

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

Monthly Bulletin of International
Community of Submitters

www.masjiduntucson.org



Published by Masjid Tucson
Sha'ban / Ramadan 1439

All Rights Reserved

Ramadan

[2:183] O you who believe, fasting is decreed for you, as it was decreed for those before you, that you may attain salvation.

Fasting is decreed to help us attain salvation. Thank You, God, for this wonderful gift You provided to us. God usually inspires me during Ramadan to do a self-evaluation through reading the Quran, meditation, and reflecting. This self-evaluation helps me recognize what I need to work on to be righteous in an attempt to attain salvation.

First, my physical body's schedule, routine, and maintenance become disrupted. I go from an active day with a long uninterrupted sleep, rejuvenating my body to perform tasks the next day, to an active day with two spurts of about half the sleep, affecting my ability and how I perform tasks the next day. And there are actually some days during Ramadan with no sleep at all.

The first thing I always do when dealing with any of my struggles is implore God to help me. There is not too much I can do about being a little more sluggish and tired than usual, but one tactic I try is putting water on

myself. When my eyes are telling me close down and rest, I go to the bathroom and throw water on my face and head. This seems to work at least for a half hour or so. Then of course there is also the power nap. I put my head down, close my eyes, and rest. But since I don't think it's a good idea to get caught sleeping on the job, it's hard to get a power nap there. Essentially, somehow, somehow God provides me with just the right amount of energy and strength to get me through the day. I feel like my self-evaluation lesson here is to keep a more constant remembrance that this physical world is only a temporary illusion.

[57:20] Know that this worldly life is no more than play and games, and boasting among you, and hoarding of money and children. It is like abundant rain that produces plants and pleases the disbelievers. But then the plants turn into useless hay, and are blown away by the wind. In the Hereafter there is either severe retribution, or forgiveness from GOD and approval. This worldly life is no more than a temporary illusion.

Anytime you challenge yourself to go through something, you create a rip-

ple effect, that impacts your entire body, mind, heart, and soul. If you use your mind to meditate on God, your body becomes relaxed, your heart is in a peaceful state, and your soul is growing.

Putting my physical body through the assignment of fasting definitely affects my heart with a more profound belief in God and the Hereafter, my soul with growth, and my mind to see things that I don't see as well when I'm not fasting. Not only does the physical body struggle during fasting, my state of mind seems to get tested just as much. I seem to find my patience more quickly removes itself during Ramadan. Here is an example of how a conversation could end up with one of my children.

Me: (Going into the kid's room, softly asking) Hey buddy, would you mind helping me clean the kitchen so I can prepare dinner.

Kid: (Playing video games, answering) Yeah sure.

I go to the kitchen and wait. 30 seconds later no one has entered the kitchen yet.

Me: (Going back into the kid's room,

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

using a normal voice, commanding) I need that kitchen done so I can get dinner started.

Kid: (Still playing video games, answering) I coming right now, I just had to save on this level.

I go back to the kitchen and wait. 10 seconds later no one has entered the kitchen yet.

Me: (Yelling from the kitchen) If you don't get in here to clean this kitchen now, I'll turn the electricity off and you won't have video games.

Kid: (Running into the kitchen) Dad, it's been less than a minute, I'm here, what do you need me to do?

Me: (My patience coming back a notch, using a normal voice) Put the clean dishes away; wash, dry, and put away the dirty ones that are in the sink, while I cut these vegetables.

Kid: (While we are working) By the way Dad, the oven, stove, and lights are electric, so if you turned off the electricity, you would be defeating your purpose by punishing me, because you would not be able to prepare dinner and cook.

Me: (Patience back again, laughing at the comment, because it's true) Thanks for helping, I appreciate it!

Patience can be like a rollercoaster during times when I'm fasting. The solution is to seek God's forgiveness and implore Him. God helps me to deal with losing my patience by using appreciation, and counting the blessings that I have. Being impatient is a form of objecting to something not going the way I want it to. So, by being appreciative of things, it helps me submit, not object, to God's will and be patient in the moment.

Fasting is designed to attain salvation. [2:183] *O you who believe, fasting is decreed for you, as it was decreed for those before you, that you may attain salvation.* God helps me when I am fasting to recognize things about myself that I need to correct to be righteous that I may attain salvation. By God's grace, I'm able to discipline my physical body through trying times,

perhaps as a reminder that the physical world is only a temporary illusion, and we should focus on the Hereafter. He guides me to recognize that I have to work on being patient through appreciation. He inspires me not to become obsessed with worldly items, to remember to say, "Bismillah" (in the name of God), before all daily tasks, to make a habit of telling the truth with all my actions, and to use my hearing, eyesight, and brains to not be fooled by lies from Satan. With God's help I'm able to keep Him in constant remembrance with all my daily tasks.

May God help all of us to use this fast-ing period to work towards salvation, pass our tests with His help, and seek forgiveness for the tests we fail.

Robert

* * * * *

With Pain There Is Gain

This Ramadan encompasses some of the longest and hottest days of the year for those of us living in the Northern Hemisphere. This is especially true for those here in the American Southwest where May and June temperatures can be quite brutal. For me this presents the dilemma of the best way to explain to others how it is that God in His infinite grace and mercy, which we know from Quran and our experience to be an absolute reality, commands us to fast from the earliest light of dawn to sunset (2:187). That puts the fast during the hottest part of the day making it the most difficult time to fast, especially from liquids.

Probably most submitters have tried to explain how God helps during the fast to someone who has not experienced it, and to reassure them that if fasting is too difficult God gives alternatives (2:184). Many of us may also have had times when our own companions question God's mercy in this practice in spite of our having experienced God's help with it! How can we convince non-submitters,

our companions and perhaps sometimes even our rebellious or lazy selves?

Looking at things from the perspective of another set of verses may help. God tells us: [94:5-8] *With pain there is gain. Indeed, with pain there is gain. Whenever possible you shall strive. Seeking only your Lord.*

Wait, this almost sounds like God wants us to suffer. May He protect us from being tricked in this by Satan as he has many people. Many Muslims believe the most miserable is the most righteous. The traditional Christian interpretation of some Biblical verses, especially in 1 Peter 4, is that suffering is for the glory of God. That concept has become an important part of much Christian philosophy. Interestingly when I read 1 Peter 4:12-13 I get quite a different meaning. Here are the verses from the King James Version of the Bible: *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.*

To me these Biblical verses have nothing at all to do with God but are all about idolizing Jesus. The Quranic principle is very, very different. The pain God speaks of in 94:5-8 is not at all the same. First, it is not suffering at all. Instead it might be compared to the pain of a strenuous workout, which while it may not be comfortable stresses the muscles to help them grow. And as the muscles grow and strengthen, so does the underlying skeleton. Thus, the pain actually helps the body grow. It is not the pain that God wants for us, but the growth.

The spiritual workout of fasting helps us grow a different kind of body, that of our souls. This workout truly is striving, seeking only God. God willing it will help us grow enough to be able to enjoy His physical presence in the hereafter.

Peace and may God bless our Ramadan.

Lisa

Ramadan

Ramadan is the month that entails intensive self-discipline and self-control. The essence of Ramadan is placing the soul over the body in compliance with the command of the Creator, not only in external forms but also in attitude and behaviour. Ramadan demands the highest degree of commitment and is designed to achieve physical, moral and spiritual reconstruction as well as self-purification.

Ramadan has a great leveling influence—no matter how rich or poor, influential or subservient, high or low, all stand on the same terms of human equality. No submitter is superior to another on account of social status or because of wealth, race or colour differences, but only on the basis of righteousness. [7:26] *O children of Adam, we have provided you with garments to cover your bodies, as well as for luxury. But the best garment is the garment of righteousness. These are some of GOD's signs, that they may take heed.*

As much as Ramadan can be seen as an exacting procedure, it's a gift for our souls, performed for a month every year to earn the pleasure of God. This annual exercise, consciously and voluntarily practiced, grows the soul. The righteous works wipe out the evil works (11:114). Fasting, particularly, is mentioned as a practice essential for our salvation. [2:183] *O you who believe, fasting is decreed for you, as it was decreed for those before you, that you may attain salvation.* When collectively undertaken one can see some ways how it can improve society and increase the quality of compassion in the community as a whole. As we experience hunger and thirst, God willing we're more empathetic of our fellow beings' plight. When we're fasting we want to be on our best behavior lest we nullify the good to our soul. But, we shouldn't just strive to be better while fasting; the positive effect on our character and conduct should last.

This month gives believers an oppor-

tunity to work on traits God wants us to observe like self-discipline, steadfastness, unity, fostering peace and mutual respect, etc. These are vital for our soul and material well-being. You need discipline to have strength for action.

Some people think that fasting is associated with mourning. This is certainly not true. The Quran makes it an instrument of moral, spiritual and physical regulation of the highest order. God says the act of fasting is a blessing and not a calamity. [2:185] *Ramadan is the month during which the Quran was revealed, providing guidance for the people, clear teachings, and the statute book. Those of you who witness this month shall fast therein. Those who are ill or traveling may substitute the same number of other days. GOD wishes for you convenience, not hardship, that you may fulfill your obligations, and to glorify GOD for guiding you, and to express your appreciation.*

Compliance with this Divine injunction fosters the sense of willing obedience to God's commands which is a sign of firm and true faith. It brings forth the feeling that a submitter has to serve only One Master. The real intention underlying the restraints and restrictions that fasting implies is total submission to the will of God. If we're practicing submission, it means we're practicing obedience, compliance, surrender, acquiescence, deference, consent and assent (to our Creator). By abstaining from what God forbids and obeying whatever He commands, believers reaffirm through performance what they profess.

God has enjoined fasting to enable us to overcome obstacles and attain righteousness, and ultimately salvation (2:183-189). If we merely follow the outward regulations that govern fasting without imbibing its spirit, without glorifying God for guiding us, and without expressing our appreciation to Him (2:185), then we may not get anything out of the fast except the pangs of hunger and thirst.

I personally feel that one should be reverent during fasting, and use it to

increase one's devotion; it's an opportunity to build our faith, piety, conduct and character. If we're conscious of the Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience of God through the fast, then this inculcates accountability in our life; God willing, we keep the Hereafter as our priority. If we sincerely believe and lead a righteous life, we will be rewarded by God in His infinite Mercy (34:4).

We must eat in order to survive. Eating is certainly not sinful from the spiritual point of view. But gluttony, eating or drinking too much, is harmful for the soul and the body. Both the Quran and the Bible warn us against this (e.g., Quran 7:31, Proverbs 23:2).

The fasting of Submitters in Ramadan is actually an exercise in self-discipline. For those who are heavy smokers or nibble food constantly or drink coffee every hour, it is a good way to break the habit, hoping that the effect will continue after the month is over. *Seyam* in Arabic means abstaining; i.e., abstaining from things that break the fast, from dawn until sunset, having first made the intention (*niyyet*) to fast.

The practice of fasting, as a key component of seeking salvation, has been part of Submission since the time of Abraham.

While Ramadan itself is not directly referenced in the Bible, we do see references to fasting. From the Old Testament:

Daniel 9:34 *“And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto the Lord God, and made my confession...”*

Esther 4:16 *“Go, gather together all the Jews ... and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day ...”*

I Samuel 7:5-6 *“And Samuel said, Gather all Israel ... and they gathered .. and fasted ...”*

Ezra 8:21-23 *“Then I proclaimed a fast ... So we fasted and besought our God ...”*

(Continued on page 4)

MASJID TUCSON United Submitters International

PO Box 43476 Tucson AZ 85733-3476 USA

Tel: (520) 323 7636

internet web site www.masjiduntucson.org

e-mail: info@masjiduntucson.org masjiduntucson@gmail.com

Non-profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Tucson AZ

ISSN 1089-053X

Happiness is Submission to God Alone

Keep up with history in the making. Subscribe now.

\$12/yr. U.S., Canada and Mexico, \$19/yr. overseas.

(Continued from page 3)

Jonah 3:5-10 “*the people ... proclaimed a fast ... from the greatest of them even to the least*”

From the New Testament:

Acts 27:33 “... *This is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.*”

Matthew 6: 16-18 “*When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*”

After this month ends, we should bow and prostrate our heads in gratitude to our Creator in His having given us the strength to fulfill His commandment and our religious obligations. Real happiness arises from nourishing the soul. We should eagerly fulfill our duty and make sacrifices of the body to prioritize the soul, knowing that it leads to happiness in this world and the next.

While it's appropriate to congratulate our brothers and sisters upon completion of this great gift from God for our soul, we shouldn't get complacent about this gift. We should continue to do good works, whether it's giving to charity and feeding the poor, or working towards helping those in need.

These are but a few ways to grow our souls, and there is always room for doing better. For example, how about using this month as a springboard towards greater implementation of God's commands, spending more time in dedication and devotion to Him, and doing more Quranic study?

The month of Ramadan brings with it innumerable blessings. We have to perform our sacred duty to follow the Final Testament and to behave towards others in the manner that God wants us to behave with His creations. We follow the laws in Quran in being steadfast, reverent and working incessantly and selflessly to do righteous works to please God.

May God make us worthy to receive His Grace, Mercy and innumerable blessings. Let us praise, exalt, extol and magnify God this Ramadan and always.

Alim

* * * * *

Alcoholics Anonymous & Submission

I have struggled with compulsive over-eating all my life. In the 1980's I found my way into the rooms of Overeater's Anonymous. That opened the doors to a revival of my spirituality. I found God again through the inspired writing of the “Big Book”.

Penned in 1932 by the first 100 founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, the “Big Book”

contains concepts about God and being a “Submitter” that rang true for me even before 1989 when I read Rashad Khalifa's translation of the Quran. The book contains concepts about making conscious contact with God throughout the day. It says we should pray for knowledge of God's will and the power to carry it out. It says whatever occupies the majority of our thoughts is our god.

Idol worship is the basis for all addictions. I was idol worshipping food. I am a food addict. I must humbly but constantly rely on God to redirect my thinking to ways which will please Him. I must maintain contact with Him throughout my day. My contact prayers are my lifeline to God.

I have considered myself an aspiring submitter since then. I say “aspiring” because, as we all know, submission is a verb as well as a noun. Submission to God's will is my aspiration. Unfortunately, I am not always a “Submitter.”

This article has been a long time in the making. What finally spurred me to put fingers to keyboard is the article in the February 2018 *Submitters Perspective* entitled “Quran and the 12 Steps”.

Thank you so much for the article.

Victoria

[Editorial note: the 12 step articles continue. See February and March 2018, with more to follow, God willing]