

APPROACHING THE GOLDEN MONTH OF RAMADAN: The Requisite Tools For A Fruitful Fasting

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ABSTRACT: *Out of the twelve lunar months, the paper ranks the month of Ramadan as a golden opportunity for the Muslims. It is in this regard that the paper postulates the need to prepare well for it in order to annex the bountiful opportunities in it. The paper is divided into six sections. Section one deals with the introduction, chapter two identifies the reasons why Ramadan is a precious month for the Muslims. In section three, an effort is made to explain the necessity for proper preparation in attainment of desired goal of whichever type. In section four, readiness to withdraw from sin, readiness to perpetually overcome the devil and readiness to resolve malice are some of the requisite tools for the attainment of a fruitful Ramadan. The paper recommends Muslims to reflect on the issues discussed in the paper and embark on self adjustment where needed.*

Keywords: *Ramadan, Tools, Fruitful, Fasting*

A. Introduction

Islam is a religion of knowledge and proper understanding. This inspires the various Qur'anic verses in which people have been asked to adopt the spirit of pondering, contemplation and reflection. The Qur'an says:



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[Here is] a Book which We have sent down unto thee, full of blessings, that they may mediate on its Signs, and that men of understanding may receive admonition. Qur'an (38:29).

In view of the above, effort is made to reflect on a very pertinent topic "Approaching the Golden Month of Ramadan: The Requisite Tools for a Fruitful Fasting"

A commonly known fact is that the month of Ramadan is a golden opportunity for Muslims. Unfortunately, many hardly ponder on the necessity of the requisite tools in a bid to attain a fruitful fasting. Contemplation and reflection no doubt make man mindful and conscious to attain greater wisdom. By means of proper contemplation, man is able to articulate messages, understand the injunctions and prepare well towards proper conduct and attainment of the desired objective.

Sequel to the above, this paper critically contemplates and reflects on the requisite tools needed for attainment of a fruitful fasting and the realization of the best opportunities embedded in the golden month of Ramadan. To this effect, the paper is divided into five segments namely, introduction, the golden opportunity in Ramadan, requisite tools and attainment of the desired objective, the requisite tools for fruitful Ramadan, conclusion and recommendations.

The golden opportunity in Ramadan

The reckoning of months in the sight of Allah according to Qur'an is twelve. Qur'an (9:36) Ramadan chronologically occupies the 9th place in the yearly calendar. It is a month in which Muslims are able to fulfill one of the five pillars of Islam. In the second year after the Hijrah of the Prophet to Madinah (624 CE), he received a revelation commanding Muslims to fast in the month of Ramadan. Allah says:

O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may [learn] self-restraint, Qur'an (2:183).

There has come to you Ramadan, a blessed month, which Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, has enjoined you to fast.¹

The opportunities in the months of Ramadan are discussed in the following section of the paper.

¹ Nasai, 3(2108), 167

Ramadan as a Shield

Ramadan is a golden opportunity for Muslims as it accords believers one opportunity or the other. Among these opportunities is how it serves as shield against hell on the Day of Judgment. There are various prophetic traditions to this effect. The prophet says:

Whosoever observes *Saum* (fast) for one day in Allah's Cause (to seek His good pleasure), Allah will keep his face away from the (Hell) Fire (a distance covered by a journey of) seventy years.²

Whoever fasts for one day in the cause of Allah, Allah will remove his face (the distance of) seventy autumns' from the Fire.

It was narrated from Sa'eed bin Abi Hind that Mutarrif from Banu Amir bin Sa'sa'ah told him that Uthman bin Abi Al As called for *milk* to be given to him (Mutarrif) to drink. Mutarrif said am fasting." Uthman said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah said Fasting is a shield like any one of you in battle."³

In view of the greatness of the opportunity provided by the month of Ramadan, the Prophet cautions Muslims against damaging the shield it provides for whosoever observes it as expected. The Hadith says:

It was narrated that Allah al Walid bin Abi Malik said: "Our companion narrated to us that Abi 'Ubaidah said: 'Fasting is a shield, so long as you do not damage it.'⁴

It was narrated from Jabir that the Messenger of Allah said: "At every breaking of the fast Allah has people whom He frees (from the Fire), and that happens every night."⁵

Expiation of sins

The preeminence of the month of Ramadan accords it the tag "the month of forgiveness". To attain the expiation of our sins in the month of Ramadan, in the glorious Qur'an, Allah enjoined whosoever is opportune to witness it to observe its fasting (Qur'an 2:185). While asserting the above position, the Prophet says:

The five daily prayers, from one *Jumu'ah* to the next, and from one Ramadan to the next, are an expiation for whatever (sins) come in between, so long as one avoids major sins.⁶

² Bukhari, 4(2840), 73-74

³ Nasai, 3(2232), 220.

⁴ Nasai, 3(2237), 222

⁵ Ibn. Majah, 2(1643) 476

⁶ Muslim, 1(552), 363-364

Whoever fasts during Ramadan, having faith and expecting his reward (from Allah), will have all his previous sins forgiven. And whoever stands in prayer on *Lailat Al-Qadr* (the Night of Decree), having faith and expecting his reward (from Allah) will have all his previous sins forgiven.⁷

Whoever fasts Ramadan out of faith and the hope of reward will be forgiven his previous sins.⁸

Intercessor and a means to paradise

One of the things that often create fear and trepidation in the minds of Muslims when mentioned is the Day of accountability. This is the Day in which the deeds of man leads him to either paradise or lands him into hell fire. Every believer therefore hopes and aspires towards getting a soft landing and an eventual admission into paradise. Ramadan provides this opportunity as it would serve as intercessor for whosoever observes it. In another hadith, Ramadan is explained as a means to the attainment of paradise. The following prophetic traditions testify to the above assertions. The Prophet says:

On the Day of resurrection the call will go out saying: 'Where are those who used to fast?' Whoever is among those who used to fast will enter it and whoever enters it will never thirst again.⁹

For those who fast there is a gate in Paradise called *Ar-Rayyan*, through which no one but they will enter. When the last of them has entered it, it will be closed. Whoever enters through it will drink, and whoever drinks will never thirst again.¹⁰

Deeds are enormously rewarded

In the month of Ramadan, rewards of deeds are given in multiple. This differentiates it from the remaining eleven months of the Islamic calendar. The month is therefore an avenue for Muslims to enhance the weight of their good deeds in preparation for the Day of weighing of deeds for human beings. The Qur'an had earlier warned man to plan well for the Day in which the scales of justice shall be displayed before man. Below are few Qur'anic illustrations to this effect.

⁷ Abu Dawud, 2(1372), 139

⁸ Ibn. Majah, 2 (1641), 475

⁹ Ibn Majah, 2 (1640), 474

¹⁰ Nasai, 3(2238), 222

We shall set up scales of justice for the Day of Judgment, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least, and if there be [no more than]the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it [to account]: and enough are We to take account. Qur'an (21:47)

The balance that day will be true [to nicety]: those whose scale [of good] will be heavy, will prosper: Those whose scale will be light, their souls in perdition, for that they wrongfully treated Our signs. Qur'an (7:8-9)

In the following prophetic traditions, effort is made to maintain that other acts of worship are rewarded in multiple of ten to seven hundred. The prestigious position of fasting in this month makes the reward of fasting an exemption. The accruable reward from fasting as enunciated in the following prophetic traditions is known to no one except the creator. The Hadith says:

Every good deed of Adam's son is for him except fasting; it is for Me, and I shall reward (the fasting person) for it.' Verily, the smell of the mouth of a fasting person is better with Allah than the smell of musk.¹¹

Every deed of the son of Adam will be multiplied, a *Hasanah* will be multiplied to ten its like, up to seven hundred times. Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, said: "Except fasting. It is for Me and I shall reward for it. He gives up his desires and his food for My sake." The fasting person will have two moments of joy: Joy when he breaks his fast, and joy when he meets his Lord. And indeed the smell of his mouth is better to Allah than the fragrance of musk."¹²

In view of the immense reward for actions exhibited in this month, the Prophet used to engage in worship and charity more in it. The following prophetic traditions concretise the above.

Narrated Ibn 'Abbas The Prophet was the most generous amongst the people, and he used to be more so in the month of Ramadan when Jibril (Gabriel) visited him, and Jibril used to meet him on every night of Ramadan till the end of the month. The Prophet used to recite the Noble Qur'an to Jibril, and when Jibril met him, he used to be more generous than the fair wind [sent by Allah with glad tidings (rain) in readiness and haste to do charitable deeds.

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¹¹ Bukhari, 7(5927), p 431

¹² Muslim, 3(2707), 221-221

The Messenger of Allah was the most generous of people in doing good, and he was at his most generous in the month of Ramadân. Jibril, used to meet him every year in Ramadan until it ended, and the Messenger of Allah would recite the Qur'ân to him. When Jibril met him, the Messenger of Allah was more generous in doing good than the (rain) blowing wind.¹³

The month of Ramadan is considered as a month of privilege for Muslims as performing Umrah in it is like Hajj in the sight of Allah. Similarly, the Prophet states that fasting is the best of deeds and nothing is equivalent to it. In the Hadith below are evidences affirming the above.

Ibn 'Abbas told us: "The Messenger of Allah said to a woman from among the Ansar when it is Ramadan perform Umrah then, for 'Umrah during it is equivalent to Hajj."¹⁴

It was narrated from Abu Ummah that he asked the Messenger of Allah: "Which -, deed is best?" He said: "Take to fasting, for there is nothing equal to it."¹⁵

Feeding a person who had undergone fasting from morning till dusk accords the giver a similar reward given to the fasting person. The prophet says:

Whoever provides the food for a fasting person to break his fast with, then for him is the same reward as his (the fasting person's), without anything being diminished from the reward of the fasting person.¹⁶

The month of inestimable blessings

The uniqueness of Ramadan among other months and its distinctive status is further explained from the perspective of its exceptional blessings. For example, a reflection on the revelation of the book which is the words of Allah to mankind in this month signifies the greatness of the month in terms of blessing. This is the book which encapsulates the teachings of all ever sent messenger of Allah to the leader of all ever sent messenger of Allah and to the best of all ever raised generation of man. The month is blessed to have the complete revelation of the book from Lawhul Mahfuz to the lowest part of the heaven in it. In addition, the commencement of the bit by bit revelation of the Qur'an from the lowest part of the heaven to prophet Muhammad (SAW) was equally in the month of Ramadan.

¹³ Muslim, 6(6009), 162

¹⁴ Nasai, 3(2112), 169

¹⁵ Nasai, 3(2224), 218

¹⁶ Tirmidhi, 2(807), 232

Ramadhan is the [month] in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a guide to mankind, also clear [Signs] for guidance and judgment [Between right and wrong]. So every one of you who is present [at his home] during that month should spend it in fasting, but if anyone is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period [Should be made up] by days later. Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put to difficulties. [He wants you] to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful. Qur'an (2:185)

The month is a blessed month as explicated in following prophetic tradition which says:

There has come to you Ramadan, a blessed month, which Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, has enjoined you to fast...¹⁷

This is the reason why the sighting of the crescent of Ramadan comes along with a lot of blessings which spread in it from the beginning of the month to its end. Numerous prophetic traditions attest to this. For example, prophet says:

When the month of Ramadan starts, the gates of the heaven are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and the devils are chained.¹⁸

The Messenger of Allah said: 'When Ramadan comes, the gates of mercy are opened, the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are chained up.'¹⁹

It was narrated from Anas bin Malik that the Messenger of Allah said: "There has come to you Ramadan in which the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of the Fire are closed and the devils are chained up."²⁰

It was reported from Masruq, from 'Aishah that when - the (last) ten (nights of Ramadan) came), the Prophet would spend the night awake, and tighten his *Izar*, and awake his family.²¹

Out of His divine wisdom, Allah had singled out a night in the month of Ramadan which He had made to be better than a thousand nights of other months. This translates to over

¹⁷ Nasai, 3(2108), 167

¹⁸ Bukhari, 3(1899), 82

¹⁹ Nasai, 3(2102), 165

²⁰ Nasai, 3(2105), 166

²¹ Abu Dawud, 2(1376), 141

83 years. The Quran equally attests to the fact that the night of power which falls within the odd nights of the last ten days of in Ramadan is a blessed night.

We have indeed revealed this [Message] in the Night of Power: A what will explain to thee what the night of power is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. Therein come down the angels and the Spirit by Allah's permission, on every errand: Peace! ... This until the rise of morn! Qur'an (97:1-5)

Ha-Mim. By the Book that makes things clear;- We sent it down during a Blessed Night: for We [ever] wish to warn [against Evil]. Qur'an (44:1-3)

The blessing in the month of Ramadan is also noted in the tradition of the Arch Angel who used to repeat the recitation of the Qur'an with the noble prophet Muhammad (SAW). This repetition was once in every year but consistently carried out in a special month which is the month of Ramadan.

However the repetition was twice in the year of his demise. To further buttress the copious blessing specifically embedded in this month, prophet also laid down a precedent for Muslims on how to take hold of this great opportunity. This he did by engaging in seclusion in the last ten days of Ramadan searching for the blessing of a night which is better than a thousand nights of other months.

Narrated Abu Hurairah Jibril (Gabriel) used to repeat the recitation of the Qur'an with the Prophet once a year, but he repeated it twice with him in the year he died. The Prophet used to stay in *I'tikaf* for ten days every year (in the month of Ramadan), but in the year of his death, he stayed in *I'tikaf* for twenty days.²⁴

Enhancement of the spirit of humanity and attainment of mercy

The creator of mankind is a merciful God, Qur'an (27:30), His sent messenger prophet Muhammad (SAW) is a mercy to mankind Qur'an (21:107) and the message given to him for conveyance to mankind (Al-Qur'an) also centres on being merciful, Qur'an (17:82). Every Muslim utilizes Ramadan to attain the mercy of Allah by engaging in various forms of charitable activities and embracing the spirit of commensalism. Notable among these activities are, sharing of money, clothes and food to the poor and the needy, family and friends neighbours and all other categories of people in the society. Generally, everyone either rich or poor, give out what they could afford as charity. Fasting increases the spirit of sympathy and

compassion, enhances the fiber of unity, and strengthens the bond of love and affection among Muslims. When all these, the spirit of humanity is enhanced and attainment of mercy of Allah is achieved in the month of Ramadan. Moreover the Prophet says:

The merciful are shown mercy *by Ar-Rahman*. Be merciful on the earth, and you will be shown mercy from Who is above the heavens. The womb is named after *Ar-Rahman*, so whoever connects it, Allah connects him, and whoever severs it, Allah severs him.²²

It was narrated from 'Abdullāh bin 'Amr and he attributed it to the Prophet "Those who show mercy will be shown mercy by the Most Merciful. Show mercy to those who are on earth and the One Who is above the heaven will show mercy to *you*."²³

Going by the above, the spirit of humanity in this month is high and distinctive when compared with other months. Ramadan accords Muslims an opportunity to express love and affection for among themselves.

Promotion of human health.

Health is wealth and as such a much desired thing in life. Besides its essentiality for various forms of materialistic engagement, health is needed for the observance of worship in Islam. Fasting avails man the chance to improve his health status thereby enabling him to achieve the purpose of life. Fasting promotes blood sugar control thereby lowering the probability of having diabetes. One of the scientific findings shows that fasting aids in reducing oxidative stress (aging) and helps in combating diseases related to old age. Fasting promotes the health status of the brain as it enhances growth of new nerve cells.²⁴

An avenue for Spiritual upliftment.

The ultimate goal of worship is to move closer to Allah. Every human being as enunciated in Sahih Muslim is endowed with a devilish companion. Fasting helps man to have control over this devilish companion which instigates man towards sinful acts. Fasting is a spiritual training that enhances God-consciousness in man. his yearnings for the mercy of Allah,

²² Tirmidhi, 4(1924), 40

²³ Dawud, 5(4941), 329-330

²⁴ Bamosky et al., Intermittent fasting vs daily calorie restriction for type 2 diabetes prevention: a review of human findings, *Translational Research*, 164(4), 302-311. Lee et al., Dietary Restriction Increases the Number of Newly Generated Neural Cells, and Induces BDNF Expression, in the Dentate Gyrus of Rats, *Journal of Molecular Neuroscience*, 15(2), 99-108.

promotes fortifies the spirit of patience and endurance, and assists man towards having contentment and self- discipline.

Requisite tools and attainment of the desired objective

The secret behind a successful attainment of a desired goal lies in the fact that it is always preceded with proper preparation. This implies that proper preparation is a highly imperative tool to success in every desired goal. There are many inferences in the Quran and hadith. For example, when Allah wanted to create man on earth, He completed the creation of everything needed for a successful living of man on earth. In Muslim,²⁵ it was mentioned that Allah created the clay on Saturday, the mountains on Sunday the trees on Monday, the things entailing labour on Tuesday, the light on Wednesday, the animals on Thursday and lastly the creation of Adam (peace be upon him) on Friday. One of the inferences from one of the hadith of Bukhari is that for a successful accomplishment of the task of messengership, all prophets of Allah were made to be shepherds so that they could attain the spirit of endurance. Equally, when prophet Muhammad (SAW) was called to prophethood, the first message buttressed in the revelation is knowledge. This implies that the preparatory tool for proper practice of Islam is knowledge.

Coming to the mundane life, it is clear that to attain success every students must prepare very well before the exams by reading, an intending traveler equally prepares his/her vehicle by ensuring its good condition before embarking on the trip. Every successful professional in the realm of education be it a medical doctor, a legal practitioner, a nurse or a reliable apprentice of whichever type must have received a preparatory training that would assist in accomplishment of the desired goal. It is on this premise that in order to attain a fruitful fasting; it is a necessity to approach the golden month of Ramadan with some requisite tools as enunciated in the next paragraphs.²⁶

The requisite tools for fruitful Ramadan

Although Ramadan is a month of bountiful mercy for Muslims, its attainment depends on how ready the faithful set to acquire it. This readiness on the part of individual has to do with the availability of some requisite required to overcome the hurdles. In the next paragraphs,

²⁵ Muslim, 7(7054), 188-189

²⁶ Khan, M. M. A., Nor, N. M., Mamat, N. M., Mohd-Shukri, N. A., & Bakar, W. A. M. A. (2018). Fasting in Islam: a combination of spiritual elevation and prevention of diseases. *IIUM Medical Journal Malaysia*, 17(2).

effort is made to examine the requisite tools needed for self reinforcement in order to attain the blessings of the month.²⁷

Resolute to withdraw from sin and readiness to perpetually overcome the devil

Approaching the month of mercy with an obstinately inclined mind to continue with perpetration of sin could earn a Muslim the wrath of Allah as against His mercy. The gravity of some sins is so high that perpetrating them could lead such a person to hell- fire on the Day of resurrection. The following hadith is a good illustration of the above.

There are three at whom Allah will not look on the Day of Resurrection: The one who disobeys his parents, the woman who imitates men in her outward appearance, and the cuckold. And there are three who will not enter Paradise: The one who disobeys his parents, the drunkard, and the one who reminds people of what he has given them.²⁸

He will not enter Paradise, whose neighbor is not safe from his evil conduct.²⁹

Wine is cursed from ten angles: The wine itself, the one who squeezes (the grapes etc), the one for whom it is squeezed, the one who sells it, the one who buys it, the one who carries it, the one to whom it is carried, the one who consumes its price, the *one* who drinks it and the one who pours it.³⁰

A sinner of whichever category of sin occupies a precarious position in the sight of Allah. In a similar vein, approaching the month of forgiveness with the desire to continue with indulgence in alcoholism or illicit sexual relationship for example could be a stumbling block to the attainment of the mercy of Allah. It is in view of the above that Muslims must be resolute to eschew actions and situations likely to lead to sins so as to attain a fruitful fasting in the month of Ramadan. Another tool needed for a fruitful Ramadan is that of readiness to overcome temptation. In one of his traditions, the Prophet affirms that man has a devilish companion. The hadith says:

²⁷ Barnosky et al., Barnosky, A., Hoddy, K., Unterman, T. and Varady, K. (2014). Intermittent fasting vs daily calorie restriction for type 2 diabetes prevention: a review of human findings. *Translational Research*.

²⁸ Nasai, 3 (2563), 380

²⁹ Muslim, 1(172), 141

³⁰ Majah, 4, (3380), 381

There is no one among you but Allah has appointed a companion for him from among the *jinn* ' They said: 'Even you, O Messenger of Allah?' He said: ' Even me, but Allah helped me with him, and he became Muslim. ³¹

This devil as enunciated in the Glorious Qur'an does nothing except the act of whispering devilish inspirations into man's heart. Allah says:

Say: I seek refuge with the Lord and Cherisher of Mankind, The King [or Ruler] of Mankind, The god [or judge] of Mankind, From the mischief of the Whisperer [of Evil], who withdraws [after his whisper], [The same] who whispers into the hearts of Mankind, Among Jinns and among men. Qur'an (112:1-6)

It is on this premise that in the Glorious Qur'an, God Almighty warns man against the devil and enjoins man to seek refuge in Him against it. Allah says:

Verily Satan is an enemy to you: so treat him as an enemy. He only invites his adherents that they may become Companions of the Blazing Fire. Qur'an (31:6)

Readiness to always utter good words or remain silent.

Quite a number of hadith earlier explained testified to the blessings of Allah that await one who observe fasting in the month of Ramadan or stands in prayer on *Lailat Al-Qadr* (the Night of Decree). For example, prophet says:

Whoever fasts during Ramadan, having faith and expecting his reward (from Allah), will have all his previous sins forgiven. And whoever stands in prayer on *Lailat Al-Qadr* (the Night of Decree), having faith and expecting his reward (from Allah) will have all his previous sins forgiven.³²

Notwithstanding the above benefits mentioned in the hadith, there are some acts which when committed could exempt one from attaining this blessings. The following hadith corroborates the above.

Whoever does not give up lying speech, (false statements) and acting on them (i.e., telling lies), and evil deeds, and behaving in an ignorant evil way, and speaking bad words to others, then Allah is not in need of his (fasting) leaving his food and drink.³³

³¹ Muslim, 7(7108), 215

³² Abu Dawud, 2, (1372), 139

³³ Bukhari, 8 (6057), 56

Readiness to resolve malice

In the sight of Allah, Muslims are one family bonded by the rope of Allah. The Qur'an says:

Verily, this brotherhood of yours is a single brotherhood, and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore serve Me [and no other].
Qur'an (21:92)

And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah [stretches out for you], and be not divided among yourselves; Qur'an (3:103)

The above implies that it is forbidden in Islam for a Muslim to hate, feel jealous desert his fellow brother.

Do not hate one another, and do not be jealous of one another; and do not desert (cut your relation with) each other, and O Allah's worshippers! Be brothers. Lo! It is not permissible for any Muslim to desert (not talk to) his brother (Muslim) for more than three days.³⁴

The Prophet forbade what you know of deserting (not speaking to your Muslim brethren), for it is unlawful for any Muslim not to talk to his brother for more than three nights (days).³⁵

It is not lawful for the Muslim to shun his brother for more than three (days); they come fare to fare and this one turns away, and that one turns away. The best of them is the one who initiates the Salam.³⁶

Keeping malice is a great offence since as the Prophet says:

Whoever abandons his brother for a year, it is as if he has shed his blood.³⁷

To achieve a fruitful fasting in the month of Ramadan, Muslims must be ready to resolve malice among themselves. The following prophetic traditions affirm that those who keep malice stand the chance of exempting themselves from the forgiveness of their sins.

The gates of Paradise are opened on Mondays and Thursdays, and every slave (of Allah) who does not associate anything with Allah is forgiven, except a man between whom and his brother there is some grudge. It is said: 'Wait for these two until they reconcile,

³⁴ Bukhari, 8(6065), 60

³⁵ Bukhari, 8(6073), 63-64

³⁶ Tirmidhi, 4 (1932), 45-46

³⁷ Abu Dawud, 5(4915), 319

wait for these two until they reconcile, wait for these two until they reconcile.³⁸

The people's deeds are presented (before Allah) twice every week; on Mondays and Thursdays, and every believing slave (of Allah) is forgiven, except a slave between whom and his brother there is some grudge. It is said: 'Leave these two' - or: 'delay these two - until they reconcile.'³⁹

Readiness to be more committed to good deeds

In Sunan Abu Dawud,⁴⁰ the attainment of a fruitful fasting is tie to two things namely faithfulness and expectation of reward. This implies that a Muslim must be faithful and hopeful that his fasting shall not be in vain. This calls for an in-depth reflection on the concept of faithfulness which also includes many things. On a general note, a faithful Muslim is one, who engages in act of goodness and abstains from all forms of transgression or oppression.⁴¹

These two factors (faithfulness and yearning for reward from Allah) as mentioned by the prophet necessitates more commitment to all forms of virtuous conducts and charitable acts in the month of Ramadan. With these, a Muslim is able to attain a fruitful fasting in the month of Ramadan. Moreover, the Qur'an hints that for those who yearn for reward from Allah, they strive towards good deeds, Qur'an (18:110). The prophet had demonstrated this by being more committed to worship and acts of generosity in the month of Ramadan. The hadith says:

Narrated Ibn 'Abbas The Prophet was the most generous amongst the people, and he used to be more so in the month of Ramadan when Jibril (Gabriel) visited him, and Jibril used to meet him on every night of Ramadan till the end of the month. The Prophet used to recite the Noble Qur'an to Jibril, and when Jibril met him, he used to be more generous than the fair wind [sent by Allah with glad tidings (rain) in readiness and haste to do charitable deeds].⁴²

Readiness to ensure earnings is from Halal

In the sight of Allah, the reward of deeds depends on a number of factors. Among the critical factor is that the earnings of a worshipper must be from the lawful means. Any action

³⁸ Muslim, 6(6544), 433

³⁹ Muslim 6(6547), 434

⁴⁰ Abu Dawud, 2(1372), 139

⁴¹ Adnan, M., & Uyuni, B. (2023, September). FASTING A PROPHATIC TRADITION. In *Proceeding International Da'wah Conference* (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 199-212).

⁴² Bukhari, 3(1902), 83-84

devoid of this no matter the greatness of the action, it shall be rejected. The following prophetic tradition expatiates further.

It was narrated that Abū Hurairah said: "The Messenger of Allah said: 'O people, Allah is *Tayyib* (good) and does not accept anything but that which is good. Allah has enjoined upon the believers that which He has enjoined upon the Messengers. He says: O (you) Messengers! Eat of the *Tayyibat* [the lawful] and do righteous deeds. Verily, I am Well-Acquainted with what you do", and He says: O you who believe! Eat of the lawful things that We have provided you with. ... Then he mentioned a man who has undertaken a lengthy journey and is disheveled and dusty, raising his hands towards heaven and saying: 'O Lord, O Lord!' But his food is unlawful, his drink is unlawful, his clothing is unlawful, and he is nourished with what is unlawful, so how can he receive a response?" A1-Mu'minân 23:51⁴³

Ramadan is a glorious opportunity for Muslims to attain paradise. A Muslim who observes fasting of Ramadan but relies on unlawful earnings deprived himself this great opportunity. Instead of gaining paradise, his abode shall be hell-fire on account of his unlawful earnings. The prophet says:

There is no flesh raised that sprouts from the unlawful except that the Fire is more appropriate for it.⁴⁴

Consciousness of Allah

Although, the paper had discussed some preparatory tools needed for the attainment of a fruitful fasting, the best of all provisions is consciousness of Allah. The Qur'an says:

And take a provision [With you] for the journey, but the best of provisions is right conduct. So fear Me, O ye that are wise. Qur'an (2:197)

This is due to the fact that all the previously discussed points hinge on consciousness of Allah. Consciousness of Allah is no doubt a necessary tool in a bid to attain a fruitful fasting in the month of Ramadan. Moreover, the Qur'an sees God consciousness as the best provision. In the Glorious Qur'an, Allah says:

And take a provision [With you] for the journey, but the best of provisions is right conduct. So fear Me, O ye that are wise. Qur'an (65:2)

⁴³ Muslim, 3(2346), 59

⁴⁴ Tirmidhi, 2(614), 73

The following prophetic tradition attests to the above:

Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah was asked about that for which people are admitted into Paradise the most, so he said: "*Taqwa* of Allah, and good character." And he was asked about that for which people are admitted into the Fire the most, and he said: "The mouth and the private parts."⁴⁵

Conclusion

With the aid of Qur'anic verses, prophetic traditions and other related sources, the paper evidently proves how Ramadan is a golden opportunity for Muslims. The treatise explains how special the Muslims are as they opportune to earnest these great blessing of the month of Ramadan. The paper is a good guide for every Muslim intending to fast the month of Ramadan which is an annual event.

Recommendation

1. Muslims should reflect on the issues discussed in the paper and embark on self adjustment where needed.
2. Muslims should be more generous in the month of Ramadan so as to attain a fruitful fasting in the month.
3. Muslims should improve on their acts of worship in the month so as to attain more blessing in the month of blessing

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⁴⁵ Tirmidhi, 4(2004), 93-94.

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