



The 9th Month of the Islamic Calendar – Ramadan

رمض are the root letters of the noun Ramadan which means scorching heat and in particular it refers to the ground which is hot to touch. How do we understand the relevance of this meaning with respect to fasting?

Chemistry students will know quite well that metals are not found absolutely pure in the ground except in rare circumstances. However, they are found mixed with rock and as an Oxide, i.e. oxygen is attached them, and referred to as a metal ore. In this state they are of little use as the metal needs to be pure in order to be used to make various items. So what is done to this metal ore in order to remove the unwanted part and gain the metal in a pure state? The answer is the famous Blast Furnace! In the blast furnace the temperatures are extremely high, sufficiently high to melt the metal and have it removed from the bottom of the furnace.

So how does the blast furnace relate to Ramadan?

The similitude is simple. As the blast furnace through heat removes the unwanted from the wanted, then in the same way Ramadan removes the unwanted from the wanted. The unwanted in our case are the sins and disobediences that have stained our souls and the wanted is a pure soul.

In that case it becomes quite clear what the purpose of Ramadan is as Allah, the Almighty says in the Qur'an:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ

تَتَّقُونَ ﴿۱۸۳﴾

O those who believe, fasting is made compulsory upon you like it was made compulsory upon those who came before you in order that you may gain *taqwa* (2:183)

"يا أيها الذين آمنوا كتب" فرض



"عليكم الصيام كما كتب على الذين من قبلكم" من الأمم

"لعلكم تتقون" المعاصي فإنه يكسر الشهوة التي هي مبدؤها

The *taqwa* being referred to as described by Imam Suyuti above is that fasting is a means by which an individual destroys whims and desires which are the cause of sins and disobedience.

This *taqwa* is a means by which a person becomes pious and more God wary. A person rarely wants to do wrong, however they lack the will power and conviction or more correctly the God consciousness to remain obedient to Him.

This is the primary reason for fasting. Secondary benefits are the realisation that we are very weak and highly dependable on food, water and rest. Also, one appreciates what people less fortunate than us have to bear with on a daily basis. Furthermore, one is grateful to Allah for bestowing food and water for us without measure and account.

So one must be clear with respect to the purpose of fasting and endeavour to achieve the best possible outcome. The benefits of fasting in Ramadan are numerous some are detailed in the *Abadith*:

صحيح البخاري (6 / 468) :

- حَدَّثَنَا مُسْلِمُ بْنُ أَبِرَاهِيمَ حَدَّثَنَا هِشَامٌ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى عَنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَنْ قَامَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَنْ صَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

“Whomsoever stands during *layla al-qadr* (Night of Power) with firm belief and expecting reward then their past sins will be forgiven. Whomsoever fasts the month of Ramadan with firm belief and expecting reward then their past sins will be forgiven.” (Transmitted by al-Bukhari)

صحيح مسلم (5 / 337) :

1793 - حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ وَقُتَيْبَةُ وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ عَنْ أَبِي سَهْلٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِذَا جَاءَ رَمَضَانُ فَتُحْتَفَتُ أَبْوَابُ الْجَنَّةِ وَغُلِقَتُ أَبْوَابُ النَّارِ وَصُفِّدَتِ الشَّيَاطِينُ

“When Ramadan arrives then the Doors of Janna are opened and the Doors of Hell are locked and the *Shayatin* are bound.” (Transmitted by Muslim)

Also performing other good acts in this month carry more reward; for example the Holy Prophet has said when addressing a lady from al-Ansar,



سنن النسائي (7 / 261) :

2083 - أَخْبَرَنَا عِمْرَانُ بْنُ يَزِيدَ بْنِ خَالِدٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا شُعَيْبٌ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي ابْنُ جُرَيْجٍ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي عَطَاءٌ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ يُخْبِرُنَا قَالَ

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِامْرَأَةٍ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ إِذَا كَانَ رَمَضَانُ فَأَعْتَمِرِي فِيهِ فَإِنَّ عُمْرَةً فِيهِ تَعْدِلُ حَجَّةً

“When it is Ramadan then perform Umra in it, for indeed Umra in it is equivalent (in reward) to Hajj.” (Transmitted by al-Nasa’I’)

Prepare a timetable for yourself in this month. You could follow the procedure below:

Sehri

Recitation of Qur’an

Fajr

Sleep (but not too long - the purpose is not to pass the time but to utilise the time)

Work/Study

Dhuhr

Work/Nap

Recitation of Qur’an

Visit and spend time in Masjid or listen to Islamic lectures

Asr

Help family and neighbours especially the elderly

Maghrib

Iftari – remember the purpose of Ramadan is not to eat too much but to control the desires/whims

Rest and help family in the house

Tarawih

Recitation of Qur’an



Also, take this opportunity to find out more about your religion. Improve your Tajweed (correct recitation of the Qur'an). Learn to perform your Sala correctly. The Masjid is thriving at this time of the year so ensure you take advantage of it.

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