

The Bounties of Allah

The fast during Ramadaan contains numerous instances of wisdom that look to both Allah Almighty's encompassing rule, to man's expression of gratitude for divine bounties, to man's personal life and the training of his soul and to his social life.

One of the many instances of wisdom from the point of view of Allah Almighty's rule is that He created the earth like a table on which He arranged numerous bounties. This clearly manifests His mercy and Compassion. However, humans often forget this and frequently ascribe the source of bounties to other causes.

During Ramadaan, people of imaan become like a well drilled army. As sunset approaches they display a wonderful attitude as though having been invited to Allah Almighty's banquet and are awaiting the command to eat.

In fact, when the people who have fasted break their fast at the appointed time they are responding to that compassionate and universal mercy with exalted and orderly worship.

Fasting in Ramadaan represents thankfulness for Allah Almighty's bounties in the following way: He has spread innumerable bounties over the earth for mankind, in return for which He wishes gratefulness as the price for those bounties.

The apparent causes and possessors of the bounties are like tray-bearers. We pay a certain price on them, and even though they do not merit it, we are often grateful to them. Yet, the True Bestower of bounties is infinitely more deserving of thanks than those causes which are merely the means of the bounty.

Thus, thanking Allah Almighty is recognition that the bounties are from Him; it is to appreciate their worth and to perceive our need for them.

Fasting in Ramadaan, then, is the key to a true, sincere, extensive and universal thankfulness.

At other times of the year, most of those who are not in difficult circumstances do not realize the value of many bounties since they do not experience real hunger. Those whose stomachs are full, especially the rich, do not understand the bounty there is in a piece of dry bread.

But when it is time to break the fast, the taste of the dry bread is a most valuable divine bounty in the eyes of a believer.

Furthermore, since eating is prohibited during the day, they will know and therefore say: 'These bounties do not belong to me. I am not free to eat them; they are another's property and gift. I await His command.' They will recognize the bounty to be bounty and will give thanks. Thus, fasting is like a key to gratitude; Man's fundamental duty in this world is to express Gratitude.

One of the many instances of wisdom in Ramadaan from the point of view of man's personal life is that it is a healing physical and spiritual diet of the most important kind.

When a man's soul eats and drinks as it pleases, it is harmful from a medical perspective and, when it indulges in everything it encounters without considering whether it is permissible or not, it poisons his spiritual life. It will not attract illness to that weak stomach by cramming it with food before the previous intake of food has been digested. By abandoning even permissible actions as it is commanded, it will acquire the ability to listen to the commands of the Shari'ah and the reason, and so avoid wrong and harmful actions. It will try not to destroy his spiritual life.

Thus, in Ramadaan, everyone's soul, from the richest to the poorest, may understand that it does not own itself but is totally owned; it is not free but a slave. It understands that if it does not receive a command, it is unable to do the simplest thing, like reaching out to drink water.

So, thorough fasting, the soul's imaginary sense of independence is shattered; it performs its worship and begins to offer thanks, which is the soul's true duty.

In conclusion, the most excellent fasting is to make the senses and organs, like the tongue, eyes, ears, heart and thoughts fast together with the stomach. That is, to withdraw, especially the tongue, from all unlawful things and from trivial and non-sensical things, and to let it participate in ibadah.

Insha Allah, during Ramadaan, may we ban our tongue from lying, back-biting and obscene language; may we busy our tongues with activities like reciting Qur'an with understanding, performing salaah, glorifying Allah Almighty's names, asking for His blessings on Nabi Muhammad (SAW), and seeking forgiveness for our sins. Ameen!