

62

Introduction:

Fasting on siyam is one of the pillars of Islam. Fasting is done by Muslims around the world as a way to show their love for God and fulfill their obligation (Fard). Fasting is done collectively by whole Muslim Ummah in the month of Ramadan. In this month, Muslims abstain from evils as they are fasting. This keeps the Muslim Ummah away from social and individual evilness and sins which forms a harmonious society as a whole. Imam Ghazali also explains about fasting that it is not just about abstaining from food and drink but also to abstain from evil looking, evil doing and, evil speaking, and evil thinking.

Literal meaning of Fasting: The

Sawm literally means "to be at rest" or "to abstain".

It is so because the Muslims refrain from evilness along with eating and drinking during fasting.

Importance of Fasting in Quran & Hadith:

In Quran:

"O ye who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed before you, that ye may ward off evil"
(Al-Baqarah 2:183-185)

In Hadith:

"Fasting is a shield for you as it saves you from sins in this world and would protect from the hell in the hereafter"
(Muslim)

Breaking Fast and its consequences:

During fasting a person may intentionally or unintentionally break the fast. If a person unintentionally breaks a fast, then he must continue ~~fast~~ ^{fasting} for the rest of the day.

But if a person breaks the fast intentionally then he has to make up for that in following way,

- Free a slave. If not possible then,
- Fast for two consecutive lunar months. If not possible then,
- Feed or give clothes to 60 people.

Days when fasting is prohibited:

Muslims are encourage to fast anytime other than Ramadan as well. But there are certain time of the year when Islam prohibits Muslims to not fast. Following are those times,

→ Eid al-Adha: During 3 days

Muslims are not ordered to fast.

⇒ Eid al-Fitr: After a whole month of fasting, Eid is like a gift for Muslims by Allah and so Muslims are required to eat and enjoy with family and do not fast.

⇒ Only Fridays: Friday is like a Eid for Muslims and so Muslims are ordered not to fast on every Friday.

⇒ Fast Everyday: Fasting every day of the year is also prohibited.

Importance of Fasting:

⇒ To understand others suffering: Fasting makes the affluent and rich to stay hungry and thirsty, making them realize about the suffering of needy and poor. In this way, the rich will work for making not just their own but others' life better too.

⇒ Economic importance: During the month of Ramadan, Muslims do the most charity which improves the living conditions of poor. This may also become a habit of the affluent and they may continue this after Ramadan as well.

⇒ Moral enhancement: The individuals and society as whole when refrains from evil then this leads to enhancement of their moral character.

⇒ Revitalization of Iman on Faith: During Fasting, Muslims open 5 times prayers and recites Quran as well. This resumes the lost connection of individuals with their God. Muslims remain spiritually at peace during Ramadan.

Impacts of Fasting
At individual level:

- Time punctuality: when Muslims

prays 5 times prayers on time and also takes care of Sehri and iftari timings, ^{Islam} they understands the importance of time and being punctual. This will be applicable in their practical life as well and even after Ramadan Muslims become habitual of this punctuality because of the one month training on lifestyle during Ramadan.

- Will power develops: For a person who is not Muslim, if food his favorite food is in front of him he will certainly eat it. But during Ramadan, when the favorite food of Muslims is front of him he will not eat it because he is fasting. This type of behavior creates will power among Muslims.
- Purification of soul: Muslims pray during fasting which keeps

them close to Allah and so their soul is at peace.

Social Impacts:

- Brotherhood and unity: Ramzan brings Muslims closer to each other in many ways. When Muslims perform ~~the~~ 5 times prayers in one mosque and then sit for Taraweeh and then this brings closer to each other. Moreover, as Muslims do more charity, this also creates harmony in the society by uniting all rich and poor.

- Socio-economic benefits: The rich people spends a lot in charity which helps the poor sections of a society. This benefits them (poor). The rich donates clothes, iftar food is also given, grocery and such provisions are provided by the rich.

- Favourable environment for training: The Muslims around the world are fasting during Ramadan which creates a collective environment of abstaining from evil and doing good. All Muslims of a society will tolerate each other's ~~among~~ little offensive acts which will train them for a life after Ramadan as well.

Conclusion: Fasting is not just prayer but a way of life as well. In the month of Ramadan, Muslims abstain from evil and this goes on for 30 days. This training impacts Muslim's life individually and socially. Individually, Muslims become more tolerant, moral and spiritual in their conduct. While, collectively Muslims become more united and generous. So, Fasting has significant importance in collective and individual life both.