

Islamic Studies

PART - II

QUESTION NO. 2

1. Introduction

Fasting or Saum / Roza is a very important concept and form of worship in Islam. It is the 4th pillar of Islam. In the month of Ramadan, in which the Holy Quran was revealed, Muslims observe fasting, which is abstaining from eating and drinking, as well as intercourse from dawn till sunset. They are supposed to observe patience throughout the day. The primary purpose of fasting is to achieve Taqwa (God consciousness) as mentioned in the Quran:

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

2. Importance of Fasting in Islam

i) Pillar of Islam

Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam and is one of the foundational worships of Islam. It holds great importance and is a mandatory act of worship.

ii) Spiritual Uplift

Fasting is a means of cleaning the soul from sins and focusing on the worship of Allah. It redirects attention from material needs to spiritual growth and helps individuals prioritize their relationship with Allah.

ii) Obedience and Submission

Fasting is a demonstration of a Muslim's devotion and submission to Allah's commands. It instills discipline and reinforces the understanding that worship is an essential aspect of life.

iii) Gratitude and Contentment

By voluntarily experiencing hunger and thirst, Muslims develop a greater appreciation for Allah's blessings and understand the struggles faced by the less fortunate.

iv) Moral Rectitude

Fasting not only involves refraining from food and drink but also requires abstaining from lying, gossiping and other harmful behaviors. This contributes to a heightened sense of morality and ethical living.

3. Impacts of Fasting on Individuals

i) Spiritual Renewal

Fasting helps individuals repent for past sins and

draw closer to Allah through increased prayers, Quranic recitation and acts of worship. It provides the Muslims with a fresh spiritual start.

(ii) Self Control and discipline

By resisting physical temptations, individuals learn to control their desires and impulses, fostering patience and resilience in their daily lives.

(iii) Improved Health.

Fasting allows the body to detoxify, regulate metabolism and develop healthier eating habits when practiced correctly. It also promotes mindfulness ~~about~~ consumption and teaches avoidance of over consumption.

(iv) Mental Clarity

The focus on spiritual activities and reduced distractions during Ramadan often leads to a greater sense of peace and mental clarity.

4. Impacts of Fasting on Society

(i) Social Unity

Fasting fosters a sense of community as Muslims across the globe observe this practice simultaneously. The collective breaking of the fast (Iftar) and congregational prayers strengthen the bonds among individuals.

ii) Charity and Generosity Promoted

The holy month emphasizes giving, with Muslims encouraged to offer Zakat (compulsory almsgiving) and voluntary charity to support the needy. This reduces economic disparities and promotes social justice.

iii) Reduction in Harmful Behaviors

Fasting encourages ethical conduct, discouraging negative actions such as stealing, lying or hurting others. A society observing these principles experiences improved moral standards.

iv) Promotion of Empathy

Experiencing hunger and thirst firsthand makes individuals more compassionate towards those living in poverty, inspiring long-term commitment to charitable efforts and community service.

5. Conclusion

Fasting in Islam is a holistic act of worship that balances personal development with societal betterment. It strengthens an individual's faith, builds discipline, and promotes gratitude while also fostering social unity, reducing inequality, and enhancing moral behavior in society. By fulfilling this sacred duty, Muslims uphold a tradition that embodies the core values of faith, compassion and responsibility.

QUESTION NO. 8

i) The Concept of Equality in Islam

Equality in Islam is a fundamental principle emphasizing that all human beings are equal in the sight of Allah, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality or social status.

The Quran says:

"Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you."

[Surah Al-Hujrat: 49:13]

a) Universal Brotherhood

Islam promotes the concept of global brotherhood uniting Muslims under the shared identity of being servants of Allah. This is symbolized during Hajj, where people of all backgrounds wear similar clothing and stand together in worship.

b) Gender Equality

Islam grants men and women equal spiritual rights and responsibilities. Both are judged by their actions and righteousness, not their gender.

c) Social Justice

Economic, political, and legal systems in Islam are designed to ensure justice for all, without discrimination. The rich and poor, leaders and followers, are subject to the same laws.

By emphasizing equality, Islam eradicates societal hierarchies based on race, wealth, or lineage promoting fairness and unity

ii) The Beauty Islamic Culture

Islamic culture is characterized by its rich heritage, profound spirituality, and emphasis on universal values. It encompasses art, architecture, traditions and daily practices deeply rooted in Islamic teachings

a) Spiritual depth

At its core, Islamic culture emphasizes devotion to Allah, reflected in prayers, fasting, and acts of charity, creating a harmonious connection between faith and daily life.

b) Inclusivity and Tolerance

Historically, Islamic civilizations celebrated cultural diversity, allowing people of different faiths to coexist

c) Modesty and Simplicity

Islamic culture emphasizes modesty in behaviour, dress and lifestyle, reflecting humility and inner peace

d) Family & Community

Islam places high value on family bonds and respect