

Five Distinguishing Features of Fasting

"O you who believe, *Fasting* has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may attain *Taqwa* (piety)" [Qur'aan 2:183]

*"Every good deed of the son of Adam is multiplied in reward from ten to seven hundred times. Allah, the Most High, said: except for **fasting**, for it is for **Me** and I will grant the reward for it. He (the fasting person) leaves his passion and his food for **My sake**. The fasting person has **two moments of happiness**: One moment when he ends his fasting for the day (Iftar) and the other when he meets his Lord (on Yawn al-Qiyaamah). And the **smell** which issues from the **mouth of the fasting person** is more pleasant to Allah than the fragrance of musk. Fasting is a **shield**. So, if it is the day of fasting for anyone of you, then do not use *obscene speech* nor *raise your voice* (with foolishness). Then, if anyone curses at him or tries to fight with him, he should say: *I am fasting.*" [al-Bukhaaree and Muslim]*

The Reward for Fasting Is Unlimited

One: The *reward* for good deeds is *multiplied* as is known - by ten, up to seven hundred times over (for every good deed) - *with the exception of fasting*. Verily, Allah the Most High, says: *...I will grant the reward for it...*Hence there is no specific (limited) number by which its reward is multiplied. Allah, the Generous the Charitable, gives in accordance with His Generosity. This is an indication that *His reward is without limitation or accounting*. And Allah, the Most High, is the Most Generous and Most Charitable of those who give.

And this is similar to the saying of Allah concerning **patience**: *Verily, the patient ones are given their reward in full - without account (limitation)*. And fasting is a type of patience. It entails being patient with the *pangs of hunger and thirst*. As well, it involves patience and perseverance in *obedience to Allah* in adhering to (the fast), in addition to being patient in refraining from *disobedience to Allah*. In this way, fasting combines all of the *three types* of patience.

Allah Said: 'Fasting Is for Me'

Two: Allah has *distinguished* fasting as being for **Himself**. This is an **honor** for fasting, and a special **merit** for it to the exclusion of other deeds. The reason for this is that fasting is a matter that is a *secret* between the person and his Lord. No one else knows about it. Hence, it is the

closest of all deeds to being sincerely (for Allah alone). For this reason, Allah the Most High said – in the Hadeeth Qudsee-: ...He (the fasting person) leaves his passion and his food for My sake...

Two Occasions of Happiness

Three: The fasting person has *two occasions of happiness*: One **at the time of breaking his fast**, after *completing* his fast and *perfecting* this great act of worship. And this is one of the greatest favors that Allah has bestowed upon him. Likewise, he is happy on this occasion due to partaking in that which Allah has allowed of food, drink and marital relations that were prohibited during the hours of fasting. And this is also a favor of Allah upon the fasting person.

The second occasion of happiness for the fasting person is **at the time of meeting his Lord**, due to the *reward* for fasting which he will receive; and it will not be limited to a certain amount, as mentioned previously. He will find this reward stored up for him at the time when he is most in need – 'A Day (the Day of Judgement) in which neither wealth nor children will benefit anyone, except the one who comes to Allah with a pure heart.' [Qur'aan, 26:89]

The Breath of the Fasting Person...

Four: The **smell** that issues from the **mouth** of the **fasting person** is more **pleasant to Allah** than the *smell of musk* (sweet smelling fragrance). This refers to the smell of the mouth of the fasting person - *due to his fasting*, due to the absence of food and drink in the person's stomach. Since this *change* in the smell of the person's mouth is *the result of an act of obedience to Allah*, its reward is that it is made to be more pleasant to Allah than the pleasant fragrance of musk; *even though its smell is detestable to the people*.

Fasting Is a Shield

Five: *Fasting is a shield*. This means that it **protects** the fasting person from *useless and foul speech and sinful behavior*. For this reason, it is mentioned in the Hadeeth Qudsee: 'If one of you is fasting, he should not use **obscenity** that day nor **shout** or **argue** (with anyone); and if someone speaks to him abusively or wants to fight with him, he should say: 'Verily, I am fasting.' All of the above mentioned behavior is *especially* prohibited while fasting, though it is also prohibited to the non-fasting person.