

Spirit of Fast

“O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you.... That ye may (learn) self-restraint(Qur’an, 2: 183).

Fast like living things, has a body and a soul. The required abstinence from food, water, sexual relations etc. Is the body of the fast: “piety” is its soul. If we are not striving to refine our character by fast, our will be a body without soul. Fast cleans our body from impurities. Likewise, it must purify our hearts and minds from all impure thoughts improper desires and undisciplined sensations.

The Holy Prophet saw a woman, who was fasting on that day (not in Ramadhan), abusing her girl-servant. The Prophet admonished her and told her to break her fast. The woman protested: “But I am fasting today”. The Holy Prophet said: “But was not your fast broken by the abuses you were hurling upon that poor girl?”

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq has said: “Your fast day should not be like other ordinary days. When you fast, all your sense – eyes, ears, tongue, hands and feet – must fast with you.” How?

Eyes: Keep your eyes off unlawful things and objects; spend this most precious gift of God in good cause and pious acts and read Qur’an and Do’as.

Ears: Abstain from hearing unlawful gossip, lies, false statements, music and obscene topics. Pay your attention towards sermons and topics of learning etc.

Tongue: Do not tell lies or useless tales; do not spread rumors or, damaging gossips about other persons; keep aloof from falsity. Use the power of speech in spreading the word of God; in creating goodwill in the society.

Hand: Do not inflict injury upon others by your actions; instead strive to help them as far as you can.

Feet: Do not go towards forbidden places, like bars and cinemas. Do not run between people creating a strife. Go towards those places, where God is remembered; and your movements should be to bring people together.

And above all, your heart and mind must be with you in fasting. Because fast in its real sense, will not be complete unless your thoughts, your emotions, your actions – in short, all aspects of our life – become pure, clean and free from blemish.

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