

MIRACLE OF RAMADHAN AND FASTING

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1.0 Introduction

Ramadhan is the greatest month and the best time for self-regulation and self-training. There are numerous benefits to those who are fasting during *Ramadhan* either from spiritual or physical perspectives. The positive effects of *Ramadhan* and fasting have not only been mentioned in *al Quran* and *al Sunnah* but also by many scientific researches. In fact, there are few institutions that were established to promote fasting as a way to prevent and heal diseases such as "Fasting Center International Incorporation" in the United States of America. This brief article attempts to highlight several interesting findings about *Ramadhan* and Fasting effects from 4 different perspectives namely economic, health and sciences, psychological and social point of views.

2.0 Miracle of *Ramadhan* and Fasting

2.1 Economic Perspective

According to the study undertaken by the University of New Hampshire led by Iranian-born finance Professor Ahmad Etebari, stocks in largely Muslim nations outperform during the month of *Ramadhan*. It is found that on average, stock returns are 9 times higher during *Ramadhan* than other times of year. The phenomenon is called the "Ramadan Effect."

Between the stock markets of Bahrain, Oman, Turkey, Kuwait, the UAE, Qatar, Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Malaysia, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, the report identified a trend of considerably higher returns during *Ramadhan* as compared to other months. The study found that the average returns for the 15 countries from the database of 1989 to 2007 were 38% during the month of *Ramadhan* as compared to an average of 4.3% during ordinary months. The research reveals that that the social cohesion and institutional feelings attains during *Ramadhan* help influence the investments behavior.

2.2 Health and Science Perspective

In 1994 the first International Congress on "Health and *Ramadhan*", held in Casablanca, entered 50 research papers from all over the world from Muslim and non-Muslim researchers who have done extensive studies on the medical ethics

of fasting. The congress made recommendations that *Ramadhan* fasting is an ideal method for treatment of mild to moderate, stable, non-insulin diabetes, obesity and essential hypertension.

Allan Cott, in his famous book “Why Fast”, states that fasting has the effects to clean out the body, to lower blood pressure and cholesterol and to let the body health itself. Another interesting finding refers to the ability of fasting habit to slow the aging process based on a research conducted by Dr. Yuri Nikolayev, Moscow scientist and dietician/nutritionist. This finding is supported with another research by Dr. Alvenia M. Fulton, by which his experiment indicates that fasting is the ladies best beautifier, brings grace charm and poise, normalizes female functions and reshapes the body contour.

2.3 Psychological Perspective

As regard to psychological point of view, it is empirically proven that fasting can bring positive effects to psychological and mental health. At this point, Dr. Sabah al-Baqir from Medical Faculty of University of King Saud reveals that fasting will generate specific hormone which may relieve tension and to make a person to feel better physically and mentally.

2.4 Social Perspective

2.4.1 Crime Rate

I believe that this is phenomenal in many jurisdictions all over the world. According to the statistic produced by the Iranian Police Department, the Iran's overall crime rate and murder rate have declined during the holy month of *Ramadhan*. There has been a 32% decline in homicides and the overall crime rate has dropped significantly. It is worth noting that the homicide rate in Iran is six murders per day and Iran stands 50th in the world in the homicide rate.

2.4.2 Family Institutions

Ramadhan is the best time for family and social gathering. The Maktoob Research in UAE conducted a survey on the opinions of 6,128 adult Muslims from across the Arab world about *Ramadhan*. The survey reveals that 96% of Muslim Arabs observing the fasting month and it is also found that 86% of those surveyed tend to observe *iftar* as a good opportunity for family gatherings. This finding indirectly indicates that fasting during *Ramadhan* can strengthen the family institutions and community as well as provide best opportunity for the unity of the *ummah*.

2.4.3 Generosity

Considering to numerous *hadith* on the rewards and benefits of *sadaqah* (charity) during the month of *Ramadhan*, it is observed that the willingness and efforts for charity and donation are significantly increased. According to Lung Transplantation Research Center, National Research Institute of TB and Lung Disease, Tehran, Iran, organ shortage is the most significant problem that they face for the activities of transplantation systems. In this regard, they carried out a survey on the Muslims' behavior during holy month of Ramadan pertaining to organs donation in Iran. Interestingly, the survey reveals that the number of applications for organs donation in *Ramadhan* increase to 154% as compared to other months with a total of 11528 organ donations as opposed to 4538 applications in the previous month. This phenomenon indicates that *Ramadhan* seems to provide a great opportunity to promote organs donation across the Muslim world.

3.0 Conclusion

Ramadhan is the greatest and best month of the year. It is one of the blessings of *Allah* to the Muslim that He enables us to fast in *Ramadhan*. The blessed month of *Ramadhan* and *ibadah* of fasting not only offer us with great rewards from *Allah* but also with so many benefits either from economic or health and science, psychological or social perspectives. With this priceless opportunity from *Allah* to us, it is hoped that we can keep the spirit of month of *Ramadhan* not only during this blessed month but at all times and throughout the year. *InsyaAllah*.