

healing are removed. **Health is the normal state.** Most chronic disease is the inevitable consequence of living a life-style that places disease-causing stressors on the human organism. Fasting gives the body an interlude without those stressors so that it can speedily repair or accomplish healing that could not otherwise occur in the feeding state.” “The job of fasting is to supply the body with the ideal environment to accomplish its work of healing.” “The body’s wondrous ability to autolyze (or self-digest) and destroy needless tissue such as fat, tumors, blood vessel plaque, and other nonessential and diseased tissues, while conserving essential tissues, gives the fast the ability to restore physiologic youth to the system. By removing or lessening the burden of diseased tissue, including the fatty tissue narrowing the blood vessels, fasting increases the blood flow and subsequent oxygenation and nutrient delivery to vital organs throughout the body.” From Joel Fuhrman, M.D., in *Fasting and Eating for Health*

“Man is the only ‘animal’ who persists in eating when he is sick, even though he may have no appetite and food makes him nauseous.” “Fasting is a calming experience. It is restful. It relieves anxiety and tension. It is rarely depressing and it is often downright exhilarating.” Alan Cott, M.D., from *Fasting: The Ultimate Diet*

“Fasting is the strongest appeal to the human being’s natural powers of healing & self-rejuvenation, on both a spiritual and corporeal level.” Heinz Fahrner, M.D.

“I often observe in the fasting participants that by four days of fasting, concentration seems to improve, creative thinking expands, depression lifts, insomnia stops, anxieties fade, the mind becomes more tranquil and a natural joy begins to appear. It is my hypothesis that when the physical toxins are cleared from the brain cells, mind-brain function automatically and significantly improves and spiritual capacities expands.” Gabriel Cousins, M.D.

“Although beginning my practice in **fog-covered medical superstition**, I came to the conclusion that **only nature can practice medicine.**” “I contend that during illness feeding becomes a burden to the sick. It uses energy that otherwise would be used to fight the illness.” Dr. E. Dewey

“I must say in all seriousness that fasting

when combined with a properly selected diet is the nearest approach to a ‘cure-all’ that is possible to conceive – profoundly simple & simply profound!” John Tilden, M.D.

“Religious ascetics, who led their lives abstaining from food, came to the conclusion that fasting improved not only their spiritual state, but also their physical condition, and through fasting many diseases could be cured.” Dr. Inamura Motoo

“I assert that fasting is the most efficient means for correcting any disease.” Adolph Mayer, M.D., from his book *Fast Cures – Wondercures*

“Fasting creates a condition of low concentration of toxic wastes in the circulatory system. This is sensed by the plasma membrane of each cell and each cell will then let go of its load of toxic wastes.” Ron Kennedy, M.D.

**Other Health Professionals:** “Fasting is like being a gifted sculptor who knows how to take areas of fatness & thinness and give them proper form.” Otto Buchinger, Jr.

“The practice of fasting tacitly acknowledges the fact that ours is a self-healing organism. Healing occurs naturally if it is allowed; improper or excessive food simply thwarts the natural ongoing healing processes. Forcing a sick person to eat ‘to keep up their strength’ overlooks the fact that digestion uses up strength too: more often than not, the available strength is better used for healing the problem at hand than for digestion.” Annemarie Colbin, from *Food & Healing*

“I do not think it is possible to over-emphasize the fact that the physical sensations of **fasting** are, for the most part, far more pleasurable than the real or illusory delights of **feasting.**” Herbert Shelton, in *Fasting Can Save Your Life*

“We must restore fasting to the place it occupied in an ancient hierarchy of values ‘above medicine’. We must rediscover it & restore it to honour because it is a necessity.” Buchinger Clinics

“The skin becomes more youthful during fasting. The eyes clear up & become brighter. One looks younger. The visible rejuvenation in the skin is matched by manifest evidences of similar but invisible rejuvenescence throughout the body.” Herbert Shelton, water fasting overseer

“When we fast, energy is freed for a thorough housecleaning of the system. The body

becomes lighter, more flexible; the mind becomes clearer & more creative. Greater intuitive powers may develop & deep spiritual insights may be experienced after a period of time. A feeling of well-being arises when the energy is freed in this way – problems suddenly become solutions and ideas flow from nowhere.” Kripalu Center for Holistic Health, from their book *The Self-Health Guide*

**Religious Writers & Figures:** “Fasting is a natural method of healing. When animals or savages are sick, they fast.” P. Yogananda

“Fast because it is good for you...[it can be an] exercise to get the body in shape to be alive to itself. This process frees the self to be more sensitive to the Creation, to ourselves, and to our histories.” *Christian Century* magazine

“Fasting is the soul’s nourishment, it reins in language and seals one’s lips, it tames desire and calms the choleric temperament. It awakens consciousness, renders the body docile, dispels nightly dreams, cures headaches & strengthens the eyes.” John Chrysostom, one of the early founders of the Christian Church

“Seek the angel of fresh air, the angel of water, the angel of sunlight, and the angel of the earth, and invite them to stay with you throughout the fast!” From the writings of the Essenes

“When you fast, do **not** look dismal, like the hypocrites.” “Be honest, be sincere. Fast for honest and truthful purposes.” Book of Matthew

The spiritual self is latent within us, and the **purpose** of fasting is to awaken it into actualized manifestation. Piety is **not** a goal but a means to attain through the purest peace of mind the highest culture. *Learn piety & righteousness.* Righteousness is good character. Through **good conduct**, the believer attains the status of one who frequently fasts & prays at night.

#### AND WHEN THE FASTING IS OVER...WHAT TO EAT?



#### FASTING IS THE GREATEST REMEDY...

## The Prescription

#### THE PHYSICIAN WITHIN

Father Louis, better known to the world by his given name, Thomas Merton (1915–1968), in a letter to a Muslim, reaffirms the **harmony of perspective** he feels between Christianity & Islam, asking when Ramadan is to be that year (1965).

He said: “**I would like to join spiritually with the Muslim world in this act of love, faith & obedience toward Him Whose greatness & mercy surround us at all times, and Whose wisdom guides & protects us even though, in the godlessness of the world of men, we are constantly on the edge of disaster. We must humble ourselves truly and seek to see our state, and strive to pray with greater purity & simplicity of heart.**”

Thirty days of fasting represents a period of great soul growth, through **overcoming.** To conquer those **subtle antagonistic forces** which are typified by the devil, is to gain strength. Everyone must meet, and finally **vanquish their own adversary.**

# PRAYER BRINGS US HALFWAY TO GOD... FASTING TAKES US TO THE GATEWAY OF HEAVEN

**The purpose of fasting is to loosen to some degree the ties which bind us to the world of material things & our surroundings as a whole, in order that we may concentrate all our spiritual powers upon the unseen & eternal things.**

Fasting is a lesson in empathy. Those of us who have access to clean drinking water & food on a regular basis should be thankful to God. However, there are great numbers of people in the world who do **not**. When we choose not to drink or eat for a whole day, we get a glimpse of what it is like to have to travel many miles for a drink. We learn what it is like to move around throughout the day with a gnawing hunger in the pit of our stomach. This seed of empathy then has a chance to grow, and become “compassion.” The word “compassion” in English comes from two words, “com-“ meaning “with”, and “-passion,” meaning “to suffer.” Thus, when you suffer with someone, you naturally will develop compassion for that person. Having compassion for the poor & needy of the world is a first, vital step in our faith journey, **but it certainly doesn’t end there.**

Next, we must become generous givers, sharing with those in need out of our own God-given bounty. This concept is the basis of one of the pillars of Islam, almsgiving, or the Zakah. It is a duty of every Muslim prosperous enough to have accumulated & retained wealth in the form of savings over the course of the year to give 2.5% of wealth to the poor. The giving of Zakah often occurs during the month of Ramadan.

Christians also believe that charitable giving is an important part of living out faith. The writer of

James in the New Testament said, “If a brother or sister is naked & lacks daily food, and one of you **says to them**, ‘Go in peace; keep warm & eat your fill,’ and **yet you do not supply** their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So **faith** by itself, if it has no works, **is dead.**” It is clear that people of faith have an obligation, **laid out by God**, to give to those in need.

But if we stop there, if we only concern ourselves with feeling empathy & compassion, and with giving a few dollars to the poor, we have **failed** to be the people God calls us to be. There is another level of engagement with the poor & needy which God demands. That third level is the **pursuit of justice** on behalf of the poor. We must ask ourselves, “Why are there people who still do not have access to clean drinking water? Why are some nations still mired in poverty? Why is most of the world’s wealth in the hands of just a few individuals & corporations?”

These are **questions of justice**, and they are increasingly a matter which **people of faith must address**. If we do not address the root causes of poverty, then we may likely find ourselves feeding the same poor people over & over again, never actually reaching out to bring them up to the level of dignity & self-sustenance which they so desperately desire. To remain in a constant state of dependence upon the charitable acts of others for one’s basic needs would be **a debilitating, degrading existence.**

Justice is the **hardest** kind of work to do. People are easily moved to feel compassion, and they can also be very generous when it comes to giving to charitable causes. When you ask someone to change the way they do business, however, then you begin to step on toes. When you begin to point out the **injustices** and **inequities** in laws, then you begin to step on toes. When you expose the **selfishness & greed** that lies at the heart of the Muslim business community, then you begin to step on toes.

When you fast, try to move through all three stages of concern for the poor – from **compassion** to **giving** to **justice**. This year, let Ramadan force you into deeper levels of each stage. **Step on the toes of the greedy & the uncompassionate ...harder!!!**

Fasting is a wonderful antidote for our usual over-indulgences. There’s nothing wrong with enjoying our food, but **excess food** on a continuous basis does create a burden for the body. When it must

handle more than is comfortable and appropriate for it, it will suffer.

During fasting, we rest our system from the constant onslaught of foodstuff. We usually think of food as giving us energy, so it can be a new way of thinking to understand how the food we eat actually requires energy. Digesting, assimilating & metabolizing – these activities require a great deal of energy. It is estimated that 65% of the body’s energy must be directed to the digestive organs after a heavy meal. Free up this energy and it can be diverted to healing & recuperation. It can detox & repair cells, tissues & organs, eliminating foreign toxins as well as the natural metabolic wastes (which are also toxins) produced even by our healthy cells.

Physically, fasting is of high benefit to the chronic degenerative diseases that are plaguing our population & that modern medicine is at a loss to cure.

One of the benefits of fasting is that it promotes we take our attention inward, that we listen, become quiet. And that quiet quality time, you with you, will also allow, if you are willing, a greater sense of kinship with your Soul.

Without the continual addition of heavy foods into the system, the body takes on a lighter, less dense, feeling. This helps to create a subtle separation from ordinary physical reality and all its worldly things, and instead you begin to sense the presence and power of things beyond this world.

Meditation or prayer become clearer, higher states easier to attain, messages or guidance from higher realms clearer. Knowing you are loved and supported every minute of your day and of your life is something you begin to intuitively feel. Recognition that there truly is a higher plan or purpose will become more real as it is intuitively experienced rather than just intellectually understood.

Let us peruse some of the brilliant thoughts through the centuries of those who came to know of the benefits of fasting. God says: “...**if you only knew.**”

“Fasting is the greatest remedy – the physician within.” Philippus Paracelsus, one of the three fathers of Western medicine

“Instead of using medicine, better fast today.” Plutarch, a Greek biographer & moralist

“The best of all medicines is resting & fasting.” Benjamin Franklin

“Everyone has a doctor in them; we just have to help them in their work. The natural healing force within each one of us is the **greatest force** in getting well. To eat when you are sick, is to feed your sickness.” Hippocrates, father of Western medicine.

“A little starvation can really do more for the average sick person than can the best medicines & the best doctors.” Mark Twain, in My Debut As a Literary Person

“Nature heals, the doctor helps!” Paracelsus, writing about activating the “doctor inside”, or our own healing nature.

“Every fool can fast, but only the wise man knows how to break a fast.” G.B. Shaw, writer. He said do not overeat after a fast.

“Humans live on one-quarter of what they eat; on the other three-quarters **lives their doctor.**” Egyptian pyramid inscription, 3800 B.C.

**Modern M.Ds:** “I believe that fasting is the ‘missing link’ in the Western diet.” “From a medical point of view, I believe that fasting is not utilized often enough.” “Fasting is one of the best overall healing methods because it can be applied to so many conditions & people.” “Fasting is the single greatest natural healing therapy. It is nature’s ancient, universal ‘remedy’ for many problems. Animals instinctively fast when ill.” From Elson Haas, M.D. in Staying Healthy with Nutrition

“Due to the effects of fasting, a fast can help you heal with greater speed; cleanse your liver, kidneys, and colon; purify your blood; help you lose excess weight & water; flush out toxins; clear the eyes & tongue; and cleanse the breath.” J. F. Balch, Prescription for Nutritional Healing

“Therapeutic [water] fasting accelerates the healing process & allows the body to recover from serious disease in a dramatically short period of time.” “Fasting, **combined with nutritional competence**, removes the most significant causes of disease.” “Therapeutic fasting is not a mystical or magical cure. It works because the body has within it the capacity to heal when the obstacles to

Zamals Software Co.; 6 Dowding St. Kitty  
shamal2007@yahoo.com; Brochures on [zamalsgy.com](http://zamalsgy.com)  
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