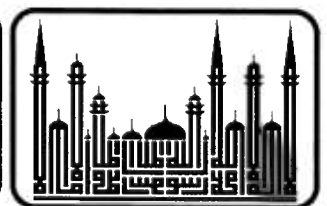


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Perspectives



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Editorial

The recent media coverage of the improper actions of some Internal Revenue Service agents raises questions about our tax system. All taxation systems enacted by a state are marked by tension between the government and citizens. Even when the role of taxation is very well understood, there is a perennial conflict of interest between the tax giver and the recipient. The question "Why should I support social programs?" continues popping up in different forms and debates. In the midst of the hype about IRS and taxation, it is appropriate to reflect on the Islamic institution of *Zakah*, which accomplishes what taxation was intended to accomplish. Specifically, the following facts can be pointed out.

- *Zakah* deals with the fiscal policies of the state as it affects its moral climate - a vehicle for social change, a source of its continuity, and a device for the safeguard of its ideological and moral frontiers.
- The Qur'an elevated *zakah* to the level of *salah* (a worship exclusively for Allah) and gives both an equation which, by all counts, remains unique in the Qur'anic diction.
- The way the *zakah* is collected, with no trace of oppression, is important. The individual is allowed to separate his/her goods for *zakah* on his/her own. The collector is restricted to taking whatever is given to him. The process then culminates in the

see *Editorial* / page 6

In This Issue:

- *Belief and righteous deeds* Page 2
- *Goals/benefits of Fasting*.Page7
- *Prophetic supplications*...Page 7
- *Important dates*.....Page 7

New Multimedia Software for Learning Arabic

The first (beginners) level of course-ware series for learning Arabic has been released by **Sakhr Software Company** in Egypt, intermediate and advanced levels will be released later. Four versions of the program are available, each providing explanations in a different language: English, French, Malaysian, and Turkish. The program provides an interactive tour that covers the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The program includes ten lessons, each divided into three main parts; a collection of verses from the Qur'an to teach Classical Arabic; vocabulary, games, a keyboard tutor; script families, dictionary, slide show and a guide to the courseware. The program is on a CD-ROM, Works on windows 3.1, 3.11, or 95, and can be obtained from **Digitek International Inc., 7631 Leesburg Pike, Suite B, Falls Church, VA 22043, Tel. (800)33-SAKHR.** ☐

Reflections

Dr. Ahmed K. Noor

Belief and Righteous Deeds

الإيمان و العمل الصالح

Islam has put a great deal of emphasis on demonstrating the belief through righteous deeds. Success and salvation can only be achieved through sincere and faithful belief, which is manifested by righteous deeds and conduct. The three words *A' amano* (believed), *A' amelo* (did), *Al' salihat* (righteous deeds) appear together, in exactly this order, 50 times in the Qur'an. Derivatives of the three words appear together in twenty other verses. The subjects of *Iman* (belief) and righteous deeds have been mentioned in numerous sayings of the Prophet (PBUH), and are the focus of the present article. Specifically, the characteristics and implications of sincere belief; the relationship between faith and righteous deeds and; the result and rewards of having true faith and performing righteous deeds.

Characteristics & Implications of Sincere Belief

The word *Iman* (faith) refers to the heartfelt belief in six facts (articles or pillars of faith), namely Allah (SWT); His angels; His Books; His messengers; the final day; and the divine measures, good and bad. (see *perspectives* Vol. 2, No.6). Although profession of faith brings one into the fold of Islam, it does not satisfy the demands required by a true Muslim. The Qur'an distinguishes between verbal affirmation of faith and true faith.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ
وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ .
(سورة النساء - من آية ١٣٦)

"O ye who believe! Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and the scripture

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ .
(سورة النحل - آية ٩٧)

"Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has faith, verily to him (her) will We give a new life, a life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions." (Qur'an 16:97)

which He has sent to His Messenger and the Scripture which He sent to those before (him)." (Qur'an 4:136)
The faith which Islam regards as true faith is characterized by (see the figure on page 3):

- Entertaining no doubt in the belief in Allah and His Messenger, and exerting one's utmost in the way of Allah.



"For those who believe and work righteousness is (every) blessedness, and a beautiful place of (final) return." (Qur'an 13:29)

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ
وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَزَالُوا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ
وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ .
(سورة الحجرات - من آية ١٥)

"Only those are believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their persons in the cause of Allah." (Qur'an 49:15)

- Adoring Allah most ardently - preferring His will to one's own will or that of others; cherishing His love so dearly as to be ready to sacrifice all other affections for its sake.

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ .
(سورة البقرة - من آية ١٦٥)

"Those who have believed are overflowing in their love for Allah." (Qur'an 2:165)

- Standing steadfast by faith.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا .
(سورة فصلت - من آية ٣٠)

"Those who say: Allah is our Lord, and then stood steadfast by it." (Qur'an 41:30)

- Surrendering, with entire submission, to all the decisions of Allah and His apostle.

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَىٰ
اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ
مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ .
(سورة الأحزاب - من آية ٣٦)

"It is not fitting for a believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His messenger, to have any option about their decision." (Qur'an 33:36)

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحْكَمُوا فِيمَا
شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ
حِزْبًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا .
(سورة النساء - آية ٦٥)

"But no (O Prophet), by your Lord, they can never become believers until they accept you as judge for the decision of the disputes between them, and then surrender to your decision with entire submission without the least resentment in their hearts." (Qur'an 4:65)

- Feeling a tremor in one's heart

when Allah is mentioned; strengthening one's faith when hearing His revelations; and putting all one's trust in Him.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ
وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ
زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ .
(سورة الأنفال - آية ٢)

"True believers are those whose hearts tremble with awe, whenever Allah is mentioned to them, and when they hear His revelations rehearsed, find their faith strengthened, and put (all) their trust in their Lord." (Qur'an 8:2)

To believe sincerely and seriously in Islam, one should surrender himself/herself to the book of Allah and to the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH); mold his/her thoughts, tastes, likes, attitude and conduct in accordance with the basic principles of Islam; and establish friendship and enmity accordingly. Instead of changing the teachings, one changes himself/herself in accordance with the commands of Allah and the instructions of the Prophet (PBUH), and accepts them for his/her guidance. If a believer hesitates to accept these, his/her faith begins to decrease and fade away.

Relationship Between Faith and Righteous Deeds

The Arabic word *Salihat* (righteous deeds) encompasses all kinds of virtuous and good deeds (including obligatory and optional acts of worship, kind and courteous treatment of others, and secular activities aimed at pleasing Allah). However, according to the Qur'an, no act can be a good act unless it is based on faith and is performed in obedience to the guidance given by Allah and His messenger. That is why the exhortation to perform righteous deeds is preceded everywhere in the Qur'an by faith. Nowhere in the Qur'an has a deed without faith been called a good deed, nor any reward promised for a deed performed without faith.

The relationship between faith and righteous deed is similar to that of the seed and the tree. Unless the seed is sown in the soil, no tree can grow out of it.

Qur'anic Verses Associating Belief and Righteous Deeds with other Actions

There are five Qur'anic verses which associate belief and righteous deeds with the following actions (see the figure on page 4):

- Establishing prayers and paying *Zakah* (Qur'an 2: 277).

- Dedicating oneself exclusively to Allah (Qur'an 11:23).
- Remembering Allah much, defending oneself and Islam when treated unjustly (and not being vindictive) (Qur'an 26:227).
- Accepting that which has been sent down to Mohammad (PBUH) (Qur'an 47:2).
- Exhorting one another to truth, and to patience (Qur'an 103:3).

Rewards for those who Believe and do Righteous Deeds

Several verses in the Qur'an list the rewards, bliss, and heavenly pleasures promised to the sincere believer who do deeds of righteousness, including (see the figure on page 5):

1. Guiding them and leading them away from darkness into light. Their faith is the cause, as well as the instrument of their guidance - the kindly light which leads them, as well as the joy which fills their souls.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُم بِإِيمَانِهِمْ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ
الْأَنْهَارُ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ .
(سورة يونس - آية ٩)

"Those who believe and work righteousness - their Lord will guide them because of their faith: beneath

Characteristics of Sincere and Faithful Belief (True Faith)

- Entertaining no doubt in the belief in Allah or His messenger.
- Exerting one's utmost in the way of Allah.
(Qur'an 49:15)

Adoring Allah most ardently:

- * Preferring His will to one's own will.
- * cherishing His love so dearly as to sacrifice all other affections for its sake.

Standing Steadfast
by faith.
(Qur'an 41:30)

Surrendering with
submission to all the
decisions of Allah
and His apostle.
(Qur'an 33:36,4:65)

Feeling a tremor in
one's heart when
Allah is mentioned;
strengthening one's
faith when hearing
His revelations; and
putting all trust in
Him.
(Qur'an 8:2)

them will flow rivers in gardens of bliss.” (Qur’an 10:9)

لِيُخْرِجَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ .
(سورة الطلاق - من آية ١١)

“That he (the Prophet PBUH) may lead forth those who believe and do righteous deeds from the depths of darkness into light.” (Qur’an 65:11)

2. Meaningful and pure life in the present world; and rewards, not according to their merit, but according to the very best of their actions (Qur’an 16:97)

3. Increase in their goodness, every time they do a little good. Every right impulse or aspiration is strengthened and leads to progressive spiritual advancement.

وَيَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ مِّن فَضْلِهِ .
(سورة الشورى - من آية ٢٦)

“And He listens to those who believe and do righteousness, and gives them increase of His bounty.”

(Qur’an 42:26)

4. Bestowing on them the love of Allah, and the love of fellow human beings, in this world and in the hereafter.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَانُ وُدًّا .
(سورة مريم - آية ٩٦)

“On those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, will (Allah) Most Gracious bestow love.” (Qur’an 19:96)

5. The following three things are promised by Allah (SWT) to those who have sound faith, obey Allah’s law, and have perfectly righteous conduct:

- they will inherit power and authority in the land, not for any selfish purposes of theirs, nor by way of favoritism, but in order that they maintain Allah’s law;
- the Religion of Right, which Allah has chosen for them, will be openly established, and will suppress all wrong and oppression; and
- they will live in peace and security, instead of having to suffer persecution, or leave their hearths and homes for the cause of Allah,

or be forced to practice the rites of their faith in secret.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا .

(سورة النور - من آية ٥٥)

“Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will of a surety, grant them in the land, inheritance (of power), as He granted it to those before them; that He will establish in authority their religion - the one He had chosen for them; and that He will change (their state) after the fear in which they (lived) to one of security and peace: They worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me.” (Qur’an 24:55)

6. Full recompense for their good deeds, and even more than their dues. This includes receiving generous spiritual and physical rizk (sustenance).

Qur’anic verses Associating Belief and Righteous Deeds with

آيات قرآنية قرنت الإيمان والعمل الصالح ب

Establishing prayers and paying Zakah.

إقامة الصلاة
وإيتاء الزكاة

(Qur’an 2:277)

Dedicating oneself exclusively to Allah.

الإخبات إلى الله

(Qur’an 11:23)

Remembering Allah much, defending oneself and Islam when treated unjustly (and not being vindictive)

ذكر الله كثيرا
والإنتصار بعد الظلم

(Qur’an 26:227)

Accepting that which has been sent down to M o h a m m a d (PBUH).

الإيمان بما نزل
على محمد

(Qur’an 47:2)

Exhorting one another to truth, and to patience.

التواصي بالحق والتواصي بالصبر

(Qur’an 103:3)

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
فَيُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرَهُمْ .
(سورة آل عمران - من آية ٥٧)

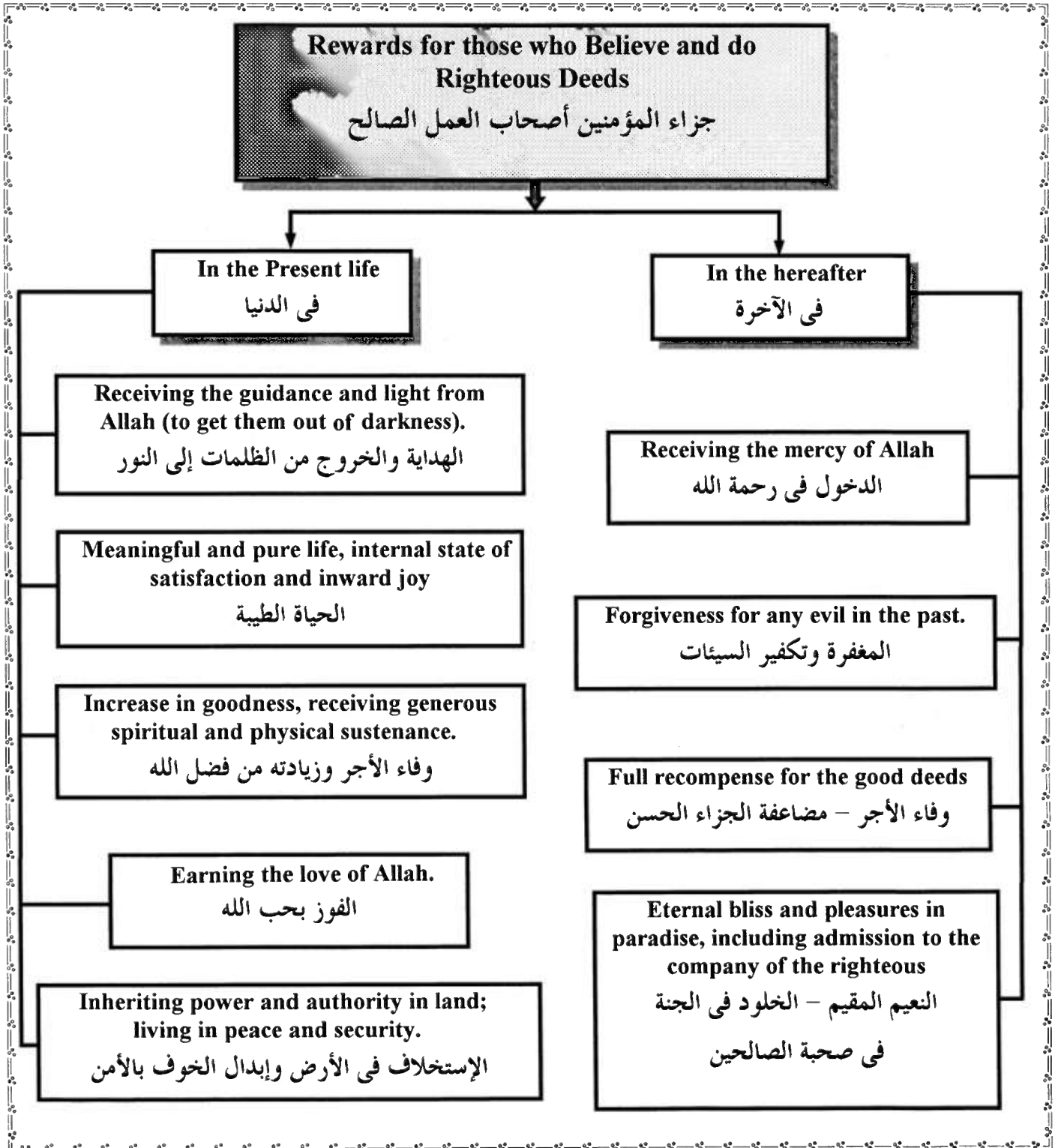
فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
فَيُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرَهُمْ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ مِّن فَضْلِهِ .
(سورة النساء - من آية ١٧٣)

لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ .
(سورة سبأ - آية ٤)

“As to those who believe and work
righteousness, Allah will pay them (in
full) their reward.” (Qur’an 3:57)

“But those who believe and do deeds of
righteousness, He will give their (due)
rewards - and more, out of His
bounty.” (Qur’an 4:173)

“That He may reward those who
believe and work deeds of
righteousness: for such is forgiveness



and a sustenance most generous.”

(Qur'an 34:4)

7. Receiving mercy of Allah, and admission to the company of the righteous - the ideal fellowship.

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
فَيُدْخِلُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ .

(سورة المجاثية - من آية ٣٠)

“As to those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them to His mercy.” (Qur'an 45:30)

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصَّالِحِينَ .

(سورة العنكبوت - آية ٩)

“And to those who believe and work righteous deeds - them shall We admit to the company of the righteous.”

(Qur'an 29:9)

8. Forgiveness for any evil in their past, purification of any tendencies towards evil which they may have inherited from that past and help to attain a future based on the best of what they have done, rather than on the average of their own merits.

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ
مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ .

(سورة فاطر - من آية ٧)

“For those who believe and work righteous deeds, is forgiveness and a magnificent reward.” (Qur'an 35:7)

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ
أَحْسَنَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ .

(سورة العنكبوت - آية ٧)

“Those who believe and work righteous deeds - from them shall We blot out all evil (that may be) in them, and We shall reward them according to the best of their deeds.” (Qur'an 29:7)

9. Receiving blessedness - an internal state of satisfaction, an inward joy in the present world, and a beautiful home of rest in the hereafter.

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
وَأَمَّنُوا بِمَا نَزَّلَ عَلَىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ
رَبِّهِمْ كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَأَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ .
(سورة محمد - آية ٢)

“But those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, and believe in the (revelation) sent down to Mohammad (PBUH) - for it is the truth from their Lord- He will remove from them their ills and improve their condition.”

(Qur'an 47:2)

10. Eternal bliss - symbolized by Gardens of Paradise with rivers flowing beneath, and receiving everything that they shall desire.

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
(سورة البقرة - من آية ٢٥)

“Give glad tidings to those who believe and work righteousness, that their portion is Gardens, beneath which rivers flow.”

(Qur'an 2:25)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا .
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا حِوَلًا .

(سورة الكهف - آيات ١٠٧ ، ١٠٨)

“As to those who believe and work righteous deeds, they have, for their entertainment, the Garden of Paradise wherein they shall dwell (for aye): no change will they wish for from them.”

(Qur'an 18:107,108)

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي
رَوْضَاتِ الْجَنَّاتِ لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ
رَبِّهِمْ .

(سورة الشورى - من آية ٢٢)

“Those who believe and work righteous deeds will be in the luxuriant meadows of the Gardens; They shall have, before their Lord, all that they wish for.”

(Qur'an 42:22)

Epilogue

Allah wants us to back up our faith with righteous deeds and firmness in action. When the person's deeds are not commensurate with his/her words, their

conduct is hateful in the sight of Allah
يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا
تَفْعَلُونَ . كَبِيرٌ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا
مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ .

(سورة الصف - آيات ٢ ، ٣)

“O ye who believe! why say ye that which ye do not? Grievously odious is it in the sight of Allah that ye say that which ye do not.” (Qur'an 61:2,3)

I pray to Almighty Allah to help us in strengthening our faith and in perfecting our conduct in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and to grant us all the rewards and bliss promised in the Qur'an. Ameen

Qur'anic Supplication

“My Lord! Inspire and bestow upon me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your favors which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds that will please You, and admit me by Your mercy among Your righteous servants.”

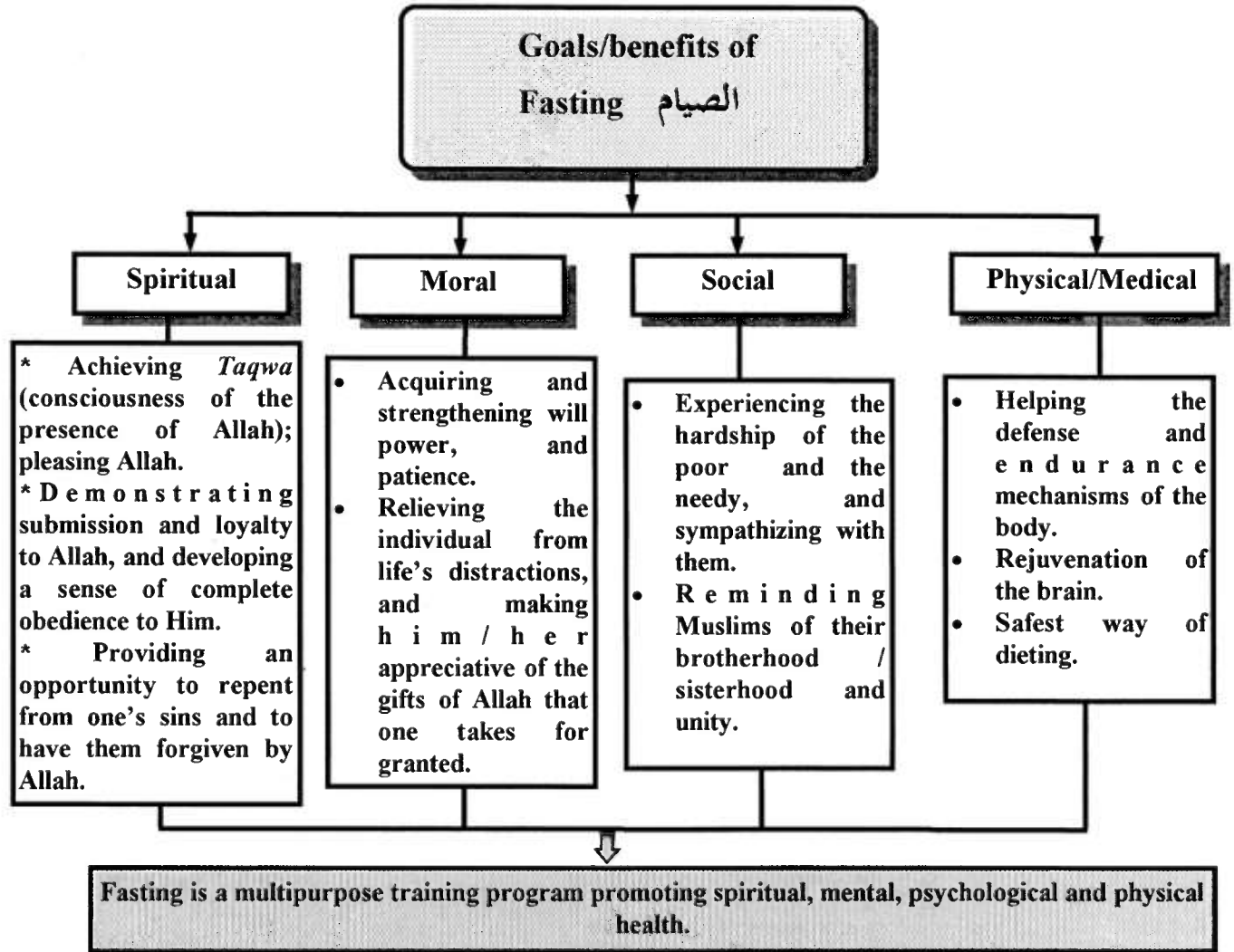
(Qur'an 27:19)

Continued from page 1
Editorial

collector making supplication for the giver that his/her wealth may increase. this imparts *zakah* with a character that goes far beyond that of a tax.

- *Zakah* provides an effective solution to the problem of poverty in the society, which Islam considers as a “social” sin. The solution is not merely through a shift in the ownership of goods, but through personal striving, aim and goodwill. While *zakah* brings about a just distribution of goods, it is part of an integral system which aims at proper upbringing, love and sympathy. So great is Islam's concern for the poor and the needy that the rewards for the fasting of Ramadan are not granted until *Eid* dues (*Zakat-ul Fitr*) are given.

I pray to Almighty Allah to grant us the guidance and the strength to perform our duty as Muslims and to share the bounties given to us with the community we live in. Ameen



Prophetic Supplications

At the Time of Braking the Fast

دعاء الإفطار

ذهب الظمأ ، وإبتلت
العروق وثبت الأجر إن
شاء الله

The thirst has gone, the glands are wet and, Allah willing, the reward is confirmed."

During the night of Power

في ليلة القدر

اللهم إنك عفو تحب
العفو فأعف عني
"O Allah, You are forgiving and You love forgiveness, so forgive me."

Happy Ramadan and Eid Mubarak

رمضان كريم وعيد مبارك

Important Dates

Ramadan 1, 1418 ...
.. December 31, 1997
Eid-ul-Fitr
... January 30, 1998
Eid-ul-Adha
..... April 7, 1998
Muharram 1, 1419
.... April 28, 1998
Ramadan 1
..... December 20, 1998
Eid-ul-Fitr
..... January 19, 1999
Eid-ul-Adha
.... March 28, 1999

Note: Please contact the National Organizations listed on the back page for confirmation about these dates.