



FASTING  
IN  
ISLAM

SHAYKH FADHLALLA HAERI



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## **Book Description**

**Fasting in Islam** is a comprehensive treatment of an essential practice of ritual worship in Islam. Starting from an overview of fasting in other religious traditions, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri takes us through the health benefits of fasting, the Qur'anic injunctions to fast, Prophetic hadith, the legal regulations according to both Sunni and Shi'ite schools of law, focusing finally on the transcendental aspects of this ancient practice.

## **About the Author**

Acknowledged as a master of self-knowledge and a spiritual philosopher, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri's role as a teacher grew naturally out of his own quest for self-fulfillment.

He travelled extensively on a spiritual quest which led to his eventual rediscovery of the pure and original Islamic heritage of his birth, and the discovery of the truth that reconciles the past with the present, the East with the West, the worldly with the spiritual – a link between the ancient wisdom teachings and our present time.

A descendant of five generations of well-known and revered spiritual leaders, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri has taught students throughout the world for over 30 years.

He is a gifted exponent of how the self relates to the soul, humankind's link with the Divine, and how consciousness can be groomed to reflect our higher nature.

The unifying scope of his perspective emphasizes practical, actionable knowledge that leads to self-transformation, and provides a natural bridge between seemingly different Eastern and Western approaches to spirituality, as well as offering a common ground of higher knowledge for various religions, sects and secular outlooks.

He is a prolific author of more than thirty books relating to the universal principles of Islam, the Qur'an, and its core purpose of enlightenment.

## **Acknowledgements**

This book would not have come about without the considerable time and energy spent by several people, in particular, Hajj Ahmed Mikell, Zainab Hussain Haeri, Muna Bilgrami, Hasan Joban and Dr. Ya`qub Zaki, whose editorial input was most helpful. My thanks are due to all of them.



## Introduction

This book was written for the present-day Muslim, with the objective of making the practice of fasting, or *sawm*, understandable and easy to follow.

In the past, Muslim communities and societies simply carried on the rituals and practices they had inherited, while the younger generations absorbed and followed the same patterns. With the present dispersion of Muslims to countries all over the world and the subsequent multi-cultural and multi-lingual environments in which they find themselves, I felt that a book encompassing the main practices and meanings of fasting would be timely.

The main aim of this book is to cover all aspects of the Islamic faith that relate and connect to fasting, taking into account the outer advantage for the practitioner, as well as the subtler inner benefits.

The principal goal has been to communicate the practices of fasting for easy and understandable use so that in time the reader will realize the numerous benefits that can be gained from fasting and the transformative effects of this spiritual and physical practice.

In the first chapter we take a brief look at the history of fasting, followed by a discussion of the health benefits of fasting in chapter two. Chapter three examines the verses in the Qur'an that instruct us to fast and relate topics, such as the various types of fasting. After the Qur'an we naturally turn to the Sunnah, or life-pattern of the Prophet, which is primarily recorded in the body of *hadith*. Chapter four, therefore, offers a comprehensive selection of *hadith* on all aspects of *sawm*.

In chapter five we enumerate all the rules regulating the fast according to Ja`fari law (the school of the Ahl al-Bayt). In chapter six we look at the same rules according to the four Sunni schools of law. It will be noticed that any difference between the Ja`fari or Ahl al-Bayt school and the Sunni schools are minor, and should, therefore, not be a cause of sectarian battle. We still find some people, however, who continue to engage in futile, hair-splitting theological debates, rather than witness the greatness of Islam and spread tolerance amongst Muslims.

Ramadan is singled out as a special time during which supplication to Allah is most effective and so in chapter seven we reproduce some recommended *du`as*. Ramadan is, of course, the blessed month during which the Qur'an was first revealed. Thus, in the eighth chapter we dwell on the meaning of the 'Night of Determination' (*Laylat al-Qadr*), as revealed in the Qur'anic chapter, Surat al-Qadr. Finally, in chapter nine, both the broader and inner aspects of fasting are explored. Fasting in Islam is not simply a matter of withholding from food and drink. Its ultimate purpose is inner purification, awareness, and sincere worship of Allah, the All-Encompassing Creator of all known and unknown worlds.

I pray that the reader will absorb and apply what is relevant and realize the transformative dimension of our great *Din*.

## **Chapter One: Fasting Through the Ages**

The desire to fast seems to be deeply rooted in human consciousness. Fasting has been resorted to for cultural or political reasons as much as for maintaining physical and mental health. More specifically, fasting has been a devotional practice in most religious and spiritual movements throughout the ages.

Islam has perfected the practice of abstinence and fasting as a means of self-purification and worship. The act of restraining the self purifies and enhances awareness and sensitivity at physical, mental and spiritual levels. The seeker realizes the weakness of the self and is gratified by the discipline, restriction and prohibitions, for these limitations are windows to Allah's limitlessness.

### **AN OVERVIEW**

The word 'fast' in English comes from the Teutonic 'fastan', which means 'firm' in the sense of 'to hold fast, be firm, to observe [something] strictly or guard.' The verb 'fastan' means keeping or observing a rule of some kind and maintaining strict obedience to a law. The specific application of this meaning is associated with abstinence from food, and after a time, the abstention from food as a religious observance or as a ceremonial expression of grief became the accepted meaning.

In some cultures, such as the Indians of North America, fasting is held in high esteem, while many tribes of Brazil and the peoples of the Pacific Islands have used it as a rite of initiation. It was once common for hunters to fast before setting out in pursuit of game. Fasting to mark puberty is still a widespread practice among some American Indian Tribes, and is observed as a preliminary rite to marriage among some communities prior to marriage. Several cultures prescribe fasting as a rite of mourning, such as those in the Andaman Islands, Fiji, Samoa, China, Korea and Africa. In general, we find whenever human beings require or seek heightened awareness or greater closeness to their core or essence, fasting is used as a key practice to achieve this end.

Ancient Egyptians, Greek, Roman, and Chinese cultures practiced fasting to cure various illnesses. The Egyptians believed that fasting three days a month helped to preserve good mental and physical health. The Greeks learned the virtues of fasting from the Egyptians and fasted before battle and the Romans followed suit. Socrates and Plato are known to have regularly performed fasts of ten days duration. Today in the West, fasting is used by alternative and naturopathic systems of medicine and healing for curing a host of acute and chronic diseases and as a useful catalyst in helping the body mobilize its own natural immune system.

During the twentieth century fasting has sometimes been used as a tool of political and social protest by individuals as well as groups. During the national struggles for independence from colonial rule, several leaders of the third world in Asia and Africa resorted to fasting to highlight their plight and struggle, often with some success.

In the religions of the East fasting has been practiced for spiritual purification and cleansing from sin. Manu stressed that the practice of fasting was utilized in order to acquire control over the senses. Hindu masters recommended a restraint on speech and actions and a total ban on injury to any created being. Gautama Buddha prescribed a middle path for attaining spiritual goals, avoiding the extremes of asceticism or luxury. Most monks, however, would follow austere regimes and fast for several days at a time, patiently bearing mental and physical weakness as a devotional practice.

The Old Testament abounds in references to fasting. David wept and chastened his soul with fasting. The Prophet Moses fasted from all food and drink for forty days and nights when he ascended the mount to receive the tablets of the covenant of his Lord. Ezra, the prophet of the Children of Israel, fasted in order to obtain guidance from his Lord. Daniel fasted for three weeks, seeking his Lord by prayer and supplication.

The Jews observe six obligatory fasts during the year, one of which (Yom Kippur – the Day of Atonement) is prescribed in the Old Testament as a two-day fast. Yom Kippur derives from similar linguistic roots as *Yawm al-Kaffarah*, both of which mean the same thing, i.e. repentance, as Arabic and Hebrew have a common Semitic root. Moses descended with the Torah on Yom

Kippur just as the Qur'an was revealed on *Laylat al-Qadr*, the Night of Determination or Power, during the month of Ramadan.

The New Testament contains numerous references to fasting and vigils. St. Jerome wrote: 'The fiery darts of Satan are to be quenched and deadened by the rigor of vigils and fasting.' Jesus is reported in Matthew to recommend sincere and cheerful fasting which became a normal practice for his disciples.

The institution of fasting and abstinence from certain foods in Christianity has its origin in the New Testament as it relates to the fasting of Jesus' disciples for several days during Lent, the forty-day period before Easter. The duration of the fast during Lent varied throughout the ages until forty days accompanied by strict rules became the norm. At first only one meal a day was allowed, and not before three in the afternoon, but gradually the time was brought forward to mid-day. Meat, fish, eggs, milk, cheese and butter were absolutely forbidden, but later on small amounts of these foods were allowed in the morning and evening.

Additional fasts were introduced later in different parts of the Church, such as the fast of Rogation Days, the Ember Weeks, the Whitsun Week, and fasts were also ordained by the Roman Catholic Church. Considerable variations in the practice of fasting is noticed between the Orthodox Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Reformed Churches of Europe.

Over time there has been a gradual mitigation in the frequency and rigor of the fasts and abstinences prescribed by Church laws due to extenuating circumstances such as age, health, poverty, hard or continued labor and changing social conditions. Today few are obliged to fast strictly, while some are excused even from abstinence. Roman Catholic legislation further provides for dispensations to be granted by the Church authorities. The overall result is that the practice of fasting has declined and is almost forgotten as a religious exercise.

## **THE ISLAMIC FAST**

For Muslims fasting, or '*sawm*' in Arabic, was commanded in the Qur'an as a major obligatory spiritual discipline for the duration of the month of Ramadan. The Arabic word for fasting is

derived from the root, '*sama*', meaning to abstain from food, drink, smoking, sensual gratifications, wrong actions, harmful intentions, thoughts, words and deeds.

Islamic fasting is obligatory for one month in every lunar year, that is, Ramadan, the ninth month in the Islamic calendar. All healthy adults are expected to adhere to the proper rules of fasting. In addition to this obligatory fast, there are many optional fasts, some of which occur regularly every week or month, and some that are scattered throughout the year. These fasts are *Sunnah*, or the practice of the Prophet, Fasting is also used as a penance for breaking an oath and as a compensation for some other religious obligation.

The fast of Ramadan begins with the physical sighting of the new moon. Throughout the month a Muslim may not eat or drink from daybreak (when a fine strip of light may be seen on the horizon) until the sun has set. Before dawn a small meal (*suhur*) is usually recommended to be taken, although not obligatory, and just after the sunset (*maghrib*) prayer the fast is traditionally broken with dates and water, to be immediately followed by the prayer. Later on a larger meal is partaken by the entire family, often shared with relatives, friends and guests.

The daily fast is begun by formulating the intention to perform the fast as a rite by making a clear intention (*niyyah*) to observe the fast. No one should fast if their health cannot sustain it or if a fast should threaten one's health. Pregnant and nursing women whose health may be harmed are exempted, as are those who are travelling away from home. When health is restored or other conditions for breaking the fast are removed (such as menstruation) then the person is expected to make up the fast later during the course of the year. The rules and conditions for Islamic fasting are given in chapters five and six.

Ramadan offers the believer an opportunity to mark an end to indulgence, or at least to impose a clear limit to it, day after day for the duration of a month. This daily restraint breaks the habitual patterns of the self and constitutes a purification both of body and spirit, which brings about renewal of strength and greater spiritual awareness. Each and every ritualistic practice of Islam disciplines the individual and strengthens Muslim society if applied thoroughly.

Every year the month of Ramadan falls at different times because the lunar calendar is shorter than the solar by approximately ten days. This means that as the period of the fast is brought forward annually, Ramadan will fall during all seasons of the year in a gradual progression. Despite the strict rules and restraint induced by the fast, Ramadan is usually a joyful time for Muslims everywhere. The last ten nights of the month, particularly the odd nights, are the spiritual highlights of Ramadan, for one of these nights is *Laylat al-Qadr*, the Night of Determination, in which the Qur'an was first revealed to the Prophet.

Ramadan comes to a close with the celebrations and prayers of Eid al-Fitr. On this day a Muslim will give appropriate alms to the poor, and families gather for a light morning repast after the congregational prayer. The Eid prayer, performed outdoors, is followed by a discourse delivered by the prayer leader after which people exchange good wishes and celebrate their success in performing a most important act of worship and attaining a heightened awareness and purposefulness in life.

## Chapter Two: Health, Diet and Fasting

The environment, our life-style and nutrition play a crucial role in determining our overall health. The affluence that capitalism and technology have brought to parts of the world during the twentieth century has improved living conditions and life expectancy, but also undermined certain qualities of life. Denatured foodstuffs (like white bread and white sugar), sedentary lifestyles, a hectic pace of life, environmental pollution together with many other factors have brought about high levels of pressure and stress on contemporary humankind. For people living in large cities, these negative influences are most concentrated. No one is immune to their effects.

### FOOD AND SPIRITUALITY

A better quality of life, self-development, higher consciousness or spiritual development cannot be pursued with a diseased and ailing body. Disease and illness, however, are signals and warnings of physical or mental imbalance and thus need attention and remedial treatment. The Qur'an indicates the importance of what we eat and how we eat it:

And in the earth are tracts and gardens of vines and fields sown with corn, and palm-trees growing out of single roots and otherwise, watered with the same water, and yet some We make more excellent than others in fruits; Verily in this there are signs for people who understand. (13:4)

Eat of the good things We have provided you with and exceed not in it. (20:81)

And eat and drink For He loves not those who go to excess. (7:31)

The middle path, moderation and constant awareness are the marks of a sincere seeker. Our present culture, however, is obsessed with increase. Thus excess weight and obesity are prevalent in wealthy societies. The Prophet said that there is nothing worse than a stomach stuffed with permissible (i.e. lawful) food. Imam `Ali said: 'Never eat unless you are hungry;



always leave a meal while still desiring to eat.’ In addition the Prophet has said to leave one third of the stomach empty and the other two thirds for water and food.

For a serious seeker eating is an act of worship, for it oils and maintains the vehicle of one’s journey. Knowledge and care is called for in deciding what to eat, when to eat and how to eat. It is said that food is for the spirit while prayer is for the body, because the outer nourishes and sustains the inner and the inner nourishes and sustains the outer. Without the body the spirit would not manifest.

## **VARIETIES OF FOOD**

Allah says in the Qur’an:

Let man consider his food. We send down water pouring, then We split the earth and cause to grow therein grain, grapes, herbs, olives, dates, gardens thick with trees, fruits and grasses, provision for you and your livestock. (80:24-32)

He is the One Who created trellised and untrellised gardens, dates, various edible grains and other standing crops, olives and pomegranates, similar and dissimilar. Eat of its fruit when it bears fruit (6:141)

These verses demonstrate the wondrous nature of food and how we are provided for with edible substances from creation. We need to learn when they should be eaten and in what combinations and quantities, as well as methods of preparation.

## **TRADITIONAL PATTERNS OF EATING**

People who lived in evolved traditional cultures have over the centuries developed generally sound dietary practices suited their particular environments and ways of life. In our time many dietary habits that were specific to a society or tribe have slipped into other cultures because of easy communication, travel, transport, trade and the concomitant desire to emulate ‘healthy’ – ‘wealthy’ – peoples. It is not easy, therefore, to discern distorted, harmful or out of context eating

practices. People who have maintained traditional patterns of eating born of long experience and wisdom are now the exception rather than the rule. Nowadays most foods are available to wealthy nations all year round, regardless of season, courtesy of modern transport and technology.

### **THE ETIQUETTE (*adab*) OF EATING AND DRINKING**

How we eat food is a good indication of our awareness and sensitivity regarding this most important action. Young children mess about and behave in an understandably animalistic manner when they eat. As we grow older and wiser we realize the importance of choosing our food carefully, its quantity and quality, our mental attitude while eating and the speed with which we consume our food. If one eats intelligently, varying the varieties food while restraining excessive appetites then sufficient pleasure and nourishment may be obtained. Stress, anger, distractions and other emotional disturbances whilst eating are a sure way to reduce the benefits of our food.

The Prophetic teaching provides us with a whole system courtesy and etiquette regarding food and eating. The purpose taking in food is to maintain life, whose ultimate purpose is the awareness and knowledge of the Life-giver, Allah, the Exalted. From this knowledge emerges an attitude of contentment and celebration of life's experiences.

***1. The following list of basic recommendations is derived from the practice of the Prophet. One should:***

- a) Wash the hands before a meal. When there are guests, the host begins by washing his own hands.
- b) Wash the hands and mouth after a meal.
- c) If there are guests, the host should begin eating before the guests and finish after them (so as not to rush them).

- d) Begin the meal by saying *Bismillahi'r-Rahmani'r-Rahim* (In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful), thereby dedicating the act to a higher purpose.
- e) Eat the meal in a spirit of gratitude and enjoyment. One should be on one's best behavior at the table, exhibiting tolerance and consideration for the others.
- f) Eat with the right hand only.
- g) If one is eating with the fingers it is best to eat with three fingers (the index finger, the middle finger and the thumb).
- h) Eat the food which is in front of one, i.e. within easy reach.
- i) Take small bites and chew well and slowly.
- j) Not eat hurriedly or hasten to leave the table.
- k) Use a toothpick after a meal and if possible use a toothbrush or *miswak*.
- l) Sit straight whilst eating, not reclining or resting one's back on cushions.
- m) Rest after a meal and if possible recline, preferably with the right leg over the left.
- n) Avoid eating when full or not hungry. One should eat with a healthy appetite and stop before feeling full.
- o) Eat heavy meals at noontime only, unless there is a valid reason for otherwise. The evening meal should generally be; the lighter of the two.
- p) Eat in company, especially with family, servants and friends.
- q) Eat the evening meal early.

r) Say little whilst eating or drinking, and avoid interrupting meals to attend to other activities.

**2. *The following are recommended when drinking:***

- a) Sip water slowly rather than gulp it down.
- b) Remember Allah before drinking and praise Him when finished.
- c) Drink water three swallows at a time successively.
- d) Drink water with relish and enjoyment.
- e) Remember Imam Husayn's thirst in the last days of his martyrdom at Karbala.

**3. *The following are considered reprehensible when eating:***

- a) Eating while performing other actions or being distracted.
- b) Eating too much or to one's full capacity. Leaving one third of the stomach empty is best.
- c) Looking in the face of another while they are eating.
- d) Eating food that is too hot and blowing on it to cool it.
- e) Eating a great variety of fruit, vegetables or other food stuffs at the same time.
- f) Eating excess meat or not eating meat at all for forty days.
- g) Eating before taking a ritual bath (*ghusl*) after sexual intercourse. If one is unable to perform the ritual bath, one should at least cleanse the nose and rinse the mouth.
- h) Eating while walking.

***4. The following are considered reprehensible when drinking:***

- a) Drinking too much water.
- b) Drinking water after eating, especially after eating the noon meal or after a meal that is rich in fat.
- c) Drinking from a place, a cup or container which is broken or from the side of the handle.
- d) Drinking with the left hand.

**FASTING AS A CURE**

Fasting is probably one of the oldest known methods of healing the body. Many people have used fasting as a means to detoxify the body and to cure disease. Fasting does indeed cleanse the body and allow us to assimilate subtler forms of nourishment by releasing the energy that would have been used for digestion and using this in tandem with the natural process of healing.

After the first few days of fasting, providing that one is not stuffing oneself in between with inappropriate foods, the appetite fades and we find that our anxiety and attachment to food begins to lessen. All the eliminative systems of the body, such as the skin, the lungs, the liver, kidneys and bowels become more active. This is often reflected in bad breath, body odor, and foul smelling body wastes. These unpleasant side-effects signify that the digestive system is detoxifying itself and that the biochemical and mineral balance in the body tissues is changing. This process is greatly enhanced if one eats plenty of fresh fruit and drinks water and vegetable juices. After a few days of fasting the process of autolysis begins, whereby dead and unhealthy cells are broken down and re-metabolized.

For over a thousand years Muslim physicians have used fasting to cure a number of different diseases, including smallpox. Avicenna (Ibn Sina) mentioned fasting as a therapeutic technique in his Canon. Four hundred years before the birth of Jesus, Hippocrates prescribed fasting to heal illness. During the Renaissance, Venetian over-indulgence in food and drink and gluttony

became so excessive that the rise in sickness and even death of wealthy citizens became a public disgrace. During the eighteenth century several European physicians advocated fasting in treating epilepsy, ulcers, plethora, cataracts, scurvy and malignant ulcers. Fasting as prevention of illness and complete abstention from eating during illness became established as a healing method for numerous common diseases.

In the United States during the 19th century the question of toxins and degenerative diseases became an important issue for which fasting was considered a major cure. The idea of toxicity as the cause of disease found more favor with naturopathic physicians than with the allopaths, who were firmly convinced of the germ origin of disease. Fasting was prescribed for stomach and intestinal disorders, obesity, dropsy, various infections and inflammations, the elimination of physical weakness and flabbiness as well as for the improvement of morale.

Proponents and practitioners of fasting today employ different forms of fasting. They may allow only water for specified periods of time, from three to 30 days, or the fast may be supplemented by a monofood diet, such as certain types of fruits or fruit and vegetable juices. According to these methods the therapy, if successful, will provoke a 'healing' or 'detoxification crisis', which is the temporary exacerbation of the symptoms followed by a rapid and complete recovery. Adherents believe that one can expel suppressed or latent toxins remaining from old diseases if cleansing is continued. These latent toxins are often believed to be due to the side-effects of drug therapies.

Fasting is considered to offer a physiological rest for the digestive tract and central nervous system while normalizing the metabolism. During a fast the kidney preserves potassium and sugar in the blood which is an important element in ensuring that the person fasting maintains a state of well-being. When there is no food to digest, the human body needs only a minimum of energy to carry out other functions, such as replenishing old cells and eliminating toxic residues.

Chinese medical practitioners of their ancient and effective system have a lucid and balanced approach to detoxification of the body through the use of fasting. Chinese medicine has developed two broad categories of therapy over the centuries. One is tonification or building up deficiencies and the other is reduction or elimination of excess. Fasting is a process of

eliminating excess. In people with a strong constitution fasting may be an appropriate therapy. In people with a weak or deficient constitution, using an eliminative process such as fasting could cause complications. In such cases sound judgment must be used to decide whether to eliminate the excess first, tonifying the deficiency, or do both simultaneously.

The Chinese system of medicine is holistic, based on the idea that no single part can be understood except in its relation to the whole. A symptom is observed as a part of a person's entire, physical state of being rather than as traced to a cause. In illness the symptom is only one part of an imbalance that can be observed in other aspects of a person's physical state. A person who is well or 'in harmony' has no distressing symptoms and expresses mental, physical and spiritual balance.

The dietary habits of many ordinary rural Muslim folk throughout the world, whether in China, Hunza or the Atlas Mountains of North Africa, are in concordance with the best guidelines for a healthy diet advocated by most modern-day nutritionists and naturopaths. They eat and drink in moderation, in season, and only a limited variety of foods. All fruits and vegetables are either fresh or dry, while processed or canned food is simply unavailable. Their lifestyles are far from sedentary and physical activity is almost continuous.

Modern urban-dwelling Muslims, however, are subject to the same negative factors that afflict all cities throughout the world. The stress of pollution, refined food products, excessive amounts of fried 'fast' foods, as well as the heavy use of spices and food additives, combined with the frenetic pace of life, social alienation and urban anonymity, take their toll on health and well-being.

Our urban modern way of life requires us to give special consideration to many factors that affect our health. Among the more important are:

1. The quality of our food, water and air;
2. Food combining and mixing, such as avoiding meals which mix concentrated carbohydrates with concentrated proteins;

3. Avoiding processed foods such as bleached and refined flour products and sugar;
4. Avoiding foods with preservatives, colorants and other artificial additives;
5. Avoiding snacking between meals;
6. Exercising regularly;
7. Avoiding remaining deskbound and sitting in fixed positions at work or during travel.

Numerous unhealthy contemporary habits which are considered ‘normal’ and even desirable are unhealthy, and these include:

1. Styles and materials of dress. Tight trousers, for example, are known to affect fertility in males; or clothing which is not protective enough or too synthetic material to allow the skin to respire sufficiently;
2. Chemicals such as nail-varnish, deodorants, hairsprays and industrial soaps etc.;
3. Colas and other artificially flavored drinks;
4. Foods containing preservatives, colorants, taste enhancers, artificial sweeteners;
5. Drinking before or during a meal (the best is to drink half an hour before food or one hour after);
6. Drinking anything that is ice-cold or too hot;
7. Drugs, especially pain-relievers, cortico-steroids and sedatives;
8. Cigarettes and alcohol.



The necessity for exercise, fresh air and sunshine cannot be over-emphasized. Deep regular breathing, brisk walks or other physically revitalizing activities are essential elements in creating and maintaining good health. Changing one's style of life to reduce stress can only improve one's capacity for better health and inner development.

During a fast the body heals and purifies itself. It is for this reason that to obtain the full benefit of Ramadan one must eat in moderation and care when fast-breaking. The choice of foods is as important as the quantity, It makes no sense to squander the opportunity for renewal and regeneration that Ramadan represents by indulging in indiscriminate eating as soon as the sun goes down, Applying this awareness frequently requires one to look beyond culturally ingrained eating patterns, in particular those that have developed in the last few decades as a result of affluence and the increased availability of highly processed and refined foods. From a healthy and vibrant physical state we can transcend our limitations to reach the higher elements within ourselves. We need a healthy body and mind to discover the light of the Eternal within us, which is the purpose of creation and the plan and design of the Loving Creator.

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*Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri*

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### **Health Sciences in Early Islam – Volumes 1 & 2**

*Collected Papers By: Sami K. Hamarneh*

*Edited By: Munawar A. Anees*

*Foreword By: Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri*

*Health Sciences in Early Islam* is a pioneering study of Islamic medicine that opens up new chapters of knowledge in the history of the healing sciences. This two volume work covers the development of Islamic medicine between the 6th and 12th centuries A.D.