



رَمَضَانَ

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An antidote to consumerism

Scene 1

It's a crisp cold December morning, I wait to cross the road amongst a throng of Christmas shoppers laden with one, two or even more shopping bags full of all sorts of goodies, from chocolate boxes to walk-mans. I look to my right, there's a giant billboards seductively displaying half naked women advertising mobile phones, on my left another billboard is blaring on about low cost loans...

As I open my front door, the local 'shopper' newspaper blocks my way, there's a pile of shopping catalogues in one corner of the living room. I want to watch the news but before I can do that I am bombarded by all kinds of consumer goods from toothpaste to deodorants. This is no different from the daily newspaper which is more or less an advertisement board for the multinationals.

Scene 2

That evening in my local mosque I bumped in to Said (his name means 'devotee').
'Saj, I've not seen you for more than a fortnight where have you been mv brother?'

'O I've been verv busv at work, lots of over time and family commitments on top of that - I'm having a new kitchen fitted . . . !' Abdullah, standing behind him just left shyly.

I can narrate another dozen similar episodes from my meetings with young and old Muslims who genuinely cannot find any time for worship let alone attend the Lord's house. Can you see the relationship between one and two? The pressure of the advertising industry. is so overwhelming that we succumb to it. Ours is truly a consumer society and we have become people preoccupied with consumer goods and their acquisition.

It is a big, all encompassing carnival, the message seeping into our subliminal recesses of the brain is "eat, drink and be merry)", for tomorrow we die". We are spurred and goaded in subtle and seductive ways to self-indulgence - a hall-mark of a liberal and Godless society. It is a time of instant rewards and immediate pleasures. Is it any wonder that Sajid and Abdullah have no time for their Lord.

Ramadan: The Spring of Righteousness has just begun. The month of patience, waiting, restraining ones appetites of eating and drinking and pleasure pursuits. Truly a Divinely ordained antidote to the lax, free, pleasure seeking wav of Life. "The doors of heaven are thrust open", said the blessed Messenger ﷺ

The advertising world promises a freedom, which ultimately leads to the slavery of basic instincts. The blessed month of Ramadan invites us to taste real independence from physical needs. It develops the ascetic nature, when a person practices self-discipline and refrains from pleasure, solely for the love of God. This leads the fasting person to become conscious of the fact that he is in this material and physical world.

Fasting is such a special devotion that God Almighty says, "Fasting is Mine and I will personally reward it", since fasting is a religious mystery unconnected with an external thing, an act of worship and devotion known only to the devotee and his Lord - hence its reward is infinite.

Lets resolve to spend each Ramadan in devotion, study and service to Allah. Ameen

