



## *Ramadan Reflection - Week 3, 2022*

It was around 10 years ago that I fasted for the first-time during Ramadan. Being so young, I remember it quite clearly. I remember the sense of accomplishment, I remember all the fun times with my cousins, I remember the feasts we shared, I remember the staying up till sunrise, the trips to IHOP and Denny's at 3 AM, and all the memories in between. I often get looks of amazement when people find out that I have been fasting for the entire month, especially when I tell them that I cannot have water either. People have asked then that I must grow weary of this time. And I reply that this could not be further from the truth. I tell them that since I am making a sacrifice in the name of Allah, He gives me the strength and *sabr* (patience) to be able to fast all day.

What Ramadan means to me is that it's a time for a spiritual reset. It's an opportunity to let go of what plagues us or troubles us and instead focus on how to make ourselves stronger. It's an opportunity to reconnect with Allah (God) and bring ourselves closer to Him. It's an opportunity to recommit to a path of worship and reflection. Often throughout the year, we get caught up with school, work, social commitments, etc. and may feel as if we do not have time to do anything else. However, Ramadan provides the opportunity to take a step back and recharge the soul. It encourages and rewards us for acts of worship, and it gives the soul a serene feeling of peace that can only be provided by becoming closer to Allah and his mercy.

From the outside, I admit fasting must seem difficult and some days it is. It's not always easy seeing others eat and drink while I awkwardly sit there. However, in those moments, I think of how fasting is feeding the soul. It's quite easy to let things become a distraction and food is no exception. However, when we remove the without-food aspect, fasting becomes much easier. The ability to reflect becomes much clearer. The prayers make you feel much closer with Allah. As Muslims we often forget, while we host lavish community dinner parties complete with an assorted array of delicious food and drink, our dearest Prophet Muhammad would sometimes only be able to have a date and some water to break his fast. Yet he would continuously thank Allah which has made me understand that while the food at sunset is a perk, it does not even come close to the true meaning and purpose behind Ramadan.

As I sit here writing this, I think of how lucky I am to be surrounded by the most amazing friends and family in a safe home with AC. I know not everyone is as lucky. Some people are fleeing war or religious persecution, others deal with famine, and some people simply are too poor to afford enough food. I consider this every time I donate and pray that my money helps someone in need. I understand that I may never completely understand their struggle, but just to experience it somewhat and become more aware is a blessing by the Mercy of Allah. May He bless everyone and give us the strength to surpass any obstacles we face. *Ramadan Mubarak!*

- Saad Meer, Class of '22