



# Exploring the Role of Sunnah Fasting in Shaping Muslim Behaviour and Spirituality: Perceptions, Beliefs and Social Dynamics

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## Abstract

This research aims to understand Muslims' perceptions and beliefs regarding sunnah fasting, with the research problem focusing on how sunnah fasts, such as the fasts of Arafat and Ashura, are understood and practised by Muslims to expiate minor sins and improve their spiritual quality. The research method used is a desk-top research, in which the researchers' collected and analysed relevant data, including the Qur'an, hadith, tafsir, scholarly articles, and other literature on sunnah fasting in Islam. The results showed that sunnah fasting has a vital role in the spiritual life of Muslims, with many benefits, including positive behavioural changes, improved discipline, and increased faith and piety. Sunnah fasting is believed to erase minor sins, thus encouraging Muslims to be more diligent in practising it. Social and environmental dynamics, such as family support, community, and lectures at mosques, play an essential role in influencing Muslims' perceptions and participation in sunnah fasting. Although there are differing interpretations among scholars regarding the ability of sunnah fasting to erase major sins, consensus suggests that sunnah fasting provides many spiritual and moral benefits. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of sunnah fasting and its role in shaping Muslim behaviour and spirituality.

**Keywords:** Belief, ummah, Islam, erasing sins, fasting, Sunnah

## Introduction

Islam is a religion that has noble values, and rahmatan lil alamin (mercy for all, compassion for the universe.) is steadfast and teaches trust, justice, and awareness about life and a good world (Botma, 2020). Islam is a religion based on the teachings of the Quran, which is believed to be a direct revelation from Allah SWT to the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Fitriani et al., 2023). Islamic teachings also include Hadith, which are records of the words, actions, and



agreements of the Prophet Muhammad (Darmalaksana et al., 2017). All Muslims believe the Qur'an and Hadith guide life in carrying out His commands and prohibitions and contain messages of life toward human goodness and happiness in the world and the hereafter (Suhaimi, 2021). In addition, Muslims need to have beliefs based on the six pillars of faith, which include faith in Allah, angels, holy books, messengers, doomsday, and qadar. Thus, the pillars of faith play a key role in shaping the values and behaviour of Muslims. Implementing the principle of belief in the pillars of faith involves contemplation, reading the Quran, prayer, and seclusion (J. M. Nur et al., 2020).

The belief of Muslims in living life based on the Qur'an is one of the noblest worship to Allah SWT (Monalisa et al., 2022). The Qur'an significantly impacts the spiritual well-being of Muslims, helps them find purpose and meaning in life, and helps them develop a deep and meaningful relationship with Allah (Aji & Ahmad, 2020). In addition, the Qur'an is considered the primary source of guidance and direction for Muslims (Dariyanto, 2022). This relates to understanding the concept of human nature in Islam in the Qur'an. In the Qur'an, human duties are included in the concept of caliphate, namely as God's representative on earth. Humans are intended to carry out the caliphate task by using various Qur'an instruments as primary capital. Humans are entrusted with the responsibility of "khalifah" to take care of the earth, which is a significant mandate, and carry out this task with full awareness and responsibility (Khabibullah, 2022). According to QS Luqman (19:95), "Every human being will be personally responsible for all his actions." This explains that a servant who obeys God and does good deeds will be rewarded well in the afterlife. On the contrary, a servant who does terrible deeds will get a reward or reward for these actions.

The Qur'an divides accountability through rewards and sins based on the categories of those whom God loves and guarantees love, and those who violate his prohibitions. Islam is a religion of peace and justice for Muslims in this world and the hereafter. The Qur'an regulates the division of rewards and sins based on commands and prohibitions and determines what efforts can be made to get forgiveness of sins to ALLAH SWT. Qs Al-Imran (133) says, "And hasten to seek forgiveness from your Lord and obtain a paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth which is prepared for the pious." explaining that every sin committed can be forgiven by seeking efforts towards virtue. Forgiveness of sins in Islam is the process of removing sins committed by an individual, which can be done in various ways, such as repenting, praying, and doing good deeds (Zuhdy, 2016) as is also the case in Judaism and Christianity. This is by the word of Allah in QS. Az-Zumar (53), "Say: O My servants who transgress against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Verily, Allah forgives the sins of all. Indeed, He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful". Thus, the purpose of repentance in Islam is to obtain forgiveness, cleanse oneself, and return closer to Allah (Lukman, 2020; Hizbullah et al., 2023).

There is another form of asking for forgiveness of sins believed by all Muslims and used to expiate sins, namely fasting. Fasting is used as a penance (Nadwi, 2007). Primarily, fasting is used to increase self-awareness of God and awareness of virtue and justice. However, the law of fasting is also divided into two, namely mandatory fasting and sunnah fasting (Rafi, 2018). In Islam, mandatory fasting (during Ramadan, expiation, and vows) requires abstaining from food, drink, and marital relations from dawn to sunset to fulfill religious duties and spiritual growth, while sunnah fasting (voluntary and specific days like the six days of Shawwal) follows the same rules to cultivate self-discipline and devotion to God, reflecting a commitment to spiritual and ethical development. Compulsory fasting is fasting during Ramadan, which is required for all Muslims with certain conditions (Wahab, 2022). At the same time, sunnah fasting is recommended (not mandatory) and has certain benefits, according to the types of fasting (Marfu'ah & Artanti, 2019). Recommended sunnah fasts include the Sunnah Fasts of David, Shawwal, Arafat, Monday and Thursday, Rajab, Tarwiyah, and Ashura or Muharram Fasting (Qodariyah et al., 2019). Each sunnah fast can be done in certain months and has different benefits and meanings. Of the various types of sunnah fasting, two types are



recommended and can cancel and melt sins, namely Tarwiyah Fasting and Ashura or Muharram Fasting. This is as explained by Rasullah SAW that "Fasting Arafat (9 Zulhijah) can erase the sins of a year ago and a year to come. Fasting Ashura (10 Muharram) will expiate the sins of a year ago" (H. R. Muslim) and "Narrated from Abu Qatadah ra: indeed the Messenger of Allah PBUH said he was asked about the virtue of fasting the day of Ashura, then he answered: 'The fast of 'Ashura expiates the sins of a year that has passed','(H. R. Muslim).

Sunnah fasting is a strong belief among scholars; it is considered a shield from hellfire and can bring us closer to Allah (Hatijah, 2019). One of the sunnah fasts the Prophet Muhammad SAW recommended is the sunnah fast of Ashura. According to the narration of Ibn Abbas, the Prophet Muhammad SAW fasted Ashura and ordered the community to follow him. In a hadith delivered by Abi Qatadah, it is stated that when the Prophet was asked about the purpose of fasting Ashura, he said, "Atoning for the sins of the past year." (H.R. Muslim). In addition, the Hadith narrated by Abus Sheikh Al-Ishfahani and Ibnun Najar is "Fasting the day of Tarwiyah can erase the sins of a year. Fasting the day of Arafat can erase the sins of two years." However, this hadith history is still disputed by some hadith experts because it contains a problematic narrator (Arifin, 2023). Until now, Muslims still believe that sunnah fasting can expiate sins. For this reason, this research was conducted to find out how the law of fasting sunnah in the expiation of sins and how the belief in fasting sunnah as an effort to expiate sins affects the thinking of Muslims. In addition, this research aims to determine the truth of sunnah fasting as a remover of sins through the faith of Muslims to date.

### **Literature Study**

Sunnah fasting is a form of voluntary fasting that is based on the traditions and practices of the Prophet Muhammad. Sunnah is the key to solving the problems of Muslim society and refers to good and bad behaviour, including fasting (Khan & Hussain, 2021). The Sunnah fasting is recommended in Islam—namely, Monday-Thursday fasting (Marfu'ah et al., 2022). Sunnah fasting is believed to have many benefits, such as increasing one's spiritual intelligence (Masitoh, 2015). Spiritual improvement through sunnah fasting means helping to strengthen one's relationship with Allah (Munib, 2019). This is related to the benefits of sunnah fasting, which can increase efforts to control and self-patience (Syari'ah et al., 2022). Sunnah fasting helps purify the soul by allowing individuals to reflect on their actions and seek forgiveness for any mistakes they may have made (Hassan, 2021). In addition, spiritual enhancement in the implementation of sunnah fasting can also affect the increase in awareness, loyalty, sense of brotherhood, solidarity, and help (Nafisatuzzahro, 2022). Fasting during sunnah is also beneficial for the health of the human body (Bebasari et al., 2021). For example, fasting can aid in weight loss, which can reduce pressure on joints and muscles, and reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. Thus, all the benefits of sunnah fasting can improve human degrees, with the reward of forgiveness of sins (Jamil, 2021).

Fasting is the fourth pillar of Islam, and the main goal is to achieve the pleasure of Allah SWT by bearing the title of piety (Nur & Malik, 2022). Indonesians generally adhere to Sunni Islam to coexist harmoniously with local culture and prioritize fasting to expiate sins (Zuhri & Wahyudi, 2022). Sunnah fasting is believed to expiate sins by Indonesian traditionalist Muslims, as advocated by Islamic boarding school scholars and Nahdlatul Ulama (Hasan, 2005). Sunnah fasting is believed to erase the sins of Indonesian Muslims (Jafar & Asmara, 2022). Sunnah fasting as a sin remover is a traditional practice of Muslims in Indonesia, thus contributing to the acculturation of religion and local culture (Anam, 2020). In Indonesia, the Ashura fast is one of the sunnah fasts believed to be able to expiate sins. In Indonesia, the Ashura fast, observed on the 10th of Muharram, involves abstaining from food, drink, and marital relations from dawn until sunset, similar to other sunnah fasts. It is believed to expiate sins from the past year and is associated with commemorating significant events, including



the deliverance of Prophet Moses and the Israelites. Some Muslims may also fast on the 9th and 11th of Muharram to align with the Sunnah and distinguish their practice from Jewish traditions, making it a time for spiritual reflection and repentance. Ashura fasting can erase the past year's sins and bring people closer to Allah and His Messenger (Siregar, 2021).

## Research Methods

This research method applied in this study was a literature review research approach to understand the perceptions and beliefs of Muslims regarding sunnah fasting, especially in the context of the expiation of sins and its influence on their behaviour and spirituality (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Clarke & Schoonmaker, 2020; Widiyawati, 2019). The research focuses on identifying and analysing written sources relevant to sunnah fasting, including the Holy Qur'an, hadith, and tafsir books, as well as scholarly works and other literature related to sunnah fasting in Islam. The data sources in this study included written documents such as the Qur'an, authentic hadith, classical and contemporary tafsir books, academic journals, scholarly articles, and other relevant literature. Data collection techniques were conducted through literature studies by collecting, reading, and reviewing various written sources directly relevant to the research topic.

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques, which involved the following steps: first, identifying and collecting relevant literature; second, categorising the data based on themes that emerged from the literature, such as the types of sunnah fasting, the spiritual and moral benefits of sunnah fasting, and scholars' views on the expiation of sins through sunnah fasting; third, interpreting the categorised texts to understand their meaning and implications in depth; and finally, compiling the results of the analysis systematically to present a comprehensive picture of the role of sunnah fasting in the spiritual life of Muslims (Miles et al., 2014). With this desk research approach, the study aims to provide an in-depth and literature-based understanding of the importance of sunnah fasting in the Islamic tradition and how this practice affects the behaviour and spirituality of Muslims.

## Results

### Muslims' Perceptions and Beliefs Regarding Sunnah Fasting

Prophet Muhammad advocated sunnah fasting, seen as a significant act of worship in Islam (Sari, 2023). With the help of scholars and the Prophet Muhammad, Muslims initially understood sunnah fasting. According to Prophet Muhammad SAW, abstaining from sin and strengthening one's faith and piety can be achieved through fasting during Ramadan and other recommended fasts. In addition, Islamic scholars have created educational materials and reminders of the importance of Sunnah fasting and its benefits, including improving mental and spiritual health and fostering discipline (Zainuddin, 2007). One of the Islamic teachings that is highly recommended and has many benefits for individuals and Muslims collectively is Sunnah fasting. Muslims' perceptions and views on Sunnah fasting are influenced by various personal variables, including the level of one's faith, serenity, and patience, which serve as the foundation for developing Muslims' beliefs about Sunnah fasting. A strong level of faith enhances dedication to fasting as an act of devotion, while serenity fosters a calm and positive approach to the practice, viewing it as a spiritual opportunity rather than a burden. Patience is crucial for enduring the physical and emotional challenges of fasting, helping individuals maintain self-control and resilience. Together, these factors influence how Muslims experience and value Sunnah fasting, shaping their beliefs about its significance and benefits.

Over time, Muslims' perspectives on voluntary fasting have changed in several ways. Initially, voluntary fasting was believed to be one of the most recommended forms of worship in Islamic teachings and has many benefits for Muslims and non-Muslims. However, other elements, such as poor physical health, disinterest, and busy schedules, can also influence Muslims'



opinions and views on sunnah fasting. Nonetheless, initiatives to improve Muslims' attitudes towards voluntary fasting have been undertaken occasionally. These initiatives include educational campaigns and reminders regarding the importance and benefits of voluntary fasting. In addition, Muslims are beginning to realize that following the Sunnah can improve mental health, discipline, and spiritual intelligence (Raysharie et al., 2023). Muslims can also observe Buddhists who fast, such as Ayyamul Bidh. Muslims can also observe Buddhist fasts, such as Ayyamul Bidh. Ayyamul Bidh, which involves fasting on the 13th, 14th and 15th of each lunar month, is a sunnah that offers spiritual benefits, self-discipline and a closer relationship with God. Similarly, Buddhist fasting, often practiced during the Uposatha days, supports spiritual development, awareness and ethical living by encouraging detachment from physical desires. Both practices emphasize spiritual growth, self-discipline, and ethical behavior, reflecting the shared goals of personal and spiritual improvement across religious traditions. By following the Sunnah, Muslims can control their libido, atone for their sins, and deepen their faith and piety. As a result, Muslims' views on sunnah fasting have evolved from one of the obligatory acts of worship to one that provides significant benefits to both individuals and the Muslim community at large.

Muslims may have different perspectives on voluntary fasting based on their history, experience, and level of education. Muslims often view fasting as one of the prescribed acts of worship in Islamic teachings (Sari, 2023). In addition, sunnah fasting is viewed by Muslims as having many benefits for individuals and Muslims in general, including improving mental health, spiritual intelligence, and discipline (Orami.co.id, 2023). Sunnah fasting can increase one's faith and devotion. In addition, sunnah fasting is also considered to help in the expiation of sins (Sari, 2023). Education and reminders about the importance and benefits of Sunnah fasting can influence Muslims' attitudes and beliefs about Sunnah fasting. Therefore, it is impossible to determine when Muslims first wanted to fast, according to the Sunnah. However, sunnah fasting has been part of Islamic teachings since the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Sunnah fasting has evolved in the eyes of Muslims from a pure form of worship to one that offers significant benefits to individuals and the Muslim community.

In Islamic teachings, sunnah fasting serves to erase minor sins. In Islamic teachings, major sins are primarily erased through sincere repentance (tawbah), which involves genuine remorse, cessation of the sin, and a firm intention not to repeat it, along with seeking forgiveness from Allah. Good deeds and acts of worship, such as the five daily prayers, charity, and fasting, also help expiate major sins, as does enduring trials with patience. Regularly seeking Allah's forgiveness through supplications is crucial, reflecting a comprehensive approach to cleansing major sins beyond the benefits of sunnah fasting for minor sins. This is based on various hadiths that emphasize the virtues and benefits of sunnah fasting. One famous hadith is the one narrated by Muslims, in which the Prophet said: "Fasting 'Arafah (on the 9th of Dhul Hijjah) can erase the sins of a year ago and a year to come. Fasting 'Ashura (on the 10th of Muharram) erases the sins of the past year" (HR Muslim). These hadiths show that sunnah fasts, such as the fast of 'Arafah and the fast of 'Ashura, have great merit in expiating minor sins committed during the year. This motivates Muslims to observe sunnah fasts as a form of additional worship and spiritual attainment. In addition, sunnah fasts performed on specific days, such as Mondays and Thursdays, as well as during specific months, such as the months of Muharram and Dhul Hijjah, are considered to have many spiritual benefits. Muslims who observe sunnah fasts with sincere intentions will be rewarded and forgiven by Allah SWT.

However, it is essential to note that while sunnah fasting can erase minor sins, major sins require more specialized and profound repentance. Major sins, such as adultery, stealing, murder, and other acts strictly forbidden in Islam, require repentance nausea (sincere repentance and may require remedial action or haftarah (a fine or substitute to be made as atonement). Islam teaches that repentance is the primary way to erase all major and minor sins. Repentance accepted by Allah SWT involves sincere regret, cessation of the sinful act,





a firm intention not to repeat the sin, and, if necessary, repairing the impact of the sin on others. Overall, sunnah fasting is a highly recommended practice in Islam and has many benefits, including the expiation of minor sins. However, the expiation of major sins requires a more profound and specialized process of repentance. Sunnah fasting, along with other acts of worship and sincere repentance, helps Muslims to get closer to Allah SWT and live a purer and more blessed life. The following is a discussion regarding the proof that sunnah fasting can erase sins:

No.	Types of Fasting	Hadith History
1.	Fasting Arafat and Ashura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: 'Fasting on the day of Arafah, I hope to Allah to erase the sins of a year ago and a year to come. And fasting on the day of Ashura, I hope that Allah will erase the sins of the past year.' (HR Muslim).</li> <li>Narrated from Abu Qatadah, the Prophet was asked about fasting Ashura, then he replied: 'This fast can erase the sins of the past year.' (HR. Muslim).</li> </ul>
2.	Monday Thursday Fasting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: 'The deeds are shown on Monday and Thursday. So I like when my deeds are shown, I am in a state of fasting.' (HR. Tirmidhi).</li> <li>It was narrated from Aisha RA, she said: 'The Prophet used to fast on Mondays and Thursdays.' (HR. Muslim).</li> </ul>

**Table 1.** Types of Fasting and Related Hadiths (Data processed by the author, 2024)

Based on the explanation of the hadith, several types of sunnah fasts are interpreted as being able to expiate sins, namely fasting Arafah, fasting Ashura, and fasting on Monday and Thursday. These hadiths show the virtues of fasting on certain days and how fasting can expiate minor sins. Minor sins (saghair) are actions that are not included in the category of major sins and do not require deep repentance like major sins, such as gossiping, neglecting voluntary prayers, speaking harshly, telling small lies, wasting time on trivial matters, being ungrateful, and minor violations of personal ethics. The interpretation commonly accepted by scholars is that fasting 'Arafah can expiate minor sins for the year before and the year after. This shows how great the virtue of this fast is, as it provides an opportunity for a Muslim to cleanse himself of minor sins that may have been committed unintentionally or in unconsciousness. Monday and Thursday fasting was practised regularly by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and recommended to his followers. This fast has a deep spiritual meaning, which increases a Muslim's closeness to Allah and provides an opportunity for introspection and self-improvement. By fasting on these days, a Muslim is expected to improve the quality of his deeds. When deeds are brought before Allah on Mondays and Thursdays, fasting can strengthen one's intentions and sincerity in performing acts of worship.

While sunnah fasting has the virtue of expiating minor sins, it is essential to remember that significant sins require more specialized repentance. Taubat naseha is a repentance that involves sincere regret, stopping the sinful act, firmly intending not to repeat the sin, and, if necessary, repairing the impact of the sin on others. Sunnah fasting is a highly recommended practice in Islam due to its great spiritual benefits, including expelling minor sins. The Hadiths indicate that fasting on certain days, such as 'Arafat, 'Ashura, Monday, and Thursday, has exceptional merit. This interpretation of the hadith emphasizes the importance of consistency in worship and taking advantage of memorable moments to draw closer to Allah, improve oneself, and wash away minor sins that may have been committed.

### Social and Environmental Dynamics of Muslim Beliefs

Families play an essential role in establishing sunnah fasting as a valuable component of daily religious practice and influencing family members' attitudes and knowledge about sunnah fasting. Sunnah fasting habits, such as Monday-Thursday fasting, can be introduced and taught to family members by the family, especially to younger family members. Family members' perceptions and understanding of sunnah fasting can be influenced by the style of



worship and values practised in the family. In addition, community members' opinions and ideas about sunnah fasting can also be influenced by the surrounding environment. This is because the community environment can educate others regarding sunnah fasting to cultivate virtues such as patience, obedience, and discipline, which affects how the community views sunnah fasting.

The environment around mosques, including their religious activities and values, can influence Muslims' views and attitudes towards sunnah fasting. If mosques actively educate and remind Muslims of the significance of sunnah fasting through lectures, this can influence Muslims' perceptions of the practice. Mosques serve as places where Muslims gather to worship and listen to religious lectures. Through these lectures, the understanding of the importance of sunnah fasting, its benefits, and how to implement it can be deepened (Suwarjin, 2015). In a lecture setting, speakers often share personal experiences or exemplary stories related to the fasting sunnah, which can influence listeners' views as they may feel inspired or better able to relate the benefits of fasting sunnah to their daily lives. Through participation in such activities, understanding and awareness of the importance of sunnah fasting can be enhanced (Dalmeri, 2014).

The role of Ulama and religious leaders is significant in providing teachings and views to Muslims to shape their understanding and beliefs related to sunnah fasting. In carrying out their functions, Ulama and religious leaders organize joint activities, such as recitations or discussions that focus on sunnah fasting. These activities are usually held at mosques, Islamic centers, or through online platforms, and can also include community events. The goal is to educate Muslims about the importance and practice of voluntary fasting, which encourages both individual and communal spiritual growth. These actions are expected to strengthen Muslims' views on sunnah fasting and build solidarity among them. In addition, clerics and religious leaders actively use social media to disseminate information about sunnah fasting and its benefits, and socialization studies are organized, focusing on the theme of sunnah fasting. These efforts aim to reach more people and strengthen Muslims' perceptions of sunnah fasting. Therefore, social and environmental dynamics have a vital role in shaping Muslims' views and attitudes towards sunnah fasting and introducing its values as an integral part of religious practice in daily life (Lubis et al., 2024).

Muslims' perspectives on voluntary fasting may vary and may be influenced by personal background, experience, and knowledge. Muslims' understanding of voluntary fasting can vary, depending on several influencing factors and each individual's personal experiences.

### **Behaviour Change and Spirituality**

The impact of changes in behaviour and spiritual aspects experienced by Muslims after performing sunnah fasting includes an increase in the discipline in worship that is much higher than before. In addition, individuals expressed the experience of being more patient and independent in living their daily lives after undergoing sunnah fasting (Aqilah, 2020). Sunnah fasting also positively influences the spiritual dimension of Muslims, recognizing that the quality of worship increases and the level of piety to Allah SWT increases (Suwarjin, 2015). Muslims also know that practising voluntary fasting, such as Monday-Thursday fasting, can improve individual spiritual intelligence, impacting Muslims' behaviour and level of spirituality.

Muslims who observe sunnah fasts, such as the Ashura fast on the 10th day of Muharram, believe that implementing this fast can erase the sins committed during the previous year (Muhyiddin, 2023). In addition, fasting on the day of Arafat is also believed to erase sins for two years, namely the previous year and the year after (Nisa et al., 2023). This belief impacts changes in the behaviour and spirituality of Muslims, encouraging them to become more devout in worship and practice sunnah fasting. Nonetheless, some scholars argue that



voluntary fasting is not able to erase significant sins, such as adultery, theft, drinking alcohol, gambling, and the use of magic (Harbani, 2023). Muslims who consistently carry out sunnah fasting recognize that sunnah fasting can also help increase patience in facing various challenges and tests in daily life. In addition, individuals who are obedient to sunnah fasting feel improved physical and mental health. Therefore, the behaviour of Muslims when fasting sunnah can impact daily life through increased spiritual intelligence, discipline, and patience. This can help individuals to focus more on worship and improve the quality of their daily lives. While voluntary fasts, such as the Ashura and Arafat fasts, can help expiate sins in some situations, they cannot expiate significant sins committed.

## Discussion

Various aspects of sunnah fasting, including its historical context, evolution, social dynamics, and impact on individuals, can be identified. While it is impossible to determine with certainty when Muslims first adopted sunnah fasting, it is clear that it has been an integral part of Islamic teachings since the time of the Prophet Muhammad. The transformation of sunnah fasting from a pure form of worship to a practice that significantly benefits Muslim individuals and communities demonstrates its relevance in the times. Social and environmental dynamics are essential in shaping Muslims' views and attitudes towards sunnah fasting and introducing its values as an integral part of daily religious practice. The variety of Muslims' perspectives on voluntary fasting signifies its complexity, and it is invariably influenced by various factors such as personal background, experience, and knowledge. While sunnah fasting can have positive impacts, such as increased spiritual intelligence, discipline, and patience, it should be noted that sunnah fasts, such as the Ashura and Arafat fasts, have limitations in expiating significant sins committed by individuals. Thus, in its entirety, sunnah fasting is not only a form of worship but also reflects the complexity and depth of Muslims' experience of religious life.

The discussion results indicate that sunnah fasting plays an essential role in the spiritual lives of Muslims, with many benefits that include positive behavioural changes, improved discipline, and increased faith and piety. This practice, advocated by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and prominent scholars, has become an integral part of the Islamic tradition, helping Muslims to get closer to Allah SWT and teaching the values of patience and self-control. In addition, sunnah fasting is also believed to expiate minor sins, providing an incentive for Muslims to be more diligent in this practice. The social environment, family, and mosque significantly influence Muslims' perceptions and participation in practising sunnah fasting. Support from family and community can greatly encourage individuals to follow this practice, while lectures and teachings from mosques on an ongoing basis can reinforce understanding of the benefits and importance of sunnah fasting. However, there is some controversy and differences in interpretation among scholars regarding the ability of sunnah fasting to absolve sins, especially about significant sins. Nevertheless, the consensus is that sunnah fasting provides Muslims many spiritual and moral benefits.

Based on the analysis results, the role of sunnah fasting in the lives of Muslims and its impact on behavior and spirituality are found. This research provides insights into how social and environmental dynamics influence Muslims' views on sunnah fasting and highlights this practice's various spiritual and moral benefits. In addition, it offers a balanced perspective on the interpretation of sunnah fasting in the context of forgiveness of sins, emphasizing the importance of a clear understanding and thoughtful approach to practising Islamic teachings. As such, this study significantly contributes to a deeper understanding of sunnah fasting and its role in shaping Muslims' behaviour and spirituality.

## Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of sunnah fasting in the spiritual lives of Muslims. It identifies various benefits, including positive behavioural changes, improved discipline, and





increased faith and piety. From a health perspective, abstaining from solids and surviving on liquids for a few days during a fast period is considered to be a good way to cleanse the human body and detoxify it. It is believed to improve the function of bodily organs and promotes a cleansed digestive system. There is some indication that fasting also improves blood circulation and rids the body of harmful toxins. Sunnah fasting, advocated by the Prophet Muhammad and prominent scholars, has become an integral part of the Islamic tradition, helping Muslims draw closer to Allah SWT and teaching the values of patience and self-control. The results show that social and environmental dynamics, such as family and community support and lectures at mosques, play an essential role in influencing Muslims' perceptions of and participation in sunnah fasting. Support from family and community can encourage individuals to undertake this practice, while lectures and teachings from mosques can reinforce understanding of the benefits and importance of sunnah fasting.

Although there is some controversy and differences in interpretation among scholars regarding the ability of sunnah fasting to erase sins, especially significant sins, the consensus is that sunnah fasting provides many spiritual and moral benefits to Muslims. The research also emphasizes that sunnah fasting serves as a form of worship and reflects the complexity and depth of Muslims' religious experiences. Overall, this study provides insights into how social and environmental dynamics influence Muslims' views on sunnah fasting and highlights this practice's various spiritual and moral benefits. In addition, this study offers a balanced perspective on the interpretation of sunnah fasting in the context of forgiveness of sins, emphasizing the importance of a clear understanding and a prudent approach to practising Islamic teachings. As such, this study significantly contributes to a deeper understanding of sunnah fasting and its role in shaping Muslims' behaviour and spirituality.

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