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It was narrated that Zayd ibn Khaalid al-Juhani said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever gives iftaar to a fasting person will have a reward like his, without that detracting from the reward of the fasting person in the slightest." Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, who said it is a saheeh hasan hadeeth.

This hadeeth is indicative of the virtue of giving iftaar ("breakfast") to those who are fasting, and shows that there is a great reward for that, namely a reward equivalent to that of the one who is fasting, and Allaah knows best, because the one who is fasting deserves to be honoured, and feeding him is an act of charity, an act of respect for his fast and a means of upholding ties with one who does acts of worship. This is something that the Muslims are used to doing, because they understand the great reward that results from that. The month of Ramadaan is a month in which Allaah bestows abundant mercy and forgiveness upon His slaves and ransoms them from the Fire, and Allaah has mercy upon those of His slaves who show mercy. Giving iftaar to one who fasts is similar in many ways to feeding the poor by giving them food to eat or money with which to buy food, but it does not apply only to the poor.

Generosity during the month of Ramadaan is an action that carries a high status. It was proven that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was the most generous of people in doing good, and he was at his most generous during Ramadaan, because of the holiness of this time and the fact that rewards are multiplied during this month, and so as to help those who were fasting and worshipping to continue with their worship - so the one who helps them deserves to have a reward equal to theirs.

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Generosity means giving a great deal; this includes charity and all manner of kind deeds. In this hadeeth it is to be understood as meaning generosity at all times, and more so in Ramadaan.

So we should follow the example of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and give generously to the poor and needy, check on our neighbours and uphold the ties of kinship, and take part in charitable projects. Perhaps it will motivate us to give if we let fasting remind us of the bounties and blessings of Allaah which we only acknowledge when we have lost them, so we should be grateful for the blessings of Allaah which enable us to get what we want of the things that Allaah has permitted to us, and we should remember our poor brothers who cannot get what they need, and we should give generously to them.

A combination of fasting and feeding others is a most effective means of expiation and protecting oneself from Hell, especially if qiyaam al-layl is added to that. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to Mu'aadh ibn Jabal (may Allaah be pleased with him): "Shall I not tell you of the means of goodness? Fasting is a shield, and charity extinguishes sins as water extinguishes fire, and a man's prayer in the middle of the night." Then he recited (interpretation of the meaning):

"Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend (in charity in Allaah's Cause) out of what We have bestowed on them.

17. No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do"

[al-Sajdah 32:16]

The righteous early generations of this ummah were keen to feed others and give iftar to those who were fasting. They gave that priority over other acts of worship whether they were feeding the hungry or offering food to a righteous brother.

There are many well-known reports about that. One of the salaf said: "For me to invite ten of my

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companions and offer them food that they like is more beloved to me than freeing ten of the sons of Ismaa'eel."

Many of the salaf would give their own iftaar food to others when they were fasting, such as 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him), Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Dawood al-Taa'i and Maalik ibn Dinar.

Among the salaf were some who would offer food to their brothers when fasting, and they would serve them and make them feel at home, such as al-Hasan al-Basri and 'Abd-Allaah ibn al-Mubaarak.

Imam al-Shaafa'i (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "I like for a person to be more generous during the month of Ramadaan, following the example of the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and because the people are in need of this generosity as many of them are distracted from earning a living by their fasting and praying."

See *Ahkaam al-Siyaam* by al-Fawzaan, p. 67.

O Allaah, accept this (worship) from us, for You are the All-Hearing, All-Knowing, and accept our repentance, for You are the Acceptor of Repentance, the Most Merciful.

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