

Gratefulness

Salam, my name is Zoya. Today, I will be telling you what I learnt in Ramadan. I have learnt the meaning of being grateful.

When I was young, until now, I was always selfish. I always cared about myself and never cared about others. I thought that since I was rich, I had everything. I spent money on the most useless things.

My family came in with news. They were worried about me, so they said “Um Zoya? For this Ramadan we are going to Afghanistan.” “When?” I said. They said, “On April 14th.” I said, “Could I bring my phone for selfies?” They went ballistic, and said, “You're glued to your phone. This trip has no devices!”

I was waking up for Suhoor. Suhoor is when you wake up to eat before you fast. At that time, I would always get gifts for every fast. I would cry if I didn't.

So far, I have fasted 10 days. I was packing my bags to go to Afghanistan. I was waiting to go. I secretly got my phone in my bag and went. I hope they do not notice. We were on the plane when something in my bag started to ring. I noticed I forgot to shut it off. My parents heard it and started looking for it. They found it and I felt like they were going to be mad at me.

We arrived at the airport and were waiting for our cab to take us to the hotel. The car came before a rough 10 minutes. I got annoyed at how the car smelled and looked. It smelled like barf. I started to get mad and get whiny. But before embarrassing myself, we arrived at the hotel.

It was the only thing good there. While I was looking at the window, I saw a really skinny kid asking for food. I said to myself, “Isn't it Ramadan?”. Why is he asking for food? I ignored it and went to get ready for Iftar.

My family said the dua, and we started to eat. I told my family about the kid I saw, and they told me the meaning of why he was doing it. They told me, “That kid has

no food and hasn't eaten anything for days. That is why he is so skinny." I was still selfish and said, "Oof!" My parents said "THAT'S ENOUGH. We are going somewhere tomorrow." "Sure" I said.

I woke up and took a shower. I got ready to go to the place they were planning. We went to a shelter for people. I didn't understand why but soon I did. We entered the shelter and I got surprised at what I was about to see. There were many kids over there who had the same skinny body of the kid on the street. My parents were giving money and food to them. I finally understood why they were skinny. They had no food.

That moment I realized how selfish I was, and I wanted to fix my mistakes. I had money in my bag and bought some bread and fruits and gave them to the kids there. I felt warm and good from inside. I just wanted to smile, but for some reason I couldn't.

When I went back home, I apologized to my parents and decided to never ever spent money on toys, candy, or useless things. I imagined if I had no food and was in the condition of those people. This is where I became grateful for what I had and what I didn't have.

I understood the meaning of gratefulness in this Ramadan as rightly said in Surah Luqman- Ayat 12:

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ ۚ وَمَن يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

Indeed, we blessed Luqmân with wisdom, 'saying', "Be grateful to Allah, for whoever is grateful, it is only for their own good. And whoever is ungrateful, then surely Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy."