



## I n t r o d u c t i o n

By Imam Muhammad Magid with Samuel Ross

**T**his will be the first in a new, and insha Allah, continuing series of columns entitled “Food for the Spirit.” Why the spirit? As Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta’ala) repeatedly shows us in the Qur’an, all matters in life are interconnected with the life to come and our belief in Him. Their nexus lies within the spiritual dimension, and it is in this realm that our lives are moored. To persevere in life, we all need spiritual energy; we need it to witness the beauty of Islam, to taste of its sweetness, and to embrace its softness.

Moreover, as Allah tells us in Surah al-Baqarah: “It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West; But it is righteousness – to believe in Allah and the last Day...To spend of your substance out of love for Him” (Qur’an, 2:177). Islam is not about rituals, but about the spirit of rituals. It is not about turning your face to the East or to the West, but about what lies to the East or West. Islam is above all about the striving for and attaining a higher spiritual state.

Our goal, therefore, is to work toward the requisite spiritual energy necessary to uplift our spirits and to soften our hearts. Yet too often we get bogged down in achieving materialistic goals. We lose track of our purposes in life, and life seems both empty and hollow. We must never forget the essential, spiritual aspect of existence; we must never become alienated from the spiritual realm.

In so emphasizing the spirit, it should be noted that our goal is by no means to partition Islam from life. There is inherent integration in Islam, integration reflecting the divine tawheed that renders any partitioning of life un-Islamic. Our goal is, rather, to show how spirituality unites Islam’s other aspects, imbuing them with purpose, reminding us all of why we do the things that we do.

In the upcoming articles we hope to discuss these questions and the myriad diseases of the heart with their respective solutions. Nevertheless, improvement cannot happen by mere intellection alone. The spiritual journey is a serious journey that requires constant introspection and self-evaluation; spiritual fitness requires a spiritual workout. At the end of every column, will be exercises we can perform at home, in our car, at work, etc. in order to increase our connectedness to Allah. Through reflection, we hope to nurture wholesome behaviors that engender positive virtues; a salubrious attitude toward life; a closer relationship with Allah; an increased commitment to Islam; and a deeper love of one’s fellow Muslims and human beings.

Consider the following questions, for example: How close do we feel to Allah? How many times per day do we remember Him? How would we characterize our relationship with Muhammad? Do we imagine him in every situation and wonder what he would do? How much enjoyment do we get out of prayer? How would we rate the quality of our relations with our fellow human beings? Are we a loving and caring person? How much do negative feelings affect our life? Before reading the next column, let us take a moment to think about our answers to these questions.

By the time that you read this, the blessed month of Ramadan will be either finishing or recently concluded, but the ultimate challenge of Ramadan lies in the rest of the year. Can we continue to suffuse our homes and environment with its sweet smell and spirit? May this column insha Allah, be one additional source of strength for you on the road ahead.

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We look forward to incorporating your feedback and questions into our future columns. Please send all correspondence to: [foodforthespirit@isna.net](mailto:foodforthespirit@isna.net). Please also visit us at our website where you can download this and previous columns at: <http://www.isna.net/foodforthespirit>

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