

# Exploring the Relationship between Integrity and the Practice of Fasting: An Analysis

Saifulazry Mokhtar<sup>1\*</sup>, Irma Wani Othman<sup>1</sup>, Azizan Januin<sup>1</sup>, Aisah Ahmad<sup>2</sup>, Kasoma Thia<sup>3</sup>, Ahmad Dzulfahmi Muhamad<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning (PPIB), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Fakulti Pengajian Islam, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

<sup>3</sup>SMK Tebobon, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

<sup>4</sup>Pusat Pengajian Pendidikan Jarak Jauh, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

\*Corresponding Author

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the relationship between integrity and fasting in Islam, emphasizing the role of fasting as a medium for shaping individual character, moral values, and spirituality. The study employs a qualitative research approach through a literature analysis method, which involves examining primary sources such as the Qur'an and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), as well as secondary sources including Islamic scholarly works, academic journal articles, and previous studies discussing aspects of integrity, self-discipline, trustworthiness, and social responsibility. This methodological approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the concept of integrity in the context of fasting from an Islamic perspective.

The findings indicate that fasting is not merely a physical ritual but a comprehensive spiritual and psychological exercise that cultivates internal integrity. Fasting trains honesty, sincerity, accountability, self-discipline, control of desires, time management, and heightened social awareness. Observing fasting with integrity encourages individuals to maintain ethical behaviour even without external supervision, thereby strengthening their relationship with Allah SWT and enhancing their responsibilities toward themselves and society. Additionally, fasting contributes to the formation of an integrity-based society by fostering empathy, justice, and social care. Thus, fasting functions as a vital instrument for moral and spiritual education in developing personal and societal integrity. Practicing fasting grounded in integrity can produce God-conscious, disciplined, and responsible individuals, in line with Islam's aim of cultivating noble character and promoting social well-being.

**Keywords:** Integrity, Fasting Worship, Self-Discipline, Honesty, Spiritual Education

## INTRODUCTION

Integrity is a core value that forms the foundation of an individual's noble character and commendable moral conduct. It encompasses the harmony between moral principles, intentions, speech, and actions in all aspects of life.

In the Islamic context, the concept of integrity is not limited merely to compliance with social norms or professional ethics; rather, it is deeply rooted in the spiritual relationship between human beings and Allah SWT. According to Al-Attas (1991), integrity in Islam is closely linked to the formation of *adab*, which refers to the recognition and acknowledgment of the true position of human beings as servants and vicegerents (*khalifah*) of Allah on earth. Therefore, Islamic integrity demands honesty, transparency, trustworthiness, and an inner awareness that every human action is under the observation and judgment of Allah SWT.

Based on this perspective, integrity is not merely an external value manifested in social interactions, but a reflection of an individual's faith and piety. The awareness that every action, whether performed openly or in secrecy, will be held accountable before Allah SWT encourages individuals to be responsible, honest, and morally upright in their daily lives.

This is in line with Islamic principles that emphasize a balance between the relationship with Allah (*ḥabl min Allāh*) and the relationship with fellow human beings (*ḥabl min al-nās*). True integrity emerges when both relationships are consistently and continuously maintained.

One form of worship that directly nurtures and tests an individual's inner integrity is fasting. Fasting is the third pillar of Islam and is obligatory for every Muslim who fulfils the prescribed conditions. The obligation of fasting is not merely ritualistic in nature but carries profound spiritual and moral objectives. This is clearly stated in the words of Allah SWT: "*O you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain piety*" (The Qur'an, Al-Baqarah 2:183). This verse emphasizes that the primary purpose of fasting is to cultivate *taqwa*, that is, individuals who possess a high level of moral awareness and a strong commitment to the commands and prohibitions of Allah SWT.

Fasting is not limited to abstaining from food and drink; rather, it constitutes a comprehensive spiritual exercise. It requires sincerity of intention, control over desires, and the regulation of both outward and inward behaviour throughout the fasting period. According to Kamaruddin (2017), fasting functions as a mechanism for spiritual purification that educates individuals to refrain from reprehensible behaviours such as lying, backbiting, using abusive language, and committing injustice. In this regard, fasting serves as an effective instrument of moral education, as it involves conscious self-control without external coercion.

The uniqueness of fasting lies in its private and concealed nature. Unlike other forms of worship that can be outwardly observed by others, the practice of fasting is known only to the individual and Allah SWT. AlQaradawi (1999) emphasizes that this condition makes fasting a true test of honesty and integrity, as a person can violate the rules of fasting without being detected by others, yet chooses to remain faithful to the trust of worship due to an awareness of Allah's constant supervision. Thus, fasting trains individuals to adhere to moral values not because of social pressure, but based on faith and spiritual responsibility.

In the context of daily life, the values of integrity cultivated through fasting help shape individuals who are consistent in practicing goodness, whether in personal, social, or professional matters. Individuals who habitually restrain themselves from actions that may diminish the reward of fasting indirectly learn the importance of trustworthiness, discipline, and honesty in situations where there is no external supervision (Nasution, 2015). These attitudes are subsequently reflected in positive social behaviour, such as fulfilling responsibilities with honesty, rejecting corruption, and respecting the rights of others.

Beyond shaping morally upright individuals, fasting also contributes to the development of a society with high integrity. When individuals possess moral awareness and a sense of responsibility toward Allah SWT, they are more inclined to uphold justice, transparency, and truth in social life.

According to Hashim (2014b), societies built upon the values of integrity and piety tend to be more stable, harmonious, and prosperous, as their members adhere firmly to strong moral principles in every action. Thus, fasting functions not only as an individual act of worship but also as an instrument of social development.

Integrity in the practice of fasting can be observed through several key elements, including honesty, transparency, trustworthiness, and consistency. Honesty ensures that the intention to fast is solely for the sake of Allah SWT; transparency requires the maintenance of both outward and inward conduct; trustworthiness instils a sense of responsibility toward Allah's commands; while consistency fosters self-discipline in performing acts of worship continuously (Rahman, 2018). Therefore, fasting can be regarded as a comprehensive spiritual and psychological training that shapes individuals with high integrity.

In conclusion, integrity and the practice of fasting are closely interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Fasting tests an individual's honesty, patience, and sincerity, while integrity serves as the fundamental basis for ensuring that the act of worship is carried out with full responsibility and awareness.

A deep understanding of this relationship is essential so that fasting does not remain merely a ritual practice, but functions as a medium for moral education, character formation, and the development of a society that is morally upright and highly integrated with integrity.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Integrity is a fundamental value in the formation of an ethical, honest, and responsible Muslim personality. Within the Islamic worldview, integrity transcends mere compliance with external rules and instead reflects harmony between intention (*niyyah*), speech, and action, grounded in continuous awareness that all deeds are accountable before Allah SWT (Al-Attas, 1991; Al-Ghazali, 2000; Hashim, 2014a). Integrity in Islam is closely associated with *taqwa*, self-discipline, honesty (*sidq*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), and moral consistency, which together shape ethical behaviour in both personal and social contexts (Beekun, 2012; Ahmad Yakob, 2022). Previous studies consistently affirm that individuals with high integrity demonstrate ethical responsibility even in the absence of external supervision, making integrity a critical foundation for the development of a just, harmonious, and morally accountable society (Alif & Wan Hasan, 2020; Kamri, 2016).

Within this ethical framework, Ramadan occupies a significant position in nurturing integrity, *taqwa*, and holistic Muslim character. Nordin (2017) describes Ramadan as a divine gift that educates individuals to become Godconscious through the cultivation of integrity, moral conduct, and obedience to Allah SWT, regardless of social status or position. The practice of fasting trains individuals to obey divine commands, regulate speech and behaviour, and continuously strive toward righteous living. The unique virtues of Ramadan, including the excellence of *Laylat al-Qadr*, further demonstrate Allah's mercy upon the ummah and provide opportunities for forgiveness, spiritual renewal, strengthened social bonds, and filial piety through prayer and charity, all of which ultimately serve the higher objective of achieving *taqwa*.

Fasting (*sawm*), as one of the five pillars of Islam, provides a distinctive spiritual and moral framework for cultivating integrity. Islamic teachings emphasize that fasting extends beyond abstaining from food and drink to include restraint from sinful acts, unethical behaviour, and false speech dimensions of conduct that are often hidden from public scrutiny and known only to Allah SWT (Al-Qaradawi, 1999; Kamaruddin, 2017; Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, 2001). Al-Ghazali (2000) classifies fasting into three levels: general fasting, specific fasting, and the fasting of the elect illustrating a progressive moral discipline governing physical actions, sensory control, and inner intentions. This holistic training strengthens patience, self-regulation, and ethical awareness, which are core components of integrity (Nasr, 2010; Beekun & Badawi, 2005).

The intrinsic relationship between fasting and integrity is particularly evident through the concept of internal accountability. During fasting, individuals are required to maintain obedience and moral restraint despite the absence of human monitoring, thereby reinforcing honesty, self-control, and trustworthiness (*amanah*) (Rahman, 2018; Kamri & Ramlan, 2018).

This internalised responsibility aligns closely with contemporary conceptualisations of integrity, which emphasise ethical consistency irrespective of situational pressure or external enforcement. Empirical findings further suggest that individuals who observe fasting with heightened spiritual consciousness exhibit greater ethical sensitivity, fairness, and responsibility in both personal and professional settings (Kamil et al., 2016; Saif, 2025).

In the context of higher education, Ramadan also plays a vital role in shaping the character of Muslim students as future national human capital. Abdul Razzaq and Azizan (2026) argue that Ramadan functions not only as a religious obligation but also as a comprehensive developmental platform for *Mahasiswa MADANI*, encompassing spiritual, emotional, social, and physical dimensions. Fasting enhances discipline, patience, mental resilience, and time management, while fostering honesty, integrity, and emotional regulation in facing academic and campus-life challenges. Furthermore, fasting cultivates empathy toward the underprivileged, encourages community engagement, and strengthens the relationship with Allah SWT through increased acts of worship, thereby promoting a balanced and sustainable lifestyle consistent with the principles of human development.

The literature also highlights the centrality of *amanah* in sustaining integrity at both individual and societal levels. The prophetic model of Nabi Muhammad SAW, renowned as *Al-Amin*, exemplifies the highest standard of trustworthiness even toward adversaries. However, contemporary realities indicate a decline in the value of *amanah*, manifested through corruption, abuse of power, and self-interest, particularly among leadership groups,

which has negatively impacted the image of Islam and its adherents (ikim.gov.my). In this regard, Ramadan is viewed as a crucial moral intervention period that facilitates spiritual purification and the reconstruction of trustworthiness through fasting practices that emphasise honesty, moderation, responsibility, and justice.

Supporting this view, Shaharom (2021) identifies integrity as a noble moral trait that should be reinforced during Ramadan, as it embodies honesty and reliability in action. Despite the implementation of national initiatives such as the National Integrity Plan and the National Anti-Corruption Plan, increasing corruption statistics indicate that the desired level of integrity remains unmet. This reality underscores the need for continuous moral education from early stages of life, with Ramadan serving as an effective pedagogical space for nurturing truthfulness, trustworthiness, and ethical speech grounded in *taqwa*.

Empirical evidence further reinforces the importance of spiritual intelligence in the development of integrity. A pilot study by Eusope and Azmi (2021) found that Muslim students in Malaysian public universities exhibit high levels of spiritual intelligence and a sound understanding of integrity. Although the correlation between spiritual intelligence and integrity was found to be positive yet weak and statistically insignificant, the study provides preliminary empirical support for the role of spiritual development in shaping ethical character among students as future national assets.

Finally, Ibrahim (2021) emphasises that fasting possesses unique characteristics, as it is performed continuously throughout daily routines without disrupting normal activities, yet it demands substantial spiritual strength, patience, and self-restraint from permissible desires. Rooted in sincerity, loyalty, and trust toward Allah SWT, fasting nurtures constant God-consciousness and obedience to divine commands. Through fasting, qualities such as patience, humility, discipline, and moral vigilance are embedded across all aspects of life, including speech, cognition, time management, and social relations. Consequently, fasting functions not merely as a ritual act of worship but as a comprehensive mechanism for cultivating integrity and shaping a balanced Muslim personality that attains success in both worldly life and the hereafter.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach using the literature analysis method to explore and understand the relationship between integrity and fasting from an Islamic perspective. The qualitative approach is chosen because it is well suited to examining conceptual, normative, and interpretative phenomena, particularly in the fields of religious and moral studies. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research allows researchers to understand the meanings, values, and principles that shape a concept based on textual sources and scholarly perspectives. In the context of this study, this approach facilitates a deeper understanding of the role of fasting as a medium for the formation of both internal and social integrity.

The literature analysis method is used as the primary data collection technique. Research data are obtained from relevant primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the Qur'an and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad SAW, which form the main foundation for understanding the concept of fasting and the value of integrity in Islam. Secondary sources consist of academic reference books, works by Islamic scholars, peer reviewed journal articles, and previous studies that discuss the spiritual, moral, and social dimensions of fasting (Al-Attas, 1991; Al-Qaradawi, 1999; Kamaruddin, 2017; Rahman, 2018). The use of diverse sources aims to ensure a comprehensive and balanced understanding between revealed texts (*naqli*) and contemporary scholarly analysis.

This literature analysis approach enables the study to evaluate the concept of integrity within the context of fasting in depth, particularly in terms of honesty, trustworthiness, self-discipline, responsibility, and social awareness. By examining the views of Islamic scholars and relevant empirical studies, the research identifies how fasting functions not only as a ritual act of worship but also as an instrument of moral education and character formation. This aligns with Al-Attas's (1991) view that Islamic education aims to produce individuals of *adab* who possess strong inner integrity.

Data analysis in this study is conducted through three main stages. The first stage involves data collection, which includes identifying and compiling reference sources related to fasting, integrity, moral development, and Muslim character formation. This process is carried out systematically by examining both classical and



contemporary works to ensure that the data used are relevant, authoritative, and supportive of the research objectives. At this stage, sources that are not directly relevant or lack credibility are excluded to maintain the quality of the analysis.

The second stage involves data screening and thematic categorization. The collected data are analysed and grouped into several core themes, including individual character development, self-discipline training, time management, moral strengthening, control of desires, and social responsibility. This thematic grouping facilitates a focused and structured analysis while helping to identify patterns and relationships between the practice of fasting and the formation of integrity. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is an effective method in qualitative research for identifying key meanings and patterns within textual data.

The third stage involves the interpretation and discussion of the research findings. At this stage, the categorized data are critically analysed by linking them to the conceptual framework of integrity and the objectives of the study. The discussion evaluates how the practice of fasting contributes to the development of individuals' internal integrity, such as honesty and trustworthiness, as well as its impact on the formation of an ethical and responsible society. These interpretations are supported by the views of Islamic scholars and findings from previous studies to strengthen the validity of the arguments presented.

Thus, the methodology adopted in this study enables a deep and holistic understanding of the function of fasting as a form of moral, psychological, and spiritual education. The qualitative approach through literature analysis is not only appropriate for examining the concept of integrity from a theoretical perspective, but also relevant in explaining the practical implications of fasting for individual and societal development. Consequently, this study is expected to contribute to the expansion of academic discourse on integrity and fasting within the Islamic context.

## DISCUSSION

### The History of Fasting in Islam

Fasting is one of the oldest and most universal forms of worship in human history, practiced not only in Islam but also in various religions and cultures around the world. In Islam, fasting is prescribed as one of the pillars of Islam with a clear objective: to enhance piety (*taqwa*) and moral consciousness among Muslims. The Qur'an states: "*O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain piety*" (Al-Baqarah, 2:183). This command emphasizes that fasting is not merely abstaining from hunger and thirst, but also a means of self-development that nurtures discipline, patience, and self-restraint—all of which are closely related to personal integrity. From a historical Islamic perspective, fasting was formalized during the month of Ramadan by Prophet Muhammad SAW, replacing the more loosely practiced fasting of the pre-Islamic period and emphasizing not only ritual observance but also the moral and social development of society (Nasr, 2003; Esposito, 2010).

Historical analysis shows that fasting was practiced by earlier communities long before Islam. The followers of Prophet Ibrahim (AS), Prophet Musa (AS), and Prophet Isa (AS) also emphasized self-restraint as a means of drawing closer to God, thereby instilling values of discipline and self-reflection. In Jewish tradition, fasting such as on Yom Kippur emphasizes introspection and repentance, where individuals abstain from food, drink, and negative behaviours to purify the soul (Heschel, 1965). Christian tradition likewise emphasizes fasting as a spiritual discipline, particularly during Lent, where individuals abstain not only from physical desires but also from morally questionable actions to enhance self-awareness and their relationship with God (McGowan, 2006). This analysis shows that despite differences in ritual context, the universal purpose of fasting is moral development and the cultivation of integrity, as it trains individuals to align their intentions, words, and actions.

In Islam, fasting emphasizes ethical and moral dimensions directly related to integrity. Prophet Muhammad SAW stressed that true fasting is not merely abstaining from food and drink, but also refraining from sinful acts such as lying, cheating, backbiting, and injustice (Rahman, 2011). This demonstrates that fasting is a spiritual discipline that strengthens integrity through self-control. Al-Ghazali (n.d.) explains that spiritual practices such as fasting purify the heart, harmonize reason, emotion, and action, and train individuals to remain consistent in

intention and behaviour. In this sense, fasting is not merely a ritual act of worship but a comprehensive instrument of character development, in which integrity naturally emerges from sustained discipline and selfawareness.

Beyond spiritual aspects, modern psychological studies also support the view that fasting can enhance individual integrity. Research in self-control and motivational psychology shows that training oneself to resist physical desires and negative behaviours increases self-regulation, moral awareness, and behavioural consistency all essential characteristics of integrity (Baumeister & Tierney, 2011; Kidwell & Bennett, 1993). When individuals restrain themselves from eating, drinking, or unethical actions, they simultaneously strengthen their ability to resist temptation in other situations, reinforce commitment to moral principles, and build a reputation for integrity. In other words, fasting cultivates integrity not only through spiritual discipline but also through the psychological strengthening of self-control and personal ethics.

Furthermore, integrity in the context of fasting can also be viewed from a social perspective. Communal fasting practices, such as congregational *tarawih* prayers and breaking fast together, not only strengthen social bonds but also instil values of honesty, justice, and social responsibility. Those who fast are reminded to regulate their behaviour in social interactions, such as avoiding conflict, guarding speech, and acting fairly toward others. This aligns with the concept of integrity as a unity between personal morality and social responsibility, where fasting trains individuals to internalize ethical values in daily life rather than treating worship as a purely ritualistic act (Lau, 2007).

In conclusion, tracing the history of fasting and its relationship with integrity demonstrates that fasting is not merely abstention from food and drink, but a holistic moral, spiritual, and psychological training. From an Islamic perspective, fasting builds integrity through self-restraint, discipline, and consistency of intention and action, in line with ethical principles taught in the Qur'an and Hadith. Modern studies also confirm that fasting enhances self-control and moral awareness, strengthening integrity in personal, social, and professional contexts. Therefore, fasting can be understood as a key instrument in the formation of integrity-driven character, making it relevant not only as an act of worship but also as a comprehensive moral and social development tool.

### **The Concept of Integrity in the Practice of Fasting**

In daily life as members of society and citizens, individuals are expected to display good conduct that reflects moral excellence and honesty in speech, thought, and action. Integrity can be understood as a state that embodies honesty and trustworthiness across various aspects of life, including one's relationship with oneself, society, and Allah SWT (Abd. Khalid et al., 2021). Integrity not only forms the foundation of ethical and morally upright individuals but also fosters a sense of responsibility, self-discipline, and loyalty to moral and spiritual values. In Islam, every action is evaluated by Allah SWT, as reminded in Surah al-Taubah (9:105), which urges people to act diligently because all deeds will be accounted for. Thus, an individual's level of integrity can be observed through personal behaviour, social responsibility, and willingness to comply with divine commands and societal norms (Abd. Khalid et al., 2021).

The month of Ramadan offers a unique opportunity for individuals to strengthen integrity through fasting. This act of worship is not limited to abstaining from hunger, thirst, and desire, but also educates individuals to maintain honesty, discipline, responsibility, empathy, patience, and self-reflection in daily life. Fasting is a personal act of worship between the individual and Allah SWT, without human supervision, making it a true test of honesty and sincerity. Individuals who fast with full awareness do so solely for Allah, not for public recognition, emphasizing that integrity begins with the self and sincere intention in every action (Abd. Khalid et al., 2021). Moreover, the discipline of refraining from food, drink, and temporary pleasures strengthens selfcontrol, enabling individuals to delay gratification, regulate impulses, and remain consistent with principles and values despite temptation or pressure (Kamaruddin, 2017).

### **Elements of Integrity in the Practice of Fasting**

The practice of fasting emphasizes several essential elements of integrity. First is honesty and sincerity, whereby individuals perform fasting with full awareness solely for the sake of Allah SWT, without seeking human recognition. This element highlights that integrity begins internally, with honesty toward one's intentions and motivations (Abd. Khalid et al., 2021). Second, discipline and self-control are cultivated through abstaining from

hunger and thirst, teaching individuals to delay gratification and regulate impulses in pursuit of higher goals. This discipline is fundamental to ensuring that actions remain aligned with values and principles, even in difficult situations or when faced with temptation (Kamaruddin, 2017).

Third, responsibility and obedience are reinforced through fulfilling the obligation of fasting with awareness, reflecting an individual's willingness to comply with divine commands and societal norms. This value enhances social consciousness, as individuals with integrity respect laws, norms, and entrusted responsibilities in daily life (Ahmad Yakob, 2022). Fourth, empathy and social concern are developed when individuals experience a degree of hardship like that of the less fortunate. This process fosters sensitivity, a desire to help others, and a willingness to contribute positively to the community, making integrity not only personal but also social (Berita RTM, 2023).

Additionally, patience and perseverance are tested through enduring hunger, thirst, and discomfort. This training cultivates resilience and emotional endurance, which are essential in upholding principles and values, especially in challenging situations (Rahman, 2018). Finally, Ramadan provides space for self-reflection and spiritual purification, allowing individuals to evaluate their actions, address weaknesses, and strive for moral and ethical improvement. This introspective process strengthens self-awareness as a key component of integrity (Al-Attas, 1991). Thus, fasting is not merely a spiritual obligation but a platform for instilling and reinforcing integrity. The elements of honesty, discipline, responsibility, empathy, patience, and self-reflection shape a strong moral character, ethical personality, and responsible citizenry. The application of these values not only enhances individual quality but also contributes to the formation of an integrated, just, and harmonious society, in line with the ultimate purpose of fasting: to produce individuals who are pious and morally upright (Al-Qaradawi, 1999; Hashim, 2014b; Ahmad Yakob, 2022).

### **Refraining from Sin as a Reflection of Moral Integrity in Fasting**

In Islam, fasting is not merely abstaining from hunger and thirst, but requires control over desires, behaviour, and all aspects of life in accordance with Islamic values. This reflects a high level of moral integrity, as it requires continuous self-monitoring even without human supervision. In fasting, integrity refers to honesty and faithfulness to religious principles, reflected in speech, actions, and thoughts. Prophet Muhammad SAW said: *"Whoever does not give up false speech and acting upon it, Allah has no need of his giving up food and drink"* (Narrated by al-Bukhari). This hadith clearly emphasizes that the effectiveness of fasting is not measured solely by physical restraint, but by moral purity. Those who fast yet continue sinful behaviours such as backbiting, lying, or harming others fail to fulfil the spirit and purpose of fasting, highlighting the importance of integrity in this act of worship (Al-Qaradawi, 1999).

Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi (1999) emphasized that fasting is an intensive form of worship that trains individuals to protect themselves from all forms of wrongdoing. True fasting requires restraining the tongue from harmful speech, the eyes from sinful sights, and the heart from negative thoughts. Imam al-Ghazali, in *Ihya' Ulum alDin*, categorized fasting into three levels: general fasting, special fasting, and the fasting of the elect, which involves guarding the heart from everything other than Allah. These levels demand strong self-control, where integrity is tested through awareness, intention, and sincerity in every action (Al-Ghazali, 2000).

Fasting also serves as internal moral education by increasing awareness of minor sins that may otherwise be overlooked. During Ramadan, individuals with integrity become more cautious in speech, more patient in facing challenges, and more diligent in righteous deeds. All this stems from moral integrity the ability to do what is right even when no one is watching (Rahman, 2018). Overall, integrity in fasting, manifested through refraining from sin, reflects noble character and spiritual discipline, making fasting not merely a ritual but a moral training that produces honest, responsible, and pious individuals, in accordance with the divine purpose stated in Surah al-Baqarah (2:183).

### **Fasting Instills Trustworthiness and Honesty in the Formation of Individual Integrity**

Integrity is a fundamental foundation in shaping moral and ethical identity. In Islam, integrity encompasses not only outward compliance but also inner purity and sincerity in action. Fasting, as a pillar of Islam, emphasizes spiritual training that nurtures noble values, including trustworthiness and honesty as core elements of integrity. Thamrin (2024) notes that fasting, including voluntary fasting, plays a significant role in shaping behaviour and

spirituality. Honesty is cultivated by refraining from lying, cheating, or backbiting, as fasting is a hidden act known only to Allah SWT, requiring a high level of honesty and trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness is further strengthened through fasting, as individuals are responsible for safeguarding their fast and avoiding actions that diminish its reward, even without human supervision. In Islamic ethics, involves moral responsibility beyond formal obligations (Eggen, 2021). Through fasting, individuals learn intrinsic responsibility, maintaining their worship and behaving responsibly in all aspects of life. Those who uphold trust in fasting demonstrate the capacity for consistent honesty and accountability in daily life.

Honesty is central to integrity, reflecting alignment between words, intentions, and actions. In fasting, honesty is tested when individuals refrain from actions that invalidate the fast despite being unseen. Rabie et al. (2024) found in an Egyptian study that fasting individuals exhibited higher honesty in situations requiring truthful disclosure. This shows that fasting enhances not only spirituality but also moral ethics. Honesty cultivated through fasting arises from internal moral awareness, fear of Allah, and spiritual responsibility, fostering ethical behaviour even when tempted (Saif, 2025).

Fasting also teaches time management, responsibility, and discipline such as observing *suhoor* and breaking fast punctually while discouraging dishonesty in daily transactions. This process shapes individuals who are transparent, reliable, and trustworthy, strengthening personal integrity and fostering ethical social and professional conduct. The integration of trustworthiness and honesty through fasting produces individuals with high self-awareness, responsibility, and ethical standards, contributing to the formation of an honest and harmonious society (Ahmad Yakob, 2022; Thamrin, 2024).

### **Cultivating Self-Discipline as the Foundation of True Integrity through Fasting**

Fasting in Islam is not merely abstaining from food and drink, but an intensive training that develops self-discipline as the foundation of true integrity. This discipline is cultivated through daily practices during fasting, such as restraining physical desires, guarding speech from falsehood or backbiting, controlling anger, and avoiding sinful actions (Al-Ghazali, 2000). The discipline developed through these practices educates both the heart and mind to adhere consistently to religious boundaries. Observing *suhoor* and breaking fast on time also instils respect for time management, a key trait of disciplined individuals (Al-Qaradawi, 1999).

Fasting requires honesty in worship, as individuals must refrain from actions that invalidate the fast, even when unseen. This nurtures internal discipline and obedience to rules (Thamrin, 2024). When practiced consistently throughout Ramadan, this discipline forms positive habits that persist beyond the fasting period. For example, individuals who adhere to prayer schedules and fasting routines often become more disciplined in daily responsibilities, including task completion and financial management. Fasting also promotes moderation and restraint, relevant in addressing modern challenges such as impulsive online consumption (Saif, 2025).

Moreover, self-discipline cultivated through fasting directly reinforces integrity. Fasting is difficult to monitor externally; individuals may appear to fast publicly while violating it privately, but only Allah knows true sincerity (Martono La Moane et al., 2024). Those who truly fast maintain honesty and refrain from wrongdoing even in private. Discipline in restraining from sin, adhering to fasting rules, and guarding speech ultimately develops true integrity encompassing honesty, responsibility, and trustworthiness in daily life (Novianti, 2023).

Individuals who are disciplined during fasting tend to become more honest, responsible, and trustworthy in social interactions. This training instils awareness to avoid deceit, exploitation, or abuse of trust. Integrity shaped through fasting becomes a strong life principle that benefits individuals and fosters a more ethical, harmonious, and trustworthy society (Ahmad Yakob, 2022). In essence, the discipline developed through fasting is not merely physical or ritual, but the foundation of comprehensive moral integrity.

### **Making Worship More Meaningful and Effective through Integrity**

Integrity is a crucial element that elevates fasting beyond a mere physical act; it ensures that inner growth develops throughout the act of worship. The integration of integrity into the practice of fasting enhances its effectiveness, as individuals do not merely follow customs or traditions, but truly understand the purpose of



fasting namely, to attain piety (*taqwa*) and draw closer to Allah SWT (Martono La Moane et al., 2024). Fasting with integrity renders the act sincere, heightens self-awareness, and encourages individuals to refrain from sinful behaviour, guard their speech, and increase righteous deeds. Practicing fasting with integrity also leads to lasting inner transformation. Individuals become more patient, gentle-hearted, appreciative of Allah's blessings, and consistently honest in their actions. Behavioural changes during Ramadan will only endure if they stem from integrity and internal awareness rather than social pressure. Thus, fasting becomes a profound moral transformation because it guides individuals toward authentic character development (Novianti, 2023).

Integrity in fasting ensures that all acts of worship are performed sincerely, free from false intentions or corrupt practices, thereby safeguarding the spiritual rewards promised by Allah, including forgiveness of sins and spiritual elevation. Individuals who maintain integrity in fasting experience inner fulfilment, a deeper relationship with Allah, and meaningful life changes. Without integrity, fasting becomes hollow and remains a physical ritual devoid of true spiritual significance (Novianti, 2023; Martono La Moane et al., 2024). Overall, fasting is not merely an obligation to abstain from food and drink, but a spiritual exercise that cultivates self-discipline as the foundation of genuine integrity. The discipline refined throughout Ramadan is translated into honesty, trustworthiness, and responsibility in daily life, thereby shaping ethical individuals and harmonious communities. In other words, fasting integrates physical restraint, emotional regulation, and the strengthening of moral values to produce disciplined and morally upright individuals with integrity.

### **Fasting Cultivates Integrity through Time Management, Daily Responsibility, and Self-Awareness**

Fasting is not merely abstaining from hunger and thirst, but a profound spiritual and physical exercise. Particularly during the month of Ramadan, Muslims are reminded to enhance moral conduct, act nobly, and embody virtuous values in daily life. Integrity which encompasses honesty, transparency, and alignment between attitude, intention, and action is one of the core values relevant to building a responsible and ethical personality (Alif & Wan Hasan, 2020). The practice of fasting demands effective time management and the fulfilment of daily responsibilities without neglecting entrusted duties. In this way, Muslims are guided to develop spiritual integrity through efficient time management and the conscientious execution of ethical responsibilities in everyday life.

Fasting directly cultivates self-discipline in time management. Muslims begin their day earlier for pre-dawn meals (*suhoor*), observe precise times for breaking the fast, and perform the five daily prayers punctually. These practices train individuals to become more time-conscious, organize daily routines systematically, and balance worldly activities with acts of worship effectively (Al-Turath, 2024). Awareness of time not only enhances worship but also improves effectiveness in work, learning, and social responsibilities. Proper time management reduces procrastination and laziness, which often undermine work performance and interpersonal relationships. During fasting, individuals are trained to use time efficiently to fulfil both worldly and religious obligations, thereby cultivating a strong sense of responsibility as a daily commitment.

Fasting also instils responsibility in carrying out daily tasks. Despite experiencing hunger and thirst, Muslims are still required to fulfil their duties and responsibilities with full commitment. For instance, a fasting employee must complete work tasks honestly even when feeling fatigued due to fasting. Performing duties with the intention of worship enhances positive effort, as sincerity and consistency in fulfilling responsibilities bring blessings and shape individuals into righteous persons (Pejabat Mufti Wilayah Persekutuan, 2020). With the awareness that every trust will be accounted for before Allah, a fasting individual strives to carry out responsibilities sincerely and meticulously, thereby instilling integrity rooted in self-awareness and faith in Allah.

Furthermore, one of the primary wisdoms of fasting is training individuals to be honest and sincere even when unobserved. A fasting person refrains from eating or drinking while alone not due to human supervision, but out of consciousness of Allah (Sinar Harian, 2021).

Integrity that arises from sincerity is far stronger than integrity enforced by external monitoring. A study by Alif and Wan Hasan (2020) indicates that integrity is a key element of good leadership and organizational success, closely linked to spiritual values and Islamic responsibility. Hence, fasting not only builds individual discipline but also serves as a model for ethical conduct across all areas of life, including work, family, and society, through transparency and honesty.

Fasting also nurtures self-awareness and responsibility toward Allah SWT. This act of worship functions as a test of restraint from negative behaviours such as lying, backbiting, or gazing at prohibited matters, as emphasized in a hadith of the Prophet SAW: “Fasting is a shield. When one of you is fasting, let him not use foul language or behave ignorantly. If someone fights or insults him, let him say: ‘Indeed, I am fasting’” (Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim). Through this discipline, individuals are trained to become more conscious of their behaviour, thoughts, and emotions, thereby enhancing patience and accountability for every action.

Beyond this, fasting fosters awareness of human dependence on Allah SWT. When experiencing hunger and thirst, individuals recognize their own weakness without Allah’s mercy and provision. This awareness nurtures gratitude, humility, and strengthens the heart’s connection with God. The Prophet SAW stated that whoever fasts out of faith and in hope of reward from Allah will have their past sins forgiven (Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim). This consciousness shapes individuals who are more obedient, responsible, and mindful of their relationship with Allah.

In addition to responsibility toward Allah, fasting also instils social awareness and responsibility toward others. By experiencing hunger, individuals gain a deeper understanding of the hardships faced by the less fortunate, which encourages charity, assistance to those in need, and the development of empathy (Al-Insan, 76:8–9). Thus, fasting educates individuals to be responsible not only toward Allah but also toward society, promoting ethical, humane, and integrity-driven actions.

In conclusion, fasting is an effective form of spiritual and moral education. It instils integrity through disciplined time management, fulfilment of daily responsibilities, self-restraint, self-awareness, and social responsibility. Those who understand and internalize the true meaning of fasting become individuals who uphold dignity, commitment, and moral principles not only during Ramadan but throughout their daily lives thereby contributing to the development of an honest, principled, and harmonious society (IKIM, 2021; Alif & Wan Hasan, 2020). The summary of this discussion is illustrated in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1: Elements of Integrity in the Practice of Fasting**

Source: Research Study 2026

## CONCLUSION

Overall, this discussion emphasizes that the act of fasting in Islam plays a highly significant role in the development of individual integrity. Fasting is not merely the act of refraining from food and drink, but a comprehensive spiritual and educational process that cultivates self-restraint, sincerity, and moral consciousness. Through fasting, individuals are trained to control their desires, preserve ethical values, and align intentions, words, and actions consistently. This process nurtures honesty even in the absence of external supervision,

strengthens accountability in fulfilling responsibilities, and reinforces self-discipline in daily life, all of which form the core foundation of true integrity. Furthermore, fasting shapes consistent ethical behaviour that becomes visible through humility, empathy, and responsible conduct. By experiencing hunger and self-restraint, individuals develop a deeper awareness of the struggles of the less fortunate, which encourages compassion, fairness, and social responsibility. These qualities reflect Islamic moral values and naturally function as a form of *da'wah*, as good character and ethical conduct influence others more effectively than verbal preaching. In this way, fasting not only strengthens personal integrity but also supports the moral dimension of *da'wah* within society.

In addition, fasting promotes effective time management, emotional control, and conscientious fulfilment of daily duties, contributing to ethical behaviour and harmonious social interactions. The integrity cultivated through fasting is therefore not temporary or ritualistic but has the potential to become a lasting life principle. Consequently, fasting should be understood as an essential instrument in the holistic development of individuals with integrity—spiritually, morally, psychologically, and socially. The practice of fasting, grounded in integrity, can produce God-conscious, disciplined, and responsible individuals who contribute positively to societal wellbeing and the preservation of noble values in both religious and communal life. This study is expected to enrich academic discourse on the relationship between fasting and integrity and to open avenues for further research in the fields of education, leadership, and Islamic social development.

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