

CURBING PROMISCUOUS SEX THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF FASTING: AN ISLAMIC APPROACH

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Abstract

Promiscuous sex is a social issue that is now rampant and has implications on society that includes an alarming increase in premarital sex among adolescence, the increase in numbers of children out-of-wedlock, rising infidelity cases and divorce rates. To curb the problem of promiscuous sex, Islamic law has recognized the practice of fasting as a practical approach to control sexual desire and fornication. This paper intends to evaluate how the philosophy and practice of fasting in Islam help curb promiscuous sexual behavior. This study employs a qualitative research design using interviews, a content analysis approach that examined various materials sourced from primary and secondary data related to the topic under study. The documents encompass Holy al-Qur'an, al-Hadith, theses, books, and academic journal articles focusing on topics of

fasting practice to curb promiscuous sex. Data gathered were grouped into codes, categories, and themes. Fasting is not just about suppressing hunger and thirst but includes restraining the self from doing things that are forbidden in Islam. Interestingly, the practice of fasting in Islam helped shaped human sexual behavior through the formation of spiritual, physiological and psychological aspects. The findings can be utilized by stakeholders especially in formulating rehabilitation modules for cases of promiscuous sex.

Keywords: Promiscuous sex; fasting practices; Islamic approach; spirituality; sexual desire.

Khulasah

Perbuatan salah laku seks kini berleluasa dan memberikan implikasi kepada masyarakat termasuk peningkatan seks tanpa nikah dalam kalangan remaja, peningkatan jumlah anak tak sah taraf, peningkatan kes kecurangan dan kadar perceraian. Bagi membendung masalah ini, syariat Islam telah mengiktiraf amalan berpuasa sebagai satu bentuk pendekatan praktikal untuk mengawal keinginan seks serta pencabulan. Makalah ini bertujuan menilai bagaimana falsafah dan amalan berpuasa dalam Islam boleh membantu dalam usaha membendung perbuatan keinginan seks secara salah. Kajian ini mengaplikasikan reka bentuk penyelidikan kualitatif melalui pendekatan temu bual, analisis kandungan dengan pengkajian ke atas pelbagai bahan yang bersumber dari data primer dan sekunder yang berkaitan dengan topik kajian. Dokumen-dokumen tersebut merangkumi kitab suci al-Quran, Hadis, tesis, buku dan jurnal akademik yang memfokuskan kepada topik amalan puasa untuk membendung masalah seks yang meruncing. Data kajian seterusnya disusun dalam bentuk kod, kategori dan tema. Berpuasa bukan sekadar menahan lapar dan dahaga tetapi menahan diri daripada melakukan perkara-perkara yang dilarang dalam Islam. Menariknya,

amalan berpuasa dalam Islam mampu membantu membentuk tingkah laku seksual manusia melalui pengukuhan aspek kerohanian, fisiologi dan psikologi. Dapatan ini dapat dimanfaatkan oleh pihak berkepentingan terutamanya dalam merangka modul pemulihan untuk kes salah laku seks.

Kata kunci: Salah laku seks; amalan berpuasa; pendekatan Islam, kerohanian, keinginan seks.

Introduction

Promiscuous sex not only plagues society in non-Muslim countries but is also a rising problem in Islamic countries that strictly prohibit such activities. Promiscuous sex is defined as engaging in sexual activity openly with different partners or being indiscriminate in the choice of sexual partners. The term promiscuity may carry a social stigma and moral judgment in countries that practice monogamous relationships.¹ In Islamic countries, promiscuity is strictly prohibited. There are 10 countries that allow promiscuity based on the total involvement of its people with prostitution activities in the form of commercial and tourism purposes. The countries are arranged in descending order being the Netherlands followed by Brazil, Indonesia, Colombia, Greece, Germany, Dominican Republic, France, Kiwis, Philippines, and Thailand. These countries allow activities such as prostitution because it contributes to the profits and economic growth of the country.²

In general, promiscuous behavior not only involves individuals who have a heterosexual sexual orientation but

¹ Justin K. Mogilski et al., "Life History and Multi-Partner Mating: A Novel Explanation for Moral Stigma against Consensual Non-monogamy" *Frontiers in Psychology* 10 (2020), 1-13.

² "Senarai 10 Negara dengan Budaya Seks Paling Bebas di Dunia," Mynewshub, accessed 21 July 2021, <https://www.mynewshub.tv/hangat/senarai-10-negara-dengan-budaya-seks-paling-bebas-di-dunia/>.

also homosexuals such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender groups.³ The issue of promiscuous sex has sparked debate among various parties on whether it should be eradicated or continued in the name of human rights⁴ or for commercial purposes.⁵

One of the implications of promiscuous behavior can be seen from the statistics gathered by the Ministry of Health Malaysia where out-of-wedlock adolescent pregnancy was reported at 3,694 cases from 2014 until 2018. 354 abortion cases were reported nationwide during the same period by Royal Malaysia Police. The National Registration Department recorded a total of 4,992 and 1,664 births of illegitimate children for the year 2017 and June 2018 respectively who were born to young mothers aged 18 years and below.⁶ The technological advancement has resulted in easy access to pornographic sites and the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission has reported blocking 1,173 pornographic sites in 2016.

In 2018, a study conducted by Malaysians Against Pornography revealed 80% of children aged 10 to 17 viewed pornography intentionally and 89% of children

³ Farahwahida Mohd. Yusof & Norazila Sugiman, "Persepsi Pelajar Institusi Pengajian Tinggi Awam terhadap Amalan Seks," *Journal of Education Psychology and Counseling* 1 (2011), 94-114.

⁴ Abdul Rahman Ramdzan et al., "Lesbian, Gay, Biseksual dan Transgender (LGBT): Antara Hak Individu dan Kesannya," in *Seksualiti Manusia: Psikologi, Komunikasi, Orientasi Seksual dan Metodologi Penyelidikan*, ed. Hatta Sidi et al. (Bangi: Penerbit UKM, 2020), 103-116.

⁵ Zofia Reych, "Thailand to Curb Burgeoning Sex Tourism," *Aseantoday*, accessed 18 July 2021, <https://www.aseantoday.com/2016/07/thailand-to-curb-the-burgeoning-sex-tourism/?lang=ms>.

⁶ Natasha Joibi, "5000 Bayi Lahir dari Remaja Bawah 18 Tahun," *Mstar Online*, accessed 20 May 2021, <https://www.mstar.com.my/lokal/semasa/2018/07/23/lahir-bawah-umur>.

aged 13 to 17 fall victim to online sexual crimes.⁷ Substance abuse is one of the contributing factors of heightened sexual desire and subsequently premarital sex.⁸

Promiscuous sex activities are risky behaviors that may affect an individual's well-being, higher chance of contracting sexually transmitted diseases,⁹ increased likelihood of adultery,¹⁰ collapse of family institutions, being pregnant out-of-wedlock and increase in the birth of illegitimate children.¹¹ This may lead to other crimes such as human trafficking¹² and abortion.¹³ The human struggle in controlling sexual instincts was once recorded in the

⁷ Malaysian Againts Pornography, accessed 15 May 2021, <https://www.malaysiansagainstpornography.com/>

⁸ Deepak Ghadigaonkar & Pratima Murthy, "Sexual Dysfunction in Persons with Substance Use Disorders," *Journal of Psychosexual Health* 1(2) (2019): 117-121.

⁹ Nurul Husna Mansor, "Modul Keagamaan untuk Remaja Hamil Luar Nikah di Pusat Perlindungan Wanita di Selangor: Kajian Pelaksanaan dan Masalah," PhD thesis, (Universiti Malaya, 2016), 105.

¹⁰ Khairul Hamimah Mohammad Jodi, Azizi Che Seman & Mohd. Afifuddin Mohammad, "Salah Laku Seksual dalam Kalangan Remaja," In *Dimensi Islam dalam Penyelidikan Kontemporari*, ed. Mohd Yakub @ Zulkifli Mohd Yusoff (Kuala Lumpur: Akademi Pengajian Islam Universiti Malaya, 2013), 45-64.

¹¹ Zainudin Sharif & Norazmah Mohamad Roslan, "Faktor-faktor yang Mempengaruhi Remaja Terlibat dalam Masalah Sosial di Sekolah Tunas Bakti, Sungai Lereh Melaka," *Journal of Education Psychology & Counselling* 1 (2011), 111-140.

¹² Nurul Amirah Hamzah, Nooraini Othman & Wardatul Aishah Musa, "Pemerdagangan Manusia di Malaysia: Isu dan Usaha Membanteras," *International Journal of Law, Government and Communication* 4(15) (2019), 130-140; Norcikeyonn Samuni & Nor-Ina Kanyo, "Usaha Malaysia dalam Membanteras Jenayah Pemerdagangan Orang: Satu Tinjauan," *International Journal of Environment, Society and Space* 1(1)(2013), 62-74.

¹³ Azmawaty Mohamad Nor et al., "The Turning Point in an Unwanted Teenage Pregnancy: A Psychoemotional Perspective," *Malaysia Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences* 15(1) (2019), 30-36.

Quran through the story of Prophet Yusuf and Zulaikha which eventually led to his slander and imprisonment.¹⁴

Similarly, there is a story recorded in a hadith about a woman who met the Prophet (PBUH) and asked to be punished for adultery for being pregnant out of wedlock shows that the problem of sexuality is not a new thing that plagues human beings.¹⁵ Clearly, promiscuous activities according to the Islamic perspective are a form of adultery that stems from a human failure to control sexual desire, while the conduct of sex according to the Shari'ah is strongly emphasized in Maqasid Shari'ah which aims to keep the sanctity of human lineage or descent from harm.¹⁶ This article intends to explore the extent of promiscuous behavior that may be curbed through the practice of fasting based on research conducted on texts from the Qur'an, al-Hadith and the views of Muslim scholars.

Promiscuous Sex Behavior

Promiscuous sex means having sex without being legally married¹⁷ and is also described as behavior driven by sexual activities conducted with various partners¹⁸ that may involve two or more individuals without planning to take the relationship seriously. Promiscuous sex also was described as intercourse that occurs between individuals outside the marriage bond either voluntarily or forcibly

¹⁴ Surah Yusuf, 23-24.

¹⁵ Al-Nawawi, *Sahih Muslim bi Sharh al-Imam al-Nawawi*, Kitab al-Hudud, Bab Had al-Zina, Hadith Number. 4433 (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr, 1983) 203-204.

¹⁶ Abu Ishaq Ibrahim Ibn Musa Ibn Muhammad al-Lakhami al-Shatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat*, vol. 2 (Saudi Arabia: Dar Ibn 'Affan, 1997), 19-20.

¹⁷ Kamarul Azmi Jasmi, "Masalah Seksual dalam Kalangan Remaja dan Penyelesaiannya," In *Remaja Hebat: Batasan dan Halangan Kecemerlangan Remaja Muslim*, eds. Jasmi, K. A., 1st ed. (Skudai: Penerbit UTM, 2017), 35-60.

¹⁸ Sarlito W. Sarwono, *Psikologi Remaja* (Jakarta: Charisma Putra Utama, 2011), 18.

that may involve kissing, oral sex or penetrative intercourse.¹⁹

Based on the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) conducted in 2017, 7.3% of adolescents in Malaysia aged 13 to 17 have had sex. Of that number, 35% of boys and 27% of girls admitted to having sex for the first time before the age of 14. Meanwhile, 21% of adolescent boys and 11% of girls admit to having sex with more than one partner.²⁰ Adolescents are driven to promiscuous behavior because of their desire to explore and as a sign of maturity. Female adolescents are found to be at higher risk in early sexual initiation due to a lack of awareness of sex education.²¹ This is more profound in adolescent girls who have been through a history of sexual abuse and willingness to engage in consensual sexual activity.²² Other factors include lack of religiosity,²³ peer influence,²⁴ media abuse,²⁵ substance abuse,²⁶ neglect or

¹⁹ Heidi A. Lyons et al., "Young Adult Casual Sexual Behavior: Life-Course-Specific Motivations and Consequences," *Sociological Perspectives* 57(1) (2014), 79-101; Justin R. Garcia et al., "Sexual Hookup Culture: A Review," *American Psychological Association*, 16(2) (2012), 161.

²⁰ National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS), 2017, *Key Findings from the Adolescent Health and Nutrition Surveys* (Kuala Lumpur: Institut Kesihatan Umum, Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia, 2018).

²¹ Salhah 'Abdullah et al., "Relationship of Parent and Peer Attachment with Coping Strategy among Teenagers Pregnancy," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 114 (2014), 334-338.

²² Nurul Husna, "Modul Keagamaan untuk Remaja Hamil," 211.

²³ Kamarul Azmi, "Masalah Seksual dalam Kalangan Remaja," 35-60.

²⁴ Mohamad Faizal Mohammad & Mohd Zaki Ishak, "Gejala Hubungan Seks dalam Kalangan Pelajar: Satu Kajian Kes," in *Proceeding Seminar Kebangsaan Integriti Keluarga, Fakulti Psikologi dan Pendidikan*, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Sabah, 11 December 2014, 1-10.

²⁵ Nurul Afiza Razali, Noor Hera & Kamarul Azmi Jamsi, "Media Sosial dan Impak Negatif Menurut Islam" in *Proceedings Persidangan Seminar Sains Teknologi dan Manusia (SSTM'19)*, eds.

not in good terms with parents,²⁷ and low socioeconomic status.²⁸

Additionally, single parenting has forced the parent to spend more time working to provide for the household resulting in reduced time spent with the children. Consequently, the children experienced loneliness and spend more time with peers. On the contrary, parents with high socioeconomic status were found to have good parenting knowledge as they were able to obtain information easily by attending courses compared to those with low economic status. Lack of religious foundations may result in promiscuous behaviors.²⁹ Religious education helps form the attitudes and beliefs to abstain from promiscuity and teaches socialization in accordance with the tenets of the Shari'ah.³⁰ Education on sexuality is lacking and adolescents are not well informed on their hormonal and bodily changes. The topic of sexuality is taboo and not to be discussed in the open.³¹ Adolescents

Kamarul Azmi Jasmi, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Johor, 15 December 2019, 115-130.

²⁶ Azmawaty Mohamad Nor et al., "The Turning Point in an Unwanted Teenage Pregnancy: A Psychoemotional Perspective," *Malaysia Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences* 15(1) (2019), 30-36.

²⁷ Mastura Bohari & Farahwahida Mohd. Yusof, "Parenting Education through the Prophet Ya'qub Method and His Approaches to Cope with Teenager Misbehavior," *International Journal of Islamic and Civilizational Studies* 6(03-2) (2020), 113-123; Khadijah Alavi et al., "Hamil Luar Nikah dalam Kalangan Remaja," *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 7(1) (2012), 131-140.

²⁸ 'Abd Allah Nasih Ulwan, *Tarbiyat al-Awlad fi al-Islam*, vol. 1 & 2 (Cairo: Dar al-Salam, 1976), 32.

²⁹ Khairul Hamimah et al., "Salah Laku Seksual," 45-64.

³⁰ Nurul Husna, "Modul Keagamaan untuk Remaja Hamil", 202.

³¹ Clare Bennett & Jane Harden, "Sexuality as Taboo: Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and a Foucauldian Lens to Explore Fathers' Practices in Talking to their Children about Puberty, Relationships and Reproduction," *Journal of Research in Nursing* 24(1-2) (2019), 22-33.

are not informed of the STDs and lack the skills to protect themselves from engaging in premarital sex.³²

In addition, emphasized the process of breastfeeding as an important period that affects the formation of individual sexual behavior. Breastfeeding helps in providing sustenance and forms a bond between mother and baby. Unfulfilled needs may result in a child growing up feeling detached and subsequently affecting their psychological and sexual growth.³³ Freud explained in Phase 1-oral stage of the Psychosexual theory that human sexual development is influenced by how they go through an important period involving aspects of breastfeeding from infancy to one year.³⁴ This view is in line with the command of Allah the Almighty contained in the Holy Qur'an that breastfeeding is provided until the child reaches two years of age.³⁵

The media and its pornographic websites have become one of the driving factors of promiscuous sex activities.³⁶ Firstly, the role of media may be misconstrued as a platform to exploit women and profit making instead of a medium for disseminating information.³⁷ Women have been stereotyped into traditional roles being housewives, mothers, teachers, clerical staff, and sex

³² Nurul Husna Mansor et al., "Implementasi Ibadah Islam sebagai Terapi Salah Seksual Remaja: Kajian Terhadap Pusat Perlindungan Wanita Terpilih di Selangor," *International Journal of The Malay World & Civilization* 4(1)(2016), 73-84.

³³ Mustafa Daud, *Perkahwinan menurut Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications & Distributors, 1995), 110.

³⁴ Sigmund Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, eds. & trans., J. Strachey, vol. vii. (London: Hogarth Press, 1905).

³⁵ Surah al-Baqarah 2:233.

³⁶ Farawahida & Norazila, "Persepsi Pelajar Institusi Pengajian Tinggi Awam," 94-114.

³⁷ Aslati & Silawati, "Fenomena Eksploitasi Perempuan oleh Media," *Jurnal Risalah Dakwah* 29(2) (2018), 133-142.

symbols. The latter was used to attract and increase sales.³⁸ Islam sees this act as a form of oppression of women and contrary to the principles and ethics of broadcasting based on Islamic teachings.³⁹ The strict prohibition of pornographic activities in Islam can be clearly seen based on the essence of the verses of the Qur'an that touch on the importance of lowering one's gazing and the command to cover one's *awrat*.⁴⁰ Secondly, studies have indicated that increased frequency of exposure to sexually explicit films may lead to difficulty to stop imagining a sexual activity, hence increasing their sexual desires.⁴¹

Islam has stated a clear principle of strict prohibition on the practice of promiscuous sex because it is an act of adultery as stated in the Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Isra' (17): 32:

Translation: "Do not even approach fornication for it is an outrageous act and an evil way."

In addition, the prohibition of engaging in same-sex can also be found through the word of Allah in Surah al-Shu'ara', verses 165-166:

Translation: "What, of all creation, will you go to (fornicate with) the males? Nay, you are a people that have transgressed all limits leaving aside those whom Allah has created for you as your mates."

Allah the Almighty condemns same-sex activities by the people of Prophet Lut which is against the nature of humankind. Although there are groups that fight for same-

³⁸ Ayunni Karim, Noor Naemah Abdul Rahman & Mohd Anuar Ramli, "Penglabatan Wanita sebagai Subjek Pengiklanan menurut Perspektif Hukum Islam," *Online Journal of Research in Islamic Studies* 5(2) (2018), 1-15.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁰ Surah al-Nur, 31.

⁴¹ 'Abd Allah Nasih Ulwan, *Tarbiyyah al-Awlad*, 220.

sex and promiscuous sex activities in the name of human rights, the implications of the activities may bring harm to the psychological, physical, mental and social development of society as stated in the teachings of Islam.

Undoubtedly, promiscuous sex has an indirect impact on the development of a community. For example, studies have revealed that promiscuity leads to higher chances of contracting STDs such as gonorrhea, herpes, syphilis, chlamydia, hepatitis, HPV and HIV or AIDS. It was also found that promiscuous sex often led to aggressive behaviors and sexual violence among sex workers.⁴² It is more worrisome when coupled with illicit substance use; it may lead to addiction and homelessness due to the inability to sustain their economy.⁴³

Besides, society places a stigma on those involved in promiscuous behavior since it is against the norms and customs.⁴⁴ This will be more pronounced in a society that is so concerned with customs and adheres to religious and moral values that strictly prohibit sexual activity outside of marriage.⁴⁵ Social exclusion not only occurs in

⁴² Reuben Balfour & Jessica Allen, *A Review of the Literature on Sex Workers and Social Exclusion* (United Kingdom: UCL Institute of Health Equity, 2014), 9.

⁴³ Farhana Nabila Fakaruddin & Azmawaty Mohamad Noor, "Emotion Regulation among Adolescents with Drug Abuse: A Qualitative Study," *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences* 8(3) (2020), 23-34.

⁴⁴ Balfour & Allen, *A Review of the Literature on Sex Workers*, 9.

⁴⁵ Sofiah Sulaiman et al., "Obstetric and Perinatal Outcome in Teenage Pregnancies," *South African Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology* 19(3) (2013), 74-77.

Malaysia but also in other countries such as in Nigeria,⁴⁶ the United States⁴⁷ and India.⁴⁸

Islam stresses the importance of understanding one's family background before marriage. It was found that promiscuous behavior may be due to biological aspects (genetics) and may be passed down to their children.⁴⁹ Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized the choice of a life partner to ensure the birth of a child. This can be stated in a hadith from Abu Hurayrah RA said: The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

Translation: "A woman is married for four things, i.e., her wealth, her family status, her beauty and her religion. So, you should marry the religious woman (otherwise) you will be a loser."⁵⁰

Sexuality

The biological perspective explains that the human sex hormone, testosterone for men and estrogen for women, begins to increase during the process of puberty (9-14 years of age) which triggers sexual feelings and urges between individuals of the opposite sex. The feeling which is not felt during infancy remains latent throughout childhood. A sexual desire among adolescents is

⁴⁶ Nurul Amirah. Nooraini Othman. Wardatul Aishah Musa. "Pemerdagangan Manusia Di Malaysia : Isu Dan Usaha Membanteras," *International Journal of Law, Government and Communication*. 4(15), (2019), 130-140.

⁴⁷ Byron R. Johnson et al., "Alone on the Inside: The Impact of Social Isolation and Helping Others on AOD Use and Criminal Activity," *Youth Soc* 50(4) (2018), 529-550.

⁴⁸ Brittany Moore et al., "The Economics of Abortion and its Links with Stigma: A Secondary Analysis from a Scoping Review on the Economics of Abortion," *PLOS ONE* 16(2) (2021), 1-19.

⁴⁹ Azizi Yahaya et al., *Penyelewengan Tingkah Laku Remaja: Punca & Rawatan* (Johor Baru: Penerbit UTM, 2012).

⁵⁰ Al-Darimi, "Sunan Darimi," *Kitab al-Nikah*, Bab Tunkahu al-Mar'ah 'ala-Arba', no Hadith. 2076.

determined by their environment during childhood and how they form beliefs about sex from their parents or adults.⁵¹ During adolescence, the understanding of sex is influenced by the values or understanding of associating with friends. Hence, the current development of children is also said to be important in shaping attitudes towards adolescence and adulthood.⁵²

From the perspective of psychology, the relationship development between men and women is said to occur in eight stages as we age. Based on the Erikson⁵³ stages of psychosocial development, children are described as having experience interdependence and relatedness during infancy. Entering the early phase of childhood until they reach the play age, boys and girls will begin to find friends to play with regardless of gender. However, when they reach the age of 8, boys and girls are said to prefer same-sex friends. As soon as they reach the age of 10 to 12, which is the beginning of adolescence, boys and girls are said to start showing discomfort towards friends of different genders. However, at the age of 13 to 14 (for girls) and 14 to 16 years old (for boys) interest in the opposite sex is more obvious. Finally, at the age of 16 to 17 years, adolescence is ready to explore and begin to have a relationship with the opposite sex.⁵⁴ Interestingly, this is supported by the psychosexual stages in the Theory of Psychoanalysis, which include genital stage is where the adolescence has interests in their opposite sex and the goal is to experience sexual intercourse.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," 128.

⁵² Azizi Yahaya et al., *Penyelewengan Tingkah Laku Remaja*, 150.

⁵³ Erik H. Erikson, "Identity and the Life Cycle: Selected Papers," *Psychological Issues* 1 (1959), 1-171.

⁵⁴ Stephanie Scheck, *Stages of Psychosocial Development according to Erik. H. Erikson* (Germany: Grin Verlag, 2014), 10-15.

⁵⁵ Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," 137.

Islam sees man as a combination of the elements of spirit and body. One of the elements of the spirit consists of lust which has several stages. First, *nafs al-ammarah* is a form of instinct that influence an individual to behave contrary to noble ethics of life and is perhaps one of the most influential.⁵⁶ Second, *nafs al-lawwamah* or the soul of remorse is a component of *al-nafs* which is at the heart of the structure of human instinct. Some refer to it as a reprehensible lust because it helps remind man of his God. It is a state of mind that does not achieve complete serenity. This lust is characterized by an irregular soul and tends to move in two directions either toward good or evil. In other words, this lust is the guardian between the two extremes in the human instinctive dimension. Third, *nafs al-mutma'innah* known as the calm soul is a good component of the soul in the whole structure of an individual's instincts. It is the nature of serenity, glory and a close relationship with God.⁵⁷

Islam also sees sexual instincts as an important survival factor for procreation.⁵⁸ Motivation towards the need for sexual desire is also recognized in the world of psychology⁵⁹ and recognized by Islam based on what is recorded in the Qur'an which explains that Allah the Almighty acknowledges the creation of men and women and recognizing human sexual needs.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, tahqiq 'Ali Muhammad Mustafa & Sa'id al-Muhasini, vol. 1 (Damascus: Dar al-Fayha', 2010), 8.

⁵⁷ Fariza Md. Sham, Salasiah Hanin Hamjah & Mohd. Jurairi Sharifudin, *Personaliti dari Perspektif al-Ghazali* (Bangi: Penerbit UKM, 2013), 60.

⁵⁸ Nurul Husna, "Modul Keagamaan Untuk Remaja Hamil," 179.

⁵⁹ Mahmood Nazar Mohamed, *Pengantar Psikologi: Satu Pengenalan Asas kepada Jiwa dan Tingkah Laku Manusia* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1990), 19.

⁶⁰ Surah al-Rum, 21.

However, Islam also emphasizes the question of the sanctity of dignity and self-respect, in addition to recognizing the human right to live without the occurrence of any oppression or tyranny. Man is the best of God's creations therefore all needs must be met in a respectful way that is through marriage. In principle, Islam sees the main purpose of marriage as legalizing the relationship between two beings. God willing, the marriage helps curb premarital sexual desire and bore righteous and pious offspring.⁶¹

Man is naturally good, and anything that is not natural has corrupted man from this natural state. They are born as a clean slate and Islam believes that believers acknowledged their status as servants to Allah the Almighty. However, deviations from God occur at the onset of breastfeeding and associations with the environment.⁶² The role of parents in child education can be understood from a hadith by Prophet Muhammad through Abu Hurairah:

Translation: "The mother of every person gives him birth according to his true nature. It is subsequently his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian."⁶³

Practice of Fasting

Fasting is the wilful refrain from eating for a period of time. In a physiological context, fasting may refer to the metabolic status of a person who has not eaten overnight, or to the metabolic state achieved after complete digestion

⁶¹ Al-Shatibi, *al-Muwafaqat*, vol. 2, 19-20.

⁶² Sa'id Hawwa, *Tarbiyatuna al-Ruhiyyah* (Cairo: Dar al-Salam, 2009), 21.

⁶³ Muslim, "Sahih Muslim," Kitab al-Qadr, Bab Ma'na Kull Maw'lud Yulidu 'ala al-Fitrah wa Hukm Mawt Atfal al-Kuffar wa Atfal al-Muslimin, no. 2658, in *Mawsu'at al-Hadith al-Sharif: al-Kutub al-Sittah*, ed. Salih bin 'Abd al-Aziz Al al-Shaykh (Riyadh: Dar al-Salam, 2000), 1141.

and absorption of a meal. Several metabolic adjustments occur during fasting. It serves as a good and effective diet method to improve physical, mental and spiritual health.⁶⁴ Additionally, it was found that fasting in the month of Ramadan has invaluable benefits and was significant in treating various human diseases. For example, physically, it has the potential of providing a nutritional and balanced diet, weight loss, cholesterol and blood sugar levels reduction, improved digestive process, stabilize hormones and immune system, reduced chances of heart disease, diabetes, chronic kidney disease and improved performance in sports.⁶⁵

From a social aspect, fasting is believed to inject human values when allowed to experience the suffering of others through hunger and thirst. Accordingly, fasting is certified as an impressive therapy in treating various diseases from mild to chronic diseases.⁶⁶ To improve better mental and physical endurance, fasting for 10 consecutive days has proven effective.⁶⁷

Fasting according to Islam is not only about restraining self from eating and drinking but all other activities and behaviors that may lead to the invalidation of the practice itself. This is because the objective of

⁶⁴ Patricia Bragg & Paul C. Bragg, *The Miracle of Fasting: Proven Throughout History for Physical, Mental and Spiritual Rejuvenation* (United States: Health Science, 2004), 174.

⁶⁵ Khaled Trabelsi et. al, "Body Composition, Hematological and Biochemical Modifications during Ramadan Fasting," in *Effects of Ramadan Fasting on Health and Athletic Performance*, ed. Hamdi Chtourou (USA: OMICS Group eBooks, 2015), 3-6; Mohammad Zakir Hossain, "Fasting in Islam: Its Benefits and Use for Sustainable Development of the Society," *Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics & Management Sciences* 3(3) (2012), 184-190.

⁶⁶ Shahzad Ahmad & Kapil Goel, "Psycho-social Behaviour and Health Benefits of Islamic Fasting During the Month of Ramadan," *Journal of Community Medicine & Health Education* 2(9) (2012), 1-4.

⁶⁷ Arnold DeVries, *Therapeutic Fasting* (California: Chandler Publishing, 1963), 15-33

fasting in Islam is also to develop a good character and be closer to God. In addition, the implementation of fasting in Islam is also different from other beliefs, for example; according to Hinduism and Buddhism, fasting means refraining from taking any animal products (i.e., meat, eggs) except dairy products. This shows that their fasting has a different objective as opposed to Muslims.⁶⁸ Therefore, the practice of fasting and its implementations will be discussed thoroughly to help curb the promiscuous sex.

Methodology

A qualitative research design using a content analysis approach is employed in the study. Content analysis refers to a detailed examination of various materials sourced from primary and secondary data that is related to the topic under study.⁶⁹ The study involved in-depth interviews with an informant and a staff member representing a juvenile institution that handles misconduct sexual cases to reinforce the findings of the study. The selection of informants was done using the purposive sampling method. To protect the confidentiality, their names and other information that could reveal their true identities have been changed. Permission to conduct interviews was obtained before implementation.

The involvement of all informants is voluntary and they are selected based on certain criteria; the staff interviewed had to have more than three years of working experience at the institution, while the informant who had committed sexual offenses and consistently practiced fasting each week when the study was conducted. The duration of the informant's stay in the institution is also

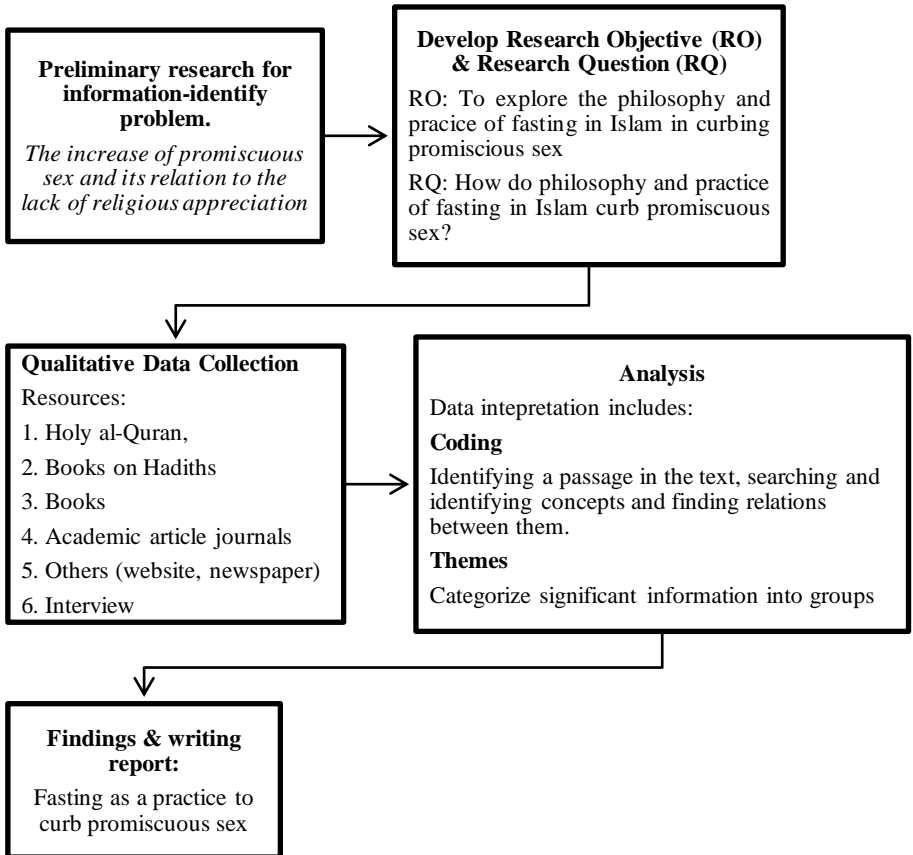
⁶⁸ M. Hosseini Mousavi, "Philosophy of Fasting in Quran and Islamic Narratives and its Relationship with Human Health Based on Scientific Notions," *Journal of Fasting & Health* 2(2) (2014), 71-75.

⁶⁹ Margrit Schreier, *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Inc., 2012), 80-107.

taken, which is more than six months. Research interview questions are semi-structured questions, the researcher gives freedom to each informant to express their views, but the researcher is still responsible for ensuring that the topics discussed are controlled.

The interview script for the informant focuses on the aspects of understanding and appreciating fasting as an element of restraining lust and strengthening spirituality. A total of four interview sessions were conducted with each session between 40 to 90 minutes. The interview script to the staff also focused on the implementation of the spiritual program, the practice of fasting and the impact of the spiritual practice on the juvenile. The procedure of the study is depicted in Figure 1. The procedures include identification of the need for the study. Next, formulate the research objective and question. Then, data collection was conducted via collections of documents and interviews related to the practice of fasting and curbing promiscuous sex. The documents include the Holy Qur'an, Hadith, theses, books and academic journal articles. The next process involves the analysis of findings by detailed examination of the documents which were later coded, interpreted and divided into themes. The final process is reporting on findings.

FIGURE 1: Procedure of Study



Analysis and Discussions

This topic will discuss the detailed findings on the practice of fasting based on the content analysis conducted including interviews.

Curbing Promiscuous Sex Through Fasting Implementation Philosophy Based on Islamic Approach

Islam defines fasting as refraining from not only eating and drinking but everything that may invalidate it, with a pure and sincere intention because of Allah the Almighty. It begins at the onset of dawn till the sun sets in the evening.⁷⁰ The practice of fasting in Islam refers to how it has been enshrined in the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah.⁷¹ In the teachings of Islam, fasting is the third pillar of Islam and must be implemented for every individual *mukallaf* who utters *shahadah*. The command to the fasting practice is clearly enshrined in the Qur'an, surah al-Baqarah, (2): 183 as follows:

Translation: "O believers! Fasting is prescribed for you—as it was for those before you - so perhaps you will become mindful of Allah."

Al-Baghawi⁷² interprets the prescribed fasting practice as not only suppressing hunger and thirst for a certain period but acts as a platform that brings the relationship between man and God closer and raises the level of piety in man.⁷³ Fasting has different levels and as a servant to Allah the Almighty, achieving the highest level is the target. Firstly, the practice of fasting for the

⁷⁰ Mousavi, "Philosophy of Fasting," 71-75.

⁷¹ Anas Ahmad Karzun, *Manhaj al-Islam fi Tazkiyah al-Nafs wa Atharuh ila al-Da'wah ila Allah Ta'ala* (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2003), 165.

⁷² Abu Muhammad al-Husayn Ibn Mas'ud al-Baghawi, *Tafsir al-Baghawi* (Lebanon: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1989), 194.

⁷³ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, 440.

public (*sawm al-'awwam*). Fasting in this category refers to suppressing hunger, thirst, giving in to lusts and sexual behaviors that may invalidate fasting. Secondly, the practice of fasting for people from a specific category (*sawm al-khusus*). Fasting at this stage involves the act of restraining the self from hearing, seeing, speaking and behaviors that may lead to committing sins and vices. Finally, the highest level of fasting is the fast of unworldly people (*sawm khusus al-khusus*). At this stage, an individual not only refrains outwardly i.e. eating and drinking but includes restraining self-doubt on the existence of the hereafter, not focusing on material and worldly matters, and submitting to Allah the Almighty.

Additionally, the practice of fasting is guided by six propositions. To lower one's gaze, to refrain from uttering unkind and slanderous words with the intention to hurt others, and to restrain self from listening to news that is deemed inappropriate in the context of Islam. The practice of fasting also restrains the self from any immoral acts (protecting your limbs) in the fear of committing sins (*haram* and *shubhah*), to avoid glutton that may affect one when worshiping Allah the Almighty. Finally, fasting always reflects and educates the self on improvising the act of worship and practice of fasting for the sake of Allah the Almighty.⁷⁴

Interestingly, apart from Islam, fasting is also practiced by most other religions around the world and it is significant and practiced on certain days in the beliefs of Hindus, Jaina and Christians.⁷⁵ However, the

⁷⁴ Sa'id Hawwa, *al-Mustakhlash fi Tazkiyah al-Anfus* (Cairo: Dar al-Salam, 2005), 61-64.

⁷⁵ Muhammad Akram, "Meaning and Significance of Fasting in Comparative Perspective a Study with Special Reference to Judaism, Christianity and Islam," *Hamdard Islamicus* XXXIX(2) (2016), 37-60; Natarajan Shanmugasundaram et al., "Fasting: A Medico Historical Overview," *International Refereed Journal of Reviews and Research* 2(1) 2014, 1-10.

implementation of fasting according to beliefs other than Islam is different. For example; the practice of fasting in Christian's teaching and belief is quite limited and refrain their believers from consuming certain foods or beverages such as fruits, milk and any type of drink. However, it still aims to bring people to a turning point in life in finding peace within, exploring the spiritual aspects and getting closer to God.⁷⁶

On the contrary, the fasting practice in Islam is not intended to burden humankind but instead, various benefits are obtained through the act of fasting. The Prophet do not agree with those who fasted all year round without breaking their fast because that was considered excessive based on the Islamic teachings as narrated below:

Translation: "Do not fast continuously (practice *al-wisal*), and if you intend to lengthen your fast, then carry it on only till the *Suhur* (before the following dawn). The people said to him, but you practice (*al-Wisal*), O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! He replied I am not similar to you, for during my sleep I have One Who makes me eat and drink."⁷⁷

The best practice of fasting as proposed by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the fast practiced by Prophet David (Dawud), who was praised for his rigor in prayer and fasting. Prophet David practiced an alternate day of fasting.

Translation: "The most beloved fast to Allah is the fast of Dawud, for he used to fast one day and not the next. And the most beloved of

⁷⁶ Akram, "Meaning and Significance of Fasting," 37-60.

⁷⁷ Al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari li al-Imam Abi 'Abdillah Muhammad bin Isma'il*, Book 30, Hadith Number 72 (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir, 2004), 1965.

prayer to Allah is the prayer of Dawud; he used to sleep half of the night, pray one-third of the night and sleep one-sixth of the night."⁷⁸

It was found that the practice is beneficial to the *ummah*. For example, while fasting, an individual will be taught and educated on the importance of patience and being grateful at the breaking of the fast for gratitude and patience are branches of faith. In addition, the practice of fasting is in accordance with their faith and submission to God. At the same time, the body gets to rest from working hard every day and from the perspective of medicine, this has been proven to be beneficial to bodily functions.⁷⁹ Islam teaches its believers to avoid glutton for it may result in being unproductive, lazy and focus on worldly desires (focus on the various meals that one may have for a break from fast).⁸⁰

Although the practice of fasting is implemented by followers of other religions, fasting according to Islam has its uniqueness which includes a pre-dawn meal or *sahur*. This is clearly mentioned through a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad which explains that the practice of *sahur* distinguishes between Muslim and Christian practice.

Translation: "The difference between our fasting and that of the People of the Book is eating shortly before dawn."⁸¹

During *sahur*, the practice and the Sunnah of our Prophet Muhammad were consuming some dates and cereals to provide sustenance, energy and improve health

⁷⁸ Al-Nasa'i, *Sunan al-Nasa'i li Abi 'Abd al-Rahman Ahmad ibn Shu'ayb al-Nasa'i*, Book 22, Hadith Number 311 (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, t.t) 2400.

⁷⁹ Mousavi, *Philosophy of Fasting*, 71-75.

⁸⁰ Hossain, "Fasting in Islam: Its Benefits and Use," 184-190.

⁸¹ Al-Nasa'i, *Sunan al-Nasa'i*, Book 22, Hadith Number 250, 2339.

benefits as required and needed by the body.⁸² Besides that, *sahur* provides strength from the spiritual aspect where getting up early may also include other forms of spiritual and religious activities such as reciting the al-Qur'an, *dhikr* and performing sunnah prayers.

Studies have found that the practice of fasting has a direct impact on reduced sexual desire. This is due to the rate of production of sexually stimulating hormones in humans namely Testosterone (luteinizing hormone (LH), follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH), progesterone and estradiol) that decreases during fasting.⁸³ Thus, the decrease in these hormones indicates that fasting activity help controls sexual desire.

Moreover, fasting practices were also included and emphasized in rehabilitation and treatment modules for sexual addiction. This may include cases of premarital sex and out-of-wedlock pregnancy.⁸⁴ The benefits of the

⁸² Sumaiyah Mohd Tarmizi et al., "The Significance of *Sahur* (Pre-Dawn Meal) during Fasting according to the Islamic and Scientific Perspectives," in *Proceeding of the Fasting and Sustainable Health Conference*, eds. Singh, R. & Muhamed, A. M. C. Penang: Quensbay, 20-21 December 2010, 131-138.

⁸³ Raidh Ali Talib et al., "The Effect of Fasting on Erectile Function and Sexual Desire on Men in the Month of Ramadan," *Sexual Dysfunction and Infertility* 12(2) (2015), 2099-2102; Shohreh Bahreyni et al., "The Effects of Ramadan Fasting on the Level of Sex Hormones in Pre-Menarche Girls in Mashhad, Iran," *Journal of Fasting & Health*, 3(1) (2015), 43-49; N. Marfu'ah et al., "Study of Fasting Effect in Holy al-Qur'an on Testosterone Hormones in Mice using Elisa Method," *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* (2019), 1-6.

⁸⁴ Nurul Husna et al., "Implementasi Ibadah Islam, 73-84; Khairul Hamimah Mohammad Jodi, "Penerapan Nilai-Nilai Islam dalam Modul Pembangunan Wanita Bermasalah di Malaysia: Kajian di Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur," (PhD Thesis, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 2013), 301; Jawiah Dakir, Siti Rugayah Tibek & Adawiyah Ismail, "Bimbingan Agama dan Metodologi Dakwah di Institusi Pemulihan: Kajian Kes di Penjara Wanita

practice of fasting have been proven and are no longer debated in the Islamic context. In fact, most Western scholars have also discussed fasting in theory and practice. For example, a German-born philosopher and physician, Paracelsus (1493-1541) in his writings explained the benefits of fasting as the most effective form of treatment for the body.⁸⁵

Interestingly, it was found that fasting suppresses the sexual desire since it was believed that excessive eating habits have correlates with heightened sexual desire. Therefore, treating sexual addiction through fasting has been proven workable.⁸⁶ Ulwan⁸⁷ and M. Asy'ari⁸⁸ added that for those who have sexual urges but remain unmarried, the practice of fasting helps instil fear of Allah the Almighty and curb the urges. Al-Qaradawi also acknowledges that all diseases that afflict the human body are due to gluttonous. Sexual addiction can be reduced through practice.⁸⁹

In the Islamic spiritual tradition, fasting is one of the forms of struggle or *mujahadah* that must be experienced by every individual who wants to undergo the process of purification of the soul (*tazkiyah al-nafs*).⁹⁰ *Mujahadah* is specifically placed as a process called *takhalli* which is the removal of reprehensible traits. This means that the practice of fasting helps removes bad habits. The direct

Kajang, Selangor," *Jurnal Institut Latihan Islam Malaysia* 2 (2009), 9-20.

⁸⁵ Patricia Bragg & Paul C. Bragg, *The Miracle of Fasting*, 179.

⁸⁶ Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Kitab al-Arba'in fi Usul al-Din fi al-'Aqa'id wa Asrar al-'Ibadah wa al-Akhlaq* (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 2003), 144.

⁸⁷ Abdullah Nasih Ulwan, *Tarbiyyah al-Awlad*, 220.

⁸⁸ M. Asy'ari, "Moral and Science Integration in the Qur'anic Education Perspective," *ADDIN* 12(1) (2018), 213-216.

⁸⁹ Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *al-'Ibadat fi al-Islam* (Kaheerah: Maktabah Wahbah, 1995), 291.

⁹⁰ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din'*, vol. 1, 1022.

relationship between fasting and lust control has long been recognized by Islam. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad encouraged fasting to be used as a practice to curb the desire for extreme lust. This can be understood through the following hadith where Abd ‘Allah ibn Mas‘ud reported the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as saying:

Translation: "Young men, those of you who can support a wife should marry, for it keeps you from looking at strange women and preserves you from immorality but those who cannot, should devote themselves to fasting, for it is a means of suppressing sexual desire."⁹¹

This hadith describes fasting as a form of worship that has its own power in curbing sexual desire and immoral acts. Although fasting has various advantages, the implementation of fasting in Islam depends on the understanding and appreciation of its main purpose. The Prophet Muhammad asserted that fasting will be in vain if it was not accompanied by the practice of keeping the tongue and other limbs from doing evil⁹². The essence of this hadith shows that the quality of fasting is not measured by the human ability to resist hunger and thirst but by ensuring all aspects of human behavior are protected from committing sins including sexual misconduct. Interview and Table 1 depict the aspects of fasting that help curb promiscuous sex.

⁹¹ Muslim, "Sahih Muslim," Kitab al-Nikah, Bab Istijab al-Nikah Li Man Taqat Nafsah ilayhi wa Wajada Muannatin wa Isytighal Man ‘Ajzin ‘an Muannatin bi al-Sawmi, no. Hadith 3398, in *Mawsu‘at al-Hadith al-Sharif: al-Kutub al-Sittah*, ed. Salih bin ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Al al-Shaykh (Riyadh: Dar al-Salam, 2000), 910.

⁹² Ibn Majah, Abi ‘Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Qazwini, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, Book 7, Hadith Number 53 (Riyadh: Sharikat al-Tiba‘ah al-‘Arabiyyah al-Sa‘udiyah, 1984), 1690.

"Yes... I fast every week sis... I feel calmer and more focused; I can control my appetite, what I want to drink here... I can say I can control my lust here..."⁹³

"I like to fast... before this, I had a hard time controlling my desires, I also thought about sex... I always feel angry, now it's ok..."⁹⁴

"Before these girls came in, some did not know how to say *shahadah*, did not fast, did not pray, now *alhamdulillah*... many already know... and some fast every Monday dan Thursday. When they are always fasting, it seems that they rarely talk about sex among themselves..."⁹⁵

"In religious classes, I always advise them to train themselves by fasting to control lust... especially sexual because they are involved with sexual problems. *Alhamdulillah*, I can see their changes, they rarely tell stories about their boyfriends and share their sexual experiences among themselves..."⁹⁶

⁹³ Miss J, informant XY institution, 06 August 2020.

⁹⁴ Miss J, informant XY institution, 05 August 2020.

⁹⁵ Staff A, informant XY institution, 06 August 2020.

⁹⁶ Staff A, informant XY institution, 05 August 2020.

TABLE 1: Fasting as a Practice to Curb Promiscuous Sex

Aspects	Implication on sexual health
Physiology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helps reduce excessive eating and drinking which is the cause of various diseases such as obesity including heightened sexual desire. ▪ Decreases the production of hormones in the body that help suppress sexual desire.
Spiritual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helps preserve and restrain sinful behavior including the sexual act. ▪ Increasing inner peace and refraining from worldly materials. Encouraging God-fearing behavior to refrain from committing vices and sins. Increased in piety.

Source: al-Ghazali, 2003 & 2010; Hawwa, 2005 & 2009; Karzun, 2003; ‘Ulwan, 1979.

Although various religions discuss fasting, the concept and philosophy of fasting according to Islam are different from fasting according to other religions. This is because; Islam focuses on the aspect of appreciating the philosophy of fasting which is so holistic and maintains external and internal balance. Fasting according to Islam not only prevents food and drink from entering the human body but also controls other physical and inner limbs from doing bad or immoral things. Based on the advantages of fasting, it turns out that fasting prescribed by Islam is not just a burdensome practice but rather a field to train individuals to control and manage desires, especially sexual instincts in a better way, respected and in line with religious demands.

Conclusion

The practice of fasting is now acknowledged and accepted among people regardless of belief. This study has concluded that the implementation of fasting based on

Islamic concepts and philosophy has its own strengths and uniqueness that provide far greater benefits, finding the internal and external balance. This study suggested that fasting is one of the proven methods to control the internal locus of sexual desire. Therefore, the discussion and debate on fasting should include the philosophical aspect in its implementation and not the standalone concepts. This study concludes that the practice of fasting should be carried out as a routine and not only in the month of Holy Ramadhan. It is functional as a natural therapy and healing process, especially in the context of psychoeducation and rehabilitation involving sexual misconduct problems. This is further enhanced by controlling and managing sexual desires in a better way and line with religious demands.

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