

New Muslim Ramadan Guide

رمضان كريم





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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What Is Fasting?

Fasting is called sawm in the Qur'an. The word sawm literally means 'to abstain'. In Surat Maryam, Allah tells us about Mary, the mother of Jesus, that she said:

I have vowed a fast (sawm) for the sake of the Merciful, so today I shall not speak to anyone. (Maryam 19:26)

The meaning is 'I have vowed to abstain from speaking to anyone today'. According to Shari'ah, the word sawm means to abstain from all things that are forbidden during fasting from the break of dawn to the sunset, and to do this with the intention of fasting.

Why Do Muslims Fast?

The Qur'an says:

O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those who were before you, in order that you may learn taqwah (God consciousness). (Al-Baqarah 2:183)

Taqwa is a very important spiritual and ethical term mentioned repeatedly in the Qur'an. It is the sum total of all Islamic spirituality and ethics. It is a quality in a believer's life that keeps him/her God fearing all the time.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that fasting is a shield. It protects a person from sin and lustful desires.



When the disciples of Jesus asked him how to cast the evil spirits away, he is reported to have said:

“But this kind never comes out except by Prayer and fasting.” (Matthew 17:21)

Is It Just about Enduring Hunger, Thirst?

The purpose of fasting is not physical training to endure hunger, thirst and exhaustion; rather, it is disciplining the ego to relinquish the loved for the sake of the beloved. The loved are the desires of eating, drinking, sexual activities etc, while the beloved is Allah, the Exalted.

Hence, it is imperative to keep in mind when we perform fasting that we do so only for the sake of Allah. It becomes imperative on us to try our best to observe the rites that reflect our obedience to Allah such as the remembrance of Allah, reading the Qur'an, optional Prayers, charitable deed and donations, good manners.

When a Muslim maintains this attitude throughout the month of Ramadan, he will definitely come out a better Muslim.



Source: onislam.net.



The Beginning and End of Ramadan

How to Confirm Them?

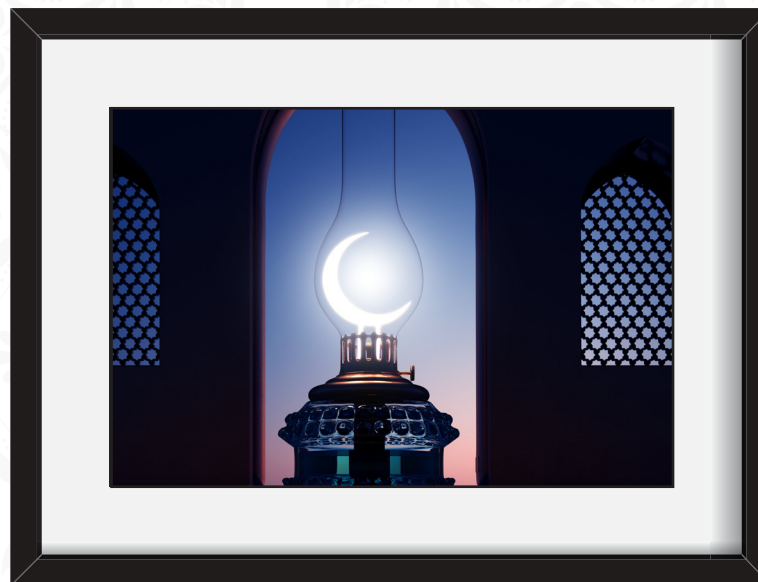
There are many hadiths concerning the timing of Ramadan. It has been authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah said:

“Start fasting upon seeing it (i.e. the moon) and end fasting upon seeing it. If it is cloudy or hazy, then complete the month of Sha`ban as thirty”.

Scholars maintained that the legal means to confirm the beginning and the end of the month in the Islamic Shari`ah is either by sighting the new moon or completing the previous month as 30 days.

Muslims in Non-Muslim Countries:

Muslims who live in such countries must try their best to sight the new moon in their areas. There are many Muslim organizations in those countries that provide services to the Muslim





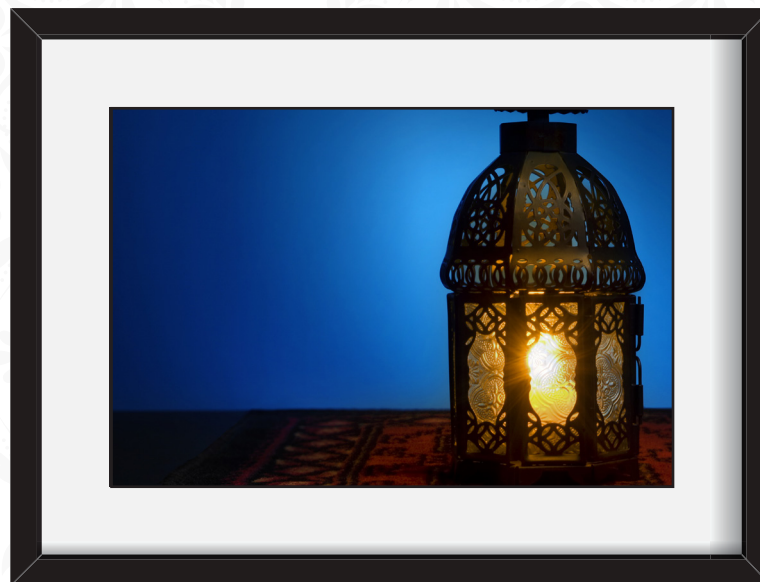
communities regarding the sighting the new moon. If they could not sight the new moon for one reason or another, in that case, they should follow the sighting of a Muslim country. Or, according to another scholarly opinion, they should follow the sighting of the closest Muslim country to them.

In some countries the day is about 21 hours in summer, and 3 or 4 hours in winter. Scholars stated that those who have day and night within the 24 hours must observe fast during the day hours and perform the daily Prayers at their designated times, for Allah says:

“Verily, salah is enjoined on the believers at designated times”. (An-Nisaa’ 4:103),

regardless how long or short is the day. However, in other countries the day is not distinguished from the night. Prayer

The Supreme Council of Grand Scholars in Saudi Arabia has convened and discussed this question and issued the following decree: People living in countries where the day lasts for six months during Summer and the night lasts for six months during winter, it is incumbent on them to perform the daily Prayers within a 24-hour period by estimating its times





taking as a standard the nearest country in which there is day and night and have regular Prayer schedule. This according to the holy hadith in which Allah said to the Prophet:

“O Muhammad. They are five Prayers during the day and night”.

It is also authentically reported that the Prophet said in the hadith of Ad-Dajjal when they asked him how long will the Dajjal remain on earth. He said: “40- days. A day which is a year-long, and a day a month-long, and a day a week-long, and the rest of the days like your days”. He was further asked: ‘Would it be enough for us to perform only five Prayers in the day, which will be a yearlong?’ He said: “No, estimate the time.”

The Prophet did not consider that day which will be a yearlong as one single day. Rather he instructed that five daily Prayers must be performed in every 24 hours.

Similarly, fasting should observe 1 countries such mentioned above according to the standard time of the nearest country to them, which has day and night.



Source: missionislam.com.



How to Get Ready for Ramadan?

Every Muslim should prepare himself to welcome the blessed month of Ramadan by strengthening his relationship with the Qur'an and recharging his spiritual battery to prepare himself to make the whole blessed month of Ramadan a real occasion of sincere obedience.

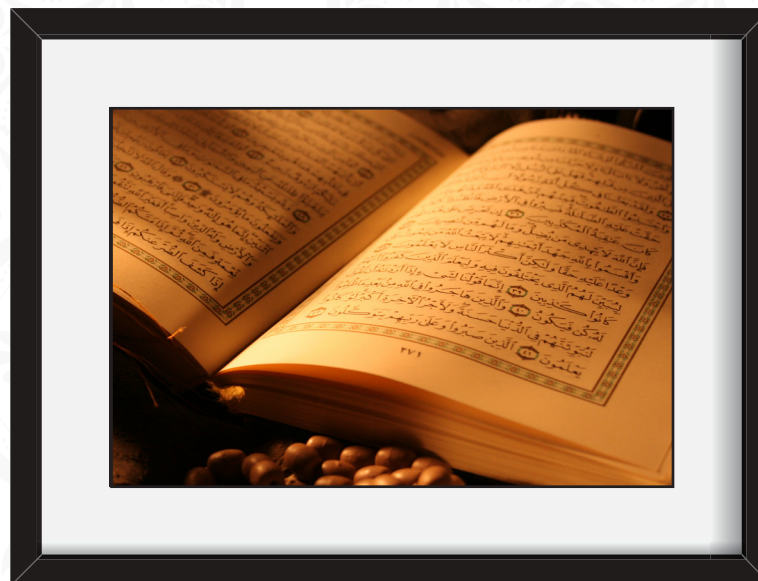
Ramadan is an event that occurs in the life of the faithful, as individuals and as an Ummah, once a year. Allah made it to help us taqwa and thus prepare us for the great mission of realizing His will on earth.

It is said that: 'Rajab is the month of planting seeds, Sha`ban is the month of watering the seeds, and Ramadan is the harvest season'. Therefore, think of what you want to harvest in Ramadan and start planting it and taking care of it in Rajab and Sha`ban.

Here's a famous du`a' of Prophet Muhammad:

"Oh Allah give us the blessings of the month of Rajab and Sha`ban and allow us to reach Ramadan." (Ahmad)

During Sha`ban remind yourself and your family of the virtues of fasting. Have at least a weekly session with your wife/husband and kids to talk about the significance of fasting. Get a booklet on fasting and read it with your children to make them love fasting. Focus on the virtues of Ramadan, that it





is the month during which the Quran was revealed and that this month has the Night of Power which is better than a thousand months.

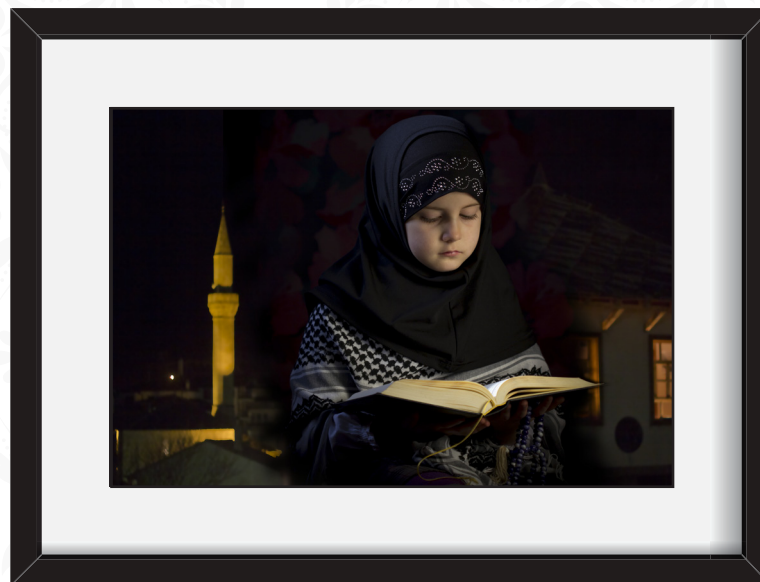
Early Muslims used to read the Qur'an a lot in Sha`ban in preparation for Ramadan. They also used to give out in charity in Sha`ban to help the poor and the needy observe fasting during Ramadan. They also used to pray to Allah to bless the months of Rajab, Sha`ban, and Ramadan.

This means that every Muslim should make du`a (supplication to Allah) a strong tool in making the best of Ramadan. Du`a should be recited before Ramadan that you witness this month, during Ramadan that Allah will accept your du`a for yourself and for others, and after Ramadan that God will accept your fasting and reward you abundantly for it.

Let us pray for Allah that we come out of Ramadan with our faith recharged, gaining strength in our faith and commitment and relationship with Allah.

How Could I Make This Ramadan a Landmark?

Every Muslim should do his best to make the coming month of Ramadan a landmark event this year. Put a target for yourself, like for example having all your sins forgiven by Allah and that you will be saved from Hellfire.





Ask yourself are you pleased with what you did last Ramadan? Will this Ramadan be the same as last year?

Let this Ramadan be the beginning of real change. Make this Ramadan different from the previous ones. Start to practice an act of worship that you never did before, or increase the acts of worship that you already do.

If you used to read the Qur'an once during the month of Ramadan, this year read it twice. If you used to do Tarawih (Night Prayers in Ramadan) alone, this year perform it in congregation. If you did not give charity, this year make it a daily habit to give to the needy what you can afford, even it is a small amount.

If you did not observe any voluntary fasting since the last Ramadan, train yourself to observe fasting during the month of Sha`ban as the Prophet used to do.





My First Ramadan

If you have embraced Islam sometime in the last year, then you're probably preparing right now for your first Ramadan. If you've not grown up with exposure to Muslim cultures, then you might discover many new customs, habits, clothes, and foods these days. Hopefully you'll make many new friends in addition to all the spiritual benefits and blessings that come with the month of fasting.

But while many Muslims look forward to Ramadan months in advance, if this is your first you might be feeling anxious-so I'd like to offer a few tips to help ease any worries ahead of time.





- Praise Allah so much for he has guided you to Islam and prolonged your life to witness that Ramadan.
- Make your intention at the beginning of Ramadan to fast for the month for the sake of Allah, seeking His forgiveness.
- Busy your time with different acts of worship, including remembrance of Allah, reciting the Qur'an, offering obligatory and voluntarily Prayers and pay charity for the sake of Allah.
- Be keen to attend Muslims gatherings in Prayer congregations and lectures.
- You may experience strong weariness in the first days because of remaining a long time without eating and drinking, but always have in mind that you do so seeking Allah's Pleasure and Paradise.
- Try to make `Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) in Ramadan for it entails a lot of reward.
- Let Ramadan be a good opportunity to reflect on the Qur'an, understanding its meaning, discovering its treasures and learning its values.
- The purpose of fasting is to purify the self, so try to make use of this benefit.





Welcome Ramadan

The month of Ramadan is highly honored by Allah, His Prophet as well as Muslims throughout generations.

In the Qur'an, Allah mentions Ramadan by name and refers to it in different verses. Allah says:

The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the criterion (of right and wrong). And whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month, and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey, (let him fast the same) number of other days. Allah desires for you ease; He desires not hardship for you; and (He desires) that you should complete the period, and that you should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that peradventure you may be thankful. (Al-Baqarah 2:185)

The month of Ramadan is the month of Qur'an, fasting, remembrance of Allah, `itikaf (spiritual retreat in the masjid), visiting Muslims, getting your heart ready to receive the light of this month.

The Prophet used to say these words when the month of Sha`ban draws to a close:





“O Muslims! A noble and generous month has come to you. A month in which a night is better than one thousand months, and this month is the month of charity, patience, and mercy. In this month the gates of Paradise become wide open and the gates of Hell are shut, and the devils are chained...” (An-Nasa’i)

The Prophet urged us to fast, not only from food and drink, but also to refrain from any bad behavior, whether it is against one’s self, the society or the humanity at large.

Had the Muslims really know the status of Ramadan in Allah’s sight, they would wish if the whole year is Ramadan.

The Blessings of Ramadan

Ramadan is a great month. This is the month of the Qur’an, and in this month is the Laylat Al-Qadr (Night of Power), which is better than one thousand months. Allah chose this month and a particular night in this month to grace humanity with His final testament, His last message, the Qur’an. In this month we have a greater urge and desire to do good deeds because this month is full of virtues and blessings. The Prophet said about this month:





“When Ramadan comes, the devils and rebellious jinns are put in chains and the doors of hell are closed, none of them remains open. The doors of heaven are open and none of them remains closed. And a caller calls, ‘O seeker of goodness, come forward, and O seeker of evil, desist. And Allah has many (in this month) who will be freed from Hell’. This announcement is made every night.” (Al-Tirmidhi)

Ramadan is meant for our moral and spiritual training and for the purification of our bodies, minds and souls. This is an annual training program for all believers. It is a special time to get closer to Allah and to seek His blessings and bounties. It is a time to learn taqwa (God-fearing), piety, self-discipline and patience. It is a time to give more charity and become more generous. It is a time to seek Allah’s forgiveness and to forgive each other. It is a time to be thankful to Allah for His gifts and bounties and especially His gift of iman.

I urge you, my brothers and sisters, do not miss any day of fasting and do not miss any moment of the blessed month of Ramadan. This is a very precious time and Allah will give us many benefits if we use it in the proper way.

Let us keep the following things in our mind when we observe this month:

1- Intention:

Remind yourself again and again that you are fasting in obedience to Allah. Be sincere in your intention. You want Allah to accept your fasting. The Prophet said: “Whosoever fasts in Ramadan with faith and seeking Allah’s reward, all his past sins are forgiven.” (Al-Bukhari)



2- Sunnah:

Observe the Sunnah in fasting. Take the sahur meal a little before dawn and end your fast at sunset. As much as you can, try to fast as much like the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) fasted. There was no Prayer better than his Prayer and no fast better than his fast. Try to follow his way of fasting. That is the most acceptable way of fasting to Allah.

3- Wara`:

Keep your body and mind very clean. Fasting is not just avoiding food and drink. Fasting is to learn how to avoid bad words and bad deeds. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Whosoever does not leave bad words and bad actions, Allah does not care if he leaves his food and drink." (Al-Tirmidhi)

4- Qur'an:

Fasting and revelation are inter-connected. The Prophet Musa (Moses) fasted when he received the Torah, the Prophet `Isa (Jesus) fasted when he received the Gospel and the Prophet Muhammad fasted when he received the first message of the Qur'an. Let us do the same thing. You must fast and spend more time with the Qur'an. Read the Qur'an every day. Try to finish at least one time the whole Qur'an during this month by your own personal reading.

5- Prayer, Du`a' and Dhikr

Pray on time and observe all the Prayers. Do not ignore the Tarawih Prayers. Make more extra and voluntary Prayers.



Do as much worship as you can. Do more dhikr (remembering Allah) and du`a' (supplication) for yourself and for others. Repent and seek forgiveness for yourself and for others as much as you can. This is the best time for devotion and seeking Allah's forgiveness. Seek the Night of Qadr by special devotion during the last ten nights of this month.

6- Zakah, Sadaqah and Generosity:

Ramadan generates the spirit of giving and sacrifice. When we deprive ourselves of food and drink we understand and realize well what it means to be hungry and thirsty. We realize the pain of those who cannot find the basic necessities of life. Be very charitable and generous. Give more to help the poor and needy. Contribute generously to useful social and community projects.

7- Family:

Goodness must begin at home. Be very good to your family, immediate family and the extended family. Spend more time and quality time with your family members. Try to have sahur (pre-dawn meal) together. Break your fast together and pray together as much as you can. Do this more at this time. Ramadan should bring you closer to each other. Allah's special mercy comes on the families that are united, harmonious and peaceful.

8- Good Conduct:

Fasting should transform you and should make you a different person. Try to be extra kind and courteous during this month. Forget your quarrels and disputes. Reconcile and forgive. Do not get involved in backbiting, lying, cheating and anything that is wrong. Be very good to Muslims and to all human beings. Be good to your friends and neighbors.



Let your non-Muslim neighbors and co-workers know that this is your blessed and sacred time.

9- Reflection:

Think, reflect and plan to improve the moral and spiritual condition of your own self and your family. Think about any wrong things and sins you might be doing and decide to correct yourself. Think about any deficiencies you have in your Islamic observances. Plan to change yourself. Think what you can do for the Ummah and for humanity to make this world a better place for everyone. Think about the life after death and the Day of Judgment.

10- Be cheerful and Happy:

Ramadan is not a time of mourning or sadness. It is a time of thankfulness to Allah. In a hadith it is reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "When you fast, anoint yourself. Let not the signs of fast be seen on you". (Al-Bukhari)

Do not feel tired and miserable. Feel alert and relax. Take things easy. This time is for your own good. Give the greetings of Ramadan to each other and enjoy this beautiful time.

How to Reap Such Blessings?

Always remember that in Ramadan rewards are multiplied, the gates of heaven are opened, the gates of hell are shut, and sins are forgiven. Be sure of Allah's Mercy on Muslims who observe fasting faithfully and avoid committing sins completely.



To make Ramadan the best month of the year, remember that:

1. Strengthen your faith during this month by confirming your belief in the unity of God.
2. Have the intention of pleasing God with all your acts of worship.
3. Keep away from the things that nullify your faith.
4. Follow the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad.
5. Feed the poor and the needy. Feel the gift of giving in Ramadan.
6. Before going out for `Eid Prayer, make sure to pay Zakat Al-Fitr.
7. Perform the daily Prayers at their fixed times and in congregation. Attend the Tarawih PrayerPrayers constantly and perform extra Prayers. Rediscover the power of Prayer in Ramadan and concentrate much while praying. Leave this worldly life behind your back once you raise your hands and say Allahu Akbar (Allah is the greatest).
8. Visit your family members and relatives.
9. Observe i`tikaf (retreat in the masjid) during the last ten days of Ramadan, if you can.
10. Make the Qur'an your companion in Ramadan and have the intention to finish reading it at least once.
11. Have the intention to offer sincere repentance to Allah.
12. Have the intention to refine your manners and the way you treat others.
13. Make any da`wah effort during Ramadan if you can, like distributing Ramadan-related da`wah materials (CDs, booklets, videos, PDF files, etc.).



14. If you have the financial means, make iftar for new Muslims in your community to help them integrate with their fellow Muslims. You can also invite non-Muslims to such events to get to know them and introduce Islam to them through fasting.

15. Make iftar meals and gifts for orphans and marginalized children to make Ramadan a happy occasion for them.

Prepare your du`a (supplication) list. Write down the du`a' that you want to recite throughout the month. You can ask God for anything and everything. Choose the proper times and occasions of offering the du`a'. The best supplication is during prostration, while offering the late night Prayer, in the last days of Ramadan, and during Laylat al-Qadr (the Night of Power).

Prioritize your list of supplications. Observe the etiquette of making supplication. Start your supplication with praising God and sending peace and blessings to the Prophet Muhammad. Face the qiblah (Ka`bah direction) and raise your hands. Be sure that God will never let your hands return empty when you pray to Him. Do not forget the oppressed people, the people of Syria, and Muslims in Burma (Myanmar).

We pray to God to allow us to live till next Ramadan, and make it the best Ramadan ever.

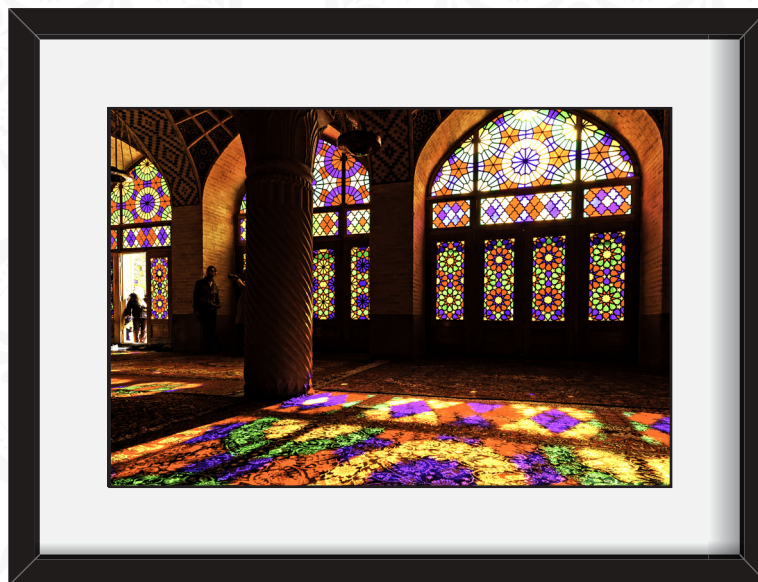


Benefits of Fasting

Psychological Benefits:

Every vice in society stems from a lack of self-control. Whether it is violence, addiction, gambling, infidelity or pre-marital sex. They are all a result of succumbing to desires. When a person does not have the strength in their character to withstand the numerous temptations and tackle his nafs (lower self) to the ground, then he will most definitely become a slave to those desires. As a prisoner of desires, a person feels completely powerless, lacking any ability to help themselves. In the extreme cases, these individuals become depressed, suicidal, bankrupt, imprisoned or in a midst of a scandal.

Since the root of all this evil is the inability to control oneself, then it would be of paramount importance to have training sessions for a whole society in order to strengthen their will power and avoid these destructive pitfalls that adversely affect





everyone. Fortunately in the Muslim world there is such a training session during the blessed month of Ramadan. Every Muslim that fasts gets intensive exercise in withstanding many different kinds of temptations. The temptation to eat, drink, have relations or even get angry is overcome every day for a month which prepares us for the many arduous tests we face in life.

Aside from gaining will power and the ability to control desires, fasting instills within us a deep feeling of gratitude along with patience. Deprivation leads to appreciation. After a long day of fasting, our sense of taste and smell are heightened. Each sip of water is like releasing a gushing, cool river in a dry, barren land and each morsel of food that is consumed is like feeding a person who has been stranded on a desert island with very little to eat, the most exquisite, scrumptious meal. It is what Gestalt therapy defines as being focused upon the individual's experience in the present moment, being mindful and being in the here and now.

In a world filled with immediate gratification, it is very healthy to learn how to delay the simple pleasures in life. Having the patience to withstand temptation and tolerating the de-





layed gratification are highly important elements in attaining personal maturity. We are trained patiently to wait for hundreds of things in life that take time and are delayed without a warning.

Firman and Vargiu remarked that fasting was a method of helping an individual move toward self-realization and reach for super conscious energies. In this respect, a period of fasting can trigger exceptional human performances, paranormal abilities, and altered states of consciousness. This explains how we are able to accomplish such lofty, spiritual endeavors during Ramadan although we are sleep deprived and abstaining from food with such zeal and contentment.

The euphoric state we experience while fasting can be classified as a spiritual catharsis which describes a purging that heals and restores the soul. It is the expelling, vacating and discharging of impurities within us to purify ourselves and reunite us with Allah. Fasting can be an extraordinarily transformative spiritual practice (Len Sperring). It provides the opportunity for releasing earthly ties, joining with the sacred and creating feelings of deep connectedness. Randi Fredricks stated that fasting has the innate power to change the individual, the community and ultimately the world.

When we reflect on the psychological implications of fasting (sawm), then we are even more empowered to embrace the blessed month of Ramadan and soar to new heights of spirituality in hopes of strengthening, purifying and enlightening the soul.

Source: missionislam.com.



Healthy Benefits: There are many studies that prove that fasting may contribute to better health than simply leading a lifestyle of gluttony. It is simply a truth that humanity has learnt from divine inspiration as well as from their own traditional practices of prevention and health.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: "Fast frequently in order to gain better health". He is also reported to have said: "The stomach is the warehouse of diseases".

Therefore, he ordered the faithful to eat only sparingly: "It is sufficient for human beings to partake a few morsels of food everyday that would maintain his posture. If he must indulge, let him divide his stomach into three parts: one third for his food, one third for water, and the remaining one third for the air passage".

These are wonderful truths that have been tested and proven to be perfect recipes for health, and they undoubtedly confirm the veracity of the divine message of the Prophet.

The Qur'an says:

{He (the Prophet) does not speak out of his own whims; rather he is inspired by Allah.} (An-Najm 53:3, 4)

It is so great to hear this scientific conclusion about the effect of fasting on the health. It proves that the Prophet of Islam is a real Messenger of Allah, and he delivered the message of Allah to mankind. However, the rightness of the prophetic statement has been proven long time ago and this scientific conclusion is an additional confirmation to his statement.

Let us strengthen our commitment to this true religion by following its teachings which were meant for the interest of mankind.



Rules & Conditions

In the second year of Hijrah, Muslims were commanded to fast in the month of Ramadan every year. The Qur'an says:

O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those who were before you, in order that you may learn taqwa (piety). (Al-Baqarah 2:183)

Further Allah says:

The month of Ramadan is that in which was revealed the Qur'an, wherein is guidance for mankind and the clear signs of guidance and distinction. Thus whosoever among you witness the month must fast.... (Al-Baqarah 2:185)

The Prophet Muhammad explained this further in a number of his statements reported in the books of Hadith. It is reported by Imam Al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim on the authority of Ibn `Umar that the Messenger of Allah said:





“Islam is built upon five pillars: testifying that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, performing Prayer, paying the Zakah, making the pilgrimage to the Sacred House (Hajj), and fasting the month of Ramadan.”

The Muslim Ummah is unanimous that fasting in the month of Ramadan is obligatory upon every person who is mukallaf (capable).

Upon Whom Fasting Is Obligatory:

Fasting in the month of Ramadan is obligatory upon every Muslim, male or female, who is adult (i.e. has reached puberty) and sane and who is not sick or on a journey.

Sickness could be a temporary sickness from which a person expects to be cured soon. Such a person is allowed not to fast during the days of his/her sickness, but he/she must fast later after Ramadan to complete the missed days. Those who are sick with incurable illness and expect no better health, such people are also allowed not to fast but they must pay the fidyah (compensation), which is giving a day's meals for each fast missed to a needy person.





One can also pay money instead of meals to the needy person. Women in their menses and post-natal bleeding are not allowed to fast, but they must make up later after Ramadan for the missed days. Pregnant women and mothers who are nursing babies, if they find it difficult to fast, they can also postpone their fasting to a later time when they are in a better condition.

Journey according to the Shari`ah is any journey that takes you away from your city of residence, a minimum of 48 miles or 80 kilometers. It is the same journey that allows one to make qasr (shortening the Prayer). The journey must be for a lawful cause. Also, it is a sin to travel in Ramadan in order to avoid fasting. A Muslim should try to change his/her plans during Ramadan to be able to fast and should not travel unless it is necessary. The traveler who misses the fasts of Ramadan must make up for those missed days later after Ramadan as soon as possible.

The Way of Performing Fasting:

- 1-** Take sahur (pre-dawn meal). It is Sunnah and there is a great reward and blessing in taking sahur. The best time for sahur is the last half hour before dawn or the time for Fajr Prayer.
- 2-** Take iftar (break-fast) immediately after sunset. Shari`ah considers sunset when the disk of the sun goes below the horizon and disappears completely.
- 3-** During fast abstain from all false talks and deeds. Do not quarrel, have disputes, indulge in arguments, use bad words, or do anything that is forbidden. One should try to discipline oneself morally and ethically, besides gaining a physical training and discipline.



One should also not make a show of one's fasting by talking too much about it, or by showing dry lips and hungry stomach, or showing bad temper. The fasting person must be a pleasant person with good spirit and good cheer.

During fast one should do acts of charity and goodness to others and should increase his/her worship and reading of the Qur'an. Every Muslim should try to read the whole Qur'an at least once during the month of Ramadan.

Things that Invalidate the Fast:

One must avoid doing anything that may render one's fast invalid. Things that invalidate the fast and require qada' (making up for these days) are the following:

- 1- Eating, drinking or smoking deliberately, including taking any non-nourishing items by mouth, nose or anus.
- 2- Deliberately causing oneself to vomit.
- 3- The beginning of menstrual or post-childbirth bleeding even in the last moment before sunset.
- 4- Ejaculation out of sexual excitement.
- 5- Eating, drinking, smoking or having sexual intercourse after Fajr (dawn) on mistaken assumption that it is not Fajr time yet. Similarly is engaging in these acts before sunset on the mistaken assumption that it is already sunset time.



Sexual intercourse during fasting is forbidden and is a major sin. Those who engage in it must make both: qada' and kaffarah (expiation by fasting 60 days after Ramadan or to feed 60 poor people for each day of fast broken in this way).

According to Imam Abu Hanifah, eating and/or drinking deliberately during fast also entails the same qada' and kaffarah.

Permissible Things During Fasting:

During fast, the following things are permissible:

- 1- Taking a bath or shower. If water is swallowed involuntarily it will not invalidate the fast. According to most of the jurists swimming is also allowed in fasting, but one should avoid diving, because that may cause the water to go from mouth or nose in the stomach.
- 2- Using perfumes, wearing contact lenses or using eye drops.
- 3- Taking injections or having blood test.
- 4- Using miswak (tooth-stick) or toothbrush (even with tooth paste) and rinsing the mouth or nostrils with water provided it is not overdone (so as to avoid swallowing water).
- 5- Eating, drinking or smoking unintentionally, i.e. one forgot that one was fasting. But one must stop as soon as one remembers and should continue one's fast.



- 6- If one sleeps during the daytime and has a wet-dream, it does not break one's fast. Also, if one has intercourse during the night and was not able to make ghusl (bathe) before dawn, he/she can begin fast and make ghusl later. Women whose menstruation stops during the night may begin fast even if they have not made ghusl yet. In all these cases, ghusl (ritual bath) is necessary but fast is valid even without bathing.
- 7- Kissing between husband and wife is allowed in fast, but one should try to avoid it so that one may not do anything further that is forbidden during fast.

Requirements for the Validity of Fasting:

There are basically two main components of fasting:

- 1- The intention (niyyah) for fasting. One should make a sincere intention to fast for the sake of Allah every day before dawn. The intention need not be in words, but must be with the sincerity of the heart and mind. Some jurists are of the opinion that the intention can be made once only for the whole month and does not have to be repeated every day. It is, however, better to make intention every day to take full benefit of fasting.
- 2- Abstaining from dawn to dusk from everything that invalidates fasting. This point has been explained in detail in the preceding sections.



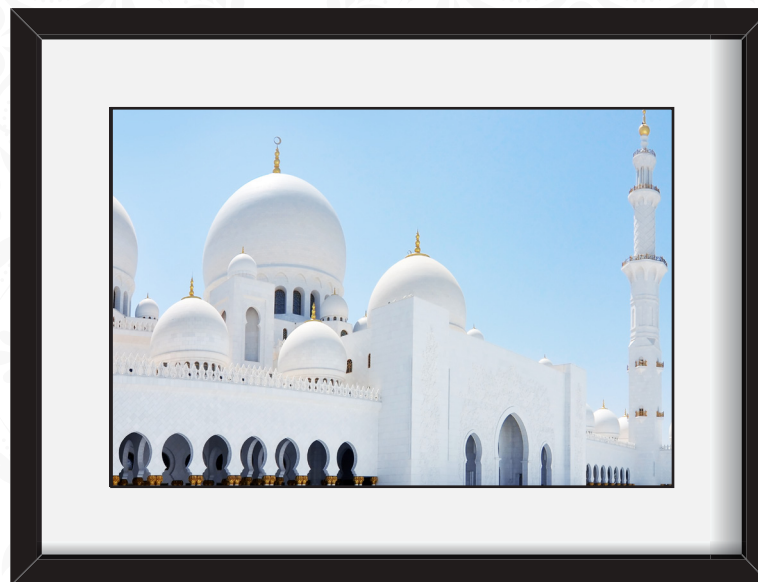
Breaking Some Fast-days of Ramadan without Justification:

It is generally known that no days are equivalent to the days of Ramadan except the days of another Ramadan. At the same time, all days of Ramadan are originally fast-days, so that one can never make up for the missed fast-days of Ramadan during another Ramadan.

That is why Abu Hurairah said: "Whoever did not observe fast for one day of Ramadan for no legal excuse or on account of a disease can never make it up later". (At-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, An-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah)

Kaffarah: Fasting during the month of Ramadan is fard (an obligation) upon every adult Muslim who is not sick or on a journey. It is a sin to miss the fasts of Ramadan without any excuse. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever broke even one fast of Ramadan without an excuse or sickness, even if he fasted the whole life after that it will not compensate what he missed". (At-Tirmidhi)

Since you regret your negligence, I suggest that you repent sincerely and ask Allah's forgiveness. Allah has promised that if anyone repents sincerely, Allah accepts his repentance and forgives him.





You should also try to make up for your missed days. Calculate how many days of Ramadan you missed. Make up for those days by fasting one day for each day that you missed. If you cannot then give the kaffarah, which is a day's meals or its value to be given to a needy person, we estimate about ten dollars per day for each day's fast.

Thus, by doing these deeds, you may not be able to compensate totally for the missed days of Ramadan, but at least you will express your sincere repentance and effort to fulfill the commands of Allah.





Women in Ramadan

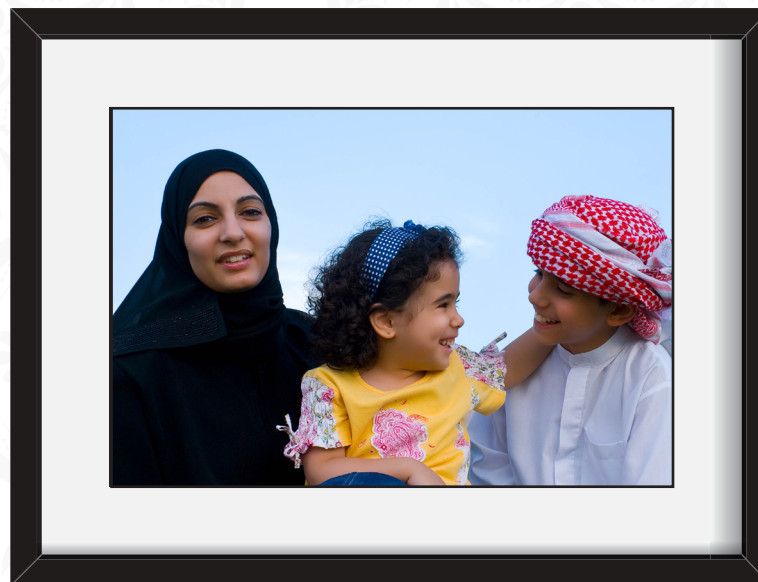
Muslim women like everyone else have high expectations for the blessed month, as well as more loads and duties.

Achieving what you want in Ramadan is strongly related to time management and realistic plans.

Women have more duties in Ramadan, especially if they are working, however, they still have several opportunities for getting rewards, which makes it even more important for them to arrange and coordinate diversity of activities only in one month.

Charity is a widely open door in which women can participate by different ways; cooking food for needy people, collecting money from relatives and friends for charitable reasons, among other activities.

Women have also a very important and crucial role in helping their children understand what Ramadan is all about, and in organizing activities and entertaining activities relevant to the holy month.





Making Up for the Missed Fast-Days of Ramadan:

It is important for the woman to make up for the missed fasts as soon as possible; she may do them consecutively or split them, but she should complete them before the next Ramadan.

‘A’ishah, the beloved wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him), says: “I would have missed fasts to make up for, and then I finish them before the next Ramadan”.

The issue, however, has been contentious among scholars: one group insists that making up for the missed fasts should be done consecutively; this is especially true if one has missed them all in a single stretch.

The second group says it can be made up consecutively or with breaks for Allah says:

The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur’an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong). And whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month, and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey, (let him fast the same) number of other days. Allah desires for you ease; He desires not hardship for you; and (He desires) that you should complete the period, and that you should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that peradventure you may be thankful.

(Al-Baqarah 2:185)

In conclusion, a woman should hasten to make up for her missed fasts, and should do so before the arrival of Ramadan.



Wearing Hijab and Fasting:Prayer

If an act of worship is done, it is hoped that Allah will accept it as long as it is done for His sake. However, we should not be sure regarding its acceptance, as this matter is referred to Allah, Who says in the Qur'an: **{... Allah accepts only from those who ward off (evil).}** (Al-Ma'idah 5:27)

As for the believers who do some kinds of sins, Allah will not deprive them of the reward of their good deeds. He says: **{And whoso doeth good an atom's weight will see it then. And whoso doeth ill an atom's weight will see it then.}** (Az-Zalzalah:7, 8)

As far as the woman who does not wear hijab and offers Prayer and fasting in Ramadan is concerned, her acts of worship are hoped to be accepted. However, she will be punished for not wearing hijab, as it is a sin.

The believer should not depend on Allah's mercy and forgiveness while not fearing Allah and continuing to do more sins. Rather, the believer who did a sin is obligated to repent and ask Allah for forgiveness and stop doing this sin so that Allah may forgive him. Allah says: **"And lo! Verily I am Forgiving toward him who repents and believes and does good, and afterward walks aright."** (Ta-Ha 20:82)

Not wearing hijab is a sign of not fearing Allah's punishment, for if she did fear Allah she would abide by His commands. So, how does Allah accept the Prayer and fasting of one who does not fear Him?



It should be clear that there is a difference between the validity of an act of worship and its acceptance. One's Prayer and fasting may be valid if the conditions of Prayer and fasting are fulfilled. We cannot say that they are invalid, as there is no relation between their validity and acceptance. But, we say that their acceptance is referred to Allah.

Is It Permissible for a Woman to Take Pills to Stop Menses during Ramadan?

There is nothing wrong, as far as Islam is concerned, if a woman takes such pills during Ramadan in order to be able to continue fasting the whole blessed month without interruption.

However, we have to keep in mind that a woman is allowed to do so while being guided by the following conditions:

- 1- Taking such pills must not result in putting her life and health at risk.
- 2- It is better, before taking such medication, to seek the advice of a reliable physician.

So, for the elderly man, elderly woman, and the sick who do not expect recovery from their sickness, they are not to fast and as charity they are to feed a poor person for each day.

The Aged and Pregnant Woman in Fasting:

As regards a pregnant woman or a suckling mother, if she is worried lest fasting should harm her, the majority of jurists are of the view that she is allowed not to fast, provided that she makes up for the fast-days she missed. A woman in either of those cases is similar to a patient.



Though jurists have unanimously agreed that a pregnant or a suckling woman who apprehends harms to her embryo or her new-born child is allowed to abstain from fasting, they have disagreed as to whether she must make up for the fast days she missed later, or feed one poor person for each day she missed or both.

Categories of Muslims in Ramadan:

In Ramadan, Muslims can be categorized into one of the following groups. Firstly, there are those who await this month patiently, with increasing happiness at its advent, so you see them working diligently in varying acts of worship, performing what is obligatory, and carrying out multiple mustahab (desired) acts of worship. They do so following in the footsteps of the best of mankind, Muhammad, as has been narrated in Sahih Al-Bukhari.

Then there are those people who enter this month and come out in the same state as they entered, that is, without any increase in righteous actions. Indeed, the individuals of this group have forfeited an abundant and countless deal of meritorious deeds.

The third group of people is those who don't concern themselves with worship except in this month. Those people are referred to as Ramadan worshippers. When the month of Ramadan arrives, you see these people frequent the masjid. However, as soon as the month comes to a halt, they return to their old state. To the individual in this category we say, you should continue obedience to Allah in other months just as you were in Ramadan, so that you meet Allah in a state that pleases Him.

The next group of people is those who fast by abstaining from food and drink and not anything else, that is, they do not forebear sinful actions. The only thing these people attain from their fasting is hunger and thirst, as Prophet Muhammad informs us.



Another group of people are those who transform the days of Ramadan into times of sleep, and its nights into times of entertainment. They do not spend the days or nights in remembering Allah, instead they spend their nights in amusement. To these people we say, fear Allah, and do not fall short from occupying yourself with the abundance of good that has been bestowed upon you.

The final group of people includes those who do not know Allah, Most High, neither in Ramadan, nor outside of it. You find these individuals heedless regarding their salah and fasting. They abandon these pillars despite being gifted with excellent health, and then they have the audacity to declare that they believe.



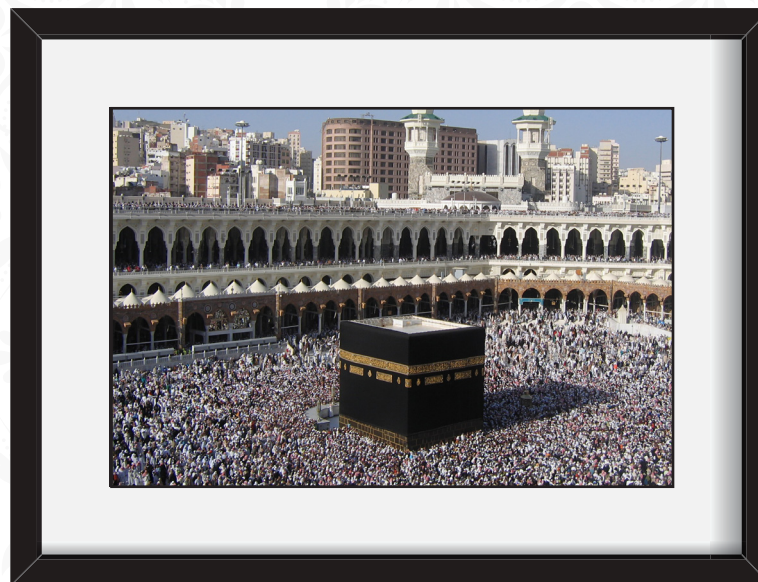


I`tikaf

Performing I`tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan in the masjid is a beautiful act of Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is like a spiritual retreat. It is reported by `A`ishah that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to observe i`tikaf during the last ten days of the month of Ramadan and he continued this practice until he passed away. Then, his wives carried on this practice of observing i`tikaf regularly after his death. (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

It is recommended that every Muslim make at least one i`tikaf in his/ her life. Muslims should be keen to perform this act of Sunnah in every community to keep this act existent. PrayerWomen can also do i`tikaf, but it is to be at home for reasons of modesty. Indeed, there are great blessings and rewards in i`tikaf that should be sought by everyone.

I`tikaf is done by having the intention to offer it for the sake of Allah and remaining in the masjid. It is desirable to start i`tikaf of Ramadan from the evening of the 20th day of





Ramadan until the end of the month . During i'tikaf one has to stay in the masjid all the time and it is not permissible to leave it except for a necessity or a need, such as going to the toilet.

During i'tikaf one should spend one's time in Prayer, reading the Qur'an, dhikr, and reflection. Engaging in business and other worldly talks and activities is not allowed during i'tikaf. However, attending a Janazah (funeral) or visiting a sick person or leaving for any emergency is permissible.





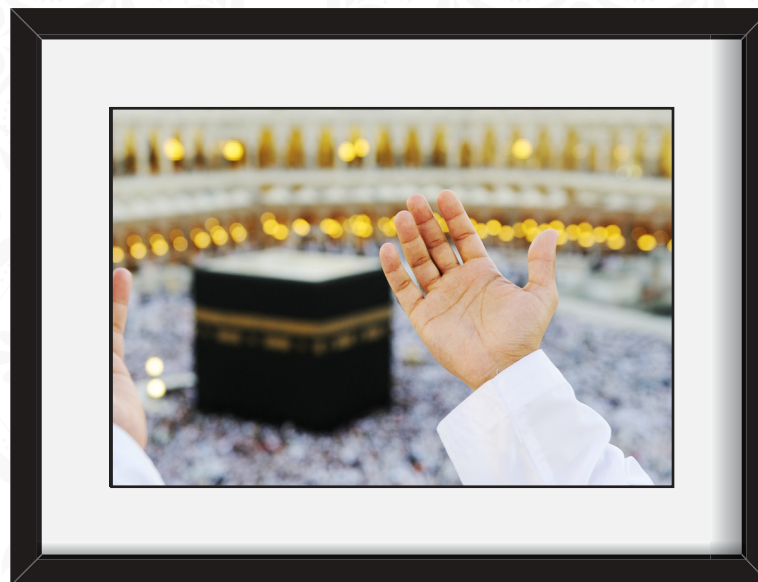
Laylat Al-Qadr

The expression Laylat Al-Qadr actually means 'The Night of DPower' or 'The Night of Decree'. This was the night on which the Qur'an was sent down from Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuz (the Preserved Slate) to the first heaven. Almighty Allah says:

Verily! We have sent it (the Qur'an) down on the Night of Decree (Laylat Al-Qadr). And what will make you know what the Night of Decree is? The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months. Therein descend the angels and the ruh (Gabriel) by Allah's permission with all decrees. Peace... until the break of dawn. (Al-Qadr 97:1-7)

Ibn Kathir commented on the phrase: **"Therein descend the angels and the ruh"** saying:

'This means that the descending of the angels increases during this night, due to the vast amount of its blessings. And, the angels descend along with the descent of blessing and mercy.'



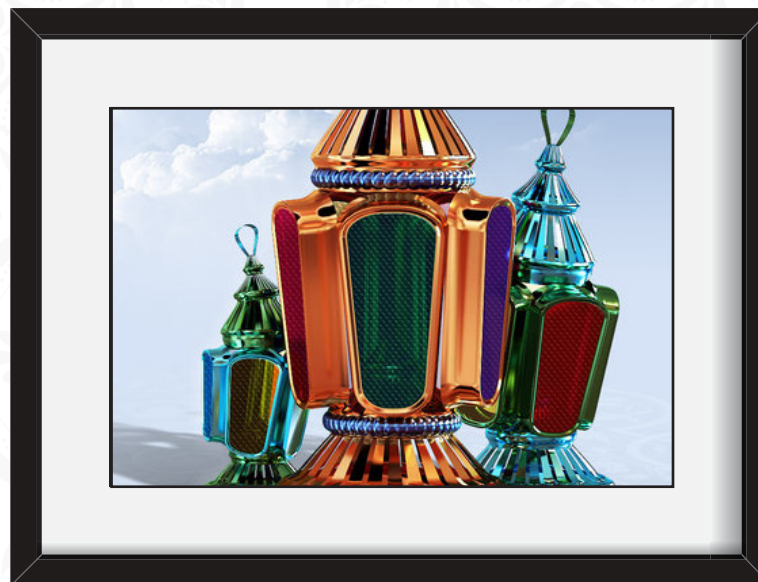


This night occurs only in Ramadan, since the Qur'an was revealed in it: **(Verily, We have sent it (the Qur'an) down in the Night of Al-Qadr.** Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet said: "The blessed month has come to you. Allah has made fasting during it obligatory upon you. During it, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hellfire are locked, and the devils are chained. There is a night [during this month], which is better than a thousand months. Whoever is deprived of its good is really deprived [of something great.]" (Ah-mad, An-Nasa'i and Al-Bayhaqi)

So, the one who misses Laylat Al-Qadr, is a very unfortunate person indeed! This is how and why the Night of Decree is so special to worshippers, who strive hard to gain its blessings.

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah said: "Whoever spends the night of Laylat al-Qadr in Prayer, out of faith and seeking reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven." Prayer (Al-Bukhari)

Every sincere believer is eager to stand in Prayer during the Night of Decree, aspiring the forgiveness of sins, as well as the great rewards from Allah. The hadiths quoted above are evidence for the virtue of the night of Al-Qadr, as well as of performing qiyam al-layl (night vigil Prayer) during it. It is also clearly indicated that Allah has honored this night





and made it better than a thousand months, which is equivalent to eighty-three years and four months!

For this reason, whoever performs qiyam ql-layl (night vigil Prayer), with true faith and seeking Allah's reward in it, will be forgiven. So, we should be keen to gain these rewards by performing night Prayer, Prayerwhether at masjid or privately at home, during that night.

Concerning praying in congregation, the Prophet said: "Whoever stands in Prayer with the imam (the Prayerleader of congregational Prayer) until he (the imam) finishes the Prayer, it is recorded for him as if he spent the whole night in Prayer." (Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)

It is recommended to supplicate a lot during this night, as reported by `A'ishah that the Prophet recommended a specific supplication on this night:

"Allahumma innaka `affuwwun, tuhibbul `afwa, fa`fu `annee." (O Allah, You are the One Who pardons greatly, and loves to pardon, so pardon me.)

Scholars mentioned that the purpose of i`tikaf in Ramadan is seeking the blessings and rewards on this night.
Prayer



When Is Laylat Al-Qadr?

Ibn `Abbas reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

“Seek the Night of Decree in the last ten nights of Ramadan, when nine or seven or five nights remain out of the last ten nights of Ramadan (i.e. 21st, 23rd, 25th nights respectively).”
(Al-Bukhari)

So, we should preferably seek out Laylat Al-Qadr in the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan: the night of the twenty-first, the twenty-third, the twenty-fifth, the twenty-seventh and the twenty-ninth. If one is too weak or unable to seek it out in all the odd nights, then let us seek it out in the last odd nights: the night of the twenty-fifth, the twenty-seventh and the twenty-ninth.





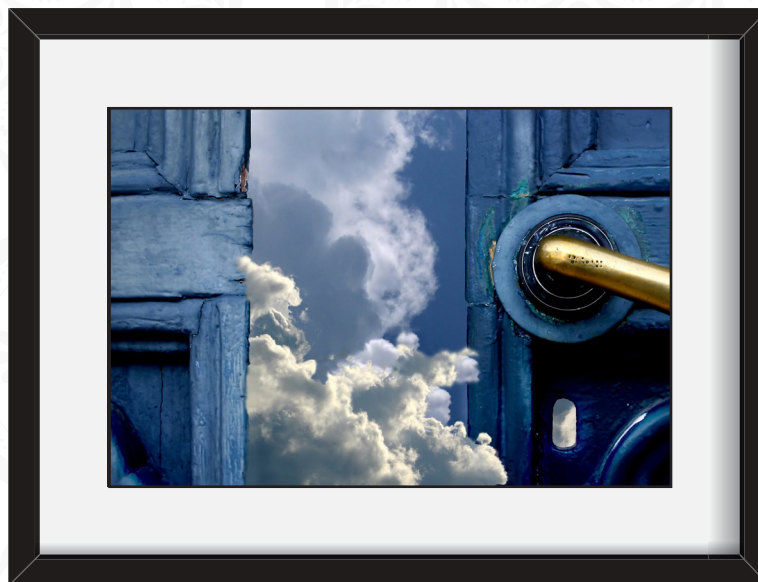
`Eid Al-Fitr

`Eid Al-Fitr is the day of boons and blessings for all fasting Muslims, as they are promised a great reward by Almighty Allah for their righteous observance of the fast. At the end of Ramadan, Muslims express their gratitude to Allah, Who enabled them to observe the fast and, at the same time, granted them abundant provision during this blessed month. `Eid Al-Fitr, therefore, is a day of joy, acts of worship, thanksgiving to Allah, cooperation, solidarity, brotherhood, unity, and spiritual provision.

Significance:

At the conclusion of the month of Ramadan, on the first day of the 10th month of the Islamic lunar calendar, occurs `Eid Al-Fitr. This is one of two main festivals of Islam and is celebrated by all Muslims throughout the world.

The Prayer of `Eid Al-Fitr is offered early in the morning in congregation. It should be performed in a large open place and attended by all Muslims, males or females. After the Prayer, the imam (leader of the congregational Prayer)





delivers a short sermon and then people greet each other. The rest of ceremonies are generally held privately with families and friends.

The significance of `Eid Al-Fitr is that it is a day of thanksgiving to Allah for giving the opportunity to the Muslims to benefit from and enjoy the blessings of the month of Ramadan.

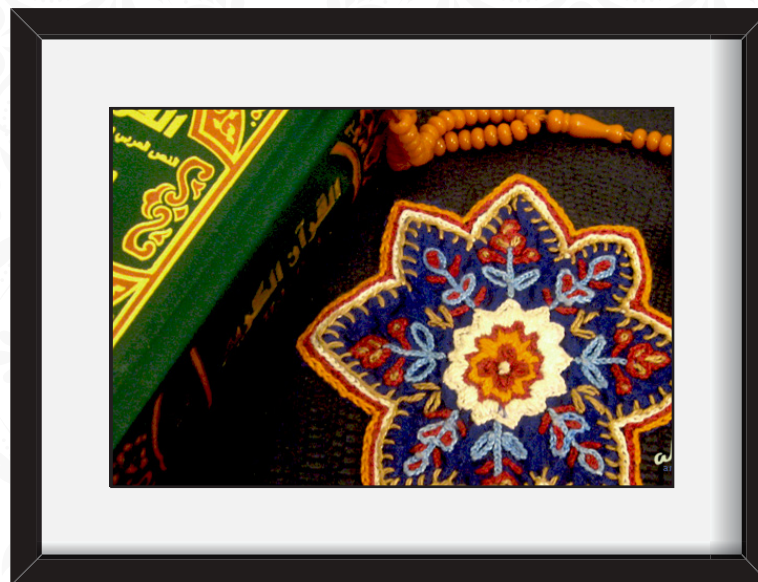
Rulings:

1- Offering `Eid Prayers

Some of the scholars say that `Eid Prayers are wajib (imperative). This is the view of the Hanafi scholars and Sheikh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah. Some scholars say that `Eid Prayer is fard Kifayah (a collective obligation). This is the view of the Hanbalis. A third group says that `Eid Prayer is Sunnah mu`akkadah (a stressed upon act of Sunnah). This is the view of the Malikis and Shafi`is.

2- Offering Supererogatory Prayers

There are no Supererogatory Prayers to be offered either before or after the `Eid Prayer. Ibn `Abbas reported that the Prophet used to go out on the day of `Eid and pray two rak`ahs, with nothing before or after them. This is the case if





the Prayer is offered in an open area. If, however, the people pray the `Eid Prayer in a masjid, then they should pray two rak`ahs for tahiyyat al-masjid (a way of greeting the mosque).

3- Women Attending the `Eid Prayers

According to the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Muslim males and females are urged to attend the `Eid Prayer to witness the goodness of this day, even the menstruating women who are asked to attend the `Eid Prayer and sermon but they have to stay a bit away from the Prayer place. That is to say, they should come to hear the `Eid sermon and share happiness with Muslims, but without offering the Prayer as this is forbidden to them. Also, women are advised to be properly dressed, and not wearing perfumes because this is against the Prophet's instructions to women.

4- Fasting

It is haram (prohibited) to fast during the days of `Eid because of the hadith of Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) in which he said that the Messenger of Allah prohibited fasting on the day of Fitr and the day of Adha. (Muslim)

Etiquettes of `Eid

1- Ghosl (taking a bath):

One of the good manners of `Eid is to take a bath before going out to the Prayer. It was reported that Sa`id ibn Jubayr



said, "Three things are Sunnah on `Eid: to walk (to the Prayer-place), to take a bath, and to eat before going out (if it is `Eid Al-Fitr)."

2- Eating before going out:

One should not go out to the Prayer-place on `Eid Al-Fitr before eating some dates, because of the hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari from Anas ibn Malik who said, "The Messenger of Allah would not go out in the morning of `Eid Al-Fitr until he had eaten some dates... and he would eat an odd number". On `Eid Al-Adha, on the other hand, it is mustahab (recommended) not to eat until after the Prayer, when one should eat from the meat of one's sacrifice.

3- Takbir on the days of `Eid:

This is one of the greatest Sunnahs of this day. Al-Daraqutni and others reported that when Ibn `Umar went out on `Eid Al-Fitr and `Eid Al-Adha, he would constantly make Takbir until he reached the Prayer-place, then he would continue making Takbir until the imam came.

4- Congratulating one another:

People should exchange congratulations and good greetings on `Eid, no matter what form the words may use. For example they may say to one another, Taqabbal Allahu minnaa wa minka (may Allah accept from us and from you our good deeds!). Jubayr ibn Nufayr said, "At the time of the Prophet when people met one another on the day of `Eid, they would say, Taqabbal Allahu minnaa wa minka." (Ibn Hajar)

5- Wearing one's best clothes for `Eid:



Jabir said, "The Prophet had a jubbah (cloak) that he would wear on `Eid and on Fridays." Al-Bayhaqi reported that Ibn `Umar used to wear his best clothes on `Eid. So, men should wear the best clothes they have when they go out for `Eid.

6- Changing the route on returning from the Prayer-place:

Jabir ibn `Abdullah reported that the Prophet used to take different routes on the day of `Eid (going to and returning from the `Eid Prayer). (Al-Bukhari)





Lessons from Fasting

God says:

Blessed be He in whose hand is the Sovereignty, and He is able to do all things. He created death and life that He may try which of you is best in deed. He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving. (Al-Mulk 67:1, 2)

Also, He says:

It is He who made the night and day to follow each other for such as have the will to celebrate His praises or to show their gratitude. (Al-Furqan 25:62)

Life and death and the succession of nights and day have a purpose and that is to test us and to give us an opportunity to express our thanks and gratitude to our Creator and Sustainer. The month of Ramadan comes and goes. We must examine ourselves now and see what we have learned and achieved during this month. The test of success of this month lies in the effects it has left upon us as follows:





1- Discipline:

We learn in this month how to discipline ourselves for the sake of Allah. In our morning and evening, we follow a strict schedule of eating and drinking. We are constantly aware that even in our mundane activities as eating and drinking, we must remain under divine injunctions.

We may change our habits in our daily routines because we learn that we are not the servants and slaves to our habits, but always the servants of Allah. Then after Ramadan, we have to keep this spirit of discipline in other modes of our life and must continue with our submission to the commands of Allah.

2- Renewal of Devotional Life:

Ramadan renews our enthusiasm for worship and devotion to Allah. In this month we are more careful of our daily Prayers and have special Prayers at night. There is no religion without Prayer and Muslims learn in this month how to strengthen and deepen their religious life.

3- Renewal of Contact with the Qur'an:

Ramadan and the Qur'an are linked together from the beginning. It was in this month that this divine message was revealed to Prophet Muhammad. We are told that the Prophet was fasting when he received the first revelation. Fasting prepares the believers' hearts to learn the Word of Allah. It is the most suitable condition for our spiritual and mental communication with the Qur'an.



The Muslim Ummah pays more attention to the Qur'an in this month. This renewed contact with the Qur'an must help us in following its message.

4- Renewal of Identity with the Ummah:

Ramadan is not an individual experience only, but it is an experience in community. The whole Muslim Ummah fasts together in one and the same month. We identify with one another in our obedience to Allah. This gives us a new sense of togetherness and association.

Ramadan teaches us that the Muslim Ummah is the community of piety and devotion to Allah and its members derive their strength from each other in deeds of piety and virtue. The bonds that are based on piety and virtue are the strongest bonds and it is these bonds that prove good for mankind. The strength of the Muslim community lies in its commitment to the values of goodness, morality and piety. Ramadan leaves an imprint of all these values upon the Muslim Ummah.

5- A Fresh Sense of Care and Sympathy:

Fasting in the month of Ramadan helps us understand the suffering and the pains of the poor and needy. By our voluntary hunger and thirst, we realize what it means to be deprived of basic necessities of life. Ramadan is called the month of charity and sympathy. We learn how to be more kind and generous in this month. Many Muslims also pay their zakah in the month of Ramadan.



6- Jihad or Struggle:

Fasting in Ramadan and Jihad both of them were prescribed in the same year, that is, the second year of Hijrah in Madinah. Fasting prepares for hardships and sacrifice. These are two important things without which Jihad is not possible. Muslims learn in Ramadan how to struggle against the forces of evil in their own selves, in the society around them, and in the world at large.

7- Taqwa:

To summarize all the moral and spiritual gifts of Ramadan, we can say that Ramadan gives us the great gift of taqwa (piety).

Taqwa is the sum total of Islamic life. It is the highest of all virtues in the Islamic scheme of things. It means, God-consciousness, piety, fear and awe of Allah and it signifies submission to Allah and total commitment to all that is good and rejection of all that is evil and bad.



What Is After Ramadan?

After the month of fasting is over, a Muslim is required to keep the spirit of Ramadan as much as he or she can. Moreover, if he or she has missed fasting for some days in Ramadan for a valid justification, he or she should hasten to make up for them.

So, we should consider the following after Ramadan:

1- Making Up for missed fast days:

A Muslim should hasten to make up for the missed fast-days of Ramadan if he or she has missed fast day(s) of Ramadan for a valid reason such as illness, travel, or menses in the case of women.

2- Fasting six days in Shawwal:

It is highly recommended by the Sunnah for a Muslim to fast six days in the month of Shawwal. Fasting for six days in Shawwal entails great reward and blessings from Allah, the Almighty. The Prophet is reported to have said, "Whoever fasts the month of Ramadan, and then follows it up by (fasting) six days of Shawwal, it is as if he has fasted the whole year." (Muslim)

Here, it is important to point out that it is not necessary for a Muslim to fast the six days of Shawwal consecutively. So long as one has fasted six days, either consecutively or separately, he or she will fulfill the requirement and will receive the same rewards, in sha' Allah.



3- Keeping the Spirit of Ramadan:

A Muslim should spare no efforts to keep the spirit of Ramadan throughout the other months of the year by means of:

- Seeking Allah's support, beseeching Him Almighty to guide him to the right path and help him remain steadfast in faith.
- Observing optional fasting after Ramadan, as Muslims are encouraged by the Sunnah to observe optional fasting after Ramadan. The days in which optional fasting is recommended are, i.e. six days during the month of Shawwal, the day of `Arafah (9th of Dhul-Hijjah, provided that the person is not offering Hajj), the 10th of Muharram.
- Keeping on offering optional night Prayer.
- Keeping on reciting, listening to and reflecting on the Qur'an.
- Keeping on taking care of the poor and the needy.
- Keeping on offering supererogatory acts of worship.
- Keeping on performing dhikr a lot and asking Almighty Allah for forgiveness.
- Avoiding the prohibitions and illegal practices.



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