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How Muslims spend
the month
of Ramadan

Ramadan

Why Muslims Love the Month of Ramadan - Inside This Month's Issue





Ramadan

Ramadan is a month in which fasting is an obligation for all able Muslims

Quick Facts



9th month of the lunar calendar



Begins and ends with sighting of the new moon



Food, drink, and sexual relations are prohibited from dawn until dusk



Muslims refrain from other sins such as looking, saying, or listening to evil



Questions?

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Ramadan is meant to instill good habits such as:

- ★ God consciousness
- ★ A break from materialism
- ★ Worship
- ★ Quality time with family and community
- ★ Increase in charitable acts
- ★ Self-constraint

Month of Quran



Ramadan is the month in which the Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him). Muslim try to recite as much as they can.

Each night of Ramadan, Muslims also pray a voluntary special prayer called Taraweeh. In this heart warming prayer, many imams try to complete the recitation of the entire Quran over the course of the month.

HOW FASTING IS GOOD FOR YOU

A ROUGH GUIDE TO WHAT HAPPENS IN YOUR BODY DURING THE MONTH OF RAMADAN

1

YOUR BODY WILL ENTER INTO A FASTING STATE APPROXIMATELY EIGHT HOURS AFTER YOUR LAST MEAL, WHEN YOUR GUT COMPLETES THE ABSORPTION OF NUTRIENTS FROM YOUR FOOD.

2

FOR ENERGY, THE FIRST THING YOUR BODY WILL USE UP IS THE GLUCOSE STORED IN YOUR LIVER AND MUSCLES.

3

WHEN THE GLUCOSE RUNS OUT, YOUR BODY STARTS USING UP FAT FOR ENERGY. DURING THIS TIME, SMALL QUANTITIES OF GLUCOSE ARE ALSO 'MANUFACTURED' THROUGH OTHER MECHANISMS IN THE LIVER.

4

ONLY DURING A PROLONGED FAST OF MANY DAYS OR WEEKS WILL YOUR BODY EVENTUALLY TURN TO USING UP PROTEIN RELEASED FROM THE BREAKDOWN OF MUSCLE — THIS IS CALLED STARVATION. THIS DOES NOT HAPPEN WHEN FASTING IN RAMADAN IF YOU ARE EATING PROPERLY WHEN YOU BREAK YOUR FAST.

5

EXTENDING ONLY FROM DAWN TILL DUSK, THE RAMADAN FAST GIVES US AMPLE TIME TO REPLENISH OUR ENERGY STORES DURING IFTAR AND SUHOOR MEALS. THIS PROVIDES YOUR BODY WITH A PROGRESSIVE AND GENTLE TRANSITION FROM USING UP GLUCOSE STORES TO USING UP FAT AS A SOURCE OF ENERGY. IT PREVENTS THE BREAKDOWN OF MUSCLE FOR PROTEIN.

6

THE USE OF FAT FOR ENERGY AIDS WEIGHT LOSS AND REDUCES YOUR CHOLESTEROL LEVELS IN THE LONG RUN. WEIGHT LOSS RESULTS IN BETTER CONTROL OF DIABETES AND REDUCES BLOOD PRESSURE.

7

DURING THE FASTING MONTH, A DETOXIFICATION PROCESS ALSO OCCURS, AS TOXINS STORED IN YOUR BODY'S FAT ARE DISSOLVED AND REMOVED.

8

AFTER A FEW DAYS OF THE FAST, HIGHER LEVELS OF CERTAIN HORMONES APPEAR IN THE BLOOD (ENDORPHINS), RESULTING IN A BETTER LEVEL OF ALERTNESS AND AN OVERALL FEELING OF GENERAL MENTAL WELLBEING.



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Why Muslims Love the Month of Ramadan



Islam uses a lunar calendar—that is, each month begins with the sighting of the new moon, therefore because the lunar calendar is about 11 days shorter than the solar calendar, Islamic months “move” each year. This year (2008) the Islamic month of Ramadan coincides almost exactly with the month of September. For Muslims the coming of Ramadan is a source of joy and celebration; however, we celebrate in a way that may seem strange to people unfamiliar with the tenets of Islam. Ramadan is not a month of parties and socialising, it is a month of worship. To fast the month of Ramadan is one of the pillars of Islam.

Muslims express gratitude and love for the One True God by obeying and worshipping Him. We worship according to His guidance revealed in the Quran and through the authentic traditions of Prophet Muhammad. Ramadan is special. It is a month of fasting, reading and coming to understand Quran and special extra prayers. The mosques come alive at night when Muslims gather to break their fast together and pray. The smooth rich sound of Quran recitation is heard throughout the long nights as Muslims stand shoulder-to-shoulder praying and praising God.

Muslims all over the world love the

month of Ramadan and look forward to it with mounting excitement. In the weeks preceding Ramadan lives are scrutinised, and plans are made for a month of serious worship and supplication. The countdown begins and conversations start with how many weeks it is until the blessed month arrives. Perhaps non-Muslims wonder why we look forward to fasting days and sleepless nights. Ramadan offers the chance of redemption and great rewards. It is a month like no other. A month of spiritual reflection and prayer. Hearts are directed away from worldly activities and towards God.

In the month Ramadan, all physically mature and healthy Muslims are required to fast: to abstain from all food, drink, gum chewing, any kind of tobacco use and any kind of sexual contact between dawn and sunset. Nevertheless, this is only the physical aspect there are also the spiritual characteristics, which include refraining from gossiping, lying, slander and all traits of bad character. All obscene and impious sights and sounds are avoided as a way of purifying thoughts and actions. Fasting is also a way of experiencing hunger and developing sympathy for the less fortunate and learning thankfulness and appreciation for all of God’s bounties.

*God said,
“O you who believe! Observing the fast is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become pious.” (Quran 2:183)*

The Prophet Muhammad also reminded us that fasting is not just abstaining from food and drink but there is a further dimension. He said, “He who does not desist from obscene language and acting obscenely (during the period of fasting), God has no need that he didn’t eat or drink.” Saheeh Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim

Ramadan is also the month when Muslims try to establish or re establish a relationship with the Quran. Although

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Why Muslims Love the Month of Ramadan - Continued

this may sound like a strange thing to say, the words of God are a guiding light and a mercy. Nobody reads Quran except that it changes his or her life in some way. The Quran was sent down in this month of Ramadan. The two, Ramadan and Quran are inextricably entwined. Being with the Quran, reading, memorising, reciting it or pondering its meanings is spiritually uplifting comforting and a source of strength. Recitation in the night is particularly beneficial, the distractions of the day have faded away and closeness of God is palpable in the stillness of the night. Special evening prayers are conducted during which portions of the Qur'an are recited. These prayers are known as Taraweeh. One thirtieth of the Qur'an is read on successive evenings, so that by the end of the month the entire Qur'an has been completed.

One of the last few odd-numbered nights of the month is Laylat ul-Qadr, the "Night of Power" or "Night of Destiny." It is the holiest night of the holiest month; it is believed to be the night on which God first began revealing the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad through the angel Gabriel. This is a time for especially fervent and devoted prayer, and the rewards and blessings associated with such are many. Muslims are told in the Qur'an that praying throughout this one night is better than a thousand months of prayer. No one knows exactly which night it is; it is one of God's mysteries.

Ramadan is also the month of good deeds and charity. Muslims try to give generously and increase their good deeds. Charity can be as simple as a smile; there is no need for lavish displays. Charity given quietly is better for the recipient and one who gives. The Prophet Muhammad was always a generous person, never owning more than just enough to cover his immediate needs. Any extra, he gave generously to those around him, however

he was most generous in Ramadan.

You may be beginning to wonder if these are not qualities and virtues a Muslim truly devoted to God, should display in any month, and you would be correct. They most certainly are. However, as human beings we all fall short, commit sins and make mistakes. Sometimes the nature of life causes us to forget our real purpose. Our purpose is to worship God and God in his infinite wisdom and mercy has given us Ramadan. It is a month, which if used wisely, can recharge our spiritual and physical batteries. It is a month full of mercy and forgiveness when God makes it easy for us to overcome our shortcomings, when He rewards us in abundance. He is our Creator, who understands that we are far from perfect. When we walk towards God, he meets us running, when we hold out our hand He reaches for us and bestows his forgiveness on us. Muslims love Ramadan, it is a lifeline. They stand shoulder to shoulder and bow their heads in submission. Ramadan spreads across the world as Muslims begin and break their fast together, one body, one people, and one nation. Ramadan arrives softly and her deeds ascend gently towards God. Far from being a trial of deprivation, the month of Ramadan is a joy and a gift beyond compare. Even before the month is finished Muslims begin to mourn the passing of this blessed month and try to extend the time by being with the Quran and worshipping God in the best way possible.

- Aisha Stacey
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The Prophet Muhammad's Last Sermon *(peace be upon him)*

This sermon was delivered on the Ninth Day of Dhul Hijjah 10 A.H. in the 'Uranah valley of Mount Arafat' (in Mecca).

After praising, and thanking Allah he said:

"O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and TAKE THESE WORDS TO THOSE WHO COULD NOT BE PRESENT HERE TODAY.

O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your LORD, and that HE will indeed reckon your deeds. ALLAH has forbidden you to take usury (interest), therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. Allah has Judged that there shall be no interest and that all the interest due to Abbas ibn 'Abd'al Muttalib (Prophet's uncle) shall henceforth be waived...

Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your

women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.

O People, listen to me in earnest, worship ALLAH, say your five daily prayers (Salah), fast during the month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in Zakat (charity). Perform Hajj if you can afford to.

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white; except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves.

Remember, one day you will appear before ALLAH and answer your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.

O People, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O People, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the QURAN and my example, the SUNNAH and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O ALLAH, that I have conveyed your message to your people".

For Questions about Islam, Comments, Suggestions or other inquiries about this publication please contact: **Editor@DawahMonthly.com**

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