



ALL ABOUT RAMADAN



What is Ramadan?

1. It is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting (sawm) to commemorate the first revelation of the Quran to Muhammad according to Islamic belief.
2. Ramadan is an Arabic word; its root "Ar-Ramad" means "dryness/heat."
3. The Lunar calendar is 11-12 days shorter than Gregorian calendar... therefore, Ramadan is 10-11 days earlier every year.



Significance of Ramadan:

1. It fulfills one of the 5 Pillars of Islam – Siyam (Fasting). Fasting during Ramadan is obligatory to all adult Muslims except those who are exempt.
2. Month in which the Qur'an (the holy book of Islam) was revealed.
3. Special month of: Fasting, Repentance, Increased prayer, Increased charity.
4. Ends with the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr: Day of celebration and gratitude.



Why Do Muslims Fast?

Primary Objective: To attain God consciousness "taqwa" and self-discipline.

Spiritual Objectives/Benefits:

1. Helps Muslims draw closer to God; increased recitation, reflection, worship
2. Aids in increase of faith and ihsan
3. Aids in purification of the heart/soul and helps to improve one's character.
4. Trains the person to do good: charity, kindness, generosity, patience and forgiveness.



What is Fasting?

1. Fasting begins at the break of dawn and ends at sunset
2. Physical Aspect
 - Refrain from food, drink and intimacy during fasting hours
 - Hours vary from 12hrs to 17 hrs.
3. Spiritual Aspect
 - Refrain from blameworthy thoughts and acts e.g. foul language, vain talk, hurtful behaviour, during all hours



Who fasts?

- All Muslims except: young children (before puberty), unhealthy adults (mentally or physically), adults travelling long distances, and women who are menstruating, in post-childbirth care, pregnant or breast-feeding.



Physical Objectives/Benefits:

1. A fasting person experiences some of the hardships of the poor and hungry.
2. Physiological effects include lowering of blood sugar, cholesterol and systolic blood pressure.
3. Improves strength, endurance and self-discipline through physical abstentions.



Typical Activities in Ramadan

1. Suhoor: Meal before dawn and the first prayer of the day.
2. Iftar: Breaking of the fast at Sunset (coincides with the 4th daily prayer).
3. Social gatherings e.g. visiting relatives, sharing food with neighbours, friends, and the poor.
4. Tarawih: Optional Prayers at early night (20-21hrs*)
5. Reading of the Qur'an during free time.
6. Qiam: Optional late-night prayers (02-04hrs*)



Eid ul Fitr: Breaking the Fast Feast:

1. Eid-ul Fitr: The feast marks end of Ramadan.
2. Zakat-ul Fitr: A prescribed amount of money obligatory on every Muslim, calculated to feed one poor person
3. Eid activities include:
 - Eid prayer in the early morning.
 - Visiting family, friends, neighbours, the sick, elderly
 - Enjoying festive meals.
 - Gift-giving especially to children.
 - The greeting on that day is: Eid Mubarak



Ramadan Etiquette:

1. Greeting colleagues or students saying: "Ramadan Mubarak" (Blessed Ramadan) is a very nice way to cross into a new culture.
2. Try to avoid lunch or coffee meetings with a Muslim during Ramadan
3. Be understanding that it is the most special month in a Muslim's calendar.
4. Allow students to be excused from lunch. Kindly allow them to go to the library or a classroom during this time.
5. Students may refrain from outdoor activities like Physical Education. Please talk to your students and allow for arrangements to be made during this time.
6. Eid Day is off, especially for those with family.
7. If invited to share Iftar, try to make it... it will be fun!



Key Points:

- Ramadan is a month of fasting.
- Physical abstentions and intensification of acts of worship are a means towards attaining the spiritual objectives of self purification and improvement.
- Essentially a month of training used to discipline/prepare oneself for the remainder of the year.
- Be considerate of and supportive to the Muslims around you



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