

The Message

Ramadan Kareem

“It is a month:
its beginning is Mercy (Rahmah),
its middle is Forgiveness (Maghfirah)
and its last part is
freedom from hellfire.”



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Contents

3: *The Prophet's Ramadan Khutbah*

6-7: *Contemplating Ramadan*

8: *The Reforming of the Human Soul*

10-11: *Ramadan Rules and Regulations*

12: *Readers Poll*

16-17: *Fasting or Feasting*

19: *Spirit Comfort*

21: *Charity Starts Here*

22-23: *Giving Eid its Groove Back*

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The Prophet's Ramadan Khutbah

The following khutbah was delivered by Prophet Muhammad (S) on the eve of Ramadan. It is short, but concise; informative and educational. It provides instructional models to Muslims to be followed and to be practiced in their daily lives; especially during the month of Ramadan. Due to its importance and because it was delivered by the Prophet Muhammad (S) himself on a notable occasion, the meaning of the khutbah was translated and included for all of us to develop a greater understanding behind the true meaning of Ramadan.

It was narrated by Salman the Persian (may Allah be pleased with him) that, the Messenger of Allah (S) delivered a khutbah on the last day of Sha'ban (on the eve of Ramadan). The Prophet (S) said:

“O you people! A great and a blessed month has arrived for you. A month therein a night which is better than one thousand months. The fasting during this month is an obligation (Fareedah), and the extra prayers during its nights are voluntary. Anyone who comes closer to Allah through a good deed during this month is as if he performed an obligatory duty (Fareedah) during times other than Ramadan, and he who fulfils an obligatory duty in it will be like one who fulfils seventy obligatory duties in another month. It is the month of patience, and, the reward of patience is Paradise. It is the month of visiting the poor, the sick and the needy so as to share their sorrows. It is the month where the nourishment, the sustenance and the income of the believing Muslim increase and they are blessed.”

“Anyone who invites others to break their fast at Iftar will be provided with forgiveness of his sins and be saved from hell,

and will receive reward equal to the fasting person without reducing his own reward in any respect.”

Some of the followers of the Prophet (S) said: "Not all of us may find food to share with one so that he could break his fast." The Prophet (S) said: "Allah will reward you even if you help the fasting Muslim to break his fast with a date, a sip of water, or a drink of milk . . . it is a month: its beginning is Mercy (Rahmah), and its middle part is Forgiveness (Maghfirah) and its last part is freedom from hellfire. Anyone who helps a slave to be freed, Allah will forgive him and free him from Hell. Increase in yourselves four characteristics: two by which you will please your Lord, and two others by which you cannot live without.

The first two qualities to please Allah are to bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah, and to ask forgiveness from Allah. However, the other two things that you cannot live without are: to ask Allah for Paradise, and to ask Him to protect you from Hellfire.

Anyone who gives water to a Muslim at Iftar, Allah will give him water during the Day of Judgment from the fountain of the Prophet Muhammad (S) which will make him not feel thirsty till he enters Paradise."

Dear brothers and sisters in Islam, by bringing this khutbah to your attention, we hope and pray to Almighty Allah that we will benefit from it and we will act according to the teachings of Muhammad (S). May Allah help us to live and follow this example so that Allah and His Messenger will be pleased with us all.

Ameen.



Ramadan

A master of months

**By Sheikh Tajjedine
El-Hilaly**

All praise is due to Allah, and the peace and blessings upon the messenger of Allah, his family, companions and their followers.

After eleven months of mankind following materialism, the desires and the temptations of life, Allah has made the month of Ramadan every year a time for the soul to take its justice from the oppressive needs of mankind.

It is a time for the soul to find its food, medicine and cure. Those who fast have been described like the respected angels.

Fasting during Ramadan is an action that involves training one's self to control their desires and to defeat the temptations of life. If the believer could abstain from the halal during his fast, then it's an obligation on him to abstain from the haram also.

The Prophet (S) gave good news to the people who fast – the news of the great rewards and gifts that Allah had prepared for them:

That the first night Allah looks upon those who fast, and who ever Allah looks at he will never punish them. The angels would ask forgiveness for them every day and night. The breath of the fasting one is more beloved to Allah than the fragrance of musk.

Allah orders Paradise to get ready to welcome those who fast and on the last night of Ramadan, Allah forgives the sins of all the believers.

In addition to all these rewards, fasting is also a great college of Iman (faith). Within it lie various departments which include: the departments of Taqwa (God-fearing), goodness, the Quran, sacrifice and the department of sympa-

thy and respect.

It should be made clear that no one can graduate from these departments except those whose fasting has been accepted. This is because fasting is not just keeping away from food and water, but more importantly, it is about keeping away from all the forbidden things and the things that nullify fasting.

There are three types of fasting:

General fasting: That is the fasting of general people; they simply abstain from food and drinking, whilst other organs are not fasting.

Special fasting: This is the abstention from food and drink as well as keeping the eyes, the ears, the hands and the feet away from the haram.

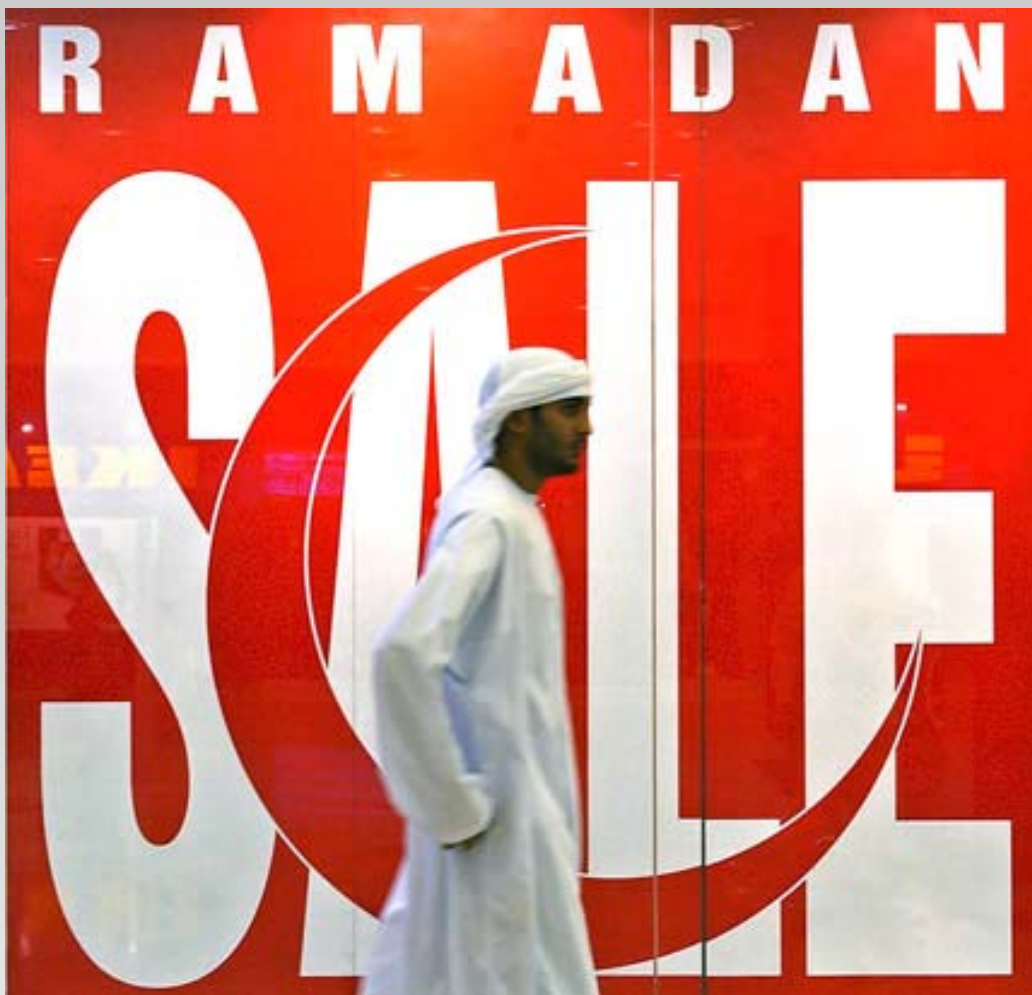
Special of the specials fasting: This is the finest and most favourable form of fasting. It involves steering clear of food and drink and guarding the eyes, ears, hands and feet from haram. It also includes the fasting of a believer with their hearts. They do not think only of Allah, but for Allah and with Allah, so it is fasting with the heart and the organs.

We must welcome this month by bettering our relationship with Allah and repenting to him and constantly reciting the holy Qur'an. Additionally, we should aim to reconcile with one another, to improve ties with kinship and spread love and harmony until we become, by the will of Allah, worthy of the mercy of Allah in the month of Ramadan.

By his eminence,

Sheikh Tajjedine El - Hilaly





Editorial:

Assalamu Alaikum brothers and sisters in Islam,

Ramadan Mubarak and welcome to another edition of "The Message". As we are all aware the holy month of Ramadan has dawned upon us again and what would be more fitting than to focus this issue on this blessed month.

It would be very difficult to forget the grand opening of the new Bankstown Square a few months ago and the hype and excitement surrounding it. In the lead-up to its opening, I can only look back and remember my family, friends, and work colleagues talking about it. It felt as if everyone was waiting for months in anticipation of the opening of the new stores, restaurants and supermarket chains to take advantage of the specials and huge sales promised by the shopping centre and its management. And finally, when that day came when those doors opened for the first time, boy the local bargain hunter must have thought he was in paradise!

Now, a few months on, the month of Ramadan has finally arrived- the month in which the Muslim bargain hunter looks forward to. It has been narrated that the companions of the Prophet (s) would work towards and prepare for the on-set of Ramadan six months before its commencement and would call upon Allah to accept their actions and deeds during Ramadan for the other six months. Why? Because they too were bargain hunters- bargain hunters on a one month shopping spree attempting to accumulate a hefty account full of good deeds and rewards.

During this blessed month of Ramadan, Allah (swt) out of his mercy

runs His own sale. A sale that should make the eyes of the believer light up with joy and excitement. Ibn Khusaima narrated a hadith that during the month of Ramadan, one Sunnah action performed is sold for the price of an obligatory action and if you choose to upsize, one obligatory action is for the price of 70 obligatory actions. In other words, the price of my daily prayers, Zakat, being good to my parents, reading Quran, lowering my gaze and even smiling in the direction of a fellow brother is multiplied over and over again. SubhanAllah! Why wouldn't the eyes of the believer light up upon hearing this? Why wouldn't the believer wait with so much eagerness for the beginning of this month?

However, fasting does not merely mean to abstain from food, drink and lawful sexual intercourse from sunrise to sunset, but more importantly, it is a period where one takes greater care to guard the eyes, the ears, the tongue and the limbs from any improprieties. Allah (swt) tells us that Fasting has been ordained for us in order that we may gain taqwa (God-consciousness). It is not a time for sleeping in, engaging in idle talk, or being caught up in worldly affairs. So ask yourself my dear brothers and sisters after each day of fasting: Has this fasting made me more fearful and obedient to Allah? Has it increased me in taqwa? Has it helped me in distancing myself from sins and disobedience? It is a month that Allah (swt) has sent down to help us re-charge our spiritual batteries, to purify our hearts and to correct our actions.

Ramadan is an opportunity to renew our relationship with Allah (swt) that may have been broken during the year. So take advantage of this month my brothers, take advantage of the sales on offer my sisters and don't be of those who once the sales have ended find themselves left short changed.

Mohammed Adra
Editor

Contemplating R



Ramadan is the most significant month of the year for Muslims worldwide, a month when we aspire to be devout to Allah: the Most Merciful, Most Gracious.

Ramadan reminds us about the importance of submitting ourselves to Allah; this holy month helps condition humanity in a manner which empowers Muslims to overcome their worldly desires.

What the Qur'an Says about Ramadan:

"The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the Criterion (between right and wrong). So, whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan, i.e. is present at his home) he must observe sawm (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Sawm

(fasts) must be made up] from other days. Allah intends for you ease and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (He wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must magnify Allah [i.e. to say Takbir (Allahu Akbar: Allah is the Most Great) for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him." [2:185]

From the above quote, one can deduce that Ramadan is comprised of two main elements:

The remembrance of Allah and self-reflection;
To sacrifice for the sake of Allah.

Remembrance of Allah

Allah (SwT) has blessed us with the light of Islam. The monthly period of Ramadan is an opportunity for all Muslims to reflect on their Iman -

aramadan

to assess one's level of obedience to Allah and how it can be improved.

Each individual should reflect upon their prayer. Ask yourself:

- Do I pray on time?
- Do I wake up for Fajr?
- Do I attend the Friday prayer?
- Do I pray at the mosque in congregation as often as I can?
- Do I get distracted during prayer by worldly matters?

We should reflect on all aspects of our religion such as:

- Do I seek knowledge as often as I can?
- Do I respect my parents & elders?
- Am I following the Qur'an & the Sunnah?
- How do I get closer to Allah?
- Am I doing everything in my power to gain entry into paradise?

Insha' Allah, through the remembrance of Allah, we will be encouraged to become better Muslims with a greater appreciation for our religion and our beloved Prophet, Mohammad (S).

Ramadan is an opportune time to concentrate on praying, reading Qur'an, performing good deeds, spending time with family and friends and above all glorifying Allah.

To sacrifice for the sake of Allah

The word Ramadan stems from the Arabic term: ramida or ar-ramad, defined as: "Scorching heat or dryness." It is believed that the month's name may refer to the heat of thirst and hunger, or because fasting burns away one's past sins, "O you who believe, fasting is decreed for you, as it was decreed for those before you, that you may attain salvation." [2:183]

There are various reasons why we fast throughout Ramadan, but most importantly, we fast because it has been prescribed for us in the Qur'an through the words of our creator, Allah. Through the act of fasting, we can show our gratitude to Allah by obeying His orders, by abstaining from: our desire to consume when we are hungry, to drink when we are thirsty, or to give into other temptations when they arise. Fasting in Islam is not only about suppressing our hunger and thirst, but also about rectifying our conduct and demeanour.

The quality attained by a Muslim while fasting is piety. In order to achieve piety, one must: Pray the 5 compulsory prayers on time, pay Zakat, pray Taraweeh, lower ones gaze when faced with haram, avoid back-biting and avoid over-eating.

Fasting also brings 1.2 billion Muslims across the world together, sacrificing for Allah in unison. That's 22% of the world's population abstaining from worldly pleasures to gain Allah's pleasure, SubhanAllah! This amazing month encompasses four out of the five pillars

of Islam: 1) Belief in Allah, 2) Praying 3) Fasting and 4) Zakat.

Zakatul - Fitr is the responsibility of every Muslim and it is recommended to be paid during Ramadan. Allah has made it clear in the Qur'an, that for every ounce of wealth we have attained, there is a fraction of it that belongs to a person in need. Generosity will never go unnoticed in the eyes of Allah, as narrated by Abu Huraira who stated: Allah's Apostle said, "If one gives in charity what equals one date-fruit from the honestly-earned money (and Allah accepts only the honestly earned money)- Allah takes it in His right (hand) and then enlarges it's reward for that person (who has given it), as anyone of you brings up his baby horse, so much so that it becomes as big as a mountain."

Sadly we must also make mention of those who become overcome by greed, forgetting that Allah has provided them with such fortune. Abu Huraira has also narrated that: Allah's Apostle said, "Whoever is made wealthy by Allah and does not pay the Zakat of his wealth, then on the Day of Resurrection his wealth will be made like a bald-headed poisonous male snake with two black spots over the eyes. The snake will encircle his neck and bite his cheeks and say, 'I am your wealth, I am your treasure.' "Then the Prophet recited: "And let not those who covetously withhold of that which Allah has bestowed on them of His bounty (wealth) think that it is good for them (and so they do not pay the obligatory Zakat). Nay, it will be worse for them; the things which they covetously withheld, shall be tied to their necks like a collar on the Day of Resurrection..." [3:180]. In a society that is dominated by materialistic wealth, we must remind ourselves of that which Allah offers to those who do pay Zakat- His Mercy!

Ramadan may be followed by Muslims world wide but it affects billions of people in different ways. Still, the universal understanding is that we must view this holy month as a suitable time to take faith to a higher level, an opportunity to maximise our good deeds, a time to ponder about Allah's Glory and Majesty and a time to thank Allah for all he has provided us with- our families, our children, our friends and our wealth (which we may spend in the way of Allah). Above all, we must thank Allah for the greatest gift he has bestowed upon us- the path of Islam, since "...Allah guides whom He wills to a Straight Path" [2:213].

May Allah reward us for following the way of Islam and allow us to be one of those who will Insha' Allah enter Jannat-al Firdaus (the highest ranks of Paradise).

Your brother in Islam

Ronnie Mikati

* www.religioustolerance.org/isl_num.html



Ramadan: The Reforming of the Human Soul

Why is mankind following the deceived desires that bring only mischief to the entire human race? The month of Ramadan is upon us once again, newly opening the doors for the souls to enter and renew its commitment towards its purpose as it has been continually exposed by its desires and corrupted instincts. So into the operating room it enters for the purification from the evil of the soul that calls for the bad and from the pressures and the whisperings of the Shaytan.

It is the month of fasting that stretches its hands to the sinners and the misguided ones so it can help to free them from their evil diseases that has been the cause of mischief and corruption. From here, the ill person must confess to his illness and must know what type of illness he has, and to take the suitable medicine. The month of Ramadan is the pharmacy that contains the different medicines of the different diseases.

Allah Almighty says: ***“O you who have attained to faith! Fasting is ordained for you as it was ordained for those before you, so that you might attain God-consciousness.”***

The month of fasting teaches those who have pride to humble themselves. It also teaches you to be sincere and to be devoted to the worship of Allah, as the Prophet (S) says in the hadith, where Allah says: "Fasting is for Me and I am the one who rewards for it."

It is the month of fasting that teaches people self-restraint, especially those who let their tongue loose with foolish talk. Sometimes, one lies to increase the corruption amongst those who are around him, and sometimes one backbites to increase the hatred between the people. So the month of Ramadan teaches you to fast and keep away from the forbidden foolish talk as the Prophet Muhammad (S) said, "When any of you is fasting, he should neither indulge in obscene language nor should he raise his voice."

It's the month of fasting which teaches those whose anger has controlled them and forced them to the wrong doings to control their anger and to forgive those who oppress them. The Prophet (S) said: If someone attacks you or abuses you, say "I am fasting."

It is the month of fasting that tells all

those who are far away from their Lord that indeed, Allah was the cause of their existence and the cause of all the bounties sent upon them. The month of Ramadan teaches us to be with Allah and to get closer to Him with our actions and words, to increase from the recitation of the Quran with thinking and contemplation into its meaning, and to remember Allah which brings the most ultimate content in our hearts that cannot be compared to any other worldly needs and wants. Allah Almighty says: "And when my servants ask you (O Muhammad) concerning me, then answer to them I am indeed near, I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls on me. So let them obey me and believe in me so they maybe led alright."

We welcome this month of fasting with open arms, and praise is due to Allah that brought this month to us to purify our souls, correct our actions, and to guard and control our words and tongues. And all thanks is due to Allah for such a beautiful blessing.

By his eminence,

Sheikh Yahya Safi

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HOMOUS WITH MEAT :: TABBOULEH :: SALADE :: KAFTA :: SHISH KEBAB

Fasting Ramadan is the fourth pillar of Islam, which Allah made obligatory on Muslims in the second year of the Prophet's migration (Hijrah) to Madinah: "**O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may gain Taqwa (piety)**" (2: 183) The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "**He who fasts during Ramadan with faith and seeking reward from Allah will have his past sins forgiven.**" (Bukhari) Ramadan is a unique opportunity for Muslims to seek forgiveness and repentance from Allah. It is also a month of opportunity for enormous reward. As the noble month of Ramadan draws near, it is relevant for us to look into some of the rulings associated with fasting. It is incumbent on Muslims to be aware of Allah's mandates, prohibitions, and permissible actions, in order that we worship Allah with sure sightedness.

Definition and Pillars of fasting

Linguistically, fasting means to abstain from doing something. However, when the notion of fasting is used in Islamic shari'a it refers to abstaining from all the things that nullify fasting from the break of dawn (Fajr) till sunset (Maghreb), coupled with the intention of doing so as an act of worship. Fasting the month of Ramadan is obligatory (Fard) according to the Qur'an, Sunnah, and consensus of the scholars on every Muslim who has reached the age of puberty, is sane and is able to fast without it acting as a threat to one's health due to illness.

The first pillar of fasting is the intention, and the place of the intention is the heart, hence articulating the intention is **something not legislated. It is mandatory to have the intention at night, that is, before the break of dawn (Fajr). This is based on the saying of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "Whoever does not intend fasting prior to Fajr, then there is no fasting for him."** It is permissible to make an intention for the whole month at the first evening of Ramadan. However, some scholars have suggested that is obligatory to make an intention every night of Ramadan.

The second pillar of fasting is abstinence; abstaining from the things that break a person's fast from the break of dawn till sunset, along with a continued intention between these two periods. The third pillar of fasting is the time. That is, one must fast during the days of Ramadan and not the nights. Whoever fasts the nights instead of the days, then their fasting is deemed defective because Allah (s.w.t) says: "**...and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night), then complete your fast till the nightfall...**"

RAMADAN

**By BILAL
DANOUN**

RULES & REGULATIONS

1-HOW TO FAST...

2-WHAT NOT TO DO...

3-PERFECTING RAMADAN...

Things Which Break the Fast

Eating and drinking deliberately

Any Muslim who eats or drinks intentionally has broken their fast. Whoever does this must repent to Allah, asking Him for forgiveness. Many of the Muslims scholars are of the opinion that he should also make up this day before the next Ramadan. Imam Abu Hanifah holds the opinion that in addition to repenting and the making up the day, he must also feed a poor or needy person. This view is also attributed to Imam Malik.

Induced vomiting

The soundest view amongst the scholars of Islam is that as long as vomiting is unintentional then the fasting remains valid. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: **"If someone had a sudden attack of vomiting, no atonement is required of him, but if he vomits intentionally he must make atonement."** If any vomit is accidentally swallowed, the fast is not affected.

Menstruation and post-natal bleeding

A woman who bleeds due to any one of these two reasons has broken her fast, even if a woman gets her period seconds before sunset. This is the opinion of the majority of the scholars. The number of fasting days missed must be made up prior to the next Ramadan.

Ejaculation

Regardless of whether this resulted due to the husband kissing his wife, caressing her etc. This is the opinion of the majority of the Muslim scholars and Allah knows best.

Sexual Intercourse

If a fasting person has sexual intercourse during the day of Ramadan, irrespective of whether ejaculation takes place or not the fasting has been broken. In this case a person must repent, seek forgiveness from Allah, and make up this day. Furthermore, he must free a slave if he owns one, if not, then two consecutive months of fasting must be done prior to the next Ramadan. If fasting two consecutive months is detrimental to one's health then sixty poor or needy people must be fed.

Supplements, nutritional injections and drips

These dietary intakes also break the fast as they defeat one of the main objectives of fasting, namely, to undergo thirst and hunger.

Apostasy

If a fasting person becomes a disbeliever, then their fasting becomes void, as Allah Most High says: **"If you commit shirk (associate others in worship with Allah), then surely (all) your deeds will be in vain..."**

Who is Exempted from Fasting?

The Sick: Those who are sick but are able to fast must do so. However, if fasting is detrimental to a person's health, due to illness, then this person is not required to fast. Those who have no hope of recovery are to compensate by paying Fidyah – The feeding of a needy person for every day missed. Those who are temporarily ill are to make up the missed days after their recovery before the next Ramadan.

Travellers: A traveller who will face no difficulty in fasting may choose not to fast, but fasting in his case is preferable. If, however, fasting will cause a traveller hardships then it is advised to take up the favour and concession of Allah granted to him, and break the fast. The missed days must be made up before the next Ramadan.

Children: Fasting is not required of children until they reach the age of puberty. The signs of puberty are: the growth of pubic hair, the occurrence of wet dreams, and in the case of a female, the menstrual period. If a person turns the age of fifteen and none of these signs have appeared, then they are considered to have reached the age of puberty. Although children are not obligated to fast prior to puberty, they should be encouraged to fast if there is no fear of harm as this will train them to fast.

Controversial Issues

Unintentionally Eating or Drinking after the Break of Dawn or before Sunset

The correct opinion concerning a person who eats or drinks believing that the break of dawn has not commenced, or that the sun has set when it actually hasn't taken place does not need to make up that day. During the leadership of 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) some people broke their fast, some moments later, the sun appeared. They asked whether they should make up this day, at which 'Umar responded by saying: "No, by Allah, we did not have any inclination towards a wrongful action." In addition, we have the incident whereby Asmaa' (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "We broke our fast on a cloudy day during Ramadan at the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), then the sun appeared." (Bukhari) Ibn Taymiyyah said: "This suggests it is not obligatory to make up the day, for if the Prophet (peace be upon him) had ordered them to make up that day, this would have been widely known, just as the news of the breaking of their fast was widely circulated."

Use of Nose Drops, Eye Drops, Intravenous Injections and Perfume

The scholars of Islam differed about the use of these things during fasting. The correct opinion - and Allah knows best - is that these things do not nullify fasting, and that no compensation is required if used, even if the nose or eye drops pass the throat. This is the opinion of Ibn 'Umar, Anas ibn Malik, Abu Hanifah, ash-Shaafi, and Ibn Taymiyyah. There is nothing authentically mentioned by the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibiting their use.

Water Entering the Stomach Accidentally

Water that enters into the stomach as a result of sniffing or rinsing out of the mouth has also caused controversy amongst scholars. The correct opinion is that the fasting is not broken, as this has occurred unintentionally. Although sniffing water up the nostrils during wudu is desirable, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) advised that it should be avoided during fasting.

Use of Puffers

Puffers used for asthma do not break the fast according to a number of scholars. This is because it is considered as compressed gas that goes to the lungs, and does in no way nourish or quench the thirst.

Pregnant and Breast Feeding Women

Women who are pregnant or breast feeding are allowed to break their fast if they fear for their health or the health of their infant or fetus. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **"Allah Most High has given concession to the traveller to pray half the Salat, and for the traveller, the pregnant, and the breast feeding and fasting."** (Ibn Majah) The respected scholars of Islam differed concerning how a woman who is pregnant or breast-feeding must compensate for her missed days. The first opinion is that of the companions Ibn 'Abbas and Ibn 'Umar, (may Allah be pleased with them) who said that she should only need to feed a needy person for each missed day.

The second opinion is that of Abu Hanifah who said she needs to make up the day only. Imam Ash-Shafi and Imam Ahmad hold the opinion that she must both feed and make up the days. According to Imam Malik, a pregnant woman must make up the day only, and that one who was breast-feeding must feed and make up the days. The correct opinion - and Allah knows best - is that she only needs to feed a poor or needy person for each missed day. This is because we do not have any reports from any of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) opposing Ibn 'Abbas and Ibn 'Umar's verdict - Two of Islam's most learned men concerning the Qur'an and Prophetic Sunnah.

We ask Allah Most High through His beautiful and greatest names and attributes to bless us with the strength that will enable us to remember Him, glorify Him, and exalt Him throughout this sacred month and throughout our lives .

Reader's Poll

Find out what our readers think of food, prayer, fasting, Zakat and much more!

Where do you prefer to have Iftar?

Home 53%

Family 27%

Friends 14%

Rest. 6%

Do you pay your Zakat in Ramadan?

Yes 92%

No 8%

What days do you find easier to fast?

Weekdays 76%

Weekends 24%



Have you planned for Ramadan?

Yes 61%

Thought about it 26%

No 13%



Do you go back to sleep after suhur?

Yes 83%

No 17%

Do you stay up later than usual in Ramadan?

Yes 68%

No 32%

Where do you spend Layat Al-Qadr?

Mosque 42%

Home 39%

Other 19%

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Fasting

[This following article is based on a lecture given by Shaykh Hamza Yusuf Hanson in London, England. It was previously published in the Muslim Word—a monthly newsletter in Toronto—in the May, 1998 issue. This current version is a summary and has been edited.]

Food is the foundation of our material existence. During our life in the womb we were sustained materially by our mother's nourishment through the umbilicus. We left the wombs and the umbilicus was severed to begin another stage of nourishment, the breast. Upon being weaned, we began to eat foods of various textures and tastes, acquiring lifelong preferences during this stage, some good, and others bad. There is a relationship between food and language that is quite revealing. Our metaphors are often derived from our necessary relationship with food. We talk about sweet talk and bitter words, being hungry for love and thirsty for knowledge, of the "milk of human kindness" and "one man's meat being another's poison." When speaking of the need for change, we say things like, "I need to wean myself from this," or "I'm going to abstain from vain talk." All of our metaphors that relate to food and drink, hunger and satiety, indicate the central role that food plays in our lives and how profound its experience is to us.

Few people think of the relationship that food has to their health. Before we speak about food, let us ask the question "what is health?" Most people believe that health is an overall state of well-being, the absence of pain, and the relative vitality of the body.

A physician will give a person a "clean bill of health," with almost no understanding of the overall state of the person as a spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical being. Each of these dimensions has a healthy status and an unhealthy one. For most people, spiritual health is given almost no consideration. If one goes to Church every Sunday, or the Synagogue on Saturday or the Mosque on Friday, given the respective faith, he or she may consider themselves spiritually well. Little attention is paid to the spiritual heart's diseases such as greed, covetousness, pride, envy, vanity, arrogance and anxiety. All of these are symptoms of pronounced spiritual disease. When mental health is considered, people tend to focus on emotional health and not intellectual health. However, can we call a man who spends his days developing more sophisticated ways of killing people for the government, healthy? When people consider their emotional states they rarely see subtleties in their overall emotional health. If they are not depressed or grief-stricken and their overall mood is balanced they feel emotionally healthy.

People often believe that because they are fine at a given moment, they think that they are generally well. But we must realize that when disease is dormant, and the right circumstances can cause a flare-up, one is still considered suffering from a disease, chronic and dormant perhaps, but still disease. There are those also who believe their bodies are physically well in the absence of pain and yet hypertension, which is often undetectable without medical tests, is one of the major causes of midlife mortality in America. What then is health? When is a person healthy?

The Latin word for health is *Sanitas*, which is where we get our word sanity, i.e. well-being of the mind. The Romans had a phrase *sans mensus*; *sans corpus*: a healthy mind in a healthy body. The Arabs call health *sihhat* from a root meaning "to be sound or strong." A sahih hadith is a healthy hadith that has no `ilal or diseases, as is known from the Islamic science of prophetic traditions. A "healthy" hadith had to have five qualities before it was determined to be sound by the doctors of the hadith science. If any were lacking, then the hadith was determined to be "sick." Depending upon the number of criteria missing, the

hadith was: very weak, weak, or in "good health" but not excellent. If we look to the human, what criteria would we use to determine the health of that person?

In Islam, health is actually not seen to be of the body, but rather the state of the heart. There is a hadith in which the Prophet (S) said, "There is a lump of flesh in the body: if it is sound, the whole body is sound. It is indeed the heart." He was not talking primarily of the physical body or the physical heart, but of the spiritual body and the spiritual heart. A man can be suffering from a terrible disease and considered to be in excellent health in Islam, while another can be in perfect bodily health but determined to be sick according to the Qur'an. In fact, a hallmark of hypocrites is the excellent appearance of their bodies, "Their outward forms are pleasing to you." But the Qur'an says of them, "In their hearts is a disease." True health is the state of one's heart with God. The heart is healthy when it is filled with trust, love, charity, compassion, lack of material desire, patience, hope, awe of God, and most importantly, gratitude. It is diseased when filled with suspicion, envy, hatred, anger, pride, anxiety, hopelessness, and ingratitude. But the health of the body is also important and Islam prohibits its neglect for many reasons - the least of which is one which does not function well in the world when handicapped by ill health.

What is the role of food in our basic well-being, in the state of the spirit, intellect, emotions and body? Is food only related to the state of one's body, and is there a connection between the body and the other integral elements of man? There has been a concern about food from the very early period of Islam. Al-Qushayri in his Risalah says that the Companions of the Prophet (S) were more concerned about their food than about the night prayer (qiyaamul-layl). The reason being, because if they were eating food that was not good or lawful, there wouldn't be any night prayer! One of the early generations (salaf) said, "I heard a word of backbiting and as a result of it I was denied the night prayer (tahajjud) for 40 days."

We are all electro-magnetic resonances at the most basic level. We are vibrating at a certain resonance.

Food has a resonance and when you eat it, it either nourishes or harms, although the food itself is neutral. If you eat in its right proportions, and if you eat good food, then it is going to be beneficial to the body. The opposite is also true. The worst thing you can do is to completely fill the body with food. In a sahih hadith, the Prophet (S) said: "The worst vessel that the son of Adam can fill is his stomach." And he also said: "It is enough for the son of Adam to have just morsels (of food) to keep his back upright. But if you have to eat more than that [and everybody thinks this is part of the Sunnah] then one third for food, one third for water, and one third for air."

The Sunnah is to consume enough morsels to keep our backs straight, while filling one third of the stomach with food, one third air and one third with water, is the dispensation (rukhsa) given to us by the Prophet (S). At the same time, we know that the Prophet (S) did not encourage asceticism and he did not like going to extremes.

Imam Busayri said in this regard, "It may be that too little food is worse than too much food." This is because the nature of the nafs is such that the excessive extreme is safer than the deficient extreme. A diabetic is not in danger when his sugar levels get high, but he is when it falls precipitously low. An overeater can go on for a long time but someone who under eats can get into serious health problems very quickly. So Imam Busayri is saying that those of excessive zuhd (doing-without) are worse than people who are indulgent, because the former can end up killing themselves.

In the Kitab Al-Raqaa'iq of Ibn Mubarak, Sayyiduna `Umar sees Yazid making tawaf around the Ka'bah and his stomach was coming out over his loin cloth (izaar), so he took his stick and lifted his devotional cover (ihram) saying: "Is this the stomach of a little kafir?" `Umar was making a reference to the well-known sahih hadith, which says that the kafir eats from seven intestines and the believer eats from one. The circumstance of the hadith is that a man came to the Prophet (S) to learn about Islam, so the Companions brought him some milk and he drank seven bowls. The next day he came and took shahadah, and the Prophet offered him milk again and this time he only drank one bowl. The Prophet (S) then asked him if he wanted more and he said that he was now full. The meaning of this is that the kafir's appetite for the dunya is more than the true mu'min.

Food is our essential connection with the world. One of the early pious Muslims said that he would prefer to stop eating before he became satiated so that he would be able to perform the night prayer.

If you look at the diet of the Prophet (S) in the Shama'il of Imam At-Tirmidhi, it says that he used to eat barley (sha'eer), which has proven to be the most nutritious of all the grains. He also used to eat dates. However, they did not drink cow's milk, but rather goat, sheep, and camel's milk. They also made a type of yogurt, as well as butter (zubda), from it. He liked pumpkin, cucumber, grapes, which came from Ta'if, and he also liked melons. The Arabs would also bring dried fruits from Syria such as apricots, but they were expensive and thus only affordable for the well-to-do.

The Prophet (S) taught us how to eat, sleep, and worship. He reminded us that our bodies have a right over us. Only recently have scientists discovered that one's health in later years is enhanced by a lifelong commitment to certain basic principles, including: moderation in food, drink, rest, and exercise. Western scientists have also clearly found that people who are in healthy marriages and practice prayer on a regular basis have longer and healthier lives. Islam provides immense guidance in the area of health and hygiene and this is an area sorely neglected among many Muslims today. We should all commit to healthier lifestyles including changing our diets to be more consistent with our beliefs and closer to our beloved Prophet's practice.

By Shaykh Hamza Yusuf Hanson

Feasting

Hadith of the Month



Deliciously repulsive!

The Imam instructs everyone to stand in one straight line, shoulder to shoulder, foot to foot, with full concentration on the salaah which is about to be performed. As I stand there in front of Allah, I aim to create an atmosphere around me: one where Paradise is in front of me, Hellfire is below me, and the Angel of Death is behind me, to help maximize the most out of this beautiful Taraweeh prayer.

"Allahu Akbar!"

The rest of the congregation follows and begins to recite the opening dua for salaah. The khushoo' is there and is slowly being built up as the salaah progresses. Alhamdulillah the connection with Allah grows even more as I beg Him for forgiveness and mercy whilst I am in Sujood. What a fantastic opportunity to ask Allah of all things I need, in a prayer, in Sujood, in the holiest of the holy months of the year, when He (Swt) is most Generous!

I ask Allah to forgive me and my family and to forgive all the sins I have carelessly committed, engulfed in a world of worldly whims and desires, all of which satisfy the ego – the nafs. I forget this dunya and remember the akhirah (hereafter) as I ask Allah to save me from the Hellfire, and from the punishment of the grave. I plead for Him to pardon me for all the negligent moments where I have forgotten Him and followed my measly desires that of which do not bring any benefit.

I ask Allah to grant me a rank in Paradise, close to our beloved Rasulallah (S). The khushoo' is nearing its peak when, unexpectedly, a hiccup is heard followed by the dreaded and sudden gush of wind which surges by from a near brother. I am back in this dunya and my khushoo' is no more, as

the atmosphere I have tried so hard to create is consumed with annoyance and frustration.

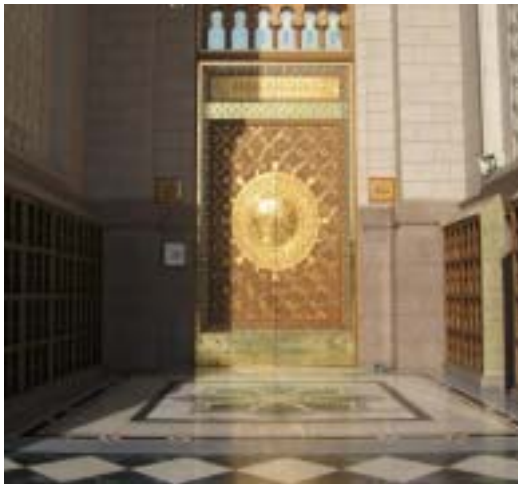
The stench of garlic ruins the mood and concentration for salaah - not only for me but for other surrounding brothers as a sense of discomfort and irritation engulfs the prayer.

"Wait, focus on your salaah," I try to remind myself. Slowly, the concentration is re-

without?

To remind us all, the following hadith was narrated by 'Abdul 'Aziz:

It was said to Anas "What did you hear the Prophet saying about garlic?" Anas replied, "Whoever has eaten (garlic) should not approach our mosque." (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 65, Number 362) (This also includes onions as narrated in other hadiths.)



gaining and the connection is being re-established once more as I try and muster up my thoughts.

We all need to realise the importance and weight this places on ourselves and the effects this has on other people. Do you want to be responsible for potentially reducing the rewards of other people because of this simple cooking herb that you can do so easily

Brothers and sisters, please take the advice of Rasulallah (S), and avoid eating garlic and onions. If necessary, then it can be mildly included and cooked in the meal where most of its essence is mixed with the other ingredients. Do not be convinced by thinking that its smell can be masked with chewing gum, musk or perfume.

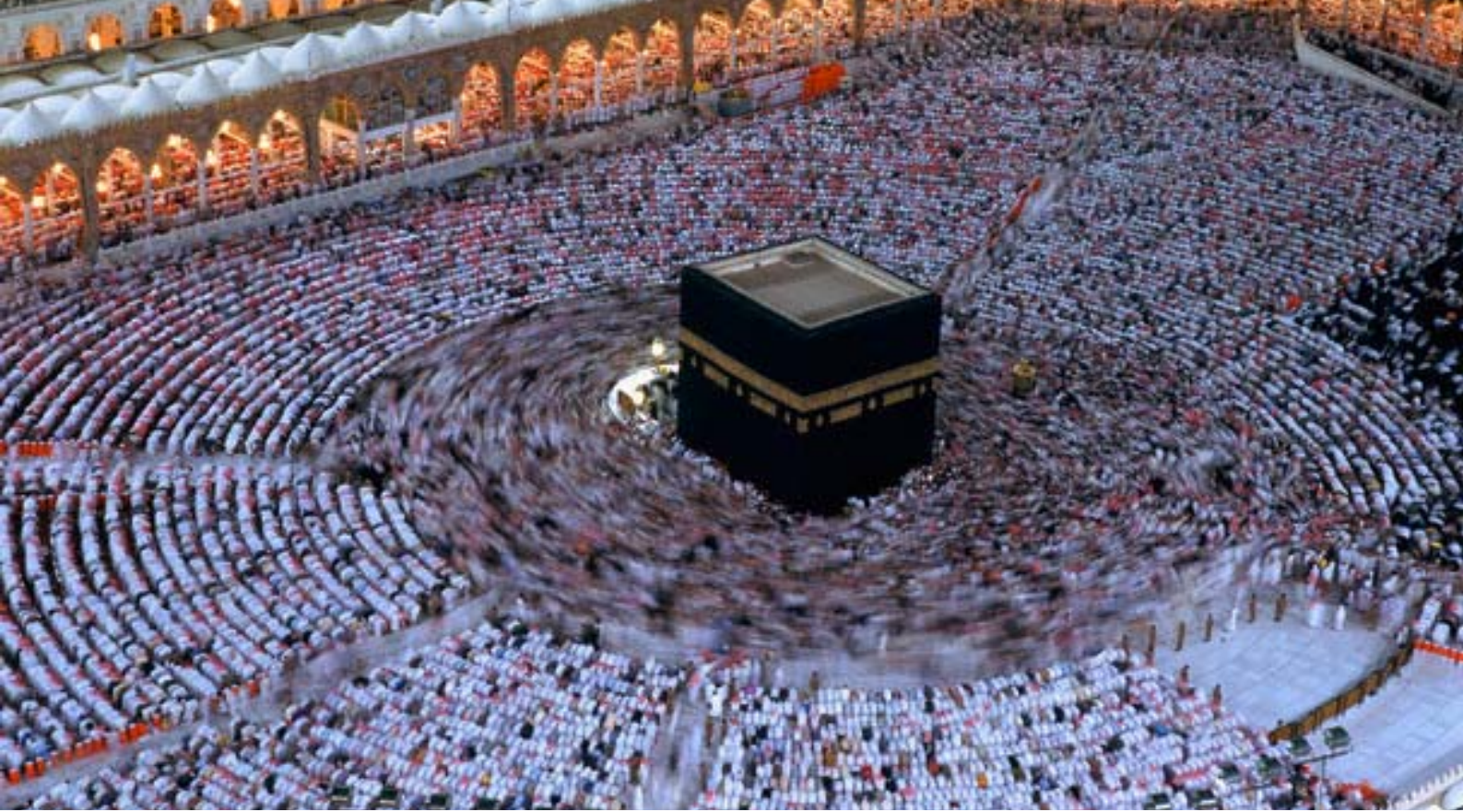
Rather, aim to smell beautiful in the house of Allah (Swt) and aim to add to the rewards of your brothers and sisters surrounding you. This way a more inviting atmosphere will be presented and the angels will gather around this congregation and ask Allah to forgive us all and grant us His mercy, rather than them being repelled due to the lack of Iman and concentration. This way, we all benefit significantly and gain the pleasure of Allah (Swt).

So my simple advice to you: *Think before you dip!*

Your brother in Islam

Hesham Mourad





Spirit Comfort

Ramadan... with its elegant days and fragrant nights comes with it the beauty of a blessed prayer for a blessed month... the prayer of Taraweeh. The month in which the mosques are full, night after night with its inhabitants all seeking, all asking, all pleading for the same thing: the mercy and forgiveness of Allah (Swt). Our beloved Prophet (S) was narrated to have said, "The one who observes the Taraweeh prayer at night during the month of Ramadan with complete faith and devotion only for the sake of recompense of the hereafter, will have all of their previous sins forgiven by Allah (Swt)."

There is no greater sight than to see the crowds of people flocking into the Masjids seeking the countenance of Allah after experiencing the pains of hunger, the thirst of the day, and the weakness of the body. So what is it that makes this prayer so special? To answer this, we must go right back to the beginning.

Allah (Swt) made certain forms of worship obligatory. He (Swt) also prescribed the recommended acts of worship that would increase the rewards. In a hadith Qudsi reported by Imam Bukhari, the Prophet (S) said: "Allah (Swt) said: 'My servant draws not near to Me with any thing more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him. When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it.'"

The prayer is one of these duties. Allah (Swt) prescribed upon us five prayers during the day and night - five to perform and fifty in rewards on the scale on the Day of Judgment. Allah (Swt) instructed us to increase our non-obligatory prayers so that they can make up for the less perfect obligatory prayers. In an authentic hadith reported by Imam At-Tirmithi and others, the Prophet Muhammad (S) said: "The first of his actions for which a servant of Allah will be held accountable on The Day Resurrection will be his prayers. If they are in order, then he will have prospered and succeeded; and if they are wanting, then

he will have failed and lost. If there is something defective in his obligatory prayers, the Lord (Swt) will say: see if my servant has any voluntary prayers with which may complete that which was defective in his obligatory prayers. Then the rest of his religious duties will be judged in like fashion."

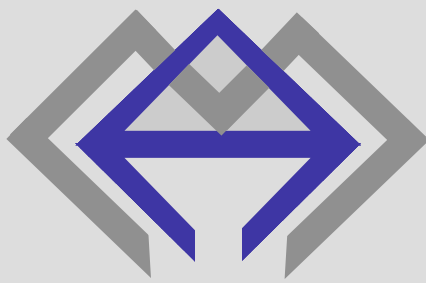
From the recommended Sunnah prayers, there is one special prayer that ranks as the greatest after the obligatory prayers. This is the night prayer. Imam Muslim reported that the Prophet (S) said: "The best prayer after the obligatory is the night prayer" and during the month of Ramadan, out of the Mercy of Allah, this night prayer can also be referred to as being the Taraweeh prayer."

The word 'Taraweeh' literally means 'spirit comfort,' and is a highly recommended Sunnah action to be performed throughout the month of Ramadan as it is considered a part of the Muslim's nightly devotional acts. The observance of the Taraweeh prayer is an integral part of Ramadan. The Messenger of Allah (S) recommended to his companions to dedicate more time, energy and attention to prayer so that their soul may be purified and elevated. On one particular occasion, the Prophet (S) addressed his followers on the last day of Shaban (on the eve of Ramadan) and said, "There is a night in this month which is greater in excellence than a thousand months; Allah has enjoined an extra salah to be offered in the nights of this month. If a person performs a nafl (voluntary) act, out of his own free choice during this month, he will be entitled to receive the reward of a fard (obligatory) act performed in other months".

It is clearly evident that the virtues associated with performing the Taraweeh prayer continuously throughout the month of Ramadan offers a reward of tremendous value. Therefore, one should strive to offer this prestigious prayer to reap the maximum reward for offering its performance, inshaAllah.

I'll see you at the mosque tonight InshaAllah!

Your brother in Islam,
Mohammed Adra



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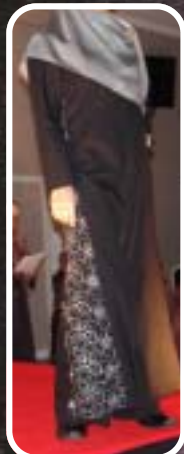
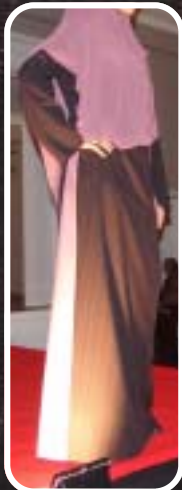
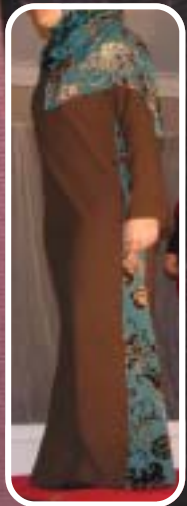
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Charity Starts Here...

By Sheikh Tareq Al Bikai

...(Each one) of you should save himself from the fire even by giving half of a date-fruit (in charity). And if you do not find a half date-fruit, then (you can do it through saying) a pleasant word (to your brother)”

Zakaat is one of the five fundamentals of Islam. Allah says in the holy Quran, "Take from their wealth alms, that you may cleanse them and purify them thereby" (9:103). The Prophet (S) also said that Islam is founded on five pillars; bearing witness that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad (S) is his servant and apostle; establishment of Salat, paying of Zakat; performance of Hajj and fasting in Ramadan.

Literal meaning of the work Zakat:

Zakat means growing or to increase, purifying or making pure. So the act of giving Zakat means purifying one's wealth to gain Allah's blessings.

The technical or Islamic meaning of the word Zakat:

Zakat is the amount of money that every adult, mentally stable, free and financially able Muslim, male and female, has to pay to support specific categories of people. Zakat not only purifies the property of the contributor but also purifies his heart from selfishness and greed. It also purifies the heart of the recipient from envy and jealousy, from hatred and uneasiness and it fosters instead good-will and warm wishes for the contributors.

Benefits of giving Zakat:

Allah says in the Quran, "The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is that of a grain of corn. It grows seven ears and each ear has a hundred grains. Allah increases manifold to whom he pleases." (2:261).

The following are some of the many benefits mentioned in the Ahadith for the one who gives his/her Zakaat:

Pleasure of Allah, Increase in wealth, Protection from losses, Forgiveness and blessing from Allah, Safety from Calamities, Protection from the wrath of Allah and from bad death, Shelter on the Day of Judgement, Security from seventy misfortunes, Shield from the fire of Jahannam and Safety from grief.

Whom is the Zakat paid to?

The holy Quran (Surat Al-Tawbah) classifies the due recipients of Zakat under the following eight categories:

"Zakat is for the poor, and the needy and those who are employed to administer and collect it, and the new converts, and for those who are in bondage, and in debt and service for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarers, a duty ordained by Allah, and Allah is the All-knowing the All-Wise" (9:60)

Zakat is distributed amongst 8 categories of people, namely:

- **Fakir:** one who has neither material possessions nor means of livelihood.
- **Miskin:** one with insufficient means of livelihood to meet basic needs.
- **Amil:** one who is appointed to collect Zakat.
- **Muallaf:** one who converts to Islam.
- **Riqab:** one who wants to free himself from bondage or the shackles of slavery (in Singapore, Zakat due to this category of recipients is spent on those who need help to pursue education or to improve their standard of living).
- **Gharmin:** one who is in debt (money borrowed to meet basic, halal expenditure).
- **Fisabilillah:** one who fights for the cause of Allah.
- **Ibnus Sabil:** one who is stranded in journey.

Persons who cannot be given Zakat:

1. Zakat cannot be given to the descendents of the Prophet (S)
2. Zakat cannot be given to parents and grandparents. In the same manner, one's children and grandchildren cannot be given Zakat. A husband and wife also cannot give Zakat to each other.

3. Zakat contributions cannot be given to such institutions or organisations who do not give the rightful recipients possessions of Zakat, but instead use Zakat funds for constructions, investment or salaries.

When is Zakat due?

1. **Passage of one lunar year:** Zakat is obligatory after a time span of one lunar year that passes with the money in the control of its owner. Then the owner needs to pay 2.5% (or 1/40) of the money as Zakat (a lunar year is approximately 355 days).
2. **Deduction of debts:** the owner should deduct any amount of money he or she borrowed from others; then check if the rest reaches the necessary nisab, then pays Zakat for it. If the owner had enough money to satisfy the nisab at the beginning of the year; then he pays Zakat (2.5%) of the total at the end of the lunar year (there are small differences in the fiqh schools here).

Each Muslim calculates his or her own Zakat individually. For most purposes, this involves the payment of two and a half percent of one's capital each year.

A pious person may also give as much as he or she pleases as Sadaqa, and does so preferably in secret. Although this word can be translated as voluntary charity, it has a wider meaning. The Prophet (S) said, even 'meeting your brother with a cheerful face is charity'.

The Prophet (S) said 'Charity is a necessity for every Muslim.' He was asked: 'What if a person has nothing?' The Prophet (S) replied: 'He should work with his own hands for his benefit and then give something out of such earnings in charity.' The companions asked: 'What if he is not able to work?' The Prophet (S) replied: 'He should help the poor and needy persons.' The companions further asked: 'What if he cannot do even that?' The Prophet (S) said: 'He should urge others to do good.' The companions said: 'What if he lacks that also?' The Prophet (S) replies: 'He should check himself from doing evil. That is also charity.'

The Punishment for not giving Zakat:

Allah (Swt) says in the Quran: "And there are those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of Allah, announce to them a most grievous penalty (when) on the Day of Judgement heat will be produced out of that wealth in the fire of hell. Then with it they will be branded on their forehead and their flanks and backs. (It will be said to them) this is the treasure which you hoarded for yourselves, taste then the treasurers that you have been hoarding." (9:34-35).

The Prophet (S) said: 'Any owner of gold or silver who does not deliver from them their right, on the Day of Judgement, the gold and silver will be shaped as foils of fire. Then it will be heated in the fire of hell; and then with it he will be ironed on his side, his forehead, and his back' (Muslim).

May Allah grant us His mercy and forgiveness.
Sheikh Tareq Al Bikai

The time is drawing near. Everyone is seated unusually early around the dinner table anticipating Athan al- Maghrib. Some may have a cup of water in their hand just waiting to guzzle it down- others a spoon, slightly suspended in their soup. Then suddenly- ALLAHU AKBAR! ALLAHU AKBAR! It's official. You have inshallah made it through another Ramadan, yet your hand is still clasped over that cup of water which you hesitate to drink. In that moment, you take a second to reflect on this wonderful month full of worship, blessings, family and a sense of togetherness. You sit still knowing that once you take a sip, you will have to wait another year to have this feeling again. Instead you pull away from the glass and embrace your family members, taking care to thank mum for her efforts in making the meals special for the past thirty days. Ahh, what a great feeling!

Okay, time to celebrate, so the next morning you wake up early to get some food into your stomach before you race off to school... or maybe work. Hang on, something just doesn't sound right here.

Eid is a beautiful time for Muslims all over the world, but sadly more and more of us are choosing to continue with our daily routines rather than tak-

feeling of attending the Fajr and Eid prayer. Had they known this, they would be one of the first people to arrive at the Masjid. By commencing our day with Salat al-Eid, we are making the conscious decision to make something of this day and we are giving ourselves the opportunity to consume the joy we have rightfully earned. Women should also be encouraged to attend the Salat, but should aim to go the Masjid appropriately covered, since we are unfortunately seeing an increasing number of females showing up at the mosques inappropriately dressed. Umm Atiyah (R) reported: *"The Messenger of Allah (S) commanded us to bring out on Eid ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha, young women, hijab-observing adult women and the menstruating women. The menstruating women stayed out of actual Salaat but participated in good deeds and Duaa (supplication). I (Umm Atiyah) said to the Holy Prophet (S): Oh! Messenger of Allah, one does not have an outer garment. He replied: Let her sister cover her with her garment"* (Muslim).

Eid is a day which should be made special for our children. Take them with you beforehand to pick out their new clothes, pick up the festival sweets, and have their hair groomed. To you these may sound like insignificant acts, but they are invaluable experiences to a child learning to form an Islamic identity.

GIVING EID ITS GROOVE BACK

ing time out to allow ourselves to be swept away by the excitement during the celebrations. By choosing to go to work or sending the kids off to school, many of us are growing blind to the fact that we are depriving our children of a highly religious celebration. It is necessary for us as adults to be sufficient role models, particularly in an increasingly westernised country. I would like to congratulate the Islamic schools in Sydney which have taken a step in the right direction by granting staff and students the required number of days off. But what about the majority of children who are attending government schools? Why is it that so many of them are taking a back seat in a celebration which is equally theirs?

With adults insisting to have the day off from work, our employers would finally realise that this celebration means something to us. Instead, we attend work and school as though it is just another day and shun the celebration off as though it is unimportant. That may not be the intended message which we are sending across, but it is the message which is being received because Muslims are no longer giving Eid the status it deserves.

It saddens me to think that many Australian Muslims do not know of the

Think back to your own childhood – I can guarantee that many can confess that Eid many years ago was a quality experience compared to the miserable efforts we are making today. Sit a child down during Ramadan and explain the significance of this upcoming day. It's a sure thing that their idea of Ramadan and Eid will be transformed dramatically.

Since a large number of Muslims come from big families (masha'Allah), you will generally find children actually ending up making a little fortune on the day. Use this to educate them further about what being a Muslim is all about. For instance, children can be encouraged to give a fraction of their riches to charity. By doing so, they become compelled to consider less fortunate individuals around the world. We must all learn to be kind and generous, especially to those who are orphaned. For them, this is a very hard day since being around everyone else's family can only remind them that they do not have one of their own, so share this experience with them.

The point being made here is one which aims to bring to the forefront the importance of celebrating Eid. By taking a firm stance on this issue we are setting an example for future generations because, at the rate we are going

today, our grandchildren will not know of Eid since it's heading in the direction of extinction. We must go back and re-learn the significance of this day and use it to show our children the enjoyment that is Eid-specific. What follows are a few activities that families can do on the days leading up to Eid and during Eid itself. I urge you to give them a go and see if in fact such activities do make a difference to your child's life.

Take the Day off!

Request the sample letter* informing teachers that your child will have the day off from school. By doing this we are inshaAllah, sending a serious message about the importance we attach to our Deen and by extension, our Muslim festivals. Also, confirm in advance that all family members will have the day off from work, school and other commitments.

Scrub and Smarten up the House!

Clean the house and let the children help decorate. Use lights, banners, balloons and streamers**. Play Islamic CD's in the background and sing along as a family as you decorate together.

school. Now you'll have all the school waiting for Ramadan to come around every year!

Spoil yourself!

Wake up early and have the kids take extra effort in grooming themselves. Pay special attention to nails, teeth, hair and clothes. Try to make sure everyone has at least one new item of clothing to wear on Eid. You don't need to indulge, but it's always nice to look presentable on a special occasion. Remember, if children think they look good, then they'll feel good!

Attend the Prayer!

For those who argue that it never feels like Eid, then attending the Eid (and Fajr prayer, if possible) is a must! Taking children along to attend the prayer will have a positive impact on what they learn to value about Eid. Brothers, sisters and children; if you see someone standing alone (they may be new Muslims or without friends or relatives) then greet them and if possible, invite them to your home to share that special meal you prepared earlier. Eid gatherings are also a great venue for children to make new Muslim friends.

Visit Family and Friends!

Give and Receive!

Buy – or better yet, make Eid cards that can be distributed to families or individuals. These can serve as a reminder of your visit and the family will have loads of fun making them together! A custom on Eid is the giving of money to children. Since children end up with quite a fortune on Eid, take them to a charity and encourage them to donate a portion of their money to the less fortunate. Another form of giving can include the exchange of gifts. This allows a child to put thought into their selected presents which has an element of surprise as well. It is claimed that the Prophet (S) encouraged this by stating: *“Exchange presents with one another, for they remove ill feelings from the heart.”* (At Tirmidhi)

Make Ramadan Gift Bags for Classmates!

Children love receiving surprise bags, so a great way to educate your child's Muslim and non - Muslim friends about Ramadan is with Ramadan party bags! Fill the bags with lots of delicious candy and the all-famous Mamoul. Add a small toy and a little card made by your child to their friend explaining in a few short sentences what Ramadan is all about. Have your child distribute the bags to their classmates, teachers and principal when they return to

Make an extra effort to see that uncle or aunt that lives far away. This is a perfect occasion to go that extra mile (literally) and children will love and remember the drive. After all, there is no greater occasion to come together so use this celebration to your advantage.

Let Others Share in the Experience!

Since Eid – ul Fitr usually arrives in the warmer months of the year, make good use of the outdoors. Have a barbeque and invite your neighbours and tell them about Eid. What a great day to do some Dawah. Children can make cards and gifts for neighbours also.

May Allah re-instill in our hearts the love and enthusiasm for Eid, and may He allow this love to continue on for future generations.

Your sister in Islam,
Manal Mikati.

* To get a copy of the sample letter, send us an e-mail and we'll contact you with the information magazine@uma.org.au.

** Eid – specific banners and streamers can be purchased from Islamic bookstores, bakeries, sweet shops and clothing stores.



THE SEASONAL MUSLIM



The glorious month of Ramadan, the spring in the year of worship! The hype, the heightened emotions, the softening of the hearts, the sprinting of the souls toward their Creator and the time when the Masjid is the place to be – any time of the day. Wow, it's really here! We departed a short while ago and here we are again. So there is a good thing about how time passes quickly after all!

In this short article, I would just like to offer the readers of this magazine a quick reminder and some sincere advice. Having gone through this beautiful month of discipline, commitment and energy; think of all the wonderful habits that you have picked up. Think of this powerful constructions zone you have built for yourself through your own commitment and sincerity.

You prayed in the Masjid more times than ever until the walls of the Masjid became accustomed to your shiny face and the road had become familiar with your footsteps. You have been diligent in your prayers, praying them on time, and counting your Sunnah as if they were a collection. You opened up the book of Allah and you kept it in your hands and in your heart. You moistened your

tongue by preserving it to glorify Allah and praise his beautiful names. You shook the human desire to sleep to please your Lord and His Messenger by waking up for suhour. Your family saw so much of you and you relived that beautiful bond that Allah has created amongst relations and you thought to your self where have I been all this time? You tried your best not to disappoint Allah during this month, you were religious, honest and respectful and above all you enslaved yourself to Allah and his commands...

This is an achievement to embrace and be proud of. The angels were proud of you, Allah always sees what you are doing, and the Messenger too would be so proud and impressed. It is a job well done.

My dearest sister, my beloved brother, don't lose this.

Don't let all of this accumulation, this construction, this beautiful picture just wash away and wither into an abyss of distraction and neglect. Don't.

Is this how you would treat the friendship

and relationship you have established which Allah has treated with so much happiness, reward and value? Is this how you wish to honour something which Allah, His Messenger, the angels and pious people celebrate? When Ramadan is over, do you really want to place all this on top of the heap of garbage like people throw out their unwanted presents?

I didn't think so.

So my advice is simple: beloved brother and dear sister: before, during and after Ramadan, continue in your attempts to please Allah. Continue in competing with the pious over the quantity and quality of worship. Continue to strive to please Allah who is the Lord of Ramadan and Lord of every other month. Don't stop. Don't throw it all away. Continue and keep this serene picture going and may Allah assist you in that...

May Allah support you and me to remain steadfast on the truth, never rejecting guidance after it had come to us. He is able to do that and He is the Lord of Success.

Ameen.

By Muhammad Khodr

Ramadan Tastebud

Pad Thai

Ingredients

12 medium cooked prawns (300g)
250g dried rice noodles
3 tablespoons finely chopped palm sugar
1 tablespoon lime juice
1 tablespoon light soy sauce
1 tablespoon tomato sauce
2 tablespoons mild chilli sauce
2 tablespoons fish sauce
2 teaspoons peanut oil
220g chicken mince
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
3 eggs, beaten lightly
2 green onions, sliced thinly
1 cup (80g) bean sprouts
½ cup (75g) roasted unsalted peanuts,
chopped coarsely
1/3 cup loosely packed, coarsely
chopped fresh coriander

Method

Shell and devein prawns, leaving tails intact. Place noodles in large heatproof bowl; cover with boiling water. Stand until just tender; drain. Cover to keep warm.

Combine sugar, juice and sauces in small bowl.

Heat oil in wok or large frying pan; stir-fry chicken, garlic and ginger until meat is cooked through. Add prawns and egg to wok; gently stir-fry until egg sets. Add noodles, sauce mixture and remaining ingredients; stir-fry gently until hot.

Tip

Palm sugar, also sold as jaggery, is a product of the coconut palm. It is available from Asian grocery stores, but you can substitute black or brown sugar if unavailable.

Serving Suggestion

Sprinkle pad thai with extra chopped peanuts to serve.



Photographs by Noor ©

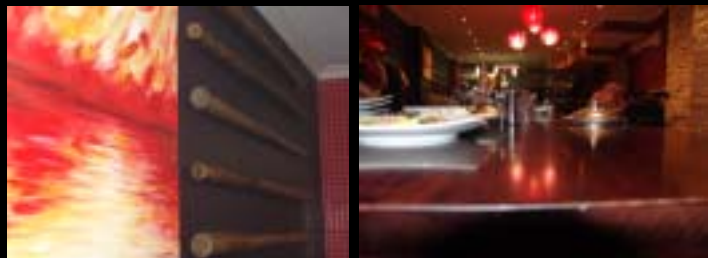
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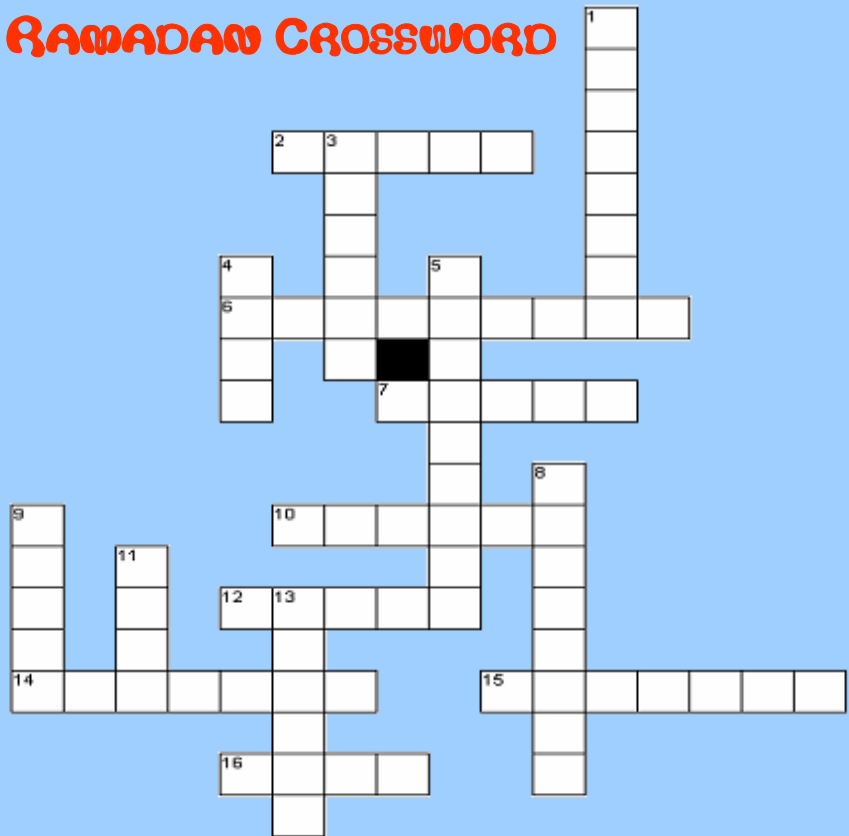
Across

- The purpose of Ramadan is so one can gain t_____.
- The name given to the celebration to mark the end of Ramadan.
- The type of fruit the Prophet (s) would break his fast on.
- What pillar of Islam is fasting in the month of Ramadan.
- What month in the Islamic calendar does Ramadan fall in?
- The recommended night prayer during the month of Ramadan.
- From whom did Prophet Muhammad (s) receive the first verses of the Quran.
- The Arabic name given to fasting.

Down

- Which phase of the moon signifies the end of Ramadan?
- The name given to the night the Quran was revealed.
- The first word/action Prophet Muhammad (s) was commanded to do during the Night of Power.
- Which surah is the verse "Fasting is ordained for you as it was ordained for those before you, so that you might attain to God-consciousness" mentioned in?
- The Night of Power is equivalent to how many months?
- Obligatory payments of charity made during Ramadan by Muslims.
- The first battle fought in the month of Ramadan.
- Seclusion or isolation in the last ten days of Ramadan.

RAMADAN CROSSWORD



“The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind in clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong).”
[Surah al-Baqarah 2:185]

FALLEN PHRASE:

Hint: Hadith of the Prophet (s) on Ramadan.

Spot the Difference

By Jason Simpson

Can you find all ten differences?



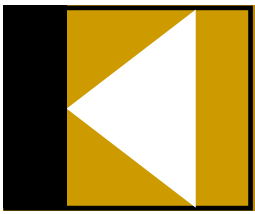
- Missing fish from left school
- Missing reed from left plant
- Octopus is missing a tentacle
- Missing stone from ocean floor
- Turtle shell pattern changed

- Left dolphin fin has moved
- Left dolphin spots colour changed
- Missing air hole on right dolphin
- Turnmy line missing from right dolphin
- Padlock has changed on treasure chest



U

E I E B T Y S N A H O U
 H U S R O M L N S A O A F A S D D F F G P T S S O
 B I A H S M U I W I D H I S E I I A T M S G M S E R N G N
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