

RAMADHAN



O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may (learn) self-restraint (HQ 2:283)



WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting has nothing to do with running or moving at incredible speeds! It's all about abstaining from food, drink and sexual activity during daylight hours (From First light until Sunset).

Muslims can fast voluntarily most of the year, but in Ramadhan, Muslims are commanded to fast every day during this whole blessed month.



HOW DOES THIS 'REFORM' WORK?

We remove all negative things and make an extra effort to promote good actions within our lives. We try to be more charitable; spend more time in prayer and study; and show more kindness to family, friends, neighbours, strangers... to all.

We practice these good actions for a month, and we try to keep them going for the rest of the year.



WHY DO MUSLIMS FAST?

In the Qur'an, the Muslim holy book, Allah commands the Muslims to observe fasting during Ramadhan. Fasting in Ramadhan is one of the five pillars of Islam.

Throughout the year, optional fasts are also observed by many Muslims for spiritual development and purification. Fasting heightens the level of taqwa (God Conscience).



WHAT ARE 'NEGATIVE' ACTIONS?

There are many qualities that are not liked by Islam and some actions may even go against the teachings of Islam. These 'bad' actions are purged from our system.

Backbiting, lying, swearing and stealing as well as alcohol, drugs and gambling are forbidden in Islam. Any Muslim involved with them removes them from their lives and hopefully forever.



WHO OR WHAT IS RAMADHAN?

Actually, I suppose, you may have met people with the name Ramadhan! A person born in Ramadhan is sometimes named Ramadhan.

Ramadhan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. The Qur'an was revealed to mankind during this month. The first five verses of the Qur'an were revealed in Ramadhan.



DO YOU NEED TO EAT CURRY TO FAST?

No, Islam is not culturally based but includes people from all nationalities, backgrounds and races. Muslims can eat anything outside the time of fasting.

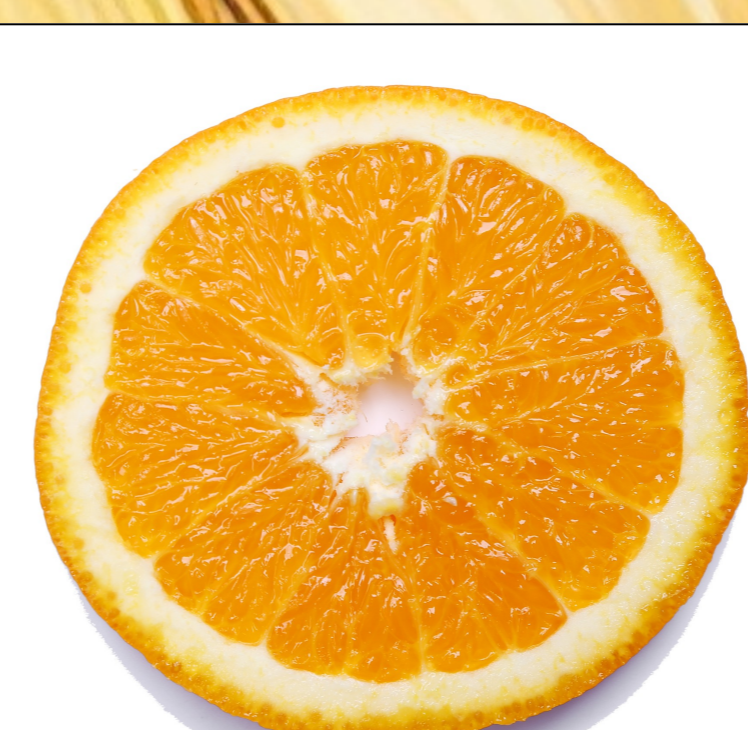
However, Muslims must eat in moderation and are encouraged to do things in moderation. For this reason, Islam is often referred to as the middle path.



DOES RAMADHAN HAVE TWO START DATES?

The Islamic calendar is based on the lunar calendar. A month begins when the new moon is sighted. If the moon is not sighted in a locality, the month may begin a day or so later.

One lunar year is smaller than a solar year by about ten days. For this reason, Ramadhan begins a few days earlier each year.



DOES FASTING HAVE ANY BENEFITS?

Fasting has a number of mental, physical and spiritual benefits. These have been documented in detail by medical and religious specialists. Most religious authorities prescribe fasting.

Fasting has a positive impact on the physical and mental well-being of a person. Giving greater control; improved self-esteem and confidence; inner strength; and an appreciation of others.



DON'T YOU GET HUNGRY AND THIRSTY?

Yes, when fasting for a whole day without food and water, people do get hungry and thirsty.

One aspect of fasting is to discipline our body and mind. It also makes us more grateful as we appreciate the blessing of food and drink. It also helps us to appreciate others less fortunate than us who 'fast' because they don't have food.



DO ALL MUSLIMS HAVE TO FAST?

All mature and sane Muslims must keep the fasts of Ramadhan. There are exceptions to performing the fast.

The exceptions include old and ill people who may be incapable of fasting or fasting may deteriorate their health further. This also applies to pregnant women and others who are advised not to fast by a doctor.



YOU MUST FEAST ALL NIGHT?

On the contrary, Muslims take advantage of Ramadhan and have a special night prayer called Tarawih. The whole Qur'an is recited by the Imam. Additional optional prayers and acts of worship are carried out by many Muslims during the night.

Muslims wake up early (before first light) and eat a light meal (Suhoor). Then, pray the early morning prayer before dawn.



CAN PEOPLE DIE FASTING?

No, unless someone has a medical condition and a lack of food is going to aggravate this illness or cause death. They are exempt from fasting in the first place.

Islam is very flexible, if there is fear of loss of life due to the fast, the fast can be broken. If a person breaks the fast accidentally, then the fast still remains intact.



WOW! THAT'S A LOT OF PRAYING, WHY?

Ramadhan is a special month during which Muslims reform their own personal character. For example, Muslims perform all their prayers punctually and completely, including optional ones.

There is great spiritual merit in prayer, studying, worshipping, reading the Qur'an, doing good deeds, repenting, showing kindness, being generous and so on.



YOU MUST BE HAPPY WHEN IT'S OVER!

When Ramadhan ends, we have Eid ul Fitr, a celebration day after Ramadhan's completion. Many Muslims are also sad and look forward to the next Ramadhan when this spirit of blessing, spirituality, love and kindness can be rekindled again.

Ramadhan is such a fantastic experience for Muslims. It has a good impact on their character, recharging them spiritually!

