



FUN FACTS ABOUT

RAMADHAN & FASTING



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MCAS

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FOREWORD

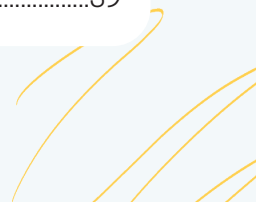
Muslims globally eagerly anticipate the arrival of Ramadhan throughout the year, not only due to its connection with various religious rituals and practices but also because it is a season of boundless blessings for humanity.

This book endeavours to reveal 45 captivating insights into Ramadhan and the practice of fasting, illuminating lesser-known facets that intrigue and enrich. Our goal is to provide readers with a profound understanding of the sacred essence of this blessed month and fasting, delving into its historical, medical, and spiritual depths.

This book is published in commemoration of the 45th Anniversary of MCAS.

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PART 1



RAMADHAN

إِذَا كَانَتْ أَوَّلُ لَيْلَةٍ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ، صُفِّدَتِ الشَّيَاطِينُ، وَمَرَدَّةُ الْجِنِّ،
وَعُلِّقَتْ أَبْوَابُ النَّارِ، فَلَمْ يُفْتَحْ مِنْهَا بَابٌ، وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُ الْجَنَّةِ، فَلَمْ
يُعْلَقْ مِنْهَا بَابٌ، وَنَادَى مُنَادٍ: يَا بَاغِيَ الْخَيْرِ أَقْبِلْ، وَيَا بَاغِيَ الشَّرِّ
أَقْصِرْ، وَلِلَّهِ عِتْقَاءٌ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَذَلِكَ فِي كُلِّ لَيْلَةٍ.

"When the first night of Ramadhan comes, the devils and mischievous djinns are chained up, and the gates of the hellfire are closed, and none of its gates are opened. The gates of paradise are opened and none of its gates are closed. And a caller cries out: 'O seeker of good, proceed; O seeker of evil, stop.' And God has necks (people) whom He frees from the hellfire, and that happens every day." (Ibnu Majah)



FACT #1

RAMADHAN MEANS 'THE HOT MONTH'

Ramadhan is the name of the 9th month in the Islamic Calendar. It originates from the Arabic root word '*ra-mi-da*' which means to be scorching hot. It was named as such, as the Arabs used to name the months based on the climate they experienced, indicating that they observed Ramadhan in summer.

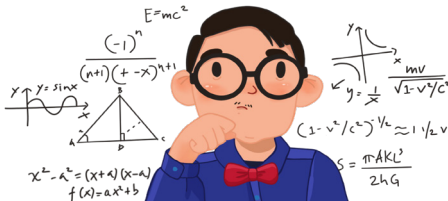
As Ramadhan is observed globally at the same period and due to climatic, seasonal, and daylight-hour differences, the experience of Ramadhan varies depending on different geographical locations.



RAMADHAN OCCURS APPROXIMATELY **11 DAYS EARLIER** EACH YEAR IN THE GREGORIAN CALENDAR

Since the commencement of the months in the Islamic calendar, also known as Hijri calendar, is based on the sighting of the new moon, Ramadhan lasts for either 29 or 30 days, depending on the moon's cycle.

The Lunar calendar which spans 354 days a year, is 11 days shorter than the Gregorian calendar. As a result, it takes approximately 33 years and 5 days for Ramadhan to complete a full 12-month cycle across the Gregorian calendar.



“RAMADHAN MUBARAK” MEANS TO HAVE A BLESSED RAMADHAN

“Ramadhan Mubarak” is a greeting that everyone can relay to Muslims during the blessed month. It means “Have a blessed Ramadhan”.

Another version is “Ramadhan Kareem”, which corresponds to “Have a gracious Ramadhan”.

Did you know?

Muslims would be delighted to receive the greeting, including from non-Muslim friends and family members.

Ramadhan
Kareem!



FACT #4

RAMADHAN IS A MONTH OF **GIVING AND CHARITY**

Islam puts strong emphasis on ensuring the welfare of the less privileged within the society, from orphans to those who face financial difficulties.

Muslims believe that the rewards of their good deeds, particularly in Ramadhan, are multiplied. Therefore, they seize this opportunity not only to offer charity and donations but also to provide sustenance to the community, particularly to those observing fasting during the iftar, as Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) mentioned that whoever provides food for those who are fasting will earn no less of the rewards of their fast. (Ibn Majah)

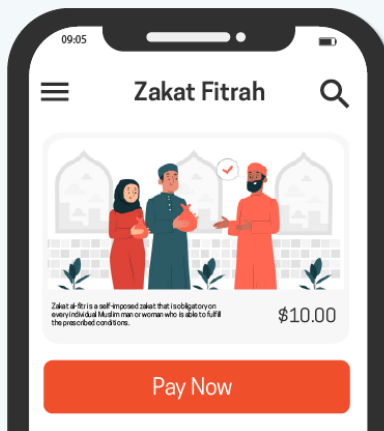


FACT #5

MUSLIMS MUST GIVE **ALMS (ZAKAT FITRAH)** DURING RAMADHAN

Zakat Fitrah, also known as Zakat Fitri or Sadaqah Fitrah, is a mandatory donation in Islam that holds particular significance in Ramadhan. Traditionally given before the Eid Al-Fitr festival, Muslims are required to donate a specific amount to the less fortunate, ensuring their welfare is being taken care of especially during the festive season of Eid.

The purpose of Zakat Fitrah extends beyond mere charity. It serves as a means of purifying one's wealth and soul, fostering empathy for the less privileged, and promoting social solidarity within the community.

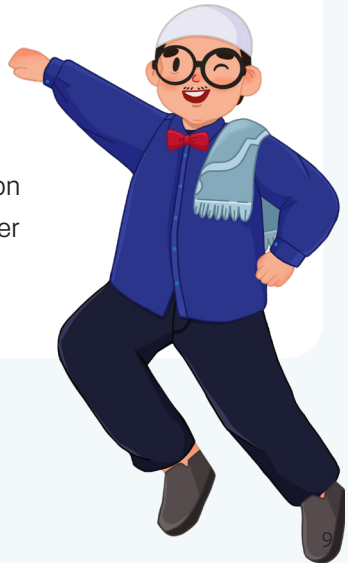


FACT #6

RAMADHAN FEATURES EXCLUSIVE NIGHTLY PRAYERS KNOWN AS **'TERAWIH'**

The Terawih Prayers can be understood as “The Prayers which are relaxing”. They are an additional set of non-obligatory prayers and can only be performed in Ramadhan. Muslims around the world would perform as many as 8 to 20 rakaats for Terawih in congregation at mosques, or even individually at the comfort of their homes.

The Terawih Prayers are also an opportunity for Muslims to foster a deeper connection with the Quran as they ponder upon the Imam's recitation throughout the prayers.



WITHIN RAMADHAN LIES A NIGHT BETTER THAN A THOUSAND MONTHS (LAILATUL QADR)

Lailatul Qadr, translated as “*The Night of Power*”, “*The Night of Glory*”, or “*The Night of Decree*” in Arabic, holds special significance in Islam. Its name derives from the belief that the rewards for good deeds performed during this night are worth more than a thousand months.

As the specific date of Lailatul Qadr remains undisclosed, Muslims devote themselves to increased acts of worship during the last ten nights of Ramadhan, especially on the odd-numbered nights. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) advised believers to seek Lailatul Qadr during this period, underscoring the exceptional spiritual value and divine blessings associated with this miraculous night.



إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ (١) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ (٢)

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ (٣)

In-nā anzalnāhu fī laylatil-qadr. Wamā adrāka mā laylatul-qadr. Laylatul-qadri khayrun min alfi shahr.

“Indeed, We sent the Quran down during the Night of Decree. And what can make you know what is the Night of Decree? The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months.”

(Quran, 97: 1-3)

THE QURAN WAS REVEALED DURING RAMADHAN

The revelation of the Quran, which Muslims believe to be God's words, occurred during the blessed month of Ramadhan - from Lauh Mahfuz (The Preserved Tablet) to the lowest Heavens; at a station called Baitul Izzah (The House of Honour). This sacred period provides Muslims with a unique opportunity to deepen their connection with the Quran, reflecting upon its teachings and seeking spiritual enlightenment.

Many devout individuals seize this opportunity to set personal goals, aiming to complete the recitation of the entire Quran, a practice known as 'Khatam'.



شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ
مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ

Shahru ramadhānal-lazī unzila fīhil-qur-ānu hudan lin-nāsi
wabay-yinātim minal-hudā wal-furqān

“Ramadhan is the month in which the Quran was revealed as a guide for humanity with clear proofs of guidance and the decisive authority.”

(Quran, 2:185)

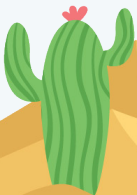


FACT #9

THE BATTLE OF BADR TOOK PLACE IN RAMADHAN

The Battle of Badr which occurred in the second Hijri year (624 CE), was a significant historical event which uncovered the unwavering faith and loyalty of the early believers to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Despite being greatly outnumbered, the believers held firm onto their faith in full certainty that victory only lies in God's hands.

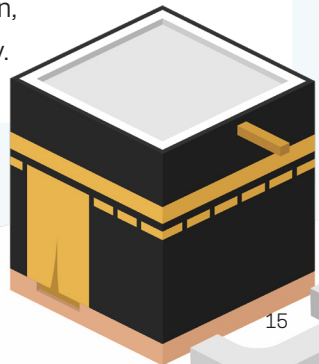
The clash unfolded as a pivotal event showcasing principles of justice, religious freedom, and moral leadership. It exemplified the duty to resist oppression, promoting coexistence and mutual respect among diverse faiths in the region.



THE CONQUEST OF MECCA TOOK PLACE IN RAMADHAN

The Conquest of Mecca unfolded during the blessed month of Ramadhan, showcasing the merciful approach to victory exemplified by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The conquest was initiated in response to the violation of the 'Treaty of Hdaybiyyah' by the Quraysh, reinforcing the Prophet's commitment to upholding agreements and peace. Instead of seeking revenge for years of persecution, the Prophet prioritised the protection of innocent lives and the preservation of human dignity.

This compassionate stance not only sets a powerful example but also emphasised the enduring values of mercy and justice, even in moments of triumph. The Conquest of Mecca is integral to Islam's legacy, portraying it as a religion that advocates peace, compassion, and profound respect for humanity.



RAMADHAN WITNESSED THE **PASSING OF** **LADY KHADIJAH**

At the age of 65, Lady Khadijah, the wife of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), peacefully departed during the blessed month of Ramadhan. Recognised as the epitome of a resilient, independent woman, she selflessly supported the Prophet (peace be upon him), contributing all she had to the cause of Islam.

Lady Khadijah played such an integral role in the early days of Islam, portraying unwavering strength and commitment. Her passing left an indelible mark on Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the year of her demise became known as "*The Year of Sadness*", underscoring the profound impact of her companionship on the Prophet (peace be upon him), and her contributions to the early Islamic community.



PART 2



FASTING

بُنِيَ الْإِسْلَامُ عَلَى خَمْسٍ: شَهَادَةِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ، وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ، وَإِيتَاءِ الزُّكَاةِ، وَالْحَجِّ، وَصَوْمِ رَمَضَانَ

"Islam is based on five things: the testimony that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger, the observance of the prayer, the payment of zakat, the Pilgrimage, and the fast during Ramadhan." (Bukhari & Muslim)

FASTING IN RAMADHAN IS ONE OF THE PRIMARY OBLIGATIONS OF A MUSLIM

These primary obligations are known as the 5 pillars of Islam. They are:

1. The testimony of faith (Shahadah): This is an uttered testimony of belief in the one true God. It goes as follows: *"I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger."*

أشهد أن لا
إله إلا الله

2. Prayer: Muslims are obliged to pray 5 times daily at specific time frames.



3. Almsgiving (Zakat): This is the mandatory act of giving a calculated portion of one's wealth to the poor, destitute, and needy.



4. Fasting: The obligatory fast lasts for one month throughout Ramadhan.



5. Pilgrimage (Hajj): This is the annual pilgrimage to Mecca that every Muslim must perform at least once in their lifetime.



FASTING IS PRACTICED IN MANY RELIGIONS

Apart from Islam, fasting is practised throughout a wide range of religions and belief systems, such as Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and many more, though there may be various motivations and reasons behind the practice.

While the specifics of the practice may differ from one religion to another, emphasising on such commonalities is a great way to foster understanding and respect among adherents of different faiths and religions.

We are not the only ones who fast!





FACT #14

MUSLIMS FAST FROM **DAWN TILL DUSK**

Muslims observe fasting from dawn until sunset each day throughout Ramadhan. The exact timings of the fast vary based on geographical locations, with different countries and regions experiencing distinct sunrise and sunset times.

These variations are due to the Earth's rotation and the different positions of locations relative to the sun. As a result, Muslims worldwide would have to adapt their daily routines and meal schedules in adherence to the specific fasting hours dictated by the local sunrise and sunset times during Ramadhan.

وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ
الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتِمُّوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى الْيَلِّ

Wakulū washrabū hat-tā yatabay-yana lakumul-khaitul-
abyadhu minal-khaitil-aswadi minal-fajri thum-ma atim-
mus-siyāma ilal-layl

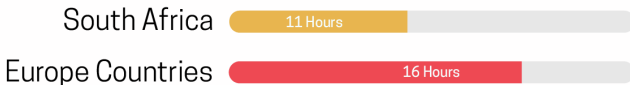
*“And eat and drink during the whole of the night, until the
break of true dawn is clear to you. Then complete your fast,
not consuming anything from the break of dawn until sunset.”*

(Quran, 2:187)

MUSLIMS IN SOUTH AFRICA EXPERIENCE THE SHORTEST FASTING HOURS

Amongst the regions that experience the shortest fasting periods during Ramadhan is Johannesburg in South Africa, where Muslims fast for approximately 11 hours daily throughout the whole month.

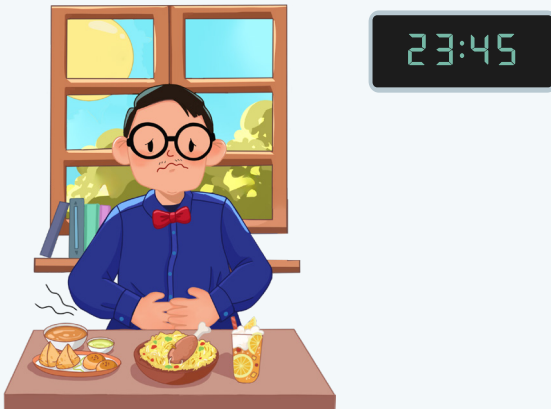
On the contrary, Muslims residing in European countries, like France, UK, and Poland experience the longest fasting hours. In cities like Reykjavik in Iceland, the period from dawn to sunset would be over 16 hours!

Shortest!

MUSLIMS FAST EVEN IN REGIONS WITH THE MIDNIGHT SUN

Countries near the Arctic Circle, like Norway, experience the phenomenon of the Midnight Sun, where the sun may not set for over 24 hours.

In such regions, Muslims may follow the fasting timings of the nearest location with a regular day-night cycle or use Mecca's timings as a reference for Ramadhan fasting. Muslim scholars provide religious guidelines for such areas with unique daylight patterns.¹



¹ Mufti Wilayah Persekutuan. (2018, May 24). Irsyad Fatwa Series: Ramadhan Edition 103 - The Ruling of Fasting in Countries Where the Daylength is Long. Retrieved from <https://muftiwp.gov.my/en/artikel/irsyad-fatwa/irsyad-fatwa-khas-ramadhan-cat/2423-irsyad-fatwa-series-ramadhan-edition-103-the-ruling-of-fasting-in-countries-where-the-daylength-is-long>



FACT #17

DATES ARE RECOMMENDED FOR SUSTAINING ENERGY DURING FASTING

Dates are a great way of getting the much-needed fibre that aids and improves digestion in Ramadhan. Its high levels of potassium, magnesium and B vitamins make dates one of the healthiest fruits available.

Did you know?

Dates are a staple fruit of the Middle East; traditionally, dates are known as the food Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) ate when he broke his fast. Today, most Muslims eat dates for Iftar following the Prophet's practice. Many prefer to eat 1, 3, or 7 dates, as odd numbers are most loved by Allah and is preferred by our Prophet (peace be upon him).



CERTAIN ACTIONS MAY INVALIDATE THE FAST

Actions that may invalidate the fast include eating, drinking, smoking, and engaging in intimate relations while fasting. Engaging in any of them without a reasonable excuse is considered a great sin.

However, if one were to eat or drink unintentionally, it would not invalidate their fast, and they should just continue fasting until the sun sets.



I FORGOT
I'M FASTING!

NOT ALL MUSLIMS ARE REQUIRED TO FAST IN RAMADHAN

Islam exempts certain groups of people from fasting, including kids who have yet to reach puberty, those who are travelling overseas, nursing women, women who are on their menstruation cycle, the sick, and the old whose health is bound to deteriorate.

In addition to the exemptions mentioned, Islam recognises the unique circumstances of individuals and provides flexibility in the observance of fasting during Ramadhan. This inclusive approach in granting exemptions acknowledges the diverse health needs of devotees, emphasising the importance of maintaining overall health while practicing religious obligations.



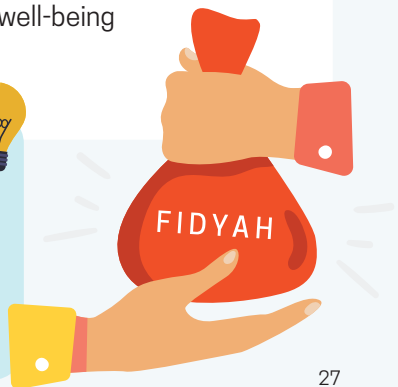
THOSE UNABLE TO FAST IN RAMADHAN ARE **REQUIRED TO EITHER MAKE UP FOR MISSED DAYS OR GIVE CHARITY (FIDYAH)**

Those who are unable to fast during Ramadhan due to valid reasons, such as illness or other health concerns, are required to make up for the missed days by fasting after Ramadhan when they are able to do so. If for some reason they are unable to make up for the missed fasts, they can provide fidyah, which is a charitable donation made to help those in need.

Fidyah is usually given in the form of providing food or financial assistance to the less fortunate, and the amount is calculated based on the number of missed fasting days. It is a way for individuals to fulfil their religious obligations while also contributing to the well-being of others in the community.

TO NOTE!


1. **Repayment:** Ill, traveling, menstruating, or invalidated fasts must be repaid.
2. **Fidyah:** Critical illness, chronic condition, or old age require fidyah, no repayment.
3. **Expiate & Fidyah:** Pregnant/breastfeeding women concerned for child or missed fasts from previous Ramadhan need both.



NEW CONVERTS **NEED NOT MAKE UP FOR THE MISSED FASTING DAYS** PRIOR TO THEIR CONVERSION

New Muslim converts are not obligated to make up for missed fasts and prayers, as Islam forgives all sins committed prior to conversion.

This symbolises a fresh start and illustrates the leniency of the religion, encouraging individuals to gradually learn the intricacies of the faith, step by step. Additionally, it provides space for personal growth and enables individuals to embrace the teachings of the religion at a comfortable pace.



A fresh start!

SOME ARE COMFORTABLE WITH OTHERS EATING AROUND THEM, WHILE OTHERS ARE NOT.

While many Muslims may not be bothered by others eating in front of them during fasting, some may find it discomforting. Nevertheless, it is a common courtesy for those not fasting to demonstrate respect for those who are by refraining from eating in their presence.

This gesture acknowledges the significance of fasting and the potential sensitivity surrounding food consumption during this time. By being mindful of these considerations, individuals can foster a supportive and inclusive environment, fostering a deeper understanding of the cultural and religious significance of fasting in the Muslim community.



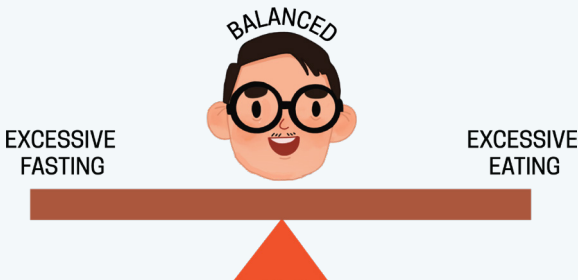
ISLAM PRESCRIBES FASTING IN A **MODERATE** **AND BALANCED WAY**

Fasting in Ramadhan comes with its regulations; it is not about skipping meals that are bound to harm health and stamina. Islam discourages the extension of fasting beyond the prescribed hours of daylight and forbids any continued fast without a break in between the days.

As much as Islam discourages extreme, or prolonged and harmful withdrawal from sustenance, fasting also encourages good health and habit through abstaining from overconsumption after the breaking of fast.

Did you know?

The Quran specifies to Muslims, “...eat and drink, but do not be excessive.”. (Quran, 07:31)



PART 3



HEALTH BENEFITS OF FASTING

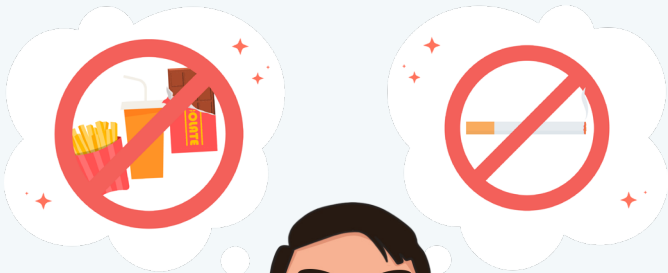
صُومُوا تَصِحُّوا

"Fast, surely you will be healthy."

(Al-Tabarani)

FASTING HELPS TO ELIMINATE BAD HABITS

The effectiveness of fasting in breaking bad habits is particularly notable when observed during Ramadhan. With a deliberate avoidance of indulging in junk foods and unhealthy habits, bodies gradually acclimatise to the absence of these elements. Over time, the temporary refraining from such indulgences fosters an environment where addictions and bad habits can be successfully overcome and eliminated for good.



FASTING MAY HELP IN DISEASE PREVENTION

Fasting allows the body to prioritise essential functions, such as disease prevention, through a process known as autophagy. This can be likened to the body's 'housekeeping', where cellular waste materials are removed.

Autophagy is believed to enhance the body's ability to handle chronic inflammation, consequently lowering the risk of conditions like heart disease, multiple sclerosis, and rheumatoid arthritis.²



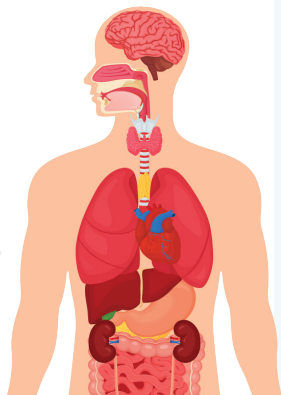
FASTING NATURALLY DETOXIFIES THE BODY

Detoxification is a normal body process. It involves the elimination and the neutralisation of toxins through organs such as the colon, liver, kidneys, lungs, lymph glands, and skin. When food no longer enters the body, fat reserves are used for energy.

During a fast, the fat reserves release the chemicals from the fatty acids into the system, which are then eliminated through the above-mentioned organs. Fasting may help enhance the production and activity of certain enzymes involved in detoxification, as well as promote the health of your liver, one of the main organs involved in detoxification.³

Did you know?

Chemicals, such as DDT, that is known for its insecticidal properties, are not found in food but are absorbed from one's environment. These are stored in fat reserves that may be released during a fast too.



FASTING HELPS TO NURTURE PATIENCE

The fasting month teaches patience. People who truly understand and bear patience also earn inner bliss and peace. When faced with difficulties or disasters, people who have learned patience have firm faith in God and remain sensibly peaceful against the disorder. Psychologists agree that people who can control their desire of hunger can also control their other desires, such as anger, happiness, etc. Hence, fasting is a comprehensive method of learning patience.

Did you know?

If mild dehydration can alter a person's mood, energy level, and ability to think clearly, the fasting person is experiencing the optimal challenge of self-control. If the fast is successful, it means the fasting person has overcome all negating influences, make use of their intellect, and remain steadfast in positivity.



FASTING ENHANCES HEART HEALTH

Changing your diet and lifestyle is a powerful way to lower the risk of heart disease. Research suggests that incorporating fasting into your routine can be particularly beneficial for heart health. One study found that fasting on alternate days can reduce total cholesterol and heart disease risk factors in overweight individuals compared to a control group. Another review indicated that alternate-day fasting can significantly lower blood pressure, as well as levels of triglycerides, total cholesterol, and LDL (bad) cholesterol.⁶



FASTING HEALS THE MIND, BODY, AND SOUL

Ramadhan is the time when the healing of the mind, body and soul are synthesised. While fasting, the brain produces more cells and improves its functions, the body speeds up the replacement of decaying tissues with new healthier tissues, and the soul is nurtured towards goodness and peace.

Did you know?

During a fast, energy is diverted away from the digestive system due to its lack of use and towards the metabolism and immune system.

Healing in Progress



80%

FASTING STRENGTHENS ONE'S WILLPOWER

Fasting puts willpower into practice. As one's willpower is strengthened, one is conditioned to cope with the challenges in all aspects of life.

This conditioning also primes the very quality that only successful people possess - turning desires into reality by using their skills and abilities.

Fasting in Ramadhan helps to suppress vain desires, and develop self-respect and self-confidence, which are the makings needed to establish willpower.



PART 4



WHY DO MUSLIMS FAST?

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن
قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

*"O believers! Fasting is prescribed for you - as it was for those
before you - so perhaps you will become mindful of Allah."*

(Quran, 2:183)

FASTING STRENGTHENS OUR DEVOTION TO GOD

Attaining the rewards of fasting should serve as a motivation, but ultimately, it is the love and pleasure of God that everyone should strive for. Fasting conditions Muslims to obedience and performing their religious duties as the servant of God.

Getting closer to God is one of the greatest objectives behind the fast in Ramadhan and behind all Islamic acts of worship. As Muslims adhere to fulfil these acts of worship, they seek to have better appreciation of the spiritual meaning in true devotion and subservience to God.



FASTING NURTURES GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS (TAQWA)

Fasting is intrinsically linked to the nurturing of God consciousness, known as Taqwa, within an individual. This religious practice goes beyond abstaining from food and drink; it serves to elevate one's awareness of their connection with The Divine. Fasting develops a heightened state of mindfulness and devotion, fostering a profound sense of self-accountability.

The act of abstaining from food even when no one is around exemplifies a sincere commitment to upholding God's commandments, emphasising that the core of this practice lies in personal devotion and a conscious effort to uphold one's religious responsibilities.

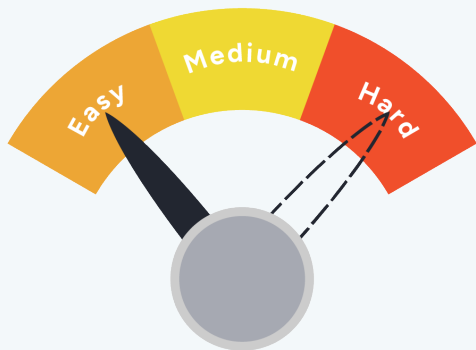


CONNECTION TO GOD

FASTING IS A MEANS TO EASE OUR AFFAIRS

As God is All-Knowing (Al-'Aleem) and The All-Wise (Al-Hakeem), Muslims should understand that all prescribed religious obligations are designed for their own benefit. These obligations are not intended to burden individuals but rather, to enhance the quality of their lives.

Similarly, actions that may lead to harm and corruption, whether at the individual or societal level, are prohibited. This includes substances like alcohol, practices like usury (riba'), and behaviours such as adultery. Conversely, all that is deemed beneficial and convenient is encouraged for the greater good.



يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ
وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

Yurīdul-Lāhu bikumul-yusra walā yurīdu bikumul-‘usra
walitukmilul-‘id-data walitukab-birul-Lāha ‘alā mā
hadākum wala‘al-lakum tashkurūn

*“Allah intends ease for you, not hardship, so that you
may complete the prescribed period and proclaim the
greatness of Allah for guiding you, and perhaps you will
be grateful.”*

(Quran 2:185)

FASTING FOSTERS THE ESSENCE OF SINCERITY

Fasting represents a form of inward obedience to God, where the act is so personal that it becomes indistinguishable between those observing it and those who are not. This practice nurtures the essence of sincerity, emphasising the profound concept of doing things solely for the sake of God without seeking recognition from others.

The quiet discipline of fasting reflects a genuine commitment to faith, encouraging individuals to engage in acts of worship with sincerity and a pure heart. This inward focus on devotion, rather than external displays, reinforces the intimate and personal nature of the relationship between the individual and their Creator.

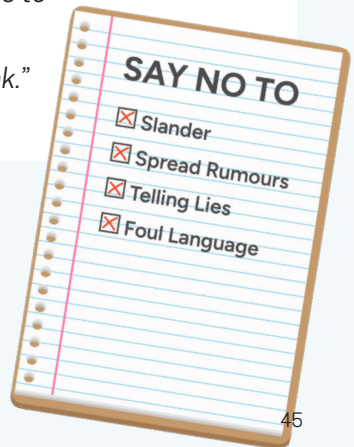


FASTING REFINES ONE'S CHARACTER

Striving to refine our character stands as a fundamental goal of fasting. It prompts contemplation on how can individuals, who can lawfully consume food and drink at other times, engage in negative behaviours such as slandering, spreading rumours, telling lies, or other vices while fasting? The purpose of fasting is not imposed upon us by God's need but is designed to assist us in abstaining from such detrimental actions.

Did you know?

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, *"Whosoever does not give up false statements (i.e. telling lies), and evil deeds, and speaking foul language to others, God is not in need of his (fasting) leaving his food and drink."*
(Bukhari)



FASTING IS A MEANS TO ATTAIN FORGIVENESS AND REPENTANCE

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, *“Fear God wherever you are, and follow up a bad deed with a good one and it will wipe it out”*. (At-Tirmidhi)

Fasting is considered a powerful means of seeking forgiveness for sins. During periods of fasting, such as Ramadhan, individuals engage in self-discipline, reflection, and increased devotion to God. The act of abstaining from physical desires, including food and drink, serves as a form of purification for the soul. By demonstrating restraint and sincere repentance, believers seek God’s mercy and forgiveness for their transgressions.

Fasting is viewed as a spiritual journey that allows individuals to draw closer to God, seek His pardon, and emerge from the experience with a cleansed conscience and a renewed commitment to righteous living.



مَنْ صَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

“He who observes fasting during the month of Ramadhan with faith while seeking its reward from God, will have his past sins forgiven.”

(Bukhari & Muslim)

FASTING NURTURES US TO BE FORGIVING

Islam teaches that God has 99 names through which the Muslim learns of the His attributes. Two of the attributes are Al-Ghafoor (The Forgiver) and Al-Ghaffaar (The Most Forgiving).

In Ramadhan, Muslims strive to purify their spiritual state by attempting to emulate God's attributes through the essence of forgiving. For Muslims there are three ways in which forgiveness is practised:

- Seeking God's forgiveness
- Seeking forgiveness from others
- Seeking to forgive others

Did you know?

Muslims seek forgiveness directly in the presence of God, without any intermediaries.

FASTING INSTILLS A SENSE OF PEACE AND TRANQUILITY

In retrospect, those who fast during Ramadhan often encounter a profound sense of peace and tranquility.

Beyond the acts of seeking forgiveness and extending forgiveness, fasting Muslims, when faced with hostility, heed the advice of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who advised, *“When you are fasting, do not behave obscenely or foolishly, and if one slanders you or aggresses against you, say I am fasting.”* (Bukhari & Muslim)

The fasting ritual encourages Muslims to look deeper within their own selves for inner peace. The spiritual awakening and revitalisation in fasting serve as essential elements in attaining inner peace.

Did you know?

A season of fasting and prayer, Ramadhan may seem difficult to observe, but Muslims truly wish Ramadhan would never end.

FASTING **PROTECTS US** FROM SINFUL ACTS

Fasting acts as a shield that protects us from other sins. The main purpose of fasting is to suppress vain desires which often lead to transgressions and harm. When a person fasts and refrains from eating and drinking, which are perfectly lawful at any other time, it would be more sensible for him to abstain from acts which are considered to be sinful at all times.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) highlighted that fasting serves as a restraint, engaging individuals in a continuous and dedicated act of worship. This ongoing connection with worship assists in avoiding forbidden actions and curbing impulsive desires.



يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ، مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمْ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ، فَإِنَّهُ أَغْضُ
لِلْبَصَرِ، وَأَحْصَنُ لِلْفَرْجِ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ، فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وِجَاءٌ.

“O young men, those among you who can support a wife should marry, for it restrains the eyes (from casting evil glances) and preserves one from immorality; but he who cannot afford it should observe fast for it is a means of controlling the sexual desire.”

(Bukhari & Muslim)

THE SUPPLICATIONS OF THOSE WHO ARE FASTING WOULD **NOT BE REJECTED**

The supplications of those engaged in fasting are promised acceptance. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) mentioned that the supplications of a fasting person, especially during the breaking of their fast would not be turned away.

The Quran reinforces this assurance, stating that God is near, responding to the prayers of His servants when they call upon Him. The Divine guidance encourages believers to respond obediently and maintain faith, recognizing the potential for guidance on the righteous path. This combination of the Prophet's teachings and Quranic verses underscores the accessibility of Divine mercy and responsiveness to the sincere prayers of those who fast.

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا
دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

Wa-izā sa-alaka ‘ibādī ‘an-nī fa-in-nī qarībun ujību
da’wata-dā’i izā da’āni fal yastajībū lī walyu-minū bī
la’al-lahum yarshudūn

*“When My servants ask you about Me,
I am truly near. I respond to one’s prayer when they call
upon Me. So let them respond with obedience to Me
and believe in Me, perhaps they will be guided to the
right way.”*

(Quran 2:186)



**DU’A
ACCEPTED**

FASTING NURTURES THE ESSENCE OF GRATITUDE

Fasting teaches Muslims the essence of gratitude. Through this practice, individuals gain a firsthand understanding of the challenges faced by the underprivileged. By temporarily abstaining from food and reflecting on the experience, fasting fosters a profound appreciation for the daily blessings that are often overlooked.

Fasting, therefore, becomes a transformative journey that not only strengthens spiritual resilience but also instils a deep and sincere sense of appreciation for the blessings that might otherwise be taken for granted.



Grateful for my health, my cats, my parents, my friends, my house, my food, my plants, my clothes, my safety, my colleagues, my TV.....



وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

Wa litukmilul-‘id-data walitukab-birul-Lāha ‘alā mā
hadākum wala-‘al-lakum tashkurūn

*“So that you may complete the prescribed period (of
fasting in the month of Ramadhan) and proclaim the
greatness of Allah for guiding you, and perhaps you will
be grateful.”*

(Quran, 2:185)

FASTING CULTIVATES A HIGHER SENSE OF COMPASSION

Especially in Ramadhan, the merits and benefits of charity are multiplied. Muslims who are already generous put in more effort and compassion for their deeds in Ramadhan.

Iftar, the breaking of the Ramadhan fast, transforms communities into vibrant displays of compassion and giving. Muslims share meals with loved ones, neighbours, and even strangers, creating a powerful sense of togetherness and generosity. Foods are shared, donated, and bought for others to break their fast. Sharing Iftar with non-Muslims extends a warm invitation to partake in the joy and blessings of the Ramadhan feast. Muslims view food as a gift from God, and by sharing it, they express their faith's spirit of generosity and community.



THE END OF RAMADHAN EVOKES A MIX OF EMOTIONS

Eid al-Fitr, marking the joyous culmination of Ramadhan, is a time of profound reverence. Muslims express their gratitude to God for the strength and guidance received during the holy month, and seek forgiveness for any shortcomings.

While Eid al-Fitr is celebrated, Muslims experience a mix of emotions. The happiness is felt for the achievement in the fast of Ramadhan; the sadness is felt for the passing of Ramadhan along with the blessings it brought, and in commemorating loved ones who have passed on to offer them supplications.

Did you know?

Besides having a feast to celebrate Eid al-Fitr, Muslims also put on their best clothes, give gifts, spend time with their family, visit relatives, and contribute to charity so that the poor may also celebrate the festival.



THE TAKBIR RECITATION MARKS THE COMPLETION OF RAMADHAN

The takbir during Eid holds great significance in Islam. It is a declaration of the greatness and majesty of God, and is a public expression of joy, gratitude, and the acknowledgement of God's blessings.

Marking the successful completion of a month of fasting, prayer, and self-discipline, the takbir also symbolises unity among the Muslim community, as people come together for Eid prayers and festivities.



EID TAKBIR

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ،
اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ

Allāhu Akbar, Allāhu Akbar, Allāhu Akbar,
Lā ilāha illallāhu wallāhu Akbar,
Allāhu Akbar walillāhil-hamd

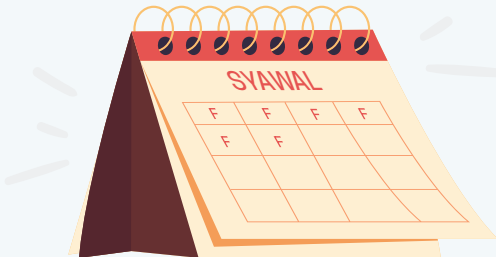
*Allah is the Greatest,
Allah is the Greatest,
Allah is the Greatest,
There is no god but Allah, and Allah is the Greatest,
Allah is the Greatest and all praises be to Allah.*



MUSLIMS ARE ENCOURAGED TO FAST 6 DAYS IN SYAWAL

Following the month of Ramadhan, Muslims engage in the practice of fasting six additional days during the month of Syawal. This tradition is rooted in a Hadith, which suggests that fasting these six days carries the reward equivalent to fasting an entire year. (Muslim)

Fasting the six days of Syawal provides believers with a chance to further solidify their commitment to self-discipline, gratitude, and spiritual reflection, fostering a continuous journey of faith and devotion beyond the holy month of Ramadhan.





BONUS FACT!

BOTH EID AL-FITR AND EID AL-ADHA FOLLOW A PERIOD OF FASTING

Both festive seasons, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha, follow a period of fasting in Islam, however fasting on the 9 days prior to Eid al-Adha is non-obligatory. While Eid al-Fitr marks the conclusion of Ramadhan, Eid al-Adha is linked to the conclusion of the Hajj pilgrimage, where Muslims perform acts of worship and sacrifice in emulation of Prophet Ibrahim's (peace be upon him) obedience and devotion to God.

The fasting and sacrifice during these periods serve as expressions of gratitude, and religious devotion, reinforcing the central tenets of Islam and fostering a sense of shared celebration and spiritual renewal within the Muslim community.





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KNOWING ISLAM SESSION

A BALANCED PERSPECTIVE..

Everyone who wishes to know Islam at an introductory level is encouraged to attend this course. It serves as the basis to other courses at Muslim Converts' Association of Singapore (MCAS). It is open to public & requires no registration.

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About the publisher

The Muslim Converts' Association of Singapore (MCAS) is committed to fostering greater understanding of Islam, bridging individuals from all walks of life, irrespective of language, race, or belief. As a non-profit organization, MCAS upholds the principle of no compulsion in religion, dedicating itself to providing educational opportunities through free lectures, courses, and introductory materials on Islam. These activities reflect Islam's values in dialogue, behavior, and spirit.

For those interested in delving deeper, MCAS offers an extensive collection of Islamic literature at its English Islamic Bookshop. Additionally, the Al-Mawrid Resource Library, open to the public free of charge, provides a wealth of resources on Islam for study and reference.

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(Drop us an email to share your thoughts on the
"45 Fun Facts about Ramadhan and Fasting" book)

This book is suitable for everyone who is curious about the significance of Ramadan, the benefits of fasting, and the reasons behind Muslims fasting throughout the entire month. Ramadan is not merely a season of endurance; rather, it is a season of blessings, gratitude, and forgiveness. Explore and gain a deeper understanding of the blessings that Muslims seek, appreciate, and embrace during Ramadan and in the practice of fasting.



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