

Al-Mi'raj

Special Edition: May-June 2019

Ramadan: An Ocean Of Divine Mercy

Vol. 4, Number 2

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“The month of Ramadan (is that) in which was revealed the Qur’an, guidance for the people and clear proofs and criterion [between right and wrong]” (Al-Qur’an- 2: 185)

“O you who believe! Decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become God-conscious” (Al-Qur’an- 2: 183)

“Had we sent down this Qur’an on a mountain, verily you would have seen it humbled itself and cleave asunder from the fear of Allah. Such are the similitudes which we propound to men that they may reflect” (Al-Quran- 59:21)

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Ramadan: An Ocean Of Divine Mercy

A Comprehensive Guide to Ramadan: Special Edition



Khutbah (Sermon) of the Holy Prophet (saws) about Ramadan

'O you who believe, prescribed for you is the Fast, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that haply you will have taqwa.'

Qur'an 2:183

'A great month, a blessed month, a month containing a night which is better than a thousand months has approached you people. Allah has appointed the observance of fasting during it as an obligatory duty, and the passing of its nights in prayer as a voluntary practice. If someone draws near to Allah during it with some good act he will be like one who fulfills an obligatory duty in another month, and he who fulfills an obligatory duty in it will be like one who fulfills seventy obligatory duties in some other month. It is the month of endurance, and the reward of endurance is paradise. It is the month of sharing with others, and a month in which the believer's provision is increased. If someone gives one who has been fasting something with which to break his fast it will provide forgiveness of his wrong actions and save him from the Fire, and he will have a reward equal to the fasting man's reward without his reward being diminished in any way... Allah gives this reward to anyone who gives one who has been fasting some milk mixed with water, or a date, or a drink of water with which to break his fast, and anyone who gives a full meal to one who has been fasting will be given a drink by Allah and will not thirst until he enters Paradise. It is a month whose beginning is mercy, whose middle is forgiveness, and whose end is freedom from the Fire. If anyone makes things easy for his slave during it, Allah will forgive him and free him from the Fire.' (From a khutba (sermon) given by the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, on the last day of Shaban.)

Reported by Salman al-Farsi (Mishkat al Masabih).

Hadiths about Ramadan

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger as saying: 'Ramadan, a blessed month, has come to you during which Allah has made it obligatory for you to fast. In it the gates of the Garden are opened, the gates of the Fire are locked, and the rebellious Shaytan is chained. In it Allah has a night which is better than a thousand months. He who is deprived of its good indeed suffered deprivation.' Ahmad and Nasa'i transmitted it.

- *Every good deed will be rewarded from ten to seven hundred fold except fasting which is endured for My sake and which I shall reward.'* **Hadith Qudsi, Sahih al-Bukhari**
- *'By Him Who holds my life in His hand the breath of the fasting man's mouth is more fragrant before God and better pleasing to Him than redolent musk.'* **Sahih Muslim**
- *'Paradise has a gate which is called al-Rayyan through which not one shall enter except those who have observed the fast.'* **Sahih al-Bukhari**
- *'Two joys are prepared for him who observes the fast, the joy of breaking the fast and that of meeting his Lord.'* **Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim**

Excerpts from the Book of the Mysteries of Fasting from the *Ihya Ulum -ud-Deen* of **Imam al-Ghazali**

Praise be to Allah who has shown great favor to His servants, Who has frustrated the hopes and plans of Shaytan by making fasting a bulwark and a shield for His friends. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, 'The reward of the fasting man will be generous beyond imagination or estimate.' And so it should be because fasting belongs to Allah and by virtue of this relationship it has been rendered noble. The fast belongs to Allah in two respects. First because it is a form of desisting and relinquishing, in its very nature concealed from human sight, whereas all the other acts of worship are apparent and exposed to it. And secondly because it is a means of vanquishing the enemy of Allah, Shaytan, who works through the appetites and desires. These appetites and desires are increased by eating and drinking. For this reason the Prophet said, 'Shaytan affects the son of Adam by pervading his blood. Let him therefore make this difficult for Shaytan by means of hunger.' For the same reason he told A'isha, 'Persist in knocking on the door of Paradise.' When she asked what she should knock with he replied, 'With hunger.' The excellence of fasting established, what follows is a basic description of the outward and inward conditions for fasting.

Outward conditions for fasting

1. The first outward duty is to watch the beginning of the month of Ramadan and announce it at the observation of the new moon (al-hilal). If clouds make the observation of the new moon impossible then the length of Shaban should be extended to thirty days. By observation we mean actual sighting of the new moon. Anyone who hears a trustworthy witness say that he has seen the new moon and believes him, fasting then becomes incumbent on him.
2. The second outward duty is intention (niyyah). Every night before the dawn of the following day one should specifically and deliberately entertain the intention of fasting. If he should entertain the intention to fast the month of Ramadan but fails to renew his intention every night his fast would not be valid...
3. The third duty is that, as long as he remembers that he is fasting, the individual should abstain from intentionally allowing any material substance such as food, drink, snuff and enema, to enter his body... Whatever enters the body unintentionally, such as dust, or water, during the rinsing of the mouth will not invalidate the fast...
4. The fourth duty is abstinence from sexual intercourse...
5. The fifth duty is abstinence from deliberate seminal emission.
6. The sixth outward duty is abstinence from vomiting. If one cannot help it however, his fast remains intact and valid.

Inward conditions for fasting

- 1. *Refraining from looking at anything disapproved, or anything which occupies the person and distracts him from remembering Allah.*
- 2. *Keeping the tongue free from raving, lying, backbiting, tale-bearing, obscenity, abusive speech, wrangling and hypocrisy.*
- 3. *Closing the ears to every reprehensible thing because everything which is unlawful to utter is also unlawful to hear.*
- 4. *Restraining the limbs from wrong actions as well as avoiding questionable foods at the breaking of the fast.*
- 5. *Not overeating when breaking the fast.*
- 6. *Remaining in a state of suspense between fear and hope after breaking the fast as to whether or not the fast has been accepted by Allah. The fast of the elite among the select few is the fast of the heart from mean thoughts and worldly worries and its complete unconcern with anything but Allah and the Last Day, as well as by concern over this world, except insofar as it promotes the deen (life-transaction), which belongs to the hereafter. Every act of worship is possessed of an outward form and an inner secret, an external husk and internal path. The husks are of different grades and each grade has different layers. It is for you to choose whether to be content with the husk or join the company of the wise and learned.*

The Three Grades of Fasting

- A. The fasting of the general public (sawm al-umum)
- B. The fasting of the select few (sawm al-khusus)
- C. The fasting of the elite among the select few (sawm kusus al-khusus)

The fasting of the general public involves refraining from satisfying the appetites of the stomach and the appetites of sex and is described in the section on Outward conditions. The fasting of the select few is to keep the ears, the eyes, the tongue, and hands, the feet and other senses free from wrong actions.

Practices connected with the Fast

1. Delaying the time of suhur (until near the time of daybreak).
2. Speeding the breaking of the fast by eating dates or drinking water before performing the prayer.
3. Generous giving throughout the month.
4. Special study of the Qur'an.
5. Retreat (i'tikaf) into the mosque, especially during the last ten days of Ramadan (in which the Night of Power, laylat ul-Qadr, falls). The 27th night of Ramadan is most widely observed as the Night of Power throughout the world.

Breaking the Fast: The Iftaar

- *'A human being has not filled any vessel which is worse than a belly. Enough for the son of Adam are some mouthfuls which keep his back straight, but if there is not escape he should fill it a third with food, a third with drink, and leave a third empty.'* *Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah*
- *'Many a one who fasts gets nothing from his fasting but thirst and many a one who prays during the night gets nothing from his night prayers but sleeplessness.'* *Tirmidhi*

The mercy of the fast of Ramadan penetrates all dimensions of man's existence, providing a holistic cure for all that ails him, rejuvenating the body as well as the spirit of man. Breaking the fast by overeating renders both these beneficial effects useless. And breaking the fast with the wrong foods in any amount will debilitate the one who fasts and make his spiritual efforts more difficult. Allah exhorts us in the Qur'an to eat of the purest foods and the practitioners of modern medicine are just beginning to realize the essential wisdom of this command along with the wisdom of the fast itself. The therapeutic effect of fasting is well documented by actual clinical experience both in Europe and in the United States, leading to general acceptance of the principal that fasting is man's oldest and best healing method. And the kind and amount of food with which one breaks the fast to a large extent determines whether the fast is useful... or a waste of time. The main rule in breaking the fast is to remember why you are fasting and what you hope to obtain by it. There are several du'a [supplications] for breaking the fast which call one back to this reality, one of which is:

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate,
 O Allah, for You I have fasted and I have believed in You,
 And have broken my fast on Your bounty and so forgive me
 my past and present wrong actions.
 O Lord of the Worlds.

Bismillahi Rahmani Raheem
 Allahumma laka sumtu wa bika aamantu
 Wa 'alaa rizqika aftartu faghfirlee
 Maa addamtu wa maa akhartu
 Ya rabbil aalamen.

One of the sunnas [practices] of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, is to break the fast as soon as the Adhan [call to prayer] is heard before performing the Maghrib prayer, with a date and some water.

Ramadan Food Guideline

The rule of thumb of the amount of food to be consumed at the evening meal is: it should be no more than is usually eaten at that time. In fact, if it is, the fast is technically invalid. Again one has to review what one's goal in Ramadan is – to bury his head deep into a nose-bag full of food every evening after sunset and snore his nights away or to eat a light but nutritious evening meal and use the precious nights of Ramadan for dhikr [remembrance] and fikr [reflection].



The following is a guideline to the types of food which will enhance the natural purifying effect which the fast already has on the body and which will increase... the one who incorporates them into his diet in energy, clarity and awareness:

1. Use as much as possible pure and organic foods, uncontaminated by artificial flavorings, colors, and preservatives.
2. Avoid eating too much meat too frequently. The Prophet, peace be upon him, ate meat only twice a week. Needless to say it should be halal, but it is also recommended to find a source of free-range animals and to have as close a control as possible over the actual killing.
3. Include lots of vegetables and raw fruits in your diet.
4. Avoid overdoses of starches, particularly excessive amounts of polished white rice – use whole grains when possible and then not too much of them.
5. Avoid too much sugar and substances containing caffeine – they will unbalance the delicate endocrine system of the body.
6. Pay attention to the order in which you eat different foods and the combinations of foods which you eat. The medicine of the Prophet recommends limiting the number of different types of food eaten at one time as much as possible, and latest research has revealed that the reason for this is the stomach's ability to produce different digestive enzymes for different foods. Too many different foods produce confusion.

Foods Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) Loved



GREEN RAMADAN GUIDELINE

“O Children of Adam! Wear your adornment at every place of prayer: eat & drink: but be not excessive, for God does not love those who are excessive.” Al- Qur’an, Surah Al-Aaraf, 7: 31

It is time for us now in this blessed month to commit to act upon Allah's command to avoid wasting food that we throw away, which is sinful. The waste in food is not just the food that we throw away but includes all the resources that goes in to the growth, preparation and delivery of food from the rural farms to our tables and includes the use of land, water, energy, gas, packaging, and other efforts. We have no right to simply throw this food away to rot in landfill sites on the outskirts of our towns!

Food Considerations for Ramadan

Eat healthy food. Avoid processed food as much as possible. Locally-sourced, fresh foods are both good for our internal physical and spiritual environment, as well as the larger physical environment. Estimate properly.

We tend to make more rather than less in these hungry times. Share the bounties of leftover iftar with your visiting friends and family and send them off with 'barakabox'. Eat leftover iftar food for sehri (suhour) the next day. And best yet, plate it up beautifully and distribute it to needy people at the masjid or in your community.

Use Water Wisely

Say, “Have you considered: if your water was to become sunken [into the earth], then who could bring you flowing water?” Al- Qur’an, Surah Al-Mulk, 67:30

- After an entire day of not drinking water (even during these short winter days), one can't help but appreciate the importance of water. Allah (SWT) often speaks of the value of this blessed resource that we are dependent on in several places of the Qur'an. The Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) emphasized the saving of water even whilst using it when it is plentiful. It is reported that Prophet (SAWS) saw Sa'd (RA) performing wudu he said: "What is this? You are wasting water." Sa'd replied: "Can there be wastefulness while performing ablution?" The Prophet (SAWS) replied: "Yes, even if you perform it in a flowing river." (Ibn Maja: 1990: Vol. 1: 147: no.425). So here are some tips, that if made with good intentions, Allah may reward us for our efforts:
- When rinsing out fruit and vegetables, collect the water in a dish. Use it to wash out dirty dishes, mop the floors or even water the plants.
- When waiting for warm water for wudhu, fill up a bucket with the cold water and water the plants, or use it elsewhere

Connect To Your Creator This Ramadan

“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding.” Al- Qur’an, Surah ‘Aali Imran, 3: 190

The plants, the animals, the insects, the microbes, the landscapes and mountains, the rivers and oceans, the skies, the clouds, the stars, the sun are all the creations of Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) talks of these Ayaat, these signs, frequently in the Holy Qura'n. Surahs are named after natural elements like An-Nahl, The Bee, Ash-Shams, The Sun, Al-Layl, The Night. Allah (SWT) often takes oaths with various natural elements. Allah (SWT) repeatedly reminds us that these creations are created, owned and controlled by Him, and that they glorify Him and are a means of reflecting His Greatness.

The seerah of our Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) is also rich with the relationship he had with creation. His initial reflection on there being only one Creator was rooted in the time he spent contemplating the universe in the deserts. We know that the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) was an advocate for not wasting resources, for keeping our environment clean, for planting trees and not cutting them down, for stressing the reward in treating animals kindly and the sin involved in ill-treating them.

Ramadan presents the perfect opportunity to connect spiritually with our Creator by contemplating on His creations as well as the chance to gain extra reward by doing "green" actions. Here are some simple green-spirit household ideas:

- Ramadan is the month of the Qur'an. Identify the verses related to nature and environment (Green verses) while reading your daily Qur'an and ponder on their meanings. Attend Tarawih prayer and listen attentively.
- Make abundant Dhikr Allah. The best Dhikr is La Ilaha Illal-lah. The time between Fajr prayer and sunrise and the time between Asr and Maghrib prayers is especially good for hearts in receiving Divine lights and blessings of spiritual purification.
- Children love animals. Get your children, younger siblings, cousins and family members involved in sharing some of the nature-Ramadan spirit like feeding birds or ducks. Remind them that it pleases Allah (SWT).

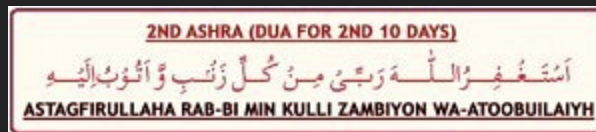
- Plant a tree or shrub in your yard. Name it "Our Ramadan Tree". Kids will love it and ask them to guess how big it will be by next Ramadan, Insha-Allah. Keep track of its growth throughout the year and Insha Allah the green spirit and Ramadan fever will be kept alive for the whole year. Alternatively, plant pot plants for your kitchen windowsill. Flowers or herbs – something to remind you to be thankful to Allah (SWT) and marvel at His creation. Read Qur'an or do Dhikr

Du'as

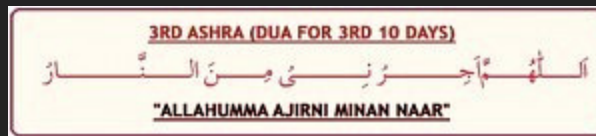
- Du'a for the First Ashra of Ramadan: First Ten Days of Ramadhan are the days of Mercy and every Muslim must seek the mercy of Almighty Allah in these days.



- Translation:** "O the Living, O the Eternal, I seek help in Your mercy."
- Du'a for the Second Ashra of Ramadan: Second Ashra of Ramadhan consists of the second ten days; it is the time of forgiveness. These are the days of forgiveness and a Muslim must seek for the forgiveness from Almighty Allah and repent for all his sins.



- Translation:** "I ask forgiveness of my sins from Allah who is my Lord and I turn towards Him."
- Middle Ashra of month of Ramadhan is a time for Maghfirah. The second Ashra is a time where the forgiveness of Almighty Allah is at its peak, and this is the best time for asking about forgiveness for all the sins from Almighty Allah. Always ask for forgiveness from Almighty Allah in all these days. Do make sure to not repeat the sins after you have done Tauba. Do Tauba as many times as possible, because Allah Almighty loves Tauba during this period and forgives the one who seeks for his forgiveness. Forgive all your beloved in these days as Allah Almighty loves Maghfirah.
- Du'a for the Third Ashra of Ramadan: In the end Ramadhan is about seeking Refuge in Almighty Allah from Hellfire. And everyone must pray that "O Almighty Allah, save me from the fire of Hell".



- Translation:** "O Allah! Save me from the fire."
- The last ten days of Ramadhan are third Ashra and are very superior and important as the Laylatul Qadr also falls in the last Ashra. Most of the Muslims also practice Itikaf in the last ten days. A Muslim must not waste the last ten nights of Ashra and work hard in worshipping Almighty Allah. The best way for practicing Itikaf is one on which a person stays in the mosque and seeks pardon from Almighty Allah for all his sins. Allah Alone Knows Best and He is the Only Source of Strength.

Ramadan Fact Sheet: For Healthcare Providers

• What is Islamic Fasting?

Islam is the second largest religion in the world. Within the US, it is one of the largest practiced religions. During the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims fast between dawn and sunset. This includes no eating, drinking, smoking, intimate sexual relations and taking oral medications. Ramadan is a time of spiritual reflection, increased devotion and worship by abstaining from sinful speech and behavior and purifying heart from evils of self-worship to God worship. The act of fasting aims to redirect the heart away from worldly activities, its purpose being to cleanse the soul by freeing it from harmful impurities. It makes one to become more God conscious and to be helpful to the needy and underprivileged

• Who must Fast?

It is obligatory on all adult Muslims who are healthy (and who are not exempt due to any permissible reason) to fast for the month of Ramadan. Ramadan began this year on May 17, 2018 and will end on June 16, 2018 (subject to moon sighting)

- **Who is exempt from Fasting?**

1. The Quran exempts people, who are unable to fast due to illness, old age or being very weak.
2. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding and or menstruating.
3. Fasting is not permitted for Lactating women who are concerned about their own or their Child's health.
4. Traveler

*Despite these exemption some prefer to fast due to the spiritual blessings of the Holy month.

- **What makes the fast broken or void?**

Eating or drinking intentionally, Oral and nasal medication (that reaches throat, Stomach, intestine or a cavity) ,Smoking, Rectal pessaries, Gastrostomy and Jejunostomy

- **What does not break the Fast?**

Injections (intravenous, intramuscular, intracardiac, intra osseous, intradermal and subcutaneous), Blood taken (thumbric or intravenous), Eye and ear drops, Eating and drinking forgetfully, Vaginal pessaries, urethral infusion, transdermal patch, concentrated oxygen and epidural analgesia

- **Patient's Concern?**

Patient's concern and choice should be respected and advise should be offered on medical grounds. Appointment times should be adjusted outside the prayer times and after the ending of fast time. Arrangement of breaking fast and a prayer space should be provided

Ramadan Fast and Prayer Schedules: These schedules are available from local mosques IHH (ISRA's Healing Hearts) is a community project of ISRA:

Website: www.israinternational.com Email: israinternational@yahoo.com

ISRA as movement to revive the totality of Deen

ISRA is a movement that began in the United States. It is working to revive the totality of Deen. Our vision is based on the famous Hadith of Jibreel (AS). [Sahih Muslim]. As explained by the Prophet (saws) in this Hadith, Deen is based on the affirmation that Allah (swt) is One, Muhammad (saws) is His final Prophet and the religion of Islam has three dimensions, Al- Islam (Fiqh), Al- Iman (Aqidah) and Al- Ihsaan (Tazkiyyah-Tasawwuf). We promote the love of Allah (swt) and the love of Rasool Allah (saws) as ways of purifying one's heart from objects other than Allah and strive for sincerity in worship. For more than 1200 years Islam was able to create a long lasting glorious civilization based on the three dimensions of Deen.

This vision or Ihsanic tradition was mainly manifested through what is known as Tasawwuf (Tazkiyyah). Its emphasis was making one's heart and soul pure and beautiful so that beauty and sincerity will arise from within. The tradition has taken many names and forms but always remained as an integral part of Islamic mainstream practice and an inseparable ingredient of the vibrant Islamic civilization of the past 1200 years.

It is only with the emergence of reform movements during the past 200 years or so, some of which deviated from this vision, the Islamic civilization got a jolt, gradual decline and disintegration giving birth to rise of sectarianism, hatred, violence, fanaticism and an immense crisis of a gross misunderstanding of Islam. Islam during this time was gradually reduced to a one or two dimensional sectarian or political ideology now leading to the emergence of Takfiri groups perpetrating most nefarious acts of gross violation of human rights and the noble Islamic values, resulting in most savage violence and acts of terrorism.

One of the greatest tragedies of these reformist versions was the rejection of the Ihsanic tradition of Tasawwuf, thus doing away with 1/3rd of religion and the birth of a rude and fanatic interpretation causing a worldwide anti Islam sentiment and enmity. Ihsanic Tasawwuf was the binding glue of this glorious Islamic civilization. Its loss has caused the Ummah to a perpetual state of mass suffering, conflicts, killings oppression, unbounded violence, and complete disregard of basic human values and rights. In fact, the largest refugee group now consists of Muslims,

Observing this unbearable and pitiable situation ISRA wants to restore totality of Deen. It wants to revive the Ihsanic vision of Islam. It wants to promote the intense love of Allah (swt) and the love of Prophet Muhammad (saws) as motivation of true and sincere Ibadah and purification of the soul. It aims to create and promote true appreciation, love and respect for Ahl al Bayth, Sahaba, the Awliya Allah and the Saliheen as role models of the Prophetic Sunnah. It wants to promote Dhikr Allah and Salawaat 'Ala Rasool Allah as means of achieving intense love of Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saws).

ISRA Newsletter invites you to connect with the Holy Qur'an this Ramadan and reflect upon our collective situation as an ummah and join with ISRA in its humble efforts to restore the lost pillar of Al-Ihsaan paving the way for reviving the totality of Deen. Ramadan Mubarak. Contact us at: Israinternational@yahoo.com

Get Involved: Join ISRA website's Volunteer Team of Faith Connectors! Contact ISRA at: israinternational@yahoo.com

Want to have more meaning in your life? Do you want to do something that is satisfying and of great service to your community? Then become an ISRA Website volunteer. Volunteers are needed from the community to maintain and expand the internationally growing website. The only qualification required is your desire to help the cause of Allah. As Allah says in the Holy Qur'an "And cooperate in righteousness and God consciousness" (Sura 5 V: 2)

Technical Volunteers: Familiarity with Graphics, templates, or databases, will be a helpful resource for our website

Non-Technical Volunteers: It's about content. Volunteers needed to write blog posts announcements, or other content. Help us with your news, views, articles, photos, translations etc.

About ISRA: A movement for the spiritual revival of Islam

ISRA was founded by the Grace of Allah in 1987 as a think tank. It was revived in 1998 as a movement and an organization to present Islam as a Deen (religion) based upon the principles of Islam (Fiqh), Iman (Aqidah) and Ihsan (Tasawwuf or Tazkiyyah) as outlined in the famous Hadith of Jibreel Alayhis Salaam



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