



## Glory of Bharath » INDICA

### Ramzan



Ramzan is the ninth month according to Islamic Lunar calendar. Ramzan (written as Ramadan) is derived from the Arabic root word 'ramida' or 'arramad' that means intense scorching heat and dryness, especially of the ground. Ramadan is so called to indicate the heating sensation in the stomach as a result of thirst. Others said it is so called because Ramadan scorches out the sins as it burns the ground. Some said it is so called because the hearts and souls are more readily receptive to the admonition and remembrance of Allah during Ramadan, as the sand and stones are receptive to the sun's heat.

Ramadan begins after the month of Shaban, after the new moon has been sighted. In case new moon is not sighted then after 30 days of Shaban, Ramadan begins. The month of Ramadan lasts for 29 or 30 days depending on the sighting of the moon. If the moon is sighted on the night of 29<sup>th</sup> fast then the month of Shawwal begins from tomorrow and Ramadan is over. The 1st of Shawwal is the Eid also know as Eid-ul-fitr to distinguish it from Eid-ul-azha (Bakri Eid).

Ramadan is the month in which the Quran was revealed. The Quran clearly says "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may learn piety and righteousness". Fasting is to be done by all able bodied men and women and children who have reached puberty. A person who is sick or has some medical reason, or if a woman is pregnant then they are waived from fasting.

During Ramadan the people who fast are not allowed to eat or drink anything (including water) from dawn to after sunset. Also one has to restrain other body parts, which may render the fast worthless despite the main factor of hunger and thirst; so the tongue, for instance, must avoid backbiting, slander, and lies; the eyes should avoid looking into things considered by the Lawgiver as unlawful; the ears must stop from listening to conversation, words, songs, and lyrics that spoil the spirit of fasting; and finally restraining of the heart, and mind from indulging, themselves in other things besides zikr or Allah (remembrance of Allah).



Also when one is fasting and feels hunger and thirst he has to remember other people in the world who do not have food and water. Charity is one of the extremely recommended acts during fasting. Muslims are required to give minimum of 2.5% of their annual savings as charity to poor and needy people. Also there are various sayings of the prophet (pbuh) where he has said that any charity made in Ramadan is multiplied up to 70 times. If some people are poor and cannot afford to give money then even a smile is an act of charity.

In recent years lot of research has been done about the medical benefits of Ramadan. The physiological effect of fasting includes lowering of blood sugar, lowering of cholesterol and lowering of the systolic blood pressure. In fact, Ramadan fasting would be an ideal recommendation for treatment of mild to moderate, stable, non-insulin diabetes, obesity and essential hypertension. There are psychological effects of fasting as

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well. There is a peace and tranquility for those who fast during the month of Ramadan. Personal hostility is at a minimum, and the crime rate decreases. Muslims take advice from the Prophet who said, "If one slanders you or aggresses against you, say I am fasting." This psychological improvement could be related to better stabilization of blood glucose during fasting as hypoglycemia after eating, aggravates behavior changes. There is a beneficial effect of extra prayer at night. This not only helps with better utilization of food but also helps in output. There are 10 extra calories output for each rikat of the prayer. Again, we do not do prayers for exercise, but a mild movement of the joints with extra calorie utilization is a better form of exercise. Similarly, recitation of the Quran not only produces a tranquility of heart and mind, but improves the memory.

### Beginning of Ramadan

Hil?l (the crescent) is typically a day (or more) after the astronomical new moon. Since the new moon indicates the beginning of the new month, Muslims can usually safely estimate the beginning of Ramadan. [15] However, to many Muslims, this is not in accordance with authenticated Hadiths stating that visual confirmation per region is recommended. The consistent variations of a day have existed since the time of Muhammad.[16]



### Practices during Ramadan

#### Fasting

Ramadan is a time of spiritual reflection, improvement and increased devotion and worship. Muslims are expected to put more effort into following the teachings of Islam. The fast (sawm) begins at dawn and ends at sunset. In addition to abstaining from eating and drinking, Muslims also increase restraint, such as abstaining from sexual relations and generally sinful speech and behavior. The act of fasting is said to redirect the heart away from worldly activities, its purpose being to cleanse the soul by freeing it from harmful impurities.

Ramadan also teaches Muslims how to better practice self-discipline, self-control, sacrifice, and empathy for those who are less fortunate; thus encouraging actions of generosity and compulsory charity (zakat). It becomes compulsory for Muslims to start fasting when they reach puberty, so long as they are healthy, sane and have no disabilities or illnesses. Exemptions to fasting are travel, menstruation, illness, older age, pregnancy, and breast-feeding. However, many Muslims with medical conditions insist on fasting to satisfy their spiritual needs, and healthcare professionals must work with their patients to reach common ground. Professionals should closely monitor individuals who decide to persist with fasting.

While fasting is not considered compulsory in childhood, many children endeavour to complete as many fasts as possible as practice for later life. Those who are unable to fast are obliged to make up for it. According to the Quran, those ill or traveling (musaafir) are exempt from obligation, but still must make up the days missed later on.

#### Suhoor

Each day before dawn, Muslims observe a pre-fast meal called Suhoor. Considering the high diversity of the global Muslim community (ummah), it is impossible to describe typical suhoor or iftaar meals. It can be anything halal-from dinner or iftaar leftovers to typical breakfast foods to various ethnic food preferences. A few dates and a cup of water are usually the first foods to break the fast, while fried pastries, salads, nuts, legumes, and breads are also common. After stopping a short time before dawn, Muslims hasten to pray the first prayer of the day, the Fajr prayer.

#### Iftar

At sunset, families hasten for the fast-breaking meal known as Iftar. Suhur can be dinner, or iftaar, leftovers, typical breakfast foods, or ethnic foods. Social gatherings, many times buffet style, at iftaar are frequent, and traditional dishes are often highlighted. A few dates and a cup of water are usually the first foods to break the fast, while fried pastries, salads, nuts, legumes, and breads are common. Traditional desserts are often unavoidable, especially those made only during Ramadan. Water is usually the beverage of choice, but juice and milk are also consumed. Soft drinks and caffeinated beverages are consumed to a lesser extent.

Over time, iftaar has grown into banquet festivals. This is a time of fellowship with families, friends and surrounding communities, but may also occupy larger spaces at masjid or banquet halls for 100 or more diners. For many around the world, iftaar starts with the eating of one or more (usually three) dates - as Muhammad used to do. Following that, Muslims adjourn for the Maghrib prayer, the fourth of the five daily prayers, after which the main meal is served.

#### Charity

Charity is very important in Islam, and even more so during Ramadan. Zakat, often translated as "the poor-rate", is obligatory as one of the pillars of Islam; a fixed percentage required to be given by those with savings. Sadaqa is voluntary charity in given above and beyond what is required from the obligation of

zakat. In Islam all good deeds are more handsomely rewarded in Ramadan than in any other month of the year. Consequently, many will choose this time to give a larger portion, if not all, of the zakat for which they are obligated to give. In addition, many will also use this time to give a larger portion of sadaqa in order to maximize the reward that will await them on the Day of Judgment.

### **Increased prayer and recitation of the Quran**

In addition to fasting, Muslims are encouraged to read the entire Quran. Some Muslims perform the recitation of the entire Quran by means of special prayers, called Tarawih. These voluntary prayers are held in the mosques every night of the month, during which a whole section of the Quran is recited. Therefore, the entire Quran would be completed at the end of the month. Although, it is not required to read the whole Quran in the Salat al Tarawih prayers, it is common.

### **Laylat al-Qadr**

Sometimes referred to as "the night of power" or "the night of decree", Laylat al-Qadr is considered the most holy night of the year. This is the night in which Muslims believe the first revelation of the Quran was sent down to Muhammad stating that this night was "better than one thousand months [of proper worship], as stated in Chapter 97:3 of the Qu'ran. Also, generally, Laylat al-Qadr is believed to have occurred on an odd-numbered night during the last 10 days of Ramadan, i.e., either the night of the 21<sup>st</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Eid ul-Fitr - End of Ramadan**

The Muslim holiday of Eid ul-Fitr ("festivity of breaking the fast"), sometimes spelled in English as Eid ul-Fitr, marks the end of Ramadan and the beginning of the next lunar month called Shawwal in Arabic. This first day of the following month is declared after another crescent new moon has been sighted or the completion of 30 days of fasting if no visual sighting is possible due to weather conditions. This first day of Shawwal is called Eid ul-Fitr. Eid ul-Fitr may also be a reference towards the festive nature of having endured the month of fasting successfully and returning to the more natural disposition (fitra) of being able to eat, drink and resume intimacy with spouses during the day.