



My OPEN IFTAR

2022

ramadan guide

A GUIDE TO
THE BLESSED
MONTH OF
RAMADAN

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord and Creator of the worlds. We return to Him, in repentance, asking for guidance in total reliance. We ask Him to send salutations upon Muhammad ﷺ, his Family, and Companions. Ameen!

'O you who believe, fasting is prescribed upon you as it was prescribed to those before you so that you may be God-conscious.' 2:183

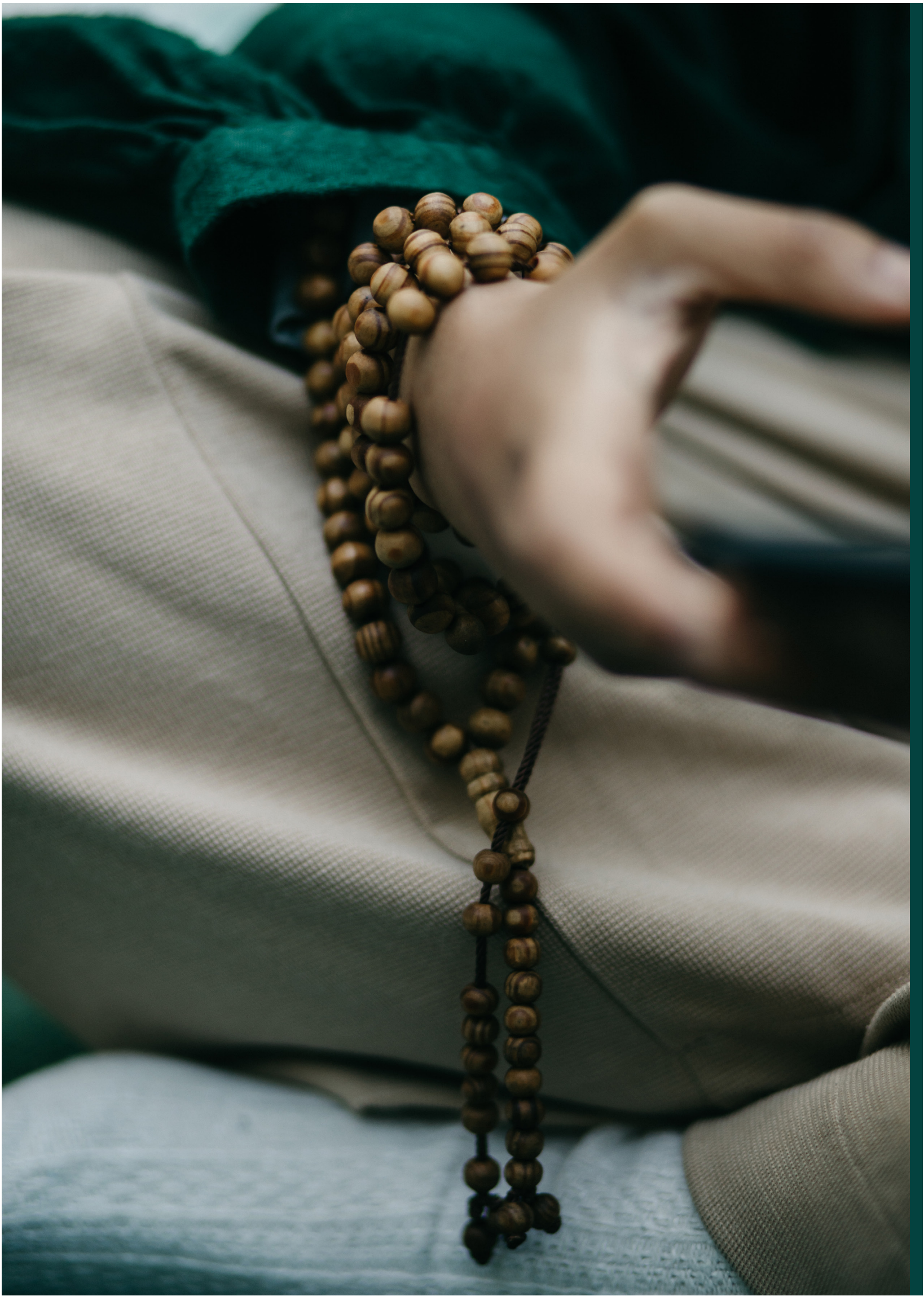
Fasting in it is one of the five pillars of the Islamic faith. These pillars, in total, include:

- Testifying that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad ﷺ is His bondsman and messenger (Shahada)
- The establishment of prayer (Salah)
- Payment of the annual-poor rate (Zakah)
- Pilgrimage to the House of Allah in Makkah (Hajj)
- The fasting of Ramadan. (Saum)

Ramadan is the ninth of the 12th-month Islamic lunar calendar. (9:36) The Quran was revealed in this blessed month and fasting prescribed therein. (2:185)

The blessings and benefits in doing so abound. This month is blessed with great benefit for both this world and the next. It is the month of the Quran, prayer, remembrance, reflection and coming together for a common purpose. Fasting in Ramadan induces the esprit de corp and sincerity needed in the community to reassess the purpose of our existence.

As there is no higher goal than Allah and no reward outside of His pleasure for fasting the report remind us, according to Abu Hurayrah (r.a.) who narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"Indeed your Lord said: 'Every good deed is rewarded with ten of the same up to seven hundred times over, except for fasting. Fasting is for Me, and I shall reward it.'*** (Al-Tirmidhi)



The Prophet ﷺ said: "None of you will believe until you love for your brother what you love for yourself." (Bukhari and Muslim) Despite the difference we face this year, we can still reflect, improve, pray, share and show compassion from a healthy distance. We need to encourage family, friends, and elders outside of our immediate reach to mutually engage through digital platforms. We remember our sick and comfort them while maintaining personal responsibility for the overall public health. **The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Two supplications have no barrier between them and Allah: the supplication of the oppressed, and the supplication of a man for his brother behind his back." (Mujam al-kabir)** Thus, while we may not be permitted to see those who suffer from COVID-19 directly, our dua for them from a distance is actually accepted, mahallah! Also, just because we do not feel sick does not mean we are not causing others to be sick! In another narration, the Prophet ﷺ said, **"Until he loves for his neighbour what he loves for himself." (Sahih al-Bukhari and Muslim)** In another narration, The Messenger of Allah, ﷺ said, **"Gabriel kept advising me to be good to neighbours until I thought he would make them my heirs." (Ibn Majah)** The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, **"He is not a believer who spends the night satiated while the neighbour to his side is hungry." (Al-Mustadrak)** Our neighbours are both Muslim and Non-Muslim, thus, it is a matter of faith for us to be both cautious, considerate, and compassionate regarding the times we live in and with all those whom we encounter (or don't?), inshallah!

The Prophet ﷺ encouraged us to be charitable stating that **'charity is a light/proof' (Muslim)** due to the testification of faith it entails (you put your money where your mouth is!) and is a practical interaction with Allah (people only sacrifice what they love!). Charity is not just spending one's wealth. Rather, one can be charitable through his peacefulness, goodly speech, and respect for others. Allah rewards us for all these various modes of charity. The first people to benefit

from our charitable nature should be the members of our household. The obligation we meet to spend on our families is a given. The charity intended here is above and beyond the minimum. Rather, in this Ramadan, and hopefully onward, we hope to learn to go the extra mile with those closest to us! Often times families complain of a lack of connection to one another in the West, being charitable with one another in our homes helps bring the hearts together. Charity in the home brings two rewards: 1) the charity itself, 2) the bond attained between one another. **He ﷺ said "Exchange gifts as that will lead to increasing your love for one another." (Al-Bukhari)** With all this time together now that the lockdown has provided us we have plenty of time to practice, insha'Allah!

The distribution of charity (sadaqah) and the obligatory poor-rate (zakah) should be careful in maintaining the social distance advice mentioned above. In fact, it is recommended that these services and distribution be facilitated online as much as possible. Otherwise, workers in centralized entities charged with these responsibilities should avoid crowds and pay special mind to the cycle of exchange (collecting, packaging, storing, and distribution) that are likely to occur.

It is encouraged to exercise in Ramadan as it is any time of the year. We should maintain distance and proper hand hygiene during these activities as well. In lieu of outside activity, we may also exercise inside following online workout classes as well! Even if we are eating far less (hopefully!) we are encouraged to eat a variety of fresh and unprocessed foods along with plenty of water.

Tobacco use is always ill-advised. Smokers tend to acquire reduced lung capacity and disease, both particular dangerous COVID-19 wise. Those who smoke and use water pipes tend to touch their lips often (and share mouthpieces and hoses as well, in the latter case), heightening the transmission of the virus to their respiratory system.

Can A Non-Muslim Fast?

The Ramadan fast is an exercise in humility. Fasting makes us experientially aware of hunger, day after day. We have to practice patience with ourselves. We have to practice patience (and even restraint!) with others as well. Our own commitments are tested. There is also a measure of sobriety in store for us regarding our willingness to step out of our comfort zones in it. There is nothing inherently religious about these aspects of the fast. There is something innately communal about it, though. If a non-Muslim chooses to fast in Ramadan their commitment to peace and understanding co-existence with Muslims is not just a theory! Likewise, Muslims who help facilitate the fast of a non-Muslim is sharing from the most core aspects of their faith with their neighbours. This is not a good deed. Rather, this is a responsibility!

Ramadan's Commencement and Duration

Ramadan begins by the ocular sighting of the new crescent moon on the sunset of the twenty-ninth of Shaban. If the crescent is sighted, the month begins. If it is not sighted then the month of Shaban is completed with thirty days. (Al-Bukhari and Muslim). Shawwal, on the other side of Ramadan is established in the same manner. The criterion for establishing both is the ocular sighting of the new crescent moon. If an astronomical calculation negates the possibility of seeing the new crescent moon, the physical eye sighting is negated. If the astronomical calculations determine ocular sighting and impossibility, then eye-witness testimony is not accepted due to the science indicating otherwise. Thus, the commencement and duration of the months is not globally synchronized. This is due to the sighting conditions that vary throughout the world. Thus, the call for unity during these days is a call to understanding varying circumstances and perspectives.

Who is Obligated to Fast?

Every Muslim who has reached puberty is sane, and capable must fast during Ramadan. The conditions of the obligation are that one must have good health, not be travelling, and free from a preventative like menses and post-natal bleeding. If one is excused from fasting must make up the days missed once the excuse ends. If one is chronically ill, thus incapable of making up the days missed must pay the compensation (fidya) for it. The compensation payment is 510g of food to one who is destitute for each of the days one is unable to fast. (2:184)

How is a Muslim's Fast Valid?

For a Muslim's fast to be religiously valid they must be sane, pure from menstruation and post-natal bleeding. They must also fast on the correct days. Thus, days like the feast of the fast breaking (Yaum ul-fitr) (commonly called Eid al-fitr) and the feast of sacrifice (Yaum al-adha, commonly called Eid al-adha) and the three days of tashriq i.e. the three days following the feast of sacrifice are not allowed.

What are the Basic Components of the Fast?

One must have an intention to fast. One refrains from eating, drinking, and intercourse from entrance of the morning (subh) prayer until sunset. One also abstains from that which nullifies the fast. The nullifiers include intercourse, ejaculation, induced vomit, menstruation, post-natal-bleeding, an episode of insanity, and apostasy. Likewise one should not smoke, take medicine or chew gum. No substance should enter through any bodily orifice.

Can One Break Their Fast?

One may break the fast if one finds that their old age or chronic illness does not comply with fasting. However, all must pay the compensation mentioned above. Likewise, it is valid to do so for one experiencing excessive hardship in a temporary illness, hunger or thirst that leads to harm, or an occupation that disables one's ability to fast that cannot be postponed during Ramadan. One who is pregnant or nursing may also allow one to break their fast as her condition is similar to that of an ill person. If one is travelling (at least 83km) for legal purposes whether difficult or not may break their fast. Likewise, one may break their fast to save another's life. However, all the people in this category must make the days up.

In a special case, if a pregnant woman fears for her unborn child, as opposed to herself, she may refrain from fasting but must both make up the days and pay the compensation mentioned above.

If a fast is broken without a legitimate reason, it is obligatory to make the days up after the end of Ramadan. Alternatively, depending on the reason, one may be required to fast for two consecutive months or feed 60 poor people. There is no expiation for refraining from fasting without a valid excuse outside of sincere repentance. ***The Prophet ﷺ has been***

reported to have said: "Whoever refrains from fasting a day of Ramadan without an excuse or cause of illness, cannot make up for it by fasting a lifetime, even were he to do so. (Al-Bukhari)

How Can I Embellish My Fast?

It is desirable to eat the pre-dawn meal (suhur) prior to the entrance of the morning prayer as there is a blessing in it. (Abu Dawud) The fast should be broken quickly once the sunset prayer (Maghrib) has entered. (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) It is also praiseworthy to supplicate while fasting or when breaking it (iftar) with ripe dates it for the supplication of a fasting person is never rejected, inshallah. (Al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Ahmad) It is desirable to refrain from that which is spiritually incompatible with fasting as well. Abu Hurayra (r.a.) narrated that: 'Allah has no need for the abstinence of food and drink from one who does not refrain from lying and calumny. (Al-Bukhari)

Why Break Fast with Dates?

Outside of the prophetic habit established to do so, dates are perfect for breaking one's fast! They are high in sugar, fibre, minerals, phytonutrients, and vitamin C. They provide potassium, magnesium, iron, and amounts of quick protein, nutrients and fat. They are easily digested. After a long day of fasting, they help regulate one's glucose levels again. Even when not fasting dates tend to stave off hunger such that when one is able to eat they do not overindulge. When not fasting, consumption of dates before a meal will satisfy the sensation of hunger, which in turn helps to avoid overeating.

What Are Some Etiquettes of Fasting?

Fasting is also more than just abstaining from eating, drinking and sexual relations. It helps us discipline ourselves. It enables our souls to gain the upper hand over the rest of our person. This helps us to draw closer to Allah. During the fast, we try to avoid all major and minor sins. Otherwise, avoiding this approach causes Ramadan to be not much more than self-inflicted hunger and thirst for a month!

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Fasting is a shield. One observing fasting should avoid sexual relations and should not behave foolishly and impudently, and if somebody quarrels with him or abuses him, he should tell him twice, 'I am fasting.'" The Prophet ﷺ added, "By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, the smell coming from the mouth of a fasting person is better in the sight of Allah than the smell of musk. 'He has left his food, drink and desires for My sake. The fast is for Me. So I will reward it and the reward of good deeds is multiplied ten times.'" (Muslim)

There are many indications that one's fast has been accepted, inshallah! These signs include:

- Appreciating Allah's grace for the month of fasting and hope in Allah for its acceptance, mentioning Him often! The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *"Allah says, 'I am as My slave thinks I am, and I am with him when he mentions Me. If he makes mention of Me to himself, I make mention of him to Myself; and if he makes mention of Me in an assembly, I make mention of him in an assembly better than it. And if he draws to Me a hand-span length, I draw near to him a forearm's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him in a hurry.'" (Ibn Majah)*
- The heart becomes further connected to Allah and to everything that draws close to Him.
- Openness to the various doors of temporal and eternal good throughout the day.
- Closedness to the various doors of evil leading to harm in both this world and the next.
- The same vigilant energy toward acts of worship established in Ramadan is maintained afterwards.
- Maintaining distance from the sins repented from in Ramadan. ***But indeed, I am the Perpetual Forgiver of whoever repents and believes and does righteousness and then continues in guidance. 20:82***
- According to Ibn Rajab, fasting the six days of Shawwal are included among the signs of acceptance for Ramadan's fast! This is because, according to him, when Allah accepts one's good deed, He enables him to perform another one after it!

What are the Benefits of Fasting the Six Days of Shawwal After Ramadan?

It is recommended, after Eid, to fast six days in the month following Ramadan, called 'Shawwal, consecutively.' One may also do so intermittently throughout the month as well. To do either is like fasting the entire year! (6:160, Muslim) If one has missed fasting during Ramadan, however, should make them up prior to these six days. If one failed to fast without an excuse, they must make up their unperformed fast immediately after Eid. (Majmu' Sharh al-Muhadhab)

What Are Some Of The Meritorious Non-Obligatory Acts Associated With Ramadan?

Covid 19 has curbed the ability to perform some of the praiseworthy actions associated with Ramadan like the spiritual retreat (itikaf) in the mosque. However, completion of the Quran's recitation (khatm al-Quran), praying tarawih, standing in prayer at night (qiyam al-layl), and especially in the last ten days of Ramadan searching for the Night of the Decree (Laylatul qadr) are quite possible, al hamdu lillah!

Is There A Special Benefit in Completing a Quran Recitation During Ramadan?

It is a prophetic habit (sunnah) to supplicate once a recitation of the Quran's has been completed. According to a report, the supplication made at the completion of the Book is answered, (Majmu sharh mudadhab) and that mercy descends at that time. (Al-Tibyan fi Hamila al-Quran). Anas (r.a.) reported that whenever he was to complete a recitation of the Quran he would call the members of his household to take part in the concluding supplication. (Sunan al-Darimi) Thus, Even if one is incapable of fasting they may certainly take part in these supplications as well.

What is the Relationship Between Praying at Night, Tarawih, and The Night of the Decree?

It is generally praiseworthy to spend one's nights in worship. (See 3:15-17, 25:64,75-76, 32:16-17) We know that the Prophet ﷺ was so accustomed to doing so that his feet cracked. When asked why he did so, considering Allah had already forgiven him he responded: *'Should I not be a grateful slave?'* (Al-Bukhari) Thus, the soul of the night vigils, especially in the last part of the night (i.e. Tahajjud, see 17:79), is a deep sense of thankfulness. Again, there are reports indicating that there is a time in the night

wherein supplications are accepted! (Muslim)

The virtue of taking up this prophetic habit during the nights of Ramadan is further accentuated by a prophetic report to search for the Night of Power within the month's odd nights in the last ten days. (Bukhari, Ahmad and At-Tabarani) Among the reasons for being called the Night of Power are because it is the blessed night (44:3) in which the destiny of the creatures is revealed (44:4) The Quran was revealed in it (97:1, and supplication are accepted! (Majmu' lugha al-fuqaha)

During the time of the second caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (r.a.) night vigil was prayed together behind an imam. Thus, since then the night vigil prayer, done together in the mosque wherein a portion of Quran is read each night until completed within the Ramadan (however, during Covid 19 perhaps better in one's home) or 'Tarawih' has been accepted as a confirmed sunnah. It is not an obligation. It is generally considered to be composed of twenty cycles (rakaat) with ten salams excluding the witr. This includes five periods of rest, with one period after each four cycles and two salams. The scholars who hold the Tarawih prayer to be less than twenty refer to the prayer fulfilling the sunnah of the night vigil occurring in both Ramadan and outside of it.

What is 'Zakatul Fitr'?

Every responsible Muslim male must pay approximately £5 before Eid ul fitr as provided by males for their the dependents when they have that which is beyond their needs for the evening before it. One may give more than the minimal requirement, the extra considered charity (sadaqah). They may give it to one or more individuals, the preference given to the most in need. (9:60) Zakatul fitr makes up for the minor offences committed throughout the month and to help the poor celebrate the joy of Eid! (Al-Daraqutni)

How Do We Celebrate Eid During Covid 19?

The Prophet ﷺ said, *'Every nation has its day of celebration, and this is our day of celebration.'* (Al-Bukhari) Considering the difference of opinion on the issue in these unprecedented times, alongside the need to maintain the performance of Eid, the sense of joyous celebration, and a show of gratitude to Allah individuals are permitted and encouraged to perform the Eid prayer in their homes. The two sermons after the Eid prayer, separated by an interval are from the prophetic habit and thus not an obligation. We are recommended to continue our normal Eid habits to the extent that we are able. Thus, taking a bath, wearing one's best clothing, applying fragrances, maintaining family ties, and making the effort to make the day memorable for children are important!

We are recommended to continue our normal Eid habits to the extent that we are able. Thus, taking a bath, wearing one's best clothing, applying fragrances, maintaining family ties, and making the effort to make the day memorable for children are important! With the proper etiquettes observed, Allah is more likely to accept our supplications (dua).

Etiquettes of Dua:

- Performing ablution (wudu). (Sahih al-Bukhari, Muslim)
- Trusting in Allah with certainty that the supplication will be answered. (15:21, Muslim, Ahmad, At-Tirmidhi)
- Acknowledgement of one's sins and mistakes. (Sahih al-Bukhari)
- Supplicate for all matters. (2:201-202, At-Tirmidhi)
- Persistent supplication without haste or abandonment. (Muslim, and Sahih al-Jami)
- Supplicate in both hardship and ease. (At-Tirmidhi)
- Supplicate abundantly. (Muntakhab Adh Ibn Humayd, Ibn Hibban)
- Thanking Allah, and praising Him. Then sending benedictions (salawat) on the Prophet (ﷺ) in the beginning and in the end of the supplications. (Ahmad, Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi)
- Requesting from Him through His Names and Attributes. (7:180, Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi)
- Lifting the hands. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Ahmad, Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah)
- Facing the Qiblah while supplicating. (Sahih al-Bukhari)
- Supplicate with a moderate voice. (37:55, 37:205, Sahih al-Bukhari), with presence of heart (At-Tirmidhi, al-Hakim, Ahmad) while asking Allah alone. (14:37, 12:86, At-Tirmidhi)
- Supplicate for all Muslims. (Qur'an 47:19, Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi)
- Supplicate for yourself and then others. (Sahih At-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, an-Nasa'i, and Sahih al-Jami) and not against oneself, family, wealth and children. (Muslim, Abu Dawud)
- Do not supplicate for sinful things nor to break family ties. [Ahmad]
- Supplicate while in conformity with the Sacred Law (al-Bukhari, Muslim) not having abandoned its obligations, (At-Tirmidhi) performing good actions and asking Allah through them. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Muslim)
- Repeat the supplication three times. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Muslim, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasai and al-Hakim, Sahih al-Jami)
- End the supplication with: 'Ameen' (Qur'an 47:19, Sahih al-Bukhari, At-Tabarani)

Any Muslim's supplication that does not include sin or the severance of family ties will receive one of three responses:

- He will answer the supplication swiftly.
- He will save it for the Hereafter.
- He will avert something bad on par with the value of the supplication. (At-Tirmidhi)



Glossary

Suhur (Suhūr) comes from the Arabic “s.h.r.” indicating one’s wakefulness or vigilance at night. Suhūr is eaten in the last part of the night in vigilant anticipation for the night to break.

Iftar (Iftār) comes from the Arabic “f.t.r.”. Al-fatrah, for example, means to be broken or weak. Thus, iftār means to literally break something. In this case, it is to break one’s period of abstention from that which is prohibited whilst fasting.

Ramadan (Ramadhān) comes from the Arabic “r.m.d.” Ar-Ramad points to the heat’s intensity. The root also means rock, or sand, ironically. The Prophet used to pray the supererogatory Dhuha, when a young camel would find the sand (al-ramdhān) had heated up after sunrise. The term ramadha is also a verb for ones having fasted because its effects burn away sins!

Zakah (Zakāh) comes from the Arabic “z.k.a.” point to meanings indicating both augmentation and purification. When one manages to pay the annual poor-rate (zakah) for example, they both increase and cleanse their wealth simultaneously.

Eid (‘Ayd) comes from the Arabic “‘a.w.d.” meaning to return. While the term is commonly used to indicate a festival or celebration, its literal implications invoke the idea of returning back. In a sense, Eid is a celebration to remind us of the ultimate celebration upon return to Allah!

Tarawih (Tarāwih) comes from the Arabic “r.w.d.” The word “rawh” indicates the idea of relaxation. Thus, while formally a non-obligatory prayer performed at night during Ramadan, consisting of twenty or so cycles of prayer, the term comes from the rest periods occurring therein referred to as “tarwīha.”



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