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Ramadhan and Eid-ul-Fitr

Ramadhan

Ramadhan is the:

- 9th Month in the Islamic Lunar calendar
- most meritorious month of the whole year

Philosophy of Ramadhan

The Holy Quran has told us that the basic objective for which man is created by Allah is that he "worships" Him : *"And I did not create Jinn and human beings except that they should worship Me."*

The word used by the Holy Quran for the worship is "Ibadah", which has a much wider sense than "worship".

The month of Ramadhan has been designed to maintain a balance between material and spiritual aspects of the human life. This month is meant to maximize the direct acts of ibadah and to maximize the pure mundane activities, so that one may accelerate his spiritual progress to make up the distance and to repair the spiritual loss one may have suffered through his deep involvement in the mundane activities during the year. The days of Ramadhan are designed to keep fast which is an act of ibadah for the whole day, and depriving oneself from any material food for many hours, it lessens the bad spiritual effects, if any, of the material pleasures. The nights of Ramadhan, on the other hand, are spent in offering Tarawih and waking up for tahajjud and suhoor, reducing the time of one's sleep much less than in the normal days. The rewards of the virtuous acts in this month has been multiplied, to encourage the Muslims to the maximum possible acts of ibaadah.

Merits of Ramadhan

It contains a night far better than one thousand months (Laila tul Qadr).

It is a month where Allah has made it obligatory to fast. It is commendable to stand up praying in its nights.

An optional act of worship (nafl) in this month has the same reward as an obligatory worship (fard) in other days. Performing an obligatory (fard) act of worship will carry as much reward as the reward of performing seventy obligatory acts of worship in other days. It is a month of patience and the reward of patience is Jannah (paradise).

It is a month of sympathy. A month in which the provision for a believer is increased. If someone provides another person with food to make Iftar, it will cause forgiveness to his sins and freeing his neck from hell and he will be awarded the same thawab as the fasting person will be rewarded for his fast, without decreasing his own thawab.

The first part of this month is mercy from Allah. The middle part of this month is forgiveness from Allah.

The last part of this month is liberation from hell. In this month, you should do four acts frequently: bear witness that there is no God but Allah seek forgiveness from Allah pray to Allah to give you the Jannah seek refuge to Allah from the Fire. It is a month of divine blessing. It is a month of purification, to purify one's soul and heart. It is an opportunity to strengthen one's Imaan. Show Allah the best of deeds from your side, because unfortunate is the person who deprives himself from Allah's mercy in this month.

Glossary of words:

Ibadah:	Worship with a much wider sense.
Nafal:	Optional worship
Fard:	Obligatory worship
Faraid:	Plural of Fard
Thawab:	Reward for performing good deeds
Tahajjud:	Nightly prayer
Dhikr:	Remembrance of Allah
Suhoor:	Eating before the fast begins
Iftar:	Eating at the conclusion of the fast.
Salah:	Prayer
Sadaqa:	Charity
Shariah:	Islamic Laws
Niyyah:	Intentions
Qada:	Making up the worship at a later time.
Kaffara:	Penalty
Makrooh:	Disliked
Miswak:	A tooth brush from a branch of a tree.
Janabah:	Major impurity
Ghusl:	Shower
Jannah:	Paradise
Jahannam:	Hell
Zakat:	Obligatory charity
Jihaad:	Struggle
Khutbah:	Sermon

The above list of words appear quite frequently in Islamic literature. It would be helpful to memorize these words.

Characteristic honors for Muslims in Ramadhan

The smell coming out from the mouth of a fasting person is better with Allah than the smell of musk. Fish (in the water) keep praying to Allah to forgive the fasting persons until they make Iftar. Every day, Allah decorates the

Jannah and addresses it saying 'It is not too far that my righteous servants shall throw away the burdens (of the worldly life) and shall proceed towards you . Rebellious satans are shackled in this month. In the last night of this month, the fasting persons are granted amnesty.

How to Spend Ramadhan

Among other things, one should carry out the following with due care : To offer every prayer in congregation in a mosque. To rise up a little earlier than the exact time of Suhoor and offer the salah of Tahajjud. Recitation of Holy Quran should be done as much as possible. Dhikr or Tasbeeh, throughout the day. Prayers and supplications - as much as one can.A Muslim should give as much money in Sadaqah (charity) as he can afford.

What should be avoided in Ramadhan

Although the sinful acts are totally prohibited in Shariah, whether in Ramadhan or at any other time, but their prohibition becomes even more severe in this month. If a Muslim continues to commit sins in Ramadhan, it will be a mockery to avoid lawful things and yet be engaged in unlawful acts never allowed in Shariah.
Specially the following acts should be avoided totally:
1. Telling a lie.
2. Backbiting
3. Quarrelling
4. Eating unlawful things
5. Earning through unlawful means.
6. Any act which may harm a person without a valid cause.
In short, one should try his best to refrain from all kinds of sins, and protect his eyes, ears, tongue and all other organs from indulging in an unlawful activity.

Rules of fasting

"Fast" means "to refrain from eating, drinking and having sexual intercourse throughout the day, right from the break of dawn up to sunset, with a clear intention of seeking the pleasure of Allah". It is necessary that there should be an intention which is called the "Niyyah".

Acts nullifying the fast

Acts nullifying the fast are of two kinds
1. Acts which make one liable to both qada and kaffara, namely :
(a) Eating something
(b) Drinking something
(c) Having sexual intercourse.
These three acts are liable to kaffarah when they are committed deliberately after one has started a fast, provided that the person committing them knows that they render the fast broken. In such cases, both qada and kaffarah are obligatory on him. Qada means to keep another fast in lieu of the broken one. And kaffarah means to perform an act to expiate the sin of having broken the fast.
Kaffarah may be given in the following three ways :
(a) freeing a slave
(b) fasting for two months constantly without a break
(c) giving food to sixty persons

2. Acts which do not make the relevant person liable to kaffarah (means penalty for breaking the fast) only Qada (means making up of the missed Ibadah) is obligatory :
(a) Eating or drinking unintentionally.
(b) Dropping medicine or anything else in the nose and ear.
(c) Smoking
(d) Emission of semen while touching, kissing or caressing a woman.
(e) Eating or drinking under the wrong impression that dawn has not yet broken, or the sun has set, while otherwise was true.

Acts rendering the fast makrooh

(a) Chewing something or tasting it with the tongue without eating it.
(b) Using tooth paste or tooth powder. However, cleaning teeth with a miswak or a brush is allowed.
(c) Remaining in the state of Janabah (major impurity) for the whole day.
(d) Giving blood to anyone.
(e) Quarreling with someone or abusing him.
(f) Gheebah i.e. to abuse or to blame someone in his absence.
(g) Telling a lie.

Acts which are allowed

(a) Cleaning teeth using a miswak or a brush and ear with cotton swabs
(b) Applying oil or henna to hair
(c) Using eye-drops or kohl (surma/kajal).
(d) Wearing perfume
(e) Taking a shower
(f) Vomiting unintentionally
(g) Entrance of smoke or dust into the throat unintentionally
(h) Ejaculation while dreaming
(i) Delaying the ghusl of janabah until after suhoor.

Concession of Fasting:

Following individuals are allowed to skip fasting during Ramadhan and compensate it by fasting on some other days.
(a) A sick person, whose disease renders him unable to fast or fasting may worsen his disease.
(b) A pregnant women
(c) A breastfeeding women
(d) A traveler

Fasting is prohibited for menstruating women. These women must make up their missed fasting.

Suhoor

Suhoor is the meal one takes in the last hours of the night before commencement of a fast. It is a sunnah to have Suhoor. If someone has no appetite at that time, it is advisable for him to have something light. Even by having a few sips of water the sunnah of suhoor can be fulfilled.

Iftar

Iftar means to conclude a fast after sunset by eating or drinking something. It si also sunnah to make iftar soon after sunset, and it is makrooh to delay Iftar after sunset without a valid excuse. However, if someone is doubtful if the sun has set or not, he should not make iftar until he is sure about it, because if it proved at any time that he made iftar even half a minute earlier than the sunset actually took place on his horizon, his fast will be rendered nullified and void.
(dua)

Tarawih

Another important feature of the month of Ramadhan is Tarawih. It is a special

salh (prayer) consisting of 20 rakat which is performed immediately after Isha prayer. This Salah is Sunna Mu`akkadah (repeatedly emphasized) and should not be missed. It is sunnah to complete the recitation of the whole Quran in Tarawih in Ramadhan.

LailatulQadr

One of the most meritous aspects of the month of Ramdhan is that it contains LailatulQadr, the most blessed night of the year. It is a night better than a thousand months. The authentic traditions mention that, in this night, Allah Almighty directs His special mercy towards the people of the Earth, accepts the supplications made by His slaves and forgives a large number of people who repent and pray.

LailatulQadr falls in on eof the last five odd nights of Ramadhan i.e. 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th and 29th. The purpose of this alternation is that one should spend all five nights in worship and prayers, so that he may find lailatulqadr with certainty.

No special form of worship is prescribed in this night. The night should be spent by offering as nafl prayers as one can offer, in recitation of the Holy Quran, in dhikr and Tasbeeh, in supplications and in making sadaqah (charity).

The follwoing Dua can be recited in this night :

Allahumma innaka `afuwwan tuhibbul `afwa f`afu `anni

Allah, You are surely most forgiving and You like forgiving, so forgive me.

I`tikaf

Another unique form of worship in this month is i`tikaf, in which a person gives up all his activities, abandons his attachments, associations and routines and enters the mosque for a specific period. IN i`tikafd one leaves his home and family and undertakes to remain in the mosque for a limited period. It has been declared as Sunnah in the last ten days o f Ramadhan, because Ramadhan is the most suitable time to carry out this worship.

Extracted from the book : Islamic Months (by Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani).

Fasting In Quran:

Al-Baqara (The Cow)

2:183 O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint,-

Al-Baqara (The Cow)

2:184 (Fasting) for a fixed number of days; but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed number (Should be made up) from days later. For those who can do it (With hardship), is a ransom, the feeding of one that is indigent. But he that will give more, of his own free will,- it is better for him. And it is better for you that ye fast, if ye only knew.

Al-Baqara (The Cow)

2:185 Ramadhan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (Between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting, but if any one is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (Should be made up) by days later. Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put to difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful.

Al-Baqara (The Cow)

2:187 Permitted to you, on the night of the fasts, is the approach to your wives. They are your garments and ye are their garments. Allah knoweth what ye used to do secretly among yourselves; but He turned to you and forgave you; so now associate with them, and seek what Allah Hath ordained for you, and eat and drink, until the white thread of dawn appear to you distinct from its black thread; then complete your fast Till the night appears; but do not associate with your wives while ye are in retreat in the mosques. Those are Limits (set by) Allah. Approach not nigh thereto. Thus doth Allah make clear His Signs to men: that they may learn self-restraint.

Fasting in Hadiths:

Salman, Radi-Allahu anhu, reports, "On the last day of Shaban Rasulullah (Sala Allahu alayhi wa sallam) addressed us and said, 'O people there comes over you now a great month, a most blessed month in which lies a night more greater in virtue than a thousand months. It is a month in which Allah has made Fasting compulsory by day. And has made sunnah the Taraweeh by night. Whosoever intends drawing near to Allah by performing any virtuous deed, for such person shall be the reward like the one who had performed a farad in any other time. And whoever performs a farad, shall be blessed with the reward of seventy faraa-idh in any other time.

This is indeed the month of patience, and the reward for true patience is Jannah (paradise). It is the month of sympathy with one's fellowmen. It is the month wherein a true believer's rizq is increased. Whosoever feeds another who fasted, in order to break the fast at sunset, for the feeder there shall be forgiveness of sins and emancipation from the fire of Jahannam (hell), and for such feeder shall be the same reward as the one who Fasted (who he fed) without that persons reward being decreased in the least."

Thereupon we said, "O messenger of Allah, not all of us possess the means whereby we can give a fasting person to break his fast Rasulullah (Sala Allahu alayhi wa sallam) replied, "Allah grants the same reward to the one who gives a fasting person to break the fast a mere date, or a drink of water, or a sip of milk."

"This is a month, the first of which brings Allah's mercy, the middle of which brings His forgiveness and the last of which brings emancipation from the fire of Jahan-nam."

"Whosoever lessens the burden of his servants (bonds-men) in this month, Allah will forgive him and free him from the fire of Jahannam."

"And in this month four things you should continue to perform in great number, two of which shall be to please your Lord, while the other two shall be

those without which you cannot do. Those which shall be to please your Lord, are that you should in great quantity bear witness that there is no deity to worship except Allah (i.e. recite the Kalimah Tayyibah Laa llaaha illallaah) and make much Istighfaar beg Allah's forgiveness with Astagirfirul-laah)." And as for those without which you cannot do, you should beg of Allah, entrance into paradise and ask refuge in Him from Jahannam."
"And whoever gave a person who fasted water to drink, Allah shall grant that giver to drink from

Assalamu Alakium
Dear Readers!
Based on Lunar sighting, this year Ramadhan is expected to begin after July 18th 2012. Please contact the Islamic Center nearest you to find out the exact date or call (734)665-6772

EID Ul Fitar - Celebration of the End of Ramadhan

Anas (ra), a companion of prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) reported that when the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) migrated from Makkah to Madinah, the people of Madinah used to have two festivals. On those two days they had carnivals and festivity. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) asked the Ansaar (the Muslims of Madinah) about it. They replied that before Islam they used to have carnivals on those two joyous days. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) told them: 'Instead of those two days, Allah has appointed two other days which are better, the days of Eid-al-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha.' (Hadith)

EID-UL-FITR is celebrated on the first day of Shaw'waal, at the completion of Ramadan. Shaw'waal is the 10th month of the Islamic calendar. The Eid-al-Fitr is a very joyous day; it is a true Thanksgiving Day for the believing men and women. On this day Muslims show their real joy for the health, strength and the opportunities of life, which Allah has given to them to fulfill their obligation of fasting and other good deeds during the blessed month of Ramadan.

Sunnah of Eid

- Wake up early.
- Prepare for personal cleanliness, take care of details of clothing, etc.
- Take a Ghusl (bath) after Fajr.
- Brush your teeth.
- Dress up, putting on best clothes available, whether new or cleaned old ones.
- Use perfume (men only).
- Have breakfast on Eid-al-Fitr before leaving for prayer ground. On Eid-al-Adha, eat breakfast after Salaat or after sacrifice if you are doing a sacrifice.
- Pay Zakaat-al-Fitr before Salaat-al-Eid (on Eid-al-Fitr).
- Go to prayer ground early.
- Offer Salaat-al-Eid in congregation in an open place except when whether is not permitting like rain, snow, etc.
- Use two separate route to and from the prayer ground.
- Recite the following Takbir on the way to Salaat and until the beginning of Salaat-al-Eid:

Takbir is a follows:
"Allaho-Akber, Allaho-Akber. La ila-ha ill-lal-lah. Allaho-Akber, Allaho-Akber. Wa-lilahill hamd.

(Allah is great, Allah is great. There is no god but Allah. Allah is great, Allah is great. And all praises are for Allah).

How to offer Eid prayer:
Ibn Abbass (ra) reported: " I participated in the Eid-ul-Fitr prayer with the Messenger of Allah (saw), Abu Bakr (ra), Umar (ra) and Uthman (ra), and all of them held Eid prayer before Khutbah, and then the Prophet Muhammad (saw) delivered the Khutbah (sermon)." (*Muslim*)

Who should go to the prayer ground & offer Eid Prayer:
Umm Atiyah (ra) reported: "The Messenger of Allah (saw) commanded us to bring out on Eid-al-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha, young women, hijab-observing adult women and the menstruating women. The menstruating women stayed out of actual Salaat but participated in good deeds and Duaa (supplication). I (Umm Atiyah) said to the Holy Prophet (saw): Oh! Messenger of Allah, one does not have an outer garment. He replied: Let her sister cover her with her garment."
(Muslim)

On the Eid day, every believing man, woman and child must go to the prayer ground and participate in this joyous occasion.

Structure of Eid prayer:
Eid prayer is wajib (strongly recommended, just short of obligatory). It consists of two Rakaat (units) with six or thirteen additional Takbirs. It must be offered in congregation. The prayer is followed by the Khutbah. The Khutbah is part of the worship and listening to it is Sunnah. During the Khutbah, the Imam must remind the community about its responsibilities and obligations towards Allah, fellow Muslims and the fellow human beings. The Imam must encourage the Muslims to do good and ward off evil. The Muslim community must also be directed to the state of the community and the Ummah at large and the feelings of sacrifice and Jihaad should be aroused in the community. At the conclusion of the prayer the Muslims should convey greetings to each other, give reasonable gifts to the youngsters and visit each other at their homes. Muslims should also take this opportunity to invite their non-Muslims neighbors, co-workers, classmates and business acquaintances to Eid festivities to expose them to Islam and Muslim culture.