

*Arabic text translates as: In the Name of Allâh,
the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful*

Ramadan

رمضان

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Prepared by

Shell Middle East & North Africa Network

Diversity & Inclusivness



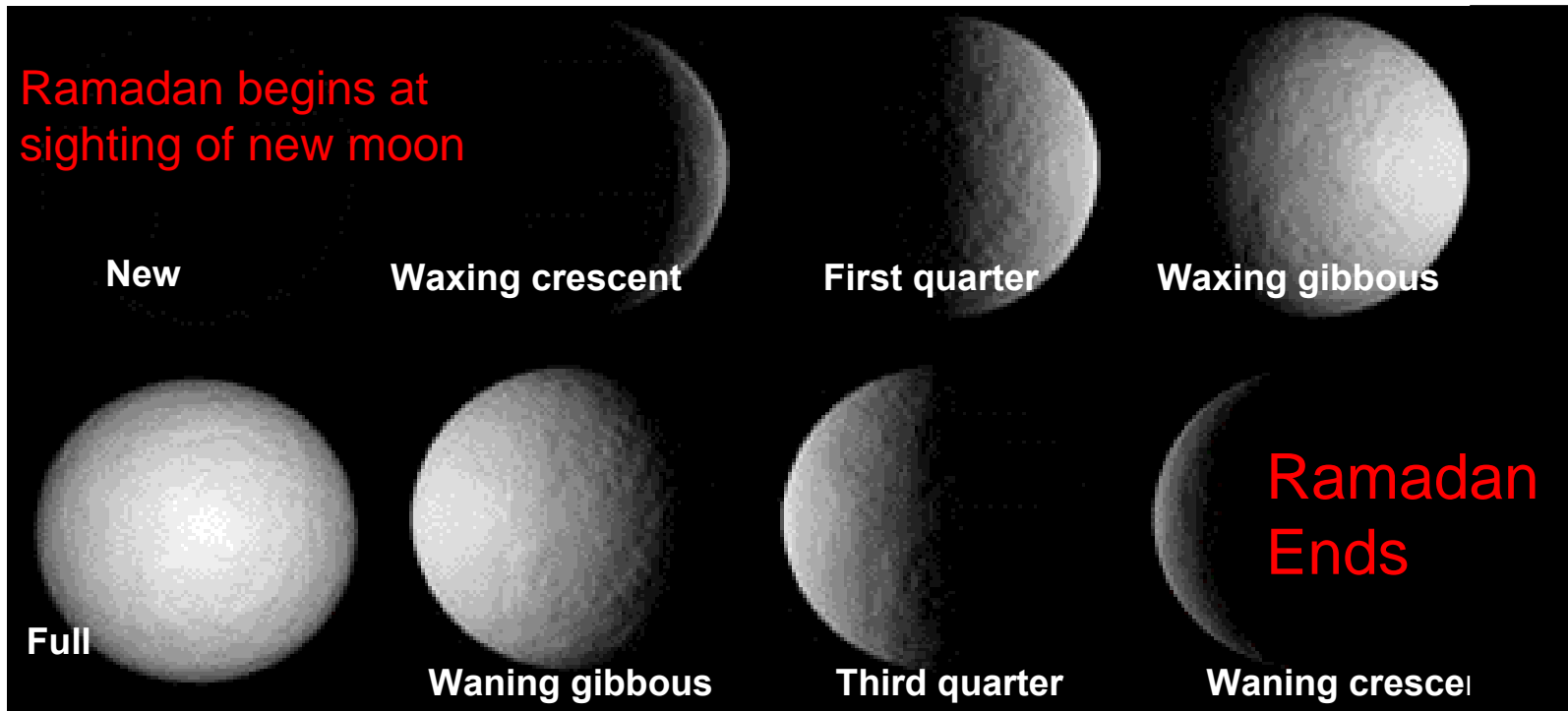
Ramadan

- What is Ramadan?
- The significance of Ramadan?
- Fasting: What is it? Who fasts? Why?
- Typical Ramadan Activities.
- Eid-ul-Fitr: Marking the End of Ramadan.
- Working with Muslim Colleagues.
- Travelling to Muslim Countries.
- Conclusions.



What is Ramadan?

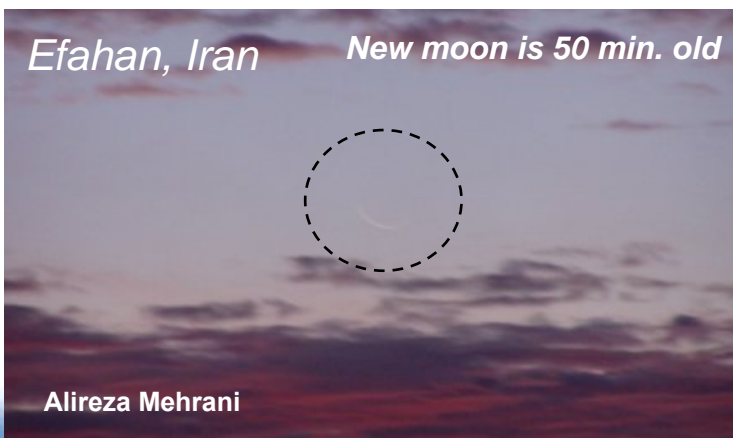
- Ninth month of the Hijri calendar (Lunar calendar)
- Ramadan is an Arabic word; its root “Ar-Ramad” means “dryness/heat.”



- The Lunar calendar is 11-12 days shorter than Gregorian calendar... therefore, Ramadan is 10-11 days earlier every year.

Can You Spot the New Moon?

Start of Ramadan could differ from location to another depending on ability to sight the moon.



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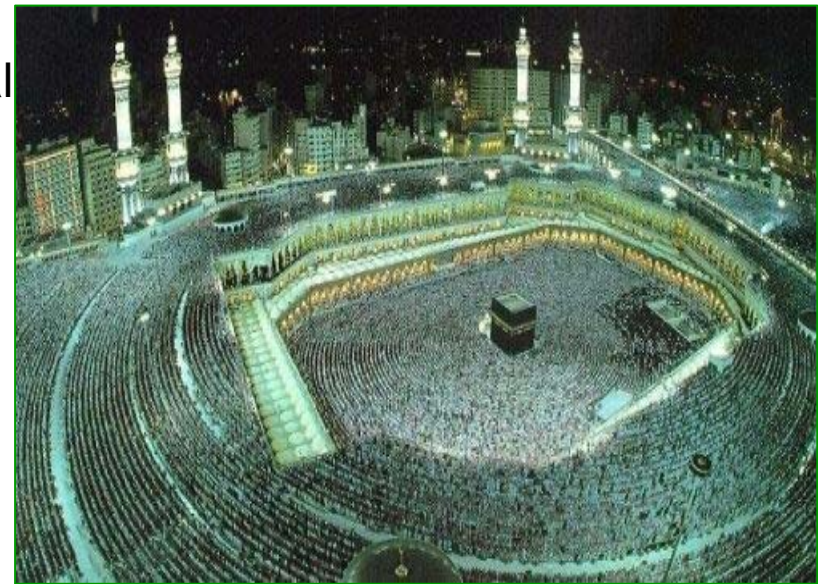
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The Significance of Ramadan

Ramadan is the 4th of the 5 pillars of Islam

1. *Shahadah* - Declaration of faith
2. *Salah* - Daily (5) prayers
3. *Zakat* - Purification of wealth (2.5% of annual savings go to the poor) Zakah is an Arabic word, root “zaka” means to grow, to increase, or to be pure in heart.
4. *Siyam* - Fasting during Ramadan is obligatory to all adult Muslims except those who are exempt.
5. *Hajj*- Pilgrimage to Makkah - obligatory once in a lifetime for those who are physically and financially able.

Indeed, the month of Ramadan is when the Qura'n has been revealed, a guidance for mankind and a reference to the way and righteousness



Ramadan evening prayer at the Holy Mosque, Makkah, Saudi Arabia





The Significance of Ramadan

- Month in which the Qur'an (the holy book of Islam) was revealed.
- Special month of: Fasting, Repentance, Increased prayer, Increased charity.
- Ends with the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr: Day of celebration and gratitude.



Fasting - Why?

Primary objective:

- To attain *taqwa* “God consciousness“/ self-discipline Taqwa is an Arabic word that comes from the root “wiqaya” which means prevention/protection

Spiritual objectives/benefits:

1. Helps Muslims draw closer to God through increased recitation and reflection of the Qur’an and additional prayers/worship.
2. Aids in increase of *iman* (faith) and *ihsan* (sincerity and righteousness) and removal of *riyya’* (showing off).
3. Aids in purification of the heart/soul and helps to improve one’s character.
4. Trains the person to do praiseworthy acts e.g. charity, kindness, generosity, patience and forgiveness.

Fasting - What is it?

Fasting begins at the break of dawn and ends at sunset

1. Physical Aspect:

- Refrain from food, drink and intimacy during fasting hours
Depending on location and season, it can vary from 12hrs to 17 hrs.

2. Spiritual Aspect:

- Refrain from blameworthy thoughts and acts e.g. foul language, vain talk, hurtful behaviour, during all hours

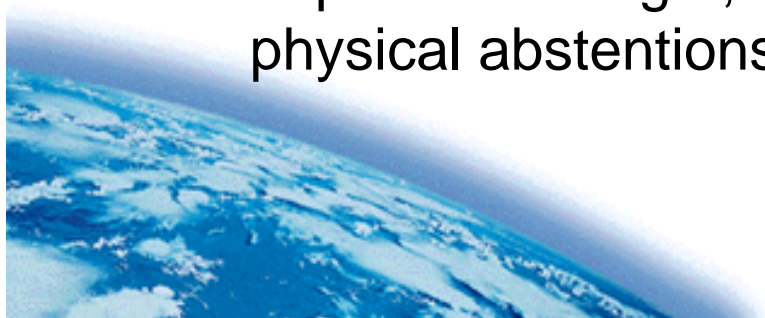
Who fasts?

- All Muslims **except**: children, unhealthy adults (mentally or physically), adults travelling long distances, and women who are menstruating, in post-childbirth care, pregnant or breast-feeding.

Fasting - Why?

Physical Objectives/benefits:

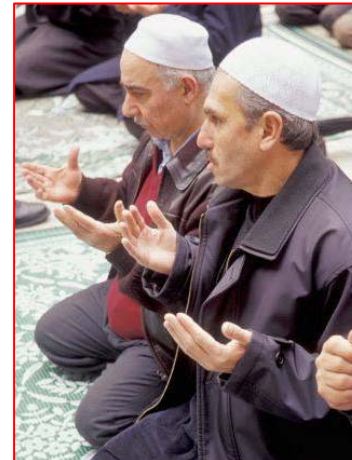
1. A fasting person experiences some of the hardships of the poor and hungry.
2. Physiological effects include lowering of blood sugar, cholesterol and systolic blood pressure.
3. Improves strength, endurance and self-discipline through physical abstentions.



The (typical) Activities of Ramadan

- **Sahoor**: Meal before dawn and the first prayer of the day.
- **Iftar**: breaking of the fast at Sunset (coincides with the 4th daily prayer).
- **Ziarat**: Social gatherings e.g. visiting relatives, sharing food with neighbours, friends, and the poor.
- **Tarawih**: Optional Prayers at early night (20-21hrs*)
- **Qiraat**: Reading of the Qur'ān during free time.
- **Qiam**: Optional late-night prayers in the last 10 days (02-04hrs*).

** for 2005 only*



Eid-ul-Fitr: Marking the End of Ramadan

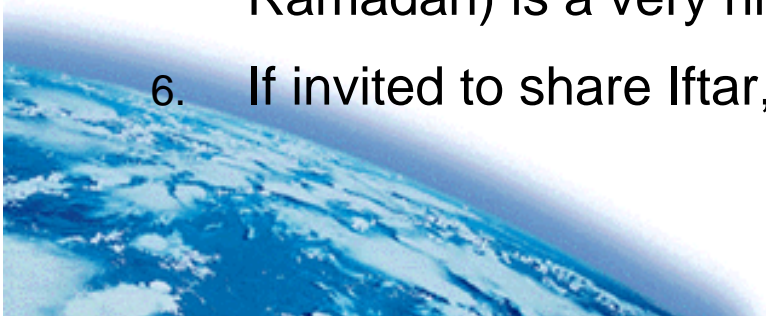
- Eid-ul Fitr: The feast marking end of Ramadan.
- Zakat-ul Fitr: A prescribed amount of money obligatory on every Muslim, calculated to feed one poor person in his region for one day.
- Eid activities include:
 - Eid prayer in the early morning.
 - Visiting family, friends, neighbours, the sick, elderly etc.
 - Enjoying festive meals.
 - Modest gift-giving especially to children.
 - **The greeting on that day is: Eid Mubarak**



Working with Muslim colleagues

Ramadan Etiquette

1. Try to avoid the following for your Muslim colleagues:
 - meetings which include lunch
 - meetings extending after 5 p.m.
 - department parties (or social events) during Ramadan.
2. Be understanding that it is the most special month in a Muslim's calendar.
3. It is common to take vacation during the last week of Ramadan.
4. Eid Day is off, especially for those with family.
5. Greeting colleagues saying: "Ramadan Mubarak" (Blessed Ramadan) is a very nice way to cross into a new culture.
6. If invited to share Iftar, try to make it... it will be fun!



Travel (to/from) and Working in Muslim Countries

- **Holiday jams** (to Muslim countries) begin < a week before end of Ramadan till three days after Eid.
- **Congestion** occurs **on flights** to and from the Gulf area during 2nd half of Ramadan (people visiting Makkah).
- **Traffic jams** are common before iftar... sometimes grid-locked,
- **Working hours** in some companies end earlier during Ramadan; Please plan accordingly!
- Being in a Muslim country during Ramadan is a great experience... There should not be any worries.



Conclusions

- Ramadan is a month of fasting.
- Physical abstentions and intensification of acts of worship are a means towards attaining the spiritual objectives of self purification and improvement.
- Essentially a month of training used to discipline/prepare oneself for the remainder of the year.

During the Month of Ramadan

- Be considerate of and supportive to the Muslims around you

Ramadan Mubarak TO ALL!