



The M.A.I. Institute
Live the Best Life... for Both Worlds

'Perfecting Your Fast'

- part of the 'Perfecting Your Deen' Series

Resource Guide (V1.2 Edited 01/04/21)

This resource is prepared for, and accompanies a series of seminars conducted in various masjid in the lead up to Ramadan, 2021, and is part of a series titled 'Perfecting Your Deen'. It serves to answer the question - As a Muslim, what do you need to know to do the right thing, and get the most out of this holy month?

WHY FAST?

Fasting is commanded by Almighty Allah on every Muslim.

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

BENEFITS OF FASTING

There are many benefits to be derived from fasting – physical, mental and spiritual. The Holy Quran tells us about fasting “...**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.” (Quran 2:185)

We are also told in *ahadith*:

Abu Huraira (r.a.) reported Allah's Messenger (pbh) as saying: Allah the Exalted and Majestic said: Every act of the son of Adam is for him, except fasting. **It is (exclusively) meant for Me and I (alone) will reward it. Fasting is a shield...** By Him, in Whose Hand is the life of Muhammad, the breath of the observer of fast is sweeter to Allah on the Day of judgment than the fragrance of musk. The one who fasts has two (occasions) of joy, one when he breaks the fast he is glad with the breaking of (the fast) and one when he meets his Lord he is glad with his fast. (Sahih Muslim Book 35, Number 2566)

Abu Huraira (r.a.) reported Allah's Messenger (pbh) as saying: **Every (good) deed of the son of Adam would be multiplied, a good deed receiving a tenfold to seven hundredfold reward.** Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, has said: With the exception of fasting, for **it is done for Me and I will give a reward for it, for one abandons his passion and food for My sake.** There are two occasions of joy for one who fasts, joy when he breaks it, and joy when he meets his Lord, and the breath (of an observer of fast) is sweeter to Allah than the fragrance of musk. (Sahih Muslim Book

WHO MUST FAST?

Fasting is enjoined on every Muslim male and female who

- is adult (having attained the age of puberty),
- sane,
- not travelling long distances,
- who are not sick, chronically ill or elderly,
- and women who are not experiencing:
 - menstruation,
 - post-natal bleeding or
 - those who are breastfeeding.

(Quran 2:184-185; Sahih Muslim Book 35, Hadith No. 2470; Sunan Ibn Majah, Book 9, Hadith No's 1668, 1670)

Benefits cont'd

35, Number 2567).

Abu Huraira (r.a.) reported Allah's Messenger (pbh) as saying: “When there comes the month of Ramadan, the gates of mercy are opened, and the gates of Hell are locked, and the devils are chained...” Sahih Muslim Book 13 Number 1)

Mentally, fasting helps to **keep our conduct in check**, improve our **moral character** and interactions, and **boosting our will power and resolve**. In addition to these, fasting helps us to connect with the **poor and indigent in society**, experiencing what they experience of hunger and thirst. It helps us to remember that in spite of how much we may have, **we have to submit to Almighty Allah**.

Physically, we recognize that while fasting places the body in some hardship and discomfort, it is recognized to help improve our digestive functions and insulin sensitivity, with spin-off effects on blood pressure and blood sugar levels, cholesterol, weight and heart functions, and immune functions.

It is important to stay hydrated during the month, to avoid ill-effects that can surface while we fast.



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HOW TO FAST

To observe the fast physically, we are required to abstain from food and drink, and marital relations, from the break of dawn through sunset, each day of fasting during the month of Ramadan. (Quran 2:187)

As Muslims, we are encouraged to eat shortly before the start of the fast (Suhoor), and to hasten to break the fast (Iftar). We are also encouraged to break the fast with dates, and water. (Ibn Majah Book 9, Hadith No. 1699)

In terms of conduct, we are cautioned to not engage in idle or abusive conduct while fasting, nor complain about the fast, and we should be patient with others, especially those who are not fasting.

“Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: Allah the Exalted and Majestic said: Every act of the son of Adam is for him, except fasting... When any one of you is fasting on a day, **he should neither indulge in obscene language, nor raise the voice; or if anyone reviles him or tries to quarrel with him he should say: I am a person fasting...**” (Sahih Muslim Book 35, Number 2566)

Abu Hurairah (r.a) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: "Whoever does not **give up evil and ignorant speech**, and acting in accordance with that, Allah has no need of his giving up his food and drink." (Sunan Ibn Majah Chapter 9, Number 1689)

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: "**There are people who fast and get nothing from their fast except hunger**, and there are those who pray and get nothing from their prayer but a sleepless night." (Sunan Ibn Majah Chapter 9, Number 1690).

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DESIRABLE AND UNDESIRABLE ACTS DURING FASTING

Desirable Acts

- To have Suhur {pre-dawn meal}
- To delay Suhur until just before break of dawn
- To hasten to break the fast
- Break the fast with dry or fresh dates, and water or milk
- To make Niyyah to fast for Ramadan, up until before the day of fasting is completed
- Engage in an abundance of Zikr (remembrance of Allah), perform obligatory and extra Saalah, and read the Quran (Tilawaah), make du'a for forgiveness, and recite extra Darood

What Does Not Break the Fast

- Forgetfulness in eating, drinking or engaging in marital relations
- Using Surma
- Emitting of blood
- Swallowing of food stuck between the teeth (for an amount smaller than the size of a chick-pea)
- Waking up in the state of major impurity
- Using Miswak
- Taking Injections which do not provide nourishment to the body

Undesirable Acts

- Idle talk
- Swearing, backingbiting, slandering etc.
- Kissing or fiddling with the spouse
- Chewing [gum, rubber, plastic, etc.]
- To taste food or water and spit it out without a reason (not applicable for cooks / chefs, but they must not swallow)
- Gather saliva in the mouth and swallow
- To delay an obligatory bath intentionally
- To use tooth paste (more than a little, and to swallow after use)
- To complain about fasting and feelings during fasting
- To take too much water into the nostrils
- To gargle more than necessary

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COMPENSATING FOR MISSED OR BROKEN FASTS

There are 3 types of compensatory acts for missed or broken fasts:

- **Qadha:** refers to keeping a day of fast for each day that is missed due to valid reasons (e.g. travelling).

Qadha is an avenue for persons who missed a day or days of fasting for valid reasons, to keep fast for those days after the month of Ramadan has ended. It should be done before the next Ramadan begins.

- **Kaffarah:** atonement for deliberately breaking fast in a day of Ramadan, or missing a day for invalid reasons. In such instances, persons are required to – in order of priority – free a slave; fast for 60 consecutive days; or, if one does not have the ability to fast, feed 60 poor people, for each day on which the fast is broken or missed.
- **Fidiya:** payment or charity given in instances where persons are unable to fast. Persons are required to feed a poor person, the equivalent of 2kg* of wheat – *different schools of Fiqh have different calculations for this, so consult your scholar for specific guidance on this matter.

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EXTRA WORSHIP IN RAMADAN

Ramadan has 3 stages: The Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is reported to have said: It (Ramadan) is the month, whose beginning is mercy, its middle, forgiveness and its end, emancipation from the fire (of hell).

Throughout the month, we should engage in: Asking for forgiveness, glorifying Almighty Allah, reciting Darood, reading the Holy Quran, praying extra Nafil, and giving charity to the poor as much as possible.

ITIKAF

Ibn 'Umar (Allah be pleased with both of them) reported that the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) used to observe i'tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan. (Sahih Muslim *Book 6, Number 2636*)

'A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) reported that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) used to exert himself in devotion during the last ten nights to a greater extent than at any other time. (Sahih Muslim *Book 6, Number 2644*)

LAILAT-UL-QADR

The Night of Power is a special night in the Islamic calendar, which holds significance for a number of events, but is noted for being a night in which Almighty Allah showers worshippers with an abundance of blessings and mercy, sins are forgiven and du'a are accepted. The blessings of this night are worth more than 1000 months (Quran 97:3)

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (Allah be pleased with him) reported that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said, in part, "so seek it (lailat ul Qadr); in the last ten nights on odd numbers. (Sahih Muslim *Book 6, Number 2625*).

FASTING FOR SHAWWAL

Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: He who observed the fast of Ramadan and then followed it with six (fasts) of Shawwal. it would be as if he fasted perpetually. (Sahih Muslim *Book 6, Number 2614*)



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Majlis ul Ulamaa – Leading Islamic Scholars working together to define One Position. One Voice. One Ummah.

Common Issues that Surface During the Month of Ramadan, and their Responses

(Sourced from the Majlis ul Ulamaa (Council of Scholars) - <http://majlistt.com>)

MOON SIGHTING ISSUES

Islam follows the lunar Hijri calendar as ordained in the Holy Quran [Quran 6:96; 2:189; 10:5]. Visibility of the new moon crescent would vary depending on geographic location according to both the earth's latitude and longitude. Some areas might be able to see the new moon crescent whereas others in a different location, (although nearby), would be unable to do so. *"Whoever witnesses the month, he must fast the month"*. [Quran 2:185]

On the Use of Calculations to start months of Ramadan:

The Ulamaa reject the use of calculations (Umm ul Qura calendar) to signal the start of the month of Ramadan, based on the ahadith *"Do fast when it is sighted and break the fast when it is sighted"*. (Sahih Muslim); and *"We are unlettered people, we neither write nor calculate. The month is this way and that, sometimes 29 and sometimes 30."* (Bukhari)

On the acceptance of Universal Sighting: MajlisTT does not accept universal sighting as the basis for the start of the month of Ramadan. This is based on the hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas regarding the sighting in Syria, and a position consistent with, and supported by Ulamaa globally.

On the acceptance of Regional Sighting: MajlisTT is further of the opinion that, for regional sighting to be accepted, the start dates of the months in question for those countries must be consistent with those start dates of Trinidad and Tobago.

On the issue of Local Sighting: MajlisTT is of the position that any credible sighting occurring within the country of Trinidad and Tobago must be accepted by the Muslim community. Majlistt notes that visibility ranges throughout Trinidad and Tobago—based on the terrain and the variance in latitudes (by 6° from the most eastern point of Tobago to the most western point of Trinidad). Thus, there is need for local moon sighting committees, whereby persons from different locations within the country need to look for the new moon crescent.

Reports of New Moon Sighting: There are stipulations on the acceptance of moon sighting by witnesses, which vary across a number of conditions. These conditions have to be verified before the sighting is accepted. Muslims should consult their Ulamaa for further details on this matter.

RAMADAN PRACTICES

The Braking of the Fast: We are required to break the fast when the sun sets – it is not tied to the Adhan, nor should we rely on the Adhan to break the fast. We should hasten to break the fast (i.e. do not wait until nightfall), but we should be careful to not break the fast too early (before the sun sets). Neither should we rely on the Adhan played by the media channels to signal the time – we should ourselves ensure the sun has set.

The specific times for sunset would vary across Trinidad and Tobago (due to the variance in latitudes). If people wait a few minutes and others do not, both are right and there is no blame on either. For congregational breaking of the fast, the Imam should instruct the community on the proper time and the procedure that would be followed.

Neyat to break the fast: The neyat / du'a to break the fast can be said before or after the fast the broken. Scholars have different opinions on which it should be, and either way the fast remains valid. It is good to remember Allah when breaking the fast.

Taraweeh: is not a fard, and neither is the tasbeeh and du'a between taraweeh salaah. Whether persons read 8, 20 or more, any extra ibadaat is good. Persons are free to engage in any ibadaat between salaah, and should not affect the ability of others to make their own ibadaat.

ذَهَبَ الظَّمَأُ، وَابْتَلَّتِ الْعُرُوقُ، وَنَبَّتَ الْأَجْرُ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

"The thirst is gone, the veins are moistened, and the reward has been earned, if Allah wills."

[Hadith Abu Dawud]