

Ramadan

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, when Muslims fast between sunrise and sunset every day. Fasting during Ramadan is the fourth pillar of Islam. There are five pillars, which help guide Muslims put their faith into action and purpose.

Ramadan is called the month of the Qu'ran, because it is believed that it is the time when the Qu'ran was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.



The Qu'ran

The Qu'ran is the holy book of Islam and recognised by Muslims as the word of God, known as Allah.

The Five Pillars of Islam

The Five Pillars of Islam are five obligations which Muslims must carry out in order to live a good life according to Islam. These are:

Shahada: This is the Declaration of Faith. When a person recites this, they are entering the Islamic faith.

Salah: Muslims pray five times each day.

Zakat: Muslims give money to charity.

Sawm: Fasting during the month of Ramadan.

Hajj: Muslims should make a pilgrimage to Mecca, a city in Saudi Arabia.

Fasting during Ramadan

Fasting means not consuming food or drink during daylight hours. It is common to have one meal (suhour) just before sunrise and another meal (iftar) directly after sunset.

Fasting is important to Muslims as a sign of self-discipline, self-restraint and generosity. Muslims believe that their good actions bring greater reward



during this month than at any other time of the year, because it has been blessed by Allah (God).

They also believe that it is easier to do good during Ramadan, because the gates of Hell have been closed, so the devils cannot tempt believers, yet the gates of Heaven are open. Almost all Muslims try to give up bad habits during Ramadan and endeavour to become better Muslims by praying more and reading the Qu'ran.

A Social Occasion

Ramadan is a time to get together with family and friends. The fast is broken each evening by sharing a meal. The end of Ramadan is an important religious holiday, and a celebration of the start of the new month is recognised by Eid al-Fitr. Eid al-Fitr means 'festival of the breaking of the fast'.

Did you know?

Those who are ill, elderly or pregnant are exempt from fasting during this time.



Questions

1. Explain how the Qu'ran is linked to the importance of Ramadan.
2. Choose another word which could be used other than 'obligations'.
3. Zakat is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. Choose the correct option below that best describes Zakat.
 - It is related to the holy journey which Muslims are encouraged to make.
 - It is the opportunity to show dedication to Allah.
 - It is the chance to show one's generosity towards others.
 - It is the sharing of a meal at the end of the fasting time.
4. Complete this sentence.

The meals eaten during Ramadan are called... and they refer to ...
5. Which word closely matches the meaning of 'exempt'? Tick one.

mercy	absolved
justified	pardoned

Questions

6. Fasting is described 'as a sign of self-discipline, self-restraint and generosity? Explain why this is the case, and why this is relevant to Ramadan.
7. Why do Muslims believe that the gates of Hell being closed during Ramadan make it easier to do good deeds?
8. Complete this table.

	True	False
Ramadan is a chance to think about others and become a better person.		
Fasting Muslims can eat before sunset during Ramadan.		
Ramadan is the ninth pillar of Islam.		
Ramadan is a time to avoid doing bad things which you have done for a while.		

Questions

9. Describe in your own words, what Ramadan is.