

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

# Submitters Perspective

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## Ramadan

If you live in Australia or South America or lower Africa, Ramadan this year will be easy for you. Short days, late sunrise, early sunset. Just like skipping lunch. But for most of us, this Ramadan will include the longest day of the year. For those of us in the desert southwest, that also means the hottest days of the year. For those in places like Sweden and Canada, it may be cooler but it means there's practically no night at all.

For me, personally, this means I've come full circle. My very first Ramadan was mid-May to mid-June, and I never thought I could survive it. The days were long, but mostly they were very hot. How could I possibly go some 16 hours without a drink of water? Food maybe I could manage, but no water? And, of course, that's what most of our friends say to us when we tell them about Ramadan—"No water?!"

I managed that whole first Ramadan, though there was a day I can still remember when I just said, "That's it! I need a drink of water!" But God distracted me and made the feeling pass. I managed it because God made it possible.

So, now as I approach a Ramadan that will include long, hot days, I know that I can not only manage it, but embrace it. I can make it through because it's God's command and I choose to strive to obey His commands. Not because it's fun or comfortable—it isn't. But it is rewarding and energizing and I feel the growth of my soul. And I'm more than willing to make a few sacrifices of creature comforts for the far better rewards that God promises (2:200-2).

This is the true blessing of Ramadan. We live in a world adorned with so many beautiful things that tempt us and distract us. This is God's gift to us. But it's also His test. We can't get so caught up in this beautiful world that we forget the One who created it. So to help us He gives us practices to draw us back from the worldly temptations and put our focus back on God. The five daily Salat prayers allow us to turn our thoughts to God. Zakat and charity allow us to remember that all gifts come from God and when we share His gifts to us with those less fortunate, we are placing the rewards of the Hereafter above the rewards of this world.

Then there's Ramadan. Ramadan is a practice that allows us to do both—

remember God and remember those less fortunate. When we feel hungry or thirsty on these long hot days, we can immediately remember that the reason we're not eating or drinking is because God told us to fast. So we remember God. We say to ourselves, "I'm not going to let my body rule my soul. I'm going to tame this unruly body and put my soul in charge. God is in full control of everything."

At the same time, we are reminded that a large percentage of the world's population faces hunger and thirst every single day. Too many children go to bed hungry. Too many people have to walk miles to fetch drinking water that we wouldn't consider safe to drink. We turn on a tap and water flows. We have to be appreciative of that. We walk in a market and are assaulted by choices of cereal, soup and all kinds of snacks. This is a blessing from God. When our stomach rumbles during Ramadan, we get the opportunity to say, "Thank You God."

And then we get to enjoy breaking the fast. When we do this with friends, it becomes a joyous celebration. But it's not a celebration of being able to eat and drink. It's a celebration of the One

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who provides the food and water and allows us to experience a tiny bit of deprivation and hardship that we may turn to God and rejoice.

*[10:107] If GOD touches you with a hardship, none can relieve it except He. And when He blesses you, no force can prevent His grace. He bestows it upon whomever He chooses from among His servants. He is the Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

*[7:168] We scattered them among many communities throughout the land. Some of them were righteous, and some were less than righteous. We tested them with prosperity and hardship, that they may return.*

It may be difficult for the next few years for those of us in the northern hemisphere, but the rewards are huge. Ramadan is a time of immense spiritual growth and development, a time to appreciate God and all the blessings He has bestowed upon us, a month-long celebration of God's power and His mercy. May each of us find peace and joy from God in this wonderful month of Ramadan.

*[2:183] O you who believe, fasting is decreed for you, as it was decreed for those before you, that you may attain salvation.*

*[2:184] Specific days (are designated for fasting); if one is ill or traveling, an equal number of other days may be substituted. Those who can fast, but with great difficulty, may substitute feeding one poor person for each day of breaking the fast. If one volunteers (more righteous works), it is better. But fasting is the best for you, if you only knew.*

*[2:185] Ramadan is the month during which the Quran was revealed, providing guidance for the people, clear teachings, and the statute book. Those of you who witness this month shall fast therein. Those who are ill or traveling may substitute the same number of other days. GOD wishes for you convenience, not hardship, that you may fulfill your obligations, and to glorify GOD for guiding you, and to express your appreciation.*

*[2:186] When My servants ask you about Me, I am always near. I answer their prayers when they pray to Me. The people shall respond to Me and believe in Me, in order to be guided.*

*[2:187] Permitted for you is sexual intercourse with your wives during the nights of fasting. They are the keepers of your secrets, and you are the keepers of their secrets. GOD knew that you used to betray your souls, and He has redeemed you, and has pardoned you. Henceforth, you may have intercourse with them, seeking what GOD has permitted for you. You may eat and drink until the white thread of light becomes distinguishable from the dark thread of night at dawn. Then, you shall fast until sunset. Sexual intercourse is prohibited if you decide to retreat to the masjid (during the last ten days of Ramadan). These are GOD's laws; you shall not transgress them. GOD thus clarifies His revelations for the people, that they may attain salvation.*

*Lydia*

\* \* \* \* \*

## Focus on Growing our Souls this Ramadan

My brothers and sisters, every year we prepare for Ramadan. A whole month to fast from dawn to sunset. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. During the fast, we don't eat or drink, nor have sex during the day time hours. We refrain from bad habits and bad thoughts. And this is the point I would like to make. This Ramadan—work on: no bad habits, no bad thoughts.

*[17:38] All bad behavior is condemned by your Lord.*

Brothers and sisters, I know we all do our best at these things. But I'm asking

all of us this Ramadan, let's focus more on getting rid of bad habits and bad thoughts. We are all pretty much aware of the physical aspect of what it does for our body, such as cleansing of body, giving organs a rest, rebuilding of cells and tissue and so on. God does excuse us from fasting if one physically can't do it (2:184).

So this Ramadan, let's focus more on spiritual growth, like being God conscious as a goal throughout the month, reading through the whole Quran maybe more than once this month, more charity and good deeds, responding with good words, breaking bad habits like smoking, losing your temper, yelling at spouses, children and friends. Tone it down. Just anything that's not healthy to our soul, let's give it up. Find good thoughts. Let's focus on perfect, one hundred percent (I know we can't be perfect, but let's try) good behavior. More reverence of God, more meditation. Let's really reach for the heaven, past the stars and moon. Our souls can grow by leaps and bounds, so let's really focus on growing our souls. Let's try to be perfect this Ramadan. The physical body will submit. This is a gift of remembrance.

God-consciousness is our goal this Ramadan.

*[3:102] O you who believe, you shall observe GOD as He should be observed, and do not die except as Submitters.*

*[2:152] You shall remember Me, that I may remember you, and be thankful to Me; do not be unappreciative.*

*Sura 97 Destiny*

*In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful [97:1-5] We revealed it in the Night of Destiny. How awesome is the Night of Destiny! The Night of Destiny is better than a thousand months. The angels and the Spirit descend therein, by their Lord's leave, to carry out every command. Peaceful it is until the advent of the dawn.*

*Carolyn*

## Purity of Body and Soul

How wonderfully the Quran intermingles the physical and spiritual parts of our life. The Quranic commandments have a crucial bearing which decide our life's character here and in turn, the all-important Hereafter. We are taught a permanent set of values to ethically regulate our lives. The Quran covers all subjects necessary for us—science, natural phenomena, food, hygiene, etc.

We should observe these guidelines and obey God's command. In nature, it is obvious that cleanliness is a constant process. We pour all sorts of contamination into our water which finally goes to a salty sea. Yet the Almighty grants us a gift of evaporation and a hydrological cycle which allows water to go to the skies, and we get fresh water essential for life. [25:48-9] *He is the One who sends the winds with good omens of His mercy, and we send down from the sky pure water. With it, we revive dead lands and provide drink for our creations—multitudes of animals and humans.*

Our Salats are a demonstration of submission to God and also a unique discipline. Our Contact Prayers whether in private or in congregation are preceded by *Wudu* ablution which involves 4 definite steps (not some other number involving all exposed parts of the body which the Mullas would like us to believe). If water is unavailable, *Tayammum* (dry ablution) is explained to us. [5:6] ... **GOD** does not wish to make the religion difficult for you; He wishes to cleanse you and to perfect His blessing upon you, that you may be appreciative. God wants us to be neat and clean.

Any psychologist will tell you that uncorrupted healthy thoughts have a profound influence on human personality. Purity and cleanliness are not confined to outward features. You may have a person who is physically neat and immaculately dressed but they are inwardly unclean. [63:4] *When you see them, you may be impressed by their looks. And when they*

*speak, you may listen to their eloquence. They are like standing logs. They think that every call is intended against them. These are the real enemies; beware of them. **GOD** condemns them; they have deviated.*

Pureness of body and soul is a trait of a good human and is equally required from men and women. [9:28] *O you who believe, the idol worshippers are polluted ...*

To be clean in body and soul, we have to obey God's commands. The Quran specifically forbids backbiting. [49:12] *O you who believe, you shall avoid any suspicion, for even a little bit of suspicion is sinful. You shall not spy on one another, nor shall you backbite one another; this is as abominable as eating the flesh of your dead brother. You certainly abhor this. You shall observe **GOD**. **GOD** is Redeemer, Most Merciful.*

Backbiting is not necessarily done by words alone. It could be through communication signs like use of hands, eyes, making faces or by imitation of one another. These types of expressions are meant to humiliate the other person. We are also considered guilty if we partake in the act by listening/enjoying and not leaving that company at the first opportunity to do so. [104:1] *Woe to every backbiter, slanderer.* Backbiting includes slander and defamation; it creates misunderstandings and causes ill will.

The Quran prohibits intoxicants (*khimr*) which means anything that enwraps the mind and consciousness. It includes psychotropic drugs and narcotics. [4:43] *O you who believe, do not observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) while intoxicated, so that you know what you are saying ...* Everyone is aware of the devastating effects of alcohol on our physical, mental, moral and social sides.

Arrogance is a terrible sin, and the Quran teaches us to be humble towards all. History is full of examples of people who were afflicted with arrogance like Pharaoh, Nimrod, and the people of 'Ad, Thamud, Midyan etc. They all came to a destructive end because they considered themselves worthy of unlimited praise and took great conceit in their suprema-

cy, wealth and command. [17:37] *You shall not walk proudly on earth—you cannot bore through the earth, nor can you be as tall as the mountains.*

Usually, the guilty ones are insecure or have an inferiority complex. This exhibit of ego will cost us in this life and exceedingly in the next. [31:19] *Walk humbly and lower your voice—the ugliest voice is the donkey's voice.* All Prophets, messengers and saints had authority and influence but they did not let self-importance manipulate them. Sadly, we have detached ourselves from the worthy trait of modesty which God wants. We incessantly grumble and complain and will not do anything "below our dignity". [35:10] *Anyone seeking dignity should know that to **GOD** belongs all dignity. To Him ascends the good words, and He exalts the righteous works. As for those who scheme evil works, they incur severe retribution; the scheming of such people is destined to fail.*

The Most Gracious made us exist. We are born weak and then God gives us strength. [30:54] **GOD** is the One who created you weak, then granted you after the weakness strength, then substituted after the strength weakness and gray hair. He creates whatever He wills. He is the Omniscient, the Omnipotent.

[82:6-8] *O you human being, what diverted you from your Lord, Most Honorable? The One who created you, designed you, and perfected you. In whatever design He chose, He constructed it.*

Our prayers and religious duties, our food and drink, hygiene, etc. are all linked with the obligation to our Creator who nourishes our body and soul. There is a simple set of Divine permanent values. God will guide us to a sanctuary of peace which will bring continuous delight to all of us. Submission (Islam) is not just a religion but a way of life and is a system of collective living that actualizes our potential, evolving us to be ready for the unfathomable Hereafter.

[32:17] *You have no idea how much joy and happiness are waiting for you as a reward for your (righteous) works.*

Alim

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## GOD GIVES YOU LIFE

*[8:24] O you who believe, you shall respond to GOD and to the messenger when he invites you to what gives you life. You should know that GOD is closer to you than your heart, and that before Him you will be summoned.*

*[50:16] We created the human, and we know what he whispers to himself. We are closer to him than his jugular vein.*

For this analogy, God has chosen the heart and the jugular vein. He doesn't say He's closer to us than our stomach, or our spine, or even our brain. The heart is the organ that pumps the blood to sustain life, and the jugular is the vein that carries that blood back to the heart from our brains. This is what defines life in worldly terms. You may appear to have lost all signs of life, but if your heart is beating, you are considered "alive." This is God giving us life, giving us this precious chance to redeem our souls.

He's inviting us to what gives us life, true life. True life is not in the heart or the jugular; true life is eternal happiness in God's presence in the Hereafter. God's invitation is more beautiful than the

most gorgeous engraved invitation, yet most people refuse to accept it. So we need to be thankful for God's presence, closer to us than our heart or our jugular vein, but we also need to remember that true life, true happiness will only come if we worship God alone and do the things in this world that will allow our souls to grow. So we can be as close to God as possible in the Hereafter.

*[56:83-85] When the time comes and it (your soul) reaches your throat—you will then look around. We are closer to it than you are, but you do not see.*

*[26:89-90] Only those who come to GOD with their whole heart (will be saved). Paradise will be presented to the righteous.*

*[39:22] If GOD renders one's heart content with Submission, he will be following a light from his Lord. Therefore, woe to those whose hearts are hardened against GOD's message; they have gone far astray.*

*[10:56] He controls life and death, and to Him you will be returned.*

*[56:10-11] Then there is the elite of the elite. They are those who will be closest (to God).*

## Ramadan 2015

God willing the month of Ramadan (2:183-7) is coming soon. The new moon times for determining the beginning and ending of Ramadan are given below in UTC (Universal time) or GMT.

June 16, 2015: 14:05 PM (UTC/GMT)

July 16, 2015: 01:24 AM (UTC/GMT)

The actual time for each time zone is relative to UTC. In order to calculate the Ramadan start date, compare the time of the New Moon with the Sunset in your location. If the new moon is before sunset, we fast the next day, God willing. Similarly, to determine the last day of fasting, compare the time of the next New Moon with the sunset in your location. If the new moon is before sunset, the Ramadan month is complete on that day. Otherwise one fasts the next day.

Based on this, God willing, Ramadan dates for western parts of USA, Canada, Mexico are: **June 17 – July 15, 2015.**

For the eastern parts of USA, Canada, Mexico, for Europe, Middle East, Africa, western parts of Asia, God willing the dates are: **June 17 – July 16, 2015.**

For the eastern parts of Asia, for Australia and New Zealand, God willing the dates are: **June 18 – July 16, 2015.**

For more details on how dates are calculated, please refer to [September 2009](#) issue of the Submitters Perspective, and <http://masjiduntucson.org/Ramadan/>

Lydia