

Learning about the month of Ramadhan



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THE LUNAR CALENDAR THE MICE IN FARHA'S KITCHEN

Farha lived in a large farmhouse in the country.

In their kitchen some white mice had taken up home. They made sure they did not disturb anyone and only came out to collect the crumbs on the floor when the kitchen was empty.

The mice knew that Ramadhan was coming soon. They had marked the date in their calendar – 2nd of Spetember. That is when it had started last year and there were no crumbs to be found because Farha and her family did not eat at home in Ramadhan. They did iftaar at the Islamic Centre and at sehri they hardly ate anything. The mice decided to store up food for Ramadhan about 10 days before it started.

On the 22nd of August, the mice family crept out to collect all the crumbs they could find. There were no crumbs to be found.

"We're sure we have got our dates right.!" they said.

Every day they came out to find no crumbs on the floor. Soon they became very weak. Mother mouse could not stand it any longer. At night she went upto Farha's bed and squeaked in her ear *"Squeak, Squeak! We're hungry."*

Farha woke up and said *"Go away! If mum finds you she'll kill you."*

The mouse would not stop squeaking. *"Look! I do not understand your language! I am not Prophet Sulayman (AS)."*

The mouse would not stop.

"I guess you want some food." Farha crept downstairs and peered into the little mouse hole in the skirting boards. She saw four thin mice! *"O you poor mice! Did you not know it is Ramadhan? You have lived here long enough to know that we do not eat in Ramadhan."*

She gave them some bread and cheese and said:

"Now listen! You have to start storing food for Ramadhan. I guess you forgot that Ramadhan starts 11 days earlier every year because the Lunar (Islamic) year is 11 days shorter than the Solar (Gregorian) calendar."

Mother mouse made a note in her calendar never to forget that the Lunar year is 11 days shorter than the Solar year.

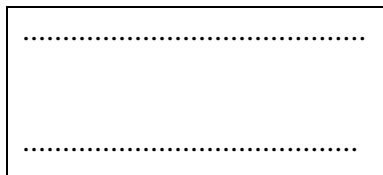
CALENDAR

Fold an A4 sheet of paper length wise in half.

Mark the ISLAMIC months on the paper and decorate.

Cut a piece of card 5" x 2".

Make two cuts on the card half an inch from the top and bottom as shown below by the dotted lines.



Slide the folded A4 paper with the months through the cuts in the card.

	Muharram Safar Rabi ul Awwal Rabi ul Aakher Jamad ul Awwal Jamad ul Aakher Rajab Sha'ban	
	Ramadhan	
	Shawwal Dhulqa'ada Dhulhijja	

SOLAR AND LUNAR CALENDAR

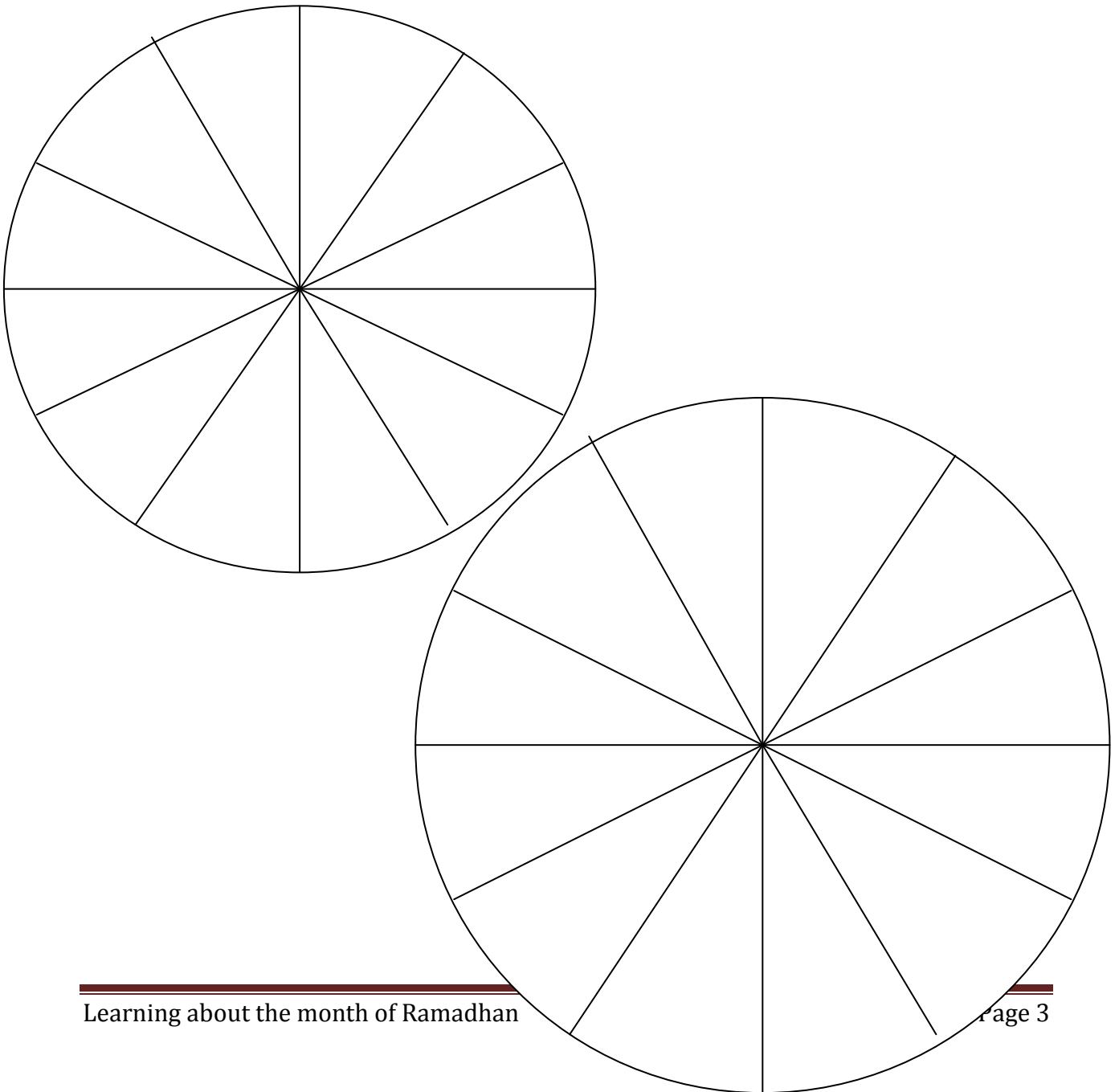
You will need: a pair of scissors , some colour pencils and a split pin

Step 1: Write the names of the Lunar months and solar months in each section.

Step 2: Colour each section.

Step 3: Carefully cut round both the circles (you may ask your teacher to help you)

Step 4: Align both the circles together, the smaller one above the larger one and put a split pin in the centre.



The New Moon



The Lunar calendar hasor days

The full moon is around theof the month

Ramadhan is the month of the Lunar Calendar

Write your dua in the moon above and colour it in

EXTRACT FROM THE SERMON OF THE PROPHET (SAW) ABOUT THE MONTH OF RAMADHAN

1. Ramadhan is the best of months
2. We are the guests of Allah in Ramadhan
3. Help the poor.
4. Honour those who are old.
5. Be kind to those who are little.
6. Remember all your relatives.
7. Guard your tongue.
8. Be kind to orphans
9. Do tawba for your sins
10. Pray a lot and do lots of sajdahs
11. Share iftar even if it's a drink of water
12. Have good akhlaq
13. Recite the Qur'an as the reward for reciting one aya is like reading the whole Qur'an
14. The doors of Janna are open – Ask Allah to keep them open for you.
15. The doors of Jahannam are closed – Ask Allah to keep them closed for you
16. **The best deed in the month is to keep away from that which Allah has forbidden
(Haram)**

SHARING

The Prophet (SAW) in his sermon about the month of Ramadhan said:

'O people! One who gives iftaar to a fasting person during this month will be like one who has freed someone and his/her past sins will be forgiven.'

Some of the people who were there then asked the Prophet (SAW)

"All of us are not able to invite those who are fasting!"

The Prophet (SAW) replied:

"Allah gives this reward even if the iftaar is a drink of water."

The Prophet (SAW) has also said:

"When Allah wishes to do good to a family He sends them a gift. That gift is a guest who brings his/her sustenance with him/her and carries away with him/her the sins of the family."

"A guest is a guide who leads one to the path to Janna."

A father and son were once the guests of Imam Ali (AS). Imam made them comfortable and sat opposite them talking to them. It was time for the meal to be served.

After food had been served and eaten, Imam's servant Qambar brought a basin and a jug of water for the guests to wash their hands.

Imam took the jug himself and asked the father to extend his hands so he could pour the water.

The guest said:

"How can it be that my Imam serves me! It should be the other way?"

Imam Ali (AS) replied:

"Here is your brother in Islam, eager to serve his brother and earn the pleasure of Allah. Why do you prevent it?"

The guest extended his hands.

Imam told him:

"Wash your hands thoroughly. Do not hurry thinking that I should be free of this duty quickly."

When it was the son's turn to wash his hands Imam told his son Muhammad Hanafiyya to hold the jug and wash the sons' hands. Imam then told him:

"I washed your fathers' hands. My son washed your hands. If your father had not been my guest today, I would have washed your hands myself. But Allah loves to see that when a father and son are present in a place, the father enjoys a privilege and a priority."

It is easy to share when we feel there is abundance but many of us find it hard to do so when there is little to go round. A Muslim however rises beyond this - Let us look at an incident from the battle of Moota where after the battle there were a number of the companions of the Prophet (SAW) who lay mortally wounded on the ground.

They were all thirsty and groaning for water.

A man seeing them took some water and offered it to the first companion who pointed to a second companion saying he needed the water more.

The man went to the second mujahid who pointed to the third companion saying that he needed the water more than him.

When the man got to the third mujahid he found that he had already died.

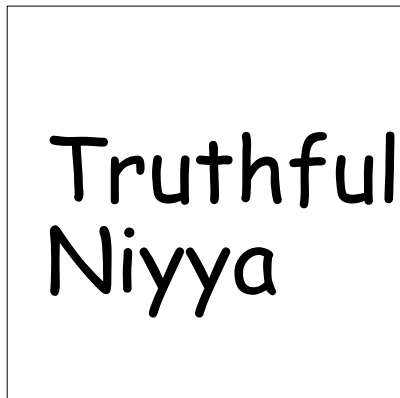
He returned to the second mujahid but he too had died and so had the first companion.

All the soldiers wanted to share with the others so much so that they were prepared to give to the other before themselves.

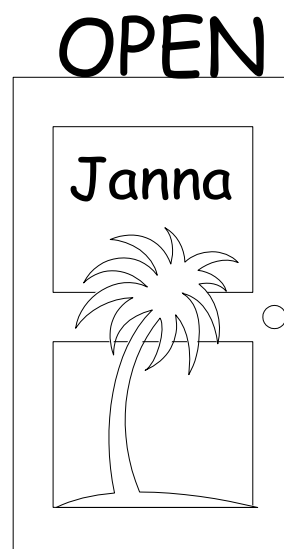
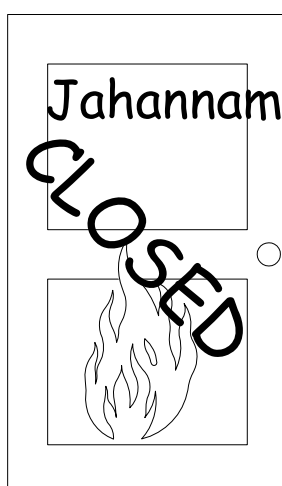
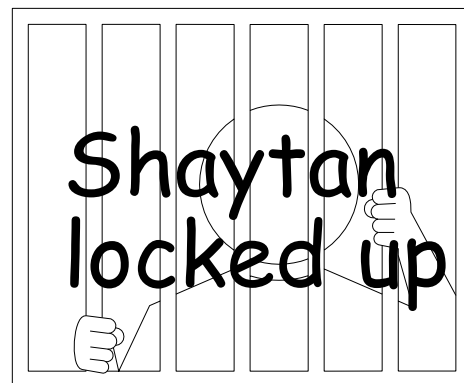
The Prophet (SAW) has said that there are five acts which bring the blessings of Allah on a person:

1. Greeting each other with Salaamun 'alaykum. The initiating of Salaam is mustahab yet carries more thawab than the reply which is wajib. It is so important that even if one is praying salaa and is greeted by someone with salaam, he/she must reply likewise.
2. Reciting Adhan loudly at home before every salaa. The Prophet (SAW) has said that the voices of those who recite adhan loudly are carried to the heavens and the angels in the heaven stop to listen.
3. Keeping clean and being tahir all the time. It is said that on the day of Qiyama, Jahannam will reject people who are sent to it simply because they were clean and taahir in the world.
4. The recitation of Qur'an every day. It increases one's memory and intelligence. Try to recite just 10 ayaat after salaa loudly.
5. Inviting a guest to share meals. It is said that Prophet Ibraheem (AS) never ate alone. He would wait in the streets inviting people to come home and share his meals with him. Let us take this opportunity in the month of Ramadhan, which in itself is a month of blessings where we are the guests of Allah to increase the blessings by sharing what we have with others.

From the sermon of the Prophet (S.A.W.)

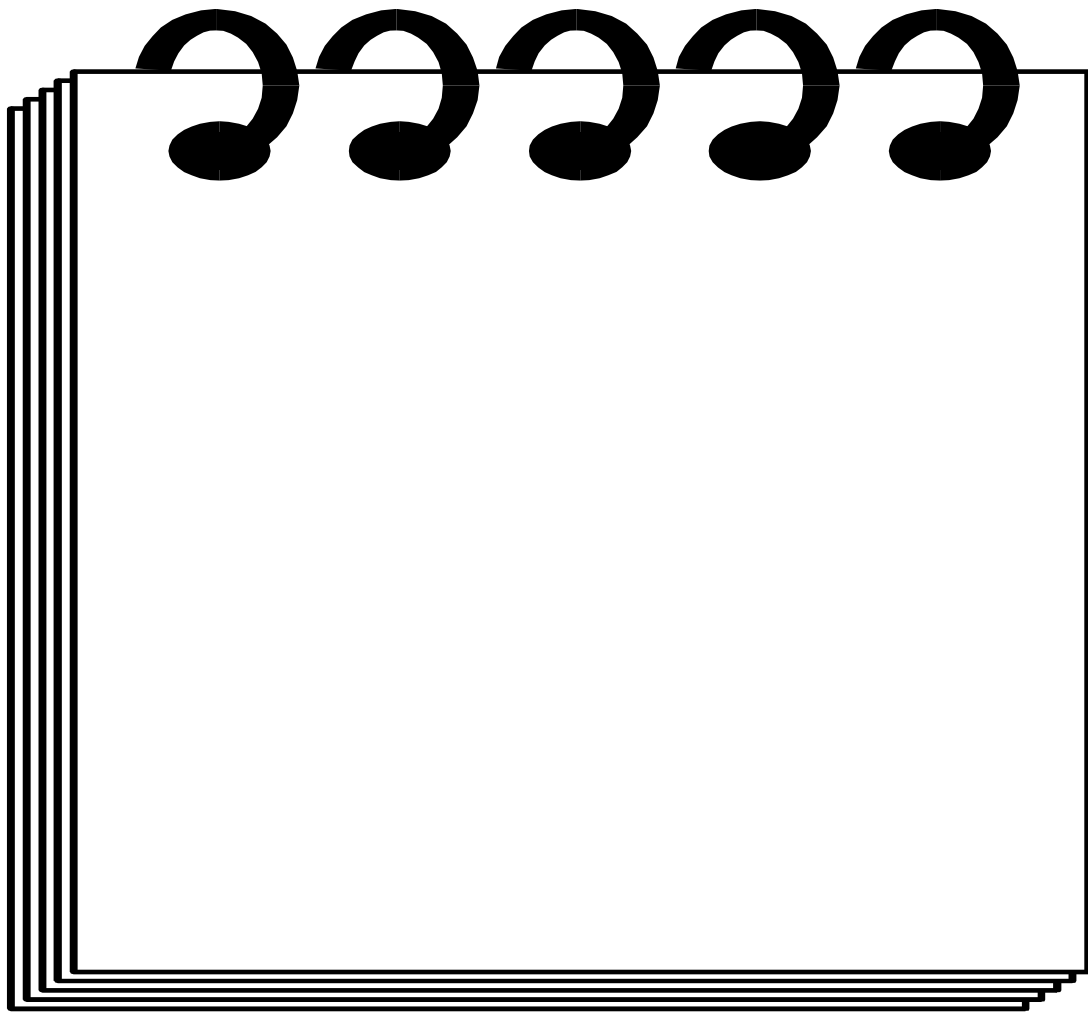


Duas



Write the CORRECT "Guest Rules " in the right order in your book of Rules below as well as decorate It.

1. Escort your guest from the room to the gate of your house.
2. Make an angry face when a guest appears at your doorstep unannounced, oh boy! Here goes my free time.
3. Make sure you finish to eat before your guest does, he mustn't know how hungry you are.
4. Be the first to start the meal
5. If a guest arrives at your door serve him whatever is available.
6. You should be the last to finish so that your guest may eat with ease.



FIQH TERMINOLOGY

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE
Wajib	MUST DO A deed which must be done and to avoid it is a sin.	Salaa, being kind to parents....
HARAM	MUST NOT DO A deed which is a sin and must be avoided.	Eating non-halal food, stealing....
MAKRUH	BETTER NOT TO DO A deed which is not acceptable but whose performance is not punished.	Praying salaa in front of a mirror, open book, picture.....
MUSTAHAB	BETTER TO DO A deed whose avoidance is not punished by Allah and performance is rewarded.	Salatul Tahajjud (Shab), Adhan , Iqama..... before salaa.
MUBAH / JĀIZ	ALLOWED It makes no difference whether one performs it or not.	All other acts that do not fall in any of the categories above.

Unscramble the following and put them in the correct blanks

J I A W B _ _ _ _ _ H M A R O Q _ _ _ _ _

R H M A A _ _ _ _ _ S H A T U M B _ _ _ _ _

1. Acts that we **MUST DO** are called _____
2. Acts that are **BETTER NOT TO DO** are called _____
3. Act that we **MUST NOT DO** are called _____
4. Acts that are **GOOD TO DO** are called _____

In the table below colour:

Acts that are better not to do **ORANGE**. Acts that we must not do in **RED**. Acts that are better to do in **GREEN** and acts that we must do in **BLUE**

SALAAT	GO TO MOSQUE	DO GHUSL JUMMAH	WEAR BLACK SHOES
TO SLEEP AFTER SUBH SALAAT	TO CUT YOUR NAILS ON FRIDAY	TO LIE ABOUT YOUR BEST FRIEND	READ TASBEH & DUA AFTER SALAAT
TO BACKBITE ABOUT OTHERS	SAUM	BRUSH TEETH BEFORE SALAAT	GO FOR JUMMAH SALAAT
START MY FOOD WITH A PINCH OF SALT	TO COVER MY HEAD WHEN I AM IN THE TOILET	LISTEN TO MUSIC	DRINK WATER WHILST STANDING AT NIGHT
TO GIVE KHUMS 1/5 OF MY ANNUAL SAVINGS	TO DO GOOD & ASK OTHERS TO DO GOOD	STEAL	TO KNOW ABOUT MY PRESENT IMAM

FASTING

(SAWM)

Sawm means to keep away from certain things from dawn to sunset only for Allah. Every Muslim who has reached bulugh must fast in the month of Ramadhan. Some of the things which are not allowed in sawm are:

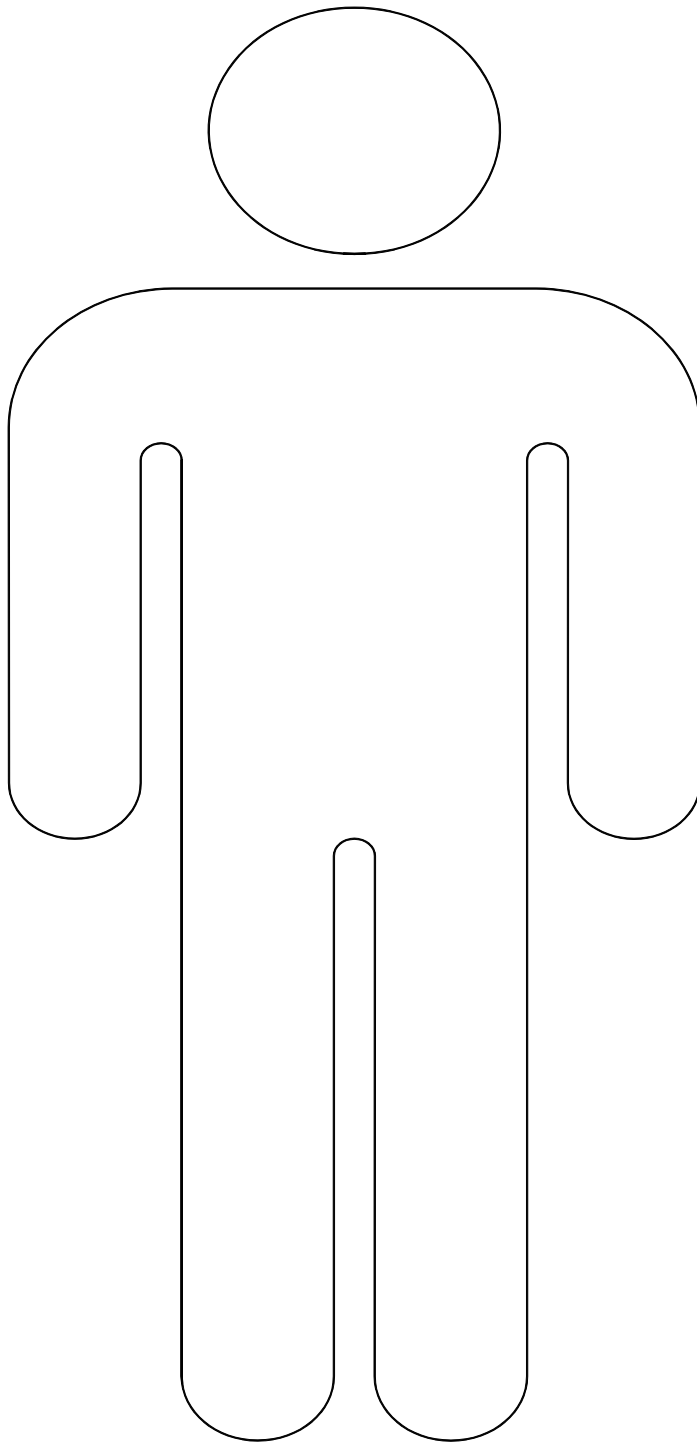
1. Eating intentionally.
2. Drinking intentionally.
3. Vomiting intentionally.
4. Letting dust or smoke enter your throat.
5. Lying about Allah and the Ma'sumeen.

These are called the muftiraat - meaning those things which make a sawm batil.

Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (AS) has said: "The sawm is not merely not eating and drinking...Your sawm must be coupled with:

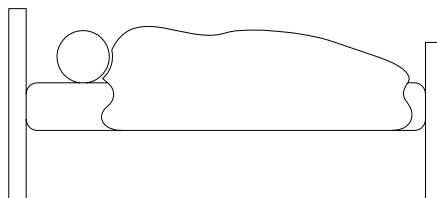
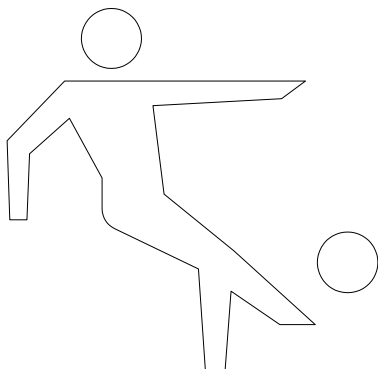
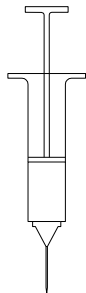
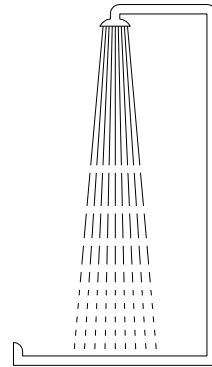
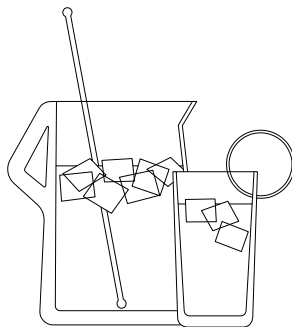
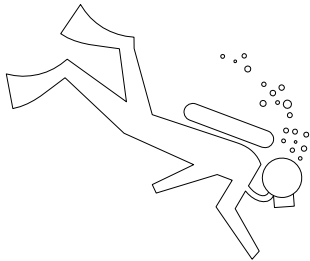
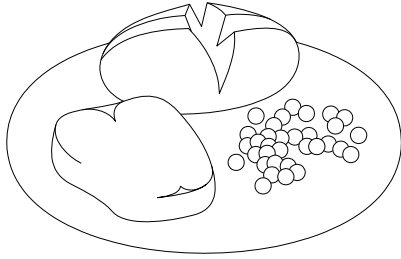
- i) Keeping your tongue from lying.
- ii) Not being jealous.
- iii) Not backbiting or gossiping.
- iv) Not arguing.
- v) Not swearing oaths, even if they are true.
- vi) Not quarrelling with one another.
- vii) Not to abuse.
- viii) Not being mean or miserly.
- ix) Not being unjust (unfair)
- x) Keeping your eyes away from that which is not allowed to look at."

Draw and/or write how you fast with the different parts of the body.



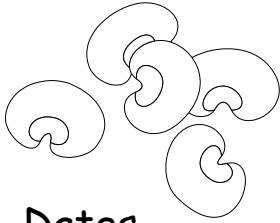
FAST (Sawm)

Put a X on all the things NOT allowed whilst fasting.

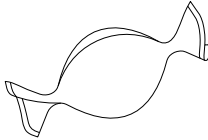


**What food did the Prophet (S.A.W.) recommend
for breaking the fast?**

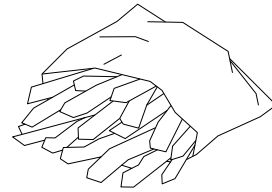
Circle the right answer



Dates



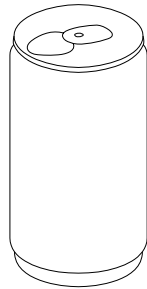
Sweets



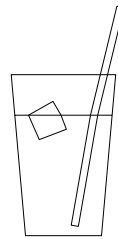
Fried food



Hot water

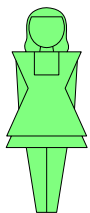


Fizzy drink

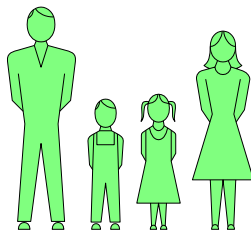


Cold drink

Who will you serve first?



Yourself



Your family
& those having
iftaar with you

THINGS WHICH BREAK A FAST

Below are some acts, some of which when done can break a fast. Put a tick in the correct column. One has been done for you.

ACTION DONE	MAKES THE FAST VOID	DOES NOT MAKE THE FAST VOID
Mohammed forgot that he was fasting and drank half a bottle of ice cold Fanta after his football match.		
Saida is diabetic and has injected herself with insulin whilst fasting.		
Farhan is swimming for his school team and swam an entire length of the pool.		
Fatemah felt sick in school and vomited whilst fasting.		
Jamil intentionally drank only a few sips of water whilst fasting.		
Sabir swallowed his saliva whilst fasting.		
Hur was pushed in the pool whilst he was fasting and his entire head was under the water.		
Mariam intentionally swallowed some food that was stuck between her teeth.		
Sarah put some eye drops in her eyes whilst fasting.		✓

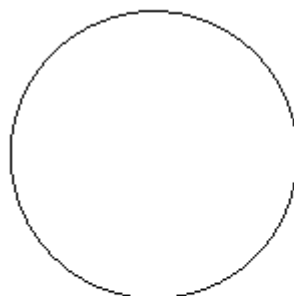


Ramadhan Timings

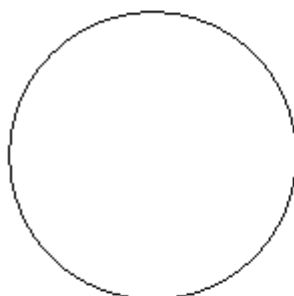
To be able to keep sawm (fast) we need to know the time for Imsaak, Fajr and Iftaar; just as we must know time for salaah every day.

Draw a clock with the right time for each of the timings for tomorrow's fast.

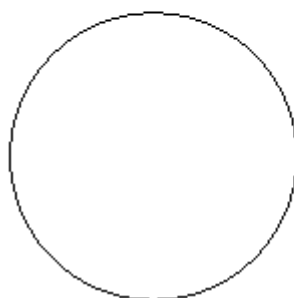
Imsaak



Fajr



Maghrib



TAQWA

“Indeed Allah loves those who have Taqwa” Surat Tawba 9:4

Taqwa is one of the most important concepts in Islam and is mentioned in the Qur’an many times. It means to unite the body and the nafs, to be able to do all the wajibaats and keep away from all that is haram.

It comes from the root word ‘wa qa ya’ which means a shield or to protect oneself.

It is like a vaccine through which a person is immunised from the germs of sins and evil which weaken one’s nafs.

How is taqwa achieved through the siyaam (pl of sawm) of the month of Ramadhan? Let’s first look at the origins of the name of the month - Ramadhan.

The root word for Ramadhan is ramadha, of the means to burn due to excessive sun-heat reflected on the desert sands. The ramdha is the burning rock. This is why it was called the month of Ramadhan. It is also said that it was called the month of Ramadhan because people become ramadh due to their suffering from the combination of hunger and thirst during a very hot month. Arab linguists say that to make something ramadh is to squeeze it between two soft rocks then to pound it. A person keeping sawm, by analogy, pounds his own nature between two rocks: hunger and thirst.

The Prophet (SAW) has said:

"The month of Ramadhan was named so because it tends to ramadh the sins, that is, burn them."

During the life-time of the Prophet (SAW) the month of Ramadhan also used to be called Al-Marzooq - the one full of sustenance, due to the abundance of the blessings of Allah in it.

The siyaam of the month of Ramadhan provide an annual spiritual programme. Whilst keeping siyaam we refrain from 10 things from dawn to sunset for a whole month. Amongst these things are those like eating and drinking which are normally lawful and allowed. Refraining from the things which are normally allowed trains a person to have a control over his nafs so that when during the following 11 months he/she is tempted in doing something haraam, he/she has a greater strength to keep away.

We realise that it is taqwa that we need to gain spiritual strength and ultimately through that a deeper meaning to life and peace within our nafs. But, how do we go about it?

Firstly we must recognise, acknowledge and accept totally that Allah is far higher than our limited selves. Because we as human beings are self serving by nature, this acknowledgment requires a degree of humility.

Then we must accept that the nafs reaches out to and comes from a much higher spiritual place and in order to nourish it we need to familiarise ourselves with the wisdom and laws of it's Creator. That is to be able to know the day to day laws of Sharia' that relate to our lives. It is not enough just to educate ourselves about these laws but we must actualise them - that is put them to practice. For instance, we are told that Salaa is the me'raj of a mu'min, that is the ladder which connects the nafs to Allah, Sawm is that which converges the body to the nafs but if the siyaam of the month of Ramadhan do not make one muttaqee then they are merely days of starvation and thirst.

Spiritual strength can only be obtained from Siyaam if we are consciously aware of it's purpose and aim - to gain taqwa.

The spiritual programme can be enhanced by simple deeds as mentioned in the sermon of the Prophet (SAW) about the month of Ramadhan. Deeds like helping a neighbour in need, listening to a stranger in distress, provide food and clothing to someone who cannot afford it. Shall we spend a month of siyaam only to find that at the end of the day nothing has changed within ourselves or within society?

So next time you look into the mirror, ask yourself -

What have I before me? I recognise my body but do I detect the nafs within it? I know my bodily needs and try to keep it away from pain and harm but do I do the same for my nafs?

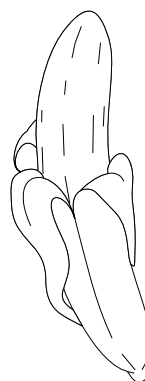
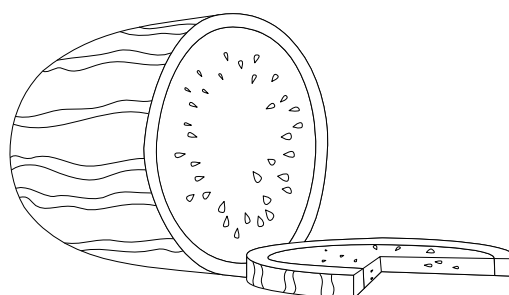
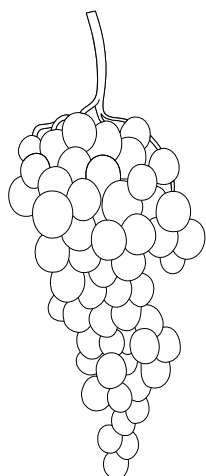
We all have the potential to get close to Allah - In Suratul Hujurat He says:

"...Indeed the most honorable of you with Allah is the one with taqwa...."

All we need to do is to recognise and tap the potential of our nafs. You see, it is like a bird and it's wings. Imagine if a bird was unaware that its' wings enabled it to fly; they would only add an extra burden of weight. But once it flaps it's wings, it lifts itself skywards. We all have wings - our nafs - that can lift us as high as we need and wish to go. All we have to do is learn to use them.

Fruits of Fasting

In each of the fruits below write a benefit (fruit) of fasting. You may colour the fruits.



Eiman (Faith), Taqwa, Nearness to Allah, Taqwa, Self-control, Forgiveness of sins.....

SALAA

Salaa is not merely a few minutes of rituals but that which concentrates our attention on the hereafter and Qiyama thus refraining one from evil.

Salaa is a cure for anxiety, distress and fear.

It is the support of the whole Muslim Umma (community). Each and every day on hearing the Adhan, Muslims assemble to pray salaa. On Friday, whole communities, villages and towns gather for Salaatul Jumu'a, likewise during Hajj Muslims from all over the world gather together for salaa.

Salaa is the me'raaj (ascension) of the mu'min.

Salaa is like a factory which produces human beings. It draws out the corruption and evil from a nation by working through each individual.

Imam Ali (AS) has said:

"If he/she who offers salaa knew how much grace Allah bestows upon him/her during the salaa, he/she would never lift his head from sajda."

To be able to attain the benefits of salaa it must be recited correctly and with full presence of mind. Just like a watch which is only useful if it shows the correct time. It would still look like a watch if it did not work but would not serve its purpose.

All attention must be on salaa and on the dhikr - lines of remembrance that it contains. When standing for salaa the heart must be free from everything else.

Having placed oneself before Allah, the Lord of the worlds, address Him, praise Him, confide in Him, and implore to Him

It befits one who prays salaa to be in a state of humility, dignified, in clean and tidy clothes, with scent and having cleaned his/her teeth and combed his/her hair.

Remembrance of Allah must be taught to the heart just like when one teaches words to a child stressing each one in order to get the child to repeat them. When one remembers

Allah with the tongue, and is occupied with training the heart, the outside helps the inside just as the heart of a child opens through the tongue.

Imam Hasan Al-Askery (AS) has said that one of the signs of a mu'min/a is that he/she prays 51 rakaats of salaa daily. This include the wajib salawaat (17 rakats) ; the nafila salawaat (23 rakats) and Salatush Shab (11 rakats).

Salatudh Shab is also known as Salatul Layl meaning the *prayers of night* and Salatut Tahajjud meaning *prayers of keeping awake at night*.

So important is Salatul Layl that the Prophet (SAW) said to Imam Ali (AS). three times : *'Alayka Bisalatil Layl '* which means *'On you the prayers of night '* - in other words *'It is incumbent on you the prayers of night'*.

The specific timing for praying Salatul Layl starts from midnight upto the time for praying Salatul Fajr . However, the best time to pray is just before Salatul Fajr.

In Suratu Bani Israil, aya 79, Allah says:

"And (in a part) of the night , pray tahajjud in addition to (what is wajib on you), maybe (through that) your Lord will raise you to a praised position."

A hadith from Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (AS) lists the benefits of Salatul Layl as told to Imam Ali (AS) by the Prophet (SAW). Some of them are that it is a means of gaining Allah's pleasure. The angels keep friends with one who prays Salatul Layl. Shaytan keeps away and it is a safety from enemies. One's good deeds and duas are accepted and one's livelihood increased. In the grave it provides light, comfortable bedding, companionship, and helps answer the questions of Munkar and Nakeer. On the day of Qiyama it will provide shelter and act as a barrier against the fire of Jahannam. It is also the key to Janna.

What better month than the month of Ramadhan to recite Salatul Layl especially in the nights of Qadr.

WORKSHEET ON SALATUL LAYL

Circle the correct answer.

1. Salatul Layl is prayed at:

- a. Time of Dhuhr
- b. Just at sunset when the sky is red
- c. Just after Asr
- d. After midnight up to Salatul Fajr.

2. Salatul Layl consists of:

- a. 2 rakaats b. 4 rakaats c. 3 Rakaats d. 11 Rakaats

3. Salatul Layl is also known as

- a. Salatul Tahajud b. Salatul Witr
- c. Salatul Ijara d. Salatul Khauf

4. Layl means

- a. Sunrise b. Sunset c. Night d. Afternoon

5. Salatul Layl can be prayed in its shortest version which consists of:

- a. 4 Rakaats b. 8 Rakaats c. 2 Rakaats d. 1 Rakaats

TAWBA

Once upon a time in a far away land, lived a king who was very wise and benevolent and cared deeply for his subjects and his country. After many years, he was blessed with a son who by definition became the prince. The king loved his son very much and prayed that the prince would be everything that not only the king and his subjects but also God expected of him.

But this was not to be a fairy tale. As the prince grew to be a man, he became everything that his father abhorred and he brought shame and disgrace to the king's household. The king tried everything in order to guide his son but even a king as great as this after having taken a horse to water could not make him drink. There came a time when the king had no choice but to banish his son from his kingdom and he issued a royal decree that the prince was no longer a prince.

Three days later the king bade farewell to his son for the last time and turned his face away. The prince began to ride to the edge of the kingdom, and for the last time bent down to drink water from a river in his father's kingdom.

For one brief moment there was remorse in the prince's heart for after all he was his father's son -

"I am sorry" he whispered "What I did was wrong!"

Because this is a fairy story, the king heard this and got off his throne and bridled his horse. The prince continued - *"I am very sorry! Father - I will not repeat these mistakes"*. On hearing this the king summoned his soldiers to accompany him to find his son.

The prince rectified the physical damage he had done and spiritually atoned for his sins. For every day of gluttony he fasted, for every night he had spent in pleasure he engaged in prayer.

The king caught up with his son just as he was about to leave the kingdom and said that out of all the lessons that he had taught his son - remorse was the most important and it was the one that his son had learnt the best. The prince was re appointed to his former station. And resumed his destiny to be the king.

We have a misconception that asking for forgiveness means tawba. However, tawba is the turning of us towards God but more importantly of God towards us, for in the story the king did not need the prince but the prince needed the king to fulfil his destiny.

Our destiny will be determined in the nights of laylatul Qadr and very much like the prince we will have to take the first step in order for a hundred to be taken towards us.

Imam Ali (AS) is reported to have said in a hadith quoted in Usulul Kaafi - in the chapter of Tawba in the book of Eiman wal Kufr -

“If I were to say - I am sorry my Rabb, God will instruct the recording angels to forget that which they have written of my sins.

If I was to say - I am sorry my Rabb, I will not repeat this offence, God will instruct parts of my body to conceal my sins.

If I were to rectify the consequence of my actions, God will instruct the earth to conceal the sins that I committed over it.

And if I were to spiritually atone in like then when I meet God there would be nothing to give witness against me regarding any sin.”

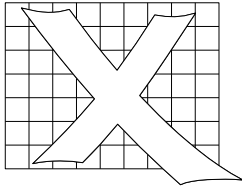
Imam Ali Zaynul aabedeem (AS) in Dua Tawba says:

“....Accept my tawba as You have promised and pardon my evil deeds as You have guaranteed and grant me Your love as you have laid down and you have my agreement, my Rabb - that I will never return to what You dislike and my guarantee that I will not go back to what you disapprove and my promise that I will give up all acts of disobedience to You.”

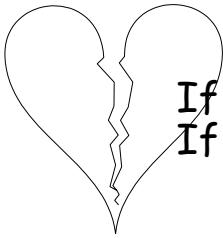
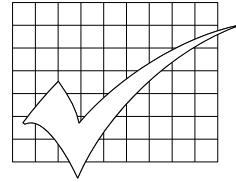
A hadith from the ma'sumeen states that when all eyes will be crying on the day of Qiyama there will be two sets of eyes which will not cry. Those that cried in tawba for their sins and those that kept awake at night in ibada.

The nights of Qadr are said to be any of the odd nights in the last ten days of the month of Ramadhan. Let us use the opportunity to sincerely turn to Allah in tawba and start afresh.

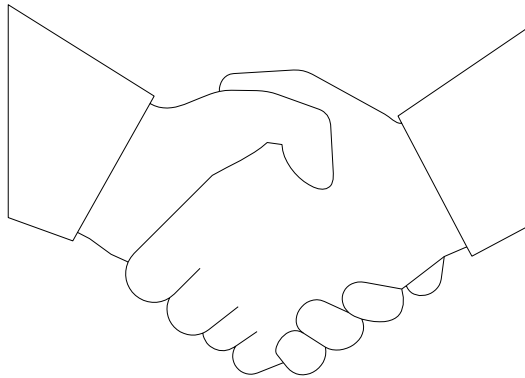
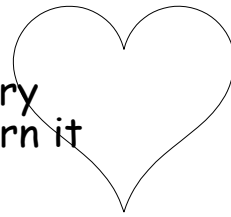
Tawba



Correct the wrong



If you've hurt someone, say sorry
If you've taken something, return it



Promise to try your best not to do it again

Say: Astaghfirullah rabbiy wa atubu ilayh

SAYYIDA KHADIJA (AS)

One of the deeds that all of us are certain that we do for tomorrow (the aakhira) is sadaqa or alms giving. We all know that sadaqa is considered a virtue and it has become a fabric of our societies.

The key to sadaqa lies in understanding that it is not only a gift to the receiver but to the giver as well. sadaqa is one of the simplest yet most profound ways to help refine the material world and unite with other human beings and Allah.

The best sadaqa is that which is given in secret for the Prophet (SAW) has said it is that which puts out the flame of Allah's anger.

The Prophet (SAW) has also said:

"On the day of Qiyama everyone will rest under the shadow of his/her sadaqa until the matters are settled between the people."

He has also said:

"Sadaqa reaches the hand of the Creator before it reaches the one you give it to."

Imam Ali Zaynul Aabedeen (AS) was once walking with his companions when they saw a faqeer. Imam gave him whatever he had and kissed his hand calling the faqeer his muhsin (one who has done ihsaan, in other words one who did him a favour). As they walked away, Imam's companions inquired as to why Imam had kissed his hand and called him his muhsin. "You are his muhsin" they said for you gave. Imam explained that was not one who took his money, multiplied it manifold times and deposited it with Allah a muhsin?

Imam Musa Al-Kadhim (AS) has said:

"Beware of refusing to give sadaqa and then spending twice as much in disobeying Allah."

Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) has said that if one gives sadaqa early in the morning he/she is saved from all the difficulties which descend in the daytime whilst sadaqa given at the end of the day will keep away all difficulties which descend at night

Sadaqa can be a smile, a good deed, an act of kindness, but of the many forms of sadqa, the most powerful is monetary. It is because we invest so much time, energy and labour into earning money that it represents the energy of life. So contributing money to sadaqa expresses the deepest form of giving and refining this physical world which is self orientated by nature.

The power of sadaqa is such that it does not allow one to become immersed in self interest. Sayyida Fatima Zahra (AS) could not bear to see her two young sons Hasan and Husayn (AS) ill. She made a vow with Allah to fast for three days.

With her the whole family fasted.

On the first day when they were about to break their fast, there was a knock on the door. It was a poor man who was hungry. All the family gave up their bread to the man and broke their fast with water.

Similarly on the next two days, an orphan and a prisoner came who were hungry. The family gave away their food.

Allah revealed Suratud Dahr in honour of their sadaqa. The criteria for sadaqa is taught by the family of Fatima Zahra (AS) and her family in this sura in ayaat 9 and 10:

"We feed you only for Allah's sake, we want no reward nor thanks for it. We fear from our Lord a difficult day of distress (Qiyama).."

Her mother too, was the first muhsina of Islam, giving all she had in the way of Allah.

Sayyida Khadija's father was a merchant like most of the tribe of Quraysh in Makka. He sent caravans to other cities to trade in the summer and winter. Her mother and father both died within 10 years of each other. Their wealth was divided amongst the children but it was Sayyida Khadija who took over the family business and expanded it. With the profit she made she helped the poor, widows, orphans, sick and the disabled people of Makka.

She had a cousin called Waraqa bin Naufal who was a very learned man and who was not an idol worshipper. Both Waraqa and Sayyida Khadija believed in one God.

Because of her excellent Akhlaq the Arabs (who at that time used to look down upon women) called her Tahira - the pure one. She was also known as the 'princess of Makka'

because of her wealth. A lot of Arab nobles and princes wanted to marry her but she refused all of them.

In 595 AD Sayyida Khadija was looking for someone to be in charge of her caravan to Syria. Abu Talib suggested the Prophet to her. She had heard of his trustworthiness and agreed to employ him although he did not have much trading experience. To help him she sent her slave Maysara. The trading caravan was a great success and when Sayyida Khadija heard of the Prophet's skills and excellent conduct she became his admirer.

Soon it was arranged for Sayyida Khadija to be married to the Prophet (SAW) Abu Talib read the Nikah on behalf of the Prophet whilst Waraqa read it for Sayyida Khadija. Abu Talib paid the *mehr* for his nephew and fed the people of Makka for 3 days in celebration. Sayyida Khadija too fed the people. The marriage was a very happy one and their first child was a son called Qasim. The second was Abdullah. Both died in infancy. Their third and last child was Sayyida Fatima Zahra (AS)

When the Prophet used to go to meditate in the cave of Hira on Jabal An-Noor it was Sayyida Khadija herself who would climb up there to give him his food and necessities. Sayyida Khadija was the first person to accept Islam as taught by the Prophet (SAW)

In 616 AD the Quraysh isolated the Bani Hashim (the family of the Prophet) and they took refuge in a ravine called *Shib e' Abu Talib*. Sayyida Khadija was there too and it was her wealth (which she had donated for Islam) that sustained the Muslims at that time. The siege lasted for 3 years during which time they experienced hunger, thirst, and the cold and heat of the desert.

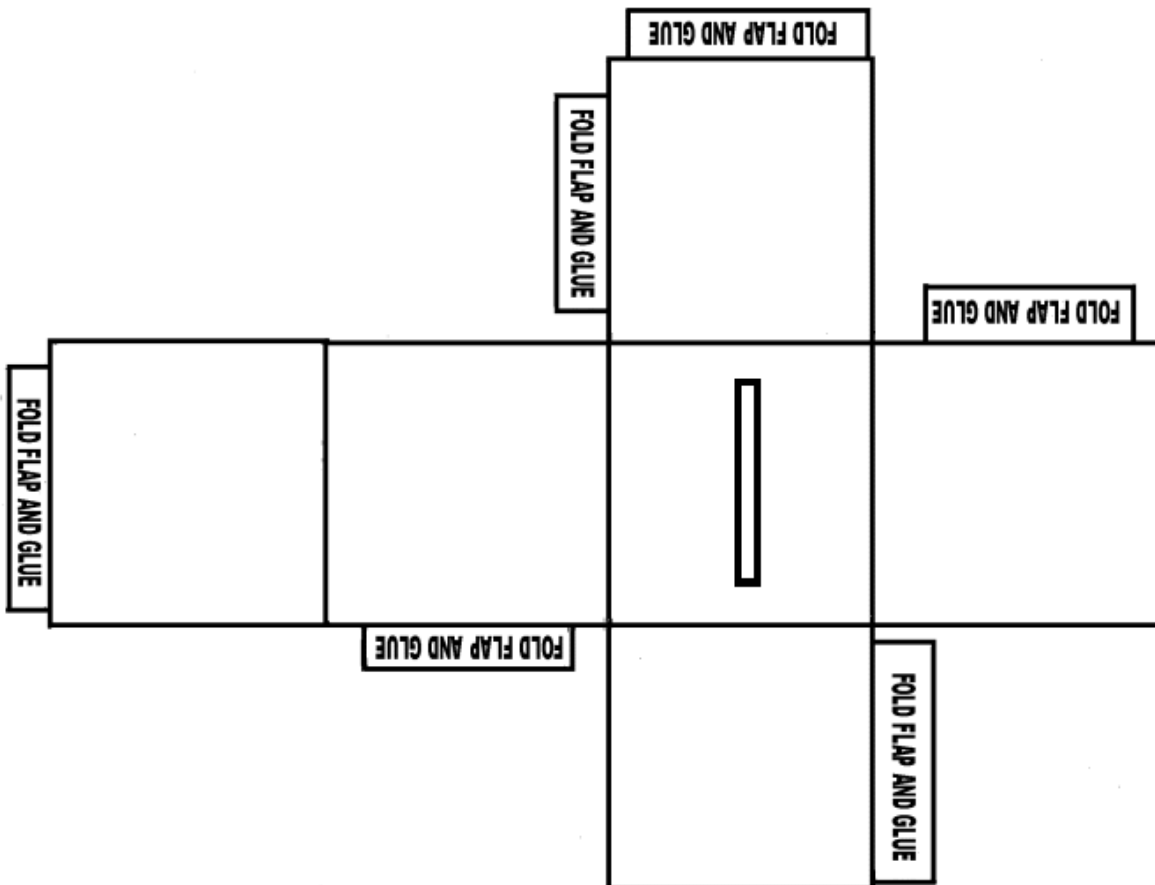
In 619 AD Sayyida Khadija died. The Prophet (SAW) had lost not only his wife and a friend, but a partner in the cause of Islam.

SAYYIDA KHADIJA (AS)

How to make a SADAQA box.

You will need:

- Card
- A pair of scissors
- Glue
- Decorating material



THE QUR'AN

The month of Ramadhan is the month of Qur'an. Let us make some resolutions in this month of Qur'an to study and act on the Qur'an. What makes the difference is not how many times we have been through the Qur'an but how many times the Qur'an has been through us. Take one aya and ponder at it's meaning.

It is said that sins will keep you away from the Qur'an or the Qur'an will keep you away from sins.

The Qur'an is Allah talking to us whilst dua is our conversation with him.

In order to be given life - in other words to awaken and enliven our nafs we need to respond to the Qur'an.

So, how are we to respond to it?

Firstly we must is to simply acknowledge that the Qur'an is a road map provided by Allah which illuminates the many winding dark paths of the world. It gives us an insight to see beyond the physical world. But like any road map we must know how to read it and understand it.

Therefore, firstly we must learn to recite the Qur'an correctly. That in itself without any understanding holds great reward.

Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (AS) has said:

"What stops one amongst you who has been busy in the day when he returns home to recite one sura before he/she sleeps? For every aya that he/she recites, ten good deeds are recorded and ten bad deeds erased.."

"It is your duty to recite the Qur'an because stages of Janna are in accordance with the number of ayaat of the Qur'an. On the day of Qiyama a reciter of the Qur'an will be told : Recite and ascend, and the more he/she recites the higher the ascension."

One Ishaq bin Ammar asked Imam As-Sadiq (AS):

"May my life be sacrificed for you. I have memorised the Qur'an. Is it more excellent for me to read from memory or shall I look at the text?"

Imam replied:

Recite whilst looking at the text for it is more excellent. Don't you know that even looking at the text of the Qur'an is a form of ibada?"

Imam continued: *"The one who reads the Qur'an from the text is gratifying his/her eyes, and bringing ease to his/her parents even if they are unbelievers."*

In the month of Ramadhan, the reward for recitation is increased manifold as the Prophet (SAW) mentions in his sermon about the month:

"...He/she who recites one aya of the holy Qur'an will be given the rewards of reciting the whole Qur'an during other months...."

The next step is to look at the translation and with the help of tafseer try and understand an aya at a time.

Ideally, endeavour to learn 'Arabic at some stage of your life for a translation of any other book - for example the Bible is still called the Bible but when a Qur'an is translated, it is called a translation of the Qur'an and not the Qur'an.

Let us not lull ourselves into thinking that it is not necessary to learn how to recite the 'Arabic text and that it is enough to know and understand the translation.

The Prophet (SAW) said to his companion Ma'adh:

"If you are eager for the life of the lucky ones. Desire the death of martyrs, wish for salvation on the day of Qiyama, want guidance when lost, then start the study of the Qur'an. This is because the Qur'an is the word of Allah, that which saves you from Shaytan and helpful in increasing good deeds."

Using a concordance, find all the ayaat that start with 'O you who believe!..' Taking one at a time, see if you can apply them in your life.... Ponder over each one and tell yourself - Allah is addressing me and asking me to do something...Am I following the instructions or not?

Find out more about the Qur'an. How was it revealed? Is it only a book of instructions? What does it say about the ahlulbayt? Does it mention space travel? Maybe you could look

up all the Qur'anic duas or all the names of Allah - The scope is endless and so with it the boost of life to the nafs.

Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (AS) has said:

"It is for a believer that he/she should not die but in a state of either learning the Qur'an or teaching it."

We are told that Sayyida Fizza who lived with Sayyida Fatima (AS) and her family in latter life only conversed with the ayaat of Qur'an. How many can we quote? Give yourself an achievable target for next year making sure it is ayaat that you can recite, understand and act upon.

Studying the Qur'an is not a passive act. It does not mean information transfer - rather it must reflect in our day to day living. It is a power that touches one's nafs.

Often we find that many of us worry about the ayaat of Qur'an which we do not understand when really to start with we should be troubled by the ayaat we do understand and how much we follow of them if that.

Let us start with the aya that we recite day in and day out before we start anything -

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

"I begin in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful."

What is the purpose of commanding human beings to begin every act in the name of Allah? The operative word here is name. When we wear name brands for instance we do that for a purpose - to be able to gain standing in a society where these names are recognised. A baby, for instance is named after someone whom one is fond of respected, thus reviving the memory of the name. Shaheed Murtaza Mutahhari in his book 'Understanding the Qur'an' writes that the reason why we begin in the name of Allah is..

He says "It is for the purpose of giving that act a sacred touch and making it blessed. When a human being who has a natural sentiment from Allah and considers Him a holy essence and a source of all Grace, begins an act in His name, it means that owing to His sanctity, nobility and greatness, the action to becomes sacred."

Let us consider this! Would we say Bismillah....before we abused someone or stretched out our hands to steal?

Another question that might come to mind when reciting بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ is what is the difference between Rahmaan and Raheem. Shaheed Murtaza Mutahhari writes:
“The word Rahmaan denotes excess and therefore...Rahmaan means that Allah’s mercy spreads everywhere and covers everything. ...The mercy of Allah has no exception. It does not include non-humans, nor does it include non-believers. It comprises the whole world....It is the extension of blessings to all existence while they exist, but many things are perishable. The word Raheem denotes stability....with it’s sense of stability and eternity it applies only to those who through their faith and good deeds have placed themselves in the path of Allah’s particular blessings. So Allah’s mercy is both universal and specific.”

We have only scraped the surface of studying the first aya of the Qur’an. Ponder over it again and again. Study the names of Allah which are found in the Qur’an thinking of how we can apply them into our lives every time you say بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Let us now look at some basic details about the Qur’an. We will start of with an from the Qur’an describing itself.

In Suratun Nahl, aya 89, Allah says:

“..We have revealed to you the book which clarifies every matter...”

Imam Ja’fer As-Sadiq (AS) has said:

"The Qur'an is living, its message never dies. It turns like the turn of day and night, it is in motion like the sun and moon. It will embrace the last of us, the way it embraced the first of us".

The Qur'an is that which was revealed as the Final message of Allah to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) during the last 23 years of his life. Every Prophet is granted the power to perform miracles in order to verify the truth of his message. The Qur'an is a standing and continuous miracle for all times and places. It is a living miracle.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) lived amongst the Arabs who were experts in language and literature and the Qur'an challenged them at their own art.

There are over 6000 ayaat in the Qur'an in 114 suwer. An aya means various things - a sign, miracle, wonder...

Suwer and ayaat are either Makki or Madani according to their place of revelation - Makka or Madina. Makki suwer mainly describe the basic faith whilst Madani deal with the rules for the code of life like salaa, sawm, zaka and khums...This division is not absolute because a Makkan sura may contain some Madinite ayaat and vice versa. e.g. Suratul Anfal revealed in Madina has ayaat 30 -40 revealed in Makka.

For convenience of reading the Qur'an has been divided into 30 equal parts called a Juz whose plural is Ajzaa without disturbing the original divisions formed by the ayaat and suwer to enable completion of reading in one month.

The Qur'an is also divided into seven equal sections - Manzil - it's plural being Manazil to enable the reader to complete the recitation on one week if so desired. This is written at the bottom of each page.

There are four wajib sajadat in the Qur'an which on hearing or reciting one must perform a sajda. It is not necessary to face qibla, or be in wudhoo.

The Qur'an

Match the columns

1 Sura

Huruf

Aya

Ambiya

1 Juz

114 Suwer

Harf

7 Manazil

Nabi

Aimma

I Manzil

30 Ajzaa

Imam

Ayaat

THE HOLY QURA'N

Check out your knowledge on the Qur'an with this simple quiz.

1. How many ayaat are there in the Qura'n?
2. There are 114 _____ in the Qur'an.
3. The word aya can mean _____.
4. There are _____ ayaat in Surah Jummah.
5. Surah _____ is recommended to be received on Thursday Night and on Friday.
6. The shortest surah in the Qur'an is _____ made up of _____ ayaat.
7. The longest surah is _____ of _____ ayaat.
8. The only surah that doesn't start with Bismilla is Surah _____
9. Name at least 5 Prophets mentioned in the Qur'an _____

_____ and _____ .
10. The plural of Surah is _____.
11. The Qura'n was revealed in which 2 places ?

a. Makka b. Syria c. Kufa d. Madina e. Kerbala
12. The Qur'an has been divided into 30 equal parts called _____
So that Qur'an can be completed over a month (30 days).
13. The Qur'an is also divided into seven equal sections called _____
_____ so that it can be completed in a week.

IMAM HASAN (AS)
WILADAT (BIRTHDAY) 15 RAMADHAN

So how should we celebrate our birthdays? Besides the receiving of cards and gifts it is an occasion to rethink our lives. How big is the gap between what I have done and what I can do? Am I spending my time properly or am I involved in things that distract me from Allah? Is my nafs any stronger from last year?

There is no better way to celebrate our birthdays then what we do for our ma'sumeen. Gather with family and friends and arrange a majlis to learn something meaningful. Do a special act of goodness so that you are not only saying that you are thankful to Allah for the life He has given you but you are showing it. Make a resolution to make the next year better than the last, and use the occasion to prepare and draw up a plan of action.

Imam Hasan (AS) was born on Tuesday the 15th of Ramadhan 3 A.H.

He was named by the Prophet (SAW) The name came from Allah through Jibrail as Hasan). The Prophet said to Imam Ali (AS) :

"O Ali! You are to me as Harun was to Musa. Prophet Harun had two sons called Shabbar and Shabbir. Shabbar translated in Arabic is Hasan".

He was the first grandson of the Prophet (SAW). and on the news of the birth, the prophet smiled showing all his teeth (One of the rare occasions of intense happiness for him).

On the 7th day 'Akeeka' was performed and it was the first 'Akeeka' in Islam. The Prophet arranged for a feast for the people of Madina.

He was the image of the Prophet and used to listen to his sermons intently and then relate all the sermons of the Prophet to his mother even at the age of 4-5 yrs. Once when Sayyida Fatima (AS) mentioned it to Imam Ali (AS) he said he too wished to listen to his son. He came into the house once and sat where Imam Hasan (AS) would not see him. When Imam Hasan (AS) came and started relating to his mother what the Prophet had said he stammered and could not reiterate. He said to his mother :

"I feel the presence of my father in the house and cannot continue".

Imam Hasan (AS) and Imam Husayn (AS) had an age difference of only 1yr and they grew up side by side with the same principles and goals.

Whenever Imam Hasan (AS) stood for wudhoo, he trembled and his face went pale. When asked why ? He would say

"Don't you know I am standing in front of my Creator?".

Whenever he was reciting Qur'an and came across an ayah beginning with "O you who believe..." He would immediately answer back "Labbaik, Allahumma Labbaik".(I am here, O Allah, I am here!!) People used to throng outside his house to hear him reciting Qur'an, so much so that the road would get blocked.

Once when one of his servants spilt hot food over him, Imam recited aya 134 of Suratu Aali Imran where Allah says:

"And those who swallow anger.....(Imam smiled - no anger) and forgive men.....(Imam forgave him) and Allah loves the doers of good.....(Imam freed him from slavery).

A man from Syria came to Madina and started abusing Imam Ali (AS) Imam Hasan (AS) told him that as he (the man) had just arrived from a long journey he had better first eat and rest. He could talk later.

After that the man told Imam "I arrived in Madina as your worst enemy and now I am the best of your admirers through your character".

Imam Hasan (AS)

Fold a piece of card and draw a heart on the front cover. Write Imam Hasan (AS) on it. Colour and decorate the heart.



Write a greeting inside the card .

e.g.

<p>In Hadithe Kisaa, Sayyida Fatima Zahra (AS) addressed her son Imam Hasan (A .S) as "Thamarata fuaadiy" - Delight of my heart .</p>	<p>To, My dearest Mummy & Papa,</p> <p>On this day I promise that I will try my best to follow the teachings of my Imam and I hope always to remain your thamarata fuaadiy .</p> <p>Lots & Lots of Love & Duas</p>
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BATTLE OF BADR

17 RAMADHAN

The battle of Badr was won by a small band of Muslims against a large army on the 17th of the month of Ramadhan. There was both planning of strategies and strength in eiman which gave victory. It was the first of the great battles of Islam.

When the Prophet heard the news that there was a trade caravan going to Syria from Makka under the leadership of Abu Sufyan he sent two men to gather information about it. It was discovered that it was a large caravan in which all the Makkans had shares. The Quraysh had decided to put all their savings into it and use the profits on arms, horses and other items of war to use against the Muslims.

The news was disturbing. The Prophet (SAW) left Madina with 313 men, 2 horses and 70 camels to go to Badr which was a stopping point for the caravans.

The Quraysh had confiscated all the property of all the Muslims who had left Makka for Madina and the Prophet therefore decided to confiscate the property of the caravan in compensation.

Abu Sufyan feared an attack from the Muslims and sent a messenger to Makka telling them of his fears. On receiving the message, an army of 1000 men, 100 horses and 700 camels under the leadership of Abu Jahl left Makka to go to Badr.

Meanwhile Abu Sufyan took a different route back to Makka avoiding Badr. Once he was back in Makka he called Abu Jahl back but Abu Jahl was too proud and wanted to crush the Muslims with his large army.

The two armies met at Badr on the 17 of the month of Ramadhan 2 A.H.

In the beginning as per Arab custom, single combat (one to one) took place. The famous Quraysh warriors Utbah, Shayba and Walid came to challenge three 'Ansars' from Madina. The Quraysh refused to fight any of the 'Ansars', demanding their 'equals' and so the

Prophet (SAW) sent Ubayda, Hamza and Imam Ali (AS) The three Makkans were killed (Ubayda was hurt). The Quraysh got disturbed and began attacking en masse.

In the thick of the battle the Prophet prayed to Allah. In Surat ul Anfal Allah gave the answer in aya 8 and 9

"When you asked for help from your Lord, He answered you. Indeed I will aid you with a thousand of the angels in rows after rows".

In Suratu Aali Imran, aya 22, He says:

"And indeed Allah assisted you at Badr when you were weak, so be careful (to your duty) to Allah so that you may be of the thankful ones. When you said to the believers 'Does it not suffice you that your Lord should assist you with three thousand angels sent down.. "

The Makkans got frightened and began to retreat. The sight of so many angels struck terror in their hearts.

70 prisoners were taken by the Muslims. The prisoners were treated with kindness and some became Muslims. In later days some of the prisoners said:

"Blessed be the men of Madina, they made us ride whilst they walked, they gave us wheat and bread to eat when there was little of it contenting themselves with plain dates".

The prisoners were asked to gain their freedom by teaching 10 Muslims to read and write.

The battle of Badr strengthened the faith of the Muslims.

BATTLE OF BADR

A scene from The Message Showing the Makkans at the beginning of the battle of Badr



Who was the leader of the caravan that was travelling from Makkah to Syria?

When did the Battle of Badr happen?

How many men were there in the army of the Makkans? And in the army of the Prophet (SAW)?

IMAM ALI (AS)

SHAHADAT

Besides being one of the possible nights of Qadr the 19th of the month of Ramadhan is a very sad day for us. It is the anniversary of the day when Imam Ali (AS) was fatally wounded by the blow of a poisonous sword by one Abdur Rahmaan Ibn Muljim.

When Imam was leaving home on the morning of the 19th, the household birds began to make a great noise. When the servant came to quieten them, Imam said "Leave them alone for their cries are only lamenting over my coming death".

As he came to the masjid of Kufa for his morning prayers he awoke those who were sleeping including, Abdur Rahmaan bin Muljim who was sleeping on his stomach, hiding the poisoned sword under him. Imam told him that it was unhealthy to sleep on his front and also that he had a sword under his clothing which he was going to use for evil intentions.

Imam then gave Adhaan and proceeded to lead prayers. In the first rakaat as he was arising from sajda he was struck on the head with the poisoned sword by ibn Muljim, which caused a deep wound. In the confusion ibn Muljim started running. Imam finished his second Sujud and requested Imam Hasan to complete the prayers. He uttered the words "Fuztu Birabbil Ka'aba" (I have been successful with the lord of the Ka'ba).

The murderer was caught and brought before Imam Ali (AS) When Imam saw the ropes that ibn Muljim was tied in, Imam ordered them to be loosened and told the Muslims to treat him humanely. Ibn Muljim, on hearing this, started crying and Imam told him

"It is too late to repent now. Was I a bad Imam or an unjust ruler?"

He ordered that ibn Muljim should not be tortured.

He was carried to his house and when he saw the bright day he said:

"O day! You can bear testimony to the fact that during the lifetime of Ali you never once dawned and found me sleeping".

He also said:

"Tomorrow you will look back to my time and my innermost thoughts will be revealed to you. Then you will recognise me after I have left my position and another has taken my place".

Let us look at some extracts from the will of Imam Ali (AS) written shortly before his death:

"Yesterday I was your companion, today I am a lesson for you, whilst tomorrow I shall have left you.

I am just like a night traveller who reaches the spring (in the morning) or like the seeker who secures his aim.

Fear Allah, to your affairs in order, and maintain good relations amongst yourselves for I have heard the Prophet say "Improvement of mutual differences is better than general praying and fasting".

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view when dealing with *orphans*.

Do not let them starve and they should not be ruined in your presence.

Fear Allah and Keep Allah in view in the matter of your *neighbours* because they were the subject of the Prophet's advice. He went on advising in their favour till we thought he would allow them a share in inheritance.

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view in the matter of *prayers*, because it is the pillar of religion.

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view in the matter of your Lord's house - *Ka'ba*. Do not forsake it as long as you live.

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view in the matter of *jihad* with the help of your *property, lives* and *tongues*.

Imam Hasan and Husayn (AS) gave their father ghusl and kafan and buried him in what is now known as Najaf in Iraq. As they covered the grave, the two orphaned brothers hugged each other and wept.

As they were returning from burying their father, they heard a voice crying out:

“ O you who used to come and feed me and tend my wounds! Where are you? I have not seen you for three days now!”

The brothers went towards the voice to find a leper who was weeping. He had been fed, washed and looked after by Imam Ali (AS) who used to come and sit with him.

When Imam Hasan and Husayn (AS) gently broke the news to him that his benefactor was no longer, he asked to be taken to the grave.

On reaching the grave he fell on it sobbing and breathed his last.

MY ASPIRATIONS

Ramadhan 40 A.H

1. Fear Allah
 2. Put your affairs right.
 3. Maintain good relations
Amongst yourself.
 4. Take care of the
Orphans.
 5. Be kind to your neighbours.
 6. Be mindfull of your prayers.
 7. Do not forsake the Ka'aba.
 8. Do jihad with your
property, life and tongue...
-

Ali ibn Abi Talib.(AS)

MY THOUGHTS

I would like the world to be a better place, I can
do this by:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

LAYLATUL QADR

The nights of Qadr are said to be any of the odd nights in the last ten days of the month of Ramadhan.

The Prophet (SAW) has said:

"Allah has favoured Friday over all other days, the month of Ramadhan over all other months, and Laylatul Qadr over all other nights."

This name was used for Laylatul Qadr because Allah determines in it for everyone all what will happen the entire next year..

Prophet Musa (AS) once addressed Allah saying: "Ya Rabbiy! I desire to be near to You."

Allah said: "Whoever desires nearness to Me is one who remains awake during Laylatul Qadr (doing ibada)."

Prophet Musa (AS) said:

"Ya Rabbiy! I wish to earn Your mercy."

Allah replied: "My mercy is granted to anyone who is merciful to the underprivileged during Laylatul Qadr."

Prophet Musa (AS) said:

"Ya Rabbiy! I wish to pass on the right path."

Allah replied: "This is granted to anyone who gives sadaqa during Laylatul Qadr."

Prophet Musa (AS) said:

"Ya Rabbiy! I wish to enjoy the trees and fruits of Janna!"

Allah replied: "This is granted to anyone who praises Me during Laylatul Qadr."

Prophet Musa (AS) said:

"Ya Rabbiy! I wish to achieve salvation from the fire!"

Allah replied: "This is granted to anyone who seeks forgiveness during Laylatul Qadr."

Prophet Musa (AS) said:

"Ya Rabbiy! I wish to achieve Your pleasure!"

Allah replied: "I shall be pleased with anyone who prays two (mustahab) rak'ats salaa during Laylatul Qadr."

Let us try and answer some questions about Laylatul Qadr?

What does the word 'Qadr' mean?

Qadr means decree and measure. It also means destiny because it is according to a measure that things unfold and develop.

This name was used for Laylatul Qadr because Allah determines in it for everyone all what will happen the entire next year. The "Qadr" in this sense means destiny. According to al-Qummi's Tafsir, as explained on p. 432 of its second volume, such destiny includes life and death, sustenance, abundance of crops or famine and everything good or bad. This means that Allah determines in this night each and every event to occur during the next year to any and all of His creation.

When is laylatul Qadr?

The night of Qadr is said to be any one of the odd nights in the last ten days of the month of Ramadhan. Our ma'sumeen have given more importance to the 19th, 21st and 23rd and 27th nights out of which the 23rd night is regarded as the most adheem.

What is so special about Laylatul Qadr?

The Prophet (SAW) has said:

"Allah has favoured Friday over all other days, the month of Ramadhan over all other months, and Laylatul Qadr over all other nights."

The Qur'an was revealed on laylatul Qadr as Allah says in Suratul Qadr. Let us look at Suratul Qadr.

Firstly, the merits of reciting it. The Prophet (SAW) has said:

"For anyone who recites Suratul Qadr, Allah writes down a good deed for every particle of dust where he sits while reciting it."

"It is a good companion for anyone who wishes to pay off his debt, strengthen his/her faith, prolong life-span, and improve his/her condition."

Sulayman al-Marzawi asked Imam Ali Ar-Ridha (AS):

It is recommended to recite Suratul Qadr a thousand times on Laylatul Qadr or as many times as possible.

After Bismillah.. the first two ayaat say:

"Indeed we sent it (the Qur'an) on Laylatul Qadr!"

And what will make you know what Laylatul Qadr is?

It is therefore the night when the Qur'an as a whole was revealed. According to one hadith, Suratul Fatiha was revealed on that night and as the rest of the Qur'an is an explanation of Suratul Fatiha, it is as though the whole Qur'an was revealed. Suratul Fatiha is known as ummul Kitab - the mother of the book.

Another hadith states that it is the night when the the whole of the Qur'an was sent down to Baytul Ma'mur - a place in the heavens directly above the Ka'ba and then revealed piecemeal to the Prophet (SAW) over 23 years. The Prophet (SAW) visited baytul m'amur when he went on me'raj.

The sura then continues:

"Laylatul Qadr is better than a thousand nights."

Normally when one compares there is a qualitative statement. For example - a particular brand is better than another. Here the comparison is quantitative - £1 in sadaqa is equivalent to £30,000, recitation of 1 aya of Qur'an is equivalent to the recitation of 30,000 ayaat, 2 rakaat salaa equivalent to 60,000 rakats...

Finally:

"The angels and the ruh descend in it with the permission of their Rabb with all the commands. Peace! It is until the break of dawn"

The coming to the earth of the angels and the ruh during the night continues from the time of Prophet Adam (AS) until the day of Qiyama. The place of descent is a human heart which must be ma'sum. Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (AS) has said:

"Argue against those who deny the continuity of the divine Imam on earth with this sura."

Some mufasssireen have said that ruh is the angel Jibrail.

Imam Ali Ridha (AS) has said:

"He who sleeps in this night does not know what he/she has missed. Had he/she known he/she would not have slept."

It is recommended to stay awake and reflect even if one does not perform any ibada.

One of the things which helps one to keep awake is to eat little during the day. Sayyida fatima Zahra (AS) used to feed her family a light meal in the day preceding laylatul qadr.

Three things are recommended on this night.

1. To give sadaqa at the beginning and at the end of the night.
2. To remember Allah a lot and doing dua ending the night with Salatul layl.
3. Finally, ghusl at the beginning of the night with the niyya of mustahab qurbatan ilallah.

It is recommended that we recite Dua Tawba and Dua Makarimul Akhlaq. We begin with tawba for we need to cleanse ourselves before we beautify ourselves with the advice in Dua Makarimul Akhlaq.

Let us look at some extracts from both these duas:

".....O Allah! I do tawba (I turn to you) in this position from:

my sins, the major and the minor,

my evil deeds, the hidden and the open,

my errors, past and recent.....

And You have said, O my God, in Your established book,

that You accept the tawba from your devotees,

that You pardon sins,

and that You love those who do tawba.

Then accept my tawba, as You have promised,

and pardon my evil deeds as You have guaranteed...."

From Dua Makarimul Akhlaq:

"O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad.

Raise my eiman to reach the most perfect eiman,

and make my certainty the most excellent of certainties,

Make my niyya the best of niyyaat,

and my actions the best of actions..."

"....raise me not a single degree with people unless You have lowered me within myself with an equal amount.."

"..O Allah! seal my (life) term with Your pardon.."

"..

It is also recommended to recite Suratu Rum, Suratul Ankabut and Suratud Dukhan. Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (AS) has said that whoever recites the suwer of Rum and Ankabut on Laylatul Qadr with mind and heart will surely enter Janna without exception.....and indeed these two suwer have a high position with Allah.

In Suratud Dukhan there is an indirect reference made to the night of Qadr. It was the first time the Muslims were informed about the night.

An a'maal that is synonymous with Laylatul Qadr is where we place the Qur'an on our heads and recite the names of the ma'sumeen.

In this a'mal we are following the Prophet (SAW) who in his sermon at Ghadeer e Khum said *"O my followers! I am leaving behind two heavy (valuable) things as legacies to you and it is to be seen how you behave with these two legacies of mine"*

He was asked what these two valuable things were to which he replied:

"On of them is the book of Allah...and the other thing is my progeny and my Ahlulbayt. Allah has informed me that these two things will not get separated from each other."

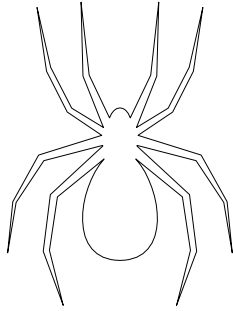
"O people! Do not seek precedence over the Qur'an and over my progeny, and do not be negligent in your behaviour towards them, lest you be destroyed."

We put the Qur'an on our heads demonstrating our acceptance of it's authority and utter the names of the ma'sumeen on our lips. Remember, the book is the quiet Qur'an whilst the ma'sumeen are the expressive Qur'an.

If possible on this night we recite the Dua Jawshan Kabeer. Jawshan means an armour and it is a unique dua containing Asmaaul Husna (the most beautiful names of Allah). It is quoted in Mafatihul Jinaan that imam Ali Zaynul Aabedeen (AS) has said that this dua was brought to the Prophet (SAW) by Jibrail when in one battle his heavy armour was giving him difficulty. Allah had sent the dua as a means of protection for the Prophet (SAW) and his Umma.

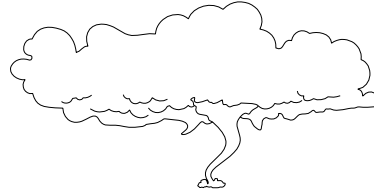
Laylatul Qadr

Draw the web



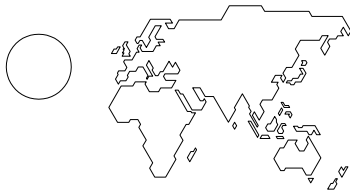
Sura Al-Ankabut

Colour in
the smoke (dukhan)



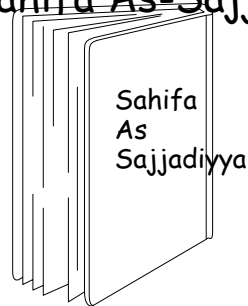
Sura Ad-Dukhan

Write 'R' for the
Romans in the circle



Sura Ar-Room

Who wrote the Duas
in Sahifa As-Sajjadiyya?



Dua
Makarimul Akhlaq

What will you
do Tawba for?



Dua e Tawba

JUMUA'TUL WIDAA

THE FAREWELL FRIDAY OF RAMADHAN

The last Friday in the month of Ramadhan is known as Jumua'tul Widaa. It is a sad occasion for we bid goodbye to the month in which we are the guests of Allah - a month whose blessings are unmatched. Let us look at some extracts from the duas by Imam Zaynul Aabideen (AS) and Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (AS) bidding farewell to the month.

"..Salams to you, o object of hope whose separation causes grief..,

Salams to you, o friend who became familiar on arrival and delighted us and makes us feel lonely and sad when it leaves....,

Salams to you, o helper who helped against Shaytan, o companion who made the path to goodness easy,

..Salams to you, what a great eraser of sins you are..,

Salams to you, o month with which no other days can compete....,

Salams to you, how much did we long for you and how intense will be our eagerness for you tomorrow (for you to come again)....

Ya Allah! whatever sin, great or small, we may have committed...whatever wrong we did in this month deliberately or in error thus doing dhulm to our own nafs, I send salawat on Muhammad and his ahlulbayt,.....forgive us with Your pardon...."

The word jumua' in itself means congregation. It is a day for congregational prayers, a weekly demonstration of brotherhood of Islam and the unity of the believers.

Daily prayers are said individually or in the local mosque. On Jumua' Muslims within the radius of about 5 miles attend one congregational prayer. Twice a year on Eid Muslims of a whole area (city) meet and once a year the international assembly of Muslims is at Makka for Hajj.

The first Jumua' prayers were held at Quba - 3.5 miles from Madina. When the Prophet (SAW) arrived at Quba on his way from Makka during hijra he first arranged for the building of a masjid there. Then he delivered a sermon and offered the Friday prayers before proceeding to Makka.

The Prophet (SAW) has said:

“Indeed the 24 hours of the night and day of Friday belong to Allah, in every hour there are six hundred thousand opportunities of freedom from the fire.”

Remember that the night precedes the day and therefore Jumua’ begins at maghrib on Thursday.

The Prophet (SAW) has also said:

The recompense for deeds on Friday is twice as much. So avoid sins and perform good deeds to gain more thawab.”

Imam Muhammad Al Baqir (AS) has said:

“As soon as the sun sets and Friday begins, Allah orders an angel to announce - Is there any mu’min abd who before the night ends asks for safety in this world and peace in the hereafter so I may grant it to him/her?

Is there any mu’min abd who turns to me in tawba so I may forgive him/her?

Is there any mu’min abd who is in distress, seeks livelihood, who is in distress, or seeks health in illness, or freedom from captivity, or gain in times of loss....I will grant him/her whatever is asked for if I am called upon tonight.”

It is highly recommended to do the ghusl of Jumua’ preferably between Fajr and Dhuhr (as near to dhuhr as possible). The Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said to Imam Ali (AS):

“Ya Ali! Perform ghusl on Friday even if it means that by purchasing the water you will have to give up a days food...”

Wearing neat clean clothes, cutting nails, trimming hair and applying scent are all recommended for it is a day of Eid.

Reciting of Ayatul Kursi, Suratul Jumua’, Suratul Ikhlas and Salawaat are also recommended.

Jumua’ is associated with the Imam of our time, Imam Muhammad Al Mahdi (AS). He was born on a Friday and it is reported that in ahadith that the dhuhur of Imam will be on a Friday. It is highly recommended to give sadaqa for his safety on Jumua’ and recite the Dua An-Nudba and ziyara of Imam Mahdi (AS)

It is a day when we should remember our marhumeen and pray for their maghfira, give sadaqa and do good deeds for them especially in the month of Ramadhan. There is no way to replace a loved one who has died but by doing virtue in their memory we build a living memorial. Dedicate at least Jumu'a to the marhumeen.

Let us look at some extracts from Dua Nudba:

"...Where is the son of the chosen Prophet? The son of Ali Al-Murtadha, the son of Khadija..the son of Fatima...It breaks my heart when O look at all that has been created and I cannot see you, nor hear a whisper about your whereabouts, nor any secret communication.....I eagerly long for you who is in ghayba....O son of Ahmed! Can you not arrange our meeting?...How long shall we keep waiting for you..?..When shall we be happy and see your radiance..."

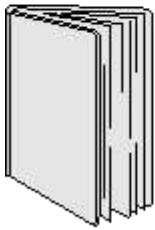
"O Allah! Let us be with him when he makes peace, and frees humankind from fear...spreads virtue and justice, so that we may do our best to promote his cause through Your rahma....Accept our dua, forgive our sins, fulfil our desires"

It is also recommended to devote Friday in learning about religion.

FRIDAY

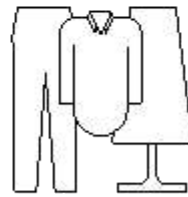
Yawmul Jumua'

Circle the things recommended to do on Jumua'



Learn about religion

Visit graves of mu'mineen



Wear neat clean clothes

Go shopping

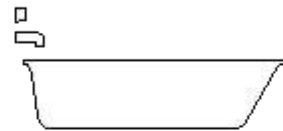


Watch TV &/or play computer games

Cut nails



Play games

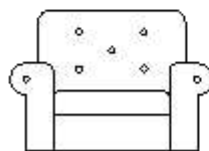


Have a long relaxing bath

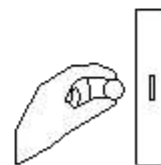
Recite salawat



Do ghusl of Jumua'



Relax



Give sadaqa

OVERVIEW OF THE MONTH OF RAMADHAN

Let us do a review of the month of Ramadhan which is closing and reflect in our own individual ways as to where we have reached on the ladder of taqwa.

Firstly, some practical pointers. Most of us in this month are aware of the Islamic date and the timing for salaa exactly to the minute. A habit once kept for a month is easily continued if desired. Salaa is the key to management - once we organise our day around salaa, we will find that although we cannot add more minutes to the day but we will be able to focus and utilise each moment making it into a meaningful one.

Another habit most of us have Insha'Allah instilled within us is the recitation of Qur'an. It is a habit whose rewards and spinoffs are countless. The least we can do is recite at least ten ayaat a day. Read them loudly repeating the same ten after each wajib salaa until they ring in your ears. At the end of the day when you have a little more time, look at one of the ayaat, and ponder over it's meaning. How does it relate to your life?

In Suratun Nahl, aya Allah says:

"..We have revealed to you the book which clarifies every matter..."

Listen to the following job application! Would you give the applicant a job in your family?

"I would like a job as a teacher and advisor to your family. I will never take a holiday.

I am always truthful, I will be up in the morning as early as anyone wishes and stay up as late as you wish.

I will help solve all your problems, I will heal all your illnesses and answer all your questions.

I will solve all your differences in opinions and give you all the information you will ever need.

In short I will give you all the knowledge that will ensure your success in the world and in the hereafter.

I am the Qur'an - Do I get the job?"

We have also made a habit of learning something new everyday. Maybe we can continue this by reading or listening as a family.

By fasting we appreciate and recognise the pangs of hunger and thirst felt by those who are in need of basic necessities like food and drink. At least we could look forward to a filling iftaar; there are people all over the world who are less well off than ourselves. Let us store the feeling and be able to contribute to charity and serve humanity in the next eleven months. Ask yourself every night-

Is anybody happier because you passed his/her way?

Does anyone remember that you spoke to him/her today?

Can you say tonight, in parting with the day that's slipping fast, that you helped a single brother/sister of the many that you passed?

Is a single heart rejoicing over what you did or said?

Does the man whose hopes were fading now with courage look ahead?

Did you leave a trail of kindness, or a scar of discontent?

As you close your eyes in slumber, do you think that Allah will say,

"You have earned one more tomorrow by the work you did today?"

Finally, the best deed of the month as taught to us by the Prophet (SAW) is keeping away from that which is haram. Let us make resolutions of keeping away from that which is haraam. Sometimes it is the little things that we probably do not even regard as sins that we need to put the most effort in to avoid. The little white lie, the gossiping, the mocking, the odd qadha salaa, the small injustices....

A man wrote to Abu Dharr who was a respected companion of the Prophet (SAW) for some good advice. Abu Dharr asked him not to do dhulm to the one he loved the most.

When the man received the reply he was a little disappointed. What was Abu Dharr trying to say? How would anyone do dhulm on the one he loved the most? He decided to write back to Abu Dharr asking for an explanation.

Abu Dharr replied:

"The meaning is quite simple. To every living being the most loved one is the self (nafs). To you, your nafs is the most beloved and therefore I meant for you not to do dhulm on your nafs."

"Remember, when one commits a sin and acts against the laws of Allah, one harms one self."

Someone asked Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS)

"What is the smallest punishable sin (dhulm) that one commits against another person?"

Imam asked him to stretch his hand. Then Imam asked for permission to squeeze it.

Imam squeezed his hand gently. The man gasped a little.

Imam said:

"That is the smallest punishable sin."

EID UL FITR

We associate the coming of Eid to giving especially to those who are less fortunate than ourselves. During the month of Ramadhan we become familiar with the experience of the needy and poor who stay hungry not out of choice but because of lack of food. By fasting we appreciate the blessings bestowed upon us by Allah and become charitable towards those in need. As if to re-enforce the idea in our minds, Allah has made a wajib charity of Zakat ul Fitr at the end of the month of Ramadhan.

Fitra becomes wajib after the moon of Shawwal is sighted and must be given from that which is the staple food of the giver like wheat, barley, dates, raisins, rice, milk ...etc..The amount is approximately 3 kg of the food or its cash value. It is to be given to a needy person.

In Sahifatus Sajjadiyya, Imam Ali Zaynul Aabedeen (AS) in his dua for eid says:

"O Allah ! Bless us in the day of our Eid and our fast breaking and let it be the best day that has passed over us."

Eid is an Arabic word derived from root of *a-w-d*. Literally it means a recurring event. In Islam it denotes the festivals of Islam. The word *Eid* occurs in the Qur'an once meaning a joyous recurring occasion.

In Suratul Maa'ida, aya 114, Allah says:

"Isa the son of Maryam said : O Allah, our Lord! send down to us food from heaven which should be to us a Eid (joyous recurring occasion), to the first of us and for last of us, and a sign from You, and grant us means of subsistence, and You are the best of Providers."

Human history has known festivals from the earliest days of man on earth. Human beings have celebrated festivals ever since they knew communal life. Ancient Egyptians had one called the day of adornment. It was during one such festival that Prophet Musa (AS) defeated the magicians.

Eid ul Fitr is the festival that marks the end of the month of Ramadhan. Fitr means to break and it therefore marks the breaking of the fasting period and of all evil habits. Happiness is observed at attaining spiritual upliftment after a month of fasting.

Imam Ali (AS) has said that Eid is a day of happiness for those whose fasts and prayers have been accepted by Allah. He has also said that Eid is the day in which one has committed no sins.

Imam Ali Zaynul Aabedeen (AS) in his dua for Eid says:

“O Allah!...write down for us the reward of those who kept siyaam in the month of Ramadhan and did Your ibada....Indeed we do tawba on this day of fitr which you have made for us an Eid,,,of every sin we committed....of evil thoughts we entertained; this is the tawba of one who secretly does not wish to sin....a sincere tawba, therefore accept it from us and be pleased with us...”

MORE ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

Make your own prayer rugs. Take pillow cases decorate them with fabric paint.

Make small mosques out of boxes. Decorate them and then cut a small slot in the top so the boxes can be used as banks to hold loose change.

Make Kabah pop-up cards for Eid to give to friends & family.

Make your own tin can luminary to light during the nights of Lailat Al Qadr.

Make a moon phase calendar (picture or cutout of the moon for each day of Ramadan) and have an easy activity for the kids to do every day (like kissing mum or dad, cleaning one's room, eating a goodie, recite one's favorite surah.....

Make collage of things we do in Ramadan.

Learn how to calculate Zakatul Fitr and have kids help you determine where the Zakat should go...let them give it also.

Get a book about Islamic art and/or calligraphy and pick your favorite and try to reproduce it (at least on paper using crayons, colored sand, pieces of cut up construction paper for mosaic tiles, glitter glue, etc.) .

String up lights either inside the house or outside to be plugged in at maghrib.

Send Ramadan cards to friends either snail mail or e-cards.

Make homemade gifts for Muslim friends, schoolmates and teachers.



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