

The Holy Month of Ramadan Ramadan

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"O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil." Holy Qur'an 2:183

Around the world literally billions of people will take part in an annual spiritual and physical observance designed to promote advancement of the human being and healing. Fasting in the month of Ramadan, the holy month observed by Muslims across the globe, begins Monday Aug. 1, 2011 and will conclude 30 days later.

Ramadan commemorates the revelation of the Holy Qur'an given to Prophet Muhammad of Arabia some 1,400 years ago. Contained in the revelation is an injunction for the Believers to fast as part of a prescription for healing ailments of the body, mind and soul and to especially focus on their spiritual development in this most sacred of months.

When Ramadan is discussed in the West, the focus is usually on the abstention from food and drink during the daylight hours, which is part of the divine command. What is often lost is the beauty of the opportunity to stand and refresh oneself, to shed bad habits that may have been picked up during the year and to again fervently seek the pleasure and blessings of Almighty God Allah.

"Fasting, one of the main pillars of Islam, is a principle that must be practiced by every believing Muslim. In fact, fasting has been enjoined in every age by every prophet that has come to reform the conduct of man," the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan has said in a message devoted to Ramadan.

"Since fasting is given to us as a prescription—and a prescription is given to us by a doctor, telling us to take a certain medicine at and for a specified time, to effect a cure for a certain illness—in this case, Almighty God Allah is The Doctor prescribing for all of humanity. And now we are speaking specifically to the Black people of America, that fasting is to be used as a cure for a sick spiritual, moral, social and physical condition.

"The Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us that fasting produces discipline. How? We know that we are creatures with desires and basic human needs: Food, shelter, and love. We need to be respected in our community. We have a hunger for love, and for expressing our own being. All of these hungers, all of these needs, must be disciplined and controlled if society is to be successful," he said.

If we desire success, we must follow guidelines laid down that will lead to success, observance of the month of Ramadan is among those guidelines.

In addition to the fasting and abstaining from sexual relations with wives and husbands during the daylight hours, Muslims are instructed not to engage in arguments or discord during this month. The Muslims also devote more time to reading divine scripture, the Holy Qur'an, and are to read one part of the book every day. If that reading schedule is adhered to, this wonderful book containing the words and divine wisdom of Allah will be completed in 30 days.

Consider what such immersion in a pure word from the Lord of the Worlds can do to resurrect the spirit and provide comfort to those suffering in a world where spiritual values are hardly celebrated and where righteous conduct and adherence to right principles are mocked. Yet it is those everlasting principles of good and right that will bring the relief sought in so many ways and the harmony that seems to be so hard to find in this life.

The benefit of Ramadan does not have to be limited solely to those who declare themselves to be Muslims, the principles can bring good to anyone who would follow these divine dictates. Ramadan makes allowances for the sick and those who are on a journey, so those who suffer from ailments can make wise choices and still follow what Allah (God) has ordained.

So as this blessed month begins, let us commit our entire being to following the commands of God as best we can and challenge ourselves to practice this important ritual as best we can—to fast, to pray, to read the divine word and to avoid discord.

Such an observance would be of great benefit to our individual lives and to the life of our entire community

Fasting Strengthens Discipline
By The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan



Related Article:

Louis Farrakhan

By the Honorable Minister

[Editor's note: On May 16, 1988, Minister Farrakhan called to The Final Call newspaper office from the United Arab Emirates to give this special message of encouragement and inspiration to the Muslim followers of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, friends and supporters of the Nation of Islam, and the Black community in the United States during the Sacred Month of Ramadan.]

In The Name Of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful.

It is a great pleasure to be able to communicate with you from the Muslim world, particularly during the Holy month of Ramadan. Nearly one billion Muslims of every race, color, creed and nationality are now observing the month of Ramadan as a month of fasting in obedience to the injunction given to us in the Holy Quran.

Surah (Chapter) 2, verse 183, it is written, O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil.

Fasting, one of the main pillars of Islam, is a principle that must be practiced by every believing Muslim. In fact, fasting has been enjoined in every age by every prophet that has come to reform the conduct of man.

Since fasting is given to us as a prescription—and a prescription is given to us by a doctor, telling us to take a certain medicine at and for a specified time, to effect a cure for a certain illness—in this case, Almighty God Allah is The Doctor prescribing for all of humanity. And now we are speaking specifically to the Black people of America, that fasting is to be used as a cure for a sick spiritual, moral, social and physical condition.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us that fasting produces discipline. How? We know that we are creatures with desires and basic human needs: Food, shelter, and love. We need to be respected in our community. We have a hunger for love, and for expressing our own being. All of these hungers, all of these needs, must be disciplined and controlled if society is to be successful.

Whenever the human being lacks discipline, the society reflects that lack of discipline in the manifestation of excesses: Excessive eating, excessive drinking, excessive sex, the lust for material things, the greed for power, the overpowering of our intelligence by anger and envy. All of these excesses break the spirit of brotherhood and destroy human society.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us that the first law of the Universe is motion. After something is put into motion, the second law is order. That which is in motion must come under order. This order presupposes discipline. And when there is no discipline, there is no order—whatever motion we have will be brought to an end.

The lack of discipline, therefore, is not only the death of the individual; it also is the death of the family and the death of the society.

Thus, fasting is prescribed for us as it was prescribed for those before us that we may guard against evil.

During this month of fasting, from dawn to sunset, from dawn until dark, the Muslim will not put a drop of water or food in his or her mouth. Nor will that Muslim feed the hunger of sex during the daylight hours. Out of our love for Almighty God Allah and obedience to what He has ordered for us in the Holy Qur'an we carry out His discipline. What are the results?

Self-imposed discipline

When we deprive ourselves of something so essential to life as water and food, for a period of 15 to 18 hours, during the heat of the day, this discipline imposed on ourselves makes it easy for us to discipline other hungers or desires.

When we can stop eating and drinking, drives which are natural to life itself, how much more easy is it for us to stop lying, stealing and the practice of those sins that destroy the peace and brotherhood of the society? This fast of Ramadan is one of the greatest means of inculcating self discipline.

We have all seen societies that are highly disciplined by authoritarian rule. This is a discipline imposed on others by a superior authority. Authoritarian rule often leads to excesses: Despots, tyrants and dictators.

Certainly the discipline imposed on the members of an authoritarian society does produce some good, but the greatest of all disciplines is that which we impose on ourselves.

Self discipline leads to the restraining of those passions in our own being that can be used by Satan for the destruction of ourselves and things around us. Self-imposed discipline leads to a healthy society, one where the people truly can rule.

Excessive eating leads to obesity which brings with it a myriad of other diseases culminating in heart failure, stroke, stress, etc. Excessive sex leads to promiscuity, fornication, adultery, the breakup of families and the destruction of the basic unit of civilization, as well as the killing of millions of unborn unwanted children.

The lust for material things leads to greed, avarice and the over consumption or acquisition of things, and ones glorying in things, that have no feeling, thereby denying the humanity in self and others.

The lust for power, to be recognized, can become so great that it gets out of control, then we see men and women destroying others to get what they want and where they want to go.

Anger is a force within the human being that is so potent, if it is not controlled it will lead to the destruction of the individual and others. You can see that there is a need for personal discipline in our lives.

The fast of Ramadan and the discipline of prayer at prescribed times during the day is the greatest aid in developing personal discipline and regulating our affairs and habits.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad wanted to see his followers supremely disciplined. Of course, in our infancy, there was authoritarian rule, just as we had in our homes under our mothers and fathers. And we witnessed some excesses under this rule which led to grievous dissatisfaction on the part of those who were offended by the improper use of authority.

But look how beautiful a society can become when each individual imposes upon himself or herself the discipline of fasting, the discipline of curtailing our own behaviors, our own hungers, our own desires. This makes a very clean, peaceful, righteous, progressive and orderly society. This, by the help of Allah, is what we intend to produce.

Here in the Middle East where the temperature sometimes gets up to 115 degrees, 120 degrees in the desert, I found myself losing a lot of water. In one incident in particular, there I was in the cool of my room, with a refrigerator full of all kind of cold drinks. No one would ever have known if I had taken a drink of water except Allah and myself. But so desirous was I not to break the fast and give in to my great thirst, I took water and rinsed out my mouth

making sure that not one single drop passed into my throat, so that I might be obedient to Allah. While I watched visitors to this region eating and drinking, I maintained my discipline.

I say to all of us as Muslims, this fast if properly followed by you will lead to your and my ability to put all of our appetites under control. This is why fasting is prescribed so that we may guard against every form of evil. As we have indicated, practically every evil comes out of a hunger that we desire to satisfy. Since we cannot discipline that hunger, we exceed the limits. Fasting, therefore, is prescribed.

I plead with all of the Muslims to do everything in your power to make this fast successful. Follow it all the way through, and at the end of these 30 days, you will become a new person.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad desired ease for us; as the Holy Qur'an teaches of Allah, He desires ease for His creatures. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad knew that we were a group of people who had lived undisciplined lives following after our slave-masters and their children. Now that we have embraced Islam, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad wanted us to practice fasting, but he chose the month of December for us to do the fast of Ramadan. Of course, this made us totally different from the Islamic world, but on careful examination of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, his rationale and understanding is very well accepted now as we explain it to the scholars of this side of the world.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad chose December because the days in that month are shortest, and since Allah desires ease for us, and the example of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was one that he desires ease for his followers, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad likewise wanted us to make the fast, so he chose the shortest days in the year for us to observe the fast.

Secondly, he did not want us to continue practicing the behavior during the month of December which disgraced the memory of a righteous servant of Allah, Jesus, the son of Mary. So the Honorable Elijah Muhammad chose December as the month for his followers to observe Ramadan. His reasons, I repeat, are wise and justified, but he also wanted us to grow up to be able to follow the Holy Qur'an as perfectly as is humanly possible.

The Holy Qur'an tells us that we should fast during the month of Ramadan, and now the followers of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, having matured in our understanding, are now fasting with the entire Islamic world.

May Allah bless each one of you to complete this fast successfully. May Allah bless us to increase in discipline so that we may leave alone those things which displease Almighty God Allah, in order to be acceptable in His Sight.

Let us, during this sacred month, thank Allah for this most precious of all gifts, the gift of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an which came to the world through Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

And lastly, may Allah bless us with a discipline that will strengthen the peace of our community, and strengthen our peace in the total society. I appeal to all of our friends, and all of our Christian Brothers and Sisters to practice this discipline called fasting. If you can do it one or two days, three or four days or maybe one week, it will show you that you also have the strength to put off certain unclean habits from your life.

Let every Muslim strive during this month of Ramadan to rid himself or herself of some habit that we know Allah disapproves of. Fasting will give us the strength to overcome it.

MAY ALLAH BLESS YOU AND THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR READING THESE FEW WORDS, AS I GREET YOU IN PEACE.

AS-SALAAM ALAIKUM.

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Daily Prayer Times:

These prayers are obligatory and should be practiced at home or abroad (within cleanly secure areas when possible) by all Practicing Muslims on a daily basis.

Fajr (Dawn)
Dhuhr (Midday)
Asr (Afternoon)
Maghrib (Sunset)
Isha'a (Night)

For more information on prayers we recommend this book: "Muslim Daily Prayers" can be ordered by calling 866-602-1230 or by visiting