

4.1 Fasting

OBJECTIVES:

- Learn the important and blessed characteristics of the month of Ramaḍān
- Understand the important essence of fasting
- Compare and contrast the difference between kaffārah and fidyah
- Understand the different rules when fasting and when to not fast
- Understand and explain invalidators of a fast
- Understand and explain moon sighting and explain why some Muslims may start/end fasting on different days

THE MONTH OF RAMAḌĀN

The month of Ramaḍān is a very holy and special month in Islam. It is a month in which we have the honor of fasting for the sake of Allah (swt) and gaining the treasure of self-control, self-restraint and God consciousness (*taqwā*).

Group Activity 4.1a: Read and Discuss

The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) has given us the gift of a special sermon in which he explains the greatness of this month and the rewards of the actions we offer in this month. Split into groups of 3. Read the following sermon and discuss the following questions:

ARTICLE -

The Last Sermon Given by the Prophet (ﷺ) On the Last Friday of Shaʿbān on the Reception of the Month of Ramaḍān¹.

“O People! Indeed ahead of you is the blessed month of Allah (swt). A month of blessing, mercy and forgiveness. A month which with Allah (swt) is the best of months. Its days, the best of days, its nights, the best of nights, and its hours, the best of hours. It is the month which invites you to be the guests of Allah (swt) and invites you to be one of those near to Him. Each breath you take glorifies him; your sleep is worship, your deeds are accepted and your supplications are answered.

So, ask Allah (swt), your Lord; to give you a sound body and an enlightened heart so you may be able to fast and recite His book, for only he is unhappy who is devoid of Allah (swt)’s forgiveness during this great month. Remember the hunger and thirst of the day of Qiyāmah (Judgement) with your hunger and thirst; give alms to the needy and poor, honor your old, show kindness to the young ones, maintain relations with your blood relations; guard your tongues, close your eyes to that which is not permissible for your sight, close your ears to that which is forbidden to hear, show compassion to the orphans of people so compassion may be shown to your orphans.

Repent to Allah (swt) for your sins and raise your hands in duʿā during these times, for they are the best of times and Allah (swt) looks towards his creatures with kindness, replying to them during the hours and granting their needs if he is asked...

¹ The sermon given by the prophet (s) on the last Friday of Shaʿban on the reception of the month of Ramaḍān. Al. (2020, May 3). Retrieved March 6, 2022, from <https://www.al-islam.org/supPLICATIONS-month-ramadhan/sermon-given-prophet-s-last-friday-shaban-reception-month-ramadhan>

“O People! Indeed your souls are dependant on your deeds, free it with istighfār (repentance), lighten its loads by long prostrations; and know that Allah (swt) swears by His might: That there is no punishment for the one who prays and prostates and he shall have no fear of the fire on the day when man stands before the Lord of the worlds.

“O People! One who gives ifṭār to a fasting person during this month will be like one who has freed someone and his past sins will be forgiven.

Some of the people who were there then asked the Prophet (s): “Not all of us are able to invite those who are fasting?”

The Prophet (s) replied: “Allah (swt) gives this reward even if the ifṭār (meal) is a drink of water.”

“One who has good morals (akhlāq) during this month will be able to pass the ‘Şirāṭ’...on the day that feet will slip...

“One who covers the faults of others will benefit in that Allah (swt) will curb His anger on the Day of Judgment...

“As for one who honors an orphan; Allah (swt) will honor him on the Day of Judgment,

“And for the one who spreads his kindness, Allah (swt) will spread His mercy over him on the Day of Judgement.

“As for the one who cuts the ties of relation; Allah (swt) will cut His mercy from him...

“Whosoever performs a recommended prayer in this month Allah (swt) will keep the fire of Hell away from him...

“Whoever performs an obligatory prayer, Allah (swt) will reward him with seventy prayers [worth] in this month.

“And whosoever prays a lot during this month will have his load lightened on the day of measure.

“He who recites one verse of the Noble Qur’ān will be given the rewards of reciting the whole Qur’ān during other months.

“O People! Indeed during this month the doors of heaven are open, therefore, ask Allah (swt) not to close them for you; The doors of hell are closed, so ask Allah (swt) to keep them closed for you. During this month Shayṭān (Satan) is imprisoned so ask your Lord not to let him have power over you.”

1. What are three of the many special characteristics of the month of Ramaḍān that are mentioned in the sermon of the Prophet (ṣ)?
