



NEW MUSLIM
ACADEMY

THIRTY DAYS, THIRTY DATES: A GUIDE TO GETTING THE MOST OUT OF **RAMADAN**



**It might be
your first,
second, or
even tenth
Ramadan as a
new Muslim.
Getting
prepared is
important
and there
are some key
things you
need to keep
in mind. But
don't panic...**

Keep calm and read on!



“O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous” (Quran, 2:183).

Fasting during the month of Ramadan (the 9th month of the Islamic calendar year) is one of the five pillars of Islam. All adult Muslims that have reached the age of puberty are required to fast from dawn until sunset for the entire month.

Some people may have a harder time fasting than others. Since God never wishes to make things hard for us, there are some exceptions to the rule of fasting.

You don't have to fast if:

- You're traveling
- You're sick
- You're pregnant or breastfeeding
- You are on your menstrual cycle
- You are experiencing post-natal bleeding

All the days of fasting that you miss must be made up at a later time after Ramadan has ended. In the case of those who are unable to fast at all such as the elderly or perpetually ill, they must feed a poor person for every day of fasting missed.

THE PHYSICAL FAST



Make the intention to fast each day for the sake of God. It's recommended to have the pre-dawn meal known as "*suhour*," but make sure you are finished eating and drinking before the time of dawn comes.

What should I eat at the pre-dawn meal?

- In order to keep hydrated, make sure you drink lots of water.
- To maintain energy levels, include some protein in your meal such as beans, eggs, yogurt, soy, lean meats, fish, etc.
- To stay full for longer periods of time, eat foods with high fiber content such as whole-grains, fruits and vegetables, and oatmeal.
- Healthy fats like nuts, avocados, olive oil, etc.



Once dawn comes in, you must refrain from anything which can break the fast until sunset.

Things that break your fast:

- Eating or drinking on purpose (if you forget that you're fasting and you eat or drink something, you may continue fasting as normal)
- Sexual intercourse
- Intentional vomiting
- The start of the menstrual cycle or post-natal bleeding

When the sun sets, it's time to break your fast. It's recommended to break your fast with dates. If you don't have dates, break your fast with some water. Before breaking your fast, say this supplication:



“O Allah, I have fasted for You and from the sustenance given by You, I break the fast.”

Although you are ravenous, try to have a lighter meal that doesn't include much fried or oily foods. Otherwise, you'll get bogged down and be unable to offer night prayers.

THE SPIRITUAL FAST



Fasting isn't only about refraining from food and drink. Muslims should use this time period to train themselves to abstain from all other sins like using curse words, cheating, lying or harming others. Instead, fill your days with positive deeds like remembering God through reciting the Quran, supplicating to Him, praying, helping others with their needs, giving charity, etc.

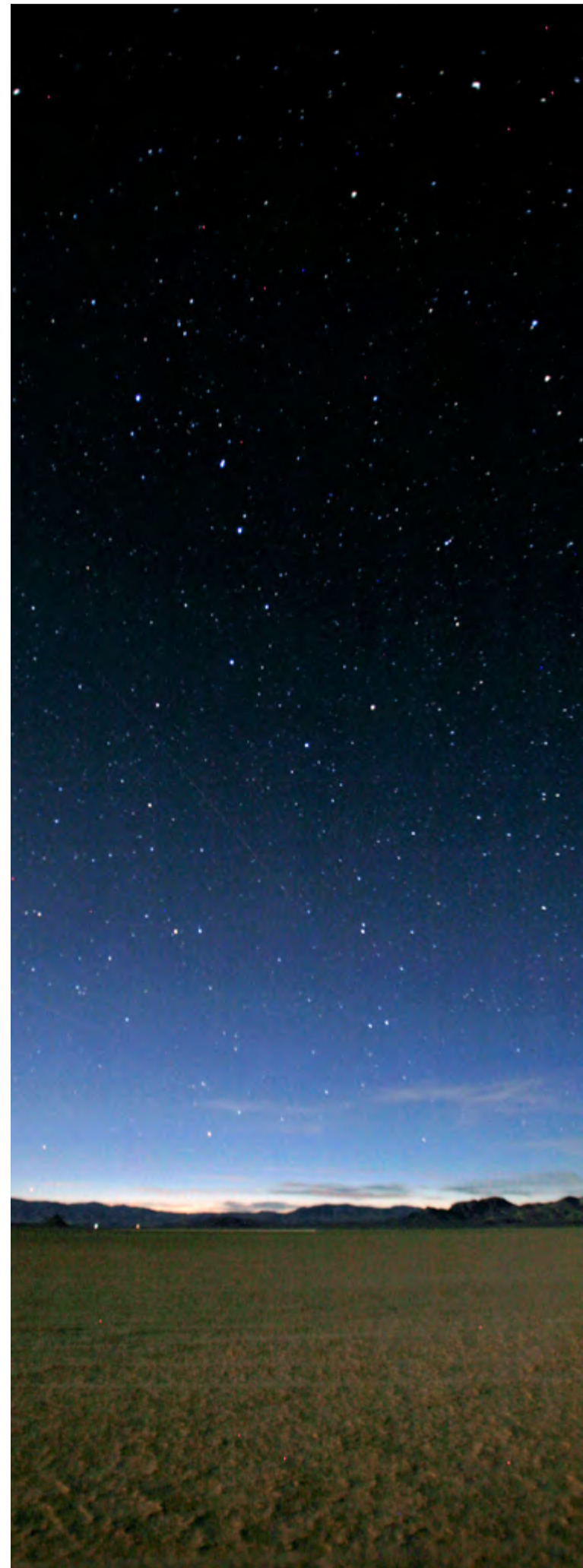
If you're not yet comfortable reciting the Quran, consider taking a beginner's Quran recitation course with NMA. Find all the details at www.newmuslimacademy.org

All the rewards you earn from good deeds performed within the month of Ramadan are multiplied. There is a special emphasis put on the recitation of the Quran and night prayers. The Quran was first revealed in this blessed month. God says:

“The month of Ramadan [is that] in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion” (Quran, 2:185).



You receive rewards for every letter you read of the Quran – and since all rewards are multiplied, the opportunity to fill your scales with good deeds is endless!



COMMUNAL WORSHIP



Every night of Ramadan, Muslims gather to pray at their local mosques after the final obligatory prayer of the day. Find a mosque near you and see what their night prayer (*taraweeh*) schedule is for the month of Ramadan. Join them for this important act of communal worship. This is a great opportunity to create lasting bonds of community and friendship.

The final ten nights of Ramadan are when we should focus most of our energy on worship. Some Muslims even dedicate all ten nights in worship by secluding themselves in their mosques – a practice known as *itikaf*.

Within the final 10 days of Ramadan, there is a night called *Laylatul-Qadr*, The Night of Decree. It was on this night in Ramadan that the Quran was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. This is the best night of the entire year to perform prayers:

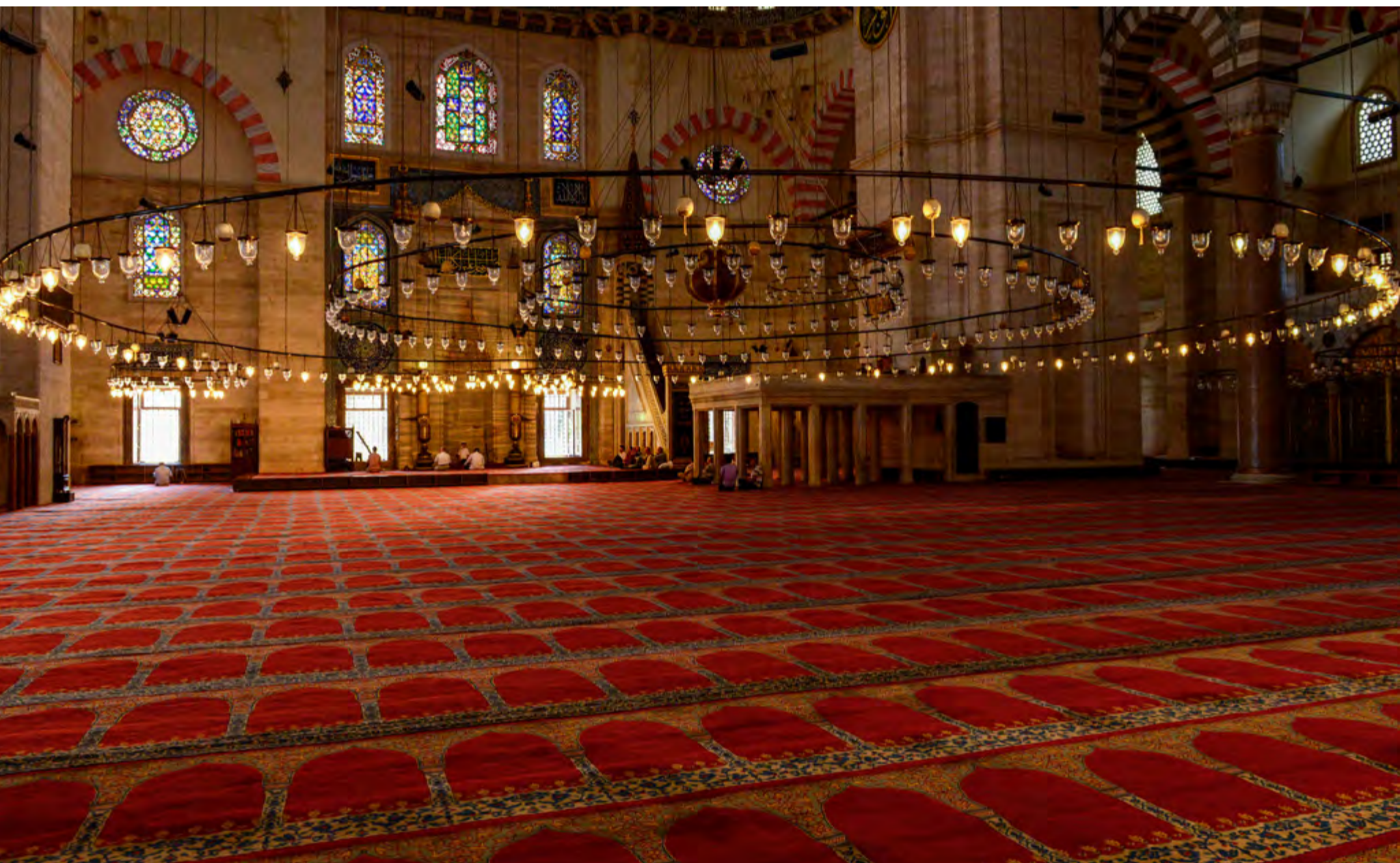
The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: “Whoever fasts Ramadan with faith, seeking God’s reward, will be forgiven all his past sins. Whoever observes Laylatul-Qadr in prayer, with faith, seeking God’s reward, will be forgiven all his past sins.”

صَلَّى
عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ



One of the great things about Ramadan is that it brings the whole community together for the singular purpose of worshiping God. Your local mosque might even host daily or weekly meals at sunset to bring the community together. Creating a sense of community through the bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood is an unparalleled feeling that makes Ramadan even more special.

If you live in an area without a Muslim community, make sure to connect with our online community at www.newmuslimacademy.org. Some great interactive and informative sessions will be taking place throughout the month of Ramadan to answer your questions and address your concerns.



ZAKAT UL-FITR



A day or two before the end of the month and the Eid celebration, all those who can afford it should give a set amount of charity known as “*Zakat ul-Fitr*” that is enough to buy a meal for one needy person. You can most likely donate through your local mosque or a reputable online charitable organization.



CREATE TRADITIONS AND SHARE THE JOY



Muslims come from every culture and country on the planet. Each culture has a unique way of marking the coming of Ramadan through particular food, treats, decor and gifts that are reserved only for this special time of year. Now is the time to think about how you will mark and remember this momentous time of the year. It's also a great time to invite your neighbours and friends to share a meal with you and learn about your faith.

Let Ramadan motivate you to branch out and connect with others in a positive and lasting way!

Above all, the purpose of fasting is to worship God as He has ordered us to, to cleanse ourselves of negative thoughts and habits, and to aspire to become better, more charitable human beings.

**RAMADAN
MUBARAK!**



NEW MUSLIM
ACADEMY

**HAPPY
RAMADAN!**