



NEW MUSLIM
ACADEMY

WINTER WELLNESS

Staying Spiritually and Physically Healthy

The winter months are a time of cold. The days are often short and the nights long. Rain, snow, ice and frost are common during this season. In response to these changes, we also change our routines. We swap our summer light clothes for heavier and warmer clothes. We wear coats, hats, scarves and gloves. We heat our houses and prefer warmer food and drinks. We factor in the cold weather as we make our daily commutes or when planning longer travel. We adjust to the shorter days and longer nights, with some of us leaving the house when it's still dark in the morning, and also returning in the dark in the evening.


Muslim scholars used to view the winter as an opportunity for good deeds, and would call the winter, the spring season of the believer. They would see the shorter days and longer nights as a call to perform acts of worship and devotion that are harder in the summer. Winter is valuable yet easy and accessible for the devout worshipper. Winter is the best season for the believer because God strengthens his practice and actions in it by making worship easier for him.

God's Favours

The winter reminds us of God's many favours upon us, such as access to warmth, food, drink, clothing and shelter. There are many people who are poor or homeless. For them, the winter is extremely hard, especially during the bitter freezing nights and cold wet days. There are others around the world who due to conflict and war have had to leave their homes and live in tents. They have no electricity or fuel and cannot heat up their homes. This becomes a greater burden for children, the sick and the elderly.

We should thank God for His blessings on us and that we can enjoy safety and comfort during this season. We can focus our energy on trying to increase our worship and good deeds and not having to worry about the basics that others may lack.



A man wearing a dark plaid jacket and a black beanie is kneeling on a colorful, patterned prayer mat in a snowy, open field. He is looking down, focused on his prayer. The background shows a vast, snow-covered landscape under a pale sky.

Salah, the Prescribed Ritual Devotions, and Quran

The winter makes performing the daily ritual devotions easier. Dawn is later in time which means we can often get a full night of sleep before having to wake up for the post dawn prescribed ritual devotion. Sunset is earlier and this allows for people to finish the final prescribed ritual devotion and sleep earlier. The long night also makes it easier to offer the optional night vigil devotion by waking up a little earlier before dawn.

This season allows for more recitation of the Quran and study. We can read and listen to more Quran and because of a good night's sleep, hopefully this will allow us to concentrate better and not read while tired. With dawn being later, we can stay awake after the post dawn Salah and use that quiet time before the day gets busy to read the Quran and study.

Fasting

The short winter days are ideal for optional fasting, or making up any fasting days of Ramadan that were missed. The disciples of the Messenger Muhammad used to enjoy the winter months for this reason. They could fast relatively frequently and because the days are short, they would not feel as if they were overly hungry or that they had overly exerted themselves.

Fasting in the winter is like an easy prize. Fasting in the winter does not require the amount of effort or hardship required in the long hot summer days. It is as if it is a gift from God.



Charity

It was related to one of the righteous leaders of Islam that there was a woman with four orphaned children who were hungry and lacked clothing. So, he had a man go to them and bring them clothes and food. He took off his outer garment and said: "I will not wear these or be warmed by them until you return and tell me that they are clothed and fed." So, the man went and came back and confirmed to the leader while he was shivering in the cold that they had taken the clothes and had eaten.

The winter is an amazing opportunity to help the poor and homeless in our communities. It could be the act of giving them warm clothing, hot food or helping them find some shelter during the winter nights. The Messenger Muhammad said, "If anyone relieves a Muslim believer from one of the hardships of this worldly life, Allah will relieve him of one of the hardships of the Day of Resurrection. If anyone makes it easy for the one who is indebted to him (while finding it difficult to repay), Allah will make it easy for him in this worldly life and in the Hereafter, and if anyone conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah helps His slave as long as he helps his brother."

May Allah grant us the ability to take advantage of this opportune time with acts of devotion and righteousness.

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