

Ramadan Fasting and Diabetes Mellitus

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By: Fereidoun Azizi, MD, and Behnam Siahkollah, MD

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The objective of this review article is to assist physicians who face the difficult task of advising diabetic patients about the safety of fasting during the Islamic month of Ramadan.

There have been diverse findings regarding the physiological impact of Ramadan on diabetics. However, researchers have not found pathological changes or clinical complications in any of the following parameters in diabetics who fast: body weight, blood glucose, HbA1C, c-peptide, insulin, fructoseamine, cholesterol and triglycerides. In the guidelines section of the article, we strongly recommend diabetic patients continue their regular daily activity and diet regimen. It is also critical that diabetics adjust their drug treatments, particularly those patients diagnosed with insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM). We named these three important factors -- drug regimen adjustment, diet control and daily activity -- the "Ramadan 3D Triangle." With 3D attention, proper education and diabetic management, we conclude that most non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM) patients and occasional IDDM patients who insist on fasting can carefully observe Ramadan. *Int J Ramadan Fasting Res. 2:8-17, 1998.*

INTRODUCTION

Several of the world's great religions recommend a period of fasting or abstinence from certain foods. Of these, the Islamic fast during the Muslim month of Ramadan is strictly observed every year. Islam specifically outlines one full month of intermittent fasting. The experience of fasting is intended to teach Muslims self-discipline and self-restraint and remind them of the plight of the impoverished. Muslims observing the fast are required to abstain not only from eating and drinking, but also from consuming oral medications and intravenous nutritional fluids.

The month of Ramadan contains 28 days to 30 days. The dates of observance differ each year because Ramadan is set to a lunar calendar. Fasting extends each day from dawn until sunset, a period which varies by geographical location and season. In summer months and northern latitudes, the fast can last up to 18 hours or more. Islam recommends that fasting Muslims eat a meal before dawn, called "*sahur*." Individuals are exempt from Ramadan fasting if they are suffering from an illness that could be adversely affected by fasting. They are allowed to refrain from fasting for one day to all 30 days, depending on the condition of their illness. People diagnosed with diabetes fall into this category and are exempt from the fasting requirement, but they are often loathe to accept this concession. Physicians working in Muslims countries and communities commonly face the difficult task of advising diabetic patients whether it is safe to fast, as well as recommending

the dietary and drug regimens diabetics should follow if they decide to fast. The lack of adequate literature on this subject makes it difficult to answer these questions. To judge correctly whether to grant medical permission to fast to a diabetic patient, it is essential physicians have an appreciation of the effect of Ramadan fasting on the pathophysiology of diabetes mellitus. In this article, we first review principles of carbohydrate metabolism and alterations of certain biochemical variables in diabetics observing Ramadan fasting. We then overview current medical recommendations that allow certain diabetic patients to fast and outline terms for diabetic patients, particularly IDDM patients, who should not fast but insist on fasting.

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL STATE OF DIABETICS DURING RAMADAN

Carbohydrate metabolism during Ramadan fasting in healthy persons

The effect of experimental short-term fasting on carbohydrate metabolism has been extensively studied ^(1,2). It has been uniformly found that a slight decrease in serum glucose to 3.3 mmol to 3.9 mmol (60 mg/dl to 70 mg/dl) occurs in normal adults a few hours after fasting has begun. However, the reduction in serum glucose ceases due to increased gluconeogenesis in the liver. That occurs because of a decrease in insulin concentration and a rise in glucagon and sympathetic activity ⁽³⁾. In children aged one year to nine years, fasting for a 24-hour period has caused a decrease in the blood glucose to half of the baseline figure for normal children of that age group. In 22% of these children, blood glucose has fallen below 40 mg/dl ⁽⁴⁾. Few studies have shown the effect of Ramadan fasting on serum glucose ⁽⁵⁻⁹⁾. One study has shown a slight decrease in serum glucose in the first days of Ramadan, followed by normalization by the twentieth day and a slight rise by the twenty-ninth day of Ramadan ⁽⁶⁾. The lowest serum glucose level in this study was 63 mg/dl. Others have shown a mild increase ⁽⁷⁾ or variation in serum glucose concentration ^(8,9), but all of them fell within physiological limits ⁽⁶⁾. From the foregoing studies, one may assume that the stores of glycogen, along with some degree of gluconeogenesis, maintain normal limits of serum glucose when a fast follows a large pre-dawn meal. However, slight changes in serum glucose may occur in individuals depending upon food habits and individual differences in metabolism and energy regulation.

Body weight during Ramadan fasting

(a) In normal subjects:

Weight losses of 1.7 kg. ⁽¹⁰⁾, 1.8 kg. ⁽¹¹⁾, 2.0 kg. ⁽¹²⁾ and 3.8 kg ⁽¹³⁾ have been reported in normal weight individuals after they have fasted for the month of Ramadan. In one study that was over-represented by females, no change in body weight was seen ⁽¹⁴⁾. It has also been reported that overweight persons lose more weight than normal or underweight subjects ⁽¹²⁾.

(b) In diabetics:

A review of literature shows controversy about weight changes in diabetics during Ramadan. ^(6,15-24). In one group of studies, patients had an increase in their weight ^(17,21). In another group, there were no change ^(15,19,22,23) or a decrease ^(6,16,18,20,24) in body weight. While no food or drink is consumed between dawn and sunset during the month of Ramadan, there is no restriction on the amount or type of food consumed at night ^(23,25). Furthermore, most diabetics reduce their daily activities ^(15,23) during this period in fear of hypoglycemia. These factors may result in not only a lack of weight loss, but also a weight gain in such patients ⁽²⁶⁾. (See later discussion about nutrition and physical activity.)

Blood glucose variations during Ramadan fasting in diabetics

Most patients show no significant change in their glucose control ^(3,23,24,27). In some patients, serum glucose concentration may fall or rise ⁽²⁸⁻³⁰⁾. This variation may be due to the amount or type of food consumption, regularity of taking medications, engorging after the fast is broken, or decreased physical activities. In most cases, no episode of acute complications (hypoglycemic or hyperglycemic types) occurs in patients under medical management ^(9,15,16,22), And only a few cases of biochemical hypoglycemia without clinical hazards have been reported ^(17,19,25).

Other parameters of diabetes control during Ramadan fasting

In general, HbA1C values show no change or even improvement during Ramadan ^(15-18,20,22,23,25,27,28,32). Only two studies have reported slight increases in glycosylated hemoglobin levels ^(19,31). However, one report has emphasized the same increase in non-fasting patients as fasting patients ⁽³¹⁾, and the other has shown a return to initial levels immediately after the month of Ramadan ⁽¹⁹⁾.

The amount of fructosamine ^(17,22,24,30,32), insulin, C-peptide ^(23,30) also has been reported to have no significant change before and during Ramadan fasting.

Energy intake and serum lipid variables during Ramadan fasting in diabetics

The amount of Energy (calorie) intake have been reported in some of the literature, indicating a decrease in energy intake ^(24,28).

Most patients with non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM, diabetes type II) and insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM, diabetes type I) show no change or a slight decrease in concentrations of total cholesterol and triglyceride ^(15-19,27,28,32). Increase in total cholesterol levels during Ramadan seldom occurs ⁽²³⁾. As in healthy persons ⁽³³⁻³⁶⁾, few studies have reported increases in high-density-lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol in diabetics during Ramadan ^(18,19,27). One report indicates an increase in low-density-

lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and a decrease in HDL-cholesterol ⁽²⁸⁾. Until there is a standardization of diabetes Ramadan research in three fundamental factors -- the Three D Triangle of drug regimens, diet control and daily activity -- the benefits or hazards of Ramadan fasting on diabetics serum lipids is unclear.

Other biological parameters during Ramadan fasting in diabetics

Serum creatinine, uric acid, blood urea nitrogen, protein, albumin, alanine amino-transferase, aspartate amino-transferase values do not show significant changes during the fasting period ^(15,17,32). Slight non-significant increases in some biological parameters may be due to dehydration and metabolic adaptation and have no clinical presentation.

FASTING GUIDELINES TO DIABETICS

During the last two decades, a better understanding of pathophysiological changes during Ramadan fasting in diabetic patients has provided a few guidelines on how to advise diabetics who want to fast. Physicians working with Muslim diabetics should employ certain criteria to advise their patients regarding the safety of Ramadan fasting.

The following criteria should be helpful in making such a decision ^(20,37):

Forbid fasting in:

- All brittle type I diabetic patients;
- Poorly controlled type I or type II diabetic patients;
- Diabetic patients known to be in compliant in terms of following advice on diet drug regimens and daily activity;
- Diabetic patients with serious complications such as unstable angina or uncontrolled hypertension;
- Patients with a history of diabetic ketoacidosis;
- Pregnant diabetic patients;
- Diabetic patients with inter-current infections;
- Elderly patients with any degree of alertness problems;
- Two or more episodes of hypoglycemia and/or hyperglycemia during Ramadan.

Allow fasting in:

- Patients who do not have the aforementioned criteria;

- Patient who accept medical advisement.

Encourage fasting in:

- All overweight NIDDM patients (except for pregnant or nursing mothers) whose diabetes is stable with weight levels 20% above the ideal weight or body mass index (body weight, kg/height, meters squared) greater than 28.

EDUCATION OF THE DIABETICS BEFORE RAMADAN

NIDDM patients and IDDM patients who insist on fasting should be given a few recommendations about fasting ⁽¹⁶⁾. They should be forbidden from skipping meals, taking medication irregularly or gorging after the fast is broken ⁽²⁶⁾.

The principles of pre-Ramadan considerations are ⁽³⁷⁾:

- a. assessment of physical well being;
- b. assessment of metabolic control;
- c. adjustment of the diet protocol for Ramadan fasting;
- d. adjustment of the drug regimen e.g. change long-acting hypoglycemic drugs to short-acting drugs to prevent hypoglycemia);
- e. encouragement of continued proper physical activity;
- f. recognition of warning symptoms of dehydration, hypoglycemia and other possible complications.

RECOMMENDATIONS DURING RAMADAN FASTING

I. Nutrition and Ramadan fasting:

Dietary indiscretion during the non-fasting period with excessive gorging, or compensatory eating, of carbohydrate and fatty foods contributes to the tendency towards hyperglycemia and weight gain ^(21,23). It has been emphasized that Ramadan fasting benefits appear only in patients who maintain their appropriate diets ^(24,38,39). Thus, in order to optimize control, diabetics must be reminded to abstain from the high-calorie and highly-refined foods prepared during this month ⁽³⁸⁾.

II. Physical activity and Ramadan fasting:

Several studies indicate that light to moderate regular exercise during Ramadan fasting is harmless for NIDDM patients ⁽¹⁵⁾. It has been shown that

fasting does not interfere with tolerance to exercise ⁽⁴⁰⁾. It should be impressed upon diabetic patients that it is necessary to continue their usual physical activity especially during non-fasting periods ⁽⁴¹⁾

III. Drug regimens for IDDM patients:

Some experienced physicians conclude Ramadan fasting is safe for IDDM patients with proper self-monitoring and close professional supervision ⁽¹⁶⁾. It is fundamental to adjust the insulin regimen for good IDDM control during Ramadan fasting. Two insulin therapy methods have been studied successfully:

1. Three-dose insulin regimen: two doses before meals (sunset and Dawn) of short-acting insulin and one dose in the late evening of intermediate-acting insulin ⁽¹⁶⁾.
2. Two-dose insulin regimen: Evening insulin combined with short-acting and medium-acting insulin equivalent to the previous morning dosage, and a pre-dawn insulin consisting only of a regular dosage of 0.1-0.2 unit/kg ⁽²⁵⁾.

Home blood glucose monitoring should be performed just before the sunset meal and three hours afterwards. It should also be performed before the pre-dawn meal to adjust the insulin dose and prevent any hypoglycemia and post-prandial hyperglycemia following over-eating.

IV. Drug regimens for NIDDM patients:

Available reports indicate that there are no major problems encountered with NIDDM overweight patients who observe fasting in Ramadan ⁽³⁾. With proper changes in the dosage of hypoglycemic agents there will be low risk for hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia.

The authors of the largest series of patients treated with glibenclamide during Ramadan recommended that diabetics switch the morning dose (together with any mid-day dose) of this drug with the dosage taken at sunset ⁽³¹⁾.

V. Other health tips for reduction of complications:

1. Implementation of the 3D Triangle of Ramadan -- drug regimen adjustment, diet control and daily activity -- as the three pillars for more successful fasting during Ramadan.
2. Diabetic home management that consists of:

- Monitoring home blood glucose especially for IDDM patients, as described above;
- Checking urine for acetone (IDDM patients);
- Measuring daily weights and informing physicians of weight reduction (dehydration, low food intake, polyuria) or weight increase (excessive calorie intake) above two kilograms;

Recording daily diet intake (prevention of excessive and very low energy consumption).

3. Education about warning symptoms of dehydration, hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia.
4. Education about breaking fast as soon as any complication or new harmful condition occurs.
5. Immediate medical help for diabetics who need medical help quickly, rather than waiting for medical assistance the next day.
6. Further attention on fasting during the summer season and geographical areas with long fasting hours.

VI. IDDM children and Ramadan fasting:

We do not encourage fasting for IDDM children. However, a few studies demonstrate that fasting is safe among diabetic adolescents. Of these studies, one study concludes that Ramadan fasting is feasible in older children and children who have had diabetes for a long time, and it concludes fasting does not alter short-term metabolic control. Nevertheless, fasting should only be encouraged in children with good glycemic control and regular blood glucose monitoring at home ⁽²⁵⁾.

POST-RAMADAN SUPERVISION OF FASTING DIABETICS

After the month of Ramadan ends, the patients therapeutic regimen should be changed back to its previous schedule. Patients should also be required to get an overall education about the impact of fasting on their physiology ⁽³⁷⁾.

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ON DIABETICS DURING RAMADAN

From a methodological point of view, few research papers on Ramadan fasting are relevant because of the absence of control periods before Ramadan and afterwards, the absence of measurements during each week of

Ramadan, a lack of attention to dietary habits, food composition, food value, caloric control, weight changes and the importance of the schedule during circadian periods.

It is recommended that all these factors should be taken into consideration and that all intervening and confounding variables should be under control. It is clear that more work should be done on Ramadan fasting to evaluate physiological and pathological changes with proper research methods ⁽⁴²⁾.

Fasting during the entire month of Ramadan is reserved usually for healthy Muslims. However, many diabetic patients are allowed to fast periodically during Ramadan. The magnitude of periodic total fasting effect on blood glucose and hepatic glucagon depends on the number of fasting days ⁽⁴³⁾, and this should be considered in all Ramadan fasting research activities.

CONCLUSION

The bulk of literature indicates that fasting in Ramadan is safe for the majority of diabetics patients with proper education and diabetic management. Most NIDDM patients can fast safely during Ramadan. Occasional IDDM patients who insist on fasting during Ramadan can also fast if they are carefully managed. Strict attention to diet control, daily activity and drug regimen adjustment is essential for successful Ramadan fasting.

To shed more light on pathophysiological changes in Ramadan fasting, in particular in Muslims diabetics, it is recommended that a multicentric international controlled clinical trial be employed to assess the effect of differences in gender, races, physical activities, food habits, sleep patterns and other important variables on physiologic and pathologic conditions during Ramadan fasting.

Fereidoun Azizi, MD, and Behnam Siahkolah, MD

Endocrine Research Center, Shaheed Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, I.R. Iran

Address correspondence to: Prof. F.Azizi, P.O. Box 19395-4763, Tehran, I.R.Iran, Fax: +98-21-2402463,

E-mail:erc5c@geocities.com

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Diet during Ramadan

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By: M. Z. A. Nomani, Ph. D.

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To be healthy, one must consume food from the major food groups: bread and cereal, milk and dairy product, meat and bean, vegetable and fruit. During the month long fast of Ramadan the metabolic rate of a fasting person slows down and other regulatory mechanisms start functioning. Body and dietary fat is efficiently utilized. Consuming total food intake that is less than the total food intake during normal days is sufficient to maintain a person's health. Intake of fruits after a meal is strongly suggested. A balanced diet improves blood cholesterol profile, reduces gastric acidity, prevents constipation and other digestive problems, and contributes to an active and healthy life style. (*Int. J. Ramadan Fasting Research, 3:1-6, 1999*)

INTRODUCTION

Fasting during the Islamic month of Ramadan can be good for one's health and personal development. Ramadan fasting is not just about disciplining the body to restrain from eating food and drinking water from predawn until sunset. The eyes, the ears, the tongue, and even the private parts are equally obligated to be restrained if a Muslim wants to gain the total rewards of fasting. Ramadan is also about restraining anger, doing good deeds, exercising personal discipline, and preparing oneself to serve as a good Muslim and a good person during and after Ramadan.

This is why the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him, PbuH) has been attributed, by Hazrat Abu Hurairah in hadith, to say: "He who does not desist from obscene language and acting obscenely (during the period of fasting), Allah has no need that he didn't eat or drink." (Bukhari, Muslim). In another hadith by Hazrat Abu Harairah, the Prophet (PbuH) said: "Fasting is not only from food and drink, fasting is to refrain from obscene (acts). If someone verbally abuses you or acts ignorantly toward you, say (to them) 'I am fasting; I am fasting.'" (Ibn Khuzainah). Restraint from food, water, and undesirable behavior makes a person more mentally disciplined and less prone to unhealthy behavior. In an investigation in Jordan (1), a significant reduction of parasuicidal cases was noted during the month of Ramadan. In the United Kingdom, the Ramadan model has been used by various health departments and organizations to reduce cigarette smoking among the masses, especially among Africans and Asians (2).

Ramadan fasting has spiritual, physical, psychological, and social benefits; however, manmade problems may occur, if fasting is not properly practiced. First of all, there is no need to consume excess food at *iftar* (the food eaten immediately after sunset to break fast), dinner or *sahur* (the light meal generally eaten about half an hour to one hour before dawn). The body has regulatory mechanisms that activate during fasting. There is efficient utilization of body fat, El Ati et al. (3) . Basal metabolism slows down during Ramadan fasting, Husain et al. (4). A diet that is less than a normal amount of food intake but balanced is sufficient enough to keep a person healthy and active during the month of Ramadan.

Health problems can emerge as a result of excess food intake, foods that make the diet unbalanced, and insufficient sleep (5, 6). Ultimately also, such a lifestyle contradicts the essential requirements and spirit of Ramadan.

DIET DURING RAMADAN

According to *Sunna* (the practices of Prophet Muhammad, PbuH) and research findings referred in this report, a dietary plan is given:

1. Bread/Cereal/Rice, Pasta, Biscuits and Cracker Group: 6-11 servings/day; 2. Meat/Beans/ Nut Group: 2-3 servings/day. 3. Milk and Milk Product Group: 2-3 servings/day. 4. Vegetable Group: 3-5 servings/day; 5. Fruit Group: 2-4 servings/day. 6. Added sugar (table sugar, sucrose): sparingly. 7. Added fat, polyunsaturated oil 4-7 table spoons.

Breakfast, *iftar*:

Dates, three

Juice, 1 serving (4 oz.)

Vegetable soup with some pasta or graham crackers, 1 cup

The body's immediate need at the time of *iftar* is to get an easily available energy source in the form of glucose for every living cell, particularly the brain and nerve cells. Dates and juices are good sources of sugars. Dates and juice in the above quantity are sufficient to bring low blood glucose levels to normal levels. Juice and soup help maintain water and mineral balance in the body. An unbalanced diet and too many servings of sherbets and sweets with added sugar have been found to be unhealthy, Gumma et al. (7).

Dinner:

Consume foods from all the following food groups:

Meat/Bean Group: Chicken, beef, lamb, goat, fish, 1-2 servings (serving size = a slice =1 oz); green pea, chickpea (*garbanzo, chana, humus*), green gram, black gram, lentil, lima bean and other beans, 1 serving (half cup). Meat and beans are a good source of protein, minerals, and certain vitamins. Beans are a good source of dietary fiber, as well.

Bread/Cereal Group: Whole wheat bread, 2 servings (serving size = 1 oz) or cooked rice, one cup or combination. This group is a good source of complex carbohydrates, which are a good source of energy and provide some protein, minerals, and dietary fiber.

Milk Group: milk or butter-milk (*lassi* without sugar), yogurt or cottage cheese (one cup). Those who can not tolerate whole milk must try fermented products such as butter-milk and yogurt. Milk and dairy products are good sources of protein and calcium, which are essential for body tissue maintenance and several physiological functions.

Vegetable Group: Mixed vegetable salad, 1 serving (one cup), (lettuce, carrot, parsley, cucumber, broccoli, coriander leaves, cauliflower or other vegetables as desired.) Add 2 teaspoons of olive oil or any polyunsaturated oil and 2 spoons of vinegar. Polyunsaturated fat provides the body with essential fatty acids and keto acids. Cooked vegetables such as guar beans, French beans, okra (*bhindi*), eggplant (*baigan*), bottle gourd (*loki*), cabbage, spinach, 1 serving (4 oz). Vegetables are a good source of dietary fiber, vitamin A, carotene, lycopenes, and other phytochemicals, which are antioxidants. These are helpful in the prevention of cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and many other health problems.

Fruits Group: 1-2 servings of citrus and/or other fruits. Eat fruits as the last item of the dinner or soon after dinner, to facilitate digestion and prevent many gastrointestinal problems. Citrus fruits provide vitamin C. Fruits are a good source of dietary fiber.

Fruits and mixed nuts may be eaten as a snack after dinner or *tarawiaha* or before sleep.

Pre-dawn Meal (*sahur*):

Consume a light *sahur*. Eat whole wheat or oat cereal or whole wheat bread, 1-2 serving with a cup of milk. Add 2-3 teaspoons of olive oil or any other monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats in a salad or the cereal. Eat 1-2 servings of fruits, as a last item.

DISCUSSION

Blood cholesterol and uric acid levels are sometimes elevated during the month of Ramadan (8). Contrary to popular thinking, it was found that intake of a moderately high-fat diet, around 36% of the total energy (calories), improved blood cholesterol profile, Nomani, et al. (9) and Nomani (10). It also prevents the elevation of blood uric acid level (8-10). The normal recommended guideline for fat is 30% or less energy. On weight basis, suggested fat intake during Ramadan is almost the same as at normal days. Fat is required for the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E, K) and carotenoids. Essential fatty acids are an important component of the cell membrane. They also are required for the synthesis of the hormone prostaglandin. Keto-acids from fat are especially beneficial during Ramadan to meet the energy requirement of brain and nerve cells. Keto-acids also are useful in the synthesis of glucose through the metabolic pathway of gluconeogenesis. This reduces the breakdown of body proteins for glucose synthesis. Therefore, the energy equivalent of 1-2 bread/cereal servings may be replaced with polyunsaturated fat.

During Ramadan increased gastric acidity is often noticed, Iraki, et al. (5), exhibiting itself with symptoms such as a burning feeling in the stomach, a heaviness in the stomach, and a sour mouth. Whole wheat bread, vegetables, humus, beans, and fruits -- excellent sources of dietary fiber -- trigger muscular action, churning and mixing food, breaking food into small particles, binding bile acids, opening the area between the stomach and the deudenum-jejenum and moving digesta in the small intestine, Kay (11). Thus, dietary fiber helps reduce gastric acidity and excess bile acids, Rydning et al. (12). In view of dietary fiber's role in moving digesta, it prevents constipation. It's strongly suggested that peptic ulcer patients avoid spicy foods and consult a doctor for appropriate medicine and diet. Diabetic subjects, particularly

severe type I (insulin dependent) or type II (non-insulin dependent), must consult their doctor for the type and dosage of medicine, and diet and precautions to be taken during the month. Generally diabetes mellitus, type II, is manageable through proper diet during Ramadan, Azizi and Siahkollah (13).

Pregnant and lactating women's needs for energy and nutrients are more critical than the needs of men (14). There is a possibility of health complications to the pregnant woman and the fetus or the lactating mother and the breastfed child, if energy and nutrient requirements are not met during the month of Ramadan (15-19). Governments, communities, and heads of the family must give highest priority to meet women's dietary needs. In African countries, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and many other places malnutrition is a major problem, especially among women from low-income groups. Further more, it is common among these women to perform strenuous work on farms or in factories, and other places. Malnutrition and strenuous conditions may lead to medical problems and danger to life. Under these conditions one must consult a medical doctor for treatment and *maulana* or *shiekh* for postponement or other suggestions regarding fasting. *Quran Al-Hakeem* and *Hadith* allow pregnant women and lactating mothers flexibility during the month of Ramadan.

For practical purposes and estimation of nutrients a diet was formulated, given below:

Iftar: 3 dates, 1/2 cup of orange juice, 1 cup of vegetable soup, 2 plain graham crackers; dinner: 1 cup of vegetable salad with two teaspoons of corn oil and two teaspoon of vinegar, 2 oz. of chicken, 1/2 cup of okra, 4 oz. of cooked whole *chana* (*garbanzo*), 3 tea spoon of oil while cooking main dishes, 2 slices of whole wheat bread, 1 cup of cooked rice, 3/4 cup of plain yogurt, one orange, 1/2 cup grapes, 1 oz of nuts-mixed roasted-without salt; *sahur*: 2 slices of whole wheat bread, 1 cup of milk, 1/4 cup of vegetable salad with two teaspoons of corn oil and two teaspoons of vinegar, 1 skinned apple, 2 teaspoons of sugar with tea or coffee.

Nutritionist IV (20) was used to estimate energy and nutrient content in the above diet, which was as follows: energy, 2136 kilocalories; protein, 70g; carbohydrate , 286g; fat, 87g, 35 % of energy of the total intake, (saturated fat 16.9g; mono saturated, 28.4g; poly unsaturated, 34g; other 7.3g; - oleic, 25.6g; linoleic, 29.5; linolenic, 0.6g; EPA-Omega-3, 0.006g; DHA-omega-3, 0.023g; dietary fiber 34g; calcium, 1013mg; sodium, 3252 mg; potassium, 2963mg; iron 13.3mg; zinc, 10mg. When the nutrients were compared with the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA), for an adult non-pregnant and non-lactating female (14), the diet met 100% or more of the RDA for protein, calcium, sodium, potassium, and vitamin A, K, B₁, B₂, B₃, B₆, B₁₂, folate, and C. The energy was close to the RDA, (97%). The dietary fiber level also was met as per the recommendation (11). Consuming food in the above amount by pregnant or lactating female may not meet the RDA for all of the nutrients. They may need supplementation of some minerals and vitamins such as, iron vitamin D, and more energy through bread or rice.

Further suggestions:

Drink sufficient water between *Iftar* and sleep to avoid dehydration.

Consume sufficient vegetables at meal s. Eat fruits at the end of the meal.

Avoid intake of high sugar (table sugar, sucrose) foods through sweets or other forms.

Avoid spicy foods.

Avoid caffeine drinks such as coke, coffee or tea. Caffeine is a diuretic. Three days to five days before Ramadan gradually reduce the intake of these drinks. A sudden decrease in caffeine prompts headaches, mood swings and irritability.

Smoking is a health risk factor. Avoid smoking cigarettes. If you cannot give up smoking, cut down gradually starting a few weeks before Ramadan. Smoking negatively affects utilization of various vitamins, metabolites and enzyme systems in the body.

Do not forget to brush or *Miswak* (tender *neem* tree branch, *Azhardicta indica* or other appropriate plant in a country, about 1/4-1/2 inch diameter and 6-8 inches length, tip partially chewed and made brush like). Brush your teeth before sleep and after *sahur*. Brush more than two times or as many times as practicable.

Normal or overweight people should not gain weight. For overweight people Ramadan is an excellent opportunity to lose weight. Underweight or marginally normal weight people are discouraged from losing weight. Analyzing a diet's energy and nutritional component, using food composition tables or computer software, will be useful in planning an appropriate diet.

It is recommended that everyone engage in some kind of light exercise, such as stretching or walking. It's important to follow good time management practices for *Ibada* (prayer and other religious activities), sleep, studies, job, and physical activities or exercise.

In summary, intake of a balanced diet is critical to maintain good health, sustain an active lifestyle and attain the full benefits of Ramadan.

Dr. Mohammad Zafar A. Nomani, is Professor Emeritus, West Virginia University; and recipient of the first King Hassan II award for outstanding research contributions on Ramadan fasting, honored by Hassan II Foundation for Scientific and Medical Research on Ramadan, Casablanca, Morocco, at the First World Congress on Health and Ramadan.

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Dietary fat, blood cholesterol and uric acid levels during Ramadan fasting

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Number of comments: 1

By: M. Z. A. Nomani, Ph. D.

[Intl. Journal of Ramadan Fasting Research*](#) -

Conflicting results were observed regarding the effect of dietary fat on blood cholesterol and uric acid levels, which may be due to lack or insufficient consideration of (a) the body-weights of the subjects, and (b) energy intake levels in

relation to the requirements. Further, researchers noted that the general guide-line for energy intake through fat - not more than 30 percent of the total, may be appropriate for the general population but not during the Ramadan fasting period or other situations that involve restricted energy intake. Higher intake of fat-energy, around 36 percent of the total intake, which includes poly-unsaturated fat may prevent elevation of blood cholesterol and uric acid levels and allow better retention of protein in the body. These findings can be applicable among diverse racial, religious or gender groups. They can also apply to other restricted energy intake conditions, such as found among subjects with anorexia nervosa or those following prolonged low-calorie weight-control diet. *Int J Ramadan Fasting Res. 1(1):1-6, 1997*

INTRODUCTION

Ramadan fasting can serve as an excellent research model for the study of human metabolism and behavior. One of the earliest published research findings on Ramadan fasting is from East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, reported by Muazzam and Khaleque (1). During the last twenty years there has been growing realization on the part of many scientists for further research in this area. Recently, a Ramadan fasting model has been used for various metabolic studies, Iraki et al (2), Ayabak et al (3), Husain et al. (4), Malik et al (5), El Ati et al (6), Nomani (7), Nomani et al (8), Sweileh et al (9) and Malhotra et al (10) and for behavior modification, Afifi (11) Farren and Naidoo (12) and Daradkeh (13).

High blood cholesterol and uric acid have been considered health risk factors in cardiovascular diseases and gout, respectively. Conflicting results have been reported on the effect of dietary fat on changes in blood cholesterol levels, Gurr et al (14) and Kritchevsky (15). In 1979, Nomani et al (16) hypothesized that there is an increase in blood cholesterol levels with either increasing or decreasing level of energy intake in relation to the requirement. The recent findings of Ramadan fasting research, Nomani (7), Nomani et al (8) and Hallak and Nomani (17), confirm the hypothesis and help in resolving the dilemma of conflicting findings. The dietary regulation of blood cholesterol and uric acid levels are not only useful for Muslims but also for others throughout the world, irrespective of religion, race, color, gender or ethnic group.

According to the 1995 dietary guidelines, from the U. S. Department of Agriculture and Department of Health and Human Services (18) - energy from fat should not to be more than 30 percent, a level that is appropriate for the general population; however, this level may be inappropriate during Ramadan fasting or similar restricted energy intake situations. Under restricted energy intake conditions, such as Ramadan fasting, anorexia nervosa, prolonged weight control dieting and low energy intake conditions in underdeveloped or developing countries, there is a need for reassessment.

BLOOD CHOLESTEROL

Body weight

One of the major problems that contributes to conflicting results on the effect of quantity or quality of dietary fat on blood cholesterol level is a failure to examine the

effect of dietary fat in relation to body weight or changes in body weight. There is an increase in blood cholesterol levels with increasing or decreasing weight from normal weight levels. Hallak and Nomani (17) noted increased blood cholesterol level with weight loss during the fasting month of Ramadan. Other investigators also noted increased blood cholesterol level with weight loss, Fedail et al. (19), Shoukry (20) and El Arnaoty and Johnson (21). Among non-Muslim American female subjects there was increase in blood cholesterol level with lowering of the body mass-index below 18.5, Nomani et al. (22). During Ramadan, when no significant difference was noticed in blood cholesterol levels, before and after fasting period, there was no significant difference in body weight as well, Maislos, et al (23).

Dietary fat and blood cholesterol level

Another omitted or insufficiently considered factor is statement of the energy intake in relation to the requirement. Under limited energy intake conditions, several studies on rats and humans, which include Muslims and non-Muslims, have indicated beneficial effects of a high fat-diet. In rats when the energy intake was ~70 percent of the requirement, blood cholesterol level was negatively associated with dietary fat energy, Nomani et al (24). In another study from the same laboratory, Forbes et al (25), found no significant difference in blood cholesterol levels of rats on diet with 40 percent of the total energy intake through fat (corn and coconut oils, 1.4:2) as compared to the group consuming 21 percent fat-energy from corn oil. Total energy intake was around 67-75 percent of the requirement. Further, this study indicates that there was significantly higher, $p < 0.05$, nitrogen retention in the body in the high-fat diet group.

In humans, Murray et al (26) reported no significant difference between the mean blood cholesterol levels of Anagamba nomads, consuming 73% of the energy as fat, mainly from milk, and Kanouri sedentary men, both from East-Niger and of the same genetic stock, consuming only 9% of energy as fat. The total energy intake was around 18,00 kcal/day and mean weight of 52.3 kg and 51.4, respectively. Among Americans, Grundy (27) noted that when body weight was kept constant, a diet rich in monounsaturated fatty acids was as effective in lowering plasma cholesterol as was a diet low in fat and high in carbohydrate.

Hallak and Nomani (17) found that during the last two weeks of Ramadan fasting, when the subjects were on high-fat diets (1834 Kcal/day), there was no significant difference in blood cholesterol levels and body weights from beginning and end of this period. In another Ramadan study, when there was no significant change in body weight, Nomani et al. (8) noted change in serum cholesterol level inversely related to fat energy intake (coefficient of correlation, $r = -0.77$, $p < 0.02$). In a concave curve-linear model change in total-cholesterol: HDL-cholesterol ratio was the lowest and optimal at 36 percent of the energy from fat, coefficient of determination, $r^2 = 0.86$, $p < 0.01$. In the multiple regression r^2 value further improved (0.98) with the inclusion of total energy intake, change in total-cholesterol: HDL-cholesterol = $4118.28 - 6.009 \text{ Fat, g/day} - 3.077 \text{ Energy, Kcal/day} + 0.0007 \text{ Energy (Kcal/day)}^2$, $p < 0.001$, Nomani (7). This suggest that fat and total energy level independently affected changes in the ratio. Maislos, et al (23) found that not only was there no significant difference in blood cholesterol level but the HDL-cholesterol profile improved during the fasting period. The dietary records were not available. However, the authors had the impression that the food consumed during Ramadan was of higher fat and carbohydrate content than that consumed during the

rest of the year. In a recent study, El Ati et al. (6) showed that during Ramadan fasting the body develops adaptive mechanisms and there is an increased and decreased oxidation of fat and carbohydrate, respectively.

The findings of the above studies have lead to hypothesize that when energy is a limited, increased dietary fat level favors reduced breakdown of body protein, including labile proteins. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol-receptors , which are protein in nature, also may be affected. Thus, high-fat diet contributes in preventing the elevation of blood cholesterol level at restricted energy conditions, including Ramadan fasting. The findings have probable usefulness not only among Muslims observing Ramadan fast but also non-Muslims with anorexia nervosa, hospital in-patient subjects with low-weight or under-weight, populations in under-developed or developing countries, persons on prolonged low-calorie diets in weight-control programs and in many other situations with restricted energy intake conditions.

BLOOD URIC ACID

During Ramadan fasting increased blood uric acid have been observed by Fedail et al (19), El Ati et al (6), Gumaa et al (28), Nomani et al (29) and Al-Hader et al (30) . Nomani et al (29) noted change in blood uric levels negatively related to the changes in body weight, $r = 0.52$, $p < 0.05$. In other words, increase in blood uric acid level was positively associated with body weight loss. During the last two weeks of Ramadan fasting, blood uric acid level in subjects with high uric acid level was prevented from further rise with the inclusion of high-fat diet, Nomani et al (7). Uric acid is a product of purine metabolism. Dietary-fat may be helpful in preventing the catabolism of these nitrogen containing compounds and protein during the fasting period. El Ati et al (6) noted the uric acid level returned back to normal one month after Ramadan period.

Summary

The findings of Ramadan fasting among Muslims and similar limiting energy intake situations among non-Muslims suggest that a high-fat diet around 36 percent of energy through fat, which includes poly-unsaturated fat, may be beneficial in preventing elevation of blood cholesterol or uric acid level and better retention of protein in the body.

Dr. Mohammad Zafar A. Nomani, is Professor Emeritus, West Virginia University; and recipient of the first King Hassan II award for outstanding research contributions on Ramadan fasting, honored by Hassan II Foundation for Scientific and Medical Research on Ramadan, Casablanca, Morocco, at the First World Congress on Health and Ramadan.

Source: [International Journal of Ramadan Fasting Research](#)

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Lose Weight and Gain Spirituality

9/18/2007 - Education Religious - Article Ref: TM0709-3368

Number of comments: 4

By: Mohammed Alo

ToledoMuslims.com* -



Contrary to public opinion, most Muslims end up gaining weight during Ramadan. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims abstain from food and water from sunrise to sunset. Although, this sounds like a good diet, seldom does it turn out to be.

Traditionally, Muslims are supposed to eat two meals; after sunset and prior to sunrise. While in most Muslim majority countries this works out well, in the US it doesn't. In Muslim majority countries the entire country reverses their daily schedule. They don't do much all day, and stay awake at night so they have time to eat a morning meal.

Here in the US, most Muslims indulge after sunset and don't wake up to have an early meal. Busy work schedules and busy lifestyles promote this bad eating behavior. This is a major contributor to gaining weight.

The human body is very smart. The body figures out that it is only getting one meal a day and decides that it needs to store everything. So everything you eat gets stored as fat. The best practice would be to remember to wake up early and have a sensible meal, but that may not always work out.

You can easily use the occasion of Ramadan to lose some weight and shed some pounds. You don't have to stop eating or avoid going to dinner break-fast parties (Iftars). You just have to follow a few guidelines.

First of all, avoid eating too many carbohydrates. Muslims love carbohydrates. Most Iftar dinners are composed of a ton of carbohydrates. Pasta, rice, bread, sweets and sugars are the most common culprits. Try to avoid these. No your host will not be offended. Instead of eating a ton of rice with the red sauce, try to cut the rice out totally and just have the sauce. Load up on salad and drink diet pop. Carbs are the worse thing person can eat if they are trying to lose weight.

Secondly, eat lots of protein. If you avoid carbohydrates and eat tons of protein, you will stop feeling hungry and end up eating less. And even if you eat tons of proteins, you will still lose weight. Eat chicken, beef, lamb, turkey, veal, eggs, and seafood. Contrary to popular belief an all meat diet will decrease your cholesterol and blood sugar. Recent studies in the New England Journal of Medicine and other reputable medical journals have proven this time and time again.

Thirdly, eat some fiber. Green, leafy vegetables are great for getting your system flowing. Have all the salad you want. Don't use "fat free" dressing. Fat free usually means "tons of sugar". It's the sugar that is making us fatter. Also, avoid fruits, a piece or two a day is fine, but they usually contain a lot of sugar.

Avoid sugary drinks. Tea, coffee, pop, and juices all contain tons of sugar. Try to drink diet drinks and use Splenda as a sugar substitute. It is made of real sugar and tastes like real sugar, but does not make you gain weight nor does it have the side-effects of other sugar substitutes.










Following this high protein diet, your body will turn into a fat burning machine. Your body doesn't get the sugar from the diet, so it has to burn fat to make fuel. Even while you sleep the fat will burn right off.











Along with extra prayers and spirituality, this is a quick easy way to get the most out of your Ramadan.











Note: Always check with your doctor before beginning any diet and exercise plan. This article does not constitute medical advice.


www.islamqa.com very useful web site for any questions you have on fasting and zakat (by Sh. Munajjid)

What is permitted for the fasting person

1		Using something to remove bad breath during Ramadaan .	22913
2		Brushing Teeth while fasting.	1312
3		Using toothpaste whilst fasting.	13619
4		Eating out of forgetfulness in Ramadan does not matter.	22833
5		Fasting person using miswaak and toothpaste.	108014
6		There is no connection between fasting and cutting one's nails or shaving one's pubic hairs .	14030
7		Ruling on anaesthetic injections and cleaning, filling or extraction of teeth whilst fasting.	106495
8		Rinsing the nose and mouth when fasting.	106497
9		Anaesthetic does not break the fast.	95062

10		His tooth was giving him pain so he broke the fast.	93248
11		Speaking to one's fiancée over the phone when fasting .	13918
12		Ruling on husband and wife playing while fasting .	20032
13		Ruling on using kohl, henna and cosmetics .	22922
14		Is saying Ramadan Mubarak be bidah .	12616
15		Having dental treatment whilst fasting .	
16		Having fillings and applying medicine to the teeth does not affect the fast.	82308
17		The food comes back up to his throat – what should he do?.	80425
18		Ruling on using ear drops during the day in Ramadaan.	80208
19		Should the worshippers stand up when they hear the iqamah or in the middle of it or at the end of it?.	79241




20		If bits of food go down his throat without him meaning them to, does that invalidate his fast?.	79190
21		Can he take vitamins after sahoor?.	78454
22		Is a bee sting or scorpion sting one of the things that invalidate the fast?.	67168
23		He agrees with the opinion of Ibn Hazm about intimacy. Is it permissible for his wife to engage in foreplay with him when he is fasting?.	66803
24		Ruling on visiting a female gynaecologist during Ramadaan.	66608
25		Bursting pimples and its effects on fasting.	65514
26		Ruling on swallowing one's own saliva or that of someone else .	49005
27		Semen coming out during the day following intercourse at night – does this invalidate the fast?.	49721
28		Can he taste coffee whilst fasting? .	49658
29		There is nothing wrong with putting oil on the hair during the day in Ramadaan .	49640

30		What is it permissible for a man to do with his wife during the day in Ramadaan? .	49614
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Fasting
 person
 using
 cream to
 moisturize
 the lips.







39210

32		Ruling on swimming and diving deep into water when fasting.	39232
33		Rinsing the mouth with salt and water whilst fasting .	39017
34		It is permissible for the fasting person to take a bath .	38907
35		Insulin injections taken by a diabetic do not invalidate the fast .	37892
36		Working on Saturdays and Sundays in Ramadaan .	37802
37		Treating toothache during the day in Ramadaan .	37744
38		Gathering to break the fast together .	37702

39		Putting on perfume in Ramadaan .	37706
40		Visiting graveyards when fasting .	37708
41		Kohl and creams do not invalidate the fast .	34552
42		Delaying ghusl for janaabah (impurity following sexual activity) until after dawn has broken in Ramadaan.	7310
43		Intercourse during non-daylight hours in the month of Ramadaan.	2555
44		Ruling on skin patches in Ramadaan.	8226

Things which invalidate the fast

1		The one who engaged in foreplay with his wife until he ejaculated has to make up the fast but he does not have to offer expiation.	110086
2		He suffered a nosebleed whilst fasting .	12687
3		Vaccinations against meningitis do not invalidate the fast .	10901
4		She put a face mask made of honey on her face and some of it got into her mouth when she was fasting.	108638
5		Does not wearing hijab invalidate the fast?.	107624
6		Emission of madhiy does not invalidate the fast.	107335
7		She was raped by a kaafir during the day in Ramadaan .	26843
8		Smoking is haraam and invalidates the fast.	106450
9		She fasted even though she was not sure that her period had ended.	106452

10		Is his fast spoiled by swearing and reviling?.	106473
11		He had a nosebleed whilst he was fasting.	106486
12		Ruling on using nasal sprays when fasting.	106494
13		If he breaks the fast by eating during the day in Ramadaan so that he can have intercourse with his wife then he has to offer the expiation.	106531
14		Expiation for one who had intercourse with his menstruating wife in Ramadaan.	104865
15		Is it necessary to do ghusl after having an ultrasound tube inserted into the vagina? .	21611

Fiqh al-Şiyām

1. Definition

1.1 Fasting is to refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, and having sexual intercourse from dawn till dusk with the intention of worship

1.2 Kaffāra is a penalty of atonement when the fasting is deliberately broken, without a valid reason through eating, drinking, smoking and sexual intercourse. The penalty is:

1.2.1 To set a slave free

1.2.2 To fast for sixty consecutive days

1.2.3 To feed sixty poor people one average meal

According to Imām Abu Hanifa, the penalty should be carried out in this order.

2. Types of fasting:

2.1. Fard:

2.1.1. Fixed Fard:

2.1.1.1. Ramadan fast.

2.1.1.2. To vow to fast on a certain day if a wish or desire is fulfilled.

2.1.2. Non-fixed Fard:

2.1.2.1. Keeping missed Ramadan fast.

2.1.2.2. A non-fixed fast of pledge

2.2. Wajib: A fast, which was broken for whatever reason is wajib to complete.

2.3. Sunna: all those fasts that the Prophet kept and encouraged.

2.3.1. Ashura with the day before or after it.

2.3.2. The six fasts of Shawwal.

2.4. Mustahab:

2.4.1. To fast every Mondays and Thursdays.

2.4.2. The 13th, 14th, and 15th of the lunar month.

2.4.3. On the day of Arafa (9th Dhill Hijj)

2.5. Makruh:

2.5.1. To fast only on the Ashura

2.5.2. To fast only on Saturday

2.5.3. To fast only on Friday

2.5.4. To fast on the day of doubt (shak) 30th Shaban/1st of Ramadan.

2.5.5. To consecutively fast without breaking the fast

2.6. Haram:

- 2.6.1. To fast on the two days of Eid
- 2.6.2. To fast on the days of tashriq (11th, 12th and 13th of Dhil Hijj)

3. Requirements for the fasting to be obligatory

- 3.1. Islam
- 3.2. Puberty
- 3.3. To be sane
- 3.4. (To have the knowledge that fasting is necessary, for a person who has become Muslim in a non-Muslim country.

4. Requirements for the validity of fasting

- 4.1. To refrain from eating, drinking, smoking and intercourse from dawn till dusk.
- 4.2. to have the intention of fasting.
- 4.3. To be free from any kind of religious impediment such as, in the case of women to be free from menses and post-natal bleeding.

5. Exception from fasting

- 5.1. The insane.
- 5.2. Children who have not yet majored.
- 5.3. A traveler.
- 5.4. A sick person
- 5.5. A pregnant woman or a suckling mother who fears for the child in her womb or the suckling babe.
- 5.6. A woman who is in her monthly cycle, or post-childbirth confinement.
- 5.7. The elderly or chronically ill.
 - 5.7.1. In this case they have to give compensation for each day missed, with the intention that if they ever are to become healthy again then they have to keep qada.
 - 5.7.2. If he is poor then he should ask Allah for forgiveness for not being able to fast.
 - 5.7.2.1. The fidya is equivalent to what is given on eid day as sadqatul fitr, approximately £2.50.
 - 5.7.3. In the case that someone dies because of illness and did not give fidya, then it is not wajib for the offspring to pay fidya on his behalf.
 - 5.7.4. If he becomes well then it is necessary to write a will, if he dies without writing a will then it is not binding on the offspring to give fidya on his behalf.
 - 5.7.5. However, if he has written a will, then it is necessary for the inheritors to pay fidya from one third of the deceased's wealth.
 - 5.7.6. It is not permissible to pray or keep fast on someone else's behalf.
 - 5.7.7. Food can be given on behalf of the deceased.

6. Things which invalidate the fast

This can be placed into two categories, (6.1.) Where qada and kaffara (please refer to point 1.2. for definition) are obligatory, and (6.2) where only qada is obligatory.

6.1 Qada and kaffara are wajib:

- 6.1.1 To eat or drink anything, even for medicinal purposes (providing that its not an emergency situation).
- 6.1.2 To have sexual intercourse, irrelevant of normal or anal sex, and irrelevant of if ejaculation took place or not. (Note: this in no way is implying towards the permissibility of anal sex)
- 6.1.3 To smoke intentionally, or to take in fumes intentionally such as agar bati and incense sticks.

6.2 Places where only the qada is obligatory and not the kaffara:

- 6.2.1 To eat or drink such a thing which is not normally consumed, for example to eat glass or to drink cow urine.
- 6.2.2 To break the fast because of intense hunger or thirst.
- 6.2.3 To take medicine in a life threatening situation.
- 6.2.4 Eating, drinking, smoking and have intercourse after dawn on the mistaken assumption that it is not dawn yet. Similarly, engaging in these acts before sunset on the mistaken assumption that it is already Maghrib time.
- 6.2.5 To break the fast intentionally after eating, drinking, smoking or having intercourse by mistake, thinking that the fast has already broken.
- 6.2.6 Eating food, which is stuck between the teeth and is bigger than the size of a chickpea.
 - 6.2.6.1 If the food is taken out of the mouth and then inserted back into the mouth then the fast breaks irrelevant of its size.
- 6.2.7 Swallowing water due to excessive gargling.
- 6.2.8 Ejaculation due to reasons other than intercourse such as kissing or fore playing with ones wife and vice versa.
- 6.2.9 Masturbation.
- 6.2.10 To insert anything into the private part.
- 6.2.11 Women beginning their menses or post-natal bleeding.
- 6.2.12 Deliberately vomiting (mouth full)

7 Things which do not invalidate the fast

- 7.1 To eat, drink, smoke or have intercourse unintentionally.
- 7.2 Unintentional vomiting.
- 7.3 Bathing
- 7.4 Use of facial cream, perfumes, oil, eye mascara and make up.
- 7.5 Injections
- 7.6 To be in the state of impurity after dawn
- 7.7 To brush the teeth

- 7.8 To swallow something which is stuck between the teeth and is less than the size of a chickpea.
- 7.9 Smoke or dust getting into ones mouth unintentionally
- 7.10 Kissing and playing with ones wife, providing there is no seminal discharge
- 7.11 Ejaculation due to looking at the private part of ones spouse, or due to entertaining sexual thoughts.

8 Things that are undesirable (makruh)

- 8.1 To chew something like gum or rubber, providing there is no flavor.
- 8.2 To taste food with the tip of ones tongue.
- 8.3 To collect saliva in the mouth and swallow it in large quantity.
- 8.4 To use toothpaste
- 8.5 To back bite
- 8.6 To quarrel and use filthy and indecent language.

9 Things that are desirable (Mustahab)

- 9.1 To break the fast on time
- 9.2 To prolong the sehri to the last part of the night
- 9.3 To do as much good actions as possible
- 9.4 To reply to someone who is looking for a fight 'I am fasting'.
- 9.5 To pray (dua) at the time of iftar
- 9.6 To break the fast with dates if not then with water.

10 Taraweeh

- 10.1 The taraweeh prayer is sunna muakada, therefore has to be prayed
- 10.2 It is 20 rakats, proven from the unanimous consensus of the Sahaba.
 - 10.2.1 It is only proven that the Prophet prayed eight.
- 10.3 If a person is ill and is not able to perform the taraweeh, then eight rakats is better then leaving it altogether, following the sunna of the Prophet.
- 10.4 In the case that a person cannot even pray eight, and then it is all right to leave it, providing the excuse is genuine. Qada is not needed.

11 Itakf

- 11.1 The itakaf is sunna ala kifaya
- 11.2 One is only permitted to leave the mosque for bathing and answering to the call of nature.
- 11.3 Women should make a quarter in their homes their place of itikaf.

12 Saqatul Fitr

- 12.1 Sadqatul fitr is wajib upon every single individual who were alive at the time of sunrise on the day of eidul fitr.
- 12.2 Everyone should pay his or her own sadqa.
- 12.3 In the case of children who are not earning then the head of the house should pay on their behalf.
- 12.4 The sadqatul fitr is determined by finding the value of 1.1 kg of barley, which is approximately £2.50.

Spiritual Program for Ramadan... Dr. Salah Soltan

All praise is due to Allah who created us to worship Him. May the peace, blessings, and mercy of Allah (SWT) be upon the final of messengers and those who follow him until the Day of Judgment.

The American Center for Islamic Research (ACIR) congratulates Muslims in the United States and throughout the world with the coming of Ramadan, the month of the Qur'an, remembrance, supplication, fasting, and *qiyam* (night prayers). It is a month for the Muslim *Ummah* (nation) to build itself. During this holy month the greatest of victories were recorded at the hands of men and women who were trained as godly servants, were able to overcome their desires, and were granted victory by Allah (SWT) over their enemies. We remind our Muslim brothers and sisters with what Imam Hassan Al Banna – may Allah (SWT) shower him with His mercy - said in his message "*Da'watuna*" (Our Call):

"We would like for our people to know - and all Muslims are our people - that they are more beloved to us than ourselves. It is pleasing for us to sacrifice our souls for the sake of their glory. This love for all Muslims has overcome our hearts, left us sleepless, and caused our tears to fall."

We sincerely wish you the all the best in this life and in the hereafter. The following are prescribed manners and behavior for Muslims during the holy month of Ramadan:

First

To be honest and sincere in your devotion to Allah (SWT), having the pure intention of fasting for His sake, wishing to please Him, and hoping for His reward to eventually win paradise and be saved from hellfire.

The following will aid you in having this intention:

- 1) The *Hadeeth* of Bukhari and Muslim narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "All the good deeds of the son of Adam multiply his reward from ten times to seven hundred times." Allah (SWT) said: "Except for fasting, for it is for Me and I reward for it." Hence, Allah (SWT) gives fasting a special status; worship by fasting is indeed one of the greatest means of getting closer to Him.
- 2.) Fasting opens up way for the pure *fitrah* (innate nature of the human being) and the clear soul to ascend to the level of full submission to the commandments of Allah (SWT).

It frees them from the overpowering bondage of lusts and desires that stand as hurdles in the path of those seeking Allah (SWT).

3.) Fasting strengthens the will of the human being and his ability to make decisions based on awareness, logic, heart, and soul. It weakens the desire of the human being to deviate in pursuit of his desire for food and sexual satisfaction and his anger. All of these ailments are remedied by fasting so that we may become godly servants.

Second

To recognize the value of time during Ramadan because it is indeed an invaluable opportunity for the wise. The first third of the month is mercy; the second is forgiveness, and the final third salvation from hellfire. During this month *Laylatul Qadr* occurs, a night greater than a thousand months, during which the performance of good deeds is considered to be equivalent to the performance of good deeds for almost a hundred years. In the Hadeeth of the Prophet (pbuh) he says: "If the Muslim *ummah* knew what Allah (SWT) had in store for it during Ramadan it would have wished that the entire year was Ramadan."

In reality we see many Muslims spending their nights watching TV and with friends and with friends and their days sleeping or shopping. This month is a month of worship, recitation of the Qur'an, remembrance of Allah (SWT), supplication, charity, and calling others to good.

Let the Muslim be honest with himself, without deceiving himself or attempting to deceive Allah (SWT) as hypocrites do, and ask himself an important question. If I had the opportunity to work overtime in my field, be it medicine, engineering, education, etc, and get paid over seven hundred times my regular pay, and the opportunity to work one single night and get paid the salary of one thousand months, would I refuse? Let the godly servants answer this question for themselves.

Third

To strive to complete the recitation of the Qur'an at least twice, once in *taraweeh* and once in an individual recitation. To aid you in accomplishing the first, remember the *hadeeth* of Al Bukhari narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever spends the nights of Ramadan in prayer out of faith and for the sake of Allah (SWT), his sins will be forgiven." Night prayers without the Qur'an are like a body without a head, and night prayers with the Qur'an but without *khushou'* (attentiveness and consciousness) are like a body without a soul. It is indeed compulsory upon you to have your mind, heart, and soul present and living the verses of the Qur'an as you recite them.

Let us remember that some of the companions used to recite the entire Qur'an once every week in days other than Ramadan; when Ramadan came, they would devote their day and night to the Qur'an. I recommend that you divide your recitation of the Qur'an between *taraweeh*, night prayers, and individual recitation. Most importantly, read Qur'an with your spouse and children at home. Thus, you will have achieved a series of recitations, one between you and Allah (SWT), one with your family, and one with other Muslim brothers in the *masjid*.

Fourth

To review what you have memorized from the Qur'an in the past. Angel Jibreel used to review what had been revealed of the Qur'an during the previous year with the Prophet (pbuh) during Ramadan. In Ramadan of the year in which the Prophet (pbuh) died, Angel Jibreel reviewed it with him in its entirety twice (Transmitted by Al Bukhari)

Let this example, set for us by the Prophet (pbuh), be a driving force for all those who have memorized and then forgotten what they memorized. It would also be prudent of them to be

fearful when they recall the *hadeeth* of the Prophet (pbuh) in which he says: “Whosoever memorizes the Qur’an and then forgets it shall meet Allah (SWT).” (Transmitted by Abu Dawoud) We need to make a record of all the verses and portions of the Qur’an that we mentioned at one point or another and begin the process of reviewing, for perhaps when we meet Allah (SWT) we can ascend one level in paradise for each verse that we memorized. A clear mind and pure heart no doubt will make the process of reviewing much easier, as well as remembering the words of Allah (SWT): “And We have indeed made the Qur’an easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?”

Fifth

To strive to provide food for other people when it is time to break the fast, either at home or in the masjid. You can either prepare the food yourself or spend some money for this purpose because the reward for this is very great: forgiveness of your sins and salvation from hellfire. All of this reward is reserved even if you provide a person with water or some milk and half a date to break his fast. This shows the boundless rewards Allah (SWT) showers upon his servants if they approach him with sincerity, even with the smallest of deeds. This is a great opportunity for brothers to donate from their money and for sisters to prepare food so that everyone may have the opportunity to attain many rewards and forgiveness.

Sixth

To make supplication when breaking your fast as in the *hadeeth* of Ibn Maja, narrated on the authority of Abdullah bin Omar that the Prophet (pbuh) said: “The fasting person is awarded a supplication when he breaks his fast that shall not be turned down.”

Abu Dawoud also narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) would never break his fast without saying: “Bismillah. O Allah, for You I have fasted and from Your blessings and provisions I break my fast.”

Abdullah bin Omar used to say when breaking his fast: Oh Allah, I ask You by Your mercy that has encompassed all things to forgive my sins.”

I recommend that you make a supplication for all your Muslim brothers and sisters, that Allah (swt) returns us to His commandments, that He used us in the service of Islam. Also, let each brother remind his wife, children, and brothers at the masjid to make a supplication when breaking their fast. The sister also has an important role in reminding her children to make a supplication when breaking their fast.”

Seventh

To hurry in breaking your fast and to delay *suhoor* (meal before dawn). It was transmitted by Muslim and Bukhari, on the authority of Sahl bin Sa’d, that the Prophet (pbuh) said: “People will still be in a good state so long as they hurry in breaking their fast.”

As transmitted by Tirmidhi, narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (pbuh) said: “Allah (swt) said: ‘the most beloved of My servants to Me are those who are quick to break their fast.’”

As for *suhoor*, it was the *sunnah* of the Prophet (pbuh) to delay it until right before *fajr* (dawn). He encouraged us to practice this *sunnah*, as transmitted by Muslim and Ibn Maja narrated on the authority of Anas bin Malik, that the Prophet (pbuh) said: “Have *suhoor*, for in *suhoor* there is blessing.”

As transmitted by Ahmed, narrated on the authority of Abu Sa’eed Al Khudary, the Prophet (pbuh) said “Eating *suhoor* is a blessing, so do not leave it, even if it is but a drink of water, for

Allah (swt) and His angels pray on those who eat *suhoor*.” The Prophet (pbuh) called it the blessed meal in another *hadeeth* transmitted by Abu Dawoud.

Hence, the Muslim’s desire and love for food diminishes and is replaced by love for Allah (swt) above all things. He hurries to break his fast not out of hunger and love for food but in order to attain the love of Allah (swt). He delays his *suhoor* because it is a blessing and because Allah (swt) and His angels pray on those who eat *suhoor*. This understanding makes us the quickest of people to follow the *sunnah* in breaking one’s fast with dates, water, or juice, praying *maghrib*, and then eating one’s meal. It also makes the Muslim delay his *suhoor* until the end of the night and right before *fajr*. Otherwise, he may oversleep and miss both *suhoor* and *fajr* prayer, and hence miss the blessing of *suhoor* with the prayer of Allah (swt) and His angels, and miss *fajr* prayer, the greatest of all prayers in reward.

Eighth

To spend from your wealth and to donate generously. Let each one of us evaluate himself, because if his fasting is good and acceptable his generosity will be great in amount. Bukhari tells us in his narration, that the Prophet (pbuh) was the most generous of people, and he was the most generous during Ramadan. When he used to meet Angel Jibreel he used to be more generous than the wind is sent with rain.

This is a clear and simple criterion. If our fasting is good and well done, our faith will be great, and our desire to build our future in the hereafter will increase, along with our desire to please Allah (swt) and to avoid His wrath and anger. Consequently, spending and giving with generosity becomes easier on the person because of his clear and pure soul, and one does not feel the reluctance he may feel at other times.

There are many ways to do good and be generous during this month, the most important of which is feeding the poor and the needy and sponsoring them wherever they may be. Start with your relatives because it is both an act of generosity and a connection to your relatives. Then there are acts of goodness such as establishing *masajid* and schools and calling people to Islam. It is also preferred that you pay your *zakatul maal* during Ramadan because the reward for performing a mandatory duty during Ramadan is multiplied seventy times the reward for performing it any other time. If you give \$1,000 for example, the reward will be equivalent to giving \$70,000. Also, *zakatul fitr* is a cleanser for the fasting person and a source of food for the needy as the Prophet (pbuh) tells us in his *hadeeth* transmitted by Abu Dawoud. Hence, this month is an opportunity for each one of us to build his hereafter with some of the blessings and provisions given to us by Allah (swt) in this life.

Ninth

To remember Allah (swt) constantly, Ibn Habban narrates that the Prophet (pbuh) said: “Four things you should do plentifully during this month, two with which you will attain the pleasure of your Lord, and two of which you cannot do without. The two with which you will attain the pleasure of your Lord are to testify that there is no God worthy of worship but Allah (swt), and to seek His forgiveness. The two which you cannot do without are to ask Him for paradise and to seek His refuge from hellfire.”

A sincere and devout servant cannot do without these four characteristics of remembrance and supplication if he wishes to please his Lord and benefit himself in the hereafter. Make use of the time on your way to work, on your way home, on your way to the masjid, or one your way anywhere, and enliven it with the remembrance of Allah (swt), perhaps Allah (swt) will remember us with His boundless mercy and blessings. Remember that on the Day of Judgment you will regret most those moments that you wasted without remembering Allah (swt).

Tenth

To reconcile any disputes you may have with any of your family members, friends, or Muslim brothers and sisters. This should be accomplished prior to the beginning of Ramadan because Allah (swt) forgives all sinners except those who are in dispute or in fighting. If we want to realize the impact that personal feuds and arguments can have on the mercy that befalls the entirety of the Ummah, let us look at Sahih Bukhari, the Book of Laylatul Qadr, chapter 4 titled "Concealing Knowledge of Laylatul Qadr Due to Fighting." In the *hadeeth* narrated on the authority of 'Ubadat bin al Samit he says: "the Prophet (pbuh) said, 'I came out to inform you of the time of Laylatul Qadr. But so and so fought one another, and the knowledge of it was lifted from me.'"

It is clear from this *hadeeth* that the Prophet (pbuh) knew the time of Laylatul Qadr, and he was coming out to inform the companions and the entire Ummah of its time. However, when two of the Muslims disputed with each other, the Prophet (pbuh) was made to forget it. From this serious *hadeeth*, one can conclude that any fight or hate instigated with a Muslim brother can lead to delay in victory, loss of rewards, division in the Ummah, and loss of blessings. Perhaps, Ramadan can be an opportunity for us to reunite and to cleanse and purify our hearts.

These are ten recommendations for every Muslim brother and sister to take the opportunity and avoid missing out on any of the rewards and mercies of his blessed month, so that everyone may attain the pleasure of Allah (swt) and avoid His wrath and punishment. This needs honest and sincere devotion, a strong will, organization of time, struggle with one's self, patience with worship, befriending the pious, sitting with and learning from scholars, reviewing one's self, purifying the soul, and cleansing the heart. Our hope is that we will truly be godly servants who will win happiness in this life and in the hereafter.

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