

# **THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN**

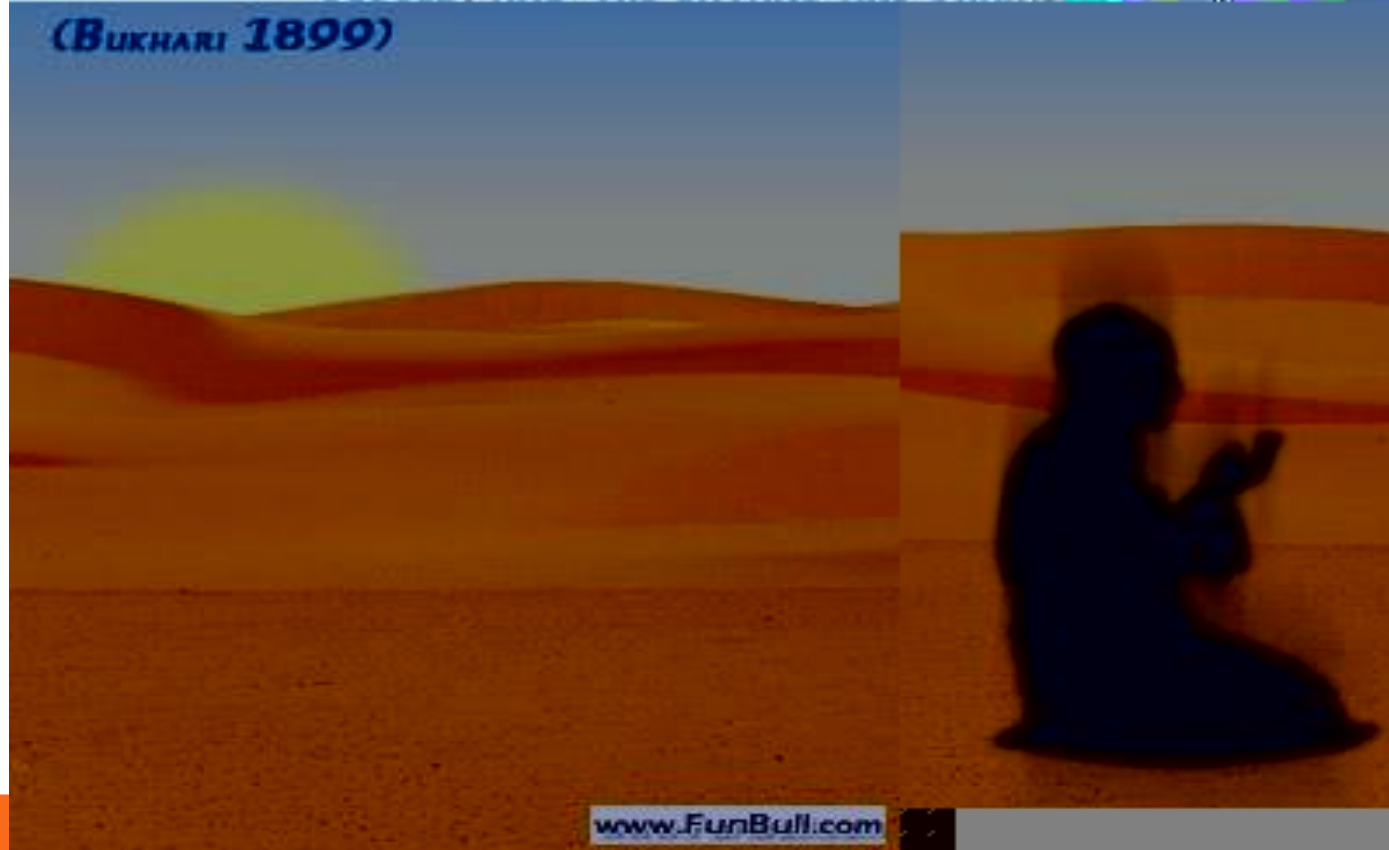




**Ramadan - is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, and a time when Muslims across the world will fast (do not eat) during the hours of daylight. The day Ramadan begins is decided by the sighting of the new moon. Muslims believe that the gates of Heaven are open and the gates of Hell are locked for the duration of Ramadan.**

"WHEN THE MONTH OF RAMADAN COMES, THE GATES OF JANNAH ARE OPENED AND THE GATES OF HELL ARE CLOSED, AND THE SATANS ARE CHAINED."

(BUKHARI 1899)



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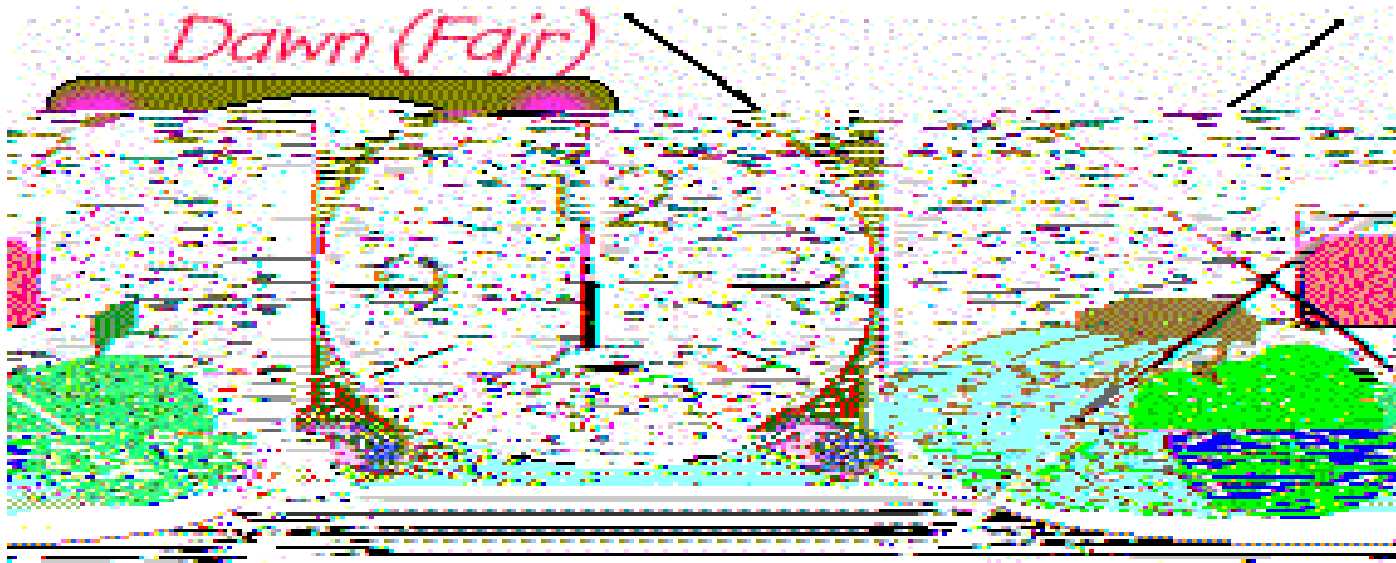
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Ramadan is the fourth of the 'five pillars' of Islam, the five requirements of being a Muslim. Ramadan is marked by a fast, which lasts for the ninth month of the lunar year. It marks the time when Muslims believe their holy book, the Quran, was revealed to them by the Prophet Muhammad





It is during this month that Muslims fast. They don't eat or drink during daylight hours. Muslims only eat when the sun goes down and often Muslims will break the fast by eating a few dates and drinking water before they have a large family meal together.

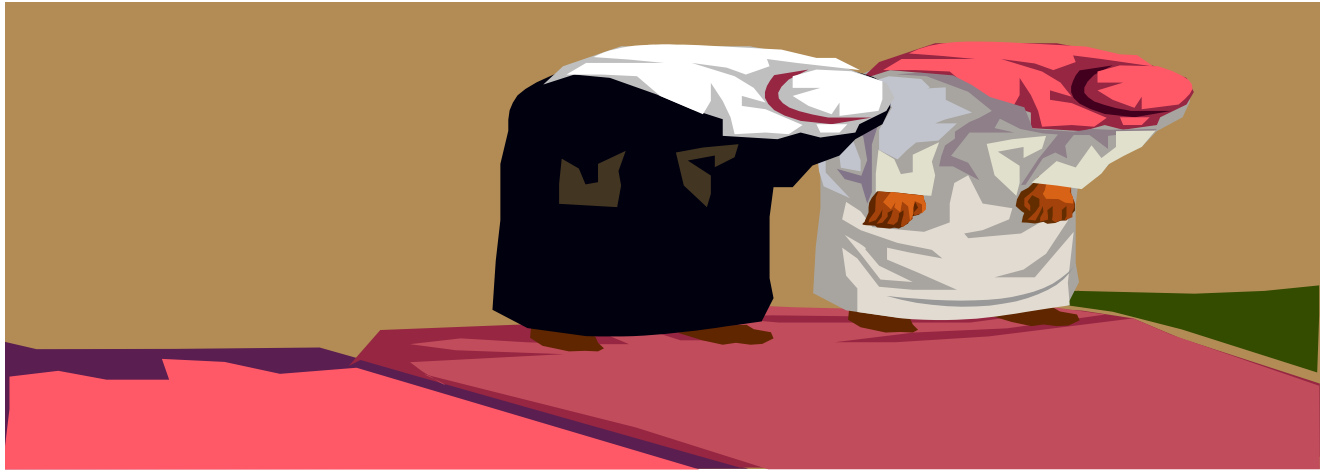


It is not easy to fast, so young children, elderly people and people who are sick don't have to, until they are older or are feeling stronger. Everyone else tries to make the effort.



Feeling hungry and thirsty helps Muslims to understand what it is like for people in the world who do not have enough to eat or drink all the time. They set aside money to give to the poor.





Ramadan is an especially spiritual month. Muslims attend the mosque more frequently and read the Quran more often than usual. Muslims make a special effort to act in the way Allah wants them to during this month. They try to create time to reflect on the way they should lead their lives.



When Ramadan ends it is celebrated for three days in a holiday called Eid-UI-Fitr (the Feast of Fast Breaking). Food is donated to the poor, this is called Zakat which is the third pillar of Islam. Friends and family gather to pray together and for large meals and gifts are exchanged.



Dear God

Thank you for all that you give to us.

May we find time in our busy lives to be grateful for them and to remember those who don't have as much as we do.

Amen

