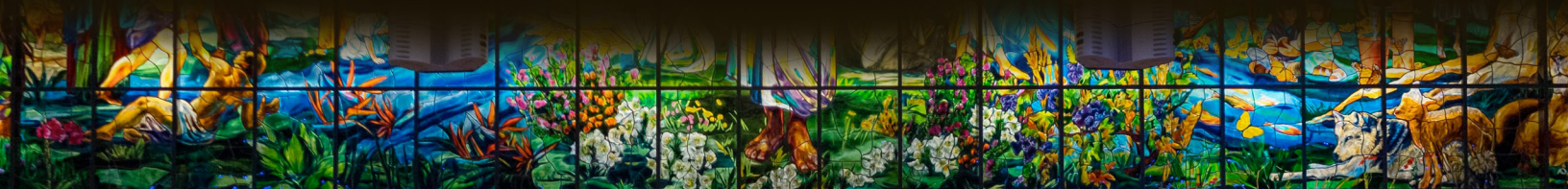


Dr. Al Issa Introduces Charter of Makkah to the American Evangelical Community

The MWL Sponsors Historic Agreement Within Muslim Communities in the Americas

Ramadan Spirituality Energises World Muslims

Saudi Children's Special Event in Ramadan



# CHARTER OF MAKKAH INTRODUCED AT GLOBAL FAITH FORUM

# THE MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE JOURNAL

## About the MWL

The Muslim World League is a non-governmental international organization based in Makkah. Its goal is to clarify the true message of Islam.

Crown Prince Faisal, the third son of King Abdulaziz Al Saud, founded the Muslim World League during the meeting of the general Islamic Conference on May 18, 1962, in order to fulfill his dream for an Islamic Ummah. The establishment of the MWL continued the vision of the Crown Prince to enlighten and educate the international Muslim community, which began with the founding of the Islamic University of Madinah in 1961. The Muslim World League has grown into a worldwide charity to which the Saudi Royal Family remain active donors.

Ascending to the throne as King Faisal in November 1964, the Saudi leader remained steadfast in his faith, proclaiming: "I beg of you, brothers, to look upon me as both brother and servant. 'Majesty' is reserved to God alone and 'the throne' is the throne of the Heavens and Earth."



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His Excellency Dr. Al-Issa Speaks as the Guest of Honor at the Global Faith Forum 2022 in Kansas City, the United States.

## Dr. Al Issa Introduces Charter of Makkah to the American Evangelical Community

RIYADH - MWL

“ Dr. Mohammed bin Abdul Karim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the MWL, participated as a guest of honor in the Global Faith Forum 2022 at the invitation of the Evangelical Leaders of Texas, representing the center of the Evangelical community of the US.





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Dr. Al-Issa: “We are bound by a common human destiny that should make us more sympathetic to one another.”

Held under the slogan “Unlikely Allies Build Flourishing Communities,” the forum was hosted by the three most important US states that foster the American Evangelical community, numbering more than 90 million people. These states are Texas, the first and most important incubator for Evangelicals in the world; Kansas, where the largest US churches are located, and Maryland.

The forum witnessed the participation of representatives from the US government, leaders of various other American reli-



**Dr. Al Issa:**

Real progress will only happen when action and courage are accompanied by a determination to generate a better world for all people





Held under the slogan “Unlikely Allies Building Flourishing Communities,” the forum was hosted by the three most important US states that foster the American Evangelical community, numbering more than 90 million people.



### **Pastor Bob Robert:**

Al-Issa is a strong moderate voice that our world needs today to face all the voices of hatred, racism, and extremism

gious communities and heads of several international organizations. Representatives of the American Muslim community, and a selection of influential religious, social, intellectual, and academic figures from inside and outside the US, also attended the event.

The forum introduced the Makkah Declaration and welcomed its guest of honor, Dr. Al-Issa, before a speech was delivered by the US ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom, Rashad





The forum witnessed the participation of representatives from the US government, leaders of various other American religious communities and heads of several international organizations.

Hussain.

In his speech, Bob Robert, an Evangelical pastor and community leader, said: "We are happy to welcome Al-Issa in this forum, the famous international religious figure in the Muslim world, who is leading the Mak-kah-based organization representing all Islamic peoples. Al-Issa, whose name has been deeply engraved in the field of world peacemaking, building bridges between religions, cultures, and civilizations.



Sam Brownback: Peace in the world will be achieved if the followers of the three Abrahamic religions can communicate with each other and agree to commit to dialogue and reject violence





His Excellency Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa and U.S. Congresswoman Kay Granger



David Paisley of the  
UN Food Program: The  
lack of communication  
between followers of  
religions causes a lot of  
pain to all

"Al-Issa is a strong, moderate voice that our world needs today to face all the voices of hatred, racism, and extremism, thanks to his strong influence on the international scene."

Robert said that he was proud of the strong partnership with the MWL led by Al-Issa in its journey to establish community coexistence and world peace. "We are proud to work together to bridge negative gaps between followers of religions, particularly hate speech,



racism and intolerance, promoted by extremists, fanatics and conflict advocates.”

Stressing that the exceptional efforts of such leadership gives hope to overcome the world’s current problems, and to look forward to a better future “where we are united by love, common interests and the will to wish good for our human societies.” He praised the Makka Declaration, a turning point in contemporary Islamic thought, laying the foundations for justice, human rights, and universal human dignity.

In his speech, Al-Issa highlighted that real progress will only happen when action and courage are accompanied with determination to generate a better world for all people, regardless of religious, national, ethnic, or other differences. He said that pursuing change “is not easy at first” and could take a long period of time, which require a steady and rational effort. “I am pleased that our dialogue today has produced a strong alliance to support our shared values,” Al-Issa said, pointing out that “hate speech is at the forefront of the causes of division and violence and must be criminalized in all legislation, with no leniency.” He said that the shared commonalities among the followers of religions “outweigh the elements dividing us in this life. We are bound by a common human destiny that should make us more sympathetic to one another.”

The former ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, Sam Brownback, said in his speech he believes that peace in the world will be achieved “if the followers of the three



Christine Caine: Joint work of followers of all religions is the only way to end human trafficking and modern slavery

Abrahamic religions can communicate with each other and agree to commit to dialogue and reject violence.” He stressed that “the values on which the Abrahamic religions were founded reject violence and call for peace.”

The Executive Director of the UN World Food Program David Paisley stressed that the hotbeds of conflict in the world have taught us something important: The lack of communication between followers of religions causes a lot of pain to all.

“We do not care about the religion of that hungry child, what we care about is that he does not starve again. We see the consequences of religious discrimination all over the world. At the end of the day, one does not think about the children one saved but the children one fails to save. One person dies every four seconds due to hunger. One must love for one’s brother what one loves for himself. If we could instill this principle in places of conflict, people would not fight,” he told the forum.

“When we look at the religious backgrounds of victims of human trafficking, they are of all religions in the world,”



Pastor Bob Roberts, co-founder of the Global Faith Forum holds the Charter of Makkah.

said human rights activist Christine Caine. "Since we help everyone regardless of their religion, we must protect them regardless of their religions as well."

Caine stressed that the joint work of followers of all religions is the only way to end human trafficking and modern slavery.

Al-Issa held meetings with various Evangelical leaders in three American states during his trip.

In its final statement, the leaders of the forum confirmed that the MWL represents an Islamic religious reference and a strong ally with whom they can work to promote shared values.







Dr. Al-Issa Speaks at the Forum on Improving Muslim Unity and Global Coexistence in Washington, D.C.

# The MWL Sponsors Historic Agreement Within Muslim Communities in the Americas

Washington – MWL



In a qualitative transformation within Muslim communities in North and South America, the MWL has sponsored a historic agreement to establish an independent body that brings them together.





Dr. Al-Issa: Religious Identity does not Conflict with National Identity



The Conferees Agreed to  
Establish an Independent  
Body that Brings Together  
Muslim Communities in the  
Americas

Dr. Mohammed bin Abdul Karim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the MWL and chairman of the Association of Muslim Scholars, has witnessed the historic agreement between Muslim leaders in the Americas. The agreement

is to activate the contents of the Makkah Charter, a document representing a turning point in contemporary Islamic thought.

"I am very pleased to see the Muslim Communities in North and South America gathered today. They are united by brotherhood, understanding and cooperation," said Dr. Al-Issa in a speech. He said these communities' coexistence and harmony indicate their enlightened perception that their religious identity does not conflict with their national identity, "but rather reinforces it."

This agreement is the culmination of the first forum to bring together Muslim leaders





The forum was themed "Improving Muslim Unity and Global Coexistence."

from the Americas, which Al-Issa launched from Washington, D.C., and attracted prominent supporting partners, including members and advisors in the US Congress, and an elite of non-Muslim religious, community and governmental leaders, who described it as an "exceptional event that expresses awareness, responsibility and enlightenment."

The forum's workshops tackled several important topics, foremost of which was the best ways to benefit from the Makkah Charter on a wide scale in the Americas. They



His Excellency Dr. Al-Issa at the Forum on Improving Muslim Unity and Global Coexistence in Washington, D.C.





Congressman Andre Carson at the forum.



Representatives of Different Islamic Schools of Thought Attended the Workshop on the Charter of Makkah at the Forum on Improving Muslim Unity and Global Coexistence

mainly focused on how the charter is a comprehensive document issued by a mufti and senior scholars from all of Islam's sects to strengthen brotherly ties and address youth and women's issues. They also committed to building the capacities of religious leaders as well as religious diplomacy.

Based on the outputs of the workshops, the conferees approved the participation of non-Muslim religious, community, governmental and parliamentary leaders in the Americas in the independent body.

They also agreed to establish an inter-





**His Excellency Dr. Al-Issa Visits Hudson Institute and Meets with Mr. Michael Doran, the Institute's Director of the Center for Peace and Security in the Middle East, and a number of Academics.**

national forum for the Makkah Charter to be subdivided from it.

The independent body will coordinate on common goals and topics, promote the values of brotherhood and coexistence and build bridges of understanding and alliance between followers of different religions and cultures in the Americas to achieve common interests.

The Makkah Charter has received great global appreciation because it calls for unifying Muslim ranks, strengthening the bonds of brotherhood and love among all.

The conferees also decided to form a com-



### The Agreement is to Activate the Contents of the Makkah Charter

mittee of seven to nine members, taking into account the necessary diversity, to draw up the statutes of the aforementioned body and forum, and work on activating the recommendations of the forum's workshops as they carry enlightened ideas of the utmost importance.





Muslims attend breakfast together in celebration of Ramadan in Indonesia.

# Ramadan Spirituality Energises World Muslims

**P.K. Abdul Ghafour**

“ The dawn of the Ramadan crescent makes every Muslim across the seven continents jubilant as it heralds the start of the blessed month when the first verses of the Holy Qur’an were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).



The month-long exercise spiritually energizes the two-billion-people Islamic nation and fosters a sense of unity and brotherhood among them.

Muslims from America to Indonesia, Russia to Australia, India to South Africa and China to Nigeria observe fasting in the same month to thank God for His innumerable blessings and establish a closer relationship with Him.

Modern medical science has highlighted the health benefits of fasting as it helps cleanse a person's body of toxins, prevent chronic diseases and improve the overall fitness of an individual.

The mandatory abstention of food and drink throughout the day for 12 to 18 hours reminds Muslim believers of the suffering of the less fortunate and encourages them to engage in various philanthropic activities to provide the needy with relief aid including food and financial assistance.

Allah says in the Qur'an:

"O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous." (Al-Baqarah, Verse:183)

This Qur'anic verse indicates that fasting was made compulsory not only for the followers of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) but also for those of previous Prophets.

In the same chapter the Qur'an explains:

"The month of Ramadhan [is that] in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion. So whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it;" (Al-Baqarah, Verse: 185)

Muslims celebrate the advent of Ramadan by observing fast from dawn to dusk, reading and learning the Qur'an, performing special night prayers such as Taraweeh and Qiyamullail and engaging in meditation and repentance. They



Muslims from America to Indonesia, Russia to Australia, India to South Africa and China to Nigeria observe fasting in the same month

also hold iftars inviting non-Muslim guests to boost communal amity.

Dr. Khaled Almaeena, former editor-in-chief of Arab News English daily, spoke highly about Ramadan traditions in Saudi Arabia. People find time to visit their families and relatives to strengthen their bonds, help the needy and the underprivileged and extend the much-needed financial assistance to the poor.

He ruled out the notion that fasting makes Muslims lazy. "Prophet Muhammad was very generous and active in Ramadan, helping people and engaging in righteous deeds. Muslims work day and night during the holy month. Thousands of young men and women flock to mosques for Taraweeh and Tahajjud," he added.

Saudi Arabia funds charitable organizations around the globe to support the poor and needy and distribute iftar meals through mosques. "This Ramadan will be the happiest compared



The mandatory abstention of food and drink throughout the day for 12 to 18 hours reminds Muslim believers of the suffering of the less fortunate





Muslims celebrate the advent of Ramadan by observing fast from dawn to dusk.

to the last two years as we are allowed to visit mosques and meet people in the neighborhood after Covid cases have dropped considerably,” said Almaeena, a prominent journalist in the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia takes the center stage during the holy month as Muslim pilgrims from all over the world visit the holy places in Makkah and Madinah to perform Umrah and offer special prayers. The Saudi government has made all-out preparations to receive millions of worshippers who throng the two holy mosques, meeting their various requirements and ensuring their safety and security.

In the United States, about 1500 American Muslims gathered in New York’s Time Square



Modern medical science  
has highlighted the health  
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cleanse a person’s body of  
toxins

for the first time to mark the beginning of Ramadan and performed Taraweeh prayers to draw public attention and speak about Islam as a religion that stands for peace and justice. Event organizers denounced all discourses that





Lakemba town in Sydney hosts a vibrant food bazaar for all Ramadan nights, which attracts more than 250,000 people from all over Australia.

aim to create division among the followers of different faiths including Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

More than 600,000 Muslims in Australia also had made preparations to mark the blessed month with various programs including congregational prayers. "Community iftars with a variety of delicious cuisines are conducted by non-Muslim organizations at the State Parliament House, universities and town halls across Sydney, inviting interfaith leaders and young activists to promote peace and understanding," said Fousiya Bismi, a Sydney-based family law adviser.

Lakemba town in Sydney hosts a vibrant food bazaar for all Ramadan nights. "This is one of Sydney's most popular and culturally-diverse



Pilgrims from all over the world visit the holy places in Makkah and Madinah to perform Umrah and offer special prayers in Ramadan

events attracting more than 250,000 people from all over Australia," she explains. There are about 60 mosques and Islamic centers in Sydney that hosts more than 250,000 Muslims who come from 150 countries including Turkey, India, Lebanon and Malaysia.





Saudis have come to see Gargee'an as a celebration of Ramadan and a teaching moment for their children.

# Gargee'an

## Saudi Children's Special Event in Ramadan

**Rob Wagner**

“ On the 15th night of Ramadan, a special event takes place not only in the Riyadh region and the Eastern Province but in other Gulf countries. Gargee'an is becoming an increasingly popular form of celebration during Ramadan, providing an education for children about the month of fasting and economic opportunities for low- and middle-income families.

Saudis, in particular, have come to see Gargee'an as a celebration of Ramadan and a teaching moment for their children. Gargee'an takes place on the 15th night of Sha'ban and the 15th night of Ramadan. It's a time when children dress in traditional clothing and seek treats from neighbors by going door-to-door. Children sing traditional songs while walking through their neighborhood. It's a tradition that has been practiced for centuries and is deeply rooted in Gulf culture.

"I see Gargee'an as an opportunity to teach my children about Ramadan and what it means to be a Muslim," said one parent on the evening of the celebration. Some parents complain that there is too much competition for children's attention in the world today. Social media, television and other distractions conspire to reduce a child's appreciation for their religion and traditions. By instilling the tradition of Gargee'an, it allows parents to teach their children the importance of Saudi customs and traditions. Dressing in traditional clothing brings young people closer to their culture as well.

Gargee'an is more or less a regional celebration centered in the northern region of Saudi Arabia and the Eastern Province. It is a lesser known celebration in the western region. But it's attraction to Saudis is growing. In addition to allowing Saudis to teach their children about Ramadan and traditions, it also serves as an avenue to create income opportunities for families. During Ramadan, traditional souqs pop up all over Riyadh and nearby communities. Tables line outdoor malls and are staffed mostly by women. These temporary souqs offer home-sewn traditional garments elaborately embroidered with Arab designs for both boys and girls. Baskets to hold candy and nuts are woven by hand. Traditional Saudi dolls are handmade, and Ramadan lamps are sold. Traditional Saudi clothing are often sold for as little as SAR 10.

Bags to carry candy and other treats are designed to showcase Saudi art. The celebrations allow Saudi mothers to demonstrate their artistic talent



## Gargee'an is more or less a regional celebration centered in the northern region of Saudi Arabia and the Eastern Province

and creativity by decorating the house and making gifts unique to their own sense of style. And that goes for their skills in cooking traditional meals to share with family, friends and neighbors.

Equally important is that the souqs provide much needed income for low- and middle-income families. Yet it's a double-edged sword for families who seek to instill the importance of Ramadan to their children. Like many holidays, both in Arab culture and in the West, commercialism has crept in, putting pressure on families to spend money. Banners, lights, tables and a wide array of candy can make an expensive night for many families.

But the juggernaut of commerce makes it almost impossible to ignore the pressing economic aspects of the holiday. Businesses thrive on holiday spending and often order their inventory based on a single month of the year. Many business owners say their expenditures on inventory focus on Ramadan. But now a subset of spending has emerged for Gargee'an.

Business owners have taken note of the importance of Gargee'an to families who publicize their participation on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The celebration has become heavily publicized by businesses and the media, which encourages Saudi women to market their handmade goods and homemade treats online. Western candy and snack exporters have boosted delivery of their goods not only to accommodate Ramadan shoppers, but specifically Gargee'an.





Gargee'an is a tradition that has been practiced for centuries and is deeply rooted in Gulf culture.

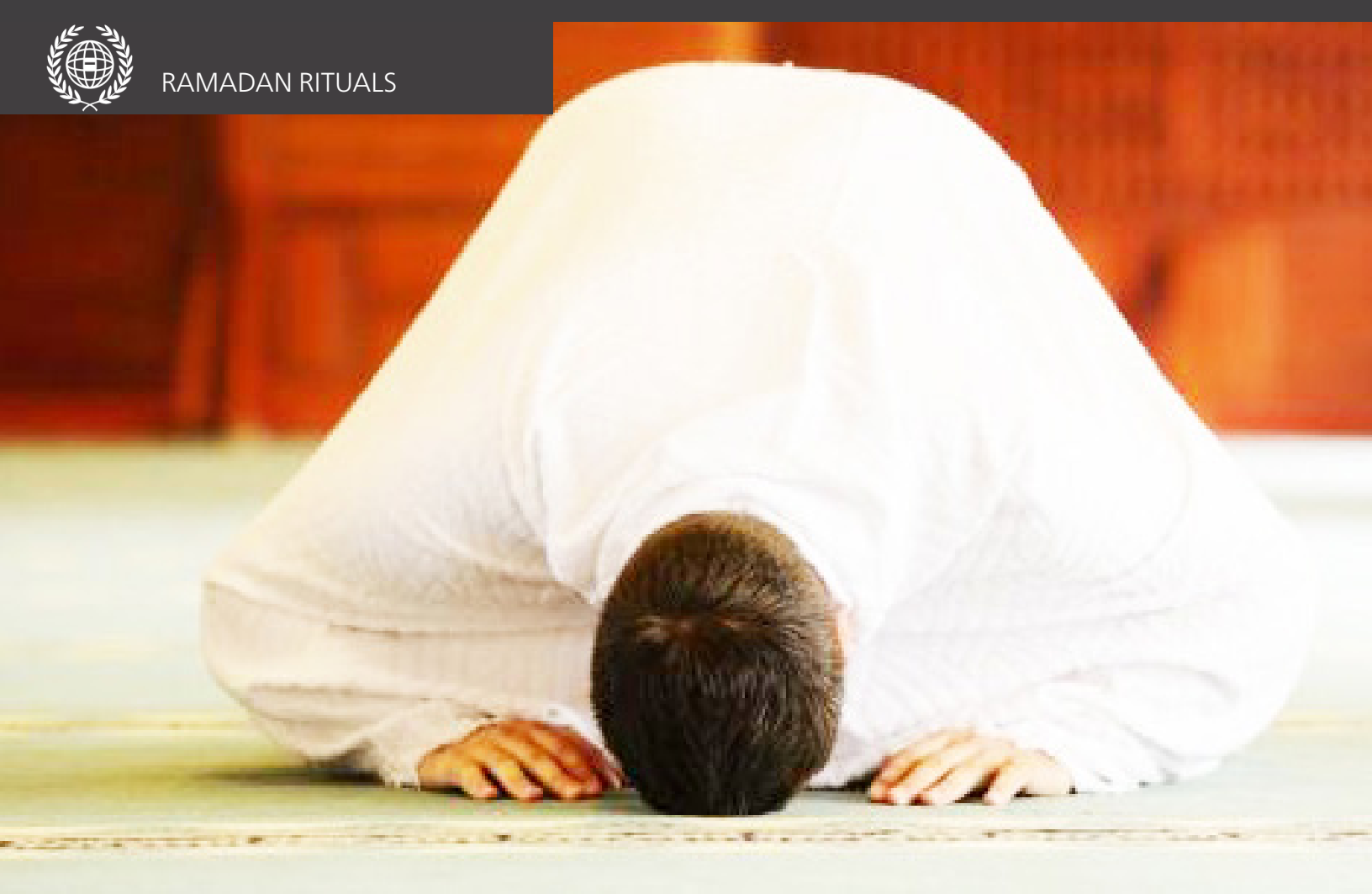
Last year, for example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agriculture Services held a virtual trade event in the Gulf to encourage business-to-business meetings between American exporters and regional buyers to focus on regional holidays and traditional celebrations. And the commercial aspects are huge. Kuwait imported \$174 million worth of U.S. products. Saudi Arabia imported more than \$1.3 billion in food products each year. Snacks accounted for \$50 million in annual spending and \$130 million in nuts. In the United Arab Emirates food buyers invested \$1 billion in food and agriculture products from the United States.

One business owner said that he places most of his attention on building inventory for Ramadan and Eid, but has in the past few years placed an



The celebrations allow Saudi mothers to demonstrate their artistic talent and creativity by decorating the house and making gifts unique to their own sense of style

additional emphasis on Gargee'an by increasing his inventory of candy and baked sweet goods. "It makes sense to add Gargee'an to my spending," he said. "Families have always shopped for Ramadan and Eid, but now have added Gargee'an to the list of items they must purchase. I'm just following the trend."



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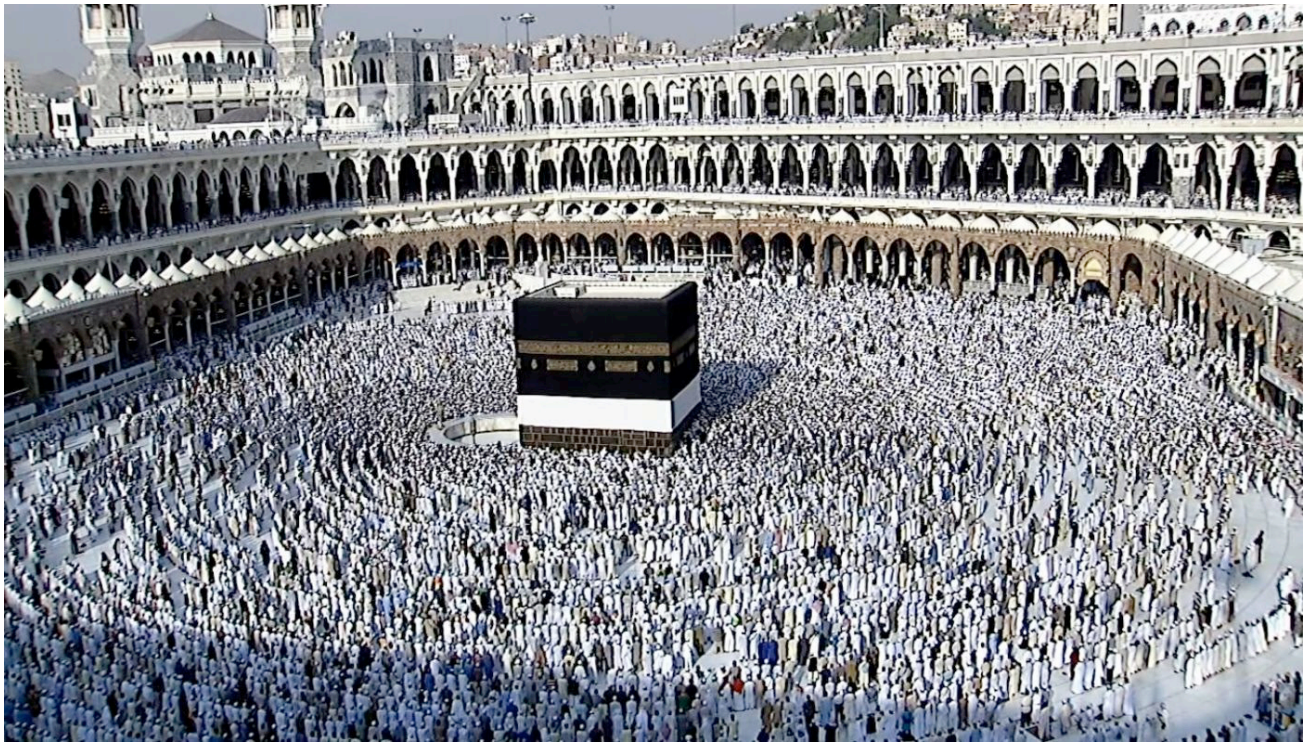
The last third of the night is the best time for Tahajjud according to the Sunnah of the Prophet peace be upon him.

## The Gift of Tahajjud

**BY Fatima Taneem Rukuddeen**

“ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Whoever stands (in the voluntary night prayer of) Ramadan, out of faith and in hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).





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The regular practice of performing Tahajjud transforms people's lives and aids them in their spiritual, physical, emotional and mental well-being.

For millions of Muslims across the globe, the month of Ramadan ushers in a lot more than the obligatory month-long fasting from dawn to dusk and thereafter feasting. It is a month of Almighty Allah's mercy, forgiveness, blessings, and rewards; a month of salvation from hellfire, and a month of giving, caring and sharing.

During this blessed and beautiful month, the Almighty Allah provides ample opportunities to the Muslims to strengthen their faith and come closer to Him. He bestows upon them the gift of Obedience to enable them to exert themselves and perform more and more righteous deeds with zeal and ease during this month.

Therefore, the month of Ramadan is a month of spiritual growth wherein every Muslim tries



Muslims are encouraged to perform Tahajjud prayer in Ramadan to reap its special blessings

to nurture oneself upon the Obedience of Allah, upon His Worship and upon the performance of righteous deeds. Thus, in Ramadan, Muslims are extra-motivated to perform righteous deeds and gain Almighty Allah's Blessings.

Amongst the many righteous deeds done during this month, the 'Tahajjud' or 'Qiyam al-

Layl' prayers hold a special significance. Though these prayers are also performed in the remaining months of the year, Muslims are urged and encouraged to perform them more in Ramadan to reap its special blessings.

Prayers are a means of remembrance of God and getting His Mercy and Blessings and a way of establishing and enhancing the connection with Him. To pray at night while others sleep; choosing worship over rest voluntarily, is mentioned in the Noble Qur'an as a trait of the distinguished servants of God who are loved by Him and are guaranteed Paradise.

### History

The 'Tahajjud' prayers are a part of the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammed who performed it regularly and encouraged his companions to do the same. And thereafter throughout the different ages, Muslim scholars and pious men have incorporated the habit of 'Tahajjud' prayers into their daily routine.

Even though the 'Tahajjud' prayers are not obligatory, they are of special importance and contain immense benefits. In fact, they were the first prayers required from the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the early believers in Makkah, prior to the legislation of the five obligatory prayers.

One of the earliest revelations were the first few verses of Surat Al-Muzzammil of the Noble Qur'an, which made it mandatory for the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the believers to wake up and pray a major part of the night. Although later these prayers were made optional, the Prophet (peace be upon him) never missed the 'Tahajjud' prayers and continued to perform them regularly.

### Meaning

'Tahajjud' and 'Qiyam al-Layl' are Quranic terms for the 'Nafl' (additional) night prayers performed after the obligatory night prayer of



Tahajjud' and 'Qiyam al-Layl' are Quranic terms for the non-obligatory night prayers performed after the Isha prayer

Isha and before the obligatory morning prayer of Fajr. The term 'Nafl' means 'to get something extra.'

The term 'Tahajjud' is derived from the Arabic word 'hujood' which linguistically means 'keeping vigil,' and the root word 'hajada' means 'to stay awake at night'.

The term 'Qiyam al-Layl' linguistically means 'standing in the night,' and scholars extend it to all forms of worship throughout the night with the term 'Salat ul-Layl' being the additional night prayers.

Although both the terms 'Tahajjud' and 'Qiyam ul-Layl' are often used interchangeably, many scholars believe there is a technical difference between them, which is that the former is the 'optional night prayers that are performed after arising from sleep' and the latter is 'the worship at night regardless of whether one has slept or not.'

### Significance

Both 'Tahajjud' and 'Qiyam ul-Layl' are emphasized in the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Allah says in Surat Adh-Dhariyat, "Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs, (16) Accepting what their Lord has given them. Indeed, they were before that doers of good. (17) They used to sleep but little of the night, (18) And in the hours before dawn they would ask forgiveness."



He also says in Surat Az-Zumar, 'Is one who is devoutly obedient during periods of the night, prostrating and standing [in prayer], fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord, [like one who does not]? Say, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" Only they will remember [who are] people of understanding.' (Verse 9)

Other places of the Quran where night prayers are mentioned include:

The Prophet stressed the significance of night prayers many times. He said, "Be vigilant in standing up (in prayer) at night, for it was the practice of the pious before you. It is a means of gaining proximity to Allah, expiation for transgressions and a barrier from sins." (Tirmidhi) He also said, "'Every night, when the last third of it remains, Allah, Our Sustainer, the Blessed, the Superior, descends to the lowest Heaven saying, 'Is there anyone to ask Me, so that I may grant him his request? Is there anyone to invoke Me, so that I may respond to his invocation? Is there anyone seeking My Forgiveness, so that I may forgive him?'" (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

## Performance

The number of prayers of Tahajjud are not specified and one can pray as many or as few sets of two units (rakaats). The Prophet said, 'Two rakaats followed by two rakaats and so on, and when you apprehend the approaching dawn, offer one rakaat as witr.' (Al-Bukhari) The Tahajjud prayers can be performed at any time in the entire night between Isha and Fajr prayers. However, the last third of the night, before the Fajr prayer commences is strongly recommended for Tahajjud as the Almighty Allah descends to the lowest heavens during this time. It is also advised to perform it in a calm manner focusing solely on the worship and praise of Allah and pleading to Him sincerely for all our needs and wishes. Imam Shafi said, 'The supplication (dua) made at the time of



The number of prayers of Tahajjud are not specified and one can pray as many or as few sets of two units (rakaats)

Tahajjud is like an arrow which does not miss its target.'

The Prophet held on to the 'Tahajjud' prayers consistently; showing his gratitude to the Almighty Allah. It is reported that he would sometimes stand in prayer for so long that both his feet or legs swelled, and would complete the first 4 to 5 long chapters of the Noble Qur'an. At other times, he would just repeat a single Quranic verse throughout the night in prayer; contemplating, pleading and crying over it. The Prophet would never miss this blessed optional prayer of Tahajjud.

## Benefits

The regular practice of performing Tahajjud is considered a keystone habit that has a positive ripple effect; transforming people's lives and aiding them in their spiritual, physical, emotional and mental well-being. There are innumerable benefits of performing 'Tahajjud' or 'Qiyam al-Layl' prayers regularly. It establishes and enhances the connection and closeness to Almighty Allah and helps to improve the quality of the obligatory prayers. The regular worship of Tahajjud, performed in a calm and reflective manner, enhances the functions of the brain and improves the ability to focus and reduces stress and anxiety. The timing of Tahajjud offers an exceptionally spiritual atmosphere and purity of thought and helps a person to be more optimistic and empathetic.



Wastage of food and use of disposable plates at communal iftars are some of the common issues that we need to look into.

# Let's Get cleaner, Greener and Frugal in Ramadan

**AFTAB HUSAIN KOLA**

“ A working group of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stated in a report released on August 9, 2021, that human activities were unequivocally the principal driver of changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere, or in other words, of climate change. Simply put, it is our responsibility to make the earth green. As Muslims, let us make a resolution this Ramadan to go green.



The Noble Quran states that man was created as "the vicegerent on earth". Muslims believe that humans are called on to protect, cherish, care for and respect the earth and all of God's creation within it.

While fasting is the key element of the holy month, there is a need to be more aware of the universal principles of mercy, compassion and respect for the earth that our faith advocates and asks us to implement.

The month of Ramadan is a time of fasting and prayer and showing empathy for others, but more and more Muslims need to reflect on their relationship with the environment.

Before we get into discussing Ramadan from the environmental perspective, let us first get enlightened about what Islam says about environmental protection.

The exploitation of natural resources is posing a grave threat to the environment. Islam, which offers solutions to all the ills facing humans, lays great emphasis on protecting the environment. The Noble Qu'ran shows the inherent value of creatures and of life, and how each creature in nature must be respected and cherished by human beings as their fellow beings. This natural world was created by Him, for His purpose and that in itself confers upon the natural environment a sanctity that must be recognized by all Believers. This, then, means that all Believers must have the utmost care and respect towards nature.

God has created everything in this universe in due proportion and measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. God has declared in the Noble Qur'an:

"Indeed, all things We created with predestination." (Al-Qamar, verse 49).

"... And everything with Him is by due measure." (Alra'ad, verse 8)



All of the resources upon  
which life depends have been  
created by God as a trust in  
our care

"And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance." (Alrahman, verse 7).

Islam has attached much importance to the protection of the environment asking its followers not to cut trees, pollute rivers or contaminate the atmosphere. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught people to live on less, to protect animal and plant life, and to worship the Creator by being merciful to the creation. "If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a charitable gift (Sadaqah) for him."

In Islam, man's relation to the earth is seen as that of a custodian mainly responsible for improving the quality of life and guaranteeing a healthy environment. 'And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority."' (Al-Baqarah, verse 30).

It is required that man should work towards the conservation of the earth, ensuring the sustainability of natural resources for future generations. In short, to be a Muslim is to worship God and to be a custodian of the earth. Prophet Muhammad declared: "The world is beautiful and verdant, and verily God, be He exalted, has made you His stewards in it, and He sees how you acquit yourselves." All of the resources upon which life depends have been created by God as a trust in our care.

He has ordained sustenance for all people and for all living beings. "And He placed on the earth firmly set mountains over its surface, and He blessed it and determined therein its [creatures'] sustenance in four days without distinction - for



These days many countries are building or converting existing mosques into green mosques and Hamdan Al Qara in Jordan is a fine example.

[the information] of those who ask.” (Fussilat, verse 10).

The Noble Qur’an includes more than 6,000 verses, of which more than 500 are on natural phenomena. Allah repeatedly calls on us to reflect on His signs, which encompass all aspects of nature such as trees, mountains, deserts, seas, animals, birds, stars, the sun and the moon – and our own hearts.

The Prophet had declared a 30-km area around his city of Madinah a protected grove, prohibiting



Our scholars should educate their congregations on the importance of environmental sustainability

the cutting down of trees within its borders. He prescribed picking up litter from the streets as an act of faith. He forbade the cutting of cedar trees



in the desert that provided shade and shelter to animals. He calls upon us to be what God intended us to be, which is in harmony with nature. We can sum up the importance of the environment by quoting what the Prophet famously said: "Even if the Day of Judgment should arrive and you are holding a sapling in your hand, plant it."

Now let us come to green Ramadan. Ramadan offers us a great opportunity to practice what the Qur'an and ahadith tell us. It is time for our scholars and environment experts to educate their congregations on the importance of environmental sustainability. Some awareness campaigns can be undertaken in this regard and this would ensure rewards from Allah.

Water and electricity consumption is high in mosques because worshippers spend more time there during Ramadan. It is always rewarding to spend more time in mosques, especially in Ramadan, but mosques should think of using LED lights and solar panels for electricity. These days many countries are building or converting existing mosques into green mosques.

Masjid Abu Ghuweileh and the Hamdan Al Qara mosque in Jordan are fine examples intended to address conservation and climate challenges at a grassroots level. Many a time, I have witnessed fans and lights being left on when no worshipper sits at that particular place. Replacing incandescent lights with LED bulbs, which use much less energy and last much longer, has to be adopted. The mosque is the most appropriate place to encourage people to change their behavior and introduce them to renewable energy. Islam exhorts not to overspend or exceed our consumption, as the Noble Qur'an says: "But waste not by excess, for God loveth not the wasters." Water-saving techniques have to be incorporated at wudu points and Muslims should be made aware to use less water while making wudu. Ramadan is the best time to focus on these aspects.

Besides water and electricity, food is another aspect that can make Ramadan truly green. Though suhur is always light, it is the iftar and



## 500 of the Noble Qur'an's more than 6,000 verses are on natural phenomena

dinner that people focus more on. Wastage of food, over-eating and use of disposable plates at communal iftars are some of the common issues that we need to look into. Though efforts are made to make Ramadan environmentally sustainable in some places of the world, they are too few. The community iftars need to be organized in a way that reduces wastage and makes an alternative to disposable plates.

In a few places in the US, Muslims practice what is known as 'Green Iftars', which makes use of reusable or recyclable materials and aims to avoid any food waste. Arranging too much food at iftars should be avoided. The Prophet's advice that Muslims should only fill one-third of their stomachs with food, with one-third reserved for liquid and the final one-third for air, will minimize the amount we consume. Even while breaking fast at a personal level, there is a need not to over-eat.

Another aspect we have witnessed in Ramadan is extravagant shopping towards the end of the month. Though it is the Prophet's advice to wear new clothes if one can afford them, people tend to shop more than what is required. We need to know that our consumption patterns affect the world around us.

So let us resolve from this Ramadan onwards to be the best possible stewards of the earth and be compassionate and respectful toward the diverse and beautiful elements of God's amazing creation. Only then would we be able to make changes so that life on earth is lived with minimal disruption to nature. In a nutshell, the values and moralities of Islam play a key role in guiding the behavior of a Muslim, which is beneficial to the environment and society. An eco-friendly Ramadan is what we look forward to.

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