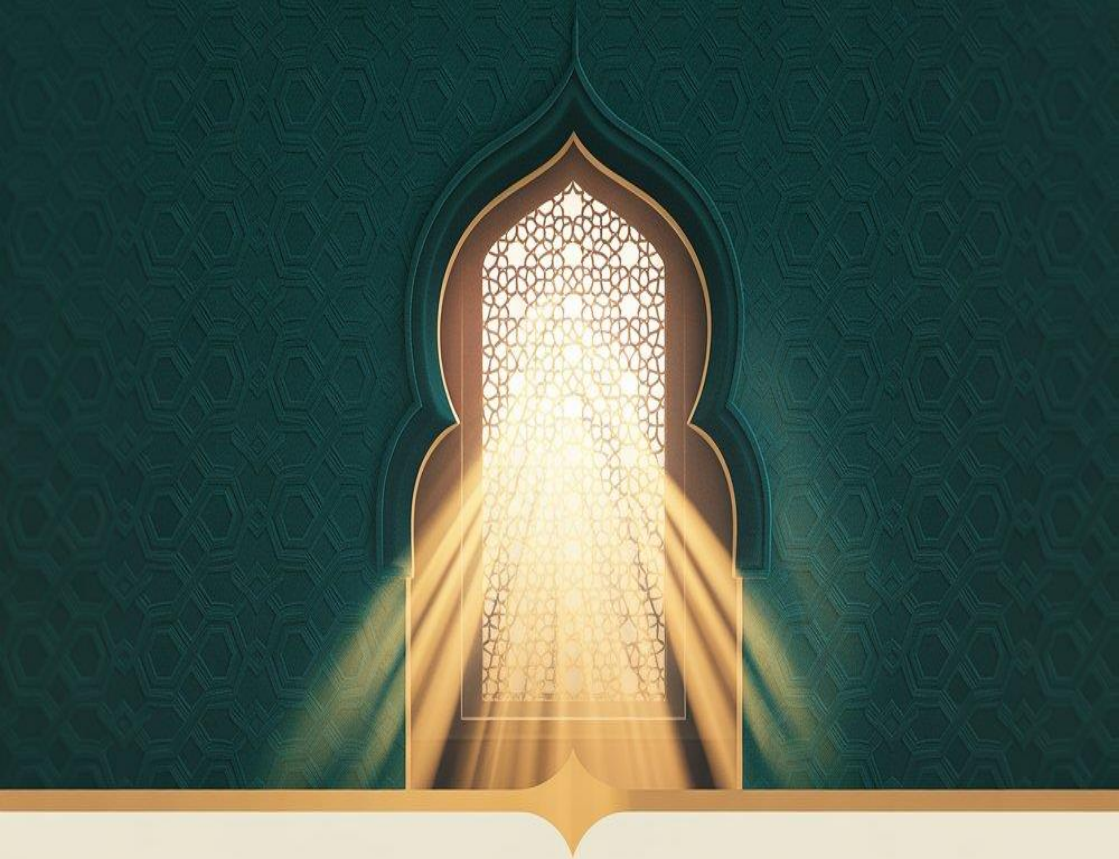




THE
RESPONSIBLE
MUSLIMAH'S
GUIDE TO
RAMADAN

ABDUL-HANAN UMAR

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If you find this useful, please remember the author in your prayers.

The Responsible Muslimah's Guide to Ramadan

by

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The Responsible Muslimah's Guide to
Ramadan

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In Allah's name, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Peace and blessings be upon Allāh's Messenger Muhammad, his family, and his companions. To proceed:

This booklet is designed as a reminder for Muslim sisters on what they need to know in preparation for the blessed month of Ramaḍān. In the Sahih of Al-Bukhari, it is recorded that the Prophet (peace be upon him) once went out, prayed, and delivered a sermon; he then went specifically to the women to admonish them, remind them of Allah, and command them to give charity. From this Hadith, scholars have noted that it is highly recommended to provide lessons and reminders specifically for women regarding the rulings of Islam.

While this guide is addressed to sisters, brothers will also find much of the content beneficial for their own worship.

The book covers topics pertaining specifically to women, as well as general topics such as the definition and types of fasting, the acts in fasting, and the specific rulings of Laylatul-Qadr, I'tikaf (seclusion), Zakat Al-Fitr, and 'Eid Al-Fitr. Finally, it emphasizes the importance of striving for steadfastness after the month has passed.

Regarding the methodology of this book, the rulings provided are not based on one particular school of thought, but rather aim for the ideal and most correct practice.

Furthermore, the specific evidences for most of the content are not provided for the sake

of brevity, keeping the guide concise and easy to use.

Please note the following regarding the appendices:

Appendix 1 is based on **Sheikh Mustafa al-Adawy's** book "Jaaami' Ahkaam Nisaa."

Appendix 2 has been prepared using the work of Aisha Bewley.

I ask Allāh, the Exalted, to bless this work, accept it, and make it a source of benefit for the Ummah.

— **Written by Abdul-Hanan Umar.**

DEDICATED

To my beloved sisters...

*Aisha, Khadijatul Kubra,
Naana Amīna, Amatul
Mugis*

May Allah reward you all for your
sacrifices.

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Prelude

Indeed, it is Allāh who brought forth this world and created all that is in it, including humanity. He chose some from among them to carry His message to all of mankind, placing the worth of a soul in its acceptance of the message brought by the Messengers, from Adam to Muḥammad (peace be upon them all).

The message of Muḥammad ﷺ comprises two parts: rulings pertaining to belief ('Aqidah) and rulings pertaining to actions ('Amal). Among the fundamental actions are establishing prayer, giving Zakat, fasting the month of Ramaḍān, and performing Hajj. To establish these acts correctly, a responsible Muslim must know the following for each: its conditions (Shurut), Pillars (Arkan), obligatory actions (Wajibat), recommended

actions (Mustahabbat), permissible acts (Mubahat), nullifiers (Muhsidat), and disliked acts (Makruhat). Therefore, it is obligatory for every responsible Muslim—male or female—to understand the rulings of these acts of worship before performing them.

The Responsible Muslim Female

Are all females bound by the legal rulings of Islam? Not necessarily. The rulings apply specifically to the "responsible woman" (Al-Mukallafah).

To be considered responsible in the sight of Allāh, a muslim woman must fulfill two conditions:

1. Sanity: She must be in her right mind.
2. Puberty (Bulugh): She must have reached the age of maturity.

Dear sister, puberty is attained when any one of the following occurs:

- Having a wet dream.
- Reaching 15 years of age (lunar).
- The appearance of pubic hair.
- The start of menstruation.
- Capable of becoming pregnant.

If you have experienced any of these, you are now responsible before Allāh. You are now obliged to perform the duties commanded by Allāh and to stay away from His prohibitions. This is a noble responsibility and a transition into a new stage of your journey as a servant of Allāh.

Getting to Know Allah

Dear responsible sister, we have talked about how your journey starts with your mind—reflecting on the world and your own body. But you might ask: "Why is this the most important thing to learn before Ramadan?"

The answer is simple: The value of any knowledge depends on what you are studying. If you study medicine, you learn about the body. If you study math, you learn about numbers. But when you study Islamic Knowledge, you are learning about the Creator of everything. This is the highest and most honorable thing a human being can do!

Have you ever wondered why Surah Al-Ikhlās (Qul Huwallahu Ahad) is equal to one-third of the whole Quran? It's a short Surah! Why is it so heavy?

It is because the entire Quran covers three things:

1. Rulings and Laws.
2. Stories of the Prophets.
3. Knowing Allah, His Names, and His Attributes.

Surah Al-Ikhlās is dedicated entirely to the third point. This shows you that Allah wants you to know Who He is, not just what He wants you to do.

Even the greatest verse in the Quran, Ayat al-Kursi, is great because every single word in it is about Allah's Majesty.

The First Verses Ever Revealed

Think about the very first time the Angel Jibril came to the Prophet ﷺ. He didn't start with how to pray or how to fast. He said:

1. Read: In the Name of your Lord who created.
2. (He) created man from a clot.
3. Read: And your Lord is the Most Generous.
4. He (is the one) who taught by the pen.
5. (He) taught man what he never knew.¹

¹ Qur'an , 96:1-5

Before the rules of Ramadan were given, the foundation was built on knowing Allah. When you know that He is Ar-Rahman (The Most Merciful), your heart loves Him. When you know He is Al-Basir (The All-Seeing), you naturally want to stay away from sins because you know He sees you. This makes being a "responsible woman" much easier!

How to "See" Allah in Your Worship

In our religion, there is a level called Ihsan. This is the "perfection" of faith. The Prophet ﷺ defined it as: "To worship Allah as if you see Him," or at least "To worship Him bearing in mind that He sees you".

Dear sister, how can you worship Him as if you see Him if you don't know Him?

When you are tired while fasting, remember He is Al-Shakur (The Appreciative)—He sees your effort and will reward you for even the smallest thirst.

When you make Dua, remember He is Al-Mujib (The Responder)—He hears the whisper in your heart before it even reaches your lips. Before that, knowing He is Al-Mujib, compels you to make dua.

Your Goal This Ramadan

As a responsible Muslim woman, your goal this month shouldn't be just to finish the Quran or cook nice meals. Your real goal is Ma'rifah—to finish the month feeling like you know Allah better than you did when it started.

When you know Him, your prayer changes from a "chore" into a "conversation." Your fasting changes from "hunger" into "devotion."

Why You MUST Seek Knowledge

Dear responsible sister, now that you know you are accountable to Allah, there is something very important you need to understand: Knowledge is not a choice; it is a duty.

Just like a man is responsible for his actions, a woman is also a "Mukallafah" (a responsible person). This means it is obligatory (Wajib) for you to seek knowledge about your religion. Why? So that when you pray, fast, or do any act of worship, you do it with Certainty (Yaqin). You shouldn't have to guess if your worship is correct; you should know for sure!

Where do you get this knowledge?

Islamic knowledge usually starts at home.

Ideally, your father, brother, husband, or another male relative (Mahram) who knows the religion should teach you.

If they cannot teach you, it becomes your job to find out! You can ask and learn from other knowledgeable women or trustworthy scholars.

No More Excuses

Guess what, sister? Fulfilling this duty has never been easier! In the past, women might have had to travel far or wait a long time to find a book or a teacher. But today, thanks to the growing technology Allah has given us, knowledge is right at your fingertips.

You can learn from your phone, your laptop, and through digital tools. In fact, this very booklet you are holding right now is one of those easy ways Allah has provided for you! It was written specifically to make sure you have the knowledge you need for Ramadan without any struggle. You have the tools; you just need the heart to use them.

Don't Be Shy to Ask!

As a woman, you will have specific questions about your body and how it affects your fasting. Sometimes, these topics can feel a bit private, and you might feel shy.

But listen closely: Never let shyness stop you from learning.

There is a beautiful rule in Islam: "Indeed, Allah is not shy of the truth." If something happens in your life and you don't know the Islamic ruling, you must ask. It is better to ask an "embarrassing" question and get your worship right than to stay silent and get it wrong.

Being a responsible woman means being a brave student. Use your phone, use this booklet, and make a promise to yourself that this Ramadan, you will worship Allah with full knowledge and Certainty.

A Religious Woman is Never Too Shy to Ask

Dear sister, I know we just talked about not being shy, but I want to prove to you why this is so important. Sometimes we think that being "modest" means we shouldn't talk about things like menstruation, ritual baths (Ghusl), or private health. But did you know that the best women who ever lived—the women around the Prophet ﷺ—asked the most "awkward" questions?

They didn't do it to be rude; they did it because they loved Allah and wanted their worship to be perfect!

The "Awkward" Questions of the Best Women

In the history of our religion, the women of the Ansar (the people of Madinah) were famous for their bravery in seeking knowledge.

One time, a woman named Asma (may Allah be pleased with her) went directly to the Prophet ﷺ and asked: "How should I wash myself after my period ends?" She didn't stay at home guessing; she went to the source! The Prophet ﷺ explained how to use water and even how to use a piece of perfumed cloth to make sure everything was clean and pure.

Another woman came and asked an even "cringier" question. She asked if a woman has to take a full bath (Ghusl) if she has a wet dream, just like men do.

Aisha (the Prophet's wife) was actually a bit embarrassed and said to the woman, "You have exposed women!" Basically, she was saying, "Why are you talking about such private things out loud?"

Do you know what the Prophet ﷺ said? He corrected Aisha! He said: "Take it easy, O Aisha. Do not prevent the women of the Ansar from learning their religion."

He then praised them, saying: "May Allah have mercy on the women of the Ansar; shyness did not stop them from deeply understanding their religion."

What This Means for You

Dear responsible sister, if the women who lived with the Prophet ﷺ could ask about periods, wet dreams, and private cleaning, then you should never feel bad about asking a question to get your Ramadan right.

If you aren't sure if your Ghusl was correct... **Ask.**

If you aren't sure if a certain type of spotting breaks your fast... **Ask.**

If you are confused about how to stay pure during the long nights of Ramadan... **Ask.**

You don't even have to walk into a crowded room to ask these questions anymore. You can look them up in trusted books, use reliable Islamic apps, or read guides just like this book.

The "Women of the Ansar" had to ask in person, but you have the world in your pocket. Being a religious woman means having the courage to say: "I don't care if this is awkward; I want my fasting to be accepted by Allah!"

We now shall delve into our aim.

In the next sections, we will look at the specific rulings of fasting, but never forget: we follow the rulings because we love and know the One who made them!

Fasting: Definition and Meaning

Quran (2:184): “(This fasting is for) a limited number of days...”

Now that we have established that seeking knowledge is your duty, let's get into the heart of the matter: Fasting (As-Siyam).

To really understand fasting, we have to look at it in two ways: what the word means in the general Arabic language, and what it means specifically in our religion.

1. The General Meaning (Linguistically)

In the Arabic language, the word Sawm (fasting) literally means to hold back or to refrain (Al-Imsak).

It is a very general word. If you stop moving, stop talking, or stop eating, you are "fasting" in the language of the Arabs. For example, in the Quran, Maryam (the mother of Prophet

Isa) said she was "fasting" from talking¹. She held her tongue and stayed silent.

The Body as an Analogy

Think about how words work in other fields, like anatomy. Many terms we use for the human body started as simple, general words before they became "specialized" terms.

Take the word "Stasis." Originally, it just meant "standing still" or "stopping." But in the specialized world of health, we use it together with Hemo (Hemostasis) to mean Hemostasis—the very specific and vital process of the body stopping blood flow to heal a wound.

¹ Surah Maryam, 19:26

Think of a "Sphincter." In a general sense, it just means "to bind tight." But in our anatomy, it refers to specific circular muscles that act as gatekeepers, holding back or refraining contents from passing until the time is right.

Consider a "Valve." Generally, it's just a "folding door." But in the heart, it is a technical structure designed to stop blood from flowing backward.

Just like these terms moved from a simple meaning to a very important, specialized function in the body, the word Sawm moved from just "stopping" to a very specific act of worship.

2. The Religious Meaning (In Sharia)

In Islam, fasting is the "specialized" version of holding back. It isn't just about "stopping" anything; it is an act of worship with four main conditions.

Let's look at them, dear sister:

WHO: It is for the sane, responsible Muslim. But remember—there is a special rule for YOU! The law of Allah tells YOU that menstruating women (Haa'id) and women with postpartum bleeding (Nufasaa') do not fast during those days. They relegate fasting those days they missed to after Ramadan to repay.

WHAT: It is refraining from specific things that break the fast (like food, drink, sexual intercourse and other nullifiers).

WHEN: From the very start of Dawn (Fajr) until the sun completely sets (Maghrib).

WHY: This is the soul of the act—it must be done with Niyyah (Intention).

As a responsible woman, once you see that Fajr has started, you "hold back" (Imsak) your desires until Maghrib, all because you are following the prescription of the One who created you.

Types of Fasting

Now let's look at the different types of fasting.

We have four types of fast in Islam; Obligatory, Virtuous, Prohibited and Disliked Fasts.

Obligatory Fasts

1. Ramadan. The monthly fast we are preparing for.
2. The Vow (Nadhr). If you made a promise to Allah, like saying, "If I pass my exam, I will fast three days," those days now become obligatory for you.
3. The Penalty (Kaffarah). If you broke a fast in Ramadan by intercourse or a religious oath, you might have to fast as a way to make it right.

Virtuous Fasts

As a responsible woman, you might want to gain extra rewards outside of Ramadan. These are the Virtuous Fasts:

1. The Day of Arafah. The 9th day of Dhul-Hijjah. Fasting this single day wipes away the sins of two years—the year before and the year after!
2. The Day of ‘Ashura. The 10th of Muharram. This is the 10th day of the month of Muharram.

The Reward: Fasting this day wipes away the sins of one full year.

3. The White Days. The 13th, 14th, and 15th of every lunar month.
4. Mondays and Thursdays. The Prophet ﷺ said that our deeds are presented to Allah on these two days, and he loved

for his deeds to be presented while he was fasting.

5. The Six Days of Shawwal. Right after Ramadan ends, in the month of Shawwal, the Prophet ﷺ encouraged us to fast six days.

The Reward: If you fast Ramadan and follow it with these six days, it is as if you fasted the entire year!.

6. The Fast of Dawud. If you want to reach the highest level of voluntary fasting, you can follow the way of Prophet Dawud (peace be upon him). He used to fast one day and break his fast the next. This is the most beloved style of fasting to Allah.

A Special Ruling for the Married Sister

As a responsible Muslim woman, you need to be aware of a specific ruling regarding these virtuous fasts.

If you are married and your husband is at home (not traveling), you should not perform a voluntary fast without his permission. The Prophet ﷺ said: "A woman should not fast [voluntarily] while her husband is present except with his permission."¹

Why is this the rule?

It is about maintaining harmony and balance in the home.

¹ Note: This rule only applies to voluntary fasts. For the obligatory fast of Ramadan or making up missed Ramadan days, you do not need his permission—Allah's command comes first!

Prohibited Fasts

Dear sister, even though fasting is a great act of worship, there are days when it is actually forbidden to fast. These are:

1. The Day of 'Eid. Both 'Eid Al-Fitr and 'Eid Al-Adha. We are guests of Allah on these days, and we must eat!
2. The Days of Tashriq. The three days following 'Eid Al-Adha.

Disliked Fasts

For example, it is disliked to:

1. Single out Friday or Saturday for a voluntary fast (unless you fast the day before or after them).
2. Fast the "Day of Doubt": This is the 30th day of Sha'ban when people aren't sure if Ramadan has started yet. Allah wants us to start Ramadan with certainty, not by guessing!
3. Singling out the month of Rajab. Don't treat it like Ramadan by fasting the whole month.

Sighting the new moon: How Ramadan Begins and Ends

Quran (2:185): “So whoever of you witnesses the month, **then he shall fast it.**”

Hadith (Bukhari & Muslim): Ibn ‘Umar reported the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “**Fast when you see it (the new moon), and break your fast when you see it; but if the weather is cloudy, calculate thirty days.**”

In our Prelude, we said it is obligatory to be able to articulate the rulings. One of those rulings is knowing exactly when your responsibility starts.

Sighting the Moon

Ramadan doesn't start because of a calendar on a wall. It starts in one of two ways:

1. The 30-Day Rule. If we finish 30 days of the month before it (Sha'ban), then the next day is definitely Ramadan.
2. The Crescent Moon. If a single trustworthy Muslim sees the new crescent moon (Hilal) on the 29th night of Sha'ban, the fast begins.

Wait, what about the end?

To end the month and celebrate 'Eid, we need two trustworthy witnesses to see the moon, or we must complete 30 days of Ramadan.

The "Cloudy Day" Rule

What if it's the 30th of Sha'ban and the sky is too cloudy to see anything? If the sky is cloudy on the night people look for the moon, you should fast the next day just to be safe. Others might disagree, but as a responsible woman, you follow the leadership of your community.

Shurut Sawm (The Conditions) Of Fasting

Remember in the Prelude of this booklet, we talked about how every act of worship has a specific structure?

We mentioned that to perform any worship correctly, you need to understand its Pillars (Arkan), Obligations (Wajibat), and Conditions (Shurut).

We are looking at the Conditions of Fasting. Think of these Conditions as the "Pre-requisites" of fasting. Before you are required to fast, you must fulfill these four specific things:

1. Islam

This is the foundation. For an action to be accepted as an act of worship by Allah, the person must be a Muslim. It is the starting point for everything else we do.

2. Sanity (Al-'Aql)

Allah has honored us with the gift of the mind. Fasting is only a duty for those who are in their right mind and can understand what they are doing. The Prophet ﷺ told us that the "Pen" (the record of deeds) is lifted for three people, meaning they are not held accountable:

The one who is sleeping until they wake up.

The child until they reach puberty.

The one who has lost their sanity until they recover.

3. Puberty (Bulugh)

Remember our second chapter? We talked about when you became a "Responsible Muslim Woman." Once you reach puberty—whether that is by having your first period, reaching age 15, or the other signs we listed—fasting becomes a mandatory duty

for you. Before that, you were still a child and it wasn't a "must," but now it is!

4. Ability (Al-Qudrah)

This is where we see the beautiful mercy of Allah. He does not want to make our lives impossible. He only asks us to do what we are physically able to do. If a person is truly unable to fast, Allah has provided a way out. The people who are excused from fasting include the Sick, the Traveler, the Elderly and Pregnant & Breastfeeding Mothers.

Note:

For the Ramadan fast to be obligatory on you, in addition to the above conditions, you must be healthy, resident (not traveling), and aware that the month has begun. For women, this also means not menstruating, not being pregnant, and not nursing.

Those Exempted from fasting

Quran (2:185): “But whoever is sick, or on a journey, then a number of other days. Allah desires ease for you...”

Hadith (Muslim): Hamzah ibn ‘Amr al-Aslamee asked about fasting while traveling. The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: “It is an allowance given by Allah, so that if anyone is not capable he has done no wrong, and if anyone wishes and is able to fast he would not be guilty of sin.”

The people who are excused from fasting are:

1. The Sick¹. If fasting will make your illness much worse or stop you from getting better.
2. The Traveler. If you are on a journey, Allah gives you permission to break your fast and make those days up later.
3. The Elderly. Those who are very old and whose bodies are too weak to handle the long day of fasting.

¹ Those who are chronically ill or elderly and cannot endure fasting should feed a poor person for each day missed. As for the acute patient, then they make up the days missed when Ramadan is over.

4. Pregnant & Breastfeeding Mothers¹. If they are worried that fasting might hurt their own health or the health of their baby.
5. Menstruating Women as well as Post-partum mothers .² Even though you are a "Responsible Woman," Allah has created you with a monthly cycle. During these days, you are actually forbidden from fasting. You aren't "missing out" or "failing"; you are actually obeying Allah by stopping exactly when He told you to stop!

¹ They have the license to break the fast if they fear for themselves or their children, but they must make up the days later.

² It is forbidden for women in menses or post-natal bleeding to fast; they must break the fast and perform the makeup days (Qada) later.

Allah Desires Ease

In the Quran, right in the middle of the verses about Ramadan, Allah says:

"Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship." (Surah Al-Baqarah: 185)

Allah created us and He knows exactly what we can handle. These conditions are there to make sure that our Ramadan is a time of spiritual growth and success, not a time of unnecessary suffering.

The Structure of Fasting: Pillars and Obligations

Do you remember what we talked about in the Prelude?

We said that every act of worship is like a building. To stand tall, it needs Pillars (Arkan) and Obligatory Actions (Wajibat). If a pillar is missing, the whole building falls!

Arkaanus Sawm (Pillars of Fasting)

For your fast to be valid in the sight of Allah, it rests on two main pillars:

1. The Intention (Niyyah). This is the "soul" of your worship. For the obligatory fast of Ramadan, you must decide in your heart to fast before the time of Fajr starts. You don't need to say it out loud; Allah knows what is in your heart.
2. Abstaining (Imsak). This is the "body" of your worship. It means staying away from food, drink, and anything that nullifies the fast from the second Fajr call to prayer (Adhan) until the sun sets at Maghrib.

The "Night Before" Rule (Niyyah)

For Ramadan, there is a specific timing for this niyyah. You must make your intention to fast at night, anytime before Fajr.

A common question

Do I need a new intention every single night, or is one intention at the start of the month enough?

To be safe and to make sure your worship is strong, try to renew that intention in your heart every night before you go to bed or when you eat your Suhoor.

Mustahabbaat Sawm (Recommended Actions of Fasting)

Let's now move to the recommended acts the responsible Muslimah should fill her fasting with. They enhance the fasting experience and are highly encouraged.

It is recommended for the fasting person to

1. Take the suhur. You remember the pre-dawn meal? The responsible Muslimah takes it and does not leave it. This is because she is commanded by her prophet to take it. The time of taking it is after midnight till dawn. Whatever you take before midnight is a meal and not suhur.
2. Hasten to take the suhur. It is recommended to delay taking your suhur. At least 45 minutes to an hour

before the fajr Adhan. However, the responsible woman does not also delay it till the fajr Adhan.

3. Make istighfar at the time of Sahar i.e. at the time of taking the suhur.
4. Hasten to break the fast. As soon as the Maghrib Adhan starts, hasten to break your fast. Don't wait! Break it with dates, and if you don't have dates, use water. This is the way of the Prophet ﷺ.
5. Break their fast with Rutab (fresh ripened dates if possible), if possible. This is the prophet's guidance.
6. Making supplication upon breaking the fast and throughout the fasting day.

7. Saying the supplication for breaking fast; *Dhahab al-ḡama' wabtallat al-'urūq wa thabat al-ajr inn shā Allah*¹
8. Protect their tongue from insults, slander, gossip, lies and all harm: The responsible woman should be responsible with her fasting. She must refrain from anything that will downgrade her fasting.
9. Remind themselves that they're fasting when provoked. Say "I am Fasting, I am Fasting" if an 'irresponsible' person insults or curses you while you're fasting.²

¹ Hadith (Abu Dawud): The Prophet (ﷺ) said when he broke his fast: "Thirst has gone, the veins are moist, and the reward is confirmed, if Allah wills." (Dhahabaz Zhama'u...)

² Hadith (Bukhari/Muslim): "If anyone reviles him or tries to quarrel with him he should say: 'I am fasting, I am fasting.'"

10. Reciting the Qur'an especially in the night.
11. Standing in Night Prayer (Taraweeh/Qiyaam/Tahajjud).
12. Making lots of Dua.
13. Engaging in Charity.

Permissible Acts of Fasting (Mubahaat)¹

As a responsible woman, you should know what you are allowed to do while fasting. These acts are Mubah—they don't break your fast:

1. Cooling down. You can take a shower, swim or pour water over your head if it's hot.
2. Staying fresh. Using the Miswak, mouthwash or a toothbrush (just be careful not to swallow any paste or water!).

¹ For more information on practices that are permissible while fasting, see *Fiqh of Fasting*, pp. 231–238.

3. Tasting food. If you are cooking for Iftar, you can taste the food with the tip of your tongue to check the salt or spice, as long as you spit it out and don't swallow any of it.
4. Using perfume, make-up or kohl. Smelling nice or wearing eye-kohl does not break the fast.
5. Applying Henna
6. Bleeding from the mouth or nose.
7. Unintentional and involuntary vomiting
8. Wet Dream
9. Foreplay (e.g. hugging and kissing) with one's spouse.
10. Smelling perfume or other gaseous substances.
11. Delaying Ghusl (ritual bath) until after Fajr.

12. Applying henna or cream on the skin
13. Using eye or ear drops
14. Taking blood sample for blood test.
15. Taking non-nutritious curative injections
16. Emission of Madhy (pre-seminal fluid)
17. Emission of Wady (pre-urinary fluid)

The Nullifiers of Fasting (Mufsidat)¹

Now, dear sister, we need to talk about the things that actually "break" your fast. In the Prelude, we called these Mufsidat. If any of these happen intentionally, your fast is gone.²

1. Intentional Eating or Drinking. This includes anything that reaches your stomach or throat through your mouth or nose. (If you forget and eat by accident, don't worry! Allah has fed you—just keep fasting).

¹ For these things to break your fast, you must:

1. Know it is forbidden.
2. Remember that you are fasting.
3. Do it voluntarily (not because someone forced you).

² For a detailed analysis of nullifiers of fasting, see *Fiqh of Fasting*, pp. 130–176.

2. Intentional Vomiting. If you force yourself to throw up, your fast is broken.¹
3. Sexual Intercourse. Whoever has vaginal or anal intercourse² daytime during Ramadhan must make up the day and perform an expiation (Kaffara).³
4. "I'm going to stop fasting now". If you are fasting and you suddenly decide in your mind, "I'm going to stop

¹ Hadith (Bukhari and Muslim): **"If one has a sudden attack of vomiting... he is not required to repeat the fast, but he who vomits intentionally must repeat the fast."**

² This does not in anyway mean anal intercourse is permissible.

³ Engaging in intercourse during the day in Ramadan is a major sin. It requires "The Heavy Expiation": **freeing a slave, or if not possible, fasting two consecutive months, or if not possible, feeding sixty poor people.**

fasting now," your fast is broken at that moment—even if you haven't put a single drop of water in your mouth yet. Remember, the Intention is a pillar!

5. Your fast is broken if something reaches your "inner body" through:
 - a. Sniffing medicine or water too deeply into your nose.
 - b. Ear drops (if they reach the throat/stomach).
 - c. Deep wound treatments that absorb into the body.
 - d. Enemas or medical injections that provide nutrition.
6. Menstruation. We've mentioned this before, but it is so important for the Responsible Woman to know. If your period starts, even one minute before

Maghrib, your fast is broken. Do not feel sad! You are not "failing." In fact, by stopping your fast when your body starts its cycle, you are being a Responsible Muslim Woman who obeys Allah's timing. You simply stop, eat, and make that day up after Ramadan is over.

Disliked acts of Fasting (Makruhaat)¹

To keep your fast pure, it is disliked to:

1. Taste food unnecessarily while cooking (though it is permissible if you really need to, as long as you spit it out!).
2. Exaggerating rinsing of the mouth and nose during wudu.
3. Swallow a large amount of saliva on purpose.
4. Tasting food without necessity.
5. Chewing gum that has lost its flavor.²

¹ For information on acts that are disliked or should be avoided to preserve the quality of the fast, see *Fiqh of Fasting*, pp. 171, 222–223, and 234.

² If the gum has flavor or sugar that dissolves and is swallowed, the fast is broken

Rulings on Making Up Your Missed Fasts

Dear responsible sister, we already know that because of your monthly cycle or other reasons like sickness or travel, you might miss a few days of fasting during Ramadan. Allah, in His mercy, has given you the chance to "catch up" later.

But how exactly should you do this? The religion gives us a clear "protocol" for making up those days.

It is obligatory to make up missed Ramadan days. This can be delayed until the following Sha'ban.

If you delay missed fasts until the next Ramadan without a valid excuse, you must pay a penalty (Fidya) by feeding a poor

person for each day, in addition to making up the fast. If you have a valid excuse (e.g., illness/pregnancy), you only need to make up the days.

If someone dies with obligatory fasts remaining, their heir (wali) should fast on their behalf.

1. Flexibility

Do you have to fast all your missed days one after another? The answer is No¹.

You have two choices:

¹ It only becomes obligatory to fast consecutively if the number of days remaining until Ramadan is equal to the number of days you missed. For example, if you missed seven days and there are only seven days left before Ramadan, it becomes obligatory to use those remaining days to make them up, which can only be done consecutively.

Separately: For example, you can fast one day this week and another day next week.

Consecutively: You can fast them all in a row.

Both ways are perfectly fine! Allah wants to make it easy for you to fit these days into your busy life as a student, mother, or professional.

2. Deadline

You have plenty of time to make up your fasts—basically the whole year! You can delay them until the very last month before the next Ramadan (the month of Sha‘ban).

In fact, our mother Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) used to stay so busy serving the Prophet ﷺ that she often couldn’t make up her missed Ramadan fasts until the

month of Sha'ban arrived. This shows us that if you are a busy sister, there is no "shame" in delaying your make-up days, as long as you finish them before the next Ramadan begins.

3. Priority

This is a very important point for the Responsible Woman. Obligations come before virtuous acts.

If you still owe Allah days from Ramadan, you should not start performing voluntary (Mustahab) fasts—like the Six Days of Shawwal or Mondays and Thursdays—until you have finished your obligatory catch-up days. It's like a debt; you should pay off what you must owe before you start giving extra gifts.

4. The "Point of No Return."

We mentioned before that for voluntary fasts, you can change your mind during the day. But Making Up a Fast (Qada') is different.

Once you wake up and start a day with the intention of making up a missed Ramadan fast, that day becomes obligatory.

You cannot decide to break it halfway through just because you feel a bit hungry or a friend invited you to lunch.

Because it is a "Must-Do" day, you must commit to it until the sun sets, just like you did during Ramadan.

5. Consecutive Fasting

If you ever have to fast for two months straight (God forbid!) as a penalty (Kaffarah), a very important rule about continuity is:

The Valid Break: If you are fasting your two months and your period starts, or you get sick, or you have to travel, the "timer" does not reset. Once you are pure or healthy again, you just pick up where you left off (e.g., if you were on day 20, your next fast is day 21).

The Invalid Break: If you decide to break the fast for even one day without a valid excuse (like just being hungry), the timer resets to zero. You have to start Day 1 all over again! This shows how much Allah values the Intention we talked about in the Pillars.

6. A Special Note for Mothers (Pregnancy and Breastfeeding)

Allah is the Most Merciful, especially to those carrying or feeding new life. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding:

If you fear for your own health, you can break your fast, and you only need to make that day up later.

If you fear for your baby's health, you can break your fast, but you must make the day up.

This is the beauty of being a responsible woman in Islam—Allah recognizes the physical struggle of motherhood and gives you a "Divine Permit" to handle it.

A Recommendation

Being a responsible Muslim woman means being organized with your worship. Keep a small note on your phone or a mark on your calendar to track how many days you missed.

The Night Prayer: Taraweeh¹

As a responsible Muslimah, you know that Ramadān isn't just about what you leave during the day (food and drink), but what you do during the night. The most famous of these night acts is Taraweeh.

What Does it Actually Mean?

It refers to the specific Sunnah prayers performed in sets of two units (Rak'ahs) after the 'Isha prayer during the nights of Ramadān.

¹ The word Taraweeh comes from the Arabic word Raha, which means "to rest." The companions would stand for so long in prayer that they would take a "rest" after every four Rak'ahs.

Is it for you?

Taraweeh is a Sunnah Mu'akkadah (a highly emphasized Sunnah) for both men and women. While it is not Wajib (obligatory) like the five daily prayers, a responsible woman tries her best not to miss its immense rewards.

Special Rule for the Responsible Sister: Home or Masjid?

You might see many people rushing to the Masjid for Taraweeh. But remember what we learned about Allāh's mercy! For a woman, her prayer at home is highly beloved to Allāh.

If you pray at home. You get the full reward, you can go at your own pace, and you maintain the harmony of your household.

If you go to the Masjid. Ensure you follow the Sunnah of modesty. Both options are open to you!

The Structure

The Units: It is prayed in sets of two. You can pray 8 units, 10 units, 20 units, or more, depending on your energy and the practice of your community.

You end your night prayer with the Witr prayer.

Laylatul-Qadr: The Night of Decree

If Ramaḍān is the best month of the year, then Laylatul-Qadr is what makes it the best month. It is the most important night you will experience all year.

WHY?

Allāh tells us in the Quran that this night is "better than a thousand months."

Think about the math, sister! Doing one good deed on this night is like doing that same deed every single day for about 83 years. This is a "shortcut" to Paradise that Allāh has gifted to us out of His pure Mercy.

Allāh, in His Wisdom, hid the exact date from us so we would strive hard. However, the Prophet ﷺ gave us clear signs:

- It is in the last ten nights of Ramaḍān.
- It is most likely on the odd nights (21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, or 29th).

What should you do?

A responsible woman prepares for this night like a student prepares for a final exam.

The special Du'ā: Our mother Aisha (may Allāh be pleased with her) asked the Prophet ﷺ what she should say if she found the night. He taught her:

"Allāhumma innaka 'afuwwun tuhibbul-
'afwa fa'fu 'anni"

(O Allāh, You are the Most Forgiving, You love to forgive, so forgive me).

What if you have your period?

This is a question many sisters ask "If I am menstruating (Ha'id), do I miss Laylatul-Qadr?"

The answer is a loud **NO!**

You cannot pray or fast, but the "Night of Decree" is not just for prayer. You can still:

- Make constant Dhikr (remembrance).
- Make long, heartfelt Du'ā.
- Listen to the Quran.
- Give Charity.
- Feed those who are fasting.

To make sure you don't miss it:

Treat all ten nights as if they are the one.

Give even a small amount every night. If it's Laylatul-Qadr, it's like giving for 83 years!

I'tikaf¹ (Seclusion)

Now that we have covered the fast itself, we must look at a beautiful way to end the month: I'tikaf. It is when a responsible woman sets aside the distractions of her home and life to focus entirely on Allāh.

What Does it Actually Mean?

It is staying in a Masjid (a place of prayer) with the specific Niyah (Intention) of worship to get closer to Allāh.

¹ In the Arabic language, I'tikaf simply means to stay or remain in one place and to keep close to something.

The Types of I'tikaf

1. **Wajib (Obligatory):** This only happens if you make a Vow (Nadhr). If you promise Allāh you will do it, it becomes a debt.
2. **Sunnah Mu'akkadah:** This is the seclusion during the last ten days of Ramaḍān.
3. **Mustahabb (Recommended):** Any other voluntary seclusion.

Where do you stay?

This is a very important ruling. While men must stay in a public Masjid, a woman performs her I'tikaf in the "Masjid of her home." This is the specific place in your house that you have set aside for your daily prayers. By staying in this designated spot with the right intention, you are performing I'tikaf.

The Nullifiers of I'tikaf (What breaks it?)

Just as eating breaks your fast, certain things break your seclusion.

1. Leaving without a valid reason. If you leave your prayer area for no reason, your I'tikaf is gone.
2. Menstruation or Postpartum bleeding. As we have learned, a woman in these states does not remain in the place of prayer.
3. Physical intimacy. Any sexual contact with your spouse breaks the I'tikaf.

When you are you allowed to leave your spot?

Allāh desires ease for you! You are a "Responsible Woman," not a person in hardship. You may leave your designated prayer area for:

1. Natural needs: Using the bathroom.
2. Purification: Taking a necessary Ghusl (ritual bath) or making Wudu.
3. Fear/Safety: If you feel unsafe in your spot or fear for your property.

The Manners (Adab) of Seclusion

To keep your I'tikaf pure, follow these three rules from the Sunnah:

1. The Rule of Silence. Do not speak unless it is for something good.
2. Choosing the Best Focus. Use your time for reciting the Quran, Dhikr, and studying your religion.
3. Avoid buying or selling or discussing worldly business while in your I'tikaf spot.

Zakat Al-Fitr

Before the 'Eid prayer begins, there is one final "Responsibility" every Muslimah must fulfill. It is called Sadaqat al-Fitr (Zakat Al-Fitr).

The Wisdom Behind It

According to the Hadith of Ibn Abbas, this charity has two beautiful purposes:

1. For You: It is a "Purification" for the fasting person. It cleanses your fast from any "laghw" (idle talk) or "fuhsh" (indecent speech) you may have accidentally fallen into in Ramadan.

2. For Others: It is "Food for the poor." It ensures that on the day of 'Eid, no one in the community goes hungry.

It is Wajib (Obligatory) upon every Muslim—male or female, old or young—provided you have enough food for yourself and your family for one day and night.

When do you give it?

Starts: From the sunset of the final day of Ramaḍān.

The Deadline: It must be given before you head out to the 'Eid prayer. If you give it after the prayer, it is just a regular charity, not Zakat Al-Fitr.

The Amount to give

The standard amount is one Sa' (about four handfuls) of common food like wheat, rice, barley, dates, or raisins.

A Note

It is permissible to give the value of the food in money if that is more beneficial for the poor people in your area. This allows the poor to buy what they actually need for their families on 'Eid.

‘Eid Al-Fitr

The word ‘Eid comes from the root word 'Awd, which means "to return." It is called this because it returns every year with joy, and because Allāh "returns" to His servants with His kindness and rewards after they finish their fast.

Is the ‘Eid Prayer Obligatory for You?

The ‘Eid prayer is a communal obligation¹ for men, but not obligatory for women, travelers, or the sick. However, even if it isn't a "Must-Do," a responsible woman strives to participate in the joy of the community if she is able.

¹ Something which is obligatory for the community as a whole, and is satisfied if enough adults perform it.

The Sunnah of the Responsible Muslimah on 'Eid

To truly honor the day, follow these 6 recommended acts (Mandubat):

1. Wake up early to show your eagerness for the day.
2. Use the Miswak and perform Ghusl (ritual bath).
3. Wear your best clothes and use perfume (at home or among women).
4. Eat an odd number of dates before leaving for the prayer. This shows you are officially no longer fasting!

5. Show joy and happiness. This is a day of celebration, not a day of sadness.
6. Take different paths: Go to the prayer using one road and return home using another to spread the greeting of 'Eid to more people.

How it is performed

The Units: It is a two unit prayer with two Khutbah's after the prayer.

In the first unit, six takbeers are said after the opening takbeer and before recitation

Then in the second unit, five takbeers after the transitioning takbeer¹ and before the recitation.

¹ This is the takbeer we do in moving from one position in our prayer to another. Here it refers to the takbeer we do in rising from the second prostration to the next unit.

If you cannot pray

If you are menstruating, you cannot perform the 'Eid prayer, but you are still encouraged to come to the place of prayer! You can stay in the back, listen to the Khutbah (sermon), and join in the Takbirat. Being a "Responsible Muslimah" means you don't miss out on the reward just because you cannot pray.

The Takbir

From the night of 'Eid until the Imam begins the prayer, fill your home with the Takbir:
"Allāhu Akbar, Allāhu Akbar, La ilaha illallāh, waAllāhu Akbar, Allāhu Akbar, wa lillāhil-Hamd."

If you find a mistake, mend the gap; for only Allah, the Most High, is without flaw.

The End.

May Allah accept.

Appendix I: Quick Rulings for the Responsible Sister

Q1: Is it permissible for a husband and wife to have relations during the nights of Ramadān?

Answer: Yes, it is perfectly permissible from the time the sun sets until the break of dawn.

Evidence (Dalil): Allah says in the Quran: "It has been made permissible for you the night of the fast to have relations with your wives..." (Surah Al-Baqarah: 187).

Q2: Can my husband kiss or embrace me during the day while we are both fasting?

Answer: Yes, this is permissible as long as the person can maintain self-control and it does not lead to anything further that breaks the fast.

Evidence (Dalil): Our mother 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "The

Prophet ﷺ used to kiss and embrace [his wives] while he was fasting, and he was the most able of you to control his desires." (Sahih Bukhari & Muslim).

Q3: Does using eye-kohl or eye drops break my fast?

Answer: No, using kohl or putting drops in the eye does not break the fast, even if you feel the taste in your throat, because the eye is not a natural entry point to the stomach.

Evidence (Dalil): Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) used to apply kohl while he was fasting.

Q4: Can I taste the food I am cooking for Iftar?

Answer: Yes, a woman is allowed to taste the food (to check the salt or flavor) as long as none of it is swallowed. It should be tasted with the tip of the tongue and then spat out.

Evidence (Dalil): Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "There is no harm in tasting the food, or something one wants to buy [to check flavor]."

Q5: Is it okay to chew gum while fasting?

Answer: It is disliked (Makruh). If the gum has flavor or sugar that dissolves and is swallowed, the fast is broken. If it is plain gum that does not dissolve, it still should be avoided to be safe.

Evidence (Dalil): The scholars categorize this under things that may lead to breaking the fast unnecessarily.

Q6: What is the penalty for having marital relations during the day of Ramaḍān?

Answer: It is a major sin that requires a heavy penalty (Kaffarah). The person must make up that day and follow the specific sequence: 1) Free a slave (if possible), 2) Fast for two consecutive months, 3) If unable to fast, feed sixty poor people.

Evidence (Dalil): A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "I am ruined!" The Prophet ﷺ asked why, and he said he had relations with his wife during the day of Ramaḍān. The Prophet ﷺ then commanded him to follow the sequence of the Kaffarah. (Sahih Bukhari).

Q7: Does the woman have to pay this penalty too?

Answer: Yes, if she was willing and remembered she was fasting, she must perform the same Kaffarah as the husband.

Evidence (Dalil): This is based on the general principle that women are equal to men in rulings unless there is a specific exception.

Q8: If I get my period just a few minutes before Maghrib, does my fast count?

Answer: No. If menstruation begins even one minute before sunset, that day's fast is broken and must be made up later.

Evidence (Dalil): The Prophet ﷺ said: "Is it not the case that when she menstruates, she does not pray or fast?" (Sahih Bukhari).

Q9: Can a pregnant or breastfeeding woman break her fast?

Answer: Yes, she is allowed to break the fast if she fears for her health or the baby's health. She must make the days up later. If she broke it specifically out of fear for the baby, she should also feed a poor person for each day missed.

Evidence (Dalil): The Prophet ﷺ said: "Indeed Allah, the Exalted, has relieved the traveler of the fast and half the prayer, and He has relieved the pregnant and breastfeeding woman of the fast." (Sunan At-Tirmidhi).

Q10: Is a woman allowed to perform I'tikaf (seclusion in the mosque)?

Answer: Yes, but she must have her husband's permission, and her presence in the mosque should not cause any fitnah (distraction/harm) or neglect of her family duties.

Evidence (Dalil): 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that the wives of the Prophet ﷺ used to perform I'tikaf after he passed away. (Sahih Bukhari).

Q11: What if my period starts while I am in I'tikaf?

Answer: You must immediately leave the mosque, as a menstruating woman should not remain inside. You can complete your I'tikaf later once you are pure.

Evidence (Dalil): The Quranic command to stay in the mosque for I'tikaf is tied to the

condition of ritual purity required for the mosque.

Q12: Is it allowed to get married or sign a marriage contract while in I'tikaf?

Answer: Yes, a marriage contract can be signed while in seclusion because it is a blessed act and does not involve physical intimacy.

Evidence (Dalil): Scholars like Imam Malik preferred this view as there is no proof forbidding it.

Appendix II: Glossary of Islamic Terms¹

Adhān: The call to prayer.

Amal: Action, normative practice, precedent, or juridical practice.

Ansar: The “Helpers,” the people of Madina who welcomed and aided the Prophet and the Muhajirun.

¹ Taken from Aisha Bewley’s “A Glossary of Islamic Terms.”

‘Aqidah: Creed, dogma, or tenet of faith firmly based on how things are, distinct from the testimony of faith (shahada).

Arkan: (The plural of rukn), used for the five indispensable pillars of Islam: the shahada, the salat, the zakat, the fast of Ramadan, and the Hajj.

Āya(t): A verse of the Qur’an. It literally means “sign” and also refers to the signs that one sees in Creation.

Bulugh: The age of sexual maturity.

Dalil: Proof, indication, or evidence; also a guide.

Du'ā': Making supplication to Allah.

'Id al-Fitr: The festival at the end of the fast of Ramadan on the 1st of the month of Shawwal.

Fajr: Dawn, daybreak. It also means the dawn prayer.

Fard al-kifaya: also fard kafa 'i, a collective obligation, something which is obligatory for the community as a whole and is satisfied if one (or enough) adult(s) perform(s) it.

Fidya: a ransom, compensation paid for rites or acts of worship missed or wrongly performed because of ignorance or ill health.

Fiqh: The science of the application of the Shari'a.

Ghusl: Major ablution of the whole body with water required to regain purity after menstruation, lochia, and sexual intercourse.

Hadith: Reported speech of the Prophet.

Hajj: The annual pilgrimage to Makka which is one of the five pillars of Islam.

Harām: Unlawful in the Shari’a.

Ihsān: Absolute sincerity to Allah in oneself: it is to worship Allah as though you were seeing Him because He sees you.

Iftār: Breaking the fast.

Imṣāk: In fasting, it is abstinence from things which break the fast.

‘Ishā’: The night prayer.

Istighfar: To ask the forgiveness of Allah.

I'tikaf: Seclusion, while fasting, in a mosque, particularly in the last ten days of Ramadan.

Kaffara: Atonement, prescribed way of making amends for wrong actions, especially missed obligatory actions.

Khutba: A speech, and in particular a standing speech given by the Imam before the Jumu'a prayer and after the two 'Id prayers.

Nadhr: A vow.

Maghrib: The sunset prayer.

Mahram: A male relative with whom marriage is forbidden (e.g., a brother, a father, an uncle, etc.), or her own husband.

Makrüh: Abominable, reprehensible in the Shari'a, disliked but not forbidden.

Mandub: Commendable, recommended.

Ma'rifa: Gnosis, direct, experiential knowledge of higher realities, witnessing the lights of the Names and Attributes of Allah in the heart.

Miswak: A small stick, usually from the arak tree, whose tip is softened and used for cleaning the teeth.

Mubah: Permissible, permitted; something for which there is neither reward nor punishment.

Mufsidat: What invalidates acts of worship in the Shari'a.

Mukallaf(a): A competent person in full possession of his faculties; subject of legal obligation, personally obligated.

Niyya: Intention.

Qur'an: The Holy Book, the Living Miracle, revealed from Allah as a guidance to mankind via the angel Jibril to the Prophet Muhammad.

Ramadan: The month of fasting, the ninth month in the Muslim lunar calendar.

Rukn: Essential ingredient; pillar.

Sadaqa: Charitable giving in the Cause of Allah.

Salat: The prayer, particularly the five daily obligatory prayers. One of the pillars of Islam.

Suhur: The early morning meal taken before first light when fasting.

Sawm: Fasting from food, drink and sexual intercourse from dawn to sunset, particularly for the month of Ramadan.

Shahada: Bearing witness, particularly bearing witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

Shari'a: Lit. road, the legal modality of a people based on the Revelation of their Prophet.

Shawwāl: The tenth month of the Muslim lunar calendar.

Shart (Shurut): Qualification, precondition.

Sūra: Chapter of the Qur'an. The Qur'an is composed of 114 suras.

Takbir: Saying "Allahu Akbar," "Allah is greater."

Taraweeh: Prayers at night in Ramadan.

Tashriq: “Drying meat in the sun,” the days of the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th of Dhu’l-Hijja when the pilgrims sacrifice their animals.

Wajib: A necessary part of the Shari’a.

Warith: (plural waratha): heir.

Wudu’: Ritual washing to be pure for the prayer.

Yaqin: Absolute unshakeable certainty and certitude.

Zakat: One of the five pillars of Islam. It is a wealth tax paid on certain forms of wealth.

Zakat al-Fitr: A small obligatory head-tax imposed on every Muslim who has the means for himself and his dependants. It is paid once yearly at the end of Ramadan.

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