

RAMADAN

"Fasting is prescribed for you—as it was for those before you!—so perhaps you will become mindful of God" HOLY QURAN 2:183

"Ramadan is the month in which the Quran was revealed as a guide for humanity with clear proofs of guidance and the decisive authority. So whoever is present this month, let them fast" HOLY QURAN 2:185

WHY DO MUSLIMS FAST?

Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is a religious obligation teaching self-discipline, reinforcing faith & piety, helping one become more mindful of God and his blessings, a means for seeking forgiveness, and a means to empathise with those less fortunate.

Fasting is a spiritual discipline observed from dawn to sunset. Fasting means no eating or drinking during this period for 29 or 30 days (depending on the moon). During Ramadan Muslims perform additional prayers, reflect, perform good deeds, abstain from negative behaviours/acts.

HOW DO YOU BREAK YOUR FAST?

Traditionally Muslims break their fast by eating dates. This may then be followed by water and fruits. Then you can sit down with your family/friends for your evening meal.



BESIDES FASTING WHAT OTHER IMPORTANT PRACTICES OCCUR

During Ramadan Muslims participate in many different practices including:

- Taraweeh/Tarawih - This is a prayer that can be done at home or preferably at the mosque as a group. Over the course of the month the entire Quran is recited during the prayers.
- Lailatul Qadr - The Quran was revealed during Lailatul Qadr (night of power). It is believed to have taken place during the last ten days of Ramadan. Muslims do extra prayers and good deeds during these last ten days.

WHAT IS ZAKAT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT IN RAMADAN?

Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is an obligatory charity which must be given by all Muslims who are able. Zakat is important because:

1. It fulfils one of the fundamental pillars of Islam
2. It increases closeness to God and your faith
3. It purifies your wealth
4. Ensures re-distribution of wealth
5. Relieves suffering and helps the community

HOW DOES RAMADAN INFLUENCE YOUR WORK?

Whilst fasting, many Muslims continue with their work as usual, and the challenge of the month spiritually, mentally & physically is all part of the experience. Fasting generally gets easier as the month goes on and our bodies adjust to the changes.

To help maintain focus and clarity some Muslims may request work changes during Ramadan. This may include booking days off, reduced working hours, working from home etc.

WORD GLOSSARY

RAMADAN - THE NINTH MONTH OF THE ISLAMIC YEAR, DURING WHICH STRICT FASTING IS OBSERVED FROM DAWN TO SUNSET.

SUHUR/SUHOOR/SEHRI - THE MEAL EATEN BEFORE DAWN (BEFORE FAJR PRAYER) DURING RAMADAN.

IFTAR - THE MEAL EATEN AFTER SUNSET (AT MAGHRIB TIME) DURING RAMADAN TO BREAK THE FAST.

ZAKAT/ZAKAH - A FORM OF CHARITY CONSIDERED A RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION (THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES).

RAK'AH - A UNIT OF PRAYER.

TARAWEEH/TARAWIH - SPECIAL SUNNAH PRAYERS INVOLVING READING LONG PORTIONS OF THE QURAN, AND PERFORMING MANY RAK'AHs. PERFORMED ONLY IN THE ISLAMIC MONTH OF RAMADAN. THE ENTIRE QURAN IS RECITED IN THE TARAWEEH PRAYERS AT A MOSQUE.

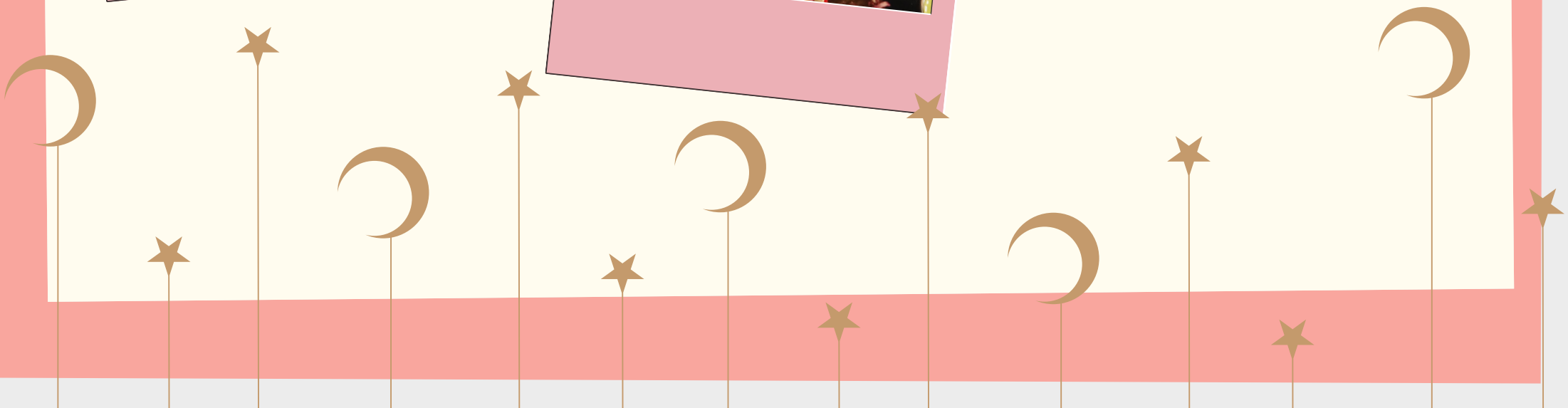
LAILATUL/LAYLATUL QADR - THE NIGHT OF POWER DESCRIBED AS BEING BETTER THAN 1000 MONTHS.



SUHUR (MORNING)



IFTAR (EVENING)



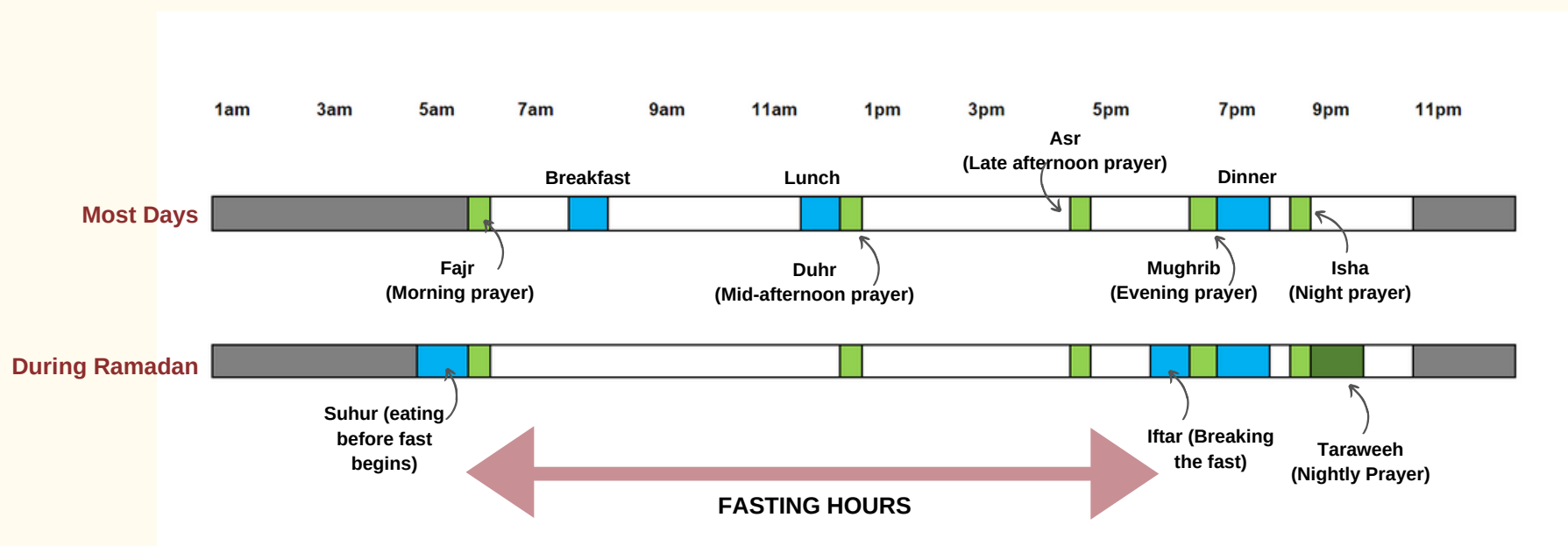
A day in a life of a Muslim colleague

To give you an idea of a typical day compared to a day during Ramadan (when Muslims fast) compare the two timelines below.

NOTE: Prayer times change across the year, depending on location, however to keep it simple the prayer times are the same on both timelines.

KEY

| | |
|---|--------|
| ■ | Sleep |
| ■ | Prayer |
| ■ | Eat |



Helpful tips for work colleagues:

1. Don't be afraid to ask questions
2. It is ok to eat around us
3. Working hours may differ slightly
4. You can try fasting if you are able as it has health benefits and allows you to experience how it feels
5. Fasting colleagues may be slightly irritable/grumpy due to the body adjusting to not eating at the usual times but don't take it personally!

