

April 24, 2020 - May 3, 2020

Ramadan is an Islamic holiday that lasts 30 days in which Muslims throughout the world fast and refrain from eating food and drinking any liquid. Essentially forbidding to have any sustenance or nutrition from sunrise to sundown. It doesn't occur at the same time each year because Ramadan is based on the lunar calendar and moves back 10 days each year. So this year it started on April 24, next year it will start on April 14.

It's not just a physical fast, but a spiritual one as well. It's a month to build good habits and become closer to god. Some Muslims try to quit bad habits during this month, some build good habits. Everyone sets a goal of having a good habit built by the end of Ramadan.

You wake up before sunrise to eat and pray, then return to sleep. Then if you have a job, you go about your day as normal. You break your fast at sundown. Depending on where you live, a person can fast from 8 hours to 18 hours to 22 hours. A favorite habit of mine is eating a fruit when I break my fast. Fruits become extremely flavorful when your tongue isn't covered in what you usually eat.

One thing you quickly notice is how much time you spend eating and drinking during the day.

You have lots of free time and, luckily, classes coincided with Ramadan so I can busy myself with work. But it's very difficult to get stuff done because the lack of food and water makes you really groggy.

The first 10 days, you really notice the physical effects. I usually feel exhausted waking up. As if I had a heavy exercise the day before, my muscles ache with soreness and pain every morning making it difficult to get out of bed.

The body takes time to acclimate to fasting. Your energy levels fluctuate as your body grows accustomed to the fasting state. Sometimes I find I have the same amount of energy or more once I get out of bed and start my day. Sometimes you wake up starving and dehydrated.

The body takes time to acclimate to fasting. It's difficult to keep a consistent exercise routine because too heavy of a workout can cause some problems. Coughing fits that last a while, extreme dehydrations, cramps, and other problems I haven't personally experienced.

There are plenty of health benefits of fasting such as cleaning your body from toxins and the unhealthy foods you eat. Ramadan is time to create better habits and break bad habits. You are given 30 days to try to break bad habits and start good ones. You do your best and carry on the good habits when Ramadan is over.

Along with the benefits and consistent exhaustion, the dreams during fasting become strange. Some people I know have had spiritual awakenings in dreams, I've had similar experiences but not to the extent they have described. My dreams are usually strange and sometimes metaphorical.

My dreams this Ramadan have been strange each day and that has been consistent since 2018. I once had a dream of being a cat who could predict the future but no one believed.

The most poignant dream I had this year was my walking into a room and seeing friends and family I haven't seen in 10+ years. It was a great seeing old friends even though it was a dream.

I guess I just miss my friends.

Especially now, during the shutdown, I've realized something that I hadn't realized before.

Ramadan is not just a fast from your usual habits. It's not just a way to become more spiritual.

It's a practice of humility.