

The Friday Bulletin

The Weekly Muslim News Update



Leaders call for support for flood victims

Muslim leaders have called on Muslims and Kenyans of goodwill to mobilize resources to support flood victims at the different parts of the country.

The leaders drawn from various Muslim organizations appealed to Kenyans to stand together and galvanize support towards the victims of the floods which have been occasioned by heavy rains which are currently being experienced in many parts of the country.

More than 200,000 have been displaced countrywide as a result of the current flood while at least 112 people have lost their

lives.

Tana River and Kilifi counties are among the worst affected and there are fears of after floods destroyed thousands of acres of crops.

As schools opened for the second term last week, more than 70 schools in Tana River and Kilifi counties were closed as they were inaccessible to learners while others were being used to host the displaced.

Heavy rains have also hit North Eastern region with severe flooding in Garissa

while deaths and displacement of at 7,000 reported in Mandera county. "We are appealing to agencies like Kenya Red Cross and particularly state department of Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) to intervene so that our collective synergy can improve the situation of the affected populations," said the Governor Ali Roba.

Speaking to Friday Bulletin the organizing Secretary Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK), Sheikh Muhammad Khalifa said it was heartbreaking to see children, women and old men undergo so

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The deputy Chief Kadhi Sheikh Rashid Ali Omar stresses on a point during a media briefing on the Islamic position on Female Genetal Mutilation (FGM). With him are Dr Adan Yunus Sheikh the Garissa Supkem chairman, Sheikh Abdullatif Abdulkarim from Islamic Foundation and community member Sheikh Ismail Komora.

Don't associate FGM with Islam, Muslim leaders say

Muslim leaders have strongly condemned the practice of Female Genetal Mutilation (FGM) asserting that it is not consistence with Islamic teachings.

The deputy Chief Kadhi Sheikh Rashid Ali Omar affirmed that Islam does not in any way support the practice and told residents of North Eastern region of Kenya and other pastoralist communities to shun the practice as it is harmful to the health of the girl child.

Sheikh Rashid urged residents not to subject their daughters to FGM but instead focus on how they can empower them through education to positively shape their future. He stated that FGM violates Islamic law which protects the welfare of family,

dignity, wealth and the mental capacity of an individual.

The Deputy Chief Kadhi noted that there is no authentic or relevant Islamic evidence sanctioning or allowing the practice in all its forms and called on all Muslim institutions to take up and support resolute action to stop the harmful practice. "Islam prohibits the mutilation of human's organs and we have not found any source that attributes to Islamic laws that a mutilation should be done to an organ of a human being, therefore the sanctity and the dignity of human beings must be preserved," he said during a press conference organized by Daya women group.

Sheikh Rashid said there is a clear de-

marcation between culture stressing that pastoralist communities which practice FGM base it on cultural traditions and not religion.

He further observed that the adverse medical, health, social and psychological effects of the practice, are other reasons why Islam prohibits the practice. "FGM is an illegal practice which is punishable by law and the Muslim community does not recognize the outlawed practice. Those claiming that Muslims are supporting FGM are misleading members of the public," Sheikh Rashid Ali added.

The Judicial officer further said FGM violates girls and women rights to health, security and physical integrity, their right to

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National Zakat body to be unveiled soon

In a bid to promote socio-economic development, build self-sustainable society and reduce poverty among Muslims, plans are underway to launch an organisation to oversee the collection of Islamic social welfare system of Zakat.

According to the convener Ibrahim Ahmed Abdinoor, the National Zakat Foundation Kenya (NZF-K) will be launched in the near future to cater for the needs and welfare of the poor and needy in the Muslim community. Ibrahim further pointed out that the donations will also help to reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor.

Speaking to Friday Bulletin, Ibrahim said the initiative is driven by the need to address the socio-economic challenges being faced by the local Muslims while exuding confidence that the Foundation will go a long way in helping local Muslims to venture into income-generating activities to improve on their livelihood.

He pointed out that the foundation has already put in place an interim committee

consisting of professionals and prominent Muslim scholars who are spearheading the process.

The officials are Ibrahim Ahmed Abdinoor (Convener/Chief Executive Officer), Juma Mvudi (Member), Fatuma Dekow (Member), Abshiro Hussein (Member) and Abdi Ahmed.

Muslim scholars on the committee include Sheikh Muhammad Swalih, Sheikh Umal, Sheikh Abdullatif Abdulkarim and Sheikh Abdurahman Adani.

Among the roles of National Zakat Foundation Kenya will be to collect charities and distribute them to the poor and needy. Also the institution will redistribute assets and opportunities, building capacity, wealth creation through extending income support to needy members.

The convener urged Muslims in the business, financial, Muslim organizations and other sectors to join the initiative to improve on economic status of the local communi-

ties adding that the National Zakat Foundation Kenya leadership will embark on a campaign exercise to market the idea in all the 47 counties across the country.

Ibrahim further disclosed that the Foundation will engage Imams and Muslim scholars in educating the local communities on matters pertaining to Zakat to help them improve their capacity.

He noted that Zakat institution has a lot of untapped economic potential that could open a window of hope for the Muslim community if well utilized.

Zakat is an obligatory form of charity that requires all capable Muslims who earn a certain income on an annual basis while Waqf is a voluntary charitable act. Kenya has at least six million Muslims that are capable of contributing towards the cause.

Parklands mosque to open on Sunday

The new multimillion Parklands mosque will officially be opened on Sunday May 13 at the ceremony to be attended by Muslim scholars, leaders and the faithful.

The multi-storeyed mosque has a capacity of 2500 worshippers and will serve as a focal centre for Islamic activities in the area.

Among amenities at the newly constructed mosque include men and female prayer halls, multipurpose hall, library and ghusl (ablution facilities for the dead) among other facilities.

The previous temporary structure made from prefabricated materials was disassembled and transported to Marsabit where it was reconstructed into another mosque.

Since its inception in 1994, Parklands mosque has become an invaluable centre of worship and activities with an important role of uniting and serving the community.

The mosque operates a madrassa for children and ladies and is involved in various daawah activities. It has an active youth committee that engages in various activities including organizing for Ramadhan and 'Eid prayers.

The mosque has also organized lecture tours by world renowned scholars who include the Mufti Ismail Menk from Zimbabwe and South Africa scholar Ibrahim Bham as a way of increasing Islamic knowledge.

Don't associate FGM with Islam

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be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and their right to life when the procedure results in death.

The Imams, Muslim scholars, Islamic preachers and women leaders collectively resolved to support and strengthen the national advocacy campaign in order to enable delivery on effective intervention towards total abandonment of the practice.

Dr. Abbas Gullet receives 2017 North South Award

The Secretary General of Kenya Red Cross Society Dr Abbas Gullet has been named the winner of 2017 North South Prize of the Council of Europe in recognition for his contributions towards humanitarian services.

Dr Abbas Gullet, who is also the Vice President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies was presented with the award by the President of Portugal Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, during an official ceremony at Portuguese Parliament in Lisbon.

He is one of the two personalities who were recognized and awarded the top honours by the North South Centre of the Council of Europe for dedicating his life to promote humanitarian work and foster human solidarity. The other recipient is Kris-

tiina Kumpula, Secretary-General of the Finnish Red Cross.

Gullet who is also the chancellor of Umma University has been at the helm at the Red Cross since 2001 and has had a distinguished career as a Kenyan humanitarian worker.

During his tenure, has transformed the Kenya Red Cross Society to a vibrant growing humanitarian organization, for which he was named "UN in Kenya Person of the Year" in 2007.

The North-South Prize of the Council of Europe is awarded every year since 1995 to two personalities, one from the North and another from the South, who have excelled in their commitment to human rights, democracy and rule of law, contributing to the

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Call for support for flood victims

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much suffering after their houses were submerged by floods.

He called for concerted efforts to alleviate the suffering of the flood victims and urged Muslims and Kenyans to stand together and extend a helping hand to the displaced by providing them with food, clothing and shelter. "The situation on the ground is distressing and we should remember that we have an obligation to assist those who have been displaced and lack shelter," he said.

Sheikh Khalifa further emphasized on the need for preventive measures and improvement of drainage systems by the respective county governments to avoid further loss of lives and properties.

The CIPK official said lessons have to be learnt following the ongoing floods, which have left many people displaced in the past few months. He noted that mega

dams must be set up to help in water harvesting during torrential rains, noting that the cycle of floods and droughts will be avoided as a result.

On his part Sheikh Abdullatif Abdulkarim from Islamic Foundation said the state should declare the situation a national disaster, saying the threshold may be too big for governments to cope individually.

"People have been badly affected and Counties cannot cope by themselves, the central government may not have the sufficient resources," he said, adding that if all development partners join hands then the situation can be handled better.

Sheikh Abdullatif appealed to Muslim organizations and mosques across the country to be open and provide humanitarian support and relief assistance to those affected by disastrous floods.

Determining the times of Fajr and Imsak (beginning of fasting)

Shaikh Ahmad Kutty

The Spirit of Ease in Shari'ah

Let me state from the outset that Shari'ah is all about ease and the removal of hardship for people in order to facilitate things for them. Shari'ah, as it has been articulated by eminent jurists, has the sole objective of catering to the welfare of people in both worlds. Consequently, practicality, balance, ease, and removal of hardship are all valid principles that have always been used as the criteria for providing rulings for people, according to changing times and circumstances.

The Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah have reiterated this principle throughout. Allah says, "Allah intends to bring for you ease; and He does not wish to make things hard upon you." (Qur'an: 2:185) and "He did not appoint for you any hardship in this religion: the way of your ancestor Ibrahim" (Qur'an: 22:78).

Additionally, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is known to have said: "I have been sent to teach the simple, natural way (of Ibrahim)." (Ibn Hajar, Kashf As-Sitr); "This religion is easy and simple to follow; whoever makes it hard will only be defeating himself." (Reported by Nasa'i); "Make things easy for people; do not make things hard for them. Give them glad tidings, and don't turn them away from religion (by making it hard on them)" (Reported by Bukhari). A'ishah, the beloved wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him), tells us about the Prophet, when left to choose between two viable options, he would always choose the easier of the two, as long as it was not sinful; for if it had been sinful, he would be the farthest from it. (Reported by Bukhari, Muslim and others).

This spirit of ease, comfort, and removal of hardship, was the basis for how the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions practiced and applied Islamic principles.

While stressing ease and comfort, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also warned against rigidity and hair-splitting in religion. In this regard, he is reported to have said: "Woe to those who are rigid." (Reported by Muslim); "Abstain from what I had forbidden, and fulfill the duties I had enjoined as best as you can (shunning rigidity) for the nations before you perished because of their (excessive rigidity and) hair-splitting interpretations of religion." (Reported by Muslim)

Allah says: "...and eat and drink until you can discern the white streak of dawn against the blackness of night, and then resume fasting until nightfall..." (Qur'an: 2:187)

The verse mentioned above has been further explained in a number of traditions. When one of the Companions, namely, Adiy b. Hatim, mistakenly thought this to be an order to determine whether he can distinguish a white thread from a black thread, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) pointed out to him that what is meant is the whiteness of the day as distinct from the blackness of the night, and he said,

"Eat and drink and do not be misled by the ascending white light. Eat and drink until the redness (of the dawn) appears." (Reported by Ahmad)

Time of Fajr according to Qur'anic commentators

In examining the various authentic commentaries of the Qur'an on the definition of the verse we have referred to above, we find that all of them indicate that fajr starts when we can be assured by means of our naked eyes of its arrival in no uncertain terms (the word used in the verse is yatabayyana).

The commentaries refer to various traditions and precedents of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the companions in order to clearly distinguish the false dawn from the true dawn. Whereas the false dawn is described as being deceptive in that it appears like dawn but does not dissipate the darkness, the true dawn is what is described as dispelling darkness gradually. Therefore, explaining the words, yatabayyana, Ibn Jarir cites the following statement, "The proper way to describe this state is to say that the glow of dawn should be so wide-spread in the sky in such a way that the whiteness and light emanating from it should fill the streets." Therefore, it is said, "Whoever has any doubt whether the dawn has arrived or not, he or she may eat until they are certain that Fajr has indeed arrived." The criterion for determining true dawn is the certainty of its arrival beyond a shadow of doubt.

Time of Fajr according to the Sunnah of the Prophet & His Companions

It is no wonder then that we find the companions demonstrated remarkable latitude when it came to imsak, by postponing suhur and eating it until such time that it was plainly clear to them that the true dawn had arrived. In short, rather than erring on the side of abstention from foods, they chose to err on the side of consumption. The traditions, in support of this, are numerous:

Hudhayfah states that Abu Bakr al-Siddiq and I were on a roof during Ramadhan and I came to him, asking, "Won't you eat (suhur), O the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah?" He said, "Not yet"; I came again, and he repeated the same answer; when I came a third time, he looked at dawn, and told me, again, not yet. Then, after a while, I came, again, asking the same question, and he said, "Yes, now let us have our meal (i.e. suhur). Soon after, he prayed two rak'ahs, and stood up to pray fardh (in congregation).

Hammad b. Salamah reports from Asim from Zirr b. Hubaysh, "I had my suhur. Then I went to the mosque (to pray Fajr). On my way, I stopped by Hudhayfah (the Prophet's companion). He brought a camel to be milked; then the milk was warmed up... and he told me to partake of suhur with him. I told him, But, I intend to fast!"; he said, 'I also intend to fast'; so we both ate and drank. Soon after, we went to the mosque and the iqamah was given. Hudhayfah told

me, 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) had done the same thing with me.' I asked him. 'Did he have suhur after the daybreak? He said, yes, it was the daybreak, but the sun had not appeared yet.'"

Ibn Abbas, the Prophet's companion (and the reputed scholar of his generation), was asked, "Should I stop eating when I doubt whether Fajr has begun or not?" He replied, "No, eat until you can ascertain clearly that the dawn has arrived." (Reported by Ibn Abi Shaybah)

The fact that such a practice was directly derived from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is shown by the following tradition:

Imam Ahmad, An-Nasai, and Ibn Majah reported on the authority of Hudhayfah, a prominent companion of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), "We partook of suhur with the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) until it was plain day, except the sun had not arisen yet." (Cited by Ibn Kathir in his tafsir) In other words, to them, there was no question about the arrival of fajr when observed by the naked eye.

A'ishah is also reported to have said, "Bilal used to give adhan at night. Therefore, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) instructed us to 'Eat and drink until Ibn Umm Makthum calls the second adhan, for he will only give adhan when fajr clearly arrives.' (Reported by Bukhari) In another report, the words, 'when fajr clearly arrives', is replaced with the words, 'until he is told that fajr has arrived'" (being blind, Ibn Umm Makthum could not have observed the arrival of dawn on his own).

Commenting on the position of companions in regards to the determination of the time of fajr, Ibrahim A-Nakha'i states: "The Prophet's companions have never agreed on any issue as they have agreed on reckoning the time of fajr as the time when it is plainly visible for all to see." (Reported by Ibn Abi Shaybah)

Views of the eminent Imams on the time of Fajr & Imsak

The various Imams' views on this issue include the following:

Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal said, "If one has any doubt in his mind about whether fajr has arrived, he may eat until he is certain of its arrival." Imam Nawawi states, "Imam Shafi's followers are unanimous on the fact that it is permissible for anyone who doubts the arrival of dawn to eat until he is certain of its arrival. The evidence for this is that Allah has allowed for us to eat and drink until the arrival of dawn; the one who doubts the fajr is not certain of its arrival." And Imam

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Maximize your ibadah during your period

An Ghela

Do you remember the days when after finishing a long year at school we finally got a couple of months of vacation? There was so much anticipation for it and the first thing we wanted to do was NOTHING! We knew that although we had homework or projects or we just needed to brush up in some subjects we all just wanted to curl up in bed without having to worry about waking up early the next day. However if we kept doing this for all our vacation we realized that when we went back to class we had become rusty. We've neglected on stimulating our brain, now that we needed to get back to our studies we found it more difficult than ever.

Sometimes something similar happens when we get our period. We've been doing all our Salahs on time, our fasting and our Qur'an reading but as soon as we get our period we fall into this "vacation" mode that makes us fall into this false idea that we cannot do anything during these days so might as well just "chill". But here we err; this could be the best time for a Muslimah to increase her good deeds and her learning of the deen.

'Aisha narrated : Allah's Apostle said, "Do good deeds properly, sincerely and moderately and know that your deeds will not make you enter Paradise, and that the most beloved deed to Allah's is the most regular and constant even though it were little" (Sahih Bukhari)

The previous hadith indicates that our Lord has great love for deeds that are constant and regular; this means that there is really no "off-time" for men or women from doing that which is right. Even while we cannot move or speak just thinking about the attributes of Allah can count as Ibadah.

Now it is important for us women to understand that our menstruation is not a problem or a barrier that stops us from reaching a higher state. Often we are plagued with misconceptions, sometimes cultural baggage or societal representations that show this monthly cycle as more of a burden than a blessing. Yet as Muslimahs we know that everything sent from above is good and Allah does not burden a soul, instead He has sent us this deen to ease our burden. If we think about it, this monthly gift (as we sometimes sarcastically refer to) it is indeed a gift. If it weren't for it we wouldn't have the joy of becoming mothers or of being healthy women. So in order to better deal with this we have to restructure our way of thinking towards menstruation, this way we can pass this positive influence to other women in our life.

So now that we have accepted this as a blessing and not an impediment, how can we make the best of these couple of days? Well below are some of the many things we can do to maximize our Ibadah during our period:

1) Seeking forgiveness (Istighfar): It is known that hormonal changes before menstruation paired with sensitivity in the body and water gain are the perfect combina-

tion to turn us into snapping, oversensitive sometimes sad, mad, glad adorable beings. So now is the perfect time to seek forgiveness to Allah for all those wrong actions we may have involved ourselves and to all those we wronged in the process. My favorite Istighfar dua'a is :

'O Allah, You are my Lord, no one has the right to be worshipped except You, You created me and I am your servant and I abide to your covenant and promise as best as I can, I take refuge in you from the evil of which I committed. I acknowledge your favor upon me and I acknowledge my sin, so forgive me, for verily no one can forgive sin except you.'

2) The healing properties of Listening to the Qur'an: When we have our menses especially the first few days most women suffer from cramps caused by the contraction of the uterine muscles. These could be trying times for any Muslimah but Alhamdulillah we have the best medicine at our reach. "And We send down of the Qur'an that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss" (Surah Al-Isra 17:82). Even though women who have their period cannot touch or read the Qur'an we can still benefit from listening to its beautiful verses. These verses would calm the tension in our bodies and at the same time help us reflect on the bounties of our Lord thus helping us endure any pain or discomfort. Some verses and ayahs to focus are Surah al Fatiha, Ayah-ul-Kursi and the last two verses of Surah al Baqarah.

3) Improve your relationship with your Husband: As single women we believe that when we get married we will fulfill the

duties posed to us by our religion and desired by our society. Yet we don't realize that after marriage we have just started the road towards fulfilling these duties. While we are not menstruating we are allowed to have physical relations with our husbands but while we are on our period we are mandated to stay away from doing so. This is a great time to explore another phase of relationship with our life partners. Al-Aswad narrated it from 'A'isha (radhiyallahu anha) that she observed: I used to wash the head of the Messenger of Allah (sal Allahu alayhi wa salam), while I was in a state of menstruation (Sahih Muslim). Even small gestures can count; being in a relationship is about always rekindling that friendship we have with our husbands. After all, paradise may lie on their hands as well.

4) New life, New Projects:

As women Allah has used our bodies as a vessel for His creation. New life is formed in our bodies and we are fortunate to live this incomparable miracle. During our menses our body is internally getting ready to be able to foster life once again. Now even though we might not be married or wanting to get pregnant, we are unconsciously prone to create things during this phase of the month. With the extra time in our hands, during these days we are not praying, we can use it wisely to start a new project. Ever wanted to start a new charity? Maybe your own halal business? Maybe a writing project? Or a Dawah project. The sky is the limit!

5) Increase your love for Dhikr: Abu Huraira reported that the Prophet said, "I love repeating Subhan Allah , Walhamdu lillah , wa La ilaha ill-Allah, wa Allahu Akbar (Glorified is Allah, all praise is due to Allah, and there is no God but Allah, Allah is the greatest) more than all that the sun shines upon." (Muslim and Tirmidhi). Often when we have our period we feel like we are missing out on our ibadah since we cannot perform Salah. So a good option would be to keep track of the Salah times and use them to instead perform some dhikr. Our connection with our Lord does not have to suffer any throwbacks but can instead be strengthened during this time. We must remember that the remembrance of Allah can be done at any instance: "Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (With the thought): "Our Lord! not for naught Hast Thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire." (Surah al Imran 3:191).



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6 steps to prepare for Ramadhan

By Norhassan Curo

"We relate to thee their story in truth: they were youths who believed in their Lord, and We advanced them in guidance" (Surah Al-Kahf 18:13)

With the present visit of our exalted guest—the month of Ramadhan, many gifts of rare opportunities are given to thousands of young Muslims in the world. They, being in their prime energies and potentials, are given the best opportunities like no other to grab the bountiful gifts of this month. Some young Muslims welcome this guest with arms wide open and see Ramadhan's visit as one with so much a blessing that it becomes a life changing event. Others take it as a sign that Allah Ta'ala has given them another opportunity to draw closer to Him and earn His pleasure through worship in this month. Some others, unfortunately, are too lazy and just see it like any ordinary guest who comes and leaves without any meaning and importance.

The Muslim youth visited by the noble guest respond in three groups.

First Group: They think they are young, will live long and reach another Ramadhan. Thus, they do not grab the golden gifts of opportunities the present Ramadhan offers.

The first group of youth are the ones who come out after Ramadhan unchanged and unmoved. They come out in the same being and state inside and out as they entered in this month. With their mentality that they are still young and more time to live, they procrastinate everything they need to do in their young age and live as if there is no end.

Thus, despite their deepest and darkest sins, they procrastinate their asking for forgiveness. They are considered the most unlucky youth as described in the Hadith, "people who reached Ramadhan but had not their sins forgiven." Indeed, they are the most unlucky person in the world. Ramadhan came but to them, his visit was just like an ordinary visit in an ordinary day. Ramadhan blew like a wind and these youth benefited neither of the bountiful gifts of Ramadhan nor the strength and energies of their youth.

These youth do not know that they might not see this visitor again. He might not come next year or they might not be there when he comes back.

Second Group: They know it is Ramadhan so they fast without however giving any importance to their fast and their youth. So they only fast and get nothing from their fasting.

"Let it not be that the day that you fast and the day that you break fast be equal." This is the attitude of the second group of youth. Their real behaviors, attitudes and outlooks are the same during the day they fast and the night they break their fast or, their undesirable attitudes come back the time they break their fast. Fasting has no effect upon them since they do not reflect upon the lessons of fasting that they observe.

Some who belong in this group use well their youthful energies but not to entertain their visitor Ramadhan but have themselves entertained. To them, Ramadhan is a time to sleep and hibernate making them pass by the precious moments of Ramadhan to no avail. Some others equate this month to month not of fasting but of feasting. As such, after Ramadhan, feast is also over.

Thus, as Ramadhan came, a sudden influx of these youth in the Masjid happens. Sudden sets of wasteful activities are held. The celebration of Ramadhan is likened to the Kuffar's celebration of their celebrated seasons. Youths, without proper understanding, join the sets of sports tournaments held in their places instead of channeling their vigor to making their most to earn the pleasure of God in this month! This is reality. What a waste not only of Ramadhan, its blessings and opportunities, and their youth but also of the money lavishly spent in such events! Spendthrift I must say to those who exhibit entertainment shows i.e. firecracker shows, to those who hold tournaments for the youth and other wasteful events in celebration of Ramadhan. They just burn their money and let their energies become sweat when many Muslims are suffering from hunger and need the helping hand of their Muslim brothers. Ramadhan is a month of giving, not of wasting.

Some others who have no proper knowledge fast but do not observe the other duties they are bound to do for their fast to be accepted. Some fast but do not offer salah. Others perform the taraweeh and tahajjud, optional prayers while leaving off the obligatory salahs. How they should be reminded that salah is their miftahu Jannah (key to Paradise)—a key to receive their rewards!

The said group of youth must be the people who are described in the hadith as those "who fast but do not get from their fasting but hunger and thirst and get nothing from their standing up at night to pray but loss of sleep." Also, another hadith reminds them, "whoever does not give up lying and evil actions, then Allah is not in need of his leaving his food and drink" (Sahih Bukhari).

Third Group: They know both that they are young and like Ramadhan, their youth will soon leave after its very short and limited visit.

The third group of youth take Ramadhan's visit as a sign that Allahu ta'ala has given them another opportunity to draw closer to Him and earn His paradise through worship in this month. They are the ones who understand fully well that the present month of Ramadhan is the best month to make use of their youth. Thus, they welcome the present Ramadhan they witness with all the efforts and strength their youth can offer as if this was the first, and will be the last Ramadhan they will ever entertain.

They are described in the hadith as "those who fast with full sincerity and will have all their sins forgiven." For this, these youth will receive the rewards of their fast not only

with manifold increase but rewards only Allah may know. This group understands that they are commanded by their God to fast to gain taqwa (fear of Allah). Fasting is a gift to them to attain self discipline and self-control and have their youthful and strong desires subject to their control. It is a time to learn how to be free from their used-to-be-master-evil desires and reverse the tide by learning how to enslave them. Through fasting, they strive to learn the lesson that as one can control and refrain himself from doing halal things, so too can he control doing the haram ones.

Youths of this group make this month a turning point in their lives. They make this a start for a new beginning—a new better life. They make this month the period and an end of a once rebellious life.

As such, they use their youthful energies to stand up for the night to ask forgiveness for all the disobedience and sins they have committed, thereby earning the pleasure of Allah. They use their youthful clear vision and clear minds to recite the noble Quran and try their best to understand its meanings. They read as they reap its manifold rewards with highest hope that reading of the holy book will intercede in their behalf on the hard Day when none shall be given the permission to intercede.

They use their young and strong able bodies to search for the night equal to a thousand as they lift their hands and pray for their forgiveness and their parents' forgiveness as they raised them up in so much difficulty.

They are the youth who use this month to bond the spirit of brotherhood and unity of all Muslims in the world as they fasted with full sincerity along them. They sympathize with their Muslim brothers and sisters, rich and poor, young and old who suffer the pangs of hunger. They feel, as part of that one whole body, the hardships of their Mujahideen brothers as they fast in the cold nights and at the same time labor through working for the establishment of the Word of Allah in this world for the youth's benefit.



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6 steps to prepare for Ramadhan

Muhammad Ahmed Shiwani

Ramadan is the most auspicious month of the year for Muslims. Around the world, we aim to use the month to redevelop or enhance our connection with Allah and so the month is of extreme importance to every Muslim. Naturally, it makes sense for us to prepare for the month beforehand, primarily so we can get the best out of the immense blessings in store for us. Here are 6 ways you can prepare for Ramadhan 2018 before it begins:

1. Prepare a schedule to follow

It is not unnatural to feel lost and incoherent during the first few days of the month. With fasting, Tarawih and other practices comes a different and mostly novel format to the day. The way to make sure you are not a confused mess during the first few days is to prepare a schedule to follow beforehand, meaning that you must note down all the different practices you wish to commit to during the month and try to find a way to incorporate them with other professional and personal commitments. An easy way to do this is to think of the different pockets of free time you have throughout the day and fit in a prioritized list of deeds within those time-slots.

Be sure not to overburden yourself and set unmatchable goals and targets, you do not want to jeopardize other important aspects of your life, nor realize that you've created a mountain too high to climb mid-Ramadan. Take it easy on yourself, but think of goals and targets beforehand and you shall sail through the beautiful month!

2. Improve your Salah

Ramadan Kareem is all about trying your best to please Allah and capturing as much of the tremendous blessings bestowed upon us during the month. Salah is one of the most important modes of prayer and perhaps the quintessential mode of submission to Allah so spending some time improving different aspects of your prayer will definitely go a long way in getting the most out of the month. Be it during Taraweeh or late-night Nafls, a concentrated proper Salah will exponentially increase the pleasure you get out of praying to the Almighty. This article has some brilliant tips for enhancing the quality of your Salah.

3. Read up on the uniqueness of Ramadhan

As narrated by Abu Huraira (radhiallahu anhu, the Prophet peace be upon him said: "When Ramadan begins, the gates of Paradise are opened." (Bukhari)

This Hadith is just one of the many Ahadith that outline the immense significance of Ramadhan and show how ideal of an opportunity the month is to regain one's connection with religion. It is perhaps pertinent, then, to really understand the immense value of the month in order to be fully motivated and inspired to extract the most from it. This information will be of immense benefit during those tough fasts and tiring Tarawihis, since you will constantly be aware of the enormous rewards in store for

you in return for miniscule efforts.

Reading up on the auspiciousness of the month will not only give you an increased sense of motivation to engage yourself in as many good deeds as possible during the month, but will also create an eagerness for the month to arrive. What better than to prepare for the month by displaying the same eagerness that the beloved Prophet peace be upon him would display?

4. Think of healthy Iftar meals

In the raging hunger that we feel during that helpless await for the Adhan, most would testify that eating healthy is usually very low on the agenda. However, we must understand that Ramadhan is more about re-establishing a commitment to Islam than about chomping down on uncountable plates of food, so it is important to be wary of what we eat during the month. It is also, of course, important to not gain a hundred kilos during the month, so it may be pertinent to think of ways through which Iftar and suhoor can be made healthier.

5. Complete your Eid shopping

Unless you enjoy going out to shop during Ramadhan, it is perhaps a good idea to shop for Eid before the month begins. Taking time out to shop in the midst of a usually packed Ramadhan schedule may be a

hard thing to do, so shopping beforehand may just make your life a whole lot easier. You may also succeed in banking on some amazing discounts!

6. Take care of someone else's Ramadhan

Some of us are more privileged than others, but the Muslim Ummah is one and must take care of each other. Abu Huraira radhiallahu anhu noted that the Prophet peace be upon him once said, "Whoever helps ease a difficulty in the world, Allah will grant him ease from a difficulty in the world and the Hereafter" (Muslim)

Let's face it: Ramadhan can be a real financial burden on some people, which makes it all the more important for those privileged enough to ease their burdens. There is perhaps no better feeling than knowing you have made someone else's life more comfortable or rid them of a severe burden. If you know someone who could use a little help in preparing for the month, do not hesitate to help them out. Islam is more than just a set of rituals; a true Muslim is one who worries about and cares for his or her fellow Muslims, take this opportunity to please the Almighty and emulate the beautiful ways of our Prophet peace be upon him!

Times of Fajr and Imsak (beginning of fasting)

Continued From Page 3

Ibn Kathir writes in his famous tafsir: "Leniency and flexibility with regard to partaking of suhur has been reported from a great number of pious predecessors.

This is the reason why Ibn Hajar, the great authority on hadith and fiqh, denounced those who laid unnecessary restrictions in regard to partaking of suhur: "Among the reprehensible innovations of our times is the practice of calling the second adhan of fajr quarter hour earlier in Ramadhan and putting off the lights signaling that the one fasting should stop eating-under the false pretext that they would like to exercise caution in the practice of the acts of worship... Such an unwarranted caution has also led

them to delay the adhan of magrib for some time. In this way, they end up delaying iftar (breaking the fast) and advancing the suhur and thus violate the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). No wonder then you find them bereft of virtue and rampant in corruption." As a final word, it would be wise to remind ourselves of the dire warning of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), "There are among you those who simply drive people away from Islam." (Reported by Bukhari and Muslim).

I pray to Allah to guide us to the straight path, make us instruments of guidance and gather us all under the banner of the seal of prophets and messengers.

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Ramadhan : Beef up security , Muslim leaders urge gov't

Muslim leaders in Coast region have called on the government to provide adequate security to Muslims across the country as they observe the month of Ramadhan.

The forthcoming Ramadhan is expected to commence either on May 16 or 17 depending on the sighting of the crescent.

The leaders called upon police and security personnel to deal with criminal gangs that have been terrorizing residents in the region and to step up security effort to provide conducive environment for worshippers to undertake their religious obligations without hindrances during the month long fasting period .

Speaking during a press briefing at Mbaruk mosque in Mombasa on Tuesday,

the leaders drawn from Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) and Kenya Assembly of Ulamaa and Imams(KAULI) said that criminal gangs are likely to disrupt peace during the period and that the government must ensure security of its citizens regardless of religion, race and ethnic diversity.

"Most prayers are conducted at night during Ramadhan and with the rise of attacks by the gangs, especially in Kisauni, we are worried. This is why we are calling upon the security officers to address this matter which is now getting out of hand urgently," said SUPKEM Coast regional chairman Sheikh Muhdhar Khitamy.

The message from Muslim leaders come after suspected members of the dreaded Wakwali Kwanza gang hacked a man in Mwan-

doni area of Kisauni.

At the same time, the chairman of Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK) Machakos branch Sheikh Anas Abdallah has urged the police not to harass Muslim faithful during the Ramadhan celebrations but instead focus on maintain security, law and order.

Speaking at Machakos Jamia Mosque on Tuesday, Sheikh Abdallah condemned past arrests by police without any basis which disrupted night prayers.

"While we are not against security crackdowns which aims at ensuring peace, it is abhorring that the police have in the past harassed innocent Muslims in their observance of Ramadhan worship activities," he said.

Address mental health issues in Khutbas, Imams told

Imams and Muslim scholars have been called upon to speak on mental health issues in their sermons and lectures to create awareness on the increasing challenges in mental health.

At the same time Imams and Muslim community leaders were encouraged to go for training courses in counseling and mental health to effectively respond to psychosocial issues affecting Muslims.

The sentiments were made by various speakers on Saturday during a mental health awareness forum organized by a Nairobi based organization Ahadi Counseling centre held at Jamia mosque.

Addressing the gathering, Sheikh Fathi Ali said Imams and scholars have an obligation to join the campaign through including mental health issues in their khutbas to prevent and stem the use of the illegal drugs. "There is need for our Imams and Khatibs to speak out on health matters in their khutbas to contribute to the wellbeing of their congregations and also offer



Dr Fatma Ahmed lecturer at the United States International University (Left) with Maryam Sheikh and a participant follow proceedings during the mental health workshop.

advice to them to shun harmful acts that could hinder their health," he said.

Sheikh Fathi further emphasized that the Muslim leadership should come up with measure to fight the rising incidences of drug abuse among the youth. He said more effective measures are needed to prevent the youth from engaging in illegal and harmful substances which he said were contrib-

uting factors to mental illness and myriad of negative social economic effects in the community.

In her remarks community activist Maryam Sheikh said mosques should be used as focal points in the war against drug abuse adding that institutions should play a pivotal role in the prevention campaign and rehabilitation of drug users.

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On her part Dr Fatma Ahmed Ali challenged Muslim medical practitioners to embrace the spirit of giving back to the community and provide health services for the members of the Muslim community.

She called on Muslim doctors and nurses to appreciate their Islamic values and formulate programmes aimed at helping Muslims with mental health advice and counseling services.

Award for Abbas Gullet

Continued From Page 2

North-South dialogue, fostering solidarity, promoting interdependence and creating partnerships.

Previous winners of the prize include inspiring personalities such as former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, the Aga Khan, Queen Rania Abdullah of Jordan and Mikhail Gorbachev who was the last president of the Soviet Union.



Clothes collection and distribution to the needy

There are many reasons why donating clothing to others is a great action. When you give people access to clothes, you give them more than a protection from the cold. You give them an ability to socialize, express themselves, and feel dignified. In fact, before we actually meet somebody, we initially meet his or her clothes; they are our very first impression of someone, preceding their actual presence or behaviour.

It is probably for these reasons that Islam place high importance on clothing the needy. By letting needy people be without proper clothing, we are making it easy for others to judge them unfairly. The Holy Quran mentions clothing, saying that it serves the purpose of covering and adorning ourselves, but (the clothing of righteousness - that is best. That is from the signs of God that perhaps they will remember) Holy Quran 7:26. The invisible clothing of righteousness leads us to helping our fellow man through the donation of clothing, with no expectation of being paid in return. Only Allah swt rewards us for this as an act of charity in the hereafter.

As we are all familiar with the current weather patterns, families have been rendered homeless and the brutality of the cold and rain needs the affected families to be supported. Many have become homeless as their homes have been swept away by floods. Tana River, Lamu and Kilifi are the worst affected counties. Ummah Foundation for the past three months has been collecting good clothes, blankets bed sheets, prayer mats at Parklands Mosque to be distributed to these areas that are affected by the pounding rains.

Lamu county is facing these floods disaster and Ummah Foundation with the help of Brother Alwy Badawy, has so far distributed 63 sacks of assorted clothes to remote villages of kitumbini- witu,

pandanguo, jimma in Boni forest, Faza, Shanga among others. These donations have gone a long way in alleviating some of the hardships the locals in these areas are facing. We therefore appeal for clothes, blankets, prayer mats and ladies buibuis to be donated so that we can meet these overwhelming demands. The situation is equally worse in villages in Kilifi and Tana River. Our distribution is universal and we do our distribution to all that are in this situation regardless of faith or creed.

Our collection point is at Parklands Mosque where we have mounted a collection box specifically to serve the interests of our suffering brothers and sisters in the floods affected areas. There are more valuable clothes than needy people! All you need to do is to look in your closet and pick out the clothes, jackets, women clothes and children clothes that are in good condition and donate them to us at our collection point at Parklands Mosque and we will do the rest in making sure they reach the deserving people. We appreciate and pray for all those who have given and urge others to follow the same trend.

May Allah bless you all for your donations and concerns about our fellow Muslims and human beings?

Contact us:

Ummah Foundation

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P.O. Box 58717-00200, Nairobi

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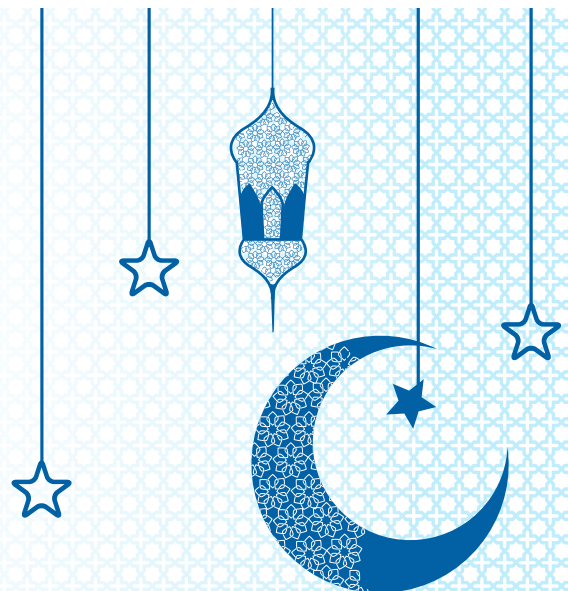


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