



NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

- Rob:** Hello I'm Rob. Welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm joined today by Neil. Hello Neil.
- Neil:** Hi there Rob. And I'm sure you'll join me in wishing our Muslim listeners Eid Mubarak!
- Rob:** Yes, indeed, Eid Mubarak! The end of Ramadan is approaching and they will be celebrating 'Eid-ul-Fitr', the Festival of the Breaking of **Fast**.
- Neil:** 'Fast' is the word for a period of time when you don't eat. And when you eat after a fast you **break** your fast.
- Rob:** Today we are going to talk about Ramadan. But first a question for you, Neil.
- Neil:** OK. What is it?
- Rob:** Well, many people around the world are celebrating Ramadan at the moment. But how many people follow Islam? Is it about:
- a) 1.2 billion
 - b) 1.5 billion or
 - c) 1.8 billion people
- Neil:** Right. This is going to be a complete guess. I'll go for the middle option, b) 1.5 billion.
- Rob:** OK, interesting guess. And do you know which country has the biggest Muslim population? Do you want to risk a guess?
- Neil:** I think I know this. I'm going to say Indonesia.
- Rob:** OK, well, all will be revealed at the end of the programme. First, let's understand what this celebration is all about.
- Neil:** Muslims believe in a God called Allah. Eid is an occasion when they thank Allah for helping them to have bettered themselves by giving up food.
- Rob:** It is. I asked Muna, our colleague from the Arabic Service at the BBC World Service, to explain the main purpose of Ramadan. Listen out for the word which means the ability to control yourself.

Muna, BBC World Service's Arabic Section:

Ramadan is the holy month when we fast. We begin the day with one meal after dawn. We finish our fast with another meal with the sunset. After this whole month comes Eid

to **reward** ourselves for this **worship**. And it's a kind of **discipline**, to discipline ourselves and to let us feel how people in need feel when they don't have enough food. And every Muslim should give an amount of money to the people in need after this fasting.

Neil: Muna uses the word 'discipline'. When you fast you resist the temptation of eating.

Rob: And she also talks about reward. After a month of fasting and worship, which means showing a strong admiration and respect for God – Allah in this case – the followers of Islam reward themselves with the festival called Eid.

Neil: She says people fast in order to understand the way others **in need** live.

Rob: People in need – poor people – don't have enough food to eat and might feel hungry for most of the time and this period of fasting helps Muslims to experience that.

Neil: And then every Muslim is required to **donate** – that's give money or gifts - to the poor. And what does Muna do during Eid?

Rob: Well, Muna, who is a Palestinian living in London, tells us. Listen out for what she does in the **mosque**, or the Islamic temple.

Muna, the BBC World Service's Arabic Section:

*We go to the mosque after the sunset and we **pray** together. Then we have coffee and sweets together. We visit each other. We spend the whole night talking and celebrating and... in Saudi Arabia for example they can go to festivals, go to coffee shops... yes, (there are) different ways of celebrating Ramadan and Eid.*

Neil: Pray – it's when you speak to God privately or in a religious ceremony, when you want to express love for God or ask for something or just say 'thank you for helping me'. Ramadan and Eid also seem to be very social occasions.

Rob: Muna will go to the mosque and after she prays with other Muslims, they eat together and talk a lot.

Neil: So, there's a personal challenge of fasting, when you have to have discipline. And also the social aspect of making donations to the poor and sharing a meal with friends and fellow Muslims.

Rob: And there's another Eid coming up, Neil. It's called 'Eid-ul-Adha'. It's going to be celebrated in October. Let's listen to what Muna has to say. What happens before that other Eid is celebrated?

Muna, the BBC World Service's Arabic Section:

*The other Eid comes after (the) **pilgrimage** to the holy places in Saudi Arabia and in this Eid also the other worship we do is to slaughter sheep or cow or camel and give this meat to people in need.*

Neil: Ah, a pilgrimage – it means a visit to a special place to show respect. In this case, it is a visit to holy places in Saudi Arabia. It's after the 'Hajj', the journey to Mecca.

- Rob:** And again there's a concern about the poor. Muna said the meat of an animal is offered to those who haven't got enough to eat.
- Neil:** And now I'm very keen to know how many Muslims there are in the world, Rob. Was I right at the beginning of the programme?
- Rob:** Well, the options were a) 1.2 billion; b) 1.5 billion; and c) 1.8 billion people.
- Neil:** And I said b) 1.5 billion.
- Rob:** You did, didn't you? And you were right. According to a 2010 study by the Pew Research Center in the US, Islam is followed by 1.57 billion people, making up over 23% of the world population. The largest Muslim population in a country is in Indonesia, a secular nation home to 12.7% of the world's Muslims. Well done! You got both questions right, Neil.
- Neil:** Fantastic!
- Rob:** Unfortunately, we're running out of time but before we go, could you please remind us of some of the English words we've heard today?
- Neil:** We heard:
- fast**
 - breaking (a fast)**
 - reward**
 - worship**
 - discipline**
 - in need**
 - to donate**
 - mosque**
 - pray**
 - pilgrimage**
- Rob:** Thank you, Neil. Well that's it for this programme. Please join us soon again for 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English.
- Both:** Bye and Eid Mubarak!

Vocabulary and definitions

fast	period of time without eating
break (a fast)	interruption of the fast by eating food
reward	get something good in return for a good action
worship	follow and show strong respect for a god
discipline	ability to control yourself
in need	poor
to donate	give money or gifts in return for nothing
mosque	Islamic temple
pray	speak to a god in private or in a religious ceremony
pilgrimage	trip to a special place to show respect

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