

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
فَإِذَا بَلَغَ الْأُمَمُ الْأَمَامُ
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"Oh you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may learn righteousness"
(Koran, al-Baqarah, 2:183)

The holy month of Ramadan – one of the holiest periods in the Islamic calendar – commemorates the time when the *Koran* was first revealed to the *Prophet Muhammad* in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, 1,429 years ago. Fasting during Ramadan is one of the five tenets, or pillars, of Islam



Night precedes day in Islamic calendar, and month is either 29 or 30 days long. On night of 30th of Sha'ban, birth of new moon is monitored.

If no moon is seen, next day is considered 30th of Sha'ban – month preceding Ramadan. Same method is used to determine end of Ramadan and arrival of Eid Al Fitr



RAMADAN SPIRIT

Devout Muslims refrain from food, drink, smoking and sex from dawn to dusk. Many spend long hours praying or reading from Koran

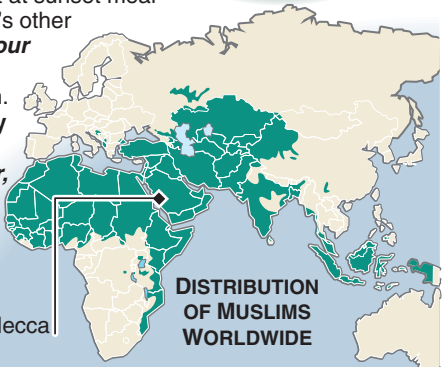
They try to avoid committing sins and show compassion for less fortunate – including tradition of holding banquets for poor Muslims after fasting ends at sunset



TIME FOR FESTIVITIES

Families and friends gather to break fast at sunset meal of *iftar*. Day's other meal – *sohour* – taken just before dawn.

Three-day holiday, Eid al-Fitr, marks end of Ramadan



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