

Fasting

An Islamic perspective on fasting

information • questions • activities • answers



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Some interesting facts...

The Qur'an was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) during the month of Ramadān.

For this reason, Ramadān is the holiest month in the Islamic calendar.

The Qur'an prescribes healthy Muslim adults to fast during Ramadān.

Some interesting facts...

Islamic fasting requires a Muslim to abstain from food and drink, between the hours of sunrise and sunset.

Islamic fasting also requires a Muslim to abstain from:

Cruel thoughts.

Cruel words and actions.

Sexual relations.

Why do Muslims fast in Ramadān?

Fasting is an **act of submission** to Allah.

It draws the believer **closer towards Allah**.

It promotes **self-discipline**.

It makes the believer more aware of **people throughout the world**, who are **hungry and living in poverty**.

A time for giving...

During Ramadān, Muslims give money to poor people and other charitable causes.

Islamic Relief, a faith based humanitarian agency, distributes millions of pounds of charitable donations to those in need, at this time.

To mark the end of Ramadān is a three day festival, **Eid-ul-Fitr**.

Typically at this time, special Eid prayers are offered at the Mosque, families come together and presents are exchanged.

Fasting in Judaism and Christianity

The Qur'an states that the practice of fasting is not exclusive to Islam.

Before the birth of Islam, people of the Book (Jews and Christians), observed periods of abstinence.

“O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for people before you ...”

(Qur'an, chapter 2, verse 183)

What did the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) say about fasting in Ramadān?

'When Ramadān begins, the gates of Paradise are opened.'

(Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 31, Number 12)

'...Whoever fasts in the month of Ramadān out of sincere faith, and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his (her) previous sins will be forgiven.'

(Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 31, Number 125)

What do you think?

How may Ramadān benefit each category ?



What do you think?

In what way is the Islamic period of Ramadān and the Christian period of Lent, similar?



Visit the following websites to find out more about Christian beliefs on fasting:

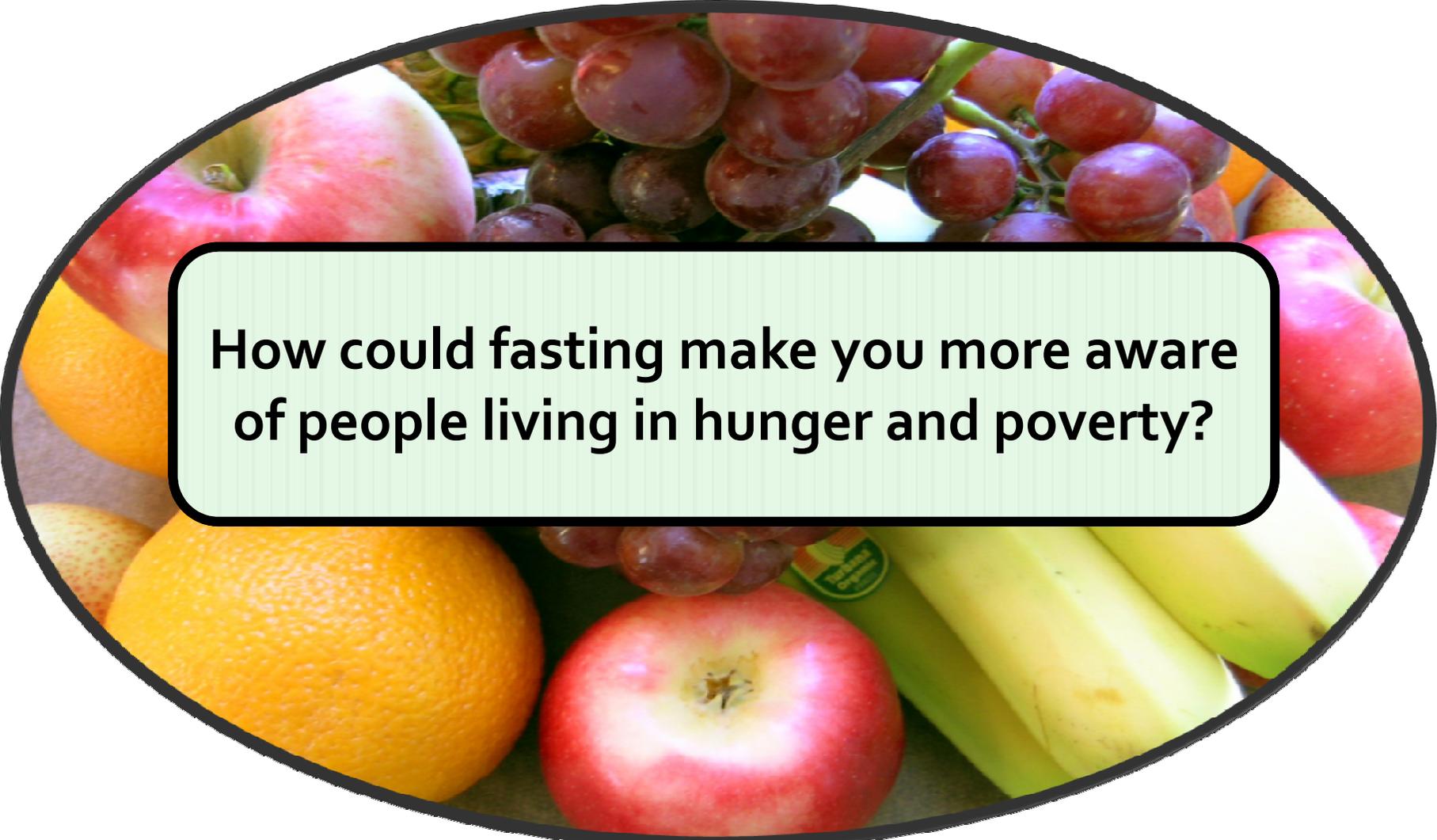
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/holydays/lent_1.shtml
- <http://www.churchyear.net/lent.html>
- <http://www.kencollins.com/holy-04.htm>

What do you think?

**Have you ever given up something dear to you?
How did you feel?**

**Fasting during Ramadān promotes self-discipline.
What are the benefits of strengthening self-discipline?**

What do you think?



How could fasting make you more aware of people living in hunger and poverty?

What could you do?

There are many charities working to alleviate hunger and poverty throughout the world.

Find out more about charities we work with at One World Week:

- ❖ Islamic Relief: <http://www.islamic-relief.org.uk>
- ❖ CAFOD: <http://www.cafod.org.uk/>
- ❖ Muslim Aid: <http://www.muslimaid.org/>
- ❖ Christian Aid: <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/>

Sources:

'The Qur'an / a new translation' (Oxford University Press, 2005)
M.A.S. Abdul Haleem.

University of Southern California, USC – MSC Compendium of Muslim Texts
<http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA>
(June 2009)

'Charity: An Islamic Perspective'

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