

Fasting Thirty Consecutive Days Sunrise to Sunset: Manmade Law or God's Commandment?

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MUSLIMS' BELIEF REGARDING FASTING

A common belief among the Muslims is that they should fast for thirty days from sunrise to sunset during the month of Ramadan. They define their fasting as no food or fluid during the daylight fasting hours.

THE KORAN'S TEACHING ABOUT FASTING

The Koran never commands thirty days of fasting in the month of Ramadan, but rather a few days during this month. This article will attempt to show the real message of the Koran, unaltered by man.

LATEST RESEARCH ON EFFECTS OF THIRTY DAYS OF FASTING

A well documented article (<http://www.alanaragon.com/an-objective-look-at-intermittent-fasting.html>) reports the following:

Ramadan is considered by practicing Muslims to be the most important period of religious observation in the Islamic calendar. In its strictest version, a complete food and fluid fast is undergone from sunrise to sunset (12-16 hours). This routine is carried out daily for a month. Unsurprisingly, traffic accidents peak during this time, alongside a reduction in working hours [Roki, R., et al., 2004]. Traffic injuries are the second major cause of death in the United Arab Emirates, with the bulk of the accidents occurring between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. [Bener, A., et al, 1992]. Research consistently shows a decrease in daytime alertness, mood, and wakefulness during the fasting month of Ramadan [Roki 2004, Bener 1992, Roki 2000, and Roki 2003]. Physical performance – as measured by speed, agility, and

endurance - declined in professional soccer players observing Ramadan [Zerguini, Y., 2007]. Their performance remained low for two weeks post-Ramadan.

Some vital effects of fasting include the following:

- 1) Lower level of activities
- 2) Lower mental output
- 3) High rate of illness
- 4) Weight gain due to overeating at sunset

The above list is much longer than the few examples listed above. However, if fasting for thirty days in the month of Ramadan were prescribed by God in the Koran, then I would not dare say anything against God's commandments.

The Koran has never subscribed to such a law. However, some Muslims blindly follow many rules that have been completely twisted by religious leaders and passed on to the next generation. This fact can be verified easily because the Koran's words are, as it claims, "very easy to understand" (54:22, 44:58), "very clear" (41:3, 43:2, 44:2)," and contain "no ambiguity about its message of guidance" (18:1).

Muslims should note that God wants them to use their minds rather than act blindly in regards to anything:

Koran 8:22 The worst creatures in the sight of God are the deaf and dumb, who do not use their minds.

Furthermore, the Koran adamantly urges Muslims not to follow their fathers' ideologies blindly:

Koran 5:104 When they are told, "Come to what God has revealed, and to the messenger," they say, "What we found our fathers doing is sufficient for us." What if their fathers knew nothing, and were not guided?

MANMADE LAWS HAVE ALWAYS REPLACED GOD'S COMMANDMENTS, CAUSING CHAOS AND TENSION IN THE ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS

Jesus' encounter with religious leaders regarding their traditions as replacing God's commandment is well documented in all four Gospels.

Matthew 15:3 He (Jesus) answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? ... **6** ... Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

Mark 7:8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men- the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." **9** He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.

Moreover, Jesus warns that these religious leaders often create harsh rules and force them on men, but these rules are not from God (similar to changing God's words from a few days' fast to a thirty days' fast in today's world of Islam).

Luke 11:46 And He said, "Woe to you also, lawyers(religious leaders)! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. ... **52** "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."

Prophet Mohammad also encountered Jews and Christians regarding this matter, and God warns them about terrible consequences of this act:

Koran 2:78 Among them are illiterates who do not know the scripture, except through hearsay, then assume that they know it. **79** Therefore, woe to those who write the scripture with their own hands, then say, "This is what God has revealed," seeking a cheap material gain. Woe to them for what their hands do write, and woe to them for their illicit gains.

Koran 3:78 Among them are those who twist their tongues to imitate the scripture, that you may think it is from the scripture, when it is not from the scripture, and they claim that it is

With the above danger of what religious leaders are capable of doing to God's commandment, let us now examine the verses of the Koran regarding fasting.

Here are all the verses of the Koran that prescribe fasting:

Koran 2:183 O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may attain salvation. **184**(Fasting) for a few days; but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed number (Should be made up) from days later. For those who can do it (With hardship), is a ransom, the feeding of one that is indigent. But he that will give more, of his own free will,- it is better for him. And it is better for you that ye fast, if ye only knew. **185** Ramadhan is the (month) in which was sent down the Koran, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (Between right and wrong). Those of you who witness this month shall fast therein, but if anyone is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (Should be made up) by days later. God intends every facility for you; He does not want to put to difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful.

Other verses in the Koran where fasting is talked about in a different context are 2:196; 4:92; (5:89, 95); 33:35; 58:4; 19:26.

Muslim religious leaders try to justify their erroneous assumption of fasting for the whole month of Ramadan with false and incorrect reasoning. They argue that God has assigned the entire month of Ramadan to fasting. They accept the belief of their old teachers who twisted the words of God before themselves. Moreover, they don't dare go against conventional teachings, as this risks and jeopardizes their position.

The religious leaders have no valid evidence to prove their claim that Muslims must fast the whole month of Ramadan. The Koran has stated that there is no ambiguity about it. Having said that the Koran never states that anyone should fast the whole month of Ramadan, it actually says a few days. The Arabic words used are "Ayyaman maAAdoodatin," which means exactly a "few days." In the Persian language, "maAAdoodat" also means "few," and "Ayyam" means days. It is impossible to alter these words to mean from a few days to a whole month.

The Koran claims that it is very clear regarding guidance, and the rule for fasting is not an exception. However, explanations are needed to undo all the manmade laws. The following information will be helpful for one to decide how many days the Koran prescribes fasting.

1) The Koran discusses fasting (2:183) by first making a parallel comparison between fasting in the Koran and fasting in the Bible. It states that fasting is prescribed to you as it was to those before you. Jews and Christian have no such prescribed thirty days of fasting; however, there are many instances in the Bible where one or few days of fasting has been proclaimed.

2) The next verse (2:184) states the fasting is for few days. This “few days” is interpreted by religious leaders as thirty days. So let us look closely to the words used to describe the duration of fasting. The words “few days” in the Arabic language is “Ayyaman maAdoodatin.” These words were never referred to as thirty days anywhere in the Koran, but rather, this phrase has been used in reference to two days. Ironically, these words are used less than 20 verses following the section on fasting. Furthermore, the Koran explains that a few days (“Ayyaman maAdoodatin”) can be two days in the context of doing a pilgrimage during the month that pilgrimage is prescribed:

Koran 2:203 You shall commemorate God for a few days (in Mena); whoever hastens to do this in two days commits no sin, and whoever stays longer commits no sin, so long as righteousness is maintained.

The Arabic words used in the above verse referring to a few days are exactly the same in verse 2:184. This may seem like a lot of time I am spending to explain something that was originally so clear, but the religious leaders did what is described in the below verse:

Koran 3:78 Among them are those who twist their tongues to imitate the scripture, that you may think it is from the scripture, when it is not from the scripture, and they claim that it is

So the words “a few days” are used in verses 184 and 203 of the same chapter of the Koran (chapter two). In addition, the phrase is used in one more place:

Koran 3:24 This is because they said, "The hellfire will not touch us, except for a few days." They were thus deceived in their religion by their own fabrications.

How could these Arabic words “Ayyaman maAdoodatin,” which means simply “a few days,” be translated to represent “five days” (which is the duration of Hajj), and then further, the same words mean thirty days when applied to fasting?

Even more amazing is that the Koran claims that no one can find any contradiction in the Koran:

Koran 4:82 Why do they not study the Koran carefully? If it were from other than God, they would have found in it numerous contradictions.

To summarize the above facts, please note the below table:

In regards to FASTING:	In regards to PILGRIMAGE: (Hajj)
Fasting occurs in a certain month: verse 2:185 .	Hajj occurs a specific month: verse 2:197 .
Fasting must be for a few days: verse 2:184 . Duration is described as “Ayyaman maAdoodatin” (or “few days”).	Hajj must be for a few days: verse 2:203 . Duration is described as “Ayyaman maAdoodatin” (which means a few days).
Fasting should be any three days in the month of Ramadan.	God declares that the duration of pilgrimage (Hajj) is a few days. It is allowed for anyone to take these few days as two days: verse 2:203 .
The laws of sexual conduct are the same during fasting as during the Hajj: verse 2:187 .	The laws of sexual conduct are the same during the Hajj as during the fast: verse 2:197 .

It is mind-boggling for me that the above teachings from the Koran are all stated in the course of 20 verses, one after another, and yet Muslims accept the duration of fasting as completely different from the duration of a pilgrimage. For God to use the exact same words to describe this duration is just amazing. How could so many people be so wrong? The way the Koran’s words describe these guidelines leaves no room for a mistake, but religious leaders of the past changed the original meaning, and today’s religious leaders follow these changes blindly and enforce them harshly.

Thus, it can be seen with this evidence that thirty days’ fasting from sunrise to sunset can hurt Muslims, and it is not prescribed in the Koran, yet no one does anything about it.

Today active Muslims are so dedicated about not missing one fast that they do anything to make sure they complete the thirty days of a fast and not shortchange God even one day. Some even start their fast a few days sooner, while others complete a sixty-day fast.

To leave no doubt in anybody’s mind that God did not make a mistake when He stated in the Koran that “fasting is prescribed to you as it was to Jews and Christians,” let us examine the fasting prescribed in the Bible and see if we find any laws about fasting thirty days consecutively from sunrise to sunset:

2 Chronicles 20:3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

Ezra 8:21 Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions.

Esther 4:15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: **16** "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"

Jeremiah 36:9 Now it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, that they proclaimed a fast before the Lord to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem.

Jonah 3:5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them.

Zechariah 7:4 Then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, **5** "Say to all the people of the land, and to the priests: 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months during those seventy years, did you really fast for Me — for Me?"

Zechariah 8:19 The fast of the fourth month, The fast of the fifth, The fast of the seventh, And the fast of the tenth, Shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts

Matthew 6:16 "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. **17** But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, **18** so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

More verses that discuss fasting in the Bible are Deuteronomy 9:7-21; Nehemiah 1:4, 9:1; Psalm 35:13, 69:10, 109:24; Jeremiah 36:6; Daniel 9:3; Joel 2:12; 2 Chronicles 20:3.

Today in countries like Iran, where no freedom is granted to anybody and all kinds of injustices are done to the people, especially to the women, in the name of Islam, laws like those related to fasting are strictly enforced. The leaders of these manmade laws, Ayatollah Khameni and people like Mr. Ahmadinejad, don't stop at just being wrong about God and His book, the Koran. They enforce these misguided interpretations of the Koran with brutality. This does not shock me, as today's Islam has drifted away from the Koran. If all the Islamic rules were followed according to the Koran, and if all so-called Islamic countries were acting according to the Koran, would the people in these countries suffer so much, for so long?

But even the viciousness and wickedness of these governments don't surprise me. Some Iranians who know their whole country declined from the highest Hakamaneshian dynasty to today's all-time lowest level, willingly follow these manmade laws (i.e., thirty days of fasting). I only get surprised when someone like me brings undisputed evidence from the Koran regarding a given subject, but yet some Muslims turn their backs to it. When did this type of brainwashing

start, and is there ever going to be an end to it? No education can undo years of wrong teachings, unless there be the will to search God's scriptures without man's intervention.

God is love, and today's fanatics that give a bad name to Muslims are anything but love. I can say with certainty that the Iranian government, for example, is not close to being godly. However, living in the U.S.A. for over 30 years, I have seen and experienced so much greatness that to deny the U.S.A. as a meaningful country of God is simply mindless.

In closing, please note three simple examples of going against God and falsely thinking it is for Him:

1) The Iranian government's declaration in regard to glorifying Islam:

"Death to the U.S.A." is a common slogan among fanatics who are losing popularity.

While **God's claim in the Koran is:**

Koran 3:55... I will exalt those who follow you (Jesus Christ) above those who disbelieve, till the Day of Resurrection. ...

2) The Iranian government's declaration in regard to glorifying Islam:

If one does not fast every day of the month of Ramadan, he/she will be punished.

While **God's claim in the Koran is:**

Koran 2:256: "There shall be no force in religion: the right way is now distinct from the wrong way...."

3) The Iranian government's declaration in regard to glorifying Islam:

Kill anyone at any cost to make a point against the U.S.A. and Israel, and this will give the murderer virgins in heaven (supporting Islamic extremists).

While **God's claim in the Koran is:**

Koran 4:29: "O you who believe, do not consume each other's properties illicitly - only mutually acceptable transactions are permitted. You shall not kill one another. God is Merciful towards you. **31** Anyone who commits these transgressions, maliciously and deliberately, we will condemn him to Hell. This is easy for God to do."

I wonder if the above comparisons will ever awaken a single fanatic Muslim. But maybe they already have. I was raised as a fanatic and was fortunate enough to change. I thank God for that.

Everyone is born as a member of humankind, but only a few accept God and die as a kind person. Those who do are promised eternal life (Koran 84:25; Bible: Matthew 22:37-40).