

August, September 2008 -Shaban, Ramadan1429
In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Chairman's Corner

Assalamu alaikum brothers and sisters,

As Ramadan approaches us, I would like to mention a few activities we have planned for our time together both in worship 'ibadah and social gathering. As in years past, with the help of our generous brothers and sisters, we are having daily iftar at the Center. Additionally, there will be sign up sheets posted for those families who wish to sponsor and cook dinner for the community on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. The last Saturday of Ramadan will be reserved for the Board as a community dinner with presentations by the board and children. During the last 10 days there will be increased activities with Qiyam al lail, 'itikaaf and sahoor.

Ramadan is a time of generosity, patience and worship. It is important that we work on not only being on our best behavior, but correcting and resolving to improve on all aspects of our daily lives. Our Center needs your help, both in human and material resources. Please be sure that you treat the Center like you would like your home to be treated. We are guests in Allah's house. Pick up after yourselves, help in the kitchen, dump full garbage cans and sweep and wipe down tables. Don't depend on someone else to do what we should all be doing to gain as much hasanaat in Allah's house as possible. Teach you children to respect and revere His house by being on their best behavior at all times.

May Allah Almighty grant us a blessed and fruitful Ramadan. Amin.

Ramadan Program

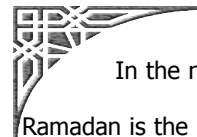
This year the ICCR plans to have a very eventful Ramadan. The success of it, like always, depends on community participation. First off, there will be regular Taraweeh prayer every night after Isha. Monday to Thursday of every week the ICCR will provide iftar for 50 people. Feel free to bring along with you a dish or two if you will. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday are for community sponsored and/or potluck iftar. There is a signup sheet posted on the masjid notice board. Please sign-up for iftar sponsorship if you like. During the last ten nights of Ramadan there will be Qiyam-ul-layl and sahoor at the masjid.

The Imam plans to complete the recitation of the whole Quran during this month by splitting it up among Fajr, Maghrib, Isha, Taraweeh, and Qiyam-ul-layl prayers. There will be regular khatirahs between Taraweeh prayers.



This newsletter is compiled by the Public Relations Committee (PRC) Mohamed Azkalany, Timothy Hyatt, Akif Shaikh, Ridwan Rashid and Mohamed Soliman.

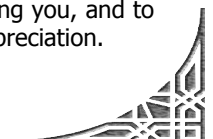
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In the name of Allah

Ramadan is the month during which the Quran was revealed, providing guidance for the people, clear teachings, and the statute book. Those of you who witness this month shall fast therein. Those who are ill or traveling may substitute the same number of other days. GOD wishes for you convenience, not hardship, that you may fulfill your obligations, and to glorify GOD for guiding you, and to express your appreciation.

[2:185]



The Inner Dimensions of Fasting

"O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those who came before you; that you will perhaps be God-fearing." [Al-Qur'an 2:183]

"He who fasts Ramadan, with faith and hoping for reward (from Allah (swt)) then his past sins are forgiven." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

So now you know that fasting is prescribed, its goal is to increase God-consciousness, and its reward is immense. But what is fasting? Is it just staying away from food, drink, and sexual intercourse from dawn till dusk? Well, in essence, fasting is a spiritual training to help you in restraining your desires and refraining from whatever displeases Allah (swt) or distracts from Him. This training in Ramadan is centered on piety (Al-Wara') and abstinence (Az-Zuhd). Al-Wara' means abandoning whatever you fear will have bad consequences for you in the Hereafter (i.e. the prohibited and the doubtful) while, Az-Zuhd, is a station higher than al-Wara'. It means even abandoning whatever does not bring about any benefit in the Hereafter (i.e. over indulgence in the permissible and the vain). [Imam ibn Taymiyyah (ra) as quoted by Ibn Al-Qayyim (ra)]

If you take this training in Ramadan with due sincerity and effort, you will come out a different person. You will be more eager and concerned about the hereafter than this worldly life. You will come to know how worthless this life is in comparison to the hereafter.

"Know that this worldly life is no more than play and games, and boasting among you, and hoarding of money and children... [57:20]

"This world, as compared to the Hereafter, is just like when one of you dips his finger in the sea! Let him see how much water sticks to his finger." (Sahih Al-Jami')

You will now be able to focus your energy on the true life - the life of the hereafter.

Therefore, race towards the forgiveness from your Lord and (towards) a Paradise whose width encompasses the heaven and the earth... [57:21]

Let us take a closer look at abstinence (Az-Zuhd) and Al-Wara'. Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (ra) divides Az-Zuhd into three grades:

1. Avoiding the prohibitions. This is the

Zuhd of the common Muslims. It is an obligation on every Muslim.

2. Abandoning [the doubtful and] overindulgence in the permissible matters. This type is the Zuhd of the distinguished people (the salihien).

3. Abandoning what will busy one from the remembrance of Allah (swt). This is the Zuhd of those who have knowledge in the religion (the anbiya, awliya and the muqarribeen).

Based on this piety and abstinence the fasting has three grades to it as well. Imam Ghazali (ra) describes them for us, "It should be known that there are three grades of Fasting: ordinary, special and extra special.

Ordinary Fasting means abstaining from food, drink and sexual satisfaction. This is the fast of the ordinary Muslim but this is not enough.

Special Fasting means keeping one's ears, eyes, tongue, hands and feet and all other organs free from sin. This is the kind practiced by the salihien (righteous).

Extra-special Fasting means fasting of the heart from unworthy concerns and worldly thoughts, in total disregard of everything but Allah (swt). This kind of fast is broken by thinking of worldly matters, except for those conducive to religious ends, since these constitute provision for the Hereafter and are not of this lower world...To this third degree belong the Prophets (saw), the true Awliya and the muqarribeen (intimates) of Allah (swt)...

'Say, "Allah (sent it down)", then leave them [i.e. the ignorant] to play in their vain discussions.' [al-An'am, 6:91]"

Once during Ramadan al-Hasan al-Basri (ra) passed by a group of people who were laughing merrily (and wasting time in vain). He said, "Allah (swt) has made the month of Ramadan a racecourse, on which His creatures compete in His worship. Some have come in first and won, while others have lagged behind and lost."

So fasting requires more than just abstaining from food, drink, and sex. In fact, there are six inward requirements of fasting as mentioned by Imam Ghazali (ra). These are:

1. Restraining your gaze
2. Controlling your speech
3. Restraining your hearing
4. Restraining limbs and all body organs
5. Avoiding over eating
6. Looking to Allah with Al-Khauf [fear] and

Ar-Rajaa [hope]"

Ibn Al-Qayyim (ra) affirms, "The fasting person's limbs fast from sins; his tongue fasts from lies, base language and false witness; his stomach fasts from food and drink; and his pudenda fast from union. If he speaks, he says nothing to violate his fast; and if he acts, he does nothing to spoil his fast. All his speech is salutary and wholesome, as are his deeds-like the fragrance one smells while sitting next to the bearer of musk. Anyone who sits with a fasting person benefits from his presence and is safe from false witness, lies, base language and wrongdoing. This is the fast prescribed by the Sacred Law, not simply abstinence from eating and drinking. [Al-Wabil al-Sayyib min al-Kalim al-Tayyib]

"When someone does not refrain from speaking falsely and the action that springs from it and from ignorance, God does not need him to refrain from food and drink." [Ibn Majah]

Let us look at each requirement below:

Restrain your gaze from viewing anything that is blameworthy or reprehensible, or that distracts the heart and diverts it from the Remembrance of Allah (swt).

The Prophet (saw) said, "The sneaky glance is one of the poisoned arrows of Satan, on him be Allah's curse. Whoever forsakes it for fear of Allah will receive from Him (swt) a faith the sweetness of which he will find within his heart." [Hakim]

Guard your tongue from idle chatter, lying, gossiping, obscenity, rudeness, arguing and controversy; making it observe silence and occupying it with the



Remembrance of Allah (swt) and with recitation of Quran. This is the fasting of the tongue.

The Prophet (saw) said, "Fasting is a shield; so when one of you is fasting he should not use foul or foolish talk. If someone attacks him or insults him, let him say, "I am Fasting, I am Fasting!" [Bukhari & Muslim]

Close your ears to everything reprehensible; for everything unlawful to utter is likewise unlawful to listen to. That is why Allah (swt) equated the eavesdropper with the profiteer, in His words,

"[They are] avid listeners to falsehood, devourers of [what is] unlawful." [5:42]
"Hearing is a trust and sight is a trust" [Abu Dawud]

Restrain your limbs and organs: Keep the hands and feet away from reprehensible deeds, and the stomach from questionable food at the time for breaking the fast. It is meaningless to fast (i.e. to abstain from lawful food) only to break the fast with what is unlawful.

Lawful food is injurious in quantity not in quality, so fasting is to reduce the former. A person might well give up excessive use of medicine from fear of ill effects, but he would be a fool to switch to taking poison. The unlawful is a poison deadly to religion, while the lawful is a medicine, beneficial in small doses but harmful in excess. The object of fasting is to induce moderation in eating.

People who don't pay attention to these internal requirements of fasting should pay heed to the Prophet's (saw) words:

"How many of those who fast get nothing from it but hunger and thirst!" [Nasai]
Ibn Al-Qayyim (ra) says, "True fasting is when the limbs fast from sin and the stomach fasts from food and drink. As food and drink can break the fast or spoil it, so sins can cut off its reward and spoil its fruits, as if one had not fasted at all." [Al-Wabil al-Sayyib...]

Avoid Over-Indulging in lawful food at the time of breaking the fast, to the point of stuffing one's belly. There is no vessel more hateful to Allah (swt) than a belly stuffed full with lawful food.

"The son of Adam does not fill any vessel worse than his stomach. It is sufficient for the son of Adam to eat a few mouthfuls, to keep him going. If he must fill his stomach, then let him fill one third with food, one third with drink and one third with air." [Tirmidhi]

"The one who eats his fill the most in this world will be hungry for the longest time on the Day of Resurrection." [Tirmidhi]

The sources of all sins are human desires, and the energy to pursue desires comes from food. Proper restraint from overindulgence in food provides control over the nafs (soul) and is a shield against sins. The Prophet (saw) said, "Fasting is a shield" [Bukhari & Muslim]. Too little food weakens the body and reduces its resolve to control desires. Over-eating is well known to cause many physical illnesses. It also causes laziness that leads to complacency in religion. It hardens the heart. He who has his fill for-

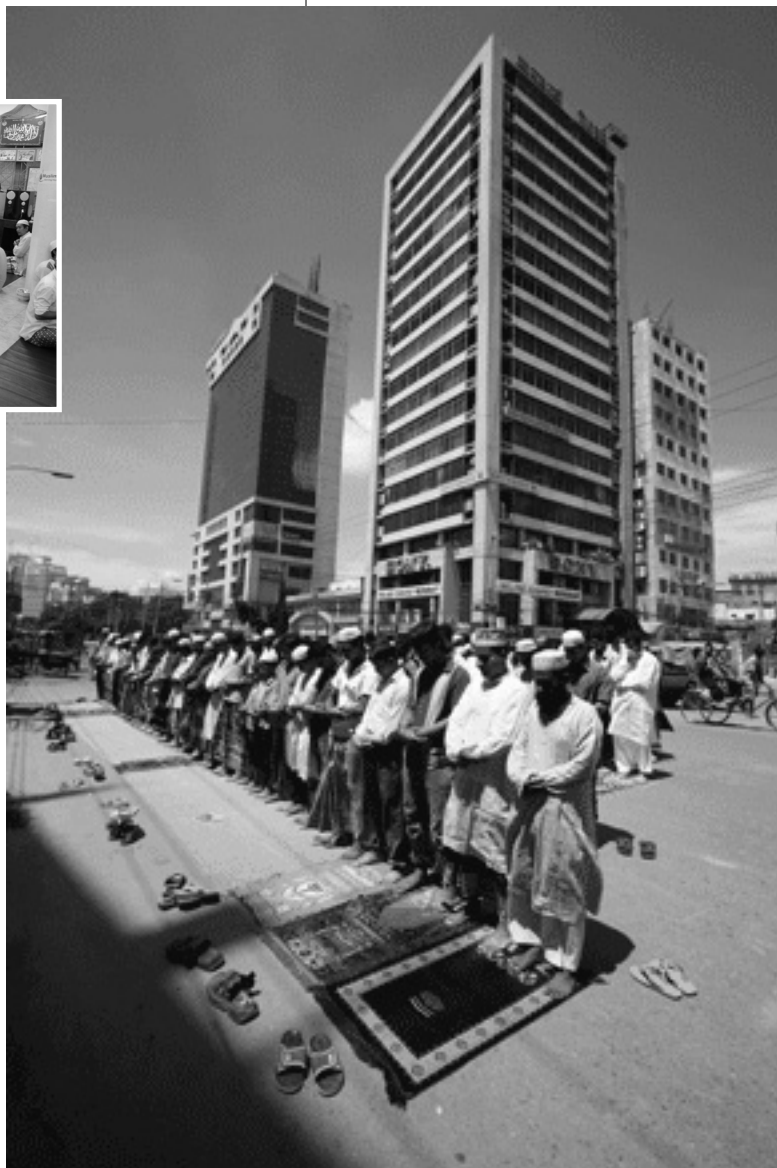
wastes precious time and causes one to miss out on the night prayer. Sleeping little at night, and spending the rest praying to the Lord is the way of the pious.

Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend (charity in Our cause) out of what We have bestowed on them. No soul knows what delight awaits them as the reward for their deeds. [32:16-17]

Look to Allah with Fear and Hope: After the fast has been broken, the heart should swing like a pendulum between fear and hope. For you do not know if your fast will be accepted, if you will find favor with Allah, or whether it will be rejected, leaving you among the losers. This is how you should be at the end of any act of worship you perform.

"...they call on their Lord, in Fear and Hope." [32:16]

And keep praying earnestly, "Our Lord, accept this from us. You are the Hearer, the All-Knowing." [2:127]



gets the one who is hungry and forgets hunger. He grows heedless and thankless till he forgets the One who provides for him. Moderation in food also helps in controlling the sleep. He who eats a lot will drink a lot, and the one who drinks a lot will sleep a lot. And, the one who sleeps a lot misses a lot. Sleeping a lot

Imam's Corner

:: Five Major Social Ills ::

This month's highlight is our Imam's khutbah introducing the five major social ills that Prophet (saw) warned us against. These ills collectively indicate extreme moral degradation of human societies. Societies that will come to be driven by base animal desires and an utter disregard of the Creator. Days marked by the arrogance and ignorance of mankind. Such will be days of widespread diseases, economic difficulties, injustice, internal strife, and foreign occupation. Indeed our time has witnessed all of these signs come true.

The Messenger (saw) said, "O Immigrants! There are five social traits that I seek refuge in Allah from and pray that they never befall upon you.

1) Whenever fornication spread among people to the point that they committed it publicly, diseases that were never experienced by their predecessors spread among them.

2) Whenever people cheated in measure and scale, they suffered from years of hardship, economical difficulties, and injustice from

rulers.

3) Whenever people held back from paying zakaah on their wealth, they were denied rain from the sky and were it not for animals, they would have never received rain.

4) Whenever people violated the covenant with Allah and His Messenger, foreign enemies took control over them and squandered their wealth.

5) Whenever the rulers stopped ruling by the book of Allah, Allah caused internal strife among them.

(Reported in Sunnan Ibn Majah, Musnad Al-Bazzar and Sunnan Al-Baihaqi)

The Imam intends to dedicate five Friday sermons on further expounding on this hadeeth and its relevance to our times. May Allah (swt) protect us from the trials of this life and rectify our affairs for us. *Ameen.*



We are in need of volunteers to help mind the children during Tarawih prayers for the month of Ramadan. Please contact Sister Tima Smejkal or any other Board member if you can manage or share this duty. Thank you and may Allah reward us for our efforts. Timothy Hayat



On Friday July 18 an open discussion forum was held with representatives from FEMA, SBA, the City Council, Chamber of Commerce, and Senator Harkin's office. The forum was about the relief and reconstruction measures undertaken by FEMA, SBA, and the City Council for the affected families. A list of those affected was compiled on the side that grew to about 100 people. The list was forwarded to the Zakat foundation of America to provide aid to the affected.

On Sturday July 26 an open dinner was held at ICCR hosted by Zakat foundation of America to provide aid to Cedar Rapidians affected by the recent catastrophic flooding. Among the distinguished guests were representatives from FEMA, SBA, the City Council, Chamber of Commerce, and Senator Harkin's office. Aid was distributed in cash and clothing to around 100 needy people.



The Islamic Center of Cedar Rapids hosted a Summer Camp that ran from June 23rd till August 7th. The four hour Monday through Thursday program offered Quran, Arabic, Islamic Studies and lots of fun activities. All students were evaluated and placed in their appropriate levels for all classes. Students' progress in this program



was phenomenal. There were four levels of Quran ranging from the small Surahs at the end of Juz Amma to the highest level completing surah al-Mursalat and surah al-

Insan. The students grew tremendously in their Arabic classes. The highest level worked hard on advancing their reading and writing skills. The second highest level began reading from the Quran using correct pronunciation. The third level students began the camp not knowing any of their Arabic letters; by the end of the program they were able to begin reading words from the Quran. The fourth level, which is the youngest students, worked extremely hard at recognizing and remembering all the Arabic letters. By the end of the program, they begin learning the vowels in the Arabic language. The oldest two groups of students were taught Islamic Studies by Imam Ahmed. They covered many topics ranging from the importance of salaah, proper manners, life after death, importance of good deeds, and pleasing your parents, to Prophets Isa, Musa, and Mohammad. The first through third graders Islamic studies program focused on learning how to pray all the five prayers as well as the Sunnah. The pre-k through first graders focused on the importance of good manners, helping other, the creation of

Allah, the five prayers, the pillars of Islam as well as stories of the Prophets.

The activities were organized and directed by a specialized instructor who rotated each activity on a daily basis. The activity program offered all students the opportunity to play basketball, soccer, volleyball, tennis, archery, and the all time favorite 'wall ball'. Every Wednesday all the students were taken on a field trip. Play station and ice skating were a hit, but bowling struck a landslide win by most. The favorite of the youngest two classes was the trip to the farm. The students had a 'hands on' opportunity to learn what happens at a farm. The students were able to brush a horse, feed sheep, collect eggs from the chicken coop and even mill some wool. The best was eating honey that was just collected from a bee hive.

As a culminating activity, the Summer Camp students enjoyed Adventure Land on August 7th. All parents, family members, and friends were welcomed. InshaAllah, all the students benefited from the summer camp. It could not have been done without the devoted and professional staff that dedicated their summer to the betterment of these students. We welcome your feedback to better serve you next time. Have a blessed Ramadan.

Qibla is 45.6 degrees (From North Clockwise)

Day	Sep/Hijri	Sahoor	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhuhr	Asr	Maghrib	Isha
Mon	1	5:09	5:14	6:32	1:07	4:48	7:40	9:00
Tue	2	5:10	5:15	6:33	1:07	4:47	7:38	8:58
Wed	3	5:11	5:16	6:34	1:06	4:46	7:37	8:56
Thu	4	5:13	5:18	6:36	1:06	4:45	7:35	8:54
Fri	5	5:14	5:19	6:37	1:06	4:44	7:33	8:52
Sat	6	5:14	5:19	6:37	1:06	4:44	7:33	8:52
Sun	7	5:16	5:21	6:39	1:05	4:41	7:30	8:49
Mon	8	5:18	5:23	6:40	1:05	4:40	7:28	8:47
Tue	9	5:19	5:24	6:41	1:04	4:39	7:26	8:45
Wed	10	5:20	5:25	6:42	1:04	4:38	7:25	8:43
Thu	11	5:21	5:26	6:43	1:04	4:37	7:23	8:41
Fri	12	5:23	5:28	6:44	1:03	4:36	7:21	8:39
Sat	13	5:23	5:28	6:44	1:03	4:36	7:21	8:39
Sun	14	5:24	5:29	6:45	1:03	4:35	7:19	8:37
Mon	15	5:26	5:31	6:47	1:02	4:32	7:16	8:33
Tue	16	5:27	5:32	6:48	1:02	4:31	7:14	8:32
Wed	17	5:28	5:33	6:49	1:02	4:30	7:12	8:30
Thu	18	5:30	5:35	6:50	1:01	4:29	7:11	8:28
Fri	19	5:31	5:36	6:51	1:01	4:28	7:09	8:26
Sat	20	5:32	5:37	6:52	1:00	4:27	7:07	8:24
Sun	21	5:32	5:37	6:52	1:00	4:27	7:07	8:24
Mon	22	5:34	5:39	6:54	1:00	4:24	7:04	8:20
Tue	23	5:35	5:40	6:55	12:59	4:23	7:02	8:19
Wed	24	5:36	5:41	6:56	12:59	4:22	7:00	8:17
Thu	25	5:38	5:43	6:57	12:59	4:20	6:58	8:15
Fri	26	5:39	5:44	6:58	12:58	4:19	6:57	8:13
Sat	27	5:40	5:45	6:59	12:58	4:18	6:55	8:11
Sun	28	5:40	5:45	6:59	12:58	4:18	6:55	8:11
Mon	29	5:41	5:46	7:00	12:58	4:17	6:53	8:09
Tue	30	5:43	5:48	7:03	12:57	4:14	6:50	8:06



IQAMA TIMES

Monday	Fajr	Dhuhr	Asr	Maghrib	Isha
9/01/08	5:30 AM	1:30 PM	5:00 PM	5 min after sunset	9:15 PM
9/08/08	5:45 AM	1:30 PM	5:00 PM	5 min after sunset	9:00 PM
9/15/08	5:45 AM	1:30 PM	4:45 PM	5 min after sunset	8:45 PM
9/22/08	6:00 AM	1:30 PM	4:30 PM	5 min after sunset	8:30 PM
9/29/08	6:00 AM	1:30 PM	4:30 PM	5 min after sunset	8:30 PM



Q. Is there any special worship or celebration during the nights of Isra wal Me'raj and middle of Sha'baan (shab-e-baraat)?

Imam Ahmad: There is no special sunnah or celebration for these two nights. It is only a cultural practice that is followed in some Muslim countries that they celebrate these nights and do special worship in them. There is no real benefit in these two nights. The real benefit is in the month of Ramadan, the night of Al-Qadr, the last ten nights of Ramadan, first ten days of Zul-Hijjah, the day of Arafah, the day of Aashoora and in fasting voluntarily on every Monday and Thursday and on the 12th, 13th, and 14th of every lunar month. You can make voluntary fasts and Qiyam at night whenever you like, but to single out a particular day or night for worship requires evidence from the Quran and Sunnah. This knowledge is a trust of Allah with me and I have to be honest with you about it.

Q. Can we continue eating suhoor even after the azaan or time of fajr?

Imam Ahmad: It is not allowed for the Muslims to eat after hearing the Athaan or knowing that the time of Fajr has entered or even during the time of Athaan. You have to stop immediately for the sake of Allah (swt). Prophet Muhammad (saw) used to have two Muazzins during the month of Ramadan. Bilal made the first Athaan before the time of Fajr to wake up the people for Suhoor. Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktoom gave the second Athaan for the people at the time of fajr so that people could stop eating Suhoor. As soon as the sahaabah, women, and children heard Abdullah say "Allahu Akbar" they would stop eating. This is the reason why some Islamic countries make special announcements via sirens for imsak. That is usually done 10-15 minutes before the Athaan to make people stop eating and be on the safe side. Personally I agree with this. Kindly follow the Suhoor timetable that ICCR has printed for the month of Ramadan. It tells you when to stop eating your Suhoor.