



## Ramadan in the Workplace

A Guide for UAE Organisations, Employees and Global Employers

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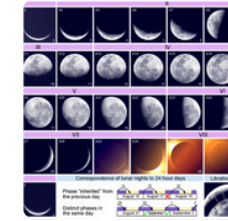


# Understanding Ramadan

Ramadan is a sacred month of the Islamic Calendar, observed by Muslims worldwide through fasting, prayer and reflection.

Ramadan marks the month in which the Quran (the holy book of Islam) was revealed.

This year, Ramadan will run from the **Evening of Friday 28th February 2025** to **Sunday 30th March 2025**.

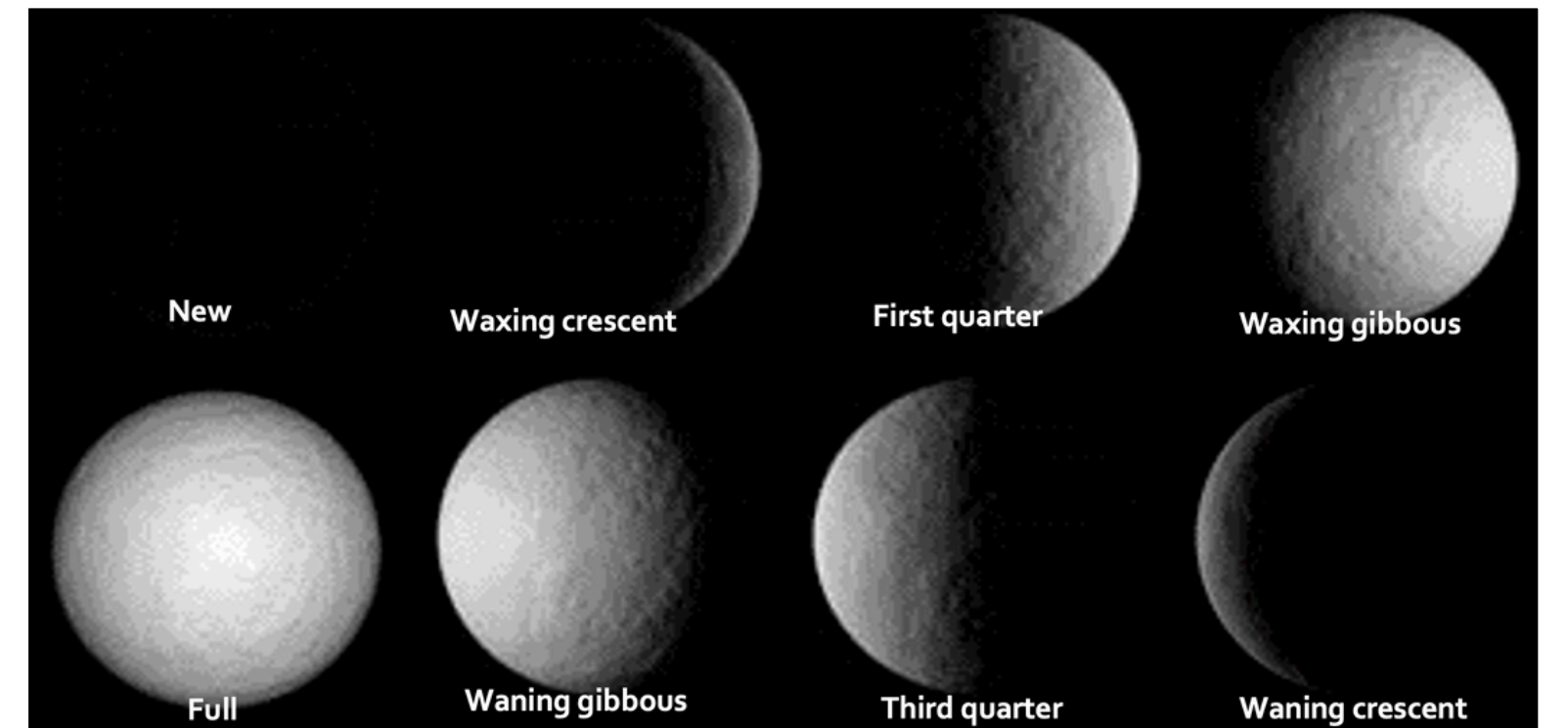


Ninth month of the Hijri calendar (Lunar calendar)

Ramadan is an Arabic word; its root "Ar-Ramad" means "dryness/heat."

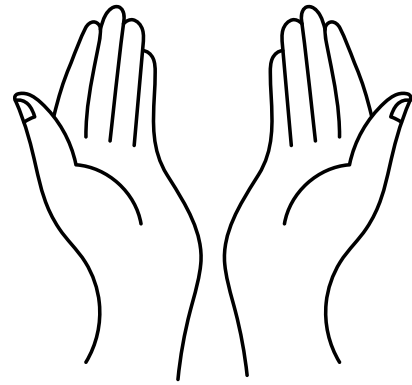


The Lunar calendar is 11-12 days shorter than Gregorian calendar. Therefore, Ramadan is 10-11 days earlier every year.



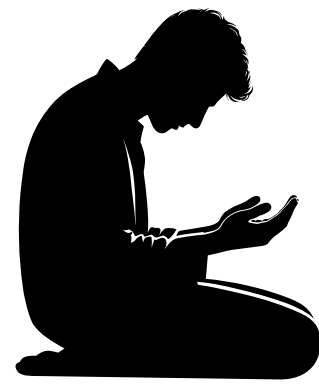
# The Significance of Ramadan

The 4th of the 5 pillars of Islam



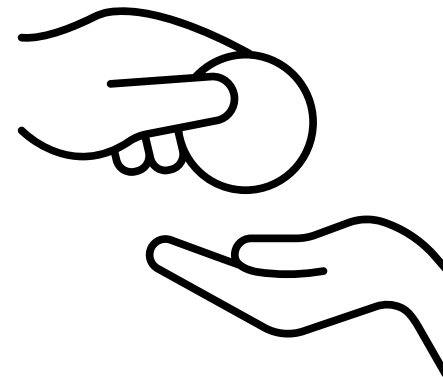
## Shahadah

Declaration of faith



## Salah

Daily (5) prayers



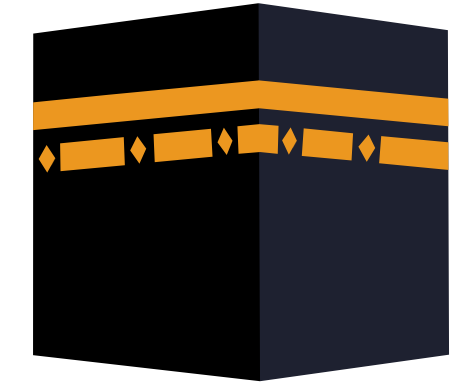
## Zakat

Purification of wealth (2.5% of annual savings go to the poor)



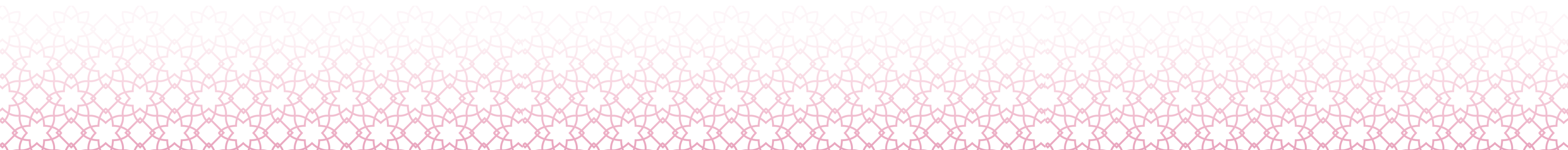
## Siyam

Fasting during Ramadan is obligatory to all adult Muslims except those who are exempt



## Hajj

Pilgrimage to Makkah, for those who are physically and financially able



# Why Do Muslims Fast During Ramadan?

## Primary Objective

To attain taqwa “God consciousness” / self-discipline.

Taqwa is an Arabic word that comes from the root “wīqāya” which means prevention/protection.



## Spiritual Benefits

Helps Muslims draw closer to God through increased recitation and reflection of the Qur’an and additional prayers/worship.

Aids in increase of iman (faith) and ihsan (sincerity and righteousness) and removal of riyya’ (showing off).

Aids in purification of the heart/soul and helps to improve one’s character.

Trains the person to do praiseworthy acts e.g. charity, kindness, generosity, patience and forgiveness.

## Physical Benefits

A fasting person experiences some of the hardships of the poor and hungry.

Physiological effects include lowering of blood sugar, cholesterol and systolic blood pressure.

Improves strength, endurance and self-discipline through physical abstentions.



# What Is Fasting?

## Primary Objective

Refrain from food, drink and intimacy during fasting hours.

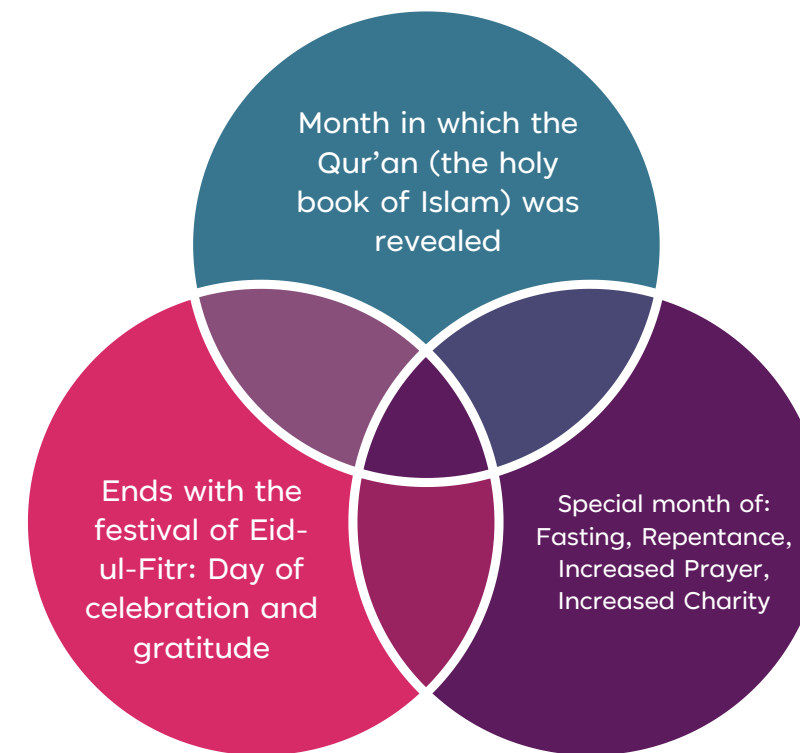
Depending on location and season, it can vary from 12hrs to 17hrs.

## Spiritual Aspect

Refrain from blameworthy thoughts and acts e.g. foul language, vain talk, hurtful behaviour, during all hours.

## Who Fasts?

All Muslims except children, unhealthy adults (mentally or physically), adults travelling long distances, and women who are menstruating, in post-childbirth care, pregnant or breast-feeding.



# A Typical Day for a Muslim During Ramadan



## SAHOOR

Meal before dawn and the first prayer of the day

## ZIARAT

Social gatherings e.g. visiting relatives, sharing food with neighbours, friends, and the poor

## QIRAAT

Reading of the Qur'ān during free time

## IFTAR

Breaking of the fast at sunset (coincides with the 4th daily prayer)

## TARAWIH

Optional Prayers at early night (20-21hrs\*)

## QIAM

Optional late-night prayers in the last 10 days (02-04hrs\*)

# Working With Muslim Colleagues

## 1. Try not to invite Muslim colleagues to:

- meetings which include lunch
- meetings extending after 5pm
- department parties (or social events) during Ramadan

## 2. Be understanding that it is the most special month in a Muslim's calendar.

## 3. It is common to take vacation during the last week of Ramadan.

## 4. Eid Day is a public holiday.

4. Greeting colleagues saying "Ramadan Kareem" and "Ramadan Mubarak" (Blessed Ramadan) is nice way to cross into a new culture.

5. If invited to share Iftar, try to make it... it will be fun!







# Ramadan Etiquette - Do's and Don'ts



Do	Don't
<p>You may have tea, coffee, water at your desk (if company allows and fasting colleagues are okay with this, alternatively there may be designated areas for coffee and drinks)</p>	<p>Refrain from eating in front of your Muslim colleagues/clients and do not eat or drink out on the streets/in the car or smoke in public</p>
<p>Be patient with those who are fasting, who may be short tempered due to lack of sleep, food and drink</p>	<p>While swearing, violence and anger are already not permitted within the office such actions are particularly insulting to Muslims during Ramadan</p>
<p>Modest dress and behaviour are encouraged for all</p>	<p>As Ramadan is a holy month, ladies are advised to refrain from wearing revealing attire</p>
<p>Non-Muslim employees may attend business lunches</p>	<p>Muslim employees should not be required to attend business lunches</p>

**During the month of Ramadan, be considerate and supportive to Muslims around you.**

**For further information, visit: [Ramadan UAE Government](#)**

# Eid-ul-Fitr

**Eid-ul Fitr** - The feast marking the end of the month of Ramadan, with celebrations, charity and prayers.

**Zakat-ul Fitr** - A prescribed amount of money obligatory on every Muslim, calculated to feed one poor person in his region for one day.

## Eid activities include:

- Eid prayer in the morning
- Visiting family, friends, neighbours, the sick, elderly etc
- Enjoying festive meals
- Modest gift giving especially to children
- The greeting on that day is “**Eid Mubarak**”.



# Additional Islamic Etiquette - Appropriate Attitude

- ❖ Show a high respect to Islam, the ruling families and the local traditions.

It is essential to understand that the Middle East social society is strictly made up of two separate groups: Men and Women. They do not usually intermingle at social or public gatherings such as weddings and some occasions.

- ❖ At all times, bear in mind that public display of affection is socially unacceptable and against the law.

- ❖ Be polite by shaking hands when meeting people and standing up when greeting others.

- ❖ Use your right hand not only to greet someone, but also to take, give, or accept something.

- ❖ Make sure to get permission before entering a mosque, unless you are a Muslim and take your shoes off.

- ❖ Be careful to be dressed conservatively on any occasion.



# Additional Islamic Etiquette - Socially Non-Compatible

- ❖ Interrupt, or pass in front of a Muslim who may be praying in public place - Be vigilant wherever you are.
- ❖ During Ramadan, play loud music at any time in your car, around town or even at home. If it is audible to others, it may offend. Adjust your habits during this holy month.
- ❖ Ask a lady for directions or instructions if she is accompanied by her husband. Ask her husband instead to avoid offending the lady.
- ❖ Do not take offence if people refuse to shake your hand, they will generally hold their hand to their heart upon greeting. Make every effort to adapt to this religious practice.
- ❖ Never take a picture of a Muslim woman without permission.
- ❖ Do not take photographs of governmental facilities as this can be frowned upon. It is illegal to take photos of any defence facilities, which are scattered throughout the city.

- ❖ Although pork meat is not illegal in the UAE, keep in mind to adapt your dishes when you host a dinner.
- ❖ Never offer alcoholic drinks to a Muslim, unless you are certain that they drink alcohol. In addition to the dangers of the alcohol consumption, this can cause great offence; and do not drink alcoholic beverages unless you are at a licensed place.
- ❖ Taking any substances is strictly forbidden and will result in dramatic effect (Police, criminal offence).
- ❖ If you are travelling and under medication, you should carry with you a copy of your prescription.
- ❖ Wearing swimwear in the streets and malls is unacceptable; keep it only for beaches and pools.



# Workplace Considerations During Ramadan

## UAE Labour Law Requirements:

As per UAE Labour Law, working hours are reduced by 2 hours per day during Ramadan for all employees, regardless of religion. This applies across both the private and public sectors.

Employers cannot enforce longer hours, even if the employee is not fasting.

However, there are exceptions in the DIFC (Dubai International Financial Centre) and ADGM (Abu Dhabi Global Market) where reduced hours are granted only to fasting employees.

As per **Article 15 (2) of Cabinet Resolution No.1 of 2022**, “Subject to the provisions of Article 17 of the Employment Law, the regular working hours shall be reduced by two hours during the holy month of Ramadan.”

**For 2025, public sector working hours have been confirmed as:**

- Monday to Thursday: 9:00am - 2:30pm
- Friday: 9:00am - 12:00pm

Ramadan holds deep cultural and spiritual significance in the region, offering a time for reflection, generosity, and togetherness with family and friends. It is important to uphold these traditions while respecting the law and being considerate of those observing the month.

# Workplace Considerations During Ramadan

## Global Best Practices:

Encourage flexible, staggered work hours or remote options to accommodate fasting employees.

Avoid scheduling critical meetings or events early in the morning or late in the afternoon when energy levels are lower.

Encouraging cultural awareness in international workplaces.



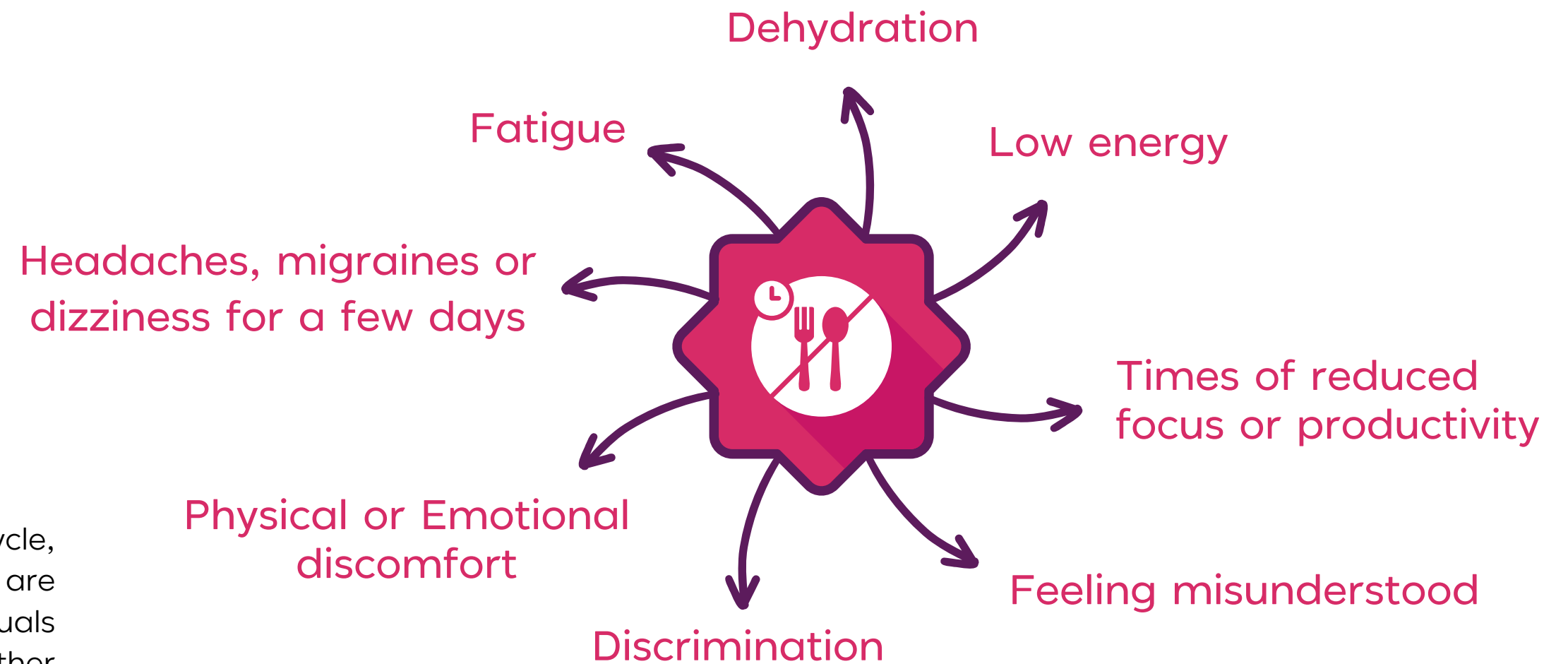
# The Ramadan Effect

‘The Ramadan Effect’ reflects the changes and challenges that fasting brings to both Muslim employees and their workplace.

Muslims in the workplace often appreciate support during Ramadan, especially understanding of their experiences. While fasting affects everyone differently, the following impacts are commonly seen in the workplace:

Being mindful of these factors and offering the right support can benefit both employers and employees, as Ramadan brings positive impacts that can enhance workplace productivity and unity.

**Note:** Pregnant women, those on their menstrual cycle, experiencing postnatal bleeding, or breastfeeding are exempt from fasting. Exemptions also apply to individuals who are traveling, unwell, elderly, or facing other challenging circumstances.



# Supporting Employees During Ramadan

## For Fasting Employees:

- Encourage hydration and self-care during Suhoor (pre-dawn meal) and Iftar (breaking of fast).
- Allow adjustments in workload and scheduling where possible.

## For Non-Fasting Employees:

- Be considerate by avoiding eating, drinking, or smoking in front of fasting colleagues.
- Understand and respect religious commitments and changes in energy levels.

## Promoting Wellbeing and Inclusivity:

- Provide designated prayer areas.
- Educate teams on cultural awareness and religious observance.





# Practical Steps for Employers

## HR and Leadership Training

Train managers to be sensitive to the needs of fasting employees, including changes in energy levels and concentration.

Encourage open communication to discuss individual needs during Ramadan.

## Prioritise Workload

Help managers identify essential tasks and adjust deadlines to reduce stress on employees.

Delegate non-urgent tasks or reschedule high-pressure deadlines after Ramadan.

## Foster Team Understanding

Encourage managers to educate teams about Ramadan and the significance of fasting to promote cultural awareness and respect.



# Ways to Support and Participate in Ramadan as a Colleague

## Host a Fast-a-Thon

Organise a **Fast-a-Thon** to experience fasting and show solidarity with Muslim colleagues.

## Ways to Take Part

There are different ways to get involved:

- ✓ Try fasting for a day
- ✓ Drink water but skip meals
- ✓ Use lunch breaks to reflect and learn about Ramadan
- ✓ Donate the cost of a meal to charity

## Show Support

Create a space (e.g. chat group) for participants to share experiences and offer encouragement throughout the day.

## Join Iftar

Break the fast together at sunset to experience Iftar, the meal marking the end of the fasting day.

## Reflect and Engage

Encourage conversations after the Fast-a-Thon to share insights and experiences, fostering greater understanding and inclusion.

## Get Involved!

Whether you take part by fasting, learning, or supporting your colleagues, your involvement makes a difference. Speak to your team, start a conversation, and help create a more inclusive workplace this Ramadan!



# Quick Ramadan

## Do's and Don'ts for Organisations

Do	Don't
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Provide flexibility where feasible to those who are fasting with their work schedules</li><li>2. Show empathy and respect for fasting employees</li><li>3. Provide quiet spaces for prayer</li><li>4. Offer greetings such as <b>“Ramadan Kareem”</b> or <b>“Ramadan Mubarak”</b></li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Do not eat, drink, or smoke in front of fasting employees</li><li>2. Avoid scheduling social events involving food during fasting hours</li><li>3. Refrain from making assumptions about who is fasting and who isn't</li></ol>



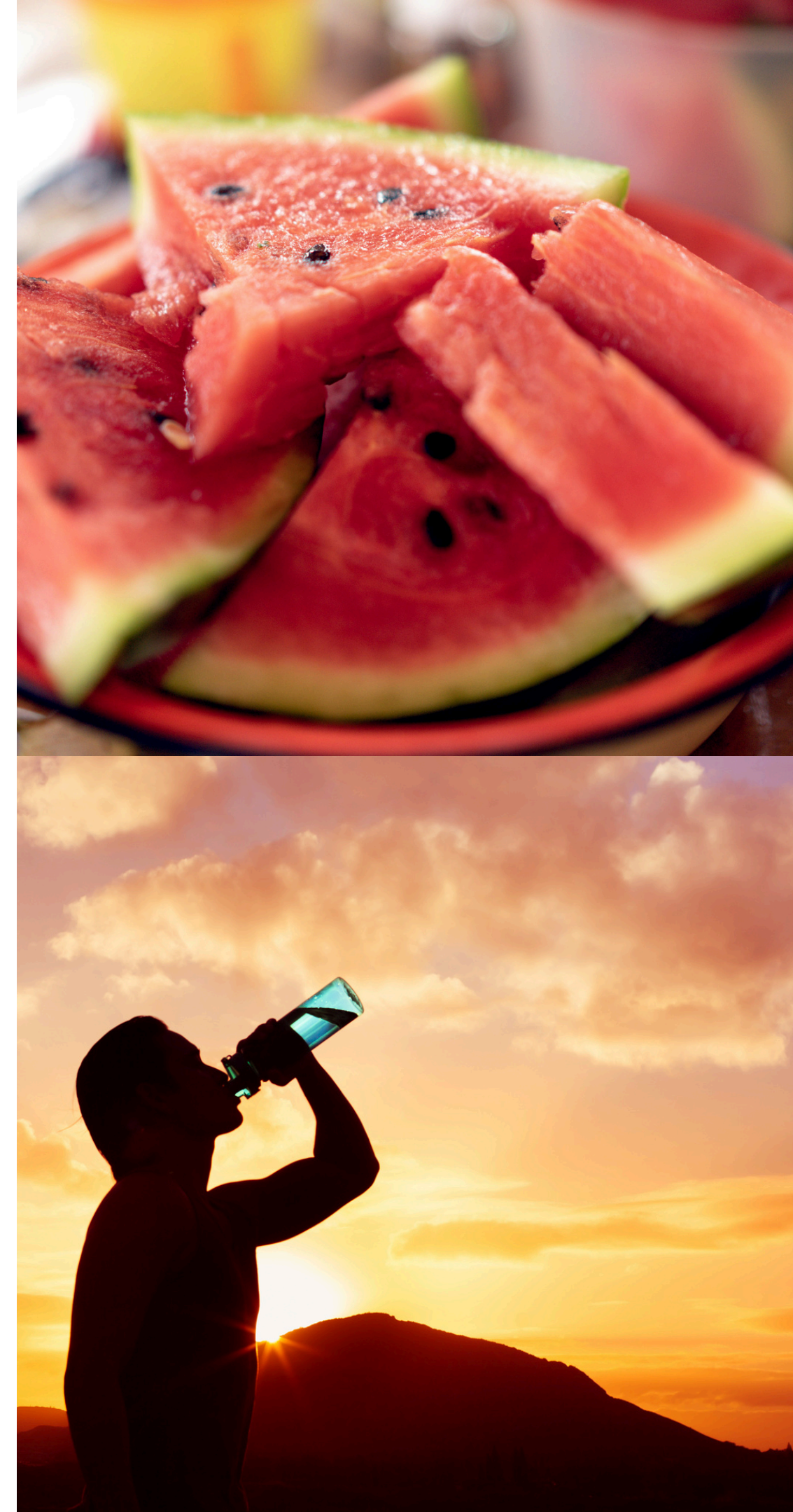
# A Final Tip From a Nutritionist

## To all Muslim colleagues

### Stay Hydrated - Beyond Just Water

Fasting for long hours can leave you dehydrated, leading to fatigue, headaches, and sluggish digestion. Water alone may not be enough to replenish lost minerals.

- **Electrolytes:** Consider adding natural electrolytes like coconut water or a pinch of sea salt to your drinks at Suhoor and Iftar. Or look into a good electrolyte supplement like Viridian Electrolyte Fix.
- **Hydrating Fruits:** Cucumbers, watermelon, oranges, and papaya hold extra water and minerals to support hydration.
- **Make Smart Choices:** Skip salty foods. Try soaked chia seeds in almond milk, almonds, and fresh fruit to stay hydrated and energised longer.





## A new skyline for HR Outsourcing

This guide aims to help managers, employees, and organisations navigate Ramadan with respect and empathy while maintaining workplace harmony and productivity.

By fostering an inclusive environment, organisations can support their diverse workforce while aligning with the UAE's labour laws and global best practices.

For expert guidance and personalised HR support, contact ReformHR today. **Scan the QR code to find out more.**

**Have a blessed month, Ramadan Kareem!**

**Website:** [www.reformhr.com](http://www.reformhr.com)

