

Shadhiliyya Community Bulletin

August 2008

Edition # 5

Please forward this Bulletin to your community list serves, and print and distribute at zhikrs. Thank you.



Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

As-Salaam 'Alaykum beloveds,

Warm Greetings once again from the Communication Circle! We are happy to bring you this special **Ramadan** bulletin and hope you will find this information helpful as you prepare to observe this holy month.

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Come and join us! Do you like to have fun, be creative and serve Allah and your community all at the same time? You're in luck! The Communication Circle is currently open to new members! To join, contact noorupshaw@gmail.com with subject "subscribe to comcircle."

Credits

This Newsletter is brought to you by your Communication Circle:

Wahida Kass Rifqa Quereau
Ihsan Rose Mahabba Smith
Noor Upshaw Sa'id Kelleher
Mahabba Stuart Muniba Harlow
Ahmed Kehoe Maryam Banville

E-mail: share@suficenter.org

Web site:

comcircle.nexo.com/shadhiliyyacommunityforum

First, some exciting news!

The new website is now live, subhan'allah!

While still very much a work in progress, we hope you will visit suficenter.org to see it, and let us know what you think.

And now... ***This Month's Bulletin***

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

**O you who truly believe!
Fasting is prescribed for you,
Even as it was prescribed for those before
you,
In order that you may practice true
devotion.
(Qur'an 2:183)**

Ramadan begins with the sighting of the new moon, which this year is expected to be around September 1st or 2nd.

Join us for Ramadan! Ramadan is a beautiful practice that helps us deepen our spirits, quiet and clean the body, and celebrate with our communities. We feel solidarity with the poor, and get to know one another better. It is a time of deep purity, reflection, and festivities. A time of coming together.

In its essence, Ramadan teaches us how to see only Allah in everything, and to clean our nafs from bad habits or old patterns. If you cannot fast a full day, then give to the poor, or sacrifice something to honor the special time. Everyone can participate in the deep meaning of Ramadan, the training of leaving the world for a time, watching our tongues, hands, and hearts, and putting our eyes on Allah, as a community. Jump in!

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله

Fasting During Ramadan

Ramadan is a special month to be with your God in everything, to be in the station of *la ilaha ila'llah*. There is great blessing in fasting during the month of Ramadan, and the time is made special by God. The fasting in Ramadan is to refrain from eating or drinking from dawn to sunset. A meal is often taken before dawn, and a feast prepared for after the sun has set. Celebration and communal gatherings are common in the evenings.

The daily fast begins at fajr prayer with setting the intention to perform the fast. The believer fasts not only from food and drink, but also from sexual activity and smoking, and overly stimulating the senses. The fast ends each day at sunset, and the intention is made again the next day. Ramadan helps us to understand the luxuries we normally have, and teaches purification, renewal, and an understanding of the suffering of the hungry.

New to the path? Never fasted before?

For those who have not fasted before it may seem like a daunting practice. However, Allah helps us greatly at this time, and support from the entire community of believers carries us so that we feel deeply blessed, and even sad when the month comes to an end. We encourage you to talk with your local teachers and to make the commitment to fast and deepen your practices in some way this year. The benefits to your walking will be tangible and lasting!

Ramadan Spiritual Practices

Ramadan is a holy time to draw nearer to Allah, and there are many practices that are included this month (see below).

Special prayers, such as tarawih and witr, are added after the evening prayers, and for some, into the night.

It is customary to **listen to or read Qur'an** each morning. Muslims try to read a thirtieth of the book each day.

It is a blessing to **participate with others** as much as possible. Try to break fast with brothers and sisters, eat in community, host evening dinners and prayers, and help with the end of the month celebration and feast.

During the day, **try to be polite**, and stay away from negative thoughts and words as much as possible.

The last ten days of the month is a **time of retreat**. Many evenings are spent in remembrance. Lailat-l-Qadr, the Night of Power, falls during this time.

You can join Sidi, inshallah, for some of this holy time at the Mother Center in Pope Valley, during the 10-day Ramadan retreat, September 21-October 1. Shaykh Nooruddeen, Hadja Nura and Amr will be present the whole 10 days. [Click here to Register.](#)



Zakat (Charity)

Zakat is a very important part of Ramadan. It is the time of year that we remember the poor and give a portion of what we have to them. Zakat means to purify, to cleanse. It is most beneficial to make your zakat at the very beginning of Ramadan.

Not everyone is asked to perform zakat, since zakat is paid only on what we have in excess. We are asked to give 2.5% of what we have in excess. Generally this refers to wealth we

have had in our continuous possession for over one year, but look inside your hearts. In Islam, it is considered that we hold a portion of our money in trust for the poor. That it is not really ours, but theirs. In this way we are not so much giving, but passing on what Allah entrusted us with for them. Zakat goes to those who are in need, giving them hope and creating balance.

Sadaqa, charitable donations, are what we give over and above zakat. Sadaqa is the good deed which expresses the beauty of our giving. Sadaqa includes the steps we take to go to jumu'ah, our smiles, and helping others. We perform sadaqa for ourselves. We perform zakat for our souls.

Zakat payments may be made directly to Sidi at the Shadduli Center, 418 Buena Tierra Drive, Woodland, CA 95695 (make check out to "Shadduli Center") OR sent to the Shadhiliyya Sufi Center, PO Box 100, Pope Valley, CA 94567 (make checks out to SSC and note "zakat" on the check.)

All *zakat* is collected and then distributed to the poor by Sidi.

Please contact a local community leader to pay zakat-al-fitr at 'Eid (the feast after Ramadan ends).

History of Ramadan

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. Because the Islamic calendar is lunar, Ramadan moves through the years. The fast of Ramadan was patterned after the Jewish tradition of fasting, and is a practice that many of the prophets taught.

The Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings be upon him, first received the revelation of the Qur'an during the month of Ramadan.

The month of Ramadan is referred to as the quiet month of Allah and of the worshipful servant. It was given this name because it burns away sins. Ramadan is like water (ar-ramad means "rain") that comes to wash away

sins from the physical body, allowing our hearts to feel purified.

The five Arabic letters in the word Ramadan have special meaning:

ra - Allah's good pleasure

min - Allah's considerate and favorable disposition

dad - Allah's assurance of spiritual reward

alif - Allah's intimate affection and nearness

nun - Allah's radiant light.

This means that Ramadan is the month of considerate behavior, giving of assurance, sharing of intimate affection, shedding of light, bestowal of benefits, and generous respect for the righteous.



Lailat al Qadr (Night of Power)

The beginning of the revelation of the Qur'an occurred during one of the last ten days of Ramadan, call the Night of Power (lailat al-qadr), the holiest night in the Islamic calendar. The Qur'an was sent down from the Tablet to this lower world to the angel Gabriel on lailat al-qadr. After that it was sent down during a period of 23 years. The time of the initial sending is called the Night of Power to proclaim the immensity of the Night itself.

When the Night of Power arrives, the angels come down in succession from the time of the setting of the sun until the rising of dawn. Allah commands the Spirit, meaning Jibril, to go down accompanied by a host of angels. They disperse in all directions glorifying the Lord and begging forgiveness for believers.

He says to each believer on the earth:

"If you are in a state of worship, peace be upon you in the form of the approval and favor you deserve!"

If you are in a state of sin, peace be upon you in the form of forgiveness!

If you are in a state of sleep, peace be upon you in the form of contentment!

If you are in the grave or the tomb, peace be upon you in the form of refreshment and sweet perfume!"

Watch for an email announcement about when Lailat-I-Qadr will be this year. The date will be posted on the website, as well -- www.suficenter.org.

Feel Free to Join In!

We hope this primer on Ramadan helps you to feel comfortable participating. As you can see, there are many ways to include yourself in this wonderful time of year. For more information, watch your brothers and sisters, or speak with your local teachers, or visit the website at www.suficenter.org.

We hope you have a very blessed Ramadan.

Ramadan Mubarak!

Ramadan Resources

Sidi teaches about Ramadan, zakat, spiritual sacrifice and the inside meaning of fasting in [The Deeper Meaning Behind the Pillars of Islam](#). He answers questions on this subject in [Fruits from the Tree of Life](#) and [Conversations in the Zawiya](#). Additional details on Ramadan practices and teachings can be found on the website (www.suficenter.org) and from your local teachers.

Your Support is Needed

Please consider donating a monthly gift (sadaqa) to the Shadhiliyya Sufi Center to support communications like this. Any amount -- \$10 - \$25 - or more -- a month will make a difference in enabling us to serve you and share the Religion of Unity. Thank you.

[You can download a pledge form from the web.](#)

Ma'a Salaam

