

On Fasting for Muslims in the Month of Ramadan

FASTING (*siyaam*) in the month of Ramadan for Muslims is well known throughout the world. Regarding the sighting of the Ramadan moon, Prophet Muhammad (s) said: "Fast when you see (the crescent) and break the fast when you see (the next crescent). If you are not able to see it (because of the clouds), complete the thirty days of Sha'ban." Muslims welcome this sacred month with a view to fulfilling the obligations imposed by Allah by undergoing a strict discipline for body and mind. Fasting in the month of Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. Allah prescribed Fasting for mankind before the time of Prophet Muhammad (s). In the Quran, Allah says: "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that you may ward off (evil)." (*sura Baqara* 2:183). The obligatory duty of Fasting, has no parallel in the manner of its performance in other religions. It is an obligatory duty upon all-abled Muslim men and women who are not sick nor on journey, which makes it difficult for them to keep fast. "Whoever of you is present, let him fast the month, and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey (let him fast the same number of other days)." (*sura Baqara* 2:185). It is not obligatory for a woman to fast who is in her menstruation or in confinement although she is required to complete them later. A person who is unable to keep fast due to the permitted reasons, should complete his fast in other times as soon as the opportunity arises so that he may comply with the commands of Allah. If it is very difficult and burdensome upon a person to keep fast due to his serious illness or old age, he is required to feed a person as a redemption *fidyah*. (Fast) a certain number of days...and for those who can do it (with hardship), there is a ransom *fidyah*: the feeding of a poor person *miskin* (for every day). But whoso does good of his own accord, it is

better for him; and it is better for you that you fast if you only knew." (*sura Baqara* 2:184). A Muslim fasts from early dawn to sunset without any food or drink and if he is married, abstains from sexual relationship, remembering Allah's order in the following verse: "And eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct to you from the black thread of the dawn. Then strictly observe the fast (till nightfall) and touch them not, (your wives) while you are in *Itikaf* in the mosques. These are the limits imposed by Allah, so approach them not." (*sura Baqara* 2:187) *Itikaf* means when one confines himself to mosque for the pur-

pose of devotion and worship usually during the last ten days of Ramadan. Before dawn, a fasting person takes a light meal called *suhur* which may even be a glass of water intending as nourishment for the following day and breaks his fast immediately after the sunset. Prophet Muhammad (s) said: "Eat the *suhur* meal, that the *suhur* is a blessing." The Prophet (s) also said: "My community *ummah* remains in a good state of affairs as long as they hurry in breaking the fast and as they delay the *suhur* (meal)." As the Islamic calendar is based on lunar months, the length of the fasting time varies from year to year. In Bangladesh this year, the period of fasting is little over 12 hours. It is important to realise that the performance of fast to a Muslim does not mean abstinence only from food, drink and marital sexual relationship. In truth, the spirit of fasting requires a Muslim

to control all his sensory organs from committing anything, which may incur Allah's displeasure and violate the commands of Prophet Muhammad (s). In that sense, fasting includes also restraint of eyes, tongue, hearing from any evil matter and controls one's mind and thought from any foul or evil act. As fasting is performed for the sake of the pleasure of Allah, it needs to be acceptable to Him, fulfilling the requirements of its observance. So an outward observance of fast by a Muslim may not be acceptable to Allah if the fasting person tells lies, backbites or quarrels

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with others. Explaining the essence of the fast, Prophet Muhammad (s) said: "The fasting is not to hold from the eating and the drinking, but for holding from the nonsense talk and the filth. If anyone curses you, or annoys you, say: 'I am fasting, I am fasting.'" As the entire purpose of fasting is obeying the commands of Allah and securing spiritual satisfaction and enlightenment, it cannot be looked upon as repressive in character. In truth it helps a fasting person to protect himself from committing evils as mentioned in the verse 2:183 quoted above, adapt his body under new regulations, purify his mind and thoughts and prepare him to conduct a disciplined, better and nobler life for the remainder of the year. Prophet Muhammad (s) assured the Muslims that "the five prayers *salaat* and the prayer from Friday to Friday, and from Ramadan to Ramadan are expiations to what is between them, if the sins al-

The Quran and the Hadith make it abundantly clear that besides the immense physical, mental and spiritual joy and benefits, vast rewards are awaiting from Allah for the observers of fast in the month of Ramadan. "And men who fast and women who fast... Allah has prepared for them forgiveness..."

He wishes to make fast easy for them. As there are immense benefits for keeping fast, Allah asks us to glorify Him, offering thanks to Him for providing us the right guidance. Allah desires that you ease and (He desires) that you should complete the period, and that you should glorify Allah for having guided you, and that perchance you may be thankful." (*sura Baqara* 2:185).

It should be noted that in the month of Ramadan, Muslims perform a special prayer *salaat tarawih* after the *salaat 'isha'*. In the large mosques located in cities and towns, the whole Quran is recited by a *haafiz* from memory while leading this special prayer. The Messenger of Allah (s) used to prompt people to say the *tarawih* prayer during the nights of Ramadan but did not press it as an obligation or duty. He used to say: "Who said the *tarawih* during the Ramadan considering it a right due specially to Allah would find their

Fasting is like a shield, and he who fasts has two joys; a joy when he breaks his fast and a joy when he meets his Lord." Prophet Muhammad (s) said: "That who fasts Ramadan out of faith and seeking the face of Allah, all his previous sins are forgiven for him." One of the most auspicious nights in the Islamic calendar, the night of power *Lailatul Qadr* falls within the last ten odd nights of the month of Ramadan. Prophet Muhammad (s) said: "Seek the *Lailatul Qadr* in the last ten days of Ramadan." In the opinion of the majority of the *ulema*, this night is the twenty-seventh of Ramadan. The significance and the majesty of this sacred night is vividly described in *sura Qadr* (no. 97). Allah mentions that the Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (s) in the month of Ramadan. "Ramadan is the month in which was sent down the Quran." (*sura Baqara* 2:185). It was revealed on the night of power *Lailatul Qadr*. "We have indeed revealed it (the Quran) on the night of power." (*sura Qadr* 97:1). Allah further says: "We sent it (the Quran) down on a blessed night." (*sura Dukhaan* 44:3). In terms of the spiritual value and status of this night, Allah proclaims that it is better than one thousand months. "The Night of

Power is better than a thousand months." (*Lailatul qadri Khairun min alfi shahr* (*sura Qadr* 97:2-3). Muslims keep awake for the major part of this sacred night performing prayers *salaat* and seeking Allah's mercy and forgiveness. In Bukhari, it has been mentioned that Prophet Muhammad (s) said: "Whoever establishes the prayers on the night of *Qadr* out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's rewards then all his past sins will be forgiven." "In that (night) is made distinct every affair of wisdom." (*sura Dukhaan* 44:4). On this auspicious night, Allah sends angels to the earth with His special blessings and bliss pervades until the appearance of the dawn. "The angels and the Spirit (Jibril) descend therein, by the permission of their Lord with all decrees. (That night is) peace until the rising of the dawn." (*sura Qadr* 97:4-5). Muslims believe that Allah is most generous in the month of Ramadan. If a Muslim fails to get the maximum blessings of Allah and His forgiveness for his sins and shortcomings, he must blame himself. Prophet Muhammad (s) said: "In it [the month of Ramadan] a night which is better than a thousand months, that who is prohibited of its goodness, he is himself prohibited." The Prophet (s) also said: "Here has come a blessed month, in which fasting is enjoined on you, when the doors of paradise are opened for you, and when the doors of hell are closed. The Satans at that time are enchained."

After the completion of fasting in the month of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate the important festival of Eid-ul-Fitr on the sighting of the moon of the next month, i.e. *Sha'awal*. An important part of the festival is the Eid-ul-Fitr prayer *salaat* attended by Muslims in large congregations. It is obligatory upon well-to-do Muslims to give charity *sadaqatul fitr* per individual member of family at the end of the month of Ramadan and before the performance of the Eid-ul-Fitr prayer. The amount of this charity *sadaqah* is one *sa'* (2.3kg.) of grains or its equivalent money. The writer, a member of the Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar, is in the Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.



Dr. Rubatul Murshed
All health information to keep you up to date

Before the doctor comes

- Burns**
How to avoid them
- Never leave a young child in the kitchen alone. Remember that hot food and drink burn.
 - Make sure that fires are guarded and that children cannot be burned between the bars.
 - Keep hot irons away until properly cooled.
 - Keep matches and lighters out of reach.
 - Take care that thin cotton clothes that can easily burn are kept away from naked flames.
- What if they happen...**
- Immediately place the burn under cold water for at least ten minutes.
 - Remove any tight clothing and jewellery as burnt skin can swell up.
 - Cover the burn with a sterile dressing or clean non-fluffy cloth.
 - If clothes are stuck to the skin do not try to remove them.
 - If you are in doubt about the severity of the injury seek a doctor's advice or if severe, call an ambulance/cab/doctor.
 - Do not prick any blisters (this can lead to infection).
 - Do not put butter, oil or ointment on a burn.

- Aged first**
Health and mind
- If you have lost your appetite, eat with a companion whenever possible. If you don't have a live-in partner, participate in community gatherings and meet family or friends for a meal as often as possible. You may be surprised to find how much just getting out and socializing can arouse your appetite.

Fact and fiction

A pain in the lower right side of your abdomen means appendicitis? It may, but so can a pain in the upper right side of the abdomen. In fact, the pain of appendicitis may be "referred" to a point as far away as your right shoulder. The better way to diagnose appendicitis is with a blood test (an increased number of white blood cells indicates infection) to confirm the classic symptoms: pain, nausea and/or vomiting and a rigid abdomen.

Tomorrow: Know your medicines, and other tips.

Can't We Derive Wealth from Waste?

by Dr Jagadish Chandra Saha

The behaviour and life-style of people are changing rapidly due to their growing need and ability to purchase vis-a-vis availability of consumer items in the market. Of late apparently affluent sections of people are consuming more than required for normal living. We can call it a wastage of resource. The quantum of production vis-a-vis demand registers a speculative increase and at the same time the amount of waste also increases in the process. Due to going by the old method and technology environmental pollution is further increasing tremendously day by day specially in the third world countries, while at the same time the natural resources are also diminishing very fast. Now time has come to think seriously about sustenance of resources and our survival thereof.

What is waste? Is there anything, which is waste forever? Not at all. All creations have their divine presence. If so, anything, which looks evil, may well be rid of its latent vice, once its divine use is unveiled. If so, nothing can be condemned as waste. The spiritual scientist manifests what lies un-manifest in things we superficially considered waste or vice. Nevertheless, in the mundane world we come across noxious things, waste products and deleterious discharges, which harm life, damage environment and destroy ecology. But the scientist and technologist, inspired by the philosophic conviction that there is good in everything, investigate, analyse extract utility from disutility and transmuted waste into wealth, win value out of worthless and condemned substances.

The natural resources of our country are in danger of exhaustion if we continue with the old wasteful method of technology for exploiting resources ignoring the great law (recycling) of nature. The time has come to ponder seriously what will happen when our forests are gone; when the coal, the iron, the

gas, the oil are exhausted; when the soils shall have been still further impoverished and washed into the streams, polluting the waters and obstructing navigation? Now it is time for us as a nation to exercise the reasonable foresight in dealing with our natural resources. These should be prudently used and conserved and therein lies the assurance of well-being for us. Utility, like 'beauty', is as relative term. In one sense, waste is what has no utility and inflicts injurious disutility. Now the scientists should be able to locate the toxicity and put the substance to new utility. Once the scientists are able to do this they become creative artists who experiment with the condemned and produce utility out of disutility, worth out of waste.

Science and technology must have a sensitive soul, a salvational drive, and a constructive direction giving scientists and technologists a social commitment. Once the higher urge becomes the locomotive of research, every discovery will prove to be alchemy whereby damaging garbage, toxic discharges and pollutive effluent will undergo a salutary change, shedding the injurious elements and reconstituting into components of new processes and products adding to the health and wealth of the community, if this magnificent project whereby what is now condemned as waste is reborn as wealth, succeeds, the world will advance in its material, moral and spiritual dimensions and banish want and privation currently stalking the peoples of the Third World who are scared about the deadly fall-out of hi-tech effluents. If this 'rags to riches' metamorphosis can be developed on a macro-scale what is regarded as bane will soon become a boon for the victimized. When science is humanized, people's happiness is the reward. At present third world is threatened with scourge of toxic

wastes, and other lethal effluents of industrialization but lacks in provision for converting refuse, residues and rejects into re-usable and serviceable new resources. This can be done through the discovery of transformation technology. This developmental activity, as it is, has many shades and dimensions, one of which is the magic of making waste non-toxic and even into value-added product. Noxious substances, as the by-products of pollutive manufacture, harm social setup and environment. But environmentally concerned experts struggle to reverse this process and rejuvenate a green, clean milieu in salutary co-existence with developmental advance. This background serves to explain the developmental manifesto of mankind, which brings together many a scientific talent from far and near to tackle the menace of waste and promotion of pollution-free enterprises.

Institute of Health Economics
University of Dhaka
Fourth Training Course in Health Economics

The Institute of Health Economics, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh will organise a training course on Health Economics. The course will address various health economic issues with special emphasis on Costing and Economic Evaluation. Some foreign scholars will join the course as Resource Persons. The training course will be held from January 7 to February 7, 2001 at the Institute of Health Economics, Arts Faculty Building, University of Dhaka. To facilitate participation of in-service personnel, sessions will be held in the evening from 5:00 to 8:30 pm everyday of the week (except Friday). The number of participants will be limited to 30. The course is sponsored by the DFID, and as such no tuition fees will be charged. The course is specially designed for the managers, policymakers, planners and researchers working in the NGOs and the private organisations providing health care, as well as the officials of the various departments of MOHFW.

Interested participants are requested to apply to Prof S R Howlader, Director, Institute of Health Economics, Arts Faculty Building, University of Dhaka, by January 3, 2001. Interview for selection of the candidates will be held on January 4, 2001. Applications should be made in a prescribed form obtainable from Mr. Abdul Haque, Research Officer, Institute of Health Economics, paying a fee of Taka 100/= (one hundred) only.

faces dangers from misuse of science. So it is important to inject a compassionate culture, a finer fibre of values into the mind and soul of the scientist and technologist. Science, in fighting environmental degradation, can and must convert a nuisance liability into an innocent asset. We, of the third world, must fight forward and scientists should be in the vanguard in this struggle against the menace of the miasmatic defilement, must arrest the greenhouse gases and win the war for industrial blessings.

The waste products can change their chemistry, if only scientists succeed in "prosecuting" them into good behaviour. We need an environment-friendly production process with all types of wastes exercised of their hostility to human life. The contradiction between a maximum profit-oriented industrialization policy and a pollution free society must be resolved by removing the fangs of industrial waste and restoring such materials into harmless substances. Cobra poison can be therapeutic, if we master the curative process. Our effort should be diverted to develop new material and find the way for different uses of the waste. We should not waste our wastes while we could make wealth out of them. In near future Bangladesh will belong to the world of waste if we do not recycle the accumulating wastes. Now it is required urgently of the environmental law societies, conservation organizations, informed intellectuals, independent scientists, technologists, and mass mobilization organs well informed on industrial pollution to come forward. A comprehensive code must provide for all these anti-pollution operators to fight combinedly against pollution and turning waste into wealth. This is a vital policy position the country is to take seriously.

The writer, an arsenic specialist (Ph.D in arsenic removal) is presently working as an environmental specialist.

Knowledge is power and scientific knowledge unlocks the secrets of nature. Technology applies such discoveries towards material welfare. When technology is used to breed violence, accumulate ill-gotten wealth and promote its morally untenable uses, development

রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
রসায়ন বিভাগ
টেডার নোটিশ

রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের রসায়ন বিভাগে বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি মন্ত্রণালয়ের বিশেষ অনুদানে ব্যবস্থা প্রকল্পের জন্য বিদেশী বৈজ্ঞানিক ইনপুট ও রাসায়নিক দ্রব্যাদি সরাসরি ক্রয়ের নিমিত্ত প্রকৃত ইনভেস্ট/সরবরাহকারী/আমদানিকারকের নিকট থেকে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে টেডার আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে। আগামী ১০-২০ ডিসেম্বর, ২০০০ অফিস চলাকালীন রসায়ন বিভাগের অফিস থেকে অফেরতযোগ্য ২০০/- (দুই শত) টাকার বিনিময়ে সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। ৩১ জানুয়ারি, ২০০১ দুপুর ১২টার মধ্যে রসায়ন বিভাগের অফিসে টেডার জমা দিতে হবে। একই দিন অপরাহ্ন ১টায় টেডার খোলা হবে। গৃহীত টেডার দাতাকে ৩% আর্নেস্টম্যান প্রদান করার পরই ক্রয় আদেশ দেয়া হবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ প্রদর্শন ব্যতিরেকে টেডার পরিবর্তন, সংযোজন বা বাতিল করতে পারবেন।

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রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।

জিডি-১১২৪

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)
E-17, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, GPO Box 3854, Dhaka-1207
Admn: 80/2000 December 6, 2000

Wanted

Applications are invited from Bangladeshi nationals for filling up the following vacant posts at the scale of pay as mentioned against each plus other allowances as admissible under the rules:

- Assistant Accountant, scale of pay, NPS '97, Tk 3400-170-4590-EB-185-6625/-
The candidate should be a graduate in Commerce of a recognised University, preferably with an M Com and with 3 years experience in accounts work along with relevant computer literacy. The age of the candidate will not exceed 35 years. In case of internal candidates, the requirements may be relaxed at the discretion of the competent authority.
- Upper Division Assistant (UDA), scale of pay, NPS '97, Tk 2375-150-3425-EB-155-5130/-
The candidate should be a graduate of a recognised University, preferably with prior experience as a clerk. (S)he should also have adequate computer literacy. The age of the candidate will not exceed 30 years. In case of internal candidates, the requirements may be relaxed at the discretion of the competent authority.

Application with complete bio-data giving details of division/class obtained and year of passing from SSC onwards along with two passport size photographs, attested copies of mark sheets, academic certificates and nationality certificate from the Chairman, Union Council/Ward Commissioner, should reach the Secretary, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) latest by January 21, 2001.

Candidates already in government/public service should apply through proper channel.
The authority reserves the right to reject any application without assigning any reason.

Secretary
BIDS

GD-1126

উপহার হিসেবে বইয়ের তুলনা হয় না

বাংলা একাডেমী
ঢাকা ১০০০

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলা একাডেমীর ৩ (তিন) টি কার এবং ২ (দুই) টি মাইক্রোসোফট টায়ার-টিউব ব্যবহারের উদ্দেশ্যে গাড়ির টায়ার-টিউব সরবরাহ করার জন্য প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ী/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে। উক্ত কার্ডে আনুষ্ঠানিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে আগামী ১৮, ১৯, ২০, ২১, ২২, ২৩, ২৪, ২৫, ২৬, ২৭, ২৮, ২৯, ৩০, ৩১, ২০০০ তারিখ দুপুর ১২-০০ টার মধ্যে অথবা ১৮, ১৯, ২০০০ তারিখের পূর্বে অফিস চলাকালে যে-কোনোদিন একাডেমীর সাচিবের কার্তব্যস্থলে দরপত্র বাবে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে। দরপত্রের বিস্তারিত বিবরণ সংবলিত সিডিউল ১৯, ২০, ২০০০ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস সময়ে প্রতিটি ৪০০.০০ (চারশত) টাকার বিনিময়ে (অফেরতযোগ্য) একাডেমীর কোষাধ্যক্ষের নিকট থেকে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষদিন কোনো সিডিউল বিচ্ছিন্ন করা হবে না। যে-কোনো দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা বাংলা একাডেমী কর্তৃপক্ষের সংরক্ষণ থাকবে।

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—WITH YET, PERHAPS, A BIT OF LIFE TO ENJOY AS BEST I CAN— EH, MARIA?

THUS, I AM MOST INTERIQUED—AND CURIOUS—AS TO WHY YOU HAVE COME ALL THE WAY FROM LONDON TO INTERVIEW FERNANDO GOMEZ!

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