

13. What are the five pillars of Islam? Fasting

Those who are sick, elderly, or on a journey, and women who are pregnant or nursing, are permitted to break the fast and make up an equal number of days later in the year. Children begin to fast (and to observe prayers) from puberty, although many start earlier.

God states in the Qur'an: "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed to those before you that you may achieve greater awareness (of God)." (Qur'an 2:183)

Fasting is not only beneficial to health, but it also allows one to truly empathize with those less fortunate. However, fasting is mainly a method of self-purification and self-restraint. By cutting oneself from worldly comforts, even for a short time, a fasting person focuses on his or her purpose in life by constantly being aware of God.

Ramadan is a special time for Muslims everywhere; a time for reflection and greater spirituality. The end of Ramadan is observed by a holiday - Eid al Fitr. On this day, Muslims all over the world celebrate with prayers and an exchange of gifts.