



# Islamic Center Newsletters™

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## CALENDAR

### MONTHLY GATHERINGS

September 27, 2008 @ 5:30 P.M.

### CORPORATE BOARD MEETINGS

September 28, 2008 @ 2:00 P.M.

### DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

November 21, 2008 –  
Eid-al-Adha issue

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## ISLAMIC CALENDAR 2008

### Mosques Around the World

A calendar every Muslim will be proud to display at home, in the office, or to give as a gift for family and friends. Reserve your calendar at the Islamic Center Book Store for only \$10.

## HOW CAN YOU PREPARE YOURSELF FOR RAMADAN?

By Farhan Alnajjar

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger.

We earnestly implore Allah from the depth of our hearts to give us the chance to complete the month of Sha'ban and reach the month of Ramadan in order to receive Allah's blessings and rewards.

With the approach of the month of Ramadan, the Muslim is supposed to start a new leaf with Allah, his fellow human beings as well as all his surroundings. On this new leaf, he should first declare sincere repentance to Allah from all sins committed in order for him to be eligible for Allah's reward in the blessed month of Ramadan.

For better preparation for the holy month of Ramadan, one must observe the following:

- Start repenting and seeking the forgiveness of Allah for all your wrong doings before Ramadan.
- Increase your du'aa' and commitment to your daily duties and obligations.
- Keep praying daily that Allah gives us the chance and grants us good health that will enable us to fast the holy month.
- Clean your heart and soul from envy, jealousy, hypocrisy, arrogance, and all heart diseases.
- Refrain from backbiting, slandering, and unlawful mixing with people.
- Seek the blessings of your parents, if they are alive, and their forgiveness for your shortcomings towards them.
- Seek forgiveness from all members of your family, friends, neighbors, and relatives for any wrongdoing against them.

We ask Allah (swt) to enable us to achieve the goals of fasting and strengthen our Imaan and Taqwa, Ameen.

## THE REAL PURPOSE OF FASTING

By: Maria Ilyas

During this month of Ramadan we all try our best to be very righteous and pious Muslims. We all do our best to abstain from food and drink from dawn to sunset, read Qur'an, attend the Taraweeh prayers at the Masjid, and stand for prayer and remember Allah at night. However after Ramadan ends do we still maintain these honorable acts? Do we still try to complete a recitation of the Qur'an in a month, do we still try to limit the pleasures of this world and yearn for the pleasures of the hereafter? Rather just the opposite is the case; as soon as Ramadan ends we all go back to our daily lives and forget everything we ever did in Ramadan, year after year the same cycle goes on and on. Do anyone think that this is the real purpose of fasting; to be hungry from Fajr to Maghrib without that process having an effect on our daily lives. Ramadan should be training for us so that when the Shayateen are chained we can practice doing righteous acts and once Ramadan is over we should still try to the best we can when the Shayateen are tempting us to do otherwise. There are many more actions which are required in Ramadan but we often overlook them and simply focus on abstaining from food and drink, yes abstaining from food and drink is an important aspect of Ramadan but if we avoid the other more spiritual aspects our fast has no meaning.

**Abstention from Lying:** Prophet Muhammad (S) has drawn attention in various ways towards the real aim of fasting and has explained that to be hungry and thirsty without keeping in view the objective is in no way useful. He said: "Whoever did not give up lying and practicing falsehood, Allah is in no need of his giving up food and water". In another Hadith he said: "Many are the fasters whose fasting does not bring them anything except hunger and thirst and many are those who keep standing in the night but their standing does not bring anything except being awake in the night". The purpose of both these Ahadith is quite plain. It means that being merely hungry and thirsty is not by itself Ibadah but an instrument of performing real Ibadah. Whoever remained heedless of this real Ibadah, without need caused trouble to his stomach with hunger and thirst. Why should Allah need to make him merely give up food and water for twelve to fourteen hours?

**Faith and Self-Scrutiny:** The Prophet has drawn attention to the real aim of fasting thus: "Whoever observed fast filled with faith and with the expectation of reward from Allah, all his past sins are forgiven". The reference to faith implies that the belief in Allah with a Muslim should remain fully fresh in the mind of a Muslim; Ihtisab denotes that man should be desirous of only Allah's pleasure constantly keeping an eye on his thoughts and actions to check if he is doing anything against the pleasure of Allah. If, in accordance with these two principles, a person were to observe all the fasts of Ramadan, he will have all his past sins forgiven because even if he was once an unruly and disobedient slave he has now turned fully repentant to his master. The Prophet said, "A penitent is like one who has never committed a sin at all."

**Shield for Protection from Sins:** In another Hadith it is said: "Fasts are like a shield (just as a shield is meant for protection from the enemy's assault, so is fasting for protection from Satan's attack)". Therefore when a man observes fast he should utilize this shield and abstain from disorderly behavior. If anybody abused him or quarreled with him, the person who keeps fast should tell him: "Brother, I am fasting (do not expect from me that I shall take part in such activities of yours)".

**Temptation of Goodness:** The Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, has directed in other Ahadith that man while fasting ought to do more and more good works and should be eager to perform benevolent acts. Particularly during fasting, he must develop with full intensity a sympathetic sentiment for his other brothers because being himself in the throes of hunger and thirst he can all the more realize what is befalling other slaves of Allah in their plight of destitution and misery. It is related by Ibn Abbas (R) that the Prophet (S) used to become especially kind and benevolent during Ramadan. No beggar in that period went empty-handed from his door, and the slaves secured emancipation.

As we can all see from these Ahadith that the real goal of fasting is not simply abstaining from food and drink but rather doing good works in an effort to gain the pleasure of Allah.

Adapted from *Let Us Be Muslims* by Abu Sayyed Abul A`la Al-Maududi

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## AL-FURQAN ACADEMY TEACHER'S PROFILE

By: Shiraz Shbat

### Shiraz Shbat-Principal

#### Shiraz Shbat

Sr. Shiraz has a B.A. in English Literature and an Associate in Applied Business. She is certified as a teacher, supervisor and administrator. Sr. Shiraz has a staff and director credentials from the State of Florida. She has been working in teaching and administration for the past 15 years.

### Administrative Assistant

#### Lateefah Siddiq

Sr. Lateefah is a valuable asset to the AFA administrative team for a third consecutive year. She is a very hard worker and knowledgeable with school procedures. Sr. Lateefah is a native of Jacksonville and has 14 years of experience in office work.

### Assistants

#### Roba Assali

Sr. Rola has an Associate degree in Accounting and a certification in Early Childhood. She has been with us for five years, two years as a volunteer and three years as an assistant teacher. She is currently assisting in Pre K and teaching Qur'an, Arabic and Islamic Studies. Sr. Roba expresses much joy in dealing with the young ones.

### Qur'an, Arabic & Islamic Studies Teacher

#### Seham Mona

Sr. Seham teaches Arabic Qur'an and Islamic Studies. She has been a volunteer at AFA for three years and a teacher for the last eight years. Prior to coming to Jacksonville in 1995, she taught physics at a university in Syria for over nine years. Sr. Seham also taught high school algebra, Qur'an, Arabic and Islamic Studies in an Islamic school for seven years. She will be teaching grades K to 5th. Sr. Seham received AFA' Best "Teacher Award" for the 2005-2006 school year.

### Lead Teachers

#### Sr. Amira Abdelhafiz

Sr. Amira will be joining us this year as a lead teacher for Kindergarten class. She has a B.S. in Chemistry. Sr. Amira has passed the Florida Teacher's Certification Exam. She is currently working on her Elementary Education Certification. Sr. Amira Taught in middle and elementary Duval County Public Schools.

#### Jayne De La Rosa

Ms. Jayne is currently the lead teacher and certified to teach Pre K/VPK class. This is her second year with our school. She has a B.A. in Family Studies with concentration on Early Childhood and an A.A in Early Childhood. Ms. Jayne received this year her directors credentials from the State of Florida. She has several years of experience in providing training and workshops for parents on children's developmental needs. She has nine years of teaching experience with Toddlers and four years old children. Ms. Jayne is the recipient of AFA' Best "Teacher Award" for the 2007-2008 school year.

*(Continued on page 4)*

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## Daily Iftar Announcement

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

*“Whoever gives food (Iftar) to a fasting person with which to break his fast, will have a reward equal to his, without a slight decrease in the reward of the fasting person.”*

Hasten to this great reward and don't miss it. Reserve your day... Make your group of four or more families and individuals and sponsor the Iftar of a day of your choice. See the daily Iftar schedule posted at Islamic Center or visit ICNEF website [www.icnef.org](http://www.icnef.org).



(Continued from page 3)

### LaTisha Mobark

Sr. Latisha (Aisha) will be the lead teacher for 1st grade for She has a B.A. in English and a teaching certification from the State of Florida. She received certification in Gifted Endorsement for grades K-12. Sr. Aisha taught honored and gifted classes for one year at Landmark Middle school. She deals with her students with patience and love. Sr. Aisha is pursuing her Masters in Literacy and Education.

### Nighat Hussain

Sr. Nighat is the lead teacher for 2nd grade. She holds a B.S. degree in Health administration from UNF, and a B.A. degree in Economics and English Literature from a university in Pakistan. She has passed the Florida Teacher's Certification Exam. She is currently working on her Elementary Education Certification. She has taught Kindergarten through fourth grade at AFA for the last seven years. Sr. Nighat enjoys her class and puts much effort into providing good teaching quality. Sr. Nighat received AFA' Best "Teacher Award" for the 2004-2005 school year.

### Sr. Jahan Shukoor

Sr. Jahan will be again joining our AFA team. She will be the lead teacher for 3rd grade. Sr. Jahan has a Masters of Arts, Foreign Language and a Bachelor of Science Education. Last year she taught in Duval County Public Schools. In the year 2007 she was the 4/5 grade teacher in Al-Furqan Academy.

### Sr. Amal Barbari

Sr. Amal will be joining us this school year as a lead teacher for 4/5 Grades. She has been part of this community for the past 14 years. She has a bachelor's in Arts and Elementary Education, a Masters in Science and Leadership. She has taught in Duval county public schools for four years and Atlanta public schools for one year. Sr. Amal is very excited to be part of AFA team

### After Care Administrator

### Najwan Edelbi

Sr. Najwan takes care of the children in the After Care Program. She is from Syria and has been in the U.S. for the last five years.

# PRAYER TIMES SCHEDULE FOR THE MONTH OF RAMADAN 1429

Gregorian	Day	Ramadan	Fajr		Shuruq	Zuhr		Asr		Magrib	Isha	
			Azan	Iqama		Azan	Iqama	Azan	Iqama		Azan	Iqama
2	Tue	1	5:57	6:30	7:03	1:26	1:30	5:00	5:15	7:47	8:55	9:00
3	Wed	2	5:58	6:30	7:04	1:26	1:30	4:59	5:15	7:46	8:54	9:00
4	Thu	3	5:58	6:30	7:04	1:25	1:30	4:59	5:15	7:45	8:52	9:00
5	Fri	4	5:59	6:30	7:05	1:25	1:30	4:58	5:15	7:44	8:51	9:00
6	Sat	5	6:00	6:30	7:05	1:25	1:30	4:57	5:15	7:43	8:50	9:00
7	Sun	6	6:00	6:30	7:06	1:24	1:30	4:57	5:15	7:41	8:48	9:00
8	Mon	7	6:01	6:30	7:06	1:24	1:30	4:56	5:15	7:40	8:47	9:00
9	Tue	8	6:02	6:30	7:07	1:24	1:30	4:55	5:15	7:39	8:46	9:00
10	Wed	9	6:02	6:30	7:08	1:23	1:30	4:55	5:15	7:38	8:44	9:00
11	Thu	10	6:03	6:30	7:08	1:23	1:30	4:54	5:15	7:36	8:43	9:00
12	Fri	11	6:04	6:30	7:09	1:23	1:30	4:53	5:15	7:35	8:42	9:00
13	Sat	12	6:04	6:30	7:09	1:22	1:30	4:53	5:15	7:34	8:40	9:00
14	Sun	13	6:05	6:30	7:10	1:22	1:30	4:52	5:15	7:33	8:39	9:00
15	Mon	14	6:05	6:30	7:10	1:22	1:30	4:51	5:00	7:31	8:38	9:00
16	Tue	15	6:06	6:30	7:11	1:21	1:30	4:51	5:00	7:30	8:36	9:00
17	Wed	16	6:07	6:30	7:11	1:21	1:30	4:50	5:00	7:29	8:35	9:00
18	Thu	17	6:07	6:45	7:12	1:20	1:30	4:49	5:00	7:28	8:34	9:00
19	Fri	18	6:08	6:45	7:12	1:20	1:30	4:48	5:00	7:26	8:32	9:00
20	Sat	19	6:09	6:45	7:13	1:20	1:30	4:48	5:00	7:25	8:31	9:00
21	Sun	20	6:09	6:45	7:14	1:19	1:30	4:47	5:00	7:24	8:30	9:00
22	Mon	21	6:10	6:45	7:14	1:19	1:30	4:46	5:00	7:22	8:28	9:00
23	Tue	22	6:10	6:45	7:15	1:19	1:30	4:45	5:00	7:21	8:27	9:00
24	Wed	23	6:11	6:45	7:15	1:18	1:30	4:45	5:00	7:20	8:26	9:00
25	Thu	24	6:12	6:45	7:16	1:18	1:30	4:44	5:00	7:19	8:24	9:00
26	Fri	25	6:12	6:45	7:16	1:18	1:30	4:43	5:00	7:17	8:23	9:00
27	Sat	26	6:13	6:45	7:17	1:17	1:30	4:42	5:00	7:16	8:22	9:00
28	Sun	27	6:13	6:45	7:17	1:17	1:30	4:41	5:00	7:15	8:21	9:00
29	Mon	28	6:14	6:45	7:18	1:17	1:30	4:41	5:00	7:14	8:19	9:00
30	Tue	29	6:15	6:45	7:19	1:16	1:30	4:40	5:00	7:13	8:18	9:00
1	Wed	30	6:16	6:45	7:20	1:16	1:30	4:40	5:00	7:12	8:17	9:00

Note 1: Fajr Athan means both Fajr (Azan) and Imsak (starting fast) and Maghrib means both Maghrib (Azan) and Iftar (breaking fast).

Note 2: Ramadan starting date may be different based on Moon sighting.

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*"The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish regular prayers, and practice regular charity, and fear none (at all) except Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance."*

Al-Qur'an: 9-18

