The Month of Rigorous Training

Fasting, the fourth pillar of Islam is the most effective means by which humanity may escape its enslavement to matter, its carnal desires and passions. It attempts to eradicate the self-indulgent orientation of the human being.

The month of Ramadan recurs annually each year a week earlier, as the lunar calendar rotates backwards through the solar. The Muslim community globally will experience differing weather conditions in whichever region they reside. Such is the mercy shown by God that all will be experiencing some harsh weather conditions while at other times very fine weather conditions.

This annual rigorous training program aught to prepare the Muslim to live the remaining months of the year in total submission to his/her Creator. The individual would become acutely aware of his/her dependence on God. The exercise of self control and sound self discipline prepare the Muslim to enjoy the taste of a disciplinary life.

A sense of social conscience is stimulated, thereby gearing the individual to relate to the plight of the less privileged and deprived.

The auspicious month of Ramadan will be completed with a great sense of accomplishment. Muslims globally will bid farewell to the month of heightened devotion and joyous labour. The day of Eid (day of recurring happiness) is ushered in with tremendous joy and happiness, thanking the Almighty Allah for reawakening and strengthening our souls to realise our higher nature and our true purpose in life.

Multifaith Chaplaincy Service
www.ecu.edu.au/chaplaincy

All campuses
Churchlands: Room 7.217
Joondalup: Room 4.202
Mount Lawley: Room 8.115

University Chaplain
Rev Joanne Baynes
Mobile: 0438 952 399
Email: j.baynes@ecu.edu.au

Visiting Chaplains
Rev Dr David Wood (Anglican)
Mobile: 0417 207 217
Email: david.wood@ecu.edu.au
Dr Sahba Habibi (Baha’i)
Email: s.habibi@ecu.edu.au
Dr Toby Metcalfe (Baptist)
Mobile: 0414 370 367
Email: t.metcalfe@ecu.edu.au
Mr Zor Hane (Buddhist)
Mobile: 0417 929 375
Email: z.hane@ecu.edu.au
Mr Rajah Senathirajah (Hindu)
Mobile: 0408 921 076
Email: r.senathirajah@ecu.edu.au
Rabbi David Freilich (Jewish)
Mobile: 0418 946 907
Email: d.freilich@ecu.edu.au
Sheikh Muhammad Agherdien (Muslim)
Email: m.agherdien@ecu.edu.au

Prepared by the Multifaith Chaplaincy Service
www.ecu.edu.au/chaplaincy

With appreciation to Sheikh Muhammad Agherdien
Muslim Visiting Chaplain

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Our vision is to support spirituality, provide care and create community as part of our service to staff and students at Edith Cowan University. We support the opportunity to celebrate, explore and nurture one's faith.

As a dynamic progressive university, ECU is truly multicultural with students coming from over 75 countries and representing all the major religious traditions. The Multifaith Chaplaincy Service supports and values spirituality, faith and religion as an integral part of life. Our chaplains are skilled professionals recognized within their own religious traditions.

During Harmony Week in 2004, the Multifaith Chaplaincy Service launched an electronic Faith Calendar. The Faith Calendar lists all major religious festivals, thus recognizing the convictions held by many staff and students. Updated annually, the Faith Calendar also showcases artwork from the ECU Art Collection.

As an extension to the Faith Calendar, our service has produced a collection of brochures on Religious Festivals observed within the various faith traditions.

At ECU, we have Muslim staff and students. Celebrating Ramadan is a significant time for them as they reaffirm their faith, maintain connections with their traditions and culture, and seek to explore the deeper meanings of life in the context of their community.

The Faith Calendar and various brochures on a range of religious festivals are available on the Multifaith Chaplaincy Service website at www.ecu.edu.au/chaplaincy

The Obligation of Fasting

Oh you who have attained unto faith. Fasting is ordained for you as it was ordained for those before you so that you remain conscious of God. al Quran (Ch 2 verse 183)

Fasting is obligatory upon every Muslim male and female who has attained the age of puberty. However there are a few who are exempted from the obligation as Islam does not intend to afflict hardship and suffering unto the human body. The exempted are; the ill, pregnant women and travellers, a penance may be prescribed for those who are unable to observe the fast.

Allah wills that you shall have ease, and does not will you to suffer hardship. al Quran (Ch: 2, verse 185-186).

Dimensions of Fasting

There are two dimensions of fasting, the spiritual dimension and the physical dimension. The spiritual dimension is the rigorous training of the soul realising its higher nature and to draw closer to its Creator. The physical dimension refers to the abstention of the individual from normally permissible things such as food, drink and conjugal relations from dawn to dusk.

The blessed Prophet (PBUH) once remarked, ‘Whoever does not give up lying and acting on lies during fasting, then God has no need of him giving up food and drink’. The mere experience of hunger and thirst is not the primary reason for the observance of the fast. However, the moral dimension is as fundamentally important as the physical aspects of this great rite of fasting.

Social Impact

One cannot discuss fasting without considering its social impact it has on society. The entire global Muslim community is involved collectively in the rite of fasting. It is not targeted at a particular social class in society. This clearly cultivates a collective consciousness in the hearts of the global community to care for the less fortunate and the deprived around the world.

The aims-giving towards the end of the month of Ramadan is also a clear indication that fasting creates an awareness of ones contribution one has to make to the betterment of the social environment.

The Holy Quran

The month of Ramadan is a month in which Muslims commemorate the revelation of the glorious Quran. Each night during the month of Ramadan one/30th of the Quran is recited by memory in Mosques around the world during special supererogatory prayers called taraweeh.

The Quran is addressed to humanity at large without distinction of race, ethnicity, language, geography or time. The Quran’s major themes are: God, human beings, the wondrous creation of nature, society, the great gift of intelligence and intellect which was bestowed upon mankind, the role of all the Noble Prophets and their respective scriptures.

Humanity is being described by the Quran as being the vicegerents of God on earth. This is a role that man has to strive constantly to fulfil. It is therefore important that the Quran is not only recited during this auspicious month, but it is also an opportune time to reflect upon the meaning and the message that the noble book is communicating to us.