



# QUICKSTEPS

*"It is not enough to take steps which may some day lead to a goal; each step must be itself a goal and a step likewise."*

*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

## English Unit PTSS

Issue 1

### Lead Story Headline

First and foremost, all praises to Allah the Almighty for giving us this opportunity to give a rebirth to our very own bulletin, the *QUICKSTEPS*. Congratulations to the *QUICKSTEPS* team from English Language Unit, General Studies Department, Politeknik Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, for their

effort to make its come back a reality. The history of *QUICKSTEPS* goes back to its birth year in 2013. Back then *QUICKSTEPS* was available in the form of hardcopy. The uniqueness of the current *QUICKSTEPS* is that it is now made available online on PTSS website so as to reach farther beyond the circle of PTSS. Similar to the previous issues, this quarterly bulletin shall put forward the voice of PTSS staff. It is the platform for the staff to express their ideas and share their experience and successively inculcates the *culture to write*. With the theme *"Let's Celebrate Mother's Day, Teacher's Day and Ramadhan Kareem"*

this issue shall highlight all these important events in its own way. We hope everyone enjoys reading it as much as we have enjoyed preparing it. We at *QUICKSTEPS* hope that our sharing in this online bulletin will be beneficial to all. "Whoever treads a path in search of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him the path to Jannah" (Hadith Muslim).

Happy Mother's Day to all mothers,  
Happy Teacher's Day to all teachers  
Ramadhan Kareem to all Muslims



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### 3 awesome tips for the last 10 days of Ramadan

1

Give 1 dinar in charity every day, so if it falls on *laylatul qadr*, it's as if you gave charity everyday for 84 years

2

Pray 2 units everyday, so if it falls on *laylatul qadr*, it's as if you prayed everyday for 84 years

3

Read surah ikhlaas 3 times a day, so if it falls on *laylatul qadr*, it's as if you read the whole Quran everyday for 84 years

Spread this, as you may find it on your account [of good deeds].

**May Allah make us of the victorious...**

# Discovering the true meaning of Ramadan

As it turns out, Ramadan is not simply an exercise in fasting during the day, binge-eating during the night and setting the clock to the morning's wee hours for those inclined to rise for the predawn meal. Neither is it about irate drivers who feel entitled to exhibit road rage, lacklustre employees who see the month as an excuse to slack off and overworked women slaving over a stove every day in preparation for the sunset meal. Ramadan is none of those things, if done right, and instead, is the chance for a spiritual boost, with lessons to be applied long after the month is out.

## The month

So Ramadan is here (almost). How do we know this? Because according to official Islamic bodies, the crescent moon will soon be sighted, marking the beginning of the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Lasting 29 or 30 days - the end date will be revealed through another official lunar sighting in the last week of the month - Muslims are to refrain from food and liquid (including chewing gum, smoking cigarettes and the like) from dawn to sunset, and instead renew their focus on prayers and increase their recitation of the Holy Quran.



## Why it's so special

It is the month in which the Holy Quran was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed. As a result, Ramadan is also known as the month to recite the holy text even more eagerly and with renewed dedication to completing the task. Muslims are encouraged to complete the full recitation of the Holy Quran at least once during the month. With an average of 600 pages, this seemingly huge task can be achieved through the recitation of four pages before each of the five prayers daily throughout the entire month.

## The fast

It is one of Islam's five main pillars (the others being the belief in one God and

the Prophet Mohammed as His Messenger, praying five times a day, completing the pilgrimage to Mecca for those who are able and giving charity or "zakat"). It is mandatory for all Muslims upon reaching puberty, as long as they are mentally and physically sound. The elderly and chronically ill are exempt from fasting; however, it is incumbent upon them to feed the poor instead if they possess the financial means.

## A spiritual detox

The fast is not simply about denying your body food and water. It also involves arguably the more taxing challenge of avoiding ill speech, arguments, loss of temper and malicious behaviour. The whole point of the fast is to demonstrate submission to God and keep the mind focused on a spiritual plane.

## The benefits

Patience and mercy, which, let's face it, we all need more of in these harried times. Ramadan is viewed as a month-long school where graduates leave with a developed sense of self-control in areas including diet, sleeping and the use of time.

## The meals

The fasting day is book-ended by two meals: suhoor and iftar. The former is the early morning meal consumed before fasting begins at dawn, while the latter is to break the fast at sunset. If breakfast is viewed as an important meal, a healthy suhoor is even more vital as it is meant to last you up to 15 hours - as is the case this summer in the UAE - before breaking bread again. Slow digesting foods like barley, wheats, oats and lentils are recommended and limiting fatty and sugary products would be wise. There is a propensity to binge eat at sunset, but a balanced, moderate meal would really make all



Worshippers at Sheikh Zayed Mosque, Abu Dhabi

the difference, considering that the evenings are spent engaging in special nightly prayers. It is also recommended to break the fast with dates, as was the practice of the Prophet Mohammed, before moving on to other dishes.

## The prayers

Ramadan is also defined by extra congregational prayers performed nightly after the evening isha prayers, which are normally the last prayers of the evening. Such an occasion presents a rarity in the UAE: a city devoid of the normal onslaught of evening traffic for the duration of Ramadan. For those living near a mosque, expect your neighbourhood to be a hive of activity for the whole month.

## The finish line

Ramadan culminates with the three-day Eid Al Fitr holiday celebrating the end of the fast. Marked by a special morning prayer, the day is a form of spiritual graduation and a chance to permanently implement the spiritual lessons learnt throughout the month. Muslims dress in their best and visit friends and relatives as a sense of community prevails.

*It's not just about abstaining from food and drink during the daylight hours - the spiritual side of Islam's holiest month is far more important.*



## Understanding The Deeper meaning of Aidilfitri

IT is that time of the year again, where we end the fasting month and celebrate our self-restraint against vice and weakness. For those who are fortunate, it is also that time where we get that rare chance to leave the hustle and bustle of our busy schedules and return to our roots.

Personally for me, this return home bears a significance beyond the familial gathering. It is an annual opportunity to rekindle our ties with those who are close to our hearts, in which for various reasons, we rarely find chances to meet.

During this festive season, we will meet those whom not only surrounded us during our growth, but also influenced our thinking, values and culture and made us who we are today.

When seen from this perspective, the forgiveness we give and receive brings a deeper meaning to the celebration of Eid. It equates to a blessing from all those who have contributed to our well-being.

Forgiveness, and the act of forgiving, opens the path to self-

improvement. As the saying goes — a problem can only be solved when the problem is acknowledged. In order for forgiveness to take place, one must first admit to requiring forgiveness.

The act of visiting family and friends during the month of Syawal also holds meaning beyond mere tradition.

We usually take this opportunity to catch up with those whom we seldom meet, those outside our scheduled routines, so much so that it would be unlikely that these personal networks are maintained if the festive season did not take place.

Such is the power of the festive

month — it keeps our bonds of family and friendship.

The interactions we have serve as updates, which in turn add to our knowledge

and experience through the act of sharing.

As we converse and catch up with old friends, little do we realise we are actually learning new things from those outside our common circle.



Most importantly, Aidilfitri is meant as a joyful day. As Malaysians, we are blessed and privileged to have celebrated the month of Syawal in peace and harmony. However, let us not forget that there are those less fortunate, and carrying out their Raya prayer in poverty, famine, persecution

or war.

Therefore, let us be mindful of the factors that make up the peace and harmony, and protect them to ensure that we continue to celebrate Hari Raya with joy and happiness.

Lastly, for many of us, the Raya holidays is the longest break we will have in any given year. While it is an opportunity to take our minds of work and spend time with our relatives and friends, it is also an opportunity to reset and rejuvenate ourselves physically and mentally, in order to do greater things upon our return to work.

I hope that we all had a joyous and fruitful Aidilfitri. For those travel-

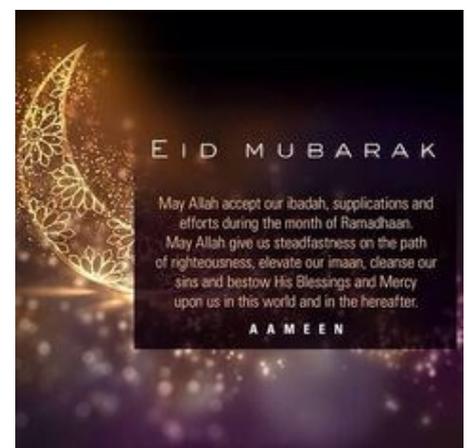
ling from their hometowns this week, I pray for a safe journey home.

While it is an opportunity to take our minds of work and

spend time with our relatives and friends, it is also an opportunity to reset and rejuvenate ourselves physically and mentally, in order to do greater things upon our return to work.



*Aidilfitri is a time to be mindful of the factors that make up the peace and harmony, and protect them to ensure that we continue to celebrate Hari Raya with joy and happiness*



# APPRECIATION OF RAMADHAN by Isyati Suparman, JPA

Ramadhan is the 9<sup>th</sup> month in the Islamic calendar in which the glorious Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad S.A.W, providing guidance for the people, clear teachings and the statute book. It is also the month where Muslims all around the world observe the 4<sup>th</sup> Islamic pillar i.e. *saum* or fasting. Upon reaching puberty, all healthy Muslims are required to partake in the fast during this holy month, from dawn to dusk. Muslims refrain themselves from food and drinks during daylight hours, with exceptions made for the sick, elderly and pregnant.

On the physical side, fasting is from first light of dawn until sundown, abstaining from food, drink and sexual relations. On the moral, behavioral side, one must abstain from lying, malicious gossips, quarrelling and trivial nonsense. In human's logical mind, a person would definitely become weak without having any drop of water or anything to eat, from sunrise to sunset. But as an obedient Muslim, a person would observe this 4<sup>th</sup> Islamic pillar without questioning, for he knows that the command from the Almighty is nothing but for the good of the humankind.

So why do Muslims fast?

- The fast is intended to bring the faithful closer to Allah and to remind them of the suffering of those less fortunate.
- Time for reflection
- Gaining Taqwa - Taqwa in this case means to make a shield between oneself and Allah's anger and Hellfire. So we should ask ourselves when we break our fasts, 'Has this fasting day made us fear Allah more? Has it resulted that we want to protect ourselves from the hellfire or not?'
- Reading of the Quran - One is encouraged to read and reflect the entire Quran to draw him closer to Allah.
- Tarawih - A special prayer that is held every night of the month, during which a whole section of the Quran

(Juz) is recited, so that by the end of the month the entire Quran has been completed.

- Giving charity - Being more charitable – The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "He who gives food for a fasting person to break his fast, he will receive the same reward as him, without nothing being reduced from the fasting person's reward"

- Purifying one's behavior - Striving for *Ihsan* (righteousness and sincerity), staying away from *riya* (showing off) and doing good deeds.

- Unity of the Muslims - In this month there is a possibility for unity, because we all fast together, we break fast together, we all worship Allah together, and we pray *Salatul-Eid* together. Therefore we sense that the unity of Muslims is possible. It is possible for Muslims to be a single body, but this will only be achieved when obedience is only to Allah and His Messenger.

- Fasting is a great exercise in self-control and the development of will power

- Fasting develops sympathy for the less fortunate and consequently learning to be more charitable and more thankful and appreciative of God's bounties.

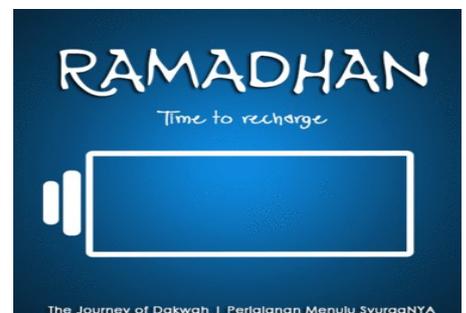
While fasting is associated with religious practice, it is a great expression of worshipping Allah and it has potential and great effects on one's health. Therefore, all the good things we have done and practiced during Ramadhan should not end at the beginning of Syawwal. But!!! We, Muslims must continually do good deeds. We have to observe our daily prayers. We should also speak the truth, be honest, and treat each other and all human beings



with courtesy and kindness. Remember that good deeds lead to more good deeds and bad deeds only lead to more bad deeds. It is said: "One of the rewards of good deeds is more good deeds, and one of the consequences of evil is committing more evil deeds."

## References

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We're on the web [https://  
eluptss.blogspot.com](https://eluptss.blogspot.com)

*Quicksteps team would like to wish all our Muslim friends "Happy Ramadhan Mubarak" and Eid Mubarak. May this holy month usher upon you peace, happiness and prosperity. Maaf Zahir & Batin*



Happy reading everybody!!

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## Ramadhan Poem

Ramadhan is here, The month that is blessed;  
Ramadhan is here, The month we love best.  
The month in which the Qur'an was sent;  
A time of great blessing in which to repent.  
Fasting for Allah is a great Muslim deed;  
Controlling desires and Suppressing greed.

Ramadhan is coming, Increase your Iman(faith).  
Ramadhan is coming, Recite the Qur'an.  
Take "Suhoor" in the dead of the Night;  
No eating or drinking during the daylight.  
Refrain from bad deeds and repent your soul;  
The pleasure of Allah is our only goal.

Even if there is hunger, remember your Lord  
And wait until 'Iftar' to earn your reward.  
Fasting is one of the gifts of Allah  
Given to believers to increase 'Taqwah' (piety).  
We pray to Allah to put right our hearts;  
Ask for forgiveness from Allah and make a new start.

Raising our hands we ask for his 'Rahmaa';  
Hear us Allah and grant us 'Jannah'.

