

Hello Professor,

2014 July

My name is Shrooq R., i met you after class yesterday and told you i was fasting and you said if i wanted to get a bonus mark i should send you an email explaining why i was fasting, so here it is.

There are five obligatory pillars of Islam; Shahadah (profession of faith, is the first pillar of Islam. Muslims bear witness to the oneness of God by reciting the creed "There is no God but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God." This simple yet profound statement expresses a Muslim's complete acceptance of and total commitment to Islam), Salah (prayer, is the second pillar. The Islamic faith is based on the belief that individuals have a direct relationship with God. The world's Muslims turn individually and collectively to Makkah, Islam's holiest city, to offer five daily prayers at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and evening. In addition, Friday congregational service is also required. Although salah can be performed alone, it is meritorious to perform it with another or with a group. It is permissible to pray at home, at work, or even outdoors; however it is recommended that Muslims perform salah in a mosque), Zakat (almsgiving, is the third pillar.

Social responsibility is considered part of one's service to God; the obligatory act of zakat enshrines this duty. Zakat prescribes payment of fixed proportions of a Muslim's possessions for the welfare of the entire community and in particular for its neediest members. It is equal to 2.5 percent of an individual's total net worth, excluding obligations and family expenses),

Sawm (fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, is the fourth pillar of Islam. Ordained in the Holy Qur'an, the fast is an act of deep personal worship in which Muslims seek a richer perception of God. Fasting is also an exercise in self-control whereby one's sensitivity is heightened to the sufferings of the poor. Ramadan, the month during which the Holy Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, begins with the sighting of the new moon, after which abstention from eating, drinking and other sensual pleasures is obligatory from dawn to sunset.

Ramadan is also a joyful month. Muslims break their fast at sunset with a special meal, iftar, perform additional nocturnal worship, tarawih, after evening prayer; and throng the streets in moods that are festive and communal. People stay up late to break their fast and get up in the early morning hours so they can eat before daybreak. The end of Ramadan is observed by three days of celebration called Eid Al-Fitr, the feast of the breaking of the fast. Customarily, it is a time for family reunion and the favored holiday for children who receive new clothing and gifts) and lastly Hajj, the pilgrimage to Makkah, is the fifth pillar and the most significant manifestation of Islamic faith and unity in the world. For those Muslims who are physically and financially able to make the journey to Makkah, the Hajj is a once in a lifetime duty that is the peak of their religious life. The Hajj is a remarkable spiritual gathering of over two million Muslims from all over the world to the holy city. In performing the Hajj, a pilgrim follows the order of ritual that the Prophet Muhammad performed during his last

pilgrimage.

The five pillars of Islam define the basic identity of Muslims - their faith, beliefs and practices - and bind together a worldwide community of believers into a fellowship of shared values and concerns.

Therefore as a Muslim in order to follow the five pillars of my religion i fast during ramadan for 30 days and after the 30 days of fasting all muslims celebrate which is kind of like a christmas celebration. Before the day of Eid, during the last few days of Ramadan, each Muslim family gives a determined amount as a donation to the poor. This donation is of actual food -- rice, barley, dates, rice, etc. to ensure that the needy can have a holiday meal and participate in the celebration. On the day of Eid, Muslims gather early in the morning in outdoor locations or mosques to perform the Eid prayer. This consists of a sermon followed by a short congregational prayer. After the Eid prayer, Muslims usually scatter to visit various family and friends, give gifts (especially to children), and make phone calls to distant relatives to give well wishes for the holiday. These activities traditionally continue for three days. In most Muslim countries, the entire 3-day period is an official government/school holiday.

Food businesses such as restaurants in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia do really well during Ramadan offering iftar (meal you eat when fast ends) buffet etc, however these are not fun times for the foreign businessman trying to work deals in the Arab world. Since people stay up late to break their fast and get up in the early morning hours so they can eat before daybreak, resulting in shorter sleeping hours which can cause people to become more lethargic later on in the day, the productivity of workers declines in the holy month by 35-50% as a result of shorter working hours and the change in behaviour during this month. Muslims all over the world have now been fasting for more than two weeks as the holy month of Ramadan is flying by.

Many feel that their main priority in the coming period is to focus on the spiritual rituals; reading and reciting the Koran, late nights spent in prayer at home or at the local mosque, daytime hours spent in fasting - a period bookended by sumptuous pre-dawn and sundown meals. The combination of piety and celebration turns the Arab World into a juggling act as people keep up religious rituals along with the TV marathon of soap operas and entertaining family and friends. Ramadan just isn't the right time for business. Still, in cosmopolitan Cairo and Beirut, most hotels and some trendy restaurants take advantage of tradition and capitalize on the late Ramadan hours, putting up large tents where friends meet for the late Sohour meal, mint tea, games of cards, backgammon, music and of course the Shisha.

The positive side of Ramadan for business people is a higher demand for goods and services and higher consumption, that often means higher prices, which translates into higher profit margins for merchants, retail stores, restaurants and cafes - especially those which arrange amusement programmes for after iftar [the breaking of the fast at the end of the day].

In Bangladesh, the government has temporarily halted the export of fish to ensure there is enough for domestic consumption and to prevent the prices rising. The higher consumption equates to higher economic growth, although this is generally only a short-term effect. It is not so different to the scenario witnessed over the Christmas period in some countries, when there are pronounced fluctuations in some types of businesses, particularly retail and entertainment. At the end of Ramadan there is normally a lot of activity

as people traditionally visit families to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr, the three-day festival marking the end of the fast. It is also a time when people exchange gifts - very often clothing, so sales of traditional costumes peak towards the end of the holy month. Cafes generally do a roaring business during Ramadan. Going to cafes after iftar and spending time there watching television, smoking shisha and chatting with friends is a Ramadan tradition. One man, who runs a cafe on King Fahd Road in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, says: "There has been a 100% increase in the number of customers during the holy month". Smoking shisha is not the only factor that results in attracting huge numbers of visitors, especially youngsters, to the cafe. Most of them come to spend their free hours as well as to watch Ramadan programmes on satellite channels. Another café owner says it is a very good season for them to earn high profit margins "Ramadan attracts huge increases in profits compared to the rest of the year," he says.
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Ramadan attracts huge increases in profits compared to the rest of the year"

Cafe owner

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

There are a lot of shish cafes in downtown toronto and during regular days they used to be quite empty but since Ramadan started its super crowded after 9pm (Toronto time of opening the fast) and one can hardly find a place to sit so some businesses start coin really well during Ramadan, the shisha cafes have convenient timings as they open around 7pm and close at around 4pm, they have even started to offer iftar and sehr meals apart from selling shisha's making more profits and taking advantage of ramadan. Also I is a tradition to wear new clothes, jewellery, get tina tattoos on 'eid' so clothe businesses and jewellery businesses do really well during eid. People go to gerrad street on the night before did with there families to buy traditional clothes and enjoy the did market set up there, having small booths for hina, bangles etc. I'm attaching a link showcasing of a traditional eid market in pakistan that is sat up on chand raat (the night before eid).

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/242964/eid-finally-chand-raat-celebrations-cheap-and-cheerful/>,

<http://www.demotix.com/news/435756/chaand-raat-night-eid-islamabad#media-435749>

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/588033/preparing-for-the-big-day-the-highs-and-lows-of-crunch-time-eid-shopping/>

Hope you enjoyed reading this,

Regards,

Shrooq R.

MGSC44H3

I received this above from student Shrooq R. and am posting it without checking the grammar and spelling - it is "by a student for students"
WTG Richardson

