

Press release

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WOKING MUSLIMS OBSERVE RAMADAN

Muslims in Woking have joined the larger community of British Muslims in observing the holy month of Ramadan. The month began on September 13th and each day all pious Muslims of sound health fast from dawn to dusk. From the early hours of the morning, around 5am, fasting Muslims abstain from eating, drinking or any form of sensual pleasure till sunset, which is around 7pm. Apart from the five daily sets of prayers, Muslims are urged to join in the traditional extended evening prayers in a congregation. The Shah Jahan Mosque on Oriental Road is a hub of activity each day from early morning till late evening. During the last ten days of the lunar month many will also participate in secluded prayers all through the night. During these ten days, the odd nights are considered most blessed.

Fasting – which is common across many faiths – is one of the five pillars of Islam. More than the physical meaning of abstinence, one month of fasting solidifies the characteristic of righteousness. Fasting is not simply a time during which people deprive themselves from physical pleasures, but is an occasion to exercise moral restraint and experience spiritual growth. Increasing numbers of local Muslims are actively engaging in devotion during Ramadan.

Speaking on the occasion Imam Farogh Ahmad Al-Quadri, the Principal Imam at the Shah Jahan Mosque said “Righteousness is a recurring theme in the Holy Quran. Through fasting righteousness may be attained. This is both an attitude and a process for Muslims. Devotees may seek a proper attitude through love of the source of good and beauty that makes life worth living. Ramadan helps us to develop our moral discipline and also reminds us of the troubles of those who live in continuing hunger and deprivation. The Holy Quran stresses continuously that simply being religious is meaningless if it does not lead people to care and share.”

Brigadier M Salamat, the Chairman of the Woking Mosque Committee also said on this occasion: “Nothing empowers a community more than the development of the moral character of its members. By solidifying our moral values through fasting Muslims achieve a higher social life, one that is based on mutual respect and help, on honest and fair dealings, and a sense of duty that encourages all to adhere to the principles of right and justice as they pursue their own diverse and competing interests within the larger community.”

Thirty days of fasting will culminate with the feast of Eid-ul Fitr around mid-October upon sighting of the new crescent moon. On this occasion all Muslims in Woking wish each other and all members of the greater community a *Happy Eid*.

In order to broaden the understanding of Ramadan and encourage enhanced inter-faith participation, the Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking invites members of all communities to join with them at an open *Iftaar* – or breaking of fast – on Sunday 7th October at 6:30pm sharp. There will be short talk about Ramadan at what the month means to Muslims from 5.15pm.