

# RAMADAN

30 Days of Prayer for South Asian Muslims



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## WHY PRAY FOR SOUTH ASIAN MUSLIMS?

South Asia is home to the greatest concentration of Muslim lostness on the planet. Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh have the world's second, third, and fourth largest Muslim populations. In addition to the large populous countries, the Maldives claims to be 100% Muslim. Maldivians are not even allowed to have a copy of God's Word!

South Asian Muslims can be found from the Himalayan mountains to the beaches of Sri Lanka, from Hong Kong to El Paso, and in pockets throughout the world. Historically, South Asian Muslims have been largely overlooked by the church. Yet the church now has a growing opportunity to reach them. South Asia has more than 560 million Muslims without gospel access, and many of them are moving to cities or live in communities near believers. As Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few" (Matt. 9:37).

Ramadan is a key opportunity to pray for this harvest. Ramadan is a time of heightened spirituality for Muslims because they fast and devote extra time to prayer. Some hope to have supernatural encounters with Allah. Others focus on accumulating good works so they are ready for judgment day. This effort does not lead to true peace, assurance, or hope for the future. They wearily repeat it again the next year in hopes of gaining salvation through their works.

Not everyone is able to go to South Asia or meet a Muslim, but every follower of Christ is called to pray for the lost. Take a few minutes each day for the next 30 days and fervently intercede for South Asian Muslims. Pray like their lives depends on it. Because they do. Pray also for the local church and workers who labor alongside them to reach their Muslim neighbors. God is emboldening South Asian Christians to share the gospel with Muslims, no matter the cost.

Thousands of Muslims will die this month and enter a Christless eternity. Let's earnestly pray and watch what God will do this Ramadan.

*\*Indicates name change*



# RAMADAN FAST FACTS

## *What is Ramadan?*

*Ramadan is the ninth lunar month of the Islamic calendar.*

**2021**

April 12 - May 12

**2022**

April 2 - May 1

**2023**

Mar. 22 - April 20

**2024**

Mar. 10 - April 8

## *How do Muslims observe Ramadan?*

*Muslims fast from food and drink from sunup to sundown every day of the month of Ramadan. Some of the more devout Muslims will not even swallow their saliva. During their daytime fast, Muslims spend extra time concentrated on prayer and reading the Quran. When the sun sets each day, families and friends gather for a big meal to break the fast. The final night of Ramadan in South Asia is called Eid (Ee-d), and families arrange for a grand feast to celebrate their month of fasting.*

## *Why do Muslims observe Ramadan?*

*Observing Ramadan is one of the five major tenets of Islam. Most Muslims believe if they strictly follow Islam's five tenets, they can earn Allah's favor and obtain salvation (paradise).*

## **WHAT IS A UUPG?**

*A people group is a group with a unique location, language, and/or customs that distinguishes them from other groups. UUPG stands for "unengaged, unreached people group." This group has little or no access to the gospel and there is no current strategy to reach them. There are currently more than 3,000 UUPGs throughout the world. More than 1,000 of them are in South Asia.*



## DAY 1

*South Asian megacities have a reputation for being hot spots for a vast multitude of people groups, religions, nationalities, and persons from every imaginable socioeconomic status. While India's population is around 14% Muslim, the Indian megacity of Mumbai hovers at 25% within its city district. Many Mumbai Muslims—far from their villages and separated from the pressures of family and tradition—may be ready to receive the good news of salvation. Pray for Christians in Mumbai to be bold and faithful to share with their Muslim friends and neighbors, and for open hearts to receive and accept Jesus as Lord.*

## DAY 2

*Communities from every people group of Pakistan live in Karachi, one of the largest cities in the Muslim world (over 16 million people). Karachi is also made up of migrants from many backgrounds. Muhajirs, the Muslim immigrants who relocated from India to Pakistan in 1947, make up 50% of the population. Please pray for the Holy Spirit to open the hearts of Muhajirs and other Muslim peoples in Karachi to receive Christ. Pray that Muslims who have heard the good news will repent and believe.*

## DAY 3

*Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India and home to more than 47 million Muslims. This number is more than the Muslim population in Iraq, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, and they have been vastly underreached by Great Commission efforts. However, in the past decade God has brought many Hindus in Uttar Pradesh to faith in Jesus, and we believe He will use them to reach their Muslims neighbors. Pray that Christians can cast vision to these believers to share the gospel with Muslims. Pray for God to work through miracles to draw Muslims to Himself using new Hindu believers.*

## DAY 4

*More than 200 million Bengali Muslims follow the teachings of the Quran and their revered prophet, Muhammed. As a community-oriented culture, members find identity in the group, and decision-making is based on whether actions will bring honor or shame to the group. Turning to Jesus often results in persecution and loss of family and support systems. Pray that whole families decide to follow Christ together so they have an automatic support system. Also pray for deep discipleship that quickly grounds believers in the Word and in prayer and joins them with local healthy, reproducing churches.*





**DAY 5** *Punjab, Pakistan, is a region that is home to over 110 million people, with the vast majority of that population identifying as Muslim. Punjabi Muslims are the largest ethnic group in Pakistan and the world's third largest Muslim ethnicity. Lahore is the most populous city in Punjab with an estimated 11 million people. Pray that the hearts of the Punjabi people would be open and sensitive to the truth of the gospel. Pray that many Punjabis would come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ this Ramadan.*

**DAY 6** *The Oriya-speaking Shaikhs of India, numbering 120,000, are unreached. The Shaikhs practice Sunni Islam, the largest branch of Islam. Pray for the ministry of one Shaikh background believer who lives and works in a major city in the Indian state of Orissa. Pray that he will be strengthened to faithfully spread the good news among his own people, and that the Spirit of God will bring spiritual understanding to the Shaikh families of Orissa. Pray for new believers to partner together to communicate that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and Life.*

**DAY 7** *During Ramadan, Muslim families fast from sunup to sundown for 30 days. Muslim women must wake up very early each morning to prepare a meal their families can eat before the sun rises. Once the sun sets and fasting has ended for the day, women set to work preparing for the family to gather for a large evening meal. Pray that as women grow tired from this schedule of early mornings and late nights, they will encounter true rest found only in Jesus Christ.*

**DAY 8** *Although roughly 15% of Delhi's population is Muslim, access to these peoples for the sake of the gospel remains difficult. Pray for online outreach and other efforts to gain entry into homes and communities. Local Christians have barriers to overcome when reaching out to Muslims: fear, anger, hopelessness, culture, language, and a lack of knowledge about how to share the gospel with Muslims. Ask for the Holy Spirit to break through these barriers and for leaders to be raised up and entrusted with entering new communities. Pray these leaders will share the gospel among Muslims in Delhi.*

## DAY 9

*In 2020, more than 1,300 men, women and young people from 24 Muslim people groups in western India were brought out of darkness and into His marvelous light. These new Muslim background believers are being disciplined and mentored to use micro-SD cards to share the gospel story through in-home Bible studies. Pray for Muslim background believers to boldly proclaim the good news that has been entrusted to them. Pray for a mighty movement of God's Spirit among all the Muslim peoples of South Asia.*

## DAY 10

*One city in the mountains of North India has two official mosques and no registered churches—Christians gather for church in their homes. The two mosques host different sects of Muslims, and their calls to prayer from the loudspeakers start one after the other, appearing to war with each other. Pray that the believers will witness to the Muslims and resist being bound by fear. Pray that God, through these believers, will open hearts of Muslims in this city to His grace and mercy.*

## DAY 11

*Each Ramadan, sweat drips from Muhammed's brow, his leg muscles tighten, and his veins bulge as he strains under the weight of the three people crammed into the rickshaw he is cycling. Millions of Bengali Muslims like Muhammed work as day laborers and find it hard to keep the Ramadan fast. They are torn between wanting to be a good Muslim and providing for their families. Pray that many nominal Muslim day laborers who feel unable to measure up to Allah's standards will hear the gospel, believe in Jesus, share the good news with others, and become extraordinary disciples who make disciples.*

## DAY 12

*Pray for Muslims as they face prejudice and isolation in many cities and villages throughout South Asia. Many Muslim men, women and children living along India's western border along Pakistan are discriminated against and treated as enemies in their own country. Please pray that believers living in these remote areas will not view their Muslim neighbors with fear or distrust. Pray they will reach out to their neighbors as people God created who are in need of a Savior—individuals for whom Christ died.*





## DAY 13

*There are over 140 Muslim people groups that form a population of over 10 million Bhojpuri-speaking Muslims in North India. Though God is doing a great work among Bhojpuri-speaking peoples, there is little-to-no engagement among Muslims in this area. Please pray the Lord will stir the heart of the local church for their Muslim neighbors. Pray for a great harvest among them. Pray for the Father to raise up Muslim leaders from within this harvest who will carry forward the work until there is no place left among Muslim communities where the gospel has not reached.*

## DAY 14

*Intellectual graduate students and businessmen regularly meet with national partners to discuss the differences between Islam and Christianity. Trained in the tenets of Islam and methods to refute Christianity, many obstacles prevent intellectuals from following Jesus, like a misunderstanding of the Trinity and a belief that the Bible has been changed and corrupted. Ask the Holy Spirit to destroy false ideas that South Asian Muslim intellectuals have of Jesus Christ and the Bible. Pray that the Spirit will guide them into all truth and convict them of sin and the need for salvation through faith in Jesus alone.*

## DAY 15

*Some Muslims believe that fasting during Ramadan scorches out their sins with good deeds, just as the sun scorches the ground. Pray that the intense dryness of Ramadan will cause Assamese Muslims in India to thirst for the Living Water. Pray that they would seek Jesus with all their hearts and that they find Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to draw them to Jesus Christ in true faith and repentance. Ask God to bind and remove Satan's work in their lives and to open their eyes to the truth of the gospel.*

## DAY 16

*Fasting during Ramadan is required in Pakistan. Muslims need an excellent excuse not to fast, such as illness, travel, or some kind of emergency. Even then, fasting days are typically made up after the end of Ramadan. Contrast this with the fasting that, "frees the oppressed, breaks every yoke" and brings liberty in Christ as is portrayed in Isaiah 58. Ask God to bring the freedom of the gospel to Pakistani Muslims by the power of His Holy Spirit. God is using His Word, His followers, and His Spirit among these people. Ask Him to bring even more fruit in this season.*

## DAY 17

*Some South Asian Muslims, especially village dwellers, practice folk Islam. They believe they ward off evil spirits with amulets, and they draw black dots on babies' foreheads to shield them from the evil eye. Pray for abundant gospel seed-sowing and Scripture distribution among South Asian Muslims. Ask the Lord to show Himself powerful so that many South Asian Muslims recognize that He is the one true God who has power over evil spirits, nature, sickness and sin. As they place their faith in Him, pray that South Asian Muslims will experience His peace that passes all understanding.*

## DAY 18

*Two years ago, the Myanmar army expelled the Rohingya people, who are primarily Muslims. Though Bangladesh took in the refugees, the country does not want them. Rohingya are not permitted to work, attend school beyond age eight, or travel farther than two miles from home. Thankfully, nonprofit organizations help the Rohingya receive medical care, basic housing, and necessary supplies. Pray for a long-term solution to a seemingly impossible refugee situation. Pray that many Rohingya will hear and respond to the gospel. Pray that Rohingya believers, instead of hiding in fear, will identify each other and work together to share with their fellow Rohingya.*

## DAY 19

*Bengali Muslims view menstruation with shame, so women often pretend to fast and hide the truth. Because women's menstrual period makes them ritually unclean, they must make up missed days of fasting during the year. Pray that many Bengali Muslim women will hear the gospel, believe and have their honor restored. Ask God to reveal Himself in a special way to Bengali Muslim women, showing them that they are loved and accepted by Him, and that Jesus's blood makes them clean in His sight.*

## DAY 20

*The Noorbasha are a Muslim UUPG numbering 703,000 people. However, not all Noorbasha are strict Muslims. In the rural areas, some Muslims may not pray as much as they are supposed to. Although they consider themselves Muslims, some people observe traditional Muslim festivals like Ramadan and celebrate popular Hindu festivals. Pray that the Holy Spirit would be preparing hearts right now among the Noorbasha to receive truth once it is proclaimed to them. Pray that the peace of God that surpasses all understanding would overwhelm them after hearing this truth so that they believe in Jesus.*





## DAY 21

*Ahmed\* in Kolkata shared, “I used to be Muslim until God sent someone to share the gospel with me and I put my faith in Him. Please pray for God to open the eyes of the many Muslims in West Bengal, India, like he opened mine. During Ramadan, Muslims fast and pray. They expect Allah to hear them because of their works. They believe that they gain His favor when they fast and buy or prepare food to break the fast. Pray that Muslims turn to God in repentance and faith through Jesus. Pray they understand the meaning of the true fast which God requires” (see Isa. 58 and Matt. 6:16–18).*

## DAY 22

*Pray for the Mappila people who live in the southern state of Kerala, India. One of the highest concentrations of South Asian Muslims is found in the Mappila population, and they are one of the least reached Muslim people groups. Pray for believers who live in Kerala to overcome their fears so they can share truth with their Muslim friends and neighbors. Ask that believers will remember the words of Psalm 27:1 (NIV): “The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?”*

## DAY 23

*Lift up the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, which is home to millions of Muslims. Pray that the faith of the believers living there will be strong, and that they will trust that God’s power is enough to penetrate the hardest and darkest areas. God has the power to save people, and His power can be trusted. Pray this verse over believers seeking to share with Muslims in Tamil Nadu: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16 ESV).*

## DAY 24

*During Ramadan, Urdu-speaking Muslims in the Indian state of Bihar are not just participating in a religious festival. Ramadan is a familial, cultural, communal, spiritual and identity-shaping festival that most Muslims have participated in their whole lives. Pray for new believers to hold strong and endure communal pressure and familial expectations during this season. Pray that the local church will reach out to them during this time to help them stand firm in their new identity in Christ.*

**DAY 25** *Pray for Christian women from Muslim backgrounds. They are often pressured to marry Muslim men. Ask for God to raise up more Christian men from Muslim backgrounds. Ask for the Spirit to give these women extra strength as they wait on the Lord. Pray their families honor their decision to wait. Pray for those who have already married. Ask for the salvation of their husbands during this season of Ramadan.*

**DAY 26** *Pray for the deep discipleship and continued growth of dozens of Muslim background believers in Central India. Ask that their new life in Christ would be evident in their family life and community. Pray that these believers would continue to share the gospel boldly among their family, neighbors and relatives. As they often face persecution from the very people they try to share with, pray for wisdom for how to share in culturally appropriate ways and the boldness to not shrink back in fear. Ask for sustained unity among them and for zeal in sharing the gospel.*

**DAY 27** *Pray for the Sindhi Muslims, who are known as some of the most devout Muslims in Pakistan. They live in rural areas and have not been taught much about their religion and why they believe what they believe. Still, they remain dedicated in their adherence to Islam. During Ramadan, many are fasting in hopes to receive some sort of blessing from Allah. Pray that God would give them a true blessing by opening their hearts to the gospel. Pray that Pakistani Christians will be able to deliver the gospel for the first time to the Sindhi people.*

**DAY 28** *Bharuch in Gujarat, India, is one of the state's main population centers for Muslims. Because of its distinct black soil, it is sometimes called Kanam Pradesh, which means "black soil land." The region's nutrient-rich black soil is ideal for growing cotton. Please pray that many seeds of the gospel will be sown in the Bharuch harvest field. Pray that many in Bharuch would trust Christ as their Savior and Lord. Please also pray for existing believers in this city to have a love for the lost, and ask the Lord to break down fear.*





## DAY 29

*The UUPGs in Northwest Pakistan are some of the world's hardest to reach groups in the world. Pray that inroads would be made among the UUPGs in these areas. Pray for softened hearts. Pray for local Pakistani believers to be burdened to go and share with these peoples. Pray for ways to enter these difficult areas. Pray that believers would find these people groups in Pakistan's large cities, which are easier to access. To reach these remote peoples, it will take an amazing work of God to open doors and hearts. So pray for God to move!*

## DAY 30

*Praise the Lord for a group of believers in the state of Maharashtra, India, who are excitedly sharing Jesus with people around them, especially Muslims. One couple runs a farm. One lady runs a woman's hair salon. Another man is physically disabled. They all are out there, committed to sharing the gospel among Muslims at least twice per week! There are many Muslims in their area, and this group of believers have formed a church and is going after them. Please ask the Lord to bring many Muslims to faith in their area and throughout Maharashtra. Pray for Him to help these believers faithfully disciple those who believe.*

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