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Ramadhan

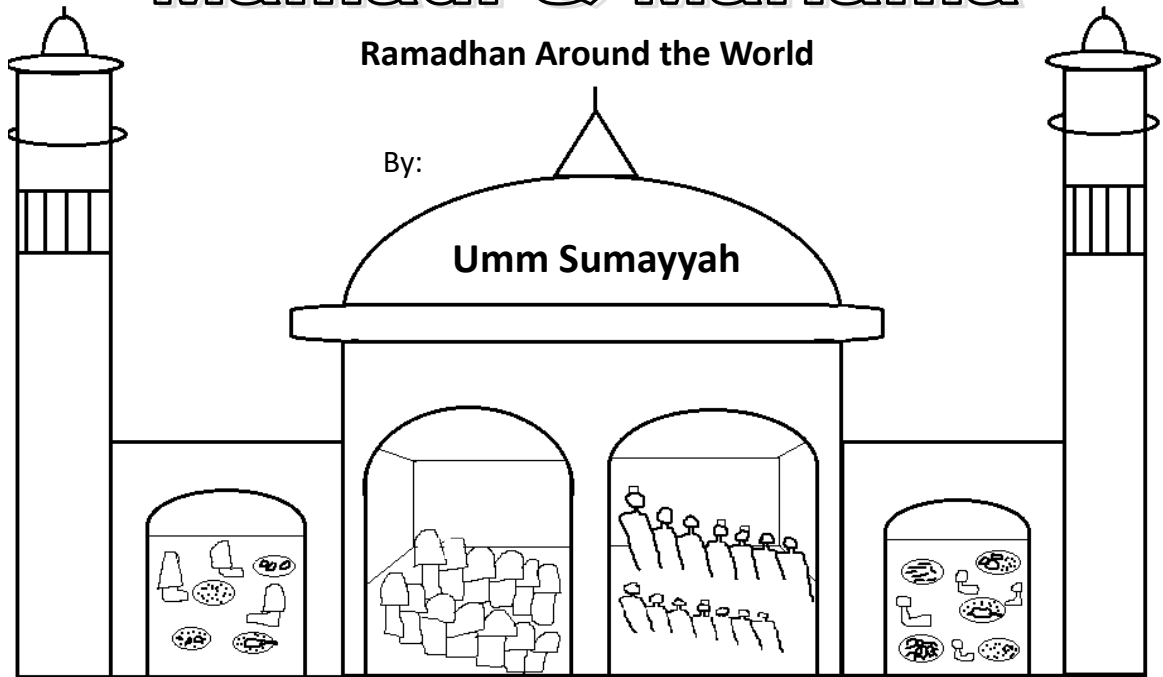
with

Mamadi & Mariama

Ramadhan Around the World

By:

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Assalaam 'alaykum. My name is Mamadi, and this is my little sister Mariama.

I am 8 years old, and she is only 6. We are *Mandenka* from Mali, a country in West Africa. As Ramadhan is approaching, I would like to share with you what we did last Ramadhan, in shaa Allah.



Ramadhan is the ninth month of the Hijri calendar (Islamic calendar), and the month in which the Qur'an was revealed. It is also the fourth pillar of Islam during which Muslims from all over the world fast from dawn until sunset. Fasting starts after the moon has been sighted. I was 7 years old and very excited to experience my first fast! Mariama also wanted to fast even though



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she was only 5 years old at the time. My parents wanted me to try fasting only half of the day because it was my first time and it was very sunny and hot outside. I kindly asked them to let me try fasting the whole day; which I did, but it was very very difficult. I'm still glad I tried because it got easier the next



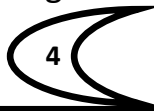
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nine days that I fasted, Alhamdulillah.

Mariama: I tried fasting, but I couldn't finish the whole day. But in shaa Allah, I will try again this Ramadhan.

Yes, Mariama also fasted. Even though she didn't finish the whole day, we



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were all very proud of her, maaShaa Allah, tabarak-Allah. My mom told her not to push herself too hard because she was still little.

After going out at night to sight the moon, we started Ramadhan by going to the masjid every night with our family for Taraweeh. Taraweeh is the long



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night prayer during Ramadhan. After Salaatu Taraweeh, we went to sleep until Suhoor. Our parents probably stayed up a little longer, but we had to go to sleep because we were tired by then. Oh, I didn't explain what Suhoor is. Suhoor is the meal or drink we consume at the end of the night. It is right before dawn.



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For suhoor, sometimes we just had dates, water, or milk. On other nights, we had traditional meals like **Lafidi** (a type of rice dish), **Monii** (a type of pudding made of ground wheat, rice, or barley turned into little balls), or **Sadii/Serii** (a type of rice pudding, plain or mixed with sugar and milk/yogurt, or sugar and lemon).



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Mariama: After Suhoor, we prayed Fajr. The men prayed at the masjid, and most of the women prayed at home with the children. Mamadi went to the masjid with our dad. Right Mamadi?

Mamadi: Right Mariama. I just wanted to be like the adults. **Laughs**



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I didn't go every night, but I did what I could. After Fajr, we went to sleep, woke up, then started the day. Mariama and I sometimes went with our mother to different orphanages to help out with chores, feed the kids, or even play with them. Our mother said that it is very good to do good deeds such as



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praying more and helping others, year-round, and especially during Ramadhan. We also organized Iftar in our neighborhood and broke the fast with many different people. Well, our mom and dad did; we just helped out sometimes with whatever we could. Iftar is the breaking of the fast at sunset.



Our mother and older sister Aisha cooked lots of food for Iftar to share with others. After Iftar, we prayed Maghrib. After Maghrib, we sometimes went to sleep because we were young while the adults stayed up. I asked my dad to wake me up for Isha and Taraweeh, but sometimes he just let me sleep



because he could tell that I was tired. Hmm, maybe I went to sleep after 'Isha instead.

Mariama: Mamadi, you forgot to tell them what fasting is. Do you want me to tell them?



Mamadi: Ohhh, you are right Mariama; sorry. Yes, please, go ahead.

Mariama: It's okay. Fasting in Islam is when Muslims do not eat or drink from dawn until sunset. During Ramadhan, this is done for 29 or 30 days. Muslims start fasting once the moon has been sighted, and stop after sighting the moon again; then it is Eid al Fitr (the celebration after the month of fasting).





There are also other things that break the fast. I don't know all the details yet. Muslims are encouraged to give more charity, pray more, recite the Qur'an more, and do as many good deeds as possible during the month of fasting. Actually, it is always encouraged, but even more so during this month because



the rewards are multiplied. I believe fasting during Ramadhan is like fasting for ten months. Oh yes, and fasting in Arabic is Sawm. Right Mamadi?

Mamadi: Right; MaaShaa Allah Mariama, you remember so many details. Allahumma baarik alayki (May Allah bless you).



Mariama: Aww, jazak Allahu khayr.

Mamadi: Wa iyyaki Mariama.

The day of fasting ends after Iftar. After Maghrib and Isha, then follows Taraweeh again. My dad told me that praying during the night with the Imaam



(the leader of the congregational prayer) till the end is like praying the whole night in rewards. That's the reason why I love Taraweeh very much. He also said that during Ramadhan, the gates of Hell are closed and the gates of Paradise are opened. That's also a reason why I love Ramadhan so much.



Towards the end of Ramadhan, there is Laylatul Qadr (the Night of Decree). The rewards for worshiping during this night is better than a thousand months. No one except Allah knows the exact day, but we know that it is in one of the last ten nights of Ramadhan. Because of that, Muslims worship



even more on those nights. Mariama and I tried staying awake to read or listen to as much of the Qur'an as we could, and pray, but we couldn't stay up for very long. Some of the adults in our family did I'tikaaf by staying secluded in the masjid only to worship Allah the whole time.



After the moon was sighted, Ramadhan was sadly over. We celebrated the end of the month of fasting on the first of Shawwal (tenth Hijri month) called Eid Al Fitr. Our parents paid Zakaatul Fitr on behalf of the whole family before the Eid prayer. Zakaatul Fitr is the obligatory charity given before the Eid prayer.



It is one Saa' (two hands full of food). Because we have a big family, our parents gave many hands full of dates, barley, raisin, rice, and other local common food. The fun part was when Mariama and I went out with them to distribute it to people. It was nice seeing smiles on people's faces as they



made du'a (prayer/supplication) for us.

We hope you enjoyed hearing our story. It was fun sharing it with you. How is Ramadhan in your country? And what's your favorite part of it?

Mamadi and Mariama: Assalaam 'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

The End