



RAMADAN

Praying for South Asian Muslims

August 2011

FAST FACT: This month, Muslims all over the world are observing their 30-day period of fasting and prayer, which is called Ramadan. Please pray for the 457 million Muslims who are South Asian peoples. One-fourth of the world's Muslim population live in the South Asian countries of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, India, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Millions of South Asian Muslims live in the Diaspora and more than 350,000 Muslims from South Asian countries live in the United States.

SOUTH ASIAN PEOPLES. During Ramadan, Muslims from South Asia and all over the world are fasting and praying from dawn until dusk "in submission to Allah." Pray that as Muslims observe this 30-day fast, they will come to know the God who wants to communicate with them personally. Pray that they will have dreams and visions of "Isa" (Jesus) and that devoted Christians will share the Good News with these who are seeking to submit to God in the best way they know how. Ask the Father to open your eyes to Muslims around you who need to know Him and give you the courage to share with them.

SOUTH ASIAN PEOPLES - DIASPORA. Have you heard of the worldwide event taking place on August 1-29? No, it isn't Judgment Day. It's the month of fasting for followers of the Islamic faith. Many people around the world are seriously searching for favor with God through this yearly ritual. Some are hoping to receive a special vision or dream as God's guidance for their lives. Please pray for South Asian immigrants who live in North America, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa and Southeast Asia and are fasting this month. Ask the Holy Spirit to give them dreams and visions of Jesus calling to them, "Come to Me!" Pray that our God will lead them to followers of Jesus who can tell them the Good News. Ask our Father to give them grace to repent, believe and follow Jesus.

SOUTH ASIAN PEOPLES – INDIA. "Muslims in India will be observing Ramadan this month, the Islamic month of fasting. Efforts are underway to try and have the 'JESUS' film or a similar movie shown on local television channels in our state. We still do not know whether or not the movies will be aired. Please ask God to make it possible for the movies to be approved for airing. Pray that many Muslims will watch these films and will have a 'hunger to know more' sparked in their lives. Ask God to reveal Himself to them during Ramadan in a way that leaves no doubt that He is God and that Jesus is the Savior for all people."

SOUTH ASIAN PEOPLES – PAKISTAN and NORTHERN INDIA. Pray for five workers who have recently returned to the United States after a God-soaked two-year term of service in Pakistan and northern India. These young people were not only godly, mature and passionate, but they forged many friendships and shared the Gospel boldly during their time there. Pray for them to be strengthened and encouraged in the Lord as they transition back to life in the States and seek to inspire others in churches across the country to come on mission with God to Pakistan and northern India! Pray also for lasting fruit in the relationships that they made, and for long-term workers and local believers to be faithful in following up with these seekers of the Truth.

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SOUTH ASIAN PEOPLES – PAKISTAN and NORTHERN INDIA. Give thanks to the Father that following ObL's death, Pakistan witnessed very few protests or violence. For the most part, both local believers and cross-cultural workers remained safe despite the high-security alert brought on by the sudden military action. Since then, at least one woman is known to have come to Christ! God is working in Pakistan! "The light shines through the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it!" (John 1:9).

MUSIC, ART AND STORYTELLING MINISTRIES. Pray for some music workshops happening in northeastern India in August. Although one area has many believers, pray that they will want to reach out to nonbelievers using the arts. Also intercede for music and chronological Bible storying projects among Hindu and Muslim people groups that will be beginning in one northeastern state.

BIHARI MUSLIMS OF BANGLADESH. This month, a ministry reaching out to Bihari Muslim families will receive the "Magdalena" film in DVD format in the Urdu language, the oral language most Bihari Muslims in Bangladesh speak. Please pray that this Christian film will touch the hearts of Bihari Muslim women in Bangladesh and help them to understand that Jesus loves them and has the power to transform their lives.

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BIHARI MUSLIMS OF BANGLADESH. Thank you for your prayers for Ashraf (pseudonym), an 8-year-old Bihari Muslim orphan. Ashraf went to school later than the other children in his community because his relatives could not afford to buy a uniform, a book bag, pencils and notebooks for him. Now he goes to school but is still struggling to read and write. He would rather play cricket, but he is glad that he can go to the free tutorial center in the afternoons. The teacher there helps him to do his homework and encourages him to study hard. Please pray that Ashraf will be able to continue to go to school. Pray also that he will make progress in his reading and writing skills and will be encouraged to continue learning. Please pray for all Bihari Muslim children living in Bangladesh. Many are suffering in numerous ways.

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CHITTAGONG MUSLIMS OF BANGLADESH. Bangladesh is divided into seven divisions, and these divisions are like states in the United States. Chittagong is the name of one of the seven divisions of Bangladesh. Chittagong Division has 23 million Muslims. One family is responsible for God's work among the Muslims of the Chittagong Division. Please pray that God will move in churches and in the hearts of individuals to partner with this family in sharing the truth of Christ through prayer, participation and provision as they seek to reach the 23 million Muslims of the Chittagong Division of Bangladesh.

CHITTAGONG MUSLIMS OF BANGLADESH. In June, you were asked to pray for national partners who were enduring persecution. Since that time, these national partners have continued to share the truth of Christ with more people. Numerous people have accepted Jesus as their personal Savior and many house groups have started. Praise God for providing strength, boldness and encouragement. God cannot be stopped! He has won the victory!

DHAKA, BANGLADESH. "Pantries are stocked with dates and special kinds of lentils and rice. Prayer caps and beads are in place. There is a certain anticipation in the air as Bangladesh Muslims await the official sighting of the moon that signals the beginning of the month of Ramadan. Muslims fast during the daylight hours and break the fast at sundown. They often eat well into the evening and then have an early breakfast before sunrise. During the day, they are not even allowed a drink of water. Some are able to keep the fast the whole month, and others falter at some point and give up. It is a time when Muslims try to spend more time focusing on God and learning about patience and humility. We have seen the opposite effect as the month wears on for the millions around us. There are often fights in the traffic jams as people's patience is frazzled by lack of food and water. There is also the feeling by many that they just are unable keep the fast and are therefore unable to please God. Pray that the Muslims of Dhaka will realize their deep need for a Savior. Pray that they will experience the grace and love of God that will forever replace the rules and works of man."

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KARACHI, PAKISTAN. "What a man desires is unfailing love . . ." (Proverbs 19:22a, NIV). Most of August will be the month of Ramadan; the fasting period for Muslims around the world. Muslims are generally more sensitive to spiritual matters during this time. Pray that the Lord Jesus will heal the hearts of those who are seeking and sensitive to spiritual matters who have not yet made decisions to place their faith in Him. Plead for the people of Karachi to come to know the one, true Savior who demonstrates, offers and is unfailing love. And ask for those who do have a personal relationship with Jesus to be sensitive and obedient to the Holy Spirit's guiding them to share the story of Jesus with others around them. Pray that they, too, will come to understand a new depth of this unfailing love by sharing it with others. Above all, pray against the father of all lies, asking that he will lose his grip on the hearts he is trying very hard to keep captive. Jesus is where freedom is found, and He already holds the victory.

MUSLIM SINDHIS OF PAKISTAN. A reprint of the Sindhi New Testament is underway, and 10,000 copies have been distributed in the last five years. Pray that New Testaments will come into the hands of those with a sincere spiritual hunger and that this will result in spiritual fruit. Pray that the few Sindhi believers will be strong and courageous for Christ amid opposition.

SRI LANKA. August in Sri Lanka will be a time of fasting and feasting for the 8 percent of the population who follow Islam as they celebrate their holy month, Ramadan. While this may not sound like many people, these pockets of Muslims make up significant communities all around the island: Arab (4,000), Bengali (22,000), Malay (60,000), Mappila (5,000), and the Sri Lankan Moor (1,500,000). Each of these groups is recognized as an unreached people, and while some resources are available for them, there has been no active church planting among them within the past two years. Because Ramadan was the month in which the first portion of the Quran was revealed to Muhammad, Muslims consider this month to be a favorable time to receive revelation from above. Please beseech our Father to make Himself known to Muslims all over the island during this time. Pray also that God will burden the church of Sri Lanka to look past ethnicity and cultural barriers and see a people bound in darkness, a people whom God wants to free. Though they, too, are few in number in comparison to those who follow world religions, pray that the believers will passionately live for Christ and share truth, and that God will open hearts and minds to salvation.

<http://prayerthreads.imb.org>

ASSAMESE MUSLIMS OF INDIA. "A young married woman in our city has been hearing stories about Jesus for several years. Through her friendship with several workers, she has heard the Gospel over and over. In a recent conversation, she said that she believes the stories she has been told. However, her husband does not believe and does not like to hear the stories about Jesus. The young woman is discouraged by his unwillingness to listen. Additionally, because her husband, as head of the household, makes the decisions for their family, she does not feel free to confess her belief. She is also struggling to understand the difference between merely converting to a new religion and truly changing her life by surrendering it to God. She seems to believe that following her current religion and following Jesus are basically the same. Please pray for this young woman to see that the only true faith is a relationship with God through Jesus. Pray that she will be able to share this truth with her husband. Ask for her husband and other members of their family to have open hearts."

BIHARI MUSLIMS OF INDIA. Recently one Bihari Muslim-background believer met another Bihari Muslim-background believer in India's capital city. While one study has shown that as many as a third of Delhi's Muslims are Biharis, for two Bihari Muslim-background believers to happen across one another in Delhi is amazing! Pray that these two Christian believers will have many opportunities to study God's Word and fellowship with one another. Pray also that their number will grow. Approximately 17 million Bihari Muslims live in India, and few have trusted Jesus as their Savior and Lord.
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BIHARI MUSLIMS. In January 2009, you began praying that Philip(pseudonym), a former Bihari Muslim-background believer, and his family would be able to obtain passports so they could travel to Bangladesh for a time of retreat, planning and prayer with those serving among the Bihari Muslims of Bangladesh. In May 2009, Philip was granted a passport. The retreat was postponed, however, because his wife and daughters had not yet received the passports for which they had applied. Finally, this spring, Philip's wife and daughters were granted passports. Give thanks to the Lord with us. Ask that He would now guide the timing of the retreat. Philip and his family still need to apply for visas to Bangladesh. A Bihari Muslim-background believer, like Philip, who is from India and speaks Urdu would be welcomed among Bihari Muslims in Bangladesh and would be able to share his testimony and God's story widely.
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DECCANI MUSLIMS OF INDIA. Last month you were asked to pray for K. Please continue to intercede for him, as he received a threat from his in-laws that they were going to kill him since he accepted Christ. Religious community leaders are preparing a court case against him. If that goes through, K's name and picture could be put into all the newspapers in the country, crying for retribution (his killing). Another man, I., faces similar problems. The religious community leaders have already been to the police and are demanding that he be jailed for attempting to convert others to Christianity. I.'s family is in danger, so they will probably move to another town. Pray that God will give these brothers courage and boldness to live for Jesus amid the family and community pressures. Pray that despite the lost relationships due to their faith in Jesus, God will give them joy and peace in the midst of their pain.

DECCANI MUSLIMS OF INDIA. In answer to your prayers, recent Bible studies among new leaders have been "raising the bar" for accountability. Give thanks to God that believers from a Deccani Muslim background are deepening their faith and willingly submitting to the Word of God! Pray that their many questions about their faith in Jesus will drive them to do more Bible study. Ask God to give them a spirit of repentance and power to obey the Word they know so that their lives will no longer conform to the world, but be transformed by Jesus.

GUJARATI OF INDIA. In the past two months, hundreds of Gujaratis have heard about the love of Jesus and about the faithfulness of God. They heard this through personal testimonies, chronological Bible storying classes and Vacation Bible School, as well as through drama and the arts. Contact information for local believers and workers was given to everyone who would take it. Please pray for all who heard the Gospel this summer. Pray that they will think on everything they heard, that God will draw them ever closer to Himself, and that they will respond. Pray that those who are seeking the Truth will make contact with workers so they can learn more about God. Petition for diligence on the part of local believers and workers to continue to return to places where ministry occurred and to be persistent in sharing.
<http://prayforgujarat.wordpress.com/>

KASHMIRI MUSLIMS OF INDIA. "I was in a beautiful garden, and an old woman dressed in white came up to me and said, 'Come with me.' She then took me to a place where I saw Him . . . Jesus . . . dressed in white and glowing with love for me. He hugged me and took me in his arms. He set a crimson red rose in my lap and then said to me, 'You are my daughter. You are my daughter.' And all I could do was cry. Then I turned around and saw a huge crowd of hundreds, thousands, all coming to be baptized." Z said that she woke up the morning after her baptism and felt an amazing peace sweep over her as she knew that she belonged to Jesus, and that He had called her His child. The day before, Z had said during a house church meeting for Muslim-background believers, "Why can't we be like that woman in the film who went from house to house, gathering women and children, and sharing with them the message of Jesus? Isn't this why we meet together?" Please pray for Jesus Christ to continue to reveal Himself through dreams and visions, like He has done for Z, during this month of Ramadan, when Muslims often feel more of a sense of guilt and a need for more of God's power. Also pray that local believing women will share their testimonies boldly and with the faith that many more are waiting to hear.

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MUSLIMS OF KARNATAKA STATE, INDIA. As the sun is setting, Muslims rush home to taste the first food or drink since before sunrise. They will gather and break their fasts with a date. Each year, Muslims around the world participate in Ramadan, 30 days of fasting. From sunrise to sunset, they do not eat or drink; many do not even swallow their own saliva. Islamic holidays are determined by their lunar calendar so it is difficult to give exact dates, but this year they estimate that Ramadan will be on August 1-29. This month, please set aside one meal-time prayer to intercede specifically for the Muslims of Karnataka. Ask God to reveal Himself through supernatural means during this special month. Pray that God will draw Muslims to read the Bible and confirm the truth of Jesus' identity. Near the end of the month, the Night of Power is celebrated. It is believed that this is the night that the first revelations of the Quran were given to Muhammad. It is considered the holiest night of the year. Many Muslims believe that on this night, God will answer their requests; they are encouraged to stay awake all night praying and asking for forgiveness. They are often open to dreams and visions. This year the Night of Power will likely be on August 26, give or take a day. Please set aside a day to fast and pray that many Muslims will receive dreams and visions identifying Jesus as the only way to right standing with God.

MUSLIMS OF LUCKNOW, INDIA. The Muslim month of fasting this year is on August 1-29. Muhammad received the first revelation of the Quran during this month. Along with not eating during the daylight hours, Muslims spend extra time reading the Quran and praying. Please join them in prayer, asking that God will reveal Himself to them.
<http://www.IsaMasih-Lucknow.org>

MUSLIMS OF LUCKNOW, INDIA. "The college-age young women for whom you prayed have come and gone now. They did a wonderful job as they followed God's leadership throughout the city. Almost every day, they had opportunities to share their faith with local people. When they first arrived, they prayerwalked an area near where they were staying. A few days later, they met a woman from the area while they were in a different part of the city. They gave her a Bible and shared their faith. Pray that very soon, the woman and her husband will come to faith."
<http://www.IsaMasih-Lucknow.org>

PUNJABIS OF INDIA. Pray for the young people of Punjab. The youth of India are starting to break away from tradition and are drifting towards materialism and secularism. This provides an unprecedented opportunity to reach out to them with the Gospel. Pray for more workers to come and share with them. Petition for boldness among the local believers to share the Gospel with their friends and family. Pray that as the seed is sown, it will fall on the good soil and take root, and that lives will be changed eternally. Pray that as people come to know the Father, there will be mature believers who will disciple them and help them to grow strong in their faith.
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