

when, by the changes of the lunar calendar, it falls in the heat of summer, when the days are long. Even then it is forbidden to drink a drop of water or take a morsel of food. Yet it is a fact that Mohammedans, rich and poor, spend more on food in that month than in any other month of the year; and it is also true that physicians have a run of patients with troubles from indigestion at the close of this religious fast! The explanation is simple. Although the fast extends over one lunar month, it only begins at dawn and ends at sunset each day. During the whole night it is usual to indulge in pleasure, feasting, and dinner parties. This makes clear what Mohammed meant when he said that "God would make the fast an ease and not a difficulty."

The hours during which fasting is prescribed are to be sacredly observed. Not only is there total abstinence from food and drink, but bathing, smoking, taking snuff, smelling a flower, and the use of medicine are prohibited. I have even heard Moslem jurists discuss whether hypodermic medication was allowed during the fast period. In eastern Arabia the use of an eye-lotion even is considered as equivalent to breaking the fast. The law provides, however, that infants, idiots, the sick, and the aged are exempted from observing this fast.

**Extent of  
Abstinence**