



FASTING

with Jasmuheen

The Encyclopaedia Britannica says fasting is “abstinence from food or drink, or both, for ritualistic, mythical, ascetic or other religious and/or ethical purposes. The abstention may be complete or partial, lengthy or of short duration. Fasting has been practiced from antiquity worldwide by the founders and followers of many religions, by culturally designated individuals (e.g. hunters, or candidates for initiation rites) In the religions of ancient peoples and civilizations, fasting was a practice to prepare persons, especially priests and priestesses, to approach the Deities. In the Hellenistic mystery religions (e.g. the healing cult of the God Asclepius) the Gods were thought to reveal their divine teachings in the dreams and visions only after a fast that required the total dedication of the devotee In the religions of traditional or preliterate peoples, fasting is often practiced before or during a vision (e.g. among the North American Indian peoples of the great plains of the Pacific North West). Among the Evenk (Tungus) of Siberia, Shamans (religious persona thought to have the power to heal and to communicate psychically) often received their initial visions not with a quest but rather after an unexplained illness; after the vision however, they fast and train themselves to see future visions and to control spirits.”

Research goes on to share how fasting and spiritual mastery have gone hand in hand throughout time. From the Pueblo Indians of Americas South West to Jainism where fasting is done according to certain prescribed rules using specific meditations, that bring on trance and heightened awareness.

In the Theravada School, Buddhists fast on holy days and Sadhus (Holy men) in India are known to frequently fast. In the West, Judaism, Christianity and Islam also emphasize fasting during certain periods - Yom Kippur, Lent, Ramadan are all times of fasting and abstinence for many due to their religious ideologies and rituals.