

Customary practices and laws, relating to food and fasting, have been traced back to Biblical and Quranic times. Fasting throughout religious history has often been a response to the religious and supernatural realm and worldly problems. However, health consciousness is also a key reason as to why people fast. Muslims and Christians alike engage in fasting techniques and practices, however, doctrinal and theological differences between the two causes for discrepancies. Similar doctrinal practices attest to restrictions of overeating, the disapproval of the use of strong drink and oral stimulants, vegetarian dieting and other means, especially during certain religious holidays. Having historical national days of prayer (Christian) or observing Ramadan (Muslim), the observer is challenged with their real intent and spiritual nature of the reasoning behind the fast. This paper looks at the role of fasting, as it relates to fasting in the United States of America, the difficulties of it, the difficulties that the two religions face, and health concerns related to fasting. The paper explores why people fast and the effects of fasting for religious and health reasons in Islamic and Christian communities.