



MUSLIM BAR  
ASSOCIATION  
OF NEW YORK

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On behalf of the Muslim Bar Association of New York (MuBANY), I write to inform you that on or about May 6, 2019, Muslims will mark the beginning of the month of Ramadan. This is a special time that affects the lives of many of your Muslim colleagues within the bar. During this month, many Muslim lawyers and law students across the United States will be observing the fast, reflecting in prayer, and trying to do more to better our communities and families. This is a timely opportunity to share a document prepared by MuBANY: *A Legal Employer's Guide to Islam in the Workplace*.

This guide provides an introduction to the religious practices and expressions of many Muslims and is meant to serve as a reference tool for law firms, law departments, and other legal employers when responding to the needs of their Muslim employees. We hope the attached guide will be helpful in informing legal employers about Ramadan and what it means for their Muslim colleagues.

During Ramadan – which this year is expected to be from May 6th to on or about June 4<sup>th</sup> - Muslims who observe the month will fast from dawn to dusk, abstaining from eating and drinking, among other things. Typically, Muslim legal professionals will strive to perform their prayers at five prescribed times during the day and will break their fast and have something to eat at sunset. Such observances rarely take more than five to ten minutes, but they may occur during business hours. That said, Muslims across America have been fulfilling their Ramadan obligations for years and rarely has it disrupted their professional responsibilities.

We believe that many law firms, corporate legal departments, government entities, judicial chambers and other organizations may not be aware of the religious observances followed by many Muslim lawyers during Ramadan. We are confident that if informed, legal employers would be more than willing to provide reasonable accommodations that may be necessary to assist their Muslim colleagues. While each person's needs are unique, such accommodations are often as simple as briefly excusing a colleague from a meeting so that he or she may break their fast or offer prayers. In addition, the end of Ramadan is marked by the joyous holiday of Eid-al-Fitr, and many Muslim lawyers may seek to take the day off to attend services and spend the day in celebration with family and friends.

Through our guide, we seek to educate legal employers, particularly those in management positions, so that they may be better informed about the needs of those lawyers, law students and legal professionals observing Ramadan. We will likewise encourage Muslim lawyers to talk to their employers about Ramadan so that there is an open and informed channel of communication.

In an effort to keep communications open, we suggest that your organization consider establishing an "Interfaith Attorney Affinity Group" or, to the extent there is a sizeable Muslim population, a "Muslim Attorney Affinity Group" as a means of providing a safe place for attorneys that identify with the faith to address issues and struggles that may affect them in the workplace. MuBANY is aware of several law firms that have established such groups, each of which have been well received at their respective firms and in our legal community.

Please feel free to contact me at [president@mubany.org](mailto:president@mubany.org) if you have any questions. We hope that we will have your organization's support on this issue and we wish you a warm "Ramadan Mubarak!" (Blessed Ramadan!).

Yours truly,



M. Umair Khan, Esq.

President

Muslim Bar Association of New York

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