

Webinar: Introducing Children to Ramadan (19 April 2021)

Nurul Ain Norman

On 19 April 2021, IAIS Malaysia held a public engagement webinar entitled ‘Introducing Children to Ramadan,’ delivered by Dr Nurul Ain Norman, the Acting Head of the Education, Culture and Art Unit at IAIS. The webinar was moderated by Assoc Prof Dr Mohamed Azam Mohamed Adil, Deputy CEO of IAIS Malaysia.

The webinar offered appropriate advice on preparing children for the fasting month, giving accurate information about how to train Islamic practices as a deed of worship and raise awareness about puberty. Dr Nurul Ain began the webinar by providing an overview of the timeline of puberty, the challenges Muslim parents face in introducing fasting to children, and the culture of several Muslim communities who favour obliging children to fast at an early age. She started by clarifying the criteria of puberty and continued to explain issues regarding it, notably that pubescence children are obliged to observe fasting—although they can break their fast if they face any extreme difficulty (fainting, severe dizziness, etc.). Pre-pubescence children, on the other hand, should only be encouraged to fast gradually, with full support from their parents. Other deeds of worship, such as Qur’anic recitation, *tarawih* participation, and donations, should also be encouraged in children in order to increase their good deeds and love towards Allah. Rebutting the claim that fasting has a negative impact on the development and school performance of children, Dr Nurul Ain quoted the Qur’an (6:152), mentioning that Allah never burdens or tasks anyone beyond his capacity but instead allows us to purify our body and soul through the blessings of fasting, good deeds, and forgiveness. Therefore, it is the responsibility of parents to teach, develop, and supervise children to ensure the physical and spiritual outcomes of Ramadan are achieved.