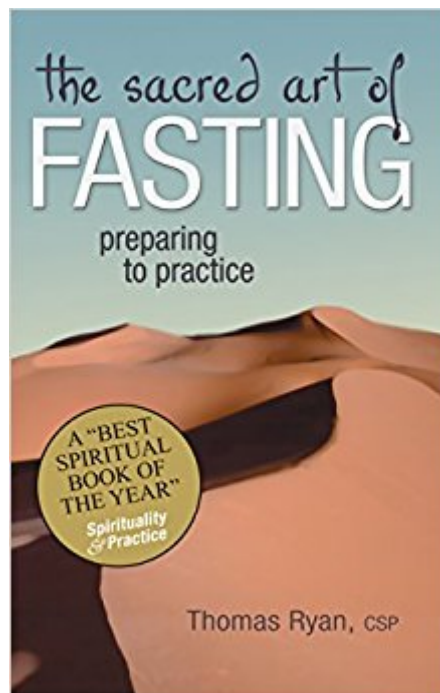




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The Sacred Art Of Fasting: Preparing To Practice (The Art Of Spiritual Living)



Synopsis

Open your mind and heart and discover how the sacred art of fasting can strengthen your spiritual appetite. Fasting as a religious act increases our sensitivity to that mystery always and everywhere present to us. It is an invitation to awareness, a call to compassion for the needy, a cry of distress, and a song of joy. It is a discipline of self-restraint, a ritual of purification, and a sanctuary for offerings of atonement. It is a wellspring for the spiritually dry, a compass for the spiritually lost, and inner nourishment for the spiritually hungry. Though fasting is practiced in some form by nearly every faith tradition throughout the world, it is often seen as scary or something only for monastic life. But fasting doesn't have to be intimidating. And it doesn't have to mean going weeks without food. The Sacred Art of Fasting invites you to explore the practical approaches, spiritual motivations, and physical benefits of this ancient practice by looking at the ways it is observed in several faith traditions. Inspiring personal reflections, helpful advice, and encouragement from people who practice fasting answer your questions, allay your fears, and reveal how you too can safely incorporate fasting into your spiritual life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Written by a Catholic priest and author of eight other books, this is an accessible, thoughtful treatment of the common spiritual practice of fasting. For an era characterized by obesity and overindulgence, this study offers a refreshing reminder that religion invites us to temperance; as

Ryan puts it, "the body tolerates a fast far better than a feast." Ryan explores both the physical and spiritual benefits of fasting with an emphasis on the religious grounds for fasting, including purification, repentance, mourning, rejoicing, self-discipline, remembering and prioritizing God, almsgiving, social solidarity and more. One of the book's strengths is its evenhanded introduction to each of the six religions it covers (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Mormonism) and the inclusion in each chapter of a "living voice from the tradition." These narratives allow adherents from each religion to speak from their own belief and experience, and they range in style from simple exposition to personal essay and interview format. The chapter on Christianity is slightly partial toward the author's own Catholicism, but the principles it explores are broadly inclusive. Another gem is the chapter with suggestions for keeping the spirit of a fast even if actual abstention is not physically possible for health reasons. This is a much-needed treatise that will attract believers from all faiths. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"A major contribution to a lost art, discipline, and spiritual practice. It reflects both a maturation of religion and a radical return to tradition. Thomas Ryan is teaching us how to refine our appetites!"
—Richard Rohr, OFM, founder and director of The Center for Action and Contemplation
"A solid and stimulating addition to the reading list of interreligious discussion groups."
—America
"Insightful and balanced.... Garner[s] the wisdom of different religious traditions ... needed in today's world.... Father Ryan has rendered a notable service in writing this book."
—Monastic and Interreligious Dialogue
"A superbly written guidebook and practical resource." Explores with ease and clarity our deeply rooted fascination with fasting and abstinence. He writes from a Christian perspective yet compares and contrasts teachings and practices in other religious traditions with insight and respect.
—John Borelli, Special Assistant to the President for Interreligious Initiatives, Georgetown University
"Broader and more complex than it might at first appear.... [A] sensitive treatment of fasting's tradition and meanings in not only Christianity but also Judaism, Islam, and other faiths."
—Library Journal
"A sober, practical, and deeply reverential discussion of an ancient practice undertaken in search for enlightenment."
—Midwest Book Review
"Readers may be inspired to develop their own fasting practice.... Warm [and] personal ... accessible and inviting.... Equips readers to practice this sacred art safely and meaningfully."
—New Age Retailer
"Accessible, thoughtful.... One of the book's strengths is its evenhanded

introduction to each of the six religions it covers....These [balanced] narratives allow adherents from each religion to speak from their own belief and experience.... [A] gem.... A much-needed treatise that will attract believers from all faiths.~•~ Publishers Weekly~•~“Does an excellent service~•~|. With diverse perspectives of social responsibility, devotion, ecology, the politics of hunger, and medicine, he explores the depth of human well-being ~•~| dispelling fears, guiding us with examples.~•~Bhaswati Bhattacharya, MPH, MD, holistic physician-author and assistant professor of family practice in medicine, Weill-Cornell Medical College~•~“Well-researched and developed.... Well-rounded.... Merit[s] serious consideration.... A feast of words that cannot fail to delight all who partake of it.... Reader-friendly ... a work of substance.~•~•~Montreal Anglican

Great read so far!

very very helpful and motivating. A must buy!

Well researched, well written

I have been interested in Fasting for some time. Am enjoying reading the different religions approach to Fasting. I am reading the last chapter on the "how To's" before I continue reading the books. I am doing this so that I can begin preparing myself for fasting.Jennie

Written by Catholic Priest and member of the Paulist Fathers Thomas Ryan, CSP, *The Sacred Art of Fasting: Preparing to Practice* is a straightforward look at fasting as a means to open oneself spiritually. Chapters survey the use of spiritual fasting in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and among the Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and strive to explain what makes fasting a "sacred art". The final chapter discusses in detail proper preparations for fasting, what health conditions make it unsafe to fast, alternative means of fasting for those who cannot safely do so, how much exercise is appropriate during a fast, and more. *The Sacred Art of Fasting* specifically focuses upon fasting as a spiritual practice rather than a weight loss or health practice, yet there is some discussion of the physical benefits of a controlled fast. A sober, practical, and deeply reverential discussion of an ancient practice undertaken in search for enlightenment.

A comprehensive review of the connection of fasting and spirituality from several faith confessions,

seen through the prism of a Christian theologian.

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