

Ashar Farooq '23

Quarantine basically wrecked me. My schedule was already wrecked before, to be honest, but it was much different during quarantine as has the entire 2020 year been. Those two weeks after getting kicked out, there was no structure at all. The first couple weeks of virtual MIT, I tried to actually “go” to all my classes. I tried to be a good student and that lasted a solid week maybe and then the lack of the full MIT experience and not being on campus really started to become even more apparent. But eventually Ramadan started and that really helped me because there was a really good consistent structure. Keeping engaged and having some resemblance of normalcy through zoom calls with different communities on campus was also really good in addition to having my entire family of 5 in the same house during Ramadan. It was like the high school days, but this time, I was flooded with zoom links everywhere, which initially was intimidating, but that's where Google Calendar came in. I think once I figured out scheduling, if there was stuff I actually wanted to do, I was more motivated to do things, like the MSA Senior Night. I knew that was going to happen regardless and the motivation to do something was there, and that energy, once you get into the flow of things, was really helpful. I ended up with solid chunks of productivity, both academically and spiritually. During Ramadan, I realized Islam to me is what Google Calendar is to an MIT student. Let me say that again. It tells you what to do. You can't really survive without it. It helps to see what's right and what's wrong, as in if there's two conflicting events, you could see them side by side and see which one you want to go to(or not). It literally is a guideline on how your day(or night) should be like. That's how you structure your whole day around, with the five prayers being like the lectures (albeit much more peaceful). You get a lot of notifications. You can learn a lot from it and go about your life. Google Calendar really dictates structure and eases worries, something that everyone kind of needs during the pandemic.