# Obama praises Muslim immigrants for helping build America

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President Obama celebrated the Muslim holy month of Ramadan with an Iftar dinner Thursday night, quoting the Koran and praising Muslim immigrants for helping build the nation.

Hosting Muslim officials and business leaders at a [State Dining Room dinner](http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2013/07/25/president-obama-hosts-iftar-dinner), Obama said, "Throughout our history, Islam has contributed to the character of our country, and Muslim Americans, and their good works, have helped to build our nation -- and we've seen the results. We've seen those results in generations of Muslim immigrants -- farmers and factory workers, helping to lay the railroads and build our cities. Muslim innovators who helped build some of our highest skyscrapers and who helped to unlock the secrets of our universe."

He twice quoted a phrase from the Koran which he said described the success of many of the business leaders in his audience. "Whoever does an atom's weight of good, will see its results," said the president. "When I look around the room tonight, beyond the communities you represent, I see all the profound good that's been accomplished. So all of us are seeing the results of your good work -- the opportunities to create for your colleagues and your communities and for our country."

He also used the even to call on nations to follow America's lead in letting people choose the religion of their choice, or not practice at all. "These are occasions to reflect on the teachings that so many religions share; to celebrate the diversity that defines our country; and to reaffirm one of our most deeply held beliefs, that here in America and around the world, people should be free to choose the God that they worship however they choose, to practice their faiths freely, or to practice no faith at all."

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