

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

The Verdicts of Fasting

Courtesy of the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society - Women's Committee

Elements Of Fasting

THE DURATION OF THE FAST is from dawn until sunset.

ABSTINENCE FROM EATING, DRINKING AND SEXUAL INTERCOURSE, carrying out the commands and orders of Allah the Exalted.

THE INTENTION (An-Niyah)

The intention is to be made by the heart to fast and to carry out what Allah has commanded (i.e., observing the obligatory fast) or seeking closeness to Allah the Exalted when observing the voluntary fast. The Prophet ﷺ said, "The rewards of deeds depend upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended."¹

OBSERVING THE OBLIGATORY (Fard) FASTING (Saum)

One must make an intention for fasting prior to the dawn at the beginning of Ramadhan, and if the fasting is interrupted by sickness or travel, then the intention should be renewed. According to the statement made by the Prophet ﷺ "Fasting is not accepted from one who does not make his intention to fast before dawn."²

OBSERVING THE VOLUNTARY (Nafil) FASTING (Saum)

For those who are observing the voluntary fasting (Nafil) it is all right to make the intention to fast even after the sunrise with the condition that he or she did not eat, drink, or have sexual intercourse. In the following Hadith Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ came to visit her one day and asked, "Did you have anything to eat?" She said, "No." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Then I am fasting."³

This Hadith is evidence that the intention of a voluntary observance of fasting does not have to be made necessarily before dawn, but the same could be done during the daytime also.

NOTE: If one intends to break his fast, then the fast may be terminated without even eating or drinking. Some Scholars have said that the reward of the voluntary fast will be from the time of making the intention (e.g., if you make the intention in the middle of the day), then the reward will be of half a day and so on. This opinion differs with the Scholars and Allah Knows Best.

Sunnah Acts Of Fasting

"Whosoever Observes the Sunnah Acts of Fasting gets the reward and whoever does not observe them will not be a sinner. "

THE MORNING MEAL (Al-Suhur)

The morning meal (Al-Suhur) is the act of eating and drinking late at night before the morning prayer (Fajr) by a person who is intending to fast. [The literal meaning for (Al-Sahur) is the name for the food taken late at night before the Fajr time.] The Prophet ﷺ said, "Take Sahur as there is a blessing in it."⁴

It was reported by Muslim that, eating of Sahur is the difference between the muslims and the people of the Scriptures. This facilitates the fasting and one gets an increased amount of reward.

DELAYING (Al-Suhur) TILL THE LAST PORTION OF THE NIGHT

The Prophet ﷺ said, "The people will remain on the right path as long as they hasten the breaking of the fast (Al-Iftar) and delay taking the morning meal (Al-Suhur)."⁵

THE BEST OF THINGS ONE MAY TAKE AS A Sahur ARE DRIED DATES;

The Prophet ﷺ said, "The best Sahur of the believer is dates (Tamr)."⁶

HASTENING THE BREAKING OF THE FAST (Al-Iftar)

One should hasten breaking the fast as long as he is absolutely sure about the setting of the sun. A delayed breaking of the fast is the practice of Jews and Christians. The Prophet said, "The people will remain on the right path as long as they hasten the Iftar (i.e., breaking the fast)."⁷

IT IS PREFERABLE TO BREAK THE FAST WITH DATES

Narrated Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him), "The Prophet ﷺ used to break his fast before offering the (Magrib) prayer with some fresh dates, if he did not get any then dried dates, and in failing that too, he ﷺ would drink a few mouthfuls of water."⁸

THE DUA'A (INVOCATION) DURING THE FAST AND SPECIALLY AT THE TIME OF BREAKING THE FAST

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Three kinds of Duaa's (invocations) are to be granted, the first is of the person who observes fasting, the second of an oppressed person, and the third is of the traveller."⁹ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Indeed the fasting person has at the time of breaking the fast a supplication, which is not rejected."¹⁰

The Prophet ﷺ used to say:

ذهب الظمأ وابتلت العروق وثبت الأجر إن شاء الله
" Dhahabadh-dhama' Wabtallatil-Urouq Wathabatal-Ajro insha' Allah "

Which translates as, "The thirst has gone and the veins are quenched and the reward is confirmed, if Allah Wills."¹¹

The Allowable Acts Of Fasting

The following are the allowable acts of fasting which one does not get a reward nor is punished for:

1. To take a bath and pouring water on the head: Narrated Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), "At

times Allah's Messenger ﷺ used to get up in the morning in the state of Janaba after having sexual relations with his wives. He would then take a bath and observe Saum (fast)."¹² in another narration, "The Prophet ﷺ used to pour water on his head while observing fast because of thirst or of the severity of the heat."¹³

2. If a man had sexual intercourse with his wife in the night of Ramadhan, he may take a bath in the morning (at dawn, before sunrise) and observe fasting according to the narration of Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her).
3. In case of the menstrual woman and the woman experiencing post birth bleeding, if the blood stopped (i.e., purified) at night, it is permissible to postpone taking the purity bath till after dawn and before sunrise (to offer the Fajr prayer) and observe fasting, but the intention of fasting should be made before dawn.
4. Eating, drinking and having sexual intercourse till dawn: The Prophet ﷺ said, "Bilal pronounces Adhan (i.e., the call to the prayer) a bit earlier when it is still night. Therefore continue eating and drinking till Ibn Umm Maktum pronounces Adhan."¹⁴
5. To clean the teeth with Siwak all the time from the beginning of the day till the end.
6. Travelling for a cause or need (though travelling will allow him to break his fast).
7. To treat diseases with any lawful medicine under the condition that it does not enter the stomach such as:
 - Intramuscular or intravenous injections, (the nutrient injections such as glucose or vitamins, etc. are considered as food and nullify the fasts).
 - Eye drops for medical reasons.
 - Nose spray only in case of necessity.
8. Taking blood from a person who is observing the fast (Saum) for blood test does not invalidate his fast if it is little.
9. Tasting food in case of necessity under the condition that it does not enter the stomach (i.e., one has to spit it out).
10. Rinsing the mouth, sniffing up and blowing out the water from the nose during ablution without exaggeration.
11. Kissing the wife or embracing her during the state of fasting for the one who has control over his sexual desire.
12. Applying Kohl (eye liner) for beauty or medical purposes.
13. Smelling perfumes and good odours, but avoid direct sniffing the Indian Qust incense and Bukhour and all that have smoke.
14. Extracting the tooth, but it is forbidden to swallow the blood which comes out due to bleeding.

What Invalidates Fasting

ACTS THAT INVALIDATE FASTING AND REQUIRE ONLY QADAA' (I.E., COMPENSATION FOR IT BY FASTING THE MISSED DAYS LATER ON) ARE:

- Eating and drinking intentionally. One should repent to Allah for the sin that he has committed and do good deeds profusely. But if he eats or drinks out of forgetfulness or forcibly, then no Qadaa' (atonement) is required of him. Narrated Abu-Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet ﷺ said, "If somebody eats or drinks forgetfully then he should complete his fast (Saum) for what he has eaten or drunk has been given to him by Allah."¹⁵
- Breaking the fast thinking that the sun has set (e.g., on a cloudy day) and then sees the sun still visible.
- All what enters the stomach through the mouth or nose. For example exaggerating in rinsing the mouth and sniffing up the water while performing ablution unforgettably (i.e., knowing that he is fasting). Sniffing the smoke of either the Indian Qust or Bukhour. Lastly, Using nutrient injections such as glucose, vitamins etc. which are considered as a source of food for the body.
- Discharge of semen deliberately while awake and by one's choice (i.e., by kissing one's wife, embracing her, fondling or looking at what excites him). But the discharge of semen while sleeping will not nullify one's fasting because it did not happen deliberately. Also if it is discharged due to sickness won't nullify the fasting.
- Vomiting intentionally by himself on his own accord by putting his finger in the mouth nullifies the fast. But if vomiting occurred during a sickness or by itself then the fast remains valid. Narrated Abu-Hurairah (may Allah be Please with him) that the Prophet ﷺ said, "If one has a sudden attack of vomiting while fasting, no atonement is required of him, but if he vomits intentionally he must make up this missed day later on."¹⁶
- Menstruation and post-birth bleeding.
- Cupping (i.e., letting out blood medically) during the state of fasting may cause weakness, which in turn force someone into breaking his fast. It is better to avoid giving blood or donating blood while observing the fast.
- Breaking and rejecting the intention of fasting (i.e., one who makes an intention of breaking the fast while observing (Saum) fast would nullify the fast even if the person did not eat or drink).

ACTS THAT NULLIFY FASTING AND REQUIRE QADAA' AND KAFFARAH (I.E., MAKING UP THE MISSED DAYS LATER ON AND PAYMENT OF EXPIATION) ARE:

If someone has sexual intercourse with his wife during one of the days of Ramadhan whereas both the man and the woman have mutually agreed on having relationships, then both are liable to repent and ask Allah's (swt) forgiveness and make up the missed day, in addition to the payment of expiation of that sinful act unless they were of those who are permitted to break their fast in Ramadhan (e.g., travellers).

In case a man has sexual relationships with his wife forcibly then he is required to make such a payment and not the woman. Narrated Abu-Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him): While we were sitting with the

Prophet a man came and said, "O Allah's Messenger! I have been ruined." Allah's Messenger ﷺ asked, what was the matter with him." He replied, "I had sexual intercourse with my wife while observing the fast (Saum)." Allah's messenger ﷺ asked him: "can you afford to manumit a slave?" He replied in the negative. Allah's Messenger asked him, "Can you observe the fast (Saum) for two successive months?" He replied in the negative. The Prophet ﷺ asked him, "Can you afford to feed sixty poor people?" He replied in the negative. The Prophet ﷺ kept silent and while we were in that state a big basket full of dates was brought to the Prophet ﷺ. He asked, "Where is the questioner?" He replied "I am here." The Prophet ﷺ said to him, "Take this basket of dates and give it in charity." The man said, "Should I give it to a person poorer than I? By Allah there is no family between its (i.e., Madinah's) two mountains who are poorer than I." The Prophet ﷺ smiled till his Premolar teeth became visible and then said, "Feed your family with it."¹⁷

PAYMENT OF EXPIATION (Al-Kaffarak) IS :

To set a slave free, if he could not find any then he should fast two consecutive months, if he is unable to do that then he is to provide food for sixty poor people on a scale of the average of that which he feeds his own family.

Al-Kaffarak should be in the same order as mentioned, and it is not permissible to transfer from one state to another unless he cannot afford it. Feeding would be for every poor person a Mudd (ie., a special measurement of grain equal to two thirds of a kilogram (approximately)) of wheat or barley or dates according to what he can offer.

Who Are Permitted To Break Their Fast In Ramadhan And Offer Fidya Only

- An old man or woman who are incapable of observing fast may atone for it by offering Fidya and no Qadaa' (i.e., making up the missed days) is required of them.
- A sick and invalid person whose health is not likely to improve (i.e., incurable sickness such as cancer,etc.)

Sheikh Al-Islam Ibn Taimiyah said, "The person who suffers from unconsciousness for days every time he observes fasting then he may also I offer Fidya."

The meaning of "**Fidya**" translates as, the offering of one meal to a poor person (either offering a lunch or a supper) on a scale of the average of that which you feed your family. Either feeding a poor for every day individually or gathering all the poor according to the number of days and feeding them (as the companion Anas Ibn Malik did when he became old). The other method is to give each poor person half Saa' (i.e., one kilogram and a half) of raw food (e.g. rice,wheat, etc.) and it is better to offer it with some meat and oil. **Offering Fidya should be in the month of Ramadhan and not before that.**

Who Are Permitted To Break Their Fast In Ramadhan And Are Obligated To Make Qadaa' Only

THE VERDICT OF THE SICK PERSON

The sick person whose health is likely to improve and his sickness is curable such as, fever, cold, or other short term sickness. There are three cases of fasting in a state of sickness:

- a. If it is not difficult for him to fast and it does not harm him (i.e., does not postpone his recovery) then he must observe fasting.
- b. If it is difficult for him to fast, but it does not harm him then it is disliked for him to fast, because he preferred fasting, which he finds difficult and hard, to accepting Allah's permission given to him to break his fast.
- c. If fasting harms him and postpones his recovery, then it is forbidden for him to fast. Allah the Exalted (swt) says in Surat An-Nisa (4:29):- "And do not kill yourselves. Surely, Allah is Most Merciful to you."

One may know to what extent fasting may harm him either by noticing the effect on himself or asking a trustworthy doctor. In general whenever a sick person breaks his fast in Ramadhan the same number of days which he did not fast must be made up later after Ramadhan. And if he should die before he recovers, then the compensation is dropped for him.

THE VERDICT OF THE TRAVELLER:

Whoever travels intending deceit (i.e., just to get excuse not to observe fasting), is not permitted to break his fast in Ramadhan, but other than those, there are four cases:

- a. In case someone feels exhausted out of exertion during a travel and finds fasting difficult, then it is forbidden for him to fast. Because the Prophet ﷺ once departed to Mekkah in the month of Ramadhan, the year of the conquest, and he and the people were fasting. He was then told that the people were finding fasting difficult and were waiting for what he would do. He ﷺ then called for a cup of water when it was after the Asr prayer and He ﷺ drank and the people were looking at him. He was told afterwards that some of the people had continued to fast, and he ﷺ said, "Those are the disobedient ones - those are the disobedient ones."¹⁸
- b. In case someone finds fasting hard and difficult but not as much as in the previously mentioned case, then it is disliked for him to fast in this case due to the rejection of the permission that Allah the Exalted has given to him.
- c. In case someone finds no difficulty in observing the fast, he may choose the most easy case for him (i.e., choose fasting if it is easier or breaking the fast) according to the verse in Surah AI-Baqarah (2:185): "*Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you.*"
- d. And if they (i.e., fasting and breaking the fast) were the same for him, it is better then to choose fasting according to the following tradition:- Reported Muslim, that Abi Ad-Dardaa (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "We sent out with Allah's Messenger ﷺ on one of his journeys, on a very hot day, and it was so hot that one had to put his hand over his head because of the severity of the heat. None of us was observing the fast (saum) except the Prophet ﷺ and Ibn Rawaha."¹⁹

The man is considered to be on a journey from the moment he comes out from his country till he returns back to it. He who is permitted to break his fast while on a journey, can compensate by fasting later on.

THE VERDICT OF THE PREGNANT WOMAN AND THE NURSING MOTHER:

It is permissible for the Muslim woman if she is pregnant or nursing her baby to break her fast in Ramadhan if she is afraid that fasting may affect her health or affect her baby or affect both herself and her baby. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Allah the Exalted released the fast and part of the prayer (Salat) from the traveller, and released the pregnant woman and the nursing woman from fasting."²⁰ The scholars differed regarding the compensation of the missed days in case of the pregnant and nursing woman; there are three sayings:

- The first saying states that if she breaks her fast fearing that fasting would affect her health only, then she should only observe a compensational fasting (i.e., making up the missed days). But if she breaks her fast fearing that fasting might affect her baby only, then she has to observe compensational fasting and offer a Fidyah (i.e., feeding a poor for every day missed), if she is afraid for both her health and the baby's health, then she should make up only the missed days later on without offering a Fidyah.
- The second saying states that if she has to offer a Fidyah only without making up the missed days.
- The third saying, **which is the most preponderant statement**, is that she has to make up the missed days only because she is considered as the sick person whose health is likely to improve and fasting is difficult for her. As Ibn Abbas said, "The Pregnant and the nursing woman break their fast in Ramadhan and then observe compensational fasting (i.e., Qadaa') without feeding."²¹

Al-Qadaa' (The Compensation)

AI-Qadal is obligatory on those who broke their fast in Ramadhan and are obliged to make up the missed days. It is preferable to be offered successively and as soon as possible after Ramadhan, and it is allowed to be postponed till before the next Ramadhan according to the following verse in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:185): *"But if any of you is ill or on journey, the same numbers should be made up from other days."*

Allah the Exalted did not restrict AI-Qadaa' to be performed insuccession or to be immediately observed in this verse.

Is it permissible to postpone Al-Qadaa' till **after** the next Ramadhan? No, it is not permissible and one will be considered sinful and is obliged to make up the missed days with repentance.

It is permissible if one has an excuse, such as a traveller whose journey continues till after the next Ramadhan, or a sick person whose illness is continuous, or a woman who is breastfeeding her child the whole year, etc. Narrated Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), "I was not able to make up the missed days of Ramadhan except in Sha'ban (The last month before the next Ramadhan)."²²

Can one observe voluntary (Nafil) fasting before making up the obligatory fasting? It

is better to start with Al-Qadaa', however, some scholars allow the observance of Nafil fast if there is still enough time, and his fasting is correct and he will not be considered sinful.

The Case Of Someone Who Dies Without Observing His Obligatory Share Of Fasting

1. If he was a sick person and died before he recovered, then the compensation is dropped for him.
2. If he was sick and recovered then died before he made up the missed days of Ramadhan, his inheritors can observe the same on behalf of the deceased, if they could not fast then they feed a poor person for every day.

Narrated Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), the Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever died and he ought to have observed Saum (fast) (the missed days of Ramadhan) then his Wali (inheritor) must observe Saum (fast) on his behalf." [23](#)

Narrated Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him): A man came to the prophet ﷺ and said, "O Allah's Messenger ﷺ! My mother died and she ought to have observed Saum (fast) one month (for her missed Ramadhan), shall I observe (fast) on her behalf?" The Prophet ﷺ replied in the affirmative and said, "Allah's debts have more right to be paid" [24](#)

Resources And References

Al-Bukhari	[1,4,17,22,24]
Muslim	[3,18,19]
AI-Bukhari and Muslim	[7,12,14,15,23]
Ahned, AbuDawoud, An-Nessaei, At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah	[2,5,13,8,16,20]
Abu Dawoud, Ibn Hibban, AI-Baihaqi	[6]
Ibn Majah, AI-Hakim, Ibn AI-Sunni and At-Tayalisi	[10]
AI-Baihaqi	[9]
Abdur-Razzaq with correct Isnad (chain)	[21]
Abu Dawoud, AI-Baihaqi, AI-Hakim, Ibn AI-Sunni, An-Nassaie, and AI-Dar AI-Qutni with Isand Hasan	[11]

SPECIAL NOTE : All narrations are graded as sahih (i.e., correct) or hasan (i.e., good).