

Fiqh of Fasting Seminar

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Types of Fast

1. *Farḍ* (obligatory)—Fasting for the whole month of Ramaḍān once a year.
2. *Sunna* —Those fasts that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ kept and encouraged others to keep, e.g. fasting on the 9th and 10th of Muharram, the 9th of Dhu’l-Ḥijja (‘Arafa), etc.
3. *Mustahab*—All fasts besides the *Farḍ*, *Sunna* are *Mustahab*, e.g. fasting on Mondays and Thursdays.
4. *Harām*—Fasting on five days during the year: ‘Īd-Fiṭr, ‘Īd al-Aḍḥā and the three days after ‘Īd al-Aḍḥā.

The Intention

The *niyya* (intention) of fasting is necessary. If a person abstains from all those things that break one’s fast without intention, the fast will not be valid (e.g. somebody was so busy he did not find the time to eat or drink anything from dawn to sunset).

It is not necessary to express the *niyya* (intention) verbally, because *niyya* means to intend, and the intention at heart will suffice. However, it is preferable to express the *niyya* verbally also.

بِصَوْمٍ غَدٍ نَوَيْتُ

Bi ṣawmi ghadin nawaytu

I have intended to fast tomorrow.

The time for making the intention lasts up to midday, However as some scholars are of the opinion that it should not be delayed at all after dawn, thus it is strongly recommended that one intends their fast from before dawn. The hours of a day of fast are from *Ṣubḥ Ṣādiq* (true dawn) to sunset.

The prayer at the time of ending the fast:

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ صُومْتُ وَبِكَ آمَنْتُ وَعَلَى رِزْقِكَ أَفْطَرْتُ، فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي

Allahumma laka şumtu wa bika āmantū wa ‘alā rizqika aftaru, fataqabbal minnī

O Allah! I fasted for You and in You do I believe

and with your sustenance do I end my fast. So accept it from me.

Mustahab (Desirable) Acts in Fasting

1. To partake of *suḥūr* (the food to be taken prior to beginning the fast in the morning).
2. To delay the *suḥūr* up to a little before dawn (*ṣubḥ ṣādiq*).
3. To end one’s fast immediately after the sunset by consuming something, and not to delay in doing so.
4. To break one’s fast with dry or fresh dates if available. If dates are not available, then water is the alternative.
5. To make intention at night.

Things *Makrūh* (Undesirable) While Fasting

1. To chew gum, rubber, plastic items or other such things.
2. To taste any article of food or drink and then to spit it out.
3. To collect one’s saliva in the mouth and then to swallow it trying to quench thirst.
4. To intentionally delay a bath that has become necessary until after dawn.
5. To use paste or tooth powder to clean one’s teeth. It is permitted to clean using a *miswāk* (toothstick) of any type.
6. To complain of hunger and thirst.
7. To take the water too much up the nostrils when cleaning the nose.
8. To gargle more than necessary.
9. To quarrel, argue, or use filthy or indecent language.
10. To backbite, tell a lie, and swear, etc. These are sinful acts even when one is not fasting. Therefore they entail greater sin when fasting.

Things that Break One’s Fast

Things that break one’s fast are of two kinds. Some make only *qaḍā* necessary whilst others make both *qaḍā* and *kaffāra* necessary.

- *Qaḍā*: To keep a single fast in place of the one that is broken.
- *Kaffāra*: A penalty of observing sixty continuous fasts followed by the missed one.

If a person is unable to keep these 60 fasts for some valid reason, e.g. continuous sickness, then one has the option of choosing from one of the following four options:

1. Feed sixty poor people to their fill for two meals, or
2. Feed one poor person two meals a day for sixty days; or
3. Give 60 poor persons 3 ½ lbs. (approx. 1.6 kg of wheat or its value in cash or food grains)
4. Give to one poor person not less than 3 ½ lbs. of wheat, rice or food grains, etc. or its value or cash for sixty days.

Things that Break One's Fast but Make Only *Qaḍā* Necessary

1. Anything put by force into the mouth of a fasting person which is consequently swallowed.
2. Water accidentally passing down the throat whilst gargling, even though conscious of one's fasting.
3. To vomit a mouthful intentionally or to return any amount of vomit down the throat.
4. Intentionally swallowing a pebble, piece of paper or any item that is not normally used as food or medicine.
5. Swallowing something edible, equal to or bigger than a grain of gram (a chick pea), which was stuck between the teeth. However if it is first taken out of the mouth and then swallowed, it will break the fast whether it is larger or smaller than the size of a gram.
6. Putting oil into the nose.
7. Putting oil into the ear. (This is according to earlier research and the classical jurists, while recent medical research indicates that applying oil into the ear should not nullify the fast unless one has perforated membranes).
8. Inhaling snuff into the nostrils.
9. Inhaling medicine through the mouth or nose (e.g., asthma medicine). If breathing becomes extremely difficult then it is permissible for one to take the inhaler. Although this will break the fast only a makeup is necessary and not *kaffāra*.
10. To purposely inhale smoke or steam, or anything with a perceptible body.
11. Swallowing the blood from the gums if the color of the blood is more than the saliva with which it is mixed.
12. To eat and drink forgetting that one is fasting and thereafter thinking that the fast is broken, eating and drinking again.
13. To continue eating and drinking after dawn or to break the fast before the sunset sets in, due to a cloudy sky or a faulty watch etc., and then realizing one's mistake.
14. To apply an enema into the anus.
15. For women to apply medicine in to the urinary organs. (This is according to earlier research and the classical jurists, while recent medical research indicates that it should not nullify the fast).

16. For a women to begin her menses during the fast.
17. Masturbation.

Things that Make Both *Qaḍā* and *Kaffāra* Necessary

1. Eating, drinking or breaking the fast in any other manner without a valid reason, will make both *Qaḍā* and *Kaffāra* necessary.
2. Thinking that the fast is broken, after applying kohl (*surma*) into the eye or rubbing oil on the head, etc, to eat and drink intentionally.
3. To take any type of medicine intentionally (i.e., through the mouth or applied through the nose). (Note: intravenous or intramuscular injections do not break the fast).
4. To have sexual intercourse intentionally while remembering that one is fasting.

Things That Do Not Break the Fast

1. To eat or drink something forgetting one is fasting (regardless of how much).
2. A mosquito, fly or any other object going down the throat unintentionally.
3. Water entering the ears.
4. Dust or dirt going down the throat.
5. Swallowing one's own saliva.
6. Taking an injection.
7. Taking an insulin injection whilst fasting is permissible. The insulin does not nullify the fast. However, in the case where the insulin is directly injected into the stomach the fast will be nullified.
8. Applying of kohl (*surma*) into the eyes.
9. Taking a bath to keep cool.
10. Rubbing oil onto the body or hair.
11. To vomit unintentionally.
12. Using a drip.
13. Inhaling smoke unintentionally.
14. Applying fragrance. It is not permitted to inhale the smoke of incense sticks whilst fasting. It is also not permitted to smoke cigarettes or inhale its smoke.
15. Brushing the teeth without toothpaste or powder, e.g. using a *miswāk* or a dry brush.
16. Applying a dry object in the vagina.
17. Applying medicine into the urethra (urinary tract).
18. A wet dream does not break the fast.

19. Spontaneous Ejaculation (without masturbation or touching) due to fantasizing or looking at pornography.
20. As long as there is no fear of the kissing leading to intercourse or ejaculation, it will be allowed to kiss one's spouse. However, if there is fear of this leading to intercourse or ejaculation, it will be *makrūh* (detestable), but the fast will remain intact unless there is an exchange of saliva in which case the fast will break.

People Exempted from Fasting in Ramaḍān

1. Sick people if their health is likely to be seriously affected by fasting. They should make up the loss, a day for a day, when they recover after Ramaḍān.
2. A traveler who is undertaking a journey of more than 48 miles and does not intend staying more than 14 days at his destination. According to the Shāfi'ī school, for a person to be considered a traveler, the distance to be traveled has to be at least 50 miles and the intention must not be to stay at the destination for four days or more. However, it is better for a traveler to fast in Ramaḍān than make them up later, provided the journey is not a tiresome one.
3. If it is feared that hunger or thirst will lead to one's death or extreme illness, it is permitted to break the fast and make it up later.
4. A women in menses or postnatal bleeding. They should make them up later, preferably before the next Ramaḍān.

Fidya (Expiation) for Not Being Able to Fast

A very old person who does not have the strength to fast or a very sickly or diseased person who has no hope of recovering after Ramaḍān should pay an expiation for each fast missed in Ramaḍān.

The *fidya* for a fast is similar to that of a missed *farḍ* or *wājib* prayer: 3½ lbs = 1.6 kg of wheat, or 7 lbs = 3.2 kg of barley, or the equivalent of the above in cash or kind.

If the person recovers after Ramaḍān the missed fasts would; have to made up and the expiation paid would be considered *ṣadaqa*. A few other rulings should be considered:

- No one is allowed to fast for another (sick or fit) person.
- Children should be encouraged to fast, but should not be forced to complete the fast up to sunset if they are unable to bear the hunger.
- If a person's fast breaks due to any reason, he should continue not to eat or drink anything for the rest of the day. It is *wājib* to abstain from eating drinking for the rest of the day and act like a fasting person.
- This is the same ruling for a woman whose menstrual periods ends after the morning. She cannot fast that day, and she cannot eat or drink, but she should remain like a fasting person. However, a women who starts her menstruation in the middle of the day is allowed to eat or drink.