

Rulings of Fasting made Simple

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1. **Moon sighting:** The month of Ramadan starts with the actual sighting of the moon on the 30th night of Sha'baan. If the moon is sighted, the month starts. If not, then 30 days of Sha'baan is completed. The sunnah doesn't allow us to use astronomical calculation to pre-determine Islamic dates.
2. **Allowance and Prohibition before a day or Two:** It is prohibited to fast a day or two before the Ramadaan unless those days coincide with a person's habitual days of fasting.
3. **Intention:** The intention must be made before the dawn. Intention is in the heart and verbalizing intention is bid'ah. The intention must not be iffy. Example: A person should not say "If I don't travel tomorrow I will fast but if I do I will not fast." This person must keep the intention of fasting and if travel he can break his fast. Same with the one who is not feeling well. Same with the lady expecting her period
4. **A Person who woke up in the morning not knowing it is Ramadan/or forgot about Ramadaan:** If he did not eat or drink should continue with fasting and if he ate or drank should stop and start fasting. The fasting is considered valid and does not need to make up the day or pay any ransom.
5. **Fasting of a junub (sexually impure person):** This can happen due to intercourse or wet dream etc., such situation doesn't stop a person to start his fasting. He can eat and drink and start the fasting. Obviously before the fajr prayer, he must make full ghusl. So, sexual purity is not a prerequisite of fasting.
6. **Suhur (pre-dawn meal):** Suhur is highly recommended and optional. Eating dates at suhur is sunnah. Missing suhur doesn't affect the validity of fasting.
7. **False dawn:** This happens when there are vertical columns of light in the horizon. This is a time when the first adhaan is given to indicate that it is time to wake up and eat suhur etc... The muadh-dhin should add "as-salaatu khayrum-minan-nawm" after "hayya 'alal falah" in this adhaan.

8. **Fasting starts from “True dawn”:** The “true dawn” is when there appears in the eastern horizon a horizontal light glow at the bottom and horizontal dark band on the top. That is the starting of the time of fajr and the fasting. This is the time the second adhaan of fajr given to indicate the starting of fajr and fasting.
9. **Imsak:** Intentionally stopping to eat and drink a few minutes before the true dawn is an innovation (bid'ah) which must be rejected.
10. **Right time to break the fast:** The correct time to break the fast is when the top part of the disk of the sun disappears in the horizon (from the vintage pointing of the fasting person). He/she must hasten to break the fast at that time. Waiting to be on the safe side is a clear innovation and against the sunnah. It is sunnah to break fast with ripe dates, if not then with dry dates, and if not then with water.
11. **What breaks the fast:** intentional eating, drinking and mating will break the fast as long the person was fully aware of the ruling! Forgetfulness, force and ignorance of the ruling will not nullify the fasting of the person. For women, the menstruation blood and post natal bleeding will break fast.
12. **Sexual Relationship during the day of Ramadaan while fasting:** This is a major sin and it invalidates the fast if the person knowing did it being aware of the ruling. In such scenario, the husband has to do the following in order (as expiation):
 - Free a slave, if he can't
 - Then fast two consecutive months, if he can't
 - Then feed sixty miskeen (poor people).This expiation is only for the husband and not for the wife. If the wife was forced, there is no sin upon her and her fasting is valid. If she was part of this sin, then she has to repent, she doesn't have to do what her husband. There is no make up for any of them in under all circumstances.
13. **Breaking the fast without valid reason:** This is a major sin, the person needs to repent to Allaah. There is no make up. A person can only make up fasting if he/she broke fast for valid reason(s).
14. **Sinning:** Sinning doesn't break the fast but diminishes and/or nullifies the rewards of fasting.
15. **Valid excuses to break fast before sunset:** The only two valid excuses to break fast are:

- a) Sickness
- b) Travelling

Exams/job, work, school, classes are not reasons to break fast or take off from fasting!

16. **Sickness:** All sorts of illnesses (mild or severe) are reasons to break fast. In some cases it is obligatory and in some cases it is optional. Below, we discuss three types of sickness separately.

17. **Temporary sickness** (ex: headache, pain in any part of body etc..., fever etc...)

- a) Sickness that doesn't cause hardship: Sick person can fast if he wishes, and if he wishes he can take the rukhsah to break it and make up later. [no fidya]
- b) Sickness that causes hardship: Sick person must break fast and make up later [No fidya]

18. **Permanent sickness** (ex: Diabetes, blood pressure, any chronic disease...)

[if the doctors allow fasting and he/she is absolutely sure of not being in danger zone, then such a sick person has the flexibility of taking off at any time he/she wants to and make up later simply because he/she falls under the category of the two exceptions Allaah made - sick and traveller)

- a) Sickness that doesn't cause hardship: Sick person can fast if he wishes, and if he wishes he can take the rukhsah to break it and make up. [No fidya]
- b) Sickness that causes hardship: Sick person must break fast and make up later. [No fidya]

19. **Sickness causing permanent disability:** No obligation to fast, there is nothing due upon him/her. However, if he/she wants to feed for the days of fasting he can choose to feed 29/30 miskeen but there is nothing authentic and clear to say it is obligatory to give what is known as "Fidyah".

20. **Travelling:** All sorts of travelling give the flexibility to a traveller to break the fast if he wishes. In some cases it is left for him to choose and in some cases it is obligatory.

Islamic definition of travel: a journey from hometown to any place that is not its neighboring town for a valid shari reason (religious, hajj, umrah, jihad, seeking knowledge etc...) or worldly reason (work, vacation trips etc...) as long no disobedience is not associated with it. So, traveling to watch concerts is not legal in islamic perspective etc...

So, here are the two scenarios [in all cases no fidya, no kaffara]

- a) If the travelling causes hardship for him or others: Travellers must break fast and make up later.
- b) If the travelling doesn't cause hardship: Traveller has a choice, he can fast and that is good. He can take the rukhsah and break the fast and makes it up at a later time.

21. Breast-feeding and pregnant women: According to the most correct opinion, their situation is exactly like a traveler. They always have the flexibility to break their fast if they want to, and in some cases it is obligatory for them to break the fast.

So there are two scenarios:

- a) If the mom or the baby has no hardship, she has the choice, she can break and make it up later or she can choose to fast. No fidya in any cases.
- b) If the mom/baby will be in hardship or there is fear for their lives/health, then it is obligatory to break the fast and she has to make it up later. No fidya in any cases.

22. The following actions are permissible during fasting and they don't break or nullify the fasting (since there lots of confusion regarding this matter, we are noting them separately):

- a. Cupping or getting cupped
- b. Giving or receiving blood
- c. Receiving injection/shots/IV fluid etc.. [of any type]
- d. Chewing gums with no flavor/taste
- e. Tasting food without swallowing
- f. Using perfume/smelling bakhur etc...
- g. Using kuhl in the eye. Rubbing oil in the head/body.
- h. Kissing and hugging spouses during Ramadan is allowed if the person can control their desires.
- i. all sorts of inhalers, whether they have powder or not powder, water or not water, etc. should be ok since a very minute amount of such material goes through the throat....
- j. Medicines to treat angina that are put under the tongue! These don't break fast...
- k. Using Miswak/brushing teeth.
- l. Using toothpaste/mouthwash and all sorts of oral hygiene as long as not swallowed, if swallowed accidentally doesn't break fast.
- m. Swallowing a big amount of spit.

- n. Ear drop, eye drops, nose drops - all are permissible.
- o. No type of vomiting will break fast. However, intentional or induced vomiting will cause the person to fast a day as atonement... But the fasting is still valid.
- p. Rinsing mouth, taking shower etc.
- q. Swimming/submerging in water etc. even if water accidentally goes inside