

**A DESCRIPTION  
OF THE FASTING,  
NIGHT PRAYER &  
I'TIKĀF OF THE  
PROPHET**

صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Shaykh  
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## THE RULING OF ṢAWM (FASTING)

Ṣawm is the fourth pillar of Islām and whoever abandons fasting without an excuse, has committed a major sin. It is prohibited to precede Ramaḍān by fasting a day or two before (its commence), except for someone who is in the habit of fasting particular days, or the one who has to make Kaffārah (compensation), or the one who is making Qaḍā' (making up for a missed fast).

## THE START OF RAMAḌĀN

The beginning and the end of Ramaḍān is only considered by the sighting of the moon, not by calculations or by the (lunar) phases of the moon. There is a general agreement amongst the scholars that the sighting of the crescent must come from at least one trustworthy witness at the event of sighting the crescent.

No specific Dhikr has been established from the Messenger of Allāh at the event of sighting the crescent.

## INTENTION

It is compulsory to make an intention the night prior to the performance of the obligatory fasts. Whereas with optional fasts, if the intention is made at any time of the day, then the correct opinion is that a person has the reward of the whole day.

If a person intends the Ifṭār (breaking the fast), then their fast is broken, even if they have not eaten (or drank).

## REFRAINING FROM THOSE THINGS THAT BREAK A PERSON'S FAST

It is obligatory to refrain from all things that nullify the fast from the start of Fajr until sunset, such as eating food, drinking and having sexual relations.

According to the general agreement of the scholars, if a person eats or drinks deliberately and knowingly, then their fast is broken, even if they have consumed something small. Taking normal or nutritional injections has the same ruling as eating and drinking.

## **ACTIONS WHICH ARE PERMISSIBLE FOR THE FASTING PERSON**

The following are permissible:

- To taste food without swallowing,
- To use an oxygen mask for breathing,
- To use Kohl and
- Eye and ear drops.

However, it is not allowed to use nose drops; if the nose drop reaches the throat and then the stomach, the fast is broken, but if it doesn't reach the stomach then the fast is valid, as the principle is that nothing should be consumed.

## **THE FOLLOWING DO NOT BREAK THE FAST**

- Vomiting intentionally or unintentionally does not break the fast according to the most correct opinion,
- Hījāmah (cupping),
- Blood transfer, but it is best to delay it and Hījāmah until the night so that the body does not become weak,
- Nose bleeds,
- Bleeding wounds do not break the fast,
- Injecting into other than the vein does not break the fast.

## **IFTĀR (BREAKING THE FAST)**

As for making supplications generally, it is prescribed at the moment of breaking the fast whether or not it is done facing the Qiblah or by raising the hands.

It is prescribed to break the fast by eating before drinking and choosing the ripe date over the dry date, but if these items are unavailable, water should be drunk in sips.

The continual fast where the Iftār is delayed until just before the beginning of Fajr or the continuation of a fast into the second or third day is prohibited according to an agreement of the scholars. Providing food for the fasting person with which to break his fast is recommended according to a consensus (of the scholars), although the ḥadīth in regard to its virtue is not authentic.

## HASTENING THE IFTĀR

It is an emphasized Sunnah to hasten the Iftār. Hastening the Iftār means; to break the fast after being sure that the sun has set, and not whilst in doubt of the setting of the sun. If someone hastened and broke his fast and realised thereafter that they had eaten before sunset due to it being overcast, then their fast is still valid according to the most correct opinion.

## SUḤŪR (PRE-DAWN MEAL)

It is a Sunnah to delay the Suḥūr to the last portion of the night and in it is a blessing, meaning receiving assistance in performing good deeds, for it gives energy to the person; therefore, if a servant of Allāh takes Suḥūr, that will assist him in reciting the Qur'ān, being obedient, connecting the ties of kinship and other good deeds, and by this the blessing is attained.

## FASTING OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE A VALID EXCUSE

### The Traveller

The traveller has the option to either fast or not, according to his condition.

### An Old Person and Those Who are Permanently Ill and Are Not Expected to Recover

An old person does not need to fast, but instead they should feed a Miskīn (poor person) as a substitute for each day missed (based upon this, the person who has an illness and is not expected to recover is given the same ruling).

## THOSE WHO MUST MAKE UP THEIR MISSED FASTS

### The Sick and the Traveller

The sick and the traveller make up for their missed fasts without having to feed a Miskīn.

### Menstruating or Bleeding Following Childbirth

The scholars are unanimously in agreement that it is not permissible for women who are menstruating or bleeding following childbirth to fast, and that they should not fast in Ramaḍān but should make up the missed fasts.

### Breastfeeding and Pregnant women

It is obligatory on the breastfeeding and pregnant women to make up the fasts missed, and it is safer and more precautionous for them to feed a Miskīn as a substitute for each day missed in addition to making up for it (after breastfeeding or their pregnancy).

### Sexual Intercourse

The one who has sexual intercourse during the daylight hours of Ramaḍān must make up for it and must expiate for it. This is the case for both the man and the woman if she did not protest.

## I'TIKĀF (SECLUSION IN THE MASJID)

### Ruling

I'tikāf may be done at the beginning, middle and end of Ramaḍān and it is a Sunnah according to a consensus (of the scholars). It is best to perform I'tikāf at the end of Ramaḍān (last ten nights).

### Limit for I'tikāf

There is no limit to the maximum number of days for I'tikāf, but the minimum time for I'tikāf is an hour. I'tikāf begins before the sunset of the 21st night of Ramaḍān and finishes on the night of 'Īd (the night proceeding the day of 'Īd).

### What to Do in I'tikāf

During I'tikāf, the Mu'takif (person performing I'tikāf) should busy himself in the remembrance of Allāh, His worship, His obedience and in seeking beneficial knowledge.

### What is Not Allowed for the Mu'takif

The Mu'takif is not allowed to have intimate physical contact with his wife. However, the Mu'takif is allowed to touch his wife. Sexual intercourse renders the I'tikāf null and void. I'tikāf may be done outside of Ramaḍān and may be done without fasting.

### What is Allowed for the Mu'takif

The Mu'takif is allowed to exit the place of I'tikāf due to a necessity without prolonging his leave.

## QIYĀM (UL-LAYL) (THE NIGHT PRAYER)

The Night Prayer should be prayed in units of two. There is no limit to the maximum number of units, but it is best to pray eleven units of prayer. It is best to perform the Night Prayer during Ramaḍān in congregation, and it is best for the Qunūt (supplication) to be the length of Sūrah al-Burūj or a little longer.

The Night Prayer may be performed in the beginning, middle or the last portion of the night. The Witr prayer (the odd-numbered prayer) should be prayed as one unit of prayer and if a person prefers, he can pray in three units.

There is no problem in reciting from the Mushaf (copy of the Qur'ān) whilst standing in the Night Prayer. The supplications in the Qunūt should be made with comprehensive invocations but without excessiveness.

### SOURCE

Translated from the book *Al-Mūjaz fī Şifat Şalāt an-Nabī wa Şiyāmuhu wa Qiyāmuhu wa I'tikāfuhu - A Summarised Description of the Prayer, Fasting, Night Prayer and I'tikāf of The Prophet of Allāh* by Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azīz ibn Marzūq aṭ-Ṭarīfī.

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