

Fiqh of Ramadan

The Obligation of Fasting

It is only when Allah(SWT) revealed the Ayah,

"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that they may learn self restraint", (Surah Al-Baqurah: 183) fasting was made obligatory.

Another Ayah that emphasizes this obligation is: "Ramadan is the month in which we sent down the Quran, as a guide to mankind, also clear (signs) for guidance and Judgment (Between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present (at his home) during the month should spend it in fasting, but if any one is ill or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. Allah intends every facility for you; he dose not want to put you difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period, and glorify Him in that he has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful"

(Surah Al-Baqarah : 185)

Was there any fasting before fasting in Ramadan became an obligation question?

The Messenger (SAW) used to fast in the month of Ashura when he was in Mecca, as narrated by Bukhari. Then he continued fasting and ordered the Muslims to fast in Al-Medina. He later on made it as merely (Mandub) rather than an obligation (fard). Also, Imam Ahmed in his Musnad narrated that the messenger (SAW) used to fast three days in every month upon arriving in Al-Medina.

The Reward for Fasting:

Since fasting is an act of worship between the slave and the creator and no one knows about it but Allah, the reward is not as any reward for normal acts of worship. The only one who knows about the reward is Allah (SWT). The Messenger (SAW) says, telling about Allah,

"Every act taken by the son of Adam is done for him except fasting, it is for me and I make the reward", (Bukhari)

Fasting stops the Muslim from Sinning:

Fasting is a shield that protects the fasting person form sinning. Disobeying and bad language. The messenger of Allah (SAW) says, "Fasting is a shield. Thus while fasting you must not use foul language or act like those of ignorance (screaming, attacking others, etc), or speak loudly". (Bukhari)

Furthermore, fasting Muslim is ordered not to retaliate if someone hurts him. The Messenger (SAW) says,

"And if somebody fights him or curses him he

Should say, I fasting twice". (Bukhari)

The smell of the Fasting persons mouth:

It is strange that the smell of the mouth of the person who is fasting is disliked by the people but greatly liked by Allah(SWT). Bukhari

Narrates that the Messenger(SAW) said: "By the one who has my soul in his hands, the smell of the mouth of the fasting person is better for Allah than the smell of musk".

Special Gate in Al-Jannah for those who Fast:

Allah(SWT) blesses those who fast and honors them, so much that He made a special gate in Al-Jannah. No one else uses this gate but them. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) says, " There is a gate in Al-Jannah called Ar-Rayyan which those who fast enter from on the day of judgment. And no one else enters from it. Once they enter from it, it is closed, and nobody else enters from it." (Bukhari)

In Ramadan Gates of Goodness are Open and Gates of Evil are Closed:

For sure, the month of Ramadan is the best of months. Worship in this month is more rewarding than in other months. Upon the arrival of the month,

" The gates of Jannah and the Heavens are opened. The gates of hell are closed and devils are chained. " (Bukhari)

Chaining the devils means stopping the source of evil. Thus, it is no wonder that many people return to Allah in this month after going astray.

Due to Fasting Previous Sins Are Forgiven:

It is enough incentive for the Muslims to hear the following hadith to rush into obedience of Allah,

"Whoever fasts in the month of Ramadan purely because of his faith and sincerity all of his/her previous sins will be forgiven."

Forgiveness has two conditions:

We have to pay close attention to the saying of the Messenger (SAW), " Purely because of faith and sincerity." It is those two conditions that differentiate between a regular habit and an act of worship. Thus, the one who fasts as a matter of habit or without sincerity, his/her fasting will no good. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "Whosoever does not saying and acting upon falsehood, Allah is in no need for him/her to abandon his/her food " (Bukhari).

On the other hand, there is glad tidings for those who fast out of sincerity. The Messenger (saws) said, "There are two occasions for the fasting person where he/she will be happy. He/she will be happy when breaking the fast and will be happy, when he/she meets his/her lord." (Bukhari)

Fast for Seeing It and Break Fast for Seeing

The moon can be sighted by all people and consequently the beginning and end of the months can be known by all. And the Messenger of Allah (SAW) taught us how to know when the month begins and when it ends. He also taught us what to do in case we don't see the moon. Bukhari narrates that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "Do not fast until you see the moon, and do not break fast until you see it." In another narration, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "if you see it (moon) fast and if you see it break fast (and the moon). But, if it can't be seen, then calculate for it." In another narration, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "The month is twenty nine nights. Thus, do not fast until you see it. But, if it is not visible, then complete the month thirty days."

In addition, Ad-Dar Qutni and Abu Daul narrated (sahih hadith) that Ibn Umar said that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, People were trying to sight the moon, and I told the Messenger of Allah (SAW) that I saw it. So he started fasting and ordered the people to start fasting." This hadith tells us that one person sighting the moon is sufficient to start fasting the month of Ramadan.

Universal or local sighting?

There is a disagreement among Muslims over whether the sighting of the moon in one region obligates Muslims in other regions to fast or not. The Hanafi, Maliki, and Hanbali schools of thought see that if the moon is sighted in a region, then all Muslims in all regions must fast. The Shafi school of thought, on the other hand, sees that sighting of the moon in one region is sufficient only for that region and not for others. The correct opinion is that one sighting is sufficient for all Muslims to fast and break fast. This is regardless to where the sighting of the moon occurred. This is due to the honorable hadith.

" Fast for seeing it, and break for seeing it. "

The phrase " for seeing it " is general for any sighting in any region. And Allah is the most knowing.

At What Time of the Day We Fast and Break Fast question

Contrary to the timing of the month, the acts of worshiping in a day are dependent on the sun. Therefor, we abstain from food, drink and sexual intercourse from fajr till sunset.

The Intention is A Requirement for Fasting.

The intention is, indeed, differentiates an act of worship from an act of habit or an accident. For example, the person who abstains from eating, drinking, and sexual intercourse from Fajr till sunset for health reasons rather than for worshipping Allah the supreme is not considered to be fasting not Islamically and consequently will not be rewarded by Allah (SWT). Therefor, the person who wants to fast must have the pure intention for doing that action only to please Allah (SWT). Contrary, to the common misunder-standing, the intention need not be said by the tongue, for the intention is act of the heart. Moreover, the intention must be settled in the heart before Fajr. Al-Tirmithi and An-Nas'i narrated that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "Who does not intend to fast from nighttime, he/she has no fast (not accepted)." So the heart must be set on fasting the next day. Waking up for suhur is also sufficient to be considered as an intention.

There Is Blessing in suhur:

Surely, Suhur is sunnah. The Messenger (SAW) said, " have Suhur, for in surah there is blessing. " (Muslim)

It is also preferred to delay Suhur for the saying of the Messenger (SAW), "my Ummah will be in good condition as long as they delay Suhur and rush in breaking fast" (Ahmed). In addition, Suhur is what differentiates our fast from that of the people of the book. The Prophet (SAW) said, " the difference between our fast and that of the people of the book is the meal of Suhur." (Muslim).

The Best Things To Keep Us Busy In Ramadan :

Once the fasting Muslim has just left his/her food and drink for the sake of Allah (SWT) prohibited. So he/she would not curse, use foul language, harm people , talk nonsense, etc. Thus, the best the fasting person should keep him/herself busy with is the remembrance of Allah, attend sessions of knowledge, read Quran, and spend in the path of Allah, etc.

If Someone Eats Or Drinks, Forgetfully, Then he/she Completes The Day Of Fasting:

It is natural for the human being to make mistakes and even sin, for human beings are created weak imperfect. Allah (SWT) says, "And man was created weak." Consequently, the fasting Muslim can make a mistake by forgetfully eating or drinking. In this case he/she is not sinning. This is so because of the saying of Messenger of Allah (SWT), "Allah has forgiven mistakes, forgetfulness, and what is due to compulsion from my Ummah." Therefore, the fast for that person is still valid. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) says, "If he forgets and eats and drinks, then he should complete his fast. It was Allah who fed him and gave him the drink." (Bukhari).

As for the person who's overcome by his /her desires and thus breaks fast deliberately, he/she has committed a great sin. If he breaks fast by sexual intercourse, then he must make it up as explained in the following hadith by Bukhari: Abu Huraira said, "While sitting with the messenger of Allah (SAW), 'O Messenger of Allah I destroyed myself and destroyed my family also." He said, "What is the matter ?" He said," I had sex with my wife in Ramadan." The Messenger of Allah (SAW) asked, "Do you have a neck (slave) to free. He said, "No". He said, " Can you fast two months consecutively ?" He said, "No". He said. Can you feed sixty poor people?" He said, "No". After a while a branch of dates was brought to the Messenger (saw). He (the Messenger) said, "Where is the questioner?" He said, "Here I am." He said, "Take this and give it as charity." He said, "To someone poorer than me, O messenger of Allah? By Allah there is no family poorer than my family."

The prophet (saw) laughed till his molar teeth could be seen and said, "Feed it to your family. "This is with regard to sexual intercourse, but with regard to anything less than intercourse, it is permissible." Bukhari narrated that Aisha (raa) said, The prophet of Allah (saw) used to kiss and touch while fasting," It is also permissible to have sexual intercourse at nighttime and delay Ghusul (Shar'ii faith) till after Fajr. "Aisha (RAA) said that the prophet (SAW) used to take Ghusal form janabah after Fajr in Ramadan and fast." (Bukhari). In addition, it is allowed for the fasting person to rinse the mouth (if some water mistakenly enters the mouth it is still valid), take a bath, wear perfume, use Kohl, and use Miswak.

Permission To Break Fast In Travelling and Sickness:

Allah (SWT) permitted us to break fast in travelling and in sickness on the condition that we make it up later on. "And for those who are sick or travelling, then (the prescribed period should be made up) other days." This is by the mercy of Allah (SWT). If the traveler finds himself/herself able to fast and prefers to do so, it is allowed. Bukhari narrated that Hamza bin Amru said to the prophet (SAW), "Should I fast while travelling?" (He used to fast often). He said, "if you wish, fast, and if you wish break fast." In the case of jihad, however, the Messenger (SAW) used to obligate his companions to break fast when they were about to meet the enemy. The Messenger (SAW) said, "You are meeting your enemy tomorrow, and breaking fast will make you stronger, so break your fast."

Does Any Travel or Sickness Constitute Breaking the Fast?

It is only the sickness, that fasting will delay its recovery or worsen it, that permits the person to break the fast. But, the one that is not affected by the fast is not a legitimate excuse. Also it is the allowed kind of travel that breaking fast is allowed in not the haram one.

Fasting In Modern Transportation:

Some might think it is better not to break fast nowadays when travelling is easier. For those we recite the Ayah, "And your lord is not forgetful." The Islamic laws are for all times and all places and they are put by the most knowledgeable about the past, present and future. Therefore, we can not make rules our minds and desires while we have a clear and true guidance from Allah.

The Menstruation and the Post-Childbirth Bleeding:

Women in either of these conditions are obligated to break fast until they become pure again. The Messenger (SWT) said,

"Is it not that she does not fast nor pray during her menstruation period?" (Bukhari). They should make up for the missed days of fasting after Ramadan.

The Pregnant and the Breast Feeding Women:

If a woman is pregnant or breast feeds and she thinks she or her baby will suffer if she fasts, or she merely feels hardship in fasting, then she can break fast, but must make up the missed days. The Messenger of Allah (SWT) said, "Allah takes away half of the salah from the traveler, the breast feeding women and the pregnant women". (Abu Daul).

The Elderly and the Incurable sick:

Both cases are in the category of the sick, except the elderly and the incurable do not have to make up the days that they have missed, for they are unable to do so. Nonetheless, they have to feed one poor person as Bukhari narrated about the action of Anas.

The fasting of Children and Teaching Them Manners:

It is a fact only those who are above the age of puberty and sane are addressed by Shari'ah. It is important, however, for the parents to take care of their children from an early age, rise them to be able to live Islamically, to love the rules of Islam, and to be consistent in performing them. The Messenger (SWT) said, "Order your children to pray when they are seven years of age, beat them for it when they are ten years of age, and separate them in their beds".(Abu Daul).

The Messenger of Allah (SWT) and his companions used to do that. And Prophet Mohammed (SWT) saw the children eating improperly, with him, he told the boy, "Boy! Say in the name of Allah (Bismillah), eat with your right hand, and eat from that which is in front of you". The effect of this lesson on this little child lasted all his life. Bukhari narrated that the child said, "I have been eating as he ordered me since". Also Bukhari narrates that Ar-rabiia, the daughter of muawath (Raa) said, "We used to make our children fast and make their toys out of wool. If any of them cried because of hunger, we would give them toy till the time to breakfast".

O, Muslims your children are trust which you will be questioned for. Teach them Islam, let them know that Allah and his Messenger, teach them to pray and fast and get them used to doing it properly. Teach them Quran, to read it and understand it. Make sure that they are in a relationship with Allah. That is not only good for them, but it is better and good for you in this life and hereafter. "O Believers, protect yourselves and your families from the hell fire which has humans and stones as its fuel".

Salatul-Tarawih:

Abu Huraira said, "I heard the messenger of Allah (SAW) say, "The one who does qiam in Ramadan with faith and sincerity, all his/her sins will be forgiven".