

Ramadan and Fasting Q&As

1. Moon sighting

Acknowledging the Arrival of the Month of Ramadan during the Day

Q: Assuming it is announced, before the canonical noon, that today is the first day of the month of Ramadan, what is one's duty on that day?

A: Assuming one hasn't, until then, committed any deed which would invalidate one's fast, obligatory caution dictates that one ought to make one's intention to fast and then actually fast on that day in addition to observing its compensatory fast (after the month). However, assuming such a deed was, in fact, committed, then one's fasting would be void; however, out of respect and honour to the month of Ramadan, one must refrain from committing any action which invalidates fasts until the maghrib adhān and observe the required compensatory fast after the month.

Methods of Proving the Arrival of the Month

Q: Assuming a number of just people bear testimony to the fact that two just people have in fact witnessed the (new) moon, will the arrival of the months of Ramadan or Shawwāl be subsequently proved?

A: No, one must be informed directly by the two just people (who have observed the new moon) themselves. Intermediary reports of the moon's observation are not sufficient save on occasions where it leads to one's acquiring certainty in relation to the moon's appearance.

How to Acknowledge the Observation of the New Moon?

Q: After hearing the reports of a number of people, assuming one conjectures that tomorrow is 'Id al-Fitr, may one fast on that day?

A: Until one is almost sure that tomorrow is 'Id al-Fiṭr, the first of Shawwāl, one cannot break one's fast on that day.

The Criterion in Relation to United Horizons

Q: What does the beholding of the same horizons actually mean? Which areas are deemed as having the same horizon?

A: It means that they are the same as to how possible/impossible it is to sight the crescent.

Witnessing the new moon before maghrib

Q: In some countries, such as Sweden, it is not possible to observe the new moon of the month of Shawwāl after sunset but 2-3 days after the moon's observation in Iran due to the fact that, in these countries, the moon sets before the sun. Assuming that, in countries like Sweden, it is possible to view the new moon before sunset, would this much be sufficient vis-à-vis proving the new moon of the month of Shawwāl?

A: Observing the new moon before sunset is sufficient in relation to proving the start of the new month as commencing from the night which follows (i.e. not from the night before).

One's Duty on Occasions Where marji's Differ in Relation to the Announcement of 'Id al-Fitr

Q: Assuming differences arise amongst the religious authorities with respect to the affirmation of 'Id al-Fitr, what is one's duty? Ought each follower to refer to his/her own marja'?

A: Following one's marji' has no role in relation to the new moon's affirmation; rather, assuming one acquires certainty, with respect to the new moon, by means of a marji's announcement then one ought to break one's fast on that day. Assuming one has doubt (post-announcement) in relation to the matter, then he/she must fast on that day.

To See the Crescent Moon or to Depend on the Testimony of Two Just Persons

Q: If somebody saw the crescent moon but the authorized religious authority did not issue a rule on sighting, what is the ruling? Also, if two just people gave testimony about their sighting but the said authority did not give his rule, what is people's responsibility?

A: Whoever sees the crescent himself/herself or two just people testify their seeing before him/her, suffices with his/her seeing or the testimonies of the two just individuals and he/she is not in need of the rule of the authorized religious authority.

Controversy about Crescent Moon's Sighting

Q: If controversy happens between two reliable, big groups about the sighting of the crescent moon (of the month of Ramadan or Shawwal), what can we do?

A: If they differ in sighting is proved or not and if among those who claim sighting there are just persons who testify that they saw it, one should accept theirs. But, if one group say it is proved that the moon is sighted and the second group say it is proved that the moon is not sighted, the two claims contradict each other and neither of them is reliable.

Saying of the Astronomers versus Witnesses' Testimony to Sighting the Crescent

Q: Would you mind to show us the shar'ī stand towards the testimony of witnesses to sighting the new crescent moon while astronomers claim that sighting is impossible.

A: If the saying of the astronomers brings confidence that the testimony of the witnesses is wrong, the testimony has no shar'ī standing.

2. Fasting

– *Eating and Drinking*

Oral Bleeding and Bleeding of the Gums

Q: Assuming one's mouth or gums bleed during the month of Ramadan, ought one to purify the inside of one's mouth?

A: Swallowing such blood is not permissible; if one intentionally swallows such blood whilst fasting, one will be deemed as breaking one's fast with a ḥarām act. The rinsing of the inside of one's mouth isn't necessary.

Unintentionally Breaking One's Fast

Q: Assuming a fasting person forgetfully consumes something, must one remind him/her of it?

A: No, it isn't obligatory to remind them.

Swallowing Water Whilst Gargling

Q: What's the ruling concerning gargling in relation to those who are fasting?

A: Assuming water flows down the throat whilst gargling, the fast becomes void.

Chewing gum Whilst Fasting

Q: What is the ruling in relation to a fasting person chewing gum?

A: Assuming nothing enters the throat, it's unproblematic.

Brushing One's Teeth with Toothpaste Whilst Fasting

Q: Is it deemed problematic to brush one's teeth with toothpaste whilst fasting?

A: It's unproblematic; however one must prevent the swallowing of that saliva which is blended with paste and/or water.

Having Intravenous Infusion Whilst Fasting

Q: What's the ruling in relation to a fasting person being infused with intravenous fluids?

A: Obligatory caution dictates that one refrains from such infusion, irrespective of whether they are used for medicinal or nutritional purposes.

Using Tooth Floss Whilst Fasting

Q: What's the ruling in relation to a fasting person using tooth floss that contains fluoride and bears a minty taste?

A: Assuming no [fluoride-containing] saliva is swallowed, it's unproblematic.

Having to Take Regular Medication during the Month of Ramadan

Q: Assuming a patient has been prescribed, by the physician, to take regular medication thrice a day, may he/she still fast?

A: One can't fast under such circumstances.

Becoming Vaccinated during the Month of Ramadan

Q: What's the ruling in relation to a fasting person being vaccinated against hepatitis? Would it make ones fast void?

A: Assuming the vaccination is carried out intramuscularly, it's unproblematic.

Oral Bleeding Whilst Fasting

Q: I filled a tooth yesterday and today I have noticed some bleeding whilst fasting. What is the ruling in relation to such oral bleeding? Is it permissible to swallow that saliva which has blended with such blood? What ought I to do? What is the ruling in relation to fasting under such circumstances?

A: Assuming there are no (visible) traces of blood within one's saliva, the latter will be deemed pure; hence, swallowing it is unproblematic and won't invalidate one's fast.

To Take Insulin Injection While Fasting

Q: Diabetic patients take insulin injection. Does it break fasting? If yes, what could the patient do if he/she is compelled to take it?

A: Insulin injection does not break fasting.

– State of Janābah and Masturbation

Nocturnal Emission Occurring after Fajr during the Month of Ramadan

Q: What must one do if nocturnal emission occurs after the fajr prayer during the month of Ramadan?

A: One's fast remains valid and one must carry out the required ghusl before performing the zuhr prayer.

Intentionally Delaying the Janābah Ghusl until moments before the Fajr adhān

Q: Assuming one wakes up, before fajr, in a state of nocturnal emission, may he/she not ghuslate oneself until moments before the fajr adhān and thus tayammumate instead?

A: Assuming one intentionally delays ghuslating until there remains limited time to ghuslate, he/she would have sinned. Nevertheless, he/she ought to tayammumate before fajr arrives and his/her fast will be deemed valid.

Matrimonial Relationships during the Month of Ramadan

Q: Assuming a man can't fast, may he perform intercourse with his fasting wife?

A: This is not permissible.

Nocturnal Emission Arising whilst Fasting

Q: Assuming a fasting person sleeps after the fajr or zuhr prayer, during the month of Ramadan, and then unintentionally ejaculates while asleep, what ought he/she to do? Would their fast be deemed void?

A: Their fast will remain valid.

Remaining in a State of Janābah during the Month of Ramadan

Q: During the month of Ramadan, last year, the janābah ghusl had become binding upon me during sahar (2-3 hour period preceding fajr adhān) one night; on waking up during sahar – in a state of janābah – I had decided to wait until the time for ghuslating becomes limited thus enabling me to tayammumate, instead of ghuslating. However, after falling asleep I hadn't woken up till after the fajr adhān. What is my duty?

A: Although you had intended to perform your duty during the limited time (preceding the fajr adhān), nevertheless the compensatory fast for that day remains binding upon you. Note that had tayammum been your canonical duty and you had, in fact, intended to carry it out before fajr – albeit unsuccessful due to having fallen asleep – the fast would have been deemed valid due to the nature of your sleep i.e. it being termed your first sleep (post-janābah).

When a Junub Person Awakes after Sunrise in Ramadan

Q: what is the ruling concerning a person who got junub by masturbating at night during the month of Ramadan then he slept and got up at noon on the next day and did ghusl knowing that the previous night he had intended to fast this day?

A: If he thought that he would be able to get up before the time of fajr and intended to do ghusl before fajr upon waking up but he unwillingly continued sleeping beyond fajr, he was obliged to keep fasting on that day and to make it up later on in qaḍā' but he owes nothing else.

To Masturbate While Fasting

Q: If somebody masturbates during the month of Ramadan but without any discharge, is his fasting invalidated?

A: if he do not intend masturbation and discharging semen and nothing is discharged, his fasting is correct even though he has done a ḥarām act. But, if he intends masturbation or he knows that he

usually discharges semen by this process and semen really comes out, it is a ḥarām intentional breaking fasting.

– Diseases and Harmful Fasting

The fasting of breastfeeding women

Q: What is the duty of the breastfeeding woman during the month of Ramadan?

A: Fasting won't be obligatory for her assuming (a) her fasting will decrease her milk supply and thus frustrate the infant or (b) she, herself, becomes harmed by means of it. Assuming she doesn't fast because of (a), she must donate ¾ kg of food (namely wheat, barley etc.) to a needy person (as described by the canon) for every day which she hadn't fasted. Concerning (b), such a ruling is decreed via obligatory caution. In any case, be it (a) or (b), she must observe the required compensatory fasts.

The Fasting of a Renal Patient

Q: Due to the stone-forming nature of my kidneys, I ought not to fast during the blessed month according to the advice of a specialist doctor. However, I don't want to break my fast. Assuming my drinking three cups of water – on either one or three separate turns – during the day, would enable me to fast, may I fast under such circumstances?

A: Assuming that the prevention of renal problems requires one to drink water, or other liquids, during the day, fasting no longer is obligatory; moreover, it will not be permissible. Drinking water, under such circumstances, will nullify one's fast.

– Other ...

Putting on Perfume Whilst Fasting

Q: What's the ruling in relation to a fasting person using perfume?

A: It's mustahabb; however, smelling scented plants/flowers is makrūh

Vomiting Whilst Fasting

Q: What's the ruling in relation to a fasting person who vomits after feeling nauseous?

A: Assuming it occurred involuntarily, it's unproblematic; however, if it was done intentionally, this would nullify one's fast.

Smoking Cigarettes Whilst Fasting

Q: Assuming one is addicted to smoking cigarettes and must smoke a few a day, may he/she fast and will such a fast be deemed valid?

A: Obligatory caution dictates that the fasting person ought to refrain from the smoke of tobacco products; assuming it is necessary to smoke [i.e. due to addiction], this does not absolve one from the obligatory duty to fast.

To Use Inhaler during Fast

Q: I suffer from asthma and I need to use medicine continuously especially during attack. Can I use medicine while fasting? My medicine is taken by inhaler and during dysenteric attacks I am forced to use nebulizer.

A: Using the inhaler does not harm the correctness of fasting unless it is associated with what could be called as eating or swallowing upon reaching throat. Anyhow, it seems that it is not associated with such things and the mere doubt is not enough to prevent it.

3. To ignore fasting or break a fast

Ruling in Relation to Intentionally Breaking One's Fast

Q: What is the duty of those who, intentionally, do not fast?

A: One must observe the required compensatory fast for each missed day in addition to paying the stipulated kaffārah for each day. Paying kaffārah is accomplished either by fasting for two months per missed fast or by satiating 60 needy persons (or donating ¾ kg food to each of the 60).

One's Missed Fasts during One's Early Years of Puberty

Q: Concerning the fasts which I hadn't observed during the early years of post-puberty, ought I to pay kaffārah in addition to observing the compensatory fasts?

A: You must compensate for all the missed fasts; assuming you hadn't fasted without a legitimate excuse, you must – in addition to the compensatory fasts – pay kaffārah which is tantamount to either fasting for two months per missed fast or by satiating 60 needy persons (or donating ¾ kg food to each of the 60).

Nullifying Mustahabb Prayers

Q: Is it permissible to nullify mustahabb prayers?

A: Yes it is; however nullifying them after zuhr is makrūh.

To Break Fasting upon a Believer's Offer

Q: Is the ruling of breaking fast upon a believer's offer applicable to all types of fast?

A: This ruling does not include that who keeps qaḍā' fast for himself or on behalf of others whether as a volunteer or by hiring or keeping qaḍā' fasting of a nadhr. On the other hand, it includes that who fasts for a mustahabb cause for oneself or on other's behalf.

To Discontinue the Intention of Fasting

Q: I did not know that interruption in, discontinuation of, the intention of fasting invalidates fasting and requires making the fasting up but not the kaffārah. However, I am now aware of this ruling. Now I am sure that I was often intending eating while fasting either due to hunger or sickness but I then did not eat. Considering that I did not know this ruling, what is my duty now? And, does the ruling differ whether or not I was blamed for the lack of knowledge? If I am to pay kaffārah, then what is it?

A: The validity of your fasting is questionable and you should, by obligatory caution, complete your fasting [i.e. if you are observing the fasting now] and make it up later in qaḍā.

4. Missed Fast

Travelling during the Month of Ramadan

Q: Assuming one travels during the month of Ramadan, ought one to pay any kaffārah in addition to observing the compensatory fasts?

A: No, only the compensatory fasts ought to be observed; there's no kaffārah to pay. However, assuming one delays performing the compensatory fasts until the succeeding month of Ramadan (i.e. doesn't perform them before the start of next year's month of Ramadan), he/she ought to donate $\frac{3}{4}$ kg of food, as a kaffārah, for each missed fast.

To Travel to Avoid Fasting of Ramadan

Q: May one escape fasting during the month of Ramadan by traveling?

A: It's unproblematic to travel during the month of Ramadan, irrespective of whether or not it is done for escaping purposes. However, doing so before the 23rd Ramadan is deemed makrūh.

Interruption Order in the Compensatory and Kaffārah Fasts

Q: Ought the compensatory and kaffārah fasts to be performed consecutively?

A: The compensatory fasts need not be performed consecutively; however, assuming one opts for the fasting kaffārah, for each day missed one must fast for two months of which a whole month plus a day from the second month ought to be fasted consecutively.

Ruling in Relation to One's Carelessness in Observing One's Compensatory Fasts

Q: Assuming one, who had displayed carelessness vis-à-vis observing one's compensatory fasts, now suffers from an illness thus hindering him/her from accomplishing one's compensatory fasts before the arrival of the month of Ramadan, what ought one to do?

A: Assuming one was careless and neglectful in relation to observing one's compensatory fasts during the year and, now, cannot observe them before the holy month starts, he/she must give $\frac{3}{4}$ kg food to

a needy person for each unaccomplished compensatory fast. Moreover, one must fulfill those missed compensatory fasts whenever one becomes able to do so.

Break Compensatory Fasts

Q: When Observing one's compensatory fast, may one nullify it for whatever reason?

A: Assuming it's before zuhr, it's unproblematic; however, breaking one's compensatory fast after zuhr is not permissible; doing so entails the payment of 7½ kg of food to the needy (¾ kg per needy person). Assuming one doesn't have the financial means to render such food, he/she ought to fast for three days for every broken compensatory fast.

Fasting for That Which Lies upon One's Shoulder/One Is Liable Towards

Q: Assuming one doesn't know/recall whether or not he/she ought to observe compensatory fasts, may one fast in accordance with that which lies upon his/her duty i.e. intending that one's fast be compensatory were he/she liable with respect to compensatory fasts, otherwise for it to be treated as a mustahabb fast?

A: Yes, one may fast with such intentions.

Acquiring Doubt in Relation to One's Father's Compensatory Fasts

Q: My father was required to observe a few years' compensatory fasts. I don't know whether he had accomplished them; furthermore, there is no mention of this within his will. What is the duty of his eldest son?

A: Assuming the eldest son knows, with certainty, that his father died leaving a number of compensatory fasts unfulfilled, he must observe them.

Hiring someone to observe One's (Deceased) Father's Compensatory Fasts by Means of Estate

Q: May the eldest son use some of his deceased father's estate in order to hire someone to observe his father's unfulfilled compensatory fasts?

A: No, the eldest son ought to observe the fasts himself or pay out of his own pocket in relation to hiring someone else. He does not have the right to spend from the estate unless his father had stipulated it in his will.

Priority between Observing One's Compensatory Fasts and Observing Those of His Deceased Father's

Q: Assuming one is obliged to observe both his own compensatory fasts as well as those of his deceased father's compensatory fasts, which obligation has priority over the other?

A: Since both acts are obligatory, there exists no priority between the two.

Daughter Observing Her Deceased Father's Compensatory Fasts

Q: Assuming a father's only child is a daughter, would the father's compensatory fasts be binding upon the daughter after the father's demise?

A: No, it won't.

The Ill not Being Able to Fast for a Number of Years

Q: What is the duty of one who was ill for a number of years thus neither being capable of observing one's fasts, during the month of Ramadan, nor one's compensatory fasts?

A: On recovery, assuming there remains sufficient time until the start of the following month of Ramadan, one must observe the compensatory fasts related to the last Ramadan month. Concerning all the years previous to that, one is not obligated to observe the compensatory fasts but rather pay $\frac{3}{4}$ kg of food for each missed fast.

Not Being Aware of the Signs of Puberty

Q: I used to experience nocturnal emissions before 14 years of age; however, I didn't know that nocturnal emissions were a sign of puberty and so I only started fasting at 15. Ought I to pay kaffārah in addition to observing my compensatory fasts?

A: Observing the compensatory fasts is obligatory; assuming you were justifiably ignorant with respect to the matter, paying kaffārah won't be necessary.

5. Kaffārah of Fast

Method of Observing the Kaffārah Fasts

Q: Ought one to observe kaffārah of a fast, immediately, or may one do so gradually over a period of time?

A: Paying the kaffārah – be it financially or via fasting – is not regarded an immediate obligation. One has ample time to do so in the future. However, one must not manifest carelessness or neglect in this regard.

Differences between the Kaffārahs for Those Who Intentionally Break Their Fast and the Kaffārahs for the Ill

Q: Do the kaffārahs for those who intentionally break their fast differ from the kaffārahs for the ill?

A: Yes they do; both in amount and in those who ought to be provided for. Concerning the kaffārahs for those who intentionally break their fast, one must either satiate 60 needy persons for each missed fast (or give each person $\frac{3}{4}$ kg of food) or observe two months of fasting. However, with the kaffārahs for the ill, assuming the illness were to extend until the following month of Ramadan, one must give $\frac{3}{4}$ kg of food to a needy person for every missed fast. Regarding the kaffārahs for those who intentionally break their fast, assuming one does have access to 60 needy persons, one oughtn't to provide each one with more than $\frac{3}{4}$ kg; this matter isn't necessary in relation to kaffārahs for the ill.

Delaying the Kaffārah of One's Missed Fasts

Q: Assuming one is liable with respect to paying the kaffārah for one's missed fasts, may he/she delay their accomplishment?

A: Yes they may; accomplishing such kaffārahs isn't immediately binding. However, one oughtn't to be neglectful in relation to their accomplishment.

Those Provided for by Kaffārahs

Q: May one spend the kaffārah (of missed fasts) for those upon whom one is obliged to pay for their necessary expenses [e.g. one's wife, children and [needy] parents]

A: No; however, it is unproblematic to donate it to (other) family members [e.g. brothers, sisters, cousins...].

Providing the Missed Fasts' Kaffārah for Sayyids

Q: May non-sayyids provide their fasts' kaffārah for sayyids?

A: Yes, this is unproblematic albeit better (a mustahabb caution) not to donate it to sayyids.

Spending the Fasts' Kaffārah on Cultural Matters

Q: May one spend the fasts' kaffārah on cultural matters, wedding ceremonies, etc.?

A: No, spending it in such matters is not permissible; such kaffārahs ought to be used to feed the needy.

The Fasts' Kaffārah of Those Who Are, Themselves, Others' Dependents

Q: Assuming one's fasts' kaffārah became binding during one's childhood at one's father's house, whose responsibility is it to pay the required kaffārah?

A: Paying the kaffārah isn't obligatory for the non-pubescent; assuming one becomes 'pubescent', one's kaffārah will become one's own liability – albeit not necessary to pay it immediately.

Observing Vowed Fasts Whilst Having Compensatory Fasts

Q: Assuming one is canonically indebted in relation to observing a number of compensatory fasts, is he/she allowed vowing to fast?

A: Assuming one had intended to observe the vowed fasts after having completed one's required compensatory fasts, such vows will be deemed valid.

The Kaffārah of Breastfeeding Women due to Their Missed Fasts

Q: Assuming a woman is breastfeeding her infant and that fasting would cause her harm, would she have to pay kaffārah if she doesn't fast?

A: She must donate $\frac{3}{4}$ kg food to a needy person for each day she hadn't fasted during the month of Ramadan, in addition to compensating her missed fasts.

Ignorance with Respect to Things Which Invalidate One's Fast

Q: What is the ruling in relation to a fasting person who commits an action whilst being ignorant of the fact that the given action invalidates one's fast?

A: One must observe the compensatory fast; paying kaffārah is not necessary save on occasions where the person is blamed for negligence vis-à-vis learning canonical rules.

6. Mustahabb Fasts

Mustahabb Fasts for a Traveler

Q: May travelers observe mustahabb fasts?

A: Observe mustahabb fasts during one's travels is not allowed save in Medina wherein one may fast for three consecutive days – in order for one's supplication to be accepted by the Lord; this is mustahabb. The chosen three days ought to be Wednesday, Thursday and a Friday.

Executing Mustahabb Fasts Whilst Obligated to Observe Compensatory Fasts

Q: Can one perform mustahabb fasts whilst still obliged to observe one's obligatory compensatory fasts?

A: Assuming one is liable to observe obligatory fasts, he/she may not perform mustahabb ones.

To Invalidate Mustahabb Fasting

Q: Is it permissible to intentionally break mustahabb fasting?

And is there a difference whether breaking fasting is done through a ḥalāl or ḥarām way?

A: One can break the mustahabb fasting any time he/she likes. But, although eating/drinking a ḥarām thing does break fasting, eating/drinking such a thing is absolutely ḥarām even though one is not fasting.

7. Miscellaneous issues

Manner of Intending One's Fasts

Q: Does one have to intend fasting every day during the month of Ramadan or is intending once at the beginning of the month sufficient?

A: Assuming one intends, on the night preceding the first day, that one wills to fast throughout the whole month, this will be deemed sufficient; however, it is better (mustahabb caution) to intend one's fasting of each day during the previous night as well.

Observing Hired Fasts and Their Manner

Q: Assuming one accepts to be hired in order to observe the fasts of a deceased person, ought one to observe them without delay? And assuming one can't fulfill one's hiring contract, may one pass on one's responsibility to another person?

A: Assuming the hiring person had determined a set time frame or had hinted at observing the required fasts without delay, he/she cannot delay the fasts; otherwise, delaying them is unproblematic unless it leads to one's negligence in relation to them. Furthermore, if the hired desires to pass on one's responsibility to another, this must be done with the permission of the hirer.

Fasting of Silence

Q: I heard that fasting of silence is ḥarām. However, some people say that it is ḥalāl in case of nadhr. Is that true?

A: It is ḥarām.

Fasting on the Day of 'Ashūrā'

Q: Is it allowed to fast on the day of 'Ashūrā'?

A: It is disliked.

- Time of Fasting

Sleeping Through Sahar

Q: At night, I decided to fast the following day; however, I didn't wake up during saḥar in order to make the intention; instead, I woke up just before sunrise. Will my fast be deemed valid?

A: The fast is valid.

Time to Break Fast

Q: Is it permissible to break one's fast at the start of the maghrib adhān?

A: This is unproblematic assuming one is certain the maghrib time has arrived; assuming one doubts or conjectures the arrival of maghrib, breaking one's fast is not allowed.

- When fasting is hard

Abandoning One's Fast due to Difficulties

Q: I am a laborer employed at Mahshahr; I work under terrible conditions with the weather being around 45 degrees Celsius and the nature of our work being awfully heavy. Fasting under such circumstances is extremely difficult for me such that it is taking its toll on my work and there's a chance I may be sacked as a result. Please guide me as to what I ought to do.

A: Assuming fasting will cause you harm or its toleration be accompanied with extreme difficulties, breaking one's fast is permissible; otherwise, abandoning one's fasting due to the presence of only some (non-extreme) excuses is not permissible.