

## **Tips on Significance of Fasting**

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Praise be to Allah, prayers and peace be upon His Messenger, family members, companions and followers. I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, the Only One who has no partner, and I bear witness, also, that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger.

Here are some tips on the significance of Fasting, which I present as a reminder to the Muslim believers.

-Congratulating Muslims for the advent of Ramadan, and showing its merits, and asking them to double increase their good deeds, and to follow the exemplary deeds and sayings of the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, and also of his companions in this regard.

-In this blessed month, gates of Paradise are all opened, and gates of Hell are all closed, and the devils are shackled, mercy and kindness are revealed, prayers and supplications are answered, and good deeds are double rewarded.

-Fasting is abstaining from eating, drinking and enjoying bodily desires from dawn up to sunset, as an act of worship.

-It became obligated gradually: first, it was imposed upon Muslims to fast for three days per month, along with the day of `Ashourah, then they were cancelled and Ramadan was appointed as the month of fasting. In the beginning, it was optional to fast or not to fast but to feed a poor person for everyday he/she breaks his/her fast. Then, this optional act was abolished, and fasting has become a will without option, then breaking the fast was up to the last evening prayer or up to sleeping time, i.e. those who performed the last evening prayer or slept before it, he/she was obliged to abstain from eating, drinking and enjoying bodily desires up to the sunset of the next day. Then this was abrogated by permitting all the joys of eating, drinking and bodily desires all night from sunset up to dawn.

-Fasting is one of the basic pillars of Islam, and its obligatory act is confirmed in the Quran, Sunnah, and consensus of the Muslim Shari`ah scholars.

-Fasting must be commenced by seeing the crescent in a clear sky, or by completing the month of Sha`baan up to thirty days in case there is difficulty in seeing the crescent in cloudy evenings. There is a Fiqh controversy about the permissibility of fasting the day of Skakk (the day that precedes the commencement of Ramadan), but the most likely it is prohibited to fast that day.

-The consideration regarding different commencements of the new crescent or disregard of it in confirming the start of the month, is a matter of independent judgment, and Scholars of Shari`ah could opt for the most likely judgment. Whoever would claim the seeing of the crescent or his independent judgment in the case of the different commencement of the new crescent, has no right to announce that in public, for observance of the consensus and integrity of the Muslim Ummah.

-The obligatory act of fasting must be obliged upon the responsible Muslim who is able and capable to fast.

-As for those who are sick or on travel, they could break their fast, and fast those days back in other days.

-The sick and the people on travel could choose the easiest: to fast or to break the fast; and if they are alike, then fasting is better, because it is easy for the responsible person, and faster in paying the duty on time of the blessed month of Ramadan, but if there is difficulty or harm in fasting, then it is disavowal or even prohibited to fast.

-As for those who are incapable to fasting, for ageing or incurable diseases, they could feed fully, for each day, a poor person, from the food they usually eat.

-And if the person is cured or the one on travel has reached his/her destination, during day-time, he/she should abstain from eating, drinking, and enjoying the bodily desires up to the rest of the day in observance of the sanctity of time, then he/she must fast another day in compensation for that day. However, some Shari`ah scholars maintain that he/she should not fast the rest of the day because Shari`ah has given him/her the license to break the fast in that case. The same judgment applies to the menstruating woman if she became clean and pure during the day time.

-Those who do hard labor, could break their fast by eating the necessary food that keep them able to do their work, then they must keep on fasting for the rest of the day, and then they must fast other days in compensation.

-The pregnant and nestling women, if they are afraid for themselves or for their babies, they could break their fast, and fast other days in compensation.

-Those who postpone the compensation days of fasting for no excuse, until they witness another Ramadan, they must fast back those days along with sacrificing an animal to the poor, as an act of atonement.

-Fasting could be spoiled by eating, drinking, vomiting, and having sexual intercourse, on purpose, without controversy among Shari`ah scholars, but if in forgetfulness, then there is a Fiqh controversy, and the most likely there is no spoil in that.

-In case the fasting is spoiled by having sexual intercourse, he/she must fast other day in compensation, along with atonement, which is freeing and ransoming a slave, and if he/she could not afford it, then he/she must fast for two consecutive months, and again if he/she could not afford it, then he/she must feed fully sixty poor persons from the food they usually eat, as Anas, may Allah be content with him, used to do. However, in case the fasting is spoiled only by eating and drinking and by other actions that would break the fast except the atonement act, should fast other days in compensation, in the most likely sayings of Shari`ah scholars.

-Fasting is not spoiled by wet dreams, or ejaculation by mere contemplation, or by abrupt looking, and if he repeated the looking and masturbated, then his fast is spoiled, because he is only forgiven for the first look, but held responsible for the second look, and fasting is not spoiled by discharging pre-seminal fluids, in the most likely sayings of Shari`ah scholars.

-And who eats in doubting of dawn time, his fasting is correct, because the basis is the rest of the night is still on, and who eats in doubting of the sunset, his/her fasting is abolished because the basis is the rest of the day is still on.

-The conditions of things that break the fast are three: knowledge, remembering and intending, and if someone eats something in ignorance or in forgetfulness, or in coercion, then his/her fasting is correct and not spoiled. Weather the being ignorant of the Shari`ah ruling or of the situation, then both excuses are acceptable, but ignorance of prohibition consequences, is not an excuse.

-The controversy about the spoiling of the fast by applying Kohl (black eyeliner), ointment, injection, and incense is a Fiqh difference, and the most likely they do not spoil the fast.

-It is of the Sunnah to hasten for breaking the fast (Iftar) as starting by eating some fresh dates, or dried dates, or just water. Also, it is of the Sunnah to delay the last meal (Suhur), because the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, said: "The Muslim Ummah is still fine and sound as long as they hasten the Iftar and delay the Suhur".

-Those who die and still had some fasting days bound on them, their people in charge of their affairs could fast for them those days, unless they were exempted from fasting because of old age or incurable sickness.

-The Fitr (Fasting) Zakat must be due after the sunset of the last day of Ramadan, and it should be paid before Eid (Feast) prayer. It could be paid two or three days before the Eid so as to reach the concerned people in due time. It is one Saa` (a measure of about 2.5 kg, or 5 lbs) of the normal food of the people of the region, for each person. However, there is a controversy about paying it in value, i.e. money, etc., that is because of justice, need, and benefit.

-It is of the Sunnah for Muslims, men and women alike, to seclude at the mosque for the last ten days of Ramadan, though there is no minimum limit, as an act of pure worship of Allah, and to be separated from woes of worldly life, and paying all his/her efforts and time to read Quran, mention the name of Allah and pray extra volunteer prayers all the time there, and to avoid interfering with matters that do not belong to him/her. The condition for seclusion is to have the intention for permanent stay at the mosque during those ten days, except for urgent needs or necessity, illness, or menstruation for women. Seclusion is nullified by having sexual intercourse at the mosque and getting out of it for no need. However, there is a Fiqh controversy about those who seclude and get out of the mosque during the seclusion period for visiting sick people.

The last of our prayers is that all praise is due to Allah alone, the Lord of the worlds.