

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Sawm (fasting) means to refrain from eating, drinking and cohabiting from ṣubḥ ṣādiq (early dawn) to sunset with a niyyah (intention) of observing fast.

Fasting in the month of Ramaḍān is one of the five pillars of Islām and is farḍ (compulsory) upon every muslim who is sane and mature. Fasting has many physical, moral, and social benefits. However, Allāh ﷻ has made fasting compulsory so that we become pious and God-fearing.

Fasting will not be valid without niyyah. It is not necessary to express the niyyah in words. However it is preferable to recite *Allāhumma aṣūmu laka ghadan* (O Allāh tomorrow I shall be fasting for you only). In the case of Ramaḍān, it is better to make niyyah in the night. However, should a person fail to do so, then it is permitted to make the niyyah during the day before the majority of the day has passed.

MUSTAḤAB (DESIRABLE) ACTS IN FASTING

1. To eat suhūr (the meal before ṣubḥ ṣādiq).
2. To delay the suhūr up to a little before ṣubḥ ṣādiq.
3. To break the fast immediately after sunset.
4. To break the fast with dates. If dates are not available then with water.
5. To recite this du‘ā at the time of breaking the fast :-

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ صُمْتُ وَبِكَ آمَنْتُ وَعَلَى رِزْقِكَ أَفْطَرْتُ

Allāhumma laka ṣumtu wa bika āmantu wa ‘alā rizqika aftarṭu

O Allāh! I fasted for You and in You do I believe and with Your provision (food) do I break my fast.

THINGS MAKRŪH (DETESTABLE) WHILE FASTING

1. To chew items such as rubber, plastic etc.
2. To taste food or drink and spit it out.
3. To collect one’s saliva in the mouth and then swallow it.
4. To clean teeth or mouth with tooth powder or toothpaste.
5. To complain of hunger or thirst.
6. To quarrel or argue with filthy words.

THINGS THAT BREAK THE FAST

1. To eat, drink or indulge in cohabitation intentionally.
2. To burn incense and inhale its smoke.
3. If water goes down the throat while gargling.
4. To vomit a mouthful intentionally.
5. To swallow vomit intentionally.
6. To swallow something edible, equal to or bigger than a grain of gram, which was stuck between the teeth. However, if it is first taken out of the mouth and then swallowed, it will break the fast whether it is smaller or bigger than the size of the grain.

7. To drop oil or medicine into ear or nose.
8. To swallow the blood from gums with saliva. However, if the blood is less than the saliva and its taste is not felt then the fast will not break.
9. Snuffing.
10. To eat and drink forgetting one is fasting and thereafter, thinking that the fast is broken, to eat and drink again.
11. Smoking.
12. To apply medicine to the anus.
13. For women to apply medicine to the urinary organs.
14. To swallow intentionally a pebble, piece of paper or any item that is not used as food or medicine.

In all the above circumstances, only a single fast will become qaḍā except in the case of number one (1), where qaḍā and kaffārah both will become obligatory. (Consult an ‘Ālim regarding the rules of kaffārah).

THINGS THAT DO NOT BREAK THE FAST

1. To eat, drink or indulge in cohabitation in forgetfulness.
2. To vomit without intention.
3. To vomit intentionally, less than mouthful.
4. To have a wet dream.
5. To oil the hair.
6. To use surma (collyrium) in the eyes.
7. To drop water or medicine in the eyes.
8. To clean teeth with wet or dry miswāk

(a stick used for cleaning teeth).

9. To apply or smell 'iṭr (perfume).
10. To swallow a fly, mosquito, smoke or dust unintentionally.
11. To swallow one's saliva or phlegm.
12. Water entering the ears.
13. To take an injection.

SUNNAH PRACTICES IN THE MONTH OF RAMAḌĀN

1. To observe tarawīḥ.
2. To increase the recitation of the Glorious Qur'ān.
3. To observe i'tikāf during the last ten days of RamaḌān.

AḤĀDĪTH REGARDING THE VIRTUES OF FASTING

Ṣawm

Ṣawm is a shield, as long as he (the fasting person) does not tear it up. (An-Nasa'ī)

Note: Fasting is a protection from Shayṭān or from Allāh's ﷻ punishment in the hereafter. One who indulges in sins whilst fasting, such as lying, backbiting etc., they become the cause of the fast becoming wasted.

All good deeds are for the one who renders them, but fasting. Fasting is exclusively for me (Allāh). (Al-Bukhārī)

Fasting is a shield and a powerful fortress. (Aḥmad, Al-Bayhaqī)

I swear by that being in whose possession is the life of Muḥammad! The odour of the mouth of a fasting person is sweeter to Allāh than the fragrance of musk. (Al-Bukhārī)

Fasting is exclusively for Allāh, the reward of it (being limitless) no one knows besides Allāh. (Aṭ-Ṭabrānī)

Suhūr

Verily, Allāh and His angels send mercy upon those who eat suhūr. (Aṭ-Ṭabrānī)

Eat suhūr because in suhūr lies barakah. (Mishkāt)

Iftār

Whosoever gives something to a fasting person in order to break the fast, for him there shall be forgiveness for his sins and emancipation from the fire of Jahannam; and for him (the one who gives) shall be the same reward as for him (whom he fed), without that person's (the one who was fed) reward being diminished in the least. (Ibn Khuzaymah, Al-Bayhaqī)

Whoever gave a person, who fasted, water to drink, Allāh shall give him a drink from my fountain whereafter he shall never again feel thirsty until he enters Jannah. (Ibn Khuzaymah)

The fasting person experiences two (ocasions) of delight: at the time of iftār and at the time he will meet his Rabb. (Al-Bukhārī)

Not a single prayer made by a fasting person at the time of breaking fast is rejected. (Ibn Mājah)

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"O you who believe! Fasting has been enjoined upon you, as it was enjoined upon those before you, so that you may be God-fearing." (2:183)

Ṣawm

(Fasting)

by
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