

ISLAMIC LAWS OF **F A S T I N G**

ACCORDING TO THE RULINGS OF
GRAND AYATULLAH SAYYID ALI AL-SISTANI



Islamic Laws of
Fasting

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AYATULLAH SAYYID ALI AL-HUSSEINI AL-SISTANI



I.M.A.M.

IMAM MAHDI ASSOCIATION OF MARJAEYA

**Imam Mahdi Association of Marjaeya, Dearborn,
MI 48124, www.imam-us.org
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Printed in the United States of America**

ISBN-13: 978-0-9997877-6-2

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I.M.A.M.'s Foreword

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious,
the Most Merciful

May peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad
and his immaculate and pure progeny

The success of any project must begin with the support of God. Moreover, the project must have a reason for its initiation, a desired outcome, an intended goal, and be different from existing literature. Thus, we begin by explaining what distinguishes this work from others and what makes it more than a mere addition to other publications.

There are several reasons for preparing this booklet.

- A lack of authoritative jurisprudential material in English that is accurate in content, professionally translated [from Arabic], and restructured and carefully edited to ensure linguistic suitability
- A lack of simple and straightforward jurisprudential material in English, presented with complete and detailed explanations of the Islamic legal terms related to fasting, in a way that is suitable for youth and teenagers
- Details about the rules of fasting and the conditions related to them currently exist in many places (books, pamphlets, or websites). This makes it difficult for the duty-bound person (*mukallaf*) to

find an accurate, all-encompassing, and easy-to-access booklet that contains all the details and rulings of fasting in one place.

- The absence of a resource that considers the appropriate order and hierarchy of the rulings of fasting. For example, many of the existing texts begin with an explanation of the intention for fasting and delve into its details (such as requirements, timing, or annulling) before even presenting the conditions that obligate someone to fast. Similarly, some texts start by covering what invalidates the fast, such as eating and drinking, before explaining the conditions of fasting, such as knowing when it starts and ends. In addition, discussion of the crescent and the beginning of the month of Ramadan often occurs at the end of these books, as if its sighting only concerns the declaration of Eid and not when the month of Ramadan starts. For these and many other reasons, this booklet endeavors to rearrange the rulings of fasting, present them in an objective manner, and explain them step-by-step.

This booklet contains two parts.

- The first part describes the importance and greatness of fasting and the benefits it has on the individual, family, and society. It also discusses the reward God Almighty has promised in the hereafter for those who fast. It attempts to demonstrate the importance and virtue of the month of Ramadan and the honorable occasions and significant events that take place in it. Thus, believers must appreciate the significance of this

temporary opportunity so they can avail themselves of it in the best way possible.

- The second part explains the rulings of fasting from A to Z. It describes the rulings in detail and includes additional related topics that a fasting person must know. These include the rules of *tayammum*, which a duty-bound person must know so they can purify themselves when the time to do so is very short, the rules of the traveler, whether to religiously consider a person a frequent traveler, and when to fast during travel. Other rules in this book cover sighting of the crescent and the means of establishing unity or multiplicity of horizons; *itikaf* (spiritual retreat) and its importance because unfortunately, it has become an almost abandoned form of worship; and *zakat al-fitra*, which jurisprudential books usually mention in the chapter on *zakat* rather than in the chapter of fasting. As such, this booklet includes everything the duty-bound person needs to know about fasting and the rules concerning its proper execution, God-willing. The booklet concludes with some recommendations about the social aspect of the month of Ramadan and discusses the joyous occasion of Eid, its gatherings, and visits. Unfortunately, by celebrating Eid in a sinful manner and engaging in acts of disobedience, many of these gatherings are the cause of spoiling believers' deeds, which they worked for during the month. This could cause the believers to lose the rewards and effects of fasting, denying them from reaping any benefit they should receive on that blessed day.

In describing the rulings of this booklet, we relied on authoritative jurisprudential sources like the revised 1439 editions of *Al-taliqah ala al-urwah al-wuthqa*, *Minhaj al-salihin*, the revised 1441 edition of *Al-masail al-muntakhabah*, *Tawdih al-masail jami* in Persian (published in 1435), and the booklet *Al-siyam junnatun min al-nar* (1426). All these books are available electronically on the official website of His Eminence al-Sayyid al-Sistani. In addition to all these sources, the booklet updates the rulings (if necessary) based on the latest questions and answers (*istifta*) published on the official website up until the publication of this booklet.

Developing this booklet began with collecting the titles of chapters and arranging them thematically. Then the material was written in that thematic order and according to what was adopted from *Minhaj al-salihin*. As mentioned above, the text also includes rulings from other books and resources, such as recent questions and new jurisprudential explanations. Furthermore, it was necessary to develop new titles that make it easier for the reader to reference and search for topics or rulings (e.g., mistakes in fasting, obligation to make up missed fasts, *kaffarah*), since the objective of this booklet was to present the material in an easy to follow and well-prioritized format.

Eminent scholars, who oversaw preparing the booklet and maintaining the accuracy of the content, reviewed the first draft. They carefully reviewed, edited, and revised it to ensure that the explanations of the rulings and topics were clear and that they did not cause any confusion or misinterpretation. The final Arabic version was then translated into English. After the translation process, the English text was evaluated and

Foreword

reviewed to confirm that it exactly matched the content presented in the Arabic text. Finally, the content was linguistically checked to ensure it flowed in English and suited the lay reader's understanding, especially the youth.

As such, we would like to thank and extend our sincere appreciation to all employees and volunteers of this blessed organization who contributed to the preparation, processing, review, editing, and dissemination of this booklet, especially Sayyid M. B. al-Kashmiri, Sayyed Muntadher al-Jaberi, and Dr. Shaykh Mehdi S. Hazari. We particularly recognize and thank His Eminence Ayatullah Shaykh Ali al-Dihneen (may God protect him) for reviewing the contents of this booklet and making sure that they are consistent with the edicts of His Eminence Grand Ayatullah Sayyid al-Sistani. We would also like to let the respected readers know that Part 1 of this booklet was prepared by I.M.A.M.'s team, it was not taken or adapted from the works of His Eminence.

We ask Almighty God to accept this work and make it a means for attaining nearness to Him and ascendance on the ladder of perfection, acknowledging that perfection is God's alone. Thus, because we are prone to fault and negligence, we would be grateful if the honorable readers could share any suggestions or notes so they may be considered for future editions of the booklet. We ask you all to remember us in your supplications, and we ask God Almighty to accept this trivial work of ours, hoping for its addition to our good deeds. Most importantly, praise be to God Almighty.

I.M.A.M.

In the name of Allah, the Most
Gracious, the Most Merciful

“ *Believers, fasting
has been made mandatory for you
as it was made mandatory for the
people before you, so that you may
have fear of God.* ”

(The Quran 2:183)



Part One



Fasting in Islam

Fasting in Islam¹

Fasting is one of the most important obligations in Islam. God says, “Believers, fasting has been made mandatory for you as it was made mandatory for the people before you, so that you may have fear of God.”² Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) included fasting among the pillars of Islam. Hadiths report that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp) said, “Islam is built on five [pillars]: testifying that there is no god but Allah, establishing prayers, paying zakat, fasting in Ramadan, and performing pilgrimage to the House of Allah for those who are capable of doing so.”³ Additionally, there are many narrations from the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (pbut) that emphasize the importance of fasting. Narrations tell us that Imam al-Baqir (p) said, “Islam is built on five [pillars]: praying, zakat, fasting, hajj, and *wilayah*; and the most important pillar is *wilayah*.”⁴ Therefore, fasting in the month of Ramadan is an essential and necessary part of Islam, and whoever denies it has denied Islam.

1. This part of the booklet was prepared by I.M.A.M. so that the content is comprehensive and exhaustive from a theoretical and not just jurisprudential perspective. It is not from the writings attributed to al-Sayyid al-Sistani.

2. The Holy Quran 2:183, Muhammad Sarwar translation (MS).

3. al-Sarkhasi, *al-Mabsut*, vol. 2, p. 149.

4. al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 18.

Fasting in Previous Nations

Several rulings in the *sharia* date back to legislations promulgated by divine religions, with changes in their implementation or expansion on their conditions, in the era before Islam. For example, the Quranic story of Luqman, the Wise, mentions prayer, “My son, be steadfast in prayer. Make others do good. Prevent them from doing evil. Be patient in hardship. Patience comes from faith and determination.”⁵ Similarly, hajj is mentioned in the Quran in the story of Abraham and Ishmael, “We made the house (in Mecca) as a place of refuge and sanctuary for men. Adopt the place where Abraham stood as a place for prayer. We advised Abraham and Ishmael to keep My house clean for the pilgrims, the worshippers and for those who bow down and prostrate themselves in worship.”⁶ The same applies to fasting, “Believers, fasting has been made mandatory for you as it was made mandatory for the people before you, so that you may have fear of God.”⁷ It is clear from this verse that fasting was legislated for previous nations as well, even if it was implemented in a more general manner and did not include the details found in Islamic law. In addition to this, there are supplications from Imam Ali ibn Hussain Zayn al-Abidin al-Sajjad (p), which include one for the farewell of the month of Ramadan. He says, “Through it (i.e., fasting in the month of Ramadan), You preferred us over other nations and chose us for its excellence

5. The Holy Quran 31:17, MS.

6. The Holy Quran 2:125, MS.

7. The Holy Quran 2:183, MS.

over people of other creeds. We fasted by Your command in its daytime, and we stood in prayer with Your help in its night.”⁸

The Definition of Fasting

Linguistically, fasting is to abstain from something. In Islamic terminology, fasting is the act of abstaining from a set of fast-nullifiers with the intention of attaining nearness, submission, and obedience to God Almighty.

Its Significance, Status, and Reward

The Holy Quran stipulates the obligation of fasting, its status, the reason for its legislation, and its conditions in more than one verse. Some of these verses include:

- “Believers, fasting has been made mandatory for you as it was made mandatory for the people before you, so that you may have fear of God.”⁹
- “God has promised forgiveness and great rewards to the Muslim men and the Muslim women, the believing men and the believing women, the obedient men and the obedient women, the truthful men and the truthful women, the forbearing men and the forbearing women, the humble men and the humble women, the alms-giving men and the alms-giving women, the fasting men and the fasting women, the chaste

8. Imam Zayn al-Abidin, *al-sahifah al-sajjadiyyah*, supplication 45.

9. The Holy Quran 2:183, MS.

men and the chaste women, and the men and women who remember God very often.”¹⁰

- “The month of Ramadan is the month in which the Quran was revealed; a guide for the people, the most authoritative of all guidance and a criterion to discern right from wrong. Anyone of you who knows that the month of Ramadan has begun must start to fast. Those who are sick or on a journey have to fast the same number of days at another time. God does not impose any hardship upon you. He wants you to have comfort so that you may complete the fast, glorify God for His having given you guidance, and perhaps you give Him thanks.”¹¹

In addition to the verses from the Holy Quran, many *Qudsi* hadith,¹² prophetic hadith, and noble narrations¹³ show the status and importance of obligatory fasting. The most important narration is Prophet Muhammad's famous sermon. Imam al-Rida, his fathers, and Amir al-Muminin narrate that the Messenger of Allah addressed us one day and said:

“O People!

“Indeed, the blessed month of Allah has arrived with blessings, mercy, and forgiveness for you.

10. The Holy Quran 33:35, MS.

11. The Holy Quran 2:185, MS

12. The *Qudsi* hadith are words of God Almighty, but they are not the Quran. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp) relayed these traditions to the people.

13. The noble narrations are narrated from the infallibles of the Ahl al-Bayt (pbut) from Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp).

A month that is considered the best of months by Allah. Its days are the best of days, its nights are the best of nights, and its hours are the best of hours. It is a month in which you are invited to be the guests of Allah. In this month you are considered to be people worthy of the grace of Allah. In this month, each breath you take glorifies Allah, your sleep is worship, your deeds are accepted, and your prayers are answered. “So, ask Allah, your Lord, with sincere intentions and pure hearts, to aid you in fasting and reciting His Holy Book. The unfortunate one is he who is denied Allah’s forgiveness during this great month. Through your hunger and thirst, remember the hunger and thirst that you will experience on the Day of Judgment. Give charity to the needy and poor, honor your old, show kindness to your young ones, maintain relations with your kin, guard your tongues, look away from that which is not permissible for your sight, close your ears to that which is forbidden to hear, show compassion to the orphans of other people so compassion may be shown to your orphans. “Repent to Allah for your sins and raise your hands and ask Allah during times of prayer, for these are the best of times; Allah looks at His servants with mercy, answering their supplications, answering their call if they called, and granting their prayers if they asked. “O People! Indeed, your souls are tied to your deeds, so free them with repentance. Your backs are heavy with sins, so lighten them with long prostrations. Know that Allah swears by His Might that He does not punish those who pray

and prostrate, and He will not frighten them with the fire of the day when people stand before the Lord of the worlds.

“O People! One who gives food to a believer to break his fast, is given the reward of freeing a slave and his past sins will be forgiven.”

Some people listening to the sermon said, “O Prophet of Allah, not all of us are able to invite those who are fasting”

The Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, “**You could avoid hellfire with even a piece of date or a drink of water.**

“O People! One who attains good morals during this month will be able to pass the sirat on the day that feet will slip. The one who forgives his slaves in this month Allah will forgive him on Judgment Day. The one who abstains from evil in this month, Allah will save him from His anger when he meets Him. The one who honors an orphan in this month, Allah will honor him when he meets Him. The one who maintains relations with his kin in this month, Allah will shower him with His mercy when he meets Him. The one who cuts ties with his kin, Allah will cut His mercy from him when he meets Him. Whoever performs a recommended prayer in this month, Allah will keep the fire of Hell away from him. Whoever performs one obligatory prayer, Allah will give him the reward of seventy prayers prayed in other months. Whoever increases his prayers (salawat) on me in this month, Allah will increase his scale of goods deeds when other people’s scales become light. The one who recites one verse from the holy Quran in this month, will be

given the reward of reciting the whole Quran during other months.

“O People! The doors of heaven are open during this month, so ask your Lord not to close them for you. The doors of hell are closed, so ask your Lord not to open them for you. Shaytan is imprisoned during this month, so ask your Lord not to let him have power over you.”

Amir al-Muminin, Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (peace be upon him) said, “I stood up and said, ‘O Messenger of God! What is the best worship in this month?’ The Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, ‘O Aba al-Hasan, the best worship in this month is to abstain from that which is forbidden by God Almighty.’ Then he [the Prophet] cried and I said, ‘O Messenger of God! What makes you cry?’ He said, ‘O Ali, I cry because of what will happen to you in this month. You will be praying to your Lord, and a wretched person—the brother of the one who slaughtered the camel of Thamud—will strike you on your head, drenching your beard with blood.’ Amir al-Muminin said, ‘O Messenger of God, will my death keep my religion safe? He [the Prophet] said, ‘Yes, it will keep your religion safe.’ Then the Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, ‘O Ali, the one who kills you has killed me, and the one who hates you has hated me, and the one who curses you has cursed me. This is all because you are from me; your soul is my soul, and your clay is my clay, God Almighty has created you and I, and He has chosen you and I. He chose me as His prophet and chose you as His imam. He who denies your imamah has denied my prophethood. O Ali, you are my successor, the father of my sons, and the

husband of my daughter. You are the successor after me in my ummah (nation), during my life, and after my death. Your command is my command, and your prohibition is my prohibition. I swear by the One who has sent me as His prophet and made me the best of His creation, that you are the proof of God on His creation, the trustee with His secret, and the successor amongst His servants.”¹⁴

Additionally, some of the most important noble narrations from the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp) and his progeny (pbut) are presented here for further enlightenment and enrichment about the many dimensions of fasting, its virtue, and the benefit of the blessed month of Ramadan.

Traditions state that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp) has said, “If the servant knew what Ramadan contained [of blessings] he would wish that Ramadan lasted for a year.”¹⁵

It has been narrated that Imam Ali (p) has said, “How many fasting people do not gain anything from their fasting except thirst. And how many fasting people do not gain anything from their standing for prayer at night except exhaustion, their acts are empty sleep and meaningless eating.”¹⁶

14. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 93, p. 356; *Uyun al-akhbar*, vol. 1, p. 295–297.

15. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 93, p. 346.

16. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol.93, p.294.

It has been narrated that Lady Fatimah al-Zahra (p) said, “What does a fasting person do with their fasting if they do not protect their tongue, hearing, eyesight and body parts [from that which is forbidden]?”¹⁷ In response to someone who asked about the wisdom behind the legislation of fasting, it is narrated that Imam Hussain (p) said, “So the rich man can taste the pain of hunger and thereby give to the poor.”¹⁸ Imam Zayn al-Abidin (p) says in his supplication, which he recited at the beginning of the month of Ramadan, “And help us to fast its days by restraining our body parts from acts of disobedience and by using them for that which pleases You; so that we do not use our ears to listen to idle talk, and we do not hurry with our eyes to look at diversion. And so we do not stretch our hands toward that which is forbidden, and we do not stride with our feet toward that which is prohibited. And so our bellies hold only what you have made lawful, and our tongues speak only what You have exemplified. And so we undertake nothing but that which brings us close to Your reward, and so we pursue nothing but what protects us from Your punishment.”¹⁹ Narrations also show that Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (p) said, “The fasting of the one who disobeys the imam is not valid. The fasting of the servant who has not returned [to his master] is not valid until he returns. The fasting of the disobedient woman is not valid until she repents. The fasting of the disobedient child is not valid until he

17. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 93, p. 295.

18. al-Qurashi, *The Life of Imam Hussayn*, vol. 1, p. 155.

19. *al-sahifah al-sajjadiyyah*, supplication 44.

obeys [his parents] and pleases them.”²⁰ It has also been narrated that Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, “When you fast, your hearing, sight, private parts, and tongue should all be fasting. You should divert your gaze from that which has been forbidden for you to look at. You should not listen to what has been forbidden. You should protect your tongue from lying and obscenity.”²¹ It has been narrated by Imam Musa al-Kadhim (p) that he said, “To break your brother’s fast by inviting him to food is better than your own fast.”²² Additionally, a detailed narration containing a long dialogue with Imam al-Rida (p) indicates that in response to being asked, “Why did God command fasting?” he said, “So they [the people] can experience the pain of hunger and thirst, and thereby understand the poverty of the hereafter. And so the fasting person can be fearful, lowly, satisfied [with what they already have], rewarded, deliberate, and patiently aware of the hunger and thirst that afflict them, so they deserve the reward of having suppressed their desires. And so that this would be a reminder to them in the immediate future, a reckoning for what God has obligated them to do, a guide for them in the future, and so that they know the severity of the affliction on the poor in this world and [as a result] do what God has ordained for them in their money.”²³ So if it were asked, why was fasting obligated in the month of Ramadan and not other months? It would be said, ‘Because the month of

20. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 93, p. 295

21. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 93, p. 295.

22. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 93, p. 317.

23. Shaykh al-Saduq, *Uyun akhbar al-Rida*, vol. 1, p. 123.

Ramadan is the month in which the Quran was sent and truth was distinguished from falsehood, as God says, “The month of Ramadan is one in which the Quran was sent down as guidance to mankind, with manifest proofs of guidance and the Criterion,”²⁴ and it is the month of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp), and in it is the Night of Power (*qadr*) which is “better than a thousand months”²⁵ and “Every definitive matter is resolved on it.”²⁶ Which is the pinnacle of the year and through it the rest of the year is determined, good or bad, harm or benefit, immediate sustenance or delay, this is why it is known as the Night of Power.”²⁷

The sources contain additional narrations for those interested in reading more.²⁸

Characteristics and Advantages of Fasting and the Holy Month of Ramadan

1. Solely for God and He Accepts It

Many acts of worship become sullied because of showing off and a lack of sincerity in their performance, except for fasting, which is private worship between the servant and their Lord. A Qudsi hadith narrates that God

24. The Holy Quran 2:185, Ali Quli Qarai (AQQ).

25. The Holy Quran 97:3, MS.

26. The Quran 44:4, AQQ.

27. Shaykh al-Saduq, *Uyun akhbar al-Rida*, vol. 1, p. 123.

28. There are many hadith sources and large encyclopedias, such as *al-Kafi* by Shaykh al-Kulayni; *Wasail al-Shia* by al-Hurr al-Amili; *Bihar al-anwar* by Shaykh al-Majlisi and more.

Almighty said, “Fasting is for Me and I give the reward for it.”²⁹ God Almighty specified this worship solely for Himself and considered it accepted in advance.

2. Its Proven Benefits

God Almighty says in the Holy Quran, “However, fasting is better and will be rewarded. Would that you had known this!”³⁰ Thus, fasting has innumerable benefits.

3. Continuous worship

Fasting is one of the rare acts of worship that God accepts and rewards regardless of the state of the servant, even if they are sleeping. A noble hadith narrates that the Messenger of God (pbuh&hp) said, “The fasting person worships God even if they are sleeping on their bed, as long as they do not backbite another Muslim.”³¹ Likewise, the Prophet (pbuh&hp) said in his sermon welcoming the month of Ramadan, “Your sleep in it is worship, and each of your breaths during it glorify God.”

4. Answered supplications

It has been narrated by Imam al-Sadiq (p), through his fathers and from the Messenger of God (pbuh&hp) that he said, “There are four people whose prayers are answered, and the doors of the heavens open [for their

29. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 93, p. 249; Ibn al-Arabi, *al-futuhah al-makkiyya*, vol.1, p. 258.

30. The Holy Quran 2:184, MS.

31. al-Shaykh al-Saduq, *Thawab al-amal*, vol. 1, p. 75, hadith 1.

supplications] until they reach the Throne. They are: the supplication of parents for their children, the supplication of the oppressed against their oppressor, the supplication of the one performing *umrah* until they return [home], and the supplication of the fasting person until they break their fast.”³²

5. Patience and willpower

Fasting is the best way to enhance the virtue of patience and strengthen willpower. God Almighty says, “Believers, help yourselves (in your affairs) through patience and prayer; God is with those who have patience.”³³ In the interpretation of this verse by the Ahl al-Bayt (pbut), narrations state that Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, “Patience in this [verse] is referring to fasting.”³⁴ Therefore, fasting is the ultimate means of strengthening a person’s patience and willpower by refraining from what God has made permissible (i.e., during the daytime). Therefore, a person who can demonstrate patience by controlling their desires during the daytime can do so at night as well, and if they are able to do it for a week, then they would be able to do it for a month, or two months, and so on until it becomes a natural part of their disposition and makes the attributes of patience and willpower an integral part of their being.

32. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 93, p. 356; *Uyun al-akhbar*, vol. 1, p. 295–297.

33. The Holy Quran 2:153, MS.

34. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 93, p. 254.

In Islam, the description of patience above does not mean that the person should be in a state of humiliation, dejectedness, or marginalization. God forbid that some people would think that this is Islam's intent. Rather, it is a process that helps us to ensure that we reach the desired outcome by teaching us to control the self and discipline our emotions and tendencies and then know when to move and act appropriately. A narration from Amir al-Muminin (p) supports this when he said, "The patient one will reach victory, even if it takes a long time."³⁵

6. Forgiveness and a great reward

Among the benefits of fasting is the chance to earn God's forgiveness and a great reward, which is indicated by the apparent meaning of the holy verse, "God has promised forgiveness and great rewards to the Muslim men and the Muslim women, the believing men and the believing women, the obedient men and the obedient women, the truthful men and the truthful women, the forbearing men and the forbearing women, the humble men and the humble women, the alms-giving men and the alms-giving women, the fasting men and the fasting women, the chaste men and the chaste women, and the men and women who remember God very often."³⁶

35. al-Sharif al-Radi, *Nahj al-balagha*, vol. 2, p. 183.

36. The Holy Quran 33:35, MS.

7. Innumerable Rewards

It was previously mentioned that the meaning of patience in the verse, “Believers, help yourselves (in your affairs) through patience and prayer; God is with those who have patience.”³⁷ God Almighty has also said, “God will recompense the deeds of those who have exercised patience, without keeping an account.”³⁸ Based on this, the fasting person earns rewards that are innumerable and unmeasurable. This is one of the rare acts of worship for which God Almighty promises such an immense reward.

8. A barrier from fire

Imam al-Sadiq (p) through his fathers narrates that the Messenger of God (pbuh&hp) said, “Fasting the month of Ramadan is a haven from hellfire.”³⁹ Thus, fasting is a barrier to the fire because it eradicates sins, strengthens piety, brings the servant closer to heaven, and keeps them away from hellfire. No other act of worship has been described in this manner, except charity.

9. A gate of paradise reserved for those who fast

It is known that heaven has eight gates, and God Almighty has assigned one gate to those who fast due to its importance and significance. It has been narrated

37. The Holy Quran 2:153, MS.

38. The Holy Quran 39:10, MS.

39. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 93, p .342.

that the Messenger of God (pbuh&hp) said, “There is a gate in heaven called *al-Rayyan*, only those who fast enter from it. It is called *al-Rayyan* because enduring thirst is more difficult than enduring hunger. Hence, when those who fast enter from that gate, they are greeted with never having to feel thirst again.”⁴⁰

10. The revelation of divine books

The month of Ramadan has a loftier status than all other months because it is when God revealed all the divine books to His prophets and messengers, and even though there were other months that were sacred before the advent of Islam. These months have a special status and unique distinction for the performance of acts of worship and obedience. They include four months mentioned in the Holy Quran: Rajab, Dhu al-Qidah, Dhu al-Hijjah, and Muharram. God says, “According to the Book of God, from the day He created the heavens and the earth, the number of months is twelve, four of which are sacred. (This is part of the law) of the religion. Do not commit injustice against your souls during the sacred months but fight all the pagans just as they fight against all of you. Know that God is with the pious ones.”⁴¹

Several noble hadiths narrated from the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (pbut) discuss the revelation of scriptures in Ramadan. For example, narrations indicate that Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, “The Quran was revealed in its entirety and all at once in the month of Ramadan to

40. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 93, p. 252.

41. The Holy Quran 9:36, MS.

Bayt al-Mamur (built house), then it was gradually revealed over twenty years.” Then the Imam (p) said, “The Prophet said, ‘Prophet Ibrahim’s scriptures were revealed on the first night of the month of Ramadan, and the Tawrat was revealed after the sixth day of the month of Ramadan, and the Injil was revealed after the thirteenth night of the month of Ramadan, and the Zabur, was revealed after the eighteenth day of the month of Ramadan, and the Quran was revealed on the twenty-third day of the month of Ramadan.’”⁴²

God chose the month of Ramadan from among the other months for its virtue. This is also evident if we connect the arrival of the Holy Quran all at once to *Bayt al-Mamur* (the built house) as is indicated in the reported hadith of Ahl al-Bayt (pbut) and what is interpreted by the commentators about the verses, “We revealed the Quran on the Night of Destiny.”⁴³ and “That We have revealed the Quran on a blessed night to warn mankind.”⁴⁴ which demonstrate that it was revealed to the heart of the honored Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp) in the Night of Power during the holy month of Ramadan. Hence, it is a month of special significance, blessing, and divine legislation, due to the revelation of the Holy Quran and the other divine books.

42 al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 629.

43. The Holy Quran 97:1, MS.

44. The Holy Quran 44:3, MS.

11. The Nights of Destiny

Commentaries of the Holy Quran unanimously indicate that what is meant by “night” in the verses, “We revealed the Quran on the Night of Destiny.”⁴⁵ and “That We have revealed the Quran on a blessed night to warn mankind.”⁴⁶ is the Night of Power, or the night in which God revealed it all at once as a whole book to the heart of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp). However, God has willed that the exact date of this night is unknown, except to Him. The night is hidden amongst other nights of the month of Ramadan and is known to only God and the righteous and sincere servants that He chose. There are many narrations reported from the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp) and his Ahl al-Bayt (pbut) about the Night of Power being in the last ten nights of the month of Ramadan. Furthermore, we have narrations that tell us it is one of three nights of those last ten, specifically the nineteenth, twenty-first, or twenty-third night. Many narrations also emphasize the order of significance and importance of these nights and what God decrees for His servants of lifespan, sustenance, success, and blessings therein. One of these narrations is by Imam al-Sadiq (p) who is reported to have said, “God decrees [people’s fates] on the nineteenth night of the month of Ramadan, destines it for them on the twenty-first, and finalizes it for their [upcoming] year on the

45. The Holy Quran 97:1, MS.

46. Quran 44:3, MS.

twenty-third night. God does with His creation what He chooses.”⁴⁷

As such, God Almighty has broadened [the potential] and singled out this blessed month over other months with this additional virtue by decreeing mercy, forgiveness, and blessings for His servants on more than one of its blessed nights. This means that we must be aware of the importance of these nights and their recommended worship.

12. The last ten days and spiritual retreat (itikaf)

The lives of the noble Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp) and the Ahl al-Bayt (pbut) indicate that the last ten nights of the month of Ramadan have a special status and virtue and require greater attention and devotion to worship. The Prophet and the Ahl al-Bayt commemorated these ten nights with worship, especially by practicing itikaf or spiritual retreat, which is a desirable act of worship at any appropriate time during the year and highly recommended in the last ten days of the month of Ramadan. It is reported that the Commander of the Faithful described that the Prophet (pbuh&hp) “Would wake up (i.e., remind) his family during the last ten days of Ramadan”⁴⁸ and that “If the ten days began, [the Prophet] would become preoccupied [with worship] and he would ask his

47. Ibn Tawus, *Iqbal al-amal*, vol. 1, p.150.

48. al-Kashani, *Zubdat al-tafsir*, vol. 1, p. 477.

family to do the same.”⁴⁹ He is also reported to have stated that “If the ten days started the Prophet would retreat [for worship] into the mosque, and a tent of fur would be set up for him, he would roll up his clothes, and put away his bed.”⁵⁰

Another indication of the virtue and reward of itikaf in these ten days of the month of Ramadan is a hadith from Imam al-Sadiq (p) by way of his forefathers that the Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, “Performing a spiritual retreat [for worship] in the last ten days of the month of Ramadan is equal [in reward] to performing hajj twice and umrah twice.”⁵¹

The Wisdom of Legislating Fasting and Its Benefits

No one knows the reason behind divine laws except for the Legislator Himself, God Almighty, and whoever God approves of from the prophets, the messengers, and their pure successors. Therefore, many of the obligations are performed with a specified intention of worship, due to a person’s conviction and certainty in God Almighty, and His message as promulgated by His prophets, messengers, and their deputies, and the desire to live in a manner that is obedient to His commands. God Almighty in His holy book and the Messenger (pbuh&hp) and the Ahl al-Bayt (pbut) in

49. al-Kashani, *Zubdat al-tafsir*, vol. 1, p. 477.

50. al-Naraqī, *Mustanada al-Shia*, vol. 10, p. 544.

51. al-Saduq, *Man la yahthuruh al-faqih*, vol. 2, p. 188.

their narrations have nevertheless made a part of the wisdom behind legislating fasting clear. The sections that follow contain narrations that describe this wisdom and the benefits and effects of fasting.

1. Strengthening One's Piety

The verse of fasting clearly states that the purpose and wisdom behind legislating it is the attainment of piety. God Almighty says, "Believers, fasting has been made mandatory for you as it was made mandatory for the people before you, so that you may have fear of God."⁵² Piety is a developed internal ability that prevents one from committing sins, even detestable or *makruh* acts, and from practicing pleasures and desires beyond what is permissible. Therefore, fasting is one of the most important means to help a person attain piety and strengthen it through controlling desires.

2. Ensuring Sincerity

It has been narrated that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (p), said, "God has obligated fasting to test the sincerity of His creation."⁵³ It has also been narrated that the pure and infallible Lady Fatimah al-Zahra (p) said in her famous sermon in which she described the philosophy behind some of God's legislations, "And fasting has been imposed by God as an affirmation of sincerity."⁵⁴ Perhaps this is because

52. The Holy Quran 2:183, MS.

53. *Nahj al-balagha*, sermon 192, hadith 252.

54. *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 4, p. 368, hadith 96.

fasting is an intimate, discreet type of worship between the servant and their Master, far from hypocrisy and showing off.

3. A Reminder to Be Grateful

After God Almighty mentions the virtue of the month of Ramadan and the fact that fasting is obligatory for those who are not sick or traveling, He reminds us of another reason for the legislation of fasting, and that is to be thankful. God says, “The month of Ramadan is the month in which the Quran was revealed; a guide for the people, the most authoritative of all guidance and a criterion to discern right from wrong. Anyone of you who knows that the month of Ramadan has begun, he must start to fast. Those who are sick or on a journey have to fast the same number of days at another time. God does not impose any hardship upon you. He wants you to have comfort so that you may complete the fast, glorify God for His having given you guidance, and that, perhaps, you would give Him thanks.”⁵⁵ Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to be especially grateful for the bounties He has bestowed in this month, for the guidance He has blessed us with, and for all His other countless blessings. We should show our gratitude for these blessings through our words and actions, and by using His blessings only to do what He commanded us to do, because if we do, God will preserve these blessings [for us] and increase them as He says in the verse, “If you give thanks, I shall give you greater (favours).”⁵⁶

55. The Holy Quran 2:185, MS.

56. The Holy Quran 14:7, MS.

4. Cultivating Wisdom and Contentment

The hadith of *Miraj*, or the ascension, narrates that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp) asked God, “Oh my Lord, what does fasting cultivate in us?” God Almighty said, “Fasting cultivates wisdom, and wisdom confers understanding, and understanding leads to certainty, and if a servant is certain [in God], they will not worry about themselves, whether they wake up [to the day] in difficulty or ease.”⁵⁷ How many people search endlessly for ways to attain wisdom, morals, and perfection to become an image of perfection and strength yet are unable to do so? Moreover, how many people look for ways to reduce their greed and bridle their insatiable pleasures yet are unable to do so? This narration shows that wisdom and contentment with the decree and destiny of God are embedded in the virtue of fasting. As such, fasting is the best way to obtain wisdom and contentment with what God has ordained for His servants, and they are so needy for it.

5. A Reminder of the Hereafter

As mentioned earlier, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp) is reported to have said, “Through your hunger and thirst, remember the hunger and thirst that you will experience on the Day of Judgment.”⁵⁸ Moreover, he said about the legislation of fasting, “There is no

57. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 74, p. 27.

58. A question may arise about the type of hunger and thirst a person will experience on the Day of Judgment. Perhaps it is argued that if the resurrection is physical and not just spiritual, then hunger and thirst will be of a physical nature, even if food or drink is not offered during judgment.

believer who fasts the month of Ramadan with anticipation [of its effects] that God gives them seven characteristics: the first is the melting off of all *haram* that has built up [from sinning], the second is they become closer to God's mercy, the third is. . .the fourth is God eases their pangs of death, the fifth is safety from hunger and thirst on the Day of Judgment, the sixth is God grants them safety from hellfire, and the seventh God feeds them from heaven's pleasant food."⁵⁹ The thirst and hunger of a fasting person reminds them of their lengthy stand in the presence of God until the person says, "What kind of record is this that has missed nothing small or great?" They will find whatever they have done right before their very eyes."⁶⁰ Therefore, fasting is nothing but a period of training that trains and readies a person to overcome inevitable difficulties so that they may be prepared for the hereafter with more good deeds.

6. Encouraging Empathy

It is narrated from Imam al-Rida (p) that he said the reason for legislating fasting was, "So that they (people) know the pain of hunger and thirst, and they get a taste of the poverty of the hereafter. . .and that they know the hardships faced by the poor and impoverished in this world, so they offer to them what God Almighty has obligated from their money (of charity and alms)."⁶¹ God Almighty says, "They are

59. al-Shaykh al-Saduq, *Ilal al-sharai*, vol. 2. p. 379.

60. The Holy Quran 18:49, MS.

61 al-Shaykh al-Saduq, *Ilal al-sharai*, p. 270.

those who assign a certain share of their property for the needy and the deprived.”⁶² Narrations also indicate that Imam al-Hasan al-Askari (p) said in reply to a question about the reason behind fasting, “So the rich taste hunger and in turn help the poor.”⁶³ Imam Hussain (p) is reported to have said something similar, “So the rich taste hunger and respond by giving generously to the impoverished.”⁶⁴ As previously mentioned, the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) said in his sermon, “‘O People! One who feeds a believer at the time of *iftar* in this month will be rewarded as if they freed a slave and their past sins will be forgiven.’ Some people then asked, ‘O Messenger of God, not all of us are able to invite those who are fasting.’ He said, ‘Fear [and save yourselves from] the hellfire with even a piece of date or a drink of water.’” These are all teachings that make people aware of their humanity and social responsibility toward the hungry and toward the needy brothers and sisters in their community. If people were to feel the pain of hunger and thirst and experience the hardships that the needy go through, they would become motivated to do good and share with others the blessings and sustenance that God has bestowed upon them. Indeed, the month of Ramadan is the month of empathy.

62. The Holy Quran 70:24–25, MS.

63. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 96, p. 368.

64. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 96, p. 368, hadith 4; p. 369, hadith 50; p. 375.

7. A Sense of Belonging and Order

Any person with a sound intellect who examines this world carefully, from its smallest atoms to its largest galaxies, would see that this universe is based on organization and a very accurate system. Many verses in the Holy Quran speak of this precise system. God Almighty says, “He has created all things with precisely accurate planning.”⁶⁵ “We have made the day and night each as evidence (of Our existence). The night is invisible, and the day is visible so that you may seek favors from your Lord and determine the number of years and mark the passing of time. For everything We have given a detailed explanation.”⁶⁶ and “According to the Book of God, from the day He created the heavens and the earth, the number of months are twelve, four of which are sacred.”⁶⁷ Just like many other verses throughout the Holy Quran, this one shows us the precise system of time that God has decreed for us, the acts of worship that He has designated for each time, and then finally declaring that “Anyone of you who knows that the month of Ramadan has begun, he must start to fast.”⁶⁸ All of these verses highlight and remind “those who commemorate God while standing and sitting, or resting on their sides and who think about the creation of the heavens and the earth”⁶⁹ that we live according

65. The Holy Quran 25:2, MS.

66. The Holy Quran 17:12, MS.

67. The Holy Quran 9:36, MS.

68. The Holy Quran 2:185, MS.

69. The Holy Quran 3:191, MS.

to a precise system of governance determined by a great divine wisdom and will, which makes a pondering, reflective human feel as though they are a part of a greater universe and that God Almighty has honored them with reason and choice, unlike all other creatures, to cultivate it and use it to ascend and reach perfection and ultimately God. Thus, humankind should organize their time and daily affairs if they want success in this temporary life and the other permanent one.

Fasting is an act of worship that teaches us organization and how to live and act within the established divine system. As such, it gives us a feeling of belonging because everyone begins and breaks their fast at a specific time, all the while remembering God Almighty and glorifying Him in the day and night.

Hadiths narrate that Amir al-Muminin Ali ibn Abi Talib (p) stated in his will to his sons al-Hasan (pbut) and al-Hussain as he neared departure from this world, "I advise you and all of my children, my family, and those who hear my will to fear God and organize your affairs."⁷⁰ Therefore, we must see the blessed month of Ramadan as an opportunity to rearrange our priorities, our way of life, and to restore order.

Fasting Levels

Each type of worship has different levels based on the awareness and perception of the servant performing it

70. *Nahj al-balagha*, <https://www.al-islam.org/articles/letter-father-son-last-will-ali-ibn-abi-talib>.

and the extent to which they draw closer to God Almighty through it. Fasting is not an exception, since it also has different levels. Traditions report that Imam Ali (p) said, “Fasting of the heart is better than the fasting of the tongue, and fasting of the tongue is better than the fasting of the stomach.”⁷¹ This hadith indicates that there are three levels of fasting as explained in the sections below.

Fasting of the Stomach

The fast of the stomach involves abstaining from food and drink. It is the jurisprudential fast, which means it is obligatory for anyone who meets the conditions requiring fasting. If the duty-bound person (mukallaf) makes an intention to refrain from fast-nullifiers seeking nearness to God Almighty by abstaining from eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, and other things throughout the days of the month of Ramadan, then they have performed and fulfilled their obligation. With this type of fasting, only God knows whether the fast was a source of benefit or reward for the person or whether He even accepted it, because it could have just been a state of hunger and thirst for the person [and not done in a true spirit of worship]. Therefore, this is the lowest level of fasting.

Fasting of the Body Parts

This second level of fasting is more honorable than the first. It is the fasting of a person’s body parts achieved by controlling and refraining from using them in

71. *Gurar al-hikam wa durar al-kalim*, p. 424, hadith 80.

anything detestable (makruh) or forbidden. This includes keeping the tongue from arguing, backbiting, and useless speech, the eyes from looking at anything forbidden, the ears from hearing anything forbidden, the nose from voluntarily smelling things that should be avoided like the *rayahin*,⁷² and the hands from touching anything forbidden. Narrations from Imam al-Baqir (p), from his fathers, state that the Messenger of God (pbuh&hp) said to Jabir ibn Abdullah, “O Jabir, this is the month of Ramadan, a person who fasts during the day, rises at night for worship, controls their stomach and private parts, and restrains their tongue, leaves their sins [behind] just as they leave and end the month.” Jabir said, “O Messenger of God, how beautiful is this hadith!” to which the Prophet replied, “O Jabir, and how difficult are these conditions [to fulfill].”⁷³ It has also been narrated that Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, “If you fast, let your hearing, sight, hair, and skin also fast.”⁷⁴ We can call this level of fasting the moral fast.

Fasting of the Heart

Fasting of the heart is the highest level of fasting—the fasting of those with true understanding [of God]. In this level of fasting, the servant does not even think about practicing detestable acts, let alone forbidden

72. Rayahin are pleasant-smelling plants that appear to make the person who smells them feel satiated and not feel hunger. Therefore, smelling them obviates the purpose of fasting. God knows best.

73. al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 4, p. 87.

74. al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 4, p. 87.

ones. For example, if the time for iftar comes, this person starts by saying the name of God and does not eat with greed and rapacity. Moreover, they only eat the amount of food and drink that is necessary to strengthen their body after making sure it is halal, pure and free from any suspicions [of prohibition]. Therefore, it is imperative for a person to practice this level of fasting to reap the best results from the month of Ramadan, gain the greatest benefits, and achieve the highest status. This has already been mentioned in the hadith narrated from the Prophet (pbuh&hp) during *Isra* and *Miraj* when he asked God Almighty, “Oh my Lord, what does fasting cultivate in us?” God Almighty said, ‘Fasting cultivates wisdom, and wisdom confers understanding, and understanding leads to certainty, and if a servant is certain [in God], they will not worry about themselves, whether they wake up [to the day] in difficulty or ease.’” Therefore, a person must practice fasting of the heart to reach high levels of wisdom, knowledge, certainty, and satisfaction with God’s decree and destiny. If they do so, they will be the personification of “People, who can neither be diverted by merchandise nor bargaining from worshipping God, saying their prayers and paying religious tax. They do these things, for they are afraid of the day when all hearts and eyes will undergo terrible unrest and crisis.”⁷⁵ This level of fasting could be called the fasting of those who have true understanding of God. We ask God Almighty to help us reach that rank.



75. The Holy Quran 24:37, MS.

Part Two



Rules of Fasting

Rules of Fasting

Fasting Etiquette

There are many recommended acts related to fasting listed below.

- Concealing the recommended or *mandub* fast from others except if asked about it. The recommendation is for a person to break such a fast if another believer invites them to eat. Narrations report that Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, “If one visits his brother [in faith] while observing a recommended fast and thereafter breaks it [upon being offered food or drink] without letting him (i.e., the host) know that he was fasting, God will record one year’s worth of fasts as a reward for him.”⁷⁶
- Taking a nap. Reports state that the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, “The sleep of a fasting person is worship, and his [every] breath is [a form of] glorification (*tasbih*).”⁷⁷ Narrations also show that Imam Musa al-Kadhim (p) said, “You should take naps because God feeds the fasting person and pours water for him (i.e., as a relief from hunger and thirst) in his sleep.”⁷⁸

76. al-Hurr al-Amili, *Tafsil wasail al-Shia* , vol. 10, p. 152.

77. al-Hurr al-Amili, *Tafsil wasail al-Shia*, vol. 10, p. 136.

78. al-Hurr al-Amili, *Tafsil wasail al-Shia*, vol. 10, p. 136.

- Providing iftar for a fasting believer, even if it is something small like a date, as reported in the sermon cited above given by the Prophet (pbuh&hp) on the last Friday of the month of Shaban. Imam Abu al-Hasan Musa [al-Kadhimi] (p) also reported, “[The reward of] providing iftar for your brother to break his fast is better than [the reward of] your own fast.”⁷⁹
- Eating a predawn meal (*suhur*) or something before the time of *fajr*. Narrations state that the Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, “My people should not forsake suhur, even if it means [eating] a part of a date.”⁸⁰ and “Have suhur even if it is only a drink of water, may the blessings of God be upon those who observe suhur.”⁸¹
- Reciting the special supplication when breaking the fast. Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (p) narrates that the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) used to recite the following upon breaking his fast, “O Allah we fasted for Your sake, and broke our fast by Your sustenance, so accept it from us, thirst has gone, the arteries are moist, and the reward is what remains.”⁸² Narrations also report that Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, “The supplication of a fasting person is accepted at the time of breaking their fast.”⁸³

79. al-Hurr al-Amili, *Tafsil wasail al-Shia*, vol. 10, p. 139.

80. al-Hurr al-Amili, *Tafsil wasail al-Shia*, vol. 10, p. 143.

81. al-Hurr al-Amili, *Tafsil wasail al-Shia*, vol. 10, p. 144.

82. al-Hurr al-Amili, *Tafsil wasail al-Shia*, vol. 10, p. 147.

83. al-Hurr al-Amili, *Tafsil wasail al-Shia*, vol. 10, p. 148.

- Performing *maghrib* prayer at its prescribed time before breaking the fast. Reports state that Imam al-Baqir (p) said, “‘During Ramadan you [should] pray and then break your fast, unless you have joined [a group of] people who wait for you [to eat with them], then do not oppose them [in making them wait for you to pray first], break your fast then pray. Otherwise, pray first.’ [The narrator said] I asked, ‘Why is that?’ The Imam (p) replied, ‘That is because you are faced with fulfilling two duties simultaneously, breaking your fast and praying, so start by performing the better of the two, which is prayer.’ The Imam (p) then said, ‘You pray while fasting and it is recorded as such, thus concluding with fasting is more beloved to me.’”⁸⁴
- Breaking the fast with lukewarm water and dates. Reports state that Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, “‘The Messenger of God (pbuh&hp) used to break his fast with *tamr* during the time of [just ripening] dates, and with *ratab* (i.e., fully ripened dates) during their season,” and he also said, “‘If a person breaks their fast with lukewarm water, it purifies their liver, and washes away the sins from the heart, and strengthens the sight and pupils.’”⁸⁵
- Being diligent in observing moral virtues and refraining from vices. In a long narration by Imam al-Sadiq (p): “‘When you fast, safeguard your tongues from lying, lower your gazes [unlawful lustful gazes], do not dispute, do not envy [each

84. al-Hurr al-Amili, *Tafsil wasail al-Shia*, vol. 10, p. 150.

85. al-Hurr al-Amili, *Tafsil wasail al-Shia*, vol. 10, p. 157.

other], do not backbite, do not quarrel, do not lie, do not endeavor [towards falsehood], do not disagree, do not become angry, do not insult [each other], do not swear [at each other], do not call each other names, do not argue, do not act ignorantly, do not oppress [others], do not act foolishly, do not reprimand [each other], do not neglect the remembrance of God and performance of prayer, keep silent, observe forbearance, patience, and truthfulness, avoid evil people, false statements, lying, slandering, disputing, negative suppositions [about other believers], avoid backbiting and gossiping, and remain cognizant of the hereafter while waiting out the remaining days [of your lives].”⁸⁶

- Reciting the supplication for greeting the month of Ramadan. Narrations report that Imam al-Baqir (p) said, “When the Messenger of God (pbuh&hp) looked at the crescent of the month of Ramadan, he directed his face towards the qiblah and recited, ‘O Allah, let the crescent shine on us with security, faith, safety, Islam, encompassing good health, abundant sustenance, repulsion of ailments, [good fortune] reciting of the Quran, and assistance in [sincerely] performing prayer and observing fasting. O Allah, safeguard us for [the month of] Ramadan, make it a safe haven for us, and accept [our actions during] it from us, until it is complete and You have forgiven us.’ Then he would turn to the people and say, ‘O Muslims, when the crescent of the month of Ramadan appears, the devils will be

86. al-Hurr al-Amili, *Tafsil wasail al-Shia*, vol. 10, p. 166.

shackled, the doors of the sky, the doors of paradise and the doors of mercy will be opened, the gates of [hell] fire will be closed, and the supplications will be answered. Allah will set [deserving] people free from hell fire during every [night of] breaking the fast, while the [divine] caller will ask, “Is there any beseecher? Is there anyone seeking forgiveness? O Allah, give everyone who spends and strives in your way perpetuation [of goodness] and give every denier deterioration such that if the crescent moon of Shawwal appears the believers are called to claim their prizes, so it is the day of the prize.”⁸⁷ Then Imam al-Baqir (p) said, ‘By the One who holds my life in His hands, this prize is not [mere] *dananir* and *dinars*.’”

- Reciting the supplication for the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan, which is the forty-fourth supplication of *Al-sahifah al-sajjadiyyah* by Imam Ali ibn al-Hussain al-Sajjad (p).
- Reciting the supplication for the farewell of the holy month of Ramadan, which is the forty-fifth supplication of *Al-sahifah al-sajjadiyyah* by Imam Ali ibn al-Hussain al-Sajjad (p).
- Spending the nights of the holy month in worship, prayers, remembrance of God, and reciting the Quran.

87. Ibn Babawayh al-Qummi, *Fadail al-ashhar al-thalathah*, p. 80.

Night Prayer (Salat al-Layl)

The night prayer is a *sunnah* (i.e., a recommended act), and the sharia stipulates that it was among the acts of worship that were obligatory for the Prophet (pbuh&hp). Almighty God says, “O you wrapped up in your mantle! Stand vigil through the night, except a little [*of it*], a half, or reduce a little from that or add to it, and recite the Quran in a measured tone. Indeed, soon We shall cast on you a weighty word. Indeed, the watch of the night is firmer in tread and more upright in respect to speech, for indeed during the day you have drawn-out engagements. So, celebrate the Name of your Lord and dedicate yourself to Him with total dedication.”⁸⁸ Almighty God also says, “Maintain the prayer [*during the period*] from the sun’s decline till the darkness of the night, and [*observe particularly*] the dawn recital. Indeed, the dawn recital is attended [*by angels*]. And keep vigil for a part of the night, as a supererogatory [*devotion*] for you. It may be that your Lord will raise you to a praiseworthy station. And say, ‘My Lord! Admit me with a worthy entrance, and bring me out with a worthy departure, and render me a favorable authority from Yourself.’”⁸⁹

Thus, the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) never got tired of remembering God Almighty and praying to Him, as he used to weep [*in awe of Him*] until he would faint. Someone asked him, “O Messenger of God, did God Almighty not forgive you for what has passed of your

88. The Quran 73:1–8, AQQ.

89. The Quran 17:78–80, AQQ.

sin⁹⁰ and what is to come?’ He said, ‘[Even so], should I not be a grateful servant?’”⁹¹

Therefore, a believer who is seeking nearness to God, especially in the month of Ramadan, should follow the way of the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp), for Almighty God says, “In the Apostle of Allah there is certainly for you a good exemplar, for those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day, and remember Allah greatly.”⁹² By following the way of the Prophet (pbuh&hp), a believer is granted a high position, about which Almighty God says, “Indeed the God-wary will be amid gardens and springs, receiving what their Lord has given them, for they had been virtuous aforetime. They used to sleep a little during the night, and at dawns they would plead for forgiveness.”⁹³ The holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) is reported to have said, “[Archangel] Gabriel kept on reminding me of the [importance of] night prayer to the extent I felt that the righteous ones of my community would not sleep [at night].”⁹⁴ It is also reported that the Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, “When a servant remains [awake and] alone with his master [Almighty God] in the middle of the dark night and

90. Sin in this narration does not indicate that the Prophet (pbuh&hp) had committed or would ever commit a sin, because he is infallible according to our belief. Therefore, it has a different significance, as explained in the books of Quranic exegesis.

91. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 10, p. 40.

92. The Quran 33:21, AQQ.

93. The Quran 51:15-18, AQQ.

94. Shaykh al-Saduq, *al-amali*, p. 257.

whispers to Him [in supplication], He [God] shall secure the light [of guidance] in his heart, . . . then the Most Majestic says to His angels, ‘My angels, look at my servant, he is up in the middle of the dark night [worshipping Me] while the idle are heedless and the negligent are asleep, bear witness that I have forgiven him.’”⁹⁵ In another narration by Imam al-Sadiq (p), he says “The night prayer brightens the face, makes the fragrances pleasant, and draws sustenance [to the worshipper].”⁹⁶ There are many more narrations about the importance and merits of the night prayer.

TIME OF NIGHT PRAYER

The time of night prayer starts at the beginning of the night, although it is better to perform it after midnight, and the closer it is to dawn (i.e., prior to fajr) the better.

TIME OF MIDNIGHT

Midnight is the half-way point between the time of sunset and dawn (fajr).

METHOD OF NIGHT PRAYER

Night prayer is composed of eleven units in the following sequence:

1. Four separate two-unit prayers⁹⁷ performed with the intention of supererogatory night prayer (*nafilat al-layl*).

95. Shaykh al-Saduq, *al-amali*, p. 354.

96. Shaykh al-Saduq, *Thawab al-amal*, p. 41.

97. Each two-unit prayer is performed just like fajr prayer.

2. Two-unit prayer with the intention of *shaf* prayer.
3. One-unit prayer with the intention of *witr* prayer.
 - It is permissible to perform only *shaf* and *witr*, or just even *witr* alone.
 - Night prayer may be performed while walking or riding (i.e., in a vehicle), and it is permissible to choose to perform it in a sitting position (even if the person can perform it in a standing position).
 - It is recommended to perform *qunut*⁹⁸ in the unit of *witr* before bowing down (*ruku*).
 - There is no specific invocation or supplication required in the *qunut*. Yet, in the *witr* prayer, the recommendation is to seek forgiveness for forty believers (by saying O Allah forgive so-and-so), and then say, “I seek forgiveness from Allah, my Lord, and to Him I repent” seventy times, then “This is the position of one who seeks refuge in You from the fire” seven times, and then “I seek pardon” three hundred times.
 - It is permissible and [actually] recommended for a person who missed the night prayer to make it up during the day.

98. Qunut is the act of raising one’s hands in supplication to God Almighty and placing them in front of the face with palms facing the sky and with both hands kept next to each other.

Detestable Acts (*Makruhat*) during Fasting

The following are detestable for a person who is fasting:

- Traveling in the month of Ramadan is detestable, except if the person travels for umrah. Moreover, it is especially detestable if undertaken to evade fasting, even though traveling is permissible in and of itself.⁹⁹
- Engaging in intimate interaction (e.g., touching) with one's lawful spouse if the husband is confident of not ejaculating and the wife is confident that she will not reach sexual climax.
- Applying eyeliner (*kohl*) like musk or something similar such that its taste or smell reaches the throat.
- Bathing in a sauna if there is fear of weakness [from the heat or humidity].
- Drawing blood¹⁰⁰ if it causes weakness.
- Applying medicine in the nose such that it does not reach the throat.
- Smelling plants with pleasing fragrances.
- Moistening the clothes (i.e., with water) to cool the body if, for example, the month of Ramadan falls in the summer.
- Inserting solid enema.

99. Umrah is recommended all year round especially in the months of Rajab, Shaban, and Ramadan.

100. For example, to donate blood or sell it to a sick person.

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- Dental treatment or extraction and anything that causes the mouth to bleed.
- Brushing the teeth with a moist stick (*siwak*).
- Rinsing the mouth (i.e., with water) for other than *wudu*.
- Engaging in sexual intercourse for a traveler that does not have to observe a fast.
- Immersing the head under water; although it does not nullify the fast, it is very detestable.

Types of Fasting

Fasting is divided into four types: Unlawful, obligatory, recommended, detestable

Unlawful Fasting

Fasting is unlawful in the following cases:

1. Fasting on the day of Eid al-Fitr and the day of Eid al-Adha.
2. Fasting on the days of *tashriq* for a pilgrim in Mina.¹⁰¹
3. Fasting on the day of doubt with the intention of it being the first day of the month of Ramadan. The day of doubt is when it is not known whether it is the last day of Shaban or the first of the month of Ramadan.
4. Fasting beyond sunset (*sawm al-wisal*), such that the person fasts all day and continues into and through the night to the next dawn or fasts two consecutive days without breaking the fast at night. However, there is no problem in delaying breaking the fast until the following night if it (i.e., the extended period beyond the first day) is not done with the intention of fasting.
5. Fasting of the wife performed for recommended purposes or an unspecified obligatory fast if it conflicts with her husband's matrimonial rights.

101 Mina is a valley southeast of Mecca where pilgrims perform certain rituals on the day of Eid.

Based on obligatory precaution,¹⁰² a wife must not perform a recommended fast if her husband forbids her, even if it does not conflict with his matrimonial rights.

Fasting on the Day of Ashura

Fasting on the tenth of Muharram, which is the day on which the Umayyads rejoiced over their killing of Imam al-Hussain (p), is an innovation (*bida*) if it entails rejoicing [over the killing of Imam al-Hussain (p)].

It is not prohibited to fast on the tenth of Muharram per se, meaning it would be permissible if a person fasts on that day [not for rejoicing the killing of Imam Hussain (p)]. However, its reward would be less when compared to refraining from eating and drinking until after *asr* prayer and then drinking some water.

Fast of silence

A fast of silence is forbidden and considered an innovation (*bida*) if one does so with the intention of it being an act of worship to seek nearness to God Almighty. As for merely observing silence, it is permissible, and in some cases it is praiseworthy.

102. This is a ruling that is obligatory to follow based on precaution. According to Sayyid al-Sistani, in such verdicts, one may follow the next most knowledgeable jurist after him.

Detestable Fasts

Fasting is detestable in the following cases:

1. Fasting on the Day of Arafah¹⁰³ for someone who fears that it will weaken them for performing supplication.
2. Fasting on the Day of Arafah if there is a doubt about the new moon, such that it may be the day of Eid.
3. Fasting of a guest without the permission of his host if it is a recommended or an unspecified obligatory fast.
4. Recommended (*mustahabb*) fasting of a child without the permission of their father.

Recommended Fasts

Fasting is a highly recommended act of worship in Islam. Narrations have described it as a haven from hell fire and a charity of the body; that the good deeds of a person who observes a fast will be accepted; their prayers will be answered; the angels will supplicate for them until they break their fast; and there are many other merits and benefits.

There are many recommended fasts. The following are some of them:

1. Fasting three days of each lunar month, and the best method for doing so is to fast the first and last Thursdays of the month, and the first

103. The ninth of Dhu al-Hijjah.

Wednesday that falls in the second ten days of the month.

2. Fasting every Thursday and Friday if they do not coincide with Eid.
3. Fasting on the birthday of the Prophet (pbuh&hp), which is the seventeenth of Rabi al-Awwal based on the most well-accepted opinion.
4. Fasting on the day of al-Mabath,¹⁰⁴ which is the twenty-seventh of Rajab.
5. Fasting on the day of the spreading of the earth (*dahwu al-ard*), which is the twenty-fifth of Dhu al-Qidah.
6. Fasting on the Day of Arafah for someone who does not fear that it will weaken them for supplication and if there is no doubt about the new moon.
7. Fasting on the day of Ghadir, which is the eighteenth of Dhu al-Hijjah.
8. Fasting on the day of Mubahalalah, which is the twenty-fourth of Dhu al-Hijjah.
9. Fasting the first, third, and seventh of Muharram.
10. Fasting the entire month of Rajab.
11. Fasting the entire month of Shaban.

NOTE: If a person who is observing a recommended fast or is fasting in the month of Ramadan, mistakenly commits a nullifier their fast remains valid.

If a person is observing a recommended fast when his believing brother/sister invites him to eat, it is recommended that they break their fast as a way of accepting their brother/sister's invitation and bringing

104. The anniversary of the beginning of the Prophetic mission.

pleasure to their heart. However, the invitation must be serious and not just appetizers, such as tea and light fare, that people usually offer their guests when they visit. The inviting person can be a person's spouse, sibling, friend, or any other believer.

Six days fast of Shawwal

Some oft-cited narrations suggest that it is recommended to fast six days in the month of Shawwal. However, these narrations are not authentic. Therefore, if a person chooses to observe either consecutive or separate fasts in Shawwal with the intention of *raja*,¹⁰⁵ they should begin doing so three days after the day of Eid, because there are authentic narrations that a person should not be fasting during the first three days of Eid since those days are meant for eating and drinking.

Obligatory Fasting

There are ten types of obligatory fasts, some of which are essentially obligatory¹⁰⁶ and others that become obligatory due to certain conditions. Traditions report that Imam Ali ibn al-Hussain al-Sajjad (p) mentioned

105. Intention of *raja* is the performance of an act of worship reported in an unauthentic narration, with the hope that God Almighty desires it.

106. Fasting is one of the pillars of Islam, meaning that one who does not believe that fasting is part of the religion is not considered a Muslim.

various types of fasting in a long narration reported by al-Zuhri.¹⁰⁷

1. Fasting the blessed month of Ramadan based on the Quranic verse, “So let those of you who witness it fast [in] it.”¹⁰⁸
2. Fasting two consecutive months as an expiation for *dhihar*¹⁰⁹ based on what God says: “Those who repudiate their wives by *dhihar* and then retract what they have said, shall set free a slave before they may touch each other. This you are advised [to carry out], and Allah is well aware of what you do. He who cannot afford [to free a slave] shall fast for two successive months before they may touch each other. If he cannot [do so], he shall feed sixty needy persons. This, that you may have faith in Allah and His Apostle. These are Allah’s bounds, and there is a painful punishment for the faithless.”¹¹⁰
3. Fasting two consecutive months¹¹¹ as an expiation for deliberately breaking a fast during the month of Ramadan without a valid excuse.
4. Fasting two consecutive months as an expiation for mistakenly killing someone if the killer is

107. al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 4, p. 83.

108. The Quran 2:185, AQQ.

109. *Dhihar* is when a husband makes a statement to his wife falsely claiming that she is like his mother in terms of being sexually impermissible to him.

110. The Quran 58:3–4, AQQ.

111. One has the option to either fast two consecutive months or feed sixty poor believers.

unable to free a slave based on God stating, “A believer may not kill another believer, unless it is by mistake. Anyone who kills a believer by mistake should set free a believing slave, and pay blood-money to his family, unless they remit it in charity. If he belongs to a people that are hostile to you but is a believer, then a believing slave is to be set free. And if he belongs to a people with whom you have a treaty, the blood-money is to be paid to his family and a believing slave is to be set free. He who cannot afford [to pay the blood-money], must fast two successive months as a penance from Allah, and Allah is all-knowing, all-wise.”¹¹²

5. Fasting three consecutive days as an expiation for breaking an oath if the person is unable to feed the poor based on God saying, “Allah shall not take you to task for what is frivolous in your oaths; but He shall take you to task for what you pledge in earnest. The atonement for it is to feed ten needy persons with the average food you give to your families, or their clothing, or the freeing of a slave. He who cannot afford [any of these] shall fast for three days. That is the atonement for your oaths when you vow. But keep your oaths. Thus does Allah clarify His signs for you so that you may give thanks.”¹¹³
6. Fasting ten days as a *fidyah* for a pilgrim who is unable to cut his hair because of physical pain on the head based on God stating, “Complete the hajj

112. The Quran 4:92, AQQ.

113. The Quran 5:89, AQQ.

and the umrah for Allah's sake, and if you are prevented, then [make] such [sacrificial] offering as is feasible. And do not shave your heads until the offering reaches its [assigned] place. But should any of you be sick, or have a hurt in his head, let the atonement be by fasting, or charity, or sacrifice."¹¹⁴

7. Fasting ten days for a pilgrim performing *hajj al-tamattu* who cannot find an animal to sacrifice based on God stating, "And when you have security—for those who enjoy [release from the restrictions] by virtue of their umrah until the hajj—let the offering be such as is feasible. As for someone who cannot afford [the offering], let him fast three days during the hajj and seven when you return; that is [a period of] ten complete [days]. That is for someone whose family does not dwell by the Holy Mosque. And be wary of Allah, and know that Allah is severe in retribution."¹¹⁵
8. Fasting as an atonement for deliberately hunting and killing while in the state of *ihram* based on God stating, "O you who have faith! Do not kill any game when you are in pilgrim sanctity. Should any of you kill it intentionally, its atonement, the counterpart from cattle of what he has killed, as judged by two fair men among you, will be an offering brought to the Kabah, or an atonement by feeding needy persons, or its equivalent in fasting, that he may taste the untoward consequences of his conduct. Allah has excused what is already

114. The Quran 2:196, AQQ.

115. The Quran 2:196, AQQ.

past; but should anyone resume, Allah shall take vengeance on him, for Allah is all-mighty, avenger.”¹¹⁶ One must estimate the value of the animal which he hunted and then convert it to *sa* of wheat, and fast a day for each half *sa*.¹¹⁷

9. Fasting for the fulfillment of a vow (explained later).
10. Fasting as part of a spiritual retreat (*itikaf*), which is obligatory in some cases (explained later).

Fasting in Fulfillment of a Vow

Fasting for the fulfillment of a vow is permissible and valid. When a duty-bound person makes a vow to fast three days in gratitude to God Almighty upon fulfillment of a specific need or makes a vow to fast three days as a punishment if they commit a sin like backbiting, then they must fast [as vowed] if it occurs. The vow may be specific such as fasting three days in the beginning of the month, the end of the month, the middle of the month, or [even] three days consecutively such as Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The vow can be unspecified, for example, if the vow is to fast any time during the year. Therefore, it is important to note the following details:

- Fasting, whether obligatory or recommended, is invalid if performed by a traveler who must shorten their four-unit prayers, except if they make a general vow to fast, meaning their

116. The Quran 5:95, AQQ.

117. It is a unit of weight that is equal to 6.6 pounds (three kilograms).

intention was to observe the fast irrespective of whether they are in a state of traveling or not.

- A person who has lapsed (*qada*) fast(s) from the month of Ramadan may vow to fast; however, they must make up the lapsed fast before fulfilling the fast of vow, even if specified.
- If a person vows to fast on a specific day, such as the first of Rajab, they must make the intention to fast before dawn (*fajr*) of that day. If they deliberately delay the intention, their fast is invalid. If they forget about the [specified] fast for that day and remember before *dhuhr* and do not commit a fast-nullifier, they make the intention to fast and their fast for that day is valid. However, if they remember after *dhuhr*, then based on obligatory precaution, they must abstain from fast-nullifiers for the rest of the day with a [general] intention¹¹⁸ of nearness to God and then make it up later.
- If a person vows a specific fast and the day of fulfillment arrives and they do not fulfill it, they must make it up.
- If a person must perform an unspecified fast for a fulfilled vow, they may do so on the last day of Shaban (the day of doubt). However, if they later come to know that it was the first day of the

118. The general intention or *qurbah al-mutlaqah* is made when a person seeks to fulfill an obligation among several possibilities, like fasting on the last day of Shaban with the intention of doing so according to the de facto condition as known by God, or by making an intention of hesitancy such that it would be for Shaban if it turned out to be the last day of Shaban and the month of Ramadan if it turns out to be so.

month of Ramadan, their fast would count as part of Ramadan, and they would have to make up the vowed fast later.

- If a person vows to fast on a specific day and deliberately does not fulfill it, they will have committed a sin and must make up the fast. Moreover, they must perform an expiation (kaffarah) for the broken vow. However, there is no expiation requirement if they do not fulfill the vow due to a legitimate excuse such as illness or menstruation. In that case, they must only make up the fast.
- It is permissible for a person to observe a recommended fast even if they must perform a fast for a fulfilled vow.

Conditions for the Obligation of Fasting and Its Validity

There are several conditions for the obligation of fasting and its validity listed below.

First, Sanity (Aql) and Consciousness (not to be insane, unconscious, or intoxicated)

- Sanity is an essential condition for acts of worship. Hence, a person who has lost their sanity for any reason does not have to perform any obligatory act of worship, although they may have to make them up in certain cases (explained below).
- The obligation for all acts of worship is revoked for a person who is essentially (i.e., permanently) insane.
- The obligation of fasting is revoked for a person who is temporarily insane,¹¹⁹ involuntarily loses consciousness, or unintentionally becomes intoxicated throughout the entire day (e.g., before

119. Insanity (e.g., mental disability) from the perspective of religious law is determined based on common understanding (*urf*) or by referring to the *ahl al-khbra* (the experts in the field), such that the mind of the person is not able to properly function, and therefore they cannot understand or fulfill religious requirements.

dawn until after sunset), and no qada is necessary. However, if the person intends to fast before dawn, and during the day one of the aforementioned situations occurs (for part of the day), they must continue fasting for the rest of the day based on obligatory precaution. They must make up the fast for that day if they do not continue fasting.

- Based on obligatory precaution, it is not permissible for a person who must fast the month of Ramadan to take anesthetics or sedative drugs that cause loss of consciousness for an unnecessary surgery. In the event they do so, but thereafter wake up during the day, then based on obligatory precaution, they must refrain from fast-nullifiers (if they had made an intention to fast) and make up the fast.
- If a person misses the time of making the intention to fast due to losing their sanity, losing consciousness, or becoming intoxicated, but thereafter wakes up during the day, they must refrain from fast-nullifiers and make up the fast. However, if they made the intention to fast before dawn, the fast would be valid, although, based on obligatory precaution,¹²⁰ they should make it up.

120. This is a ruling that is obligatory to follow based on precaution. According to Sayyid al-Sistani, in such verdicts, one may follow the next most knowledgeable jurist after him.

Second, Being at the Age of Religious Obligation (*Bulugh*)

Age of religious obligation is a condition for fasting to be obligatory for a person, although it is not a condition for its validity. As such, the fast of a discerning child¹²¹ (*mumayyiz*) is valid and rewarded by Almighty God.

Age of religious obligation for males

A male becomes religiously duty-bound if one of the following occurs:

- Growth of thick pubic hair between the lower abdomen and the private parts
- Ejaculation of semen
- Completion of fifteen lunar years¹²²

Note: underarm and chest hair and the deepening of the voice are not signs of bulugh.

121. A child who is close to the age of bulugh and understands the meaning of bulugh and religious obligations, meaning that they intend the performed acts and discern between what is valid and what is invalid.

122. Fifteen lunar years is equivalent to fourteen years seven months and fifteen days of the solar calendar (Gregorian calendar.)

Age of religious obligation for females

A female becomes religiously duty-bound upon completion of nine lunar years.¹²³ Therefore, she must observe her religious duties on the first day of her tenth lunar year.

Fasting during the first years of bulugh

The following are rulings for the first years of bulugh:

- If a person does not fast the month of Ramadan after having reached bulugh and subsequently does not remember the exact number of days they missed, they should make up the minimum number of days (i.e., that they think they missed) and pay kaffarah for intentionally breaking a fast for each day missed (unless they were certain that they did not have to fast at that time—then they only must make up the fasts without paying a kaffarah). Additionally, based on obligatory precaution, they must offer a kaffarah for delaying the make-up (qada) fast [beyond the next month of Ramadan], which is to give 750 grams of food to a poor person for each day missed.
- If a girl does not fast because she assumes that she only becomes duty-bound at menarche, then she must make up the days she did not fast, but no kaffarah is necessary in her case.
- If a girl in the first year(s) of bulugh does not fast due to severe physical weakness in her body, a [true] inability to bear fasting for the entire day,

123. Nine lunar years is equivalent to eight years, eight months and twenty days of the solar calendar (Gregorian calendar.)

because it is very hot, or similar difficult conditions, then she must make up the missed fasts, but no kaffarah is due.

- If fasting causes serious harm to a girl who is religiously duty-bound or she deems it veritable and highly likely (i.e., that she would suffer harm), then she does not have to fast. However, she must make it up later. On the other hand, if she is unable to fast due to, for example, the length of the day or intensity of heat, despite taking the necessary nutrition before dawn (suhur) and resting during the day, then she must fast for the sake of general nearness to God.¹²⁴ When she reaches a stage of unbearable fatigue and needs to eat or drink, she may do so. However, she must limit eating and drinking to the minimum extent that lifts the hardship, based on obligatory precaution, and not eat and drink to fullness. Thereafter, she should continue to abstain from fast-nullifiers for the rest of the day and make up the fast later.¹²⁵

124. Without considering it an obligatory fast, rather abstinence of eating and drinking for the sake of nearness to God.

125. It is important to train the child to fast in months other than the month of Ramadan, even for part of the day, because this can help the body become used to fasting. Also, it is worthy to note that the permissibility of eating and drinking only as much as necessary does not necessarily apply during the entire blessed month. Thus, for example, the child can become accustomed by fasting one day and skipping the next.

Third, Capability, Tolerance, Hardship, and Security from Harm

Capability and tolerance

There are many things to consider about the capability and tolerance of a person for fasting.

- Fasting is not valid if a person knows that it will cause illness, or they fear that they will become ill due to weakness.
- Fasting of an ill person is not valid if they suffer harm from it to the extent that it is usually unbearable, whether it is due to worsening of the illness, delaying recovery, or increasing pain. This ruling applies for a person who has certainty, or even any rational conjecture that usually leads to true and reasonable fear [that fasting would lead to harm]. An ill person who does not suffer harm by fasting must fast.

The criterion of capability and tolerance

Weakness is not a valid reason to avoid fasting in the month of Ramadan per se, unless it amounts to unbearable hardship. In such a case, it is permissible not to fast, however, the person must make it up later.¹²⁶ Also, it is permissible for a person not to fast if

126. The same ruling applies for young boys and girls who are at the age of religious obligation but are unable to fast due to the weakness of their bodies (that is, the child cannot fast on account of their physical incapability). In this case, they do not need to

it causes them weakness that prevents them from working and it is their only source of earning a livelihood (i.e., there is no alternative). The same applies if the worker is unable to continue fasting because of extreme thirst. However, in both cases, the worker must eat or drink only to the minimum extent necessary, based on obligatory precaution, and thereafter continue abstaining from nullifiers until the end of the day.

Harm

Consideration is also given to whether the fasting will cause harm to a person.

- The obligation to fast is revoked if a person is certain that doing so will cause them unbearable serious harm or even if they deem it to be veritable and highly likely, and it is forbidden for them to fast in such a case.
- Fasting is revoked if it results in worsening of [an existing] illness, a delay in recovery, or causes a new illness.
- If a person fasts believing that it will not cause them harm, but they [later] realize otherwise, then fasting for them is problematic (i.e., based on obligatory precaution, it is invalid).
- The fast of a person who knows or fears serious harm is invalid unless they intended to fast for the sake of general proximity to God and later realized that the fast did not cause any harm.

fast. However, they must make it up later even if in the winter season.

- It is permissible for a person to break their fast if they are certain or strongly think it is likely that fasting will cause them serious harm based on a doctor's recommendation. Otherwise, it is not permissible to break a fast even if the doctor recommends it.
- A person must fast if they are certain or strongly think it is likely that fasting will not cause them serious harm, even though a doctor advises them not to. On the other hand, a person may break their fast if they are certain or strongly think it is likely that fasting will cause them serious harm, even though a doctor says that it will not.

Criteria of harm

Serious harm means anything that leads to death, damage of organ(s), or bodily weakness that results in the inability to carry out [essential] daily living activities, such that people commonly accept it as being unbearable. Therefore, change of mood, blurry vision, headache, and similar symptoms, usually alleviated shortly after breaking the fast, are not considered serious harm.

Those who are excused from fasting

Certain individuals are excused from fasting during the month of Ramadan: the elderly, a pregnant woman approaching the time of delivery, a nursing mother with little breast milk, a person suffering from polydipsia, an ill person, and those who cannot fast due to unbearable hardship. The following is a detailed explanation of each of these groups:

THE ELDERLY

- An elderly person, who is not capable of fasting or for whom fasting causes difficulty, does not have to fast.
- An elderly person who is not capable of fasting does not have to offer a kaffarah.
- An elderly person who can fast, but it causes them difficulty, does not have to fast. However, they must offer a fidyah of one portion of food for each day,¹²⁷ and it should be two portions of food based on recommended precaution. They must make up the fast later.

A PREGNANT WOMAN WHO IS CLOSE TO TIME OF DELIVERY

- A pregnant woman who is close to delivery (i.e., in her eighth or ninth month) is excused from fasting if she fears harm to herself or her unborn child, and it may be obligatory for her to break her fast if it entails serious harm to either of them. She must make up the fast and offer a fidyah for each lapsed day. If she delays making up the fasts until the following month of Ramadan for another reason like due to nursing her child, she must offer another fidyah for delaying the lapsed fasts, which is to feed a poor person for each day missed.
- A pregnant woman who is not close to delivery (from the first to the end of the seventh month) is excused from fasting if she fears harm to herself

127. A portion of food is equal to 1.65 pounds (750 grams).

or her unborn child or if it causes her unbearable hardship. However, she must make it up later and she does not have to offer a kaffarah. If she delays making up the fasts until the following month of Ramadan, even if it is due to nursing her child, she must pay a kaffarah for delaying the lapsed fasts based on obligatory precaution, which is to feed a poor person for each day missed.

- It is permissible for a pregnant woman to consume what is necessary for medical examinations in the month of Ramadan if the examination is necessary and cannot be administered at night, after the month of Ramadan, or if it is not possible to break her fast by traveling the legal distance, but she must make it up later.

A NURSING WOMAN WITH LITTLE MILK

- A nursing woman with little breast milk is excused from fasting if it is harmful for her or the newborn if there is no other way, like a wet-nurse or formula milk, to feed the child (i.e., this breast feeding is the only way to feed the newborn). Otherwise, it is not permissible for her to break the fast. However, she must make up the fast and offer a fidyah.
- Based on obligatory precaution, the mother may not break her fast if there is a way to hire a wet nurse, who can feed the child, or by other means such as using baby formula.

AN ILL PERSON

- A duty-bound person is excused from fasting if it causes them illness, worsens an existing illness, delays recovery, or results in another illness.
- If a person experiences critical health symptoms that require immediate treatment while fasting during Ramadan, such as low blood sugar and the need for insulin medication, they may break their fast.

HARD LABOR WORKERS

- If fasting prevents a person from working a job which is their only source of securing a livelihood, for example, by causing weakness because of which they are unable to perform their tasks, or unbearable thirst, they must still fast if they can change their job or take a break from work throughout the month of Ramadan and rely on savings or borrowed money that they can repay later. Otherwise, they are excused from fasting. However, based on obligatory precaution, they must eat and drink the minimum amount necessary to lift the hardship that prevents them from working, and they must make up the missed fasts. They do not have to offer any kaffarah.
- Working in hard labor jobs (e.g., construction, bread baking, cooking) during the hot summers does not permit a person to break their fast. Rather, the worker must fast, and if during the day they reach a point where they fear harm or unbearable hardship due to extreme thirst, then they may drink water to the extent necessary to relieve the hardship, continue to refrain from

fast-nullifiers until the end of the day, and make up the fast later.

- It is permissible for those who work in a profession (e.g., pilot) that requires staying hydrated to drink water to the extent necessary if work in the month of Ramadan is essential to secure a livelihood, such that they would encounter unbearable hardship if they did not. In such a case, they must make up the missed fasts, but they do not have to offer any kaffarah.
- It is permissible for a person who works in delicate occupations and tasks that require full consciousness, awareness, and readiness (e.g., guard, security guard, soldier) and is unable to take leave, even for some days of the month of Ramadan, to eat and drink only to the extent necessary if fasting poses harm to them, causes them to fall short in fulfilling their tasks, and subjects them to termination. Based on obligatory precaution, they must eat and drink to the minimum extent necessary to fulfill their duties, continue to refrain from fast-nullifiers until the end of the day, and make up the fast later.

A PERSON WHO SUFFERS FROM POLYDIPSIA

- A person who suffers from polydipsia is excused from fasting and they are not required to offer a fidyah if they are unable to fast, but if fasting causes them unbearable hardship they must offer a portion¹²⁸ of food to the poor as fidyah, and

128. A portion of food is equal to 1.65 pounds (750 grams).

based on a recommended precaution, they should offer two portions.

- If a person needs to drink water to avoid illness or prevent worsening of an illness, such as a severe headache or dehydration that leads to hemorrhoids, and there is no other way to obtain hydration, such as eating water-filled vegetables and fruits like cucumbers and watermelon before fajr (dawn), then they may break their fast and make it up later.
- If a fasting person becomes extremely thirsty such that they fear harm or will be subject to unbearable hardship if they do not drink water, then they may drink water but based on obligatory precaution, it must not be more than necessary. Also, they must refrain from fast-nullifiers for the rest of the day if this fast is during the month of Ramadan (i.e., respecting the holy month), and they must make up the fast later. If it is an obligatory fast in other months they do not have to refrain from fast-nullifiers.

Forth, Establishing the Beginning of the Month of Ramadan

Among the conditions that establish the obligation of fasting for the month of Ramadan is witnessing the start of the holy month. Almighty God says, “So let those of you who witness it fast [in] it.”¹²⁹ Therefore, if a duty-bound person witnesses the start of the month,

129. The Quran 2:185, AQQ.

they must fast it in its entirety “so that you may complete the number.”¹³⁰

Determining the beginning and end of the lunar month

Confirming the sighting of the crescent moon of the ninth month of the lunar year establishes the beginning of the blessed month of Ramadan, and the month ends with the sighting of the crescent of the tenth month, which is the month of Shawwal. Lunar months are sometimes twenty-nine days and at other times thirty. Confirming the sighting of the crescent of Shawwal ends the month of Ramadan, and the next day is the first of Shawwal, which is Eid al-Fitr. Fasting is not permissible on the first of Shawwal.

WAYS OF ESTABLISHING THE START OF LUNAR MONTHS

The criterion for the beginning of a lunar month is the appearance of the crescent moon on the horizon such that the naked eye can see it if not obstructed by clouds and other obstacles (such as mountains or trees). One of the following ways establishes the beginning of the lunar month:

1. Knowledge [of the appearance of the crescent, which leads to certainty] attained by sighting the crescent with the naked eye (i.e., by the person

130. The Quran 2:185, AQQ.

themselves) and not via an optical aid (e.g., a telescope).¹³¹

2. Knowledge [of the appearance of the crescent] received from multiple eyewitness accounts (i.e., from various people or *tawatur*) such that one derives certainty or confidence of the crescent sighting.

131. This is one of the controversial issues among jurists. The juristic opinion which asserts that an optical aid cannot confirm the [new] crescent is based on the following points. First, God states, “They question you concerning the new moons. Say, ‘They are timekeeping signs for the people and [for the sake of] hajj.’” (Quran 2:189, AQQ) This verse addresses people in general and directs them to use the crescent as a reference point for the start of the religious months, and it does not just address those who have knowledge of astronomy, which was available and used in the pre-Islamic era. Secondly, the criteria for applying religious rulings are based on common understanding (*urf*) and practice. Consider, for example, the religiously prescribed limit known as *hadd al-tarrakhuss* or where the traveler shortens their prayer or breaks their fast, which is the distance outside of the traveler’s hometown where they can no longer see its buildings nor hear the *adhan* (call to prayer) or the residents of the town can no longer see the traveler. The criterion is that the residents of the hometown cannot see the traveler with the naked eye, otherwise, the simplest binoculars could see them. If that was the case, the prescribed limit would likely become the same as the religiously required distance that makes a person a traveler. Similarly, if a duty-bound person washes their white shirt to purify it of blood and the color disappears, then they would consider it to be pure and suitable for prayers. However, what if they were to place the shirt under a microscope and see small red particles? Would they then consider the shirt impure? Jurists say the criterion is the unaided vision [of an ordinary person], and therefore, they would not even regard the vision of someone with extraordinary vision, who sees things from afar [as the standard], because it is beyond the normal capacity of common people, which shapes a religiously accepted common view.

3. The spread of common news (*shaya*) such that the person becomes certain of the crescent sighting.
4. Any rational means by which a person becomes certain of the appearance of the crescent [and its sighting by the naked eye].
5. The passing of thirty days from the first of Shaban so there is no doubt that the next day is the first of the month of Ramadan or the passing of thirty days from the first of the month of Ramadan, which means the next day is the first of Shawwāl.
6. The testimony of two just men that they sighted the crescent, provided that a comparable opposing testimony does not contradict them, even if in principle. Therefore, if two just men testified that they sighted the crescent and [at the same time] two other just men testify to the contrary (i.e., that they did not see the crescent), and the sky was clear with no obstacle to sighting it, then this means does not establish the first of the month.
 - It is permissible to act according to the report of a non-Muslim on the sighting of the crescent with the naked eye if one becomes certain and content by the report.
 - Crescent sighting is not established by the testimony of women,¹³² the testimony of one

132. This ruling, like all others, is a binding obligation the wisdom behind which is unknown (i.e., it is only known to God and those He chooses to inform). Some might assume that Islam considers women to be incompetent or underestimates women's abilities, which is an invalid judgment raised against Islam from time and time. The Holy Quran has clearly stated that human beings have dignity irrespective of their gender, and God created them equal and distinguished them from each other based on their piety, despite their different practical roles. In addition, while the

just man who swears an oath [that he truly sighted it], nor the statement of astrologers.¹³³ It also cannot be established by its disappearance after twilight to indicate that it is for the second night; by seeing it before *zawal* or *dhuhr* time such that it would be considered the day of the new month; nor by the ruling of a qualified jurist (al-hakim al-shari) even if it is not known that he is mistaken unless contentment is achieved by means of his ruling that the crescent has been sighted.

testimony of women is not considered in establishing the crescent sighting, it is legislated, [sometimes] through the testimony of one woman in other matters, such as proving crimes that pertain (e.g., directed at) to women. On the other hand, the testimony of a woman is sometimes half that of a man, as would be the case in some general matters. Hence, there is no single ruling by which a person can judge the religion (i.e., by ascertaining the appropriateness of a rule or not). It is also important to note that if contentment is achieved from the testimony of women then a person may act upon it.

133. It is important to differentiate between astrologers and astronomers. The latter are experts in astronomy and are capable of [scientifically] predicting the possibility of sighting the crescent according to their specialization and professional experience. Moreover, a duty-bound person may attain contentment from their statement and act accordingly [to visually sight the moon]. As for the astrologers, they apparently base their astronomical information on suspicions and attempt to predict the unknown, which Islam forbids.

UNITY AND MULTIPLICITY OF HORIZONS

The following points explain the concept of the unity of horizons:

- The beginning of the lunar month in every area¹³⁴ is based on sighting the crescent there.
- If there is confirmation of the crescent sighting in an area, it becomes established for other areas that share the same horizon. This means the actual sighting of the crescent in that area guarantees it will be visible in the other areas unless there are clouds or other similar obstructions. In other words, if the altitude (i.e., above the horizon) and luminosity of the crescent in two adjacent areas are close, then they would be considered to have the same horizon. This closeness is usually [within] one to two degrees depending on the geographical location and according to the season.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS ABOUT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CRESCENT AND THE ISSUE OF UNITY AND MULTIPLICITY OF HORIZONS

More details follow concerning the crescent and unity of horizons:

- If a duty-bound person acquires [veritable] knowledge or becomes content, albeit through

134. Area, as used in this booklet, refers to the jurisprudential term *balad*, which describes a particular place where the crescent must be sighted. This could be a city, metropolis (large city) or general area. The details of this are determined from place to place based on *urf* or common understanding. Thus, it could apply to only a metropolis in one place; a city and its suburbs in another; or even two or three cities in yet other places.

experience and repeatedly encountering the same conditions, that the crescent on the local horizon has the features (e.g., size and altitude) that make it visible with the naked eye, then they must act according to their knowledge and certainty even if it is not visible due to clouds, fog, or any other natural obstacle.

- Two areas are considered to have the same horizon if sighting the crescent in the first area guarantees sighting it in the second one absent natural obstacles such as clouds or mountains. This is established if the crescent in the second area has the same or more prominent features to the first in terms of size, altitude above the horizon at sunset, and angular distance from the sun as determined by accurate astronomical calculations.
- If the area in which the duty-bound person resides is located west of the area where the crescent sighting occurred, and the two areas are close in latitude (i.e., vary only by one or two degrees), then sighting is also established for that area to the west if the luminosity is ascertained. However, this is not a general condition [applied in every circumstance], because establishment of sighting for adjacent areas, even with relatively close latitude and longitude, may vary in different seasons.
- A person who is content about the crescent sighting must act accordingly [in beginning the next month]. However, if they do not achieve contentment, then they must act upon other criteria explained in this booklet.

- A person's contentment is not sufficient for others to act upon.
- It is not sufficient to rely on a single person who claims to have sighted the crescent if others who are proficient in knowing its position and have sharp vision cannot do so, provided the sky is clear and there is no likelihood of something obstructing the view.
- A person may rely on the information provided by an astronomer who reports on the visibility of the crescent on the horizon with the naked eye if they derive contentment from it. For example, if astronomers report that the crescent is not born yet and that it is still in the stage of *mahaq* (just a few hours old), then this could instill contentment that the crescent is not present on the horizon such that the naked eye can see it.
- The main criteria that influence the sighting of the crescent are its size (i.e., magnitude of illumination), its altitude over the horizon, and its angular distance from the sun. For example, if the sighting of the crescent is established in an area at sunset and its size is 4 percent, its altitude is eight degrees, and its distance from the sun is twenty-five degrees, then it is certain that it will be visible (unless there is an external obstruction) in the area if the criteria are not less than those guaranteeing visibility.
- The criterion for establishing the beginning of the lunar month is the presence of the crescent on the horizon such the naked eye can see it unless clouds or other such obstacles obstruct it. Therefore, it is not sufficient to establish the first of the lunar month if the birth of the crescent and

its presence on the horizon occur, but it is not visible or is only visible with an optical aid. Based on this, astronomical information reporting the birth of the crescent and its transition from the stage of mahaq is not useful in establishing the beginning of the new lunar month, even if it is based on definitive mathematical calculations, unless a person derives contentment from it in certain cases which are explained in detail in books of jurisprudence. Astronomers' reports about the visibility of the crescent with the naked eye depend on two factors: (1) astronomical calculations about the position of the crescent in terms of its age, degree of elevation from the horizon, angular distance from the sun, and other factors that affect its sighting, and (2) astronomical observations of the crescent that verify the minimum conditions required to sight it with the naked eye (i.e., by characterizing its age, altitude, and distance from the sun). Astronomers differ on these criteria, however. For example, some astronomers posit that it is possible to sight the crescent when it is at fourteen hours, while others state that the minimum age [for visibility] is sixteen hours, still others state eighteen hours, and some state even more. Similarly, some astronomers claim that it is [only] possible to sight the crescent when it is at an altitude of four degrees above the horizon at sunset, while others state that the minimum altitude required to see it is five degrees, or six degrees, and even other altitudes. This is the case for all the factors that affect crescent visibility. As such, it is not feasible for a duty-bound person to act according to

astronomical data substantiating the possibility of sighting the crescent in an area when there is uncertainty of doing so with the naked eye. This is because religious texts indicate that one cannot rely on opinion and speculation in the matters of the crescent. Traditions state that Imam al-Baqir (p) said, “If you sight the crescent then fast, and if you sight it [the following month] then break your fast, and these practices are not established by opinion or speculation but with actual sighting.”¹³⁵

ISTIFTA (RESPONSE TO JURISPRUDENTIAL QUESTIONS)

A group of believers in North America inquired about a ruling mentioned in *Minhaj al-Salihin* and other sources that the unity of the horizons only occurs for two places if the sighting in the first land guarantees sighting of the crescent in the second land unless dust or clouds obstruct visibility.

Based on the figure below, experience (i.e., repeated measurements) indicates that the naked eye can see the crescent moon in the orange and dark yellow areas if conditions are ideal, such as having clear skies. On the other hand, it has been repeatedly confirmed that the crescent can be seen clearly and easily in the red areas, such that the person can be certain of seeing it based on the astronomical calculations.

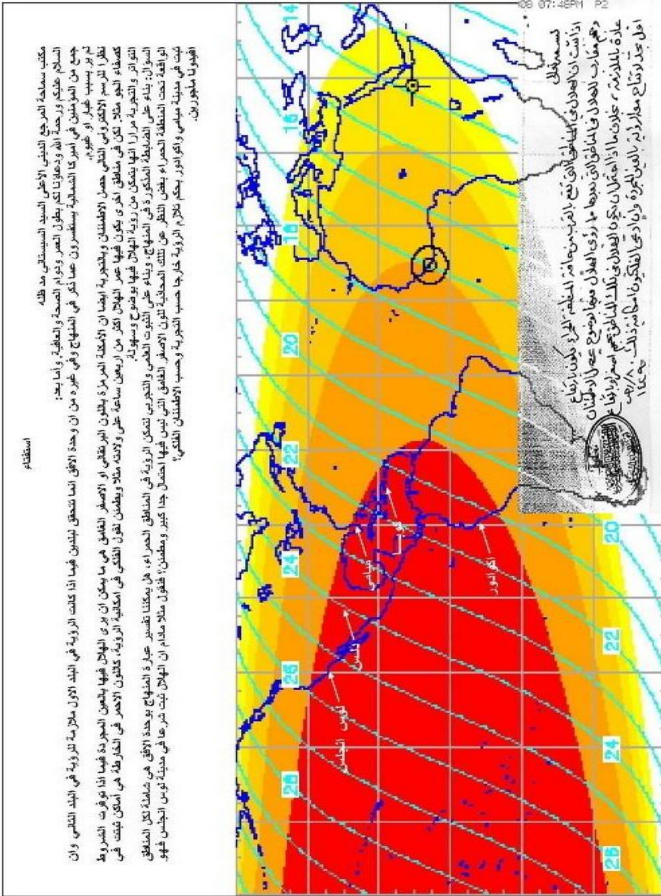
135. al-Tusi, *Tahthib al-ahkam*, vol. 4, p. 156.

Question

According to the criteria mentioned in *Minhaj al-Salihin* and scientific proof, as well as through practical experience in sighting the crescent in the red areas in the figure below, is it appropriate to include all of the areas that are within the red, without paying attention to those parts [immediately] adjacent to the dark yellow areas, as having the same horizon (i.e., unity of horizons) such that, for example, as long as the crescent sighting has been proven religiously in the city of Los Angeles, then it will also be established in Miami and Ecuador?

Answer by the office of His Eminence al-Sayyid al-Sistani (may God prolong his life)

If it is proven that the crescent moon in the areas that fall close to the edge of the red zone has an altitude and size that is close to the crescent in the areas beyond it (i.e., outside of the red zone), in which the crescent moon was indeed sighted with clarity, then contentment is usually attained that such a relationship between the two areas exists (i.e., guarantee of visibility). In contrast, contentment is not achieved for those areas in which it may be expected that the crescent is smaller in size or lower in altitude such that it is not possible to sight it with the naked eye, even if astronomers make the claim that it is indeed possible.



A PRACTICAL MODEL FOR DETERMINING THE UNITY OF HORIZONS

A release issued by the office of His Eminence Grand Ayatullah Sayyid al-Sistani (may Allah prolong his life) announced that the beginning of the month of Ramadan 1431 A.H. had been proven in the Holy City of Najaf, Iraq, and some countries close to it at sunset on Wednesday, August 11, 2010. As a result, the office of

His Eminence issued a statement specifying the horizon of Najaf and all other cities that share it (i.e., unity of horizon), beginning with Australia and ending with the United States. Below is a copy of the statement:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The office of His Eminence Sayyid al-Sistani in the Holy City of Najaf announces to the gracious believers that it has been proven to His Eminence (may Allah prolong his life) that tomorrow, Thursday, is the first day of the blessed month of Ramadan in most Islamic countries such as Iraq, the remaining Arab countries, Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, as well as India, Australia, the African nations, the nations of South America, the United States, and areas of southern Canada. As for most regions of Europe such as Britain, Ireland, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Holland, the Scandinavian nations, and most regions of Canada, the first day of the holy month will be the day after tomorrow, Friday. We ask Allah Almighty to make it a month of goodness and blessings for all Muslims.

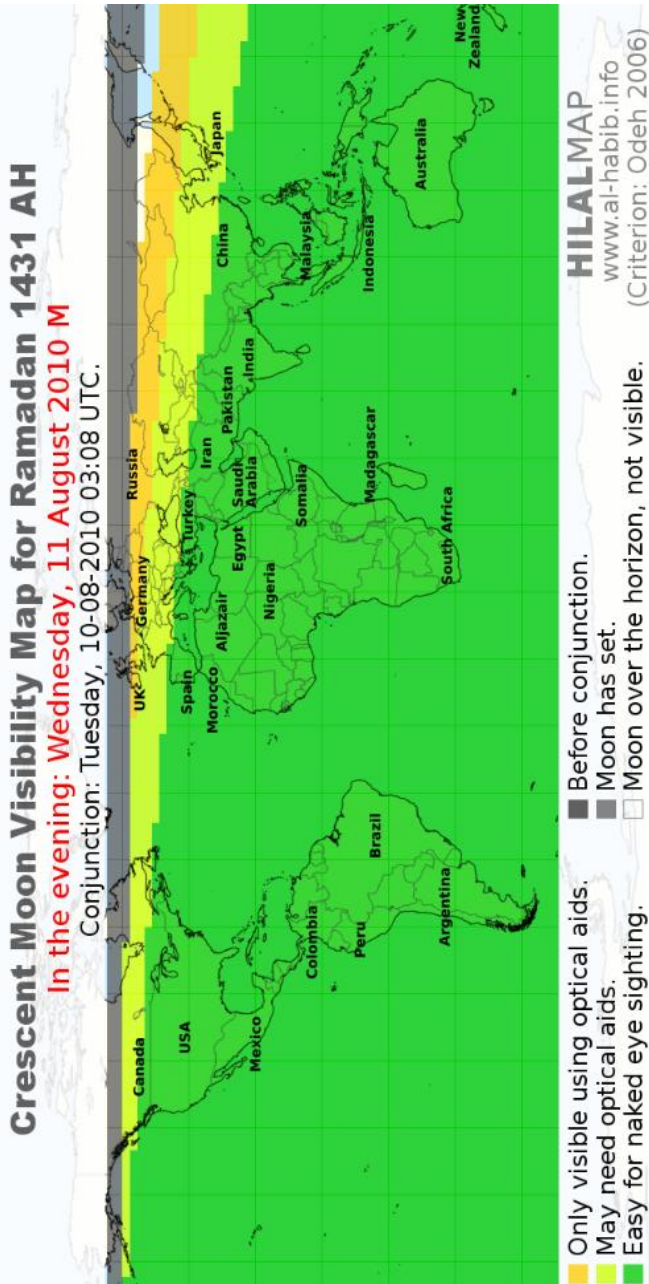
The seal of the office of Sayyid al-Sistani
The Holy City of Najaf / The eve of Thursday,
Ramadan 1, 1431

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

یعلن مكتب سماحة السيد السيستاني في التخصّص الاستشف للمؤمنين الكرام
انه قد ثبت لدى سماحته دام ظلّه ان يوم غدٍ (الخميس) هو اول ايام شهر
رمضان المبارك في معظم الدول الاسلاميه كالعراق وسائر الدول العربيه
وامران وباكستان واندونيسيا وماليزيا وكذلك في الهند واستراليا و
الدول الاصفقيه و دول امريكا الجنوبيه والولايات المتحده واخرى من جنوب
كندا . واما في اغلب مناطق اوروبا كبريطانيا وايرلندا وفرنسا والمانيا و
اطاليا وبلجيكا وهولندا والدول الاسكندنافية ومعظم اجزاء كندا فان
يوم بعد غدٍ (الجمعة) سيكون اول ايام الشهر الفضيل . نسأل الله
تبارك وتعالى ان يجعله شهر خير وبركة لجميع المسلمين .

ليلة الخميس ١ رمضان
السيد السيستاني
العماد الشريف
١٤٣١ هـ

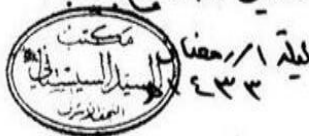
If we refer to what the [astronomical] sources that track the conditions of the crescent published, including charts that depict the areas in which the crescent is visible if the conditions are clear (see below), we will see that all the areas designated in green have been included in the statement and it is consistent with the edict on the unity of horizons included in his manual of [Islamic] practice.



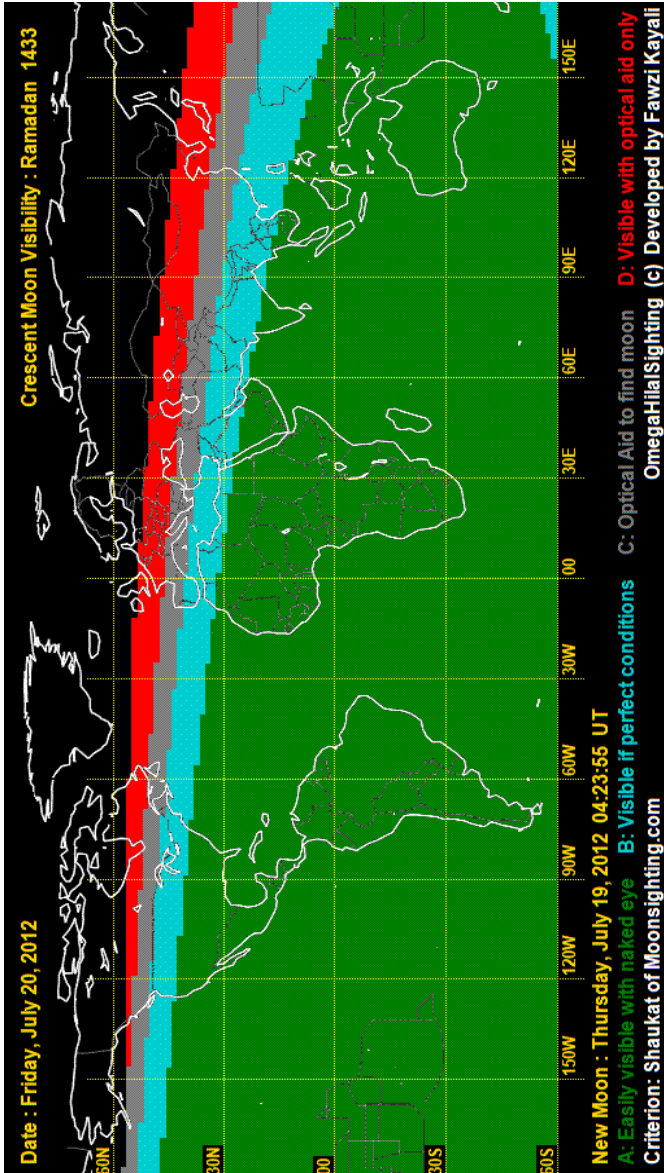
ANOTHER PRACTICAL MODEL FOR DETERMINING
THE UNITY OF HORIZONS

Similarly, the office of His Eminence al-Sayyid al-Sistani confirmed the sighting of the crescent of the month of Ramadan 1433 A.H. in Najaf, Iraq, and some nearby cities at sunset on Friday, July 20, 2012. As a result, the office of His Eminence issued a statement specifying the horizon of Najaf and all other cities that share it (i.e., unity of horizon), beginning with Australia and ending with the United States. Below is a copy of the statement.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يعلمني مكتب سماحة السيد السستاني في التحف الاشراف المؤمنين
الكرام انه قد ثبت لدى سماحته دام ظلهم ان غدا السبت هو اول ايام
شهر رمضان المبارك في العراق وسائر الدول العربية وفي الدول الاسلاميه
المجاورة لها كما هو الحال في استراليا ونيوزلندا والدول الافريقيه والولايات
المتحده ودول امريكا الوسطى والجنوبية . واما في بريطانيا والمانيا
وفرنسا وايطاليا وتونس والدول الاروپيه وفي معظمها فكلوا
يوم الاحد واول ايام الشهر الفضيل . نسأل الله تعالى ان يجعله
شهر خير وجره لجمیع المسلمين انه سمع بحسب .



Once again, this confirms that the statement includes all the areas designated in green (below).



A CONTEMPORARY ISSUE RELATED TO FASTING,
TRAVELING, AND DIFFERENT HORIZONS

If sighting of the crescent of the month of Ramadan occurs in the hometown of a duty-bound person who must fast while traveling (e.g., a frequent traveler), but they have traveled to another town which has a different horizon where the crescent has not been confirmed, then they do not have to fast that day. On the other hand, if sighting the crescent of the month of Shawwal occurs in their hometown but they have traveled to another town with a different horizon where the crescent has not been confirmed, then they must abstain from fast-nullifiers for the rest of that day and make it up later, both based on obligatory precaution.

Determining the beginning and end of the day according to Islamic law

After confirming the beginning of the month of Ramadan, a duty-bound person must ascertain the times of *imsak* or when to stop eating and drinking and the times of *iftar* or when to break the fast to ensure that their fasting is correct. Almighty God says, “Eat and drink until the white streak becomes manifest to you from the dark streak at the crack of dawn. Then complete the fast until nightfall.”¹³⁶ It is clear from this holy verse that it is permissible to eat and drink until dawn, after which one must fast until the disappearance of the redness in the eastern sky (twilight).

136. The Quran 2:187, MS.

DETERMINING TIME OF DAWN (FAJR)

The following points contain detailed explanations about determining the time of dawn:

- One must abstain from fast-nullifiers when the white streak becomes manifest and distinguished from the dark streak as stated in the Holy Quran. This is known as true dawn (*al-fajr al-sadiq*). True dawn has a horizontal brightness on the horizon that is clearly apparent and emanates from the direction of sunrise and increases in intensity. This distinguishes true dawn from false dawn, which is a column of light that appears on the horizon, ascends vertically to the sky, diminishes, and weakens until it disappears.
- The means for establishing the time (of fajr) is either by [veritable] knowledge or contentment that it has set in or by using any rational means.
- The schedules and timetables issued by astronomers (for sunset, for example) are based on estimations and they cannot be relied upon unless the person derives contentment [from them] that the time has set in. Similarly, the sound of the adhan or call to prayer, heard from mosques and other Muslim places of worship, cannot be relied on unless the duty-bound person derives contentment that the time has set in.
- It is permissible for a person to practice *istishab* or consider it is still night and therefore continue eating and drinking until they know or are content that dawn has set in. However, it is better to abstain before that time (i.e., as a precaution) and delay dawn prayer slightly [to ensure the time of prayer has set in].

- It is permissible for spouses to practice *istishab* or consider it is still night and engage in intercourse if they are content that they will have enough time to perform the ritual bath (*ghusl*) before dawn sets in.
- It is not sufficient to resort to assumption (*dhan*) when determining the time of dawn, even if the duty-bound person has a personal excuse, like blindness or imprisonment, which prevents them from knowing it. As such, even if there is a natural obstruction (e.g., clouds) which prevents the determination of the time, the person must delay their prayer based on obligatory precaution until they are content that the time has arrived.

DETERMINING SUNSET TIME (MAGHRIB)

The following points describe how to determine the time of maghrib:

- The time of breaking the fast is when the redness in the eastern sky disappears, even if a person knows that the sun has set based on obligatory precaution.¹³⁷
- The exact hour and minute when the eastern redness disappears varies from place to place and

137. This is a controversial issue among Imami Twelver jurists. For those people who wish to break their fast at sunset without waiting for the eastern redness to disappear, especially to join others in fast-breaking, and they do not believe that it is necessary to wait until the disappearance of the eastern redness if they are certain that the sun has set, then they may emulate the next most learned jurist who does not require waiting until the disappearance of the eastern redness.

time of year. Therefore, determinations must be made accordingly.

- If a person breaks their fast before sunset due to *taqiyya* or fear of serious harm to themselves, their property, or their dignity, then it becomes obligatory upon them to break their fast anyway, but they must make up the fast later and do not have to pay kaffarah.¹³⁸
- If the time for maghrib prayer sets in for the duty-bound person's city while they are taking off in an airplane and heading west to a destination where the sun has not set, they do not need to wait for maghrib to occur at their destination [and therefore continue fasting], although the recommendation is to refrain from fast-nullifiers until sunset at the destination.

FASTING IN THE POLAR REGIONS

In the polar regions, the night becomes very short and sometimes there is no night at all. Similarly, days can be very short and sometimes there is no day at all. Based on these conditions, the duty-bound person must observe the following rulings:

- In the polar regions where the night is short and it is not completely dark, dawn starts when the light begins to increase on the horizon after its decrease in an observable way. Thus, the fasting

138. It is not justifiable for people to break their fast before the legal time in public iftar gatherings because they are joining other Muslims who break their fast earlier. This is not permissible even if it is to achieve unity with other Muslims. The religious rulings must be observed within their prescribed limits.

person must refrain from fast-nullifiers (i.e., *imsak*) right before that time and [thereafter] pray the *fajr* prayer but before sunrise. It is permissible to break the fast (i.e., *iftar*) at sunset if there is no eastern redness or if its redness persists. Hence, [when the days are very long (e.g., twenty-two hours)] the duty-bound person must fast the entire day if possible. However, if they experience severe hunger or thirst that is not bearable, then it is permissible for them to eat or drink the minimum amount necessary and abstain from anything more based on obligatory precaution, and they must make up the fast later. If eating and drinking the minimal amount is also not possible, then the obligation of fasting is revoked; however, they must make it up later.

- In the polar regions, fasting is not possible at times when there is no night or no day (i.e., there would be no way to delineate the start and end of the fast). In such cases, it is necessary for the person to move to another place where there is dawn and sunset so they can fast the month of Ramadan if possible. The other option is to wait for another time of the year in which they can make it up. If the person is not capable of making it up, even by moving to another place, they only have to offer a *fidyah* for each day they could not make up.
- If the night decreases to only a few hours and the level of light from sunset to sunrise does not change, then based on obligatory precaution, the person must fast from sunrise to sunset with the intention of *raja*, which means fasting with the hope that God desires it in this special case and make it up later. If the duty-bound person is not

capable of doing so, they must travel to another place where there is dawn and sunset so they can fast the month of Ramadan if possible, or they can make it up later in the year. If the person is not capable of making up the fast, even if they travel to another place, they only have to offer a fidyah for each day they missed.

Fifth, Not Traveling

Almighty God says, “The month of Ramadan is one in which the Quran was sent down as guidance to mankind, with manifest proofs of guidance and the Criterion. So, let those of you who witness it fast [in] it, and as for someone who is sick or on a journey, let it be a [similar] number of other days. Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire hardship for you, and so that you may complete the number, and magnify Allah for guiding you, and that you may give thanks.”¹³⁹ Accordingly, one of the requirements of a valid fast is that the duty-bound person is not traveling, such that they must shorten their four-unit prayers, with certain exceptions.¹⁴⁰ What follows are detailed rulings which

139. The Quran 2:185, AQQ.

140. Among the exceptions are the following:

- Fasting three days out of a total of ten as an atonement for not being able to offer a sacrifice in hajj
- Fasting eighteen days in place of offering an animal sacrifice as an atonement for departing Arafat before sunset
- Observing a fast to fulfill a vow to fast while traveling
- Reports indicate that it is recommended for a person who has a need and wants it to be fulfilled to travel to the holy city of Medina and reside there for three days, Wednesday,

a duty-bound person who is traveling must know and observe, whether before, during, or after travel, to ensure that their fasting is valid.

Intending to travel

Recanting the intention to fast or being hesitant to fulfill it invalidates it. This will be explained in the section on the intention of fasting. Therefore, one who intends to travel must note the following:

- If the person travels before dhuhhr prayer, it is permissible for them to break the fast. Rather, it is obligatory to break their fast based on obligatory precaution if they intended to travel the previous night.
- If the person travels after dhuhhr prayer, they must continue fasting based on obligatory precaution especially if they did not make the intention to travel from the previous night.
- If the person decides to travel after the time of dhuhhr prayer, even if they intended to do so the previous night, he must continue his fast based on obligatory precaution.

If a traveler returns to their hometown or enters a town where they will reside for ten days,

- the person must fast that day based on obligatory precaution if they enter the town before dhuhhr

Thursday, and Friday; observe fasts; and spend the time in the holy shrine of the Prophet (pbuh&hp) engaged in remembrance of God. Then God will fulfill their need.

and they have not committed a fast-nullifier (e.g., eating), and the fast will be valid;

- the person does not have to fast if they enter the town after the time of dhuhhr prayer, and it would not be valid if they do fast based on obligatory precaution. Rather, they must make it up later; and
- the criterion for whether the traveler has reached the town before dhuhhr or after dhuhhr is entering the town itself and not just reaching the outer limit or hadd al-tarrakhuss.

Five conditions

One of the conditions for the validity of fasting is not to be traveling, so it would be invalid if the fasting person travels. However, the invalidation of fasting [due to travel] is contingent upon five conditions:¹⁴¹

1. THE TRAVEL MUST BE LAWFUL.

A traveler must not shorten their four-unit prayers nor break their fast if the conditions of their travel include:

- distress to the parents, which would occur [due to the parents' legitimate concern for the person (e.g., harm)] if they embark upon the travel, since Islam prohibits causing distress to one's parents;
- a wife embarking on travel without the permission of her husband, unless the purpose of her travel is to fulfill an obligatory pilgrimage (i.e., once the criteria for her obligation are fulfilled) or visiting her kin if

141. The traveler must fast if one or more of the five conditions is not met.

the obligation of maintaining ties with them requires traveling, if doing so does not entail a forbidden act that would revoke the duty;

- traveling to commit an unlawful act (e.g., murder, adultery, robbery, unlawful trade) or visiting an oppressor for the purpose of aiding them in their oppression;
- being indebted to someone and traveling to flee from them; and
- hunting for amusement.¹⁴² However, if the purpose of hunting is to secure a livelihood, then the traveler must shorten their prayers and break their fast.

2. THE PERSON MUST INTEND TO TRAVEL THE RELIGIOUSLY PRESCRIBED DISTANCE THAT WOULD MAKE THEM A TRAVELER AND MAINTAIN THAT DISTANCE.

The distance is equivalent to eight *farsakh*, which is 44.5 km or 27 miles one-way, or four *farsakh* [22.25 km or 13.5 mi] for each leg of a two-way or round-trip.

- a. The religiously prescribed distance is calculated starting from the outer boundary of a town. However, in very large cities, the distance is calculated from the outer boundary of a given locality or even a particular neighborhood if the common view or *urf* [of the residents] is that a person is a traveler from that point.
- b. The traveler must reach the outer limit or *hadd al-tarrakhuss* (as described above) before they can

142. Sayyid al-Sistani does not prohibit this form of hunting.

shorten their prayer or break their fast. This is usually the point outside the hometown where the buildings are no longer visible to the naked eye, which is approximately three to five km or two to three miles.

3. TRAVELING MUST NOT BE A [REGULAR] PART OF WORK OR THE NATURE OF THE WORK

Traveling must not be a [regular] part of work or the nature of the work, such as the jobs of a pilot, navigator, or taxi driver (NOTE: the taxi driver must shorten their prayer if they work locally and travel past the religiously prescribed distance). Similarly, this includes when a person's profession necessitates travel on a frequent basis, such as a physician who travels more than the religiously prescribed distance to different hospitals or a teacher who travels to different universities to teach. Such individuals must always perform full prayers and fast the month of Ramadan even if their travel does not repeat in certain months if they are considered a frequent traveler, moreover, their travel does not only have to be for work. A person, who is [only] required to travel for their work occasionally and the nature of their work does not include regular travel, must shorten their prayer and break their fast when traveling beyond the religiously prescribed distance.

4. THE TRAVELER MUST NOT PASS THROUGH AN AREA WHICH INTERRUPTS THEIR TRAVEL OR WHERE THEY ARE NO LONGER CONSIDERED A TRAVELER.

In the following instances, the person must pray full prayers and observe the fast of the month of Ramadan:

- Hometown of origin (*al-watan al-asli*): A person's birthplace, which can usually be the residence of their parents and remains their home unless they permanently abandon it as a place of residence (i.e., never plan to live there again). Therefore, if the person reaches their hometown during a trip and stays in it for a short while (it is not enough to just pass through it), they must perform full prayers and observe the fast if it is the month of Ramadan.
- Domicile of [temporary] stay (*watan al-iqamah*): A place where the person intends to reside for ten full days. Therefore, if a person reaches a place where they intend to stay for ten days they must pray full and fast because they are no longer a traveler and must note the following:
 - The ten days are calculated from the time the person enters the town during the day until the same time on the eleventh day when they intend to depart and to begin the journey away from where they were staying. However, if they arrive anytime during the night, the ten days must be calculated from the time of fajr of the following day to sunset (maghrib) of the tenth day.
 - The prayers are shortened as soon as they cross the boundary of the temporary domicile (i.e., upon departure) where they resided for ten days; it is not necessary for them to wait until they reach the outer limit (hadd al-tarrakhus) [as they would if they were departing their home].

- Residing in one place for the entire duration of ten days. However, there is no problem in leaving for a couple of hours during the day to go to the outskirts of town.
- A place where a person remains for thirty days but is undecided about staying or leaving is also considered a temporary domicile. In such a case, they must begin performing full prayers and observe the fast of the month of Ramadan on the thirty-first day [and beyond].
- Long-term stay (LTS) (*watan al-itikhadhi*): A place where a person plans to stay long-term for work, school, summer or spring vacations, or similar purposes, even if they do not own property or a home there. Except for the first month of stay during which time the person must perform both full and shortened prayers and fast the month of Ramadan and make up those fasts based on obligatory precaution if one of the following criteria related to their stay in that place applies:
 - Remain there for six hours during every trip, in twenty-two days every month, for four years
 - Remain there for eight hours during every trip, in twenty days every month, for four years.
 - Remain there for twelve hours during every trip, in fifteen days every month, for five years.
 - Remain there for twelve hours during every trip, in twenty-two days every month, for three years.
 - Remain there for twenty-four hours during every trip, in seven to eight days every month, for four years.

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- Remain there for twenty-four hours during every trip, in fifteen days every month, for three years.
- Remain there for twenty-four hours during every trip, in twenty-two to thirty days every month, for one and a half years.

The following table contains more clarification.

| | Hours each day | Days each month | Number of years | Ruling |
|----|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | 24 hours | 22-30 days | 1½ | LTS |
| 2 | 24 hours | 15 days | 3 | LTS |
| 3 | 24 hours | 7-8 days | 4 | LTS |
| 4 | 24 hours | 6 days | less than 5 | LTS does not apply |
| | | | greater than or equal to 5 | Observe precaution ¹⁴³ |
| 5 | 24 hours | 4 days | less than 7 | LTS does not apply; |
| | | | greater than or equal to 7 | Observe precaution |
| 6 | 12 hours | 22 days | 3 | LTS |
| 7 | 12 hours | 15 days | 5 | LTS |
| 8 | 12 hours | 6 days | less than 7 | LTS does not apply; |
| | | | greater than or equal to 7 | Observe precaution |
| 9 | 8 hours | 20 days | 4 | LTS |
| 10 | 6 hours | 22 days | 4 | LTS |

143. Obligatory precaution in this matter means performing both full and shortened prayers as well as fasting the month of Ramadan and making it up later.

5. THE PERSON MUST NOT BE A FREQUENT TRAVELER.

The person must not be a frequent traveler or someone who has no permanent residence, such as a nomad with no permanent home or a person who lives in a mobile home. These are individuals who travel [frequently] beyond the religiously prescribed distance for any reason and not necessarily for work or profession. This includes, for example, frequent visits to check on one's parents, visits to the holy shrines, visiting believers, travel for amusement, or a patient who goes to the hospital frequently for long-term treatment. A person who is considered a frequent traveler must always pray full prayers and fast in the month of Ramadan no matter where they are. A person is considered a frequent traveler if they

- plan to travel ten days every month for a period of six months in one year;¹⁴⁴
- plan to travel ten days every month for a period of three months each year for two years or more;¹⁶
- plan to travel 8-9 days every month for a period of six months in one year. However, in this case they should shorten their prayers as well as pray in full, and fast (if in the month of Ramadan) as well

144. If the person is hesitant and does not feel certain that their status is that of a traveler (*musafir*), someone who is a frequent traveler, or is residing (*muqim*) when they settle in the new location where they have arrived, then they must observe precaution for the first two weeks or however long it takes them to become certain, by praying shortened prayers and full prayers, and by fasting (if in the month of Ramadan) as well as making it up later. This also applies for LTS.

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as make it up later based on obligatory precaution.

- If the person travels less than these three scenarios, they must shorten their prayers and break their fast.

The table below contains more clarification.

| | Overall duration | Number of days or trips | Ruling |
|---|---|--|---|
| 1 | Six months in one year or three months every year for two years or more | 10 days each month | Frequent traveler |
| 2 | Five months in one year or 2½ months every year for two years or more | 9 days in a month and 11 days in the following month (repeated in that sequence) | Frequent traveler |
| 3 | Five months in one year or 2½ months every year for two years or more | 8 days in a month and 12 days in the following month (repeated in that sequence) | Frequent traveler |
| 4 | Five months in one year or 2½ months every year for two years or more | 7 days in a month and 13 in the following month (repeated in that same sequence) | Frequent traveler |
| 5 | Five months in one year or 2½ months every year for two years or more | 9 days in one month | Observe precaution (i.e., pray a shortened prayer as well as a full prayer, and observe a fast and make it up later). |
| 6 | Five months in one year or 2½ months every year for two years | 8 days in one month | Observe precaution (i.e., pray a shortened prayer as well as a |

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| | Overall duration | Number of days or trips | Ruling |
|----|---|---|---|
| | or more | | full prayer, and observe a fast and make it up later). |
| 7 | Five months in one year or 2½ months every year for two years or more | 6 days in one month and 14 in the following month (repeated in that sequence) | Observe precaution (i.e., pray a shortened prayer as well as a full prayer, and observe a fast and make it up later). |
| 8 | Five months in one year or 2½ months every year for two years or more | 5 days in one month and 16 in the following month (repeated in that sequence) | Observe precaution (i.e., pray a shortened prayer as well as a full prayer, and observe a fast and make it up later). |
| 9 | Five months in one year or 2½ months every year for two years or more | 4 days in one month and 16 in the following month (repeated in that sequence) | Not a frequent traveler |
| 10 | Five months in one year or 2½ months every year for two years or more | 7 days or less every month | Not a frequent traveler |
| 11 | Five months in one year or 2½ months every year for two years or more | 10 days or more every month | Observe precaution (i.e., pray a shortened prayer as well as a full prayer, and observe a fast and make it up later). |
| 12 | Five months in one year or 2½ months every year for two years or more | 9 days or less every month | Not a frequent traveler |
| 13 | Four months in | 12 days or more | Observe |

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| | Overall duration | Number of days or trips | Ruling |
|----|--|-----------------------------|---|
| | one year or two months every year for two years or more | every month | precaution (i.e., pray a shortened prayer as well as a full prayer, and observe a fast and make it up later). |
| 14 | Four months in one year or two months every year for two years or more | 11 days or less every month | Not a frequent traveler |
| 15 | Three months in one year or 1½ months every year for two years or more | 15 days or more every month | Not a frequent traveler |
| 16 | Three months in one year or 1½ months every year for two years or more | 14 days or less every month | Not a frequent traveler |
| 17 | Two months in one year or one month every year for two years or more | 22 days or more every month | Not a frequent traveler |
| 18 | Two months in one year or one month every year for two years or more | 21 days or less every month | Not a frequent traveler |

Rulings for people who follow others in their travel (e.g., wife, child, servant, soldier)

A person who is associated with the traveler (in terms of traveling with them) such as the wife who follows her husband, children who follow their father, an

employee who follows their employer (e.g., servant), a prisoner transferred from one place to another by the person responsible for them, or the soldier who follows his commander wherever he goes in his mission should adhere to the rules that apply to the person they are following. This includes shortening their prayer and breaking their fast, or praying a full prayer and fasting, whether they chose to travel with them or had to do so, if the follower knows that the individual or group (as in the case of the army) they are following will travel the legal distance. When in doubt, they must pray a full prayer and continue to fast if it is the month of Ramadan. However, based on recommended precaution, the person should inquire about the distance they have traveled.

If the person who follows another decides to separate from them before reaching the religiously prescribed distance or is hesitant to do so, then they must continue to pray full prayers and observe fasts. The same applies if they are determined to separate from the person they are following upon fulfillment of certain conditions, such as a woman becoming divorced from her husband. The same ruling applies if there is a high probability of an impediment to the continuation of travel, such as a security hindrance. In general, if the person intends to travel the legal distance, but assumes there is a rational possibility that something will impede their travel, then they must pray full prayers and continue to fast, even if later they come to know that there was no impediment.

University students, ambassadors, and consuls

University students who reside outside of their hometowns during the period of their study, ambassadors, consuls, and similar individuals who settle outside their country or town of origin must consider the place where they have settled as their home if it is considered as such by common view. Therefore, their fasting would be valid and they must pray full prayers. However, during the first month of their settlement, they must combine shortening their prayers and praying in full as well as fasting the month of Ramadan and making it up based on obligatory precaution.¹⁴⁵

Fasting of people with temporary occupations

Those with temporary occupations, such as managers of hajj caravans, those contracted to perform temporary tasks that involve traveling (e.g., security investigators), and those who temporarily reside outside their countries for certain periods and in their countries for the rest of the year fall under one of the following categories in terms of the rulings about their prayer and fasting:

145. If a person finds this precaution difficult, they may follow the next most learned jurist or intend to reside in the new place for ten days without leaving. Thus, they can observe a fast from day one and pray in full [and not have to make up the fast and pray shortened prayers as well]. Thereafter, they can switch their intention to residing for the period of their study.

| Travel period | Ruling |
|---|---|
| Three months or more, for two years or more | Pray full prayers and fast |
| Two months or less | Pray a shortened prayer ¹⁴⁶ |
| More than two months but less than three | Based on obligatory precaution combine performing shortened and full prayers, and fasting the month of Ramadan as well as making it up later. |

Sixth, The State of Purity

Being in the state of purity is an obligation when one wants to perform obligatory prayers, fasting, or tawaf.

Ritual impurity due to *janabah* (sexual intercourse), *haydh* (menstruation), or *nifas* (postnatal bleeding)

The following are points related to ritual impurity:

- A fasting person, male or female, must be in a state of purity from *janabah*, *haydh*, or *nifas* before *fajr* sets in.
- If a fasting woman experiences bleeding from menstruation or postnatally, even if it is a few minutes before *maghrib*, her fast becomes invalid and she must make it up later.

146. However, anytime they intend to reside for ten days, not leave the town, and remain there after the ten days without initiating new travel, they must pray a full prayer and fast even if they are there for less than two months.

- If a woman must observe the rulings of *istihadha* (non-menstrual blood) and refrain from the acts that are not permissible for a woman in the state of *nifas* (after just giving birth) on account of adhering to precaution, then she must make up the fast of that day based on obligatory precaution.
- It is permissible for a woman to use means to delay her monthly menstrual cycle to fast the entire month of Ramadan if it does not cause her serious harm.

Performing tayammum in place of *ghusl*

A person must perform a ritual bath (*ghusl*) before dawn (*fajr*) to purify from *janabah*, menstruation (*haydh*), or postnatal bleeding (*nifas*). However, if there is not enough time to do so before *fajr*, then they must perform *tayammum* (dry ablution).

CONDITIONS AFFECTING PERMISSIBILITY OF PERFORMING TAYAMMUM IN PLACE OF GHUSL

The following conditions affect the permissibility of *tayammum* in place of *ghusl*:

- Cases when *tayammum* is warranted in place of ritual purification with water are as follows:
 - If there is not enough time to perform a ritual bath (*ghusl*) before *fajr*. For example, if there were only a few minutes left before dawn and there was not enough time to perform a ritual bath (*ghusl*), the person must perform *tayammum* immediately for their fast to be

valid, and thereafter perform a ritual bath (ghusl) for dawn prayer.

- If there is not enough water to perform a ritual bath (ghusl) and the person tries to acquire it but is incapable of doing so or there is not enough time to do so
- If using water causes a person unbearable hardship; for example, if it results in infecting a wound or causes some other serious illness or harm which is usually unbearable
- If a person can use ice by melting it and performing ablution (wudu) or they are able to wipe the face and hands in a manner that is considered washing and wipe the head and feet with the moisture that remains on the palms, then they must do so and not perform tayammum.

THINGS WITH WHICH ONE CAN PERFORM TAYAMMUM

The following things are acceptable for performing tayammum:

- It is permissible to perform tayammum with anything considered to be earth, whether it is soil, sand, a clump of dirt, pebbles, or rocks. However, the recommended precaution is to use soil if possible. Moreover, it is necessary for whatever one uses to cling to (i.e., rub off onto) the skin based on obligatory precaution. Thus, tayammum is not valid with a smooth stone that has no dirt or dust on it.
- It is not permissible to perform tayammum with something usurped. However, if a person is

compelled to remain on usurped land, they may perform tayammum on it, but instead of striking the earth they must [just] place their palms on it.

- It is permissible to perform tayammum with dust that has collected on clothes, carpet, or something similar if it is considered fine dust and has mass based on common view or urf.
- If it is not possible to perform tayammum with any of the above-mentioned substances, then the person must do so with anything that has dust on it. If the latter is also not possible, then the fasting will be valid. As for the prayer at that time, they will need to make it up later [once they are able to perform ritual purification].

HOW TO PERFORM TAYAMMUM IN PLACE OF GHUSL

The instructions that follow explain the performance of tayammum:

- The method of performing tayammum is to strike or place the palms of the hands on the earth and do so all at once based on obligatory precaution. Then, the person must wipe the entire forehead, based on obligatory precaution, from the hairline to the eyebrows and the bridge of the nose, including the temples. Then, they must wipe the whole of the back of the right hand, from the wrist to the tip of the fingers, with the palm of the left hand, and the whole of the back of the left hand, from the wrist to the tip of the fingers, with the palm of the right. It is not sufficient to wipe the left hand before the right based on obligatory precaution.

- One strike on the earth is sufficient for a valid tayammum, whether it is in place of ablution (wudu) or a ritual wash (ghusl), although the person should strike the earth once for wiping the face and a second time for wiping the hands based on recommended precaution. In fact, it is even better to strike the earth once to wipe the face and hands, and then strike it a second time to wipe the hands [again].
- If there is a barrier (e.g., a cast) over the part being wiped, which cannot be removed, then the person should wipe over that barrier. If the palm itself has a barrier on it, the person should wipe with an uncovered part of the palm.

CONDITIONS OF TAYAMMUM

The list below explains the conditions for valid tayammum.

- One must have an intention of nearness to God for tayammum, just like wudu and ghusl, and based on obligatory precaution, the intention should be made at the same time the hands strike or are placed on the earth.
- It is not necessary to intend to perform tayammum in place of ablution (wudu) or the ritual bath (ghusl); rather it suffices if it is for nearness to God.
- Tayammum lifts the state of impurity (hadath) if it does not become nullified (e.g., by urinating).
- A person must perform tayammum without the assistance of someone else and do so in close succession (i.e., without interruption) and in the

correct sequence. Based on obligatory precaution, wiping should occur from top to bottom.

Tayammum becomes invalid if not done in the proper sequence and its completion is interrupted, even if this occurs due to ignorance or forgetfulness. However, it is valid if there is no interruption and they [immediately] restart the tayammum and use the correct sequence.

- The hair [from the scalp] that falls on the forehead must be lifted to wipe directly on the skin of the forehead, whereas the person should wipe over the hair that grows on the forehead if it is not longer than normal; otherwise it must be removed.
- Any rings worn on the fingers (i.e., that constitute a barrier) must be removed during tayammum.
- If a person doubts whether there is a barrier such as nail polish or glue on one of the parts of tayammum, then they must examine themselves to the extent that they become certain or content that it is not there.

Seventh, Intention

Fasting the holy month of Ramadan becomes compulsory if all the previously mentioned conditions are met. At that point, it is necessary to establish the intention to fast seeking nearness to God which is an essential requirement in many acts of worships. Narrations tell us that the Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, “Verily [the significance of] actions are by intentions,”¹⁴⁷ and Imam

147. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 67, p. 212.

Zayn al-Abidin (p) is reported to have said, “No act [of worship is valid] without an intention.”¹⁴⁸ Hence, it is imperative for a person who wishes to fast to recognize and be attentive to the importance of intention and its effect on this holy act of worship.

Intention of seeking nearness to God

The intention of fasting is characterized by deliberateness in seeking nearness to God,¹⁴⁹ which means that a person intends to abstain from certain acts (i.e., fast-nullifiers) out of obedience and submission to God, the Exalted. Therefore, if a person abstains from fast-nullifiers (e.g., eating and drinking) due to lack of desire,¹⁵⁰ only with the goal of taming carnal desires,¹⁵¹

148. al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 84.

149. There are three types of acts when it comes to intention:

- Acts that require intention of nearness to God, such as praying and fasting
- Acts that require intention, but without delineating it as nearness to God, like conducting transactions (e.g., buying, selling, renting, marriage, and divorce) Acts that do not require an intention nor delineation of nearness to God, such as purifying an impure object. For example, if a person has a shirt that has become impure and it accidentally falls under the rain or in water, then it becomes pure even though they did not intend to purify it.

150. Like someone who does not desire food at all and does not eat except when necessary (i.e., they eat something simple at night) or someone who does not feel the desire to have sex during the day at all.

151. Like someone who practices yoga or engages in certain spiritual practices that may require abstaining from food, drink, and sex for long hours, noting that Islam forbids some of these spiritual practices.

or only to protest something,¹⁵² then it does not constitute a valid fast. Therefore, the intent of abstaining must solely be out of obedience and submission to God, the Exalted, and it must not be to show off, because this would invalidate the fast.

Continuity of intention

It is necessary to maintain a continuous intention during the entire period of fasting, in addition to abstaining from the fast-nullifiers, out of obedience and submission to God, the Exalted. This means that the person should have full awareness of their obligation and never hesitate in continuing the fast with that intention.

Time of intention

What follows are some rulings related to the time of one's intention:

- The time of intention differs based on the type of fasting. There are three major types:
 - Fixed and specified obligatory fasts¹⁵³ such as the fasts of the month of Ramadan. The intention must be made prior to fajr based on obligatory precaution. It is also permissible for

152. For example, someone who goes on a hunger strike in a prison for a political position.

153. The fixed and specified obligation has a specified time, such as fasting the month of Ramadan, which would not be valid in Shaban or Shawwal (i.e., it must be during the month of Ramadan, from the first day until the last).

the duty-bound person to make the intention each night to fast the following day or from the first night and before fajr of the first day to fast the entire month.

- Extended and unspecified obligatory fasts¹⁵⁴ such as the missed fasts of the month of Ramadan. A person can make the intention until before dhuhr sets in as long as they have not committed any fast-nullifiers. If dhuhr sets in, and the person has not made the intention to fast, even if they wished to do so, their fast would be invalid based on obligatory precaution.
- Recommended fasts. The time for making the intention extends all the way until moments before maghrib if the person has not committed a fast-nullifier during that day.
- If a person does not make the intention to fast because they forgot or were ignorant of the rule, or they forgot or were ignorant of the fact that the month of Ramadan had begun, and they came to know or remember before dhuhr, they must make the intention to fast and it would be valid if they have not committed a fast-nullifier. However, if they remember or come to know after dhuhr sets in, then based on obligatory precaution they must abstain from fast-nullifiers for the rest of the day with the intention of absolute nearness to God¹⁵⁵

154. The extended and unspecified obligation does not have a specified time, such as making up the missed fasts from the month of Ramadan. These may be made up any time during the year.

155. Absolute nearness (*al-qurbah al-mutlaqa*) means that a person intends to abstain from fast-nullifiers for the sake of absolute

and make up the day later. Also, precaution must be observed by intending to fast and continuing the fast with hope that it is desired by God.

- If a person fasts to make up a fast that they believe is missed, then they may break it anytime during the day, before dhuhr or after, if they choose.

Changing intention

It is not permissible to change the intention from one type of fast to another, such as changing from making up a missed day of the month of Ramadan to a vowed or recommended fast, because this is a breach of the intention and doing so invalidates the fast. However, if the person makes an intention to end the fast, and right before noon intends a different fast, it would be valid if they did not commit a fast-nullifier.

The intention of fasting the last day of Shaban

The following are rulings concerning fasting intention for the last day of Shaban:

- It is permissible to fast the last day of Shaban with an intention, whether recommended or obligatory, of it being what is known (i.e., last day of Shaban or first of the month of Ramadan). This means that the person should make an intention for a recommended fast if it is the last day of

nearness to God and not with a specific intention of it being an obligatory fast.

Shaban and an obligatory fast if it is indeed the first day of the month of Ramadan.

- It is invalid and not permissible to fast the last day of Shaban with an intention of it being the first day of the month of Ramadan without establishing that the latter has started, even if it turns out to be the former.
- If a person fasts the last day of Shaban as a recommended or make-up fast, or to fulfill a vow, and they find out later that it is the first of the month of Ramadan, their fast will count as part of Ramadan, and if they come to know before dhuhur they must change their intention to a fast for the month of Ramadan.
- If a duty-bound person wakes up with the intention of not fasting thinking that it is the thirtieth of Shaban (Day of Doubt), and they come to know that it is the first day of the month of Ramadan before dhuhur, then they must make the intention and fast the first of the month Ramadan if they have not committed a fast-nullifier. If they find out that it is the first of the month of Ramadan before dhuhur but they committed a fast-nullifier, then they must abstain from any further fast-nullifiers for the rest of the day based on obligatory precaution and make up the day later. On the other hand, if they find out after dhuhur and they have not committed any fast-nullifiers, then based on obligatory precaution they must fast with the intention of raja¹⁵⁶ and make it up

156. The intention of absolute nearness means to intend complying with one of the possible obligations.

later. If they find out after dhuhr, but they committed a fast-nullifier, then they must abstain from any further fast-nullifier for the rest of the day and make up the fast later based on obligatory precaution.

Sleep, insanity, unconsciousness, and intoxication

The rulings for situations when one is not in full possession of one's faculties are as follows:

- Sleeping all day from fajr until maghrib while fasting does not invalidate the intention if the person made the intention to fast before fajr (even the night before).
- The rulings for insanity, unconsciousness, and intoxication are different from sleep. A person who has a mental impairment or who passes out involuntarily and later becomes mentally cognizant or wakes up, respectively, during the day must abstain from fast-nullifiers with the intention of (dhimmah). If they do not, then they must make up the day later.
- A person who voluntarily becomes intoxicated or purposefully does something to pass out (not sleep) must complete the fast for that day and make it up later if they made the intention to fast before fajr.

The intention of raja is to perform an act hoping that it is desired and accepted by God (rather than not) in cases of uncertainty of whether the act is obligatory (i.e., legislated), thus, it is performed with the hope of it being so.

- If a person is voluntarily induced into a coma for the entire day, such as someone who is going to have surgery, then they must make up the fast of that day based on obligatory precaution.

Hesitancy of intention

The following rulings involve hesitancy of intention to fast:

- It is obligatory to maintain the intention of fasting until the end of the day. Therefore, if a person intends to break their fast or becomes hesitant about continuing it for any reason, then it becomes invalid based on obligatory precaution even if they return to their previous intention of fasting. Moreover, the person must abstain from fast-nullifiers until the end of the day and make up the fast based on obligatory precaution.
- A person's fast remains valid if they become hesitant because they doubt the validity of their fast.
- If a person observes an unassigned fasting such as making up a missed day from the month of Ramadan, and intends to break their fast or becomes hesitant as to whether they will continue to fast, their fast is valid if they return to their original intention of fasting before dhuhur sets in.

Intention of fasting for a traveler

Refer to the previously mentioned rulings on the conditions of valid fasting of a traveler.

Rules of Fasting

If all the aforementioned conditions of a valid fast are fulfilled, in addition to making the intention to fast out of obedience to God, the duty-bound person must learn the fast-nullifiers that must be avoided. These fast-nullifiers are explained in the next section.

Fast-Nullifiers

The significance behind the worship of fasting is to abstain from certain things out of obedience and submission to God; these are known as fast-nullifiers (*mufattirat*).

Before getting into the details of the fast-nullifiers, it is important to point out that a fast is invalid only if a person knowingly and willfully commits a fast-nullifier. Therefore, if a person commits a fast-nullifier unintentionally or due to forgetfulness, their fast remains valid, irrespective of the type (fixed and specified, recommended, etc.).

If someone deliberately eats, drinks, or engages in sexual intercourse, whether they know they are fast-nullifiers or not, their fast is invalid. However, the fast is not invalid if the person commits one of the other fast-nullifiers out of inculpable ignorance¹⁵⁷ of the

157. A person who is inculpably ignorant has a valid excuse for not knowing the ruling, whereas someone who is culpably ignorant does not. For example, an inculpably ignorant person is someone who might have relied on a certain jurisprudential source for a given ruling and found out later that they were wrong [in their understanding of the ruling] or they emulated a qualified jurist not knowing that the jurist had changed his ruling. Similarly, a person is considered inculpably ignorant if they think that a prohibited act is permissible on account of living far away from a religious environment. In contrast, a culpably ignorant person is someone who fails to learn the rulings that are relevant to the fulfilment of their religious duties such as praying, fasting the month of Ramadan, avoiding backbiting, consumption of alcoholic beverages, and adultery; or someone who believes that something is permissible due to being negligent in learning [the rules].

ruling. On the other hand, a person's fast is invalid if they commit a fast-nullifier due to willful negligence in learning the ruling. As for an inculpable ignorant who is hesitant about a nullifier, they must not [even] intend to commit it because this is contrary to the intention of abstaining from all the fast-nullifiers.

The fast of a person forced to eat, drink, or engage in sexual intercourse is invalid, and they must make it up later unless they were stripped of their will (i.e., physically forced) such that water was forced down their throat, then their fast is valid. However, if they are forced to commit any of the other fast-nullifiers, then they should complete their fast and make it up later based on recommended precaution.

First & Second: Eating and Drinking

Knowingly eating or drinking invalidates a person's fast, even if it is a very small amount (e.g., the food that remains between the teeth, medicine, or gum). On the other hand, the fast is not invalid if a person mistakenly or forgetfully eats or drinks something, even if it is a lot.

Rinsing the mouth

Rinsing the mouth is recommended for ablution (wudu), yet the person should ensure that water is not swallowed. However, the fast remains valid if water enters the esophagus inadvertently, provided the rinsing was for ablution (wudu), otherwise it would become invalid.

Rinsing the nose

It is permissible to aspirate water through the nose for the purposes of rinsing if the person is certain that it will not enter the esophagus. The fast is invalid if the water enters the esophagus; however, the person must continue abstaining from fast-nullifiers for the rest of the day and make up the fast later.

The use of asthma inhalers does not invalidate fasting if there are no medicinal particles that enter the esophagus. If use of the inhaler is necessary [for the person's health] and it is known that the medicinal particles will enter the esophagus, then it is permissible to break the fast. However, it must be made up later if possible.

Swallowing saliva

Swallowing saliva that collects in the mouth, when a person purposely smells a fragrance or remembers a certain taste, does not invalidate a fast irrespective of the quantity of saliva.

Tasting food

Tasting food while cooking, preparing, or chewing it for a toddler does not invalidate a fast if the person does not swallow it and provided they spit [any remnants out] three times afterwards.

Phlegm and mucus

Swallowing one's own phlegm or mucus does not invalidate the fast; however, it is a recommended precaution not to do so.

Chewing gum

Chewing gum does not invalidate a fast, even if the person can taste its flavor, if it does not have particles like sugar that dissolve, spread with the saliva, and are swallowed, unless it is so minute that it disintegrates and disappears with chewing and does not go down the esophagus as particles. In any case, a person must avoid chewing gum unless they are certain not to swallow any particles.

Moisturizing the lips

It is permissible for a fasting person to use lip moisturizers or balms, and it does not invalidate the fast.

Fragrances, eyeliner, and body lotion

The following are rulings about fragrances and some cosmetics:

- There is no problem if a fasting person applies eyeliner even if they taste it in their mouth, nor is there a problem with using fragrances, even if they are strong. However, it is detestable (makruh) to smell fragrant plants like flowers.
- Applying creams or lotions to moisturize the face and body or applying deodorants does not invalidate a fast.

Brushing the teeth

The following rulings concern care of the teeth:

- It is permissible for a fasting person to use a toothbrush and other things to clean their teeth during the day provided they do not swallow anything during the cleaning process. Moreover, there is no problem if there are little particles that disintegrate and dissolve in the saliva. However, after brushing their teeth, the person must spit out all the rinse water (e.g., by spitting three times) to ensure that nothing goes down the esophagus.
- It is not necessary for a person who intends to fast to floss their teeth after eating, even if there is a chance that not doing so will result in swallowing the food that is inadvertently stuck between the teeth. However, if they know that leaving food debris in the mouth will result in it entering the esophagus, then they must floss it out.

Dental treatment and blood from the gums

These rulings cover other dental treatments:

- It is permissible for a fasting person to get dental treatment during the day if they can ensure that nothing (e.g., water or medicine) enters their esophagus. However, the fast is invalid if something accidentally enters, and it must be made up. On the other hand, if they are uncertain that nothing will enter their esophagus, they must not undergo dental treatment during the day and instead seek it at night or after the month of

Ramadan, if it is not an urgent or immediately needed treatment.

- If a person suffers from bleeding gums, the blood enters their esophagus while sleeping, and they are unable to prevent it, then their fasting remains valid. However, if during the day the person swallows the blood that mixes with saliva due to severe difficulty in spitting it out, then their fast is invalid, they must abstain from fast-nullifiers for the remainder of the day, and make it up later.

Using medicine

What follows are edicts on using medicine while fasting:

- Injecting medicine into the veins or the muscle does not invalidate a fast, even if the person is not in dire need of it and it alleviates hunger and thirst.
- Applying medicine [such as drops] into the eyes or ears does not invalidate a fast, even if its color or taste reaches the mouth.
- Any treatment that does not enter the esophagus and is not considered food or drink does not invalidate a fast (e.g., if medicine is applied to a wound or to the private parts).
- It is permissible to take a medicinal pill for necessary treatment during the day; however, the fast becomes invalid and must be made up later. Moreover, if the person cannot make up the missed fast [because the need for taking the medicine continues until the following month of

Ramadan], then they only must offer a fidyah of feeding one poor person for each day.

Use of energizers

There is no problem with injecting supplements into the vein, even if they provide energy. However, if food and drink are delivered to the stomach through some other means, such that it is considered eating or drinking, then the fast is invalid.

Medical imaging

Ultrasound examinations and other such imaging that take images of the inside of the body do not invalidate a fast provided that no substances (e.g., contrast dye) enter the esophagus in the process.

Third: Sexual Practices

Intercourse

The following are rulings on sexual intercourse and fasting:

- Sexual intercourse invalidates fasting for both participants, whether it is vaginal or anal, and even if it is with other than a person. It becomes invalid as soon as penetration occurs, even if the person does not reach sexual climax and ejaculation and even if they do not intend to ejaculate. Similarly, masturbation also invalidates fasting regardless of whether the act is

permissible (e.g., stimulation by a person's lawful spouse).

- The fast of a person who intends to engage in sexual intercourse during the day is invalid because it constitutes breaking the intention to fast the entire day. Therefore, even if they do not engage in sexual intercourse, they must abstain from fast-nullifiers and make up the fast later. However, they do not have to offer a kaffarah.
- Fasting does not become invalid if a person intends to engage in foreplay with their spouse and penetration occurs unintentionally.

Masturbation

These rulings concern masturbation and fasting:

- Masturbation, as defined by religious law, is the act of climaxing and it is either permissible or prohibited.
 - Permissible masturbation is when a person stimulates their spouse to reach sexual climax.
 - Prohibited masturbation is when a person uses their own hand or some other means to reach sexual climax, even if it is by imagining.
- Both permissible and prohibited forms of masturbation invalidate a fast if it reaches sexual climax or even if the person intends to reach climax and they do not.
- The fast remains valid if a person accidentally reaches sexual climax or ejaculates but they did not intend to do so and were [previously] confident that it would not occur.

- If a person masturbates knowing that it invalidates the fast or does not know due to culpable ignorance,¹⁵⁸ they must make up the fast and offer kaffarah.
- If a person willfully masturbates but does not reach sexual climax or ejaculate, their fast is invalid, they must abstain from fast-nullifiers for the rest of the day and must make up the fast later.
- If a person accidentally reaches sexual climax or ejaculates after [only] engaging in foreplay with their spouse when they were not certain that it would not occur [by continuing to do so], then their fast is invalid and they must make it up later. In this case, they must also offer kaffarah if they knew that this act would invalidate the fast. However, they do not have to offer kaffarah if they were inculpably ignorant about the ruling. In contrast, a culpably ignorant person must offer a kaffarah based on obligatory precaution if they

158. A person who is inculpably ignorant has a valid excuse for not knowing the ruling, whereas someone who is culpably ignorant does not. For example, an inculpably ignorant person is someone who might have relied on a certain jurisprudential source for a given ruling and found out later that they were wrong [in their understanding of the ruling], or they emulated a qualified jurist not knowing that the jurist had changed his ruling. Similarly, a person is considered inculpably ignorant if they think that a prohibited act is permissible on account of living far away from a religious environment. In contrast, a culpably ignorant person is someone who fails to learn the rulings that are relevant to the fulfilment of their religious duties such as praying and fasting the month of Ramadan; avoiding backbiting, consumption of alcoholic beverages, and adultery; or someone who believes that something is permissible due to being negligent in learning [the rules].

were unsure of the ruling; otherwise, they do not need to do so.

- If a person masturbates knowing that it is unlawful but confident that it does not invalidate their fast, they do not have to offer kaffarah, and this rule applies to both men and women.

Fourth & Fifth: Deliberately Remaining in the State of Janabah, Haydh, or Nifas until Fajr

Janabah

These next rulings concern remaining in janabah:¹⁵⁹

- A *mujnib* who is unable to perform a ritual bath (ghusl) or dry ablution (tayammum) is absolved of that obligation and their fast is valid.
- The fast of a person who willfully becomes *mujnib* during a night in the month of Ramadan knowing the time is too short to perform a ritual bath (ghusl) or dry ablution (tayammum) is invalid. If they can perform tayammum (i.e., there is enough time), then they must do so and their fast will be valid. However, their fast is invalid if they have sufficient time and do not perform tayammum, and they must make up the fast and offer kaffarah.

159. Ritual impurity that results from sexual intercourse, sexual climax, or ejection of semen. A *mujnib* is a person in the state of janabah.

- A mujnib must perform dry ablution (tayammum) before dawn if they are unable to perform a ritual bath (ghusl) during the night of the month of Ramadan due to illness. They do not need to remain awake until fajr if they do so. However, they are considered deliberately remaining in janabah until fajr if they do not perform dry ablution (tayammum).
- Nothing is required of a person who becomes mujnib after assuming there is enough time, but then realizes that there is not enough time to perform even dry ablution (tayammum). Thus, they should continue their fast. However, they should perform ghusl before praying fajr.
- A person must make up the fast(s) if they realize after a day or even a few days in the month of Ramadan that they forgot to perform a ritual bath (ghusl), but they do not have to offer kaffarah.
- There is no difference between men and women in janabah rulings. A woman becomes in the state of janabah either by penetration or when she reaches sexual climax.

Menstruation (haydh) and postnatal bleeding (nifas)

The following are edicts on menstruation and postnatal bleeding during fasting:

- The rulings of janabah apply to menstruation and postnatal bleeding. Therefore, a fast of the month of Ramadan, or its qada based on obligatory precaution, is invalid if a woman who has ended menses or postnatal bleeding does not perform a

ritual bath (ghusl) before dawn. The fast of a woman is valid if her menstruation or postnatal bleeding ends, even if she is still bleeding, but does not have enough time to perform a ritual bath (ghusl) or dry ablution (tayammum) or she finds out after fajr that her menstruation or postnatal bleeding had ended.

- Unlike for the state of janabah, a woman's fast is valid (i.e., there is no qada) if she ends menstruation or postnatal bleeding but forgets to perform a ritual wash (ghusl) before dawn and realizes after a day or more.
- All types of non-menstrual bleeding (istihadha) do not invalidate the fast, and unlike prayer, performing a ritual bath is not a condition of the fast's validity.

Sleep of a person who is in the state of janabah, haydh, nifas until fajr in the nights of the month of Ramadan

What follows are rulings about sleeping at night while in the state of janabah during the month of Ramadan:

- If a person becomes in the state of janabah at night during the month of Ramadan and sleeps before performing a ritual bath (ghusl),
 - the ruling of deliberately remaining in the state of janabah applies if they willfully do not perform the ritual bath (ghusl) before fajr. They must make up the fast and offer kaffarah
 - the ruling of deliberately remaining in the state of janabah applies if they are unsure that

they will wake up to perform a ritual bath (ghusl) before fajr [and do not do so] based on obligatory precaution. They must make up the fast and offer kaffarah

- If a person sleeps intending to perform a ritual bath (ghusl) before fajr after becoming in the state of janabah during a night in the month of Ramadan,
 - the fast is valid if the person does not wake up from their first [and only] bout of sleep and they were confident [before sleeping] that they would wake up before fajr [to have time to perform ghusl] due to an alarm clock or on account of habitually doing so. However, they must make up the fast based on obligatory precaution if they were not confident about waking up.
 - they must make the fast up if they slept knowing they were in the state of janabah, woke up from their first bout of sleep before fajr, went back to sleep again [without performing ghusl], and then woke up after fajr. However, they do not have to offer kaffarah
 - they must make the fast up if they woke up twice before fajr but went back to sleep [without performing ghusl] each time and thereafter woke up after fajr
 - in all three cases, the person should offer kaffarah based on recommended precaution if they were not confident about waking up.

The same rulings apply to a woman who experiences sexual climax or becomes in the state of janabah during the night.

- The sleep in which a person has a nocturnal emission at night is considered the first bout of sleep. Hence, if they wake up and go back to sleep again, it would be the second bout of sleep.
- A person in the state of janabah must make up the fast if they sleep heedless of the need to perform ghusl and not about having to fast the next day.
- If a person who is in the state of janabah is not confident that they will wake up in time [to perform ghusl] before dawn, they must not go to sleep based on obligatory precaution. They must make up the fast based on obligatory precaution if they sleep and wake up after fajr, and offer kaffarah based on a recommended precaution.
- The rulings concerning the first, second, and third bouts of sleep for janabah do not apply to a woman who has ended menstruation or postnatal bleeding. Her fast is valid provided she is not negligent in performing a ritual bath (ghusl) before fajr. Her fast is invalid if she is neglectful about waking up before dawn to perform a ritual bath (ghusl), even if this was her first bout of sleep.

Waking up after fajr in the state of janabah or having an emission [during sleep] during the day

The following are decisions about becoming janabah involuntarily:

- A fast is not invalid if a person wakes up in the morning in the state of janabah [after not being so when they went to sleep], even if their sleep extends past fajr.
- A person's fast is valid if they have an emission while sleeping during the day and they do not have to perform a ritual bath (ghusl) for their fast to be valid. However, they must perform ghusl for prayer.
- A man who involuntarily becomes janabah during the day may urinate to clear the urethra (*istibra*) of any remaining semen. However, if he performs a ritual bath (ghusl) before *istibra*, the recommended precaution is to delay *istibra* until after maghrib, even if he knows that no semen will come out, provided that delaying it does not result in harm.

Sixth: Deliberately Causing Thick Dust or Smoke to Reach the Throat

These rulings concern dust or smoke during fasting:

- The fast of a person who deliberately causes thick dust or smoke to enter their throat is invalid based on obligatory precaution. However, there is no problem if the dust is thin, like dust rising in the air due to sweeping, movement, or something similar.
- A fasting person must avoid smoking (cigars, pipes, and hookahs) and the smoke that comes from burning firewood.
- A fasting person must avoid thick dust, especially when exposed to it during work. Examples include

demolishing old buildings; working in flour plants or cement factories; transferring bags of flour or cement; and other similar sources of exposure.

- A fasting person must prevent thick dust from reaching the throat when encountering a sand storm, even if by wearing a face mask.

The use of an inhaler

The rulings about using inhalers are as follows:

- It is permissible to use an inhaler to treat asthma if it enters the windpipe. However, the fast is invalid if its droplets collect in the mouth and enter the esophagus. If a fasting person needs to use an inhaler that invalidates a fast, they must make it up later, and they do not have to make up the fast if the illness continues until the next month of Ramadan, but they must offer a fidyah.
- It is permissible for a person with asthma to use vapor inhalants as treatment if the steam and whatever medicine it contains does not enter the esophagus, because that will invalidate the fast. It is permissible to use vapor inhalants if necessary [for treatment]; however, the person will need to make up the fast if possible (i.e., as determined by the persistence of the illness).
- Steam does not invalidate fasting unless it turns into water droplets in the mouth and is then swallowed.

Smoking

The following are rulings about smoking:

- Smoking is considered heavy smoke. Therefore, it invalidates the fast based on obligatory precaution irrespective of whether a person can stop [during the month].
- If a person smokes during the day, they must abstain from all fast-nullifiers for the remainder of the day with the intention of hoping that this is what God has ordained and then make up the fast based on obligatory precaution.
- A fasting person must avoid using electronic cigarettes (liquid that contains nicotine and fruit flavors converted into vapor upon inhalation) based on obligatory precaution, and it would invalidate the fast if the vapor droplets collect in the mouth and enter the esophagus in a way that would be customarily considered drinking.

Seventh: Applying Liquid Enema

The rulings concerning liquid enema are as follows:

- Applying liquid enema invalidates the fast even if it is necessary for treating an illness. However, there is no problem in using a solid enema, or a liquid enema that does not ascend past the anus.
- Fasting is valid if a woman applies liquids such as vaginal creams or solid enema in her private [reproductive] area and there is no problem with the insertion of medical instruments for the purpose of examination.

Suppositories

The use of solid suppositories does not invalidate fasting, however, it is not permissible to use suppositories that melt immediately after being placed in the anus.

Surgery and treatment of fistulas and hemorrhoids

Applying ointments and medicines to treat fistulas, hemorrhoids and similar ailments does not invalidate fasting.

Eighth: Deliberately Ascribing False Things to Allah and the Infallibles

These edicts concern ascribing false things to Allah and the infallibles (pbut) and how this affects fasting:

- A fast is invalid based on obligatory precaution if a person ascribes a false statement to or lies about God Almighty, the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp), or one of the twelve holy Imams (pbut), irrespective of whether the information is relevant to religious or worldly matters.
- The fast of a person is valid if they ascribe something to God or one of the infallibles with the belief that it is true but realize afterwards that it was false. However, if they ascribe something with the belief that it was false and found out afterwards that it was true, then their fast is invalid.
- A fasting person must not report a hadith by saying “The infallible said...” and ascribe it to one

of the infallibles (pbut) if they do not have any evidence of its authenticity because this would be considered a form of lying. In all cases, it is better to quote a hadith by saying “It is reported that the infallible (p) said...” rather than “The infallible (p) said...”

- When conducting an *istikhara*, it is not permissible to report that something good or something evil will happen and attribute it to God, the Exalted, because this is a form of prognosticating the unseen and is considered falsely ascribing things to God, the Exalted. Instead, if a person wishes to perform an *istikhara* they should say for example, “The apparent meaning of the verse suggests that the matter is good, God willing” or “The apparent meaning of the verse suggests that the matter is not good.”

Ninth: Deliberately vomiting

The following are rulings about vomiting and fasting:

- Fasting becomes invalid by deliberately vomiting, even if there is a need for it such as treatment. However, involuntarily vomiting does not invalidate fasting.
- Fasting does not become invalid by vomiting due to an illness or a natural bodily cause as opposed to if it is just spontaneous.
- It is permissible for a fasting person to burp, even if they think it is possible that something (i.e., food or drink) will come up with it. However, if they are certain that something will come up,

then they must avoid burping based on obligatory precaution.

- The fast remains valid if a person burps and some food or drink is regurgitated to the mouth and then involuntarily enters the esophagus. However, if it reaches the mouth and the fasting person voluntarily swallows it, then their fast is invalid based on obligatory precaution, they must make it up later, and they must offer kaffarah.
- If a fasting person knowingly swallows something at night that will cause them to vomit the [next] day, then their fast is invalid in the event they do so.

Tenth: Immersing the Head under Water

Several jurists have mentioned that immersing the head under water, such as in swimming, invalidates a fast; however, this is not established, although it is highly detestable.

Making Up Missed Fasts and Offering Kaffarah and Fidyah

A duty-bound person who has missed fasts of the month of Ramadan must fulfill the following duties in terms of making up the fast and offering kaffarah or fidyah:

- A person must make up missed fasts of the month of Ramadan later.
- If a person is sick before or becomes sick during the month of Ramadan, and their sickness continues until the following month of Ramadan, they do not have to make up the fast even if they eventually recover from the illness after a year or even several years. However, they must offer fidyah for each day they missed.
- It is not permissible for a person who has a missed fast (qada) of the month of Ramadan to observe a recommended fast until they make up the missed one. On the other hand, if the person must fast due to kaffarah or if they were hired to fast on behalf of a deceased person, then they may observe a recommended fast according to certain conditions mentioned in more detailed books.
- It is not obligatory to make up the missed fast immediately nor to do so in the order missed. It is also not necessary to specify which fast a person is making up, rather it is acceptable just to make an intention to do so for one of the fasts missed from the month of Ramadan for the sake of attaining

nearness to God, the Exalted. However, if a person does not make up their missed fasts until the next month of Ramadan, whether intentionally or out of negligence, they must offer fidyah,¹⁶⁰ which is a portion of food for one poor person for each day missed. The fidyah is for delaying the make-up fast, and they must make it up as well. However, if they delay making up the fasts, but not out of negligence, they must offer a fidyah based on obligatory precaution in addition to making the fast up.

- A person who has become honored by converting to Islam does not have to make up any fasts that they did not keep prior to becoming a Muslim.
- A Muslim, who is not a Twelver Shia, does not have to make up their fasts that they kept according to their sect if they later become a Twelver Shia.

The Intention of Making Up a Missed Fast (Qada)

As mentioned in the previous sections, it is sufficient for the intention of fasting in the month of Ramadan to do so for the sake of attaining nearness to God. As such, if a person wants to make up a missed fast, they must make an intention of qada for the sake of attaining nearness to God, the Exalted. Similarly, if a person is hired to keep a fast on behalf of someone who is

160. A portion of food (mudd) is equivalent to 1.65 pounds (750 gm).

deceased, they must make the intention to fast to fulfill the duty on their behalf.

Obligation to Offer Kaffarah in Addition to Making Up the Missed Fast

- Kaffarah is obligatory upon a person who deliberately invalidates their fast by eating, drinking, engaging in sexual intercourse, masturbating, [willfully] remaining in the state of janabah until fajr in the month of Ramadan, invalidating their qada fast after dhuhr with one of the first four fast-nullifiers, or breaking an assigned vow.¹⁶¹
- Kaffarah is obligatory for a person who knows that committing a fast-nullifier will invalidate their fast. The same rule applies based on obligatory precaution if the person is culpably ignorant and hesitant [about a particular fast-nullifier].
- The kaffarah for deliberately breaking a fast in the month of Ramadan is either to fast two months consecutively or to feed sixty poor people by offering one *mudd*¹⁶² of food to each one. If a person deliberately breaks their fast with something unlawful, such as eating or drinking

161. Fasting for an assigned vow includes such things as vowing to fast the last three days of the month to fast in the holy city of Medina with the intention of remaining there for ten days.

162. A portion of food (*mudd*) is equivalent to 1.65 pounds (750 grams).

something impure, or masturbating, then they should offer a combined kaffarah (i.e., fast two months and feed sixty poor people) based on recommended precaution.

- If a person is not capable of offering kaffarah, then they must seek forgiveness from God. They should offer the kaffarah based on obligatory precaution if they become capable of doing so later.
- If a person breaks a make up fast (qada) for the month of Ramadan after dhuhr they must offer a kaffarah of feeding ten poor people a mudd of food each, and if they are incapable of doing so, they must fast three days, which do not have to be consecutive.
- If a person breaks a fast for an assigned vow, they must offer kaffarah. For example, if the person vowed to fast on a certain Thursday, or the fifteenth of Shaban or the Day of Mabath and they broke their fast on that day, they must offer a kaffarah of feeding ten poor people one mudd¹⁶ of food each or provide clothing for ten poor people. Otherwise, the person must fast three days consecutively if they are incapable of offering the kaffarah.
- If a person commits a fast-nullifier more than once on a given day, they do not have to offer more than one kaffarah.
- If a man forces his wife to have sexual intercourse during the day in the month of Ramadan, he must offer two kaffarah based on obligatory precaution. However, if the husband has a valid excuse not to fast and forces his wife to have sexual intercourse,

he has committed a sin, and he does not have offer kaffarah. As for the wife, she does not have to offer a kaffarah in either case.

- If a person knows that they invalidated their fast [by committing one of the fast-nullifiers], and they are uncertain whether it requires making up the fast only or making up the fast and offering kaffarah, then they do not have to offer kaffarah.
- If a person knows that they missed several days of fasting but they are not certain of the exact number, they only need to pay kaffarah (in addition to making up the fast) for the number of days they are certain about (e.g., they doubt if they missed six or nine days and they are certain that it cannot be less than five, then they must go with five).
- It is not necessary to offer a kaffarah immediately, rather one can delay it if doing so does not amount to negligence.

Cases Only Requiring Qada without Kaffarah

It is obligatory for a person to fulfill a qada fast without kaffarah in the following cases:

1. If a person sleeps in the state of janabah until fajr.
2. If a person invalidates their fast by hesitating in their intention [during the day] without committing a fast-nullifier.
3. If a person forgets to perform a ritual bath (ghusl) for janabah for one or more days.
4. If a person commits a fast-nullifier after fajr without checking that it had occurred. However, if

they knowingly commit a fast-nullifier after dawn, they must make up the fast and offer kaffarah. A person may eat and drink if they doubt whether fajr has set in.

5. If a person commits a fast-nullifier before the time of maghrib with the assumption that maghrib has set in. They may not commit a fast-nullifier if they doubt whether maghrib has set in, and if they do, they will have committed a sin and must make up the fast and offer kaffarah.
6. If a person places water or any other liquid in their mouth for the purpose of washing, cooling, reducing thirst, or even without a purpose, and they accidentally swallow it, they must make up the fast, irrespective of whether this was a fast of the month of Ramadan or some other.
7. Emission of semen due to unintentional sexual arousal that is not customary for the person in cases other than with one's wife. However, if foreplay preceded emission, then the person must make up the fast and offer kaffarah, even if they did not intend to do so or it was not customary for them if they assumed a high possibility of the emission of semen.

Cases Requiring Qada with Kaffarah

As mentioned in several other sections, the following cases require making up the fast and offering kaffarah:

1. If a person deliberately and knowingly invalidates their fast in the month of Ramadan by eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, and masturbation. This does not apply to someone compelled.

2. If a person knows that masturbation invalidates fasting in the month of Ramadan or was culpably ignorant and hesitant¹⁶³ that it invalidates fasting, they must make up the fast and offer kaffarah.
3. If a person deliberately becomes in the state of janabah during the night of the month of Ramadan when there is not enough time to perform a ritual bath (ghusl) before fajr, they must make up the fast and offer kaffarah if they could perform dry ablution (tayammum) and they do not do so.
4. If a person doubts whether the time of maghrib has set in, they must not break their fast. If they break their fast, they will have committed a sin and they must make up the fast and offer a kaffarah.
5. If a person ejaculates semen due to touching or kissing even if they did not intend to do so, and it was not something that usually occurs, they must

163. A culpably ignorant person is one who does not have a valid excuse for not knowing the ruling. For example, a culpably ignorant person is one who fails to learn the rulings that are relevant to the fulfilment of his religious duties, such as praying, fasting the month of Ramadan, avoiding backbiting, avoiding consumption of alcoholic beverages, avoiding adultery, or believing that something is permissible by being negligent in learning. An inculpably ignorant person is one who has a valid excuse for not knowing the ruling, and the culpable ignorant person does not. An example of an inculpably ignorant person is one who relied on a qualified jurist and found later that the jurist was not qualified or who acted according to the ruling of the qualified jurist not knowing that the jurist had changed his ruling. In addition, this could include a person who because of living far from a religious environment became certain that an act was permissible, when it was unlawful.

make up the fast and offer kaffarah unless they assumed that touching or kissing would not cause it to happen. In the latter case, they must only make up the fast.

Making Up Fasts on Days When Fasting Is Recommended

The following rulings concern what to do when recommended fasts and make-up fasts coincide:

- It is not permissible for a person to observe a recommended fast if they have missed fasts from the month of Ramadan.
- It is permissible for a person to observe a recommended fast if they also must observe a kaffarah fast for deliberately breaking their fast in the month of Ramadan.
- If a person observes a qada fast for the month of Ramadan during the months when fasting is recommended, such as Rajab, Shaban, the twenty-seventh of Rajab, or the fifteenth of Shaban, with the hope of also receiving reward for fasting those days, God, the Exalted, will reward them for it. It is also permissible to combine multiple intentions for a fast in one day. For example, a person may make an intention to make up a fast from the month of Ramadan and one of the following recommended fasts if they choose to keep the fast on that day, and they will be rewarded for it:
 - Intention to fast a day in the month of Rajab
 - Intention to fast three days in the month of Rajab

- Intention to fast the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth of Rajab
- Intention to fast the first and last Thursday of Rajab
- Intention to fast Thursday and Friday in the month of Rajab

Keeping a Missed Fast on Behalf of a Deceased Person

The following are rulings for fasting on behalf of a deceased person:

- Based on obligatory precaution, the *wali* or guardian of the deceased, who is the eldest son, must perform [or hire someone to perform] any missed obligatory acts of worship (i.e., prayer, fasting) that his father had not performed due to a valid excuse and could have made up, but did not. It is not obligatory for the son to perform the father's obligatory worship if the latter did not perform them deliberately, performed them improperly due to culpable ignorance, or had an excuse such as sickness, or if the son is not aware that his father had missed them. The same ruling applies to a person's mother based on recommended precaution.
- If the son knows that his father missed some acts of worship (e.g., prayer or fasting) but is not certain whether he made them up during his life, then he must perform them on his behalf based on obligatory precaution.
- The son does not have to make up missed acts of worship for the deceased father if the details are

in doubt or not known. If the son does not know the exact number of missed fasts, he must only perform the minimum he is certain of. In any case, if the son knows that his father missed some acts of worship but is not certain whether he made them up during his life, then he must perform them on his behalf based on obligatory precaution.

- If the eldest son was not at the age of religious obligation (bulugh) or he was insane at the time of his father's death, then it is not obligatory for him to perform his father's missed acts of worship when he becomes the age of religious obligation or becomes sane.
- The son does not have to make up fasts the father was hired for or otherwise responsible to keep on behalf of someone else but were missed.
- It is not obligatory to observe a qada on behalf of a deceased person immediately. Instead, it is permissible to delay it if doing so does not amount to negligence.
- The eldest son does not have to observe qada on behalf of his father if he is disqualified from inheriting from his father because he killed him or because he is a non-Muslim.
- If another person voluntarily observes a qada on behalf of the deceased or if the eldest son hires them and they fulfill the qada, then the son no longer must observe it.
- If the deceased does not have a wali (i.e., a son at the age of religious obligation) or in the event it is not obligatory for the son to observe the qada on his behalf, it is not obligatory for the heirs to use

the estate to hire someone to fulfill it. Although, the inheritors should do so based on a recommended precaution if it does not affect the shares of any minor children.

- If the deceased has missed fasts, it is permissible to offer a mudd of food for each day they missed in place of observing the fast on his behalf, and it is permissible to take it from the estate with the consent of all heirs. Then the wali no longer must make it up.

The Amount of Fidyah and Kaffarah and Their Disbursement

As mentioned previously, fidyah is feeding one poor person for each day missed on account of sickness, and kaffarah is feeding sixty poor people for deliberately breaking a fast in the month of Ramadan, feeding ten poor people for deliberately breaking a qada fast after dhuhr, and feeding one poor person for each day of qada delayed until the following month of Ramadan. The following points explain these circumstances in detail:

- The obligatory feeding for kaffarah or fidyah can be either by giving the unprepared food to the poor person(s) [for them to prepare] or by making the meal and feeding them directly such that they are satisfied (i.e., not hungry anymore), and it is permissible to give the unprepared food to some poor people and feed a meal to others. There is no specific amount considered necessary for satisfaction. Instead, it is [any] food made readily available and enough [to satiate their hunger], whether it is a little or a lot. As for giving

unprepared food to the poor, the least allowable is a mudd, and it is better to offer two.

- In both cases, whether giving unprepared food or feeding, the person must satisfy the entire number of sixty or ten (based on the type of kaffarah) different poor people. It is not sufficient to feed thirty or five poor people twice, or to offer two mudd to each person. However, it is not obligatory to do it at the same time. Therefore, it will suffice if a person feeds sixty poor people at separate times and places.
- Feeding requires giving the poor person one complete meal of food, although it is better to offer two meals: lunch and dinner.
- It is sufficient to feed the poor any meal that is commonly eaten by people such as cooked food and bread made from wheat or barley, even if offered without something to dip it in (e.g., yogurt). However, it is better to include something liquid or solid to dip the bread in, and it is better if it is of high quality.
- If a person chooses to give food instead of feeding, they can give anything that is commonly called food, whether cooked or not, made from wheat, barley, or their flour; or rice, corn, dates, raisins; and other such items.
- Giving the poor person the food makes them the owner of it and the giver has then discharged their obligation in offering the kaffarah. Moreover, they do not have to make sure the poor person eats the food, rather the recipient can sell it.
- Children and adults are equal in terms of receiving a mudd of food. Hence, a poor child

receives a full mudd just like the adult, although the child's portion must be given to their guardian. On the other hand, if a person chooses to expiate by feeding the poor (i.e., giving prepared meals), they must consider two children for each adult, and in such a case they do not require the permission of the guardian if feeding the child does not violate the guardian's rights (of guardianship, custody, etc.).

- It is permissible to give several mudd of food to one poor person or to feed one poor person several times for different kaffarah. For example, if a person deliberately breaks their fast for the entire month of Ramadan, they may feed sixty specified poor people thirty times, or offer thirty mudds of food to each of the sixty poor people, even if there were other deserving poor people present.
- If a person cannot find sixty poor people or ten poor people in their town, they must feed or give food to [deserving people in] another town, and if this is also not possible, they must wait.
- The definition of a poor person is someone who does not possess the means to meet their expenses for a full year, whether in terms of possessing the resources or the means to acquire them. They must be a Muslim, and based on obligatory precaution, they must be a Twelver Shia. However, in the event a person cannot find a Twelver Shia, it is permissible for them to give the kaffarah to non-Shia Muslims who are weak. Moreover, it must not be given to those people for whom one is responsible (i.e., for their expenses) such as parents, children, the permanent wife (not

a temporary one), and it is permissible, and perhaps better, to give to any other relatives.

- A poor person does not have to be just; however, the kaffarah must not be given to someone who does not perform their obligatory prayers, drinks wine, or sins openly based on obligatory precaution.
- Giving the monetary value of food or clothing to the poor does not suffice. Instead, when it comes to feeding, the person must offer food, either by feeding the poor person [directly] or giving them ownership of the food. However, there is no problem in giving the monetary equivalent to the poor person and delegating them to purchase food on behalf of the person offering the kaffarah after which they would take possession of it. Still, the obligation of the kaffarah is not fulfilled unless the poor person purchases food with the money.
- If a person is incapable of offering a kaffarah, or even part of it, they must offer what they can, even if it is to feed less than sixty poor people. Moreover, if the person is not able to offer anything, they must seek forgiveness from God. However, they must offer the kaffarah based on obligatory precaution if they become capable of offering it later.
- If a person is not capable of fasting three days, which is the alternative kaffarah for breaking a qada fast after dhuhur, then they must seek forgiveness from God.
- It is permissible to delay offering the kaffarah if doing so does not amount to negligence in fulfilling the obligation, although one should offer it without delay based on recommended precaution.

- It is permissible to delegate someone else to offer the kaffarah by authorizing them to pay it using the money of the delegator. At the time of delegation, the delegator must make the intention to offer the kaffarah, which they delegated to their deputy to offer it on their behalf for the sake of attaining nearness to God, the Exalted.

Time of Offering Fidyah

These rulings explain the time to offer fidyah:

- The elderly, pregnant women approaching birth, nursing women with little milk, and people who suffer from polydipsia as explained in the previous sections may break their fast and offer fidyah after the month of Ramadan. It is also permissible to offer the fidyah for each day after maghrib during the month of Ramadan.
- A person who has a chronic illness and knows that they will not be capable of fasting the month of Ramadan must not offer fidyah until time passes and they establish that they are in fact unable to make up the fast (i.e., they must wait until the following month of Ramadan before offering the fidyah).
- A pregnant woman or a nursing woman who is not capable of fasting due to its harm to her or her child must not offer fidyah before the month of Ramadan. Rather, she must wait while her pregnancy or nursing (i.e., that which prevented her from fasting) continues and after the days in which she could not fast pass; then she must offer a fidyah.

Fasting on Behalf of Someone Else

It is permissible to fast on behalf of another person who is dead, whether voluntarily or for hire. It may sometimes be necessary, as in the case of the eldest son making up the fasts his deceased father missed in the month of Ramadan. The son or hired person must make an intention to fast to fulfill the duty of the deceased.

Voluntarily Fasting on Behalf of Someone Else

The following rulings concern voluntary fasting for another person:

- It is not permissible for a person who has missed (qada) fasts of the month of Ramadan of their own to volunteer to fast on behalf of someone else.
- It is permissible for a person who must perform a kaffarah fast for deliberately breaking their fast in the month of Ramadan to voluntarily fast on behalf of someone else.
- Fasting voluntarily on behalf of someone is not permissible if it causes distress to a person's parents, which would occur [out of concern for their child] if they perform it.
- It is not permissible for a wife to voluntarily fast based on obligatory precaution if her husband forbids her from doing so, even if her fasting does not interfere with his rights.

Fasting for Hire

These rulings explain fasting for hire:

- It is permissible for a person who has missed (qada) fasts of the month of Ramadan of their own to fast for hire on behalf of someone else.
- Merely hiring someone to fast on behalf of a deceased person does not fulfill the obligation unless the hired person performs the fast correctly.
- It is not permissible for a discerning child to fast on behalf of a deceased person based on obligatory precaution.
- Fasting for hire is not permissible if it causes distress to a person's parents, which would occur [out of concern for their child] if they perform it.
- It is not permissible for a wife to fast for hire based on obligatory precaution if her husband forbids her from doing so, even if it does not interfere with his rights.

Rulings on Fasting Errors

This section provides details about circumstances that can invalidate a fast and how to correct them appropriately. Most of this section was presented in some form in earlier sections, but it is discussed more comprehensively here.

Deficient Intention

If the duty-bound person does not make an intention to fast, delays it past its required time, or invalidates it somehow (e.g., showing off [*riya*]), they must make up the day later even if they did not commit any fast-nullifiers.

Mistakes Related to Fast-Nullifiers

If a duty-bound person deliberately commits one of the fast-nullifiers or remains in the state of janabah until dawn and was not compelled to do so, then in addition to having committed a sin, they must make up the fast for that day.

However, if a person unknowingly or mistakenly commits a fast-nullifier, their fast is valid and they do not have to do anything apart from the cases described below:

- The fast of a person who commits a fast-nullifier, such as eating, drinking, engaging in sexual intercourse, or remaining in the state of janabah

until the end of the night (i.e., until fajr) out of forgetfulness and unaware that they must fast is valid in all cases.

- The fast of a person is invalid if they eat, drink, or engage in sexual intercourse out of ignorance that these acts invalidate it, and they must make it up later even if they are inculpably ignorant.

Examples of this include the following:

- A person eats something that is not usually edible or drinks medicine believing that it does not invalidate a fast and that only normal food (and not medicine) invalidates a fast.
 - A person is content that the sun has set and the eastern redness has disappeared, so they eat or drink and then realize that the sun has not set. However, the obligation to make up the fast is based on obligatory precaution if their reason for being content that the sun had set was darkness in the sky or something similar.
 - A person doubts whether fajr has set in, considers that it is still night, continues to eat or drink, and later it becomes apparent to them that fajr had set in. However, the fast is valid if the person investigates and concludes that fajr has not set in, and as a result, eats or drinks and later realizes that their eating or drinking occurred after dawn.
- If a person commits a fast-nullifier other than eating, drinking and sexual intercourse, or if they remain in the state of janabah until fajr, then their fast is valid if they are inculpably ignorant. This could be a person who grew up in an unreligious

environment and believed firmly, for example, that masturbation does not invalidate a fast, or for instance, relied on the ruling of a qualified jurist that smoking does not invalidate a fast and realized later that the ruling was incorrect. As for remaining in the state of janabah until fajr, if the person was certain that it would not have invalidated a fast, then they do not have to make it up, even if they were culpably ignorant.

- If a person unintentionally commits any fast-nullifiers, such as forcibly opening their mouth and spraying water in, or rinsing their mouth for ablution (wudu) or just to cleanse it and accidentally swallowed the water, then their fast is valid except for these two cases:
 - Rinsing the mouth to alleviate thirst and accidentally swallowing the water. The fast is invalid and must be made up later.
 - Engaging in foreplay with their spouse without intending to ejaculate but not being confident that it will not occur. The fast must be made up if ejaculation occurs accidently.
- If a person is forced to eat, drink, or have sexual intercourse and they do so fearing harm, or they initiate committing one of these acts fearing a person might harm them if they do not, then their fast is invalid and they must make it up. As for committing fast-nullifiers other than eating, drinking, and sexual intercourse, their fast is invalid based on obligatory precaution.
- If a person remains in the state of janabah until fajr because they could not perform a ritual bath (ghusl) or dry ablution (tayammum), whether it is

because they have no water or dirt, or out of fear, then their fast is valid.

Mistakes in Imsak

If a person invalidates their fast by committing one of the fast-nullifiers or remains in the state of janabah until fajr, they must abstain from committing any fast-nullifier for the rest of the day according to the following details:

- If a person deliberately remains in the state of janabah until fajr, they must abstain from fast-nullifiers for the entire day and based on obligatory precaution and they must make their intention of doing so for the sake of attaining absolute nearness to God without specifying it as fast for the month of Ramadan or abstaining from fast-nullifiers to respect the holy month.
- If a person deliberately ascribes falsehoods to God, the Exalted, or His messenger (pbuh&hp), or if they inhale thick dust or smoke, then they must abstain from fast-nullifiers for the rest of the day based on obligatory precaution with the hope that God desires it, which means that God could desire it as a fast of the month of Ramadan or [merely] abstaining from fast-nullifiers to respect the holy month.
- If a person invalidates their fast with any other fast-nullifier not mentioned in the previous bullet, then based on obligatory precaution they must abstain from fast-nullifiers for the rest of the day to respect the holy month hoping that God desires it.

Mistakes in Fulfilling the Conditions of Qada and Kaffarah

If a person invalidates their fast by eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, or masturbation they must make up the fast and offer a kaffarah if they meet the following conditions:

- They must make up the fast if one of the four fast-nullifiers was committed intentionally and willfully, not like the case of a person who rinses their mouth to alleviate their thirst and accidentally swallows the water or someone who engages in an act that causes sexual arousal and accidentally ejaculates (even if they were not confident of not ejaculating), in which case the person does not need to offer kaffarah. However, if an act of sexual arousal involves foreplay or kissing, they must offer kaffarah in addition to making up the fast.
- The person is not compelled to commit a fast-nullifier due to being threatened. Thus, if they commit one of the fast-nullifiers out of fear then they only must make up the fast and do not have to offer kaffarah.
- The person is not certain that the act is a fast-nullifier. Thus, they do not have to offer kaffarah if they commit an act that they are certain is permissible, whether they assumed that fasting was not obligatory for them because of their young age or that God does not consider that act to be a fast-nullifier. Hence, kaffarah is not obligatory in these cases, whether the person's assumption is due to inculpable or culpable ignorance, such as a person who neglected

learning the religious rulings and, as a result, assumed that a certain act was not a fast-nullifier.

Mistakes in Performing an On-time or Makeup Fast

Anyone who must fast the month of Ramadan and neglects it or does not perform it in the correct manner according to Islamic laws, with or without a valid excuse, must make it up by fasting the number of days missed after the end of the month of Ramadan. A person who does not have to fast the month of Ramadan because they do not meet one of the conditions of its obligation, and thus, does not fast, does not have to make it up unless it is one of the following situations:

- If a person does not fast because it is harmful to them, they must make it up if fasting later is no longer harmful. This is the case unless it is a harm related to their health and it persists until the following month of Ramadan; then they do not have to make up the fast, but they must offer *fidyah*.
- A woman who does not fast certain days of the month of Ramadan due to its coinciding with menstruation or postpartum bleeding must make up the fasts.
- If a person does not fast in the month of Ramadan because it causes severe unbearable hardship, then they must make it up afterwards if they are able to do so without its continuing to cause them hardship.
- If a person does not fast certain days of the month of Ramadan due to being a traveler, who must shorten their prayers, then they must make up the fast after the month of Ramadan.

Rulings of Making Up a Fast

What follows are some rulings related to making up a fast:

- It is not obligatory to make up a missed fast immediately; however, it is not permissible to delay it out of negligence or considering it unimportant. In the event a person delays making up their missed fast until the arrival of the next month of Ramadan for any reason, then they must offer kaffarah [of feeding one poor person for each day] in addition to making it up. Moreover, they would only offer the kaffarah once and do not repeat it if they delay their make-up fast for several years.
- It is not obligatory to make up the missed fasts of the month of Ramadan in the order missed; instead, the person can make up any day they wish [in any order].
- A person has until the time of dhuhur to make their intention to perform a make-up fast and it must be for what they missed in the month of Ramadan.
- It is not permissible for a person who is observing a make-up fast to break it after dhuhur; doing so counts as a sin, and they must make up the fast later. If a person invalidates their make-up fast by eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, or masturbation, they must offer a kaffarah of feeding ten poor people, and if they are not capable of doing so, then they must fast for three days.
- If a person knows that they have missed fasts from the month of Ramadan but are unsure of the

number, they may make up the minimum that they are certain of.

- If a person knows that they have missed fasts from the month of Ramadan but are unsure if they made them up, they must [act as if they did not and] make them up to ensure fulfilment of their obligation.

Spiritual Retreat

Spiritual retreat (itikaf) is a recommended (mustahabb) ritual act of worship, which helps to refine and purify the self and results in a person becoming closer to God, the Exalted. It is the act of remaining in the mosque (masjid) for the purpose of worship, prayer, remembrance of God, fasting, and similar acts of devotion. It is valid any time when fasting is permissible, and it is better in the last ten days of the month of Ramadan.

Conditions of Spiritual Retreat

Spiritual retreat is valid under the following conditions:

1. Sanity
2. Intention of nearness to God, the Exalted
3. Fasting. A spiritual retreat is invalid without fasting. Therefore, if a person is traveling and fasting is not permissible, they cannot engage in spiritual retreat.
4. The minimum duration for a spiritual retreat is three days, including the two nights in between. There is no problem in including the first or the fourth night in the intention of spiritual retreat.
5. It must be performed in one of the following four mosques: al-Masjid al-Haram (Mecca), Masjid al-Medina, Masjid al-Kufa, or Masjid al-Basra. It is

also permissible to observe it in the central mosque¹⁶⁴ of a town.¹⁶⁵

- It is not permissible to perform a spiritual retreat in a central mosque where the imam is not just based on obligatory precaution.
6. Permission. It is necessary to obtain permission from whom it is required, such as the parents if the child wishes to perform a spiritual retreat, which might cause them distress (i.e., out of compassion for the child). Also, the wife must obtain her husband's permission before she can perform a spiritual retreat. If he does not permit her to remain in the mosque without his consent or it is with his consent but doing so interferes with his marital rights, then the retreat would not be valid.
 7. To remain in the mosque where the person originally embarked on a spiritual retreat. Therefore, if they leave without a valid excuse, their spiritual retreat is invalid even if they were ignorant of the ruling or had forgotten it.
 - It is permissible for a person who has embarked on a spiritual retreat to leave the mosque in some cases, such as for a dire necessity; if they are forced; to use the restroom; or to perform an obligatory ritual wash (ghusl) for janabah,

164. A mosque is a place essentially endowed to God for the purpose of performing prayers.

165. The central mosque is the main mosque of a town, which is usually the largest one and is not assigned to a certain group or family, rather it is for everyone irrespective of their color and ethnic background and is designated for the five daily and Friday prayers.

menstruation (haydh), irregular bleeding (istihadha), or for touching a dead body. However, if the person can perform a ritual bath (ghusl) inside the mosque, they must not leave based on obligatory precaution if the occurrence does not prevent a person from remaining in the mosque such as touching a dead body or irregular bleeding (istihadha), and if it is for janabah they must perform it in the mosque based on obligatory precaution. It is also necessary to preserve the purity of the mosque when performing a ritual bath (ghusl al-janabah) and make sure not to rush it in a way that causes the mosque to become impure.

- It is permissible for a person who has embarked on a spiritual retreat to leave the mosque to perform Friday prayer; to attend a funeral procession and funeral prayer; and to wash, shroud, and bury a deceased person. It is also permissible to leave to visit the sick.
- A person engaged in a spiritual retreat must not leave the mosque even to perform laudable things based on obligatory precaution unless they are necessary. If they must leave, then based on obligatory precaution they must take the shortest route and return as quickly as possible.

Conditions to Avoid on Spiritual Retreat

A person who embarks on a spiritual retreat must avoid the following:

1. Engaging in debates and arguments on religious or worldly matters to defeat the other party or

demonstrate one's own prowess. However, there is no problem in arguing for the sake of proving the truth and to turn the opponent away from something that is wrong. The criterion for this is based on intention.

2. Buying, selling, and trading in general based on obligatory precaution. However, there is no problem in buying and selling what the person needs during the spiritual retreat such as water, food, or other needs if there is no way for them to delegate someone else to do that on their behalf or to transfer it by other than buying and selling.
3. Smelling fragrances in general, particularly natural scents (*rayahin*),¹⁶⁶ for the purpose of seeking pleasure. It is permissible if it is not for pleasure.
4. Masturbation¹⁶⁷ based on obligatory precaution.
5. Sexual intercourse, including touching and kissing with lust, based on obligatory precaution.

Summary

The following are a few additional points about the validity of a spiritual retreat:

- If one of the previously mentioned acts that invalidate a spiritual retreat occurs inadvertently (mistakenly), the spiritual retreat remains valid.
- If a person invalidates their fixed and specified spiritual retreat, which they had to fulfill due to a

166. *Rayahin* is the plural of *rayhan*, which is any plant that has a natural fragrance. [al-Sistani, *Minhaj al-Salihin*, vol. 1, p. 384].

167. This refers to lawful masturbation between spouses.

vow, then they must make it up based on obligatory precaution. If the spiritual retreat was not fixed and specified, it must be repeated. If the spiritual retreat was recommended and a person invalidates it after completion of two days, they must make it up. Otherwise, there is no required make-up retreat if they invalidate it before the completion of two days. Moreover, making up a missed spiritual retreat does not have to be immediate; it can be delayed if it does not amount to negligence.

The Fitra Alms Tax (Zakat al-Fitra)

Alms tax (zakat) is one of the obligatory acts of worship that God, the Exalted, mandated, and He joined it with prayers in many verses: “Certainly, the faithful have attained salvation —those who are humble in their prayers, who avoid vain talk, who carry out their [duty of] zakat,”¹⁶⁸ and “Felicitous is he who purifies himself, celebrates the Name of his Lord, and prays.”¹⁶⁹

Numerous authentically transmitted and honorable prophetic traditions state that zakat is one of the pillars of Islam, and if a person neglects to pay any part of it, they shall die as if outside of the circle of Islam.¹⁷⁰

Fitra Alms Tax

The duty-bound person must make an intention to pay zakat al-fitra out of obedience and seeking nearness to God, the Exalted; must set it aside on the night of Eid; and pay it to the deserving recipient on the day of Eid.

168. The Quran 23:1–4, AQQ.

169. The Quran 87:14–15, AQQ.

170. Reports state that Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (p) said, “Islam is built on prayer, alms, fasting, pilgrimage, and guardianship [of Ahl al-Bayt], and nothing will be emphasized like guardianship.” [al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 18, and vol. 3, p. 505].

When Does Fitra Alms Tax Become Obligatory and When Must It Be Paid?

If the conditions of fitra alms tax are met by maghrib on the night before Eid, it becomes obligatory for the duty-bound person, and it is required even if the conditions are met after maghrib based on obligatory precaution. Therefore, it must be set aside and paid before Eid prayer based on obligatory precaution for a person who plans to perform the prayer. If the person does not set aside the fitra alms tax until dhuhr (or later), then they must pay it with an intention of absolute nearness¹⁷¹ to God based on obligatory precaution.

- If a duty-bound person sets aside the fitra alms tax during the prescribed time, it is permissible to delay paying it if they need to wait and find a poor recipient or for similar reasons.
- If a duty-bound person sets aside the fitra alms tax, they must not change it without the permission of the qualified jurist (al-hakim al-shari). If a person delays paying the fitra alms tax and it is subsequently lost or damaged, they must pay it again to the deserving poor if possible.
- It is permissible to pay zakat al-fitra during the month of Ramadan to those people who are deserving or to an agent (*wakil*) who will execute it according to religious rules.

171. Absolute nearness means that a person intends to pay the fitra alms tax for the sake of nearness to God and without specifying it as *ada* (performed within the prescribed time) or *qada* (performed after its prescribed time).

- It is sufficient for the head of the household to set aside the fitra alms tax on behalf of their dependents on the night of Eid according to the establishment of the month of Shawwal by their jurist, even if the dependents do not consider the next day as Eid based on a different jurist.

Who Must Pay the Fitra Alms Tax?

Every sane person who has reached the age of religious obligation (bulugh) whose annual finances are secured through available assets, wealth, or ability to earn must pay the fitra alms tax on behalf of themselves and their dependents, whether they must support them or not, and whether they are near or far, Muslim or non-Muslim, young or old.

- Fitra alms tax is not obligatory for a child; insane or unconscious person;¹⁷² or the poor.
- If a person gets married before the night of Eid, and his spouse is considered a dependent¹⁷³ at that time, he must pay fitra alms tax on her behalf.

172. A poor person is one who does not possess the means to meet his annual expenses either all at once or gradually, such as in the form of monthly payments.

173. This varies in terms of traditions and customs. Conducting the marriage ceremony (nikah) per se does not make the wife a dependent before she moves with her husband to his home. After marriage, some cultural traditions require that she remains with her family for a while, therefore she is dependent on her family, and at other times she is independent from them and a dependent of her husband..

- It is not obligatory to pay the fitra alms tax on behalf of a newborn child unless it was born before maghrib of the night before Eid.
- It is obligatory for the host to pay fitra alms tax for a guest who stays in their house, but it is not necessary if the guest is only invited for iftar.
- If a dependent person's fitra alms tax becomes obligatory for someone else, they do not have to pay it themselves. However, if the person who must pay it does not do so out of disobedience or forgetfulness, the dependent must pay it based on obligatory precaution if they meet the conditions of obligation.
- If the head of the household is poor, their dependents must pay their own fitra alms tax if they meet the conditions of obligation, and even if the poor head of household pays it, they must still pay it based on obligatory precaution.

The Form of Fitra Alms Tax

The way to apply fitra alms tax is to cover the cost of common food commodities such as rice, wheat, dates, corn, and macaroni. It must not be poor quality based on obligatory precaution, and it is permissible to pay the monetary value instead, which is the price of the food at the time of payment and in the place where the zakat is being used and not the price in the duty-bound person's location or when it became obligatory for them.

The Amount of Fitra Alms Tax

The amount of fitra alms tax is one *sa* of food, which is equivalent to 6.6 pounds (three kilograms).

Location of Fitra Alms Tax Spending

- The fitra alms tax must be paid to poor believers (i.e., Twelver Shias) who do not possess the means to cover their annual expenses based on obligatory precaution. If there are no poor Twelver Shias in the area where a person lives, they can pay it to other poor Muslims.
- A non-Sayyid cannot give their fitra alms tax to a Sayyid; however, a Sayyid can give it to both Sayyids and non-Sayyids.
- It is permissible for a duty-bound person to pay their fitra alms tax directly to the poor. However, the recommended precaution is to pay it to the qualified jurist who can appropriately distribute it or to his authorized representative.
- It is not permissible to transfer the fitra alms tax outside the area in which a person resides if there are deserving poor people there based on obligatory precaution.
- Based on a recommended precaution the fitra alms tax should be paid to the qualified jurist.

Eid al-Fitr¹⁷⁴

Eid al-Fitr is one of the most important holidays in Islam. God Almighty has assigned special acts (pbuh&hp) of worship for it, some are obligatory while others are recommended, and there are even forbidden acts like fasting on this special day. As such, God Almighty attests to it, “To respect the symbols of God is the sign of a pious heart.”¹⁷⁵ The eve of Eid al-Fitr is also a night of virtue. The eve and day of Eid al-Fitr mark the end of the holy month and a completion of the blessed acts of worship and obedience performed throughout it, as God Almighty states, “So that you may complete the fast, glorify God for His having given you guidance, and that, perhaps, you would give Him thanks.”¹⁷⁶ The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp) and his pure Ahl al-Bayt (pbut) highly regarded the eve and day of Eid al-Fitr, paid close attention to their significance, and urged people to wisely occupy themselves with worship, prayer, and supplication during that period. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp) is narrated to have said, “Indeed, God has a favorite in everything He has created. As for His favorite eves, they are the eve of Friday, the eve of the fifteenth day of the month of Shaban, the Night of Power, and the eves of the

174. This last chapter of the booklet was prepared by I.M.A.M. so that the content is comprehensive and exhaustive from a theoretical and not just jurisprudential perspective. It is not from the writings attributed to al-Sayyid al-Sistani.

175. The Holy Quran 22:32, MS.

176. The Holy Quran 2:185, MS.

two Eids.”¹⁷⁷ He also said, “The heart of a person who observes the night of Eid and the night of the fifteenth of Shaban in worship will not die on the day that other hearts will die.”¹⁷⁸ Lastly, it has been narrated from Imam Musa al-Kadhim (p) that Imam Ali (p) said, “I like for a man to occupy himself with nothing but worship on four nights of the year: the night of Eid al-Fitr, the night of Eid al-Adha, the night of the fifteenth of Shaban, and the night of the first day of Rajab.”¹⁷⁹

Eve of Eid al-Fitr

It is obligatory to take out zakat al-fitra and separate it from the rest of one’s money if the eve of Eid al-Fitr arrives, as previously mentioned.

There are several recommended things to do on that night.

- Appreciate the blessing of completing the fasts of the month of Ramadan and the grace bestowed by God Almighty.
- Learn and understand the rulings of zakat al-fitra and the details of its obligation; the way to determine its amount and pay it; and those who are deserving recipients. These are important details so the duty-bound person can discharge their obligation appropriately.
- Perform a ritual wash or *ghusl*.

177. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 94, p. 78.

178. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 88, p. 132.

179. al-Hurr al-Amili, *Wasail al-Shia*, vol. 8, p. 109.

- Say *takbir* after the maghrib prayer in accordance with God saying, “So that you may complete the fast, glorify God for His having given you guidance, and that, perhaps, you would give Him thanks.”¹⁸⁰ Perform *takbir* by saying: “*Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, la ilaha illallahu wallahu akbar, Allahu akbar, wa lillahil hamd, Allahu akbar ala ma hadana, walahul shukru ala ma awlana.*” Narrations from Imam al-Sadiq (p) recommend saying it after maghrib and isha prayer on the eve of Eid al-Fitr, and before the Eid prayer.¹⁸¹
- Pray the two-unit prayer for the eve of Eid and an additional ten units. Books of supplications and worship contain the details for both prayers.
- Observe the eve of Eid with worship and devotion to God Almighty. Imam Ali al-Sajjad (p) used to worship the whole night until sunrise and connect it to the Eid prayer. He would say, “The importance of this night is not less than the importance of the Night of Destiny.”¹⁸²

The Day of Eid al-Fitr

The day of Eid is a day of joy for the believers knowing that they completed the month of Ramadan and are now pure from sins, hoping that God has accepted all their good deeds and worship and that they have gained His satisfaction with the start of a new year. It is narrated that the noble Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, “On

180. The Holy Quran 2:185, MS.

181. Ibn Tawus, *Iqbal al-amal*, vol. 1, p. 459.

182. Ibn Tawus, *Iqbal al-amal*, vol. 1, p. 464.

the first day of the month of Shawwal, a caller calls from the heavens announcing, 'O believers, claim your rewards.' He continued, 'O Jabir, the rewards of God are not like the rewards of these worldly kings.' Then he said, 'It [the day of Eid] is the day of reward.'"¹⁸³ Other narrations state that he said, "On the day of Eid al-Fitr God Almighty dispatches the angels all over the land, and they will descend and roam the alleys and call in a voice that all of God's creation, from humans to jinns, will hear. They will say, 'O nation of Muhammad, come to your Lord, the Generous One Who gives abundantly and forgives even the great.' If they go out to pray, God Almighty says, 'O my angels, what is the compensation for a worker who finishes his work?' The angels say, 'Our Lord, Our Master, their compensation is that you pay them for their work.' God Almighty will say, 'My angels, bear witness that I am compensating those who fasted in the month of Ramadan and worshiped in its nights with My forgiveness and satisfaction.' God Almighty will say, 'My servants, ask Me! For I swear by My might and My majesty that anything you ask of Me today for your hereafter I shall give you, and anything you ask of Me for this world I shall consider. By My might, I will conceal your faults if you know I am watching you and I will not embarrass you or reveal your sins in front of those in attendance [in the hereafter]. Depart with all your sins forgiven by Me. You have sought my satisfaction; therefore, I am pleased with you.' The angels will then ascend and joyfully celebrate what God has given the people of this nation when they break their fast at the end of the

183. Ibn Tawus, *Iqbal al-amal*, vol. 1, p. 481.

month of Ramadan.”¹⁸⁴ Therefore, the day of Eid al-Fitr is a day of reward, and we should not be negligent of the Glorified One who is offering these rewards. We should observe the day and its recommended acts with due diligence to reap God’s best rewards. Some of these acts are

- to recall the meaning of Eid, which is a day of joy and a celebration of fulfilled promises. It is God Almighty’s promise to forgive and reward His servants and grant them a pure rebirth from their sins;
- to perform a ritual bath (ghusl) that is followed by supplications as mentioned in supplication books;
- to recite the prayer of tabia, when going out for the Eid prayer. It begins, “Allahumma man tahaya fi hadhal yaum wa taba aw ada wa istadda liwafadatin ila makhluqin raja rifdihi wa jaizatihi wa nawafilih.” “O God, whoever prepares, gets ready, and seeks aid from another creature with the hope of gaining his aid;”
- to recite Dua al-Faraj for Imam al-Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance);
- to eat breakfast before going out to the Eid prayer, and offer breakfast to the believers if possible;
- to wear nice clothes and apply perfume;
- to go out to the Eid prayer shortly after sunrise;
- to pay zakat al-fitra to those entitled to it before the prayer;
- to pray outside under the sky;

184. al-Saduq, *Fadail al-ashhur al-thalath*, p. 127-128.

- to recite the ziyarah of Imam al-Hussain specified for the two eids;
- to read Dua al-Nudbah; and
- to read the supplication of Imam Zayn al-Abidin al-Sajjad that he recited after his Eid prayer, which is the forty-sixth supplication from *Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah*.

Eid prayer

Eid prayer is obligatory in the presence of the infallible Imam and recommended in the era of occultation, or ghayba. It is permissible to perform Eid prayer, which is a two-unit prayer, either individually or in congregation. The person should recite Surat al-Fatihah and another short surah (preferably Surat al-Ala) in the first unit. Then, they should perform five takbirs with a qunut (to raise hands for a prayer) between each takbir. The following dua is recited in the qunut:

"اللَّهُمَّ أَهْلَ الْكِبْرِيَاءِ وَالْعِزَّةِ، وَأَهْلَ الْجُودِ وَالْجَبْرُوتِ، وَأَهْلَ الْعَفْوِ وَالرَّحْمَةِ، وَأَهْلَ التَّقْوَى وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ، أَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ هَذَا الْيَوْمِ الَّذِي جَعَلْتَهُ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ عِيداً، وَلِمُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ دُخْرًا وَمَزِيداً، أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ عَلَيَّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَأَنْ تُدْخِلَنِي فِي كُلِّ خَيْرٍ أَذْخَلْتَ فِيهِ مُحَمَّدًا وَآلَ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَأَنْ تُخْرِجَنِي مِنْ كُلِّ سُوءٍ أَخْرَجْتَ مِنْهُ مُحَمَّدًا وَآلَ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَوَاتِكَ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَيْهِمْ. اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَ مَا سَأَلْتُكَ عِبَادُكَ الصَّالِحُونَ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِمَّا اسْتَعَاذَ مِنْهُ عِبَادُكَ الصَّالِحُونَ"

“Oh Allah, You are the Lord of glory and greatness, and the Lord of magnanimity and omnipotence, and the Lord of forgiveness and mercy, and the worthiest of being feared and the Lord of forgiveness. I ask You in the name of this day, which you have made an Eid (celebration) for Muslims and an increasing honor and treasure for Muhammad, peace be upon him and his progeny. I ask You to send Your blessings upon Muhammad and his progeny, and to include me in everything you have included Muhammad and his progeny in, and to exclude me from everything you have excluded Muhammad and his progeny from, peace and blessings be upon them all. Oh Allah, I ask you for the best of all that which Your righteous servants have asked you for, and I seek Your protection from all the evil that Your righteous servants have sought protection from.”

After the fifth takbir, the person should complete the ruku (bowing), sajdatayn (prostrations), get up for the second unit, and read Surat al-Fatihah and another short surah (preferably Surat al-Shams). Then the person should perform another four takbir and qunut between each takbir; recite the same dua mentioned above; complete ruku and sajdatayn; and finally complete tashahhud, taslim and end the prayer.

After finishing the prayer, it is recommended to do tasbih al-Zahra.

After the prayer, it is recommended for the imam of the congregational prayer to deliver two sermons separated by taking a seat for a short while. In the first sermon, he should praise, glorify, and thank God Almighty and

remind the believers of simple matters that are good. In the second sermon, he should praise God and send peace and blessings upon the Prophet and his family in the best manner. He should end the sermon by praying for the believers and their deceased ones and finally end with a short surah from the Holy Quran.

Details to pay attention to on the day of Eid

The day of Eid is a day of joy and happiness for receiving the rewards of God as mentioned in previous narrations from Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp). However, many believers forget the greatness of this day and what is expected from them [in recognizing this greatness]. They overlook the fact that they must safeguard the acts of obedience and worship they performed throughout the holy month. The believer should be aware that Satan uses this day as an opportunity to pull people into his traps again. It is narrated that Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (p) once looked at people laughing and playing on the day of Eid al-Fitr and said to his companions, “God Almighty has made the month of Ramadan a race for his creation in which they compete to win His satisfaction by obeying and worshiping Him. Some people will win, and others will stay back and lose. One wonders at these people who are laughing and playing on a day in which the winners are rewarded and the losers are disappointed. I swear by God, if the veil was lifted for them, then the one who won would be busy with his reward, and the one who lost would be busy with his sins and disappointment.”¹⁸⁵

185. Ibn Tawus, *Iqbal al-amal*, vol.1, p. 468.

Therefore, we must follow the verse, “Believers, save yourselves and your families from the fire”¹⁸⁶ and protect ourselves, families, and communities from falling into any of Satan’s traps on the blessed day of Eid. This warning is especially timely now when falling into sin and disobedience and ignoring religious obligations are easy. Accordingly, the following list of recommendations will help safeguard us from falling into sins and disobedience:

- Observe modesty in clothing and appearance. Believing men and women are not supposed to display their bodies in an attractive manner under any circumstance in addition to safeguarding their intentions [of being modest]. Nowadays, many young men and women are unfortunately distorting the concept of *hijab*, restricting it only to women and displaying immodest fashion and aesthetics in the name of the Islamic veil. This results in misleading others, falsifying religious beliefs, and tempting those who are ignorant.
- Be wary of extravagance and wasting food and drink because Islam forbids it. Moreover, it has bad consequences, because it negates the positive effects of fasting and its philosophy of consciously remembering the hunger and thirst of others, especially the poor, so that we empathize with them and act charitably.
- Take out the obligatory *zakat al-fitra* on the night of Eid al-Fitr and pay it to those who deserve it before performing the Eid prayer. The obligation to remember the poor, show compassion, and help

186. The Holy Quran 66:6, MS.

them satisfy their most basic needs is a lesson for us to strengthen our humanity and foster empathy. It is an act of worship that draws us closer to God, and it is not less rewarding than prayer or remembrance, for God says, “Lasting happiness will be for those who purify themselves, remember the name of the Lord, and pray to Him.”¹⁸⁷ Therefore, the believers, especially those with means, should give more for the sake of social solidarity and to lift the needy out of their hardships. If they do so, God will bless them and their wealth, bounty, and livelihoods for their virtue, righteousness, and generosity. They will also receive the prayers of the needy and impoverished people whom they helped.

- The recommendation to wear nice clothes and perfume, and pray in congregation, emphasizes the importance of our social lives and the need to strengthen the spiritual bond between believers. Therefore, gatherings and visits between believers, especially between relatives and kin, are some of the greatest deeds in the eyes of God. These gatherings are also highly rewarded if they lead to restoring broken family ties and strengthening them; in forgetting the past and its disputes; and in forgiving and pardoning others. Narrations state that Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, “Maintaining family ties is done through visiting them if they are near, and through writing to them if they are traveling.”¹⁸⁸ Therefore, whoever

187. The Holy Quran 87:14-15, MS.

188. al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 638.

is unable to visit their family in person for any reason, must at least reach out with a message, especially since it has become an easy task with today's technology, social media, and the many ways of communication we have readily available to us. Therefore, we do not have an excuse. However, we must be extremely careful that these gatherings do not turn into a setting where prohibited acts are performed, such as backbiting, mocking others, or mixing and meeting with the opposite gender in an inappropriate and tempting manner. All of these will negate the purpose of legislating the celebration of the day of Eid al-Fitr, which is to enjoy God's blessings and divine rewards after completing the month of Ramadan.

Praise be to Allah,
Lord of the worlds



Glossary

adhan (أذان). Call to prayer.

akhlaq (أخلاق). Good morals.

aql (عقل). Sanity.

asr (عَصْر). Afternoon prayer that follows dhuhr prayer
(see below).

al-Bayt al-Mamur (الْبَيْتُ الْمَعْمُور). The built house.

bida (بِدْعَة). An innovation.

bulugh (بُلُوغ). The age at which a person becomes responsible for performing religious duties such as daily obligatory prayer and fasting during the month of Ramadan. A girl becomes *baligha* (reaches this time) upon completing nine lunar years, and a boy becomes *baligh* (reaches this time) upon completing fifteen lunar years except for when one of the signs of bulugh, such as the growth of stiff pubic hair or the discharge of semen, appears before that age.

dahwu al-ard (دَحْوُ الْأَرْض). The day of the spreading of the earth

dhan (ظَن). Assumption.

dhihar (ظَهَار). When a husband makes a statement to his wife falsely claiming that she is like his mother in terms of being sexually impermissible to him.

dhimma (ذِمَّة). Conscience (as in an unspecified act of worship that remains in the conscience of a person).

dhuhr (ظُهُر). Zenith.

dinar (دِينَار). Type of money

dananir (دَنَانِير). Plural of dinar.

fajr (فَجْر) or **al-fajr al-sadiq** (الْفَجْرُ الصَّادِق). Dawn when fajr prayer commences.

al-fajr al-kadhib (الْفَجْرُ الكَاذِب) false dawn. Dawn.

fidyah (فِدْيَة). 0.75 kg of food for each fast day missed.

ghusl (غُسْل). Major ablution performed by washing (with water only) the whole body—either by washing every body part in stages from the head and neck to the rest of the body (as one would have to do in a shower) or by immersing the whole body in water at once (as one could do in a river).

hadath (حَدَث). The state of impurity.

hadith (حَدِيث). Tradition, narration.

hadd al-tarrakhuss (حَدُّ التَّرْخُص). The point outside of a town where its residents, including those who live on its outskirts, cannot see a traveler nor can the traveler see them or where the buildings are no longer visible, which is usually 2 to 3 miles away from the town but also depends on the geographical location.

hajj al-tamattu (حَجُّ التَّمَتُّع). The obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca.

haram (حَرَام). Forbidden.

haydh (حَيْض). Menstrual bleeding.

iftar (إِفْطَار). Food with which one breaks their fast.

ihram (إِحْرَام). An act of worship among the rituals of pilgrimage that entails wearing the garb of a pilgrim (for men), adhering to temporary prohibition of certain acts and recitation of the *talbiyah*.

imamah (إِمَامَة). Leadership.

imsak (إِمْسَاك). to abstain from eating and drinking and the rest of the nullifiers of fasting a few minutes before dawn (*fajr*) as a precautionary measure to ensure a valid fast.

isra (إِسْرَاء). Night journey.

istibra (اسْتِبْرَاء). A recommended act performed by men after urinating in order to be confident that no urine is left in the urethra.

istifta (اسْتِيفْتَاء). Response to a jurisprudential question.

istihadha (اسْتِحْضَاءَة). Non-menstrual blood

istikhara (اسْتِخْرَاءَة). Supplicating to God for the best when making a decision in a matter of great concern. This can be performed either through spiritual inspiration by way of prayer or by seeking a definitive indication through the Holy Quran or prayer beads.

istishab (اسْتِشْبَاه). To consider it is still night and therefore continue eating and drinking until they know or are content that dawn has set in.

itikaf (إِعْتِكَاف). Spiritual retreat.

janabah (جَنَابَة). The state of ritual impurity that occurs as a result of intercourse (penetration), even without ejaculation, by a man or woman. Such a state requires ghusl of janabah.

kaffarah (كَفَّارَة). The religious penalty to absolve a sin. It can be in the form of food, money, an act of worship, or other things (based on the specific sin someone may have committed).

maghrib (مَغْرِب). The time for prayer after sunset, when the redness of the eastern sky, which persists in the east for some time after sunset, disappears from above one's head when one looks vertically upwards.

mahaq (مَحَاق). The stage of the crescent moon when it is just a few hours old.

makruh (مَكْرُوه). Detestable.

makruhat (مَكْرُوهَات). Detestable acts.

mandub (مَنْدُوب). Recommended

miraj (مِعْرَاج). The ascension.

mudd (مُد). A measurement equal to approximately 1.65 pounds (e.g., wheat).

mufattirat (مُفَطَّرَات). The fast-nullifiers.

mukallaf (مُكَلَّف). A duty-bound person.

mumayyiz (مُمَيِّز). a child who is near the age of a *baligh*. They are capable of rational actions and knowing the difference between *haram* and *halal*. Some of their religious duties are accepted by God, like following a jurist, undertaking something, and buying and selling.

- muqim** (مُقِيم). A person residing in a place in which they have newly arrived.
- musafir** (مُسَافِر). A traveler.
- mustahabb** (مُسْتَحَب). Recommended.
- nafilat al-layl** (نَافِلَةُ اللَّيْلِ). Supererogatory night prayer.
- nifas** (نِفَاس). Post-natal bleeding.
- Polydipsia** (Arabic: *dhul-atash* ذُو الْعَطَاش). an illness due to which a person feels extreme thirst, which occurs to the point that their thirst is not quenched.
- qada** (قَضَاء). Make-up (as in act of worship).
- qadr** (قَدْر). Power (as in night of power).
- qudsi** (قُدْسِي). The words of God Almighty that are not in the Quran. Rather, they were relayed by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp) to the people.
- qunut** (قُنُوت). The act of raising one's hands in supplication to God Almighty and placing them in front of the face with palms facing the sky and with both hands kept next to each other.
- raja** (رَجَاء الْمَطْلُوبِيَّة). An intention for an act of worship (e.g., fasting, prayer) that the jurist cannot establish with certainty that it is legislated as such by God (wajib); "hope that it is required by Allah."
- rutab** (رُطَب). Fully ripened dates.
- al-rayyan** (الرَّيَّان). A gate in heaven.
- rayahin** (رَيْحَان). The plural of rayhan, which is any plant that has a natural fragrance.
- riya** (رِيَاء). Showing off.

ruku (رُكُوع). Bowing down.

sa (صَاع). A unit of weight that is equal to 6.6 pounds (three kilograms).

salat al-layl (صَلَاةُ اللَّيْلِ). The night prayer.

salawat (صَلَوَات). To send peace and blessings on Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hp).

sawm al-wisal (صَوْمُ الْوِصَال). Fasting beyond sunset.

shaf (شَفْع). Two-unit recommended prayer performed in the middle of the night

sharia (شَرِيعَة). Religious law

shaya (شَيْعَة). Common news.

sirat (صِرَاط / سِرَاط). The path

suhur (سُحُور). A predawn meal.

tamr (تَمْر). Dates in the process of ripening.

taqiyya (تَقِيَّة). Dissimulation

tashriq (تَشْرِيق). 11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul Hijjah

tawatur (تَوَاتُر). Widespread news from which one can obtain knowledge or contentment.

tayammum (تَيَمُّم). A substitute for wudu and ghusl when water is unavailable. It is done by striking the hands on the earth and then wiping the forehead and the hands. With the inside of the left hand, wipe the outside of the right hand. Then with the inside of the right hand, wipe the outside of the left hand. For ghusl, strike the ground and wipe in the same way again.

ummah (أُمَّة). The Muslim nation.

- umrah** (عُمْرَة). The lesser pilgrimage
- urf** (عُرْف). The common understanding.
- wakil** (وَكِيل). An agent.
- wali** (وَلِي). A guardian.
- al-watan al-asli** (الْوَطَنُ الْأَصْلِي). Hometown of origin.
- al-watan al-iqamah** (وَطَنُ الْإِقَامَةِ). Domicile of temporary stay.
- al-watan al-itikhadhi** (الْوَطَنُ الْإِتِّخَادِي). A place where a person plans to stay long-term for work, school, summer or spring vacations, or similar purposes, even if they do not own property or a home there.
- wilayah** (وِلَايَة). Guardianship
- witr** (وِتْر). One-unit recommended prayer performed in the middle of the night
- wudu** (وُضُوء). Ritual ablution.
- zakat** (زَكَاة). Alms tax.
- zakat al-fitra** (زَكَاةُ الْفِطْرِ). Alms tax which becomes obligatory at the eve of Eid al-Fitr and paid on the day of the Eid.



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God created humankind for worship even though He does not need the adoration or devotion of His creation. As such, the benefit of worship is for the creation who seek nearness to God and the fulfillment of their worldly obligations. Moreover, God rewards each person's acts of worship based on their intention, sincerity, and subsequent impact in life. Fasting is a special form of worship only performed for God, and only He knows the extent of its reward. It is unique because it continues for hours while other forms of worship conclude after only a few minutes. In addition, it fosters sincerity, discipline, humility, and empathy by denying the body even those things that are permissible. Thus, it has the potential to create systemic change within a person if they know its significance, rules, and details. This booklet provides a comprehensive look at fasting, its philosophy and goals, the rules that govern its performance, and the important details related to its fulfillment that every duty-bound person must know. This information is critical because a person's fast becomes deeper, and not just restricted to a physical denial of food and drink, with greater understanding of its meaning and potential result.

