

Laws of Fasting

Part 1



tasneeminstitute
ENRICHING THE SOUL

The Meaning of the Word الصَّوْمُ

- The lexical meaning of the word الصَّوْمُ is to refrain or abstain from something, be it a word or an action.
- The linguistic usage of the word can be found in the Holy Quran in reference to a vow made by Lady Mary.

The Meaning of the Word الصَّوْمُ

فَإِذَا تَرَيْتَ مِنْ الْبَشَرِ أَحَدًا فَقُولِي إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ
الْيَوْمَ إِنْسِيًّا

And if you see any human being, say, ‘Verily I have vowed a fast to the Compassionate, so I shall not speak this day to any human being.’”

Quran 19:26

The Meaning of the Word الصَّوْمُ

- The religious meaning of the word الصَّوْمُ is the act of refraining from certain actions as prescribed by Islamic law from dawn to dusk with the intention of seeking nearness to God.

Why Do Muslims Fast?

- Muslims fast simply because God has prescribed it.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

“O you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you, as it has been prescribed for those before you, so that you may learn self-restraint.” Quran 2:183

Why Has God Prescribed Fasting?

- **1. To teach us taqwa or self-restraint**
 - How does fasting teach us self-restraint (taqwa)? It helps us practice submitting to what God wants even when it contradicts what we want. It also offers us an opportunity to break sinful habits
 - Self restraint during the month of Ramadan is emphasized in hadith and supplications.

Why Has God Prescribed Fasting?

يا رسول الله ما أفضل الأعمال في هذا الشهر؟.. فقال (صلى الله عليه وآله) : يا أبا الحسن !.. أفضل الأعمال في هذا الشهر : الورع
عن محارم الله عز وجل

[Imam Ali asks]: “O Messenger of God, what is the best thing to do during this month?”

To which the Holy Prophet replied: “The best thing to do during this month is to refrain from what God has made forbidden.”

Why Has God Prescribed Fasting?

وترزقني أن أعض بصري ، وأن أحفظ فرجي ، وأن أكف عن جميع محارمك ، حتى لا يكون شيء آثر عندي من طاعتك وخشيتك ، والعمل بما أحببت ، والترك لما كرهت ، ونهيت عنه

In one supplication, Imam Al-Sadiq says:

“I ask you to provide me [the strength] to avert my gaze, to guard my private parts, and to restrain them from everything you have forbidden to such an extent that nothing is more preferable to me than obedience to you, awe of you, doing what you love, and abstaining from what you dislike and have forbidden.”

Why Has God Prescribed Fasting?

- 2. To make us empathize with the poor.

”إِنَّمَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ الصِّيَامَ ، لِيَسْتَوِيَ بِهِ الْغَنِيُّ وَالْفَقِيرُ . وَ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ الْغَنِيَّ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيَجِدْ مَسَّ الْجُوعِ ، فَيَرْحَمَ الْفَقِيرَ . لِأَنَّ الْغَنِيَّ كُلَّمَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا قَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ . فَأَرَادَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنْ يَسُوِيَ بَيْنَ خَلْقِهِ ، وَ أَنْ يُذِيقَ الْغَنِيَّ مَسَّ الْجُوعِ وَ الْأَلَمِ ، لِيَرِقَّ عَلَى الضَّعِيفِ ، فَيَرْحَمَ الْجَائِعَ

Why Has God Prescribed Fasting?

“God prescribed fasting, so that, through fasting, the rich would be brought to the level of the poor. By this I mean that rich people do not usually feel the pangs of hunger and so do not empathize with the poor. Whenever a rich person wants something he has the ability to get it. God wanted to equalize his creatures and give the rich a taste of hunger, so that they would then show compassion for the weak and hungry.” – Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq

Why Has God Prescribed Fasting?

- **3. To remind us of the Day of Judgment**

ويكون ذلك دليلا له على شدائد الآخرة،

Imam al-Ridha wrote: “[God also prescribed fasting] so it would point people to the tribulations of the hereafter.”

Why 30 Days?

إن آدم لما أكل من الشجرة بقي في بطنه ثلاثين يوماً ، وفرض الله على ذريته ثلاثين يوماً الجوع والعطش ، والذي يأكلونه بالليل تفضل من الله عز وجل عليهم ، وكذلك كان على آدم

“Verily, when Adam ate from the [forbidden] tree, [the food] remained in his stomach for thirty days. So God prescribed upon his progeny thirty days of hunger and thirst and what they consume at night is from the Grace of God, and this was [also prescribed] on Adam.”- The Holy Prophet

The Merits of Fasting

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ

“Seek help in patience and prayer, and this indeed is difficult except for the humble.” Quran 2:45

The Merits of Fasting

” إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَكَلَّ مَلَائِكَتَهُ بِالذُّعَاءِ لِلصَّائِمِينَ

وَقَالَ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) : أَخْبَرَنِي جِبْرَائِيلُ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) عَنْ رَبِّهِ أَنَّهُ
قَالَ : ” مَا أَمَرْتُ مَلَائِكَتِي بِالذُّعَاءِ لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ خَلْقِي إِلَّا اسْتَجَبْتُ لَهُمْ فِيهِ

“Verily, God has appointed His angels to supplicate for those who fast. Gabriel informed me on behalf of his Lord that He says: I have not commanded My angels to supplicate for anyone among My creation except that I answer [their supplication] for him.”-

The Holy Prophet (saw)

The Merits of Fasting

أوحى الله عز وجل إلى موسى (عليه السلام) ما يمنعك من مناجاتي؟
فقال: يا رب اجلك عن المناجاة لخلوف فم الصائم فأوحى الله عز وجل
إليه: يا موسى لخلوف فم الصائم أطيب عندي من ريح المسك

“God revealed to Moses, ‘What prevents you from My supplication?’. He replied, ‘My Lord, I find You too exalted [to speak to] due to the [foul] breath of a fasting person’. God revealed, ‘O Moses, the breath of a fasting person is more pleasant to Me than musk.’”

Requirements Before I Fast

- **1.You must be Muslim**
- **2.You must be sane and conscious**
- **3.You must have reached puberty**
 - Indicator for young men: Has reached 15 lunar years or has grown thick facial or pubic hair or experienced seminal discharge
 - Indicator for young women: Has reached 9 lunar years= 8y221d on Gregorian calendar

Requirements Before I Fast

- **4. You must determine that month of Ramadan has begun.**
- **5. You must be in a place of residence**
- **6. You must be ritually pure of certain states of spiritual impurity**
- **7. You must be able to fast**
- **8. You must have the intention to fast**

Requirements Before I Fast

- Conditions 1-3 are self explanatory while 4-8 require further clarification

The Beginning of an Islamic Month

- **1.The sighting of the crescent in your area**

إذا رأيتم الهلال فصوموا، وإذا رأيتموه فأفطروا

“... when you see the crescent, fast, and when you see the crescent, stop fasting.” –

Imam al-Baqir

The Beginning of an Islamic Month

- **2. Knowledge that it could be seen in your area if there were no obstructions. Visibility curves are useful tools to approximate this**

How do I know whether the month has begun?

- 1. You are certain that the crescent has been, or could have been seen because you have seen it yourself or because there are enough independent reports.
- 2. You are confident that it has been seen, or could have been seen because it is well known that it has been seen.

How do I know whether the month has begun?

- 3. Thirty days have passed since the beginning of the previous month.
- 4. Two righteous individuals testify to having seen it as long as you do not know they are mistaken.

Controversy over beginning and end of Islamic months

- 1. The nature of the moon cycle. It is not as straightforward as the sun's cycle. The moon cycle tends to split countries so that people in the SW see the moon when people in the NE do not.
- 2. Different standards between Sunni's and Shia's. Some Sunni's believe the standard is the new moon instead of the crescent. Some Sunni's also believe that if it is seen in one place, it marks the new month for the whole world.

Controversy over beginning and end of Islamic months

- 3. Different opinions among Shia jurists.
 - Sistani vs Khoie or Ta3dud al-ufuq vs Wahdat al-ufuq
- - If an individual derives full satisfaction and certitude from astronomical data then they are welcome to act upon that.
- - US Naval Observatory itself notes on its website, “The date and time of each New Moon can be computed exactly, but the time that the Moon first becomes visible after the New Moon depends on many factors and cannot be predicted with certainty

Controversy over beginning and end of Islamic months

- 4. People's ignorance of the law and its correct implementation
- **Solution:** Choose your marji' correctly, follow the legal opinion (fatwa) of your marji', and do not worry about the differences among the followers of different maraji'.

What to do if Moon is not spotted on evening of 29th of Sha'baan?

- 1. Treat the next day as the 30th of Sha'ban (known as **يوم الشك**)
- 2. Go ahead and fast with one of the following intentions:
 - - As a mustahab fast of Sha'baan
 - As qadha for a fast you missed
 - As fulfillment of a vow (nadhr)

What to do if Moon is not spotted on evening of 29th of Sha'baan?

- If the moon sighting is established anytime during the day, renew your intention for the 1st of Ramadan.
- If the day passes and the moon sighting is never established, you simply get the reward for the fast.

Place of Residence

- We mentioned earlier that one of the conditions that must be met before you fast is that you must be in a place of residence.
- **General Ruling:** You must be in a place of residence at zenith in order to fast in Ramadan.

Place of Residence

- •Exceptions to the rule:
 - If you do not know that you cannot fast during travel, your fast is correct
 - If you are a traveler, who must offer the 4 rak'ah prayers as 4 rak'ah, you must also fast

Place of Residence

- The following 4 places are considered places of residence.
- **1. Hometown:** This could be your birth place or the place where you grew up and consider your hometown.
- **2. Permanent:** Your city of permanent residence. You may have multiple places of permanent residence.

Place of Residence

- **3.Semi-Permanent:** Any place in which you plan to live for a significant amount of time such that you are no longer considered a traveler
- **4. Temporary:** Any place you plan to stay for 10 days or more and any place where you remain for 30 days in limbo.

What constitutes travel?

- **Rule of thumb:** Any travel that causes you to pray shortened (qasr) prayers prevents you from fasting

Requirements for you to be considered a traveler

- 1. Knowingly travel the critical distance of 27mi/44 km
 - How to calculate? Add up total mileage, whether one way or round-trip
 - Where to begin calculation? At point when you are considered to be “leaving town” or “going out of town”. That is usually the city limits.

Requirements for you to be considered a traveler

- 2. That you NOT intend to stop in a place of residence before reaching the critical distance.
- **Example:** You plan to travel 24 miles from your place of permanent residence and stop in your hometown and then travel another 10 miles to your vacation spot for 12 days. You are NOT considered a traveler at any point of this journey

Requirements for you to be considered a traveler

- 3. That your journey or purpose of your journey be legal (mubah)
- Example of an illegal journey: A person travels to Las Vegas to gamble

Requirements for you to be considered a traveler

- 4. That you not be a frequent traveler. A frequent traveler is:
 - - One who travels for work. This means that traveling is an integral part of your work. Example: flight attendant, bus driver, truck driver.
 - Or traveling is necessary to get to work. Example: A commuter who travels 50 miles to work each day
 - - One who travels a lot. “A lot” here means 3 days per week or 10 days per month.

Requirements for you to be considered a traveler

- 5. That you cross the Hadd al-Tarakhus
- - This is the point at which you are far enough from your city that its people can no longer see you.
- - Note that your journey starts when you cross the city limits, but you cannot do anything that breaks your fast until you cross the hadd al-tarakhus

Time when residency is established

- Residency is established at zenith.
- - If you travel before zenith, your fast is null and void as a precaution.
- - If you travel after zenith, you must continue fast as a precaution
- - If you arrive at a place of residence before zenith there are 2 scenarios
 - 1. If you have NOT done anything to break your fast, you must fast.
 - 2. If you have broken your fast, you may not fast.

Ritual purity from certain states of spiritual impurity

- We mentioned earlier that one of the conditions that must be fulfilled before you begin your fast is ritual purity from specific states of spiritual impurity.

Ritual purity from certain states of spiritual impurity

- **1. Janaabah:** Results from seminal discharge or sexual intercourse. Thus, you may not intentionally remain in a state of janaabah until fajr.

Ritual purity from certain states of spiritual impurity

- **2. Haydh and Nifaas:** Also known as menstrual and postpartum bleeding. Thus, if a woman bleeds the whole day or any part of the day, she may not fast on that day. If her bleeding ceases before fajr, she must perform ghusl; if she intentionally does not do ghusl, her fast is invalid and she must make it up later.
- **Note:** None of the 3 levels of non-menstrual bleeding (istihaadha) prevent a woman from fasting

You Must be Able to Fast

- This is the 7th condition that we mentioned that must be met before you begin fasting.
- The following individuals are exempt from fasting (we will discuss this in more detail later):

Those Exempt from Fasting

- **1.Seniors:** Those upon whom fasting is impossible or unbearably difficult.
- **2.The Polydipsic:** Those who feel excessive thirst.
- **3. Pregnant women at full-term:** If fasting is harmful to them or their fetuses
- **4. Nursing women and wet-nurses:** If they have insufficient milk and fasting is harmful to them or their infants.

Those Exempt from Fasting

- **5. The Insane:** If they remained insane the entire day.
- **6. The Unconscious:** If they remained unconscious the entire day
- **7. Children:** Anyone who is not yet baligh
- **8. Menstruating women**
- **9. Women with postpartum bleeding**
- **10. Travelers:** conditions mentioned earlier apply

Those Exempt from Fasting

- **11. The Sick and Ill:** If fasting worsens their sickness, delays their recovery, increases their pain, or even threatens to do any of these. If someone's illness lasts till following Ramadan they are exempt and do not need to make up the days they missed.
- **12. The Healthy:** If fasting will likely cause them undue sickness or harm.

You must have the intention to fast

- What does the intention entail? That you are fasting as an act of worship and out of obedience to God
- When should I make my intention? On the eve of the first of Ramadan make your intention to fast the entire month. And/or make your intention for each coming day
- • **Note:** You must make your intention by Fajr of the day you are fasting. You must also maintain this intention for the duration of the fast.