

# Ahkam-e-Ramadhan

by Hazrat Mufti A'zam Mufti Shafi sahib (rh), presented by Shariah Board, New York

## Rules and Virtues of Ramadhan

To fast during the blessed month of Ramadhan is the third obligation of Islam. Whoever denies this obligation does not remain a Muslim. He who fails to fulfil this obligation is a grave sinner.

### The Niyyah (Intention) of Fasting

Niyyah refers to the intention of the heart. Verbal utterance is not a condition. Intention is a condition for the fast. If one does not make intention of fasting but abstains from eating and drinking the entire day, then too his fast will not be accepted. It is better to make intention for the fast of Ramadhan from the night before i.e. before subh sadiq and if not then at least one and a half hour before zawāl (midday) with the condition that one abstained from eating and drinking during that day.

### Factors that invalidate the fast:

- 1) To apply medication to the nose or ears.
- 2) To intentionally vomit mouth full.
- 3) When water accidentally goes down the throat whilst gargling.
- 4) To ejaculate because of contact with a woman.
- 5) To swallow items that are not normally eaten, like a stick or a piece of iron.
- 6) To intentionally inhale the smoke of incense. Cigarettes and hukkah etc. follow the same law.
- 7) After eating or drinking forgetfully, one assumes his fast is broken and thereby continues to eat intentionally.
- 8) Eating after subh sadiq with the impression of it being before subh sadiq.
- 9) To make Iftār before sunset with the impression of it being after sunset.  
Note: The above factors invalidate the fast and make Qadā wājib. However, Kaffarah is not necessary.
- 10) If one intentionally has intercourse with one's wife, eats or drinks intentionally, the fast breaks and qadā as well as kaffarah become wājib. Kaffarah means: to free a slave. If this is not possible, then to fast 60 consecutive days. If one fast is missed in between, the entire 60 have to be recommenced. If one is unable to observe these fasts then one should feed 2 meals to 60 needy people.

### Factors that make the fast Makruh but do not nullify it:

- 1) To unnecessarily chew on something. To taste salt and spit it out. To clean or brush one's teeth with toothpaste is also makrūh.
- 2) To remain the entire day in the state of Janābah (in need of an obligatory bath).
- 3) To extract blood from the veins. This includes blood donations.
- 4) Backbiting (to speak of the faults of someone in his absence). Although this is harām in all conditions, however the sin is more severe whilst one is fasting.
- 5) To argue, swear or fight with someone. Whether it is a human, an animal or any lifeless object. This also renders the fast as makrūh.

### Those factors that neither nullify the fast nor do they render it makruh:

- 1) To use a miswāk.
- 2) To apply oil to the moustache.
- 3) To apply medication to the eyes.
- 4) Inhaling of any fragrance.
- 5) To have a bath due to severe heat or thirst.
- 6) To take any type of injection.
- 7) To eat or drink forgetfully.
- 8) When smoke, dust or any insect enters the mouth unintentionally.

- 9) When water enters the ears.
- 10) Vomiting involuntarily.
- 11) Experiencing a wet dream.
- 12) When blood comes out from the gums but does not enter the throat. This will do no harm to the fast.
- 13) If a person was in need of a compulsory ghusl (bath) due to intercourse or a wet dream, and was unable to have a ghusl before subh sadiq and in this condition he makes the intention, no harm would be caused to his fast.

#### **Factors that excuse a person from fasting in the month of Ramadan:**

- 1) If one does not have the strength to fast due to sickness or if due to fasting, the illness will increase, then one is excused from fasting. However, it will be necessary to keep the qadā later.
- 2) If a pregnant woman fears some harm on herself or her child due to the fast, she should not fast but keep qadā later.
- 3) That woman who is breastfeeding her own child or any other child, and if due to fasting, the child will not receive milk, then she should not fast but keep the qadā later.
- 4) One who is travelling a distance of at least 48 miles is permitted not to fast. If one is able to fast without causing any difficulty or harm to oneself then it is better for one to do so. If fasting will cause harm to oneself or those travelling with one, then it is better not to fast.
- 5) If one commences the journey whilst one is fasting then it is necessary for one to complete the fast. And if one does not fast whilst on a journey, but one ate or drank something and in this state one
  - 1) returns home then one should abstain from eating and drinking for the rest of the day. If one did not eat or drink and one reaches home at such a time wherein it is permissible to make intention for the fast then it is necessary.
  - 2) for one to make the intention (and observe the fast).
- 6) If one is threatened with murder and is forced to break one's fast then it is permissible for one to break the fast and one should keep the qadā later.
- 7) If one is overcome with sickness, thirst or hunger to such an extent that an expert Muslim doctor says that his
  - 3) life is in danger, then it is necessary for one to break the fast and to keep the qadā later.
- 8) It is not permissible for a woman to fast during the days of haid (menses) and nifās (postnatal bleeding). It is
  - 4) necessary for her to keep the qadā. It is necessary on the sick, the traveller, the woman in haid or nifās and all those who are excused from fasting that they respect the month of Ramadhan and do not eat during the day in front of others.

#### **The Qada (Missed) Fasts**

When one misses a fast due to a valid excuse, one should keep the qadā fast as soon as one is able to do so. There is no guarantee of life. One has a choice of keeping the qadā consecutively or separately. If the traveler after returning home, or the sick person after recovering, do not live for so long whereby they could complete all the missed fasts, then they will be responsible for only the amount of days for which they lived thereafter.

#### **Sehri (Early morning meal)**

It is sunnah for the fasting person to partake of sehri during the last portion of the night, before subh sadiq. This is also a means of acquiring blessings and rewards. The sunnah of sehri will be fulfilled if one eats after midnight, but it is better to eat during the last portion of the night.

#### **Iftar (Meal after fasting)**

It is makrūh to delay the iftār after being certain that the sun has set. If however it is a cloudy day, it will be permissible to delay the iftār for a few minutes, in fact as a precaution it should be delayed for at least 2 or 3 minutes.