



Illustrated Islamic Jurisprudence for the Acts of Worship

Simplifying and Teaching the Rules of Islam

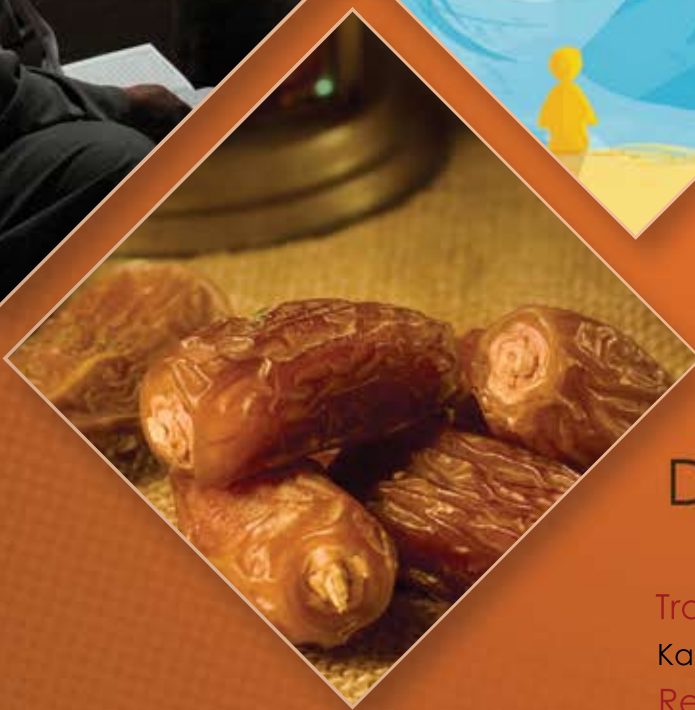
At-Tahara

As-Salāh

As-Saum

Az- Zakah

Al-Hajj



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Translation

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**Permissible Reasons for Breaking fasting during
Ramadan and Paying Back Missed Fasts**

Permissible Reasons for Breaking Fast in Ramadān and Paying Back Missed Fasts



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1. Sickness

It is permissible for the sick to break fast in Ramadān. Allah Almighty says: “... but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number of days (should be made up) from other days” (Al-Baqarah : 184). The sickness that permits the breaking of fast is the one that causes or leads to a more serious pain, if the sick were to fast.

Breaking of fast by the sick

If the sick breaks his fast, but the sickness is a form that recovery from it is expected, then it is mandatory on him to pay back the missed days. Allah Almighty says: “... but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number of days (should be made up after recovery) from other days.” (Al-Baqarah : 184)

If the sickness is, however, a form of such that recovery is not expected, for instance a terminal disease or an old man or woman that is permanently incapable of fasting, then such should feed one poor person, for every day missed, with half a Saa⁽¹⁾ of rice or any other common food in the community.

(1) A saa' is a four handful measure of an average man. A saa' is approximately two and a quarter kilograms (2.25 kg), thus the feeding on each day will be approximately 1 kilogram and 25 grams (1025 grams).

2. Traveling

It is permissible for a traveler in the month of Ramadān to break his fast, and it is compulsory on him to pay back the missed days. Allah Almighty says: "... but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number of days (should be made up) from other days." (Al-Baqarah : 184). The same distance that permits Al-Qasr (reduction of the number of prostrations in prayers) (Salāt) also permits the breaking of fast, provided it is known as traveling according to the customs of the people and it is a permissible form of traveling. If, however, it is a form of sinful traveling or a traveling done in order to be free from fasting, then it will be prohibited for him to break his fast.

However, if a traveler decides to fast, it will be valid. This is due to the hadeeth reported by Anas ibn Mālik who said: "We used to travel (during fasting) with the Prophet ﷺ, and those of us who fasted neither abused nor looked down upon those who broke their fast, nor did those who broke their fast look down upon those who fasted."⁽¹⁾ However, this permission is upon the condition that fasting is not a burden on him nor a cause of pain for him. If it is, then it will be better for him not to fast. This is because the Prophet ﷺ in one of his journeys, saw a man whose fasting had become burdensome upon him (had been severely weakened) due to the severe heat, and as such people had gathered around him. Thereupon, the Prophet said: "Fasting while on a journey is not part of righteousness."⁽²⁾

3. Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

A pregnant or breastfeeding woman who fears there would be a burden on herself if she fasted may break her fast, and she must pay it back, just like the sick.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Allah Almighty has relieved the traveler of fasting and some parts of Salāh (daily prayers), and He relieved the pregnant and

(1) Source: Bukhari.
(2) Source: Tirmidhi.

the breastfeeding woman of fasting."⁽³⁾ However, if she fears the burden on only her child or fetus, then she must pay the missed fasts back and feed one poor person for every missed day. Ibn ‘Abbas said: "As for the pregnant and breastfeeding women, if they fear the burden of fasting on their children, then they must pay it back (the missed fasts) and feed one poor person for every missed day."⁽⁴⁾

4. Menstrual and Post-Partum Bleeding

But a woman who menstruates or has post-natal bleeding is obligated to break her fast, as it is prohibited for her to fast. If, however, she does fast, it will not be valid; and she will still have to pay back the equivalent fasts for the period she missed. When ‘Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) was asked why a menstruating woman pays back the missed fast, but not the missed prayers, she said: "That (i.e. post natal and menstrual bleeding) used to befall us and we were ordered to pay back missed fasts, but not missed Salāh (prayers)."⁽⁵⁾



(3) Source: Bukhari.
(4) Source: Abu Dawud.
(5) Agreed upon.

Paying Back Missed Fasts

- If a Muslim misses a day of fasting in Ramadan without a valid excuse, he must repent to Allah and seek His forgiveness; because the offense is great, and this is a grave abominable act. He must also in addition to repentance and seeking forgiveness, make up for the day(s) he did not fast after Ramadan. Here it is a necessity to make up for the day(s) immediately after Ramadan according to the most correct opinion of scholars, because he did not have a license to break his fast in the first place and he should have fasted the day(s) in its correct time.

- If s/he broke his fast for a legitimate excuse, such as the reason of Hayd (menstruation) and nifaas (post-natal bleeding) for women, illness, travel or other excuses for which it is permissible to break the fast, then he must make up for the day(s), unless s/he is incapable of fasting. Moreover, it is not obligatory to fast these days immediately. Rather s/he has been given the chance to observe Fast over the entire following year, up until the next Ramadan, for 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) in a hadeeth said: "I was not able to make up for the missed days of Ramadhan except in Sha'ban

(the last month before the next Ramadhan)." A sub-narrator, Yahya, said, "She used to be busy serving the Prophet."⁽¹⁾ However it is highly recommended and preferred to hasten to make up for the missed day(s), since by doing that one is discharging himself from that debt. And it is also safer for the person for something might unexpectedly happen, such as illness and the like, that would prevent him from fasting.

- If he delays making up for the day(s) until the next Ramadan, and he has an excuse to delay it, and if the same excuse still continues, then he must make up for the day(s) after the next Ramadan.
- If, however, he delays making up for the day(s) until the next Ramadan without an excuse, according to the majority of scholars, together with making up for the day(s), he is obliged to feed one poor person for each day half of a Sa'a (approximately one and a half kilograms) of the food staple of that country. Hanafis and Thahiris, however, are of the opinion that he does not have to feed the poor.
- When making up the missed day(s), it is not required that it be done consecutively. He can either make up the day(s) by fasting on consecutive or separate days, both are correct;

(1) Agreed upon.

Allah Almighty says: "... but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number of days (should be made up) from other days" (Al-Baqarah : 184). Allah, Glorified be He, does not require that these days of fasting be consecutive. If it was a condition, Almighty Allah would have made it clear.

- If a person has to make up for missed day(s) of Ramadan, he should begin with that before performing his voluntary fasting; because obligatory fasting is of greater importance. It is, however, permissible to fast voluntarily before making up for the obligatory day(s) of Ramadan in cases where the voluntary fasting is of days that the person is keen not to miss due to their virtue, such as the tenth of Muharram, the day of Arafah, fasting the six days of Shawwal and the like, since the chance for making up for the day(s) of Ramadan extends until before the following Ramadan. Yet, it is better to make up the day(s) that he did not fast in Ramadan as soon as possible.
- Whoever delays making up for the day(s) of Ramadan until he dies for a valid excuse, there is nothing against him; because he did not leave the fasting intentionally. If, however, there is no excuse, he should feed one poor person for every day of Ramadan he did not fast, however

if the fasting is a Nathr (vowing to fast for Allah if something happens), then his inheritor must fast that on his behalf. Some scholars are of the opinion that if a person dies and he still has day(s) from Ramadan to make up, his inheritor should fast on his behalf, whether that was the obligatory fasting of Ramadan or the nathr fasting and the like. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever dies and he ought to have observed Saum (fast) (the missed days of Ramadhan) then his Wali (inheritor) must observe Saum (fast) on his behalf"⁽¹⁾; Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "A man came to the Prophet and said, 'O Allah's Messenger ! My mother died and she ought to have observed Saum (fast) for one month (for her missed days of Ramadhan), shall I observe (fast) on her behalf?' The Prophet replied in the affirmative and said, "Allah's debts have more right to be paid."⁽²⁾

(1) Agreed upon.

(2) Agreed upon.