



Series of the Writings of His Eminence The Shaykh (96)

Fasting A Set of Questions on its Rulings

By His Eminence Shaykh

Muhammad ibn Sālih Al-'Uthaymīn

May Allah forgive him, his parents, and all Muslims

Published by

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Sālih al-'Uthaymīn Charity
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Fasting **A Set of Questions on its Rulings**

***In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate,
the Most Merciful***

Introduction

Praise be to Allah; we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our selves and from our bad deeds. Whoever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whoever He leads astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allah, alone, with no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, whom He sent with guidance and the religion of truth; so he conveyed the message, fulfilled the trust, communicated sincere advice to his Ummah, and strove duly in the cause of Allah until he passed away. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, his family, his Companions, and those who follow them with righteousness until the Day of Judgment.

Following is a set of questions on fasting and its rulings, numbering 70. His Eminence Shaykh Muhammad ibn Sālih Al-'Uthaymīn (may Allah have mercy upon him) kindly answered them.

In compliance with the rules and directions laid down by His Eminence as regards the production of his scholarly legacy, and out of desire to spread the benefit, we have prepared this material for printing and publication.

We ask Allah Almighty to render this work sincerely done for His sake, pleasing to Him, and beneficial for His servants; and we ask Him to reward our Shaykh for what he did for Islam and Muslims and to multiply his reward and raise his rank; indeed, He is All-Hearing and Ever Near.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon His servant and Messenger, the seal of prophets, the leader of the pious, and the master of the early and late generations, our Prophet Muhammad, and upon his family, Companions, and those who follow them with righteousness until the Day of Judgment.

The Academic Committee

at the Shaykh Muhammad ibn Sālih al-'Uthaymīn
Charity Foundation

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***In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate,
the Most Merciful***

Question (1): With the approach of the blessed month of Ramadan, the season of worship and good deeds, kindly address a few words to Muslims on this occasion. How should this month impact them spiritually?

Answer (1): What I would like to say to Muslims is that this month includes three types of glorious acts of worship, namely Zakah (alms), fasting, and Qiyām (voluntary night prayer).

As for Zakah, most people, or many of them, pay the due Zakah during this month. A person is required to pay his Zakah with honesty and to feel that it is an act of worship and an Islamic obligation whereby he draws close to his Lord, and that, by paying it, he is fulfilling one of the great pillars of Islam, not incurring a loss as depicted by Satan, whom Allah Almighty describes, saying: {Satan threatens you with poverty and calls you to the shameful acts} [Al-Baqarah: 268] Rather, it is a gain, as Allah Almighty says: {The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.} [Al-Baqarah: 261] He also says: {And the example of those who spend their wealth seeking means to the approval of Allah and assuring [reward for] themselves is like a garden on high ground which is hit by

a downpour - so it yields its fruits in double. And [even] if it is not hit by a downpour, then a drizzle [is sufficient]. And Allah is All-Seeing of what you do.} [Al-Baqarah: 265]

A Muslim is required to pay Zakah on everything on which Zakah is due, whether much or little, and to hold himself accountable for this, not leaving anything subject to Zakah without paying the Zakah due on it in order to absolve himself of the liability and save himself from the stern threat issued by Allah Almighty, Who says: {And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection. And to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and earth. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.} [Al-‘Imrān: 180] And He says: {And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah - give them tidings of a painful torment. The Day when it will be heated in the fire of Hell and seared therewith will be their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs, [it will be said]: “This is what you hoarded for yourselves, so taste what you used to hoard.”} [Al-Tawbah: 34-35]

Interpreting the first verse, the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) said: “Whoever is made wealthy by Allah and does not pay the Zakah of his wealth, then on the Day of Resurrection his wealth will be in the form of a bald-headed poisonous snake with two black spots over the eyes. The snake will encircle his neck and bite his cheeks and say: ‘I am your wealth, I am your treasure.’”

Regarding the second verse, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) interpreted it, saying: "Any person who possesses gold or silver and does not pay what is due on it (i.e. Zakah), on the Day of Resurrection they will be made for him into sheets of fire and would be heated in the fire of Hell, so his flank, forehead, and back will be branded with them. When they cool down, they will be heated again and the same process will be repeated during the day the measure of which will be fifty thousand years. (This will go on) until Judgment is pronounced among the creation, and he will be shown his final path, either to Paradise or to Hellfire."

In order for Zakah to be accepted, a Muslim should pay it in the proper manner, not as a habit nor as a means to ward off another loss he incurred or to discharge another duty other than Zakah.

The second act of worship that Muslims perform in the month of Ramadan is fasting, which is one of the pillars of Islam. Allah Almighty points out the benefit of fasting, saying: {O you who believe, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.} [Al-Baqarah: 183] The real benefit of fasting is attaining piety and fear of Allah Almighty by observing His commands and prohibitions. So, a person does what Allah Almighty has prescribed on him, like purification and prayer, and avoids what Allah has prohibited, like lying, backbiting, cheating, and neglect of his duties. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whoever does not

give up false speech and acting upon it and does not abandon foolishness, Allah is not in need of him giving up his food and drink.”

Regrettably, many Muslims fast this month, but we do not see any difference in them between the days of fast and other days. They continue to neglect their duties or engage in sins, which is deplorable. A wise believer would not make the days of fasting and the other days alike. Rather, he should be more heedful of Allah Almighty and more obedient to Him during the days of fasting.

The third worship in Ramadan is Qiyām (voluntary night prayer), which the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) encouraged, saying: “He who performs Qiyām during Ramadan faithfully and expecting its reward from Allah will have his past sins forgiven.”

Qiyām of Ramadan includes supererogatory prayers during this month’s nights and the well-known Tarāwīh prayer which is part of Qiyām without doubt. That is why a Muslim should be keen to offer it regularly and to pray behind the imam until he finishes the prayer, for the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) said: “Whoever performs Qiyām with the imam until he (the imam) leaves shall have the reward of spending the whole night in prayer.”

The imams leading people in Tarāwīh prayer should fear Allah Almighty with regard to the people they are leading. They should pray in a calm unhurried manner in order to enable those

who are praying behind to perform the obligatory and recommended acts of prayer as best as they can.

Many people nowadays offer Tarāwīh prayer in a quick manner bereft of tranquility, which is a pillar of prayer and without it prayer would be invalid. What they do is sinful:

First: Because they abandon tranquility in prayer.

Second: Even if they do not abandon tranquility, they still cause those praying behind to get tired and unable to perform the obligations of prayer properly. The person leading people in prayer is not like a person praying alone; he must have consideration for the people such that he fulfills his trust with regard to them and offers the prayer in the proper manner.

The scholars stated that it is disliked for the imam to hasten in prayer in a way that makes those praying behind unable to do the Sunnah acts in prayer, let alone hastening in a way that makes them unable to do what is obligatory!

The advice I would like to render to my fellow Muslims, myself included, is to turn to Allah Almighty, repent to Him, and show obedience to Him as much as possible in Ramadan and in all other months.



Question (2): Some young people – may Allah guide them – are too lazy to pray in Ramadan and outside it, albeit they observe the fasting of Ramadan and endure hunger and thirst.

What advice would you give them? And what is the ruling on their fasting?

Answer (2): My advice to them: Think well about your situation and know that prayer is the most important pillar of Islam, after the testimony of faith. Whoever abandons prayer, out of negligence, then he – according to the opinion I regard as preponderant and is supported by evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah – is a disbeliever to an extent that takes him out of the fold of Islam; he is an apostate. The matter is serious, for nothing is accepted from a disbeliever who apostated from Islam; neither fasting nor charity nor any other deed. Allah Almighty says: {*And what prevents their expenditures from being accepted from them but that they have disbelieved in Allah and in His Messenger and that they come not to prayer except while they are lazy and that they do not spend except while they are unwilling.*} [Al-Tawbah: 54] So, Allah Almighty made it clear that their expenditures, albeit beneficial for others, shall not be accepted from them due to their disbelief; Allah Almighty says: {*And We will regard what they have done of deeds and make them as dust dispersed.*} [Al-Furqān: 23]

The fasting of those who fast but do not pray will not be accepted, and it will rebound upon them, for, as we have said, they are disbelievers, as indicated by the Qur'an and Sunnah. My advice to them: Fear Allah Almighty, guard your prayers strictly, and perform them on time along with the congregation of Muslims. If they do, I assure them – by the might of Allah – that they will find a definite desire in their hearts during Ramadan

and after it for the performance of prayers at their appointed times and along with the Muslim congregation. Indeed, when a person returns to his Lord and repents to Him sincerely, he becomes a better person than he used to be before repentance. After Adam (peace be upon him) did what he did and ate of the tree, Allah Almighty says about him: {Then his Lord chose him and turned to him in forgiveness and guided [him].} [Tāha: 122]



Question (3): What is the ruling on sleeping for the entire daytime? And what is the ruling on the fasting of a person who sleeps like this? And what is the ruling if he wakes up to perform the obligatory prayer then returns to sleep?

Answer (3): This question comprises two cases:

First: A man who sleeps for the entire daytime and does not wake up in between. There is no doubt that such a man does wrong to himself and disobeys Allah by abandoning the prayers at their appointed times. Moreover, if he is one of those required to offer the prayer in congregation, he adds the failure to pray in congregation to the list of violations. This is prohibited and it detracts from his fasting. He is like a person who builds a palace yet destroys a city. He should repent to Allah Almighty and offer the prayers on time, as commanded.

Second: A man who wakes up from sleep to offer the obligatory prayer in congregation. Such a man incurs no sin, but

he misses a great deal of good, for he ought to keep himself busy with prayer, Dhikr (mention of Allah), supplication, and recitation of the Qur'an so as to combine different types of worship during the fast. If a person trains himself to perform acts of worship while fasting, it will become easy for him. By contrast, if he accustoms himself to laziness and comfort, this would be the only state he is used to, and, consequently, worship and other good deeds would be difficult for him while fasting.

So, my advice to such a person: Do not let the time of your fast be consumed by sleep and be keen to engage in worship. Praise be to Allah Who has provided us in this day and age with means to alleviate the hardship for fasting people, such as air-conditioners and the like.



Question (4): What is the meaning of fasting in language and religion?

Answer (4): Linguistically, fasting means abstention. This meaning occurs in the following Qur'anic verse: {Say: "Indeed, I have vowed to the Most Merciful abstention, so I will not speak today to any human."} [Maryam: 26] And it occurs in the following verse of poetry:

**Horses abstaining (from moving and roaming) and others
not abstaining
under the dust, and others chewing on the bridles**

As for the meaning in the Shariah, fasting is to worship Allah Almighty by abstaining from the invalidators of fasting from the rise of the second dawn to sunset.



Question (5): What are the types of fasting?

Answer (5): There are two types of fasting:

1. Obligatory fasting, which may be for a reason, like the fasting for expiations and vows, or without a reason, like the fasting of Ramadan which is a fundamental obligation in the Shariah; i.e. without a reason initiated by an accountable person.

2. Supererogatory fasting, which may be specific or general. An example of specific supererogatory fasting is the fasting on Mondays and Thursdays. And an example of general supererogatory fasting is the fasting of any day of the year. However, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) is reported to have forbidden the fasting of Friday alone. So, it may only be fasted along with the fasting of one day before it or after it. Also, it is reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) forbade fasting on the two days of Eid (Al-Fitr and Al-Ad'ha) as well as the days of Tashrīq (11-13 Dhul-Hijjah), except for a performer of Qirān or Tamattu' pilgrimage who cannot find a sacrificial animal to slaughter, and so he is to fast the days of Tashrīq as the three days he is required to fast during Hajj.

Question (6): What is the ruling on the fasting of Ramadan?

Answer (6): The fasting of Ramadan is an obligation, according to the Qur'an and Sunnah, as well as the consensus among Muslims. Allah Almighty says: {O you who believe, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.} [Al-Baqarah: 183] To the verse that says: {The month of Ramadan [is that] in which the Qur'an was revealed, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion. So whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it...} [Al-Baqarah: 185]

The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Islam is built upon five [pillars]: Bearing witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; establishing prayer; giving Zakah (alms); fasting the month of Ramadan; and performing Hajj to the Sacred House of Allah." He also said: "When you witness it, observe fast."

Muslims unanimously agree that fasting Ramadan is an obligation and one of the pillars of Islam. Whoever denies its obligation becomes a disbeliever, except if he grew up in a remote land where the rulings of Islam are not known, in which case he should be informed about them. If he persists in his denial despite the evidence presented to him, he becomes a disbeliever.

As for a person who does not fast it out of negligence – while acknowledging that it is an obligation – he is in danger, for some

scholars regard him as a disbelieving apostate. According to the preponderant opinion, however, he is not a disbelieving apostate, but he is a defiant sinner, who is in great danger.



Question (7): What is the status of fasting in religion and what is its merit in terms of worship?

Answer (7): As for the status of fasting in Islam, it is one of its great pillars without which it would not be established or complete. As for its merit, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), said in an authentic Hadīth: "He who fasts the month of Ramadan out of faith and expecting its reward from Allah will have his past sins forgiven."



Question (8): What is the ruling on the failure to fast during Ramadan's daytime without excuse?

Answer (8): Failure to fast during daytime in Ramadan without excuse is a major sin and its perpetrator is a defiant sinner; he is required to repent to Allah Almighty and make up for the day he has not fasted. In other words, if he begins the fast and then breaks his fast during the day without excuse, he is required to make up for that day, for when he embarked upon fasting, he became committed to it and treated it as an obligation. So, he is obligated to make up for it, like making up for a vow.

But if he fails to begin fasting on that day in the first place, intentionally and without excuse, he is not required to make up for it according to the preponderant opinion, for he will gain no benefit from it at all as it will not be accepted from him. The rule says that if a person delays a timed act of worship beyond its fixed time, it will not be accepted from him; the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whoever does something that is not in accordance with this matter of ours (meaning Islam), it will be rejected." Moreover, this constitutes transgression of the limits set by Allah; for transgression of the limits set by Allah is wrongdoing, and the deeds of a wrongdoer are not accepted. Allah Almighty says: {And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah - it is those who are the wrongdoers.} [Al-Baqarah: 229] Also, if a person performs an act of worship ahead of its appointed time, it will not be accepted from him. Likewise, if he delays it beyond its time, it will not be accepted, unless he has a valid excuse.



Question (9): How is the advent of Ramadan established?

Answer (9): The advent of Ramadan is established by seeing the crescent or with the completion of the month of Sha'bān as thirty days. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "If you see it (the new crescent), then fast, and if you see it (again), stop fasting. If you cannot see it because of clouds, then complete the month of Sha'bān as thirty days."

Question (10): What is the ruling if one sees the crescent alone and people do not observe the fast along with him?

Answer (10): Whoever sees the crescent should inform the Shar'ī court and give his testimony.

The advent of Ramadan is established by the testimony of one person if the judge approves him and accepts his testimony. If his testimony is rejected, however, he is obliged to fast according to some scholars, for he is certain that he has seen the crescent. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Observe fast when you see it," and this person saw it.

Other scholars said that he is not obliged to fast because the beginning and end of fast should be along with the people, and complying with the group is better than acting alone differently from them.

Others maintained that he should observe the fast secretly. He should fast because he has seen the crescent, but it should be done secretly so that he would not publicly go against the Muslims.



Question (11): What are the pillars of fasting?

Answer (11): Fasting has one pillar; worshiping Allah Almighty by abstaining from the invalidators of fasting from dawn to sunset.

Dawn here refers to the second Fajr, not the first one. The second Fajr is distinct from the first one by three things:

First: The second Fajr lies across the horizon, while the first one is vertical, i.e. extending from the east to the west. The second Fajr, by contrast, extends from the north to the south.

Second: The second Fajr is not followed by darkness; rather, its light continues to grow until the sun rises. The first Fajr, on the other hand, darkens after it has a ray at first.

Third: The whiteness of the second Fajr is connected to the horizon, while there is darkness between the first Fajr and the horizon.

The first Fajr is not subject to any ruling in Shariah; it does not make Fajr prayer due, nor does it render food forbidden for a fasting person - unlike the second Fajr.



Question (12): Upon whom is fasting due?

Answer (12): Fasting is due upon every Muslim who is adult, sane, able to fast, not traveling, and free from impediments. These are six requirements.

As for the disbeliever, neither fasting nor any other worship is due on him. By the statement “fasting is not due on him” we mean that in the state of disbelief, he is not obligated to fast, nor is he required to make up for the missed fast if he embraces Islam, because worship is not accepted from a disbeliever. Allah

Almighty says: {And what prevents their expenditures from being accepted from them but that they have disbelieved in Allah and in His Messenger} [Al-Tawbah: 54] And he is not required to make up for missed worship if he converts to Islam, for Allah Almighty says: {Say to those who have disbelieved [that] if they cease, all what has occurred before will be forgiven for them} [Al-Anfāl: 38]

But he shall be punished for the duties he neglected while in the state of disbelief. Allah Almighty says about the companions of the right as they inquire about the criminals (in the Hereafter): {[And asking them]: “What put you into Saqar?” They will say: “We were not of those who prayed, nor did we use to feed the poor. And we used to enter into vain discourse with those who engaged [in it]. And we used to deny the Day of Recompense - until there came to us the certainty.”} [Al-Muddaththir: 42-47] Their mention of abandonment of prayer and not feeding the poor as among the reasons for their entry into Hellfire indicates that these things do actually have a role in that regard.

Rather, the disbeliever shall be punished for all the blessings he enjoyed, like food, drink, and clothes; Allah Almighty says: {There is not upon those who believe and do righteousness [any] blame concerning what they have eaten [in the past] if they [now] fear Allah and believe and do righteous deeds, and then fear Allah and believe, and then fear Allah and do good; for Allah loves the doers of good.} [Al-Mā'idah: 93] The negation of blame from the believers with regard to what they have eaten

indicates that there is blame on non-believers concerning that; Allah Almighty says: {Say: “Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has produced for His servants and the good [lawful] things of provision?” Say: “They are for those who believe during the worldly life [but] exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection.”} [Al-A’rāf: 32] His statement {They are for those who believe during the worldly life [but] exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection} indicates that believers and non-believers are not alike in this regard.

But if a person embraces Islam during Ramadan, he is not required to make up for the fast he has not observed before embracing Islam. So, if he becomes Muslim on the eve of the 15th of Ramadan, for example, he is not required to make up for the past 14 days. If he embraces Islam during the day, he is required to abstain from food and drink for the rest of the day, but not make up for that day. Accordingly, if he becomes Muslim at noon, for example, we say to him: Fast for the rest of the day, but you are not required to make up for that day. So, we ask him to abstain from food because he has become subject to Islamic obligations, but we do not ask him to make up for that day, because he has done what became due on him once he embraced Islam, i.e. abstaining from food. As he has fulfilled what is due on him, he is not required to repeat the worship again.

Sanity is the second requirement of obligation, for it is the means of discernment between things. If a person is not sane,

he is not required to fast, nor to perform any other act of worship, save for Zakah.

Falling under this category – i.e. those with impaired mental faculty – is a person who reaches an age when he has no discernment. Such a person is not required to fast, nor is it required to feed the poor on his behalf for the missed fast, as he is not subject to obligations.

The third requirement is puberty, which occurs by either of three matters:

- That the person turns 15.
- That the pubic hair grows.
- That semen is discharged with pleasure, whether during sleep or wakefulness.

A fourth matter is related to women only, and that is menstruation. A female reaches puberty when she starts to menstruate.

Accordingly, whoever reaches the age of 15, whether male or female, has attained puberty; whoever has pubic hair has attained puberty, even if before the age of 15, whether male or female; whoever discharges semen with a feeling of pleasure, whether male or female, has attained puberty, even if before the age of 15; and if a girl menstruates, she has attained puberty, even if she has not yet turned 15. It is possible that a girl starts menstruating at the age of 10.

This last point should be heeded, as there are many people who are heedless of it. Some girls menstruate at an early age and are not aware that they are required to fast and perform other acts of worship whose obligation depends on attainment of puberty. Many people believe that puberty is only attained by reaching the age of 15, which is baseless.

So, if a person has not reached puberty, fasting is not obligatory on him. However, the scholars mentioned that a guardian is required to ask his young dependents, males or females, to fast so that they can get accustomed to it and find it easy when they reach puberty. This is what the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) used to do. They would make their little children fast, and if a child cried (out of hunger), they would give him a toy made of wool to distract him until sunset.

The fourth requirement is the ability to fast without hardship. If a person does not have the ability to fast, fasting is not due on him. However, there are two types of inability:

First: A person who is unable to fast on a continuous basis, like the elderly and the terminally ill. He should feed a poor person for each day of missed fast. So, if the month of Ramadan is 30 days, he feeds 30 poor people.

There are two ways to feed the poor:

The first way: To give out half a Sā' [unit of measure] of rice or wheat based on the volume of the Sā' of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with him), which is one fifth of the Sā' known here. The Prophet's Sā' is estimated at two kilograms

and 40 grams of good wheat. In other words, if you weigh two kilograms and 40 grams of good wheat, that is the Prophet's Sā', which is equal to four Mudds [unit of measure]; so, it suffices four poor persons. It would be better in such a case to add something with the rice or wheat to make it more palatable, like meat or otherwise according to what the conditions or customs entail.

The second way: To prepare food that suffices 30 or 29 poor persons, according to the number of days of the month, and invite them to it. This is reported to have been done by Anas ibn Mālik (may Allah be pleased with him) in his old age.

It is not permissible to feed one person with food sufficient for 30 or 29 people, because it must be one poor person for each day.

The second type of inability to fast is the temporary inability that is hoped to end, like an illness that occurs during the days of fast and makes fasting difficult; in such a case, we say: Do not fast on the days you are ill and make up for them later. Allah Almighty says: {**And whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days**} [Al-Baqarah: 185]

The fifth requirement is to be a resident, as opposed to a traveler. A traveler – defined as the person who departed his country/town of residence – is not required to fast, for Allah Almighty says: {**And whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days.**} [Al-Baqarah: 185]

However, it is preferable that he fasts unless there is difficulty involved, in which case, it would be preferable that he does not fast. Abu al-Dardā' (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: "We were with the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) on a very hot day during Ramadan, and none of us was fasting except the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and 'Abdullāh ibn Rawāhah."

If fasting becomes hard for him, he may break the fast, and he must do so. A complaint was once raised to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) that fasting was too hard for the people, and so he broke the fast. Then it was said to him that some people continued to fast; thereupon, he said: "Those are the disobedient ones; those are the disobedient ones."

The sixth requirement is freedom from impediments, and this is relevant to women in particular. For the observance of fasting to be due on a woman, she should be outside menstruation and postpartum period. If she is menstruating or in postpartum period, she is not required to fast; and she should make up for the missed days, as the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Is it not true that when she menstruates, she does not pray or fast?" So, if a woman is having her menstrual period, she is not required to fast and should make up for the missed days later.

There are two points here worthy of attention:

First: Sometimes, the menstrual period ends in the latter part of the night and the woman becomes aware of that;

however, she does not fast on that day thinking that she may not observe the fast except after she has taken a ritual bath (Ghusl), which is not true. Her fast is valid even if she takes the bath after the rise of dawn.

Second: It happens that while a fasting woman breaks her fast at the time of sunset, she gets her menses before she offers the Maghrib prayer. Some women think that if the menstrual period starts after the breaking of the fast but before offering the Maghrib prayer, then their fast of that day becomes invalid. Some even go too far and say that if the period starts before the 'Ishā' prayer, their fast of that day is invalid. All this is not true. If the sun has set while the woman did not see any menstrual blood, her fast is valid, even if the blood comes out one moment after sunset.

These are six requirements, which, if met in a person, then the observance of the fasting of Ramadan becomes due on him, and he or she is not permitted to break the fast. If one requirement is unmet, the foregoing rulings apply.



Question (13): Some young people mistakenly believe that accountability for religious obligations begins at the age of 16. They may reach puberty before this age but they do not observe the fast. What should they do? Are they required to make up for the missed years?

Answer (13): Yes, this matter mentioned in the question is so prevalent, especially among women. Some may start to menstruate at an early age. Puberty is not related to age only; rather, it may occur by other things, like the growth of pubic hair, the discharge of semen, as well as reaching the age of 15; and a fourth thing pertains to women, which is menstruation.

Accordingly, if a person had reached puberty, he is required to make up for the fast he missed after reaching puberty. Most people pray during this period and do not miss the prayer, but they often fail to fast. When a girl gets her menstrual period at a young age, she might feel shy to tell her family about it. Sometimes she does not fast at all and sometimes she fasts even during her period. In both cases, she is required to make up for the fast she missed. If she did not observe the fast at all, she is required to make up for the whole month; and if she fasted even during the days of her period, she is required to make up for the days of her period.



Question (14): What is the ruling on the fasting of a person who does not pray?

Answer (14): The fasting of a person who does not pray is invalid and unaccepted, because the person who does not pray is a disbeliever and an apostate. Allah Almighty says: {But if they repent, establish prayer, and give Zakah, then they are your brothers in religion} [Al-Tawbah: 11] The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "What stands between

a man and polytheism and disbelief is abandonment of prayer.” He also said: “The covenant between us and them is the prayer; so whoever abandons it has disbelieved.” This is also the opinion stated by the majority of the Companions, if not all of them. The well-known Tābi’i ‘Abdullāh ibn Shaqīq, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: “The Companions of the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) did not consider the abandonment of any deed as disbelief except for prayer.”

Based on this, if a person fasts but does not pray, his fasting is rejected and shall not benefit him with Allah on the Day of Judgment. We say to such a person: Pray and then fast. If you fast but do not pray, your fasting is rejected, for the good acts of a disbeliever are not accepted.



Question (15): What is the ruling on a person who fasts and prays during Ramadan, but when Ramadan ends he stops praying?

Answer (15): What I deduce from the relevant proofs is that abandonment of prayer does not make a person a disbeliever unless he abandons it completely. As for those who pray at times and abandon prayer at others, they are not disbelievers, as I deduce from the proofs. The Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) said: “The covenant between us and them is the prayer; so whoever abandons it – i.e. the prayer – has disbelieved.” He also said: “What stands between a man and polytheism and disbelief is abandonment

of prayer.” However, this kind of person who prays only in Ramadan and fasts in Ramadan - I have doubts about his faith. If he were a true believer, he would pray in Ramadan and outside it. But as he only recognizes his Lord during Ramadan, I am doubtful about his faith; however, I do not judge him to be a disbeliever. Rather, I refrain from giving a definite opinion regarding him, and his affair is left to Allah, The Exalted.



Question (16): What is the ruling on a person who fasts on some days and does not fast on others?

Answer (16): The answer to this question can be understood from the previous one. In brief, a person who fasts at times and does not fast at others does not go out of the fold of Islam, but he is a defiant sinner, given that he has abandoned this great obligation which is one of the pillars of Islam. He is not required to make up for the days he failed to fast, for this would not avail him at all and would not be accepted from him, based on the rule we have mentioned above that if a person delays a timed act of worship beyond its appointed time without excuse, it will not be accepted from him.



Question (17): If a person does not observe the fast for months after reaching puberty and then he becomes upright, is he required to make up for those months?

Answer (17): According to the preponderant scholarly opinion, he is not required to make up for those months which he missed without excuse, based on the aforementioned rule that if a person delays a timed act of worship beyond its Shariah-fixed time without excuse, it will not be accepted from him. So, if he makes up for them, this will be of no benefit to him. We have cited above the relevant proofs from the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and Qiyaas (analogy).

Accordingly, if a person, in his early years of adulthood, did not pray or fast and then Allah Almighty blessed him with guidance and he began to pray and fast, he is not required to make up for the missed prayer and fasting. Likewise, if he used to pray and give Zakah but did not fast and then Allah Almighty blessed him with guidance and he began to observe the fasting, he is not required to make up for the missed fast, based on the above-mentioned rule that if a person delays a timed act of worship beyond its appointed time without excuse, it will not be accepted from him. Hence, it is of no use to him to make up for it.



Question (18): What are the excuses that permit a person to not fast in Ramadan?

Answer (18): Some of the excuses permitting a person not to fast have already been mentioned above; namely, illness and travel.

Other excuses include pregnancy when harm is feared to the woman or her fetus.

Another excuse is when a woman is breastfeeding a baby and she fears that fasting may harm her or her baby.

Another excuse is when a person needs to break his fast to rescue another from death, like when he finds someone drowning or trapped in a place surrounded with fire, so in order to rescue him, he needs to break his fast - in such cases, he may break the fast and rescue the distressed person.

Another excuse is when a person needs to break the fast to have strength for Jihad in the cause of Allah. This is one of the reasons for breaking the fast, for the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said to his Companions at the time of the battle of the Conquest: "You are going to encounter your enemy in the morning and breaking of the fast would give you strength; so, break your fast."

When there is a valid excuse for breaking the fast, and the person actually breaks it, he is not required to abstain from food and drink for the rest of that day. For example, if a person breaks his fast to be able to rescue someone from death, and he rescues him, he should remain non-fasting for the day. This is because he broke his fast for a valid reason. So, he is not required to abstain from food and drink, since the inviolability of fast on that day was canceled by the excuse permitting the breaking of the fast.

Therefore, we adopt the preponderant view on this issue: If a sick person recovers during the day and he was not fasting before recovery, he is not required to abstain from food and drink upon recovery. Similarly, if a traveler returns from his journey and he was not fasting, he is not required to abstain from food and drink upon his return. And if a woman's menstrual period ends during the day, she is not required to abstain from food and drink. All those broke their fast on account of a valid reason. So, it is as if that day, to them, is no longer inviolable, given the legitimate excuse to break the fast therein. That is why they are not required to abstain from food and drink if the reason for breaking the fast ceases to exist.



Question (19): What is the difference between such people and those who know about the advent of Ramadan only during the daytime?

Answer (19): The difference between the two cases is clear. If the evidence emerges during the day that this is Ramadan, they are required to abstain from food and drink, for they did not fast in the beginning of the day for an excuse, namely ignorance. If they had known that this day is part of Ramadan, they would have been required to abstain. As for the people in the other case mentioned above, they know that this is Ramadan, but breaking the fast has become lawful for them. The difference is obvious.



Question (20): What are the invalidators of the fast?

Answer (20): The invalidators of the fast are eight: copulation, eating, drinking, discharge of semen with lust, what falls under the meaning of eating and drinking, induced vomiting, cupping, and the menstrual or postpartum bleeding.

As for eating, drinking, and copulation, the evidence for them is found in the verse that reads: {So now, have relations with them and seek what Allah has decreed for you. And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night]. Then complete the fast until the sunset} [Al-Baqarah: 187]

As for the discharge of semen with lust, its evidence is found in a Qudsi Hadīth about the fasting person, in which Allah Almighty said: "... he gives up his food, drink, and lust for My sake." Also, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "And in your [lawful] sexual intercourse there is charity." They said: "O Messenger of Allah, does one of us satisfy his lust and have a reward for that?" He said: "You see, if he were to satisfy it unlawfully, would he not incur a sin? Likewise, if he satisfies it lawfully, he will have a reward." It is ejaculated semen that results from satisfying sexual lust. That is why the release of pre-seminal fluid does not invalidate the fast, even if it is discharged with lust, according to the preponderant opinion.

The fifth invalidator of fasting are such things that fall under the meaning of eating and drinking. These are nutrient

injections that make the person in no need of food and drink. Although they are not food and drink, they fall under the same meaning since they do replace them. When something falls under the meaning of something else, both are subject to the same ruling. The subsistence of the body relies on these injections, if it does not receive other nutritions.

As for injections that give no nutrition and do not take the place of food and drink, they do not invalidate the fast, whether injected in a vein or a muscle or any other place in the body.

The sixth invalidator of fasting is induced vomiting. This is when a person intentionally vomits to bring out what is in his stomach through his mouth. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whoever vomits intentionally is required to make up (for the fast), and whoever is overcome by vomiting is not required to make up."

This is because when a person vomits, he empties his stomach of food and the body becomes in need for food to fill this void. Hence, we say: If a person is observing obligatory fast, he may not vomit intentionally, for he will harm himself and invalidate his fast.

The seventh invalidator is the discharge of blood through cupping. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The cupper and the one for whom cupping is done both break their fast."

With regard to the menstrual and postpartum bleeding, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Is it not true that when a woman menstruates, she does not pray or fast?" The scholars unanimously agreed that the fasting of a menstruating woman is invalid, and the same applies to the woman in the postpartum period.

That said, these invalidators do not affect the fasting except when three conditions are met: knowledge, remembering, and intent. In other words, the fasting of a person is not affected by these invalidators except with three conditions:

That the person is aware of the Shariah ruling and the time. If he is not aware of the Shariah ruling or the time, his fast is valid. Allah Almighty says: {Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred} [Al-Baqarah: 286] In reply, Allah Almighty said: "I did [what you asked for]." He also says: {And there is no blame upon you for that in which you have erred but [only for] what your hearts intended} [Al-Ahzāb: 5] It is authentically reported that 'Adyy ibn Hātim (may Allah be pleased with him) intended to fast so he put two camel cords under his pillow, one black and the other white. He continued to eat and drink until he could distinguish the white cord from the black one, at which point he abstained. In the morning, he went to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and told him about that. Thereupon, the Prophet explained to him that the white thread and the black thread mentioned in the verse [about the time of day to start fasting] are not literally threads, rather, the white thread

refers to the whiteness of daytime while the black thread refers to the darkness of night. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) did not order him to make up fasting for that day, because he was ignorant of the ruling, thinking that this was the meaning of the verse.

As for heedlessness of the time, Asmā' bint Abi Bakr (may Allah be pleased with her), in a Hadīth narrated by Al-Bukhārī, reported: "We broke our fast on a cloudy day during the Prophet's lifetime and then the sun appeared." The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) did not order them to make up for that. If making up were due, he would have ordered them to do it; and if he had commanded them, this would have been reported to the Ummah (Muslim nation). Allah Almighty says: {Indeed, it is We who sent down the reminder and We are indeed its guardians.} [Al-Hijr: 9] Since this was not reported – though the reason for reporting it existed – this means that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) did not order them to make up for that day, which means that making up for it is not obligatory.

Accordingly, if a person wakes up and thinks it is nighttime so he eats and drinks, after which he comes to know that he has eaten and drunk after the rise of dawn, he is not required to make up for this day because he did it unknowingly.

The second condition is that he remembers, as opposed to forgetting. If a person eats or drinks forgetfully, his fast remains valid and he is not required to make up for it, as Allah Almighty says: {Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have

forgotten or erred} [Al-Baqarah: 286] In reply, Allah Almighty said: "I did [what you asked for]." Also, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whoever forgets that he is fasting, so he eats or drinks, let him complete his fast; for it was Allah who fed him and gave him to drink."

The third condition is that the person voluntarily does what invalidates his fast. If he has no choice, then his fasting is valid, whether he is under coercion or not. About a person compelled to show disbelief, Allah Almighty says: {Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief, except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is certain in faith. But those who [willingly] open their breasts for disbelief, upon them is wrath from Allah, and for them is a great punishment.} [Al-Nahl: 106] If coercion cancels considering someone as a disbeliever, then coercion impacts less serious matters with greater reason. Also, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Allah has pardoned my followers for mistakes and forgetfulness and what they are coerced to do."

Hence, if dust disperses and goes into the nose of a fasting person and he feels its taste in his throat and it goes down to his stomach, his fast remains valid, because he did not intentionally cause this to happen.

Likewise, if he is coerced to break his fast and he does break it, his fast remains valid because he had no choice.

By the same token, if he has a wet dream, this does not affect the validity of his fasting, because a sleeping person possess no intent.

Also, if a man forces his wife into copulation while fasting, her fast remains valid, for she has no choice.

Here is a point worthy of attention: If a man breaks his fast by copulating during the daytime in Ramadan, and the fast is due on him, this has a number of consequences:

First: Sin.

Second: Invalidation of the fast.

Third: The duty to make up for this fast.

Fourth: The duty to give expiation.

And he is required to refrain from food and drink for the rest of the day, and it makes no difference whether he was aware or not of what such copulation entails. In other words, if a man engages in sexual intercourse during the fasting of Ramadan, and the fasting is due on him, but he does not know that expiation is due on him, expiation is still due on him, for he has done the invalidator of the fast deliberately, and this entails the consequences and makes them due on him. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that a man came to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and said: "O Messenger of Allah, I am ruined!" He said: "Why are you ruined?" The man said: "I had intercourse with my wife in

Ramadan while fasting.” The Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) ordered him to give expiation, though the man did not know about it.

Our statement “and the fasting is due on him” is a phrase of precaution, for a fasting man may engage in copulation while traveling, in which case expiation is not due on him. An example is when a man travels with his wife during Ramadan while both are fasting. Then, he copulates with her. In such a case, it is not due on him to give expiation, for a traveler who embarks upon fast is not required to complete it: He may break the fast and make up for it later, if he so wills, and he may continue fasting.



Question (21): There are workers who work in factories, some of which have a lot of dust and it enters through nostrils and mouths, and other factories have plenty of smoke that also enters through the body’s openings. Some of them work in paint coatings, pesticides, etc. They fear that their work might affect the validity of their fast. Kindly give them Fatwa regarding their situation and tell them what to do. May Allah reward you.

Answer (21): This work does not affect their fasting, for the dust or smoke enters against their will. From a health perspective, however, they should look into this matter and ask whether they would be subject to harm if their noses and mouths remain open, or they need to use masks to protect

themselves from this smoke and dust. If this is the case, they should take precautions lest they can be harmed. Indeed, the self of a person is a trust with him and he should fear Allah Almighty with regard to this trust and not subject it to any harm or damage.

On this occasion, I would like to note that the invalidators of fast do not actually invalidate it except if the following three conditions are met:

First: He who consumes or commits them is aware that they invalidate his fast.

Second: He remembers; not forgetting that they invalidate his fast.

Third: He is acting voluntarily.

If he is not aware, then his fasting is valid, whether he is ignorant of the ruling or the time of fasting. An example of ignorance of the ruling is a person who gets cupped during the daytime in Ramadan thinking that cupping has no effect on fasting. He is not to blame, for he is ignorant of the ruling.

An example of ignorance of the time is a person who thinks that dawn has not yet risen so he eats and drinks, and after that he realizes that he has eaten and drunk after the rise of dawn. His fasting is valid and he is not required to make up for it, since he was ignorant of the time.

This is evidenced by the general meaning of the verse that says: {Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred} [Al-Baqarah: 286] Allah Almighty also says: {And there is no blame upon you for what you have erred but [only for] what your hearts intended} [Al-Ahzāb: 5] It is also evidenced by the specific meaning of the following report of Asmā' bint Abi Bakr (may Allah be pleased with her and her father): "We broke our fast on a cloudy day during the lifetime of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and then the sun appeared." [Al-Bukhārī] She did not mention that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) ordered them to make up for that. If making up were obligatory, he would have commanded them to do so; and if he had commanded them, this should have been reported to the community of Muslims. If making up were obligatory in such a case, it would be part of the Shariah of Allah, and His Shariah must be conveyed and preserved.

As for ignorance of the ruling, the evidence for this is the Hadīth involving 'Adyy ibn Hātim (may Allah be pleased with him) who continued to eat and drink while looking at two camel head-cords – used to harness the camel – that he put under his pillow; and when he could distinguish between them, he stopped eating and drinking. Then, he informed the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) about that. Thereupon, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said to him: "Indeed, your pillow is wide to have enough room for the white cord and the black cord." He did not order him to make up for the fast.

As for the evidence for the second condition – that he remembers – it is the general meaning of the verse that says: {Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred} [Al-Baqarah: 286] This verse gives an inclusive meaning. The relevant specific evidence is found in the Hadīth in which Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) said: “Whoever forgets that he is fasting and eats or drinks, let him complete his fast, for it was Allah who fed him and gave him to drink.”

As for the third condition – acting voluntarily – its evidence is the general meaning of the verse that says: {And there is no blame upon you for what you have erred but [only for] what your hearts intended} [Al-Ahzāb: 5] A person under coercion does not act deliberately. And specific evidence is found in the verse that says: {Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief, except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is certain in faith. But those who [willingly] open their breasts for disbelief, upon them is wrath from Allah, and for them is a great punishment.} [Al-Nahl: 106] This pertains to coercion to commit polytheism, which is the greatest sin. And if polytheism – the greatest sin – is not judged as such if the person is under coercion, then there is greater reason to apply this rule to things that are less serious, using the above verse analogically.



Question (22): What is the ruling on fasting of a child?

Answer (22): Fasting is not obligatory on a child, as we have previously mentioned; rather, it is an act of Sunnah, for which he will be rewarded if he fasts. He incurs no sin if he does not fast; however, his guardian should encourage him to fast so as to get used to it.



Question (23): What is the ruling on fasting of someone who is sane at times and insane at others, or he suffers dementia at times and comes to his senses at others?

Answer (23): The ruling applies when its reason exists, and vice versa. When he is sane and rational, fasting is due on him; and when he is insane and demented, fasting is not due on him. If we assume that he suffers insanity for a day and recovers for a day, or he suffers dementia for a day and recovers for a day – i.e. that he loses discernment due to old age, then fasting is due on him on the day he is recovered; and it is not due on him on the day he is suffering such disorders.



Question (24): What is the ruling if a person loses his sanity during the daytime?

Answer (24): If he loses his sanity during the day, his fasting becomes invalid because he is no longer accountable for religious obligations. The same holds true if he suffers dementia

during the daytime. He is not required to continue fasting for the rest of the day, but he is required to make up for it later. Likewise, he who loses his sanity during the daytime is required to make up for the missed fast, for he was accountable for religious obligations in the earlier part of the day.



Question (25): What is the ruling on fasting on the day of doubt (30th of Sha'bān), fearing it could be the first of Ramadan?

Answer (25): Fasting on the day of doubt is forbidden, according to the more correct opinion, because 'Ammār ibn Yāsir (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "Whoever fasts on the day of doubt has disobeyed Abu al-Qāsim [meaning the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him)]." By fasting the day of doubt, a person transgresses the limits set by Allah Almighty, which prescribe that Ramadan should only be fasted after sighting the crescent or upon the completion of Sha'bān as 30 days. Hence, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Do not fast a day or two days ahead of Ramadan, except a person used to observe a particular fast; he may fast on that day."

Moreover, a person under Muslim rule should follow the ruler. So, if it is affirmed to the ruler that Ramadan has started, he should fast along with the Muslims; otherwise, he should not fast. We have pointed out in a previous answer the case of a person who sees the crescent of Ramadan alone, as to whether he should fast or not.

Question (26): What is the ruling regarding a person who begins fast in a Muslim country then moves to another country where the fast has begun later. If he follows them in fasting, he will fast more than 30 days, or the opposite.

Answer (26): If a person moves from a Muslim country to another, where fasting has begun later, he should remain with them and break his fast along with them, for a person should fast when the people fast, and he should observe Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Ad'ha when the people observe them. As for the point of fasting one or two days more is like a traveler who reaches a country where sunset comes later than the country he was in, in which case he should remain fasting until the sun sets, even if this means fasting two or more hours than the usual time. And this is because he has moved to a country where the crescent was sighted later than in the country he was in, and the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) ordered us to fast and stop the fast only after seeing the crescent. He said: "Stop the fast upon seeing it." "Do not stop the fast until you see it."

As for the opposite – that he moves to a country where the crescent was sighted earlier than in the country he was in – in such a case, he should stop the fast along with them and then make up for what he has missed; a day or two. If he stops the fast with them after 28 days, he should make up for two days if the month is complete (30 days) in both countries, and one day if the month is incomplete in both or either of them.

Question (27): Someone may say: Why is a person required to fast more than 30 days in the first case, whereas he is required to make up in the second?

Answer (27): He is required to make up in the second case because a month cannot be less than 29 days, and he fasts beyond the 30 days because he has not seen the crescent.

In the first case, we said to him: Break your fast even if the days are less than 29 for you, because the crescent has been sighted there and you cannot fast a day of Shawwāl. Because you fasted less than 29 days, you are required to complete them as 29; unlike in the other case, where you are still in Ramadan if you move to a country where the crescent has not been sighted yet. So, you are in Ramadan there; how can you break the fast?! You should follow the people in fasting, even if this means fasting more than a month, for this is like fasting more hours in a day.



Question (28): What is the etiquette of fasting?

Answer (28): The etiquette of fasting includes being constantly heedful of Allah Almighty by complying with His commands and avoiding His prohibitions. In the Qur'an, He says: {O you who believe, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.} [Al-Baqarah: 183] And the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whoever does not give up false

speech and acting upon it and does not abandon foolishness, Allah is not in need of him leaving his food and drink.”

Among the etiquette of fasting is to give charity and do acts of kindness to people on a frequent basis, particularly in Ramadan. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) was the most generous of people, and he used to be most generous in Ramadan when Jibrīl (Gabriel) would meet him and study the Qur’an with him.

Another etiquette is to avoid what Allah Almighty has prohibited, like lying, cursing, reviling, cheating, treachery, looking at forbidden things, and listening to forbidden things, as well as all other things that must be avoided by fasting and non-fasting people alike; but there is greater reason to avoid them while fasting.

Another etiquette of fasting is to have Suhūr (pre-dawn meal) and to have it late at night, as the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) said: “Eat Suhūr, for indeed there is a blessing in Suhūr.”

Its etiquette also includes breaking the fast with dates, and, if not available, with dried dates, and, if not available, with water.

Another etiquette is to hasten to break the fast once sunset becomes certain or most likely. The Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) said: “People will remain upon goodness as long as they hasten to break the fast.”

Question (29): What is the ruling regarding a person who eats and drinks while he is doubtful about the break of dawn?

Answer (29): It is permissible for a person to eat and drink until dawn becomes clear to him. Allah Almighty says: {So now, have relations with them and seek that which Allah has decreed for you. And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night]. Then complete the fast until the sunset.} [Al-Baqarah: 187] As long as it is not certain that dawn has risen, he may eat and drink – even if he has doubts – until he becomes certain. By contrast, a person having doubt about sunset should not eat or drink until sunset becomes certain or most likely.



Question (30): What is the ruling on eating during the Adhān (call to prayer) of Fajr, to its end?

Answer (30): The ruling regarding eating during the Adhān depends on the Muezzin's attitude: If he makes the call to prayer only after being certain the dawn has risen, then one is required to abstain from food and drink once the Adhān is pronounced, for the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Eat and drink until you hear the Adhān of Ibn Um Maktūm."

If the Muezzin makes the call to prayer without ascertaining that dawn has risen, then it is preferable to abstain from food and drink when one hears the Adhān; however, he may eat and

drink until the Adhān is complete - as long as there is no certainty. In principle, it is night until it is proved that dawn has risen, but it is better to be cautious and not eat during the Adhān of Fajr.



Question (31): What is the ruling on swimming and diving for a fasting person?

Answer (31): There is nothing wrong with diving or swimming by a fasting person, for these are not among the invalidators of fast. The basic rule is that things are permissible unless there is evidence for ruling them disliked or prohibited. In the case in question, there is no evidence for dislike or prohibition. However, some scholars ruled that it is disliked for fear that some water might reach the person's throat while he is not aware.



Question (32): What is the ruling on using eye drops and eye ointments by a fasting person?

Answer (32): A fasting person may apply Kohl or drops to his eyes and also in his ears, even if he feels the taste in his throat, for this does not invalidate the fast because it is not food or drink and cannot replace them. The relevant evidence only prohibits food and drink, so it does not apply to things which are not food or drink or can be treated as such. This view

was favored by Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy upon him), and it is the correct one.



Question (33): What is the ruling on using toothbrush and toothpaste for a fasting person?

Answer (33): There is nothing wrong for a fasting person to use toothbrush and toothpaste to clean his teeth. But, given that the toothpaste is highly permeative, he ought not to use it while fasting, for it passes through to the throat and the stomach while the person is not aware. Plus, there is no urgent need for it. So, he should refrain from it until he breaks his fast. He should use the toothpaste in the nighttime, not in daytime, but, in principle, it is permissible and there is no harm in it.



Question (34): What is the ruling on doing a blood test and blood donation by a fasting person?

Answer (34): A blood test for a fasting person, which means taking a sample of his blood to examine and test it, is permissible and there is no harm in it.

As for blood donation, it apparently involves letting out plenty of blood and so it is subject to the same ruling that applies to cupping. Hence, we say to a person observing obligatory fasting: Do not donate your blood, except if necessity calls for it.

For example, if a man suffers bleeding and doctors say that he will die if he does not receive blood transfusion right away; so, blood must be donated to him. If they find a person to donate blood and that person happens to be fasting, there is nothing wrong if he donated blood then he breaks his fast and eats and drinks for the rest of the day. This is because he has broken his fast for a necessity, like rescuing someone from fire or drowning. Such a person is required to make up for this fast.



Question (35): What is the ruling on using moisturizers for a fasting person if he has chapped lips and a dry nose?

Answer (35): The nose of a fasting person may become dry and his lips chapped. There is no harm in such a case to use a moisturizer or cream to moisten the lips and nose, or to wet them with water with a piece of cloth or the like. Caution should be exercised, however, lest some of the substance used for moisturizing reaches his stomach. If something reaches his stomach unintentionally, there is no blame on him. It is like a person who rinses his mouth and some water reaches his stomach unintentionally; this does not break his fast.



Question (36): What is the ruling on injections given in the muscle or vein (of a fasting person)?

Answer (36): There is nothing wrong with injections given in the vein or muscle or thigh, for they do not invalidate the fast as they are not food or drink and they cannot replace them. We have previously explained that this has no effect on fasting; rather, it is the injections that can replace food and drink that affect the fasting.



Question (37): What is the ruling on rinsing the mouth and sniffing water excessively during the daytime of Ramadan?

Answer (37): It is better to phrase the question as follows: What is the ruling on excessive rinsing of the mouth and sniffing water by a fasting person? The answer is that this is disliked, for the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said to Laqīt ibn Sabrah (may Allah be pleased with him): "Perform ablution thoroughly, pass wet fingers through the fingers (and toes), and sniff water well into your nostrils unless you are fasting." This is proof that a fasting person should not do excessive sniffing of water into his nostrils or excessive rinsing of his mouth because water might go down to his stomach thus invalidating his fast.

However, if he did so excessively and water actually reached his stomach unintentionally, this does not invalidate his fast because among the conditions of invalidating the fast is that the fasting person does what invalidates his fast intentionally.



Question (38): What is the ruling on smelling perfume by a fasting person?

Answer (38): There is nothing wrong if a fasting person smells perfume or incense. But he should not inhale the smoke of incense, for smoke has tiny particles that penetrates into a person's stomach, thus invalidating the fast, like water and what is similar to it. As for the mere smelling without inhaling it until it reaches his stomach, there is no harm in it.



Question (39): Does inhaling perfume, like aloes and incense, affect a fasting person and invalidate his fasting?

Answer (39): Perfumes which have no mass that passes through a person's nose do not invalidate the fast. As for incense that emits smoke, if a fasting person inhales it and it reaches his stomach, it invalidates his fast. This is because it has a mass that enters the stomach, unlike fluid perfumes which a person only smells and they have no mass that reaches the stomach. As for merely getting perfumed with aloes, there is nothing wrong with that.



Question (40): What is the difference between incense and drops that pass through the throat and the fasting person feels their taste?

Answer (40): Here is the difference: A person who inhales incense intentionally lets it into his stomach through a usual inlet, which is the nose; whereas in the case of eye or ear drops, he did not let an invalidator of fast get into his body from a usual inlet, much like a person who treads on a colocynth and feels its bitterness in his throat.



Question (41): What is the ruling if a fasting person eats or drinks forgetfully? And what should he do if he remembers during that?

Answer (41): We have previously mentioned that if a fasting person eats or drinks out of forgetfulness, even if much, his fast does not become invalid. As long as he is still in a state of forgetfulness, his fast remains valid. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whoever forgets that he is fasting and eats or drinks, let him complete his fast, for it was Allah who fed him and gave him to drink."

However, he should stop eating or drinking once he remembers. Even if a morsel of food or a sip of drink is inside his mouth, he should spit it out because the excuse permitting eating and drinking is no longer there.



Question (42): Many people think that if a person sees someone eating while fasting, he should not remind him; is this right?

Answer (42): If someone sees a fasting person eating, he should remind him, as this is cooperation in goodness and righteousness. This is like seeing a person praying in a direction other than the Qiblah or wanting to perform ablution with impure water. In such cases, he should be reminded and advised. If a fasting person is excused due to forgetfulness, his fellow Muslim is mindful and should remind him. This meaning can also be derived from a Hadith in which the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Verily, I am a human being like you and I forget just as you forget. So, if I forget, remind me." As a person who forgets during prayer should be reminded, the same holds true for a fasting person who acts forgetfully.



Question (43): What is the ruling on discharge of blood from a fasting person's nose, mouth, or any other part of his body?

Answer (43): The discharge of blood does not affect his fasting, for this occurs against his will. So, if he has a nosebleed, albeit profuse, his fast remains valid.



Question (44): What is the ruling if he causes the bleeding, like in the case of tooth extraction?

Answer (44): There is also nothing wrong with that, for he has not had his tooth extracted to cause bleeding, but, rather, due to the harm in his tooth. Moreover, the bleeding caused by tooth extraction is usually slight and does not compare to cupping.



Question (45): What is the ruling if a person breaks his fast on land, for example, and then boards a plane and it takes off, and after that he sees the sun?

Answer (45): He is not required to abstain from food and drink, for his day of fasting has been complete upon sunset and he has broken his fast based on a valid proof; and when a person does something based on a valid proof, he is not required to repeat it.



Question (46): Some women take pills in Ramadan to prevent the menstrual period so that they would not have to make up for missed fast later. Is this permissible? And are there any restrictions that should be adhered to in this regard?

Answer (46): In my view, a woman should not do this and should keep the state that Allah Almighty has decreed for women. Allah Almighty caused menstruation to exist for a wise

purpose that suits the woman's nature. If a woman prevents it from happening, this will undoubtedly cause a harmful reaction to her body. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "There should be no harm, nor reciprocal harm." This is in addition to the harmful effects such pills have on the womb, according to doctors.

So my opinion on this issue is that a woman should not use such pills - and praise be to Allah Almighty for His decree and wisdom. When she gets her menstrual period, she stops fasting and praying. When she becomes pure, she resumes fasting and prayer. When Ramadan is over, she makes up for the days of fast she missed.



Question (47): A person witnesses Ramadan while staying in a western country. He finds difficulty determining the start and end of daytime. What should he do? Moreover, he does not find restaurants and grocery stores open at night. Should he abstain from food and drink at the start of the night? Is it permissible for him to abandon the fast and make up for it after his return from his long mission?

Answer (47): It is known that Western countries that have Muslim communities in them have calendars outlining the times of the start and end of the fast. There are also Islamic centers that present this. So, he can contact the Islamic centers there to provide him with these times.

Regarding not finding restaurants or groceries open at night, he can save food, like bread and the like, to the latter part of the night and have Suhūr then, which is better. There is also nothing wrong if he has Suhūr early at night. Delaying Suhūr is only recommended, not obligatory.

As for delaying the fast and making up for it after return to his homeland, this issue is subject to disagreement among the scholars. Some scholars held that he may abandon the fast and make up for it in the winter or after his return. But the predominant course of action according to this opinion is that if he will stay there, he may not delay making up for the missed fasting till the next Ramadan, lest months of fasting accumulate on him.

Other scholars held that he is required to observe the fast if he intends to stay there for long, since the ruling of a traveler ceases to apply to a person when he intends to stay, either for 4 days or 15 days; the scholars differed on this point. And Allah knows best.



Question (48): Muslims living in North Europe face a problem regarding the length of the night and day. Daytime may last for 22 hours, with the night being two hours. The opposite happens in another season. It is also said that the night lasts in some regions for six months and the daytime for six months. How can Muslims who live in these countries or those staying there for work or study observe the fasting?

Answer (48): The problem in these countries is not limited to fasting only, but it also includes prayer. If these countries have night and day, Muslims there should treat them in the usual manner, whether the daytime is long or short.

As for the regions that have no night or no daytime, like in the polar circles where daytime lasts for six months and the night for six months, Muslims living there should estimate the times of their fasting and prayers; but how?

Some scholars held that they should follow the times of Makkah, for it is the mother of all cities, and a mother should be followed, like an imam for instance. Describing his spear, an Arab poet composed the following verse:

**At its head is a mother of it (meaning the pointed
arrowhead) by which it is guided**

Other scholars said that Muslims in those countries should follow what is average, estimating the night as 12 hours and the daytime as 12 hours.

Another scholarly opinion says that they should follow the nearest country to them where there is regular night and day. This view is more correct, for the nearest country to them is more deserving of being followed and it is the closest to their climate and geographical traits. Based on this, they should consider the day and night of the nearest country and apply its times in their fasting and prayers.

Question (49): What is the ruling on copulation during the daytime in Ramadan, whether out of forgetfulness or intentionally? And what does this entail?

Answer (49): Copulation during the daytime in Ramadan is like any other invalidator of fast. If a person is permitted to break his fast during the day, there is nothing wrong if he engages in sexual intercourse whether he was fasting or not, but he is required to make up for that day.

However, if he is not permitted to break his fast for any excuse, then if he engages in sexual intercourse out of ignorance or forgetfulness, there is no blame upon him and it does not invalidate his fast, for it has occurred due to ignorance or forgetfulness. But if this is done knowingly and deliberately, it entails five things: incurring sin, invalidation of the fast, the requirement to abstain for the rest of the day, the requirement to make up for that day, and making expiation.

The expiation is to set a slave free; if not possible, fasting two consecutive months; and if not possible, feeding sixty poor people. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: A man came to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and said: "I am ruined, O Messenger of Allah!" The Prophet said: "What ruined you?" The man replied: "I had intercourse with my wife during the day in Ramadan while fasting." The Prophet said to him: "Are you able to free a slave?" The man said: 'No.' The Prophet said: "Can you fast for two consecutive months?" He said: 'No.' The Prophet said: "Can you feed sixty poor people?" He said: 'No.' Then the man

sat down. A basket of dates was brought to the Prophet and he said to the man: "Give this as charity." The man said: "To someone who is poorer than myself! By Allah, there is no household in this city who is in need of these dates more than mine!" The Prophet laughed until his molar teeth became visible and said to the man: "Feed these dates to your family."



Question (50): If a person engages in sexual intercourse more than once during the day in Ramadan, is he required to give multiple expiation?

Answer (50): According to the more famous opinion in Imām Ahmad's school of Fiqh, if a person engages in sexual intercourse a number of times and he has not expiated for the first time, one expiation is enough; and if he does so over two days, he is required to give one expiation for each day, for each day is a separate act of worship.



Question (51): The Hadīth "It is not righteousness to fast during travel," denotes that not fasting is preferable. Is hardship the reason behind that? If we say that it is so, travel nowadays is done via means that has no hardship, like air-conditioned planes and cars. Kindly shed light on this issue and whether it is preferred to fast or not under modern circumstances.

Answer (51): A traveler may fast and may not, as Allah Almighty says: {*And whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days*} [Al-Baqarah: 185] The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) used to travel with the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and some of them would observe the fast and others would not, and neither party would blame the other.

The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) used to fast during travel. Abu al-Dardā' (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: "We traveled with the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) in extreme heat and none of us was fasting except the Messenger of Allah and 'Abdullāh ibn Rawāhah."

The rule is that a traveler is given the choice to fast or not. If the travel is not difficult, however, it is better for him to observe the fast, for three reasons:

First: He follows the Prophet's example.

Second: Fasting becomes easy for him, as it is easier to fast when people are fasting.

Third: He fulfills his obligation sooner.

This applies if fasting is not hard for him; otherwise, he should not fast. Indeed, it is not righteousness to fast during travel. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) made this statement when he saw a man being shaded and surrounded with people. He asked: "What is the matter?"

They replied: "He is fasting." Thereupon, he said: "Indeed, it is not righteousness to fast during travel." This general rule applies to everyone in a state similar to that man; those who find it difficult to fast. Hence, we say: If travel nowadays does not involve hardship – as the questioner said – then it is preferable for a traveler to fast.



Question (52): What is the ruling on fasting during travel that involves hardship?

Answer (52): If fasting involves a potential hardship, it becomes disliked, for the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) saw a man being shaded and surrounded by people, and he asked: "What is the matter?" They replied: "He is fasting." Thereupon, he said: "Indeed, it is not righteousness to fast during travel."

If it involves severe hardship, it is incumbent upon the traveler to break his fast. A complaint was raised to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) that fasting was too hard for the people, and so he broke the fast. Then it was said to him that some people observed the fast; thereupon, he said: "Those are the disobedient ones; those are the disobedient ones."

But if a traveler does not find difficulty fasting, it is preferable that he fasts, in line with the Prophet's example. Abu al-Dardā' (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: "We

were with the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) on a very hot day during Ramadan, and none of us was fasting except the Prophet and 'Abdullāh ibn Rawāhah."



Question (53): Do academic trips and missions that exceed a month fall under the kind of travel that permits breaking the fast, especially that fasting in the West involves hardship and many troubles? What is the travel in which it is not permissible to shorten the prayer or break the fast during Ramadan?

Answer (53): This issue is subject to various disagreements among the scholars, as to whether the ruling of travel ceases if the traveler intends to stay for a specific period exceeding four days, 15 days, or 19 days, or he is regarded as a traveler as long as he does not intend to settle in that country. There is a difference of opinion among the scholars over this matter.

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah and his student Ibn al-Qayyim held that as long as a person is on a journey and does not intend to stay there permanently; rather, it is only for some need after which he will return to his homeland, he continues to be subject to the rulings of a traveler.

This view was adopted by Shaykh 'Abdullāh ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, Shaykh Muhammad Rashīd Reda, the author of "Al-Manār", and Shaykh 'Abdur-Rahmān ibn Nāsir ibn Sa'di (may Allah have mercy upon all of them). This is because there is no evidence that a person ceases to be regarded as

a traveler if he stays for a certain purpose, after which he will return to his homeland.

They cited a number of reports on this issue, including one relating that Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) stayed in Azerbaijan for six months during which he shortened prayers. He was detained there by snow. They cited similar reports about some Tābi'is who were staying in Muslim border areas.

Nonetheless, I see that they should not delay the fasting of Ramadan to the next Ramadan, for this would lead to accumulation of months of fasting, making it hard for them to make up for the missed fast later.

The travel that does not make it permissible to shorten prayers or break the fast is the one for a distance less than 48 miles, or about 81.3 km.

Also, the scholars differed over the travel in which a person sets out to do something prohibited, as to whether he may or may not use the dispensations related to travel.

Some scholars said that this is permissible, given the inclusiveness of the relevant proofs.

Some others opined that he may not use the dispensations associated with travel, for he is a sinner by this travel and does not deserve dispensation or facilitation. Some people travel to certain countries to indulge in unlawful things there, like drinking alcohol, gambling, adultery, and the like. Such people

are not permitted to shorten prayer or break their fast, according to one of two scholarly opinions. And Allah Almighty knows best.



Question (54): Is there a certain number of days for breaking the fast during travel?

Answer (54): There is no certain number of days for this, for when the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) conquered Makkah, he entered it on Ramadan 20 and did not observe the fast for the rest of the month. This is mentioned in an authentic Hadīth reported by Ibn 'Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) and narrated by Al-Bukhāri. He stayed for another nine or ten days after Ramadan. So, in total, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) stayed in Makkah for 19 days during which he shortened prayers and did not observe the fast while in Ramadan.



Question (55): What is the ruling on the fasting of Ramadan by a pilgrim performing 'Umrah?

Answer (55): There is nothing wrong with the fasting of a pilgrim performing 'Umrah. We have mentioned above that it is preferable for a traveler to fast if he does not find difficulty in fasting. And if he chooses not to fast, there is no blame upon him.

A pilgrim may think: If I continue to fast, the rituals of 'Umrah will be difficult for me, and I will have one of two choices; either I delay the performance of the rituals until after sunset, or I break my fast and start the rituals right away. We say to him: It is preferred that you break the fast and perform the rituals of 'Umrah upon arrival to Makkah, for this - i.e. the performance of 'Umrah upon arrival to Makkah - was what the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) did, and the main purpose of the pilgrim performing 'Umrah is to do 'Umrah, not to fast in Makkah.



Question (56): What is the ruling on traveling during Ramadan for the purpose of breaking the fast?

Answer (56): In principle, fasting is due on Muslims; rather, it is an obligation and one of the pillars of Islam, as well known. It is not permissible to use any trick to avoid religious duties. So, if a person sets out on a journey with the intention to avoid the fast, his travel is forbidden, and so is his breaking of the fast. He should repent to Allah Almighty, return from his travel, and observe the fast. If he does not return, he is required to observe the fast, albeit during travel.

In brief, a person may not use travel as a trick to avoid fasting in Ramadan. In fact, trickery with the aim of exemption from a religious duty does not make one exempt from it. Likewise, the use of tricks cannot render a prohibited thing permissible.

Question (57): What is the ruling on making up for the missed fast in Ramadan early?

Answer (57): It is better to make up for the missed fast in Ramadan early than to delay it because a person does not know what may happen to him. Hastening to settle the debt of fasting is a sign of firmness and keenness to do what is good. If it were not for the following Hadīth of ‘Ā’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her): “I would have missed days of fast in Ramadan, and I could not make up for them except in Sha’bān;” if it were not for this Hadīth, we would say that hastening to make up for the missed fast is obligatory.

This Hadīth indicates that a person upon whom missed fasts from Ramadan are due should not delay it till next Ramadan. It is not permissible for a person having to make up for missed fast in Ramadan to delay it till next Ramadan except for an excuse, like continued illness that makes him unable to fast or breastfeeding that makes a woman unable to fast. In such a case, they can delay making up for the missed fast till the next Ramadan.



Question (58): Many Muslims think that when an act of worship, like prayer or fasting, is missed, it ceases to be due.

Answer (58): We have previously mentioned the rule that if a person delays a timed act of worship beyond its fixed time without a valid excuse, it will never be accepted from him

even if he repeats it a thousand times. He must repent to Allah Almighty, and repentance is enough.

But if a person misses the fast of Ramadan for an excuse, like illness or travel or otherwise, he is required to make up for it. Allah Almighty says: {And whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days} [Al-Baqarah: 185]



Question (59): If a person delays making up for the missed fast till the next Ramadan starts without a valid excuse, is anything due on him along with making up for the missed fast?

Answer (59): According to the preponderant view, he is only required to make up for the missed fast and is not required to feed the poor, given the general indication of the verse that says: {And whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days} [Al-Baqarah: 185] Allah Almighty says “an equal number of other days” and does not mention feeding. A person is basically absolved of liability unless there is evidence for the obligation. That said, it is forbidden for him to delay making up for the missed fast till the next Ramadan without an excuse.



Question (60): Is there a difference between observance of fast and making up for missed fast?

Answer (60): First: Whereas there is a broad time limit for making up for the missed fast till the next Ramadan, the observance of fast has a tight time limit; it must be done in Ramadan.

Second: Copulation during the observance of fast entails expiation, whereas it does not entail expiation during making up for missed fast.

Third: If a person breaks his fast during the daytime in Ramadan without excuse, his fast becomes invalidated, yet he is still required to abstain for the rest of the day, out of respect for this blessed time.

On the other hand, if he breaks his fast during the daytime while he is making up for a missed fast, his fast becomes invalidated but he is not required to abstain for the rest of the day, for there is no inviolability for time when making up for missed fast, which can be done in any day.



Question (61): What is the ruling regarding a person who dies while missed fast of Ramadan is still due on him?

Answer (61): If a person dies while missed fast of Ramadan is due on him, his heir should fast on his behalf. 'Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whoever dies while still having some fasts to make up for, his heir should fast

on his behalf.” If his heir does not fast on his behalf, he should feed a poor person for each day of missed fast.



Question (62): If a Muslim was fasting in Ramadan then died without completing it, is his heir required to complete the fast on his behalf?

Answer (62): His heir is not required to complete the fast on his behalf, nor to feed a poor person. This is because when a person dies, his deeds come to an end, as related in a Hadīth in which the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) said: “When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge, or a pious child who prays for him.”

Accordingly, if he dies, no one should observe the fast or feed the poor on his behalf. Even if he dies during a day of fasting, no one should fast this day on his behalf.



Question (63): What do Tarāwīh and Tahajjud refer to?

Answer (63): Tarāwīh is Qiyām al-Layl (voluntary night prayer) in Ramadan. The Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) said: “He who offers Qiyām during the month of Ramadan, faithfully and expecting its reward from Allah, will have his past sins forgiven.”

It is called Tarāwīh because people in the past used to prolong it, and after offering four Rak'ahs – with two Taslīms – they would take Rāhah (rest) and resume the prayer. This is indicated in a Hadīth in which 'Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported: "The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) would offer four Rak'ahs; do not ask about their excellence and length; then he would offer four Rak'ahs; do not ask about their excellence and length; and then he would offer three Rak'ahs." She meant that he would offer four Rak'ahs with two Taslīms, and that there is a break between those and the next four.

Tarāwīh is a Sunnah enacted by the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him); but he led his Companions in these prayers for three nights, after which he was late in showing up and then said: "I was afraid it would become obligatory upon you."

A Muslim should be keen to perform it so as to gain the reward for Qiyām in Ramadan, which is the forgiveness of past sins.

He should also offer it along with the Imām, for the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whoever performs Qiyām along with the Imām until he (the Imām) leaves shall have the reward of Qiyām for one whole night."

It is no secret that Tarāwīh performed nowadays involve some mistakes by Imāms and others.

Many Imāms offer Tarāwīh so quickly that people cannot enjoy tranquility in prayer, and the elderly, the sick, and others find it hard to catch up. This runs counter to the trust given to them. An Imām is entrusted and should do what is best for those praying behind him.

The scholars stated that it is disliked for an Imām to hasten with the prayer in a way that prevents those praying behind him or some of them from doing the supererogatory elements of prayer. If so, then there is greater reason for this dislike when he prays so quickly that they are unable to do what is necessary, i.e. having tranquility and catching up with the Imām.

Also, some Imāms perform the Tarāwīh prayer as an odd and consecutive number of Rak'ahs, like the one sometimes offered by the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). So, he would offer five or seven Rak'ahs consecutively and only sits at the end of it, or nine Rak'ahs and only sits at the eighth Rak'ah and says Tashahhud and then rises for the ninth one. Some Imāms do this. I do not know any report saying that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) used to pray in this manner when he led people in prayer; but he would only do this at home.

This action, which has grounds in the Sunnah, is to offer Witr as five or seven Rak'ahs and only sit at the end of it, or as nine Rak'ahs and only sit at the eighth one and make Tashahhud without Taslīm and then rise for the ninth Rak'ah followed by Tashahhud and Taslīm. But when an Imām prays

like this in Ramadan, he confuses people, with many entering prayer with the intention for offer two Rak'ahs other than the Witr.

Moreover, some people may need to leave the prayer after two or four Rak'ahs and they wait until the Imām makes Taslīm so that they can go.

Also, some people may need to answer the call of nature and find it hard to continue with the Imām for five, seven, or nine consecutive Rak'ahs.

If the Imām wants by doing so to demonstrate the Sunnah, we say to him: Demonstrate the Sunnah through words by saying: The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) used to offer Witr as five or seven Rak'ahs and only sits at the end of it, or nine Rak'ahs and only sits at the eighth and makes Tashahhud without Taslīm, and then he rises for the ninth Rak'ah, followed by Tashahhud and Taslīm. He should not do so with a group of people who are not aware of it. Also, some people may join the prayer later and get confused or burdened by it.

Furthermore, I have no knowledge so far that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) led his Companions in Witr prayer in this manner; rather, he used to offer it at home.

As for the mistakes made by people other than the Imāms, some cut off these Tarāwīh prayers and pray in a mosque until one or two Taslīms and then go to another mosque and do

the same, thus losing time and missing the great reward about which the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whoever prays along with the Imām until he (the Imām) leaves shall have the reward of Qiyām for one whole night." What a great loss it is!

Also, some people praying behind the Imām do not follow him properly and surpass him, whereas the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Is he who raises his head before the Imām not afraid that Allah might transform his head into that of a donkey or his shape into that of a donkey?"



Question (64): Is the person who offered Tarāwīh prayer required to perform it regularly?

Answer (64): He is not required to perform it regularly, for it is an act of Sunnah (not an obligation). He gets rewarded if he does it and is not punished if he does not do it; however, he misses a great deal of good, as previously mentioned. A person who intends to do good, or habitually does good, ought not to abandon it. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said to 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr: "Do not be like so-and-so. He used to perform Qiyām (voluntary night prayer) and then abandoned Qiyām."



Question (65): Some Imāms weep loudly and uncontrollably, and some people criticize that. What is the ruling on such weeping and the criticism directed at it?

Answer (65): There is nothing wrong with unaffected moderate and mild weeping, not sobbing. This is a sign of the softness of a person's heart and his humility and presence of mind. As for affected weeping, I fear it might be a sign of ostentation, which is punished rather than rewarded.

Also, some Imāms recite in the Qunūt (supplication while standing in prayer) of Witr long supplications in manners not reported from the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). This causes hardship to worshipers or some of them. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) used to choose the most concise supplications and abandon others.

My advice to my brothers, the Imāms, is: Do not prolong Qunūt in a way that makes it difficult for people and do not use strange rhymed supplications. Indeed, brevity is the soul of wit. It is better to perform an act of worship in the Shariah-prescribed manner that does not cause boredom than to do it in a way that burdens people and makes them bored.



Question (66): What is the ruling on carrying a Mus'haf (copy of the Qur'an) during Qiyām although the Imām does not need anyone to correct his recitation?

Answer (66): In my view, a person praying behind an Imām should not carry a Mus'haf except if necessary, like when the Imām says to someone: I might make mistakes in recitation; so, I need you to stand behind me and follow my recitation in the Mus'haf to correct me if I make a mistake. Otherwise, it should not be done because it causes distraction and involves unnecessary movement. Moreover, it leads to missing the Sunnah of putting the right hand on the left hand over the chest. So, it is preferable that one does not do it except if needed, as explained above.



Question (67): Many people believe that the 27th night of Ramadan is the Night of Qadr, so they celebrate it with prayer and worship and do not do the same in other nights in Ramadan. Is this practice right?

Answer (67): This practice is not right. Indeed, the date of the Night of Qadr is not fixed. It might fall on the 27th night and it might fall on other nights as well. This is indicated in many Hadīths. It was authentically reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was shown the Night of Qadr in a certain year, and it was the 21st night. It was also authentically reported that he said: "Seek it in the last ten of Ramadan. The Night of Qadr occurs when nine (days of Ramadan) remain, when seven remain, or when five remain (meaning it could be on the 21st, 23rd, or 25th)."

Moreover, a person should not offer Qiyām specifically on the night that is hoped to be the Night of Qadr alone, but he should be diligent in worship throughout the last ten nights. This was the Prophet’s guidance. When the last ten nights started, he would tighten his waist-wrapper, awaken his household, and pass the night in worship. A keen believer should be diligent in all of the last ten nights and not miss the great reward.



Question (68): What is the meaning of I’tikāf? And what is its ruling?

Answer (68): I’tikāf is to retire to the mosque to be devoted to the worship of Allah Almighty, away from people.

It can be done in any mosque, whether it is a mosque where Friday prayer is held or not. It is preferable, however, to observe it in a mosque where Friday is held to avoid leaving for another mosque to pray it.



Question (69): Are there types of I’tikāf?

Answer (69): I’tikāf is of one type only, which, as previously clarified, is retirement to the mosque for worship of Allah Almighty. But it can be observed along with fasting or without fasting. The scholars differed over whether I’tikāf is valid without fasting or not.

The Shariah-prescribed I'tikāf is what is observed in the last ten nights of Ramadan, for the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) used to do so in the hope of being engaged in worship on the Night of Qadr, and he did not observe I'tikāf outside those Ramadan nights except for one time when he did not observe it in Ramadan so he made up for it in Shawwāl.



Question (70): Is I'tikāf restricted to Ramadan only or it can be observed in other months?

Answer (70): The Shariah-prescribed I'tikāf is the one in Ramadan, for the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) did not observe it except during this blessed month, with the exception of one year when he did not observe it in Ramadan and made up for it in Shawwāl.

It is permissible, however, to observe I'tikāf in other than Ramadan because 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him): "I vowed to observe I'tikāf for one night or one day in the Sacred Mosque." The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) replied: "Fulfill your vow." However, a person should not be ordered or asked to observe I'tikāf in other than Ramadan.



*This academic material is thus completed,
and praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds,
by Whose grace good things are accomplished.*

*May Allah's peace and blessings be
upon our Prophet Muhammad,
his family, his Companions,
and all those who follow them rightly
until the Day of Judgment.*

