

## Basic Fasting Guidelines

### THINGS THAT ARE FORBIDDEN IN FASTING (MUFTIRĀTU 'Ş- ŞAWM)

#### (A) Related to Head & Mouth:

1. & 2. Eating and drinking.
3. Intentionally letting the thick dust or smoke enter the throat.
4. Vomiting intentionally (even if it is for a medical purpose).
5. Submerging the head completely into the water.<sup>1</sup>

#### (B) Related to Private Parts:

6. Sexual intercourse.
7. Intentionally remaining in state of *janābat*<sup>2</sup> till the time of *fajr* (dawn).

A person becomes *junub*<sup>3</sup> & goes to sleep:

(a) with intention of not doing *ghusl* before dawn = fast is *bāṭil* (invalid).

(b) with intention of doing *ghusl* before dawn:

- i. but did not wake up before dawn = fast is okay.
- ii. woke up once & went back to sleep till *fajr* = fast + do qazā.<sup>4</sup>
- iii. woke up twice & went back to sleep till *fajr*  
= fast + do qazā + it is recommended to pay *kaffārah*.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, intentionally remaining in state of hayz (period) for a woman whose bleeding has stopped and has enough time to do *ghusl* or, at least, *tayammum* before *fajr*.

8. Doing anything that would cause discharge of semen.
9. Using liquid enema.

#### (C) Moral/Ethical:

10. *Kizb* (lying) of the highest type —falsely attributing a statement to Allāh, the Prophets, and the Imams— makes the fast *bāṭil* (invalid).

Note: If a person does any of the muftirāt intentionally, then the fast will become *bāṭil* (null/void).

However, doing any of these unintentionally does not harm the validity of fasting.

1. According to Ayatullah Sistani, submerging the head into the water is strongly disliked but not forbidden.
2. *Janābat* is a state of ritual impurity (*najāsāt*) caused by sexual intercourse or discharge of semen.
3. *Junub* means the person on whom *ghusl-e janābat* becomes obligatory.
4. *Qaza* means to make up the fast during other days after Ramadhān.
5. *Kaffārah* means penalty.

## THOSE EXEMPTED FROM FASTING

1. An **elderly person** who cannot fast at all or it causes great difficulty for him/her:  
There is no qazā for them at all; however, they have to pay *fidya*.  
(Fidya is different from kaffārah. Fidya is “compensation” whereas kaffārah is a “fine.”)  
Fidya for each day of fasting is 750 grams of wheat or rice; although giving 1.5 kg of wheat or rice is better.
2. A person whose **medical condition** does not allow him/her to stay thirsty (e.g., diabetic):  
If this person recovers from the medical problem, then it is wājib for him/her to do *qazā*.  
However, if there no chances of recovery from that illness, then he/she is exempted.  
Such a person also has to pay *fidya* for each day of fasting.
3. A **pregnant** or a **nursing woman**: if fasting would harm her or the child’s health.  
Such a woman has to do *qazā*; and also pay *fidya*.

### What About Travelers & Fasting?

If a **traveler** stays for ten days continuously in one city, then he can fast; but if he is going to stay in one city for less than ten days, then he cannot fast—he will have to make up (do *qaza*) the days he missed after the month of Ramadhān.

However, a “**frequent traveler**” will fast as normally and also say the prayers fully. “Frequent traveler” means a person

1. whose work itself is traveling (e.g., driver, pilot),
2. whose work involves traveling (e.g., salesperson, construction worker, consultant who visits the clients), and
3. whose work-place is more than 24 miles away from the city limits of his home-town.

## THE SPECIAL NAWĀFIL OF RAMADHĀN

The special *nawāfil* (recommended or supererogatory prayers) for the month of Ramadhān are to be recited as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> day —> 20 raka‘āt (2 rak‘at x 10) each night.

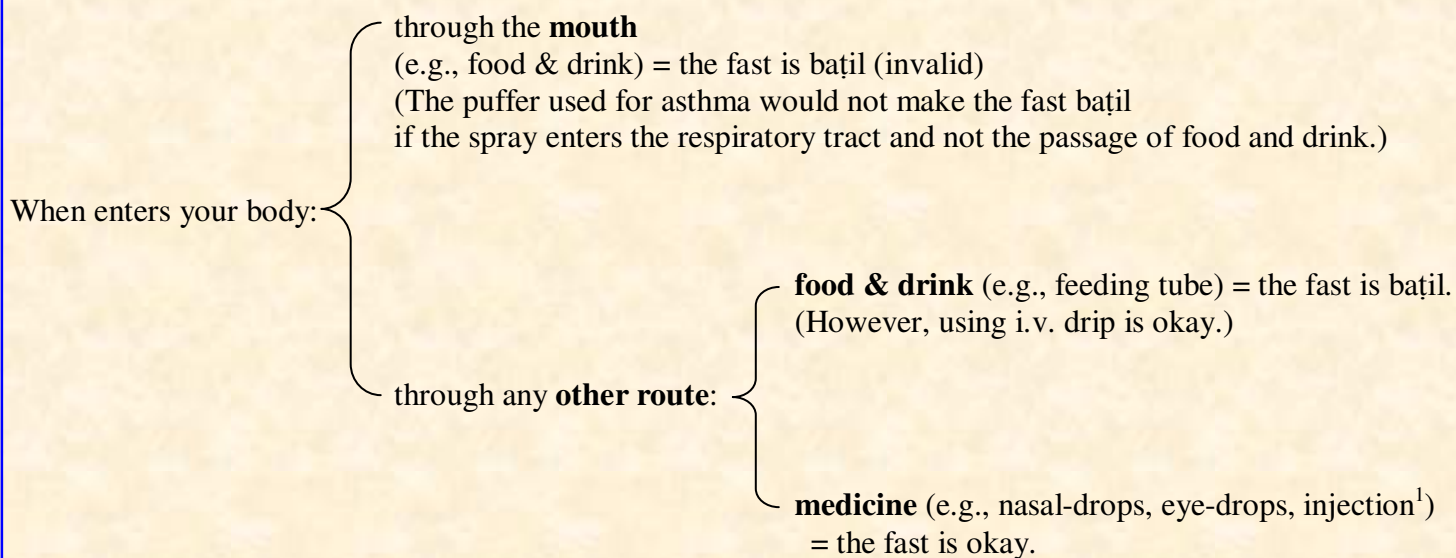
19<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> —> 100 raka‘āt (2 rak‘at x 50) each of the three eves.

21<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> —> 30 raka‘āt (2 rak‘at x 15) each of the ten nights.

The total numbers of the special *nawāfil* of Ramadhān comes to 1000 rak‘āt. However, it is important to note that these *nawāfil* prayers, from the Shí‘a Islamic perspective, cannot be said in congregational form (*jamā‘at*); it can only be said in individual form (*furāda*).

The Prophet (s.a.w.) said, “...I recommend you to say prayers in your homes because the best of a person’s prayers is in his home except for the obligatory (prayers).”

## FASTING & USE OF MEDICINE



Note: When the fast become baṭil because of medical reason, the one has only to do the qaza; there is no kaffarah.  
1. Except liquid enema which makes the fasting baṭil.

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## The Prophet's Sermon Welcoming the Month of Ramadhān

“O people, indeed the month of Allāh has approached you with blessings, mercy and forgiveness. In the eyes of Allāh, it is the **best of all months**, its days are best of all days, its nights are best of all nights, and its hours are best of all hours.

“It is a month in which you have been invited to be **guests of Allāh**, and you have been made in it the people who have honour of Allāh. Your breathing in it is *tasbīh* (singing the praise of God), your sleep in it is an act of *ibādāt* (worship), your deeds are accepted, and your prayers are answered to. Therefore, ask your Lord with sincere intentions and pure hearts to help you in fasting during this month and in reciting His Book. For the most unfortunate is one who is deprived of Allāh's forgiveness in this great month.

“By your thirst and hunger, remember the hunger of the day of judgement and its thirst. Give **charity** to the poor and needy among you; lower your **glances** from what is not permissible for you to see, and refrain [from **hearing**] what is not permissible for you to hear. Show sympathy to the **orphans** of the people, and sympathy will be shown to your orphans. Repent for your sins, and raise your hands in **supplications** at the time of your prayers for that is the best of times in which Allāh looks towards His servants with mercy, answers them what they whisper to Him, responds to them when they call upon Him, gives to them when they ask Him, and accepts their prayers when they pray to Him.

“O people, your souls are dependent on your deeds, therefore release them [from Hell-Fire] by asking for forgiveness. Your backs are burdened with your weight [of sins], so lighten their burden by lengthening the *sajdahs* (prostrations); and He shall not threaten with Fire when people will stand [in prayers] for the Lord of the Universe.

“O people, whosoever among you **gives *iftār*** (meal to break the fast) to a believer who is fasting during this month, his rewards with Allāh will be the releasing of his neck [from the Hell-Fire] and forgiveness for his past sins.”

Someone asked, “O Messenger of Allāh, not all of us have the ability to do that.” He said, “Fear the Fire! Even by breaking a date. Fear the Fire! Even by drink of a water!”

“O people, whosoever among you **improves his character** (*khulq*) during this month, he shall have the pass for going over the *sirāt* (the bridge) on the day (of judgement) when the feet shall slip. Whosoever lessens the burden [of work] from his slave (and subordinates), Allāh shall lessen his reckoning (of his deeds) for him. Whosoever prevents his evil (from people), Allāh shall prevent His anger from him on the day he shall meet Him. Whosoever severs the link with his relations in this month, Allāh shall sever His mercy from him on the day he shall meet Him.

“Whosoever fulfills a duty in this month, his **rewards will be multiplied seventy times** compared to the same deed done during other months. Whosoever increases the *salawāt* on me during this month, Allāh shall lighten his burden [of sins] on the day when He shall be lightening the burdens [of other good doers]. Whosoever recites a verse of the Qur'ān during this month, he shall have the reward of one who has completed the recitation of the entire Qur'ān during the other months.

“O people, the **doors of Paradise** are open during this month, so ask your Lord not to close them on you; and the doors of Hell are closed, so ask your Lord not to open them up for you. The satans are in chains, so ask Allāh not to impose them upon you.”

Imām 'Alī stood up and said, “O the Messenger of Allāh, what is the best of deeds during this month?” The Prophet said, “O Abu 'l-Ḥasan! The best of deeds during this month is to refrain from what Allāh has prohibited.” Then the Prophet cried. 'Ali asked, “O messenger of Allāh, what made you cry?” The Prophet said, “O 'Ali, I am crying for the injustice that will be done against you in this month. It is as if I see you that while you are praying to your Lord, the most wretched of the mankind...struck you [with his sword] on your head so that its blood coloured your beard.” 'Ali asked, “O Messenger of Allāh, will this happen while I am at peace with my faith?” The Prophet replied, “You will be at peace with your faith. O 'Ali, whoever kills you is as if he has killed me, whoever hates you is as if he hates me, whoever curses you is as if he has cursed me because you are to me like my own soul, your soul is from my soul and your nature is from my nature. Verily Almighty Allāh created me and you, then He selected me and you, and chose me for prophethood and chose you for imāmat; so whoever rejects your imāmat, he has indeed rejected my prophethood. O 'Ali, you are my heir, the father of my descendants, the husband of my daughter, and my successor to my community in my life as well as in my death; your command is my command and your prohibition is my prohibition. I swear by the One who raised me as the Prophet and made me the best of creation, you indeed are the proof of Allāh upon His creation, trustee of His secret and His vicegerent towards His servants.”

(Translated by Sayyid M Rizvi from Shaykh aṣ-Ṣadūq's '*Uyūn Akhbāri 'r-Riḍā*, vol. 2, p. 265.)