

How to Make Ramadan Productive

Virtues of Fasting

The Prophet (SAW) said that Allah said, "The reward for every good deed of a son of Adam is increased by ten to seven hundred times (according to the intention and sincerity), but in respect of the reward for fasting, Allah proclaims: "Fasting is for me and I, Myself, shall bestow the reward. The person who fasts forgoes his desires, eating, and drinking for My sake." (Bukhari & Muslim)

The Prophet (SAW) said anyone who fasts one day for Allah's Pleasure, Allah will keep him away from Hell at a distance of seventy years of travelling." (Bukhari)

The Prophet (SAW) said, "Whoever does not give up untruthful speech and evil actions, Allah is not in need of him leaving his food and drink." (Bukhari)

Based upon this, the obligation upon the fasting person is to undertake the obligatory deeds and abstain from the unlawful, both in statements and in actions. So we should not backbite, lie, spread gossip among people, sell unlawful things, and all other unlawful deeds. If a person is able to do this, for a whole entire month, the soul will be upright for the rest of the year, inshaAllah.

Parts of a Complete Fast

* Niyah (intention): The intention of fasting is necessary, however it is not necessary to express the intention verbally, as intention simply means to intend. Thus, the firm determination of the heart will suffice.

* To stay away from eating, drinking, and intimacy.

* To break the fast with dates and water is Sunnah.

* It is a Sunnah to have suhoor (pre-dawn meal), but leaving it out will not invalidate the fast. The Prophet (SAW) said: "Have Suhoor, for certainly there is blessing in Suhoor." (Bukhari)

Acts To Do In Ramadan

* Recite the Holy Qur'an.

* Recite the Kalimah Shahadah as much as you can.

* Do lots of istighfaar, (ask forgiveness from Allah).

* Be punctual for the five time salah with jamaat; offer extra nafl salah in addition to fardh.

* Help and share with others in need, pay sadaqah (charity) in accordance with your ability.

* Be patient, show tolerance, and avoid being ill-tempered.

* Refrain from arguments and verbal abuses, abstain from falsehood, lying, and backbiting.

* Reduce the workload of employees or subordinates.

* Make lots of duaa at Tahajjud time, ask for Jannah, and seek protection from Jahannam.

* Increase in Ibaadaat, in last 10 Days, and perform i'tikaaf, and search for Lailatul Qadr.

* Offer iftar meals to others in accordance with your ability.

* Pray the Taraweeh and Tahajjud prayers.

Acts Done Intentionally That Break One's Fast & Require Make Up (Qadha) & Kaffarah

- * Eating or drinking that bears the characteristics of food, drink, and medicine. *
- Sexual intercourse, or the emission of mani (semen) due to desire.
- * The emission of menstrual and postpartum blood.
- * Eating, drinking, smoking, or performing sexual intercourse forgetfully, and then thinking that the fast is broken, and thereafter doing it again (For this scenario, if one knows that eating/drinking/having intercourse will not break the fast because done forgetfully, but continues to eat, one must give kaffarah. Otherwise just qadha will be sufficient).
- * Smoking, or vomiting a mouthful intentionally.

Acts That Do Not Break the Fast

- Swallowing one's own saliva.
- Tasting the leftover traces of medicine in the mouth or throat.
- Dust, smoke, or incense entering one's throat or mouth.
- Swallowing sweat, tears, phlegm; feeling wetness in mouth after wudu or ghusl.
- Swallowing vomit that emerges in the mouth without one's doing.
- Deliberately vomiting less than a mouthful,
- Using a miswaak or toothbrush.
- Ejaculation caused unintentionally, by looking, or by wet dream.
- Applying khul (surma) in the eyes, dripping eye drops, or wearing contact lenses.
- Taking an injection/vaccine, or withdrawing blood for a blood test.
- Rubbing oil or cream on the body or hair, or applying deodorant
- Water entering the ears, or scratching the ear with a Q-tip.

Acts That Are Disliked (Makrooh) While Fasting

- Tasting or chewing flavorless gum or something without an excuse.
- Kissing one's spouse with desire in which one fears falling into sexual intercourse.
- Gathering saliva in the mouth and then swallowing.
- To gargle or to sniff water excessively in the nose time of wudu or ghusl.
- Brushing the teeth with tooth paste or using mouthwash.
- Backbiting, lying, slandering, cheating, deceiving, arguing, cursing, and watching unlawful things, listening to music, sleeping the entire day, and spending excess time on devices.

And Allah knows best.

May Allah accept our fast and all acts of worship (ibaadaat) that we perform for His sake. Ameen.