

Actions Break the Fast

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ وَعَلَى جَمِيعِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ.

All Praise is due to Allah, we praise Him and we seek help from Him. We ask forgiveness from Him. We repent to Him; and we seek refuge in Him from our own evils and our own bad deeds. Anyone who is guided by Allah, he is indeed guided; and anyone who has been left astray, will find no one to guide him. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, the Only One without any partner; and I bear witness that Muhammad, peace and blessings on him, is His servant, and His messenger.

Dear Brothers and Sisters ...

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

7 Things invalidate your fast

There are seven things that break the fast, as follows:

1. Eating and drinking
2. Intercourse
3. Masturbation
4. Anything that is regarded as coming under the same heading as eating and drinking
5. Letting blood by means of cupping and the like
6. Vomiting deliberately
7. Menstruation and nifaas

Eating or drinking

The first of the things that invalidate the fast is eating or drinking. This refers to food or drink reaching the stomach via the mouth.

If anything reaches the stomach via the nose, this is like eating or drinking.

Hence the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Snuff up water deeply into the nose (when doing wudu), except when you are fasting." (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 788).

In this case he or she has to make up that fast later on.

Intercourse

The Second of the things that invalidate the fast is: intercourse. This is the most serious and the most sinful of the things that invalidate the fast.

The evidence for that is the hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, "I am doomed, O Messenger of Allah!" He said, "Why are you doomed?" He said, "I had intercourse with my wife (during the day) in Ramadan." He said, "Can you free a slave?" He said, "No." He said, "Can you fast for two consecutive months?" He said, "No." He said, "Can you feed sixty poor persons?" He said, "No." ... (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 1936; Muslim, 1111).

No expiation is required for any of the things that break the fast apart from intercourse.

Masturbation

The Third of the things that invalidate the fast is masturbation. This means causing ejaculation or climax by using the hand etc.

The evidence that masturbation is one of the things that invalidate the fast is the words of Allah in the hadith qudsi in which He says of the fasting person: "He gives up his food and drink and desire for My sake."

(Narrated by al-Bukhari, 1894; Muslim, 1151)

Causing ejaculation comes under the heading of the desire which the fasting person gives up. Whoever masturbates during the day in Ramadan has to repent to Allah and refrain from eating and drinking for the rest of the day, and he has to make up that fast later on.

With regard to the emission of Madhiy (prostatic fluid), the most correct view is that it does not invalidate the fast.

Anything that is regarded as coming under the same heading as eating and drinking

The fourth of the things that invalidate the fast is anything that is regarded as coming under the same heading as eating and drinking

This includes two things:

1. Transfusion of blood to one who is fasting – such as if he bleeds heavily and is given a blood transfusion. This invalidates the fast because blood is formed from food and drink.
2. Receiving via a needle (as in the case of a drip) nourishing substances which take the place of food and drink, because this is the same as food and drink. Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymin, Majalis Shahr Ramadan, p/ 70.

With regard to injections which do not replace food and drink, rather they are administered for the purpose of medical treatment – such as penicillin or insulin – or are given to energize the body, or for the purpose of vaccinations, these do not affect the fast, whether they are intravenous or intramuscular (injected into a vein or a muscle). (Fatawa Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, 4/189) But to be on the safe side, these injections may be given at night.

Letting blood by means of cupping

The fifth of the things that invalidate the fast is letting blood by means of cupping

Because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The cupper and the one for whom cupping is done have both invalidated their fast.”

(Narrated by Abu Dawud, 2367; classed sahih by al-Albani in Sahih Abi Dawud, 2047).

Donating blood comes under the same heading as cupping, because it affects the body in the same way.

Based on this, it is not permissible for a person who is fasting to donate blood unless it is essential, in which case it is permissible. In that case, the donor has broken his fast and must make up that day later on. (Ibn 'Uthaymin, Majalis Ramadan, p. 71)

If a person suffers a nosebleed, his fast is valid, because that happened involuntarily. (Fatawa al-Lajnah al-Daimah, 10/264)

With regard to bleeding that results from extraction of a tooth, surgery or a blood test etc., that does not invalidate the fast because it is not cupping or something that is similar to cupping, unless it has an effect on the body similar to that of cupping.

Vomiting deliberately

The sixth of the things that invalidate the fast is Vomiting deliberately.

Because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever vomits involuntarily does not have to make up the fast, but whoever vomits deliberately let him make up the fast.” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 720, 577)

The blood of menses and nifas

The seventh of the things that invalidate the fast is the blood of menses and nifas.

Because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Is it not the case that when she gets her period, she does not pray or fast?"

(Narrated by al-Bukhari, 304)

When a woman sees the blood of her period or nifas (postpartum bleeding), her fast becomes invalid even if that is one moment before sunset.

If a woman feels that her period has started but no blood comes out until after sunset, her fast is still valid.

If the bleeding of a woman who is menstruating or in nifas ceases at night and she has the intention of fasting, then dawn comes before she does ghusl, the view of all the scholars is that her fast is valid. Al-Fath, 4/148.

It is preferable for a woman to keep to her natural cycle and to accept that which Allah has decreed for her, and not to take any medicine to prevent her period. She should accept what Allah has decreed for her of not fasting during her period and make up for those days later on. This is what the mothers of the Believers used to do.

In addition, it has been medically proven that these means of preventing menstruation are harmful and many women have suffered menstrual irregularities as a result. If a woman takes pills and her period stops as a result, that is fine, she can fast and her fast is acceptable.

These are things that invalidate the fast. All of them – apart from menses and nifas – only invalidate the fast if three conditions are met: that the person was aware of the ruling and not ignorant of it; that he did it knowingly and not out of forgetfulness; and that he did it by choice and was not forced to do it.

I conclude with this and send prayers of blessings and peace upon our Prophet as your Lord commanded:

Allahumma Sallai Al'a Muahmmad'n wa'aila Muhammad

Remember Allah, the Great – He will remember you. Thank Him for His favours – He will increase you therein. And seek forgiveness from Him – He will forgive you. And be conscious of Him – He will provide you a way out of difficult matters. And, establish the prayer.