

Fasting throughout the month of Ramadhan is obligatory, one who denies this becomes a kafir, and one who misses it without any religious reason commits a grave sin. This is the best month of the Islamic calendar. A fard carried out during this holy month bears the reward of 70 fard acts and a nafl being observed during this month has the reward of a fard.

What is Fasting and who should do it.

Fasting means to abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual intercourse from dawn to sunset. It is fard (compulsory) on every Muslim who has reached puberty (i.e. has become baligh) to fast during the month of Ramadhan. Allah has made fasting Fard on us in the month of Ramadhan because it keeps us away from sins. Apart from many other advantages, fasting is extremely good for you health. Things that will break a fast:

- Eating, drinking and smoking intentionally.
- Sexual intercourse, masturbation (remember that masturbation is Haraam (strictly forbidden) whether you are fasting or not).
- Vomiting, if mouthful and more.
- Putting Medicine in your ears or nostrils.
- Take care when performing wudhu that water does not pass down your throat or else the fast will break.
- Starting of haiz or nifas (menstruation and chronic vaginal discharge).

What things will make your fasting Makruh (decrease the reward):

Backbiting, telling lies, slandering abuse, kissing or embracing your spouse, elongating gargling, chewing and festing of food without a reason, hurting someone, and all the Haraam things in Islam.

What things will NOT break a fast:

- Eating, drinking, smoking or sexual intercourse by mistake forgetting that you are fasting.
- Application of surmah, Kajal, facial cream, hair oil, perfume etc.
- Vomiting or swallowing back unintentionally, even if it is more than a mouthful.
- Wet dreams.
- The use of miswak or toothbrush.
- Istihaza (This is the name given to the abnormal vaginal bleeding due to some form of illness) It is Fard to pray Namaz and fast in Ramadhan during Istihaza.

Who is excused from fasting:

- Children under the age of puberty.
- The insane.
- The very old, weak and sick who cannot bear the hardship of fasting; however the person should give a Kaffara.
- Pregnant women.
- Mothers' breast feeding their babies.
- Women having periods (Haiz), or post-natal bleeding (Nifas).
- Person Traveling over 57½ miles.

In all these situations, qaza has to be made after Ramadhan.

Kaffarah

If someone breaks the fast before sunset without any religious reason, he or she will have to observe 60 successive fasts outside the month of Ramadhan, and if a person is incapable of doing it, 60 people should be given food (lunch and dinner) to compensate it. In all other cases qaza has to be made after Ramadhan.

Tarawih

It is an important sunnat to read 20 rakaat sunnat additional prayer after performing 4 rakaat fard and 2 sunnat prayer of Isha, through the month of Ramadhan. It is highly preferable to read this Tarawih prayer with Jamaat. Those who miss fard of Isha with Jamaat are required to read with prayer of Isha alone.

Sehri

It is sunnat to eat sehri i.e. to eat something before dawn. Allah and his angels send his blessings upon people having sehri.

Iftar

It is also sunnat to break the fast just after sunset. During the rainy season and cloudy weather it is better to delay it for a few minutes. It is sunnat to begin to eat at the time of iftar with fresh, dry dates or water.

Eid-ul-Fitr

Eid-ul-fitr refers to the festival after completion of fasting in the month of Ramadhan. This special occasion is celebrated on the 1st of Shawwal, which is the 10th month in the Islamic calendar. The festival of Eid-ul-fitr is a manner of showing appreciation and gratitude to the Almighty Allah for all he has bestowed upon us. On the morning of Eid-ul-fitr, Muslims throughout the world perform Eid Prayers, which is compulsory upon all Muslims. It is not permissible to miss the Eid prayers without a valid reason. One must listen to the Khutba in the Mosque after the prayers. Below are various actions which are desirable on the day of Eid and some of them are the sunnah of our beloved Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and therefore deserve the appropriate reward for performing them.

- To trim the hair and nails.
- To perform Ghusl.
- To wear new or good clean clothes.
- To wear a ring (for men - a silver ring maximum weight 4.83 grams with one stone).
- To use perfume.
- To go walking to the Mosque or place of Eid prayers.
- To perform Fajr prayers at the mosque.
- To go from one route and to return through another.
- To eat few dates preferably odd numbers or anything sweet before going for Eid prayers.
- To show happiness and gratification.
- To give charity in abundance.
- To walk modestly, relaxed and in a dignified manner towards the Eid gathering.
- To congratulate one another after Eid prayers, by shaking hands and embracing each other.

Fitrah

Our fasts remain unaccepted unless we pay this sadqah. It is sunnat to pay it before the Eid prayer. If we pay it out in Ramadhan we get more sawaab. You can pay it at Masjid-al-Ameen. This year the amount of fitrana payable per head is £5.50 - please pay before 25 Ramadhan 1446AH to ensure it's distributed in time.

Fidya

You must pay fidya for fasts missed out of necessity, that cannot be made up afterward. It's £5.50 per missed fast. You're supposed to pay it before you miss a fast, or before Ramadan if you know you can't participate for the whole month.

Some important dates in the month of Ramadhan

- 3rd Ramadhan - Wisal of Bibi Fatima
- 10th Ramadhan - Wisal of Bibi Khadija
- 14th Ramadhan - Wisal of Hazrat Ba Yazeed Bustame
- 15th Ramadhan - Birthday of Hazrat Imam Hassan
- 17th Ramadhan - Jang-e- Badr
- Wisal of Bibi Aisha
- 20th Ramadhan - Victory of Makkah
- 21st Ramadhan - Sahadat of Hazrat Ali
- 22nd Ramadhan - Urs of Junnid Baghdadi
- 25th Ramadhan - The revelation of the Holy Quran
- 27th Ramadhan - LailatuI Qadr (The night of power)
- 29th Ramadhan - Wisal of Hazrat Umar-bin-Aass