

The Month of Fasting

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ

WHAT BREAKS THE FAST

Eating or drinking deliberately
Intercourse — and this alone carries an expiation
Deliberately causing vomiting
Menstrual or post-natal bleeding, at any hour
Leaving Islam

One who eats or drinks forgetting has no fault – let him complete his fast; it is Allah who fed him.

WHAT DOES NOT BREAK IT

Rinsing the mouth and nose, without exaggeration
Bathing, swimming, cooling the body with water
Unintended vomiting
Blood taken for a test; injections that do not nourish
Tasting food on the tongue without swallowing
Waking in a state of janābah — wash and continue
Using the siwāk or a toothbrush at any hour of the day

WHO DOES NOT FAST

CASE	OWED
Illness, expected to pass	Make up the days
Travel	Make up the days
Menstruation, post-natal	Make up the days
Pregnancy, nursing	Make up, or feed
Old age, lasting illness	Feed one poor person a day

Q 2:184–185. Missed days are made up before the next Ramaḍān.

MAKING UP & EXPIATION

Missed days may be made up singly or together, at any time before the next Ramaḍān.
Breaking a fast by intercourse carries an expiation: freeing a slave, or fasting two consecutive months, or feeding sixty poor people.

Bukhārī, Muslim • ṣaḥīḥ

ZAKĀT AL-FIṬR

One ṣā' of staple food — roughly 2.5 to 3 kg — for every member of the household, young and old. Given before the 'īd prayer, so the poor are not left asking on the day.

Bukhārī, Muslim • ṣaḥīḥ

THE DAY, IN ORDER

01 Suḥūr — eat before dawn

Delay it until near Fajr. There is blessing in it, though it be only a sip of water. The intention is made in the heart during the night.

Bukhārī, Muslim • ṣaḥīḥ

02 Fajr — the fast begins

From the true dawn until sunset. Eating stops at the adhān of Fajr, not before it. If the call finds the vessel in your hand, he ﷺ said, finish what is in it.

Abū Dāwūd • ḥasan

03 Through the day — guard the tongue

اِنِّیْ صَائِمٌ
If someone abuses you or picks a quarrel, say *innī ṣā'im* — I am fasting. Whoever does not leave false speech, Allah has no need of his leaving food and drink.

Bukhārī • ṣaḥīḥ

04 Maghrib — break the fast at once

ذَهَبَ الظَّمَأُ، وَابْتَلَّتِ الْعُرُوْقُ، وَثَبَتَ الْأَجْرُ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
The thirst is gone, the veins are moistened, and the reward is certain, if Allah wills. Fresh dates, or dried, or water. The supplication of the fasting one at breaking is not turned back.

Abū Dāwūd • ḥasan; Tirmidhī • ḥasan

05 'Ishā', then Tarāwīḥ

Whoever stands the night of Ramaḍān in faith, seeking reward, is forgiven what has preceded of his sin. Prayed in the masjid or at home; the number is not fixed, the length is.

Bukhārī, Muslim • ṣaḥīḥ

06 The last ten nights

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي
O Allah, You are pardoning and love to pardon, so pardon me. Seek Laylat al-Qadr in the odd nights — better than a thousand months. He ﷺ would tighten his belt, wake his family, and stay awake.

Tirmidhī • ṣaḥīḥ; Q 97:3

07 I'tikāf — retreat in the masjid

He ﷺ kept to the masjid for the last ten nights every year, and in the year he died, for twenty. One enters before sunset on the twentieth and leaves at the sunset that ends the month. He leaves only for necessity. A day, or a night, or an hour of it is still a retreat.

Bukhārī, Muslim • ṣaḥīḥ

08 'Īd al-Fiṭr — the month ends

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
Fasting on the day of 'Īd is forbidden. Eat an odd number of dates before going out, wash, wear your best, and say the takbīr on the way. Go by one road and return by another, as he ﷺ did.

Bukhārī • ṣaḥīḥ

For the fasting one there are two joys — a joy when he breaks his fast, and a joy when he meets his Lord.

Bukhārī, Muslim • ṣaḥīḥ

FASTING ELSEWHERE

Six days of Shawwāl after Ramaḍān are as a fast of the whole year. The Day of 'Arafah expiates two years; 'Āshūrā' one. Mondays and Thursdays, and the three white days of each month — the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth.

Muslim • ṣaḥīḥ.
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