

Published on Al-Islam.org (https://www.al-islam.org)

<u>Home</u> > <u>A Course In Islamic Jurisprudence – Manhajul Fiqhil Islami</u> > <u>Faridatus–Sawm [The Obligatory Fasting]</u> > Explanation

# Faridatus-Sawm [The Obligatory Fasting]

Allah, the Exalted, says:

"The month of Ramadan, is that in which the Qur'an was revealed, a guidance to mankind and manifestations of guidance and distinction; therefore, whoever of you is present in the month (at home) has to fast therein; and whoever is sick or on a journey, then (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. Allah wants ease for you, and does not want hardship for you. And that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the Greatness of Allah for having guided you, and that you may give thanks." (2:185)

He, the Glorified, also says:

"O you who believe! fasting is incumbent on you as it was incumbent on those before you, so that you may ward off Allah's wrath." (2: 183).

The Messenger of Allah (s) said: "A fasting person is considered to be worshipping even if he is in his bed, unless he backbites a Muslim." He (s) also said: "Whoever fasts in Ramadan out of faith and to please Allah, Allah forgives the sins he had committed." 2

He (s) also said: "O people! The month of Almighty Allah has come to you with blessings, mercy and forgiveness, a month which is the best of months with Allah, its days are the best of days, its nights are the best of nights and its hours are the best of hours..." He (s) also said: "... It is the month of forbearance, and, surely, the reward of forbearance is Paradise. It is the month of consolation." 4

The *Imam* Ja'far As–Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Allah enjoined the *Siyam* [fasting] so that equality may prevail between the rich and the poor, since the rich usually do not feel the touch of hunger so as to show mercy to the poor, as they are capable of affording whatever they desire. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, wanted to put His creatures on an equal footing, making the rich taste the pains of hunger, so that they may be kind to the needy and have mercy on the hungry people."5

As-Sawm is a worshipping duty legislated by Allah, the Exalted, and enjoined on the people, and

nations which lived before us, as it is now enjoined on us. *As–Sawm* is one of the fundamental pillars of Islam, and it is to be practised in a particular month of the year, the blessed month of *Ramadan*.

As-Sawm brings about numerous ritual, educational and moral objectives. It teaches man to prefer obeying Allah and loving Him to loving himself, his desires and pleasures. The Muslim, in this month, responds to Allah's command, by giving up all pleasures derived from food, drink, etc., for the sake of Allah's pleasure and as an obedience to His orders.

It strengthens one's will and ability to forbear difficulties and sharpens one's inner sense of obeying and carrying out the Divine orders and laws. The *Sa'im* [the fasting person] is inwardly driven to avoid all that Allah had ordered him to avoid in this blessed month. This accustoms the Muslim to obedience and commitment.

It also teaches the Sa'im Muslim to adhere to the virtuous morality and upright conduct. It causes the rich Sa'im, to sense the poor's hunger, and to understand the meaning of being poverty–stricken and needy. This, in turn, urges him to help the poor and soothe their pains. Furthermore it makes all Muslims feel equal in the presence of Allah, the Exalted, and, by strengthening this feeling in them, they learn to regard one another as brothers, equal in rights and duties.

There are, of course, many other good effects and salubrious (healthful), curing advantages to the body. The Messenger of Allah (s) said "Sumu Tasihhu" that is: Fast yow would be healthy. It has been proved by the physicians and scientists that fasting is a relaxation for the body's organs, and is regarded as a cure for many diseases.

# The Conditions Making Fasting Wajib

Fasting can not become Wajib on a Muslim unless the following conditions are present:

- 1. Puberty: Fasting is not incumbent on a person who has not yet reached puberty, though it would be correct if he fasted;
- 2. Sanity: No fasting is incumbent on the insane.
- 3. Not being a traveller: One who is on a journey is not to fast, and if he did it, it would be Batil.
- 4. Consciousness, as the unconscious person is not to fast.
- 5. Cleanliness from Hayd and *Nifas*, as the women who are in the state of Hayd or *Nifas* are not to fast before becoming *Tahir*, otherwise, their fasting would be *Batil* and unacceptable, if they did fast during the Hayd and *Nifas*.
- 6. Being healthy enough to withstand fasting, as the sick, the old men and women (for whom it is difficult to fast), and the pregnant6 and the suckling women who or whose children would be harmed by fasting,

are not to fast.

N. B. The *Musafir*, the sick, the Hayd and the *nafsa* must perform the *Qada Sawm*, that is to fast, when able later on, as many days as had been missed.

### The Niyyah for Fasting

- 1. The *Niyyah* is a basic part of the *Sawm*, as the sa'im will have to make his intention that he is performing the *Sawm* for the pleasure of Allah; the Exalted.
- 2. The *Niyyah* can be made once by the Sa'im for the whole month of *Ramadan*, or one may make it for each day separately, before dawn.
- 3. The *Niyyah* for fasting is to last until the end of the day. If one has the intention of breaking one's fast during the day, or if one is not sure about it, one's fasting will be *Batil*, even if one did not do any of the acts which invalidate the *Sawm* such as eating, drinking, etc. In this case one has to abstain from the "invalidators" until the end of the day, and then to make up for it by fasting another day after the month of *Ramadan*.

## When to Begin and End Ramadan Fasting

The blessed month of *Ramadan* is the month of the *Sawm* which is incumbent on every Muslim *Mukallaf* Therefore, it is necessary to be sure about the first and last days of this month, in order to carry out this sacred worship.

The Islamic *Shari'ah* has explained the lawful ways of knowing these two days at the beginning and the end of the month. These ways are as below:

- 1. The month of *Ramadan* is ascertained by eye–witnessing the *Hilal* (crescent) [the new moon] and the day of the *Eid* is also ascertained by eye–witnessing the new moon of the month of *Shawwal* [the month after *Ramadan*]
- 2. If the new moon of the month of *Ramadan* could not be seen for any given natural reason, such as clouds, fog, or dust, the number of the days *Sha'ban* [the month before *Ramadan*] is to be completed 30 days, then we start the month of *Ramadan* the next day.
- 3. The *Eidul–Fitr* [the first day of the month of *Shawwal*] is ascertained by eye–witnessing the new moon on the begin ning of the month of *Shawwal*. If it was not possible to see it, the month of *Ramadan* is to be completed up to 30 days.

#### **How to Ascertain the Hilal (The New Moon)**

There are three ways defined by the Islamic *Shari'ah* for being sure of the visibility of the *Hilal*, (the crescent):

- 1. If someone himself saw the *Hilal*, it would be *Wajib* upon him to start the *Siyam* of the month of *Ramadan*, or to break the fast, if it was the *Hilal* of *Shawwal*.
- 2. If two equitable men<u>7</u> testified that they themselves had seen the *Hilal*, we, then, would have to begin our *Siyam*, or to break it.
- 3. If it was rumoured among people that the *Hilal* had been seen, and people gave credit to it and believed in it, then the *Mukallaf* must act according to this circulation, starting the *Siyam*, or by starting the *Iftar* [fast-breaking], depending on the circulation.8

#### **Explanation**

Some *Faqihs* believe that to ascertain the crescent in a country cannot be sufficient for the citizens of another, unless both are near each other, or they were known to have a common horizon, or the ascertaining country is situated to the east of the other. Whereas other jurisprudents believe that ascertaining of in a country suffices for ascercaining of it in the other countries.

- 1. Al-Kulayni, "Furu Ul-Kafi, vol. 4, p. 191.
- 2. At-Tirmidhi's Sahih, vol. 3, pp. 76 and 171. "Majma Uz-Zawa'id, vol. 3, p. 144.
- 3. Al-Hurrul-Amili's Wasa'ilush-Shi'ah" vol. 7, Kitabus-Sawm, p. 227, 5th ed.
- 4. Ibid, p. 222.
- 5. Ibid, p. 3.
- 6. The four sects say: "If nursing and pregnant women expect harm to themselves or to their infants, they may or may not fast."
- 7. The Hanafis say: "The new moon of Ramadan is established by the testimony of a single man and a single woman, provided they are sane and equitable Muslims, but the new moon of Shawwal is established by the testimony of two men, or one man and two women". The Shafi'is say: "The new moons of both the months of Ramadan and Shawwal are established by the testimony of a single equitable sane and Muslim man".
- 8. Some Faqihs say that fasting or breaking of the fast during the month of Ramadan becomes Wajib if the equitable Faqih is ascertained of the new moon, unless the Mukallaf personally is certain of the contrary.

#### Source URL:

https://www.al-islam.org/course-islamic-jurisprudence-manhajul-fiqhil-islami-sayyid-hashim-al-musa wi/faridatus-sawm