

Ḥanafī Fiqh of Fasting Ramaḍān

Translation and Summary of *Nūr al-Īḍāḥ*

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al-Shurunbulālī al-Ḥanafī (d. 1069 AH)

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Introduction

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise be to Him, the Lord of the all worlds. And may peace and blessings be upon His noble Messenger, our master Muḥammad ﷺ, and upon his family and companions.

This is a summary and translation of the chapter of fasting from the book *Nūr al-Īdāḥ* written by the great Ḥanafī jurist al-Shurunbulālī (d. 1069).

In this summary, I have omitted portions of the chapter that are not relevant to the general public to make the Fiqh of fasting simple and accessible.

The footnotes are important additions from relied-upon works, and they either clarify or add details to the original text.

Because this is a short summary of the Fiqh of fasting for the general public, it does not include answers to specific questions or Fatāwā (legal verdicts). For Fatāwā, visit: <https://seekersguidance.org/>

Special thanks to my teacher, Shaykh Maḥdī Lock, may Allāh preserve and reward him, for vigilantly editing and refining this booklet.

I ask Allāh to benefit the Muslims with this work, and for it to be a means of forgiveness for me, my parents, and my teachers.

The Book of Ṣawm (Fasting)

Definition of Fasting:

[Fasting] means to abstain during the day from allowing anything to enter the stomach whether intentionally or mistakenly,⁽¹⁾ [and to abstain from] sexual pleasures, with the intention [to fast].

The Reason for its Obligation:

The reason that obligates [the fasting] of Ramaḍān is witnessing part of it (the month of Ramaḍān). And every day of it is a reason to perform it.

Its Ruling:

It is obligatory, both performing it (on time) and making it up (if missed).

The Conditions for Fasting to be Rendered Obligatory:

One has to be:

1. Muslim
2. Sane
3. Pubescent
4. Knowledgeable of its (fasting) being an obligation⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ This excludes eating and drinking out of forgetfulness, which does not invalidate the fast. An example of ‘mistakenly’ would be accidentally swallowing water during ablution (See *Imdād*, *Lubāb*, and *Hadiyyah*).

⁽²⁾ An excuse can only be made for someone who became a Muslim in a land where the influence of Islām is totally absent (*Hadiyyah*).

The Conditions for Fasting to Be Obligatory:

1. To be free from illnesses⁽¹⁾
2. To be free from *Ḥayḍ*⁽²⁾
3. To be free from *Nifās*⁽³⁾
4. To be a resident⁽⁴⁾

The Conditions for Fasting to Be Valid:

1. The intention [for fasting]
2. Being free from *Ḥayḍ* and *Nifās*
3. Being free from what breaks the fast

Note: Being in a state of *Janābah*⁽⁵⁾ does not affect the validity of the fast⁽⁶⁾.

The Result of Fasting:

1. [The fasting person's] having fulfilled his obligations
2. Reward in the afterlife

The Intention of Fasting:⁽⁷⁾

For performing the obligatory fasts on time: It is validated by an intention from the night before, or up until midday⁽⁸⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Illnesses that you know will increase if you fast, based on past experiences or the words of a trusted skillful **Muslim** doctor (*Lubāb, Hadiyyah*).

⁽²⁾ Menstrual periods.

⁽³⁾ Postnatal bleeding.

⁽⁴⁾ Breaking your fast as a traveler and making it up later is permissible. However fasting (if one is able to) is more favorable (See *Nūr al-Idāh* and *Lubāb*).

⁽⁵⁾ Major ritual impurity.

⁽⁶⁾ Such that if one were to have intercourse with his wife before Fajr and then not perform Ghusl until after Fajr, his fast would not be invalid (*Hadiyyah*).

⁽⁷⁾ An intention for fasting is necessary for every day of Ramaḍān on its own from the night before (See *Ikhtiyār*).

⁽⁸⁾ Wording out an intention is not necessary. Rather, any thought or action that means you have intended to fast the next day qualifies. An example of an action is setting an alarm for Suḥūr, preparing food for Suḥūr, or simply intending to fast the next day (*Ikhtiyār, Hadiyyah*).

Things That Do not Nullify the Fast

[Some of them] are:

1. Eating, drinking, or having intercourse forgetfully⁽¹⁾
2. Applying perfume or musk⁽²⁾
3. Cupping
4. Backbiting⁽³⁾
5. Intending to break the fast [intentionally] but then not breaking it
6. Smoke or dust entering one's throat that is not a result of one's actions⁽⁴⁾
7. A fly entering one's throat [that is not a result of one's actions]
8. Waking up while *Junub*⁽⁵⁾, even if one remained Junub for the entire day⁽⁶⁾
9. Water entering one's ear when swimming
10. Cleaning one's ear with a stick, then removing it and finding ear-wax on it, then putting it back in repeatedly
11. Intentionally inhaling and swallowing mucus from the nose⁽⁷⁾
12. Unintentionally vomiting, even if it is more than a mouthful
13. Intentionally vomiting, if it is less than a mouthful⁽⁸⁾
14. Eating what is between one's teeth if it is smaller [in size] than a chickpea⁽⁹⁾

⁽¹⁾ If one is seen eating or drinking forgetfully, and he has the ability to fast, the onlooker should remind him, and it is disliked not to remind him. As for someone who does not have the ability to fast, then it is preferable that the onlooker does not remind him (*Nūr al-Īdāh, Hadiyyah*).

⁽²⁾ Applying perfume while fasting is permissible in the Ḥanafī Madhab, but disliked in the Shāfi'ī Madhab (See *Ghurar*).

⁽³⁾ Backbiting might not nullify the fast, but it is still a major sin (See *Zawājir*).

⁽⁴⁾ For his inability to prevent it, like a sandstorm (*Imdād*).

⁽⁵⁾ Being in a state of major ritual impurity.

⁽⁶⁾ His fast for the day would be valid, but he would be sinning because he cannot pray (*Hadiyyah*).

⁽⁷⁾ One should remove this mucus and not swallow because it breaks the fast according to al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī, may Allāh have mercy upon him (*Nūr al-Īdāh*).

⁽⁸⁾ If one intentionally makes himself vomit and it is more than a mouthful, it nullifies the fast (*Lubāb*).

⁽⁹⁾ However, if one were to take it out of one's mouth then put it back in and eat it, it would nullify his fast (*Hidāyah*).

Things That Nullify the Fast, Requiring Both **Kaffārah**⁽¹⁾ and **a Make-up Day**

Guideline of What Nullifies the Fast:

If the one fasting does any of them:

1. Willfully
2. Intentionally
3. Without any necessity

He is required to perform a make-up day **and** Kaffārah.

[Some of them] are:

1. Intercourse⁽²⁾ in either passageway⁽³⁾
2. Eating and drinking⁽⁴⁾
3. Swallowing rainwater that has entered one's mouth
4. Eating a small amount of salt
5. Swallowing the saliva of one's wife

⁽¹⁾ Expiation.

⁽²⁾ For both parties (if both have done it willingly) (*Nūr al-Īdāh*).

⁽³⁾ i.e the vagina and anus (*Marāqī, Hadiyyah*).

⁽⁴⁾ Whether it is for nourishment or medicine (*Nūr al-Īdāh, Hadiyyah*).

Kaffārah

The Kaffārah is one of the following (in descending order based on ability):

1. Freeing a slave⁽¹⁾
2. Fasting 2 consecutive⁽²⁾ months⁽³⁾
3. If one is unable to⁽⁴⁾: Feeding 60 poor people⁽⁵⁾

Overlapping of Kaffārah:

One Kaffārah is sufficient for multiple broken fasts, even if they are from different Ramaḍāns.⁽⁶⁾

⁽¹⁾ Even if the slave was a non-Muslim (*Nūr al-Īdāh, Hadiyyah*).

⁽²⁾ Those days must not coincide with a day of ʿĪd or the days of Tashrīq (11, 12, 13 of Dhu-l Ḥijjah) (*Nūr al-Īdāh, Hadiyyah*).

⁽³⁾ If one fasts for 59 days and then breaks his fast on the 60th day he must restart the Kaffārah (*Hadiyyah*).

⁽⁴⁾ Due to sickness or old age (*Imdād*).

⁽⁵⁾ He must feed each of them until they are content (full) for lunch and dinner (2 meals each), and none of them must be full beforehand (*Nūr al-Īdāh, Hadiyyah*).

⁽⁶⁾ In other words, if one unlawfully breaks one's fast with a need of Kaffārah multiple times in the same month, or multiple times over multiple years, one Kaffārah is sufficient for all of them. However, if one was to do a Kaffārah then in the following year, unlawfully break his fast once more, he must make another Kaffārah (*Nūr al-Īdāh, Imdād*).

Things That Nullify the Fast Without the Need for a Kaffārah⁽¹⁾

[Some of them are:]

1. Eating dough
2. Swallowing a pebble or rock
3. Swallowing soil
4. Ḥuqna⁽²⁾
5. Su‘ūt⁽³⁾
6. Unintentionally swallowing water or snow that has entered the throat
7. Unintentionally swallowing water from Wuḍū’ while rinsing the mouth
8. Being forced to break the fast, even if one is forced into intercourse
9. Breaking the fast due to fearing illness because of servitude⁽⁴⁾
10. Swallowing water that was poured down one’s throat while asleep
11. Eating intentionally after eating out of forgetfulness
12. Having intercourse intentionally after having intercourse out of forgetfulness
13. Breaking the fast because of travelling, after waking up as a resident
14. Having intercourse without being sure whether Fajr time has come yet, when it had come in
15. Breaking the fast thinking it was Maghrib when it was not yet time
16. Achieving an orgasm due to a kiss or a touch
17. Inserting a wet finger into either the anus or the inner vagina

⁽¹⁾ However, a make-up day remains necessary (*Nūr al-Īdāh*).

⁽²⁾ Getting medicine administered in the anus (*Imdād*).

⁽³⁾ Getting medicine administered in the nose (*Imdād*).

⁽⁴⁾ Applies to both the free woman and the slave, so it is servitude to either husband or master (*Nūr al-Īdāh*).

18. Intentionally making oneself vomit⁽¹⁾
19. Swallowing vomit if it is more than a mouthful⁽²⁾
20. Eating what is between the teeth if it is as big as a chickpea
21. Being unconscious, even if it was for the entire month⁽³⁾

[Note: Masturbation breaks the fast and requires a make-up day only]

Those for Whom *Imsāk*⁽⁴⁾ is Necessary for the Remainder of the Day

Imsāk is necessary for the remainder of the day for:

1. One whose fast has been broken
2. A woman whose menstrual or postnatal bleeding did not fully stop until after Fajr
3. A child who reaches puberty
4. A disbeliever who becomes Muslim

They must all perform a make-up day except for the last two (3 & 4).

⁽¹⁾ Must be more than a mouthful (*Imdād*).

⁽²⁾ Only if one remembers one's fast while swallowing (*Nūr al-Īdāh*).

⁽³⁾ However, one does not make-up the day he became unconscious (*Nūr al-Īdāh, Hadiyyah*).

⁽⁴⁾ i.e. refraining from eating despite one's fast being invalid.

What is Disliked for the One Fasting

1. Tasting something
2. Chewing food, without an excuse⁽¹⁾
3. Kissing if one does not have the willpower to prevent oneself from achieving an orgasm or [the kissing leading to] intercourse
4. Collecting spittle in one's mouth and then swallowing it
5. Doing what might physically weaken oneself⁽²⁾, such as extracting blood

What is not Disliked for the One Fasting

1. Kissing if one does have the willpower to prevent oneself [from achieving an orgasm or the kissing leading to intercourse]
2. Using Siwāk, even if it is moist
3. Rinsing one's mouth [with water], even if it was not for Wuḍū'
4. Rinsing one's nose [with water], even if it was not for Wuḍū'
5. *Ightisāl*⁽³⁾
6. Wrapping oneself with a wet towel to cool down

⁽¹⁾ A mother is permitted to chew food for her baby if she does not find anyone around her who is excused from fasting (valid excuses like Ḥayḍ) who can chew it for her (*Imdād, Lubāb*).

⁽²⁾ This differs from person to person.

⁽³⁾ i.e. having a ritual bath, and this includes showering.

What is Desirable for the One Fasting

1. Suḥūr⁽¹⁾
2. Delaying Suḥūr
3. Not delaying Iftār

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{And our closing prayer will be: Praise be to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds}

⁽¹⁾ But one should not be excessive during Suḥūr, except if the manual labor in one’s work is immense (*Hadiyyah*).

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