



**Muslim Community Association of Ann Arbor and Vicinity**

2301 Plymouth Road, Ann Arbor MI-48105

Web: [www.mca-a2.org](http://www.mca-a2.org) Phone: (734) 665-6772

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***A Guide to the Fiqh of Ramadan***

**Disclaimer to the reader:**

This document was prepared by a community member and approved by Shaykh Moataz Al-Hallak, Imam of the Islamic Center of Ann Arbor. This guide is meant for the community to be used reference to address the basic *fiqh* (jurisprudence) rulings regarding the fast of Ramadan. Any specific questions should be asked to the local imam of your community. Should you have any questions/concerns please contact us by visiting [www.mca-a2.org](http://www.mca-a2.org)



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## **A Guide to the Fiqh of Ramadan**

### **Who Fasts?**

Every Muslim must fast if they are:

1. Mature—they have reached puberty. Children are not obliged to fast but scholars do recommend training children in fasting from an early age, by fasting half a day for example.
2. Of sound mind—mental unawareness means that you are not obliged to fast.
3. Healthy
4. Resident
5. Clearance from preventative reasons (with respect to women)—women in menses or post-partum bleeding are unable to fast (more details below)

### **Who is exempt from fasting?**

Allah (swt) does not impose difficulty on us. He (swt) tells us in the Qur'an:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ  
وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ  
فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ  
أُخْرٍ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ  
وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَيْتِكُمْ  
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ



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*The month of Ramadhan [is that] in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion. So whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it; and whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days. Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship and [wants] for you to complete the period and to glorify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you; and perhaps you will be grateful. (al-Baqarah, 2:185)*

Out of the mercy of Allah, (swt) specific groups of people are exempt from fasting.

They are as follows:

1. A woman experiencing menses or post-partum bleeding
2. Traveller
3. Ill person (temporary)

*These three groups are exempt from fasting, and must make up the number of days they missed after Ramadan.*

4. Pregnant/Breastfeeding Woman

*It is allowed for the pregnant or breastfeeding woman to abstain from fasting the month of Ramadan. However, there is a difference of opinion on how she must make up the days she missed:*

- *Ibn 'Umar and ibn 'Abbas said she should feed the poor, and does not need to make up the missed fasts*
- *Imam Abu Hanifah said she makes up the missed fasts, without feeding the poor*
- *Imam Ahmad and Imam al-Shafi'i said she does both*
- *Imam Malik differentiated between the pregnant woman and the breastfeeding woman. If pregnant she makes up missed days without feeding the poor. If she is breastfeeding, then she does both: feeds the poor and makes up missed fasts.*



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5. Elderly or a person with a chronic illness

*This group makes up the fasts by paying the fidyah; they must feed a poor person for each day.*

## Etiquettes of making up missed fasts?

One has until the next Ramadan to make up missed fasts; however, it is best to do so at the earliest possible occasion.

Note: You can combine intentions and have the intention to make up a day of Ramadan while simultaneously seeking the reward of fasting Arafah, 'Ashoorah, or the sunnah fasts of Monday and Thursday, etc. But this is not true for the hadith regarding the six days of Shawwal; the intention cannot be combined between making up the missed days of Ramadan and fasting the six days of Shawwal.

## What are the pillars of fasting?

1. The Intention

*Is one intention sufficient for the month, or does the intention need to be made for each day?*

Imam Malik said one intention covers the whole month, while Imams Ahmad, Abu Hanifah, and al-Shafi'i said the intention must be made every day.

*Why is there a difference of opinion?*

Due to the understanding of accepting Ramadan (the month) as one act of worship, or does one consider each day of the month as singular, individual acts of worship.

*What is the strongest opinion?*

The vast majority of scholars agree that each day is an individual act of worship, as one must make up for each missed day within the month separately.

Making the intention is very simple; when you set your alarm to wake up for suhoor the next morning, you have made the proper intention.



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2. Refraining from anything that breaks the fast
3. Correct time (month of Ramadan, from Fajr until Maghrib time)

### What breaks the fast?

1. Intentional eating and drinking

*Anything that is consumed as a genuine error or due to forgetfulness does not invalidate the fast*

2. Intentional vomiting

*Unintentional vomiting does not break the fast*

3. Menstruation

4. Post-partum bleeding

5. Sexual intercourse

*It is a major sin to have intercourse while fasting. The expiation for this sin is to free a slave; and if this is not possible, to fast 2 months consecutively; and if this is not possible, then to feed 60 poor people.*

### What are the etiquettes of fasting?

#### Permissible Acts During the Fast

- Pouring water over one's self
- Submersing oneself in water  
*CAUTION: Do not swallow water (even unintentionally), as this would invalidate the fast*
- Applying kohl or eye-drops
- Kissing spouse, for the one who is able to control himself
- Injections
- Cupping to drain blood
- Rinsing the mouth and nose
- Swallowing unavoidable things (dust, saliva)
- Remaining in a state of janabah even after the onset of fajr time



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### Disliked Acts During the Fast

- Gargling water—due to the risk of swallowing water, which would invalidate the fast
- Anything that leads to arousal—avoid any contact that may create this feeling
- Any acts that diminish reward, i.e. any form of major or minor sin
  - Take particular care to avoid backbiting, slander, and becoming angry during this month

### Highly Recommended Acts During the Fast

- Eating Suhoor, the pre-dawn meal
- Using siwak or toothbrush
- Generosity
- Reciting the Qur'an
- Hastening to break the fast
  - As soon as Maghrib strikes, one should break the fast.
  - This is to distinguish our fast from the pre-Islamic fast, for which they would break the fast upon sighting the stars
- Breaking the fast with dates, and if none are available, then with water
- Making du'a at the time of breaking the fast

The best suhoor is one that is light and simple, and delayed until right before Fajr