

Swimming for a fasting person in Ramadhaan

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: What is the ruling regarding swimming for a fasting person in Ramadhaan?

Answer: All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers until the Day of Resurrection.

Swimming in itself is not something that invalidates the fasting, it has the same ruling as taking a bath for a fasting person, whether he takes a bath in a bathroom, a pond, a bathtub or a similar thing, even if the only purpose of the swimmer is to freshen up himself. Moreover, Al-Bukhaaree رحمه الله designated a chapter in his classification of hadeeths with a general expression: "Chapter of what about one's taking a bath while he was fasting" to include all kinds of baths, those which are recommendable, obligatory or permissible¹.

The proof that taking a recommendable bath is allowed is the general permission of taking a bath and the Mauqoof² traditions, among them, the tradition narrated by Anas Ibn Maalik رضي الله عنه who said: "I had a tub (Al-Abzan) in which I could sit when I feel hot while I was fasting"³, Ibn Hajar رحمه الله said: "Al-Abzan is an excavated rock resembling a tub, it is a Persian word, that is why it did not undergo the rules of Arabic grammar, apparently that Al-Abzan was full of water, so when Anas feels hot, he entered it in order to cool up himself⁴.

Swimming keeps this ruling of permissibility if the places of swimming do not involve some evils which are usually linked to it, like nakedness and uncovering the private parts of the body and looking at forbidden things, however, it is forbidden for these incidental reasons not for itself.

Hereupon, if the good swimmer earns money for his living by diving, whether by repairing ships, welding them or for another reason, and his diving coincides with a day of Ramadhaan, it is obligatory for him to prevent water from infiltrating into his belly, but if in

¹ "Fath Al-Baaree" by Ibn Hajar (4/153).

² Attributed to Companions رضي الله عنهم.

³ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree as a comment in the chapter of "fasting" (1/461) concerning one's taking a bath while he was fasting.

⁴ "Fath Al-Baaree" by Ibn Hajar (4/154).

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spite of this, water infiltrated into his throat through his mouth or nose accidentally and without negligence, his fasting is valid without being detestable.

However, if his diving and swimming in water is for entertainment, refreshing oneself, sport or playing unnecessarily, without any need like working for making a living or for rescuing or something else. If the good swimmer is not afraid that water enters into his throat in a manner that he is sure of preserving his fasting, it will be permissible for him to swim as it has been stated in establishing the previous principle. However, if the amateur swimmer is afraid that by swimming, water will infiltrate into his throat, it will not be permissible for him to swim in accordance with the Prophet's ﷺ saying to Laqeet Ibn Sabirah رضي الله عنه: "...and snuff with water well except when you are fasting"⁵.

In both cases; whether when fearing that water enters into his throat or not, if water enters into his throat inadvertently and without any purpose, his fasting is valid with detestation of his deed, contrarily to the majority of scholars who consider that his fasting is invalid and he should make up for the missed day.

His fasting is valid because it resembles the introduction of road dust or the siftings of flour into his throat, or a fly that enters into his throat, thus, it is different from the case of someone who does it deliberately⁶.

The ruling of detestation becomes effective because the reasons of his swimming during Ramadhaan are not related to a need or a necessity. Consequently, it is detestable for him for fear of the introduction of water into his throat. In fact, Al-Hassan and Ash-Sha'bi considered Makrooh (detestable) the fact of diving into water for fear that it enters into his ears⁷, and in order to not be under the divergence of scholars as regards the ruling of such a thing, especially for a purpose of playing and wasting without any need or necessity.

This been said, the fasting person should take advantage of the month of Ramadhaan and occupy himself with worshipping, performing acts of obedience and pious acts and to refrain from all the acts of disobedience, the evil acts and the forbidden things, and to strive to do what gives him benefit in this life and in the hereafter. He should strive to benefit from his time by doing what pleases to Allaah and to preserve himself from frivolousness, playing and what touches the virility and other deeds that he had better avoid during the month of Ramadhaan and in other months, as they include wasting time in things for which he is not created for.

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah. Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet ﷺ, his Family, his Companions and Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

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⁵ Reported by Aboo Dawood, chapter of "Purification" (hadeeth 142), concerning the fact of snuffing then rejecting water, by At-Tirmidhee, chapter of "Fasting" (hadeeth 788), concerning what is reported about the detestation of exaggerating in snuffing for the fasting person. This hadeeth is judged authentic by Al-Albaanee in "Al-Irwaa'" (4/85).

⁶ See: "Al-Mughnee" by Ibn Qudaama (3/108-109), "Al-Majmoo" by An-Nawawee (6/326).

⁷ See: "Al-Mughnee" by Ibn Qudaama (3/109).