

## Voluntary fasting before making up for obligatory one

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

**Question:** Is it allowed to observe the voluntary fasting before making up for the missed days of Ramadhaan? May Allaah reward you with what is best.

**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 till the Day of Resurrection.

There is no divergence [among the scholars] that making up for the obligatory fast precedes observing the voluntary one, because the obligatory thing is stronger and higher in position than the recommendable one. Moreover, obligations and prescriptions are the greatest acts of worship for Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ. Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ said in a Qudsee (sacred) hadeeth: "**The most beloved things with which My slave comes nearer to Me, is what I have enjoined upon him**"<sup>1</sup>.

On another hand, the obligation of making up for the missed days of Ramadhaan before observing the voluntary fasting is stressed if one fears to be unhealthy, unable or that he would not have time to observe it. As a consequence, he would be a sinner if he delays making up for the missed days of Ramadhaan in case he could not observe it later, because the absolute obligation became restricted to time. So, one should accomplish his obligation at once, or he would be considered as a negligent as regards his duties.

In all cases, one should hurry to accomplish the acts of obedience by making up for his obligations, because Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ said:

فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْحَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

[...so compete in good deeds. The return of you (all) is to Allaah; then He will inform you about that in which you used to differ]<sup>2</sup>

He also said:

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

[And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for Al-Muttaqoon (the pious)]<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree; chapter of "softening the hearts", concerning modesty (hadeeth 6137) and Ibn Hibbaan in his "Saheeh" (hadeeth 347), according to the hadeeth reported by Aboo Hurayrah. It is also reported by Ahmad in his "Musnad" (hadeeth 25794), according to the hadeeth reported by `A'ishah رضي الله عنها.

<sup>2</sup> Soorah al-Maa'idah[5:48]

<sup>3</sup> Soorah Aal-Imraan [3:133]

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In addition, the hadeeth about the benefit of fasting the six days of Shawwaal states, apparently, that one will not get the reward of fasting Dahr (a year) except by fasting the month of Ramadhaan and following it up with the six days of Shawwaal, according to the hadeeth of the Prophet ﷺ: **"He who fasts Ramadhaan and follows it up with six days of Shawwaal, he will be considered as he has fasted Dahr (a year)"**<sup>4</sup>. So, fasting the six days of Shawwaal before making up for the missed days of Ramadhaan implies a non accomplishment of the month of Ramadhaan. This contradicts the term of the stated hadeeth. For that reason, it is recommended to begin with compensating the missed days of Ramadhaan, then fast those of Shawwaal in order to put into practice the apparent meaning of that hadeeth and get the reward of fasting Dahr.

However, I have stated the recommendation rather than the obligation of beginning with making up for the days of Ramadhaan, because the message maybe addressed to the people as a whole, because the majority of the fasting persons, who are incited by the Sharee'ah to observe voluntary fasting, fast all the month of Ramadhaan. This supports the probability that the term of the hadeeth in the Prophet's ﷺ saying: **"And follows it up with six days of Shawwaal"** is stated as regards the usual case and it has not the meaning of opposition. This probability is confirmed by the hadeeth reported by Thawbaan that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"He who fasts Ramadhaan has ten months as reward for every month, and fasting six days after Eid Al-Fitr is a complete year of fasting"**<sup>5</sup>.

The apparent meaning of the hadeeth states that the reward of fasting Ramadhaan is ten months, because one Hasana (good deed) equals ten. The same thing applies for the six days of Shawwaal. So, in both cases the reward of fasting Dahr is attained whether one begins with making up for the missed days or starts with the voluntary one.

In sum, if this probability becomes strong and is made clear, regardless of the precedence of the obligatory fast over the voluntary one, it is allowed to fast the six days of Shawwaal before compensating the missed days of Ramadhaan, especially for someone who has just few days of Shawwaal due to the compensation of the missed days of Ramadhaan.

As for the fasting of all the other voluntary days, such as that of `Arafah, Aashuraa the Beed days (13th, 14th and 15th days of every month of Hegira) and others, it is permissible to observe the voluntary fast first, according to the most correct saying of the scholars. It is the opinion of the Hanafees and Shaafee`s and one of the two opinions of Ahmad, as there is no proof from the Sharee'ah that forbids that. However, there is a text from the Qur'aan indicating that the time of compensation is unlimited:

<sup>4</sup> Reported by: Muslim; chapter of "fasting", concerning the recommendation of fasting the six days of Shawwaal successively (hadeeth 2758), At-Tirmidhee; chapter of "fasting", according to what is stated about the fast of the six days of Shawwaal (hadeeth 759), Abd Ar-Razzaaq in "Al-Musannaf" (hadeeth 7918) and Al-Baihaquee in "As-Sunan Al-Kubra" (hadeeth 8516), according to the hadeeth reported by Aboo Ayoob Al-Ansaaree رضي الله عنه.

<sup>5</sup> Reported by: Ahmad in his "Musnad" (hadeeth 21906), according to the hadeeth reported by Thawbaan رضي الله عنه. This hadeeth is authenticated by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh At-Targheeb" (hadeeth 1007).

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فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ  
[There are other days]<sup>6</sup>

The verse proves that it is allowed to delay making up for the missed days of Ramadhaan unlimitedly without obliging [people] to hurry to compensate the fasting once one is able to do it. Moreover, the opinion that the time of compensation is unlimited is shared by the overwhelming majority of the scholars; whether the predecessors or the successors.

This opinion is also supported by the approbation of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to the act of `A'ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا. She said: "I used to have some days to make up for and I could not compensate them except in Sha'baan"<sup>7</sup>. Ibn Hajar, may Allaah be merciful with him, said: "It is permissible, according to the hadeeth, to delay the compensation of Ramadhaan absolutely, whether one has an excuse or not, because that addition is included as we have proven it"<sup>8</sup>. And if this addition was not Marfu`a (elevated to the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), its permissibility would be necessarily limited, because the hadeeth has the ruling of Raf` (elevation to the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). Furthermore, it seems that the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ knew that and there were reasons for which his wives asked him concerning the matters of Sharee'ah. So, if this had not been legal, `A'ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا would not have done it regularly"<sup>9</sup>.

I said: It was permissible for her to delay making up for the missed days of Ramadhaan and there was no doubt that she رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا wanted to get the benefits of the voluntary fasting during the year as she cared about `Umrah (lesser pilgrimage); she was sad to see her girl friends coming back with performing Hajj and `Umrah independently and she came back with performing just `Umrah included in Hajj. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ then, ordered her brother to accompany her to perform `Umrah from At-Tan`eem to soothe her"<sup>10</sup>.

From the reasonable point of view, if it is permissible as regards "the extensive obligation" to begin with the voluntary act which is of the same kind of the obligation before performing it, such as Ar-Rawâtib (voluntary prayers) which are offered before the prescribed prayers, it is permissible a fortiori as regards "the absolute obligation" as it is the case in making up for the missed days of Ramadhaan.

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

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<sup>6</sup> Soorah al-Baqaraah [2:184]

<sup>7</sup> Reported by: Al-Bukhaaree; chapter of "fasting", concerning the time of making up for Ramadhaan (hadeeth 1849), Muslim; chapter of "fasting", concerning making up for Ramadhaan in the month of Sha'baan (hadeeth 2687), Ibn Khuzaymah in his "Saheeh" (hadeeth 2046) and Al-Baihaquee in "As-Sunan Al-Kubra" (hadeeth 8302), according to the hadeeth of `A'ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا.

<sup>8</sup> He means the narration in which she has delayed making up for the fast of Ramadhaan till the month of Sha'baan, because she was needed by the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

<sup>9</sup> "Fath Al-Baaree" of Ibn Hajar (4/191).

<sup>10</sup> "Zaad Al-Ma'aad" of Ibn Al-Qayyim (2/94). See fatwa number (712) (concerning the ruling of repeating `Umrah).