

Fruits for the Week

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The important elements of fasting

Every adult Muslim has to fast during daylight hours for the entire month of Ramadhan. Allah says: *“O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for the people before you in order for you to gain God-consciousness.”* (Al-Baqarah:183)

When a Muslim fasts, he fasts from dawn until sunset. This fasting includes abstaining from eating, drinking and sexual intercourse from dawn until sunset.

The fast has two essential elements that must be fulfilled for it to be valid and acceptable. They are:

1. The intention (*niyyat*). The intention must be made before *fajr* and during every night of Ramadhan. The intention is valid during any part of the night. It needs not be spoken as it is in reality an act of the heart which does not involve the tongue. It is fulfilled by making one's intention to fast out of obedience to Allah and for seeking His pleasure.
2. Abstaining from those acts that break the fast.

There are four things that break the fast:

1. To eat and drink knowingly and intentionally.

2. To induce vomiting intentionally.
3. Menstruation and post-childbirth bleeding even if the bleeding starts just before sunset.
4. Ejaculation.

It is preferred for the fasting person to do the following:

1. Eat a pre-dawn meal and hasten in breaking the fast.
2. Make supplications while fasting and while breaking the fast.
3. Refrain from performing any actions that do not fit the fasting.
4. Be generous.
5. Study the Qur'an.
6. Strive to perform as many acts of worship as possible during the last ten days of Ramadhan.

Breaking of the fast is permitted for the following reasons and conditions:

1. A pregnant or breast-feeding woman, if she fears for herself or for the baby.
2. A traveler.

One who is unable to fast in Ramadhan must make up the days of fasting missed. Wallahu A'lam.

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