

## Ruling on fasting on Saturdays

*What is the ruling on fasting on Saturdays at times other than Ramadaan? What if the day of 'Arafah happens to be a Saturday?.*

It is disliked to single out Saturday for fasting, because of the report narrated by al-Tirmidhi (744), Abu Dawood (2421) and Ibn Maajah (1726) from 'Abd-Allaah ibn Busr, from his sister, that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Do not fast on Saturdays apart from days when you are obliged to fast. If any one of you cannot find anything other than grape stalks or the twigs of a tree, let him chew it (to make sure that he is not fasting)." Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in al-Irwa' (960). Abu 'Eesa al-Tirmidhi said: This is a hasan hadeeth. What is makrooh in this case is for a man to single out Saturday for fasting, because the Jews venerate Saturday. End quote.

Ibn Qudaamah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Mughni (3/52): Our companions said: It is makrooh to single out Saturday for fasting ... what is makrooh is singling out that day. If he fasts another day along with it, then it is not makrooh, because of the hadeeth of Abu Hurayrah and Juwayriyah. If it coincides with a day that a person regularly fasts, it is not makrooh.

What is meant by the hadeeth of Abu Hurayrah is the report narrated by al-Bukhaari (1985) and Muslim (1144) from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: I heard the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say: "No one of you should fast on Friday, unless he fasts (a day) before it or after it."

The hadeeth of Juwayriyah was narrated by al-Bukhaari (1986) from Juwayriyah bint al-Haarith (may Allaah be pleased with her), that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) entered upon her on a Friday and she was fasting. He said; "Did you fast yesterday?" She said, "No." He said: "Do you intend to fast tomorrow?" She said: "No." He said: "Then break your fast."

This hadeeth and the one before it clearly indicate that it is permissible to fast on a Saturday at times other than Ramadaan, for the one who fasts the Friday before.

It is proven in al-Saheehayn that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The most beloved of fasting to Allaah is the fast of Dawood; he used to fast one day and not the next."

In this case it is bound to happen that he will sometimes fast on a Saturday on its own. So it may be understood from this that if Saturday coincides with a day that he habitually fasts, such as 'Arafah or 'Ashoora', there is nothing wrong with fasting on that day, even if it is on its own.

Al-Haafiz stated in al-Fath that an exception to the prohibition on fasting on Friday is made if a person habitually fasts on a certain day, such as 'Arafah, and it coincides with Friday.

The same applies to Saturday. We have quoted the words of Ibn Qudaamah concerning that above.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

It should be noted that different scenarios may apply with regard to fasting on a Saturday.

1 – It may be obligatory, such as observing a Ramadaan fast during Ramadaan or making it up later on, or observing a fast as expiation (kafaarah), or instead of offering a sacrifice when performing Hajj tamattu', and so on. There is nothing wrong with that so long as he does not single it out deliberately thinking that there is some virtue in that.

2 – If he fasts on the Friday before, there is nothing wrong with it, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to one of the Mothers of the Believers who was fasting on a Friday: "Did you fast yesterday?" She said: "No." He said: "Are you going to fast tomorrow?" She said, "No." He said: "Then break your fast." The words, "Are you going to fast tomorrow?" indicate that it is permissible to fast Saturday along with Friday.

3 – If it happens to be one of the days when it is prescribed to fast, such as Ayyaam al-Beed (the 13th, 14th and 15th of each hijri month), 'Arafah, 'Ashoora', six days of Shawwaal for one who has

fasted Ramadaan, and the ninth of Dhu'l-Hijjah. There is nothing wrong with that, because he is not fasting because it is Saturday, rather it is because it is one of the days when it is prescribed to fast.

4 – When it happens to be a day when he habitually fasts, such as a person whose habit is to fast alternate days, and the day that he fasts happens to be a Saturday, then there is nothing wrong with it, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said when he forbade fasting one or two days before Ramadaan begins: “except a man who (habitually) observes a fast, in which case let him fast.” This is similar.

5 – If he singles it out to observe a voluntary fast for one day only. This is what is forbidden, if the hadeeth forbidding it is proven to be saheeh.

End quote from Majmoo' Fataawa wa Rasaa'il al-Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (20/57)

And Allaah knows best.

**In Fataawa al-Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem (may Allaah have mercy on him) (4/206). He stated:**

It is makrooh to single out a Saturday for fasting. Some of them gave the reason that it is the 'eid' of the Jews, but it is more likely to be because it is the day when the Jews refrain from working and they rest on that day. If the Muslim fasts on that day, the fast may keep him from working or slow him down, because the fast will make him thirsty and hungry, so he will resemble the Jews in not working on that day. End quote.

### **The reason why it is forbidden to single out Friday for fasting**

Singling out a day for observing a naafil fast is permissible, unless it is a Friday or Saturday, or it is the day of 'Ashoora which is the tenth day of Muharram, in which case it is mustahabb to fast the day before or the day after as well.

As for Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, there is nothing wrong with fasting them on their own, rather it is Sunnah to fast on Mondays and Thursdays.

Al-Bukhaari (1985) and Muslim (1144) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say: “No one of you should fast on Friday, unless he fasts (a day) before it or after it.”

According to a report narrated by Muslim: “do not single out the day of Friday for fasting, unless that coincides with a fast that one habitually observes.”

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: These ahaadeeth appear to support the view of the majority of the companions of al-Shaafa'i, which is that it is makrooh to single out Friday for fasting unless that happens to coincide with a fast that one habitually observes. If he joins it to a fast on the day before or the day after, or it coincides with a day that he habitually fasts, such as if he vowed to fast on the day that a loved one was healed for the rest of his life, and that happens to be a Friday, then it is not makrooh, because of these ahaadeeth.

The scholars said: The reason why it is forbidden is that Friday is a day of du'aa', dhikr and worship, such as ghusl, going to the prayer early and waiting for the prayer, listening to the khutbah and reciting a lot of dhikr after it, because Allaah says: “Then when the (Jumu'ah) Salaah (prayer) is ended, you may disperse through the land, and seek the Bounty of Allaah (by working), and remember Allaah much” [al-Jumu'ah 62:10]. And there are other acts of worship to be done on this day, so it is mustahabb not to fast then, so that one will have more energy to do these duties and perform them in an energetic manner and be happy to do them and enjoy them without feeling bored or tired. This is like the pilgrim on the day of 'Arafah in 'Arafah: the Sunnah is for him not to fast, as stated above.

If it is said: If that was the case, the prohibition would still apply to fasting the day before or the day after, because the reason still applies, the response to that is that he will attain reward for fasting the day before or the day after, which will make up for any shortfall in his duties on Friday that occurs because of his fasting. This is the correct view on the wisdom behind not singling out Friday for fasting.

And it was said that the reason is that there is the fear of going to extremes in venerating Friday, so that become infatuated with it as some people became infatuated about Saturday. But this is a weak view which is contradicted by the fact the Muslims offer Jumu'ah prayer and do other acts which are an expression of veneration of that day.

And it was said that the reason for this prohibition is lest it be thought that it is obligatory. This is a weak view which is contradicted by the fact that it is recommended to fast on Mondays, so no attention should be paid to this unlikely notion. Similarly it is recommended to fast on the day of 'Arafah and the day of 'Ashoora' and so on. The correct view is that which we have stated above, and Allaah knows best. End quote.

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