Basic Fasting Guidelines

THINGS THAT ARE FORBIDDEN IN FASTING
(MUFTIRATU 'SH- SAWM)

(A) Related to Head & Mouth:
1. & 2. Eating and drinking.
3. Intentionally letting the thick dust or smoke enter the throat.
4. Vomiting intentionally (even if it is for a medical purpose).
5. Submerging the head completely into the water.

(B) Related to Private Parts:
7. Intentionally remaining in state of Janabat till the time of fajr (dawn).

A person becomes junub & goes to sleep:
(a) with intention of not doing ghusl before dawn = fast is batil (invalid).
(b) with intention of doing ghusl before dawn:
   i. but did not wake up before dawn = fast is okay.
   ii. woke up once & went back to sleep till fajr = fast + do qazah.
   iii. woke up twice & went back to sleep till fajr = fast + do qazah + it is recommended to pay kaffarah.

Similarly, intentionally remaining in state of hayz (period) for a woman whose bleeding has stopped and has enough time to do ghusl or, at least, tayammum before fajr.

8. Doing anything that would cause discharge of semen.

(C) Moral/Ethical:
10. Kizb (lying) of the highest type —falsely attributing a statement to Allâh, the Prophets, and the Imams— makes the fast batil (invalid).

Note: If a person does any of the mufitar intentionally, then the fast will become batil (null/void).
However, doing any of these unintentionally does not harm the validity of fasting.

1. According to Ayatullah Sistani, submerging the head into the water is strongly disliked but not forbidden.
2. Janabat is a state of ritual impurity (najasat) caused by sexual intercourse or discharge of semen.
3. Junub means the person on whom ghusl-e janabat becomes obligatory.
4. Qaza means to make up the fast during other days after Ramadhân.
5. Kaffarah means penalty.
THOSE EXEMPTED FROM FASTING

1. An elderly person who cannot fast at all or it causes great difficulty for him/her:
   There is no qazã for them at all; however, they have to pay fidya.
   (Fidya is different from kaffãrah. Fidya is “compensation” whereas kaffãrah is a “fine.”)
   Fidya for each day of fasting is 750 grams of wheat or rice; although giving 1.5 kg of wheat or rice is better.

2. A person whose medical condition does not allow him/her to stay thirsty (e.g., diabetic):
   If this person recovers from the medical problem, then it is wâjib for him/her to do qazã.
   However, if there no chances of recovery from that illness, then he/she is exempted.
   Such a person also has to pay fidya for each day of fasting.

3. A pregnant or a nursing woman: if fasting would harm her or the child’s health.
   Such a woman has to do qazã; and also pay fidya.

What About Travelers & Fasting?

If a traveler stays for ten days continuously in one city, then he can fast; but if he is going to stay in one city for less then ten days, then he cannot fast—he will have to make up (do qaza) the days he missed after the month of Ramadhân.

However, a “frequent traveler” will fast as normally and also say the prayers fully. “Frequent traveler” means a person
1. whose work itself is traveling (e.g., driver, pilot),
2. whose work involves traveling (e.g., salesperson, construction worker, consultant who visits the clients), and
3. whose work-place is more than 24 miles away from the city limits of his home-town.

THE SPECIAL NAWÄFIL OF RAMADHÄN

The special nawäfil (recommended or supererogatory prayers) for the month of Ramadhân are to be recited as follows:

1\textsuperscript{st} to 20\textsuperscript{th} day ——> 20 raka‘at (2 rak‘at x 10) each night.

19\textsuperscript{th}, 21\textsuperscript{st} & 23\textsuperscript{rd} ——> 100 raka‘at (2 rak‘at x 50) each of the three eves.

21\textsuperscript{st} to 30\textsuperscript{th} ———> 30 raka‘at (2 rak‘at x 15) each of the ten nights.

The total numbers of the special nawäfil of Ramadhân comes to 1000 rak‘at. However, it is important to note that these nawäfil prayers, from the Shí‘a Islamic perspective, cannot be said in congregational form (jamä‘at); it can only be said in individual form (furãda).

The Prophet (s.a.w.) said, “…I recommend you to say prayers in your homes because the best of a person’s prayers is in his home except for the obligatory (prayers).”
**FASTING & USE OF MEDICINE**

through the **mouth**
(e.g., food & drink) = the fast is baṭil (invalid)
(The puffer used for asthma would not make the fast baṭil
if the spray enters the respiratory tract and not the passage of food and drink.)

When enters your body:

**food & drink** (e.g., feeding tube) = the fast is baṭil.
(However, using i.v. drip is okay.)

through any **other route**:

**medicine** (e.g., nasal-drops, eye-drops, injection\(^1\))
= the fast is okay.

Note: When the fast become baṭil because of medical reason, the one has only to do the qaza; there is no kaffarah.

1. Except liquid enema which makes the fasting baṭil.

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**Revised: July 2010 / Sha’ban 1431**
The Prophet’s Sermon
Welcoming the Month of Ramadhãn

“O people, indeed the month of Allâh has approached you with blessings, mercy and forgiveness. In the eyes of Allâh, it is the best of all months, its days are best of all days, its nights are best of all nights, and it hours are best of all hours.

“It is a month in which you have been invited to be guests of Allâh, and you have been made in it the people who have honour of Allâh. Your breathing in it is tasbîh (singing the praise of God), your sleep in it is an act of ‘ibâdat (worship), your deeds are accepted, and your prayers are answered to. Therefore, ask your Lord with sincere intentions and pure desires to help you in fasting during this month and in reciting His Book. For the most unfortunate is one who is deprived of Allâh’s forgiveness in this great month.

“By your thirst and hunger, remember the hunger of the day of judgement and its thirst. Give charity to the poor and needy among you; lower your glances from what is not permissible for you to see, and refrain [from hearing] what is not permissible for you to hear. Show sympathy to the orphans of the people, and sympathy will be shown to your orphans. Repent for your sins, and raise your hands in supplications at the time of your prayers for that is the best of times in which Allâh looks towards His servants with mercy, answers them what they whisper to Him, responds to them when they call upon Him, gives to them when they ask Him, and accepts their prayers when they pray to Him.

“O people, your souls are dependent on your deeds, therefore release them [from Hell-Fire] by asking for forgiveness. Your backs are burdened with your weight [of sins], so lighten their burden by lengthening the sajâdâhs (prostrations); and He shall not threaten with Fire when people will stand [in prayers] for the Lord of the Universe.

“O people, whosoever among you gives iftar (meal to break the fast) to a believer who is fasting during this month, his rewards with Allâh will be the releasing of his neck [from the Hell-Fire] and forgiveness for his past sins.”

Someone asked, “O Messenger of Allâh, not all of us have the ability to do that.” He said, “Fear the Fire! Even by breaking a date. Fear the Fire! Even by drink of a water!”

“O people, whosoever among you improves his character (khulq) during this month, he shall have the pass for going over the sirât (the bridge) on the day (of judgement) when the feet shall slip. Whosoever lessens the burden [of work] from his slave (and subordinates), Allâh shall lessen his reckoning (of his deeds) for him. Whosoever prevents his evil (from people), Allâh shall prevent His anger from him on the day he shall meet Him. Whosoever severs the link with his relations in this month, Allâh shall sever His mercy from him on the day he shall meet Him.

“Whosoever fulfills a duty in this month, his rewards will be multiplied seventy times compared to the same deed done during other months. Whosoever increases the salâwât on me during this month, Allâh shall lighten his burden [of sins] on the day when He shall be lightening the burdens [of other good doers]. Whosoever recites a verse of the Qur’ân during this month, he shall have the reward of one who has completed the recitation of the entire Qur’ân during the other months.

“O people, the doors of Paradise are open during this month, so ask your Lord not to close them on you; and the doors of Hell are closed, so ask your Lord not to open them up for you. The satans are in chains, so ask Allâh not to impose them upon you.”

Imâm ‘Ali stood up and said, “O the Messenger of Allâh, what is the best of deeds during this month?” The Prophet said, “O Abu ’l-Hasan! The best of deeds during this month is to refrain from what Allâh has prohibited.” Then the Prophet cried. ‘Ali asked, “O messenger of Allâh, what made you cry?” The Prophet said, “O ‘Ali, I am crying for the injustice that will be done against you in this month. It is as if I see you that while your are praying to your Lord, the most wretched of the mankind...struck you [with his sword] on your head so that its blood coloured your beard.” ‘Ali asked, “O Messenger of Allâh, will this happen while I am at peace with my faith?” The Prophet replied, “You will be at peace with your faith. O ‘Ali, whoever kills you is as if he has killed me, whoever hates you is as if he hates me, whoever curses you is as if he has cursed me because you are to me like my own soul, your soul is from my soul and your nature is from my nature. Verily Almighty Allâh created me and you, then He selected me and you, and chose me for prophethood and chose you for imâmât; so whoever rejects your imâmât, he has indeed rejected my prophethood. O ‘Ali, you are my heir, the father of my descendants, the husband of my daughter, and my successor to my community in my life as well as in my death; your command is my command and your prohibition is my prohibition. I swear by the One who raised me as the Prophet and made me the best of creation, you indeed are the proof of Allâh upon His creation, trustee of His secret and His vicegerent towards His servants.”

(Translated by Sayyid M Rizvi from Shaykh aṣ-Ṣadûq’s ‘Uyûn Akhârî ’r-Riḍâ, vol. 2, p. 265.)