

## Iftar [to break the Saum (fast)]

When should the person observing Saum (fast) break his Saum(fast)?

Narrated `Umar bin Al-Khattab [Radi Allahu anhu : May Allah be pleased with him] : Allah's Messenger [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said: "[When night falls from this side \(i.e., the east\) and the day vanishes from this side and the sun sets, then the person observing Saum \(fast\) should break his Saum \(fast\).](#)"[Reported by Al-Bukhari;Classification:Fasting: Breaking fast at the end of day.]

Narrated 'Abdullah bin Abi Aufa [Radi Allahu anhu : May Allah be pleased with him]: We were in the company of the Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] on a journey and he was observing Saum (fast), and when the sun set, he addressed somebody, "O so-and-so, get up and mix Sawiq ([ground roasted barley drink](#) ) with water for us." He replied, "O Allah's Messenger! (Will you wait) till it is evening?" The Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said, "Get down and mix Sawiq with water for us." He replied, "O Allah's Messenger ! (If you wait) till it is evening." The Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said again, "Get down and mix Sawiq with water for us." He replied, "It is still daytime."(1) The Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said again, "Get down and mix Sawiq with water for us." He got down and mixed Sawiq for them. The Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] drank it and then said, "[When you see night falling from this side, the fasting person should break his fast.](#)" [Reported by Al-Bukhari;Classification:Fasting: Breaking fast at the end of day.]

Explanation:Perhaps that Companion of the Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] thought that the sun had not set but was still hidden behind a hill or the like, or it was cloudy and thus was not sure of the setting sun. (Fath Al-Bari, Vol.5,p.100)

`Umar bin Al-Khattab [Radi Allahu anhu : May Allah be pleased with him] reported: The Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said: "[When the night approaches from this side \(i.e., the east\) and the day retreats from that side \(i.e., west\) and the sun sets, then it is time for a person observing Saum \(fasting\) to break his fast.](#)" [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Commentary: The words "[break his fast](#)" can be interpreted in two ways. First, it is time to break the Saum . Second, the Saum has reached its end. Whether one eats or not the Saum is over because it comes to a close with sunset. Thus, the time for Saum has been determined that it begins with the daybreak and ends at sunset. Any increase in this time is exaggeration which is disliked by Allah.

Imaam Muhammad Naasir-ud-Deen Al-Albaanee explains:As for his teaching, then he (saw) said, in the hadeeth reported by al-Bukharee in his Saheeh (no. 1954), " If the night appears from this side," and he pointed towards the east, " and the day has departed from here," and he pointed towards the west, "and the sun has set, then the fasting person's fast is broken"

What does 'the fasting person's fast is broken' mean? It means he has entered under the ruling that [he should break his fast](#). So then comes the previous ruling where the Messenger (saws) encouraged hastening to break the Fast, and the Messenger (saws) used to implement this, even when he was riding on a journey.

So it is reported in the Saheeh of al-Bukharee (no.1955) that the Prophet (saws) ordered one of his Companions to prepare the Iftaar for him. So he replied, 'O Messenger of Allaah it is still daytime before us.' Meaning: the light of the sun, so even though it had set, yet its light was still clear in the west. So the Messenger (saws) did not respond to what he had said, rather he re-emphasized the command to him to prepare the Iftaar. So the narrator of the hadeeth who said, We could see daylight in front of us,<sup>1</sup> meaning: the light of day, the light of the sun, When we broke our fast,<sup>1</sup> said, "If one of us had climbed onto his camel he would have seen the sun." The sun had set from here, and the Messenger (saws) ordered one of the Companions to prepare the Iftaar - Why? To hasten upon good "My Ummah will continue upon good for as long as they hasten to break the Fast."

So what is important is that we notice that the Iftaar, which is legislated to be hastened must be done with a few dates. Then we must hasten to perform the Prayer. Then after this the people can sit and eat as they need. This is the first matter, which I wanted to remind you of, and it is how to reconcile the two things that the Prophet (saws) commanded we should hasten to perform. The first being the command to hasten the breaking of the Fast, and the second being the command to hasten the Maghrib Prayer. So the Iftaar should be done with some dates, as occurs in the Sunnah, and if dates are not available, then with some gulps of water. Then the Prayer should be prayed in congregation in the mosque.

" Iftar" [to break the Saum (fast) with available water or anything else.

Narrated Abdullah bin Abi Aufa [Radi Allahu anhu : May Allah be pleased with him] We were traveling with Allah's Messenger [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] and he was observing Saum (fast), and when the sun set, he said to (someone), "Get down and mix Sawiq with water for us." He replied, "O Allah's Apostle! (Will you wait) till it is evening?" The Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] again said, "Get down and mix Sawiq with water for us." He replied, "O Allah's Messenger! It is still daytime." The Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said again, "Get down and mix Sawiq with water for us." So, he got down and carried out that order. The Prophet then said, "When you see night falling from this side, the person observing Saum should break his Saum (fast)," and he beckoned with his finger towards the east.

[Reported by Al-Bukhari;Classification:Fasting: Breaking fast with water or anything available.]

The Superiority of Hastening to Break the Fast

Sahl ibn Sa'd reported that the Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said: "The people will not cease to be upon good as long as they hasten in breaking the fast." [Bukhari and Muslim].

Sahl also reports that the Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said: "The Ummah will not cease to be upon my Sunnah as long as they do not await the stars when breaking the fast". [Ibn Hibban; Sahih]

'Amr ibn Maimun adds: "The companions of Muhammad [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam], would be the first to break the fast and the last to eat their Suhoor." [al-Baihaqi, Abdur-Razzaq and al-Haithami; Sahih]

He (S) said: "The religion [of Islam] shall continue to prevail as long as people hasten breaking the fast, for the Jews and Christians delay it" [Sahih al-Jami`]

Narrated Abud-Dardaa' [Radi Allahu anhu : May Allah be pleased with him] :The Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam]said, "[Three things are from the manners of the Prophets: Hastening in breaking the fast, delaying the Suhoor, and placing the right hand upon the left in prayer](#)". [Tabarani] (Sahih)

Ahmad and Abu Dawood recorded through Anas with a Hasan Isnad that the Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] used to break the fast before praying.

He (S) used not to pray Maghrib unless he breaks his fast, even if it be a sip of water. [Sahih al-Jami`]

People will continue to adhere to good as long as .....

Sahl bin Sa'd [Radi Allahu anhu : May Allah be pleased with him] reported: The Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam]said, "[People will continue to adhere to good as long as they hasten to break the Saum \(fasting\)](#)". [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Commentary: "[Adhere to good](#)" here means welfare of the religion as well as that of this world. Breaking the Saum early does not mean that it is terminated before the prescribed time. What it really means is without any delay after the sunset. One should not delay it for the mere reason that the rigour one has gone through in the Saum should be enhanced further, as is done by some Sufi. There is no merit in such things because the real merit lies in following the Sunnah of the Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] . Welfare of the Muslims will, therefore, come in the share of the Muslims because of their following the Prophet's Sunnah of breaking the Saum in the early moments of the prescribed time.

Imaam Muhammad Naasir-ud-Deen Al-Albaanee explains:

There is a hadeeth that is very often neglected due to another hadeeth, because the majority of people are unable to reconcile in practice and application between them. This hadeeth is his (saws) saying, "My Ummah will continue to be upon good for as long as they hasten to break the fast and delay the pre-dawn meal."

So here two matters were mentioned, and they are neglected by most of the people, and they are: hastening to break the fast, and delaying the pre-dawn meal (Suhoor).

As for neglect of the first matter, which is hastening to break the Fast, then in the view of some people it contradicts another hadeeth, which is his (saws) saying, "My Ummah will continue to be upon good for as long as they hasten to pray the Maghrib Prayer."

So here we have two commands, to hasten with two matters. So it appears to some people that we cannot hasten to perform both of them together.

But reconciling between the command to hasten with breaking the Fast and the command to hasten to pray the Maghrib Prayer is a very easy matter. So it is something that our Prophet (saws) made clear to us by his action and practice. He (saws) used to break the Fast with three dates. He would eat three dates. Then he would pray the Maghrib Prayer, then he would eat again if he found that he needed to eat the evening meal.

But today we fall into two offences:

(i) Firstly we delay the Adhaan from its legislated time. Then after this delay comes another delay, which is that we sit down for a meal - except for a few people who are eager and pray the Maghrib Prayer in the mosque. But the majority of the people wait until they hear the Adhaan, and then they sit down to eat as if they are having a dinner, or their evening meal, and not just breaking their fast.

So the Adhaan these days - in most of the lands of Islaam, is, unfortunately, I have to say, and not just in Jordan, and I have known this from investigation, in most of the lands of Islaam - the Adhaan for Maghrib is given after the time it becomes due. And the reason for this is that we have abandoned adhering to and applying the Islamic rulings, and instead we have come to depend upon astronomical calculations. We depend upon the timetable.

But these time-tables are based upon astronomical calculations which count the land as being a single flat plane. So they give a time for this flat plane, whereas the reality is that the land, particularly in this land of ours varies, varying between the depression of valleys and the elevation of mountains. So it is not correct that a single time be given which covers the shore, the planes and the mountains. No, each part of the land has its own time. So therefore whoever is able in his place of residence, in his city or his village, to see the sun set with his own eye, then whatever time it sets at, that is the hastening that we have been commanded with in his (saws) saying, which we just mentioned: 'My Ummah will continue to be upon good as long as they hasten to break the fast.' So the Prophet (saws) was careful to implement this Sunnah by teaching it, and by putting it into practice.

The Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] used to do so

Abu Atiyah [Radi Allahu anhu : May Allah be pleased with him] reported: Masruq and I visited `Aishah [Radi Allahu anha : May Allah be pleased with her] and said: "O Mother of the Believers! There are two Companions of Muhammad [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] and neither of them holds back from doing good acts; but one of them hastens to break Saum (fasting) and hastens to perform the Maghrib prayer, while the other delays breaking Saum and delays performing Salat (prayer)." She asked, "Who is the one who hastens to break Saum and perform the Maghrib prayer?" Masruq said, "It is `Abdullah (meaning `Abdullah bin Mas`ud)." She said, "The Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] used to do so."

[Muslim].

### How to break the Fast

Salman bin `Amir [Radi Allahu anhu : May Allah be pleased with him] reported: I heard the Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] saying, "When one of you breaks his Saum (fasting), let him break it on dates; if he does not have any, break his fast with water for it is pure." [Abu Dawud].

Anas [Radi Allahu anhu : May Allah be pleased with him] reported: The Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] used to break his Saum (fast) before offering Maghrib (sunset) prayer with three fresh dates; if there were no fresh dates, he will eat three dry dates; and if there were no dry dates; he would take three draughts of water. [Abu Dawood and others, graded authentic by Shaikh Al-Albani in Sahih Al-Jami' AS-Saghir, No.4995]

Commentary: It is well to keep the priorities of things mentioned in the Hadith as one gets the reward of following the Sunnah in breaking his Saum.

### Times of responding to the Supplication

Allah's Messenger [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said: "The supplication of a fasting person upon breaking his fast, will not be rejected." (Ibn Majah, graded authentic by Shaikh Al-Albani in Sahih Sunan Ibn Majah, No.1432)

Dua (Supplication) of Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] upon breaking the Fast

When the Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] would break his fast he would say: : "Dhahabaz-zamau wabtallatil-'uruqu, wa thabata lajru, insha' Allah." (The thirst has gone, the veins are replenished (moistened) and the reward is confirmed, if Allah wills.) [Abu Daawood, al-Baihaqee, al-Haakim and others, It was graded Hasan by Shaikh Al-Albani in Al-Irwa' Al-Ghaleel, No. 920]]

**When invited to break the fast, the Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] used to supplicate for his hosts by saying:**

Anas [Radi Allahu anhu : May Allah be pleased with him] reported: The Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] came to visit Sa`d bin `Ubadah (May Allah be pleased with him) who presented bread and olive oil to him. The Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] ate it and said, "The observers of fast have broken their fast with you (this is the literal translation, but the meaning is: `May Allah reward you for providing a fasting people with food to break their fast'); the pious people have eat your food and the angels invoked blessings on you." [Abu Dawud].

Commentary: The word "**Aftara**" is informative in nature, but it is used in the sense of a prayer. Thus, what it denotes is "**May Allah give you the reward of one who arranges for the Iftar (breaking the Saum) of somebody.**" Thus, it induces one to hospitality according to his means.

\*"Akala ta`amakumul-abraar, wa sallat `alaikumul-mala'ikah, wa aftara `indakumus-sa'imoon" May the righteous eat your food, may the angel seek forgiveness for you and may those who fast break the fast with you. [Ahmad, an-Nasa'i and others; Sahih]

\*Allahumma aT`im man aT`amane, wasqi man saqani O Allah feed the one who fed me, and give drink to the one who gave me drink. [Muslim]

\*Allahumma 'ghfir lahum warHamhum wa baarik lahum feema razaqtahum O Allah forgive them, have mercy upon them and place bless what You provided for them. [Muslim]

The Merit of Providing something to the Person Observing Saum (Fasting) for breaking the Fast

Zaid bin Khalid Al-Juhani [Radi Allahu anhu : May Allah be pleased with him] reported: The Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said, "**He who provides a fasting person something with which to break his fast, will earn the same reward as the one who was observing the fast, without diminishing in any way the reward of the latter.**" [At-Tirmidhi].

The Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said: "He who gives food for a fasting person to break his fast, he will receive the same reward as him, except that nothing will be reduced from the fasting persons reward." [Ahmad, at-Tirmidhee, Ibn Maajah, Ibn Hibbaan, Saheeh]. Also, a fasting Muslim should not reject invitation of another Muslim to break fast.

Umm `Umarah Al-Ansariyah [Radi Allahu anha : May Allah be pleased with her] reported: Once the Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] visited us and I served him some food. He [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] asked me to eat. I replied that I was observing (optional) fast. He [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] said, "**When people eat by a person observing fast, the**

angels keep asking Allah's forgiveness for that person until they have had their fill."  
[At-Tirmidhi].

Commentary: This Hadith tells us the merits of the person who is himself observing Saum but serves meals to others.