

Chapter 17: The Adab of Sawm (Fasting)

1. In al-Faqih: Narrated from Muhammad ibn Marwan who said: I heard Aba ‘Abdillah (as) saying: The Prophet (S) would fast so much that it would be said he does not break his fast and he would stop fasting for so long that it would be said he does not fast. Then he fasted on alternative days. Then he fasted on Mondays and Thursdays. In the end he turned to fasting three days a month: the Thursday in the beginning of the month, the Wednesday in the middle of the month and the Thursday at the end of the month; and he (S) would say: “This is the fasting of the lifetime.”

He (as) also said: My father (as) used to say: None is more disliked by Allah (SwT) than a person who is told: “The Noble Prophet would do this and that” and replies: “Allah (SwT) would not punish me for my effort in (performing more) prayer and fasting” – as if he thinks that the Holy Prophet (S) left out something that was excellent because he was unable to perform it. 1

2. In al-Kafi: Narrated from Muhammad ibn Muslim from Abi ‘Abdillah (as): In the beginning of his prophetic mission, the Holy Prophet (S) used to fast so much that it would be said he never breaks his fast, and he would stop fasting for so long that it would be said he doesn’t fast. Then he left this (practice) and started fasting on alternative days – and this was the fasting of Prophet Dawud (as). Then he stopped this and fasted on the three days of *al-Ghurr* (the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth of every month). He then left this (practice) also and separated the fasts by ten days, (fasting) on two Thursdays with one Wednesday in-between, and he (S) continued this until he passed away.2

3. In Hadith al-Arba’mi’ah: He (S) said: Fasting on three days every month, (on) two Thursdays with a Wednesday in-between, and fasting in the month of Sha’ban, removes devilish insinuations and anxieties from the heart ... and we (the Ahl al-Bayt) fast on two Thursdays with a Wednesday in-between.3

4. In al-Kafi: Narrated from ‘Anbasah al-’Abidi who said: The Noble Prophet (S) passed away while (continuing the practice of) fasting in the month of Sha’ban and Ramad’an, and three days in every (other) month.4

5. From al-Saduq in his two books al-Ma’ani and al-Majalis: Narrated from Abi Basir from al-Sadiq from

his fathers (as): One day, the Holy Prophet (S) asked his companions: “Who from among you fasts the (whole) lifetime?” Salman said: “I do, O Prophet of Allah.” A man said to Salman: “I have seen you eating on most days!” He said: “It is not as you think. I fast on three days every month (and) Allah has said:

“Whoever performs a good deed he shall have ten like it ...” (Surat al-An’am (6): 160)

And I join Sha’ban with Ramad’an, so this is fasting of the lifetime.”

Also (it is mentioned that) the Holy Prophet (S) told the man: “Where else will you find the likes of Luqman the wise? Ask him and he will tell you.”⁵

6. From Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Isa in his Nawadir: From ‘Ali ibn Nu’mān from Zur’ah who said: I asked Aba ‘Abdillah (as) whether the Noble Prophet (S) used to fast in the month of Sha’ban. He replied: “Yes, but he did not fast the whole of it.” I said: “How many days did he not fast?” He said: “He discontinued fasting on some days (of Sha’ban).” I asked him this question thrice and he gave me the same answer, adding nothing more to ‘he discontinued fasting on some days’. I asked him this question again after one year and he replied in the same way.⁶

7. In al-Kafi: Narrated from ‘Amr ibn Khalid from Abi Ja’far (as) who said: The Holy Prophet (S) used to fast in Sha’ban and Ramad’an, joining them both together, but instructing the people not to join them. He (as) would say: “They are both the months of Allah, and they are atonement for the sins of the past and future.”⁷

Note: It is possible that the instruction for not joining the fasts of the two months refers to not fasting continuously for the two months, as has been mentioned in some of our ahadith where there is an instruction to disjoin (the two) even if it be by (not fasting on) a day in the middle of the month.⁸

8. In al-Makarim: From Anas who said: The Holy Prophet (S) had a drink with which he would break his fast and a drink for *sahr*. Sometimes he would have only one (drink) – sometimes it would be milk and sometimes it would be a drink with soaked bread.⁹

9. In al-Kafi: Narrated from Ibn al-Qaddah from Abi ‘Abdillah (as) who said: The first thing that the Noble Prophet (S) broke his fast with in the season of fresh dates was fresh dates and in the season of dry dates was dry dates.¹⁰

10. Also: Narrated from al-Sakuni from Ja’far from his fathers (as): When the Holy Prophet (S) fasted and did not find anything sweet (to break his fast with), he would break his fast with water.¹¹

11. In some narrations: He (S) would sometimes break his fast with raisins.¹²

12. From al-Mufid in al-Muqni’ah: Narrated from the family of the Holy Prophet (S): It is recommended to have the *suhur*¹³ even if it is only a glass of water. Also: It is narrated that it is better to have dry

dates and *'al-Sawiq'*¹⁴ because this is what the Holy Prophet (S) used to have in his *suhur*.¹⁵

13. In al-Makarim: From the Holy Prophet (S) that he used to eat *'al-Harisah'*¹⁶ more than any other food and he would also have it for the *suhur*.¹⁷

14. In al-Faqih: When the Month of Ramad'an entered, the Noble Prophet (S) freed all the prisoners and gave (something) to all the beggars.¹⁸

15. In al-Da'aim: From 'Ali (as) who said: The Holy Prophet (S) would roll up his mattress and intensify his worship on the last ten days of the month of Ramad'an. He used to wake his family on the twenty-third night and he would sprinkle the faces of those who were asleep with water on this night. And Fatimah ؓ did not let anyone in her family sleep on this night and in order to enable them to remain awake; she gave them less food and prepared them from the morning saying: "The one who does not benefit from the blessings of this night is surely deprived."¹⁹

16. In al-Ja'fariyat: In his narration from Ja'far from his fathers from 'Ali (as): When the Holy Prophet (S) wanted to go for the prayer on the day of Fitr, he would (first) have a breakfast of dates and raisins.²⁰

17. From al-Saduq in al-Muqni': The *sunnah* is that one should eat after the prayer on the day of Ad'ha and before the prayer on the day of Fitr.²¹

Addendum to this Chapter

1. In Durar al-La'ali: From one of the wives of the Holy Prophet (S) (who said) that he would fast on the ninth of Dhul Hijjah and on three days every month.²²

2. In al-Iqbal: In the second volume of Tarikh al-Nisabur, from Khalf ibn Ayyub al-'amiri in his narration about the Holy Prophet (S): When the month of Ramad'an would enter, he would grow pale and his prayers would increase and he would supplicate and beseech Allah entreatingly.²³

3. In Majmu'at Warram: When something made the Noble Prophet (S) sad, he would take recourse in fasting and prayer.²⁴

4. In al-'Uyun: From Darim ibn Qabisah from al-Rid'a from his fathers from 'Ali (as) who said: When the month of Sha'ban entered, the Holy Prophet (S) would fast for three days in the beginning of the month, three days in the middle of the month and three days at the end of the month, and he would stop fasting before the month of Ramad'an entered, leaving a gap of two days before it and then fasting (again).²⁵

5. In al-Kafi: From 'Abdillah ibn Maskan from Abi 'Abdillah (as) who said: When the Prophet (S) opened his fast, he started with a sweet dish, and if he did not have it, he would partake some sugar or dried dates and if he did not have any of these, he would open his fast with lukewarm water.²⁶

6. In al-Iqbal: From Jabir from Abi Ja'far (as) who said: "The Holy Prophet (S) would open his fast with

‘the two black foods’.” I asked: “May Allah shower His mercy on you – what are ‘the two black foods?’” He said: “Dried dates with water and fresh dates with water.”²⁷

7. In al-Makarim: The Holy Prophet (S) used to open his fast with dried dates and when sugar was available, he would open his fast with it.²⁸

8. In al-Kafi: In his narration from Abi Basir who said: When the last ten nights (of the month of Ramad’an) would enter, he (S) would prepare himself, leave his wives, keep awake at night and occupy himself with worship.²⁹

Note: This has also been narrated by al-Saduq in al-Faqih and al-Tabarsi in al-Majma’.³⁰

9. In al-Tahdhib: From what has been confirmed to be from the *sunnah*: The Holy Prophet (S) would look for the crescent of the new moon and undertake the responsibility for trying to spot the new moon himself.³¹

10. In al-Da’aim: From ‘Ali (as) who said: Disbursing the (obligatory) charity of Fitr before the prayer of Fitr is from the *sunnah*.³²

11. al-Saduq in al-Muqni’: It is from the *sunnah* to recite the *takbir* on the eve of Fitr and the day of Fitr after ten (of the obligatory) prayers, and to recite *takbir* on the (day of) Ad’ha – for those who have not gone for Hajj – from the Dhuhr prayer to the Fajr Prayer of the second day (12th of Dhul Hijjah) – (after) ten (obligatory) prayers.³³

12. In al-Tahdhib: In his narration from Sa’eed al-Naqqash who said: Abu ‘Abdillah (as) said to me: “There is *takbir* on the (day of) Fitr but it has been prescribed as a *sunnah*.” I asked: “When is it (recited)?” He replied: “On the eve of Fitr in Maghrib and ‘Isha prayers, and in the Fajr prayer and ‘Eid prayer (on the day of Fitr), then it is stopped ...”³⁴

13. In al-Da’aim: It was narrated to us from ‘Ali (as) who said: It is (from the) *sunnah* to make haste with regards to opening the fast and to delay the *suhur* (until the last part of the night), and to start with the prayer – meaning the Maghrib prayer – before opening the fast.³⁵

14. In al-Tahdhib: In his narration from Mu’awiyah ibn Wahab who said: I heard Aba ‘Abdillah (as) saying: On the issue of the (*zakat* of) Fitr, the *sunnah* was (to give) one *sa’* (i.e. three kilos) of dry dates, one *sa’* of raisins or one *sa’* of barley.³⁶

15. Also: In his narration from Ishaq ibn ‘Ammar from Abi ‘Abdillah (as) who said: The Noble Prophet (S) said: Allah (SwT) has disliked for me (to have) six qualities and I have disliked these qualities for my successors from my progeny and their followers after me: (one of them is) sexual intimacy while fasting.³⁷

Note: This has also been narrated by al-Saduq in al-Amali in his narration from Ghiyath ibn Ibrahim.³⁸

16. In Tuhf al-'Uqul: A man came to al-Rid'a (as) on the day of Fitr and said: "For my breakfast today, I consumed a dry date and earth of the grave." He (as) said: "You have combined the *sunnah* with the blessing."³⁹

17. In 'Awarif al-Ma'arif: The Holy Prophet (S) used to open his fast with a drink of water, a little milk or some dry dates.⁴⁰

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1. al-Faqih 2:81, Makarim al-Akhlaq: 138, al-Kafi 4:90, Qurb al-Isnad: 43, Tahdhib al-Ahkam 4:302
 2. al-Kafi 4:90
 3. al-Khisal 2:612
 4. al-Kafi 4:91
 5. Ma'ani al-Akhbar: 234, Amali al-Saduq: 37
 6. We do not have the Nawadir of Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Isa, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 7:367
 7. al-Kafi 4:92, al-Faqih 2:93, Tahdhib al-Ahkam 4:307, al-Khisal: 606
 8. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 7:387-390
 9. Makarim al-Akhlaq: 32
 10. al-Kafi 4:153, Da'aim al-Islam 2:111
 11. al-Kafi 4:152
 12. Tahdhib al-Ahkam 4:198
 13. Last meal before daybreak during the month of Ramadhan. (Tr.)
 14. A dish made from wheat or barley mixed with sugar and dates. (Tr.)
 15. al-Muqni'ah: 316
 16. A dish made from mixing bulgur with meat (Tr.)
 17. Makarim al-Akhlaq: 29
 18. al-Faqih 2:99, Amali al-Saduq: 57
 19. Da'aim al-Islam 1:282
 20. al-Ja'fariyat: 40, Nawadir al-Rawandi: 39, Bihar al-Anwar 91:122
 21. al-Muqni': 46, al-Faqih 1:508
 22. Narrated by al-Nuri in al-Mustadrak 7:520
 23. Iqbal al-A'mal: 20
 24. Majmu'at Warram: 255
 25. 'Uyun Akhbar al-Rid'a 2:70
 26. al-Kafi 4:153
 27. Iqbal al-A'mal: 114
 28. Makarim al-Akhlaq: 27
 29. al-Kafi 4:155
 30. al-Faqih 2:156, Majma' al-Bayan 10:518 – Surat al-Qadr (97)
 31. Tahdhib al-Ahkam 4:155
 32. Da'aim al-Islam 1:267
 33. al-Muqni': 46
 34. Tahdhib al-Ahkam 3:138
 35. Da'aim al-Islam 1:280
 36. Tahdhib al-Ahkam 4:83
 37. Ibid., 4:195
 38. Amali al-Saduq: 60
 39. Tuhf al-'Uqul: 448

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