

Fasting (Ṣawm)

[The legal definition of] fasting is to withhold from eating, drinking, and sexual intercourse during daylight hours,⁴⁷⁰ with an intention of fasting, performed by one capable and required to do so.

Its types are seven—obligatory, mandatory, *sunna*, recommended, voluntary, prohibitively disliked, and mildly disliked.

1. Obligatory (*farḍ*): the fasting of Ramaḍān, during the month (*adāʾ*) as well as makeups (*qadāʾ*); fasts of expiation (*kaffāra*); and vowed fasts (*mandhūr*), the latter two according to the more apparent position (*azhar*) [in terms of strength];⁴⁷¹
2. Mandatory (*wājib*): makeups of broken voluntary (*nafl*) fasts;

⁴⁷⁰ Namely, from true dawn until sunset; i.e., it is lawful for the one intending on fasting to continue eating until true dawn (*fajr ṣādiq*), even if false dawn (*fajr kādhib*) comes in. At true dawn, however, one must stop eating, even if one is in the middle of the meal, to the extent that even the morsel or sip in one's mouth must be expelled and not swallowed, so as not to invalidate the fast.

As for the ḥadīth, "If one of you hears the call [to prayer] while his [drinking] vessel is in his hand, let him not place it down until having fulfilled his need from it" (*Mustadrak, Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad*)—indeed, the eminent masters of ḥadīth have clearly stated that it is not rigorously authenticated (*ṣaḥīḥ*) by either of its two chains of transmission. Moreover, what is meant by "the call [to prayer]" in the ḥadīth is that of Bilāl ؓ, which used to be given well before true dawn so as to alert people that dawn was approaching. It does not refer to the call of prayer *at dawn*, which used to be performed by Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ (*Nafahāt* 163–4). This is of utmost importance, as unfortunately many people invalidate their fasts by eating or drinking past true dawn, based on a gross misinterpretation of the above ḥadīth.

Finally, with respect to modern tables of prayer timings, the 18-degree time for fajr is more precautionary and should therefore be used, especially for fasting.

⁴⁷¹ The more accurate position in the school is that the fasts of expiation and vows are mandatory (*wājib*) rather than obligatory (*farḍ*) (*Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:296–7; *Hadīyya* 153; *Durr, Radd* 2:82).

3. *Sunna*: the fasting of the Blessed ‘Āshūrā’ [tenth of Muḥarram]⁴⁷² along with the ninth;⁴⁷³
4. Recommended (*mandūb*): fasting three days of every month;⁴⁷⁴ or Mondays and Thursdays; or six days of Shawwāl, yet spread out;⁴⁷⁵
5. Voluntary (*nafl*): any other day of fasting as long as its reprehensibility is not established [see next two categories];
6. Prohibitively Disliked (*makrūh taḥrīman*): fasting on [any one of] the two days of ‘Īd, or the Days of Tashrīq;⁴⁷⁶
7. Mildly Disliked (*makrūh tanzīhan*): e.g., to single out⁴⁷⁷ fasting on Saturday, [Friday],⁴⁷⁸ *Nayrūz* or *Mahrajān*,⁴⁷⁹ unless it happens to coincide with one’s habit;⁴⁸⁰ or to fast consecutively (*ṣawm al-wiṣāl*).⁴⁸¹ It is [also] disliked to fast daily [for the entire year] (*ṣawm al-dahr*).⁴⁸²

472 Ibn ‘Ābidīn inclines toward considering it recommended (*mandūb* or *mustaḥabb*) rather than *sunna* (*Radd* 2:83).

473 Or with the eleventh. If the tenth is fasted alone it is mildly disliked (*makrūh tanzīhan*), as that entails resemblance of the Jews. The *sunna*, therefore, is to conjoin with it either the day before or after (*Marāqī ‘l-Falāḥ* 2:299; *Durr, Radd* 2:84).

474 It is a separate recommended (*mandūb*) act to make those three days the 13th, 14th, and 15th of the month (*Nūr al-Īḍāḥ* 2:297).

475 Although to fast them consecutively, immediately after ‘Īd al-Fiṭr, is also acceptable (*Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:298).

476 The Days of Tashrīq are the three days after ‘Īd al-Aḍḥa, namely, the 11th, 12th, and 13th of Dhū ‘l-Ḥijja.

477 That is, without fasting the day before or after it as well (*Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:299).

478 Although some scholars considered it recommended to fast on Friday, even if singled out (*Durr, Radd* 2:83), which would perhaps explain why the author left it out of this text, although he did include it in *Nūr al-Īḍāḥ* as being mildly disliked if singled out for fasting (*Imdād* 621, *Marāqī ‘l-Falāḥ* 2:299).

479 *Nayrūz* and *Mahrajān* are the spring and autumn holidays of the Persians (*Marāqī ‘l-Falāḥ* 2:300). They are celebrated on the days of the astronomical vernal and autumnal equinoxes.

480 Such as if one fasts every other day—or if one fasts the first of every month—and then that day corresponded with one of the above days (*Radd* 2:84).

481 *Ṣawm al-wiṣāl* is to fast for two or more days consecutively without eating in between, while *ṣawm al-dahr* is to fast daily yet with breaking the fast every night (*Marāqī ‘l-Falāḥ* 2:300).

482 Both *ṣawm al-wiṣāl* and *ṣawm al-dahr* are deemed mildly disliked (*makrūh tanzīhan*), and regarding the latter, it is disliked even if one does not fast on the five days on which it is prohibited to fast (see type six in text above) (*Ḥadiyya* 154; *Durr, Radd* 2:84).

THE INTENTION OF FASTING

[All types of fasts require an intention.]⁴⁸³ The following types of fasts require an intention and specification of the “type” of fast [as well as that the intention be made the previous night before fajr, yet after maghrib (*ṭabyīṭ*)]:

- Makeups (*qadāʿ*) from Ramaḍān,
- Makeups from voluntary (*nafl*) fasts that one invalidated,
- Fasts of expiation (*kaffāra*),
- Unspecified vows (*nadhr muṭlaq*).⁴⁸⁴

The following types of fasts require neither specification of the type of fast, nor that the intention be made the previous night before fajr; rather, the intention may be made any time from the previous night⁴⁸⁵ until [before] *ḍaḥwa kubrā*.⁴⁸⁶

- Ramaḍān fasts during the month (*adāʿ*),
- Specified vows (*nadhr muʿayyan*),⁴⁸⁷
- Voluntary (*nafl*) fasts.

THE CRESCENT MOON (*HILĀL*)

The beginning of the month of Ramaḍān is established either by sighting the crescent moon,⁴⁸⁸ or by the completion of thirty days of Shaʿbān.

One may not fast on the Day of Doubt (*yawm al-shakk*),⁴⁸⁹ except as a voluntary fast.⁴⁹⁰

483 This section has been somewhat paraphrased in translation for more fluidity.

484 That is, vows made to fast, without specifying a particular day.

485 For the previous night, the intention must be made *after* maghrib, not beforehand (*Durr* 2:85).

486 *Ḍaḥwa kubrā* is determined by dividing the time between the entrance of fajr and that of maghrib by half. If the intention of fasting *the entire day* is performed *before ḍaḥwa kubrā*, the above three types of fasts are valid; otherwise, they are not. Another way of determining *ḍaḥwa kubrā* is to divide the entire prayer time of fajr, from true dawn until sunrise, by half; this amount of time before midday (*zawāl*) is *ḍaḥwa kubrā* (*Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:303; *Hadiyya* 154; *Radd* 2:85).

487 That is, vows made to fast, in which a particular day was specified when making the vow.

488 That is, at night, as day sightings are given no consideration (*Durr*, *Radd* 2:95–6).

489 *Yawm al-Shakk* refers to the day after the 29th of Shaʿbān, yet for one reason or another the crescent moon is not sighted by reliable witnesses. Hence, there is doubt as to whether it is the 30th of Shaʿbān or the 1st of Ramaḍān (*Marāqīʿ l-Falāḥ* 2:306; *Tabayīn* 1:317).

490 One may fast on this day *only* if with a *firm* intention of the fast being voluntary (*nafl*).

For the beginning of Ramaḍān, if there is an obstruction in the sky [such as cloudiness or fog], then the sighting of one upright person is sufficient, even if a slave or woman.

For the completion of Ramaḍān (*fiṭr*), however—if there is an obstruction in the sky—there must be at least two free male witnesses, or one male and two females.

If there is no obstruction in the sky, then there must be a large body of people that sight the new crescent.⁴⁹¹

Moonsighting for ʿĪd al-Aḏḥā [i.e., the month of Dhū ʿl-Ḥijja], as well as every lunar month, takes the same ruling⁴⁹² as that of ʿĪd al-Fiṭr [i.e., the month of Shawwāl].

THINGS THAT INVALIDATE THE FAST (*MUFSIDĀT*)

Actions of one who is fasting are divided into four categories:⁴⁹³

1. Those that require a makeup as well as expiation,
2. Those that require a makeup without expiation,
3. Those that require nothing [and are not disliked],
4. Those that require nothing yet are disliked.

Those that require a makeup as well as expiation

If one eats or drinks something of nutritional value [i.e., something customarily eaten]⁴⁹⁴ or something for medicinal purposes; or if one has sexual intercourse

Otherwise it is disliked, prohibitively (*taḥrīman*) if done with a firm intention of fasting Ramaḍān, and mildly (*tanzīhan*) if (a) with a firm intention of a makeup obligatory (*farḍ*) fast or a makeup mandatory (*wājib*) fast, or (b) with a mixed intention, i.e., of fasting Ramaḍān if it turns out to be Ramaḍān, or a voluntary or mandatory fast otherwise. In any of the above cases, if it does in fact turn out to be the first of Ramaḍān, the fast fulfills the obligation of Ramaḍān. If it turns out to be Shaʿbān, it counts for what was intended if the intention was firm, or for a voluntary fast if the intention was mixed. Finally, if one makes no intention of fasting but rather hesitates, intending that if it turns out to be Ramaḍān then it is a fast, yet if Shaʿbān it is not a fast, then it is indeed not a fast, even if it turns out to be Ramaḍān, as there was no intention whatsoever (*Ḥadiyya* 1:56–7; *Durr, Radd* 2:88–9).

491 This applies to any month, its start or end (*Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:316).

492 Namely, the requirement of two free male witnesses, or one male and two females, if there is an obstruction in the sky; and a large body of people if there is no obstruction (*Marāqī ʿl-Falāḥ* 2:317).

493 This section has been rearranged in translation for clarity.

494 As opposed to, for example, stones, or uncooked dough or flour, as ingesting such things

in either of the two passages [front or rear]; *on purpose*,⁴⁹⁵ then he must make up the fast as well as perform expiation, which is to free a slave; if he does not have one, he must fast two consecutive months; if he is genuinely unable, then he must feed sixty poor people, a half *ṣāʿ*^c [2.2 kg] of wheat [or give its equivalent monetary value] to each person.⁴⁹⁶

If, however, he does one of the above—namely, if he eats, drinks, or has intercourse—*out of forgetfulness*,⁴⁹⁷ then he neither has to make up the fast nor perform expiation.

Those that require a makeup without expiation

- Use of a suppository;⁴⁹⁸
- Something not normally eaten [nor used for medicinal purposes], like dirt, reaching the body cavity;
- Accidentally swallowing water while rinsing the mouth;⁴⁹⁹
- Being coerced to break one's fast;

only necessitates a makeup, not expiation (*Hadiyya* 165; *Durr, Radd* 2:103; *Kanz, Tabyin* 1:326). Yet doing so without a valid excuse would still be sinful.

495 This stipulation applies to any one of the three acts, namely, eating, drinking or intercourse. It serves to exclude doing so out of forgetfulness (in which case the fast is not nullified), by mistake, or under coercion (the latter two cases requiring a makeup yet no expiation) (*Radd* 2:108). For this entire chapter, *any* action mentioned as nullifying the fast only does so if one did that act *while remembering* that he was fasting.

496 Expiation is mandatory only if one had made the intention to fast before fajr; and only if no sickness severe enough to otherwise absolve one from fasting, nor menstruation or postnatal bleeding, occurred later that day before maghrib. If one of those did occur that day, or if the intention were made after fajr that day, then no expiation is required. Of course, breaking one's fast without a valid excuse would still be gravely sinful (*Hadiyya* 168). Finally, expiation is legislated only for breaking fasts in Ramaḍān, not outside of the month, even if makeups for Ramaḍān (*Kanz, Tabyin* 1:329; *Radd* 2:107).

497 Forgetfulness in this context means forgetting that one is fasting, not forgetting that such an act breaks the fast, which would still invalidate the fast. If one breaks the fast out of forgetfulness, such as by eating or drinking, then although the fast is not nullified he must stop that act immediately upon remembering that he is fasting. If he fails to do so and continues eating or drinking, the fast would be nullified. If someone else sees the person eating or drinking, he must remind him of the fast, as it is prohibitively disliked (*makrūh taḥrīman*) to not remind him, unless the person is weak such as a very old person (*Hadiyya* 160; *Durr, Radd* 2:97; *Tabyin* 1:322).

498 Both the vagina and the anus are deemed passageways into the body through which the entrance of a foreign substance could vitiate the fast; the distance within each that the substance would have to reach to do so is the size of a suppository. Hence, placing anything wet with water, oil or the like, even a wet finger, that distance inside either orifice vitiates the fast. Likewise, the complete insertion of a solid substance, such that it disappears, into either orifice vitiates the fast (*Durr, Radd* 2:99).

499 Or accidentally ingesting water while rinsing the nose (*Tabyin* 1:329).

- Eating [even if intentionally], in the daytime, for a fast in which the person did not make the intention before fajr;
- Ejaculation due to touching or kissing;⁵⁰⁰
- Someone pouring water into the body cavity of a sleeping person [i.e., the sleeping person must make up the day without expiation];
- Self-induced vomiting⁵⁰¹ [a mouthful or more].⁵⁰²

Those that require nothing and are not disliked

- Blood cupping (*hijāma*) or drawing blood, as long as it does not weaken him;⁵⁰³

500 As opposed to ejaculation due to looking or thinking, or having a wet dream, neither of which vitiate the fast (*Kanz, Tabyīn* 1:322–3).

501 The only other case whereby vomiting breaks the fast is if one naturally vomits a mouthful or more, and then purposefully reswallows it; in that case, the fast must be made up, yet there is no expiation (*Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:325; *Hadiyya* 164–5; *Durr, Radd* 2:111). The criteria of a mouthful is that one's mouth cannot withhold the vomit without strain (*Hadiyya* 26).

502 The following also necessitate a makeup without expiation:

- Depositing oil (or medicine) into the ear, whether intentionally or not (*Marāqī 'l-Falāḥ* 2:338). With regard to depositing *water* into the ear, there is agreement that it does not break the fast if unintentional. If done intentionally, the opinion given preference in the *Hidāya* (1:123), *Tabyīn* (1:329) and other texts, is that it does not invalidate the fast. This is deemed a sound and followable position (*Radd* 2:98).

Unintentionally ingesting rain, snow or blood (from outside the mouth) that enters one's mouth on its own (*Marāqī 'l-Falāḥ* 2:339, *Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:324). The same applies to tears or sweat if one *tastes* the saltiness throughout the mouth, and then unintentionally swallows (*Durr, Radd* 2:103). If one *intentionally* does any of the above, then both a makeup and expiation are required (*Marāqī 'l-Falāḥ* 2:339, *Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:324; *Hadiyya* 166). If one bleeds from within the mouth, then if the saliva becomes red or pink as a result and is swallowed, the fast is broken and must be made up without expiation; if the saliva is yellow or clear, it may be swallowed and the fast remains valid (*Tabyīn* 1:325).

Ingesting leftover food in one's mouth that amounts to the size of a chickpea or more (*Marāqī 'l-Falāḥ, Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:326, 344); if it amounts to less, the fast is not invalidated and hence no makeup is required (*Marāqī 'l-Falāḥ, Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:326).

Intentionally inhaling or ingesting smoke (*without* enjoyment or benefit), dust, water vapor, steam (such as from cooking or a bath), or a fly (*Marāqī 'l-Falāḥ, Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:343; *Hadiyya* 166). If one inhales smoke with enjoyment or for benefit, then both a makeup and expiation are required (*Marāqī 'l-Falāḥ* 2:329; *Hadiyya* 166). If, however, one *unintentionally* inhales or ingests smoke, dust, water vapor, steam, or a fly (e.g., if such things are in the air, and one is simply trying to breathe), then the fast is not invalidated and hence no makeup is required (*Radd* 2:97). This criteria applies to inhaling anything with a *physical* body, such that one can actually see it in the air. However, if one intentionally inhales scented air that has no *physical* body, such as the scent of musk or a flower, then the fast is not invalidated and hence no makeup is required (*Radd* 2:97).

503 As it is disliked to do anything that one thinks will weaken him to the point of breaking

- Using the toothstick (*siwāk*), even if used at the end of the day [rather, it is a *sunna*];
- Rinsing the mouth or the nose [without any water proceeding down the throat];
- Placing a wet garment on one's body [or taking a bath] due to heat.⁵⁰⁴

Those that require nothing yet are disliked

If one tastes some food or chews on it [*without swallowing*], without a valid excuse;⁵⁰⁵ or if one kisses [his spouse] while not feeling secure [from ejaculation or intercourse], it is disliked. If, however, one feels secure from engaging in intercourse or from ejaculation due to the kissing, it is not disliked.⁵⁰⁶

The following actions are recommended (*mustahabb*) for the one fasting:

- To have the pre-dawn meal (*subūr*) [due to the blessing therein, even if only a sip of water];
- To delay it [until shortly before fajr, yet while being certain not to swallow anything after fajr enters];⁵⁰⁷
- To hasten in breaking one's fast, unless it is a cloudy day [i.e., one must be certain that maghrib has indeed entered].

The following actions during the day necessitate withholding (*imsāk*) from

the fast, lest he do so due to that weakness (*Hadiyya* 171; *Radd* 2:114).

504 The following are also permissible and not disliked when fasting: the entrance of water, oil or the like into the urethra of the male organ (*Durr, Radd* 2:100); being in a state of major ritual impurity when true dawn enters (*Durr, Radd* 2:101); oiling one's moustache or body, as absorption through skin pores does not vitiate the fast; or applying antimony (*kuhl*) or the like in the eyes, as absorption through the eyes does not vitiate the fast (*Durr, Radd* 2:113; *Tabyīn* 1:323-4). Based on the latter two cases, modern injections and eyedrops are permissible while fasting and do not vitiate the fast (*Al-Jāmi' fi Ahkām al-Ṣiyām* 48-9, *Maqālāt Fiqhiyya* 207).

505 Tasting or chewing on food without swallowing is mildly disliked (*makrūh tanzihan*), unless there is a valid excuse, such as a woman tasting the food she cooks because her husband is unkind, in which case it is not even mildly disliked (*Hadiyya* 163; *Tabyīn* 1:330; *Radd* 2:112).

506 Kissing here does not refer to mouth-to-mouth, which is always disliked (as one might swallow the other's saliva, which would vitiate the fast). It is also disliked for the two spouses to lie down or hug while naked. However, to do so while clothed, or to kiss other than mouth-to-mouth, is based on the criterion mentioned above in the text, namely, that it is not disliked as long as they both feel secure from ejaculation or intercourse (*Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:347; *Radd* 2:112-3).

507 If, however, one has doubt as to whether the time of true dawn has entered or not, it becomes disliked to eat (*Radd* 2:114).

anything that would vitiate the fast, for the remainder of that day [i.e., it is mandatory (*wājib*) to do so]:

- If one breaks the fast [whether accidental, on purpose, or under coercion];
- If a traveller arrives to his place of residence, and was not fasting on his journey [since if he were fasting, then he must remain fasting *a fortiori*];
- If a woman in menstruation or postnatal bleeding becomes pure;
- If a non-Muslim embraces Islam;
- Or if a child becomes an adult [by puberty or by age].⁵⁰⁸

The first three cases require a makeup, as opposed to the last two.

EXEMPTIONS FROM FASTING

The following people are exempted from fasting in Ramaḍān:

- A sick person who fears that the illness will worsen;⁵⁰⁹
- A pregnant woman or nursing woman, with the condition for each that she have a legitimate fear⁵¹⁰ for the baby or for herself;⁵¹¹
- One who is undergoing severe thirst from which he fears death;

⁵⁰⁸ Normally, puberty for a boy is by ejaculation (such as a wet dream), and for a girl is by menstruation. If either a boy or girl has not yet reached puberty, then upon completion of fifteen lunar years (fourteen solar years and seven months), he or she legally becomes an adult; this is the position for legal verdict (*fatwā*) (*Durr, Radd* 5:97).

⁵⁰⁹ This also includes a sick person who fears prolongation of his illness, or even a healthy person who fears becoming ill due to the fast (*Tabyīn* 1:333). In either case, the fear of course must be a *genuine fear*, not just mere delusion (see next note).

⁵¹⁰ For the sick person, pregnant woman, and nursing woman, the condition for permissibility of breaking the fast is not simply a delusion of potential harm, but rather a legitimate fear, recognized by the Sacred Law (*sharīʿa*). This entails either (1) past experience, even if of someone else with the same sickness; (2) an obvious sign of potential harm; or (3) an opinion of a qualified, Muslim physician who does not sin in public. The same would apply for a healthy person that has a legitimate fear, based on one of the above indications, of becoming ill (*Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:355, *Durr* 2:116). Ibn ʿĀbidīn adds that if one were to break the fast without one of the above indications, then he would have to perform expiation, while most people are unfortunately completely unaware of this ruling (*Radd* 2:116).

⁵¹¹ There is a typo here in the Arabic published edition; it reads *mufasāʿ* (woman in a state of

- Or a traveller,⁵¹² yet for him to fast is more preferable if it does not harm him.

If one who breaks the fast due to a valid excuse [as listed above] passes away before having the chance to make up the days missed, then it is not mandatory to make up those days.⁵¹³

When making up fasts in general, one does not have to perform them consecutively.

The *fidya* payment for a very old person who is unable to fast⁵¹⁴ is a half *ṣāʿ*^c [2.2 kg] of wheat [or its equivalent monetary value] for each day.⁵¹⁵

A person performing a voluntary fast may break it without an excuse, according to one narration.⁵¹⁶

Entertaining guests is a valid excuse for both the host and the guest.⁵¹⁷

If one breaks a voluntary fast after having started it [in any case], it is mandatory (*wājib*) for him to make it up, except for the days in which it is prohibited to fast, namely, the two days of ʿĪd and the three Days of Tashrīq.

If a person makes an unspecified vow to fast; or a vow to fast upon fulfillment of a particular condition, which then occurs; then he must fulfill his vow. And Allāh knows best.

postnatal bleeding), which does not make sense and should rather read *al-nafs* (herself) as in the manuscript.

512 With the condition that he initiates the journey and is outside city limits, or is already a traveller, at the onset of fajr. Otherwise if he is resident when fajr enters, then he *must* fast that day, even if he travels after fajr. If he still breaks his fast then there is no expiation, although it is sinful (*Marāqīʿ l-Falāḥ, Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:355). Finally, unlike the above categories, the traveller cannot break the fast after having started it (*Radd* 2:122–3).

513 That is, he does not need to stipulate *fidya* payment on their behalf in his will if it seems that he will die before being able to make them up.

514 With the condition that his inability to fast continue until death; otherwise once able, the missed fasts would have to be made up. The same ruling would apply to someone with a chronic illness, likewise whose recovery is not expected for the remainder of his life, and were he to recover, he would have to make up the missed fasts (*Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:358–9; *Hadiyya* 173; *Radd* 2:119).

515 The *fidya* payment is mandatory (*wājib*) (*Hadiyya* 173; *Durr* 2:119).

516 According to the stronger narration, however, one must have a valid excuse to break a voluntary fast (*Durr, Radd* 2:121). In any case, it would have to be made up if broken.

517 Breaking the fast in such circumstances would be permissible only if the following conditions are met:

- The host would be offended if the guest did not eat, or the guest would feel uncomfortable eating by himself;
The person is confident that he will make it up;
The fast is broken before *ḍaḥwa kubrā* (see related note, p. 129) (*Durr, Radd* 2:121–122).

SPIRITUAL RETREAT IN THE MOSQUE (*IʿTIKĀF*)

The spiritual retreat⁵¹⁸ is of three types:

1. Mandatory (*wājib*): when one makes a vow to perform it;
2. Emphasized Communal (*kifāya*) Sunna:⁵¹⁹ the last ten nights of Ramaḍān;
3. Recommended (*mustahabb*): any other retreat.

Fasting is a condition for the validity of the vowed spiritual retreat [the first type] only.

The minimum period of time to fulfill a voluntary retreat [the third type] is a moment, with its intention, [and as with all types of spiritual retreat, is valid only] in a mosque of congregation.⁵²⁰

One may not leave his place of retreat except for a legitimate need based on the Sacred Law, such as to pray the Friday prayer in the main community mosque;⁵²¹ or for a natural need, such as to urinate; or due to an emergency, such as if forced to leave under coercion. [In any of these cases] he should immediately enter another mosque [upon fulfilling the need]. If there were no valid excuse, then the spiritual retreat would be invalidated by his leaving the mosque.

The woman performs the spiritual retreat in that area of her house which she in general has designated for her prayer (*ṣalāt*).⁵²²

⁵¹⁸ The spiritual retreat may not be performed without its intention; nor by one in a state of major ritual impurity, menstruation, or postnatal bleeding (*Marāqī ʿl-Falāḥ, Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:374–5; *Durr, Radd* 2:129).

⁵¹⁹ That is, if any member(s) of the community performs it, the *sunna* is fulfilled, such that there is no sin on the others for leaving it without a valid excuse. Yet if no one performs it, then the entire community is in blame for leaving it, and potentially in sin if habitually left (*Radd* 2:129).

⁵²⁰ That is, a mosque with an *imām* and a *muʿadhdhin*. Some stipulated that all five prayers must be performed there in congregation, while others did not. The two companions (Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad) maintained that any mosque would suffice, and some scholars preferred this opinion as it is easier, especially in latter times (*Durr, Radd* 2:129).

⁵²¹ In such a case, one should leave for the main community mosque with enough time to pray the *sunna* prayers before and after the Friday prayer, and then immediately return to the mosque of his retreat. If he remains in the main community mosque for his retreat, then it is valid yet mildly disliked (*makrūḥ tanzīhan*) (*Marāqī ʿl-Falāḥ* 2:377; *Imdād* 676; *Hadīyya* 184; *Durr, Radd* 2:132–3).

⁵²² In general, it is recommended for a woman to designate a place in the house for prayers, just as it is recommended for a man to do so for his voluntary prayers. The woman's retreat then should be in her designated prayer area. If she nevertheless did it in the mosque, it would be valid

It is permissible⁵²³ for the man performing the spiritual retreat to eat, drink, sleep, and even buy or sell⁵²⁴ in the mosque, provided the commodity for sale is not brought inside the mosque, as to do so is disliked.⁵²⁵ It is also disliked to remain silent,⁵²⁶ or to speak other than good.

It is unlawful (*ḥarām*) to have sexual intercourse or to engage in any foreplay; moreover, the retreat is invalidated by intercourse, or by ejaculation due to foreplay.⁵²⁷

If one makes a vow to perform the spiritual retreat for a certain number of days, he must remain in his retreat during the accompanying nights as well; similarly, a vow of nights necessitates their accompanying days. This type of retreat [in either case] must be performed in consecutive days and nights, not separately, even if he did not explicitly stipulate consecutiveness in the vow. If he makes a vow for two days, he must perform his retreat for the accompanying two nights as well.⁵²⁸

yet mildly disliked (*makrūh tanzīhan*), or according to some (*Badā'i'*), merely contrary to what is optimal (*khilāf al-afḍal*). Also, her retreat is not valid in any part of her house aside from her designated prayer area; if she does not have a designated prayer area, it is not valid anywhere in her house. She may, however, simply designate such an area in her house when she desires to perform the retreat. When performing the retreat in her designated prayer area, she may not leave that area until the retreat is over. Finally, she should get her husband's permission first before doing her retreat. Once he grants it to her, he is not allowed to renege on his permission and have intercourse with her (*Durr, Radd* 2:129; *Tabyīn* 1:350).

523 Such that if he left the mosque for these actions, the retreat would be invalidated (*Marāqī 'l-Falāḥ* 2:379).

524 That is, it is not disliked for one performing the spiritual retreat to conduct a purchase or sale in the mosque if the transaction is for something he or his dependents need, as long as the commodity is not brought inside. It is disliked, however, to conduct a transaction in the mosque if merely for his usual business, even if the commodity is not brought inside the mosque (*Marāqī 'l-Falāḥ* 2:379–380; *Durr* 2:134; *Tabyīn* 1:351).

525 That is, prohibitively disliked (*makrūh taḥrīman*) (*Ṭaḥṭāwī* 2:380).

526 That is, it is disliked to remain silent if one believes that silence *in and of itself* is an act of worship—as that belief is prohibited—as opposed to remaining silent in order to guard one's speech without believing that it is an act of worship, in which case it is not disliked (*Marāqī 'l-Falāḥ* 2:380; *Tabyīn* 1:352).

527 The retreat is not invalidated by ejaculation due to thinking or looking (*Tabyīn* 1:352–3).

528 Meaning that he begins at maghrib (*Marāqī 'l-Falāḥ* 2:382). In general, one enters the mosque for the retreat before maghrib of the first night, and leaves after maghrib of the last day (*Tabyīn* 1:353).