



506809 - Guidelines on the type of sickness that makes it permissible not to fast; if someone intended not to fast, then in the morning he found out that his sickness was no longer so severe, does he have to refrain from eating and drinking?

the question

I am a young man living in difficult circumstances in a tent, and the wind causes me to catch a kind of stomach flu. I am not able to eat at the time of iftar and sahur because of the severe pain and sickness I am suffering due to a high temperature, pain in my stomach and vomiting that happened during the night until the time of dawn.

I was not fasting during the day because of sickness, and I only took medicine and drank water. I did not take medicine at night because I thought that I would not be able to fast with this severe sickness. I prayed Fajr and went to sleep, and I did not take the medicine because I had decided not to fast during the day due to severe sickness. Then I woke up and felt pain, but it was not as bad as before; rather it was much less. Is it permissible for me not to fast?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Sickness is a valid reason that makes it permissible not to fast.

Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those who came before you, that you may become pious,

[fasting] for a specific number of days; but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, he should fast the



same number of other days}

[Al-Baqarah 2:183-184].

It is permissible not to fast because of sickness in some cases:

1. When sickness results in clear pain and hardship that is more than what is usually bearable.
2. When there is the fear that the sickness will be made worse by fasting.
3. When there is the fear that recovery will be delayed because of fasting.
4. When the healthy person fears that he will become ill because of fasting.
5. When the sick person needs medicine during the day, and cannot delay it until night.

All of these are excuses which make it permissible not to fast.

An-Nawawi said in *Al-Majmu`* (6/261): The sick person who is unable to fast because of sickness from which there is the hope that he will recover is not obliged to fast...

This applies if it will clearly be difficult for him to fast. It is not stipulated that his condition should reach the point where he cannot fast. Rather our companions said: The condition for it being permissible not to fast is that fasting will cause hardship for him, to the decree that he cannot bear it. End quote.

And he said: As for mild sickness that does not result in clear hardship, it is not permissible for him to break the fast in that case, and there is no difference of opinion among us regarding that. End quote.

Ibn Qudamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *Al-Mughni* (4/403):

The type of sickness that makes it permissible not to fast is extreme sickness that will be exacerbated by fasting, or recovery will be delayed by fasting.

It was said to Ahmad: When can the sick person break the fast? He said: When he is not able to do it.



It was said: Such as fever?

He said: What sickness is worse than fever? ...

The healthy person who fears that he will become sick if he fasts is like the sick person who fears that his sickness may be exacerbated if he fasts, in terms of it being permissible not to fast, because the sick person is only permitted not to fast for fear that fasting will make his sickness worse or make his recovery take longer. So the fear of becoming sick again comes under the same heading. End quote.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said: When a person is sick, there are several scenarios:

1. When his condition is not affected by fasting, such as a mild cold, a slight headache, toothache and the like. In this case, it is not permissible for him not to fast, even though some of the scholars say that that is permissible for him, because of the general meaning of the verse {but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, he should fast the same number of other days} [al-Baqarah 2:184].

But we say: This ruling is based on a reason, which is that not fasting may be kinder to him and more appropriate to his condition. In that case, we say that he may not fast. But if fasting will not affect him, then it is not permissible for him not to fast, and he must fast.

2. If it is too difficult for him to fast, but it will not harm him. In this case it is disliked (makruh) for him to fast and it is Sunnah for him to not fast.
3. If it is difficult for him to fast and fasting will harm him, such as a man who has kidney disease, diabetes and the like. In this case, fasting is prohibited for him.

End quote from *Ash-Sharh al-Mumti`*, 6/341.

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said: What is prescribed for the sick person is not to fast during the month of Ramadan if fasting will harm him or be too difficult for him, or if he needs medical treatment during the day by taking different kinds of pills and medicines and the



like which are to be taken by mouth. That is because Allah, may he be glorified, says: {but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, he should fast the same number of other days} [al-Baqarah 2:184]. And the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Allah loves His concessions to be accepted just as He hates for acts of disobedience to be committed." According to another report: "... as He loves a person to do his religious duties." End quote from *Majmu` al-Fatawa*, 15/211.

II.

If someone does not fast because he has to take medicine only, and fasting is not difficult for him, then he should take that medicine and refrain from eating and drinking for the rest of the day.

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said: If a person fears that he will become sick if he delays taking the medicine on time, there is nothing wrong with him not fasting. If the day is long, such as 15 hours, as is the case nowadays, there is nothing wrong with him taking the medicine, such as a pill, that the doctor has prescribed for him, and thus break the fast, and he should make up this day. He should take the medicine and then refrain from eating and drinking, and make up that day, because he broke the fast for that purpose. So he should refrain from eating and drinking, and make up that day later.

However, if it is possible to delay taking the medicine, and that will not cause him hardship, then he must delay it until he can take it at night.

End quote from *Fatawa Nur `ala ad-Darb*.

Similarly, if you did not intend to fast from the night before – rather you intended not to fast because you were sick – then you found that you felt better during the day, or you no longer felt so severely ill, and you do not need to take the medicine during the day, then you must refrain from eating and drinking for the rest of the day, then make it up.

The obligation to refrain from eating and drinking is the view of the Hanafis and Hanbalis.

The Malikis and Shafa`is – and Ahmad according to one report – is that if the sick person recovers,



he does not have to refrain from eating and drinking [for the rest of the day].

Al-Bahuti said in *Ar-Rawd al-Murbi`*, p. 228: The same applies to the woman who is menstruating or bleeding postpartum, if they become pure [that is, their bleeding stops] during the day: they should refrain from eating and drinking for the rest of the day, and make up that day. And the same applies to one who is travelling and reaches his destination when he is not fasting; he should refrain from eating and drinking for the rest of the day, and make up that day later on. And if one who is sick recovers whilst he is not fasting, or a minor reaches puberty during the day when not fasting, they should refrain from eating and drinking for the rest of the day, and make up that day later on. End quote.

See also: *Al-Mawsu`at al-Fiqhiyyah*, 28/79.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) thought it most likely that it is not obligatory to refrain from eating and drinking, and he quoted as evidence the words of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him): Whoever ate at the beginning of the day, let him also eat at the end of it. Narrated by Ibn Abi Shaybah in his *Musannaf* (3/54).

And he said: The guideline, based on the correct view, is that if someone does not fast during Ramadan for a reason that makes it permissible to do that, then that reason ceases to apply during the day, he is not obliged to refrain from eating and drinking for the rest of that day.

End quote from *Ash-Sharh al-Mumti`*, 6/335.

If you refrained from eating and drinking for the rest of the day, that is fine, and if you did not do that, there is no blame on you. But you must make up the fast in either case.

We ask Allah to grant you complete healing and well-being.

And Allah knows best.