



507737 - Using Menthol Inhalers While Fasting

the question

Does using menthol, which is used to treat a blocked nose by inhalation when one has a cold, break the fast if used during the day in Ramadan?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Using a menthol inhaler – or Vicks – to treat a blocked nose does not invalidate the fast, because nothing of it reaches the throat, and if the fragrance reaches the throat, that does not matter.

The fasting person is not allowed to make anything reach his throat via the nose, because of the hadith of Laqit ibn Sabirah (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: I said: O Messenger of Allah, tell me about wudu'. He said: "Do wudu' properly, let the water run between your fingers and toes, and exaggerate in snuffing water up into the nostrils, except when you are fasting." Narrated by Abu Dawood (142) and by al-Tirmidhi (788), who said: It is sound and authentic (hasan sahih). Al-Albani classed it as authentic (sahih) in *Sahih at-Tirmidhi*.

It says in *`Awn al-Ma`bud* (1/65): It is only disliked for the fasting person to exaggerate in snuffing water up into the nostrils for fear that something that would invalidate the fast might reach his throat. End quote.

But nothing reaches the throat from this inhaler except the fragrance, and that does not affect the fast.

Shaykh `Abd al-Karim al-Khudayr (may Allah preserve him) was asked about inhaling Vicks for those who suffer from sinusitis, as they constantly experience severe nasal congestion. Does this invalidate the fast during Ramadan? And does putting it in the nose invalidate the fast or not?



He replied: There is no doubt that Vicks has a pungent odour, which reaches the areas for which it is inhaled.

But the smell alone does not invalidate the fast, so long as that is not accompanied by any substance that is inhaled.

Hence there is a difference between smelling a rose or basil, or any other similar thing from which nothing reaches your stomach, and inhaling bukhur (incense), from which something could reach your stomach. There is a difference between the former and the latter. Smelling basil does not invalidate the fast, because nothing of its substance reaches the stomach, whereas if you inhale smoke or sniff it, it will reach your stomach, so the fasting person should avoid it. Based on that, we say: Vicks does not break the fast, and its fragrance does not do any harm; it is like smelling basil, roses and the like.

End quote from the Shaykh's website.

Dr. Khalid al-Muslih (may Allah preserve him) was asked: What is the ruling on putting Vicks in my nose when I am fasting?

He replied: Putting Vicks or anything else that has a fragrance – such as perfume, for example – under the nose does not break the fast according to the correct scholarly view, because there is no religious text which states that that breaks the fast, and there is no scholarly consensus to that effect, and the basic principle is that the fast is not invalidated except on the basis of what is mentioned in the religious texts. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his book *Haqiqat as-Siyam* (p. 51), whilst discussing whether the fast is broken by kohl: If this was something that breaks the fast, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would have pointed it out, as he pointed out that other things break the fast. As he did not point it out, it is known that it comes under the same heading as perfume, incense and oil. Incense may reach the nose and enter the brain, and may form particles; oil may be absorbed by the body and enter it, and give some energy to the individual; and perfume may also give good energy. Since these things were not prohibited to the fasting person, this indicates that it is permissible for the



fasting person to use perfume, incense and oil, and also use kohl.

I also say: The same applies to putting Vicks or similar things under the nose.

The Hanfi jurists clearly stated that if the fasting person notices the taste of the medicine when he has not consumed it or eaten it, that does not affect the fast.

It says in *Radd al-Muhtar* (2-396): "Such as the taste of medicine" means: if he grinds or crushes the medicine, and notices its taste in his throat. And he said: The taste of the medicine and the fragrance of the perfume, if he notices it in his throat, does not break the fast.

This appears to be the view of the Shafa`is, as they stipulated with regard to the fast being invalidated that the actual substance should reach the stomach. It says in *Asna al-Matalib* (1-415): Excluded from that is the trace of a thing, such as the fragrance of what he smells reaching the brain.

That the fast is not invalidated by the fragrance of Vicks is what appears to me to be the view of the Hanbalis, based on the fact that they say: It is disliked (makruh) for the fasting person to smell anything of which he cannot be sure that his breathing will not cause it to reach his throat, such as powdered musk, camphor, oil, and similar substances like incense, oud, and ambergris.

End quote from *Kashshaf al-Qina`*.

As for that which the fasting person notices in his throat, that is the trace of medicine, and it does not affect the validity of his fast.

Only the Malikis stated that the fast is broken by that. It says in *At-Taj wal-Iklil* (3-348):

And in *At-Talqin* it says: It is obligatory to refrain from anything that could reach the throat, whether it is dissolvable or not.

Then he said: Similar to that are kohl, oil, and perfumes that reach the throat, even via the nose. And Allah knows best. End quote.



As for using nose drops or nasal sprays, please see the answers to questions no. [93531](#) and [124202](#).

And Allah knows best.