

Did Rasulullaah SAW. Ever Terminate a fast Prematurely on a Journey?

Q: Saum-24: An Urdu pamphlet stated that Rasulullaah SAW. prematurely Terminated a fast while travelling and even made the Sahabah RADI. travelling with him do the same. Is this true? Please clarify this Important issue.

Answer: Yes, the incident is true in which Rasulullaah SAW. and the Sahabah RADI. prematurely terminated their fasts. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas Vakkah during Ramadhaan and when they reached a place called Usfaan, Rasulullaah SAW. sent for some water. He then instructed the Sahabah RADI. to terminate their fasts. They then did not fast until they reached Makkah. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas RADI. then adds that Rasulullaah SAW. Sometimes fasted while on journey and sometimes did not. Therefore, whoever wished to fast may do so and who ever wishes not to, may not.

Another narration states that Rasulullaah SAW. gave the instruction because the fasting had become difficult for the Sahabah RADI. during the journey. A narration from Hadhrat Jaabir RADI. states that when it was Reported to Rasulullaah SAW. that some of the Muslims did not terminate the fast. Rasulullaah SAW. remarked, "They are disobedient! They are disobedient.

Rasulullaah SAW. said this because he wanted the Sahabah RADI. to terminate the fast since they were marching to conquer Makkah at the time.

Hadhrat Jaabir RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. was once on journey when he noticed the people gathering around a person to shade him. Upon enquiry, Rasulullaah SAW. was informed that they were doing this because the person was fasting (and therefore feeling faint). To this, Rasulullaah SAW. remarked, "Fasting while on journey is no act of virtue.

Hadhrat Aa'isha RADI. narrates that a Sahabi by the name of Hadhrat Hamzah bin Amr Aslami RADI. used to fast very often. He once asked Rasulullaah SAW. "I have a great fervour and the strength to fast on journey. May I do so?" Rasulullaah SAW. replied by saying, "You may fast if you wish to and if you do not wish to, you may not."

Hadhrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri RADI. reports that they travelled on an expedition with Rasulullaah SAW. on the 16th of Ramadhaan. While some of them fasted. others did not, but neither group condemned the other because they knew that both practices were allowed.

It is because of these and several other Ahadeeth that the Fuqahaa maintain that it is not Waajib (compulsory) to fast on journey. However, it is best not to fast when one fears that it would adversely affect one's health or may impede the journey for oneself or one's companions.' And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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