

26850 - Prohibition on anticipating Ramadan by fasting one or two days before it begins

the question

I heard that it is not permissible for us to fast before Ramadaan. Is that true?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

There are ahaadeeth narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) which forbid fasting in the second half of Sha'baan, except in two cases:

1 - Those who have a habitual pattern of fasting, such as a man who usually fasts on Mondays and Thursdays - he may continue to do so even in the second half of Sha'baan.

2 - If he joins fasts in the second half of Sha'baan to the first half, i.e., if he started to fast in the first half and continues to fast until Ramadaan begins, this is permissible. See question no. [13726](#).

These ahaadeeth include the following:

Al-Bukhaari (1914) and Muslim (1082) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Do not anticipate Ramadaan by fasting one or two days before it begins, but if a man habitually fasts, then let him fast."

Abu Dawood (3237), al-Tirmidhi (738) and Ibn Maajah (1651) narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon

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him) said: "When Sha'baan is half over, do not fast." Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi, 590.

Al-Nawawi said:

The words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), "Do not anticipate Ramadaan by fasting one or two days before it begins, but if a man habitually fasts, then let him fast," clearly indicate that it is not allowed to anticipate Ramadaan by fasting one or two days before it begins, for those who do not have a habitual pattern of fasting or who are not continuing to fast after starting to fast before (in the first half of Sha'baan). If one is not continuing to fast or does not have a regular pattern of fasting, then it is haraam.

Al-Tirmidhi (686) and al-Nasaa'i (2188) narrated that 'Ammar ibn Yaasir (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "Whoever fasts on the day concerning which there is doubt has disobeyed Abu'l-Qaasim (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)." See Question no. [13711](#).

Al-Haafiz said in Fath al-Baari:

It was understood from this that it is haraam to fast the day of doubt, because the Sahaabah would not say such a thing based on personal opinion.

The day of doubt is the thirtieth of Sha'baan if the new moon cannot be seen because of clouds etc. It is called the day of doubt because it could be the thirtieth of Sha'baan, or it could be the first day of Ramadaan. It is haraam to fast on this day, unless it coincides with a day on which a person habitually fasts.

Al-Nawawi said in al-Majmoo' (6/400) concerning the ruling on fasting the day of doubt:

If a person observes a voluntary fast on this day, and he has a reason for doing so, such as having the habit of fasting every day, or of fasting alternate days, or fasting on particular days such as

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Mondays, and it happens to coincide with that day, then it is permissible for him to fast on this day; there is no difference of opinion among our companions regarding that. The evidence for that is the hadeeth of Abu Hurayrah: “Do not anticipate Ramadaan by fasting one or two days before it begins, but if a man habitually fasts, then let him fast.” If he does not have a reason, then it is haraam for him to fast on this day.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said in his commentary on the hadeeth “Do not anticipate Ramadaan by fasting one or two days before it begins...”:

The scholars (may Allaah have mercy on them) differed concerning this prohibition and whether it meant that this is haraam or makrooh. The correct view is that it means it is haraam, especially on the day of doubt.

Sharh Riyaadh al-Saaliheen, 3/394.

Based on this, fasting in the second half of Sha’baan falls into two categories:

1-Fasting from the sixteenth until the twenty-eighth. This is makrooh, except for those who have a habitual pattern of fasting.

2-Fasting on the day of doubt, or one or two days before Ramadaan begins. This is haraam, except for one who has a habitual pattern of fasting.

And Allaah knows best.