93240 - Not fasting because of military parades and marches, and because of the fear of dying

the question

We went out in Ramadaan on a military parade in Palestine, marching for nearly four hours. In the end we came back and we were nearly dying. There were some people who broke their fast because they could not bear the exhaustion and they looked as if they were about to die. Is what some of the young men did of breaking their fast wrong? What is the solution if it was wrong?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

We ask Allaah to show us a day when the Jews who have usurped the land of the Muslims will be humiliated, and to make His religion prevail and restore people’s rights to them. And we ask Him to accept those Muslims who die defending their religion, honour and land as martyrs. We ask Him to help the mujaahideen and those who are striving to serve Islam and support the oppressed.

Secondly:

Breaking the fast during the day in Ramadaan for those who have legitimate excuses is undoubtedly permissible, and may be obligatory in some cases. That includes breaking the fast when meeting the enemy, or beforehand in order to prepare to meet them and fight them. There is evidence in the saheeh Sunnah which indicates that this is obligatory.

It was narrated that Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: We traveled with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to Makkah when we were fasting. We made a stop, and the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)

said: “You have drawn near to your enemy, and breaking the fast will make you stronger.” This was a concession, so some of us fasted and some did not. Then we made another stop and he said: “In the morning, you are going to meet your enemy. And breaking the fast will make you stronger, so break the fast.” He emphasized it (the second time), so we broke the fast. Narrated by Muslim 91120).

For more details on that, please see the answer to question no. 12641.

If what you did was urgent training to prepare to meet the Jewish enemy, then it is permissible for the one who wants to meet the enemy to help himself by not fasting and thus strengthen himself for fighting. But if what you did was training that could have been delayed, or was a parade after which you would not meet the enemy, then it seems that it was not permissible for you to break the fast. A distinction should be made between the two matters and it is not permissible to confuse them. The first case in which is it permissible or obligatory to break the fast is when it is certain or most likely that you will meet the enemy, and the second case in which it is not permissible to break the fast is when it is a military parade and training in which you are not preparing to meet the enemy soon, or it could be delayed until after sunset, so that the troops will be able to do the training and fast.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

An example of that is one who needs to break the fast in order to gain strength for jihad for the sake of Allaah in fighting the enemy. He may break the fast and should make up the fasts that he misses, whether that is when he is travelling or he is in his homeland, if the enemy comes there, because that is defending the Muslims and making the word of Allaah supreme. In Saheeh Muslim it is narrated that Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: We traveled with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to Makkah when we were fasting … and he quoted the hadeeth. This hadeeth suggests that gaining strength for fighting is a reason separate from travelling, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) gave the reason for breaking the fast as gaining strength for fighting the enemy, not travelling. Hence he did not tell them to break the fast at the first halting-place.

Majaalis Shahr Ramadaan (eighth session).

In al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah (28/57) it says:

They (the scholars) added to the exhaustion of hunger and thirst the fear of physical weakness when meeting the enemy that one is likely or certain to meet, such as if one is surrounded. If the warrior knows for certain or thinks it most likely that there will be fighting because he is confronting the enemy, and he is afraid that he will be too weak to fight because of fasting, and he is not travelling, then he may break the fast before fighting.

Al-Bahooti said: If someone is fighting the enemy or the enemy has surrounded his town and fasting will make him too weak to fight, then breaking the fast is justified even if he is not travelling, because there is a need for that. End quote.

Thirdly:

If those who broke the fast with you thought it most likely that they would be able to continue fasting, and for that reason they joined the parade with you, then fasting became so difficult for them that they were afraid that they might die, it was permissible for them to break the fast, and in fact that was obligatory for them, so long as they broke the fast by eating and drinking only as much as was needed to remove the fear of dying, after which they should have refrain from eating and drinking until sunset. They have to make up that day and not do that again so long as they have no concession allowing it.

The scholars of the Standing Committee said:

If the fasting person needs to break the fast during the day, and if he does not break the fast he fears that he may die, he should break the fast at the time he has to, and after consuming what he needs to keep body and soul together, he should refrain from eating and drinking until night comes, and he should make up the day when he broke his fast after Ramadaan ends, because of the general meaning of the words of Allaah (interpretation of the meaning):

"Allaah burdens not a person beyond his scope"

[al-Baqarah 2:286]

“Allaah does not want to place you in difficulty”

[al-Maa’idah 5:6]

Majallat al-Buhooth al-Islamiyyah (24/67).

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked:

What is the ruling on one who spoils an obligatory fast because of thirst?

He replied:

The ruling is that it is haraam for one who is observing an obligatory fast, whether that is in Ramadaan or when making it up, or fasting as an expiation (kafaarah) or a ransom (fidyah – in the case of errors made during Hajj) to spoil his fast. But if his thirst becomes so intense that he fears he may be harmed, or that he may die, then it is permissible for him to break his fast and there is no sin on him. Even if that happens in Ramadaan, if he fears he may be harmed or die, it is permissible for him to break the fast.

Majmoo’ Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (19/question no. 149).

In al-Mawsoo’ah al-Fiqhiyyah (28/56) it says:

If a person is overcome by severe hunger or thirst, he may break the fast and make it up later on.

The Hanafis limited it to two conditions:

1 – If he fears that he may die, and thinks that is most likely, not just something that he imagines, or if he is afraid that he may lose his mind or lose some of his faculties, such as pregnant and breastfeeding women, if they fear that they or their children may die.

The Maalikis said that if a person fears for himself then it is haraam for him to fast, because preserving one’s life and faculties is obligatory.

2 – He should not deliberately exhaust himself. End quote.