

275659 - Ruling on breaking the fast in order to play football (soccer) when travelling and otherwise, and the ruling on travelling fans breaking the fast

the question

What is the ruling on football players breaking the fast during the day in Ramadan, because it is too difficult for them to do their work, especially since the people in charge asked for the matches to be delayed until night time, but the secular authorities refused. What is the ruling on players breaking the fast in the event of travel, meaning that they travel to play in another city? What is the ruling on fan breaking the fast because they will be travelling to watch a football game? Please note that the match may be shown on television. Is the ruling different if they travel to compete against non-Muslim countries? Is the ruling affected by the fact that the player's 'awrah is visible, namely part of his thigh? What is the ruling on travelling as a tourist to swim at a resort for the purpose of relaxation?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

There is nothing wrong with playing football if it is not for money or prizes, and it does not distract one from obligatory duties, or lead to anything that is prohibited, such as uncovering the 'awrah or free mixing of men and women.

There is nothing wrong with watching games if they are free of these problems. Please see the answer to question no. 95280.

Secondly:

It is not permissible to break an obligatory fast for the purpose of playing sport, because breaking the fast is only allowed in the case of a valid excuse such as sickness or travel, and playing sport does not come under this heading.

If it is not permissible in principle for those who have physically hard jobs to break the fast, then what about those who break the fast in order to play?! Please see the answers to questions no. [12592](#) and [43772](#).

Thirdly:

If a player travels to another city that is far enough away to make it permissible to shorten the prayers, which is 80 km, then the issue of his breaking the fast is subject to further discussion:

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If his playing football is prohibited, because the game is played for prizes and money, or because he is required to uncover his ‘awrah, then this journey is sinful, and the majority of Maaliki, Shaafa‘i and Hanbali scholars are of the view that the traveller who travels for sinful purposes is not allowed to avail himself of the concessions, so he should not break his fast or shorten the four-rak‘ah prayers, and he cannot wipe over the khuff (or socks) in the manner that is permitted to the traveller.

The Hanafis and Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah are of the view that he may avail himself of the concessions like any other traveller, but it is obligatory for him to repent from sin. In al-Mawsoo‘ah al-Fiqhiyyah (25/33) it says: The majority of fuqaha’ – the Maalikis according to the more correct view, the Shaafa‘is and the Hanbalis – stipulated with regard to travel in which concessions are granted that the traveller should not be committing sin by travelling, such as a bandit, a woman who is defiantly disobeying to her husband, a person who is disobeying to his parents, and a traveller who owes a debt when he is able to pay it off but travels without the permission of his creditor. That is because the prescription of the concessions of travel is to help people, but the one who is sinning or disobeying Allah is not to be helped, because the concession could not be granted for a sinner.

A similar case is where a person’s travel changes from being permissible to being sinful, in that he sets out on a journey for a permissible purpose, then he changes his intention to an unlawful purpose. What is meant by the traveller whose journey is for sinful purposes, is where the main motive for travelling is a sin, as in the examples mentioned above.

The Hanbalis included alongside travel for sinful purposes travel for makrooh (disliked or disapproved) purposes. In their view, the traveller cannot avail himself of the concessions if he is travelling to do something that is makrooh.

In the Maaliki madhhab, there is a difference of opinion regarding concessions in the case of makrooh travel. It was said that it is not allowed to avail oneself of the concessions, and it was said that doing so is permissible. Ibn Sha'baan said: If he shortens the prayers, he does not have to repeat them, because of the difference of opinion concerning the matter.

Moreover, if the one who was sinning by travelling repents during his journey, then he may avail himself of the concessions of travel, as if he had not committed sin before that, and his journey is regarded as beginning from the time of his repentance.

According to some of the Maalikis, it is permissible to avail oneself of the concessions of travel when travelling for sinful purposes, even though doing so is regarded as makrooh.

The Hanafis did not stipulate this condition, so (according to them) the one who is travelling for sinful purposes may avail himself of all the concessions of travel, because of the general meaning of the texts which speak of the concessions, such as the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “and whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days” [al-Baqarah 2:185]; and the hadith narrated by Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: Allah enjoined prayer on the lips of your Prophet, four rak‘ahs when not travelling and two rak‘ahs when travelling.

Sin is not a reason for the concession; rather the reason for it is travel; as he is travelling, the reason for the concession is there.

As for one who sins whilst travelling, who is a person who intends to travel for permissible purposes, then he happens to commit a sin, the fuqaha’ are unanimously agreed that he may avail himself of the concessions whilst travelling, because he did not intend to travel for sinful purposes, and because the reason for the concession – which is travel – is applicable before and after the sin he committed. End quote.

Please see also the answer to question no. [50758](#).

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If his playing football is permissible, then it is permissible for him to break his fast whilst travelling.

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This may also be said regarding the ruling on the fans who travel. If their travel is forbidden, then there is a difference of scholarly opinion about their breaking the fast; if travelling is permissible for them, then it is permissible for them to break the fast.

In that regard, it makes no difference whether the journey is to a non-Muslim country or to a Muslim country, but if someone travels to a non-Muslim country in order to commit sin, then his journey is a sinful journey, and what is mentioned above applies to it.

With regard to uncovering the thigh, it is forbidden, and as a result it is also forbidden to play football or to travel for the purpose of that forbidden play, as may be understood from what is mentioned above.

Fourthly:

It is permissible to travel to swim at a resort, if it is thought most likely that one will be able to avoid committing any evils, such as seeing 'awrahs, free mixing of women with men, and so on.

But if the person who goes there will not be able to avoid seeing evil and will not be able to denounce it, or he himself will fall into evil, then it is not permissible for him to go to these places.

Please see the answer to question no. [23464](#).

And Allah knows best.