

Q.1: Is taking "Sahri" for fast compulsory or Sunnat?

A. Taking "Sahri" (pre-dawn meal) is neither "Fard" (obligatory act) nor "Sunnat-e-Muakkadah". But it is "Mustahab" (commendable act) and full of blessing. If one does not take Sahri due to some valid reason, will not incur the burden of ignoring the Sunnat. However, the Holy Prophet stressed that three things i.e. "Jamaa'at", "Sureed" and "Sahri" carry great blessings. Another Hadees says that Allah and His Angels send blessings on those who take Sahri.

Q.2: What is the Mustahab time of taking Sahri?

A. Taking Sahri in the later part of night i.e. untill (just before) the appearance of dawn of Fajr is "Mustahab" and "Masnoon" (as practised by the Holy Prophet). But it should not be delayed so much so that the dawn of Fajr appears. A Hadees to this effect says: that my Ummat will remain safe and well so long as it breaks fast early and delays taking Sahri.

Q.3: How is that for not taking Sahri?

A. Taking nothing in Sahri is not only against the regular practice of the Holy Prophet but also opposed to the Prophetic injunction. There is in Muslim and Abu Daawood that the Holy Prophet said: the difference between the fasts of ours and that of other "Ahlal-Kitaab" (people of the book) is a morsel of Sahri. Therefore, one must take Sahri. If not possible then take at least a morsel or a draught of water to conform his fast to the Sunnat. There is in another Hadees that Sahri is a blessing in whole. Do not leave it and take even though it be a draught of water.

Q.4: Should one eat to his satiation or take light meal in Sahri?

A. Eating so voraciously that one feels uneasy and has belches of indigestion is an undesirable act even in normal condition let alone the fast. Excessive eating defeats the very objective of fast that aims at suppressing the carnal desires. Eating to one's fill amounts to nourishing "Nafs" (self) and depriving oneself of the reward of hardships. It also impedes the creation of sympathy and compassion in one's heart for the poor and indigents who face the pangs of hunger daily. So one should neither eat to his satiation in Sahri nor eat so little food that his attention gets engaged in provisions whole the day. Be moderate in taking Sahri and do not take more than needed.

Q.5: Can cock's crowing be relied upon or not for Sahri?

A. Cock's crowing is not a reliable indicator of Sahri's time being over. Observation to this effect reveals that cocks often start crowing much before the time of dawn of Fajr and some time they crow on noticing the movement of family members and light in the house regardless of time.

Q.6: Is it right or not to break fast seeing the stars?

A. Breaking fast on seeing stars is not authenticated by the Shari'ah. Some stars often appear in broad day light. Should fast be broken seeing them in the day? If one delays breaking his fast in wait of the stars and in the meanwhile any of those particular stars which usually appears in the sky after sunset appears, in such situation this action of his will conform to that of "Raafizis" (Shi'ite sect)'s way of breaking fast. There is in a Hadees that my Ummat will remain on my Sunnat as long as they do not wait for stars to break their fast. Another Hadees says that this faith (Islaam) will remain dominant so long as people break their fast early, for, Jews and Christians delay breaking their fasts.

In brief, as soon as the fasting man is sure of sunset he should immediately break his fast without delay.

Q.7: Is it right or not to break fast hearing Azaan made in a mosque?

A. If the fasting man is sure that the sun has set or the sound of Azaan (call to prayer) he heard was made in the mosque where all care is taken to utter Azaan (of Maghrib) at the right time then he can break his fast. But in case he is unsure of the sunset or Azaan the sound of which he heard was made in a mosque where no care is taken to give call to prayer at right time like the mosques of "Ghair-Muqallid" (nonconformists), in such situation he should not break his fast at all but instead he should wait for the sunset and on being sure of it break his fast.

Q.8: Can fast be broken or not hearing gunshots or announcement from radio?

A. The Shar'ee injunction to this effect is that if shots are fired or announcement from radio is made under the supervision or on the order of a reliable religious scholar then fast can be broken as these are also the mediums of telling people about the sunset even though the man who fires shots and the radio announcer are "Faasiq" (sinner, transgressor). Nevertheless such things can not be relied upon completely because a number of times it has been seen that sirens were sounded or shots fired or announcement from radio was made when time was still there in the sunset. People followed them and broke their fasts with the result they had to observe Qada fast in lieu of the fast they broke before time. So it is better to make sure of the sunset to break fast.

Q.9: Can calendars or charts showing timings of Sahri and Iftaar be followed or not?

A. It is not permissible to follow calendars showing timings of Sahri and Iftaar as most of them carry wrong timings. Working out right timings of Sahri and Iftaar is an exclusive domain of the scholars of "Ilm-e-Tauqeet". Ordinary religious scholars have no inkling of the knowledge. However, the charts showing timings of Sahri and Iftaar compiled by the reliable and meticulous religious researchers can be followed. Likewise, charts compiled by the religious scholars on the basis of the experts' charts can also be relied upon, but even then taking care is must. These charts also contain an instruction for taking care of five minutes.

Q10: With which thing is breaking fast Masnoon?

A. There is in a Hadees that the Holy Prophet used to break his fast with dates before Maghrib prayer. If not available then with the dry dates. If there were no dry dates even, then he would take some mouthful of water.

Q11: What Du'aa is recited at the time of Iftaar?

A. This "Du'aa" (supplication) should be recited at the time of breaking fast: "Allaa-humma Laka Sumtu wabeka Aamantu wa 'Alaieka Tawakkaltu wa 'Alaa Rizqaika Aftartu. Faghfirlee Maa Qaddamtu wamaa Akh-khartu." (O'Allah! I fasted for You, believed in You, depended on You and broke fast with the provisions You provided. O'Allah! Forgive me my past and future sins).

Q12: What reward does entertaining a fasting man to Iftaar carry?

A. The Holy Prophet said the Angels pray for the forgiveness of the believer during Ramadaan who entertains a fasting man to Iftaar (breaking fast) with the lawful food or drink and the Archangel Gibreil prays for his forgiveness in the night of "Qadr" (the night during which the revelations of the Glorious Quraan begun). There is in a tradition that the angels send blessings on the believer every night in Ramadaan who entertains a fasting man to Iftaar with the honest earnings and Chief Angel Gibreil shakes hand with him in the night of Qadr. Another Hadees says that Allah Almighty will make the believer drink from my (Prophet's) "Haud-e-Kauser" (a heavenly body of water) who offers water to a fasting man for breaking his fast. After savouring the blessed water he will not feel thirst until entered into paradise.

Q13: Should a fasting man break his fast or not on other's word that Iftaar time has come along?

A. A fasting man can break his fast on the word of other who is an honest, reliable and pious man and he (fasting man) also acknowledges his integrity otherwise not. Similarly a fasting should not break his fast on the word of a woman.