

and intentions are left unpunished so far as they are not rendered into deeds, a blessing from Him (SWT). For were He to hold us accountable for our thoughts, man would not have been able to escape His wrath. On the other hand, a good thought is rewarded regardless of whether the thought is being rendered into deed or not.

In a hadith, related by Ibn Abbas (raa) the Messenger of Allah (saas) conveying the Message from His Lord, says: “Allah has written down the good deeds and the bad ones. Then He explained it (by saying that) he who has intended a good deed and not done it, Allah records it with Himself as a full good deed, but if he has intended it and has done it, Allah records it with Himself as from ten good deeds, multiplied to seven hundred times, or many times over. But if he has intended a bad deed and has not done it, Allah records it with Himself as a full good deed, but if he has intended it, and has done it, Allah records it as one bad deed.” (Bukhari/Muslim)

Nullifiers that Entails Redemption and Expiation (*Al-Qada & Kaffarah*)

When a faster intentionally has marital relations with his wife during the daytime, the fast is invalidated. This is the most serious of fast breakers. That is why, besides redeeming the day, there is *kaffarah mughallazah*, severe expiation to be observed after Ramadan.

There is a precedent to this case during the time of the Prophet (saas) as related by Abu Hurairah (raa) who said a man came to the Messenger of Allah, and said:

“I am ruined, O Messenger of Allah.” The Prophet (saas) asked Him, “What ruins you?” He replied: “I had marital relations with my wife in Ramadan.” The Messenger of Allah (saas) asked him, “Do you have a bondsman to free as an expiation? ” He said No. The Messenger of Allah (saas) asked him again, “Are you able to fast two consecutive months?” No, he said. The Messenger of Allah (saas) asked again, “Do you have enough to feed sixty poor people?” No, he said. As the Messenger of Allah (saas) sat, someone brought a sack full of dates. The Messenger of Allah (saas) gave the dates to the man and told him to expiate with it (by giving it to the poor). The man said, “Is there anyone poorer than I am, within the innermost part of this city? Indeed, there is no household in more desperate need than us.” The Messenger of Allah (saas) laughed until his teeth and gums could be seen. He said to him, “Then go and feed your family.” (Jama'ah, including Bukhari and Muslim)

This hadith indicates many important points. First, what constitutes expiation is one of the three following things:

1. Freeing a person in bondage, man or woman. If a man did not have a bondman, he could purchase one and set him free. By the way, this was one way Islam combatted the institution of slavery.

2. Fasting two consecutive months.

3. Feeding sixty poor people an average meal. Indeed, the severity of the penalty is indicative of how serious the offense is.

According to *Jamhur*, the majority of the scholars, both the man and his wife are responsible for making up the expiation, provided both intentionally committed the offense during the daytime, while both had intended to fast that day. But, if he forced his wife during Ramadan to have relations with him, both will redeem the day, but he will be the one to expiate. If she is not observing fast for some reason, there will be nothing due on her.

Others said, regardless of whether he forced her or not, only the man should expiate because in the hadith, the Messenger (saas) commanded the man, not the woman, to expiate. However, the previous explanation is stronger.

Another point discussed is which is the best among the three choices of expiation: freeing, fasting, or feeding? Whichever is easier to the expiator is the one he should do. There is another hadith by Abu Hurairah (raa) in which the Messenger of Allah (saas) told a man who broke his fast to free a person, or fast two consecutive months, or feed sixty indigent. This report, by the way of Muslim, demonstrated that one has a choice.

What happens to a person who has sex during fasting, but before he expiates he repeats the offense? How many expiations should he make? There will be only one expiation. It is like in prayer when a worshipper makes two mistakes in one prayer, he makes only one correction. But if he has expiated for the first offense and then repeated the offense, the scholars agreed

that expiation is due for the second offense. The *Jamhur* of scholars infers from hadith that the expiation is dropped because of poverty. Allah is the best knower.

Conditions of Fast Breakers

The fast breakers, except menstruation (*hayd*) and post child-birth bleeding (*nifaas*), including marital relations, self-pollution, eating and drinking; indulging in them do not break fast and require redemption of the fast unless three conditions are met:

(1) Knowledge (ʿElim)

The person should have full knowledge that what he is about to do will invalidate his fast. If he is ignorant and does not know, the fast remains valid. Allah (SWT) said,

“...But there is no blame on you if you make a mistake therein: (What counts) is the intentions of your hearts.”

(Al-Qu`ran, 33:5)

Doubt In The Break of Dawn

In the case of the ignorant person mentioned above, he can be either

(a) ignorant of the Islamic rule in the matter, as a person who did not know that a certain act will invalidate fast, or

(b) ignorant of the time, as a person who thinks the dawn has not broken and continues his *sahur*, finding out later that the sun has risen. Or he mistakenly breaks fast thinking the sun has set. In all these instances, the fast is valid, despite the ruling to the contrary by the majority of the scholars.

In a hadith by Bukhari (raa) when the following verse was revealed: “...And eat and drink, until the white thread of dawn appears to you distinct from its black thread...” (*Al-Qur'an*, 2:187)

`Adyi bin Hatim (raa) told the Messenger of Allah (saas) that he placed two threads, one black and the other white, under this pillow as he sat to eat his sahuur. He continued to eat while glancing at the thread under his pillow to see whether he can differentiate between them. By the time he could differentiate between them, it was already daybreak. When he finished this story, the Messenger of Allah commented and explained: 'Your pillow must be very vast (to cover the spaces of white and black threads)' What is really meant is the whiteness of the day and the darkness of the night.'

The point of reference in this hadith is that 'Adyi ate after *Fajr* and after the time he was supposed to stop, but the Prophet (saas) did not ask him to make up the day because he was ignorant of the Shari'ah rule. In another report by Bukhari, Asma bint Abu Bakr (raa) said: "We broke fast one day in Ramadan, on a cloudy evening during the time of the Prophet, but after a while the sun appeared." Again in this citation there is no report that the Prophet commanded those who mistakenly broke their fast to make up the day. If he had, it would have been reported because of its importance.

Elsewhere, Hisham bin `Urwah (raa), who was one of the reporters of the above hadith, said: "They were not commanded to redeem the day."

(2) Remembering (Dhikir)

The faster should remember before an act that it will invalidate his fast. If he forgets, the fast remains valid and resumes, as mentioned earlier.

Allah (SWT) states:

"...Our Lord! condemn us not if we forget or fall into error..."

(Al-Qur`an, 2:286)

In Islam no one is condemned for an act done out of forgetfulness or due to a mistake. It is human, after all, to forget. In a hadith mentioned earlier it was observed:

“Whoever forgets while fasting and eats or drinks, he should complete his fast (of that day), for he has just been fed and quenched by Allah.” (Muslim and others)

Thus, regarding the eating and drinking of one who forgets, it is evident that he is not to be held responsible for his action. However, if he remembers or has been reminded, he should stop immediately, for if he continues to eat after that moment, the fast is invalid. Therefore, it is incumbent on anyone who sees a faster eating or drinking to remind him or her. Allah (SWT) said:

“...Help you one another in righteousness and piety.”

(Al-Qur`an, 5:2)

(3) Breaking Fast Willingly (Ikhtiyaar)

For the fast to become invalid, the person should break on his own accord, eating or drinking intentionally without force from anyone. For, if he is coerced under the threat of harm, the fast remains valid. Allah (SWT) states:

“ Anyone who, after accepting faith in Allah, utters unbelief, except under coercion, his heart remaining firm in faith...”

(Al-Qur`an, 16:106)

The point of reference here is if Allah absolves one from blame for claiming disbelief under compulsion (a person who has said a word of great sin), a person under similar conditions who has committed lesser offense deserves pardon. Besides, the Mes-

senger of Allah (saas) said in a hadith related by Ibn Abbas (raa):

“Allah absolves my community (Ummah) from responsibility if they make a mistake, or forget, or have been forced to do something against their own will.” (Ibn Majah)

Relying on this citation, if, for instance, water is mistakenly swallowed during rinsing of the mouth or sniffing, or a person is forced under threat of harm to eat, the fast remains valid.

Duties After Ramadan

As the blessed month of Ramadan nears its end, there are three important obligations to help the faster bid the month a deserving farewell. These obligations also bring the faster closer to Allah, elevate his *Iman* and increase the weight of his deeds. These duties are: *Zakatul-Fitr*, (Fast breaking alms); *Takbeer*, (utterance of Allah is the Greatest), and `Eid Prayer, (Festival of fast breaking).

Fast Breaking Alms (Zakaatul Fitr)

Allah (SWT) has mandated the observation of fast breaking alms (*Zakaatul fitr*) at the end of Ramadan before Eid Prayer. Although this obligation was established by the Messenger (saas), it has the power of all the established commands of Allah, for the power to legislate and prescribe a rule has been granted to the Messenger of Allah, by Allah (SWT), Who states:

“He who obeys the Messenger, obeys Allah; but if any turn away, We have not sent thee to watch over their (evil) deeds.”

(Al-Qur`an, 4:80)

Also,

“If anyone contends with the Messenger, even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that becoming to men of faith...”

(Al-Qur`an 4:115)

Also,

“...So take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you...”

(Al-Qur`an, 59:7)

Eligibility

The giving of the fast breaking alms is mandatory on every Muslim, old, young, man and woman, etc. In a hadith related by Abdullah bin 'Umar (raa) he said:

“The Messenger of Allah, has commanded the faster to observe Ramadan fast breaking alms, one *Sa'a*, (a