

Fasting Series | Shaykh ‘Abdul-‘Azīz ibn Bāz Fasting While Travelling

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا: أَنَّ حَمْزَةَ بْنَ عَمْرِو الْأَسْلَمِيَّ قَالَ لِلنَّبِيِّ -
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ -: أَأَصُومُ فِي السَّفَرِ؟ - وَكَانَ كَثِيرَ الصِّيَامِ -
فَقَالَ: إِنْ شِئْتَ فَصُمْ وَإِنْ شِئْتَ فَأَفْطِرْ.

‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) narrated that Ḥamzah ibn ‘Amr al-Aslamī (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said to the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): “Should I fast when travelling?” – and he used to fast frequently – to which the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

If you wish then fast and if you wish then do not fast.¹

¹ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (no. 1943) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (no. 1121)

Explanation of Shaykh ‘Abdul-‘Azīz ibn Bāz (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ):²

This ḥadīth is in regard to fasting while travelling. The authentic narrations from the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) prove that it is permissible and likewise the Qur’ān establishes that it is allowed to either fasting or not. In addition, it is an allowance from Allāh (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) to not fast as He said:

﴿فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ﴾

“Whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days should be made up] from other days.”³

Meaning: if he does not fast then he must make up the days. So, the traveller has the choice between fasting and not fasting except in cases wherein fasting is difficult for him and causes him hardship. The Sunnah for such a person is to not fast and it is disliked for him to fast due to what it contains from hardship. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

² Explanation of ‘Umdah al-Aḥkām, Dār al-Riyādah (pgs. 246-247)

³ Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:184)

«لَيْسَ مِنَ الْبِرِّ الصَّوْمُ فِي السَّفَرِ»

“It is not from righteousness to fast while travelling.”⁴

Meaning: it is not from complete and perfect righteousness to fast while travelling or it means that it is not from righteousness to fast while travelling if it is extremely hot and causes difficulty for the believer.

For this reason, when the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) saw a man who was being shaded by the people and they were crowding around him due to the hardship he was in, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) disliked for him to fast, saying to him: **“It is not from righteousness...”** meaning: it is not from complete and perfect righteousness to fast while travelling. This is the case if there is hardship and difficulty in it. This is how we combine between the different authentic narrations.

⁴ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (no. 1946) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (no. 1115)

In another wording of this ḥadīth, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said to Ḥamzah ibn ‘Amr al-Aslamī (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)

«هِيَ رُخْصَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ، فَمَنْ أَخَذَ بِهَا فَحَسَنٌ، وَمَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يَصُومَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ»

“It is an allowance from Allāh. Whoever takes it has done well and whoever wants to fast then there is no blame upon him.”⁵

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ - رضي الله عنه - قَالَ: كُنَّا نُسَافِرُ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ -
صلى الله عليه وسلم - فَلَمْ يَعْيبِ الصَّائِمُ عَلَى الْمُفْطِرِ وَلَا الْمُفْطِرُ
عَلَى الصَّائِمِ.

Anas ibn Mālik (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) narrated:

⁵ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (no. 1121)

We used to travel with the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and the fasting person would not criticise the non-fasting person, and the non-fasting person would not criticise the fasting person.

Explanation of Shaykh ‘Abdul-‘Azīz ibn Bāz (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ):⁶

Meaning: they used to travel with the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), some would fast whilst others would not. The fasting one would not criticise the one who is not fasting and the one not fasting would not criticise the one fasting.

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ - رضي الله عنه - قَالَ: خَرَجْنَا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -
صلى الله عليه وسلم - فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ فِي حَرٍّ شَدِيدٍ حَتَّى إِنْ كَانَ
أَحَدُنَا لَيَضَعُ يَدَهُ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ مِنْ شِدَّةِ الْحَرِّ وَمَا فِيْنَا صَائِمٌ إِلَّا رَسُولُ
اللَّهِ - صلى الله عليه وسلم - وَعَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ رَوَاحَةَ.

⁶ Explanation of ‘Umdah al-Aḥkām, Dār al-Riyādah (pg. 247)

Abū al-Dardā' (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) narrated:

We went out with Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) during the month of Ramaḍān in severe heat to the extent that one of us would place his hand on his head from the severity of the heat and none from amongst us was fasting except Allāh's Messenger and 'Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥah.

Explanation of Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azīz ibn Bāz (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ):⁷

The journey was difficult and perhaps this was before Allāh revealed that it is disliked to fast in the state of difficulty. So, the ḥadīth of Abū al-Dardā' is considered to be the first ruling and then Allāh revealed the ease and encouraged to not fast if there is difficulty in it.

⁷ Explanation of 'Umdah al-Aḥkām, Dār al-Riyādah (pgs. 247-248)