

The Fasting Person Who Eats or Drinks Due to Forgetfulness

On the authority of Abu Hurairah (Radiya-llahu 'an-hu) that the Prophet (Salla-llahu alayhi wa sallam) said: Whoever **forgot** that he is fasting, and then **eats** or **drinks**, must complete his fast. This is because it is Allah Who has fed him and given him drink [i.e. it is Allah Who *decreed* this to happen]. [al-Bukhaaree, no. 1933]

Rulings Derived from this Hadeeth

1. The correctness (***Sihhah***) of the **fast** of the person who **ate** or **drank** or had *sexual relations* (with one's spouse) *forgetfully*.

[al-Hasan and **Mujaahid** (Rahima-humAllah) said: If one has **sexual intercourse** *forgetfully* (with one's spouse), there is no blame upon him. (al-Bukhaaree, chapter 26, Book of Fasting, Under the Title-Heading: *If a fasting person ate or drank forgetfully*)].

[al-Haafith ibn Hajar mentioned here: Ibn Juraij asked '**Ataa** about a man who has sexual relations with his wife *forgetfully* in Ramadaan? Ataa said: [*Such a thing*] *is not forgotten*. This requires ***al-Qadaa'*** (to make up the fast for that day). Those who followed `Ataa in this (opinion) are ***al-Awzaa'ee***, ***al-Laith***, ***Maalik*** and ***Ahmad***, and it is one of the two opinions of the ***Shaafi'ee Madh-hab*** (School of Law). And all of them *differentiated* between eating (***al-Akl***) and having sexual relations (***al-Jimaa'***) (*forgetfully*). The well-known opinion of **Ahmad** is that it is also obligatory upon such a person to fulfill the ***Kaffaarah*** (freeing a slave, or fasting two *consecutive* months or feeding sixty poor people). See: '*Fath al-Baaree*', 4/659-660]

2. There is no sin (***Ithm***) against him due to his eating or drinking, since it is *not by choice* [i.e. he did it due to *forgetfulness* - not *consciously* choosing to do so *knowing* that he is fasting].

[This is in accord with the saying of Allah: '*Allah does not burden any person beyond his ability (al-Wus'u). He gets the reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned. O our Lord, Punish us not if we forget or fall into error...*' al-Baqarah, 2:286. In the Hadeeth of **Abu Hurairah** (Radiya-llahu'an-hu), the Prophet (Salla-llahu alayhi wa Sallam) said: '**Allah said: Yes!** (I accept your supplication)'. [Reported by Muslim] And in the Hadeeth of **Ibn `Abbaas** (Radiya-llahu 'an-humaa), the Prophet (Salla-llahu alayhi wa Sallam) said: '**Allah said: I have done it** (i.e. I have already accepted your supplication)'. [Reported by Muslim]

[Also, the Hadeeth of the Prophet (Salla-llahu alayhi wa Sallam): 'Verily, Allah has pardoned – for me - the **mistakes** of my Ummah, their **forgetfulness** and that which they are **compelled** to do'. At-Tabaraanee, Ibn Hibbaan, Saheeh Ibn Maajah, 2/178, no. 1675/2073 and 1677/2075]

3. The meaning of '*Allah has fed him and given him drink*' - is that this action happened without a *conscious* choice. Rather, it is Allah Who has **decreed** this to happen to him, *by causing him to forget* that he is fasting.

'*Umdah al-Ahkaam*', by al-Imaam Abdul-Ghaneer ibn Abdul-Waahid al-Maqdisee, along with its *Sharh* (Explanation) '*Tayseer al-'Allaam*', by Shaykh Abdullah ibn Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Saalih Aali Bassaam. Hadeeth No. 179 [p. 417]