

# Miscellaneous provisions on fasting

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## 1. Students not fasting

**Sheikh `Atiyyah Saqr**, former head of Al-Azhar Fatwa Committee, states<sup>1</sup>:

"Concerning the legal excuses that allow one not to observe the fast of Ramadan, Allah, Exalted be He, says: **"And whoever of you is sick or on a journey, (let him fast the same) number of other days; He desireth not hardship for you."** (Al-Baqarah: 185) Sickness (referred to in this verse) that is considered a legal excuse for not observing the fast of Ramadan is that which occurs, becomes urgent, or is aggravated, as a result of fasting.

"The same ruling applies to one whose work requires hard labour, so that he cannot observe fast during his work hours, and, at the same time, he has no other means to earn his living. For instance, a baker works in the daytime where it is so hot that fasting becomes unbearable.

"However, one must bear in mind that legal excuses - such as illness and hard labour - must be actually found, and not just imagined or expected.

"As for students, they are not obliged to study during the daytime; they can strike a balance between their assignments and the available time. So, when Ramadan is in summer, when days are long and hot, students may study their lessons at night and they are not allowed to break the fast-days of Ramadan for the sole reason that they prefer studying during the daytime. Anyway, not observing the fast of Ramadan is by no means permissible, unless fasting entails serious problems, whether physically or mentally. When there is no such excuse, one must not even consider refraining from fasting in Ramadan.

Students may be allowed to break the fast-days of Ramadan (that is not fast) if their examination is held during the daytime when it is very hot, i.e. between noon and sunset, in case hunger and thirst affect their concentration.

But, beware, all this applies only to a student who actually feels tiredness while taking his examination, but so long as he does not feel actual tiredness, he is never allowed to break the fast-days of Ramadan.

I therefore advise students who are sitting for/have exams during Ramadan to be pious and conscious of Allah, as the honourable verse goes, **"And whosoever keepeth his duty to Allah, He maketh his course easy for him."** (At-Talaq: 4)"

## 2. Eating in the presence of one who is fasting

Narrated Umm Umarah: The Prophet (PBUH) visited Umm Umarah and she put some food before him. He asked her to eat also. She said: I am fasting. Thereupon he observed: Angels call down blessings on a

person who is fasting when other people eat in his presence till they finish (or till they have eaten their fill). (Mishkat).

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Ask the Imam – Mufti Desai

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<sup>1</sup> Can Studying be a Valid Excuse for Breaking the Fast? – Islamonline – 5 November 2003  
Quote on back cover sourced from Islamonline.