

Sexual relations in Ramadan

Compiled by: Iqbal Lambert

Reviewed by:

- **Imam Uzair Akbar** and **Mufti J Akbar**, Holland Park Mosque, Brisbane, Australia
- Prior edition reviewed by: **Imam Y Patel** – Secretary, Jamiat-ul-Ulama, Mpumalanga and **Imam M Ali**, Mpumalanga, South Africa

Contents

[You are permitted to have sexual relations with your spouse whilst not fasting](#)

[Sexual intercourse whilst fasting is prohibited](#)

[You do not need to make ghusl before commencing your fast](#)

[Embracing your wife while fasting](#)

[Wet dreams and masturbation](#)

1. You are permitted to have sexual relations with your spouse whilst not fasting

You are permitted to have sexual relations with your spouse during Ramadan nights. The Quran states: “Permitted to you on the night of the fasts is the approach to your wives. They are your garments. And ye are their garments.”

2. Sexual intercourse whilst fasting is prohibited

Sexual relations whilst fasting is forbidden and will break the fast.

Narrated Aisha (Prophet’s wife): “A fasting person is forbidden to have sexual intercourse.” (Bukhari, volume three, page 82). Any sexual intercourse breaks the fast even if there is no emergence of semen in the male. For a female the slightest penetration will break the fast.

3. You do not need to make *ghusl* before commencing your fast

A common misconception is that a person who has sexual relations before suhur (or the commencement of the fast) has to perform *ghusl* (bath) before he/she can fast. All the schools concur that if a person has had sexual intercourse during the evening, his/her fast is acceptable even if *ghusl* has not been performed. All the schools encourage the performance of the *ghusl* as soon as possible. The Prophet (PBUH) said: “I am in a state of Janub, and I observe fast (in that very state).” (Muslim).

In response to a question on this issue Mufti Ebrahim Desai states¹: “It is not necessary to take ghusal before sehri. The bath may taken after sehri before the fajr prayer.”

4. Embracing your wife while fasting

Narrated Abu Huraira: A man asked the Prophet (PBUH) whether one who was fasting could embrace (his wife) and he gave him permission; but when another man came to him, and asked him, he forbade him. The one whom he gave permission was an old man and the one whom he forbade was a youth. (Abu Dawud).

The Prophet (PBUH) used to embrace and kiss his wives while fasting:

Narrated Aisha: "The Prophet (PBUH) used to kiss and embrace his wives while he was fasting, and he had more power to control his desires than any of you." (Bukhari, volume three, Hadith number 149).

Sheikh Ahmad Kutty, a senior lecturer at the Islamic Institute of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, states²: "Hugging your spouse in itself does not invalidate the fast; we read in the sources that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to kiss his wife while fasting. We also read that once a person asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) "Am I allowed to kiss my wife while fasting?" He replied, "Yes." Hugging is comparable to kissing.

"Having said this, however, I must caution you to abstain from such acts if you find yourself unable to control your desire, for as Muslims we must keep away from all such acts that may inadvertently lead to invalidating our fasts. This is why we read in another hadith that the Prophet told another person not to kiss his spouse. In explaining the discrepancy between the two reports, Ibn `Abbas said, "The man he permitted was an older person, while the man he prohibited was a young man." Therefore, if you have any doubt or fear of being unable to control yourself, then you should simply abstain from such actions altogether in order to save your fast. This is why the Prophet's wife `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) asked a person, "Who among you is capable of restraining himself as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had been?"

If a man embraces his wife and an emission occurs, scholars are of the opinion the fast is broken.

If a man has an emission by just looking at his wife, his fast is not broken. Said Jabir: "A person who gets discharge after casting a look (on his wife) should complete his fast." (Bukhari, volume three, Hadith number 149).

5. Wet dreams and masturbation

Wet Dreams

Wet dreams do not invalidate a fast.

Masturbation

Sheikh Hamed Al-Ali, instructor of Islamic Heritage at the Faculty of Education, Kuwait and Imam of Dahiat As-Sabahiyya Mosque, states³: "Masturbation during the daytime of Ramadan breaks the fast, based on the Hadith that a fasting Muslim gives up eating, drinking, and sexual desire for the sake of Allah. Since masturbation is a kind of sexual desire, a fasting Muslim must avoid it. The Prophet's (peace and blessing be upon him) mention of "sexual desire" after "eating and drinking" is evidence that it breaks the fast if one does fulfill his or her sexual desire during the daytime of Ramadan. Therefore, masturbation does invalidate the fast, as it is one of the sins that if someone does it he or she would be violating the sanctity of this month."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Holy Quran – Yusuf Ali translation

Hadith: Bukhari; Mishkat; Abu Dawud; Muslim.

Lambat EI: Fasting in Ramadhaan, Razara Publishers CC

Imam Ali: The Essential Hanafi Book of Fiqh

Bakhtiar L: *Encyclopedia of Islamic Law*, ABC International Group.

Sallie: The Book of Fasting

Ask the Imam – Mufti Desai

¹ Mufti Desai – Imam Online - <http://www.islam.tc/ask-imam/index.php>

² Hugging One's Spouse While Fasting – Islamonline – 8 November 2003

³ Masturbation: Does It Break the Fast? – Islamonline – 4 November 2003