



# FAQ about Rules of Fasting in the Month of Ramadhan

According to Fatawa of Ayatullah  
Sistani and Ayatullah Khomeini  
Blessed Month of Sha'abaa 1436  
June 2015

# What We'll Cover insha'Allah

- Philosophy of Fasting
- Fasting for children who are not *baaligh*
- What if I can't bear it?
- Fasting and travel
- Fasting for expecting and feeding mothers
- Fasting for those who are sick
- What if I have qadhaa left over?
- Does X break my fast?
- Taking medicine



Why should we fast?



# Fasting is an Obligation

- O you who have faith! Prescribed for you is fasting as it was prescribed for those who were before you, so that you may be God wary. (2:183)
- So let those of you who witness [the month of Ramadhan] fast in it (2:185)
- Imam al-Baqir (a): Islam is founded upon five: salaah, zakaat, hajj, sawm, and walayah. (*al-Kafi*)



Should children who are not  
*baaligh* fast?



# Fasting of a non-baaligh

- Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) said: “And at the age of 7, we ask our children to fast to their capability, either half of the day or more or less, and we order them to break their fast when they become hungry or thirsty. This is so that they become used to fasting. Thus you should ask your [male] children to fast at the age of 9, and tell them to break their fast when they are thirsty or hungry.” (*Usul al-Kafi*)



# Practical Suggestions

- Fasting before physical maturity has developed: should not be encouraged
- Fasting after the physical maturity has developed, but before coming of age: should be encouraged to break fast when they are thirst or hungry
- Avoid asking young children, “Are you fasting today?” or somehow hint it is better to fast for a child who has not come of age to fast the entire day



What if I can't bear it?



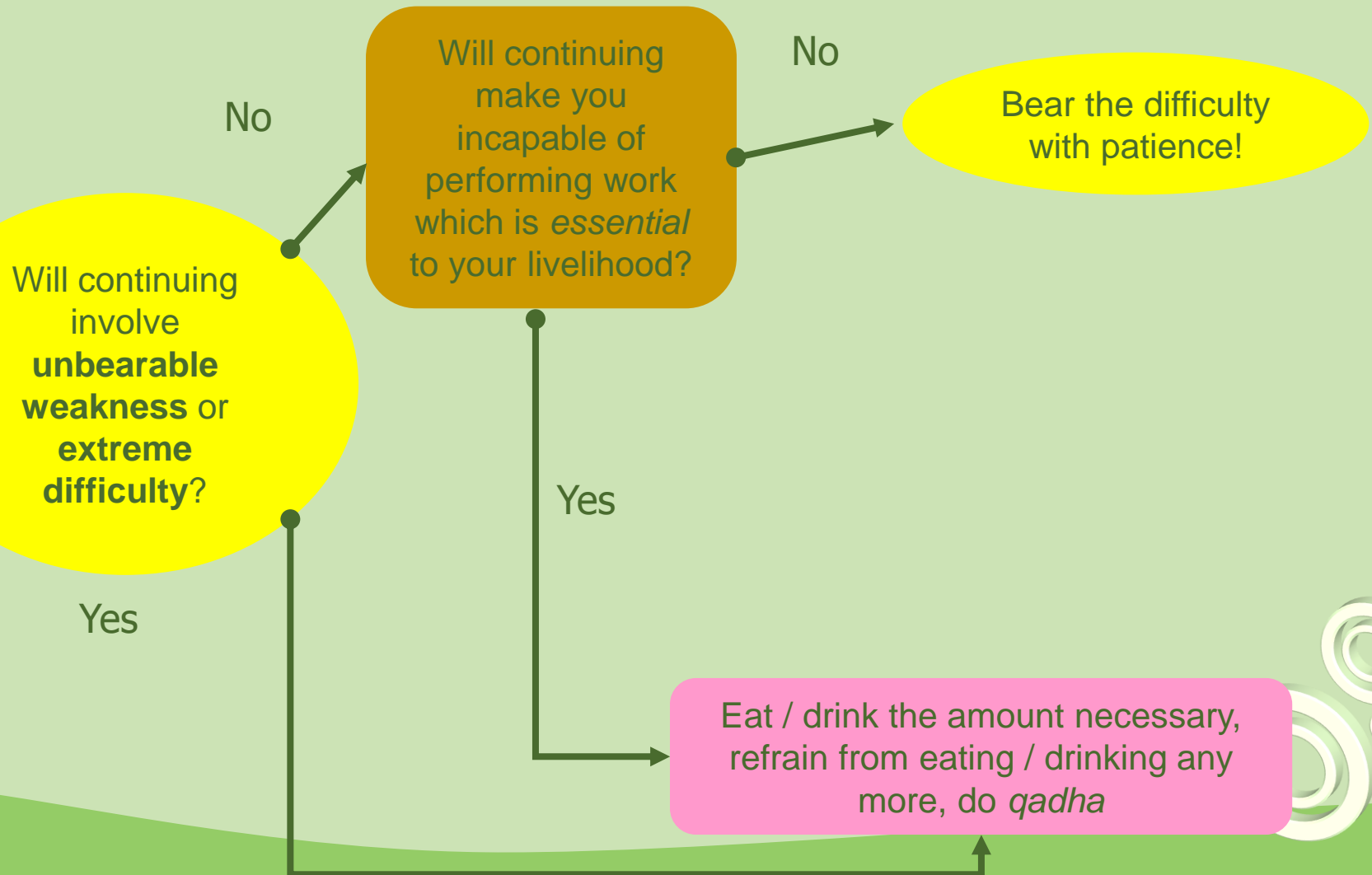


# Is my nine year old daughter too young to fast?

- Fasting is an obligation on those who have come of age unless it entails significant harm or unbearable difficulty
- The human body is amazing at being able to adapt
- The social effect of having a community fast together is amazing



# What if I'm fasting and things get difficult?



# What if fasting will make me sick or harm me?

- If I fear (based on rational grounds) that I will be harmed by fasting, fasting is not obligatory
  - Example: By fasting, I won't be able to take some heart medicine at the right time which could in turn result in heart issues.
- Consequence: Qadhaa



# What does the doctor say?

- Doctor's opinion can be the source of the fear of harm
  - Example: I go for a checkup and the doctor tells me that fasting is not good for my diabetes situation. His/her word causes me to fear that fasting will cause me harm.
- But, if I'm certain fasting won't cause me any harm despite what the doctor says, I must fast



# What if I fast despite the fear of harm?

- If there is harm (and the harm is extreme: Sistani), I have sinned and the fast is invalid.
- Otherwise, if I turn out to be okay, the fast is valid.



# Fasting is invalid if I'm not sick but...

- If I fear (based on rational grounds) I will get significantly sick by fasting.
- Example: I just recovered from an infection and today is my day to recuperate. If I fast, I fear that I won't recuperate properly and the infection will come back.
- Consequence: Qadhaa



# What about the elderly?

Exempted if difficult  
to fast

FIDYA

Exempted if  
impossible to fast

NO FIDYA

Note: According to Ayat. Khomeinii, if an elderly person regains ability to fast, it is ihtiyaat waajib to make up the fasts that are missed.



What if I get sick?





# Fasting is not obligatory if I'm sick and...

- I fear (based on rational grounds) it will
  - intensify my sickness or
  - prolong my recovery or
  - increase the pain.

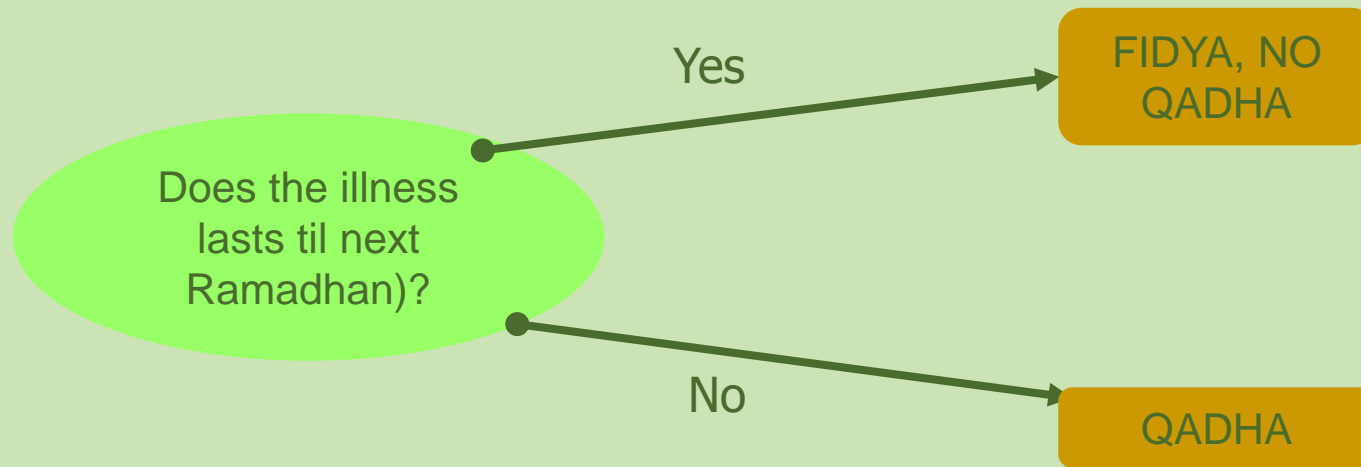


# Examples of one's responsibility when sick

- I am sick and I need to constantly drink fluids to get better (fasting is invalid, qadhaa is necessary)
- I have a mild cough and fasting might keep my throat feeling uncomfortable (fasting is valid and necessary)
- Ayat Sistani: If the harm is extreme, fasting is a sin! Ayat. Khomeini: Fasting is a sin if there is harm, whether or not it's extreme.



# What is the consequence if I don't fast due to sickness?



Should expecting mothers or  
mothers who are feeding  
fast?



# If a woman is expecting

If she fears (based on rational grounds) that fasting will harm her or the child's health, fasting is not obligatory. And if this harm is dangerous, fasting is prohibited.

Ayat. Khomeini: In the case of harm, fasting is prohibited.

Example: After the ultrasound she is told by the doctor to eat frequent meals to ensure proper growth of the child.



If a woman is expecting,

Consequence of woman not fasting in scenario describe on previous slide:

If she is close to delivery: qadhaa + fidyah

If she is not close to delivery: qadhaa



If a woman is breastfeeding and her milk supply is low,

If she fears (based on rational grounds) that fasting will harm her or the child's health, fasting is not obligatory.

Ayat. Sistani / Imam Khumayni: *Ihtiyaat waajib* for her to use an alternative if available.

To discuss: Is using formula a valid alternative?

Consequence: qadhaa + fidyah.



What effect does traveling  
have on my fasting?





# Am I allowed to travel during the month of Ramadhan?

- Yes, although doing so can be *makrooh* in some circumstances
- It is *ihtiyaat mustahab* for a traveler to stay away from food, drink, and sexual intercourse during the daytime of the month of Ramadhan



If I travel, I am exempted from fasting and my fasting is invalid unless...

- I am planning to stay in a place for ten days or more
  - I am considered to be a 'frequent traveler'
  - I am traveling to my '*watan*'
  - The travel is sinful
- 
- More about this later (time permitting)



# Who is a frequent traveler?

A frequent traveler is one who prays full and can fast despite traveling.



# Who is a frequent traveler?

Ayat Khamenei: If my work is commonly considered to be in a different city than my hometown, then if I ever travel to work 3 times without there being a ten day gap in between travels, upon starting the third trip I become a frequent traveler.



# Who is a frequent traveler?

Ayat Khamenei: If I ever stay in a place for 10 days in a row and don't go to work, then the next time I start up traveling for work again, for the first trip I will be considered a traveler but for the second and onwards I will pray full.



# Who is a frequent traveler?

- Ayat Sistani: I become a frequent traveler when I intend to be in a state of travel (for work or other purposes) for either:
  - 6 months of the upcoming year, and in those 6 months I will be traveling for a total of at least 60 days

OR

- 3 months of the upcoming year and 3 months in the next year, and within those months I will be traveling for a total of at least 30 days



# What about other travels?

- Ayat Khamenei: If I'm a frequent traveler due to work, I would still pray shortened and not being able to fast on other non-work travels.
- Ayat Sistani: If I'm a frequent traveler, I pray full and am able to fast on all travels.



# What is my *watan*?

A *watan* is a hometown. When I am in my *watan*, I can fast and I pray full, even if I'm there for less than 10 days.





# How does a place become my *watan*?

- Ayat Khamenei: Having an intention to settle down in a place for 7-8 years
- Ayat Sistani: Having an intention to stay in a place long enough so that I am no longer considered a traveler there (for example, 1.5 years or more)



How long do I have to stay in a new *watan* before it takes on the rules of a *watan*?

- Ayat Sistani: One month
- Ayat Khamenei: A few nights



How does I place stop becoming my *watan*?

If I move from my *watan* and I'm confident that I won't come back to live there again that place is no longer a *watan* – even if it was my birthplace.



I must keep my fast if I travel and

- I cross the city boundary while departing from my hometown after *dhuhr*

OR

- I cross into the city boundary in my hometown or place of temporary residency before *dhuhr* and I haven't committing any act that would break a fast



# I am allowed to break my fast when traveling

- As soon as I intend to travel the required distance (approx. 22 km) away from the city border and I have crossed the *hadd al-tarakkhus* (where a traveler has gone far enough to be hidden from the sight of city-dwellers)
  - Note: The ruling is slightly different if I am traveling away from a place of temporary residency.



What if I have *qadhaa* fasts  
to make up?



# What if I don't know how many to make up?

- If I'm unsure whether I have to make up, for example, 10 or 15 fasts, 10 is wajib
  - Ayat Khamenei: Except when you know when you stopped fasting (for example 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadhan) but unsure about the end date of your travel (for example 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup>)



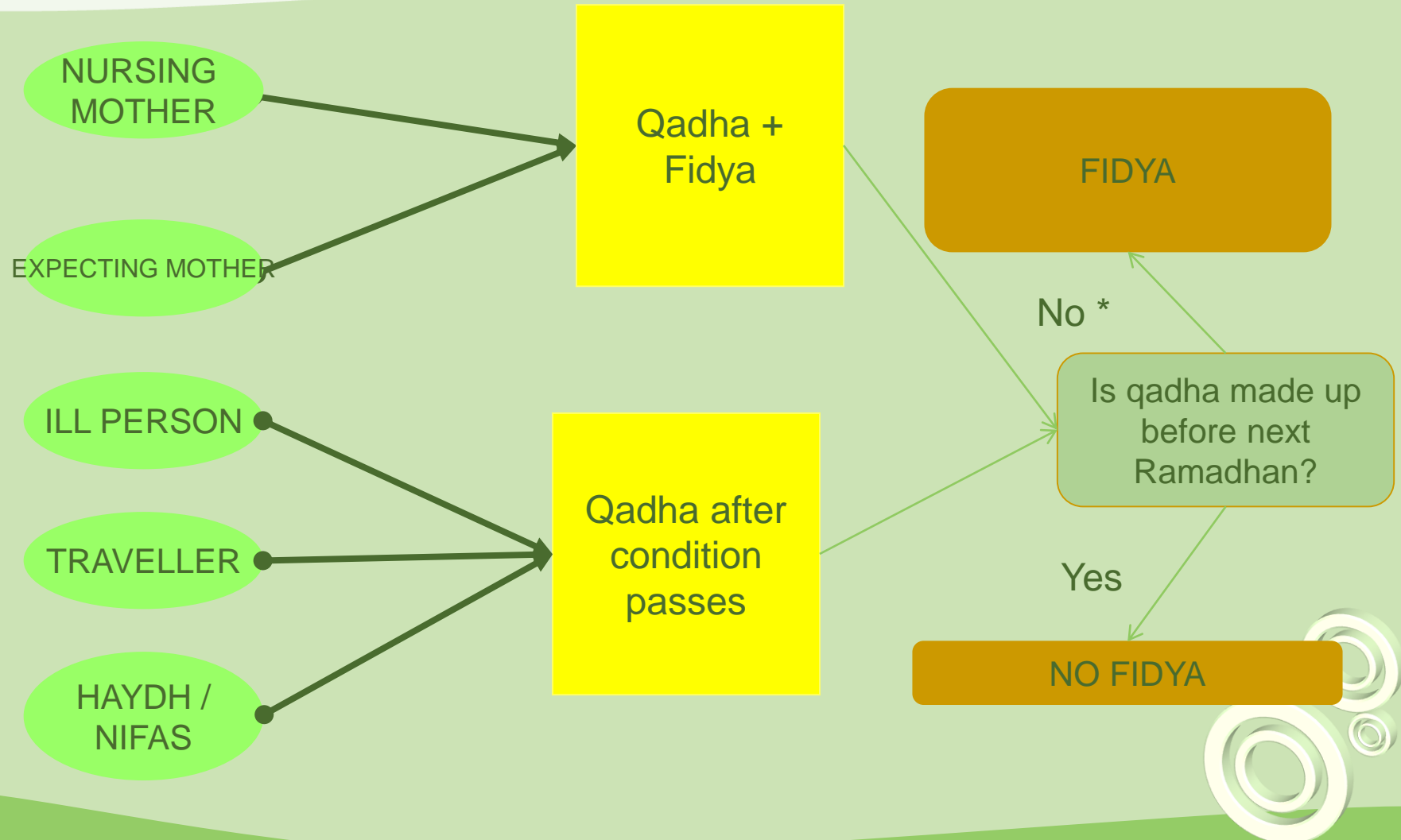
Do I have to make up a qadhaa fast before the next month of Ramadhan?

Ayat. Sistani: mustahab. Ayat Khamenei: *ihtiyaat waajib*. But in either case, if next month of Ramadhan comes, fidyah will be *wajib* as well. Example: In Ramadhan 1435 I missed a fast due to illness. If I'm able to make it up before Ramadhan 1436 but I don't, I will still owe the qadhaa fast as well as fidyah.





# Those who do have to give qadhaa



# About fidyah

- Fidyah is one mudd = 3/4 kg of food (better to give wheat) to a poor Muslim (Sistani: shi`ah)
  - This is different than just feeding someone a meal
- Fidyah for multiple days can be given to one person
- Must be delivered as food (not as money to buy food)
  - Exception (Ayat. Khomeini): when the recipient can be trusted as a *wakeel*
- Can appoint a *wakeel* (like a trusted charity) who will take money and distribute
- Does not need to be given right away but shouldn't be delayed negligently



What breaks my fast?



## Step 2: Refrain from 9 Things from Fajr til Maghrib

- Food and drink
- Liquid enema
- Vomiting
- Swallowing thick dust and smoke
- Immersing head under water

- Spousal relations
- Istimnaa
- Remaining in Janabah after fajr
- Lying about Allah and His Prophet (s)



# No food and drink

- I can't eat and drink from fajr to maghrib
  - What if I have food in my mouth at fajr time?

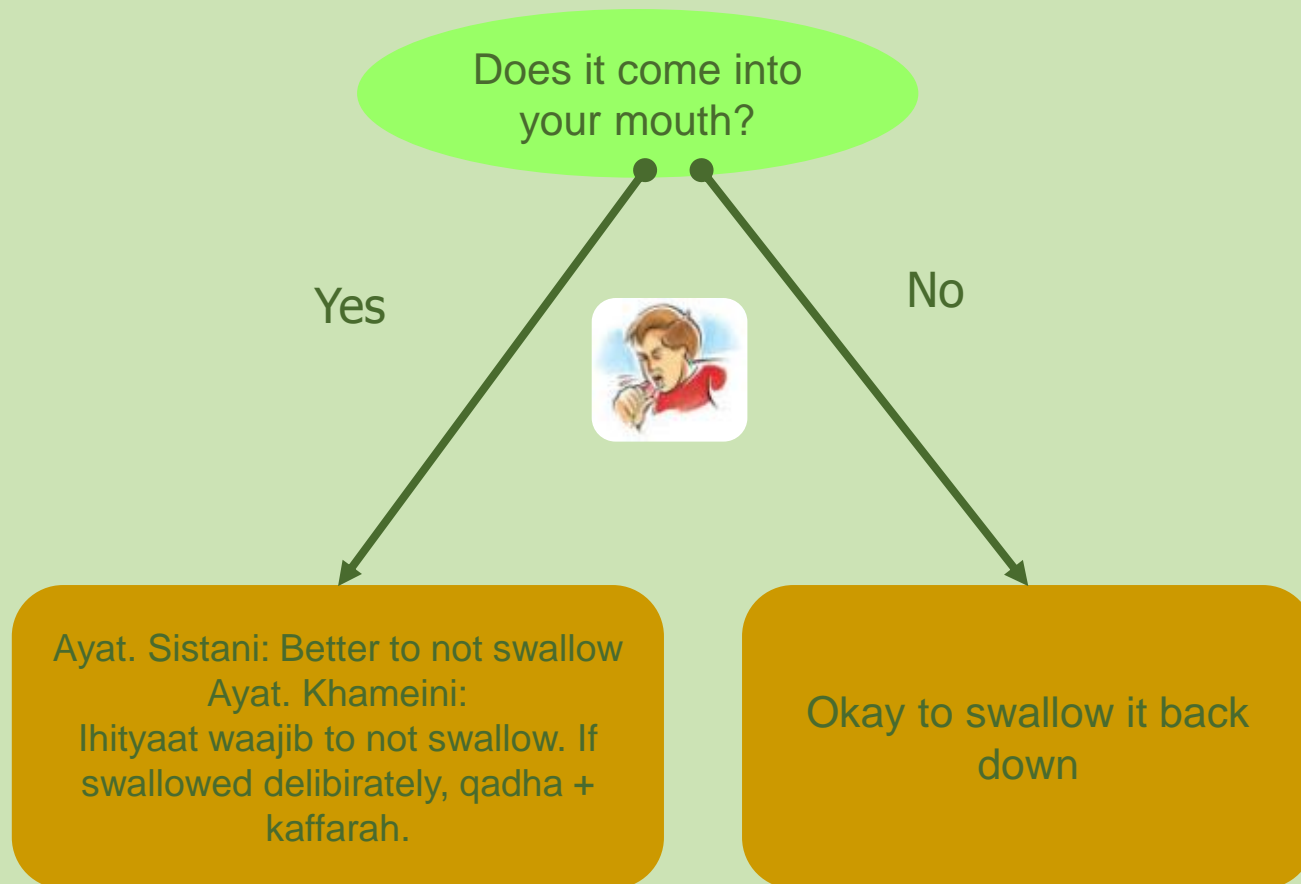


# In order for my fast to be broken, eating/drinking has to be...

- Deliberate
- Swallowed
  - I need to clean my teeth if I know I'll swallow some food stuck in my teeth
- From the “outside”
  - Saliva is okay
  - Coughing up or spitting up – see next slide
- Through the mouth



# Coughing up phlegm, congestion, mucous



# Can I rinse my mouth with water when fasting?

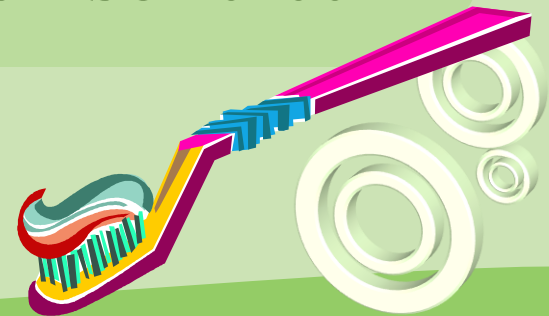
- Yes, as long as you don't swallow
- Makrooh to do so to without a valid purpose
- Recommended to spit out 3 times after rinsing
- In some cases if it is swallowed then qadhaa is necessary



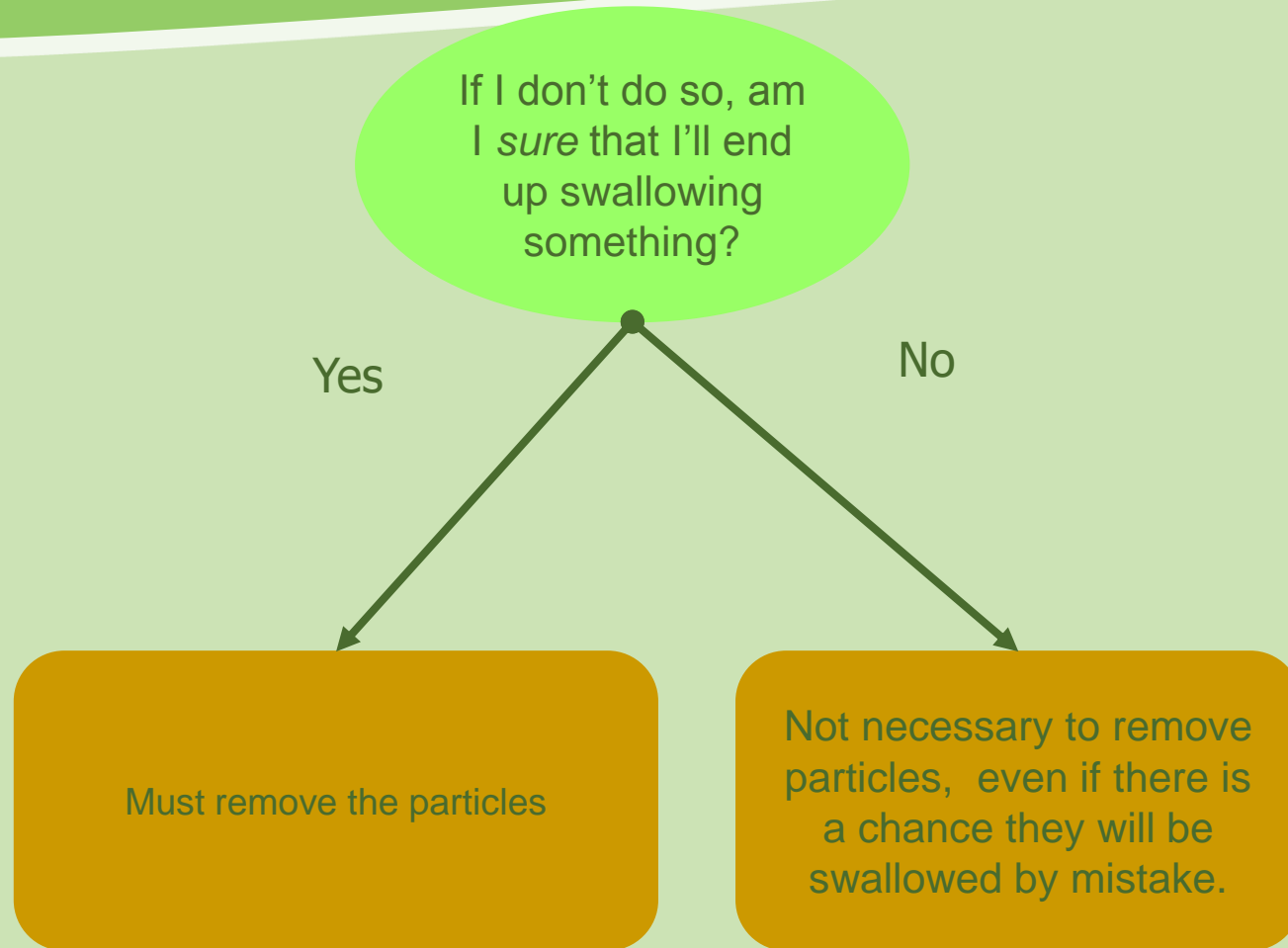


# Can I clean my teeth?

- Yes, brushing - even with toothpaste - and flossing - even with flavored floss - is ok as long as nothing is swallowed deliberately
- Using a wet toothbrush / stick is makrooh
- According to some, using a dry brush is mustahab
- Troubling others with bad breath can be haraam



# Do I have to floss or use a toothpick to remove any food particles before fasting?



Can I take medicine?



# Can I take medicine?

- Medicine that enters through the mouth (orally) like pills and syrups: Not ok (unless necessary, in which case qadha is necessary)
- Inhaler: Ok, as long as it enters the respiratory tract and medicine is not swallowed



# Can I take medicine?

- Eyedrops, nosedrops, eardrops:
  - Ok, even if you taste something in your mouth
  - Should not be used as a way to eat or drink



# Injections

- Medicinal injections while fasting: Okay
- Anesthetic injections while fasting (Ayat. Khameini: ok, Ayat. Sistani: better to avoid)
- Food- base injections (Ayat. Sistani: better to avoid, Ayat. Khameini: ihtiyaat waajib to avoid)
- Vaccination (Ayat. Khameini: as long as the vein is not injected)



# Better to avoid...



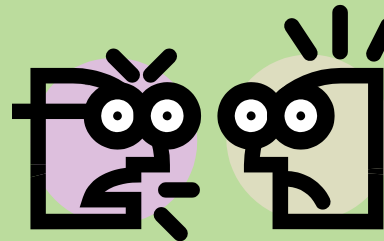
Rinsing with water  
excessively



Smelling fragrance from  
herbs and flowers (perfume  
is ok)



Tooth extraction or any  
other action which will  
cause bleeding in the  
mouth



Pointless argumentation  
and dispute



A wet tooth  
brush for  
brushing

## Step 2: Refrain from 9 Things from Fajr til Maghrib

- Food and drink
- Liquid enema
- Vomiting
- Swallowing thick dust and smoke
- Immersing head under water
- Spousal relations
- Istimnaa
- Remaining in Janabah after fajr
- Lying about Allah and His Prophet (s)





# Vomiting

- Vomiting breaks my fast - if it is deliberate!
  - Deliberate vomiting → qadha is wajib
  - Otherwise my fast is still intact



# Questions about Vomiting

- I feel like vomiting. Do I have to stop myself from vomiting?
  - Yes, if doing so will not cause harm or difficulty (Ayat. Khomeini)
  - Not necessary (Ayat. Sistani)



# Questions about Vomiting

- Can I eat at night if I know it will make me vomit?
  - Yes, but after vomiting, qadha is
    - Wajib (Ayat. Khomeini)
    - Mustahab (Ayat. Sistani)



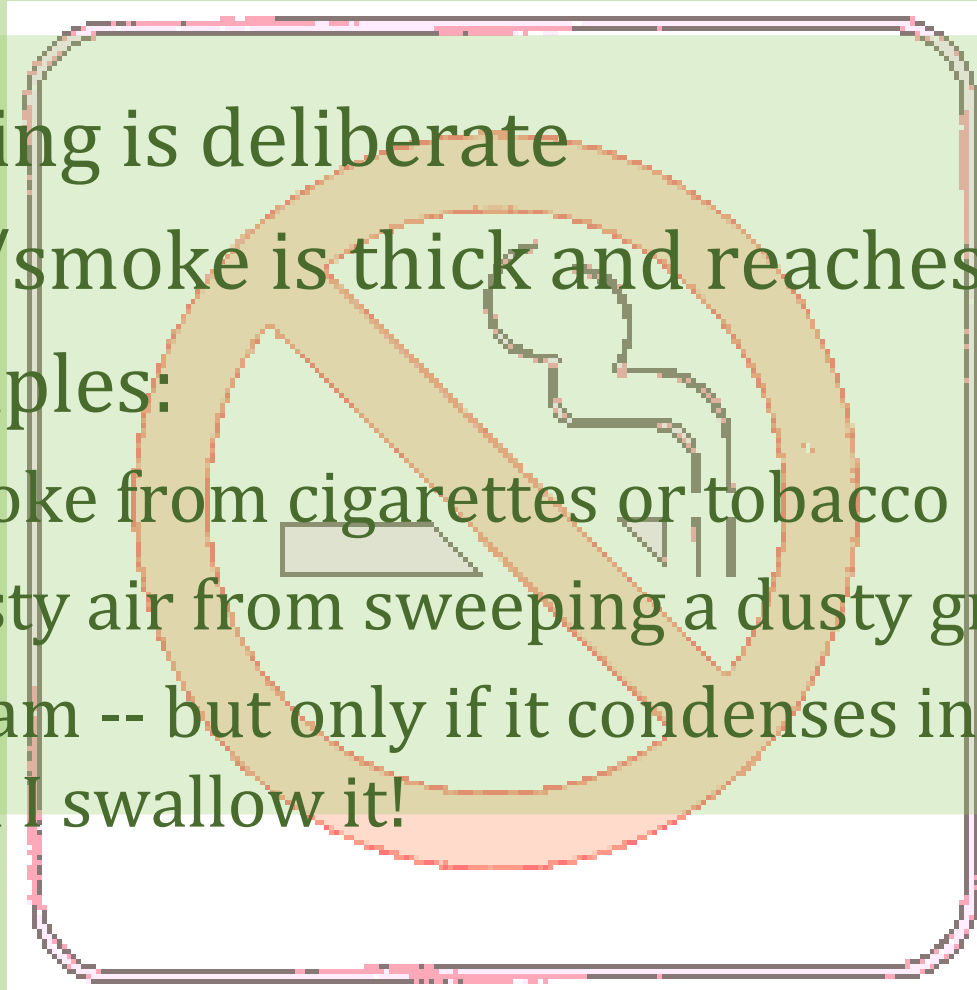
# Is deliberate belching allowed?

- to belch: To expel gas noisily from the stomach through the mouth; burp.



# Inhaling dust and smoke breaks my fast when...

- Inhaling is deliberate
- Dust/smoke is thick and reaches throat
- Examples:
  - Smoke from cigarettes or tobacco
  - Dusty air from sweeping a dusty ground
  - Steam -- but only if it condenses in my mouth and I swallow it!



# Can I deliberately put my head under water while fasting?

- Ayatullah Khamenei  
Ihtiyaat waajib to avoid and  
invalidates fast



- Ayatullah Sistani  
Severely makruh but does not invalidate fast
- Showering is okay
- Taking a bath is okay as long as I don't dip my head under water
  - It is makruh for a woman to sit in water when fasting

## Step 2: Refrain from 9 Things from Fajr til Maghrib

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# Some other things that will break my fast

- Sexual intercourse
  - Kissing and other acts that will lead to something that would cause the fast to break is not allowed
  - Istimnaa = Any deliberate act that causes the discharge of semen
- Intentionally remaining in the state of janabah / haydh / nifas til fajr (details to come)





# What if I enter the state of janabah at night?

- Deliberately staying in this state until fajr time invalidates my fast
- If there is not enough time left for a ghusl before fajr, tayammum in place of ghusl
  - Should then do ghusl before doing the fajr prayer
  - If there wasn't enough time left because of a valid reason, qadhaa is mustahab
- If I don't do ghusl [or tayammum], my fast is batil. Consequence: making up fast + kaffarah



# For a woman who becomes clean from haydh/ nifaas at night

- Needs to perform ghusl before fajr, or tayammum if there is not enough time for or unable to perform ghusl



# Can I go to sleep at night after entering the state of janabah?

- Yes, if I am intending to wake up before fajr to do ghusl and I'm confident of about waking up
  - If I oversleep past fajr without waking up: no qadha
  - If I wake up once before fajr and then oversleep: qadha
- Otherwise, if I sleep without intending to wake up before fajr to perform ghusl, and I sleep past fajr, I have to do qadha and pay kaffarah



# What if I enter the state of janabah while asleep?

- If it happens at night:
  - If I wake up
    - Before fajr, I have to do ghusl
      - Can only go back to sleep if I intend to wake up before fajr to do the ghusl and I am confident I will do so.
      - Ayat. Sistani: If I oversleep, have to give qadhaa.
      - Ayat Khomeini: If I wake up again and go back to sleep and oversleep, have to give qadhaa.
    - After fajr, my fast is intact
- If it happens while asleep after fajr: my fast is intact



# A common scenario where tayammum would become wajib

- In a night in the month of Ramadhan, I enter the state of janabah (or I become clean from haydh) but I don't have time to do ghusl before fajr



# Kaffarah

- Penalty for deliberately breaking one's fast: Qadha, plus, for each day, either:
  - Feeding 60 poor people to their fill or giving each one *mudd* of food (can't be individual who are *wajib al-nafaqah*) (Sistani: ihtiyaat waajib that it be a mu'min)
- OR
- Fasting for two months
- When the fast is broken with something *haram*, it is ihtiyaat mustahab to give both kaffarahs
- See sources for laws regarding when one is unable to do either of these



# When does Kaffarah apply?

## According to Ayat. Sistani:

- When one of the following is done *intentionally*:
  - Eating / drinking
  - Sexual intercourse
  - *Istimnaa'*
  - Remaining in state of *janabah* til Fajr
- If one was ignorant about one of these acts breaking one's fast, Kaffarah does not apply, unless his ignorance was not excusable and he wasn't sure about it being okay to do.



# When does Kaffarah apply?

## According to Ayat. Khamenei:

- When any of the acts mentioned is done *intentionally*, including:
  - Eating / drinking
  - Sexual intercourse
  - *Istimnaa'*
  - Remaining in state of *janabah* til Fajr, etc.
- If one was ignorant about one of these acts breaking one's fast, Kaffarah does not apply

