



FASTING WITH DUAL INTENTION
TO LOSE WEIGHT

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Fasting with Dual Intention (to Lose Weight)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Question: Can someone fast for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and to lose weight?

The simple, short answer to this question is — based on how it's worded — yes. But there are some important points to note. Wanting the advantage of weight loss in Ramadān along with the 'Ibādah is like other various 'Ibādāt that include Duniyā benefits. That's like someone who needs to do Ghusl, he needs to shower from Janābah, from major impurity, the intention and Niyah is to do it for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى so that he can be pure for an 'Ibādah, but he also wants to cool off because it's a hot summer day or he just returned unclean from work. Likewise, one who wants to do Wudū' for Salāh, but he also wants to cool off or cleanse himself. Similar to that is one who goes to Jihād for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى but also wants to obtain some Ghanīmah. That's permissible by Ijmā'. Or someone who maintains Silat Ar-Rahm, he maintains the bonds of kinship for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, but also wants to reap the Duniyā benefits of prolonging his life and blessing his earnings. Those are benefits Ahādīth specify.

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَبْسُطَ لَهُ رِزْقُهُ أَوْ يَنْسَأَ لَهُ فِي أَثَرِهِ فَلْيَصِلْ رَحِمَهُ

Whoever desires an expansion in his sustenance and age should keep good relations with his kith and kin.¹

So the first point is that many Duniyā benefits like these, that one gets from 'Ibādāt, they're usually inclusive within the 'Ibādah and they're attained even without a Niyah for them. So it's not what falls under Riyā' or Shirk, and it doesn't nullify the 'Ibādah. In fact, some detailed 'Ibādāt have Duniyā benefits

¹ Bukhari: 2067

mentioned in the proof — Like Silat Ar-Rahm. Sometimes it's not included within the 'Ibādah, but it's still permissible. Like someone who goes to Hajj for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى but takes some items with him so he can sell it there. The Salaf said,

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ

There is no blame upon you for seeking bounty from your Lord [during Hajj].²

was revealed permitting that. That's why it was revealed, to permit trade during Hajj.

A second point to keep in mind, and it's an important point pertaining to this. So, the rule that I mentioned, if the 'Ibādah and deed are done for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, as the question states, but one also wants to reap a Dunyā benefit, that's accepted insha'Allāh. However, if someone is in Ramadān and he says, "I'm fasting for weight loss only," there's no Ajr in that, that's rejected. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى says,

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا نُوفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يُخْسِرُونَ

Whoever desires the life of this world and its adornments - We fully repay them for their deeds therein, and they therein will not be deprived.³

Whoever desires only worldly gain from his deeds, they'll get their deeds in full in this life.

² [2:198]

³ [11:15]

وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يَخْسُونَ

and they therein will not be deprived.

Nothing will be left out. You wanted it in this life? You got it in this life! Like the other verse,

فَمَنْ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ

And among the people is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world," and he will have in the Hereafter no share.⁴

They say, "Rabbana! Give us our benefits from our deeds in this world." For them, there's no portion left in the Ākhirah. The Hadīth,

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ

Deeds are to be judged only by intentions...⁵

specifies that,

وَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ لِدُنْيَا يُصِيبُهَا أَوْ امْرَأَةٍ يَنْكِحُهَا فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَىٰ مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ

⁴ [2:200]

⁵ Abu Dāwūd: 2201

And whoever emigrated for the sake of worldly gain or for a woman to marry, then his emigration will be considered to be for what he emigrated for.

That's someone who turns a noble 'Ibādah, which has the highest goals, into complete means to attain low, worldly benefits — it's doing the deed totally for worldly advantages. That person may even be sinned. And a good test — if you're confused with your intention — a good test is to ask yourself or ask the person, *“Would I fast even if I wasn't going to get any weight loss or health benefits from this? Would I fast or not?”* If one says, *“I wouldn't fast if it weren't for those Dunyā benefits. I wouldn't fast if it weren't for weight loss,”* that's rejected, unaccepted, and that's what the verses that I mentioned mean.

نُوفٍ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَلَهُمْ فِيهَا

We fully repay them for their deeds therein...⁶

In the other verse,

وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ

And he will have in the Hereafter no share.⁷

He got what he wanted in this Dunyā. If he says, *“I would fast regardless for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, but I also want the weight loss out of it,”* that's permissible.

⁶ [11:15]

⁷ [2:200]

A third point to keep in mind on this matter is that we talked about whether the deed would be accepted or not, however, in such scenarios, where one intends from the start of the 'Ibādah a Dunyā benefit, that detracts or diminishes one's reward. Among the proof establishing that is that the Mujāhid, one who puts his most precious life on the line for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, leaving his comfort and facing nothing but hardship for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, if he intends from the start to go for Jihād and to get Ghanīmah, then the reward is diminished by two-thirds, and only one-third remains in the Ākhirah. If he gains no Ghanīmah, then he is rewarded in full. And something to keep in mind, we're talking about one who left his house for Jihād for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى to attain Ghanīmah, but one who left for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى completely, without the intention of Ghanīmah, but then after the battle is over, he's given a gift, then that doesn't diminish the reward.

And my advice is to keep your intention in 'Ibādāt purely for the sake of Allāh, even when it's permissible to attain Dunyā benefits. One does a deed totally for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى yet struggles as to whether Allāh سبحانه وتعالى will accept it or not. Don't add to the problem by tagging on Dunyā benefits in your intention that you may automatically get already. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى says,

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ

And they who give what they give while their hearts are fearful because they will be returning to their Lord.⁸

Those who give — in the verse talking about charity, but other deeds are like that — those who do deeds for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, but their hearts are full of fear over whether those deeds have been accepted or not. And Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها asks the Messenger ﷺ, “Is this about the one who drinks alcohol and steals and commits adultery?” He said, “No, O Daughter of the Siddīq! It's the man who

⁸ [23:60]

fasts, gives in charity, and makes Salāh, but her fears that those deeds will not be accepted.”

أَهُوَ الرَّجُلُ الَّذِي يَزْنِي وَيَسْرِقُ وَيَشْرَبُ الْخَمْرَ؟

Is this the one who commits adultery, steals and drinks alcohol?

قَالَ: لَا يَا بِنْتَ الصِّدِّيقِ! وَلَكِنَّهُ الرَّجُلُ يَصُومُ وَيَتَصَدَّقُ وَيُصَلِّي وَهُوَ يَخَافُ أَنْ لَا يَقْبَلَ مِنْهُ

He said: No, O daughter of As-Siddiq – rather it is a man who fasts and gives charity and prays, but he fears that those will not be accepted from him.⁹

Righteous people do deeds completely for the sake of Allāh *وتعالى* yet fear that Allāh *وتعالى* may not accept them. Imagine if Dunyā benefits are added in the initial intention. The best is for one to keep his Niyyah purely for the sake of Allāh *وتعالى* in all his 'Ibādāt. The benefit of losing weight or gaining health through fasting comes regardless of whether you intended it or not. Intending that in the 'Ibādah only diminished the reward, and that shows how essential intentions are for 'Ibādāt. From the generosity and wisdom of Allāh *وتعالى* is that deeds and 'Ibādāt come with enormous Dunyā benefits. Deeds return in good upon a believer in Dunyā and in the Ākhirah.

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ ءَامَنُوا وَأَتَّقُوا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ

And if only the people of the cities had believed and feared Allāh, We would have opened [i.e., bestowed] upon them blessings from the heaven and the earth...¹⁰

⁹ Ibn Mājah: 4198

¹⁰ [7:96]

Īmān and Taqwā bring Barakah, blessings, to your life.

فَاتَهُمُ اللَّهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحَسَنَ ثَوَابِ الْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

*So Allāh gave them the reward of this world and the good reward of the Hereafter. And Allāh loves the doers of good.*¹¹

Thawāb Ad-Dunyā. He gives you reward in Dunyā for your deeds. They're automatically included, good deeds bring about a good happy life.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً

*Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life...*¹²

Many specific deeds have specific Dunyā benefits attached to them, like Silat Ar-Rahm. It prolongs life and blesses one's earnings. Istighfār! Many Dunyā benefits to Istighfār, some of them are mentioned in the Qur'ān.

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا

And said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver.

يُرْسِلُ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا

¹¹ [3:148]

¹² [16:97]

He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in [continuing] showers

وَيُؤَدِّدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا

And give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers.¹³

One may do Istighfār for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and also to get the benefit of rain or wealth or children. My point is, when you know you're already getting the Dunyā advantages tagged along with your 'Ibādah when you're doing it for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى alone, don't decrease the reward by intending Dunyā benefits. Keep your Niyah pure. Let me give you an example that summarizes that. We have two individuals. One says, "I'm fasting totally for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, one hundred percent for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, I don't do it for any other reason," but because he's fasting, he gets the benefit of his weight loss, his health gets better, he gets *حَيَوَةً طَيِّبَةً*, he gets a happy life, as the verse I mentioned stated, and other benefits. Then you got the second one, who says, "My intention is to fast for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, but also to lose weight." Both are permissible of course, both attain the Dunyā benefits, while the latter lost deeds to that intention at the start of the 'Ibādah.

¹³ [71:10-12]