

## Shaykh Al Albani and Shaykh Abdul Muhsin Al Abbad debate Concerning Fasting on Saturdays

**Al Albaanee:** Yes, Shaykh 'Abdul Muhsin has something to say, please go ahead.

**'Al 'Abbaad:** It is about the issue of Saturday, you say that it is not permissible to fast on Saturday's at all, whether a person singles it out or combines it with another day.

**Al Albaanee:** Yes, except during an obligation as was stated [by the Messenger - صلى الله عليه وسلم -], there is no difference between fasting it on its own and combining a day before it or a day after it with it. I say this while having the Hadeeth of Juwayreeyah in mind al Hamdulilaah; "...did you fast a day before it...will you fast a day after it, she said no..."

**Al 'Abaad:** [Meaning] the Friday.

**Al Albaanee:** Yes, the Friday.

**Al 'Abaad:** The Friday which comes before Saturday. [i.e. the Shaykh is indicating that since Saturday comes after Friday, then the Hadeeth is permitting fasting Fridays with Saturdays.]

**Al Albaanee:** What I'm saying is; those who are claiming that it is permissible to fast on Saturday's because of this Hadeeth, this Hadeeth is associated with another Hadeeth. They are saying that if a person fasts on Friday, then he can fast on Saturday, the Hadeeth of Juwayreeyah clearly states that. But we respond by saying, as was mentioned earlier, with the issue related to the statement of the Messenger - صلى الله عليه وسلم - "Nothing cuts off the Salaat."

**Al 'Abaad:** No, I only intended the issue of Saturday, meaning is it permissible for someone to fast a supernumerary fast on Saturday if he combines it with another day?

**Al Albaanee:** No, no, I say no may Allaah bless you. What I meant by referring to the previous issue, is that the Hadeeth of Juwayreeyah permits the fasting of Saturday, and the other Hadeeth prohibits it, so the prohibition takes precedence over the permit. This is what I intended when referring to the previous issue.

**Al 'Abaad:** But isn't the Hadeeth that is prohibiting fasting on Saturday only prohibiting it if it was singled out in fasting?

**Al Albaanee:** As is known to you, as you are the people of the Arabic language, and it is us who are learning from you, the Messenger - صلى الله عليه وسلم - said: "Do not fast on Saturday unless it is obligated upon you." Unless it is obligated upon you.

**Al 'Abaad:** But isn't the meaning here that you single it out with fasting?

**Al Albaanee:** No, because this understanding would be contradictory to the exception [i.e. of fasting only when it is an obligation]. Likewise, what do the people of knowledge say if 'Eed is on Saturday? Let's say for example, that fasting on the day of 'Arafah is followed by a Saturday, the virtues of fasting on 'Arafah is well known to noble students of knowledge like yourselves. The differing of fasting on the day of 'Arafah for those who are in 'Arafah is known, and the Sunnah is that they shouldn't fast, and fasting is a virtue for those who are not at 'Arafah.

In any case, lets say that the day of 'Arafah is on Friday, so the day after it is 'Eed which is on a Saturday. Is it permissible to fast on Friday, knowing that fasting on 'Arafah and fasting on Saturday which is the day of 'Eed is prohibited as is known to us all. Can we do so with the claim that we are not fasting Saturday on its own and the Hadeeth only prohibits singling out Saturday with fasting? I do not think that any of the people of knowledge would say so in such a case, and it happens often, that the day of 'Arafah is on a Friday, so

the day following it would be a Saturday. So can we say that it is permissible to fast on that day because we fasted Friday, being that Friday was the day of 'Arafah? I do not believe anyone would permit this.

**AI 'Abaad:** But this is because it is prohibited to fast on 'Eed.

**AI Albaanee:** If you would permit, your statements are in agreement with mine. When I say that I do not think any of the people of knowledge would permit this type of fast, if this is the case, then saying it is permissible [to fast Saturday's when combined] is not free of error. Saying that the prohibition is only for singling out Saturday in fasting is not free of error, that in this case Saturday was not singled out, so what is the response?

It is as you have just kindly said; that the prohibition of fasting on the day of 'Eed is well known. Ok, may Allaah bless you, what is the difference between the first prohibition [of fasting Saturday] and the second prohibition [of fasting on 'Eed]?

I say, the difference is that the prohibition of fasting on 'Eed is known to most scholars, rather it is known to most students of knowledge. As for the prohibition of fasting on Saturdays, then it was unknown, it was buried in the books, it was forgotten. This is the only difference, otherwise the prohibition by the Messenger - صلي الله عليه و سلم - whether here or there is the same. Rather, I say that his prohibition of fasting on Saturday is more severe than his prohibition of fasting on 'Eed. This is because the prohibition of fasting on the day of 'Eed is nothing more than his prohibition - صلي الله عليه و سلم - of fasting on the day of 'Eed. As for the prohibition of fasting on Saturday, then it is coupled with a statement that emphasizes the prohibition, and it is none other than his saying; "...if you do not find anything but a bark of a tree, then chew on it." Meaning that the person would affirm that he is not fasting by doing so in obedience to the order of the Messenger - صلي الله عليه و سلم -. This statement by the Messenger, if it does not emphasize or render the fasting of Saturday to be more severe than fasting on 'Eed, then at least it makes it equal. So why is it that some of the people of knowledge differentiate between the fasting of Saturdays, saying that what is meant is singling it out with fasting, why is it that you don't say the same thing about singling out 'Eed with fasting. It is because of the prohibition, and the prohibition is given precedence over the permit, this is my opinion on the matter.

**AI 'Abaad:** The Hadeeth of Juwayreeyah, does it not affirm that what is meant by the Hadeeth; "Do not fast on Saturdays except in what has been obligated upon you." is that the prohibition is specific to singling out Saturday with fasting? Because the Hadeeth clarifies that Juwayreeyah affirms that she fasted on a Saturday combined with a Friday. Likewise is the statement of the Messenger - صلي الله عليه و سلم - "Whoever fasts Ramadaan and follows it with six days of Shawaal..." If it is on a Saturday for a benefit, should a person not continue fasting [on the Saturday]? Meaning that he fasts six days in succession including a Saturday. Likewise are the three days in the middle of a month if Saturday is included in them, or that the day of 'Arafah is on a Saturday?

**AI Albaanee:** I believe that this is only repeating what I have already said. We said that the Hadeeth of Juwayreeyah permits [fasting on Saturdays] and the Hadeeth that prohibits fasting on Saturday is given precedence because the prohibition is given precedence over the permit. The virtues of fasting the six days of Shawaal are no doubt known, but if happens that one of those six days is a Saturday – and I see the gentleman over there coming and going, it is as if he is waiting for us, be patient and your patience is only by Allaah. I say, Whoever wants to fast on Saturday as you are saying, combining it with another day and not singling it out, as for me, I fast the six days of Shawaal, and if I come to a Saturday I would not fast, and if I fast a Friday combining it with a Thursday I would fast it, but if Saturday is included in these six days I would not fast it.

I believe, and I mean what I say, that I have a better way that is closer to guidance, and more correct in speech when I do not fast on a Saturday as opposed to the person who fasts on Saturday as one of the six days of Shawaal. Why? Because I have not given up the fasting of a Saturday due to my desires or innovation in the religion, I have only given it up for Allaah the Elevated and His Messenger - صلي الله عليه و سلم -, and he says as is well known to you; "Whoever leaves something for Allaah, Allaah would replace it with something better for him." Therefore I do not fast, and this is better than fasting [on Saturday] because I did not fast that day for Allaah the Magnificent.

The point is, may Allaah bless you, is that we remember the clear example that has already been mentioned, the example that cannot be argued against; it the day of 'Eed is also a day that is virtuous to fast on, do we fast?

The answer is no.

What is the legislated reason for this?

There is no legislated reason other than the principle of the prohibition is given precedence over the permit. If the people of knowledge have another reason, then I may change my opinion of fasting on Saturdays. As for falling into the dilemma of sometimes permitting the fasting of a day that the Messenger - صلى الله عليه و سلم - prohibited in totality and stating that the statement; "...except on what has been obligated upon you.." stating that this is only when it is singled out, what are we holding on to here, a principle, a text? This text prohibits, it prohibits all types of fasting [on Saturday] except those that have been obligated. So fasting on the day of 'Eed if it coincides with a day of virtue, or fasting on a Saturday if it coincides with a day of virtue, do we fast it while contradicting a text that prohibits it?

We say no, we do not fast it, why? Because the prohibition takes precedence over the permit. So I feel at peace that I am not in confusion in my understanding and knowledge ; sometimes permitting what the legislation prohibited with the claim that it is permissible when combined with another day, and at other times prohibiting while the ruling is clear.

**AI 'Abaad:** The way to combine the evidences; the Hadeeth; "Do not fast on Saturdays except in what has been obligated upon you." And the Hadeeth of Juwayreeyah; "Are you going to fast tomorrow (Saturday)? She said no, then do not fast [on Friday]"

**AI Albaanee:** May Allaah bless you, I say; this is only repetition, I know what they mean by combining the Ahaadeeth, but why do they not implement this with the issue of fasting on the day of 'Eed? The response: Because fasting on 'Eed is prohibited.

**AI 'Abaad:** No, we say that it is not permitted at all.

**AI Albaanee:** Why my Sayyid? This is what you are saying, but what is the knowledgeable response? It is because the Messenger - صلى الله عليه و سلم - prohibited it, and what did I say was the knowledgeable response? It is that the prohibition is given precedence to the permit. As for saying it is because [fasting of 'Eed] has been prohibited, then we say; likewise fasting on Saturdays has been prohibited, and we mentioned earlier that fasting on Saturdays has been emphasized more than fasting on 'Eed, because he said; "...if you do not find anything but a bark of a tree, then chew on it." A bark is not food, it does not even have any moisture in it, no sweetness, nothing at all. But it was mentioned to emphasize the obedience of the noble Hadeeth practically, so a person chews on this bark to establish his obedience to the prohibition of the Messenger - صلى الله عليه و سلم .

A person from the crowd interrupts: But you O Shaykh, you are of the opinion that if the day of 'Arafah is on a Saturday, that it should not be fasted?

**AI Albaanee:** Subhaan Allaah.

**Person:** By saying this we would make the Muslims miss out on a lot of good.

**AI Albaanee:** You have forgotten what we have said earlier...

(debate continues with person for a short while with others which has been omitted)

**AI 'Abbad:** O noble Shaykh, may Allaah preserve you, are you aware of any scholars who held the opinion that it is not permissible to fast on Saturdays whether it is singled out or combined with another day?

**Al Albaanee:** Firstly I say; if you consider the narrator of this Hadeeth to be a scholar, then the answer is yes.

**Al 'Abbaad:** I mean a scholar - other than you - from the scholars of old.

**Al Albaanee:** I say yes, the narrator of the Hadeeth, the Sahaabee.

**Al 'Abbaad:** But the Sahaabee did not say that he understood the Hadeeth as you have understood it.

**Al Albaanee:** What did the Sahaabee say?

**'Abbaad:** He only narrated the Hadeeth, and it is possible to understand it in a way that is in agreement with the Hadeeth of Juwayreeyah.

**Al Albaanee:** No it is not that, I meant something else, and it is that he [the companion] said; **'Whoever fasts on Saturday has neither fasted nor has he eaten.'**

**'Abbaad:** This is understood only if he singles out Saturday with fasting.

**Al Albaanee:** This is how you understand it, but I am speaking about him [the companion].

**'Abbaad:** Others have also understood it likewise.

**Al Albaanee:** No, no, I am speaking about the narrator of the Hadeeth, this understanding is your understanding, we are not differing about this.

**'Abbaad:** The narrator of the Hadeeth...this does not apply except with those who say that he is making up an obligatory fast. So if he is not fasting an obligatory fast [speech not clear], so he is not to fast a supererogatory fast on Saturday except if he combines it with another day such as Friday.

**Al Albaanee:** In any case, do not blame me, Shaykh 'Abdul Muhsin...

**'Abbaad:** No there is no blame at all.

**Al Albaanee:** ...if I were to say that this is only repetition. You asked me previously if any of the people of knowledge held this opinion. I say yes, a number of the scholars of old as well as more recent scholars held this opinion. But I aimed high and referred you to the narrator of the Hadeeth, he said:

**"The one who fasts on Saturday has neither fasted nor eaten."**

He derived this from the statement of the Messenger - عليه الصلاة والسلام - concerning the person who fasts for a whole year:

**"Neither has he fasted, nor has he eaten."**

So do you order the person who wants to fast the whole year to fast or not to fast? There is no doubt that in this issue, you would order him not to fast the whole year...

**A person interrupts:** The Hadeeth...

**Al Albaanee:** Excuse me, if you would please, I am speaking with Shaykh 'Abdul Muhsin.

**Person:** Continue...

**AI Albaanee:** I do not believe that you would prefer, or a more precise statement would be; that you consider the preponderant opinion to be that a person should fast the whole year - because he is drawing close to Allaah the Glorified by doing so - with your knowledge of the Prophets statement; **“Whoever fasts the whole year has neither fasted nor has he eaten.”** So what do we understand from this statement concerning fasting of Saturdays? Does it encourage one to fast or does it encourage one not to fast?

**‘Abbaad:** It encourages one not to fast if he singles it out in worship, meaning if he singles it out with fasting he should not fast.

**AI Albaanee:** You, O shaykh - may Allaah reward you, are imposing your understanding on the narrator of this Hadeeth.

**AI ‘Abbad:** Interjecting...

**AI Albaanee:** Sorry, if you would permit me, what I want you to do, is bring a statement that you could add to the statement of the narrator that would be in agreement with your understanding. As for understanding his statement according to yours, then this is an understanding that cannot be imposed on the Hadeeth. But in conclusion, I say that the statement of the Messenger, ‘Alayhi as Salaam, is clearer and more confirmatory than the statement of the narrator. As for the narrator, then we can say he was being creative in his statement, he was drawing attention to the Hadeeth of the Messenger; **“Whoever fasts the whole year has neither fasted nor has he eaten.”** He was being creative, he meant [the person who fasts on Saturdays] has no reward either. These words from the narrator benefit me a lot in reality, for he chose the opinion I hold, which is not to fast, over the opinion of fasting that others hold. This is because this companion is saying; fasting on Saturdays is like fasting for the whole year, the person is neither fasting nor is he not fasting.

As for me, I have left fasting on Saturdays for the pleasure of Allaah, and Allaah will replace it for me with something better in its place, As Salaamu ‘Alaykum wa Rahmatullaahi wa Barakaatahu.

**A Person:** The Hadeeth of fasting a day and missing a day, is it not contradictory to this?

**AI Albaanee:** While getting up: May Allaah bless you, you continue to revolve around general texts, there is a general text concerning what you have said, and a general text can be specified by other texts, and this is what we were speaking about.

Please forgive me O Shaykh [‘Abbad], for I went ahead and responded to the question in your presence [i.e. I should have let you respond to the question – the Shaykh is saying this out of politeness and good mannerisms indicating that Shaykh ‘Abdul Muhsin has great knowledge and should be given precedence in responding to questions]

**‘Abbaad:** And you are greater than me, in knowledge and age.

End of debate

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