

رَفْعُ الشُّبْهَةِ عَنْ كَلَامِ كِرَاهِيَةِ السَّنَةِ

A Clarification regarding the Six Fasts of Shawwāl

With respect to the fasts of Shawwāl (that is, the six days of Shawwāl), this has been authentically established from a few traditions of the Prophet ﷺ. In this regard, it is narrated from Abu Ayyūb (RA) that the Prophet ﷺ said,

“Whoever fasts the month of Ramadhan and then follows it with six fasts of Shawwāl, then it is like if he fasted for the whole year”¹

Based on this and other similar traditions, Imām Ash-Shāfi² (RA) and Imām Ahmad Bin Hanbal³ (RA) have considered it *Mustahabb* (commendable) to fast the six days of Shawwāl.

With respect to the Madhhab of Imām Abu Hanīfah (RA), most of the latter day Hanafī scholars have seen no harm/objection in observing the six fasts of Shawwāl.⁴ In fact, in the famous Hanafī text, *Nūr Al-Idhāb* and its commentary *Marāqī Al-Falāh*, it is stated that it is *Mandoob* (commendable) to observe these fasts.

However, it has been narrated in some books that according to Imām Abu Hanīfah and his student Imām Abu Yūsuf, it is Makrooh (disliked) to observe the Shawwāl fasts of six days as identified in certain traditions.

¹ *Sahih Muslim*, 1/521, *Tayyibab*

Sunan Abi Dawūd, Hadith: 2433

Jāmi’ At-Tirmidhī, 1/191, Hadith:759, *Anqaaf As-Saūdiyyah*

Sunan Ibn Mājah, Hadith: 1716, *Dār Al-Ma’rifah*

Sunan Ad-Dārimi, vol 2, pg. 34, Hadith: 1754, *Qadimi*

² *Mughni Al-Muhtaj*, vol. 1, pg. 654, *DKI*

³ *Al-Mughni*, vol 4, pg. 438, *Dār ‘Ālim Al-Kutub*

⁴ *Al-Hāwī Al-Qudsī*, vol 1, pg. 312, *Dār An-Navādir*

While discussing this position of these two great Hanafi Imams, the renowned scholar of Hadith, *Shaykh Al-Hadith*, Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyya Kāndhlawī (RA), writes in his famous work, *Anjazz Al-Masālik* (commentary of the Muwattā of Imām Mālik),

“As for the Hanafi scholars, different narrations have been transmitted from them. In *Al Babr Ar-Rāiq*⁵, it is mentioned, “And from the Makrooh acts, is the fast of the six days of Shawwāl according to Imām Abu Hanīfah, whether it is done separately or consecutively. Imām Abu Yūsuf considered it Makrooh if the fast is done consecutively, not separately. However, most of the latter day scholars do not see any harm in observing the six fasts of Shawwāl .

In *Nūr Al-Idāb* and its Sharh (commentary), it has been considered ‘*Mandoob*’ (commendable).⁶

In *Al Badāi*⁷, it is mentioned, “From the Makrooh fasts is to follow Ramadhan with six fasts of Shawwāl. This has been stated by Imām Abu Yūsuf. These scholars disliked following the month of Ramadhan with fasting, fearing that such fast would be attached/joined with the compulsory Ramadhan fast. The same has been narrated from Imām Mālik. The author of *Al-Badāi*’ further writes, ‘Fasting immediately after Ramadhan, becomes Makrooh when a person observes fast on the day of Eid and then observes five days afterwards. But if one does not fast on the day of Eid, and then observes the fast for six days (after Eid), this will not be Makrooh. Instead, it will be Mustahabb and Sunnah’. (End quote of *Al Badāi*’).”⁸

The renowned Hanafi Jurist, Ibn ‘Ābideen Ash-Shāmi (RA) has also explained this matter in his famous super-commentary (hāshiyah) titled *Radd Al-Muhtār* and stated,

“The author of *Al-Hidāyah* has written in his famous book *At-Tajnis* that with respect to the six fasts (of Shawwāl) after Eid-ul-Fitr consecutively, some scholars have disliked it, however, the preferred opinion is that there is no objection in it (and there is nothing wrong in observing this fast), because the dislike occurs when one cannot differentiate it from the Ramadhan fast, (that is, it becomes disliked when one may consider it to be connected to the Ramadhan fast). However, this understanding does

⁵*Al-Babr Ar-Rāiq*, vol. 2, pg. 451, DKI

⁶*Hāshiyah At-Tabtāwi ‘alal-Maraqi*, pg. 640, DKI

⁷*Badāi’ us-Sanāi*, vol. 2, pg. 562, DKI

⁸*Anjazz Al Masālik Vol.5pg.173, Idārah Taleefat Ashrafīyyah, Multan, Pakistan*

not take place now. Similar statements to that of *At-Tajnis* have been mentioned in *Kitāb An-Nawāzil* by *Abu Laith*; in *Al-Wāqiāt* by *As-Sadr Asb-Shabeed*; in *Al Mubeet Al-Burbānī* and *Adh-Dhakehirah*.

However, in *Al-Ghāyah*, it is narrated from Hasan bin Ziyād that he did not see anything wrong in observing the six fasts of Shawwāl. He explained that the day of Eid-ul-Fitr was sufficient to separate between the Ramadhan fasts (which was compulsory) and the Shawwāl fasts (which was not compulsory). (Hence, there was no possibility of one becoming confused about the both types of fast). It is also mentioned in *Al-Ghāyah* that most of the latter scholars do not see anything wrong in observing the six fasts of Shawwāl”.⁹

‘Allamah *Ibn ‘Abideen* further indicated a detailed discussion of this topic and said, “A complete explanation of this discussion is to be found in the treatise, ‘A Record of the statements regarding the six fasts of Shawwāl’ by ‘Allāmah Qāsim bin Qutlubugha”.¹⁰

In this treatise, the great Hanafi Jurist, ‘Allamah Qasim bin Qutlubugha (RA) has refuted the didactic poetry/treatise of ‘*Allāmah Jalāl ud-Deen At-Tabbāni Al Hanafī*, in which he attributed to Imam Abu Hanīfah that fasting the six fasts of Shawwāl was generally Makrooh (disliked)”.¹¹

The great scholar of the sub-continent, ‘Allāmah Yūsuf Al Binnori (RA) comments on this matter in his famous commentary of Jāmi’ At-Tirmidhi titled *Mā’rifus-Sunan*, “With respect to the six fasts of Shawwāl, it has been ascribed to Imam Abu Hanīfah and Imam Mālik (RA) that they regard it as Makrooh, and Imām Ash-Shāfi’i and Imam Ahmad have considered it Mustahabb (commendable). However, the information which has been transmitted and narrated by the latter scholars from Ibn Nujaim, Al Kamāl, Ibn Al Kamāl and others from among our scholars is confused/mix-up (مضطربة).

The great researcher and investigator, ‘Allāmah Qāsim bin Qutlubugha has written a separate/unique treatise on this topic titled *‘Tabrīr Al-Aqwāl fī Sanm as-Sitt min Shanwāl’*. In this, he has established from the clear texts of the Hanafī Madhhab that the six fasts of Shawwāl is Mustahabb (commendable)

⁹Radd Al-Muhtār, vol. 2, pg. 435 H.M. Saeed, Karachi

¹⁰ Minhab Al-Khāliq ‘alā Hāmish Al Babr, vol. 2, 451, DKI

¹¹Radd Al-Muhtār, vol. 2, pg. 435, H.M. Saeed, Karachi

according to Imam Abu Hanīfah and Abu Yūsuf (RA).¹²

From the above discussion, we see that reference has been made by these great scholars to the *Risālah* (treatise) written by the great 9th century Hanafi Jurist, Hāfidh ‘Allāmah Qāsim bin Qutlubugha. In this famous *Risālah*, Allāmah Qāsim refuted statements which were written by another Hanafi Jurist, ‘Allāmah Jalāl ud-Deen At-Tabbāni in his ‘*Mandbooma*’ (treatise).

That which was written in At-Tabbāni’s ‘*Mandbooma*’, showed that observing the six fasts of Shawwāl was Makrooh according to the great scholars of the Hanafi Madhhab. For example, the following was mentioned,

و فِي صِيَامِ السَّيِّئِ مِنْ شَوَّالٍ، كَرَاهَةٌ عِنْدَ أَوْلِي الْأَفْضَلِ

“With regards to the fasting of the six days of Shawwāl, there is Karāhah (dislike) according to the people of virtues and knowledge”.

In the Sharh (commentary) of his ‘*Mandboomab*’ (treatise), Shaykh At-Tabbāni further comments, “Fasting the six days of Shawwāl consecutively or separately is Makrooh according to Imam Abu Hanīfah, and according to Imam Abu Yūsuf it is Makrooh to fast consecutively.

Imām Mālik says that it is Makrooh in all conditions, and this is the practice of the ignorant ones”.¹³

In response to these statements made by Shaykh At-Tabbāni, ‘Allāmah Qāsim bin Qutlubugha (died 879 A.H) wrote, "This person has gone towards nullifying that which has great blessings, with an untrue claim, and without any evidence. He has relied upon that which is weak and subjected to interpretations, and has neglected/left out that which is relied upon (in the Madhhab). He has gone further to regard as being sound and correct, that which no one before him has regarded as sound, and no one has relied upon it”.

‘Allāmah Qāsim (RA) further writes,

¹² *Mā’rifus-Sunan*, vol.5 pg. 443 H.M Saeed, Karachi

¹³ *Tanwir Al-Maqālah*, vol. 3, pg. 171

“As for Shaykh At-Tabbānī’s statement that it is Makrooh to fast the six days of Shawwāl according to Imam Abu Hanīfah, this is mentioned in *Al Mubeet Al-Burbānī* and in *Adh-Dhakhīrah Al-Burbāniyyah*¹⁴ with such wording which indicates that the narration is in conflict with the well-established principles ‘Al Usool’ (على أنه خلاف الأصول). The author of Adh-Dhakhīrah (Ibn Māzah) has afterwards mentioned that the correct and sound position is opposite to what has been mentioned”.

‘Allāmah Qāsim further explains in his treatise, that Shaykh At-Tabbānī’s statement that it is Makrooh according to Imām Abu Yūsuf (also), is a transmission in which there has been an error.

The reason is that all the classical texts with their explanations and statements, are unanimous, and in agreement that what has been transmitted from Imam Abu Yusuf, is that which has been mentioned in the narration of Imām Al-Karkhī (died in 340 AH) which states, “They (the jurists) used to dislike (consider it Makrooh) that people should follow Ramadhan with fast, (that is, they disliked that people should begin to fast immediately after Ramadhan), fearing that they join/attach the optional fasts with the compulsory ones. Based on this statement, the author of *Al-Haqāiq*¹⁵ thought that fasting in Shawwāl consecutively (i.e. the six days) is Makrooh”.

‘Allāmah Qāsim further clarified the statement of Imām Abu Yūsuf and cites the statement of ‘Allāmah Kāsānī¹⁶ (author of *Al-Badāi*), “The act of fasting consecutively and immediately after Ramadhan which is Makrooh is that one observes fast on the day of Eid, and then fasts for 5 days afterwards (which will result in six days fast of Shawwāl)”. He adds, “So this is the meaning of the statement of Imām Abu Yūsuf”.

He further mentioned the statements of some of the greatest Fuqahā of Hanafi Madhhab, including the companions of Imām Abu Hanīfah (RA) and those who came after in the succeeding generations, to show that they were all unanimous on the ruling that fasting the six days of Shawwāl was not Makrooh. In fact, the Karāhah (dislike) was due to a specific reason/cause, and it was not general. From amongst the statements, he quoted the following:

¹⁴ *Adh-Dhakhīrah Al-Burbāniyyah*, vol. 3, pg. 75 DKI | *Al-Mubeet Al-Burbāniyyah*, vol. 3, pg. 362, *Idāratul Qurān*

¹⁵ *Haqāiq Al-Mandhoomah An-Nasafiyyah*, pg. 295 (Manuscript)

¹⁶ *Badāi’ us-Sanāi*, vol. 2, pg. 562, DKI

1. Imām Muhammad Ibn Al-Hasan Ash-Shaybānī (died in 189AH), the student and companion of Imām Abu Hanīfah opined that it was not Makrooh.
2. Imām Hasan bin Ziyād (died in 204 AH), a student and companion of Imam Abu Hanīfah, also states that it is not Makrooh.
3. Imām Tahāwī (died in 321 AH) who was one of the grand jurists of the Hanafi Madhhab quoted the Hadith regarding the virtues of the six fasts of Shawwāl and showed that it was well-established.¹⁷
4. The great Faqīh, Mufassir and Muhaddith, Abu Laith As-Samarkandi (died in 373 AH), stated in his book *An-Nawāzil*¹⁸, “With respect to the fasting of the six days of Shawwāl consecutively after the day of Eid ul Fitr, some stated that it is Makrooh. However, the preferred opinion/ruling is that there is no objection to it”.
5. The great Hanafi jurist, As Sadr Ash Shaheed (died in 526 AH), stated in his book *Al Wāqiāt*, “With respect to fasting the six days of Shawwāl consecutively after the day of Eid, some have stated that it is Makrooh however, the preferred opinion is that there is nothing wrong in observing the fasts”.

In this way, ‘Allāmah Qāsim Bin Qutlubugha (RA) went on to quote the most famous works of some of the greatest jurists of the Madhhab of Imam Abu Hanīfah, whose works have been accepted as some of the most reliable and authentic, in giving the official rulings of the Madhhab of Imam Abu Hanīfah.

These included:

- *At-Tajmīs*¹⁹ by ‘Allāmah Marghīnāni (author of the famous *Al-Hidāyah*, died in 593 AH).

¹⁷ *Mushkīl Al-Athār*, vol. 2, pg. 82, DKI

¹⁸He also states in his masterpiece, *Tanbih Al Ghāfilīn*, pg. 265, *Makatabah Al-Iman*:
و عِنْدِي أَنَّهُ لَا بَأْسَ بِهِ مَتَّبِعاً أَوْ مُتَّفَرِّقاً لِأَنَّ الْفِطْرَ صَارَ فَاصِلاً بَيْنَهُمَا.

¹⁹*At-Tajmīs WalMazūd*, vol. 2, pg. 412, *Idaratul-Qur’an*, Karachi, Pakistan

- *Al-Kāfi fī Sharh Al-Wāfi* by Imām An-Nasaḫī.
- *Al-Fatāwā Al-Khāniyyah* by Qādhi Khan Hasan Bin Mansoor Al-Awzjandi, Mujtahid of masāil in the Hanafī Madhhab (died in 592 AH).²⁰
- *Aḍḍ-Dhakhīrah Al-Burbāniyyah* by Burhān Ad-Dīn Abdul ‘Azīz Bin Umar Bin Māzah Al-Bukharī.²¹
- *Majma’ Al-Babrain* by Ibn As-Sa’ātī died (694 AH).²²

In all these references, ‘Allāmah Qāsim quoted directly from the statements given by these great Hanafī jurists in which they all mentioned that fasting the six days of Shawwāl was not Makrooh, and that there was no harm in observing these fasts.

In concluding the discussion, ‘Allāmah Qāsim then wrote,

“This is what is clear to me at present from the texts of the books of our Ulamā. From these statements, it is evident that no one from among those (who preceded Shaykh At-Ṭabbānī) said that the dislike (karāhah) was general.”

Here, ‘Allāmah Qāsim explained that no one from among the great Hanafī jurists who came before him, considered it generally Makrooh to observe the six fasts of Shawwāl. Instead, the statement attributed to Imām Abu Hanīfah and Imām Abu Yūsuf and others after them, was that it was specific to the following states:

1. When there was a fear that people may consider the fast of Shawwāl to be like the compulsory Ramadhan fast, when they begin to fast immediately after Ramadhan
2. When a person fasted on the day of Eid (1st Shawwāl) and then observed five days of fast afterwards to complete six days of Shawwāl.

²⁰*Al-Fatāwā Al-Khāniyyah*, vol. 1, ḡ. 183, DKI

²¹*Aḍḍ-Dhakhīrah Al-Burbāniyyah*, vol. 3, ḡ. 75 DKI | *Al-Mubeet Al-Burbāniyyah*, vol. 3, ḡ. 362, Idāratul Qurān

²²*Sharh Majma’ Al-Babrain*, vol. 3, ḡ. 260, Dār Al-Falāh

These were the only situations in which some scholars regarded observing the six fasts of Shawwāl to be makrooh. It therefore means, that when these situations are absent, and there is no such fear, then according to these scholars, the six fasts of Shawwāl will remain as being Sunnah/Mustahabb, as pointed out in the treatise of the grand Jurist, ‘Allāmah Qāsim bin Qutlubugha (AR).²³

The scholars of the Mālikī Madhhab have also clarified the stance adopted by Imām Mālik (RA) regarding the fasts of Shawwāl where he stated that it was makrooh. The position of the Imām is recorded in his Muwattā, which reads, Yahya said, “I heard Mālik saying in regards to the six days of fasting after the completion of Ramadhan (i.e. of Shawwāl), that he did not see anyone from among the people of knowledge and fiqh observing these. He further said, “The fasting for six days in Shawwāl has not reached me from anyone from the pious predecessors. The people of knowledge disliked this (considered it makrooh), and they fear that it becomes a Bid’ah (an innovation). They also fear that the ignorant ones may attach it to Ramadhan if they see the people of knowledge observing these fasts.²⁴

While explaining the opinion of Imām Mālik as highlighted above, the great Mālikī scholar, ‘Allāmah Az-Zarqāni Al-Mālikī (died 1122 A.H) says,

“Imām Mālik disliked the fasts of Shawwāl for this reason (that is, the ignorant people may attach it and join it to Ramadhan, while these are not a part of Ramadhan). As for those who observe the fasts of Shawwāl, desirous of the rewards in them, then there is no dislike in it”. (It is not Makrooh)²⁵

‘Allāmah Muhammad bin Abdul Bāqi bin Yūsuf Az-Zarqāni Al-Mālikī further writes, “Shuyūkh (great teachers and scholars) have stated, ‘Imām Mālik considered the six fasts of Shawwāl to be Makrooh only due to the fear that the ignorant people may attach / connect it to Ramadhan. As for observing these fasts based on what the Shariah requires, then it is not Makrooh.’

“It has also been said that the Hadith concerning the six days of Shawwāl did not reach him, or it

²³*Majmoo’ Rasāil Ibn Qutlubugha, pg. 377, Dār An-Navādir*

²⁴*Al-Muwattā of Imām Mālik, vol. 2, pg. 77, Bushrā*

²⁵*Sharh Az-Zarqāni ‘Alā Al-Muwattā, vol. 2, pg. 283, Khairiyyah*

was not evident according to him, or he found the people of Madīnah not observing the fasts of Shawwāl.”

‘Allāmah Az-Zarqāni further states, “It is also possible that Imām Mālik disliked that the fasts of Shawwāl be joined directly with the fasts of Ramadhan. It is for this reason, he said, “Fasting for six days (immediately) after Eid ul Fitr was disliked”. Therefore, if one observes the six days of fasting during the month, it will not be Makrooh”.²⁶

‘Allāmah Az-Zarqāni then cited the statement of the great Māliki scholar, Ibn Abd Al Barr (died in 463 AH) regarding Imām Mālik’s approach in religious matters and stated,

“Abu Umar Ibn Abd Al Barr said, ‘Imām Mālik was protective and very cautious in religious matters, and fasting was a great act of goodness. As such, he did not see that the fast of Shawwāl should be observed, fearing that the ignorant people may connect it to the Ramadhan fast’.

Another great Māliki jurist, Ibn Rushd Al Māliki (died 595 AH) wrote the following regarding Imām Mālik’s position on the fasts of Shawwāl.

He wrote, “As for the six fasts of Shawwāl, it is evident that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘Whoever observes the fast of Ramadhan and then follows it with six fasts of Shawwāl, then it is like fasting for the year’.

However, Imām Mālik considered this to be Makrooh. The reason for his opinion is that he either feared that people may connect to Ramadhan what does not belong to it (like the six fasts of Shawwāl), or the hadith did not reach him, or the hadith is not sound in his opinion, and this is the better opinion”.²⁷

The famous 7th century Māliki scholar, Allamah Jalāl ud-Dīn bin Shās Al-Māliki (died 616 AH) writes the following regarding Imām Mālik’s position. He states, “The six days of fasts in Shawwāl has been mentioned in sound/authentic narrations. However, Imām Mālik feared that the ignorant people may attach to the compulsory fast what is not from it. Hence, he considered it disliked (makrooh), but he regarded the six days fast of Shawwāl to be Mustahabb (commendable) when these are observed at

²⁶*Ibid*

²⁷*Bidayatul Mujtabid, vol. 3, pg. 210, DKI*

another time besides Shawwāl”.

Ibn Shās Al-Māliki (AR) further explained and said, “The fixing of the time of fasting in the month of Shawwāl after the fasts of Ramadhan was done for ease upon the believers, and it was not done to make the ruling of fasting specific only to the month of Shawwāl. Therefore, there will be no harm if one observes the six days in the month of Dhul Hijjah”.²⁸

The great Māliki jurist, Imam Al-Qarrāfi (died in 684 AH), has also given a similar explanation and said, “Imām Mālik considered it Mustahabb (commendable) to observe the six fasts of Shawwāl at another time besides Shawwāl, fearing that these be joined with Ramadhan (fast) by the ignorant ones. The Shariah has only fixed it in Shawwāl to be an ease upon the followers, since it is close to the fasting in Ramadhan”. (It means that they have already become accustomed to fasting in Ramadhan, therefore, it will be easy for them to fast in Shawwāl).

“The objective of these six fasts in Shawwāl however, can be achieved in another month. As such, delaying the six fasts of Shawwāl to another month, will be permissible in order to achieve the benefits”.²⁹

The 13th century great Māliki Jurist, Allamah Dardīr Al-Malīki (died 1201 AH) also explained the Māliki position on the fast of Shawwāl and said in his famous work, *Asb-Sharh As-Saghir*,

“It is Makrooh to observe the six fasts of Shawwāl if one attaches it to Eid in order to make it manifest and apparent. It will not be Makrooh if it is separated from Eid or it is delayed.

Similarly, if one observes it immediately after Ramadhan in a secret manner. In all these cases, it will not be Makrooh, since the cause for believing that it is wājib (essential) is negated.”³⁰

It is therefore evident from these explanations, that Imām Mālik (AR) did not consider the six days of fast in Shawwāl to be generally Makrooh. His dislike was on account of a specific reason which has

²⁸ *Iqd Al-Jawābir Ath-Thaminah*, pg. 259, Dār Al-Gharb Al-Islāmi

²⁹ *Adb-Dhakhīrah fī Furoo' Al-Mālikīyyah*, vol 2, pg. 351, DKI

³⁰ *Asb-Sharh As-Saghir*, vol. 1, 692, Dār Al-M'arīf

been explained in details by the Māliki scholars.^{31 32 33}

And Allāh Knows Best.

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³¹*Hashiyah Ad-Dasūqī, vol. 1, pg. 517, Dār Ihyā-Al-Kutub*

³²*Mawāhib Al-Jalīl, vol. 3, pg. 329, DKI*

³³*Hashiyah Al-Khurasbī ‘alā Mukhtasar Al-Khalīl, vol. 3, pg. 21, DKI*

