

Six Days In Or From Shawwal — the Time Range

1. After the completion of fasting in Ramadhan, is it obligatory to observe the fast for six days in the month of Shawwal?

2. If a woman wishes to fast 6 days in the month of Shawwal, as recommended by the Prophet, peace be upon him, should she first complete her Ramadhan fasting? If so, this means that she should fast 12 days in this month, which may not be very convenient.

1. No, but it is recommended to fast six days after the end of Ramadhan, provided we do not begin with the first day of Shawwal which is the day of Eid. The recommendation is particularly significant. As you know, Allah rewards a good deed with at least ten times its value. Therefore, when you fast the month of Ramadhan, you have the reward of fasting ten months. If you follow that with fasting for six days, then you have the reward of fast for sixty days, which is equivalent to two months. This means that your reward is equivalent to that of fasting of the whole year. If you do this year after year, then Allah stores for you the reward of fasting throughout your life.

2. The first fasting a woman does after Ramadhan should be the compensatory fast in lieu of the days she did not fast in Ramadhan because of her periods. When she has finished this obligatory fast, she may do any voluntary fasting she does. The six days recommended by the Prophet, peace be upon him; need not be offered in the month of Shawwal. The Prophet's Hadith may be understood as indicating the start of the time range. The Prophet, peace be upon him, does not say that these six days should be "in Shawwal," rather he says: "from Shawwal", which indicates a time range beginning with that month. This means that we have the next eleven months to complete this recommended fast. If you look carefully at the Hadith, which makes this recommendation, you realize that this is the meaning intended by the Prophet, peace be upon him.

[Back](#)

[Sub Index](#)

[Next](#)

[Home](#)

[Email Question / Answer](#)

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