

THE RULING ON THE USE OF SALBUTAMOL INHALER FOR PEOPLE WHO FAST ACCORDING TO 'ABDUL 'AZĪZ IBN BĀZ AND WAHBAH AL-ZUḤAILĪ (A COMPARATIVE STUDY)

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Abstract: *Performing fasting in the holy month of Ramadan is an obligation of every Muslim. Muslims who fast are given a great reward in the sight of Allah swt. To achieve this great reward, fasting by obeying the rules and regulations is a necessity. True fasting is fasting in accordance with the guidance of the Prophet saw. There are obligations that must be done, there are sunnahs that must be maintained, and there are also prohibitions that should be avoided. Allah swt. has prescribed fasting with restrictions that if violated can invalidate the fast. So it is obligatory for every Muslim to know all the things that can invalidate his fast so that he can carry out fasting properly according to sharia guidance. In this modern era, along with the development of the times, there are many things that are disputed by the scholars, whether they are included in breaking the fast or not, such as modern medical / health equipment, including "salbutamol inhaler" which is commonly used by people who are suffering from lung and respiratory diseases. The Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Abdul 'Azīz ibn Bāz, stated in his fatwa that it is permissible to use asthma inhalers while fasting. The Syrian mufti Wahbah al-Zuḥailī, on the other hand, is of the opinion that asthma inhalers invalidate the fast.*

Keywords: *'Abdul 'Azīz ibn Bāz, Wahbah al-Zuḥailīy, Salbutamol Inhaler, Breaking the Fast.*

A. INTRODUCTION

Upholding the pillars of Islam is an obligation that Allah has assigned to every Muslim. Leaving them without an excuse is a violation of Shari'ah that can undermine one's Islam. These pillars have been mentioned by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the hadith

عن عبد الله بن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: بُني الإسلام على خمسٍ: شهادة أن لا إله إلا الله، وأنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ، وإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ، وَحَجِّ الْبَيْتِ، وَصَوْمِ رَمَضَانَ (رواهُ البُخَارِيُّ)¹

¹Muhammad ibn Ismā'il Abū 'Abdillāh al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Juz 1 (Cet. I; [t.t.]: Dār Ṭauq al-Najāh, 1422 AH), p. 11. 11.

Meaning:

Ibn 'Umar r.a. reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah say: Islam is built on five things: testifying that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, establishing prayer, giving alms, making the pilgrimage to the House of Allah, and fasting in the month of Ramadan. (HR Bukhārī).

The Hadith describes the five pillars of Islam, one of which is fasting in the holy month of Ramadan. The obligation of fasting is also confirmed by Allah swt. in QS al-Baqarah/2: 183.

In the books of fiqh, the breakers of fasting are commonly referred to as "*mufaṭṭirāt al-ṣiyām*" or "*al-mufaṭṭirāt*", which means things that must be avoided by the fasting person, and if they are violated, the fast is invalidated. There is a difference of opinion among the fuqaha' when discussing "*mufaṭṭirāt al-ṣiyām*", for example, in the case of cupping and vomiting. However, they also agree on some things that break the fast such as eating, drinking, and intercourse.

In this modern era, along with the development of the times, many things are found that are disputed by the scholars, whether they are included in breaking the fast or not, such as modern medical / health equipment, including "*salbutamol inhalers*" which are commonly used by people who are suffering from lung and respiratory diseases. Lung and respiratory disease itself is one of the global health problems in the world. Five major lung diseases are the most common causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide. They are chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, acute lower respiratory tract infections, tuberculosis (TB) and lung cancer.² Asthma is one of the top ten morbidity and mortality diseases in Indonesia, as evidenced by data from Household Health Survey (HCS) studies in various provinces in Indonesia. The 2013 Basic Health Research reported that the prevalence of asthma was 4.5% per mile. The highest prevalence of asthma was found in Central Sulawesi at 7.8%, followed by East Nusa Tenggara at 7.3%, Yogyakarta at 6.9%, and South Sulawesi at 6.7%.³ It can be seen from these data that lung and respiratory health problems are a big problem, including in Indonesia, especially South Sulawesi, where the largest population is Muslim.

Patients with lung and respiratory diseases can feel symptoms that occur due to narrowing of the respiratory tract such as wheezing (breathing sounds *ngik ngik*), wheezing, coughing, and shortness of breath. These symptoms can recur at any time, even suddenly. Controlling the recurrence of symptoms can be handled by taking special medications prescribed by a doctor. However, taking medication while fasting will invalidate the fast. To alleviate the shortness of breath experienced by patients while fasting, spray devices such as *salbutamol inhalers* are used to relieve breathing.

Mufti of Saudi Arabia 'Abdul 'Azīz ibn Bāz stated in his fatwa: "*حكمه الإباحة*" that it is permissible to use asthma inhalers while fasting.⁴ The Syrian mufti Wahbah al-Zuhailī, on the other hand, is of the opinion that this inhaler invalidates the fast.⁵

Based on the differences in opinion between the two contemporary scholars above, the researcher is interested in further examining the law on the use of *salbutamol inhaler* whether it breaks the fast or not.

²Agus Dwi Susanto, "Press Release of the Indonesian Lung Doctors Association on World Lung Day 2018". <http://www.klikpdpi.com/> (January 20, 2022).

³Agus Dwi Susanto, "Press Release of the Indonesian Lung Doctors Association in the Context of World Lung Day 2018", (January 20, 2022).

⁴Abd al-'Azīz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Bāz, *Majmū' Fatāwā Ibn Bāz*, Juz 15 (n.d.), pp. 265.

⁵Wahbah al-Zuhailī, "Munāqasyah al-Mufaṭṭirāt fī Majāl al-Tadāwī", *Majma' al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, no. 10 ([t.th.]), p. 842. 842.

B. METHODOLOGY

Typologically, this type of research is descriptive qualitative which takes data sources from *library books (library research)*. The approach used is the shar'i approach, which is an approach by paying attention to the provisions of Islamic law sourced from the Qur'an and hadith. The fiqh approach, which is an approach that examines, studies, understands Islamic law through a collection of shara'a laws in the field of amaliyah produced through ijtihad based on the arguments of the Qur'an and hadith in detail.

The data sources of this research consist of two sources, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data sources are obtained from the works of 'Abdul 'Azīz ibn Bāz and Wahbah al-Zuhailī regarding *salbutamol inhaler* whether it is a fast-breaker or not, as well as the works or writings of other thinkers who discuss the study. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from other sources, namely the results of interviews with other parties who are considered to have theoretical competence in the aspects studied.

This research data collection uses the documentation method which produces important records related to the problem under study. With non-statistical descriptive data analysis that describes or describes a problem without using information in the form of tables, graphics, and numbers.

The analysis techniques used in this research are deductive, descriptive and comparative methods. The deductive method starts from data that is universal (general), then applied to a special form. Descriptive method that describes all data and comparative method that processes and analyzes data by comparing one data with other data, then drawing a conclusion.

C. RESULTS

The Opinion of 'Abdul 'Azīz ibn Bāz on the Use of *Salbutamol Inhaler* while Fasting

The view held by 'Abdul 'Azīz ibn Bāz is that the use of *salbutamol inhaler* for asthma sufferers while fasting does not invalidate their fast. He said in his fatwa,

حكمه الإباحة إذا اضطر إلى ذلك؛ لقول الله عز وجل: {وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُمْ مَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا مَا اضْطُرِرْتُمْ إِلَيْهِ} ولأنه لا يشبه الأكل والشرب فأشبهه سحب الدم للتحليل والإبر غير المغذية⁶

Meaning:

The ruling (on the use of asthma sprays) is that it is permissible if necessary, because Allah swt. said: And Allah has explained to you what He has forbidden to you, except when you are in necessity. Also, the asthma spray does not resemble eating and drinking, but is more like taking blood for diagnosis and needles that do not fill you up.

On another occasion, 'Abdul 'Azīz ibn Bāz was also asked whether using a mouth spray during the day in Ramadan invalidates the fast of someone who suffers from shortness of breath, to which he replied in *Fatāwā al-Da'wah*, no. 979.⁷

وبخاخ الربو لا يفطر لأنه غاز مضغوط يذهب إلى الرئاة وليس بطعام، وهو محتاج إليه دائما في رمضان وغيره.

Meaning:

⁶Abdul 'Azīz Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn Bāz, *Majmū' Fatāwā Ibn Bāz*, Juz 15, pp. 265.

⁷Muhammad Šālih al-Munajjid, *Kitāb Mauqī' al-Islām Suāl wa Jawāb*. <https://al-maktaba.org/book/26332/5163#p5> (April 20, 2022).

The Ruling on the Use of Salbutamol Inhaler for People Who Fast According to 'Abdul 'Azīz ibn Bāz and Wahbah al-Zuhāilī (A Comparative Study)

Asthma sprays do not invalidate the fast because they are compressed gas that goes into the lungs and not food, and sufferers always need them in Ramadan and at other times.

Wahbah al-Zuhāilī's opinion on the use of Salbutamol Inhaler while fasting

Wahbah al-Zuhāilī is of the opinion that the use of asthma sprays during the fasting month invalidates the fast. In *Majma' al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, it is stated that Wahbah holds the opinion that fasting people should not use asthma sprays. If a person needs it and uses it, it invalidates his fast. He must make up the fast of the day on which he used the spray. He said:

أن ما يدخل الجسم عن طريق الجهاز التنفسي كالدخان والبخاخ وبخاخ الربو هذا يفسد الصوم.⁸

Meaning:

What enters the body through the respiratory tract, such as smoke and vapor, and asthma sprays, these break the fast.

Wahbah al-Zuhāilī is of the view that, in general, what invalidates the fast is anything that enters the body through the mouth and passes through the throat. He further said:

أما ما يدخل الجسم عبر الفم والحلق متعمداً يعني عنصر القصد ينبغي أن نراعيه ، ... كل هذه مفطرات عملاً بمذهب الشافعية.

Meaning:

What enters the body through the mouth and throat intentionally, which means that the element of intentionality must be considered... all of this invalidates the fast, as this is in line with the Shaafa'i madhhab.

The view of the Shafi'i school is mentioned in his book *Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuh* in the chapter "al-Ṣiyām". This chapter includes a description of the things that invalidate the fast according to the four madhhabs, Hanafiyah, Mālikiyah, Shafi'iyah and Hanābilah. It is mentioned in the Shafi'i school of thought

لكن لو استخدم مريض الربو بخاخة الهواء عند ضيق النَّفْس، فإنه يفطر؛ لأن ما يعفى عن جنسه كالتراب والهواء مقصور على حالة الابتلاء العام، فإن كان الشيء خاصاً، كتعتمد ابتلاع رائحة شواء لحم، فيفطر، لسهولة الاحتراز عنه.¹⁰

Meaning:

But if a person with asthma uses vapor when he is short of breath, then that invalidates his fast. That is because what is excused in this case, such as dust and air, is limited to circumstances that cannot be avoided. As for something other than that, such as deliberately swallowing the smell of roast meat, it invalidates the fast, because this kind of situation can be avoided.

A Comparison Between the Opinions of 'Abdul 'Azīz ibn Bāz and Wahbah al-Zuhāilī on Salbutamol Inhaler as an Invalidator of the Fast

Ibn Bāz based his opinion that *salbutamol inhaler* does not invalidate the fast on the fact that when sprayed in the mouth, the medicine that comes out in the form of a gas called aerosol goes to the lungs through the respiratory tract and does not enter the stomach. From this it can be understood that he stipulated that something must reach the stomach for it to break

⁸Wahbah al-Zuhāilī, "Munāqasyah al-Mufatṭirāt fī Majāl al-Tadāwī", *Majma' al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, p. 839. 839.

⁹Wahbah al-Zuhāilī, "Munāqasyah al-Mufatṭirāt fī Majāl al-Tadāwī", *Majma' al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, p. 843. 843.

¹⁰Wahbah al-Zuhāilī, *Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuh*, Juz 3, pp. 1719.

the fast. But if it does not reach the stomach, even if it enters through the entrance of food and drink, it does not break the fast. This is different from Wahbah, who did not stipulate that something that enters the mouth must reach the stomach to break the fast.

Regarding the difference of opinion as to whether something must reach the stomach or not to break the fast, some scholars mentioned the concept of *ما وصل عمدا إلى الجوف* (the intentional entry of something into the body cavity) as one of the fast breakers. It seems that Ibn Bāz tends to argue that *al-jauf*, which if food or drink enters it, can break the fast, is limited to the stomach, which is located in the stomach. Meanwhile, Wahbah interpreted *al-jauf* more broadly.

Referring to the meaning of language, *al-jauf* is which means "a حفرة، فراغ في داخل الشيء¹¹ hole, an empty space that is on the inside of something". Ibn Manzūr mentions in *Lisān al-'Arab* means his stomach). The scholars do *jauf*, *he* (when someone says *بطنه جوف الإنسان*¹² not dispute that the stomach is included in *al-jauf*, but determining the limits of this *al-jauf*, this is where the scholars differ. This is probably one of the reasons why they differed in deciding whether something that enters a particular body cavity invalidates the fast or not.

Regarding the certainty that *Ventolin inhaler* does not reach the stomach, medical experts themselves differ in opinion. Based on the results of the author's interviews with several pharmacists and pulmonary and respiratory specialists, some of them confirmed that it was impossible for any part of the drug to reach the stomach. This is because the *salbutamol inhaler* spray is a very small and fine particle, in one spray the dose has been measured, which is only 100 mcg to reach the lungs alone so if you talk about the stomach, it is very far away. *Salbutamol inhalers* are not like drinking medicine. The technology has been specifically designed so that the drug used is very minimal and in the form of an aerosol.

In contrast to the testimony of other medical experts who said that the problem of *salbutamol inhalers* reaching the stomach can actually be, it's just that the logic of the drug being sucked means that it will enter the lungs. Errors in the use of inhalers can cause deposits in the throat, small particles of the drug can get stuck in the throat. The possibility of reaching the stomach also seems to be hinted at in the drug description, "*The swallowed portion of an inhaled dose is absorbed from the gastrointestinal tract and undergoes considerable first-pass metabolism to the phenolic sulphate*"¹³, which suggests that the *swallowed* portion of an inhaled dose *is absorbed* from the gastrointestinal tract and undergoes considerable first-pass metabolism to the phenolic sulphate.

Considering the possibility of small particles of *salbutamol inhaler* deposited in the throat to reach the stomach upon swallowing saliva, it is clear that the dose is very small. A tube containing 200 doses is equivalent to 10 ml. Each dose is only 100 micrograms or 0.05 ml. If 1 ml is equivalent to 20 drops then 1 dose is only 1 drop. The starting dose for treatment of chronic patients with *salbutamol inhaler* is generally two puffs (200 micrograms) at a time which can be repeated up to four times a day. The maximum recommended dose is 800 micrograms in 24 hours and no more.¹⁴ Some scholars are of the opinion that such a small amount does not affect the validity of the fast. According to them, the Shariah tolerates the residue of ablution water left in the mouth after rinsing the mouth¹⁵ which does not invalidate the fast. So the smaller dose of *salbutamol inhaler* is certainly more forgivable.

In response to the analogy of the small amount that may enter the stomach from *Ventolin inhaler* when sprayed with ablution water that enters the stomach after rinsing the mouth and is tolerated by Shariah as mentioned earlier, Wahbah argues that the *qiyās* is not

¹¹Aḥmad Mukhtār 'Umar, *Mu'jam al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah al-Mu'āṣirah*, Juz 1, p. 423. 423.

¹²Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, Juz 9 (Cet. III; Beirut :Dār Ṣādir, 1414 AH), pp. 34.

¹³Glaxo Smith Kline Group of Companies, *Ventolin Inhaler CFC-Free*, p. 6.

¹⁴Glaxo Smith Kline Group of Companies, *Ventolin Inhaler CFC-Free*, p. 12.

¹⁵Ḥassān Shamsī Bāshā, "al-Tadāwī wa al-Mufaṭṭirāt", *Majma' al-Fiḥ al-Islāmī*, no. 10 ([n.d.]), p. 758. 758.

The Ruling on the Use of Salbutamol Inhaler for People Who Fast According to 'Abdul 'Azīz ibn Bāz and Wahbah al-Zuhailī (A Comparative Study)

appropriate. Even if something is very small, whether it nourishes the body or not, it is not suitable to make an analogy with the small amount of water that must enter the stomach when rinsing the mouth and inhaling water during ablution. This is because gargling and sipping water are part of the procedure of ablution, and ablution itself is a condition for the validity of prayer. Wahbah said: "Basically, a little water must enter the stomach when gargling and sipping, but the fuqaha' did not rule the fast invalidated because of that. If they would have ruled that the fast was invalidated, that would have undermined the Islamic ruling that rinsing the mouth and sipping water during wudoo' is Sunnah in most madhhabs, and obligatory according to the Hanbali madhhab. So one should also pay attention to the meaning of the ruling. Therefore, it is not correct to make an analogy between gargling and sipping water with a small portion that enters the stomach, even if it is a small amount, whether it nourishes the body or not."¹⁶

In determining the breakers of fasting, the concept guided by Wahbah is the entry of something into the body through an open hole of the body, which he termed "نظرية المنافذ المفتوحة" open hole theory. The open orifices in question include the upper parts of the human body, namely the mouth and nose, while the lower parts of the body are the urethra (urinary tract), vagina, and anal opening. Wahbah argues that inserting something into these openings invalidates the fast because these openings connect to the inner cavities of the body, except for the ear holes.¹⁷

The Prophet said in one of his traditions

وبالغ في الاستنشاق إلا أن تكون صائماً (رواه النسائي وأبو داود والترمذي)¹⁸

Meaning:

Be diligent in inhaling water into the nose (during ablution), unless you are fasting."

In this Hadīth, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) exempts the fasting person from taking water into his nose during ablution, which would invalidate his fast. This Hadīth shows that taking water into the stomach through the nose invalidates the fast, just as taking water into the mouth invalidates the fast. In this case, the nose is like the mouth; they are both open holes that connect to the stomach. It can be concluded from the generality of this Hadīth that anything that is put into the stomach through an open hole such as the nose or any other hole invalidates the fast.

When there appears to be a contradiction between the two opinions, the rule of thumb mentioned by usul scholars when there appears to be a conflict between the arguments is *الجمع مقدم على الترجيح* (compromising is preferable to strengthening one and denying the other). An attempt at compromise must be made because compromise allows all propositions to be applied. Unless compromise is not possible, the next step is *tarjīh*.¹⁹

The majority of scholars agree that anything that enters the stomach breaks the fast, whether it is food or non-food, whether it is a little or a lot, it breaks the fast, but the entry of some of the *salbutamol inhaler* into the stomach is something that cannot be confirmed, it is only a possibility or doubt. The fiqh principle says *اليقين لا يزور بالشك*²⁰ that what is certain cannot be removed by doubt. In this case, what is certain (اليقين) of the fasting person is that his fast

¹⁶Wahbah al-Zuhailī, "Munāqasyah al-Mufaṭṭirāt fi Majāl al-Tadāwī", *Majma' al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, p. 840. 840.

¹⁷Wahbah al-Zuhailī, "Munāqasyah al-Mufaṭṭirāt fi Majāl al-Tadāwī", *Majma' al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, p. 839. 839.

¹⁸Abū 'Abdirrahmān Ahmad ibn Shu'aib al-Nasāi, *Al-Sunan al-Ṣugrā*, Juz 1, pp. 66; Abū Dāūd Sulaimān al-Sijistānī, *Sunan Abī Dāūd*, Juz 1, p. 35; Muhammad ibn 'Īsa al-Tirmizī, *Sunan al-Tirmizī*, Juz 2, pp. 147.

¹⁹Ahmad Ibn 'Umar al-Hāzimī, *al-Syarh al-Muyassar li Qawā'id al-Uṣūl wa Ma'āqīd al-Fuṣūl*, ([t.d.]), in *al-Maktabah al-Syāmilah ver. 3.62 [CD ROM]*, Muassasah al-Maktabah al-Syāmilah, 2008, Juz 9, p. 18.

²⁰Muhammad Ṣidqī Ālu Būrnū, *Mausū'ah al-Qawā'id al-Fiqhiyyah*, Juz 1, pg. 32.

is valid, when using *salbutamol inhaler* then the doubt (الشك) is the invalidation of his fast. The fasting person's fast is valid until he is certain that something invalidates it.

Considering Wahbah's opinion, which is more cautious, avoiding the use of *salbutamol inhaler* during fasting and coming out of the *khilāf* of two opinions is better. Therefore, if possible, patients should use this medicine before the *imsak* time of fasting comes. However, if it is necessary to use it while fasting, these two opposing opinions can be compromised as a middle ground between the two. Based on the information given by some patients who use *salbutamol inhaler*, some of them have felt the effect of using this medicine on their stomach. Therefore, the ruling is that if the user feels an effect on the stomach, such as pain or nausea, then this is an indication that part of the medicine has reached the stomach, so that the fast is invalidated. If no effect is felt, then the fast is still valid because there is no belief that the medicine reaches the stomach.

It should be noted that a sick person should be able to assess his health condition so that he can take the right steps. This is because sickness itself is a reason that allows a person to refrain from fasting.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Conclusion

In his opinion that the use of *salbutamol inhalers* for fasting people does not invalidate the fast, 'Abdul 'Azīz ibn Bāz cites arguments that can be easily understood. Wahbah al-Zuhailī's opinion, which states that the use of *salbutamol inhalers* for fasting people invalidates the fast, is a more cautious opinion. Compromising the two opinions, the opinion of 'Abdul 'Azīz ibn Bāz applies to users who do not feel any effect after using *salbutamol inhalers*. While Wahbah al-Zuhailī's opinion applies to users who feel effects such as pain in the stomach or nausea, which is an indication that part of the drug reaches the stomach.

Implication

Using *salbutamol inhaler* should be done before the fasting time comes. In the case of having to use *salbutamol inhaler* while fasting, the patient should carefully observe whether or not there is any effect. Gastric pain or nausea is an indication that the medication is reaching the stomach and the patient needs to change the fast.

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The Ruling on the Use of Salbutamol Inhaler for People Who Fast According to 'Abdul 'Azīz ibn Bāz and Wahbah al-Zuhailī (A Comparative Study)

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