

Abandoning fasting due to ignorance

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: A woman has not fasted a day or two of Ramadhaan after the menstrual bleeding ceased, and this in each of the four first years of her puberty (the four years after menarche), due to her ignorance of the legal religious ruling, so, does she incur sin? And should she make up for the missed days?

Answer: All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

If she could not acquire knowledge about the legal religious ruling or she had not the capacity to learn it and know it, in this case, she is excused for her ignorance of the legal religious ruling, as "**The ruling contained in a message should not be established only after transmitting it**" and "**There should be no commandment with the presence of ignorance**".

Hereupon, she does not incur sin, since sin is according to purposes and intentions, and the ruling does not apply to the ignorant person as he has no intention (of infringement). So he does not incur sin and he is not required to make up for the missed days, as the reason that makes it obligatory cannot be applied to him because of his ignorance and because the time of the requirement had expired. Ibn Taymeeyah رحمه الله said: "The cases that prevent the obligation of making up for something obligatory and the obligation of leaving forbidden things are: the apparent disbelief, inward disbelief, original disbelief, disbelief of apostasy, and the pardonable ignorance because no message reached him, or because of an interpretation whether for a Mujtahid (studious jurist) or for a Muqallid (imitator)"¹.

Contrarily to someone who has forgotten, slept or erred, this one does not incur sin, and this is the view of all the scholars², then he should make up for the missed days, as he had knowledge of the legal religious ruling which is the obligation but he did not do it because of sleeping or forgetting, or error prevented its completion.

However, if a person is able to learn and can acquire a certain knowledge, even so, he did not do it on account of laziness or negligence, the ignorant person is not excused for his ignorance, and he is sinful because of neglecting what Allaah has ordained him to do, and the person who neglects acquiring knowledge deliberately, is not obliged to make up for the missed days according to the soundest opinion of scholars, in accordance with the Prophet's

¹ See: "Majmoo`al-Fataawa" by Ibn Taymeeyah (22/23).

² See: "Mudhakkirat Ash-Shanqeeti" (48).

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صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying: "There is no negligence in sleeping, the (true) negligence accounts when someone is awake, he would not perform the prayer (intentionally) till the time of the next prayer comes"³. So, he should repent and multiply supererogatory prayers, give charity and perform good deeds generally, since the good deeds remove the evil deeds.

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah. Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, his Family, his Companions and Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

Algiers, Ramadhaan 29th, 1418H. Corresponding to: January 27th, 1998.

³ Reported by Muslim, chapter of "Prayer" concerning performing the missed (obligatory) prayer, and the desirability of hastening to make up for it (hadeeth 1562), by Aboo Dawood, chapter of "Prayer", concerning he who sleeps without performing prayer or forgets to perform it (hadeeth 441), by At-Tirmidhee, chapter of "Prayer" concerning what is reported about sleeping without performing the prayer (hadeeth 177), by An-Nasaa'ee, chapter of "Times of prayers" concerning he who sleeps without performing the prayer (hadeeth 615), by Ibn Maajah, chapter of "Prayer" concerning he who sleeps without performing prayer or forgets to perform it (hadeeth 698), from the hadeeth of Aboo Qataada رضي الله عنه