

49944 - The amount of fidyah mentioned in the verse on fasting

the question

What is the amount of fidyah that is mentioned in the verse on fasting?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

If Ramadaan comes and a person is unable to fast because he is elderly or sick with no hope of recovery, then he is not obliged to fast because he is unable to do so. So he should not fast and he should feed one poor person for each day.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who believe! Observing As-Sawm (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqoon (the pious).

184. [Observing Sawm (fasts)] for a fixed number of days, but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days. And as for those who can fast with difficulty, (e.g. an old man), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a Miskeen (poor person) (for every day). But whoever does good of his own accord, it is better for him. And that you fast is better for you if only you know”

[al-Baqarah 2:183-184]

al-Bukhaari (4505) narrated that Ibn ‘Abbaas said: This has not been abrogated. It refers to old men and old women who are not able to fast, so they should feed a poor person for each day.

Ibn Qudaamah said in al-Mughni (4/396):

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If fasting is too difficult for an old man or an old woman, and will cause them intense hardship, then they are allowed not to fast, and they should feed one poor person for each day. If they are also unable to feed a poor person, then they do not have to do anything, for “Allaah burdens not a person beyond his scope” [al-Baqarah 2:286]. If a sick person has no hope of recovery, he is allowed not to fast, and he should feed one poor person for each day, because he comes under the same ruling as an old man. End quote.

In al-Mawsoo’ah al-Fiqhiyyah (5/117) it says:

The Hanafis, Shaafa’is and Hanbalis are agreed that the fidyah for not fasting should be paid when there is no hope of making up the missed fasts because of old age which makes a person unable to fast, or sickness from which there is no hope of recovery, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “And as for those who can fast with difficulty, (e.g. an old man), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a Miskeen (poor person) (for every day)” [al-Baqarah 2:184]. What is meant is those for whom it is too difficult to fast. End quote.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said in Fataawa al-Siyaam (p.111):

It is essential to note that the sick may be divided into two categories:

1 - Those for whom there is the hope of recovery, such as those with temporary sickness from which there is the hope of recovery. In this case the ruling is as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days” [al-Baqarah 2:184]. All they have to do is wait until they are better, then fast. If it so happens that the sickness continues and the person dies before recovering, then there is no sin on him, because Allaah has only enjoined him to make it up from other days, but he died before those other days came. This is like a person who dies in Sha’baan before Ramadaan begins – so it should not be made up on his behalf.

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2 - Cases where sickness is ongoing, such as cancer - Allaah forbid - kidney disease, diabetes and similar chronic diseases where there is no hope of recovery. These people are allowed not to fast in Ramadaan, but they have to feed one poor person for each day, like old men and women who are unable to fast, so they may not fast and should feed one poor person for each day. The evidence for that in the Qur'aan is the verse in which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "And as for those who can fast with difficulty, (e.g. an old man), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a Miskeen (poor person) (for every day)" [al-Baqarah 2:184].

Secondly:

With regard to the manner of feeding, one has the choice between giving each poor person half a saa' of food such as rice and the like (i.e., approximately one and a half kilograms) or making food and inviting the poor to eat.

Al-Bukhaari said: As for an old man who is unable to fast, after Anas grew old, for one or two years he fed a poor person with bread and meat and he did not fast. End quote.

Shaykh Ibn Baaz was asked about an elderly woman who was unable to fast - what should she do?

He replied:

She should feed one poor person for each day, giving half a saa' of the local staple food, such as dates, rice, etc, which is equivalent to approximately one and a half kilograms. This was stated by a number of the companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), such as Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him). If she is poor and is unable to feed a poor person, then she does not have to do anything. This expiation may be given to one or more people at the beginning of the month or in the middle or at the end. And Allaah is the Source of strength. End quote.

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Majmoo' Fataawa Ibn Baaz (15/203).

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen said in Fataawa al-Siyaam (p. 111):

The sick person who has an ongoing sickness, and elderly people, both male and female, who are unable to fast, must feed one poor person for each day, whether that is by giving this food to the poor or by inviting the same number of poor people as days in the month to a meal, as Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him) used to do when he grew old. He would gather together thirty poor people and that was instead of fasting for a month.

The Standing Committee (11/164) was asked about the giving of food by one who is unable to fast in Ramadaan such as old men, old women and the incurably sick.

They replied:

If a person is unable to fast in Ramadaan because of old age, such as elderly men and women, or it is very difficult for them to fast, then they are allowed not to fast, but they have to feed one poor person for each day, giving half a saa' of wheat, dates or rice etc, the same as he gives to his own family. The same applies to a sick person who is unable to fast or for whom it is very difficult to fast, and there is no hope of recovery for him, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Allaah burdens not a person beyond his scope”

[al-Baqarah 2:286]

“and [Allaah] has not laid upon you in religion any hardship”

[al-Hajj 22:78]

““And as for those who can fast with difficulty, (e.g. an old man), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a Miskeen (poor person) (for every day)””

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[al-Baqarah 2:184]

And Allaah knows best.