

## RECOUPMENT OF SKIPPED DAYS OF FASTING

If during the month of Ramadan one has missed one or more than one day's fasting, he can fast on any other days to recoup them.

### Time for Recoupment of Skipped Days of Fasting

One must recoup the skipped fasts in between from one Ramadan to the next Ramadan. If the balance of skipped fasts is equal to the number of days left to the onset of the next Ramadan it is obligatory for him to recoup them on time. Recoupment fasting can be kept only on days on which fasting is permitted. Fasting on forbidden days will not be valid. It is not necessary that the missed fasts be recouped by fasting continuously but it is desirable to fulfil this obligation as early as possible.

### Atonement for the Skipped Days of Fasting

Skipping the fast of Ramadan or terminating one's fast without any valid reason necessitates not only recoupment of the missed fasts but also atonement [*Kaffarah*] for them.

***Kaffarah* can be offered in one of the following three ways:**

1. To free one Muslim bondman
2. To fast for two months continuously without break. If Ramadan or Eidul Adha or any other impediment intervenes *Kaffarah* will not be acceptable. The intervening fast for a vow will not be taken into consideration.
3. To feed sixty poor persons. They can be fed with either cooked food or given dry food grains.

**Fulfilment of *Kaffarah* becomes obligatory in one of the following two conditions:**

1. If one terminates his fast by indulging in sexual intercourse
2. If one terminates his fast by deliberately eating and drinking (this is according to the Maliki School).

*Kaffarah* must be offered sequentially. That is, if one has the means to free a Muslim bondman he should do it in the first instance. But since nowadays slavery is abolished this option is

non-available. The next is that one must fast for sixty days, if capable of doing so. But if not capable to do so then to feed sixty needy persons. Suppose a person is incapable of exercising any of these options, then he is exonerated of it. In that case he must seek forgiveness of Allah frequently for the atonement of his lapses.

The above is the *Kaffarah* for a single skipped day of fasting. If the skipped days are more than one then one has to offer Kaffarah for each missed day separately.

### **Ransom for Skipped Days of Fasting**

In certain conditions a person is given a waiver from fasting by paying ransom (*Fidyah*) that is, feeding of the needy persons. These conditions are:

1. If somebody becomes so old and frail as to be incapable of fasting
2. If somebody is suffering from a terminal disease.
3. If a pregnant or suckling woman apprehends a risk to the health or life of the infant in fasting.

### **Recoupment of Skipped Fasts of a Deceased Person**

One should hasten to recoup the missed fasts and should not delay it unnecessarily because nobody knows when his life comes to an end while an obligation remains undischarged. Certainly, Allah is a stern reckoner. If somebody had to recoup the fasts of Ramadan or vow or *Kaffarah* but died before recouping them while he had enough time to recoup them but could not recoup because of any reason, then in the opinion of some jurists it is incumbent upon his nearest relations to recoup the missed fasts on his behalf. They may recoup all of them or some of them. Suppose if he does not have any relatives, then some person will have to be engaged on payment from his property to recoup his fasts on his behalf, because this is in the nature of a debt owed to Allah. As compared with material debts it is even more important to discharge this spiritual debt owed to Allah. If the relatives of the deceased person refuse to do the needful all of them will be sinners. The deceased himself is released of this obligation as it is transferred to his

relatives after his death. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said that if somebody dies while he had some missed fasts to recoup, it is the responsibility of his near kin to discharge this obligation (Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah). However, in the opinion of some other jurists, the kinsmen will not be bound to recoup for the missed fasts of a deceased person. If somebody died after skipping the fasts of Ramadan due to some valid reason like sickness or journey he is neither liable to recoup for the missed fasts nor he will be a sinner because he had no time to discharge his debt.

### **Fasting as *Kaffarah* for Mistakes or Sins Committed**

Fasting for *Kaffarah* is that which is kept for atonement of any mistake or sinful act. For instance, if somebody is guilty of killing someone by mistake the atonement is freeing one bondman. But if he is incapable of doing so, then he will have to fast for two months consecutively. *Allah (Ta'ala)* ordains:

﴿فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ﴾ النساء: ٩٢

(Translation of meaning) [“And whoso hath not the wherewithal must fast two consecutive months. A penance from Allah” (An-Nisa: 92)].

Similar is fasting as a means of atonement for the sin of indulging in *Dhihaar*. *Dhihaar* is an Arabic term derived from *dhahr* [back], which means a husband cursing his wife in these words: “You are for me like the back of my mother”. This was a mode of pronouncing divorce during the [pre-Islamic] Age of Ignorance. Islam outlawed this practice and prescribed atonement for this wrong-doing. This atonement or *Kaffarah* is either to free a bondman; or to keep fasting for two months consecutively; or to feed sixty poor people.

### ***Allah (Ta'ala)* proclaims:**

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِن نِّسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَتَمَاسَا ذَٰلِكُمْ تُوعُظُونَ بِهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ﴾ (٣) ﴿فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَتَمَاسَا فَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَاِطْعَامُ سِتِّينَ مِسْكِينًا﴾ المجادلة: ٣ - ٤

(Translation of meaning) [“(3) Those who put away their wives (by saying they are as their mothers) and afterward would go back on that which they have said, (the penalty) in that case (is) the freeing of a

slave before they touch one another. Unto this ye are exhorted; and Allah is Informed of what ye do. “(4) And he who findeth not (the wherewithal), let him fast for two successive months before they touch one another; and for him who is unable to do so (the penance is) the feeding of sixty needy ones.” (Al-Mujadilah: 3-4)].

One form of fasting for atonement is that which is done to atone for non-fulfilment of vows made by a person. If one vowed or swore to do something but could not fulfil his vow or oath he has to feed or clothe ten poor people or free a bondman, and failing that, to keep fasting for three days. *Allah (Ta'ala)* has ordained:

﴿لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا عَقَدْتُمْ الْأَيْمَانَ فَكَفَّرتُكُمْ بِطَعَامِ عَشْرَةِ مَسْكِينٍ مِنْ أَوْسَطِ مَا تُطْعَمُونَ أَهْلِيكُمْ أَوْ كَسَوْتُهُمْ أَوْ تَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ ذَلِكَ كَفَّرتُكُمْ أَيْمَانَكُمْ إِذَا حَلَفْتُمْ وَاحْفَظُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾ المائدة: ٨٩﴾

(Translation of meaning) [“Allah will not take you to task for that which is unintentional in your oaths, but He will take you to task for the oaths which ye swear in earnest. The expiation thereof is the feeding of ten of the needy with the average of that wherewith ye feed your own folk, or the clothing of them, or the liberation of a slave, and for him who findeth not [the wherewithal to do so] then a three days’ fast. This is the expiation of your oaths when ye have sworn; and keep your oaths. Thus Allah expoundeth unto you His revelations in order that ye may give thanks” (Al-Maedah: 89)].

\* \* \*