128809 - She has been sick for three years and did not fast

the question

I have been sick for three years and did not fast; this year that has just passed is the fourth year. Do I have to fast or offer expiation?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Allah has forgiven the sick person for delaying the fast, because Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Sawm (fasts) must be made up] from other days” [al-Baqarah 2:185]. This is a favour from Allah, may He be glorified and exalted; He has allowed the sick person not to fast and to delay making up the fast until he has recovered. Hence He says (interpretation of the meaning): “Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you” [al-Baqarah 2:185]. If Allah heals you, you can make up the fasts that you missed. Praise be to Allah.

But if the doctors have determined that there is no hope of recovery from this sickness and that it is ongoing, then you have to feed one poor person for every day (that you do not fast).

Old men and women who are not able to fast must feed one poor person for each day, giving half a saa‘ of dates, rice or other local staple food. This is equivalent to approximately one and a half kilograms, which should be given to some poor people.

But if a person is waiting to recover and has the hope of recovery, he does not have to feed the poor; rather he should wait until Allah heals him. When Allah heals him, he should make up what he has missed of fasts, even if it is several years, because he had a legitimate shar‘i excuse. No expiation is required in this case. End quote.