26811 - controlling Urges Through Fasting

the question

My question is about fasting. But it is not concerning the Holy month Ramadan. I mean fasting when one wants to marry but has not the ability to do this at the moment. I know that in Islam it is prescribed for this purpose, but I do not know what is the right ruling on this. I would like to learn the exact time for iftar and sahur, how many days in the month one should fast, and exactly which day of the week it is supposed to be as well. Please provide me with as many details as you can about that. And Allah knows best. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon all of you.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

This pure monotheistic religion came to teach people how to control urges so that the Muslim individual who is distinguished by his character and behaviour would not remain a prisoner to his desires like an animal. Islam prescribes rulings, both obligatory and mustahabb (recommended), to protect him against the bad effects of being driven by his desires. Among these rulings is the prescription of fasting for those who cannot find the natural outlet for these desires in marriage, as ‘Abd-Allah ibn Mas’ood (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, “We were young men with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and we did not have anything (i.e., we could not afford to get married). The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to us, ‘O young men, whoever among you can afford to get married, then let him do so, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and guarding chastity. And whoever is not able to do that, then let him fast, for that will be a shield for him.’” (al-Bukhaari, 5066; Muslim, 1400). Fasting reduces the effects that desires have on young people.

Although this ruling is addressed to young men, it may become more essential when there is more temptation and the means and motives for committing evil increase, especially for those

who live in societies in which there is a great deal of wanton display and promiscuity. So they should be keen to do this act of worship in order to protect their chastity and religious commitment. As well as fasting, a person may seek help though praying to Allah to protect his religious commitment and honour, and to make it easy for him to get married, as marriage protects one's chastity. He may also help himself by remembering the reward in Paradise that Allah has prepared for those who steadfastly obey His commands and guard their chastity, namely al-hoor al-'iyn (maidens in Paradise).