23429 - Observing Voluntary Fasts before Making Up Missed Fasts

the question

What is the ruling on observing voluntary fasts before making up obligatory fasts from Ramadan?

Summary of answer

Some scholars view that so long as there is sufficient time to make up missed fasts, it is permissible to observe optional fasts.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The scholars differed concerning the ruling on observing voluntary fasts before making up missed fasts .

Some scholars were of the view that “it is not correct to observe voluntary fasts before making up missed fasts , and that the one who does that is a sinner.” The reason they gave for that was that an optional (non-obligatory) action should not be done before an obligatory action.

Other scholars, on the other hand, said that it is permissible so long as time is not short. They said: So long as there is sufficient time, it is permissible to observe optional fasts , just as one may perform optional prayers before praying (an obligatory prayer). For example, the time of Dhuhr starts after the sun reaches its zenith and ends when the shadow of an object is equal in length to its length, so one may delay Dhuhr to the end of its time, and during this period it is permissible to offer optional prayers, because there is sufficient time.

This is the view of the majority of jurists, and was the view favoured by Ash-Shaykh Muhammad ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) who said: “This is the most correct view, and his fast is valid and he is not a sinner, because this is a clear analogy… And Allah 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 means that he has to make up (the missed fasts) on other days, but Allah did not stipulate that they must be consecutive days; if He had stipulated that, then they would have had to be made up immediately. This indicates that there is some room for manoeuvre in this matter.”

And Allah knows best.