49794 - Fidyah for Missed Fasts Due to Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

the question

I read that it is permissible for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers not to fast, and that they can feed the poor and do not have to make up the missed days. They quoted as evidence the report narrated from Ibn `Umar concerning that. How true is this? Please answer with evidence, may Allah bless you.

Summary of answer

The correct view is that pregnant and breastfeeding women have to make up the missed fasts, and what was narrated from Ibn `Abbas and Ibn `Umar that pregnant and breastfeeding women have to feed the poor instead, is a weak view that goes against the Shar`i evidence.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The scholars differed concerning the ruling on pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers if they do not fast. There are several opinions.

- That they have to make up the fasts only. This is the view of Imam Abu Hanifah (may Allah have mercy on him). Among the Companions, it was the view of `Ali ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him).
- That if they fear for themselves, they have to make up the fast only, and if they fear for their children then they have to make up the fasts and feed one poor person for each day. This is the view of Imam Ash-Shafi`i and Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on them). Al-Jassas (may Allah have mercy on him) also narrated this from Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).
- That they have to feed the poor only, and do not have to make up the fasts. Among the

Companions, this was the view of `Abdullah ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him). Ibn Qudamah (may Allah have mercy on him) also narrated this in Al-Mughni (3/37) from Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).

Abu Dawud (2318) narrated from Ibn `Abbas and `Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) that this phrase – “those who can fast with difficulty” [Al-Baqarah 2:184] was a concession granted to old men and old women who find it difficult to fast, allowing them not to fast and to feed one poor person for each day instead, and the same for pregnant and breastfeeding women if they are afraid. Abu Dawud (may Allah have mercy on him) said: i.e., for their children – they may not fast and may feed (the poor) instead. An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: its Isnad (chain of narration) is sound.

This was also narrated by Al-Bazzar (may Allah have mercy on him) who added at the end: Ibn `Abbas used to say to a concubine of his who was pregnant: “You are like one who cannot fast, so you have to pay the Fidyah but you do not have to make up the fasts.” Al-Daraqutni classed its Isnad as authentic, as stated by Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) in At-Talkhis.

Al-Jassas (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated in Ahkam Al-Quran that the scholars differed concerning this issue. He said:

The Salaf differed concerning this matter, and there were three points of view. `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said: they have to make up the fast if they do not fast, but they do not have to pay theFidyah. Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: They have to pay the Fidyah but do not have to make up the fasts. Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: They have to pay the Fidyah and make up the fasts.

Those who said that they only have to make up the fasts quoted the following as evidence:

- The report narrated by An-Nasaa’i (2274) from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Allah has waived half of the prayer for the traveller, and fasting, and for those who are pregnant and breastfeeding.” Classed as authentic by Al-Albaani in Sahih An-Nasa’i. The Prophet (peace and blessings of

Allah be upon him) stated that the ruling on pregnant and breastfeeding women is like the ruling on the traveller. The traveller may not fast and has to make it up later, and this also applies to pregnant and breastfeeding women . (See Ahkam Al-Quran by Al-Jassas)

- Analogy to the sick. Just as the sick are allowed not to fast and have to make it up later, the same applies to those who are pregnant and breastfeeding. (See Al-Mughni, 3/37; Al-Majmu`, 6/273)

This view was favoured by a number of scholars.

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Majmu` Al-Fatawa (15/225):

“Pregnant and breastfeeding women come be under the same ruling as those who are sick. If it is too difficult for them to fast , then it is prescribed for them not to fast, but they have to make up the fasts when they are able to do so, like those who are sick. Some of the scholars are of the view that it is sufficient for them to feed one poor person for every day they missed, but this is a weak view. The correct view is that they have to make up missed fasts , just like travellers and those who are sick, because Allah 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]

He (may Allah have mercy on him) also said in Majmu` Al-Fatawa (15/227):

“The correct view concerning this matter is that pregnant and breastfeeding women have to make up the fasts, and what was narrated from Ibn `Abbas and Ibn `Umar, that pregnant and breastfeeding women have to feed the poor instead, is a weak view that goes against the Shar`i evidence. Allah 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]

Pregnant and breastfeeding women are likened to those who are sick, and do not come under the ruling on old men who are unable to fast. Rather they come under the rule of those who are sick,

so they should make up the fasts when they become able to do so, even if that is delayed.

It says in Fatawa Al-Lajnah Ad-Da'imah (10/220):

"If a pregnant woman fears for herself or her foetus because of fasting in Ramadan, she may break the fast and she only has to make up for the missed fasts. In this regard she is like one who is sick and is unable to fast or fears that fasting will harm him. Allah 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]

Similarly if a breastfeeding woman fears for herself if she nurses her child during Ramadan, or she fears for her child if she fasts and does not breastfeed him, then she may not fast, and she only has to make up the missed fasts."

It also says in Fatawa Al-Lajnah Al-Da'imah (10/226):

"A pregnant woman has to fast when she is pregnant, unless she fears for herself or her foetus if she fasts, in which case she is allowed not to fast, but she has to make up the missed fasts after she gives birth and becomes pure from postpartum bleeding; it is not sufficient for her to feed a poor person instead, rather she has to fast and does not have to feed a poor person if she does that."

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Ash-Sharh Al-Mumti` (6/220), after mentioning the difference of scholarly opinion about the ruling on this matter, and expressing his preference for the view that she only has to make up the missed fasts :

"This view is the most likely to be correct in my opinion, because at most they are like one who is sick or travelling, who only have to make up missed fasts."

And Allah knows best.