FW-1002 13 July 2026

Making Up a Deceased Person's Missed Fasts

THE QUESTION

A relative of mine has passed away, and he had missed a number of days of fasting in Ramadan. Should the fasts be made up on his behalf, or should food be given on his behalf (fidyah), and what ought to be done?

THE SCHOLARLY RESPONSE

We ask Allah the Exalted to forgive him, to have mercy upon him, and to pardon his shortcomings.

When a Muslim dies while still owing fasts from Ramadan, the ruling differs according to his circumstances:

If he missed the fasts of Ramadan due to a valid excuse and died before he was able to make them up - for example, his illness continued [until death], or he died before enough time had passed for him to make them up - then there is no sin upon him, and neither making up the fasts (qaḍā') nor expiation (fidyah) is obligatory, because he was not negligent.

But if he missed the fasts of Ramadan due to a valid excuse, then became able to make them up yet delayed doing so until he died, then it becomes obligatory to redress what he missed. The relied-upon (mu'tamad) position in the Shāfi'ī school is that his guardian (walī) either fasts on his behalf, or gives out from his estate one mudd of food for each day.

As for one who missed the fasts of Ramadan without a valid excuse and then died, his guardian redresses it either by expiation (fidyah) or by fasting on his behalf - whether he died before being able to make them up or after.

Reference: Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn

Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Tuḥfat al-Muḥtāj fī Sharḥ al-Minhāj. Cairo: Maktabat Muṣṭafā Muḥammad, 1983, vol. 3, p. 423.

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Answered for: Anonymous