

Breastfeeding And Pregnant Women-Rulings Regarding Their Fasting

Darulifta Ahlesunnat

(Dawateislami)

Question

What do Islamic scholars state about the following issue: A woman suckles a baby due to which she suffers a lot; she is very weak and there is fear she may fall ill. In this condition, will she be allowed to miss a fast?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

If there is a genuine fear that by observing a fast a suckling woman, her child, a pregnant woman or her (unborn) baby can face a health risk, fall ill or encounter insurmountable hardship, such a woman has permission to not keep a fast. One can discern this through three manners of overriding assumption: There must be symptoms clearly visible, she must have previous personal experience or a Muslim doctor who does not commit sins openly and who is an expert in his profession has informed her.

Bear in mind mere thoughts of illness or death do not suffice; it is needed to have a presumption according to any of the three conditions previously specified. If the act of suckling a baby truly causes this kind of condition and one of the three manners of overriding assumptions mentioned previously is found, she is allowed to miss a fast. Otherwise she cannot.

The final Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ has said,

إن الله تعالى وضع عن المسافرين الصوم وشرط الصلاة وعن الحامل أو المرضع الصوم

Translation: Allah Almighty has undoubtedly lifted fasting and a portion of salah from travellers. He has also lifted fasts from pregnant women and women who breastfeed.

In Multaqā al-Abḥur:

حامل او مرضع خافت على نفسها او ولدها تفتط وتقتضى

In Fatāwa Razawiyyah, Imam Aḥmad Razā Khān رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ explains “Both breastfeeding and pregnant women are allowed not to fast, only in the case when there is a fear established via overriding assumption that she or her child can categorically face danger to their health.

Mentioning the conditions in which unwell, pregnant or breastfeeding women can miss fasts, Mufti Amjad ‘Ali ‘Azami رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ writes:

These scenarios are specified by overriding assumption. Mere thoughts or misgivings are not enough. There are three manners in which overriding assumption can be determined:

1. Apparent symptoms are visibly seen
2. The individual has personal experience beforehand

3. An expert, mastūr (non-fasiq; one who does not sin openly) Muslim doctor informs them.

وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَرَسُوْلُهُ اَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

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