



Statement regarding August/2020 prayer times

Dear brothers and sisters, Assalamu alaykum warhmatu Allah,

There will be two significant changes in August prayer timetable for the Fajr and Isha prayers. The reason for this is the return of standard timings, whereby the start times of both prayers will become distinctive. The following will examine the reason for this and its implication on August prayer times.

Firstly: New timings for Fajr and Isha

We have mentioned before regarding the disappearance of twilight from the horizon, and that this is due to the location of countries that lie above the 48-degree line, Scotland being one of them. This has meant the Fajr and Isha starting indications becoming non-existent in summer months. The twilight at Isha would often hide the starting of Fajr, making it unrecognisable. This period started on the 5th of May and will conclude approximately on the 8th of August.

The majority body of scholarship, contemporary and old, held the opinion of making the Isha and Fajr prayers a matter of predictability in circumstances like this. They justified this by a Hadith related by al-Nawab ibn Sam`an, may Allah be pleased with him, in which he said, "The Prophet, peace and salutations be upon him, mentioned the days the Dajjal (anti-Christ) would appear, (in a long Hadith), We said, 'O Messenger of Allah, How long will he be among us?' He said, 'Forty days, one day will be like a year, another day will be equal to a month, another day will be equal to a Friday, and every other day will be like your normal days.' We said, 'O Messenger of Allah, that day where it will be equal to a year, will it suffice to pray for one day?' He said, 'No, estimate their timings.'"

Using the method of estimating the timings of prayer, as mentioned in the above Hadith, the majority of scholars have said that for countries where start timings are difficult to witness, the ruling is to estimate using the closest countries where the day and night are distinctive. This is what has been published by the council of scholars.

The sign for dawn is the removal of the white line and its spread across the horizon, 18 degrees under the eastern twilight. It will appear on the 9th of August, and this is what will explain the difference between prayer timings on this day and the day before it (the 8th of August). This must be followed as Allah said, "Prayer has been enjoined on the believers at appointed times."

The mentioned explanation clarifies the change in Isha prayers with the complete disappearance of light, signifying the start of the night (Isha) prayer.

Secondly: Combining Maghrib and Isha prayers due to lateness of Isha time:

From the 9th of August, the Isha prayer will be extremely late, after midnight, and this will be difficult for people like students and early morning workers to abide by. Therefore, it is permissible to combine the Maghrib and Isha prayers at the commencement of Maghrib on the days Isha is after midnight. Allah says, "He did not make hardships in your religion." [Al-Hajj 78] And, "Allah wants easiness for you and does not want to put you in difficulty." [Al-Baqarah 187]. A Hadith found in Muslim from Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, in which he said, "The Prophet, peace be upon him, combined Zuhr and Asr, Maghrib and Isha in Madina without the presence of fear or the occurrence of rain." Ibn Abbas was asked the reason for this, and he said, "The Prophet did not want to put his Ummah in difficulty." [Muslim 18/65-66].

The scholars permitted combining prayers at times of difficulty but not for the usual prayers outside particular circumstances.

So, we say, the inhabitants of Edinburgh and the surrounding areas who want to pray Isha at its real-time can do so, and those who cannot stay after midnight due to the difficulties it will cause, have the option to combine Maghrib and Isha.

Concerning the congregational Isha prayer at Edinburgh Central Mosque, Isha and Maghrib will be combined on the days Isha enters after midnight. This will incorporate the days between the 9th and 14th August, after which, Isha congregation will be performed at its real-time.

We ask Allah (SWT) to give us the ability to act upon what has been said.

Ahmed Elgehani (Imam)