

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

As-salamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullaahi wa barakaatuh

Our dear Brothers/Sisters, May Allaah bless you all.

We, at Dar As-Sahaba Association, would like to share a concern which we have regarding the prayer time schedule for Ottawa. Since last Ramadhan (1436), we noted that the entrance of the true Fajr and 'Ishaa according to the prayer schedule of Ottawa was not consistent with what is mentioned in the Book of Allaah ﷺ and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.

Regarding al-Fajr, Allaah ﷻ mentions in the Qur'an,

"...and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night), then complete your Saum (fast) till the nightfall."
Soorah Al-Baqarah:187

Narrated 'Adi ibn Haatim, (may Allaah be pleased with him), who said:

I said, O Allaah's messenger! What is the white thread distinct from the black thread? Are these two threads? He said, "You are not intelligent if you watch the two threads." He then added, "No, it is the darkness of the night and the whiteness of the day."
Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Chapter of Tafseer, no. 4510

Due to this discrepancy, we began to accurately observe the entrance of the true Fajr both at the outskirts of Ottawa (Casselman) and within the city of Ottawa. We noticed an extended time difference between the current Ottawa schedule and the true Fajr by sight in the city of Ottawa.

From our observations, we have the following concerns:

- Firstly, that everyone is praying before the entrance of al-Fajr. This applies especially to those who are not able to pray at a masjid or musalla; someone who needs to pray at work; or someone who is incarcerated and does not have access to see outside.
- Secondly, regarding that which is specific to Ramadhan of abstaining from food and drink much before the legislated time to stop. Thus, making it especially difficult for those who have a sickness, pregnant, breast feeding and our senior brothers and sisters.
- Thirdly, delaying the true entrance time of al-'Ishaa. As will be mentioned below, since the currently calculated Fajr time is before the true Fajr, the 'Ishaa timing is also put into question. The currently calculated 'Ishaa time is subsequently later than the actual entrance time for 'Ishaa. We realize that this will not affect the validity of the 'Ishaa prayer as opposed to the Fajr prayer. However, with respect to making it easy for the people, the current Ishaa timings places undue burden on people to pray much later than the actual time (at least by 20 minutes), especially during the summer when the days are long. According to the shari'ah, 'Ishaa starts when the twilight (redness) of Maghrib completely disappears.

Narrated by Jabir ibn Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him),

"...Then he came to him when the twilight had disappeared; Gabriel went forward with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ behind him and the people behind the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and he prayed 'Ishaa..."

Narrated by Ahmad (2/213), Muslim (no.173/612), An-Nasaa'I (1/260) and Abu Dawood (no.396)

Since many of us are dependent on the prayer schedule, an adjustment to the calculated prayer schedule for the entrance of al-Fajr and al-'Ishaa had to be made. Generally, the Muslims in North America use ISNA's calculation of 15° (sun being below the horizon) for the entrance of al-Fajr and al-'Ishaa. Based on our observations, we adjusted the degrees to coincide with what we observed with our eyes for the entrance of the true Fajr to be approximately 12°. This is apparently the closest timings and corresponds to the nautical twilight rather than the approximate astronomical twilight currently being used.

That being said, we advise our brothers and sisters to take the time to go out and observe the entrance of the true Fajr and 'Ishaa, then compare it with the schedule that you are currently using. You will note a substantial difference by at least 20 minutes. We are more than willing to physically observe the arrival of al-Fajr and al-'Ishaa together to confirm our claims, in-sha-Allah.

Also, please keep in mind that the prayer schedule is just an estimated timing to help us be within the legislated Islamic times of our daily prayer without delay. This should not in any way contradict the legislated proofs as stipulated by Al-Islaam, especially when these estimations are prone to human error.

There are some noted statements from our scholars such as Ash-Shaykh ibn Baaz and Ash-Shaykh Al-Albaanee (may Allaah have mercy upon them) regarding this issue which have been omitted herein intentionally for the sake of brevity. You are most welcome to contact us and further discuss, in-sha-Allah.

We ask Allaah ﷻ to gives us all success, help us all in doing that which He loves and is pleased with, aameen.

Sincerely your brothers in Islam,

Dar As-Sahaba Association Administration
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