

Phenomena of Fajr and Shafaq

We are explaining the Fajr (Dawn) and the 'Isha (Night) prayer times which are indicated with a star sign (*) in Prayer Times Schedule.

The Islamic scholars provide in their books quite explicit and comprehensible definitions of the times to be used, along with the guidelines of usage, concerning the times of namâz and those of fast for whose performance the prescribed conditions have not matured. Because they established and authenticated in their books the methods and rules of calculation to be employed the whole world over including the polar regions, and since those methods have been being used for fourteen hundred years, it is definitely necessary that they be carried on in their exactitude.

Islamic astronomers, in their books qualified as cosmography, explained in detail, the matters of fajr (the redness of the sky at morning dawn) and shafaq (morning twilight) in the cities of which latitude is in the North of 47° 33'. These cities are also known as **the Cities in the North Latitude**. The cities in the North latitude of Europe, Russia, Canada or United States are in this group.

It is stated in the book entitled **Ibni 'Ābidīn**, as well as in books written by scholars affiliated in the four rightly-guided Madhhabs, that either one of the following two methods are to be employed for the so-called locations:

(1) (**Aqrab-i-leyâlî**), which means to keep on using the same prayer time of the last day whose time of 'imsâk' eventuated and that of the same day's night prayer until the time of 'imsâk' resumes its normal course ;

(2) (**Aqrab-i-bilâd**), which means to use same-wise the closest location's prayer times,- in other words, the closest latitude's prayer times found by calculation. The prayer times used by both methods are almost the same as each other. Since the prayer times prescribed to be used in lieu of the times and/or locations where events of imsâk and 'ishâ' do not take place, and which are determined by **aqrab-i-leyâlî** (using the same time-table belonging to the last day when imsâk took place and the time of the same day's night prayer until the time of imsâk restarts taking place) or by **aqrab-i-bilâd** (closest location), are no different from the other times of imsâk and 'ishâ', on the so-called days we should make our niyya and perform our prayer of namâz and fasts exactly as we do on days when times of imsâk and 'ishâ' follow their normal course.

For example:

The Islamic astronomers recorded the prayer times in these cities plainly. For example, one of the leading Islamic astronomers Ahmed Ziya bay, in his book **Ilm-i hayat**, writes: **"As we come nearer to the geographic pole, the beginning of the fajr and isha prayer times, that is, the times of fajr and shafaq, goes away from the times of the rising and setting of the sun. In other words, the first times of fajr and isha prayers come nearer to each other. The prayer times of every city are different owing to its distance to equator, or to its latitude and to the declination of the sun, that is, according to months and days."** In the places where the latitude is over (90- declination), there is no daytime and nighttime. If the complementaries of the latitude (the supplements to 90o) is less than (declination+19), that is, when the addition of the latitudes and the declination of the Sun is (90-19=71) or more, in other words, in summer months, when the declination of the Sun is over 5 degrees, fajr commences prior to the disappearance of shafaq.

It is told in the **Cosmography** book of Hasib Bey (he was one of the most famous scientists on the study of the universe) that: **"in the locations where latitude degree**

is higher than $66^{\circ} 33'$, there are nights without daytime and days without nights. If a circle is drawn which is 19 degrees away from $66^{\circ} 33'$ latitude parallel to the equator there happens a phenomena of fajr (morning twilight, dawn, daybreak) and shafaq (evening dusk, evening twilight) if latitude degrees are between these two circles. At places where the complementaries to the latitudes are less than declination $+19^{\circ}$, or, in other words, in situations where regional and seasonal conditions concur in such a way as the sum of latitude and declination, $(\phi+\delta)$, is greater than or equal to $90^{\circ} - 19^{\circ} = 71^{\circ}$, the morning twilight or dawn begins before the evening twilight disappears." ($66^{\circ} 33' - 19^{\circ} 00' = 47^{\circ} 33'$), due to his phenomena in the areas where latitude degree is higher than $47^{\circ} 33'$ before the evening twilight disappears (before the redness disappears where of the sun sets) the fajr (morning twilight) starts. This means that the whiteness known as fajr sâdiq does not begin to be seen on the ufq (horizontal) line in the east.

As it is understood from the above explanation, the phenomena of fajr (morning twilight, dawn, daybreak) and shafaq (evening dusk, evening twilight) occur in the areas where the latitude degrees are between $47^{\circ} 33'$ and $66^{\circ} 33'$ (included $66^{\circ} 33'$). Therefore the darkness of night will not occur between the times of dawn and the 'Isha (Night) during the days before and after the 22nd of June. Thus, during summer months, due to his phenomena, the twilight starts and before the dawn disappears (before the redness disappears where the sun sets up). Ahl-i sunnat scholars have said **"when these two times do not commence, it is better to pray in the time of the last day, of which, had these times"**. So we have inserted a star sign (*) in order to explain what it means when you see the star in the prayer times schedule under the name of a relevant city. It means, **"Fajr (Dawn) and 'isha (night) prayer times are the times of the last day on which, Fajr time occurs."**

The number of days with the star sign preceding it increases depending on the latitude of any location which is higher than $47^{\circ} 33'$ towards and away from the North Pole, before and after the 22nd of June. If there is not a fajr (dawn) time in a location, there is no 'isha (night) time either. It means that if the fajr (dawn) in the morning does not occur, there will not occur an 'isha (night) time either. During this type of time period, we ought to pray and fast at the same time of the last day, of which there had the fajr (dawn) and 'isha (night) time, until the normal time resumes.

During the days with the star signs that don't have the fajrs (dawns) are accepted as if they have normal dawn time and they are applied as the dawn time as are the other days.

All the times with star sign are just like the other dawn times and 'isha (night) times. That is why we must pray and fast at the indicated times without any change as if we are at the normal times. We are also doing the same thing.

There is no obligation in Hanafî Madh-hab for praying, unless an event has occurred causing a certain condition and a reason for praying, since it does not become fard and it is not necessary to pray before the time occurs. But we do have to do the 'isha (night) prayer, and the morning prayer, according to the majority of the scholars' sayings in these countries where the nights are short and before the dawn begins vanishing by the time of the commencement of twilight. For this reason, it is better to worship at the time of the last day's prayer times when these two worship times do not occur.

As a conclusion : it is told in Hadîth-i Sharîfs and in books of scholars, that everybody has to pray five times a day. If we keep following the rules of the above explanation, all the necessities are performed without skipping any sayings as a result ijtihâd of scholars. We are also implementing the rules with a high precaution, in order to comprise everything necessary to be a real Muslim.