
Whether long fasting hours should be shortened -1

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(Al-Hudaa wan-Noor, 237.)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Questioner: The Muslims in Sweden, a European country, in Ramadhaan they have only three hours to eat after opening their fast, i.e., the sun sets at ten o'clock and rises at one.

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): Where?

Questioner: In Sweden.

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): In Sweden, yes.

Questioner: Yes there are Muslims ...

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): Yes ... yes ma'roof.

Questioner: They only have three hours during which to eat, and they fast for twenty-one, so they find it difficult. One brother told me that some people gave them a fatwa that they can start and break the fast according to the time in Makkah, so this fatwa ya'nee ...

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): I don't hold ... I don't hold this fatwa to be correct. Since we can flip the situation and say that a season will come where the situation will be the opposite, where they will fast for three hours or thereabouts and they will be able to eat for the remainder of those twenty four hours, clear?

Questioner: I don't think ...

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): Have you studied any geography?

Questioner: No, only a little.

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): Do you know that the sun, ya'nee, is hidden in the North Pole for half the year such that they don't see it, and in the other half it's the opposite of that totally, are you aware of that or not?

Questioner: My hold on geography [is weak], O Shaykh.

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): So you don't know that, it is something well-known.

¹ (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him

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Questioner: Yes.

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): And [then] between this and that [i.e., between the North and South poles] you have seasons in those countries, ya'nee, in the two poles you have night for half the year and day for half, [it is] in such a situation [that] the question as to what should be done is posed.

But those who are closer to us, [closer] to the equator, the closer they get to us the more uniform time becomes for them, you know that at the equator day and night are totally equal?

Questioner: Yes.

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): Yes, but it changes totally the higher or lower you go, so that you get a period in those countries where instead of the twenty or twenty-one hours they fast and the three hours they can eat, about half a year later it's the total opposite of that.

That's why I say to them your account is being accumulated in terms of what is coming [i.e., a time will come when your fast will be very short], and I do not give them a fatwa that they should fast according to [the timings of] their neighbouring countries, because the [following] aayahs apply to them: **["And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night],"]**² in contrast to those we told you about in the North Pole who do not see the sun at all, there is no morning, no 'ishaa, nothing, [it is] these people [who] estimate the value as has been clearly stated in the authentic hadeeth about the Dajjaal in which the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)³ upon informing his Companions that the Dajjaal would be there for how many days? Thirty or forty?

Questioner: Forty.

Someone else: Forty days.

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): Forty days. One of his days will equal a year, the next a month, the third a week and the rest will be like these days of yours. The question arose as to how they should pray [during that time]? He said, **"You must make an estimate of its extent."**

So, making an estimate in that long year, what will the Muslims want to base that estimate on? On what they were accustomed to.

Now with the presence of watches it is very easy for them to estimate ... if we supposed that the Muslims had a year-long dark night such that day and night were combined [into one], which happens at the two poles as we mentioned, in such an instance they have to make an estimate.

² سورة البقرة - Soorah al-Baqarah [2:187]

³ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him

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As for every country in which the sun can be seen setting and rising, and what that results in in terms of fajr—then these people have to fast even if the duration of the fast seems long to them, and our Lord (عزوجل)⁴ says in the Noble Qur’aan: [**“And if Allaah had willed, He could have put you in difficulty,”**]⁵ [but] He didn’t will difficulty for us, alhamdulillah.

If such a situation does occur in some countries then soon enough they will get copious amounts of ease in place of that increased discomfort [when the day becomes short and their fasting becomes easier].

This is my answer and it is correct, in’sha’allaah.

⁴ (عزوجل) (Azza wa Jaal) Mighty and Majestic is He

⁵ سورة البقرة - Soorah al-Baqarah [2:220]