

Whether long fasting hours should be shortened -2

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(Fataawa Jeddah, 3.)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

Questioner: Fasting in countries where the day is long, more than twenty or twenty-two hours, some people say that it is permissible to fast according to the closest country to them.

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ)¹: Why do they say that?

Questioner: They're going according to the hadeeth of Dajjaal ...

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): And does that hadeeth ...

Questioner: They are performing qiyaas ...

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): Qiyaas of what to what?

What is better than that is for you to ask, 'What is the correct opinion on this issue?' [And] in order to facilitate the correct opinion which I will soon mention, [I ask]: is it possible for someone whose fast is twenty hours to do it, is it possible or not? This is the first thing.

Secondly, the sun rises where they are and sets, does it not? ...

If the question were: what is the ruling [concerning people for whom] it is [constant] daylight for six months, as is the case in a certain country, and where after these six months, what takes its place? Night for six months—it is here that what you alluded to earlier in terms of the qiyaas of forty days as in the time of Dajjaal [comes in to play], a day which will be like a year, another like a month, and the rest of his days will be like your [normal] days.

Okay, but your question was, [and] I don't know whether it was intentional or not, if it wasn't unintentional then [I say to you that] using the hadeeth of Dajjaal here is not possible because [in the case of those people who have a long day and have to fast long hours] the sun does [actually] rise and set—the most that can be said in this circumstance is [to ask] whether those who are required to fast [those] twenty hours can actually do it?

The answer, in my opinion, is that they can, and this is a general answer, maybe some of them can't—for now we're talking about those who can, it's not allowed for these people to

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

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be given a fatwa that they are to fast in accordance with the hours of the country closest to them, bearing in mind the fact that this issue [of the hours] will differ from country to country and does not have a set yardstick by which to go ... but [in contrast is] His Saying, **“Fear Allah as much as you are able,”**² which is a precise, unabrogated principle.

So if the fast is sixteen hours long in some countries and shorter in others, the ruling doesn't vary as regards the obligation of fasting due to the number of [such] hours being long or short—thus the regulating principle is that: if they see daybreak [fajr] they stop eating, and when they see the sun setting, they eat, this is what is obligatory on them.

And what may come to one's mind is not said here, i.e., 'That this is akin to oppression,' far be it, because in response we will say that they will get their due in days to come, where instead of fasting twenty hours they might be fasting for ten, as is the [cyclical] nature of seasons.

Thus, the ruling is that whoever is able to is obligated to fast.

It is not allowed for them to align themselves to another country for the rising and setting of the sun.

And I believe, through personal experience, that a person has the strength and power, if he responds favourably to legislated rulings, to fast day and night—not only to fast for twenty hours and eat during four, no, rather that he fasts day and night continuously [without eating at all], indeed some of the Companions of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)³ wanted to fast continuously without a break so the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) forbade them from doing so, to which they responded, 'O Messenger of Allaah! You fast continuously without a break.' So he said, **'I spend the night while my Lord provides me with food and drink.'**

So if there are people who are able to carry out an unlegislated fast, which is to fast continuously night and day without a break, then it is more fitting that they are able to do this [normal] fast if their country according to the legislation obligates them to refrain from eating at daybreak and to eat at sunset, this is possible.

And I myself, since some of you may have read in my books, fasted for forty days not having any food or drink except a few sips of water. You all know through everyone's experience that whoever eats a lot drinks a lot, and that whoever stays hungry and doesn't eat doesn't long for water except for only a very little which will keep him alive—and this is how I was for forty days, nothing entered my stomach except for very, very little water, so how can I not fast ... [a normal fast which is long] ... especially with the kinds of Iftaar which we have been tested with nowadays, i.e., what we lost in the day we have there in the Iftaar.

² سورة التغابن - Soorah Taghaaboon [64:16]

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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For this reason, I hold it to be a glaring error in such an instance where the sun can be seen rising and setting that we turn to [the timings of] another country.

As for the other situation where there is no day or night ... and this is present in the North Pole a lot, then for this circumstance we say that they fast according to the nearest possible country to them, it is possible to say this [in such a situation]. And it is possible here that we take the hadeeth [of Dajjaal] concerning the prayer times, **“You must make an estimate of its extent,”** ... because they [at the poles] have a day which is very, very long at half a year, and a long, long night for the other half, so it is possible to say that they make a moderate estimate, for example, and fast for twelve hours only ... as for where the sun rises and sets, then it is not allowed.