

Why is this Timetable Different?

For those of us who live in the UK, we have recently seen a change in the timetables of certain Masajid. Why has this happened? What is wrong with the more popular timetable? This short pamphlet aims to address these issues.

1. Why is this timetable different to other timetables in this area?

The local Ulama recently discovered that the timetable used by many Masajid has many errors. The original timetable is still used in many Masajid in the UK. It was devised by Hizbul Ulama; a group of Ulama originally based in Blackburn but who have now moved to East London.

2. What are the errors?

There are almost too many errors to mention. However, I will list a few.

A) The timetable is based on observations in Blackburn, Lancashire. Hizbul Ulama have advised different areas to add/subtract a number of minutes from the timetable to calculate times for other places.

Observing in Blackburn has many issues. Firstly, this is an area where light pollution is one of the highest in Europe, a place where most of the time even stars cannot be seen. If stars are difficult to observe, then to notice the break of dawn is even more difficult.

Secondly, observing in Blackburn is different to observing in London. According to the experts the more North a person goes the more abnormal the day becomes. For example countries close to the North Pole have 6 months day and 6 months night. Therefore if you are to observe, then you must do so at varying latitudes.

B) The observations were sporadic. Sometimes whole months went by without more than 2 observations. For example in April, June, July and August, no more than two observations were carried out. In July there were no successful observations due to rain.

C) The timetable produced does not match the observation times.

This is the biggest problem with the timetable. Despite the sporadic observations, if the times observed were the times specified on the timetable produced then the timetable would at least hold some credibility. However, this is not the case.

Example:

- May 21st—Day break was observed at 2:37 am and this light was seen to spread at 3:28 am. However, the timetable produced by the same group who made the observations has the time of Fajr at 3:07am.
- June 6th—Day break was observed at 1:45 am and this light was seen to spread at 3 am. However, the timetable produced has Fajr time at 2:46 am.
- August 7th—Day break was observed at 3:38 am and this light was seen to spread at 4:10 am. However, the timetable produced has Fajr time at 3:46 am.
- August 16th—Day break was observed at 3:55 am and this light was seen to spread at 4:25 am. However, the timetable produced has Fajr time at 4:04 am.

These are just some of the examples. As you can see the published times are different to the observation times. Although there is a difference of opinion about when Fajr starts, the vast majority of scholars are of the opinion that Fajr starts at day break. Whatever the opinion, for most of the year the times published by Hizbul Ulama for Fajr are not correct according to any Mufti or school of Fiqh.

D) It has been rejected by experts in Fiqh:

In a fatwa published by Darul Ulum Karachi it states, “These errors (of the Hizbul Ulama Timetable) came about due to a lack of knowledge with regards to (the nature of) Subh Sadiq.”

On the other hand, the timetable produced by those Masajid who have opposed Hizbul Ulama’s timetable has been praised by experts in Fiqh from around the world.

In a recent conference in Abu Dhabi, the Muslim World League produced many evidences supporting 18 degrees.

Mufti Taqi Uthmani (D.B.) in a fatwa which can be seen on albalagh.net states that 99% of the Ulama of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh support the use of 18 degrees.

Many Masajid in the UK also use a similar degrees based timetable including most of the Masajid in South London. In East London, Forest Gate Masjid, Queen’s Road (Walthamstow) and Seven Kings’ Masjid use this timetable. 99% of the Masjid in Leicester, Batley and Dewsbury also follow this timetable.

This is not a minor issue. If you follow the Hizbul Ulama timetable you are starting your fasts later than you should. The books of Fiqh are clear on this, if you even delay starting your fast by one minute your fast is invalid.

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