

The Proper Time for the Fair Salaah

Q: Salaah- 643: What is the best time for performing the Fajr salaah? Is it during Isfaar (when the horizon has lit up considerably) or during Ghalas (when it is still dark immediately after Subh Saadiq). In our town, we perform the Fajr salaah when it is quite bright, which is approximately 25 to 30 minutes before sunrise. There is however someone who maintains that performing the Fajr salaah during Isfaar is not substantiated by any Hadith. Please clarify in the light of the Ahadeeth.

Answer: The time for the Fajr salaah starts immediately after Subh Saadiq and ends just before the sun rises. While the Fajr salaah may be performed at any time during this period, it is best and most rewarding to perform it at Isf'aar. This is proven from several Ahadeeth, such as the Hadith of Hadhrat Jibra'eel ALY. when he performed the Fajr salaah during Isfaar. The Ahadeeth state that the Fajr salaah may be performed either in Ghalas or in isf'aar. In the early days of Islaam when the Sahabah RADI. used to spend nights in the Masjid learning and engaged in Ibaadah, it was easy for them to perform the Fajr salaah in Ghalas (just as it is easier for us during Ramadhaan) and there was no fear of anyone missing the Fajr salaah in Jamaa'ah. Since many women also attended the Masjid, performing it at this time was better for their concealment.

However, as the numbers of the Muslims started to grow, it became more convenient for them to perform salaah during Isfaar and there was no fear of people missing the salaah, Rasulullaah SAW.. started to perform the salaah at this time and even mentioned the virtue of doing so. Rasulullaah SAW. said, "Perform salaah when the light is bright because it holds greater rewards." Other Ahadeeth mentioning the same virtue are found in Tirmidhi (Vol.1 Pg.22), Muslim (Vol.1 Pg.223), Nasa'ee (Vol.1 Pg.50), ibn Maajah (Pg.49), Majma'uz Zawaa'id (Vol.1 Pg.132), Ibn Abi Shaybah (Vol.1 Pg.321), Tahtaawi (Vol.1 Pg.106), Muslim (Vol.1 Pg.223) and many others.

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood RADI. says, "I never saw Rasulullaah SAW. perform any salaah out of its time apart from two salaahs; (1) when he combined the Maghrib and Isha salaahs at Muzdalifah and (2) the Fajr salaah during the time of Ghalas.

It is because of these narrations and many more that Fuqahaa recommend that the Fajr salaah be performed when the sky is bright. This should be at such a time before sunrise in which it is possible to comfortably perform the Fajr salaah according to the Sunnah (reciting at least forty verses) and then to perform another such salaah should the first be rendered invalid on some account'. This would be approximately 25 to 30 minutes before sunrise and performing salaah at this time is Mustahab.

Performing the Fajr salaah at this time is best because performing it earlier will result in most people not attending since it would be too early for them. It must however not be so late that there is no time to repeat the salaah should the need arise.

You people are therefore practising on the Ahadeeth and the Sunnah and your act is by no means an act of Bid'ah. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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