219806 - Is it permissible for one who is residing in a country where the days are very long to follow the timings of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for his fasting and prayers?

the question

Is it permissible for one who is residing in Sweden to fast and pray in Ramadan according to the timings of Saudi, or any Arab country that is close to him, or should he follow the timings of the country where he is living?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The one who is residing in Sweden or similar countries that are located close to the North Pole comes under one of two headings:

-1-

He is residing in a city where night and day follow one another within a 24-hour period. In this case it is not permissible for him to fast or pray according to the timings of another city; rather he must offer the five daily prayers at the times stipulated according to Islamic teachings, because of the general meaning of the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat) from mid-day till the darkness of the night (i.e. the Zuhr, ‘Asr, Maghrib, and ‘Isha’ prayers), and recite the Qur’an in the early dawn (i.e. the morning prayer). Verily, the recitation of the Qur’an in the early dawn is ever witnessed (attended by the angels in charge of mankind of the day and the night)”

[al-Isra’ 17:78]

“When you have finished As-Salat (the prayer - congregational), remember Allah standing, sitting down, and lying down on your sides, but when you are free from danger, perform As-Salat (Iqamatas Salat). Verily, the prayer is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours”

[an-Nisa’ 4:103].

There is nothing in the verses or hadiths to differentiate between cases where the day is long or short, so long as the timings of the prayers can be distinguished according to the signs defined by the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) for the beginning and end of the times of the prayer. By the same token, it is obligatory for him to fast during the day in Ramadan in full, whether the day is long or short, and it is permissible for him to eat, drink and have intercourse during the night that follows that day, whether the night is long or short, because Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night)”

[al-Baqarah 2:187]

“It is made lawful for you to have sexual relations with your wives on the night of As-Saum (the fasts)…”

[al-Baqarah 2:187].

-2-

If a person is residing in a city where night does not follow day within a 24-hour period, such as a city where the day lasts for two days, or a week, or a month, or more than that, such as the land where the sun does not set in the summer, and does not rise in the winter, then such people have to offer the five daily prayers within each 24-hour period, and they have to work out the timings of them, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) instructed with regard to the day

of the Dajjaal that will be like a year, and his day that will be like a month, and his day that will be like a week. So they should work out the timings for the prayers and the fast.

We have previously explained that working out those times should be based on the nearest city in which the timings of the obligatory prayers can be distinguished.

For more information on the above, please see the answer to question no. 106527

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Those who issued a fatwa stating that those who are living in a city where the day is very long may fast according to the length of the day in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia made an obvious mistake and went against the Qur’an and Sunnah. We do not know of any of the scholars who issued such a fatwa.

Yes, with regard to those who live in a city where night and day do not follow one another within a 24-hour period, such as a city in which the day lasts for two days, or a week, or a month, or longer than that, the contemporary scholars differed as to how the time of night and day are to be worked out in a city in which night and day last longer than twenty-four hours.

Some of them said that they should be regarded as equal, so the night should be regarded as twelve hours and the day should be regarded as the same, because this is the length of each in in average terms.

Some said that the length of night and day in Makkah and Madinah should be followed, because they are the two cities in which the revelation came down, so the length of night and day should be based on what is known in those cities, if it is not known how long night and day last in any given city.

Some said that the length of night and day in the nearest city in which night and day follow one another within a 24-hour period should be followed. This view is most likely to be correct, because connecting a city to that which is geographically closest to it is more appropriate than connecting it to one that is far away from it, because the closest one is more likely to resemble it than any other.

End quote from Majmoo‘ Fataawa wa Rasaa’il al-‘Uthaymeen (19/309)

Secondly:

It is well-known that the people in those cities experience difficulty in fasting in the summer, because of the length of the day there, but Allah will never cause the reward of their good deeds and their patience to be lost. The reward for acts of worship is greater when there is more difficulty in doing it, so long as the person does not deliberately make it difficult for himself It is narrated in a hadith of ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to her, when she went out for ‘umrah: “Your reward will be commensurate with your spending or your effort.”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (1787) and Muslim (1211).

If a person is unable to complete the fast because the day is too long, it is permissible for him not to fast, and to make up the days on which he did not fast on any day of the year in which he is able to make it up, even if that day is two or three hours, as is the case in some cities.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said: If fasting is too difficult on very long days, and is unbearably difficult, and there is the fear of physical harm or sickness as a result, then it is permissible to break the fast in that case, and to make it up on shorter days, because Allah, may He be exalted, says in the context of fasting (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him):

“Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (He wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must magnify Allah (i.e. to say Takbeer (Allahu-Akbar; Allah is the Most Great) on seeing the crescent of the months of Ramadan and Shawwal) for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him”

[al-Baqarah 2:185]

“and [Allah] has not laid upon you in religion any hardship, it is the religion of your father Ibrahim (Abraham) (Islamic Monotheism). It is He (Allah) Who has named you Muslims both before and in

this (the Quran), that the Messenger (Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) may be a witness over you and you be witnesses over mankind! So perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), give Zakat and hold fast to Allah (i.e. have confidence in Allah, and depend upon Him in all your affairs) He is your Maula (Patron, Lord, etc.), what an Excellent Maula (Patron, Lord, etc.) and what an Excellent Helper!"

[al-Hajj 22:78]

"Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope. He gets reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned. 'Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error, our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which You did lay on those before us (Jews and Christians); our Lord! Put not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Pardon us and grant us Forgiveness. Have mercy on us. You are our Maula (Patron, Supporter and Protector, etc.) and give us victory over the disbelieving people'"

[al-Baqarah 2:286].

End quote from Majmoo' Fataawa wa Rasaa'il al-'Uthaymeen (19/309)

Thirdly:

If the times for some of the prayers can be determined and others cannot, then it is obligatory to offer on time those prayers for which the time can be determined, and whatever cannot be determined should be worked out.

This can be seen in Sweden and neighbouring countries, in the case of 'Isha' prayer, as dawn breaks before the disappearance of the red afterglow which signals the beginning of the time for 'Isha' prayer.

The correct scholarly opinion is that they must pray 'Isha', and work out the time for it, in contrast to some of the Hanafi scholars who said that it is waived because the reason for it, namely the time, is not present. Please see Maraaqi al-Falaah (p. 73)

In Haashiyat ar-Rawd al-Murbi‘ it says: If the sign for its onset is not present and cannot be seen, as in Bulgaria, he is still obliged to offer both of them. So he should work out the time for it, as it will be worked out during the days of the Dajjaal, because it is proven in Saheeh Muslim that (the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) said: “Work it out…” as-Sarkhasi and al-Balqaani issued fatwas stating that it will be waived in their case, but others issued fatwas saying that it is still obligatory, which is the correct view, by analogy with the days of the Dajjaal.

End quote from Haashiyat ar-Rawd al-Murbi‘ (1/468)

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about a city in which the disappearance of the red afterglow, which signals the beginning of the time for ‘Isha’, is very late, and it is difficult for them to wait for it.

He replied: If the red afterglow does not disappear until dawn breaks, or it disappears for a length of time that is not enough to pray ‘Isha’ before dawn breaks, then these people come under the same ruling as those who do not have a time for ‘Isha’. They should work out a time for it based on the nearest city to them which does have sufficient time for ‘Isha’. And it was said that they should work it out according to the time of ‘Isha’ in Makkah, because it is the Mother of Cities (Umm al-Qura).

If the red afterglow disappears a long time before dawn, allowing enough time to pray ‘Isha’, then they must wait until it disappears. But if it is too difficult for them to wait, then in that case it is permissible for them to put ‘Isha’ together with Maghrib at the time of the earlier prayer, so as to ward off hardship and difficulty, because Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you”

[al-Baqarah 2:185]

“and [Allah] has not laid upon you in religion any hardship”

[al-Hajj 22:78].

In Saheeh Muslim it is narrated from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) put Zuhr and ‘Asr together, and he put Maghrib and ‘Isha’ together, in Madinah, when there was no fear and no rain. They said: What did he intend by that? He said: He wanted not to cause any hardship for his ummah. In other words, he did not want to cause them hardship by not putting prayers together.

End quote from Majmoo‘ Fataawa wa Rasaa’il Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (12/206)

And Allah knows best.