# 127876 - Is intense cold regarded as one of the legitimate excuses for not praying in congregation?

## the question

What is the ruling on someone who lives in a very cold country and fears that he will become ill if he goes out to pray Fajr, so he prays at home? Is his prayer valid?

## Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Praying in congregation in the mosque is obligatory for men who are able to do it, because there is a great deal of evidence which indicates that, some of which we have quoted in the answers to questions no. 120 and 8918.

The Sunnah indicates that there is nothing wrong with a man praying in his house and not praying in congregation in the mosque, if he has an excuse.

Ibn Majah (793) narrated from Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever hears the call and does not come, his prayer is not valid, except for those who have an excuse.” Classed as authentic by al-Albani in *al-Irwa’*, 2/337.

If it is not possible to protect oneself against the cold by wearing many layers of clothing or warm clothing, or going to the mosque by car and the like, and a man fears that if he goes out to attend the prayer he will become sick, then this is an excuse which allows him not to pray in congregation in the mosque. But if it is possible to protect himself against the cold and there is no fear of becoming sick, then it is not an excuse.

Al-Bukhari (632) and Muslim (697) narrated that Nafi` said: Ibn `Umar gave the call to prayer on a

cold night in Dajnan – a mountain between Makkah and Madinah – then he said: Pray where you are halting. And he told us that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to order the mu'adhdhin to give the call to prayer, then to say afterwards, if it was a cold or rainy night: Pray where you are halting.

Al-Hafiz (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

In *Sahih Abu 'Awanah* it says: "a cold or rainy or windy night." This indicates that each of the three is an excuse that allows staying away from prayer in congregation. Ibn Battal narrated that there was consensus regarding that, but the well-known view among the Shafa`is is that wind is only an excuse at night. The apparent meaning of the hadith suggests that all three excuses apply at night only, but in *as-Sunan* [a version of this hadith] is narrated via Ibn Is-haq from Nafi` which says: "on a rainy night and cold morning." And in the same book it is narrated with an authentic isnad from Abu'l-Malih from his father that it rained one day and they were granted a concession [allowing them to pray at home]. I have not seen anything in the hadiths that explicitly refers to a concession granted on the basis of wind during the day, but on the basis of analogy that may be assumed to be the case.

The apparent meaning of the words "on a journey" indicates that this only applies to the traveller. The report of Malik from Nafi` that is narrated in the chapters on prayer in congregation is general in meaning, and this is the view of the majority. But the rule which says that what is general in meaning must be applied to a particular case means that this is to be applied to the traveller at all times, and may also be applied to anyone who faces hardship when not travelling. As for the one who is not facing hardship, this ruling does not apply to him. And Allah knows best. End quote.

Abu Is-haq ash-Shirazi said in *al-Muhadhdhab*, 1/176:

The obligation to pray in congregation is waived when there is a valid excuse, which may be one of several things… including when a person fears harm to himself or his property, or sickness that makes it difficult to go to the mosque. End quote.

An-Nawawi said in *al-Majmu`*, 4/99, when discussing the excuses that make it permissible not to

pray in congregation: Extreme cold is a valid excuse by night and by day, and extreme heat is an excuse in the middle of the day, and snow is an excuse if it makes one’s clothes wet. End quote.

It says in *al-Mawsu`ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah*, 27/186:

Extreme cold by night or by day, and extreme heat, are among the general excuses which make it permissible to stay away from prayer in congregation. What is meant is the cold or heat that goes beyond the bounds of what people are used to, or what people of hot or cold regions are used to. End quote.

It also says in the same book, 8/57-58:

With regard to Jumu`ah prayer and prayers in congregation, in the case of extreme cold, the jurists allow staying away from Jumu’ah prayer, and from prayers in congregation by day and by night. End quote.

For more information, please see the answers to questions no. 70507, 98739 and 109209.

And Allah knows best.