172137 - Ruling on offering the lunar eclipse prayer if the moon has entered the penumbra (outer part of the earth’s shadow)

the question

Is it permissible to offer the lunar eclipse prayer at the time of a penumbral lunar eclipse [when the moon enters the outer part of the earth’s shadow]? This is an astronomical eclipse and is not usually visible to the eye. Or should we wait until the partial or total eclipse begins? This happened yesterday (June 15th), when some people offered the eclipse prayer during the penumbral eclipse, before the partial eclipse began.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is not prescribed to offer the eclipse prayer unless the eclipse of the sun or moon is actually seen, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The sun and moon do not become eclipsed for the death of anyone. If you see them [the eclipse of either of them], then pray and offer supplication until it ends.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 982; Muslim, 1521.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked:

What is the ruling if the sun is covered by clouds, and before that the media reported that there would be an eclipse, by Allah’s leave, at such and such a time? Should the eclipse prayer still be done, even if the eclipse is not seen?

He replied: It is not permissible to offer the eclipse prayer, relying on what is published in newspapers or stated by some astronomers, if the sky is cloudy and the eclipse is not seen, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) connected the ruling to seeing the eclipse, as he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “If you see them [the eclipse of either of them], then then hasten to pray.” It is possible that Allah, may He be exalted, may

conceal this eclipse from some people and not others, in His wisdom."(*Majmu` al-Fatawa*, 16/309).

He also said: Moreover, announcing the eclipse has created another problem. They announce the eclipse, and it turns out to be partial and so small that it cannot be seen, but some people hasten to offer the prayer, as happened one or two years ago, when an announcement was made about an eclipse but it did not appear. If it is announced but does not become apparent, it is not permissible to offer the eclipse prayer, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “If you see it, then pray.”

According to astronomers, an eclipse sometimes refers to the penumbra, meaning that the light becomes slightly dimmer, but the eclipse is not clear."(*Liqa’ al-Bab al-Maftuh*, 16/31).

And Allah knows best.