2196 - What is the right answer concerning the start of Fajr in Northern England?

the question

I wish to ask you about the problem of praying ‘Isha and Fajr in the region of Newcastle in Britain. The Muslims here in Newcastle have a big problem with defining the right time for Fajr and ‘Isha’ prayers, and the time for starting the fast, because the light reaches the surface of the earth before the sun rises, and stays there after it has set, for a long time, and sometimes this light remains there for the entire night. The astronomers here have divided this period when the light appears until the sun rises, and when remains after sunset until it disappears, into three:

1. when the intensity of the light is such that a person is able to do some work
2. when the light is such that a person cannot do any work that needs light
3. total darkness.
4. The question here is: how do we define the beginning of the time for Fajr and ‘Isha’ and for starting to fast in the light of the times given by these astronomers’ calculations?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

In defining the times of prayer, the astronomers’ calculations do not matter. For determining the time of Fajr, what counts is the appearance of a horizontal line of light on the eastern horizon. The time for Fajr starts when this line becomes clear and distinct, and it ends when the sun rises. The time for Maghrib starts when the disk of the sun has set, and it doesn’t matter if there is still light after the disk of the sun has disappeared. The time for ‘Isha’ begins when the red afterglow of sunset disappears.

The time for fasting begins when the time for Fajr begins, as we have explained above, and the

fast ends when the disk of the sun itself has set, even if some of its light remains afterwards.