292307 - Ruling on putting Maghrib and ‘Isha’ together and praying Taraweeh in a country where the red afterglow takes a long time to disappear

the question

In our city in Germany, the people pray ‘Isha’ and Taraweeh one hour and a quarter after the adhaan of Maghrib. This is following a fatwa which says that it is permissible to put two prayers together when there is a reason for doing so or there is hardship in offering the two prayers separately. But they make Taraweeh prayer so long that the time for ‘Isha’ begins [before it is finished], and someone may pray with them who is able to pray ‘Isha’ at its proper time, and there are some who stay up to eat sahoor, i.e., he is also able to pray ‘Isha’ at the proper time, and they follow the Turkish timings in Ramadan, i.e., starting the time for Fajr when the sun is 13 degrees below the horizon, and between the two times there is approximately an hour or more, so they bring ‘Isha’ forward and delay sahoor. Are their prayers and fasts valid?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

It is obligatory to offer ‘Isha’ prayer at the proper time, even if the disappearance of the red afterglow takes a long time, as has been explained previously in detail in the answer to question no. 135415.

Secondly:

If it is too difficult for someone to wait for ‘Isha’ prayer, because he will not be able to sleep after it and he needs to work or study, it is permissible for him to put Maghrib and ‘Isha’ together at the

time of the earlier prayer, in accordance with the report narrated by Muslim in his Saheeh (705) from Ibn ‘Abbaas, who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) put together Zuhr and ‘Asr, and Maghrib and ‘Isha’, in Madinah, when there was no state of fear and no rain. It was said to Ibn ‘Abbaas: Why did he do that? He said: So as to not make things difficult for his ummah.

As for one for whom it is not difficult to wait for ‘Isha’, it is not permissible for him to put the prayers together.

The Islamic Fiqh Council adopted this view and said that putting the prayers together should not become a habit for everyone; rather it is only for those who have excuses.

It says in the Council’s statement: When the signs of the times for the prayers beginning are apparent, but the disappearance of the red afterglow, which marks the beginning of the time for ‘Isha’ prayer, is very late, then the Council thinks that ‘Isha’ prayer should be offered at the time stipulated in Islamic teachings. But for those for whom it is too difficult to wait and perform it at its time – such as students, employees and workers on regular workdays – they may put the prayers together, in accordance with the texts which say that there should be no hardship for this ummah, such as the report narrated in Saheeh Muslim and elsewhere from Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) put together Zuhr and ‘Asr, and Maghrib and ‘Isha’, in Madinah, when there was no state of fear and no rain. Ibn ‘Abbaas was asked about that and he said: He wanted to not make things difficult for his ummah.

However, putting the prayers together should not be the usual practice for people in that country throughout this period, because that comes under the heading of turning the concession of putting prayers together into a regular practice…

With regard to the guideline on what constitutes difficulty or hardship, this should be referred to ‘urf (what is customary), which differs from one individual, place and situation to another.

End quote from the nineteenth session of the Council held in the headquarters of the Muslim World

League in Makkah al-Mukarramah, 22-27 Shawwaal 1428 AH/3-8 November 2007 CE, statement no. 2.

Thirdly:

If Maghrib and ‘Isha’ are put together in Ramadan at the time of the earlier prayer, it is prescribed to pray Taraweeh at that time, because putting the two prayers together makes their times like one time.

It says in the commentary on Muntaha al-Iraadaat (1/238): The time for Witr is between ‘Isha’ prayer, even if ‘Isha’ is put together with Maghrib at the time of Maghrib, and the break of dawn, because of the hadith of Mu‘aadh: I heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: “My Lord gave me an extra prayer, namely Witr; its time is between ‘Isha’ and the break of dawn.” Narrated by Ahmad. End quote.

Shaykh ‘Abd ar-Rahmaan al-Barraak (may Allah preserve him) said of those who pray ‘Isha’ and Taraweeh before the time for ‘Isha’ begins, because ‘Isha’ is very late: It is not permissible for them to offer Taraweeh before ‘Isha’ and before the time for ‘Isha’ begins.

But in light of the fact that ‘Isha’ begins very late in their country, it is permissible for them to put Maghrib and ‘Isha’ prayers together at the time of the earlier prayer, then pray Taraweeh after that.

End quote from question no. 220828.

To sum up: it is permissible to put prayers together in order to ward off hardship from those who have excuses. As for those for whom it is not difficult, it is not permissible for them to put prayers together.

Fourthly:

There is nothing wrong with following the Turkish timings for Fajr prayer, but in order to be on the safe side, it is better to stop eating and drinking and begin the fast when the sun is at an angle of

15 degrees below the horizon. With regard to the prayer, there is nothing wrong with delaying it until the sun is 13 degrees below the horizon or even later, as in other timetables, so as to be certain that the time for the prayer has begun.

And Allah knows best.