9644 - When does a journey count as travelling?

the question

When does a journey count as travelling [safar, i.e., a journey which allows the traveller dispensations regarding prayers such as shortening and combining prayers, etc.]?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Some of the scholars (may Allaah have mercy on them) think that travelling is defined by a distance between 81 and 83 km or more. Some think that travelling is defined by ‘urf (local custom), so that whatever is customarily regarded as travelling is travelling, even if it is to a place that is close, and whatever is not regarded as travelling – i.e. it is not called travelling – is not travelling. This was the view favoured by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him), and it is more correct from the point of view of the evidence (daleel), but it is difficult to apply, because one person may regard a trip as travelling whilst another does not. The definition based on distance is more precise and is clearer to people. If it is agreed that a trip counts as travelling based on both distance and ‘urf, there is no need for debate. If there is a difference between distance and ‘urf, then a person should act in accordance whatever is on the safe side.