

Question 79: How To Pray And Fast In The Polar Regions?

Question: When we meet some materialists and non-Muslims people they say that how can Islam be a universal religion while its laws be applied only in our areas and area like ours. For example to pray five times a day and fast in the month of Ramadhan is not possible at the north and the south poles because there the days and nights are exceptionally long. Some places have a six month day and a six month night.

Answer: By divine wisdom, Islamic law has provided the solution to such problems before they arose. On the basis of this Islamic law are never enforceable without any difference.

The explanation of this statement is that our senior jurisprudents have discussed this problem in their books. For example, the late Kazim Yazdi, who is of our senior jurisprudent. In this book *Urwathul Wuthqa* he has mentioned this problem and given a clear verdict that the duty of such people is that they must pray and fast according to the timings of areas which have moderate day and nights. But these people should see how long the days and nights in that season are. And then he can fast according to it and perform the five daily prayers.

This matter can also be explained in another way by which all the doubts and objections are dispelled. (Please note).

In the Polar region where the nights and days are long and sometimes the sun is visible in the sky for six months, and it does not set, it goes from one horizon to the other once in every twenty four hour.

In such regions the movement of the sun around the horizon is not the same all the year round. When it circles the horizon once sometimes it goes up and sometimes it comes down and seen in a low lying ground, from this aspect sometimes the surroundings are more lighted and sometimes less.

Thus this process is repeated once a day. If you see those pictures which are taken during the movement of sun around the horizon which were taken from those places you will know the facts.

When the sun is at zenith the people living near the poles call it day and they start working when it declines and reaching near the horizon it dims, they call it night and rest.

We should remember that when the sun the sign reaches the horizon at the polar region the moderate regions which have equal days and nights, there is actual night.

From the aspect of this calculation the night and day can be determined easily. If a pole is fixed in the ground when the length of its shadow increase little more than its size it is the time of Noon Prayers and Afternoon Prayers and when it becomes the longest, then also it would be midnight. And in this way it is easy to determine noon and midnight.

Now if we know the length of days and nights at this time of year in the moderate regions. For example we know that in the beginning of summer the days are normally of fourteen hours and nights are of ten hours, we could easily know the timings of our prayers and fasts etc.

And whatever is mentioned above on the basis of this in long days the responsibility of Prayers and fast have become clear but when the nights are prolonged we should remember that in twenty-four hours the atmosphere are not the same.

Rather sometimes it is absolutely dark and sometimes it is lighted a little bit becomes sometimes the sun is near the horizon and the atmosphere is misty or darker than this and sometimes the sun moves away from the horizon and the atmosphere becomes dark.

In the nights the position and the movement of the stars, their distance from the horizon and in the same way the darkness and brightness of the atmosphere could help us to determine the noon and midnight and keeping in view the median length of days and nights in the moderate regions, the religious duties can be performed.

The above-mentioned explanations show that the duties of Prayer and fasting along with the other Islamic duties are not applicable to only one particular area and they can be acted upon in all the regions.

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