



Question:

What is the Holy Quran opinion about the times of prayers?

Answer:

One of amazements of this issue is that in two verses of holy Qur'an, when it is talked about times of prayers, only three time has been mentioned for daily prayers, and despite this fact, it is wonderful that why a group of these brothers insist on necessity of five times for performing prayers.

Preference of performing prayer in five times is not deniable. We also perform prayers in five times, whenever it is possible, but there is a discussion about necessity of that.

First verse is in Hood Sura: "Perform prayers at the two ends of the day and some parts of the night..." [1].

Phrase "طرفي النهار" (the two ends of the day) refers to dawn prayer which performs at the beginning of the day and noon and afternoon prayers which their time continues until sunset. In another words continuity of time of noon and afternoon prayers can be understood clearly from this verse.

"زلفاً من الليل" (some parts of the night) by noticing that, according to Mokhtar Alsahah" and Ragheb in the book "Mufradat", "زلف" is the plural form of "زلفة" which means parts of beginning of the night, so it refers to the time of sunset and night prayers.

Therefore if Prophet (s.a.) usually performed prayers in five times, surely it was for its preference of the times which all of us believe in that. Why shall we ignore the feature of verse of Qur'an and go for another interpretation?!

Second verse is in Isra' Sura: "Perform prayer at the noon's decline until the darkness of the night, and also the Qur'an (reading) of the dawn (dawn prayer) ...". [2]

"دلوك" means inclining and here it points to decline of sun from meridian that means decline of noon.

"غسق الليل" means darkness of the night which some persons interpret that to beginning of the night and others to midnight, because as Ragheb has mentioned in Mufradat, "غسق" means the extreme darkness of the night which is midnight.

Therefore "دلوك شمس" refers to the beginning of the time of noon and afternoon prayers and "غسق الليل" refers to the end of time of sunset and night prayers and also "قرآن فجر" refers to dawn prayer.

By the way, in this holy verse it has been mentioned only three times for daily prayers not five times, and this is the permission for performing prayers in three times.

Fakhr Raazi has interesting expression in interpretation of this verse which says: "Whenever we interpret "غسق" to the appearance of the first darkness at beginning of the night, which Ibn Abbas and Ata and Nazr ibn Shamil are also agrees, then "غسق" will be in meaning of

beginning of sunset and therefore what is mentions in the verse referring the three times: Time of decline and time of beginning of sunset and time of the dawn.”

Then he adds: This matter behooves decline to be the time of noon and afternoon prayers, then this time is common between this two prayers, and the beginning of sunset is the time for “sunset and night payers”. Therefore, foresaid prayers has also common time and the result of all this is that conjunction of noon and afternoon prayers and sunset and night prayers is absolutely permitted”. [3]

Fakhr Raazi wends the way well to here and understands the meaning of holy verse as well and mentions that, but he says in continue that because we have a proof that conjunction of prayers is not permitted without excuse or in travel, therefore we should limit the conditions of the verse to the situation of excuse. [4]

We should remind him that we have no proof for limiting the verse to the situation of excuse, but we have several cabbalas (which had been mentioned before) that prophet of Allah (s.a.) performed prayer of noon and afternoon, also sunset and night conjunct without any excuse or being in travel for facilitating for his nation that the can use this opportunity; moreover how is it possible to assign the verse to limited cases as in Usul science (science of fundamentals) it is said that limiting the major is not permitted.

And by the way, we cannot ever ignore the clear meaning of the holy verse in expressing three times for prayers. Refrence:

[1] Hood Sura, verse 114.

[2] Asraa Sura, Verse 78.

[3] Great interpretation of Fakhr Raazi, vol. 21, p. 27.

[4] The same evidence.

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