

Explanations on the Correct Imsâk Time

We computed the salât times published in the Turkish and other languages editions of the Türkiye Calendar, including the Ramadhân-e-sherîf imsâkiyyes, and those on the www.namazvakti.com and www.turktakvim.com websites, according to the methods given in the calendar prepared by the (**Meshîhat-e Islâmîyyeh**), the highest office of the 'Uthmânî 'ulamâ', and the book (**Türkiye'ye Mahsûs Evkât-I Şer'iyye** (Awqât-al-sher'iyya for Türkiyyeh)) dated 1958 no. 14 by the University of Istanbul Kandilli Observatory

It is with knowledge on the religion that the times of worships are designated and determined, that is, understood and explained. The fiqh 'ulamâ' have reported in the (**Figh**) books what the müjtehids conveyed. It is jâiz to calculate the times communicated. It is a must that the times found by calculation are approved by the 'ulamâ of the Dîn. Of these, in the one prepared by the "**Astronomy Experts**" and the "**Committee of Consultants of the Presidency of Religious Affairs**", in the **Taqwîm-i Dhiyâ** of the year 1926, it is noted: "**This calendar was printed (published) after being inspected by the Consulting Committee of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, by the esteemed presidency's approval.**" One should use the salât times approved by the Islamic 'ulamâ' and the Islamic astronomy experts in religious affairs. Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır has given extensive information on this issue in the periodical (**Sebil-ür-reşâd**) volume 22.

We saw that the salât times found by our calendar committee of real men of religion and astronomy experts based on observations using modern instruments and computations are the same as those found and conveyed by the Islamic 'ulamâ for centuries, based on calculations using (**rub'-e-dâira**).

In the salât and imsâkiyya time tables prepared by the Türkiye Calendar, published also on the web (Internet), the temkin periods and the Sun's altitude angles from the Sher'î horizon have not been changed at all; the sawm (fasting) and salât (prayer) times are publicized correctly. The imsâk begins at the end of the (**sher'î night**) according to all of the the four madhâhib. That is, it starts upon the appearing of the whiteness called (**Fejr-e sâdik** (True twilight)) at a point on the üfq-e-zâhirî (Apparent horizon). Sawm (fasting) also starts at that time. That is, it starts when the Sun approaches 19 degrees to the apparent horizon.

Islamic astronomy expert Ahmed Ziyâ Bey, in his book (**Rub'-e-dâira**) notes, (**The Europeans calculate the fajr-e-sâdiq time as the time when the whiteness spreads completely along the horizon. This is why they take the Sun's altitude as that of the "Astronomical twilight" (-18) degrees. As for us, we calculate the time when the whiteness first appears on the horizon. This is why we find the time when the Sun's altitude is (-19) degrees. It is because the Islamic 'ulamâ have stated that the imsâk time is not when the whiteness spreads all along the horizon, but it is the time when THE WHITENESS IS FIRST SEEN ON THE HORIZON.**)

In the book (**Mukhtasar 'ilm-e-hey'et**, (concise astronomy)) published by the Ministry of Education in the year hijrî 1316 (milâdî 1898), it is noted, (**The waqt-e-fejr (imsâk time) is calculated on -19 degrees. The imsâk is found by subtracting temkin from fajr**). And, in all of the times, a 10-minute temkin is used.

A 10-minute temkin has been used and -19 degrees has been taken for imsâk in the text book printed by the Ministry of Education, titled (**Hey'et-e-felekiyyeh**) authored by Mustafa Hilmi Efendi, astronomy and marine navigation teacher at the Naval School.

Kedûsî in his book (**Rub'-e-Dâira**) notes, (**The fejr begins when the front edge of the Sun approaches 19 degrees to the sher'î horizon.**)

İbn-i Yunus (**milâdî 1009**), took 19 ° for twilight (imsâk) and arranged his tables accordingly.

Ibn-I Shâtîr who lived in the XIVth century, took the Sun's dip as 19 ° for the day (morning) and night (evening) twilights, and, his contemporary El-Khalîlî also calculated his tables based on these

values. In the salât timetables prepared throughout the 'Uthmânî Empire, Ibn-î Shâtîr's dip of the Sun values were used.

Gazi Ahmet Muhtar Paşa, in his books titled (**Islâhût-taqvîm**) and (**Riyâz-ul-mukhtâr**) notes that the astronomy experts agreed unanimously that the Sun's depression below the horizon is -17 degrees for the shafaq (the 'ishâ' time) and -19 degrees for the fejr (the imsâk time).

That is, the Islamic 'ulamâ', for centuries, have understood that the Sun's altitude below the horizon is (-19) degrees at the fejr (imsâk) time. As such is the fatwâ. Those who are not müjtehids do not have the right to change this fatwâ. The worships not complying with the fatwâ are not acceptable. **In religious affairs, the Muslims need to follow not the christians and the madhhabless, but the Islamic 'Ulamâ.**

As a matter of fact, by the memorandum from the T.R. Boğaziçi University Kandilli Observatory, dated 08.07.1992 and number 1354, that the Sun's altitude angles below horizon for the imsâk and 'ishâ times, and the temkin period have been being applied for 1400 years, that is, being (-17) degrees below horizon for 'Ishâ (Shafaq) and (-19) degrees for Imsâk (Fejr), and, that the temkin period has been confirmed stating:

"The period called temkin is: the sum of the pieces of time due to the Sun's apparent radius, the angle due to the height of the place of observation, the refraction (of light) at horizon, and the Sun's horizontal parallax.

According to the calculations, this value (temkin period) varies between (8-10) minutes. Bu bakımdan genel olarak temkin miktarının 10 dakika alınması ve bunun öğleden önceki vakitlerden çıkartılması, öğleden sonraki vakitlere ise eklenmesi gelenek hâlini almıştır. Accordingly, it has become a general practice to take the value of temkin 10 minutes, to subtract it from the times before noon and to add it to the times after noon."

Dr. Muhammed İlyâs in his book titled (**A modern Guide to Astronomical Calculations of Islamic Calendar, Times, Qibla**) has given valuable information on fejr, and has drawn graphics of the Islamic twilights (fejr and shafaq). The following statement by Dr. İlyâs sheds light to our present subject: **The well known Malaysian astronomer Sheykh Tâhir takes 20 degrees for the fejr, 18 degrees for the 'ishâ (nightfall salât). It is a most ponderable issue lest one would propose even a minimum time (difference) that might nullify the sawm (fast). One must be very careful. And it is pertinent to use an interval of 10 minutes (Temkin) for the beginning of sawm.)**

We cite below a few of the documents that (-19) degrees altitude was to be used, beginning with the establishment of the Presidency of Religious affairs until the year 1983. Of these, the links of those still present on the Presidency of Religious Affairs' web pages are given below.

In 1958, in the written response given to a newspaper columnist who wrote that the prayer times published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs were erroneous, after stating, **"...As for the imsâk time, in your article you say, 'The British, the Americans and also the French have assumed this time to be the time when the Sun is 18 degrees below horizon (Astronomical twilight)'. We wonder whether these three nations, who are Christians, have any worship at imsâk that they should accept this altitude as the basis. Even if they have done so, from where does the necessity arise for us to follow the foreigners while the said (imsâk) time has been decided upon by the Islamic astronomy experts according to the Islamic rules? The imsâk time is the moment at which the source of fejr is born (that is, it is the time when the whiteness is seen as a point on the eastern horizon). Our foregoing Islamic astronomy experts have accepted that this moment in time coincides with the 19 degrees descent of the Sun (19 degrees below the horizon). This is to say that the altitude accepted for imsâk by the Islamic astronomy experts is not 18 degrees, but 19 degrees. The salât times are to be calculated according to this degree (of altitude), and thus, are the time calculations in our calendar."** it continues, **"We give the formula for the imsâk time herein. Carry out the calculations or get the calculations carried out according to this. As a result, it will be seen that the time printed in the calendar**

comes out to be correct, and that an unnecessary confusion has been caused.” with addition of an example imsâk time calculation using logarithmic and trigonometric formulae, and bringing it forward by the amount of temkin. The imsâk times published in the Türkiye Calendar and on our web pages are calculated exactly as expressed here, using 19 degrees below horizon and bringing forward (earlier) by the amount of temkin.

The imsâk times calculated without temkin and by taking the Sun’s altitude below horizon as (-18) are wrong.

In the calculations, by taking the Sun’s altitude as (-18) degrees below horizon, taking the Sun closer to the horizon, and removing completely the temkin period, a difference of approximately 15-20 minutes arise (at places between the latitudes of 36-42 degrees, such as Türkiye) for the imsâk time, and thus, the sawm is being started approximately 15-20 minutes later than the correct time and are being fâsid (invalid). The sawms (fasts) kept as such are to be made qadhâ of (made up for).

In Türkiye, until the year 1983, nobody changed the temkin period and the Sun’s altitudes below horizon, all ‘ulamâ, Awliyâ, Sheykh-ül-Islâms, Müftîs, for centuries, had performed their salâts at their sher’î times and kept their sawms at their sher’î times. And now, all Muslims need not to depart from this unanimity of Muslims.

We cite below a few of the numerous documents that (-19) degrees altitude was taken to be used beginning with the establishment of the office of Presidency of Religious affairs until the year 1983. Of these, the links of those still present on the Presidency of Religious Affairs’ web pages are given below.

In a letter of answer dated 13.08.2010 by the Presidency of the Religious Affairs (of Türkiye) to a reader, it is noted;

“The times of worships; especially knowledge of the Sun’s angle of descent from the horizon in determining the ‘ishâ’ time, and the angle of ascent to the horizon for the imsâk time have been the main topic for the astronomers. Since the times of Khalîfa Me’mûn [since 198 (m. 813)] the ‘ishâ’ and imsâk times have been determined according to these (17 ° for ‘ishâ’, 19 ° for imsâk) values.”

In the “Press release” of 17.07.2013 by the Presidency of Religious Affairs, it is noted;

(Taken from the web page of Presidency of Religious Affairs, <http://diyanet.gov.tr/tr/icerik/basin-aciklamasi/8204?getEnglish=8204>.)

“The committee formed in 1949 upon the direction of the President of Religious Affairs, Ahmet Hamdi Akseki, headed by the founder of the Kandilli Observatory Prof. Fatin Gökmen, with the members Kâmil Mîrâs, the Müftî of Istanbul Ömer Nasûhî Bilmen, the Müftî of Eyyüb İsmâil Habib Erzen and the Müwaqqit Yusuf Ziya Gökçe, also took the -19 degrees as basis for determining the imsâk.”

Again in the web page of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (of Türkiye);

(From the Presidency of Religious Affairs web site, <https://www.diyanet.gov.tr/tr/icerik/imsak-vakitlerinin-belirlenmesi-usulu-ile-ilgili-aciklama/6275?getEnglish=> .)

On the other hand, Prof. Fatin Gökmen, a prominent expert of the field says: “...as a result of observations performed at various places for a long time, they (the observers) have determined that the disappearance of the reddish twilight (shafaq-e-ahmer) took place with the descending of the Sun to 17 degrees below horizon, at all times and all places, and the disappearance of the white twilight (shafaq-e-ebaydh) and the birth of fejr, which is the imsâk

time, occurred at its descending to 19 degrees, and the later observers have approved and confirmed this declaration remaining in agreement upon the 17 and 19 degrees.” [Prof. Fatih Gökmen, Sebilürreşad, Vol. III, no. 61]

Again in the web page of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (of Türkiye) it is noted;

(From the Presidency of Religious Affairs web site, <https://www.diyenet.gov.tr/tr/icerik/imsak-vakitlerinin-belirlenmesi-usulu-ile-ilgili-aciklama/6275?getEnglish=>)

*“...some Muslim countries and Muslim societies take the imsâk time to earlier hours by taking the Sun’s proximity to the horizon to be 19 ° as a **precautionary action**. As a matter of fact, this is the practice adopted at el-Mesjid-el-Harâm and el-Mesjid-el-Nebewî, the two very important centers for Muslims.”*

It has been approved that the salât times of the year 1982 and before are correct as stated also in the “**Protocol**” written and undersigned by the committee composed of the expert in charge Arif Çöklü together with the Astronomer of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (of Turkey), the Director of the Time Calculation Department and the representatives of the civil calendar publishers, following the mutual agreement that **it is correct to take 19 degrees as basis for imsâk time calculations and to use 10-minute temkin period in Türkiye**, taking into consideration also the results obtained by the expert in charge Arif Çöklü, of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (of Türkiye), in the meeting of the related officials and the civil calendar publishers, held at the Presidency of Religious Affairs (of Türkiye) on 26.05.1992..

The conclusion that is drawn based on information from all these and many other similar sources is this:

The statement that takes place in the calendars and the web sites publishing erroneous imsâk times, *“In the process of removal of the temkin from the imsâk time in 1982, 18 °, as the scientific criterion instead of 19 degrees has been determined, **in the direction of principle of facilitation in Islâm**.”* is an act of changing that declared by the Islâm ‘ulamâ’. It is because;

On their own initiative and autocratically, by the statement “**in the direction of the principle of facilitation**”, true imsâk times have been abolished, incorrect times have been publicized as imsâk times by both bringing the 19 degrees altitude below horizon up to 18 degrees and by removing the temkin period.

It is conveyed in the books by the Islam ‘ulamâ’ as related to the “**facilitation principle**”, the decree that there is ease in Dîn, does not mean “**Do what your ego likes**” or “**Do what is easy for you**”, but that it meant taking the easy ways that are conveyed in the Dîn (Islâm).

The signs of the imsâk and the salât times have been determined by **Nass** (El-Qur’ân-el-Kerîm and el-Ahâdîth-el-Sherîfa). The Islâm ‘ulamâ’ have explained them, and the Islamic astronomers have carried out the calculations according to the explanations. All these, like written on marble, have been applied for centuries, and have not been changed the least until the year 1983.

It is noted in commentary to “**Dürrer-ül-hükkâm**” that: “the decrees based on usage and custom may change with time. The decrees based on **Nass** (El-Qur’ân-el-Kerîm and el-Ahâdîth-el-Sherîfa), delîl (evidence), does not change with time.”

Also in the thirty-ninth article of (Majalla) and in its annotation, it is noted “Decrees change with time. Decrees based on usage and custom change. The decrees understood by nass do not change with time.”

Therefore, the correct imsâk times have been abolished by these changes made in the imsâk time, using the statement of “**Principle of Facilitation**”. Prior to the year 1983, the salât times were all the same. In fact, **while the true imsâk and salât times are given in all calendars for the year 1982 and before, whichever calendar published in Türkiye is taken, but starting first with the year 1983**, the methods and rules for calculation of correct times have been abandoned in the web pages and in the calendars published by those giving erroneous times. And the sawms (fasts) kept following these erroneous imsâk times are fâsid (invalid).

As a matter of fact, it is written in the books by the Islâm ‘ulamâ’ that **the sawm of the one who delays the imsâk time 3-4 minutes, and the sawm and maghrib salât (evening prayer) of the one who brings forward the ghurûb (sher’î sunset) by 3-4 minutes will be fâsid (spoilt, broken). (Dürr-e-yektâ)**

Certainly, the sawms kept according to the imsâk times, which are proved to be erroneous up to here, will have to be made qadhâ of.

**TÜRKİYE CALENDAR
PRESIDENCY OF THE TIME CALCULATION COMMITTEE**

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