

Explanations About Correct Imsâk Times

We have calculated the prayer times shown in our Ramadan-ul mubârâk Imsakiyya and our websites www.namazvakti.com and www.turktakvim.com according to the methods written in **Ilmiyye sâlnâmesi** prepared by **Mashîhat-i Islâmiyya**, the-highest council of the Ottoman 'ulamâ', for the year 1334 [1916 A.D.], and the **Türkiye'ye Mahsûs Evkat-ı Ser'iyye** book no. 14 published by the Kandilli Observatory of the University of Istanbul in 1958.

Calculating and determining the times of daily prayers require possessing profound Islamic knowledge. Fiqh scholars wrote the narrations of mujtahids in their 'Fiqh' books. It is permissible to calculate the communicated times. It is important, however, that the prayer times determined by calculation are subject to the approval of Islamic scholars. For example, in "**Takvim-i Ziya**" calendar, which was jointly prepared and published by "**Astronomy Expert**" and "**Higher Committee of Religious Affairs**" published in 1926, it is written: "**This calendar was carefully examined by the Higher Committee of Religious Affairs, and published with the ratification of the Department of Religious Affairs.**" In religious matters, the prayer times that were approved by Islamic scholars and Islamic specialists in astronomy must be used. Elmalili Hamdi Yazir gives details on this matter in the 22nd volume of his periodical "**Sebil-ur-reshad**".

We have witnessed that the prayer times calculated with observations and calculations by our calendar committee which consists of real religious scholars and astronomy experts by using the most up-to-date tools are the same as the calculations done by Islamic scholars for centuries using a quadrant (**Rub'-i dâira**).

In the prayer and fasting times prepared by Türkiye Calendar and published also on the websites, the Tamkin Time and the altitude angle of the sun from the shar'i horizon relating to prayer times have not been changed, and the prayer and fasting times have been set correctly. Imsâk time starts at the end of **Shar'i night** in all four madhhabs. That is, it starts when the whiteness called "**Fajr-i sâdiq**" appears on one point of the Ufk-i zâhirî, (horizontal line) on the east. Fasting starts at this time, too. That is, it starts when the upper limb of the sun approaches 19 degrees to the apparent line (Ufk-i zâhirî).

Islamic astronomy scholar Ahmad Ziyâ Beg (passed away in 1355 A.H.) wrote in his work (**Rub-i dâira**) about Imsâk: "**Europeans define the time of dawn as the time when the whiteness completely spread over the horizon line. For this reason they take the altitude of the Sun as 18°. But we know for Imsâk to be the time of the first sighting of whiteness on the horizon, not the time when it spreads around it. That's why we calculate the altitude as 19° because Islamic scholars reported the time of imsâk to be the TIME OF THE FIRST SIGHTING OF WHITENESS ON THE HORIZON, not the time when it spreads around it.**"

In the book **Mukhtasar ilm-i hey'et** printed by Ministry of Education in 1898 (h.1316) says, "**Imsâk time (vakt-i fajr) is calculated on -19 degrees, and founded by subtracting Tamkin time from Fajr time.**" 10 minutes of Tamkin is used in all times.

In the textbook named **Hey'et-i Felekiyya**, written by Mustafa Hilmi Effendi, who is a teacher of astronomy and course of ships in Naval School, and printed by Ministry of Education, ten minutes of Tamkin and -19 degrees was used in the determination of all prayer times.

Kedûsî's book **Rub-i Dâire** says, (**Fajr starts when the upper limb of the sun reaches 19 degrees to the apparent line (Shar-î Ufk)**)

Ibni Yunus (**1009 A.D.**) based his calculations of Imsâk on 19 degrees and prepared his tables accordingly.

Ibni Shâtir, lived in the 14th century, took the height of the sun below horizon as 19 degrees and his contemporary Al-Halîfî also calculated his tables upon his data. The tables of prayer times prepared during Ottoman Empire are based on Ibni Shâtir's data about the position of sun below horizon.

Ghazi Ahmed Mukhtar Pasha writes in his books **Islâh-ut Takwim** and **Riyadh-ul-Mukhtar** that astronomy experts are agreed on the fact that when the sun is -17 degrees below the horizontal line it is time for dawn and 'Ishâ, and when it is -19 degrees it is time for Fajr (Imsâk).

That is, for centuries, Islamic scholars have agreed that in the Fajr (Imsâk) time height of sun is -19 degrees below the horizon and that all other values are not correct. This is a fact stated in a fatwâ. (Fatwâ is a conclusive explanation wherein an authorized Islamic scholar answers Muslims' questions). Non-mujtahids do not have the right to change the fatwâ. Acts of worship that are not performed in accordance with the fatwâ are not sahîh (valid). **Muslims have to follow Islamic scholars not Christians and la-Madhhabi people in religious affairs.**

Actually, it was informed and confirmed by the document issued by Kandilli Observatory of Bogazici University, no. 1354 dated 08.07.1992 that the position of sun below the horizon has been used for 1400 years to determine the time for Imsâk and Isha prayer, and they were -17 degrees for Isha (dawn) and -19 degrees for Imsâk (Fajr). It also says in relation to the Tamkin period:

"The period called Tamkin: It is the sum of apparent radius of the sun, the horizontal angle that depends on the altitude of the location, the amount of refraction on the horizon and the duration of time for horizontal parallax of the sun.

According to the calculations, this amount of Tamkin changes 8 to 10 minutes for a certain location for various dates of the year. For this reason, it has become a tradition to accept it as 10 minutes in general, and that it has to be subtracted from the prayer times before noontime, and has to be added for the times for prayers after noontime."

Dr. Muhammed Ilyâs provides valuable information about Fajr and draws schemes for Islamic dawns, Fajr and Shafak in his book **A Modern Guide to Astronomical Calculations of Islamic Calendar, Times, Qibla**. These writings of his shed light to our subject: "Earlier I also used smaller degrees in Fajr and dawns by following Bagvî. But, later on, under the light of my further research and the knowledge I obtained, I realized that this was wrong. Renowned Malaysian astronomer Sheikh Tâhir uses -20 degrees for Fajr and -18 degrees for 'Ishâ. Offering even the smallest amount of period that nullifies the fast is important. Utmost care is needed. It is acceptable to use 10 minutes of Tamkin for the beginning of Fast."

The followings are some of the documents with their sources issued by the Higher Committee of Religious Affairs by the year 1983 since its foundations on the necessity of using -19 degree of irtifâ'. The links which are still available on the official site of the Presidency of Religious Affairs are also quoted below.

As a matter of fact, in 1958, the Presidency of Religious Affairs had given an answer to a columnist by saying, "... **When it comes to Imsâk time; you say that 'The British, Americans and French people have adopted this time as the time when the sun is 18 degrees below the horizontal line' in your article. I wonder what worship these three Christian nations have at Imsâk time that they would accept this degree as the basis. Even if they have done so, why to follow foreigners in this matter while the Islamic rules for the mentioned time were set by Islamic astronomy experts? The Imsâk time is the moment when the rising of Fajr starts (that is, the moment when the whiteness appears as a point on the east horizon). The former astronomers (the all early Islamic astronomy experts) accepted this moment as 19 degrees of the sun below the horizon. This means that the time accepted by Islamic astronomers is not -18 degrees but -19. The prayer times have to be calculated according to this and the calculations in our calendar are based on this" they declare and "We state the formula of Imsâk time. Make the calculation or have it calculated according to this formula. By doing so you will see that the time written in the calendar is correct and it will be understood that the minds have been confused for nothing."** the Imsâk time is calculated by logarithmic and trigonometric with these formulas and calculating the Period of Tamkin, too, they sent to the abovementioned author of the newspaper. Imsak times published in Turkiye calendars and in our web sites are all calculated as the same way as mentioned here by using 19 degrees below the horizon and by taking a lead time as long as Tamkin time.

The Imsâk times calculated without Period of Tamkin and accepting the altitude below the horizontal line as -18 degrees are wrong.

Calculating with both (mistakes as) by taking the altitude of the sun below horizon as -18 degrees and by eliminating the Period of Tamkin completely makes around 15-20 minute difference in times of Imsâk (in countries staying between the latitudes of 36 – 42 degrees like Turkey) fasting time starts approximately 15-20 minutes later than correct Imsâk time. Fasts that were shortened by this reason should be made qadâ (repeated).

Until and including the year 1983, nobody; all scholars, walîs, sheikh-ul-islams and muftîs have never changed the Tamkin Time in Turkey; and all Muslims have performed their salât at these shar'i times and started fasting at these times. Every Muslim shouldn't get apart from this ijma'-i Muslimîn now, either.

The followings are some of the documents with their sources issued by the Higher Committee of Religious Affairs by the year 1983 since its foundations on the necessity of using -19 degree of irtifâ'. The links which are still available on the official site of the Presidency of Religious Affairs are also quoted below.

In an answer given to a question of a reader by Presidency of Religious Affairs dated 13.08.2010 it says:

Prayer times, especially the sun's angle of approaching horizon in the determination of 'Ishâ prayer and Imsâk moment have always been a subject for astronomers. Since the time of Khalifa Me'mûn (198 [813 A.D.]) 'Ishâ and Imsâk times have been determined as 17 degree for 'Ishâ and 19 degree for Imsâk.

In a press release of the Presidency of Religious Affairs dated 17.07.2013 published on web site,

<http://diyanet.gov.tr/tr/icerik/basin-aciklamasi/8204?getEnglish=8204>, it says:

"Upon the order of the President of Religious Affairs Ahmet Hamdi Akseki a commission headed by Prof. Fatin Gokmen and composed by Kamil Miras, Istanbul Mufti Omer Nasuhi Bilmen, Eyup Mufti Ismail Habib Erzen and Muwakkit Yusuf Ziya Gokce, has decided to base the calculations of Imsâk time on 19 degrees in 1949."

Again in the same web site; <https://www.diyanet.gov.tr/tr/icerik/imsak-vakitlerinin-belirlenmesi-usulu-ile-ilgili-aciklama/6275?getEnglish=>

"On the other hand, Prof. Fatin Gokmen, one of the leading experts on the subject, says: '... as a result of several observations made by different locations and for long periods, they have determined that disappearance of shafak-i akhmar occurs when the sun is 17 degrees below horizon and time of Imsâk occurs at the disappearance of shafak-i abyaz when the sun is approached 19 degrees below the horizon. Observers of later generations have also determined and approved the same and agreed upon 17 and 19 degrees. (Prof. Fatin Gokmen, Sebilurreshad, Vol.III, no. 61)

Again from the same web site; <https://www.diyanet.gov.tr/tr/icerik/imsak-vakitlerinin-belirlenmesi-usulu-ile-ilgili-aciklama/6275?getEnglish=>

"... with an aim to act more cautious, some Islamic countries and Muslim populations is getting Imsâk time even earlier by taking 19 degrees as a base for their calculations. Actually, in Masjid-i Haram and Masjid-i Nebî, the two most sacred locations for Muslims the application is the same as this."

In a meeting participated by officials of Religious Affairs Authority and representatives of calendar held in the Presidency of Religious Affairs held on **26th May 1992**, a memorandum was signed by all including the section manager for calendars and expert authority of the presidency Arif Coklu. The

memorandum documented that all, including Arif Coklu and Astronaut of Religious Affairs Authority and Time Calculation Branch Manager, agreed on **the use of 19 degrees while calculating Imsâk time and it is an acceptable duration for Tamkin of 10 minutes in Turkey.**

The result that can be reached by all these sources and even more proofs is that:

Views and assertions of those who inform faulted times for Imsâk and say that "18 degrees are assumed as a scientific criterion instead of 19 degrees **in line with Islamic principle of easing/facilitating** worships while the Tamkin time was removed before Imsâk time in 1982" means to change what the Islamic scholars have said. Because;

With the subjective expression of "**in line with the principle of facilitating**" actual Imsâk times are made null and baseless and wrong times are presented as Imsâk time by removing Tamkin period.

The principle of facilitating does not mean to "**do every thing you enjoyed, do what is easy to do**", while in the opposite, it means to utilize the allowances of the religion. These are explained and convened as such by Islamic scholars in their valuable books.

The signs of Imsâk and prayer times are determined by **Nass** (Qur-ân-I Kerîm and Hadîth-i Sherîfs). Scholars of Islam have explained these and Islamic astronomers calculated times for worships. These are as fixed as the writings on marble and are practiced for centuries and have not been changed by the year 1983.

In the annotation of "**Durer-ul Hukkâm**" it says, "Rules depending on customs and traditions may change when times are changed. But, the rules that are depending on **Nass** (Qur-ân-I Kerîm and Hadîth-i Sherîfs) do not change."

By the same token, in the thirty-ninth article of **Mecelle**, and in its annotation, it says, "Rules change by time. Rules depending on customs and traditions may change. (But) the rules that are understood by Nass do not change."

So, with the change made in Imsâk time in 1983 by using the statement of "**principle of facilitating**" eliminated the correct Imsâk times. Before 1983 the prayer times were same in all calendars. As a matter of fact, **no matter which calendar, the correct Imsâk and prayer times had been given in all calendar in Turkey before the year 1982 but for the first time starting with 1983**, the calculations and methods belonging to correct time have been replaced with wrong time communicating websites and with the calendars belonging to these sites. The Fast worships performed by following wrong time of Imsâk are becoming null (Fâsid).

As is informed in the books of Islamic scholars, it is written in **Durr-i Yektâ** that, **the fasts and evening prayers of those who postpone Imsâk time 3 to 4 minutes and those who haste sunset 3 to 4 minutes, become void (Fâsid).**

Those Fasts that were performed by observing the wrong time of Imsâk as proven false by this point, should certainly be made qadâ (repeated).

TURKIYE CALENDAR

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