

The Time for Iftaar

Q: Saum-6: Our Masjid follows the times given over radio which happens to differ by five to seven minutes from the time given on the calendar. For example, the radio announces the time of sunset as 6:15 pm, while the calendar gives the time of sunset as 6:10pm. When must Iftaar be made?

Answer: The times for Maghrib and Iftaar depend on the sunset and not on times. Both the radio and the calendar may err and although one may use their times, one must not depend on them. You should therefore terminate the fast when you see the sun set, hear from others that it has set or can determine this from other factors. As soon as it is then certain, one should terminate the fast and it would be wrong to delay this in the interests of caution. However, when one is in doubt, it will be wrong to rely completely on the calendar or the watch when one has not established the facts by seeing the sun set or receiving reliable information in this regard.

N. B : The practice followed in the Jaami Masjid of Delhi is worthy of emulation. There is a person appointed to watch the sun set from the upper storey. He carries a flag with him and he waves it as soon as he sees the sun set. A light is then immediately lit on the minarah and a canon is fired. However, if the horizon is not clear and the sunset is not clearly visible, the Iftaar is delayed for a few minutes.

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