

PROBLEMS IN THE CAMBRIDGE PRAYER TIMETABLE THAT NEED RESOLVING

Cambridge Muslim Welfare Society
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PRAYER TIMETABLE YEAR 2004 QIBLA direction: South East

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
Week	Fajr	Sunnat	Zuhr	Ashr	Maghrib	Isha	Week	Fajr	Sunnat	Zuhr	Ashr	Maghrib	Isha	Week	Fajr	Sunnat	Zuhr	Ashr	Maghrib	Isha
1	6:23	8:08	12:08	2:52	4:51	6:43	1	6:00	7:48	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	1	5:55	7:48	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35
2	6:22	8:08	12:08	2:52	4:51	6:43	2	6:00	7:50	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	2	5:59	7:42	12:16	2:30	4:49	6:35
3	6:23	8:08	12:08	2:50	4:50	6:43	3	6:00	7:52	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	3	6:03	7:36	12:14	2:30	4:51	6:35
4	6:23	8:08	12:08	2:48	4:49	6:43	4	6:00	7:54	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	4	6:07	7:30	12:12	2:30	4:53	6:35
5	6:23	8:08	12:08	2:46	4:48	6:43	5	6:00	7:56	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	5	6:11	7:24	12:10	2:30	4:55	6:35
6	6:23	8:08	12:08	2:44	4:47	6:43	6	6:00	7:58	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	6	6:15	7:18	12:08	2:30	4:57	6:35
7	6:23	8:08	12:08	2:42	4:46	6:43	7	6:00	8:00	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	7	6:19	7:12	12:06	2:30	4:59	6:35
8	6:22	8:08	12:08	2:40	4:45	6:43	8	6:00	8:02	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	8	6:23	7:06	12:04	2:30	5:01	6:35
9	6:22	8:08	12:08	2:38	4:44	6:43	9	6:00	8:04	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	9	6:27	7:00	12:02	2:30	5:03	6:35
10	6:22	8:08	12:08	2:36	4:43	6:43	10	6:00	8:06	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	10	6:31	6:54	12:00	2:30	5:05	6:35
11	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:34	4:42	6:43	11	6:00	8:08	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	11	6:35	6:48	11:58	2:30	5:07	6:35
12	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:32	4:41	6:43	12	6:00	8:10	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	12	6:39	6:42	11:56	2:30	5:09	6:35
13	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:30	4:40	6:43	13	6:00	8:12	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	13	6:43	6:36	11:54	2:30	5:11	6:35
14	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:28	4:39	6:43	14	6:00	8:14	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	14	6:47	6:30	11:52	2:30	5:13	6:35
15	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:26	4:38	6:43	15	6:00	8:16	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	15	6:51	6:24	11:50	2:30	5:15	6:35
16	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:24	4:37	6:43	16	6:00	8:18	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	16	6:55	6:18	11:48	2:30	5:17	6:35
17	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:22	4:36	6:43	17	6:00	8:20	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	17	6:59	6:12	11:46	2:30	5:19	6:35
18	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:20	4:35	6:43	18	6:00	8:22	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	18	7:03	6:06	11:44	2:30	5:21	6:35
19	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:18	4:34	6:43	19	6:00	8:24	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	19	7:07	6:00	11:42	2:30	5:23	6:35
20	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:16	4:33	6:43	20	6:00	8:26	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	20	7:11	5:54	11:40	2:30	5:25	6:35
21	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:14	4:32	6:43	21	6:00	8:28	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	21	7:15	5:48	11:38	2:30	5:27	6:35
22	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:12	4:31	6:43	22	6:00	8:30	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	22	7:19	5:42	11:36	2:30	5:29	6:35
23	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:10	4:30	6:43	23	6:00	8:32	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	23	7:23	5:36	11:34	2:30	5:31	6:35
24	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:08	4:29	6:43	24	6:00	8:34	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	24	7:27	5:30	11:32	2:30	5:33	6:35
25	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:06	4:28	6:43	25	6:00	8:36	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	25	7:31	5:24	11:30	2:30	5:35	6:35
26	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:04	4:27	6:43	26	6:00	8:38	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	26	7:35	5:18	11:28	2:30	5:37	6:35
27	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:02	4:26	6:43	27	6:00	8:40	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	27	7:39	5:12	11:26	2:30	5:39	6:35
28	6:21	8:08	12:08	2:00	4:25	6:43	28	6:00	8:42	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	28	7:43	5:06	11:24	2:30	5:41	6:35
29	6:21	8:08	12:08	1:58	4:24	6:43	29	6:00	8:44	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	29	7:47	5:00	11:22	2:30	5:43	6:35
30	6:21	8:08	12:08	1:56	4:23	6:43	30	6:00	8:46	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	30	7:51	4:54	11:20	2:30	5:45	6:35
31	6:21	8:08	12:08	1:54	4:22	6:43	31	6:00	8:48	12:18	2:30	4:47	6:35	31	7:55	4:48	11:18	2:30	5:47	6:35

APRIL							MAY							JUNE						
Week	Fajr	Sunnat	Zuhr	Ashr	Maghrib	Isha	Week	Fajr	Sunnat	Zuhr	Ashr	Maghrib	Isha	Week	Fajr	Sunnat	Zuhr	Ashr	Maghrib	Isha
1	5:21	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	1	4:12	6:36	1:00	6:01	9:39	9:45	1	5:46	6:36	1:00	6:18	9:14	9:11
2	5:21	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	2	4:12	6:36	1:00	6:01	9:39	9:45	2	5:46	6:36	1:00	6:18	9:14	9:11
3	5:21	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	3	4:08	6:38	1:00	6:02	9:41	9:47	3	5:49	6:39	1:00	6:21	9:17	9:14
4	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	4	4:08	6:38	1:00	6:02	9:41	9:47	4	5:53	6:42	1:00	6:24	9:20	9:14
5	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	5	4:07	6:40	1:00	6:03	9:43	9:49	5	5:57	6:45	1:00	6:27	9:23	9:14
6	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	6	4:07	6:40	1:00	6:03	9:43	9:49	6	6:01	6:48	1:00	6:30	9:26	9:14
7	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	7	4:06	6:42	1:00	6:04	9:45	9:51	7	6:05	6:51	1:00	6:33	9:29	9:14
8	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	8	4:06	6:42	1:00	6:04	9:45	9:51	8	6:09	6:54	1:00	6:36	9:32	9:14
9	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	9	4:05	6:44	1:00	6:05	9:47	9:53	9	6:13	6:57	1:00	6:39	9:35	9:14
10	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	10	4:05	6:44	1:00	6:05	9:47	9:53	10	6:17	6:59	1:00	6:42	9:38	9:14
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14	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	14	4:03	6:48	1:00	6:07	9:51	9:57	14	6:33	7:11	1:00	6:54	9:50	9:14
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17	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	17	4:01	6:52	1:00	6:09	9:55	10:01	17	6:45	7:20	1:00	7:03	9:59	9:14
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20	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	20	4:00	6:54	1:00	6:10	9:57	10:03	20	6:57	7:29	1:00	7:12	10:08	9:14
21	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	21	4:00	6:54	1:00	6:10	9:57	10:03	21	7:01	7:32	1:00	7:15	10:11	9:14
22	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	22	4:00	6:54	1:00	6:10	9:57	10:03	22	7:05	7:35	1:00	7:18	10:14	9:14
23	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	23	4:00	6:54	1:00	6:10	9:57	10:03	23	7:09	7:38	1:00	7:21	10:17	9:14
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28	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	28	4:00	6:54	1:00	6:10	9:57	10:03	28	7:29	7:53	1:00	7:36	10:32	9:14
29	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	29	4:00	6:54	1:00	6:10	9:57	10:03	29	7:33	7:56	1:00	7:39	10:35	9:14
30	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	30	4:00	6:54	1:00	6:10	9:57	10:03	30	7:37	7:59	1:00	7:42	10:38	9:14
31	5:20	6:36	1:08	4:30	7:38	9:30	31	4:00	6:54	1:00	6:10	9:57	10:03	31	7:41	8:02	1:00	7:45	10:41	9:14

Assalaamu alaikum wa rahmatullah. Peace be unto you.

The Cambridge Muslim Welfare Society¹ (CMWS) who run Cambridge Mosque have recently attempted to **explain the numerous difficulties and errors** that exist in the current prayer timetable. These difficulties were first brought to their attention back in **January 2004** by concerned members of the community.



After numerous *private* dialogues spanning almost twelve months, the **Mosque Committee** has decided **not to act** upon these concerns. The Committee's response was printed in a *public* newsletter² in order to defend its decision to keep the current 2004 Prayer Timetable unchanged.

The purpose of this publication is to provide an alternative view of the prayer timetable debate by examining two critical issues raised by the Committee's newsletter:

- (1) What is the "Correct" Time for Fajr During Ramadhan?**
- (2) Are We Praying Asr at the Correct Times?**

Our main purpose in doing so is to encourage the good brothers at the Mosque Committee to reconsider their decision regarding the reliability of the current prayer timetable so that we can resolve any problems and errors **urgently before the publication of their 2005 prayer timetable.**

We wish for the Muslims of Cambridge to once again have confidence that the prayer timetable they are now using is free from defects and errors as far as is reasonably possible, and that it conforms to the Islamic Shariah.

Cambridge Prayer Times Project Team
December 2004
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contact@prayertime.org.uk

¹ Abu Bakr Siddiq Islamic Centre, Mawson Road, Cambridge

² *Prayer Timetable*, written by Mohammad Ashraf on behalf of Hicham Kweider, Hon. Secretary of the Cambridge Muslim Welfare Society, 16th December 2004.

WHAT THE MOSQUE SAYS ABOUT THE PRAYER TIMETABLE

Regarding the calculation and compilation of the current prayer timetable, the Mosque Committee state that it is based on the calculations and recommendations of **Khalid Shaukat**:

Mosques generally do not produce their own timetables. They follow one scholar or another. **We are following the timetable, which was specifically calculated for Cambridge by Khalid Shaukat**, who is specialised in physics, mathematics, computer programming and computational astronomy....³

(1) WHAT IS THE “CORRECT” TIME FOR FAJR DURING RAMADHAN?

We present the **Cambridge Mosque Ramadhan 2004** timetable along with the data supplied to us by Khalid Shaukat. If the Mosque timetable is indeed based on the calculations and recommendations by Khalid Shaukat, then the Mosque times should be near identical, but this is not the case:

Date	Ramadhan 2004	Fajr: Mosque ⁴ (Fast begins)	Fajr: Khalid Shaukat ⁵
15-Oct	1	5:51	5:31
16-Oct	2	5:53	5:33
17-Oct	3	5:54	5:34
18-Oct	4	5:56	5:36
19-Oct	5	5:58	5:38
20-Oct	6	5:59	5:39
21-Oct	7	6:01	5:41
22-Oct	8	6:03	5:43
23-Oct	9	6:04	5:44
24-Oct	10	6:06	5:46
25-Oct	11	6:08	5:48
26-Oct	12	6:09	5:49
27-Oct	13	6:11	5:51
28-Oct	14	6:12	5:53
29-Oct	15	6:14	5:54
30-Oct	16	6:16	5:56
31-Oct ⁶	17	5:17	4:57
01-Nov	18	5:19	4:59
02-Nov	19	5:21	5:01
03-Nov	20	5:22	5:02
04-Nov	21	5:24	5:04

³ *Prayer Timetable*, written by Mohammad Ashraf on behalf of Hicham Kweider, Hon. Secretary of the Cambridge Muslim Welfare Society, 16th December 2004.

⁴ Ramadan 1425, October – November 2004 Timetable, published by the Cambridge Muslim Welfare Society. The fact that the Ramadhan timetable was based on the calculations by Khalid Shaukat was also stated on the Mosque website during Ramadhan www.cambridgemosque.org.uk/

⁵ Data provided by Khalid Shaukat on Saturday, 11th December 2004 for Cambridge Lt=52:12N Lg= 0:07E. Fajr is calculated for Sun being 18 degrees below horizon during this time. See <http://www.moonsighting.com/prayer.html>

⁶ British Summer Time ends on 31st October 2004, thus clocks go back one hour.

05-Nov	22	5:25	5:05
06-Nov	23	5:27	5:07
07-Nov	24	5:28	5:08
08-Nov	25	5:30	5:10
09-Nov	26	5:32	5:11
10-Nov	27	5:33	5:13
11-Nov	28	5:35	5:15
12-Nov	29	5:36	5:16
13-Nov	30	5:38	5:18

Note how **dissimilar** the Cambridge Mosque Fajr times are compared with the data calculated by **Khalid Shaukat**. The Mosque Fajr times are much later than the *Fajr* times computed by Khalid Shaukat. **There is a constant disparity of 20 minutes in the Mosque timetable.**

Thus it is highly unlikely that the *Fajr* times as used by the Cambridge Mosque are based on the calculations or recommendations of Khalid Shaukat.

WHY IS THERE A HUGE DIFFERENCE IN FAJR TIMES?

Ramadhan 20004	Date	Fajr: Mosque (Fast begins)	Fajr: Khalid Shaukat
25	08-Nov	5:30	5:10
26	09-Nov	5:32	5:11
27	10-Nov	5:33	5:13

The calculations produced by Khalid Shaukat for Cambridge are based on **18 degrees** – **when the sun is 18 degrees below the horizon**. But it would appear that the Mosque times for Ramadhan are based on an entirely different calculation. It seems that the Mosque data is using **15 degrees** – **when the sun is 15 degrees below the horizon**⁷. Using a smaller twilight angle produces a later *fajr* time (but earlier *Isha* time) – and this is the reason for the huge discrepancy of 20 minutes in the Mosque timetable.

WHAT DOES KHALID SHAUKAT RECOMMEND? 15 OR 18 DEGREES?

In response to a question regarding Ramadan timetables and the use of 15 degrees, Khalid Shaukat clearly states that **18 degrees is considered appropriate** but cautions the use of 15 degrees:

Question: Some Ramadan timetables in my area have the sehri end time based at 15 degrees and others at 18 degrees. Which one is the correct one?

Answer: 18 degrees is considered appropriate by most Ulamaa of the world and I agree in general. It is suggested that if one has 15 degree chart for fajr then one should finish eating 10 to 15 minutes before that chart time for Fajr.⁸

Khalid Shaukat considers 18 degrees as appropriate. The Muslim World League’s Fiqh Council and a committee of astronomers headed by Dr. Mohammad Hawari, who has researched the methods of prayer computation for the past twenty-five years, also recommends the use of 18 degrees for *fajr*.⁹

⁷ Months January to March, and months October to December seem to be based on 15 degrees. But from early April – early September the timetable does not appear to be based on 15 degrees. This change is probably introduced to account for the phenomenon of *persistent twilight*, a topic which is beyond the scope of this paper.

⁸ Questions on Prayer Schedules, Khalid Shaukat, http://www.moonsighting.com/faq_pt.html#F3

Khalid Shaukat further recommends that if one is using a timetable based on 15 degrees (as is the case with the Mosque timetable), then one should finish eating 10 to 15 minutes before *Fajr* time. Concern on this matter of timing is obviously understandable as many in our community would feel that an erroneous delay in the beginning of *fajr* would have serious implications for the beginning of the fast.

We can only conclude that it is highly unlikely that the *Fajr* times as used by the Cambridge Mosque in the Ramadhan 2004 timetable are based on the calculations or recommendations of Khalid Shaukat. The Mosque Committee seem to have deviated from Shaukat's original calculations and recommendations.

One should bear in mind that problems in prayer times were first brought to the attention of the Cambridge Mosque Committee back in **January 2004**; yet no action was taken to correct the data – even during the Ramadhan period – when the issue was once again raised. Whatever the reasons for the discrepancies, we feel confident that the Mosque Committee will now rectify these problems **urgently**, given the over-whelming evidence presented above.

WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM?

The root of the problem is that the Mosque Committee seem unsure as to exactly what Khalid Shaukat has actually calculated for them or even what *Mathhab* (school of thought) the prayer times actually follow:

We **believe** Khalid Shaukat has used 15° for the calculation of Fajr and Isha time considering a factor of safety ¹⁰

Thus their position on prayer times is based on **belief and not established facts**. It is perhaps for this reason that we now find ourselves in such difficulty.

When the Mosque Committee publish their **2005 prayer timetable**, how would they reassure the local community that it would be free from errors or defects? Could we be sure that any advice or recommendations have been adhered to?

Without some form of independent verification it would hard, if not impossible, for anyone to have full confidence in any new prayer timetable. It is for this reason that we strongly urge the Cambridge Mosque committee to approach the **Head Imam of London Central Mosque**¹¹ for help and assistance.

The **constitution** of the Cambridge Mosque states that in issues of doubt regarding the interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith, it should be referred to the Head Imam of London Central Mosque¹² for a solution:

In case there is any doubt about the interpretation of Holy Qur'an or Hadith, the matter shall be referred to the Head Imam of London Central Mosque at the Islamic Cultural Centre, London. ¹³



⁹ The Muslim World League, Makkah al-Mukarramah, Administration of the Fiqh Council, Ninth Session, 1406 AH. The Eighth Decree. *Fajr* corresponds to the first appearance of a white light that spreads laterally across the horizon. This is referred to as true dawn (*Subh as-saddiq*) and corresponds to when the sun is 18 degrees below the eastern horizon. Isha corresponds to the sun being 17 degrees below the western horizon.

¹⁰ *Prayer Timetable*, written by Mohammad Ashraf on behalf of Hicham Kweider, Hon. Secretary of the Cambridge Muslim Welfare Society, 16th December 2004.

¹¹ The Head Imam is Sheikh Anwar Mady. Sheikh Anwar Mady is also the Deputy Director of the Central London Mosque. For contact information visit <http://www.iccuk.org/icc/contact.htm>

¹² Islamic Cultural Centre. See http://www.iccuk.org/resources/prayer_times/prayer_timeguide.htm

¹³ REFERENCE FROM FATWA: Rule No.19, Cambridge Muslim Welfare Society Constitution.

This should be the first step in establishing a reliable prayer timetable. We are confident that the Mosque Committee will now refer all these and other issues regarding the prayer times to the Head Imam of London Central Mosque for an urgent solution and advice *insha Allah*.

We also look forward to reading any Fatawas obtained from the London Central Mosque, which we hope the Cambridge Mosque Committee will make freely available to the community before January 2005 *insha Allah*.

May Allah reward the committee of the Cambridge Mosque for their efforts in correcting the current prayer timetable – which is now long over due.

(2) ARE WE PRAYING ASR AT THE CORRECT TIMES?

Allah (swt) says regarding the prayers:

“Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers and [in particular] the middle [i.e. Asr] prayer and stand before Allah, devoutly obedient.” [al-Baqarah 2:238]

The “middle prayer” referred to here is the mid-afternoon prayer or Asr prayer. We should not delay any of the prayers until after their time is over. We should pay attention to the prayers, because the prayers are the foundation of Islam.

WHAT IS THE OFFICAL MOSQUE POSITION REGARDING THE ASR PRAYER?

In the “Prayer Timetable” document distributed by the Mosque Committee on Friday 16th December, Br. Mohammad Ashraf states:

As regards the time for Asr prayer there is no single standard method for calculating the time. There is a difference between the **Hanafi** and the **Shaafi Mazhab**. Whichever Mazhab you follow you will be right because all the Imams have worked out the prayer times according to the Qur’an and Hadith, which has been recognised by all the Ulama of the world for centuries. In **Shaafi Mazhab** the time for Asr payer begins when an object’s shadow becomes equal to its height plus the length of its noon-time shadow. However in **Hanafi Mazhab**, Asr starts when an object’s length should be twice its length plus the length of its noon-time shadow. **Khalid Shaukat** has provided us the calculation of Asr, both for **Hanafi and Shaafi Mazhabs**. We have adopted at the Mosque Hanafi Asr time for some months. While for some other months Shaafi Asr time has been adopted and for some period, times in between Hanafi and Shaafi Mazahabs have been adopted for convenience of local Muslims. The Mosque prayer timetable thus is perfectly within the time band allowed in *Sharia*.¹⁴

¹⁴ *Prayer Timetable*, written by Mohammad Ashraf on behalf of Hicham Kweider, Hon. Secretary of the Cambridge Muslim Welfare Society, 16th December 2004.

HOW DO YOU DETERMINE THE TIME FOR ASR PRAYER?

The time for Asr depends on the length of the shadow cast by an object. Imams Shaafi, Hambali, and Maliki are in agreement concerning the determination of the mid-afternoon prayer (Asr). It is the Hanafi school which differs:

In ***Shaafi Mazhab*** the time for Asr prayer begins when an object's shadow becomes equal to its height plus the length of its noon-time shadow. However in ***Hanafi Mazhab***, Asr starts when an object's length should be twice its length plus the length of its noon-time shadow.¹⁵

Thus there are two accepted methods in calculating the Asr prayer.

MOSQUE ASR TIMES ARE UNACCEPTABLE

Which out of the two methods described above does the Cambridge Mosque follow? Shaafi? Hambali? Maliki? Hanafi? The answer may well surprise you.

The methodology used in determining the Asr times by Cambridge Mosque do not appear to follow the methodologies of Imams Shaafi, Hambali, Maliki or even Imam Abu Hanifa:

We [i.e. the Mosque] have adopted at the Mosque **Hanafi Asr time for some months.** While for **some other months Shaafi Asr time** has been adopted and **for some period, times in between Hanafi and Shaafi Mazahabs have been adopted** for convenience of local Muslims. The Mosque prayer timetable thus is perfectly within the time band allowed in Sharia.¹⁶

In other words, an inconsistent, incoherent, conflicting and at times contradictory Asr times have been adopted that conforms neither to the Imams Shaafi, Hambali, Maliki or Imam Abu Hanifa and nor to the Shariah. **Not only is this devoid of logic and reason, it is also totally unacceptable from a Shariah point of view.**

And what is this “**convenience**” that the document is referring to? What could possibly warrant such a *mix-and-match* methodology in establishing the Asr prayer? And far from providing a “convenience to local Muslims” it serves only to confuse the local Muslim community.

The document argues that both the Shaafi Asr and Hanafi Asr prayers are correct, so whichever method you follow you will be right, so why worry:

Whichever Mazhab you follow you will be right because all the Imams have worked out the prayer times according to the Qur'an and Hadith, which has been recognised by all the Ulama of the world for centuries¹⁷

¹⁵ Mohammad Ashraf, Op Cit.

¹⁶ Mohammad Ashraf, Op Cit.

¹⁷ Mohammad Ashraf, Op Cit

The methods used to determine the Asr prayer by Imams Shaafi and Abu Hanifa are accepted methods, but it is totally unacceptable from the Shariah to *mix-and-match* the two as we find in the Cambridge Prayer Timetable. **One should consistently follow only one approach.**

The calculation and compilation of all the prayer times – including Asr times – were once again provided by Khalid Shaukat:

Khalid Shaukat has provided us the calculation of Asr, both for *Hanafi and Shaafi Mazhabs*.¹⁸

What is Khalid Shaukat's opinion on this *mix-and-match* approach to the Asr prayer times? Is this *mix-and-match* approach acceptable from a Shariah point of view? We asked brother Khalid for his response to the following question:

To: Khalid Shaukat
Sent: Tuesday, December 21, 2004 6:00 PM
Subject: Re: Prayer Schedule and manuscript "when to pray Fajr and Isha"

We have come across a timetable which has adopted Hanafi Asr time for some months. While for some other months Sh'afi Asr time has been adopted and for some period, times in between Hanafi and Sh'afi Mazahabs have been adopted.

In other words, an inconsistent, incoherent, conflicting and contradictory Asr times have been adopted that does not conform to the Imams Sh'afi, Hambali, Maliki or Imam Abu Hanifa.

My question is, what your opinion in light of the Shariah on this mix and match approach?

Khalid Shaukat's blunt response is reproduced below:

From: Khalid Shaukat
Sent: 22 December 2004 02:18
Subject: Re: Prayer Schedule and manuscript "when to pray Fajr and Isha"

Mix and match approach is not allowed in Shari'ah in any school of Fiqh.

Khalid Shaukat

We put the same question to **Sheikh Anwar Mady** who is the Head Imam of the Islamic Cultural Centre and the Deputy Director of the London Central Mosque. He is a specialist in Fiqh and holds a doctorate from Al Azhar University. The text of his fatwa is reproduced below:

From: Anwar Mady
Subject: RE: fatwa
Date: Wed, 22 Dec 2004 12:59:28 +0200

Thank you for your email. For every prayer there is a time of preference which is preferred and time of permissibility and a time of undesirability. As you have stated in

¹⁸ Mohammad Ashraf, Op Cit.

your email there is a difference between the scholars over the time of preference for Asr prayer.

According to the majority of Ulama the time for Asr is when the shadow of an object is equal to the length of this object. However Imam Abu Hanifa differs in that opinion and argued that the time of Asr prayer begins when the shadow becomes twice as the actual length of the object. When there is a difference of opinion between scholars, any Muslim can take either one of the two opinions keeping in mind the opinion of the majority or the strength of the evidences of that opinion.

Thus every individual Muslim can take either the first one or the second one without any guilt. But as far as the Mosques are concerned I prefer for the Mosque to adopt one of these opinions and to be consistent in applying that opinion which they have chosen in order not to make any incoherent attitude or cause discrepancies between the public - which has to be avoided.¹⁹

Thus it is totally unacceptable from the Shariah to *mix-and-match* the Asr prayer times as we find in the Cambridge Prayer Timetable. If this is the case, then it is natural to ask on whose authority was the Asr prayer times changed?

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS IN THE ASR PRAYER TIMES?

The current prayer timetable follows neither the Shaafi method (used by Imams Shaafi, Hambali, and Maliki) nor the Hanafi method in calculating the Asr prayer, but a mixture:

January: The Mosque follows neither the Shaafi nor Hanafi
February: The Mosque follows neither the Shaafi nor Hanafi
March - October: The Mosque appears to follow the Shaafi Asr
November: The Mosque appears to be drifting from Shaafi Asr
December: The Mosque appears to follow the Hanafi Asr

It can be argued that the current Mosque timetable is essentially a *Shaafi Mathhab* timetable as it seems to follow the *Shaafi Asr* prayer for eight months of the year. But one should remember that it is totally unacceptable from the Shariah to *mix-and-match* the Asr prayer times as we find in the Cambridge Prayer Timetable.

Asr(S) = Shaafi Asr.

Asr(H) = Hanafi Asr

January 2004

Day	Dhuhr	Asr(S)	Mosque	Asr(H)	Maghrib
Jan-01	12:08pm	1:42pm	2:04pm	2:11pm	4:01pm
Jan-02	12:09pm	1:42pm	2:04pm	2:12pm	4:02pm
Jan-03	12:09pm	1:43pm	2:05pm	2:13pm	4:03pm
Jan-04	12:10pm	1:44pm	2:05pm	2:14pm	4:04pm
Jan-05	12:10pm	1:45pm	2:06pm	2:15pm	4:05pm

January: The Mosque timetable follows neither the Shaafi nor Hanafi Asr times.

¹⁹ Fatwa dated Wed 22/12/2004 . Reproduced with minor corrections to English grammar.

February 2004

Day	Dhuhr	Asr(S)	Mosque	Asr(H)	Maghrib
Feb-01	12:18pm	2:22pm	2:35pm	2:57pm	4:49pm
Feb-02	12:18pm	2:23pm	2:36pm	2:59pm	4:51pm
Feb-03	12:18pm	2:25pm	2:37pm	3:01pm	4:53pm
Feb-04	12:18pm	2:26pm	2:38pm	3:03pm	4:55pm
Feb-05	12:19pm	2:28pm	2:39pm	3:05pm	4:57pm

February: The Mosque timetable is now closer to the Shaafi Asr but follows neither Shaafi nor Hanafi.

March 2004

Day	Dhuhr	Asr(S)	Mosque	Asr(H)	Maghrib
Mar-01	12:17pm	3:02pm	3:01pm	3:45pm	5:42pm
Mar-02	12:17pm	3:03pm	3:03pm	3:47pm	5:43pm
Mar-03	12:16pm	3:04pm	3:04pm	3:49pm	5:45pm
Mar-04	12:16pm	3:05pm	3:05pm	3:50pm	5:47pm
Mar-05	12:16pm	3:07pm	3:07pm	3:52pm	5:49pm

March: The Mosque timetable appears to follow the Shaafi Asr.

April 2004

Day	Dhuhr	Asr(S)	Mosque	Asr(H)	Maghrib
Apr-01	1:08pm	4:36pm	4:37pm	5:30pm	7:36pm
Apr-02	1:08pm	4:37pm	4:38pm	5:31pm	7:38pm
Apr-03	1:08pm	4:38pm	4:39pm	5:32pm	7:40pm
Apr-04	1:07pm	4:39pm	4:40pm	5:33pm	7:41pm
Apr-05	1:07pm	4:40pm	4:41pm	5:35pm	7:43pm

April: The Mosque timetable appears to follow the Shaafi Asr.

May 2004

Day	Dhuhr	Asr(S)	Mosque	Asr(H)	Maghrib
May-01	1:02pm	5:00pm	5:01pm	6:04pm	8:28pm
May-02	1:01pm	5:01pm	5:01pm	6:05pm	8:29pm
May-03	1:01pm	5:01pm	5:02pm	6:06pm	8:31pm
May-04	1:01pm	5:02pm	5:03pm	6:07pm	8:33pm
May-05	1:01pm	5:03pm	5:03pm	6:08pm	8:34pm

May: The Mosque timetable appears to follow the Shaafi Asr.

June 2004

Day	Dhuhr	Asr(S)	Mosque	Asr(H)	Maghrib
Jun-01	1:02pm	5:19pm	5:19pm	6:32pm	9:14pm
Jun-02	1:03pm	5:19pm	5:19pm	6:32pm	9:15pm
Jun-03	1:03pm	5:19pm	5:19pm	6:33pm	9:16pm
Jun-04	1:03pm	5:20pm	5:20pm	6:33pm	9:17pm
Jun-05	1:03pm	5:20pm	5:20pm	6:34pm	9:18pm

June: The Mosque timetable appears to follow the Shaafi Asr.

July 2004

Day	Dhuhr	Asr(S)	Mosque	Asr(H)	Maghrib
Jul-01	1:08pm	5:27pm	5:27pm	6:41pm	9:27pm
Jul-02	1:09pm	5:27pm	5:27pm	6:41pm	9:26pm

Jul-03	1:09pm	5:27pm	5:27pm	6:41pm	9:26pm
Jul-04	1:09pm	5:27pm	5:27pm	6:41pm	9:26pm
Jul-05	1:09pm	5:27pm	5:27pm	6:41pm	9:25pm

July: The Mosque timetable appears to follow the Shaafi Asr.

August 2004

Day	Dhuhr	Asr(S)	Mosque	Asr(H)	Maghrib
Aug-01	1:11pm	5:16pm	5:16pm	6:24pm	8:54pm
Aug-02	1:11pm	5:16pm	5:16pm	6:23pm	8:52pm
Aug-03	1:11pm	5:15pm	5:15pm	6:22pm	8:50pm
Aug-04	1:11pm	5:14pm	5:14pm	6:20pm	8:48pm
Aug-05	1:10pm	5:13pm	5:13pm	6:19pm	8:47pm

August: The Mosque timetable appears to follow the Shaafi Asr.

September 2004

Day	Dhuhr	Asr(S)	Mosque	Asr(H)	Maghrib
Sep-01	1:04pm	4:42pm	4:43pm	5:39pm	7:51pm
Sep-02	1:04pm	4:41pm	4:41pm	5:38pm	7:48pm
Sep-03	1:04pm	4:40pm	4:40pm	5:36pm	7:46pm
Sep-04	1:04pm	4:38pm	4:38pm	5:34pm	7:44pm
Sep-05	1:03pm	4:37pm	4:37pm	5:32pm	7:41pm

September: The Mosque timetable appears to follow the Shaafi Asr.

October 2004

Day	Dhuhr	Asr(S)	Mosque	Asr(H)	Maghrib
Oct-01	12:54pm	3:54pm	3:55pm	4:41pm	6:40pm
Oct-02	12:54pm	3:52pm	3:53pm	4:39pm	6:38pm
Oct-03	12:53pm	3:51pm	3:51pm	4:37pm	6:36pm
Oct-04	12:53pm	3:49pm	3:50pm	4:35pm	6:33pm
Oct-05	12:53pm	3:47pm	3:48pm	4:33pm	6:31pm

October: The Mosque timetable appears to follow the Shaafi Asr.

November 2004

Day	Dhuhr	Asr(S)	Mosque	Asr(H)	Maghrib
Nov-01	11:48am	2:03pm	2:11pm	2:41pm	4:34pm
Nov-02	11:48am	2:01pm	2:10pm	2:39pm	4:32pm
Nov-03	11:48am	2:00pm	2:09pm	2:37pm	4:30pm
Nov-04	11:48am	1:59pm	2:07pm	2:36pm	4:28pm
Nov-05	11:48am	1:57pm	2:06pm	2:34pm	4:27pm

November: The Mosque timetable is beginning to drift from the Shaafi Asr.

December 2004

Day	Dhuhr	Asr(S)	Mosque	Asr(H)	Maghrib
Dec-01	11:54am	1:33pm	1:59pm	2:04pm	3:54pm
Dec-02	11:54am	1:32pm	1:58pm	2:03pm	3:53pm
Dec-03	11:54am	1:32pm	1:58pm	2:02pm	3:53pm
Dec-04	11:55am	1:32pm	1:58pm	2:02pm	3:52pm
Dec-05	11:55am	1:31pm	1:58pm	2:02pm	3:52pm

December: The Mosque timetable now appears to follow the Hanafi Asr.

After studying the data presented above, it should have come as little or no surprise then that people have been questioning the validity of the existing prayer timetable.

NO SHAAFI – HANAFI DISPUTE HERE!

The document also reports that some months ago a group of brothers allegedly requested that the mosque replace the *Asr* times with **Shaafi Mathhab** times. The Mosque Committee refused citing that the majority of the Muslims in Cambridge were Hanafis:

Few months back some brothers started **questioning the validity of the Mosque timetable. They approached us to replace the Mosque timetable with theirs, which is in fact Shaafi Mazhab timetable.** It must however be emphasised that **Cambridge Muslim Community mostly comprises of the followers of the Hanafi Mazhab...** The Mosque Committee felt that **it would not be fair to solely impose a minority view over a majority** and did not feel it appropriate to replace the Mosque timetable with theirs.

What the purpose of the above statement serves remains unclear. Is the Mosque Committee saying that **the mosque is a purely Hanafi mosque** and they will follow only Imam Abu Hanifa? Such pronouncements serve only to divide the community. The majority of Muslims in our community would be unconcerned whether the timetable follows a Shaafi or a Hanafi *Asr* as long **as it follows ONE method consistently.**

IMPOSING A TIMETABLE ON THE COMMUNITY?

The document also claims that the Committee has prohibited the imposition of a minority (Shaafi) view over the majority Hanafi followers by rejecting what they believed to be a “Shaafi timetable.” **This is surprising given the fact that the Mosque timetable itself is essentially a Shaafi Mathhab timetable!!!!**

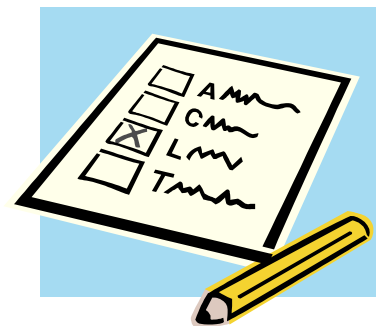
The Mosque Committee has rejected a “Shaafi Mathhab” timetable WHEN Mosque timetable is essentially a Shaafi Mathhab timetable! For eight long months the Mosque timetable follows a Shaafi Mathhab timetable. It is only in December that the timetable resembles a Hanafi *Asr*. Once again the Committee’s position is based on **belief and not established facts.**

It is most unreasonable for the Mosque Committee argue that it would not be fair to solely impose a minority (*Shaafi*) view over a majority Hanafi when **this is precisely what the Mosque Committee have done. The Mosque Committee have imposed what is basically a Shaafi Mathhab timetable on a community of Hanafi followers.**

January:	The Mosque follows neither the Shaafi nor Hanafi
February:	The Mosque follows neither the Shaafi nor Hanafi
March - October:	The Mosque appears to follow the Shaafi <i>Asr</i>
November:	The Mosque appears to be drifting from Shaafi <i>Asr</i>
December:	The Mosque appears to follow the Hanafi <i>Asr</i>

But most worrying is the fact that the Mosque Committee is guilty of having imposed a *mix-and-match* *Asr* prayer time that has no basis in Shariah whatsoever! These problems are not new. They were first brought to the attention of the Mosque Committee way back in January 2004.

Although explanations were requested a number of times, it seems that only now, shortly before a major Mosque Election in January 2005, is the issue now being discussed and *insha Allah*, resolved!



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A number of issues regarding the prayer timetable were first brought to the attention of the Mosque Committee back in January 2004 by concerned members of the community. After numerous private dialogues spanning almost twelve months, the Mosque Committee decided not to act upon these concerns even though some of these concerns were very serious. The Committee's response was printed in a public newsletter. The newsletter sought to defend the Committee's decision to keep the current 2004 Prayer Timetable and Ramadhan 2004 timetables unchanged.

- The Mosque Committee claims that the prayer times were based on the calculations and recommendations of Khalid Shaukat, but this does not seem to be the case
- The Mosque Fajr times seem to have deviated from Shaukat's calculations and recommendations by 20 minutes - without good cause or reason.
- The Committee's understanding of the prayer timetable appears to be based on belief rather than established facts
- The Mosque's new 2005 prayer timetable requires independent verification because without this, it would be hard, if not impossible, for anyone to have full confidence in it
- We strongly urge the Cambridge Mosque committee to approach the Head Imam of London Central Mosque for any help and assistance they may require
- The methodology used in determining the Asr times by Cambridge Mosque committee do not appear to follow the methodologies of Imams Shaafi, Hambali, Maliki or even Imam Abu Hanifa
- An inconsistent, incoherent, conflicting and at times contradictory Asr times have been adopted that conforms neither to the Imams Shaafi, Hambali, Maliki or Imam Abu Hanifa and nor to the Shariah. This situation is not only devoid of logic and reason, it is also totally unacceptable from a Shariah point of view.
- The current Mosque timetable is not a Hanafi timetable but is essentially a *Shaafi* timetable as it seems to follow the *Shaafi* Asr prayer for eight long months of the year
- The community in general is not concerned whether the timetable is a Hanafi or Shaafi timetable as long as it follows one method consistently

The publication of the "Prayer Timetable" document by the Mosque Committee actually has raised far more questions and problems than it sought to answer. **The Cambridge Mosque Committee should work to publish a new and corrected prayer timetable for 2005.** But how would they be able to reassure the local community that it would be free from errors or defects?

How would they reassure us that the new 2005 prayer data has been faithfully and accurately reproduced? How could we be sure that any advice or recommendations have been adhered to? Will a minority view be “imposed” on the community again? Have the Committee adopted any opinions that are totally unacceptable from a Shariah point of view?

Without a detailed explanation and some form of independent verification, it would be hard, if not impossible, for anyone to have full confidence in any new prayer timetable produced by the Committee. It is for this reason that we strongly urge Cambridge Mosque committee to approach the **Head Imam of London Central Mosque** for help and assistance

We are however confident that the Mosque Committee will work to resolve these and other issues that have been highlight. The Committee can be sure that we in the community will provide any support and assistance they may require insha Allah.

We ask Allah to forgive any mistakes we have made.

Cambridge Prayer Times Project Team

December 2004

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