

**ECLIPSE BETWEEN
THE BELIEVERS
& THE NEGLIGENT**

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The Eclipse between the people of Faith and the people of Negligence

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful

All Praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, the [One Who] Sustains the Heavens and Earths, Director of all that is created, who sent the Messengers (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon all of them) to rational beings, to guide them and explain the religious laws to them with clear proofs and undeniable arguments. I praise Him for all of His bounties. I ask Him to increase His Grace and Generosity. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah alone, who has no partner, the One, Who Subdues, the Generous, the Forgiving. I bear witness that our leader Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, His beloved and dear one, the best of all creation. He was honoured with the Glorious Qur'an that has been an enduring miracle throughout the years. He was also sent with his guiding Sunnah that shows the way for those who seek guidance. Our leader Muhammad has been particularised with the characteristic of eloquent and pithy speech, and simplicity and ease in the religion. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, the other Prophets and Messengers, all of their families and the rest of the righteous.

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The Eclipse between the people of faith and the people of negligence

What the people whose concern is only for this world are saying about the eclipse

A scientific researcher has said: “The eclipse is a natural phenomenon which should be regarded without alarm.”

With regard to what they are actually doing, we have heard the following news:

0. Medically-approved glasses will be distributed to people so that they can enjoy these few moments.
1. One country has imported 50,000 pairs of special glasses to be used for watching the eclipse this coming Wednesday.
2. People will gather at specialized telescopes so that they will have the opportunity to see the eclipse through advanced scientific means.
3. British Airways has organized two Concorde flights to observe the eclipse this coming Wednesday. The flights will depart from Heathrow airport and head west for half the distance, then they will come back, so that the two hundred passengers will be able to see the eclipse from an altitude of 58,000 feet, travelling at twice the speed of sound. All the tickets for both flights sold out within a short period of time.
4. In some countries people have been advised to stay in their houses and not to go out in the streets at all.

This is what the people of negligence say, but what about the people of faith? Al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in his Saheeh: Baab Al-Salaah fi Kusoof al-Shams (Chapter on prayer when the sun is eclipsed):

From Abu Bakrah who said: “We were with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and the sun was eclipsed. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stood up, dragging his cloak, and went into the mosque. We went in too and he led us in praying two rak’ahs, until the sun was uncovered again. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘The sun and moon are not eclipsed for the death of anyone [or for the life of anyone], [they are two of the signs of Allaah]. So if you see that, [then get up and pray] and make du’aa’ until what happened to you is over.’” (982).

From ‘Aa’ishah who said: “The sun was eclipsed at the time of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), so the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) led the people in prayer. He stood for a long time, then he made rukoo’ for a long time, then he stood again for a long time but shorter than the first

time, then he made rukoo' for a long time but shorter than the first. Then he prostrated for a long time, then in the second rak'ah he did the same as he had done in the first. Then he finished, and the eclipse was over. He addressed the people, first praising Allaah, then he said: 'The sun and the moon are two of the signs of Allaah. They do not become eclipsed for the death or life of anyone. If you see that, then pray to Allaah, say *Takbeer* ("Allahu akbar"), pray and give in charity.' Then he said, 'O Ummah of Muhammad, by Allâh there is no one more jealous than Allaah when His slave, male or female, commits zina (adultery or fornication). O Ummah of Muhammad, if you knew what I know you would laugh little and weep much.'" (*Saheeh al-Bukhaari*, 986)

Then Al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: *Baab al-Nida' bi'l-salaah jaami'ah fi'l-kusoof* (Calling "*al-salaatu jaam'iah* (the congregational prayer is about to start)" at the time of an eclipse).

From 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Amr (may Allaah be pleased with them both) who said: "When the sun was eclipsed at the time of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), the call was given '*al-salaatu jaam'iah* (the congregational prayer is about to start)'." (*Saheeh al-Bukhaari*, 989).

Then Al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: *Baab al-Ta'awwudh min 'adhaab al-qabr fi'l-kusoof* (seeking refuge from the punishment of the grave at the time of an eclipse).

'Abd-Allaah ibn Muslimah told us from Maalik from Yahya ibn Sa'eed from 'Amrah bint 'Abd al-Rahmaan from 'Aa'ishah the wife of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) that a Jewish woman came to ask her (for help) and said to her, "May Allaah protect you from the punishment of the grave." 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) asked the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), "Will people be punished in their graves?" The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) explained the matter to her, seeking refuge with Allaah from that. Then one day the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went out in a funeral procession, and the sun was eclipsed and he came back at Duha. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) passed between the apartments [of his wives], then he stood and prayed, and the people stood behind him. He stood for a long time, then he did rukoo' for a long time, then he stood upright and stood for a long time, but less than the first time. Then he did rukoo' for a long time, but less than the first rukoo'. Then he stood upright, then he prostrated, then he stood up and stood for a long time, but less than the previous time. Then he did rukoo' for a long time, but less than the previous rukoo'. Then he stood for a long time, but less than the previous time, then he did rukoo' for a long time but less than the previous time. Then he stood up, then he prostrated and finished the prayer. Then he spoke and said as much as Allaah willed he should say, then he commanded them to seek refuge with Allaah from the punishment of the grave. Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 991.

Then al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Baab al-Jahr bi'l-qiraa'ah fi'l-kusoof (Reciting aloud during the eclipse prayer).

Muhammad ibn Mahraan told us that al-Waleed ibn Muslim told us that Ibn Nimr informed us that Ibn Shihaab heard from 'Urwah from 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) recited aloud during the eclipse prayer (*Salaat al-Kusoof*). When he had finished reciting, he said '*Allaahu akbar*' and bowed. When he stood up from rukoo' he said '*Sami'a Allaahu liman hamidah Rabbanaa wa laka'l-hamd* (Allaah hears those who praise Him, our Lord to You be praise).' Then he recited again in Salaat al-Kusoof, four rukoo's (bowing) in two rak'ahs and four sajdahs (prostrations). *Saheeh al-Bukhaari*, 1004.

We will briefly discuss below the important points made by Al-Haafiz ibn Hajar al-'Asqallaani (may Allaah have mercy on him) in his commentary on the ahaadeeth narrated by al-Bukhaari, with some adaptations and the addition of simple headings:

Solar and lunar eclipses are means used by Allaah to scare His slaves and remind them about the Day of Resurrection on which the moon will be eclipsed and the sun and moon will be rolled up

“Two signs” means two indicators. “The signs of Allaah” means things that indicate His Unity and the greatness of His Ability, or that alarm His slaves and remind them of His punishment and power. This is supported by the aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

“And We sent not the signs except to warn, and to make them afraid” [al-Israa' 17:59].

“Allaah frightens His slaves with them”. In the hadeeth about the eclipse narrated by al-Nu'maan ibn Basheer and others, a reason other than that claimed by the astronomers is given. This was narrated by Ahmad, al-Nisaa'i and Ibn Maajah, and classed as saheeh by Ibn Khuzaymah and al-Haakim, with the wording, “The sun and the moon do not get eclipsed for the death or birth of anyone. They are two of the signs of Allaah, and when Allaah manifests Himself to any of His creation, it fears Him and humbles itself before Him.”

The hadeeth was proven saheeh by a number of scholars, and it is also saheeh according to its meaning, because light has to do with physical beauty (*jamaal*), but if the attribute of majesty (*jalaal*) is made manifest, the lights will be extinguished out of fear of Allaah. This is supported by the aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

“So when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He made it collapse to dust” [al-A'raaf 7:143]

This hadeeth also supports the account which we narrated from al-Taawoos, who looked at the sun when it was eclipsed and wept until he almost died, and said, “It fears Allaah more than we do.”

Ibn Daqeeq al-'Eed said: perhaps some of them think that what the mathematicians say

contradicts the Prophet's words "Allaah frightens His slaves with them". But this is not the case at all... because Allaah does some things according to the ordinary laws of the universe, and He does other things that go beyond these ordinary laws, for He is above all causes and He can override whatever natural laws He wishes. Once this is understood, those who know Allaah believe that He is able to do all manner of extraordinary things, and that He does what He wills. So when something out of the ordinary happens, they fear Allaah because of the strength of their belief. This is not to say that there may be regular instances of cause and effect, which Allaah can override if He wills. So to sum up, what the mathematicians say is correct, but this does not mean that this event is not the means of Allaah alarming His slaves.

Ruling on Salaat al-Kusoof

Al-Bukhaari's chapter heading, "*Baab al-Salaah fi Kusoof al-Shams* (Chapter on Prayer at the time of a solar eclipse)" implies that it is prescribed in Islam. This is a matter on which there is scholarly consensus, but there were some differences as to the ruling and description of the prayer. The majority stated that it is Sunnah mu'akkadah (confirmed Sunnah).

The Prophet's nervous haste at the time of the eclipse

"The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) got up dragging his cloak." A report narrated from Yoonus adds the word "rushing". Muslim narrated from Asma': "The sun was eclipsed at the time of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and he rushed nervously and put on his coat of mail, thinking that it was his cloak." In other words, he wanted to put on his cloak, but he put on his coat of mail instead, because he was preoccupied with the eclipse.

Lengthening the prayer until the eclipse is over

"Until [the eclipse] was over." This indicates that the prayer should be made lengthy until the eclipse is over. Al-Tahhaawi replied that the phrase "offer salaah and make du'aa" indicates that if the salaam at the end of the salaah is said before the eclipse is over, one should keep busy making du'aa' until it is over. This was also stated by Ibn Daqeeq al-'Eed, who said that the aim of both (salaah and du'aa') is the same, and that the prayer does not need to be made long or repeated.

"The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said 'The sun...'" According to a report narrated by Ibn Khuzaymah, "When the eclipse was over, he addressed us and said..." This indicates that the end of the eclipse does not mean that there should be no khutbah or speech by the imaam.

Refutation of jaahili beliefs concerning eclipses

"For the death of anyone". According to another report: "That was because a son of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) who was called Ibraaheem had died, so the people said it was because of that." According to another report, "The people said, the

sun is eclipsed because of the death of Ibraaheem.” According to another report: “The sun was eclipsed at the time of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and he rushed out to the mosque, dragging his garment. He kept praying until the eclipse was over, and when it was over he said, ‘The people are claiming that the sun and moon only become eclipsed for the death of some great person. This is not the case...’” This hadeeth refutes the belief of the people of the jaahiliyyah, who thought that the heavenly bodies had some influence over the earth. This is like what was said in the hadeeth about asking for rain, “They say that our rain was foretold by such and such.” Al-Khattaabi said, during the Jaahiliyyah, they used to believe that an eclipse meant that something would happen on earth, such as a death or some harmful event, so the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught them that this was a false belief, and that the sun and moon were two created entities that were subjugated to the control of Allaah, they had no power over anything else and were unable to protect themselves.”

“(nor) the life of anyone”. The reason why life or birth is mentioned is in order to refute the false notion of those who say that just because an eclipse is not the cause of loss is not to say that it is not the cause of something positive.

Eclipses demonstrate the repugnant nature of the idea of worshipping the sun or moon. Some scholars interpreted the command in the aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

“but prostrate to Allaah Who created them [the sun and moon]” [Fussilat 41:37] as referring to *Salaat al-Kusoof*, because this is the time when it is most appropriate to turn away from worshipping them, because of the changes and shortcomings that are manifest in them at such times, and Allaah is far above such things, may He be glorified and exalted.

Timing of Salaat al-Kusoof

“So stand up and pray” indicates that there is no specific timing for Salaat al-Kusoof, because this prayer is connected to seeing the eclipse, and an eclipse could happen at any time of day. This was the view of al-Shaafa’i and those who followed him... What is meant is that this act of worship should be done before the eclipse is over, and the scholars agreed that the prayer should not be done once the event has passed.

History of eclipses during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)

“The day when Ibraaheem died” refers to the son of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). The majority of biographers and scholars of Seerah stated that he died in 10 AH, and it was said that he died in Rabee’ al-Awwal or in Ramadaan.

Most of the scholars stated that this happened on the tenth of the month, or on the fourteenth.

What people should do

“So hasten” means, “seek refuge” or “turn to”, and implies that people should rush to do what is commanded here. Turning to Allaah at times of fear by making du’aa’ and seeking His forgiveness will wipe out the sins that have happened, which hopefully will remove the cause of the event which has brought fear. Sins are the cause of trials and punishment in this world and the next. We ask Allaah for His mercy and forgiveness.

“The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) got up in haste, thinking that the Hour had come” means he feared that the Hour was at hand.

Perhaps he feared that the eclipse was a precursor to some of the Signs of the Hour, such as the sun rising from the west. It is not impossible that between the eclipse and the sun’s rising from the west many of the things that were mentioned could happen one after another. We should remember the words of Allaah (interpretation of the meaning):

“And the matter of the Hour is not but as the twinkling of the eye, or even nearer.” [al-Nahl 16:77].

In order to explain how serious the issue of eclipses is, he explained to those of his ummah who witness such a thing how they should fear Allaah and hasten to pray, especially if that happens after the Signs of the Hour or most of them have come to pass.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, “These are signs which are sent by Allaah”, then he said: “But Allaah makes His slaves afraid by means of them.” This is in accordance with the aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

“And We sent not the signs except to warn, and to make them afraid (of destruction)” [al-Israa’ 17:59]

It is understood from this that the command to hasten to remember Allaah, make du’aa’, seek forgiveness, etc. is not confined only to solar and lunar eclipses, because the signs of Allaah are more general than that.

Giving charity at the time of an eclipse

In the ahaadeeth that were narrated concerning eclipses, there is the command to pray, to give charity, to remember Allaah, to make du’aa’, etc. They are listed in order of priority.

Chapter on seeking refuge with Allaah from the punishment of the grave during an eclipse

Al-Bukhaari said, “*Baab al-Ta’awwudh Billaah min ‘adhaab al-qabr fi ‘l-kusoof* (Chapter on seeking refuge with Allaah from the punishment of the grave during an eclipse)”. Ibn al-Muneer said in his comment:

“The reason why one should seek refuge at the time of an eclipse is that the daytime darkness that occurs during an eclipse is like the darkness in the grave even during the day. So one is reminded of a thing by something that is similar to it. So we should fear the one as

we fear the other, and from this we learn that we should adhere to that which can save us from the calamities of the Hereafter.

What he recited during the prayer

“He stood for a long time.” According to the report of Ibn Shihaab, “He recited a lengthy recitation.” At the end of the prayer, according to other reports, “he recited a long soorah.” According to the hadeeth of Ibn ‘Abbaas which appears four chapters later, “he recited something as long as Soorat al-Baqarah in the first Rak’ah.” Something similar was narrated by Abu Dawood via Sulaymaan ibn Yassar from ‘Urwah, in which it is added that “in the first standing of the second rak’ah, he recited something as long as *Aal ‘Imraan*.”

How the prayer is done

“Then he stood up and stood for a long time.” According to the report of Ibn Shihaab, “Then he said ‘*Sami’a Allaahu liman hamidah* (Allaah listens to the one who praises Him)’. Another report at the end of the chapter on eclipses adds the phrase, ‘*Rabbanaa wa laka’l-hamd* (our Lord to You be praise).’ From this it is understood that it is *mustahabb* to recite the prescribed phrases (*dhikr*) when standing up at the beginning of the second standing in the first rak’ah. Some of the later Shaafa’is found this problematic because they thought that it referred to the standing for recitation (the first standing), not the standing after rukoo’. Their evidence for this was the scholarly consensus among those who said that the rukoo’ in each rak’ah should last longer than the recitation of *al-Faatihah*, although Muhammad ibn Muslimah al-Maaliki differed from them in that regard. The response to this is that *Salaat al-Kusoof* is unique and there is no room for *qiyaas* (analogy) in this case. Everything that it is proven that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did in this prayer is prescribed for it, because it is in a class of its own. So the majority refuted those who compared it to naafil prayers and thus said that the second rukoo’ should not be added. When there is a text, *qiyaas* diminishes in significance. *Salaat al-Kusoof* is more akin to *Salaat al-‘Eed* and the like, prayers which are in a class of their own among the *Naafil* prayers. *Salaat al-Janaazah* (funeral prayer) is distinguished by the absence of rukoo’ and sujood, *Salaat al-Eedayn* (Eid prayer) by its extra *Takbeeraat*, and *Salaat al-Khawf* (fear prayer) by extra actions and not necessarily facing the Qiblah. By the same token, *Salaat al-Kusoof* is distinguished by having an extra rukoo’.

“He made the rukoo’ long.” The scholars agreed that no Qur’aan is to be recited in this rukoo’, only Dhikr such as *Tasbeeh* (“Subhaan Allaah”), *Takbeer* (“Allaahu akbar”) and so on.

“Then he finished” i.e., finished the prayer. “And the eclipse was over.” According to the report of Ibn Shihaab, “The eclipse ended before he had finished.” Al-Nisaa’i said, “Then he recited the Tashahhud and said the Salaam [i.e., ended the prayer].”

“Chapter on lengthy sujood in (salaat) al-Kusoof.” The saheeh ahaadeeth prove that the sujood should be long.

“I never did any sujood that was longer than in that prayer.” This is what is said in the hadeeth. According to another report: “I never did any sujood that was longer than that sujood.” Muslim added: “And I never did any rak’ah that was longer than that.” We have already quoted the report of ‘Urwah from ‘Aa’ishah, “Then he prostrated and made the prostration long.”

The two shaykhs (al-Bukhaari and Muslim) narrated from Abu Moosa that “[these were] the longest qiyaam (standing), rukoo’ (bowing) and sujood (prostration) that I have ever seen.” Abu Dawood and al-Nisaa’i reported from Samurah, “As if it were the longest sujood in any prayer in which he ever led us.” From all of these ahaadeeth it is clear that the sujood in Salaat al-Kusoof should be made long, as is the case with the standing and rukoo’.

Muslim reported from Jaabir that “His sujood was like his rukoo’.” This is the madhhab of Ahmad and Ishaq, and is one of the two opinions of al-Shaafa’i. It was confirmed by the scholars from the hadeeth of his Companions, and this was the view of al-Nawawi.

Note: In the hadeeth of Jaabir narrated by Muslim, which I referred to above, it says that the qiyaam (standing) which was followed by the sujood was made long. The wording is, “Then he did rukoo’ and made it long, then he prostrated.”

Al-Nisaa’i, Ibn Khuzaymah and others narrated from ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Amr, “Then he did rukoo’ and bowed for so long that it was said, he will never stand up. Then he stood up and stood for so long that it was said, he will never prostrate. Then he prostrated for so long that it was said, he will never sit up. Then he sat up and sat for so long that it was said, he will never prostrate, then he prostrated...” The hadeeth is saheeh, and I have not found anything in any report that indicates that the sitting between the two prostrations should be long, apart from this report.

“Chapter: the first rak’ah in (salaat) al-kusoof should be longer.”

In this chapter it says: “Then he stood up for a long time, but it was shorter than the previous standing.” This was reported by al-Ismaa’eeli with the wording, “The first was longer than what came after.” This contains evidence for those who say that the first standing of the second rak’ah should be shorter than the last standing of the first rak’ah... So each standing should be shorter than the one which came before. What also makes this view more likely to be correct is the fact that if what was meant by the phrase “the previous standing” was the first standing in the first rak’ah only, then the second and third standing would be omitted and no reference would be made to how long they should be. The other interpretation makes more sense. And Allaah knows best.

The reports narrated on how *Salaat al-Kusoof* should be done

From these reports it is understood that Salaat al-Kusoof takes a particular form: it is longer than usual in the standing etc., and there is an extra rukoo’ in each rak’ah.

In some manuscripts of al-Bukhaari there is a chapter heading, “*Baab subb al-mar’ah ‘ala*

ra'sihaa al-ma' idha ataala al-imaam al-qiyaam fi'l-rak'ah al-oola) A woman pouring water over her head if the imaam makes the first standing of the first rak'ah very long) – i.e., if a person is about to faint whilst praying. This also indicates that this action does not invalidate the prayer.

The khutbah

“He addressed the people.” This indicates that it is prescribed for there to be a khutbah on the occasion of an eclipse.

It also indicates that if the eclipse ends, this does not mean the khutbah does not have to be given; in contrast, if the eclipse ends before the prayer is started, then neither the prayer nor the khutbah should be done.

“He praised Allaah.” Al-Nisaa'i added, in the hadeeth of Samurah: “And he bore witness that he was the slave and Messenger of Allaah.”

“Remember Allaah.” According to the report of al-Kashmehni, “Call on Allaah [make du'aa].”

“By Allaah, there is no one” – the oath serves to re-affirm what is said, even though those who were listening had no doubts about it.

“There is no one who is more jealous” this refers to the protectiveness and pride, which one originally has towards one's wife and family.

Since they were commanded to ward off calamity by remembering Allaah, making du'aa', praying and giving in charity, it is appropriate to deter them from committing the sins which are the cause of the calamity befalling them. *Zina* (adultery or fornication) is singled out because it is the most serious of sins in that regard. Or it was said that this was because this is the most repugnant of sins and has the worst effect on people and stirs up anger, hence it is appropriate to scare them in this situation by reminding them of the punishment of the jealous Lord, may He be glorified and exalted.

“O Ummah of Muhammad.” This is because here he is in a position of warning and alarming them. Another example is the phrase, “O Faatimah daughter of Muhammad, I cannot protect you from Allaah in the slightest...” The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) started his khutbah with an oath to reaffirm what he was going to say, even though there is no doubt about its truth.

We may also understand from the phrase “O ummah of Muhammad” that the preacher should not use his preaching to exalt himself, rather he should be extremely humble because this is more effective in helping his audience to benefit from what he is saying.

“If you knew what I know” means, the great power of Allaah and His vengeance upon the sinners.

“You would laugh little” means, you would give up laughing and would laugh very rarely, because of the overwhelming fear and grief.

The hadeeth indicates that the khutbah should be more frightening than lenient, because mentioning leniency is more in tune with people’s hearts which are naturally inclined towards their own desires, but the wise doctor treats an ailment with its opposite, not with something that will only make it worse.

“Chapter: the imaam’s khutbah on the occasion of an eclipse.” The scholars differed with regard to the khutbah. Al-Shaafa’i, Ishaq and most of the scholars of hadeeth regarded it as *mustahabb*. Ibn Qudaamah said: “We did not hear anything to that effect from Ahmad.” The author of *al-Hidaayah*, one of the Hanafis, said: “There is no khutbah on the occasion of an eclipse because nothing to that effect was transmitted.” ... Some of them responded that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not intend to give a khutbah exclusively because of the eclipse, but because he wanted to explain to them what was wrong with the belief that eclipses happen because of a person’s death. The saheeh ahaadeeth describe the khutbah and its features such as praising Allaah and preaching, etc. The ahaadeeth did not refer only to the reason for the eclipse. The basic principle of Islam is to follow the example of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and the details are only to be proven with the proper evidence (daleel). Ibn Daqeeq al-‘Eed considered this interpretation to be weak and said: “The khutbah cannot be confined to a certain idea after you have done what is required, i.e., praising Allaah and preaching. Everything that has been mentioned concerning explaining the causes of the eclipse and other things is among the purpose of the khutbah. So we should follow the example of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and the imaam should mention that in his khutbah on the occasion of the eclipse.” Yes, Ibn Qudaamah thought that Khutbat al-Kusoof is like Khutbat al-Jumu’ah (Friday sermon) and Khutbat al-‘Eedayn (Eid sermon), but there is nothing to indicate that in the ahaadeeth that have been mentioned.

(al-Bukhaari 988)

Is it obligatory to pray *Salaat al-Kusoof* in congregation?

“To the prayer” means to a specific, known prayer. From this it is understood that praying in congregation is not essential for it to be valid, because the hadeeth refers to him rushing and hastening. (But praying in congregation is indicated by the Prophet’s actions, so it is Sunnah, but it is OK for a Muslim to pray *Salaat al-Kusoof* individually, male or female, settled or travelling).

Chapter: *Salaat al-Kusoof* in the mosque

This is understood from the phrase “he passed between the apartments”, because the apartments were the homes of the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), which were attached to the mosque, as has been stated... According to Muslim the wording is: “I came out among some women between the apartments and into the

mosque, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came from his funeral escort to the place where he usually prayed...” The funeral escort was because his son Ibraaheem had died... When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came back (from the funeral), he went to the mosque.. If it were not the Sunnah to pray *Salaat al-Kusoof* in the mosque, praying it in the desert it may make it easier to see when the eclipse ends. And Allaah knows best.

Women may pray *Salaat al-Kusoof* with men

This is a refutation of those who say that this is not allowed and that women should pray individually... in *al-Mudawwanah* it says: women should pray at home and only old women should come out (to the mosque). According to al-Shaafa’i everyone should come out apart from women who are stunningly beautiful (because they may tempt men).

Remembering Allaah at the time of the eclipse with all kinds of Islamically prescribed phrases

“and remember Allaah”. According to the report of al-Kashmehni, “and remember Him” – with the pronoun referring to Allaah. “Allaah frightens His slaves with it.” This is encouraging us to seek forgiveness at the time of the eclipse and at other times, because this is one of the things that can ward off calamity.

What the Muslim historians said

In *al-Bidayyah wa’l-Nihaayah* it says:

“In Jumaada al-Aakhirah (453 AH), two days before the end of the month, the sun was eclipsed totally, with its entire disk being obscured. The people stayed like that for four hours, until the stars appeared and the birds fled to their nests and stopped flying because it was so dark.”

Elsewhere in the book, the author (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

“On the morning of Sunday, the twenty-eighth of the month mentioned (Jumaada al-Aakhirah), the sun was eclipsed before noon.”

Conclusion

What is our attitude on the medical aspects?

It is wise not to stare at the sun during the eclipse, because it has been proven medically that this is harmful. There is nothing wrong with eye doctors being present in their clinics and hospitals to deal with emergency cases, as this is a reasonable precaution. But people should not ignore this great act of worship – *Salaat al-Kusoof*, with which Allaah frightens His slaves – for the sake of enjoying looking at the eclipse with special glasses or using other instruments or cameras. This is the height of negligence on this occasion.

People are afraid of the dangers of ultra-violet rays because of the complications that may cause and the possibility that they may burn the eye and destroy its cells and damage the lens. They fear that infra-red rays may burn the eye without a person even feeling it.

We should fear the Day when eyes will burnt when a person can feel it!

O Allaah, make us fear You and make us content to put our trust in You. Give us the strength to obey You and do not humiliate us by letting us disobey You. Help us to remember You and to thank You and to worship You properly. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad.
