

12602 - Imsaak (stopping eating) a few minutes before Fajr is bid'ah

the question

In some countries there is a time approximately ten minutes before Fajr which they say is the time of imsaak (stopping eating and drinking), when the people usually start fasting and stop eating and drinking. Is what they do correct?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

What they do is not correct.

Because Allaah has permitted the fasting person to eat and drink until dawn comes. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night)”

[al-Baqarah 2:187]

al-Bukhaari (1919) and Muslim (1092) narrated from Ibn 'Umar and 'Aa'ishah that Bilaal used to give the adhaan at night. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Eat and drink until Ibn Umm Maktoom gives the adhaan, for he does not give the adhaan until dawn comes.”

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

This shows that it is permissible to eat, drink, have intercourse etc until dawn comes.

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
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Al-Haafiz ibn Hajar said in Fath al-Baari (4/199):

One of the reprehensible innovations that have appeared in our times is giving the second adhaan approximately twenty minutes before Fajr in Ramadaan, and extinguishing the lamps which indicate that it is haraam to eat and drink for those who want to fast. Those who introduced this innovation claim that they are erring on the side of caution with regard to an act of worship.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen was asked about some timetables which give the time of imsaak as being approximately one-quarter of an hour before Fajr. He said:

This is a kind of bid'ah (innovation) which has no basis in the Sunnah. Rather the Sunnah is to do the opposite, because Allaah says in His Holy Book (interpretation of the meaning):

“and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night)”

[al-Baqarah 2:187]

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Bilal gives the adhaan at night, so eat and drink until you hear the adhaan of Ibn Umm Maktoom, for he does not give the adhaan until dawn comes.” This imsaak which some of the people do is an addition to that which Allaah has enjoined, so it is false. It is a kind of extremism in religion, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Those who go to extremes are doomed, those who go to extremes are doomed, those who go to extremes are doomed.”

Narrated by Muslim, 2670

And Allaah knows best.