
Difference of opinion in regards to the Moon Sighting of Dhul Hijjah

The local committee announced the beginning of Dhul Hijjah a day after Saudi had announced it. Every year there is an argument regarding this, so how should we recognize the start of Ramadan, Dhul Hijjah, etc? From the Qur'an and Sunnah, we learn that the moon is the same for everyone, regardless of their locality

- When Allah mentions the moon in the Qur'an, He also mentions all of mankind:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلِةِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ ؕ

They ask you, [O Muhammad], about the new moons. Say, "They are measurements of time for the people and for Hajj." [Al Baqarah: 189]

- There is only one Hajj for all the people, so the moon is also one
- The moon has different stages (28 phases) for *all* of mankind, and not just one locality:

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ ؕ

It is He who made the sun a shining light and the moon a derived light and determined for it phases - that you may know the number of years and account [of time]. [Yunus: 5]

- Allah is the Lord of all of mankind and Islam doesn't have a division of countries and boundaries - all Muslims are part of one ummah:

وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ

And indeed this, your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so fear Me.
[Al Mu'minun: 52]

- In the following hadith, the command of the Prophet (ﷺ) is for everyone, and not for a certain locality:

صُومُوا لِرُؤُوسِهِ، وَأَفْطِرُوا لِرُؤُوسِهِ، فَإِنْ غُبِّيَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَكْمِلُوا عِدَّةَ شَعْبَانَ ثَلَاثِينَ

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "Observe Saum (fast) on sighting the crescent and terminate it on sighting it (the new moon), but if the sky is cloudy before you, then complete the number (thirty days) of the month." [Sahih al-Bukhari 1909]

- If *some* Muslims sight the moon, then *all* the Muslims should start fasting, celebrate Eid al Fitr and Eid al Adha, etc.. It is not from Islam to have separate Eids or for one masjid to fast while another is celebrating Eid. The whole ummah is being addressed here:

الصَّوْمُ يَوْمَ تَصُومُونَ وَالْفِطْرُ يَوْمَ تُفْطِرُونَ وَالْأَضْحَى يَوْمَ تُضْحُونَ

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "The fast is the day the people fast, the breaking of the fast is the day the people break their fast, and the sacrifice is the day the people sacrifice."
[Jami` at-Tirmidhi 697]

With regards to the command of sighting the moon, there are two types:

1. Haqiqi - a person sees the moon with his own eyes
2. Hukmi - a person didn't see the moon himself, but has been informed by others of the moon being sighted, so that moon sighting is applicable to everyone
 - a. If any of the sahaba informed the Prophet ﷺ of having sighted the moon, he took their statement and would accordingly start fasting, celebrate Eid, etc.
 - b. There was an instance where people came to the Prophet ﷺ from very far and informed him that they sighted the moon. The Prophet ﷺ took their statement and didn't ask them how far they had come:

It was narrated that 'Umair bin Anas bin Malik said:

"My paternal uncles among the Ansar who were among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) told me: 'The new crescent of Shawwal was covered with clouds, so we fasted the next day. Then some riders came at the end of the day and testified to the Prophet (ﷺ) that they had seen the new crescent the night before. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) commanded them to break their fast and to go out to offer the 'Eid prayer the following morning.'"

[Sunan Ibn Majah 1653]

- Unanimous decision among scholars that if some Muslims sight the moon, then all Muslims should start fasting with them
- Imam Malik, Imam Hanbal, and Imam Abu Hanifa all mention that there is no basis of having different "moons"
 - If people in the West sight the moon, then the people in the East must follow them in also beginning the fasting
 - Imam Malik says in his Muwatta', "If people are fasting on the day of Fitr thinking that it is still Ramadan and then definite evidence comes to them that the new moon of Ramadan had been seen one day before they began to fast and that they are now into the thirty- first day, then they should break the fast on that day at whatever time the news comes to them..." [Book 18, Hadith 4]
 - Imam an-Nawawi says in his explanation (sharh) of Sahih Muslim, "Some of our [Shafi'i] companions say that a universal sighting in any place applies to all people on the earth, and that is their practice."

- Ibn Taimiyyah said, " *A person who learns about the sighting of the moon in good time to be able to utilize it for fasting, ending his fast, or sacrifice, must definitely do so. The Texts [of Islam] and the reports from the Salaf point to this...* " [Shaikh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, Al-Fatawa, 5:111]
- Other opinions
 - The founder of the Barlevis said: "In the correct and authentic mazhab of our Imams, with regard to the sighting of moon for Ramdhan and eid, distance of the place of sighting is of no consideration. The sighting of the east is binding upon west and vice versa i.e. the sighting of west is similarly binding on east." [Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan, Fatawa Rizwi; Vol 4 page 568, Urdu edition]
 - The co-founder of Dar al-Uloom Deoband, Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi said: "If the people of Calcutta sighted the moon in Friday, whereas it was sighted in Makkah on Thursday itself, but the people of Calcutta did not know of it (the sighting on Thursday); then whenever they come to know of this, it will be obligatory for them to celebrate eid with the people of Makkah and make up (Qada') for the first fasting." [Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi, Sharh Tirmizi (Explanation of Tirmizi), Kaukab un Durri, pg 336, Urdu edition]
 - "Wherever the sighting is confirmed, however far off it may be, even if it were to be thousands of miles; the people of this place will have to abide by that." [Fatawa Dar ul Uloom Deoband, Vol. 6 page 380, Urdu edition]
- Sheikh Albaanee was also of the opinion that if the moon is sighted in one place, then all Muslims must begin fasting or stop fasting
- There is no such report of the Prophet ﷺ acting contrary to the report of the moon being sighted by other Muslims - he did not ask them how far away it was sighted
 - He immediately started fasting or celebrated Eid
- If Islam has not placed any restrictions on the distance the moon was sighted from one's country, how can we place such restrictions?
 - There is no consensus on what is considered to be a "local" moon sighting
- The command to look for the moon has been given to everyone; if one person has sighted it, it has been fulfilled
- The following phrase is very common, but it is not a hadith. It is the title of a chapter given by some muhadditheen in some hadith books:

لِكُلِّ بَلَدٍ رُؤْيَتِهِمْ

Every country has its own sighting

- The following hadith is present in this chapter:

Kuraib narrated that Umm Al-Fadl sent him to Muawiyah in Ash-Sham. He said:

"I came to Ash-Sham. He said: "I came to Ash-Sham and complete her errand. Then the new crescent of Ramadan was sighted while I was in Ash-Sham. I saw the new crescent on the night of Friday, then I came to Al-Madinah at the end of the month. 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas asked me

about the sighting of the moon and said: ' When did you see it?' I said: 'We saw it on the night of Friday.' He said; 'You saw it on the ninth of Friday?' I said: 'Yes, and the people saw it and started fasting, and so did Muawiyah. He said: 'But we saw it on the night of Saturday, so we will continue fasting until we have completed thirty days or we see it.' I said: 'Will you not be content with the sighting of Muawiyah and his companions? He said; 'No; this is what the Messenger of Allah enjoined upon us.' [Sunan an-Nasa'i 2111]

- Hadith about ijtihaad, which shows us that we should not fight regarding the matter of global vs. local sighting:

Kuraib narrated that Umm Al-Fadl sent him to Muawiyah in Ash-Sham. He said:
Amr ibn al-'As reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "If a judge makes a ruling, striving to apply his reasoning and he is correct, he will have two rewards. If a judge makes a ruling, striving to apply his reasoning and he is mistaken, he will have one reward."
[Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 7352, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1716]
