

The Reason for Insisting on Adopting the Unity of Sighting and Nothing Else, in Determining the Start of the Blessed Month of Ramadan

(Translated)

News:

The International Astronomy Center has determined the date for the start of the blessed month of Ramadan in 2025 based on astronomical calculations that identify the day when the crescent moon of the fasting month can be sighted by Muslims. In a statement on its website, the International Astronomy Center announced that the Islamic world will observe the crescent moon of Ramadan for the year 1446 AH on Friday, February 28, 2025. It revealed that sighting the crescent on that day is possible using a telescope from western Asia, most of Africa, and southern Europe, and it is visible to the naked eye from large parts of the Americas. The statement added that since the crescent can be sighted from the Islamic world on Friday, and given that the conjunction occurs before sunset and the moon sets after sunset in all regions of the Islamic world, it is expected that most Islamic countries will declare the start of the blessed month of Ramadan on Saturday, March 1st. (Source: <https://astronomycenter.net/articles/2025/02/13/ram46>)

Comment:

The reason for insisting on reminding Muslims of the obligation of adopting the unity of sighting, in determining the start of Ramadan and the beginning of Shawwal, is the soundness and strength of this jurisprudential (fiqhi) opinion, as well as the pursuit of the unity of the Islamic Ummah. Muslims, led by their jurists, have unanimously agreed that the unity of the Islamic Ummah is one of the objectives of Islamic law, which Muslims must strive to achieve as a matter of life and death. Islam has made the unity of the Ummah and its cohesion as a vital obligation, with the severest punishment awaiting those who violate it. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, «مَنْ أَتَاكُمْ وَأَمْرُكُمْ جَمِيعٌ عَلَى رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَشُقَّ عَصَائِكُمْ أَوْ يُفَرِّقَ جَمَاعَتَكُمْ فَأَقْتُلُوهُ» **“Whoever comes to you while your affair is unified under one man, wanting to split your unity or divide your group, kill him.”** And the Prophet (saw) also said, «فَمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقَ أَمْرَ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ وَهِيَ جَمِيعٌ، فَاصْرِبْهُ بِالسَّيْفِ كَانِنًا مَنْ كَانَ» **“Whoever seeks to divide the affairs of this ummah while it is unified, strike him with the sword, whoever he may be.”** [Sahih Muslim].

The Messenger of Allah (saw) explicitly stated that whoever intends to divide this Ummah deserves death and execution. Therefore, seeking and adopting rulings that achieve the unity of Muslims is the work of the sincere ones who strive to unify the Ummah in all its affairs, whether in ruling by what Allah (swt) has revealed and the obligation to appoint a single Khalifah (caliph) to govern them by the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet, or in their worship rituals such as Salah, Sawm, Hajj, Zakat, and Jihad.

Despite the ease of performing acts of worship, in the manner Allah (swt) intended and is pleased with, there are those who wait for an opportunity against Islam and Muslims, insisting on adopting jurisprudentially invalid opinions to serve political agendas, aimed at undermining the unity of the Ummah in its Islamic rituals. This is similar to how the colonialist kafir succeeded in politically dividing the Ummah into more than fifty states, installing over each an agent ruler loyal to them, whose primary task is to rule by kufr, pleasing their masters in Western capitals. These rulers employ every ounce of cunning to prevent the

implementation of Islam in people's lives, even in their acts of worship, Prayer, Fasting, Hajj, Zakat, Jihad, and so forth.

This is although Allah (swt) has made His Shariah easy and accessible, tying Shariah rulings to obvious and tangible matters, understood equally by the layman, the alim, the desert nomad and the city-dweller. The Prophet (saw) emphasized this by saying, «إِنَّا أُمَّةٌ أُمِّيَّةٌ» «We are an unlettered ummah; we neither write nor calculate. The month is like this, like this, and like this.» This affirms that our Deen does not require complex calculations like those used by the People of the Book to regulate their worship. Yet, these rulers, along with the ulema of the rulers, have confused people about their rituals, straying from the sound jurisprudential opinions agreed upon by the classical ulema, with the intent of entrenching the Ummah's political division and extending it to a division in its rituals.

The Ulema have agreed that the criterion for confirming the start and end of the month is the visual sighting of the Hilal crescent, as stated in the authentic hadith: «لَا تَصُومُوا حَتَّى تَرَوْهُ، وَلَا تَفْطُرُوا حَتَّى تَرَوْهُ» «Do not fast until you see it, and do not break your fast until you see it.» This indicates that relying on astronomical calculations alone is not valid in Islamic jurisprudence. Indeed, a consensus has been established that the opinions of astronomers are not to be considered binding, even if they agree on the calculation over the probable sighting of the Hilal crescent. Thus, these rulers and ulema of the rulers were among those who undermined the bonds of Islam, as the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, «لَيَنْقُضَنَّ عُرَى الْإِسْلَامِ» «The knots of Islam will be undone one by one. Whenever one knot is undone, the people will hold on to the next one. The first of these bonds to be undone will be the ruling by Islam, and the last will be Salah.» [Narrated by Ahmad].

The consensus of the majority of ulema, including Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn 'Abidin, al-Qurtubi, and others, has been transmitted, affirming that it is not permissible to rely solely on astronomical calculations to establish the months. They emphasized that acting upon the sighting of the Hilal crescent for Fasting, Hajj, and other rulings tied to the Hilal crescent must not be based on the calculations of astronomers, but instead on visual sighting. This is what Muslims have unanimously agreed upon, with no known disagreement, old or new, except from some later ulema who opposed the consensus without a sound legal basis. Indeed, the establishment of the Hilal crescent is based on visual sighting, not the calculations of mathematicians, which ensures that the community of Muslims remains unified, and does not require complex calculations to achieve unity in fasting and breaking the fast.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ﴾

“O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah intervenes between a man and his heart and that to Him you will be gathered.” [TMQ Surah Al-Anfaal 8:24]

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