

The Start and End of the Blessed Month of Ramadan are Determined only by the Shari' Sighting of the Hilal (new moon)

(Translated)

With the grace and bounty of Allah, we are approaching the arrival of the blessed month of Ramadan for the Hijri year 1445. Once again, discussions arise among Muslims regarding whether the beginning of Ramadan can be predetermined using astronomical calculations and what is the correct approach to deal with this issue. Some Islamic centers in Denmark have chosen to follow astronomical calculations based on certain considerations, while others have rejected this and affirmed that the beginning of the month must be confirmed by sighting the *hilal* (the new moon) with the naked eye according to the Islamic methodology.

This question is important for Muslims all over the world. A part of the ongoing debate concerns the proper interpretation and application of Islamic rulings, especially for Muslims living in the West. Therefore, Hizb ut Tahrir in Denmark finds it necessary to clarify the following points:

The beginning of fasting in the month of Ramadan relies on sighting the *hilal* according to the religious evidence, including the Hadith where the Prophet Muhammad (saw) said... «صُومُوا لِرُؤْيَيْهِ وَأَفْطَرُوا لِرُؤْيَيْهِ فَإِنْ عُبِّيَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَكْمَلُوا عِدَّةَ شَعْبَانَ ثَلَاثِينَ» **“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.”** [Al-Bukhari]

This question is a religious matter directly related to the religious texts and takes from them a mandatory character. Muslims must take their positions on such religious issues based on what the texts of the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw) indicate, without being influenced by prevailing circumstances or practical considerations. Claiming that determining the beginning of Ramadan by sighting Al-*hilal* is related to a "legal defect" and that it is not necessary to sight the crescent but it is sufficient to know of its existence is an incorrect claim and there is no evidence to support it. If it is not possible to sight the crescent at the end of the month, then the hadith of the Prophet (saw) has provided the solution. «... فَإِنْ عُبِّيَ عَلَيْكُمْ» **“but if the sky is cloudy before you, then complete the number (thirty days) of the month.”**

Even if astronomical calculations were accurate, the issue does not pertain to confirming a celestial phenomenon in the scientific sense. Determining the beginning or end of Ramadan does not require a "scientific guarantee" of the new moon's birth. There is no religious evidence that the start of fasting must depend on the astronomical birth of the *hilal* (new moon), but it must be based on sighting it, as the Prophet (saw) commanded in the previous hadith.

Therefore, if the crescent of Ramadan is present but obscured by clouds to the extent that it cannot be seen with the naked eye, in this case, we must complete Sha'ban for thirty days.

We, Hizb ut Tahrir in Denmark, driven by our love for our Deen and commitment to its Sharia, wish to clarify that the beginning of the month of Ramadan should only be determined by the method prescribed in the religious texts, namely through sighting, and not through astronomical calculations.

There is another important aspect that dear Muslims should be aware of. There is a deeper aspect to the current debate on how to determine the start of the month of Ramadan that goes beyond just the legislative aspect. It is, in fact, a more serious issue that affects our understanding of Islam legislatively and how we deal with the religious evidence. For Muslims who choose to rely on astronomical calculations instead of sighting, among their justifications is that we live in a non-Muslim society where Islamic practices receive little understanding and are almost non-existent. Therefore, according to them, relying on astronomical calculations is more suitable for Muslims in the West for practical reasons and to facilitate matters. Then, very weak interpretations of the texts or the opinions of some scholars are used to justify the stance already taken regarding reliance on astronomical calculations. Furthermore, irrelevant opinions, such as the absence of conflict between Islam and science, are added.

We are here compelled to warn that this is a problematic approach to Islamic law when presumed or imagined interests become the determining factors, including prevailing circumstances, including the ruling regime, in choosing between opinions, even in matters of worship. With this approach, one can slide dangerously towards adapting Islam to a societal system that does not respect Islam but rather resists it and aims to integrate and assimilate Muslims into it.

O Muslims: Together, we eagerly anticipate the upcoming month of Ramadan that gathers Muslims around the world as soon as the sighting of the *hilal* (new moon) is confirmed anywhere on the face of the earth, starting from the 29th of Sha'ban, by the permission of Allah. We ask Allah, the Most High, to enable us to experience the blessed month of Ramadan once again and to bring with it comfort and victory for the Muslim Ummah. We also pray that this month marks the last Ramadan without a Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate).

Finally, we remind you, dear Muslims, that the recurring confusion about the start and end of Ramadan and the celebration of Eid is due to the absence of Islamic governance for centuries, and therefore the absence of legitimate Islamic authority to regulate the affairs of Muslims, including their common worship practices, and to make binding decisions for all Muslims worldwide.

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Hizb ut Tahrir

Denmark