

Can Fast Be Kept Or Eid Be Celebrated As Per Calender, Without Sighting The Moon?

Darulifta Ahlesunnat

(Dawateislami)

Question

What do the noble scholars and the Jurist of Islamic law say regarding the following matters:
1] Can fast be observed or eid be celebrated according to the calendar, without sighting the moon?
2] Sometimes a month begins according to the calendar, whilst the moon is not visible on that day and then when it's visible the following day, it seems like a 2 day old moon, therefore, should the moon be considered 2 day old corresponding to the calendar or 1 day old?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

1] According to Islamic Laws, the matters related to Fast and Eid depend on sighting of the moon, therefore one cannot fast or celebrate eid without sighting the moon, because the word “Sighting رؤيت” is mentioned in Sahih Ahaadith and from the time of the holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم till now, actual sighting was interpreted from this and this has always been the practice, hence, the lunar month won't begin until the moon is sighted or it is approved by Islamic Laws, although the month may have commenced according to the calendar. Because we are obliged to follow Quran and Hadith, not the astronomers, therefore matters related to worship, such as, Ramadaan, Eid etc. will be observed according to the actual sighting, not according to the calendar. Regarding observing fast, celebrating eid etc. it is stated in a hadith, that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

لا تصوموا حتى تروا الهلال ولا تفطروا حتى تروه

Meaning “Do not commence the fast of Ramadaan without sighting the moon and do not end it without sighting” [Sahih Bukhari, kitabus sawm, باب إذا رأيتم الهلال فصوموا الخ, V-3, P.27, Dar tauq al najaat]

Even if it is cloudy, then too, it is not permissible to fast or to celebrate eid on the basis of assumption, rather completing 30 days of that month has been ordained.

The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم said:

“فإن غم عليكم فأكملوا العدة ثلاثين يوماً”

Translation: If the Moon is invisible to you, then complete 30 days. [Sunan dar qutni, kitabus sawm, باب الصوم لرؤية الهلال, V-2, P.7, Dar al kutub al arabi, Beirut]

Regarding observing fast and celebrating eid etc. only upon sighting the moon, it is stated in the famous book of Hanafi jurisprudence, "AL Ikhtiyar" :

"(ويجب أن يلتبس الناس الهلال في التاسع والعشرين من شعبان وقت الغروب فإن رأوه صاموا، وإن غمّ عليهم أكملوه ثلاثين يوماً) لقوله عليه الصلاة والسلام: "صوموا الرؤيته وأفطروا الرؤيته، فإن غمّ عليكم فعدوا شعبان ثلاثين يوماً"

Meaning: It is necessary to search for the moon on the 29th Sha'ban at the time of Maghrib, hence, if they sight it, they should fast and if its cloudy, then they should complete 30 days of Sha'ban. As the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم has stated: Fast upon sighting the moon and terminate upon sighting it, if it's cloudy, then complete 30 days of Sha'ban.[Al ikhtiyar li ta'leel al mukhtar, kitabus sawm, V-1, P.128, Beirut]

2] The day the moon is sighted, that is the day which will be considered, even if the moon may seem to be 2 day old apparently, because Shari'ah has ordained for sighting, therefore, the day it is sighted, that is day which will be reckoned and this has been the practice of the Sahaba رحمهم الله.

It is stated in Sahih Muslim:

"عن أبي البخترى قال خرجنا للعمرة فلما نزلنا بطن نخلة قال تراءينا الهلال فقال بعض القوم هو ابن ثلاث وقال بعض القوم هو ابن ليلتين قال فلقينا ابن عباس فقلنا إننا رأينا الهلال فقال بعض القوم هو ابن ثلاث وقال بعض القوم هو ابن ليلتين فقال أي ليلة رأيتموه قال فقلنا ليلة كذا وكذا فقال إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال إن الله مده للرؤية فهو لليلة رأيتموه"

Translation: It is narrated from Abu al bakhtariyy, he says, we went for Umrah and when we reached the valley of nakhlah, we sighted the moon, so some people said, it is 3 nights old, some people said, it is 2 nights old. However we met Abdullah Ibn Abbas رضى الله تعالى عنها and mentioned the incident to him, so he asked, on which night did you sight the moon? We said, so and so night. Hence, Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Abbas رضى الله تعالى عنها said: The Messenger of Allah said: indeed Allah has fixed its Period depending on sighting, therefore, the night you all sighted the moon, that is night which will be reckoned.[Sahih Muslim, Kitabus sawm, باب بيان انه لا اعتبار بكمبر الهلال, V-3, P.127, Beirut]

Imam of Ahlus Sunnah Imam Ahmed Raza khan رحمه الله states mentioning the mistakes of sighting the moon: Assumptions and Contexts e.g. the moon was large, it was bright or it was visible for long duration, therefore it was definitely of yesterday, today it has risen late, so it is definitely 15th today, the moon was sighted on 28th, hence the month will be of 30 days, we tried to sight it on 28th, but we didn't, therefore the month will be of 29 days. All these assumptions do not even value the calculations, therefore, acting upon them is mere ignorance and humiliation. It is stated in a Hadith, the Beloved Prophet صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم said:

من اقترب الساعة انتفاخ الالهة

Meaning: From the signs of nearness of judgement day is that, the moon will appear bulged. Meaning it will appear large in viewing.[Fatawa Razawiyya, V-10, P.428, Raza Foundation, Lahore]

وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَرَسُوْلُهُ اَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

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