

Moon Sighting for Ramadan and Eid: A Divine Call for Unity

O Muslims, Allah (swt) has blessed us with the sacred act of fasting for a profound purpose. ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾ **“O you who have believed, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become righteous.”** [Al-Baqarah: 183].

Abdullah ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) reported that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: «الشَّهْرُ تِسْعَ وَعِشْرُونَ فَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الْهَيْلَالَ فَصُومُوا وَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمُوهُ فَأَفْطِرُوا فَإِنْ غُمَّ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقْدِرُوا لَهُ» **“The month is twenty-nine days, so when you see the crescent moon, start fasting, and when you see it again, break your fast. But if it is obscured from you, then calculate it accordingly.”** (Narrated by Muslim)

Fasting is (*Ibada Tawqifiah*) “as prescribed by Allah worship”; it's stated objective in the Ayah “So you may gain Taqwa” to build personal piety and strengthens community bonds. The Ahadeeth of Prophet Mohammad (saw) established the how to perform this Ibada – Worship - in text, acts and approval of (saw). Like prayer, zakat, and pilgrimage, fasting is as much individual Ibada (Worship) as much as it is collective. Fasting brings us together as an ummah, united like a solid structure. But sadly, we've drifted from this purpose piety and unity!

Colonial powers deliberately worked to divide Muslims, separating them from the very acts of worship and deeds that unite them—prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, zakat, jihad, and steadfastness in the path of Allah. They also sought to weaken their commitment to protecting their land, honor, and sacred sites, calling others to Islam, and upholding justice and mercy. To achieve this, they promoted division through nationalism, artificial borders, and self-interest, exploiting minor jurisprudential differences to justify their agenda. It is as if Muslims are expected to shape their worship around personal convenience rather than adhering to clear, authentic evidence in devotion to their Creator! ﴿فَاسْتَقِمَّ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَمَن تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ﴾ **“So remain steadfast as you have been commanded—you and those who turn back with you—and do not transgress. Indeed, He is All-Seeing of what you do.”** [Hud: 112].

O Muslims, the debate around moon sighting isn't just a scholarly disagreement; it reflects a deeper issue—our disunity as an ummah. The same moon that rises over Mecca appears over Jerusalem, Istanbul, Rabat, and Jakarta. Why, then, do we let colonial-era borders divide our worship? In 1966, the Islamic Research Academy in Cairo ruled that “differences in moon sighting locations are irrelevant, even across distant regions, as long as they share the same night.”

Some argue for astronomical calculations to create unified practice unsuccessfully. While the Arabs of the Prophet's time knew astronomy, they didn't rely on it for this act of worship. Instead, they followed actual moon sightings.

In a hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both), he said: جَاءَ أَعْرَابِيٌّ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ الْهَيْلَالَ قَالَ الْحَسَنُ فِي حَدِيثِهِ يَعْني رَمَضَانَ فَقَالَ أَتَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ

إِلَّا اللَّهُ قَالَ نَعَمْ قَالَ أَنْشَهُدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ قَالَ يَا بِلَالُ أَدِنِّي فِي النَّاسِ فَلْيَصُومُوا عَدَا
"A Bedouin came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and said, 'I have seen the crescent moon.' Al-Hasan, in his narration, clarified that he meant the crescent of Ramadan. The Prophet asked him, 'Do you bear witness that there is no god but Allah?' He replied, 'Yes.' The Prophet then asked, 'Do you bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah?' He replied, 'Yes.' The Prophet then said, 'O Bilal, announce to the people that they should fast tomorrow.'"

So why don't we worship Allah as He wants to be worshiped, rather than according to the whims of division and borders?!

O Muslims, Here comes the blessed month of Ramadan, the month of worship and forgiveness, the month of victories and triumphs, the month of dignity and unity—a single month for one ummah, with one fast and one Eid to bring joy to the entire nation. Will we not respond to our Lord, unite our ranks, support the weak among us, implement our Shariah, liberate our sanctities, and defeat our enemies as one united nation? Indeed, Allah loves to see unity among the ummah, and He will shower it with His pleasure, blessings, forgiveness, victory, and honor, rewarding it with the gardens of Paradise.

O Nation of Muhammad! This division, even in the simplest act of moon sighting, reflects the larger challenges we face due to the absence of Islamic governance that unites us under the banner of "**La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadur Rasul Allah.**" As Muslims, we are called to follow divine guidance (Hukum Shari) in every aspect of life, including fasting and Eid.

The Prophet (saw) said: «لَا طَاعَةَ لِمَخْلُوقٍ فِي مَعْصِيَةِ الْخَالِقِ» "**There is no obedience to any created being if it involves disobedience to the Creator.**"

On the Day of Judgment, will we not be asked, "**Why did you divide your religion?**" Shouldn't we strive to be among those Allah describes: ﴿وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا﴾ "**Hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided.**" [Aal-Imran: 103].

O Muslims let's answer Allah's call. Let's unite our ranks, uphold His law, and reclaim our dignity in this world and His pleasure in the Hereafter.

O Allah, allow us to reach Ramadan while You are pleased with us, unite our Ummah in Your obedience, and grant us victory over those who seek to harm us. Ameen!

Friday, 29 Sha'ban 1446 AH

February 28, 2025 CE

Hizb ut Tahrir

America