

Details of the New Moon for Ramadhaam and Eidul Fitr (concerning the situation in England)

Q: Salaah-290: Here in England we always have clouds and dust in the Atmosphere because of which the sun and moon are seldom seen. As a result. the Islaamic months run a full thirty days. What should we do with regard to the new moon of Ramadhaan and Eidul Fitr? People here generally work in factories and need to fill out an application a week before taking leave. There is a Molvi Sahib here who receives news of the sighting of the new moon via telephone from Morocco. Is this in order?

People are unable to take leave spontaneously and the law also states that none can take leave on the last day of the month as well as on the first day of the next month. Should anyone do so, he will lose his job. Since the month is counted as having thirty days when the moon is not sighted, will there be any harm to specify the beginning of Ramadhaan and the days of Eidul Fitr and Eidul Adhaa according to a twenty-nine day rotation?

Answer: It is not necessary in the Shari'ah to get news of the moon's sighting from another country and to follow suit. If the moon is not sighted by the twenty-ninth day, the month will be a complete thirty days. Rasulullaah SAW. said that fasting should not start until the moon of Ramadhaan is sighted and should then not end until the moon of Shawwaal is sighted. If the moon is not sighted because of overcast conditions by the twenty-ninth day, the month will be a complete thirty days. Even if one day's fast is lost in this manner, the full reward will still be attained Inshaa Allaah.

In another Hadith, Rasulullaah SAW. said that according to Allaah as well, the fasting will start on the day that the people start to fast. the fasting will end on the day that the people end the fasting and the sacrifice of animals (for the day of Eidul Adhaa) will take place on the day that the people start to sacrifice.

Now in a place where the sky is always unclear and every month is counted as thirty days, there will be a very big discrepancy. If people have to rely on news from the radio or telephone, there will be great confusion, which will lead to doubts in acts of Ibaadah such as fasting, Taraaweeh, Eid, sacrificing, etc. This will eventually lead to conflicts and chaos. In a situation like this, you need to establish a contact with a country that has its sunrise and sunset times closest to your own, but where the moon can be sighted. When three or four religious people from this country telephones you with news of the sighting and you know well that the voices are theirs, you may start Ramadhaan.

However, formal testimony is required in the case of the sighting of the moon for Eid. In this case, two religious and trustworthy men need to see the moon themselves and then fly down to present the testimony to you, or two such men from your country need to go there and hear the testimony from them. What may also be done is to receive an official announcement of the sighting from the Mufti, Judge or chairman of the Hilaal committee to the effect that the moon has been sighted. This will be valid if the accredited Ulema of your country recognise and accept the word of this person.

As for the question of taking leave, it may not be too difficult to apply for two days leave in advance. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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