

Fast when you see it

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It was narrated from 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) spoke of Ramadaan and said: "Do not fast until you see the new moon, and do not break the fast until you see it, and if it is covered then complete the month." Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1906; Muslim, 1080.

This hadeeth indicates that it is obligatory to fast Ramadaan when the sighting of the new moon is confirmed according to sharee'ah. It also indicates that it is obligatory to break the fast when it is confirmed that the new moon of Shawwaal has been sighted according to sharee'ah, and that it is obligatory to complete Sha'baan as thirty days if clouds etc prevent sighting of the new moon of Ramadaan, and it is obligatory to complete Ramadaan as thirty days if clouds etc prevent sighting of the new moon of Shawwaal - because the basic principle is that the month continues and it not judged to have ended until there is certainty. It is not essential for each person to sight the moon for himself, rather if it is sighted by someone whose testimony that the month has begun or ended is acceptable, then the ruling applies.

The words "if it is covered" means if the new moon is concealed and covered by clouds etc.

"Then complete the month" means make it thirty days. This meaning is confirmed by the words narrated in *al-Saheehayn*: "If it (the new moon) is covered then complete the number (of days) as thirty."

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

Here there is a very important issue which is often discussed at this time, which is:

The ruling on fasting the Day of Doubt.

The day of doubt is the night of the thirtieth of Sha'baan [in the Islamic calendar days are regarded as starting at sundown], if the new moon is not sighted or is covered with clouds etc.

It is not permissible to fast on this day because the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded the Muslims to complete Sha'baan as thirty days if the new moon was concealed, because that night is part of Sha'baan unless there is certain evidence that it is Ramadaan. 'Ammar ibn Yaasir (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "Whoever fasts the day concerning which there is doubt has disobeyed Abu'l-Qaasim (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)." Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 686; al-Nasaa'i, 2188; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh al-Tirmidhi*, 553. See also questions no. [22850](#), [13711](#), [26860](#).

We should also pay attention to the new moon of Sha'baan so that we can watch out for the thirtieth night and seek the new moon of Ramadaan.

The month should be completed if the new moon is not sighted because Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Follow the progress of the moon through Sha'baan so that you may seek Ramadaan." Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 687; classed as hasan by al-Albaani in *al-Silsilah al-Saheehah*, 565.

What this hadeeth means is: try to work out when Sha'baan will begin and strive to watch the phases of the moon so that you will be ready to watch out for the new moon of Ramadaan and you will not miss any of it.

And Allaah knows best. May Allaah send blessings and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions.

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* [Today's Reminder No : 1](#)