MONTHLY AHKAM | May 2021 - 1 /May/ 2021

How to Sight the New Moon

Question 1: Is there any difference if we sight the new moon with the naked eye or use an equipment? Is it enough to see the new moon using the equipment? Considering the fact that nowadays astronomical calculations are common, the exact lunar houses are known through very accurate calculations and equipped observatories exist all over the world, should it still be done in a traditional way, i.e. by naked eye only?

Answer: There is no difference between sighting the new moon using instruments and sighting it in the normal way [with the naked eye], and both are valid. The criterion is that "sighting" [as in seeing the moon] should take place; therefore, the ruling for sighting with the naked eye, glasses, and a telescope is the same. However, seeing the image of the crescent on a computer is problematic, because it is not clear if "sighting" in its actual sense has taken place.
Also the first of the month is not proved by the calendars and scientific calculations of astronomers unless one is convinced of what they say.

Fasting on the Doubted Day

Question 2: Is it obligatory to fast on a day when it is not known whether it is the end of Sha'bān or the beginning of Ramadan? Is it possible to fast with the intention of Ramadan?

Answer: On a day which a person doubts whether it is the last day of the month of Sha'bān or the first day of the month of Ramadan (yawm al-shakk), he is not obligated to fast, and if he wants to fast, he cannot make the intention of fasting for the month of Ramadan; rather, he can make an intention of performing the recommended fast of the end of the month of Sha'bān, or qaḍā' fast and the like. If, later, it becomes clear that it was a day of the month of Ramadan, it will be counted as a fast of the month of Ramadan, and performing its qaḍā' fast is not necessary. If he finds out that it is the month of Ramadan in the middle of the day, he has to make the intention of fasting for the month of Ramadan at that moment.
• If in the evening of the twenty-ninth of the lunar month, the crescent moon is not seen due to cloudy weather or any other reason, or there is a dispute about the sighting of the moon, the next day is called the Day of Doubt. So, if the doubt is between the last day of Sha'bān and the first day of Ramadan, it is considered as the last day of Sha'bān and its fast is permissible with the intention of a mustaḥabb or qaḍā' fast, but it is ḥarām with the intention of fasting during Ramadan, and if doubt is between the end of Ramadan and the first day of Shawwāl, it is considered as the last day of Ramadan and fasting is obligatory.

To Use Asthma Spray during Fasting

Question 3: I have asthma and I have to use an asthma inhaler several times a day. What is the ruling on using asthma spray while fasting?

Answer: There is no problem for a fasting person to use a spray containing medicine to help with shortness of breath and fasting is not invalidated.

Fasting despite the Doctor's Prohibition

Question 4: I have been suffering from a disease for several years and most of the doctors I have visited are against fasting, except for a limited number who have said that I am allowed to fast if certain principles are observed. As I heard if fasting is harmful to the disease, fasting is invalid and it is obligatory to make up for it. Therefore, it made me doubtful and need guidance despite the fact that I am interested in fasting.

Answer: It is upon a person himself to finally conclude lack of ability to fast or whether his fasting causes or worsens an illness or not; thus, if a doctor says that fasting is harmful for him, but he knows, through experience, that it is not harmful, he has to fast. Also, if a doctor says that fasting is not harmful, but he knows that it is harmful for him or fears of a harm based on a rational grounding, he must not fast and fasting is ḥarām for him.

To Travel in Ramadan

Question 5: If a person travels during the holy month of Ramadan, what is the ruling on his fast? Is it permissible to break the fast?

Answer: If he travels in the afternoon, he should observe his fast, but if he travels before shar'ī noon, his fast is void if he has decided the night before to travel [in the morning]. However, if he intends during the day to travel, he should - according to the obligatory precaution - fast and make up for it after the month of Ramadan.

To Travel in Ramadan

Question 6: What is the ruling on fasting if a person travels during the holy month of Ramadan and reaches his hometown or a

place where he intends to stay for ten days before noon adhān?

Answer: If he has not done any fast invalidator, he must intend fasting, and the fast of that day is valid.

Terms of Fasting Intention

Question 7: Is it necessary to determine the type of fasting that we observe when intending?

Answer: It is not necessary to determine the type of fasting during the fast of Ramadan. Rather, it suffices to intend fasting. However, in other months, it is necessary to specifies the type of fasting – even under a general title but a differentiating one. For example, a person who is only obliged to make up the missed fasts must either explicitly intend to make up the missed fasts, or he intends to perform the fast that he is responsible for. And if he is responsible for several types of fasting; Like the fast of qaḍā' and vows, he must determine which kind of fast he observes.

Mustaḥabb Fast while Owing Qaḍā' Fasts

Question 8: A person, who do not know that he has to perform qaḍā' fasts, perform a recommended fast. Is his fast considered as a mustaḥabb fast or a qaḍā' one?

Answer: For a person who has to perform qaḍā' fasts, a mustaḥabb fast is not valid.
However, if he remembers that before shar'ī noon, he can switch his intention to a qaḍā' fast of the month of Ramadan, and his fast will be correct. However, if he remembers that after shar'ī noon, he cannot switch his intention to a qaḍā' fast.

A Traveler's Fast

Question 9: A person who travels less than ten days during Ramadan, in order to benefit from the reward of fasting, can he intend other than Ramadan fast?

Answer: In the month of Ramadan, it is not possible to intend other than Ramadan fast, except in the case of a traveler who cannot fast during Ramadan but has made a vow (nadhr) to observe the recommended fast during the journey, in which case his vow to fast in Ramadan is valid. Of course, nadhr fast in the month of Ramadan is not counted as Ramadan fasting and he must make up for the fast of Ramadan later.

COVID-19 Vaccination while Fasting

Question 10: Does injecting COVID-19 vaccine invalidate the fast?

Answer: It does not invalidate the fast.

Makrūh Actions while Fasting

Applying medication or kohl to the eye if the smell or taste reaches the throat. Performing any action that causes weakness (such as donating blood or taking a bath). Smelling fragrant plants and flowers. But wearing perfume is not makrūh. Getting the clothes one is wearing wet. Brushing one's teeth using a moist miswak (a fibrous twig used traditionally for brushing the teeth). Pulling a tooth or performing anything that causes the mouth to bleed. Pouring medicine into the nostrils or inhaling it through the nostrils if it does reach the throat. Engaging in any act which arouses one's passion such as touching one's spouse and foreplay. A woman's sitting in a receptacle of water. To rinse inside the mouth too much. To taste food and the like.