

Series of Questions Addressed to Eminent Scholar Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah,  
Ameer of Hizb ut Tahrir through his Facebook Fiqhi Page

**Answer to Question**

**We Take Astronomical Calculations in Determining Prayer Times  
We Do Not Use Them to Determine the Start of Fasting and Eid**

To Abu Al-Asim Ash-Shami  
(Translated)

**Question:**

Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatuh our dear Ameer. This question has been on my mind for a long time. I hope that it will be clarified by you. I ask Allah (swt) to grant you health and wellness and that Allah (swt) grant you His great conquest.

Why do we take astronomical calculations in determining the times of the five daily prayers throughout the year and do not take astronomical calculations in determining the start of fasting and Eid?

**Answer:**

We have previously issued an answer to such a question on 25/11/2003, it stated:

[- Allah (swt) requested that we fast and break the fast when sighting the new crescent moon, and Allah (swt) has made the sighting the reason for fasting and breaking the fast. «صُومُوا لِرُؤْيَيْهِ وَأَفْطِرُوا لِرُؤْيَيْهِ» **“Fast when you see it and break your fast when you see it.”** If we see the crescent moon of Ramadan, we fast, and if we see the crescent moon of Shawwal, we break our fast.

- The one who studies the texts mentioned about fasting will find that they differ from the texts mentioned regarding the prayer, as fasting and breaking the fast have been linked to sighting: «صُومُوا لِرُؤْيَيْهِ وَأَفْطِرُوا لِرُؤْيَيْهِ» **“Fast when you see it and break your fast when you see it”**, «فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ» **“So whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it”** [Al-Baqara: 185]. The sighting is the decider. But the texts on prayer have been linked to time «أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ» **“Establish prayer at the decline of the sun [from its meridian]”** [Al-Isra': 78] «إِذَا زَالَتْ الشَّمْسُ» **“Pray when the sun passed the meridian.”** The prayer is dependent on the time, so you pray as soon as you verify the time by whatever means. If you looked at the sun at the time of passing the meridian (zawal) or if you observe the shadow and see that all things have the same size of their shadow or like it, as stated in the Hadiths of prayer times, if you did that to verified the time, the prayer is valid. If you do not do that, but calculate it astronomically, and find out that time of the sun passing the meridian is such-and-such, and you look at your watch without going out to see the sun or the shade, your prayer is valid. i.e., that you verify the time using any means. Why? Because Allah (swt), asked you to pray when the time enters, and left

you to verify its entry without specifying how to verify it. As for fasting, He (swt) asked you to fast by sighting (the moon), and He (swt) specified the reason for you, but above that, He said to you: If the clouds obscure the vision and you could not sight it, do not fast even if the crescent is located behind the clouds and you are certain of its presence by astronomical calculations. «حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ زَيَْادٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ يَقُولُ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ أَوْ قَالَ قَالَ أَبُو الْقَاسِمِ ﷺ صُومُوا لِرُؤُوسِهِ وَأَفْطِرُوا لِرُؤُوسِهِ فَإِنْ غُبِيَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاكْمُلُوا عِدَّةَ شَعْبَانَ ثَلَاثِينَ» Adam told us, Shu'bs told us, Muhammad Bin Ziyad said: I heard Abu Huraira (ra) say: The Prophet (saw) or Abul-Qasim said, "Start fasting on seeing the crescent (of Ramadan), and give up fasting on seeing the crescent (of Shawwal), and if the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete thirty days of Sha'ban." [Bukhari] That is, if you do not see it, then complete the thirty days of Sha'ban,

- Allah (swt) is the Creator of the universe, and He (swt) is the one who taught man what he did not know. The knowledge of the movement of the celestial bodies and their minutes is from Allah's grace on people. But Allah (swt), did not ask us to adopt the astronomical calculation for fasting, rather He (swt) asked us to sight the moon, so we worship Him (swt) as He (swt) requested, and we do not worship Him (swt) as He did not request.

Thus, the sighting alone is the ruling on fasting and breaking the fast, not the astronomical calculation. Accordingly, we say that it is not permissible to adopt the astronomical calculations in the issue of fasting and breaking the fast, but rather to adopt sighting only because it is mentioned in the texts.]

**Your Brother**

**Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah**

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**The link to the answer from the Ameer's Facebook page:**

<https://www.facebook.com/HT.AtaabuAlrashtah/posts/518850783135629>