



**Fatwa no. 3421**

**Q 1: What is the ruling on relying on a calendar to determine the beginning of Ramadan?**

**Q 2: If the calendar shows that Sha`ban is twenty nine days, then on the twenty-ninth of Sha`ban it gets cloudy and rain falls to a degree that we cannot sight the new moon of Ramadan and we don't hear anything about it, should people begin fasting or not?**

**Q 3: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: (We are an unlettered Ummah 'nation'; we do not write or calculate.) What is meant by this Hadith?**

**Q 4: The Messenger of Allah said that whoever believes what the soothsayer says is a disbeliever in what was revealed to Muhammad (peace be upon him), and Shaykh Abu Bakr Al-Jaza'iry explained that the sorcerer is someone who foretells**

**(Part No. 1; Page No. 631)**

**the unknown future. So what is the ruling on the calendar which determines the whole year, day by day?**

**Q 5: The Messenger said that we should complete the month of Sha`ban thirty days when we are unable to sight the new moon of Ramadan. Should we follow that method or the calendar?**

**Q 6: What is the difference between the stars and the calendar as far as Tawhid (belief in the Oneness of Allah) is concerned?**

**Q 7: The Qur'an forbids following Taghut (false gods), then what is the ruling on the makers of calendars?**

**A 4:** Firstly: The Council of Senior Scholars in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have previously discussed the question of sighting the new moon by means of calculations, and issued a decree, which reads the following: The Council of Senior Scholars considered the matter of depending upon calculations in sighting the new moon, and all the relevant evidence from the Qur'an and the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet). They reviewed the opinions of scholars in this regard, and a decision has been unanimously made pertaining to discarding the calculations of the movements of the stars in confirming the sighting of the new moon when it comes to religious issues. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Start Sawm 'Fast' on seeing it 'the new moon of Ramadan', and give up Sawm on seeing it 'the new moon of Shawwal'.) He (peace be upon him) also said: (Do not begin Sawm

**(Part No. 1; Page No. 632)**

until you sight it 'the new moon of Ramadan', and do not end Sawm until you see it 'the new moon of Shawwal'.) Etc.

**Secondly:** If the twenty ninth night of Sha`ban, according to the legal sighting, was not clear, then it is not permissible to begin Sawm the next day (the thirtieth of Sha`ban), whether it becomes cloudy by the sunset of the twenty-ninth or not, based on the two Hadiths mentioned above as well as the

Prophet's saying: (If the sky is overcast (and you cannot see it), complete thirty days of Sha`ban.) There is also the statement of `Ammar ibn Yasir (may Allah be pleased with him): (Whoever fasts during the Day of Doubt (the day after the twenty-ninth of Shawwal) has disobeyed Abul-Qasim (Muhammad, peace be upon him).)

**(Part No. 1; Page No. 633)**

**Thirdly:** The meaning of the Prophet's saying: (We are an unlettered Ummah ; we neither write, nor know accounts.) Was made clear by the Prophet himself at the end of this Hadith, as he said: (The month is like this and this (i.e. sometimes of twenty nine days and sometimes of thirty days).) (Related by Al-Bukhari)

**Fourthly:** Mathematics and the study of the movements of the stars have nothing to do with soothsaying; it is not Haram (prohibited) to learn them. However, it is not permissible to rely on them in deciding religious matters, such as Sawm , Hajj (Pilgrimage) and the like. This is not like astrology which is forbidden to pursue, and which Shaykh-ul-Islam Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be merciful to him) defined as the study of the positions and aspects of celestial bodies in the belief that they have an influence on the course of natural earthly occurrences. Al-Khattaby (may Allah be merciful to him) said that the study of the stars becomes forbidden when it comes to astrologers who claim knowledge of the future creations and incidents, such as the exact times of wind blowing, rainfall, price changes, and other similar matters which, they claim, can be predicted by knowing the movements of planets in their orbits, their gathering, and separation. They assume that planets have control over the lower and hidden worlds, and that is tantamount to claiming knowledge of the Ghayb (the Unseen) which is only known by Allah.

**(Part No. 1; Page No. 634)**

**Fifthly:** It has been mentioned above that calculations are by no means a kind of soothsaying, and that it is permissible to pursue it. Accordingly, people who apply calculations are not considered as Taghut. However, it is not right to claim that a month, whose beginning has been legally confirmed, is not due according to their calculations, or vice versa. To sum up, the opinions of those who apply calculations should not be considered in religious matters.

May Allah grant us success. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions.

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