

Fasting الصوم

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know what it means to fast and its importance
- Know the importance of the Holy month of Ramadan
- Understand the rules regarding intention for compulsory and non-compulsory fasts
- Know the nine invalidators of fasting
- Gain a basic understanding of the moon cycle
- Learn how to determine the first of the Islamic month using various resources available.
- Understand that difference between maraji' regarding the rules of moon sighting should not create disunity.
- That breaking a wajib fast under certain conditions requires different kaffarah
- Understand what fidyah is and when it is payable
- Understand the rules of fasting when travelling
- Be reminded of the categories of people exempted from fasting

Lesson 1: Introduction to Fasting

Undoubtedly, all of you have reached the age of maturity now and have been fasting in the holy month of Ramadan for a few years already. Fasting is one of the best and highest forms of worship for three major reasons:

- It is the longest worship one can possibly do (12hrs on average, a day)
- It is a private worship, meaning that no-one will know you are fasting (unless you tell them); it's a secret between you and God,
- Every action and thought (as long as it is not evil) is rewarded, even just sleeping or breathing!

Once, the Holy Prophet asked his companions:

"Shall I tell you about something which, if you do it, will distance you from Satan as much as the distance between the east and the west?" They said, "O yes! Please do so," whereupon he (saw) said, "It is the fast. It darkens his [Satan's] face, while charity breaks his back and the love for Allah's sake and assisting others in doing good deeds cut off his tail and seeking Allah's forgiveness splits his spine. For everything there is a zakāt (purification), and the zakāt of the bodies is fasting."i

TYPES OF FASTING

As you have learnt in the previous years, there are different kinds of fasting:

- 1- Natural fasting- This is like keeping a diet. There are no benefits in the hereafter whatsoever
- 2- Jurisprudential Fasting- This is the fasting prescribed by our jurisprudence i.e. from dawn to dusk, to avoid 9 things, etc. (to be discussed later)

- 3- **Ethical Fasting** This is not only avoiding the things that break the fast from a jurisprudential point of view, but the organs of the body (the limbs, eyes, tongue etc.) also fast. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says:
 - "When you fast, you should safeguard your tongues, lower your gaze, and you should neither dispute with nor envy one another"
- 4- Mystical fasting- This is the highest form of fasting where one abstains from everything other than the Almighty Allah (SWT).

FASTING IN THE MONTH OF RAMADĀN

According to one of his numerous traditions, Prophet Muḥammad (saw) is quoted as saying:

"The month of Ramaḍān was named so because it tends to burn (yarmiḍu) the sins."

The righteous people at the dawn of Islam used to call it al-midmār, meaning something that destroys the excesses of evils and sins. During the life-time of the Prophet (saw), the blessed month of Ramaḍān used to be called al-marzūq, the one full of sustenance, due to the abundance of the blessings of Allah whereby His servants are sustained during it. iii

Imamal- Ṣādiq (as) has said:

"When you fast, let your hearing and vision abstain with you from anything unlawful, against everything ugly, and leave hypocrisy aside, and do not harm those who serve you. Rather, adorn yourself with the dignity of the fast, and do not make your fasting day the same as the day when you do not fast." iv

The above clearly shows us the significance of the month of Ramaḍān; it is a month full of blessings and Mercy, it is a catalyst for changing bad habits such that each month of Ramaḍān, one should improve more than the previous year. Every Ramaḍān, we are expected to get rid of one bad habit at a time, whether it is the sin of lying, eating too much, envy, gossip etc. At the same time, we should not make fasting an excuse to get out of work, to get more attention or to feast at night.

Because of the special rewards in the holy month of Ramaḍān, there are a few additional things that are highly recommended and highly rewarding to do such as:

- Reciting the Holy Qur'an more often
- Worshiping (such as prayers, du'a, contemplating, etc.) in the night especially
- Avoiding all forms of sins (like swearing, being rude to parents etc.)
- Spending more time at mosques and Islamic centres and around pious people
- Avoiding wasting time
- The month of Ramadān is also a good time to take a 'time-out' from our usual routines and focus on improving ourselves spiritually. It is also important to focus on our own selves in particular. For example, if we are engaged in Islamic education or teaching all year round, during this month we should reduce our commitments so that we can focus on our own spiritual health.

Before we can practice the higher forms of fasting, we must understand and follow the rulings regarding the jurisprudential fasting. The next three lessons shall focus on just that.

INTENTION OF FASTING

For any action of worship, we must have a clear intention for that worship. This intention does not need to be said out loud, just like for prayer, it suffices to be aware of the action one is about to perform. With regards to fasting, the basic intention one must make is that one will avoid anything that will invalidate the fast from the time of Fajr to the time of Maghreb for the sake of proximity and obedience to Allah (SWT).

INTENTION FOR WĀJIB FASTS

- 1- We can make an intention either every night (or moments before the adhān of fajr), that we will fast the next day, or we can make an intention at the beginning of the month, that we shall fast the whole month. The latter is better just in case we forget to make the intention every night.
- 2- If a person does not have an intention to fast before going to bed and wakes up before Duhr prayers, he can intend to fast then. If he wakes up after Duhr prayers, he should continue fasting but also give the qadā' for that day.
- 3- For keeping other wājib fasts (like that of a vow), one must know the intention of the fast.

- 4- One cannot offer mustaāab fasts if one owes wājib fasts (i.e. qadā fasts)
- 5- If one has fasts owing from Ramadan, they must offer their Qada before the next Ramadan comes around
- 6- If one intends to break their wājib fast, the fast becomes immediately void, even if they don't act upon it. For example, if in the afternoon a person decides in their mind: 'I am too tired, I am going to go and eat' but then changes their mind and does not eat, their fast is still not valid and must be repeated.
- 7- For Mustaḥab fasts, one can make the intention for fasting at any time of the day, even moments before Maghreb- provided he has not committed any act that invalidates the fast.

Homework:

Ali went on a holiday and when he returned to his home town it was the 3rd of the month of Ramaḍān. Ali forgot this and because he was tired from the trip, he went to sleep after his dinner and did not wake up until after the time of Duhr. When he woke up, he realized that it was Ramadān and he had to fast. What should he do?

He should not do anything that breaks his fast until Maghrib and then he has to offer $Qa\underline{d}\bar{a}'$ fast after the Month of Ramadhan.

List at least 2 things you will give up this month of Ramaḍān to help you achieve purity. Make the intention to stop these bad habits this Ramaḍān and get the help from your parents, teachers or friends to achieve this.

Lesson 2: Invalidators of Fasting

There are nine acts which invalidate or break the fast. Below is a list of the invalidators, followed by a review of the first three invalidators followed by explanations of the rest.

- 1. Eating and drinking
- 2. Swallowing thick dust
- Immersing one's head completely in water (except for Sayed Sistani who says this is makrūh)
- 4. Ascribing false things to Almighty Allah, or his Prophet or to the successors of the Holy Prophet
- 5. Sexual intercourse
- 6. Masturbation
- 7. Remaining in Janābah or Hayd or Nifās till the Adhān for Fajr prayers
- 8. Enema with liquids
- 9. Vomiting

FAQS- REVIEW

If a person eats or drinks intentionally, his fast is void. Let us turn our attention to the more commonly occurring tricky situations that we may experience during fasting:

- a. Can I brush my teeth?
 - Yes you can brush when you're fasting teeth as long as you don't swallow the toothpaste or the water.
- b. <u>Can I take injections, anaesthetics and drips (e.g. in</u> the hospital)?
 - Anaesthetics are permissible and do not break the fast. You can take any injection and it also does not break your fasting. However, if you are taking drips in the hospital and it is a nutritious injection, then this may not be permissible. Eye and ear drops also do not break the fast.
- c. Can I swallow my saliva and phlegm?
 - Swallowing saliva does not invalidate the fast. Also, there is no harm in swallowing one's phlegm or mucous from head and chest as long as it does not come up to one's mouth.
- d. <u>Swallowing thick dust:</u> This does not include normal dust in the air. It refers to thick dust, for example if one is sweeping the floor and a cloud of dust comes up.
- e. Immersing ones head in water

With the exception of Sayed Sistani who says it is Makrūh, most other Marāji' say that intentionally immersing the head completely in water invalidates the fast. This means that by and large one cannot swim while fasting.

OTHER INVALIDATORS

ASCRIBING LIES TO ALLAH AND HIS PROPHET AND INFALLIBLES

- If a person who is observing fast, intentionally ascribes something false to Allah and the Prophet (saw) and his trustees, verbally or in writing or by making a sign, his fast becomes void, even if he may at once retract and say that he has uttered a lie or may repent for it.
- If a person observing fast wishes to quote something about which he has no authority or he does not know whether it is true or false, he should, as an obligatory precaution, give a reference of the person who reported it, or the book in which it is written.
- If a person quotes something as the word of Allah or of the Holy Prophet with the belief that it is true, but realises later that it is false, his fast does not become void.

SEXUAL INTERCOURSE OR FOREPLAY LEADING TO EJACULATION

Sexual intercourse or foreplay that leads to ejaculation during the state of fasting invalidates the fast. Also if foreplay is with the intention of ejaculation then this requires a kaffārah. However if there was no intention to ejaculate but they ejaculated anyway, then it breaks the fast but there is no kaffārah.

MASTURBATION (ISTIMN \bar{A}')

Masturbation, which means touching one's private parts resulting in ejaculation, invalidates the fast. It is a highly forbidden act in Islam and the punishment for it is very severe. We have several narartions which condemn this act and the one who performs it. Below is one such narration:

"Once a person was caught masturbating and was brought to Imam 'Ali. The Imam punished him by beating on his hands until it turned red; then he made arrangement for his marriage on the government's expenses"

BEING IN THE STATE OF JANĀBAH (FOR MEN AND WOMEN) OR HAYD OR NIFĀS (WOMEN)

a) <u>Janābah</u>

- If a person in a state of Janābah does not perform Ghusl <u>intentionally</u> till the time of Fajr prayers, his/her fast becomes void
- If a person is in Janābah during a night in Ramadān and knows that if he goes to sleep he will not wake up till Fajr, he should not sleep before Ghusl and if he sleeps before Ghusl and does not wake up till Fajr, his fast is void, and Qadā' and Kaffarah become obligatory on him.
- When a person in Janābah goes to sleep in a night of Ramadān and then wakes up, the obligatory precaution is that if he is not sure about waking up again, he should not go to sleep before Ghusl, even though he may have a faint hope that he might wake up before Fajr if he sleeps again.
- When a person wakes up in the month of Ramadā after the Fajr prayers and finds that he has become jūnub his fast is in order, even if he knows that he became so before the Fajr prayers.
- If a person is in the state of Janābah and goes to sleep being fairly sure of waking up before Fajr AND having the intention to perform Ghusl when they wake up, but they sleep in till after Fajr, their fast is valid.

b) Hayd or Nifas

- If a woman who is in either of these states does not become tāhir before the time of fajr, then she cannot fast (if it is during the month of Ramadān)
- If a woman exists or enters either of these two states during the day (between Fajr and Maghreb) then the fast of that day is not counted. Even if she enters Hayd just before Maghreb, the fast must be offered again
- If a woman becomes clean before the time of Fajr prayers in the month of Ramadan but neglects her obligation and does not do Ghusl before Fajr, nor does she resort to tayammum as time becomes short, her fast will be void.

LIQUID ENEMA

An enema is a type of medication used to relieve constipation. It is placed in a person's rectum and dissolves into the end of the bowel, making it easier for the person to pass faeces. If this enema is a liquid enema, then its use voids the fast. If it is solid, then its use does not void the fast.

VOMITING INTENTIONALLY

If a fasting person vomits intentionally his fast becomes void even though he may have been obliged to do so on account of sickness. However, the fast does not become void, if one vomits forgetfully or involuntarily. vi

Review Questions

Answer the following providing explanations for your answers:

- 1. If a person ascribes something to Almighty Allah or the Holy Prophet knowing it to be false and understands later that it was true, what is the state of his fast?
- 2. If a person throws himself into the water thinking that his entire head will not go down into the water, and after diving the water covers his entire head, what is the state of his fast?
- 3. If a person swallows something by mistake and remembers before it reaches the stomach that he is fasting, what should he do?

Lesson 3: Qadā' and Kaffārah

In the previous years, we have learnt a great deal about the rules of fasting, especially with regards to kaffarah and $Qad\bar{a}$ fasts. In this lesson we shall review some of that information and introduce you to some of the more common issues regarding kaffārah and $Qad\bar{a}$.

QUIZ

For each of the questions below, write whether the person must give kaffārrah, Qaḍā' or nothing or both. vii

	QUESTION	Answer
1.	John reverted to Islam when he was 21 years old. Does he need to make up the fasts he missed before becoming Muslim?	
2.	Mr. Ali is 75 this year and has problems with his kidneys. His doctor told him that if he fasted this year, it would be detrimental to his health. He did not fast this Ramaḍān	
3.	Muḥammad, whilst fasting, did not know that he was not allowed to immerse his head into water but realized after	
4.	Ali did not know he had reached the age of Taklīf, even though he had, and did not fast the whole Month of Ramaḍān.	
5.	Nour deliberately drank a whole glass of juice in the month of Ramaḍān, whilst fasting so that she fits in with all her friends at a restaurant	
6.	Yusuf was playing soccer with his friends in Ramaḍān whilst fasting and his mouth was very dry. He decided to rinse his mouth and some of it went down his throat.	
7.	Ḥusayn was certain that if he fell asleep in the state of Janābah till after Fajr prayers, his fast would be ok. He did this in the Holy month of Ramaḍān and only later did he find out that it was not acceptable.	
8.	Zaynab had her monthly period in the middle of Ramaḍān, and she was unable to fast for 8 days of the month	
9.	Mrs Naji is the late stages of her pregnancy and fasting would be harmful for her	

RULES OF KAFFĀRAH

There are 2 types of kaffarah. One must fulfil either one or both of them depending on conditions which we shall talk about later. They are:

- 1- Feed 60 poor people
- 2- Fast for 60 days (of which 1month and 1 day should be consecutive)

As we have learnt in previous years, eating , drinking, sexual intercourse, staying in the state of Janābah till the time for Fajr prayers, if done deliberately whilst offering a compulsory fast, would oblige one to give (only one) kaffarah and qaḍā for each missed fast. We should also remember this kaffārah is for each fast, such that if we deliberately miss 3 fasts in Ramaḍān we have to fast for 180 days or feed 180 people!

Under certain conditions, it is a recommended precaution that BOTH the kaffārah become necessary (plus the Qaḍā'). This is when one deliberately breaks ones fast by:

- 1- Doing something Ḥarām (eg masturbation, fornication, eating pork or wine etc.)
- 2- Attributing a lie to Allah (SWT) or the Holy Prophet (saw)

We must remember that apart from the above examples where both kaffārah become necessary, we can choose what kaffārah to give. If we decide to give the kaffārah for fasting 60 days then we must remember that:

- 1- We must fast continuously for the first month and 1 day and if within this period we are unable to fast without a valid excuse, we have to restart from the beginning
- 2- Within that first month and one day, there cannot be any day which is Ḥarām to fast (such as Eid al-Aḍḥa)
- 3- The Kaffārah can be given at any time, so in the case that one chooses to fast for 60 days, one is not obliged to fast before the next Ramaḍān but MUST fulfil the Qaḍā for that fast before the next Ramaḍān. Otherwise, he must give fidyah.

RULES OF QADĀ FASTS

We have learnt in the previous years about some of the rules of gadā' fasts. What we shall discuss here is when

we need to perform these Qaḍā' fasts. As a general rule, one must offer his/her Qaḍā' fasts before the commencement of the next Ramaḍān. If one fails to do so then they must fulfil the Qaḍā' and additionally pay something called a 'fidyah' which equates to ¾ kg of food (this is equivalent to around \$3) per fast. This fidyah is not necessary when:

- 1- The person is a new revert to Islam
- 2- If the person is too old to fast any more

RULES RELATED TO DAYS OF FASTING

The table below outlines the fasts in each of these categories

Wājib	Mustaḥab	Makrūh	Ḥarām
In the Holy month of Ramaḍān	First and last Thursday of every month and the first Wednesday after the 10 th of the month	On the day one is not sure if it is the day of 'Arafah or 'Īd al-Aḍḥa	On the day of 'Īd al-Aḍḥa or 'Īd al-Fiṭr
If we have made a vow, oath or covenant to fast in general, or on a particular day	13 th , 14 th , and 15 th days of every month	On the day of 'Ashurā'	For a wife to keep a Mustaḥab fast if it hinders her duties to the husband or without his permission
For the eldest son to perform the Qaḍā' fasts of the deceased father	All days of Rajab and Sha'bān		A child's fast if it causes emotional suffering to parents
Qaḍā fasts	On the Day of Ghadīr		If one is sick and knows it would be detrimental to fast
The fasts of Kaffārah	On the Day of Mubāhalah		If one is travelling (such that he prays qasr prayers)

THOSE EXEMPT FROM FASTING

Those who are sick (or for whom fasting causes extreme hardship) - For these people, if they have a prospect of getting better and/or do get better, they have to fulfil only the qaḍā. If they do not get better, they are required to pay fidyah for every day they have missed. Similarly, women who are in advanced stages of pregnancy or lactating mothers are not required to fast but in this case she has to pay fidyah as well as fast the qaḍā.

Very old people- Very old people are not required to fast nor do they have to offer $qa\dot{q}\bar{a}$ or fidyah for fasts they have missed. As a recommended precaution though, if they become capable of fasting somehow later, they should offer $qad\bar{a}$.

Travellers- We have discussed in detail under the lesson of 'traveller's prayers', who is considered a traveller and who is not. As a general rule, any traveller who prays qasr prayers is not obliged to fast but must offer the qaḍā'. Those travellers who offer full prayers (like a regular traveller, or one who travels for a ḥarām purpose) must fast.

There are some additional rules we need to keep in mind when travelling in the month of Ramadan:

- 1- It is makrūh to travel before the 24th of Ramadan
- 2- It is makrūh to travel to avoid fasting
- 3- It is makrūh for anyone who is not fasting for any excuse (even travelling) to have sexual intercourse or eat or drink to his fill in the month of Ramaḍān.

The table below shows when a traveller must break his fast or keep it.

Situation	Break his fast or keep it	
Person travels after Duhr	Keeps the fast	
Person travels before Duhr and had an intention to travel from the night before	Cannot fast that day- but cannot break the fast until he reaches outside city limits	
If the person travels in Ramaḍān to a place where he intends to stay for 10 days or his home town (waṭan) and arrives in the hometown BEFORE dhuhr	Must fast on that day (provided he has not already broken his fast)	

If one travels to a place he wishes to stay for 10 days or his home town and arrives AFTER Duhr

He cannot fast on that day

Review Question

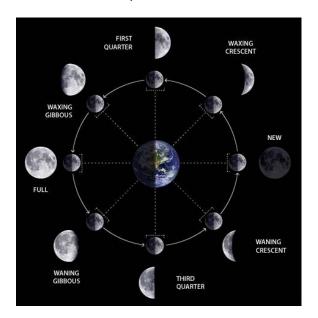
Refer to the Islamic Laws book of your marja'. Write down 3 conditions under which only the qaḍā' fast is to be offered, without the need for a kaffarah.

Lesson 4: Moon Sighting

In the previous lessons, we have learnt a great deal about all the laws regarding fasting. We know that the Islamic calendar is lunar and the days of fasting depend on this lunar calendar. It is therefore important to understand how it works.

LUNAR CALENDAR

The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar, that is, it is based on the sighting of the moon. The first day of the Islamic month, as we have learnt in previous years, is when the waxing crescent moon is sighted. We shall discuss the rules of moon sighting later in the lesson. We have to first understand the moon cycle first.



MOON PHASES

The diagram above shows the phases of the moon. Sunlight is shown coming in from the right. The earth, of course, is at the centre of the diagram. The moon is shown at eight key stages during its rotation around the earth. The dotted line from the earth to the moon

represents your line of sight when looking at the moon. To help you visualize how the moon would appear at that point in the cycle, you can look at the larger moon image. The name of the moon phase is shown alongside the image.

The important thing to notice is that exactly one half of the moon is always illuminated by the sun. Of course that is perfectly logical, but you need to visualize it in order to understand the phases. At certain times we see both the sunlit portion and the shadowed portion -- and that creates the various moon phase shapes we are all familiar with. Also note that the shadowed part of the moon is invisible to the naked eye; in the diagram above, it is only shown for clarification purposes.

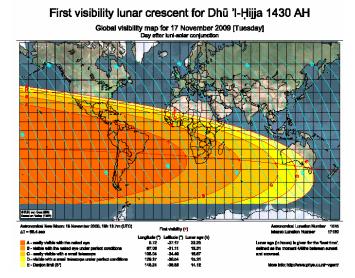
So the basic explanation is that the lunar phases are created by changing angles (relative positions) of the earth, the moon and the sun, as the moon orbits the earth. viii

The crucial time for us Muslims is the observation of the first waxing crescent which signifies the beginning of the new month. From the point of view of people on the earth in order for us to be able to see the moon:

- 1- It has to be bright enough in the sky (at least 1% of the moon's face should be illuminated)
- 2- It should be far enough above the horizon to be in the line of sight (Fig 1)

For the first criteria, under normal circumstances, the moon has to be at an altitude of at least 10° (although in rare cases above 8°) above the horizon for an observer on earth to be able to see it (figure 2). Additionally, because the moon does not have its own light, the crescent moon is only visible more than 47 minutes after sunset and around 24hrs ± 2hrs after the birth of the 'new moon' ix. Furthermore, if we would like to go searching for the moon, we have to look just where the sun sets as that is the same place where the moon can be seen.

Although there are other criteria also involved in sighting the crescent moon such as brightness of the evening sky, contrast requirements of the eye, atmospheric reflection, etc... the above two mentioned criteria are the main ones One can easily access the internet and check out the possibility of sighting of the moon with the above 2 criteria using visibility maps* (figure 3). As we can see in the figure below, there was no possibility of sighting the crescent moon in the eastern part of Australia or even in the Middle East but it was clearly visible on the same day in any part of South America. Note that at point (E), the moon is at 8° below the horizon and therefore impossible to sight.



PRACTICAL ACTIVITY

Your teacher will arrange a moon sighting excursion sometime in the year and demonstrate the direction to look for the moon:

- Find a westerly facing spot with a clear view of the horizon.
- Wait for the Sun to set, then look for the crescent moon in that part of the sky.
- Don't look directly at the Sun, using your naked eye, binoculars or a telescope.
- Can you see the crescent moon? Are you sure? Is it a cloud or a vapour trail?
- Make a note of where you were, the date and time of your observation, the weather conditions and whether you saw the Moon or not

UNIFIED HORIZON VS. LOCAL HORIZON

Some marāji', from their research, believe that for the case of moon sighting, the whole world can be considered as one horizon and therefore if the moon is seen in any country (or city) that shares the night or part of the night with your city, it can be considered as the first month.

Most of the other marāji' believe in a local horizon, i.e. that the new month can only be declared if there was a sighting within the local horizon (for example Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane share one horizon, which is not the same as Adelaide and

Perth). Therefore, if the new moon is sighted in Perth, and not in the eastern part of Australia, we cannot consider it a new moon (similar to the visibility maps shown above).

We should understand that because different people follow different marāji' it does not mean they are wrong. These marāji' have done several decades of study to reach these conclusions and we have no right to vilify them or their followers. Additionally, it is important to remember that if followers of different marāji' celebrate different occasions at different times, it does not imply disunity. It is our responsibility as sincere followers of our faith to ensure that we follow our own Marja' and to tolerate all the others. This very phenomenon is a test for us which we must not fail.

METHODS OF ASCERTAINING THE FIRST DAY OF THE ISLAMIC MONTH

The first day of the Islamic Month can be determined in any one of these 4 ways (we have discussed details of each one in the previous years):

eHAWZA – Semester 1, Course: Jurisprudence of Worshipping- lectures on Fasting

- 1. Nothing
- Nothing

- 1- If a person himself sights the moon
- 2- If many people have sighted it and one is convinced that it is indeed sighted or from any other source that one becomes certain and satisfied that the moon is sighted.
- 3- If two just ('ādil) people say they have sighted the moon that night (without two other just people opposing them).
- 4- If 30 days have passed of the month, then the next day will be the first of the next month.

HOMEWORK

Go to this website:

http://www.crescentmoonwatch.org/nextnewmoon.htm

Determine when you would be able to see the new moon for the next month in the Eastern part of Australia. Write it down and bring it to the next class to compare with the other students.

- Qadha only
- 4. Qadha only
- 5. Qadha and Kaffarah
- 6. Qadha only
- 7. Qadha only
- Qadha only
- 9. Qadha, she should pay fidyah also

i al-Saduq's Amali (or Majalis) p. 59,

[&]quot; Fast of the Month of Ramadhan by Yasin T. Al-Jibouri

iii Ibid

iv Biharul Anwar Vol 94 p 351

⁽Wasa'il, vol. 14, p. 267; vol. 18, pp. 574-5)

vi Islamic Laws – Syed Sistani

vii Answers to table

 $^{^{\}text{viii}} \ \text{http://www.moonconnection.com/moon_cycle.phtml}$

ix It should be noted here; the Astronomical new moon is invisible as shown in the image. The 'new moon' according to the Islamic view is the very first waxing crescent that is seen signifying the start of the new month.

^{*} www.moonsighting.com