

Optical Aid to Sight the New Moon

Fatwa by Mufti Yusuf Badat/Mufti Rida Al-Haq (Hanafi/2016)



Question:

Is it permissible in Islam to use optical aid when sighting the new moon to commence the lunar Islamic months?

Answer:

In the Name of God, Most Merciful, Most Kind

Jazāk Allāh Khayr/ Thank you for contacting us regarding your question.

Yes, Islamically it is permissible to use optical aid when sighting the new crescent for lunar Islamic months. This is due to the generality of the Prophetic words,

“Fast when you see it and end fasting when you see it.” (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim)

Optical aids, although not a requirement, can be utilized to ease the matter of moon-sighting.

Optical aids can include eyeglasses, binoculars, and various types of telescopes.

Climbing onto an elevated place, such as a hill or minaret, or going to an open field away from city structures to avoid light pollution, to ease the task of sighting the new moon, falls in the same category of using optical aid for ease to spot the moon. (See: Dur Al-Mukhtār, Imdād Al-Fattāh)

My teacher, the grand muftī of South Africa, Muftī Riḍā Al Ḥaq (*may God preserve him*) writes, “Telescopes only magnify the ability to see, just as eyeglasses do. There is no objection in using them to sight and make observations. The reality, to sight by the use of modern optical aid instruments, is merely visibility. In other words, it is not such that something that does not exist is forged to be seen. For this reason, one is permitted to bring into use these modern instruments of optical aid when sighting the new moon.” – (Fatāwā Dār Al ‘Uloom Zakariya)

Shaykh Ashraf ‘Alī Thanwī (*may God’s mercy be with him*) writes, “There is no separate ruling for sighting the moon via a telescope or binoculars. The same rules that apply to seeing the moon without optical aid also apply to the scenario when seeing the moon with optical aid.” – (Imdād al Fatāwā)

Shaykh Ibn Uthaymīn (*may God’s mercy be with him*) states, “With regards to using a telescope to see the crescent, there is nothing wrong with it, but it is not necessary, because the apparent meaning of the *sunnah* is that we should rely upon ordinary sighting and not anything else. But if it is used and the moon is sighted by a trustworthy person, then this sighting may be acted upon. In the past, the people used that because they used to climb up the minarets on the night before the 30th of Sha’bān and the night before the 30th of Ramaḍān and look for it by means of a telescope.” – (Fatāwā ‘Ulamā’ al-Balad al-Ḥarām, Fatāwā al-Lajnah al-Dā’imah)

“There is no objection if one makes an attempt to see the moon via the use of a telescope.” – (Islāmī Fiqh)

“Seeing the moon by the use of telescopes and binoculars is acceptable and correct according to Islamic jurisprudence.” – Iḍāḥ Al-Masāil

And Allah Knows Best!

Ref: <https://mathabah.org/optical-aid-to-sight-the-new-moon/> (Accessed: 26/3/2026), see also original fatwa by Mufti Rida Al-Haq (HA) in Urdu: <https://archive.org/details/Fatawa-Darul-Uloom-Zakariyya/> (Vol.3 / p.252)