

“Should I celebrate Eid tomorrow? Or should I fast?”- A DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK FOR MO’MINEEN

SalamunAleikum! This has been prepared in Ramadan-ul-Mubarak 1434 A.H. (2013 C.E.) by some students of the Hawza-e-Ilmiya in Qom. Pages 1 and 2 explain some terms and answer some FAQs; Page 3 contains a chart that shows the framework within which mo’mineen must decide for themselves regarding the commemoration of Eid-ul-Fitr. **The purpose of this document is to enable each muqallid to decide for himself what his duty is – should he celebrate Eid the next day, or should he fast?** This material is based on the rulings of Ay. Sistani (h.a.) and Ay. Khamenei (h.a.) only, and has been derived from www.sistani.org and www.leader.ir, esp. from the Farsi sections.

SOME TERMS EXPLAINED

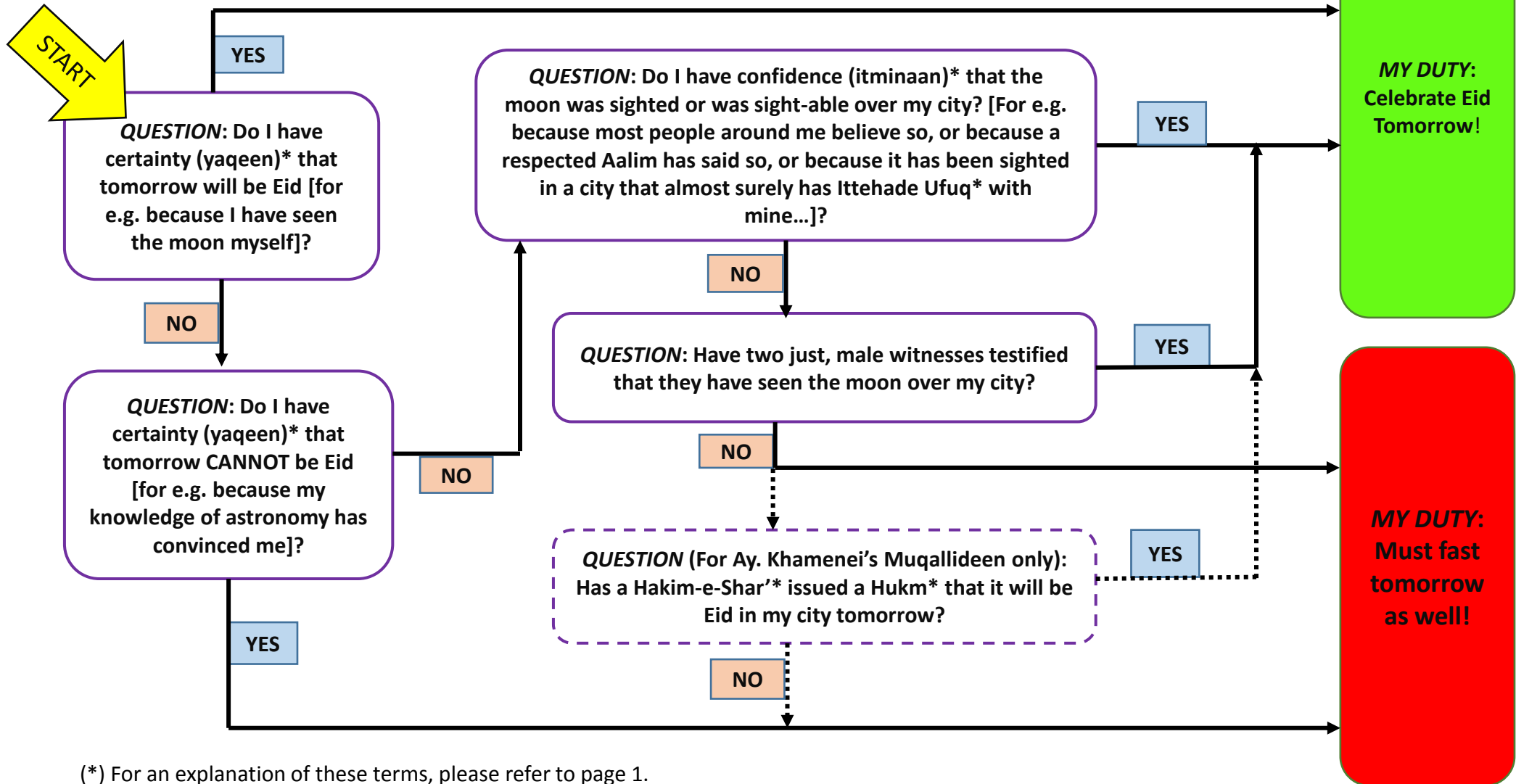
1. *Yaqeen or Certainty* – A condition in which a person is so sure of something being true that he is unwilling to even consider the possibility that its contrary may turn out to be true instead. E.g.: belief in this equation that $2+2=4$.
2. *Itminaan or Confidence* – A condition in which a person believes something to be true and acts per this belief, but is also willing to consider the possibility that its contrary may turn out to be true instead. Most things we believe in in our day-to-day lives are of this kind.
3. *Hakime Shar’* – Also known as “Mujtahid Jamius Sharaait lil Iftaa”. This is a mujtahid who has all the necessary qualifications to issue fatwas and judgments; for e.g. – a Marja-e-Taqlaed.
4. *Hukm* – A specific kind of religious ruling that only a Hakime Shar’ is qualified to issue.
5. *Ittehade Ufuq* – Unity of horizon; Two cities are said to have “Ittehade Ufuq” if the sighting of the moon in the 1st city, will necessarily imply that the moon will be sight-able in the 2nd city (even if it is not actually sighted in the 2nd city).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *Q: Why should I use this chart (page 3)? Am I not supposed to do Taqlaed and follow my Marja in celebrating Eid on a certain day?* Ans: Determining the day of Eid is not a matter for Taqlaed. The Maraje’ have made it clear that each of us is to arrive at our own decision regarding which day to celebrate Eid on. They have provided us with the guidelines on how to arrive at this decision; the attached chart is nothing but a graphical representation of these very same guidelines.
2. *Q: What does it mean that this is “not a matter for taqlaed”?* Ans: This means that our Maraje do not want us to do taqlaed in whether or not tomorrow is Eid; instead, they want us to do taqlaed in following their defined framework, and to then arrive at an answer for ourselves. This is not something new; there are many other instances where we are expected to act similarly.
3. *Q: If this is not a matter for taqlaed, then why do the offices of Maraje issue statements that speak of a specific day for Eid?* Ans: They probably do so because many muqallideen ask the office for the day the Marja will be celebrating Eid himself. Unless specified otherwise, these statements are meant to be inputs to assist each one of us in our efforts to arrive at our own decisions using the framework they have defined (refer accompanying chart).
4. *Q: What if my Marja says that he will be celebrating Eid tomorrow - Isn't it compulsory for me to do the same?* Ans: It is compulsory only if you are a muqallid of Ay. Khamenei (h.a.), and he issues a Hukm that tomorrow is Eid, and that Hukm is applicable to your city too. Otherwise, his statement can be an input for you to arrive at yaqeen or itmi’nan (ref. accompanying chart).
5. *Q: If any Hakime Shar’ issues a Hukm (order) that tomorrow is Eid, does it automatically apply all over the world?* Ans: No, not unless he specifies this, and you happen to be a muqallid of Ay. Khamenei (h.a.). However in any case, his Hukm can serve as an input for you to arrive at yaqeen or itmi’nan (refer accompanying chart).

6. *Q: Why can't all the marjas just get together and agree on a single day for Eid?* Ans: As it's up to each one of us to decide the day of Eid for ourselves, even if the Maraje' (h.a.) were to agree on a single day, it would still not eliminate the chances of differences between us.
7. *Q: What if I follow this framework and end up celebrating Eid on a certain day while in fact it is not Eid on that day in reality?!* Ans: This can happen even if we do not follow this framework! At least by following this framework we are acting upon our duty as a muqallid, and can have greater hope for Allah's mercy and reward.
8. *Q: Look, if we follow this framework, we may end up having different members of the same family/community celebrate Eid on different days - How can Islam sanction this?!* Ans: See Answer to Q.7 above. Furthermore, having different people celebrate Eid on different days is neither a new phenomenon, nor is it the great crisis that some people imagine it to be.
9. *Q: Ok, so what exactly matters in determining Eid - moon-sighting or moon-rise? Why?* Ans: The criterion is moon-sighting (or at the least, to have the moon sight-able) over your city. This is what is understood from the Ahadith.
10. *Q: What is meant by "at least have the moon sight-able" in Ans. 9?* Ans: It means that even if the moon is not actually sighted – either because no effort was made to sight it, or because of a barrier such as clouds – but you believe that it was sight-able, it is as good as sighting it.
11. *Q: Does it count if the moon is sighted using equipment like binoculars?* Ans: Ay. Khamenei (h.a.) accepts sightings using equipment like binoculars. Even though Ay. Sistani (h.a.) considers only sightings by the naked eye to be valid, his muqallideen may use information obtained from equipment-based sightings as inputs to arrive at yaqeen or itmi'nan (refer accompanying chart).
12. *Q: Why don't we use astronomical calculations to figure out the date for Eid?* Ans: The Ma'sumeen (a.s.) have laid down moon-sighting as the criterion. H/w, we can take assistance from astronomical calculations; if someone arrives at yaqeen or itmi'nan about moon-sighting through astronomical calculations, then he must act accordingly (refer accompanying chart).
13. *Q: I am sure the moon was sighted in "X" city. Will tomorrow be Eid in my city too?* Ans: If the two cities have "Ittehaade Ufuq", then yes, it will be Eid in your city too.
14. *Q: What is "Ittehaade Ufuq"? Why does it matter?* Ans: For the meaning of this term, please refer to Page 1. Ittehaade Ufuq matters because it is the only way to determine whether or not a confirmed moon sighting in another city applies to your city.
15. *Q: How do I find out if there is Ittehaade Ufuq between "X" city and mine?* Ans: Determining the answer for any two cities requires some degree of expert knowledge. One of the criteria is that the 1st city must not be located on a longitude that is to the west of the 2nd city.
16. *Q: A respected Aalime Deen in my city/area/country has said that tomorrow is Eid. Do I have to act as per what he says?* Ans: You must follow him if you are a muqallid of Ay. Khamenei, and this Aalime Deen is a Hakime Shar', and his statement is a Hukm. Otherwise his statement may be used as an input for you to arrive at yaqeen or itmi'nan (refer accompanying chart).
17. *Q: Two different groups of mo'mineen in my city say two different things about it being Eid tomorrow. I am confused. What should I do?* Ans: It's up to you to decide which of the two views - if any! - you feel yaqeen or itminaan about (refer accompanying chart).
18. *Q: Two different sets of witnesses have given contradictory testimony regarding moon-sighting. What should I do?* Ans: If two sets of just (pls. refer to an Aalime Deen for the meaning of this term), male witnesses give contradictory testimonies - one set says that they have sighted the moon, and the other set says they are certain the moon cannot have been sighted - then we must disregard the testimony of both sets. However, if one set says they have sighted the moon, and the other says they do not know whether it has been sighted or not, then we must accept the testimony of those who say they have sighted the moon.
19. *Q: This is a great framework. How do I get others use it as well?* Ans: Please propagate it only where you are sure that doing so would not lead to further disagreements and disunity among mo'mineen. And at all times please remember to emphasize that to use this framework is to follow the Marja's opinion.

“So, is it Eid Tomorrow?”
- A DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK FOR MO’MINEEN -
 {based on the rulings of Ay. Sistani (h.a.) and Ay. Khamenei (h.a)}



(*) For an explanation of these terms, please refer to page 1.