



## Why does the Ḥanafī school take the view of Global Sighting in which a report from anywhere in the world is considered valid as that is based on the assumption that the Earth is flat?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

هو الموفق

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الجواب ومنه الصواب

This is a misunderstanding of the term اختلاف المطالع غير معتبر (Ikhtilāf al-Maṭāli' ghayr mu'tabar) which is translated to mean that 'different horizons are not considered'. This is misunderstood to mean that the horizon is considered as one and therefore if the hilāl is seen anywhere then the next day is the new month. This view then has to be based on the presumption that the Earth is flat for this to make any physical sense. However, that is not what is meant by this term.

In the discussion on the topic we see what the Fuqahā meant by the term in Radd al-Muḥtār,

اعلم أن نفس اختلاف المطالع لا نزاع فيه بمعنى أنه قد يكون بين البلدتين بعد بحيث يطلع الهلال له ليلة كذا في إحدى البلدتين دون الأخرى وكذا مطالع الشمس؛ لأن انفصال الهلال عن شعاع الشمس يختلف باختلاف الأقطار حتى إذا زالت الشمس في المشرق لا يلزم أن تزول في المغرب،

Imām Ibn Ābidīn states that there is no dispute with respect to the fact that there are different horizons, in other words that the Earth is of a spherical nature. He further explains the point that it could be possible that the hilāl is seen in one land on one night and on another night from another country.



He then details what is meant by the term,

وَأَمَّا الْخِلَافُ فِي اعْتِبَارِ اخْتِلَافِ الْمَطَالِعِ بِمَعْنَى أَنَّهُ هَلْ يَجِبُ عَلَى كُلِّ قَوْمٍ اعْتِبَارُ مَطْلِعِهِمْ، وَلَا يَلْزَمُ أَحَدُ الْعَمَلِ بِمَطْلِعِ غَيْرِهِ أَمْ لَا يُعْتَبَرُ اخْتِلَافُهَا بَلْ يَجِبُ الْعَمَلُ بِالْأَسْبَقِ رُؤْيَاهُ حَتَّى لَوْ رُئِيَ فِي الْمَشْرِقِ لَيْلَةَ الْجُمُعَةِ، وَفِي الْمَغْرِبِ لَيْلَةَ السَّبْتِ وَجَبَ عَلَى أَهْلِ الْمَغْرِبِ الْعَمَلُ بِمَا رَأَهُ أَهْلُ الْمَشْرِقِ، فَقِيلَ بِالْأَوَّلِ وَاعْتَمَدَهُ الرَّيْلَعِيُّ وَصَاحِبُ الْمَيْضِ، وَهُوَ الصَّحِيحُ عِنْدَ الشَّافِعِيَّةِ؛ لِأَنَّ كُلَّ قَوْمٍ مُحَاطَبُونَ بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ كَمَا فِي أَوْقَاتِ الصَّلَاةِ، وَأَيَّدَهُ فِي الدَّرَرِ بِمَا مَرَّ مِنْ عَدَمِ وُجُوبِ الْعِشَاءِ وَالْوُتْرِ عَلَى فَاقِدِ وَفَيْهِمَا وَظَاهِرُ الرَّوَايَةِ النَّبَوِيِّ وَهُوَ الْمُعْتَمَدُ عِنْدَنَا وَعِنْدَ الْمَالِكِيَّةِ وَالْحَنَابِلَةِ لِتَعَلُّقِ الْخُطَابِ عَمَلًا بِمُطْلَقِ الرَّوْيَةِ فِي حَدِيثِ «صُومُوا لِرُؤْيَيْهِ» بِخِلَافِ أَوْقَاتِ الصَّلَوَاتِ، وَتَمَامُ تَقْرِيرِهِ فِي رِسَالَتِنَا الْمَذْكُورَةِ.

“Is it necessary upon a community to only follow their horizon [in other words their sighting] and not binding to follow that of another horizon or that this difference [of horizons] is not considered and rather it is necessary to follow the earliest sighting; so if it was seen in the east on Friday night and in the west on Saturday night then it would be necessary on the people in the west to follow the sighting of the eastern people. The lesser view is the former [that it is only binding if seen in their locality] Imām Zayla’ī relies upon this view as does the author of al-Fayḍ and this is the sound view of the shāfi’iyya; this is because every people are responsible [to perform prayers] according to the times in their locality. This position is ratified by what is mentioned in al-Durar previously with respect to the none necessity of Ishā and Witr when their time is absent [yet is present in other localities]. The zāhir al-riwāya is based on the second view [that, in this case fasting, becomes binding upon a people irrespective of where the hilāl is seen] and that is what is relied upon according to us and the mālikiyya and the ḥanābila because the address is associated with an absolute/unlimited ru’ya in the ḥadīth “Fast due its observance...”, contrary to times of prayers and this is detailed in the relevant risāla.”

He further states;

[تَنْبِيْهُ] يُفْهَمُ مِنْ كَلَامِهِمْ فِي كِتَابِ الْحَجِّ أَنَّ اخْتِلَافَ الْمَطَالِعِ فِيهِ مُعْتَبَرٌ فَلَا يَلْزَمُهُمْ شَيْءٌ لَوْ ظَهَرَ أَنَّهُ رُئِيَ فِي بَلَدَةٍ أُخْرَى قَبْلَهُمْ يَوْمٌ وَهَلْ يُقَالُ كَذَلِكَ فِي حَقِّ الْأُضْحِيَّةِ لِغَيْرِ الْحُجَّاجِ؟ لَمْ أَرَهُ وَالظَّاهِرُ نَعَمْ؛ لِأَنَّ اخْتِلَافَ الْمَطَالِعِ إِنَّمَا لَمْ يُعْتَبَرِ فِي الصَّوْمِ لِتَعَلُّقِهِ بِمُطْلَقِ الرَّوْيَةِ، وَهَذَا بِخِلَافِ الْأُضْحِيَّةِ فَالظَّاهِرُ أَنَّهَا كَأَوْقَاتِ الصَّلَوَاتِ يَلْزَمُ كُلَّ قَوْمٍ الْعَمَلُ بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ فَتُجْزَى الْأُضْحِيَّةُ فِي الْيَوْمِ الثَّلَاثِ عَشَرَ وَإِنْ كَانَ عَلَى رُؤْيَا غَيْرِهِمْ هُوَ الرَّابِعَ عَشَرَ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ

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In this discussion he reemphasises that in the chapter on al-Ḥajj then the local situation is taken into consideration. So nothing is binding on the individual if the hilāl is sighted elsewhere a day or so before. It is only fasting which has this specific ruling in which any sighting can bring about the start of the month of Ramaḍān. Due to the absolute/unlimited statement of ru'ya. Whereas Uḍhiyya is like times of prayers each group of people are bound by the times which brings about an act. Therefore, an Uḍhiyya on their 13<sup>th</sup> of Dhu'l Ḥijja will suffice even if it is 14<sup>th</sup> according to others.

In summary, it is appreciated amongst the aḥnāf that the Earth is near spherical and not flat and as a result there will be day somewhere and night somewhere else. When it comes to all other acts associated with time including the start of months then it should be based on local sighting and local solar movements for prayer. However, for Ramaḍān due to the general unrestricted use of the verb conjugate in the ḥadīth it means that whenever and wherever the hilāl is sighted and the witnessing reaches, according to the sharī'a as discussed in my paper, then the fasting of Ramaḍān on the next day becomes binding.

والله اعلم وعلمه أتم

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