

How do we know when ' Aashooraa ' is this year?

How should we fast ' Aa ' shooraa ' this year? Until now, we do not know when the month begins or whether Dhu ' I-Hijjah has twenty-nine or thirty days. How can we define when ' Aa ' shooraa ' is and fast it?

Praise be to Allaah.

If we do not know whether the month of

Dhu ' I-Hijjah is complete (30 days) or incomplete (29 days), and no one tells us when the new moon of Muharram was sighted, then we should follow the

basic principle, which is that the month should be completed as thirty days.

So Dhu ' I-Hijjah is counted as being 30 days long, then we calculate the date

of ' Aashooraa ' on that basis.

If a Muslim wants to be sure that he has

fasted on the right day, he should fast two consecutive days at ' Aashooraa ' .

So he should calculate when ' Aa ' shooraa ' will be if Dhu ' I-Hijjah is twenty-nine days and if it is thirty days, and fast these two days. Thus he

will be definite that he has fasted ' Aashooraa ' , and in this case he will

have fasted either the ninth and tenth, or the tenth and eleventh, both of

which are good. If he wants to be sure of fasting Taasoo ' ah (the ninth of

Muharram) as well, then he should fast the two days we have spoken of

above

and the day immediately before them as well. Then he will have fasted the

ninth, tenth and eleventh, or the eighth, ninth and tenth. In either case he

will have fasted the ninth and tenth for sure.

If someone were to say " My work and other

circumstances only allow me to fast one day, so which is the best day for

me

to fast? " we say to him:

Count Dhu ' I-Hijjah as being thirty days and

work out the tenth day (of Muharram), then fast on that day.

This is a summary of what I heard our shaykh,

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' Abd al- ' Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him), say when I asked him about this matter.

If we receive news from a trustworthy Muslim that he has seen the new moon of Muharram, we should act in accordance with that. Fasting at any time in Muharram is Sunnah, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: " The best fasting after the month of Ramadaan is fasting in the month of Muharram. " (Narrated by Muslim, 1163)

And Allaah knows best.