

The Prophet (salla 'Llahu `alayhi wa sallam) took great care to determine precisely the beginning of Sha`ban, because one can then count twenty nine days and watch for the crescent of Ramadhan or complete thirty days before starting to fast. `Aishah (Radiya 'Llahu `anha) said:

The Messenger (salla 'Llahu `alayhi wa sallam) used to be more concerned about [determining the beginning of] Sha`ban than about other months. Then he used to fast at the sighting of [the crescent of] Ramadhan. If it were obscure, he would count thirty days [of Sha`ban] and then fast. [Authentic; narrated by Abu Dawud and Ahmad]

One can start fast by one or two Muslim witnesses

Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar [Radi Allahu anhu: May Allah be pleased with him] The people sighted the moon, so I informed the Apostle of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] that I had sighted it. He fasted and commanded the people to fast. Reported by Sunan of abu dawood

The `Ulama agree that two trustworthy Muslim witnesses are sufficient to establish moon sighting. This is based on reports by a number of the Sahabah (Radiya 'Llahu `anhum) that the Messenger (salla 'Llahu `alayhi wa sallam) said:

"If two just Muslim witnesses testify [that they saw it] then fast or break your fast.."
[Authentic; narrated by Ahmad, an-Nassa'i and ad-Daraqutni]

If an adult, sane, trustworthy, reliable Muslim who has good eyesight says that he has seen the crescent with his own eyes, then we should take his word for it and act accordingly (i.e., start fasting).

Dua to say upon Sighting the Crescent:

Talhah bin Ubaidullah [Radi Allahu anhu: May Allah be pleased with him] reported: At the sight of the new moon (of the lunar month), the Prophet [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] used to supplicate: "[Allahumma ahillahu `alaina bil-amni wal-iman, was-salamati wal-Islam, Rabbi wa Rabbuk-Allah, Hilalu rushdin wa khairin](#) (O Allah, let this moon appear on us with security and Iman; with safety and Islam. (O moon!) Your Rubb and mine is Allah. May this moon be bringing guidance and good)."
[At-Tirmidhi].

When the Messenger of Allah [Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam] would see the crescent he used to say: 'Allāhu 'akbaru, 'allāhumma 'ahillahu `alaynā bil-'amni wal 'eemāni, was-salāmati wal-'islāmi, wat-tawfeeqi limā tuhibbu watardhā, rabbuna wa rabbuka 'allāhu

[Reporters :Reported by Ad-Dāramiy, and At-Tirmithi. Al-Albāni said it was sound due to its testimonials and that Ibn Hibbān (#2375) said it was sound. At-Tirmithi said it was comely and it is #132 in The Authentic of Good Sayings]

Translation:Allah is greater [than everything], O my ilāh (god) bring this month upon us in security and in faith, in peace and Islam [submission], and in making us successful to do what You love and approve of. Our Lord and your Lord is Allah.

Shaikh Al-Albani Cautions: Many people face the crescent when supplicating, as they also face graves, and all of this is not allowed as it is affirmed in the legislation of our religion: "Nothing is faced during supplication other than that which is faced during prayer."

References:

- 1.Al-Bukhari :Name of book of Hadith, which is known for its authenticity and correctness.
- 2.Riyadh-us-Saliheen; Abu Zakariya Yahya bin Sharaf an-nuwi damishqi
- 3.Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Adtheem by Ibn Kathir (The exegesis of the great Qur'an).
- 4.Tirmidhi(Name of book of Hadith)

Footnote (Explanation) :

SAAW: Salla Allahu Aleihi Wassalam, i.e. the Salat of Allah and His Salaam (Peace) be upon Prophet Muhammad. The Salat of Allah upon Prophet Muhammad is His Praise and mentioning of the Prophet to the angels in the Most High place in Heaven.