

**NEGATION of  
Saudi moon sighting  
for UK!**

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## Darul-uloom Deoband approves Wifaqul-Ulama criteria and methods (2007)

Q) What do the Ulama of Islam and Shariah state on the following issue:

Our Jamaat "Wifaqul-Ulama" is serving the Muslims in Britain and the Jamaat is under the guidance of Hadhrat Maulana Hasan Bodhanwi, who is the Khaleefa of Hadhrat-e-Aqdas Maulana Syed Asad Madani (RA). The issue of moon sighting in Britain is complex and the Jamaat is specifically trying to resolve it to end the internal disputes and schisms (amongst Muslims). You are requested to comment on the following recommendations as put forth by the local and responsible Ulama:

1) Full arrangement will be made for local moon sighting based on the following Hadeeth, "Narrated Abdullah bin Umar (RA): Allah's Apostle (Sallaho Alaije Wassallam) mentioned Ramadan and said, "Do not fast unless you see the crescent (of Ramadan), and do not give up fasting till you see the crescent (of Shawwal), but if the sky is overcast (if you cannot see it), then act on estimation (i.e. count Sha'ban as 30 days)." [Bukhari]

2) In order to achieve this sighting, help can only be taken from experts of Astronomy but the decision will NEVER be based on this rather the decision will ALWAYS be based on sighting by the eye

3) If the moon is not sighted locally then we will rely on countries to the East of Britain where there is a system of moon sighting and where moon sighting is possible and when their news is beyond doubt and criticism (i.e. acceptable); we will only accept their sighting AFTER contacting them.

A1) Recommendation is correct

A2) This recommendation is also correct

A3) This recommendation is also correct BUT the news (of sighting) will be acceptable after contacting the place where the sighting has occurred

Habibur-Rahman (Mufti Darul-uloom, Deoband)

The answer is correct.

Zainul-Islam Qasimi

The answer is correct.

Mahmood Hasan Bulandshari

### **Darul-uloom Deoband approves South African moon sighting for UK (2007)**

**Q) What do the Ulama of Islam and Shariah state on the following issue:**

There is a clear system of Moon sighting in South Africa where a committee comprising of local Hanafi Ulama makes arrangements for it and makes decisions after due deliberations and search according to Islamic Shariah. This country is located in the East of Britain with a time difference of one hour. Is their moon sighting decision dependable and correct for the residents of Britain? Furthermore we would like to add that the authenticity of South African moon sighting was also attested by Hadhrat Maulana Mufti Saeed Ahmed Saheb Palunpuri (teacher, Darul-uloom Deoband) and he also stated that the sighting of South Africa is much more suitable and acceptable for residents of Britain in comparison to Morocco as there are Ulama there on our own Maslak who are working in the right direction. We would like your guidance on the matter.

**Query put forth by:**

**Members of committee: Wifaqul-Ulama  
Walthamstow, London**

A) An hour time difference is not much and the decision of South Africa (on moon sighting) will be acceptable for the residents of Britain and I also agree with Mufti Saeed Ahmed Saheb that it will be more reliable and correct than Morocco.

Habibur-Rahman (Mufti Darul-uloom, Deoband)

The answer is correct.  
Zainul-Islam Qasimi

The answer is correct.  
Mahmood Hasan Bulandshari

**Mufti Ebrahim Desai (Mufti, South Africa) states that following Saudi Arabia is an open munkar and wrong (2007)**

Q) What is the opinion of the honoured Mufti Sahib as regards to the under mentioned? Recently the moonsighting issue has come under a lot of debate here in the U.K. A great number of people are now very much aware of the flaws in following the moonsighting news of Saudi Arabia. However it seems that the Deeni elders of the community are stopping the majority from adopting the true and correct formula as prescribed by the Wifaq ul Ulama. Even the Tablighi Jamaat, who normally claims not to get involved in such controversial issues, has directly intervened in stopping the majority from adopting the correct method. In a recent meeting in Batley a member of the Shooraa of the Dewsbury Markaz, Janab Shabbir Daji, personally disrupted a meeting in which he was not invited to attend the meeting held by IMWS, he continuously supported the Saudi criteria, not allowing anyone else to even speak on the matter. He and another member of the Dewsbury Shooraa, Haji Bostan are also responsible for donating the costs of the book 'qowl ul faisal' a book which tries to justify the Saudi criteria. This is after claiming that the Tablighi Jamat do not get involved on issues of any Massail. It has also been reported that Tablighi brothers in other areas of UK, are also being a barrier for the Ahle Haq, despite Fatawas issued not only by yourself but also from Darul Uloom Deoband, Jamia Islamia Dabel, Mazhir ul Uloom Saharanpur, Jamia Farooqia Karachi, Darul Uloom Kantharia, and Jamia Hussainiyah Rander; that is not correct for the people of U.K. to follow Saudi Arabia in moonsighting.( All these are posted on the website;www.wifaqululama.co.uk) This also happens to be the opinion of the Ulamaa of Saudia One such brother from Stamford Hill even stopped a prominent Mufti Sahib from even uttering the word moon during a Bayaan. My question to you would be that, is it permissible for these people to be a barrier for the masses to practice upon the Haq? In the eyes of Islamic law

what is the position of these people? Is it permissible for these non Aalim tablighees (who normally continue to preach that the moon issue should remain only for the Ulamaa to discuss) to meddle in the affairs of the Shariah? Is this an 'Ulamaa only' issue? Or should the masses be made aware of the reality of this important issue? Are such people who stop the Haq being preached in the Masjid worthy of a post in the management of the Masjid? Can this issue be described as an Ijtihadi Masala? What is the responsibility of Ulama of UK on this issue?

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

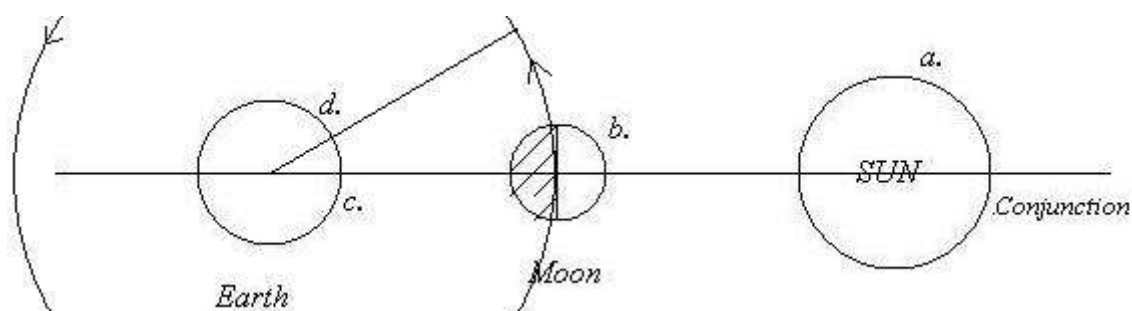
Assalaamu `alaykum waRahmatullahi Wabarakatoh

It is very encouraging to note that there is an awakening in the regarding the flaws and discrepancies of 's criteria of commencing a lunar month.

Hereunder is a brief illustration of the discrepancy.

Allah says "They ask you (O Mohammed صلى الله عليه وسلم ) about the crescents, say, the crescents are a means of calculating time for people (and a mean for calculating) Hajj...(Al-Baqarah v. 189)

Allah declares the Hilaal (Crescent) to be criteria of time. A Hilaal (crescent) is when the sun shines on the surface of the moon for a minimum of approximately 18 hours after passing the line of elongation before it is visible from earth.



See the diagram. The moon travelled upwards the line of elongation till it became a hilaal at point d.

When Allah declares that the Hilaal is a criteria for time, any deviation from that criteria

is deviation from Qatiyyus Suboot and Qatiyyat ud Dalalah (express and explicit order of Shariah).

There can never be a scope for another view in the presence of Qatiyyus Saboot and Qatiyyat ud Dalalah. Allah declares Hilaal to be the criteria to calculate time. We have to abide by that. Whoever goes against this criteria is guilty of Nasee'ah (altering time) which is also expressly prohibited in the Quraan. (Tawba V.37)

This is a major sin and there is also fear of kufr depending on an individuals approach and attitude towards violating an order of the Quraan which is (Qatiyyus Saboot and Qatiyyat ud Dalalah).

All the Mufties are unanimous on the open and glaring discrepancies of the Saudi criteria of commencing a lunar month. There are innumerable Fatawa on that. You have also quoted the prominent and leading Darul Iftaas and Mufti's Fatawa on that. This was also a unanimous decision by all the senior Ulama of UK in 1975 in the presence of Sayyid Mufti Abdur Rahim Lajpur Saheb. This is clearly recorded in Fatawa Rahimiyyah Vol 9 (old edition) and Vol 10 (new edition). The resolve was to go by local moon sighting if possible or accept the rooyat of a place where sighting is conducted according to Shariah. Alhamdulillah some of the signatories on that fatwa are still alive and residing in.

It is fard upon the Ulama and senior people of to correct the open wrong of following Saudi announcement of the lunar month.

It is disturbing to note that responsible people of the Tabligh Jamaat are thwarting the efforts of Ulema e Haqq on Nahi Anil Munkar (stopping the wrong).

This attitude has been one of the two biggest concerns of Hazrat Maulana Ilyas Saheb (R.A) before his death.

He expressed his concerns to Hazrat Mufti Shafi Saheb (R.A) that when non Ulema lead this effort and non-Ulama are given prominent positions in tabligh, they will lead the people astray. (Taqrir Tirmidhi Vol 5).

In the discussion of the imbalances of Tabligh Jamaat, in the above quoted reference, Hazrat Mufti Taqi Uthmani Saheb Madda Zillohu states that:

The ignorant people engaged in this effort become Muftis and also issue Fatwas.

If responsible people of Tabligh Jamaat conduct themselves in a irresponsible manner as explained by yourself, then that is a complete disservice to Deen. The elders of the Markaz who are non-Ulama are engaged in “Fatawa” which is beyond their jurisdiction and ability. That is extremely dangerous for the ummat.

One can understand the consequence of following the Fatwas of ignorant people and becoming an obstacle in propagating Haqq and stop wrong. They cannot claim being characterized by Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar which is the salient feature of the noble work of da’wah and tableegh..

Hazrath Moulana Inamul-Hasan Saheb (RA), the former Ameer of Tabligh has categorically emphasized that an effort should be made to follow the correct criteria of moon-sighting. His letters have been widely circulated and could be seen on the website of [Wifaaqul Ulama](#).

It is the responsibility of ever Muslim of UK, Ulama, Trustees of the masaajid Organizations and masses to be firm on Haqq and not to compromise on this. Following Saudi is a Munkar and an open wrong.

I urge the trustees and senior people of the different organizations to take immediate control of the issue and avoid putting this issue under the carpet. If elders do not do that, the consequences in light of the huge awakening and restlessness on this issue will erupt in very ugly dimensions. Allah forbid.

And Allah knows best

Wassalam

Mufti Ebrahim Desai

Darul Iftaa, Madrassah In'aamiyyah

**Advice against following Saudi moonsighting by Adil Salahi (Saudi Scholar) (2006):**

<http://www.arabnews.com/?page=5&section=0&article=86399&d=12&m=9&y=2006>

**Q. Some people in my home country do not begin the Ramadan fast according to their country; they follow Saudi Arabia. They do the same with the Eid and mark it on the same day as in Saudi Arabia, while people at home may be still fasting. Please comment.**

*A.S. Al-Jaidy*

**A.** These people are well meaning. They think that Islam is practiced in its best form in Saudi Arabia and they want to follow it. But their practice is wrong because it does not have a solid basis. If we were to extend their practice to its logical conclusion, we should offer prayers according to the timings in Saudi Arabia, rather than our own timings. Thus, we should import Saudi calendars and follow the timings indicated in them. Similarly, we should fast the same number of hours as fasting is indicated in Saudi Arabia. This is easy nowadays, because of satellite television. We can always watch the time in Saudi Arabia and follow it. Needless to say, no one will agree to this although some logical argument could be presented in its support, such as the unity of all Muslims.

Yet the practice of all Muslims is that each locality has its own timings. The difference in prayer time between Jeddah and Dammam, at the two coasts of Saudi Arabia is around an hour. No one suggests that it should not be observed. In fact if it is not observed, we run the risk of having our prayers rendered invalid.

The difference in starting Ramadan has always been known, and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) companions accepted it. Abdullah ibn Abbas asked someone who had traveled from Damascus to Madinah about the day they started Ramadan.

When he was informed of the day, he mentioned that the people of Madinah sighted the moon on a different day. People asked him whether he would defer to the sighting in Damascus since it was the capital city of the Muslim state at the time, but he said: "Each have their own sighting." This is a clear answer to those people by one for whom the Prophet prayed to be a scholar. Needless to say, he was a scholar of high distinction.

**Saudi Sightings by 80 year olds! (2005):**

**The Impossible Testimonies (Al-Watan: Saudi Newspaper Article/20JAN2005))**

By Hamza Al-Muzani

The issue of the crescent continues to stir widespread debate, especially for the beginning of the month of Ramadhan and its end. However, this time it has been raised on the occasion of confirming the beginning of the month of Dhul al-Hijjah 1425 AH. The

reason as always is because of, the Supreme Court relying on the testimony of people claiming to have seen the crescent directly with their eyes, contrary to reality.

On this occasion the Supreme court originally issued a statement saying that those who's testimony is relied upon have not witnessed the crescent on Monday night, the reason being that conditions were cloudy, therefore it was decided that the beginning of the month will be Wednesday, however thereafter two witnesses came forward claiming to have seen the crescent on that night. This has led the Supreme court to issue that Tuesday was the first day of Dhul al- Hijja. Science & Technology' had stated that the crescent had set on the **Saudi** horizon (through out the country) before sunset on Monday, this in turn means that the sighting of the crescent is impossible after sunset on that day for simple reason of it not being present on the horizon.

Many people were misled when they saw the crescent very high in the sky on Tuesday night believing it to be the crescent of the night before. However the correct scientific explanation for it being so high is that approximately 37 hours had passed since its birth. It is also worth pointing out that Sheikh Salih al-Lahaydan head of Supreme Court had used the height of the crescent as evidence in his statement issued on 9/11/1425. This supported the incorrect view of those people who linked the height of the crescent and the beginning of the month.

In an interview by the head of the Supreme court to the 'Okaz Paper' a number of phrases used by him to discuss the witnesses on whose testimony the Court relied upon in determining the crescent on Tuesday night are worth noting such as: "intelligent men of understanding" and they are "trustworthy, reliable and men of knowledge" and "these are men are not children" and "should the matters of moon remain unknown to them because they are shepherds?".

It is possible to understand from these very strong praises for the two witnesses that it is evident that the court feels that the view of impossibility of seeing the crescent on that night as being a very strong view. Therefore it was forced into giving the strongest possible praises to the witnesses in view of the strong opposing view. This exaggeration has led to describing the witnesses with every possible hyperbole; otherwise what is the link between them "being shepherds" and the validity of their testimony?

My intention here is not to throw doubt on their personality or on their honesty in

reporting what they thought they saw, but all I want is to point out that more rigor and investigation should have been used when accepting their testimony.

Another point of interest is that the Supreme court has contrary to what we are accustomed from them, forsaken the literal meaning of the “...fast upon seeing it and end fast upon seeing it, and if it is cloudy then complete the month of 30 days.” The text of the Hadith relates to Ramdhan but the court now cites it as evidence for establishing the beginning and end of months other than Ramadhan, as Sheikh al-Lahaydan says: “an act of worship connected to a complete month does not end or begin except by the sighting of the crescent at the beginning and the end and also Hajj cannot be performed in the time prescribed except by the practice of sighting and establishing the crescent”.

It was expected that the Court would abide by the letter of the Hadeeth and not generalize for determining the beginning of other months. Sheikh al-Lahaydan’s interview with ‘Okaz Newspaper’ makes it clear that the court works with other committees known for determining the crescent and sends with it judges, he says “The many committees and judges responsible for sighting the crescent in their respective regions went out and with them some other governmental organizations, they returned having not seen the crescent on Monday night, therefore the crescent was hidden from us”. He further elaborates this issue: “On the advent of a new month especially a month whose beginning is necessary for us to know, the courts are made aware and the judges request people who generally seek the crescent and have good eyesight to go out with a judge and a representative of the region before Maghrib and stay at the specific place to see the crescent and this routine has been followed for a long time”.

Sheikh al-Lahaydan further emphasizes that the committee has been taking into consideration what the observatory says for a long time. However in his interview he indicates that the Supreme Court’s view of the observatory is biased by dislike and distrust. He comments on the view of the astronomy experts about the height of the crescent on Tuesday night: “It is unfortunate that the scientists or as they are known astronomers, have declared notwithstanding that it would set on Tuesday night before sunset’ (thus: although it should be Monday). It is necessary to point out here that Sheikh al-Lahaydan himself had said in his interview that the height of the moon is not proof of its age. When asked by the reporter about the possibility of astronomers being wrong he said: “We don’t know, but they sometimes look at the horizon and sometimes in their books”. The answer indicates Sheikh al-Lahaydan’s contempt of astronomers or possibly him not knowing what that do, although this comment of his is a judgment of them being incompetent. Sheikh al-Lahaydan comments reiterate the fact that the Supreme Court

does not rely on the astronomers and the observatory when confirming a sighting. The question now is: The Supreme court compels some judges to go out with the committees that sight the crescent with a naked eye, which is wrong in many times, but if the Supreme Court wants precision and help from the astronomers, then shouldn't they send some judges to 'King Abdul Aziz City for Science & Technology' to confirm the testimony of the astronomers at the observatories? It is possible for these judges to further confirm it by seeing the crescent by way of telescopes.

Sheikh al-Lahaydan ends his interview with 'Okaz Newspaper' by saying: "I advise all to fear Allah and to speak the truth and refrain from interfering in matters that do not concern them, it is possible the Supreme Court may "punish" whoever interferes by writing about the determination or otherwise in matters pertaining to the crescent because this causes confusion in the public especially when they have no knowledge of this matter". The frightening thing from this comment is that it strengthens the view of those who claim that the official **Saudi** religious organizations base their views not on convincing evidence but rather on one single view and on threats, denials and compulsion and suppressing all opposing views and opinions on the matter. We have been for a long time victims to these kinds of accusations and now the chairman of major governmental organization confirm it.

Another point to ponder about is Sheikh al-Lahaydan's expression to "punish" rather than saying, "to prosecute". This means that the Supreme Court, which is the last point for justice and is not to punish anyone until evidence proves one guilty could possibly bypass this noble path and lay down a punishment without prosecution if they hold an opposing view.

Also the statement "A matter that does not concern public" takes away their right to express an opinion is one which is wholly uncalled for because it is manipulating the truth and admonishing the Muslims which stops them from free thinking and expressing their views on matters which they see as concerning them. As for the crime the Supreme Court wants to punish the writers for "confusing the public" although the source of confusion are those contradictory views based on non scientific foundations.

In conclusion what happened this year at the end of Ramadhan with no witnesses for the beginning of the Ramadhan and the confusion and contradiction that happened at the beginning of Dhul al-Hijja compels the government to take the same positive steps to resolve this matter which should not continue anymore, especially when we in the

Kingdom have means to match precise and correct decisions for determining the beginning & end of months, which will free us from falling victim to impossible testimonies.

### **Darul-uloom Deoband issues Fatwa against following Saudia Sighting (2003)**

**Question:** You will be well aware of the controversies regarding the sighting of the moon here in the UK. For a period of time our respected scholars and the representatives of the esteemed institute of Deoband followed the authentic sightings of Morrocco considering it as a nearby country, which is in accordance with the Shariah and the Hanafi school of thought.

The only setback was that occasionally the news of sighting the moon was delayed to an extent that on one occasion we fasted on not hearing any news about the moon being sighted, only to find out later on that day that it was sighted, therefore the fast was broken and Eid celebrated.

The individuals who were responsible for the research of the moon sighting should have calmed down the situation and rebuilt confidence in the general community, but instead, they went running around to and fro, to Darul Iftaa's around the globe to get a fatwa issued so that following Saudi's sightings would be made permissible. They published such fatwa extensively creating an atmosphere that following Saudi's sighting was the only permissible way and that it was wrong to follow Morocco. When in reality the outcome of these fatwas was to grant some flexibility in times of difficulty. Granting flexibility under temporary circumstances and issuing verdicts for permanent situations are separate matters altogether.

This all lead to a confusion resulting with a group of people trying to instigates Saudi's observations and contrary to this, some scholars eager to follow the righteous path, who were never satisfied with the Saudi observations. As time passed Saudi sightings were proved wrong on many occasions.

If the Saudi observations had been correct, there would not have been any controversy at all. But time and time again Saudi has proved itself incorrect. The evidence is that on many occasions Saudi announces the sighing of moon, when not a single person sights the moon in any part of Asia or Africa where the horizon is mostly clear as well. What's more is that there is no sighting of the moon in any part of America, Canada or West Indies where the sun sets eight hours after Saudi; and the crescent has grown much bigger.

For instance, this Shawwal 1423H on Wednesday evening Saudi made an announcement for Eid and a large number of Muslims here in the U.K. celebrated Eid on the following day whereas Muslims were fasting America, Canada, Panama, and

Barbados and they celebrated Eid on Friday. This episode repeats itself nearly every year.

The purpose of putting this in writing is so that we ponder over the problems and dilemmas that are arising as a result of these premature Saudi announcements and to rectify the situation (if possible).

The following problems will arise whenever Saudi will make a premature announcement:

1. Keeping a fast of Ramadhan in Sha'ban, which contradicts the Hadeeth as well as misleads people into thinking that it is a fast of Ramadhan when in reality it is not
2. Changing a day or two of Sha'ban into Ramadhan, which contradicts the verse of Qur'an in which the people of the days of ignorance were prohibited from changing the names of the months. They used to change the name of the month according to their likings.
3. Celebrating Eid in Ramadhan
4. Omitting a fast of Ramadhan, when all are equally compulsory
5. Changing Ramadhan into Shawwal, which is forbidden as above
6. Many pious people start the six fasts of Shawwal straight after Eid and under such circumstances they would be fasting on the day of Eid which is in complete contradiction with the Hadeeth
7. It is understood from many books of Fiqh that any form of Ibaadah is not acceptable before the due time, but is accepted if it is performed later than schedule time due to any valid excuse and the responsibility of fulfilling that ibaadah is discharged. For example praying Zuhr Salaah 2 minutes before Zawal will not be accepted under any circumstances at all. But if it was prayed late close to Asar time, it would be accepted and no sin committed if there was a valid excuse. Similarly, Qurbani can be made on the eleventh or twelfth if it is not made on the tenth but under no circumstances can it be made on the ninth of Zil-Hijjah. It is the same command for fasting and Eid. If fast or Eid is celebrated before time it will not be accepted, but if for any reason there is a delay because the sighting of the moon cannot be clarified then this Ibaadah will be accepted and the responsibility discharged
8. How is it possible that when-ever Saudi makes a hasty announcement of the moon sighting, it is not visible in Asia, Africa, or any other western countries even though they have a clear horizon. How can it be possible that the moon is sighted at sunset time in Saudia and 8 hours later it cannot be seen in America, Canada or the West Indies? The problem has occurred many times as well as this year. Therefore, this itself weakens the claims of the Saudi observations
9. It is stated in a Hadeeth from which we can understand that we should stop and start fasting in accordance with the moon sighting complete 30 days of Sha'ban if

moon sighting is not possible due to distorted visibility. If we look at reality, we have left the practice upon this Hadeeth. What, don't we have permission to keep complete 30 days of Sha'ban or Ramadhan? Don't we have the flexibility to wait instead of jumping to conclusions and acting upon Saudi's hasty sighting where there is a great possibility of our Ibaadah not being accepted because it is done before due time? We should therefore act only upon such verdicts that save us from ruining our Ibaadah.

10. From a Hanafi point of view, a single trustworthy person's sighting is accepted for fasting, but for the sighting of Eid, it is important for a large group of people to give evidence of the moon being sighted. A number of people upon whom others have confidence and satisfaction. Whereas according to them (the Saudi) one or two persons sighting is accepted for Eid.
11. There has always been an atmosphere of controversy, confusion and argument amongst the Scholars and the general community whenever Saudi has made hasty announcements about the sighting and whenever they complete 30 days there is peace and satisfaction amongst the Muslim community. Our elders have always had doubts and suspicions regarding the Saudi announcements. If their dates were accepted to be accurate then Pakistan, India etc. would be under more obligation to follow them because they are more closer to Saudi than U.K. Hakeemul Ummah Sheikh Thanwi (RA) has stated and which is mentioned in Fatawa Raheemiyah at the end of volume seven, that if the observation of Saudi is proved to be accurate then the Muslims of India should follow Saudi. This was said approximately 60-70 years ago when in reality this has not been acted upon since, when there is only the Arabian Gulf separating the Indian sub-continent from Saudi and there is not much time difference between them as well.
12. If Saudi observation is followed blindly, people will avoid consulting the learned scholars and the responsible authorities. The sources of media are so advanced that people can learn the news of the moon sighting through telephone, T.V. and satellite and many a time they start to spread the news by making their announcements before sunset. In future if this continues, then people will not wait for the announcement to be made from their local Mosques and it will be impossible to act contrary to these hasty announcements.

These are some major problems that have been created by acting upon premature announcements of the moon sighting. What is happening in this country is that scholars of all different schools of thought are constantly trying to figure out a solution for this great crisis, but unfortunately a great majority of our scholars following the Deobandi school of thought are sleeping with a content mind deceptively assured that what was made permissible for certain circumstances under temporary conditions can be made practical in all situations, even though we have understood hasty actions can ruin our Ibaadah whereas delaying does not.

Alhumdolillah, a number of people who take interest in knowledge and research

including our up and coming generations of Muslims here in the U.K. who hold great knowledge and are fluent in English, understand the weaknesses of Saudi observations.

At the moment in time, what we need is for the local scholars to sit down and acknowledge the weakness of these premature announcements and the problems that are arising from them. The general public still awaits for the correct announcements to be made. It would prove to be a great step in the right direction even if there is a single scholar in each locality who takes up the responsibility of explaining to the community the reality of these hasty announcements.

The scholars of truth have always had a habit of not being afraid of speaking the truth regardless of any opposition. I have firm and full belief through my knowledge and experience that the general community possesses the capability to accept these changes because they are in view of the problems and weaknesses created by the Saudi premature announcements. If it is done with great wisdom, by pointing out the errors and respective corrections, through lectures or private gatherings, there will be no sign of any uproar or aggression. May Allah grant us all the ability to rectify and correct (Ameen).

Answer: "I have studied your queries very attentively. It has been written from here in the past that announcements should be made for the sighting of the moon, based on information of sightings from your close country. It is incorrect to make announcements of Eid and Ramadhan by following Saudi for the sake of ease. Even if a fatwa has been obtained for this purpose, it is against the principles of Shariah. There is a far greater distance between Britain and Saudi whereas Morocco is a lot closer to Britain. To abandon a close country's sightings and to accept Saudis sighting, is in contradiction with the principles of Fiqh. Thereafter considering the state of Saudi observations and the difficulties that are arising from them, which you have written and attention towards; no decision should be ever made blindly in accordance with the Saudi observations. You should enforce with full strength the practice of following Morocco sightings. This is the closest to the truth."

Allah Knows Best.

Mufti Habibur Rahman

Mufti Darul-uloom Deoband

18th of Safar 1424 AH"

The Answer is correct!

Hazrat Maulana Kafeelur-Rahman Nishat

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Zafeeruddin

Hazrat Mufti Muhammed Abdullah

**Mazahirul-uloom (Saharanpur): Agreement with Darul-uloom Deoband (2003) :**

The answer is correct and in accordance with the principles of Shariah. The countries closer in distance should be considered where there isn't a lot of difference between sunrise and sunset times."

Mufti Muhammed Tahir Mazahirri

Mufti Mazahirul-uloom Saharanpur

1st of Sha'aban 1424 AH"

**Madrasah Islamic Taleemud Deen Dhabail, Gujarat: : Agreement with Darul-uloom Deoband (2003):**

I also fully agree with the answer."

Mufti Ahmed Khan Puri

Madrasa Islamia Taleemud-Deen Dhabail"

**Jamia Islamia Binori Town, Karachi: Agreement with Darul-uloom Deoband (2003):**

Therefore in the following circumstances it is necessary for the Muslims in England to follow Morocco or Algeria whichever is closer to England. It is not permissible to follow Saudia, Pakistan or any other country which is far from England."

Written by Mufti Abdul-Kareem Deenpuri

21st of Ramadhan 1424"

## **Jamia Khairul Madaris, Multan: Agreement with Darul-uloom Deoband (2003):**

We have learned from very reliable sources that the thirty two years Saudi Calendar has been set according to Greenwich (London) and the announcements for Eid, Ramadhan are made according to it and not according to moon sighting or by following principles laid down in the Islamic Shariah. A basic proof of this fact is the statements made in the forward of Saudi Calendar.

The second proof is that when officials of Waizarat Ad-Difah wal Tairan were asked that on 21st of February 1993 it will be 30th of Sha'ban but is there actually a chance of sighting the moon; both ministries admitted that according to moon sighting calculations there was no chance of sighting yet Ramadhan was announced in Saudia the next day.

The third proof is that in Saudia moon sighting is not common amongst the common population despite clear horizons; no one can be presented in Saudi Arabia who has fasted upon sighting the moon himself even though in case of clear horizon, perpetual sighting is necessary.

The fourth proof is that the moon is generally sighted elsewhere 2-3 days afterwards.

The fifth proof is that the phases of moon are out of synch i.e. full moon is not seen on the fourteenth in Saudi etc and these can be seen by anyone in Saudia.

Based on these evidences it is can be deduced that moon sighing is not practiced in Saudi Arabia. Therefore to make Saudi the basis of these decisions would be wasting your acts o worship and this is also the opinion of Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani.

Mufti Abdul-Sattar

Mufti Muhammad Abdullah

24th of Jamidul-Thani 1424”

## **Hazrat Maulana Mufti Taqi Usmani on following Saudi moon sighting (1998)**

**Q.) I am writing this letter to you with regards to the controversy surrounding the sighting of the crescent moon over Saudi Arabia on Friday 18 December 1998 and the subsequent commencement of the month of Ramadan in mosques throughout England.**

**My question is: Can such a sighting be acceptable in the face of astronomical data which suggested that on Friday 18 December 1998 the crescent was invisible due to the Sun, earth and moon lying in one plane? The data also suggested that the earliest possible sighting was on Saturday 19 December 1998.**

Thank you for your letter asking me about the issue of sighting of moon at the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr and about the acceptability of evidence despite its being impossible according to the astronomical calculations. In fact the contemporary scholars have different views on this point. I personally believe that if it is certainly proved that the moon is not yet born and its sighting is not at all possible on a particular evening, the evidence of only a few persons should not be taken as a proof of existence of moon at the horizon and the Ramadan or Eid should not be started on that basis alone unless there is evidence of people in overwhelming numbers that they themselves have seen the moon in which case it may be said that there was something wrong in the astronomical calculation. But in the absence of such an evidence, the only evidence of two or some more persons should not be relied upon. This view of mine is based on the ruling given by a large number of jurists that if the Horizon is clear the evidence of two persons is not enough for proving a crescent moon unless it is established by the evidence of a great number of people about whom it is not imaginable that they may have connived to give a false evidence. The requirement of such an overwhelming evidence in this case is based on the common sense that if the horizon is clear the moon must have been seen by a large number of people and merely the evidence of two persons is doubtful. By the analogy, if the astronomical calculation proved that new moon cannot be sighted on a particular day the evidence of a few people should not be relied upon.

However, there are some contemporary scholars who totally disregard the astronomical calculations in the matter of sighting the moon and base their view on the famous Hadith of the Holy Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam "Keep fast after seeing it (moon) and give up fasting after seeing it (moon)." Their argument is that the Shariah does not base its findings on the astronomical calculations because it is meant for all the Muslims the majority of whom have no means to know the results of such calculations. Therefore, they say, reliance can be placed only on the evidence of the persons who claim to have seen the moon. This is the view which has found favor with the Saudi authorities who are responsible for declaring the sighting or otherwise of the moon. Although I do not endorse this view, nor do other scholars of many Muslims countries accept it, yet the issue being a matter of Ijtihad, the decision given by Saudi authorities is enforceable in their own jurisdiction. That is why, despite having a different view, we validate the Hajj and Ramadan etc, as announced by the Saudi authorities [for applicability within Saudi Arabia]. The Muslims living in other parts of the world should desirably arrange their own system of sighting the moon, as is done in Pakistan and many other countries, because the system adopted in Saudi Arabia is not

based on the stronger view. However, as I mentioned earlier this is not an issue which has been specifically mentioned in the Holy Qur'an or Sunnah in express terms but it is a matter of Ijtihad, therefore, we should not hold that any decision taken on that basis, whether in Saudi Arabia or in any other country, is totally against Shariah and the worship or celebrations held on that basis are invalid. This is my humble opinion regarding this issue and according to me the Muslims living in UK etc. should preferably make their own arrangement for sighting of the moon. However, if the dissension of the Muslims cannot be removed except by declaring the beginning of the months on the basis of the announcement of the Saudi authorities then the adoption of Saudi view is less harmful than inculcating the dissension among the Muslims, particularly, in a non-Muslim country.

### **Hazrat Shaykh Maulana Abul-Hasan Ali Nadwi (RA) (1993)**

Hazrat Shaykh Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RA) was also aware and concerned about the prevailing circumstances and he not only stated his concerns but also tried his best to urge International reputable Islamic organizations to clearly display their dissatisfaction with the current situation as evident in one of his letters, “**...The issue of moon sighting is indeed sensitive and International Islamic organizations with global standing and credibility should strongly convey their concern and dissatisfaction towards the present situation. This issue should be discussed thoroughly and others should be strongly encouraged towards this debate. I often discuss this matter with Maulana Burhanuddin...**”

### **Hazratjee Maulana Manzoor Naumani (RA) (1990)**

Retraction of Maulana Muhammad Manzoor Naumani (RA) from the hands of his son Maulana Ateequr-Rahman Sunbhuli:

**....Now I (my father) don't have the same opinion of the Saudi moon sighting as given by me in the light of the evidences available at the time nearly ten years ago in August 1983...**

Maulana Muhammad Manzoor Naumani (RA)

19th of November 1990

## Hazratjee Maulana In'aamul Hasan (RA) (1987)

Bangla Wali Masjid

15 Shabaan 1407

15 April 1987

Dear Hafiz Patel Sahib and other members of the Shuraa and all the responsible brothers of this work of Dawah.

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

The blessed month is coming close. On this occasion there has been a long controversy in regards with the sighting of the moon. Ramadhan Mubarak and the Eids are the fundamental basis of Islam. We need to be very cautious and fearful in this matter because making right or wrong judgement can lead the whole country in the right or wrong direction.

On these occasions the responsible brothers have a very grave duty upon them, especially when people are relying on them heavily due to the great effort of this work people throughout the country accept their decisions. It is very clear and evident in the Qur'an regarding the cycles of the moon and sun... الشمس والقمر بحسبان الخ It is possible to find errors in the calculations of the humans but there is no flaw in the calculations of the creator.

The English dates that are set by the experts of this field are possible dates of sighting the moon. We do not have to trust them but staying within the bounds of Shariah if there is any sighting of the moon then Ramadhan and Eid will commence or else it will be the following day without doubt. This is no innovated system but this is practiced all over the place and neither does anyone have any objections about it. Wherever the horizon is clear and there is a sighting of the moon on that date it is brought into action and if not then it is without doubt the following day.

Now what is left is that when, claims of moon sighting is made even before there is any slightest possibility of sighting. There is no credit given to this type of claims and it is against the actions of *Jamhoor Ulama* as well. To be cautious in regards with this matter, we can take calculations from experts in the Astronomical field which will include

Muslims and non-Muslims. From our point of view we consider Dr Ilyas of Malaysia as a Muslim expert in this field.

Assistance can be taken from the Nautical Almanac Office of England. If their calculated dates turn out to correct then it will be understood that there was possibility of sighting the moon on that date and if there was no Shar'ee sighting of the moon on that date then the following date will be considered as definite. It is not hidden from you brothers that expert astronomers calculate the dates of solar and lunar eclipses many years beforehand and thousands of people visibly experience these eclipses on these dates where there are clear skies. Similar is the situation of sighting of the moon with more or less a difference of one day.

Therefore on such occasions where their dates are not accepted to be exact, at the same time you cannot completely reject their calculations. Instead, whilst staying within the bounds of Shariah, advantage should be taken of their calculations.

From: Hadharat Jee

Written by: Raheem Dadkhan

Note; Three, four copies of this issue have been sent to different members of the Shuraa. It should be read in front of all members of the Shuraa incase anyone does not get a copy of it

### **Hazrat Mufti Abdur-Raheem Lajpuri (RA) as recorded in Fatawa-e-Rahimiya (1976)**

...The unanimous opinion of Ulama of UK about following Morocco is recorded in Fatawa-e-Rahimiya (volume 9 in the old edition & volume 10 in the new edition) and this agreement by Ulama of UK was reached in the presence of Hazrat Mufti Saheb (RA)...

### **Hazrat Maulana Mufti Rasheed Ahmed Ludhyanwi (RA) against following Saudi moon sighting**

...It is not known that the number of people sighting the moon in Saudia is of satisfactory quantity. The decision of the Saudi government is not only against the established principles of the Hanafi Fiqh, it is also against common sense therefore it is not applicable to Pakistan. The sighing of a large body is a condition within the Hanafi Fiqh when the horizon is clear however the Saudi government often decides Ramadhan on a single witness and Eid and Dhul-Hijjah on a minimum of two witnesses...(Ahsanul-Fatawa, Volume4/Page 417)

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Rasheed Ahmed Ludhyanwi (RA) subsequently wrote a letter to the responsible officials in the Saudi government regarding this matter and was not satisfied with the reply. He (RA) wrote, "I had clearly stated my reasons for claiming that your criteria for moon sighting are against the obvious; however I have not received a reply. The reasons quoted previously are as follows:

1. It is unusual in case of clear horizons for just a few people in the entire country to sight the crescent
2. General sighting is not even observed on the 2nd day of sighting i.e. masses are unable to see the moon even on the 2nd day)
3. Full moon should be observed on the 14th or the 15th, however according to your sighting it is usually viewed on the 16th or the 17<sup>th</sup>
4. It is impossible to sight the crescent on the day (or even a day after) when the moon is sighted in the east at dawn since the moon sets before the sunset in those days. However the Saudi government announces moon sighting sometimes on the very same day when the moon is sighted in the east at dawn
5. Moon is not sighted elsewhere after the sighting in Saudi Arabia even in the west of Saudi Arabia
6. The first day of the moon (birth) is been often declared the first of the Islamic month, which is illogical because it would mean that the moon can be sighted before its birth (Ahsanul-Fatawa, Volume4/Page 418)

### **Advice against following Saudi moonsighting by Shaykh Uthaymeen (RA) (Saudi Scholar)**

#### **FASTING OF ARAFAH AND THE SIGHTING OF THE MOON**

**As we in India are keen to fast on the day of 'Arafah, but the Hijri date in India is different from the date in Saudi: when the date in India is the 8th of the month, it is the 9th in Saudi. Should I fast on the 8th – which is the 9th in Saudi – or should I fast according to the date in India?**

**These are the type of question arrive every time when Ramadan comes or the day of Arafah comes Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked: what if the day of 'Arafah is different because of the moon being sighted at different times in different countries? Should we fast according to the moon sighting in the country where we are or according to the moon sighting in al-Haramayn (the two Holy Sanctuaries)?**

He replied: This is based on a difference of opinion among the scholars: Is there only one

moon sighting for the whole world or does it vary according to when the moon rises in different places?

The correct view is that it varies according to when the moon rises in different places. For example, if the moon is sighted in Makkah, and today is the ninth, and it is sighted elsewhere one day before Makkah, and the day of 'Arafah in Makkah is the tenth for them, it is not permissible for them to fast on this day because it is Eid. Similarly if it so happens that they sight the moon after Makkah, and the 9th in Makkah is the 8th for them, then they should fast the day that is the 9th for them, which is the 10th in Makkah. This is the correct view, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "When you see it (the new moon) fast and when you see it break your fast." Those who did not see the moon in their own location have not seen it. Just as people are unanimously agreed that the times for dawn and sunset vary according to their own location, so too the months are also worked out by location, just like the daily timings. Majmoo' al-Fataawa, 20.

And he (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked about some people who worked in the Saudi embassy in a foreign country, who said that they were having a problem concerning the fast of Ramadaan and the fast on the day of 'Arafah. The brothers there had split into three groups:

One group said: we will fast with Saudi and break the fast with Saudi.

Another group said: we will fast with the country where we are living and break the fast with them.

The last group said: we will fast Ramadaan with the country where we are living, but we will fast the day of 'Arafah with Saudi.

They asked the Shaykh to provide them with a detailed answer concerning the Ramadaan fast and fasting the day of 'Arafah, whilst noting that for the past five years, in the country where they were living neither Ramadaan nor the day of 'Arafah had been observed on the same days as in Saudi; their Ramadaan started one or two days after it had been announced in Saudi, and sometimes three days after.

He replied:

In the name of Allaah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The scholars (may Allaah have mercy on them) differed concerning the issue when the moon is sighted in one part of the Muslim world and not in another: do all the Muslims have to act on the basis of that, or only those who sighted it and the people who live in the same region, or only those who sighted it and the people who live under the same government? There are many different points of view.

The most correct view is that the matter should be referred to those who have knowledge of it. If the moon rises at the same point for two countries they become like one country, so if it is sighted in one of them that ruling applies to the other. But if the rising points differ, then each country has its own ruling. This is the view favoured by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him); this is the apparent meaning of the texts of the Qur'aan and Sunnah and what is implied by analogy.

In the Qur'aan it says (interpretation of the meaning):

“So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Sawm (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number [of days which one did not observe Sawm (fasts) must be made up] from other days. Allaah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (He wants that you) must complete the same number (of days), and that you must magnify Allaah [i.e. to say Takbeer (Allaahu Akbar: Allaah is the Most Great)] for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him” [al-Baqarah 2:185]

What is implied by this verse is that whoever does not see it is not obliged to fast.

In the Sunnah, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “When you see it (the new moon) then fast, and when you see it, break your fast.” What is implied by this hadeeth is that if we did not see it we are not obliged to fast or to break the fast.

With regard to analogy, the times for starting and ending the fast each day should be

worked out in each country on its own, according to the local times of sunrise and sunset. This is a point on which there is scholarly consensus. So you see the people in east Asia starting their fast before the people of west Asia, and breaking their fast before them, because dawn breaks for the former before the latter, and the sun sets for the former before the latter.

Once this is established with regard to the times for starting and ending the daily fast, it also applies to the start and end of the monthly fast. There is no difference between them.

But if many regions come under the same government, and the ruler gives the command for the fast to start or end, then his command must be followed, because this is a matter of scholarly dispute but the command of the ruler dispels that dispute.

**Based on the above, you should fast and break your fast along with the people of the country where you are living, whether that is in accordance with your country of origin or not. Similarly on the day of 'Arafah you should follow the country where you are living.**

by Muhammad al-Saalih al-'Uthaymeen, 28/8/1420 AH. Majmoo' al-Fataawa, 19