

SUMMARY OF THE POINTS DISCUSSED AT THE SEMINAR IN BIRMINGHAM ON 22nd NOVEMBER 2008.

The meeting commenced with a brief introduction from the host, Mufti Muhammad Gaibee Saheb. A set of rules were clearly outlined for the audience to follow, which included amongst other things:

- The Masjid e Falah committee has invited the Wifaq ul Ulama to address the gathering as they have been following the announcements of Wifaq.
- Only the Ulama invited and designated by the committee will be addressing the gathering.
- No one else will be given permission to speak.
- All questions will be answered, but in order that the gathering remains under control, questions must be put forward in writing.
- Those who do not wish to adhere to the rules outlined were kindly requested to leave the gathering.

After the introduction, Br Qamaruddin, a research Scientist from York put forward a very educational PowerPoint presentation, explaining the basics and the science of Moonsighting, MashaAllah many of the points were pointed out with references from the Holy Qur'aan and the Ahaadith. Emphasizing that what science is telling us now, the Qur'aan has already told us 1400+ years ago. He further clarified that:

- If Moon set was before sunset, then the sighting of the moon was impossible, this was explained with reference of the Qur'aanic verse "By the Sun and its brightness, and by the Moon as it follows it (the sun)." Surah 91 verse 1 and 2. Through this verse it is clearly understood that the Moon follows the Sun, hence if the moon has already set before sunset, then there is NO moon after sunset to be sighted.
- The time of conjunction or in other words the time of the birth of the Moon, the time of Moon set is not just a presumption, but factual, verified by thousands of Astronomers Muslims and non Muslims alike over hundreds of years. There is no difference of opinion on this.
- New Moon means the INVISIBLE DARK MOON, this Moon would become visible approximately 18+ hours after the birth with the naked eye, provided all other conditions are right.
- There were times when a large number of Astronomers were Muslim; their contribution to this particular knowledge is invaluable. A lot of information we have today is due to the work and efforts of those early Muslim Astronomers.

After the presentation a very inspiring Urdu Bayaan took place, the speaker was Mufti Ashfaq Saheb of Bradford. The main points of Mufti Saheb's bayaan were:

- The present system of different Eids for Muslims within one locality was having a devastating effect on the youth, and it was leading to the youth becoming Distant from the Ulama e Kiram and the youth losing the confidence in the Ulama. There is a genuine need to settle this situation once and for all.
- The system/nizaam of the Sun and Moon is bound by Allah SWT, it is an established and a firm system. The Qur'aan states: "and for the Moon we have appointed measured phases" Surah 36 verse 39. "the sun and the moon run on their fixed courses (exactly) calculated with measured out stages for each." Surah 55 verse 5.

- This system of Allah SWT is not a dubious/ dodgy system (that the Sun comes out when it wants and sets when it wants, or the Moon has set before sunset, and now on the same day Moon comes out again which people claim to see). Rather this is the system of the creator who is Almighty and All knowing, hence it never goes wrong.
- There are at present three opinions on the Moonsighting issue:
 - 1) Only follow Astronomy- this opinion needs rectification.
 - 2) Use of Astronomy not allowed at all, rather just follow Saudi Arabia- this opinion also needs rectification.
 - 3) Use Astronomy as a tool for guidance, but beginning of the month to be decided by actual sighting only. This is the correct and moderate view, which should be adopted by all.

Hadhrat Mufti Saheb's Bayaan was followed by an English Bayaan by Moulana Muhammad Shoyaib Nurgat from London who's talk WAS based on facts and quotations from the Akabireen of Ummat . The main points were:

- In the same manner that the times of sunrise or sunset are conclusive and definitive, the times of moonset and the time of conjunction is also conclusive and definitive.
- Hence in the same manner that we would not accept an impossible sunset time, we should not be accepting an impossible sighting, for example if the moon has set before sunset, and a person claims a sighting, this is impossible and should be rejected.
- To reject something which is impossible, against commonsense and sheer logic is not against our Holy Shariah. This point was backed up by a quotation from a principle of Usool e Hadith. The writings of Allama Ibn Hajar Asqalani R.A., Imam Abu Bakr Jassas R.A., Allama Suyooti R.A. also clarify this issue.
- This point was further backed up by the Following Fataawaa:

Mufti Nizamuddin Mufti e AAzam and Muhaddith of Darul Uloom Deoband, who have also written "If a man testifies that he has sighted the crescent before the conjunction then his testimony must be rejected, as it is against logic and observation as conjunction occurs before the moon is present in the sky. So the new moon cannot be sighted, and if this testimony was to be accepted then it would be against the Hadith "the month is..." (mas'alah ru'yat e hilal awr Islami Maah page 199)

Allamah Subki R.A.(756 AH) states ...if the experts in astronomy clearly and ambiguously state that there is no possibility of sighting then the testimony (of some who claim to have seen it) must be rejected as they have erred or are lying... (Fataawa As Subki Vol 1 pg 209)

Hadhrat Jee Hadhrat Moulana Inaamul Hasan Saheb, has written in a letter addressed to the Shooraa "now what is left is that when claims of moon sighting is made before there is any slightest possibility of a sighting, then no credit should be given to these types of claims and it is against the actions of Jamhoor Ulama as well."
- If the moon is sighted in the East then people to the west should be able to sight the moon as it would be older and clearer, yet time and again the Saudi's claim a sighting and the whole of the African and American continents (in countries where actual sighting is attempted) report negative sighting, to the extent that India and Pakistan the next day still claim negative sighting, this gives reason for doubt, hence we should have Hadith of Rasool Sallalahu alaihi Wa Sallam in mind, "leave that which is doubtful, for that which has no doubt"
- Local sighting is Fardh Alal Kifaayah, and must be attempted by some if not all in the community.
- Use of technology in Ibaadaat has always been allowed, especially, when it strengthens Deen or perfect our Ibaadaats. For example, compass for determining the Qiblah direction. The resolution passed by the Fiqh Academy based at Jeddah, documented by Mufti Muhammad Taqi Saheb was quoted: "for the month to be declared actual sighting is necessary, but help could be taken from

Astronomical calculations and observatories so that the Hadith is also acted upon and the scientific facts are also considered”

- Actual sighting was necessary to determine all twelve months, NOT just the months of Ibaadaat.
- Those who reject technology, which one of them actually went out at Iftari time to witness sunset before eating a date? Do they not use the telephone for Moonsighting purposes?
- Famous Tabi’ee, **Mutarraf Ibn Abdullah (RA)**, Muhadditheen like **Ibn Qutaibah (RA)**, Fuqha like **Imam Shafae (RA)**, **Ibn Suralj (RA)** and **Ibn Daqlq Al Eld (RA)** have permitted the use of technology which was available in their era for moon sighting purposes, present day Jibaal e ilm (Mountain of knowledge) like **Mufti Muhammad Taqi Saheb (DB)**, **Mufti Rashid Ahmad Ludhyaanwi Saheb (RA)**, **Mufti Saeed Ahmad Palanpuri Saheb (DB)**, **Moulana Yusuf Ludhyaanwi Shaheed (RA)**, the elders of Tablighi Jamaat like, **Hadhrat Jee Moulana Inaamul Hasan Saheb (RA)**, **Hadhrat Mowlana Muhammad Umar Palanpuri Saheb (RA)** have also permitted the use of technology for moon sighting purposes.

This bayaan was followed by a very inspirational bayaan by Sheikul Hadith Moulana Ayyub Saheb, amongst the things he mentioned were:

- Our Akaabir, the likes of Hadhrat Sheikh ul Hadith Moulana Zakaria (RA), Allamah Muhammad Yusuf Binnori (RA), Sheikh ul Islam Moulana Madani (RA), Moulana As’ad Madani (RA), Moulana Muhammad Umar Palanpuri (RA), were not at all content with the moon sighting decisions of the Majlis Qadhaa ul A’alaaa, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- He also reminded us that when the decision was made in 1986 to start following Saudi Moonsighting, Hazrat Moulana Yusuf Motala (DB) was also of the same opinion but he reluctantly agreed, it is his discretion as to what he does but his Sheikh who was also my first Sheikh, Hazrat Moulana Zakaria (RA) was not satisfied with the information coming from Saudi regarding their Moonsighting decisions.
- Whilst in Saudi Arabia, (visiting or residing) it was essential to follow the announcements of the authorities there. The Ibaadaat performed there would be correct.
- It was not necessary for us here in UK to follow the announcements of the authorities in Saudi Arabia.
- Fataawaa from all our institutions including the **Mother of all Institutions Darul Uloom Deoband** agree with our stance and criteria, all advice us not to blind follow Moonsighting news of Saudi.
- Any Ibaadaat performed before its time is not valid and he gave us several examples like performing Dhur Salah 10 minutes before Zawaal.
- This is not an issue that is impossible to resolve, Ulema must make the efforts to come to the correct decision.

The Majlis concluded with Dua from Hadhrat Moulana Hasan Saheb from Walsall, unfortunately the people were deprived of the Q&A session due to actions of those who came uninvited to disrupt this noble gathering.

Finally, we would like to thank Mufti Muhammad Ghaibee Saheb and the Management committee of Masjid al Falah for inviting us to address the gathering. We would also like to congratulate them for the outstanding way in which they organised the seminar and handled the fracas in the end. Jazakumullah u Khairal Jaza.