

## Dewsbury Moon Sighting Meeting

*Held on Saturday, 18 April 2009 at Masjid Al-Hidayah, Dewsbury (UK)*

### Report by Kaushar Tai (Dewsbury)

Following a series of individual meetings organised by Brother Kaushar Tai with the Ulama (scholars) of opposing parties to develop a **unified approach** to the moon sighting issue, an open meeting was held in Masjid Al-Hidayah, Dewsbury on Saturday 18 April 2009 after the Zuhar (mid-day) prayer congregation.

Mufti Fuad Ahmed (Oldham) was requested to start the meeting with the recitation of the Quran and Brother Kaushar Tai explained the background to the moon sighting issue. About 40 individuals attended the meeting, which included Ulama, Imams and representatives of committee members of 6 Dewsbury mosques as well as attendees from other cities, including Bradford, Oldham, Huddersfield, York and Cardiff.

Maulana Ibrahim Khan (Bradford) made the first speech giving the view points of Jamiat-e-Ulama (Britain) and the reasons for their following the moon sighting news from **Saudi Arabia** only. His speech was undertaken in Urdu giving detailed explanation of the importance of following the rulings of the major *Madhabs* (school of thoughts) and not to rely on the knowledge of *Falakiah* (science of astronomy).

Scientist Qamar Uddin (York) was invited to make the second presentation and with the aid of computer graphics, he explained how the scientific data from International observatories could be used to support accurate/reliable naked-eye sighting of the moon, as required by the Shariah (Islamic Law). He emphasised the differences between the New Moon Conjunction (*Iqthiran*), Predicted Crescent Visibility (*Imkan-e-Ruyat*) and the Presence of the Moon (*Ujud-e-Qamar*) and why it was not possible to sight the moon before conjunction or after moonset. The understanding of these facts was very important to avoid future confusions.

Mufti Zubair Dudha (Dewsbury) made the third speech about the historical background of the moon sighting criteria adopted in UK over 30 years ago and how it was changed from following Morocco to Saudi Arabia. He explained that about 20 years ago the change to following Saudi Arabia was made for the sake of ease and convenience. However, a lot UK Ulama were not satisfied with the accuracy/reliability of news received from Saudi Arabia and continued to follow Morocco. He emphasised that scientific data from the observatories can be used as a guide to authenticate moon sighting claims, but not to use it to replace sighting by the human eye. He concluded his speech by stating that he fully supports the criteria of local moon sighting and when that is not possible, to follow any reliable countries from Morocco to the East, including South Africa as adopted by the Wifaqul Ulama (UK).

The meeting was ended with a Question/Answer session to all the three speakers to further clarify their presentations to the mosque committee members and other attendees. Brother Kaushar Tai emphasised that no decision will be taken at this meeting as many of the senior Ulama were not present (due to prior travel commitments). However, he reiterated that this meeting was held to start a dialogue/discussion between opposing parties to work towards a unified moon sighting criteria. The organisers were happy to see an amicable discussion between people of opposing views and thanked everyone for their attendance and good conduct. It was concluded with a Duaa (supplication) and everyone was invited by the mosque committee to have food before their departure.

For further information about future moon sighting meetings in Dewsbury, please contact Brother Kaushar Tai by email ([kaushartai@hotmail.com](mailto:kaushartai@hotmail.com)).

Dated: Saturday, 25 April 2009.

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