

Respected Brothers in Islam, Assalamu-alaikum wa Rahmatullaahi wa Barakaatuh

I begin in the name of Allah the most Beneficent the most Merciful. I hope this letter reaches you in the best of health and Imaan. I write this letter with the Hadith of our beloved Nabi Sallallahu alaihi Wassalam in my mind that 'Each and every one of you is a shepherd, and each and every one of you will be questioned regarding your flock'. Those who have influence and responsibilities over others will be questioned by Allah SWT as to what effort was made to fulfil those responsibilities. A father is responsible for his household; hence he will be questioned as regards to how well he fulfilled this Allah given responsibility. In the same way an Aalim, a Mufti or an Imam or Trustees or Committee members (who majority of the times have the final say, even in matters of Deen) will be held responsible for those who are under them. It is obligatory for these responsible people that they guide their 'flock' on the Siraat e Mustaqeem, the right path. Even if this means that sometimes harsh and tough decisions have to be made, which may make one unpopular. As a Muslim, one needs to obey Allah and his Rasool Sallallahu alaihi Wassalam in all matters of Deen, and fear Allah SWT only. Holding back the truth and Haq for fear of backlash, position, or fear of someone, is not from the teachings of Islam. Imagine if Rasool Sallallahu alaihi Wassalam had held back on calling people to the Haq and truth just out of fear of backlash, disunity, and losing respect, do you think this great Deen of Islam would have prospered in the way it has? Truth has to be propagated and told. The backlash and torture suffered at the hands of the Quraish, his own people, by our Nabi Sallallahu alaihi Wassalam for spreading the truth is recorded in the books of history for all to see.

After understanding the above, I want each and everyone of these responsible people to think and question themselves: "what have I done to ensure that my Mussallees, or my people, or my family, or my members and the people outside who follow me in matters of Deen, have been rightly guided in moon sighting issues, and is my conscience clear that I have not misled them?"

I write this as a reminder to you, because I know that many people are aware of problems of blindly following the Saudi authorities in U.K. on moon sighting. The majority of times the moon sighting decisions that are being declared by Saudi Arabia are not based on actual sightings of the moon. Rather, it is declared according to the following criteria: 'after moon birth, if moonset is after sunset declaration of the moon being sighted will be made, irrespective of how old the new moon is.' This formula/criteria which Saudi uses is as declared by Dr Zaki Al-Mustafa of the institute of Astronomical & Geographical Research at King Abdul Aziz city for Science and Technology. (Official Saudi authority that prepares the Ummul Qura calendar). *For verification of this claim, log on to the wifaqululama.co.uk website, and click on 'The Actual Saudi Dating system.'* (According to the leading scholars in the field of astronomy, the moon has to be at least seventeen hours old to be sightable.) It is an accepted fact, that if the moon is sighted in the East, the countries to the West will definitely sight the moon if the conditions are right, yet the Saudi authorities often declare a sighting when the whole world fails to sight the moon, and then despite clear skies the sighting is witnessed by only a few people. This is very doubtful and there is a clear Hadith of our beloved Nabi Sallallahu alaihi Wassalam that: "abandon what is doubtful for that which is not doubtful"

On the other hand we are neglecting the important Sunnah of local moon sighting (*Maqaami Ru'yat*) which is termed in the words of the Fuqahaa/Jurist as *Wajib alal Kifaayah*. Our beloved Nabi Sallallahu alaihi Wassalam has very clearly stated in the Hadith 'Don't Fast until you see it and don't break it until you see it. If then there is cloud over you, count in full'. *Sahih Al Bukhari Vol 1 Page 256, Sahih Al Muslim Vol 1 Page 347, Mishqaat Vol 1 Page 174. Bab Ru'yat ul Hilaal.*

To present this Hadith as an excuse: 'we are unlettered Ummah, we do not write and we do not count' is not going to appeal to the confused young and educated groups outside. This particular

Hadith was revealed for a specific incident. If we were to remain unlettered why did our beloved Nabi sallallahu alaihi wa sallam instruct the Sahabah to write the Holy Qur'aan? Why has Allah mentioned in Surah al Baqarah verse number 282 ' *When you contract a debt for a fixed period, write it down. Let a scribe write it...* 'Why have all these books of Ahaadith been written? What about the knowledge of Meerath which is dependent on numbers. The list would go on.

I personally think that those who choose to use this Hadith to keep away from the advanced technology we have at our disposal today have no right to use the telephone for moon sighting purposes but I doubt that would be acceptable to them.

Technology is a gift of Allah and we should, if possible, use it to our benefit and Alhamdulillah at this present stage we have in our possession many fatawas (Issued 2007) and writings of prominent Ulamaa supporting our method. Our method/criteria has been outlined very clearly in the Istiftaa sent to many Darul Uloom and for which I have received answers for. I have posted the translations to some of these answers on our website, [www.wifaqululama.co.uk](http://www.wifaqululama.co.uk). The original fatawas are in our possession and are posted on our website. The criterion is as follows:

All efforts will be made to sight the moon locally. To achieve this, help could be taken from the experts in the field of astronomy, although the judgement will never be dependent upon them. If the astronomers are of the opinion that at the end of the twenty ninth day the moon could be sighted as the moon is on the horizon, then all efforts will be made to sight the moon locally. If the moon is not sighted in U.K. then we can accept the sighting of another country on the East of U.K. on the condition that a moon sighting criteria accepted by our Holy Shariah is in place in that particular country.

If the astronomers are of the opinion that the moon is not on the horizon, which would mean that the moon cannot be seen, then we would still not accept their word as final. Rather, we will exhaust all efforts in trying to sight the moon, as is the Sunnah. However, on this occasion, the testification of one or two witnesses will not be deemed as acceptable; rather the testification of a large group will be necessary. (*As is the case, when the skies are clear.*) If this condition does not exist then thirty days will be declared for the month. All the scholars to whom we written to, have endorsed this criteria.

One should be aware that the leading scholars of Saudi Arabia are also of the opinion that we should be doing our local sighting. As an example let me quote a few of those eminent scholars: "As for those who say that it is necessary to follow the sighting of Makkah, then let it be known to them, that there is no proof or basis for this in the Qur'aan and Hadith". (Sheikh Abdullah bin Baz R.A. Al Ba'ath ul Islaami Zil Hijjah 1399 Hijri)

This question was posed to Sheikh Salih ibn Al-Uthaimin by a Muslim brother from North America: "Should we abide by the local sighting in determining the Eid ul Adha or should we follow the pilgrim's schedule, knowing that North America's sighting of the crescent may come a day before Saudi Arabia's sighting?"

The honourable Sheikh answered: "You should abide by the city you are living in". These answers and many others given by the Ulamaa of Saudia do not mean that they have disrespected the Haramain Sharifain in any way. They are merely directing you towards the truth, and an important Sunnah which the jurists have termed as Wajib alal Kifaayah.

It's very unfortunate that people are intentionally misunderstanding and misquoting the criteria adopted by Wifaq ul Ulama which has been endorsed by leading Ulama and institutions. In a recent lecture at Snowdon Street Masjid I heard the representatives of Jamiat continuing to criticize calculations, yet who is following calculations? Our criteria is very clear and open for all to see. Refer to the website. In the same gathering a responsible member of Jamiat Ulama stated the Mazhab of Imam Abu Hanifa R.A. Unfortunately failing to clarify a number of points, he mentioned that one witness is enough to declare the moon as sighted - this is not the case when the skies are clear. When the skies are clear a large group of Muslim witnesses are necessary. Is it not the case that the skies of Saudi Arabia are clear, majority of times, then according to the Hanafi Fiqh would the testification of one or two or even three witnesses be sufficient for the majority Hanafi population of U.K. to start or end the month of Ramadhan? NO would be the answer of the Hanafi jurist. A large group would be necessary. ( See Ahkam Ramadhan ul Mubarak Pg 5, printed and distributed by Darul Uloom Deoband) This should be the case (a large group should see it ) in a country with clear skies like Saudi.

He further stated that according to Imam E Aazam R.A. when one hears news of positive sighting from anywhere in the world, then it would be necessary for those who heard this news to accept and follow that announcement. Why then, did the Jamiat not announce Ramadhan on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> September after hearing news of sightings in Nigeria and Libya? Is there a Hadith present that makes it obligatory on us in U.K. to follow Saudi moon sighting declarations? NO would be the answer.

It is proven that even in the times of our Prophet PBUH the Makkans did their own sighting and the people of Madinah did their own sighting. Why is this body of Ulama not advocating and encouraging the laymen to follow this Sunnah? The Sahaabah R.A. emigrated to many different countries for the purpose of Da'wah - did any Single Sahaabi R.A. insist on following Haramain Shareefain on moon sighting? NO. I am sure you all agree with me that the love they had for these cities was much greater than ours. It is a time to reflect, ponder upon the truth, abandon the zid and arrogance, stop playing with the emotions of the ordinary laymen, and come to the path of truth. A person who finds the correct route in the night after initially losing his way in the morning is not considered as lost.

At present around sixty Masaajid of London and its outskirts and many other Masaajid in major cities throughout the U.K. plus the majority of Masaajid in Scotland have adopted the aforementioned formula. For the past nine months we have practiced upon this formula, we have made an effort to sight the moon locally and Alhamdulillah we have sighted the moon on four occasions at the end of the 29<sup>th</sup> day after sunset. The reality is that if the moon can be sighted in this country then it is not permissible to take the news of another country's moonsighting.

I feel it is about time that those responsible for the moonsighting declarations in this country should stop playing with the emotions of the ordinary laymen, and sit, revise and rectify the formula they have previously adopted and followed, and guide the Ummah correctly. The criteria mentioned above InshaAllah will lead to unity in Ramadhans and Eidain in U.K., the unity that we all crave and pray for. It is also about time that 'this Halqah' environment that is slowly creeping into our society comes under control. Everyone seems to want to be loyal to their halqah. As Muslims it is our duty to strictly adhere to the teachings of our beloved Nabi sallallahu alaihi wasallam at all times. Our loyalties should first and foremost be with the great Deen of ours and truth must never be compromised.

Unfortunately all our institutions are silent on this issue. Is it not the time, that when the Ummah needs guidance, we listen to those who are vocal on this important issue? How long are we going to continue with the accepted wrong or at least doubtful, now reaching new and amazing lengths by instructing the people to sight the moon on the 28<sup>th</sup> and the 29<sup>th</sup>, if not seen on these days then complete thirty! And how after fifty + days did the doubt come from? especially after claiming that we always sight the moon to begin or end the month! [Saudi Press Agency - SPA](#)

My fellow Ulama e Kiram and responsible people, is now, not the time to come out, and try to rectify this open wrong? Do we not owe it to our congregations, that we guide them correctly?

May Allah bless us with sincerity and always guide us on the right path. Aameen

If you want to benefit from up to date moonsighting information you can log on to our website: [www.wifaqululama.co.uk](http://www.wifaqululama.co.uk)

Wassalam  
Imam Abu Yahya Falahi  
Khadim, Wifaq ul Ulama