In the light of Fatawa from Deoband & other Authentic Islamic Institutions

The Issue of Moon Sighting in Britain
An explanation of the error in following Saudi moon sighting for Britain
By Hafiz (Maulana) Muhammed Iqbal Rangooni (Manchester) 2nd Edition

Online version of the booklet made available on Wifaqul-Ulama web-site by permission of Hazrat Maulana Iqbal Rangooni.

http://www.wifaqululama.co.uk/home.html
Hazrat Maulana Mufti Akhtar Imam Adil’s Approval  
(Darul-uloom Sabeelus Salam, Hyderabad)

Moon sighting has been a source of differences in Britain for sometime and it is clear that it is affecting the social fabric of the Muslims in this country. Scholars and people of knowledge should consider this problem, research and discuss the matter at length in a just manner and resolve the issue for the sake of Muslims of this country and attempt to put an end to the dispute once and for all.

This treatise of Hazrat Maulana Iqbal Rangooni Saheb can help in the matter as it is full of evidence from the Qur’aan, Hadeeth, Fiqh and science and after reading this treatise it becomes abundantly clear that those insisting on following Saudi sighting have no sound Islamic evidence or foundation.

I pray to Allah (SWT) that Maulana’s treatise becomes a beacon of light and results in Ulama and people of knowledge sitting together to solve the problem.

May Allah (SWT) accept this from Maulana and make it a source of benefit for all Muslims like his previous compilations (Ameen).

Akhtar Imam Adil

Visiting Britain: Masjid Imadadia Manchester

23rd of October 2005

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Zubair Dudha’s Approval

Janab Kamil Saheb,

Asslamo Allaikum w, w,

I have read through the translation, and Alhumdo-lillah a good translation has been produced. I pray that there is a means for this booklet to be published and distributed like the original. It will be very beneficial for the English speaking masses. It would also make it easy for myself to hand out, as I get many enquiries on this issue.

May Allah reward the efforts of both the author and the translator (Aameen).

Mufti Zubari Dudha

Islamic Tarbiyah (12/06/06)
### Contents

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Akhtar Imam Adil’s Approval ................................................................. 2  
Hazrat Maulana Mufti Zubair Dudha’s Approval ................................................................. 2  
Foreword ............................................................................................................................... 5  
  Maulana Inamul Hasan (RA) Hazrat Jee’s letter ................................................................. 6  
  Istafta: ............................................................................................................................... 8  
The issue of Moon Sighting in Britain ...................................................................................... 10  
  Request to reconsider Saudi sighting for Britain ............................................................. 10  
  Hazrat Maulana Qadhi Thanullah Pani Pati (RA) ........................................................... 10  
  Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (RA) ....................................................................... 11  
  Hazrat Shaykhul Hadeeth Maulana Abdul Haqq (RA) ..................................................... 11  
  Hazrat Mufti Abdur-Raheem Lajpuri (RA) ....................................................................... 11  
  Al-Hayat (Saudi Newspaper) Article January 2005 .......................................................... 11  
  Hazrat Maulana Mufti Saeed Ahmed Palunpuri (of Darululoom Deoband) .................... 12  
  Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani ............................................................................................... 13  
  Hazrat Shaykh Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RA) ..................................................................... 13  
  Dr Salih (member Saudi moon sighting committee) ......................................................... 14  
  Dr Ali Muhammed As-shukri (Chairman of the Department of Physics, Saudi Arabia) .... 14  
  Qateef Observatory (Saudi Arabia) ............................................................................... 15  
  Gulf News (UAE Newspaper) Article October 2006 ....................................................... 15  
  Hazrat Maulana Mufti Rasheed Ahmed Ludhyanwi (RA) .................................................. 16  
  Hazrat Maulana Burhanud-Deen Sunbuli ........................................................................ 17  
  Hazrat Shaykh Maulana Mufti Nizamuddin .................................................................... 18  
  Maulana Sameeruddin Qasmi ....................................................................................... 18  
  Commentary of Saheeh Muslim by Imam Nawawi (RA) .................................................... 19  
  Hazrat Allamah Taqiuddin Subki (RA) .......................................................................... 19  
  Hazratjee (Maulana Inamul Hasan (RA)) ...................................................................... 20  
  Hazrat Maulana Mohammed Yaqoub Qasmi .................................................................. 20  
  Hazrat Maulana Burhanud-Deen Sunbuli ...................................................................... 21  
  Misleading testimonies ..................................................................................................... 21  
  Proposal to the Saudis: Unanswered ............................................................................. 21  
  Darul-uleum Deoband .................................................................................................... 22  
  Question: ......................................................................................................................... 22  
  Answer: ............................................................................................................................ 24

[http://www.wifaqululama.co.uk/home.html](http://www.wifaqululama.co.uk/home.html)
Mazahir-ul-loom (Saharanpur) .................................................................................................................. 25
Hazrat Maulana Mufti Ahmed Khanpuri .................................................................................................. 25
Key text of the Fatawa: Analyzed ............................................................................................................. 26
Jamia Islamia Binoria (Karachi, Pakistan) .............................................................................................. 26
Jamia Khairul Madaris (Multan, Pakistan) ............................................................................................... 26
Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammed Ismael Kachlavi ........................................................................... 27
Hazrat Maulana Mufti Ebrahim Desai ..................................................................................................... 27
  Question: ............................................................................................................................................... 27
  Answer: .................................................................................................................................................. 27
Advice to Americans and Europeans: By Maulana Mohammed Yusuf Binnori (RA).......................... 30
Plea to the British & European Ulama..................................................................................................... 30
Appendix.................................................................................................................................................. 31
Darul-uloom Deoband approves Wifaq-Ulama criteria and methods ....................................................... 31
  Question ............................................................................................................................................... 31
  Answer .................................................................................................................................................. 31
Darul-uloom Deoband approves South African moon sighting for UK ................................................... 32
  Question ............................................................................................................................................... 32
  Answer .................................................................................................................................................. 32
Shaykhul-Hadeeth Hazrat Maulana Sher Ali, Tarkeeshar (Gujrat, India) ........................................... 32
Printed booklets (and further information) can be obtained from: ...................................................... 33

http://www.wifaqululama.co.uk/home.html

Page 4 of 34
Foreword

Moon sighting has been a major issue on the occasions of Ramadhan and the two Eids in Britain for the last fifteen years. Previously, Jamiatul Ulama Britain, Deobandi and Barelwi scholars (followers of Imam Abu Haneefa (RA)) unanimously didn’t follow the Saudi moon sighting; however due to the circumstances prevailing at the time there was special dispensation awarded for following the Saudi moon sighting. The very same institutions are now not only refusing the “special circumstantial dispensation” but have also prohibited determining the occasion of Ramadhan and the two Eids based on Saudi moon sighting. There is still a group insisting on the Saudi sighting to be followed while the other group deems the Saudi system of sighting to be unsatisfactory therefore not binding on British Muslims. Incredibly the Saudis do not insist that their sighting be followed by other countries rather they instruct other countries to follow their own local sighting! The later group of Deobandi scholars present evidence from authentic and credible elders and institutions in their support, who question the logic of following the Saudi methodology in the presence of clear evidence to the contrary.

This year (2005) the announcement of Ramadhan and Eid by a group following the Saudi sighting has thrown the British Muslims into turmoil. Three months have passed since the announcement and the debate is still raging as to why a group of Deobandis are insisting on following the Saudi sighting? It is perplexing after reading the articles and editorials in The Daily Jang (London) particularly the one in which one of the members of Saudi moon sighting has openly admitted, “...we received no testimony of moon sighting yet the Majlis Qadha Al-Ala enforce the decision...” as to how the Saudi decision can be enforced upon the Muslim of Asia, Africa, Europe and America? If this issue is in the category of Fardh or Waajib then why does it only apply to Britain?

Why are the Muslims of the subcontinent exempt from it? Why does a group of Deobandi scholars insist on following the Saudi sighting despite its illogical stance and clear errors in its implementation?

Our friends insist that they have Fatawa from the Deobandi scholars which gave them the permissibility of following Saudi sighting, but why then do they shy away from answering the following:

1) Were the circumstances the same when this dispensation was given as the ones that have come about in the last 4-5 years?
2) Did someone feel the need to research the mechanism and system of Saudi sighting at that time?

Facts about the Saudi sighting have now manifested themselves on the common Muslims, elders and Muftees of Deoband who they are no longer willing to award the dispensation of following Saudi sighting. As a matter of fact they are openly saying that is erroneous for British Muslims to follow the Saudi sighting! Why are these Fatawa cast aside? Don’t we follow the Ulama of Deoband in other matters? Is this not a running joke that we profess to follow, yet reject the Fatawa of the elders at the same time? Scholars are aware that if dispensations are granted according to circumstances then they can also be revoked due to changed circumstances. Why then is the dispensation of following Saudi sighting any different? It is not befitting the people of knowledge to blindly follow a matter when the truth has become manifest.

A scholar from the proponents of Saudi sighting has written in the paper that we have Fatawa from two of the elders namely Hazrat Maulana Mufti Mahmood Hasan Gangohi (RA) and Hazrat Maulana Mufti Wali Hasan Tonki (RA) and a thousand Fatawa in opposition are worthless in their presence! A fatwa from these elders on this subject neither exists nor can anyone present one during their visit to the UK according to the best of our knowledge. Nevertheless
even if we were to assume that such Fatawa exist then what is the category of these texts that they render everything else and all circumstances and evidence to the contrary useless?

Some of our friends state that the two of the holiest places for Muslims i.e. Makkah and Madinah are in Saudi Arabia therefore it will be a centre for Muslims until the Day of Judgement. We ask who is that denies the sanctity of the Haramain and what is its connection with moon sighting? We have never come across this Mas’ala and neither did our elders as they never insisted on following Saudi sighting.

Hazrat Jee (RA)’s letter to the Ameer of Tablighi Markaz (Britain) and other members of the Shura written 17 years ago is a hot topic of discussion in the newspapers these days in which he has commented on the validity of following Saudi sighting in Britain. This letter reached the hands of Maulvi Yaqoub Miftahi of Hizbul Ulama who mercilessly replied to Hazrat Jee (RA). It is not known if the reply reached the Ameer of Tablighi Markaz (Britain) and other members of the Shura or if the Shura and the Ameer Saheb opted to disregard the advice of Hazrat Jee (RA) based on the reply? Was it the not the responsibility of Ameer of Tablighi Markaz (Britain) and other members of the Shura to call in a meeting with other Ulama of Britain and attempt to resolve the matter? Any progress at that time would have thwarted the current disagreement amongst the Deobandi Ulama!

**Maulana Inaamul Hasan (RA) Hazrat Jee’s letter**

Hazrat Jee’s letter is reproduced in full as follows:

Bangla Wali Masjid

15 Shabaan 1407

15 April 1987

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

Asslamo Allaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh

*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...*

*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: Raheemdad Khan

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 in case anyone does not get a copy of it.

It appears that Hazrat Jee (RA) tried to solve the matter 17 years ago in a scholarly manner. Unfortunately, his advice was disregarded and the result is the bitter disagreement that we have today!

Some have argued that this letter is a fake! Our friends have never stated if they have consulted Dewsbury Markaz about the authenticity of this letter as to the best of our knowledge they have never denied its authenticity and neither have other scholars of this country. One of the Khateeb’s from Bradford raised his concerns about the authenticity of this letter in The Daily Jang to which Ashraf Ali Saheb of Dewsbury replied in The Daily Jang and provided further details about the letter. He raised the question as to why Maulvi Yaqoub Miftahi of Hizbul Ulama felt the need to reply to a fake letter within 3 weeks on their letterhead and get it sanctioned by other Ulama. We have Maulvi Yaqoub Miftahi’s 6 page reply in front of us and there are other matters which come to light from his reply! Furthermore members of the Shura also went to Maulana Yaqoub Kawi’s house and took him to the Markaz where he was informed in front of the Shura about Hazrat Jee’s letter and the need to resolve the matter; all of this proves that the letter is not fabricated.

We digress from the subject just to highlight as to how facts are being twisted to prove that to disagree with the Saudi sighting is to disagree with an absolute fact! However, as far as the Mas’ala is concerned Hazrat Jee’s letter is
binding on all those who propagate following their elders. One must ponder as to why his letter was cast aside and why other scholars were not informed of it.

Since this issue has caused great concern and anguish amongst the Deobandi Ulama and has been a subject of great many editorials in the newspapers, I tried to seek an explanation from the Deobandi Ulama by sending a questionnaire on the 14th of July 2005 (with return postage). However neither a reply nor my postage has been received by myself. I have the names of the scholars who were sent the questionnaire and cannot understand their logic of not replying. Is answering a question not their Islamic obligation? I do not wish to comment on their reasons for not replying but my query is reproduced below in full:

14th of July 2005

Istafqa:

Dear respected Mufti Saheb

Asslamo Allaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatu

Muslims in Britain are anxious over the disagreement amongst the Deobandi Ulama about moon sighting and you will no doubt be aware that this is due to the following of Saudi sighting. You will also be aware of the state of Saudi sighting and its errors as they are becoming manifest as the time passes so much so that the scholars from India and Pakistan are genuinely concerned about its validity. They may have permitted for it to be followed by British Muslims at one time but are now of the opinion that it should not be followed rather Muslim in Britain should follow the sighting of Morocco as being their closest Muslim country. Since there is a group of Deobandi scholars who are insisting on following Saudi sighting we are sending a query which has the Fatawa of respected Muftees of Darul-uloom Deoband, Mazahirul-ulum, Jamia Islamia Taleemud-deen Dhabail, Jamiatul Uloom Binnori Town (Pakistan) and Kahirul Madaris, Multan (Pakistan) and would like to know;

1) If it would be permissible to follow someone who regards Saudi sighting as credible and insists on it being followed?

2) Would it be permissible to follow those who claim that we don’t accept these Fatawa and will always follow the original (Fatawa of dispensation)? Is it permissible to follow the abrogated in the presence of clear evidence which has abrogated the former?

3) Is there any scope to follow Saudia for those who are aware of the errors in Saudi sighting and are also aware of the Fatawa to the contrary? If they do so would they not be guilty of fasting in Sha‘baan and performing Eid in Ramadhan?

You are also requested to provide your opinion on the Fatwa of Darul-ulum Deoband and it is hoped that you will ponder over the problem at your earliest convenience and reply.

Was-Salam

Nazir Ahmed Chaudry

http://www.wifaqululama.co.uk/home.html
P.S.: Self addressed envelope is being enclosed for a reply.

May Allah (SWT) reward Hafiz Muhammed Iqbal Rangooni Saheb (Manchester) who replied and explained the issue in simple terms backed by the Fatawa of Darul-uloom Deoband and further supported by the responses from Mazahirul-uloom, Jamia Taleemudeen (Dhabail) and major Islamic institutions of Pakistan.

I am thankful to Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Hasan Saheb Damat Barakatuhum (Khaleefa Amirul Hind Hazrat Maulana Syed Asad Madani) who had the entire reply printed for the benefit of the Muslims before the start of Ramadhan 1426 and for the scholars to ponder over and take the issue seriously.

I am thankful to Allah (SWT) that this booklet proved to be beneficial and was reviewed by visiting scholars from the subcontinent and they insisted on the issue to be resolved swiftly. Due to its limited supply the original booklet and subsequent reprints (by various individuals) in the thousands ran out quickly but the demand continues unabated. Discussions and deliberation on the subject are ongoing and there are calls for the reprinting of the booklet. I therefore sought permission from Hafiz Muhammed Iqbal Rangooni Saheb who not only approved of the reprint but also added some additional notes and references. Questions from the session in Leicester have also been added to the booklet to keep the readers abreast of the latest developments on the subject.

It is hoped and requested of those who are insisting on following the Saudi sighting to ponder on their actions and not to oppose the Fatawa of Darul-uloom Deoband just for the sake of opposition as it is not the way of the people of knowledge.

Nazir Ahmed (Greater Manchester)
The issue of Moon Sighting in Britain

Request to reconsider Saudi sighting for Britain

Respected and Honorable

Wa-Alaikumus Salam Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh,

Muslims residents in Britain have been in mental agony for some considerable time over the issue of moon sighting for Ramadhan and the two Eids. During the occasions of starting and finishing of Ramadhan or celebration of Eid; unity has been rare and these occasions generally come with debates, arguments and differences of opinions which leave a bitter taste for months.

What is the reason for these differences? Obviously, it is the Saudi moon sighting announcements. Some Muslims in Britain announce Ramadhan or Eid based solely on the news from Saudi Arabia without even considering the following:

1) Is there a chance of a local sighting in Britain?
2) Is a sighting even possible in Saudi Arabia? Has it actually occurred?
3) If the Saudi sighting is indeed valid then what are the injunctions in Shariah regarding following it in Britain?

Saudi sighting has been consistently challenged by Saudi, Muslim and Non-Muslim scientists and experts around the world. These experts are baffled as to how the Saudis are able to “produce” the moon when it is not even on the horizon!

Allah (SWT) has set stages for the moon and it follows a prescribed orbit. Allah (SWT) has also ordered Muslims to commence Islamic months after the sighting of the crescent. What is a crescent? The moon during its orbit around the earth comes directly between the sun and the earth so that it cannot be seen from anywhere on earth; as soon as it moves away from being directly between the sun and the earth the new moon is born (conjunction). After a few hours it moves to a position where the sunlight is reflected off the surface of the moon and the human eye is able to sight it (crescent) from the earth. Scientists have a difference of opinion regarding the time required for the new moon to become a visible crescent however there is an agreement that a new moon less then 16 hours old cannot be seen with a naked eye and one less then 13 hours old cannot be seen with an optical aid (telescope, binoculars etc.). This agreement is fully supported by Muslim scientists and the Saudi experts would also agree with it should they be asked. Despite these scientific facts there are mysterious personalities, knowledge and means by which the crescent is sighted in Saudi Arabia sometimes before it is even born!

Hazrat Maulana Qadhi Thanullah Pani Pati (RA)

Scholars are no doubt aware that when the horizon is clear the testimony of one or two individuals is not acceptable and sighting must be general and observed by a large body of Muslims as stated in the book of Hanafi Fiqh Raddul-Muhtaaar (Kittabus-Saum, Volume3/Page 410). This Mas’ala is present in many other books of Hanafi Fiqh e.g. by the author of Hidaaya where the words “a large body...” (Hidaaya, Volume 1/Page 215) are used and the famous Mufassir of Qur’aan, Hazrat Maulana Qadhi Thanullah Pani Pati (RA) states, “...If the horizon is clear then the testimony of a
large body of Muslims is required for the sighting of the crescent for Ramadhan and Eidul-Fitr...(Mala Budda Minh, Page 93).”

Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (RA)

Thus it is necessary for a large body of Muslims to observe the crescent when the horizon is clear, if not hundreds then at least 20-25 Muslims. Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (RA) writes, “...if the horizons are clear then the sighting will not be proven by the testimony of a few individuals whether it is the moon for Eid or Ramadhan. However if there is a great majority of people who testify to the sighting that the heart is convinced that so many people cannot possibly collaborate and make the news up then the sighting will be proven... (Bahishti Zewar, Part 3/Page 6)”

Hazrat Shaykhul Hadeeth Maulana Abdul Haqq (RA)

The founder of Darul-uloom; Haqqania Akora-Khatak Hazrat Shaykhul Hadeeth Maulana Abdul Haqq (RA) further elaborates on the term “a large body” and writes, “...Islamic Shariah requires that if the horizon is clear on the 29th of the Islamic month then a large body must sight the crescent. There are many numbers attributed to the large body with some stipulating 50 while others 500, however Imam Ibne Abideen (RA) has not stipulated or quantified the numbers but left this matter to the satisfaction of the Qadhi (Muslim Judge). However the satisfaction of the Qadhi is linked to two further conditions namely possibility of sighting and extensive sighting; therefore the testimony of 3-4 people in case of clear horizons is unacceptable...(Fatawa Haqqania, Volume 4/Page 137). “

Hazrat Mufti Abdur-Raheem Lajpuri (RA)

Hazrat Mufti Abdur-Raheem Lajpuri (RA) replies to a query and states, “...if the horizon is clear then the testimony of 2-4 people is insufficient and sighting of a large body is necessary whereby the Qadhi can be satisfied of the sighting and there remains no doubt about it... (Fatawa Rahimiyya, Volume 10/Page129).”

You will be surprised to know that there is hardly ever any general sighting by a large body of Muslims in Saudi Arabia. In a Muslim state like Saudi Arabia when the horizon is clear there should be many testimonies backing the government declaration. However, there are only 1-2 people and it is puzzling as to how the Judges in Saudi Arabia interpret a large body as 1-2 people. Conversely, in the sub-continent there is usually a general sighting and a large number of Muslims sight the crescent and show it to each other. Is there no interest amongst the Muslims in Saudi Arabia in moon sighting or has the government deputed just 1-2 people for the sighting of the moon? Furthermore sometimes these 1-2 people are over the age of 70 and when the media tries to contact them they are threatened by the authorities as indicated by the article in Al-Watan dated 20th of January 2005 (full translation available on the Internet).

Al-Hayat (Saudi Newspaper) Article January 2005

Experts in Astronomy were perplexed by the sighting in Saudi Arabia (Jan 2005) when the moon was not even on the horizon and was not seen anywhere else in the world; correspondents from Al-Hayat (Saudi paper) were dispatched
to Ar-Rain to meet the individuals who testified to the sighting. However, these individuals declined to meet the correspondents on account of being busy in preparing for Hajj. Later on correspondents were told that the meeting will be restrictive with certain conditions. However locals in the area stated that these two individuals had no extraordinary qualities and were not even aware of the Islamic requirements for moon sighting. Due to the importance and complexity of the situation King Abdul Aziz City for Science & Technology decided to send a delegation of experts to Ar-Rain to investigate the matter and found both of them to be over 80 years old!

Even around Saudi Arabia in the smaller Gulf States, the crescent is never sighted by the masses on the days reported by Saudi Arabia. How is it possible for thousands of people in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries to continuously miss the sighting of the crescent when the horizons are generally always clear?

The fact is that Saudi Arabia has set and adopted a 32 year lunar calendar which is based on new moon in Greenwich (hence a little over a day ahead of the actual sighting in Saudi Arabia by default) contrary to the Islamic calendar used in the Sub-continent, South Africa, Portugal etc. which is based on the possibility of sighting (locally) and not the mere presence of the new moon. Consequently, moon sighting in Saudi Arabia is always a day or two ahead of the rest of the world and sometimes even ahead of the birth of the new moon as in the case of Dhul-Hijjah 1395 (10 hours before the birth of the new moon), Dhul-Hijjah 1398 (5 hours before the birth of the new moon) and Dhul-Hijjah 1404 (4 hours before the birth of the new moon) etc.! 1-2 individuals sight the moon in Saudi Arabia while the rest of the world ponders as to how this moon was seen before its birth by a select few in Saudi Arabia! Sometimes the moon is sighted during a solar eclipse during which the moon is actually directly in front of the sun and cannot possibly be sighted. This dubious Saudi sighting when enforced upon British Muslims breeds controversy, if the Saudis set their Calendar on the possibility of local sighting then there would be no controversy and the Islamic dates across the Islamic world would follow a logical pattern.

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Saeed Ahmed Palunpuri (of Darululoom Deoband)

There is a major difference between moon sighting of Saudi Arabia and that of the rest of the world e.g. India, Pakistan, Morocco, Portugal etc. as the latter base the start of Islamic months on the actual sighting rather then the birth.

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Saeed Ahmed Palunpuri, the famous Muhaddith and Mufti from Darul-uloom Deoband replies to a query stating, “...many consider that moon sighting in Saudia is not actually based on sighting rather they accept anyone’s testimony after the birth of the new moon. This consideration has credible evidence therefore it will be not be correct to issue a judgement based on Saudi sighting... (Mas’ala Royate-Hilal Aur Islami Mah, Page 197)”

Whenever the Saudi authorities are questioned they at once respond that we have Muslims sighting the crescent and a decision is taken based on the testimony of Muslims according to guidelines set forth in the Islamic Shariah. But how is the crescent sighted by only 1-2 individuals in a populous Muslim country? Why are the Muslim judges accepting the testimony of 1-2 individuals and not wondering as to why no one else is sighting it particularly when the experts (Muslims and Non-Muslims) from Saudi Arabia and around the world have strong evidence to the contrary and are almost unanimously questioning these dubious sighting? Hazrat Mufti Abdur-Raheem Lajpuri (RA) also expressed his concerns in his Fatawa by stating, “...It is famously known about Saudi Arabia that they disregard Islamic Shariah guidelines and determine Ramadhan and the two Eids based on astronomical equipment and calculations. If these allegations are true then these methods are not acceptable in the Shariah and this should be understood and observed... (Fatawa Rahimiyya, Volume 7/Page 390).”
Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani

Hazrat Mufti Saheb issued no retraction or correction to his statement hence to insist on following Saudi sighting for British Muslims is indeed a blatant move. Amongst the scholars of Pakistan Mufti Taqi Usmani writes, “...In summary I would like to say that the inhabitants of Britain in the present circumstances should not consider the moon sighting of Saudi Arabia as sufficient and they should contact Morocco in case of the weather not being clear. In Saudi Arabia the sighting of the moon has been previously accepted before even the birth of the moon on many occasions which is impossible in my view. I have discussed the situation with many Saudi Ulama and they are also disturbed with these occurrences however they are helpless since this is in the hands of the Majlisul Qadha Al-Ala...”

He further dissects the issue and explains, “...It is possible for all the Muslims globally to have Eid & Ramadhan on the same day as global application of sighting (on a single geographical location anywhere on the globe) is applicable, however Saudi Arabia has complicated the issue. There is often a difference of 2 days between the Islamic dates in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan which is impossible and human logic and intellect cannot accept it. This impossibility is due to the prevalent system of moon sighting in Saudi Arabia which is unique (in the world) and breeds problems for Muslims of the rest of the world.

Many scholars (in contrast) have stated that when the sighting of the moon is not possible then the testimonies of the witnesses become doubtful and must be scrutinized thoroughly as Fuqaha have quoted that in case of a clear horizon the testimony of 1 or 2 people is not sufficient and must be backed by sighting of a large group of people. This condition of sighting by a large group of people (set by Fuqaha) must be applied in the strictest sense when sighting is not even possible. However in Saudi testimony is accepted (without scrutiny) even when it is impossible for the crescent to be sighted or even before conjunction (birth of the new moon).

Therefore we don’t accept their sighting and if Saudi can rectify their system, then we (in Pakistan) would also accept it.

...Mufti Saheb then continues to explain the validity of Hajj although Saudi sighting is doubtful by saying that Saudi sighting is acceptable within their own country, however other countries are under no obligation to follow it...”

(http://deeneislam.com)

Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani has nothing to do with the internal differences of the Deobandis and his statement is a reflection of his own observations and experiences. Furthermore he has also not retracted his statement and neither have the Saudis contradicted it therefore it has to be accepted that his statement is correct and implies that it is erroneous for other countries to follow Saudi Arabia blindly.

Hazrat Shaykh Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RA)

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...”

http://www.wifaqululama.co.uk/home.html
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…”

All of the above-mentioned scholars are credible and trustworthy and they have no axe to grind with the Saudi government. Then why are they concerned? Indeed they are well wishers of the Muslims and the Saudis and want the officials who are in error to remedy the situation.

It is evident from the Hadeeth of Rasul-ullah (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) that Ramadhan should be commenced with the sighting of the crescent and it is also firmly established that there is no general sighting of the crescent in Saudi Arabia of the masses. It is usually a government announcement which always coincides with the established calendar and the masses have no choice but to accept the government’s decision without question.

The announcement for the commencement of Ramadhan 1426 as stated in the National Gazette dated 03rd of October 2005 even astounded the members of the moon sighting committee, it read, “…After praising Allah (SWT) and salutations to Rasul-ullah (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam) it is announced that the crescent for Ramadhan has been sighted in the light of credible and trustworthy testimonies therefore Tuesday the 04th of October 2005 will be the first day of Ramadhan…”

Dr Salih (member Saudi moon sighting committee)

The announcement does not discuss as to where the credible and trustworthy testimonies come from. However Dr. Salih, a member of the 6 member Saudi moon sighting committee responsible for accepting the testimonies for moon sighting stated on the Internet that he has neither received any testimony nor is he satisfied with the decision. He also gave his Mobile number on the Internet and stated that he has been trying to convince the Saudi authorities for the past 20 years not to enforce wrong decisions for Eid and Ramadhan, however the Supreme Council continues to issue such decisions (Daily Jang, 11th of October 2005).

Scholars from various parts of Britain contacted Dr Salih and obtained further details from him about the matter.

Dr Ali Muhammed As-shukri (Chairman of the Department of Physics, Saudi Arabia)

Furthermore Dr Ali Muhammed As-shukri who is also the chairman of the physics department in Saudi university stated, “…it is impossible for Ramadhan to start before Wednesday the 5th of October 2005 i.e. the moon can only be sighted in Saudi on the eve of Tuesday the 4th of October because it will be over 29 hours old and 7.4 degrees above the horizon...(Daily Jang, 11th of October 2005)"

Nevertheless fasting was started in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday and readers can judge the accuracy of the announcement, themselves.
Qateef Observatory (Saudi Arabia)

Saudi announcements are a concern even for the Saudis and no Islamic injunction can permit the forcing of this absurdity on British Muslims! Saudi observatory officials openly disagreed with this decision as reported, “…Saudi sighting was denounced by a report from Saudi observatory in which officials from the Qateef observatory stated that 30 men gathered half an hour before sunset with a telescope on Wednesday the 2nd of November and were unsuccessful despite the clear horizon. Crescent was present for 7 minutes after sunset but its angle was less than 7 degrees from the sun it was not high enough on the horizon therefore it was not sighted with a telescope so the possibility of naked eye sighting is non-existent; however the next day the crescent was on the sky for 49 minutes after sunset and it was easily sighted. Please note that Qateef observatory also disagreed with the official announcement for Ramadhan sighting and they announced the commencement of Ramadhan to be on the 5th of October and declared the 3rd of November to be the 30th fast of Ramadhan…”

Gulf News (UAE Newspaper) Article October 2006

The following report of Gulf News dated 04th of October 2006 is full of severe criticism of the Saudi moon sighting system and declares that the start of Ramadhan (1427) was impossible on Saturday the 23rd of September 2006.

Ramadan 'was announced on wrong day'

http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/06/10/04/10072189.html

By Rania Habib, Staff Reporter

Published: October 04, 2006, 00:00

Abu Dhabi: Astronomers in the UAE maintain that the announcement of the beginning of Ramadan on Friday, September 22, was incorrect, and that it should have in fact been announced two days later.

UAE Astronomical Society engineer Mohammad Shawkat Odeh and American University of Sharjah Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy Dr Nidhal Guessoum explain that the crescent moon was impossible to see on Friday, September 22.

"The moon had set before sunset, so there was no moon in the sky to be seen," says Odeh. "We have three types of crescent visibility. First is impossible, as the moon sets before sunset, so the object is not in the sky. Second is not possible, which means the moon sets after sunset but it cannot be seen. Third is when the crescent can be seen. On Friday, it was impossible, from all Islamic countries."

The astronomers attributed the mistake to a significant margin of human error, whereby inexperienced observers believe they have sighted the crescent moon. "The crescent was claimed to have been seen in Saudi Arabia, but in such situations, mistakes can easily be made, with people mistaking something for the thin, faint and elusive crescent," says Dr Guessoum.

Odeh explains that on Friday, September 22, Mercury was very close to the horizon, so people could have mistaken it for the crescent. "Mercury doesn't look like the crescent at all," he said. "Nothing looks like the crescent, but if the observer is inexperienced and not an astronomer, they do not know what to see. Sometimes, if you concentrate on the
Dr Guessoum says the sighting of the crescent on Friday, September 22, was a mistake that should have been corrected. "The authority in Saudi Arabia that validated the claim should have realised that it was simply a mistake since all astronomers around the world, including the Saudi astronomers and everyone in the region, said it was impossible; the crescent was nowhere to be seen then. The problem is that the Ulemas or Fuqahas must realise that a testimony by one or more people in such cases is really worth nothing, and that other criteria must be taken up."

According to Odeh, religious authorities in Saudi Arabia confuse astronomy with astrology, the latter of which is not recognised in Islam. "We are not astrologers, there is a very big difference between us and them," he said. "The difference is not clear at all for Muslim scholars in Saudi, so they don't consult with astronomers."

We say to those who say that the premature sighting by a few in Saudi Arabia is never wrong even when contradicted by experts (around the world) with the utmost respect to restrict Saudi sighting to Saudis and not to thrust it upon British Muslims! Muslims within the confines of Saudi Arabia should follow the announcements made by their government but to insist upon and enforce it on British Muslims is indeed criminal and culpable to be questioned by Allah (SWT) on the Day of Judgment. Particularly when even the Saudis do not enforce it on others.

We ask those who say that there is no such thing as differences of horizons hence Saudi sighting is equally applicable to Britain as to why the moon sighting committees and scholars of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh disagree with the Saudi sighting? Surely it is more applicable for them to follow Saudi Arabia because they are closer and have less of a time difference! Actually it would make sense for other Muslim countries to simply disregard differences in horizon, abandon their efforts of moon sighting and just wait for the Saudi announcement and follow suit. Nay! We see Muslim countries around the world have their own moon sighting committees with local arrangements for sighting. Furthermore we find evidence of difference of horizons (local sighting) in Fatawas dating back over 70 years ago. Elders and scholars from the Subcontinent not only never followed Saudi sighting but also clearly stated their dissatisfaction and lack of trust in the Saudi sighting from time to time.

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Rasheed Ahmed Ludhyanwi (RA)

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Rasheed Ahmed Ludhyanwi (RA) from Pakistan specifically answers the query of Saudi sighting not being applicable to Pakistan even if you ignore the issue of differences of horizons as irrelevant and states, “...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 sighting 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 17th

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 Saudia 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-Fatowa, Volume4/Page 418)

Saudi sighting is dubious at best for their own citizens according to Hazrat Maulana Mufti Rasheed Ahmed Ludhyanwi (RA) and to impose it on British Muslims is an even bigger injustice.

Hazrat Maulana Burhanud-Deen Sunbuli

Hazrat Maulana Burhanud-Deen Sunbuli (Shaikhut-Tafseer Darul-ulum Nadwa) who is a well known scholar writes, “All Madhahib have now agreed that the news of crescent sighting will not be applicable to Muslims not local to the area where the moon was sighted e.g. here in India credible news of sighting is received via the Radio, newspapers and even trustworthy Muslims who are travelling regarding the sighting in the Arab countries and about their commencement of Ramadhan etc.; but there is no movement or call to simply declare Ramadhan based on the authentic news (received from abroad); therefore we can say that a consensus has developed about the news from far not being acceptable for the local population. Among the scholars who have held similar opinions from the past, the name of Abdullah bin Abbas (RA) tops the list. (Royate Hilal Ka Mas’ala Asre Hazir kay Wasail w Taraqiyaat ki Roshni main, Page 128)”

He writes towards the end of the book, “...The horizon for Hijaz, Egypt is different to the subcontinent therefore their testimonies will not be acceptable for the residents here under any circumstances as their distance from the subcontinent often results in the difference of a day (in Islamic dates)... Royate Hilal Ka Mas’ala Asre Hazir kay Wasail w Taraqiyaat ki Roshni main, Page 160)”

The question must be asked to why Saudi sighting was considered valid for Britain and why was Ramadhan and Eid decisions in Britain subjected to it? We must turn the annals of time and return to the situation prevalent in Britain 20-25 years ago. Originally Muslims in Britain used to follow Morocco for their Ramadhan and Eid and Jamiatul-ulama Britain used to rely on the authentic sightings in Morocco based on the Islamic Shariah as written in the short treatise compiled by the head of Jamiatul-ulama Britain at the time. However as days continued to get longer and the time between Iftaar and Sehri was considerably shortened thus it became difficult to obtain the news from Morocco in time and often the news arrived late in the night making it difficult to convey to the masses in time for them to arrange time off from work etc. British Muslims were perturbed by the situation because communication and news gathering from Morocco were taking too long. Jamiatul-ulama Britain contacted the elders in the sub-continent and the visiting scholars about the problem and suggested that there is only a three hour time difference between Saudi Arabia and Britain therefore following Saudi Arabia would facilitate the lifestyle of the Muslims in Britain instead of forging strong bilateral communication links with the moon sighting committee in Morocco. The permission to follow Saudi sighting was portrayed as the only viable option and legally binding position for all Muslims in Britain. As a result most Muslims in Britain consider this ruling to be absolute and dare not oppose or violate it. The scholars from

http://www.wifaqululama.co.uk/home.html
the subcontinent granted permission to follow Saudi sighting due to the hardship of the time. However, this decision has been blindly followed ever since. There were scholars at the time who disagreed with the decision stating that the Saudi sighting is dubious for Saudi Arabia itself hence it cannot be binding on British Muslims. In addition, there is a need for better communication links with Morocco and not for following a distant country instead of a nearer Muslim country just for the sake of convenience, as it is also unacceptable in Shariah. However Jamiatul-ulama Britain continued to follow Saudi sighting and desire to suppress the opposing views; however the truth is that the opposite view is still practised amongst the Deobandi scholars in Britain. As time passed the errors in Saudi sighting became evident for all to see and their decision was questioned time and again. It is now obvious that their sighting is premature and it can be ascertained from the communication between the Saudi officials and British scholars that their calendar is based on new moon in Greenwich therefore their sighting is always ahead of the rest of the world. It is well known the starting and ending of Islamic months is based on the sighting of the crescent and not the birth of the new moon, hence the present situation should not be acceptable to the scholars, Muftees and the people of knowledge. Above all there have been sightings in Saudi Arabia even before the birth of the new moon and the Muslim judges somehow accept the testimony of 1-2 people! This is baseless, illogical and impossible! How can the moon be sighted even before its birth in Saudi Arabia? How can the Judges explain that the moon is never sighted even in the countries where the sunset is 7-8 hours after Saudi Arabia? Sometimes it is not even sighted in these countries the next day?

Hazrat Shaykh Maulana Mufti Nizamuddin

Hazrat Shaykh Maulana Mufti Nizamuddin (Mufti & Muhaddith, Darul-ulum Deoband) replies to a question, “...If a man testifies that he has sighted the crescent before the conjunction then this testimony must be rejected as it is against logic and observation ad conjunction occurs on the 27th or 28th lunar night and before that moon is present in the sky anyway so the “new” moon cannot be sighted and if this testimony is to be accepted then it would be against the Hadeeth “...the month is...” which cannot be true...(taken from Mas’ala Royaitay Hilal Aur Islami Mah, Page 199)”

The blind followers of Saudi sighting in Britain do not even consider if the moon is present on the British horizon (or even the Saudi horizon for that matter). They regard the Saudi sighting as absolute and vehemently argue with the Muslims who hold an opposite view.

Maulana Sameeruddin Qasmi

Renowned scholar, commentator of Hidaya & Qudoori and an expert on astronomy Maulana Sameeruddin Qasmi has met Saudi scholars on numerous occasions to discuss the weaknesses of their position and has reached the following conclusions after his elaborate discussions on the subject;

1) The 32 year Saudi calendar is based on the new moon in Greenwich, which is a day and a quarter ahead. If they arrange to sight the moon on the 29th it is actually 27 ½ and if they finish 30 then they have actually finished 28 ½ days of the Islamic month

2) Muslim Judges in Saudi Arabia accept two testimonies for Eid (even if they are 70-80 years old) and one testimony for Ramadhan even when the horizons are clear and insist on it. They regard mass sighting to be an innovation

3) Moon sighting committee in Saudi doesn’t investigate the moon sighting news and simply receives the news on the Phone. If the Saudi authorities were to announce the Islamic months on actual sighting then 10 Islamic
months will commence on the same date in India, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and the remaining 2 months will have a difference of just 1 day. Furthermore 8 Islamic months worldwide will commence on a different date while the remaining 4 will have same dates (i.e. during the 4 months in which countries after North America to Fiji Island sight the crescent first will have the same lunar date and the Islamic months in which countries from Fiji Island to North America sight the crescent the Islamic date for countries west of the first sighting will have the same date while the countries located east will have a different date.)

It is clear from Maulana Sameeruddin Qasmi’s explanation that the Saudi sighting and its announcement are dubious in nature and against established principles and facts. British scholars should at least consider the facts and not insist on enforcing this dubious sighting especially when the Saudi scholars don’t even ask for their sighting to be followed elsewhere.

British scholars who insist on enforcing Saudi sighting should also consider the fact that worship performed before its appointed time is not acceptable e.g. fasting when Ramadhan has not started and praying Eid Salah when it is still Ramadhan is not valid. When it is established that the Saudi announcements are premature and based on the testimony of 1-2 individuals and masses of Arabs living in and around Saudi Arabia are unable to sight the crescent then which scholarly criteria justifies following this sighting and invalidating acts of worship because they are premature? Compulsory acts of worship (fasting, praying etc.) performed premature are not valid and still remain to be discharged. They should be cautious in this matter, avoid haste in following Saudi sighting and adopt a method which is free from doubt and according to established principles of Fiqh.

**Commentary of Saheeh Muslim by Imam Nawawi (RA)**

It is true that we are commanded to sight the crescent for the commencement of the Islamic months and are not instructed to solely rely on calculations. However it is permissible to use the knowledge and expertise of the experts in a field in a time of need and to bring it as evidence to prove a point is acceptable in the Islamic Shariah. Renowned Tab’ae Hazrat Matraf bin Abdullah bin Alshakheer (95 AH) was also of this opinion (Commentary of Muslim by Imam Nawawi, Volume 1/Page347).

The Moon, its stages and set orbit are difficult for laymen who are not familiar with astronomy to fathom; therefore there is no harm in benefiting from the latest research and from the experiences of those who are working in this field. What is the harm in considering (but not solely and exclusively) the information provided by the observatory during Ramadhan and Eid in tandem with physical sighting? This is not a matter of belief and disbelief! Trying to prove Saudi sighting and the evidences put forth in its support are not enough to satisfy even the Saudi scholars and experts let alone others! Why are the ones who disagree with this dubious sighting jeered, mocked and warned that there faces will be turned away from the Qiblah in their graves?

Please consider the fact that if all the experts in the world unanimously declare that the crescent will not be seen on a particular place on earth by the naked human eye because it has not become a crescent yet (although it is present in the sky) but 1-2 people in Saudi (over the age 80) testify to sighting it then how can their testimony be accepted?

**Hazrat Allamah Taqiuddin Subki (RA)**

Authentic scholars state that in this situation the testimony must be rejected as they have either erred or are purposely trying to lead the people astray. Hazrat Allama Taqiuddin Subki (756 AH) has clearly stated, “...if the experts...”
In astronomy clearly and unambiguously state that there is no possibility of sighting then the testimony (of those some who claim to have seen it) must be rejected as they have erred or are lying because calculations are absolute while sighting and subsequent testimony are subjective. Subjective sighting and subsequent testimony cannot be taken over absolute calculations (which are clear and unambiguous); it would be impossible to take the testimony in case of a conflict and the Shariah doesn’t command for impossibilities to be followed (Fatawa As-Subki Volume 1/Page209, Research by Hisamuddin Al-Qudsi and printed in Beirut)."

It is incorrect for some to propose that Hazrat Allama Taqiuddin Subki (RA) was against calculations rather he was against the new moon calculations i.e. to start Islamic months based on new moon (and not crescent). He was of the opinion that the moon must become the crescent and others must be able to sight it as is the opinion of other scholars. The thought that he and other great scholars of the past were ignorant of Ahadeeth like, “We don’t write and we don’t calculate” cannot be ascertained! They were of the opinion that Islamic months must commence from the sighting of the crescent and not merely from the birth or existence of the new moon.

Hazratjee (Maulana Inamul Hasan (RA))

For those who say that Hazrat Allama Taqiuddin Subki (RA) was a Shaf’ae and we will only listen to Hanafi scholars we present an excerpt from the great Hanafi scholar and elder, Ameer of Tableeghi Jamaat Hazratjee Maulana Inamul Hasan Kandhalwi (RA) whose knowledge and piety are undisputed. Hazratjee (RA) was asked to present his opinion on the matter when the Saudi vs. Morocco debate was hot and he wrote a detailed letter to the Ameer of Dewsbury Markaz Hafiz Patel and other members of the Shura in which he writes, “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 these types of claims and it is against the actions of Jamhoor Ulama as well.”

Hazrat Maulana Mohammed Yaqoub Qasmi

Hazrat Maulana Mohammed Yaqoub Qasmi from Dewsbury writes that nearly 10 years ago (25th of Sha’baan 1414, Saturday the 5th of February 1994) responsible elders from the Shura of Dewsbury Markaz came to his house and took him to the Markaz where Hafiz Patel Saheb stated in front of the Shura, “Hazrat Jee (RA) called us (members of the Shura) from Britain and told us to correct the wrong with respect to moon sighting in Britain.” Hazrat Maulana Mohammed Yaqoub Qasmi replied that this is good; we ask others to understand and consider even the implicit desires of the elders while this is a straightforward command from Hazrat Jee (RA) (Akhbarul Majalis, January 1999)”. Hazrat Jee’s (RA) command also shows that he was also of the opinion that it is incorrect to adopt the Saudi sighting for Britain otherwise he would have never stated to correct the wrong. It is puzzling as to what has prevented the elders of Dewsbury Markaz from following his guidance ten years on! Can someone claim that Hazrat Jee (RA) was against the Hadeeth “We are an illiterate Ummah” or was unaware of it or didn’t understand it? Can someone claim that Hazrat Jee (RA) preferred experts over Hadeeth of Rasul-ullah (Sallaho Alaihe Wassallam)? Can someone claim that Hazrat Jee (RA) adopted the wrong path by rejecting Saudi sighting? Nay! Hazrat Jee (RA) didn’t invent something new; he merely repeated what many before him have said after due consideration of Shariah and its principles. It has already been stated that the expert opinion (scientific calculations) of scientists can neither be considered absolute nor rejected completely and it can be of assistance due to their knowledge and experiences can be of benefit particularly in this matter where not only Non-Muslims but Muslim scientists are also of the same opinion.
Hazrat Maulana Burhanud-Deen Sunbuli

Hazrat Maulana Burhanud-Deen Sunbuli (Shaikhut-Tafseer Darul-ulum Nadwa) who is a well known scholar writes, “…The speed and the orbit of the sun and the moon are determined and they don’t deviate from them in anyway. Hence it would not be incorrect to say that when a man claims to have seen the crescent despite there being no way for it to be seen (based on calculations) then it should be assumed that the man has erred (if he is not purposely trying to mislead people) and often people have admitted to their error after giving testimony as Allama Tantawi (RA) has related many such incidents in his treatise entitled “Mas’ala Roiyatil Hilal” (Jadeed Masail ka Shar’I Hal, Page 65).

Hazrat writes before the abovementioned text, “…even if a trustworthy person testifies to the sighting when the sighting is impossible then his testimony is to be rejected…” (Jadeed Masail ka Shar’I Hal, Page 49)

Misleading testimonies

Let’s consider two recent incidents of purposeful manipulation:

1) Mufti Taqi Usmani has written that Maulvi was found profusely crying at the Kaabah and it was discovered that he was guilty of pronouncing Eid and Ramadhan before its time and was now repenting for his sins (Jang London, 5th of October 2005)

2) Alkhair monthly which is the organ for Jamia Khairul Madaris Multan (Pakistan) printed an article on the error of celebrating Eid and Ramadhan on the basis of Saudi sighting by Basheer Ahmed in which the opinions of most of the credible scholars of the sub-continent is quoted; a section of the article reads, “…one of my neighbours who belongs to the Tableeghi Jamaat and employed at Pakistan Railways testified that one of the Tableeghi brothers (resident near NWFP province) said that him and his companions have been giving incorrect testimonies about Ramadhan and Eid for some time and used to falsely console their conscious; however they have now repented and asked Basheer Ahmed to also make dua for their forgiveness…” (Monthly Alkhair, Page 14, this report can be verified by correspondence or personal visit)

All of the above clearly prove that those who insist on the Saudi sighting based on a Fatwa of scholars from Darululoom Deoband given due to desperate circumstances are in error. The reality of Saudi sighting is in front of the scholars of the sub-continent and they are openly giving Fatawa against it hence it is wrong for the British scholars to follow it and they should follow the sighting of their closest Muslim country, unfortunately some of the British scholars are adamant and are unwilling to consider the facts. We implore them once more to consider the facts and at least try to open a dialogue with the Saudi scholars and authorities to clear the doubts and misunderstandings of scholars and people of knowledge globally.

Proposal to the Saudis: Unanswered

Ziauddin Lahori had proposed something to the Saudis over twenty years ago which could have eliminated all the doubts and the proposal is still practical and noteworthy. He writes, “…we don’t want to get into the technical
astronomical details, lets just suggest that a Jamaat of credible scholars from the subcontinent should stay there for a few months and establish beyond doubt that the crescent is actually sighted when the announcement is made by the officials. If the Saudi authorities want to convince others of the authenticity then they should invite a group of scholars and actually show them the crescent and not simply inform them of the processes and procedures of sighting. We will then contact the best of the global observatories and tell them beyond doubt that their calculations are wrong and since their calculations will be proven wrong about moon sighting we will also have to reconsider their calculations about prayer times...(Albayynat, Muharram 1405, Pg 18)"

No answer has been received from the Saudi authorities and the Muslims resident in the West (US, UK & Europe) continue to be divided and divergent!

We now reproduce the Fatawa on the subject in response to the questionnaire by Maulana Mohammed Ayub Bandellahi (Khaleefa of Hazrat Maulana Abrarul Haq Saheb (RA)) and you are requested to ponder over the weak position of those who insist on following Saudi sighting:

**Darul-uloom Deoband**

**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 instigate 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 sighting 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 in 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:

“l 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-ulum Deoband
18th of Safar 1424 AH”

The Answer is correct!
Hazrat Maulana Kafeelur-Rahman Nishat
Hazrat Maulana Mufti Zafeeruddin
Hazrat Mufti Muhammed Abdullah

Mazahirul-ulum (Saharanpur)

The answer was also strongly agreed with and approved by the second biggest deobandi Darul-ulum of India Mazahirul-ulum (Saharanpur) and the scholars stated, “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-ulum Saharanpur
1st of Sha’aban 1424 AH”

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Ahmed Khanpuri

The original answer was further agreed upon by the renowned Mufti of Gujarat Hazrat Maulana Mufti Ahmed Khanpuri of Madrasa Islamia Taleemud-deen (Dhabail) which is a centre of Islamic knowledge and excellence for the Muslims of Gujarat. He has also visited Britain and is familiar with some of the circumstances and problems facing the Muslim in this country. He writes, “I also fully agree with the answer.”
Key text of the Fatawa: Analyzed

The main points in the Fatawa of Darul-uloom Deoband agreed by Mazahirul-uloom (Saharanpur) and Jamia Islamia Taleemud-deen (Dhabail) are as follows:

1) It is incumbent upon the Muslims in Britain to follow the sighting of their closest Muslim country for Ramadhan and Eid and to wait if there is delay in the confirmation of the news
2) It is against the established principles of Shariah to insist upon following the Saudi sighting due to convenience
3) It is also against the established principles of Fiqh to follow the Saudi sighting instead of closer Muslim countries
4) British Muslims should not blindly follow Saudi sighting
5) The Fatwa of Darul-uloom Deoband is according to establish principles of Shari’ah hence moon sighting should be observed and announced according to it
6) Saudi sighting is relevant to Muslims in Saudi Arabia and to enforce it upon British Muslims against the established principles of shariah is incorrect and should be avoided

If the Fatwa from Darul-uloom Deoband was against Shariah or its established principles then why would other Darul-uloom agree to it? Their explicit agreement clearly indicates that they consider it wrong for British Muslims to follow Saudi sighting and want the error to be rectified. The scholars from Pakistan are of the same opinion as that of Darul-uloom Deoband and if the Saudi sighting was Islamically binding on Muslims then surely they would have acted upon it themselves and encouraged others to follow it. Nay! They never followed it themselves nor considered it binding for others and are also of the opinion that British Muslims should follow their closest Muslim country or find a way closely resembling this solution where sighting is observed according to established Islamic principles.

Jamia Islamia Binoria (Karachi, Pakistan)

Scholars from Jamia Islamia Binoria founded by Maulana Yusuf Binori (RA) write, “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-Kareen Deenpuri

21st of Ramadhan 1424”

Jamia Khairul Madaris (Multan, Pakistan)

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Abdus-Sattar from Madrasa Khairul-Madaris, Punjab (Pakistan) writes, “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 Saudia the basis of these decisions would be wasting your acts of 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 Muhammed Ismael Kachlavi

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammed Ismael Kachlavi of Daruliftaa wal Irshad (Bradford, UK) had given this Fatwa nearly 10 years ago, “...Under the circumstances that you have written and described we don’t believe it correct for the Muslims of United Kingdom to follow the moon sighting of Saudi Arabia and it was evident from their announcement of 1st of Muharram 1412 and 1st of Rajab 1412 as the earth has only one sun and moon and there was a solar eclipse in Hawaii at the time of their observance of crescent for Muharram and solar eclipse at in America at their time of crescent observance of Rajab and pictures were taken of this event...It is also written in Ahsan-Fatawa that due to the sighting in Saudia being against the principles of the Hanafi Madhab and established science it is unacceptable for Pakistan therefore it cannot be regarded as acceptable for the Muslims in the United Kingdom either.”

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Ebrahim Desai

Translator’s Note: This is the latest Fatwa which has been issued since the publication of the booklet.

Question:
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 Dabhel, 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 Saudi 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?

Answer:

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 Qatiyyius 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 masajid 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 to Americans and Europeans: By Maulana Mohammed Yusuf Binnori (RA)

Hazrat Maulana Mohammed Yusuf Binnori (RA) permitted the Muslims resident in Europe to act upon the moon sighting of nearest Muslim countries (Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco) and not Hijaz (Saudi), Egypt etc. because they are closer to the Muslims resident in Europe and there may not be a day difference in Islamic date and this is closer to the truth; furthermore adopting this opinion also results in the combination of the prominent Hanafi opinion (about differences of Horizons) and sound scientific observation.

Plea to the British & European Ulama

There is no way for the British Muslims to follow Saudi sighting now in the light of the above-mentioned Fatawa. If permission was given 10 years ago due to desperate prevalent circumstances then it is no longer valid! There is no reason for being hysterical about the matter or attempting to destroy the worship of millions of Muslims because of convenience.

It is the responsibility of the scholars and Imams of the Mosques to come forward and inform the trustees and committee members of the Mosque (non-scholars particularly) that they are committing an error by enforcing Saudi sighting. Saudi sighting can be trusted if the criteria and system in Saudi Arabia changes and scholars from the sub-continent explicitly declare their trust in the new system. However it is wrong to enforce it in Britain in the light of above-quoted opinions and current Fatawa!
Appendix

Translator’s Note: These Fatawa have been issued since the publication of the booklet, therefore added to the Appendix.

Darul-uloom Deoband approves Wifaq-ul-Ulama criteria and methods

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

Our Jamaat “Wifaq-ul-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 sighing 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.

Answer

1) Recommendation is correct
2) This recommendation is also correct
3) 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**

**Question**
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 compromising 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: Wifaq-ul-Ulama
Walthamstow, London

**Answer**

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 then Morocco.

Habibur-Rahman (Mufti Darul-uloom, Deoband)

The answer is correct.
Zainul-Islam Qasimi

The answer is correct.
Mahmood Hasan Bulandshari

**Shaykhul-Hadeeth Hazrat Maulana Sher Ali, Tarkeshar (Gujrat, India)**
An excerpt from a page from the 4th edition (unpublished) of Maulana Iqbal Rangooni’s book

Hazrat Shaykhul-Hadeeth Maulana Sher Ali from the famous Darul-uloom Tarkeshar is well known in the UK as Maulana has many students in the country; Hazrat (DB) is also not satisfied with the Saudi system of moon sighting and has made his dissatisfaction clear in writing, please see below (the original is preserved with the writer i.e. Maulana Iqbal Rangooni (DB))

18th of January 2008

http://www.wifaqululama.co.uk/home.html
...This humble servant was blessed with the Ziyarah of the Haramain in 1989 and it so happened that I went to Jannatul-Ma’ala with another person and witnessed the moon before the Adhan for Isha on the 16th (Night) of Dhul-Hijjah and this moon appeared to be of the 12th or the 13th (as it was quiet high up when on the 16th Night it should be just rising).

The second incident occurred in Jeddah on the 28th of Dhul-Hijjah (in 1989) when I performed the Morning Salah in the Masjid and while sitting there witnessed the moon around sunrise and the moon was clearly visible high up in the horizon.

I personally witnessed both incidents which clearly point to the error in moon sighting and the other concern is that no one knows who are the people who announce the sighting (itself) so I have no confidence in the system.

The difference of two days between us (in India) & Saudia is just absurd and according to the sciences of Astronomy it just cannot happen!

Note: I have heard that some have stated on my Authority that I have confidence in the Saudi moon sighting, please note this is false! I have been stating since 1989 that I have no confidence in their (Saudi) moon sighting system...

Hazrat Maulana’s text clearly indicates that the people of knowledge have grave reservations in the sighting and reporting of Saudi system; for those who say that the ones who distrust and abandon the Saudi Sighting are tools in the hands of enemies of Islam should ponder and think about the position of these Kibar Ulama. Would Hazrat (RA)’s students dare suggest that they have acquired the knowledge of Hadith from the enemies of Islam?

Printed booklets (and further information) can be obtained from:

- Hazrat Shaykh Maulana Muhammed Hasan (Khaleefa Silsila Hazrat Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani & President of Markazi Jamiat Ulama Britain)
  110 Wednesbury Road, Walsall
  E-Mail: Maulana_Asad@hotmail.com

- Hakeem ul Ummat Academy
  P.O. Box 36, Manchester M16 7AN
  E-Mail: Hakeemulummat@hotmail.co.uk

- Masjid Imdadia
  26 Blackburn Street, Old Trafford, Manchester M16 7JN
  E-Mail: Hakeemulummat@hotmail.co.uk

- Islamic Academy of Manchester
  Upper Brook St, Manchester M13 9TD
  E-Mail: Hakeemulummat@hotmail.co.uk

- Majlis-E-Dawat-ul-Haq
  126/128 Earl Howe St, Leicester LE2 0DG

http://www.wifaqululama.co.uk/home.html
Tel: +44 (0)116-255-9847

- Islamic Tarbiyah Academy
  Mufti Zubair Dudha
  Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1924-450-422
  http://www.islamictarbiyah.com/