

Moonsighting: Traditional Sunnah Vs Contemporary Methods

Moonsighting is a lagging indicator that looks to the past (something that already happened & has witnesses). The Quran states ".....So whoever sights (the new moon of) the month (of Ramadan), let him fast it....." This is a clear evidence.

On the other hand, the Lunar Calander / Lunar Birth / Calculation methods are measurement based that are prone to statistical or measurement errors (Astronomical Data Accuracy, Algorithm Precision, Time Zone and Date Line Issues, Calendar Conversions). These leading indicators look ahead and attempt to predict future outcomes (like visibility curves confidence level can be 99.99% as when Moon will be sighted). But there is never 100% confidence.

Moonsighting is a coincident indicator that is practiced (Sunna **act**) in real-time to enable a witness.

Following Mecca Hilal sighting is not possible for Muslims living in New Zealand as it is +12 hours ahead, the next day. There was no technical ability for Muslims 1293 years before the phone was invented (1876) in lands far away from Arafat to find out what day Yum-e-Arafat was going to be.

Furthermore, the Quran states that "...This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed my favor on you..." and the Hadith says "Fast when you see it (the new moon) and break your fast when you see it. If it is cloudy, then complete the month of Sha'ban as thirty days" (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 1909; Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1080). The approach, according to the Hadith, is to wait an additional day. Qurbani (Udhiyah) can be on 2 days late but cannot be a day earlier.

We need to ponder as Muslims and ask why we are compromising Allah's Perfect religion by creating a dependency (following Mecca or Lunar Predictive Model) on phones, that was not possible for the Ummah to practice before discovery of phone in 1876? Why we give up the Sunnah (moon sighting with naked eye) of our beloved prophet (SAW) and use (a confidence level dependent) statistical model instead and create a dependency on phones and ultimately on two acts of worship globally? **Should we practice (Qurbani) Sunnat of Ibrahim A.S. following the Contemporary methods or Sunnah of Prophet Muhammed (SA) that eminent Sahabah, Caliphs and Muslim ummah practiced for 1293 years.**

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The statement attributed to Ibn Abbas about "our moon and their moon" (Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2391) refers to an important concept in Islamic jurisprudence and moon sighting for determining the start and end of the Islamic months, particularly Ramadan and Eid. Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) emphasized that different regions might have different moon sightings due to the variation in geographical locations. This concept is known as "ikhtilaf al-matali" (differences in moon sighting).

Regional Moon Sightings

Ibn Abbas's response indicates that moon sightings can be regional. Just because the moon was sighted in one region (Syria), it does not necessarily mean that another region (Medina) must follow the same sighting if they have not sighted the moon themselves.

Local Observation

The hadith underscores the importance of local observation for moon sightings, reflecting that each community should rely on its own sighting unless there is a consensus or clear communication that connects the sightings between regions.

Jurisdictional Autonomy

This perspective allows for jurisdictional autonomy in determining the Islamic months, recognizing geographical and observational differences.

Ibn Abbas's stance, as highlighted in the hadith, emphasizes the principle that moon sightings can vary by region, and each community should base its Islamic month on its own sighting. This principle acknowledges the practical challenges of universal moon sighting and supports the idea of localized observation for starting and ending Islamic months.

We Muslims should also ask ourselves how well our leaders understand the Contemporary Moon prediction Methods?

Moonsighting: Traditional Sunnah Vs Contemporary Methods & Unity of Ummah ?

The concept of unity in the Ummah is fundamental in Islam and is rooted in both the Qur'an and the Hadith. This unity transcends race, nationality, and ethnicity, emphasizing the brotherhood and sisterhood of all Muslims worldwide.

Spiritual Unity

The Qur'an emphasizes that all Muslims are a single brotherhood. Verses like "The believers are but a single brotherhood..." (Qur'an 49:10) highlight this **Spiritual Unity**. The concept of Tawhid (the oneness of God) extends to the oneness of the Muslim community, encouraging a sense of solidarity and shared faith.

Equality and Brotherhood

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) stated, "All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; a white has no superiority over a black, nor does a black have any superiority over a white; none have superiority over another except by piety and good action." This promotes the idea that all Muslims are equal and **should treat each other with respect and fairness**.

Collective Identity

The Ummah is seen as a collective identity that transcends individual and tribal identities. Muslims are encouraged to prioritize their identity as part of the Ummah over national, ethnic, or cultural identities. **This collective identity is reinforced by shared rituals such as the five daily prayers, fasting during Ramadan, and Hajj.**

Support and Solidarity

The Hadith frequently stresses the importance of mutual support within the Ummah. For instance, the Prophet Muhammad said, "The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, fellow-feeling is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole-body aches, because of sleeplessness and fever." (Sahih Muslim 2586). This metaphor underscores the idea that Muslims should support each other in times of need, akin to how different parts of the body support each other.

Political and Social Unity

The unity of the Ummah also had a political dimension, with the Caliphate serving as a symbol of this unity. While the political landscape has changed, many Muslims still view the concept of a united Ummah as an ideal that encompasses both social and political solidarity. OIC is modern example.

Moral and Ethical Unity

The unity of the Ummah also encompasses a shared commitment to Islamic moral and ethical values. Muslims are encouraged to uphold justice, compassion, and moral integrity, contributing to a cohesive and supportive community.

We as Muslims may ask does the unity of the Ummah require us to abandon the Sunnah of local Moonsighting. Was there Unity in the Ummah for first 1293 years of Islam including Caliphate? Is the criteria of global Moon sighting as requirement for the unity of Ummah has divine guidance?

Why change the "probabilistic" Hijri Dynamic Lunar Calander (divine ordinance) to a "deterministic A.D. (in the year of our Lord (Jesus – may peace be upon him))" Gregorian Calander, introduced by his Holiness Pope Gregory XIII that is fixed around the Sun?