

GLOBAL SIGHTING & FOLLOWING SAUDI ARABIA

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Ikhtilaf al-Matali' (Difference of Horizons)

- The difference in horizons is real and natural. The moon follows a natural system, with specific phases for each day of the month. Undoubtedly, the horizon for the moon differs according to the longitude and latitude of each region, leaving no room for doubt.
- Mufti A'zam of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz, clarified in an article that the entire world's horizon cannot be the same, and it is not correct to make Makkah the center for moon sighting for the entire Islamic world. He writes:

- *"The issue of Ikhtilaf al-Matali' (difference of horizons) regarding the sighting of the crescent is one on which scholars have different opinions. After discussion in a session of the Dar al-Ifta, it was decided by a majority that the correct opinion is that each region should rely on its local sighting. In this matter, people should refer to their local scholars."*
- He further writes at the end of his article:
- *"Some people think that the sighting of the crescent in Makkah should be used as the basis for determining Ramadan and Eid for the entire world. However, there is no evidence for this in the Shariah, nor is there any basis for it."*

• **The Position of the Imams:**

- It is often said that all jurists agree that if the moon is sighted anywhere in the world, fasting and Eid become obligatory for everyone. However, this is incorrect; there is no consensus among all the Imams on this issue.
- Below is a summary of the positions of various jurists:

Shafi'i Position:

- Only a few Shafi'i scholars hold the view that Ikhtilaf al-Matali' is not to be considered, but the majority of Shafi'i scholars maintain that Ikhtilaf al-Matali' is valid.
- For example, Allama Nawawi states:

• والصحيح عند اصحابنا ان الرؤية لاتعم الناس بل تختص بل تختص بمن قرب على مسافة لاتقصر فيها الصلاة-

- Allama Faqih Sheikh Zainuddin Ahmad bin Abdul Aziz Malibari states:

• واذا ثبت رؤيته ببلد، لزم حكمه البلد القريب دون البعيد و يثبت البعد باختلاف المطالع على الأصح.

Maliki Position:

- There is also some difference of opinion among the Malikis on this matter, but the majority of Maliki scholars consider **Ikhtilaf al-Matali' to be valid**. Therefore, the sighting of the moon in one place is not necessarily binding for other locations.
- Allama Ibn Rushd al-Andalusi mentions the consensus of the Malikis:
 - اجمعوا على انه لا يراعى ذلك فى البلدان النائية كالاندلس والحجاز-
- Furthermore, Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (may Allah have mercy on him) has narrated the consensus of the Malikis, as mentioned by Allama Hafiz Ibn Abd al-Barr.
 - " اجمعوا على انه لا تراعى الرؤية فيما بعد من البلاد كخراسان والاندلس "-

Hanbali and Hanafi Position:

- The well-known position of the Hanafi and Hanbali jurists is that **Ikhtilaf al-Matali' is not considered valid.** لا عبرة لاختلاف المطالع

Therefore, the sighting of the moon anywhere in the world is sufficient, and it applies equally to both the East and the West.

- There is no doubt that this opinion is found in Hanafi texts, but an important point to consider is whether the concept of "the entire earth," "the world," and "the East and the West" held by scholars and jurists of that time is the same as what we understand today. Did they have the same knowledge of the world's limitlessness as we do today? Obviously, the answer is no.

- When the early jurists used the terms "East" and "West," they did not mean the entire world. For example, Imam Abu Yusuf was referred to as the Qadi of the East and the West, but clearly, he was not the judge of the entire world. The Hanafi jurists who wrote that the sighting in one part of the world should be considered sufficient for the entire world based their opinion on the general meaning of the hadith. However, practically implementing this ruling is not feasible.
- This position is not practical because there is a 17-hour time difference between Australia and North America. If the people in Australia were to wait for news from North America, it would mean that they would have to decide in the middle of the next day whether they should have fasted or celebrated Eid in the morning. For example, if the sunset in Australia is at 8 PM, and the moon is not sighted there, they would wait for information from those to the west. If no sighting is reported, they would continue waiting until the sun sets in North America. By the time the sun sets in North America, it would be 1 PM in Australia.

• The Original Hanafi Position:

• First of all, it is important to understand that the primary Hanafi texts, which contain the 'Zahir al-Riwayah' ظاهر الرواية (the apparent narrations), are the six books authored by Imam Muhammad (may Allah have mercy on him). These books are:

- 1. Al-Mabsut
- 2. Al-Jami' al-Saghir
- 3. Al-Jami' al-Kabir
- 4. Al-Siyar al-Saghir
- 5. Al-Siyar al-Kabir
- 6. Al-Ziyadat

In these six books, the statement "لا عبرة لاختلاف المطالع" is not stated.

The opinion that the Hanafi madhhab on the issue of moon sighting does not consider the difference in horizons is inaccurate.

- Additionally, the following Hanafi texts do not mention this phrase either:

1. المبسوط السرخسى - شمس الأئمة محمد بن أحمد السرخسى (d. 483 AH)
2. المحيط الرضوى - رضى الدين محمد بن محمد السرخسى (d. 571 AH)
3. خزانة الأكل - أبو يعقوب يوسف الجرجانى الحنفى (d. 522 AH)
4. شرح مختصر الطحاوى - أبو بكر الرازى الجصاص (d. 370 AH)
5. مختصر القدورى - أبو الحسين أحمد بن محمد القدورى (d. 428 AH)
6. تحفة الفقهاء - علاء الدين السمرقندى (d. 539 AH)
7. بداية المبتدى - على بن أبى بكر عبد الجليل الفرغانى المرغينانى (d. 593 AH)

8. الحاوى القدسى - جمال الدين احمد بن محمود (d. 593 AH)

9. الفقه النافع - ناصر الدين محمد بن يوسف السمرقندى (d. 556 AH)

10. المنهاج فى مذهب الحنفية - ابو حفص عمر بن محمد العقيلي البخارى (d. 576 AH)

11. جواهر الفقه لابن صاحب الهدايه - ابو حفص عماد الدين بن على الفرغانى المرغينانى

(d. 593 AH)

Additionally, the following texts also do not contain this phrase:

12. الوقاية - عبيد الله بن مسعود تاج الشريعة (d. 747 AH)

13. جواهر الفقه لطاهر بن سلام - طاهر بن سلام الانصارى الخوارزمى. (d. 771 AH)

14. النقاية - مختصر الوقاية فى مسائل الهداية المسمى بالنقاية (d. 747 AH)

15. الاصلاح لا بن كمال باشاه - شمس الدين سليمان بن كمال پاشا (d.940 AH)

THE FIRST CLAIM OF "لا عبرة لاختلاف المطالع"

- It is important to note that the first mention of the phrase "لا عبرة لاختلاف المطالع" appeared in Fatawa Khaniyah by Qadi Khan, who passed away in 592 AH. Prior to this, none of the Hanafi texts mentioned this concept, and if anything was mentioned, it was the opposite: "يعتبر اختلاف المطالع"
- It is clear that from Imam Jurjani (d. 398 AH) to the author of Al-Hidayah (d. 593 AH), none of the Hanafi jurists mentioned the phrase: "لا عبرة لاختلاف المطالع".
- After the publication of Fatawa Khaniyah, later scholars began to quote this phrase, and it became popularly believed that the Hanafi madhhab did not consider the difference in horizons for moon sighting. However, this is not accurate.
- Consider the words of Allama Imam Fakhr al-Din Hasan ibn Mansur al-Uzjandi, known as Qadi Khan (d. 592 AH):

عن محمد في النوادر : إذا صام أهل مصر شهر رمضان على غير رؤية ثمانية وعشرين يوماً رأوا هلال شوال، قالوا: إن كانوا عدوا شعبان لرؤية ثلاثين يوماً، وغم عليهم هلال رمضان قضاوا يوماً واحداً، وغم عليهم هلال رمضان قضاوا يوماً واحداً، و إن صاموا تسعة قد أكملوا الشهر. ولو صام أهل بلدة ثلاثين يوماً للرؤية وأهل بلدة أخرى تسعة وعشرين يوماً للرؤية، فعلم من صام تسعة وعشرين يوماً فعليهم قضاء يوم ، **ولا عبرة** لاختلاف المطالع في ظاهر الرواية ، وكذا ذكر شمس الأئمة الحلواني رحمة الله تعالى ، وقال بعضهم: **يعتبر** اختلاف المطالع. (فتاوى قاضى خان: 1/176 طدارالكتب العلمية 2009ء)

- If we carefully consider the context of this statement, it becomes clear that the issue on which Qadi Khan wrote the phrase "لا عبرة لاختلاف المطالع في ظاهر الرواية" (There is no consideration for the difference in horizons in Zahir al-Riwayah") pertains to the category of 'Nawadir' (rare or isolated narrations). In his 'Khaniyah', Qadi Khan introduces this by saying "عن محمد في النوادر" (from Muhammad in Nawadir"), indicating that this issue is connected to the previous discussion, thus making it clear that this is a matter of Nawadir.
- Now, consider this: if this was truly a part of 'Zahir al-Riwayah' (the primary and most authoritative narrations of the Hanafi school), how could it be that this ruling is not found in the six main books of Zahir al-Riwayah, nor in the foundational books compiled to address the issues of these six texts?

How could it be that such a significant ruling was unknown to prominent Hanafi scholars such as

امام طحاوى ، امام كرخى ، امام جصاص ، امام قدورى ، امام حاكم شهيد ، شمس الائم سرخسى ، امام رضى الدين سرخسى ، امام يوسف بن على جرجانى ، امام سمرقندى ، امام كاسانى and امام مرغينانى رحمهم الله

Imam Tahawi, Imam Karakhi, Imam Jassas, Imam Quduri, Imam Hakim al-Shahid, Shams al-A'imma al-Sarakhsi, Imam Radhiyuddin al-Sarakhsi, Imam Yusuf ibn Ali al-Jurjani, Imam Samarqandi, Imam Kasani, and Imam Marghinani?

This view is unbelievable and highly unlikely.

Below, we present the statements of Hanafi jurists who preceded Qadi Khan.

1- وهذا اذا كان بين البلدتين تقارب بحيث لا تختلف المطالع فان كان يختلف لا يلزم احد البلدين حكم الآخر -

The mentioned statement is found in the works of Imam Quduri, Sharh Mukhtasar al-Karkhi, Al-Muhit al-Burhani, Tatarakhania, Al-Fatawa al-Hussamiyya, Al-Fatawa al-Kubra, and Al-Fatawa al-Walwaljiya.

• Imam Radhiyuddin Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Sarakhsi (d. 571 AH) states that:

2 – وهذا اذا كان بين البلدين بعد بحيث لا يختلف فيه مطالع الهلال لان الرؤية لا تتفاوت و لا يختلف ، فيلزم احدهما حكم الآخر، وان كان بينهما مسافة فاحشة مديدة بحيث يختلف فيهما المطالع لم يلزم احدهما حكم الآخر" - (المحيط الرضوى : 50 /2 ط دارالكتب العلمية)

• Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Quduri (d. 428 AH) states:

3 – ان مطالع الهلال متفاوتة-

• Imam Ali ibn Abi Bakr al-Farghani al-Marghinani (d. 593 AH) writes, referencing "Al-Hawi":

4- و فى الحاوى اهل بلدة راوا الهلال يوم الثلاثاء و اهل بلدة اخرى يوم الاربعاء يحكم لكل بلدة بما راو ، **ولا ينظر الى راي اهل بلدة اخرى**، لان ابن عباس انه سئل عن هذا فقال : لهم ما لهم و لنا ما لنا- (التجنيس و المزيد : 2/421 ط ادارة القرآن و العلوم الاسلامية 1424هـ - 2004ء)

• Imam Ali ibn Abi Bakr al-Farghani al-Marghinani (d. 593 AH) states:

5- وهذا اشارة الى ما ذكرنا انه **لا يلزمهم حكم قاضى بلدة اخرى** - (التجنيس و المزيد : 2/421 ط ادارة القرآن و العلوم الاسلامية 1424هـ - 2004ء)

• Muhammad ibn Abd al-Rashid al-Kirmani (d. 565 AH) states:

6- **ان كان يختلف المطالع لا يلزم احدهما حكم الآخر** - (جواهر الفتاوى : كتاب الصوم ط جامعة الملك سعود مخطوط)

• Imam Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud al-Ghaznawi (d. 593 AH) has written:

7- هذا اذا لم يكن بين البلدين تفاوت يختلف فيه المطالع **فان كانت مختلفة فيه المطالع لم يلزم احد البلدين حكم الآخر** - (المقدمة الغزنوية : 239 ط قسم اللغة العربية بجامعة بنجاب بلاهور 1997ء)

- Imam Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn Amir Wuhayb Abu al-Fadl al-Kirmani (d. 543 AH) states:

8- **و ان كان منهما البعد ما يختلف المطالع لا يلزم ذلك-** (الايضاح في شرح التجريد : بي ڈى ايف)

Allama Alauddin al-Kasani (d. 587 AH) states:

9- ولو صام أهل بلد ثلاثين يوماً وصام أهل بلد آخر تسعة وعشرين يوماً فإن كان صوم أهل ذلك البلد برؤية الهلال وثبت ذلك عند قاضيهم، أو عدوا شعبان ثلاثين يوماً ثم صاموا رمضان فعلى أهل البلد الآخر قضاء يوم لأنهم أفطروا يوماً من رمضان لثبوت الرضائية برؤية أهل ذلك البلد، وعدم رؤية أهل البلد لا يقدر في رؤية أولئك، إذ العدم لا يعارض الوجود، وإن كان صوم أهل ذلك البلد بغير رؤية هلال رمضان أو لم تثبت الرؤية عند قاضيهم ولا عدوا شعبان ثلاثين يوماً فقد أساءوا حيث تقدموا رمضان بصوم يوم. وليس على أهل البلد الآخر قضاؤه لما ذكرنا أن الشهر قد يكون ثلاثين وقد يكون تسعة وعشرين، هذا إذا كانت المسافة بين البلدين قريبة لا تختلف فيها المطالع، فأما إذا كانت بعيدة فلا يلزم أحد البلدين حكم الآخر لأن مطالع البلاد عند المسافة الفاحشة تختلف فيعتبر في أهل كل بلد مطالع بلدهم دون البلد الآخر. (بدائع الصنائع: ٢/٥٤٩)

Now, we will present the statements of the jurists who came after Qadi Khan.

1. Imam Burhan al-Din Mahmud Bukhari Hanafi (d. 616 AH)

- "وكانه مال الى ان حكم احدى البلدين لا يلزم البلدة الاخرى اصلا او عند اختلاف المطالع و علم ان المطالع مختلفة" (المحيط البرهاني: 2 / 379 طدارا لكتب العلمية بيروت لبنان 1424 هـ - 2004 ء)

2. Imam Ibrahim ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Qahiri (d. 923 AH) has written:

- "والصحيح اعتبار اختلاف المطالع".

3. Allama Kamal al-Din Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahid, known as Ibn Humam (d. 861 AH), states:

- ولا شك ان هذا اولى لانه نص، وذلك محتمل لكون المراد امر كل اهل مطلع بالصوم لرؤيتهم" (فتح القدير لابن همام: 2 / 314 طدارا لفكر 1379 هـ - 1970 ء)

4. Allama Ali ibn Sultan Muhammad al-Harawi, known as Mulla Ali al-Qari (d. 1014 AH):

- لان السبب شهود الشهر ، فاذا انعقد بالرؤية في حق قوم ، لا يلزم ان ينعقد في حق غيرهم مع اختلاف المطالع ، كما لو زالت الشمس او غربت على قوم دون آخرين يجب الظهر او المغرب على الاولين دون اولئك لعدم انعقاد السبب في حقهم ، و اختار صاحب التجريد وغيره من المشايخ اعتبار اختلاف المطالع. " (شرح نقايه: ٥٦٤ / طدارا لارقم بن ابى الارقم بيروت 1418 هـ - 1997 ء)

5. Zain al-Din Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr ibn Abd al-Qadir al-Razi (author of Mukhtar al-Sihah) (d. after 666 AH) states:

• **تعدد المطالع و لا يلزم أحد المصريين رؤية المصر الآخر إلا إذا اتحدت المطالع** - (تحفة الملوك : ١٣٨ طدار البشائر الإسلامية

بيروت ١٢١٤هـ - ١٩٩٤ء)

6. Allama Fakhr al-Din Uthman ibn Ali al-Zayla'i (d. 743 AH) states:

• **والأشبه أن يعتبر لأن كل قوم مخاطبون بما عندهم** وانفصال الهلال عن شعاع الشمس يختلف باختلاف الأقطار

كما أن دخول الوقت وخروجه يختلف باختلاف الأقطار حتى إذا زالت الشمس في المشرق لا يلزم منه أن تزول في المغرب وكذا طلوع الفجر وغروب الشمس بل كلما تحركت الشمس درجة فتلك طلوع فجر لقوم وطلوع

شمس لآخرين وغروب لبعض ونصف ليل لغيرهم وروي أن أبا موسى الضيرير الفقيه صاحب المختصر قدم الإسكندرية فسئل عن صعد على منارة الإسكندرية فيرى الشمس بزمان طويل بعدما غربت عندهم في البلد

أيحل له أن يفطر فقال لا ويحل لأهل البلد لأن كلا مخاطب بما عنده **والدليل على اعتبار المطالع ما روي عن**

كريب - (تبيين الحقائق: ١/٣٢١)

7. Allama Ibn Abidin al-Shami (d. 1252 AH) states:

" اعلم أن نفس اختلاف المطالع لا نزاع فيه بمعنى أنه قد يكون بين البلدين بعد بحيث يطلع الهلال له ليلة كذا في إحدى البلدين دون الأخرى وكذا مطالع الشمس؛ لأن انفصال الهلال عن شعاع الشمس يختلف باختلاف الأقطار حتى إذا زالت الشمس في المشرق لا يلزم أن تزول في المغرب، وكذا طلوع الفجر وغروب الشمس بل كلما تحركت الشمس درجة فتلك طلوع فجر لقوم وطلوع شمس لآخرين وغروب لبعض ونصف ليل لغيرهم كما في الزيلي وقدر البعد الذي تختلف فيه المطالع مسيرة شهر فأكثر على ما في القهستاني عن الجواهر اعتباراً بقصة سليمان - عليه السلام -، فإنه قد انتقل كل غدو ورواح من إقليم إلى إقليم وبينهما شهر. اهـ.

(فتاوى شامى: 2/394 ط شركة مكتبة ومطبعة مصطفى البابي الحلبي وأولاده بمصر ١٣٨٦ هـ - - ١٩٦٦ ع)

8. Sheikh al-Islam Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani (d. 1369 AH) states:

“It is appropriate to consider the difference in horizons between locations where the difference in dates is typically more than one day. This is because the texts explicitly state that the month is either 29 or 30 days long. Therefore, the testimony from a location that would result in a month being less than 29 days or more than 30 days should not be accepted” فتح المسلم: ٣/١١٣

9. Hadhrat Muhaddith Kabir Allama Anwar Shah Kashmiri (d. 1352 AH) states:

لابد من تسليم قول الزيلعي والا فيلزم وقوع العيد يوم السابع والعشرين او الثامن والعشرين او يوم الحادي والثلاثين او الثاني والثلاثين فان هلال بلاد قسطنطينية ربما يتقدم على هلالنا يومين فاذا صمنا على هلالنا ثم بلغنا رؤية هلال بلاز قسطنطينية يلزم تقديم العيد او يلزم تاخير العيد اذا صام رجل من بلاد قسطنطينية ثم جاءنا قبل العيد- (العرف الشذى: ٢/١٢٥)

10. Allama Yusuf Banuri (d. 1397 AH) states:

و حققوا اوقعوا الاختلاف في المطلع بنحو خمسمائة ميل- (معارف السنن ٥/ ٣٢٠)

11. Allama Zafar Ahmad Usmani (d. 1394 AH) states:

ولو سلم توجه الإشارة في كلام ابن عباس إلى عدم لزوم رؤية أهل بلد لأهل بلد آخر لكان عدم اللزوم مقيداً بدليل العقل، وهو أن يكون بين القطرين من البعد ما يجوز معه اختلاف المطالع- (اعلاء السنن: 9/119)

12. Allama Abdul Hayy Farangi Mahalli Lakhnawi (d. 1304 AH) wrote in "Majmu'ah al-Fatawa" (on the margins of Khulasat al-Fatawa) in Persian, which translates as follows:

"From both rational and textual perspectives, the most correct opinion is that for two cities separated by a distance sufficient to cause a difference in their horizons—typically measured as a month's travel distance—the sighting of the moon in one city should not be considered valid for the other. However, in the case of nearby cities with a distance of less than a month's travel between them, the sighting of the moon in one city should be considered binding and necessary for the other. This opinion is completely balanced and moderate." مجموعة الفتاوى على هامش خلاصة الفتاوى

13. Sheikh al-Islam Husain Ahmad Madani (d. 1376 AH) states:

“If there is such a distance between two locations that not considering the difference would result in a discrepancy of one day or more in the date, then the difference in horizons between such locations should be considered valid. This is because the hadiths explicitly state that the month is no less than 29 days and no more than 30 days”.

معارف مدنیہ ۱۰۷، استفاد از:
انوار رحمت ۵۵۱

14. Mufti Rashid Sahib (d. 1422 AH) quoted Allama Banuri's (may Allah have mercy on him) writing:

"In distant lands, the consideration of the difference in horizons is an issue of consensus (Ijma').

احسن الفتاویٰ ۴/۲۸۴

15. Mufti Shafi Sahib (d. 1395 AH) states:

In his treatise on moon sighting (Risaalah Ru'yat Hilal, pp. 22-23), he wrote in great detail and mentioned that both Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani and Allama Anwar Shah Sahib held the same opinion that the difference in horizons must be acknowledged.

In distant lands, this should be considered. Esteemed Hanafi jurists, whose eminent status among the Hanafi scholars is well established, have given preference to this view.

16. Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani writes:

The decision made by the Shariah Research Council of Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow, held on May 3-4, 1967, by scholars and representatives from various schools of thought regarding this issue is as follows:"

In reality, the sighting of the moon is not uniform worldwide; rather, differences in moon sightings are considered valid. This is an observational matter and there is no disagreement among the jurists on this point, and it is also supported by Hadith.

Fatwa of Binori Town:

From the major scholars of Deoband such as Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri, Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi, Maulana Muhammad Yusuf Banuri (may Allah have mercy on them), **differences in moon sighting are considered valid**, and this is the ruling

From the statements of these scholars, it is clear that, despite being Hanafis, **they considered differences in moon sighting to be valid.**

(جامعہ علوم اسلامیہ علامہ محمد یوسف بنوری ٹاؤن 144012201124 : فتویٰ نمبر) .

Reasons why relying on astronomical calculations is incorrect

1. Turning away from Mutawatir Ahadith

- There are more than forty Ahadith regarding sighting the moon, which have reached the level of Mutawatir (mass transmission). Imam Tahawi has classified the Ahadith regarding moon sighting as Mutawatir.
- Ignoring these Mutawatir Ahadith in favor of astronomical calculations is an extremely dangerous sin. Scholars are well aware that the ruling of Mutawatir Ahadith is equivalent to that of the Qur'an, and denying them is very serious.

2. Acting on astronomical calculations is disobedience to the command of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

3. It necessitates opposing the continuous Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

- The command of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) regarding the sighting of the crescent has been followed by all the Khulafaa', the Tabi'in, the Tabi' al-Tabi'in, all the renowned Imams, Fuqahaa', scholars, and the entire Islamic nation. Even today, almost the entire Muslim world, especially the Arab world, follows the practice of sighting the moon. They do not announce the start of fasting or Eid until the crescent is sighted, unlike those who announce the dates far in advance.

4. Relying on astronomical calculations is an innovation (bid'ah).

Allama Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy on him) states:

“Relying on astronomical calculations for the sighting of the crescent is misguidance in the Shariah and an innovation in the religion.”

5. Relying on astronomical calculations goes against the consensus (ijma) of the Ummah.

- Those who follow astronomical calculations are going against the consensus of the Ummah. Scholars like Ibn al-Mundhir, Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, Abu al-Walid al-Baji, Ibn Rushd, Allama al-Qurtubi, and Ibn Abidin, among others, have all mentioned that relying on astronomical calculations for determining the beginning and end of the month is absolutely incorrect. For more details, refer to the works of these scholars.
- Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, while strongly refuting the use of astronomical calculations, states:

"Whoever writes or calculates in this matter is not from this Ummah in this ruling; rather, they have followed a path other than that of the believers".

- Moreover, contemporary scholars have also reached a consensus on this matter, and among those who signed this consensus are prominent scholars from Saudi Arabia.

• وقررت هيئة كبار العلماء بالسعودية في ختام بحثها الخاص بإثبات الأهلة قرار رقم (2) : ثالثا :

أما ما يتعلق بإثبات الأهلة بالحساب : فبعد دراسة ما أعدته اللجنة الدائمة في ذلك ، وبعد

الرجوع إلى ما ذكره أهل العلم- فقد أجمع أعضاء الهيئة على عدم اعتباره ؛ لقوله صلى الله عليه

وسلم: (صوموا لرؤيته، وأفطروا لرؤيته) الحديث، ولقوله صلى الله عليه وسلم: (لا تصوموا حتى

تروه، ولا تفطروا حتى تروه) الحديث.

The Council of Senior Scholars in Saudi Arabia, at the conclusion of their study on the determination of the crescent, issued Decision No. 2.

Thirdly, concerning the determination of the crescent using calculations: After studying the findings of the Permanent Committee on this matter and after referring to what the scholars have stated, the members of the council unanimously agreed not to consider astronomical calculations. This decision is based on the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "Fast when you see it (the crescent), and break your fast when you see it," and "Do not fast until you see it, and do not break your fast until you see it

هيئة كبار العلماء

محمد الأمين الشنقيطي	عبد الرزاق عفيفي	محضار عقيل
عبد العزيز بن باز	عبد الله بن حميد	عبد الله خياط
محمد الحرکان	عبد المجيد حسن	عبد العزيز بن صالح
صالح بن غصون	إبراهيم بن محمد آل الشيخ	سليمان بن عبيد
محمد بن جبیر	عبد الله بن غديان	راشد بن خنين
	صالح بن لحيدان	عبد الله بن منيع

6. Relying on astronomical calculations will impose hardship and difficulty on the Ummah

- Allama Ayni, in his commentary Umdat al-Qari, explains the wisdom behind the ruling of sighting the moon:

"The Shari'ah made fasting and other rulings dependent on sighting the crescent to relieve the Ummah from the burden of calculations and astronomy".

- Allama Nawawi, in his commentary Sharh al-Muhadhdhab, states:

"If people were required to rely on calculations, it would be difficult for them because only a few individuals in large cities know such calculations. The correct view is what the majority of scholars have said, and anything else is false and rejected by the explicit Ahadith".

7. Trust in the Qadi (Judge) will be undermined

- Relying on astronomical calculations could lead to accusations against the Qadi and may even harm the credibility of just Muslim witnesses. The Qadi might dismiss testimony by claiming it is not in line with astronomical calculations, thus undermining the principles of sighting and testimony established by Shari'ah.

8. Relying on astronomical calculations is the way of the Jews, Christians, Shia, Rafidah, and Ismailis

- Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah states:

“Our religion does not require writing and calculations as practiced by the People of the Book (Jews and Christians).” He further adds :

“This is a deviation from the religion of Allah and a change in it, similar to the deviation of the Jews and Christians”.

- Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah also mentions:

“This approach is similar to that of the Ismailis, who rely on numbers rather than the sighting of the crescent”.

- Ibn Taymiyyah goes so far as to describe those who rely on astronomical calculations as misguided and lacking in both intelligence and faith. He states:

“Whoever takes the knowledge of the crescent, which Allah has made a means of timing for the people and Hajj, from books and calculations is both foolish and deviant”.

- Hafiz Ibn Hajar comments:

“Some people have turned to astronomers for guidance in this matter, and they are the Rafidah”.

9 .Those who rely on astronomical calculations are confused

- There is confusion among those who advocate for astronomical calculations, which can be summarized as follows:
 - a) One group believes that if the moon is born anytime between one Fajr and the next, fasting on the following day is obligatory. Their reasoning is that once the moon is born, it is present in the sky.
 - b) A second group believes that there should be an agreement between sighting and calculations, with the condition that the moon must be born before sunset, even if only a short time before. In this case, they argue, fasting becomes obligatory from the following sunset. Their reasoning is that the Islamic day begins after sunset.

c) A third group suggests that agreement between visual sighting and astronomical calculations can be achieved by ensuring that the moon is born before sunset. Astronomers differ on when the moon can be seen with the naked eye or a telescope, but some argue that it is impossible to see the moon 13 hours before its birth. Therefore, the moon must be at least seven degrees away, and if it is less, no part of the moon's light will be visible, making sighting impossible. Muslim astronomers in Istanbul have determined that the moon must be at least eight degrees away for it to be visible.

d) The fourth group states that if the moon is born after sunset, its sighting is impossible, so no testimony should be accepted. Their reasoning is that if the moon is born after sunset, sighting is impossible, and anyone claiming to have seen it is either mistaken or lying.

10. Those who rely on astronomical calculations do not follow any of the recognized Imams

- All the recognized Imams agree that visual sighting is necessary for fasting and Eid; mere knowledge is not sufficient.

Conditions for Moon Visibility Based on Observatory:

- Now, let's examine two key factors that determine whether the moon will be visible or not, based on observatory findings.

1. Age of the Moon at Sunset:

- The first important factor is the age of the moon at sunset. According to years of experience, if the moon's age is 20 hours or more at the time of sunset, it is likely to be visible. If the moon's age is less than that, it becomes very difficult to see. In over a hundred years of records, only once has a 13-hour-old moon been sighted, and in that instance, the elongation and altitude must have been exceptionally high. Such rare occurrences cannot be used as a basis for determining the sighting.

2. Elongation (Distance from the Sun):

- The second important factor is the elongation, or the distance between the moon and the sun.

If this distance is insufficient, the moon will not be visible. The required distance for visibility varies according to different opinions:

- Some have stated that 8.1 degrees is sufficient, but this is rare, and observation contradicts it, so it cannot be used as a basis.
- Others have mentioned 10 degrees.
- According to researchers, 12 degrees is the most reliable distance, and if all scholars agree on this, it would be beneficial, as observation shows that the moon becomes easily visible when it is 12 degrees away.

- The author of "Al-Tasrih" mentions 12 degrees in his book, stating:

• **واذا بَعُدَ عنها (عن الشمس) بُعْدًا يسيرا من اثني عشر درجة رأينا منه (اي من القمر) او وجهه المضي قليل وهو الهلال-**

"When it is slightly more than 12 degrees away from the sun, we see a small portion of it, which is the crescent."

- In "Sharh Chaghmini," it is stated:

• **واذا بعد عن الشمس مقدارا قريبا من اثني عشر جزءاً فبرى طرفا منه وهو الهلال.**

"When it is approximately 12 degrees away from the sun, we see its edge, which we call the crescent."

- In his book "Falakiyat Jadida," Mawlana Musa Khan Ruhani Bazi (may Allah have mercy on him) mentions:

"Due to the differences in conditions, both modern and ancient astronomers have differing opinions on how far the moon needs to be from the sun at sunset for the first crescent to be visible:

1. One opinion is that the moon should be 10 degrees east of the sun at sunset.
2. Another opinion is that it should be 8 degrees away.
3. A third opinion states that the moon should be far enough east of the sun that it remains visible for 40 minutes after sunset.
4. A fourth opinion is that the distance should be 12 degrees.
5. The fifth opinion is that the distance should be between 12 and 13 degrees. Beyond 13 degrees, no further distance is necessary according to both modern and ancient astronomers."

- Mawlana Musa (may Allah have mercy on him) clarified this issue well, stating that the minimum distance required between the moon and the sun should be 12 degrees. Although he also mentions the opinions of 10 and 8 degrees, he suggests that the 10-degree opinion could be acceptable if the age of the moon is sufficient, but the 8-degree opinion is rare and should not be relied upon, as it contradicts observation.

3. Altitude (Height Above the Horizon):

- The third important factor that determines whether the moon will be visible is its altitude above the horizon. If this altitude is insufficient, the moon will not be visible. The altitude refers to how high the moon is above the horizon at the location where it is being observed at sunset. The moon must be at least 5 degrees above the horizon at sunset for it to be visible.

- A few years ago, I discussed this topic with the renowned Australian astronomer Dr. Nick Lomb, and he also confirmed that there is no possibility of seeing the moon at minus or very low degrees, or on the same day as the New Moon. He further stated that the moon can be seen one or two days after the New Moon, and the difference between sunset and moonset should be at least 47 minutes.

- In the 1997 edition of the "Sydney Sky Guide," Dr. Nick Lomb covers these factors under the section "Visibility of the Moon" on page 28. I will quote a few lines from this book to clarify the facts. Dr. Nick Lomb writes:

“At the time of the New Moon, we do not see the moon at all. It is in the same direction as the sun, with the illuminated side facing away from us. One or two days after the New Moon, we begin to see a small portion of the illuminated side as a thin crescent. The first visibility of the crescent is often of interest for religious or other reasons. It can be seen low in the west after sunset, one or two days after the New Moon. A Malaysian astronomer, Dr. Ilyas, has developed a useful rule of thumb to estimate whether the crescent will be visible on a particular evening. For Sydney's latitude, the time lag between sunset and moonset should be at least 47 minutes”.

Making the sighting of the moon in Makkah Mukarramah the central reference

First of all, I quote the statement of Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz. The Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz, clarified in an article that the sighting of the moon cannot be uniform across the entire world, and it is not correct to make Makkah Mukarramah the central reference for moon sighting for the entire Muslim world. He writes:

'The issue of differing moon sightings is a matter of dispute among scholars regarding the sighting of the moon. After a discussion in a fatwa council, the prevailing opinion is that each country should follow their own local moon sighting. In this regard, people should refer to their local scholars. At the end of this article, he further writes:

'Some people believe that decisions about Ramadan and Eid should be based on the moon sighting in Makkah Mukarramah for the entire world. There is no evidence for this in the pure Shariah, nor does it have any basis" .

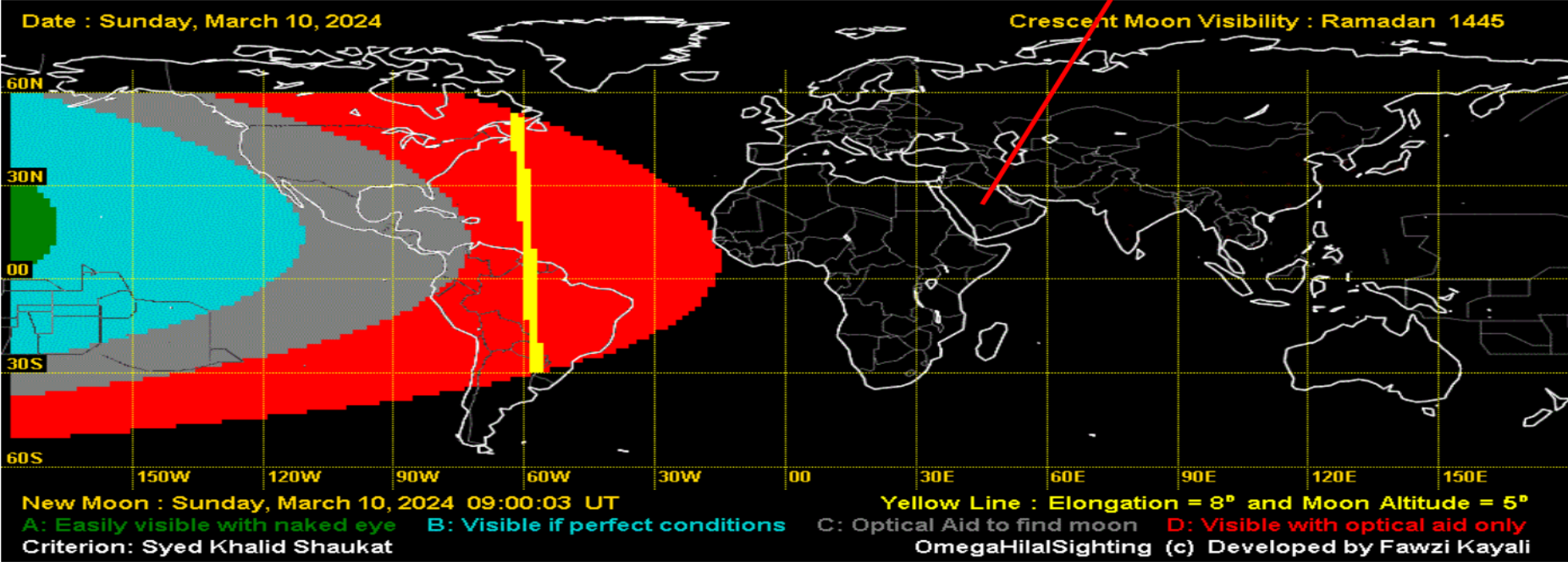
- Some people mistakenly believe that Saudi Arabia's announcements for Ramadan and Eid are based on actual moon sightings. A simple question to any observatory would be whether it was possible to see the moon on the announced date in Saudi Arabia, or if the moon was above or below the horizon.
- For instance, in 1412 AH (1992 CE), according to the official Saudi announcement, the first day of Ramadan was on March 4, 1992, which means that the moon was sighted in Saudi Arabia on March 3, 1992. However, the new moon was at 4:22 PM Saudi Standard Time on March 4, 1992. If you ask any observatory worldwide if moon sighting was possible on March 3, the answer would be negative, as the new moon had not yet occurred. If the moon sighting in Saudi Arabia was correct, it should have been visible in all neighboring countries that evening, but it wasn't sighted even the next day.

- To illustrate this, consider the following four days on which the start of Ramadan in 1412 AH (1992 CE) was claimed based on moon sighting:

1. Saudi Arabia, claimed moon sighting on March 3, 1992 (approximately 22 hours before the new moon). Ramadan began on March 4, 1992, in Saudi Arabia (and some places in the USA and Europe following this).
2. Egypt, claimed moon sighting on March 4, 1992 (2 hours and 34 minutes after the new moon). Ramadan began on March 5, 1992, in Egypt (based on the moon being above the horizon 2 hours and 5 minutes later).
3. Morocco, some European countries, Pakistan, and some African countries claimed moon sighting on March 5, 1992 (after the new moon). Ramadan began on March 6, 1992, in these places.
4. India, Bangladesh, Réunion, Mauritius, and New Zealand claimed moon sighting on March 6, 1992. Ramadan began on March 7, 1992, in these countries.

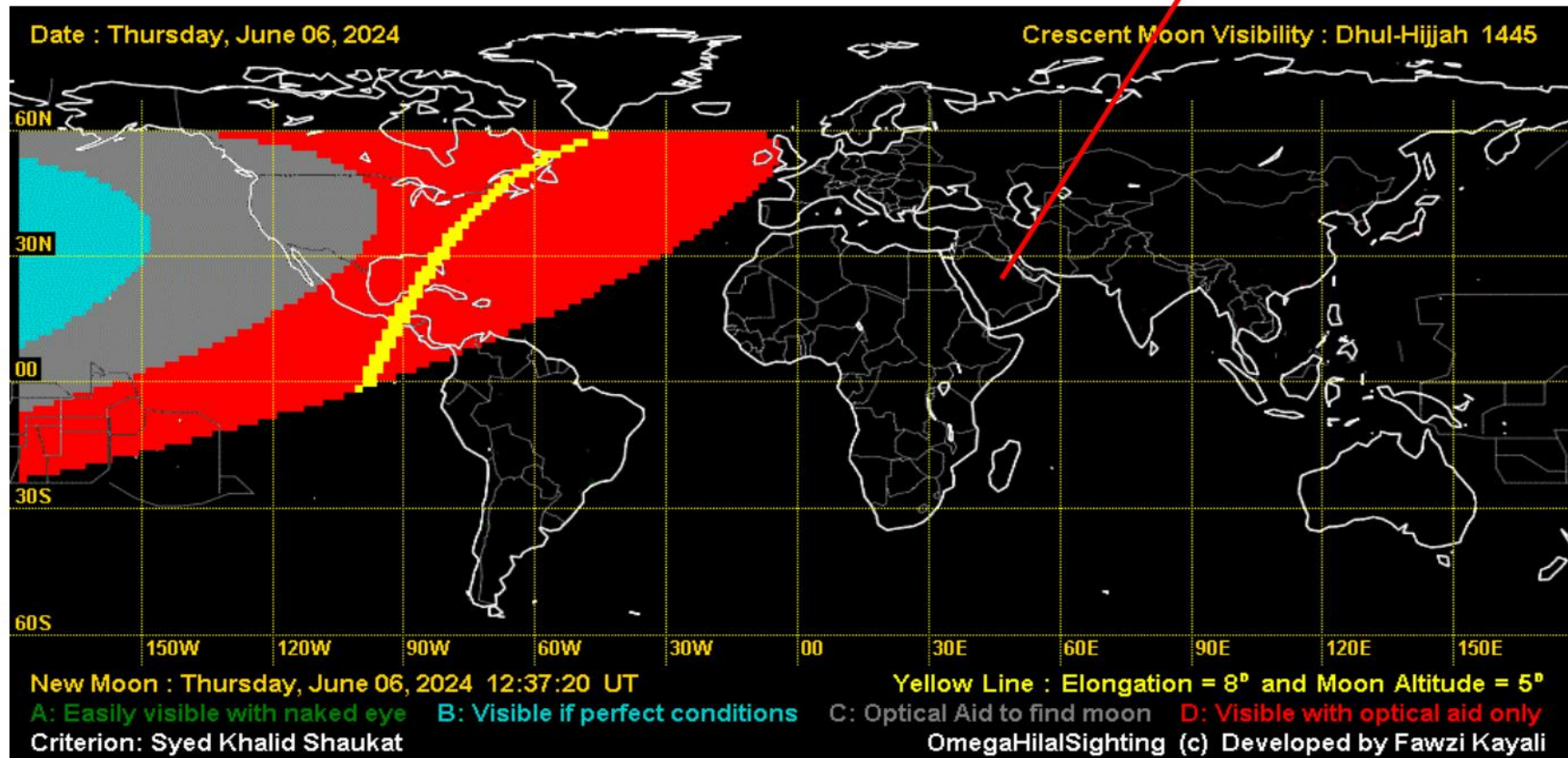
- These countries claimed moon sightings on four different days. The question arises: how do we verify or refute these claims? Is it based on any legal or jurisprudential basis, aside from astronomical observations? If all claims are verified, should each country follow its own sighting (considering the differences)?
- Looking at the recent example of Eid al-Adha 2024, the moon was sighted for only three hours, leading to three different Eid celebrations in Australia.
- Dr. Khalid Shaukat's moon map, showing the moon for Ramadan on March 10, 2024, in Saudi Arabia, is provided as an example.

Saudi Arabia



On June 6, 2024, which was a Thursday, the moon was in the black zone in Saudi Arabia, but a claim of sighting was made there.

Saudi Arabia



I am presenting some past instances of sightings in Saudi Arabia where it was impossible to see the moon, yet the sighting was officially declared:

Islamic Month	Date of New Moon	Umm al-Qura Calendar	Difference between Sunset and Moonset in Makkah Mukarramah	Moon Sighting Possibility Calendar
Muharram 1413 AH	June 30, 1992	July 1, 1992	+3 minutes	July 2, 1992
Safar	July 29, 1992	July 30, 1992	-20 minutes	August 1, 1992
Rabi' al-Awwal	August 28, 1992	August 29, 1992	+6 minutes	August 30, 1992
Rabi' al-Thani	September 26, 1992	September 27, 1992	-11 minutes	September 29, 1992
Jumada al-Awwal	October 25, 1992	October 26, 1992	-28 minutes	October 28, 1992
Jumada al-Thani	November 24, 1992	November 25, 1992	+3 minutes	November 26, 1992
Rajab	December 24, 1992	December 25, 1992	+19 minutes	December 26, 1992
Sha'ban	January 22, 1993	January 23, 1993	-9 minutes	January 24, 1993
Ramadan	February 21, 1993	February 22, 1993	Both together	February 23, 1993
Shawwal	March 23, 1993	March 24, 1993	+8 minutes	March 25, 1993
Dhu al-Qi'dah	April 21, 1993	April 22, 1993	-21 minutes	April 24, 1993
Dhu al-Hijjah 1413 AH	May 21, 1993	May 22, 1993	Both together	May 23, 1993

Date	New Moon (Saudi Time)	Sunset in Makkah Mukarramah	Age of Crescent at Sunset
1 Shaban / January 23, 1993	January 22, 1993, 9:27pm	6:05pm	-3 hours 22 minutes (New Moon after Sunset)
1 Ramadan / February 22, 1993	February 21, 1993, 4:05pm	6:22pm	2 hours 17 minutes

Other Fatawas:

1 .Sheikh Uthaymeen states:

- " وعلى هذا فإذا ثبت الهلال في السعودية لم يلزمكم حكمه إلا أن تروه أو يراه من كان قريباً منكم، بحيث يوافقكم في المطالع .

2.Fatwa from Binori Town:

- *"When the distance between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is much greater than 500 miles, and these are distant lands, and there is a dedicated moon sighting committee in Pakistan that officially observes the moon and announces Ramadan and Eid, it is not correct to consider Saudi Arabia's moon sighting for Pakistan".*

Fatwa Number: 144112201200

3.Fatwa from Darul Uloom Deoband:

"There is a long distance between Saudi Arabia and Australia. In countries with such long distances, it is not correct to consider the moon sighting from one place as valid for another place".

Dar al-Ifta Darul Uloom Deoband, Fatwa Number: 605813

• عنوان : هل يصوم ويفطر كل الناس بصوم وإفطار السعودية.

It was also mentioned that Saudi moon sighting should not be followed. 100777 30356

Monday, 25 Shawwal 1428 AH - 5 November 2007 CE. Islam Web Fatwas Al-Hayya.

5. Fatwa from Mufti Online:

- *"The Saudi government's moon sighting decision is not only against the Hanafi school but sometimes also contradicts apparent observations. **Therefore, their decision cannot be considered binding for non-Saudis.**"* (Mujeeb Syed Hakeem Shah, Mufti Aftab Ahmad, Muhammad Hussain Khil Khail.)

6. Fatwa from Dar al-Ifta, Jamia Osmania Peshawar:

- *"In the given situation, those residing in Pakistan will arrange Eid and Qurbani based on their local moon sighting. **It is not permissible for anyone to individually follow the moon sighting or calculations from Saudi Arabia for Eid and Qurbani, and such sacrifices will not fulfill their obligation.**"*

Fatwa Number: 8710/297/321

7. Statement by Mufti Rashid Ahmad:

- *"The Saudi government's moon sighting decision not only contradicts the Hanafi school but also the apparent observations, therefore it is not binding for people in Pakistan."*

(Ahsan al-Fatawa: 4/624)