

# THE LIGHT

## WHERE THE PLEASURE OF ALLAH RESIDES

He who lives in humility is the one who finds his Beloved. O thou experimenter with other ways try this recipe too.

Only those who are near to God are alive. It is they, having been accepted by God, who have become His dear friends.

They are far removed from God who are far away from righteousness. They are all the time the prisoners of haughtiness, pride and vanity.

Friends, righteousness means the abandoning of haughtiness, the getting rid of the habit of pride, vanity and miserliness.

Give up the love of this transient world. For the sake of your Beloved, give up the path of mirth and jollity.

Accept the life of hardship in all sincerity, so that the angels from the empyrean heights may descend on you.

Give up conceit and vanity – that is what righteousness is. Make yourself lowly and humble – that is where the pleasure of God resides.

جو خاک میں ملے اُسے بلتا ہے آشنا  
اُسے آزمانے والے یہ نسخہ بھی آزما

زندہ وہی ہیں جو کہ خدا کے قریب ہیں  
مقبول بن کے اُس کے عزیز و حبیب ہیں

وہ دور ہیں خدا سے جو تقویٰ سے دور ہیں  
ہر دم اسیرِ نخوت و کبر و غرور ہیں

تقویٰ یہی ہے یارو کہ نخوت کو چھوڑ دو  
کبر و غرور و منجل کی عادت کو چھوڑ دو

اس بے ثبات گھر کی محبت کو چھوڑ دو  
اس یار کے لئے رہِ عشرت کو چھوڑ دو

تلخی کی زندگی کو کرو صدق سے قبول  
تا تم پہ ہو ملائکہ عرش کا نزول

چھوڑو غرور و کبر کہ تقویٰ اسی میں ہے  
ہو جاؤ خاکِ مرضیٰ مولا اسی میں ہے

– English Translation by S.Muhammad Tufail

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## NEWS FROM PAKISTAN AND ABROAD

### Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan Sahib

By the grace of Allah, Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan Sahib is attending to the work of the Anjuman as usual. Members are requested to pray for his health and long life.

### Annual Prayer Gathering

Due to circumstances beyond its control, the Central Anjuman of Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement has not been able to hold its Annual Jalsa for the last so many years. However, in order to seek Allah's blessings and mercy and grant of strength and fortitude to forbear present-day difficulties and tribulations, many of our members — men, women and children — visit the headquarters during the third week of December to offer prayers in congregation. This year, the dates for such special congregational prayers have been fixed for 25th to 28th December, 1990.

### Dedication to Hafiz Maulana Sher Muhammad Sahib

The December 1990 issue of the "Light" will be dedicated to the memory of our worthy scholar and untiring missionary Hafiz Maulana Sher Muhammad Sahib. Kindly send your contributions before 15th of December, 1990.

### Mr. & Mrs. Enayat Mohammad of Trinidad in Lahore

Our distinguished guests from Trinidad, Mr. & Mrs. Enayat Mohammad, visited the headquarters from 3rd to 15th November, 1990. Mr. Enayat Mohammad met Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan Sahib and members of the Executive Committee of the Central Anjuman and apprised them of the present situation in Trinidad. During his brief stay, he saw the places where the Founder and his dedicated members stayed and worked during the eventful period of the Movement. He also visited Okara, Peshawar, Rawalpindi and Islamabad. On the 14th November, a dinner was arranged in his honour at a local hotel. Extracts from the address of welcome are as follows:

"It is a great pleasure for the members of the

Executive Committee of the Central Anjuman, and for all of us present here, to welcome, this evening, our esteemed brother Enayat Mohammad from Trinidad, one of the founder members of the "Ahmadiyya Anjuman Trinidad" founded in the year 1975. Previous to that, all Ahmadis were members of the Trinidad Muslim League. But after the unfortunate decision in Pakistan declaring all Ahmadis as non-Muslims, it became imperative to organise Ahmadis as a separate entity in foreign countries. Thus, under the guidance of Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan Sahib and thanks to the efforts of our late benefactor, brother Aziz Ahmad of Trinidad, Ahmadiyya Anjuman Trinidad was founded and registered in 1975.....

Brother Enayat Mohammad, ex-president of Ahmadiyya Anjuman Trinidad, started his career as a primary teacher and soon became an active member of the Trinidad Muslim League. He was secretary of the League in 1975 when Ahmadiyya Anjuman Trinidad came into existence. First he served the Anjuman as its vice-president and then became its president in 1978. Under his presidentship, the Trinidad Anjuman progressed steadily... In July 1985, a very successful Tenth Anniversary convention was held.

Brother Enayat Muhammad is a very humble and dedicated Ahmadi and so is his lady wife Hajrah Mohammad. Both husband and wife take pleasure in serving the cause of the Movement. Their home is a haven for the guests where every member of the family is ever ready to serve and oblige.

In recognition of Brother Enayat's meritorious services to the cause of the Movement in Trinidad, he was awarded *Sitara-i Ahmadiyyat* at the Centenary Thanksgiving Convention in Suriname in 1989."

Mr. & Mrs. Enayat Mohammad left Lahore on 15th November, 1990. We wish them a happy and safe return.

A talk over Radio Guyana

## IN THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

by Maulana Mohammad Rasheed, Guyana

Recently I listened to two friends expressing their opinion in regard to the letters *Alif, Laam, Meem*. One of them expressed his findings on these letters as having no meaning, but admitted that they are revelation from the Most High Allah. My other friend expressed his opinion on the issue by saying that Allah would not reveal something if it had no relevance for the information and education of man. He also said that he was in full agreement with the translator of the Holy Qur'an Maulana Muhammad Ali whose research on this issue has helped him to understand the Holy Qur'an much better.

In this talk I will take the opportunity to discuss the letters *Alif, Laam, Meem*. The lesson is taken from Chapter 2:1-2 "*Alif, Laam, Meem* (I, Allah, am the best Knower). This Book there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who keep their duty."

In the Holy Qur'an we find that the letters *Alif, Laam, Meem; Alif, Laam, Raa* and others are used in the Holy Qur'an at the commencement of 29 Chapters. These letters are abbreviations standing for words. According to Maulana Muhammad Ali, abbreviations are known to all languages, the only peculiarity of their use in Arabic literature being that the letters carry different meanings in different places, and the meaning is decided in each case by the context. Abd Allah ibn Abbas and Abd Allah ibn Masud, companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), along with a few translators of the Holy Qur'an agree on interpreting — *Alif, Laam, Meem* — as "I, Allah, am the best Knower."

Let us examine how important these abbreviations are in the context they are used. First of all Allah informs us that He alone comprehends every particle of what exists in the heavens and the earth. There is no other entity that can claim this distinction. All that are worshipped as gods besides Allah and claim to be the Infinite Being, have never been able to conform to the attributes of Allah. Men have been worshipped and are still being worshipped as gods, but they could never claim to possess even one attribute of Allah that conforms to

the super intelligence of the Divine Being. Let us take for instance the attribute of '*Alim al-Ghaib*, "The Knower of all things, seen and unseen". I am sure that none of the man-made gods can venture to inform man with certainty what will take place in the world in future. Their predictions are only based on human intelligence and calculations. These man-made gods certainly possessed exceptional qualities that are not found in ordinary men. They were acclaimed as gods by their followers but they themselves had never claimed to possess any super natural qualities.

Thus it is Allah alone Who possesses the attribute 'the best Knower' and has brought this to our attention that man can truly comprehend the knowledge of the Infinite, only through Divine guidance and therefore, none other should ever be raised to the same level as Allah. We note that after "I, Allah, am the best Knower" the words that follow are: "This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who keep their duty".

How befitting these Holy Words are as they describe the magnificence of the Holy Book which through the knowledge of Allah has come into existence for the guidance of humanity, offering to the world a perfect system for working out a way to attain a conscious relationship with HIM. For the benefit of man and to allay his fears whether the Holy Qur'an is perfect and immaculate in all aspects, the second verse reads: "There is no doubt in it." To prove the point, one should examine the Qur'an and will find that it contains arguments and reasoning of irresistible penetration. It supports and upholds its meaning by enlightening arguments and subtle reasoning. It is essentially a miracle which cuts through the cobwebs of doubts and suspicions.

How beautifully the abbreviations *Alif, Laam, Meem*, "I, Allah, am the best Knower" have been placed in describing the Author — Allah, as presenting a perfect guide for the righteous "those who keep their duty." It is a fact worth contemplating that the righteous are those who will undoubtedly benefit more than anyone else, from the Quranic guidance.

The guidance will continue to reach all. But those who are not God-fearing, will not derive any benefit from the guidance contained in the Holy Qur'an.

God Almighty says that the aim of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an is "guidance for the God-fearing". This, of course, means that the righteous and pious people shall benefit by the light and guidance revealed in the Holy Qur'an. 'Keeping of duty' is innate in every man, thus it is that every one who has regard for duty is true to himself. It is by following the immaculate guidance of the Holy Qur'an that man can hope to attain spiritual perfection. Man is taught to recognise the infallibility of the Holy Qur'an as it is the only truth that can stand the scrutiny of all levels of man's quest for knowledge and guidance. The Holy Qur'an has presented a challenge to the world to produce a better guidance for the deliverance of man from sin and unrighteousness.

It says about itself: "And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, produce a chapter like it, and call on your helpers besides

Allah if you are truthful" (2:23). This revelation asserts the correctness of the guidance, that which Allah, Who is the best Knower, has brought to our attention for our salvation. This guidance which is spoken of in the verse under discussion clearly draws attention of all those who seek after truth. Allah in His Infinite Mercy and Love for His creation has assured us of His beneficence that His Guidance will be acceptable to all mankind inspite of his opposition to accept the religion of Islam. The Holy Qur'an assures us: "He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the Guidance and the religion of Truth that He (Allah) may cause it to prevail over all the religions" (61:9).

These verses pertain to the fact that it is guidance that man needs to save him from sin and unrighteousness. Therefore, we must realise that whatever is revealed in the Holy Qur'an even where letters are being used, it has great significance for the guidance of humanity. Thus the letters *Alif, Laam, Meem* have rightly been interpreted as "I, Allah, am the best Knower" Who has revealed His perfect guidance in the pages of the Holy Qur'an.

## THE FAREWELL ADDRESS OF THE HOLY PROPHET

(PEACE AND BLESSINGS OF ALLAH BE UPON HIM)

by Capt. (Retd.) Abdus Salam Khan

Sensing that his mission was done,  
since Sura 'Fath' had already come;  
Seated on his she-camel,  
he did address,  
his followers, all in Pilgrim's dress,  
a hundred thousand strong,  
unified by Islam's fraternal bond;  
all kinds of men..fair, brown and black,  
Chanting, *Labbaik, Allahumma, Labbaik!*

Thus:  
"All praise is due to Allah  
Him do we praise  
From Him we seek assistance  
From Him we seek grace!

Repentently we turn to Him  
in Him we seek refuge  
from the mischief of our inner selves  
from the effects of sins' deluge!

Whoso Allah guideth  
none can lead astray,  
And those that He does'nt,  
none can show the way!

Hark ye & listen!  
I may not be around  
next year, in this Arafat's hallowed ground!  
so listen to what I say  
and carry it around!

Guard your duty to Allah,  
O men! do guard it ever so well,  
Tread in His Way fearfully,  
beware of the fire of hell!  
He alone is worthy of worship  
To this I testify  
and I am His servant-apostle  
sent to pacify,  
to reform and remind  
all mankind!  
I call you all  
to all that's good,  
to what you should'nt  
and what you should!  
All the savage customs  
of pre-Islamic days,  
all the evil habits  
all the filthy ways,  
stand trampled under my foot  
for ever and for good!

Hark ye! men!  
 As God is One,  
 so was your father, Adam.  
 Neither the Arab over the "Ajam"  
 or vice versa,  
 Nor the Red over the Black  
 or vice versa,  
 has superiority...  
 except for *Taqwa!*

All claims to excellence  
 all claims to being fine,  
 pride in your forebears  
 glorying in your line,  
 stands wiped out  
 by command of the Divine:  
 Ye are 'Momins', if Allah ye fear,  
 If you do'nt the consequences ye bear.  
 You are all born of Adam,  
 the progenitor, the first,  
 and he was just a mortal,  
 a handful of dust!

Hark ye and listen!  
 your blood, your property and your honour,  
 like this day, this city, this month, this hour  
 are sacrosanct! Soon ye shall be  
 standing in Allah's court,  
 facing the reckoning, giving your report!  
 Do'nt ye lose the way  
 after me,  
 striking each others necks  
 with rage and fury!  
 All the blood feuds of yore  
 are void for you,  
 I hereby declare void the blood of my nephew!

Return all deposits,  
 all interest waive,  
 but the principal of the debt  
 shall be duly met!  
 All usuary is banned  
 by Allah's command,  
 and the first sum I write off  
 is my uncle's demand!  
 Verily, Satan has despaired  
 of being worshipped in this land,  
 but over your minor sins he still rejoices  
 along with his merry band!  
 Beware of his machinations  
 lest he leads astray,  
 and by suggesting minor sins  
 he makes you lose the way!

The number of months is twelve in Allah's reckoning,  
 four of these are sacred, having no fighting!

Hark! O ye men!  
 Beware of Allah: give your wives their rights,  
 In Allah's name you've taken them, as your wedded

wives:  
 They should Guard their chastity,  
 and show fidelity to you,  
 good food, clothing and shelter  
 are certainly their due!  
 Then if they break their trust  
 chastise them lightly,  
 Do'nt treat them cruelly  
 nor beat them brutally!

Hark! O ye men!  
 As for the slaves,  
 they are Allah's trust,  
 treating them gently, nicely,  
 for you it is a must!  
 Feed them well and full  
 with what you yourself eat,  
 clothe them well and nicely  
 keeping them  
 clean and neat!

Hark! O ye men!  
 In matters of inheritance  
 He's fixed for all a share,  
 so no one can now make  
 a will regarding the heir.  
 A son inherits from the man  
 in whose bed he is born,  
 and fornicator's punishment  
 is laid down in the Quran!

A husband's property  
 is a trust unto his wife  
 she must guard it faithfully  
 just as she guards her life!

Hark! O ye men!  
 Debts should be repaid,  
 Things borrowed restored:  
 Meet a gift with a gift,  
 A Guarantor is responsible  
 for the sum he has assured!

Hark! O ye men!  
 A man is surely responsible  
 for the acts that he has done,  
 Neither son shall pay for the father,  
 nor the father for his son!

Hark! O ye men!  
 Even if a negro with a sawn-off nose  
 is made an Amir over you,  
 Give him his due respect,  
 And obedience that's his due!

Hark! O ye men!  
 There'll be no prophet after me,  
 Neither another Ummah is destined  
 to come into mankind's view!

(Continued on p. 10)

## THE SIGHTING OF THE MOON-I

by Maulana Mustapha K. Hydal & Iqbal Hydal, Trinidad.

“And the sun moves onto its destination. That is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Knower. And the moon, We have ordained for it stages till it becomes again as an old dry palm-branch. Neither is it for the sun to overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day. And all float on in an orbit.” (Qur’an 36:38-40).

The Holy Qur’an is not a book of science but it contains scientific principles which are operating in the Universe. Man’s ability to understand these principles by means of mathematical computation, establishes the workings of the Universe and its measurement (*Taqdir*) as ordained by its Creator.

The Qur’an establishes as a principle that the moon has been given stages. An attempt is now made to focus our attention on this daily phenomenon which is often taken for granted. The stages of the moon manifest a visible example to all mankind, of the existence of a Living God, the Master and Controller of the Universe, whose principle of *Taqdir* (measurement) is operating with every moment that passes.

### Islam and Calculations

Islam is a religion that is based on Truth. Indeed it is called the Religion of Truth in the Holy Qur’an (48:28). Truth is known through the use of reason and intellect and so the Holy Qur’an in several places appeals to the use of reason and intellect (2:73, 242; 6:152; etc.). Nay, it goes further and describes as cattle those who fail to use their faculties for acquiring knowledge (7:179; 8:22). The first revelation of the Qur’an enjoined reading (i.e. the acquiring of knowledge) and promised that Allah will teach man what he knows not (96:1-5).

Reflecting on the Five Pillars of Islam we see that they all encourage the increase in knowledge, particularly in the science of calculations and computation. In teaching about Faith, the First Pillar of Islam, the Qur’an tells us that Allah is One (112:1), not Two nor Three (16:51; 4:171). It speaks of the Heavens and Earth being created in *six* periods (50:38); of our entire life being in accordance with

a measure (80:19), and even the Day of Judgement is called the Day of Counting (38:26). The Qur’an also indicates that reflecting on the heavens and the earth leads to Glorification of Allah and eventually to Faith in Him (3:189-197).

Prayer, the Second Pillar of Islam, is ordained in computed times (4:103), the Solar system being used to compute these times (17:78). Fasting, the Third Pillar of Islam is likewise observed for a computed number of days (2:184) after witnessing the Month of Ramadan (2:185). Its duration is determined by computing dawn and dusk (2:187).

Spending of wealth is the Fourth Pillar of Islam and its rewards are associated with large computation (2:261). Zakat according to the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is payment of a calculated portion of wealth. Pilgrimage too, the Fifth Pillar of Islam, is an appointed time (2:189) which is well known (2:197). Thus the Five Pillars of Islam involve calculations of some kind.

### Ramadan

The month of Ramadan is an important month to the Muslim community in that it is the month in which the Holy Qur’an was revealed as well as the month in which we are required to fulfill one of the pillars of faith – viz., Fasting. While the Qur’an has not directly indicated to us when this month is to be determined, it is the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, who has guided us to the fact that Ramadan is a lunar month whose beginning and end are determined by the new moon. Indeed the Holy Qur’an says: “They ask thee about the New Moons. Say, They are predeterminable times (or places) for men and for Pilgrimage” (2:189). The word *mawaaqeet* in this verse is the plural of *meeqaat* which means a place or time that is fixed beforehand for the performance of some action or duty. Thus for *Hajj* the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has fixed *mawaaqeet* i.e. predetermined places where *Ihraam* (the pilgrim’s garb) is to be put on. The Holy Qur’an has not intended that fasting should be performed in a haphazard manner and so it indicates that fasting is prescribed for a *predeter-*

*mined* number of days (2:184).

Fasting in Islam is performed using the knowledge of the two systems of reckoning given by Allah viz. the Lunar system and the Solar system. By means of the Lunar system we determine the period or month of the fast, whereas by means of the Solar system we determine the extent or duration of the fast (2:187). The Qur'an thus recognises both of these systems for the purpose of computation as the following verses indicate:

"He has made...the sun and moon for counting" (6:97).

"He has made the sun and the moon...and measured for it stages that you might know the determining of years and counting" (10:5).

"He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon following their courses" (14:33): (It should be noted that in Yusuf Ali's translation of the Qur'an, the note (1909) to this verse states: "Because there are laws here which man can understand and calculate.")

"The moon, we have ordained for it stages" (36:39).

"The sun and the moon follow courses (exactly) computed" (55:5 – Yusuf Ali's translation).

Since the Muslim community has for hundred of years adopted sighting of the new moon with the physical eye to determine the beginning and end of Ramadan, it is felt that the use of any other method is against the teachings of Islam. This is a total fallacy, for the change in understanding of a Law is not the rejection of that Law. Several practices given to us by the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, have already been changed to suit the circumstances of the times as knowledge increases. Yet Islam has not been affected in a negative way by these changes. For example, the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, tells us that the Angel Gabriel indicated to him the time of prayer relevant to the length of his shadow; yet Muslims today do not use this method to fix the times of prayer. Rather they almost always use the scientific invention of the clock, and most mosques now have a timetable showing the times of prayer. No one considers this as contravening the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, which is to use one's shadow. Similarly, the payment of Zakat in dollars and cents rather than in *dinars* and *dirhams* or in cheques rather than cattle and sheep does not mean that the Law of Zakat has changed. Just as currency notes can replace the *dinar* without affecting the principle of Zakat, so too calculations can replace the sighting of the moon with

the physical eyes without affecting the principle that Fasting begins and ends with the new moon. Followers of Imam Shafa'i uphold on this point that the word of the astronomer is incumbent upon himself and those who accept him as true. (*Kitabul Fiqh 'al mazaahibil Arba'ah*, p. 517).

#### Calculation Enjoined by the Holy Prophet

There are many who consider the calculation of the new moon as a thing against the teaching of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. What they do not realise, however, is that calculation is enjoined by the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, himself. Calculation does not replace the physical sighting of the moon, it complements it; for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, himself has said if the moon is hidden from you then have it calculated. Thus it is the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, himself who has given us the injunction to calculate the appearance of the moon and this is fully in accordance with the Qur'anic information that the moon (as well as the sun) has been created for calculation (6:97; 10:5). How could the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, intend an exclusively literal interpretation of his sayings when he himself objected to a too literal interpretation of the Holy Qur'an concerning the starting of the daily fast? Bukhari 31:16 reports a companion as saying: "When it was revealed 'until a white thread becomes distinct to you from the black thread' (2:187), I took a black thread and a white thread and put them under my pillow, and I looked at them during the night but I could not distinguish between them; then I came to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in the morning and I mentioned this to him. He said, 'By this is meant only the blackness of the night and the whiteness of the day.'" Thus when the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has permitted the use of intelligence and estimation in interpreting the Holy Qur'an rather than a literal acceptance, how much more will he permit the use of intelligence and estimation in the interpretation of his Sayings.

In order to substantiate this permission of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, to calculate the appearance of the new moon, it is necessary to look a little closely at the hadith on this subject. Bukhari 31:11 relates the following three hadith:

- 1) "Fast not until you see the Crescent, cease not fasting until you see it. Should it be overcast,



you then measure it.”

- 2) “The month is 29 nights, so fast not until you see it, but if it is overcast on you then complete the number 30.”
- 3) “Fast on seeing it, cease fasting on seeing it. Should it be not visible then complete the number 30 of Sha‘ban.”

In the first hadith the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, clearly refers to the crescent and gives the injunction ‘to see’ for the beginning and the end of the fast. But if it is clouded then measure it (i.e. the crescent). Here the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, clearly states that the crescent (not the days in the month) must be measured.

In the second hadith the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, refers to the month as having 29 nights. But in this hadith he speaks only of starting the fast (not ending of it) and it is here that he states should it be clouded then complete the number 30.

In the third hadith the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, while he mentions neither the month nor the moon refers to both the starting of the fast and the ending of it. But here he indicates if it is hidden then complete Sha‘ban as thirty days.

From these hadith it must be understood that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, enjoined the sighting of the crescent moon, but if or when it could not be seen then calculation must be resorted to. Thus when the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, himself has enjoined calculation how can anyone say that to calculate the appearance of the crescent is against the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

Indeed there is another tradition in Bukhari 31:13 which states: “We are an illiterate nation, we neither write nor know counting. The month is thus and thus i.e. sometimes 29 and sometimes 30.” Scholars of Islam have interpreted this hadith to mean that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and his companions relied on sighting with physical eye because they did not know how to count. They use this hadith to substantiate that when the Muslim community knows how to count and calculate, then it should rely on calculation

rather than sighting. Thus on the basis of this hadith the scholars say, if a Muslim community does not know how to calculate then it should determine fasting and Eid by sighting with the physical eye, but when it knows calculation then it should determine fasting and Eid by calculation.

### The Meaning of Sighting

In all the hadith quoted above the Arabic word for ‘seeing’ is *ru‘yat*. This word literally means to see with the eyes or mind or to see with the heart. Imam Raghīb speaks of four senses of *ru‘yat*: (a) seeing with the senses, (b) seeing with the imagination, (c) seeing by pondering, (d) seeing with the mind. He has quoted several verses of the Qur’an to illustrate these meanings. In 2:258; 12:4; 24:41; 69:7; and 89:6 for example *ru‘yat* could not possibly mean seeing with the physical eye. Also in chapter 53:11-18 the Qur’an speaks of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, seeing with his heart in his experience of the Mi‘raj. In other places in the Holy Qur’an *ru‘yat* means to see by observation, through knowledge of history, archaeology, travelling etc. Thus the words “until you see it” in the hadith means seeing with the eye as well as with any other form of knowledge.

This interpretation is fully in accordance with the Qur’an which says of Ramadan “whoever of you witnesses the month, he should fast therein” (2:185). The word *shahida* in this verse which is translated as to witness or to be present in, also means to have evidence or decisive knowledge about a thing. Thus Muslims bear witness to the Oneness of Allah because of their sure knowledge of His existence even though they do not see Him with the physical eye.

It is surprising that some Muslims reject scientific means when it comes to sighting of the moon but they depend on scientific means in the dissemination of the knowledge of that sighting. Few Muslims look for the new moon, the majority depend upon the radio, television and the print media. Indeed the persons who set themselves up as authorities to announce the sighting of the moon, often do not see the new moon themselves. They receive information of the new moon through the telephone. If it is lawful to declare Fasting and Eid on the basis of information received through the scientific instrument — the telephone, then it is also lawful to declare the Fast and the day of Eid on the basis of information received through the use of other scientific instruments.

The Islamic Cultural Centre, London the largest organisation of Muslims in the U.K., in its book

*Siyam — Fasting* by Dr. Muhammad Ibraheem Al-Geyoushi on pages 12 & 13 states: "We know about the moon and its phases and about changes in the weather; so this leads us to the following point: Is it acceptable, from the religious point of view, to rely on the knowledge of the modern scientists regarding the moon or not? All of us know how great this knowledge is, through which we know the movements of the moon, the sun and the other stars for hundred of years to come. We have seen man travelling to the moon, therefore we have no right to refuse knowledge coming from this source, particularly as we will find there is no objection from the religious point of view to accepting such knowledge.

### MSA and the New Moon

Some Muslims are even prepared to reject the physical sighting of the moon if it is contrary to scientific knowledge. Thus The Muslim Students of America (MSA) in *Islamic Horizons*, May 1984, p. 4 states:

"MSA Fiqh Committee declares the following principles:

- (5) Any announcement of the beginning or the end of Ramadan that comes in complete contradiction to the undisputed established astronomical knowledge may be disregarded by an unanimous decision of the *Fiqh* Committee. The Committee will be guided in making its decision by the following:
- (a) If the moon sets before sunset, the report of the sighting will be ignored.
  - (b) If the moon sets 0 — 20 minutes after the sun, a sighting is remotely possible subject to further evidence and investigation.
  - (c) If the moon sets anytime after twenty minutes of the sun, there is a good possibility of sighting the crescent and the evidence will be acceptable."

It must be noted that one cannot evade calculation. Before even looking for the new moon Muslims check astronomical charts to see when the moon is born and whether it will be visible. If the weather is cloudy and the moon is not visible then they go back to the charts to see when Sha'ban began and then count thirty days. But suppose it was clouded at the beginning of Sha'ban and the moon was not seen, how can we know at the end of the month how many days Sha'ban had when we never saw the new moon at the beginning of the month? It is quite possible too, if Sha'ban has 29 days and Ramadan 29 days also, that if Sha'ban is completed to 30 days and the Eid moon is seen, then the fast would have only been 28 days which will be against Shari'ah.

Calculation avoids such error being committed.

The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "Seek *Lailatul Qadr* in one of the odd nights during the last ten nights of Ramadan." If one did not know beforehand when Ramadan ended, how could one know when the last ten nights started? If Ramadan is of 30 days then the last ten nights would begin on the 20th night, but if Ramadan is of 29 days then the last ten nights would commence on the nineteenth night. Thus it is important to know beforehand when Ramadan ends in order to determine *Lailatul Qadr* (the Night of Majesty) and *I'tikaaf* (seclusion in the mosque).

Already a pattern is emerging whereby the Muslim world is moving towards relying on calculations to celebrate Islamic Festivals uniformly all over the world. It is our hope that the information supplied in this booklet will be beneficial to the Muslim community worldwide.

### The Calendar

The moon has always held a prestigious position in the affairs of man. Like the sun, it is the source by which time is measured. The sun has given us the measurement of the day (24 hours) by virtue of its effect on the earth's rotation. Three hundred and sixty five and a quarter ( $365\frac{1}{4}$ ) of these rotations on its axis, which is the earth's revolution about the sun, have given rise to the solar year. The year has been divided into twelve months, but the months are not equal. Sometimes they are of thirty (30) or thirty one (31) days and one month (February) has twenty eight (28) days except for a leap year when an additional day is imposed on it. Though the word 'month' is derived from the word 'moon,' the months of the solar year as we know them today in our present Gregorian Calendar, have no relation to the motion of the moon.

The solar year consists of  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days. It is the time the earth takes to make one complete revolution in its journey around the sun. The lunar month consists of  $29\frac{1}{2}$  days (29d 12h 44m 3s). It is the time the moon takes to make one complete revolution in its journey around the earth. The lunar year with 12 lunar months consists of 354 days. The difference of  $11\frac{1}{4}$  days with respect to the solar year has been made up in the 12 months of the solar year in a very arbitrary manner. Four (4) months have been given thirty (30) days each. Seven (7) months have been given thirty one (31) days each. One month has been given twenty eight (28) days, all of which total three hundred and sixty five (365) days. The calen-

dar is still short of the solar year by a quarter of a day ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ). This shortfall is compensated every fourth year (leap year) by adding an extra day to one of the months. February, the shortest month, accommodates this day.

The Gregorian Calendar which we use today was designed by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 to correct anomalies which existed in the Julian Calendar that preceded it. The Julian Calendar was drawn up in 46 B.C. when Julius Caesar ordered that the moon be disregarded in the calculations of the calendar and divided the solar year into 12 months.

The moon, however, has been the criterion by which time was measured from time immemorial. The Hebrew Calendar which is supposed to have started with creation, is based on the moon and consists of 12 lunar months. The Chinese Calendar is based on the moon and consists of 12 lunar months. The Islamic Calendar is based on the moon and consists of 12 lunar months. The Christian world bases its festivals on the moon. The Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. decreed that Easter Sunday be the first Sunday after the first full moon of the Vernal Equinox (March 21). Easter Monday, Good Friday and Ash Wednesday then easily fall into place.

The Islamic Calendar is based on the moon. There are 12 lunar months alternately 30 and 29 days long. The appearance of a crescent determines the beginning of a month. The word 'appearance' has been used deliberately instead of 'sighting,' for the purpose of this analysis is to arrive at that distinction in the context of the confusion which seems to exist for only one day of the entire 354 days orbit of the moon. The determination of 1st Shawwal (Eid-ul-Fitr) seems to perplex Muslims every year. In an effort to remove this cloud, it would be necessary to ponder on the movement of the moon and understand how it travels in the scheme of creation. Such a task would require mathematical tools. Since this book is written for the benefit of all Muslims, mathematical calculations would be kept to a minimum and as simple as possible.

### The Moon-Earth-Sun System

The moon is a satellite of the Earth 240,000 miles away. It has a surface area about  $\frac{1}{16}$  that of the earth's. It rotates on its axis, making a complete rotation in the same time that it takes to make one complete revolution as it orbits the earth. Thus from earth we always see only one side of the moon — that part of the moon which receives light from the sun and reflects it to earth. The earth rotates on its own

axis making a complete turn in 24 hours. As it orbits the sun, it makes a complete revolution in its orbit when it has spun  $365\frac{1}{4}$  rotations on its own axis. The Moon-Earth-Sun system is a system moving in space in which the moon orbits the earth as the earth orbits the sun.

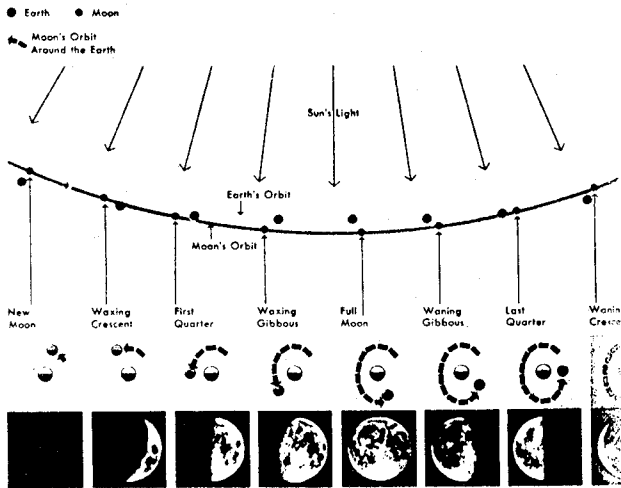
Since the bodies are moving, it would be necessary to consider them from some reference point. The earth traces out an elliptical orbit around the sun. In this case we are considering the earth's orbit around the sun. Equally we may look at it as the sun's apparent movement with respect to the earth, as our observations are taken from earth. Thus on any day the sun rises in the east, ascends higher in the sky and sets in the west. An observer looking at the sun sees the sunrise in the east. Since the earth is rotating from west to east, the observer sees the sun overhead at midday as the earth has rotated eastwards. After about six hours again, the earth has made a further rotation eastwards and the sun is now seen to the west of the observer until it eventually goes under the horizon and out of sight. This is the time we refer to as sunset. To the observer the sun appears to trace out a semi-circular path in its transit across the sky.

The moon also rotates from west to east. All day long it follows the sun westwards across the sky but steadily lags behind it because of its eastward orbital motion around the earth. Thus on the night of the full moon, after the sun has set, the moon rises in the east and seems to follow the path traced out by the sun during the day. As the night progresses it ascends higher in the sky and shines throughout the night as it moves in a westward direction across the sky.

### Phases of the Moon

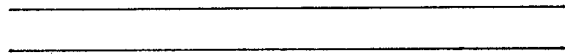
The moon does not emit light of its own. The light which we know as 'moonlight' is the light from the sun reflected by the moon. The amount of sunlight reflected by the surface of the moon determines the particular phase of the moon. When the phase is new moon the centres of the earth, sun and moon are in the same straight line. The moon, however, is between the earth and the sun and no light is reflected from the moon, even though half of the moon's surface is always under sunlight. At full moon, the positions of the earth and moon are reversed, i.e. the earth is now between the moon and the sun. First quarter and last quarter are the positions of the moon at right angle to this alignment.

### WHY THE MOON HAS PHASES



The moon can only be seen when light is reflected from it. At new moon there is no reflected light. New moon can never be seen (except during a Solar Eclipse). Let us assume that new moon occurs today in Trinidad at sunset. No part of the moon can be seen. Tomorrow at sunset, the earth would have made one rotation on its axis and 24 hours would have passed. During this passage of 24 hours, the moon would have moved in its orbit around the earth, a

comparable 49 minutes. Its centre would no longer be aligned with the centre of the earth and sun. The moon would have moved outside of this alignment. A small part of the moon's surface which is sunlit, reflects light and a crescent is formed. The moon is '24 hours old' at sunset and appears on the western horizon for about 27 minutes and then goes under the horizon due to the earth's eastward rotation. The next day the moon is 24 hours older and appears higher in the sky than the night before. A larger surface area of the moon captures reflected sunlight and the crescent grows larger. It stays a longer period in the sky before it again goes under the horizon due to the earth's eastwards rotation. Each subsequent night a greater surface area of the moon reflects light from the sun and the moon increases its altitude in the sky. These varying amounts of reflected light are referred to as the phases of the moon. About seven days after new moon, the moon is directly above us and first quarter exists. About seven days later, it is full moon and the moon seems to rise from the east and shines all night. The moon then appears to lose its lighting property and in another seven days at the phase of last quarter, only part of the moon's surface reflects light. In about seven days again, it would have completely gone to the position of new moon and starts a new cycle for another lunar month.



(Continued from p. 4)

Hark! O ye men!  
I leave something behind with you  
if you hold fast to it  
You wo'nt go stray:  
it's the Book of God, I say,  
and the Sunnah of your Prophet!"  
Finally, he posed a question  
to Islam's mighty nation:  
"When the good Lord asks  
on the day of resurrection,  
What shall ye tell Him then?"  
"We shall say  
you accomplished the mission,

delivering God's message,  
your duty done"!  
With one voice  
they responded,  
Islam's valiant sons!  
He, then lifting his finger  
towards the sky,  
addressing his Lord, God the High,  
Spake thus:

"O Allah bear witness!  
O Allah, bear witness!  
O Allah! bear witness!"