

In the Name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.  
Islamic Council of New England, Imams Shura Council  
**Hilaal Conference Press Release 2009**

“Calculations are a deviation from the Sunnah and must be rejected” *Imam Nawawi*

Assalamu Alaykum,

My beloved respected Brothers and Sisters in Islam: I pray that you as individuals and as communities are doing well, and that Allah is pleased with us and is forgiving of our short comings.

I am writing on behalf of more than two dozen Imams and leaders in the Greater Boston area and New England Muslim community with whom I've had consultations regarding the assumption that *astronomical calculations* is an accepted means for determining our lunar months. Although we agreed that calculations are an excellent scientific tool; it cannot be used to replace the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah صلي الله عليه وسلم of sighting the crescent moon. Therefore we rejected by an overwhelming majority this new innovation. Here is a summary of the evidences to prove that position.

### 1. Rejection of calculations by **Rasoollullaah** صلي الله عليه وسلم

“صوموا لرؤيته وأفطروا لرؤيته”

“Fast by its sight (the crescent moon), and break fasting by its sight” (Bukhari and Muslim). Fasting only starts by sighting of the crescent moon, not by calculating its sight, not by predicting its start and not by determining it on the basis of astronomy or any other scientific method for that matter.

### 2. The uprooting of the calculations argument by the prophet صلي الله عليه وسلم

“ألا، لا تقدموا الشهر حتى تروا الهلال أو تكملوا العدة ولا تفتروا حتى تروا الهلال أو تكملوا العدة”

"Attention, **do not commence the month without seeing the crescent moon**, or completing the previous month, and do not break your fasting (Eid) without seeing the crescent moon or completing the month" Authenticated by Abu Daud, Tirmithi, Nasaa'e, Dara Qutni, Nawawi and Al-Albani.

When ISNA and its fiqh council announces the start of a lunar month years ahead of time, what are they going to say to the prophet صلي الله عليه وسلم when he challenges them and says to them “didn't I tell you not to commence and predetermine the month without seeing it's crescent moon?”

### 3. The clearest rejection of calculations by **Rasoollullaah** صلي الله عليه وسلم

“إنما أمة أمية، لا نكتب ولا نحسب، الشهر هكذا وهكذا. يعني مرة تسعة وعشرين، ومرة ثلاثين”

"We are an illiterate Ummah that neither writes **nor calculates**, the month is either like this or like this, meaning either 29 or 30 (days)". Bukhari and Muslim. The great scholar and jurist Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalaani, said while explaining this Hadith: "The clear understanding and the flow of the Hadith indicate the rejection of building any ruling of a crescent moon on calculations" (Fath Al Bari). Also Imam An-Nawawi said while explaining this hadith: " The **unanimous opinion** of the scholars is the right course, any other opinion like **calculations is corrupt and rejected** by the evident clarity of this Hadith" (Sharh Muslim).

### 4. Rejection of calculations is the verdict of **all schools of thoughts**

The invalidity and the erroneousness of the astronomical calculations method to determine the start and the end of lunar months is what all of the **Sahabah agreed upon**, and in their footsteps the **four schools of thought**, and **every single judge, scholar, jurist and Muslim court throughout 14 centuries**.

This consensus and decree of the Muslim Ummah (إجماع الأمة); that calculation has no place in the determination of the crescent moon is established by many scholars throughout generations including but not limited to:

1. Ibn Aabideen in his book 'Al-Hashiyah' a **distinguished Hanafi scholar**
2. Ibn Hajar in 'Fath Al bari' the great **Shafi'e scholar**
3. Ibn Al Munthir in his book 'Al Ijma'a', an eminent scholar from **Ahl-Al-Hadith**
4. Ibn Rushd in his book 'Bidayatul Mujtahid' one of the best **Maliki scholars**
5. Ibn Taymiyah in his 'Fatawa' Vol 25, p 132, **Hanbali, Shaykul Islam, but a Mujtahid also**

## What We Must Do

We are fortunate to have two primary sources from which to derive our guidance and base our decisions. One is the book of Allaah and the other is the Sunnah of our beloved prophet (peace be upon him). Our understanding of these two divine sources must be in accordance with that of the three noble generations and our eminent scholars throughout the centuries. For more than 1400 years we have been secured from deviations in making our decisions by always going back to those references.

However, in recent years, due to the fact that our position in the world has diminished and increasingly degraded, we have lost our preeminence and are living under the aegis of non-Muslims. Therefore, we are pressured by the dominance of others into seeking means of reaching decisions that are in conflict with our faith and Islamic traditions. Unfortunately some Muslims are willing to entertain new innovations to this already completed way of life, while paying the price of deviating from their Shariah (the clear path to the water).

We must never deviate from the clear teachings or be made subservient because we cannot act on these clear injunctions in these times and in these places. If we allow our traditions and ways of life to be compromised; we may never recover. We must be engaged in the struggle to establish this religion in its fullness, so our deeds can be acceptable to Almighty Allaah. We must reject innovations that are orchestrated day after day. We must unite clinging to the rope of Allaah. We must understand that no scholar, no Fiqh Council and no one whomsoever; will be able to take responsibility of our mistakes, sins or deviations.

Allah (the exalted) commands us:

**“O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority; and if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger if you are believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end. Surah Nisa; Ayat (59)**

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him) said:

**"Whoever innovates something into what we have been commanded, that is not of it; will have it rejected"** *Bukhari, Muslim.*

## Decree of Imams Shura Council

The Islamic Council of New England's Imams Shura Council met Saturday July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in an effort to establish the most authentic method of determining the start of lunar months and to reaffirm the opinion of the council from previous years. An agreement was reached that the Sunnah clearly states; **sighting of the Hilaal** is the authentic means for the commencement of our lunar months, **not calculations**. More than twenty-five Imams and leaders of the New England Muslim communities have agreed that we will follow the Sunnah together in determining Ramadan and Shawwal. We have established a local moon sighting committee. We are aligned and are in consultation with a National Hilaal sighting body that represents hundreds of Islamic Organizations, and will continue to consult and work with them to achieve the best results for our community.

With much love and respect we caution the Muslim communities not to be hoodwinked into following the astronomical calculations method for the sake of convenience; it is not the authentic Sunnah of our Prophet (peace be upon him). Calculations will never be accepted by the almighty Allaah. It will not be accepted by those who know and follow the Sunnah of his messenger. With that said, we pray that almighty Allaah guide us all to that which is best for us in this life and the next eternal life. Surely only Allah (the exalted) knows the best!

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