

## Illumination on the Delusion created by “A Brief report on the Eid-ul-Fitr 1435H Decision”

الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وبعد:  
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

Allaah, the Most High, says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ

“O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion; indeed, some suspicions are sins.”

[al-Hujuraat (49):12]

Anas ؓ narrated that the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said:

“Help your brother, whether he is a wrongdoer or being wronged.” A man said: “O Messenger of Allaah, I will help him when he is being wronged, but how can I help him when he is doing wrong?” He ؓ replied: “You can restrain him from his wrongdoing. That will be your help to him.” [al-Bukhaari & Muslim]

Aboo Hurairah ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

“A slave of Allaah may utter a word which pleases Allaah without giving it much importance but because of that Allaah would raise him to degrees (of reward). On the other hand, a slave of Allaah may utter a word displeasing to Allaah without thinking of its gravity and because of that he would be thrown into the Hell-fire.” [al-Bukhaari]

After a lot of deliberation on the subject about to be penned, multiple discussions with qualified shaykhs, brothers in authority and members, I have been left with no choice but to write a clarification regarding the issue, especially as the FIANZ report has been circulated all over New Zealand and many people have contacted me requesting an explanation and clarification.

As the report must have been written with the best of intention, so should this report be received likewise in the same manner.

I find it most appropriate to thank the Fiji Muslim League for their endless support in Islamic matters to our Muslim community in New Zealand.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 (24<sup>th</sup> Ramadaan 1435), a letter issued by FIANZ to sight the moon on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July was circulated and it further said that any sightings should be reported.

On Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> I received a call from Shaykh Mohammad Amir around 3:30 PM regarding the issue and I updated him including those steps taken at Masjid at-Taqwa for sighting the crescent. I also said to him that we should take in consideration at least Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne if they sight it locally and it is verified. **By Allaah**, he said: I know that we should indeed take from them also. I replied: Okay, then I will report to you if anything comes by me. He said: Yes.

After Maghrib salaah we touched base again more than once. No successful sighting was reported and thus it was announced officially by FIANZ that Monday would be the 30<sup>th</sup> of Ramadaan. The FIANZ announcement also mentioned that the crescent was not sighted in Fiji either.

At around 9:30 PM, the news started to come from Fiji that the crescent had been sighted and that the reports were in the process of being verified. From this time until the final announcement by the Fiji Muslim League, I was in contact with Shaykh Amir. I insisted that if it is verified in Fiji then we should take it as we have been doing for decades. There is nothing in the *Sharee'ah* stopping us from doing so. He gave me excuses why we cannot take the sighting of Fiji this time. They were:

- Astronomically, the sighting of the crescent is extremely unlikely.
- We do not have to take their decision as they did not accept ours one time! So if we do not take theirs this time, it should not be an issue.
- It is too late and this is going to create confusion among people.
- Nobody else is agreeing to accept it.

I said very clearly that if the scholars have verified it locally in Fiji we have no choice but to take it.

I waited until it was officially announced in Fiji. After the announcement, I spoke to Shaykh Amir again. He insisted that we cannot announce it due the same excuses mentioned above. I requested him to talk to others and make them understand. He replied: Nobody else wants to accept the sighting. After discussion I said: If you do not agree, then we will have no choice but to announce that tomorrow is Eid. **By Allaah**, he said: Okay (Jee in Urdu).

I will be clear that I never took that as a permission from him but as an acknowledgement that we will announce if FIANZ refuses to do so.

I have always argued against those who did not support the procedure adopted by FIANZ for crescent sighting and I may have been the most vocal in order to keep the ummah united. Now what would I gain by going against their decision apart from disunity? This is what it may look like on the surface but let me elaborate.

We had no interest whatsoever to announce it. It was only after Shaykh Amir totally closed the door to any negotiation, as request upon request by me came to no avail, that our decision changed. When I asked him for the last time to renegotiate, he said that nobody else is agreeing. **By Allaah**, he never said to me that he would try again or that we should not announce it yet or that he would try to further the discussion. If he had given the slightest notion that the door to discussion was open, we would never have announced it on our own.

#### **Points to be noted:**

- I spoke to Shaykh Amir after Fiji Muslim League's announcement and the time of the call was around 11:08 PM as the record shows on his mobile phone.
- All the announcements made by us via our website, Facebook page, SMS, Viber, etc. was done after that. You can verify it by yourself also.
- Since 9:30 PM, what was happening in Fiji had already been known and it did reflect in the circle of scholars locally here. FML announced it at 11:00 PM and FIANZ after 12:30 AM.
- It should only have been a formality of protocol to be followed, especially when it was already known for a while.

- It was only when the door to any honest discussion was closed on us that we had to take this step to ensure that we do not fast on the day of Eid. Once our message was out it was sufficient motivation for other like minded brothers and sisters to concur with us who then decided to celebrate Eid on Monday 28 July.

**It should also be noted that:**

- Why was it announced to sight the crescent on Sunday when the Ulama board was not ready to accept it if it was sighted? This was the obvious case after it had been sighted in Fiji. Shaykh Amir told me more than once that nobody else was accepting it.
- Why was the issue of the crescent sighting being extremely unlikely astronomically being repeated?
- If there was no intention of accepting the sightings from the beginning, then why was there a follow up to find out if it had been sighted or not?
- Why did the rest of the Ulama Board members and those who did not want to accept the sighting keep quiet about the matter? Why did they not notify FIANZ from the start that the sighting will not be accepted, even if it is verified (as was the case this time), if that was their plan all along?

Allaah is my witness that we, at Masjid at-Taqwa, are not challenging the authority of FIANZ but we came out to stand for the authority of Allaah when it was challenged and to establish the prophetic hadeeth commanding us to observe Eid once the crescent is sighted. As the sighting was established in Fiji and here in New Zealand, we have been accepting the sightings from Fiji for years, we had been left with no choice but to accept it this time as well.

It has been proven time and again that astronomical calculations cannot be equated with revelation from Allaah with no room for adaptation. The crescent was sighted by many this time and it was there to be seen for 6 to 7 minutes.

We at Masjid at-Taqwa feel that we have united the ummah on the observance of Eid and not the way the circulated report may hint. Allaah enabled us to ensure that Eid is observed on Eid day and that people are not fasting on that day.

I would like to mention a few points which may be raised by those who would read the FIANZ report:

- Is there any time limit after which we are not allowed to consider any crescent sighting reports?
- In case of the sighting report being verified late, is it permissible for us to refuse to announce it just because it is late?
- Is it okay for us to accept the sightings from neighbouring countries?
- Are we allowed to refuse to accept verified sighting reports just because it is extremely difficult to sight the crescent based on scientific calculations?

In response, it will be enough to mention one authentic hadeeth which will answer the first two questions:

Abu ‘Umayr ibn Anas رضي الله عنه narrated from his uncles among the Ansaar رضي الله عنهم: “It was cloudy and we could not see the crescent of Shawwaal, so we started the day fasting. Then a caravan came at the end of the day and told the Messenger of Allaah صلى الله عليه وسلم that they had seen the crescent of Shawwaal the day before! So he صلى الله عليه وسلم told the people to stop fasting, and they went out to offer the Eid prayer the next morning.”

[Sunan Abee Daawood (1157); authenticated by Ibn Hajar & al-Albaanee]

This authentic hadeeth is very paramount and overrides any notion regarding a set time for the announcement. It is clear that whenever it is established, it has to be taken. Nobody holds the right to cover up the information just on the basis that it is too late.

We are in the era of the global village and to say that people will not be able to get the information in time is not acceptable for too many reasons, including it being against the teachings of Islam. Also in this case, almost every Muslim in New Zealand celebrated Eid on the day and those who did not had various reasons and mostly not much to do with it being announced late.

As far as accepting the sighting of neighbouring countries is concerned, I will not elaborate too much on it as this report is not for that purpose. But I would like to mention here that the majority of the scholars, including the Four Imaams, have chosen the position that wherever it is sighted, it should be applicable to everyone, everywhere.

As for the last question, it is already clear from what I have mentioned above that scientific calculation is not always one hundred percent correct. Moreover, chances of sighting being extremely unlikely is obviously not the same as the sighting being outright impossible.

### **What about the majority?**

Today some people argue that we must follow what the majority are practising. They attempt to misquote Islamic texts about “**holding on to the *Jamaa‘ah*,”** misinterpreting these to mean the *jumhoor* or majority! Islam has obliged sticking to the *jamaa‘ah* of Muslims under an Imaam (Khaleefah), not to the majority. In fact, the knowledgeable Companion ‘Abdullaah ibn Mas‘ood ؓ clearly explained the concept of the *jamaa‘ah* as:

“The *jamaa‘ah* is what conforms to the truth — even if you appear to be alone!”

[*Sharh Usool I’tiqaad Ahl-is-Sunnah wal-Jamaa‘ah* (160); authenticated by al-Albaanee]

Establishing unity does not mean following the majority even when they are in the wrong.

If a point of view is adopted by the majority, that does not qualify it to be the sound and authentic view. ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab ؓ differed with the majority in the issue of the prisoners of war in the Battle of Badr in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ and yet the truth was with ‘Umar as the relevant *ayaah* was revealed supporting his view. Khaleefah Aboo Bakr ؓ differed with the majority regarding the issue of the apostates and yet his view was correct.

The concept of following the majority, rather than following Islam, is not based on evidence from the Qur’an and the Sunnah. In fact, it contradicts many evidences about enjoining the good and forbidding evil even in the face of hardship. It is reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

“The master of the martyrs is Hamzah, and a man who stands up to an unjust ruler and gives him advice and so the ruler kills him.”

### **The disease of Nationalism has affected us indeed?**

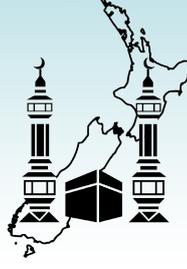
Why is it that many people wish to only follow the sighting in their nation? Who has created the borders between these nations? Why is it that in Delhi, people will follow the sighting in any other part of India but not of Pakistan although it is geographically closer than many parts within India itself like Kerala or Tamil Nadu? In Pakistan, people will not follow the sighting of Bangladesh but before 1971 when it was East Pakistan, they did! Why?

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Muslims in New Zealand have diversified lately and share various backgrounds and we should do our best to be united together. This can only happen by adhering to the Qur'aan and the authentic Sunnah interpreted according to the methodology of the Sahaabah and the Salaf .

May Allaah enable us to be His abiding servants and His Prophet's true followers ﷺ.

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

On behalf of the scholars, trustees and members of Masjid at-Taqwa,

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