



Central Moon Sighting Committee of Great Britain

(Jamiatul Ulama Britain, Darul Uloom Bury, Hizbul Ulama UK)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Which timetable should you follow?

Brothers & Sisters in Islam

Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullah Wabarakatuh

Everyone is perfectly aware that in the UK there are differences in the Salat timings for Fajar and Isha and this becomes highly noticeable in Ramadan when one starts to compare timetables. Sometimes there are differences in timetables within one city and amongst the same groupings. Like the moonsighting issue it has become a major controversy and has proved impossible to resolve.

So what should one do in these circumstances when faced with a varying number of timetables?

The visit of Hazrat Mufti Mahmudul Hasan Gangohi RA- Let me take you back almost 30 years when we were fortunate enough to receive the personality of Hazrat Molana Mufti Mahmudul Hasan Gangohi RA. Hazrat attended a gathering in Jamia Masjid, Howard Street, Bradford on 29 May 1983 at a time when there were several methods followed for prayer times in the UK based on solar depression angles and fixed times for Isha etc. In the absence of a Mansus Mushahadah here (which was well known by Hazrat RA at the time and by the Ulama), Hazrat tried to resolve this issue of differences by ruling that it will be permissible to adopt any of the methods, provided one does not follow one's own whim and vain desires, and that no one should consider the other person wrong. Everyone's ibadat will be accepted InshaAllah ([Click here for reference](#)). How excellent this advice was from this noble personality but alas we are so unfortunate that as soon as Hazrat leaves the Country we are left fighting about salah timings.

The arguments continued repeatedly amongst the community, and people were becoming fed-up and getting more and more frustrated until finally the good news arrived that with pressure from the people and committees of Masajids the community were serious enough now to do something about resolving this issue just as it resolved the Moon sighting issue before at Darul Uloom Bury under the supervision of Hizbul Ulama UK and Jamiatul Ulama Britain on 28 December 1986.

Mushahadat to resolve problem – 70 years previously Hakimul Ummat Hazrat Thanvi RA referred to mushahadat in response to a questioner from Scotland before sending a timetable chart in the absence of mushahadat in the UK. We now had the chance to consider and carry out mushahadat to resolve our problems with Salat in the UK and some key members of the community and senior Ulama decided they wanted to put an end to this division once and for all and for the sake of uniting the Muslims began a year long observation of Subha Sadiq and Isha in Blackburn, Lancashire during 1987/88. When the Mushahadat was completed a meeting of Ulama was called and all three Ulama Jamaat's at the time, Jamiyat Ulama Bartaniya, Hizbul Ulama, UK, and Markazi Jamiat Ulama, after much discussion and deliberation agreed to adopt a timetable based on the results, in the manner pointed out in Imdadul Fatawa and Bawaderun-nawadir by Hakimul Ummat Hazrat Thanvi RA. A year long mushahadah resulted in sufficient observations to construct a timetable and apply the gaps observed to other cities. The Ulama present signed an agreement to adopt the timetables and people left the gathering happy that they had achieved a major success in uniting on this controversial issue.

Unfortunately, however, the historic unity achieved did not last long and some Masajids continued to adopt previous timetables despite knowing full well of the Fatawa of eminent Scholars that Mushahadah has precedence over degrees or calculated times.

Recent efforts to create a fitnah -Whilst different Masajids followed different methods and sometimes there were arguments, these were often localised. However in recent years there has been a concerted effort to rubbish the timetables based on mushahadah to the extent of creating fitnah within the community by flooding the internet with emails and distributing pamphlets outside Masjids etc. Whilst this is morally wrong it is also wrong in shariah. What has happened to Hazrat's advice? How quickly we forget. Where is the benefit in causing dissension amongst the Muslims at a time when Islamophobia is rife and our enemies are gaining ground?

No one has a monopoly on truth and where there are genuine fiqhi differences no one should be accused of being wrong. Last year Mufti Taqi Usmani Sahib and Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, two of our top scholars of the present day, during their visits to the UK both made a point of explaining this principle, in direct response to questions being asked about these divisive issues. Mufti Taqi Sab is well aware of the differences as he held a

meeting five years ago with Hizbul Ulama UK to find out the full facts about the mushahadah. Mufti sab had also already read the books produced on the issue prior to the meeting with Hizbul Ulama UK.

The advice of the senior Ulama - Many other great scholars past and present have also emphasised that where there is a proper Fiqhi difference of opinion, it is absolutely correct for the community to follow whichever fits their needs best, and it is **not permissible** for others to criticize that opinion or those following it which is the message left to us by the great scholar of our times Hazrat Mufti Gangohi RA 28 years ago.

Likewise Mufti Taqi Sab's brother, Mufti Azam, Pakistan, Mufti Rafi Usmani also emphasized unity and the tolerating of different methods in his book of Fatawa, "**Nawadirul Fiqh**".

Questions to Mufti Rafi Usmani Sab- Maulana Saleem Dhorat Sab posed a series of questions to Hazrat Mufti Azam first by giving the context of Leicester where he said some Masjids used the mushahadah timetable when Maulana took over the running of Masjid Noor. After a great deal of discussion with the ulama especially with the respected Imam of Masjid Al Falah, Molana learnt that the times were based on "*the mushahadah of several mo'tabar ulama and supported by the ulama of Jamiyat Ulama, Hizbul Ulama and Markazi Jamiyat Ulama at a meeting attended by a countless number of Ulama and Muftiyane Kiram from the UK*", and all the Masjids in Leicester adopted this timetable at the time. Later Jame Masjid and Masjid Bukhari shifted from this timetable and adopted 18 degrees. Molana explains that he felt confident of the timetable of Masjid Noor and others based on the mushahadah but desired that there should be unity amongst all the Leicester Masjids. Masjid Noor later adopted 18 degrees after Molana read a pamphlet by Molana Yaqub Qasmi sab. Molana then wrote to Mufti Rafi Usmani Sab to seek clarity.

Responding to questions from Maulana Saleem Dhorat sahib HA on the mushahadah timetables, Mufti Sahib said, In the case of sehri and fajar, Shari'ah basis its times on mushahadah, not science. As it is unlikely that Mushahadah was carried out for a full year in a country like the UK, but only for a few days, and if after carrying out mushahadah for those few days, the ulama have found a gap of 1 hour and 35 minutes and Qiyas was used to fill the remainder of days, this will be permissible. It will be permissible to follow this timetable not just for those who express confidence in the mushahadah but also permissible for those who have some doubt about it. In a country like UK where mushahadah is not possible for a full year shariah has allowed "Zanne Galib" and it will be permissible to act on this Zanne Galib principle.

(Please note that Mufti sahib refers to a gap of 1 hour 35 minutes due to the way the question was phrased. In actual fact the subha sadiq gap varies from 1 hour 35 to 2 hours, the latter relating to tabayyun and with first light this gap extends to 3 hours in summer. Mufti Sab also assumes the mushahadah was for a few days only yet still deems it permissible, Alhamdolillah! However the mushahadah actually yielded scores and scores of successful observations sufficient for a high degree of confidence as the original records show).

What Mufti Sahib says about 18 degrees- On the issue of 18 degrees Mufti Sahib says, remember the principle of using 18 degrees is "**zanni**" not "**qat'ai**" because there are differences amongst the ulama and scientists on the use of 18 degrees although 18 degrees he says is used in Pakistani timetables but Hazrat says they delay the Fajar prayer by about 20/25 minutes (*equating to 15 degrees*) so that there is no doubt with their Fajar Salat.

Once more another noble personality advocates and clarifies the shariah so eloquently and with such wisdom. May Allah help us to do qadar of the pious Ulama who are beacons for us lighting the way. Ameen. May Allah unite the ummah and understand the wisdom of our great scholars. Aameen.

Finally a good piece of advice from Shaikh Haitham Al Haddad from a recent article he wrote:

"Having written this and respectfully disagreeing with others, I urge all to maintain the Islamic etiquette of differing. We should not allow such differences to disunite us or place enmity in our hearts. May Allah keep us united, keep our hearts pure, and forgive our shortcomings". Ameen.

Note: Please note that the recent Urdu article on this topic has been misunderstood by some people. The Islamic Academy in Leicester run by Molana Saleem Dhorat and Masjid Noor, Leicester use 18 degrees and the Urdu article does not say that they do not do so. Take care to read articles very carefully rather than jump to quick conclusions and make inappropriate accusations and begin to hurl un Islamic abuse as appears to be the practise of some people who seem to have an agenda driven by anti Hizbul Ulama/Jamiyat Ulama, Markazi Jamiyat Ulama feelings. Only Allah knows who is being deceitful. May Allah grant hidayah to all. Ameen.

(Please click here For Urdu)



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