

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Axing of Methodology

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After many moons of chaos and confusion that moon sighting has caused within the Muslim community, at the borderlines of Shaaban, Ramadhan and Shawaal. This time ISNA has decided that there is no requirement of moon sighting for this year and next 5 years and preemptive declarations of Ramadhan and Eid-ul-Fitr based on Astronomical calculations have been made. [ISNA's press release](#)¹ and an explanation of Astronomical calculations by Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Shah can be found on [ISNA's website](#).²

This article is for the person who wants to practice the Islam in pure and pristine form and in the following sections of this article would highlight the shortcomings of the report written by Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Shah.

Let's begin from the first premise of the press release.

1. **ISNA PR:** *“Sighting the Hilal (ru'yah) is not an act of ‘ibadah in itself; it is rather a means to know with certainty about the beginning of the new month related to Islamic ‘Ibadat.”*

Prophet of Allah (SAWS) has taught us, words of remembrance for every action that we do and for nature's phenomenon that occurs.

- **Words of remembrance related to clothing and dressing**

- i. It is preferred for one who is dressing to start with his right side (Recorded by Abu Dawud)
- ii. If a person wears a new garment or new footwear, he should say:

﴿ اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ أَنْتَ كَسَوْتَنِيهِ اسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَهُ وَخَيْرَ مَا صُنِعَ لَهُ ﴾

﴿ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهِ وَشَرِّ مَا صُنِعَ لَهُ ﴾

¹ Press release : http://www.isna.net/index.php?id=35&backPID=1&tt_news=764

² http://www.isna.net/fileadmin/_temp_/FIOH/Zulfiqar%20Ali%20Shah%20-%20Astronomical%20Calculations.pdf

“O Allah, to you is the praise. You are the one who clothed me with it. I ask of you for its good and the good that is was made for. And I seek refuge in you from its evil and the evil that it was made for” (Recorded by Abu Dawood & Al –Trimidhi)³

- **Words upon seeing clouds about to join to together**

- i. When one sees clouds about to join together, he should stop what he is doing, and say, اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهَا
“O Allah, I seek refuge in You from its evil” (Recorded by Abu Dawood)⁴

- **Words upon hearing the Sounds of Thunder**

- i. اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَقْتُلْنَا بِغَضَبِكَ وَ لَا تُهْلِكْنَا بِعَذَابِكَ وَ عَافِنَا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ
“O Allah, do not destroy us out of Your anger and do not destroy us by Your punishment. But forgive us before that” (Recorded by Al-Tirmidhi)⁵

- **What to say when Winds become strong**

- i. اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَهَا وَ خَيْرَ مَا فِيهَا وَ خَيْرَ مَا أُرْسِلَتْ بِهِ وَ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهَا وَ شَرِّ مَا فِيهَا وَ شَرِّ مَا أُرْسِلَتْ بِهِ
“O Allah, I ask You for the good of it and the good what is contains and the good that is sent with. And I seek refuge in You from its evil, the evil that it contains and the evil which with it has been sent.” (Recorded by Al-Muslim)

- **When it Rains, one should say**

- i. اللَّهُمَّ صَيِّبًا نَافِعًا
“O Allah, [make it] a heavy beneficial rain” (Recorded by Al-Bukhari)

- **After Rainfall, one says**

- i. مُطَرَّنَا بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَ رَحْمَتِهِ
“It rained upon us by the mercy and grace of Allah” (Recorded by Al-Bukhari)

³ See Al-Albani, Sahih Al Jaami, vol. 2, p 853

⁴ Sunan Abi Dawood Vol 3, p 960

⁵ Al-Hilaali, vol 1, pp 471-2

- **Upon seeing the New Moon, one says**

i. اللَّهُمَّ أَهْلِلْهُ عَلَيْنَا بِالْيَمَنِ وَالْإِيمَانِ وَالسَّلَامَةِ وَالْإِسْلَامِ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكَ اللَّهُ

“O Allah, bring the crescent over us with safety, faith, peace and Islam, my Lord and your Lord Allah” (Recorded by Al-Tirmidhi)⁶

- **When One sees the Moonrise, one says**

i. أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَرِّ هَذَا الْعَاسِقِ إِذَا وَقَبَ

“I seek refuge in Allah from the evil of that darkness when it settles [over the land]” (Recorded by Al-Tirmidhi)⁷

- **And many more words of remembrance. ...⁸**

When you do certain action or a natural phenomenon occurs and after which recite these words of remembrance, then you have followed and obeyed the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), which is nothing but ‘**Ibaadah**’.

And ISNA press release has neglected these words of remembrance on the sighting of new moon. I cannot comment whether it is deliberate or not, but certainly they have neglected it.

ISNA’s scholars are duty bound to explain what is meant by “*Sighting the Hilal (ru’yah) is not an act of ‘ibadah in itself;*”. And what we should be doing to these words of remembrance on nature’s phenomenon, and also explain the meaning of ‘ibaadah’ .

2. In the fifty-two pages, article written by Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Shah, it is pointed out that all four schools, Hanafi, Maliki, Shafaei and Hanbali agree upon the sighting the moon. Ibn Tamiyaah has agreed upon the sighting on the moon.

It is prudent to follow the advice rendered by saviours and luminaries of Islamic Jurisprudence. Always in the Islamic history we had discrete and isolated opinions, it is logical, for the masses to follow luminaries, and these luminaries have a massive following through out the ages.

Common people need to know, how can the Muslims unite by following discrete and isolated opinions. The unity is in the hearts and minds and not superficial unity.

⁶ Sahih Sunan Al Tirmidhi, Vol 3., P 157

⁷ Al-Hilaali, Vol 1., p 491.

⁸ Words of Remembrance & Words of Reminder Translated by Jamaal al-Din M. Zarabozo

3. *“It is a means to achieve the goal of certainty, as was elaborated above. Now if the goal of certainty could be achieved through a different and more accurate method, then, following such a method will be as Islamic as sighting the Moon with the naked eyes. They believe that currently astronomical calculations are more precise than the sighting method.”*

Shouldn't all the three parts of this equation as important as each other.

Means → Methods → Achieve Goals

- If the goal is to feed the family, then the means and methods employed by father is highly important. Should we accept your new paradigm of achievement of goals is important, then method.
 - If man wants to achieve fatherhood, are the means and methods important i.e. it's due process. Should we accept your new paradigm of achievement of fatherhood is important, then method.
 - If one needs to perform ablution, it is necessary to perform in correct methodology i.e. correct order. Should we accept your new paradigm of achievement of ablution is important, then methodology.
 - If one needs to perform prayer الصلاة, it is necessary to perform in correct methodology i.e. correct order. Should we accept your new paradigm of achievement of prayer (completion) is important, then methodology.
4. It has been meticulously documented on page 37, the ‘six steps’ involved in computation of Jewish calendar, but your conclusions / deductions of these dates isn't mentioned

Ramadan 1427 – First of Fasting September 23, 2006

Eidul Fitr 1427 - First of Shawwal October 23, 2006

As a Muslim I have a right to know and understand your deduction logic, and I'm least interested in ‘six steps’ process of other communities. Why the deduction logic isn't made available?

Let me take a leap of faith and assume for granted that your deduction logic is one hundred percent correct, after which you will have to rely on computer systems for number crunching. Environmental factors can cause, well written program to malfunction. These environmental factors would include, cosmic rays causing the bits to flip, floating pointing residual errors and many others things. The point here is to note that you always have some probability of error in the long run. And the irony is ISNA has already prepared five-year lunar calendar.

5. “ Perhaps these are the reasons that Mustafa al-Zarqa is most amazed that a good number of present day conservative jurists are so much adamant about not accepting the astronomical calculations in confirming or negating the month of Ramadan while they are using the same calculations in acts of worship which are far more important in significance as well as frequency such as daily prayers.”

The beginning/ending of Islamic months and calculations of daily prayers are two different things all together. Islamic months are based on lunar calendar and timings of daily prayers are based on solar workings (Sunrise, High Noon, Length of Shadow, Sunset, Darkness).

- We pray Fajr -- between Dawn and Sunrise.
- We pray Zohar – after high Noon.
- We pray Asr – when length of shadow is equal or twice in length
- We pray Maghrib – just after Sunsets
- We pray Isha – when it is dark.

سورة الروم

قال تعالى: ﴿ فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ (17) ﴾

قال تعالى: ﴿ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا وَحِينَ تُظْهِرُونَ (18) ﴾

"Therefore glory be to Allah when you enter upon the time of the evening and when you enter upon the time of the morning. ⁹"

"Unto Him be praise in the heavens and the earth! - and at the sun's decline and in the noonday."¹⁰

For the daily prayers, there is a specified **range of timings (ranges)** dependent on the solar calendar.

And for moon sightings, there can only be one value from any of below two-value pairs.

Non Visibility	Visibility
0	1
False	True
Negative	Positive
Nay	Yeah

⁹ <http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/030.qmt.html>

¹⁰ <http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/030.qmt.html>

The resulting outcome from a two-value pair is significant i.e. you get it or you don't get it, there is no middle ground in two-value pair.

Where in the case of ranges, as long as one is within the range, it is perfect and valid.

How can one compare ranges with two-value pair and label jurists as “adamant” ?

Looks like Mustafa al-Zarqa is saying Astronomical calculations is one thing, there is no need to differentiate between lunar calendar and solar calendar. If were to be the case, then please provide lunar calculations of daily prayers.

6. *“The Prophetic commandment asking to depend only upon the actual sighting came also with the specified reasons for doing so elaborated by the same text. The specified reason was that the Ummah of that time did not know how to write or calculate. And the cause and effect always go hand in hand. Now, when the Ummah has come out of its unlettered status and started writing and calculating”.*

In Sahih Muslim:

باب فضل الصحابة ثم الذين يلونهم ثم الذين يلونهم

﴿ عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ سَأَلَ رَجُلٌ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَيُّ النَّاسِ خَيْرٌ قَالَ " الْقَرْنُ

الَّذِي أَنَا فِيهِ ثُمَّ الثَّانِي ثُمَّ الثَّلَاثُ " . ﴾

A'isha (RA) reports that a person asked Allah's prophet (SAWS) as to who amongst the people were the best. He said: of the generation, to which I belong, then of the second generation (generation adjacent to my generation), then of the third generation (generation adjacent to the second generation).

سورة البينة

﴿ قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ جَزَاءُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا

أَبَدًا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ ﴾

“Their reward with their Lord is gardens of perpetuity beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein for ever; Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him; that is for him who fears his Lord.”

This is a **subtle attack** on the companions of Prophet (SAWS) and people of later generations. Yes it would be correct to say, they didn't know today's C++/Perl, Relativity-theory, Plantar Fasciitis, Trench-less technology, Nano technology, Strings theory and others. But we should remember that what Allah (SWT) and Prophet (SAW) have told us about these rightly guided people and before we deploy a label on them. We should remember their rank and position in sight of Allah and Prophet (SAWS).

Through their effort, Islam has been preserved and through them the Islam came us, the very first people to hold the baton of Islam. Just imagine if one of our children told us, "O father you are an un-lettered one, and O' father you don't know how to write a simple arithmetic equation, let alone write a software program for it." And depending on father's nature, there will be a different response.

At a minimum child will be told to respect his father. Similarly we should have same level of reciprocation or may be more for these companions of Prophet (SAWS).

7. Another assumption is made by "*The Sharia'h had required sighting at the times when the Ummah was mostly unlettered and mostly ignorant in the fields of astronomy and other sciences related to attaining the authentic calculations.*"

Let's validate this claim of "*other sciences related to attaining the authentic calculations*",

سورة النساء

قال تعالى: ﴿يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثِيَيْنِ فَإِن كُنَّ نِسَاءً فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُنَّ ثُلُثَا مَا تَرَكَ وَإِن كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا النِّصْفُ وَلِأَبَوَيْهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ مِمَّا تَرَكَ إِن كَانَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ فَإِن لَّمْ يَكُن لَّهُ وَلَدٌ وَوَرِثَهُ أَبَوَاهُ فَلِأُمِّهِ الثُّلُثُ فَإِن كَانَ لَهُ إِخْوَةٌ فَلِأُمِّهِ السُّدُسُ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفَعًا فَرِيضَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا﴾ (11)

"Allah enjoins you concerning your children: The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females; then if they are more than two females, they shall have two-thirds of what the deceased has left, and if there is one, she shall have the half; and as for his parents, each of them shall have the sixth of what he has left if he has a child, but if he has no child and (only) his two parents inherit him, then his mother shall have the third; but if he has brothers, then his mother shall have the sixth after (the

payment of) a bequest he may have bequeathed or a debt; your parents and your children, you know not which of them is the nearer to you in usefulness; this is an ordinance from Allah: Surely Allah is Knowing, Wise.”¹¹

قال تعالى: ﴿وَلَكُمْ نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ أَزْوَاجُكُمْ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُنَّ

وَلَدٌ فَلَكُمْ الرُّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَنَّ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِينَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَلَهُنَّ الرُّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَتُمْ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَلَهُنَّ الثُّمُنُ مِمَّا تَرَكَتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ تُوصُونَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ رَجُلٌ يُورَثُ كَلَالَةً أَوْ امْرَأَةٌ وَلَهُ أَخٌ أَوْ أُخْتٌ فَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ فَإِنْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فِي الثُّلثِ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ

يُوصَى بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ غَيْرِ مُضَارٍّ وَصِيَّةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ (12) ﴿

“And you shall have half of what your wives leave if they have no child, but if they have a child, then you shall have a fourth of what they leave after (payment of) any bequest they may have bequeathed or a debt; and they shall have the fourth of what you leave if you have no child, but if you have a child then they shall have the eighth of what you leave after (payment of) a bequest you may have bequeathed or a debt; and if a man or a woman leaves property to be inherited by neither parents nor offspring, and he (or she) has a brother or a sister, then each of them two shall have the sixth, but if they are more than that, they shall be sharers in the third after (payment of) any bequest that may have been bequeathed or a debt that does not harm (others); this is an ordinance from Allah: and Allah is Knowing, Forbearing.”¹²

These Ayats are pinnacle on laws of inheritance, on these two Ayahs, volumes of books have been written by scholars, if they weren't able to comprehend mathematical equations or calculations, as portrayed by Zulfikar Shah, then solving the inheritance is left open to ISNA scholars or the fiqh committee of ISNA.

The fact the companions and later generations had clear instructions, to see the crescent and determine Islamic months. It was a redundant work for them and it is totally incorrect and immoral to say, “and mostly ignorant in the fields of astronomy and other sciences related to attaining the authentic calculations.”

In this day & age of technological advancement, does any one have a mathematical equation of any sort, to solve the laws of inheritance?

¹¹ <http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/004.qmt.html>

¹² <http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/004.qmt.html>

8. *“He further argues that the birth of the new Moon is the beginning of the new month.”*

On what basis, moon birth is chosen as a criterion, linguistically what does لُرُوَيْتِه mean, why birth of new moon. Depending on the chosen words, the reality of things is changed.

Following your logical progression, would you recommend performing ‘Aqeeqa’ of a child based on the EDD (expected delivery date).

9. *“The criterion is moon birth before 12:00 Noon (GMT)”*

May be we should use the time zone where Muslims masses are in large number, how about Indian Standard time or Indonesian Standard Time.

10. With the calculations we are making Allah (SWT) duty bound to have crescent appear on the horizon or anywhere on the face of earth. Since my calculations have told me, about the moon would appear, and it has to appear.
Are you willing to fast from only the calculations point of view, and that there is no reports on the visibility of crescent.

11. Linguistically what does عَمٌ means, something that is available but covered temporarily? It doesn't mean we make birth of moon as a new criterion.

These are the shortcomings of the report created by Zulfiqar Shah, there are few other things I wanted to write about narrowed interpretations selected by him, but time doesn't permit. But I would hope these few things have provided some food-for-thought to those who are considering ISNA opinion this Ramadan.

Lastly I would appeal to my fellow Muslims, that if you have plans of buying a pair of shoes or a diamond ring, then you would do due diligence, before buying. Islam is much more than a pair of shoes or a diamond ring and far greater in consequences, please consult with the scholars and it's time that you take control of things. Let not one individual or select group individual take you for a ride.

May Allah (SWT) guide us all. آمين

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