The image features a green speech bubble with a white outline and a small tail pointing downwards. Inside the bubble, the text "A Miscalculation" is written in a white, serif font. The background is a light green gradient with faint, concentric circular lines and dashed lines, creating a subtle pattern.

A Miscalculation

Breakdown of the Book

Introduction	2
The Quranic Argument for Moonsighting.....	5
The Decisive Verse: “They ask you about the crescent moons.”	9
Ibn Daqiq Al-‘Id’s Rejection of Calculations	12
The Other Scholars who “Permitted” Calculations.....	13
Testimonies from the Hadith Literature	15
“If the Sky is Cloudy”	16
Definitions.....	17
The Meaning of “Ru’yah”	17
Hilal	18
Hadith Arguments in Favor of Calculation	19
A. The Expression “Faqduru” (Calculate/Complete).....	19
B. The Hadith: “We are an Unlettered Nation”	20
The Method of Calculation and the Meaning of “For” (<i>li</i>) in the Hadith of Sighting	22
Our Prayer Times Are Established – So why not our Months?	23
What Can Calculations Be Used For?	26
Astronomy vs. Astrology.....	27
Erroneous Sightings	29
Is Sighting the Moon an Act of Worship?	32
The Issue of Unity	34
Misgivings about Unity	35
Conclusion.....	36

Importance

- **Zafar Ahmad Uthmani (RA) writes:**
- “Since many legal rulings and religious acts of worship revolve around the lunar calendar, **its preservation and determination are obligatory on the community** (*Fardan ‘ala al-Kifayah*)...and it is no doubt that to tend to communal obligations are an act of worship, and those methods which facilitate its preservation become acts of worship as well, therefore the usage of the lunar calendar is desirable by *Shariah’s* standpoint.”
- *Ahkam al-Quran*, 1/279

Many Acts of Deen are Based on the Correct Calendar Being Used

- Menstrual Cycles
- 'Iddah and Divorce
- Zakah
- Fasting specific Masnun days: White days, Ashura, Arafah
- Hajj
- Ramadan
- **Exclusive to the lunar calendar**

Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi

- “The wisdom in this is that God has made the sun and moon two of His signs, and it is related in some sources that He assigned to each an angel and decreed for them two points of rising. **He move them between the two for two benefits: one worldly, which is the solar calendar, and the other religious, which is based upon the lunar.**”
- *Ahkam al-Quran*, Moon Births, pg. 5

Topics Covered Today

- History of Moonsighting
- Quranic Argument for Moonsighting
- Hadith Argument
- Our Prayer Times are Established – So why not our months?
- The Issue of Unity
- Is Sighting the Moon an Act of Worship?

History of Moonsighting

- The usage of the moon for starting of months is found in almost all previous civilizations
- Harvesting crops
- Sea tides
- Fertility for women
- A calendar is required to maintain a sense of the passing of time

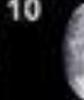
The Lunar Calendar

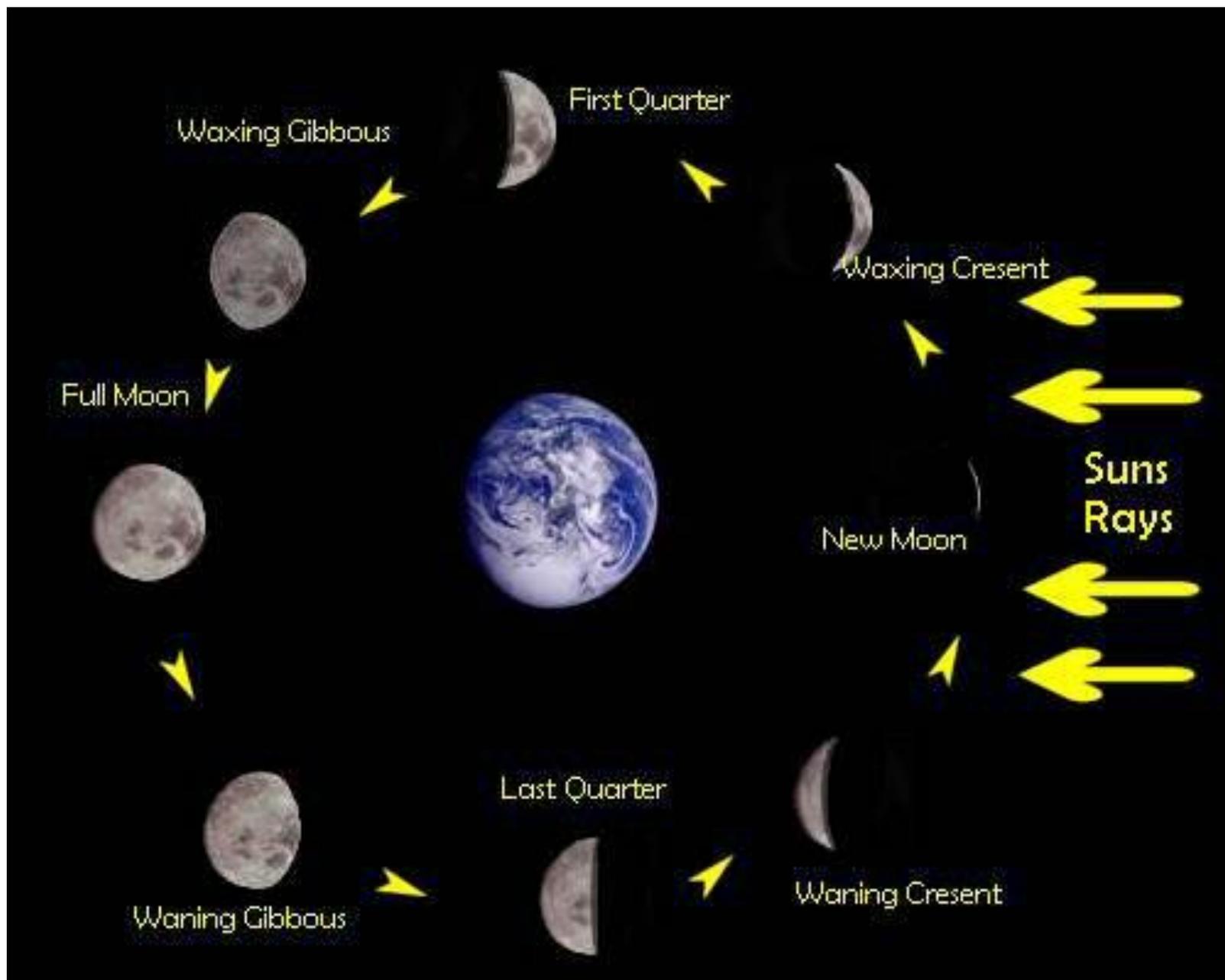
- Has 29 or 30 days
- 354 days in a year
- Self-correcting
- “He is the one that has made the sun shine and the moon glow, and determined the lunar phases that you may know the number of years and calculation.” (10:5)

FIRST VISIBLE CRESCENT MONTH

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Sabbath
				NM 		1 New Moon Day 
2 	3 	4 	5 	6 FQ 	7 	8 
9 	10 	11 	12 	13 FH 	14 	15 
16 	17 	18 	19 	20 LQ 	21 	22 
23 	24 	25 	26 	27 	28 	29 
30 						

CONJUNCTION MONTH

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Sabbath
					NM 	1 New Moon Day 
2 	3 	4 	5 	6 	7 FQ 	8 
9 	10 	11 	12 	13 	14 FH 	15 
16 	17 	18 	19 	20 	21 LQ 	22 
23 	24 	25 	26 	27 	28 	29 
30 						



The Jewish Calendar

- They also use a lunar calendar
- It was completely in use to its fullest until the Roman Empire
- Because of persecution and loss of those who maintained the calendar, they resorted to intercalation

They Should've switched back

- “Suggestions have been made that the computations should be changed, or that observation should again be used. It is clear that adjustments need to be made to the computed calendar in order to keep it synchronized with the sun and moon. But there is no consensus as to how this should be done, and, in the modern world this needs to be done years in advance. **Returning to observation is idyllic, but totally impractical.** The modern world requires plans for religious observance to be made months, or even years, in advance. Only a computed calendar permits this.”
- *Understanding the Jewish Calendar, Caesarean Moon Births,* pg. 9

Pre-Islamic Calendar

- Practiced intercalation
- Abu Thumamah al-Qulammas would come every Hajj season and announce: “Safar for this year is permitted (For fighting).”
- Then he would come next year and forbid Safar and permit Muharram in place of it
- “Allah had censured the idolators from their unrestricted in the Shariah of Allah through their corrupt opinions, changing the commands of Allah through their cold desires, permitting that which Allah has made Haram, and forbidding that which Allah has made Halal.” (Tafsir ibn Kathir, 2/522)
- **They changed the commands of Allah because of expedience and ease, but they were not allowed to do so**

Following the Misguided Ways

- “You will follow the [erroneous] ways of those before you hand span by hand span, arm’s length by arm’s length, to such a degree that if they went down a lizard’s hole, you would also go down the hole.”
- His companions exclaimed in response, “The Jews and the Christians, O Messenger of Allah!?”
- “If not them, then who?” he replied. (al-Bukhari, 3456)

Ayah #1

“The month of Ramadan is the one in which the Qur’an was revealed as guidance for mankind, and as clear signs that show the right way and distinguish between right and wrong. **So those of you who witness** (the crescent on the first night of) the month must fast in it.” [2:185]

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ
وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ

سورة البقرة



What do these two words mean?

The Word: Shahida

- To be witness
- To be present
- To attain (acquire information)
- *(al-Jāmi' li-Ahkām al-Qurān, 1/366)*

What does “Shahr” mean?

- The great Imam of the Arabic language, al-Fairūzabādī explains *shahr* to have several meanings
- Among which are *al-Hilāl* (crescent) and *al-Qamar* (the moon).
- Ibn al-Athīr, in *an-Nihāyah*, quotes the hadith, **(*sūmū ash-shahra wa sirrah*)**
- “Fast at the *Shahr* and its end,” and says *shahr* here means “the crescent (the beginning of the month).”
- *Al-Qāmūs al-Muhīt*, pg 380 by al-Fairūzabādī (d. 817 H)

*Shahr =
Crescent*

- ***Sahīh Muslim #2568. fa in ghummiya ‘alaikum ash-shahr’***
- ‘If the *Shahr* is obscured for you’ to show its usage with the meaning of ‘*hilāl*’ by the Messenger of Allah.
- The only possible meaning for ‘*shahr*’ in this hadīth is crescent.
- If it is taken to mean month (the common meaning for *shahr*) then the hadith would be ‘if the *month* is unclear to you’.
- This does not make sense, so the word *shahr* is then understood to mean ‘crescent’, and thus the hadīth is ‘if the *crescent* is obscured.’

The
Translation is
Plausible

■ **So those of you who witness the crescent must fast in it.” [2:185] is a valid translation**

To Translate:
“To be present
at home”

- Muqim vs. Musafir – not calculator vs. moonsighter
- No classical mufassir interpreted it this way
- Instead Imam al-Qurtubi writes:
“Whoever follows the opinion of the astronomers and leaves the ‘*ijmā*’ (consensus) of the scholars is a proof against (himself).” *Al-Jāmi’ li-Ahkām al-Quran*, 1/363

Ayah #2

- “They ask you about **the crescent moons**. Say: They are indicative of time (months) **for the people**, and of the Hajj.” [2:189]

The Backdrop

- “Abu Ja’far said: Rabi’ – Abu al-Aliyah: It has reached us (from many) that they said, ‘Oh Messenger of Allah! Why were the crescents created?’ The verse was revealed [2:189], and he said, **‘Allah had created them as established times for the fasting of the Muslims, and their terminating [their fasting], and for the *Iddah* of their women, and for when loans are due.’**
- It has also been narrated via ‘Ata, Dhahhak, Qatadah, al-Suddi, and al-Rabi’ bin Anas in a similar manner.

Implications

- The Ayah fixes the beginnings of the month through the crescent
- Then fixes that it is made for all of mankind, regardless of relying on astronomers or visibility curves
- Everyone can sight, and therefore the ruling is that the month is established through sighting

Sighting is the Chosen Method

- **“And since this is a worship it which encompasses the general masses, it does not permit that the ruling should relate to (a knowledge – astronomy) which no one recognizes except a few people – who perhaps we cannot trust their statements entirely. “ (Ahkam al-Quran, 1/279)**

Quotes of the Mufassirin

- Al-Qurtubi (671 AH):
- “Whoever follows the opinion of the astronomers and leaves the ‘*ijmā*’ (consensus) of the scholars is a proof against (himself).” *Al-Jāmi’ li-Ahkām al-Quran*, 1/363

Abu Bakr al-
Jassas
(370 AH)

“The Muslims are in complete agreement that the meaning of verse and narration is in regards to the sighting of the crescent in obligating the fast of Ramadan. [The *Hadith*] **indicates that sighting the crescent (*Ru'yah al-Hilal*) is in fact the witnessing of the month (*Shuhud al-Shahr*)”**
Ahkam al-Quran, 1/279

Ibn Al-Arabi
(543 AH)

- “The Prophet had explicitly mentioned that, ‘Do not fast until you see the crescent, and do not terminate until you see it...’ and the saying of Allah, ‘so whoever witnesses the month from amongst you should fast.’[2:185] is taken upon its normal condition (*‘Adah*) **by witnessing the month, which is to sight the crescent. Like that the Prophet said, ‘Fast through its sighting (the crescent), and terminate through its sighting.’**

Fakhr al-Din
Al-Razi
(606 AH)

“...the months are known through the orbit of the moon, and that is because the months which are considered in the *Shari’ah* are founded upon the **sighting of the crescents.**”
Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, under the verse: “so that you may know the number of the years and calculations.” [10:5]

Al-Qurtubi (671 AH)

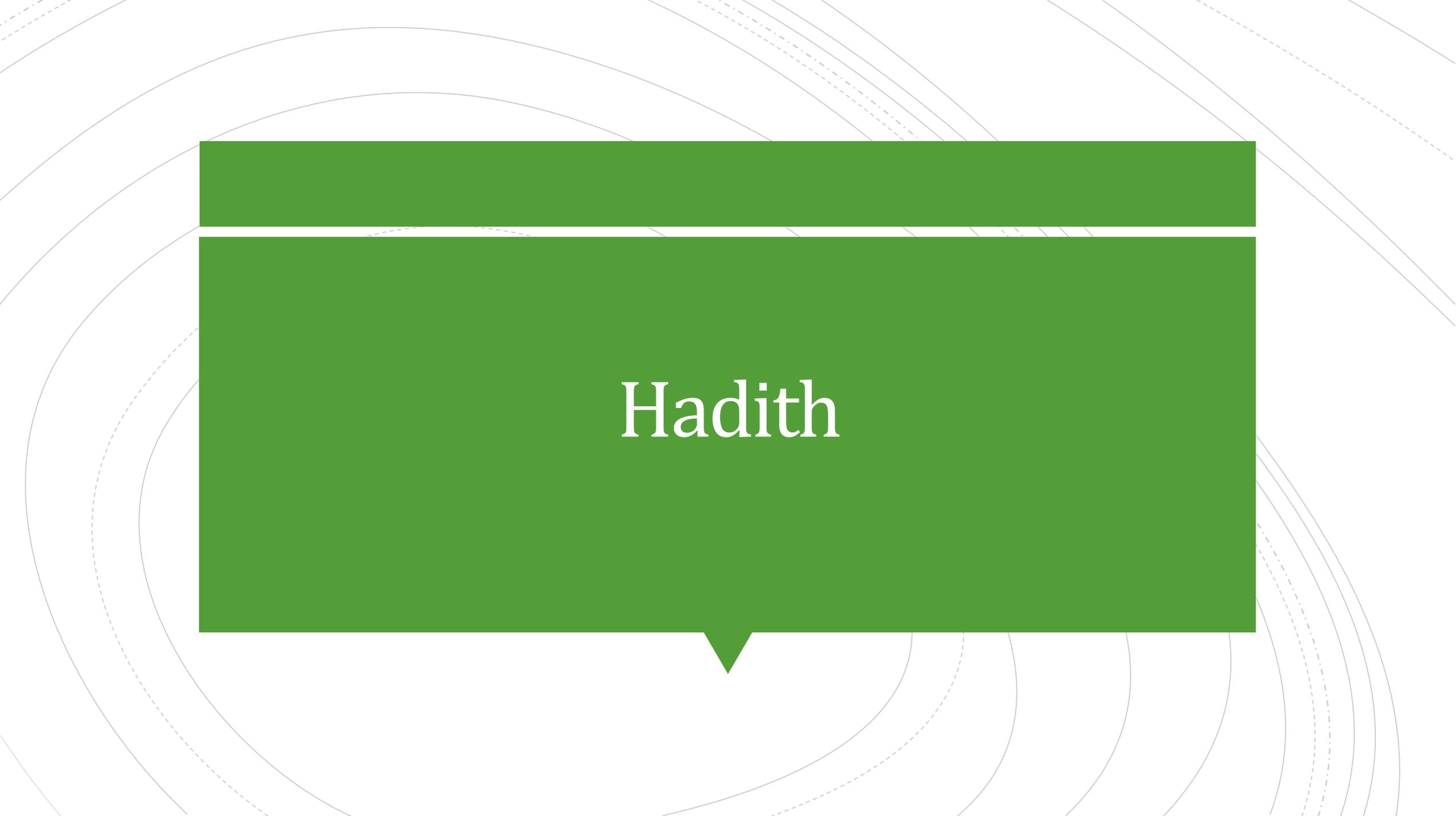
- **“It is compulsory upon us, when the crescent cannot be seen, to complete thirty days of Sha’bān and thirty days of Ramadan, so that we can enter into the ‘*ibādah* (worship, i.e. fasting) with full certainty and come out of it with full certainty...**
- [As for those who calculate on a cloudy day] and this we know no one who claimed such a thing except a few companions of al-Shafi...and the consensus is a proof against them.”
- *al-Jāmi’ li Ahkām al-Quran*, 1/362-3.

Imam ibn
Kathir
(774 AH)

“And His Saying:
“Whoever witnesses
the month should
fast,” [2:185] **this is
an imperative on
those who witness
the *Hilal* of the
month.”** *Tafsir ibn
Kathir*, 1/314.

Al-Alusi (1270
AH)

“The word *Shahr* (month) means a specified time which begins by the **sighting of the crescent...**” A few pages later, he clarifies that the correct interpretation is to take the word “*Shahr*” as the object of the verb, and says the meaning to be “[whoever witnesses the] crescent of the month.” *Ruh al-Ma’ani*, 3/129 - 132



Hadith

Hadith

- Narrated Abdullah bin Umar (RA): Allah's Messenger ﷺ mentioned Ramadan and said, "Do not fast unless you see the crescent (of Ramadan), and do not give up fasting till you see the crescent (of Shawwal), but if the sky is overcast (if you cannot see it), then complete (i.e. count Sha'ban as 30 days)." (Bukhari, v. 3/b. 31/n. 130)
- Nine narrations brought into the book on the topic

“If the Sky is Cloudy”

- These words in the *Hadith* should be appreciated to the fullest degree.
- The Prophet ﷺ said that you cannot see the moon, *although the moon is there in the sky*.
- Yet, the injunction is not to assume that the moon is there and therefore start the next month.
- A strong proof against those who feel that the objective is to be certain of the moon's existence, and not to follow the exact command of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

Abu Bakr al-Jassas (RA) says:

- “They differed concerning the meaning of the statement of the Prophet ‘If it is cloudy then estimate it.’”
- Some have said, ‘he meant regarding the phases of the moon. If it is in the (visible) place of the full moon (*Qamar*) where it could be seen if there were no clouds or disturbances, the ruling of sighting should be implemented for fasting and breaking...’”

Cont.

- As for the first interpretation (assuming the moon to be sighted behind the clouds), ***it is dropped without a doubt, because it requires consulting the astronomers and whoever has recognition about the phases of the moon and its positions.*** This is in contrast to the speech of Allah which says, “They ask you concerning the crescents, Say: it is a place of determining time for *people and Hajj*,” and so He connected the rule with the *sighting of the crescent* (not with possibilities).

The Second Opinion

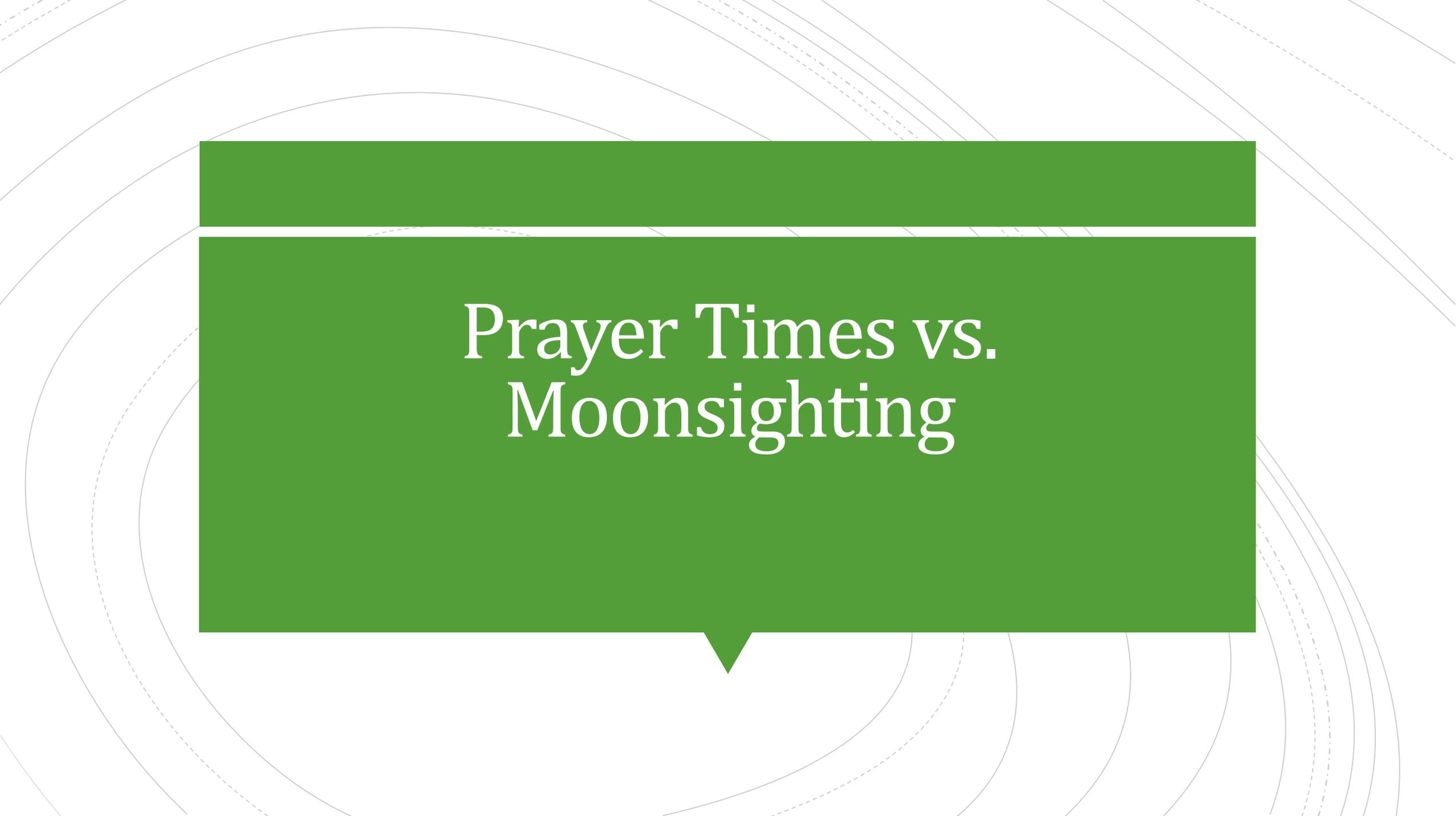
- “The second opinion or interpretation is the correct one and this is the statement of the mainstream jurists and ibn Umar (RA) – the narrator of the tradition (on “estimating”). It has been **reported in the narration that he would not take calculations.** There is explicit mention by him the meaning of “Faqduru,” that which requires no further interpretation.
- “Abdul Baqi bin Qani’ – Muhammad bin al-Abbas al-Muaddib – Shurayh bin al-Nu’man – Fulayh ibn Sulayman – Nafi’ – **ibn Umar (RA) – “The month of Ramadan was mentioned around the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He said, ‘Do not fast until you sight the crescent, and if it is obscure upon you, then complete (faqduru) thirty days.’**

Cont.

- “This narration clarifies the meaning of the phrase, which drops any other interpretation...”

Negation of Astronomers

- He did not obligate recourse to the statement of one (an astronomer) who says, ‘If there were no obstacles of clouds etc., we could see it...’ Therefore, the one who says we must regard the phases of the moon, **and the calculations of the astronomers has come out of the pale of the ruling of the *Shariah*, and this is not a place that *Ijtihad* can be tolerated**, due to the clear direction in the Book, the explicit (*Nass*) Sunnah, and the consensus (*Ijma’*) of the jurists against it.”

The background features several concentric circles of varying radii, some solid and some dashed, in a light gray color. A large, solid green callout box is centered on the page, containing the title text. The callout box has a small triangular pointer at the bottom center.

Prayer Times vs. Moonsighting

Our Prayer Times Are Established – So why not our Months?

- Allah says: “Establish the prayer times through the setting of the sun” [18:78].
- The functionality of the moon versus the sun are different.
- The sun is used for establishing prayer times, whereas the moon is used for months. The utilization of a prayer time table is because the prayer times are determined through the *time* of day.
- In contrast, the determination of the crescent calendar is determined by *sighting* the crescent.
- What people have mistakenly conflated is the idea that since one can be calculated, the other can also.
- Qiyas ma’a Faariq – the Ilal are not the same

Imam al-Qarafi,
the Maliki
scholar and
astronomer,
explains:

- “Why is it that we can determine prayer times by calculation and the use of instruments, yet in the case of crescent moons for the determination of our Ramadans, it is not permissible to use [instruments and calculation] according to the accepted position? The difference is that [Allah] has stipulated in our devotional practice [of fasting] the sighting of the crescent moon and if that is not possible then the completion of thirty days of Sha’ban, and He did not stipulate the astronomical new moon. **On the other hand, in the case of prayer times, He stipulated simply the entrance of the times...**
- **Hence we are able to determine them by any means possible. For instance, a prayer is conditional upon the occurrence of the sun’s postmeridian phase (*Duluk al-Shams*).** [With Ramadan] however, it was not linked with the conjunction’s separation but with its physical sighting. And should the crescent be obscured, we complete thirty days.”

Is it Possible to Calculate the Sighting of the Moon?

- No
- The sighting can be given a visibility curve, analyzed for best conjunction areas, and even estimated timings for the possibility of sighting.
- But to *actually* sight is a function of the human eyes and the forecast of the sky, and no amount of calculations can assume that.

U.S. Naval
Observatory's
Section for
Muslims

- “Although the date and time of each New Moon can be computed exactly, **the visibility of the lunar crescent** as a function of the Moon's "age"—the time counted from New Moon—**depends upon many factors and cannot be predicted with certainty.**

Cont.

- “The elongation as a function of the Moon's age depends on several factors:
- **The Moon's elongation at New Moon....**
- **The speed of the Moon in its orbit....**
- **The distance of the Moon...**
- **The observer's location (parallax)...**
- **“...Stated in less technical language, many things are changing very rapidly.** Effects to be considered are the geometry of the Sun, Moon, and natural horizon; the width and surface brightness of the crescent; the absorption of moonlight and the scattering of sunlight in the Earth's atmosphere; and the physiology of human vision. This problem has a rich literature.”

The image features a green speech bubble with a white outline and a small tail pointing downwards. The bubble is centered on a white background with faint, light gray concentric circles and dashed lines. The text inside the bubble is white and reads "Misgivings about Unity".

Misgivings about Unity

Who Broke the Unity?

- You are not the ones who switched
- Even last year they had complications ISNA started a day earlier than Saudi
- They know they are wrong

Muzammil
Siddiqi,
President of
ISNA

- ISNA's Position on Eid-ul-Adha ISNA's Position on Eidul Adha Plainfield, IN., 1/25/2002 (ISNA Headquarter) ::
- For the last several years ISNA held the position that Eidul Adha is to be celebrated according to the announcement of Hajj and not according to our local moon sighting as we do for Ramadan and Eidul Fitr. But there were many scholars who criticized this position. They said that this position was not according to the Sunnah.

Cont.

- Eidul Adha is to be on the 10th of Dhul Hijjah according to the moon sighting. Muslims in distant lands such as India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Central Asia, etc., have always been celebrating Eidul Adha according to their own moon sighting...**We checked the books of Fiqh, we did not find any support for the assertion that Eidul Adha decision should be made on the basis of Hajj decision.** The Hadith of the Prophet - peace be upon him - that “al Hajj yauma yahujju al-nas” is for those who make Hajj...Of course those who go to Hajj must go to 'Arafah according to the decision of the authorities there, even if that is contrary to the astronomical data or someone's own moon sighting. But people in far away lands do not make Hajj in their locations...

No Support from Scholars

- **ISNA's position was under strong criticism from the scholars. No Fiqh Scholar from any country came to the defense of ISNA's position.** We have the North American Shura that brings major organizations together. ICNA and Imam Jamil al-Amin's group separated from us last Eidul Adha because of this position. **We asked the 'Ulama in Saudi Arabia whether there was a special case for Eidul Adha... They told us that we must be consistent and should not play with this 'Ibadah according to our own desires...There is no basis for this inconsistency in the Shari'ah."**

Bin Baz (RA)

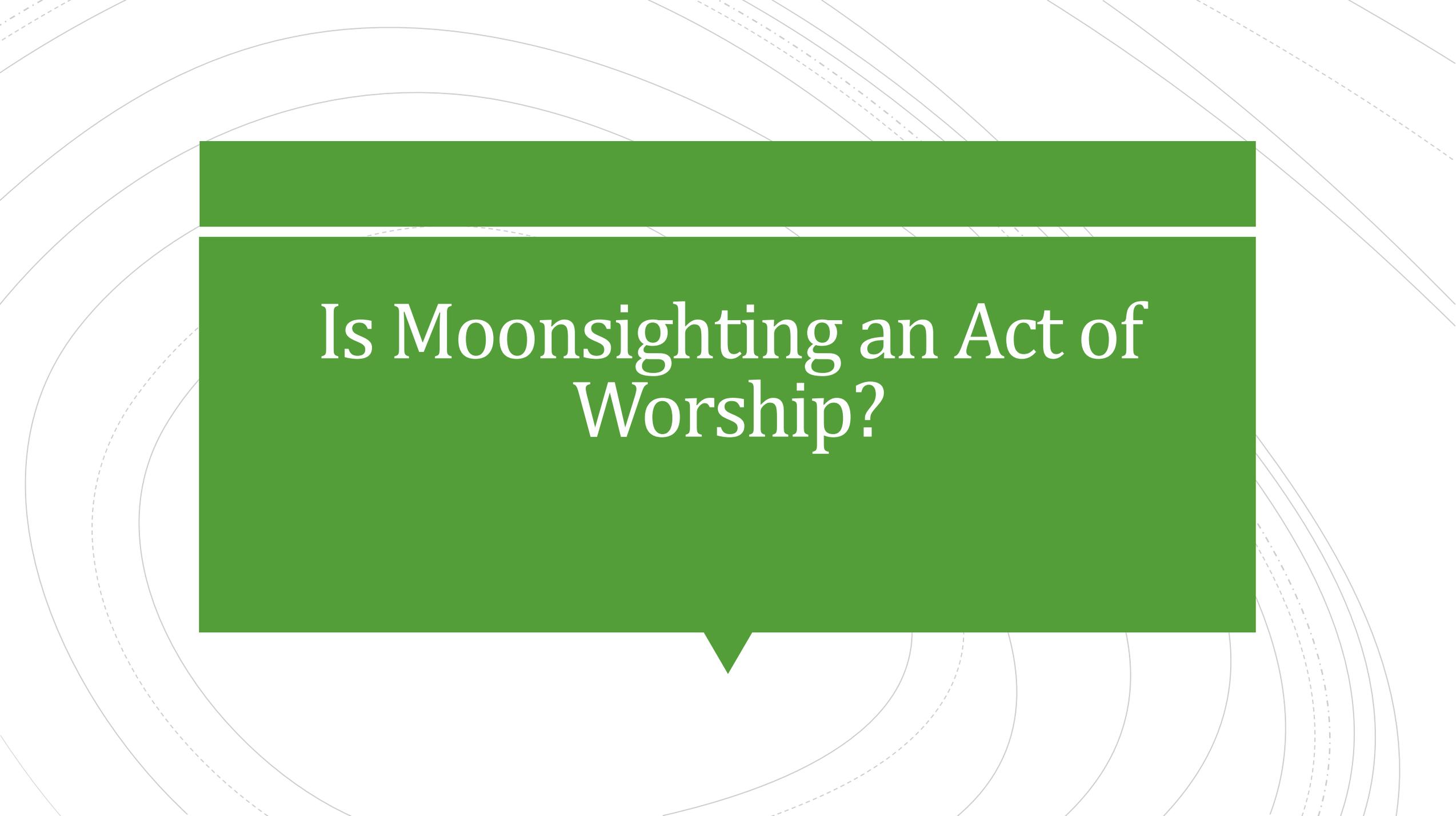
- “Hence, it becomes clear that the reliable factor in determining the time of Sawm and breaking the Sawm and the rest of months is the **sighting of the moon or completing the prescribed period. The mere birth of the new moon is not considered in Shari`ah (Islamic law) to verify the beginning and ending of the lunar month with the Ijma’ (consensus of scholars) of trustworthy Muslim scholars, unless it is sighted legally.** This ruling is pertinent to the timings of worships. Thus, whoever from among the contemporary scholars contradicts this Ijma’, then he will have his opinion rejected as the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the unanimous agreement of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) should take priority [over] any other argument...”

Ibn Uthaymeen

- The correct view is that it varies according to when the moon rises in different places...Similarly if it so happens that they sight the moon after Makkah, and the 9th in Makkah is the 8th for them, then they should fast the day that is the 9th for them, which is the 10th in Makkah. This is the correct view, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “When you see it (the new moon) fast and when you see it break your fast.” Those who did not see the moon in their own location have not seen it. Just as people are unanimously agreed that the times for dawn and sunset vary according to their own location, **so too the months are also worked out by location**, just like the daily timings. (Majmu’atul Fatawa, 20)

A Difference in
Opinion Does
not Mean
Disunity

- Are we really unified if we just have the same day of worship?
- There is no unity if unified on a mistake
- There is no point to unity if it entails leaving the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.



Is Moonsighting an Act of
Worship?

Is Sighting the Moon an Act of Worship?

- Following the Sunnah should be a goal of every Muslim
- By following Sunnah, mundane actions become acts of worship (Hand under cheek)
- There is a *Dua'* associated with sighting of the new moon:
اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُمَّ أَهْلُهُ عَلَيْنَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَالْإِسْلَامِ وَالتَّوْفِيقِ لِمَا تُحِبُّ رَبُّنَا
وَتَرْضَى رَبِّي وَرَبُّكَ اللَّهُ
- Having a *Dua'* attached to this action clearly distinguishes it from normal practice.
- Those who abandon sighting may never be able to realize the exact Sunnah of the Messenger ﷺ

The Habits of the Prophet are a Source of Hidayah

- “You should never entertain [the notion] that his actions ﷺ - in every movement – were done without a measure, rule, or system. Rather, all of his volitional acts, that in which the doer may select between two or more things, would not be given done first coincidentally **unless** there was a reason (Ma’na) that demanded its precedence, because careless movements without reason in whichever way seems suitable is the characteristic of animals, and fixing [one’s] movements to measured reasons is the characteristic of the saints (Awliya’).” (Ihya, 1/522)

Never Backwards

- Anyone who tries to follow such a system should be respected for their love of the Sunnah and not degraded for being “backwards.”
- Even if this is just a simple system of their time, if this can still be implemented in our times, then those acts of love should not be discouraged but encouraged to foster our connection with the Beloved Master ﷺ.

How Intently Did the Sahabah Imitate?

- Ibn Umar (ra): “...regarding the tanned leather shoes, no doubt I saw Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) wearing shoes without hair on them...**So I love to wear similar shoes.**” (*Sahih al-Bukhari:166*)

How Intently Did the Sahabah Imitate?

- Abu Ayyub Ansari reported that when food was brought to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), he ate out of that, and sent the remaining part to me, and one day he sent to me the leftovers; (I found that he) had not taken from it at all, for it included garlic. I asked him whether that was forbidden, whereupon he said, "No, but I do not like it because of its odor." He (Abu Ayyub Ansari) said, "**Then I also do not like what you do not like.**" (*Sahih Muslim: 2053*)

How Intently Did the Sahabah Imitate?

- Jabir (RA) narrates: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) took hold of my hand one day (and led me) to his residence. There was presented to him some pieces of bread, whereupon he said: Is there no condiment? They (the members of his household) said: No, except some vinegar. He (the Holy Prophet) said: Vinegar is a good condiment. Jabir said: **"I have always loved vinegar since I heard it from Allah's Messenger."** (*Sahih Muslim: 2052*)

How Intently Did the Sahabah Imitate?

- Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) wore a gold ring or a silver ring and placed its stone towards the palm of his hand and had the name 'Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah' engraved on it. The people also started wearing gold rings like it, but when the Prophet (ﷺ) saw them wearing such rings, he threw away his own ring and said. "I will never wear it," and then wore a silver ring, **whereupon the people too started wearing silver rings.** (*Sahih al-Bukhari: 5866*)

Conclusion

1. The Quran emphasizes a lunar calendar, espoused by many of the Mufasssireen, some more vehemently than others.
2. The Ahadith are replete with narrations on sighting the moon
3. There is a difference between the timings of Salah, and the sighting of the crescent
4. It is not possible to calculate the sighting of the moon, even in “modern” times
5. Following the Sunnah as it was shown by the Messenger is an act of worship

May Allah allow us to be from
those who follow the Sunnah,
spread the Sunnah, and revive it in
difficult times.

