

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلّٰهِ ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَ نَسْتَعِينُهُ وَ نَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَ نَعُوذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ
شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللّٰهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ
لَهُ ، وَ مَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ. وَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهُ
لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَ أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَ رَسُوْلُهُ.

All Praise be to اللّٰهُ .

We praise him and ask him for help and forgiveness. We ask him for protection from the evilness within ourselves and from our own bad deeds. Whom-so-ever God guides to the truth no one can lead astray, and whom-so-ever He leaves misguided, no one has the power to guide.

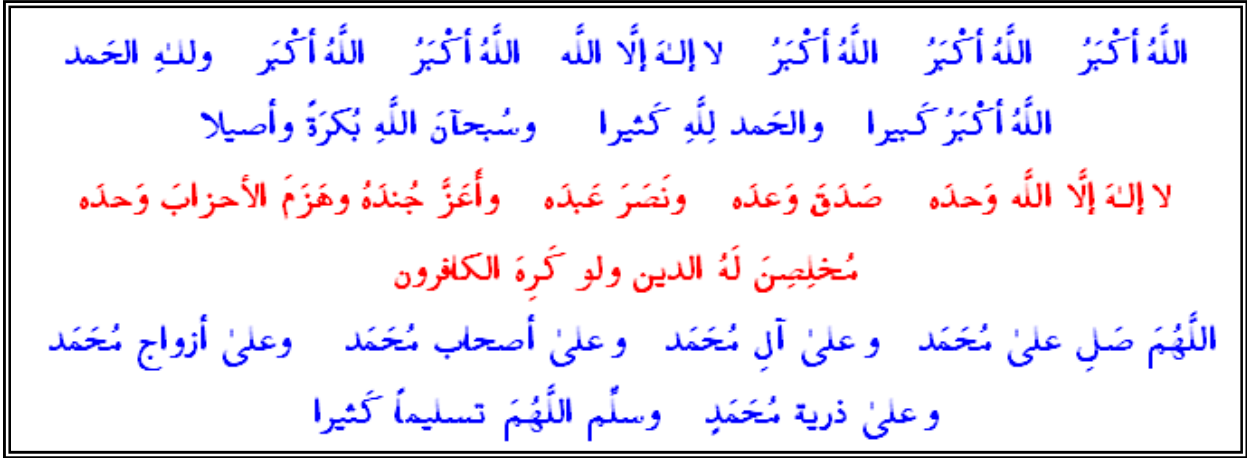
I testify that there is no God but اللّٰهُ to whom there is no partner and I testify that Muhammad ﷺ is his servant and messenger

وَ أَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللّٰهِ جَمِيعًا وَ لَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَ أذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ
كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا

“And hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you; for you were enemies and He joined between your hearts, and by His Grace, you became brothers” (S3, A103)



Dear brothers and sisters, ASA.



Allahu-Akbar, Allahu-Akbar, Allahu-Akbar, La Illaha-Illa-llah. Allahu-Akbar, Allahu-Akbar, Walil-lahil-hamd.

I know it gets a little bit too much to have so many khutbahs in such a few days, but this is the blessing of Eid. We all get an extra reminder in the week, and to be honest, may be we do need that. We have heard from Brother Munir as to what these occasions are about. They are first and foremost about sorting our hearts. The big test for Muslims after such events is to check whether they have taken control of their hearts. The big test for Muslims is to find out whether they have truly changed. This will only become clearer to us with the passage of time and as the opening ayah tells us, our hearts can only be joined by the grace of Allah(SWT)

Time will testify whether we are truly of a “God Conscious” heart. You have heard plenty about “Taqua”, and you know very well that in the final khutbah, the Prophet(SAAWS) pointed to his heart and said: “This is where taqua lies”, and he repeated that three times. Brothers and sisters, I do not need to remind us all of the importance of the heart, and because of that this khutbah had to deal with recent issues that have created some discord amongst ourselves and amongst our hearts. Needless to say it is to do with the Eid in Altrincham being on Wednesday when most, if not all the other mosques had their Eid on Tuesday. The issues that had caused discomfort amongst us are three. Firstly the day of the Eid, secondly the manner in which this decision took place and finally, it is to do with members of the committee being perceived to drive their opinion onto our community with disrespect to the opinion of others.

Because of the sensitivity of the issue, I have dedicated the khutbah to explain to you in some detail what had happened, and ISA I beg your patience and your understanding.

The Prophet(SAAWS) said in a hadeeth saheeh: “Fast to seeing it, and break your fast to seeing it. But should you be clouded, then finish the 30 days.” We also read in the Quran:

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

“The month of Ramadan is when the Quran was sent down as a guidance to all people, and clear guidance and criterion of what is right and what is wrong. Whoever witnesses the month then he should fast it” (S2, A185)

The guidance is that we start Ramadan to seeing the new moon, we start Shawal to seeing the new moon and where-ever you are, you fast according to what you witness, wherever you are.

Just before starting, I would like to ask everyone here, what did the “Mo’azin” do just before he declared the time for Dhuhr? Did he stand outside until he was absolutely clear that the sun is at its highest point before declaring it is Dhuhr. The answer is obviously not. Every one of us now has a clock at home which tells us the Azan. As soon as Ramadan starts, we all get a Ramadan calendar that is related to their local Masjid and we follow it. At Maghrib, we do not stand outside waiting to define for ourselves when the sun has set. We do not phone our friends and relatives to ask if they have broken their fast. We either wait for our Azan clock or we look at our Masjid timetable. If we take all the timetables in Manchester for Ramadan, we all know that there will be some difference of a few minutes between them. Imagine now looking at the time tables of the whole of the UK.

Now that we are clear about this, and now that we know that we may have fasted a few minutes less or a few minutes more, do we have any strong negative feelings about this issue. The same can be said about Fajr. Do we have similar strong feelings about Fajr time. We know that if we eat for a minute or two after Fajr Azan we have wasted our Siyam, and if we eat a minute or two before Maghrib, we have also wasted our Siyam. Yet, no one here or anywhere would try to synchronise the entire Manchester Ramadan timetable. There is a great deal of ease in Islam. You pick up the timetable and you get on with it with the full belief that Allah(SWT) will accept your fast ISA based on your intentions and your behavior.

What did the Sahabah do at the time of the Prophet(SAAWS) and how did they judge the Fajr and Maghrib. They did not have the same technology as we have now, and in fact it was Muslim scientists who went out of their way to develop the science of astronomy and mechanics and time to help the Ummah to better its ability to define time. Would anyone sitting here find it unacceptable in Islam that the brother looked at his watch before he did the Azan?

What then about the sighting of the new moon. As a word of reassurance, what I am about to say is based on the recommendations of the council of fatwa and science of Europe. What the committee of this association has decided some time ago was that we needed to have a reference. We wanted to adhere to an organization that represented people living in Europe. I have lived in Manchester long enough to remember that the various sections of the Muslim community went along with their country's time timetable. The Libyan fasted with Libya, the Saudi fasted with Saudi Arabia and so on. Over the years the wider Muslim community started to change its practice which is exactly what the Quran states:

فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ

“Whoever witnesses the month then he should fast it” (S2, A185)

For the past few years, we in Altrincham started to support the idea that the science of astronomy is now so exact that it is becoming more accurate to determine when the exact point of lining up of the sun, the earth and the moon takes place. This moment determines when the last moon has gone and the new moon is about to be borne. In Arabic, this moment in time is called “Iqtiran”, which probably, literally means marriage. It is the perfect alignment of the earth between the sun and the moon whereby the moon is hidden totally from the sun and cannot be seen. As time passes, the new crescent starts to become visible.

The whole kafuffle when looking at the scientific evidence of the birth of the new moon is not when the moment of “Iqtiran” is, for this moment, I am informed, can be calculated to within seconds for many years to come. Our kafuffle relates to what the hadeeth saheeh states: “fast to seeing it and break your fast to seeing it”.

For us to understand how science and Islam come together in harmony, we need to look at what actually happens. The first important point is to recognize that as the new moon is born, the first large land mass on earth to witness this birth is the southern aspect of South America. With time, the visibility of the new moon spreads north and east. The next important point to understand is that just as the sun sets, the crescent also sets. Science can now calculate with fine accuracy when the sun will set anywhere in the world. I have an electronic clock that can tell me when the sun will set in ten years time on any particular day. I never give this a moment of thought. Science can also calculate when the crescent will set, including the newly born crescent. Now comes the most important point for us Muslims. We were not asked to fast when the new moon is born, but we were asked to fast when we can see the new moon: “fast to seeing it and break your fast to seeing it”. This is where we find the problem.

Science can tell you well in advance if one can or cannot see the new moon based on time and location. Therefore, if we want to consider the visibility of the moon, we need to decide on a location on earth to use as our reference. This becomes clearer when one is having to make a decision on behalf of a large land mass such as Europe. The decision the European council of fatwa and science took was to accept the scientific criterion and to use Makah as their point of reference on earth.

This was for us in Altrincham an amazing decision. Firstly, and for the first time, we find that a major point of Islamic reference in Europe has taken on board the scientific evidence. We in Altrincham are not standing out alone in this anymore, and we were also shown to be well ahead than most other institutions in the UK. I have received a number of e-mails regarding the decisions of the European council on this matter. Our biggest concern however, was the fact that they decided to use Makah as their point of reference on earth, rather than using a point on the land mass of Europe. Nevertheless, we accepted that as we believed that this is a very important decision and we wanted to be part of it.

I received an e-mail from the Council before Ramadan stating that according to scientific calculations the 1st of Ramadan was to be the 1st of September and the 1st of Shawal was to be the 1st of October. I received this information many days before Ramadan, and you will all testify to the fact that it was I who made the first announcement regarding Ramadan and Eid. The committee was anxious about this announcement, but agreed with the decision to announce it early to help our community members sort their times and work.

I received another e-mail from the Council dated the 18th of Ramadan, and I will present it section by section:

- The science of astronomy is now very advanced and its calculations are beyond doubt.
- The exact point of “Iqtiran” can now be calculated with extreme accuracy
- Based on this, the new month is declared when “Iqtiran” has indeed taken place and that for the new moon to be visible it must not set before the sun sets even if this was for a moment
- The European council will now use this criterion to confirm the beginning of Ramadan and Shawal
- The members of the council have asked their followers to guide their communities to understand and accept this scientific methodology as the correct way forward
- They also asked that if the new moon will not be visible on scientific grounds, it should not be sought as any such sighting should be refuted as not possible

Based on that, the council stated “Iqtiran” in Makah will take place at 11:12am on the Monday 29th September 2008, which will be 8:12am GMT. The new moon will set at 18:04pm in Makah while the sun will set at 18:12pm. This means that the new moon will have already set 8 minutes before the sun and it will be impossible to see it in Makah on the 29th of Ramadan after Maghrib.

Similarly, the new moon will set a few minutes in the whole of Europe and ALL the Arabic countries, and it will be impossible to see the new moon in any of these countries after Maghrib. Based on that, the first day of Shawal will be Wednesday the 1st of October 2008. The council finished off its mail by wishing everyone an Eid Mubarak.

Brothers and sisters, I wish you all an Eid Mubarak.

أقول قولي هذا وأستغفرُ الله لي و لكم

2nd Khutbah:

الحمدُ لله ثم الحمد لله. الحمد لله نستعينه ونستغفره، ونعوذُ بالله من شرور
أنفسنا وسيئات أعمالنا. أما بعد:

﴿ قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴾

“Say: O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: Surely Allah forgives all sins: It is He who is most Forgiving, Most Merciful” (S39, Zumar, A53)

Brothers and sisters, let us remind ourselves what we have been doing for the past month:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

“O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may achieve Taqwa” (S2, A183)

Brothers and sisters, the committee of this centre did not stick to the first day of Eid being the Wednesday out of arrogance or disregard to its community. We had an extremely difficult decision to make. We knew that the information from the European council will ultimately be available to all. We were shocked when we found out that Saudi decided that Eid was on Tuesday, but at least we felt comfortable in the fact that the moon was not visible in Saudi on the Monday, and that the scientific data regarding Makah was in fact accurate. I am informed that Saudi has accepted the sighting of the moon in another country. We also know that members of the council who are Imams in nearby Masjids including Leeds surprisingly went with Saudi despite the fact that it was their decision to stick to scientific evidence. I can only assume that one factor in their decision would have been the difficulty in explaining their decision to their communities.

We in Altrincham stood by the Quran and by the Hadeeth. The moon was not visible in Europe what so ever. It was definitely not visible in Manchester. And, according to the hadeeth saheeh, if you were “clouded”, then complete the 30 days. In the Holy Quran, and in a different context, the word “clouded” can even be interpreted as “clouded” in judgement.

I want to reassure our community that our decision was never taken lightly. It was not the decision of one or two members of the community. As the new chairman of our committee, I took the first step in announcing the times according to the European council, and ISA, I will be doing the same next year with your approval. It is my intention to make you all inclusive in the decisions relating to our centre. The committee exists principally to serve you and nothing else. This has always been our. We need your support, and we need your confidence in us. As the voice of true Islam is gaining a foothold in the UK and in the West, ISA, you will be seeing further positive strides in our centre. It does however take time, and on behalf of the committee, I ask you for your patience and for your support.

Finally, it is time that we put all our differences behind us. There has been a tendency for us to take matters to heart based purely on personalities. I will say this, and I hope I am understood in the way I want to express this opinion: Islam combines knowledge and Iman. Knowledge, scientific or otherwise, must be accompanied with the compassion of Iman, and the compassion of Iman needs to be elevated with bettering our knowledge.

Finally, just to give you some encouragement and comfort in our decision making, Syria, Bahrain, Oman and Egypt celebrated Eid on Wednesday. I was informed that in Syria, the skies were clouded and accordingly they completed the month. I am not sure what the reason in Egypt was, suffice to state that The Azhar is one of the main established reference point in Islam in the Muslim Ummah. You may also be pleased to know that our Imam for the Taraweeh did not feel comfortable celebrating the Eid on Tuesday and fasted that day with us.

We ask Allah(SWT) to guide our hearts, guide our minds and guide our eyes to what is truthful. We ask Allah(SWT) to accept our fasting, prayers and Dua' in Ramadan, and we ask him to show us His acceptance in the manner we look at each other and embrace each other in this community. Brothers and sisters, please ask yourself a very serious question. Ask yourself: If my heart has not been mended in this Ramadan, then what happened to my Dua's? Where did all my Dua' in Ramadan go? I leave you with this beautiful ayah:

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلّٰهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ
أَنفُسِكُمْ

“O you who believe stand firmly upright in justice, bearers of witness for Allah, even if it be against yourselves” (S4, A135)