Hijra Calendar in Quran

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Introduction about the Author by Dr. J.M.I Sait. (http://www.hijracalendar.com/contactus1.htm)

Talent is not wisdom and wisdom is not Talent. Talent is the Grace of the Almighty. Wisdom is attainment of knowledge in a subject by way of strenuous efforts. But, if talent and wisdom merges together it becomes a fantastic legend.

Ali Manikfan, native of Minicoy Island in Lakshdweep, is a man of fantastic skill coupled with wisdom of a man, which happens very rarely. Ali Manikfan who acquired deep knowledge in Qur'aan and Islamic teachings is different in life style and views from others. Ali Manikfan is an example for simple life, innocence and purity. Dark in complexion, medium in physique with a Henchman's beard, this man is storage of multifarious knowledge and skill. Even though not having any academic qualification Manikfan's knowledge in different languages is one among his various skills. He is well versed in fifteen languages in which he can speak, read and write. Over and above his mother tongue Mahal, he is used to handle English, Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, Urdu, Arabic, Latin, French, Russian, German, Persian, Sanskrit and Simhala and in some languages he is a scholar too. He has acquired in-depth knowledge in the field of Marine Biology, Marine research, Geography, Astronomy, Social science, Ecology, Traditional shipbuilding, Fisheries, Education, Agriculture, Horticulture, Self-sufficiency and Technology. He has proved his knowledge and mettle in these fields from time to time.

The famous Marine Biologist and Director of Central Marine research institute Dr S. Jones who came to the Island to find and research the variety–wise fishes, soon realized the skill lying in Ali Manikfan who helped Jones very much in collecting very rare species of fishes. Dr. Jones found out and honored the inherent skills lying in Ali Manikfan. Dr Jones has published a book on the fishes of Laccadives in which he gives an account about Ali Manikfan's vast knowledge about sea and fishes, which astonished him. Dr. Jones christened the new species of fish collected by Ali Manikfan as Abudefduf Manikfani.

Ali Manikfan the second son of Moosa Manikfan and Fathima Manika was born on 16-03-1938 in an Aristocratic family in Minicoy Island of Laccadives. His father Moosa Manikfan the last Amin of the Island during colonial rule, sent his son to Kannur for education. But he could not adjust with the school education and left the school and his acdamic career came to an end but his quest for knowledge continued. Ali Manikfan joined the Fisheries lab in 1960. Later, he was promoted as Museum Assistant. He worked in Fisheries for 20 years till his voluntary retirement in 1980.

He took voluntary retirement from the post of Museum Assistant due to the fact that he realized that the research and experiments, which are being done by him, may cause difficulties in carrying out the duties and may not be faithful to the assignment.

Ali Manikfan took up the assignment as Museum Assistant in Central Marine Research, Mandapam, in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu at the request of Dr. S. Jones. In the near by village Vedalay he found a place to perform his experiments and researches. It was a barren land. By constructing a hut in that land Ali Manikfan and family started living there. He says that according to the climate there, huts are more suitable for living. Based on naturalistic efforts, he tried to convert the barren land into a fertile one and he succeeded in it.

He applied for electric connection and waited for a long time. In spite of his repeated requests to the authorities, he did not get the electricity. Disgusted, Ali Manikfan thought about a self-owned powerhouse. His underlying skill awakened and started to work. He cut the top end of a dried palm tree near by his house and installed a windmill on the stake; worked a dynamo of a car. From this he could charge an old battery and the battery supplied the power which lit the lights and operated the radio and other gadgets in his hut. This was ample evidence for Ali Manikfan's skill and self-sufficiency. He developed a system by absorbing the air from the oven and produced energy for a fridge - a low cost fridge affordable by the ordinary people.

For his own purpose he invented a cycle fitted by a roller motor, which one can ride very easily at a speed of twenty-five km per hour. This cycle could work many hours continuously. Ali Manikfan, along with his son traveled up to Delhi on this cycle. He owns a patent for this cycle.

After voluntary retirement from the service, in Central Marine Fisheries Istitute, for two decades, Ali Manikfan had to undertake a historical and fantastic mission - a retracing of the adventure of 9655 km, voyage done by the famous sailor Sindbad 1200 year's ago. Tim Severin, A journalist and adventurer of Ireland wanted to explore the facts of the story 'Sindbad the Sailor'. For this voyage the ship similar to that which Sindbad used 1200 year's ago was to be made by using the same material and technology as were used for the Sindbad. Tim Severin was searching for a suitable person to construct such a ship. At that time Dr. Jones recommended Ali Manikfan's name to Tim Severin. Ali Manikfan undertook the construction work of the ship in 1981. Ali Manikfan and his team reached Oman. Within one year a ship by name 'Sohar' was completed. It took 75000, coconut husks four tons of coir and a lot of Aini trees for the construction of 'Sohar' which performed the voyage, under the leadership of captain Tim Severin with 22 passengers, from Muscat to Canton (China) and the vessel is now in Oman at Muscat preserved as a monument of their culture & heritage. This is a living monument of Ali Manikfan's technological skill. Tim Severin has written a book on this re-enactment of the voyage of Sindbad, by name "The Sindbad Voyage".

Tim Severin expressed his gratitude to Ali Manikfan for the construction of traditional Sindbad's ship and praised Ali Manikfan's skill. Even a foreign expert has noted that this construction was an incredible one.

After returning from Muscat Ali Manikfan worked as an engine converter at Madras in Tamil Nadu. He assisted Arch Bishop Mar Gregorios in constructing an electrical dryer for his fisheries project at Thottapalli. He served as workshop chief in Dr. Jones' Polio Home, at Trivandrum making braces and calipers for polio affected kids. Being interested in agricultural pursuits Ali Manikfan purchased 13 acres of land in Thirunelveli District. He constructed a hut and a windmill to generate electricity. He insisted not to remove spontaneous growth and not to do any work on land including manuring and he named his farm 'Do Nothing Farm'. He believed that watering is not needed for big trees and coconut palms. If at all watering is done it should be away from the tree for, then only the roots will go deep in search of water. It helps to get the yield for longer periods. Though the growth in sapling stage may be very slow, later the growth will be faster and yield will be good. Ali Manikfan's agricultural method proves that the modern agricultural methods are unscientific, contrary to nature and unfruitful in the long run.

Ali Manikfan developed a scientific basis for the Islamic Calendar. The day when Sun, Moon and Earth come in a stright line is called the New moon day. The very next day is the first day of a lunar month. To fix the beginning of a lunar Calendar it is not necessary to watch the rising of the moon. The event can be predicted by calculations by any qualified or experienced astronomer and any layman with some training can check the dates with the phases of the moon. Hence there remains no difficulty in preparing a Universal Lunar Calendar in advance. Ali Manikfan proved that his calculation is scientific and in conformity with the teachings of the Qur'aan. Young scholars who

obtained this knowledge from Ali Manikfan are now engaged in the publication of this calendar in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Ali Manikfan prophesies that based on Islamic law and concepts and by adopting scientific methods, in future, days of fasting, Eid, Arafah etc will be observed by the Muslims all over the world on the same day.

He rendered service as the first president of Lakshadweep Environment Trust, vice chairman of Union Territory Building Develop Board, Member Advisory Board, and Fellow of marine Biological Association of India, Chairman Hijra Committee etc. Manikfan has written a number of monograms and he was encouraged with many honors. He was invited to the National Institute of Science & Technology and Development Studies where he delivered two literary of high academic content. He took part in a seminar on 'Medicines from the sea' at National Institute of Oceanography at Goa. The "Island Formation" and "Meeqathul Qibla" are his notable essays.

Ali Manikfan's family consists of wife, a son and 3 daughters. His son is working in engine department in Merchant Navy. All the 3 daughters are teachers. None of his children studied in Academic institutions. They studied themselves and grew to their own interest. A daughter is running an institution wherein the above said education system is followed. Ten students in the age group of 3 to 5 are studying in this institution. Languages, custom etc, are being taught in an interesting manner. The method of teaching is through play and entertainment. Mother tongue is not taught. Students learn it by themselves. Ali Manikfan continues his experiments, research in productivity of land in conformity with the nature and climate at his farm in Vallioor in Tirunelveli District. He practices "Do Nothing" agriculture and allows spontaneous growth. This area which was dry and barren is now changing into a green and fertile land.

Ali Manikfan says – Nobody has to do anything but refrain from destroying the natural growth. For the past so many years the life of Ali Manikfan is closely attached with nature. He eats all leaves and fruits. Ali manikfan himself says he eats all kinds of leaves that goats eat.

It is unfortunate that till date Ali Manikfan's talents and wisdom have not been utilized fully nor given due recognition. Tim Severin praised Ali Manikfan as "A man in a million" and most of us still do not even know this complete man fully. This account of Ali Mankfan is not complete. It may not be possible to narrate everything about a noble man at a time – we have to study him, his philosophy, his ideology and his ideals and that needs more than a lifetime.

Ali Manikfan gives us the message "WE MUST DEPEND ON OURSELVES" through his own life splendid with self-dependency, self-sufficiency. If we can emulate him in at least one aspect we would have done justice to this prophet of nature and Apostle of Islam. The Almighty keeps the pearl inside the oyster. People have to find out and utilize it. Ali Manikfan is also a precious pearl, we must find him a living legend; we must find life from it.

Dr. J.M.I Sait.

Synopsis

This article published in a journal 1999 is a complete treatise of Ali Manikfan's thesis

The main problem in drawing up a Calendar arises from the fact that the units of time also the month and the year are not exact multiplies of the days or weeks and therefore they get out of step with the sun or the moon. Adding a day in one of the years called a leap year generally rectifies the error. Prophet (saw) condemned this practice and showed that the number of days in a month should be 29 or 30 and that could be determined by observing the Manazil or the phases of the moon or by calculation of the Manazil.

Days of the week are named. They may also be reckoned with numbers or dates. One day cannot have two names or two date numbers. The day name is unique for the whole World so the date number should also be unique. It cannot be different from place to place.

To say that the dates of the Islamic calendar are not predictable and are liable to change is denial of the Ayah of Qur'aan (55:5). The lunar dates are predictable as the sun and the moon follow their orbits in accordance with fixed rules. Confusion and disputes arise by ignoring this fact and looking for the Hilal on the wrong day and the people are led to committing a wrong against Allah (swt) in their religious observances like not fasting on the first of Ramadan or fasting on the day of Eid or observing the day of Arafah a day or two after the event!

Qur'aan and Hadees unequivocally declare that the sun and the moon were created as measures of time and are subject to calculation due to their precise movements in predetermined orbits. We have inadvertently caused errors in the past and now refuse willfully to rectify those errors. The article asserts that

1) The day must be reckoned with the sun's movement and the duration of the months with that of the moon.

2) There can be 12 months only, each of 29 or 30 days and no alterations or additions are permitted.

3) Advance determination of times, dates and events are not contrary to Qur'aan rather it is encourared.

The first of the month is the day immediately following the eclipse or conjunction and the emergence of the moon out of the line of conjunction. It need not be visible from every part of the World. It need not be seen at all.

Hijra Calendar in Quran

"Certainly the number of months with Allah is twelve in His Book since the day He created the Heavens and the Earth. Of these four are sacred. That is the right religion. So wrong not yourselves in them. And fight the polytheists all together just as they fight you all together and know that Allah is with the righteous." (Qur'aan 9:36)

From this verse of the Holy Qur'aan we know that there are 12 months in a year in Allah's reckoning. This has been the measure of time since the creation of the universe. Allah (swt) orders us to follow this system of dating in our affairs of this world. When there are 12 months in a year, every month should have a beginning and an end and there should be clear limits, which separate one month from the other. Allah (swt) says: "Wrong not yourselves in them." We must know the limits of the months so that we may not violate His orders by transgressing them. Allah (swt) has given us the Moon, which is a satellite of the Earth so that we may discern the dates and months by watching her cycle which equals a month.

When the people questioned the Prophet (saw) regarding the waxing and waning of the Moon, he was asked to reply: "say they are dates for the people and the pilgrimage."(Q 2:189). In another verse of the holy Qur'aan it is explained "And for the Moon we have appointed the Manazil (phases) till it returned like an old Urjoon"(Q 36:39). The Moon has 28 or 29 visible phases commencing from the shape of Hilal or Urjoon which attains half at the quarter and full in the middle of the month and back to Urjoonul Qadeem. It becomes smaller day by day and ultimately attains the original shape of the Hilal or Urjoon one day before the end of the month.

The first Hilal sets in the western horizon just after the sunset, if the preceding month is of 29 days, on the 29th of the Hijri month the Hilal may be visible under very clear conditions. If the month is of 30 days the Hilal is not present on the 29th and may not be visible on the 30th day also anywhere in the world. The next month in such

cases begins after completing 30 days for the previous month, without seeing the Hilal. This criterion for the Islamic Calendar is derived from the Holy Qur'aan and the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw).

All months do not begin after seeing the Hilal as generally believed by people and wrongly recorded in the books. The Prophet (saw) ordered to look for the Hilal only on the 29th of the month, not on 28th or 30th. So it is imperative that the 29th should coincide with the Ahillah of the Moon as directed in the Qur'aan. (2:189). If the Hilal is present on the 29th, the next month begins. If it is not present 30 days should be completed. After completing 30 days there is no need to look for the Hilal. The next month begins without seeing the Hilal. If the people looked for the Hilal on a wrong day this method will not give correct results, the dates will be wrong and the calendar becomes impractical. The concept that all months begin after seeing the Hilal with the naked eye is meaningless. The Prophet (saw) has not given such an order.

The Prophet (saw) said in clear words that the months are of 29 or 30 days, sometimes 29 and sometimes 30 days, not alternating in a regular order or sequence. So for a people, who do not know how to calculate, a method of observation of the Hilals is necessary to discern the months. He taught them a simple method of observation. But carelessness in it would make a day of one month go into the other. When a day of Sha'baan becomes a day of Ramadan it would forbid us to eat on its daytime while Allah (swt) has allowed it. Allah (swt) warns us in the Qur'aan. "So wrong not yourselves in them."

From this we know that particularly the four months, which are sacred, and Ramadan should not go out of phase with Allah's calendar (the Moon). Now we have no time to look at the Moon and we have to depend on the calendars, which are not made according to the rules given in the Qur'aan. Our activities have polluted the atmosphere and the visibility has become poor and the first crescent is never seen. If a day of one month goes into the other we would commit the sin of allowing what is forbidden. Therefore a scientific study of the course of the Moon is very essential in our times in order to avoid the sin.

Moon is the calendar designed by Allah (swt) for the use of mankind. Calendar is a system for reckoning the passage of time. The principal problem in drawing up calendars arises from the fact that the immediate units of time, - the solar day, the week of seven days and the months are not simple multiples of each other. The days eventually get out of step with the Moon and an adjustment is needed. This difficulty is usually got over by adding one or more extra days or months at regular intervals in an extended cycle of months or years in order to adjust with the natural system. This is known as intercalation, which is not allowed in the Shariah. "Surely intercalation is an addition to disbelief. The disbelievers are led astray there-by. They allow it in one year and forbid it in another year in order to adjust the count with the period that Allah has made sacred and thus they allow what Allah has forbidden. The evil of their deeds is made fair seeming to them. And Allah does not guide the disbelievers." (Q 09:37) Allah orders the believers to follow the phases of the moon for their dates and calculate the passage of time basing on the natural system without resorting to intercalations, which create confusion in reckoning time.

In the days of the Prophet (saw) people did not know how day and night alternated and how the Moon waxed and waned. The Prophet (saw) was not sent to teach science and celestial mechanics. People could learn such things by their own investigations and studies. The mission of the Prophet (saw) was to teach mankind the spiritual knowledge of right and wrong, the laws of God which man cannot learn by his own efforts. So their question regarding the Ahillah (phases) was answered in a simple way, that it was meant for showing them the dates for programming their affairs of this world and to reckon the passage of their time.

We have the week of seven days that are known by names. The dates of the month stand in place of them. A date denotes a particular day of the week. A date cannot denote two days. We must be able to know in advance on

what day a certain date will fall. Without this we cannot have a practical calendar. The lunar dates shown by the phases of the moon must be predictable by calculations because the moon is subjected to certain laws, which do not change. Calendars can be drawn up basing on the phases of the moon and the dates could be used in our daily life successfully. Observation of the moon can tell us whether the calculations are correct. We should use them without making careless mistakes in reckoning the months.

In the Qur'aan we read, "He it is who made the sun radiate a brilliant light and the moon reflector and ordained for it stages that you might know the count of the ages (of the moon) and the calculations. Allah has not created this but in truth. He details the Signs for an understanding people."(Q 10:5). These verses clearly tell us that Allah (swt) has not created all these things in vain but that we may investigate and learn. The sun and the moon are means for us to reckon time, the ages. But mankind did not care to investigate into them or to learn the laws of their calculations by observing them. Instead they took them for gods and worshipped them. It was only in recent times after the revelation of the Qur'aan, that man started thinking about them.

When Allah (swt) says that the moon is for reckoning time and it contains a date system for mankind to program their affairs in this world, it cannot be a vague and baseless date system. It must be perfect and foolproof without errors. We must be able to find out a day or date of a particular event in history by calculation. It will be foolish to say that we cannot predict a date of the Hijra calendar. It is wrong to change dates of Allah (swt) according to the whims of the people, who look for the Hilal on the wrong day and say that the Hilal is not visible. By this we ridicule the sayings of the Prophet (saw) and put the blame on him that he has not given us clear instructions to learn. He has asked us to observe the moon and find out the dates. But we foolishly look for the Hilal on the wrong day and make mistakes. Changing dates will allow what Allah (swt) has forbidden and our actions will become useless.

It is true that the Prophet (saw) said "do not fast without seeing the Hilal and do not celebrate Eidul Fitre without seeing it." This does not mean that the date cannot be predicted. It only means that we should not be so careless as to fast on the wrong day and celebrate Eid on the wrong day as it is done now. The word 'seeing' should not be taken literally. If we take it in the literal sense the words of the Prophet (saw) will become ridiculous. The Hilal seen in one town will not be seen in the other town. Will it mean that the dates of the two towns will differ in the Islamic Shariah? Allah has already warned us against wronging ourselves in fixing the months carelessly and violating His laws. (9:36).

Change of dates would violate Haram and Halal of Allah. It is a very serious matter. How can we change a date all of a sudden and postpone a sacred period? For example, if Wednesday is the first of a month, then the 5th will be Sunday. To say that 5th will be Monday is absurd. This will happen when a date is changed all on a sudden. A calendar, which is liable to such changes, cannot be used in this world.

Allah (swt) has prescribed certain laws of motion for all celestial bodies. They do not transgress the laws. Allah (swt) does not make any change in his laws. He says, "Have you not seen that Allah makes the night pass into the day and makes the day pass into the night. And he has put the Sun and the Moon into service each pursuing its course till an appointed time. And Allah is well aware of what you do." (Q 31: 29). To say that the dates of the Islamic calendar are unpredictable and liable to change according to the seeing of the people is tantamount to the denial of the Ayahs of the Qur'aan.

From the lessons of Science learnt through the past ages we know that night passes into day and day passes into night because the globe (earth) spins on its axis. The Earth goes round the Sun. The Moon goes around the Earth. The Moon has no light of its own. It reflects the Sun's light. The changing positions of the Moon, the Earth and the Sun cause waxing and waning of the Moon, the eclipses of the Moon and the Sun. Because these things move with precision and there is no change in their laws we can predict their positions and time. We can predict the date and time of a solar or a lunar eclipse exactly. But ignorant people think that a future date of the Islamic calendar cannot be fixed! Any past or future date of the Hijra calendar can be prefixed exactly just as we predict the dates of the eclipses. If it is necessary we can check our calculations with the observation of the Moon so that we may not make a mistake. We do this with the sun. Why should we not do the same with the Moon too? We should not wrong ourselves by making mistakes due to our neglect of observations or calculations.

The Solar and Lunar eclipses occur when these bodies come in a line. They can be predicted by calculations. The seasons change because of the Earth's rotation on a slanted axis around the Sun. Allah (swt) has ordered us to reckon the time depending upon the Moon's rotation around the Earth as seen from the Earth in relation with the Sun. Anyone with common sense can easily understand that the starting point of the month can be only from the point when these three bodies viz. Sun, Earth and Moon come in a line.

Just as we know when the shadow of an object disappears totally, the Sun must be overhead, we know when an eclipse occurs the Sun, the Earth and the Moon, must be in a line. The Qur'aan explains, "And the Moon is eclipsed and the Sun and the Moon are brought together." (Q 75:08, 09) The moon begins its course from this point and when she makes a round and reaches the line again it marks the end of a month. It takes about 29.53 (30 or 29) days.

For finding out the emerging of the Moon from the other side of the Sun after crossing the Sun, people who had no knowledge of Science and calculation in the days of the Prophet (saw) looked for the appearing of the Hilal in the evening sky. After the Moon's last phase, this is just before the sunrise early in the morning and that day evening the Moon sets after the Sun. In those days the atmosphere was not congested and the first Hilal could have been seen in places like Medina situated at higher latitudes. The Prophet (saw) asked them to look for the Hilal on the 29th day. If we go wrong in fixing the 29th, certainly we will make a mistake, a day of a month may go into the other and what is allowed will be forbidden and vice versa by that. (Q 09:37) This is very serious in the sight of Allah (swt).

Day has a fixed time and night has a fixed time. Our ancestors could not measure it accurately. They had no watches or chronometers and they had no need to be so accurate because they were not able to move fast. They were not so busy in the worldly affairs. Now we are able to move very fast and time has become a very important factor. An error of few seconds can cause death to millions of people. Muslims were very particular about time even in those days because they had to perform the prayers at the correct time.

Magrib cannot be prayed in the day i.e. before nightfall. One must be sure of the nightfall. It will be difficult to know this on a gloomy day. They invented and used many devices for the purpose before the invention of the clock. Had the Muslims continued their research they only would have inveted everything. But they gave up thinking and research and others followed suit. Even today, mankind does not have a perfect and foolproof date system, which is essential for recording the events of history and that, is because the Muslims have given up research in their calendar.

The Holy Qur'aan guides people to a perfect date system. But the Muslims want to bear witness to the world that this date system is baseless. They look for the Hilal on the wrong day and make a date disappear. A date system in which a date can disappear all of a sudden cannot be relied upon. Allah (swt) has fixed the limits of the months when He created the heavens and the Earth. People have no right to change them. The Qur'aan explains the limits of the months. "And for the moon, we have appointed stages till she returned like the old 'Urjoon' (dried and shriveled date stalk). (Q 36:39).

"Therefore whosoever of you witness the month let him fast" (Q 2:183) and according to Hadith, those who witness should convey the message to others. Everybody is not charged with the observation of the Moon or the calculations. Those who have knowledge in astronomy can know the onset of a month by calculations. They must take up the responsibility and witness the month correctly for the others. We have many sayings of the Prophet (saw), which explain the matter. We have to examine all of them in order to arrive at a final decision.

People of the Prophet's time did not know astronomy. They had no knowledge of celestial mechanics. They did not know how to calculate the movements of the Moon. Their method was only naked eye observation of the Moon. The Prophet (saw) himself said, "We are a community who does not write or calculate. Our month is 29 or 30 days".

The tradition says that the Prophet (saw) was very particular to observe the Moon, especially for Ramadan. This is because a day of Shaban cannot be made a day of Ramadan. Allah (swt) has forbidden eating in a day of Ramadan, but He has not forbidden eating in a day of Shaban. That is why the Prophet (saw) forbade beginning the fasting of Ramadan one or two days before Ramadan. He has forbidden the fasting on Youmus Shak (doubtful day). People have a wrong belief that every month has a Youmus Shak, but it is only when people fall into doubt owing to clouds or some other reason that they are unable to distinguish the months.

Violation of the orders of the Prophet (saw) is equivalent to the violation of the orders of Allah (swt) and such actions will render all our Amals (actions) useless. So it is very important that we should have clear knowledge of his orders about the ending of Shaban or Ramadan. The Prophet (saw) said, "Do not fast without observing the Moon and do not celebrate Eid without observing it" because there are some months of 29 days and some months of 30 days. Not every month is of 29 days or of 30 days. So we must distinguish the months of 30 days and the months of 29 days. The beginning of the months can be found out without calculations only by careful observation of the Moon. Mere seeing of the Hilal only on a single day, cannot guide us to the correct beginning of the month. One must observe the waxing and waning phases of the moon carefully in order to find out the true beginning of the month. The months do not follow a simple order of alternating or a sequence. One cannot predict the months of 29 and 30 by seeing the Hilal only in the end of Shaban.

To predict the months we must have the data of the Moon. We must learn astronomy and Lunar Sciences and the Celestial mechanics to calculate the moon's orbit to tell the months in advance. The knowledge of Astronomy required for calculating the lunar months will come under Farz Kifaya. If no one learns this, all will fall in error and sin. The expert astronomers prepare the data of the Moon. The laymen can use these data just as they use a calculator and draw the Hijra calendars.

Astronomy and Astrology are two different categories of knowledge. Astrology is forbidden in the Islamic Shariah. There is a misunderstanding that Astronomy too comes under the banned Sciences. Even today some people regard it as a forbidden Science. Ulema of the past, i.e. before 1700 AD believed so because in those days

astronomy and astrology were practiced by the same people and so they were thought to be the same kind of knowledge. But after the invention of telescope the two got separated.

Astrology remained a superstition based on mere conjectures while Astronomy developed into a Science based on experiments and facts. The Prophet (saw) had banned the use of Astrology. People had no knowledge of real astronomy in the days of the Prophet (saw). Some people would have thought that the banning of Astrology is applicable to Astronomy also because the same people practiced these two disciplines in the days of the Prophet (saw). This is certainly a misunderstanding. The Holy Qur'aan invites our attention to the observation of celestial objects and their movements and admires those who study them. The Hijra calendar itself is based on this faculty of Science.

The people of the Prophet's (saw) time could tell the date by watching the changing phases of the Moon even though they did not know celestial mechanics. They had no confusion and they did not need calendars. Their calendar was the Moon. They looked at the Hilals and found out the end of the months correctly. If the Hilal is seen or known to be present, they ended the month in 29 days. Otherwise, one day was added and the month was taken as 30 days, by this time certainly the Moon would have crossed the Sun and come to the other side. The day the crescent rises just before the Sun in the eastern horizon it sets just after the Sun in the western horizon confirming the presence of the Hilal. The moon phase is not visible in the last day of the month.

The average measure of the month is 29.53 days. An inadvertent mistake is regarded as forgiven by Allah (swt), because Allah (swt) forgives our shortcomings. The Holy Qur'aan says: "He knows that you cannot keep its exact measures. So He has turned to you in mercy". (Q 73:20). But the blunders committed today will not be forgiven because they are intentional and due to ignorance or arrogance.

The first Hilal in a month of 29 days could have been visible in a very clear sky even when the difference of sunset and moon set is only a few minutes at places like Medina situated at higher latitudes in the days of the Prophet (saw). It would be silly to look for the Hilal from inside a house or a hilly place where the setting sun cannot be seen on the horizon or from a place where the atmosphere is polluted. If we totally depend on the naked-eye observation method we should look for the Hilal from a suitable place. Otherwise we can go wrong. If we look for the Hilal on the 30th day instead of the 29th, certainly we will make a mistake because some times the Hilal will not be at the visible angle on the 30th. So in our busy days those who look for the Hilal should learn astronomy and know the lunar calculations. Otherwise the whole Muslim community would be led astray because the month would begin on the wrong day and this always happen in our times. It is like the blind leading the blind.

Now we have watches and chronometers and we know how to measure time. There is no need for us to look at the shadow for knowing the prayer time as our ancestors did. We can rely on the watch and we can pray at the correct time even if we do not see the Sun. We have the data of the Sun. We have tables of prayer times prepared in advance. We know at what time the Sun would set or rise on a particular date and place. We have the same data of the Moon also. We know at what time the Moon would set or rise at a given place on earth. These are published every year by the concerned departments of Science. Even a difference of seconds will not be there in these tables because a mistake in them can create problems in navigation.

It would be foolish to change the date by saying that the Moon is not visible or the Moon has not crossed the Sun when we are able to know the exact time of its crossing. If the Qazis and the authorities had the slightest knowledge of the movements of the celestial bodies, they would not commit such blunders and the Muslims would not be misled. Allah's religion will not be ridiculed.

At the time of the Prophet (saw), the Sahaba wanted some clarifications regarding the observation of the Hilal. They asked the Prophet (saw) various questions. What should be done if the Hilal was not seen on the 29th? He said complete 30 days (because the Moon would not have crossed the Sun by that time as it happens in a month of 30 days but it may not be at the visible angle on the 30th also and there is no need to see the Hilal on that day). How many times can this repeat? Every month is not of 30 days. So the Prophet (saw) made this clear by clapping the hands three times and saying Hakadha, Wa Hakadha, Wa Hakadha and holding the thumb and he repeated three times for making it very clear that the months of 30 days usually repeat only 3 times consecutively and the fourth month will be of 29 days even though the Hilal is not seen. This is in conformity with the lunar data. The fourth month getting 30 days is a rare occurrence, which happens only after a hundred years.

A man of Prophet's (saw) time would not have known this. This is enough to prove that Muhammad (saw) was the Messenger of Allah. Otherwise from where did he get this information, which nobody would have known in those days? Even today people are unable to realize this fact. Only those who are well versed in lunar mechanics can know this. But the most pathetic thing is that our Ulema conveniently overlook all these traditions on astronomy as they themselves are totally ignorant and disinterested in this precious science. The result is that the date system prescribed for mankind in the Holy Qur'aan and the Hadees recedes to the backward though none dare call them impractical.

The beginning of Zul Hajj 1414 H had gone wrong even at Makkah al Mukarramah because of confusion. This is absurd in these days of science and technology. It happened only because of carelessness and lack of knowledge on the part of concerned authorities and people have no fear of Allah (swt) in observing His ordinance. Allah says, "O ye who believe, fear Allah as he should be feared and let not death overtake you except when you are in a state of full submission." (Q 03:102).

In Shaban 1414 H Hilal was not seen. It had 30 days. In Ramadan the Hilal was not seen and it had 30 days. In Shawwal the Hilal was not seen and it had 30 days. Then how could Zul Qaida, which is the 4th month, have 30 days according to the instruction of the Prophet (saw)? They made Zul Qaida also a month of 30 days and miscalculated the Zul Hajj, which is also a sacred month, where strict observation of the Moon is very essential to keep in step with Allah's calendar. And Allah (swt) has informed very particularly that the phases of the Moon are meant for dates to program the important events such as Hajj. "They ask you about the phases; tell them they are dates for the people and the pilgrimage." (Q 02: 189)

By postponing a date of Zul Hajj, the day of Arafa (Hajj) had changed and it fell on Friday which made it a Hajjul Akbar, a rare occasion and supposed to be very auspicious, the Sawab of which is said to be 70 times more. It was a mistaken Hajjul Akbar. People do not know about this. More crowds gathered and it led to a stampede only to prove that Muslims are ignorant and ill disciplined.

People are so ignorant even in this age of education and literacy as to believe that the dates of Arabia and India would differ. People go to Arabia and return the same day and yet they do not realize this simple matter! How can the date be different at any two places in the world when the Friday is same for all? The Prophet (saw) has declared the Friday as the 'Sayyidul Ayyam' (the leader of the days). If the 'Sayyidul Ayyam' falls on another day (Saturday), then there will not be any meaning to what the Prophet (saw) had said! How can the date that stands for a day differ when the day is same?

Anybody will laugh at us if they see what we are doing. Muharram 10th, 'The Day of Ashura' is Sunday in Arabia. In Kerala, Maldives and Malaysia it is Sunday, same as Arabia. In Sri Lanka, it is on Monday and in Tamil Nadu and other parts of India, it is Tuesday! How can we have Ashura on different days when the Prophet (saw) said in clear words that the Muslims should observe these sacred days on the same day? Ignorance and faithlessness among us give rise to such funny and unhappy incidents. Are we not far away from Islam?

Let us have a look at the details of the dates for Muharram 1415 H, the first month of the Islamic year. Even a child can tell that the Hijra dates are not in order. Then what is wrong with our educated grown ups, who are doctors and advocates and judges? They cannot understand this.

Makkah	12-06-1994AD = 03-01-1415AH = Sunday
Kerala	12-06-1994 AD= 03-01-1415AH = Sunday
Tamil Nadu	12-06-1994 AD= 02-01-1415AH = Sunday
Sri Lanka	12-06-1994 AD= 02-01-1415AH = Sunday
Delhi	12-06-1994AD = 02-01-1415AH = Sunday
Pakistan	12-06-1994AD = 02-01-1415AH = Sunday
Malaysia	12-06-1994AD = 03-01-1415AH = Sunday
Maldives	12-06-1994AD = 03-01-1415AH = Sunday

Afterwards again Delhi Imam ordered to postpone by one day under the pretext that he could not see the Hilal, making Youm Ashura fall on Tuesday 21-06-1994 = 10-01-1415 and the Chairman of Kerala Hilal Committee ordered to postpone by one day in Kerala under the pretext that he could not see the Hilal and made Youm Ashura fall on Monday 20-06-1994 = 10-01-1415. This is how the authorities play with the dates of Allah's calendar. If Muslims behave like this how would the others accept Islam as the right religion?

Such baseless actions of the religious leaders would appear ridiculous to any thoughtful person. Allah (swt) says in His book, "Today I have perfected your religion and completed my favors upon you and I have chosen for you Islam as the religion."(Q. 05:03). How could the date system of the perfect religion be imperfect? It only proves that we have not cared to learn or follow the Holy Qur'aan or the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw) though we have been with it for more than 1400 years. We are no better than the Asses who carried the books! We have false calendars in use to mislead the people. We do not know that all calendars should be same and that the dates should tally with the phases of the Moon.

A little practice in watching the moon will make anyone knowledgeable enough to tell the correct lunar date prescribed for the people in the Holy Qur'aan. The moon becomes nearly half on the seventh and full in the middle of the month. It is not seen at the end of the month in the morning or in evening and the month is over. The Hilal is present in the evening sky just after the sunset, but not visible now-a-days due to pollution. If the Hilal is present anywhere in the world, that is enough for all. Today it is not necessary to see because we know how to calculate and we have means to verify the onset of the Hilal.

When the matter is so simple, why do some people wish to differentiate in the celebrations of Eid and sacred days saying that they have not seen the Hilal? Should everyone or every country see the Hilal? It is only because they want to show that they can change the laws of Allah (swt), as they like. The Holy Qur'aan says: "It is not the eyes that are blind but it is the hearts, which are in the breasts that are blind" (Q. 22:46)

When it is said to them that there is a mistake in the calendars and the dates are not in accordance with lunar Manazil that Allah (swt) has set, they say, they have been following it like this long since and their forefathers also

were doing so. Regarding such people the Holy Qur'aan says, "And thus has it always been that we never sent any Warner before them to any township but the evil leaders thereof said, we saw our forefathers following a certain course and we are following in their footsteps."(Q 43: 22)

They are not ready to follow the right path. They want to stick to their old dogmas, which the Holy Qur'aan or the Sunnah does not warrant. The example of such people is also explained in the Qur'aan. Allah says about those who do not want to look at the signs of Allah (swt) but want to see their calendars without observing the moon as commanded by the Prophet (saw). "I shall soon turn away those who behave proudly on earth in an unjust manner, from my signs and even if they see all the signs they will not believe therein and if they see the way of the righteous they will not accept it as their way. If they see the way of the wicked they will accept it as their way. This is because they have treated our signs as lies and were heedless of them." (Q 7:146)

When they are asked to study and understand the movements of the celestial bodies they simply say, we do not know it. Why cannot they learn the sciences, the study of which is demanded by the Qur'aan? Has Allah (swt) asked them to be among the ignorant? The Prophet (saw) said, "Acquire knowledge even if it be from China." Why can't some of the Alims learn Astronomy and the Celestial mechanics? The whole Muslim community is being misled because of their ignorance. The Khazis declare the sacred dates on wrong days without observing the Hilal as commanded by the Holy Prophet (saw) and the others are laughing at the foolishness of the Muslims.

Allah (swt) has deputed Muslims to lead others. But they are making themselves a laughing stock. All are busy with their own affairs. No one has time even to talk about this important matter of the Muslim Ummah. The persons in charge receive their salaries for conducting prayers and marriages. They are compelled to earn more money in order to cope with others. They have no time to study religious matters. Yes, they too have to fill their bellies. But the people are not ready to pay them enough to meet their expenses so that they may be out of want to devote their full time and attention to the study of religion. Why can't some of them be deputed for learning such important matters? Allah (swt) says in the Holy Qur'aan, "It is not possible for all believers to go forth together. Why then, does not a party from every section of them go forth that they may become well versed in religion so that they may warn their people when they return to them, that they may guard against evil?" (Q.9:122).

So it will be better for the community to depute suitable Alims to learn the subject and appoint them for computing the Hijra calendars according to the Holy Qur'aan and Sunnah and observing the Moon to see if there is any variation in the calculation so that we may not go wrong in the months declared sacred in the Qur'aan. We cannot go according to the false calendars propagated by others and put ourselves into the wrong way by miscalculating the sacred periods and making ourselves liable to the displeasure of Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw).

May Allah forgive us if we have made mistakes and shower his blessings upon us!

Ali manikfan

Meeqatul Qibla and Islamic Calendar

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Synopsis

Meeqath is a fixed place or station to refer a thing or action to be performed. Meeqathul qibla is an imaginary line running from the North Pole to the South Pole, which determines the turn around point towards Qibla for the purpose of Salah. This line coincides with the International Date Line and the people on the either side of this line turn their face away from those on the other side in order that both face the Qibla.

The Islamic calendar is based on the movement of the moon about the Earth. One complete circle around the earth takes 29.53059 days. As a result the lunar months have 29 or 30 days, the actual measure depending on the occurrence of the conjuction and subsequent emergence of the moon from the sun. However not more than three consecutive months with 30 days and not more than two consecutive months with 29 days are possible except as very rare occurances.

This Meeqathul Qibla or International Date Line passes through sea in order that people in the same town do not have to observe Jumu’a prayers on two different days or to turn against each other when facing Qibla.It is nine hours ahead of Makkah. The days begin here at Zero hour at noon when it is Sahar or the last part of night at Makkah- the hour when Allah (SW) ordered the change of Qibla and change of the day.

Some astronomers have suggested use of lunar Date lines, which shifts every month. This is impractical, unscientific and cumbersome.

Meeqatul Qibla and Islamic Calendar

All of us are familiar with the word "Meeqat" in connection with the Hajj pilgrimage. As we know, the Meeqat is a fixed place or a station at which the pilgrims don the 'Ihram', that is the pilgrim's garment.

Now I am trying to explain about another Meeqat which is very important for the Muslims, - that is "The Meeqatul Qibla". The former Meeqat which we already know is connected with a place and this 'Meeqat' is connected with the place as well as the time, where a traveller going around the Earth has to change his Qibla from east to west or vice versa, his day and his date and the time when the world has to change her day, for example, - from Thursday to Friday.

We must have a universal date line, for the Islamic world to calculate the dates of the Islamic calendar, which is based on the movement of the Moon.(Qur'an 2:189). The date line of the Islamic calendar should be marked in the light of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah, and this should be with reference to the Ka'ba, which is situated in the Ummul Qura, the mother of towns, - that is Makkah al Mukarramah. The Ka'ba is the Qibla of the Muslim prayer, - the direction to which a Muslim must turn during his prayer.

I like to name this Date line, which would be established, as 'The Meeqatul Qibla'.

What is the use of such a date line?

We calculate time in relation to the rotation of the Earth with reference to the Sun, which is the largest and brightest object that all of us can see in the sky. The Qur'an says that all celestial bodies are floating in their orbits

in space (Q.36:40) under certain calculations. So the Sun too is moving according to the Qur'an. We know our time only in relation to the Sun.

Perhaps the most important thing in our life is time. The time that is lost can never be regained. So time has to be spent with utmost care. For this we must pre-plan our affairs and carry out the programmes chalked out using a reliable calendar with defined and assigned dates. Islam gives certain rules to guide us in this venture.

Islam teaches us how to manage our time by appointing 5 prayers for a day, which must be performed punctually at the fixed timings. The time for the prayers was measured in the days of the Prophet (saw) with the help of the shadow of an object cast by the Sun.

The Zuhar prayer is performed when the shadow disappears and the Sun is on the meridian, after the first declination of the Sun, - that is when the Sun has passed 90 degrees, the Asar prayer, after the shadow equals the object, - that is when the Sun has passed 135 degrees, the Magrib prayer, after sunset, - that is when the Sun has passed 180 degrees, the Isha prayer when the glare of the setting Sun has disappeared, - that is when the Sun has passed 202.5 degrees and the Fajre prayer, when the first rays of the rising Sun appear, - that is when the Sun has passed 337.5 degrees if the Sun is taken to be at 0 degree at the beginning on one's horizon at sea level. (This is the basis of time. This will be correct on the day of equinox on the equator. The other details are not given here.) The Qur'an explains this in the verse 17:78 (see the diagram No: 1).

It will be interesting to note that the period of night 9hours equals the distance from the Qibla to the Meeqathul Qibla. The last time to confirm the onset of Ramadan at Makkah, the Centre of Islam is their Sahar time. At this time the last sunset of the day takes place at Central America and it is noon at the Mathla'h, where the first Jumu'a prayer is performed. The distance from the Qibla to Central America is 9hours. Thus the Qibla (Ka'aba) is placed in the middle of the world.

Our time is dependent upon the Sun's angle in relation to the horizon at sea level. We have converted all these angles to our watches. We can tell the Sun's angle in hours, minutes and seconds without looking at the Sun or its shadow. There is no difficulty in telling our time even when the Sun is not visible for days together because its movement is subjected to certain calculations. The Qur'an says: "The Sun and the Moon are with calculation" (55:5)

We cannot record the count of our time in minutes or hours because the figures will be too long. Pages will be required to write them down. So we use a Date, - that is days, months and years to make the recording easy. A date stands in place of a particular day of the week, a month and a year. A day has 24 hours and a week 7 days, which have numbers or names having same meaning in different languages. They are 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, Jumu'a and 7th day in the Islamic calendar and in English Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday and this is recognized by all people in the world. The most important day for the Muslims is the Jumu'a or Friday on which all Muslims in a town must perform the Jumu'a prayer at noon in a congregation.

Where on the Earth should the first Jumu'a of the week be performed? How can this place be fixed according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah?

The verses of the Holy Qur'an "He merges night into day and he merges day into night" (35:13) indicate that the Earth must be a globe rotating on its axis and that the rotation would make the night merge into the day and vice versa. The hemisphere on which the Sun's light falls experiences the day while the opposite hemisphere experiences the night. As the globe rotates, night passes into day and day passes into night. The first hemisphere in

which the Ka'ba is situated and contains Australia, Asia, Europe and Africa enjoys the day-time while the second hemisphere containing two Americas enjoys the night-time. As time proceeds from east to west on earth, the five prayers as mentioned above, must be performed at the stipulated times in succession according to the angles of the Sun without violating the order. Thus no time in the world passes without a Muslim prayer.

In the second year of the Hijra the order to turn towards the Ka'ba, while in prayer, was revealed in the Holy Qur'an (2: 144). Supposing the Earth to be a vast area with the Ka'ba at a particular place, imagine what will happen to the people in prayer on both sides of the Ka'ba at the last ends. A diagram will explain this better. (Diagram No2)

The Qibla of a town cannot be different in the Shariah. All Muslims in a town must face to one direction in their prayer.When all people turn towards the Ka'ba, which is almost in the centre, what will happen to those at the ends, if the ends are joined together as it is in the globe? The people at the ends will face towards the opposite directions and their backs will meet! This condition is not contradictory to the Qur'an, which says: "Righteousnes is not that you face East or West." (2:177). So there must be a place on the Earth, where Muslims must necessarily turn towards the opposite directions in order to face the Qibla during their prayers. Where on the Earth could this happen?

The Zuhar prayer is performed at noon everyday and there is no Zuhar prayer on the Jumu'a day. So when the Zuhar prayer of Thursday is over in the world the Jumu'a prayer of Friday must begin immediately and there must be a place on the Earth, where some people pray the Zuhar prayer while the others pray the Jumu'a prayer. Here the sudden change of Thursday to Friday will be experienced. This is inevitable in the world. The change over time of Zuhar to Jumu'a is the Zero hour of the world. The days change here in the world at noon. This is the place, where two days of the Jumu'a and losing or gaining of 5 canonical prayers of a Muslim traveller crossing from one side to the other, becomes inevitable. This too cannot happen in a town or on a land inhabited by people. There must be a line demarcating the two groups to avoid confusion. Such a place can be only in the sea.

The Imams of the past have written down the rules for such a place. According to them, it should be separated by a sea or an uninhabitable mountainous barrier, which makes the two sides approachable only by travel in which the Shariah could allow the lessening of the canonical prayers. Here a traveller must change his Qibla, his Day and his Date. This is the Meeqatul Qibla of which we have already mentioned. The Meeqatul Qibla is one of the Signs of Allah. It must be recognized and respected by all people. (Q.22:32). (see the diagram 3)

Since a traveller is allowed to lessen his prayers (4:101) the peculiarity of losing or gaining of prayers during a travel accross the Meeqatul Qibla is not a problem. The diagrams explain how the lines of Qibla radiating from the Ka'ba towards east and west meet and make a line passing from the north pole to the south pole of the Earth. There is no question of the lines radiating towards north and sounth of the Ka'aba meeting each other because people cannot pass through the poles or live there.

It is interesting to note that the Qur'an does not mention north and south in connection with the Qibla! Only the lines radiating towards east and west could meet each other and this forms the dateline which marks the place to begin the day in the world. It passes through the Bering Strait, which is the only gap separating the continents of Asia and America. It has to be zigzag to allow one Qibla, one day and one date for those who had already settled and established their day and Qibla when they occupied the islands near this line and were living there without knowing each other till the explorers detected them. The inhabitants on the East observe the East Qibla and Thursday, while the inhabitants on the West observe the West Qibla and Friday. There is one day's difference at

this place on the Earth. The Islamic Shariah forbids the change of day, date or Qibla at any other place on the Earth.

The Meeqatul Qibla is exactly 9 hours ahead of Makkah. Days and dates of the Isalmic calendar begin here at the Zero hour at noon. Corresponding time at the Ummul Qura, the Centre of Islam is "Sahar" (the last part of the night) and at London, situated on the line opposite to the Meeqatul Qibla, it is midnight. Allah (swt) had ordered the Prophet to observe a singular Qibla and change of day at 'Sahar' time in the second year of the Hijra about 1400 years ago and the Muslims began to practice it since that time. The Date Line of Islam thus defined at the time of the Prophet (saw) was found out by the science in 1886 A.D. Those who established it did not know the Islamic rules! Science does not contradict Islam.

Our knowledge of time is in relation to the rotation of the Earth with reference to the Sun. To count the number of rotations of a wheel two marks are necessary - one in the rotating wheel and one stationary, outside. When these two marks meet, one rotation is counted. In the same way to count the rotations of the Earth a mark on the Earth and a mark outside are needed. The mark on the Earth is the Meeqatul Qibla and the external mark is the Sun. When both meet, one rotation for the Earth or one day is counted. To get the correct count we need a stationary mark outside. But our mark, the Sun is moving and the Earth too is perambulating the Sun. So we will not be able to count the number of the Earth's rotations exactly with the help of the celestial objects which too are in motion. We need not worry about the correct number of the Earth's rotations because our time is not connected with that. Our days depend only on sunrise and sunset.

We record the count of days in dates. So if we calculated with the average length of a day, measured in relation to the Sun or the other objects which too are really moving, we will make errors in recording the passage of our time. So the Creator has provided us with a wonderful system to calculate our time and has asked us to use the Moon for the purpose so that we may not make mistakes and be confused in calculating our time. "He has appointed Manzils for it (the Moon) so that you may know the count of the ages(of the Moon) and the calculations."(Q.10:5). We follow the instructions of the manufacturers in the case of our home appliances. In the same way we must follow the instructions of the Creator in order to be on the right track.

The day dawns first for those who live near the 'Meeqatul Qibla' and it is 9 hours before Makkah. They must observe all religious rites 9 hours before Makkah. In fasting and feasting also they will be 9 hours ahead. They cannot postpone any ritual saying that the Centre has not yet done it. The order of time sequence in the world must be strictly adhered to. Violation of time order in performing the rituals is forbidden in the Shariah. For the same reasons a time bound prayer cannot be postponed. (2:189, 17:78, 9:37). So a gap of 24 hours (a day) must be observed between the islands on either side of the Meeqatul Qibla, the International Date Line. This means that those to the west shall observe Friday while those to the east observed Thursday.

Meeqatul Qibla is the Date line of the Islamic calendar and the days begin depending on the Sun (25:45). So a date which stands in place of a day should also begin with the day. A date line cannot be shifted from place to place. The Lunar Date Lines suggested by some astronomers are neither scientific nor Islamic.

After having defined the beginning of a day under the light of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah let us try to define the beginning of a month of the Islamic calendar. The Qur'an has already explained that our dates and months should depend on the Moon. The Sun cannot catch the Moon.(36:40). The Earth has already caught it. It is a satellite of the Earth that rotates around the Earth. One rotation of the Moon around the Earth with reference to

the Sun is one month. As the Moon tarvels in its course, the change of its position in relation to the Sun, creates changes in the phases of the Moon seen from the Earth. This marks the dates for the people.(2:189)

A solar eclipse (New moon) can occur only when the Sun, the Moon and the Earth are in a line, - the Moon between the Sun and the Earth. Since it can happen at any part of the day, it is called the new moon day. The Islamic month ends with it and the next month begins. Since a month can begin only with a day, the next day is treated as the first day of the ensuing month. Some times a solar eclipse can be experienced at the time of the Eid prayer at some places on the Earth. Imam Shafi (RA) has corroborated this.(Fat'hul Barri Vol.2)

The Islamic month ends when the Moon completes her cycle around the Earth and this is to be calculated taking the Sun as the reference point to begin the cycle. When the Sun, the Moon and the Earth join in a line, the cycle is complete and the next one begins. This moment is known as the conjunction or new moon. This may happen at any part of the day, in the beginning or in the end and it is called the new moon day. This will fall on one of the days of the week. The next day will be the first day of the next month. The Hilal can be seen at different times at different places on the Earth just as the sunset, many hours before and after the conjunction, because the the Sun and the moon are far apart. It happens due to the error of parallax. The month changes after the conjunction.

During an eclipse of the Sun the shadow of the Moon falls on the Earth. It crawls on the surface of the Earth as the time moves on. If one follwed the shadow the eclipse can be viewed for a longer time. The first and last are not treated as conjunction. The middle one alone is the conjunction. This is better explained by a diagram. See diagram No.4.

Since the dates of the Islamic calendar must tally with the phases or the Manzils of the Moon, (2:189, 10:5, 36:38-40) full moon day(a lunar eclipse) should occur only in the middle of the month when the Moon is behind the Earth and the last day of the month should be the new moon day (solar eclpse) when the Moon is in front of the Earth towards the Sun. So it will be clear that the dates depend on the angles of the Moon in relation to the Sun and that the dates could be found out exactly by using the calculations.

Our time depends upon the angles of the Sun in relation to the horizon at sea level. Our dates depend upon the angles of the Moon in relation to the Sun. The horizon has nothing to do with the date. We can know our time without seeing the Sun or the shadow. There is no objection to use calculations or any other means than the shadow to find out our time. Then why should there be any objection to use the other means than the seeing of the Hilal for finding out our dates? The Qur'an informs us that both the Sun and the Moon are with calculations.(55: 5) We can use calculation for both, our time and our date. The Ulema should give a verdict on this issue.

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) who taught the Qur'an to the illiterate Arabs of his time, taught them the easy method of finding out their time by observing the Sun. He also taught them the easy method of finding out their dates by observing the Moon. They were not in the habit of writing, calculating or recording their time. The Prophet (saw) asked them to learn wisdom, the art of reading, writing and recording. He did not forbid them to learn but on the other hand, he enjoined them to acquire knowledge in every faculty of learning from wherever it was possible.

In the days of the Prophet (saw) the Arabs were using the Jewish lunar calendar which had a fixed number of days for every month, 30 or 29 alternating and had intercalations (leap years) to adjust their artificial months with the

natural calendar. He gave them instructions to correct the dates according to the Moon's Manzils (2:189). He ordered them to avoid the intercalations and use the natural calendar. The deviation of a date from the Manzil of the Moon would cause a day of one month go into the other.This was not allowed because if a day of Sha'ban entered into Ramadan, it would violate the Halal and Haram of Allah (swt). Sha'ban according to the Jewish calendar always had 29 days where as it could have 30 days also. All Ramadans had 30 days, but Ramadan too could have 29 days according to the Moon's phases (Ahillah). That is why the Prophet (saw) ordered them to observe the Moon and correct the dates accordingly. The final amendments of the calendar were announced during the Hajjathul Wida.

There are 12 months in a year (9:36). We know what will happen if a date is skipped over. Qur'an forbids the transposition of dates. (9:37).

The observation of the Moon for long periods gives us the average number of days for a year as 354.3671 and 29.53059 days for a month. (2953059x12=354.3671). Astronomers have proved that the statement of the Prophet (saw) that the lunar months have 29 or 30 days only is correct.

Since the dates of the months are related to the days of the week, but not to the places, the months of the Islamic calendar should begin from the Meeqatul Qibla with the day. Now the Muslims do not practise the Islamic calendar, instead they rely and depend on the Christian calendar for their daily use. So they do not have any idea about the Islamic calendar. They think that the Islamic months will begin only when they see the Hilal with their naked eyes at the sunset differently at different places! It is foolish to believe that time will wait for man and say that different towns would have different dates in the Islamic calendar!

Julius Caesar had instituted the Julian calendar in 46 B.C. Later the Christians adopted it as their calendar. This Christian calendar was reformed by Pope Gregory xiii in 1582. It had accumulated an error of about 10 days by 1582 A.D! Pope Gregory removed 10 days and changed the rules of the calendar, and it is known as the Gregorian Calendar since then.

The exact measure of the solar year was not known when Julius Caesar introduced the calendar. Even today we do not know the exact measure! It was regarded as 365.25 days. Later it was estimated that the Earth takes 365 days 5hrs 48 minutes and 49 seconds to make a rotation around the Sun according to the correction made in 1582 AD. This is 365.2422 days and this too will change whenever the accumulated error of days is corrected at intervals!

The error of 0.0078 days added up every year amounts to 15.6 days in 2000 years! This means that 15.6 days would have passed without sunrise! In a solar based dating system days will accumulate without our notice and days will have to be eliminated from the calendar at intervals in order to adjust with the natural system. This sort of meddling with the calendar will create confusion in calculating the passage of our time. Such a dating system cannot be good for recording the events of history.

Had the people used the lunar phases for their dates to record the events in the past, the historians would not have had problems in finding out the actual days on which the incidents in the past had occurred. But now we are in utter confusion. We do not arrive at the recorded date and day by calculations. The Qur'an says "The Sun and the Moon are with calculation" (55:5). So both the Sun and the Moon should be used for calculating the passage of our time. A dating system in which the Moon has no role cannot be accurate.

Renowned mathematicians and astronomers have calculated the date of birth of the Prophet Muhammad(saw). But all of them have gone wrong! They give different dates for the Prophet's birth(saw)! The fact that a person cannot be born on two days indicates that there is some thing wrong with their calculations. Their dates do not tally with the historical records too. This is because the calendar had been meddled with and the omissions are not taken into account correctly.

We have a record of two events of the past recorded in two calendars. If we calculate the number of days elapsed between the two incidents according to the two calendar systems we can see what happens when a defective calendar is used to record time. The equivalent dates and days of two solar eclipes of the past are given below as recorded according to two calendars.

The dates of the Solar eclipses of 0622 and 1990AD according to CE and ME.

1. CE. 22-07-1990 Sunday ME. 30-12-1410 Sunday
2. CE. 14-07-0622 Wednesday ME. 30-12-0000 Wednesday
8-00-1378 years 00-00-1410 years=Time elapsed
Total No. of days according to C.E. 1368 x 365.25+8 = 499670.00 days
Total No. of days according to M.E. 1410 x354.3671 = 499657.16 days

The error accumulated in C.E for 1378 years is 12.39 days. At the same time there is no error in M.E. From this we can see that the Lunar dating system is perfect. If we calculated without involving the Moon we will make mistakes and we will not be able to know that there is a mistake. We will be left in confusion. It is high time that we adopted the scientific dating system and used it in our day-to-day life so that we may not create confusion for the future generations.

If we have the concensus to prepare the scientific lunar calendar based on the phases of the Moon as per the rules of the Qur'an for the entire world, we can have the first of Ramadan on the same day for each and every Muslim on earth. Likewise we can celebrate the Eid also on the same day in all countries. Let me remind that the Holy Prophet (saw) has forbidden to fast on the Day of Eid. How is it justifiable to have fasting and feasting on the same day? If we agree that it can be so we are admitting that there can be mistakes in the calculations of Allah the Almighty also!

By observing Ramadan and Eid on the correct days, which will be same for all people in the world as commanded by Allah, we will be able to acheive the much required unity, harmony and peace of the people in all parts of the world.

Kindly think over the problem and the relevance of the Meeqatul Qibla which is very important to define the dates of the Islamic calendar. May I once again remind that The Islamic Lunar Date Lines suggested by some Muslim astronomers are neither scientific nor Islamic.

May Allah bless us with open minds and intelligence to find out His orders and systems which are hidden in Nature and help us to live accordingly!

Ali Manikfan

Dated : 10-11-1996/21-07-1419