**[Modelling a Muslim friendly moon](https://nation.com.pk/11-Feb-2020/modelling-a-muslim-friendly-moon%22%20%5Ct%20%22_new)**

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Moon has a marvelously monumental place in the Muslim mindset, faith and celebrations of their festivals. In Holy Quran it is vowed as a wonderful creation of Allah that can propel the people to believe in His immense power, prominence, wisdom and grandeur and hence in His will, ways and the codes and commands proclaimed for the faithful. One of Moon’s myriad benefits for the Earthlings since the times immemorial has been that its first sighting and subsequent stages have been used to mark the significant events, feasts, functions and festivals. Its sighting certainly can no longer help to schedule and execute several indispensable and intricate human needs and activities like sowing, cultivation, harvesting, animal breeding, pregnancy, postpartum requisites, perspective planning, global travels, transactions, treaties and commitments yet it is still revered as an indicator for various rites, events, feasts and festivities.

Its crucial significance for the Muslims began as the Holy Prophet (PBUH) prescribed its sighting to schedule the lunar months and major events and observances like Ramadan, the ensuing Eid, Eid-ul- Adha and the Haj. The Prophet while pioneering this, however, also stressed that ‘We are Ummi’ and even counted the number days in a month on his fingers.

The word ummi was indeed immensely realistic and prescient as it evidently epitomized the general level of literacy when the Holy lands were mostly insulated and oblivious of the Greek, Egyptian and Persian power politics and prominence in knowledge and advancement including the prevalence of the Solar calendar improved about six hundred years earlier. The Muslims later rose not merely to conquer most of these lands but also to inherit and excel in their expertise, knowledge and technology and to impart several new dimensions to their development. Added to it are also the Quranic verses verifying an unwavering pace and pattern in the paths and motion of the Sun and the Moon and hence also in their appearances or sighting. Several verses such as`6:96and 55:5 emphasize that the Sun and the Moon travel with precision and follow a specified or calculated path.

If the Muslims had maintained their excellence in the science of sighting, detecting,, tracking and computation skills, they would have also reigned the realms of space and astronomy that help us pinpoint the paths, position, atmosphere, environment, weather and chemical composition of the Moon and other celestial bodies in our own solar system as well as many of those millions of miles further away in space. They would have known the techniques to track the space entities invisible to the human eye but still capable to collide and create catastrophe on Earth. Consequently many of our fundamentalist and conservative cadres may not have been so irretrievably rooted to the original tradition of the physical sighting of the Moon with their own eyes. Some of them indeed accept and rely on eyeglasses and telescopes to aid and improve the sighting process. But they don’t realize that the eye glasses and the telescopes, invented in 1290 and 1608, have now become pretty antiquated appliances for extending the field of human vision. The sighting and tracking technologies since then have been stunningly transformed not merely for probing the remote space but also for delving deeper down the ocean floors, dark dreary bowels of the Earth and the diseased cells in the hidden human interiors. Realizing these facts, most Muslim segments like the International Ulemas of Istanbul, the European Council of Fatwa and Research and the Fiqh Council of North America, have adopted the expert astronomical calculations as a valid shar’i method to determine the lunar month and routinely rely on the charts provided by the renowned astronomical societies. The lunar linked Jewish, Christian and Chinese festivals similarly have also long followed the astronomical logs.

A substantial segment of the Muslim devotees in the developing countries, however, despite their overt obsession to avail most of the latest technological innovation and facilities, spurns the modern techniques for moon sighting sticking to the primitive mode and means. Their mindset often stirs a dilemma as many other larger swaths particularly the youth, like to move with world in celebrating the festivals with the pinpoint prediction and precision like Easter, Dewali, Christmas, Cricket Galas and their own birthdays. The mad rush of the instant and up to the minute news blast by our mushroom TV channels, further fuels this frustration of the uncertainty, delayed delights, despondency, agony, anxiety and the impatience for the festivities.

The modern science and technology have, however, now reached a stage to implant and furnish several new supplementary features to the Moon to ensure its simple straightforward sighting even to the infants, toddlers or to the most skeptic elderly faithful viewers, the moment it actually attains its visibility in any certain selected and defined regions. The operation actually can be made to incorporate a console of sound and scintillation lunar fixtures to facilitate its widest sighting. The scintillation implants on it, would enhance its illumination to tear through any intervening haze, dust, clouds and storms. The sonar one would play a prerecorded and consensus based salutary message like Salam to all Pakistanis, `I am here over (say Multan) wishing you a very blessed and ecstatic Eid”. So even the blind would be blissfully buoyed by its benediction. It can similarly splash a slick epilogue while returning to disappearance.

The Parliament for this evidently would have to demarcate some suitable regions to serve as the first fields of visibility and the ground signal scanning sites. It would also have to allocate appropriate funds to be paid to the NASA or some other competent space giants to design, install and operate this arrangement. These costs could be cut by collaboration with other Muslim countries making it a first real mega Muslim leap to end the agony and the uncertainty suffered through the centuries and monopoly of the Mullahs and the Muftis on this free for all celestial sighting spectacle.