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Problems with Fiqh- Jurisprudence

Following the right chain is very important otherwise the followers of the wrong imam are bound to go astray. It will have an effect on their deeds.

The Ismailis, mostly Bohras follow the book of Da'aimul Islam written by Qadi al-Nu'man, and use it as their guide for jurisprudence. Qadi al- Nu'man served four of the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams and was in their service for 50 years yet this book has no sayings of the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams. Why? The divine Imams are supposed to be full of knowledge and wisdom then how come Qadi al-Nu'man did not record any of the sayings of the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams in his famous book Da'aimul Islam? It took Qadi al Nu'man thirty years to complete this book yet in these thirty years he found nothing worth recording about the Ismaili/Fatimid Imams in this book? Moreover, the book has traditions of the Holy Prophet (sawa) and the Imams up to Imam al-Sadiq (as), but has no chain of narrators, and the chain of narrators is very important in determining if the tradition is authentic or not, especially when the content of the tradition is unusual and does not match the norm.

Like mentioned earlier, following the right chain is very important otherwise the followers of the wrong imam are going to perform the deeds that are not accurate and questionable. As an example, I'd like to examine the Bohra Calendar. The Bohras take pride that they follow a fixed calendar; therefore, they know the exact date when a new lunar month would start and when it finishes. On the other hand, the majority of the Muslim world relies on moonsighting to determine the start and end of a month. As per the Holy Qur'an and traditions of the Holy Prophet (sawa), Imam al-Baqir (as) and Imam al-Sadiq (as), the Muslims are instructed to sight the new moon to determine the start and end of a month.

I would like to shed some light on the Bohra calendar and prove that the Bohra Calendar is not accurate.

[The Bohra Calendar & Moon sighting](#)

Quran tells us to follow the lunar calendar; however, it does not specify the exact number of days in a given month. For instance, Quran does not tell the Muslims that Muharram is always going to be 30 days, nor does it say that the Holy Ramadhan is always going to be 30 days.

The Holy Quran, Surah Baqarah verse 189 says:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَيَّامِ ۚ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ

They question you concerning the new moons. Say, "They are timekeeping signs for the people and [for the sake of] hajj. 1

أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ

(Fasting) a certain number of days... 2

And in Surah Baqarah verse 185:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۚ ۚ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۚ ۚ وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۚ ۚ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ ۚ ۚ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَيْكُم وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ۚ ۚ ۚ

The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the distinction Therefore whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein And whoever is sick or upon a journey, then [he shall fast] a [like] number of other days Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire for you difficulty, and [He desires] that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the Greatness of Allah for His having guided you and that you may give thanks. 3

As per the ayahs above, we are supposed to follow the lunar calendar but nowhere does Quran specify fixed number of days for any months.

The ahadith of the Ahlul Bayt (as) specifically tell us to start fasting when the moon of the Holy month of Ramadan is sighted and then stop fasting when the moon of Shawwal is sighted.

Here is a tradition of the Holy Prophet (sawa) that is in the famous book of Qadhi Numan that the Ismailis, especially the Bohras follow.

قَالَ: إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الْهَيْلَالَ أَوْ رَأَهُ ذَوْا عَدَلٍ نَهَارًا فَلَا تُفْطِرُوا حَتَّى تَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسُ كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي أَوَّلِ النَّهَارِ أَوْ فِي آخِرِهِ وَ قَالَ لَا تُفْطِرُوا إِلَّا لِتَمَامِ ثَلَاثِينَ يَوْمًا مِنْ رُؤْيَةِ الْهَيْلَالَ أَوْ بِشَهَادَةِ شَاهِدَيْنِ أَنَّهُمَا رَأَيَاهُ

The Holy Prophet (sawa) said:

'When in the day time, you sight the crescent or two just ('Adil) persons sight it do not break your fast until the sun sets, this is whether (it is sighted) in the beginning of the day or the latter part of the day. And he (sawa) said: Do not stop fasting unless & until all thirty days are complete starting with sighting of the crescent (for the beginning of Ramadhan) or with the witnessing of two witnesses who sighted it (crescent of Shawwal).' [4](#)

(Meaning: if the witnesses sighted the crescent of Shawwal earlier then you must stop fasting even if 30 days are not complete).

This is what could be understood from this hadith of the Holy Prophet (sawa): Suppose it is the 29th day of Ramadhan and two just ('Adil) people inform the one who is fasting that they saw the crescent in the daytime, then this person should not break the fast. Now suppose one fasts for 30 days and still the moon was not sighted then he should not fast more than 30 days. Suppose the moon was sighted on the 29th day and the two just ('Adil) people reported it, then he should not fast the 30th day.

In other words, this hadith of the Holy Prophet (sawa) that is found in Da'aimul Islam, clearly says that the starting and the ending of the month should be based on sighting of the crescent. We also learn from this hadith that Ramadhan could be less than 30 days.

The following are couple of ahadith of Imam al-Baqir (as) and Imam al-Sadiq (as):

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ وَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ جَمِيعاً عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي عُمَيْرٍ
عَنْ حَمَادِ بْنِ عُمَانَ عَنِ الْحَلْبِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع قَالَ إِنَّهُ سُئِلَ عَنِ الْأَهْلَةِ فَقَالَ هِيَ أَهْلَةُ الشُّهُورِ فَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الْهَيْلَالَ
فَصُمْ وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُ فَأَفْطِرْ

Imam al-Sadiq (as) (when) he was asked about the crescents, so he said: The crescents are for (distinguishing) the months, so when you sight the crescent, fast and when you sight it (at the beginning of the next month) stop fasting.[5](#)

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْحَسَنِ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ مَهْزَبَانَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ أَبِي عُمَيْرٍ عَنْ أَيُّوبَ وَ حَمَادٍ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مُسْلِمٍ عَنْ أَبِي
جَعْفَرٍ ع قَالَ إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الْهَيْلَالَ فَصُومُوا وَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمُوهُ فَأَفْطِرُوا وَ لَيْسَ بِالرَّأْيِ وَ لَا بِالتَّظْنِيِّ وَ لَكِنْ بِالرُّؤْيَةِ الْحَدِيثِ

Imam al-Baqir (as) said: fast when you sight the crescent and stop fasting when you see it and not with opinion nor with guessing but with actually seeing it happen. [6](#)

The Ismailis and the Ithna Asharis both believe in Imam al-Baqir and Imam al-Sadiq (as). These traditions are clearly saying that we should fast when we see the crescent and stop fasting when we see the crescent of the next month and guesstimating is not allowed. The crescent is visible after about seventeen hours⁷ of conjunction (new born moon), so when the Holy Prophet (sawa) and the Imams (as) asked the Muslims to sight the crescent this means that moon will be about seventeen hours old.

We Muslims follow the Holy Quran and Quran does not give all the details, for example it tells us to pray but as for how to pray and how many units are in each prayer, we have to get these details from the Holy Prophet (sawa) and his Holy Progeny (as). Similarly, Quran tells us that the new moons are timekeeping signs for the people. The Holy Prophet (sawa) and the Imams (as) clarified how to determine when the month starts; that is by sighting the crescent.

It would be great to have an accurate calendar but unfortunately there is no such calendar. It is impossible to come up with an accurate universal calendar as the time when the moon can be sighted differs from region to region. Since the traditions we have from the Holy Prophet (sawa) and the Imams (as) tell us specifically to sight the crescent to determine the start of the month, we have no choice but to submit. So, on the Day of Judgment if we are asked then we can present this strong argument that we followed the rulings of the Holy Prophet (sawa).

The Bohras which is a sect of Ismailis have their own *lunar calendar* and all the Bohras around the world start and end the month on the same date, they do not consider the regional variations at all. If the Bohras would consider these regional variations they would see that it is impossible for the whole world to sight the crescent at the same time; this is due in part to the rising and setting of the moon in a perceived arc fashion much like the sun. In the same way that every point on the Earth does not see the sun in the same place at the same time to the extent that some areas are not able to see the sun at all for prolonged periods, different point on the Earth will not see the moon at the same place at the time. The clearest example of how a person's location affects what they can and can't see, astronomically speaking, is the fact that while it is winter in the northern hemisphere with very short days to the extent that in the arctic circle it can be night for months on end while at that same time it is summer in the southern hemisphere so there would be long days to the extent in the Antarctic it is day for months on end. At that time, in the south you can clearly see the sun but in the north especially far north you will not see the sun at all. The same can be said for the moon that there are times when one area will clearly see the moon while another will be totally devoid of its presence. So, it is impossible to have one standard lunar calendar for the whole world. The Bohras neglect with respect to this fact seems to show that sighting of the moon for them is not a criteria when constructing their calendar clearly contradicting the tradition of the Holy Prophet (sawa). They do not pay heed to the tradition from the Holy Prophet (sawa) found in their books (that has been quoted above from their book *Da'aimul Islam* by Qadhi Numan) where the Holy Prophet (sawa) clearly specifies the significance of sighting the crescent. Now this heedlessness could be argued (all be it wrongly) if their calendar was accurate but as we will see it is not accurate at all.

Bohra Islamic Calendar

The Bohra/Ismaili calendar has fixed days for each month every year except for the month of Dhul-Hijjah which alternates between 29 or 30 days. Below is a four year reading of a Bohra calendar.

1429 Hijri/2008 AD

Muharram 30 days, Safar 29 days, Rabi ul-Awwal 30 days, Rabi uth- Thani 29 days, Jamadi ul-Awwal 30 days, Jamadi uth-Thani 29 days, Rajab 30 days, Shaban 29 days, Ramadhan 30 days, Shawwal 29 days, Dhul-Qa'dah 30 days and **Dhul-Hijjah 30 days**.

1430 Hijri/2009 AD

Muharram 30 days, Safar 29 days, Rabi ul-Awwal 30 days, Rabi uth- Thani 29 days, Jamadi ul-Awwal 30 days, Jamadi uth-Thani 29 days, Rajab 30 days, Shaban 29 days, Ramadhan 30 days, Shawwal 29 days, Dhul-Qa'dah 30 days and **Dhul-Hijjah 29 days**.

1431 Hijri/2010 AD

Muharram 30 days, Safar 29 days, Rabi ul-Awwal 30 days, Rabi uth- Thani 29 days, Jamadi ul-Awwal 30 days, Jamadi uth-Thani 29 days, Rajab 30 days, Shaban 29 days, Ramadhan 30 days, Shawwal 29 days, Dhul-Qa'dah 30 days and **Dhul-Hijjah 30 days**.

1432 Hijri/2011 AD

Muharram 30 days, Safar 29 days, Rabi ul-Awwal 30 days, Rabi uth- Thani 29 days, Jamadi ul-Awwal 30 days, Jamadi uth-Thani 29 days, Rajab 30 days, Shaban 29 days, Ramadhan 30 days, Shawwal 29 days, Dhul-Qa'dah 30 days and **Dhul-Hijjah 29 days**.

As per the Bohra calendar, all the odd number months are 30 days and all the even number months are 29 days except the last month (Dhul-Hijjah) is 29 or 30 days. There can be no such pattern as far as phases of the moon go. If it would have been that simple the Holy Prophet (sawa) would have specified it, but he did not. Moreover, the science today also says that there is no given pattern.

Some questions regarding the number of days in a lunar month were posed to 'Moonsighting.com', which specializes in the moon sighting issue; one of their answers is listed below:

Question: Is there a pattern of sequence of 29 and 30 days month? Some people say that after 19 years moon phases repeat. Some others say that after 30 years moon cycle repeats.

Answer: After careful scrutiny of long term calculations of moon cycles we found that, in fact, there is no pattern. We have checked 4000 years of calculations i.e. 48000 months and found no pattern. The 19 year cycle of Gregorian year (equal to 228 months in Gregorian Calendar), is a cycle after which the moon phases roughly repeat. Remember the word **roughly, not exactly**; and hence 228 Gregorian months (or 6940 days) are approximately equal to 235 lunar months (19 years and 7 month in Lunar Calendar). Similarly 30 lunar years (10631 days) are approximately equal to 29 years and 1 month of solar calendar, but again this is also **approximate**. Long term calculations based on this rule sometimes

gives results that are wrong by one day. Some others have pointed a cycle of 210 lunar years, and it has the same flaw as 30 year cycle. **In short, there is no pattern that can be quoted exactly repeating.**[8](#)

Where do the Bohras get this calendar from?

The **Tabular Islamic calendar** (an example is the Fatimid or Misri calendar) is a rule-based variation of the Islamic calendar. It has the same numbering of years and months, **but the months are determined by arithmetic rules rather than by observation or astronomical calculations.** It was developed by early Muslim astronomers of the second hijra century (the 8th century of the Common Era) to provide a predictable time base for calculating the positions of the moon, sun, and planets. It is used by some Muslims in everyday life, particularly in the Bohra Ismaili community. It is their firm belief, that all Fatimid Imams and their Da'is⁹ have followed this tradition.

Each year has 12 months. The odd numbered months have 30 days and the even numbered months have 29 days, except in a leap year when the 12th and final month has 30 days.

There are 11 leap years in a 30 year cycle. Noting that the average year has $354 \frac{11}{30}$ days and a common year has 354 days, at the end of the first year of the 30-year cycle the remainder is $\frac{11}{30}$ day. Whenever the remainder exceeds a half day ($\frac{15}{30}$ day), then a leap day is added to that year, reducing the remainder by one day. Thus at the end of the second year the remainder would be $\frac{22}{30}$ day which is reduced to $-\frac{8}{30}$ day by a leap day.

Using this rule the leap years are 2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16, 18, 21, 24, 26 and 29 of the 30-year cycle. If leap days are added whenever the remainder *equals* or exceeds a half day, then all leap years are the same except 15 replaces 16.

The Ismaili Tayyebi (Bohra) community uses the following order of leap years in their 30-year cycle:

2, 5, 8, 10, 13, 16, 19, 21, 24, 27 and 29

Apart from these, there are two more orders for the leap years which are as follows:

2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 15, 18, 21, 24, 26 and 29

2, 5, 8, 11, 13, 16, 19, 21, 24, 27 and 30

The mean month is $29 \frac{191}{360}$ days = 29.5305555... days. This is slightly too short and so will be a day out in about 2500 years. [10](#) **The Tabular Islamic calendar also deviates from the observation based calendar in the short term for various reasons.** [11](#)

The Bohra calendar has an average month of 29.530555¹² and the long-term average duration of the lunar month is 29.530589 as we can see the average month in the Bohra calendar is slightly shorter than the actual average meaning that in around 2500 years¹³ the Bohra calendar will be a whole day further

behind [14](#) the scientifically calculated birth of the moon couple this with the current differences and we can conclude in around 1000 years (as currently we are in 1432) the Bohra calendar will have little to do with the lunar phases or lunar calendar.

Another important reason why the Bohra calendar is inaccurate is when I looked into the moon sighting reports for couple of months (Holy Ramadhan and Shawwal) and compared it with the Bohra Calendar, I found that the Bohras calendar is definitely off and in one of the years (1431 AH) **the Bohras started fasting when the moon was barely born!** Actually, the Bohras in India started Ramadhan fast before the moon was born in 1431 AH.

Following is a four year study based upon the data found in moonsighting.com and crescentmoonwatch.org:

[Moon sighting for Ramadan 1429 Hijri \(2008\)](#)

The astronomical New moon is on Saturday, August 30th, 2008 at 19:57 UT: No sighting reports are expected on August 30. However, Nigeria has claimed to see the moon on Saturday. [15](#)

This means that the moon was barely born on August 30th. It was seen on probably on 31st of August or 1st of September. Then the first of the Holy month of Ramadhan should have been the 1st of Sept or max 2nd of September, but as per the Bohra/Ismaili calendar the 1st of Ramadan was August 31st, 2008. It was impossible to see the crescent on August 30th, then how come the Bohras started fasting on the 31st of August?

India is 5 ½ hours ahead of Universal Time (UT or GMT), so the moon was born at 1:27 AM on Aug 31st (Indian Standard Time) and the Bohras started fasting the same day in India!!!

[Moon sighting report for Shawwal 1429 Hijri \(2008\)](#)

The Astronomical New Moon is on Monday, September 29, 2008 at 8:12 GMT, 4:12 am EDT, 1:12 am PDT). It will not be visible [16](#) on September 29 except small possibility in Polynesian Islands. On Tuesday, September 30, it will be visible in New Zealand Australia, Indonesia, South Asia, Africa and Americas. In North America on September 30, it can be seen in Southern belt states. [17](#)

This means that the moon of Shawwal could be sighted only on the 30th of September or 1st of Oct 2008, so Eid ul Fitr should have been on 1st or 2nd of October 2008, but as per the Bohra/Ismailis calendar Eid ul Fitr was on Sept 30th, 2008. It was impossible to see the crescent on the 29th of September, then how come they celebrated the Eid on the 30th? If one does not fast intentionally on a day that fasting is wajib then as per Shariah he should makeup that fast and give kaffarah (Penalty). The Bohras need to be careful and look into this matter seriously.

[Moonsighting for Ramadan 1430 Hijri \(2009\)](#)

The Astronomical New Moon is on August 20, 2009 (Thursday) at 10:01 UT. This moon cannot be seen in any continent. There is a small chance to see only in Polynesian Islands on August 20. On August 21, it is very difficult to see in Europe and Canada. It can be seen with difficulty in India, Pakistan, Middle East, and Northern Africa. On August 21, it can be easily seen in New Zealand, Australia, most of Africa, and Americas. [18](#)

This means that the crescent of the Holy month of Ramadhan could be sighted only on the 21st or 22nd of August depending on the horizon, so the 1st of Ramadan should have been 22nd or 23rd of August, 2009, but as per the Bohra/Ismaili calendar the 1st of Ramadan was on 21st of August. It was impossible to sight the crescent on August 20th but still Bohras went ahead and started fasting on 21st of August?

[Moon sighting for Shawwal 1430 Hijri \(2009\)](#)

The Astronomical New Moon is on September 18, 2009 (Friday) at 18:44 UT. This moon is not visible anywhere on September 18. On September 19, it will still not be visible in Asia, Europe and Canada. It can easily be seen in South Africa and South America on Sep 19. On the same day, with difficulty, it is possible to be seen in Western Australia, Central Africa, Caribbean Islands, Central America and very Southern areas of USA. **In USA, on Sep. 19, the moon is going to be very low on the horizon at sunset, so try to see before Maghrib. Binocluars will help.** [19](#)

This means that the moon for Shawwal could be sighted on September 20th or 21st depending on the zone, so Eid ul fitr should have been on 21st or 22nd of September, 2009, but as per the Bohra/Ismaili calendar Eid ul Fitr was on 20th of September, 2009. The crescent was not at all visible on the 18th and on the 19th it was not at all visible in Asia, Europe and Canada but the Bohras in Asia, Europe and Canada celebrated their Eid on September 20th?

[Moon sighting for Ramadan 1431 Hijri \(2010\)](#)

The Astronomical New Moon is on August 10, 2010 (Tuesday) at 3:08 UT. On this day, this moon may not be seen in any continent. With difficulty it may be visible in South America. Only in Polynesian Islands on August 10, it will be easily visible. On August 11, it will be easy to see in New Zealand, Australia, South-East Asia, Africa and Americas, while it will be difficult to see in Northern Asia, Europe, and Canada. [20](#)

According to the data above **the moon for the Holy month of Ramadhan was barely born** on August 10th, 2010 and it was not visible at all on the 10th of August. Hence it could have been sighted on 11th of August or 12th of August; this means the 1st of Holy Ramadhan should have been 12th of August or 13th of August. As per the Bohra/Ismaili calendar the first of Ramadhan was on the 10th of August,

which means **they fasted on the day that moon was barely born.**

As a matter of fact India is 5 ½ hours ahead of Universal Time (UT or GMT), the new moon was born at 3:08 UT on the 10th of August which is equivalent to 8:38 AM Indian Standard Time, this means that Bohras who started fasting in India on the 10th would have started fasting before the new moon was actually born!!! This is an obvious error.

[Moon sighting for Shawwal 1431 \(2010\)](#)

The Astronomical New Moon is on September 8, 2010 (Wednesday) at 10:30 UT. This moon may not be visible anywhere on September 8 except some Polynesian Islands. On September 9, it will still not be visible in Northern Asia, Europe and Canada. It can easily be seen in New Zealand, Australia, South-East Asia, Africa and Americas on Sep 9th.[21](#)

The data above shows that the moon for Shawwal was born on 8th of September, 2010 and hence it was probably visible on September 9th, 2010. Hence, Eid ul Fitr should have been on 10th of September, but as per the Bohra/Ismael calendar Eid ul Fitr was on 9th of September. The scientific data clearly says that crescent will not be visible at all except in Polynesian islands and as per crescentmoonwatch.org, with the help of optical aid in South Africa and nowhere else but the Bohras celebrated Eid on 9th of September?

[Moonsighting for Ramadan 1432 \(2011\)](#)

The Astronomical New Moon is on July 30, 2011 (Saturday) at 18:40 UT. On July 30, it cannot be seen anywhere in the world. On Sunday, July 31, 2011, it can be easily seen in Southern Africa and South America, but with difficulty in Central Africa. On August 1, it can be easily seen everywhere except Northern Europe.[22](#)

As per the information above, the moon was born on July 30th, 2011 and it cannot be seen anywhere. Hence it was probably visible on July 31st or August 1st, 2011, which means that the Holy Ramadhan should have started on 1st of August or 2nd of August, 2011. As per the Bohra/Ismaeli calendar the 1st of Holy Ramadhan was on 31st July, 2011.

[Moon sighting report for Shawwal 1432 \(2011\)](#)

The Astronomical New Moon is on August 29, 2011 (Monday) at 3:04 UT. On August 29, by naked eye it can be seen in Southern part of South America and Polynesian Islands. With binoculars it may be seen in Cape Town South Africa, Northern part of South America, and in Hawaii. On Tuesday, August 30, 2011, it can be easily seen everywhere except Northern Asia and Northern Europe.[23](#)

As per the data above the moon for Shawwal was born on 29th of August, 2011 and it was probably

visible on August 29th, 2011 in very few places like Southern part of South America and Polynesian Islands, but it was definitely not visible in India, UK, North America etc. It was easily visible everywhere on August 30th. Hence Eid ul Fitr should have been on 31st of August, but as per the Bohra/Ismail calendar Eid ul Fitr was on 30th of August, 2011 and all the Bohras throughout the world celebrated Eid on 30th of August.

As per the data presented above, it is clear that the Bohra calendar is not accurate at all. The data above shows that most of the time the Bohras started the month before the crescent was visible and sometimes even before the crescent was born²⁴ in their region, which is against the rulings of Islam. The Bohra Calendar does sound very good as the dates are fixed, but it is not accurate and it is against the rulings of Islam. It is interesting that Bohras follow the book Da'aimul Islam and there is a tradition of the Holy Prophet (sawa) regarding sighting the crescent, but the Bohras insist on following a calendar. It seems that this calendar was made by the Fatimid for the sake of convenience only. Like I said earlier, that it would be great to have an accurate calendar, but unfortunately the Bohra Calendar is not accurate.

[Some frequently asked questions about moonsighting](#)

Following are some very frequently asked questions that were posed to Moonsighting.com:

Question: What is the process one must use to correctly sight the moon?

Answer of Moonsighting.com: Go after about 15 minutes after sunset. Look in the direction of the setting sun, just above it, also look to the right or left of it up to 30° in either direction of the setting sun. Keep looking until the time of moonset that you can obtain from local newspapers. Binocular helps. Have one or more persons with you, if possible. If you do this for a few months, you will know yourself about improving your procedure. What evening you should go to look, can be found from my web site, or if you know when the moon was sighted in your area for the previous month, then count 29 days from it.

Question: If the moon is big, does it mean it is a second day moon?

Answer of Moonsighting.com: As most of us know, the moon goes through several phases. The months of the Islamic Calendar are based on sighting of the new moon every month. In Astronomy, a new moon means “when the moon of the previous month disappears (i.e. the moon goes from a slightly visible crescent to a completely black sphere that is impossible to be seen).” Remember, new moon is dark and invisible. About 17–23 hours after the new moon, a thin crescent becomes visible on earth; this is visible new moon. As we were taught by Allah (Qur'an 2: 189) and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), it is the sighting of this crescent that marks the start of a new month. Therefore, even though a moon may be born on one day, it may not be seen until the next day. Furthermore, if a new moon is born less than 15 hours before sunset on day 1; it will not be seen until sunset of day 2; and when it is finally seen it is 15+24=39 hours old and will look very thick. This does NOT mean that this is a second

day moon. A first day crescent–moon can be very thin in some locations and it can also be thick in other locations because of time difference. As Muslims, we should always remember that our first priority is to follow the teachings of our beloved Prophet (peace be upon him) who told us to start the month when we see the crescent, not when the moon is “born.” If we do that, Insha–Allah we will start the month at the “right” time (the time that Allah intends for the month to start for **a specific location**).

For more questions regarding moonsighting, please visit their website.

- [1.](#) Surah Baqarah (2), Ayah 189; Translation of Sayyid Ali Quli Qarai
- [2.](#) Surah Baqarah (2), Ayah 184
- [3.](#) Surah Baqarah 185; Translation of M H Shakir
- [4.](#) Qadhi Numan (Numan ibn Muhammed), Da’aimul Islam 1st vol., p. 280
- [5.](#) Wasa’il ash–Shia, vol. 10, p. 252
- [6.](#) Wasa’il ash–Shia, vol. 10, p. 252
- [7.](#) Moonsighting.com under ‘FAQ’s Youngest moon & Sighting Criteria’ Answer to Questions # 2.1 & 10.6
- [8.](#) Moonsighting.com
- [9.](#) Representatives of the Imam
- [10.](#) Detailed explanation to follow
- [11.](#) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabular_Islamic_calendar [1]
- [12.](#) We obtain this by taking the common Bohra calendar year, 6 months 29 day and 6 months 30 day, then multiplying that by 30 years (as that is the cycle) and adding on the 11 leap days. Finally we divide that by 30 to get the average year and by 12 to get the average month.
- [13.](#) We obtain this value by subtracting the Bohra calendar average month from the lunar calendar average month, then we divide 1 by this number (as we are trying to see when the calendars will differ by a day) and finally divide the obtained number by 12 to get the value in years and we get the value 2491.65 years (approximately 2500 years)
- [14.](#) What this means is that the Bohras after about 1000 years will be starting the month about a day or day and a half before the new moon is born!!! As it is they are sometimes starting the month even before the moon is born. Please see below where Ramadhan of 1431 Hijri (2010) is discussed.
- [15.](#) Moonsighting.com. Note as per Crescentmoonwatch.org the new moon was born at 19:58UT and it was not visible at all on Aug 30th, 2008. In order to access the data on crescentmoonwatch.org go on the site and click on ‘next new moon’ and scroll down and until you see the ‘Global Visibility Maps for previous months’. Also note that crescentmoonwatch.org is a non–Muslim site. The site address is <http://www.crescentmoonwatch.org/> [2]
- [16.](#) Note: When they say not visible, they mean the crescent will not be visible even in the best weather conditions.
- [17.](#) Moonsighting.com; and as per Crescentmoonwatch.org the crescent was not visible on the 29th except probably with optical aid in South Africa.
- [18.](#) Moonsighting.com; Note as per crescentmoonwatch.org the new moon was born at 10:02 UT and it was not visible at all on August 20th.
- [19.](#) Moonsighting.com; and as per crescentmoonwatch.org the moon was not visible at all on September 18th at all.
- [20.](#) Moonsighting.com; and as per crescentmoonwatch.org the crescent will be easily visible only in a very small part of South Africa and nowhere else on August 10th.
- [21.](#) Moonsighting.com; and as per crescentmoonwatch.org the crescent was not visible at all except with the aid of optical aid in South Africa only on September 8th.
- [22.](#) Moonsighting.com; and as per crescentmoonwatch.org the crescent was not visible at all on July 30th
- [23.](#) Moonsighting.com; and as per crescentmoonwatch.org the crescent was only visible in South Africa on the 29th of August.
- [24.](#) In Ramadhan 1431 H (2010), we discussed above.

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<https://www.al-islam.org/examining-ismaili-imams-bohras-ali-azhar-arastu/problems-fiqh-jurisprudence#comment-0>

Links

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabular_Islamic_calendar

[2] <http://www.crescentmoonwatch.org/>