

Moon Sightings

By Imam Izak-El M. Pasha

As the community is aware, we have a group of Believers that have collaborated over the past few years under the Leadership of Imam W. Deen Mohammed in order to determine the beginning of the major observances of the Muslim community such as Ramadan, Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha. **This year Ramadan will come in the month of September and end in the month of October 2007**; in the Islamic calendar 1428 A.H. It is our intent that we will have an opportunity to get with the many committee members who have volunteered their help in sighting the moon for the beginning of Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr at this year's annual convention.

Earlier this year we had the opportunity to sit down with our leader Imam Mohammed and ask him about the methods that should be used for determining when we begin our fast and determining the Eids. The Imam replied, "I believe we should begin fasting when it's sighted in the United States; not in some other country because they would be outside our time zone." He also spoke about if the view is obstructed because of cloudiness, weather conditions, etc. He says "If we cannot sight it for some reason...its' cloudy, the weather is bad or something, then for me, the best way to be accurate...accurate as possible is not to join somebody outside of the time zone, but to use the scientific method." I asked the Imam what did he mean by scientific? Would the moon cycle in the newspapers be considered scientific? The Imam answered, "It's scientific. Yes sir." And then he went on to explain the method that he uses to calculate when we would begin the month of Ramadan. The Imam explained, "Scientifically-speaking the new moon is the black moon. You cannot see anything." Then the Imam explained that in the condition where we are not able to get a sighting...his method was once it was determined that the black moon scientifically was there, science is saying this it is there, you calculate between 30 and 48 hours after its sighting, it would be the third day. So, on the third day, the night of the third day, you make your prayers and make your intentions to fast the next morning. The Imam said, "And I guarantee you will be accurate almost 100% of the time." He said, "In fact I've never missed it following that way. That way of calculating it...the starting of the month of fasting."

The Imam also spoke about those persons within the United States who would report a sighting. He stated that it should be "a reliable, truthful person." And if that is the case, then anywhere within the United States if anyone sights it who meets that criteria of being reliable and truthful person then we should begin our fast when it is sighted in the United States.