



When is Eidul Adha 1429 AH in UK?

Report by Qamar Uddin (York): It is a well-known principle that the Islamic lunar months start with the first sighting of the crescent moon (Hilal) and the fact that the duration of the months are either 29 or 30 days. The lunar months can never be 28 or 31 days in any countries (having normal atmospheric conditions). Since, our mandatory worships (Ibadah) such as Ramadan/Eids are dependent on the first sighting of the Hilal, it is most important for Muslims all over the country to try sighting the Hilal in all 12 months of the year to avoid accumulating any mistakes or doubts. It is a Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (S) to look for the Hilal on the 29th day of each month after sunset.

By the grace of almighty Allah, many Muslims in UK have started to sight the Hilal from different parts of the country in each lunar month throughout the year, regardless of the weather conditions. Based on those sighting (or non-sighting) reports as well as receiving reliable news from abroad, the Ulama make decisions on when to begin (or not to begin) the lunar months in UK. Accordingly, 1 Dhul-Qa'adah 1429 AH was on Friday, 31 October 2008 in UK. The above sighting reports/decisions are also submitted to various Internet web sites on a regular basis.

Since 1 Dhul-Qa'adah 1429 AH started on 31 October 2008, the 29 Dhul-Qa'adah 1429 AH in UK would be on Friday, 28 November 2008, Insha-Allah. If the Hilal was not sighted anywhere in UK but reliable sighting news was received from a country in the East of UK, then 1 Dhul-Hijjah 1429 AH will be on the following day (Saturday, 29 November 2008).

From a scientific point of view, the New Moon (conjunction) of Dhul-Hijjah 1429 AH will be on 27 November 2008 at 16:54 hrs GMT (19:54 hrs Saudi Local Time). Since the birth of the moon will be after sunset in UK (as well as in Makkah) it will not be visible anywhere in the world. The next day, Friday 28 November 2008, the moon will not be visible in UK (or Saudi Arabia) either, because on that evening the moon will set before sunset in London (and will be too close to the horizon/sun's glare at Makkah sunset). However, it may be possible to be sighted in the southern parts of Africa (see crescent visibility map). Therefore, 1 Dhul-Hijjah 1429 AH in UK may be on Saturday 29 November 2008, the earliest, making 10 Dhul-Hijjah (i.e. day of Eidul Adha) 1429 AH to be on Monday 8 December 2008, Insha-Allah. It is most important to realise that Eidul Adha 1429 AH can never be on Sunday 7 December 2008 (as the moon will not have been born) and hence any news from abroad for that date must be rejected (as mistake/false news). [Editor's Note: please see Fatawah below]

At this point it should be pointed out that for those who live in (or are visiting) Saudi Arabia, only their date of Eidul Adha is on the next day after Hajj. The day of Hajj/Arafah is on 9 Dhul-Hijjah, as decided by the Saudi Justice Department. According to the advice given by many eminent scholars, such as Mufti Taqi Uthmani (Pakistan) and Shaykh Saleh Ibn Uthaimen (Saudi Arabia), all those who live outside Saudi Arabia, such as in Europe/USA, should follow the lunar calendar of their own country (which may be different from that of Saudi Arabia). This advice is consistent with the noble practice of Prophet Muhammad (S) when he started celebrating Eidul Adha from 2 AH, well before the Hajj becoming obligatory in 9 AH; as well as the Sahabah (R), (e.g. see Kuraib Hadith in Muslim).



According to the Muslim historians, the Prophet Muhammad (S) performed his one and only Hajj on Friday, 9 Dhul-Hijjah 10 AH in Makkah and passed away on Monday, 12 Rabiul Awwal 11 AH in Madinah (i.e. 3 months after his Hajj). This means, the Prophet Muhammad (S) celebrated Eidul Adha in Madinah without having any possible connection with the day of Arafah/Hajj in Makkah for over 7 years. Also, from these dates and the fact that a month has either 29 or 30 days, it can be proven that the calendar of Makkah was different from the calendar of Madinah. Furthermore, many of the Sahabah (companions) of the Prophet Muhammad (S) who subsequently relocated to countries outside Saudi Arabia and the later Muslims over past 1400 years of Islamic history, have never tried to connect/synchronise their day of Eidul Adha with the day of Hajj in Makkah. They all celebrated Eidul Adha (and kept optional fast on 9 Dhul-Hijjah) with the sighting of the Hilal on their own/local horizon. Therefore, it must be understood that to connect/ synchronise Eidul-Adha in Europe/USA with the day of Arafah/Hajj in Makkah has no basis in Shariah (Islamic Law). In fact, some scholars consider such a practice to be a Bid'ah (innovation)!

Finally, it should be mentioned that due to the adverse weather conditions in UK during some winter months, many Fuqaha (Muslim Jurists) have given permissions to UK Muslims to act on the Hilal sighting news from any countries in the East, provided:

- (1) an earnest effort has been made to sight the Hilal locally in UK after sunset,
- (2) reliable news can be obtained directly from the foreign authority and
- (3) the news is easily obtainable within a short time (e.g. 2 hours of London sunset).

Fortunately, a few countries do fulfil these conditions, including Morocco and South Africa. More efforts need to be made to establish contacts with other authorities in the East of UK.

If anyone wishes to take part in the monthly Hilal observations or simply would like to be kept informed about the Hilal sighting efforts in UK, please do not hesitate to contact the Wifaqul Ulama by email (info@wifaqululama.co.uk).

Dated: 20 November 2008.

Editor's Note: Please refer to the under mentioned Fataawaa:

Mufti Nizamuddin Mufti e AAzam and Muhaddith of Darul Uloom Deoband, has written "If a man testifies that he has sighted the crescent before the conjunction then his testimony must be rejected, as it is against logic and observation as conjunction occurs before the moon is present in the sky . So the new moon cannot be sighted, and if this testimony was to be accepted then it would be against the Hadith "the month is..." (Mas'alah ru'yat e hilal awr Islami Maah page 199)

Allamah Subki R.A.(756 AH) states "...if the experts in astronomy clearly and ambiguously state that there is no possibility of sighting then the testimony (of some who claim to have seen it) must be rejected as they have erred or are lying..." (Fataawa As Subki Vol 1 pg 209)

The Ameer of Tablighi Jamaat worldwide, Hadhrat Jee Movlana Inaamul Hasan Saheb RA has written in a letter addressed to the Shooraa of Dewsbury markaz ;" now what is left is that when, claims of moon sighting is made before there is any slightest possibility of sighting, then no credit should be given to these types of claims and it is against the actions of Jamhoor Ulama as well."