



02 October 2014

**MUIS' ADVISORY ON THE DETERMINATION OF EIDUL ADHA AND  
DAY OF ARAFAH  
OFFICE OF THE MUFTI  
ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS COUNCIL OF SINGAPORE**

1. There are times when we would find that the dates for Eidul Adha and *wuquf* in Arafah that have been determined locally differ from that in Saudi Arabia. Hence, when such a situation arises, should the local Muslim community perform their sunnah fasting based on the date of 9 Zulhijjah that has been determined in Singapore, or should they follow the date on which the pilgrims are performing their *wuquf* in Saudi Arabia?
2. In this instance, it is important to note that determining the dates of the months of *hijri* is a religious issue. Determining it would have to be in accordance with the sighting of the new moon at the horizon, on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of the preceding month. If the new moon is not sighted on the night of the 29<sup>th</sup> day, the preceding month will then be extended for one more day; making it 30 days in total. The following day (after the 30<sup>th</sup> day) will then be considered to be the beginning of a new month, and this is based on the religious guidance found in the hadiths and practices of the Muslim ummah.

**Different Sighting Zones (Ikhtilaf Al-Mathali‘)**

3. The issue on the different sighting zones of the new moon, has been discussed by the past scholars. Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani has recorded some of the differences in opinions with regard to this issue. The established opinion in the As-Syafie school of thought maintains that the different sighting zones will determine the beginning of a new month for the respective zones. This is also

the opinion of Ikrimah, al-Qosim bin Muhammad, Salim bin Abdillah bin Umar, Ibnu Abbas r.a, Imam Malik and Ishaq bin Rahuyah. (*Fathul Bari*, 4/123).

4. There are several narrations that expound on the different sighting zones in different countries. One of the narrations, as recorded by Imam Muslim, documented an incident when there was a difference in determining the beginning of Ramadan between those in Al-Sham (Damascus) and the companions in Madinah.

*Ibn Abbas was narrated to have said to Kuraib: 'For us here we saw it on Saturday night. So we would continue to observe fast till we complete thirty (days of fasting) or until we see (the new moon of Shawwal).' Kuraib then asked: "Is the sighting of the new moon by Mu'awiyah and his fasting not valid for you?" Ibn Abbas replied: "No, this is how the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has commanded us... "*

5. Al-Khatib al-Syarbini explained in his book *Mughni Al-Muhtaj*: “*And when the crescent is sighted at a particular country, then it is compulsory for the neighbouring countries to follow suit, as in the case of city of Baghdad and the city of Kufa; and not for countries that are located far from each other, as in the case of Hijaz and Iraq*”.
6. *Mathla'* or the sighting zone in Singapore and the Southeast Asian region, differs from that of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is located further to the west of Singapore, and there is a significant timing difference between the two. Due to these reasons, the position of the new moon when it was sighted in Saudi Arabia is higher than when it was sighted in this region.
7. Hence, it becomes an individual responsibility for Muslims to follow the date that has been determined by their respective countries. If the first of Zulhijjah has been determined in Singapore, then the 9th of Zulhijjah – which is the Day of Arafah – would then have to be based on the date that has been determined earlier. It is hence not valid for local Muslims to perform the fast of Arafah based on the day that the pilgrims are performing their *wuquf* in Saudi.

Due to the geographical reasons, the position of the new moon in Singapore will differ from that in Saudi, and hence the date of the Day of Arafah will also differ in these two countries.

8. The Prophet s.a.w. mentioned in his hadith:

صَوْمُكُمْ يَوْمَ تَصُومُونَ وَفِطْرُكُمْ يَوْمَ تَفْطُرُونَ وَأَضْحَاكُمْ يَوْمَ تُضْحُونَ

Which means: *“Your fast is on the day that all of you fast, and your Eidul Fitri is on the day all of you celebrate Eidul Fitri, and your Eidul Adha is one the day all of you celebrate the Eidul Adha”*.

9. There is also another hadith in which the Prophet s.a.w. asserted that the performing of the sacrifice (korban) is dependent on the sighting of the new moon.

As narrated by Umm Salamah, the Prophet s.a.w. had said: *“And when you have sighted the new moon of Zulhijjah and there are amongst you who would like to perform the sacrifice, then he (the person who has intended to perform the sacrifice) should not cut his hair and nails”* (narrated by Imam Muslim).

10. The Fatwa Committee was asked on the issue of the difference in determining the beginning of Zulhijjah and Eidul Adha between Singapore and Saudi Arabia. The Committee concluded that<sup>1</sup>:

- a. Hari Raya Haji (‘Eiduladha) is not a social festival or anything to that effect; it is in fact a religious celebration that is closely connected to the acts of worship and prayer rituals for Muslims. All acts of worship and prayer rituals are accorded their own specific timings, and would differ

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<sup>1</sup> **First Fatwa Collection**, first edition, 1987, Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura, Singapore, pg 20.

based on the geographical factors and different time zones of the respective countries.

- b. We know that the world is round; when Southeast Asia is experiencing morning, the Middle East is only experiencing its night time. And in the West, there would be places that are still experiencing the evening, while other places have yet to even begin a new day. And because we are situated to the east of Mekah with a timing difference of 5 hours, based on both methods of rukyah (sighting) and hisab (calculation), the new moon will not be detected, as the geographical location of our country has yet to enter the new *hijri* month. Hence the rituals and acts of worship that are related to the sighting of the new moon cannot be performed as the time has not come for us to do so. However, for countries located to the west of Mekah, if it has been determined that the new moon has been sighted, then all the countries will be subjected to Mekah's decision (on the beginning of the new *hijri* month).

11. It is hence clear that different countries should abide by the sightings determined in their respective zones, and not to be tied to the sighting determined by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, or by the sighting of the new moon in Mekah. Hence, the beginning of the month of Zulhijjah for Singapore for this year (1435H/2014), in accordance with the criteria of the visibility of the new moon (*imkanur rukyah*), has been determined to fall on 26th September 2014. And with that, the Day of Arafah will thus fall on 4th October 2014; and hence it follows that Eidul Adha will fall on 5th October 2014.

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