



# NEWSLETTER

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## EDITORIAL

### Nigeria and Moon Sighting

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Fasting the month of Ramadan is one of the pillars of Islam. Allah says in the Qur'an "O you who believe, fasting is decreed for you, as it was decreed for those before you, that you may attain salvation". Also in a hadith reported by Bukhari, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, "Whoever fasts during the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, will have all of his previous sins forgiven."

The ruling on sighting the moon, after which the fasting of Ramadan commences, is very clear in Islam. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has commanded the Muslims to fast when they see the moon, and break the fast when they see the moon. At a point, a man came to the prophet and told him that he has sighted the moon, the Prophet asked him if he believes in Allah and his messenger, the man said, yes, the prophet then asked Bilal (RA) to make Adhan and inform the people to begin the fasting of Ramadan. Thus ordinarily, there shouldn't be any dispute regarding the beginning and the end of Ramadan, as what Muslims need to do has been made clear.

However in recent years, the sighting of the moon has become a controversial issue in Nigeria, because the moon is sighted without exception

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## The Problem of Moon Sighting in Nigeria: The Way Out

Dr Usman H. Dukku

### Introduction

Muslims in Nigeria start the Ramadan fast or celebrate the Eids on different dates in spite of the official announcement of the sighting of the crescent. Details of the problem include the following:

- Most Nigerians do not go by the official announcements.
- An organised system of monitoring the moon is wanting.
- Sha'ban and Ramadan have had 29 days each in the past 40 years while Shawwal and Dhul-Qi'dah have had 30 days each but only in Nigeria.
- Nigeria leads the world in moon sighting.

This has led to a dichotomy, that is, there are those that follow the announcements with absolute loyalty; and those that totally reject such announcements. Whereas the former maintain that they are following their leaders, as dictated by the Shari'a, the latter believe that the leaders are wrong and, therefore, should not be followed.

According to them the announcements made often contradict common knowledge, that is:

- The old moon should disappear before reappearing as a crescent moon.
- Full moon should be on the 14th day of the month.
- The crescent is not popularly sighted, one or two days after the announcement.

### The Way Out

The Qur'an has commanded us to refer to God and his messenger in matters of dispute (4:59; 26:10) and to ask "those who possess knowledge" where we do not know (16:43)

Allah, the Almighty said: "They ask you concerning the crescent moons. Say: They are but signs to mark fixed periods of time in (the affairs of) men and for Pilgrimage." (2:189)

"It is He who made the sun to be a shining glory and the moon to be a light (of beauty), and measured out stages for it, that you might know the number of years and the count (of time)." (10:5)

"And the Moon We have measured for it stations (to traverse) till it returns like the old (and withered) lower part of a date-stalk. It is not permitted to the Sun to catch up the Moon, nor can the Night outstrip the Day: Each (just) swims along in (its own) orbit." (36:39-40)

"The sun and the moon follow courses (exactly computed)." (55:5)

The Messenger of Allah (SAWS) has said: Abu Hurayrah (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAWS) said: "Start fasting upon sighting it (the crescent) and terminate the fast upon sighting it (the crescent) and if it is hidden to you (by clouds), then count the month of Sha'ban to thirty days." (Bukhari and Muslim)

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Narrator Abdullah ibn Umar in Al-Muwatta: The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, once mentioned Ramadan and said, "Do not begin the fast until you see the new moon, and do not break the fast (at the end of Ramadan) until you see it. If the new moon is obscured from you, then work out (when it should be)."

Abdullah Ibn Umar (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAWS) said: "We are an uneducated community: We neither write nor calculate. A month is so and so days; meaning sometimes twenty nine and sometimes thirty." (Bukhari)

### Disappearance

Commentators on the Holy Qur'an, jurists and astronomers agree that the stations are twenty-eight and that the moon passes through one station daily as it revolves around the earth in its orbit. This means that the moon spends twenty-eight days to complete one revolution. In fact this period, known as the orbital period, is twenty-seven days, seven hours and forty three minutes.

Remember that as the moon revolves around the earth the latter revolves around the sun and at a certain time the three objects align, with the moon in the middle. This moment, termed conjugation, marks the end of a lunar month and the beginning of another. The length of a lunar month, also called *synodic* period, is the period between two successive conjugations and is twenty-nine days, twelve hours and forty-four minutes (i.e., 29.53 days)

Abdullah Ibn Fodiyo, commenting on the verse (10:5), in his book *Kifayatu dua'fa us-Sudan* said: "It (the moon) has twenty-eight stations in twenty-

*eight days in every month. Thereafter it disappears for two days in the case of a thirty-day month or one day in the case of a twenty-nine-day month."*

Ibn Rushd said, in his book *Bidayatul mujtahid*: "The jurists agree that the Arabic (lunar) month has twenty nine or thirty days and that the only valid way to determine the month of Ramadan is through sighting of the crescent due to his (the Prophet (SAWS)) saying: 'Fast upon sighting it and terminate the fast upon sighting it.' What is meant by sighting is the first appearance of the crescent after its disappearance."

John Caldwell and David Laney, of the South African Astronomical Observatory, said: "...At this moment (conjugation) the moon is always invisible from the earth. When the moon first becomes visible again (always more than half a day after astronomical New Moon), observers see a Young Crescent Moon."

Mohammed Odeh, of the Jordanian Astronomical Society, said: "...So during the moon's orbit if the moon, earth and the sun lie exactly in the same line and the moon in the middle, the sun will illuminate half of the moon that faces it and the other half which faces us will be dark because it does not reflect rays of the sun. However... according to my information no observer yet reported seeing such crescent."

Abdurrazak Ebrahim Snr said: "For approximately fifteen hours on either side of the instant of conjugation, the moon is completely hidden from view. Consequent to the first appearance of the lunar crescent on the western horizon after sunset the moon waxes (increased illumination) until the fourteenth night when it appears as the full moon. After this the moon wanes (diminishing illumination) until it disappears over the eastern horizon before sunrise on the twenty-eighth day of the month."

### New and Old Moon

It is not possible to see a new moon in the evening of the same day the old one was seen in the morning. No! What is

meant by the disappearance of the moon is its invisibility at any time, in the east or in the west, even under the best of weather conditions, due to the reasons given above. Also remember that for the moon to be sighted in the morning it ought to have risen well before sunrise and, therefore, would set before sunset: Then how can it be seen? Please refer to the commentary of Suratash Shams verse 2, viz, 'By the moon when it follows it (the sun)', by Ibn Kathir where he said: "Qatada has said: 'The time when it (the moon) follows it (the sun) in the night preceding the beginning of a lunar month; when the sun sets, the crescent is then sighted.'"

### Solar and Lunar Eclipses

A solar eclipse occurs only at the time of conjugation when the earth moon and the sun lie in a straight line (with the moon in the middle) whence the moon obstructs the sun. A lunar eclipse, on the other hand, occurs at full moon, i.e., when the three bodies again lie in a straight line, but with the earth in the middle. The shadow of the earth falls on the moon which then appears dark to us, since it does not produce its own light (It reflects sunlight). Since full moon occurs midway between two successive conjugations, a lunar eclipse can occur only between the thirteenth and fifteenth day of a lunar month.

### Size and Altitude

The size and altitude of the crescent is not an accurate measure of its age because it depends on the following factors:

1) *The age of the moon.* That is the period between conjugation and local sunset when the crescent is sighted. The minimum time required is about seventeen hours for sighting with naked eyes, fifteen with binoculars and twelve with a telescope. Since conjugation can take place at any time of the day, the age of the moon at sunset varies from month to month and the older it is the bigger. Here is an example, assuming naked-eye sighting. Suppose conjugation takes place at 1:00am in a lunar month A and the sun sets at 6:00pm: The moon is 17 hours old at sunset and can, therefore, be sighted.

Now in another lunar month B conjugation takes place at 6:00am: The moon is 12 hours at sunset and, therefore, cannot be sighted until the following evening when it is 36 hours old. Other factors being constant, crescent B will certainly be bigger than crescent A.

2) *Distance*. As the moon revolves in its orbit its distance from the earth varies, due to the shape of the orbit. The moon is said to be at *perigee* when it is closest (356,410 km) to the earth and at *apigee* when it is furthest (406,740 km). Other factors being constant a *perigee* crescent is larger.

3) *Season*. Summer crescents are larger than winter crescents because the moon (being in the same hemisphere as the observer) is nearer to the observer. Thus, here in Nigeria, the crescent observed during the hot season (late spring to early autumn) is larger than the one observed during the cool season (late autumn to early spring).

From the foregoing, it is clear that size and altitude alone are not sufficient in determining the age of the crescent. Now let us conclude our explanation with the following hadith, reported by Muslim and Ahmad: Abul Bakhtari reported: "We went out to perform Umrah and when we encamped in the valley of Nakhlah, we tried to see the new moon. Some of the people said: It was three nights old, and others (said) that it was two nights old. We then met Ibn Abbas and told him we had seen the new moon, but that some of the people said it was three nights old and others that it was two nights old. He asked on which night we had seen it; and when we told him we had seen it on such and such night, he said the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him) had said Verily Allah

*deferred it till the time it is seen, so it is to be reckoned from the night you saw it."*

#### **Astronomical calculations**

Though these calculations can predict exactly when a new moon will be born, they cannot predict precisely (the accuracy is 85%) when it can be seen. In other words, these calculations can tell you when it is impossible to sight the moon and when it is most likely to sight it.

The popular view among Muslim jurists regarding the meaning of the hadith "Fast upon sighting it (the crescent)..." is actual sighting of the crescent. Therefore astronomy should *compliment* actual sighting rather than replace it. In other words astronomy should be used to check sighting errors.

#### **Sighting of other countries**

There are two views regarding using the sighting of other countries:

1) The single horizon view: favours global sighting and is based on the hadith "Fast when you sight it..." and

2) The multiple horizon view: favours local sighting and is based on this Hadith:

*Kurayb said: Umm Fadl, daughter of Harith, sent him to Mu'awiyah in Syria. I arrived in Syria, and did the needful for her. It was there in Syria that the month of Ramadan commenced. I saw the new moon (of Ramadan) on Friday. I then came back to Medina at the end of the month. Abdullah ibn Abbas asked me (about the new moon of Ramadan) and said: When did you see it? I said: We saw it on Friday. He said: (Did) you see it yourself? I said: Yes, and the people also saw it so they observed fast and Mu'awiyah also observed fast. Thereupon he said: But we saw it on Saturday . So we shall continue to observe the fast until we complete thirty (fasts) or we see it (the new moon of Shawwal). I said: Is the sighting of the moon by Mu'awiyah not valid for you? He said: No; this is how the Messenger of Allah (peace\_be\_upon\_him) has commanded us. Yahya ibn Yahya was in doubt (whether the word used in the*

*narration by Kurayb) was Naktafi or Taktafi. (Muslim, Attirmidhiy, Abu Dawud, An-Nasa'iy and Ahmad)*

Change? No, in fact this is one of the worst, but interesting, years we are witnessing. Worst because the month was started wrongly; and interesting because Allah has provided us with a rare opportunity to check ourselves.

Only Nigeria claimed sighting the crescent on this planet on Monday 4 November 2002. The moon set before the sun on the said day: Not only in Nigeria but even in countries west of it such as Senegal. In fact, the moon set nine minutes before the sun in Kaduna and Port Harcourt while it set eight minutes before the sun in Sokoto, the three places where claims of sighting were made.

Conjugation took place on the day in question at 9:34 pm local time (Yes, more than three hours after sunset). How then could someone have sighted the moon before conjugation, that is, when it was still before the sun? Please refer to the commentary of Suratush Shams verse 2 ('By the moon when it follows it (the sun)') by Ibn Kathir where he said: "Qatada said: 'The time when it (the moon) follows it (the sun) in the night preceding the beginning of a lunar month; when the sun sets the crescent is then sighted.'"

Based on actual sighting of the crescent, and not speculation or pre-prepared calendars, Monday 4 November 2002 was equivalent to 28 Sha'ban 1423 throughout the world, Nigeria (the common people, most of whom live in rural areas, and others that care to monitor the moon) inclusive. Then did Sha'ban have 28 days or did we start fasting on 29 Sha'ban?

Before I conclude the answer to this question, I wish to draw your attention to this fact: The majority of Muslims, locally and globally, started fasting on Wednesday 6 November. Only two countries declared Tuesday 5 November the beginning of Ramadan, and these are Nigeria and Libya. However, the

latter did not claim sighting the crescent they rather declared Ramadan based on their official criterion for determining the beginning of lunar months, that is conjugation before dawn. Since it is not the Libyan issue we are discussing, I will conclude with the following Hadith, reported by Attirmidhy: *Abu Huraira reported that the Prophet (SAWS) said: "Fasting is when you fast and Fitr (termination of fasting) is when you celebrate Fitr and Adha is when you celebrate Adha." Abu Isa (ie Attirmidhy) said: "This hadith is sound and rare and that some authorities have explained it to mean that fasting and Fitr should be with the majority."*

### Opportunity

Two eclipses will occur this month (Ramadan): A lunar eclipse on Wednesday 20 November (around 3:00am) and a solar eclipse on Wednesday 4 December (at sunrise). Since these events take place at specific times they are very useful in checking the authenticity of a lunar date: Whereas a solar eclipse takes place at the time of conjugation (i.e., at the expiry of an old lunar month and the beginning of a new one when the earth, moon and sun lie in a straight line, with the moon in the middle) a lunar eclipse occurs at full moon (i.e., about midway between successive conjugations when again the three objects lie in a straight line, but with the earth in the middle) that is between 13th and 15th day of the month.

Now let us use these two events to check our beginning of Ramadan. The lunar eclipse will take place on the 16th day! This is a divine proof that we started Ramadan at least a day earlier. Now the solar eclipse: Going by the Nigerian standard the moon

will be sighted on Tuesday 3 December, after 29 days of fasting, and Wednesday 4 December (the day of the eclipse) will be declared *Eid al-Fitr* day. However, as we get ready to go to the prayer ground, the sun will rise with the moon. What we are witnessing is a solar eclipse and the dark portion of the solar disc is nothing but the moon approaching conjugation. Then how could anybody have sighted it the previous evening? In fact on 3 December the moon will set before the sun throughout the country. For example, it will set thirty and forty minutes before the sun in Sokoto and Lagos, respectively. Even in the evening of 4 December the moon cannot be sighted since it will be only a little over 9 hours old (the minimum requirement for naked-eye sighting being 17 hours). However, on Thursday 5 December the moon can be sighted and it is going to be big and high above the horizon: Enough to mislead a layman to believe that the crescent is more than a day old. It is big because it is about 34 hours old and near *perigee* (closest to the earth).

### Recommendation

We should make it an obligation upon ourselves to be going out *en masse* to search for the crescent at the end of each month, and throughout the year. In particular, the Supreme Council For Islamic Affairs should, as a matter of urgency, evolve a system of monitoring the moon throughout the year and throughout the country. The beginning of every month should be announced for public consumption. This is the path of the Prophet (SAWS), his companions and those that followed them, as shown by the following hadith: *Abdullah Ibn Abi Qais (RA) said: "I heard A'isha (RA) saying: 'The Messenger of Allah (SAWS) used to keep track of Sha'ban more than any other month. Then he would fast the month of Ramadan when the crescent was sighted; and if it was hidden he would count thirty days and then fast."* (al-Bayhaqiy)

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## THE MESSAGE - Eidul Adha Controversy

*Bu Femi Abbas*

It would have been unrealistic for 'THE MESSAGE' not to expect a barrage of reactions from Nigerian Muslims over the observation of Eidul-Adha in Northern Nigeria last Sunday.

Such reactions naturally started pouring in as soon as the announcement was made to the effect that Sunday (December 7, 2008) was Eidul-Adha day. The calls came from all parts of the country including the North, a further confirmation that this column is well read and an indication that readers believe in its contents.

Among those who called were Muslim clerics, Imams and Islamic scholars. Some of them wanted to know the informed position of 'THE MESSAGE'. Some wanted to know the personal opinion of this columnist on the matter.

What was common to all the callers was their belief that the declared day was Arafah day. They also believe that observing Eidul-Adha in any part of the world that day could only amount to sacrilege. Their apprehension was manifest either in their voices or in their text and e-mail messages.

Some of them reminded this columnist that last Sunday's Eidul Adha was the third of its type observed in Nigeria in the past 13 years. They argued that such queer act was peculiar to Northern Nigeria.

Some of them expressed puzzle on what implications that Fatwa might have had on this year's Hajj.

As concerned Muslims, they all have a right to raise questions on such a controversial issue. What most of them

do not know, however, is that Islam is like a University where all sorts of researches and intellectual exercises are carried out. Unless one is deeply informed, whatever sounds or looks contrary to the well known norms would be seen as an aberration.

For those who are well versed in Islamic knowledge, observing Eidul-Adha on Arafah day in some sections of the world would not be strange. Islam is a dynamic rather than a rigid religion. It encourages and accommodates such intellectual exercises, views and opinions for enhancement of knowledge about the religion in as much as such views and opinions do not contradict the well known fundamental norms of Islam. That is why four learned Imams are well known to Sunni Muslims just as there are in Shia sect.

The opinions of those Imams may sometimes be at variance with one another based on the individual's understanding of the issue involved. Nevertheless, those differences do not usually affect the real tenets of the religion. That is why Muslims of any sect can ask for the Mosque anywhere and join the congregation in observing Salat without any enquiry about the sectarian status of the Imam of that Mosque. If differences of opinion of Imams about Islam are so fundamental, performance of Hajj in such a large congregation would have been very difficult if not impossible.

The controversy over observation of Eidul-Adha on Arafah day is not new. Neither is it peculiar to Nigeria. As a matter of fact, this issue has been perennially debated at

international conferences for scores of years.

The real genesis of controversy about any Eid whether Fitr or Adha is the sighting of the crescent. That is one issue that has remained unresolved for centuries.

With the differences over the sighting of crescent at the commencement of the last Ramadan, it was clear that a similar controversy would ensue during Eidul Adha.

For the North to have issued the Fatwa which named last Sunday Eidul-Adha, certain steps had long been taken which were not contradictory to Islam. For instance a Fatwa Committee had been set up in 2001 to sit from time to time and deliberate scholarly on crescent sighting so that Nigerian Muslim Ummah could be rightly guided. The members of that Committee are people well lettered Islamically and whose integrity is never in doubt. It is the responsibility of this Committee to advise the leadership of the Ummah, ably represented by the Sultan, on various Islamic matters including the sighting of the crescent. Thus, when a Fatwa is announced concerning the sighting of the crescent in Nigeria, it is not by anybody's whim but based on the findings and advice of the Committee.

As a result of the various researches carried out by that Committee, certain conclusions were reached one of which, incidentally, led to a clash between Arafah day and Eidul-Adha this year.

Some of those conclusions are as follows:

1. "That there is no direct link between observing the Arafat Day and the observance of the Id-al-Adha or Greater Bairam Festival. In fact, the observance of the Adha was instituted in the second year of the Hijrah while Hajj was instituted in the 9th year, a gap of seven years during which Id-al-Adha was observed without any reference to Arafat.

2. The Committee also noted that there are no directives from the Prophet (SAW) linking the Id-al-Adha with the observance of Arafat. The only relationship between the two is that Arafat is observed on the 9th day of Dhul Hijjah according to Makkan time and Id-al-Adha is observed on the 10th of Dhul Hijjah according to the local date of the month in any given country.

Thus for people who happen to be in Saudi Arabia they must observe Arafat on the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah according to the date in Saudi Arabia. However, for the rest of the world, Muslim must observe Id-al-Adha on the 10th day of Dhul-Hijjah according to their local time. Accordingly, since the month of Dhul-Hijjah began here in Nigeria on Friday 28th November, 2008, our Id-al-Adha day must be observed on Sunday, 7th December, 2008.

3. There is a consensus of opinion among the members of the Committee that the only legally acceptable way of determining the beginning and ending of any lunar month is through physical sighting of the crescent. They explained that all Islamic rituals and observances which are related to given dates are determined through physical sighting of the crescent without any reference to astronomical calculations.... This guidance from the Prophet of Islam (SAW) is what should guide all Muslims, and it is the consensus of almost all earlier generations of Muslim scholars.

a. It was also observed that three out of the four founders of the Orthodox schools of Jurisprudence, namely Imams Abu Hanifa, Malik b. Anas and Ahmad b. Hanbal agreed that the beginning and ending of Islamic lunar months are to be determined only by physical sighting according to various Hadiths of the Holy Prophet (SAW) who said: "Fast when you see it (the new month) and end your fast when you see it (a new moon). However, if it is concealed or covered from you, then complete it 30 days)".

b. Here at home in Nigeria, Shaykh Abdullahi b. Fodiyo, the younger brother of Shaykh Uthman b. Fodiyo and one of the greatest jurists in Africa, has said in

his well-known and highly regarded Tafsir (Commentary on the Holy Qur'an) Diya al-Ta'wil, that is not permitted to use any scientific or astronomical calculation as a basis for determining the beginning or end of an Islamic month. Like other great scholars before him, he also said that only physical sighting of the crescent is acceptable to the Shari'ah in accordance with the Hadith of the Holy Prophet of Islam (SAW).

Going by the criteria set by Islam, which have always guided this Committee, it is worthy to note that:

- i. Ramadan started on Sunday 31st August and ended Sunday 28th September, 2008 (29 days).
- ii. Shawwal started on Monday 29th September and ended on Tuesday 28th of October, 2008 (30 days).
- iii. Dhul Qadah started on Wednesday 29th October and ended on Thursday 27th November, 2008 (30 days).
- iv. Dhul Hijjah started on Friday 28th November and Sunday, 7th December, will thus be the 10th day, which must, therefore, be observed as the Id-al-Adha (Greater Bairam) day.

It is thus clear that all Muslims in Nigeria and our neighbours who choose to follow Nigeria in respect of sighting the moon must observe Id-al-Adha on Sunday 7th December, 2008 the day our brothers and sisters in Saudi Arabia are reportedly going to observe Arafat. There is nothing strange about this, since, as earlier observed, there is no direct guidance from the Prophet (SAW) or any recognised authority, linking

Arafat in Saudi Arabia and Id-al-Adha anywhere in the world".

The above quoted opinion is supported by some facts presented at an international conference thus:

"The contemporary scholars who implicitly disconnect Eid al-Adha from Hajj rituals and connect it directly to the local Moon sighting argue that al-Adha, like Eid al-Fitr, was instituted by the Prophet (PBUH) independently of Hajj institution. The Prophet initiated the two Eids after observing inhabitants of Madinah celebrate their two local festivals. He (PBUH) instead institutionalised the two Eids as alternate Islamic festivals.

"The initiation of these two important institutions of Islam at two different timings, in view of the first group, illuminates the fact that the two Islamic institutions are not intertwined. They are separate entities.

"The Prophet (PBUH) connected Eid al-Fitr with completion of the month of Ramadan i.e., the first day of Shawwal, while Eid al-Adha was connected with the 10th of Zil-Hajjah. There is no report that the Prophet (PBUH) ever tried to find out the day of Hajj or Arafah during his stay in Madinah in an effort to make Eid al-Adha coincide with day of Arafah or Hajj. The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have regularly slaughtered the sacrificial animals during his ten year's stay in Madinah, as Tirmidhi reports:

"Even after the Hajj was made obligatory, Eid al-Adha remained the same independent institution. There is no report that the Prophet (PBUH) made any conscious effort to find out the Day of Arafah or to correlate Eid al-Adha with the Day of Hajj or 10th of Zil-Hajjah in Makkah. Had it been a significant religious issue to link the Adha with Hajj then the Prophet (PBUH) would have made efforts to search for the Day of Arafah in Makkah. Instead he went with the local sighting of Madinah.

Now, the arguments above can be regarded as only one side of a coin. There is another side since every coin has two sides.

The other side which the Fatwa group over-sighted in their analysis and conclusion was equally addressed at the same international conference. All these facts are contained in a well researched paper presented by a renowned Islamic scholar Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Shah whose e-mail address is: Zulfiqalis@aol.com.

Some of those facts can be quoted as follows:

"Imam Ibn Taymiyyah makes a significant observation that the sacrifice of Hujjaj in Mina is the foundational principle to be followed by non-Hujjaj Muslims all over the world. That is why the Day of Sacrifice in Mina is termed by the Qur'an as the bigger Eid and the Hajj al-Akbar because it combines the sacred Eid time with the sacred place....

"The famous Hanbali Jurist Hafiz Ibn Rajab explains the relationship of Eid al-Adha prayer with the movement of Hujjaj from Muzdalifah to Mina. He reports that this is the position of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal that the common Muslims are to follow the movements of Hujjaj in Makka and do the Eid prayer within the time frame when the Hujjaj are throwing pebbles at Mina.

"Imam al-Bhaghawi states that the Muslims all over the globe are to follow the timings of Hujjaj in the Takbeerat of Tashreeq. This is the position of Ibn Abbas, Malik and Shafa'ee.

I have brought these multiple quotes from authoritative Hanafi, Shafa'ee, Maliki and Hanbali sources to make the point that these juristic authorities are united in their understanding that the Eid al-Adha rituals such as the Eid Prayer, act of sacrificing the animals and even the Takbeerat of al-Tashreeq are in subordination to the acts of Hujjaj. Therefore, the claim that the Eid al-Adha is an absolutely independent Islamic institution totally disconnected and detached from Hajj and fully self-regulating by all means is far from the

## Late Shehu of Borno: More Alive than the Living

Tribute By Professor Kyari Tijjani, Department of Political Science, UNIMAID  
([http://www.dailytrust.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=5768&Itemid=37](http://www.dailytrust.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5768&Itemid=37))

truth. It seems altogether otherwise. The Eid al-Adha is conventionally attached with the institution of Hajj. It is precisely the imitation and reminiscence of some of the acts of the final Pillar of Islam called Hajj. It is as much connected with the sacred place as with the sacred time. Ibn Taymiyyah has long ago observed this subtle link.

"There can not be any doubt that the enhanced reward in these days is connected with the international gathering of Muslims on Hajj. The Hajj culminates in the Day of Eid. That is why Muslims all over the globe are asked to participate in it so that they might get the reward of such a big Muslim gathering and share their supplications. Fasting on the Day of Arafah is also connected with the Wuquf of Arafah.

"Imam Muhammad bin Hasan al-Shaybani, the renowned student of Imam Abu Hanafi, states that the Imam's decision is carried out even if the person saw the new Moon with his own eyes and the 9th of Zil-Hajja according to the actual sighting was different than the day of Arafah announced by the leader

"Imam Ibn Taymiyyah narrates that there is no difference of opinion among the jurists that the month of Eid al-Adha should be observed in unity. No jurist has ever allowed that those who sighted the Moon should go by their sighting and celebrate the Day of Arafah according to the actual sighting or slaughter the animals according to their actual sighting. They must go with the majority of Muslims.

The controversy over this matter is endless. But it should be blamed on Saudi Arabia which has failed to provide the necessary leadership as expected of her.

*This article appeared on Femi Abbas' Friday Column – "THE MESSAGE" in The Nation Newspaper of Friday, 12th December, 2008. It is available online at:*

<http://www.thenationonlineng.com>

Shehu Mustafa Ibn Umar Ibn Kyari Al-Amin Al-Kanemi died on 21st February 2009, at the age of 85. It was expected; but not welcomed. No death; nobody's, anywhere, is ever welcomed. Shehu Mustafa Ibn Umar Ibn Kyari Al-Amin Al-Kanemi was a mortal, just as any one of us will die, he died.

But Shehu Mustafa Ibn Umar Ibn Kyari Al-Amin Al-Kanemi is not just like any one of us. Whatever his faults, as he well had some; as we all humans do have; Shehu Mustafa Umar Al-Kanemi [simply called Shehu Masta by all] had managed to establish a niche for himself in the psyche of everyone of us who know him for some good. As a mortal, he died.

But this is not death like all others despite his ripe old age, and well known failing health. No death I remember of in my over sixty [60] years of life, was ever so shocking; and so unwelcome. This is because Shehu Mustafa Ibn Umar Kyari Al-Kanemi; henceon Shehu Masta, despite whatever fault you may say he has, he had made himself so indispensable to his kingdom; to his people, to Borno State that it could be said that in death, the Shehu is more living than the living. In this, he is simply unique; unequalled and irreplaceable. This is a commentary not only on his personal quality and character, which it is, but on the terrible leadership deficit that exists today – in Borno in particular; and in Nigeria in general. Wai k'lande waji, if I could borrow the common Kanuri cry of anguish [meaning: Oh Lord; we are finished!] must have been in the heart of every Borno man and woman when his death was announced.

### Model of public service

As much has been attested to by the grief of the thousands who turned up for his funeral!

The Shehu, in the reasonably long life God has given him, for which we are grateful, has worked in all sorts of positions in the service of his people, ranging from Yalema [messenger of the palace]; policeman; clerk, and at a higher levels, as parliamentarian and District Head, before ultimately the Shehuship in 1974. Most of these jobs are fairly ordinary. They appear glamorous only because they are set in the palace.

Watching the events of the Shehu's death and burial, I cannot, but believe that Shehu Masta did, even in death, what living sons and daughters of Borno at all levels of power;

wealth and authority, have failed to do for Borno. Shehu Masta's death reincarnated Borno to its former glory of the Sayfawa days – fame and glory spreading between the great African Rivers, Niger and Nile [bein'al behrein; in Arabic]. For me, the congregation that thronged his burial was a confirmation. Literally, all who mattered trooped into Maiduguri; to the Shehu's palace; first to bury the late Shehu; and then to condole the people of Borno.

Two things must have worked to invoke this widespread sympathy, for the family of the late Shehu, and also for the people of Borno. The first thing is the personality of the late Shehu Mustafa Ibn Umar Ibn Kyari Ibn Al-Kanemi, which personality had reached everywhere and touched everybody in Nigeria. The second thing is historical fame and glory of Borno, which; in influence and authority, if not in power, had covered the better half of the Sub-Saharan Africa.

Not least emblematic of the respect and goodwill Shehu Mustafa Ibn Al-Kanemi had in the eyes of Nigerians, every Head of the Nigerian State living came for his funeral; or for condolence soon afterwards. Incumbent President, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua was even at the grave side. The leadership of National Assembly came in their entirety; and the Supreme Court in toto came to Maiduguri to condole the people of Borno State. Not even the hierarchies of the Securities and Armed Forces who normally kept their distance from such civic affairs as condolences had restrained themselves. They were in Maiduguri in all their ranks and colours. Even the Association of the disabled came, rolled out of their wheelchairs, and crawled into the palace to grieve and condole.

### The lesson

The lesson in all this is that in the final analysis, common humanity wins. By his humanity and humility Shehu Masta has reincarnated the historic pre-colonial Borno that was famed and loved throughout the Central Sudan. By this Shehu Masta did what living Borno leaders did not do. Shehu Masta brought out Borno from the waste matter basket visionless and missionless leaders had consigned it to.

The lesson for us: Be humble and humane. Then we can keep Borno in the 9th clouds where it belongs. Otherwise, Borno will drop back into the pit! And history will not be kind to our generation. God forbid. And may the Shehu's soul rest in eternal peace, ameen.

# News and Announcements

## Editorial (from page 1)

the very first day the authorities asked the people to do so. In this age of technological advancement, where communication has made it easy for information to be circulated easily, and the technology to be applied in aiding the Muslims to sight the moon has become available, two different opinions emerged: those who accept the traditional means of moon-sighting, and those who favour the use of technology. The controversy becomes more apparent with the issue of Arafah, as sometimes the day of the Arafah becomes the day of Eid for the countries that started fasting earlier than Saudi Arabia. This is an issue that has been dealt with by eminent scholars.

The issue at stake is that such disagreements have become a source of disunity among the Muslim Ummah, both in Nigeria and around the world. This is what made it pertinent to have a discussion on the best way to address this issue in a scholarly and respectful manner. For this reason, the Nigeria Muslim Forum, UK, dedicated its spring conference this year in Birmingham on the controversy of moon sighting in Nigeria, an issue that worries a number of Muslims, keeping in mind the incidence on the day of Arafah/Eid in the year 1429.

It is hoped that the scholars invited will use the knowledge Allah (SWT) has bestowed them with, to find a solution to the problem, and advise the authorities on how to confront the issue in case it arises in the future.

## ARRIVALS

1. Br Abdullahi Abubakar, MA International Trade and Finance at Leeds Metropolitan University.
2. Dr Garba Danjuma, Masters in Public Health at Nuffield Institute, University of Leeds.
3. Abdul'Azeez A Aliyu, M.Sc. in Energy and Environment at University of Leeds.
4. Abdulmajid Muhammad Nainna Masters in Fire and Exploration Engineering at University of Leeds.
5. Mohammed Usman Degereji, PhD Engineering, University of Leeds.
6. Aliyu Baba Msc Offshore Engineering, University of Newcastle.
7. Aliyu Abdullahi, M.Sc. in Fire and Explosion Engineering, University of Leeds.
8. Bintu Grema Mustapha, M.Sc. Fire and Explosion Engineering, University of Leeds.
9. Muhammed Yusuf, M.Sc. Environmental Engineering, University of Leeds.
10. Jamila Abdulkadir, M.Sc. Environmental Engineering, University of Leeds.
11. Zainab Shamaki, M.Sc. Environmental Engineering, University of Leeds.
12. Mukhtar Usman Raji, M.Sc. Electrical/Electronics Engineering, University of Leeds.
13. Muhammed Bello, M.Sc. Exploration Geophysics Engineering, University of Leeds.
14. Bilkisu Sada, M.Sc. Exploration Geophysics Engineering, University of Leeds.
15. Muhammad Sani Yahya from FCT, Abuja for a PhD programme in Remote Sensing, University of Nottingham.
16. Mukhtar Abdulkadir from Sokoto State for PhD Chemical Engineering, University of Nottingham.
17. Abdulkareem A. Yahya from Zamfara State for an M.Eng Chemical Engineering, University of Nottingham.
18. Attahir Murtala from Gombe State for an M.Eng Electrical & Electronics Engineering, University of Nottingham.
19. Awwal Ndayako from Niger State for an M.Eng Mechanical Engineering, University of Nottingham.
20. Usman Abdullahi from Kogi State for an M.Sc. in Banking & Finance, University of Surrey.
21. Abdulhafiz Adamu Gulma from Kebbi State for a Foundation programme in Law, Nottingham Trent International College.
22. Kamil Muazu from Kaduna State for a Foundation programme in Arts & Design, Nottingham Trent International College.
23. Muhammad Babani from Bauchi State for a Foundation programme at University of Nottingham.
24. Muhammad Mustapha for a Foundation programme at Nottingham Trent International College.
25. Bashir Shattima for a Foundation programme at Nottingham Trent International College.

May Allah (SWT) guide and protect them and give them the ability to excel and succeed in their studies, ameen.

## DEATHS

1. The Shehu of Borno and Vice President, Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Alhaji Mustapha bin Umar Kyari Amin El-Kanemi, passed away after a protracted illness.
2. Professor Egberonge of the University of Lagos passed away after a protracted illness.
3. Professor Abba B. Gumel lost his sister (Zainab) who died during child birth.
4. Brother Waziri Mala lost his brother Alhaji Mala Zanna and two of his Uncles Alhaji Kaigama Mustafa (Kaigama of Dikwa), and Alhaji Mallam Sanda.
5. Brother Aliyu Gana, former student of Birmingham University lost his sister. She died during child birth.
6. Brother Muhammad Nur of University of Leeds has lost his mother who died after brief illness.
7. Sheikh Tsofo Adam, an Imam and Community Leader in Nottingham passed away after brief illness.
8. Sister Hadiza Bappah (Woking) lost her uncle who died after a protracted illness.
9. Dr Aminu Shittu of the Royal Veterinary College, University of London, lost his uncle, Alhaji Aliyu Sabon Birni, who died after brief illness.
10. Brother Atiku Nuhu Koko of University of Dundee lost his father in-law, Alhaji Muhammad Modi Yabo who died after brief illness.

May Allah (SWT) forgive them, have Mercy on them and give the family they left behind the fortitude to bear the loss, ameen.

## BIRTHS

1. The family of AbdulHadi Aminu was blessed with a baby boy named Mohammed.
2. The family of Mallam Babandi Abubakar Gumel of the Nigeria High Commission, London was blessed with a baby girl named Naima.
3. The family of Dr Mohammed Kyari, former Amir of the Forum was blessed with a baby boy named Alhaji Kyari.
4. The family of Adam Abubakar Gumel, Secretary of the Forum, was blessed with a baby boy.
5. The family of Dr Magaji Sani of Nottingham was blessed with a baby boy named Mohammad Tariq.
6. The family of Brother Nasiru Abubakar of Birmingham was blessed with a baby boy.
7. The family of Dr Abdullahi Shehu of Coventry was blessed with the birth of a baby girl.
8. The brother of Mallam Waziri Mala - Abba Jato Mala was blessed with a baby girl.

May Allah (SWT) enable the parents of these children to bring them up in the right manner, according to Islamic teachings, ameen.



## GRADUATION

1. Dr Abdullahi Nuhu (Kano State) has successfully completed his PhD programme and has since returned to Kano State University of Technology.
2. Dr Bashir Aliyu has successfully completed his PhD programme in Mechanical Engineering.
3. Dr Ahmad Hassan Ahmad (Adamawa State) has successfully completed his PhD programme in Economics at Loughborough University.
4. Dr Mu'azu Musa (Kebbi State), has successfully completed his PhD programme in Renewable Energy Resources, University of Nottingham.
5. Dr Mahmoud M Garba (Kebbi State) has successfully completed his PhD programme in Renewable Energy Resources, University of Nottingham.
6. Dr Hayatu Raji (Adamawa State) has successfully completed his PhD programme in Biological Sciences at University of Oxford.
7. Dahiru Muhammad Dodo (Adamawa State) has successfully completed his Masters programme in Personal Mobile and Satellite Communication at University of Bradford.
8. Yazeedu Alhassan Kebbi (Kebbi State) has successfully completed his Master programme in Fire and Explosion Engineering at University of Leeds.
9. Brother Usman Kaigamma has successfully completed his Master programme in Structural Geology engineering at University of Leeds.
10. Brother Mohammed Lawal Bello has successfully completed his Masters programme in Wireless and Mobile communication at University of Leeds.

## NMF (UK) Summer Conference 2008 in Pictures - Leeds

11. Brother Tijjani Bulama has successfully completed his Masters programme in Geology at University of Leeds.
12. Brother Bala Fakandu completed his MSc in Fire and Explosion Engineering at University of Leeds.
13. Brother Suleiman Wada completed his Masters in Fire and Explosion Engineering at University of Leeds.
14. Brother Dahiru Abdulmalik completed his Masters in Financial Mathematics at University of Leeds.
15. Brother Ibrahim Danjuma completed his masters in MSc Management at University of Leeds.
16. Brother Mohammad Abubakar Gumel, the younger brother of Adam Abubakar Gumel, has successfully completed his Hifzul Quran at Dewsbury Madrasah, West Yorkshire.

May Allah (SWT) make this achievement beneficial to them, their family and the entire Muslim Ummah, ameen.

### ***Editorial Board***

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**Cross Section of Participants – Brothers’ Section**



**Cross Section of Children Participants with Prices**



**Group Photograph taken at the end of the event I**

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