

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## **CRESCENT SIGHTING USING THE UML AL QURA CALENDAR IN SAUDI ARABIA TO DETERMINE RAMADAN AND EID UL FITIR OF 1422 AH AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR UNITY IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES BY DR. MUHAMMAD M H KHAN**

The Uml Al Qura Calendar used by Saudi Arabia claims to be for civil purposes only, yet it plays a major role in influencing the determination of the 29<sup>th</sup> day of the month in which the crescent is normally observed. Because of this, there is always chaos between Saudi Arabia and other Countries for each year in respect to major Islamic events. Due to this growing problem, The Highest Religious Council "Majlis al-Ifta' al-A'ala" in Saudi Arabia in 1419 AH has ordered the formation of Official Crescent Sighting Committees for the six regions of Makkah, Riyadh, Qassim, Hail, Tabuk and Asir, but to no avail; this problem has not been corrected since the Uml Al Qura Calendar is used as a precalculated guide to determine the 29<sup>th</sup> day of sighting, which leads to observer errors that are accepted by the Justice Department since such testimony are not scrutinize using Quran and Ahadith. The Highest Religious Council "Majlis al-Ifta' al-A'ala" in their Hikmath and study of Quran and Ahadith knows that errors made by solo observers can be corrected by group sighting, thus explaining the formation of 6 Official Crescent Sighting Committees, but such action have not help to correct the present situation since there are always solo observers who do not accompany the Official Crescent Sighting Committees, in so doing their testimony are accepted by the Justice Department even when the sighting was solo and contradicts the sighting of the Six Official Crescent Sighting Committees. From the famous tradition between Omar (RH) and Anas (RH), its shows clearly the benefits of sighting the crescent as a group, this is the only way to eliminate observer error and at the same time, increase the Sawab between Muslims, since the Sunnah of sighting the crescent would be done in Jammah which can later lead to Magrib Prayers at sun set being carried out in Jammah also. From this there are various advantages in sighting the New Crescent as a Group with no disadvantages; the opposite can be said of solo sighting. Listed below are reports of JAS/ICOP- Islamic Crescent Observation Project for the sighting of Rajab 1422 in Saudi Arabia.

### **RAJAB 1422 Observation in Saudi Arabia:**

- 1. ICOP member, Mr. Saleh Al-Saab said: "Due to the low altitude and the clouds, the crescent was not seen."**
- 2. ICOP member, Mr. Anwar Al Muhammad said: "Around sunset of Monday, 17 Sep, we had tried to sight the new crescent of Rajab as a group of about 15 persons. But all of us could not see it except two of us who claimed that they can see it. I know that the crescent was above horizon with at most 4 degrees at sun set in our town (Qateef-East of Saudi), which means that the crescent will stay at most 20 minutes after sun set. According to astronomical records it is almost impossible to see such a crescent. For this reason I asked one of those two persons to locate the crescent through my telescope (30X-60X) and he did but again no body of the group can see it even through the telescope. Then, I told it is not logical to see it by your naked eyes while the other normal people can**

**not see it through a telescope which can show the ring of Saturn, I think they may saw some thing other than the crescent."**

This report along with the tradition mentioned above explicitly shows the advantages of group sighting in real life and what would be the outcome of solo sighting especially when an error is made and such testimony is not scrutinize using Quran and Hadith. If this continues to happen, there will always be errors in the system. Since research clearly shows, that 15% error will exist in reports of solo observers; and with hundreds of inexperience Muslims looking for the new crescent in one or two months only, the percentage of error will go up drastically. The error which happened for Rajab 1422 AH in Saudi Arabia was 13.2 %, luckily enough, a group was present to correct this error by reducing it to zero percent; imagine what would have happened if these two individuals went solo sighting and there was no group present to correct such errors. Lets hope Inshallah the Justice Department will see the Hikmath in accepting new crescent sighting reports only from the Six Official Crescent Sighting Committees of Saudi Arabia and would encourage solo observers to accompany these 6 Official groups in sighting the new crescent by not accepting the testimony of solo observers.

The Calendar System used by Saudi Arabia for civil purposes influence the Religious Holidays, because there is no Religious Calendar present to guided Muslims in sighting the new crescent on the correct 29<sup>th</sup> day. For this reason the Uml Al Qura Calendar have constantly changed their criteria in an attempt to coincide civil dates with religious dates, currently such attempts are in vain and their criterias will soon change again in 1423 to reflect conjunction of the moon once more. Provided below are the constant changing criterias which the Uml Al Qura Calendar faces in an attempt to correct this growing problem. This information, provided by the Jordanian Astronomical Society (JAS) are presented in its complete form, with scanned Original Arabic documents from Saudi Arabia describing these criterias. To see the entire documents visit the web site at: -

<http://www.jas.org.jo/sau.html#new> (For the old and new criteria)

<http://www.jas.org.jo/~salman/> (Reverting to the conjunction criteria starting 1423 AH)

## **The Actual Saudi Dating System**

### **The OLD Criteria (Up to 1420 AH, April 1999)**

**"( To Jordan/ Al-Yadodeh/ M.Kh./ Al-Sook/ Mr. Hayel Mamdooh Abu-Zeid, dated January 21, 1998/Ramadan 23, 1418H.**

**We wish to thank you for sending us your greetings of Ramadan, and for reminding us of the date of the New Moon of Shawwal for the year 1418 H. We would like to remind you that determining the first day of the Islamic month is like determining the prayer times, and the aim of His Almighty from these times is to inform us not to take it as worship. It is adopted in Umm-ul-Qura Calendar that if the Moon's age at Sunset is 12 hours or more after the New Moon then the PREVIOUS day is the first day of the Islamic month, since the Islamic day starts at Sunset, and the night is before the daylight, as well as the time of fasting is in the civil daylight. May Allah accept your worship. May Allah bless this Ramadan. Thanking you for your good cooperation.**

**From: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia/ Al-Riyadh/ The Higher Religious Council "Majlis al-Ifta' al-A'ala"/ Mohammad Bin Ehmead.)"**

### **The NEW Criteria (After 1420 AH, April 1999)**

**"Recently, one of our friends informed us that the responsible person of Umm Al-Qurrah calendar (the official Saudi calendar) told him that they will change their current criteria starting from the year 1421 AH.**

**Later on, as we got the 1420 AH Umm Al-Qurrah calendar, we noticed that Saudi did change their criteria starting from 1420 AH not 1421 AH. Which is better! Now, Saudi starts the lunar month if the Moon sets AFTER the Sun on the 29th day of the previous month, as seen from Mecca. Although the new criteria are much better than the old ones, it still ignores the actual sighting of the crescent! Also, at certain months they begin the month while the Moon is not yet in conjunction (i.e. new moon)! Setting of the Moon after the Sun does NOT always imply that the Moon reached conjunction."**

### **REVERTING TO THE CONJUNCTION CRITERIA STARTING 1423 AH**

#### **UmmUIQura Calendar**

**"I met the brothers at KACST who were calculating the UmmUIQura Calendar for Hejiri dates. The brothers were very warm and welcoming. Alhamdulillah I was able to find out first hand, the details behind the UmmUIQura Calendar. I found that there has been a major change in the computation criteria starting 1420H. Before that year, the UmmUIQura calendar was based on Greenwich and not Makkah. Also it was based on the dark invisible Astronomical new moon being born. Thus it was totally different from the actual Hilaal observation. Starting about 1420H, the new criterion is that the Moonset be after Sunset in Makkah (even by one second). Starting 1423H Insha'Allaah it will again change slightly to directly take the astronomical new moon (conjunction) into account. But the main input I got was that the UmmUIQura calendar was for CIVIL use only, and NOT for predicting the Hilaal for religious dates. The author of the calendar is well aware that the moonset needs to be after sunset by a long time, and not just one second (along with other factors) for the Hilaal to be visible. But the point was that the UmmUIQura calendar neither attempts nor claims to predict the Hilaal. It is merely used for the official dates in the Ministries, schools, Saudia Airlines, and indeed all over the country Alhamdulillah.**

**I was a bit hesitant to introduce the issue of errors in the Saudi announced dates for fear of offending my hosts. But Alhamdulillah they themselves expressed that they knew there were a LOT of errors." (Hilaal Sighting in Saudi Arabia & Its Implications Worldwide- S. SALMAN)**

**Because the General Muslim Public in Saudi Arabia and other Countries using the Umm Al Qura Calendar are not aware that the data reflected, are not based upon the actual visibility of the new crescent, but instead is based on the calculated conjunction phase of the moon (i.e new**

moon, black moon, astronomical new moon, molad) or moonset after sunset on the 29<sup>th</sup> day on the calendar, which are ahead of the visible new crescent by 1 or 2 days. Muslims who are unaware of the astronomical differences in relation to moon set after sunset by 1 seconds and conjunction, as not being the same to the visibility calculation of the new crescent or actual sighting are misled in observing the crescent on the wrong 29<sup>th</sup> day; which can lead to only three results after this error happens.

1. The observer in the plight to see the crescent, will see a foreign object in place of the new crescent and declare the new crescent was seen when its was impossible to be seen, due to the wrong 29<sup>th</sup> day determination.

2. If the crescent was not seen on the wrong 29<sup>th</sup> day, the month will be counted to complete 30 days which will again be ahead of the actual sighting by one or two days since the count will start on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of the Uml Al Qura Calendar.

3. This procedure on using the wrong 29<sup>th</sup> day for sighting, will continue in a vicious cycle for the other months and since sighting does not happen for the previous months before Shaban, Ramadan and Zul Hijjah there will be constant errors, which causes daily intercalations for most of the months in the first or second days of each month.

Once the wrong 29<sup>th</sup> day is used by the observer, one of the three results mentioned above will ultimately lead, to the Observer testimony, being accepted by the Justice Department if its not cross checked with the points listed below:

Astronomical Data which shows that sighting at conjunction, a few hours after conjunction and moon set after sunset; is impossible since this phase or time is before or ahead of the new crescent phase.

The Justice Department who accepts the Testimony of observers, have little knowledge in Astronomy to know that the sighting was an error, which contradicts Quran, that states clearly the moon follow courses or phases that are sequential and orderly and it would be impossible for one phase to come before the other (in this case the conjunction phase or moon set after sunset on 29<sup>th</sup> day, being ahead of the new crescent phase). Following a sighting based on a disorderly phase of the moon contradicts the laws, which Allah (SWT) has set for the moon. Allah (SWT) Says in the Holy Quran (see underlined words):

**INDIVIDUAL ORDAINED ORBITS AND ORDERLY SEQUENTIAL PHASES FOR EACH CELESTIAL BODY, EACH BEING DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER:**

**"And the moon, we have measured for her mansions (to traverse) till she returns like the old, (withered, and curved-up like a sickle) date-palm. It is not permitted for the sun to catch-up the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; each swims along in (its own) orbit." (36:39-40)**

**"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 her; that he might know the number of years and the**

count (of time). Nowise did God create this but in truth and righteousness. (Thus) doth he explain his signs in detail, for those who understand." (10:5)

"He has made subject to you, the night and the day; the Sun and the Moon; and the stars in subjection by his command." (14:33)

"And he subjected the Sun and the Moon (to his law); each one runs its course for a term appointed." (13:2), (31:29), (35:13), and (39:5).

*"The Sun and the Moon follow courses exactly computed." (55:05)*

This short verse lays the foundation on which it is permissible to calculate for the first visible new crescent from a Shariah perspective and refutes any claim made by Muslims that erroneous crescent sighting should be followed; since all such erroneous sighting would contradict the findings of this short verse and at the same time contradict the Words of Allah in the previous verses, explaining the orderly movement of the moon and other celestial bodies.

"The number of months in the sight of Allah is twelve (in a year) so ordained by Him the day He created the heavens and the earth; of them four are sacred; that is the straight usage." (At- Tauba:36)

"Verily the transposing is an addition to unbelief: the unbelievers are led to wrong thereby: for they make it lawful one year and forbidden another year in order to adjust the number of months forbidden by Allah and make such forbidden ones lawful. The evil of their course seems pleasing to them. But Allah guideth not those who reject faith." (At-Tauba:37)

These two verses clearly state that the Islamic months with Allah are 12 of which 4 are sacred and at the same time, the notion of intercalation or transposing months or days (since the basic unit of a month is a day), is Unislamic and such practices should be discourage. There is no mention of civil Islamic months therefore Muslims should try to use a Calendar based on the 12 Islamic months mentioned in the Holy Quran, Inshallah.

At the same time accepting such Testimony contradicts the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SWS) since it shows clearly that the 29<sup>th</sup> day of Shaban was not determined by looking at a calendar system, that's based upon the conjunction phase or moonset after sunset which was followed by the Jews in their calendar making (For more explanation on this topic read- **THE UML AL-QURA CALENDAR COMPARED TO THE JEWISH CALENDAR (CALCULATED RABBINICAL CALENDAR -CRC) AND ITS EXAMINATION FROM A SHARIAH PERSPECTIVE. BY DR. MUHAMMAD M H KHAN.**) But instead he relied on sighting for the previous months by counting 29 or 30 days to extract the correct 29<sup>th</sup> day of sighting in Shaban, in order to start the month of Ramadan correctly. Our Prophet Muhammad (SWS) says (see underlined words):

**Sunan of Abu-Dawood- Hadith 2318, Narrated by Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin**

**“The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) used to count the days in Sha'ban in a manner he did not count any other month; then he fasted when he sighted the new moon of Ramadan; but if the weather was cloudy he counted thirty days and then fasted.”**

**“Fast when you see it and break the fast when you see it, but if you cannot see it (or clouded over), calculate it”(Bukhari).**

**These two Ahadith explicitly states that the 29<sup>th</sup> day based on conjunction or moonset after sunset was not used to determine the new crescent, but instead a systematic method of looking for the crescent for all 12 months was followed, where counting up to 29 days was imply for sighting or completing 30 days was used when the new crescent was not seen. The second Hadith and the verses of the Quran mentioned previously, gives us the permission to calculate for the new crescent phase, in so doing this Calendar will follow Quran and Sunnah. The Uml Al Qura Calendar presently does not calculate for the new crescent but instead calculates for conjunction (one phase before the new crescent phase) or moonset after sunset on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of the Month. Care should be taken to calculate for the correct phase of the moon (i.e new crescent phase) in order to follow Quran and Ahadith, Inshallah.**

In cases where our Prophet Muhammad (SWS) did not see the crescent, he verified the observer's testimony to the best of his knowledge by making sure that the observer was a Muslim and that he sighted the new crescent, in so doing the possibility of a Muslim misleading the Ummah by lying was less, since they would be aware of the consequences on the day of Judgment in trying to created disunity. It was shown in other Ahadith that the testimony of observers seeing something other than the new crescent was rejected, this well documented situation happened when Omar (RH) rejected the testimony of Anas (RH) who claimed that he saw the crescent when he actually saw his gray hair over his eye. When a testimony was verified using the best knowledge available, the decision to begin or end the fast was transmitted in a professional manner in which a well know spokesperson of our Prophet Muhammad (SWS) was used to disseminate this message to the Muslim Public. This was seen where Billal (RH) was used to do so, with such actions the Public did not had to Question where the News was coming from, since he was recognize among them as the caller of the Adhan. Listed below are the Ahadith of our Prophet Muhammad (SWS) where these vital steps were taken to eliminate error and establish a working system:

**NARRATOR Abdullah ibn Abbas, ABU DAWUD- HADITH\_No 2333**

**A Bedouin came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: I have sighted the moon. Al-Hasan added in his version: that is, of Ramadan. He asked: Do you testify that there is no god but Allah? He replied: Yes. He again asked: Do you testify that Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah? He replied: Yes. and he testified that he had sighted the moon. He said: Bilal, announce to the people that they must fast tomorrow.**

**NARRATOR Ikrimah, ABU DAWUD- HADITH\_No 2334**

**Once the people doubted the appearance of the moon of Ramadan, and intended neither to offer the tarawih prayer nor to keep fast. A Bedouin came from al-Harrah and testified that he had sighted the moon. He was brought to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He asked: Do you testify that there is no god but Allah, and that I am the Apostle of Allah? He said: Yes; and he testified that he had sighted the moon. He commanded Bilal who announced to the people to offer the tarawih prayer and to keep fast.**

**These two Ahadith clearly shows the extra steps which our Prophet Muhammad (SWS) took to establish the testimony of a Muslim unknown to him because he came from outside the city; he establish that the Bedouin was a Muslim and secondly that he saw the crescent, of course since or Prophet Muhammad (SWS) methodically counted the previous months and did this for the month of Shaban (see previous Hadith), he knew that the testimony was correct since the day of sighting done by the Sahabas and the Bedouin was on the correct 29<sup>th</sup> day of Shaban and not based on conjunction or moonset after sunset as the Jews practiced in his time. If such sighting was ahead of time and contradicted his count of the previous months with Shaban, and also contradicted the Quran in its totality, such testimony would be rejected.**

**When the Bedouin testimony was found to be correct, our Prophet Muhammad (SWS) in his wisdom commanded Billal (RH), his official spokes person to announce this message, in so doing the Muslim Public will be secure and will not question this command since they knew Billal (RH).**

From the process mentioned above, a few rules can be extracted to establish a systematic criteria for the determination of all twelve Islamic Months mentioned in the Quran and Ahadith.

**CRITERIAS EXTRACTED FROM THE ABOVE VERSES OF THE QURAN AND AHADITH THAT ANY JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SHOULD ADHERE TO IN SAUDI ARABIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES.**

1. Sighting should be done in a group to reduce the possibility of observer error this is clearly seen when Anas (RH) was corrected by Omar (RH) in the error he made. If a group was not present, this error would have gone unchecked and Muslims would have started fasting one day earlier.
2. New crescent observation should happen for all 12 Months using group sighting since this helps to build the experience of the observers and recheck observer error against the group.
3. The data of the Uml Al Qura Calendar should reflect the calculated visibility of the New Crescent, since the 29<sup>th</sup> day will correspond to the actual day of sighting and in cases of error the crescent will be visible to the majority of Muslims; leading to following the

Quran, Ahadith and not contradicting Quranic Astronomy which is Fard ul Kifayah, in so doing leading Saudi Arabia and other Countries towards unity of Islamic events.

4. If Saudi Arabia finds it difficult to reflect this data in the Uml Al Qura Calendar, since this old system was in use for many years in their Schools, Ministries and Industries etc. The Uml Al Qura Calendar, at the minimum should explicitly state that its purpose is for civil uses only and at no time should the 29<sup>th</sup> day be used from this calendar to go out and observe the crescent. At the same time an Almanac with the dates of the new crescent visibility for all 12 months in Saudi Arabia should be included on the Uml Al Qura Calendar, in so doing Muslims can use these dates to go out and look for the crescent based on the correct day of sighting. This work should be carried out by the brothers at KACST who are responsible for constructing the Uml Al Qura Calendar, in so doing this Almanac will be Official and will be a small step towards correcting this problem.

5. The ideal solution is to construct a Religious Islamic Calendar based on the calculated visibility of the new crescent, thus looking for the crescent or using the dates exclusively based on the calculated visibility of the new crescent would give the same results. Making such a Calendar will follow Quran and Sunnah; this will also utilize and advance the works of past Muslims Astronomers (the majority of them being Arabs) in using the legacy they have left us in working to calculate the visibility of the new crescent and not to follow the Jewish Calendar System which reflects conjunction of the moon or molad as was rejected by our Prophet Muhammad (SWS) and the Sahabas at the time of the Jews. This data on calculating the visibility of the new crescent is only 3 decades old and can be obtained from many software and Organizations. One of these Organization which is sponsored by Saudi Arabia (a member state) is the Organization of Islamic Conference which in due action to the growing disunity between Muslims on Islamic dates; have commissioned the International Islamic Calendar Programme to continue with the legacy of past Muslims Astronomers in creating the calculated dates for the visibility of the new crescent. These calculations were made for Saudi Arabia taking Makkah as the central bearings. Currently this Information is available free of charge with parameters such as the visibility of the new crescent, Islamic Days correlated to the Gregorian Days, Lunation number etc for Saudi Arabia but this data is not utilize by the Saudi Authorities making the Uml Al Qura Calendar or the Justice Department.

This data is currently being used in Guyana for approximately 10 years, when it replaced the Uml Al Qura Calendar of Saudi Arabia due to the increasing disunity it caused between Muslims for determining the Islamic dates and sighting of the New crescent. Currently this data has fixed the problems encountered in the past, in so doing forming the ideal Religious Calendar since Muslims are more united as to the visibility of the New Crescent; with no conflict between Religious and Civil dates.

Perhaps its time the Brothers who prepare the Uml Al Qura data at KACST, should utilize this data made for Saudi Arabia by the International Islamic Calendar Programme in making a Religious Islamic Calendar that can guide Muslims to the correct 29<sup>th</sup> day of sighting. This Religious Calendar should be made to serve as a transitional calendar between the Uml Al Qura Calendar and the current crescent problems that are encountered in Saudi Arabia each year, in so doing the Industries, Schools and Ministries etc. can be weaned into accepting the Religious Islamic Calendar, which would be more appropriate for Saudi Arabia being an Islamic Nation. Saudi Arabia should see no problems in using this data on a civil basis or for Islamic Months, since both will coincide with each other. This system has been working for 10 years in Guyana among Muslims with little argument, chaos or disunity in respect to civil and Islamic events.



Perhaps Inshallah when this system is adopted by Countries at large especially Countries in the Middle East, will Muslims scattered in Islamic and Non Islamic Countries be united in using one Islamic Calendar, which reflects one Islamic day of 24 hours corresponding to 2 partial Gregorian days depending where the International Lunar Date Line Falls.

Jordanian Ministry of Islamic Affairs with the help of Jordanian Astronomical Society (JAS/ICOP), recognizing this problem, will be the first country in the Middle East to use the Universal Hejric Calendar (UHC) starting 2002, which is based on the actual calculated visibility of the new crescent and not conjunction or moonset after sunset on the 29<sup>th</sup> day. Lets hope Inshallah, other Countries in the Middle East and through out the world can follow Jordan so that we can attain unity by abiding to the Quran and Ahadith.

6. The testimony of the Observer should not contradict the Quran in this Case Quranic Astronomy. Therefore a Muslim Astronomer should evaluate each testimony and his judgment should be considered as final since he would be the most qualified for the Fard ul Kifiah interpretation and understanding of Astronomy as seen from the Holy Quran. It should be noted that Fard ul Ine being compulsory on all Muslims, is different than Fard ul Kifiah, where it is compulsory that some Muslims in the community attain and use this Knowledge. A lack of this knowledge in its implementation and acquiring, by all members of the Muslim community will be considered questionable for all Muslims on the Day of Judgment. Therefore it is very important that Astronomical Knowledge from the Quran be consulted from the few qualified Muslims Astronomers in order to avoid the entire Muslim community being held culpable on the day of Judgment, especially when such sightings contradicts the Holy Quran and Ahadith.

7. On what basis was the 29<sup>th</sup> day of sighting determined (was it determined using the Uml Al Qura Calendar or was it actually determined from sighting of previous months with counting of 29 or 30 days that should correspond to the calculated visibility of the new crescent.

8. Was the observer a Muslim?

9. When the above points are checked and found to be correct, transmittion of such testimony should be done in a systematic and professional manner, in which an Official Committee declares all twelve months to the Muslim Public. Such confirmed testimony should be carried out in a written manner, where the names, Shahada status of the observers and sighting information in respect to time, date and place are recorded on this document that can be given to the media and archived for future use.

10. This official document can be used by the media to transmit the news on the beginning of the month, since it will have all the vital information to demonstrate to the Muslim Public, that a systematic method was followed that adhered to the Quran and Sunnah. With the existence of this document, countries to the west of the sighted crescent, can prepare to begin the Islamic month since they will eventually see the crescent and at the same time will have an official document to confirm such sighting via the media, email, fax etc. and no rumors or unofficial source will be taken into consideration which can lead Muslims into greater disunity. This happens frequently in the USA where reports of New Crescent sighting coming from the Middle East are broadcasted by Unislamic Sources that have no official document to support their claims, which mislead many Muslims to follow the Middle East when such Sighting Completely contradict the Quran and Ahadith.

Listed below are the dates for Saudi Arabia and the rest of the World in respect to the Months of Shaban, Ramadan and Shawwal 1422 AH. As stated above if the crescent is observed on the wrong 29<sup>th</sup> day based on the Uml Al Qura calendar, Ramada and Eid ul Fitir can start 1 or 2 days ahead of other Countries, therefore its important that the criterias listed above, be followed by the Brothers at KACST who makes the Uml Al Qura Calendar, the 6 Official Crescent Sighting Committees and the Justice Department in Saudi Arabia, so that Unity can be achieve.

**FIRST DAY OF SHABAN, RAMADAN AND SHAWWAL 1422 AH FOR THE USA AND SAUDI ARABIA**

MONTHS	FIRST DAY OF THE MONTH BASED ON THE VISIBILITY CRITERIA/ SIGHTING IN THE USA	FIRST DAY OF THE MONTH BASED ON THE UML AL QURA CALENDAR	29 <sup>TH</sup> DAY OF THE MONTH BASED ON THE UML AL QURA CALENDAR
SHABAN	THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2001	WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2001	WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2001
RAMADAN	SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2001	FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2001	WILL BE DETERMINED BASED ON SHABAN
SHAWWAL	SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2001	SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2001	WILL BE DETERMINED BASED ON RAMADAN

From the table above we can see that Ramadan will begin on Saturday, November 17, 2001 for the USA and the rest of the world, based on the calculated visibility of the new crescent/sighting. Nevertheless, since Saudi Arabia uses the conjunction based/ moonset after sunset Uml Al Qura calendar, the first day of Shaban will be Wednesday, October 17, 2001 this would make the 29<sup>th</sup> day of Shaban in Saudi Arabia being on Wednesday, November 14, 2001. If Muslims living in Saudi Arabia, uses this incorrect day of the 29<sup>th</sup>, based on the Uml Al Qura Calendar and attempt to look for the New crescent by going solo without any Group present (the 6 Official Crescent Sighting Committees), an error in sighting the new crescent can be made and the month of Ramadan will start on Thursday, November 15, 2001 which is 2 days ahead of the USA and the rest of the world. On the other hand if the crescent was not seen, 30 days would be completed based on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of the Uml Al Qura Calendar for Shaban, making the first day of Ramadan on Friday, November 16, 2001 which again is one day ahead of the USA and the rest of the world. On the same basis the first day of Shawwal or Eid ul Fitir may be based on the incorrect determination of Ramadan and Shaban, thus Eid ul Fitir in Saudi Arabia can be on the same day as the USA or one day ahead. In any case unity will never be achieved using the Uml Al Qura Calendar since it does not take into consideration the calculated visibility of the new crescent, but instead is widely used by the Muslim Public in establishing the 29<sup>th</sup> day of sighting.

**IN CONCLUSION TO CORRECT THIS PROBLEM THAT PLAGUES SAUDI ARABIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES EACH YEAR:**

It is vital that the Uml Al Qura Calendar reflects the calculated visibility of the new crescent at the minimum in the form of an almanac with the correct dates of crescent sighting in Saudi Arabia, and instructions stating that the 29<sup>th</sup> day of the Uml Al Qura Calendar should never be used to observe the crescent or complete the month as 30 days since it is for Civil Purposes only.

On the same note a Religious Islamic Calendar should be made by KACST that follows Quran and Sunnah.

This problem can be corrected if the 6 Official Crescent Sighting Committees look for the crescent for all 12 months, in so doing the correct 29 or 30 days can be recorded so that crescent sighting error can be eliminated. At the same time the Justice Department will see that such responsibility is implemented on a professional basis for all 12 months which is not the same for inexperience solo observers who attempt sighting for one or two times a year. The 6 Official Crescent Sighting Committees should re-organize their structure in having an Ameer for each group, with a Head Ameer responsible for coordinating the 6 groups and providing the correct information to the Muslim Public via newspapers, TV, email, articles etc in respect to the correct day of crescent sighting in Saudi Arabia. The Head Ameer should also be responsible for collecting the sighted reports of the 6 groups and documenting such data on an official letterhead of this committee with vital information pertaining to sighting, so that such document can be presented to the Justice Department for all 12 months and can be archived for future use.

Last but not least the Justice Department should following Quran and Sunnah, in using Muslim Astronomers to verify new crescent sighting reports based on Quranic Astronomy, and such testimony if proven correct, should be officially documented and propagated in a professional manner.

The three groups which includes the makers of the Uml Al Qura Calendar, the 6 Official Crescent Sighting Committees and the Justice Department have a Major role to play in establishing the correct dates for Each Islamic Month in Saudi Arabia; currently their function have been lacking since there is division and disunity through out the world between Saudi Arabia and other Countries for many years. Muslims and Non Muslims scattered through out the world are observing these flaws in Saudi Arabia's dating system, since it causes division in their Countries, because some Muslim groups follow Saudi Arabia blindly while others abide by the Visibility Criteria and sighting. It is important that this problem be corrected since it contradicts Quran and Sunnah in respect to the movement of the Moon and Disunity of an Ummah. I hope Inshallah, the respective Brothers belonging to the 3 different groups, can approach this problem in a constructive manner so that closure and resolution can be achieve.

We end with the following DUAH- Now that Knowledge has come to us, Oh Allah forgive us of our short comings, in creating division among ourselves in the past. Oh Allah bless and strengthen us with knowledge, tolerance and unity so that we will "Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving clear signs; for them is a dreadful penalty."(Al Imran v.105) Aameen.