

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

06/12/1439

17/08/2018

Al salāmu ‘alaikum wa rahmatullāh

I hope you are in the best of health and īmān. As you are all by now aware, the Board of Religious Affairs has revised its decision regarding the commencing of the month of Dhū al Hijjah 1439. We understand that this has caused some confusion within the community and wish to shed some light on why we chose to revise our original verdict.

The BCMA follows a global moon sighting policy for all 12 lunar Islamic months. What this means is, on the 29th of each Islamic month, the Board of Religious Affairs fields reports of crescent sightings worldwide in order to determine whether the current month will complete 30 days or not. Keeping this in mind, allow us to describe the sequence of events which led to our original announcement and our subsequent revision.

On July 13th (29th of Shawwāl 1439) the Board of Religious Affairs began fielding reports of crescent sightings worldwide. We were unable to verify a single sighting of the crescent anywhere in the world. Hence the month of Shawwāl completed 30 days and the 1st Dhū al Qa’dah was decided for July 15th. On August 11th, when Saudi Arabia declared August 12th to be the 1st of Dhū al Hijjah, the Islamic date here in BC (according to the BCMA Board of Religious Affairs) was the 28th of Dhū al Qa’dah. In the hope of unifying the community, we went back and revisited our decision for Dhū al Qa’dah in order to see whether we erred in our verdict (i.e. whether there was in fact a sighting on the 29th of Shawwāl that we missed). At that time we came across no compelling evidence that we erred in commencing the month of Dhū al Qa’dah and therefore we were not in a position to declare August 12 to be the 1st of Dhū al Hijjah. All of the above resulted in our original announcement.

After issuing our original announcement, we were presented with a sighting of the Dhū al Qa’dah crescent that took place on July 13th in California. The Board was aware of this report but had not accepted the sighting due to the fact the sighting was not accepted by the local hilāl authority in California. Upon further investigation of this sighting, we came to know the reason it was discredited was due to an external factor not related to the validity of testimony. Based on this new evidence we revised our verdict for the month of Dhū al Qa’dah and subsequently accepted the Saudi sighting on August 11th. This was done in the hope of uniting the community on a single date for Eid.

We hope the above will offer some insight into why the Board of Religious Affairs revised its original verdict. May Allah unite our hearts and accept our acts of devotion during these remaining few blessed days.

Board of Religious Affairs
Imam Yahya Momla
BC Muslim Association