

## Which day is Eid?

Isn't it amazing the fervour, passion and intensity the debate about which day will be EID brings to the community. It awakes us from our slumber and overnight we become professors in Physics debating the path of the moon, whilst at the same time becoming religious scholars with almost magical powers. Wonder what happens in the other months?

When a person is told he needs a heart transplant, the critical nature of the situation usually drives the person to obtain a second opinion or third opinion. Why does he seek multiple differing opinions? Surgeons are highly skilled, specialist in their field of work, operating maybe even in the same hospital. However, human beings desire different opinions to cover all grounds and eventualities before they make a choice. After all, doctors are human beings, and don't know everything.

Almighty Allah could have made us all the same faith following identical rules; however, HE has kept things secret and beyond our understanding. Our scholars are not choosing to be different because one is right or one is wrong, they have different rulings because they believe the path they have chosen seems to be the more accurate path based on their knowledge, education, data available, environment and many other factors. Just as a surgeon takes a life in his hands, ***our Ulema take our souls in theirs to guide us***. What a responsibility they carry!!

Differences accelerate better outcomes, just recently scientists had different approaches in creating a COVID vaccine, these challenges between them created an environment to accelerate human learning and achieve amazing results. Scientist who studied at the same university with same teachers can have different methods in solving the same problem.

Whether a scholar believes the birth of the moon is the best option or allows the use of optical aids to witness the moon or sighting by the unaided eye is NOT something we should fight and argue over rather embrace (within the parameters of our Marjae system), our Ulema are great men with best intentions devoted to serving God, we should never be questioning their intention or attacking them. They act to simply uphold the faith, the message of Allah as best as they understand. Yes, we do have every right to discuss their views and seek clarity and guidance, but never doubt their intentions. They act to simply uphold the faith, the message of Allah as best as they understand. ***Good intentions are the most beautiful of secrets. – Imam Ali (AS)***

Maybe, by tracking on slightly differing paths, will lead us all to the best final path. Imagine the simplicity and empowerment of the Muslim community if we use sighting of the moon or the disadvantage sometimes caused by the confusion. Imagine the advantages of using an optical aid to derive which day is EID and unite the community or maybe it will make us lazy and simply depend on an announcement and lose the passion for searching which day is EID. Imagine the simplicity of following the birth of the moon and having a global solution, however giving up all the power to decide to a handful of people/scientist who have the data.

**This is not a religious statement. It is simply my personal view to embrace differences (within acceptable jurisprudential reasoning) within our community, when so many forces are trying to tear our faith down.**

Opinion note: to keep our community united, by embracing the difference – Abbas Aly

Who knows, maybe nirvana is a combination of all 3 allowing for localisation, binding a country and uniting nations globally, we can only pray that our system of Marjae stays strong and continues to guide us all. Only Almighty Allah knows best.

It is not about which day is right or wrong, it is how we respect the differences with the goal of improving and evolving ourselves. In the same way that it is alright for the elders to follow local sighting, because that is what was available to them previously, equally it's a sign of technological progress that modern methods exist to enable the next generation to carry out data driven moon sighting.

Each person is attracted to faith differently. Some like the classical approach, and others want a data driven approach. It's a sign of an evolving Muslim community which can cater for a range of views, especially in an age where so many distractions abound for our youth.

Celebrate Eid on whichever day you are comfortable with based on the Ulema you follow. You had the freedom to choose which Marjae to follow just as your fellow Muslims made their choices, why didn't we all choose the same Marjae?

**Let's be patient, supportive and respectful of those who have a different opinion to ours. Ultimately Almighty Allah knows what is best and let's place our trust in Him.**

Wishing you Eid Mubarak! Let's pray for the quick reappearance of our 12<sup>th</sup> Imam Mahdi A.S.

Abbas Aly

NOTE: I follow the local sighting approach but respect the views of each person with regards to which day they make EID, based on the scholar within our Marjae system they follow. It may not be a perfect system to some people, but it has protected our faith for centuries and by the Grace of Allah it has served under intense attack.

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