

Eid al-Adha is well connected with Hajj

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The relationship of *Eid al-Adha* with Hajj in *Makkah* is a hotly debated issue among Muslims. Some Muslims emotionally argue that *Eid al-Adha* all over the globe must be celebrated a day after the *Wuqu'f* of *Arafah*. The others argue that *Eid al-Adha* is neither connected with the Day of *Arafah* nor the rituals of Hajj but is a separate Islamic institution associated with the ritual of sacrificing animals. It must be observed in accordance with the local Moon sighting. Following are some of the main arguments expounded by the two parties.

The *Eid al-Adha* like *Eid al-Fitr* was instituted by the Prophet (PBUH) independent of the Hajj institution. The two Eids were introduced by the Prophet (PBUH) most probably in the second year of *Hijrah* when he saw the inhabitants of *Madinah* celebrate two local annual festivals. He instead initiated the two Eids as annual Islamic festivals. Hajj, on the other hand, was made obligatory in the sixth year of *Hijrah*. Some scholars argue that Hajj was initiated even later than that perhaps in the 8th or 9th year of *Hijrah*. 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 but are separate entities.

Secondly, 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 month of *Zil-Hajjah* and with the 10th day 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* to make *Eid al-Adha* coincide with the 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 Imam Tirmidhi reports. Subsequently, no Caliph or jurist has ever tried or bound *Eid al-Adha* with the *Wuqu'f* at *Arafah* though it could have been possible to know the day of *Wuqu'f* in some situations. The Muslim *Ummah* for the last 14 centuries has been following this tradition. There is a kind of consensus among the *Ummah* that Muslims are not required to know exactly when the *Wuqu'f* is at *Arafah* and connect the *Eid* with it.

Thirdly, the acts of *Iba'da't* are connected with specific timings. For instance, the Day of *Arafah* is required to be observed on the 9th of *Zil-Hajjah* and the act of sacrifice on the 10th day of *Zil-Hajjah* or during the rest of the days of *Tashri'q*. Nobody is permitted to intentionally do the *Wuqu'f* of *Arafah* before or after the 9th of *Zil-Hajjah* and the sacrifice before the 10th or after the 13th of *Zil-Hajjah*.

Fourthly, the Muslim jurists have clearly established a demarcation line between the rules and rituals of pilgrims and the rules and rituals for the non-Hujjaj. For instance, pilgrims are not required to offer *Eid* prayer or sacrifice the animal while the non-Hujjaj are

required or recommended to perform them in accordance with their social and financial situation. Many other rules are also quite different for both the groups.

Therefore, connecting *Eid al-Adha* with Hajj, as Mufti Taqi Usmani observes, “is in total disagreement with the teachings of Quran and Sunnah, and with the Shari'ah position recognized throughout the centuries. This is an unprecedented view which has never been adopted by any of the Muslim jurists during the past 1400 years, and it has a number of intrinsic defects and anomalies...”

The second group argues that the institutions of Eid and Hajj are very old and existed long before the Prophet of Islam (PBUH). The rituals of Hajj were well known to the People of Arabia. The Prophet himself performed Hajj even before receiving the Qur'anic revelation as he did afterwards also. Fasting in the month of Ramadan was also a practice followed by the Prophet (PBUH) before becoming the Prophet. The Prophet initiated the two Eids to denote the institution of Hajj. The months of Hajj begin with the first day of Shawwal and the Hajj ends with the *Wuqu'f of Arafah*. That is why, as argues Imam Ibn Taymiyyah, the Prophet (PBUH) introduced two days of festivities; the first, on the first day of Shawwal and the second on the completion of Hajj to celebrate the beginning and the end of the Hajj season. Even the month of *Zil-Hajjah*, with all its blessings, takes its name from the institution of Hajj. Otherwise there is nothing special to make the first ten days of *Zil-Hajjah* so sacred, as the Qura'n and Sunnah make of them. This group contends that the two Eids are not solely independent institutions but are closely related and absolutely connected with the other obligatory pillars of Islam such as fasting and Pilgrimage to *Makkah*. The Prophet (PBUH) was guided by Allah SWT to pick up these two specific days because of their intrinsic relationship with two of the most significant acts of Islamic worship i.e., fasting and Hajj.

Such an understanding that the two Eids were prescribed to celebrate the season of fasting and Hajj is supported by the sequence of the Qura'nic verses in Surah al-Baqarah (2:183-203). The sequence starts with the verses of fasting and ends with the verses of Hajj. The commandment of sacrifice is also originally addressed to the Hujjaj and secondarily to the Muslims at large. (Surah Hajj: 28; 36) Even the *Takbi'ra't* of *Tashri'q* are originally addressed to the Hujjaj by the Qur'an. The ordinary Muslims follow the Hujjaj in these rules. Many Classical jurists have peculiarly noted this connection between the rituals of *Eid al-Adha* and the rituals of Hajj. Imam Ibn Taymiyyah, for instance, makes a significant observation. He states that the animal slaughter at Mina is the original rule. All the other cities are to follow *Makkah*. That is the reason that *Eid al-Adha* is the greater of the two Eids and is called the Day of al-Nahr and the Day of the Great Hajj because this Eid is connected both with the sacred time and with the sacred places. 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 explains that this is the position of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal that *Eid al-Adha* prayer should be offered within the time frame when the Hujjaj are moving from Muzdalifah to Mina and throwing the pebbles. Imam Ahmad clearly connects the Eid prayer with the timings of Hujjaj's rituals on the Day of Eid. He also states that the ordinary Muslim's Eid prayer has to follow the Hujjaj movement and actions.

Imam al-Bhaghawi states that Ibn Abbas, Imam Malik and Imam *Shafai'* are of the opinion that the Muslims all over the globe are to follow the timings of Hujjaj in the *Takbi'ra't* of *Tashri'q*. Imam al-Khazin attributes this opinion also to Ibn Umar. Imam al-Sarkhasi reports that Imams *Shafai'* and Abu Yousuf were of the same opinion about the *Takbi'ra't*. Imam Abu Yousuf is the known student of Imam Abu Hanifa. This indicates that many established authorities within all the four known schools of Islamic Fiqh agree that Muslims all over the globe are to follow the Hujjaj in the *Takbi'ra't* al-*Tashri'q*. Moreover, Imam al-Nawawi, Imam Ibn Qudamah, Imam Ibn Arabi and many other known jurists also maintain that the non-Hujjaj should follow the Hujjaj in their timings regarding the *Takbi'ra't* of *Tashri'q*.

Though there are other opinions about the exact timings of the *Takbi'ra't* of *Tashri'q*, the above multiple quotes from authoritative Hanafi, *Shafai'*, Maliki and Hanbali sources are presented 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 *Takbi'ra't* of al-*Tashri'q* 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 truth. It seems to be the otherwise. It is conventionally attached to 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 place as with the time.

During these ten days of Zil-Hajja, the rituals of Hajj and the acts of Hujjaj take precedent over every other act of worship in the vicinity of *Makkah*. There is almost a kind of consensus among the Muslim jurists that the Day of *Arafah* and the Day of *Eid al-Adha* will be when the Hujjaj will stay in Arafat and when they will slaughter their animals. Some scholars maintain that this rule is specific to the Hujjaj. The others argue that this is generic rule which applies to all the Muslims. This rule applies even if the Hujjaj made a mistake and stood at *Arafah* on a wrong day say a day ahead or later than the real 9th of Zil-Hajja. This is the position of all the known Muslim jurists. 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 do the *Wuqu'f* in *Arafah* according to the actual sighting or slaughter the animals according to their actual sighting. They must go with the Imam and with the majority of the Muslims. Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali goes further than that. He, like many other Hanbali, Maliki and *Shafai'* jurists, concludes that the Day of Eid la-Fitr is not the exact day of the first of Shawwal and the Day of *Arafah* is not the exact day of the 9th of *Zil-Hajjah* but the day accepted and celebrated by the Muslims as the Day of *Arafah*. Likewise the Day of *Eid al-Adha* is not the exact day of the 10th of *Zil-Hajjah* but the day when the Muslims celebrate *Eid al-Adha* to the best of their knowledge and understanding that that day was the day of Eid even if it was proven to be wrong. They derive this rule from the authentic Hadith of Prophet (PBUH) when he said, "*Eid al-Fitr* is when you celebrate breaking your fast and *Eid al-Adha* is when you slaughter your animals..."

It should be clear by now that the *Eid al-Adha* is not divorced from the *Wuqu'f* of *Arafah* and the Hajj as some of the contemporary scholars usually contend. They are mutually well connected. The two Eids were not prescribed out of the blue but were intertwined with the completion of the month of Ramadan and the Hajj, the two pillars of Islamic devotional system. The Prophet (PBUH) linked the new month with the actual sighting of the new Moon as it was the only authentic source available at that time. He did not depend upon the news of sighting of *Zil-Hajjah* in *Makkah* for the first 8 years of *Hijrah* as the Ka'abah was under the occupation of the Polytheists and the Makkans were not very careful about these dates. They used to arbitrarily change the Hajj dates due to their ulterior motives. Following their lead would have meant nothing to the Prophet (PBUH).

It is a reality that the Muslim community all over the Muslim globe for fourteenth centuries has been going with their local Moon sighting and local days of *Arafah* and *Zil-Hajj*. That was the case mostly because there was no way for the Muslims to figure out when the *Wuqu'f* and Hajj was performed. The Shari'ah did not require Muslims to find out about the true date of Hajj and *Arafah* because the Shari'ah would not require something beyond human capabilities or obligate things causing hardship to the *Ummah*. On the other hand, it is clear that wherever Muslims could figure out the real Day of *Wuqu'f* they had preferred to fast on that day and sacrificed the animals on the next day. The reason might be that the increased reward is more connected with the international gathering of the Muslim community and the performance of the fifth pillar of Islam rather than the day or Eid prayer itself, as shown above.

It is important to notice here that there is no clear text from the Hadith which can require binding the *Eid al-Adha* for the entire Muslim community with the acts of Hajj but there are plenty of indirect references in the Qur'an and the Sunnah that connect this act of festivity with the acts of Hajj and *Wuqu'f*. Contrary to this, there is no text whatsoever, neither in the Qur'an, Sunnah nor in any authentic classical book of Fiqh that the Prophet (PBUH), his Companions or any other Muslim scholar has ever required to knowingly go against the known day of *Wuqu'f* of *Arafah* at *Arafah* as announced by the Hajj authority. Actually some contemporary jurists claim that there is a consensus among the Muslim scholarship that *Eid al-Adha* must be celebrated a day after the Day of *Arafah*. Hajj is an expression of Muslim unity and power in addition to being a source of many spiritual reminders. It has a political as well social tone to it. This aspect can be fulfilled only if the Muslim *Ummah* is united in observing Hajj and Eid together especially once it has become possible to know in advance when the Hajj is going to be performed. Currently, going with the Hajj is more beneficial (*Maslahah*) than opposing it (due to an unintentional mistake or a wrong *Ijtihad* on part of the Saudi Hajj authorities}. Allah SWT knows the best.

