

Eid al-Adhā and its connection with Hajj

Introduction

The relationship between Eid al-Adhā and Hajj is a hotly debated issue among Muslims all over the world. A small minority of Muslims argue that Eid al-Adhā must be celebrated a day after the *wuqūf* (stay) in Arafā in an attempt to centralise Islam and dictate the Islamic calendar from Makka. The majority argues that Eid al-Adhā is not linked to the Day of Arafā or the rituals of Hajj, but is a separate Islamic event. Therefore Eid al-Adhā must be observed in accordance with local moon sighting. Here is the simple evidence to support the majority view of the Ahl al-Sunna.

1. When Eid al-Adhā and Hajj were introduced

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) introduced the two Eids after observing that the inhabitants of al-Madīna celebrated their two local festivals. The hadīth recorded by Abū Dawūd reports:

Anas ibn Malik reports that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) came to al-Madīna and saw they had two days of festivity. He asked, 'What are these two days?' They said, 'We used to celebrate these days in Jāhiliyya. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said, 'Allāh has replaced them with better two days: the day of Fitr and the day of Adhā.'

There are some reports that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) offered the first Eid prayer at al-Madīna in the first year of Migration. The more authentic and widely accepted report, on the other hand, indicates that the first Eid prayer was observed in the second year of the Hijra.

Hajj, on the other hand, was made obligatory in the ninth year of Hijra. Sayyidunā Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) sent Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (may Allāh be pleased with him) as the head of the Hajj convoy in this year. If the *wuqūf* of Arafā (Hajj) and Eid al-Adhā were closely linked, then they would have been ordained by Allāh and His Messenger at the same time. Instead there is at least a seven-year gap between the introductions of the two worships.

2. Hajj Date Confirmation

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) connected Eid al-Fitr with the completion of the month of Ramadān, namely the first day of Shawwāl. Eid al-Adhā was identified as the tenth of Dhul-Hajj. There is no report that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) ever tried to find out the day

of Hajj or Arafa during his stay in al-Madīna in an effort to make Eid al-Adhā coincide with day of Arafa or Hajj.

During the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him), it was possible to travel between Makka and al-Madīna with ease within ten days. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) never dispatched anybody to find out exactly when was the day of Arafa so as to connect the Eid with Arafa. It was quite possible for him to find out when the moon of Dhul-Hajj was sighted in Makka as the Hajj was performed on the tenth of Zul-Hajj. Ten days were sufficient to establish the exact sighting date in Makka. This historical fact proves that the day of Arafa is not directly connected with Eid al-Adhā. Eid al-Adhā is connected with the tenth of Dhul-Hajj and not with the observance of Hajj.

3. After Hajj became obligatory

Even after the Hajj was made obligatory, Eid al-Adhā remained an independent institution. There is no report that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) made any conscious effort to find out the Day of Arafa or to correlate Eid al-Adhā with the Day of Hajj or the tenth of Zul-Hajj in Makka. Had it been a significant religious issue to link the Adhā with Hajj, then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) would have made efforts to search for the Day of Arafa in Makka. Instead he went with the local sighting of al-Madīna.

4. The practice of Muslims since the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) time

The Muslim Ummah for the last fourteen centuries has been following this tradition of separating the Eid al-Adhā from Hajj. History tells us that no Caliph or scholar has ever tried to search for the Day of Arafa in Makka and connect Eid al-Adhā with it. Actually doing so would have been an unsurpassable challenge as Islam is spread across the world and it would have caused undue hardships for the Ummah. That is why the classical jurists have not worried about this issue at all. They seem to be content with the local moon sighting and connecting Eid al-Adhā with the locally agreed upon tenth of Dhul-Hajj, rather than Makkan tenth of Dhul-Hajj.

5. Differences between those performing Hajj and those who are not

The scholars of Islamic jurisprudence have clearly established a distinction between the rules and rituals of the *hujjāj* (pilgrims) and rules and rituals for the non-*hujjāj*.

For instance Mina is actually classed as part of Makka and falls within its city limit. As such Eid al-Adhā is *wājib* (incumbent) upon all those in Mina and yet no pilgrim who is present in Mina on the tenth of Dhul-Hajj offers the *salāh* of Eid-

ul-Adhā. If Eid al-Adhā was the celebration of Hajj and was so closely linked, then one would expect the actual people who have performed this spiritual journey to offer the *salāh* of Eid-ul-Adhā - but they do not.

Furthermore, the sacrifice of Eid-ul-Adhā is *wājib* (incumbent) upon all those who possess enough wealth to satisfy the least condition of *nisāb* (minimum wealth threshold). However, such a sacrifice is not required by the *hujjāj* in Mina according to most *fuqahā* (jurists). The sacrifice made by the *hujjāj* is not the result of them being *sāhib al-nisāb*, but rather by them combining Umra with Hajj in the Hajj of *tamattu* or *qirān*. If the Umrah is not combined with Hajj, then even this sacrifice is not required.

Conclusion

For the pilgrims and non-pilgrims, the opening days of Dhul-Hajj are days of devotion, repentance and spiritual rejuvenation. In order to gain most of these blessed days, we must respect tradition. In Islamic history, it is abundantly clear that no attempt has ever been made to directly interrelate Hajj and Eid al-Adhā. For a large part of our history, other countries had no means of knowing when Makka was doing Hajj, purely because of slow communication methods. This issue has only appeared in the last few decades, with the advent of satellite television and Muslims becoming aware when the authority of Saudi Arabia are announcing the Hajj. Eid al-Adhā should be marked on the locally agreed upon tenth of Dhul-Hajj rather than Makkan tenth of Zul-Hajj.

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