



## Eid al-Aḍḥā and its Connection with Hajj

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EID AL-AḌḤĀ and Hajj is a hotly debated issue among some Muslims. A small minority argue that Eid al-Aḍḥā 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-Aḍḥā is not linked to the Day of Arafā or the rituals of Hajj, but is a separate Islamic event. Therefore Eid al-Aḍḥā must be observed in accordance with local moon sighting. Here is the simple evidence to support the majority view of the Ahl al-Sunna wa 'l Jamā'ah, or Sunni Muslims.

### 1. When Eid al-Aḍḥā and Hajj were introduced

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ introduced the two Eids after observing that the inhabitants of al-Madīna celebrated their two local festivals. The hadīth recorded by Abū Dāwūd reports:

Anas ibn Mālik reports that the Prophet ﷺ 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 ﷺ said, 'Allah has replaced them with better two days: the day of Fitr and the day of Aḍḥā.' (*Sunan Abū Dāwūd*)

There are some reports that the Prophet ﷺ 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. Our master Muhammad ﷺ sent the *Ṣiddīq*, Abū Bakr ؓ as the head of the Hajj convoy in this year. If the *wuqūf* of Arafā (Hajj) and Eid al-Aḏḥā 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 ﷺ connected Eid al-Fitr with the completion of the month of Ramadān, namely the first day of Shawwāl. Eid al-Aḏḥā was identified as the tenth of Dhu'l Hajj. There is no report that the Prophet ﷺ ever tried to find out the day of Hajj or Arafā during his stay in al-Madīna in an effort to make Eid al-Aḏḥā coincide with day of Arafā or Hajj.

During the time of the Prophet ﷺ it was possible to travel between Makka and al-Madīna with ease within ten days. The Prophet ﷺ never dispatched anybody to find out exactly when was the day of Arafā so as to connect the Eid with Arafā. It was quite possible for him to find out when the moon of Dhu'l Hajj was sighted in Makka as the Hajj was performed on the tenth of Dhu'l Hajj. Ten days were sufficient to establish the exact sighting date in Makka. This historical fact proves that the day of Arafā is not directly connected with Eid al-Aḏḥā. Eid al-Aḏḥā is connected with the tenth of Dhu'l Hajj and not with the observance of Hajj.

## 3. After Hajj became obligatory

Even after the Hajj was made obligatory, Eid al-Aḏḥā remained an independent institution. There is no report that the Prophet ﷺ made any conscious effort to find out the Day of Arafā or to correlate Eid al-Aḏḥā with the Day of Hajj or the tenth of Dhu'l Hajj in Makka. Had it been a significant religious issue to link the Aḏḥā with Hajj, then the Prophet ﷺ would have made efforts to search for the Day of Arafā in Makka. Instead he went with the local sighting of al-Madīna.

#### 4. The practice of Muslims since the Prophet's ﷺ time

The Muslim Ummah for the last fourteen centuries has been following this tradition of separating the Eid al-Aḍḥā 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-Aḍḥā 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-Aḍḥā with the locally agreed upon tenth of Dhu'l Hajj, rather than Makkan tenth of Dhu'l 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 *ḥujjāj* (pilgrims) and rules and rituals for the *non-ḥujjāj*.

For instance Minā is actually classed as part of Makka and falls within its city limit. As such Eid al-Aḍḥā is *wājib* (incumbent) upon all those in Minā and yet no pilgrim who is present in Minā on the tenth of Dhu'l Hajj offers the salāh of Eid-ul-Aḍḥā. If Eid al-Aḍḥā 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-Aḍḥā — but they do not.

Furthermore, the sacrifice of Eid-ul-Aḍḥā 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 *ḥujjāj* in Minā according to most *fuqahā* (jurists). The sacrifice made by the *ḥujjāj* is not the result of them being *ṣāhib al-nisāb*, but rather by them combining Umrah 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 Dhu'l 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-Aḏḥā. 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-Aḏḥā should be marked on the locally agreed upon tenth of Dhu'l Hajj rather than Makkan tenth of Dhu'l Hajj.

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