

## **The Feasts: Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha**

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***Abstract:** Muslims of the Islamic countries of the world hold some feasts with special customs and religious rituals of which are: Eid al-Fitr held on the first day of Shawal month, Eid Al- Adha on the tenth of Dhu al- Hijjah month. This article refers to some orders of these feasts especially Eid al-Fitr of which Zakat al-Fitr, Fitr prayer and Ziarat of Imam Husain (p.b.u.h.) are included.*

*The roots and branches of religion are explained in the article as well. The author says that different worship and branches of religion are considered from two aspects: The aspect of mere worshipping God and the communal aspect which refers to the individual and social aspect of the worship.*

***Keywords:** Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha (Qurban) , roots of religion, branches of religion*

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## **Eid Al-Fitr**

The first day of Shawal month is called *Eid al-Fitr*. The term Fitr means breaking the fast. *Eid al-Fitr* is the Muslims' feast (*Eid*) which is held after Ramadan month. Throughout the Islamic countries and among the Muslims from other countries of the world, this Feast is held with special custom and religious rituals of that Region. In Islam religion, the religious orders and commandments like fasting have been taught gradually not all at once. At about 17 months after the prophet Muhammad's Hijra, (Muhammad and his followers' emigration from Mecca to Medina) this kind of worship became a duty for Muslims. It means Shawal month of the second year of Hijra and about 15 years after the prophet *Be'sat* (mission). Fasting in Ramadan month became a duty by the verse 183 from *Sura 2* (al-Baqara). Fasting becomes a duty from the first day of Ramadan month (the ninth month of the lunar year) till the end of this month, of course for those who are at the legal age (Taklif age) and are able to do that. The first day after the month that you go on a fast, that is the first day of Shawal month (the tenth month of the lunar year) is called Eid al-Fitr. Fitr is an Islamic great feast. There are some orders, like Fitr prayer, for this day. Saying this prayer is a duty over the period of Imam Mahdi, and it is recommended while he is absent. This prayer can be said congregationally. If it is so the just Imam will preach two sermons. He reminds people about their duties and *Zakat al-Fitr* related affairs. On Eid al-Fitr, except doing good deeds, visiting intellectuals, the righteous and relatives, the other important thing is paying *Zakat al-Fitr* which is some sort of tax. The amount of *Zakat al-Fitr* is roughly 3 Kilos of the mostly used food, (It means

the food that is mostly eaten by that person) or the equivalent of its price. Regarding Muslims all over the world it could be a considerable amount. Of course, in a religious social system these funds can be consumed collectively than individually. It can be used for ending destitution and establishment of scientific, cultural and medical institutions. It can also be used for building hospitals, kindergartens, universities, and laboratories. These funds are also used for investing in doing scientific and medical findings and strengthening the Islamic borders, spreading Islam religion throughout the world by available means and dozens of important social and humane affairs.

In Payment of *Zakat al-Fitr*, one is recommended to give priority to his poor relatives. Then the priority shall be given to the poor students. *Zakat al-Fitr* shall not be given to a person who will use it performing sins. Understanding Islamic teachings one shall keep in mind that Islamic commandments do not merely involve other worldly and ethical aspects, but any commandment has been combined with its worldly and social aspects. Consequently, it causes a connection between these commandments and people's daily life, social conducts, and human relationships. As an example, consider saying prayer! Islam has regarded saying prayer as the *Miraj*<sup>1</sup> of the

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<sup>1</sup> The meaning of *Miraj*: A ladder, a means for going up, a means for ascending to heaven and getting to the world above and approaching God. "Prayer is the *Miraj* of a believer" it means that the believer will spiritually approach God and he will be with God. His soul will be with God and the soul is talking to God while he is saying his prayer. For saying prayer to be *Miraj*, it must be said with "special attention" it means that one must say his prayer with attention to God. In addition, he must forget the world and worldly affairs. Having special attention while saying prayer, one must try and practice it. According to theologians one of the ways by which a person can have special attention while saying prayer is paying attention to the meaning of the words and sentences of the prayer.

believers, the pillar of religion and a meaningful and full of secret worship with giving consideration to God. In spite of all this, you see that Islam has involved this worship in the community to a great extent and has made it the cause of one of the most firm human relationships. Islam religion emphasizes the necessity of saying prayer congregationally and there is a prayer for great and social days like Eid al-Fitr. Another example: at the night and day of Eid al-Fitr, one of the acts that are recommended to be done is *Ziarat* of Imam Husain. It is emphasized and recommended for everyone at any place. One of the important things in this *Ziarat* is paying attention to the bloody earth of the martyred and its words and contests, the words that all indicate the philosophy of *Ashura*. Generally they indicate the philosophy of being active and rising up against the oppression and the corrupt government at any time and any place. So you can notice that in Islam, prayer, *Eid* (feast), epic, *Ziarat* of martyred and worshiping has been combined together. In short, Islam has combined all factors necessary for making a humane community.

These factors can be found in Islamic commandments. That's why in Islam there is always a relation between the individual and the community and visa versa, and in general between all human beings and God.

## **Eid Al-Adha**

There are two great *Eids* (feasts) in *Dhu al-Hijjah* Month (the last month of the lunar year): they are "*Eid al-Adha*" on the tenth day and "*Eid al-Ghadir*" on the eighteenth. *Dhu al-Hijjah* month means the month of Hajj. Those Muslims who are able-bodied and can afford to do it must journey to Mecca

from all over the world on this month and join processions of people. For circumambulating *Kaaba*, (walking seven times counter clockwise around the *Kaaba*) pilgrims shall perform what is known as “Hajj Rituals”<sup>1</sup>. In Islam religion basic religious beliefs are called “roots” of religion, and those acts of worship that are considered as duty are called “branches” of religion. The roots of religion are those affairs which Muslims must believe in, and the effect of this belief must be perceivable from their conduct and deeds. The roots of religion are as follow:

1. *Tawhid* (Oneness or Monotheism): Believing that this vast universe is under the control of a power with perception and determination, and that, this power is unique. He is the unique and always present and watcher God.

2. *Adalah*<sup>2</sup> (Justice): Believing in the justice of God and that nothing unjust or imprudence can occur on behalf of him.

3. *Nabuwwah* (Prophethood): Believing that God has appointed and sent on the mission so many of his best slaves as prophets for guiding mankind and also believing that our prophet Muhammad is the last prophet, it means that there would be no prophet after him and his religion, Islam has

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<sup>1</sup> *Rituals* which is the pl. form of *Ritual* means worship in Hajj, like sacrificing an animal.

<sup>2</sup> Since the compassionate and almighty God do not need to oppress anyone, you shall notice that when it is said: “God is just” it means that there is no oppression with divine destiny. It does not mean that people have not suffered oppression at all. There have been oppression worldwide but it is done all by people to each other, so both the oppressor and the oppressed are responsible for that, especially about the oppression in the community. And undoubtedly the oppressed is going to be revenged. Nothing will be lost in this world, hence the effect of people's deeds will be considered and there would be a reward or punishment after them.

nullified other religions and it would justly be the best religion till the resurrection.

4. *Imamate* (Leadership): Believing that *Ali ibn Abi Talib* and, then after him, other eleven Imams are justly Muslims' leaders succeeding Prophet Muhammad. During the period which Imam (the twelfth Imam) is absent, all the religious duties must be fulfilled unchangingly whether they are individual or social and the Shias must follow a *Fiqh*-based school, that is based on the commandments and teachings of Qur'an and the exegeses by Imams who are the successor to prophet Muhammad. In other words, people must follow the successor to Imam over the period which Imam is absent. It is necessary for people to follow him both in individual and social acts.

5. *Ma'ad* (the Day of Judgment): Believing that all mankind will return to God, and there they will be with God and according to their deeds they will be punished or rewarded. Believing in the Day of Judgment (*Ma'ad*) is of great importance in the religious teachings. Maybe so many people of different religions, beliefs, and training believe in an origin for the universe; but the prerequisite for having faith in God and being pious believes in the Day of Judgment and that all mankind would return to God and would be with God.

The subordinate Islamic teachings are as follows:

1. *Salat* (prayer)
2. *Sawm* (fasting)
3. *Khums* (religious tax, 20% of surplus income)
4. *Zakat* (alms)
5. Hajj (pilgrimage)
6. Jihad (Holy war)

7. Encouraging people to perform good deeds
8. Discouraging people from performing sin
9. To love *Ahl al-Bayt*
10. To disassociate oneself from the enemies of the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

In Islam different worship and branches of religion are considered from two aspects. The aspect of mere worshipping that must be performed for the purpose of worshipping God; obeying the commandments of God and seeking the pleasure of God. To please God and the communal aspect of it which refers to individual and social aspects of the worship. Of course, in Islam both individual and social aspects of the acts must be performed for seeking the pleasure of God.

According to Islam everything belongs to God, whether it is one or more, visible or invisible. Hajj is one of the branches of religion and Islamic prays. In Hajj, in addition to worshipping affairs, purity and self teaching, social and political affairs in an international dimension must be considered. Hajj is a multidimensional and meaningful worship. Hajj is performed along with making a pilgrimage to *Kaaba*. Hajj has special rituals and shall be performed at a special time (*Dhu al-Hijjah* month) and a special place (Mecca). It is a duty for all adult and wise Muslims to make at least once in their lifetime if they are able bodied and they can afford to do so whether they are male or female. Hajj Rituals last for five days, from the 8<sup>th</sup> of *Dhu al- Hijjah* to the 12<sup>th</sup>. The tenth of *Dhu al- Hijjah* month is called *Eid al-Adha*. On this day, those who have made pilgrimage to Mecca (*Hajjis*) and have performed some parts of their Hajj Rituals, leave *Kaaba* for “*Mena*”. Performing some rituals, pilgrims sacrifice animals.

This day is called *Eid al-Qurban* or *Eid al-Adha* (means sacrificing). *Eid al-Adha* is one of the great religious and social feasts of Muslims. Performing Hajj and making a pilgrimage to *Kaaba* is spiritually and individually an important worship. Many books have been written on this. Making a pilgrimage to *Kaaba* – (the House of God)-, this great place of worshipping God- the *Qiblah* of Muslims-one must be sincere. There pilgrims shall worship God with humility. They all walk with a plain garment. There, no rank, position, authority, nor other differences are concerned. Hajj is the man movement toward God, with his heart, his body, and his soul... . But the social aspect of Hajj is that many groups of Muslims from different parts of the world go on a journey to Mecca and gather there. They worship God with pure heart and good faith while they are wearing similar garments. In this religious ceremony, the great Islamic congregation is formed. Delivering speeches, distributing papers, etc.

The representatives of Muslims can notify other Muslims about their problems, their domestic problems and those problems that have external roots. They can ask for help and consult each other. They can also ask other's point of view and make a vow ...

In Hajj all Muslims can be warned about the dangers that threaten Islam and Muslims. So they can be mobilized for struggling and rising up against the oppression and aggression to save the poor nations. These are parts of religious, social and political duties of Muslims. These acts like other rituals of Hajj must be performed for seeking the pleasure of God. When these acts are performed for seeking the pleasure of God and fulfilling the duty, they are considered as worship.