

Mentions of Eid-ul-Fitr¹ in the Qur'an and the Hadith

Eid-ul-Fitr is not a standalone event and requires stipulated fasting of 29-30 days² during the Islamic (lunar-calendar) month of Ramadan.³ An important point, which sometimes a few people do not appreciate, is that the month of Ramadan is also the introduction anniversary of the Divine revelation of the Holy Qur'an.⁴ The revelations of the Holy Qur'an happened as staggered deliveries over a period of 23 years. Fasting is also a period of self-assessment in spiritual gap-analysis.⁵ This gap-analysis is an annual event and a continuation from previous Israelite prophets,⁶ who fasted for 40 days.

Eid-ul-Fitr has been celebrated over the last 1500 years, since the days when Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was in active service as the Seal and the Final Prophet of Allah⁷. It is a commonly universal knowledge, that Muslims fast for 29-30 days in the Islamic month of Ramadan; and the first day of

¹ Eid-ul-Fitr, commenced by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the second of the two important festivals in Islam, prefixed as Eid. (The greater of the two is Eid-ul-Adzha). Prior to intervention by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the communities of Medina held two annual festivals, which were joyous carnivals only, with lots of merrymaking, but without any religious attachments. Eid-ul-Fitr is celebrated on the 1st day of the Arabic (lunar) month of Shawwal; and Shawwal is the 10th month of the Islamic lunar-based calendaring system. The month before that is Ramadan, the month of 29-30 days of prescribed fasting.

² Holy Qur'an states at 2:183, *"O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil."* This stipulation also comes with a self-assessment option for those who are variously unable to fast. The holy Qur'an clarifies further at 2:184 *"For a certain number of days. But whoever among you is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. And those who find it extremely hard may effect redemption by feeding a poor man. So whoever does good spontaneously, it is better for him; and that you fast is better for you if you know."*

³ Ramadan is that stipulated self-assessment and testing period for Muslims to go in their lives prescriptively correct, insofar as self-discipline, self-control, purity, charity and obedience to Allah matter. In a nutshell, if people can pass this self-testing period of a month, then people must continue with that same trend of improvement for the next 11 months towards perpetuity, in attaining higher elevations of perfection.

⁴ The Holy Qur'an states at 2:185 *"The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion. So whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein, and whoever is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. Allah desires ease for you, and He desires not hardship for you, and (He desires) that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the greatness of Allah for having guided you and that you may give thanks."*

⁵ Gap-analysis of Muslims also involves an audit period, during a special halting of regular behavioural mannerisms (i.e. the one month fasting in Ramadan is halting from regular life styles of mixed behaviours), which will identify to the person of his/her weaknesses, such as regular non-compliances, illegal or non-allowed activities, his/her poor personal life management, resulting in wastages in life; and drifting away from the five compulsory obligations of every Muslim.

⁶ Fasting is a capsule of virtues, comprising fundamental compliance with the Ordinance in the Holy Qur'an (2:183) and strengthening both the spiritual values and the moral values in people who fast. This includes abstaining from certain activities from dawn to dusk, such as abstaining from food and drink and sexual intercourse, during the stipulated times under fast. In recorded history, all Israelite prophets fasted in some form according to the prescriptions valid during their ages.

⁷ The specific authority is in the Holy Qur'an at 33:40, as *"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the prophets. And Allah is ever Knower of all things."* This simply means that no prophet of any description shall come after Prophet Muhammad (pbuh); and Islam is the final religion and with the Holy Qur'an as the final revealed scripture, both of which shall never be superseded.

the following month, Shawwal, is Eid-ul-Fitr. Muslims are prohibited to fast on the day of Eid-ul-Fitr, inasmuch as Muslims are also prohibited to fast on the day of Eid-ul-Adzha.

Of the six Sahih Hadith,⁸ one of the six Hadith (Hadith No 772, Hadith Jami-al-Trimidhi, Chapter on Fasting Vol 2) clearly states: Abu Sa'eed al-Khundri narrated: *"The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) prohibited two fasts: Fasting on the day of Eid-ul-Adzha and on the day of Eid-ul-Fitr."* There is further Hadith on prohibition on fasting on the days of both Eids. It is reported in the Hadith (Hadith No 953, Hadith Sahih Bukhari, Book of Eid Festivals, Vol 2): Anas bin Malik narrated: *"The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) never proceeded for Salat on the day of Eid-ul-Fitr unless he had eaten some dates."* Anas bin Malik further narrated: *"The Prophet (pbuh) used to eat odd number of dates."* However, Muslims are definitely not prohibited from eating their regular breakfast; neither is it imposed upon them to eat only dates on Eid; but the most important point is noting the prohibition, which is not to fast on the exact day of the two Eids.

Taking into consideration the level of technology, which existed 1500 years ago, the visible moon phases were used as the standard measure in determining the numbers of lapsed days and nights, when compared to convenience of readymade calendars, as they are today.⁹ It is for this reason that sighting the new moon was specifically mentioned for Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adzha. However, rather than to keep leaping back into the old system of sighting the new moon only for Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adzha, and then using the modern calendars and clocks for all other purposes in our daily life, it is necessary to analyse and evaluate the exact meaning of the decree on commencement for Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adzha festivals. The most authoritative Hadith (Hadith No 1906, Hadith Sahih Bukhari, Book of As-Saum, Vol 3) states: Abdullah bin Umar narrated: *"The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) mentioned Ramadan and stated: Do not observe fasting unless you see the crescent moon (of Ramadan), and do not give up fasting unless you see the crescent moon (of Shawwal); but if the sky is overcast and you cannot see the moon, then act on estimation (i.e. count 30 days each for Shaban and Ramadan)."*

An important aspect which needs clarification is, the attendance of women and girls for any Salat, including Salat for Eid-ul-Fitr. It must be emphatically stressed that Islam is not only for Muslim men and boys; but Islam is for the whole family, Muslim women and girls, and including those Muslims who are children, and those Muslims who are elderly, and those Muslims who are disabled and needing physical assistance. Muslim women and girls attended the masjids for prayers during the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). There is not a single verse in the Holy Qur'an which prohibits Muslim

⁸ The Six Sahih Hadith (authentic) is recognized as follows: 1st . Hadith Sahih Bukhari, collected and authored by Imam Muhammad b. Ismail al-Bukhari over a period of 16 years. It has 7,275 Hadith. He died near Samarkand in Uzbekistan in 870AD. 2nd . Hadith Sahih Muslim, collected and authored by Muslim b. Hajjaj al-Naishapuri. It has 9,200 Hadith and is second only to Sahih Bukhari. Muslim b. Hajjaj died in 875AD. 3rd . Hadith Sunnan al-Sughra, collected and authored by Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Nasa'i who was from Khurasan and died in 915AD. 4th . Hadith Sunnan Abu Dawood, collected and authored by Abu Dawood Sulaiman b. Asha'ath al-Sijistani of Persia and died in Persia in 888AD. 5th . Hadith Jami al-Trimidhi, collected and authored by Muhammad b. Isa al-Trimidhi and who was a student of al-Bukhari and died in Persia in 892AD. 6th . Hadith Sunnan Ibn Majah, collected and authored by Ibn Majah al-Qazwini and who died in Persia in 887AD. It should be noted that all six were not Arabs but they were all Persians, as living within the realm of the Persian Empire.

⁹ This refers to the (sometimes called Christian) Western calendar, which is solar-based and perhaps better known as the Gregorian calendar, because it was started by Pope Gregory XIII in February 1582. It also started a system of leap year, which is any year, which is divisible by 4, is a leap year.

women and girls from entering a Masjid.¹⁰ Ibn Umar reported on the authority of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), directing to husbands: *“When your women ask your permission to go to the masjid at night, give them permission”* (as stated in Hadith No 832, Hadith Sahih Bukhari, Book of Salah, Chapter 80, Vol 1). The fundamental rights of Muslim women to go to the masjid unhindered, even in situations of extreme privacy, has been clearly exemplified in the Hadith (Hadith No 981, Hadith Sahih Bukhari, Book of the Eid Festivals Vol 2) states: Umm Atiyya narrated: *“We were ordered to go out for Eid and also take along with us the menstruating women, mature girls and virgins staying in seclusion. The menstruating women could present themselves at the religious gathering and invocation of Muslims, but should keep away from their mussalla.”*¹¹ This concludes that menstruating women may join in the invocation but they must not offer Salat. Women, especially mothers of infants are naturally weighed with the motherly task of breast-feeding infants and changing the infants’ soiled nappies, when there is such a call of nature. In this regard, there is a very specific Hadith, which mentions that mothers may stay within the confines of their home and pray; and will be equally entitled to blessings under the circumstances, as detailed. This appears as only a single Hadith specifically on record amongst the six Sahih Hadith (Hadith No 570, Sunnan Abu Dawood, Chapter 204 Vol 1): Abdullah bin Masu’d reported, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as saying *“It is more excellent for a woman to pray in her house than in her courtyard, and more excellent for her to pray in her private chamber than in her house.”* The specific circumstance given is unique and must never be generalised to totally prohibit Muslim women and Muslim girls from going to Masjid.

The succinct clarity is given in another Hadith (Hadith No 886, Sahih Muslim, Chapter 177 Vol 1). Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, *“Do not prevent the female servants of Allah from going to the masjids of Allah.”* It should also be noted that since the Hijri when Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) entered Medina, he never prevented Muslim women and girls from entering any masjid. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was a master-planner and he made that ruling statements, insofar as presence of Muslim women and girls in masjids was to be conducted. This is reported by Abu Hurairah as *“Prophet Muhammad said, “The best rows for men are front rows, and the worst ones are the last. The best rows for women are the last ones, and the worst ones for them are the first.”* (Hadith No 881, Hadith Sahih Muslim, Chapter 175, Vol 1). This was in full respect to the modesty of Muslim women and girls. Islam does not permit intermingling of the sexes.

During the early stages in Islam, when education of Muslim women and girls was a rarity, the masjids were also used as learning institutions, teaching Muslim women and girls reading and reciting of the Holy Qur’an and learning deeper all about Islam.

¹⁰ The restriction on Muslim women and girls from entering any masjid originated in the Indian subcontinent when the boundaries of India extended from Afghanistan to Burma, especially after the cessation of the Mughal Regime of India (1526-1857). The Mughal Emperors allowed Muslim women and girls in masjids until 1857. Consequently with political partitions (1947) later into India, Pakistan and (further in 1971 after seceding from Pakistan) into Bangladesh, the diasporas of these communities carried over their cultural baggage wherever they migrated to and continued to impose upon people, restricting Muslim women and girls from entering Masjids. Muslim women and girls are permitted to enter and perform their Salat in all masjids in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, USA, UK and Singapore.

¹¹ The mussalla is referred to that part of the masjid infrastructure, which is not used for the congregation to stand in rows in performance of prayers. It must not be taken to get confused with Muslim prayer mat, which is pronounced by the same sound. A *“jama’at-kha’na”* is also a dimension of a mussalla.

A final point on this sub-topic is the basic fact, that the masjids, which were constructed many hundreds of years ago, can no longer accommodate the exponential increases in Muslim populations, to the extent, that almost every space in the masjids is taken up by the Muslim men and boys; and leaving no room for Muslim women and girls. It is indeed a lame excuse to deny the fundamental rights of Muslim women and girls into masjids, because of a space-logistical problem in accommodating everybody. Surely, there are better alternatives in managing such situations.

It has often been seen, rather sadly, that the times for commencement of Salat Eid-ul-Fitr commences a number of hours (3-4 hours) after sunrise. The time for Salat for Eid-ul-Fitr must be as early as possible after sunrise; but needs taking into consideration the logistics of moving whole Muslim families, from their homes to the masjid, or to the place for Eid-ul-Fitr prayers. This has been clarified in the Hadith (Hadith No 1135, Hadith Sunnan Abu Dawood, Book of Salat Vol 1), which states: *Yazid bin Khumair narrated that Abdullah bin Busr who was the companion of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) once went with the people on the day of the Eid-ul-Fitr and the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) criticised the delay by the Imam and said: "We used to be finished at this hour (and that was the time one could pray voluntary prayers)"* i.e. just after sunrise had completed).

A very important and compulsive feature, which needs to be observed and regardless of any other doing, before preparing for prayer (*namaz*) in Eid-ul-Fitr, is paying the "Zakat-ul-Fitr." The sum of money to be paid is generally worked out by the administrators of the masjid, and the amount differs in different countries, and this is then publicly announced in ample time, before Muslims leave their homes and proceed to the place for Salat Eid-ul-Fitr. Of course in current practice, the prayer time-table for Ramadan is done very comprehensively and includes the pre-calculated amount for "Zakat-ul-Fitr" per person and this is regardless of age of persons in the household; the "person" includes from newly born Muslims to advanced-age elderly Muslim persons in every home. This prerequisite is authoritatively stated in the Hadith (Hadith No 1509, Hadith Sahih Bukhari, Book of Zakat Vol 2); similarly, in Hadith No 677, Hadith Jami-al-Trimidhi, Chapter on Zakat Vol 2). Ibn Umar (ra) narrated: *"The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) would order paying Zakat-ul-Fitr, before going to Salat on the day of Eid-ul-Fitr."*

A unique feature about the Eid prayers is that there is neither an *adhan* nor an *iqamah*. This is reported in the Hadith (Hadith No 2049, Hadith Sahih Muslim, Book of the Two Eid Prayers Vol 2), which states: Ibn Juraji narrated *"Ata informed me from Ibn Abbas (ra) and Jabir bin Abdullah al-Ansari (ra) who said: "There was no adhan called on the day of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adzha."* I asked him about that later on and he said: *"Jabir bin Abdullah Al-Ansari (ra) informed me that there was no adhan for the prayer on the day of Eid-ul-Fitr, neither before the Imam came nor afterwards, and there was no iqamah or call or anything; no call that day nor iqamah."*

Both Eid-ul-Adzha and Eid-ul-Fitr have only two raka'ts. There are seven Takbirs including the opening Takbir in the first raka't before the recitation; and five Takbirs in the second raka't before the recitation. There is a Hadith on this: (Hadith No 536, Hadith Jami At-Trimidhi, Chapter on Two Eids Vol 1), in which Khatir bin Abdullah reported, from his father and from his grandfather *"Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said the Takbir in the first raka't seven times before recitation, and in the last, five times before recitation."*

There has to be compulsory *khutbah* (sermon) after delivering the two raka'ts of Eid prayers. This is also given in the Hadith: (Hadith No 957, Hadith Sahih Bukhari, Book of the Two Eid Festivals Vol 2).

Abdullah bin Umar (ra) reported, *“Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) used to offer As-Salat of Eid-ul-Adzha and Eid-ul-Fitr, then deliver Khutbah after As-Salat.”*

Both Eids may fall on any day of the week. However, when either or both Eids circumstantially fall on any Friday, the compulsory Jumu’ah prayer is dispensed with provided all those who were to be in the Jumu’ah congregation were present in the Eid Salat. This is clarified in the Hadith (Hadith No 1070, Hadith Sunnan Abu Dawood, Book of Salat Vol 1). Ilyas bin Abhi Ramlah Ash-Sami reported, *“I was present when Muawiyah bin Sufiyan asked Said bin Arqam: Di you witness two Eid (ie the Eid and the Jumu’ah) being combined on one day during the times of Allah Messenger (pbuh)? He replied “yes.” So he said (Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) prayed the Eid. Then he was lenient about Friday prayer, for he said “Whoever wishes to pray can pray.””*

There is to be no other Salat either immediately before, or immediately after, the Salat Eid-ul-Fitr and this is clarified in the Hadith (Hadith No 964, Book of the Two Eid Festivals, Hadith Sahih Bukhari Vol 2), which states: Ibn Abbas narrated: *“The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) offered a two-raka’t Salat on the day of Eid-ul-Fitr and he (pbuh) did not offer any Salat before or after it. Then he (pbuh) went towards with Bilal (ra) and ordered them to give alms, and so they started giving their earrings and necklaces (in charity).”*

Eid-ul-Fitr is intended to be a period of happiness and enjoyment; and this is also authenticated in the Hadith. (Hadith No 2061, Hadith Sahih Muslim, Book of Two Eid Salats, Vol 2): It was narrated by Hazrat Aisha (ra) who reported that *“Hazrat Abu Bakr (ra) entered the area and there were two girls of the Ansar tribe with me who were singing the verses that the Ansar had recited on the day of Bu’ath.”* She said, *“But they were known to be singers.”* Abu Bakr (ra) said, *“Wind instruments of the Shaitan in the house of Allah’s Messenger (pbuh)?”* That was the day of Eid. Allah’s Messenger said, *“O Abu Bakr! Every people have their Eid and this is our Eid.”* In another narration, it is said that Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said: *“Let them be O Abu Bakr, for these are day of Eid.”*

Eid-ul-Fitr is joyously celebrated, not because people can now resume regular mealtimes, but it is a celebration for honouring those dedicated people who fasted for a month, abstained from stated activities, and who followed all the prescribed requirements for Muslims in full compliance; and most importantly, kept away from all evils. That was the fundamental purpose of fasting; and once again this is reiterated from the Holy Qur’an: Holy Qur’an states at 2:183, *“O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil.”*

What is the way forward from here? They way forward are for adherence and full-compliance with the Holy Qur’an and verification with the practices of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as exemplified in the Six Sahih Hadith.

It is for all correct thinking Muslims to guide and assist other Muslims; the Holy Qur’an has sanctioned that correct advice shall be given to those who need to be guided. This is given in the Holy Qur’an at 3:103, as *“And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoy the right and forbid the wrong. And these are they who are successful.”*

- End of Document -