



The Virtues and Importance of the First 10 Days of Dhul-Hijjah

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The first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah are among the most sacred days in the Islamic calendar. These are days in which righteous deeds are most beloved to Allāh ﷻ, surpassing even the days of Ramaḍān in virtue according to many scholars. It is a time when Muslims around the world increase in acts of worship including Ṣalāh, fasting, Dhikr and charity to attain the Riḍā' (pleasure) of Allāh ﷻ. For those not performing Ḥajj, these days offer a unique opportunity to earn immense rewards. Allāh ﷻ has sworn by the ten nights in Sūrah al-Fajr as He says:

وَالْفَجْرِ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ

"By the dawn, and [by] the ten nights". (Sūrah al-Fajr, 89:1-2)

Abū Hurayrah (RA) narrated that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allāh ﷻ than in the [first] ten days of Dhul-Hijjah. Fasting on each of these days is equivalent to fasting for a year, and worshipping during each of these nights is equal to worship on Laylat al-Qadr". (Reported by al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah)

Another narration states: "There are no days greater in the sight of Allāh ﷻ, and in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Him, than these ten days. So increase in saying: Tahlīl (lā ilāha illa Allāh), Taḥmīd (al-ḥamdu lillāh), and Takbīr (Allāhu Akbar)". (Reported by Imām Aḥmad)

The Significance of Uḍḥiyah (Qurbānī)

Uḍḥiyah is an Arabic term that refers to the sacrifice of an animal. The word Qurbānī, commonly used in Urdu and Persian, is derived from the Arabic word Qurbān, which literally means "an act done to seek the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ". In Islamic terminology, it refers specifically to the slaughtering of an animal for the sake of Allāh ﷻ during the days of Dhul-Hijjah.

Uḍḥiyah is a practice commanded by Allāh ﷻ. He says in the Qur'ān:

فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحِرْ

"So turn in prayer towards your Lord and sacrifice". (Sūrah al-Kawthar, 108:2)

Narrated 'Ā'ishah (RA): That the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: "A human does no action from the actions on the day of Naḥr more beloved to Allah than spilling blood (of sacrificial animals). On the Day of Judgement, it will appear with its horns, and hair, and hooves, and indeed the blood will be accepted by Allāh from where it is received before it even falls upon earth, so let your heart delight in it". (al-Tirmidhī)

It was narrated that Zayd ibn Arqam (RA) said: The Companions of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: "O Messenger of Allāh, what are these sacrifices"? He replied: "It is the Sunnah of your father Ibrāhīm (AS)". They asked: "What is there for us in them, O Messenger of Allāh"? He said: "For every hair, one reward (ḥasanah)". They asked: "What about wool, O Messenger of Allāh"? He replied: "For every hair of wool, one reward". (Sunan Ibn Mājah)

Who Must Offer Uḍḥiyah?

Uḍḥiyah is Wājib on every Muslim who is mature (has reached puberty), of sound mind, is a Muqīm (i.e. not a Sharī traveller), and possesses wealth in excess of basic needs equivalent to the Niṣāb amount upon which Zakāh becomes obligatory. Uḍḥiyah is not obligatory on children, the insane, or those travelling a Sharī distance (for more details on travel distance in Sharī'ah, read our December 2024 article, Issue: 6). While not Wājib on others, offering Uḍḥiyah is still highly meritorious, and charity cannot replace this unique act of worship.

Timing of Uḍḥiyah

The days of Uḍḥiyah are the 10th, 11th and 12th of Dhul Ḥijjah. The valid time for Uḍḥiyah begins after the 'Eīd Ṣalāh on the 10th of Dhul-Ḥijjah and continues until sunset on the 12th of Dhul-Ḥijjah. It is important to ensure that the Uḍḥiyah is carried out at the correct time - that is, after performing the 'Eīd Ṣalāh. This is especially relevant in countries like Australia, where 'Eīd al-Aḍḥā may be observed on different days. If you delegate your Uḍḥiyah to another person or organisation, make sure they are aware of your day of 'Eīd so that the sacrifice is done accordingly. For specific situations, consult your local 'Ālim.

Distributing Uḍḥiyah Meat

It is permissible to eat from the Uḍḥiyah meat, and it may also be distributed to relatives and friends, regardless of whether they are wealthy or poor. It is recommended to divide the meat into three parts: one for oneself and one's family, one for relatives and friends, and one for the poor and needy. While this is the recommended act, if one chooses to consume the entire meat for themselves, this will still be acceptable.

Additional Guidelines

- It is permissible to offer a goat, she-goat, sheep, cow, bull, buffalo, or camel for Uḍḥiyah. A cow, bull, buffalo, or camel may be shared by up to seven people, provided that each person contributes an equal one-seventh share. In contrast, the Uḍḥiyah of a goat, sheep, or ram is valid for only one person.
- For Uḍḥiyah, it is necessary that the goat, whether male or female, is at least one full year old. A cow, bull, or buffalo must be at least two years of age, while a camel must be five years old. Any animal younger than the required age is not suitable for sacrifice. However, in the case of a sheep, if it is at least six months old and appears strong and healthy enough to resemble a one-year-old, it will be acceptable for Uḍḥiyah. Otherwise, it too must be one full year old.
- It is recommended for the one intending to perform Uḍḥiyah to refrain from cutting their hair or clipping their nails from the 1st of Dhul-Ḥijjah until the Uḍḥiyah is completed on the 10th. However, if one does cut their hair or trim their nails during this period, their Uḍḥiyah will still be valid and accepted.
- If one has been blessed by Allāh ﷻ with ample wealth, it is commendable to offer Uḍḥiyah on behalf of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, his Ṣaḥābah (RA), the Ummah, the Prophets, and one's own living or deceased relatives, friends, and teachers.

One should never forget to remember our beloved Prophet ﷺ during the days of Uḍḥiyah and should strive to offer a sacrifice on his behalf. Abū Ṭalḥah (RA) reported that the Prophet ﷺ sacrificed one ram, and while sacrificing the second, he said: "This is on behalf of every member of my Ummah who believed in me and testified to my prophethood". (Aṭ-Ṭabarānī) It is truly a matter of reflection that the Prophet ﷺ remembered his Ummah during his own act of sacrifice - how then can we, as his followers, neglect to remember him during ours?

Virtues of the Day of 'Arafah (9th Dhul-Hijjah)

The Day of 'Arafah, the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah, is one of the most blessed days in the Islamic calendar. It is the day when millions of Ḥujjāj gather on the plains of 'Arafāt, and it holds immense virtue even for those not performing Ḥajj. It is a day of forgiveness, mercy, and the freeing of souls from the Hellfire.

Ā'ishah (RA) reported that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "There is no day on which Allāh ﷻ sets more souls free from the Fire than on the Day of 'Arafah. On that day, He draws near and, expressing His pride to the angels, says: "What do these servants desire"? (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim)

In another Ḥadīth, Abū Qatādah al-Anṣārī (RA) narrated that Rasūlullāh ﷺ was asked about fasting on the Day of 'Arafah, and he replied: "It expiates the sins of the past year and the coming year". (Reported by Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, and Ibn Mājah)

The 9th of Dhul-Hijjah Is Not the 9th Everywhere

While the virtues of the Day of 'Arafah are undeniable and deeply inspiring, **it is important to address a common misunderstanding: that this blessed day must coincide with the day the Ḥujjāj stand on the plains of 'Arafāt in Saudi Arabia, regardless of where one lives. This view overlooks both the principles of Islamic jurisprudence and practical realities - particularly for Muslims in countries like Australia, which is 7 to 8 hours ahead of Saudi Arabia.**

On numerous occasions, local Muslims begin their fast for the Day of 'Arafah while the Ḥujjāj have not even started their day of 'Arafāt, and they break their fast while the pilgrims are still making Du'ā'. How then can the fast be connected to the Wuqūf of 'Arafāt, if it occurs before the event itself has taken place?

The truth is, the Day of 'Arafah is not defined by the actions of the Ḥujjāj, but by its date in the lunar calendar which is the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah and is determined by local moonsighting. Just as we fast Ramaḍān, perform 'Eid al-Fiṭr, and observe other Islamic dates based on our local crescent, so too should we observe the fasting of the day of 'Arafah and 'Eid. This is the method upheld by the majority of classical scholars. In our sincere effort to honour these sacred days, we must ensure that we are following correct principles rather than symbolic alignment that lacks practical or juristic foundation.

Similarly, those who insist on aligning 'Eid al-Aḍḥā with Saudi Arabia overlook the fact that the Ḥujjāj do not even perform 'Eid Ṣalāh - instead, they are engaged in rituals of Ḥajj that differ from what the rest of the Ummah is doing on that day. If the rites of Ḥajj and the 'Eid of the general Ummah are not the same in practice, how can they be forced to match in timing?

Below are a few Fatāwā from respected scholars - including scholars from Saudi Arabia themselves - who state clearly that local moonsighting should be followed, and that there is no obligation to align with Saudi Arabia's sighting.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymīn was asked whether the fast of 'Arafah should be based on local moonsighting or the moonsighting in al-Ḥaramayn (Makkah and Madīnah). He explained that this is a matter of scholarly disagreement, but the correct opinion is that moonsighting varies from region to region. He clarified that if the moon is sighted earlier in another country than in Makkah, their 9th of Dhul-Hijjah may fall on what is the 10th in Makkah, which would be 'Eid day in Saudi Arabia - so it would be impermissible for them to fast.

Conversely, if a country sees the moon later than Makkah, then their 9th would be on Makkah's 8th, and they should still fast according to their own local calendar. He based this view on the Ḥadīth: "When you see the moon, fast, and when you see it, stop fasting" and he drew an analogy with how Muslims agree that the times for Ṣalāh differ by location, so too should Islamic months be based on local observation. (Majmū' al-Fatāwā, vol. 20)

When questioned about the idea of determining 'Eid al-Aḍḥā by aligning it with the Day of 'Arafah in Saudi Arabia, Mufti Taqī Usmānī (ḥafīẓahullāh) strongly opposed this view, stating that it contradicts the teachings of the Qur'ān, Sunnah, and the position upheld by Muslim jurists for over 1400 years. He explained that this approach is unprecedented in Islamic jurisprudence.

While unity of the Ummah is a noble goal, he clarified that unity does not require uniformity in the timing of acts of worship, as time zones naturally lead to different prayer and fasting times across the globe. Just as Muslims do not pray at the same hour worldwide, they are also not required to observe 'Eid at the same global time.

He further stated that no classical jurist ever insisted on determining 'Eid al-Aḍḥā based on the date of Ḥajj in Makkah, even though that information was accessible well before the 10th of Dhul-Ḥijjah. If this had been a requirement, efforts would have been made historically to coordinate with Saudi Arabia - yet this was never the case. Mufti Taqī Usmānī concluded by warning that such proposals, though appearing to promote unity, actually introduce division and confusion into the Ummah. Such matters, he advised, should be left to qualified jurists through recognised international fiqh councils rather than being adopted unilaterally.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Bāz, the former Grand Muftī of Saudi Arabia, also stated: "As for those who say that it is necessary to follow the sighting of Makkah, then let it be known to them, that there is no proof or basis for this in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth". (Al-Ba'ath al-Islāmī, Dhul-Ḥijjah, 1399 AH)

This statement directly refutes the claim that Muslims around the world must base their 'Eid or moonsighting decisions on Makkah's sighting, affirming that local sighting remains valid and independent.

There are countless more Fatāwā from senior scholars across the globe affirming that each country should rely on its own local moonsighting, but the examples mentioned above should suffice for anyone who reflects with sincerity. **When even Saudi scholars themselves - including their own Grand Muftīs - state that there is no obligation to follow Makkah's sighting, why are we so determined to do so? As explained earlier, this approach not only contradicts centuries of established Fiqh, but it also defies basic logic.** How can we claim to be "following" Saudi Arabia if we choose to fast before their Day of 'Arafah, and pray 'Eid Ṣalāh while their Ḥujjāj are still in Muzdalifah? Is this truly what "following" means?

Let us honour the sacredness of these blessed days - not through symbolic gestures, but through correct understanding, unity within our own communities, and adherence to the timeless principles of our Dīn.

Takbīrāt of Tashrīq (From Fajr of Friday, 6th June to 'Aṣr of Tuesday, 10th June)

It is Wājib for every adult Muslim to recite the Takbīrāt of Tashrīq once audibly after every Farḍ Ṣalāh, beginning from Fajr on the 9th of Dhul-Ḥijjah until 'Aṣr on the 13th of Dhul-Ḥijjah - a total of 23 prayers. The Takbīr must be recited immediately after completing the Farḍ prayer, and while men should recite it aloud, women should do so softly. The Takbīrāt are as follows:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، وَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ

Allāh is the Greatest, Allāh is the Greatest. There is no deity except Allāh. Allāh is the Greatest, Allāh is the Greatest, and to Allāh belongs all praise.