

The City School
PAF Chapter, Junior Section
Islamiat Handout Year - 4



Festivals in Islam:

The word festival means a **special day or period**, usually in **memory of a religious event**, with **its own social activities, food, or ceremonies**.

Muslims observe two major festivals named as Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Azha.

In Islam, Eid is not only considered a day of rejoicing and happiness, it is a day to thank Allah SWT for His blessings. Every act performed on this day, from praying to greeting and caring about the poor and needy is a true example of remembering Allah and being submissive as His creations.

Eid Ul Fitr:

Eid ul Fitr is celebrated on the 1st of Shawwal. It marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan. Muslims consider it a day of thanking Allah for providing them an opportunity of fasting for a whole month - Ramadan. The day begins with the Eid prayers offered in the Eid gah. Sadaqa tul Fitr is also paid to the poor and needy on this day. People usually spend this Eid thanking Allah and spend their time with their relatives, friends and neighbours. Everyone wears new clothes, exchange gifts and prepare special dishes to celebrate this occasion.

Eid ul Azha:

Eid ul Azha is celebrated on the 10th of Zilhajj, the last month of the Islamic calendar. This Eid is known as the festival of sacrifice as it reminds us of the great sacrifice of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and his son Hazrat Ismail (AS).

Hajj is performed by many pilgrims in Makkah before the Eid.

On the day of Eid, Muslims sacrifice animals (cows, goats, sheep or camels) after offering the Eid prayers. The meat is then divided into three parts. One part is kept for the family, the second part is distributed to the relatives, friends and the third part is given to the poor and needy.

The sacrifice of the Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and his son Hazrat Ismail (AS):

Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) was commanded by Allah (SWT) to sacrifice his beloved son Hazrat Ismail (AS) in a dream. As a proof of his obedience, Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) immediately agreed to sacrifice his son for Allah's will. Hazrat Ismail (AS) also submitted himself to show his love for Allah (SWT). However, on the last moment a ram was sent by Allah (SWT) in acceptance of their sacrifice. The slaughtering of animals on Eid ul Azha is a remembrance of this sacrifice as well as our duty towards Allah - complete submission to His Will as his servants.

Sacrificing Animals in the name of Allah:

On Eid ul Azha, Muslims sacrifice animals in the name of Allah. This act symbolizes our willingness to give up things that are of benefit to us or close to our hearts, in order to follow Allah's commands.

Hajj:

Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam. All Muslims who can afford it must go for Hajj to Makkah, at least once in their lifetime. Hajj is performed in the month of Zilhajj. Muslims come to Makkah from all over the world and pray to Allah and spend time in His worship. Hajj is performed according to a set of rituals which must be strictly followed.

Ramy:

Ramy, after Hajj is observed in memory of Hazrat Ibrahim's (AS) struggle when he was taking his son Hazrat Ismail (AS) with the intention of sacrificing him in obedience to Allah. Satan tried to

convince him to give up his intention. Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) rejected the Satan by throwing stones at him. The three pillars known as Jamrahs, are considered to be the approximate places where the Satan appeared. The pilgrims throw pebbles on the three pillars saying Allah u Akbar and this act is known as Ramy.

The Hills of Safa and Marwah and the importance of Sa'ee:

Allah commanded Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) to go to a distant land. So, he brought his wife Bibi Haajra and their young son Hazrat Ismail (AS) to a desert valley in Makkah and left them there.

It was a rocky and barren place where nothing grew. It was hot and soon Ismail grew thirsty. He began to cry for water. This caused Bibi Haajra fear for her son's life and she began a desperate search for help or water. She ran seven times between the two hillocks, called Safa and Marwah, praying anxiously to Allah SWT. When she returned to Hazrat Ismail (AS), she found a spring of fresh water flowing by, where the thirsty child was rubbing his heels. Her prayer was answered by Allah SWT.

This spring of water has flowed ever since, and it is still there in Makkah. This is the Well of Zam Zam.

Today the pilgrims drink Zam Zam and in memory of Bibi Hajra's running and praying anxiously, walk at a fast pace seven times between the two hills to perform Sa'ee during Hajj and Umrah.

The Miraculous Well of Zam Zam:

The blessed water of Zam Zam holds many beneficial qualities. It is indeed a miracle that a well sprang in the middle of desert and the water is still flowing. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, "Zamzam water is what one intends to drink for. When one drinks it to be healed, Allah heals him; when one drinks it to be full, Allah makes him full; and when one drinks it to quench his thirst, Allah quenches it."

Maqaame e Ibrahim:

Maqaam e Ibrahim is a large stone block on which Prophet Ibrahim (AS) stood while he was constructing the Ka'aba. Sent from the heavens, the stone used to move around, up and down as per the instructions of the Prophet Ibrahim (AS). The stone helped in building the walls of Kaaba with the assistance of his son Hazrat Ismail (AS). Even after thousands of years, the footprints of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) are fresh and can be seen easily. This stone is located near the Holy Kaaba. After performing Tawaaf, the Muslims offer two units of prayers behind Maqaam e Ibrahim.

Hajra- e- Aswad:

While constructing Kaaba, Hazrat Ismail (AS) brought a black stone, which is reported to have been sent from Paradise. They placed that stone as a sign for the beginning of circumambulation (Tawaf) in the wall of the Kaaba.

Key: Circumambulation - Tawaf