

Eid al-Adha and Aimmat Fatimiyyn: Historical, Juristic and Religious Dimensions

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Abstract: This abstract surveys the religious, juridical, and courtly dimensions of 'Eid al-Aḏḥā in Fatimi Miṣr, which historians describe as celebrated across the 11th–13th Dhulḥajjah and revered as 'Eid al-Naḥr, the Festival of Sacrifice. Zabīḥah, a culminating rite of Ḥajj, is presented as Sha'ā'irullāh to be honoured without coercion: in the 'Eid Khuṭbah, Rasulullāh (S) instructed that whoever can bear the expense should respect the rite, while Allah does not bind one who cannot afford. In Ḥajjat al-Wadā', Rasulullāh (S) offered one hundred she-camels; he slaughtered sixty-three himself and the remainder were slaughtered by Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (as) under his instruction. Ritual timing is carefully delimited: on 10th Dhulḥajjah, after sunrise and Salaat al-'Eid/Khuṭbah until Zawāl; on 11th and 12th, from sunrise until Zawāl; and not on the 13th, except in Minā after Ḥajj. A central textual witness is al-Imām al-Manṣūr's Khuṭbah at al-Mahdiyyah (336 AH/21 June 948 AD), which links public Ta'zīm to Adab: a healthy, non-disfigured offering with intact eyes and ears; sharpened knives and gentleness; and Qur'āni reminders to eat and feed the needy (al-Ḥajj 36-37), for Taqwā-not blood-reaches Allah. In Da'ā'im al-Islām, Sayyidunā al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān records Faḍā'il: the first blood-drop becomes Kafārat al-dhunūb, and every part is weighed in the Mīzān with reward multiplied seventy-fold for all. The offerer is encouraged to perform Zabīḥah personally, or place a hand over the executor's hand, reciting Bismillāh Allāhu Akbar and Du'ā' "Wajahtu Wajheya...". In Al-Mu'izziyyah al-Qāhirah and nearby Fuṣṭāt, 'Eid functioned as imperial choreography: a ranked Mawkib from the Qaṣr to the Muṣallā near Bāb al-Naṣr, courtly hierarchy displayed in the Khuṭbah, sacrifice at the Manḥar, and Simāt, through which meat circulated as Barakāt to Ismaili Du'āt, Hudūd, students of Dār al-Ḥikmah, dignitaries, neighbours, and the needy. Sayyidunā Nāṣir'e Khusraw's "Wajh'e Dīn" reads Zabīḥah as Sharī'ah joined to Ḥaqīqah: outward slaughter must be matched by inner Taslīm, Ma'rifah of the Imām, and the continual sacrifice of the Nafs. Selection criteria-sound limbs, unbroken horns, uncut ears-guard the Halāl form, while al-Imām 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābideen (as) models distribution in thirds: needy, family, neighbours, making 'Eid a discipline of solidarity and clear conscience.

Keywords: Eid al-Adha; Fatimi Miṣr; Zabīḥah; Ḥaj rituals; Islamic jurisprudence; Sayyiduna Al Qāḍī al-Nu'mān; Dā'ā'im al-Islām; Fatimi Imams; Khutbah; Sacrifice in Islam; Ritual practice; Religious authority; Barakāt; Ismaili tradition

Historians provide us event of Eid al-Adha in length, which was celebrated in Misk between the 11th and 13th Dhulhijjah, is considered among Muslims as the Festival of sacrifices. Animal scarification is part of the final rituals of the Haj. Sayyiduna Al Qadi al-Nauman discussed that Al Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) and Al Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as) narrated that Rasulullah (S) instructed to the Ummah on the day of Eid al-Adha in his Khutbah that O People! Each one among you who bear the expenses of Zabihah should pay respect to Shairullah (Zabihah is one of them). And the one who is not prosperous than must know that Allah never bound and force upon the one who cannot afford. Rasulullah (S) sacrificed 100 she-camels in Hajjat al-Wada. He himself slaughtered 63 she-camels and remained were slaughtered by Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as), under his instruction. It can be performed on 10th Dhulhijjah after sunrise, i.e. after Salaat al-Khutbah, till Zawaal. It can also be performed on 11th and 12th Dhulhijjah from sunrise till the Zawaal. Zabihah cannot be performed on 13th Dhulhijjah, except in Mina after Haj.

A few lines from the Khutbah of Al Imam al-Mansur at Mahdiyah on the Day of Eid al-Nahar, is source of guidance, which he delivered in 336 (A.H.) = 21st June, 948 (A.D.). The Imam says:

O Servants of Allah! Verily, this is the day of Eid and it is incumbent upon you by Allah's will to glorify and respect it. The numbered days of rituals start today and the known days of Ibadat are marked, over. Allah has made this day the flagship of Zaireen, Hujjaj towards the Baitullah al-Har'am. The gateways of Jannat are opened for the acceptance of Ibadaat. Offer Dua in this day, with purity of heart, and call upon him in humility and deepest desire. Approach Allah with sacrifice of cattle and livestock, in accordance to His command, the best of which are she-camels, cows and sheep. He who sacrifices a little (young) goat does not fulfill the day's ritual, while a lamb is acceptable. A sacrifice prior to the Salaat al-Eid is Halal meat, and after the Eid Salaat, it is a sacrifice accepted by Allah. A full filled sacrifice is that which is healthy and not disfigured. Its eyes and ears are intact, and it is not mutated having more or less limbs. Before you slaughter be sure to sharpen your knives and be gentle to the animal; "And when they are slaughtered, eat from its meat and feed those who do not beg but live in content and those who beg with due humility" (Surat al-Haj, 36), treasure the blessing and praise Allah. "It is not its meat or blood that reaches Allah, but it is the piety that reaches Him." (Surat al-Haj, 37) "Allah has subjugated the animals for you, may you be grateful." (Surat al-Haj, 36) .May Allah grants his acceptance to our sacrifices and Ibadat. May He multiply our deeds, for He is the most Generous, the most obliging, emperor and the most Merciful".

Sayyiduna Al Qadi al-Nauman described the Fadail of Zabihah in "Da'aim al-Islam", vol 2 as under:

"Rasulullah (S) approached Sayyidah Fatimah on the day of Eid al-Adha and asked her, O Fatimah! Come and see your offering of Zabihah. The first drop of blood that flows after the slitting of the throat of animal becomes the Kafarat al-Zunub. Listen! Its flash, horns, bones, hairs, and all its parts should be put in your scale and Allah will bestow upon you reward seventy times higher. This wording was listened by Sayyiduna

Miqdad bin al-Aswad. He asked his Moula Rasulullah (S) that this reward exclusively for Aal e Muhammad or it is for all/ Rasulullah (S) declared that no it is for all”.

It is desirable that the person who is offering Zabihah should perform it himself/herself. If one cannot perform, then one should put his hand over the hand of the one, who is doing Zabihah on one's behalf. If this is also not possible then one must stand near the Zabihat and observe and say Bismillah Allahhu Akbar loudly and recite the Dua Wajahtu Wajheya....” Any person can do Zabihah on behalf of the person intending to offer, if it is not possible for one to do so. According to Sayyiduna Al Qadi al-Nauman, Al Imam Sadiq (as) precisely recommended that sheep for Zabihah which has large horns, fatty, male, take food and drink in darkness, can move, saw and discharge in darkness. Rasulullah (S) took sacrificed similar kind of sheep because of the same nature of sheep was descended for Nabi Ibrahim Khalilullah (as).

Eid al-Aḍḥā as Fatimi Imperial Ritual in al-Muizziyyah al-Qāhirah:

In al-Muizziyyah al-Qāhirah and nearby Fuṣṭāṭ, Eid al-Aḍḥā was not only a religious feast but also a carefully staged Empire ceremony, often arranged Eid al-Naḥr, “the Feast of Sacrifice”. During the period of the Aimmat Fatimiyyin this festival was arranged on a large scale. It was Al Imam al-Muiz (as), who introduced its importance and significance largely. On the morning of the Eid, the Fatimi Imam and Khalifah left the Qasar in a formal Mawḳib, a ranked procession of courtiers, officials, and soldiers-moving to the open-air Muṣallā (Eidgah). Sources place the Fatimi Muṣallā by the northern gates, near Bāb al-Naṣr, with troops lining the route for crowd control and ceremony. Chroniclers and later summaries drawing on them describe the Fatimi Khalifah in ceremonial dress, carrying Royal Insignia-cane; sword; Umbrella, with elite units and banners emphasizing sovereign power as much as piety.

This partying took place in two sites; the Musalla, where Salaat was offered, built outside Al Muizziyyah al-Qahirah, by Sayyiduna Al Qaidjohar, and by Al Imam al-Muiz (as) in Qasar. At the Muṣallā, the Salaat and Khuṭbah followed a courtly script. Accounts describe prominent dignitaries being singled out for honor during the Khuṭbah and positioned close to the Fatimi Khalifah in a way that publicly displayed hierarchy and favor. The Fatimi Imam used to go in a great pageant, in 415/1024, Al Imam Zahir (as) included in his pageant an elephant and giraffes, from Qasar to the Musalla where he offered Salaat al-Eid and offered Khutbah from the Minbar. Sacrifices were offered by turn in two places; at the Musalla and at a special place at al-Qasar. After Salaat, the Fatimi rite moved to the Manḥar - slaughter place. Reports in the chronicles describe the Fatimi Imam personally performing the sacrifice, and the ritual extending over three days, with specific tallies for animals prepared/ slaughtered across the days, e.g., figures given as 31 on the first day, 27 on the second, 23 on the third in one set of reports.

This joyful festival continued for three days. The meat of the sacrifices was served at a special meal, which was even attended by the dignitaries. The sacrificial meat offered by the Imam himself was revered as sacred. The food served as a means of transportation

of transmitting the Barakaat of the Imam to the ordinary people, who were blessed through it. The meat was also divided among Du'at, Hudud and students of Dar al-Hikmah and those gathered at the Musalla.

(Musabbihi. 80-1; al Khitat, vol.II, al-Muqrizi).

Al Imam al-Aziz (as) declared death of his father and his own control as an Imam during the Festival of Eid al-Nahar of 365/ 976. He rode in a pageant to the Musalla, under the ceremonial parasol -a sign of authority-and delivered a Khutbah. Upon returning to his Qasar he received Mithaq from the dignitaries of the Ismaili Dawah. Eid also meant the famous Fatimi Simāt (Empire banquet). Descriptions preserve staggering quantities-multiple long tables, roasted sheep, and hundreds of birds-served with strict seating order by rank. Notably, one account states that the same type of formal Qasar banquet held on Eid al-Fiṭr also took place on the first day of Eid al-Aḍḥā, "with the same formalities."

Across these elements-procession, Salaat, sacrifice, feasting the Aimmat Fatimiyyin used Eid to make governance visible: the Fatimi Khalifah at the center, order in the streets, rank on display, and abundance framed as divine favor. Some accounts even note participation by non-Muslim notables in formal greetings, underscoring that these festivals were also civic events in a plural city.

Sayyiduna Abu Muin Hamiduddin Nāṣir'e Khusraw's "Wajh-i Dīn" on Eid al-Adha (Discourse 24)

In Ismaili thought, Eid al-Adḥā is not confined to the Zāhir act of animal sacrifice, but embodies profound Haqā'iq that refine the soul and affirm loyalty to divine Hidayah. The festival harmonises Sharī'ah and Haqīqah, wherein the physical rite of Zabīḥah signifies a deeper spiritual offering. At the level of Haqīqah, the sacrifice commemorates the supreme act of obedience and Taslīm (total submission) demonstrated by Ibrāhīm (as), an inner sacrifice: purifying intention Niyyah, restraining passion, and aligning action with Aqidah. Central to the Ismaili Haqā'iq of Eid al-Adḥā is the role of the Imām as the locus of divine guide Maẓhar al-Hudā. Just as the rites of sacrifice are incomplete without correct form and timing, spiritual life is incomplete without recognition - Ma'rifah and Tā'at to the Imām of the time. The Fatimi tradition of the Imām personally offering sacrifice and distributing its meat symbolised the transmission of Barakāt from the Imām to the Mumineen, transforming a rite of Shariah into a living spiritual economy. The division of sacrificial meat-among the needy, family, and neighbours-further reflects an ethical Haqīqah: true sacrifice must generate compassion, social justice, and communal solidarity. The sacrifice of Mumineen is validated when it alleviates suffering, strengthens bonds, and manifests Rahmah. Finally, Eid al-Adḥā in Ismaili understanding is a call to perpetual vigilance of the heart. The festival teaches that outward rites recur annually, but the inner sacrifice is continuous. One who slaughters the animal yet spares the ego has fulfilled the Zāhir but neglected the Bāṭin. True success lies in uniting both-where Halal Zabīḥa becomes a means of spiritual ascent and nearness to Allah. In essence, the Ismaili Haqā'iq of Eid al-Adḥā affirm that sacrifice is not an end in itself, but

a disciplined path toward purity of conscience, recognition of divine authority, and transformation of the self in obedience to Allah.

Sayyiduna Nāṣir opens by saying this 'Eid is a "proof - Dalīl of the Qā'im al-Qiyāmah, because through him the inner meaning of the Sharī'ah becomes manifest and Mumineen are released from the "pain of Zulmah." For Sayyiduna Nāṣir, the festival is not merely commemorative; it is a doctrinal symbol of disclosure-a movement from outward forms and ignorance toward unveiled meaning.

"Going out to the open Salaat-ground"

He links the customary act of going out from "hidden" places to the open plain to the Qā'im's function: just as people come out into the open, the Qā'im brings "Asrar" out of Satr into clarity. The Da'i notes: "Aḍḥā is four letters," just as "Qā'im has four letters." This is a compact piece of symbolic rhetoric-letter-count used as a sign of correspondence. Sayyiduna Nāṣir explains that the 'Eid Salaat lacks the Adhān and Iqāmah because the "Lord of Resurrection" is not characterised by the outward and inward Dawah in that way: the outward Dawah belongs to the Nāṭiq, the inward Dawah belongs to the Asās - Wāṣī. He then emphasises the Qā'im's distinct role: he is "the Lord of Reward," i.e., the one who renders each person his due. He reads the post-Salaat Khuṭbah as symbolising an order of spiritual history: the Qā'im first "Nurtures the Sharī'ah," then stands in his own rank and makes the truth manifest; thereafter, the ranks of Hidayah (Nāṭiq, Asās, Imām) seek redress - Adl against tyrannical and Shaytani forces opposing the Mumineen. Takbīr before the Salaat signifies that Tawḥīd and greatness of Rabb are disclosed through him. Five Takbīr signifies that benefit reaches Mumineen from the "Five Physical Ranks" Hudūd Jismānī in every age, and by the Noor of Qā'im they reach the next world; the Takbīr are also a symbol of the joy of Mumineen and the Qā'im's victory over Munafiqeen and enemies of religion.

The key move of the Great Hujjah of Khurasan, Ruby of Badakhshan, Sayyiduna Nasir is to interpret sacrifice as a sign of the Ahd taken from the Nāṭiq down to the Mustajīb-a chain by which the servant draws near to the Command of Rabb. Then he gives an explicit mapping, each "sacrifice" corresponds to the next rank in the chain:

Nāṭiq → its "sacrifice" is the Asās

Asās → its "sacrifice" is the Imam

Imam → its "sacrifice" is the Hujjah

Hujjah → its "sacrifice" is the Da'i

Da'i → its "sacrifice" is the Madhun and the Mustajīb

And finally, the animal-symbols:

Camel → Nāṭiq

Cow → Asās

Sheep → Imam

Shariah Ahkaam:

Rasulullah (S) specifically instructed that the meat of the Zabihah should not be distributed among the non-Muslims. The preference of animal is as follows:

- i. *She camel (10 persons)*
- ii. *Camel*
- iii. *Cow (7 persons)*
- iv. *Bull*
- v. *Ram*
- vi. *Castrated Ram*
- vii. *She Ram*
- viii. *Sheep*
- ix. *Goat*
- x. *She Goat*

Prior to purchase animal of Zabihah carefully check the following:

- i. *Animal's ears must not be chopped or broken.*
- ii. *Same care should be taken regarding horns also i.e. they should not be broken.*
- iii. *There must not be addition or subtraction of any organs of the body of the Animal.*
- iv. *A sheep one year old or more is allowed for Zabihah,*
- v. *While a goat completing two years with developed front teeth are allowed for Zabihah.*
- vi. *Front or hind limbs should be normal.*
- vii. *Amongst goats whose horns are not grown at all are not permissible for Zabihah.*

These instructions should be followed:

- i. *Before Zabihah water should be offered to the animal*
- ii. *Face of the animal should be turn towards Qiblah*
- iii. *Animal should be slaughter on mud, not on stones or concrete.*
- iv. *At the time of Zabihah only artery should be cut, not the bone. All four main blood vessels of the neck must be completely severed above the vocal chords. (There is a special method of killing a camel called Nahar, which may also be used for other animals, when Zabihah is not possible. It should be noted finally that all animals whose blood does not spurt are Haraam, except fish, which have scales, without mustache and breathed last on Bismillah Allahhu Akbar.*
- v. *Bismillah Allahhu Akbar and Dua "Wajhatu Wajehya" should be recited*
- vi. *Skin of Zabihah can be given to the butcher, as service charges, but meat must not be allowed to sale.*

Following parts of the animal are Haraam and must not be use in food.

- i. *Glands*
- ii. *Spinal cord*
- iii. *Spleen*
- iv. *Inner portion of kidney*
- v. *Sex organs*
- vi. *Womb*

- vii. Testicles
- viii. Blood

Al Imam Ali Zayn al-Abedeen (as) distributed meat of Zabihah in three parts. He distributed one part among the needy once, second part for family members and the third part for neighbors. The message of Eid-al-Adha is sacrifice for a higher purpose. We too must show our solidarity and seek to help and comfort those in greater need wherever they might be. The real Hikmah (purpose) of Eid-al-Adha is that a person should keep his heart and conscience clear. Keep away from sins and protect himself from vice.

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