49014 - Sunnah Acts During `Eid

the question

I would like to know some of the Sunnahs of `Eid and the rulings thereon.

Summary of answer

Sunnah acts during `Eid include: 1- reciting Takbir during the night of `Eid, 2- eating an odd number of dates before leaving for the `Eid prayer, 3- wearing your best clothes, 4- doing Ghusl for the `Eid prayer, 5- offering the `Eid prayer, 6- paying Zakat Al-Fitr, 7- greeting and embracing one another, 8- going out to the `Eid prayer by one route and return by another...

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Allah has set out several rulings concerning `Eid, including the following:

- It is recommended to recite Takbir during the night of `Eid from sunset on the last day of Ramadan until the Imam comes to lead the prayer. The format of the Takbir is as follows:

Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, la ilaha ill-Allah, Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, wa Lillahi'l-hamd (Allah is Most Great, Allah is Most Great, there is none worthy of worship except Allah, Allah is Most Great, Allah is Most Great, and all praise be to Allah).

Or you can say Allahu akbar three times, so you say:

Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, la ilaha ill-Allah, Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, wa Lillahi'l-hamd (Allah is Most Great, Allah is Most Great, Allah is Most Great, there is none worthy of worship except Allah, Allah is Most Great, Allah is Most Great , Allah is Most Great, and all praise be to Allah).

Both are permissible.

Men should raise their voices reciting this Dhikr in the marketplaces, mosques and homes, but women should not raise their voices.

- You should eat an odd number of dates before leaving for the `Eid prayer, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not set out on the day of `Eid until he had eaten an odd number of dates. He should stick to an odd number as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did.
- You should wear your best clothes – this is for men. With regard to women , they should not wear beautiful clothes when they go out to the `Eid prayer-place, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Let them go out looking decent” i.e., in regular clothes that are not fancy. It is prohibited for them to go out wearing perfume and makeup.
- Some of the scholars regarded it as recommended to do Ghusl for the `Eid prayer , because it is narrated that some of the Salaf did this. Doing Ghusl for `Eid prayer is recommended, just as it is prescribed for Jumu’ah because one is going to meet people. So if one does Ghusl, that is good.
- Offering the `Eid prayer . The Muslims unanimously agreed that the `Eid prayer is prescribed in Islam. Some of them say that it is Sunnah, some say that it is Fard Kifayah (a communal obligation) and some say that it is Fard `Ayn (an individual obligation), and that not doing it is a sin.

They quoted as evidence the fact that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded even the virgins and women in seclusion, i.e., those who did not ordinarily come out, to attend the `Eid prayer place, except that those who were menstruating should keep away from the prayer-place itself, because it is not permissible for a menstruating woman to stay in the mosque; it is permissible for her to pass through but not to stay there.

It seems to me, based on the evidence, that it is an individual obligation and that every male is obliged to attend the `Eid prayer except for those who have an excuse. This was the view

favoured by Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him).

In the first Rak`ah the Imam should recite Sabbih isma rabbika  Al-A`ala (Al-A`la 87) and in the second Rak`ah he should recite Hal ataka Hadith ul-ghashiyah (Al-Ghashiyah 88). Or he may recite Surah Qaf (50) in the first and Surah Al-Qamar (54) in the second. Both options are narrated in authentic reports from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

- If Jumu`ah and `Eid fall on the same day , the `Eid prayer should be held, as should Jumu`ah prayer, as is indicated by the apparent meaning of the Hadith of Al-Nu`man ibn Bashir (may Allah be pleased with him) which was narrated by Muslim. But those who attend the `Eid prayer with the Imam may attend Jumu`ah if they wish, or they may pray Thuhr.
- One of the rulings on `Eid prayer is that according to many scholars, if a person comes to the `Eid prayer-place before the Imam comes, he should sit down and not pray two Rak`ahs, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed `Eid with two Rak`ahs, and he did not offer any prayer before or after it.

Some of the scholars are of the view that when a person comes he should not sit down until he has prayed two Rak`ahs, because the `Eid prayer-place is a mosque, based on the fact that menstruating women are not allowed there, so it comes under the same rulings as a mosque, which indicates that it is a mosque. Based on this, it comes under the general meaning of the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): “When any one of you enters the mosque, let him not sit down until he has prayed two Rak`ahs.” With regard to the fact that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not offer any prayer before or after the `Eid prayer, that is because when he arrived the prayer started.

Thus it is proven that we should pray Tahiyyat Al-Masjid (two Rak`ahs to “greet the mosque”) when arriving at the `Eid prayer-place, as in the case of all mosques, because if we assume from the Hadith that there is no Tahiyyat Al-Masjid for the `Eid mosque, then we should say that there is no Tahiyyat  Al-Masjid for the Jumu`ah mosque either, because when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) arrived at the Jumu`ah mosque he would deliver the Khutbah, then pray two Rak`ahs then leave and pray the regular Sunnahs of Jumu`ah in his house,

so he did not offer any prayer before it or after it (in the mosque).

What seems more likely to be correct in my view is that we should pray two Rak`ahs in the `Eid prayer-place to greet the mosque, but we should not denounce one another with regard to this issue, because it is a matter concerning which the scholars differ. We should not denounce others with regard to matters where the scholars differ, unless there is a clear text. So we should not denounce the one who prays (Tahiyyat Al-Masjid) or the one who sits down without praying.

- One of the rulings on the day of `Eid – `Eid Al-Fitr – is that Zakat Al-Fitr is due on this day. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined that it should be paid before the `Eid prayer.

It is permissible to pay Zakat Al-Fitr one or two days before that, because of the Hadith of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) which was narrated by Al-Bukhari: "They used to give it one or two days before (`Eid) Al-Fitr." If it is paid after the `Eid prayer, it does not count as Sadaqat Al-Fitr, because of the Hadith of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him): "Whoever pays it before the prayer, it is Zakat Al-Fitr, and whoever pays it after the prayer, it is ordinary charity."

It is prohibited to delay Zakat Al-Fitr until after the `Eid prayer. If one delays it with no excuse then it is not acceptable Zakah, but if there is an excuse – such as if a person is travelling and does not have anything to give or anyone to give it to, or he is expecting his family to pay it and they are expecting him to pay it, then in this case he should pay it when it is easy for him to do so, even if that is after the prayer, and there is no sin on him because he has an excuse.

- People should greet one another, but that results in prohibited actions on the part of many people, such as men entering houses without any Mahram being present, and also shaking hands with unveiled women. Some of these evils are worse than others.

We see some people denouncing those who refuse to shake hands with those who are not their Mahrams, but it is they who are the wrongdoers, not he. But he should explain to them and tell them to ask trustworthy scholars to verify his actions and he should tell them not to get angry and

insist on following the customs of his forefathers, because they do not make a permissible thing forbidden or a forbidden thing permissible. He should explain to them that if they do that, they will be like those of whom Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And similarly, We sent not a warner before you (O Muhammad) to any town (people) but the luxurious ones among them said: “We found our fathers following a certain way and religion, and we will indeed follow their footsteps.” [Az-Zukhruf 43:23]

Some people have the custom of going out to the graveyard on the day of `Eid to greet the occupants of the graves, but the occupants of the graves have no need of any greeting or congratulations, because they do not fast or pray Qiyam.

Visiting the graves is not something to be done especially on the day of `Eid or Friday or any particular day. It was proven that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) visited the graves at night, as mentioned in the Hadith of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated by Muslim. And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Visit the graves for they will remind you of the Hereafter.”

Visiting graves is an act of worship, and acts of worship are not acceptable unless they are in accordance with Shari`ah. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not single out the day of `Eid for visiting the graves, so we should not do so either.

- There is nothing wrong with what men do on the day of `Eid of embracing one another.
- It is prescribed for the one who goes out to the `Eid prayer to go by one route and return by another , following the example of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This Sunnah does not apply to other prayers, Jumu`ah or anything else, it only applies to `Eid.” (Majmu` Fatawa Ibn `Uthaymin, 16/216-223)