48983 - Is ‘Eid Prayer Obligatory?

the question

What is the ruling on ‘Eid prayers?

Summary of answer

Scholars differed concerning the ruling on ‘Eid prayers: 1- it is a confirmed Sunnah; 2- it is a communal obligation; and 3- it is obligatory for men.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Is ‘Eid prayer obligatory?

The scholars differed concerning the ruling on ‘Eid prayers . There are three scholarly points of view:

1. That ‘Eid prayer is Sunnah mu’akkadah (a confirmed Sunnah). This is the view of Imam Malik and Imam al-Shafi'i.
2. That it is a communal obligation. This is the view of Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him).
3. That it is a duty for each Muslim and is obligatory for men; those who do not do it with no excuse are sinning thereby. This is the view of Imam Abu Hanifah (may Allah have mercy on him), and was also narrated from Imam Ahmad. Among those who favoured this view were Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah and al-Shawkani (may Allah have mercy on them). (Al-Majmu’, 5/5; al-Mughni, 3/253; al-Insaf, 5/316; al-Ikhtiyarat, p. 82)

Support of the view that ‘Eid prayer is obligatory

Those who held the third view quoted several texts as evidence, including the following:

1. The verse in which Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only).” [al-Kawthar 108:2]

Ibn Qudamah said in al-Mughni: “The well-known view is that what is meant by this is the ‘Eid prayer.”

Some of the scholars were of the view that what is meant in this verse is prayer in general, not just ‘Eid prayer, so what the verse means is that we are commanded to devote our prayer and sacrifice to Allah Alone, so it is like the verse in which He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say (O Muhammad): ‘Verily, my Salah (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the ‘Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists)’” [al-An’am 6:162]

This view concerning this meaning of the verse was shared by Ibn Jarir (12/724) and Ibn Kathir (8/502).

1. The fact that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded the people to go out to it (the ‘Eid prayer) and even commanded the women to go out too.

Al-Bukhari (324) and Muslim (890) narrated that Umm ‘Atiyyah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded us to bring them (women) out on (‘Eid) al-Fitr and (‘Eid) al-Adha, and to bring out adolescent girls, menstruating women and virgins, but the menstruating women were to stay away from the prayer, but were to witness goodness and the gathering of the Muslims. I said: “O Messenger of Allah, what if one of us does not have a jilbab?” He said: “Let her sister lend her a jilbab.”

The evidence of this hadith that the ‘Eid prayer is obligatory is stronger than the evidence of the verse quoted above.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymin said in Majmu’ al-Fatawa (16/214):

“What I think is that the ‘Eid prayer is fard ‘ayn (an individual obligation), and that it is not permissible for men to miss it, rather they have to attend, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined that. He even commanded the women – including virgins and those who usually stayed in seclusion – to come out to the ‘Eid prayer, and he commanded menstruating women to come out to the ‘Eid prayer , but told them to keep away from the prayer-place itself. This indicates that it is confirmed.”

He also said (16/217):

“What seems more likely to be correct in my view, based on the evidence, is that it is fard ‘ayn (an individual obligation), and that it is obligatory for every male to attend the ‘Eid prayer apart from those who have an excuse.”

Shaykh Ibn Baz said in Majmu’ al-Fatawa, 13/7 concerning the view that it is fard ‘ayn:

“This view is more likely to be correct, based on the evidence.”

And Allah knows best.