



Takbir in Salat-ul-'Eid

The third question of Fatwa no. 1732

Q3: Why is it Sunnah to utter Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") twelve times before we recite Surah Al-Fatiyah in Salat-ul-'Eid (the Festival Prayer)? And what is the benefit of this and why do we do it in Salat-ul-'Eid and not in the Five Obligatory Prayers?

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A: The basic ruling in acts of 'Ibadah (worship) is that they are Tawqif (bound by a religious text and not amenable to personal opinion). We should worship Allah in the manner He (may He be Exalted) and His Messenger (peace be upon him) told us to, whether we know the wisdom behind this or not. This is especially so regarding acts of 'Ibadah, such as Salah (Prayer), Sawm (Fasting), and Hajj, as the intellect has no role to play in these. It also includes what the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordained in regard to saying Takbir six or seven times after the Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar" upon starting Prayer) before reciting Surah Al-Fatiyah in the first Rak'ah (unit of Prayer) of the Two 'Eid Prayers, and saying it five times before reciting Surah Al-Fatiyah in the second Rak'ah of the Two 'Eid Prayers, which is different from the Five Obligatory Prayers. We have to believe in whatever Allah (may He be Exalted) and His Messenger (peace be upon him) prescribed for us, surrender to Him, and listen and obey. The basic ruling in this is to know how to perform the 'Ibadah, rather than the reason for it. A servant must not interfere in matters belonging to Allah alone, such as the acts of 'Ibadah, their types, and the manner in which they are offered. The servant must not ask why Allah has prescribed this and not that, or what can be the benefit of a certain rule that He laid down. In fact, the servant's duty is to know what Allah and His Messenger have prescribed and act upon it. If the wisdom behind an act of 'Ibadah is unveiled to them, all praise be to Allah; if not, they should surrender to Allah's Decree, obey Him, and be certain that Allah does not prescribe anything unless there is a wisdom behind it and it is for the own good of the servants. Allah (may He be Glorified) is All-Wise and All-Knowing in All His Words, Deeds, Laws, and Decree, as He (may He be Exalted) says (what means): (Certainly your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing.) What we have said is also confirmed by the Saying of Allah (may He be Praised): (Indeed, in the Messenger of Allâh (Muhammad peace be upon him) you have a good example to follow.)

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Also, the words of the Prophet (peace be upon him), ("Pray as you have seen me praying.") (Related by Al-Bukhari in his "Sahih [Book of Authentic Hadith]") The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said during the Farewell Hajj, ("Learn your rituals from me.")

May Allah grant us success! May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

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