

Eid al-Fitr: Reaffirming Our Identity as Muslims and Distinguishing Ourselves from the disbelievers

Allāh Ta'āla has blessed us with the day of Eid as a means of expressing gratitude for the great favours He bestowed upon us during the month of Ramadhān. By the grace of Allāh, we were able to fast, recite the Qur'ān Karīm, and perform the Tarawīh Salāh. After completing this great duty—and with sincere hope of having attained the forgiveness of Allāh—a Muslim is granted the day of Eid to rejoice. Expressing happiness on the day of Eid is a salient feature of Islām and the Muslims. Through distributing our Sadaqatul Fitr, attending the Eid Salāh, reaffirming family ties, and enjoying the favours of Allāh Ta'āla, the celebration of a believer differs significantly from that of a non-Muslim.

History of Eid

Having endured hardship and persecution in Makkah Mukarramah, Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam and his Sahaabah Radhiyallāhu 'anhum were commanded to migrate to Madinah Munawwarah. Upon arrival, Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam found that the people of Madinah had two days upon which they rejoiced. Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam asked: "What are these two days?" The people replied: "These are days we used to celebrate in the days of Jahiliyyah." Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam then said: "Verily, Allāh Ta'āla has replaced these days with those that are better: the days of Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr." (Abu Dawud, 1134)

Despite the Muslims being in the minority, Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam was divinely inspired to establish a unique identity for them in Madinah Munawwarah. To this end, he specified two days for the Muslims to rejoice—a substitute for the days they were accustomed to in the period of Jahiliyyah. Muslims were then expected to avoid celebrating those days and confine themselves to Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha.

Thus, a salient feature of our Eid should be our dissociation from the customs of non-believers.

How ironic it would be if we celebrated Eid—the very day intended to differentiate us—by fully emulating the ways of non-believers!

In imitation of Christian and Hindu traditions, Eid decorations, Eid trees, and turkeys are becoming increasingly common. May Allāh protect us! Similarly, our haircuts, dress, actions, and speech should not resemble those of non-believers; instead, they should reflect the spirituality gained during the month of Ramadhān.

Point of Reflection

Having thoroughly researched the history of different nations in India, Moulāna Husain Ahmed Madani Rahimahullah wrote that any nation that assimilated into the local culture and failed to maintain its distinctive features eventually ceased to exist. Many groups came to India and, after assimilating with Hindu culture, lost their identity and are today indistinguishable from them. On the other hand, those who maintained their uniqueness continued to survive and thrive.

If we continue to assimilate into the prevailing culture, we will eventually lose our identity. Allāh forbid, our Eid may then become a mere festivity, devoid of spiritual significance and no different from Christmas or Diwali.

May Allāh Ta'āla remove the love for the ways of the disbelievers from our hearts and grant us the ability to appreciate the great favour of Islām. Āmīn

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