

Do Not Crush the Joy of Eid

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Eid has a special joy. It is the joy at the bounty of Allah, His mercy and His great blessings. It is the joy at His guidance in a time when many people have strayed from the straight path.

In Eid, Muslims gather together, sensing the deep belonging to this *Ummah* and this religion. They rejoice at the bounty of Allah Who has guided them when many others failed to follow the straight path.

{Allah desires ease for you, not your discomfort. He desires you to fast the whole of the month, and that you may magnify Him for giving you His guidance, and that you may give thanks.} (Al-Baqarah 2:185)

What blessing could be better and bigger than being guided to Islam!

Moreover, Eid fills us with joy at the bounty of reaching Ramadan. We enjoy the success we achieved and feel grateful for the help that Allah granted us by facilitating our worship in this month.

Ramadan's days and nights have been a season overflowing with Allah's mercy and gifts. Muslim congregations spent the nights glorifying Allah and reciting the Qur'an. A lot of supplications were uttered; many eyes were filled with tears.

Many souls have been softened as if they were ascending to the heavens, living with angels, looking at Paradise and Hell with their very eyes.

On these days, Muslims experienced blessings and joy that no one else could feel. Such souls deserve to rejoice at being blessed by Allah with this overwhelming flow. Another source of joy is fulfillment of the fasting period and completion of the third pillar of Islam.

{Say: In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy: therein let them rejoice. It is better than what they hoard} (Yunus 10:58)

A Happy Day

For all the above, feeling joy and showing happiness and delight are essential elements of Eid. That is why scholars stated that showing happiness in Eid is a religious rite. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) encouraged the Muslim community to manifest happiness on this day. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, came to Madinah and the people had two days when they would play and have fun. He said, **“What are these two days?”**

They said, “We used to play and have fun on these days during the *Jahiliyyah* (pre-Islamic period).”

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “**Allah has given you something better than them, the day of *Adha* and the day of *Fitr*.**” (Abu Dawud)

This is evidence for the recommendation to show joy in Eid and that it is part of the Islamic *Shari`ah*.

Indeed, replacing the pre-Islamic *Eids* with these two Islamic *Eids* indicates that it is permissible to have fun on Eid as the people used to do during the pre-Islamic period, provided that this fun does not go against Islamic teachings.

The Prophet wanted to assert the Islamic identity and to make Muslims distinct from other peoples.

The following report emphasizes this point. `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated:

Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) came to my house while two girls were singing beside me the songs of *Bu`ath* (a war between Madinah's two major tribes, the Aws and the Khazraj, before Islam).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) lay down and turned his face to the other side. Then Abu Bakr came.

Seeing that, Abu Bakr spoke harshly to them saying, “Musical instruments of Satan in the presence of the Messenger of Allah?” But the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “**Leave them, Abu Bakr, for there is Eid for every nation and this is our Eid.**”

Celebrating Eid

Another manifestation of joy in Eid during the Prophet's time was the Abyssinians' show: they gathered at the mosque and played with shields and spears. When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) heard them, he looked at them then asked `A'ishah whether she would like to watch.

She replied in the affirmative, and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) made her stand behind him and her cheek was touching his cheek.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) encouraged them saying, **“Carry on, Banu Arfadah! Let Jews know that we have a space of relaxation in our religion.”**

Here we see the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) approving and even encouraging such shows of happiness and joy.

No for Gloomy Spirit

Actually, what makes one wonder is the act of those who overlook this Prophetic guidance and try to destroy this joy and spoil *Eid's* cheerful spirit. In fact, some ascetics and worshipers did so in the past out of good intention.

It was reported that when one ascetic saw some people laughing on Eid day, he said, “Assuming that their fasting was accepted, why should they act in such an unthankful way? Why do not they show anxiety and worry?”

Another ascetic was seen sad on Eid. People told him that Eid is a day of joy and happiness. He replied that he did not know whether his fasting was accepted or not.

This gloomy spirit is echoed today by some sincere people who are used to turning *Eids* into occasions of lamenting the *Ummah's* shortcomings and tragedies, and mourning over the lost glories.

They always remind you that Salah Ad-Din (Saladin) never smiled until he succeeded in liberating Jerusalem. However, they forget that laughing and having a cheerful sense are part of Allah's favours on His servants, and that one's actions and behaviour should be relevant to the occasion at hand.

Actually, sadness and gloominess will never be the remedy for our tragedies. The remedy needs more than that. It needs reflection and wise thinking, as well as courageous self-criticism and assessment.

Actually, rejecting the manifestations of joy, extinguishing every smile and succumbing to sadness and grief have nothing to do with liberating even hand-span of land, satisfying a hungry person, or answering any call for help.

Be Positive

The best guidance is that of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who used to seek refuge in Allah from worry and sorrow. He was always an optimistic, smiling man. We really need to infuse the *Ummah* with this hopeful spirit. Eid is a ray that dispels the darks engulfing our souls and the despair strangling our hearts.

So let hope find its way into our souls. The life-span of Islam is far longer than ours; its horizons are far wider than our countries; the calamities afflicting us are not unchangeable fate.

Let's remember that in the Battle of Al-Khandaq (the Trench), Muslims were tightly besieged in Madinah and they experienced a very critical time; yet, a few years later, they victoriously entered Makkah, their enemy's stronghold, in one of Islam's most glorious days.

Similarly, Baghdad collapsed under the sweeping attacks of the Tartars, but only two centuries later, Muslims took over Constantinople.

A desperate soul overwhelmed by fears and blinded by a gloomy view can never be helpful in rectifying our situation. We should not be hasty and impatient. Allah's laws in running the universe can not be altered according to the humans' whims or wishes.

Let's look at the bright side and appreciate the favors Allah has bestowed on us. Just reflect on the attitude of the righteous man `Urwah ibn Az-Zubair: A serious illness afflicted his foot and he had to have it amputated. In addition, one of his sons died in an awful accident. `Urwah's response was really amazing:

O Allah, praise and thanks are due to You. Although one of my members was taken, You still kept the others for me; and although one of my sons died, You saved the others.

We really need such inspiring hope and motivating positivism that spur endeavor and lead to achievement. A desperate soul overwhelmed by fears and blinded by a gloomy view can never be helpful in rectifying our situation. After all, we should remember that Allah is always there and that He Almighty is the Greatest.

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