

Qualities of Eid

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The Islamic scholar Hammudah Abdalati states in his book *Islam In Focus*:

“The Islamic Eids are unique - there is no similar in any other religion or any other sociopolitical system. Besides their highly spiritual and moral characteristics, they have matchless qualities:

- a) Each Eid is the wholesome celebration of a remarkable achievement of the individual Muslim in the service of God. Eidul-Fitr comes after a month of fasting, ibadaat and charity. Eidul-Adha comes after the completion of Hajj to Mecca.
- b) Each Eid is a “Thanksgiving Day” where the Muslims assemble in a brotherly and joyful atmosphere to offer their gratitude to the Almighty for helping them to fulfill their spiritual obligations prior to the Eid. This form of thanksgiving is not confined to spiritual devotion and verbal expressions. It goes far beyond that to manifest itself in a shape of social and humanitarian spirit. The Muslims who have completed the fasting of Ramadan express their thanks to the Almighty by means of distributing Alms (fitrah) among the poor and needy on Eidul-Fitr. Similarly Muslims on Eidul-Adha offer their sacrifices by slaughtering obligations to be distributed among the poor and needy. The distribution of alms and obligations constitutes a major part of the respective Eid. This Islamic form of thanksgiving is a wholesome combination of spiritual devotion and humanitarian benevolence, a combination which cannot be found except in Islam.
- c) Each Eid is a Day of Remembrance. Even in their most joyful times, Muslims make a fresh start of the day by a plural session of worship to God. They pray to Him and glorify His name to demonstrate their remembrance of His favours. Muslims also remember the deceased by prayer for their souls, the needy by extending a hand of help, the grieved by showing them sympathy and consolation, the sick by cheerful visits and utterances of good wishes, the absentees by cordial greetings and sincere considerations, etc. Thus the meaning of Remembrance on the Day transcends all limits and expands over far-reaching dimensions of human life.
- d) Each Eid is a Day of Victory. The individual who succeeds in securing his spiritual rights and growth receives the Eid with a victorious spirit. The individual who faithfully observes the duties, which are associated with the Eid, is a triumphant one. He proves that he holds a strong command over his desires, exercises self control and conducts a disciplined life. And once a person acquires these qualities he has achieved his greatest victory; because the person who knows how to control himself and discipline his desires is free from sin and wrong, fear, vice and indecency, jealousy and greed, humiliation and all other courses of enslavement. So, when he receives the Eid, which marks the achievement of this freedom, he is in fact celebrating his victory, and the Eid thus becomes a Day of Victory.
- e) Each Eid is a Harvest Day. All the good workers in the service of God, all the faithful believers reap the fruits of their good deeds on the Day, as God grants His mercy and blessings abundantly. The Islamic society, on the other hand, collects the due subscriptions to religious brotherhood and social responsibility, in which subscriptions are paid in the form of mutual love, sympathy and concern. Every

member of the Islamic society will be reaping some fruits or collecting some revenue in one way or another. **God gives infinitely, especially to those who are sincerely concerned with the general welfare of their fellow believers.** Those beneficiaries who cannot give will receive, along with God's enormous grants, the contributions of their fellow benefactors. The haves and have-nots will all enjoy the providence of God in a most plural fashion, and the Day will indeed be a Good Harvest Day.

- f) Each Eid is a Day of Forgiveness. When the Muslims assemble in the congregation of the Day, they all whole-heartedly pray for forgiveness and strength of Faith. And God has assured those who approach Him with sincerity of His mercy and forgiveness. Consequently, a Muslim would find himself moving along with others responding to the spirit of the Day to purify his heart and soul. In this case, he would forgive those who might have wronged him; because he himself would be praying for God's forgiveness, and would do his best to acquire it. The spirit of this highly devotional assembly would teach him that if he forgives he will be forgiven. And when he forgives, the virtue of forgiveness will be mercifully exercised by God, and widely exchanged between Muslims. And that marks the Day as the Day of Forgiveness.
- g) Each Eid is a Day of Peace. When the Muslim establishes peace within his heart by obeying the law of God and leading a disciplinary life, he has certainly concluded a most inviolable treaty of peace with God. Once a person is at peace with God, he is at peace with himself and, consequently, with the rest of the universe. So when he celebrates the Eid in the right manner, he is actually celebrating the conclusion of a Peace Treaty between himself and God, and this marks the Eid as a Day of Peace.

“That is the proper meaning of an Islamic Eid: a Day of Peace and Thanksgiving, a Day of Forgiveness and moral victory, a Day of Good Harvest and remarkable Achievements, and a Day of Festive Remembrance. An Islamic Eid is all this and is much more; because it is a Day of ISLAM, a Day of God.” (*Islam In Focus*, page 75).