

REMINISCING EID TIME



By Abdulrazak Fazal *Updated: August 2020*

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'Never shall there be another Corona like epidemic' is our heartfelt and tearful plea to the Almighty, and to create for his obliging creatures a more pandemic free world. What a horrifying experience we had this Ramadhan! We were restricted to our homes. no mosques, 'tarawi', 'dua', and 'amaal'. Anyhow, thanks to IBN for telecasting duas, amaals and the religious lectures. Imagine the plight of those rendered orphans and widows, and the aged parents relying entirely on their sons to go through this extremely saddening and depressive phase! Nonetheless, the holy month is over and now it is 'EID' time as the moon has been sighted. Eid is an obligatory religious event by which we perceive Allah's mercy upon us. We also pray for His 'rahma' and 'maghfirat' of all those who have passed away of recent. Also, our 'duas' to Him for the 'shifa' of everybody. Did we ever envisage no 'Eid Salah' on the day of 'Eid'? All along we were taught that 'Eid' becomes invalidated if its 'namaaz' is not performed. May Allah accept our endeavors and pardon our sins.

Here is sharing my last year's 'EID' post with you. Indeed, times have changed!

REMINISCING 'EID' TIME

I stand in the balcony of my house to view and sight the 'EID' moon. Amid the rejoicing of Eid moon a tinge of sadness is also felt. Just the other day we had welcomed the new Ramadhan moon and now within no time the holy month comes to an end. No more the 'tarawi', 'dua', 'iftar', 'sehri', the mosque filled with devotees and the vibrancy of Ramadhan; it is all gone. Sadder, the Eid moon reminds us of those dear ones who are no more in our midst and this realization creates hollowness inside us. Anyhow, Eid is an occasion to rejoice. In the colonial Zanzibar, our Nai Misit minaret would be the center of attraction on the eve of Eid as we would climb it to sight and view the Eid' moon. Also, a large number flocked Forodhani and the Eid moon sighting alike Ramadhan moon was greeted with a 21-gun salute and a lot of excitement. Eid was a festive occasion with 3 to 4 days of public holidays. Eid night was pretty hectic. A week earlier we would take our 'tron' fabric to the tailor Chunilal who took our measurement and then deliver the trouser to

us on the eve of Eid. We would then go to Hira Mochi (shoemaker) to collect our shoes that were custom made and eventually end up at 'Jacksis' to buy the stiff collar 'Shikibo' shirt. It was more affordable than the 'Double Two' which was meant for heavy pockets. Most of the shops were open on Eid night, in fact Toto Hajam's barber shop opposite the Junni mosque remained open till the wee hours.

I happened to spend the 1976 Eid in Karachi. In Pakistan they term Eid night as 'Chand Raat'. It is Pakistan's liveliest night and in fact the most sensational time that I'd experienced. On declaration of moon sighting on tv Tariq Rd around PECHS where I'd put up was overflowing with excited people going around to make their last-minute purchases. The ladies and girls were seen selecting bangles, jewelry, dresses and 'dupatta' of their choice in shops that offered varieties. The festive spirit continued throughout the night. The ladies flocked the parlours to have their hairs set and 'mehndi'/'henna' applied to their hands. Gents shopping was mostly 'kurta shalwar', slippers and shoes. The food stalls and eateries were full of sweets and yummy food. What reminds of Bombay's Eid in the 60s was the 'sheer khurma' at the Nizai Restaurant in Bhindi Bazaar after the namaaz at the Khoja mosque in Palagali. Such was its demand that Nizari prepared as many as 20 large pots of 'sheer khurma'. Later I'd go to 'Suleman Usman' to buy 'aflatoon' that I distributed at the hostel to my Hindu friends who loved it having begun to acquire its taste.

In Zanzibar in the olden days after the Eid namaaz at Nai Misit the humble Agha Muravij delivered his 'khutbah' in Gujarati. The Eid greetings followed in the 'sahan'. After the prayers and 'baraza' the Zanzibaris warmly shook hands to greet each other. The streets brightened up with their new white 'khanzu' and 'kofia'. The 'Wamanga' in their traditional attire chanted and paraded through the town jumping up and down with their 'jambia' and sticks to display their swordsmanship. The 'halua ya Mmanga' was their specialty that people bought to relish visitors at home. As children we went from one relative's house to another and reveled in the 'eidi' that we received from them. Evening was marked with funfair at Mnazimoja. We looked forward to Mnazimoja where there were toy stalls, food stalls, 'ngoma', merry go round, tombola and 'karagosi' (puppet show). The fair continued till midnight and lasted for 4 days. I vividly recall the excitement we felt when my maternal uncle 'Jafumama' arrived at the fair as he would buy us a toy every day for 4 continuous days.

Although it has been more than a decade since I lost my mother, I no more derive the joy of Eid within the confinement of my home. The past keeps lingering. My mother would wake up early and relentlessly pester me to go to take my shower lest I miss my Eid namaaz. The Eid morning breakfast with 'sheer khurma' followed and then I would head for the 'salaah'. Once the namaaz was done I rushed back to greet my mother showing my respect and love and to receive her blessings. After a while the guests would start arriving and exchange greetings. My mother took out her money and gave 'eidi' to the children. By then our house would come alive with the laughter, joy and refreshments of Eid. Over 90 years old and the eldest among the relatives all the gathering was centered around her. She was so loving and caring, the real force that united us all. Later she excitedly awaited the telephone calls from my siblings abroad who would convey their Eid greetings to us. Sadly, most of them also remain no more.

Now my first priority after the namaaz is to rush to the cemetery and visit the grave sites of my mother and sister to offer salutation at their graves reciting 'yaasin'. The graveyard is full of people sitting by the side of the graves of their dear ones in whose remembrance they are being moved to tears. We realize the grief bearing in mind that the inevitable death remains a humbling experience for all of us.

Eids come and go. Now in my 70s Eid is no more exciting, rather lifeless and traditional, they are never gonna be the same as before. I go through its routine for the sake of it, pay a visit to my aunt to offer her Eid greetings and then return home to spend the moment together with my wife and daughter, my better half being complimented for the mouthwatering delicacies she'd feasted us during Ramadhan and now awaiting her spicy 'chanabateta/chevro' and scrumptious 'biryani'.

The main essence of Eid ritual is its 'namaaz', our obligation to thank Allah for having given us strength to go through the fasting phase. Eid also implies giving 'zakat al fitr' as obligatory charity to the needy at the end of Ramadhan. The lessons learnt during the holy month such as feeding the poor, good manners and self-restraint need observance in our day to day affairs to attain perfection in life as commanded by the Almighty.

Here is wishing all my FB friends EID MUBARAK. Take care and stay safe.

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