

Eid, Festival Of Peace

Talk: Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Eid is celebrated on the first date of Shawwal, that is, the tenth month of the Hijra calendar. During the festival, Muslims exchange gifts, greeting their neighbours as a mark of solidarity and brotherhood.

It is reported that when the Prophet of Islam saw the new moon at the coming of the month of Shawwal, He said: "O God, make this moon a moon of peace for us." This saying of the Prophet expresses the true spirit of Eid that is meant to promote spiritual values among people and create a peaceful environment in society.

Rituals observed on the day of Eid are very simple. Muslims wear new clothes and visit the Eidgah to offer two units of the Eid prayer. In this prayer, they call to mind those teachings of Islam that advocate peace and spirituality and pray to God to bestow His blessings on humanity and help all men and women to promote a healthy society.

After completing this prayer at an Eidgah, Muslims visit their relatives and neighbours to offer greetings, meeting them with the invocation: "May the peace and blessing of God be upon you."

The full name of Eid is Eid ul-Fitr, that is, the Eid that marks the breaking of the fast. In the spirit of Eid ul-Fitr, God and His greatness are acknowledged, His blessings for humanity are acknowledged and thanked. The faithful make a promise to Him that everyone will live together in peace. There is no prescribed ritual for Eid ul-Fitr except for the two units of namaz or prayer.

Generally it is held that Eid ul-Fitr is the Eid of sweets. They are not a religious part of Eid ul-Fitr, but certainly they represent the spirit of Eid, for sweet dishes are always

considered to be the sign of love, compassion and good wishes. Gifts of sweets distributed on the day of Eid represent the true spirit of this Islamic festival.

The Prophet of Islam once said that an exchange of gifts promotes love in society. So, sweets are not simply sweets: they also have a spiritual meaning. Sweets represent not only the spirit of Eid, but also the true spirit of Islam.

Prayer on the day of Eid is offered in congregation. All Muslims, including women and children, gather together in congregational prayer in order to promote harmony and brotherhood, not only among Muslims but others also.

Eid comes just after the final day of fasting. The month of fasting and the day of Eid ul-Fitr both represent two very important features in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad said that the month of fasting was a month of patience. That is, it is a month of self-restraint, a month of self-discipline, a month of self-control, a month of promoting duty-consciousness.

Eid ul-Fitr represents the reward of God, which will be granted by God to those who observe one month's fasting. In other words, fasting represents dutiful worldly life and Eid ul-Fitr represents the reward that will be given in return by God to man.

According to tradition, the day of Eid is the day of divine reward. When believers observe their duty in the month of Ramzan in the true spirit of the season, God declares: "O angels, be witness that I have decided to bestow upon them paradise in the world hereafter."



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