

Special Issue

# MOTIVATED

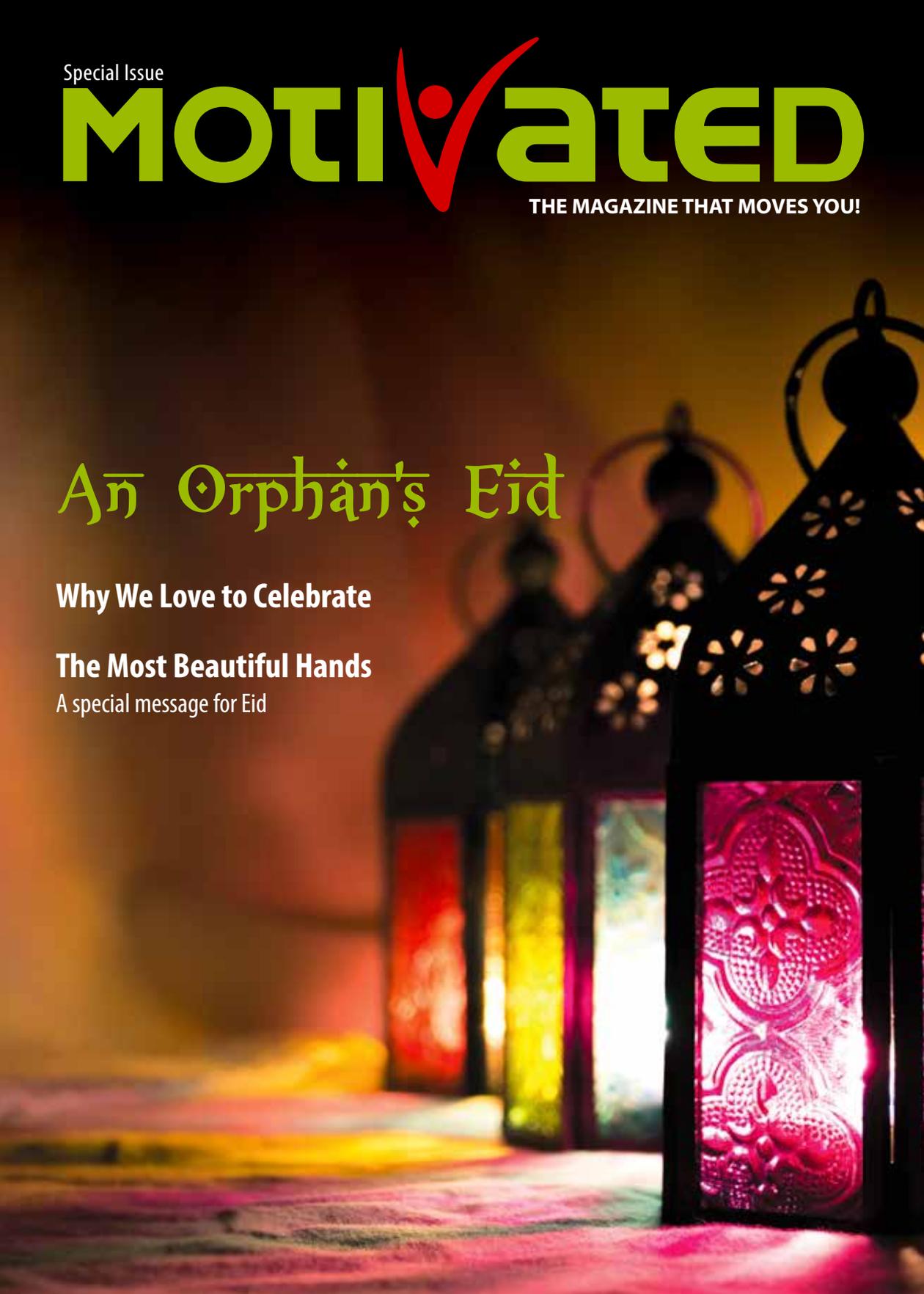
THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

## An Orphan's Eid

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Muslims everywhere celebrate Eid twice a year: First Eid-al-Fitr, and later Eid-al-Adha.

Eid-al-Fitr is celebrated worldwide and marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic Holy month of fasting, and can last one, two, or three days. Eid gifts are often given to children and immediate relatives.

Eid-al-Adha, also known as the Feast of Sacrifice, commemorates the willingness of Ibrahim (Abraham) to sacrifice his son in obedience to God's command. However, before Abraham could offer up his son, God provided a male goat to sacrifice instead. In remembrance of this, an animal is sacrificed and divided into three parts: one third is given to the poor and needy; another third is given to relatives, friends, and neighbors; and the remainder is kept by the family.

Both holidays are joyful occasions that promote worship, dedication, charity, empathy for the poor, patience, generosity, hospitality, and gratitude for God's many blessings—values that are common and recognized by people of all faiths.

I hope that the articles and stories in this special issue of *Motivated* will inspire you to reach out to others during the Eid holidays—regardless of their religious or cultural standing—and help to make them truly memorable times of celebration.

Christina Lane  
For *Motivated*

# An Orphan's Eid

Adapted Web Reprint



It was the day of celebration, and a day of rejoicing. There was an air of festivity in the streets of Madinah. All the people, both young and old, were dressed in their best clothes for this special day of Eid.

As it was time for early morning Eid prayers, everyone made their way to an open piece of land on the outskirts of the city. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) arrived, and led the prayers. After they had finished they all greeted each other before walking back home. The children ran and played in excitement, smiling and laughing, without a care in the world.

As the Prophet (pbuh) walked back home, he suddenly became aware of a little boy (Zuhair Bin Saghir) sitting by himself on the side of the road. The little boy was crying and looked very sad. The Prophet (pbuh) bent down, patted him on the shoulders, and asked. "Why are you crying?"

"Please leave me alone," sobbed the little boy, not recognizing who was talking to him.

The Prophet (pbuh) ran his fingers through the young boy's hair and very gently and kindly asked him again why he was crying.

This time the boy said, "My father died, and now my mother has married again and my stepfather does not want me to live at home any more. Today is Eid and everyone is happy. All the children have new clothes and nice things to eat, but I don't have any clothes except what I am wearing. I have no food and I don't even have a place to live."

The Prophet (pbuh) said to him, "I know how you feel. I lost both my mother and father when I was a little boy." The boy was surprised to hear that it was an orphan who was comforting him, and when he looked up, to his great surprise, he saw it was the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) himself. He immediately jumped up to his feet out of love and respect.

The Prophet (pbuh) said to him, "If I were to become your new father and Ayesha your mother, and Fatima your new sister, would that make you feel better?"

"Oh yes, that would be the best thing in the world!" The boy started smiling.

The Prophet took him home and gave him new clothes and good food, and on this beautiful day, the boy had a wonderful Eid indeed. ◆

Eid is a time of celebration, but let's not forget to remember those less fortunate than ourselves, and share of our abundance with others when we can.



# Why We Love to Celebrate

By Dimitris Xygalatas, adapted

The mere thought of holiday traditions brings smiles to most people's faces, and elicits feelings of sweet anticipation and nostalgia. We can almost smell those candles, taste those special meals, and hear those familiar prayers and songs in our minds.

Ritual marks some of the most important moments in our lives, from personal milestones like birthdays and weddings to seasonal celebrations like a New Year, and religious holidays like Eid, Christmas, Hanukah, or Chinese New Year.

Holiday customs are bursting with sensory pageantry. The new colorful clothes, the mehndi, the bangles, and food signal to our senses that this is no common occasion—it is one full of significance and meaning. Such sensory exuberance helps create lasting recollections of those occasions and marks them in our memory as special events worth cherishing.

Indeed, there are plenty of reasons to value family traditions. Research shows that they can provide various psychological benefits, helping us enjoy

ourselves, connect with loved ones, and take a respite from the daily grind.

## An anxiety buffer

Everyday life is stressful and full of uncertainty. Having a special time of the year when we know exactly what to do, the way we've always done it, provides a comfortable sense of structure, control, and stability.

Many of those customs may of course also be performed at other times throughout the year. But during the holiday season, they become more meaningful. They're held in a special place (the family home) and with a special group of people (our closest relatives and friends). For this reason, more people travel during major holidays than any other time of the year. Gathering together from far-flung locations helps people leave their worries behind, and at the same time lets them reconnect with time-honored family traditions.

## Happy meals

No holiday tradition would be complete without a festive meal. Since

the first humans gathered around the fire to roast their food, cooking has been one of the defining characteristics of our species.

The long hours spent in the kitchen and the dining room during the preparation and consumption of holiday meal, and sharing a ceremonial meal, symbolize community, bring the entire family together around the table, and smooth the way for conversation and connection.

Research found that when children participate in food preparation they enjoy the food more, and that the longer we spend preparing a meal, the more we come to appreciate it. In this way, the labor and fanfare associated with holiday meals virtually guarantees an enhanced gastronomic experience.

### **Sharing is caring**

It is common to exchange presents during a holiday period. From a rational perspective, this might seem pointless, at best recycling resources or, at worst, wasting them. But don't underestimate the importance of these exchanges, which play a crucial role in maintaining social ties by creating networks of reciprocal relationships.

Today, many families give each other lists of desired presents for the holidays. The brilliance of this system lies precisely in the fact that most people end up getting what they would buy anyway—the money gets recycled but everyone still enjoys the satisfaction of giving and receiving gifts.

And as this is a special time of the year, we can even allow ourselves some guilt-free indulgence.

### **The stuff family is made of**

The most important function of holiday rituals is their role in maintaining and strengthening family ties. In fact, for relatives who live far apart, holiday traditions may be the glue that holds the family together.

Holiday traditions are particularly important for children. Research shows that children who participate in group rituals become more strongly affiliated with their peers. In addition, having more positive memories of family traditions seems to be associated with more positive interactions with one's own children.

Holiday traditions are also the perfect recipe for family harmony. Sure, you might need to take three flights to get there, which will almost certainly be delayed. And your uncle is bound to start a political argument with his son-in-law again. But according to Nobel Laureate Daniel Kahneman, this is unlikely to spoil the overall experience.

Kahneman's research shows that when we evaluate past experiences, we tend to remember the best moments and the last moments, paying little attention to everything else. This is known as the "peak-end rule."

In other words, our memory of the family holiday will mostly consist of all the rituals (both joyful and silly), the good food, the presents, and then hugging everyone goodbye at the end of the night (after your uncle made up with his son-in-law). And by the time you get back home, you'll have something to look forward to for next year. ♦



# 5 Ways to Give Well

Adapted Web Reprint

**W**hen it comes to giving, we all want our gifts to be more than just charitable donations. How can you truly make a difference with your generosity? It starts with the heart.

Giving well is about giving out of a heart of love for God and love for people. Our joy in God and our gratitude to him will always overflow in true and intentional generosity to others.

Here are a few ways you can be purposeful with your giving:

## 1. Double your donation.

Take advantage of opportunities for charitable matching gifts! This is an easy way to make your gift have twice as much impact for your cause. Keep an eye out for special matching gift campaigns or check to see if your employer offers corporate matching gifts.

## 2. Give in honor or memory of someone special.

Know of a cause near and dear to your friend or family member's heart? Making a donation in honor of a loved one is a thoughtful way to both support a cause and show how much you care.

## 3. Leave an eternal legacy.

Choose to make an impact by investing in eternal things today, as well as by making sure your resources bless others beyond your lifetime. Not sure where to start when it comes to charitable gift planning? You can start your journey by requesting a “Building Your Legacy” brochure from a charity you love, filled with options available for gift and estate planning.

## 4. Find the best charities.

To make sure your gift is put to good use, do some research on charitable organizations. Check websites that offer charity ratings to find the best organizations for your charitable giving. Look for an organization that excels in transparency and accountability—one who you can trust to make your gift go far.

## 5. Invite others to participate.

Think of ways to motivate others to acts of love and good works. Sharing about your favorite charity with friends, or starting a Facebook campaign, can be an effective way to invite others into generosity and extend your impact. ◆



# A Brother like That

Adapted Web Reprint

**S**huaib received an automobile from his brother as an Eid present. On Eid day when Shuaib came out of his house, a street urchin was walking around the shiny new car, admiring it. “Is this your car, Uncle?” he asked. Shuaib nodded. “My brother gave it to me for Eid.” The boy was shocked.

“You mean your brother gave it to you and it didn’t cost you nothing? Boy, I wish...” He hesitated. Of course Shuaib knew what he was going to wish for. He was going to wish he had a brother like that. But what the lad said jarred Shuaib all the way down to his soul. “I wish,” the boy went on, “that I could be a brother like that.” Shuaib looked at the boy in astonishment, then impulsively he said, “Would you like to take a ride in my automobile?”

“Oh yes, I’d love that.”

After a short ride, the boy turned and with his eyes aglow, he asked, “Uncle, would you mind driving in front of my house?” Shuaib smiled a little. He thought he knew what the lad wanted. He wanted to show his neighbors that he could ride

home in a big automobile. But Shuaib was wrong again.

“Will you stop where those two steps are?” the boy asked.

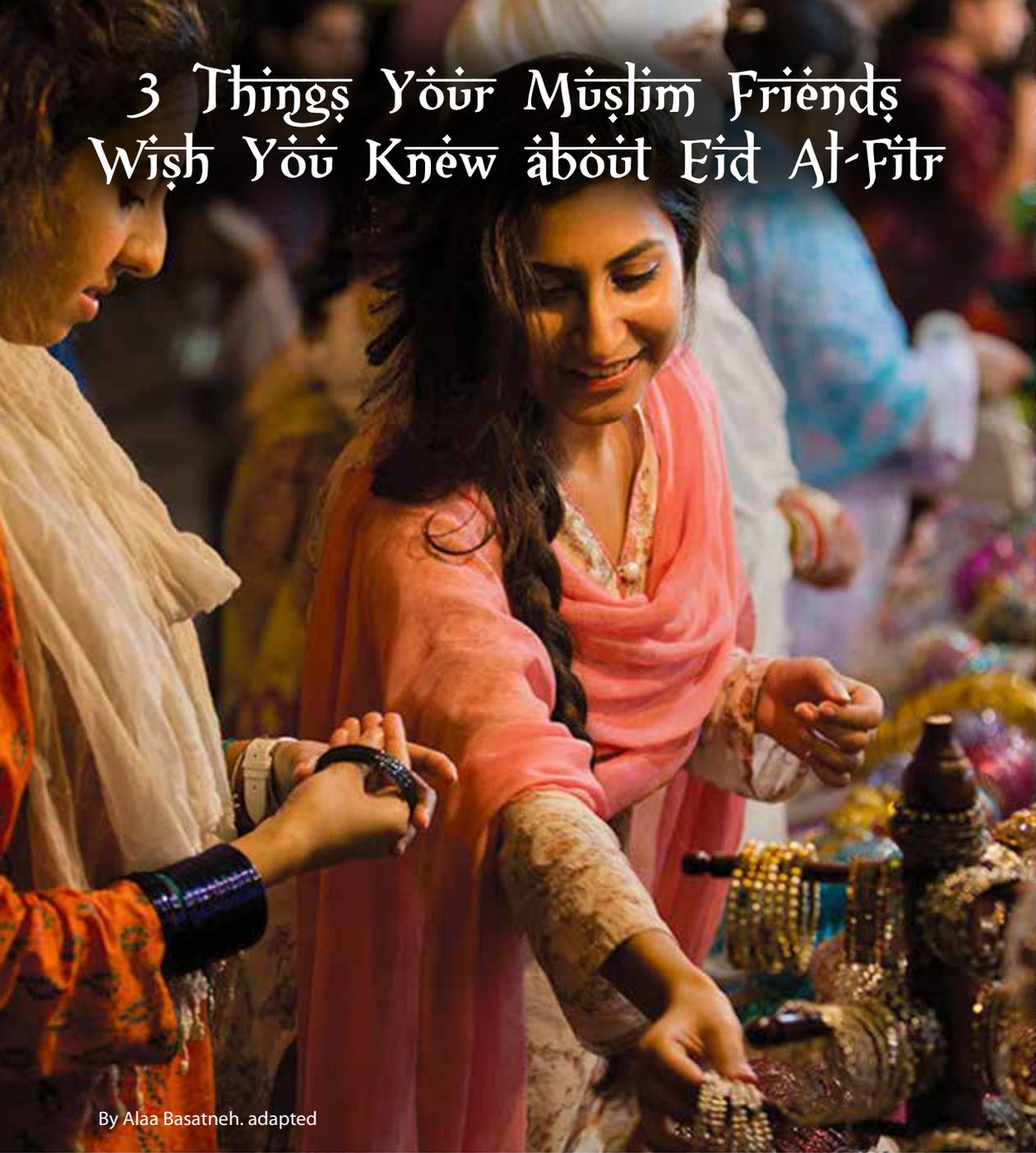
He ran up the steps. Then in a little while Shuaib heard him coming back, but he was not coming fast. He was carrying his little crippled brother. He sat him down on the bottom step, sort of squeezed up against him, and pointed to the car.

“There it is, little brother, just like I told you upstairs. His brother gave it to him for Eid and it didn’t cost him a penny. And some day I’m gonna give you one just like it... Then you can see for yourself all the pretty things in the shop windows that I’ve been trying to tell you about.”

With tears in his eyes, Shuaib got out and lifted the boy to the front seat of his car. The shining-eyed older brother climbed in beside him, and the three of them began a memorable ride.

That Eid, Shuaib learned what it meant when it is said: “Love for your brother what you love for yourself.” ◆

# 3 Things Your Muslim Friends Wish You Knew about Eid Al-Fitr



By Alaa Basatneh. adapted

Once a year, Muslims around the world will come together to celebrate Eid Al-Fitr with lots of sweets, gift-giving, and family gatherings. Eid Al-Fitr is Arabic for “holiday of breaking of the fast” and begins at

sunset on the last night of Ramadan. It marks the ending of a one-month fast, when 1.6 billion Muslims worldwide celebrate with festivities that last three days.

There tends to be confusion in Western countries about what exactly Muslims do during these three days of celebration. The celebrations might slightly vary in different countries, but here's some of what they will do.

### The night before Eid is spent shopping for new clothes and baking sweets.

Every single member of the family gets to have new clothes and shoes for Eid. Shopping centers are filled with people looking for the best outfit to wear the next morning during prayer. Women usually gather in the eldest family members' home to bake sweets—lots of sweets. Pistachio cookies, Baklava, Halva, Kheer, and many other desserts are prepared and set up in the dining room for the morning.

In Arabic countries, sweet date cookies are the official dessert of Eid and are given out throughout the holiday among many Muslim families.

Temporary henna hand tattoos are a symbol of celebration for some Muslim women, and worn to accessorize their new outfits that will be worn the next morning for prayer.

### The holiday starts with prayer and reverence.

At the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, Muslims gather very early in the day at mosques, banquet halls, or stadiums to pray to mark the official beginning of the three days of celebration. In some Western countries, public officials, members of the Christian and Jewish clergy, and other non-Muslims

often join in to show the importance of multi-faith unity.

Eid is also marked by generosity. Adults, family, and friends give cash to children, and, just as with Christmas and Hanukkah, it's very common for young people to exchange gifts. Many people also use the occasion to give charitable donations to the poor and needy.

### Food, family, and friends are central.

Most importantly, Eid is about community. Eid Mubarak, which means "a blessed holiday" in Arabic, is a common greeting between Muslims during the holiday. Phones are flooded with cheerful and happy messages. Young people compete in a constant competition for the best Eid selfie or photo-message. Family and friends gather after prayers to eat, with multiple generations coming together to exchange gifts. It's tradition to visit the eldest family members' home to celebrate with them and cheer them on, with sons and daughters bringing them sweets and gifts.

Muslims also take time to visit their loved ones' graves with fresh flowers and prayers to God to have mercy on the deceased. This is an act worthy of praise in the Muslim community, and is a way for the living to remember the dead even amid days of celebration.

All of these things combine to make Eid one of the most special, moving periods of the entire year. Hopefully, wherever people are celebrating Eid, they are doing so with genuine love and a sense of community.

So Eid Mubarak, dear friends! ◆

# The Most Beautiful Hands

A special message for Eid

Reprinted from Motivated Special Issue 2002



It has been said that there is no obstacle that enough love cannot conquer, no disease that enough love cannot heal, no door that enough love cannot open, no gulf that enough love cannot bridge, no difference that enough love cannot overcome, no fault that enough love cannot forgive. It makes no difference how deeply seated may be the trouble, how hopeless the outlook, how muddled the tangle, how great the mistake—sufficient love can dissolve it all.

Love takes on many forms. It can be shown in deeds of kindness, in concern for others, through words of love, encouragement and appreciation, and even by simply giving a smile or remembering to speak positively. Love can be the giving of our time to listen, or helping to lighten someone's load.—All these simple acts show and reassure others that we love them. Such loving deeds warm our hearts, give strength and encouragement, and renew our lives in so many wonderful ways.

There is a legend that tells how long ago in a regal mansion, there lived three fair maidens. One morning while they were in the garden adjoining the mansion, with its strong streams and blushing roses, the question arose as to which of the maidens had the most beautiful hands.

Narjis, who had tinted her white fingers while gathering the luscious strawberries, thought hers the most beautiful. Leila had been amongst the fragrant roses, and her hands had partaken of their dewy sweetness. To her they were the loveliest. Jameela had dipped her dainty fingers in the lucid stream, and as the clear diamond drops sparkled on her tapered fingers she thought her hands the most beautiful.

Just then there came a beggar girl who asked for alms. The royal maidens drew aside their rich robes and turned away. The beggar passed on to a cottage nearby, and a woman with sunburned face and toil-worn hands gave her bread.

The beggar, so the legend says, was immediately transformed into an angel and appeared at the garden gate saying, “The most beautiful hands are those which are found ready to bless and help their fellowmen.”

The joyous festival of Eid, the feast of giving and considering those in need, is with us once again. It reminds us all to share the gift of love and mercy with others, to lend a helping hand to those in need. May this gift grow and become stronger in our hearts and the hearts of others, and may we ourselves be blessed as we make it the focal point of our interactions with others this season. ◆

# 7 Things to Do Before Eid

By Zahra Debbek, adapted

**E**id Al-Adha is coming up. Hopefully, you were able to take at least a day off! If you've been busy up to now and didn't prepare yet, don't panic! Here is a checklist that will remind you of the things to do prior and during the day of Eid.

**1. Prepare gifts.** You might want to start making gifts and Eid Mubarak cards now! Another option is to give Eidiya to the kids if you didn't have time to prepare some gifts. The simplest thing you can do is prepare some candy.

**2. Eid decorations.** Start decorating now! It is so much fun to decorate with your family! Decorations don't have to be extravagant at all. You can find a lot of DIY tutorials on how to make lanterns from paper, for example. If you don't have time, you can always reuse decorations from previous Eid Al-Fits.

**3. Prepare your breakfast.** It became a habit in my family to prepare all the food for Eid prior to the day of Eid. That way, we don't have to worry about cooking all day! We can just spend the day enjoying our time while knowing there is food waiting for us at home once we get back. If you are volunteering to make food for your community's celebration, make sure you get all the ingredients and supplies beforehand, and wake up early so that you have enough time to make fresh food for the people of your community.

**4. Pick a nice outfit.** Prepare the best and newest garments you have! It does not have to be brand new. As long as it is clean and you feel comfortable, go for it! Oh! Don't forget to make sure that you smell nice too.

**5. (Re) connect with friends.** Especially those who live far from their families. Invite them to share in your celebration, either with your family or at a community event. College students who live away from their families might not know about the community's events in your area. Invite them.

**6. Don't forget your neighbors!** If you live in an area where most of your neighbors are not Muslims, try to reach out and tell them about our annual celebration of Eid. Simply prepare a dish of sweets and candy, knock on their doors, and if you feel comfortable, invite them to your Muslim community's celebration. If possible, donate a small portion of your Zabiha to families and individuals in need. It's a great feeling being the reason behind someone's happiness! But don't brag about it! Keep it a secret.

**7. Have a blast.** The most important thing to remember is that you should try to relax and enjoy this day. Don't stress about work or school.

Eid is a unique celebration that each Muslim family celebrates according to its own family's rituals. What are your family's special Eid customs? ◆

# Celebrate

NOTABLE  
QUOTES



The most beautiful things are not associated with money; they are memories and moments. If you don't celebrate those, they can pass you by.

—**Alek Wek**

I am in tremendous love with life, hence I teach celebration. Everything has to be celebrated, everything has to be lived, loved.—**Osho**

The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate.—**Oprah Winfrey**

I learned from my grandmother, who grew up in devastating war times, how important it is to keep with tradition and celebrate the holidays during tough times.—**Marcus Samuelsson**

Celebrate what you want to see more of.—**Tom Peters**

Instead of hate, celebrate.—**Prince**

It's always good to remember where you come from and celebrate it. To remember where you come from is part of where you're going.—**Anthony Burgess**

Every day is a good day. There is something to learn, care and celebrate.

—**Amit Ray**

Any celebration meal to which guests are invited, be they family or friends, should be an occasion for generous hospitality.—**Julian Baggini**

Celebrations infuse life with passion and purpose. They summon the human spirit.—**Terrence E. Deal**

If you want to celebrate a happy occasion, Do it by helping those who are in need.—**Mohith Agadi**

Today is a day for celebration, no matter what your religion or your culture. Learn to celebrate today: celebrate the fact that you are alive, that you are breathing, that you have friends and family in your life.—**Margaret Naylor**

