

Spending Eid without loved ones

“Eid means joy and if that joy is gone, celebration feels pointless.”

AYRA AREEBA ABID

I grew up seeing Ma spending the entirety of Eid at home. Babai passed away when I was a little over two years old, and ever since then, Ma has stayed back home for Eid all alone, and she has expressed solemnly that she wishes things to remain the same.

This has been the norm for us and I never questioned her decision as I understood she somehow found peace through this. Though I am surrounded by my family every Eid, I felt a tinge of loneliness, especially when I see children being accompanied by their parents to the festivities. Though we all adapt, and learn to accept the way things are, events such as Eid end up reminding us of that ever-present void.

Abreshmi Chowdhury, 21, who lives abroad for higher studies, says, “During Ramadan, I could never wake up for sehri. My family would always wake me up. It’s very lonely now.” There’s a feeling of hollowness clenching its teeth into our hearts, owing to the absence of loved ones around us.

During Ramadan in 2019, no one could imagine how the advent of 2020 would cause everything to become disoriented. Ramadan and Eid would never be the



PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

same for bereaved families. Many chairs have been left empty this Ramadan, and will remain to be so during Eid.

On Eid, when homes are to be infused with the fragrance of love and joy, the acrid taste of emptiness conquers instead. For Saba Nawaz, 20, life changed in the

blink of an eye.

“It was the early hours of June 3, 2020 when I lost my father. Even though it’s been about two years since then, the terrifying memories of that dark night are forever etched in my heart,” Saba recalls.

She adds, “The home in the initial days

seemed deserted. Now that another Eid is around the corner, I am reminded of that Ramadan when we used to all have sehri and iftar together without the slightest idea that this was going to be our very last Ramadan as a complete family.”

When our loved ones pass away, we learn to cope with loss, or at least try to, while keeping them engraved in our hearts. You feel their absence but you learn to wake up and feel okay. Disruption in life is inevitable, there will always be life-changing, tragic events and deaths of loved ones as we grow up, which can shake us to the core.

Sometimes people pretend to be happy, for the sake of others, for their children, or even for their own selves, but it’s never easy. It feels comfortable and familiar to linger in that void to find a sense of belonging. During Eid, we hug our loved ones and celebrate with abundant happiness, but what if we can’t embrace a loved one ever again?

This Eid, I pray that we all find solace. My heart reaches out to you. Eid Mubarak.

Ayra Areeba Abid’s favourite word is “serendipity” and she’s a Sociology geek. Connect with her at areeba.ayra@gmail.com

My hometown doesn’t feel like home during Eid

NADEEMAHAFROSE MONDOL

When people migrate out of their hometowns in search of jobs or in order to settle down, a piece of their heart always aches for not being able to live in their actual home. Eid is the time of the year when these people go back to their roots. My family is no exception in this case.

However, as much of a “homecoming” affair as it may seem, for me, this whole Eid celebration outside the place “I” call home couldn’t satisfy me, ever.

My older sister and I have had to visit my paternal home to celebrate Eid, ever since we were young. The journey is long and tiring, but it feels worse because I’m not fond of that place. Whenever I go there, I constantly feel unimportant and unwelcome. Eid is meant to be the day when everyone feels and tries to make others feel festive and jolly, but whenever I step into that house, especially during Eid, the atmosphere makes me feel asphyxiated.

I feel the eyes around me judging my every move. I cannot be myself. I can never talk or laugh loudly because girls are meant to be polite and calm. When others get busy hanging out, I can only think of my friends and loved ones back in Dhaka. The thought that revolves around my mind is how wonderful it would be if I got to spend Eid with them, go about my favourite city with my favourite people.

Food is certainly a big part of the Eid celebration. People who enjoy cooking and eating indulge themselves in preparing the Eid dishes that they were looking forward to. When I’m celebrating Eid outside my home, I neither get the chance to cook my favourite dishes nor can I eat them. It may sound silly, but as a food enthusiast, it makes me really sad not being able to feed myself and others my choice of food.

Also, being a girl, always makes it a lot harder to adjust there because dealing with body negativity, along with misogyny, is very exasperating. Most of the relatives, instead of greeting and talking to me as they haven’t seen me in a while, start asking about why I haven’t been losing any weight and come up with various hurtful ways to ask this question. Besides, when we have meals together in my paternal home or just gather around to chitchat, my male cousins significantly get more preference and privileges, which makes the whole atmosphere utterly uncomfortable.

Whenever the Eid season arrives, I am reminded that even during Eid, no place could ever give me the joy and peace like my home in Dhaka does.

Nadeemah always wraps her head around the thought of what she’s going to eat next and thinks that the glass at her bedside table is half- full. Say hi at nadeemahafrose13@gmail.com



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