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Press Releases

Ramadan 2023 - In the Eyes of Said Khan

Said Khan • May 25, 2023

Ramadan is a very holy month and is sacred to Muslims worldwide. How it is observed may vary from country to country, and it is not uncommon for traditions to differ from family to family. However, what is universal is that those who are able to fast from dusk to sunset for about a month, adhering to the lunar calendar.

To fast is to control one’s desire of many of life’s temptations. In its truest form, this goes beyond abstaining from water and food. While fasting, we also reflect on ourselves as humans, and consider how we relate to those around us - especially those less fortunate. Being a holy and sacred month, much time is devoted to praying and to doing good deeds, such as donating to worthy causes.

I am a social person, who travels and meets people on a regular basis - both personally and professionally - throughout the year. My job involves meeting brokers over coffee or a meal at work or after work hours in Singapore and beyond. But during the month of Ramadan, I refrain. I get my work done and ensure I break my fast at sun set with my family, prior to sleep.

On Saturday April 22, 2023, we celebrated Eid (called Hari Raya here in Singapore & Malaysia). This is a busy time for my family, as we clean and decorate the house to welcome the big day. The house always smells good at this time of year, as there is a lot baking of cakes and cookies (Mrs Khan is very good at baking!)

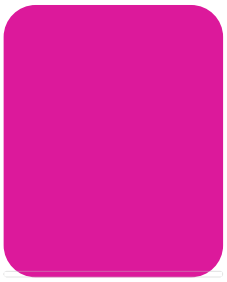
On the eve of Hari Raya, I traditionally make chapati (a wheat-based flatbread), to honour my late dad, who ate this as his staple food (not rice, as many in Southeast Asia do). I miss him every day, and it is not uncommon that we think of our lost loved ones during Hari Raya. I make around 100 chapati while my wife cooks keema (minced mutton curry with potato) - best eaten with fresh chapati. At the last break of fast, the whole family will gather and enjoy the chapati and keema together. After that and after our prayers, we travel to our siblings'

home to drop some to them. They all very much look forward to this, although they complain that once a year is not enough!

On Hari Raya day at around 7 a.m., my boys and I go to the Mosque to pray with other Muslims. We think a lot about those that have departed and are around to enjoy this big day, which can make proceedings quite solemn. After the prayers, there will be more feasting at home. Many visit their older relatives, which usually starts with visits to one's parents and then to the elders in the clan as a mark of respect. We seek their blessings, and we seek forgiveness from them and to one another for all our bad deeds. It is as if we want to re-boot and re-start afresh.

We bow before the elders, shake and kiss their hands as a mark of respect. As I do this, I too have the kids kneeling before me and my wife and to kiss our hands.

The fasting lasts a month, and Hari Raya is also celebrated for a month. During this period, we visit one another's homes, and there is always lots of chatter and fun. Ramadan is a spiritual journey with much self – reflection and commitment to be a better being to oneself and society at large.
Since last year, this time has become even more meaningful to me, as I now have a grand-daughter. Sofia turned one early last month. She looked like a princess on Saturday. I know it will be more fun since she is now able to really make the most of the festivities.



Said Khan

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