

My Eid Gift in Lockdown

About 19 years ago, right after my mourning period, Ramadan and Eid arrived. Two or three days before Eid, the president of our local community came by and handed me an envelope with "Eid Mubarak" written on it. I was happy thinking it was an Eid greeting card. After a while, I opened it and found a significant amount of money considering my financial situation at the time.

Seeing the money, I was stunned. I was alone at home then and cried a lot. I was furious at the president, thinking, "Just because I became a widow doesn't mean you need to offer me charity or make me feel like a widow." The feeling of being a widow overwhelmed me. After some time, I controlled my tears and anger, and called the president, complaining that being a widow didn't mean I needed charity or pity.

He was surprised and asked, "What charity or aid are you talking about?" I referred to the envelope he had given me. He laughed softly and explained, "Sister, this is neither charity nor aid. It is Eid money (Eidi) sent to you by our beloved leader (Huzoor Anwar)." Hearing this, I was pleased, but the feeling of being a widow deepened in my heart.

After that, I continued receiving Eidi from our beloved leader every year. I got used to it, and the feeling of widowhood lessened. Two years ago, we moved to a new area and changed our local community. That year, I didn't receive Eidi, but I wasn't concerned, thinking I might no longer be eligible.

Due to the lockdown, this Eid was different. Everyone celebrated in their homes. The children did online shopping and planned secret Eid gifts for each other. They intended to open their gifts together on Zoom during Eid evening. Many parcels arrived at home, and since my room is near the front door, I often received them without checking whose names were on them.

The day before Eid, I saw a beautifully decorated fruit basket being delivered. I rushed to my daughter-in-law, excitedly saying, "Go receive it; your brother must have sent you a lovely Eid gift!" She smiled and asked me to receive it, but I insisted it would make her happy. However, when she went to get the basket, the delivery person asked, "Is Safia Bashir home?"

Embarrassed, she called me, and I received a stunning Eid gift from our local community president. My daughter-in-law shyly remarked, "You've been receiving everyone's parcels, but when your gift arrived, you sent me to get it!"

I hadn't expected anything for myself, let alone such a beautiful gift. Receiving it brought tears of joy to my eyes. I felt proud of our loving community and deeply prayed for our

beloved leader. Even though I wasn't expecting anything, seeing our leader's concern for us was heartwarming.

May God bless our community and grant our beloved leader a long, healthy life. May this bond of love and protection always remain intact. May we always remain obedient under our leader's guidance.

Yes, tears filled my eyes when I received my first Eid gift—and they did again when I received this one!

The tears were the same, but the emotions were very different.

Safia Bashir Sami