

“A COMMUNITY AFFAIR”

FOR LESSON

*Eid and Ramadan
in Brooklyn*

NARRATOR **Abdul Rasheed Abdullah**



ABDULLAH Everybody would always come to Masjid Khalifah’s **Eid** — even to this day, we’re known here for having the best Eids in America. Everybody know about Masjid Khalifah Eids, ’cause—

ALI Why is that? Tell me about what Eid is like here.

ABDULLAH Because — because they are very celeb— celebratory, and they are uniquely African American. I mean, we party. We get down, and we enjoy ourselves, and we eat our food, and we come out with our families and really enjoy our Eids. Whereas more with the — with the immigrant communities, they spend their Eids more at home with family. And here at Masjid Khalifah it’s a, it’s a, it’s a community affair.

ALI What kinds of things do you have here on Eid?

ABDULLAH Oh, we have African drummers and jazz musicians and singers and games and toys and gifts for the kids, and — you know, it’s, it’s, it’s a — especially when it’s in the winter — as you know, the lunar calendar rotates — so when it’s in the winter, we’re in Akbar Hall, the big catering hall here. And when it’s in the summer, we’re outside. So it’s just a day of celebration. And, and even, even people who might not affiliate themselves with us on other days miraculously show up for our Eids. [laughter] Which tells you something in that, you know, they might think of us as not being quite up to their expectations of what they consider, in my opinion incorrectly, proper Islam. But on Eid they’re here, partying right along with us. So that’s kind of, you know, indicative of us as a people.

RUN TIME **2:10**

EID

a Muslim holiday. There are two Eids in the Muslim calendar. Eid al-Fitr marks the end of the month of fasting in Ramadan. Eid al-Adha commemorates the sacrifice of Abraham.

BIO Abdul Rasheed Abdullah was born in 1952 in Brooklyn. In the 1970s, he joined the Nation of Islam and got married, and became involved in Muslim communities in both Queens and Brooklyn. In 1984, Abdullah’s son received a scholarship to study in Sudan through the Al-Madrassa Al-Islamiya school in Sunset Park. The family relocated to Sudan and Abdullah spent his time there studying **Sufism**. After returning to New York, he taught as a licensed Sufi **sheikh** in a **zawiyah** in Brooklyn. He attended Masjid Abdul Muhsi Khalifah and Masjid At-Taqwa, both in Bedford-Stuyvesant, and was head of the Islamic studies department at Masjid Khalifah’s Clara Muhammad School.

CITATION Abdullah, Abdul Rasheed, Excerpt from oral history interview conducted by Zaheer Ali, March 10, 2018, Muslims in Brooklyn oral histories, 2018.006.07; Brooklyn Historical Society.

SUFISM

a Muslim spiritual practice that is often described as ‘mystical.’ Sufi communities are organized around traditional forms of knowledge transmission where a teacher, or sheikh, guides students to spiritual knowledge.

SHEIKH

a Muslim leader who has been authorized to teach.

ZAWIYAH

an Islamic religious school or monastery.