

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

Today by the Grace of Allah is the 16th fast of this blessed month of Ramadan. I hope that each member of our Jamaat is doing their best to reap the maximum benefits from the month. What I mean is that besides keeping the fast each one is busy reading more of the Holy Quran more than they used to and in addition they are constant in asking forgiveness for all their sins every day and that they are taking time to recite as much as they can *laa ilaha illallah* while meditating on each word of this sentence. Besides please remember that we should keep asking Allah to grant us His Paradise and also keep asking Him for protection against hell.

As you are well aware there is a close connection between fasting and *do'a* that is making requests to Allah. In the *Ruku* where the commandments for fasting has been explained in the Holy Quran we read “ *Wa iza sa'alaka ibaadi annni fa'inni qareeb, ojibo da'watad daa'i iza da'aani falyastajibouli wal you'menou bi la'allahoum yarshodoune.*”(2:187). We translate this verse as follows:

And when My servants ask thee about Me, say “I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me. So they should hearken to me and believe in me that they may follow the right way.”(2:187)

This is a verse that raises hope in the servant of Allah. Allah makes it clear to us that He is near. He hears our prayers. He knows our situation. He knows what are our problems and how desperately we want them solved. The One to whom we are making entreaties is not like a worldly ruler who has limited power. He is the One who controls this universe however vast it might be. He has control over everything. There are no limits to His Power. His Power surpasses anything that we might consider Powerful. It is to such a Mighty God that we are making entreaties and He has Power to accept all our requests. In a hadith Qudsi this great Power of Allah is explained in some details. Remember that Hadith Qudsi are words that Allah has taught the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) directly but they do not form part of the Holy Quran. As far as I know there are forty of these which can be directly traced to the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) and they are authentic. Allah says:

“O cherished servants, as I have made injustice unlawful for Me, so I have made it unlawful for you. Be not unjust.

O servants, all of you are wandering astray except the ones whom I have guided. Ask Me to

guide and I will guide you.

O servants, all of you are hungry except those whom I have fed. Ask Me to feed you and I will feed you.

O servants, indeed you are erring night and day, yet I forgive all offences. Ask Me to forgive and I will forgive you.

O servants, although you may think you are doing harm to Me through your negative actions, no harm can reach Me. Although you may imagine you are benefitting Me through your good deeds, these acts of yours cannot add the least particle of goodness to My Own overflowing Goodness.

O servants, even if the entire spectrum of intelligent beings-- from the first of you to the last of you, from human beings to beings on subtle planes-- possessed the heart of the most evolved ones among you, this would add nothing to My Kingdom.

O servants, even if all intelligent beings, from the first to the last, possessed the heart of the most rebellious ones among you, this would take away nothing from My Kingdom.

O servants, if all intelligent beings, visible and invisible, gathered together and demanded their most sublime wishes from Me and I granted every one of them, this would in no way diminish the treasures that are with Me, any more than a needle dipped in the ocean would decrease the ocean.

O servants, I take account of your deeds only according to their subtle inner intentions, and it is according to these intentions that I will fully reward you.

O servants, those who see goodness all around them are opening their being to the praise of Allah. Those who find other than the good can blame only themselves.”

If I can recall well maybe once or twice in the past I have spoken about this hadith. So it is to this great Lord (*Al Akbar*) that we are called to humble ourselves several times every day so that we might establish an unbreakable relationship with Him and it is to Him that we address our entreaties. Whether you like it or not it is to Him that will be our final return. Every year He sends us the Holy Month of Ramadan to make it easy for us to prepare for that return. So how will be our return will depend mostly on our deeds in this month and also in the other months of the year. May Allah make your return and mine as well a happy one.

When Allah tells us that He is near and He listens to our prayers He also says “So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me that they may follow the right way.” So the right way to be followed and for which we pray several times every day is not the way that human beings may devise. It is the Way that Allah has prescribed and His Prophet (saw) has shown us what it is

by living it. So we should listen with attention to His Message and believe in Allah with full sincerity. There are many things going on in the world that wants to derail Muslims from their belief in Allah. The more we understand the Holy Quran the more will our faith in Allah increase. So we should all do our best to read and understand our Holy Book so that we may progress in our belief in Allah.

So since this is the month of prayers we should take the time especially when we are praying *nafil* alone to keep repeating “*Iyyaka na'bodo wa iyyaka nasta'eene*”. Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has told us that we should reflect about the meanings of these words “Thee alone do we worship and from thee alone do we seek help” and then you will see its effects on you. Similarly he has asked us to repeat “*ih denassiratal moustaqeem*” “guide us to the right path” and think of the presence of Allah before you and witness its effects on your being. Try it and you will see. Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has also recommended us that when we are in a position of Ruku we repeat several times the following “*Ya Hafiz Ya Aziz Ya Rafiq*”. “*Hafiz*” is an attribute of Allah meaning “The Guardian. “*Aziz*” is an attribute that means “The Almighty” and “*Rafiq*” means “The Friend” So keep repeating these attributes whilst at the same time you think about their meanings. This repetition may take some more time but it will be time well spent because it will enhance your relationship with Allah. Similarly Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has taught us that in *sajda* when we are closest to Allah we should repeat the following prayers. First “*Subhaanaka llahoumma wa behamdeka astaghferoka wa atoubo elaik*” meaning “Pure is my Lord with His Praise I seek forgiveness from Thee and I turn to Thee”. Learn these words by heart with their meaning and keep repeating them and see its effects upon you.

Now I will tell you another hadith Qudsi which will make you think more about Allah, The Great. He says “*I am the One beyond equal, free from any reality other than My Reality. Therefore, those who pledge their devotion and worship to any other than Me are not with Me, and belong instead to that illusion which they chose over Me.*” Nothing can be compared to Allah. Our mind cannot imagine Him. He is totally different from what we might think of Him. Part of our task as a human being is to grasp a little of what He might be. But we would not know this by discursive reasoning. It is something that He places in our heart when we do our best to tread the path that He has chosen for us and which has been exemplified by His Noble Messenger Mohammad (saw). The Promised Messiah (as) said:

'It is not the way of Allah the Exalted to disgrace one who turns to Him in humility and give him an ignoble death. One who turns to God is never wasted. There will not be a single instance since the beginning of time where a person sincerely connected to God Almighty but died a failure. God Almighty wants man not to simply supplicate for his selfish desires but to turn to Him in sincerity. One who turns to Him in this way has no difficulty and finds a way

out of every trouble. He Himself states: '...And he who fears Allah – He will make for him a way out, and will provide for him from where he expects not...' (65: 3-4). Here provision does not simply mean bread and butter but also signifies respect, knowledge etc. which man needs. One who has even a slight connection with God Almighty is never wasted."

Now another hadith Qudsi to make us reflect. The Holy Prophet (saw) said that the Almighty Allah said:

"Among the most intimate to Me of My saints are the believers of humble means who find their pleasure in prayer, worshipping their Lord in the most beautiful way, and who obey Him both secretly and openly. These saints are hidden among the people. They are not always pointed out by Me. They are content with small sustenance. They receive and bear trials patiently.

The Messenger of Allah went on to comment about these secret lovers: Their death comes swiftly, their mourners are few, their family inheritance is meager.

At that, he struck his thigh with great enthusiasm."

So we should be concerned with cultivation of our relationship with Allah and not worry unduly about our wealth.

Another most interesting hadith is as follows. It does not have a direct link with the month of Ramadan but it helps us to know how we should always behave towards a fellow Muslim. The Holy Prophet (saw) said:

"While the glorious Messenger, upon him be peace, was seated among his companions, they saw him smile so widely that his eyeteeth were revealed. Omar the Just inquired: "Why are you smiling, O Messenger, more precious than my father and mother?" The noble Prophet responded:

Two believers will one day kneel before the Lord of Power, may He be exalted. The accuser will pray: "O Lord, grant me compensation for the harm this brother had inflicted upon me."

Allah Most High will address the accused: *Offer spiritual compensation to your brother for the harm you have caused him.*

The accused will announce: "O Lord, I have not a single good deed left to offer him."

"Then let him carry some of my burdens," the accuser will pray.

The eyes of the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, filled with tears, and he interjected:

That will truly be a terrible day when human beings will need someone else to carry their burdens.

The noble Prophet continued:

Allah, may He be glorified and magnified, will then address the accuser: *Raise your eyes and gaze into the Gardens of Paradise.*

He will lift his head and exclaim: "O Lord, I see cities of silver and palaces of gold crowned with pearls. To what prophet or martyr do these beautiful abodes belong?"

They belong to the ones who pay Me the full price.

"O Lord, who is able to do that?"

You are able to do that.

"How, O Lord?"

By forgiving your brother.

"O my Lord, I forgive him instantly."

The Most High will continue: *Now take the hand of your brother, and allow him to enter Paradise.*

The Messenger, may Divine Peace be upon him, then remarked:

"Be in loving awe of Allah Most High and make peace among yourselves, for then Allah will establish His Own Peace among you on the Day of Resurrection."

May Allah make each one amongst us a Muslim that He approves of and whom He will put in His Paradise *incha* Allah.