

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

We are arriving at the end of Ramadan by the Grace of Allah. Today is the 23rd day of fasting. So only a maximum of seven fasts are left or a minimum of six. Since the birth of the new moon will take place on Thursday 16th July at 5.24 AM Mauritian time the possibility for visibility in Mauritius with naked eye will be almost impossible. Hence in all likelihood in Mauritius the Jummah Mosque will proclaim Eid for Saturday 18th July. Here is a situation where traditional Ulemas will insist that Eid should be celebrated only when the new moon has been seen or the month should be counted as consisting of 30 days. By the Grace of Allah due to advances in knowledge of astronomy it is well known when the moon is born and when it sets. Hence a new moon will already be up in the sky by Thursday next and so the new month of Shawwal would already have started. If we fast on Friday next it would be a day of fasting on the first day of Shawwal and not 30th day of Ramadan. There is need for an evolution in our way of thinking and doing. I hope *incha* Allah that the day is near when we, as members of Jamaat Ahmadiyya Al Mouslemeen will venture forth and celebrate Eid on the day we think it should be celebrated and we stop following the directives that we receive from others. Should such an Eid occur in the weekend I would have suggested to you to celebrate Eid according to a day of our own choosing rather than follow the official line from the Jummah Mosque. *Incha* Allah we will talk about this matter later on.

In the light of what I have explained concerning the end of the month of Ramadan the last Jummah for this blessed month is today and not next week. It is known as the Jummatoul Widah. As far as I know there is no particular spiritual distinction attached to this Jummah. It is a Jummah day as any other one and a blessed day indeed. Unfortunately mistakenly many people traditionally think that attending this particular Jummah will bring them spiritual or other advantages or that they will have all their sins washed away. In some parts of the world like Pakistan or Bangla Desh or even India some people labor under the delusion that being present on this day in the mosque is sufficient to wipe out a year's sins or all previous sins. Such ideas do not help us in practicing our *deen* as it should be. Being a Muslim who cares for Allah and His Prophet one should be committed to Allah and His Prophet throughout one's life and at every moment of the day and night. It is true that in the month of Ramadan we are called upon to do more. But to believe that just by attending *Jummahtoul Widah* one will replace one's commitment to our religion or we will get all our sins effaced is very far from the spirit that Islam aims at cultivating in its adherents.

Friday is an important day for every Muslim. Allah tells us in the Holy Quran “*Yaa Ayyohallazina Amanou iza noudiya lissalaate min yawmil jomo’ate fas’aw ila zikrullahe wa zaroul bay.Zalekoum khayroullakoum in kountoum ta’lamoune.*” We translate this verse as follows “O ye who believe when the call for prayer is made on the day of Jummah hurry to the remembrance of Allah and leave all commerce. That is better for you if you knew.” It is this verse that has made it obligatory for male Muslims to attend the Jummah prayer on each Friday. Allah says you should stop all your commercial transactions. In other words for some hours you should abandon your work, your means of livelihood and resort to the mosque for the remembrance of Allah. Note the similarity between this verse and the second verse where Allah speaks about fasting. Allah says “Fasting is good for you if you knew.” And here He says attending Jummah is good for you if you really knew. This leads us to conclude that in the Knowledge of Allah both the act of fasting and attending Jummah have more benefits than are apparent. It is a point that we should ponder because Allah knows and we do not thoroughly know what is good for us. In Allah’s eternal wisdom He is fully aware what is to our benefit and what is not whatever we might think of the matter. He knows best and we should submit to Him alone. So those who do not attend Jummah Prayer should do their best to find ways and means so that they might attend. Ask Allah for help and you will see help coming your way from where you did not expect at all.

As from Tuesday last we have entered the last ten days of this blessed month. We learn from the hadith that during these last days the Holy prophet (saw) showed greater determination and doubled his efforts in devotion to Allah especially during the night. We learn that he almost did not sleep during those nights and he also woke up his household for prayer and remembrance of Allah. One can only imagine the level of such devotions. We also learn that he has advised the Umma to look for *laylatoul Qadr* on the odd nights of the last ten days. If ever this night is manifested to us we should follow the advice that the Holy prophet (saw) gave to Hazrat Ayesha that she should pray in the following words “*Allahoumma innaka afouwwoune tohibboul awfa fa’fo anni*” meaning” “O my Lord You are the Effacer of sins , You like to efface sins , efface my sins.” I think that each one amongst us should by now know this supplication by heart and we should keep repeating it fully conscious of its meanings in our prayers whether by night or even by day. It should be the aim of each one amongst us to have all our sins forgiven by the end of this blessed month. So we should not let go the opportunity that has been given to us to become as pure as the day when we were born. We should all learn to turn to our Lord. This should not just be a pious wish for us. We need to translate it into goals followed by action, by regrets by weeping for all the wrongs that we might have done. Some people say that they do not commit sins. *Alhamdo lillah* for them. But have these people also seen within themselves, their innermost thoughts and what they think of themselves. They might

have a high opinion of themselves. What do they do with such a thought? Do they work on themselves trying to mend their ways? In the path of returning to Allah, if we think well we cannot have a high opinion of ourselves. With the passage of time we come to understand that purity is an exclusive attribute of Allah whereas it is in our nature to sin. But Allah is also the Forgiver par excellence and He likes that we should ask Him for forgiveness.

These days we are revising hadith and I have come across some interesting ones which I want to share with you. The Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "he who repents from his sins is like one who has not committed any sin." If Allah loves a servant his sins do not cause him any harm and the prophet read "*Innallaha yohibbout tawwabeena wa yohibboul motatahhereen*" meaning "Allah loves those who repent and who keep themselves pure". The companion of the Prophet who relates this hadith was Anas bin Malik and he asked the Holy Prophet (saw) "*Ya rasouloullah wa ma ilamtouttawba*" meaning "O Prophet of Allah what are the signs of repentance. He replied "*An nidama*" meaning "regrets" that is regrets for the sin committed.

In another hadith we learn from Abdullah bin Omar that the Holy prophet (saw) said that Allah (*azza wa jalla*) accepts the repentance of a servant before he is in the throes of death.

There is an interesting hadith that we heard for the first from our uncle Ahmad Domun (of blessed memory) when we were children. This hadith is in fact in Bokhari and it is as follows:

"There was a man who had heartlessly murdered ninety-nine people. Then, he felt remorse.

He went to a learned man and told him about his past, explaining that he wished to repent, reform, and become a better person. "I wonder if Allah will pardon me?" he asked.

For all his learning, the scholar was a man who had not been able to digest what he had learned. "You will not be pardoned;" he said. "Then I may as well kill you, too," said the other. And kill him he did.

He then found another worthy individual and told him that he had killed a hundred people. "I wonder," he said, "whether Allah will pardon me if I repent?" Being a truly wise man, he replied, "Of course you will be pardoned; repent at once. I have just one piece of advice for you: avoid the company of wicked people and mix with good people, for bad company leads one into sin:"

The man expressed repentance and regret, weeping as he sincerely implored his Lord to pardon him. Then, turning his back on bad company, he set off to find a neighborhood where righteous people lived.

On the way, his appointed hour arrived, and he died. The angels of punishment and of mercy both came to take away his soul. The angels of punishment said that as a sinful person he rightfully belonged to them, but the angels of mercy also claimed him, saying, "He repented and had resolved to become a good man. He was on his way to a place where righteous people live, but his appointed hour had come." A great debate ensued, and Gabriel was sent as an arbitrator to settle this affair.

After hearing both sides he gave this verdict: "Measure the ground. If the spot where he died is closer to the good people, then he belongs to the angels of mercy, but if it is nearer to the wicked people, he will be given to the angels of punishment."

They measured the ground. Because the man had just set out, he was still closer to the wicked. But because he was sincere in his repentance, the Lord moved the spot where he lay and brought it to just outside the city of the good people.

That penitent servant was handed over to the angels of mercy."

Since this story comes from Bokhari we are not going to ask whether such an event happened or not. We take from it its didactic value. In other words we try to learn from it. In brief Allah loves a repentant servant.

So in these last remaining days of this blessed month we should make a new commitment to Allah. We will use part of our days and nights to draw near to Allah by getting more involved in reading the Holy Quran, asking for forgiveness and remembering Allah as much as we can as we have often spoken about and by making sincere repentance for all our misdeeds. I hope that *incha* Allah each one amongst us will do our best to draw nearer to Allah in these last days and *incha* Allah we will continue doing so after the month of Ramadan as well.

In another hadith concerning these last days we learn that the Holy Prophet has said that "Whoever stands (in prayer) in *Lailatul-Qadr* out of *Eemaan* (faith and sincerity) and seeking reward then his previous sins are forgiven". (Bukhari). So let us use this last week for this purpose. So we should strive to find the *laylatul Qadr* because it is a night that contains much good in it. May Allah have mercy upon all of us and may He make us become His True Believing and practicing servants. We will *incha* Allah read Namaz Eid at 9.30AM.