

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

The new moon for Zull Hajj this year (1436AH) will be born on Sunday 13th September at 06:41 UTC that is around 10:41am in Mauritius. That evening in some part of the world, namely in the Western Hemisphere it will be seen but not in Mauritius. Even in Saudi Arabia it will not be seen with the naked eye. Now as far as Eid is concerned, most probably for us here it will be on Thursday 24 September, and it is quite probable that the Saudis will celebrate on Wednesday 23rd September and hence the day of Arafat will be Tuesday 22nd September. Anyhow by next week we will know for sure on which dates exactly Hajj will be performed and which day we will celebrate Eid in Mauritius.

The Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam. It is obligatory on any Muslim who has the material means to go there and participate in the rituals. These days the participants are in the range of two million plus. In fact last year there were approximately 2,089,053 Hajjis according to statistics published by the Saudis and approximately one third were Saudis and the rest were foreigners from around the world. You can imagine how this event has been transformed throughout the twentieth and since the beginning of the twenty-first century. According to published statistics in 1920 there were only about 58,584 foreign Hajjis. This figure almost doubled in 1950 to become 100,000. However in the next 46 years, in 1996 it grew to 1,080,465. In 2011, the record year of foreigners there were about 1,828,195. But it fell down to 1,389,000 last year. The Saudis who usually participate in Hajj are approximately half the number of the foreigners. So one can imagine the necessary infrastructure needed to welcome so many pilgrims for the Hajj which starts on the 8th day of Zull hajj and ends on the 12th or at latest the 13th for those who might have some excuses. With their expansion projects the Saudis are aiming to accommodate approximately 1.8 million worshippers at one time in the mosque. The investment has been huge but as custodians of the Holy places of Islam they have been blessed with enough wealth to make improvements to ease the life of pilgrims to the Sacred Mosque.

I have given you some figures so that you might have an idea of what is going on over there during these days of Hajj. But these days with all the facilities available we can see direct and live what goes on in Mecca during Hajj or in any other days of the week. Prayer from there are transmitted live around the world and all the rituals of Hajj are also transmitted live. So even if one is far away because one cannot participate in the Hajj ceremonies one can still from afar immerse oneself in the atmosphere prevailing over there. It is true that we Ahmadis-Muslims have been forbidden by the Saudis and their

Muslim state vassals not to attend Hajj. But this bigotry against us is quite recent. There was a time when Saudi Arabia was ruled by an enlightened king who understood clearly that the Kaaba is not his personal house and he cannot decide who can visit it or not. I know that I have read about this somewhere but unfortunately I could not find the reference. Anyhow what I want to say is that although we are not going for Hajj yet we can live the spirit of Hajj by watching what goes on over there. There is no need for speeches. By just watching people remembering Allah one's heart is automatically inclined to the remembrance of Allah. I can still recall that when in the early 1980s we started watching Hajj live on television I was deeply moved to see the people performing the rituals. These days this does not seem to mean much to many people, but in those days it was new, it was rare and it was quite inspiring.

From the hadith we learn that the Holy Prophet Mohammad saw said: **"Amongst all days there are none better to engage in sole worship of Allah than in the ten days of Zul-Hijjah, To observe a fast on any of these days is equivalent to fasting throughout the year, to actively engage in prayer and worship throughout any of these nights holds such rewarding values leveling with "night of power" (*Laylatul-Qadr*) "Tirmizi". It is said that Hazrat Abi Qataadah (R.A) reports in a part narration from the Holy Prophet ﷺ concerning the fast observed on the day of Arafaat: "I have full confidence in Allah for the one who observes a fast on the day of Arafaat that his previous year's sins and the proceeding year's sins are forgiven." (Muslim).**

These hadiths show that it is recommended that a Muslim fasts in any of these blessed days if he or she can do it. However we should not delude ourselves by thinking that we just fast and not be inclined to give Allah the necessary importance that are due to Him in our life is sufficient. It is incumbent upon us that we should do our best to be a good Muslim throughout our life. Under no circumstance should we think we can get along by just being part time Muslims. We should be convinced that the teachings of Islam are the best and we should do our best to follow them.

In another hadith we learn that the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) said: "There are not any days in which righteous deeds done in them are more beloved to Allah than these days, i.e. the ten days (of *Dhul-Hijjah*). They said: O, Messenger of Allah, not even Jihad in the path of Allah? He said: Not even Jihad in the path of Allah Most High, except if a man goes out (for Jihad) with his self and his wealth, then he doesn't return with anything from that." So doing good deeds in these first ten days are well appreciated by Allah. So if we are convinced that Allah will reward us and will efface our sins should not we be eager to do as much good deeds as we can? Above all what should be those deeds. In another hadith we learn as follows:

“Imam Ahmad narrated from Ibn Umar (May Allah be pleased with him), from the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) that he said: "There aren't any days greater, nor any days in which deeds done in them are more beloved to Allah Most High, than these ten days (of *Dhul-Hijjah*). So, increase in them the saying of *Tahleel* (*Laa-ilaaha-ill-Allah*), and *Takbeer* (*Allahu-Akbar*) and *Tahmeed* (*al-hamdu-lillaah*)."

We see here that the Holy Prophet (saw) has told us that we should engage ourselves in the remembrance of Allah as the best deed that we could be doing in the best of days. In the Holy Quran you will recall what we repeat in every Jummah “*Uzkoroullaha yazkourkoum wad ouho yastajib lakoum wa lazikrullahe akbar*”. We translate as “Remember Allah and He will remember you, pray to Him and He will respond to you, and the remembrance of Allah is best (virtue).” There are many hadiths which explain the merits of the remembrance of Allah. I will share some with you.

“Abu Huraira  said that Rasool Allah  said, “The angels look for those who do Zikr of Allah on the paths. When they find those who are doing Zikr of Allah then they call each other, “Come, your desired has been found.” Then those angels cover those who are doing Zikr of Allah up to the skies of this world with their wings. And Allah Rabbul Izzat says about them to those angels “What are my slave doing?” Though Allah knows more than those angels. The angels say, “Those people are doing your *Tasbeeh*, *Tahmeed*, and *Tamjeed*.” Allah says, “Have they seen me?” The angels say, “We swear by your pure Entity, they have not seen you.” Allah says to them, “If they had seen me then what would be their state?” The angels say, “If they could’ve seen you then they would do your *Tamjeed* and your *Tasbeeh* even more.”

Allah says, “What slaves are asking from me?” The angels say, “They are asking for Jannat from you.” Allah says, “Have they seen Jannat?” The angels say, “We swear by Your Pure Entity, they have not seen Jannat.” Allah says, “If they had seen Jannat then what would be their state?” The angels say, “If these people had seen Jannat then their greed, desire, and inclination for it would increase. Allah says, “What else are they doing?” The angels say, “They are seeking refuge.” Allah says, “From what are they seeking refuge?” The angels say, “They are seeking refuge from Hell.” Allah says, “Have they seen Hell?” The angels say, “Oh Rab, we swear by Your Pure Entity, they have not seen it.” Allah says “If they had seen it then what would be their state?” The angels say, “If they had seen it then they would run even further away from it and fear it even more.

Allah says, “angels, be witnesses that I have forgiven them.” An angel says, “There is one person amongst them who is not part of those who do Zikr, he is there for some necessity

of his/her.” Allah says, “These are such people that even those sitting among them are not deprived.” (Bukhari)

In another hadith Abu Darda رضي الله عنه narrated that Rasool Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “Should I not tell you of such things which are the best and purest deeds in the court of your Lord, high in ranks (*darajat*), better for you than spending gold and silver (in Allah’s path), and better than slaying the neck of the enemy during war? The Sahaba said, “Yes, Oh Rasool Allah! صلى الله عليه وسلم.” He صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “It is Zikr of Allah.” (Tirmizi)

Furthermore the Holy Prophet (saw) also said “Allah Tabaraka wa Ta’ala says when a person moves his lips for Zikr of Allah, I am with him. “ (Bukhari)

All these hadiths help us to understand the importance of saying these Zikrs in the blessed days that are coming next week. We will be given an opportunity to endear ourselves to Allah by remembering Him as much as we can because this act of remembrance is the best deed that we could be doing. This remembrance of Allah need not be restricted to only these three formulas that have been given. We can use the time that will be available to us to even make *Daroods* on the Holy prophet saw and also of asking forgiveness for our sins. We can increase our reading of the Holy Quran so that we know better what Allah expect from us. We can also increase the remembrance of Allah in our prayers and in nawafil that we might be inclined to read. All these are means by which we would be doing our best to seek the ways and means to be nearer to Allah because without Him we are nothing. Allah is giving us a great opportunity once again in our life to be inclined towards Him and if we let go of this moment without doing anything really worthwhile we would indeed be losers. May Allah rank us among those who show themselves to be true to the pact that tie us to Him and that we be among the truthful who really recognize Him as our Lord and we reject all other Lords. May Allah grant me and you also the opportunity to make the best use of the blessed moments that will come our way soon incha Allah.