

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

By the Grace of Allah, as from Wednesday a new Islamic year namely 1437 AH has begun. We do not feast on such a day nor do we organize any festivities as are done at the end of a Gregorian calendar change of the year in December. The reason is that we simple minded Muslims understand this transition of a year to another as a milestone in the passage of time and we do not involve ourselves in frivolous entertainment as those that are common in western cultures. As good Muslims we strive our best to follow the example of our beloved Prophet Mohammad (saw) because we believe that in following him we will insha Allah become the beloved of Allah as He has taught us in the Holy Quran:" Say 'if you love Allah , follow me and Allah will love you". So when we see from his example we see that on the appearance of the new moon he made a simple prayer which is as follows: "*Allahoumma Ahillahou Alayna bil amn wal islam was salaame was salamate , rabbi wa rabboka Allah*" which we translate as " O our Lord may the month begin with peace and submission and salvation and security, (to the moon) my Lord and your Lord is the same. It was in these words and nothing more that the Holy Prophet welcomed each new moon whenever it came. Hence we see that on such circumstances the Holy Prophet prayed for what is good from Allah. When I checked the word "*Salamate*" in the dictionary I saw that it had wider meanings than just salvation as I have said it. The other meanings mentioned are "absence of defects, piety, integrity, loyalty, perfection, salvation and security as well". This is a small supplication and it fits the occasion. We should all learn it and pray it whenever we see the new moon because so did the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw).

Except for some brief moments in its history, the world of Islam after the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) and the pious caliphs has not enjoyed peace. The enemies of Islam from without especially the Christians have always tried to finish Islam and put an end to its supremacy. From the inside the internal divisions especially after the death of Imam Hussein who was murdered on 10th Muharram in the year 680CE never stopped the bickering that started after the death of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw). Slowly Muslims would be known as Shias and Sunnis and this division is still here. Unfortunately this division was so pronounced that there were mutual curses that were thrown on one another from the time of Amir Muawiya. Eventually when the Abbasids assumed power they spoke ill of the first three Sunni caliphs after the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) namely Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (ra) Hazrat Umar (ra) and Hazrat Osman (as). So these

ill feelings have festered among Muslims for more than 14 Centuries and we do not see any end in sight.

Hazrat Masih Maood (as) came as the one who would put an end to the differences of Muslims and would teach them how to live together in peace. So he spoke of the first four caliphs of Islam in glowing terms to show that he respected them all. I will share some of his writings about them with you today. He says:

‘I have been given the knowledge that Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (may Allah be pleased with him) had the greatest glory and highest stature among all the Companions. Without doubt he was the first Khalifa and verses regarding Khilafat were revealed about him....’
‘By God, he [Hazrat Abu Bakr] was Islam’s second Adam and the first manifestation of the best among mankind (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). Although he was not a Prophet, he had the strengths of Prophets.’ He also stated: ‘Allah the Exalted knew that Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (may Allah be pleased with him) was the most valiant and righteous and was the most beloved of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). He was a victorious general, who was completely absorbed in the love of the chief among creation. From the very beginning he was his confidant and helper in his tasks. This is why God assured His Prophet in time of adversity through him and made the title of Sadeeq [the truthful] specific to him. He was a close friend of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) and God granted him with the robe of honour of: ‘**...he was one of the two...**’ (9:40) and included him in His special servants.’

He further said:

‘By becoming a Muslim at the time of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) the first Khalifa, who was a great merchant, gave incomparable help. He was granted the status of being called ‘Sadeeq’ and was the leading friend and first Khalifa. It is written that he was returning from a trade trip and had not yet reached Makkah when along the way he met a man and asked him for any latest news. The man said there was no latest news other than that his friend had claimed Prophethood. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) said on the spot that if he had made such a claim, it would be truthful.’ The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) also stated: ‘Hazrat Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) gave all his property in the way of God and assumed a destitute life for himself. But what did Allah the Exalted grant him for this? He made him the king of entire Arabia and gave Islam a new lease of life through his hand and demonstrated triumph over apostate Arab and conferred on him what was beyond anyone’s imagination.’(Malfoozaat).

We understand from the history books that he died in August 634AH. When these days one may hear about what some Shias have written about him, one wonders how such a bad

impression could take root. It was well known then how he became the friend of the Holy prophet (saw) when he married Khadija(ra) and came to live in her house. Hazrat Abu Bakr (ra) was the neighbor of Hazrat Khadija and so he became friend with the Holy Prophet (saw). The Holy Prophet said of him "Whenever I offered Islam to any one, he always showed some reluctance and hesitation and tried to enter into an argument. Abu Bakr was the only person who accepted Islam without any reluctance or hesitation, and without any argument." His conversion to Islam was very significant for the progress of Islam. This has been acknowledged by historians of the west. Edward Gibbon who is well remembered for his volumes of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" says: "the moderation, and the veracity of Abu Bakr confirmed the new religion, and furnished an example for invitation." William Muir, another historian who has written about the prophet and the caliphs says "Abu Bakr's judgment was sound and impartial; his conversation agreeable and his demeanor affable and much sought after by the Quraysh and he was popular throughout the city.... The faith of Abu Bakr was the greatest guarantee of the sincerity of Muhammad in the beginning of his career, and indeed, in a modified sense, throughout his life. To have such a person as a staunch adherent of his claim, was for Muhammad a most important step." If others who came much later could understand the significance of Hazrat Abu Bakr for Islam how come a minority of the early Muslims failed to understand it and they dubbed him with all sorts of names.

Concerning Hazrat Umar the Promised Messiah said:

‘Do you realise how high is the stature of Hadhrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) among the Companions? So much so that at times, Qur’an used to be revealed in accordance with his viewpoint. A Hadith states about him that Satan runs from the shadow of Umar. Another Hadith states: ‘If there was to be a Prophet after me, it would have been Umar.’ Third Hadith is: ‘There were Muhaddath (recipient of Divine revelation) in earlier people. If there is any Muhaddath in this Ummah, it is Umar.’ The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) also stated: ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) also used to receive revelation. He did not consider himself to be anything and did not wish to be a partner in the Imamate Haqqa (true leadership) that God in Heaven created on this earth. On the contrary he declared himself to be a lowly servant and this is why God’s grace made him a deputy of the Imamate Haqqa.’

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) also says : ‘Two persons buried adjacent to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) were pious, pure, wholesome and accepted and God deemed them friends of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) in life as well as after their death. Indeed, it was friendship that endured till the end and it is rare to find a model of it. Felicitations to them that they spent their lives with

the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) and were appointed Khalifa in his city and in his place and were buried adjacent to him and were brought close to the paradise of his shrine and on the Day of Judgement will be raised with him.’ (*Hujjatullah*).

Furthermore he adds: ‘My Lord has made it evident to me that Hazrat Abu Bakr, Hazrat Umer Farooq and Hazrat Usman (may Allah be pleased with them) were pious and had faith and were from among those people who are chosen by God and are made exclusive for the recipients of His Blessings.’ (*Sirrul Khilafa*)

Concerning Hazrat Ali(ra) the Promised Messiah said “‘He was extremely righteous and pure and was from those people who are the most beloved of the Gracious God. He was from a good family and was from among the chiefs of the time. He was the lion of the Supreme God and was the youth of the Kind God. He was very generous and had a clean heart. He was that unique valiant who did not move away from the battlefield even if an army of enemy stood against him. He spent a life of destitution and attained a high status in temperance. He distributed wealth, alleviated pain and anguish and was foremost in care of orphans, poor and neighbours. He displayed great bravery in different expeditions and was wondrously skillful in wielding the sword and spear. In addition to this, he spoke mellifluously and eloquently. His words had very deep effect and he removed erosion of hearts with his words and illuminated hearts with the light of reason. He was aware of every kind of manner/style and experts in various fields would approach him vanquished and apologetic. He was excellent in every quality and in eloquence. Rejection of his excellences is tantamount to committing shamelessness. He used to promote sympathy for the helpless and would instruct to feed those who were content as well as those who insisted to be fed. He was among the chosen people of Allah the Exalted and excelled in deep understanding of the Holy Qur’an. He had an amazing insight of the understanding of the profound points of the Qur’an.’ From history books we understand that in fact Hazrat Ali devoted himself to study and teachings for about twenty five years after the death of the Holy Prophet (saw).

In addition he said:

“‘I have an exquisite likeness with Ali and Hussein (may Allah be pleased with them) and no one apart from the Lord of the East and the West knows this secret. Most certainly, I love Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and both his sons and have enmity with whoever has enmity with them.’

‘In my view it was very good that Hazrat Hassan (may Allah be pleased with him) stepped aside from Khilafat. Thousands had been killed and he did not want more people to be killed...As this action of Hazrat Hassan (may Allah be pleased with him) is contrary to

Shia [creed], therefore they do not fully accede to Imam Hassan. Indeed, we praise them both. Fact is that each individual has diverse strengths. Hazrat Imam Hassan did not want internal fighting among Muslims to increase leading to more killing; he kept preference of peace in view. Hazrat Imam Hussein (may Allah be pleased with him) did not choose to take Bai'at at the hand of a wicked man because this is detrimental to faith. They both had good intentions: deeds are judged by motives. It is a different matter that there was Islamic progress through the hand of Yazid. It is the grace of God the Exalted, if He so wills, even a wicked person can bring about progress. Yazid's son was a good person.'

So Muslims of today have to realize that as Muslims our origin is the same and we should learn to put our differences apart and live peaceably with one another. When will Muslims realize this is known only to Allah. But we should do our little part by not harming any Muslim with neither words nor actions nor even in thought. May Allah bring peace , security and real Islam to all Muslims throughout the world.