

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

We will begin by talking about the moon's visibility for the month of Shawwal which will announce the end of Ramadhan and the time for the celebration for Eid ul Fitr 1437 AH or 2016CE. According to astronomical calculations the moon will be born at 11UTC or 15H00 Mauritian time on Monday 4th July 2016. Therefore, it will not be visible in Mauritius that evening. The next evening, that is on Tuesday it will be visible in many places around the world and so *incha* Allah Eid will be celebrated on Wednesday 6th July this year. Consequently, here in *Baitul Rahma* mosque we will read Eid prayer at 9h30am. We request all members to be present on time *incha* Allah.

So before Eid we have only four more days of fasting. Of course most people would be preparing for Eid celebrations but we should all not forget that we still have time to pray a lot, to ask a lot forgiveness and to try to get close to our Lord as much as it is within our capacity to do so. So let not our energy flag and let we not think we have done enough. On the contrary we should always understand that whatever we have done is never quite enough. Although Allah has promised us that He is very appreciative of our efforts we should always think that surely He would reward us for what we have been doing, but at the same time we should also be quite humble to think that there might have been some shortcomings that would prevent us from getting the full measure of what has been promised to us. In all circumstances we should continue to pray to Allah to entreat Him to help us to keep with us the full benefits that the month for Ramadan does bring. So in the rest of the days left we should not rest but keep on with our worship as before. I once read that people devoted to Allah keep praying about the month of Ramadan throughout the year. After Ramadan they pray for half of the year for Allah to accept all the devotions that they have been doing during the month. In the other half of the year they pray to Allah to grant them the capacity to fast in the coming Ramadan. We should inspire ourselves with their example and learn not to take anything for granted and place great hopes on Allah's mercy and Forgiveness without forgetting that He is swift in punishing especially if we defy Him impudently. So let us all continue to pray to Allah that He accepts our devotions although they might have been below the standard that they should have been.

Today is the last Jummah for this year's month of Ramadan. It is known as the *Jummatul Widah*. That is to say the Jummah that says "Au Revoir" to the blessed month of Ramadan. It announces that the end of this blessed month for the year is nearing its end. Some people believe that by being present in this Jummah they would have all their sins forgiven. Such a belief is not supported neither by the Holy Quran nor by any hadith and so we do not believe in it. From the understanding that we have received the believer should strive throughout his life to become a better person through his prayers, remembrance of Allah, asking Allah's forgiveness, giving charity and fasting and above everything his good character. There is no magic appointed hour that can help him to have merit in the sight of Allah except the hour chosen by Allah Himself. A believer has to be desirous of being forgiven for all his sins. If he does not have this desire in his heart he would not achieve anything in the sight of Allah. But the whole month of Ramadan opens all the doors of forgiveness from Allah to all believers. That is why believers have been asked to fast and strive to come nearer to Allah so that He might exercise His attribute of Forgiveness and forgive as many as He pleases during this month. If there is a special time during the *Jummatul Widah* which is a special moment where Allah accepts prayers, then that is characteristic of all Fridays. In a hadith we read that the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) is reported to have said: "There is an hour (opportune time) on Friday and if a Muslim gets it while praying and asks something from Allah, then Allah will definitely meet his demand." And he (the Prophet) pointed out the shortness of that time with his hands. (**Bukhari Vol. 2, Book 13, Hadith 57**). So we need to be quite clear that this Jummah has no particular characteristic except that it is the last one in this month of Ramadan.

However, if there is something special in the month of Ramadan it is the *Laylatul Qadr* which is usually translated as the night of destiny. The Holy Prophet (saw) advised the Muslims to seek for that special night on the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan. I will share with you some hadiths about the *Laylatul Qadr*:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whoever fasted the month of Ramadan out of sincere Faith (i.e. belief) and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his past sins will be forgiven, and whoever stood for the prayers in the night of *Qadr* out of sincere Faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven." (Vol. 3, Book 32, Hadith 231)

Here we see in this hadith a great Promise of forgiveness from Allah. If it happens that after Ramadan we indulge again in sins and seek forgiveness from Allah even then we would find Him to be most forgiving.

Concerning when the night might be we read “Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Search for the Night of *Qadr* in the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan." We also read: “With the start of the last ten days of Ramadan, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to tighten his waist belt (i.e. work hard) and used to pray all the night, and used to keep his family awake for the prayers.”

All these Hadiths show that we should not slacken in our devotions during the last ten days. Rather we should try to do even more with the hope that Allah will listen to us and will forgive us. If by the Grace of Allah, we encounter the night of *Qadr* we should pray “*Allahoumma innaka afuwoune tohibbul afwa fa'fo anni*” meaning “O my Lord you are the Effacer of sins, you like to forgive sins, forgive my sins” As you will recall this is the prayer that was taught to Hazrat Ayesha (ra) when she asked him what she should read in the night of *Qadr*.

So believing with firm faith in Allah we should all do our best to spend the last nights of the month of Ramadan or part thereof in devotion to Allah. If there is such a person who feels that he does not have many sins to be forgiven, at least he or she can use these special nights to request for his prayers to be accepted and for him to become nearer to Allah. Let us use these moments to pray for all those who are in distress or in need and who need help. May Allah help them and protect them. We should always think how privileged we are to be living in such a beautiful country as Mauritius where we do not have any worry about safety as other people in richer countries do have, May Allah shower even more of His Blessings here and elsewhere and may people learn to be tolerant of one another despite their having different beliefs. It took the Christians almost three centuries or even more to learn to live together despite their differences. But unfortunately Muslims for almost 14 centuries have been butchering other Muslims although they are forbidden to do so by the Holy Quran and even by clear sayings of the Holy Prophet Mohammed (saw). This is a sad situation indeed and only Allah's help will solve it. Let us pray for His help to come.

You will recall that Allah has prescribed fasting for us so that we might become righteous. We need to examine ourselves and wonder how far we have progressed on this path. We should not be of that category of people who have had only thirst and hunger from their fast. We should be of that group of people whose fear and love of Allah and whose desire to be completely devoted to Him have increased during the past month. We should be that group of believers who regularly wake up for our *Fajr* prayers and do our best to offer all our prayers on time as far as possible and who lengthen their prostrations because they are thinking about Allah and they do not rush through their prayers by thinking about other things than Allah. We do not achieve these standards in our prayer all at once. It takes time. Sometime we will feel great enthusiasm and sometimes our energy will flag. But at no time should we ever give up. We should understand from the wine drinker as Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has taught us. As long as he is not intoxicated he never stops drinking. As long as we are not saturated with the love of God our energy should not flag in seeking Him. We will recall again the words of the Promised Messiah:

“How unfortunate, indeed, is the man who does not even know that he has a God with power over all things! Our Paradise, indeed, is our God: our highest enjoyment is in God, for we have seen Him and all beauty found in Him, this treasure is worth having, even if at the cost of one's life; and this is a jewel which should be purchased even if obtainable only by sacrificing one's entire being. O ye that are devoid, run to this spring, for it will slacken your thirst. It is the spring of life that shall save ye. What am I to do, and how am I to impress this glad tiding upon your mind, with what drum should I go crying through the streets that This is your God, so that all should hear! And with what unguent am I to treat the people so that their ears open to hear!”

May Allah grant to each one amongst us the wisdom to know Him and to become completely devoted to Him. May He protect us from sinning and may He grant us His nearness. May we not harm anyone with neither our tongues nor our hands. May Allah accept our fasts and may He help us to complete them and may He be satisfied with us now and forever. Ameen.