

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

As most of you might be aware, a new Muslim festival known as *Eidul Adha* will soon be coming upon us. The new moon for the last month, *Zil Hijja* of the Islamic calendar for the year 1438AH will be born on Monday 21st August UT at around 18H29. The new moon will be visible in some parts of the world namely the Americas on Tuesday night and it might be visible to us and in Saudi Arabia if there are no clouds. So the first day of *Zil Hijja* for this year will most probably be on Wednesday 23rd August. In that case, *Eidul Adha* will be on Friday 1st September. If not, it will be at latest on Saturday 2nd September. We will know more by next Friday and we will inform you accordingly *incha* Allah.

For the majority of the 1.6 billion Muslims living around the world, this festival is celebrated in their own countries. But a privileged few who have the means go to Mecca for Hajj. Last year there were about 1,862,909 people who performed Hajj. Out of these almost one third were people from Saudi Arabia: the locals and foreigners who work there. The Saudi Government has been pouring billions of dollars of investment to facilitate pilgrims during the days of Hajj. And by Allah's Grace one should say that they are doing their best and have succeeded in making life easier for the pilgrims even if at times there have been some loss of lives. Whilst in the past people travelled on foot or on camels, these days they travel by train or bus or even cars. Some even go on foot. These days the pilgrims do not slaughter the animals by themselves. They purchase a ticket through their phone for about US\$125 and they are informed that a sheep has been slaughtered for them. The meat is then distributed to the poor in Mecca or

packed and sent abroad for poor people in other countries. For the convenience of the pilgrims, each one receives an electronic bracelet which carries his personal and medical data. Similarly, there are plenty other facilities that are available to the pilgrims. For the male pilgrims who must shave their heads, I have read that about 7000 barbers are on hand and up till now, I do not know if they have devised an electronic way to have them shaved. One can even follow the pilgrims' route on Saudi Television which broadcasts the ceremonies almost 24/24.

For the majority of Muslims who stay at home, the Holy Prophet's (saw) words act as guidance as to what we should be doing during the coming days. He says:

“There are no days on which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allah than these ten days.” They said: “Not even jihad for the sake of Allah?” He said: “Not even jihad for the sake of Allah, unless a man goes out himself for jihad taking his wealth with him and does not come back with anything.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 2/457

From this hadith, we learn that we should do our best to multiply our good deeds during these coming days. We have a better chance to have them accepted and elevated by Allah. In another hadith, we learn about the good deeds of the Holy Prophet during these days. It is reported that **the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to fast on the first nine days of Dhu'l-Hijjah. It was narrated from Hunaydah ibn Khalid from his wife, that one of the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to fast on the first nine days of Dhu'l-Hijjah and the day of ‘Ashura’, and three days each month, the first Monday of the month and two Thursdays”.** Narrated by al-Nasaa'i, 4/205 and by Abu Dawood.

There is no doubt that we should try to imitate the Holy prophet (saw) as best as we can out of love and a desire to follow his example but under no circumstances should we look down upon those who do not do so. These are supplementary actions that lead us to Allah but they are not obligatory (*farz*).

Furthermore we learn that **it is Sunnah to recite *takbeer* (saying *Allaahu akbar* (Allah is most great)), *tahmeed* (saying *al-hamdu Lillah* (praise be to Allah)), *tahleel* (saying *Laa ilaaha ill-Allah* (There is no god but Allah)) and *tasbeeh* (saying *Subhaan-Allah* (Glory be to Allah)), during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, saying these words out loud in the mosques, homes, streets and every place in which it is permissible to remember Allah, to perform this act of worship openly and proclaim the greatness of Allah. Men should recite out loud and women should recite quietly.**

As good Ahmadi Muslims who proclaim that they project true Islamic beliefs and actions, we should try our best to recite these Zikrs during the first nine days of Zil Hijja. Zikr, that is remembrance of Allah by itself brings in many benefits. In the Holy Quran, Allah tells us “*Alaa be zikrillahe tatmaenil Qoloub*” which we translate as “most surely it is in Allah’s remembrance that the heart finds solace”. For spiritual progress, it is imperative that one devotes time to the remembrance of Allah, in seeking His Forgiveness in making supplications to Him. But most people seek solace elsewhere whereas what we are looking for is to be found in Allah. Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has spoken about this in the following words:

“Of the natural conditions of man is his search after an Exalted Being towards Whom he has an inherent attraction. This is manifested by an infant from the moment of its birth. As soon as it is born, it displays a spiritual characteristic that it inclines towards its mother and is inspired by love of

her. As its faculties are developed and its nature begins to display itself openly, this inherent quality is displayed more and more strongly. It finds no comfort anywhere except in the lap of its mother. If it is separated from her and finds itself at a distance from her, its life becomes bitter. Heaps of bounties fail to beguile it away from its mother in whom all its joy is concentrated. It feels no joy apart from her. What, then, is the nature of the attraction which an infant feels so strongly towards its mother? It is the attraction which the True Creator has implanted in the nature of man. The same attraction comes into play whenever a person feels love for another. It is a reflection of the attraction that is inherent in man's nature towards God, as if he is in search of something that he misses, the name of which he has forgotten and which he seeks to find in one thing or another which he takes up from time to time. A person's love of wealth or offspring or wife or his soul being attracted towards a musical voice are all indications of his search for the True Beloved. As man cannot behold with his physical eyes the Imperceptible Being, Who is latent like the quality of fire in everyone, but is hidden, nor can he discover Him through the mere exercise of imperfect reason, he has been misled grievously in his search and has mistakenly assigned His position to others.”(Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam P82)

So, if our beloved Prophet recommends that we should remember Allah much during these days especially and in other days as well he knows that such remembrance will profit us enormously. We will know only when we practice what he has recommended us. We could say more on this subject of Zikr but we will leave it for the time being. We should try during the coming days to seek forgiveness and to make supererogatory prayers and to deepen our relationship with Allah through reading and reflecting on the verses of the Holy Quran. Allah offers us days where He manifests His

Mercy more than usual. We would be stupid if we neglect such days or such hours. May Allah open our heart and may we profit by His Instructions.

Now I will read you extracts from the writings of the Promised Messiah in which he speaks generally about what we should be doing. He says:

“The door of the Grace and Benevolence of God is never closed. If a man turns to Him with all the sincerity of his heart, he would find that God is Forgiving and Merciful and He accepts the repentance of the man, who repents; it is mere impudence to think that God wouldn't be able to forgive so many persons. His Mercy is limitless; He is not short of anything whatsoever. His doors are never closed to anyone. It is not like the services with the Englishmen; they think as to how they would be able to employ the people if they were educated in large numbers. All those who will turn to God will get high ranks: it is a definite promise. Unfortunate is the person who loses hope in God-and he continues to be in that condition till he is breathing his last. When a man is out of his senses, while breathing his last, the door of the mercy of God, is, of course, closed to him-but only then and not before. (Malfoozat Vol. III, p.296)

Speaking about the fear and love of Allah he says:

“There are two parts of worship: one, that man should fear God as he ought to. The fear of God takes a man to the fountain of purity and his soul begins to melt and flow to the Unity of Godhead; that makes man real and true worshipper. Two, that man should love God as He deserves to be loved. God says: *wallazeena aamanoo ashaddo hubban lillah* (those who have believed, love God very strongly): we should take all the affections transitory and mortal and the love of God as real and true. These are the two rights that belong to God and He demands them from human beings. So far

as these two rights are concerned, almost all the modes of worship display them to some extent but Islam has enjoined two types of worships distinctly for these rights of God. Apparently, it seems to be impossible to combine fear and love; one begins to think, as to how can a man love the object which frightens him. But the fear of God and His love are of a different nature. The more a man advances in the fear of God, the more he begins to love Him. And the more he loves God, the more the fear of God begins to grip him fast and remove him away from the evil deeds and make him pure. In order to fulfil both these things, Islam has enjoined its followers to offer (five daily) prayers and to perform Hajj. The prayer manifests the aspect of fear while Hajj depicts the love of God. Whatever fear demands, we have it in various postures of the prayer: a man humbles himself and admits his being the servant of God. Whatever is done during Hajj shows different ways of love. In the extreme condition of love, at times, one does not feel the need of clothes; love is also a sort of madness and a lover cannot be looking after his clothes to maintain their fineness. There was a woman at Sialkot who was in love with a tailor-master. People tried all they could to restrain her but she would tear off her clothes and run to him. This condition of the dress is to be met with in the ceremonies of Hajj; one must shave off his head; one must run; one has to kiss-this is the kiss of affection (all religions have taken kissing to be a sign of affection). Slaughtering of the ram (sacrifice) is also a sign of excellence of love. Islam has given a comprehensive teaching for these two rights of God. Ignorant is the person who, because of his spiritual blindness objects to these things. (Malfoozat Vol. III, p.298-300)

May Allah help us to think about these words and may we put them into practice. If we are unable to go for Hajj , at least if we have means we

should sacrifice an animal or participate in its sacrifice. May Allah help us all to understand the philosophy of Eidul Adha and may we manifest it in our life incha Allah.