

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

By Allah's Grace we find ourselves once more gathered here in this mosque to celebrate the Eidul Fitr. I wish to extend to you, in particular, and to all Muslims in general, my Eid Mubarak greetings. We are quite happy that Allah has helped us to complete the fast and we have reached the day of Eid. It fills our heart with joy and we are thankful to Allah for His Favours. We should always remember that Allah says in the Holy Quran "*La in shakar toum la azidannakoum wa la'in kafartoum inna azabi la shadeed*", which means: "If you are thankful, I will give you more of My Favours; but if you are ungrateful, My Punishment will be severe." Incha Allah, our Lord will count all of us among His grateful servants.

Most of the adults amongst us were lucky enough to fast. *Alhamdulillah* here in Mauritius we have been fasting for only twelve and a half hours. But in many countries, people have fasted within a range of 15 to 23 hours. It is quite tough for them but nevertheless they did their best to keep these fasts because according to them they had to do it. When we hear of these Muslims declarations as they have been published on YouTube, we cannot but admire their determination to obey Allah against all odds and they inspire us to try to make greater efforts in the path of Allah. Allah imposed these fasts of the month of Ramadan on us for a limited number of days and now these days have come to an end for this year. It is our prayer and hope that Allah accepts our repentance and all our efforts and that we continue to have zest and zeal for obeying His commandments as Muslims generally do in the month of Ramadan.

Today is Eid Day. We are allowed to eat and drink and have some fun within the boundaries set by Islam. We are not allowed to exceed bounds. From a hadith, we learn that on an Eid day some Ethiopians were demonstrating their physical skills in Medina and people were watching. The Holy Prophet (saw) and Hazrat Ayesha also watched. The hadith as recounted by Hazrat Ayesha (ra) is as follows:

"By Allah, I remember the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) standing on the door of my apartment screening me with his mantle enabling me to see the sport of the Abyssinians as they played with their daggers in the mosque of the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him). He (the Holy Prophet) kept standing for my sake till I was satiated and then I went back; and thus, you can well imagine how long a girl tender of age who is fond of sports (could have watched it)". (Muslim)

In another Hadith She said:

“Abu Bakr came to see me and I had two girls with me from among the girls of the Ansar and they were singing what the Ansar recited to one another at the Battle of *Bu'ath* (battle between the tribes of Medina prior to Islam). They were not, however, singing girls. Upon this Abu Bakr said: What is (the playing of) this wind instrument of Satan in the house of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and this too on 'Id day? Upon this the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: Abu Bakr, every people have a festival and it is our festival (so let them play on).” (Muslim)

These hadiths help us to understand that some light entertainment is allowed but as I said we should not exceed bounds.

However, on Eid day instead of having the usual five daily prayers we pray a sixth time as well, that is the Eid Prayer which the Holy Prophet performed in the open ground in clear weather but inside the mosque if it were raining. Unfortunately, here we do not have the open space to perform our salat outside instead of within the mosque. In fact, if we examine the Eid day, its main feature is this gathering for prayer and for listening to the Imam's sermon and for exchanging Eid greetings with one another. So even on this day of joy we are reminded to remember our Lord more than in any other days by reading two *Rakaat* namaz in congregation. Hence under all circumstances the remembrance of Allah is still important according to the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw). We also learn from the hadith that the Holy prophet is reported to have said “*zouyyenou eidokoum bit takbir*” meaning “beautify your Eid with Takbir”, i.e. the repetition of “*Allaho Akbar Allaho Akbar laa ilaha illallah Allaho Akbar Allaho Akbar wa lillahil hamd*”. While proceeding to the open space for prayer the Holy Prophet (saw) used to recite these *takbir* and on his return to his residence also he used to recite them by taking a different route than the one he took on going there. Here we may just repeat the Takbirs while coming and going away from the mosque.

During the month of Ramadan, we had the opportunity to focus our life on our Creator, our Allah. The more we feel His presence in our life the greater will be our love of Him and our fear of His Punishment and the more we would try to stay away from sins. In fact, to get all our past sins forgiven was one of the objectives of fasting which is obligatory. In addition the Holy Prophet (saw) also said that the standing up for prayer at night (*Qiyam al layl*) whether it is *Tarawee* or *Tahajjud* and the seeking of the night of *Laylatoul Qadr* are there to help us to have our sins forgiven. To have one's sins forgiven is so important that the Promised Messiah said:

*“All the people should remember that Allah the Almighty has fixed such days in Islam which are considered days of happiness and He has put great blessings in those days. Among them is the day of Friday which is a very blessed day. Then there are the two*

*Eids in Islam which are considered days of great happiness and Allah has put amazing blessings in them. But one should remember that although these days are days of happiness and blessing in their own right but there is another day which is a day of much more happiness and greater blessings. But unfortunately, it is seen that people do not look forward to that day nor do they search for that day. In reality if people were aware of the blessings and goodness of that day then they would have considered the day a great reward. Which day is that which is better and more blessed than the day of **Jumma** and the **Eidain** [two Eids]? I tell you that it is the day of a man's repentance which is greater than all days and all Eids. Because that day his bad record of sins which was bringing him closer to the hellfire and bringing him under the wrath of God is wiped clean and all his sins are forgiven. Which day can be greater and happier for a person than the day which saves him from eternal hellfire and the wrath of God? The sinner who repents was previously far away from God's grace and close to his wrath but now he is brought close to God's grace and mercy and removed from the punishment of fire." (Mal'uzat, Vol. 4, pp. 114-115.)*

So as good practicing Muslims we have shown through our deeds during the month of Ramadan that we can wake up earlier to read some Tahajjud prayers before Fajr prayer. We have shown through our practical example we can read at least one part of the Holy Quran if we really wish to do so. We have shown to ourselves that we can recite *astaghfaar* and Darood Shareef a lot of times in order to have our sins forgiven and to cultivate greater love for the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw). We have shown that we can if we wish read all our prayers on time and not reduce them to only three times per day. While fasting we have proven to ourselves that we can exercise patience and not indulge in arguments with our close ones on minor matters. In addition, we have proved to ourselves that we can also put aside some money for Allah's cause to be spent on those who are poor. Furthermore, we controlled ourselves not to indulge into any sort of backbiting while we were fasting in order for our fasts to be pure enough to be presented to Allah. In brief we had plenty of opportunities to practice a level of Islam which we usually do not practice before in our life or which we have come to practice only in the month of Ramadan.

Now the question we should be asking ourselves is whether we will make the practicing of these virtues permanent in our life or do they just become a temporary feature of our life in the month of Ramadan only. I think that each one amongst us will agree that if we understand the purpose of the month of Ramadan well we should try to make the practice of virtue the signal feature our days, months and years. It is an uphill struggle for which we need help. This help will definitely come only from Allah. When we come to understand that we should obey all the commandments of

Allah and at the same time we become conscious of our own weaknesses, we eagerly turn to Allah for help. Then our heart will open itself for the seeking of this help and we will weep profusely at the threshold of Allah and ask Allah to help us to obey Him and to get rid of all our sins and to grant us the strength to stay firm on the right path.

Ramadan comes and goes but the struggle of the active Muslim never ends. We need to continue with our prayers and other virtues and try to get as close as possible to our Lord who is a treasure beyond compare. There is no one who can help us in our material life or our spiritual life as much as He can and to Him should we devote our life. We should all try to deepen our understanding of what is meant by the word *Taqwa* so that we might inculcate it within ourselves. It is here that the reading and study of the Holy Quran would help us enormously. I hope you will all take these simple advice into consideration and strive so that Allah could become the focus of your entire life insha Allah. I will end by reading you an extract from the writings of the Promised Messiah where he advises us on the importance of making supplications to Allah. He says:

“Thereafter (after you have gained knowledge), the very first urge felt by the soul, through God’s grace, is called *du‘a* [Supplication]. Do not think that we already pray every day, and that the Salat we offer is also prayer; for the prayer which follows true knowledge and is born of Divine grace is of an altogether different color and complexion. Such prayer is a thing that consumes, it is a fire that melts, it is a magnetic force that draws Divine mercy, it is a death but ultimately gives life, it is a raging flood but finally turns into a boat. Through it every wrong is redressed and every poison finally becomes an antidote. Blessed are the prisoners who never tire of supplication, for they shall one day be freed. Blessed are the blind who are not listless in their prayers, for they shall one day see. Blessed are those lying in graves who supplicate to God for help and succour, for one day they shall be taken out of their graves. Blessed are you who never tire of supplication, your soul melts in prayer, your eyes shed tears, and a fire kindles in your breast which takes you to dark closets and wildernesses so that you may taste solitude and drives you to restlessness and near madness, for you shall finally receive Divine bounties. The God to Whom I invite is very Gracious, Merciful, Modest, True, and Faithful. He bestows His mercy on the humble ones. You too should be faithful and pray with all sincerity and faith so that He may bestow His mercy on you. Dissociate yourselves from the commotion of the world and do not give religious complexion to your egoistic disputes. Accept defeat for the sake of God so that you may become heirs to great victories. God will show miracles to those who supplicate and those who ask will be blessed with

extraordinary grace. Prayer comes from God and to Him it returns. Through prayer God becomes as close to you as your very life.” (Lecture Sialkot page 31)

May Allah help each one among us to be among His most sincere and loyal servants. May He accept all the good deeds that we have striven to present to Him during this month of Ramadan and may He make them a permanent feature of our life. Eid Mubarak to you all once more.

Before ending, I also wish to share with you that on Thursday morning when I was waking up I received the following verse: “*Al salamo alaykoun*” which as you know means “Peace be upon you”. I understood that it is a message of peace from Allah to us all. Then it was revealed to me “*Inna ja’alnaaka Shahidan wa mubasheraw wa nazira wa da’iyan illalhi be iznehi wa sirajam munira*” meaning “we have made you a witness, a harbinger of good news and a warner and a summoner unto Allah by his permission and a light giving lamp.” Then I received “*tahiyatohoum yawma yalqawnahou salam*” meaning “the greeting on the day that they will meet Him is “*salam*”. As soon as I woke up I understood that the meaning of the first words that I received were for us all and a sign of acceptance of all our efforts during the blessed month. By Allah’s Grace, I have already spoken about the other signs that we received during the month during my previous sermons. May Allah make this Ramadan that we have just gone through a source of great spiritual bounties for us all. Ameen.