

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

Today will most probably be the last Jummah for this year's holy month of Ramadan. According to information published by reliable sources on the net, the new moon of Shawwal will be born on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> June at 19:43 UT (Universal Time). For us here, it will be 23:43 local time. Nowhere in the world will the moon be visible on that day. Weather permitting it should be visible on Thursday next. So, in all likelihood, Eid Festival will be celebrated on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> June incha Allah. If that is the case, in Mauritius, we will incha Allah celebrate Eid here, in Baitul Rahma mosque at 9:00 am sharp. If due to weather conditions, the moon is not been visible in Mauritius, then incha Allah we will celebrate Eid on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June at the same time. So, we will consider this Jummah to be the farewell Jummah (*Jummatoul Widah*) for this year.

Of course, we are not saying that this Jummah is special in the sense that if you attend it you will have all your past sins forgiven. Nowhere, neither in the Holy Quran nor in the hadiths, do we read that this Jummah has this purpose. It is a Jummah like any other except for the fact that it is the last one that we have in the month of Ramadan this year. Since good deeds performed during all the days and nights of the month of Ramadan are amply rewarded, this Jummah is no exception. As you are well aware, the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) is reported to have said "whoever discharges an obligatory deed in (this month) shall receive the reward of performing seventy obligations at any other time." Since it is incumbent upon all male Muslims to attend Jummah every week, this attendance will be particularly rewarded for all attendees. In this sense, it is particularly special. Participating is a great blessing indeed. However, it is foolish to think that all our sins will be washed if we just attend it. Anyhow, those who fast should try to be engaged in optional prayers, in remembrance of Allah, in sending Darood on the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw), in giving charity, in asking for forgiveness throughout the day and hope that all these would be accepted by Allah. It is in this way that we can make this day a really significant day of Ramadan, incha Allah.

We have some interesting hadiths about the last ten days of Ramadan and about the *Laylatoul Qadr* which might be experienced in its last nights. First of all, we learn that when the last decade of the month of Ramadan arrived, the Holy Prophet (saw) renewed his efforts for worship of Allah and gave much in charity. Contrary to most people, the Holy Prophet (saw) felt the need for doubling his efforts in seeking Allah's Blessings and Pardon and he did not in anyway show any sign of tiredness or weakness. He knew with certainty that he had to increase his devotions and be washed of all sorts of sins.

Hazrat A'ishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported:

“The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) used to strive more in worship during Ramadan than he strove in any other time of the year; and he would devote himself more (in the worship of Allah) in the last ten nights of Ramadan than he did in earlier part of the month.” (Muslim).

In another hadith the Holy Prophet said “Whoever observes fasts during the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith, and hoping to attain Allah’s rewards, then all his past sins will be forgiven.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim). Similarly, he said “Whoever stands (in the voluntary night prayer) in *Laylat Al-Qadr* out of faith and in hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven”. (Al-Bukhari) He also said “Whoever stands (in the voluntary night prayer of) Ramadan out of faith and in hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven”. (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

When we read all these hadiths together, we understand that Allah has opened for us plenty of avenues to get all our sins forgiven during the month of Ramadan. First just by fasting, second by offering optional prayers at night and third by offering prayers in the night of *laylatul Qadr*. With such generosity from Allah, we would indeed be quite foolish not to grab these opportunities. We need just to have faith and rely upon Allah so that He might help us to make the best of the opportunities from redemption that He is offering each one amongst us.

Concerning the time of *Laylatoul Qadr* in the month of Ramadan, there is one hadith which is as follows:

‘Ubaadah bin ‘Saamit R.A. said, ‘Once Rasulullah S.W. S.W. came out to inform us the true date of *Laylatul Qadr*. (Unfortunately, at that time) an argument took place between two Muslim men, whereupon he said, “I came out in order to inform you as to when *Laylatul Qadr* was, but because two people argued (the fixing of the correct date) was taken away. Perhaps that is better for you. So, seek it among the ninth, seventh and fifth nights”. (Mishkaat)

From this hadith we learn that arguing, especially during the month of Ramadan, is bad: it made the Holy Prophet forget the time of *laylatoul Qadr*. We should bear this in mind.

Now when it might occur I have read that most hadiths point that it should be sought in the odd nights, namely, 21<sup>st</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>. But opinions amongst the Ulama differ. I have read that Ibn Arabi, famous Muslim saint who lived in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, is reported to have said:

“In my opinion the view of those who believe that *Laylatul Qadr* comes on various nights throughout the year, is most correct, because twice have I seen it in Sha’baan once on the 15th, and once on 19th and twice have I seen it in the middle ten nights of Ramadan, the 13th, and the 18th. and I have also seen it on every odd night of the last ten, for this reason I am certain that it could occur on any night of the year but comes mostly in Ramadan”

Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

“The Prophet was the most generous of all people, and he used to become more generous in Ramadan when Gabriel met him. Gabriel used to meet him every night during Ramadan to revise the Qur’an with him. So, Allah’s Messenger then used to be more generous than the fast wind.” (Al-Bukhari)

We also learn from the hadith that when Hazrat Ayesha asked the Holy Prophet (saw) what should be read if one witnesses the *laylatul Qadr*, he advised her to say the following prayer: “*Allahoumma innaka afouwoun tohibboul afwa fa’fo anni*” meaning “O my Lord You are the effacer of sins, You love to efface sins, efface my sins.” If one does not know this prayer by heart one should try to learn it. If even then one is unable to recite it in Arabic, one can say the translation in one’s own language.

So, one may conclude that to cultivate righteousness, which is the ultimate objective of fasting, one should do one’s best to have one’s sins forgiven by Allah during the month of Ramadan at least once every year. It is Allah’s love for mankind that He sends this opportunity to us once every year because He loves to see us sinless. If we do not do what is required of us to have our sins forgiven, then we are among those who are most unfortunate. We should all be ever grateful to Allah that He has granted us so many opportunities in our life to have our sins forgiven. May we all be conscious of our responsibilities and may we all be among those people who have been forgiven all their sins at the end of each Ramadan, incha Allah.

So even if Ramadan is coming to an end next week we should not relax our efforts in reading the Holy Quran with a view to deepen our understanding of its verses. Similarly, we should not show weakness in offering our prayers with full concentration and find time to recite *astaghfaar* and *Darood Shareef*. We cannot and should not be content with our success; we should always try to advance further. The Promised Messiah explains this matter thus:

“So far as the Religious leader and his follower are concerned, they are like a teacher and a disciple (student). Just as the student benefits from the teacher, also does the follower from the Religious leader. But if it so happens that despite the fact that the student stays with the teacher, he does not advance in his studies, that cannot be of any avail to him. Same is the case with the follower. That being the situation, it is necessary that after one is linked with the Religious leader, one should try to advance in the knowledge of religion and in God-realization. The seeker after having reached some length must not stop, otherwise Satan would make him busy in some other kind of things. Just as static water begins to stink, if the believer does not make effort for his advancement, he falls down. The good-natured people, therefore, must always, keep themselves busy in religious affairs.

There never has been a man more perfect than the Holy Prophet, *sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*, in the world but God taught him *Rabbi zidnee ilma* (O my God increase me in

knowledge). Who else, then, can trust his knowledge and God-realization and stop moving forward because he thinks that he has got enough of these things. The more a man advances in knowledge and God-realization, the more he begins to feel that he needs to know a lot more.

There are certain things which, in the beginning, look to be meaningless just as a child thinks that the diagrams of Mathematics are meaningless. But having advanced further, they come to know that those very points were real and true. That is why it is vitally important that with the change of one's position, one should try to carry their knowledge nearer to completion. You have left a lot of meaningless things and joined this dispensation and if now you do not try to know the whole truth and you do not get insight into all what you have received here, you will not be able to benefit from joining this dispensation and you will not be able to attain to certainty; your doubts will make you stumble at every step. (Malfoozat, Vol. III, p.193)

With these words I end today's sermon with the hope and prayer that Allah grants His Pardon to each one amongst us and that we come to realize that without Him we are nothing despite all our achievements. May we all complete the fast for this year and may we all complete our journey to Allah in our own life time, incha Allah.

I ended writing this sermon on Wednesday around 11AM. I was feeling very sleepy. So, I went to take a nap. As I laid my head on my pillow, I received the following soothing and forceful message from Allah, the Great:

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا ۝  
لِيُغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِن ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا  
تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ  
صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ۝

These are the two verses of Sura Al Fath (49). It is translated as follows:

*“Verily, we have granted thee a clear victory, That Allah may cover up for thee thy shortcomings, past and future, and that He may complete His favour upon thee, and may guide thee on a right path”* (49:1-2)

I thought that I might share it with you all so that each one amongst us should know that we should make our own efforts and Allah, out of His Grace, will deal with us with His Forgiveness and His Mercy. We should have firm faith in the Promise of Allah and continue to pray to Him till our last breath, incha Allah. Personally, I think the victory spoken of here is the Promise of Forgiveness that has been granted. I will incha Allah speak more about this in the Eid Sermon.