

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

After an intense month of spiritual exercises, we have again entered a relaxed post-Ramadan period. After Ramadan, despite their best intentions, most Muslims are not as keen to offer prayers on time or to daily read the Holy Quran or to pray namaz Tahajjud or even to offer optional prayers or to say *Astaghfaar* or even to send *Darood* on the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw). Even the presence of Muslims in mosque suffers a decline. It is an unfortunate situation but we can only lament this fact and keep advising people that such should not be the case. We need to constantly remind ourselves that sooner or later we will be summoned to Allah and He will question us concerning the extent to which we faithfully implemented all His commandments and stayed away from all the prohibitions about which He cautioned us.

There is no denying the fact that during Ramadan we have an exceptional zeal to obey Allah. But Allah expects us to carry this zeal throughout our life so that we might get a greater share of His Blessings. So, we should not take this matter lightly and delude ourselves in thinking that we have done enough during the recent month of Ramadan and we will do more again in the coming of another Ramadan. Indeed, we have offered special devotions to Allah during the month of Ramadan and now we should pray that Allah accepts what we have offered. Allah is Self-sufficient. He does not need our devotions. He is the one who helped us offer these devotions for our own benefit. It is befitting now that we thank Him for His Graciousness towards us so that we might get even more of His Favours.

There is a famous Hadith Qudsi which helps us to understand how much we need Allah in our life. It runs as follows:

The Holy Prophet (saw) said that Allah said :

“My slaves! I have forbidden injustice for Myself, so it is forbidden amongst you. So, do not be unjust to each other.

O My slaves! All of you are liable to go astray except the one whom I guide on the right path. So (always) seek guidance from Me, I will guide you.

O My slaves! All of you are hungry except the one whom I feed. So, ask Me for food. I shall feed you.

O My slaves! All of you are naked except the one whom I make wear. So, ask Me to make you wear and I shall make you wear.

O My slaves! You commit mistakes (sins) by day and night; and I forgive all the sins. So, ask Me forgiveness, I shall forgive you (your sins).

O My slaves! You will not attain harming Me so as to harm Me, and you will not attain benefiting Me so as to benefit Me.

O My slaves! Were the first of you and the last of you, the human being of you and the jinn of you to be as pious as the most pious heart of anyone of you, that would not increase My kingdom in anything.

O My slaves! Were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to be as wicked as the most wicked heart of anyone of you, that would not decrease My kingdom in anything.

O My slaves! Were the first of you, the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to rise up in any place and make a request to Me and I have to give everyone what he requested, that would not decrease what I have, anything more than a needle decreases the sea if it is put into it.

O My slaves! Rather it is but your deeds which I will reckon for you, and then recompense for. So, let he, who finds good, praise Allah and let he, who finds other than that, blame no one but himself". (This is a sound hadith reported by Muslim).

So, we should all develop within us this thought that we consider Allah to be greater than anybody who exists and anything that we might possess.

Since we are speaking about some Hadiths, I will tell you a one more just to remind us all more about Allah and understand how He is the pillar of our existence.

Allah is a Forgiver *par excellence*. There is no one like Him. If we are sincere in our seeking of forgiveness, He will forgive us. Hazrat Abu Huraira (ra) narrates: "I heard Prophet Muhammad (saw) say: a sin was committed by one of the slaves (or maybe he said: one of the slaves committed a sin). He said: O my Lord! I have committed a sin, (or he said, a sin was committed by me). So please forgive me. His Lord would say: Does My slave know that he has a Lord who can forgive him and (if He likes) can punish him. Anyhow, I have forgiven My slave. No sooner does the time elapse as much as Allah wishes, then is another sin committed by him or he commits another sin. He says: O my Lord! I have committed a sin, (or a sin was committed by me). So please forgive it. Allah will observe: Does My slave know that he has a Lord who can forgive him and (if He likes) punish him too. Anyhow, I have forgiven him again. No sooner does the time elapse as much as Allah wishes, than is another sin committed by him or he commits another sin. He says: O my Lord! I have committed another sin, (or sometimes he says

another sin is committed by me). So please forgive it. Allah will remark: Does My slave know that he has a Lord who can forgive him and (if He likes) can punish him too. Anyhow, I have forgiven him for the third time. So, let him do whatever he wishes”. (This Hadith is sound and reported by Bukhari and Muslim).

Man is quite weak. Yet if he recognizes that Allah forgives sins and asks Him for forgiveness, Allah will forgive him until he removes the desire to commit such a sin from his heart. So as long as we live we should seek His forgiveness, hence the need for constantly repeating the supplication “I seek forgiveness from Allah.” Never should a believer doubt that Allah can forgive him provided he is ready to come to Allah with a repentant heart.

Here I am reminded again of the incident which happened in the life of Shibli who a Muslim divine was who lived in the 9th century CE. His story is told thus by the second caliph of Jamaat Ahmadiyya mainstream. He said:

“Shiblī was a great saint. He came from an affluent family and was a governor under the king of Baghdad. He came to the capital for consultation concerning some issue. During the same days, a commander-in-chief had been sent to face an enemy who had defeated many armies previously. The commander defeated the enemy and won the lost lands back for the country. On his return, the commander was given a grand reception in Baghdad. The king summoned a special court to reward the commander. The king proposed that a robe of honor be given to the commander to recognize his services. Unfortunately, on his way back from the journey, he had developed a runny nose, and he had also forgotten to bring his handkerchief with him. After the bestowal of the robe, according to the tradition, he was to respond saying, “I am grateful to you that you have been gracious to me, and my generations will be your servant because of these four yards of cloth.” While the commander was getting ready for the speech, suddenly he sneezed, and had a nasal drip. If he had spoken with a runny nose, he might have been killed. He searched in confusion, and not finding the handkerchief, he sneakily cleaned his nose with a portion of the robe. Unfortunately, the king saw the incident. The king roared, “Take away his robe. He has disgraced our robe. He cleaned his nose with our gift.” As the king said this, Shiblī let out a shriek and started crying. As there was piety in the heart, there was righteousness in him; God had kept an opportunity for his guidance. When Shiblī let out a shriek, the king said, “I am angry with the commander. Why are you crying?” Shiblī stood up and said, “O King, I present my resignation.” The king said, “What is this untimely request? What has come over you, and why are you resigning?” Shiblī said, “Oh King, I cannot carry out my responsibility.” The king said, “What is the matter?” While weeping, Shiblī submitted, “This commander left this place two years ago. He was sent to a war which many great generals had lost. He was sent to an area which could not be

retaken. He stayed away for two years. He went to the forests, mountains, and continuously fought with the enemy. He died every day, every morning, every evening. Every night his wife thought that she would wake up as a widow in the morning. Every morning, as she woke up, she thought that the evening will come and she will be a widow. Every evening as his children went to sleep, they thought that they would wake up orphans. Every morning when they woke up, they imagined that they would be orphans by the evening. He conquered that country after a persistent sacrifice and brought it back under your rule. In return you gave him a few yards of cloth, which did not have much value. Just because he was compelled to wipe off his nose with the robe, you became so angry with him. Then, how will I respond to that God who gave me a body which cannot be built by any king? Who has given me this robe and I am dirtying it for your sake. What answer will I give to my Lord?" Shiblī said this and left the court. But he was such a cruel and merciless person that when he went to a mosque and wanted to repent, everyone responded the same: "Get out of here. Can the repentance of a Devil be accepted?" He started visiting all of the places nearby but no one had the courage to accept his repentance. Finally, he visited Junaid Baghdādī and told him of his improprieties and that he wanted to repent. "Can my repentance be accepted?" he asked. Junaid said, "Yes, but with a condition. First you will have to accept that condition." Shiblī said, "Tell me what it is, for I am ready to accept any condition." Junaid said, "Go back to the city where you were the governor. Knock at every door and ask for their forgiveness. Ask for the forgiveness of the excesses you have committed." Shiblī said, "I accept." So, he went to the city. He knocked at every door. When the people responded, he said, "I am Shiblī who was the governor here. I have made mistakes, and I have committed excesses against you. I ask for your forgiveness." The people said, "We forgive you." The seed of piety always grows and bears fruit. After he had passed by a dozen or so homes, the news spread through the town like fire that the governor, who was known to be cruel, was going door to door today, and was asking for forgiveness. Spiritual fountains erupted out of people's hearts. They said, "Our Lord is so great that He provides opportunities for piety and repentance and righteousness even to such an aggressor." So, it passed, that Shiblī, following the instructions of Junaid, knocked door to door, bare-foot, but rather than having the doors opening with complaints and disenchantments, people came out weeping, saying, "Do not embarrass us, you are an honorable person to us. You are our spiritual leader. Do not embarrass us like this." In short, Shiblī asked the whole town for forgiveness, and then he returned to Junaid. Junaid accepted his repentance and included him among his students. Now, Shiblī is considered among the greatest saints of Islam." (Points to ponder Page 16)

So, there is no doubt that Allah likes to forgive His sinning servants. But the servants should be eager to get that forgiveness and if they are sincere in acknowledging their

faults. It is only then that they will be forgiven. Those who have sinned should learn from Shibli and start asking for forgiveness for all the sins that they have done and what they have forced others to do. May Allah forgive us all our excesses and may He help those who have sinned against us to acknowledge their sins and may we willingly forgive them once they do so. *Ameen.*