
by Imam Zafrullah Domun

By Allah's Grace the holy and blessed month of Ramadan is approaching very fast. *Incha* Allah according to published information we will start fasting here in Mauritius, as from Tuesday 7th May. We should all do our best to fast and derive the greatest blessings that are attached to this blessed month. Those amongst us who may have some problems they should make the intention to fast and seek Allah's help so that they might be able to fast. Allah is All Powerful and He can grant capacity to anyone who might be in need of His help. For those do not have any excuses not to fast they should all as well pray that Allah maintain their health so that they might be able to engage in intense prayers and remembrance of Allah as best as they can. Let us all start praying as from now on if we have not already started that we can prepare ourselves to derive all the benefits of the blessed month of Ramadan as best as we can *incha* Allah.

During the Ramadan Friday sermons we will *incha* Allah talk about verses of the Holy Quran and some *Ahadiths*, but for today we will just say a few words about Ramadan so that we might get into the right frame of mind to start fasting *incha* Allah. We will also read some more extracts from the writings of the Promised Messiah (As). The Promised Messiah (as) tells us:

“Fasting is not merely staying hungry and thirsty; rather its reality and its impact can only be gained through experience. It is human nature that the less one eats, the more one's spirit is purified and thus his capacity for [spiritual] visions increases. The will of God is to decrease one kind of sustenance and to increase the other. A person who is fasting should always be mindful that he is not just required to stay hungry. On the contrary, he should remain engaged in the remembrance of God so that he can cut asunder ties of worldly desires and amusements and is wholly devoted to God. Hence, the significance of fasting is this alone that man gives up one kind of sustenance which only nourishes the body and attains the other kind of sustenance which is a source of comfort and gratification for the soul.” (*Malfuzat* Vol. 5 P102)

“During that month one should discard one's preoccupation with eating and drinking; and cutting asunder from these needs should address oneself wholly

towards God. Unfortunate is the person who is bestowed material bread and pays no attention to spiritual bread. Material bread strengthens the body, and spiritual bread sustains the soul and sharpens the spiritual faculties. Seek the Grace of God, as all doors are opened by His grace.” (Essence of Islam Vol 2 P316)

In Islam we do not fast to rest our body. We do not fast to become slim. We do not fast just because everyone is fasting. We fast because fasting is one of the means that Allah says can make us righteous. We need all to bear this well in mind that we do not fast just to remain hungry and thirsty. Rather whilst we are hungry and thirsty we should make the additional effort to develop in ourselves such an overpowering presence of Allah that under all circumstances, whether we are being seen or not we should remain away from all sorts of sins. The Promised Messiah (as) says that we come to understand fasting's effects only through experience. If we content ourselves to just being hungry and thirsty we will not achieve much. In the world we see many people who do not well understand the philosophy of fasting and there is no transformation or to use a lesser word, no change in their perception of life after a month of fasting. But a good Muslim should aim much higher and he or she should wish for and pray that Allah embellishes him or her with the raiment of righteousness (*libaasut taqwa*) because it is righteousness, piety which is the true aim of fasting.

Since we will have plenty of opportunities to pray during the month of Ramadan I am sharing with you some beautiful prayers of the Holy prophet Muhammad (saw) where righteousness is sought. I hope you will care to read and learn them and with these words during Ramadan and even after. Try them and you will notice what types of change they will bring in your life.

Hadrat Zaid bin Arqam (ra) relates one of the prayers of the Holy Prophet(saw).

اللَّهُمَّ آتِ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا، وَزَكِّهَا أَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا، أَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا
وَمَوْلَاهَا۔²²⁹

“O Allah, instill Your fear in my soul, purify it as You are the best of those who purify. You are its Master and Guardian.”

Hadrat ‘Abdullah (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (saw) frequently used to recite this prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْهُدَى وَالتَّقَى وَالْعِفَافَ وَالْغِنَى.

“O Allah, I beg You to grant me guidance and Your fear. I beg You for chastity and contentment.”

Hazhrat ‘A’isha (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (saw) used to recite this supplication:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَحْسَنُوا اسْتَبَشَرُوا وَإِذَا أَسَاؤُوا
اسْتَغْفَرُوا.

“O Allah, make me one of those who do good and attain pleasure from it and one of those, who when they do wrong seek Your forgiveness.”

We also learn that the Holy Prophet (saw) is reported to have said that he saw Allah in a beautiful manifestation and Allah instructed him to recite the following prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ، وَ تَرْكَ الْمُنْكَرَاتِ، وَحُبَّ
الْمَسَاكِينِ، وَإِذَا أَرَدْتَ فِتْنَةَ قَوْمٍ فَأَقْبِضْنِي إِلَيْكَ غَيْرَ مَفْتُونٍ.

“O Allah, I beg You to grant me the ability to do good and refrain from evil deeds. Confer the love of the poor on me. When You intend to put people in trials, take control of my soul without putting it in trial”

These are just some simple but very important prayers that you can learn and read during the coming month of Ramadan and after as well.

Now I will read a few more extracts from the writings of the Promised Messiah (as). He said:

“The fact is that man has created many gods for himself. When he puts his trust in his own cleverness and machinations, then those are his gods. If he takes pride in his knowledge or power, then those are his gods. If he prides himself on his beauty or wealth, then those are his gods. In short he has thousands of gods. But until one becomes weary of all these gods, and surrenders to the One

and Peerless God, and calls him with deep anguish, he cannot understand his true God. So, while many people say that they offer this prayer, it is only truly uttered when it is offered with heart-melting anguish, and when it is uttered with the conviction that one is beckoning the One True God. When this comes about, then will he understand the true God and truly pray to Him.”

We can understand from this extract how much effort we should put in so that we might arrive at such a stage where Allah becomes the be all and end all of our existence. It is only Allah’s Grace that will elevate us. To get that Grace we need to humble ourselves and seek Him with fervent prayers and strive to obey all of His instructions.

He says further:

“Allah says that I created the Jinn and men so that they may recognize Me and worship Me. Thus, in light of this verse, the purpose of man’s creation is to worship God, know Him, and become His completely. It is obvious man is in no position to set his own purpose in life. For, man neither comes of his own will, nor departs of his own will. He is only a creation whom God has blessed with greater powers as compared to other creatures and made him the best of creation. Thus, he has set a purpose for him. Whether man understands or not, the purpose of his creation is worship of God, to know Him, and become immersed in Him. When man puts this purpose before him, he becomes a true believer. Then, he also uses the good of this world as a means to attain the pleasure of Allah.”

“I have told my Community again and again not to rely merely on their *baī‘at*, because until you reach the depth of its essence you cannot attain salvation. One who is content with the shell is deprived of the essence. It is not enough to look at the superficial aspect until you try to achieve what is within. If a disciple does not practice, the teaching of the guide will not benefit him. A person who receives a prescription from the doctor and puts it away in the cupboard and does not use it will not benefit from it, and he cannot complain if he is not cured. The same is true of those who suffer from spiritual maladies. If they listen but do not act, then the teaching is of no use, because the benefit lies in practicing what he’s been advised of, but of that he has deprived himself. Read *Kashtīe- Nūh* again and again and mould yourselves accordingly. “Surely, he prospers who purifies himself” (91:10).”

Just belonging to the Jamaat of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) without striving for self-purification will not benefit anyone at all. Unless and until a member of the Jamaat does not realize that he has to embark on a journey to Allah by facing many trials he would not amount to anything at all. Ramadan gives us ample opportunities to change the way we live. We should avail ourselves of the great opportunities that Allah grants us to reform ourselves and to do our best to join the group of Allah's Friends. If someone thinks that by just being an Ahmadi one has fulfilled one's obligations one would be mistaken. Each one amongst us should make an effort to know the writings of the Promised Messiah (as) and once we know them we should do our best by seeking Allah's help to implement these teachings in our daily life. May Allah help us all to do so by His Grace.

And our last extract for today is as follows:

“God's pleasure does not lie in somebody's physique or this or that tribe; He always looks towards the *Taqwa* (righteousness and the quality of fearing God).

Inna akramakum indallahi atqakum

(That is, the most honourable in the sight of God is the one among you who is most God fearing). It is quite false and meaningless to say that I am a Sayyed, a Mughal, a Pathan or a Sheikh. If somebody takes pride in his caste being a great one, he does something that is of no value. When a man has passed away from this world, all the castes become non-existent. God does not look to the castes nor man can attain to salvation because he belongs to a 'great family'. The Holy Prophet, *sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*, told Hazrat Fatima not to take pride in being the daughter of a Messenger of God. God has nothing to do with the castes. The man attains to spiritual ranks because of his *Taqwa*. The castes and the tribes are just a matter of recognition. God has nothing to do with them.

It is *Taqwa* that generates the love of God and again it is *Taqwa* that is the basis of the attainment of high ranks.

If somebody is a Sayyed and he becomes a Christian and abuses the Holy Prophet, *sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*, and insults the commandments of God, can it ever be said that since he is a descendant of the Holy Prophet (saw) he will attain to salvation and he will be made to enter the paradise?”

May Allah help each one amongst us to be sincerely devoted to Him. May He help us so that we might fast and draw nearer to Him in this coming month of Ramadan and may He forgive us all our sins because He is the Forgiver and The Merciful. Ameen.