

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

As always, the holy month of Ramadan is passing by at great speed. We just started and we are already on the 11th day of fasting. As from today, we are entering the first ten days of the manifestation of Allah's forgiveness. From the books of hadith, we know of the following words from the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw):

1. The five (daily) prayers, and from one Friday prayer to the next, and from Ramadan to Ramadan are expiation for sins committed in between provided one stays away from the major sins. (*Al-Bukhari*)
2. 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*)
3. 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*)
4. 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*)

These few hadiths make it quite clear for us that with the month of Ramadan, Allah wants to manifest His mercy and His forgiveness to His servants. He gives us the opportunity to clean ourselves of all our sins provided we sincerely repent of them. We would be called ill fated if we do not seize this occasion to think of all the wrongs that we might have done in our life and ask forgiveness for all of them and try to make amends for them as best as we can. In fact, we keep away from enjoyable food and drink in order to think about our own life, how we have spent it up till now. There is no other occasion in the year where the opportunity to have ourselves washed of all our sins is so generously given to us. So, we will be real losers if we do not make the most of what we are given. In one hadith Abu Huraira reported:

“The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, ascended the pulpit and he said, “***Amin, amin, amin.***” It was said, “O Messenger of Allah, you ascended the pulpit and said *amin, amin, amin.*” The Prophet said, “**Verily, Gabriel came to me and he said: Whoever reaches the month of Ramadan and he is not forgiven, then he will enter Hellfire and Allah will cast him far away, so say *amin*. I said *amin*. Whoever sees his parents in their old age, one or both of them, and he does not honour them and he dies, then he will enter Hellfire and Allah will cast him far away, so say *amin*. I said *amin*. Whoever has your name mentioned in his presence and he does not send blessings upon you and he dies, then he will enter Hellfire and Allah will cast him far away, so say *amin*. I said *amin*.**”

The hadith is quite explicit and needs no commentary. So, we have a unique opportunity to be forgiven and we should take it because there is no guarantee that we will see another Ramadan in our life except by Allah’s Grace. May Allah help each one amongst us that we make it a duty to recite as much *istighfaar* as we can during this month and also the prayer “*Allahoumma innaka afouwoune tohibbul afwa fa’fo anni*” meaning “O my Lord You are the Effacer of sins, You like to efface sins, efface my sins”. This was the prayer that the Holy Prophet (saw) recommended Hazrat Ayesha (ra) to recite if she happened to see the *laylatul Qadr* but there is no harm at all in reciting this prayer as much as you can even in the other months of the year. There are two other prayers of Hazrat Adam (as) and Hazrat Moosa (as) that are most appropriate to recite. The first one is:

“Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves and if Thou forgive us not and have not mercy on us, we shall be of the lost.” (7:24)

The other one is that of Hazrat Moosa (as) when he killed a *man* and he prayed “*O my Lord I have wronged my soul please forgive me.*” (28:16)

Similarly, there are plenty of important prayers from the Holy Quran which may be recited. There is an interesting book where all these prayers have been compiled on

www.alislam.org/library/books/Treasure-House-of-Prayers.pdf

Members will profit a lot by looking for the book on this address and downloading it. I am sure you will be touched by what you will read. We pray that Allah grant you such an opportunity. In these days of Ramadan, the recitation of these prayers can be a good way to spend your time.

Try to use these prayers. If you cannot, simply say *astaghfirullah* which means 'I seek forgiveness from Allah' as much as you can and wherever you are with a desire to get rid of all your sins. In another interesting Hadith we read that "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "If anyone constantly seeks pardon (from Allah), Allah will appoint for him a way out of every distress and a relief from every anxiety and will provide sustenance for him from where he expects not."(Abu Dawud) May Allah help each one amongst us to be forgiven by His Grace.

Now I will read to you another version of the Hadith speaking about the excellences of the month of Ramadan. It is good to keep these in mind while we are fasting.

"O People ! Indeed ahead of you is the blessed month of Allah. A month of blessing, mercy and forgiveness. A month which with Allah is the best of months. Its days, the best of days, its nights, the best of nights, and its hours, the best of hours. It is the month which invites you to be the guests of Allah and invites you to be one of those near to Him. Each breath you take glorifies him; your sleep is worship; your deeds are accepted and your supplications are answered.

So, ask Allah, your Lord; to give you a sound body and an enlightened heart so you might be able to fast and recite His Book, for only he is unhappy who is devoid of Allah's forgiveness during this great month. Remember the hunger and thirst of the day of *Qiyamah* (Judgement) with your hunger and thirst; give alms to the needy and poor, honour your old, show kindness to the young ones, maintain relations with your blood relations; guard your tongues, close your eyes to that which is not permissible for your sight, close your ears to that which is forbidden to hear, show compassion to the orphans of people, so compassion may be shown to your orphans.

Repent to Allah for your sins and raise your hands in *dua* during these times, for they are the best of times and Allah looks towards his creatures with kindness, replying to them during the hours and granting their needs if He is asked ...

"O People! Indeed your souls are dependent on your deeds, free it with *Istighfar* (repentance) lighten its loads by long prostrations; and know that Allah swears by his might: That there is no punishment for the one who prays and prostrates and he shall have no fear of the fire on the day when man stands before the Lord of the worlds".

"O People! One who gives Iftaar to a fasting person during this month will be like one who has freed someone and his past sins will be forgiven. Some of the people who were there then asked the Prophet (s): "Not all of us are able to invite those who are fasting?"

The Prophet replied: "Allah gives this reward even if the Iftaar (meal) is a drink of water."

"One who has good morals (*Akhlaq*) during this month will be able to pass the '*Siraat*' ... on the day that feet will slip ...

"One who covers the faults of others will benefit in that Allah will curb His anger on the day of Judgement ...

"As for one who honours an orphan; Allah will honour him on the day of judgement,

"And for the one who spreads his kindness, Allah will spread His mercy over him on the day of Judgement.

"As for the one who cuts the ties of relation; Allah will cut His mercy from him ...

"Who so ever performs a recommended prayer in this month Allah will keep the fire of Hell away from him ...

"Whoever performs an obligatory prayer Allah will reward him with seventy prayers [worth] in this month.

"And who so ever prays a lot during this month will have his load lightened on the day of measure.

"He who recites one verse of the Holy Quran will be given the rewards of reciting the whole Quran during other months.

"O People! Indeed, during this month, the doors of heaven are open, therefore ask Allah not to close them for you; the doors of hell are closed, so ask Allah to keep them closed for you. During this month Satan is imprisoned so ask your Lord not to let him have power over you."

These words awaken and motivate us to be eager to fast and pray and seek forgiveness with the hope of being forgiven. If we examine ourselves, we will notice that despite the fact that we try our best not to sin, it happens very often. Here I am not speaking about the major sins like murder adultery or rebellion. I am speaking of minor ones like speaking with contempt, thinking ill of others, not exercising proper control on our senses, indulging in idle talk, speaking ill of others, swearing or similar ones. If we want to advance in becoming a better person we will have to avoid these minor sins as well. Ramadan is the ideal time for developing discipline and correcting all our wrong habits. Allah takes us as His guests in this month and we should all show ourselves worthy of such an honour.

We will end with two extracts from the writings of the Promised Messiah (as):

"It is obvious that man is very weak by nature and has been charged with hundreds of Divine commandments. On account of his weakness, he falls short in carrying out some Divine commandments and sometimes he is overcome by the desires of the self that incite to evil. On account of his weak nature, he deserves that at the time of any slipping, if he should repent and seek forgiveness, God's mercy should save him from being ruined. It is a certainty that if God had not been the Acceptor of repentance, man would not

have been charged with these hundreds of commandments. This proves conclusively that God turns towards man with mercy and is Most Forgiving.

Taubah (Repentance) means that a person should discard a vice with the resolve that thereafter, even if he is thrown into the fire, he would not commit that vice. When man turns towards God Almighty with such sincerity and firm resolve, then God, who is Benevolent and Merciful, forgives him that particular sin. It is one of the high Divine attributes that God accepts repentance and saves a sinner from ruin. If man had not the hope of his repentance being accepted, he would not be able to refrain from sinning. The Christians also believe in repentance, but on condition that the person who repents should be a Christian. Islam lays down no condition for repentance. The repentance of the followers of every faith can be accepted leaving out only the sin of denying the Book of God and His Messenger. It is impossible that a person should attain salvation only through his conduct. It is the Benevolence of God that He accepts the repentance of some and bestows by His grace such powers on others that they are safeguarded against sinning. [Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 23, pp. 189-190]

May Allah grant each one amongst us enough wisdom to distinguish right from wrong and may we all who are fasting fast to Allah's Pleasure *inchaAllah*. Ameen.