

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

Here we are again at almost the end of the blessed month of Ramadan because now we only have five or six days of fasting left. As usual, in the beginning of the month we feel that we have a long way to go but in the twinkling of an eye we find ourselves at the end and we see the new moon for Eid. Today is the last Jummah for the month. But it has no special feature or characteristics. It is as obligatory on all men as any other Jummah except, of course, when there are special circumstances such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Contrary to popular belief prevalent in many countries, attending it does not automatically erase one's sins unless Allah so wills. But when it comes, Muslims definitely feel that the end of the Blessed month is near and soon, we will go back to our routine of *non-Ramadan* months. But since it is reported in the Ahadith that every Friday is a blessed day, we should strive to pray as much as we can, read the Holy Quran as much as we can, remember Allah as best as we can and give charity as best as we can because it is the last Jummah of the month of Ramadan. May Allah help us all to be more determined today and in the coming days to show our qualities of servanthood in such a way that He might be pleased with us all.

From what I have read, I understand that the birth of the new moon for Shawwal will be at 19:00 hrs UT, which means 23:00 hrs. Mauritian time on Tuesday 11th May. Hence, it might be visible here in Mauritius on Wednesday 12th May depending on the weather conditions. If that is the case, Eid will be celebrated on Thursday 13th May. If it has not been visible, then we will celebrate Eid next Friday 14th of May. Unfortunately, once again all our members will not be able to meet on Eid day for prayers in the mosque. We should show patience and resilience and accept the situation and still be grateful that by Allah's Grace we are still safe unlike many other countries. Anyhow, let us hope for the best and leave the rest in Allah's hand. Whatever He decides is what is best for us all. For all those Mauritian members who will be listening to the Eid sermon from our mosque, they should do their best to finish reading their two *rak'at* prayers by 9:15AM. The sermon will start by that time insha Allah.

Until that time, let us concentrate on more devotion in asking for more forgiveness, in reading Nawafil, in reading and pondering over the Holy Quran, in distributing money to the poor and the needy and in many other good deeds that may please our Lord. May Allah help us use the remaining time to do what we might have missed due to negligence or forgetfulness in the previous days of Ramadan. Ameen.

As you are all well aware one of the verses in Ruku 23 of Al *Baqara* where Allah speaks about fasting is as follows:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۖ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

Translation:

And when My servants ask thee about Me, say: I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me. So, they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way. (2:187)

In this verse, Allah answers a natural question that pops in many people's mind: where is Allah? The answer is very simple. Allah says "*Inni qarib*" meaning "I am near". And immediately after He says "**I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me**". The way I understand this is that the fact that Allah answers prayers is proof of the fact Allah is near to us. So, if we want to experience the nearness of Allah, we should call upon Him and when He responds we know that He has heard us. But there are two conditions so to say that Allah imposes upon His Servants: (1) they should listen to Him – meaning that when we hear His message (the Holy Quran) and (2) believe in Him. Consequently, we will be properly guided. Hence, for Allah to answer our prayers we should do as He expects us to do namely to hear and to believe. Then we will be properly guided. So, we should do our best to bear this in mind.

In a hadith reported in Tirmidhi it is said "*Whoever does not ask Allah, The Exalted, He gets angry with him.*" Allah is Independent (*ghani*) but we are in need (*faqir*). We should be conscious of our own condition and recognize it and understand how much we depend on Allah for our wellbeing. He expects us to ask Him for our needs even if at times He does not respond to our prayers in the way we expect. So, we should make it a habit to ask of Him. If you do not have any physical need, you might have plenty of other types of needs like His Forgiveness. At least we should be conscious of our frailties and our sins and ask Him everyday to Help us overcome them.

Now that we are nearing the end of Ramadan and we have fasted and some may also have given their Zakat and most have been doing other good deeds, we should ask Allah to accept them all and then He will multiply them for us for He says:

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا ۖ وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

Whoso does a good deed shall have ten times as much; but he who does an evil deed, shall have only a like reward; and they shall not be wronged. (6:161)

Never should we ever think that we are independent of Him or that we will ever be independent of Him for He says in the Holy Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

O ye men, it is you who are dependent upon Allah, but Allah is He Who is Self-Sufficient, the Praiseworthy.

Now we will read some extracts on the subject of supplication (*doa*) from the writings of Hazrat Masih Maood (as). He says:

“It is imperative that just as an individual strives in worldly matters, so should he strive in the way of Allah. There is a proverb in Punjabi: ‘He who asks dies a death, so die and then ask.’ The meaning is that it is an afflicted one who prays and that prayer is a form of death. If a person drinks a drop of water and claims that his great thirst has been slaked, he utters a falsehood. His claim would be established if he were to drink a bowl full of water. When prayer is offered in great tribulation so that the soul melts and flows at the threshold of the Divine, that is true prayer and it is God’s way that when such a prayer is offered, He accepts it or responds to it in some other manner”. (Malfuzat, vol. IV, p. 340)

“*Salat* is a prayer which is submitted to God in travail and burning with a heart aflame, so that vicious thoughts and evil designs may be got rid of and a holy love and a pure relationship may be established and one may be enabled to keep God’s commandments. The word *Salat* indicates that true Prayer is not offered only with the tongue but must be accompanied by burning and sizzling and being consumed by fire. God Almighty does not accept Prayer until the worshipper at the time of prayer arrives a kind of death...” (Essence of Islam, Vol. II, p. 296).

“*Salat* is prayer at a very high level, but people do not appreciate it duly. In this age many Muslims are devoted to frequent repetition of pious formulas... For a seeker, none of these innovations is of any benefit compared with the *Salat*. The way of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) was that at a time of difficulty... he stood up in *Salat* and made his supplications in the *Salat*... My experience is that nothing takes one so near to God as *Salat*. The various postures of the *Salat* demonstrate respect, humility and meekness. In *Qiyam* (standing posture) the worshipper stands with his arms folded as a slave stands respectfully before his master and king. In *Ruku* (bowing) the worshipper bends down in humility. The climax of humility is reached in *Sajdah* (prostration), which indicates extreme helplessness.” (Essence of Islam, Vol. II, pp. 296-297).

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that steadfastness is the condition for acceptance of *dua*. He also said that it is not wise to offer *Salat* as a mere ritual because God has condemned such worshippers: ‘**So woe to those who pray**’ (107:5) let alone their *dua* gaining acceptance. This is about those worshippers who are unaware about the significance of *Salat*. The Companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) knew Arabic very well and appreciated the reality of it superbly but it is important for us to understand the meanings of the prayers made in *Salat*. There is no advantage to God in this, rather it is beneficial to man that he is given the opportunity and

the honour to supplicate to God. And this can get him out of many of his problems. The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said he was astonished that there were people who lived through their days and their nights without realizing that they had a God. He said it was an important advice from him which he wished people listened to: "Life is passing by, abandon negligence and adopt humility. Pray to God in solitude that He may keep faith alive and that He is pleased with you."

Disagreement between two people was mentioned in an assembly in 1907. Among other words of advice, the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said: 'Until the heart is clean, prayer does not gain acceptance. Even if you have malice about a worldly matter with one person your prayer cannot be accepted. It should be remembered very well not to have enmity with anyone over worldly matters. What worth does this world and its matters have that one should keep enmity regarding them?'

The purification of the heart is no simple matter. We should be always very vigilant because *Shaytan* does not stop trying to accomplish its mission, which is to delude us. Some people go so far as saying *Shaytan* does not exist. Someone has replied to this objection saying that *Shaytan* is so cunning that he makes you think that he does not exist and he continues to delude you and you fall in its trap. Very often we do not feel like forgiving someone. But if we progress in our knowledge of Allah, we will know that we should not have any rancour in our heart if we want Allah to dwell there. May Allah help us all and may Allah be pleased with us all. All members should not forget to pay their *Sadaqatul fitr* before Eid Salaat. You may Give it in the Jamaat or distribute it among the poor. Let us also pray and hope that restrictions will be removed very soon and we will all be able to meet together soon. Ameen.