

FRIDAY SERMON

01 July 2022

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The birth of the new moon for *Zul Hijja* for the year 1443 AH/2022 CE was at around 7 am Mauritian time on last Wednesday. So according to the experts, on June 29, the moon could have been seen by binoculars in Caribbean Islands, USA and Central America. And it could have easily been seen in Hawaii. However, on 30th June it could easily be seen all around the world. The Saudis, however, have seen the crescent of the moon on 29th June and they have officially declared the days for the Hajj this year. Arafat Day falls on the 9th day of Dhul Hijjah (Friday July 8). This year, contrary to the preceding two years, around one million hajjis will flock to Mecca for the Hajj and all precautions are being taken for a smooth running of all the ceremonies of the hajj and for the movement of the hajjis. May Allah show His Mercy so that there are no major accidents and everything goes on well as planned and that every hajjis remains safe and sound.

Here, insha Allah, we will read Salat Eid in Baitul Rahma Mosque at 9am on Sunday 10th July.

According to the hadiths, the first ten days of the month of Zul Hijja have plenty of merits. Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "**There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allah than these ten days.**" The people asked, "Not even Jihad for the sake of Allah?" He said, "Not even Jihad for the sake of Allah, except in the case of a man who went out to fight, giving himself and his wealth up for the cause, and came back with nothing." (Reported by al-Bukhari).

In the light of this Hadith, we might use the opportunity that Allah is granting us in the coming ten days to practice some noble deeds that we do not usually do in order to receive more rewards from Allah and at the same time to seek forgiveness for our own sins. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) is further reported to have said:

“There are no days greater in the sight of Allah and in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Him than these ten days, so during this time recite a great deal of *Tahlil* (*La Ilaha Illallah*), *Takbir* (*Allahu Akbar*) and *Tahmid* (*Alhamdulillah*).” (Musnad Imam Ahmad).

Not only do these words of remembrance strengthen our relationship with our Lord, they also connect us in a special way to Prophet Ibrahim (a.s). Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w) said:

“I met Ibrahim (a.s) on the Night of Ascension (Al-Mi’raj), and he said to me: ‘O Muhammad, convey my greetings to your Ummah, and tell them that Jannah has a vast plain of pure soil and sweet water. It is a plain levelled land. The plants grow there by uttering: Subhanallah, Alhamdulillah, La Ilaha Illallah and Allahu Akbar (Allah is free from imperfection; praise be to Allah; there is no true god except Allah; and Allah is Greatest).” (Sunan At-Tirmizi)

We should not take this hadith to have a literary meaning. It means that by uttering these noble words, one will be rewarded by the rewards that will be found in Jannat.

Another hadith to this effect is the following: Abu Dharr reported: “Some of the people from among the Companions of the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) said to him: Messenger of Allah, the rich have taken away (all the) rewards. They observe prayer as we do; they keep fasts as we keep, and they give *Sadaqa* out of their surplus riches. Upon this he (the Holy Prophet) said: Has Allah not prescribed for you (a course) by following which you can (also) do *sadaqa*? In every declaration of the glorification of Allah (i.e. saying *Subhan Allah*) there is a *Sadaqa*, and every Takbir (i.e. saying Allah-O-Akbar) is a *sadaqa*, and every praise of His (saying *al-Hamdu Lillah*) is a *Sadaqa* and every declaration that He is One (*La illha ill-Allah*) is a *sadaqa*, and enjoining of good is a *sadaqa*, and forbidding of that which is evil is a *Sadaqa*, and in man's sexual intercourse (with his wife,) there is a *Sadaqa*. They (the Companions) said: “Messenger of Allah, is there reward for him who satisfies his sexual passion among us?” He said: “Tell me, if he were to devote it to something forbidden, would it not be a sin on his part? Similarly, if he were to devote it to something lawful, he should have a reward.” **(Muslim Book 5 Nbr 2148)**

Again, in another hadith we read:

“*Sadaqa* is due on every joint of a person, every day the sun rises. Administering of justice between two men is also a *Sadaqa*. And assisting a man to ride upon his beast, or helping him load his luggage upon it, is a *Sadaqa*; and a good word is a *Sadaqa*; and every step that you take towards prayer is a *Sadaqa*, and removing of harmful things from the pathway is a *Sadaqa*” **(Muslim Bk5 Nbr 2204)**

So, in light of these hadiths and in light of the verses of the Holy Quran, where Allah exhorts all Muslims to do good deeds, one can easily understand that if we are told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) that these days of *zul hijjaa* are a very opportune time for us we should believe it and do as best as we can to follow his advice. So, each one among us should take to heart this advice of the Holy Prophet (saw) and try to multiply our good deeds in the coming days. We may start the day by reading two *rakaat tahajjud* and ask forgiveness for our sins and pray to Allah to relieve us of any distress that we may be facing and present our needs to him. The Holy Prophet (saw) is reported to have said:

Our Lord, the Blessed, the Superior, comes every night down on the nearest Heaven to us when the last third of the night remains, saying: "Is there anyone to invoke Me, so that I may respond to invocation? Is there anyone to ask Me, so that I may grant him his request? Is there anyone seeking My forgiveness, so that I may forgive him?" (Bukhari)

Ramadan is gone for the year and we have a new opportunity to do good. We would be foolish and negligent if we did not embrace such an opportunity. And then we pray *Salaatul Fajr*. If we do not have a mosque, it does not mean that we should pray *Fajr* after sunrise or ignore it all together. The Holy Quran mentions the noble recorders who are recording each of our deeds. So, we should be careful and strive to fulfill our obligations to Allah. To stress the point that Allah is watching us wherever we are there are plenty verses in the Holy Quran. For example, we recall

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ

(**Al Hadid 57:4**) which is just a part of this verse meaning “He is with you wherever you are”

Again we read:

وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأْنٍ وَمَا تَتْلُو مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْآنٍ وَلَا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُودًا إِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ وَمَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْ رَبِّكَ مِنْ مِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَا أَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

And thou art not engaged in anything, and thou recite not from Him any portion of the Qur'an, and you do no work, but We are witnesses of you when you are engrossed therein. And there is not hidden from thy Lord even an atom's weight in the earth or in heaven. And there is nothing smaller than that or greater, but it is recorded in a clear Book.

So let us remember these words and also that the Holy Prophet (saw) said: “Verily, among the best of faith is that you know Allah is with you wherever you are.”

The pleasures of this world can easily make us forget our Lord. Hence, it is in our advantage that we strive not to forget Him by praying our five daily prayers, by reading a portion of the Holy Quran daily and by seeking His Help in making us a better human being day by day. May Allah help each one among us to realize this. The sooner the better.

You will recall that Hajis have to sacrifice animals in Mecca. But the bulk of Muslims who do not go for hajj and who have means sacrifice animals at their own place of residence. And Allah has made it clear that those who have means and who neglect sacrificing animals are sinful. Hence all those who can should share in a big animal or they should sacrifice a small one like a goat or sheep. However, Allah has made it clear for everyone to understand what Allah wants from us. He says:

لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْكُمْ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Their flesh reaches not Allah, nor does their blood, but it is your righteousness that reaches Him. Thus, has He subjected them to you, that you may glorify Allah for His guiding you. And give glad tidings to those who do good. (22:37)

The act of sacrificing animals is a symbolic act. The spirit of sacrifice is the main object of the sacrificing of animals. We should always remember this. By sacrificing animals, we practice the sunnah of Hazrat Ibrahim (as) which has been renewed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) and which is being practiced by Muslims since more than 1400 years. And in our own time Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has come to renew the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw). The Islamic spirit cannot be renewed but by walking in the footsteps of the Holy prophet Muhammad (saw). We need to bear this always in mind and do our best to follow his example in all matters. That is why it is imperative for each one among us that we strive to learn the Holy Quran and the sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) if we really want to lead a successful life.

One can easily argue that our two main festivals, that is Eid ul Fitr and Eidul Adha, come to remind us that we should always be ready to sacrifice our self for Allah's sake. Whatever we do, whether we keep fasts or we sacrifice animals, we should bear in mind that Allah looks at our heart. He is interested only in the level of our readiness to obey His commands, our *taqwa* and nothing else. So, as good Muslims, let us turn to our Lord in full humility and with repentance and in doing good deeds because these deeds have a special value in the sight of Allah during these first days of Dhul Hijja. Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has expressed this instruction or attitude in the following verses in Urdu:

اسلام چیز کیا ہے؟ خدا کے لئے فنا
ترکِ رضائے خویش پئے مرضیٰ خدا

What is Islam, but to lose one's self

for the sake of God;

And to surrender one's own pleasure for His.

We can read from the beginning of Buraheen Ahmadiyya Part 1 the following verses of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) about Allah:

Fear of You makes one secure against every fear;

The more one knows You the more one lives in awe of You.

People seek protection and shelter from others,

But You alone grant protection to one and all.

Your remembrance is the key to resolving all difficulties.

*Without You, everything that occurs in the mind is anguish for the heart.
Whosoever cries unto You with humility; Finds again his lost fortune.
Your grace never abandons Your true seekers;
No one ever suffers loss in Your path.
Whosoever submits himself before You,
Turns himself away from all others.
Why indeed should he turn to others,
When he has left his affairs in Your mighty hands!
Just as we have only one heart and one soul,
So is Your Holy Being enough for us as the One and Only Friend.
Whosoever establishes a relationship with You unknown to others;
Your mercy is bestowed upon him openly, for all to see.
Whoever sticks to Your threshold with devotion and sincerity;
His household is filled with light.
Whosoever adheres to Your path, achieves all his objectives,
And a plenitude of hope shines upon all his affairs.
Whosoever seeks Your path, finds it,
And resplendent becomes the face that does not turn away from You.
But he who runs away from Your shelter,
Finds only disgrace no matter where he turns.
O my God, forgive my sins,
And show me the path to Your Presence.
Vouchsafe light to my heart and soul,
And cleanse me of my hidden sins.
Be my Beloved, win my heart and soul,
And with a single look, do away with all my tribulations.
You alone are dear to me in both the worlds.
All I desire from You is You.
May we all live in such a way that Allah becomes the center of our existence. Ameen.*

