

FRIDAY SERMON OF IMAM ZAFRULLAH DOMUN

05 AUGUST 2011

After reciting the *Tashahhud*, the *Ta'uz* and the first chapter of *Al Fatiha* Imam Zafrullah Domun read the following verse of the Holy Quran:

Yaa ayyohal lazina aamanou koteba alaykomous siyaamon kama koteba alal lazina min qablekoum la'allakoum tattakoun. (2:184)

Here in Mauritius, today is the fourth day of fasting. I hope that by the grace of Almighty Allah all of us are doing our best to fast and to engage in additional acts of worship in order to get all our past sins forgiven and to protect ourselves from further sins in the future. Last week I started speaking about some of the benefits of fasting. I explained that during the month of Ramadan a Muslim gets the opportunity to practice the recommendations of his/her faith in a way that he cannot do during the other days of the month. There is a concentration of acts of worship during these days. Today we remind our brothers and sisters about some virtuous acts that we need to practice during this month in order to win the pleasure of Allah. May each one amongst us remember these hadiths and do our best to practice them.

In a long hadith in which the Holy Prophet Mohammad^{saw} discourses about the greatness of the month of Ramadan the narration ends with the following words:

“you should display four characteristics to a great extent; with two of which you will please your Lord, and two you cannot dispense with. The two with which you will please your Lord are to testify that there is no one deserving of worship except Allah, and to seek His forgiveness; whereas the two which you cannot dispense with are that you beseech Allah to place you in Paradise and that you seek refuge with Him from Hell.” [**Related by Ibn Khuzaymah and AlBayhaqi**].

Although I quoted this hadith last year I think that it is good that we should remind ourselves of it again so that we might profit from it. The Holy Prophet has recommended that we should constantly testify “*la ilaha illallah*” and we should be constantly saying “*astaghferoullah*”

meaning “I seek forgiveness from Allah”. These are the two statements that will help us to please Allah. The Holy Prophet has not put a limit on the number of times that we should be saying these two statements every day. It is open to us. If we want we can do it hundred or even thousand times per day. But what is most important is that we understand what we are saying and that we do not just mechanically repeat these words. A strict minimum can be about one hundred times a day and if you do it with full concentration or while you are going about your work it will not take more than ten minutes. I will advise members to read them after their prayers for some time and also while they are walking about going to work or using any spare moment that you can get. It is reported in the hadiths that the Holy Prophet Mohammad used to read at least three times “*astaghferoullah*” whenever he finished the obligatory prayers and also that he asked forgiveness from Allah for more than seventy times per day. If this was the practice of the best of mankind just imagine what should be ours. You will remember that when he read all those long *rak’at* of *tahajjud* prayers and his feet got swollen and Hazrat Ayesha asked him why he did so. He replied “should I not be a grateful servant?” In other words the Holy Prophet was so conscious of the favours of Allah upon him and he understood that he had to show gratefulness in return to Allah. So even poor mortals like us whenever we think of the Favours of Allah upon us we should be overwhelmed by his Favours and show some thankfulness. Ramadan grants us this occasion in an excellent way. So we should use each minute that we can during this month by making the statement of faith “*La ilaha illallah*” and “*astaghferoullah*”. Also remember that you should practice this spiritual exercise and see its effects upon your own selves. Do not let these days go by without making a full use of what is being offered to you to make yourself a better person. The Holy Prophet ^{saw} has told us that these two statements will help us to please our Lord and so we should repeat them a lot during these days and nights.

Next the Holy Prophet ^{saw} has said that we should pray to Allah to admit us into Paradise and to protect us from Hell. He said that we cannot dispense with these two things. Therefore whenever we have the opportunity we should be making these supplications to Allah with the expectation that He will accept our entreaties. We should spend more time in our prostrations to entreat Allah to grant us Jannat and to protect us from Hell.

Now let us say a few words about the reading of the Holy Quran especially during this month. We all know that Allah says in the Holy Quran “The month of Ramadan is that month in which the Holy Quran had been revealed as a guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance and

discrimination...”(2:186) For the simple believer it does not matter whether the whole or part of the Holy Quran was revealed during the month of Ramadan or its revelation started in the month. What is important for us is that Allah said that it was revealed during that month. According to the hadiths we know that in each month of Ramadan after the year 610 A.D Hazrat Jibril came to help the Holy Prophet revise whatever portion of the Holy Quran was revealed by then. This was an exercise that was carried on to the end of the Holy Prophet’s life. Hence there is a very close connection between Ramadan and the reading of the Holy Quran. We may say that this practice has lived on throughout history when Muslims read the Holy Quran during the whole month in Tarawih prayers. Besides, many Muslims (men and women) make it their duty to read the Holy Quran at least once during the month of Ramadan. It is a good practice and we should keep it. But we should see to it that we understand what we read. These days there are many translations that are available whether in English or French or even Creole. We should aim to read with a view to understand what Allah wants from us. If you read only to hear your own voice your benefits will be less than when you read fully understanding every word of the Holy Book. We, members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community we should all try to delve deep into the Holy Quran so that it might be clear in our mind what is good and what is bad and how to avoid what is bad. May Allah always help us to stay away from dogmas and may He enlighten each one amongst us with the wisdom contained in His Book.

The month of Ramadan is the month where we have more opportunities to make supplications to Allah, to engage in more acts of worship to please our Lord. In the ruku where Allah speaks about the prescription for fasting Allah says:

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)

Allah gives a guarantee to those who will supplicate to Him. He says He will respond to His servants supplications. But His servants also have some obligations. They have to listen to Him and believe in Him so that they might be properly guided. A Muslim cannot ignore Allah’s prescriptions for him and expect that Allah will respond to his prayers. If we do not strive to obey Allah despite our weaknesses Allah will not respond to our solicitations. Allah the Almighty will help us provided that we believe in Him and carry out His injunctions. Allah tells us that He is near us. But how many amongst us ignore His Presence either in Ramadan or even

in the other months of the year. He who indulges in whatever is forbidden is ignoring Allah's presence. He or she who backbites others is ignoring Allah's Presence. He who does not control his gaze or his anger ignores Allah's Presence. Whenever we indulge in any type of sins we ignore Allah's presence. So if you want to get rid of sins develop in yourself the consciousness of Allah's Presence wherever you are. Try it and you will see how powerful such an idea can be. On the one hand we should be conscious that there is a Mighty God who has Power over all things and so He can help us out of any type of difficulty or problem. On the other hand we should be fully conscious of His presence so that we do not indulge in what is forbidden thinking that no one is seeing us. Wherever we are Allah is also there. I remember when I was quite young I read that there was a Sufi master who loved one of his students more than others. The other students resented this situation. So one day in order to illustrate the reason for his preference towards his particular student he asked all his student to catch a bird. Once they brought him their birds he asked them to go and kill them where no one could see them. All of them went somewhere and they killed their bird except his preferred student. When all came back he asked his protégée why he has not killed his bird. He said he could not find a place where no one could see him because wherever he went Allah was there. The master then explained why he was particularly inclined towards this particular student. It was because of his consciousness of Allah. I have quoted this incident from memory. It may be that the wordings might be different. But the message is the same.

To end I would like to tell you about a hadith that I have recently read from Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal. It is from the same Book of Hadith where the hadith about Khilafat is often quoted by Jamaat Ahmadiyya mainstream. The hadith is as follows:

“Once Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique stood up in the mosque to speak. He said: Last year, at this very place the Prophet ^{saw} stood up to make a speech. After saying this he wept. Then he said: Ask Allah for forgiveness and good health. For no one has received anything which is better than forgiveness or health after receiving certainty in faith. Adopt truth because it is connected with virtue and these two will be found in Paradise. Protect yourself from speaking falsehood because falsehood is connected with sin and these two will be present in Hell. Do not be jealous of one another; do not begrudge one another; do not break your relationship with one another; do not turn your face from one another and live like brothers as Allah has commanded you to be.”(Musnad Ahmad Vol 1 Hadith 5)

In another hadith it is said:

“Once Hazrat Abu Bakr stood up to make a speech. He praised Allah and then said “ O People you read the following verse “ *Yaa ayyohallazina aamanou alaykoun anfosakoum laa yazourra koum man zalla izahtadaytoun*” which means“ O ye who believe take care for your own selves, the one who is astray cannot harm you if you are well guided.”. We also heard the Holy Prophet say when people see sins being committed and they do nothing to stop it soon all of them would be punished by Allah.”(Musnad Ahmad Vol 1 Hadith 1)

My aim in telling these two hadiths is for us to think about it and to practice it. Secondly I want all those from Jamaat Ahmadiyya mainstream who might read this sermon to reflect how far this hadith may be addressing them. This book of hadiths contains about thirty thousand hadiths and not only one hadith about khilafat. In this blessed month of Ramadan members of the mainstream Jamaat should reflect about their innumerable sins that they have been committing against members of Jamaat Ahmadiyya Al Mouslemeen and they should repent and ask Allah for forgiveness. Furthermore they should reflect about their passivity in the face of the new God of which they have come to be afraid of namely Nizaamé Jamaat. Many members know quite well that the Jamaat’s leadership is doing wrong and yet they have preferred silence rather than raise their voice to decry wrongs. Allah knows best how members of a Jamaat who have received the best of teachings could have stooped so low. May Allah show His Mercy and help the people to wake up from their slumber.

