

FRIDAY SERMON OF IMAM ZAFRULLAH DOMUN

19 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)

Today is already the third Friday of the month of Ramadan. So we have only one left and in a twinkling of an eye the holy month of Ramadan for this year will incha Allah be gone. We have only eleven days of fast remaining. So as from Sunday we will be entering the last ten days of Ramadan. Some might think that this is the most difficult period because our body might have started feeling the effects of Ramadan after twenty days of fasting, and we might feel some weakness. But that was not the case with our model, namely prophet Mohammad^{saw}. We learn from the hadiths that at the start of the last ten days of Ramadan the prophet redoubled his efforts and his determination to be devoted to Allah. Usually he practiced *I'tekaaf* for at least ten days in the mosque devoting himself to the remembrance and worship of Allah. Hence we learn from Muslim that "He would strive [to do acts of worship] during the last ten days of Ramadan more than he would at any other time." And from Bokhari we learn that Hazrat Ayesha ^a said that "With the start of the last ten days of Ramadan, the Prophet used to tighten his waist belt (i.e. work hard) and used to pray all the night, and used to keep his family awake for the prayers." Therefore can poor mortals like us who are full of sins ignore this excellent example of our beloved prophet and show weakness and not try to copy him? As true Muslims we should all redouble our efforts and remotivate ourselves to make the best of these few remaining days of this blessed month. Now is the time for us to make up for the lost time that we might have been negligent during the early days of the month. Now is the time to increase the time we stand up praying and asking for forgiveness and hoping for divine mercy at night. Now is the time to ask forgiveness for our sins and try to get the "*laylatul Qadr*"

You will recall that in the long hadith about the blessings of Ramadan the Holy Prophet Mohammad^{saw} is reported to have said "Oh people! A great month has come over you; a blessed month; a month in which is a night better than a thousand months; month in which

Allah has made it compulsory upon you to fast by day, and voluntary to pray by night." From the hadiths we understand that one of the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan is better than a thousand months. And the Holy Prophet ^{saw} has advised Muslims to seek that night with their prayers and nocturnal devotions. In another hadith we also learn through Hazrat Ayesha that the Holy Prophet told her that if she witnessed the night of Decree (*laylatul qadr*) she should say " *Allahoumma innaka afouwoun tohibboul afwa fa'fo anni*" which means "O Allah You are The One Who erases sins, You love erasing sins , so erase my sins .". [Tirmithi and Ibn Majah]. In another Hadith we also learn that the Holy Prophet ^{saw} is reported to have said "Whoever stands (in prayer) in Lailatul-Qadr out of Imaan (faith and sincerity) and seeking reward then his previous sins are forgiven". [Bukhari] All these hadiths help us to understand that we should do our utmost during the remaining days and nights of Ramadan to engage ourselves in acts of worship so that we might be washed of all our sins.

Regarding *I'tekaaf* we understand from the hadiths that the Holy Prophet ^{saw} was very regular in its practice. We also understand that during the year he died he stayed in the mosque for twenty days instead of the usual ten. We also learn that once he did not do it in the month of Ramadan but the following month namely *Shawaal*. When one secludes oneself in the mosque one tries to get closer to Allah by cutting off one's relationship with everything else. A great saint of the past has given us his thoughts on *Itekaaf* and Ramadan as follows:

".... The hearts' rectitude and firmness upon the path towards Allah the Most High, rests upon directing it solely upon Allah and causing it to turn and give all its attention to Allah the Most High, Since the disorder of the heart cannot be rectified except by turning to Allah the Most High, and its disorder will be increased by eating and drinking too much, mixing with the people excessively, speaking profusely and sleeping too much. These will cause it to wander into every valley, and cut it off from its path to Allah, weaken it, divert it or put a halt to it.

From the Mercy of the Mighty and Most Merciful is that He has prescribed for them fasting, which will cut off the excesses of eating and drinking, and empties the heart of its desires which divert it on its journey to Allah the Most High. He prescribed it in due proportion as will be appropriate and will benefit the servant, with regard to this world and the Hereafter, and does not harm him, nor damage what is beneficial for him.

He also prescribed *i`tekaf* for them, by which is intended that the heart is fully occupied with Allah, the Most High, concentrated upon Him alone, and cut off from preoccupation with the creation. Rather it is engrossed with Him alone, the One free of all defects, such that remembering Him, loving Him and turning to Him takes the place of all anxieties of the heart and its suggestions, such that he is able to overcome them. Thus all his concerns are for Him. His thoughts are all of remembrance of Him, and thinking of how to attain His Pleasure and what will cause nearness to Him. This leads him to feel contented with Allah

instead of the people, so that prepares him for being at peace with Him alone on the day of loneliness in the grave, when there is no one else to give comfort, nor anyone to grant solace except Him. So this is the greater goal of *i`tekaf* "

This extract is taken from the book "*Zaad ul Ma'aad*" by Shamsuddeen Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya. (1292-1350). He was born and he died in Damascus, Syria. He is well known for his writings. I read this extract from the net and I have wished to share it with our brothers and sisters so that it might make them grasp fully what is intended for us with fasting and *Itekaaf*.

Hence we see that Ramadan gives us the unique opportunity to do what is necessary to fulfill the aim of our life, namely to worship our Lord in the best possible way. We go without food and drink and we do not engage in any type of sensual pleasure. While in *itekaaf* we try to live solely for Allah by staying in the mosque and by being solely devoted to Him. I hope and pray that Allah will help any Muslim who is truly seeking Him during these days of Ramadan to be blessed by His Love and pardon.

Since during these last days all Muslims will be engaged in supplicating Allah to efface their sins I will say a few words about do'a (supplications) itself. To begin with we should be careful about our ablution (Wuzu). We should pay attention to the way we perform it. It should be well done as per the instructions of the Holy prophet Mohammad^{saw}. We should not do Wuzu in an absent minded way and get on with it quickly. Most of the do'a that we will do will be performed by us individually and we can speak with Allah as long as we want. Remember that we can supplicate in our own language. Prayers may be made after Ruku when we stand up prior to the Sajda. Here we can recite the usual Qoranic prayers that we know of. From the Holy Quran there are about eighty. If you know all of them and you want to recite them, you can recite them here. But is not allowed to recite them in Sajda. However you may read other Arabic prayers if you know them in Sajda. But you may spend time in your Sajda to supplicate to Allah for your own personal needs in your own Creole language. While supplicating to Allah try to forget everything else and imagine that you are in the presence of Allah alone. Let His Majesty and Grandeur overwhelm your tiny and sinful being and ask Him for whatever you want. Ask Him for His Mercy His Favours His Protection, His Proximity and also for the capacity to obey Him until He is pleased with you. Strive to shed your tears because it is these tears that will wash away all your sins in the long run. There is a method to approach Allah. Hazrat Masih Maood^{as} has taught us this method which he learned from the Holy Prophet's example and from Allah also. By the Grace of Allah during the course of my life I have learnt many prayers and I have been reading them for some time quite often. Today I want to share with you three little prayers which will incha Allah be of use to you all. The first one is "*Allahoumma Inni zaifoune fa qawweni*". Its translation is "O my Lord I am weak, make me strong". The second one is "*Allahoumma inni zaliloun*

fa'aizzani” meaning “O my Lord I am despicable make me honourable”. When you say these words imagine all the despicable words and actions that you might have done and for which you are expressing regrets sincerely. The third prayer is “*Allahoumma inni abtahelo elaykab tehalil muznebiz zaleeel*” meaning “O my Lord I turn sincerely towards You as a despicable sinner”. When saying these words one should make the determination not to commit sins again. Anyhow since my young age I have been reading these supplications. I learnt them from Al Fazl . I have spoken about them today so that our young ones may learn them and recite them often with full understanding. I hope incha Allah all of you will be immensely blessed by the recitation of these supplications.

Now we will talk about something else. Recently I have read a hadith in Abu Dawood about Sadaqatul fitr. I always wondered why at times in the literature we read Sadaqatul Fitr and at other times we read Zakatul Fitr. But in our Jamaat’s literature I never read anything about it. But this question was always at the back of my mind. Anyhow now Allah has guided me and I have been able to find the answer which I want to share with you. It is reported that Ibn Abbas said that the apostle of Allah ^{saw} prescribed the *sadaqah* for breaking the fast as a purification of fasting from empty and obscene talk and as food for the poor. If anyone pays it before the prayer of Eid it will be accepted as Zakat. If anyone pays it after prayer then it will be *sadaqah* like other *sadaqas*.(H 1605 Vol 2)

From this hadith we gather that this Sadaqatul Fitr has two purposes. One is purification for the empty and obscene talk that we might have done while we were fasting and the second one is to help the poor. I think all of us should think well about why we give it. It is not just a routine sort of tax that has to be paid. It has two important purposes and both have to be kept in mind when we give it. Furthermore it is a means of purification when we remit it before the Eid prayer. But if for any reason we give it after the Eid prayer it will be deemed just an ordinary Sadqa that we usually give. Anyhow Allah knows best. As I said before this money should be paid enough days before the end of Ramadan so that it might be distributed prior to Eid.

Let us hope that as good practicing Muslims who are sincere to the teachings that they have been blessed with each one amongst us will do our best to make the most of the remaining days of Ramadan. May Allah bless and accept our insignificant efforts.

As members are aware on Monday next our two young brothers Zaher and Ayal Sooltangos will be proceeding to France for university level studies. Let us hope and pray that Allah will be their Help and Guardian wherever they will be and will crown all their efforts with succes. We also pray that they will devote themselves to their study in such a way that they might master all the subjects under study as soon as possible. We hope and pray that Allah provides them with all

sorts of facilities that will make their stay overseas a real blessing for them and their family. We hope that their absence will not be sorely felt by their parents and brother and sister because they will be in constant contact due to the marvels of modern technology. We hope also that time will fly quickly so that they might be amongst us again very soon. Ameen