

## FRIDAY SERMON OF IMAM ZAFRULLAH DOMUN

### 11 NOVEMBER 2011

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

By the Grace of Allah Eidul Adha came and is now gone. Almost 3 million Muslims went to Mecca for Hajj and a considerable amount of money has been spent for this purpose. Even in Mauritius it has been reported that at least 3500 head of cattle may have been slaughtered besides goats and rams. If we put the cost of cattle to be around fifty thousand rupees, it means that about 175 million rupees have been spent. By all counts for a Muslim population of around 250 thousands, this is an enormous amount of money that has been spent with the intended purpose of offering sacrifices to please Allah. These days fortunately we are more aware of what goes on. It appears that most young male Muslims are very enthusiastic about all the events associated with cattle parks, embarking and disembarking them around the island. At many places one may see groups of young men on bicycles following lorry loads of cattle. Those who can, like to be personally involved with the slaughtering of the animals themselves. Furthermore they post their videos of all that happens on YouTube or they share it among friends. There is no harm in getting involved but one should never lose sight of the purpose of the sacrifice as we have been explaining in our previous sermons. The animal sacrifice is a symbol of our own readiness to sacrifice all for Allah's sake as Hazrat Ibrahim and his family did. Unfortunately from what I have seen and heard it appears that proper Islamic etiquettes are not being observed and proper respect are not being shown to the animals. The proper authorities should see to it that the Islamic etiquettes are observed.

Moreover once we do something for Allah's sake we should hope and pray that Allah accept our sacrifices or our offerings. There is a famous incident that we have been hearing since we were young which illustrates the essence of Hajj and making sacrifices in the path of Allah. Unfortunately due to lack of time I have not been able to find the source of this incident. Anyhow it is published in several places on net. The story is as follows:

"It is related that a noted Muslim scholar 'Abdullah ibn Mubarak, had a dream while he was sleeping near the Holy Ka'bah in Makkah. Abdullah ibn Mubarak saw two angels descend from the sky, and start talking to each other. One of the angels asked the other: "Do you know how many people have come for Hajj this year?" The other angel replied: "Six hundred thousand have come for Hajj."

Abdullah ibn Mubarak had also gone for Hajj that year.

The first angel asked: "How many people's Hajj has been accepted?"

The second angel replied: "I wonder if anyone's Hajj has been accepted at all."

Abdullah ibn Mubarak was grieved to hear that. He thought, "So many people have come from all over the world, crossing so many obstacles like rivers, jungles, desert and mountains, suffered so many hardships, and meeting so many expenses. Would their effort be wasted? God does not let anyone's

effort go to waste.”

Abdullah ibn Mubarak had thought only so far when he heard the other angel speak: “There is a cobbler in Damascus. His name is ‘Ali ibn al-Mufiq. He could not come for Hajj, but God has accepted his intention of Hajj. Not only will he get the reward for Hajj, but because of him, all the Hajjis will be rewarded.”

When ‘Abdullah ibn Mubarak woke up, he decided he would go to Damascus and meet that cobbler whose Hajj intentions carried such a lot of weight. On reaching Damascus, ‘Abdullah ibn Mubarak inquired if anyone knew a cobbler named ‘Ali ibn al-Mufiq. The town people directed him to a house. When a man appeared from the house ‘Abdullah ibn Mubarak greeted him and asked his name. The man replied “‘Ali ibn al-Mufiq.” Abdullah ibn Mubarak asked: “What do you do for a living?”

Ali ibn al-Mufiq replied: “I am a cobbler.” Then ‘Ali ibn al-Mufiq asked the stranger’s name that had come looking for him. Abdullah ibn Mubarak was a very well-known scholar of Islam. when ‘Abdullah ibn Mubarak introduced himself, the cobbler was anxious to find out why such a well known scholar was seeking him out. When ‘Abdullah ibn Mubarak asked ‘Ali ibn al-Mufiq to tell him if he had made any plans to go for Hajj. ‘Ali ibn al-Mufiq replied, “For thirty years I have lived in the hope of performing the Hajj. This year I had saved enough to go for Hajj, but God did not will it, so I couldn’t make my intention translate into action.” Abdullah ibn Mubarak was eager to find out how could this man’s Hajj be accepted and blessed for all the people who went for Hajj that year when he didn’t go for Hajj in the first place. While talking to the cobbler he could feel certain purity in his heart. Islam regards greatness not in wealth or in power, but in civility, in good manners and the goodness of heart.

Abdullah ibn Mubarak further asked: “why could you not go on Hajj?” In order not to disclose the reason, ‘Ali ibn al-Mufiq again replied “it was Allah’s (SWT) will.”

When ‘Abdullah ibn Mubarak persisted, ‘Ali ibn al-Mufiq revealed: “Once I went to see my neighbour’s house. His family was just sitting down for dinner. Although I was not hungry I thought my neighbour would invite me to

sit down for dinner out of courtesy but I could see that my neighbour was grieved about something and wanted to avoid inviting me for dinner.” After some hesitation the neighbour told me: “I am sorry I cannot invite you for food. We were without food for three days and I could not bear to see the pain of hunger of my children. I went out looking for food today and found a dead donkey. In my desperation I cut out some meat from the dead animal, and brought it home so that my wife could cook this meat. It is halal (lawful or permitted) for us because of our extreme condition of hunger, but I cannot offer it to you.”

Ali ibn al-Mufiq continued: “On hearing this, my heart bled with tears. I got up and went home, collected the three thousand dinars I had saved for Hajj, and gave my neighbour the money. I too had to go hungry but that was to save money for Hajj, but I thought helping my neighbour during his difficult times was more important. Although I still desire to go for Hajj if God wills.”

Abdullah ibn Mubarak was greatly inspired by the cobbler’s story and told the cobbler of his dream.

This story shows the importance of helping someone in need. It is such a meritorious act that Allah can reward someone with a Hajj even if one has not accomplished the act itself. Such is Allah, the Generous who rewards without limit.

One may ask if as a community, the Muslims are doing their best to cater to the needs of the less unfortunate amongst themselves. It is a subject matter that needs to be explored.

Similarly in order to understand the inner reality of Hajj and the rituals associated with it, in the books we have a conversation that took place between Imam Zainul Abedine, the fourth Imam of the Shias, the son of Imam Husain and Shibli, who later became a great Muslim mystic. In this conversation Shibli will confirm that he did most of the rituals but he will deny that he understood the reality underlying the actions. The conversation is as follows:

The Imam: "Did you perform Hajj, Shibli?"

Shibli: "Yes, son of Allah's Messenger, I did."

The Imam: "You stopped at Miqat, put off your sewn clothes, and washed yourself, did you not?"

Shibli: "Yes, I did."

The Imam: "As you stopped at Miqat, did you intend to put off the garment of disobedience (to God) and put on a garment of obedience (to Him)?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "As you put off your sewn clothes, did you intend to get rid of ostentation, hypocrisy, and intrusion in suspicious matters?"

Shibli: "No, I did not?"

The Imam: "As you washed yourself, did you intend to wash yourself from sins and offenses?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "In that case, you did not really stop at Miqat, put off your sewn clothes, and wash yourself. You washed yourself thoroughly, entered the state of Ihram, and intended to perform Hajj, did you not?"

Shibli: "Yes, I did."

The Imam: "As you washed yourself thoroughly, entered the state of Ihram, and intended to perform Hajj, did you intend to wash yourself thoroughly with pure repentance to Allah?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "As you entered the state of Ihram, did you intend to abstain from every matter that Allah deems unlawful?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "As you intended to perform Hajj, did you intend to get rid of any pledge that you took with anyone other than Allah?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "In that case, you did not wash yourself thoroughly, enter the state of Ihram, or intend to perform Hajj. Did you enter Miqat, offer the two-Rakat prayer of Ihram, and say Labbayk (Talbiya)?"

Shibli: "Yes, I did."

The Imam: "As you entered Miqat, did you intend to meet all the qualifications of the visitation of the Sacred House of Allah?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "As you offered the two-Rakat prayer, did you intend to seek nearness to Allah through the best deeds such as prayers and the deeds by which servants of Allah can obtain His rewards?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "As you said *Labbayk*, did you intend to utter any statement of obedience to Allah and shut your mouth against any statement of disobedience to Him?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "In that case, you did not enter Miqat, offer the two-Rakat prayer of Ihram, or say *Labbayk*. You entered the Sacred Precinct, saw the *Kaaba*, and offered prayers there, did you not?"

Shibli: "Yes, I did."

The Imam: "As you entered the Sacred Precinct, did you intend to abstain from backbiting any individual of Islam?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "As you arrived in Mecca, did you intend to direct towards Allah and no one else?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "In that case, you did not really enter the Sacred Precinct, see the Kaaba, or offer prayers. You circumambulated the Holy House, touched the corners, and performed the Sa'y, did you not?"

Shibli: Yes, I did.

The Imam: "As you performed the Tawaaf, did you intend to seek refuge of Allah (from the trickeries of Satan and evil temptations) and that He, the Knower of the unseen, knew this from you?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "In that case, you did not really circumambulate the Holy House, touch its corner, or perform the Sa'y. You caressed the Black Stone, stopped at the standing-place of Ibrahim (a.s), and offered a two-Rakat prayer there, did you not?"

Shibli: "Yes, I did."

The Imam then cried so loudly and said: "To caress the Black Stone is to shake hands with Allah. Look, poor man, do not ever waste the reward for the thing that is greatly sacred and do not breach your caressing by acts of violation (of God's instructions) and seizure of illegal things, just like the sinful. As you stopped at the standing-place of Ibrahim (a.s), did you intend to stop at every act of obedience (to God) and leave every act of disobedience (to Him)?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "As you offered the two-Rakat prayer, did you intend to offer the same prayer that was offered by Ibrahim (a.s) and to disappoint Satan?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "In that case, you did not really caress the Black Stone, stop at the standing-place of Ibrahim (a.s), or offer the two-Rakat prayer there. You came near to Well Zamzam and drank from its water, did you not?"

Shibli: "Yes, I did."

The Imam: "As you did, did you intend to come near to acts of obedience (to God) and cast your sight down acts of disobedience (to Him)?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "In that case, you neither really came near that well nor did you drink from its water. You roamed, walked, and frequented to Mount Safa and Mount Marwa, did you not?"

Shibli: "Yes, I did."

The Imam: “As you did, did you intend to be between hope and fear (of God)?

Shibli: No, I did not.”

The Imam: “In that case, you did not really roam, walk, or frequent between Safa and Marwa. You then left for Mina, did you not?”

Shibli: “Yes, I did.”

The Imam: “Did you intend to save people from your tongue (words), heart (ill intention), and hand (deeds)?”

Shibli: “No, I did not.”

The Imam: “In that case, you did not really leave for Mina. You halted in Arafat, mounted Jabal alRahma (Mount Mercy), recognized Nemira Valley, and supplicated to Allah at al-Mil and Jamarat, did you not?”

Shibli: “Yes, I did.”

The Imam: “As you halted in Arafat, did you intend to recognize Allah, Glorified is He, and His knowledge, and recognize that He is holding on the record of your deeds and that He has full acquaintance with your hidden and secrets?”

Shibli: “No, I did not.”

The Imam: “As you mounted Jabal al-Rahma, did you recognize that Allah would have mercy upon every believing man and woman and see to every Muslim male and female?”

Shibli: “No, I did not.”

The Imam: “As you were on Nemira, did you recognize that your advices and warnings to people are fruitless unless they are originated from Allah's instructions? “

Shibli: “No, I did not.”

The Imam: “As you stopped at al-Alam and an-Nemirat, did you recognize that these signs would testify for your acts of obedience (to God) and would keep you like the Keeping Angels whose mission is to keep you according to Allah's instructions?”

Shibli: “No, I did not.”

The Imam: “In that case, you did not really stop on Arafat, mount Jabal al-Rahma, recognize Nemira, supplicate to Allah, or stop at an-Nemirat. You passed by the Two Signs (al-Alamain) , offered a two-Rakat prayer before so, walked in Muzdelifa, picked up pebbles there, and passed by al-Mash'ar al-Haram, did you not?”

Shibli: “Yes, I did.”

The Imam: “As you offered the prayer, did you intend it to be thanksgiving that saves from every hardship and alleviates all difficulties?”

Shibli: “No, I did not.”

The Imam: “As you walked between the Two Signs without turning to right or left, did you intend not to turn away from the right religion with heart, tongue, or other organs?”

Shibli: “No, I did not.”

The Imam: “As you walked in *Muzdelifa* and picked up pebbles, did you intend to get rid of every act of disobedience and every item of ignorance and to fix in your behavior every item of knowledge and good deed?”

Shibli: “No, I did not.”

The Imam: “As you passed by al-Mash'ar al-Haram, did you intend to carry in heart the slogan of the pious people and the God-fearing ones?”

Shibli: “No, I did not.”

The Imam: “In that case, you did not really pass by the Two Signs, offer a two-Rakat prayer, walk in al-Muzdelifa, pick up pebbles there, or pass by al-Mash'ar al-Haram. You reached in Mina, threw the pebbles (i.e.

performed the Ramy al-Jamarat), had your hair cut, slaughtered your sacrificed animal, offered prayer in Kheif Mosque, returned to Mecca, and performed *Tawaf al-Ifadha*, did you not?"

Shibli: "Yes, I did."

The Imam: "As you arrived in Mina and threw these pebbles, did you feel that you achieved your aim and that your Lord would settle all your needs?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "As you threw these pebbles, did you intend to stone Eblis, your enemy, and challenge him through your precious Hajj?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "As you shaved your head, did you intend to purify yourself from all filths and liabilities of people that lie on your shoulders, and to get rid of sins as if your mother had just given birth of you?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "As you offered prayer in Kheif Mosque, did you intend that you would never fear anything except Allah and the responsibilities of your (past) sins and that you would hope for nothing except Allah's mercy?"

Shibli: "As you slaughtered your sacrificial animal, did you intend to cut off the throat of greed by clinging to the reality of piety, and to follow the exemplary tradition of Ibrahim (a.s) who intended to slaughter his dear son (so as to carry our God's order)?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "As you returned to Mecca and performed Tawaf al-Ifadha, did you intent to supply yourself with Allah's mercy, return to obedience to Him, cling to His love, perform all His precepts, and seek nearness to Him?"

Shibli: "No, I did not."

The Imam: "In that case, you neither reached Mina, nor did you throw these pebbles on Satan, nor did you shave your head, nor did you perform the rituals of the Hajj, nor did you offer prayer in *Kheif* Mosque, nor did you perform *Tawaf al-Ifadha*, nor did you offer sacrifice for the Lord. Go back, you did not perform Hajj."

As he heard these words, Shibli wept heavily for the shortcomings of his performance of Hajj and decided to perform another Hajj the next year, and he did.

In Islam all acts of worship has an inner meaning. It is the duty of every Muslim man or woman to find it. We will talk more about it next time incha Allah.