

FRIDAY SERMON OF IMAM ZAFRULLAH DOMUN

18 November 2011

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

In the early days of the divine manifestation in Mauritius, one morning Allah revealed the following verse of the Holy Quran to me:

“Innallaha yamoro bil adle wal ihsaane wa itaae zil qurba wa yanha anil fahshaae wal munkare wal baghi yaezokoum la'allakoum tazakkaroune” (16:91)

We usually translate this verse as follows “Verily, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others; and giving like kindred; and forbids indecency, and manifest evil, and wrongful transgression. He admonishes you that you may take heed.”

Members will remember that every Friday we hear the *khatib* repeating these words. How many times have we stopped and thought about the meanings of what has been said in this verse and how far do we go along to do what we are asked to do in this verse. This is a matter for reflection. Everywhere you hear many Muslim and non Muslim leaders saying that they are for Justice and they do practice it. Some might even say they revere it. How far this is true is open to debate. Even within Jamaat Ahmadiyya despite all the rhetoric about the great idea of Justice we see that in many instances this idea has been trampled under the feet. Allah knows why. Anyhow this is not the subject matter of my sermon today. When Allah revealed that verse to me I also remember that He said to me “this is your mission”. From this I understood that we should stand up for justice and we should under no circumstance stop telling others to do good and we should also speak against all sorts of evil that we may find. This is what we have been trying to do since then.

Since Hazrat Masih Maood^{as} has spoken extensively on this subject I would like to quote from his book “**The Philosophy of the teachings of Islam**” what he has said about this most important matter. I personally think that telling others to do good and to refrain from evil is one of the most important duties of a Muslim even if others listen to him or ignores him. But let us hear what Hazrat Masih says:

“This means that we are commanded to return good for good, and to exercise benevolence when it is called for, and to do good with natural eagerness as between kindred, when that should be appropriate (16:91). God Almighty forbids transgression or that you should exercise benevolence out of place or should refrain from exercising it when it is called for; or that you should fall short of exercising

graciousness as between kindred on its proper occasion, or should extend it beyond its appropriate limit.

This verse sets forth three gradations of doing good.

The first is the doing of good in return for good. This is the lowest gradation and even an average person can easily acquire this gradation that he should do good to those who do good to him....”

We may say that this is basic virtue that should be practiced by any simple Muslim. Unfortunately how many times we have seen Muslims fighting or turning against their own brothers who have been quite kind to them. In such cases it means that those who act like this have been unable to understand what is virtue at the basic level. Whenever I see close friends become almost deadly enemies I am reminded of the Holy Prophet’s words which I learnt quite young where he said: “Do not exceed the limits in friendship because the friend may one day become an enemy; Do not exceed the limits in enmity because the enemy may become a friend.” I have given this quote from memory. But the gist of the message is that we should not exceed the bounds in both friendship and enmity. We continue from the quotation:

“The second gradation is a little more difficult than the first, and that is to take the initiative in doing good out of pure benevolence. This is the middle grade. Most people act benevolently towards the poor, but there is a hidden deficiency in benevolence, that the person exercising benevolence is conscious of it and desires gratitude or prayer in return for his benevolence. If on any occasion the other person should turn against him, he considers him ungrateful. On occasion he reminds him of his benevolence or puts some heavy burden upon him.

The benevolent ones have been admonished by God Almighty: “Render not vain your alms by reproaches or injury “(2:265). The Arabic word for alms (*Sadaqah*) is derived from a root (*sidq*) that means sincerity. If the heart is not inspired by sincerity in bestowing alms, the almsgiving ceases to be alms and becomes mere display. That is why those who exercise benevolence have been admonished by God Almighty not to render vain their benevolence by reproaches or injury.”

The Muslim should be concerned with living his life to win the pleasure of Allah. Almost everything that he might enjoy on earth are gifts from Allah with which Allah tries him or her “to see who is best in conduct”. Allah has spoken about these trials at several places in the Holy Quran. One should read and reflect and try to understand the deep meanings of Allah’s commandments. In brief then we should do good to please Allah and not to expect thanks from those who benefit from our benevolence. Should we expect such words or actions of thanks we render what we do vain. So if on the one hand we want to give to others we should always fight any type of desire to receive thanks for our good actions. But on the other hand those who receive favours also should never forget that the Holy Prophet ^{saw} is reported to have said that “he who is not thankful to men will not or cannot be thankful to Allah”. Hence there is the balance which we spoke of earlier. Since benefactors and beneficiaries are Muslims, all should act within the bounds prescribed by Allah and his prophets and consequently there will be peace and harmony within society. Hazrat Masih continues and says:

“The third grade of doing good is graciousness as between kindred. God Almighty directs that in this grade there should be no idea of benevolence or any desire for gratitude, but good should be done out of

such eager sympathy as, for instance, a mother does good to her child. This is the highest grade of doing good which cannot be exceeded.”

This level of virtue is quite rare. Only some rare individuals, who are thoroughly inclined towards Allah and whose heart He has purified can practice such virtue, Foremost amongst them is our beloved prophet Mohammad^{saw} who has set an unparalleled example of such acts of virtue. The kindness that he showed to those who have been relentless in persecuting him and his followers is unparalleled in History. His generosity towards his followers was boundless. Incha Allah whenever we have some time in the future we will collect such acts of virtue on his part in a sermon. Hence to describe the highest type of virtue Allah speaks about the kindness displayed amongst those who are blood related. In other words you show kindness and favours even to strangers as you would have shown only towards those who are related in blood to you. When we see what Allah is saying and what His Prophet has said and what the Messiah has said we can easily understand the degradation of our mainstream Ahmadi friends when they do the contrary in their lives!

By the Grace of Allah in the past I read *Al Fazl* quite often. But recently due to some other preoccupations I was not reading. But on Monday last I went on the Al Islam website with the intention of reading what might have been published recently on *Al Fazl*. I read the reports of the caliph's tour of Germany in June and September this year. It was quite interesting. One can easily get an idea of what goes on in such visits. But what impressed me most was the fact that whenever the caliph talked with non Muslim dignitaries he tried to impress upon them the distinctive characteristic of Islam concerning absolute justice. He emphasized with all these people (there were many delegations) that the Islam for which he stands is just and does not practice any type of double standards. In all speeches he spoke about love, peace, harmony and how these values are important for people of different faiths to live together. Whenever he spoke with Ahmadis he laid stress on the fact that they all should practice the teachings which they have inherited. He dilated upon the verse “hateful it is in the eyes of Allah that you do not practice what you preach”. He even visited the Berlin Mosque built by our brothers known as the Lahoris. He even told the person who was there to receive him to put non-controversial mainstream Jamaat's books in their libraries for visitors to see. He even invited that person to visit him in London if he ever goes there. This visit took place on June 29th this year and it has been reported in *Al Fazl* London dated 7th October page 10 Column 2 paragraph 3-4.

So I started thinking how come such a man who gives such advices and who is displaying an open-mindedness that was unheard of during the time of the second caliph could tell Ahmadis in Mauritius to maintain an unislamic and anti-Ahmadiyya boycott against members of Jamaat Ahmadiyya Al Mouslemeen. If he is at the source of this unislamic directive then he would have proved himself to be the epitome of hypocrisy and his end would not be well with Allah. So there should be another explanation for all these unislamic practices. The more I think about it the more I am inclined to think that this is the work of the previous and the actual amirs of Mauritius and local mullahs who do not know as much of Islam as their caliph and who have their own hidden agenda that they are trying to implement. Besides this conclusion I am really at a loss to attribute this perversity of Islamic teachings to the caliph. Allah knows best. Last week I

woke up with the words “*Huwa mujh par woh zahir ; mera haadi – Fa subhaanallazi akhzal a’aadi*” Of course this is a couplet from the poem of Hazrat Masih Maood^{as}. We translate it as “He who is my guide has manifested Himself to me; Pure is He who has humiliated my enemies”. Allah knows best what He has in store for those who wish to harm me and my friends.

We come back to the extract we were talking about. Hazrat Masih Maood^{as} says:

“But God Almighty has conditioned all these grades of doing good with their appropriate time and place. The verse cited above clearly indicates that if these virtues are not exercised in their proper places they would become vices. For instance, if equity exceeds its limits it would take on an unwholesome aspect and would become indecent. In the same way, misuse of benevolence would take on a form which would be repelled by reason and conscience; and in the same way graciousness between kindred would become transgression.

The Arabic word for transgression is *baghy*, which connotes excessive rain which ruins crops. A deficiency in the discharge of an obligation or an excess in its discharge are both *baghy*. In short, whichever of these three qualities is exercised out of place becomes tainted. That is why they are all three qualities conditioned by the due observance of place and occasion. It should be remembered that equity or benevolence or graciousness between kindred are not in themselves moral qualities. They are man's natural conditions and faculties that are exhibited even by children before they develop their reason. Reason is a condition of the exercise of a moral quality and there is also a condition that every moral quality should be exercised in its proper place and on its proper occasion.”(Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam page 71 from www.alislam.org/library)

In the verse under discussion Allah “**forbids indecency, and manifest evil, and wrongful transgression**”. Hazrat Masih has already explained the last word *Baghi*. Allow me to give you the meaning of the first two most important evil that Allah forbids. The first one is “*fahshaa*” which we translate as “indecency”. But it is more than that. According to Lexicologist Lane it means “an excess, an enormity, anything exceeding the bounds of rectitude; or a thing excessively foul, evil, immoral, lewd or obscene; adultery or fornication.” When we take all these shades of meanings into consideration we can understand how pregnant with meaning this word is. The word *munkar* means any action that is deemed to be bad, evil, hateful, foul, indecent or unbecoming.

If we think carefully all evil actions and thoughts are covered by these words. Incha Allah we will talk more about this next week.