

FRIDAY SERMON OF IMAM ZAFRULLAH DOMUN

02 DECEMBER 2011

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

Today is the first Friday of the new Islamic Year 1433 AH which started on Saturday last. In Islam there are no festivities that are associated with this passage of time as is done in western and other countries. But there is nothing wrong if on this occasion we greet our Muslim brothers and sisters with “*Naya Saal Mobarak*” or “happy new year” or “*bonne année*” as they say in French or in any other words of our choosing. By so doing we only wish good to others. There is nothing more to be taken out of these words. Bearing this in mind we hope and wish that year 1433 will be better for all Muslims around the world. We pray that Muslims around the world learn from the Holy Quran and the practice of the Holy Prophet Mohammad^{saw} how they should live peacefully with one another and how they should settle their differences without raising the swords on one another. May Allah grant Muslim leaders and Muslims followers around the world the necessary wisdom and guidance to live the Islamic way of life so that all may obtain salvation. Ameen

With the arrival of each Muharram we are reminded of the sad events which took place at Karbala in Iraq in the fateful year 60AH where Hazrat Imam Hussein was brutally murdered by the henchmen of Yazid. In the past once or twice we have spoken about this but just to remind we will briefly sketch those events that will eventually divide the Muslim world so much that its repercussions are still being felt today, that is after about 1350 years. However before we speak about those events I will share with you a few thoughts about Hazrat Hassan also.

When Hazrat Ali^{ra} became caliph in the year 56AH after the death of Hazrat Uthman, Muawvia who was the son of Abu Sufyan - a bitter enemy of the Holy Prophet^{saw} until the Victory at Mecca, was the governor of Syria. He

had a good following in that town and the people backed him. At one time his army and that of Hazrat Ali came face to face for battle but eventually they raised the cry that they will accept arbitration to settle their dispute. Even then they employed tricks to dupe the party of Ali and they remained a thorn in the flesh of Ali forever. When Ali was assassinated the people of Kufah elected Hazrat Hassan to be the new caliph. However Muawiya had other designs, he wanted to be caliph of the Muslim World. Hazrat Hassan made a pact with him that he will surrender the caliphate to him on the condition that after him the caliphate will be his (Hassan). In addition he told Muawiya that he should desist from seeking anyone from the Hijaz or Madinah or Iraq for revenge for what happened during Ali's caliphate. Furthermore Muawiya should pay all Hassan's debts and according to some other records he had to give him an allowance also. It is reported that the Holy Prophet once said of Hazrat Hassan that "Allah will make peace through him between two groups of Muslims". So it is said that when he made that arrangement with Muawiya to relinquish the caliphate he fulfilled the prophetic words of the Holy Prophet ^{saw}.

Later on some persons rebuked Hazrat Hassan for abdicating the caliphate and they would address him thus "O Disgrace of the believers!" He would reply saying "Disgrace is better than fire". At another time someone said to him "Peace be upon you humiliator of the believers" and he would reply "I am not the humiliator of the believers, but I disliked to kill you for sovereignty". At another time someone said to him "People are saying that you want the khilafat". He replied "The chiefs of the Arabs were with me, at war with whomever I was at war with and at peace with whomever I was at peace with. I abandoned that desiring the face of Allah, and to prevent the spilling of the blood of the *ummah* of Mohammad ^{saw}. Now later shall I take it by force with the help of the herd of goats of the people of Hijaz". In another incident it is said that Muawiya withheld the stipend that he agreed to give to Imam Hassan and the latter was in straitened circumstances. Hazrat Hassan speaks about this incident thus "I called for an inkpot so that I might write to Muawiya to remind him about myself and then I desisted. In dream I saw the Messenger of Allah ^{saw} and he said "How are you Hassan?" I said: "Well father." And I complained to him about the withholding of the property from me. He said: "Did you call for an inkpot to write to a created being like yourself to remind him of that?" I said "yes". He said "say' O Allah cast into my heart hope in You and cut off my hope in everything other than You, until I do not hope for anyone other than

You. O Allah that which my strength is too weak for and my action falls short of, my desire does not attain, my supplication does not reach, and what does not flow from my tongue, of that certainty which you have given to anyone of the ancients and the later prophets, then single me out for it, Lord of all the worlds.” Imam Hassan said “ by Allah I had not persisted in this for a week before Muawiya sent me one million and five hundred(*dirhams* most probably) and I said “praise be to Allah who does not forget whoever remembers Him and does not disappoint whoever supplicates Him.” I saw the prophet in sleep and he said ‘Hassan how are you?’. I said “Well Messenger of Allah” and I told him my story. He said ‘My son that is how it is for whoever hopes for something from the Creator and does not hope for something from the created.’”

Imam Hassan was born in 3AH, that is in the year 625 and he died in 49AH, around 671CE, barely 46 years old. It is said that his physical features resembled that of the Holy prophet ^{saw}. He died at quite a young age after he was poisoned. This is how political opponents were eliminated in those days. Here was a man who did not want Muslim blood to be spilled so that he might be their leader. He let go of temporal leadership and he is still revered in the Islamic world for all his great moral qualities. He was buried in *Jannatul Baqi* in Medina.

So when Muawiya became caliph in 656 he consolidated his position until one of his main rivals namely Imam Hassan was eliminated in 671. His elimination is according to some reports the work of Yazid, the son of Muawiya. The source for all that I have said about Imam Hassan come the Book of Imam Suyuti^{ra} entitled “Tarikh ul Khulafa” which has been translated into English as “Khalifas who took the right way”.

Now we will speak about Imam Hussein. He was born in the year 4AH (10.1.626 AD). When he was born the Holy Prophet ^{saw} was given the news of the birth of his 2nd grandson. He arrived at the house of his daughter, took the little baby in his arms, and said the *Azan* and *Iqamah* in his ears. People around the Prophet saw tears in his eyes. Fatimah asked what the reason was for this, he told her that this boy of hers will achieve martyrdom, but consoled her by adding that God will create a nation who will mourn Hussain till the Day of Judgment. It is also reported that the Holy prophet (saw) said “*Hussein-o-Minni wa Ana Minul Hussain*”. We can translate this as “Hussain is from me and I am from Hussain.” These words of the Holy Prophet may explain the close relationship that existed between these two personalities for the preservation of Islam. Many people have

written a lot about Imam Hussein and his sacrifices for Islam. One such person was Shah Moinuddin Chishty Ajmeri. He said in a Persian quatrain which is translated as follows:

Hussain is the king, indeed he is the king of kings,
Hussain is Deen and also the protector of Deen,
He gave his head but not his hand of allegiance in the hand of Yazid.
Indeed he was the founder (Like his grandfather) of the concept of One God.

In fact it was Imam Hussein who saved Islam from oblivion when a man of ill repute like Yazid became caliph after his father Muawiya died in 60AH or 682 CE. So when the Holy Prophet died Imam Hussein was only about 6 years old. He would live the next 25 years of his life in Medina with his father Ali, his brother Hassan and many other brothers and sisters from Hazrat Ali's other wives. He was well respected by the companions. He spent his time in seeing to it that the people understood the real Islam. When Ali became caliph he remained with him and took part in the battles that took place during his reign. Later on he came back with his brother Hassan in Medina. Many times he went for Hajj. One of his prayers was as follows:

“O God: you know that our struggle, moves, protests, and campaigns have not been, and are not, for the sake of rivalry and for obtaining power, neither are they for the sake of personal ambition nor for worldly ends, nor for the purpose of accumulating wealth and acquiring worldly advantages. “ But the purpose was “To establish the landmarks of Your *Deen*, to make reforms manifest in Your lands, so that the oppressed among Your servants may have security, and Your laws, which have been suspended and cast into neglect, may be reinstated.”

Continuing in the same vein He addressed Allah saying: “Oh He, upon whom I called when I was sick and He healed me, when naked, He clothed me, when hungry He fed me, when thirsty He gave me drink, when abased He exalted me, when ignorant, He gave me knowledge, when alone He provided companion, when away from home He returned me home, when empty handed He

enriched me, when in need of help He helped me, when rich He took not from me". These words help us to make an idea of the type of person that he was.

So when Yazid became caliph in 60 AH in Damascus, he sent a letter to his representative in Medina where Imam Hussein was living. He informed him of his succession to the throne of his father and ordered him to take the Oath of Allegiance from Hussain Ibne Ali. Yazid realized that although he had full temporal power and is the virtual ruler of the Arab Empire, but he has no spiritual strength unless the grandson of the Prophet accepts him as such. Walid Ibne Ataba the Governor of Madinah received this letter on 26th of Rajab 60AH. It was dusk and people were getting ready for Maghrib prayers. Walid immediately sent a messenger to Imam's house and called him to the palace. Imam Hussein realized the seriousness of the situation and took his brothers and sons with him. When they arrived at the gate of the palace Imam Hussein asked them to stay outside and wait and only enter the gates when they hear him speak loudly. Then Imam Hussein entered the palace. Walid was sitting in his high chair with Merwan Ibnul Hakam by his side. Imam Hussein asked, "What is the matter that I was called at this hour". Walid mentioned Muawiya's death, Yazid's accession to the throne and the demand for Imam's oath of allegiance. Imam replied that this is not the matter which can be done in the solitude of the palace; let this matter be brought before the people of Madinah next day in the mosque of the Prophet. Imam Hussein stood up to leave while Merwan who was listening to this conversation did not like it and warned Walid that if he lets Hussain go he will lose him. Take the oath now or cut his head off as Yazid suggested in his letter. When Imam Hussein heard this remark from Merwan he told Walid loudly: "A person like me would not give the oath of allegiance to a person like Yazid who had violated all tenets of Islam". As he raised his voice his brothers and sons entered the palace and they all left safely.

From then on Imam Hussein realized that staying in Medina would not be safe for him. From the records we also learn that the oath of allegiance had been modified by Yazid. Whilst previously all Muslims swore allegiance that the caliph would rule according to the Holy Quran and the practice of the Holy Prophet ^{saw}, Yazid was asking them to swear that they would be his slave (*abd*) and he would dispose of their life, property and offspring in any manner deemed fit. One of the companions of the Prophet in Medina named Ibn Rabia Al Aswad was prepared to swear allegiance to Yazid in accordance with the old practice but refused to swear allegiance in the form proposed. He was summarily executed. This happened inside the city of Medina. These were the circumstances from which Imam Hussein had to extricate himself so that the real Islamic values could be preserved. This story is quite interesting and fascinating. We will speak more in detail next time incha Allah. May Allah make the New Islamic Year and all coming years Mubarak for you and all your future generations who tread the path of Allah. Ameen