

FRIDAY SERMON OF IMAM ZAFRULLAH DOMUN

16 December 2011

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

We will continue today with the story of events that would eventually lead to Imam Hussein's death at the hands of Yazid's men in the year 61AH. We should understand that by the time of Imam Hussein's death those who exercised temporal power in the Muslim world were more concerned with power than with truth or spirituality or giving leadership positions to those who were most apt to exercise it. Yazid was afraid of the threat that an Imam Hussein as a grandson of the Holy Prophet Mohammad^{saw} would have to his position as leader. So either he would bring him to toe the line through the oath of allegiance (*bay'a*) or he would eliminate him completely through death. Unfortunately despite the lessons that could be learned from these sad events of the early days of Islam, Islamic history has been dogged by many infamous leaders who have preferred to follow Yazid's footsteps and harming innocent people like Imam Hussein and his family members. Even these days such Yazidis are at work around the world to try to force innocent people to conform to their hidebound and parochial view of Islam. But fortunately history is also witness that such Yazidis are blotted out of the surface of the earth when their time comes. More often it comes sooner rather than later.

The previous week I told you that according to history books Imam Hussein received Yazid's instructions to take the oath of allegiance on 26th Rajab 60AH. Imam Hussein left Medina and went to Mecca for the next approximately five months. Then on the 8th Zul Hijja 60AH he left Mecca because he understood that he was no longer safe over there. Before leaving he left a letter in which he explained why he was moving to confront Yazid by looking at death in the face. In the letter he said:

"I have not come out to stir emotions, to play with discontentment, to provoke dissension or to spread oppression. I wish to bring the Umma back to the path of *Amr-bil-Ma'arouf* and *Nahyi Unil Munker*. I wish to bring them back to the

path of my grandfather the Messenger of Allah and of my father Ali Ibne Abi Talib”.

We note here the breadth of the knowledge of Imam Hussein when he spoke what was most essential in what he was doing. You will recall that in our two previous sermons before the last we spoke about the matter of promoting good and forbidding evil in Muslim Society. Those who understand the essence of Islam know quite well that this task is fundamental and that it is the duty of every Muslim to carry it out provided he knows what he is talking about. Even though he knew that according to instructions he should have shown obedience to Yazid who was the chief of the Muslims yet he chose not to do so because his God-given knowledge helped him to understand that giving in to Yazid would mean abetting him in his crime of trampling under the feet the fundamental teachings of Islam. He understood in his heart of heart that he would have to fight this man so that the teachings of Islam as expounded by his Grandfather and father might prevail even though this confrontation might cost him dearly. Yet in order for Islam to prevail he had to do it. He knew he did not have material means at his disposal. He was outnumbered by Yazid's army. He did not have weapons with him. He was determined to carry out this fight through spiritual means so to say.

So he set out on his journey on 8th Zul Hajj 60AH and he would journey for about 22 days before arriving in Karbala in Iraq on 2nd Muharram 61AH. Wherever he went he talked with the people. According to some historians he stopped at about 14 places on his journey. Recently with an early map from the British Museum a historian has been able to map the entire journey of Imam Hussein to Karbala. We are told that at a place he met a poet and asked him about the condition of the people in Kufa. The poet dissuaded him from proceeding on his journey and told him “their hearts are with you but their swords are against you”. Out of a total of 82 male warriors eighteen were from his own family, all descendants of Hazrat Ali^{ra}. But the rest of his party was from all places, almost from all Islamic lands of that time. There were men from Sham (Syria), from *Jaba el Amul* (Lebanon), from Armenia, from Azerbaijan, from Yemen, Abyssinia and Egypt. We are told that when he reached his 5th stop there were only 50 people with him, most of them women and children.

When he arrived at his 6th stop he was told by a tribesman not to proceed to Kufa because it is not a friendly place. But he was determined and he moved on. Arriving at his seventh stopping place known as Sorat he passed the night over there. After Fajr he asked his companions to fill all their containers and water skins with water. Eventually they met one of the army of Yazid which was being led by Hur. The latter prevented him from proceeding any further. The party of the Imam shared their water with them. When the time for Zohr prayer came all of them read the prayer behind the Imam. At least that much they knew that they could pray together even if they

had political differences. When the Imam understood that he would not be allowed to go to Kufa he wrote a letter to the people of Kufa which said:

“O’people of Kufa, you sent me delegations and wrote me letters that you had no Imam and that I should come to unite you and lead you in the way of God. You replied that we Ahlulbayt are more qualified to govern your affairs than those who claim things to which they had no rights and act unjustly., But if you have changed your mind, have become ignorant of our Rights and have forgotten your promises, than I shall turn back”.

But Hur’s army did not allow him to return. So he moved on to the North. Arriving at Baiza, his tenth stopping place Imam Hussein delivered a speech which is considered a landmark in the literature. He is reported to have said:

O’People, The Prophet of Islam has said that if a believer sees a tyrannical ruler transgressing against Allah and his Messenger and oppressing people, but does nothing by word or action to change the situation, then it will be just for God to place him where he deservingly belongs. Do you not see to what low level the affairs have come to., do you not observe that truth has not adhered and falsehood has no limits. And as for me, I look upon death but a means of attaining martyrdom. I consider life among the transgressors an agony and an affliction”.

Real men cannot just suffer in silence when they see things are amiss. Here I will make an aside to say something about how Ahmadis in their majority are made to obey a Nizam which acts contrary to the words and directives of Allah and His Messenger. By now it is quite well known that many aspects of Ahmadiyya teachings of these days are contrary to what the Promised Messiah himself has said but yet we see Ahmadis slavishly obeying these non Islamic instructions. This is why it is justified for people like us and other reformist Ahmadiyya Jamaats around the world to continue to denounce all unislamic teachings and practices that are being imposed upon Ahmadis these days. Fortunately for us, By the Grace of Allah we have better means available to fight these forces of darkness and they are being forced to run on their heels because they are unable to defend their position on all controversial matters. But unfortunately their capacity to do harm is still quite enormous on their slavish followers. A recent example of their unislamic teaching that they try to impose is what one of their speakers said in their Lajna Ijtema whereby according to the Book of Allah it is forbidden to break family relationship except with those who have rebelled against the Nizam. There is a limit to ignorance. Mainstream Ahmadiyya men are hiding themselves and they are pushing forward their ladies to issue unislamic fatwas! Unfortunately a majority of Ahmadis have cultivated the attitude of slaves towards their masters instead of cultivating in themselves the spirit of Imam Hussein and his

companions who were ever ready to fight oppression whenever they saw it. Anyhow let us continue to pray that Allah helps our Ahmadi brothers understand what is true from what is false.

We now come back to our story. When Imam Hussein arrived at his destination he asked what was the name of the place. He was told it is known as Kerbala. The Imam replied, this is the place of *Kerbin-wa-bala*, i.e. the place of torture and pain. Let us stop here.” He ordered his followers to dismount. “We have reached our destination”, he said. Tents were pitched near the River Bank. The date was 2nd of Muharram 61 AH (3rd October 681 AD).

Hur’s soldiers surrounded the Imam’s camp. On the 4th of Muharram another contingent of 4000 men arrived from Kufa. The next day Shimr arrived with another 10,000 men to fight an army of about 40 people, among them were men of over 80 and children of 13 and 11 and even a 6 month old baby, the youngest son of the Imam who was only a month old when Imam left Madina in the Month of Rajab 5 months back. Shimr ordered the Imam and his entourage to leave the River Bank and pitch their tents away from it. Imam’s brother Abbas and others refused, but Imam told them to move the tents. The tents were moved about 200 yards away from the River Bank and the river was immediately occupied by the soldiers of Yazid newly arrived from Kufa. Hence the Imam’s group was denied access to the water in the river.

On the 7th of Muharram, all water supplies were stopped for the Imam’s party and soon the cry of thirst was heard from the children in the camp. Whatever water they would have stored was finished within a day and by the 8th there was no water left in the camp. Just imagine how difficult it was for this small party to be without water in the scorching heat of the desert. On the afternoon of the 9th, Yazid’s army moved forward in a formation of attack. The imam sent them word to give him one night so that he and his people might pray and meditate. This respite was given and they spent their night in meditation and prayer. In the army of Yazid there were amusements. This impressed about thirty persons and they left Yazid’s army and joined that of Imam Hussein to fight on his side. It is reported that on that night Imam Hussein told his companions that they could leave him because the enemy wanted him alone but no one left. They stayed put. Before the battle started Hur who had been following Imam Hussein joined his side together with his soon. Early in the battle they would be killed. Eventually Imam Hussein would be killed and about 22 persons from his party would be spared and they would move on to Kufa.

Since these fateful events took place in 61AH, poets and scholars have never finished praising the courage and determination of Imam Hussein for standing up against injustice oppression and irreligiousness. The essence of the history of Islam has been written with Imam Hussein’s blood we may say. Whenever the Yazidis take power in the world of Islam there will always be people of the caliber of Imam Hussein and his companions who would rise to the occasion in order to

confront those forces that try to impose their unislamic will on the people. Even a brief survey of Islamic History will show how many times people motivated with the spirit of Imam Hussein combated those who showed their Yazid like behavior. When those in power try to force innocent Muslims to obey their will several Husseins appear to bring to naught these nefarious schemes of the enemies of Islam who pretend to be its defenders.

Even many non Muslims like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Rabindranath Tagore have praised Imam Hussein for his acts of bravery and they have taken from this tragedy several lessons that they have tried to display in their own lives. Mahatma Gandhi is reported to have said “*“My admiration for the noble sacrifice of Imam Hussein (a.s) as a martyr abounds, because he accepted death and the torture of thirst for himself, for his sons, and for his whole family, but did not submit to unjust authorities.” “I learnt from Hussain how to achieve victory while being oppressed.”*”*“My faith is that the progress of Islam does not depend on the use of sword by its believers, but the result of the supreme sacrifice of Hussain.” “If India wants to be a successful country, it must follow in the footsteps of Imam Hussain (as). “If I had an army like the 72 soldiers of Hussain, I would have won freedom for India in 24 hours.”*

On the internet one can find a list of quotations which show the admiration that Non Muslims had for Imam Hussein. Those who are interested may read these quotations there.

May Allah enable all Muslims to have faith and courage like that of Imam Hussein! May Allah help us to face all sorts of oppression which might come, with fortitude and with a readiness to lose our life so that the principles of Islam might live on. Ameen