

FRIDAY SERMON OF IMAM ZAFRULLAH DOMUN

16 MARCH 2012

Summary:

Independence Day celebrations and love of our country. Mauritians need to know history of the country. Prayer for rain. Why Masih Maood Day. Statistics about Roman Catholicism and their resources in the field. Real challenge for Jamaat Ahmadiyya mainstream in Europe. Window of opportunity to present the real message of Islam as taught by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Mainstream Jamaat should adopt a reform agenda and take initiatives to bring all groups together.

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

We are already in the middle of March this year. When the month of March comes Mauritians celebrate Independence Day on 12th March. Most of the Mauritians who are born after independence in 1968 and who have not studied our history cannot realize the significance of that day in the history of Mauritius. Unfortunately they are not well aware of the progress that the country has made since then. I think that it is important that all Mauritians irrespective of religion or ethnic group should make it a must to learn the history of our nation in order to know what has been really going on in this small island. The History of Mauritius is a fascinating history. It needs to be known and taught to all in order to help each one to appreciate our rich cultural and historical heritage. As a Muslim we have love for this country and we pray for real peace and justice and love to prevail upon it so that we might all live together in peace and solidarity with all its inhabitants.

The Holy Prophet ^{saw} has taught us that “the love of country is part of our faith.” Hence it is incumbent upon every Muslim to cultivate love for his country in the heart and to work towards the superior interest of the country at all times. We take this opportunity to pray that Allah keeps Mauritius under the shadow of His Grace forever. May all Mauritians live in peace and fraternity. May we all learn to count our blessings and work for the benefit of all. Let us also pray that out of His Grace Allah will fill all our reservoirs with water because we know Him to have this capacity. Does He not tell us in chapter 67 Verse31 of the Holy Quran “*Qoul Afa ra’aytoun in asbaha maa’okoum ghayran faman yaatioum be maa’im ma’een*” which we translate as “**Say, ‘Tell me, if *all* your water were to disappear *in the earth*, who then will bring you *clear* flowing water?’**”. It is our sincere belief that He can send the necessary amount of water that will fill our reservoirs and help all of us to get an adequate supply every day. We say so because we know that there are other verses where Hazrat Nuh is reported to have said to his people. “And I said, ‘**Seek forgiveness of your Lord; for He is the Great Forgiver. ‘He will send down rain for you in abundance, ‘And He will strengthen you with wealth and *with* children, and He will give you gardens and He will give you rivers.**’”(71:11-13) From these verses we can easily deduct that if people ask forgiveness for their sins from Allah, He will send them rain in abundance. This is a Promise on His Part. Anyhow this is a subject that needs more explanations. But what is important is that we need to stop sinning if we expect Allah to favour us with His all embracing Grace.

During the month of March each year since some time now Ahmadi-Muslims all over the world also celebrate what is known as Masih Maood Day. I do not know for sure when this day has been celebrated for the first time in Jamaat Ahmadiyya. But in Mauritius I know that it started in the early 1960s when we were still young children. This day is celebrated on 23 March every year. Usually a function is held and several speeches are made on the various aspects of the life of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} who took the first bait on 23rd March 1889 in Ludhiana, a town near Lahore in India at that time.

To know the circumstances leading to the creation of Jamaat Ahmadiyya in 1889 is a must for all Ahmadi Muslim. This history tells us that everything was not smooth in the beginning. Few people were attracted to truth and some came and left after a little time because they did not agree with the ideas being presented. But many would stay and carry on the work of spreading those initial ideas to the corners of the world. It is thus that during the 123 years since the initial setting up of the Jamaat in Ludhiana, members of Jamaat Ahmadiyya are to be found in all corners of the world today. According to the official statistics the Jamaat is present in almost two hundred countries and they say that there are about 200? million members. But we do not believe in these statistics as we have quite often said before. We will not get into that discussion again here. Personally I think that there are about ten to fifteen million Ahmadis in the world. Anyhow those who give false statistics to increase the numbers will have to answer to Allah for giving such inflated numbers to the world.

Recently I read a report about the Roman Catholic Church. In fact the report was made public last Saturday. It is known as the pontiff's directory. It gives a lot of figures about Roman Catholicism in the world up to the end of 2010. Thus we learn that there are about 1.196 billion Catholics in the world. In one year they increased by only 1.3%. The proportion of Catholics in the world is stable at 17.5% of the global world population. Their proportion in the continents varies. For example they form only 23.8 % of Europe and 15.5 % of Africa, 28.3% of South America and 10.4% in Oceania. Their resources in the field are enormous. They have about 5104 bishops and 412,236 priests and about 712,935 nuns. Catholics are the majority of all Christians in the world. Yet they have one of the oldest institutions in the world which has been racked by enormous scandals since the beginning and in its name enormous crimes have been committed against ordinary people. In the name of their religion people have been burnt alive, money has been exacted from the people for the remission of sins and they sit on enormous wealth whereas there are so many Christians dying of hunger. In addition recently their hierarchy has been accused of committing pedophilia against many of those who trusted them.

From America to Australia through Ireland the Catholic Church has had to pay enormous damages for the cover-up of the crimes of the clergy. Recently the Vatican itself has been accused of corruption and the pope moved a cardinal from the Vatican to USA because this cardinal was doing his work too well. All these are reports that have been published and they are even available on the net.

Now one may say what is the use of speaking about them in today's sermon. These are the people who are our real enemies because they are the ones who say that Jesus is the son of God or even God incarnate. Hazrat Masih Maood^{as} came to smash this concept of theirs and to show the world that Allah is Unique and far above that which they have associated with Him. Despite all their setbacks the pope and his inner circle are trying their best to win back Catholics and others to their concept of God. Recently they published another report to bring Catholics back to the fold in Europe and they have similar plans for the other continents. At this point in time Jamaat Ahmadiyya can offer a lot to those people in Europe who have been deceived by those they trusted. But the question is whether the Jamaat can show how it is itself trustworthy. The Jamaat needs new thinking to channel people's energies towards propagation of Islam that will give to suffering souls the balm that they need but they can't find elsewhere! This is the challenge for Jamaat Ahmadiyya these days. At a time when we remember how the Jamaat was first formed it would be quite appropriate to make plans how to win the people of Europe and the world to real Islam.

We will be able to bring others to Islam when we practice it as it has been taught to us by Hazrat Masih Maood^{as}. Unfortunately we have to say that Jamaat Ahmadiyya has to follow a program of reform for itself. There is a need for the people to know how Islam can liberate them from those chains and collars that slow them down. There is a need for Ahmadis to practice real fraternity rather than speak about it. There is a need for Ahmadis to practice real virtue instead of inviting others to it but ignoring it themselves. So the agenda of reform within the Jamaat is itself quite enormous and we need to be bold enough to prepare it and to strive to implement it. Despite its grand declarations Jamaat Ahmadiyya is not following the Islam that

Hazrat Masih Maood^{as} has taught us. The leadership has to change course and on time. They have to do what they preach and stop preaching what they do not do. They have to come forward to repair all the broken relationships that their ill thought policies and archaic view of Islam has forced them to do. They should not, like the Catholic Church, wait centuries before presenting excuses for all the wrongs that they have done. They should do it now and acknowledge their stupid mistakes and let us all move on together.

Recently an Ahmadi friend of mine told me that we should find ways and means to recreate unity in the Jamaat and move Hazrat Masih's mission forward. I agree with him. The mainstream Jamaat should have made initiatives to re create unity in the Jamaat. But they do not seem to be in the least interested to do so because they are inadequately equipped to handle such matters. Unfortunately we have to say it the Pakistani culture has more sway on people's mind than the Islamic culture. The Pakistani culture says we should boycott all those who have different views from us whereas the Islamic culture says we should talk with those who have different views than ours in order to persuade them or even to adopt their views if they are right. Otherwise we might still be friends but we agree to disagree and we carry on living peaceably together. But such an attitude can only be developed by those who have certainty in their knowledge but yet they are open to others' ideas. Those who think that they have iron clad opinions have difficulty to open their heart or their mind to others. Hazrat Masih taught us to be open minded and told us that we should seek knowledge because in itself it is a force by which we fight falsehood. But those who do not have the knowledge that he has taught us will always refrain from confrontation with those who might break their false paradigms. So I say it again that my heart and my arms are open to all those who think I am wrong and would like to have an exchange of ideas with me in an open and civilized manner. I will even be thankful to them if they show me my ignorance and enlighten me with their wisdom!

Members of Jamaat Ahmadiyya Al Mouslemeen and all other Ahmadi Muslims should see to it that when we reflect upon the early days of Jamaat Ahmadiyya

Mainstream we should be asking ourselves how far we are doing what Hazrat Masih Maood^{as} expected from an Ahmadi. It is important for all of us to take stock of our life and wonder how far we have been loyal to the noble teachings that we received and how far we have failed to put these noble teachings in practice in our life. If the gap between what we should have done and what we have done is large then we have a lot to do to catch up. But if it is small then we should be grateful to Allah that He has helped us to do as much as we could have done to honour our promise in our oath of allegiance.

We should learn to continuously reflect on why we are a member of Hazrat Masih Maood's Jamaat. One day of reflection will not be enough. This reflection should become a part and parcel of our life if we want to give meaning to our life. Just sitting in mosques listening to speeches or giving them will not make a big difference in our life or the life of others. We should learn well what the Promised Messiah stood for and we should do our best to imitate him. Let not petty worldly squabbles prevent us from realizing the noble objectives for which Jamaat Ahmadiyya was set up in the first place. May Allah open the heart of each one amongst us to these noble objectives and may He enable us to do our part in trying to realize them. Ameen