

FRIDAY SERMON OF IMAM ZAFRULLAH DOMUN

**20 JULY 2012**

After reciting the *Tashahhud*, the *Ta'uz* and the first chapter *Al Fatiha* of the Holy Quran Imam Zafrullah Domun read verses 184&185 of Sura Al Baqara in Arabic and then he said:

As I said last week, the moon for the month of Ramadan will most probably be visible tonight weather permitting. The heart of the majority of Muslims will be full of joy as from today because Allah has allowed them once more to be alive during another month of Ramadan. As from tonight those who out of illness or negligence or laziness have been absent from the mosque for Esha prayers will be present not only to say Esha prayers but Tarawih prayers as well. As from tonight most Muslims will show an additional enthusiasm in their devotion to Allah. The most evident sign of this new zeal will be the number of people who would be resorting to mosques for all the daily prayers during this most blessed month.

I wish to convey to all Muslim brothers and sisters around the world “Ramadan Mubarak” and hope and pray that Allah helps us to derive the maximum physical and spiritual benefits from this month. I hope that each one amongst us will use the opportunity that we have been given to increase the level of our Godfearingness (*taqwa*) because this is the aim of fasting as Allah has said in the verse that I have just read **“O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous.”** From this verse we understand that fasting for those who declare themselves to be Muslims is to be observed as a prescription from Allah. Being a Muslim it is obligatory upon you to observe the fasts of Ramadan except for those who are sick or on a journey. Hence all able bodied Muslims who have the capacity should fast during the month of Ramadan. He or she who does not fast or who is neglectful in replacing his missing fasts has disobeyed Allah and he or she will have to answer for his negligence. That is why I say that a rare opportunity is being given again to all those who see this month, that is who are alive during this month to have all their past sins forgiven and to make amends for their past negligence. Each one amongst us should make up

our mind that we will be grateful for this special favour of Allah upon all of us and that we will do our best to increase our determination to obey Him and to seek forgiveness for our past sins during this holy month. Remember that a rare opportunity is being given to all of us to wash all our sins and to become pure as we were on the day we were borne. You will recall that it is reported that the Holy Prophet Mohammad <sup>saw</sup> has said **“The month of Ramadan is the month in which Allah, The Mighty, The Glorious, has made fasting obligatory upon you. So one, who fasts in this month in a state of belief and with the intention of recompense, shall become free of his sins just as he was on the day when his mother gave him birth.”** So from day one we should be determined to make the most of this month by getting involved in multiplying good deeds like prayers, almsgiving, and reading of the Holy Quran and in being kind with one another.

*Alhamdulillah* that for us in Mauritius, the weather is quite cool and we would be fasting for only about twelve and a half hours per day. Moreover since we are in winter we will not be feeling some inconveniences that are usually associated with fasting during summer like extreme thirst and hunger. Here the average temperature will be around 20<sup>0</sup>C during the day and even less at night. But in some other places these days it will be around 40<sup>0</sup>C or even more during the day. Fortunately for us we do not know such extreme temperature. So let us be grateful to Allah for making things easy for us. At no times does Allah wishes that we should be inconvenienced because of these fasts. In verse 186 of Surah Al Baqara Allah says *“Yoridullaho becomoul yusra wa laa yorido becomoul usra”* meaning “Allah desires to give you facility and He desires not hardship for you”. Hence Allah has prescribed these fasts for only one month out of the twelve months of the year. He says **“The prescribed fasting is for a fixed number of days”**. But if during the month of Ramadan someone is sick or is travelling these fasts have to be observed on other days of the year. In such a way no one will complain that he or she could not fast because of some necessity and has been deprived of the blessings associated with fasting. Allah out of His Mercy tells His servants that they can still derive the full benefits of the fasts when they would be free of their inconveniences. Similarly if a Muslim finds himself to be unable to fast because the fast will be unbearable for him or her Allah offers an expiation as He says in the Holy Quran **“and for those who are able to fast only with great difficulty is an expiation — the feeding of a poor man.”** Now if someone has the capacity to do more good deeds that have been prescribed it would be better for him because Allah says **“And whoso performs a good work with willing obedience, it is better for him.”** The treasures of Allah are never depleted.

He is the Great and He can reward everyone according to his deeds and no one is harmed in anyway.

Some persons sometimes question the wisdom of fasting. In fact if you study the matter you will know that Islamic fasting is quite unique. In no other religion besides Islam you will find people fasting the way we do. Although Allah tells us that He prescribed fasting for all the peoples who received His Guidance before the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad <sup>saw</sup>, yet the way we fast is different from the way others fast. So in order to silence those who might not know the benefits of fasting Allah tells us “**And fasting is good for you, if you only knew**”. In the first instance fasting has been prescribed for us so that we might become more conscious of Allah. In other words we try to know more of his prescriptions and prohibitions by devoting more time to the study of His Book, the Holy Quran. Second while we fast we devote more time to prayer. The more we pray the greater we feel His Presence and the more conscious we become of Him. Besides these spiritual benefits there are some other benefits that are known and some that are to be discovered. We know for example that there are some doctors who are treating some diseases with fasting. Some researches done by Malaysian doctors have shown how fasting controls blood sugar. In the literature related to this field some researchers have shown the overall beneficial effects of fasting over the whole body. These days, doctors are speaking about the obesity epidemic that is spreading rapidly around the world. Fasting can provide great help in controlling it.

Since in the month of Ramadan we should be having some more time on hand, we should try to use this time to enhance our knowledge and practice of Islam. We all should try to read more of the Holy Quran with a view to get a deeper understanding of what it is telling us and how we should practice its teachings in our daily lives. I can tell you that understanding Allah’s words is more important than just reading the words in Arabic or in another language. So do not think that you are doing a great feat by just reading one part per day and finishing the reading during the whole month. We should read with understanding. Remember that nowhere has Allah told us that we should read the whole Quran once during the month of Ramadan. This practice has been established from the fact that during the month of Ramadan Hazrat Gabriel used to make the Holy Prophet recite that portion of the Holy Quran that had been revealed until then. Since we cannot say for sure why he did so we can speculate that it was done so that all that the Holy Prophet had been told could stay fresh in his memory. At that time they did not have books. But by the Grace of Allah the Holy Quran is easily available today. These days you may have it even on your smart phone as well. The facilities we have for understanding the Book is

enormous and we all should try to benefit from the means that Allah has made available for us. So our aim should be to understand the book. Although many Muslims are becoming professional in many worldly subjects few are trying to be proficient in what Allah wants us to learn most for our benefit in this world and in the next. So put it on your priority To-Do list for this Ramadan that you will do your best to learn at least the subject matter of the 40 Rukus of Sura Baqara for this Ramadan. If you engage yourself in this task you will see that by the end of this Ramadan you will be another person because you know more of the Holy Quran than what you know today. Start slowly but go on steadily and you will marvel at how much you will have accomplished by the end of the month. Once you get a taste for this study you will delve more into it.

Since during the coming month we will get plenty of opportunities to read *Nawafil* prayers, it will be good and very rewarding if each one amongst us should see to it that we understand each and every word that we pronounce when we pray. Unfortunately many people do not understand the meanings of the words that we utter in prayer. Unless and until someone does not make the personal effort to understand all the words that we say we will not know the pleasure that one can derive in prayer. So use the opportunity that will be given to you in this Ramadan to learn all the words that we use in prayer well so that the door for true supplications may be opened for you. There are plenty of books available these days on the Internet which can make this task quite easy for you. So make it a task on your priority list to learn your prayers well during this Ramadan. It is only when we know what we are saying to Allah that we will develop the necessary concentration that will develop the presence of Allah in front of us whenever we are praying. But if we just repeat words that we do not understand, our prayers will be an exercise in futility. In fact the Arabic words we use in our daily prayers are quite simple and can be easily understood. What is needed is the motivation to understand it and the determination to undertake the task. *Incha* Allah we will speak more about this in a later sermon.

In a hadith it has been reported that the Holy Prophet(saw) had said that during the month of Ramadan: “you should display four characteristics to a great extent; with two of which you will please your Lord, and two you cannot dispense with. The two with which you will please your Lord are to testify that there is no one deserving of worship except Allah, and to seek His forgiveness; whereas the two which you cannot dispense with are that you beseech Allah to place you in Paradise and that you seek refuge with Him from Hell.” [Related by Ibn Khuzaymah and AlBayhaqi].

In fact all Muslims who want to profit from all the spiritual benefits of Ramadan should try to follow these advices of the Holy Prophet saw to letter. We should do our best to repeat *laa Ilaha illah* and *astaghfirullah* many times per day and night. These are the two characteristics that will please Allah *incha* Allah. The prayers for Paradise and protection from the fire of Hell may be done in our own tongue. In fact we should address Allah in our own tongue whenever we need something from Him. May Allah help each one amongst us to fully enjoy all the benefits that Ramadan usually comes with. Ameen!