

FRIDAY SERMON OF IMAM ZAFRULLAH DOMUN

27 JULY 2012

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

Today almost one quarter of the month of Ramadan is already gone. Time is moving quite fast. We should now be more determined to multiply our good deeds in the coming days. We should not say that we will do such and such deeds in the last days of the month. Whatever we can do we should try to do it as quickly as possible. As I said before we should try to fill our days and nights with good deeds. Such deeds include prayers, charity, reading and understanding the Holy Quran, remembrance of Allah and salutations on the Holy Prophet ^{saw} and seeking forgiveness besides of course, fasting. May Allah enable each one amongst us to understand all our duties and obligations for the month of Ramadan and may He reward us in full measure out of His Grace despite our shortcomings.

Hadith books are full of plenty of sayings of the Holy prophet ^{saw} in which he has advised the umma about how they should fast. Since most people have a tendency to forget we use the Friday sermon to remind them about these important instructions of the Holy Prophet ^{saw}. So today we will talk about some hadiths. Most of these are well known but it is still good to remind ourselves of them.

In one hadith Hazrat Salman ^{ra} says: "On the last day of Shabaan Rasulullah ^{saw} addressed us and said, 'O people there comes over you now a great month, a most blessed month in which lies a night more greater in virtue than a thousand months.'" Here we understand that he is referring to laylatul qadr. He continues: "It is a month in which Allah has made Fasting compulsory by day. And has made *sunnah* the standing up for prayer at night. Whosoever intends drawing near to Allah by performing any virtuous deed, for such person shall be the reward like the one who had performed a *fardh* in any other time. And whoever performs a *fardh*, shall be blessed with the reward of seventy *fardh* in any other time.

This is indeed the month of patience, and the reward for true patience is Jannah (paradise). It is the month of sympathy with one's fellowmen. It is the month wherein a true believer's provision is increased. Whosoever feeds another who fasted, in order to break the fast at sunset, for the feeder there shall be forgiveness of sins and emancipation from the fire of *Jahannam* (hell), and for such feeder shall be the same reward as the one who Fasted (whom he fed) without that persons reward being decreased in the least." Thereupon we said, "O messenger of Allah, not all of us possess the means whereby we can give a fasting person to break his fast." Rasulullah^{saw} replied, "Allah grants the same reward to the one who gives a fasting person to break the fast a mere date, or a drink of water, or a sip of milk."

"This is a month, the first part of which brings Allah's mercy, the middle of which brings His forgiveness and the last part of which brings emancipation from the fire of *Jahannam*." "Whosoever lessens the burden of his servants (bondsmen) in this month, Allah will forgive him and free him from the fire of *Jahannam*."

"And in this month four things you should continue to perform in great number, two of which shall be to please your Lord, while the other two shall be those without which you cannot do. Those which shall be to please your Lord, are that you should in great quantity bear witness that there is no deity to worship except Allah (i.e. recite the Kalimah Tayyibah Laa Ilaaha illallaah) and make much *Istighfaar* beg Allah's forgiveness with *Astagfirul-laah*." And as for those without which you cannot do, you should beg of Allah, entrance into paradise and ask refuge in Him from *Jahannam*." "And whoever gave a person who fasted, water to drink, Allah shall grant that giver to drink from My fountain, such a drink where after that person shall never again feel thirsty until he enters *Jannah*."

This hadith speaks in a nutshell about many important aspects of Ramadan. We should reread it and reflect upon what it is trying to tell us and try to put into practice all that is being asked of us.

In another hadith Kaab bin Ujra relates, "Rasulullah^{saw} said, "Come near to the mimbar". And we came near to the mimbar. When he ascended the first step of the mimbar he said "Aameen". When he ascended the second step of the mimbar he said, "Aameen". When he ascended the third step he said, "Aameen".

When he descended we said, "O Messenger of Allah, we have heard from you today

something which we never heard before". He said, When I ascended the first step Jibraeel^{as} appeared before me and said, "Woe to him who found the blessed month of Ramadan and let it pass by without gaining forgiveness", Upon that I said, "Aameen". When I ascended the second step, he said "Woe to him before whom thy name is mentioned and then does not read Durood on you". I replied "Aameen". When I ascended the third step he said, "Woe unto the person in whose presence both parents or one of them attain old age, and (through failure to serve them) is not allowed to enter Jannah" I said "Aameen". Reported by Haakim.

In this hadith we learn how great an opportunity is being given to us to get forgiveness for our sins during this month. We would be really quite miserable if we let go of such an opportunity to get all our sins forgiven. We are also reminded how important it is for us to say *sallallahu alayhe wassallam* when we hear the name of the Holy Prophet mentioned. Thirdly we are reminded how important it is for us to serve our parents if we find them old with us. Unfortunately this is an area where many fail because they neglect their parents and look only on their wives and children. As a Muslim we should always remember that we have obligations towards our parents and our wives and children as well.

It is also reported by Abu Ubaida^{ra} that the Holy Prophet has said "Fasting is a protective covering for a man as long as he does not tear that protection". What we can understand from these words is that as long as we fulfill the needs of fasting as we should it protects us. But once we ignore its requirements we have through our own actions lost its protection. If we fast and use foul language, the fast has not given us an increase in God consciousness so that we might have controlled ourselves not to use foul language. We should know at any moment that we are fasting and we should preserve our fast. We fast in order to be more careful in what we say or do. It is most probably for people who just go through the motions that the Holy Prophet has said "many are the ones who fast, attaining nothing by such fasting except hunger and many are the ones performing salaah by night attaining nothing by it except for the discomfort of staying awake at night." These should be those people who do not get any increase in *Taqwa* because of their fast: prior to fasting and after fasting they are the same. In other words they have fasted for nothing and they have stayed awake at night for nothing. A good Muslim should aim to get an increase in his fear of Allah through his fasts and through his prayers at night. After and during Ramadan he should have corrected all his shortcomings and he should strive to tread the path of the righteous. Relevant to the same subject is the hadith which says: "He who does not give up false speech and evil actions, Allah doesn't need his refraining from food and drink." Our fasting does not serve us if we do not stop from doing

what Allah has forbidden us to do. Each one should make his or her own list of what such prohibitions he might be indulging in and immediately stop doing them.

Now I will tell you about the hadith in Bukhari concerning the beginning of Tarawih prayers: Abu Huraira narrates: Allah's Apostle said, "Whoever prayed at night the whole month of Ramadan out of sincere Faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven." Ibn Shihab (a sub-narrator) said, "Allah's Apostle died and the people continued observing that (i.e. Nawafil offered individually, not in congregation), and it remained as it was during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr and in the early days of 'Umar's Caliphate." 'Abdur Rahman bin 'Abdul Qari said, "I went out in the company of 'Umar bin Al-Khattab one night in Ramadan to the mosque and found the people praying in different groups. A man praying alone or a man praying with a little group behind him. So, 'Umar said, 'In my opinion I would better collect these (people) under the leadership of one Qari (Reciter) (i.e. let them pray in congregation!)'. So, he made up his mind to congregate them behind Ubai bin Ka'b. Then on another night I went again in his company and the people were praying behind their reciter. On that, 'Umar remarked, 'What an excellent *Bid'a* (i.e. innovation in religion) this is; but the prayer which they do not perform, but sleep at its time is better than the one they are offering.' He meant the prayer in the last part of the night. (In those days) people used to pray in the early part of the night."

We learn from this hadith that no Tarawih prayers in congregation were performed at the time of the Holy Prophet ^{saw}. But the companions used to pray individually at night in the mosque. It was Hazrat Umar^{ra} who grouped them together led by one Qari. Since then the practice has stayed within the Umma. But we have to note also that Hazrat Umar^{ra} understood quite well that Tahajjud prayer done in the latter part of the night is better than Tarawih Prayer done in the first part of the night. Hence even if we participate in Tarawih prayer we should strive to do at least two *rakaats* of tahajjud prayer in the latter part of the night. If we have time and capacity we should do more *rakaats*. Furthermore no one should discount Tarawee prayers and say that the Holy Prophet did not do it. In fact the ways of the close sahabas specially a caliph also form part of the traditions of early Islam. Moreover one should try to see what are the advantages that can accrue to us through these additional prayers.

These days by the Grace of Allah beautiful recitation of the whole Holy Quran is available on YouTube together with their translation in many languages. If someone is a bit familiar with the Arabic language but he does not master it thoroughly he can benefit enormously by listening to these videos. There he will have the benefit of a beautiful recitation together with a

simultaneous translation in writing. Here is an occasion to make a really good use of technology which unfortunately has brought many ills as well. During the month of Ramadan one may easily listen and read to understand one part of the Holy Quran everyday through this technology. I think this will be a big plus for all Muslims who do not understand Arabic quite well. They are being given an easy way to read one Part of the Holy Quran every day. It is up to them to avail themselves of this opportunity. The facility is there to make it easy for almost everyone to listen and read at least one Part of the Holy Quran easily everyday.

The month of Ramadan is the month of prayers and devotions and of being good to one another. As good Muslims we should do our best to turn to Allah during this month with repentance. Despite the fact that at times fasting might be difficult, yet Allah has kept plenty of hidden benefits in it for all of us. We should prove ourselves to be of those who go for the hidden benefits of the month of Ramadan. Along with some physical benefits there are plenty of spiritual ones. May Allah open the doors to those spiritual benefits for all of us. May we all get out of Ramadan with an increase in taqwa and an increased determination to observe Allah's prohibitions and allowances in the best possible way. Ameen.