

EIDUL FITR SERMON

OF IMAM ZAFRULLAH DOMUN

20th August 2012

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

Today is Eid. I take this opportunity to convey to all Muslims my greetings of Eid Mubarak. It is a cause for celebration. Out of His Mercy Allah asks His Servants to enjoy food and drink today after a month of deprivation that they endured during the month of Ramadan. Now that Ramadan is over Muslims around the world celebrate this day with eating drinking and meetings of relatives and friends. But as always our Islamic celebrations have an Islamic coloring and not a western one. Allah tells us to eat and drink and to be happy but not to exceed any limits. In other words we should eat and drink in proper measure and not exceed any limit and not consume anything that is forbidden by Islam.

Usually on Eid day the Holy Prophet Mohammad ^{saw} used to eat a few dates before leaving his house for the *Eid gah* which was a place in the open where almost all Muslims gather for the purpose of reading Eid Prayer and listening to the sermon that followed. In addition it was also the practice of the Holy Prophet ^{saw} to take two different routes to go and come back from the Eid Gah and he used to recite *Takbir* while he was going and returning back to his home. In one hadith he has told us to beautify our Eid with the glorification of Allah.

Between Eid and Ramadan there are some similarities and some differences. One of the similarities is that on both occasion the believer is supposed to obey the instructions that Allah has given him either through the Holy Quran or through the practice of the Holy Prophet Mohammad ^{saw}. During Ramadan Allah tells the Muslim that he should refrain from eating and drinking and having sex during the day. So the Muslim carries the commandments that he has received to the best of his abilities. On the other hand on Eid day Allah tells us that it is forbidden for Muslims to fast; they should eat and drink and be happy. So the Muslim follows the instructions of Allah. So on both occasions we see that the Muslims follows what Allah expects from them. And the true success of a Muslim is that he obeys Allah to the letter as best as he can in whatever circumstance. By doing so, it can be said that he is discharging Allah's rights on him as is expected of him. Hence it is of prime importance that each one amongst us understands that our salvation lies in the fact that we obey Allah and his Prophet as best as we can. In fact the Holy Quran tells us that "*wa man yoti ullaaha wa rasoulohou faqad faaza fawzan azima*" which we translate as "he who obeys Allah and His prophet achieves a supreme triumph".

You will all agree that the feeling of happiness that we feel on Eid day is quite temporary. So we are bound to conclude that the aim of Ramadan was not to give us this temporary fleeting happiness of an Eid day. Hence the objective of Ramadan was far greater than what we might enjoy on an Eid day. As I said in my last Friday sermon, unless and until there is a spillover of the virtues practiced during the month of Ramadan to the other months of the year we fail to profit from all the blessings that Allah has placed for us in Ramadan. Allah is our Creator and He has well spelled out for us the aim of our mission on earth namely to worship Him because He says “I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they should worship me”. Any human being particularly any Muslim who fails to understand what Allah expects from him misses the real purpose of his life despite all his worldly accomplishments. It is imperative for all of us to keep this in mind and we should not let this world with all its trappings beguile us or let Satan beguile us into thinking otherwise.

Now that Ramadan for this year is over, each one amongst us should examine his or her own conscience and ponder how much really he or she has progressed in Godfearingness during the month of Ramadan. If you have become more conscious of Allah because of your fasting then this fear of Allah will definitely manifest itself through your words and deeds. If you do not bring about any improvement in your words or deeds then there has been no progress in your Godfearingness and your fasting has not been of any use to you but a deprivation of food and drink for 29 or 30 days. I think that no one amongst us would like that our efforts have been wasted. We all would wish and expect that whatever deprivations we subjected our body to during the month of Ramadan will bring us plenty of spiritual benefits after Ramadan. Now no one will deprive us of spiritual benefits but our own selves. So we should see to it that we do not shoot ourselves in the foot and harm our own selves by ignoring the virtues that we used to practice during Ramadan. I have spoken quite extensively on this matter in my last Friday sermon and I am not going to repeat it here.

Since the acquisition of Godfearingness is of prime importance to all of us I would like to share with our brothers and sisters some verses of the Holy Quran where Allah tells us the many spiritual benefits that this taqwa will bring to us. May be by hearing the usefulness of cultivating this virtue in us we will see to it that we do not fritter away what we have accumulated in Ramadan. In chapter 65 there are several short verses which speak about the great benefits of having the fear of Allah in the heart. Allah says: “And he who fears Allah — He will make for him a way out, And will provide for him from where he expects not. And he who puts his trust in Allah — He is sufficient for him. (65:3-4). And whoso fears Allah, He will provide facilities for him in his affair “And whoso fears Allah — He will remove the evil *consequences* of his deeds and will enlarge his reward.” (65:6)

These verses are quite explicit. We should try to cultivate Allah’s fear in our heart and Allah will do the rest. Here you should also understand that I am not advocating that it is sufficient only to cultivate the fear of Allah and not adopt the proper means for the attainment of any objective. This is far from what we understand by even a cursory reading of the Holy Quran. We should always adopt all the means that Allah has made available for us and even then have fear of Allah in our heart. Sometimes for the attainment of an objective it could appear that it would be proper to adopt illegal or even unethical means. For the Muslim it is his fear of Allah which will determine his choice: the greater his fear of Allah the greater his chance of making the most appropriate choice. In fact wherever true fear of Allah prevails, you will see that justice prevails. Wherever justice is absent true fear of Allah is also absent.

In another verse Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ
لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ
وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٣٠﴾

Transalation:

O ye who believe! if you fear Allah, He will grant you a **distinction** and will remove your evils from you and will forgive you; and Allah is *Lord* of great bounty.

The word used in this verse is “*furqaan*” translated as “distinction”. In fact its meaning is more extensive. It means according to the lexicographer Lane (1) that which distinguishes between right and wrong (2) proof or evidence or argument (3) and or victory and (4) dawn. Each of these meanings can be appropriately applied to the verse to explain what great favours are in store for the truly God fearing person.

In another verse Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَآمِنُوا
بِرِسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كَفْلًا مِّنْ رَّحْمَتِهِ
وَيَجْعَلْ لَّكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ
وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

O ye who believe! fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will give you a double share of His mercy, and will provide for you a light wherein you will walk, and will grant you forgiveness – and verily Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful (57:29)

Apart from these there are many other verses which will help you to understand how great is the emphasis that Allah has placed in the Holy Quran for the believer to develop this great characteristic in himself or herself. Personally I still remember how when I was quite young and I read these two last verses and the comments that the caliphs made about them, I was particularly impressed and strived as best as I could to fear Allah in all circumstances of life.

I want also to share with you an anecdote in the history of Islam which helps us to have a good idea of what fear of Allah really means. It is written that

“Omar Ibnul-Khattab asked Ubay Ibn-Ka’b, who was one of the memorizers of the Noble Qur’an, “What is piety?” Ubay replied, “O Emir of the believers. Have you ever walked in a path with thorns before?” Omar replied, “Yes.”

Ubay asked, "What did you do?"

Omar said, "I tucked up my clothes, and paid attention."

Ubay then replied, "This is piety."

In other words it means that we should try to be very careful where we tread in the world. A true Muslim who wants to please Allah should do his best not to disobey Allah and not to be amongst those who disobey Allah or else they would have a bad influence on him.

In a posting on the internet I have also read an extract from Umar Bin Abdul Aziz who is remembered in some quarters as the fifth pious caliph. He said: "None can reach the station of *taqwâ* until he possesses neither action nor words that can be exposed to his embarrassment either in this world or the Hereafter." He was once asked, "When does the worshipper reach the peak of *taqwâ*? He replied, "If he put all his thoughts and desires in his heart on a plate and then wandered around in the market, he should not feel ashamed of anything there." He would frequently say, "The sign of the *muttaqî* (pious person who fears Allah swt much) is to bridle oneself from speaking just like one in *ihram* bridles himself from speaking. The *muttaqî* need to be a scholar of the *Sharî'ah*, all of it, otherwise he leaves *taqwâ* without realizing."

The last part of this extract is very important and highlights the importance of understanding our Holy Quran and the Books of hadith. Now just imagine how time consuming these tasks are and how early in life should we start studying these matters. May Allah help each one amongst us to understand the aim of our life on earth and may we all adopt the necessary means to achieve it. May Allah help us in this noble task. May each day that passes increase the level of *taqwa* in our heart.

In the last part of this *khutba* I will speak about some revelations that I have received recently. I have said this before and I will repeat it. Revelations come from Allah. We may increase our worship or diminish it, we may read more of the Holy Quran or just a little, all this has no effect on whether we will get revelations or not. Whenever Allah decides, He gives and we have no control over it. Thus one day while I had just finished praying sunnat in the mosque, I received the following prayer " *Allahoumma agirni minan naar*" meaning " O Allah protect me from the fire". This was a reminder for me to pray more for this purpose during the month of Ramadan and I acted accordingly. At another time I received " *Wa maa toqaademou le anfosekoum min khayrin tajedouho indallahe howa khayran wa aa'zamon daraja*" meaning "whatever good you send forth for your own selves, you will find it with Allah to be even better and of a better rank." On Friday morning just before waking up for Tahajjud I received " *kam min fe'atin qalilatin ghalabat fe'atan kasiratan be iznillah*" meaning "how many a small party triumphed over a large party by the Grace of Allah." And this revelation was immediately followed by " *Yaa Ayyohal insaano innaka kadehoune ila rabbeka qadhad fa molaaki he*" which we translate as " Verily thou O man art toiling towards thy Lord a hard toiling , then thou will meet him". Definitely we undergo a lot of hardship in our journey to the Lord. We deprive ourselves of many things and faithfully we continue on our journey with the hope that *incha* Allah our Lord will be pleased with us. In fact this is a confirmation that our efforts are not going in vain. Immediately after I woke up and was wondering about some of the difficulties in our path. I closed my eyes while I was pondering these matters. Allah immediately revealed to me " *Jab sona aag mein parta hay to koundan ban ke nikalta hai, toum ouss pe tawakkal kar ke chalo aafaat hi ka khyal jane do*". We can translate this as "When Gold is put into the fire it becomes more solid- place your trust in Him and

forget the misfortunes that are falling upon you.” This helped me to understand that the trials in our path are not there to destroy us but to make us even more solid in our stance. They are there to consolidate us. I think that by now all those who are advanced in age know that life is not a series of happy events that follow one another. Sometimes we meet with good circumstances and sometimes we meet with bad circumstances. *Kabhi khushi kabhi gham*. This is the only constant that we have seen in the life of the previous generation and this is what we see these days and this is what will continue to be in the future. And in order to navigate through life’s changing circumstances we should learn to do our best to try not to fall into troubles. But if they come we should show patience as we have been commanded by Allah. And one of the revelations that I received during Ramadan was “*Innallah ma’as swabereen*” meaning Allah is with those who are patient. Again at one moment I was a bit downcast because of some adverse circumstances and very forcefully I received “*Alam ta’lam annallaha ala koulle shayin qadir*” meaning “don’t you know that Allah has power over all things?”.

So my message to you all is that we should all learn to submit ourselves completely to Allah and understand that whatever happens Allah is still here and He is with us. Some circumstances may appear to be bad but they might bring good in the future. This is what Allah has expressed in the Holy Quran “*Asa an takrahou shay’an wa howa khairoullakoum wa asa an tohibbou shay’am wa howa sharroul lakoum*” meaning “it may be that you dislike a thing but it is good for you and it may be that you like something but it is bad for you”(2:217) There is a very deep wisdom in these words. May Allah help each one of us to understand them and weather through lifes adverse circumstances with greater ease. Yesterday morning while I was waking up I received “*Sa yaj alallaho ba’da ousrin yousra*” “Allah will bring ease after hardship.”

Anyhow I still wish that Allah keep you all happy today and always within the perspective of what we have said above. Once again Eid Mubarak to all. May Allah bless you all. Ameen!