

FRIDAY SERMON OF IMAM ZAFRULLAH DOMUN

03 AUGUST 2012

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

We are already by the middle of the month of Ramadan today. Not much is left. We should not let the weakness that is overcoming us lull us into thinking that we have done enough and that we may relax now. On the contrary, we should redouble our efforts and our enthusiasm and not let the creeping weakness of our body overcome us. We should constantly keep in mind the main reason why we are fasting. We should keep telling ourselves that we are doing it in order to be more conscious of Allah in our day to day existence. We are not fasting because we like it but because we want to show obedience to our Lord who created us and who gave us our senses which make it possible for us to enjoy life in this world. So our fast is in other words our readiness to obey Allah's commandments even if it means putting ourselves into trouble by going without food and drink and by sleeping less. We should always keep in mind the reasons why we fast when our determination begins to flag or when we start feeling the discomfort of the fast on our body. Anyhow we have already done half of the journey and only half remains now. *Incha* Allah we will complete the other half as well and soon we will see Eid.

In one of the verses where Allah speaks about the commandment to fast He says: "Allah desires ease for you and He desires not hardship for you so that you may complete the number and that you may exalt Allah for His having guided you and that you may be grateful."(2:186). So exalting Allah and being grateful to Him implies that we should complete our fast for the full month and understand that our discomfort in so doing is for our own good and not a hardship per se. Through this discomfort we will get many physical and spiritual benefits as we have already said in our previous sermons. There is another interesting verse of the Holy Quran which speaks about how Allah views the difficulties that believers undergo in His Path. He says:

"It does not behove the people of the [Prophet's] City and the Bedouin [who live] around them to hold back from following God's Apostle, or to care for their own selves more than for him- for, whenever they suffer from thirst or

weariness or hunger in God's cause, and whenever they take any step which confounds those who deny the truth, and whenever there comes to them from the enemy whatever may be destined for them - [whenever anything thereof comes to pass,] a good deed is recorded in their favour. Verily, God does not fail to requite those who do good ” (9:120)

Although the verse addresses the people of the time of the Holy Prophet ^{saw} in the first place, we know that it can aptly be applied to us today. Hence whatever good we try to do in the path of Allah we will get its reward from Allah most surely.

Furthermore we understand that reward for our fast will be given in the afterlife. In one hadith we learn that the Holy Prophet ^{saw} is reported to have said:

“Whoever spends in the path of Allah two things of the same kind would be called to Paradise and it will be said, 'O Servant of Allah.' One who had been offering *salaah* would be called from the gate of *salaah*; the man of Jihad would be called from the gate of Jihad; the man of fasting would be called from the gate of Rayyan.' Upon hearing this, Abu Bakr ^{ra} said, 'May my parents be sacrificed for you, will there be anyone who would be called from all these gates?' The Prophet ^{saw} said, 'Yes! And I hope you are one of them.' (Tirmizi)..”

There is another version of this hadith and it reads as follows:

“There is a door to heaven called Al-Rayyan through which only fasting people are admitted. It will be asked; where are the fasting people? They stand up. No one is admitted through that door except them. When they have entered, the door will be closed and no one else can get through it.” (Related by Al-Bukhari)

So we understand that there will be special rewards for those who have obeyed Allah and fasted in this world. The word *Rayyan* in Arabic is an adjective which describes in normal usage something which is ripe, full of juice. It is normally used to describe fruit and vegetables which have fully ripened. It just gives an idea of what may be in store for those who have been fasting on earth.

In a hadith Qudsi the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} is reported to have said that Allah has said **“All actions a human being does are his with the exception of fasting which belongs to Me. I will reward it accordingly”** One may ask how come when we make all our devotions for Allah’s sake, He has singled out only fasting as being done only for His sake. One reason we may advance for this is that the particularity of fasting is that almost no adult male or female will

be inclined to cheat with regard to the prohibitions imposed during fasting, namely abstention from food, drink and sexual intercourse. Regarding our Salaat, we may not offer them in time. We may go to read them in the mosque in order to be seen by others so that they might think that we are pious. Many other such actions or ideas may creep in to vitiate the worship and make it not worthy of acceptance in the sight of Allah. Similarly for Zakaat and Hajj, these actions are known to others but when someone fasts no one may know of his fast unless he speaks about it. Furthermore, although the fasting person may harm his fast by some slips, he will not break it by trespassing the three prohibitions as mentioned above. No act of worship in fact creates this feeling of the presence of Allah more than fasting. I humbly think that is why Allah has said that we fast in order to develop a greater awareness of Allah in our life. Whenever the fasting person feels the pangs of hunger and thirst, he knows that he cannot take any food or drink because that will break his fast and he will not dare to do it. Nothing prevents such a person from taking some food or drink because He knows in his heart of heart that Allah is looking at him and that if he disobeys he would be punished. It is when such a presence of Allah pervades all aspects of our life that we become truly righteous and may be counted amongst the God fearing.

Man is weak and he commits mistakes every day. When he fasts he follows a discipline which helps him to understand what Allah expects him to do in the other days of the year. Allah expects man to develop his God consciousness to such a degree that he might always stay away from sins. During the month of Ramadan we see there is a great eagerness to do all sorts of devotions. People read the Holy Quran in order to try to understand what Allah expects from them. They are busy making long prayers and they stand at night for *Tarawee* and some for *Tahajjud* as well. In addition, some engage themselves in remembering Allah and sending salutations on the Holy prophet ^{saw}. In addition they pay *Zakaat* and give food to the poor. But once Ramadan is over most people will stop doing all these devotions altogether. Unfortunately the drop in the attendance of Fajr prayer on Eid day itself is quite lamentable let alone the general drop in the attendance of prayers altogether for the other prayers in all mosques. It is incumbent upon a Muslim man to attend the mosque whenever he can. The fact that we can do it during the month of Ramadan shows that it is not a burden that we cannot shoulder. In fact it is quite easy once we understand the training that we went through during the month of Ramadan. Similarly we see that during the month of Ramadan television viewing is quite limited. But once Ramadan is over we see people rushing towards the set as if they were missing something vital for their existence. Unfortunately there are some people who go to watch films in movie theatres on Eid day itself. These are not actions worthy of the Muslim who has had a dose of God consciousness during Ramadan.

Abdullah Ibn al-Abbas Ibn Abd al-Muttalib reports that he heard Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) say: “Every night, in the month of Ramazan, Allah, The Blessed and The Exalted, calls out three times: Is there one, who seeks from Me, so that I grant him his wish? Is there one, who turns to me in repentance so that I turn to him (in Mercy)? Is there one, who seeks forgiveness from Me so that I forgive him?” This hadith is not found in the six canonical books of hadith but what it says is quite important and is in line with the overall teachings of the Holy Prophet ^{saw}. One should do one’s best to pray at night and to present one’s needs to Allah. Allah has taken a promise that He will fulfill needs and forgive sins and accept the repentance of His servants. If we want to profit by this generosity of Allah we should spend more time at night praying with the hope that Allah will accept our prayers.

In one of the verses related to Ramadan we read: “And when My servants ask thee about Me, say: ‘I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way.’”(2:187). This verse is a balm to the heart of all supplicants. They are told that Allah who has power over everything is ever present. If we obey Him, He will respond to our prayers and accept them as we have been told in the hadith just mentioned.

Hazrat Masih Maood ^{as} has spoken lengthily about the subject of supplications in his writings. We will share one such extract with you. We hope it will help you in the coming days. He says:

“It is at a time of trial that the wonderful and rare qualities and effects of prayer are manifested. The truth is that God is recognized only through prayer.

Prayer is a wonderful thing. It is a pity that those who pray are not aware of the true manner of prayer, nor are they acquainted with the ways of the acceptance of prayer. The truth is that the very reality of prayer has become strange. There are some who deny the effectiveness of prayer altogether and there are others who do not deny it, but as their prayers are not accepted on account of their lack of knowledge of the manner of prayer and are not prayers in the true sense, their condition is worse than that of those who deny the effectiveness of prayer. Their practical condition has pushed many others to the verge of atheism. The first condition for prayer is that a supplicant should not get tired and become a prey to despair that nothing will happen. Sometimes it is seen that a prayer is carried on till it is about to be accepted and then the supplicant gets tired and the result is failure and frustration. Frustration results in the denial and effectiveness of prayer and gradually culminates in the denial of God. It is said if there is God Who accepts prayer why have not those prayers been accepted which were offered over a long period? If those who think thus and stumble were to reflect upon

their lack of perseverance, they would come to know that all their frustration is the result of their own haste and impatience which generated an ill concept of the powers of God and resulted in despair. So one should never get tired.

Praying is like the sowing of a seed by a cultivator. By carrying out sowing over a field, he places underground the seed corn. Who can expect at that time that every grain of seed will be nurtured like a good plant and will bring a harvest? Outsiders and even the cultivator himself cannot see that the grain is assuming the form of a plant inside the earth. But the reality is that within a few days the grain undergoes a change and begins to assume the shape of a plant till its shoot emerges from the earth and becomes visible to everyone. From the moment when the grain was placed in the earth it had started its preparation to become a plant, but an eye that can only perceive the visible was not aware of it till its shoot emerged from the earth and became visible. An ignorant child cannot understand at that stage that it will bear fruit only at its due time. He desires to see it bearing fruit immediately, but an intelligent cultivator will know what is the time of its bearing fruit. He looks after it steadfastly and nurtures it till the time comes when it bears fruit and that fruit ripens.”(Malfoozaat Vol 4)

May Allah help us all to really understand the true purpose of fasting and may he keep the benefits of these fasts with us in the other days of the year as well. Ameen.