

FRIDAY SERMON OF IMAM ZAFRULLAH DOMUN

10 AUGUST 2012

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

We are entering the last phase of this month of Ramadan. You will recall that it is reported that the Holy prophet^{saw} said that the month of Ramadan is divided into three parts. The first ten days are for the manifestation of Allah's Mercy. The next ten days are for the manifestation of Allah's forgiveness and the last ten days are for our protection from the punishment of the Fire. Alhamdulillah as from yesterday in Mauritius we have started the last ten days. So one may ask what do we have to do during these days. How should we busy ourselves days and night.

First of all we should all try to follow the example of the Holy Prophet^{saw} about whom it is reported by Hazrat Ayesha^{ra} when the last days of Ramadan arrived the Holy prophet used to tighten his waist belt (i.e. work hard) and used to pray all the night, and used to keep his family awake for the prayers. Hence we understand that the Holy Prophet increased his efforts during the last ten days of Ramadan and so should we if we are interested in getting Allah's love. Remember that Allah has told us in the Holy Quran through the Holy Prophet^{saw} "say if you love Allah then follow me and He will love you" and also "Indeed you have in the prophet of Allah an example for he who desires Allah and the last day and remember Allah much." A Muslim, whether he is a man or a woman, tries his best to follow into the steps of the Holy Prophet Mohammad^{saw}. Of course most of us will fall short of the example that the Holy Prophet^{saw} has set because he was, to use a Sufi term, *Al insan al kamil* or the Perfect Man. He is the ideal and our task is to try to imitate him as far as we can. Our success in this endeavour will be determined by our determination, our innate capacity and how much Grace Allah will pour on us. Anyhow whoever sincerely tries will be given a large portion of what is good.

We also understand that it was the Holy Prophet's practice to observe *I'tekaaf* during the last ten days of Ramadan and this *sunnat* is still alive today after almost 1400 years after his death. As you know *itekaaf* is observed in the mosque starting from after *fajr* Prayer on the 20th day of Ramadan till the end. The aim of *itekaaf* is to be exclusively devoted to Allah for about ten

days. A person leaves his home and all members of his family and he stays in the mosque for exclusive devotions to Allah day and night. During this time the person is not allowed to go out except for natural needs. While they are at the mosque the *Mu'taqeefeen* engage themselves in prayers, reading of the Holy Quran and in the remembrance of Allah. They speak whenever it is necessary to do so. They try to use all the time available to them to be devoted to Allah. A great Muslim divine named Ibn Qayyum Al Jawzia (1292-1350) has commented upon the importance of both fasting and *Itekaaf* in one of his books and he said:

"Since the hearts' rectitude and firmness upon the path towards Allah the Most High, rests upon directing it solely upon Allah and causing it to turn and give all its attention to Allah the Most High, Since the disorder of the heart cannot be rectified except by turning to Allah the Most High, and its disorder will be increased by eating and drinking too much, mixing with the people excessively, speaking profusely and sleeping too much. These will cause it to wander into every valley, and cut it off from its path to Allah, weaken it, divert it or put a halt to it. From the Mercy of the Mighty and Most Merciful is that He has prescribed for them fasting, which will cut off the excesses of eating and drinking, and empties the heart of its desires which divert it on its journey to Allah the Most High. He prescribed it in due proportion as will be appropriate and will benefit the servant, with regard to this world and the Hereafter, and does not harm him, nor damage what is beneficial for him. He also prescribed *i`tikaf* for them, by which is intended that the heart is fully occupied with Allah, the Most High, concentrated upon Him alone, and cut off from preoccupation with the creation. Rather it is engrossed with Him alone, the One free of all defects, such that remembering Him, loving Him and turning to Him takes the place of all anxieties of the heart and its suggestions, such that he is able to overcome them. Thus all his concerns are for Him. His thoughts are all of remembrance of Him, and thinking of how to attain His Pleasure and what will cause nearness to Him. This leads him to feel contented with Allah instead of the people, so that prepares him for being at peace with Him alone on the day of loneliness in the grave, when there is no one else to give comfort, nor anyone to grant solace except Him. So this is the greater goal of *I'tikaf*"

I know that last year I read this extract to you. But I have repeated it today just to remind us about it because Allah says that it is good to remind.

Those who have the opportunity should make the best of these last days of Ramadan and seclude themselves exclusively for Allah during these last days. As for those who cannot do so, at least they should try their best to do as much devotions as they can during the coming days. The night of these days are particularly blessed. One of these nights will be the “*laylatul Qadr*” which we translate as the night of destiny or the night of decree. From the Holy Quran we understand that “this night is better than 1000 months.” So here we can appreciate Allah’s generosity towards the Muslims that He has given them such a night of Glory and Magnificence. The Holy Prophet ^{saw} is reported to have said “The blessed month has come to you. Allah has made fasting during it obligatory upon you. During it the gates to Paradise are opened and the gates of Hellfire are locked, and the devils are chained. There is a night [during this month] which is better than a thousand months. Whoever is deprived of its good is really deprived [of something great]. [Ahmad, an-Nisa’i] In addition he has also said “Whoever stands (in prayer) in *Lailatul-Qadr* out of (faith and sincerity) and seeking reward then his previous sins are forgiven”. [Bukhari]

So even if we have been negligent in the first twenty days of Ramadan, Allah still gives us a new opportunity to recoup what we might have lost. He gives us a new opportunity to have our sins washed away completely and to start anew. What can we ask for more! Most probably in order to make it light for us the Holy Prophet ^{saw} has advised the people to look for this great night during the odd nights of the last ten days. Furthermore we have learned through Hazrat Ayesha ^{ra} that he has told us that if anyone witnesses that night he should make the following prayer “*Allahoumma innaka afouwoun tohibboul afwa fa’fo anni*” which we translate as “O my Lord , you are the effacer of sins, you like to efface sins, efface my sins”

During these last days we also understand that the Holy Prophet who was a very generous person by nature proved to be even more generous. Whatever he received he distributed amongst the poor. We learn from the hadith that Ibn 'Abbas said, "The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was the most generous of people, and he was even more generous during Ramadan when *Jibril* met him. *Jibril* used to meet him every night in Ramadan until it was over and the Prophet would go through the Qur'an with him. The Messenger of Allah was more generous with good things than the blowing wind." [Agreed upon] In a previous sermon we spoke about how the Holy Prophet advised Muslims to give *iftar* to those who are fasting and the benefits that one gets from such a practice. We should also remember that Islam has imposed on all Muslims who have means to provide for those who are poor so that they may participate in the festivities of Eid. All Muslims are expected to pay *Sadaqatul fitr*. This *sadqa* is the equivalent of four and a half pounds of either rice or flour or a mixture of both per person.

It should be paid prior to salaah e Eid and it should also be distributed. This practice is one of the highlights of Islamic teachings which aim at producing equitable societies. Unfortunately, however we continue to see that even Islamic Governments have up till now not been able to eliminate poverty in their midst. Here I am not speaking about countries like Pakistan or Indonesia or Bangla Desh but about Saudi Arabia, one of the richest or the richest Islamic country. Recently I read a report in Reuter's news that there are about 3 million Saudis who are living below the UNO poverty line of \$1.25 a day or the equivalent of about RS 37 per day. One can only wonder how come such poverty could exist in a country which has so much wealth if real Islam was being practiced. Anyhow *Sadaqatul Fitr* is there to alleviate some of the misery of the poor in society.

As a Muslim we believe and we are convinced that whatever Allah has prescribed for us in the Holy Quran is for our own benefit. Sometimes those who are victim of the cultural influences of the west think that practicing Islam is outdated in the modern world. But we Muslims, we show to the world that we love the teachings of Islam and we take pride in putting them into practice. We are the people raised for doing good to others and under no circumstance at all should we harm anyone either through our tongue or our hands or even by our looks or our attitude. The Holy Prophet Mohammed ^{saw} is our guide and it is our duty to try to mould our lives according to his. Hence the need to learn and study and know exactly as best as we can what was his practice. By the Grace of Allah, we Ahmadi Muslims have been privileged to be aware of the way that Hazrat Masih Maood ^{as} has taught us what real Islam is. We should do all we can to follow the guidance that we have received from him.

So let us end these last days of Ramadan by making our prayers as extensive as possible. Besides praying for our own selves we should also pray for our relatives and all our Muslim brothers and sisters and we should also pray for the human family as a whole. These days the Islamic world is as usual in turmoil. But who will put an end to their misery but Allah. For those who are familiar with the history of the world the Islamic world has been in turmoil for a long time and there seem to be no end in sight in the near future for a majority of the people. Since we have the opportunity to pray and we are confident of acceptance we should engage ourselves in fervent supplications to Allah to come to the rescue of the Muslims. According to the Holy Quran if Muslims are sincere to Allah no enemy will be able to overcome them whatever his might. So if there is no victory over the enemies Muslims have to think about what may be the causes.

May we all use each minute that will be given to us in the coming days to turn ourselves with full repentance towards Allah with the hope that our Allah will accept our repentance, efface our sins and give us plenty of opportunities to do good to meet with His pleasure. I hope and pray that everyone who will hear or read this sermon will heed its advices and will try his best to put into practice the advices given *incha* Allah.