

FRIDAY SERMON OF IMAM ZAFRULLAH DOMUN

04 JANUARY 2013

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

Today is the fourth day and the first Jummah of the New Year 2013. As I said last week the changing of the years is just a milestone marking the passage of a certain amount of time. To us there is nothing to celebrate on such occasion. On the contrary it makes us more conscious of the rapidity with which time goes by and that however much we may have to live, we should do our best to fill the remaining days of our life with deeds that will be pleasing to our Lord. Many people in the West no longer believe in God. Hence they allow themselves to do all sorts of indecent actions that they would have refrained from had they have a fear of God in their heart. This is not to say that all Muslims do indeed have a very deep fear of Allah in their heart and that they are very careful in all that they say or do. Even Ahmadi who are here to act as role models are quite unaware of what is expected of them and how they should strive to scale spiritual heights as Hazrat Masih Maood^{as} expected them to do by joining his Jamaat. As an Ahmadi Muslim our behavior should distinguish us from others. We should strive to do our best to be enlightened by Allah. We should all understand that the pleasures of this world are quite transitory and that we should strive for pleasures that are permanent.

Since today almost all members of our Jamaat are present I have chosen some saying of Hazrat Masih Maood^{as} which will enliven our hearts and will create in us an eagerness to tread the path that will lead us to Allah. In October 1907, less than one year before he died Hazrat Masih Maood^{as} responded to a question by a visitor who asked him that he wanted to know what spiritual benefit is. Hazrat Masih^{as} answered him as follows:

“Spiritual benefit comes only to those who make an effort themselves. You will note that our Holy Prophet saw was the best and held the highest spiritual position yet he, too, suffered much for the sake of his faith. Religion is attained truly only after “dying” for it. Had God so wished, He would not have ordered things in this way. However, God has made the same laws even for worldly matters, that is , everything is achieved only through effort. With God’s Grace and one’s effort a person can reach his desired destination. In worldly affairs achievement comes only after

overcoming numerous difficulties and suffering. Should it then be the case that no effort or striving is involved in religious achievements? In worldly affairs even a small court case sends a person running in all directions to gather support and backing for his case. Great expense is incurred and much effort is made for such matters and if, after all the effort, should the case be decided against that person, appeal after appeal is submitted and the person keeps striving to achieve his aim. When such is the nature of striving in worldly affairs, are matters of religion to be considered so simple that one can achieve success in them by living a life of ease and comfort? Is religion to be attained merely by someone's touch or just by chanting few words when God states: "*Ahaseban naaso an youtrakou wa yaqoulouna aamanna wa houm laa youftanouna*"(29:3), that is, do these people think that they will be left untried because of their verbal utterances and will be considered people of faith merely on the basis of their verbal proclamation 'we believe' and will not be tested?

Tests and trials are very essential. All prophets are agreed on this that trial is an essential element in one's progress and until a person passes successfully through the different levels of trials, he cannot become truly religious.

It is an established rule that pleasure follows suffering. Remember however that the person, who is not prepared to suffer hardship or face difficulties in the path of God, shall be cut asunder. Progress always comes after suffering and the state of one's faith can be assessed only when one is faced with difficulties and tribulation. In order to gain spiritual benefits, one should first prepare oneself for hardship and suffering.....

Some people come to me and expect to attain spiritual elevation and purity of heart just through being touched by me. Such people should remember that nothing is attained without facing difficulties and undergoing hardship and this is necessarily so. However, on the difficult path of spiritual advancement, it should be remembered that God does not allow a believer to go waste.

Given that in worldly affairs people struggle so hard, are matters of religion to be considered so light that success in them is possible just by a touch and no test or trial is deemed necessary? Look at a farmer- how he wakes up in the last hours of the night to tend to his crops with great efforts and facing much hardship- he rests neither by day nor by night. After all this efforts, when the crops are ready, he has to continue with the hard work of harvesting. He suffers so much but for a world that is here today and gone tomorrow. He faces numerous problems, one after another, and suffers much hardship. Given that so much efforts is required to grow a few crops, is religion then the only thing left which can be attained at a mere touch and no effort is required – no test or trial is deemed necessary?

To have reliance upon such views in matters of faith and to consider religion an easy matter like a ripened fruit ready to be plucked, is not the right attitude. You should ponder over the lives of the companions of the Holy Prophet ^{saw} and consider how they suffered grave difficulties and passed through great hardships. They rested neither by day nor by night. They accepted all kinds of tribulations in the path of God and for the sake of their religion they sacrificed their lives and offered their heads.

I am reminded here of an incident that took place when the Holy prophet saw together with his companions set out to confront an enemy. At noon when the summer sun was at its hottest and hot winds were blowing in their faces, they came upon a spring which was surrounded by lush greenery. One of the companions made a request that he should be allowed to worship at this spot. The Holy Prophet responded by reminding him that he should offer repentance – did he not know that they had set out upon a task that was undertaken for God and that stopping to offer worship at such a place of comfort would not serve the purpose.

If there is no pain or suffering in serving God, then that is not true service. Nothing is gained by sitting around some pond, like some Hindu Gurus and living a life of comfort or remembering God while lying down in a lush green spot. What is needed is that at times of trial and tribulation, you should remain steadfast and you should not even hesitate to give your life for the sake of God. Indeed you should be prepared at all times to give your life for the sake of God. Spiritual benefit is gained only when a person makes a determined resolve to be prepared for all manner of hardship and suffering. It is only after such resolve that a person can find God. Such is the way of God and ever since the world was created and the system of Prophethood was established, it has been so. God's pleasure cannot be attained without pain and hardship. Some people come to me and ask me to bless them with a touch in order that they may turn into godly persons. God, however 'slaughters' first and then brings to life. In fact, by facing trial and tribulation, a person himself realizes that he is now not the same person as he was before and there is no doubt that God is most certainly to be found after one emerges successful from such tests and trials. Unless a person becomes prepared to face difficulties and hardships in the path of God, he cannot hope to achieve spiritual progress.

Salat which is offered by Muslims also contains within it a sense of anguish. During its performance, a person sometimes stands upright and sometimes he sits. At times he has to bow and then he prostrates. Moreover care needs to be taken in so many ways to preserve its sanctity. The implications of all this is that people should learn to bear hardship for the sake of Allah. If this was not the case, remembrance of God, however, did not approve of this alternative. The word *salat* itself indicates a condition of ardour. Until there develops within a person feelings of deep regret and sorrow, unless he abandons comfort for the sake of God nothing will be achieved. We know that there are many people who cannot, by nature, fulfill these conditions and such weaknesses are with them from birth, preventing them from being steadfast upon these matters. However, even if one finds oneself in such a state, one should seek forgiveness. One should repent much lest one should become like those who are totally negligent towards religion and who consider the world to be the source of all their pleasure.

Every age has its own tests and trials. The companions of the Holy Prophet ^{saw} gave up their lives in the path of God. In the time of other prophets there were other kinds of hardships and difficulties that they had to face. In short, until a person proves himself in the trials he is put through, he cannot progress and he does not become worthy of acceptance in the sight of Allah. Without facing difficulties and suffering hardships nothing can be achieved.

Such advice are important for all of us. We need to show that we are sincere to Allah in our beliefs and our actions. If not, we are just wasting our time. We pray that Allah grants us the opportunity of knowing and fearing him as we should incha Allah.