

FRIDAY SERMON OF IMAM ZAFRULLAH DOMUN

**01 FEBRUARY 2013**

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

As most members are aware, we are holding our *Jalsa* today. It so happened that last year we were unable to hold it for some particular reasons. As far as Jamaat Ahmadiyya Al Mouslemeen is concerned we started holding *Jalsa salana* in the year 2004. Since then we have held it more or less regularly except for two or three years. Even in the time of Hazrat Masih Maood<sup>as</sup> once or even twice the *Jalsa Salana* was not held due to some unforeseen circumstances. During the course of the 120+ years of the Ahmadiyya Jamaat's history a few times the *Jalsa* was not held or it was postponed for the coming year. I am giving you these details so that you might know what to say when members of the mainstream Jamaat rebuke us for not holding the *Jalsa* zealously every year.

Hazrat Masih Maood<sup>as</sup> started organizing the *Jalsa* in 1891. He had very noble aims for such a gathering. Prior to the first *Jalsa* he published a pamphlet in which he said:

*“The primary purpose of this Convention is to enable every sincere individual to personally experience religious benefits; they may enhance their knowledge and –due to their being blessed and enabled by Allah, The Exalted- their perception [of Allah] may progress. Among its secondary benefits is that this congregational meeting together will promote mutual introduction among all brothers, and it will strengthen the fraternal ties within this Community...”*

(*Ishtihar* 7 Dec. 1892, *Majmoo`ah Ishtiharat Vol. I, Page 340*).

So even today whenever someone attends this august gathering he or she should keep these original objectives in mind. One should seek through one's

attendance to get an increase in one's consciousness of Allah. We should not delude ourselves that by just being physically present in this gathering one would increase one's God consciousness. The truth is that if we attend the *Jalsa* by listening carefully to what we hear and by reflecting upon what is being said that eventually we will have an increase in our God-consciousness and we will try to do better deeds in our everyday life. For example let us say someone attends the *Jalsa* and hears from the speeches that he or she should do his best to read his five daily prayers as prescribed. And let us say that there are some persons who are not doing so in their daily lives. Now if after being reminded of the need to pray regularly during the *Jalsa* and one continues to ignore this important religious duty after the *Jalsa* one has not increased at all in God-consciousness with reference to that particular duty. So it is incumbent upon all of us that we use the time that we spend during the *Jalsa* to reflect on our own conditions and to be determined to have that increase in God-consciousness that will help us to do more good deeds and to refrain from doing all that is evil. If we attend the *Jalsa* with such a mindset we will definitely profit from the speeches that we hear. One should not view the *Jalsa* as an occasion to put on our best clothes and to have an opportunity to talk with friends and relatives and to eat good food and to settle personal scores and to forget its noble objectives.

If after the *Jalsa* we have a lot of questions that crop into our mind and we are keener to know who Allah is, what are the detailed events in the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad <sup>saw</sup> and how did he practice the Islam that he came to teach, what can learn from the books of Hadith, what are the main events in the history of Islam up till now, what is the mission of Hazrat Masih Maood <sup>as</sup>, and what do we stand for in Jamaat Ahmadiyya Al Mouslemeen and similar questions, then we may say that our attendance to the *Jalsa* has been fruitful. But if after attending the *Jalsa* one says thanks goodness it is finished, I can now go to watch my TV and forget about all the serious talks and points raised one is failing to profit from one's attendance. Let us hope and pray that every member of Jamaat

Ahmadiyya al Mouslemeen will be wise enough to make the utmost of his attendance at this *Jalsa* as was expected by Hazrat Masih Maood<sup>as</sup>.

Another feature of this gathering was that we should talk about Allah so that we might have more certainty about Him. As we have previously explained many times it is the lack of certainty that makes us sin. For example if we are told that food is poisoned we will not partake of it. If we are told that there is a serpent in a hole we would not put our hand in it. Similarly if we are told that there is a ferocious lion roaming in the forest we would not venture in it. We refrain from all these actions because we may or may not have certainty over their evil consequences and we feel that it is in our benefit that we stay away. But unfortunately we do not have a certainty that Allah might punish us for the evil that we do and hence we continue doing some evil. Speaking about the importance of certainty/conviction in one's life Hazrat Masih Maood<sup>as</sup> says:

“O ye, who seek the Lord, open your ears and listen! Take heed that there is nothing like perfect conviction which delivers you from sin; conviction gives you the power to do good; and conviction alone can turn you into a lover of God. Can you turn away from evil without perfect conviction? Can you hold your base impulses in check without the help of a sure light? Without this perfect conviction, can anyone bring about any real change in himself? Can you attain to any state of satisfaction and peace of mind without this perfect certainty? Can you at all win any real prosperity without it? In the wide world, is there any Atonement which can give you the power to avoid sin which man so much stands in need of? Can the fictitious blood of Jesus, son of Mary, deliver you from sin? O ye Christians refrain from uttering a monstrous falsehood, even such as would fain break this earth to pieces! For deliverance Jesus himself had to depend on perfect conviction. He believed with conviction, and was delivered. Woe, indeed, on those Christians who deceive the world by saying they have been delivered by the blood of Jesus Christ even when from head to foot they are drowned in evil. They do not even know who their God is. Their life is one of indulgence and ease; with the intoxication of wine in their head they remain unaware of the life with God; and for them there is no share in the fruits of life as lived in purity. Always remember, therefore,

that you cannot come out of the darkness without firm conviction, nor can you get the Holy Spirit. Blessed are they who have this conviction, and blessed are they who have been delivered from uncertainties and doubts, for they alone shall be delivered of sin; and blessed will you be when this great treasure of firm conviction is given to you, since on that day sin for you will come to an end. Sin and conviction cannot exist together. Would you ever knowingly put your hand into a hole which you see is occupied by a poisonous snake? Or would you remain standing where a shower of red hot stones is coming down from some belching volcano? or which forms the target of a thunderbolt from the skies? or where a ferocious lion is likely to attack any moment? Or would you live in a place where a dangerous plague is destroying mankind? Then, if you believe in God with the same firmness of conviction as you believe in the danger from a snake, or a thunderbolt, or a lion, or from plague, it is not possible that you should defy Him by disobedience, to incur punishment thereby, or that you should want to break the bond of sincerity, and loyalty which binds you to Him.

O ye people who have been called to righteousness and truth, rest fully assured that Divine attraction will take its birth in you, and you will be washed clean of the ugly blot of sin, only when your hearts become brimful of firm conviction. Perhaps you will say that you have this conviction, but you should take care to remember that this feeling is not more than a delusion on your part. That firm conviction is most certainly not yet yours, for you do not display the conditions which necessarily must go with it always. You have not yet given up your sinful ways; you have not yet taken the first step which you ought to have taken the moment this firm conviction became yours. You do not yet fear sin as you should. You can very well think out the question in your own mind. A man never puts his hand into a hole which he knows to be occupied by a poisonous snake; nor does he ever knowingly partake of a food he has reason to believe has been poisoned. Nor will he thoughtlessly walk into a thicket of trees which harbors' a lion. Then how can your hand and feet, your eyes and ears, dare to sin when you have the same degree of certainty in regard to the punishment and reward from God on your conduct in life? How in the name of reason can you throw yourself into a fire which you know will burn you to ashes? And always remember that the defensive ramparts built by firm conviction against sin are

veritably as high as the heavens, so that Satan cannot scale them to get you, after you have once properly built them up.

Everyone who is purified is purified through firmness of conviction. It is conviction which gives you the strength to bear hardships, even to the extent of persuading a king to abdicate his royal throne and take to the life of a mendicant. Conviction dissolves all difficulties. Conviction enables a man to see God. All ideas of any atoning sacrifice are false, for every kind of purity comes only from firm conviction. The only thing which delivers a man from sin, and advances him in sincerity and steadfastness, far ahead of the angels themselves, is conviction and conviction alone. All religions which fail to create this firmness of conviction are false. All religions which fail to show God by means beyond any shadow of doubt are false; and all those religions are false which contain nothing more than a handful of tales and fables about what happened in the past.”

As you might have recognized this is an extract from the book of the Promised Messiah, Noah’s Ark. To me personally this book and this extract have been particularly helpful in trying to develop a certain degree of certainty in Allah. All of you might not know to whom Hazrat Masih Maood as is referring to when he says that it is conviction that can turn a king into a mendicant. I think that he is most probably referring to the famous story of Ibrahim Adham. But it is an important one that we read when we were quite young. There are many versions on the net and I have taken this one just to help you have an idea of whom and what we are talking about.

Abu Ishaq Ibrahim Adham, a ninth century Sufi of Khorasan, was the Prince of Balkh who governed a large northeastern province in Persia. He lived in a luxurious palace, and his soldiers carried swords and shields made of pure gold. The biography of Ibrahim Adham is one of the most interesting historical stories in Sufism.. Many stories tell about warnings Ibrahim received to change his way of living. One relates a significant experience had converted his life of luxury to a life devoted to God. The following is a summary of this story:

One night, while he was sleeping in his palace in a room decorated with silk, gold, and gemstones, Ibrahim heard footsteps on the roof. He called for his guards and soldiers, but received no reply. He then called to the man who was walking upon the roof, "Who is there? What are you doing on the roof of my palace?"

"I am a friend looking for my camel!" the man responded. "You fool! Ibrahim replied, "How do you expect to find a camel on the top of a palace?" "My action is as strange as yours. You think that I am crazy to search for a lost camel on the top of a palace, and yet you consider yourself sane when you search for divinity in the depth of your luxurious attachments!"

Ibrahim realized that this was a sign, and understood that so long as he prayed in his elaborate room, and remained deeply attached to these luxuries, his hopes of finding Allah were as futile as searching for a camel upon the palace's rooftop.

When he awoke the next morning, he found that he was still upset about his experience of the night before. Nonetheless, he went to the audience room of his palace and carried on with his usual schedule. A poor man barged into the palace with such force that the guards were afraid to throw him out. The man addressed Ibrahim abruptly, "Who lives in this inn?"

Insulted, Ibrahim angrily retorted, "This is not an inn, this is my palace." Seeming not to notice the remark, the man asked, "Who lived in this house before you?" Ibrahim answered, "My father." The man continued to question Ibrahim: "And before him, and before him, and so forth?" Ibrahim replied, "My father, and his father, and so forth for a few generations." The man then asked, "Where are they now?" to which Ibrahim answered, "They have all died." Then the man said, "So is this not an inn, where one comes and goes, and leaves his place for another to come and go? Why are you holding so tightly to something that will not remain in your possession forever?" The man, who was said to be Khezr (also spelled Keizr), the hidden prophet, seemed to disappear after he made this statement.

The more he searched for Allah, the stronger his devotion became. He left his palace and life of luxury so that he could search for his true God. His life story is very much like that of Buddha, who also left the world of luxury for the realm of spirituality.

So when conviction overwhelms the heart everything can happen. Let us hope and pray that each one amongst us will do our best to strive to know more of Allah daily. Let us pray that Allah increases our conviction to such a degree that we stay away from all types of sins at every moment of our life *incha* Allah. Let us all use the coming hours for an increase in God-consciousness. May Allah help us to do so now and during the rest of our life.