

FRIDAY SERMON

05 July 2013

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

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

By the Grace of Allah , *incha Allah*, another month of Ramadan will dawn upon us by the middle of next week. According to available calculations most probably we will start fasting here in Mauritius as from Wednesday next. I understand from publications that I have read that in France and many other countries, this year the start of the month of Ramadan has been fixed well in advance. In fact it will start over there on Tuesday 9th July. This is the first time in France that the date for the start of Ramadan has been fixed according to astronomical calculations rather than by other usual means. Personally I think that this is quite good. In the traditions it is reported that the Holy Prophet said that “When you see the moon of Ramadan you start fasting.” But that was a time when there were no watches and people did not understand the movements of celestial bodies as we understand them today and they could not compute time as we do today. By the Grace of Allah today knowledge concerning the moon's movements are well known and there is no need to rely on outdated methods like direct witnessing with naked eyes and awaiting the sky to clear or counting 30 days for the month of Shabaan. For tradition bound people this new method might be unacceptable and they might even reject it. Hence there is a need to educate people so that they understand the spirit and not just the words of the Law or of traditions. By the way it has been reported that in many Muslim countries this method of determining the day of the start of Ramadan is already being practiced. Among these countries we may mention Turkey, Malaysia, Lebanon, Libya and Brunei. Let us hope that sooner rather than later others will follow including Mauritius.

We, human beings are full of weaknesses. Very often we fall, unfortunately. But Allah who is our Creator knows our human nature well. He knows what needs to be done to enthuse us with renewed vigor to tread the path that He has chosen for us. That is why every year He sends us on training during the month of Ramadan. Without necessary training or refresher courses we see that even professionals cannot keep up. Hence the need for continued self development for a sustained effort for continuous improvement. So during this month of Ramadan all Muslims are keen to upgrade their devotions to Allah and their help to their fellow human creatures. We improve our devotions to Allah by striving to say all our prayers on time. This is the month when mosques are full with devotees for the Fajr and Esha prayers. As a Muslim we all should resort to the mosque for our five daily prayers unless, of course, we have valid reasons not to do so. Unfortunately most of us do not do so. We prefer the comfort of our sofa rather than walking to the mosque. But during the month of Ramadan we make an extra effort to go to the mosque. If we stay at home we feel guilty much more than in other months of the year. Here I would like to remind you all what the Holy Prophet (saw) said about the reading of Fajr and Esha prayers in the mosque. He said:

"No Salaat is more burdensome to the hypocrites than the *Fajr* (dawn) prayer and the *'Isha'* (night) prayer; and if they knew their merits, they would come to them even if they had to crawl to do so. [*Sahih-Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim*].

This hadith calls for reflection from any Muslim worthy of that name. The Fajr salaah is difficult because of sleep and these days because it is cold as well. But we will be manifesting a sign of hypocrisy if because of sleep or because of any other minor inconvenience we neglect to leave our bed and resort to the mosque wherever a mosque is available. If for any reason we cannot go to a mosque we should at least wake up and pray and sleep again if need be. But under no circumstance should we think that it is allowed for us to wake up when the sun is up in the sky or when we wake up to go to work to hurriedly say four *Rakaats* of prayer. Even worst there are some who do not read the Fajr prayer at all and go out to school or to work. Such Muslims should heed these words of the Holy Prophet (saw) and understand that once they have attained puberty Namaz Fajr is incumbent upon them until the day they die. Sometimes despite the pricks from our conscience we show great negligence in this matter. We should stop deluding ourselves by saying that the next day we will wake up for Fajr prayer. But as the saying goes "*do not wait for tomorrow because tomorrow never comes*". We should be determined and say that from now on we will be doing our best to pray Fajr prayer on time. We will be sleeping at such a time that will make it easy for us to wake up for Fajr prayer. If we are a defaulter concerning Fajr and Esha we should fervently pray to Allah during the coming month of Ramadan and beseech Him to help us to accomplish our religious duties to His satisfaction. On the one hand we should make personal effort while knowing its limitations and on the other we should fervently pray to Allah to help us to be regular in all our prayers. Unfortunately many Muslims are irregular in their prayers and this is indeed a very sad state of affairs. No member of Ahmadiyya Jamaat can allow himself to be neglectful of his or her prayers if he truly understand the purpose of the coming of Hazrat Masih Maood (as).

During Ramadan we will get additional time to devote to the quality of our prayers and supplications. It is the time for those who do not understand all the wordings of the daily prayers to learn them. It is only when you know what you are saying that you can concentrate your mind on Allah and address all your needs to Him. Ramadan gives everyone the opportunity to learn anew the translation of the wordings of prayer. Once these words are understood they will remain with you almost forever . I know that several times I have said this in the past but I do not think that every one amongst us knows the exact meaning of each word that he or she pronounces during prayers. Once we know the meanings of the words that we pronounce we should move to the next stage where we spend a lot of time addressing our supplications to Allah in our own words. Supplications is the essence of prayer. We should devote more time to this task. I am saying this mainly for the young ones. If you follow the advice that I am giving you today, you will profit by them throughout your life. If you neglect them, you will be deprived of a great source of tremendous good. So make it a habit to stay longer in your prostrations and keep asking Allah for all your needs whether they are material or spiritual. Keep Allah always in mind and understand that you are someone special who does what others do not do. You are those who strive with all their might to establish a true relationship with Allah and you try your best not to annoy or harm others, You are someone in

whom others may find peace. Use the time that is available during the month of Ramadan to become a better person. Do not just pass through Ramadan as if nothing happened. Before entering the month be determined to correct your own shortcomings and strive to cultivate some worthy habits as well. Anyhow we will talk more about these matters later on.

Ramadan is a great opportunity for doing good for the believer. In fact the Holy Prophet (saw) has called it an “*azim*” month. Usually we translate “*azim*” as “great”. But one of its meanings is “that whose greatness cannot be well conceived”. In other words, our mind cannot conceive its greatness. Such is the month of Ramadan. Our minds cannot conceive of all its greatness. So how fortunate we should be when Allah, out of His Grace has allowed us to be alive and to partake of the greatness of this month. Now that we are still alive when this month has arrived is it not our duty to show gratefulness to Allah for keeping us alive during such a month? In fact as Muslims who understand their state of servanthood we should give thanks to Allah and we should try to become like those who preceded us on this path and who manifested their servitude to Allah in a most excellent way. Here we remember mostly the Holy Prophet (saw) and his companions. They were those who first put into practice these injunctions of Allah and how excellent were their fast and their night full of prayers. Next we remember those who tread this path trying to know the profoundness of these instructions to fast so much so that they said that the month of Ramadan is the “spring for the believers”. Despite the pangs of hunger and drinks they felt great delight in this particular month. Once they have fasted they prayed to Allah during the next six months asking him to accept their devotions. These examples are here only to give us an idea how some devotees took Ramadan to be. To be brief we should also do our best to fulfill all our obligations to Allah as best as we can.

Allah says that fasting has been prescribed for us in order that we might become righteous. Hence we should understand that it is a means towards an end. The primary objective of fasting hence should be that the fasting person is more righteous at the end of his fast than he was when it began. We need to pause and reflect on this matter carefully. If you fast but you did not get any increase in righteousness, your fasting has not fulfilled its primary God-given objective. As a result of fasting your health might have improved, you might have become thinner but if you have not become more righteous, your fasting has not achieved its primary purpose. So it is time now to decide to achieve the objective of our fasting by seeking this righteousness as we understand it to be. As you know we usually translate *Taqwa* as “righteousness” or “the fear of God”. But *taqwa* has more to do with the feeling that one is conscious of the presence of Allah wherever we are. It is this spirit that we should take with us when we leave Ramadan. We feel more of the presence of Allah although we do not see Him. It is important for all of us to understand this matter well so that we might be fully equipped to make a success of our coming fasts.

As good Muslims let us all show thankfulness to Allah but not ungratefulness. Allah says in the Holy Quran “*La'in shakartoum la'azidannakoum wa la in kafartoum inna azaabi la shadeed*” meaning “if you show thankfulness I will give you more but if you are ungrateful, My Punishment is definitely severe'. Hence the need for all of us to recognize the Favours of Allah upon each one of us and render thanks to Him. We render thanks by also obeying Him and doing our best to be His obedient servants in all walks of life. We are being given a great

occasion to manifest our sincere obedience by the fast of Ramadan and let us all rise to the occasion to do our best. May Allah accept all our efforts and may He cover our weaknesses and eliminate them through His Grace. So from now on let us make the good intention of fasting with all its requirements. Let us be determined to fast against all odds as long as our life is not in danger. Let this Ramadan be the Ramadan that will efface all our sins. Let this Ramadan be the Ramadan for the reconciliation of hearts which have been torn apart because of the misunderstanding of the teachings of Allah. Let this Ramadan be the Ramadan when Allah will grant each one amongst us, nay all Muslims the consciousness that He is present everywhere and that we should inculcate His fear in our heart and stay away from sins of all types whether great or small. May Allah fulfill all our good intentions and may He fill this coming Ramadan with such blessings as we have never seen before. Ameen

Announcements:

By the Grace of Allah our daughter Nazish Rabia has been successful in obtaining a BSc (honors) in Information Systems. Our thanks for Allah and to all those who prayed for her. We hope her success will be a source of blessing for her and for our Jamaat *incha* Allah.