

FRIDAY SERMON

25 October 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:

Almost ten days have gone by since the Hajj and so in ten more days the Islamic year 1434 will be gone. Another year will be gone in our life. For those who are young they will feel that they are growing up. For those who are old, above sixty years, they will feel that another year has gone by and they are coming nearer to their grave. Every day of our life is a gift from Allah. Most of us do not recognize it as such. We should if we really want to be true servants of Allah. To learn to be grateful is a characteristic that needs to be learned; some might even say it is an art. Allah says in the Holy Quran that few of His Servants show gratefulness. The Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) has taught us that on waking up we should pray thus "*Al hamdo lillahil lazi ahyana ba'da maa amatana wa elayhin noshour*". This prayer can be translated as follows "All praise are for Allah who has woken us to life again after sleeping (which resembled death) and to Him is our return." This is a simple prayer of a few words. But it is pregnant with meaning. Our first words or thoughts on gaining consciousness from sleep are for Allah and we sing His Praise because we are firm in the belief that everything is under His control and He has given us life again to start another day. So we thank him for giving us our life again, so to say. And in the end we remind ourselves of this important fact that eventually when one day we will die we will go to Him and He will question us about all our deeds. So being aware of the passage of time and being conscious of all our deeds and misdeeds should be a concern of every believer. He has to live life in such a way that he or she strives to please His Lord as best as he can. We should all be concerned with this important aspect of our life and we should not allow any worldly engrossment to make us forget it.

Hazrat Masih Maood (as) did his best to distill the teachings of Islam in such a way that he made it easy for us to understand. We will read some more extracts from his writings today. He says:

Every rich man is as much answerable over the due discharge of his obligations to his Creator and his fellowmen, as a poor man is. In fact a rich man is even more answerable. Indeed how unfortunate is he, for the sake of this brief life in this world, who completely turns *away* from God; who uses forbidden things with such fearlessness as if they were quite lawful; when angry, who raves upon people like a madman, ready to wound and kill using abusive language, and who in the pursuit of his lust becomes shameless in the extreme. Such a one will never know real prosperity. My dear people! You

are in this world only for a few days, of which a large part is already past. Do not displease your Master. Even a temporal government, if displeased with you, can destroy you. Therefore how much more it behoves you not to displease your Creator. No one can destroy you if you are held righteous in the eyes of the Lord. He will Himself protect you, and no enemy thirsting for your blood shall be able to harm you. Otherwise there is no protection for you, and you shall have to live in constant fear of your enemies, uneasy and restless, full of forebodings, and the later days of your life will pass in great anguish of mind. God Himself becomes the protection of those who stand with Him. Therefore come to God, and leave all kinds of opposition to Him. Never be negligent in the discharge of the obligations He has laid on you. Never oppress His creatures, with hand or word of mouth, and always remain in fear of the wrath of heaven, for herein lies the only way to salvation....”

The Muslim should keep asking himself how far he is advancing in the fear of Allah day in and day out. In order to get a good share of the fear of Allah in our heart we should devote more time to prayer. When we pray, especially when we are in prostration we should allow the grandeur of Allah to overwhelm us and reflect on Allah’s attributes “*Al Aala*”, the Highest. We should express our indignity to Allah and at the same time think about His greatness and believe that His Mercy is greater than our sins. We should also express to him how we are in need of Him but He is not in need of us but yet He has taken it upon Himself to help us because we are His creatures and he wants us to be saved. In another extract Hazrat Masih says:

“But the most important question is how to win the blessings. To this question God Himself has given the answer. He says “*wasta’inou bis sabre was salaah*” i.e “Seek help from god with prayer and perseverance”. What is Salaah? It is a prayer addressed to God in true humility of spirit and the fullest awareness of His Purity, his praiseworthiness, his Holiness coupled with a burning desire on the part of the devotee for divine forgiveness and for blessings on the Holy Prophet (saw). Therefore when you stand up for prayer do not like ignorant people confine yourself to the prescribed Arabic text; over and above the prayers found in the Holy Quran, which is the word of God, and in the hadith, which is the word of the Holy prophet. Address your petitions to the Lord in your own language, with heartfelt humility which should leave a lasting effect on the mind. In prayer lies the remedy for the coming tribulations. You have no idea what the coming day has in store for you. Therefore, ere the day dawn, pray every time that for you it should be a day of blessings and peace.”

Addressing rich people Hazrat Masih Maood (as) was quite blunt and warned them not to indulge in excesses because of their wealth. He said:

“O ye who are rich, who are kings, who are millionaires: among you there are few who fear God and remain steadfast in all His ways. Most are such that they attach their hearts to the riches of this world, spending all their lives in this preoccupation, without giving any thought to death. Every rich man who does not address himself to God in prayer, whose attitude to God is one of heedlessness, will have on his head the sins of all those who are connected with him. Every rich man who drinks shall have on his head the sins of all those under him who drink with him. O ye wise! This world will not last forever. Take a hold on yourself and be steady. Give up every excess. Leave all intoxicants. Wines, and beers, and whiskies are not the only harmful drinks. Opium *ganja*, *charas*, *bhang*, *taree*, and all other intoxicants, the use of which with you becomes a matter of habit, have all a deadly effect on the brain and in the end prove fatal. You should keep away from all such things. In fact we cannot understand at all how and why you take to the use of things which, in front of your own eyes, every year prove to be undoing of thousands of people and bring about their death, while the punishment to come in the world hereafter is something use of things which, and you should live longer lives, and be blessed by God. Too much indulgence in luxurious and easy living is a curse as it is ill mannered and heartless to be indifferent to the sufferings of others....”

In this particular extract Hazrat Masih speaks about the shunning of all types of intoxicants including cigarettes. Some foolish people say that it is not forbidden. In fact it is one of the worst intoxicants that shorten the lives of people and create havoc in families and societies. A Muslim should not smoke as he should not take any intoxicating drinks. Intoxicants play havoc with the lives of people in both the developed and developing countries. We should do our best to protect our children from this health and societal hazard by all means.

“God exists even now, as He did in the days past; His powers too remain the same as they were in the past; and He is still as capable of showing signs as He was before. Then why should you be satisfied with stories and fables alone? The religion is dead and destroyed which contains nothing more than stories of miracles shown in the past; and the people are a dead people on whom God does not descend in grace and mercy, whom the Divine hand itself has not come down to purify. As a man is drawn towards the joys of this world when he sees its attractions with his own eyes; similarly is man drawn towards God when he comes to know with perfect certainty that the spiritual joys are even sweeter. The appeal of Divine beauty takes such a hold on his mind that everything else appears to him of no more value than mere trash. Man is freed

from sin only when he comes to know of the power of God and of Divine retribution, on the basis of a firm conviction. Ignorance is the root of every fearlessness and no one will be found devoid of the fear of God even to the least extent who partakes of divine knowledge. When a householder knows that a dangerous flood is advancing on his house or that it has been surrounded by a fire on all sides, he will at once flee from it. Then how can you dare to leave your ways of life unaltered after your belief in the existence of God, in Divine retribution and reward, has hardened into a firm unshakable conviction? Therefore, open your eyes and carefully study the Law of God operating in the universe. Do not be like rats which only go digging and descending down into the earth: become like a dove capable of flying into the heavens, which feels happy only when it is flying in the pure air of the loftier regions. After taking the *bai'at* of repentance at my hand, take care that you do not remain unaltered in your former sinful ways. Do not be like a snake that remains as much of a snake after it has shed its skin as ever it was before. Remember death, which approaches you every moment, though you remain unaware. Do your best to purify yourself, for a man can attain nearness to what is purity par excellence only when he himself becomes pure, as far as possible....”

In this extract Hazrat Masih (as) is telling us to change our ways once we have decided to do so by taking an oath of allegiance. This oath means that we have taken a firm resolution to leave our sinful ways and to strive to be virtuous in our everyday dealings. I can tell you that this is not an easy task. May be it is easy to spell out the words. But when we are tried and have to be very patient in all daily circumstances of our life there will still be a gap between what we intended to do and what we really do. At times we will succeed but many times we will fail and will have to start again. One has just to observe oneself carefully and see where one crosses the limit and where one is within limits. It is by being aware of this daily struggle and by trying to overcome the desires of the ego that one will eventually be released from sins and tread the path of virtue. May Allah help each one amongst us to keep up this struggle until we win it. Success in this path may take a long time. But if we are sincere eventually Allah will help and crown our efforts with success. May Allah put all of us amongst those who “strive in the path of Allah and who eventually led to that path. Ameen.