

FRIDAY SERMON

22 November 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:

Last week we read two very interesting extracts from the writings of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) where he explained what should be understood by the word “faith”. In brief he has taught us that faith should precede full understanding and not the other way round. In other words we should have faith and then we will understand from Allah. If we seek full understanding to have faith, then we will be lost. Understanding will come through reading and pondering over the verses of the Holy Quran and following their teachings and also through the establishment of a personal relationship with Allah through supplications to Him. This is a very long and bumpy road and very few people can really travel on it to its end. But Allah has promised to all those who want to complete this journey with determination and perseverance that He would help them along the way and they would be directed to Allah’s ways. For He says in the Holy Quran “*Wallazina Jaahadou fina lanahdeyannahoum sobolana*” meaning “those who strive in to meet us, we will guide them to our ways” (29:70). So, I say it again, and I will never stop repeating it that we should care to offer our prayers in such a spirit as if we are talking to Allah face to face. And every time that we say “*ihdenas siraatal moustaqeem*” that is “Guide us to the right path” we should do so with full sincerity in our heart and we should yearn for that straight path from the depth of our heart. This advice is addressed to all of us whether he is a man or a woman, whether he is young or old.

For today I have chosen some hadith which help us to understand our own responsibilities in order to live to the ideals that Islam teaches us as Muslims. The elders of our community might have read or heard these hadith but our younger generation might not have heard them at all because these days few people are interested in reading hadiths. The first hadith is narrated by Ibn Umar who said that Allah's Apostle said: “**Islam is based on (the following) five (principles): 1. To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Apostle. 2. To offer the (compulsory congregational) prayers dutifully and perfectly. 3. To pay Zakat (i.e. obligatory charity) . 4. To perform Hajj. (i.e. Pilgrimage to Mecca) 5. To observe fast during the month of Ramadan.**” Here, of course we see that the Holy Prophet (saw) is speaking about the basics of Islam; he is speaking about the five pillars. It is the duty of every Muslim to see to it that he or she understands these basic principles well and that he or she moulds his/her life around them. Two of these duties are to be performed once every year, namely Zakaat and Fasting during Ramadan. Even then Zakaat is liable only on those who have a certain amount of wealth. It is not levied on all. But the fasts of Ramadan are for a majority of Muslims. However prayer has been enjoined on all Muslims five times daily. Similarly Hajj is only for those who are capable of going and who do not have any debts. As far as the testimony that Allah

is the sole One to be worshipped and that Mohammad (saw) is His Messenger, we keep repeating this testimony in all prayers. Since in one hadith the Holy Prophet(saw) is reported to have said that saying “**Laa ilaha illallah**” burns away sins as fire burns dry straw” every good Muslim who wants to have his sins forgiven keeps reciting this formula many times in the course of a day and during the course of his life. This is a recitation that if we resort to it will remove all else besides Allah from our heart. Now I do not have a proof to show that this is true like proving a theorem in geometry. So if you want to make the experience and test it by yourself you will see that what I have said is true and you will be guided to the path of the pure ones who went before you.

In the next two hadith the Holy Prophet (saw) is reported to have said:

"Faith (Belief) consists of more than sixty branches (i.e. parts). And *Haya* (is a part of faith."

“What is lawful is manifest and what is unlawful is manifest and between these two are doubtful things which many people do not know. So whoever guards himself against the doubtful things, he keeps his religion and his honour unsullied, and whoever falls into doubtful things is like the herdsman who grazes his cattle on the borders of a reserve--he is likely to enter it. Know that every king has a reserve (and) know that the reserve of Allāh in His land is what He has forbidden. Know that in the body there is a bit of flesh; when it is sound the whole body is sound, and when it is corrupt the whole body is corrupt. Know, it is the heart."

Personally I think that these two hadith are two treasures. If a Muslim reflects on them he or she will be able to navigate his way quite easily through life. Islam aims at drawing out the best in human beings. Here the Holy Prophet (saw) makes it clear that modesty or bashfulness is part of our faith. **This term "*Haya*" covers a large number of concepts which are to be taken together; amongst them are self respect, modesty, bashfulness, and scruple, etc.)** In another hadith we also learn that the Holy Prophet (saw) was more shameful than a virgin. These days unfortunately we hear and see people especially the young ones who suffer the full blast of the west cultural onslaught speaking and behaving shamelessly. But as a good Muslim who wants to preserve Islamic values as taught by the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) we should learn to develop some *Haya* in ourselves. In the light of these hadith a Muslim cannot allow himself to engage in anything that is shameful and that can bring shame to himself. These days some young men unashamedly meet with girls who are not their wives, in public or in private. Such actions are condemned by Islam. Muslim families meet in cinema theatres to watch all sorts of films in public. Such people are not at all observing any sense of decency. If such actions are being done by Ahmadi Muslim families they are then more outrageous because Ahmadi are expected to know better and to act in a better way. The Holy Prophet (saw) tells us that we should avoid what is doubtful. Therefore it is incumbent upon us to learn our religion so well that we can distinguish between what is permitted and what is forbidden so that we might know what is doubtful. If you still cannot make out then you should ask those people who know and you go by what they say. The image of grazing animals near a reserve that the Holy Prophet (saw) has given us to show how we may slip into forbidden territory is very powerful and calls for reflection. Moreover what the Holy prophet (saw) has said about the need for our heart to be sound for our whole body to be

sound also calls for some self introspection. Each one amongst us should examine his heart and see how uncorrupted it is from evil thoughts. Satan never stops attacking us. We should also be relentless in pushing it back. Allah has taught us in the Holy Quran to make this prayer: “*Rabbe aouzobeka min hamazaatish shaitan wa aouzobeka rabbe an’yahzoorune*” meaning “O my Lord I seek thy protection against the promptings of Shaitan that they harm me”. Similarly Hazrat masih Maood (as prayer) “*Rabbe azhib annir rijsa watahhirni tathira*” meaning “O my Lord remove all sorts of filth from me and purify me completely” are very good and potent prayers for someone who desires spiritual progress and who wants to travel the right path.

In Islam we should be very careful about our intention. The first hadith in Bukhari is “deeds will be judged according to intention”. Hence before doing anything each one amongst us should examine our intention. We should strive to do only such deeds that stem from our pure intentions. You might recall the long hadith told by Hazrat Mu’az about how some people’s deeds which appeared to be very beautiful but were rejected by Allah because they were tainted by such flaws as arrogance, envy, showoff etc. I will now tell you about another hadith which speaks more or less about this same subject. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) is reported to have said:

“Verily, the first of people to have their case judged on the Day of Resurrection will be a man who was martyred. He will be brought and Allah’s blessings will be made known and he will recognize them. Allah will say: What have you done concerning these blessings? The man will say: I fought in your cause until I was martyred. Allah will say: You have lied because you fought so that it would be said how courageous you are, and it was said. Then Allah will order him to be dragged upon his face into the Hellfire. Another man learned religious knowledge, taught others, and recited the Quran. He will be brought and Allah’s blessings will be made known and he will recognize them. Allah will say: What have you done concerning these blessings? The man will say: I learned religious knowledge, taught others, and I recited the Quran for Your sake. Allah will say: You have lied because you learned religious knowledge so that it would be said you are a scholar and you recited the Quran so that it would be said you are a reciter, and it was said. Then Allah will order him to be dragged upon his face into the Hellfire. Another man was given abundance from Allah and was given every kind of wealth. He will be brought and Allah’s blessings will be made known and he will recognize them. Allah will say: What have you done concerning these blessings? The man will say: I spent money in every cause upon which you wished it to be spent. Allah will say: You have lied because you spent money so that it would be said how generous you are, and it was said. Then Allah will order him to be dragged upon his face into the Hellfire.”

Such hadith would freeze some people and stop them dead in trying to do things. We may think that our intention is good and pure but Allah knows the innermost part of our heart. We may delude ourselves into thinking that all that we are doing are meeting with the approval of Allah but we cannot know for sure. That is why we should always be striving to purify our intentions and make constant efforts to winning the pleasure of Allah. The people mentioned here are those who are considered of being of great merit according to Islam. Yet since Allah the All knowing knew their innermost thought he rejected their deeds and sent them to hell. Now those who have lesser merit should they not be constantly on the watch lest they are doing something that might

make Allah throw away all their “good deeds”? What can we learn from this hadith? Among other things we learn that we should do good deeds with the sole purpose of pleasing Allah. We do not do anything to be well spoken of by men or to feel important among men. When we do something good we should offer it as an offering to Allah with the hope that it might be accepted. We should pray to Allah that He accepts what we have offered. If we find pleasure in the fact that people praise us we should discount such acts and pray to Allah even more that He accepts what we have offered and not let us feel happy with people’s praise.

The last two hadith that I am presenting today is that the Prophet said, "None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself." And “Some people asked Allah's Apostle, "Whose Islam is the best? i.e. (Who is a very good Muslim)?" He replied, "One who avoids harming the Muslims with his tongue and hands."

These hadiths make it quite plain that as Muslims we should have such love for other Muslims that we should wish for them what we wish for ourselves. Hence we should be living with a view to wish only that which is good to our fellow Muslims and nothing else. The second hadith make it incumbent upon us not to come to blows with any Muslim and also to desist from speaking ill about anyone. I will *incha* Allah continue to speak about this matter next week. May Allah make all of us good Muslims.