

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:

When one listens to the recent speeches of the caliph, one can easily understand that all is not well on the Ahmadiyya front. Secondary goals of lesser importance may be achieved but the essence for which this Jamaat was created is being lost because the members are not totally convinced of the necessity to reform themselves to achieve the pleasure of Allah. To remind us briefly about the purpose of the creation of the Jamaat, of course we will quote what Hazrat Masih Maood (as). He said:

“God Almighty desires to draw all those who live in various habitations of the world, be it Europe or Asia, and who have virtuous nature, to the Unity of God and unite His servants under one Faith. This indeed is the purpose of God for which I have been sent to the world. You, too, therefore should pursue this end, but with kindness, moral probity and fervent prayers. And till that time when someone inspired by God with the Holy Spirit is raised by Him, all of you should work in harmony with one another. And you, too, should partake of the Holy Spirit by compassion and by purifying your souls. Because without the Holy Spirit true *Taqwa* cannot be attained.”(The Will Page 8-9)

This extract is taken from the book known as *Al Wassiyyat* which has been so named in order to bring home to all adherents that these were the parting advice of the guide. It is at the end of this book in which Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has called upon his followers to strive to donate at least one tenth of their wealth to the cause of Islam. When we reflect upon this extract we see that in it there is a message of Unity. There is an invitation for people of different countries, who have a virtuous nature, not those who are vicious, are being called upon to come together and to unite under one faith. Hazrat Masih Maood (as) was convinced that Islam was the faith to which he was calling all people and he was convinced that its teachings were of such a nature that it could lead men to God. He called upon his followers to continue his mission relying upon three important characteristics namely **kindness, moral probity and fervent prayers**. So as an Ahmadi-Muslim you should be a person who is good at heart. Anyone can understand what kindness means. We do not need circulars to explain that to us. It is a condition of the heart and even a child can easily understand it although it might not understand almost anything else. Under no circumstance should a Muslim show any type of unkindness towards anyone. As a group which has as its mission to draw people towards Allah, we should show by our looks, by our behavior, by our words that we are kind towards others. If we show harshness people will move away from us. That is most probably why Allah told the Holy Prophet

Mohammad (saw) “*Fa bema rahmatim minallahe linta lahoum Wa law kounta ghalzal qalbe lan fazzou min hawleka*” meaning “ And it is by the great Mercy of Allah that thou art kind towards them and if thou had been rough and hardhearted they would surely have dispersed from around thee...(3:159). Therefore an Ahmadi Muslim should cultivate in himself virtues and he should become an embodiment of kindness. When we use this extract as a reference and we examine the behavior of present-day mainstream Ahmadis, we see that there is a great gulf between what Hazrat Masih Maood (as) wanted us to be and what the leadership especially the one in Mauritius has become and wants the followers to be. It seems that virtuous natures are totally absent and roughness and harshness is being practiced where we should have seen kindness.

When we thumb through the pages of history to see whether there has been a group which has shown a similar or somewhat similar behavior in the name of religion, our mind is drawn to the Roman Catholic Church. In the beginning the followers of Hazrat Isa (as) were quite few in number. He had only twelve disciples and one of them betrayed him to the Romans for a few coins. But little by little the disciples spread his message and they were able to have converts in many places around the Roman Empire. Nonetheless they were a persecuted minority for a long time. Peter was martyred in Rome. Christians were so weak that they were regularly thrown live to lions which tore them apart while the Romans watched. But in 309AD a Roman Emperor, Constantine converted to Christianity and from then on Christianity will be in the ascendancy throughout the Roman Empire. They will split about the Godhood of Jesus in the 5th or 6th Century and slowly they became very powerful and they started committing lots of excesses in the name of religion. We do not have so much time to speak in detail about them. But these days there are plenty of books and lectures and films that detail the 2000 years history of the Roman Catholic Church , on the net. Those who are interested might refer to them and they make interesting reading and watching.

Some of the excesses that the Church as an institution has committed are the selling of indulgences to fill the coffers of Rome. To put it briefly people could buy their salvation. In addition we may also mention their silence against slavery and against colonialism, the persecution of their opponents for their changed beliefs known as the Inquisition, the debauchery of some popes, and most recently the pedophilia scandal that has made headlines around the world. To be fair we may say that among their good deeds are the numbers of people who devote their life to the service of their religion, the care that they take for those who are poor, elderly or even sick and vulnerable in society. They run many schools and hospitals and universities around the world and they are adamantly opposed to abortion. However the Protestant Revolution of 1520AD was in fact a revolt against the excesses of the Pope and its immediate circle. Martin Luther, a German priest defied the pope and established Protestantism around Northern Europe. There followed in Europe a period of bloodshed and civil war in many countries between these two groups. Even today after more than 400 hundred years these two groups have taken divergent paths and they

both claim to follow Jesus. But today Roman Catholicism is on the wane in Europe and it has lost much of the moral force that it had in the past.

For those who are familiar with the history of the mainstream Ahmadiyya Jamaat it is well known that the second caliph tried to mould the Administrative system of the Jamaat on that of the Roman Catholic Church. Personally I have read where he said that. To the best of my remembrance I recall reading about this matter in an Urdu magazine published by students of *Talimul Islam* or some other college from Rabwah. The RCC system is quite good. In fact in management literature the church is given as an example of the oldest institution in the world. Unfortunately it has difficulty to renew itself in the face of changing circumstances. I remember that I read an interview of a Cardinal who is now dead but who said last year or the previous year that the Church is at least 200 years backwards. A religious institution can renew itself provided it is open for this renewal. The Christians may be doing some good in the world but their beliefs are wrong. And under no circumstance can we use their worldly actions or progress as a yardstick of their progress. Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has pointed out this matter very clearly in many of his writings. What is important is that a religious group should always aim at pursuing its primary objectives. Primary objectives are what we have mentioned above namely develop virtue and develop kindness.

Unfortunately we see that especially in Mauritius these virtues have been subordinated to other aims like trying to maintain the system as it is, use it to increase financial contribution, use it to repress any idea that seems to be against the official wisdom, maintain discipline by threats, bigotry and above anything social boycott. The Jamaat was initially created to be a beacon of light, a personification of virtue but the ignorant ones who are in a leadership position use it to settle old scores, to vent their anger on those who do not conform and to use funds in an opaque way. Slowly but surely the Jamaat is treading a path that is away from virtue, more akin to some of the excesses of the catholic church. Let us hope and pray that Allah will open these leaders' minds and will enlighten them so that they might guide the people to the path of salvation rather than to the path of damnation or destruction. Let us hope that in copying the systems of the Roman Catholic Church they copy its virtues rather than its vices.

In the end I would like to say a few words about slavery. As you are all aware tomorrow is a public holiday in Mauritius since some time now. In fact slavery was abolished in Mauritius on 1st February 1835, one hundred and seventy eight years ago. Slavery has existed in the world since immemorial time. In all past great civilizations slavery existed. But mass slavery of abducted people on a grand scale took place when the Europeans, namely the Spaniards, the Portuguese and the English and French colonized the Americas as from 1492. In order to work the land they abducted many Africans and they sold them as slaves to go to work on plantation fields in the Newfoundland. This trade started around 1600 and in America it will end after the civil war in 1863. It is estimated that about fifteen million people were victims of this system. As I said they were abducted in Africa and kept

prisoners until a European ship especially made to carry slaves came to take them to the states or even Brazil and the other South American countries. Many died during the journey. For those who would survive they were faced with a tougher ordeal on arriving on land. I will not speak about their ordeals. But there are many books and films and good articles on the net that describe what these people went through at the hands of their handlers throughout their lives. The history of slavery around the world and its eventual abolition is a really dark chapter in the history of humanity. Personally I think that each one amongst us should apprise ourselves about slavery and its consequences in the world.

We might think that real emancipation of all people has taken place around the world in this 21st century. But the truth is quite the contrary. Recently I read about the case of three women who have been kept as slaves in Great Britain for thirty years. They were eventually released by the police. As improbable as it may seem, last year, the first Global Slavery Index revealed there were nearly 30 million people living as slaves in 162 countries and that Britain was not immune to the problem. Although ranked 160th on the list, there were still estimated to be more than 4,000 slaves in Britain, an estimate that the index judged to be conservative, Reuters reported. Just imagine if such is the case today how far worse it was for those people a century and a half ago.

Anyhow in Mauritius the day for the emancipation of slaves is commemorated on 1st February each year. It was the Dutch who brought the first slaves to Mauritius when they first colonized it in the mid 17th Century. The first slaves came from Madagascar. Eventually the French will bring many from India, Mozambique and even as far as Senegal. Up till 2009, according to the Truth & Justice Commission report it has not been established exactly how many slaves came to Mauritius. Their history is a sad one. To know more about them you may consult the Volume 1 of the Truth & Justice commission report available on the Government website.

When somebody is a slave he or she loses his freedom to move about, to make his own decisions or even to believe what he wants to believe. Only a really freeman can believe what he considers just and proclaim it. Those who cannot do so are slaves to their wrong belief system. A free man follows evidences to draw conclusions. A true Muslim tries his best to understand the Holy Quran and the *sunna* of the Holy Prophet to do what is right according to his religion. That is why from time to time when the need arises Allah sends one of His own to free enslaved people who have cultivated wrong beliefs. Today there is a need to free people from false beliefs and that is one of the primary objectives of Jamaat Ahmadiyya. May Allah help us to achieve this objective *incha* Allah.