

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

After reciting the *Tashahhud*, the *Ta'uz* and the first chapter *Al Fatiha* of the Holy Quran, Imam Zafrullah Domun recited verse 8 of chapter 49 of the Holy Quran and gave its translation as follows:

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ
يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ
وَزَيَّنَّ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمْ
الْكُفْرَ وَالنَّفْسُوقَ وَالْجُحُودَ ۗ
هُمُ الرُّشِدُونَ ﴿٨﴾

And know that among you is the Messenger of Allah; if he were to comply with your wishes in most of the matters, you would surely come to trouble; but Allah has endeared the faith to you and has made it look beautiful to your hearts, and He has made disbelief, wickedness and disobedience hateful to you. Such indeed are those who follow the right course.

In the time of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) while the Holy Quran was being revealed, Allah made it clear to the Muslims that their wishes and their interests did not coincide. Allah knew better what was in the interests of Muslims and He expected them to have faith and to rely on the Holy Prophet's guidance. Once at least we learn from the books of History that the Holy prophet (saw) followed the view of the majority of Muslims and they all landed into trouble. Once the Holy Prophet was gone, anyone who acts in his name cannot and should not attribute to himself the same privileges of the Holy Prophet (saw) in the matter of guidance of Muslims. The teachings of the Holy Quran are the best and all should strive to understand and put them into practice in the best possible way. Any guide, Mujaddid or whoever who asserts anything has to prove it through the verses of the Holy Quran and in all matters he should come up with better interpretations of the Quranic verses.

The verse under discussion tells us that Allah has made faith (*iman*) beautiful to us. Although in the first instance the early Muslims were addressed. But in fact all generations of Muslims are addressed- those who came after the Holy Prophet (saw) and those who would come after us as well. We may ask "What is *Iman*?" The answer is what we have been learning since we were children and which we find in the Holy Quran and the Books of Hadith and which has been beautifully presented in an interesting hadith and which is as follows:

"Ibn Umar reports: My father, Umar ibn al-Khattab, told me: One day we were sitting in the company of Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) when there appeared before us a man dressed in pure white clothes, his hair extraordinarily black. There were no signs of travel on him. None amongst us recognized him. At last he sat with the Apostle (peace be upon him) He knelt before him placed his palms on his thighs and said: Muhammad, inform me about al-Islam. The Messenger of Allah (peace

be upon him) said: Al-Islam implies that you testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, and you establish prayer, pay Zakat, observe the fast of Ramadan, and perform pilgrimage to the (House) if you are solvent enough (to bear the expense of) the journey. He (the inquirer) said: You have told the truth. He (Umar ibn al-Khattab) said: It amazed us that he would put the question and then he would himself verify the truth. He (the inquirer) said: Inform me about *Iman* (faith). He (the Holy Prophet) replied: That you affirm your faith in Allah, in His angels, in His Books, in His Apostles, in the Day of Judgment, and you affirm your faith in the Divine Decree about good and evil. He (the inquirer) said: You have told the truth. He (the inquirer) again said: Inform me about al-*Ihsan* (performance of good deeds). He (the Holy Prophet) said: That you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, for though you don't see Him, He, verily, sees you. He (the enquirer) again said: Inform me about the hour (of the Doom). He (the Holy Prophet) remarked: One who is asked knows no more than the one who is inquiring (about it). He (the inquirer) said: Tell me some of its indications. He (the Holy Prophet) said: That the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress and master, when you will find barefooted, destitute goat-herders vying with one another in the construction of magnificent buildings. He (the narrator, Umar ibn al-Khattab) said: Then he (the inquirer) went on his way but I stayed with him (the Holy Prophet) for a long while. He then, said to me: Umar, do you know who this inquirer was? I replied: Allah and His Apostle know best. He (the Holy Prophet) remarked: He was Gabriel (the angel). He came to you in order to instruct you in matters of religion.”

There are many important matters that have been discussed in this hadith. You can take your own time and reflect over them. What is of immediate concern to us is what *Iman* is? When Allah says that *Iman* has been made beautiful to Muslims, I think Muslims in return should show by words and deeds that they indeed love what Allah had made dear for them. Our religion is very important for us. We should always strive to practice it. Faith without practice does not have much value. That is why wherever Allah speaks about the believers in the Holy Quran He speaks of “those who believe and do good deeds”. Good deeds are those deeds that are pleasing to Allah. In the scale of good deeds the greatest virtue is saying “*Laa ilaha illallah*” and the least is “removing something on the road that might embarrass the passersby.” So the scope to practice good deeds, virtue is really wide and we have a large choice and we should see to it that we multiply our good deeds throughout our life.

Furthermore Allah says in this verse that He has made three things hateful to us. What are they? First is disbelief (*kufur*), second is wickedness (*fosouq*) and third is disobedience (*isyaan*). It is obvious that disbelief is the contrary of belief. In all circumstances of life we should have faith in Allah. We should ask Him whatever we need. We should humiliate ourselves in front of Him and explain to Him our helplessness although He knows everything. Under no circumstance should we think that He does not exist because despite our prayers He is not listening to us. You know, there are plenty of proofs that I personally have of the existence of Allah. I can share these proofs with you. But it may not necessarily be a proof for you. That is why I always say that we should all embark on the journey to God if we are sincere in our quest for Him. He is waiting for each one amongst us to come to Him. Hence, being given the fact that we are Muslims we should have faith in Him and never doubt His existence for an instant. Doubting the existence of Allah should be hateful to our heart.

Secondly we should stay away from all sorts of wickedness. The word *fosooq* encompasses “disorder, inappropriate behavior, debauchery, impiety, depravity, perversity, corruption, immorality, luxury, adultery, and vice”. Allah has made all these things hateful to us. We cannot and we should not indulge in them at all. The truly guided ones are those who shun

all these inappropriate actions because they know that they do not meet the approval of Allah.

Thirdly we should avoid all sorts of disobedience (*isyaan*). First of all we should know about Allah's commandments as explained in the Holy Quran. We should do what He has commanded us to do and we should avoid what He has asked us to avoid. Secondly we should also learn what the Holy Prophet (saw) has established as practice and we should do our best to follow in his footsteps.

It is this group of Muslims who acts according to what Allah has said in the abovementioned verse who are the rightly guided (*rashidoune*). We should all strive to form part of this group. These are the people to whom Faith is important. These are the people who in their heart of heart have disgust for disbelief, for wickedness and for disobedience. Such people are made the leaders of the world not through force but through persuasion. By the Grace of Allah we can say in all humility that we are striving to be such a group and we hope that those who may truly share these values would join us *incha* Allah. If people join us, we would be happy because there would be more people who would be promoting virtue around the world or in their immediate circle of friends. But if no one joins us, it is still our duty to continue to work towards putting into practice what we have understood from the Holy Quran and from the practice of the Holy prophet (saw) and from the writings of Hazrat Masih Maood (as). Our aim is to promote the Islamic values and not recruitment of members. We should become embodiment of Islamic values and we should gently persuade others to adopt them. But we have to agree that it is quite difficult. People are enamoured with this world. They are always eager to get richer and they do not care about the how. Allah does not forbid a Muslim to be rich. On the contrary Muslims are encouraged to be rich and to spend on good causes. In fact even if a Muslim is not rich he is still encouraged to spend in the cause of Allah and Allah will return back to him whatever he spends in Allah's Way.

We are living in a very dangerous world. No one can really predict what sort of catastrophe we might see tomorrow. Every day we hear of really shocking events happening around the world. In addition if nothing is done now to bring down the amount of heat trapping gases in the atmosphere, scientists predict that by the year 2100 the average temperature on earth would increase by at least 1.5 to 2 degrees C which will bring in its wake plenty of environmental catastrophes. All of a sudden we have seen how Russia and the West have gone back to the cold war era over the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine. This crisis is an unfolding one and no one knows where it will end and how it will end. It can have dramatic consequences for all of us. The Palestinians and the Israelis are still far away from a peace accord that might bring peace to the region. The Israelis are prepared to provoke an international crisis if Iran does not stop developing nuclear energy. Some Muslims still believe that they can impose Islamic rule by the use of terror and they continue to kill in the name of religion in Nigeria. China and Japan may go to war for the control of an island. North Korea keeps provoking Japan and the west. A long list of these crises can be made. I have just mentioned the major ones that can turn this world upside down.

In these circumstances as good Muslims we should continue to strive to devote ourselves to our lord and to do whatever we can to remove evil from the surface of the world. The words of the poem of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) are as relevant today as they were at the beginning of the last century. In a prophetic poem which he wrote he called upon the people to wake up because the time was not appropriate for sleeping. He said he was particularly disturbed with the revelations that he had received from Allah. Soon, he predicted the world would be in great turmoil due to earth shaking events. But he said despite all the disturbances those who do good deeds, who act righteously need not be anxious at all because Allah would be there for their help. In the last century the First World War started in August 1914. It was going to last for four years and it killed more than twenty million people. Never had such a butchery been perpetuated on the earth before. Throughout the world from then on revolutions, famine, forced imprisonment, disease, the rise of Nazism, the Second World War, the extermination of 6 million Jews, the atomic bomb over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Korean War, the Vietnam War etc, plus all the failed experiments of Mao in China and the failure of communism in Russia and Eastern Europe did convulse the whole world and we have still not seen the end. By the Grace of Allah, Allah has given the Muslims the best teachings to help them to face any kind of situation that they might face provided of course, they obey Allah and they hold fast to the Holy Quran and the practice of the Holy Prophet (saw). May Allah give each one amongst us such faith that will help us to weather any type of storm that we might face in our life and may we never deviate from the path of the righteous despite adverse circumstances. Ameen!