

FRIDAY SERMON

08 August 2014

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:

Nearly thirteen days have elapsed since we saw the moon for Eid this year. Slowly we are moving away from that blessed month of Ramadan and almost everywhere in mosques we will notice that the number of *Namazis* has started diminishing. Personally since I was a young man almost forty years ago I have noticed that after Ramadan the number of *namazis* trickles down to quite a few especially in *Namaz Fajr* and *Esha*. Yet in almost all mosques especially in Ahmadiyya mosques, in speeches after speeches people are reminded that they should not let go of the virtues that they practiced during Ramadan and that they should adopt these virtues and make them permanent features of their lives. Yet in fact, we see very few people who are really concerned with this type of the practice of virtue. Allah knows best if this is a natural situation or not. Our task is to keep on reminding because Allah says that “reminding profits the believers”. Let us hope and pray that the believers profit by what they are being reminded about. So for today’s sermon I have chosen a few extracts from the writings of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) which might be used as food for thought for all of us.

Speaking about what true faith is Hazrat Masih Maood (as) says:

In order to recognize a true religion it is necessary to look at three matters. In the **first place**, one must see what is the teaching of a religion concerning God. That is to say, what does a religion state with regard to the Unity, power, knowledge, perfection, greatness, punishment, mercy and other attributes of the Divine.....

Secondly, it is necessary that a seeker after truth should inquire what a religion teaches with regard to his own self and with regard to human conduct. Is there anything in its teaching which would disrupt human relationships, or would draw a person into courses which are inconsistent with modesty and honour, or would be contrary to the law of nature, or would be impossible to conform to or carry out, or make it dangerous to do so? It would also be necessary to see whether some important teaching needed to control disorderliness has been left out. It would also be necessary to discover whether a religion presents God as a Great Benefactor with whom a relationship of personal love should be established and whether it lays down commandments which lead from darkness into light and from heedlessness to remembrance.

Thirdly, it is necessary for a seeker after truth to satisfy himself that the god presented by a religion should not be one who is believed in on the basis of tales and stories and resembles a dead being. To believe in a god who resembles a dead being, belief in whom is not by virtue of his having manifested himself but is due to one's own good faith, would be to put him under an obligation. It is useless to believe in a god whose powers are not felt and who does not himself make manifest the signs of his own existence and life. [Nasim-e-Da'wat, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 19, pp. 373-374]

Now as a young person who has started thinking about God, it is incumbent upon you to think and wonder what kind of God Islam presents to you. When you read the Holy Quran you should make notes and whatever questions may crop up in your mind you should try to find their answers. If you see that despite your best efforts you do not have the answers then you may come to me and ask me or ask the elders in the Jamaat. With the knowledge that Allah has given us we will do our best to help and through this process we will continue to learn and impart knowledge as well. As I said recently each one of us should treat the Holy Quran as a message that Allah has sent to us personally. We should strive to understand its do's and don'ts and we should do our best to practice its teachings in our daily life and understand that its teachings are the greatest heritage that we have received and we should pass on to the next generation. He further says:

Search for God is a difficult matter. It is not an affair of worldly philosophers and wise men. Observation of the heavens and earth only leads to the conclusion that although orderliness indicates that the universe should have a Creator yet it is not proof that such a Creator in fact exists. There is a great deal of difference between **ought to be** and **is**. The Holy Qur'an is the only book that sets forth His existence as a fact and not only urges the seeking of God but makes Him manifest. There is no other book which makes manifest the Hidden Being. [Chashma-e-Masihi, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 20, pp. 351-352]

The transition from "ought to be" to "is" about God is achieved only through developing a personal relationship with Allah through prayers and leading a virtuous life. As a member of Jamaat Ahmadiyya and as a disciple of Hazrat Masih Maood (as), it is our incumbent duty to arrive to such a degree of certainty in our life that we know in fact that Allah truly exists. Such knowledge cannot be imparted to anyone. He has to look for it by himself or herself. The achievement of this purpose is the objective of our life and there is no greater purpose than it. Prophets, messengers or spiritual caliphs and Imams are but helpers in this path. All else that we do are subordinate to this overall purpose. And as Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has rightly put it, it is quite difficult to achieve it but it is not at all impossible provided we are ready to make the necessary sacrifices.

For those who behave rudely towards others because of religion or because of different beliefs Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has this to say:

Religion does not mean disputes, abuse and harsh words that are indulged in, in the name of religion. In this context, no one pays attention to the suppression of inner vices or the establishment of true relationship with the Beloved. One party attacks another party like dogs and every kind of ill conduct is exhibited in support of religion. Such people do not realize why they came into this world and what is the main purpose of their lives. They continue to be blind and ill-natured and give their bigoted sentiments the name of religion. They exhibit their bad manners and employ their loose tongues in support of a fictitious god of whose existence they have no proof. Of what use is a religion, which does not teach the worship of the Living God? The god that they present is no better than a corpse. He walks with the support of others; when that support is withdrawn, he falls to the ground. The only thing they gain from such a religion is bigotry. They lack altogether true fear of God and true sympathy with mankind, which is the best of characteristics. [Brahin-e-Ahmadiyya Part V, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 21 p. 28]

When we read such comments of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) about Non Muslims, we wonder how sad it is that these days even Ahmadis are behaving like such people. Most members of mainstream Ahmadiyya Jamaat have preferred to cultivate bigotry instead of having a living relationship with Allah and tolerate those who differ from them.

Speaking about how the teachings of the Holy Quran bring about gradual improvements in man he says:

When I reflect upon the Holy Word of God, I find that in its teachings it seeks to reform the natural conditions of man and to raise him step by step to higher spiritual levels. In the first place God desires to teach man the elementary rules of behavior and culture and thus to change him from the wild condition of animals, and then to bestow upon him elementary moral conditions which can be described as culture or civilization. Then He trains him and raises him from the elementary moral conditions to a high moral stage. All this is in truth one stage, which is the reform of natural conditions, and the only difference is one of degree. The All-Wise One has presented the moral system in such a way whereby man should be able to move from a lower moral level to a higher moral level. The third stage is that man should be devoted to winning the true love and pleasure of his Creator and the whole of his being should be devoted to God. It is at this stage that the faith of Muslims has been named **Islam**, which means to be wholly devoted to God and to keep nothing back. [Islami Usul ki Philosophy, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 10, p.324]

My advice to you all is that we should take time to study this book and try to imbibe what Hazrat Masih Maood as has taught us in it. Reading it once is not sufficient at all. You should try to read it at least once every year and meditate on what he has said and you will notice how profound are all the explanations that he has given us through the Help of Almighty Allah. Many questions that crop into our mind have been answered in this book.

Speaking about how religions have been corrupted except Islam He says:

God did not allow this to happen in the case of Islam, as He desired that this garden should flourish throughout. He made provision in each century for its irrigation and thus rescued it from decay. Although at the beginning of each century, when a man of God was appointed for its reform, the ignorant people opposed him and were averse to the reform of anything which had become part of their habits and customs, yet God Almighty adhered throughout to His way. In these latter days also, which is the time of the last battle between guidance and error, finding the Muslims heedless and neglectful in the beginning of the fourteenth century, God recalled His promise and made provision for the revival of Islam. But other faiths were never revived after the advent of the Holy Prophet[peace and blessings of Allah be on him] and they all died. There was no spiritual life in them and errors took root in them, as dirt accumulates in a garment which is much in use but which is never washed. People who had no concern with spirituality and who were not free from the stains of earthly existence corrupted these faiths to a degree that they no longer resemble the originals. [Lecture Sialkot, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 20, pp. 203]

Hence we understand that there is a need for the garden of Islam to be kept cleaned from time to time and no established authority has been invested with this task. This task is the preserve of those who are raised by Allah through revelation and upon them falls the heavy duty of preserving Islam's purity. Although Hazrat Masih Maood (as) did speak about a Khilafat after him, yet he also said that all members should work together until someone is raised by the Holy Spirit. Past and present leadership of the mainstream Jamaat have ignored this teaching of the Promised Messiah in order to justify a system of Khilafat that they have imposed over the Jamaat.

So for all those who want to learn and reflect, I have given them sufficient food for thought. I suggest that you reread these extracts and thoroughly digest their message. If there is any need for clarification, I will *incha* Allah help.

In the end I wish to say that *incha* Allah after Jummah prayer we will read the Janaza prayer *in absentia* of the three martyrs of Gujranwala, in Pakistan. We did not offer these prayers last week because we did not know their names. Now that their names have been published we will pray for them. Their names are as follows: Grandmother Boushra Bibi aged 55 years, Wife of Munir Ahmad sahib, Hira and Kainaat daughters of Mohammad Bota sahib aged 8 years and 7 months respectively. So we understand that Mohammad Bota sahib has lost his mother and two daughters in very tragic circumstances. May Allah admit the martyrs in Jannatoul Firdaus and may He grant beautiful patience to the bereaved family and may He punish the perpetrators of these horrible crimes with an exemplary punishment.