

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:

Unfortunately we are living in a period of time when there are plenty of problems in the world. I do not say that this is a unique period of history in which we are witnessing so many upheavals and so many problems. In the past also there have been many periods when the situation was as worst or even worse. Even we in Mauritius are not safe. Severe problems might occur here also. Many will recall how last year in a short period of two to three hours Port Louis was inundated and many people lost their lives. Around the world politicians promise people that they are good managers who have the people's interest at heart. But everywhere the same story goes on and on that once they come in power they have their personal interest at heart rather than the people's interests. We Muslims, we members of Jamaat Ahmadiyya, we members of Jamaat Ahmadiyya Al Mouslemeen have been brought up to believe that we should fulfill the promise of Allah as spelled out in the Holy Quran:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ  
تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

“You are the best people, raised for *the good of* mankind; you enjoin good and forbid evil and believe in Allah.”(3:111)

Allah has qualified the Muslim Umma as the “best people” so that they might look after the interests of *an naas* meaning all people not exclusively their own. Their main mission is to ordain what is good (*Al maroof*) and to forbid what is evil (*al munkar*). Hence the Muslim who understands his mission in life is duty bound to promote what is good and to forbid what is bad. This is an important point that we all should remember and as best as we can try to accomplish in our own limited circle of influence. We should engage in this task at the group level and also at the individual level.

These days the world is confronted with a group of extremist Sunni Muslims who have established a caliphate in part of Syria and Iraq. It is controlling a very big chunk of territory which is mostly inhabited with Sunnis and it is forcing others such as Shias, Kurds and Christians to leave Iraq. It is practicing a sort of sectarian and ethnic cleansing over there and it is doing this in the name of Islam. This group started in Iraq and it spread to adjoining Syria and now they are controlling a large part of these two countries. They are motivated by a sense of jihad and they have been joined by at least 2000 jihadists from

western countries. Their rise has created an alarm in western capitals and in adjoining Arab countries as well. In interviews from their spokesmen on a documentary on Al Jazeera they say they are intent to export their brand of jihad to other countries as well. Muslim countries are at a loss. Besides condemnation and fatwas over fatwas they are almost paralyzed and they cannot do anything. Even America has repeatedly said through its President that they still do not have a strategy of how to deal with the Islamic state in Syria and Iraq until yesterday when he said that they will “downgrade and destroy” it. Meanwhile many are being killed and many more are being displaced and many have been wounded.

There are many factors that have brought about this situation. I will not elaborate on them now. But these people think that it is allowed in Islam to convert others by force or to kill them if they do not convert to Islam. It is only now that many Muslims are beginning to understand that the teachings of Muslim Ulama about *Takfir* (to declare other Muslims as Kafir and that it is allowed to kill them) has been creating havoc among Muslims. We all know that Allah says in the Holy Quran “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:256) But if Muslims are attacked it is legitimate for them to defend themselves. If there is one person who has vociferously defended the teachings of Islam in defensive war and has condemned the Ulama wrong conception of Jihad it is Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908), the Promised Messiah and Mahdi and the founder of Jamaat Ahmadiyya. Since more than hundred years now he has explained that Islam does not need any use of force to conquer the heart and mind of other people. He explained his ideas on this matter in a booklet written in 1900 entitled “*Government angrezi awr Jihad*” which has been translated as “The British Government and Jihad”. All our young ones should download and read this booklet of about fifteen pages and they will know what are our teachings concerning Jihad. We will read excerpts from this booklet in the rest of this sermon *insha* Allah. What he said can usher in an era of peace among Muslims and between Muslims and others in the world as well. But before we start reading from him let us see briefly what the meaning of Jihad is.

The word is a verbal noun derived from the root *jahada* meaning to strive to the utmost in Islam. According to the dictionary Lane we understand jihad to mean “exerting one’s utmost power, effort, endeavor, or ability in contending with an object of disapprobation.” Furthermore there exist different types of jihad according to those who are experts in understanding this matter from the Islamic point of view. They say that there is jihad of the heart, jihad of the tongue and jihad of the pen. We need to keep these different meanings in mind. Now we will read from the Promised Messiah’s book. He says:

“The philosophy and true nature of jihad is a matter both complex and subtle. Grave errors have been made both in our age and in the middle age [of Islam] because people failed to understand this subject. It is with great embarrassment that I am forced to admit that these dangerous mistakes have

exposed the holy religion of Islam, which is a mirror of the laws of nature and a manifestation of God's glory, to the criticism of its opponents.”

“It should be remembered that today's Islāmic scholars (who are called maulawīs) completely misunderstand Jihād and misrepresent it to general public. The public's violent instincts are inflamed as a result and they are stripped of all noble human virtues... I know for certain that the maulawīs who persist in propagating these blood-spattered doctrines are in fact responsible for murders committed by ignorant, egotistical people... They should remember that their understanding of Jihad is not correct, and human sympathy and compassion are its first casualties.” (Pp. 8-9)

“May God bring these molwis back to the right path! They have misled the populace into believing that the keys to Paradise lie in beliefs that are oppressive, cruel, and completely immoral...”

“Is it not shameful that a complete stranger should be unjustly killed while occupied in his daily affairs, thus widowing his wife, making his children orphans, and turning his house into a funeral parlor? Which Ḥadīth (saying of the Prophet) or verse of the Qur'an authorizes such behavior? ... Foolish people hear the word Jihad, and make it an excuse for fulfillment of their own low desires. Or perhaps it is sheer madness that inclines them towards bloodshed.” (Pp. 14-15)

“The tradition prevalent among the Muslims of attacking the people of other religions, which they call Jihad, is not Jihad of the Divine religious Law (Islāmic Sharī'ah). Rather, it is a grievous sin and a violation of the clear instructions of God and His prophet. (P. 20)”

All these extracts help us to understand that Hazrat Masih Maood (as) is condemning the prevailing ideas about Jihad that exist among most Muslims. Explaining why the Holy Prophet (saw) had to wage wars in the first place he says:

“Why did Islam come to need *jihad* and what is *jihad*? I would now like to address this question. It needs to be understood that Islam was forced to confront great difficulties from its very inception, and all nations stood opposed to it. When a Prophet or Messenger comes from God, his followers are perceived to be a promising, truthful, righteous and progressive group that is likely to advance quickly. Pre-existing communities and religious sects inevitably begin to develop a certain kind of anger and jealousy towards them. Religious experts and leaders are particularly vocal about expressing such feelings because arrival of a man of God leads to a change in their incomes and prestige.

Their students and disciples begin to emerge from their trap because they find all excellent qualities of faith, morality and knowledge in the person who is from God. Those possessing sense and discrimination therefore begin to understand that these scholars do not deserve the respect that they had been previously accorded on the

basis of educational accomplishment, piety and abstinence. Exalted titles such as *Najm-ul-Ummah* [Star of the Nation], *Shams-ul-Ummah* [Sun of the Nation], *Sheikh-ul-Masha'ikh* [Leader of the Honourable] and so forth no longer befit them. Sensible people who do not wish to lose their faith therefore turn away from these scholars. Religious scholars and patriarchs have always been jealous of God's Prophets and Messengers because of the foregoing losses. The members of this faction are in fact deficient; they possess very little of Divine light and their flaws are totally exposed during a Prophet or Messenger's time. Their egos give rise to hostility towards God's Prophets and the righteous, and they selfishly devise plans to injure them. Such people sometimes even know in their hearts that they have fallen under God's wrath by unjustly persecuting his pure-hearted man. Their instinctive actions against the righteous indicate the guilty state of their hearts, and the fire of their jealousy—moving like a fast locomotive—pushes them towards the abyss of hatred.

These reasons incited the hostility of pagan, Jewish and Christian scholars and prevented them from accepting truth in the time of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They therefore sought to eliminate Islam from the face of the earth. Since there were so few Muslims during Islam's early period, their opponents treated them with bitter hostility out of the natural arrogance that inspires the minds of those who consider themselves to be superior to the followers of a new faith in terms of wealth, property, numbers, esteem and rank. They did not want this heavenly plant [of Islam] to take root upon the earth, but rather were fighting with all their might to destroy these righteous people. They feared that the firm establishment of this religion would in turn sow the seeds of destruction for their faith and nation. Because of this fear, which was deeply impressed on their hearts, they committed acts of extreme viciousness and cruelty and brutally murdered many Muslims. Their ways remained unchanged for a lengthy thirteen year period. Many of God's faithful—the very honour of humanity—were cruelly cut to pieces by the swords of these barbarians. Orphans and weak, helpless women were slaughtered in the streets and alleys. Even so, God commanded that there be no retaliation against evil. These righteous, chosen people adhered to this instruction precisely. While the streets ran red with their blood, they did not utter a sound. They were slaughtered like animals but did not protest. God's holy and exalted Prophet (upon whom the heavens and earth shower their blessings) was stoned on many occasions, so much so that he was stained with blood. Nevertheless, that upright mountain of truth tolerated all this mistreatment with an open heart and love. This attitude of steadfastness and humility provoked Islam's enemies to intensify their persecution, and they looked upon this holy community as a hunter looks upon his prey. Then God, Who does not wish that cruelty and oppression should exceed their bounds on the earth, turned towards His oppressed servants, and His wrath was inflamed against the wicked. He informed His helpless, suffering people through the Holy Qur'an: I am watching everything that is happening to you and henceforth give you permission to retaliate. I am God the Almighty, and I will not allow your oppressors to escape without punishment. This is the commandment that in other words came to be known as *jihad*. The original wording, which is still preserved

in the Qur'an, is as follows:

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقْتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلَمُوا ۖ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ  
تَضَرُّهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ ۚ  
الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ ...

That is: Allah has heard the cry of those oppressed people who are killed and unjustly turned out of their land and has permitted them to retaliate. Allah is All-Powerful, and able to help the oppressed. (22:41-2)”

We will continue with the text next week *incha* Allah.