

FRIDAY SERMON

26 September 2014

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We have already reached the last month of the Islamic calendar, Zil Hajj for the year 1435. But before I start to talk about matters concerning the first ten days of this month, allow me to bring a precision concerning Jihad, a subject on which we have been speaking during our last three sermons.

When someone reads what Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has said one may be tempted to conclude that Jihad which involves fighting with an enemy has been thoroughly forbidden now. But there are some circumstances where Muslims have to stand up and fight for their motherland to defend their women and children. In fact during the course of Muslim history in many such circumstances Muslims have had to fight to regain their freedom. Many Muslims have had to sacrifice their life to preserve that of their dear ones. But this is a very long history and we do not intend to go into details here. One example will suffice. Take Algeria. This is a Muslim country which the French invaded in 1830 with a view to conquer and colonize. But the Algerians never accepted them and the religious leaders declared Jihad against them and under the Amir Abdel Kader they fought the French for seventeen years but in 1847 the Algerians were defeated and had to lay down their arms. Eventually the French colonized the country through emigration making as if the country was theirs. Throughout their stay the Algerians never accepted them. Consequently after about 100 years when the time came to grant the Algerians their independence, The French who thought of themselves as the standard bearer of Equality, Liberty and Fraternity refused to grant independence and the Algerians had to fight to get it. And this war went on for about eight years from 1954-1962 and many thousands Algerians had to fight for it. This is only one instance where Muslims had to wage war to defend their motherland and to defend the life of their countrymen. And a Muslim has to fight whenever such circumstances arise. If you read the history of the Muslims during the past two hundred years you will come across many such instances where they had to put up a fight to defend what was theirs. They have had to fight with non Muslims who tried to rob them of their possessions. So we should try to understand what the Promised Messiah really said. He spoke against the wrong concept of Jihad which was common amongst Muslims that it is allowed to kill Non Muslims and take their wealth or force them to become Muslims. However if your life or that of your countrymen are in danger because others are invading your country and want to kill you, then the Muslim has to wage war to repel the invaders until peace prevails. War of self-defense is a duty in Islam. Concerning IS, the Iraqis should have found the necessary solution to their

problems. Since they have not done so others are coming forward to kill them. According to the Holy Quran Muslims countries should have done the needful to solve that crisis rather than allowing foreigners to do it for them. Anyhow these are very complex issues that cannot be treated in one or two Friday sermons. So we leave them for the time being.

So since the new moon was visible yesterday in Mauritius, Incha Allah Eidul Adha will be celebrated here on Sunday 5th October. The Saudis will be celebrating Eid on 4th October. The first ten days of Zul Hajj are full of blessings and if we spend our time in making some specific *Zikr* we will *incha Allah* reap plenty of spiritual blessings especially because we are a people who have been banned to attend Hajj. So we learn that the Holy Prophet (saw) is reported to have said:

There are no days which are greater than the first ten days of Zul Hajj and there are no days where actions are better accepted than in these ten days. So increase the recitation of *Tahleel* (*Laa-ilaaha-ill-Allah*), *Takbeer* (*Allahu-Akbar*) and *Tahmeed* (*al-hamdu-lillaah*)" during these days.

So a Muslim who seeks to get near to Allah and who cares about good deeds and about good thoughts will always try to practice the recommendations of our beloved prophet Mohammad (saw). We who think of ourselves as being in this group of Muslims should do our best to multiply our good actions in the days ahead. You will recall that at the end of Ramadan I said that we should do our best to try to make the virtues that we practiced during the month of Ramadhan, permanent features of our life. Allah knows better who has been trying to do so and according to my observations some are making the necessary efforts and we hope that Allah will draw all of us towards Him and He will continue to grant us the opportunity to do such deeds that will please Him throughout our life *incha Allah*.

According to the hadith that I have just mentioned we understand that the Muslim is usually expected to be reciting the *Tahleel*, the *Tahmid* and the *Takbir* regularly in his life. That is why he has not just asked us to read them but to increase their recitation. Here he has not asked to go and look after the poor nor to go and participate in Jihad but he has asked us to reaffirm the Unicity of Allah. Many think that they know quite well what is it to proclaim Allah's Tauheed but unfortunately in everyday life they do not practice it.

When we say *laa ilaha illallah* we are affirming that there is no one to worship, no one to love, no one to obey except Allah. Everyone can examine himself or herself and wonder how far he or she is loyal to this declaration. It is our duty that day in and day out we should become more sincere in this declaration of faith. If we examine ourselves and note that we are not true to this declaration of faith it does not mean that we should just

lose hope and think that we will never succeed. On the contrary we should continue to reaffirm this declaration knowing quite well what we are saying. Every day we should allocate sometime to think and reflect about Allah. When you pray you should always fix your attention only on Allah. Whenever our thoughts stray to mundane matters or to other matters we should bring it back to Allah. These are the kind of efforts that we should engage in everyday so that Allah becomes more and more present in our daily life. This is a task that you should do for your own self. No one will do it for you and you cannot delegate it. You owe it to your soul to do it. So the coming days are an excellent occasion for you to be engaged in these *Zikr*. From another hadith we learn that the Holy Prophet Mohammad saw is reported to have said “*La ilaha illallah* is the best *Zikr*” meaning the best thing to remember. In another hadith he said that the recitation of “*La ilaha illallah*” burns away sins as fire burns dry wood or dry leaves”. So when we recite “*La ilaha illallah*” we will move away from *Shirk*, that is associating partners with Allah. And the Holy Quran has taught us that *Shirk* is a sin that will not be forgiven by Allah. And the Holy Prophet has told us that “*Shirk* among the Muslims is as invisible as a black ant over a dark rock in pitch darkness.” All these help us to understand that *Shirk* is a grievous sin and Muslims may not easily recognize it. At times you might think that you do not indulge in *Shirk* at all but in the sight of Allah you might be a *Moushrik*, that is someone who practices *Shirk*. I think that this subject is so important that the Holy Prophet has drawn our thoughts to what is truly essential to our faith at a time when Allah treat us with great indulgence.

Learning to act for the pleasure of Allah alone is not easy at all. We should remove from our heart all desire for grandeur, for honour and for being well appreciated in the eyes of others or for anything that gives us personal satisfaction. This is a task that needs great efforts and it demands great effort and perseverance and as long as Allah does not help you, you will not succeed.

There is a hadith which illustrates why we should do good deeds only with a view to win Allah’s Pleasure. We have spoken about this hadith in the past and we are going to repeat it. It is as follows:

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said: ‘The first of people against whom Judgment will be pronounced on the Day of Resurrection will be a man who died a martyr. He will be brought and Allah will make known to him His favours and he will recognize them. [The Almighty] will say: “And what did you do about them?” He will say: “I fought for you until I died a martyr.” Allah Subhanah will say: “You have lied! - you did but fight that it might be said [of you]: He is courageous. And so it was said.” Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Hell-

fire. [Another] will be a man who has studied [religious] knowledge and has taught it and who used to recite the Quran. He will be brought and Allah will make known to him His favours and he will recognize them. [The Almighty] will say: “And what did you do about them?” He will say: “I studied [religious] knowledge and I taught it and I recited the Quran for Your sake.” Allah Subhanah will say: “You have lied! - you did but study [religious] knowledge that it might be said [of you]: He is learned. And you recited the Quran that it might be said [of you]: He is a reciter. And so it was said.” Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Hell-fire. [Another] will be a man whom Allah had made rich and to whom He had given all kinds of wealth. He will be brought and Allah will make known to him His favours and he will recognize them. [The Almighty] will say: “And what did you do about them?” He will say: “I left no path [untrodden] in which You liked money to be spent without spending in it for Your sake.” Allah Subhanah will say: “You have lied! - you did but do so that it might be said [of you]: He is open-handed. And so it was said.” Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Hell-fire.

There is a lot that each one amongst us can learn from this hadith. No one has a guarantee that his good actions will put him in Paradise. If our intentions are bad, our actions may precipitate our ruin. Allah desires that we work exclusively for Him, to win His Pleasure. And whenever we practice good deeds we should be well-intentioned and pray that Allah accepts what we are offering. And when we recite «*Laa ilaha illalla*» with good intentions *inchaAllah* we will enter Paradise. It is incumbent upon all of us to purify our intentions and make it become exclusively for Allah’s sake if we want to have success in this world and the hereafter.

I said it before and I am repeating it again. Many Muslims are deceiving themselves if they think that by killing an innocent non Muslim they will gain entrance to Paradise. Many young Muslims these days feel themselves attracted to ISIS and they are going there to fight. If our intention for Jihad is not good we cannot expect to be rewarded with the reward for Jihad. If people can be deceived concerning three most noble actions in Islam, how much more can they be deceived in other types of good actions! Just imagine the case of those who blindly follow their leader who orders them to commit actions which are diametrically opposed to the teachings of the Holy Quran? We can easily conclude that the judgment of those who ignore Allah’s instructions will be quite severe indeed. We pray that Allah grants each one amongst us the opportunity to remember Him much in obedience to the instructions given by our beloved prophet. May He protect us so that we remain always aloof from Shirk and that we remain always attached to *Tauheed, InchaAllah*. Ameen!