

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:

Spiritually speaking today is doubly blessed. On the one hand it is a Friday and it is blessed according to Hadiths. Secondly it is the day of Arafat for this year's pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia. And we all know that the peak of the Hajj is the Day of Arafat. It is a day and night of intense prayer and remembrance of Allah. The pilgrims assemble at the mount of Mercy and they solicit Allah after Zohr and Asr prayer around midday to around Maghreb prayer and they do their best to keep praying and remembering Allah even during the night. We also who are away from Mecca should do our best to use the remaining hours of the day to pray and remember Allah as best as we can.

You will recall that the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) accomplished Hajj only once in his lifetime and that also during the last year of his life. We know from Hadiths books that for at least two years after the treaty of Hudaib he did not attend the Hajj at all and so he was in Medina for Eid ul Doha. We do not have much information about what he did during that day or night while he was not participating in the Hajj ceremonies. But we can easily deduce that he most surely should have been engaged in extraordinary worship to draw nearer to Allah because of the blessings associated with these days. Concerning the merit of Arafat he is reported to have said "The greatest sin of a person who goes to Arafat and then leaves it to think that he has not been forgiven of his sins." So the pilgrim undergoes all the trouble to perform Hajj with a view to be forgiven and after his supplications at Arafat he or she should be convinced that he or she has been forgiven or else according to this hadith of the Holy Prophet (saw) it would have meant that the pilgrim would not have achieved the objectives of his Hajj. And this will reflect badly on Allah because several times in the Holy Quran He makes it known to us that He is the Forgiver, the Effacer of sins. So a pilgrim should think well of Him and expect forgiveness and keep away from sins in the future.

The Holy Prophet (saw) is also reported to have said: ""There is no day on which Allah frees more people from the Fire than the day of Arafat. He comes close and expresses His pride to the angels saying, 'What do these people (the Hajjis) want?'" [Saheeh Muslim] Furthermore he **said** "The best invocation on the day of Arafat, and the best of all the invocations I ever offered or other Prophets before me ever offered is: "There is no god but Allah: He is Unique; He hath no partner, the whole universe is for Him and for Him is the praise, and

He hath power over all things." He also said: ""The best supplication (*dua*) is the supplication (*dua*) of Arafat." (*Tirmidhi*). In the light of all these hadiths we understand that this day has a special significance for those who go for Hajj. Other Muslims who remain in their respective countries have nothing to do on that particular day except that they engage in acts that will draw them nearer to Allah. Many Muslims offer voluntary fasting on that day.

From the books of Hadiths we also learn that the day of Arafat was a day of great significance especially the one when the Holy Prophet (saw) participated in the Hajj ceremonies. We also learn that in that particular year the day of Arafat fell on a Friday. There is a significant hadith in which it is reported that once a Jew said to Hazrat Omar (ra) ·O Ameer al-Mumineen (O head of the Muslims)! There is a verse in the Qur'an, which if it was revealed on us, the Jews, we would have taken that day as an Eid (festival)." **Umar asked:** "Which verse?" **He said:** "*This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.*" [al-Maidah, 5:3] **Umar (ra) said:** "We know on which day and in which place was this verse revealed to Allah's Messenger ﷺ. It was when he was standing in Arafat on a Friday." Thus this was the day when Allah perfected His Favour on the Muslim Umma. Even a Jew looked with envy with what Allah had said to the Holy Prophet (saw).

Similarly we know that it was at Arafat on that Friday that the Holy Prophet (saw) made what we know as the Farewell Address because he did not address the pilgrims again in his lifetime. This farewell address is so interesting and is a sort of epitome of the teachings of Islam that we will profit immensely from being reminded of it from time to time. So we will read the address. As you might well know there are many versions of this text. I have taken an easily available one from the net. It is as follows:

"O people, hear me well: I explain to you. For I do not know; I may well not meet you again in this place where I now stand, after this year of mine...." These words were really prophetic. It is as if he felt that his end was near and that he would not have the occasion to address the people again in that great gathering at Arafat. Within four months after returning to Medina he would die. He continues: " O people: your lives and your property, until the very day you meet your Lord, are as inviolable to each other as the inviolability of this day you are now in, and the month you are now in. Have I given the message? -- O Allah, be my witness. So let whoever has been given something for safekeeping give it back to him who gave it to him. Truly, the usury of the Era of Ignorance has been laid aside forever, and the first usury I begin with is that which is due to my father's brother 'Abbas ibn 'Abd al- Muttalib. And truly the blood-vengeance of the Era of Ignorance has been laid aside forever, and the first blood vengeance we shall start with is that which is due for the blood of [my kinsman] 'Amir ibn Rabi'a ibn Harith ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib. Truly, the hereditary distinctions that were pretensions to

respect in the Era of Ignorance have been laid aside forever, except for the custodianship of the Kaaba [by Bani 'Abd al-Dar] and the giving of drink to pilgrims [by al- 'Abbas]. A deliberate murder is subject to retaliation in kind. An accidental death from a deliberate injury means a death resulting from [something not usually used or intended as a deadly weapon such as] a stick or a rock, for which the indemnity is one hundred camels: whoever asks for more is a person of the Era of Ignorance. O people: the Devil has despaired of ever being worshipped in this land of yours, though he is content to be obeyed in other works of yours that you deem to be of little importance. O people: postponing the inviolability of a sacred month [claiming to postpone the prohibition of killing in it to a subsequent month, so as to continue warring despite the sacred month's having arrived] is a surfeit of unbelief, by which those who disbelieve are led astray, making it lawful one year and unlawful in another, in order to match the number [of months] Allah has made inviolable. Time has verily come full turn, to how it was the day Allah created the heavens and the earth. Four months there are which are inviolable, three in a row and fourth by itself: Dhul Qa'da, Dhul Hijja, and Muharram; and Rajab, which lies between Jumada and Sha'ban. Have I given the message? -- O Allah, be my witness. O people: verily you owe your women their rights, and they owe you yours. They may not lay with other men in your beds, let anyone into your houses you do not want without your permission, or commit indecency. If they do, Allah has given you leave to debar them, send them from your beds, or [finally] strike them in a way that does no harm.(Here he is just quoting the Holy Quran. There are different interpretations of this verse and some modern ones say categorically that beating was not meant here. Anyhow this is another discussion which we will leave right now.) He continues: "But if they desist, and obey you, then you must provide for them and clothe them fittingly. The women who live with you are like captives, unable to manage for themselves: you took them as a trust from Allah, and enjoyed their sex as lawful through a word [legal ruling] from Allah. So fear Allah in respect to women, and concern yourselves with their welfare. Have I given the message? -- O Allah, be my witness. O people, believers are but brothers. No one may take his brother's property without his full consent. Have I given the message? -- O Allah, be my witness. Never go back to being unbelievers, smiting each other's necks, for verily, I have left among you that which if you take it, you will never stray after me: the Book of Allah. Have I given the message? -- O Allah, be my witness .People, your Lord is One, and your father is one: all of you are from Adam, and Adam was from the ground. The noblest of you in Allah's sight is the most god-fearing: Arab has no merit over non-Arab other than god-fearingness. Have I given the message? -- O Allah, be my witness. -- At this, they said yes.

He said, "Then let whomever is present tell whomever is absent. O people: Allah has apportioned to every deserving heir his share of the estate, and no deserving heir may accept a special bequest, and no special bequest may exceed a third of the estate. A child's lineage is that of the [husband who owns the] bed, and adulterers shall be stoned." Here also there is controversy about the stoning of adulterers. The Holy Quran

says that they should be whipped. We will leave this discussion for the time being. He continues: "Whoever claims to be the son of someone besides his father or a bondsman who claims to belong to other than his masters shall bear the curse of Allah and the angels and all men: no deflecting of it or ransom for it shall be accepted from him. And peace be upon all of you, and the mercy of Allah."

So on this blessed day of Arafat we will all profit by meditating on these noble words of our beloved prophet Mohammad (saw). As I have said there is a resume of the basic teachings of Islam in this text and some have said that the Prophet's speech was a charter for humanity. He has spoken about all men being equals and that men should take care of women because they are a trust from Allah. These values have become current quite recently in the Western world. But Islam spoke about them more than fourteen hundred years before. The Holy Prophet has re-laid emphasis on the fact that a man's or a woman's superiority is his or her God-Fearingness and nothing else. Hence we all should remember that it is in our *Taqwa* (God Fearingness) that we will be eventually judged and not upon our wealth or our number. Furthermore the Holy Prophet (saw) stressed upon all Muslims that they should obey the law and that law was the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet's sunna. One does not need to read all the Holy Quran or all the Books of hadith to understand how one should behave. A mere reading of this farewell address can easily help any Muslim to understand what is expected of him or her. But it is quite unfortunate that despite such clear-cut teachings from the Holy Prophet even today Muslims and even Ahmadis fail to act on such teachings and they do not stop harming one another.

So let us all profit by the blessings that are attached to this particular day and let us turn to Allah in repentance and humility and beseech Him to forgive us and to help us to stay firm in His path and may He forgive those who out of their ignorance have offended us. May we all be among those who understand Allah's teachings and live them in our daily life. May Allah grant all of us the opportunity to do so *inchaAllah*. Ameen!