

FRIDAY SERMON

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by Imam Zafrullah Domun

Main points: What should end of year mean for an Ahmadi Muslim. Need to vie with one another in Good Deeds. Need to avoid unislamic customs. Replace bad habits with new ones. Turmoil in Muslim World. Comments on Caliph's statements of last week.

After reciting the *Tashahhud*, the *Ta'uz* and the first chapter *Al Fatiha* of the Holy Quran, Imam Zafrullah Domun said:

Today is the last Jummah for the year 2014. It does not have any special significance in itself. But it just helps us to note that another cycle of a year has come to an end in our life. Each one should take stock of his personal life and wonder how far he or she is on the path of accomplishing his or her life mission. Taking stock of what we have achieved so far in our life on the personal or family level, in the material or spiritual fields helps one to move forward. In the Holy Quran Allah says "*Wa lekoullin wijhatoune howa mowalliha fastabeqoul khayraat*" which we translate as "And everyone has a goal to which he turns his full attention. Then vie with one another in good deeds" (2:143). Each Muslim believer is expected to have an objective in his life which is overriding meaning it ranks above all other objectives of his life. Whatever that objective might be everyone is free to choose. But Allah says we should compete with one another in doing good deeds, in practicing virtue. Just imagine the sort of society that will be created when each member of that society strives to do what is good and is competing with the other members of the society to do good. Just imagine what type of home it would be where each member puts into practice "*fastabeqoul khayraat*"- vie with one another in good deeds. This will be a house where everyone will place the interests and welfare of others above its own and each member will strive to do good and to be good to others. This will be a house where strife will be at a minimum and peace and love will reign supreme. As good Ahmadi Muslims it is our duty to strive to create such a house and such a Jamaat and such a society. By doing good we spread goodness in society and we and others live in peace and harmony.

So as good Ahmadi Muslims who read and try to practice the Holy Quran, who remember the verses "by the Time, Surely man is in a state of loss except those who believe and do righteous deeds and exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to be steadfast."(ch103) It is incumbent upon us to be conscious of the passage of time because it means that the end is becoming nearer and we should be prepared for it. So if

the end of a year has any purpose it is that it is reminding us that another year in our life has gone by and what do we have as our record of good deeds for it. Allah has given us the Holy Quran so that we might live our lives according to His instructions and not according to customs or in imitation of others. Hasn't Hazrat Masih Maood (as) imposed on each Ahmadi Muslim that "That he/she shall refrain from following un-Islamic customs and lustful inclinations and shall completely submit himself / herself to the authority of the Holy Qur'an; and that he/she shall make the Word of God and the sayings of the Holy Prophet his/her guiding principles in every walk of his/her life". If we really want to lead our life according to what is expected of us as an Ahmadi Muslim we have to be conscious of the responsibilities that have been imposed upon us. It is incumbent upon us to make great effort to understand what truth is; we should follow that which is true and shun all types of falsehood whether it is in belief or in deeds. We should not be followers of customs at all. We should strive to establish practices that are compatible with the teachings of Islam. Under no circumstance should we copy others and feel that what others say is best. To us we should be aware that what Islam teaches is best and we should have so much knowledge that we can justify all the teachings of Islam that we follow. So just imagine how much we should study Islam to be able to justify all its teachings. This is the task of a life time and since we do not know the length of our life time we should set ourselves to task as soon as possible without any delay at all even if or especially because we might have been negligent in the past. To succeed in our life mission we should strive but we should also pray as we said last week. If we neglect any of these two means we will end up in failure. But we all should be determined not to fail at all. So we should place our trust in Allah and move forward.

With all ending there is a new beginning. A new year ends. Another one begins. The fact that Allah keeps us alive means that He is giving us new opportunities to practice good deeds according to His pleasure. In order to set ourselves on a course of real self improvement we need to break with all our bad habits. All of us are aware how difficult it is to break our bad habits and adopt new good ones. Someone said:

“Sow a thought, and you reap an act;
Sow an act, and you reap a habit;
Sow a habit, and you reap a character;
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.”

So if we want to change our destiny we should change the way we think. We should always examine our thoughts and try as much as we can to think in a positive way and drive away all dark thoughts and eventually you will see the positive influence that you will spread around you.

I was saying just now that we should refrain from imitating others except if they are doing something that we know is really good. Staying awake until midnight on New Year's Eve and praying two *rakaat nafil* before going to sleep is just another innovation that is gaining currency among members of Jamaat Ahmadiyya mainstream. Now if you are someone who reads *nafil* at night regularly and you read it on New Year's Eve there is nothing wrong. But I think that if you are such a person who is inclined to wake up to remember Allah, you would have easily understood that there is no need for you to remain awake and engage in frivolous pursuits on any night of the year. Your heart would be most inclined to Allah than to anything else besides Him.

You will recall that one hundred years ago that is, in 1914 the whole world entered a period of great convulsions. The First World War started and when it ended in 1918 the world was no longer the same. In 2014 there are still plenty of problems around the world. Many Muslim countries are still in turmoil due to internal strife and there is no end in sight. In addition new caliphs are declaring themselves as leaders of the Muslim World and want to impose their own understanding of the Sharia on the people. Western and Muslim countries have banded together to eliminate these newly declared caliphs but they have already admitted that the fight would be quite long and the task is not at all easy. Wanton killing has become the hallmark of those Muslim groups who say that they are fighting in the name of Islam. The same type of butchery is being perpetrated in Pakistan, Nigeria and Iraq and Syria to name but a few. What happened in Pakistan last week in Peshawar should have moved the most callous heart except for the perpetrators of this horrible crime who killed more than 140 people in a school including 133 children. One wonders how people schooled by the prophet of peace could perpetrate such hateful crimes. Last week the Ahmadiyya caliph made this tragedy the subject of his Jummah sermon. He mentioned the following quotation from Hazrat Masih Maood (as):

‘True believers and Muslims are enjoined to be gentle and compassionate.’

‘Each person should look at himself every day and see as to how much he cares about these matters and how much compassion and good will he has for his brothers.’

‘The common purpose of the advent of all Prophets is to establish true and real love of God and to instill special import in love for and rights of humanity and among brothers. Until these are practiced all matters are merely ceremonial.’

‘Be compassionate to God's people and do not oppress them with your tongue, hand or by any other means. Always endeavour for the good of humanity. Do not feel arrogant towards anyone even if they are your

subordinate and do not verbally abuse anyone even if they verbally abuse you. Become meek, forbearing and good of intention and be sympathetic to mankind so that you are accepted.”

As we use to say whatever Hazrat Masih Maood (as) says has an immense value for each one of us. Reflect upon his words and see how he has stressed the point that the essence of the teachings of all prophets is that we should develop our relationship with Allah and act kindly towards one another. He said if these twin objectives are not being pursued all is “ceremonial”. In other words, a mere formality. But we all know that formalities have no place in Islam. In Islam whatever is practiced should be practiced out of sincerity and not as formalities. This sentence from Hazrat Masih Maood (as) is of concern to each one amongst us. It is imperative to check all our thoughts and deeds and examine how far we indulge them as a formality or because we sincerely believe that by doing so Allah will reward us? Members of Jamaat Ahmadiyya in Mauritius and elsewhere also have to examine their deeds and words and wonder how far they have been successful in acting as Hazrat Masih Maood (as) expected and how far they have failed. Taking only this sentence from all the writings of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) we will argue that the Jamaat has miserably failed. Most of what it has been doing is only ceremonial because it has devised ways and means to adopt unislamic teachings and practices and present them to its members as good Islamic teachings. Here, of course, I am referring to the 14 year-old social boycott that Jamaat Ahmadiyya Mainstream in Mauritius has been practicing against members of our own Jamaat. This boycott has completely ignored Hazrat Masih Maood (as) teachings because to maintain the boycott sisters have had to break relationship with sisters, brothers have been doing the same and all this has been done in the name of an overarching loyalty to a notion known as Khilafat and completely ignoring Allah’s teachings. If the caliph is really true to his words, he would see to it that within all the Jamaats for whom he has responsibility, the words of Allah reign supreme and not the perpetuation of the mistakes of a previous caliph and his amirs. This would really have showed the world that the Ahmadiyya caliph is true to his words and he is really keen in promoting brotherly love around the world or else whatever he does is just “ceremonial” as Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has said.

In his speech of last week the caliph went even further. He quoted from Hazrat Masih Maood (as) as follows:

“What does God want from you but this that you treat all humanity with fairness? More than this do good to those who have never done good to you and more than this be compassionate to God’s creatures as if they were your next of kin; as mothers are with their children...The ultimate degree of good is borne of natural instincts like those of a mother.”
(Kishti e Nuh, p. 30 Ruhani Khaza’in Vol 19).

The he added:

“We have had this level of teaching as regards sympathy and compassion and if we practice it then alone can we feel each other’s pain. With the grace of God large majority of our Jama’at has this compassion as indeed Ahmadis should. We have these sentiments for all humanity and in greater degree for Muslims. Our grief is heart-felt over any cruelty perpetrated against Muslims. The atrocity committed in Pakistan is certainly very painful for us and any atrocity perpetrated against Muslims around the world is painful for us.....”

We in Mauritius say that the caliph only speaks about these matters and in Mauritius his followers do not put these teachings into practice at all with his blessing. On the contrary it is their callousness and inhumanity and blind followership that is proverbial. It is indeed quite sad to note that despite these noble teachings that we have received from the Promised Messiah most members of the Ahmadiyya mainstream Jamaat in Mauritius ignore them in order to manifest the evil lying hidden in their souls. We pray that Allah help them and remove all the veils on their eyes that are preventing them from seeing truth as it is. So let us all pray that Allah grants us plenty of occasions in the coming days and years to practice such good deeds that are pleasing to Him.