

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

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

Yesterday our country celebrated the 47th Anniversary of its Independence. I still remember how I and my brothers were present in Port Louis on that historic occasion in 1968 at Champs de Mars. Although we did not understand the full implications of the event yet we were very glad to participate. By the Grace of Allah, since then Mauritius has made great progress in every field of human endeavor that we have been engaged into although there are still plenty of room for improvement. Celebrated English economists thought that we would never be able to progress so to say but by the Grace of Allah the economic and social achievements of Mauritius are not only talked about in Africa but in world institutions and even at the University of Harvard. Had politicians been keener to develop the country further our progress would have been even more fantastic. These days even Economics noble prize winners speak with great praise for the country's achievements. Some years back one such professor visited Mauritius for a few days and after he went away he wrote an article in the Financial Times of London praising Mauritius and he said that even the USA could learn from Mauritius especially in the provision of social services. So given the proper policies and proper people to implement them our country can progress enormously and everyone can live here as we say in our national hymn in "Peace justice and liberty". We pray that Allah's Grace will continue to shine on this country and its people and that we really become a model for others to follow if not in all but at least in many aspects of life.

Mauritius has a very interesting history. Unfortunately because Mauritius has been populated by people from different parts of the world, up till now a reliable and unbiased account of the history of the country has yet to be written. Consequently since our history is not taught in primary or secondary schools many Mauritians are not at all aware of the history of the country as a whole and this lack of knowledge still militates against the development of a truly Mauritian culture or of a true sense of belonging to the country. Anyhow this may be understood because the history of the country is quite young. Provided those who hold power pursue the right policy with a view to creating a true sense of belonging within all the components of the nation, the population will continue to live in separate groups from one another. Anyhow for us

Muslims we should remember what the Holy Prophet(saw) taught us that “*Houbboul watan minal imaan*” meaning “the love of the country is part of faith.” As such a Muslim is expected to have the love of the country at heart and he should do whatever is in his power to cherish and preserve his country and avoid to do anything that might be detrimental to the interests of the country at large. Most probably it is because we should love our country that we are forbidden to participate in any type of movements that might bring harm to the country. Peacefully, without the use of violence one can make one’s voice heard.

Since we are speaking about an aspect of history I would like to share with you another event which took place on a 13th March with reference to the history of the Ahmadiyya Jamaat International. You will recall that about one month ago I spoke about the birth of the Promised Messiah on 13th February 1835. Today I will say a few words about the death of Hazrat Hakim Molvi Nouruddin (ra) 1st caliph of the Promised Messiah, which occurred on 13th March 1914 and which was a Friday. From the book “Ahmadiyyat ,The Renaissance of Islam” by Sir M Zafrullah Khan we can read the following:

“The health of Khalifatul Masih I began to be poorly in the beginning of January 1914, and suffered a serious decline in the middle of February of that year. On 26 February, under the advice of his physicians, he was removed to the house of Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan Sahib (the son in law of the Promised Messiah), which was situated in a garden at some distance outside the town.

On the afternoon of 4 March he wrote out his will while he was lying in bed. It was in the following terms:

‘In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful. We praise Him and call down blessings on His noble Messenger. This humble one writes in the full possession of his senses. There is no one worthy of worship save Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. My children are young and there is no money in our house. Allah is their Guardian. No provision should be made for them out of any fund for orphans and the needy. A loan might be provided for them which should be repaid by those of my sons who grow up into a position to do so. My books and property should be put in trust for my children. My successor should be righteous, popular, learned and of good conduct. He should exercise forbearance towards the old and new friends of the Promised Messiah. I have been the well-wisher of all of them and so should he be. The public teaching of the Quran and *hadees* should be continued. Greetings of peace. Nurud Din 4 March 1914.’”

And in a later paragraph Sir Zafrullah Khan said:

“The end came nine days later on Friday 13 March, shortly after 2 p.m. He had been born in 1841 and was thus six years younger than the Promised Messiah. He died six years after the death of the Promised Messiah and thus at the time of his death his age was the same as was the age of the Promised Messiah at the time of his death. The same was the case with Hazrat Abu Bakr, the First Successor of the Holy Prophet. He also died when he arrived at the same age at which the Holy Prophet had died.”

After his death we know that the Jamaat left by Hazrat Masih Maood (as) was split into two and a bitter rivalry between those at Qadian and those that would go to Lahore would ensue. That rivalry and enmity still goes on after one hundred years just as the rivalry between Sunnis and Shias have been going on for more than 13 hundred years. Splits have been continuing and no one can really understand why and that reminds me about one revelation that I received about the split that occurred within our Jamaat which is as follows:

*“Qadir hay who baargah tota kaam banae
Bana bana ya tor deh koyi ousse ka bhed na janein”*

which we translate as follows

“Allah is All Powerful He can mend something that is broken
Either He mends or He breaks it no One knows His Secret”

So be it. He knows best. We should do the best with what we have but we should never close the door for reconciliation because “all Muslims are brothers”.

Now let us speak again about the history of Jamaat Ahmadiyya in Mauritius. As I said last week we do not have a comprehensive history with verified facts or events backed by written documents. Glimpses of our history can be found in books printed by the Jamaat in Mauritius namely “the centenary Khilafat souvenir”, a few notes in Tarikh Ahmadiyyat in Urdu, the book “History of Muslims in Mauritius” by Momtaz Imrith and also the different statements made by the Ahmadis in the court case in 1919. Recently I read an article in Al Fazl International about Sufi Ghulam Mohammad sahib (ra). Although the article is an interesting one it does not give us an adequate view of what went on in the early days of the Jamaat in Mauritius. Such information may be gleaned from the reports that were sent to Qadian at that time. Unfortunately we do not have full access to all Al Fazl which could have shed light on that aspect of our history. What we hear and some of what has been written need not be taken on face value because there are no concrete proofs to back all the statements made.

If we take the case of the first Mauritian Ahmadi, we see that in the Jamaat's magazines very little is said of him. So I wanted to know more about him. Unfortunately even when I googled him I did not get anything on him. I wanted to know when he was born and when did he die but could not get any information on this. Eventually I knew that there was a Dictionary of Mauritian biographies published by the Mauritian history society. I was able to go to their website and they advertised that the book was available for 9000 Mauritian rupees (\$300). Fortunately for me in an advert they showed the name of the Mauritians on whom biographical notes are written and there I saw the name of Noormamode Noorooya, a unique entry in the midst of several Franco Mauritian names. There I learnt that he was born in 1880 and he died in 1944. He lived for about sixty four years. Now *incha* Allah I will try to consult this dictionary and try to get some more information about him. So when he first came into contact with Jamaat Ahmadiyya's literature he was only about twenty seven years old and he became an Ahmadi at the age of thirty three years and he became the first secretary of the Anjuman Ahmadiyya Mauritius on Sunday 20th June 1915. Infact this was the date when an association was created with Sufi Ghulam Mohammad as the President, Noormamode Noorooya as the secretary and Mohammad Azim Sooltangos as the Treasurer. This event took place in Phoenix after Zohr prayer on the first Sunday following the arrival of Sufi Sahib in Mauritius. Sufi sahib arrived in Mauritius on Tuesday 15th June 1915 at around 10h30am. Mr Noorooya and some other Ahmadis went to fetch him in Port Louis. Initially he gave him a room at his place but later on he rented a room for Sufi sahib in Rose-Hill.

Furthermore I have been able to learn that Mr Noorooya's son Hassen Noorooya was the third Muslim to be a laureate in Mauritius in 1937 after Hassenjee Joomye in 1922 and Hassam Fakim in 1935. These scholarships had been established by the British since 1881 and only after forty years did a Muslim get it. In those days for a Muslim to get that scholarship was a rare event indeed. Mr Noorooya seems to have many firsts in his record. His son was the first Ahmadi to be a laureate and his great granddaughter Shabnam Begum Ameeruddeen would be the first Ahmadi woman laureate in 1985. It appears that when he came into contact with Jamaat Ahmadiyya he was fired with a great enthusiasm to spread the good news throughout the island. Eventually he accompanied Sufi sahib to about sixteen mosques out of a total of about 40 on the island. I have read a report of Sufi sahib about their visit to Souillac. He and Mr Noorooya went there by train and from there they went to Chemin Grenier. They stayed for about 48 hours doing tabligh with several people before coming back to Rose Hill on the next Monday. It appears that in that period tabligh was quite intense and people were marveling at the message that Sufi sahib was giving them. Mr Noorooya and some other young persons studied the Holy Quran with Sufi sahib and they were also trying to translate the Holy Book into French. They were quite eager to get the English translation that was then being prepared in Qadian so that they might

put it into French as soon as possible. Unfortunately we do not know any more about this matter.

By the grace of Allah I am gathering some information on the formative years of the Jamaat in Mauritius and I will *incha* Allah share it with our friends from time to time when they are available. It is unfortunate that a man who did so much for the implantation of the Jamaat in Mauritius should have been expelled from the Jamaat because in one instance he could not follow the policy of the Jamaat. I will try to inquire into this matter further and study the possibility of his rehabilitation eventually. *Incha* Allah more next week.