

FRIDAY SERMON

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prepared by Imam Zafrullah Domun

delivered by Dr Mahmud Ahmad Sooltangos

These past days we have been living some of the best days of the Muslim calendar i.e., the first ten days of Zul Hijja, the last month of the Islamic Calendar 1446AH. Today in Mecca, Saudi Arabia they are celebrating Eidul Adha. Yesterday was the Day of Arafat where all the pilgrims assembled from midday to sunset at mount Arafat and they humbly beseeched Allah for forgiveness. Let us hope and pray that everything goes on well for the Hajis and they return back to their respective countries safe and sound insha Allah. Ameen.

Unfortunately, here in Mauritius we have again found ourselves in a position where we have had to go along with the majority of Muslims and their Ulemas in Mauritius with the fixing of the date of Eidul Adha in the country. That is how we are seeing ourselves celebrating Eidul Adha forty-eight hours after Saudi Arabia. Allah knows best when a more enlightened view about the fixing of our festivals will prevail. Meanwhile we have to bear patiently the status quo.

The authorities in Saudi Arabia have upgraded the facilities for Hajis by investing billions and billions of dollars to make life easy for all pilgrims. This year also they have put up a remarkable setup to receive the pilgrims. I will now share with you some information about the organization of Hajj which might help you to have an idea how big the administration for receiving Hajis is for the Saudi Arabia and how prepared they have been to receive these pilgrims.

According to preliminary published figures **about 1.6 million people** have attended the Hajj this year. Women outnumber men; they represent 53% of the arrivals. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs has prepared over 25,000 mosques in Makkah, Madinah, and the holy sites. Additionally, 2.5 million copies of the Holy Quran and 1.3 million digital ID cards with QR codes have been distributed.

About 25,000 volunteers have provided help to the pilgrims. The daily water system capacity exceeds 1.2 million cubic meters, distributed through a 1,300-kilometer network. More than 4,000 lab tests are conducted daily, overseen by over 2,000 Saudi engineers and technicians. The Ministry of Commerce completed over 11,000 inspections in Makkah and Madinah. The Ministry of Municipalities and

Housing has allocated 22,000 personnel, 980 vehicles, and 177 shelters, with an operations room linked to 911 for rapid response. Advanced digital infrastructure and AI algorithms are being used for crowd and pilgrim management, supported by over 5,000 communication towers, 9,000+ 5G/4G stations, and 2,000 km of optical fiber. Over 10,000 Wi-Fi hotspots are available.

The second edition of the Hajj Media Forum, in partnership with the Pilgrim Experience Program, spans 6,000 sq. meters and hosts over 5,000 media professionals. The Saudi Broadcasting Authority has been broadcasting globally through a wide range of media services. Authorities tested electricity and water networks, conducted four simulations, and inspected over 37,000 pilgrim residences, addressing 3,400 observations. The transport sector, with 45,000 employees, prepared 7,000 flights from 238 destinations. Railway services offer two million seats on over 4,700 trips. Road maintenance covered 7,400 km, with an 82 per cent expansion in cooling services.

Ground transport includes 25,000 buses and 9,000 taxis, with 18 dedicated lanes and road readiness assessments including 247 bridges. The health sector increased bed capacity by 60 per cent, deploying over 50,000 personnel. Early international health measures included vaccinations. 14 ports were equipped, and over 50,000 health services have been delivered.

Measures to combat heatstroke include planting 10,000 trees, installing 400 water coolers/misting fans, and expanding shaded areas. A new 200-bed hospital was established in Mina. Three field hospitals with 1,200+ beds, 71 emergency points, 900 ambulances, 11 evacuation aircraft, and over 7,500 paramedics have been mobilized. The Seha Virtual Hospital provides remote consultations and chronic disease monitoring. This season also sees the highest private sector participation in health services.

This is some highlights of the preparations put in place to receive about **2million** Hajis in 2025. One can imagine that 100 years (in 1925) ago the facilities were rather rudimentary when people were arriving in Saudi Arabia on camels or lately using railroad (1909) and travels by ship. It was after the second world war (1939-1945) that the number of hajis started growing to hundred thousand and in the 1980s to millions of pilgrims and the Saudi Authorities invested their Petro dollars heavily to be able to receive them. These days a trip between Medina and Mecca takes only two hours by the Haramain Railway whereas in the early days of islam it took about 42 days by camel or 6 hours by car since cars were available. This is a great improvement indeed and the Saudi Authorities are to be congratulated for all the improvements that they have made for making Hajj easy for the pilgrims. May Allah help every Muslim to understand the true meaning of Hajj or Umra and how we should celebrate Eidul Adha in our respective countries.

Now I will share with you some extracts of the Promised Messiah(as) on Hajj or matters related to the Kaaba. He said:

“Another form of worship is *Hajj*—the Pilgrimage; which does not mean that a person should carry out the formality of the Pilgrimage by providing for his journey across the ocean with money lawfully or unlawfully acquired, and having repeated the prayers and formulas according to the directions of the servitors of the *Kaaba*, should come back and boast that he has performed the Pilgrimage. The purpose that God Almighty has appointed for the Pilgrimage is not achieved in this manner. The truth is that the last stage of the seeker’s journey is that withdrawing himself altogether from the demands and desires of self he should be completely engulfed by the love of God and complete devotion to Him. A true lover sacrifices his soul and heart; and the circuit of the House of Allah is a visible sign of such a sacrifice. As there is a House of Allah here below on the earth, so there is one in heaven. Until a person performs the circuit of the House above, his circuit of the House below is not truly performed. One who performs the circuit of the House below puts aside all garments, retaining only one of them to cover his body, but he who performs the circuit of the House above discards all garments altogether and becomes naked for the sake of God. The circuit is a sign of the lovers of God. They go round the *Kaaba* as if they have no will of their own left and they are devoted wholly to Him.” (Essence of Islam P317)

He said further:

“The human heart is like *Hajr-e-Aswad* [the Black Stone] and a man’s bosom is like *Baitullah* [the House of Allah]. The thoughts of that which is beside Allah are the idols installed in the *kaaba* of his heart. The idols of the Holy city of Mecca were obliterated when our Holy Prophet(saw), accompanied by ten thousand saints, arrived at Mecca and Mecca surrendered.... To defeat and obliterate the idols that are beside Allah, it is necessary that they should be invaded in the same manner.... A Jihad is needed for clearing this house of its idols and I teach you the way of this Jihad, and assure you that if you follow it you will succeed in breaking those idols. This way is not devised by me. God has appointed me to disclose it to you. What is that way? It is that you should follow me and obey me. This is not a new call. To clear Mecca of idols, the Holy Prophet(saw) also announced: **Say, ‘If you love Allah, follow me; then will Allah love you.’ —Al- Imran, 3:32**

In the same way, if you will follow me, you will be able to break the idols that are inside you and you will be able to purify your bosoms which are filled with idols of many kinds. No hard disciplines are needed for the purification of the self. The Companions of the Holy Prophet(saw) did not subject themselves to any hard disciplines nor to any purposeless repetition of formulas.

What they possessed was something very different: they were wholly committed to obedience of the Holy Prophet(saw). The light that was in him passed through the

duct of obedience and fell upon the hearts of his Companions(ra) and wiped out all thoughts of everything beside Allah. Their bosoms were filled with light in place of darkness. Remember well that the same is the situation today. You cannot be purified until the light which comes through the Divine duct falls upon your hearts. The human bosom is the place of descent of Divine light; that is why it is called the House of Allah. The grand design is that the idols that fill it should be broken and Allah alone should dwell in it. [Malfuzat, vol. 1, pp. 187-188]

This is an extract that we have read in our Jummah sermons. But we forget very often. That is why we repeat these words often so that we may be careful in what we think, and what we do. Take sometime to reflect on this sentence “In **the same way, if you will follow me, you will be able to break the idols that are inside you and you will be able to purify your bosoms which are filled with idols of many kinds.**” It is the responsibility of each one among us to embark on this quest of Allah to which Hazrat Masih Maood(as) has invited us. Hence it is incumbent upon each one among us to understand how our desire for self-purification should become intense. If we succeed in all other aspects of our life and we neglect this main task, our life might be in vain. Hazrat Ibrahim (as) was an idol breaker and in the Holy Quran Allah tells us he also was an *uswatun hasanatur* (excellent exemplar). We should do our best to break all the idols that have found their place in our heart.

Our protection from these idols will always come from the advices that the Holy Prophet Muhammad(saw) has bequeathed us namely through the Holy Quran and his Sunnah. So, we should cultivate the habit of reading the Holy Quran daily and studying it so that we might remember its teachings wherever we are. Next, we should be aware of the sunnah of the Holy Prophet(saw) by reading his biography and critically read the Books of hadiths so that we might do our best to follow him. When Hazrat Masih Maood(as) says as we have just quoted; what he means is that we should follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad(saw). Remember if we do not care to know the teachings of the Holy Quran and to implement them in our daily lives, we would be losers. So let us take heed while we still have time. We should seek self-purification through efforts and above all through supplications to Allah to help us to become pure. May Allah help each one among us to meet Allah while He is pleased with us. Incha Allah. Ameen

I will end with repeating the following words of Hazrat Masih Maood(as). May they inspire us to lead a virtuous life. The words are:

“An essential teaching for you is that you should not abandon the Holy Quran like a thing forsaken, for therein lies your life. Those who give precedence to the Quran over every hadith and every other saying will be given precedence in heaven. Today, there is no book on the face of the earth for mankind except for the Quran. The sons of Adam have no Messenger and Intercessor but Muhammad, the Chosen One, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Endeavour, therefore, to cultivate

true love for this Prophet of glory and majesty, and do not give precedence to anyone over him, so that in heaven you may be counted as those who have attained salvation.”

May Allah help us to be so. Ameen.

We will read Eidul Adha prayer incha Allah on Sunday at 9:30am here in the mosque. After the sermon incha Allah we will partake of lunch together. So, try to be on time. May Allah help us to be among those who strive to put His Teachings into practice. Ameen