

Friday Sermon: Essence of Recognizing Allah

14th March 2014

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih said that few weeks ago he had given Friday sermons on reformation of practices in which he had explained how the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) had presented God to us and what are the ways and means of attaining Divine knowledge and Divine love and nearness that the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) taught us. The signs and miracles granted to the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) were also mentioned in early sermons. All these matters should be tried and understood in light of the words of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) for enhancement of our faith and our practice.

Today Hazrat Khalifatul Masih presented some extracts from the writings and pronouncements of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) regarding Divine knowledge, or knowledge of God. His writings on this subject cover hundreds of pages but today just a few examples were presented as regards his guidance on Divine knowledge. Prophets of God and saints have a distinct station in Divine knowledge, but the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) explained what should be the standard of an ordinary Muslim in this respect.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that man is dependent on two things to reach God. Firstly, avoid evil and secondly, do acts of virtue. Merely shunning evil is nothing special. The fact is that ever since man has been created he has both the capacities in his nature. On the one hand selfish passions incline him to sin and on the other hand the fire of Divine love which is latent in his nature burns away the rubbish of sin just as physical fire burns away physical rubbish. However, the flaring of the spiritual fire which burns away sin is reliant on Divine knowledge because love and adoration of something is associated with its knowledge. If you are not aware of the beauty and the qualities of something you cannot adore that thing. Thus, knowledge of the sublime beauty and attributes of God the Most High, the Most Glorious generates the fire of His love and His love burns away sins. However, the way of God is that this knowledge is granted to ordinary people through Prophets of God and people attain light from their light by following them, they attain whatever has been granted to the Prophets.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) also said that he had studied all religions in depth and had analysed them and it was after this that he had concluded that at this time it is only Islam which can create real knowledge of God in every age. This is because this is the only religion with a living Prophet, a living teaching. In the love and subordination of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) one can be the recipient of Word of God and doors of Divine light can be opened to one.

In explaining that there is a connection between the reality of Islam and Divine knowledge, the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that God has declared knowledge as the source to attain the reality of Islam. There are many other sources of attaining the reality of Islam, for example fasting and observance of Salat, prayer and all Divine commandments which number more than six hundred. However, knowledge of God's greatness and knowledge of God's Unity/Oneness is reliant on knowledge of God's signs and knowledge of His attributes and these are the sources to recognise God as is His right to be recognised. How can a person who is negligent and devoid of Divine knowledge be enabled to offer Salat or fast or pray or give charity. All these aspects are dependent on Divine knowledge and all other sources are borne of it. Divine knowledge is initiated through the Divine quality of Rahmaniyyat (quality of being Gracious) and not by virtue of any action or any prayer or any beneficence. It is found merely through being obedient. Later, this knowledge is enhanced and burnished by good works and beauty of faith, ultimately reaching a stage where God speaks to man illuminates his heart with the light of the faith called Islam.

As regards Divine knowledge, deliverance from sin, enablement of virtue and level of prayer the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that the truth is that a person cannot really rid of sin or truly attain love of God or fear Him as He ought to be feared unless he is given knowledge through God's grace and is granted strength from Him. It is most evident that all kinds of fear and love are borne of knowledge. Sentiments of love, fear and repulsion from anything in the world are generated in man after he has gained knowledge. It is true that knowledge cannot be attained without God's grace and it cannot be beneficial without His grace. When knowledge is gained through God's grace, it opens a door of recognition of truth and seeking of truth and remains open for frequent grace of God. In short, knowledge is gained through God's grace and also remains through His grace. God's grace makes knowledge very pure and bright and removes covers [between Divine and human] and removes the dust of the self that incites to evil, it grants strength and life to the soul and releases the self from the prison of evil and purifies it from the impurity of bad wishes and takes it out of the tumultuous flood of selfish desires. It is then that a change comes about in man and he is naturally disinclined to evil and the first thing that he is drawn to after God's grace, is prayer! Do not imagine that you pray every day and offer Salat which is also a Prayer, because the prayer that one is enabled to make through God's grace and after gaining knowledge has a unique tenor and condition. It annihilates; it is a fire that melts, it is a magnetic pull that draws God's mercy, it is a death that ultimately brings life, it is a tumultuous flood which ultimately turns into a vessel and everything that has gone wrong is fixed with it and every toxin ultimately becomes an antidote through it.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) explained why man lowers himself towards sin so much. He said the audacity to commit sin stems from hearts devoid of fear of God. How can fear of God be generated? For this Divine knowledge is required, the greater one's Divine knowledge the more one will fear God. Divine knowledge is central and it results in fear of God. When man has knowledge of something, he even fears and avoids tiny insects like the flea and mosquito etc. Then what is the reason that man is so audacious to go against the commandment of God, Who is All-Powerful, All-Knowing and All-Seeing and Master of the heaven and the earth! If one thinks about it one realises that this is because man has no knowledge. Many verbally profess the existence of God but a little probing shows them to be atheistic. When they are engaged in worldly matters they completely forget God's greatness and His wrath. This is why it is very important that you should seek knowledge from God through prayer. Perfect belief cannot be attained without it in any way. It can be attained when one has the knowledge that there is death in disassociation from God. While one should pray to be protected against sin one should never let go of planning [regarding this] and should give up all gatherings and assemblies which promote sin and pray and be very aware that one can never be free from the tribulations that are destined for man without God's help.

Huzoor remarked that there are few assemblies these days which do not incline towards sin, be it TV or the internet or Facebook. In USA recently 600,000 Facebook accounts had to be closed because they had caused extreme anxiety.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) wrote: Remember, immunity to sin is only possible when man comes to have absolute faith in God. Indeed, the chief object of human life is none other than deliverance from the clutches of sin. Look, how a child is tempted to catch a snake for it fascinates him. He may even touch it. But a sensible person who knows the snake will bite and kill shall never dare touch it. He will not even enter a house in which he knows there is a snake. Likewise when one knows that poison kills, he will never be foolhardy enough to taste it. In the same manner, one cannot avoid sin unless one believes it to be a deadly poison. This kind of conviction is not possible without true understanding and knowledge. Why then does man commit sin with audacity, despite having faith in God and considering sin a sin. The only possible explanation is that he does not possess the knowledge and perception which destroys the disposition to sin. Inability to attain this state would be tantamount to admitting that, God forbid, Islam is devoid of its paramount quality. But I reiterate that such is not the case. It is through Islam alone that this objective can be attained to its highest degree, and the only way to it is through converse and communion with God, for this creates complete faith in

the Creator, and thus alone do we come to know that God detests sin and punishes it. Sin is poison: it is venial at first, then becomes deadly and ultimately leads to disbelief.’ Lecture Ludhiana, pp. 55-56)

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said about the significance of knowledge in respect of avoiding sin that knowledge is something that prevents man from sinning. Just as a man who knows that arsenic kills snakes and lions, does not go near it. Similarly, if man has knowledge he does not go near sin. This is why it is important to enhance/develop knowledge and this happens with prayer. Salat is Prayer. The more one adorns one’s Salat the freer one is from sin. Knowledge cannot be attained by verbally professing something. Many a great sage left God because they had created objects in their sight and they did not pay heed to prayer. Created objects validate the existence of a Designer, a Maker, but do not prove that indeed He exists. ‘Should exist’ and ‘does exist’ are two separate matters. Knowledge of ‘does exist’ cannot be found anywhere apart from in prayer. Those who only address this matter intellectually cannot attain the knowledge that He ‘does exist’. This is what is meant by **‘Eyes cannot reach Him...’** (6:104) that He cannot be recognised merely through intellect. On the contrary He can be recognised through the sources that He Himself has given. In this regard there is no other prayer like: **‘Guide us in the right path - the path of those on whom Thy hast bestowed Thy blessings...’** (1: 6-7)

Regarding true repentance, the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said one who is resolute in his search of God finds Him. Not only does he find God but he also sees Him. A lot of trouble and expense is incurred in attaining worldly knowledge. This kind of knowledge indicates the principles to attain spiritual knowledge. The way for a beginner of spirituality is to first gain awareness of God and then [understand] His attributes. This awareness should reach the stage of belief. He will then find out about the Being of God and His perfect attributes and his soul will cry out that he has indeed found God most satisfactorily. When man accepts the existence of God to the degree of belief, man feels as if he has seen God and is aware of God’s attributes, this is when a repulsion to sin is generated and just as one was inclined towards sin before, one withdraws from it and detests it and this is what repentance is!

Elucidating the verses **‘Guide us in the right path - the path of those on whom Thy hast bestowed Thy blessings...’** (1: 6-7) the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) wrote that this is the prayer taught to recite in the obligatory Five Prayers. Why then should someone from the Ummah be denied this blessing? Is the blessing given to Prophets of God which is mentioned in Surah Al Fatihah currency? Obviously the blessing granted to Prophets (peace be on them) was the privilege of Divine dialogue and Divine Word through which their insight reached the level of certainty of knowledge and the splendour of [Divine] dialogue was followed by seeing [Divine]. Thus what else does the prayer show us but the path so that we too may be recipients of the blessing ... O God, bestow on us too the honour of dialogue. Many ignorant say that this prayer signifies O God strengthen our faith and enable us to do good works and make us do what pleases You. But these foolish people do not realise that strengthening of faith or doing of good works or doing things that please God are all consequences of perfect knowledge. A heart that has not received any share of knowledge of Allah the Exalted is a heart also deprived of strong faith and good works. Fear of God is instilled in hearts with knowledge alone and it is with knowledge that love of Allah the Exalted surges in hearts. Just as it is also seen in the world that love and fear of anything is owing to its knowledge! If a lion stands by you in darkness and you do not know if it is a lion rather you think it is a goat, you will have no fear. However, when you will come to know that it is a lion you will run away in fright. Similarly if you think that a diamond lying in the forest worth hundreds of thousands is only a stone you will have no care for it. But if you find out that it is a diamond of glory and magnificence you will love it excitedly and will try your best to acquire it. This shows that all fear and all love is dependent on knowledge. Man will not put his hand in a hole if he knows that inside the hole is a poisonous snake and he will also not leave a house about which he comes to know that a large treasure is buried underneath it. Since fear and love are completely reliant on knowledge, therefore man can only completely turn to God Almighty when he has knowledge of God. Firstly to be informed of His existence and then have His attributes and perfect strengths be evident! How can this kind of knowledge be gained without someone having

the honour of dialogue with God and the belief by virtue of Divine revelations that God is the Knower of the unseen and has All-Powerful and does as He please! Thus the real blessing (on which strength of belief and good works are dependant) is Divine dialogue and being spoken to by God through which firstly God is found and then one is made cognisant of His powers and in accordance with this cognisance man witnesses God's powers with his own eyes. This is the blessing which was granted to the Prophets (peace be on them) and then this Ummah was commanded 'seek this blessing from Me, I will grant it to you too'. Thus whoever's heart has the longing to seek this blessing will doubtlessly be given this blessing!

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said about doing good and shunning evil that all goodness is dependent on recognising God and there is only one thing that stops selfish passions and satanic actions and that is perfect knowledge of God. It tells us that there is a God Who is All-Powerful and is Severe in reckoning. This is the only formula which falls like scorching lightening on man's refractory life. Until man moves from the stages of 'belief in Allah' to 'knowledge of Allah' it is not possible for him to avoid sin. A truth which we cannot deny is that we cannot be saved from sins without knowledge of God and belief in His attributes. It is our everyday experience that man does not go near what he fears. For example with the knowledge that snake bite can be fatal which wise person would let alone put his hand in snake's mouth, even want to go near a stick with which a poisonous snake has been killed just in case it's residue poison remains on the stick. If someone finds out that there is a lion in such and such jungle he would not want to travel through it or at least not go there on his own. Children too have the sense to be frightened of something about which they have been convinced to be dangerous.

Unless knowledge of God and conviction of the toxins of sin is instilled in man, no other way, be it suicide or sacrificial blood, can bring salvation and cannot kill life of sin. Most certainly be sure that flood of sins and river of selfish passions cannot stop unless a resplendent belief is attained that yes, there is a God and His force befalls each disobedient person like lightening. Unless this is instilled man cannot avoid sin. If someone says that they believe in God and also believe that He punishes sinners but sin does not leave them. I will say in response that this is a lie and a delusion of nafs (self). There is mutual enmity between true faith, true belief and sin. Where there is true knowledge and luminous belief in God, it is not possible for sin to remain there!

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that one should move swiftly towards recognising God. One who recognises God can enjoy God and prayer of one who does not move towards God with truthfulness is not fully accepted and some part or the other of darkness remains with him. If you move a little towards God Almighty, He will move more towards you but it is essential that you make the first move. It is a useless idea that one should expect something from God without making any move. It is always the way of Allah that first man takes an action and then God Almighty responds with an action. If a man shuts all the doors of his house, shutting of doors will be his action. The action of God Almighty in response will be that the man's house will be filled with darkness...

Some people complain that they did good, offered Salat, fasted, gave alms and charity and made spiritual endeavour but they did not attain anything. Such people are inherently miserable and they do not believe in the Divine quality of Rububiyyat (quality of nurturing) and their good deeds were not done for God Almighty. If something is done for the sake of God Almighty it is not possible for it to go wasted and for God Almighty to not reward it in this life. This is why many people remain embroiled in suspicions and they are not even sure if God Almighty exists or not. Man understands that a sown garment will definitely have a sewer and even if man finds a clock that tells time in a jungle he will be sure that a clockmaker had made it. Observe the works of God Almighty how many kinds of timekeeping He has created and what wonders of nature there are! On one hand are intellectual proofs of His existence and on the other hand are signs which convince man that there is a God of magnificent powers. He first reveals His will to His chosen ones and this is the weighty matter that Prophets bring which is called prophecy!

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) wrote that the root of faith is recognition of God and knowledge of Divine blessings while its branches are good works and its flowers are high morals while its fruits are spiritual blessings and most exquisite love which develops between God and His servant. And to derive benefit from this fruit is a consequence of spiritual sanctity and purity...Excellence in love is generated by excellent knowledge and Divine love surges by virtue of knowledge and when personal love [of God] is instilled, is the first day of new birth and that moment is the first moment of a new universe!

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said God is a pearl and after attaining His knowledge man looks at material things with such disdain and disregard as if merely looking at them is also a coercion for him. Thus seek knowledge of God Almighty and move onwards towards Him alone for therein is success.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said: I say most truthfully that man's righteousness, belief, worship and purity all come from the heavens. And this is dependent on the grace of God Almighty. If He so wills He may keep it or He may remove it.

True knowledge is when man considers himself as nothing and lowly and seeks God Almighty's grace by bowing humbly on the Divine threshold. When he seeks that light of knowledge which burns away selfish passions and creates an inner light, strength and energy for virtues. If he partakes of God's grace and at any given time he attains some sort of enlightenment and conviction of heart he should not feel arrogant and proud about it. On the contrary his humbleness and humility should further increase because the more he considers himself as nothing, the greater conditions and lights will descend on him from God Almighty which will give him luminosity and strength. If man keeps this creed then it is hoped that with the grace of Allah the Exalted his moral condition will become very good. It is arrogance to consider one to be someone in this world and this is very telling. Man ends up cursing others and considering them contemptible.

I say these matters repetitively because God Almighty has willed to make this community with the objective to re-establish true knowledge which is lost from the world and true righteousness and purity which cannot be found in the world!

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said: Because sin and wickedness has vastly increased in the world in the current times and paths of recognising God cannot be seen, Allah the Exalted established this movement and sent me with His grace and favour alone so that I may inform the negligent and the unaware about Allah the Exalted. Not only should I inform them about God but I may also show God Almighty to those who come to this way with honesty, patience and sincerity. This is why God Almighty addressed me and said: 'You are from Me and I am from you.'

Huzoor said this was the objective for which the advent of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) took place; to instil knowledge of God in us in a manner as if we are seeing God. May we do everything in light of love and fear of God and may we have such Divine knowledge instilled in us which burns away all our sins and we fulfil the objective of the Promised Messiah's advent. May God enable us to put all this in practice and understand its spirit!

Next Huzoor announced that he would lead a funeral Prayer after Jummah. Abdul Subhan Mannan Din Sahib passed away yesterday at the age of 72. He was one of the early Ahmadis in the UK and came here in 1945. He served in the Amanat department at Jalsa Salana for thirty years. He was a cousin of Naseer Din Sahib.