

Friday Sermon: Learn the best ways of worship and sacrifice

March 29th, 2013

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih delivered today's Friday sermon from newly built Baitur Rahman mosque in Valencia, Spain. He recited the following Quranic verses at the start:

'And remember the time when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House, praying, 'Our Lord, accept *this* from us; for Thou art All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

'Our Lord, make us submissive to Thee and *make* of our offspring a people submissive to Thee. And show us our ways of worship, and turn to us with mercy; for Thou art Oft-Returning with compassion and Merciful.' (2:128 – 129)

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih said all praise belongs to Allah that we have been enabled to build a second mosque in Spain. He added that some seven years ago he had stressed the importance of another mosque in Spain at Basharat Mosque, Pedroadbad. It was decided at the time that the next mosque would be built at Valencia. Although the number of Ahmadis in the area are about 130 but the significance of building the second mosque in Spain here is due to the historical significance of the place. Ahmadiyya Jama'at has been enabled to build this mosque in Spain after a gap of 30 years. In this time many Muslims have come to Spain and they have built mosques. These avenues were opened for them by the construction of Basharat Mosque. Indeed, Jama'at Ahmadiyya was enabled to raise a mosque in Spain after 700 years. The current number of Muslims in Spain is around 1 million and it is estimated that by 2030 there will be 80% increase and the Muslim population can reach 2 million. 30 years ago there were merely a few thousand Muslims in Spain. Most of the Muslims in Spain are of North African origin and it can also be said that centuries old Muslim communities of Spain who had been forcefully converted to Christianity but who covertly kept their faith have reverted back to Islam. With the grace of God there are many Muslims in Spain and this increase was initiated through Ahmadiyya Jama'at. However, true Islam will only be seen in Spain when the servants of the Muhammadan Messiah will comprehend their own significance and will be drawn to spread the message to every person in the land. Some may say that there are too few Ahmadis here, how could they take the message to everyone? However, if one is resolved and determined and then make an effort, it can be done. Planning has always been done in this regard but was not put into practice. The planning given by the centre or Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih or indeed, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) before him was not implemented.

The location of Basharat Mosque is close to motorway along the route that leads to Cordoba. If a strategy was made, our Jama'at could have been introduced from there. Some other Jama'ats, though few in number, have disseminated our message to a vast number of people through leaflets. Many outside people come to see Basharat Mosque. Had work been carried out with fervour and zeal, introductions could have been made. If the other Muslim sects can bring back 20,000 'early Spanish Muslims' to Islam, how could our Tabligh, which is comprised of true Islam, not attain this? Indeed, we opened the avenues for this but did not use the avenues with due zeal and fervour, while others took advantage of them. Jama'at office-

holders on every level in Spain should appreciate their responsibility, plan targets and try and attain them.

The true picture of Islam that we present needs to be propagated in the world today. People from early Spanish Muslim communities need to be made aware that now is that time to reciprocate the cruelty perpetrated with their forefathers. However, this reciprocation is not to be done with force, because Islam teaches: **‘There should be no compulsion in religion...’** (2:257) And God states that the enmity of any people should not incite you to act with injustice and He commands: **‘...Be *always* just, that is nearer to righteousness...’** (5:9) Righteousness /Taqwa alone takes one close to God. Also, there is no question of enmity here; these people are countrymen and it to them that the message of love and peace needs to be taken. We need to tell them to first adopt the beautiful teaching of Islam and then recompense for the past by winning over hearts through this beautiful teaching. Hearts that were forcibly made to associate partner with God should be inculcated with love of Oneness of God and Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) as His Messenger. Love of the God Whose attribute of mercy overrides all His other attributes and love of the Messenger who is Rahmatullih A’lameen (Mercy for all the Worlds). These old Muslim communities should be searched and love of the true religion should be reignited in them and they should be transformed into missionaries of faith.

The reason Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih chose Valencia as the location of this mosque is because Spanish history tells us that when the cruel king and queen forcibly converted Muslims to Christianity, Valencia was an area where in spite of the persecution Arabic continued to be spoken. Muslims in Valencia continued with their worship of God and maintained their teaching whereas other Spanish Muslims of the time did not openly assert their faith. When the king decided to expel Muslims from Spain in 1600s, Muslims of Valencia were the first to be banished because they tried to practice their faith. Spanish Muslims of the time were financially weak and they had been gradually expelled from large cities and were scattered around. Subsequently different rulers ruled Spain. Italian forces perpetrated cruelty and later expelled some adult Muslims and sent their children to Christian families who brought them up as servants and slaves. These children were forbidden to worship One God and were forced to adhere to the concept of Trinity. Today it is our task to once again make them worshippers of One God. We also need to take this message to others, out of milk of human kindness and wish for them what we wish for ourselves. Efforts towards this should be made in particular in this area because here Islam was upheld till the end. Here Muslims were not expelled seven centuries ago; rather the expulsion took place here four centuries ago.

There is no doubt though that after centuries of ruling Spain, the decline and downfall of Muslims came about because of their own greed and conspiracies. Neither the token Khalifa nor the King honoured his responsibilities and the dignitaries acted similarly. Every person had created his own faction and this resulted in the way all self-centred matters end. Now that the Khilafat of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) is in operation, it is the task of its followers to re-establish the lost glory and once again introduce these people to the creed of: ‘There is none worthy of worship save Allah and Muhammad is His servant His messenger.’ God has enabled us to build a mosque in this area and we found a most suitable site for this purpose. The mosque is centrally located and is visible from the motorway. This is a respectable area and we have decent neighbours which is a grace of God. We should not

merely feel happy that we have built a beautiful mosque in another Spanish city. Self-reflection should be observed, standards of worship should be observed and responsibilities should be observed.

The Quranic verses recited at the start of the sermon illustrate a beautiful manner in which Hadhrat Ibrahim and Hadhrat Ishmael (peace be on them both) have taught us to fulfil the responsibilities after building house of God. We need to reflect on this matter so that in our generations to come people are born who will honour the dues of God. The verses comprise of the prayer Hadhrat Ibrahim (on whom be peace) made while building walls of the Ka'ba. After years of sacrifices by the father, his son and his wife they did not pray in the vein go: O' God we have been sacrificing in Your way for so long following Your commandments, it is our due that You accept every sacrifice of ours and create ease for us. It is not the practice of Ahmadiyya Jama'at but other Muslims do tend to proudly announce every little sacrifice. Yet, the model that God has illustrated through this Prophet of His is that the son was prepared to be sacrificed and the father was prepared to sacrifice his son who was born to him in old age. Also he left his wife and son in wilderness and eventually the time came when this sacrifice of his wife and son was accepted and they were provided for. When the Ka'ba was being built these two individuals (Hadhrat Ibrahim and his son Hadhrat Ishmael) declared that their objective was to populate House of God, indeed populate it with believers who would honour the dues of worship of God and take His worship to its highest standard. These people were building House of God with God's commandment and their humility and love of God was such that they supplicated Him to accept their sacrifice. This is the lesson of sacrifice; to make one's sacrifice and then turn to God in utter humility and pray to Him to accept the sacrifice that has been made. It is this Ibrahimic and Ishmaelic outlook and prayer that draws our attention that we are the followers of one who, borne of his perfect devotion and ardent love for the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), was given the title of Ibrahim of this age by God. Who renovated the walls of faith and who polished the beauty of Islam and presented it to the world in all its glory so much so that non-Muslims say if this is Islam then we take our words back that we said against Islam.

Today the objectives of the Ka'ba are being fulfilled through this Ibrahim and the light of the beautiful teaching of Islam is being made evident to the world. Our each mosque around the world is witness to fulfil these very objectives and this mosque that has been named Baitur Rahman is also an expression of attaining these objectives. While this mosque is drawing our attention to turn with humility towards our objectives, it also draws attention to fulfil our pledge and our responsibilities. Then alone will we be able to achieve our objective.

We declare: 'O Muhammadan Messiah, true and ardent devotee of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), we have pledged you that we will give precedence to faith over worldly matters and will spread Tawheed (Oneness of God). Building of this mosque will draw the world's attention to Islam and avenues of Tabligh will open. Fulfilling their requirements and by utilising all our capacities, our foremost obligation will be to establish Tawheed and to bring the people of the country under the banner of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). O God, O All-Hearing, All-Knowing God, listen to our prayers and enable us to fulfil our obligations. Make this mosque source of attaining those objectives which are the objective of building Your house. You are All-Knowing, You know our weaknesses, accept our prayer and overlook our shortcomings and make us fulfil our

objectives.’ Indeed, beauty and scale of a mosque can only avail when we will fulfil our dues. When we will pay dues of worship of God as well as dues of mankind so that a practical example of the teachings of Islam is also evident and people are drawn to it.

During the hundreds of years of Muslim rule in Spain many beautiful mosques were built. For example, the mosque in Cordoba, its beauty is astonishing and there are many other grand mosques which were built wherever Muslims went, there is one in Granada. However, when the spirit of the true teaching of Islam escaped those who inhabited these mosques, then these structures where once Oneness of God was extolled were either demolished or they were converted into churches. One is astonished to see the beauty and durability of the Cordoba Mosque which remains unchanged after centuries, but unfortunately it has been converted into a church. When the Muslims lost the spirit of their faith the mosques went to others. The main aspect is not the edifice of the mosque; the main aspect is the spirit of faith of those who come to the mosque. Certainly, we have to maintain the spirit of this mosque with hard work and with prayers so that God may continue to raise people among us who generate this spirit so that it remains a centre of Tawheed till the Day of Judgement.

In the second verse recited at the start, the noble Prophets did not limit the prayers to themselves, in fact they extended it to their offspring and generations to follow. This indeed is the method of prayer and the mind-set and concern of those who wish to be successful generation after generation. With this approach InshaAllah we will be successful and with our prayer that may our offspring also adhere to piety we can attain the objective of this house of God. Our sacrifices will be accepted when we will continue to have people who pay the dues of God as well as the dues of humanity. We need to pray to God, as the Prophets did, ‘**And show us our ways of worship**’. These ways of worship and sacrifice are understood through God’s guidance. The insight to understand them in-depth is fulfilled by God’s grace. Salat is indeed a form of worship of God. But there are those worshippers about whom God states that their Salat will rebound on them and will be a source of their destruction. One should try and offer Salat that is accepted by God through His grace. In such instance everything which is done for His cause becomes a form of worship, even if it is service to humanity.

We should pray for our offspring with great angst. We pledge in our meetings that we will be ever ready to make every sacrifice. We need to also instil this spirit in our next generation. However, we should realise that with time the nature of sacrifice changes. When the early Muslims came to Spain and spread all over it, they fought Jihad of the sword. However, the sacrifice of the time is Jihad of Tabligh, it is financial giving for the building of mosque. The nature of sacrifice changes with circumstances. Hadhrat Ibrahim (on whom be peace) prayed to God to be taught ways of sacrifice and through this God gave us guidance in principle that sacrifice should be given in accordance with the situation. Piety should be carried out to attain the pleasure of God. This is why the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) cited the greatest virtue to some as offering Tahajjud and to others to offer Jihad. Thus, the virtue/piety that we lack in is the greatest virtue/piety for us and that alone is the apt way of worship for us and that alone is the apt sacrifice for us. This prayer lays a lot of stress on removing any shortcomings of our own and those of our offspring. It should always be remembered that we can neither attain high standards of worship merely through our efforts nor of sacrifice. This is why the prayer entreats: ‘**and turn to us with mercy...**’ so that sacrifice can lead to further sacrifice and worship becomes the focal point of our thoughts.

Fortunate are those who will follow this way and will come in the refuge of God from shortcomings and transgressions and will also pray in this vein for their offspring and inculcate it in them. We should draw attention to paying the dues of humanity and abandon pride and conceit. We should shun indolence in offering Salat and whichever Salat appears difficult to us, we should offer it with that much care and attention. If offering congregational Salat is our weakness, we should address that. If we do not honour the dues of our parents we should do so, if we do not fulfil the rights of siblings, we should pay attention to that. If we do not pay the dues of our neighbours we should address that and attract them to Ahmadiyyat, true Islam. If we practice all the virtues then alone we can truly ask God to accept our repentance and have mercy on us. Certainly we should treat others with mercy if we wish God to show mercy to us.

When a believer is truly connected to mosque, new doors of piety are opened up for him and he receives forgiveness. Today this mosque which has been granted to us by God should draw our attention to seek these measures. Those who live in the area have to populate this mosque as well as populate it with their children, InshaAllah. May God grant all those blessings that are associated with mosque and may He accept repentance and forgive shortcomings! Today, we need to do Jihad of the self. Spreading the message of Islam is also Jihad and we need to pay attention to it. We cannot succeed without God's help. God's grace comes by fulfilling the dues of His worship. We will attain His grace by observing our Salat and by participating in Jihad of the self and Jihad of spreading message of God. In today's society man is in need of this Jihad most of all. This Jihad alone will save us from the ills of society and make us attain God's grace and keep us and our offspring free of the foulness of the world. Adorn this mosque with sincere worship. May God make this mosque fulfil the objectives and may we fulfil our responsibilities. A mosque funded by Egypt and Saudi Arabia has already been built in this province. What it lacks due to not accepting the Muhammad Messiah can only be realised by an Ahmadi mosque. This fact should make each Ahmadi that much more mindful about the increased responsibility. May God enable you to fulfil it!

As regards facts and figures of this mosque, it is built on a 1,350 cubic feet plot at a cost of 1.2 million Euros of which Spanish Jama'at contribution is small. If there are financial constraints, promises should still be honoured, but another way to contribute is to participate in Tabligh ventures. The capacity of the hall is given as 250, but the halls are quite large. Other facilities include seven offices, a library, book shop and a good kitchen, a store and a technical room. The building is air-conditioned. The site had an existing residence but it has been extended by three rooms. A newspaper has reported that the largest place of worship of the province has become a reality. However, it will become a reality when each one of us will pay its dues. Another positive thing mentioned in the newspaper was that owing to their devotion to God, Ahmadis are against anyone who kills in the name of God. The mosque also has two multi-functional halls. May this mosque present the true picture of Islam to people of this area and province and may each Ahmadi fulfil his responsibilities!

Most of the help in construction of the mosque came from the centre. Technical help was also provided by the centre. Our elder engineer Chaudhry Ijaz sahib organised many jobs and made detailed analysis. He brought cost down where it was excessive but without compromising standards. He is not very well and receives weekly dialysis treatment but he worked hard, may God reward him and grant him good health so that he may further serve the Jama'at.