

Friday Sermon: The Exemplary Ahmadiyya Jama'at

May 23rd, 2014

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih recited the following Quranic verses at the start of his Friday sermon today:

'And no soul can die except by Allah's leave — a decree with a fixed term. And whoever desires the reward of the present world, We will give him thereof; and whoever desires the reward of the life to come, We will give him thereof; and We will surely reward the grateful.

And many a Prophet there has been beside whom fought a large number of godly people. They slackened not for aught that befell them in the way of Allah, nor did they weaken, nor did they humiliate themselves *before the enemy*. And Allah loves the steadfast.

And they uttered not a word except that they said: 'Our Lord, forgive us our errors and our excesses in our conduct, and make firm our steps and help us against the disbelieving people.'

So Allah gave them the reward of this world, as also an excellent reward of the next; and Allah loves those who do good.' (Surah Ale Imran, verses 146-149)

'Think not of those, who have been slain in the cause of Allah, as dead. Nay, they are living, in the presence of their Lord, being well provided,

Jubilant because of that which Allah has given them of His bounty; and rejoicing for those who have not yet joined them from behind them, because on them *shall come* no fear, nor shall they grieve.

They rejoice at the favour of Allah and *His* bounty, and *at the fact* that Allah suffers not the reward of the believers to be lost.' (Surah Ale Imran, verses 170-172)

It is great grace and favour of God on the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) that He has given it people who understand the spirit of their pledges and understand the spirit of sacrifice and not only do they understand the spirit of sacrifice but they also set models of it of which many examples can be found in this age. If it is a matter of financial sacrifice, it is the Ahmadis who demonstrate it, if sacrifice of time is demanded, the Ahmadiyya Jama'at present excellent models of it. Examples of sacrifice of honour can be seen among Ahmadis, they dedicate their lives to spread the message of Islam and if a true model of sacrifice of life is to be seen, the history of Ahmadiyya Jama'at has set its seal on it. In short, any sacrifice which is in accordance with the commandment of God and is for God, is given by Ahmadiyya Jama'at.

Today God has bestowed a community to the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) a large majority of which understands the spirit of sacrifice of property, life, time and honour and is also ready to give sacrifice. However, sometimes, due to lack of knowledge or owing to humanness, some will say something which is against the dignity of a true believer and can adversely affect those who have not had the requisite moral training. Some people even write to Huzoor that the period of trials is getting too long. If the period of trails is long, may God soon provide ease, communities of Prophets and true

believers believe in the provisions provided through God's help. However, it is against the dignity of a believer to express reliance on worldly ways and means for support.

For example someone wrote to Huzoor that the persecution of the Jama'at in Pakistan should be broadcast through a large portion of MTA schedule and other means should also be utilised for raising the voice against persecution in the world. The letter gave the impression that perhaps we should also adopt ways of creating noise in a worldly way and make protestations to make the governments who are against us take note and pay attention towards human rights and this period of trials be over. He also wrote that his Shia friend has told him that if what is happening to Ahmadis was happening to Shias, they would take out rallies and demonstrations and raise a clamour of protestations in the world at every minor persecution. He said that Ahmadis do not protest properly and this is why their period of trial is so long.

The first thing to remember here is that when we claim to be a Divine community we should be mindful that such communities do not believe in relying on worldly governments and protestations. There is no hand of any worldly help in the progress of Divine communities. Moreover, worldly help is never unconditional, it is never offered without any clause to capitulate before whoever is offering help and true believers cannot abide by this. They seek help from God and turn to Him alone. When we seek God's help in times of trials, He opens further avenues of progress and advancement for us. Today, Ahmadis spread all over the world, in 204 countries, are witness to the fact that our trails are opening up new avenues of success for the Jama'at and we are traversing greater heights. We should not be perturbed that our period of trial in one country is long. What should be borne in mind is how far-reaching are the blessings of God for the Jama'at. As far as utilising worldly means to help our cause, indeed, this should be done and with the grace of God, we utilise such means within limits. We make the world aware of the persecution and tell them that if they do not join in putting an end to the persecution, it will simply spread. Yet, we neither rely on any government nor on any human rights organisation, but only on God. This is the subject which Huzoor had expounded in his few previous Friday sermons that believers should always look only to God for all their outcomes.

Ways adopted by worldly people are violent rallies and protestations and riots, they respond to persecution with oppression because they have not been given Divine promises that the ultimate triumph will be theirs. Whereas we have been promised that in spite of state-sponsored persecution God has decreed that we will be given those blessings which are bestowed upon true believers through God's special grace. We have been promised that the sacrifices given will never go to waste and the ultimate triumph will be ours. The greatest formula for this triumph is of course prayer. The more we will turn to prayers and the more we will devote ourselves to our Lord, the sooner He will show extraordinary signs in our favour. Indeed, our thinking is very different to the thinking of worldly people. We have taken the Bai'at of that Imam of the age to whom God promised triumphs, which we are witnessing. As far as the Shia community or others are concerned, Huzoor said he cannot see they are getting their rights by adopting worldly means of protestations, all that is happening is that persecution is being responded with oppression, which we will never do.

By way of example of the stance of worldly people Huzoor said a newspaper here published an article saying that Muslims are not loyal to this country and they should be expelled/deported. Our press section responded to this and told them that this was incorrect and Islam teaches being loyal to the law of the land and to love ones' country. They said in response that this was not what how other Muslims behaved and asked us to write something advisory to them. We agreed to write something if they were prepared to print it and sent them a statement written in line with their requirements. The editor or the board declined to publish it on the pretext that they had received some other material that had to be printed although the real reason was that they did not have the courage to publish it. They did not want to displease other Muslim sects who are against Ahmadis as they fear them because of the harsh stance of some Muslims.

Huzoor said that he often tells their leaders and the press that in order to establish peace justice has to be maintained and double standards dropped. Some of them admit that although they will not publicly say so but they have vested interests in the agendas that they pursue. How can we rely on those who are duplicitous! The newspaper was not prepared to publish something expressing love of one's country. Those who suggest to us that we should seek help from worldly ways and means should ponder how could we look to these people and seek their support. If every Ahmadi understands the reality of reliance and trust in God and begins to put it in practice, the persecution against Ahmadis, wherever in the world it may be, will be blown away by prayers alone. However, the condition is that prayers are made with the requisites of prayers! Indeed, in Pakistan and some other countries Ahmadis are treated very badly, in places it is done under the guise of law. However, this did not start a few decades ago. In fact this persecution has been going on since the time the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) made his claim and established the Jama'at. There was a time when it was felt that he may have to migrate from his ancestral village of Qadian which had been owned by his family for ages.

When we look further back in history we find that the entire life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) was a period of enmity shown by his opponents. What sort of life did his beloved wife [Khadija] who was a very wealthy business woman and one of the riches people of Makkah spend after becoming a Muslim! She was made homeless in her old age and spent a long time in a valley in exile where there was lack of food and basic provisions and the time spent there caused her eventual passing away. This is what she endured for Islam in the hope that the sacrifices carried Divine promises. The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him) also endured severe harassment and persecution. The thirteen years of his Makkan life were spent in constant discrimination which he faced with great courage and valour. When he was asked to pray against someone he would pray for their guidance and when he was pelted with stones and ended up soaked in blood due to injuries on a day he called the worst day of his life, God asked if his enemies should be destroyed, he asked for them to be spared just in case in future people are born among them who accept Islam. After migration to Medina wars started which entail a long tale of attacks and patience and steadfastness. Apart from the excellent models of the Holy Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allah be on him) his Companions also showed amazing fortitude because they had set their sights on Divine promises.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) was to come as a ظل (zil) a shadow, a reflection of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) which he did, therefore he told his followers that he and his community was to face persecution. He did not say that his way was a bed of roses but said that it was a very hard and difficult way.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih said he also says to new Ahmadis that life in Ahmadiyyat is not a bed of roses. Huzoor said recently he had a session with new Ahmadis where he put this question to a new Ahmadi who hails from Pakistan. He replied that he had taken Bai'at after giving it due consideration and was ready to endure every hardship. Women have left families but have not abandoned faith. This is because they have had the insight into giving precedence to faith over worldly matters. They realise that life and death is in God's hands and fortunate are those who show steadfastness and are the recipients of God's blessings in this world and the Hereafter. These are not mere words; history of the Jama'at is filled with such stories of sacrifice some of which are amazing. This is because the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) had said at the very beginning that this is how things will be and had also said do not let your faith be compromised in the least after witnessing and enduring such situations and remember that God rewards steadfastness in this world and in the Hereafter.

The verses recited at the beginning of the sermon are also on this subject. Everyone faces life and death. It is expounded that life and death is with God's decree and death in the name of God carries glad-tiding of great reward. When Khalid bin Waleed, a great warrior of early Islam was on his death bed a friend went to see him. Khalid bin Waleed started weeping intensely. The visitor thought this was due to fear of death, so he said, Khalid, you fought the enemy with such courage why do you weep now out of fear of death? He asked the person to uncover his upper body. The visiting friend saw every inch of his upper body was covered in wound marks. He then asked the friend to uncover his legs and the friend saw every inch of his legs covered in wound marks. Khalid bin Waleed told his friend that he did not cry out of fear of death but because he always wished for martyrdom and the wound marks were a testimony to his wish. But, he knew he was dying on bed and wondered if it was due to his sins that he did not attain martyrdom. Such was the high level of those who truly understood the spirit of sacrifice. Indeed, God also gives the glad-tidings of Paradise to a brave warrior like Khalid bin Waleed.

Another example of a person who understood the spirit of sacrifice was demonstrated by Sahibzada Abdul Latif Shaheed. The king repeatedly asked him to reject and deny the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) and incited him with freedom in return. Every single time Sahibzada Sahib's reply would be that if God was granting him a death that makes one a recipient of blessings, why would he turn away from it. He said it was a strange ignorant deal to ask for! Indeed, this is the dignity of a true believer, as God has stated: 'They slackened not for aught that befell them in the way of Allah, nor did they weaken, nor did they humiliate themselves *before the enemy*. And Allah loves the steadfast.'

Today our opponents are similarly frustrated as to why we do not flinch and bow down to them. They do not realise that an Ahmadi always seeks the pleasure of God. And God has taught a prayer for staying firm on one's faith no matter how much the enemy tries to weaken our faith: 'Our Lord, forgive us our errors and our excesses in our conduct, and make firm our steps and help us against the disbelieving people.'

While God has told us to turn to Him in everything He has also told us that success comes from Him and for this we are told to turn to Him and seek from Him to become recipients of rewards in this world as well as the Hereafter.

In the latter verses of Surah Ale Imran, as explained before, words of assurance are given to further strengthen faith. It is stated that those who give their lives in the way of God are not dead. The connotation of 'as dead' apart from the obvious is also something which is not avenged, or behind whom no one is left to fulfil his objective or one who is sad and in despair. However, those who are slain in the way of God are not 'as dead' but are in the category of the living. God will avenge their blood and secondly their martyrdom will not weaken those left behind, in fact there will always be a group exuding the spirit of martyrdom and thirdly these martyrs will be granted a station and provision by God which will delight them and their death is not a sad death but is a death which creates means of happiness. The martyrs will be informed in the Hereafter that not only their sacrifice has increased those who wish to offer sacrifice but is also going to be a source of the ultimate triumph over the enemy. These sacrifices, these trials and temporary tribulations do not halter our progress and do not push us in despair. God states in the Qur'an: '*As for those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then remain steadfast, the angels descend on them, saying: 'Fear ye not, nor grieve; and rejoice in the Garden that you were promised. (41:31)*

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) explained: 'That is, upon those who affirm: God is our Lord, and turn away from false gods and are steadfast, that is to say, remain firm under trials and calamities, descend angels, reassuring them: Fear not nor grieve, and be filled with happiness; and rejoice that you have inherited the joy that you had been promised. We are your friends in this life and in the hereafter.

These verses indicate that steadfastness wins the pleasure of God Almighty. It is true, as has been said, that steadfastness is more than a miracle. The perfection of steadfastness is that when one is encircled by calamities and life and honour and good name are all in peril in the cause of Allah, and no means of comfort are available, so much so, that even visions and dreams and revelation are suspended by God as a trial, and one is left helpless among terrible dangers, at such a time one should not lose heart nor retreat like a coward nor let one's faithfulness be put in doubt in the least. One should not let one's sincerity and perseverance be weakened, one should be pleased with one's disgrace; one should be reconciled to death; one should not wait for a friend to lend one his support in order to keep one firm;'(The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam' pp. 171-172)

Each one of us should try and aspire to become as the Promised Messiah explains and this is not possible without the grace of God. If a person makes effort and becomes like this, then God comes

forward and holds such a person and this is when God gives glad-tidings of Paradise and for this He has taught us prayer for steadfastness, prayer for gaining triumph over the enemy. It signifies that by accepting the prayer God will open the doors of triumph in such a way that the enemy will have nowhere to escape. InshaAllah the ultimate triumph will be ours as promised to the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace).

Another brother of ours joined the ranks of those who make great sacrifice. Khalil Ahmad Sahib was martyred on 16 May in district Shiekhpura, Pakistan. Inna lillahe wa inna illahe raji'oon. On 13 May an argument ensued with opponents of Ahmadiyyat when anti-Ahmadi stickers were removed. Enemies of Ahmadiyyat used this as a reason to take out a rally where inflammatory speeches were made on loudspeakers and traffic was blocked and demands were made to the police to file a court case against Ahmadis. As a result the police issued legal papers against four Ahmadis: Mubasher Ahmad Sahib, Ghulam Ahmad Sahib, Khalil Ahmad Sahib and Ahsan Ahmad Sahib and imprisoned them. While the bail of all the others went through and they were released Khalil Ahmad Sahib's bail process was underway. At midday on 16 May a young man named Saleem came to where Khalil Sahib was imprisoned on the pretext that he had brought food. He asked Khalil Sahib to be pointed out to him and when this was done he produced a hand gun and shot Khalil Sahib in the face. The assailant was apprehended and Khalil Sahib was brought out of the cell but he had been martyred. Although the assailant was arrested all this is happening right under the nose of the authorities and the police. The Maulawis have so blinded people that it is said that after firing at Khalil Sahib the assailant raised a slogan that he had earned Paradise. While God and His Prophet say that punishment for killing those who recite the Kalima is Hell, the Maulawis give them tidings of Paradise.

Khalil Shaheed's family is from district Shiekhpura. He was 61 years old and had only just retired from WAPDA. He was a pious Ahmadi who observed his Salat regularly including Tahajjud and had a deep connection with the Jama'at and Khilafat. He watched the Friday sermon and other MTA programmes very regularly and showed great respect towards life devotees. He was a very trustworthy Ahmadi who was keen on serving mankind and helping the poor. He also served the Jama'at in various capacities. He leaves behind his wife, two daughters and two sons. One son Laiq Ahmad is in Germany while the other Ahsan Ahmad is a qaid back home. The local Mu'allim Sahib writes that Khalil Sahib was a very prayerful person who made heart-rending prayers.

Huzoor said he would lead his funeral Prayer in absentia after Friday Prayers. Two other funerals were also announced by Huzoor.

Maulawi Ahsan Illahi Sahib who was a retired Waqfe Jadid Mu'allim passed away on 17 May at the age of 83. He lived in London. He was the son of a companion of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) Rehmat Ali Sahib who was appointed by the Promised Messiah to tend the plants in the Bahishti graveyard. Ahsan Illahi Sahib had dedicated his life and worked as a Waqfe Jadid Mu'allim until 1999 when he retired and came to London to be with his children. He was a Moosi and was enabled to establish many Jama'ats during his service. He leaves behind four daughters and three sons. One of his sons is a missionary, Mahmood Ahmad Shams Sahib.

Nasreen Butt Sahiba passed away on 18 May following a heart attack. She was 41 years old. She was a pious, God-fearing active member of the Jama'at and was regular in her chanda. Her husband had passed away suddenly four and a half years ago. She brought up her children on her own and kept them connected to Khilafat and the Jama'at. She had a loyal bond with Khilafat. She leaves behind four sons. May God keep them in His protection and make them the recipients of their parents' prayers.

May God elevate the stations of the three deceased and grant them forgiveness.