

Friday Sermon: Introspection and Self-Reformation

6th December 2013

In last Friday sermon attention was drawn towards reformation of practice with reference to a Friday sermon of Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him). Incidents from the blessed life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) and the ways and practices of his true and ardent devotee, the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) were mentioned to expound the moral quality of truthfulness and how our master and his true and ardent devotee observed it at an excellent level. The Companions too pursued this excellent level by following the blessed model and attained high stations.

The discourse was based on truthfulness only by way of example. Otherwise, the reality and root of reformation of practice is in seeking every virtue that God has enjoined and not only shunning every sin that God has forbidden but also abhorring it. We will be true believers and will be true members of the Jama'at of the Imam of the age when we will instil all the virtues and high morals in us which God has commanded true believers to instil in them and will engender abhorrence for sin. A true believer embraces every virtue and runs away from sin and then alone can he practice moderation. It was also mentioned [last Friday] that we have solid proofs and arguments in terms of creed given to us by the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) and as such we are always ahead of our detractors in this regard. If they do not believe due to their stubbornness and narrow-mindedness, it is another matter, but they certainly cannot refute our proofs and arguments, therefore they shy away from discussions. In our Arabic MTA programme a Christian viewer acknowledged that Ahmadiyya Jama'at has solid arguments.

We also have many arguments to prove the veracity of Ahmadiyyat and have refutations of their objections. If our detractors are not dogmatic and do not take the words of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) out of context and misrepresent them, there is no choice but to agree to the veracity of Ahmadiyyat. However, their vested interests force them to attribute untruths to the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) and even resort to his verbal and written abuse.

As far as proofs and arguments are concerned, we are always at an advantage over our detractors. No one can contend with those who regularly read the Promised Messiah's (on whom be peace) books and this was indeed the Promised Messiah's (on whom be peace) claim. However, when we see the state of affairs as far as the lifestyle changes the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) wished to bring about, we have cause for concern. Is each one of us defeating every societal ill by contending with it? Is everyone around us impressed by our morals or are we succumbing to the influence of society and forgetting Islamic teaching and traditions? Is each one of us trying the utmost to reform their lifestyle as the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) taught? Teaching that demands whether we have established that level of truthfulness where there is not even a hint of falsehood and deception! Do we keep an eye on the Hereafter as regards our worldly dealings? Do we give precedence to faith over worldly matter? Do we observe extreme caution in avoiding every ill and every bad practice? Do we shun usurping others? Do we observe five daily Prayers? Do we always engage in prayer and remember God with humility? Do we abandon associates/friends whose influence is bad? Do we respect and serve our parents and listen to everything good they say to us? Are we gentle and kind towards our wives and their family? Do we deprive our neighbours of small matters of goodness? Do we forgive those who wrong us? Are our hearts free of all kinds of rancour and malice for others? Is every husband and every wife paying the dues of each other's trusts? Do we keep an eye on our condition in light of our pledge of Bai'at? Are most of our gatherings/assemblies free from slandering others and from back-biting? Is there discourse about God and His Messenger in most of our gatherings/assemblies? If the answer to these questions is in the negative, then we are distant from the teachings of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) and should be concerned about our

lifestyle. If the answer to the questions is in the affirmative then fortunate are those who are paying heed to their lifestyle and are paying the dues of their Bai'at.

Realistically looking sometimes we do not follow some of the aforementioned matters and societal ills repeatedly interfere in our lives and at times we succumb to them. There is no doubt that 99.9% of us claim that our belief is strong and nothing can make us waver from it. However, we should always remember that when lifestyle weaknesses are caught up in societal surge they can also shake the roots of belief. Satan attacks gradually. One becomes distant from the Nizam (administrative system) of the Jama'at and this leads to distance from Khilafat. One weakness causes another weakness and everything is destroyed. We know that the beauty of Ahmadiyyat is in being corded together in the string of Nizam of Jama'at and Khilafat and this alone is the strength of our faith as well as the strength of what we practice. This is why Khulafa of the time always draw attention of the Jama'at to various weaknesses, so that before any Ahmadi becomes so distant that he reaches the point of no return, he can engage in Istaghfar (seeking forgiveness from God), keep an eye on his weaknesses and make an effort to remove them while remembering God's favours on him.

During his recent tour of the Far East when he had the chance to meet religious scholars from Indonesia in Singapore, which Huzoor has mentioned before, many people told him that their ulema (religious leaders) should listen to what the Imam of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at says. In response of a question put to him there Huzoor had said that today Jama'at Ahmadiyya is the only jama'at on the face of the earth whose scope is not national or regional. It is known globally as a single entity and it has unity and it follows a nizam and is led by an Imam and is formed of people of all races. This is a huge testimony to the pronouncement and prophecy of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) who said that among the Muslim Ummah one Jama'at will be on the right path. It is also a testimony of the truthfulness of his true and ardent devotee. In the order to perpetuate this testimony, everyone should keep an eye on the state of their actions at all times because in this age Satan is on the rise in an unprecedented way. These days societal ills are rampant and worse still some ills are given legal protection in the name of freedom of expression. Evil was somewhat restricted before this age. The evil of neighbourhood remained in the neighbourhood, a city's evil stayed in the city and a country's evil remained in the country. But now ease of travel, television, the internet and various media have made localised evil international evil. Contacts are forged on the internet across thousands of miles to spread evil. Young women are deceived into falling for lax morals and are even made distant from faith. Recently it was in the news that girls are given the enticement of marriage in Pakistan and some other countries and they are then made prostitutes. That is, after a brief marriage they are [forced to] turned to prostitution. This is been carried out by an international gang. Indeed, this is frightening situation which makes hair stand on end. Likewise, young men are made paralytic by different ways not just in terms of their morals but also their faith. While one prays that may God keep each Ahmadi protected from this foulness, each Ahmadi also needs to commit to a personal Jihad to avoid this foulness.

Taking advantage of modern inventions is not prohibited. Ahmadis should utilise these inventions to spread the message of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) and not come under the influence of indecency and faithlessness and assign themselves to the detractors. This is cause for concern for all Ahmadis. The elders should be good role models and the younger ones should make full efforts and seek help from God to be protected from the attacks of the enemy. This enemy is attacking in a manner that one does not perceive and is entering homes in the name of entertainment and influencing youngsters and weak-willed people. As said before, Ahmadiyya Khulafa have been drawing attention to these matters and Huzoor also draws attention to this shortcoming through sermons and other ways. Jama'at and the auxiliary organisations also make programmes in light of the didactic sermons so that all sections of the Jama'at are saved from such attacks. However, if each one of us not only raises to personal defence but also reforms others and makes a special connection with God for this purpose, then along with saving others we will also be reforming ourselves. We will be saving our next generation and will be the saviours of the weak-willed and thus the sequence will continue and last till the Day of Judgement and rather than spread evil, new inventions will be source of spreading God's name in every country and every part of the world.

It should be remembered that we cannot avoid the facts. Progressive communities keep an eye on their weaknesses and we should keep an eye on the facts. We cannot feel happy that 50% or such and such per cent of us are reformed. If we are to bring about a revolutionary change in the world we need to keep 100% reformation as our target. If we reform our lifestyles 100%, all the conflicts, litigations, efforts to harm others financially, greed for property, watching foul material on television and other media, efforts to demean each other, all ills will be removed. An atmosphere of love, affection and brotherhood will be generated which will make life on this earth like paradise. Huzoor said he mentioned the ills because they effectively come to attention in the Jama'at. If a sense of responsibility is instilled in us we would consider service of faith as a Divine blessing. Some may say in response to this that indeed they consider service of faith a Divine blessing, but 100% of the office-holders do not think this. Matters are brought to Huzoor's attention showing that office-holders do not have self-control and tolerance. If someone speaks to them in a loud tone their ego and honour gets in the way and false sense of pride surfaces. One who considers work as Divine blessing tolerates everything for the pleasure of God and the knowledge that all honour belongs to God forces him to be humble and meek. Close scrutiny tells us that the adage of 'Assume that you are worse than all the rest' is not being acted upon and in some form or the other egotism flares up. We have appreciation of [revelation given to the Promised Messiah] 'He is pleased with your humble ways' [Tadhkirah 2009 edition, p. 931] but do not think that this is also the teaching he gave to those who took his Bai'at. The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that he had come to revive the message of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) and of course even the Prophet's slave said that he had never spoken to him harshly and when a person was given to jitters due to the majestic dignity of the Prophet he assured the man that he was not a despotic king but was the son of a woman who ate dried meat. This is the model which needs to be portrayed by every office-holder in his lifestyle, every worker of the Jama'at needs to portray in his lifestyle and every Ahmadi needs to portray it in his lifestyle. If one is given an office or the opportunity to serve, then the following words of the Muhammadan Messiah should always be remembered: 'I was but poor, helpless, unknown and without talent!' One fulfils the rights of service of faith when this helplessness, meekness and humility are inculcated and this may lead to hope of: 'For this may admit you in the abode of union with God!'

Failing this, we may be right in our claim to have accepted the Imam of the age but in reality with our actions we would be mocking the claim. Enmity of another will not harm us, on the contrary our own duplicity will disgrace us and on top of this we will be incurring Divine displeasure. Each person who is appointed to serve the Jama'at needs to self-reflect in particular and every Ahmadi needs to self-reflect in general. Because the dues of Bai'at are not fulfilled merely by professing verbally and by accepting, rather there is no point unless there is brilliant strength of action. If we declare that Hazrat Isa (on whom be peace) has passed away for all humans are mortal, if we declare that God can send a Prophet in subservience of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) and can still speak to whomsoever He wishes and can send down revelation because none of His Divine attributes were or are time-restrained! We say that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (on whom be peace) was the true and ardent devotee of the Prophet and was sent by God owing to his love and obeisance of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) with the honour of being a non-law-bearing Prophet. We say that the Holy Qur'an is in its pristine state and God has Himself taken the responsibility of safeguarding it while no other revealed book remains in its original form. We tell the world that no matter how much noise it creates, as these days anti-Islam people are trying to prove on the television and in writing that, God forbid, the Holy Qur'an was not revealed to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) but was written a few centuries ago. Jama'at Ahmadiyya silences such people with proofs and arguments. When we asked the person who made the aforementioned claim against the Holy Qur'an to discuss the matter, he declined.

The object of the exercise is that we believe that Hazrat Isa (on whom be peace) has passed away, we believe that God sent the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) as the second advent of Hazrat Isa (on whom be peace), we believe that the last revealed Book given to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be on him) is in its original state. Can all these beliefs help us succeed in our objective? The answer is a simple, no. Unless having proven the death of Hazrat Isa (on whom be peace) we do not inculcate the pure change that the

Companions instilled and in light of the fact that the second advent was to be from among the Ummah of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) and in the person of his true and ardent devotee, our belief alone will not avail. When we declare that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (on whom be peace) is the very same Promised Messiah whose coming was foretold by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), we also have to demonstrate his teaching! If we consider the Holy Qur'an to be safeguarded but do not practice upon its teachings, our declaration in its defence cannot avail unless we demonstrate its teachings in our lifestyle.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said: 'Remember mere verbosity and phraseology cannot avail unless it is followed by practise. Mere words carry no weight.' He also said: 'Make your faith weighty. Practise is the ornament of faith. If man's lifestyle is not right then there is also no faith. A true believer is a beautiful person. Just as a beautiful person's beauty is enhanced by wearing simple and light jewellery, similarly good practises of a person of faith make him or her most beautiful. There is nothing if the person's practises are evil. When true faith is instilled in a person he finds special pleasure in his practises and his spiritual insight is released, he observes Salat as it should be observed and sin disgusts him. He abhors impure assemblies and finds a particular passion and fervour in his heart to express the greatness and majesty of Allah the Exalted and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him).'

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) also said: 'Upon asking the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) told people that Surah Hud had aged him because by virtue of its commandment a huge responsibility fell on him. It is possible to correct oneself and fully obey the commandments of Allah the Exalted as far as one's own person is concerned. However, it is not easy to make others the same. This shows the great glory and power of holiness of our Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). He obeyed this commandment perfectly and prepared that pure community of Companions that they were called: **'You are the best people raised for the good of mankind...'** [\(3:111\)](#) and they were the recipients of [the salutation of] may Allah be pleased with them. No hypocrite remained in Medina during his life time. In short, the success he received was unmatched in the lives of other Prophets. The will of Allah the Exalted was not to limit the matter to mere words. If matter was limited to mere words and hypocrisy what would be the distinction between us and the others and what would be our merit over others? You should simply show your example by practise and it should have brilliance in it so that others may accept it. No one will accept it unless it has brilliance. Can anyone like something that is not clean? As long as a piece of cloth has a mark on it, it does not look good. Similarly, if your internal state does not have cleanliness and brilliance no one will buy it. Everyone likes fine things. So, if you do not have high morals you cannot attain any station.'

May God make us adherents of high morals and may He instil that pure change in us the brilliance of which draws the attention of the world. May avenues of Tabligh open more than ever and we are able to fulfil the mission of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace).