

Friday Sermon: Building Mosques, Unity and Accord

April 5th, 2013

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih delivered his Friday sermon from Baitur Rahman mosque in Valencia, Spain. He recited the following Quranic verses at the start of the sermon:

‘And hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allah and be not divided; and remember the favour of Allah which He bestowed upon you when you were enemies and He united your hearts in love, so that by His grace you became *as* brothers; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah explain to you His commandments that you may be guided. And let there be among you a body of men who should invite to goodness, and enjoin equity and forbid evil. And it is they who shall prosper.’ (Surah Ale Imran, verses 104 – 105)

‘Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in a way that is best. Surely, thy Lord knows best who has strayed from His way; and He knows those who are rightly guided.’ (Surah Al Nahl, verse 126)

With the grace of God last Friday the second mosque in Spain was inaugurated. The Jama’at was very happy about and remains so. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih gave a sermon last Friday with reference to the new mosque and wished to draw further attention to some matters today.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said: ‘At the time our Community is in great need of mosques. [A mosque] is a house of God. In which ever town or village our mosque is built, consider that the foundation for the progress of the Community has been laid [there]. If there is a town or a village with very few or no Muslims and progress of Islam is required there, a mosque should be built there. God would Himself attract Muslims to it. However, the condition is that the mosque is built with sincerity of intent and is raised merely for the sake of God. Providing there is no element of self-centred motives or any evil, God would bless it.’ (Malfuzat, Vol. 6, p. 119. 1984 edition)

This extract has been presented many times before but it contains so many significant points that Ahmadis need to repeatedly reflect over it. The first aspect it mentions is that a mosque is a house of God. With the grace of God every Ahmadi believes in God; this belief should further draw attention towards honour of house of God and ways to populate it. When such attention is paid for the sake of God then one is also drawn to pay the rights of God’s creation with whom it is indeed required to cultivate a bond of love and affection. In this regard the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said with reference to mosques: ‘People of Community should all get together and offer congregational Prayer in this mosque. There is a lot of blessing in congregational Prayer and accord. Dispersion creates discord while this is a time to greatly enhance unity and accord. Trivial matters which are cause of discord should be disregarded/overlooked.’

Thus, this is a house of God and Ahmadis of this area [Valencia] have to fulfil the dues of congregational Prayer here while maintaining ties of love and accord. The Promised Messiah's (on whom be peace) made this pronouncement 108 years ago although his companions were being personally trained by him in spirituality. Their standard of Taqwa (righteousness) was extremely high compared to the standard today. They had greater fear of God and they were mindful of Salat to a very great degree. In fact people who accepted the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) were those who had a special connection with God. Yet, it is a Prophet of God's work to elucidate the finer details of Taqwa and guide people. This is why he drew attention of his companions to these matters. He was concerned that if Taqwa was not heightened in the early phase, there would not be examples for the latter ones to follow.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih said the series of relating incidents of companions of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) that he had started [in his Friday sermons] remains wanting. Incidents of every companion were not related and those that were related were done so briefly. Yet they illustrated such high standards that one is drawn to pray for those people. Here [in Valencia] if there are families of companions of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) they should pray for their elders. Indeed, a lot of work needs to be done in this country. Lost reputation of centuries past has to be restored and people have to be gathered under the banner of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). To do this, foremost is worship of God followed by Tabligh activities done as a united community.

We have raised a huge claim in this country; therefore, first of all we have to inculcate high standards within ourselves. If the office-holders and the Jama'at do not stand united, then they would not be fulfilling the rights of house of God. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih said that he had also said earlier that the beauty of a mosque is apparent when the beauty of the spirit of those who come to the mosque is apparent, when their mutual love and accord is apparent. The first verse recited today indeed enjoins mutual love and draws attentions that it is God's favour that He made you as one. Every true believer should reflect on every command, every directive of God.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih said no one is exempt from commandments of God; neither he nor anyone else; be they office-holders of the Jama'at, missionaries of the Jama'at, Ahmadi men and women. As long as we will firmly hold onto the 'rope of Allah' and will practice very commandment of the Holy Qur'an and will remember God's favour that He has made us Ahmadi, we will be paying His dues and well as the dues of His house. As long as will hold fast the teachings of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) and his true and ardent devotee, the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace), we will be fulfilling the dues of God's favours. Following our pledge of allegiance (Bai'at) with the Khalifa of the time, as long as each one of us will not only listen to his words but will also put them in practice, he will be showing gratitude for of God's blessings. It should be remembered that the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) and Khilafat e Ahmadiyya are all 'rope of Allah'. Anyone who overlooks any one of the links [of this rope] will be getting closer to the pit of fire once again. Holding firmly to the rope of God and remembering God's favours will lead to words transforming into practices. Mutual love, accord and brotherhood will make Ahmadis truly guided and among those who save themselves from pit of fire. True Ahmadis avoid all manner of

egotistical matters and love each other for the sake of attaining God's pleasure. Fortunate are those who keep their words and deeds in this manner. Summoning others to God can only be done successfully once one has attained these standards.

Today a large number of humanity is distant from religion and many in the West reject the existence of God. However, people are inclined to religion in Spain. A reception was held in Valencia two days ago for Spanish people. The president of the Valencian parliament came to this reception and during conversation expressed his concern that people are turning away from religion and need to be brought to it. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih said among all the people of his level that he has met in the West thus far, this was the only person who expressed concern for religion.

God has clearly stated that Islam is now the true religion. Therefore no other religion can bring man close to God; no other religion has the strength to do so. And those whose responsibility it is to spread Islam and those who have been blessed with the 'rope of Allah' are indeed Ahmadis. If we damage our unity and create divisions, most certainly we will be accountable before God. It was mentioned in last Friday sermon that thousands of Spaniards whose ancestors were Muslims are entering into Islam once again. Yet, they are unaware of the true Islam. We have to make them aware of it. Many Europeans Ahmadis accepted Islam in their spiritual quest but the Ulema (religious scholars) did not guide them to the spirituality that they sought. These people looked further and eventually accepted Ahmadiyyat. Every Ahmadi should be aware that each new comer to Ahmadiyyat finds spiritual peace after accepting Ahmadiyyat and long term Ahmadis need to analyse themselves in this regard. If the long term Ahmadis, especially those of Pakistani origin do not fulfil their responsibilities they could be turning away these seekers of truth.

In the aforementioned reception at Valencia, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih gave a brief address with reference to Islamic teachings. A lady with a head scarf came to see him later on. She looked Spanish but introduced herself as a Muslim. She said that the beautiful teaching of Islam had been explained in a very good manner. When Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih remarked that she looked Spanish, son of Maulwi Karam Illahi sahib who was there explained that she was indeed Spanish and had converted to Islam. The lady responded that she had not 'converted' as such; rather she had reverted to the faith of her forefathers. There are many Spanish people who are looking for the faith of their forefathers and their roots. We need to work with great effort in such areas and among such people. However, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih said that he would say it again and again that if we expect this work to be blessed, we need to adapt our conditions according to the commandments of God. The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that mosque is the building block of progress but he also reminded that for this the intentions need to be sincere. Thus, it is sincerity that truly avails not cleverness or knowledge, although they do work hand in hand but sincerity is fundamental. When thoughts will be devoid of egotism, Basharat Mosque [Pedro Abad] and this mosque will bring about good results.

The reception held for the mosque in Valencia was the first such major event organised by Spanish Jama'at. It was attended by neighbours, well-educated people, government officials and politicians. They all took a favourable view of the reception and many said that they had heard the beautiful teaching of Islam for the first time. Many said they felt emotional. In fact

an atheist guest said that he had learned a lot about religion. Dr Mansoor sahib reported that his contacts/colleague doctors felt emotional at the reception. Today, only the followers of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) can relate belief in the existence of God and beauty of religion; they are people for whom God has facilitated holding onto the 'rope of Allah'. Details of the reception will be published in report form and will also be broadcast by MTA which recorded the event and also took interviews etc. The speaker of the Valencian parliament had gone to Madrid on the day of the reception. Madrid is two hour train journey away. He was delayed and his office informed that he would not attend the reception. However, the speaker came to the reception. He had asked his driver to drive straight to the reception from the train station. He appreciated the significance of the programme. He thought he would only attend for half an hour or so but stayed longer. He said that Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih had related very beautiful teachings of Islam. Similarly there were other guests, including politicians, lawyers, doctors and MPs. The total number of guests was 108, including neighbours who had previously been opposed to us. The address had touched upon the rights of neighbours in Islam and after listening to the address their doubts were allayed. The world is now watching and we have to play our role. There is need to understand this responsibility.

The second verse recited at the start states; **'let there be among you a body of men who should invite to goodness...and forbid evil'**. In this regard foremost are the missionaries of the Jama'at because the Khalifa of the time has made them his representative in matters of Tarbiyyat and Tabligh. They are preachers who counsel people. If missionaries do not establish high standards themselves how could they counsel others? Both Tarbiyyat of the Jama'at and Tabligh are their tasks and these require high resolve. It is also necessary to set high standards of patience, high standards of being obedient and receiving obedience, high standards of congruity between word and practice. They are representatives of the Khalifa of the time for the religious and spiritual advancement of the Jama'at and need to honour this responsibility. During the course of their mission they face hard times, owing to humanness there will be times when their patience is tested to the limit but they should promptly turn to prayer at such times and be mindful of the fact that they have dedicated their life for God and they are to bring the world under the banner of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). Thus, nothing anyone says will waver them from attaining their objective. Their pledge will be before them and God's greatness alone, not their own will be before them. Tolerance of incorrect attitude of office-holders will make them recipients of pleasure of God because they will be acting upon 'invite to goodness' in every situation. Not only they have to protect themselves from discord, they also have to save the world from it. The second group of people addressed in this verse are Jama'at office-holders. They too are entrusted a trust for which they will be held accountable. For this they have to have congruity in their word and practice, and present high models of sincerity and loyalty as well as make others follow these practices. If their own examples do not lead members of the Jama'at to piety and if there is conflict between their word and practice the others would say it to their face that they need to correct their moral values, correct their spiritual condition, correct their worldly dealings, inculcate tenderness to spread the message of the Jama'at. They should respect the missionaries who are representatives of the Khalifa of the time. Indeed office-holders should be foremost in respect of the missionaries. Unless they make their apparent self and inner self congruous they cannot say they are among those who: **'invite to goodness, and enjoin equity and forbid evil'**. Office-holders of the Jama'at on every level need to self-reflect and watch

themselves especially sadr Jama'at and Ameer Jama'at wherever they are, otherwise they are causing divisions. Respect of missionaries should first come from sadr Jama'at and Ameer Jama'at. Meanwhile missionaries should not consider it their right to be respected, in fact this should generate further humility in them and they should be further drawn to reformation of self. When these standards will be attained on every level our Tarbiyyat issues will be resolved, InshaAllah and our Tabligh efforts will garner extraordinary achievements. Unity, respect and harmony will bless our every task. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih also explained that mutual dealings of office-holders should also be of high standard, this is important for our tasks to be blessed. Divisions, egotistical stances and lack of patience only produce negative results.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I (may Allah be pleased with him) related an incident in explanation of this verse. Someone complained to a noble man that his friend, a rich person had verbally abused him. The nobleman called for the person and started verbally abusing him. He then asked the man why he had verbally abused the other man earlier. He replied because the other man had said unpleasant things to him which he could not tolerate. The nobleman said 'I abused you and you listened quietly because you had the tolerance to listen quietly. However, when the other man was unpleasant to you, you verbally abused him because you consider him of lesser social standing than yourself. You could have had shown tolerance as you did before me. I had only tested your tolerance.' Thus are the standards of tolerance and patience. Just as we tolerate those above us, so should we tolerate those who are subordinate to us or those who are equal to us and this stance alone will put an end of discord and conflicts. We counsel the world but when the time comes we let go of patience and tolerance.

Members of the Jama'at should not assume from this that these are responsibilities of those who have dedicated their lives and the office-holders only. Mutual accord and harmony, practicing what God and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) say, enhancing standard of Taqwa in accordance to the teaching of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) and submitting to what the Khalifa of the time says is everyone's responsibility. It is the obligation of every person to respect the office-holders. It is the responsibility of every Ahmadi to demonstrate high morals at home and outside home. When each and every Ahmadi will discharge of their responsibility then alone will they be saved from the pit of fire! God has not stated that Tabligh is for missionaries and office-holders only. Summoning others to God is everyone's task. In the third verse recited at the start God states it is everyone's responsibility and the method has also been explained. It is stated to call others to God with wisdom.

Now that introduction via the new mosque in Valencia is widening, new Tabligh avenues are opening. The newspapers have started given coverage; now is time for Tabligh. The word Hikmah or wisdom that has been used in conjunction with Tabligh [in verse 16:126] has many meanings/connotations. Firstly, it is very important to have religious knowledge which can be obtained from the Holy Qur'an and its commentaries; arguments and reasoning should be strengthened through these. Then, there are Ahadith, arguments should also be strengthened through these. Strong arguments to counter objections against the person of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) should be researched. Hikmah also means justice. Our reasoning should not be based on objections, i.e. our arguments should not be a source of unfairness. When non-Ahmadis lose arguments they descend to verbal abuse. The Promised

Messiah (on whom be peace) has thus fortified us with sound knowledge that there is no question of us ever articulating anything unfair or cruel. For this purpose it very important to read the writings of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace). Not only will they help us in Tabligh matters but also in Tarbiyyat matters. Hikmah is also used for gentleness and forbearance. New Ahmadis often ask most painfully how they can do Tabligh to their near and dear ones? When their dear ones react angrily, they should remain calm and gentle. Many people are won over by gentleness. Some write in to say their patience has paid and such and such relative of theirs has taken Bai'at.

Hikmah, a word used by the Qur'an is explained in lexicon as something that deters from ignorance. Those who do Tabligh should use such ways and ensure that whatever they say does not lead the other into further ignorance. Although there are some people, some Maulwis whose hearts have hardened and they are destined to die in ignorance, but if wisdom is employed during Tabligh and people are approached according to their knowledge and disposition, hearts can be softened. At the very least, if people do not accept they stop objecting. Anti-religious hearts are softened and the ignorant desist from objections.

Many atheists were present at the Valencian reception. One such pair listened to matters explained by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih with reference to the Qur'an and Ahadith and said they wished to keep on listening. They later met with Hudhur. So replete with wisdom is the teaching of Islam that when explained in accordance to the situation, it is most effective. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih reiterated that now that the introduction of Jama'at has taken place here in Valencia, follow-up work will have to be carried out diligently.

Hikmah (wisdom) also requires that always truth is told. Islam is religion of truth and has no room for anything oblique. We are not from among those Ulema who say employ falsehood for Hikmah. Indeed, where there is falsehood, justice and fairness is absent and this creates evil and disorder and that is not Islam.

It is a huge responsibility on every Ahmadi when God states to fulfil the requisites of Hikmah. Enhance your level of knowledge and your standard of fairness and inculcate the capacity to recognise nature of people. It is an important skill to recognise nature of people and Tabligh cannot be done without it. All this will enable you to give a **'goodly exhortation'**. This means something that softens the heart. Thus, something that fulfils the requisites of Hikmah, softens hearts. People of different ethnicities live here and different ways of doing Tabligh to them will have to be thought through. We are guided to this aspect as well: **'and argue with them in a way that is best'**. Our task is to do Tabligh and it is for God to bring about results. This is why it is most important that we change our conditions.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that it is the same thing when said in a certain context can make a person your friend and when said in another context can him your enemy. He said to always practice: **'and argue with them in a way that is best'** and said that this indeed was what God called Hikmah.

Utilising Hikmah is important for our mutual matters as well as for Tabligh. God's grace has opened up Tabligh avenues, now it is up to people to benefit from them. The newspapers have given coverage to the news that the Khalifa has said that Muslims were expelled in the seventeen century and now we going to return. Our objective is not achieved by news

coverage alone. Similar news were reported with references to Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) at the time of the inauguration of Basharat Mosque, Pedro Abad. But what have we attained in the past thirty years? People who attain objectives are not delighted by news coverage alone. We should continually self-reflect, plan new programmes and put them in practice with unity and not rest until we have achieved our aims.

Trivial matter should be insignificant for Ahmadis. They are not to look out for what the Ameer Jama'at or sadr Jama'at said about them. They say to those who bring these matters to them that they consider them insignificant. They say they have pledged allegiance to the Imam of the age and they wish to fulfil it by giving precedence to faith over worldly matters and such trivial matters would disperse their thoughts and will make them forget their objective and will cause them to speak of divisions and thus they will ruin their world as well as their ending. They say to those who raise trivial matters that if they have sympathy for them and for the Jama'at then they should not mention such matters to anyone for these matters are tantamount to tale-telling/back-biting. With such thoughts avenues leading to revolutionary changes will open up. Khuddam, Ansar and Lajna all should consider rooting out all manner of discord and division. May God make this mosque blessed in every way!

Hadhrot Khalifatul Masih asked for prayers for the recovery of an Ahmadi who was shot in Nawab Shah, Pakistan. He is critically ill in a Karachi hospital and doctors will be able to tell in the next few days if he is out of danger.