

FRIDAY SERMON

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We are in the sacred month of Muharram 1438AH. In Islam four months are sacred. The other three are Zil Qada, Zil Hajj which are the two last months of the calendar and also Rajab which is the 7th month. We know this from a verse of the Holy Quran which is as follows: **"Verily, the number of months with Allah is twelve months (in a year), so it was ordained by Allah on the Day when He created the heavens and the earth; of them, four are sacred. That is the right religion, so wrong not yourselves therein ... "Al-Qur'an 9:36.** And we read from the hadith that the Holy Prophet is reported to have said *"The year is twelve months of which four are sacred, the three consecutive months of Dhul-Qa'dah, Dhul-Hijjah and Muharram, and Rajab Mudar which comes between Jumadah and Sha'ban."*(Reported by Al-Bukhari, 2958)

It is true that the Holy Prophet Mohammad(saw) did fast on the 10th of Muharram prior to his receiving the revelations about fasting in the month of Ramadan. Some Muslims even today do fast on the 10th of Muharram with a view to seek blessings from Allah. This is a voluntary act and it has all the merits ascribed to it. However we should bear in mind that it is voluntary and not obligatory. Whoever fasts on that day with a view to seek blessings from Allah will get his or her reward from Allah. Sunni Muslims do fast on that day.

However it is also the day when the grandson of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw), Hazrat Imam Hussein was martyred with his family and companions at Karbala. Shia Muslims commemorate this event during most of Muharram. Although Imam Hussein's death occurred more than 1300 years ago, its tragedy is made vivid to every Shia Muslim and many others through the annual observance

of Muharram which a western author qualified as “the most distinctive and the most widely known of Shia’s customs.” From what I have read it is said that it is reported that as early as around 984CE when the Buwaihids ruled Baghdad the custom of commemorating the events of Muharram with a period of mourning was introduced. In other words it was almost 300 years after the passing away of Hazrat Imam Hussein that the commemoration started at state level and it has been going on since.

During the first ten days of Muharram and some even stretch it to forty days in total, it is a period of mourning for the Shias. They organize Majalis , that is mourning assemblies where step by step the day to day events are remembered. They start from the time that Imam Hussein received the invitation from the Kufians to the time of his martyrdom. Details in the programme vary from place to place. During the first two days there is much visiting among relatives and the story of Imam Hussein setting forth against the earnest entreaties of his relatives, his travel and his arrival in Kerbala is recounted. On the third day they recall the encampment at Karbala, Imam Hussein moving back from the river, and the arrangement with Bani Asad for the burial of those who might be killed. On the fourth and fifth days the difficulties of Hussein and his party are recited. On the sixth day they recount the valour and death of Ali Akbar, Hussein’s son. On the seventh day they speak about the heroism of Qasim , a son of Imam Hasan and an account of his betrothal to Imam Hussein’s daughter. On the 9th day they recount the part played by Hazrat Abbas (junior) and others of the 72 martyrs. On the tenth day, of course the poignant circumstance in which Imam Hussein was killed is the centre of thought of all. What is read is written in a book called “the Observance of Muharram in Persia” and it has been translated into English in the 19th Century. Those who are interested may read more. Anyhow this brutal elimination of innocent people by those who held power and who were filled with

their own importance has had and will continue to have far reaching consequences in history.

Since the sad events of his martyrdom, Imam Hussein remains a pillar of a Muslim who defied a so called khilafat to uphold justice and truth. He did not bow down to the likes of Yazeed and refused to take allegiance with him because he knew he was not worth it. In the words of the poet Iqbal:

“When Khilafat strained its relationship with the Qur’an and abandoned Islamic and Qur’anic ideals by transforming it into a kingship and when freedom was poisoned, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) did not tolerate its injustices. Like a blessed cloud he marched forward and through his rain of blood transformed the desert into a garden of martyrs. By doing so he ended the reign of injustice and breathed new life into the garden of freedom.” If in the past khilafat strained its relationship with the Holy Quran it is not at all surprising it is doing so again. Some who claim to have khilafat are very eager to go against the commandments of Allah in order to please their caliph. Allah is the distributor of blessings and He gives to whomsoever He pleases without measure and others have no say in the way Allah distributes His favours. At one place the present caliph of the mainstream Ahmadiyya Jamaat has quoted Hazrat Masih Maood (as) as saying:

نہیں محصور ہرگز راستہ قدرت نمائی کا خدا کی قدرتوں کا حصر دعویٰ ہے خدائی کا

The path of the manifestation of the divine power is not limited;

To restrain God's powers is tantamount to a claim to Divinity itself!

He and his followers need to reflect on these words more and stop deriding those who say Allah talks to them. These were a few words that I wanted to say about

Muharram and Imam Hussein. In my previous sermons I have several times spoken about the events leading to Karbala. They may be read on our website. Now I will read you some extracts from the writings of the Promised Messiah from His book *Baraheen Ahmadiyya* volume 4. Hazrat Masih Maood (as) is speaking about the beauty of Sura Al Fatiha. He says:

“ The fifth beauty of *Surab al-Fatiha* is that it comprises the most complete and perfect teaching which is essential for a seeker after truth and which constitutes a perfect code of conduct for making progress in nearness and cognition [of God]. The beginning of progress towards nearness is at the point of journey when the devotee, by accepting death for his ego and submitting to hardships and suffering, purely for the sake of Allah, discards all of those carnal desires which separate him from his Benevolent God and which turn his face away from God towards personal pleasures, emotions, habits, thoughts, inclinations, and created beings, and entangle him in their fears and hopes. The intermediary stage of progress occurs when all of this suffering—whichever hardships were suffered in the beginning stage for the annihilation of the ego and all the pain that was endured in discarding engrained habits—appears as a reward, toil is perceived as joy, grief is felt as comfort, and distress is appreciated as delight and cheerfulness. The highest stage of progress is when the devotee cultivates such union, love, and accord with God and His will and designs that his self ceases to have an identity and influence of its own. The Being and attributes of Allah are reflected in the mirror of his own being without any shadow of darkness and without the least consciousness of state and situation, so that through the mirror of total annihilation, which puts the utmost distance between the devotee and his carnal desires, the reflection of the Being and attributes of the Divine is

clearly visible. In this statement there is not a single word that endorses the false theories of *Wujüdis*' (Those who believe that God and the material world are one and the same thing.) or Vedantists (believers in the vedantic doctrine of the eternity of the soul), because they fail to recognize the eternal distinction between the Creator and the created. They have been grievously misled by their dubious visions which are often experienced in a condition of imperfect devotion, or result from austerities which induce a type of insanity, or when someone who, in a condition of intoxication or ecstasy—which is a type of insanity—overlooks the difference between the spirit of God and spirit of man in respect of powers, faculties, perfections, and holiness. Otherwise, it is obvious that the Omnipotent God—from whose eternal knowledge not even the smallest particle is hidden and to whom no defect or detriment can be attributed and who is free from every type of ignorance, impurity, weakness, sorrow, grief, pain, hurt, and embarrassment—can never be identified with the one who is subject to all these afflictions. Can man, whose spiritual progress is subject to infinite contingencies, be the same or identical with the Perfect Being, who possesses every excellence and is not subject to any contingency? Can he who is mortal and whose soul suffers from the obvious deficiencies of creation—with all his stains, weaknesses, impurities, defects, and shortcomings—be the equal of the Lord of glorious attributes, who is eternally complete and perfect on account of His excellences and holy attributes?

‘What we mean by this third type of progress is that the devotee becomes so lost and consumed in his love of God, and the Peerless and Timeless Being approaches so close to him with all His perfect attributes, that the manifestations of Divinity overcome his personal desires and draw him

towards themselves to such a degree that a complete estrangement and intrinsic enmity is generated against his selfish desires, and even against anyone who is a slave of their selfish inclinations. The difference between this and the second type of progress is that even though complete accord is also established with the will of one's Lord in the second type and any pain from Him appears as a bounty, his relationship with Allah is not such as to charge him with personal enmity towards everything besides Allah, and from which the love of Allah should not merely be the goal of the heart but should become the very nature of his heart.

In short, in the second type of progress, accord with God and opposition to all besides Him is the goal of the devotee and he attains pleasure by achieving that goal; however, in the third type of progress, complete accord with God and enmity towards others becomes an integral part of his very nature from which he cannot depart under any circumstances; for, stripping something from its own self is impossible. On the contrary, such stripping is possible in the second type. So long as the *waliyat* [being a friend of God] of a *wali* [friend of Allah] does not reach the third type, it is not permanent and is not secure against dangers, the reason being that so long as the love of God and enmity to all besides Him does not become a part of the nature of man, some traces of darkness linger in him because he has still not fully discharged his obligation to *rububiyyat* [providence] as it was required and still falls short of perfect *liqa*. But when the love of Allah and accord with Allah completely saturate his nature, so much so that God becomes his ears by which he hears, his eyes with which he sees, his hands with which he grips, and his feet with which he walks, then no trace of darkness remains in him, and he becomes secure against every danger. It is this stage which is indicated in Allah's words: "Those

who believe and mix not their belief with injustice: it they who shall have peace and who are rightly guided”(6:83)(page 228)

When we read such an extract it should increase our humility when we think about our own stage in this quest for Allah and increase our enthusiasm to make even more sacrifices and move towards Him. May Allah help each one amongst us to better understand and to do better incha Allah.