

FRIDAY SERMON

21 January 2022

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We continue reading extracts from the must-read book of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) – Noah’s Ark (*Kishti Nuh*). From this book, we get the essence of the teachings that we should do our best to follow. In a time of crisis like the one in which the mainstream Jamaat is going through these days, these words help us to stick to what is essential. It is quite easy to make long speeches about universal values like Justice, brotherhood, women’s inalienable rights, rights of young children. But as an international organization, if we start resembling failed organizations of other long-established religions, the words of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) are as pertinent today as they have ever been. Reform is not brought out by organizations but by people who are given this important task by Allah. The leaders of the mainstream Jamaat want people to believe that they are quite competent to bring about reforms but what is being revealed in international newspapers and the social media shows that some type of corruption has settled in even if the leadership wants people to believe that everything is under control. So, we should make ourselves aware of what the Promised Messiah said so that we might know what the true teachings are and in that light, judge what the leadership is doing.

So, from the book *Kishti Nuh*, we read:

“Who is it that believes in God? Only those who are such as we have just described. Similarly, foolish is he who is inclined towards a fearless sinner, or one who is evil-minded and vicious, for he will destroy himself. Ever since God has created the heaven and earth, it has never happened that He should have ruined or destroyed or obliterated the righteous. On the contrary, he has always shown wonders in their favour and will also show them now.

God is the most Faithful and He manifests wondrous works for those who are loyal to Him. The world desires to devour them and every enemy grinds their teeth at them, but He who is their friend, delivers them from every place of danger and bestows victory upon them in every field. How fortunate is the person who never lets go the mantle of God. We have believed in Him and we have recognized Him. The God of the whole world is He who has sent down His revelation to me, who has shown mighty signs in my support and who has sent me as the Promised Messiah in this age. There is no God beside Him, neither in heaven nor on earth. He who does not believe in Him is bereft of all good fortune and is ensnared in disgrace. The revelation I have received from God is as bright as the sun. I have seen that He alone is the Lord of the world and that there is none other than Him. Truly Omnipotent and All-Sustaining is the God whom we have found. How great are His powers of Him whom we have witnessed. The truth is that nothing is beyond Him except that which is contrary to His Book and His promise.

So, when you pray, do not be like ignorant naturalists who have in their own fancy devised a natural law which does not bear the seal of God's Book. They are the rejected and their prayers will not be accepted. They are blind, not of those who see. They are dead, not of those who are alive. They present to God their self-devised law and presume to limit His infinite powers and deem Him weak. So, they shall be dealt with according to their condition.

When you stand up in prayer, it is necessary for you to have firm faith that your God has power over all things. Only then will your prayer be accepted and you will behold the wonders of God's power that we have beheld. Our testimony is based on observation and not on hearsay. How should the supplication of a person be accepted and how should he have the courage to pray at times of great difficulty, when according to him he is opposed by the law of nature, unless he believes that God has power over everything? O fortunate ones, follow not these practices. Your God is One who holds aloft innumerable stars without the use of columns and who has created heaven and earth from nothing. Then would you think so ill of Him as to imagine that your objective is beyond His power? Such ill-thinking will frustrate you.

Our God possesses countless wonders, but they are visible only to those who become His out of sincerity and loyalty. He does not disclose His wonders to those who do not believe in His Power and who are not sincere and loyal to Him. How unfortunate is the man, who even now, is unaware that there is a God who has power over all things. Our paradise lies in our God. Our highest delight is in our God for we have seen Him and found every beauty in Him. This wealth is worth procuring though one might have to lay down one's life to procure it. This ruby is worth purchasing though one may have to lose oneself to acquire it. O ye, who are deprived! Hasten to this fountain as it will satiate you. It is this fountain of life that will save you. What am I to do? How shall I impress the hearts with this good news? What sort of a drum am I to beat in the streets in order to make the announcement that this is your God, so that people might hear? What remedy shall I apply to the ears of the people so that they should listen?

God is the central beam of all our plans. If you become one with God, rest assured that God too will be yours. God Almighty shall remain awake for you as you sleep. God shall watch over your enemy and frustrate their designs, while you are unmindful of him. You still do not know the extent of God's powers. Had you known, not a single day would you have grieved over the world. Does he who owns a treasure weep, cry and become sorrowful unto death over the loss of a single coin? Had you been aware of this treasure and knew that at every time of need God is able to fulfil your requirements, why would you look to the world so restlessly? God is a precious treasure; appreciate Him accordingly, for He is your Helper at every step. You are nothing without Him, nor do your resources and your schemes amount to anything.

Do not follow other people for they have become wholly reliant on material means. Just as a snake devours dirt, they consume the filth of inferior worldly means. They gorge themselves on carrion in the manner of vultures and dogs. They have become estranged from God. They have worshipped men, devoured the flesh of swine and consumed wine as though it were water. They have become lifeless, for they place all their reliance on material resources and do not seek the help of God. The heavenly soul has escaped their bodies as a pigeon flies from its nest. They are afflicted with the leprosy of material worship, which has consumed their internal organs. Thus, beware of this leprosy.

I do not forbid you to employ material means within moderation; only that you do not become slaves to them like other nations and that you do not forget the God who is the very Provider of these means. Had you possessed insight, you would have seen that God is everything and all else is nothing. One cannot so much as stretch or fold one's arms without His will. One who is [spiritually] dead may laugh at this, but physical death would have been better for him than such ridicule.

Beware! Though other nations have progressed far in their worldly designs, do not envy them and seek to follow in their footsteps. Listen and know well that they are wholly unaware and unmindful of the God who calls you to Himself. What is their god? Only a helpless mortal. Thus, they are languishing in heedlessness. I do not forbid you from the trade and business of the world; rather, I exhort you not to imitate those who have considered the world to be everything. In all that you do, whether material or religious, continue to supplicate God so that you may be granted strength and ability. Your supplications should not be confined to mere lip service, but you ought to truly believe that every blessing descends from heaven. You will become righteous only when, in every time of need or difficulty, prior to employing any plan, you shut your door and fall down at the threshold of God with your difficulty, and supplicate to Him so that He may resolve it by His Grace. You will then be helped by the Holy Spirit and a path will be opened for you from the unseen. Have mercy on your souls and do not follow those who have completely cut themselves off from God and depend wholly on material means, to the extent that they do not even seek strength from Allah by saying *insha'Allah*. May God open your eyes so that you should realise that He is the central beam of all your plans. If this beam should fall, can the rafters continue to support the roof? Indeed not, for they would suddenly fall and would perhaps even cause a loss of life. In the same way, your plans cannot succeed without the help of God. If you do not seek His assistance, and do not make it your rule to seek strength from Him, you will never achieve anything and will die in immense sorrow. Do not wonder why other nations seem to succeed, while they are not even aware of the existence of God who is your Perfect and Mighty Lord. The answer is that they have been subjected to the trial of the world on account of their abandoning God. At times, He opens the doors of the world to a person who forsakes Him and seeks the joys and pleasures of the world and runs after its riches, in order to try him. Such a one is wholly bereft and deprived in respect of religion. In the

end, he dies with his mind devoted wholly to the world and is cast into an eternal hell. At other times, the trial of God is such that a person is deprived of this world as well. But this latter kind of trial is not as dangerous as the former, for the one who is subjected to the former is more arrogant. In any case, both these groups are described as those who have incurred the wrath of God.

God is the fountainhead of true prosperity. How can people attain true prosperity if they are unaware of the Ever-Living and All-Sustaining God and are ignorant and heedless of Him, and even turn away from Him? Blessed is one who understands this secret and ruined is one who does not.

Similarly, do not follow the philosophers of this world and do not be overawed by them, for they only pursue follies. True philosophy is that which God has taught you in His Word. Those who are in love with secular philosophy are in ruin and truly successful are those who have sought true knowledge and philosophy in the Book of God. Why do you follow the paths of foolishness? Will you teach God that which He does not know? Do you hasten to follow the blind so that they should guide you? O foolish ones! How will he, who is himself blind, guide you? True philosophy is, in reality, acquired through the Holy Spirit as has been promised. Through it you will be carried to the acquisition of pure knowledge, to which others have no access. Ultimately, you will obtain such knowledge by sincerely seeking it. Then will you come to know that this is the very knowledge which revitalizes and revives the heart and guides you to the pinnacle of certainty. How is it possible to receive pure nourishment from he who feeds upon carrion? How can he who is blind help you see? All pure wisdom descends from heaven. What then do you seek from the people of this world? Those whose souls ascend to heaven are the true heirs of wisdom. He who is not satisfied himself cannot bestow satisfaction upon you, but first purity of heart is required; sincerity and purity are needed, after which, everything will be bestowed upon you.”(p. 12-18)

There is plenty to reflect upon in these words. May Allah always keep us on the right path. Ameen.