

FRIDAY SERMON

5th August 2022

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We will continue with the speech that Hazrat Masih Maood (as) delivered at Jalsa Salana in 1900. He spoke about the meaning of the name Muhammad and Ahmad. He spoke about the power of the Holy Prophet's (saw) prayers which melted the harshness of Hazrat Umar's heart and made him one of his most sincere devotees. Then, the Promised Messiah (as) continues in explaining why we can be saved by following the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw). He said:

“The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was a perfect example of one who attained the pleasure of Allah and became the beloved of God. This is why Allah the Exalted clearly states:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ

Meaning, “Say, ‘If you desire to become the beloved of God and for your sins to be forgiven, there is only one way, and that is for you to obey me.’ This means that following the Holy Prophet (saw) never lets a person despair of divine mercy; it becomes a means for the forgiveness of one's sins and makes an individual the beloved of Allah Almighty. Moreover, a person's claim that he loves Allah the Exalted shall only prove to be true and sincere when he follows the Holy Prophet (saw).

This verse clearly establishes that man cannot become the beloved of Allah Almighty and become worthy of His nearness by self-invented forms of spiritual exercise, labour or meditation. Divine light and blessings cannot descend on anyone until they become lost in obedience to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. A person who becomes absorbed in love for the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and takes upon his own soul every death in order to obey and follow him, is conferred the light of faith, love and passion, which frees him from all that is besides Allah, releases him from the bondage of sin and grants him salvation. Such a one is blessed with a holy life in this very world, and is pulled out from the dark and narrow graves of carnal passion and desire. It is to this that the following Hadith alludes: “*Ana hasharul lazi yuhsherun naasa ala qadami*”.

◌Meaning, “I am the one who raises the dead and at whose feet the people are raised.” In short, such knowledge on which salvation is based cannot be conclusively and categorically attained except by a life which is bestowed through the Holy Spirit.

The aforementioned verse of the Holy Quran manifestly and openly declares that such a spiritual life can only be attained by way of obedience to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. All those who defy the Noble Prophet (saw) due to their own close-mindedness and animosity, are under the shade of Satan. Such an individual is deprived of the pure life just mentioned. Although they seem to be alive, they are actually dead and Satan rules their heart.

Be Mindful of Death

It is a pity that such people are not mindful of death. Is death a far-off thing? A person who has reached the age of fifty will live perhaps for a few more years, or in any way. I observe that people remain inexplicably absorbed in counting their money but never bother to count the days of their lives. Unfortunate is the one who gives no attention to counting the days of one's life. It is one's life which is most important and most worthy of being calculated, lest death arrives and a person is forced to depart from this world deprived. It is established from the Holy Quran that just as the heavenly life begins in this world, so too a life of hell begins here on earth. When a person is at the brink of death with his desires unfulfilled, he suffers an excruciating form of hell. When one sees that he is about to depart this world and when he becomes afflicted by cholera, plague, typhoid, palpitations, or some other severe disease, he experiences a death before his actual death, which crushes his heart and soul, as it were, and this is also a sort of deprivation. Certain ailments do not let a person live in peace for even a few moments and finish a man within no time. A person who realizes that he is nothing more than a creature bound to die, will reflect on the means by which to save himself from that punishment which consumes a person through grief.

One of our relatives began to suffer from colic and his condition reached a state where he could no longer pass urine. He vomited a black substance after which he could no longer hold up his head. It was at this time that he said: 'I have now realized that the world is worth nothing.' Always remember, the world has no value. Who can say that those of us who are present here at this time will also definitely be alive in the coming year? Many of our friends who were alive last year are no longer with us today. What did they know that they would no longer be in the year to come? Similarly, who can say at this time that he will definitely be present when the new year dawns, and who can know the names of such people who are in the list of those destined to pass on. Hence, an individual who does not reconcile with God before he dies, and who gives precedence to his superficial relations, is utterly foolish and ignorant.

Evil Company

Keeping evil company is also from among the things which lead a man to ruin. One may observe that Abu Jahl not only perished himself, but also took many others along

with him to destruction—the people who would go and sit in his company. His meetings and gatherings were characterized by nothing except mockery and ridicule. These people would say:

إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ يُرَادُّ

Meaning, this is mere fabrication. Now do tell us, is it the light of him who was named a fraud and a deceiver that shines in the world today or the light of someone else? Abu Jahl is dead and has nothing but curses to his name. However, observe the lofty grandeur of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Day and night, rather, at every moment, people far and wide invoke salutations upon him and he commands a following of 990 million Muslims [today it is 1.8 billion]. If today Abu Jahl returned, he would be astonished to witness the same man whom he once saw walking the streets of Mecca alone and whom he subjected to every possible grief, with a community consisting of 990 million people; in fact, this very sight would be enough to kill him. This is proof of the truthfulness of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet (saw). If Allah the Exalted had not been with him, the Holy Prophet (saw) could not have triumphed in such a manner. How numerous were the efforts and schemes that were employed against him out of enmity and opposition, but ultimately, all of these adversaries were frustrated and met with failure. In this state of affairs, at the very outset when there were only a handful of people with the Holy Prophet (saw), who could imagine that he would attain such greatness in the world and that he would emerge safe and unscathed from all the conspiracies of his opponents to gain victory? But bear in mind that it is the custom of Allah Almighty that the ultimate victory belongs to the servants of God. Conspiracies of murder, edicts of disbelief, and varying forms of injury can do them no harm. Allah the Exalted is true when He states:

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

Meaning, “these evil disbelievers desire to extinguish the light of Allah with the breath of their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, even if the disbelievers dislike it”. What exactly is the *breath of their mouths*? It is when he who belongs to God is branded a cheat, labelled a deceiver, dubbed a disbeliever, called irreligious. Therefore, those who level such allegations desire to extinguish the light of Allah the Exalted, but they can never succeed.

The armies of those who belong to Allah Almighty are in heaven; and so, the disbelievers and worldly people cannot see them. If they came to know of these hosts and if they were able to behold them even slightly, they would die of fear. But this army cannot be seen until one is covered by the mantle of Allah Almighty.

The Path to Great Prosperity

I return to my actual subject and say that there is only one path appointed by Allah Almighty to attain ultimate prosperity and that is to obey the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. As Allah the Exalted states:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ

That is, come and follow me, so that Allah may also take you as a friend. This does not mean that one should engage in worship in the form of a tradition. If this is the essence of religion, then of what significance is Prayer and fasting? To refrain from a certain action, or to perform an action of one's own accord—this is not the true meaning of Islam. The meaning of Islam is for one to place their head to be slaughtered like a sheep, just as the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: 'My death, my life, my Prayer and my sacrifices are for Allah alone, and I am the first to put forth my neck to be sacrificed.' This pride of Islam was first and foremost the distinction of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, not Abraham (as) or anyone else. It is to this very point that the following words allude:

*I was a Prophet even when Adam was in the initial
stages of creation between water and clay.*

Although the Holy Prophet (saw) appeared after all other Prophets, the call that 'my death and my life are all for the sake of Allah Almighty' was not proclaimed by anyone else.

The Actual State of the Muslims

Observe the state of the world today. Our Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, demonstrated through his own actions that his death and his life were all for the sake of Allah Almighty alone, but then, there are the Muslims of today. If someone is asked whether they are a Muslim, they will respond in the affirmative by saying: 'All praise belongs to Allah.' But the man whose creed they recite was one whose entire life was based on the guiding principle of devotion to God. Yet the Muslim of today lives for the world and dies for the world. Until they finally begin to breathe their last, it is the world that is their objective, the object of their love and desire. How then can such a one say that he follows the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him?

This is an instance for contemplation; do not consider this to be an ordinary matter. It is not easy to be a Muslim. Do not rest until you develop obedience for the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and inculcate a true image of Islam within yourselves. The current state of affairs may be likened to a shell and nothing

more. You may call yourselves Muslims without truly following the Messenger of Allah, but bear in mind that it is unwise to be content with a name alone, and nothing but the husk. It is written that a Muslim told a Jew to accept Islam, to which the Jew responded: 'Do not be pleased by a mere name. I named my son Khalid (i.e. one who lives long) but I was forced to lay him to rest before the start of the evening.' So, seek the essence. Do not be satisfied with mere names. How shameful is it to call oneself the follower of such a magnificent Prophet, yet spend a life akin to that of disbelievers? Show an example of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in your own lives and foster within yourselves a similar state. Be mindful that if you have not developed such a condition, then you are a follower of Satan.

In short, it can now be very well understood that becoming the beloved of Allah Almighty ought to be the prime objective of a person's life. Until a person is endeared to Allah the Exalted and he does not receive His love, he cannot live a life of success. Now this is not possible until one sincerely obeys and follows the Messenger of Allah. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has shown through his own example what Islam truly is, so inculcate that very same Islam within yourselves so that you may become the beloved of God." (p. 80)

May Allah help each one among us to understand our obligations well and to fulfill them in the best possible way insha Allah. Ameen.