

FRIDAY SERMON

1st March 2024

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We continue reading from Malfuzaat Volume 10. We are reading records of the last month in the life of Hazrat Masih Maood (as). We continue from where we left off last week. Explaining the purpose of the advent of a Khalifah, Hazrat Masih Maood (as) said:

“Look, this human race started with Hazrat Adam (as). After an extended time, when the practical conduct of human beings deteriorated and man—having forgotten the true purpose of life and the real objective of Divine scripture—fell away from the path of righteousness, Allah the Exalted, out of His sheer mercy, guided the world and brought it out from the pit of misguidance through a Messenger and Appointee. The glorious majesty [of God] showed its luster and the light of cognizance [of God] was established in the world like a brilliant lamp. Faith was transformed into a brilliant and luminous faith.

In short, this has been the practice of Allah the Exalted since eternity, that after the passage of sometime people forget the teachings of an earlier Prophet and thereby lose the path of rectitude, the wherewithal of faith, and the light of Divine cognizance. A perilous darkness of misguidance, error, vice, and transgression encompasses the world from all four sides. It is then that the attributes of Allah the Exalted are roused and the name of God, His *Tauhid* [the Oneness of God], and His sublime excellences are made known anew in the world through a great man of extraordinary rank. Clear proofs of the existence of God Almighty are thus provided through thousands of Signs and it so happens that the cognizance of God, righteousness, and piety—that had been lost—become established in the world and a grand revolution takes place. In short, this Movement of mine has been established in accordance with this ancient practice of God.

Remember well that it is indeed faith that recognizes faith and it is with light that light can be identified. The sun is indeed present in the world, but what benefit can an individual whose eyes lack the light of vision draw from the sun?

It is most perilous to casually assert that there is no need for an Imam or a Reformer. Verily I say that there are some great hardships and ravines immensely difficult to traverse on the path to find God Almighty. Faith does not merely mean reciting the *Kalimah* “ *Laa ilaha illallah Muhammadur Rasoolullah*”[‘There is no one worthy of worship except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah’] with the tongue.

Faith is a very exquisite and profound mystery. It refers to a belief that dispels the egoistic passions from man and engenders a state within him that incinerates sin. The condition of those who achieve the true light of faith and real understanding becomes something quite unique. They are not like the ordinary people of the world. They are distinct from the rest. To become satisfied and smug that one has now become a believer and has mastered all levels of faith merely by giving up an old sin, is but wishful thinking.

Look, human nature is indeed such that it does not always remain in one state. There is no reason to become satisfied until it is established, through long experience and perseverance, that you have really now made God your first preference and your ability to ward off sins has become permanent and you have been granted *nafs-e-mutma'innah* [the soul at rest] after having being rescued from *nafs-e-ammara* [the self that incites to evil] and *nafs-e-lawwamah* [the self-reproaching self] and you have achieved genuine piety in your practices.

Look, Allah the Exalted says:

سَيَذَرُ مَنْ يَخْشَى

"Verily, he truly prospers who purifies himself (87:15).

Only he finds success who is able to develop comprehensive piety and *taqwa* [fear of God] and purity in himself and does not ever experience any bouts of commission of sins and disobedience.

When a person has excelled both in casting away evil and pursuit of virtue, only then can he achieve success. Faith is not such an easy matter. It is not possible to achieve true faith until a man brings about a death upon his self.

Look, there are only two hallmarks of faith. The first stage is that man should abandon sin and should be able to achieve a state [of mind] in which he considers commission of a sin to be akin to throwing himself into a fire or putting his finger into the mouth of black snake or drinking from the cup of some lethal poison. You should also keep in mind that mere abstinence from evil is not virtue. Virtue lies in pursuit of good along with abstinence from evil. When a person has progressed to this level in his abstinence from sin, he should then perform righteous deeds earnestly in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet (saw) as is the intent of God Almighty. No constraint should develop in his mind. And he should become capable of doing good with an open heart. Look, some people are inherently such that they do not have the power and ability to commit certain kinds of sins. Can a person, who is impotent boast that he does not commit adultery? Or can one who barely affords a loaf of bread worth a few cents, boast that he does not drink wine? Or can a person who is old, weak, and helpless and is in a wretched and abject state, boast that he always shows patience, self-restraint, and forbearance, and does not confront people and forgives them? Thus, some people are just intrinsically incapable of committing certain sins.

It is quite possible that there might be some simpletons who have not committed any sin in their entire lifetime. Therefore, just giving up sin is not the only requisite of virtue. Pursuit of good is also a noble component. No one can be perfect until he drinks both kinds of elixirs. In the chapter *ad-Dahr* [of the Holy Quran] Allah the Exalted has mentioned that one elixir is *kafuri* [of camphor] and the second elixir is of *zanjabil* [dry ginger]. The chosen and dear ones [of God] are given both elixirs to drink. By drinking the *kafuri* elixir, the heart of the person is cooled and the faculties to commit sin are calmed down. Camphor has the ability to neutralize the foul matter. The faculties to commit sin get totally suppressed in those who are given the *kafuri* elixir to drink and they are no longer able to commit sin. They experience a kind of calm that is called *shanti*.

A heavenly light descends like water upon them that washes off all the impurities of their heart, and all the contacts of carnal life are severed from them, and the inferno of the fire of sin cools off once for all.

But remember, this alone is not virtue and distinction. I recall the incident of someone. He was invited by someone to a feast. After having fed him the meal, the host, according to the custom, apologized for not doing enough. The guest was such a hot-headed person that he became very angry upon hearing this apology of the

host, and said: ‘Do you intend to put me under an obligation to you by saying this? You have not done a favour to me. Rather, I have done a great favour to you.’

The host again expressed his gratitude and implored him to continue. The guest said, ‘When you were busy with your hospitality and were totally unmindful of me, I was alone here, and I could have set your house on fire. How much loss would you have suffered? So, I have done a favour to you and not vice versa.’

This is only an illustration of not committing evil, but know it for certain that no one can present this kind of example before God Almighty. There, you will find the reward for what you earned. Allah the Exalted has likened abstinence from sin with drinking the *kafuri* elixir.

The second stage after this is that man be made to drink the *zanjabili* elixir. The word *zanjabil* denotes dry ginger. It is a compound word derived from *zana* and *jabal*. The effect of ginger is that it increases natural vigour. The literal meaning of this word is to climb a mountain. The implication is that just as the arduous task of mountain climbing is made easy by the use of this tonic, similarly, it is very difficult to climb the mountain of virtue, but it becomes easy with the spiritual elixir of *zanjabil*.

To carry out pure deeds sincerely and meritoriously, solely for the sake of Allah, is also a mountain and like a ravine that is very difficult to traverse. Not everyone’s foot can reach it.

Look, in worldly matters there is an obvious outcome that is in mind, and effort is made for a specific matter. One works hard keeping a specific purpose and objective in mind. How hard one tries to succeed! What great hardships are endured to achieve respect and rank so much so that sometimes one becomes insane and crazy due to these efforts, and at times one gets sick and suffers from such ailments as ulceration of the lungs and emaciation, etc.

When the ravines of worldly trails are so arduous, imagine how much effort and hard work is needed to cross the ravines of religious and spiritual objectives whose outcomes are still behind a veil of the unseen, and whose very existence or non-existence can be elusive to some sceptic minds. To imagine that we can reach God by the blow of one breath, and we can be purified merely by verbal acknowledgement, is the idea of those who have not heard or seen reformation.

Remember that the stages of purification are very distant and beyond such conjectures. To achieve purity and truly save one's self from minor and major sins is the achievement of those who constantly keep God in the forefront of their eyes. Only they can be like the angels.

Look, if you stand a goat before a lion, it would forget even about eating and drinking, let alone that it should stray into the fields and eat out of the crops grown by people with hard labour and great efforts. So, the same is the case of man. If he is convinced that he is seeing God or, at the least, that God is watching him, then how would it be possible for him to commit sin? Of course not! This is a natural rule that when one is convinced and has definitive knowledge that to put one's foot at a certain spot would result in death—would he do it? Or would he insert his finger in a hole which has a black snake in it and he has himself seen it? Or can he venture into a jungle without any arms where he knows that a bloodthirsty lion roams? Of course not!

Thus, it is human nature that he avoids and stays away from the place if he is convinced of its peril. The essence of faith is elusive and has not been understood until his cognizance of God reaches this level and until he gets convinced that sin and disobedience of God is a consuming fire or that it is a lethal poison.

Faith is incomplete without such perfect conviction and understanding. What use is faith and what can be its benefit if it has no impact on his actions or which cannot produce even a trivial change in the condition of man!

Those who think they can continue to spend life comfortably in the pursuit of worldly affairs and still find God and can be purified as well, without any effort or struggle, are totally mistaken. It is the collective verdict of all Prophets, saints, and holy men that it is the prerogative of God to purify and it is absolutely essential and necessary to follow the footsteps of the Holy Prophet (saw) in order to absorb this blessing of God, as He says: “Say, ‘If you love Allah, follow me: *then* will Allah love you’ 3:32). (p. 355)

We will stop here for today. Let us remember this last verse well and let us all do our best to try to imitate the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) in what we do *insha Allah* under all circumstances. May Allah grant each one among us the capacity to do so. *Ameen*.