

FRIDAY SERMON

26th April 2024

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These days, the Palestinians who have been inhabiting the land that is now known as Israel are being subjected to great persecution that may be unique in their history especially since the creation of Israel in 1948. They are being bombarded by sophisticated weapons day and night and they have no weapons with which they could defend themselves. This situation has been created by the USA, UK, France and Germany and several lesser-known states. These days, they are the same countries which are providing arms to Israel to destroy the Palestinian territories and to kill the Palestinians including well as women and children. The statistics about the damage are very alarming and more destructions and killing will be known when the war will end if it ever ends.

Unfortunately, we cannot do much for these Palestinians except to pray for them and seek Allah's help for them. Most probably never in our lifetime have we been hearing of the butchering of so many Muslims and Christians as well. So, we should be doing the little that we can do and solicit Allah so that He might help them with His armies that are not seen by men.

Last week, I read some extracts from the writings of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) about the grandeur, the great capacities of Allah to whom we pray day and night. I will continue with some more extracts to motivate us to devote more time to pray in such a way that the situation of the people of Palestine on the ground might change and they might see better days. May Allah grant us the opportunity and capacity to do so. Ameen.

The Promised Messiah (as) said:

“I repeat that you should not be content with having made a superficial covenant of *bai’at*, for this amounts to nothing. God looks at your hearts and will deal with you accordingly. Look here, I discharge the obligation of conveying my message by telling you that sin is a poison—do not consume it. Disobedience to God is a filthy death—safeguard yourselves against it. Supplicate so that you might be granted strength. He who at the time of supplication does not believe that God has power over all things, except that which might be contrary to His promise, is not of my community. Whosoever does not give up lying and deceit, is not of my community. Whosoever is consumed by material greed and does not lift his eyes to look at the hereafter, is not of my community. Whosoever does not truly give precedence to religion over the world, is not of my community. Whosoever does not repent of every vice and every evil deed, such as drunkenness, gambling, lustful glances, deceit, bribery and every misappropriation, is not of my community. Whosoever does not observe the five daily prayers, is not of my community. Whosoever is not constant in supplication and does not remember God with humility, is not of my community. Whosoever does not discard the company of an evil one who influences him towards vice, is not of my community.

Whosoever does not honour his parents and does not obey them in all matters that are not contrary to the Quran, and is careless in serving them diligently, is not of my community. Whosoever does not treat his wife and her relatives with gentleness and benevolence, is not of my community. He who refrains from doing even the least bit of good to his neighbour, is not of my community. He who does not desire to forgive an offender and harbours rancour, is not of my community. Every husband who deceives his wife, and every wife who deceives her husband, is not of my community. Whosoever breaks the covenant of *bai’at* in any respect, is not of my community. He who does not truly believe in me as the Promised Messiah and Awaited Mahdi, is not of my community.

Whosoever is unwilling to obey me in all that is *ma'roof* [good], is not of my community. Whosoever associates with my opponents and endorses what they say, is not of my community. Every adulterer, transgressor, drunkard, murderer, thief, gambler, deceiver, bribe-taker, usurper, tyrant, liar, forger and those who sit amongst them, and everyone who slanders his brothers or sisters and does not repent of his foul deeds, and does not abstain from evil company, is not of my community.

All these are poisons. You cannot consume this poison and survive; light and darkness cannot exist together. Everyone who possesses a crooked disposition and is not straightforward with God, can never achieve the blessing that is bestowed on the purehearted. How fortunate are those who cleanse their hearts and purify them of every impurity and swear an oath of loyalty to their God, for they will never be destroyed. It is not possible that God should humiliate them, for they are God's and God is theirs. They will be safeguarded at the time of every calamity. Foolish is the enemy who moves against them, for they are in the lap of God and enjoy His support.

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 abandons 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?

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 fly 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.” (Our Teachings, p. 15)

So let us all try to know Allah better and let us strive to understand how important He is to our life. May He help the Palestinians, help us as well and help the world and diminish the catastrophes that are besetting the world including our little island almost daily. Ameen.