

FRIDAY SERMON

1st November 2024

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In the previous sermon we read what Hazrat Masih Maood(as) spoke said about the prevailing education of his times. According to him the knowledge contained in the Holy Quran is of far greater value than what was being taught and for a Muslim it was imperative that he learnt of the teachings of the Holy Quran prior to reading about modern day sciences. Then the Promised Messiah(as) said:

“It was necessary, therefore, to explain such subtle and spiritual concepts to them through metaphors appropriate for them, and to help them comprehend the real truth by using similitudes. This is why the Holy Quran adopted this method to make them understand the reality of Paradise but it was stated also that:

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ

“A description of the Garden promised to the righteous (47:16).

This is an example and not to be taken literally. It is apparent from these words of the Holy Quran that Paradise is actually something altogether different. It has also been clearly mentioned in the traditions of the Holy Prophet (saw) that the comforts of Paradise should not be compared with the palpable material, worldly experiences because it is something that no eye has ever seen nor any ear has ever heard, etc.

Yet the examples given to illustrate the comforts of Paradise are things that we do see and hear. At one place in the Holy Quran, Allah the Exalted says about Paradise :

“And give glad tidings to those who believe and do good works, that for them are Gardens beneath which flow streams (2:26).

In this verse, faith and good deeds are likened to Paradise and streams; meaning that, Paradise results from faith, and the streams therein result from righteous deeds. Thus, just as a garden would perish quickly without streams and water and would not last long, similarly faith without righteous deeds is not of much benefit. Then, at another place, faith has been likened to trees and it is said that the faith to which Muslims are called is akin to trees, and righteous deeds irrigate these trees.

In short, the more one ponders, the more insight he accumulates. Just as it is required of a farmer to sow the seed, so is faith similarly necessary and obligatory for the one who wishes to harvest spiritual advances, as this amounts to sowing the seeds of spirituality. And then again,

just as the farmer irrigates his field or garden, similarly the spiritual garden of faith needs good deeds for its irrigation.

Remember it well that faith without righteous deeds is as useless as a magnificent garden would be without a stream or other source of irrigation. Trees may be of a superb quality, capable of bearing high quality fruit, but if the owner grows careless in watering them, the result of this is something that is known to everyone. The same is the case of the tree of faith in spiritual life.

Faith is like a tree for which the righteous deeds of man work like streams in the spiritual sense for its irrigation. Furthermore, just as a farmer is compelled to toil and trouble on top of seeding and watering, similarly God Almighty has required and necessitated spiritual striving for obtaining the comely fruits of spiritual blessings and bounties. Accordingly, He says: "And as for those who strive in Our path—We will surely guide them in Our ways" (29:70).

The human soul is like a vine and it has three stages. *Nafs-e-ammarah* [the self that incites to evil]—*Ammarah* conveys a sense of exaggeration; *ammarah* means what takes one towards evil, one that drives towards the commission of much evil.

The second type of *nafs* [self] is *nafs-e-lawwamah* [the self-reproaching self]. *Lawwamah* is said of one who rebukes.

Man commits a misdeed at some time but simultaneously his conscience reproaches him for having committed this evil and he becomes remorseful. This tendency is ingrained within human nature. Nevertheless, there are also some dispositions of the type that become so mired, on account of their foul condition and evil deeds, that their disposition or nature cannot, in fact, be considered as rightly inclined anymore. They fail to even feel this reproach. However, one who has a pure nature, is sensitive to this feeling and sometimes the same self-rebuke makes him rectify his course and leads him to salvation, albeit this state is not one that can be relied upon.

There is a third condition of the self, which has been termed as *mutma'innah* [(the soul) at peace]. It is attained by man when he has overcome the challenges of *nafs-e-ammarah* and then of *nafs-e-lawwamah* and has achieved victory in this battle. *Nafs-e-ammarah* is the enemy of man, and is the enemy hidden in his own home. *Lawwamah* also intends to mount an attack off and on, but it desists. As opposed to these two conditions, when man progresses to the stage of *nafs-e-mutma'innah* [the soul at peace] it is as if his enemy has come under his sway and he has achieved a clear victory over it and a truce has been agreed to.

The ultimate limit of human progress and the zenith of life for a man is to attain the state of *mutma'innah* [at peace]. This is the state where his pleasure becomes the pleasure of God and his displeasure becomes God's displeasure; his will is the will of God and he speaks when God calls him to speak and he walks when God makes him walk. All his deeds and all his activity and inactivity are executed not by him, but are carried out by God. A kind of death descends upon the earlier condition of the person and a mantle of new life is bestowed upon him afresh. Thereafter, such a man becomes a man of distinction.

In short, God Almighty has created two systems side by side in the law of nature—one physical and the other spiritual. Whatever is made available physically, that very same is happening

spiritually as well. Thus, the individual who works hard and strives in his endeavours, keeping both these systems in mind, will make quick progress. His knowledge will be vast.

In each situation, every physical action will reflect its spiritual counterpart: [This world is preparation for the Hereafter] *according to a hadith*.

We observe in the physical system that a physical farmer is still in need of water from the heavens despite all the regular hard work and labour. And if the heavenly water does not descend upon his crop, along with all his labour and efforts, his crop will be ruined and labour wasted. Accordingly, this very same scenario prevails in the spiritual realm. Mere dry faith cannot be of any benefit to man until spiritual rain descends and cleanses him by washing his inner impurities with mighty Signs. Accordingly, the Holy Quran points to this very reality when it says:

“By the heaven that pours down rain, and by the earth that brings forth herbage.” (86:12-13)

Some people object, out of their ignorance, as to why God had to make use of oaths. However, in the end such people merely embarrass themselves on account of their hastiness.

Essentially, an oath counts as a substitute for testimony. Even in secular administration, we observe that some litigations are decided primarily on [proclamations under] oath. Hence, in the same way, God Almighty swears by the heavenly rain and presents this physical phenomenon of nature as a witness that just as the greenery of the earth and flourishing of the fields depend upon heavenly rain; and in the absence of heavenly rain, no greenery can endure upon the earth; and the earth becomes dead, even the water of the wells dries up; and the world is turned upside down resulting in devastation; people die from hunger and thirst; men and animals, birds, and beasts feel its impact—similarly, there is a spiritual world exactly comparable to it as well.

Remember that mere dry faith can never ever bring about salvation or real comfort without the heavenly rain which descends in the form of converse and communion with God.

Those who believe they can attain salvation without spiritual rain and without an Appointee of God, and that they are not in need of the Reformer and Appointee of God, and they already have everything they need—they should also make water for themselves¹ in their own homes. Why do they need rain to descend from the clouds? It is right in front of their eyes as to how the material system is being sustained. Thus, you can understand from this that there are exactly comparable needs and requirements for spiritual life. This boast of man that he has learnt everything and has acquired all knowledge is a totally false assertion. What does human knowledge amount to? It is like a needle after being dipped in an ocean [i.e., the tiny droplet of water that clings to the needle in comparison with the ocean]. This is the state of human knowledge—how little he has been given of wisdom and knowledge!

O Bedouin! I wonder how you can reach the Ka ‘bah,

When the road you have taken leads to Turkistan.

It is, therefore, astounding that some people make lofty claims after acquiring just routine traditional learning, while the path of faith is so very subtle and fine and its truths and spiritual philosophy are not things that everyone can claim expertise in.

This religion has indeed come from heaven and the means to keep it fresh and green forever and always shall also continue to descend from heaven itself. I regret to say that if the people educated in mundane sciences and traditional fields are asked, most of them will turn out to be knowledgeable only in those areas but here I also wish to say to these gentlemen who are learned in mundane and worldly knowledge:

O thou who art studied in Greek philosophy!

Study also the wisdom of people of faith.

I have observed that there are also many in this day and age who consider religion to be fanaticism and they do not hold any respect for it in their hearts. They claim that the dwellers of Arabia were savages and illiterate—that the Quran was sent down at that time apropos for their needs. Now the world has advanced and this is the age of enlightenment. Now religion needs to be amended to suit the present times. But let it be known that religion is not some absurdity. Quite the contrary, real comfort of the world and salvation in the Hereafter are bound up with this religion alone.

Those unlettered people of Arabia who were the sincere servants of this religion—their being unlettered was itself a miracle in that these same unlettered people, after coming under the sway of Quranic teachings, worked such wonders that claimants of great scholarship were utterly unable to compete against them.” (Malfuzaat Vol 10 P 512)

We will stop here for today. We will continue insha Allah next time. May Allah guide us all to value these teachings in our everyday life. Ameen!