

FRIDAY SERMON

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Today insha Allah we will be presenting to our brothers and sisters a fifth part of Hazrat Masih Maood's (as) explanation of his mission to the Englishman Mr. Dickson who visited him in Qadian by the end of the year 1901, almost 125 years ago. Of course, we are reading from Malfuzaat Volume 4 in English. We continue from where we left of last week. Hazrat Masih Maood(as) said:

“If what I have explained is not deemed to be correct, it would be false to suggest that those who are physically blind in this world would be blind in the hereafter also. The fact of the matter is that the key to all forms of pleasure and light in the next world is to recognise God Almighty without any error and develop deeper insight of His attributes and names. The verse just mentioned explicitly indicates that we take our punishment along with us from this world into the next. It is one's benighted life in this world and one's impure actions here which shall become manifest as the punishment of hell in the hereafter. This will not be something new and unrelated.

Those who closes the doors in their home are deprived of light and they cannot receive fresh, life-giving air. One who consumes some poison cannot continue to live. In the same manner, an individual who distances himself from God and commits sin, becomes overshadowed by darkness and is gripped by punishment. The Urdu word *gunah* (sin) was derived from the Arabic *janah* meaning 'inclination' or 'moving away from the centre.' Hence, when a person shuns God, turns away from His light and distances himself from that divine radiance, which descends upon the hearts from God alone, he falls into darkness, which brings about the divine chastisement that such a person experiences.

Moreover, the nature of punishment with which one is afflicted accords with the sort of aversion that one exhibits towards God. However, if an individual once again desires to return to that central point and brings himself to that station on which divine light descends, he is able to find that lost light. In the world, we observe that light can only enter our room if we open the shutters. Similarly, in the spiritual world, 'returning' to the central point is the

only way to attain pleasure and this saves one from the pain and agony that arose when one moved away from this centre. This phenomenon is called repentance (*tawbah*).

This very darkness which results in the manner that I have described is called misguidance and hell. The pleasure that is derived from returning to the original source is what represents paradise. Forsaking sin and returning to virtue—which draws the pleasure of Allah Almighty—serves as an atonement for sin, and drives it away and suppresses its effects as well. This is why Allah the Exalted has stated:

إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبُنَّ السَّيِّئَاتِ

In other words, **good works drive away evil works**. Since evil carries the poison of death and virtue possesses the antidote of life, the method of dispelling the poison of evil is nothing other than virtue. We could also say, in other words, that punishment is the absence of pleasure, and salvation is synonymous with pleasure and bliss. Just as illness describes a condition where the body shifts away from its normal state, health is a state when one's condition is at its normal state.

One begins to feel pain if one's hand, foot, or any other limb shifts from its original state, rendering the part unusable; and if this state continues for some time, not only does the limb itself become permanently damaged, in fact, this even begins to have an adverse effect on other parts of the body as well. This is precisely the state in spirituality too, in that when a person turns away from **God Almighty Who is the centre, the actual source and essence of one's life, and abandons the religion** of human nature, it is at such time that chastisement begins. If a person's heart has not died completely and if he still possesses the element of perception, he is able to acutely sense that punishment. If one does not reform this disturbed state, there is a risk that all of one's spiritual faculties may slowly but surely become useless and ineffectual, which is the beginning of a severe punishment.

Now, it is very clearly understandable that no punishment comes from beyond, rather it comes forth from within. I do not deny that punishment is an act of God. Without a doubt, it is God Who gives punishment, but in the same manner that when someone consumes poison, Allah causes them to perish. Hence, the action of God follows the action of man. It is to this very point that Allah the Lord of Glory alludes in the following words:

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَةُ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ

Meaning, the punishment of God is the fire kindled by God and its flame rises from the heart of man. This expounds in explicit terms that the actual seed of punishment is one's own inner impurity, which takes on the form of punishment from God.

Similarly, the actual source of the pleasure of paradise is one's own deeds. If an individual does not forsake the religion of human nature, if they do not stray from the centre of equilibrium, and if—being fully aligned with the demands of man's servitude to God and

divinity—they partake of God’s light, they may be likened to the healthy limb that has not shifted from its proper place and continues to function in the manner that God has created it, feeling no pain, but only pleasure. Allah the Exalted states in the Holy Quran:

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

Meaning, “give glad tidings to those who believe and do good works that for them are Gardens beneath which flow streams.” In this verse Allah the Exalted has likened faith to a garden and good deeds to streams. The relationship that exists between a flowing stream and a tree is the same **that exists between good deeds and faith**. Just as it is impossible for a garden to be verdant and fruitful without water, no faith can be beneficial and effective unless accompanied by good deeds. So what is paradise? It is made by vistas of faith and deeds personified. As is the case with hell, paradise also is no external entity. In fact, a person’s paradise springs forth from within. It ought to be remembered that the pleasures received in this place are as a result of the holy life and being that is formed in the physical world. Pure faith is similar to a plant, and good deeds or lofty morals serve as streams that water that plant so it remains verdant and fresh. In this world, these are similar to things seen in dreams, but in the next world, they will be perceptible and visibly apparent.

Hence, this is the reason it is written that when the inhabitants of paradise receive these bounties, they will proclaim:

*‘This is what was given us before,’ and gifts mutually
resembling shall be brought to them.*(104:7-8)

This does not mean that the milk, honey, grapes, pomegranates and other such things that we eat and drink in this world will be given to us in the next life—not at all. The things of the hereafter will be completely different in their nature and state; they will be similar only in name. Moreover, even though all of the bounties of the next world have been illustrated in a physical manner, we are also told at the same time that they illuminate the soul and nurture a deeper insight of God.

Their source is the soul and virtue. To infer from the words رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ (*This is what was given us before*) that the bounties of this world are what one will receive in the hereafter as well, is absolutely incorrect. Instead, the purport of Allah Almighty in this verse is that those believers who performed good deeds will have created a paradise with their own hands, the fruits of which they will enjoy in the next life as well. Since the believers will have already eaten that fruit spiritually in this world, they will recognise it in the hereafter as well. Thus, they will say that these are the same fruits; these are the same spiritual advancements that were achieved in the world as well, and so the pious and devout will be able to recognise them.

I would like to clearly reiterate that hell and paradise are underpinned by a deeper philosophy according to the manner that I have just explained. However, no one should forget that the punishments of this world are for the purpose of warning and to serve as a lesson, in order to maintain discipline. Both rule and mercy bear a mutual relationship with one another. The punishments and rewards of this world are reflections of this relationship. This is how human deeds and actions are preserved and recorded, just as sound is recorded on the phonograph. Until one develops divine cognisance, one cannot reflect on this system and derive any pleasure or benefit.

To attain insight of the Divine it is necessary to first recognise God, and one cannot recognise God until one remains in the company of a godly person for some time with pure intentions and sincerity. After this a person will be able to easily understand the phenomenon of punishment and reward, and the system of this world and the hereafter. Reflecting upon this exposition it becomes clear that the philosophy of heaven and hell expounded by the Holy Quran has not been explained by any other scripture. A study of the Holy Quran also reveals that God Almighty has expounded this concept in stages. However, this secret is disclosed only to those who strive in the way of God Almighty and contemplate with a pure soul. For nothing excellent can be attained without pain. If someone were to inquire as to why all people do not know about this concept, I would say that one may observe how our various senses perform different tasks. For example, the eyes can see, the tongue can taste and speak, the ears can hear. In other words, every sense is responsible for its own responsibilities and function. It is not possible for someone to place a piece of sugar candy next to their ear and then describe its taste, nor is it possible for the eyes to hear an external voice, or for the tongue to see. In the same way, there are special faculties that must be employed to perceive the intricate secrets of divine cognisance and only these distinct faculties can perceive such secrets. God has given these faculties to everyone but very few put them to use. Conjecture cannot have a strong effect. This is why philosophers are very weak in faith and cannot move past conjecture. When Plato, who was deemed a wise and great thinker, was about to die, he asked for a rooster to be slaughtered as an offering to some idol. This demonstrates how weak he was in faith; he could not hold fast to belief in God's Unity." (P97)

We will end here for today and we will continue insha Allah next time. May Allah help each one among us to make a personal effort to understand these words of the Promised Messiah(as). May we all do our best to live a pious life and may we not allow Satan to delude us concerning Allah. Ameen!