

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

SELF DISCIPLINE – A PANACEA TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WITH ALLAH'S GRACE AND HIS MERCY



قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢﴾

[23:2] Surely, success does come to the believers,

[23:2] یقیناً مومن کامیاب ہو گئے۔

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خِشْعُونَ ﴿٣﴾

[23:3] Who are humble in their Prayers,

[23:3] وہ جو اپنی نماز میں عاجزی کرنے والے ہیں۔

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٤﴾

[23:4] And who shun all that which is vain,

[23:4] اور وہ جو لغو سے اعراض کرنے والے ہیں۔

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكٰوةِ فٰعِلُونَ ﴿٥﴾

[23:5] And who are active in paying the Zakat,

[23:5] اور وہ جو زکوٰۃ (کا حق) ادا کرنے والے ہیں۔

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَفْوَاجِهِمْ حٰفِظُونَ ﴿٦﴾

[23:6] And who guard their chastity —

[23:6] اور وہ جو اپنی شرم گاہوں کی حفاظت کرنے والے ہیں۔

إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ

أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٧﴾

[23:7] Except from their wives or what their right hands possess, for then they are not to be blamed;

[23:7] مگر اپنی بیویوں سے نہیں یا ان سے (بھی نہیں) جن کے ان کے دابنے ہاتھ مالک ہوئے۔ پس یقیناً وہ ملامت نہیں کئے جائیں گے۔

فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ

الْعَادُونَ ﴿٨﴾

[23:8] But those who seek *anything* beyond that are the transgressors –

[23:8] پس جو اس سے ہٹ کر کچھ چاہے تو یہی لوگ ہیں جو حد سے تجاوز کرنے والے ہیں۔

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ

رِعُونَ ﴿٩﴾

[23:9] And who are watchful of their trusts and their covenants,

[23:9] اور وہ لوگ جو اپنی امانتوں اور اپنے عہد کی نگرانی کرنے والے ہیں۔

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

[23:10] And who are strict in the observance of their Prayers.

[23:10] اور وہ لوگ جو اپنی نمازوں پر محافظ بنے رہتے ہیں۔

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ ﴿١١﴾

[23:11] These are the heirs,

[23:11] یہی ہیں وہ جو وارث بننے والے ہیں۔

الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا

خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

﴿١٢﴾

[23:12] Who will inherit Paradise. They will abide therein.

Ameer Chairman, Sadr Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya, Regional President and Missionary,
Members of the National Executive Committee present, Respected brethren,

Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullah Wabarakatuh

I wish to express my sincere gratitude first to ALLAH Almighty for granting all of us herein assembled, the strength and will to once again present ourselves here on this auspicious occasion. Secondly, to the organizers of the function for giving me the honour to stand before you and address this august assembly.

My observation is that the jamat's programmes have greatly improved at all levels, especially in respect of the issues that are being addressed. This is yet another blessing on the jamat. Allah Almighty continues to cast His guiding light in front to enable us tread in the right direction. May this light continue to shine ahead and may we tread without tumbling.

The fact that development rests squarely on individual discipline has never been more apparent than it is in contemporary times. Empirical evidence has shown that societies in which discipline is at its highest are also the fastest developing whilst the least disciplined societies only witness ever worsening conditions. These communities continue to grope in darkness and pessimism, as every new programme leaves in its wake stories of corruption, exploitation, selfishness, greed and ultimate failure. Ghana and its African neighbours are the worst hit in this regard. Indiscipline is so high in these societies that lots of interesting

stories relating to corrupt and undisciplined behavior are told. Whilst most of these stories tend to be hypothetical they epitomize the typical African society. The characters displayed in these stories are but the average citizen. The result is the appalling conditions. In a recent address on discipline the Ameer and Missionary-In-Charge, Maulana Noor- Muhammed Bin Salih stated that a country may have all the mineral resources in the crust of its lands, all the petroleum resources off its sea coast, the greenest of forests and the best human resources yet that country will continue to be in abject poverty unless it adopts a disciplined approach into harnessing these resources together to the benefit of its people.

We find a rather sharp contrast in highly disciplined societies. A Singaporean leader was once asked how a little City State with virtually no natural resources could develop to that high extent. His response was one single word **“Discipline”**. According to him the backbone of Singapore's development was the disciplined approach that every one of the country's citizens gave to daily life. Discipline has punctuated the life of the average citizen of that country from handling of finances in Billions of Dollars down to matters of apparently little significance such as dropping litter in the open. The result at the end of the day is a highly developed society in which every facility is made available to the people.

There is no doubt that most of you have done some sciences somewhere along the line either presently or in the very recent past. In my case in the very distant past. In science, when we desire to know the character of a substance we only need to study a little sample. Sometimes one little drop is enough to give us loads of information on a body as vast as the sea. This is also the case with discipline in relation to a society. The character displayed by one or two individuals reflects the nature of the society they are drawn from. Self-discipline is therefore the starting point in the endeavor to set up a disciplined society, which in turn, influences the level of socio-economic development.

From the two scenarios described above it becomes clear that discipline has much to do with social development and that to achieve societal discipline, the individuals that make up that society need to have a high level of Self-discipline. The question that naturally arises is how does an individual achieve Self-discipline? The Holy verses which I recited at the beginning of this paper set out a number of steps that an individual must take to achieve success. Success in this context means a decent life that is meaningful and complete in every positive sense. One that leads man to the goal of his creation which is to show a deep sense of accountability to God Almighty for His bounties and a life that displays true virtue through every minute of its existence. Let us take these steps one after the other:

Those who are humble in their Prayers,

Salat, as we are aware, is the umbilical cord that links man to his maker. Without salat this link is severed, leaving man free and there is then no link through which Allah will give him the much needed moral and spiritual nourishment.

Elsewhere in the Holy Qur-an we are informed that *"Prayer restrains one from indecency and manifest evil (29:46)"*.

If prayer leaves the supplicant resigned to a disciplined life of decency and freedom from all manner of evil, it goes without saying that a society that is comprised of such persons as will always offer their prayers in all humility will be a trouble-free society and hence one that is set on the right pedestal for growth and development.

And who shun all that which is vain,

A Muslim is required to dedicate his entire life to matters of seriousness and importance. Vain talk, idleness and futile actions have the potential to set the ego free and to promote undisciplined behavior. It is the avoidance of these vain desires that put the human ego in chains and thereby promote right conduct. Lottery, smoking, usage of drugs etc. all belong to this category. The youth are particularly vulnerable in these areas and it is essential that steps are taken to ensure that young people are kept busy on matters of importance to themselves and society rather than leave them free to engage in these vain and futile pastimes. Idleness is the progenitor of all these vices and one sure way to prevent the youth from getting caught up in them is to get them engaged in undertaking positive tasks around the clock. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) has advised the youth in his poem entitled "TO THE NATION'S YOUTH" in the words:

"So be not seekers of idle rest"

Many great nations of the world invest huge amounts of money to save their citizens from drugs and other related vices. They are such a menace in these societies and governments are stopping at nothing to ensure their eradication. Meanwhile, a society in which Self-discipline is upheld by all will continue its forward march through all developmental programmes without behind held back.

What we eat, drink, wear, see, hear, say and even where go all influence our Self-discipline. Even our senses of smell and feel contribute to make up what we are or become, which impacts on society. If we are truly disciplined, the society in which we live will also be disciplined. If we fail to discipline ourselves society rots away and eventually becomes a jungle with anarchy taking centre stage.

And those who are active in paying the Zakat,

Zakat is an institution which has the effect of purifying souls and making them into upright social figures of high stature. In the Holy Qur'an the Holy Prophet (saw) was instructed to take zakat from jamat members and thereby cleanse and purify them (9:103). On the issue of Self-discipline and its relation to National Development, Zakat proves to be of great help in at least four ways. In the first place, its payment extends financial support to the state to take care of the less economically favoured sections of society, providing for their needs in the areas of nutrition, education, health etc. Secondly, the payment of zakat discourages the hoarding of money, thus leading to more brisk economic activity and hence faster social development. Thirdly, payment of zakat disciplines the individual and helps him focus his finances on matters of importance to him and his family. Excess money is not left to make him indulge in useless ventures. Fourthly, an individual who gets accustomed to paying zakat regularly, also finds no difficulty in paying his taxes, which are the main basis for all social interventions. In our time, other forms of infaq have been introduced to the Muslim Umma under divine instruction. The various chandas that we are called upon to pay rank under the same category and have similar purifying effects on our souls. They also go a long way to improve upon our Self-discipline and therefore the potential for national growth in all areas.

And those who guard their chastity

Let us now turn our attention to one matter that greatly affects most of the youth of today. Fornication and Adultery have been described by the Holy Qur'an as Filthy and evil and so we should not make any approaches in their direction (17:33). Note that we are warned against even making the approaches, let alone going the distance. These two ills are so filthy they are the cause of many diseases that governments are spending huge sums of money trying to bring under control. At some point we were told that AIDS prevalence among the youth in South Africa had risen as high as 40%. The immediate concern of that country became controlling it to protect the working population from being wiped off. Other social interventions that the people needed suddenly fell casualty. That is AIDS alone. Other effects are broken marriages resulting in poor parentage and hence street children, childhood pregnancies and hence abortions and their accompanying dangers, and of course, children being born outside wedlock, all requiring breakfast. The huge amounts that many nations are spending on all this would be available for further national development if its citizenry would discipline themselves and stick to their lawfully married spouses.

The evils of fornication and Adultery arise from the human ego. Some of us feed our egos on dust! The ego is part of creation which drives man in stomach direction. One of the major tasks of a believer is to subdue his ego and steer it in the direction of truth. That is

Self-Discipline. On this, I will request us to once again visit the words of Hazrat Musleh Mau'ud (ra) in the earlier referred poem:

"If you conquer the world

You have gained naught

If the wild and Terrible Self

You have not subdued and taught"

Let us first conquer the ego before surging forward to cover additional ground.

And those who are watchful of their trusts and their covenants

A true believer remains so disciplined that he makes sure he does not overlook his covenants even to the minutest detail. He guards matters entrusted to his care with so much caution that he hardly ever overspends money or effort in any respect. In our own country people tend to approach national assets and policies with so much carelessness that one would wonder whether they have the nation at heart. The cost to the nation is often tremendous. It may be necessary to give a practical demonstration of the care that some of the very highly disciplined personages have shown for state property. It is related that on one occasion a group of persons visited Hazrat Umar (ra). The group arrived in the night and found him busy doing some work so they had to do a bit of waiting. He later invited them in and after the normal exchange of salutations when they began to talk, he put off the candle in the room and lit another candle. This action looked rather bizzare to them but they did not pass any comment. When he had finished with them and they were about to depart they asked him why he had put off one candle only to light another. His explanation was that the first candle was state property and as he was working for the state he then had the right to use it but when they came in he realized that their mission was rather on matters that were private to him so he had no right to light up the room with the state's candle only to engage in his own private discussions. According to this holy personage, the second candle was his own private property which he then employed for his private discussions.

How many of us are able to avoid taking advantage of office facilities to do our own private work? And do we even ever ask ourselves how much cost we are putting on the shoulders of the state on such occasions? We covenant with the state or other employers to work eight hours daily for our remuneration. Do we invest all that time to our employers? How much money would the state save if everyone worked the full eight hours daily, taking care to protect everything that is entrusted to them. It is part of our Self-discipline that all matters entrusted to us are well protected and applied only for their intended purposes. Even the rubbish bins that are provided by the state, if everyone patronized them effectively with our litter, would we be writing June 3 in our history books?

Caring for trusts and fully and effectively identifying with covenants is one aspect of Self-discipline that could make a huge impact on the developmental status of every society.

And those who are strict in the observance of their Prayers

Looked at on the surface, it would appear as though there was a repetition here but it is not quite the case. In the first verse, emphasis was laid on the humility with which one said one's prayers. This verse crowns the series of disciplinary measures with the strictness of prayers. At this point of Self-discipline, the person is so strict with the observance of prayer that there is a clear demonstration of an uncompromising nature. He places his prayers above every other concern. Such a person's prayer discipline manifests itself in every aspect of his life and the goodness in him is simply unlimited. If any society could be comprised of only persons of that nature, everything would be achieved at virtually no cost. This level of Self-discipline would result in a society of the highest level of development.

THE DEITY OF MONEY

It will also be necessary to mention some matters of relevance which have become engrained in the spirit of youthfulness. One of these is the love for material wealth. Many people tend to rush for wealth and will want to make it at all costs. Hazrat Abdullah Bin Mas'ud has reported the Holy Prophet (saw) as having said that after the basic acts of worship the next compulsion for every Muslim is to earn his income honestly.

We should not forget the statement of Allah Almighty which is repeated so many times in the Holy Qur'an. That statement is:

"He enlarges the provision for whomsoever He pleases, and straitens it for whomsoever He pleases" (42:13)

It is a matter of common knowledge that whatever Allah Almighty grants an individual, nobody can deny him of it. On the other hand, whatever He has denied him that also cannot be granted him by anyone. Many people tend to rush, only to earn through dubious means what they would have earned honestly. It is narrated that once Hazrat Ali Bin Abi Talib (ra) was travelling on horseback. When it got to time for prayers, he entrusted the care of his horse to a gentleman whilst he went to say his prayers. On the way he took a decision to remunerate the man on his return. The amount he then decided on was fourty (40) Dinars. Upon his return, however, he observed that both the saddle to his horse and the man to whom he had entrusted the care of the horse had disappeared. He then had no option but to buy a new saddle. After some search he got one and coincidentally, the vendor asked for fourty (40) Dinars for it. To his amazement, it was his own saddle that had been sold to him! He continued his journey and as fate

would have if he ran into the same man he had entrusted the care of his horse to. He told the man:

“Well, I had decided to reward you with forty (40) Dinars for caring for my horse but you could not wait. You stole the saddle and at the end of the day you got through dubious means what you would have earned through honest means. The money I intended giving you, I have used to buy back my saddle.”

Most of us behave like that man. We need to discipline ourselves in our quest for riches. If we would use genuine and lawful means we would always achieve the same financial conditions that we are driven to achieve dubiously. Where we cheat to make money Allah sometimes arranges circumstances in a way that we lose back those monies. Meanwhile we remain the cheats and undisciplined souls that we have made in ourselves.

ABETTING CRIME

Allah Almighty admonishes us in the Holy Qura'an thus:

“And help one another in righteousness and piety, but help not one another in sin and transgression” (5:3)

One characteristic of the youth is that they tend to make heroes of peers who are successful in some sinful and criminal deeds. That then incites them to go further, and others to follow in their steps. A typical example is in the area of womanizing. The above Holy verse warns us against this attitude. Encourage friends to participate in jamat activities. Encourage them to further their education and to do everything that is good but when they decide to go the evil way, let them go it alone. Even if you are yourself guilty of that behaviour you should not encourage colleagues to go in that direction.

CONFERENCES

Our jamat's conferences are a special favour that Allah Almighty has bestowed on the Promised Messiah (as) and his following. They are an avenue for tarbiyyat and the acquisition of knowledge. The moral lessons that are taught at these conferences and Ijtemas as well as the interactions between jamat members from far and near are one of the effective ways of transforming participants in the area of Self-Discipline. The blessings we derive from organizing them will be incomplete if we deny ourselves and the Atfal the opportunity to attend.

Attending all conferences within their areas of abode must therefore be an integral part of every khadim and Tifl's ambitions each year.

CONNECTION WITH KHILAFAT

The story of self-discipline will be incomplete without mention of the connection we each have to make with khilafat. This jamat was established under divine instruction and guidance. It is therefore a matter of fact that every instruction from the Khalifa of the day emanates from Allah Almighty directly or indirectly. Following the instructions of the Khalifa and his representatives is therefore sure to meet with Allah's pleasure. This Majlis needs to ensure that all instructions from the jamat are strictly adhered to in a most coherent manner. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (ra) says:

"It is essential for us that we spend our daily lives being grateful to Him (Allah Almighty) and create within the jamat everlasting unity and harmony. Let the fact never be forgotten, that all eminence and all beneficence lie at the feet of Khilafat-e-Rashida"

On a separate occasion Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (atba) has said that:

"Your success and progress emanates from your attachment to Khilafat"

By following the Khalifa of the time, there is no doubt that Allah Almighty will always shower his blessings upon us and grant us the Self-Discipline that we seek to achieve.

KNOWLEDGE

Acquisition of knowledge was Allah's very first instruction to mankind (chronologically) in the Holy Qur'an. This was not without purpose. Elsewhere The Holy Qur'an says:

"Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah" (35:29)

This verse informs us that to imbue the fear of Allah effectively in all members of this community and thus improve upon the level of Self-Discipline of its members, education cannot be compromised. No matter the cost, it must be our policy that every member of the community, young or old, male or female must be given a full understanding of Islam and must have the ability to read the Holy Qur'an fluently. Secular knowledge is equally important and its acquisition must be upheld. Programmes of Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya must include this subject and a strong monitoring and control mechanism put in place to ensure success.

It is our prayer that Allah Almighty may, out of His grace and mercy, guide and support this Majlis in our endeavours towards developing truly disciplined youth to become the successors of the jamat in future and through that discipline, help to procure the most advanced forms of social and economic development for our dear nation.

AMEN.

Alhamdulillah Rabbil-aalamin!

ALHAJ ABDUL-WAHAB ISSAH

(SECRETARY, TAHRIK-I-JADID AND FORMER SADR MKA)

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