



A SERMON PRESENTED BY MR. BIPUAH HANIF AT THE 37TH ANNUAL NATIONAL RALLY OF THE MAJLIS KHUDDAM-UL-AHMADIYYA GHANA AT GSTS TAKORADI, ON THE TOPIC: "THE ESSENCE OF DEVOTION TO ISLAM AHMADIYYAT"

Tashahhud, Ta'awwudh and Surah Al-Fatiha

The Sadr Majlis Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya Ghana, Missionaries and elders of Jama'at present, members of the Majlis; Assalamo Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

I feel sincerely grateful for this opportunity to deliver a sermon on such an important topic as would fuel the victory of Islam, at such a great occasion. My sincere appreciations therefore go to the Sadr and the crafters of this program for the honour.

I shall go back into the profound history of the era of Islam during its ontogeny, to unshackle the true awe in the efforts of the newly created Muslim community, sandwiched in an extremely hazardous setting of determined blood thirsty idolaters in the Arabian Peninsula.

Battle of Mauta

During the run-up to the battle of Mauta, the Prophet_{sa} raised a force of three thousand and despatched it to Syria under the command of Zaid bin Haritha_{ra}, freed slave of the Prophet_{sa}. The Prophet_{sa} nominated Ja'far ibn Abi Talib as the successor of Zaid_{ra}, should Zaid_{ra} die, and 'Abdullah bin Rawaha_{ra}, should Ja'far die. Should 'Abdullah bin Rawaha_{ra} also die, Muslims were to choose their own commander. A Jew who heard this exclaimed, "O Abu'l Qasim_{sa}, if thou art a true Prophet_{sa}, these three officers whom thou hast named are sure to die; for God fulfils the words of a Prophet_{sa}." Turning to Zaid_{ra}, he said, "Take it from me, if Muhammad_{sa} is true you will not return alive." Zaid_{ra}, a true believer that he was, said in reply, "I may return alive or not, but Muhammad_{sa} is a true Prophet of God". (*Halbiyya, Vol. 3, p. 75*).

It was the first Muslim army sent to fight the Christians. When Muslims reached the Syrian border, they heard that the Kaiser himself had taken the field with one hundred thousand of

his own soldiers and another hundred thousand recruited from the Christian tribes of Arabia. Confronted by such large enemy numbers, the Muslims half wanted to stop on the way and send word to the Prophet_{sa} at Medina. For he might be able to reinforce their numbers or wish to send fresh instructions. When the army leaders took counsel, 'Abdullah bin Rawaha_{ra} stood up, full of fire, and said, "My people, you set out from your homes to die as martyrs in the way of God, and now when martyrdom is in sight you seem to flinch. We have not fought so far because we were better equipped than the enemy in men or material. Our mainstay was our faith. If the enemy is so many times superior to us in numbers or equipment, what does it matter? One reward out of two we must have. We either win, or die as martyrs in the way of God." The army heard ibn Rawaha_{ra} and was much impressed. He was right, they said, with one voice. The army marched on. As they marched, they saw the Roman army advancing towards them. So at Mauta the Muslims took up their positions and the battle began. Soon Zaid_{ra}, the Muslim commander, was killed and the Prophet's cousin Ja'far ibn Abi Talib_{ra} received the standard and the command of the army. When he saw that enemy pressure was increasing and Muslims, because of utter physical inferiority, were not holding their own he dismounted from his horse and cut its legs. The action meant that at least he was not going to flee; he would prefer death to flight.

Ja'far_{ra} lost his right hand, but held the standard in his left. He lost his left hand also and then held the standard between the two stumps pressed to his chest. True to his promise, he fell down fighting. Then 'Abdullah bin Rawaha_{ra}, as the Prophet_{sa} had ordered, grasped the standard and took over the command. He also fell fighting. The order of the Prophet_{sa} now was for Muslims to take counsel together and elect a commander. But there was no time to hold an election. The Muslims might well have yielded to the vastly superior numbers of the enemy. But Khalid bin Walid_{ra}, accepting the suggestion of a friend, took the standard and went on fighting until evening came.

The assurance of the Ansar of Medina at Badr

"You ask for our counsel," he said, "because you think that when you came to us, we agreed to fight on your side only in case you and your fellow emigrants from Mecca were

attacked in Medina. But now we seem to have come out of Medina, and you feel that our agreement does not cover the conditions under which we find ourselves today. But O Prophet_{sa} of God, when we entered into that agreement we did not know you as well as we do now. We know now what high spiritual station you hold. We care not for what we agreed to. We now stand by you, whatever you ask us to do. We will not behave like the followers of Moses_{as} who said, 'Go you and your God and fight the enemy, we remain here behind.' If we must fight, we will and we will fight to the right of you, to the left of you, in front of you and behind you. True, the enemy wants to get at you. But we assure you that he will not do so, without stepping over our dead bodies. Prophet_{sa} of God, you invite us to fight. We are prepared to do more. Not far from here is the sea. If you command us to jump into it, we will hesitate not." [Bukhari, Kitab al-Maghazi, and Hisham].

This was the spirit of devotion and sacrifice which early Muslims displayed, and the like of which is not to be found in the history of the world. Along with their inspired achievements came trying times when their human weaknesses surfaced and posed a threat to their continuous survival in the midst of enemy strategies and the divine plan;

Allah reveals to the Prophet_{sa} while the distressed army were on their journey to Tabuk;

"O ye who believe; what is the matter with you that, when it is said to you, go forth in the way of Allah, you sink down heavily towards the earth? Are you contented with the present life in preference to the Hereafter?" [Surah Al-Taubah vs 38]

Magnificent EXAMPLE of devotion for men

The greatest and the noblest of them all was our beloved Prophet, the Holy Prophet of Islam (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Testifying to this the Holy Qur'an says:

"Say, 'my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds". [Al-An'am 6:163]

The Promised Messiah_{as}, too, following the example of his noble Master_{sa} totally submitted himself to the Will of God and to promoting the cause of Allah, expecting the Jama'at to follow him in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet_{sa}. Admonishing the Jama'at he says:

“The pain which pleases God is better than the pleasure which makes God angry. And that defeat which pleases God is better than the victory which invites the wrath of Allah. Renounce the love which brings you nearer to the wrath of Allah. If by purifying your hearts you will come to Him, then He will help you whichever path you tread and no enemy shall be able to harm you. You can never ever win the pleasure of Allah unless you, relinquishing your desire, abandoning your pleasures, sacrificing your honour, disowning your wealth, discarding your life, bear such hardships in His way as make you suffer pangs of death. But once you have suffered hardships for Allah, you will come in the lap of God like a beloved child. And you will be made as heir of those pious persons who have preceded you. The door of every blessing will be opened to you. But there are few who belong to this category.” [The Will, pp. 9 -10]

Benefit of devotion

Holy Qur'an

This is the very sacrifice about which Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Quran:

“O ye who believe! Shall I point out to you a bargain that will save you from a painful punishment? That you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and strive in the cause of Allah with your wealth and with your persons. That is better for you if you did but know. He will forgive you your sins, and make you enter the Gardens through which streams flow, and to pure and pleasant dwellings in Gardens of Eternity. That is the supreme triumph. And He will bestow another favour which you love: help from Allah and a near victory.

So give glad tidings to the believers. O ye who believe! Be helpers of Allah, as said Jesus, son of Mary, to his disciples, ‘Who are my helpers in the cause of Allah?’ The disciples said, “We are helpers of Allah.” [Al-Saff 61:11-15]

Again, Allah the Almighty says:

“Those of the believers who sit still, excepting the disabled ones, and those who strive in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their persons, are not equal. Allah has exalted in rank those who strive with their wealth and their persons above those who sit still. And to each Allah has promised good and Allah has exalted those who strive above those who sit still, by a great reward. Namely, by degrees of excellence bestowed by Him, and by special forgiveness and mercy. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.” [Al-Nisa 4:96-97]

In short, sacrifice of self and of wealth, which is also known as striving in the cause of Allah is really the third kind of '*waqf*' that Allah the Almighty demands from true Muslims. The nature of this '*waqf*' is related to the very essence of religion. When the sword is raised against faith, a Muslim is enjoined to defend his religion with the sword even if he has to sacrifice his life in defence. When wealth is being spent against religion, a Muslim is commanded to devote his wealth to fulfil the needs to strengthen his religion. When it is the pen that is being used against religion, a Muslim is ordered to strive against his adversary with the pen.

The manner of 'Jihad' that Allah the Almighty has demanded in this age through the Promised Messiah_{as} is described by the Promised Messiah_{as} in the following words:

“These words proceed not from the mouth of man. They are God’s words, words of the Mighty Lord Himself. The mighty attacks mentioned in this prophecy are near, but these attacks are not by physical weapons, not swords or guns. These are spiritual weapons, which will come as help from God. A battle with the Jews of our time will ensure. And who are these Jews? They are worshippers of external forms who have acquired complete resemblance with the Jews of yore. The sword of heaven will cut them up, the Jewish ways will be destroyed. All those who resemble the Anti-Christ, those who love this world over-much and who have only one eye, having lost the eye for spiritual truth, all of them will end by the sword of solid unanswerable arguments. Truth will prevail. A new bright day will dawn again for Islam. Same as it did before. The sun of Islam will rise in full bloom, same as it did before. But this will not be at once. Imperative it is that this should not happen until we have proved our worth by devoted hard work, by offering our life-blood, by sacrificing our rest and peace, by accepting all indignities for the dignity of Islam. The new life of Islam demands a great Sacrifice from us. What is this Sacrifice? It is our lives: on this Sacrifice depends now the Life of Islam, the life of Muslims, the Manifestation of God in our time. Sacrifice is the essence of Islam. And this is the Islam that God wants to restore.” [Victory of Islam, Page 10]

The Promised Messiah_{as} established his Jama'at for the very purpose that we should become true Muslims and hearken to the call made by Allah the Almighty for the regeneration of Islam and be prepared to make all kinds of sacrifices that may be necessary for this noble purpose.

Hence Allah commanded:

“And let there always be among you a body of men who should invite to goodness and enjoin virtue and forbid evil. And it is they who shall prosper.” [Al-‘Imran 3: 105]

Dr. Iftikhar Ayaz Sahib wrote in "the devotion of life, its importance and blessing"

The third kind of submission that is mentioned in the Holy Quran is that a Muslim should devote his life and his wealth for the propagation, strengthening and progress of Islam. Under ordinary circumstances, a Muslim is not forbidden to benefit from the blessings that are related to worldly life. But it has been made an obligation for him that, just as under ordinary circumstances he continues to strive to the best of his faculties to gain the pleasure of Allah by discharging his duties towards Allah and His beings, similarly, it is obligatory that when faith and Muslims need him for protection and progress, he will present himself to Allah and devote himself entirely for the support of Islam. As, under normal circumstances, just for the sake of Allah the Almighty he abstained from all forbidden things, so now, he will give up even permitted things to gain the pleasure of Allah the Almighty and to strengthen religion.

Dr. Iftikhar Ayaz Sahib gives his verdict

At the end, he has stated this very important point that the word ‘Waqfeen’ does not apply only to those who have devoted their lives, rather, according to the will of the Promised Messiah_{as}, it is the responsibility of every Ahmadi that he devotes his life and with genuine concern endeavours to attain the status where he can say, "My prayers and my sacrifice and my life and my death are for Allah, the Lord of the worlds!"

The crux of the matter in the Ghana context

The Ghanaian story isn't any different from the various accounts from the historical records accumulated from the time of the Holy Prophet_{sa} till the era of the Messiah, Hadhrat Masih

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Maud_{as}. The nerve twitching sacrifices made in devotion to the spread of Islam Ahmadiyyat in the Gold Coast and Ghana is an otherwise pregnant prophecy awaiting fulfilment.

The amount of devotion invested in the birth, growth and spread of the community in our country is a credible example of the effort invested by the earlier Ghanaian Ahmadis. Imam Alhaj Salih's account sees proper expression in; "History of the Waala; The Ahmadiyya Factor" a book written by his own son Alhaj Maulana Mohammed Bin Salih, current Ameer & Missionary In-Charge of the Ahmadiyya Community in Ghana. Maulana Dr. Wahab Adam's story can be told by the average Ghanaian who knows Ahmadiyyat to be synonymous to the patriotic patriarch and man of peace. A great account can also be told of the Missionary exploits of the first Hafiz; Maulana Ahmad Jibreel Saeed of the Ghanaian Jama'at as espoused in his book entitled "Islam in the Islands".

Alhaj Adams Dawoode was an eloquent son of the community who dazzled his audience and shattered his opponents during his illustrious preaching carrier. It would be absolutely unjust to tell the contemporary Ghanaian story without painting the portrait of Alhaj Ahmad Adusei and his family. This humble soul who was a convert turned out later in life to become one of the trusted voices of Ahmadiyya and Islam. He leveraged his business and the support of his family to build what many know to be the highest number of mosques an individual Jama'at member had sponsored and personally constructed. His ultimate sacrifice was in the translation of the Holy Qur'an to Twi, under the guidance of the Khalifatul Masih IV_{th}.

An attempt to outline the roles of all earlier Ahmadi devotees would be an over ambitious task and fortunately that's not my objective at this point. It's however my loudest cry and most solemn supplication to the Most High and Merciful God that, May He reward these souls with His greatest reward.

The growth of Islam Ahmadiyyat relied so much on the devotion and sacrifices of all these great servants of the faith. It's however obvious that the establishment and victory of Islam Ahmadiyyat in the world is tied mostly to the devotion of the present and future generations that

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the past ones. The sacrifices made now would only be leveraged by the next generation to finish the task set forth by Allah for the salvation of mankind.

Narration on Hadhrat Ali

Hazrat Musleh Maud_{ra} narrates that the Promised Messiah_{as} used to say that Haroon Rashid imprisoned an individual named Imam Musa Raza and tied his hands and feet with rope. Meanwhile Haroon Rashid was resting comfortably when he saw in a dream that the Holy Prophet_{sa} has come and that his face is indicative of extreme displeasure. The Holy Prophet_{sa} said to him that O Haroon Rashid you claim to be one who loves me but have you no shame that you are enjoying deep sleep surrounded by comfort while our loved one is lying all tied up in extreme heat in a prison?

Seeing this scene Haroon Rashid got up disturbed and immediately went to that same prison with his commander and with his own hands untied the hands and feet of Imam Musa Raza. Imam Musa Raza said to him that you were so opposed to me what has happened that made you walk here in person? Haroon rashid narrated his dream and said I seek your pardon I did not know the reality of things.

Hazrat Musleh Maud_{ra} says that look what great span of time separates the time of Hazrat Ali and this time of Haroon Rashid. We have seen the progenies of many a king walking the streets begging. He says in Delhi I myself saw a water carrier who was a descendent of the Mughal Kings. His job was to go around give people water to drink. But he had still at least this much sense of shame that he did not go around begging from people. But look at the progeny of Hazrat Ali_{ra} on the other hand. That despite so many generations having gone by, yet still God warns a king about a descendant of Hazrat Ali_{ra} and directs him to treat him kindly.

If Hazrat Ali_{ra} had known of the honour he was going to receive, and had knowledge of the unseen and had carried out the sacrifices for the sake of all this his faith would have been nothing more than buying and selling and a mere buy sell transaction. And it would not have become deserving of any reward.

At one place Hazrat Promised Messiah_{as} mentions the case of a Friend of God - a saintly person - that he was on board a vessel and it came across an immense storm at sea and the ship was very

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close to total destruction but the prayers of that saintly person became the cause of its safety. While he was praying it was revealed to him that solely for your sake all of the passengers have been saved.

The Promised Messiah_{as} says look, these things cannot be attained by mere words but it is necessary that one undertakes strenuous efforts for attaining it and a connection has to be established and maintained with Allah, the Exalted. One has to maintain the good and virtuous state of the parents.

So one can benefit from being the progeny of righteous parents only when you are also virtuous yourself. [*Huzur's sermon – 15.01.2016*]

Conclusion

Once again, I thank the Sadr Sahib for giving me the chance to speak at the very blessed Ijtema'a. I also thank all present here for the patience and attention during my presentation.

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