



FRIDAY SERMON

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After greeting all his disciples (and all Muslims) worldwide with the greeting of peace Hadhrat Khalifatullah (atba) read the Tashahhud, Ta'uz, Surah Al Fatiha, and then he delivered his sermon on:

DIVINE FAVOUR TO ABRAHAM (AS)

As we are in the month of Hajj (*Dhul-Hijjah*), after the Eid-ul-Adha which was celebrated last Monday, today's Friday Sermon is on the divine favour granted to Hazrat Ibrahim (as) and how thereafter the favour of prophethood has eternally been given in the Muhammadan Ummah.

I must also say that following my article in French on the newspaper '**Le Mauricien**', on 12 August 2019, day of the Eid of Sacrifice (*Eid-ul-Adha*), there are people from other communities who have written misplaced comments on Islam, and some even attacked the honour of Hazrat Ibrahim (as) and condemned the practice of slaughtering [sacrifices] of animals. There are also those who do not even believe in the purpose of religion, and belief in God. So, these types of people say that Islam has copied on the practice of people from before Islam.

So, I wanted to answer their questions [through this sermon] before going into the heart of the subject of my sermon today which is also a refutation also for them, which preserves the honour of Abraham (as) as well as the honour of all his children and that of his legitimate and honourable wives.

Islam is undoubtedly a model way of life. Islam has indeed existed since the beginning of the existence of humanity. Islam means submission in peace to the will of the Unique God, a God who has no partner in His worship. Islam was the way of life for all the honourable prophets of God (even before the advent of Islam). But it is only with the advent of the Holy Prophet of Islam that God Himself gave a name to his faith and way of life and his religion, where God (Allah) gave him, and all his followers who will be sincere and righteous (upright), **ISLAM** as their official religion and thus officially called them Muslims (those who submit to the Unique God in peace and who spread peace also).

Practices such as observing fasting and pilgrimage existed before the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). These practices existed at the time of Abraham (as) and his son Ishmael (as) when they set up the foundation of The Sacred House (the Ka'aba) and they did the circumambulations (*Tawaaf*) around the House, praying to the One God. But as I explained to you in my sermon last Friday, after their time, after many years/ centuries, the people who came after them fell into the trap of Satan and they started worshiping idols, forgetting the Unique God. Despite their existing belief in Allah (the One God), but they also preferred to place idols besides Him and pray to them, and so they attributed partners in the worship of Allah.

And I must say that the Hajj as taught to Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) is the perfected form of the pilgrimage, a pilgrimage that is just and perfect and that honours the rites to Allah that Abraham and Ishmael (as) had done. It is this perfected pilgrimage that will continue to exist until the end of the world. This is the Islamic Hajj. It commemorates and honours all the legitimate and honourable rites of all the prophets of God. Islam is the only religion that accepts all the prophets of God, and honours them, and does not slander them. Indeed, God loves all His messengers. He is the one who raised them as prophets/ messengers.

And last week, as well as in my Eid sermon, I spoke at length about the sacrifice of animals, why we must make the sacrifice. Long ago, and even today in remote places in Africa and Madagascar, there is human sacrifice - cannibalism as we know it today. And certainly, what is more serious is that it is not the flesh of animals that these people eat, but verily the flesh of humans.

Before the advent of Islam, [barbarian] people made human sacrifices. If those who criticize Islam and even those who criticize Abraham (as) lived in that barbaric age, then it is not the sacrifice of animals that would have occurred [which they would have witnessed], but human sacrifices. But God through Abraham and Ishmael put an end to human sacrifice. He has served them as examples, as models par excellence of sacrifices and He has by this means taught the Muslims and the whole of humanity that it is only the sacrifices of animals that is acceptable to Him, and not the human sacrifices, meaning the shedding of a person's blood. Moreover, in Islam, the Muslim does not have the right to consume the flesh of even a permissible animal, until he pronounces the name of God and sacrifices and eats the flesh in question. Human sacrifices were practiced to please idols, a very reprehensible practice in the eyes of the One God.

God relates in the Qur'an an event that is reported in the Old and New Testaments, in that which: God put Hazrat Ibrahim (as) to the test in relation to certain things, from which he came out victorious. The Qur'an says:

"When Allah tried Abraham with certain words and he fulfilled them, He (Allah) said, 'Indeed, I will make you a leader (Imam) for the people.' He (Abraham) said, 'And of my descendants?' He (God) says, 'My covenant does not include the wrongdoers.'" (Al-Baqara 2: 125)

It is evident that as Abraham had fulfilled the commands of his Lord, so God had made a pact with him that the *Imamate* (that is, prophethood - *Nabuwwah*) would be established among his children provided that they do not become evil - wrongdoers.

Who are Abraham's offspring, and how did God fulfil His promise?

It should be remembered that two main lineages are from Hazrat Ibrahim (as): one by Hazrat Ismail (as), which spread in Arab countries and the other by Hazrat Issac (as), and Jacob's (*Yaqub*) family which spread to Palestine and neighbouring countries.

The first line is called the Ishmaelites and the second the Israelites. Some Jewish tribes had also established themselves in Iran (Persia), Afghanistan, etc. When the idolaters conceived the criminal designs to throw Abraham into the fire, he

prayed to God to give him pious children who could become his worthy heirs and continue his work. The Qur'an says:

“So they hatched a plot against him, but We humiliated them. He said: ‘I will go to my Lord! He will surely guide me! O my Lord, grant me a righteous son!’ So We gave him tidings of a gentle son.” (As-Saffat 37: 99-101).

Hazrat Ibrahim (as) had come to break the idols and restore the oneness of God. The idolaters planned to kill him, but Ibrahim (as) answered them with the greatest assurance that they could not stand in the way of his mission, for God was certainly going to guide him. But at the same time, feeling that these people could really put an end to his life, he implored God to give him a son who could continue his mission. His prayer was answered and his first child, Hazrat Ismail (as) was born. The Old Testament speaks of this prayer and its fulfilment in these terms:

“After this, the word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abraham. I am your shield, your very great reward.” But Abraham said, “Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abraham said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.” Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” (Genesis 15: 1-4).

“And the angel of the Lord said to Hagar (Hajra), ‘I will multiply your offspring so that it will be innumerable.’ And, continuing, He said to her, ‘You have conceived and will bear a son, and you shall call him Ishmael, that is to say, ‘God has heard’, because the Lord has heard the cry of your affliction. He will be a proud and wild man; he will raise his hand against all, and all will raise their hands against him; and he will set up his pavilions before all his brethren.’” (Genesis 16: 10-12).

Here the word “wild” is used in the sense of freedom and independence. The Bible in Urdu uses the word “Azad” (free). There was a very great prophecy therein:

(i) The posterity of Ishmael (as) would be innumerable;

- (ii) Ishmael (as) would set up his tents before all his brothers; that is to say, his lineage would be firm and despite the hostility of many, no one could destroy it;
- (iii) The time of his elevation and power would begin when he would raise his hand against all and all would raise his hand against him, that is to say, of his posterity a prophet would spring forth who, by his universal message would upset all beliefs and consequently everyone would be against him;
- (iv) He would be free, independent, and from the great opposition he would encounter, he would come out victorious, that is to say, he would be the stone that crushes the one on which it would fall, and the one who would fall on it would break.

Now I come to the second line from Abraham. After the birth of Ishmael (as), Abraham (as) had no hope of having another child. But God wanted to bring forth a child from Sarah as well. So when God made the decision to destroy the people of Lot (as), Abraham (as), who had a tender heart, begged Him to spare them. God told him that this people was utterly corrupted, that the few men who were good over there would be spared, and at the same time He gave him the good news that his family was going to bring forth pious people. Because Abraham felt a pain when he heard of the destruction of the people of Lot (as), God gave him the good news of a pious posterity.

When the angels brought the news of the punishment, his wife was present:

“And his Wife was standing, and she smiled. Then We gave her good tidings of Isaac and after Isaac, Jacob. She said, “Woe to me! Shall I give birth while I am an old woman and this, my husband, is an old man? Indeed, this is an amazing thing!” They said, “Are you amazed at the decree of Allah ? May the mercy of Allah and His blessings be upon you, people of the house. Indeed, He is Praiseworthy and Honorable.” (Hud 11: 72-74).

Mention is made here of Issac and Jacob, for, indeed, the Israelites descend from Jacob. It was by Jacob (Israel) that there were twelve tribes. It is said in the Old Testament:

“God said to Abraham, ‘You will no longer call your wife Sarai, that is, ‘My princess’, but Sarah, ‘The princess’. I will bless her, and I will give you from her also

a son, whom I will bless too; he will be the head of the nations, and kings and various peoples will come out of him.

*Abraham prostrated himself, face down, and laughed, saying in the depths of his heart: A man of a hundred years to have a son? And will Sarah be with child at ninety years old? And he said to God, **'Give me the grace that Ishmael lives.'**" (Genesis 17: 15-18).*

It follows that the announcement of the birth of Issac (as) was made when Abraham and Sarah were no longer in a state to procreate. God announced to them the birth of a son from whom various peoples would come out. As a result, twelve tribes came out of Yaqub (as) [Jacob].

About Ishmael, there is not the mention of peoples, but of twelve chiefs. (Genesis 17:20). This means that the Bani Israel will be divided into twelve peoples, while the Bani Ishmael will be one nation. From this also follows that by Ishmael, God was going to gather everyone under the banner of unity. Now, see how the foundation of the Ka'aba was laid by Ishmael (as), the Ka'aba which would become the only [real] centre on earth. It was from his posterity that Muhammad (pbuh) was born, to rally all peoples under this banner of unity.

If, after describing Abraham's family and posterity in detail, we reread this verse:

"When Allah tried Abraham with certain words and he fulfilled them, He (Allah) said, *'Indeed, I will make you a leader (Imam) for the people.'* He (Abraham) said, *'And of my descendants?'* He (God) says, *'My covenant does not include the wrongdoers.'*" (Al-Baqara 2: 125).

We see that God made a covenant with the offspring of Abraham, except the wicked. This promise was that the *Imamat (Nabuwwah)* would be given to his posterity. Thus, his two sons, Ishmael and Issac became prophets. From the descendants of these two families, God first chose those of Issac. His son became a prophet. Jacob's son, Joseph, was a prophet. Then from the family of Benjamin there was the prophet Moses. The Torah confirms that in fact this alliance was contracted first with the family of Issac. God said to Abraham again:

“Sarah your wife will bear you a son whom you will call Issac, that is, he laughs, and I will make a pact with him, and with his seed [offspring] after him, so that My covenant with them may be eternal.” (Genesis 17: 19)

It is the same eternal covenant that God made with Abraham. The eternal law is the one that every time misguidance becomes widespread, God raises a prophet. This apostolate is a divine favour given to the righteous and pious, and the wicked have no part in it.

“(Remember) When Moses said to his people, ‘O my people! Remember the blessing of Allah upon you, when He has appointed you prophets. And He made you kings. And He gave you what He did not give to any other nations [before you].” (Al-Maida 5: 21).

God repeatedly drew their attention to it: **“O Children of Israel, remember My favour of which I have filled you, and (Remember) that I have preferred you to all peoples (of the time).” (Al-Baqara 2: 48).**

God also reminded them of the eternal covenant by recommending them to be faithful to it and to obey His commandments, and not to let themselves become wicked, and assured them that He too would keep His promise to grant them the favour of the Imamate and *Nabuwwah*:

“O Children of Israel! call to mind the (special) favour which I bestowed upon you, and fulfil your covenant with Me as I fulfil My Covenant with you, and fear none but Me.” (Al-Baqara 2: 41).

But unfortunately! The Israelites did not value this favour and were unable to retain it. When Moses was raised as a Prophet in their midst and God gave him the Book of Laws, the Torah, the Jews displayed wickedness:

“And [recall] when you said, ‘O Moses, we will never believe you until we see Allah outright’; so the thunderbolt took you while you were looking on.” (Al-Baqara 2: 56)

To feel the manifestation of God one must practice good works, have an unshakeable faith, and a solid heart, filled entirely with love for God. But these

unhappy Jews wanted to see God without making them worthy of it [of seeing Him]. At the request of Moses, God called them to Mount Thor, and when He manifested Himself they could not bear what they saw, and God told Moses to warn them that one day the favour of prophethood would be removed to be given to others. Addressing his people, Moses said:

“The Lord will raise up for you a prophet from among you, from your brothers like me; it is he whom you will listen to; just as it was according to the request that you made to the Lord your God near Mount Horeb, where all the people were assembled, saying to Him, ‘I will not hear the voice of the Lord my God anymore, and I will not see this frightful fire lest I die.’

And the Lord said to me, ‘All that this people has said is reasonable. I will raise from the midst of their brethren a prophet like you; I will put My words in their mouths, and He will tell them all that I command. If anyone does not want to hear the words that this prophet will utter in My name, it is Me who will take revenge’.”
(Deuteronomy 18: 15-19)

This prophecy is multi-faceted:

- (1) Mention is made of the prophet who will be raised from among the brothers of the Israelites, that is to say, the Ishmaelites.
- (2) This prophet will be a law-bearer like Moses.
- (3) Like Moses, he will have a sword to defend against the attacks of his enemies because there is in the prophecy concerning Ishmael: *“He will raise his hand against all and all will raise their hand against him.”*
- (4) His law shall be the word of God, the word of man shall not be mixed with it.
- (5) This prophet will repeat the word of God as he will have heard.
- (6) He who turns away from this *Shariah* (this law) will incur the vengeance of God, that is to say, a day will come when this *Shariah* will be the sole one being put into practice and all opposition will cease, and it is God who will preserve this *Shariah*.

This prophecy was fulfilled by the coming of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (pbuh). Although the proclamation of this prophethood was made by Moses himself, yet God does not inflict the supreme punishment on a people because of one

mistake. He gives them the opportunity to make amends, to redeem themselves, but if the people persists in their misguidance, then God punishes them.

Thus, the Muslim world must take great precautions not to become as ungrateful as the children of Israel; we must in no way follow those who do not believe in the unity of God in their misguidance. Almighty God, Allah has given us the best guidance and it is incumbent on us then to follow His perfect commandments and universal messengers in the Muhammadan Ummah so that His Oneness (*Tawheed*) and the right path (*Siratwal Mustaqeem*), in this case , Islam is always our focus in life.

May Allah make us true Muslims, not Muslims by names, but Muslims who know how to fulfil the duties of Islam, that is to say, to spread peace in the world and to invite people to Allah (twa); to do the **Dawat-i-Allah** to make people submit to this One God, without a partner. *Insha-Allah, Ameen.*