

English rendering of a Friday Sermon by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V (may Allah assist him) delivered on 25th April 2008 at Port Novo, Benin.

“It is with the grace of Allah the Exalted that today we are offering Jummah Salat in this mosque of Port Novo. Allah has enabled us to build this beautiful and large mosque so that a maximum number of people can gather here for His worship. During my last visit when I came here I had inaugurated this beautiful large mosque of Port Novo. It is a great blessing of Allah on the Ahmadiyya Community that He is enabling us to build mosques in every region, every city of the world. Mosques are being built in the small villages and towns of the remote areas as well as large cities of the disadvantaged African countries just as, with Allah’s grace, they are being built in European and other Western countries. The Community is making huge sacrifices everywhere in the building of these mosques. The Ahmadiyya Community neither has the wealth of oil nor do we amass wealth by any other means. Indeed, we have the wealth of ‘belief’ by virtue of which the Ahmadis make sacrifices.

You should always remember that this wealth is to be safeguarded at all times. This is such a limitless treasure that thieves, robbers and raiders waylay for it everywhere. Neither our nights are safe from these people nor our days. Rather, these robbers run in our blood streams in the shape of Satan. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) alerted us to be safe from Satan who runs in our veins. Always be mindful that at the time of the birth of Adam Satan pledged that he would definitely tempt people away from their path. Therefore, always remember that the wealth of belief is such a wealth that its protection is the most difficult of tasks. For other worldly wealth you can make worldly arrangements; put up locks, have guards/sentinels in place. However this wealth [of belief] is such that for its protection one has to constantly make arrangements for the purity of one’s *nafs* (self) and has to continually do this. For its safety one has to continually endeavour to seek Allah’s blessings because without it, the waylaying Satan is bound to incite man at every step. Satan had declared at the very start that the nature in which Allah has created man, he would be ever inclined to worldly matters and to greed. He had announced that man would listen to him and his desires and materialism will take him away from God and the majority of mankind will not be grateful of God. Allah the Exalted had said to Satan that He would fill Hell with people who squandered faith in this way and who were ungrateful. Therefore, for a believer this world is such that it necessitates moving about most cautiously.

We need to safeguard our belief and the safeguarding of belief is impossible without turning to God. It is the obligation of each Ahmadi to become *ebad ur*

Rahman (servant of the Gracious God), be one who turns to the Gracious God Who has bestowed us with countless blessings. From among these blessings today we see Allah has also granted us this beautiful mosque. The purpose of this mosque, indeed the purpose of each mosque, is that we gather in it for the worship of the One God. A tremendous way to be grateful for this is to ever be drawn to populate this mosque. We should find each mosque of our Community populated. And what does populating a mosque entail? Just as I said earlier, it is to gather there for the five daily Prayers to seek the pleasure of Allah; to attend the mosque to establish high standards of worship of God. Ahadith relate that the reward of Salat offered in mosque is twenty-seven times greater.

Always remember that the dues of building mosques can only be honoured when one goes to mosque with the intention that people should gather there for worship of God and purely for worship of God. Only then will one be truly rewarded and only then will each believer be deemed as paying the dues of the purpose of his creation; will be deemed as fulfilling the objective for which Allah the Exalted has created man. Allah declares in the Holy Qur'an: 'And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship me.' (Surah Al Dhariyat - 51:57). Therefore, whether one is a person of great position, is a person of great rank and grandeur, is a very wealthy person or is a very poor person, Allah the Exalted has stated the objective of the creation of both kinds of people as this alone that they worship Him.

These mosques signify that everyone, rich and poor, gathers in one place and discarding all worldly positions and ranks stands together most humbly in the Presence of Allah to worship Him. So that they may turn to God, bow before Him as one entity and seek His blessings. When worship of God is observed as one entity, so that the grace of His blessings is increased more than before, then Allah the Exalted also rewards such worship twenty-seven times more. If one harbours discriminatory feelings of wanting to stand next to such and such and not wishing to stand next to such and such or that such and such has newly taken their bai'at and one presumes their status to be less than one, then, despite the fact that one is in a mosque for the worship of God, one is not worthy of this reward.

Just as the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said that the reward of Prayers offered in a mosque is twenty-seven fold he also said that 'the reward of each deed is dependant on its intention'. Therefore if the intention is not good then Allah also withholds the reward for an apparent good deed. Thus, the reward of each deed is only if the intention is good. Allah has also declared in the Holy Qur'an: 'Woe those who pray' (Surah Al Ma'un 107:5) Woe because they forget the real objective of Salat, they have flawed intention; they do not have good sentiments towards others and are mentally occupied with worldly

matters. Therefore it is most significant to purify one's thoughts in order to seek beneficence from Salat. Elucidating this matter the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said:

'Salat during which the heart is wandering somewhere, thoughts are elsewhere and the mouth is uttering something else is a curse. It is thrown back at one [who is saying it] and is not accepted.'

He also stated:

'Only that Salat is real which gives pleasure. Such a Salat is a source of generating abhorrence for sin. This is the very Salat about which it is said that it is the zenith of a believer and is a source of progression for a believer.'

We should try and offer this kind of Salat and we should come to the mosque with the intention of offering such Salat. Always be mindful that personal and communal advancement is only with the grace of Allah and in order to attain Allah's blessings, as Allah the Exalted has stated the purpose of creation should always be kept in view. In particular it should be borne in mind that while in the mosque no worldly matters are discussed and in line with the commandment of Allah only His pleasure is sought. When one would come to the mosque with this thought and each person would be coming to the mosque to seek Allah's pleasure, then even if a bad thought about another comes to mind, one would shake it off. With the blessings of such Salat and worship of God one's attention will be drawn to love and affection and matters of mutual care even outside of the mosque and animosities and resentments will be rid of. Therefore the advantage of building mosques is only when mosques are built with this intention and one comes to mosques with this intention that one is to keep one's heart clean and pure for the sake of Allah. Otherwise we see that there are countless mosques in the world. In some of these mosques those who give sermons say little else other than use abusive language and extremely foul words for other [religious] sects. In some mosques of the world our Community is also targeted with abusive language. In these mosques, at times, from within, two [rival] groups break up in conflict and exceed such limits that governments have to intervene and lock up the mosques. Can such mosques be a source of earning Divine reward? Rather such people are guilty of incurring God's displeasure.

Thus simply making a mosque and making it beautiful is not something to be very joyous about. If one wishes to attain real happiness, then that is only possible when worshippers with beautiful hearts whose intentions are pure, who spread love and affection and who turn to Allah with sincerity are generated. Always be mindful that the purpose of the advent of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) was, and indeed is, to bring man close to God and to promote

mutual love and brotherhood. If we are not endeavouring to attain this purpose then it is pointless to be considered an Ahmadi. I mentioned in the Jalsa [of Benin Jama'at] yesterday that only that person is dear to Allah who progresses in *taqwa* (righteousness) and the ways to attain *taqwa* that He has taught us are through observance of Salat and honouring of His other obligations and honouring the obligations towards His creation.

We in the Ahmadiyya Community should always be mindful of honouring these dues. It is a tremendous blessing of Allah on us that He has enabled us to accept the Imam of the age. At a time when the world is embroiled in disorder He has corded us together onto a filament as a Community. In thankfulness of this favour it is our obligation to raise the standards of our worship, it is our obligation to express our mutual care, love and brotherhood in a greater way and it is our obligation to completely purify our hearts for each other. It is our obligation to merge those who have recently taken their *bai'at* (pledge of allegiance) within us. If we are not following all this it would be most unfortunate. Each Ahmadi should always have an awareness of this, indeed should be heedful that we are the adherents of that Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) whose entire livelihood, his waking, his sleep, his life and his death were all for the pleasure of Allah. We will be counted as real believers when we will adopt his blessed model, when each act of ours will be to attain Allah's pleasure. In such an instance our matters will be accepted and our other deeds will be accepted. We will be calm and tranquil amongst ourselves and will be able to take the message of true peace and true Islam to others and the results of our Tabligh (propagation of Islam) will be successful. We will thus gather greater blessings of Allah.

May Allah the Exalted make this mosque blessed in every way for the Jama'at here and may He grant us its most excellent fruits. Now I would like to say something from an administrative perspective here that concerns the auxiliary organisations i.e. Ansar, Khuddam and Lajna. These auxiliaries should be mindful that the responsibility of each is only within its respected organisation. Ansar Ullah may not interfere in the matters of Lajna Ima'illah or Khuddam ul Ahmadiyya or the Jama'at programmes or its administrative matters. Likewise Khuddam and Lajna are limited to their own spheres and the administration of the Jama'at is over and above these auxiliaries. It should be very clear that the auxiliaries directly report to the Khalifa of the time, however when planning their programmes they should consult the Ameer so that there is no [timing] clash with the Jama'at programmes. It should also be borne in mind that each member of the auxiliaries is a member of the Jama'at and is thus bound by the administrative system of the Jama'at.

May Allah the Exalted enable all of you to live with love and affection and may attaining Allah's pleasure, rather than personal egos, is your objective. Ameen.