

Friday Sermon delivered in Urdu on 17 June 1911 at Gross-Gerau, Germany, by *Hadrat* Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masih V, may Allah be his support.

As-Salamu 'Aliakum Wa Rahmatullah. Recitation of Tashahhud. Recitation of Surah Fatihah.

This is a great favor of Allah on us Ahmadis that he gave us the opportunity to accept the Imam of this age. If an Ahmadi ponders, he will realize that he cannot return this favor even if he spends all his life in being grateful to Allah.

It is said that there are around two billion Muslims in the world at this time. The prophecy and directive is in front of all of them that the Messiah and the Mahdi will appear in the fourteenth century [after Hijrah]. A period of rejuvenation of Islam will start after a long while. Therefore, when that advent takes place, the signs are fulfilled then accept that sent by Me and the true lover of mine.

The greatest of the signs is the sign that lunar and solar eclipses will take place in the month of Ramadan on identified dates and that it is such a sign that since the creation of the earth and heaven this sign has never taken place.

This is a directive of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, peace and blessings of Allah be on him. The Holy Qur'an, by saying wa akharina minhum lamma yalhaqu bihim [And among others from among them who have not yet joined them. 62:4], diverted attention further to this aspect.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him thus further clarified by saying, Search him among the non-Arabs. He also directed to go to him and to have his Salam conveyed to him even if you have to walk on your knees on slabs of ice.

And then Allah taught Muslims prayers to always stay on the guidance and with the guidance. But yet only 5-7 % availed the opportunity to recognize the Imam of the time even though the Muslims pray the supplication of ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6] in their worship many times.

Despite that the prophecies of the Holy Qur'an and the prophecies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him are before them, the majority of Muslims is denying this Imam who is the Imam of this time. Not only they are refusing to accept but rather are strongly pressing for denial while Allah is bestowing guidance and leading pious-natured non-Muslims and irreligious and atheists to the path of guidance. Every year thousands from them enter the Community.

But unfortunately, following the opportunistic so-called scholars, at some places, people known as Muslims have brought the enmity of the Imam of the time to its extreme. Only Allah can bestow understanding on them. The so-called scholars have reached such state that it seems that all avenues of reformation have been closed on them. But those who follow them in innocence, or in their imagination, in the love of the messenger, may Allah guide them towards the right path so that they may recognize the Imam. May they desist from the enmity they are engaged in, which is touching the extreme limits at some places, and may they straighten their hereafter. May the prayer of ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6] become the voice of the hearts of the Muslims. And

may the Muslim ummah be the inheritor of the blessings of God and that may the world see them with an eye of honor and respect.

Explaining the verse of ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6], the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, says,

As the Holy Qur'an has directed to follow a ruler for civic responsibility, the same directive is for spiritual civic responsibility. It is a pointer toward the same when Allah teaches the prayer ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6], sirataladhina an'amta 'alaihim [The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings... 1:7]. One should consider that though neither a believer, nor a human, nor even an animal is deprived of the favors of Allah, but it cannot be said that Allah has directed to follow any of them. Therefore, the meaning of this verse is that provide us the opportunity to follow the ways of those on whom the rain of heavenly favors has showered. Therefore, the hint in this verse is that you be with the Imam of the time.

He defined the Imam of the time (Imamuz-Zaman) as messengers and the ones appointed by Allah for the guidance of the world.

In this time, as I said, according to the prophecies of the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, Imam of the time is the true lover of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, the Promised Messiah and the Mahdi of the time, who has appeared in this age bearing this favor from Allah. That reward which is to continue till the time of the end through the blessings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, according to his prophecies, has to continue through the Promised Messiah, peace be on him. This can be attained by others only by attaching themselves to the Promised Messiah, peace be on him.

The companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, availed the favor quite well which emanated 1400 years ago. They were always in the worry how they refresh their faith. The words of ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6] were on their tongues. Every word and prayer emanated from the depths of their hearts when they offered Prayers. They had developed such relationship with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, that its example cannot be found. And therefore Allah also blessed them so that they attained the honor of radiyallahu 'anhum [Allah is well pleased with them... 5:120]. Thus to attain this favor and to be steadfast on guidance, to tread upon siratal-mustaqim (right path), forever abiding by the directives of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, and accept the Imam of the time, the Messiah and the Mahdi, we will have to develop such a relationship which may make us the inheritors of the favors of Allah forever. And as we have made the pledge at the time of allegiance that we will have this relationship above all others, and will give it preference over all other relationships, as is written in the 10th condition of initiation. That condition is,

That he/she shall enter into a bond of brotherhood with this humble servant of God, pledging obedience to me in everything good, for the sake of Allah, and remain faithful to it till the day of his/her death; that he/she shall exert such a high devotion in the observance of this bond as is not to be found in any other worldly relationship and connection demanding devoted dutifulness.

Thus, just by performing initiation, we cannot surmise that our prayer of *ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim* [Guide us in the right path. 1:6] has been accepted, or that Allah accepted the *ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim* [Guide us in the right path. 1:6] prayer of our ancestors and had us born in their homes. It is not enough that Allah provided us the opportunity to accept the Imam of this age. In accordance with the directive of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, we have to move our steps forward after we have accepted this Imam. Rather, now there is need more than before to pay attention to the prayer of *ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim* [Guide us in the right path. 1:6]. That the pledge of *ta'at bil-ma'ruf* [obedience in what is right 24:54] we have made, may Allah keep us firm on it forever. May we be the ones who continue to walk for ever on *siratal-mustaqim* (the right path). And, may we be the ones abiding by this directive of the Holy Qur'an, *fala tumutunna illa wa intum muslimun* [so let not death overtake you except when you are in a state of submission 2:133], that you do not pass away but that you are obedient.

If it is not the blessing of Allah, one can never with his effort show complete obedience and fellowship. One will have to turn to God to absorb his favors. To keep one attentive, Allah has taught this prayer, and has directed to keep the prayer of *ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim* [Guide us in the right path. 1:6] before us in every *Rak'at* of every *Salat* because it is only Allah who bestows guidance.

Taking account of your selves, keeping the apprehension of Allah in heart, continue to pray to seek the right path. Without this, it is very difficult that man can have such a relationship with someone which is not found in any other condition of servitude, such a relationship which is not found in any other interaction. Such a relationship is not possible without the favor of the Allah, the Almighty, which carries complete obedience. Therefore, there is need to seek guidance only from Allah, and there is need only to seek help from Allah.

Therefore, if we have to abide by the pledge of allegiance with the Imam of the age in reality then we need to understand the reality of *ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim* [Guide us in the right path. 1:6]. There is need to ponder over it. There is need to offer this prayer fervently because after being attached to this Imam, only this is not enough that we pledged allegiance to the Imam of the time, and that is it. Rather, we will have to develop an attachment with the system which was established by the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, and the explanation of which he narrated with clear exposition in his booklet *Al-Wasiyyat* [The Will]. That system is the system of *Khilafat*.

A person accepts the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, but then if he is denying the manifestation which is to come after him or seeks excuses in *ta'at bil-ma'ruf* [obedience in what is right 24:54] then he becomes the one who is breaking the relationship of servitude with the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, and thus he is deprived of those blessings which result from keeping attached to him. The example of *Gher Muba'in* [the deniers of the *Ahmadiyya Khilafat*] is before us. It is a very clear example. They for sure entered the allegiance of the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, or claimed to have pledged allegiance, but they did not comprehend his message [about the second manifestation], or tried not to understand it due to their personal interests, that is, to take the system of *Khilafat* as the continuation of the same system which Allah established in this age through the Promised Messiah, peace be on him.

Thus, fortunate are those of us who, after accepting the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, established the relationship of affinity and fidelity with the second manifestation. But, for an Ahmadi, only this is not the culmination of ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6]. As I said, one should always be judging his self. The prayer of ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6] is a continuation of perpetual progress forward, and being in the search of the way to guidance at all times; it is the mark of a believer to pray for its permanence.

An ordinary person who is not on high levels of spirituality, he is always at war with Satan. Or it can be said that despite carrying out good deeds Satan is after him to deviate him. Despite a belief in the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, despite having a relationship of fidelity with Khilafat, despite taking part in financial sacrifices, despite serving the Community and taking part in Waqar Amal, some people are such that when they meet me they say that they are lazy in Prayers [Salat]. Laziness in Salat, which is the basic objective of man's creation, pulls one away from other good deeds too.

There are also ones who perform a lot of good deeds, offer their Prayers, but they are not good in treatment of their families. These also are the people who deviate from the way of guidance. They may be offering the prayer of ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6] but are not acting on all the directives because the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, has said, The best among you is the one who is good with his family.

Thus the seekers of guidance, keeping every small aspect in front of them, keeping that love and affection before them, which a believer should have with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, make an effort to tread the path on which Allah and His messenger want us to tread. As we offer the prayer of ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6], we should have before us that target, that example, which was presented before us by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, which the Companions who benefitted from him and showed the example of mun'am 'alaih [on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings... 1:7], which the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, presenting before us through his word and action showed us the ways to move from darkness to light, through which the Companions of the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, too, by bringing about a revolution in their lives, attained a high spiritual status.

I have mentioned family and how the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, directed his Companions to treat the family members in a good way. Once a Companion presented himself before the Promised Messiah, peace be on him. He said that his wife had stayed so long with her parents that he will not allow her to go back to them again. The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, was much hurt and distressed on hearing this. His face turned red and asked the person to leave his company because his utterances were polluting his company, and rebuked the person in very strong words. The person asked for forgiveness.

Another Companion who also did not treat his wife well was also sitting there. He immediately got up and went to the market and bought some things for his wife and gave them to her and told her that they were a gift for her and talked to her with love. The wife became perplexed as to what had happened to her husband and how this revolution had come about. She asked him what happened. He said,

I came home from the company of the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, after I observed that the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, was greatly distressed and hurt on hearing about the mistreatment of a wife. May Allah forgive my previous sins because of the way I treated you. You should also forgive me. I will show good treatment from now on.

This is the change which leads to the way of guidance. It starts from domestic life, spreads through the society and then spreads in the world.

A person establishes the pledge of allegiance with the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, on its basis, and then from that are obtained the relationships of nearness to God. Guidance is not just to accept a person sent by Allah, or not just being affiliated with the Community but to mold lives to the teaching and to establish oneself on it is the basis for the foundation of guidance.

Therefore the prayer of *ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim* [Guide us in the right path. 1:6] is not just for discharging the rights of the Creator, it is not just to strengthen one's belief, but this prayer also is for discharging the rights of creation. The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, has said,

This prayer is for every aspect of your life.

There are many people among you here-and some of them I know- who are cruel to their wives. Some are not known. They are good outside the home, they are very well behaved in the eyes of the people and established on the path of guidance but are deviated from *siratal-mustaqim* [the right path] when it comes to their homes. It is not a trivial matter to treat the family well. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, especially mentioned that the best among you is the one who is good with their family and then presented his example that he was the best among all in treating his family well. This is an act which is not an insignificant act. To show the importance of this act, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, presented his example. Therefore, one should offer the prayer of *ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim* [Guide us in the right path. 1:6] keeping every task before him so that the levels of good deeds continue to increase and when death comes, it is in the state of pure obedience.

True believer is the one who accepts the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, and then continues to elevate the level of his good acts. He is making an effort all the time to enhance his faith. He should pray that may his steps advance towards progress in the right path He has established him on. He should always be trying to advance in righteousness. One who progresses in righteousness is always humbled due to the regard of God. And the one in whose heart the regard for Allah takes root, he prays for the discharging of the rights of God and also makes an effort and prayer for discharging the rights of man. Every person who prays to Allah for staying on the right path, he also progresses in the desire to serve the faith. Not only that he desires but every step he takes in this way, guided by God and his messenger, he takes that step for the pleasure of Allah. A true believers should not be like those who consider themselves righteous and virtuous and consider themselves established at some level. They think that they have attained some permanent status or have reached a level where they are safe. Whenever a person thinks so, however pious he may be, consider that he is annihilated in spiritual terms and is possessed by Satan. Therefore, to always take account of oneself and to advance to the next level is the

way and trait of a believer. One who considers that he has found his destination, and becomes proud after a little service to the Community, considering his service to the Community and worship enough, and diverts his attention away for the rights of man, even if he has reached some status, he loses it in time due to his behavior. Therefore, the true believer does not observe only the deeds of today but rather looks towards his end and prays for an honorable end.

No one in this world can have a greater spiritual status than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him. His scribe who recorded his revelations-could be called secretary in today's world-attained such a status of nearness that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, called upon him all the time to write down revelations. This status shows that he had trust in him. In the eyes of others too, Abdullah bib Ubayy, scribe of revelations, for sure would have had a status because he wrote the revelations of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him. But what was the end? He stumbled and was lost all status. In the same way, during the time of the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, there were people who were advanced in love and affection. When their misfortune stumbled them they turned into severe enemies and started hurling filthy and low blames on him, and started raising new objections by the day. Therefore, the prayer of ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6] is very important for an honorable end. Ponder over it and rehearse. The Promised Messiah peace be on him says at one place,

The purpose and the objective of man's life is to tread upon sirat mustaqim [right path] and its longing, which has been produced in the words, ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6], that O Allah, show us the straight path, path of those, on whom You showered your favors. This is the prayer which is offered at all times during every Prayer and in every rak'at. So much repetition of it shows its importance. Our Community should remember that it is not a trivial matter. To repeat these words just from the tongue like a parrot is not its real objective. It is an effective and unerring prescription to make a person perfect, which should be treated as a goal and kept before eyes all the time as an amulet.

He said that this prayer will fulfill the rights of man and the rights of the abilities which are given to man will also be discharged. Then he says,

To attain the excellences which the mun'am 'alaih [on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings... 1:7] have, and to which Allah has pointed in siratalladhina ana'amata 'alaihim [The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings 1:7], is the objective of every man. Our Community in particular should divert their attention to this aspect because Allah, by establishing this Community, has desired only this that He may prepare such a Community as the one which was prepared by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, so that, in this last period, this Community be a witness to the truth and grandeur of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him.

This is a great undertaking. This is an honor but also is a great task. It is a great responsibility for the Community. Every Ahmadi should be a witness to the truth and greatness of the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him. Every Ahmadi can only be a witness to the

truth of the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, if by reciting the prayer of ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6], they continue to achieve levels of progress, and continue to attain the level of the honored ones, and make every aspect of the teachings of Islam a part of their life. There has to be an effort to act on the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him. We have to make an effort to achieve these levels. And, when we make such an effort then we will in reality be the ones who understand the meaning of ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6], and will be the ones who fulfill the purpose of the advent of the Promised Messiah, peace be on him. Otherwise, this prayer will become as words memorized by a parrot, as the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, has said. The Promised Messiah peace be on him, advising us, said at one place,

If there is a part of deficit in dealing with Allah, the same will be from the other side.

That is, if there is deficient dealing from this side then though Allah does not engage in deceit but understands it, you will not get reward due to the deceit from your side. Allah knows everything. He further says,

But one who keeps his heart clear before Allah, and assures that there is no deficiency in dealing with God, Allah will also not hold anything back. Man's heart is a mirror for himself. He can see everything in it. The real way to save yourself from hurt is to desire forgiveness for your sins with a pure heart and show a relationship of fidelity and sincerity. And this course of allegiance which you have adopted, give it preference over everything else, because you will be questioned about it.

It is necessary to take account of one's self. There are billions of Muslims in the world, they offer the prayers if ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6] but because it is a matter of repeating words like memorized by a parrot, therefore, after the Prayers their attention is towards mischief and disturbances. Only filth pours out of the mouths of some. They utter only filth while standing in the mosques. Or they are immersed in their mutual mischief. Is this that sirat mustaqim [right path] for which the prayer has been taught? Of course, it is not.

Before us are the paths. The sirat mustaqim [straight path] was to make man after abandoning the traits of animals, and then it was to turn him into a civilized man. And then turn civilized men to godly men. These examples before us are not in the form of stories and anecdotes that we came and we heard anecdotes and stories. But rather these examples are before us to divert our attention towards action. The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, has taken the pledge from us concerning these very things. Keeping this passion alive within us by acting on the teachings of the Qur'an, we can give preference to the requirements of the pledge of allegiance. Otherwise, Allah will not be happy only on this matter that we read and repeated the words of ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6] millions of times. Rather, words emanating from the depths of soul, prayer and seeking help for treading upon and being established on sirat mustaqim [right path], they will help gain the nearness to God. Otherwise as the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, said, you will be queried about that your claim was different and act was something else. With every prayer, effort and good intention are a requirement. The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, says at one place,

Allah the Almighty says, walladhina jahadu fina lanahdiyannahum subulana [And as for those who strive in Our path — We will surely guide them in Our ways. 29:70]. That whoever will make an effort in our way, we will show him our way.

He said, this is a promise, and, on the other side is the prayer of ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6]. So man should, keeping this in mind, pray fervently in Prayer and desire that he may be one of those who have attained progress and enlightenment. It may not happen that he is taken from this world unenlightened and blind.

So, in one respect, as Allah has bestowed upon us enlightenment, after understanding the message of Allah and His messenger, we attached ourselves to the Imam of the time, and accepted him. But, as I have explained, the gates of progress are always open. Spiritual grades are always attained. Steps should go forward in the direction of progress. He has said at a place, show a change in yourselves after entering the Community, which should be obviously visible. Do not take any injunction lightly. Every directive should be honored. There is a need to make an effort to understand and act upon hundreds of injunctions of the Holy Qur'an. A person can himself undertake to measure and take account of his effort. And the best way is only this that if there is sensitivity then a person should take his account himself. As the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, has said, man's heart is a mirror. Observe yourselves in the mirror of heart after cleaning it. Look at the condition of your hearts. Everyone will be able to see his condition. Objections on others will vanish, and attention will be drawn to one's own reformation. And there will be attention to recite ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6] after understanding it. The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, says,

It is the change in the internal review that I want to see in my Community.

These reviews will keep diverting our attention towards the pledge of allegiance and our responsibilities. As has been mentioned that the true believer is the one who is making an effort to progress in faith, I relate the stages which the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, has outlined.

Until a person does not have a trove of real good deeds [not one or two], until then he is not a believer. That is why Allah has taught the prayer of ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim [Guide us in the right path. 1:6] in Surah Fatihah that man may not understand it a virtue just not committing grave sins like theft, adultery, etc., rather it is clarified by saying siratalladhina an'amta alaihim [The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings... 1:7] that reward is a separate thing; unless one attains it he cannot be considered good and pious. Notice that Allah has not taught the prayer that do not count me among the sinful and the transgressors but rather taught that count me among the ones who are blessed.

Thus, not a few good deeds but it is the job of a believer to gather a trove of good deeds. And this trove can only be gathered by discharging the rights of both God and man, and by acting on the injunctions of the Holy Qur'an.

The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, says at a place,

Realize that the root of every good is in belief in God. As much a person's belief in God is weak, that much weakness and laziness exists in carrying out good deeds. But when the faith is strong, and Allah, with all his perfect attributes, is ascertained to the extent, a peculiar change takes place in the actions of man. One who believes in God cannot commit sins.

When a person has true faith in God, then it is certain that he will not commit sin.

Because this belief cuts off his base abilities and limbs of sin. Note that if some ones' eyes are gouged out then how can he use them for unwarranted viewing?

When there are no eyes, how can unwarranted viewing be carried out?

How will he commit the sin of eyes? And similarly, if the hands are cut off, sensual limbs are cut off, then how can he commit the sins which relate to these limbs? Exactly the same way when a person is in the condition of a soul at rest [nafs mutma'innah], the soul at rest makes him blind and his eyes lose the ability to sin. He looks but does not see because the ability of eyes to sin is eliminated. He has ears but is deaf and cannot hear the things which pertain to sin. Same way, all his base and sensual abilities and limbs are virtually cut off. A death takes place on all his abilities which could lead to sin. And, he is just like a dead body and is under the will of God. He cannot take even one step aside of Him. This condition exists when there is a true belief in God, and its result is that he is given complete peace. This is the stage which should be the real objective of man. Our Community needs this. To attain perfect peace, perfect belief is necessary. Therefore the first responsibility of our Community is that they attain to true faith in Allah.

Just to accept is not enough. This is the condition of faith which we have to attain. These are the standards which the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, wants to see in us. May Allah do so that we, by making pure changes in ourselves, be able to meet these standards. May we be the ones who progress forward in nearness to Allah. The guidance on which Allah has established us, the favor he has bestowed on us, as a gratefulness to that reward and favor, may we be the ones who continue to make progress in following the injunctions of Allah. To continue the reward of Ahmadiyyat among our generations, may we never be lax in our efforts and prayers. The worldly comforts of these countries may not divert us from attaining our objectives. May Allah allow us to avail the opportunity.

The traditional second khutba was recited at the end.