

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ



لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

Friday Sermon

HADHRAT MUHYI-UD-DIN AL-KHALIFATULLAH
Munir Ahmad Azim

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After greeting all his disciples, including all new 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: "The Three Stages of the Soul".

The spiritual journey is a life-long journey. Various stages of progress and development during the course of this journey may be described as achievements but the fact is that ultimate distinction and goal of this journey is never to be achieved in its totality. There is always a stage beyond the highest point of achievement and there is always a peak higher than that we set our feet upon. This has to be like that for the simple reason that in this spiritual journey we travel and ascend towards God whose infinite Being is, strictly speaking, beyond human comprehension.

Allah clearly states: **Eyes cannot reach Him but He reaches the eyes. And He is the Incomprehensible, the All-Aware.** (Al-Anam 6: 104).

Man discovers God according to his own limited knowledge and ability and along with the increase in his faculties of understanding God, his realisation of God goes on attaining higher stages. This point is well-epitomised in the Holy Quran. It says:

Every day he reveals Himself in a different state. (Ar-Rahman 55: 30).

Apart from the depth of this topic of spirituality the subject is so delicate that it is absolutely futile to attempt to describe it without a real and personal experience in this field. If the essence of spirituality is to know God and to actually attain nearness to the Creator and Maker, then, undoubtedly, it can be described by someone who has gone through all this experience and who can speak with the authority of personal experience and conviction.

According to Islam, the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the best in every respect. He not only attained the highest possible heights of spirituality but also became a means to attaining all types of spiritual favours from God Almighty. A unique manifestation of this is to be seen in this century by this humble self and in the last century in the person of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), the Imam Mahdi and Promised Messiah who enjoyed the distinction of being the most humble and the most devoted servant of the Holy Prophet of Islam in the last century. Having received the divine favours and blessings, he enlightened the world with the deep insight and experience bestowed upon him in the field of spirituality. He wrote more than 80 books expounding the Islamic teachings on various complicated issues. One of his world-famous books is: **The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam**, in which he discusses the various state and stages of spiritual life and their relevance to human life. He has stated that, according to Islam, there are three states and stages of one's spiritual journey.

Firstly: *Nafse Ammarah*, i.e. the self that incites to evil.

Secondly: *Nafse Lawwamah*, i.e. the reproving self.

Thirdly: *Nafse Mutmainah*, i.e. the soul at rest/ peace.

Explaining the first stage, the Promised Messiah (as) says: *It is characteristic of the human self that it incites man to evil and is opposed to his attainment of perfection and to his moral state, and urges him towards undesirable and evil ways. Thus the propensity towards evil and intemperance is a human state which predominates over the mind of a person before he enters upon the moral state, so long as he is not guided by reason and understanding but follows his natural bent in eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, anger and provocation, like the animals. When a person is guided by reason and understanding and brings his natural state under control and regulates it in a proper manner, that state ceases to be his natural state and is called his moral state.*

About the second stage, he says: *This reprovng self is the second source of human state from which the moral state is generated. At this stage man ceases to resemble the animals... It is so called as it reprovng man on vice and is not reconciled to man's submitting to his natural desires and leading an unbridled existence like the animals. It desires that man should be in a good state and should practise good morals, and no kind of intemperance should be manifested in any aspect of human life, and natural emotions and desires should be regulated by reason. As it reprovng every vicious movement, it is called the reprovng self. Though it reprovng itself in respect of vices, yet it is not fully effective in practising virtue and occasionally it is dominated by natural emotions, when it stumbles and falls. It is like a weak child who does not wish to stumble and fall but does so out of weakness, and is then remorseful over his infirmity. In short, this is the moral state of human self when it seeks to comprehend within itself high moral qualities and is disgusted with disobedience, but cannot achieve complete success.*

How does one progress from the second stage to the third stage of spiritual journey? At the stage of the reprovng self a person's condition is that he repents time after time and yet falls down and often despairs and considers his condition beyond remedy. He remains in this situation for a period and when the appointed time comes, a light descends upon him at night or during the day which possesses divine power. With the descent of that light he undergoes a wonderful change and he perceives the control of a hidden hand, and beholds a wonderful world. At that time he realises that God exists and his eyes are filled with a light which they did not possess before.

Describing this third and the final stage of the spiritual journey, the Promised Messiahs explains: *This is the stage when the soul of a person being delivered from all weaknesses is filled with spiritual powers and establishes a relationship with God Almighty without Whose support it cannot exist. As water flowing down from a height, on account of its volume and the absence of any obstruction, rushes with great force, in the same way the soul at rest flows towards God. That is indicated by the divine direction to the soul that has found comfort in God to return to its Lord. It undergoes a great transformation in this very life and is bestowed a paradise while still in this world.*

May Allah (swt) guide us all in the right path. *Ameen.*