

ZIKR-E-HABIB: FORGIVENESS AND FORBEARANCE

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Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as}, the Promised Messiah said that prophethood is divided into two parts - one is marked by difficulties and hardship and the other is marked by victory and triumph. There is a divine wisdom behind this arrangement so that prophets may manifest excellence of their morals in both phases of prophethood. On another occasion he said, "Prophets are very courageous and brave people who face immeasurable challenges and suffering in carrying out their mission. Nobody else, however strong or brave, can endure such hardships." The same is true of the Promised Messiah who submitted completely and absolutely to his beloved master Hadhrat Muhammad ^{saw} in all aspects of character and morals. Hazoor manifested forbearance for the ignorant and the arrogant and forgiveness for his enemies, even under extreme adversity. He called on us to adhere to the same high morals that he himself practiced. The Promised Messiah stated in one of his speeches, "What have our opponents done to us? They have spared no effort to harm us and hurt us but we are still ready to forgive all of their transgressions; so you, who associate with me, remember that you must sympathize with everybody regardless of one's religion and be kind irrespective of one's ethnicity and creed."

In the early days of the Promised Messiah, the majority of the population of Qadian consisted of Hindus and Sikhs. Two of these Hindus, Lala Malawamal and Lala Sharampat, are well known in the history of Ahmadiyyat. Both of these gentlemen witnessed the fulfillment of many of the Promised Messiah's prophecies, a few of which directly related to them. Many of these revelations were from well before the time when Hazoor founded the *Jama'at* and started taking *Bai'at*. In spite of the fact that these gentlemen witnessed the glaring truth concerning the future foretold by the Promised Messiah, they rarely missed an opportunity to oppose him. When the *Minaratul Masih* was being built, the Hindus from Qadian complained to the deputy commissioner that the interior space of their homes would be exposed to anyone who stood at the top of the minaret and thus compromise the privacy within their homes. And in view of that, they claimed the construction should be immediately stopped. The deputy commissioner came to Qadian and inquired from the Promised Messiah about this objection. Hazoor

explained the reason for the construction of the minaret. He then turned to Hindus who had accompanied the deputy commissioner and said, "Ask Lala Badamal who is sitting here whether there was ever a time when they needed any help and I refrained from providing it to them and also ask them that whenever they had an opportunity to harm me, did they not avail it?" Hadhrat Hafiz Roshan Alira sahib stated that Lala Badamal was visibly ashamed and did not have the courage to look towards Hazoor, much less respond to his comments.

Pundit Lekhram, a religious scholar who was a staunch enemy of Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, arrived in Qadian and was aided and supported by the Hindus of Qadian in his effort to abuse the Promised Messiah. They fed him all kinds of lies about Hazoor which made him more abusive and disrespectful towards the Promised Messiah and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace be on him. Eventually, Pundit Lekhram was killed in response to the prayers and prophecy of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood, the Promised Messiah. Hindus and *Arya Samaj*, including Lala Shrampat, accused the Promised Messiah of masterminding the murder of Pundit Lekhram and wanted the government to prosecute *Hazoor*. And yet, while on one hand Lala Shrampat laid slander upon Promised Messiah's name, on the other hand he asked for help from the Promised Messiah at the same time. During this whole episode, Lala Shrampat became sick and he came to *Hazoor* for medicine. *Hazoor* gave him the medicine and asked him if he truly considered him the enemy responsible for the murder of Lekhram. If so, Hazoor asked, did he then think it was appropriate to take his medicine? Lala Shrampat replied, "We trust you. Please give us the medicine."

The same Lala Shrampat, fell seriously ill on another occasion due to an infection in his abdomen and believed he was going to die. When Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood found out about his illness, he visited his home located in a dark and narrow alley. He appointed his own personal doctor, Muhammad Abdullah, to treat Lala Shrampat - he was the only doctor in Qadian at the time. *Hazoor* visited him daily. During his illness, Lala Shrampat would request *Hazoor* "*Hadhrat Jee, pray for me!*" *Hazoor* comforted him and prayed for him till he recovered. This is the character of a man so great that his heart overflowed with genuine goodwill for even the worst of his enemies.

In 1882, the Promised Messiah received this revelation:

"Ya Ahmadu, faazatir rahmatu alaa shafataika"

Mercy flows from thy lips, O Ahmad!

The Promised Messiah's whole life is a testimony of this divine statement. After the death of Lekhram, three of the Arya Hindus in Qadian started a newspaper which was devoted to attacking the Promised Messiah and the *Jama'at* with the most abusive, filthy

and slanderous language. The Promised Messiah wrote a booklet entitled "*Qadian kay Arya aur hum*" (The Aryas of Qadian and us) and asked them to refrain from their malicious statements but they continued in their venomous behavior. During this time, the plague epidemic began to spread in Qadian. The Promised Messiah declared that the members of his *Jama'at* would not be infected with the plague after being revealed by Allah that "I shall safeguard all those who dwell in this house." When the manager of this *Arya* newspaper heard the Promised Messiah's pronouncement, he mocked it and claimed that he would also be saved from the plague. A few days later, he and his friend contracted the disease and died. The editor of the paper, who also contracted the disease but was still alive, called an Ahmadi *hakeem* (herbal doctor), a Maulvi Abaidullah, and requested treatment. *Maulvi Sahib* asked the Promised Messiah what to do. *Hazoor* said, "You must treat him because human compassion requires it but I will tell you that he will not survive." The man died the next day despite the treatment.

Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad commented on this incident saying "It shows a remarkable expression of concern by the Promised Messiah for his sworn enemy by asking his follower to treat Mr. Samraj." But it also indicates his unshakable belief in the divine word. He was certain in his belief that those Hindus who had ridiculed and taunted his prophecy would not escape.

Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood wrote in his book *Arba'een*, "I would like to say explicitly to all Muslims, Christians and Hindus that I do not consider anybody my enemy in this world. I love mankind more than a caring mother loves her children. I am only the enemy of those false beliefs which belie the truth. Compassion for human beings is my obligation; repudiation of falsehood, idolatry, oppression and every kind of misdeed, injustice and immorality is my creed." He repeatedly expressed his love and sympathy for all humans as part of his faith and purpose of his advent. Even those who devoted their lives to prosecute him shared his grace. The Promised Messiah said, "I am thankful that I have prayed for every single one of my enemies at least two or three times."

And what did the Promised Messiah receive in return? His opponents whether Muslims, Christians or Hindus were relentless in their efforts to stop him and destroy him, by whatever means possible. Dr. Martin Clark, a Christian missionary, filed a suit in court in 1897 charging the Promised Messiah with conspiracy to murder him. He produced a Muslim youth, Abdul Hameed, who stated under oath that *Hazoor* had instructed him to assassinate Mr. Clark. Initially, an arrest warrant was issued for the Promised Messiah, but later he was issued a notice to appear in the court. After a few days of judicial proceeding, it was evident that there was a discrepancy in the testimony of the star witness. Eventually, Mr. Abdul Hameed admitted that he was coerced by some of the Christian missionaries to take a false oath and admitted that Mirza Sahib never asked him to kill Dr. Clark. Captain Douglas, the magistrate hearing the case, honorably dis-

charged *Hazoor* after concluding that charges against him were false and baseless. After his verdict, he turned to Promised Messiah and stated that if he desired to prosecute Dr. Clark for false charges, the district magistrate would allow him to do so. *Hazoor* replied that he had no desire to prosecute Dr. Clark before an earthly court; his complaint was pending before the Highest Judge. On a footnote, Dr. Clark died two years later. The Promised Messiah forgave the enemy who wanted him shackled and thrown into a prison cell; the courtroom was packed with *maulvis*, Christian missionaries and Hindu pundits, all gleeful and anticipating that Promised Messiah would receive the severest punishment. Maulvi Muhammad Husain, an arch-opponent of the Promised Messiah, was one of the prosecution witnesses in this case. He travelled all over India to collect edicts from foremost Muslim religious leaders declaring *Hazoor* an infidel and a *kafir*. He regularly used the most defamatory and abusive and incendiary language in his publications against Promised Messiah. Maulvi Fazal Din was the attorney representing *Hazoor*, he was not an Ahmadi. He sought the Promised Messiah's permission to ask Maulvi Muhammad Hussain questions regarding his parentage to damage the character of the witness and weaken the prosecution's case. *Hazoor* forbade him from asking such personal questions and said, "God forbids unseemly speech." Maulvi Fazal Din recalled years later, "Here I was, defending him in a case of conspiracy to murder and he forbids my questioning, lest it brings shame upon a witness who hated him!"

Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood received a revelation in 1883,

"wa ma arsalnaaka illa rahmatallil alameen"

I have sent thee as a mercy for all people.

This is, of course, also a verse of the Holy Quran in Sura Anbiyya, addressing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace be on him. There were many occasions when this virtue was manifested by the Promised Messiah (as) for all kinds of people - friends and foes. He writes in *Tadhkiratu Shahadatain*, in the Arabic part, about his opponents, "I prayed so often for them in the darkness of blessed nights that may they be shown mercy." He also prayed for his enemies in these words, "O Allah, do not punish those who express enmity towards me; they do not see and do not recognize me. O Allah, have mercy on them and may they join the guided ones."

Mirza Imam Deen and Mirza Nizam Deen were the Promised Messiah's cousins; they also shared ancestral properties with *Hazoor*. Both brothers, especially Mirza Imam Deen, held deep animosity and ill will towards the Promised Messiah and the *Jama'at* and missed no opportunity to cause trouble. On one occasion, they built a wall to block the street to Masjid Mubarak, shutting off the direct access to the mosque for the prayer-goers. Hadhrat Yaqub Ali Irfani, author of *Seerat Masih Mau'ood* writes:

"Those days were very difficult for Ahmadis. We had to walk a long distance to reach the mosque. Whenever it rained, the streets would become muddy and slippery. Many of the elderly and weak and many of the blind members of the *Jama'at* would fall and their clothes would get soiled just for going to the prayers. On top of that, these men restricted the water supply to the Ahmadis. The Promised Messiah was extremely anguished over this matter and sent a few of his companions to Mirza Imam Deen and his brother to persuade them to stop this hostility. In return, they received an abusive and threatening response. The *Jama'at* approached the appropriate government authorities to stop this persecution but was turned down."

Eventually, the Promised Messiah decided to file a complaint in the court. The judge decided against the offending party and ordered the wall to be demolished. The judge also ordered the brothers to pay for all the expenses incurred and offer compensation for this illegal act. *Hazoor* did not approve of the financial part of the decision but unbeknownst to him, the attorney issued a formal notice to Mirza Nizam Deen to pay all of his court sanctioned obligations. Upon receiving this notice, Mirza Nizam Deen wrote a letter to *Hazoor*. He said that his financial resources were meager and he would not be able to pay by lump sum. He admitted that he was obligated and would pay in installments but asked if *Hazoor* would have mercy upon him and forgive him his payments. He also admitted to have wronged *Hazoor* and admitted that he and his brother had caused *Jama'at* trouble in the past.

Hazoor was upset upon receiving the letter and inquired why he was not contacted before the notice had been sent to Mirza Nizam Deen.

He said, "We must not be involved in litigations like worldly people. If he had done this to hurt us, we must not retort. God has not sent me for this purpose."

He wrote a letter to Mirza Nizam Deen sympathizing with him concerning the whole matter, forgiving him and his financial obligations. He dispatched a person to immediately deliver this letter, as he was away from Qadian and wished to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. Halhurat Yaqub Ali writes,

"This is just one example of forbearance and forgiveness of his enemies by the Promised Messiah, which should be a lesson to his followers."

Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad writes, "This is the same Mirza Nizam Deen who brought many false and malicious suits of litigation against Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood and his followers. His behavior with some poor Ahmadis was so vile that a decent person cannot even mention it. And yet, at one point when Mirza Nizam Deen fell ill and almost became delirious, the Promised Messiah went to visit him and prescribed treatment."

Our beloved Messiah, our most forgiving Mahdi, arrived at the door of a sworn enemy to treat hatred with compassion and to fight hostility with generosity. It was the Promised

Messiah's greatest desire that his followers set the highest moral standards and this wish is aptly illustrated by a narration in *Seeratul Mahdi*. Once, two companions of the Promised Messiah, Hadhrat Mir Nasir Nawab Sahib and Maulvi Muhammad Ali Sahib had a disagreement. Mir Sahib reported the matter to *Hazoor* and Maulvi Sahib, finding out that he had been reported, came to *Hazoor* to clarify the matter. The Promised Messiah said, "Yes, Mir Sahib told me something but I was so preoccupied with an issue that I swear that I do not remember what he said or did not say." The Promised Messiah went on to say:

"Lately, a thought has completely taken over me and I have become oblivious of other matters. Whether I am outside in the company or at home, I am now overwhelmed with this one thought which is continuing to build in my mind. And that concern is that the real reason for my coming is to establish a *Jama'at* of true believers with real connection with God and complete faith in Him, who practice the Islamic teachings and follow the character of the Prophet, walk on the path towards righteousness and guidance and set an example of the highest moral conduct so that through such a *Jama'at*, the world learns guidance and the will of God is achieved. If our purpose is not realized but we defeat our enemies through reasoning and arguments, then our victory is no victory. For if the real reason for our advent is not fulfilled, then all of our work will have gone to waste. I see signs of victory as a result of reasoning and arguments and even our enemies are now sensing their weakness but there is still a real lack of awareness concerning the true purpose of our advent. There is a great need of attention within our *Jama'at*; thus, this is the thought that eats at me these days and it is of such great magnitude that it does not leave me even for one moment." [*Seeratul Mahdi*]

This overwhelming concern which erased all other thoughts from the Promised Messiah's mind is the same concern which should consume his followers as well. Our Master expects us to guide the world not through merely logic and reasoning but through the way we carry ourselves and the way we sacrifice our lives for God. We are being asked to shoulder an awesome responsibility. The Promised Messiah lived a life conforming to the highest moral standards set by Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa. The Promised Messiah has exhorted and challenged us to bring about the real change within ourselves to set ourselves apart from the rest of the world.

A few weeks ago, scores of Ahmadis laid down their lives in two mosques in Pakistan for the sake of their faith. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V, may Allah strengthen him, extolling their qualities, has reminded us of our obligation to Allah and His Messiah. The best tribute that I can offer to those martyrs who spilled their blood that fateful day is to bring upon a profound change within myself. Sacrificing my lowly desires and reviving the highest morals within me and I cannot think of a better retribution for those enemies than conforming to the life of the Promised Messiah. So the *Zikr* of my beloved is not mere lip service but the love for my Master entwines with every fiber of my very being!

The speech ended with a short Arabic prayer.

