

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

The Amīr/National President
Jamā‘at Ahmadīyya,

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Dear Brother,

السلام علیکم ورحمة اللہ وبرکاتہ

Extracts from the Friday Sermon delivered by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfa-tul-Masīh V (May Allāh be his Helper) on 24th April 2020 at Mubarak Mosque Islāmabad, Tilford, UK.

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) recited verses 184-186 of *Surah al-Baqarah*, which are as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ . أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ . شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَى وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ .

“O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous. The prescribed fasting is for a fixed number of days, but whoso among you is sick or is on a journey shall fast the same number of other days; and for those who are able to fast only with great difficulty is an expiation — the feeding of a poor man. And whoso performs a good work with willing obedience, it is better for him. And fasting is good for you, if you only knew. The month of Ramaḍān is that in which the Qur’ān was sent down as a guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance and discrimination. Therefore, whosoever of you is present at home in this month, let him fast therein. But whoso is sick or is on a journey, shall fast the same number of other days. Allāh desires to give you facility and He desires not hardship for you, and that you may complete the number, and that you may exalt Allāh for His having guided you and that you may be grateful.” [2:184-186]

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: By the grace of Allāh, tomorrow is the start of Ramaḍān, the month of fasting that Allāh has prescribed for our spiritual growth. In the first verse that I have recited, Allāh says that fasting has been prescribed for you so that you may attain *Taqwa*.

The Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) says: *Taqwa* means to fulfil one’s all obligations to God and to abide by one’s pledge of faith. It also means to fulfil one’s all obligations to people and to live up to our commitments. We should fulfil these obligations in their minute details to the best of our ability and be grateful to God for His bounties. Allāh says that the purpose of the month of fasting is to enable you to make up for the shortcomings of the other eleven months by turning wholly towards God, forgoing even

the lawful things of the world, enduring hunger and thirst, performing more worship, and fulfilling your obligations to your fellow human beings. This is the meaning of *Taqwa* and this is the purpose of fasting in Ramaḍān. This transformation should not be temporary, rather it should be of a permanent nature and thus you will always remember to fulfil your obligations to God and His creatures.

The Holy Prophet (May Allāh's Blessings be upon him) says: Whoever fasts for the sake of Allāh, seeking His grace, Allāh creates a distance of 70 years between him and the fire of hell. These are the blessings of the *Taqwa* that result from fasting. Fasting does not only bring about *Taqwa* for thirty days, rather its effect spans over 70 years. Therefore, when an adult Muslim fasts with its true spirit, he reaps its benefits throughout his life. Imagine how beautiful the whole society would become if people observed their fast in its true spirit and fulfilled their obligations towards God and towards His creation. Such is the beautiful and harmonious society that every believer, indeed every human being, wishes to bring about.

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: The current pandemic and the government's directives for most people to stay at home have motivated volunteers of Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya to provide essential supplies and medicines to people who cannot access them. This is a wonderful activity as it not only benefits Ahmadīs but also helps non-Ahmadīs and brings a good name to the Jamā'at.

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: There are also spiritual benefits to the situation. Many people write that their homes have a new spiritual atmosphere where they pray together with congregation and listen to *dars*. Together they listen to the Friday Sermon and watch MTA. If the lockdown is extended throughout Ramaḍān, we should continue to offer prayers with congregation and learn with greater zeal. Teach the children basic religious knowledge and increase your own knowledge as well. Pay special attention to prayers and seek God's mercy for yourselves and for the world. Let us make full benefit of these days that Allāh has gifted us.

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: The Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) has explained the meaning of *Taqwa* in various ways and on different occasions. We need to listen to his teachings and act upon them and fulfil the pledge we have made to him. On one occasion, the Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) said: *Taqwa* means to avoid impurity even its most minute forms. To achieve this, it is necessary that a person should employ means whereby he does not even come near sin. And he should not rest content with that, rather he should also offer heartfelt prayers. Whether sitting, prostrating, bowing or standing, he should always pray that he may be saved from the filth of sin and transgression. There is no doubt that man can benefit by employing the physical means, but it is total ignorance to put complete faith in them. Unless such means are accompanied by prayer, they are of no avail. This is why Allāh says, "Those who strive towards Us, We guide them in Our ways." Here Allāh stresses the need for striving. In another verse Allāh says, "Call me, and I will answer you." Thus, if man desires *Taqwa*, he must strive for it as well as pray for it, then will Allāh have mercy on him. But if he does only one of these, he will remain deprived.

The Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) says: The fear of God is the root of every deed. *Taqwa* embellishes all actions, and through *Taqwa* one finds nearness to God.

The Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) says: I see that sometimes there are disputes among the members of my Jamā'at, and minor differences reach a point where people start attacking each other's honour and brother starts fighting against brother. Such behaviour is extremely undesirable and should be avoided. Some people will not let go of a dispute without demeaning the other person. One of Allāh's attributes is *Al-Sattar* (the One who overlooks people's faults), so why does one brother not have mercy on the other and overlook his errors? It is important to cover your brother's sins and not attack his dignity. Even in minor quarrels, people want to find ways to demean the other person and overcome him. However, in order to protect the self from egotistic passion, it is necessary that one should show humility in order to avoid conflict. To seek out a brother's fault and to publicize it is the root of arrogance. Avoiding such things constitutes *Taqwa*. When a person adheres to *Taqwa* in all personal and social affairs, he is counted among the angels. Acquire *Taqwa*, for it is only through *Taqwa* that God's blessings are received. The one who fears God is saved from the tribulations of the world and God overlooks his faults.

The Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) says: The Holy Prophet (May Allāh's Blessings be upon him) was the epitome of all the high morals and God has made his morals the ultimate criteria. Do not malign others, for often in maligning others one becomes guilty of the same vices. If the sin you accuse him of is indeed present in him, then the matter is between him and God, and if it is not present in him then you yourself might become engrossed in it. Many people are in the habit of instantly accusing their brother of unholy deeds. You must avoid this. Try to be of service to humankind and show sympathy to your brothers. Be kind to your neighbours and treat your wives in the best manner. But, first and foremost, avoid *shirk* (idolatry), for this is the first step.

The Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) says: It is not enough for a person to say that he is righteous because he has never deprived anyone of his property, never robbed or committed theft, or leered or committed adultery. In the eyes of the men of God, this is laughable, for a person who commits such crimes would be punished. Avoiding these things does not constitute righteousness in the eyes of the men of God. True righteousness means to serve mankind and show such sincerity and devotion in the path of God as to be ready to give up one's life. Remember, the mere avoiding of sin is not a virtue unless it is accompanied by good deeds. Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: These are the standards of *Taqwa* that the Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) has taught us and that we should strive to achieve.

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: The next verse is about those who are granted exemption from the obligation to fast. Those who find it impossible to keep fast or have been advised by the doctor not to fast can pay expiation (*fidya*) instead. But one should not find excuses to not fast and only give expiation (*fidya*). Allāh goes on to explain that you should not fast if you are on a journey or are ill, for He does not want hardship you, but when you become well or come back from the journey, you need to complete the days of fasting that you have missed, even if you have paid expiation (*fidya*) for them.

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: These days, because of the pandemic, some people are asking me whether or not they should fast, because fasting causes the throat to dry up and this increases the chances of infection. I do not give any general verdict in this regard, but I tell them to seek the answer from their own selves. Everyone can seek advice from his own conscience. Ask Allāh to give you the ability to fast. And pray a lot in these days so that Allāh may have mercy on the world and end this tribulation.

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: As a result of the pandemic, the economic situation is also worsening. In such situations, the risk of wars increases as governments try to solve problems through all kinds of machinations. Sometimes they take certain actions only to divert the attention of the public and thus cause even greater difficulties for their people. May Allāh grant the big powers the sense not to take any such step that can lead to more upheaval in the world. May Allāh enable us to pray and to reform ourselves. May Allāh enable the governments of the world to make better policies for the future. *Amīn*.

Jazākumullāh.

Wassalām,

(Ch. Hameedullah)

Wakīl A‘lā,

Tahrīk Jadīd Anjuman Ahmadīyya Pakistan.

Dated: 29th April 2020