

Speech Jalsa Salana Ghana 2022 (Fajr prayer Dars)

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

اشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له و اشهد ان محمدا عبده و رسوله

اما بعد فاعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ زِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَسْفَلَ الْكُفَّارِ بَثَّاهُ ثُمَّ يَصْبِحُ
فَتَرَاهُ مُمْصَقًا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

Respected Ameer sahib and distinguished guests,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله و بركاته

The topic of my Dars today is,

ISLAM'S ANSWERS TO THE CURRENT WIND OF MATERIALISM AND GODLESSNESS

The translation of the verse which I have just recited is as follows:

‘Know that the life of this world is only a sport and a pastime, and an adornment, and source of boasting among yourselves, and of rivalry in multiplying riches and children. It is like the rain, the vegetation produced whereby rejoices the tillers. Then it dries up and you see it turns yellow; then it becomes worthless stubble. And in the Hereafter there is severe punishment for the wicked and also forgiveness from Allah, and His pleasure for the righteous. And the life of this world is nothing but temporary enjoyment of delusive things. (Surah Al-Hadid 57:21)

A wind of change is blowing across societies of the world, be they Eastern or Western, religious or secular. It is an evil wind, which is polluting the entire world climate. The modern world seems to be far more concerned of the rising level of pollution in the material

atmosphere than the rapidly rising level of pollution in our social environment, of our relationships with each other.

The Holy Quran, obviously speaking of such an age, declares:

وَالْعَصْرَ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالصَّبْرِ

‘We bring to witness that age when man as a whole would be in a state of loss, except for those few who believe and do good deeds and exhort others with truth to accept truth, and admonish others with patience to be patient.’

Exploitation, duplicity, hypocrisy, selfishness, oppression, greed, the mad pursuit of pleasure, indiscipline, corruption, theft, robbery, violation of human rights at both national and international levels, fraud, treachery, lack of responsibility, and lack of mutual respect and trust have become the hallmark of the modern societies.

For past few decades the societies are drifting towards materialism and a godless society, with nothing to guide and discipline moral behaviour. The danger of vain, playful pleasure-seeking and irresponsible trends flooding from the West especially are producing devastating effects on their moral behavior. A mad rush after acquiring more and more wealth through fair or unfair means at individual, national and international levels is visible all around.

The homosexuals, i.e., gays, lesbians, drug addicts, and criminals of all sorts, all continue to grow in numbers and strength. Their audacity to defend their behaviour by simply asking their admonisher, ‘Why not?’, has become a challenge to our society.

Again, referring to the vanity of material life, the Holy Quran states:

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيَعَةٍ يُحْسِبُهُ الظَّمْآنُ مَاءً ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ فَوَفَّاهُ حِسَابَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

‘As to those who disbelieve, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert. The thirsty one thinks it to be water until, when he comes up to it, he finds it to be nothing. And he finds Allah near him, Who fully pays him his account; and Allah is swift in reckoning.’ (Surah An-Nur 24:40)

The Holy Quran depicts this as a mirage which tantalises the thirsty person by ever-running away from him until he becomes so exhausted that he can pursue it no more. That is when he is punished. He is made to realise that this is the goal of emptiness and void, which he had been following all along. Suddenly, the mirage stops running away and permits him to catch up only to make him understand the bitter meaning of pursuing nothingness. That is the punishment meted out to those who pursue the vanity of life, and that, according to the Holy Quran, is how all such societies end up.

As I have said earlier, the Western nations have forgotten God altogether. They have indulged themselves in materialism from head to toe. At individual and national level their system and regulations look perfect. They take good care of their citizens and provide them with all the amenities. Their rules for human rights look fantastic. But their reality is exposed when they have to deal with other nations at the international level. Their double standards and hypocrisy is exposed to the bone.

The effect of this materialism and Godless behaviour has swept throughout the world today. No nation is immune from it's effects today.

As against this, Islam advocates that life on this earth is not the be-all and end-all of things but that there is a life to come hereafter.

According to Islam, the way we lead our lives here on earth influences our souls in a manner as sometimes, certain diseases of a pregnant mother influence her child in the belly. The child may be so handicapped that it may prove to be a hell for it to live with its disabilities among healthy children. This, according to Islam, is how we shape our own heaven or hell.

A materialistic person may argue that who has returned from the Hereafter to testify to such claims? Why not be content with a bird in hand than to barter it for two in the bush? But the end of all such people is loss of peace of mind and they only follow the rule of pleasure-seeking howsoever they get it; irrespective of fair or unfair means.

In such a materialistic society the crimes against society are only considered crimes when it is established beyond doubt that a crime had been committed. Corruption is considered corruption when it is proven that it was committed. Anything short of that is no crime or corruption at all. In such a case there is the possibility of the miscarriage of justice. In such a social order, the dispensation of justice is not only superficial and limited but also encourages for offences against society. It promotes the pursuit of vested interests and encourages extreme selfishness on the part of the individual.

He has only this short life to live. He needs society only for his own benefit. He submits to the superior authority of the society only out of necessity. If he can run away with some self-appropriated benefit and snatch a few moments of illegal pleasure here and there while remaining clever enough to escape detection, why not? What so-called 'moral' inhibition could stop his hand?

This exactly has been mentioned in the Holy Quran as the essence of the materialistic society.

لَنْ يَموتَ إِلَّا حَيَاتِنَا الدُّنْيَا نَموتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ

The disbelievers declare: ‘There is no life other than our present life; we shall die here and it is only here that we shall live and we shall not be raised again.’ (i.e., we reject the concept of life after death.) (Surah Al-Muminun 23: 38)

Hazrat ‘Abdur-Rahman bin ‘Auf^{fa} accepted Islam at young age. He was a successful businessman, and was very wealthy; but money was not dear to him at all. In fact he would feel much pleasure in spending his wealth in the way of Allah. Once, his trading caravan comprising of seven hundred camels laden with wheat, flour and other food items came into Medinah. As it was an unusual occurrence, it became the talk of the town. Hazrat ‘A’ishah^{ra} said that the Holy Prophet^{sa} had said that ‘Abdur-Rahman^{ra} would enter heaven crawling. This statement reached the ears of Hazrat ‘Abdur-Rahman^{ra} as well. He came to Hazrat ‘A’ishah^{ra} and said: ‘be thou a witness that I have devoted the whole caravan, with all its goods and luggage, in the cause of Allah’. And he sacrificed all the 700 camels laden with food items in the way of Allah.

Islam does not stop from wealthy lifestyle through fair means but one must not forget the concept of accountability in the hereafter. Once a person remembers accountability in the hereafter he will never be drifted in the raging ocean of materialism. This is what Hazrat Abdur Rahman bin Auf^{ra} did.

The features of a godless and materialistic society have been summed up in Surah Al-Muddassar Chapter 74, v. 43-47. The inmates of Hell will be asked as to ‘What has brought you into the Fire of Hell?’

They will say. ‘We were not of those who worshipped God, nor did we feed the poor. And we indulged in vain talk with those who indulge therein. And we used to deny the Day of Judgement.’ It means firstly, they failed to perform salat. secondly they failed to feed the poor. Thirdly, they indulged in vain pursuits. and Fourthly, they denied the Day of accountability.

The question then arises that there are some societies who claim to believe in God and the Hereafter, yet in all other characteristics remain materialistic through and through? As we see in the Muslim world today. The answer is not difficult to find when we examine the nature of the beliefs. In fact, just a remote theosophical belief in a God cannot influence the social behaviour of such believers. This is because such beliefs are only academic in nature and are never translated into responsible godly behaviour. How can genuine belief in God cohabit with lies, falsehood, extreme selfishness, usurpation of the rights of the others, corruption and cruelty? The concept of God in such societies is only cosmetic, too unreal and airy-fairy to play an active role in the Afterlife, and accountability is reduced only to a pale shadow of a distant possibility. At every moment of choice, immediate interests always dominate and displace any consideration for the life to come.

In a superficial religious society atheism, and disbelief in the Hereafter, lie vague and undetected in a semi-conscious state. Superficially one may continue to subscribe to the existence of God and the belief in the Hereafter, but for all practical purposes, they seem to be non-existent. Sometimes, for generations they live without truly realising the fickleness and fragility of their beliefs. It is at such times that atheism and disbelief in the Hereafter, which had lain undetected and unchallenged, begin to surface.

When societies begin to degenerate or become top-heavy they begin to topple down and return to the same crude animal answer to their urges. This may not be visible in every social and cultural activity, but it is almost always visible in human relation and style in the pursuit of pleasure. A brief study of man in his responses to sex will demonstrate the case in point. Around the basic instinct to reproduce through sexual regeneration, pleasures are associated by nature in the entire animal Kingdom. Nature never desired sex as an ultimate object. The ultimate object has always been reproduction and propagation of species. Sex was only secondary to it.

When societies become decadent, this role is almost reversed. Sex becomes primary and reproduction becomes secondary. There is no denying the fact that gradually the responses to satisfy this fundamental urge become more and more sophisticated and involved. This is what we see in cultures who legalise homosexuality in their law. The only objective of homosexuals and sex perverted is the satiation of pleasure. They are not concerned at all about reproduction, which by Allah the Almighty was set as the main objective of this activity.

Growing promiscuousness in male and female relationships is again symptomatic of the same malady. It is not just a permissive, liberal attitude towards sexual relationships but there is, indeed, much more that goes with it to change the entire atmosphere of this extremely important sphere of human interest and activity. If somebody tries to debate about the legitimacy or illicitness of sexual relationships in the Western world today they are looked down upon as old fashioned.

It is becoming much more fashionable in the West to consider sex as a natural urge which should be responded to without any inhibitions. A traditional shyness associated with talk amongst women is becoming a thing of the past. Nakedness, exposure, display, unabashed discussion and confession are considered only as public expressions of truth.

Sadism, growing violence associated with sex and the return of sexual behaviour to beastly, crude aspects are but a few examples of today's trends. Gone are the days when homosexuality was considered a crime by society, which would most mercilessly punish it. Now some states have not only legalized it themselves but pressurize some other governments and societies to legalize it in their countries as well if they expect some benefits from them. Gone are the days of chastity not being just a virtue but a social trust which, if violated, would be brought to account. This softening on crime is seen as alarming.

The definition of crime itself is undergoing fundamental change. That, which was considered a crime yesterday is no longer so. That which was concealed for fear of shame or reprimand is disclosed and displayed with great pride. If this philosophy was sound and worthy of survival then religious and moral philosophies no longer serve any purpose in the contemporary age.

How true were the words of Jesus^{as} when he said:

A good tree cannot bear worthless fruit, neither can a rotten tree produce fine fruit. (Matthew 7:18)

People are crying against the bitterness of the fruit today, but they fail to see that it is not the fruit but the tree which is at fault. The Islamic social order stands for the uprooting of the evil tree and the planting of a healthier one instead.

In the case of forbidden tree for Adam, the tree is just a symbol. The Holy Quran clearly speaks of an unhealthy philosophy as against a healthy one in the same symbolic language.

The *word* in (John 1:1) that ‘*In the beginning the Word was and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,*’ has been used in the connotation of a philosophy, system, and order.

Evil philosophies and orders are bound to meet the fate of an evil tree which fails to pass the test of survival of the fittest and is ultimately uprooted and tossed from place to place by the raging tempest.

Human desire of pleasure-seeking can never be satiated. Even in the richest societies of the world, there are always haves and have-nots. But the case of the comparatively poorer majority is worse. They cannot even have access to the basic amenities of life, not to speak of the luxuries the affluent society can afford. It is the poor with whose emotions and desires modern media plays havoc. Day in, day out media brings to their poor houses, rosy images of a glorious lifestyle with palatial homes, fabulous gardens, fleets of luxury cars, helicopters, private planes and an army of attendants. The lifestyles of Hollywood and Beverly Hills with revelries, dances, merrymaking parties, or the life in casinos, gambling houses, are all temptations to which the poorest have no access. Only in their imagination they can have and enjoy all such lifestyles. Yet few, even amongst the richest, can ever dream of achieving this heaven on earth. Such people would most certainly lose interest in their poor coarse surroundings. The

home and hearth would no longer have any appeal to them. Lack of culture and civilisation stand against this rosy vision presented on media, and, in this context, the realities of their own life begin to lose all meaning. If this were the ultimate achievement of a society fed on vain pleasures and unreal visions, warmth and peace of home all become increasingly illusionary. Then there would be nothing left for them to live for in the future.

It would take more than one measure to restore the traditional family unit so essential to bind its members together with mutual trust, reliance and warmth-generating peace. But, perhaps, we are already too late to talk of this.

Once the Promised Messiah^{as} required some funds for the propagation of Islam. He gave the opportunity to Kapoorthala Jamat to sacrifice in this regard. Kapoorthala Jamat members were better off than other Jamats. The Promised Messiah^{as} expressed this desire before Hazrat Munshi Zafar Ali sahib of Kapoorthala. Hazrat Munshi Zafar Ali sahib went to his town and sold some of the property and brought the required funds and presented to the service of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Later when other members of Kapoorthala Jamat learnt of this desire of the Promised Messiah^{as} and the sacrifice of Munshi Zafar Ali sahib they became very much annoyed with Hazrat Munshi Zafar Ali sahib that why didn't he inform them of this desire of the Promised Messiah^{as} and why did he himself offer only his money for this purpose.

Islam has a clear message. It has a well-defined plan to protect, guard and preserve a universal family system or to rebuild it wherever it has been totally demolished.

Among many measures suggested to create social peace is the admonition that man should discipline and curtail his desires and keep them in check. Otherwise, it would be impossible for any man to achieve peace through the satiation of desire. Desires always run faster than one can pursue them. Small as these measures may appear, they are potentially very effective and important. For instance, the Holy Quran states:

وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۖ لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ ۗ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ

‘Strain not your eyes after what We have bestowed on some classes of them to enjoy for a short time—the splendour of the present world—that We may try them thereby. And the provision of your Lord is better and more lasting. (Ta Ha 20:132)

According to the Holy Quran peace of mind can be achieved in the poorer sectors of societies only when they curtail their desires keeping themselves within their resources and means. This applies to the international relations as well. Violating this principle of the Quran some parts of the world, for centuries had been exploiting the resources of Africa, which in some ways is continued until to-date. As a result peace of African families was absolutely destroyed.

The following words of the Promised Messiah^{as} were written in 1898 when the plague had just started in India.

He wrote: All the men of God are informed that they must adopt righteousness wholeheartedly, and engage in welfare, and stay away from all ways of permissiveness. The Muslims should comply with the commandments of God with sincerity, be regular in salat, avoid all types of disobedience and debauchery, repent, adopt well-behaviour, kindness and remembrance of Allah. Be kind to the poor, neighbours, orphans, widows, travellers and the helpless. Spend money in charity, and offer prayers in congregation, and supplicate,

cry in prayer for the protection against this calamity. Wake up at *tahajjud* time and supplicate in prayer. In short, engage in all good deeds and avoid all types of misdeeds; and fear the God who in His rage can annihilate the world in an instant....this is a destiny which can be put in abeyance as a result of supplication, alms, charity, good deeds and firm repentance. (Ruhani Khazain, vol.14, Ayyamus Sulha pp.361-62)

At this time we are passing through very turbulent times. Earlier Covid which is not fully over yet, then recession and poor economic conditions of the world and now the West is busy selling their arms to warring nations of eastern Europe irrespective of the very, very dangerous consequences. Our beloved Imam, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V ^(May Allah be his Helper) has been warning the world of such consequences for some past years. The precious advice of the Promised Messiah^{as} is equally relevant today as it was relevant then in the days of plague.

It is the greedy pursuit of materialism of the West that brought the West to Africa. It is the pursuit of materialism that has driven the world to sexual permissiveness and now they have crossed all limits in it. It is the pursuit of materialism that has brought the world to the brink of a nuclear disaster. And at homes it is the materialism that every one is in mad pursuit of becoming rich through any means whatsoever, as if this is the only purpose of life. If we want to protect ourselves and our family members from this onslaught of materialism we will have to attach ourselves with Hazrat Khalifatul Masih and especially his Friday sermons. May Allah protect us all from this attack of materialistic age of Antichrist. Amen.

Wa akhiru da'wana anil-Hamdolillah Rabbil-Alamin.