

Friday Sermon – 6th May 2022



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Sermon 1 : *Birr* are not self-carved acts

Sermon 2: The real meaning of Zuhd

I invite , inherit , preach you divine Taqwa and emphasize to live your lives in accordance with Taqwa. It is the divine security plan from Allah and this plans protects the humanity of human life. If these walls of Taqwa are broken then humanity does not remain and instead of its beastliness and lowliness comes up. The example of this is the current generation wherever Taqwa is missing or less we can see beastliness even though the name of religion is also present. That religion is without Taqwa where humanity ends which we can see around us, in our country and in our neighborhood.

The acquisition of Taqwa has been ordered most abundantly and repeatedly for human being. In Surah verse 189 it is mentioned

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلِ ۖ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ ۚ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنِ اتَّقَى ۚ وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ {189}

They ask you concerning the new moon. Say: They are times appointed for (the benefit of) men, and (for) the pilgrimage; and it is not righteousness that you should enter the houses at their backs, but righteousness is this that one should guard (against evil); and go into the houses by their doors and be careful (of your duty) to Allah, that you may be successful

This verse has two parts; one is related to crescent and second is about Taqwa to express that self-carved goodness, religion, deeds is not the replacement of Taqwa and *Birr*. The self-carved religion is very easily made by man which has been prohibited by Quran. In the background of this verse it is found that there were some people during the time of Hajj, in the state of Ihram they would not enter their homes from door but instead go through by climbing or breaking the walls of the backside of home. They have adopted this as a goodness. This has been prohibited to people that this is not Taqwa that you enter your own houses not from doors but from walls and then consider this as goodness and religiousness. This is just an example of that era where people were carving religious acts. Today this is done more by various sects and is very common that people have adopted self-carved acts and strictly abide by them and condemn those who do not do these acts like them.

In Quran, Allah has prohibited this and said *Birr* are not these things and the criteria of *Birr* is also mentioned that what you have to achieve through Taqwa you cannot take it from your own self carved ways. People have made their own ways everywhere. Those who are much ahead in piety and abstinence they also adopt such ways who are famous as pious and people narrate such acts amongst themselves. These pious persons have taken certain acts from their teachers and elders, which became common amongst people, they get inside books and hence becomes a reference in religious and spiritual life, whereas in Quran, Seerah of Holy Prophet (s), Ahlulbyat (a) there is no testification or verification for such acts. But these acts are found in the lives of these elders as spirituality. And Quran has precisely prevented from this that these self-carved rituals are not part of *Birr*. Like in special days doing something special or in some style or visiting some place on certain

days, or acting in a particular ways on certain religious days is something very common. If we take example of Pakistan of religious places where people visit very often are the shrines of sages where people go for visiting, supplications and the caretakers of such shrines have carved many such acts which people follow seriously. Similarly if we see for the shrines of Ahlulbyat (a) similar replica acts are seen which the faithful have made themselves or have been made by the custodians of these shrines. If one ritual on the shrine of one Imam started, then it repeated on the other shrines, and then the pilgrims who visit consider and adapt such acts as religion and Taqwa. Like for example beating drums on shrines. This is done on the shrine of Imam Raza (a) where there are towers made on which the drums are beaten. These drums were used in ancient times as announcement for special events like moon sighting has taken place since loudspeakers and communications system were not there. In some places fire would be burnt on some height so that nearby population, villages would understand the meaning that crescent has been sighted or some other relevant event. Where there were urban populations drums would be beaten which were for announcement. But even now in Mashad, Iraq and now even in Qom this has started. This is an example which is considered as something sacred. There is so much vastness in these and certain elderly persons have kept many such acts. Like some elders would do such thing on so and so day. All these fall in this category that this is not *Birr*. The standard for *Birr* is that which Allah has ordered and if Allah, Prophet has not ordered, preached and not seen in the acts of Ahlulbyat (a) then this is not *Birr*. The certification for classifying something as *Birr* is the Quran, Seerah of Prophet or saying, actions of Ahlulbyat (a). The Quran says if instead of doing this you would have adapted Taqwa that would have given salvation. This self-carved *Birr* won't give any benefit to you.

There are various groups amongst believers, some are followers of mosques, some of shrines, some of organizations and they all have made their own *Birr*. Amirul Momineen (a) was going on a battle and passed through the city of Ambar in Iraq and when the news reached that Amirul Momineen (a) is passing through this area, they welcomed Amirul Momineen (a). And in this welcome as per Nahjul Balagha, they did Tarjjul means dancing in happiness. Amirul Momineen (a) asked their elders, chiefs what is this? They replied that this is your honor and we welcome our rulers this way and is our regional practice. Amirul Momineen (a) said this is useless and in fact harmful. This does not benefit your commander and in this world is fatigue and in hereafter a loss. This shows that even if we start something in the name of Ahlulbyat (a) then this is harmful. If we see in one area someone is doing something we bring that to our place.

Our Pakistani believers consider this as a reference as to whatever is being done in Iran and Iraq. They give reference and say that this is being done. If something done there is as per Quran, Prophet and teachings of Ahlulbyat (a) then even if that is not done in Iran and Iraq you should do this. As Iran and Iraq are not sources, the sources are the Seerah of Ahlulbyat (a). In Iran the Azadari is done on drum beats. Some scholars have stopped it there as well. The scholars are of two categories; one are those who do not prohibit even if they find something wrong like this being done. They at times remain silent and testify this and at times even verbally allow this as they want followers. Another category is of those who prevent this. One example of such personality is Ayatullah Burujerdi, a very prominent scholar with comprehensiveness in sciences, creative and has taken bold steps for Muslim unity at that time when unity with Ahle Sunnah were disliked. He would send representatives to Ahle Sunnah centers to establish relationship. When Ayatollah Burujerdi saw that people are doing Azadari on drum beats, and another thing they do a Taziya like flags which has animals carved on iron like mages of birds and people lift those as pledges. It looks like some royal decorative piece made of silver. Ayatullah Burujerdi stopped them from beating drums and taking out these Taziya as this has no justification. It has been told that everyone said to him that we do

your Taqlid in other matters but in this regard we are not going to listen to you. Now even with Islamic revolution this is happening.

Imam Khomeini (Ra.) that best source is Shariah and there is nothing left which people should carve and do this. If you adapt Taqwa then you acquire Falah. It does not mean being successful. Falah means harvesting. There are three words in Arabic; Harasat, Zar'aat and Fa'lahat. Harasat mean to sow seeds, Zar'aat means cultivation of the seed like giving water, and Fa'lahat means to cut the final crops and bringing it home. You need to first sow the seeds of Taqwa in every segment of your life, then cultivate the seed, nurture it when the seed turns into crop then harvest which is Falah. There could not have been a better resemblance of guidance than this. We have not adopted the role of a farmer. We have taken the role of trader, whereby we are doing everything for the benefit of Allah and in return he should give us something in this world and hereafter. Quran is presenting an example of guidance as agriculture, where you have to prepare the soil, then sow seed, nurture it and then the crops will come which you have planted in your heart, and then when you achieve those fruits, crops you would be a person who has harvested it. Man is a farmer and Quran is the seed which Allah has sent for this world and next step man has to do this himself for preparing his self.

Birr is also a Quranic term and if do Tafsir of *Birr* as well on our own then we will deviate. Few verses before 189 Allah has guided us about *Birr*.

لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ أَنْ تُولُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ
السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا
وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُتَّقُونَ {177}

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is this that one should believe in Allah and the last day and the angels and the Book and the prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflicts-- these are they who are true (to themselves) and these are they who guard (against evil).

This is a very comprehensive verse and is a summary of religion which Allah has presented in this noble verse. In Verse 189 it was mentioned *Birr* was not to enter your houses from backdoors. Like some people who put bangles, chains on their body throughout the life and they bear this hardship which they have learnt from someone or somewhere. I was returning from outside Pakistan on one propagation journey, one believer told me that I will give you a special gift. It was a very heavy thing inside a small box. I asked what is it, he said these are shackles, which I have prepared for Ashura. This is 20 feet chain which I intended to give you. He said this is for you to tie on your body with a lock and participate in processions. I told him in a joking manner that I have come to remove shackles from you and you are putting on the gifts of shackles on me. This is a very common thing which people do, like rings. To wear ring as ornament is recommended. But making stories about the benefits of these rings is not correct. They are good people who do this, like wearing steel bangles.

They are good people , who find religion as deficient or incomplete so they have made their own amendments to religion.

When you don't present proper religion to people, they carve things in religion because they want things to become contended in religion. In such goodness Quran says in verse 177 that this is not *Birr* that you sit towards East or West, means sit in that direction or this is not religion of Allah. Now Quran narrates the list of *Birr*. What is *Birr*?

Birr is faith on Allah as the first step. The second is faith on hereafter. The third is faith on Angels. Then faith on heavenly books. Then faith on Prophets. This is *Birr*. Then despite of being needy spending wealth. You have love of wealth in your heart still you spend on needy relatives of yours, orphans, poor and on those travelers who have becoming needy during travel and those who seek help during need. Then freeing slaves is *Birr*. Establishing Salaat , giving Zakat is *Birr*. To make promises and fulfilling is *Birr*. In hardships being patient and perseverance is *Birr*. They are sincere ones. We need to assess on these parameters if this is our religion. They are *Muttaqeen*.

Now look at this list and see what we are doing in the name of religion. How much part of this list is in our acts and how much outside of this list we are doing acts in the name of religion. Quran is asking us to do these and we have opened our own self carved account of religious acts and expecting great rewards. Why these acts are termed as *Birr*. These are those acts which has vastness inside the act or the act creates further vastness. And in *Birr* Taqwa is top of the list as per verse 189.

Sermon 2

In wise saying of 104

104. وَ عَنْ نَوْفٍ الْبِكَالِيِّ قَالَ رَأَيْتُ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَ دَاتَ لَيْلَةٍ وَ قَدْ خَرَجَ مِنْ فِرَاشِهِ فَتَنَظَرَ فِي النُّجُومِ فَقَالَ لِي يَا نَوْفُ أَرَأَيْدُ أَنْتَ أَمْ رَامِقٌ فَقُلْتُ بَلْ رَامِقٌ فَقَالَ:

It is related by Nawf al-Bikali that: I saw that one-night Amir al-mu'minin, peace be upon him, came out from his bed and looked at the stars, then he said to me: "O Nawf, are you awake or sleeping?" **I said:** "I am awake, O Amir al-mu'minin." **Then he said:**

يَا نَوْفُ طُوبَى لِلزَّاهِدِينَ فِي الدُّنْيَا الرََّاغِبِينَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أُولَئِكَ قَوْمٌ اتَّخَذُوا الْأَرْضَ بَسَاطًا وَ تَرَابَهَا فِرَاشًا وَ مَاءَهَا طِيبًا وَ الْقُرْآنَ شِعَارًا وَ الدُّعَاءَ دِثَارًا ثُمَّ قَرَضُوا الدُّنْيَا قَرْضًا عَلَى مِنْهَاجِ الْمَسِيحِ

Amirul Momineen (a) is the teacher who gets out of bed and comes to his student at this hour of night. He is asking his student whether you are awake or sleeping. When student said I am awake, the lecture started. This is the third part of night where the sleep is also very deep and man is enjoying the sleep and removing his tiredness. At this time Ali started this lesson lecture.

He is sending blessings on those who abstain from this world and are desperate for hereafter. The signs of such people is that the earth is their floor and dust is their bed. They have made Quran as their slogan, attire and Dua is their blanket. They have cut off their relationship with the world the way Isa ibn Maryam had disconnected.

يَا نَوْفُ إِنَّ دَاوُدَ ع قَامَ فِي مِثْلِ هَذِهِ السَّاعَةِ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَقَالَ إِنَّهَا لَسَّاعَةٌ لَا يَدْعُو فِيهَا عَبْدٌ إِلَّا اسْتُجِيبَ لَهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ
عَشَّاراً أَوْ عَرِيفاً أَوْ شُرْطِيّاً أَوْ صَاحِبَ عَرْطِيَّةٍ (وَ هِيَ الطُّنْبُورُ) أَوْ صَاحِبَ كُوبَةٍ (وَ هِيَ الطَّبْلُ)

O Nawf! The prophet Dawud (David), peace be upon him, rose up at a similar hour one night and said, "This is the hour when whatever a person prays for is granted to him unless he is a tax-collector, an intelligence man, a police officer, a flute player or a drummer.

Zuhd is found in the Seerah of Amirul Momineen (a) and also in the sayings of Ali (a). There has been many Tafsir of *Zuhd* like Taqwa as fear, abstinence are made. As a result fear came but Taqwa did not come. If we would have done the right translation of Taqwa then some status would have been achieved. Similarly the meaning of *Zuhd* is also done in accordance with Taqwa. The common meaning of *Zuhd* that is taught to people is abstinence from life. If someone is fulfilling the needs of life and is struggling for his life he is not considered as *Zahid*. The *Zahid* is one who has no home, no family, relying on mercy of others and is busy in worship day and night.

I have pointed before from Quran that *Zuhd* is against *Raghat*. Man is either *Zahid* or *Raghib* (ardently desiring). AS mentioned before when Yusuf was thrown in well, and the caravan pulled him out they did not find any *Raghat* in Yusuf. Still they went to sell him but could not sell for the whole day and last thing left was this child. They were *Zahideen* means completely lacking any interest. *Zuhd* means lack of *Raghat*. The meaning of *Raghat* is man has practical efforts towards ardently desired something. If there is a desire in heart but he is not making any efforts to acquire that then this is not *Raghat*. In Dua e Iftitha, it has been taught to us whereby Imam Mehdi (a.t.f.s)

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّا نَرْغَبُ اِلَيْكَ فِي دَوْلَةِ كَرِيْمَةٍ

We have *Raghat* towards Allah for the governance of wilayat and Imamat. This is being taught by Imam (a.t.f.s.) to his followers. *Raghat* means desire from heart with practical efforts. It is that orientation , desire for which man gets up to acquire it. Like some children who get up and walk towards acquiring it. Imam has taught this behavior to his followers.

Raghat is that orientation which arouses, inclines man towards that thing and man practically moves towards it. The opposite sate of *Raghat* is *Zuhd*. It means man is not interested, oriented at all towards something. Due to this frustration a distancing gets develops. *Raghat* is that orientation which develops movement towards the things whereas *Zuhd* is that state of frustration which develops movement away from the things. Like you don't like to sit at some place and give a proof that you get up and go away from there. Your effort is to go as far as possible from the things you are frustrated.

Today is Friday prayers and there are millions of people in Lahore. You can visit the mosques and see how many have come to mosques. Some are frustrated to the extent that they are not interested at all and go away from mosques. This is *Zuhd* which is lack of interest, frustration due to which distancing.

Amirul Momineen (a) says are those who are *Zahid* in this world that is the agreed state for them. The incorrect translation of *Zuhd* which is being taken which distances people from world is abstinence from life. The Quran has specified the world as *Lahb* and *Lahw*. We can see in Quran

Surah Anam

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَهْوٌ {32}

Surah Ankaboot

وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهُوٌ وَلَعِبٌ ۖ {64}

Surah Mohammad

إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوٌ ۖ {36}

Surah Hadid

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوٌ

There are many more verses in Quran as to what is world. The word Dunya comes from Danu which something abased and lowly. The world is abased because it has Lahb and Lahw which are those activities that distances from the purpose of life. Sports is not Lahb that is exercising. Lahw is anything even religious which takes man away from the purpose of creation whether that is on TV, laptop, mobile and can be in any form. Lahb is purposeless work and Lahw is that which takes away from purpose.

You need to distance from these things and acquire *Zuhd* in these. But the demands and needs of life should be fulfilled , struggle should be done for this. This is not world but life. *Zuhd* in this world which means Lahw and Lahb as per Quran are those things which distance from purpose and those which are purposeless. We can assess how many things we have done which has taken away from purpose and several occupancies of ours had no purpose in it. Like you do political discussions and the ground which social media has opened, those who have distanced from these Amirul Momineen (a) says that they are blessed who have adopted *Zuhd* and have *Raghabat* towards hereafter. Then he says this that community who has made ground as bed, dust as blanket and we will discuss this later.