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Pilgrimage is a School of Self-Purification

Friday Sermon Presented by

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In His Holy Book, The Most Majestic Speaker said: "**The pilgrimage is {in} the well known months, and whoever is minded to perform the pilgrimage therein {let him remember that} there is {to be} no *Rafath* (lewdness) nor *Fusuq* (abuse) nor *Jidal* (angry conversation) on the pilgrimage. And whatsoever good you do Allah knows it. So make provision for yourselves {here after}; for the best provision is to ward off evil. Therefore keep your duty unto Me, O men of understanding**" (Al Baqarah, 197).

In this text, it is decided in the Holy Qur'an that pilgrimage is a school of self-purification and self-refining. It is a nursery in which the believer is trained to make his limbs purified, his tongue honest, and his heart sound, for when the Exalted Allah mentions three matters, namely, lewdness, abuse and angry argument, He draws our attention to get our tongue, our limbs and our hearts purified. In Arabic, *Rafth* means using abusive words.

Fusuq means disobedience of the commands of Allah and its bad effects on the body, that is, the great stain that may cover it. *Jidal* does not mean 'debate', because debate is exchanged words, the purpose of which is attaining knowledge, but argument is mixed with anger, and when anger fills the heart, it

blinds it and makes it unable to see the truth. Accordingly, the statement of the Holy Qur'an is miraculous when the Beloved Al Mustafa is addressed in the Holy Qur'an: "**Argue with them in the better way**" (An Nahl, 125), so that anger be excluded from this argument, and only one type of anger remains, that is, the anger of the Exalted Allah.

The Prophet (PBUH) never felt anger for himself. He did that only when the sanctities of Allah were violated, so in the above mentioned statement, there is part of anger. The Exalted Allah did not say: "Have dialogue with them". He rather said: "Argue with them". But when the Exalted Allah points out to the attitude of the slave in pilgrimage and to the state which he should experience, He directs him to leave aside his interest in the creatures as he is in the presence of his Lord, while he is circumambulating around Allah's Ancient House, when he invokes Allah to answer his wishes, when he asks getting knowledge on Arafat, and when he asks closeness to Allah in Muzdalifah. Consequently, this leads to annulling argument with all its descriptions, and all its angry exchanged words.

How can the one who is engrossed in servitude and in the Greatness of the Divinity feel angry? It is a state in which the slave should not have haughtiness, rage or severity. Instead, he should be submissive and humble. The slave usually feels humbleness, humility and subservience in such circumstances. Consequently, the Exalted Allah purifies this slave when He orders him not to commit lewdness, abusiveness and angry argument. Read the following verse: "**The pilgrimage is {in} the well known months**", i.e., the months we are passing through now, namely: Shawwal, Dhul Qi'dah, and Dhul Hijjah.

When the Exalted Allah makes quarter of the year a time for pilgrimage, He says: "**The pilgrimage is {in} the well known months and whoever is minded to perform the pilgrimage therein**", i.e., whoever intends to perform pilgrimage, "**let him remember that} there is {to be} no lewdness nor abuse nor angry conversation on the pilgrimage**", for He, Exalted He is,

prepares His slaves for pilgrimage in advance. Consequently, the believer enters the school of self-purification. He moves to the Ancient House of Allah by his body answering and responding to the call of Allah that He ordered Abraham to announce when He said: "**And proclaim unto mankind the Pilgrimage**" (Al Haj, 27), then the pilgrim says: "Here I come to respond to Your call", thus he becomes in a pure and refined state.

"The pilgrimage is {in} the well known months and whoever is minded to perform the pilgrimage therein", i.e., whoever intends to perform the ritual of pilgrimage in these months, **"{let him remember that} there is {to be} no lewdness nor abuse nor angry conversation on the pilgrimage".** Accordingly, the pilgrim will have been qualified by the state in which he will be ready to perform pilgrim.

Will those who desire to perform pilgrimage get ready in advance so that they enter the school of self-purification, or only their bodies perform this ritual?

The connotations of pilgrimage are the following: desire, goal, and intention. Will souls and heart also perform pilgrimage? Will they turn to Allah with their will, goal, and intention, or only the bodies move, while the hearts are preoccupied with the creatures tasting nothing of the meanings of pilgrimage?

Accordingly, one should be prepared for pilgrimage in advance to reform his intention, and to direct his heart to Allah.

Directing the hearts, and reforming intentions is an Islamic requirement that Muslims have to be aware of throughout all the year, because deeds are valueless if they are not based on sincerity. The Prophet (PBUH) said: "**Deeds {their correctness and rewards} depend upon intentions**".

Consequently, deeds are valueless unless they are the result of sincerity. The Exalted Allah said: "**And We shall turn unto the work they did and make it scattered motes**" (Al Furqan, 23).

Sincerity, good intention, and pure resolution directed to Allah are Islamic requirements. Every year, the months of pilgrimage are nothing but reminder to man. As the Exalted Allah reminds us of the causes of piety in the month of Ramadan when He said: "**O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may ward off evil**" (Al Baqarah, 183), and as He trains man to be pious in this month when man gives up violation of the prohibitions, and when he becomes in a spiritual purity so that he becomes interested in none of the objects, so is the case with the months of pilgrimage when the Exalted Allah reminds man of the goal, of the intention and of the honesty of will that is directed only to Allah.

Pilgrimage is not considered true when man moves to the Ancient House only with his body. It is rather an ever present symbol in the hearts of the Muslims, whether they go there or not. These are months in which the Muslims should all share in reforming intention, and directing resolution to Allah.

Read the following statement of the Exalted Allah: "**The first Sanctuary appointed for mankind was that at Mecca, a blessed place, a guidance to the peoples...**". The Exalted Allah did not say "Guidance to the pilgrims", because He, Exalted He is, aims at making the symbol of the Ancient House spread all over the world. It is to teach all the world how servitude to Allah should be, and how pilgrims from all parts of the world move to one place by the bodies to circumambulate around the Ka'bah, but the souls turn to the One Who is not confined by time or place. Bodies move to one place, while the souls turn to the One Lord wherever they are.

The Ancient House in Mecca is not guidance to pilgrims only. The Holy Qur'an decides that it is guidance to all the world: "**Wherein are plain memorials {of Allah's guidance}; the place where Abraham stood up to pray**" (Al Imran, 96-97). Abraham is an accepted sample by all people. He is greatly valued by the Jews, by the Christians as well as by the Muslims.

Consequently, the Exalted Allah makes him Imam (leader): "**I have appointed you a leader for mankind**" (Al Baqarah, 124). Imamate here does not refer to imamate of politics, leadership, headship, dictatorship, or autocracy. It is rather an imamate of quality and type. When man is distinguished by being an Imam without his seeking it, he does not present himself for this position.

Type and quality are the attributes of real imamate, and these make man be distinguished by his type and quality. This is the good example for all people. Consequently, when the pilgrim goes to the Ancient House, he will remember that it is the place where Abraham stood to pray.

As the ancient House (the place where Abraham stood to pray) is guidance to all people, the Abraham example is guidance to all people, for he was steadfast in carrying out the order of Allah, submissive to the order of Allah, and a devoted slave to Allah... .

How long will the people in the world go on worshipping their own lusts?

How long will the people in the world go on worshipping the material?

How long will the people in the world go on forgetting about the Manufacturer of the world, its Owner and Lord?

How long shall we go on living in this detested beastly state?

How long shall we go on living in this beastly state that we witness daily?

All that is the result of our negligence of directing the hearts to this Abraham example who surrendered to the Exalted Allah, the one who was a monotheist in his outer aspect in obeying the orders of Allah, and in his inner heart by having belief, faith, certainty and credence.

Where is our call to Allah? Where is our effort to increase the Abraham type? We move to the House in Mecca by our bodies,

but shall we turn with our souls to the Lord of Abraham Whom Abraham turned to?

The Exalted Allah said: "**Allah hath appointed the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, a standard for mankind**" (Al Ma'idah, 97), i.e., a symbol of reforming to all people. People should be reformed by the existence of this House. If this House vanishes, the world will vanish. The secret of the existence of the world is the existence of the House. The center of the spiritual world power is this House. If the House and its secret or its importance disappears, the world will vanish.

The world is strengthened by Allah as long as the secret of this House exists. Civilization, culture, spiritual ascension will also be strengthened by the existence of this House. But when the consideration of the House is weakened in the world; when its secrets, lights, and its construction as well as the Abraham type are missed, the world will become valueless.

Read the following verse of the Exalted Allah: "**And when We made the House {at Mecca} a resort for mankind and a sanctuary**" (Al Baqarah, 125). People's going there when they come from all the regions of the world renews the world relationship.

When pilgrims come back to their country after performing pilgrimage, they remind all the people of their region of the covenant with this House, and when the pilgrims who set out from all the world heading towards the House, then return back to their countries, they remind all the world of this covenant.

But after the Exalted Allah said: "**a resort for mankind**", He also said: "**and a sanctuary**". If consideration of the house appears in the world together with its proofs, safety will spread in the world, but when its consideration disappears or weakens with its Abraham sample, all the people of the world will be confused.

The safety of people is related to the secret of the House.

When servitude to Allah is universal, the world will become safe, but when servitude to Allah disappears, safety vanishes from the world, the fact we suffer from today.

Today, we are living in a state of confusion, oppression, eating one another, devouring one another, superiority of the strong over the weak, robbing the weak by the strong. We are living in a confusion that would not have happened if the secret of the house were present among people, and if the proofs of the House were present among the rulers and the ruled, among the wealthy and the poor, and among princes and subjects.

When the secret of the House was present with Omar (ABPWH), he became humble to the Exalted Allah; and when the secret of the House was present with Solomon, the king (PBUH), he became a slave to Allah, but when servitude to Allah vanishes from the hearts, we, as well as the world, live in darkness.

The Beloved, Al Mustafa (PBUH) stood in the time of pilgrimage on the day of slaughtering a sacrifice (as is related by Al Bukhari in his Sahih) and said: **"O People, Which day is this? They said: "A sacred day". He asked: Which city is? They said: A sacred city". He asked: Which month is this? They said: a sacred month. He said: You blood, your property, and your honor are sacred to one another (i.e. Muslims) like the sanctity of this day of yours, in this month of yours and in this city of yours"**.

Thus, pilgrimage produces abstract and material safety.

"Your blood is sacred to you", so beware of committing the sin of shedding blood.

Your property is sacred, to you, so do not devour the wealth of one another. Be straightforward and honest in trade transactions, and avoid material fraud, and stealing the other's money and wealth.

Your honor is sacred to you, so do not defame the honor of one another. Abandon backbiting, stop ridicule and mockery of the others. Stop tattling because it causes talking badly about the honor of the others.

Consequently, pilgrimage produces a state of abstract and material safety, perceptibly and meaningfully, in addition to its producing purity in human behavior.

"The pilgrimage is {in} the well known months". While we are in the month of pilgrimage, shall we realize our abstract and material duty in this month?

Oh Allah, guide us to You favorably, and make us from those who listen to wisdom and follow the best of it.

I say my words and ask Allah's forgiveness.