

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

There is a program on the BBC where a host debates “the big questions” with experts and laymen who have opposing views about some subject. The recent one that I watched they were debating “whether God exists?” There were religious people and scientific people who were present and each one was, of course trying to put forward arguments to prove and deny God’s existence. As could have been expected no one was able to persuade the other group about the veracity of its own claims. This debate of which I am talking is one of many examples of such debates or conversations where people keep talking about God even if the people of Europe have tried to eliminate Him entirely from their lives. As Ahmadi Muslims we have a duty to spread the true teachings of Islam and particularly the writings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) to the world and to let them assess what he has said on this fundamental question. So we will continue to read from where we left off last week about what he was telling us concerning the key to success. He says:

“It was the Holy Qur’an that transformed the unruly people [of Arabia] by turning them, first, into human beings and then turned those human beings into godly human beings. Do they propose to abandon all this in order to follow a nation that worships the material world? Those who wish to see improvement in the condition of Islam while desiring a life that faces towards the West, can never succeed. Only those will succeed who follow the Holy Qur’an. Success without the Qur’an is an impossible and difficult task and the thought of achieving such success is just wishful thinking. One should keep before oneself the example of the Companions of the Holy Prophet(saw) and see how they followed the Holy Prophet(saw) and how they kept their religion paramount, above all else. Consequently, all the promises that God had made to them were fulfilled. In the beginning opponents mocked and taunted them that they were not even able to walk about in the land freely, yet they claimed they would one day become its rulers. They, h o w e v e r, lost themselves in obedience to the Holy Prophet(saw) and they attained that which for centuries had not been theirs. They loved the Holy Qur’an and the Holy Prophet (saw) and they would strive day and night in obedience to both. They did not follow those whom they called ‘non-believers’, not even in customary traditions. As long as Islam remained in this state, it enjoyed a period of great progress and glorious success and its secret is [contained in this Persian verse]: ‘When one has God what need is there for worry?’. The key to the victories and successes of Muslims was the strength of their faith. Large numbers confronted Salah Uddin, yet no one could gain victory over him and his motive was to serve Islam. (Salah Uddin was the Muslim general who took Jerusalem back from the Christians in

1199.) This situation [in Islam] persisted for a long period. God's wrath began to fall upon them when Kings began to indulge in corrupt practices and gradually there was a steep decline, the final outcome of which can now be observed all around us. However, I disagree with the diagnosis that is being proposed of the 'ailment' [by the self-professed supporters of Islam]. In my view the cure recommended for such a diagnosis would prove harmful and dangerous. Until the Muslims turn to the Holy Qur'an and until there develops in them belief and faith, their situation will not improve. Respect and an upturn in their fortunes will come from the same direction as was the case before. It is not my purpose to encourage the Muslims to become sluggish. Islam does not wish to make any one sluggish. You should, by all means, engage in your employment and enterprise, be it business or trade, but I do not like the fact that there should be no time left for God. You should engage in your trade when it is time for that but even then you should have the fear and awe of God before you so that your trade, too, can become like worship. You should not abandon Salat when it is time to offer Salat. Whatever is your business, you should give religion priority over all worldly matters. The world should not become the object of all your desires. The real objective should be your religion then the worldly matters will also become matters of religion. This is beautifully illustrated by the Companions of the Holy Prophet(saw) who did not forget God even during the most difficult times. The time of battle and the sword is so dangerous that even just the thought of it is very disturbing. It is a time when emotions are aroused [and one can easily forget all else] but the Companions of the Holy Prophet(saw) did not forget God even at times such as these. They did not abandon their Salat and always turned to prayer. The unfortunate thing these days is that the Muslims, in their efforts to assist the advancement of the Muslims tend to neglect God. They hold conferences, they make long speeches and put in much effort to bring about a change in the situation of the Muslims but they are so negligent towards God that they do not even give Him a thought. In such a state of affairs, when all their efforts are for the world, what hope is there that their wishes would bear fruit!

Remember that until [the meaning of the words] "*La ilaha illallah*" [i.e. there is no God but Allah] penetrates into the heart and mind and until the light of Islam reaches into every particle of one's being and rules over it, there can never be any progress. Should you present the example of the Western nations having achieved progress then remember that theirs is a different case. You have been given the Book [the Holy Qur'an], and a conclusive argument is before you. For others it is a separate matter and for them there is a different time for reckoning. However, if you, [the Muslims] abandon the Book of God, then for you there is hell in this very world. Given the present state of Islam, groups are formed and conferences are held in nearly every town to make the condition of the Muslims better but no sympathizer of Islam ever utters the words that the Qur'an should be made the Guide and the basis of our practice. If they say anything at all it is that people should learn English, colleges should be set up and

people should aim to adopt professions such as that of a barrister or a lawyer. This shows that there remains no faith in God. It is the case that even the very skillful physicians end their treatment should it not produce positive effects within ten days. Here, there is failure after failure and yet there is no turning away from the proposed 'remedy'. If it was in fact the case that there was no God, then by all means progress could be achieved by abandoning Him. However, when there is a God, and there necessarily is a God, then we can never achieve progress by abandoning Him. Having shown disrespect to God and to God's Book, people still wish that they should be successful and their nation should be reformed – but it can never be so. In my view it is quite evident that there is only one path of progress and that is to know God and to have a living belief in Him. However, if such ideas were to be mentioned in a worldly gathering, people would mock at them but I feel pity for them that they are unable to see what I can see! [Malfoozat, Vol. 2, pp.155-158. Review of Religion 2001]

In brief Hazrat Masih Maood (as) wants us to understand that real progress is achieved when Muslims follow the teachings that they have received. Under no circumstance should Muslims abandon the world and just devote themselves to Allah, so to say. We are expected to live in the world but by not attaching ourselves to it. It is not easy but it is achievable. Although at times the teachings of Islam might be difficult to put into practice, yet with enough will a way will be found by Allah's Grace. Above everything we should always find time to connect to Allah especially through the performance of our prayers. Prayers are performed to remember Allah. So if prayers are devoid of the remembrance of Allah they are not being properly performed. Hazrat Masih has also spoken about "*Laa Ilaha Illallah*". He expects Muslims to recognize that Allah is of supreme importance in their life. So each one amongst us should do one's best to better understand these words and to live by them. Remember that that the Holy Prophet (saw) has taught us that "the best Zikr(remembrance) is *Laa Ilaha Illallah*". We should make it a duty reciting it as much as we can each day and keep meditating upon all its meanings. This will develop in us a love for Allah and a desire to know Him better.

In another extract Hazrat Masih Maood (as) says:

"I have been sent to strengthen the faith and to prove the existence of God Almighty to the people, for their faith has become weak, and they take life after death no more seriously than a fable. The conduct of every person proclaims that he has not the faith and trust in God and in the hereafter as he has in the world and its ranks and its resources. Tongues profess a lot but the hearts are suffused with the love of the world. It is the same condition in which the Messiah^[as] had found the Jews. As a characteristic of the weakness of their faith, the moral condition of the Jews had deteriorated greatly, and love of God had become cold in their hearts. The same is true in my time. I have been sent so that truth and faith may be revived and righteousness may inspire the hearts. This is the purpose of my advent. I have been

told that heaven will once more come near the earth after it had moved far away. These are the reforms that I have to bring about and these are the tasks for which I have been sent.” Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, *Kitab-ul-Bariyyah, Ruhani Khaza'in*, Vol. 13, pp. 291-294, [footnote].

He further adds at another place

“I wish to state that God Almighty – having found this age full of darkness, and sunk deep in heedlessness, denial and paganism, and having observed the waning of faith, truthfulness, sincerity and righteousness – has sent me so that He may once again re-establish in the world the intellectual, physical, moral and spiritual verities, and to safeguard Islam against the onslaughts of those who design to harm this Divine garden in the guise of philosophy, naturalism, innovation, polytheism and atheism.” [Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, *A'ina-e-Kamalat-e-Islam, Ruhani Khaza'in*, Vol. 5, p. 251]

Such extracts make it quite clear what our duties should be. Under no circumstance, should we ever allow ourselves to neglect our duties to Allah, especially our prayers. We should all cultivate the habit of praying with greater concentration day in and day out. Prayers should not be rushed through. We should behave like a beggar on Allah's threshold who begs of Him for everything. Allah wants us to pray to Him and he has promised us that he would answer our prayers. The world with all its embellishments is here to beguile us but we should resist it. May Allah put us among His believing and practicing servants. Ameen