

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

On Wednesday morning when I woke up the following words were on my lips: “*Sach poucho to hay rouh ki rahat namaz mein*”. When I sat on my bed I recited the second verse of this poem which is as follows: “*Aur mominon ko milti hay lazzat namaz mein* ”. These are the two verses of a poem which was taught to us (My brothers, sisters and I) by our mother who, by Allah’s Grace is still here and keeps advising us. May Allah keep her well and may she continue to be a source of guidance and inspiration for all of us. These two verses may be translated into English as follows: “1. Truly speaking the solace of souls is found in prayer. 2. And believers find great pleasure in prayer.”. I recall that I was around 14 or 15 years old when I recited this *Nazm* on the occasion of a jamaat function at the Darus Salaam mosque in Rose-Hill. The audience appreciated my recitation and at least two elders rewarded me with monetary gifts. But these are only two verses of a poem which contained at least twenty. I do not know who wrote it. But it was from an early Ahmadiyya Urdu Book known as “*Islam ki pehli kitab*”. Most probably it was from a companion of the Promised Messiah (as). Since Allah has called my attention to a very important fact by revealing these words to me, I have decided to speak about the subject of Salat which in Urdu is known as *namaz* in my sermon of today. Each one amongst should never forget that whatever challengers we might be facing in our life now or in future we should make it a habit to improve the way we perform our Salat. We should seek to improve it by establishing a deeper connection with Allah so that He might reveal Himself to us and grant us relief from all sorts of distress. This is a path that is known only through practice and not by just listening to lectures or by just reading books. All prophets and their close companions have had recourse to sincere prayers to help them navigate through the difficult circumstances in which they find themselves. So, anyone who wants to establish a solid relationship with Allah has to have recourse to prayers and witness firsthand how Allah comes to His Rescue or how Allah grants consolation to his heart. Now I will share with you a large extract from the writings of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) where he was advising the members about many important matters including *salaat*. He said:

“*Salaat* [performed by a Muslim] can only be considered to be a true *Salaat* when there is a true and pure relationship with God—when one becomes so

immersed in the pleasure and obedience of God that one gives precedence to faith over all worldly matters, to the extent of being prepared to sacrifice even one's life in the path of God. It is only when such a state is inculcated within a person that his *Salat* can be considered to be sincere and true. Until such a truthful state develops within a person and until he manifests [signs of] a true and sincere loyalty, his *Salat* and other deeds are without any effect. There are many people who are considered to be believers and to be truthful but, in the heavens, they are considered to be non-believers. A true believer who is truthful in every way is he who is considered to be a truthful person in the heavens even if it is the case that such a person is considered to be a Kafir or a non-believer by the world. However, attaining such a state of true belief and complete truthfulness and manifesting signs of total and sincere loyalty to God is a difficult task indeed. It is the case that when a person acquires a deeply sincere and true belief [in God] there are manifested many signs of such a state. The distinguishing signs of true believers as described in the Holy Qur'an are all to be found in the people who are true believers. Among such distinguishing signs is the great sign of becoming distanced from the material world. Just as a snake comes out of its old skin, so does a person who 'tramples' the material world under foot and becomes separated from it and 'comes out' of the 'covering' of his self-importance and selfish desires. Such a person becomes a believer and there are to be found in him signs of complete faith. Hence, God Almighty states: "*Innallaha ma'allazinat taqaw wallazina houm mouhsenoune*" Verily, Allah is with those who are righteous and those who do good. (Ch.16, V.129) That is, without doubt, God is with those who adopt *Taqwah*, that is, righteousness and with those who do even greater deeds than *Taqwah*, that is they are beneficent [being eager to do good and serve mankind]. The meaning of *Taqwah* is to abstain from wrongdoing in such a manner that even the very fine lines around it are not crossed. R e m e m b e r, however, that goodness is not that a person should consider himself to be 'good' because he has not usurped another's rights or stolen another person's property or that he has abstained from adultery. A truly righteous person would find such a description of 'goodness' to be laughable because if a person committed any of the above deeds, he would face punishment [by society]. Hence, such acts are not acts of goodness of a kind that would find appreciation by **those who have true knowledge of God**. On the contrary, a **truly good deed** is one where a **person is of service to mankind** and manifests **complete loyalty and truthfulness** in the path of God, being prepared to give up even his life in this path. That is why it has been stated "Verily, Allah is with those who are righteous and those who do good".

(Ch.16, V.129). This is to say that God is with those who abstain from performing bad actions and who do good deeds. Remember this point well that the mere abstention from bad deeds is not in itself worthy of being considered an outstanding act unless there are also present good deeds. There are many who have never committed adultery or murder, nor indulged in theft or robbery, but despite all this they do not perform any acts manifesting true loyalty to God nor do they serve mankind in any way. Such people, therefore, have not performed any good deeds at all. It would be an ignorant person indeed who would present such things and enumerate such people among the righteous because such acts [as theft, murder and adultery are generally accepted to be bad and] constitute evil behaviour. It is the case that merely abstaining from these will not lead a person to enter the fold of those who are the ‘friends of God’. It is the practice of God that those who indulge in evil behaviour, those who steal, who are dishonest and those who take bribes, all such people will meet their punishment in this very world— such a one does not die until he has received his punishment. Remember, therefore, that the mere abstention from major ills does not constitute goodness. *Taqwah* [righteousness] is a lower stage. Its example is like the container that is cleaned thoroughly in order that the best kind of food may be placed within it. If, however, it were the case that the container is cleaned thoroughly but no food is in fact placed within, would this satisfy one’s hunger? Certainly not! The same applies in the case of *Taqwah*. What is *Taqwah*? It is merely that which cleanses the vessel that contains *Nafse-Ammarah*, [that is ‘the self that incites to evil’].

There are three types of the self [or soul]: *Nafse - Ammarah*, *Nafse - Lawwama* and *Nafse - Mutmainnah*, [that is, the ‘self that incites to evil’, the ‘self-accusing spirit’ and the ‘spirit at rest’]. There is yet another type of self and that is *Nafse Zakiyah* [the ‘naturally pure self’] but this exists in the state of childhood when the concept of sin does not apply. Hence, apart from the *Nafse - Zakiyah*, there has been mention of only the three types of the ‘self’ which are applicable in adulthood. *Nafse- Ammarah* is that state when a person is slave to the self and Satan and follows the desires of the self. Whatever the self-commands, the person obeys just as a slave is eager to fulfil the commands of its master. If it commands him to commit murder, he murders; if it commands him to commit adultery, he commits adultery; if it commands him to commit theft, he steals and robs. In short, whatever is commanded by the self, he is ready to fulfil. Whatever evil deeds

or bad acts he is asked to perform, he performs these. This is the state of *Nafse - Ammarah*, the ‘self that incites to evil’.

After the state of *Nafse - Ammarah* comes the state of *Nafse - Lawwama* or the ‘self-accusing spirit’. This is the condition in which a person is not yet completely free of sin but blame and accuse themselves and are occupied in the effort of trying and finding ways and means of ridding themselves of sin. Those who are in this state, that is, in the state of *NafseLawwamma*, are in a state of battle as they are continually fighting a war with Satan and with their own self. Sometimes it happens that they win and sometimes the self [that incites to evil] – at times the self-overpowers them and at other times they overpower the self and subdue it. Such people progress further than those in the state of *Nafse-Ammarah*. There is no difference between *Nafse - Ammarah* and other beasts. Just as a dog or a cat falls upon a container if it is without cover, unaware of the fact as to whether they have a right to it or not, so a person who is enslaved by the self that incites to evil indulges in whatever evil he has the opportunity to commit and he is ever ready to do so. If, for example, he finds some coins lying in his path, he will rush to pick them up and will not consider whether he has a right to take them or not. This is not, however, the case with a person under the rule of the self-accusing spirit, or *NafseLawwamah* – such a person is in a state of war in which sometimes he is victorious and at other times the self. There is not yet complete victory which is the condition of the third state, *Nafse - Mutmainnah*. In this state there is an end to all battles and there is a complete victory hence the name *NafseMutmainnah* which means the achievement of complete satisfaction and peace. At this stage, a person acquires a true belief in God and believes in the existence of God with complete certainty. The state of *NafseMutmainnah* brings with it strength of belief that has reached its ultimate limits because complete satisfaction and assurance is only granted when there is a complete belief in God.” (Review of Religion Dec2002).

May Allah help each Ahmadi Muslim to live up to the advice of The Promised Messiah if they want their life to be well-lived. May Allah help each one to achieve this noble objective, Incha Allah. Ameen.