

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

Almost half of this year is gone. Believers are expected to examine their life and wonder how they spend their time. This self-examination is to be done everyday so that believers might improve themselves if they find that they have not been up to the standard that is expected of them as Muslims. We should all avoid mispending our time and do our best to make our life as fruitful as it can be on all levels, whether it is physical or economic or spiritual. We should all learn to improve ourselves and above everything else we should see to it that we do not fail in our relationship with other human beings or in our relationship to Allah. Hazrat Masih Maood (as) spared no efforts to advise his followers about what is expected of them. We will read some more from his writings about diverse subject matters with the hope that we might remember and care to improve ourselves. The following extract describes what he said about the need to ask for forgiveness:

**“Wa anistagh-firoo Rabbakum summa tooboo ilaihi”**

*"And that you ask for forgiveness from your Lord and then you turn to Him".*

You should remember that this Umma has been granted two things. One is to obtain strength and the other is for a practical display of that strength. In order to obtain strength, *Istighfar* has been given to Muslims, which in other words can be called asking for help (*Istimdad* and *Istianat* ).

Mystics say that just as one gets physical strength through exercise (exercise with dumb bells and other things), it can also be said that *Istighfar* is the means of exercise for spiritual strength. It gives strength to the soul and also grants steadfastness to the hearts- whoever wishes to gain strength should be doing *Istighfar* (i.e. he should be asking for the forgiveness of his sins). *Ghafara* means to cover up or press down. With *Istighfar* one tries to cover up or press down the low passions which keep him away from God. Thus, *Istighfar* actually means that one should try to press down (and put an end to) the poisonous matter which attacks man to ruin him, and thus getting away from what stands between him and his God, he should act upon His Commandments.

It should also be remembered that there are two kinds of matters to be found in human beings. One, the poisonous matter and, two, the elixir. The poisonous matter is handled by Satan. When a man shows pride and begins to think that he is somebody very important, and he does not ask for help from the fountain of elixir, then the poisonous matter overpowers him, but when he humbles himself and begins to realise that he is nobody and of no importance and feels the need for seeking after the help of God, then a fountain is made to flow and his soul begins to melt. This is what *Istighfar* is, that is, he overpowers the poisonous matter and does so by receiving the power from God.

In short, it means that you should constantly worship God. First you should obey the Prophet, *sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*. Second, you should always ask for help from God.

Of course, first and foremost you should ask for help from God and when you have got it, then you should: *Tooboo ilaihi* -Then you should turn to Him”. (*Malfoozat* Vol. II, p. 68)

Just to add to this extract, I would like to say that the Holy Prophet (saw) himself used to ask forgiveness from Allah more than seventy times per day. Now sinners like us should wonder how much more we need do it. We should at least try to copy the example of the Holy Prophet (saw) and do at least as much as he did or even some more because we have sinned a lot.

Now we will read another extract from the Promised Messiah about the need to pray for others. He said:

“You should remember that sympathy is of three kinds. One, physical two, financial and three, in the form of prayer.

The third kind does not need money or strength to be used, but its beneficence is very extensive. So far as physical sympathy is concerned, it can only be shown when one is strong enough to do so, for example, a weak wounded person cannot be helped by someone who is not physically strong. Likewise, unless a man has got money with him, he cannot help a helpless, penniless hungry person. How can such a person show sympathy. But so far as sympathy with prayer is concerned, it neither requires money nor physical strength. As long as a man is a man (i.e. he knows that he is human being) he can pray for the other and prove to be beneficial to him. The sphere of good that can accrue from this kind of sympathy is very wide and if a person does not make use of this sympathy, he is certainly very unfortunate.

I have said it that physical and financial sympathy has limitations but that is not the case with the prayer. My own way of thinking is that so far as prayer is concerned, even enemies should not be excluded from it. The more extensive the prayer is, the greater is the benefit derived by the one who prays. The more a person is niggardly in the matter of his prayers, the farther he gets away from God. The fact is that the man who limits the Bounty of God-which is very extensive-has a very weak faith. One of the great advantages in praying for others is that it prolongs life. God has promised in the Holy Quran that those who do good to others live longer. He says:

*Amma ma yanfa-onnasa fa-yamkoso fil-arz* meaning “what is of benefit to others stays on earth. (13:)

The other kinds of sympathy being limited, it is the prayer that can be termed as a continuous charity. It is with prayer that we can benefit most”. (*Malfoozat* Vol. II, 73)

I have read that Ibn Arabi, a great Muslim saint who lived in the 13<sup>th</sup> century used to offer funeral prayers for all Muslims who died on that particular day after his Maghrib prayer. Even in our time, I have read in Al Fazl that Sir Zafrullah Khan used to mention the

names of 270 people in his *Salaat* Tahajjud regularly. There are some people who understand Islam in such a way that they live it to spread love, sympathy and justice in the world. There are others who just make speeches about these concepts and show through practical example that they are keener to do harm rather than good.

The next extract I am reading is about how we should deal with beggars or people who are in need. The Promised Messiah (as) said:

“Some people, on seeing a beggar, become peevish and if they have *maulviyyat* (dry theology) in them, they begin to tell the beggar what their religion says about begging. Imposing on him their *maulviyyat*, they even use harsh words.

What a pity, these people do not understand, and in fact it is as if they cannot understand, at all. This understanding is given to good-natured and pious-hearted people. They do not realise that if the beggar, despite the fact that he is quite healthy, has come out to beg, and is committing a sin against himself; but it is not a sin to give him something. The Hadith even tells us this much that if a man comes to you to beg and he is riding a horse, you should give him something. The Holy Quran says: *wa ammassaa-i-la fala tanhar*: you should not scold the beggar. There is no indication here as to what kind of beggar should not be scolded-and what kind of beggar may be scolded.

You should remember never to scold a beggar, for doing so sows the seed of immorality. Good morals demand that one should not hastily get annoyed with the beggar. It is *satan* who wants to keep you away from virtue by making you annoyed with the beggar; he (*satan*) wants to make you the inheritor of evil.

You should ponder over this fact: do one good deed, and you will find that you are enabled to follow it with another good deed. Likewise, if you do one evil deed, you will follow it with another evil deed. It is just as one thing absorbs another. This process of absorbing one thing by the other is to be found in all the actions of man; so, God has destined it to be. When a man will show kindness to a beggar and will thus make a moral charity' he will be able to do another good deed-and that is give something to the beggar.

Good morals are key to other good deeds, and those who do not keep their morals right, ultimately become devoid of good deeds altogether”. (*Malfoozat*, Vol. II, p. 75)

The next extract concerns leading an active life as far as possible. The Promised Messiah (as) tells us:

“You should remember that he who dedicates his life for the cause of God does not become slack nor does he sit down hands folded. No. Never. Rather such a person becomes more energetic and cleverer than ever before. Slackness does not touch him in the least.

Amaar bin Khuzaina reports in the Hadith that Hazrat Umar (may God be pleased with him) asked his father what had stopped him from planting trees in his garden. The father replied that it was old age and he felt that he would die soon. Hazrat Umar (may God be

pleased with him) told him that he must continue planting the trees. Then he (Amaar) saw that Hazrat Umar joined hands with his father and planted trees in the land. The Holy Prophet, *sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*, always sought refuge of Allah against laziness. I say it to you repeatedly that you should never become slack. God does not say that you should not work for the achievement of worldly things, but has rather taught us the prayer about *Hasanatud-Dunya* (the good of this world). God does not like that anyone should sit down hands folded. He says: *Laisa lil insani ilia ma sa-aa* i.e. the man will not have except what he strives for. The Believer should therefore work hard. But I will say as many times as it is possible to repeat that the acquisition of worldly things should not become the be all and end all. Religion should be the target and the world should be made to serve it. Quite often rich people can do things that are out of reach for the poor. In the days of the Holy Prophet, *sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*, he who became the first Khalifa later on, rendered matchless services to the Muslims after joining Islam-he could do so because he was a great trader; he became the friend and the first Khalifa and was honoured with the rank of Siddiq. (Malfoozat Vol. II, p. 92)

May Allah help each one amongst us to think over the advice given and do our best so that our life reflects these qualities that Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has spoken about. Ameen.