

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

All of a sudden, we see that the world is in a state where many things have gone wrong and no one can predict for how long. Since the beginning of the pandemic of the coronavirus around the world, governments have been busy dealing with the consequences of this deadly disease. As of yesterday, it had spread to 114 countries and has killed more than 4500 people. At present, there are at least eight countries including the USA that are reporting more than 1000 cases. Furthermore, they say that in the past two weeks, the number of cases of COVID-19 outside China has increased 13-fold, and the number of affected countries has tripled and, in the days ahead, they expect the number of affected cases and deaths to increase.

The last time that a pandemic was declared was in 2009 when the swine Flu H1N1 appeared and killed more than 18000 people in more than 214 countries. Most countries are facing emergencies and even here in Mauritius the situation is not business as usual but by Allah's Grace we have been safe up till now and we pray that Allah will keep all of us under His Protection and that He helps the world to contain this disease as soon as possible.

As believers, we should not yield to a sense of panic but we should place our trust in Allah and hope that He will do what is best for us. And under all circumstances we should be resigned to His Will. This is the time for the remembrance of Allah (*zikrullah*), for asking pardon for our sins (*istighfaar*), for engaging ourselves in good deeds rather than evil ones (*amr bil ma'roof wan nahy anil mukar*) and also for tearful prayers. We need to pray that a solution be found by the experts in medicine to deal with the virus because if it is present, we will not be safe. It has to be dealt with. Our prayer is that Allah help these experts to find a solution, the sooner the better.

Now we will continue reading some extracts from the writings of the Promised Messiah (as) as we have been doing in the past sermons. He said:

“When the grace of Allah Almighty draws near, He furnishes the means that are necessary for the acceptance of prayer. The heart develops a fervour, passion and emotion. However, when a prayer is not meant to be accepted, the heart is unable to feel contentment and inclination. No matter the extent that a person forces his disposition, one is unable to develop focus in prayer. The reason for this is because on certain occasions, God Almighty desires for us to submit to His decree, whilst on other occasions, He accepts our prayers. Therefore, until I perceive signs of God's permission, I have little expectation of a prayer being accepted. I become content with the decree of God and feel even more joy than that which is experienced on the acceptance of prayer, because the fruits and blessings that are received in being content with the will of God are far greater.”

He said further:

“Allah the Exalted has no liking for the outer shell; it is spirituality and the essence that finds acceptance with Him. This is why God Almighty states:

لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْكُمْ

*Their flesh reaches not Allah, nor does their blood, but it is your righteousness that reaches Him. (22:38)*

In another instance, God Almighty states:

*Allah accepts only from the righteous. (5:28)*

In actuality, this is a very delicate matter. Here, even if someone is the child of a Prophet, this is of no benefit. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said a similar thing to Fatimah, may Allah be pleased with her. The Holy Quran also clearly states:

*Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. (49:14)*

The Jews too are the progeny of Prophets. Did hundreds of Prophets not appear among the Jews? But what benefit did being the children of Prophets bring to them? If their deeds were good, why would they personify the following verse:

ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ

*They were smitten with abasement and destitution. (2:62)*

God Almighty desires a pure transformation. On certain occasions, even pride in one's ancestry deprives one from acts of virtue and a person will surmise that they shall receive salvation due to their lineage alone, which is an utterly absurd notion. Kabir says: ‘It is good that I was born in the home of the lower caste. O Kabir! It is good that we are among the lowly, for we greet everyone equally.’ God Almighty loves loyalty and sincerity, and desires good deeds. He cannot be pleased with boasting and bragging.”

“My state of affairs is that whilst engaged in Prayer if someone is in pain and their cry reaches my ears, I feel moved to go to their aid and give them sympathy insofar as possible, even if I am compelled to break my Prayer. It is against the principles of morality to not stand by a brother who is in pain and distress. If you can do nothing else, at least pray for them. What to talk of our own, I even say that you ought to show the same example of morality and sympathy to Hindus and others. One must not possess a thoughtless nature.

On one occasion, I was going out for a walk. A man named Abdul-Karim, who was a village registrar of lands, was also with me. He was somewhat ahead of me and I was walking at some distance behind. On the way, a frail, old lady of about seventy or seventy-five years of age met us. She gave a letter to Abdul-Karim and asked him to read it to her, but he scolded her and moved her away. This broke my heart. Then, the old lady gave me the letter. I took the letter and stopped. Then, I read the letter to her and explained its contents to her in detail. At this, Abdul-Karim was deeply ashamed, because he had to wait anyway, and was deprived of spiritual reward as well.”

“It is mentioned in the Holy Quran:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

Meaning, one who purifies his soul has found salvation. To purify one's soul, seek the company of the righteous, or fostering a relationship with those who are pious and virtuous is very beneficial. One ought to shun ignoble morals such as falsehood and the like, and seek guidance from one who already treads this path. One ought to correct one's errors along the way. Just as one cannot improve one's writing without identifying one's mistakes, so too morals cannot be rectified until one identifies one's errors. Man is the sort of creature that remains on the right path only if he is purified continuously as he goes along, otherwise he will deviate.”

“When a person attains success, and a state of helplessness and difficulty no longer exists, a person who shows humility at such a time and remembers God is supreme.

*If you do not lose your senses even after finding wealth, only then are you a true man.”*

People enjoyed immense freedom in speaking to His Holiness and anyone could engage in a conversation with him without any hindrance whatsoever. In this relation, the Promised Messiah as states: “It is not my practice to sit in a fierce and frightful manner so that people should fear me as they are terrified of a carnivorous beast. I extremely detest the idea of sitting like an idol. I have come to abolish idol worship, not so that I should become an idol myself and people worship me. Allah the Exalted knows well that I do not give myself preference over others even in the slightest. In my opinion, there is no worse an idol-worshipper and no one more wicked than an arrogant person. An arrogant person does not worship any God at all; in fact, he only worships himself.”

Speaking about friendship he said:

“It is my belief that any individual who makes a vow of friendship with me even once, I have such regard for this vow, that irrespective of their nature and no matter what they become, I cannot sever my ties with him. If the individual cuts off their ties with me himself, in that case I am helpless. Otherwise, my belief is that if one of my friends had collapsed in the market after consuming alcohol and there was a crowd of people around him, I would pick him up and take him away without fear of reproach by any critic.” The Promised Messiah as also said: “The bond of friendship is a most valuable gem. One must not waste it away easily. No matter how unpleasant a friend may be to you, one ought to forgive and forget.”

We should all try to remember these wise words and do nothing amongst us that may impair our friendly relationship. If something bad happens amongst our members we should learn to forgive and forgot and do not allow Satan to stir enmity amongst us incha Allah. The Promised Messiah (as) further said on this matter:

“I have spoken many times before about the mutual concord and love that ought to prevail within our community. I have stated that you all ought to remain reconciled and united. This is the teaching that God Almighty gave to the Muslims that you must all remain as one being, or you will lose your stature. The reason that Muslims have been instructed to stand

together in Prayer with their shoulders touching one another is to foster unity. The goodness in one person will flow into the next like an electric current. If you are divided and disunited, you shall be deprived.

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has said that you ought to love one another and pray for each other even without the other's knowledge. If an individual prays for someone without their knowledge, an angel says: 'May it be so for you as well.' What an outstanding thing indeed! If someone were to suggest that man's prayers are not heard, at least they will agree that the prayers of an angel are accepted. I would like to advise you and say that there should be no discord amongst you. I have only brought you two teachings: firstly, to believe in the Oneness of God; secondly, to show one another love and sympathy. Show an example that serves as a miracle for others. This was what developed amongst the companions and it served as an argument to others. Allah the Exalted states:

*You were enemies and He united your hearts in love.*

Remember! Unity is a miracle. Remember! Until each and every one of you likes for your brother what you prefer for yourselves, you are not from among my community. Such a one suffers misfortune and trial. He shall not meet a good end. I am about to prepare a book in which all those people who cannot control their emotions will be separated. People fight over trivial matters. For example, one person says that a certain performer jumped ten yards and another person will begin arguing on this point, and this then leads to malice." (p221)

Speaking about how the Promised Messiah (as) spent the month of Ramadan it is said:

"Seth Abdur-Rahman Sahib (ra) of Madras sought permission from the Promised Messiah (as) to return to Madras for some important work. He had also received a telegram to return. The Promised Messiah (as) said: "It is absolutely imperative for you to remain here during this blessed month." The Promised Messiah as also said: "I am ready to make such a prayer in your favour that would even move mountains." Then, he said: "During these days, I sit with my friends less than usual and remain in solitude for longer. This is truly to the benefit of my friends. I pray in seclusion with time and freedom, and spend a better part of the night in prayers."

May Allah help us all. May we all prosper in the shade of Allah. May we all pray that Allah divert the calamity that is falling on the world these days. Ameen.