

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

We are living in very difficult times although to some people it might not seem so. The Covid-19 pandemic has turned the world upside down. Many countries have had to impose complete lockdowns, hundreds of thousands of people have died, millions have lost their jobs, especially in the USA which is considered to be the most advanced economy in the world, and in India, where the numbers tally up to almost 120 million. I am not going to burden you with numbers. They are freely available on the net, on TV and radio. But suffice it to say that since the beginning of the year, approximately 440, 000 people have died worldwide because of this pandemic. And it has caused a lot of distress in many families around the world though we felt it less in Mauritius.

In times of both difficulty and ease, the believer is expected to trust in Allah and to do his/her best to avoid harm to himself or to others.

The Holy Quran reminds us “*Inna ma’al ousre Yusra*” meaning “Surely there is ease after hardship” (ch.94). In another verse, we read “*Sa yaj’alallaho ba’da ousrin yousra*” which we translate as “Soon Allah will bring ease after hardship” (65:8). In light of these verses, we can expect that there will come some ease after all the trouble that we have had to face especially during the lockdown. But most people who are aware of the impact of such events on the world say that there are difficult days ahead for the whole world. As good Muslims, we should pray that Allah relieves the distress of the people here in Mauritius and elsewhere as well as soon as possible.

From a hadith, we learn that “Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“I am amazed by the believer. If he is granted goodness, he praises Allah and is grateful. If he is afflicted with a calamity, he praises Allah and is patient. The believer is rewarded for every matter, even feeding a morsel of food to his wife.”** Source: Musnad Ahmad 1495

This is a very simple hadith but it has very deep meaning. The Holy Prophet (saw) expresses his wonder at the state of a Muslim. Whatever befalls him, whether it’s good or bad, his attitude is such that he has an appropriate response because he has understood that when we are alive, we are always faced with circumstances that are good and circumstances that are bad. However, the believer controls his response to these circumstances. If the circumstances are good, he praises Allah and shows his gratitude because he knows that Allah says in the Holy Quran “If you are grateful, I will grant you

more” (ch.14) and he is convinced that Allah’s words are always true. In a similar vein, if he is faced with bad circumstances, he still praises Allah and he manifests patience. He does not speak ill of Allah or of the circumstances which he faces. He just seeks Allah’s Help and manifests great patience. As a good believer, he knows that Allah says in the Holy Quran “*wastainou bis sabre was salaah*” meaning “seek help with patience and prayers” but also “*Innaha lakabiratoune illa alal khashe’een*” meaning “but this is difficult except for those who are humble”. And then the Holy Quran gives the meaning of the “*khashe’een*” as “those who are convinced that they would definitely meet their Lord and to Him they would return” (2: 46-47)

But being fully convinced that one day we will return to Allah and meet Him is not at all just an intellectual exercise. There is no theorem to prove this and there are no arguments that are totally unassailable. But it is conviction or a light that Allah deposits in the heart of believers when we seek His help with patience and prayers. At one place, Hazrat Masih Maood (as) expresses himself thus:

"Put forth your utmost efforts to recognize God, finding Whom is salvation and meeting Whom is deliverance. He manifests Himself to him who seeks Him with love and sincerity of heart, and He reveals Himself to him who becomes truly His. Pure hearts are His thrones and the tongues that are free from falsehood, abuse and vain talk are the places of His revelation. He who loses himself in seeking His pleasure becomes a manifestation of His miraculous power. " (Kashfulghita, p. 8-9, Essence of Islam I, p. xvi).

This is an extract on which we need to reflect and try to fully understand. It will indeed help us a lot to establish such a relationship with Allah that will make it easy for us to weather any type of storm that we may face during our brief sojourn on earth.

To come back to showing gratitude, we read in one hadith:

“Ibn Abbas reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“Take advantage of five before five: your youth before your old age, your health before your illness, your riches before your poverty, your free time before your work, and your life before your death.”**”(Baihaqi)

Usually people use their youth as a time to indulge in many things that are quite unimportant. They go out, they drink and amuse themselves, they spend hours these days either watching films or talking with friends on social media. But it can also be a time to increase one’s knowledge improving our bodily health and engaging in pursuits like improving one’s knowledge either for professional development or to learn more about our religion or both. But most people prefer to do what is easy thinking that they will do what is difficult later on in life. All of a sudden, they find that old age has set in and they

are suffering its effects. That is why the Holy Prophet (saw) tells us to value our youth before old age comes upon us. Regarding the other four advice, I hope you will take some time to delve into the wisdom of these words and allow yourselves to be guided by them.

Now we will read some further extracts from the *Malfuzaat* of Hazrat Masih Maood Volume 2 as we used to do previously. These extracts, of course, are not on any particular subject. They touch on many subjects. I will deliver them as they have been recorded in the book. He said:

“A person must not lose hope. Determination is also a high moral quality and a believer is characterized by high resolve. One ought to always be ready to serve and support the Faith, and should never show cowardice. For cowardice is the mark of a hypocrite. A believer is gallant and courageous, but courage does not imply that they lack good judgement. Any action done without appropriate consideration of the prevailing circumstances is recklessness. A believer is free from haste. In fact, a believer remains prepared to serve the Faith with immense sagacity and forbearance, and is never cowardly.

Sometimes a person will act in a manner that displeases God Almighty and thereby arouses His indignation. For example, if a person shoves away a beggar, this is harsh behaviour, which results in the displeasure of God Almighty. In turn, such a one becomes deprived of the opportunity to give something to the beggar.

However, if a person acts in a gentle and noble manner, and even if he gives the beggar a cup of water, this results in a removal of the spiritual contraction of the heart (*qabz*).”

Before going any further, let me add some comments on this extract. As an Ahmadi Muslim believer, we have beliefs that are slightly different from that all mainstream Muslims. Under all circumstances, we should uphold our beliefs. To uphold them, we should have knowledge of them and for this we should study and master the arguments that we use to uphold our beliefs. We should not just remain silent and acquiesce what others say. Hence, we should have enough courage and fear none but Allah to present our views but with wisdom.

The Promised Messiah said:

Seeking Forgiveness from Allah

“Man undergoes a state of both spiritual contraction (*qabz*) and spiritual expansion (*bast*). In the state of spiritual expansion, one’s pleasure and delight in worship heightens, the heart is opened, one’s inclination towards God increases, and warmth and comfort is derived from the Prayer. However, on certain occasions, man experiences a state in which this passion and eagerness is lost and the heart becomes constricted. When this state of

affairs arises, one should seek forgiveness from Allah profusely, invoke salutations upon the Holy Prophet (saw) abundantly, and offer Prayer again and again. This is the only way to do away with one's state of spiritual contraction of the heart.

True Knowledge

Logic or philosophy is no knowledge; in fact, true knowledge is that which God Almighty bestows by His mere grace. Such knowledge is a means of developing a deeper understanding of Allah the Exalted and develops a fear of God in the heart. In this regard, Allah Almighty states in the Holy Quran:

وَأِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ الْعُلَمَاءِ

Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah.

If knowledge does not increase a person in fear of God, then remember that such knowledge is not such as can further him in cognisance of the Divine.”

Trust in God

“Trust in God is the hallmark of Islam. A Muslim is one who believes in giving charity and offering prayer. The Christians do not believe in this. Why is this the case? Christians have crafted their own physical god. One of the greatest and most enduring joys of man, which supports him in times of peril, is trust in God. Only Islam teaches, in the true sense, that one must trust in God.”

In his Eidul Adha sermon of 21st April 1899, the Promised Messiah (as) said:

“The first state that speaks for a person's good nature is whether or not they honour their mother. In relation to Awais Qarni (ra), the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would often turn his face towards Yemen and say: ‘I can smell the fragrance of God coming forth from Yemen.’ The Holy Prophet (saw) would also say: ‘He is heavily engaged in serving his mother and this is why he cannot come to visit me.’ Apparently, it seems strange that the Prophet of God, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is present in his time but Awais (ra) is unable to see him in person only due to his constant preoccupation in service and obedience to his mother. However, I find that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has instructed his people to convey his greetings of peace particularly to two people alone—Awais (ra) and the Promised Messiah (as). This is a remarkable distinction which others have not been fortunate enough to receive. It is written that when Hazrat Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, went to visit him, Awais (ra) said: ‘I remain engaged in tending to my mother's needs and so the angels graze my camels.’ On the one hand, there were people like Awais

(ra) who strove so tirelessly in serving their mothers that they were blessed with such acceptance and honour; while on the other hand, there are those who engage in litigation over pennies, and speak of their mothers so disrespectfully that even ignoble and uncivilized peoples from among the scheduled caste do not act so inappropriately. What is our teaching? It is to inform people of the pure guidance of Allah and the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. If someone claims to have a relationship with me but does not act in accordance with this guidance, then why do they join my community at all? Those who act inappropriately turn others away from the right path. People will raise objections and say that these people are such that they do not even respect their parents.”

May Allah open our heart to the wisdom of these words. May we all live up to them. May Allah forgive us our sins and may He always look upon us with kindness. Ameen.