

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

You might recall that last week we were talking about what Hazrat Masih Maood (as) tells us about the need for seeking Allah's Help and how the seeking of forgiveness (the recitation of *Istighfaar*) plays an important role in our journey to Allah. We will continue from where we left off last week. The Promised Messiah (as) said:

“Seeking forgiveness from God (*istighfar*) and repentance (*tawbah*) are two distinct things. However, in one respect, seeking forgiveness from God takes precedence over repentance. For seeking forgiveness from God means to seek help and strength from God, whereas repentance means to stand on one's own feet. (*That is, once you regret your sins and seek Allah's Forgiveness, you do your best to be firm and not indulge in sins again*).

The eternal way of Allah is that when a person seeks help from Him, He will grant them strength; and with this strength, a person will then be able to stand on his own feet and will develop the strength to perform good deeds, which is called ‘turning to Allah’ or ‘repentance’, as alluded to in the words: **تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ** (*Turn to Him, i.e. God*). Therefore, in natural sequence, seeking forgiveness from God comes before repentance.

In short, the method that is prescribed for the seekers of God is that they must seek assistance from Him in every condition. Until a seeker is given strength from Allah the Exalted, what can he do? The strength to turn to God in repentance comes through seeking assistance from God, by begging for His forgiveness. If there were no seeking forgiveness from God, know for certain that the ability to turn to God in repentance would die as well. However, if you engage in seeking forgiveness from God, and then turn to him in repentance, the result will be as stated in the following verse:

يُمَتِّعُكُمْ مَتَاعًا حَسَنًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى

He will provide for you a goodly provision until an appointed term

The way of God is that if you seek forgiveness from God and turn to Him in repentance, you will attain to lofty grades. Every individual has a scope of their own, within the bounds of which he advances in grades of progress. Everyone does not have it within him to be a Prophet and Messenger, or from among the Truthful and the Martyrs.

Hence, there is no doubt in the fact that the comparative greatness of rank is a matter of truth. After this, Allah the Exalted states that a seeker who persistently remains engaged in these efforts shall progress in ranks and stations to the degree of his individual ability. This is precisely what is implied in:

وَيُؤْتِي كُلَّ ذِي فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهُ

And He will grant His grace to every one possessed of merit.

However, if a person is greater in capacity than others, then God Almighty will grant him more as well and the individual in question will receive the superiority to which he is naturally entitled. The distinction that God bestows is inherently His property, for He is the true Possessor of distinction. What this means is that God Almighty will never keep a person deprived of the distinction that he deserves. There are some who say: ‘Sir! Are we out to become saints?’ Those who say such a thing are mean-natured disbelievers. Man ought to strive in line with the law of nature.

Now, the gist of this entire discourse is that God has nowhere stated that one should seek assistance from the dead; in fact, He has always spoken of those who are living. God Almighty has blessed us immensely by entrusting Islam to the living, for if He had left the Faith to those who were dead, who knows how catastrophic this would have been? Are the shrines of those gone by few and far between? Simply observe the number of shrines in Multan. There is a renowned saying about this place:

گردو گرما گدا و گورستان

Dust, heat, beggars and graveyards.

I also visited Multan once. Wherever one goes to visit a tomb, the attendants will surround a man for money. Just look at what goes on in Pakpattan thanks to the dead. Visit Ajmer and see what goes on there. Innovations in the faith and self-invented beliefs are rampant. In short, if one looks towards the dead, one will find nothing but innovations in the faith and forbidden practices. The right path (*sirat-e-mustaqim*) which Allah the Exalted has appointed for us is the way of the living, not the path of the dead. Therefore, one who desires to attain God—the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining God—must search for the living. For our God is a Living God, not dead. If those people whose God is dead and whose scriptures are dead, seek blessings from the dead, this would not be surprising. It would be surprising, however, if a true Muslim, whose God is living, whose Prophet is living, whose Book is living, and whose religion has always welcomed the living; and for whom in every era, a living man has come to grant a living faith in the existence of God Almighty, turns their back to the living and remains lost in search of decayed bones and shrines.

Hence, you ought to seek the company of those who are living and return time and again to sit with them. I would also say that once or twice is not enough to receive a full influence. The way of Allah is that progress is gradual, just as was the case with the community of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Therefore, the community which is to be established on the precepts of prophethood will also grow according to the law of gradual development.

Therefore, you ought to put aside your worldly affairs and return here, again and again, and remain in my company for good amounts of time, as the companions were

accustomed in the time of the Holy Prophet (saw), so that you too can witness and find what Abu Bakr (ra), Umar (ra) and others, may Allah be pleased with all of them, attained. Someone rightly says:

*You can either give precedence to your worldly
affairs or give precedence to Allah.*

You know that when I take the oath of allegiance, I seek a declaration that you will give precedence to religion over worldly affairs. This is so that I may observe the degree to which the individual who takes the oath acts upon this declaration. If people are able to acquire even a small area of land, they will leave behind their homes and settle there; in fact, it is necessary for them to remain there so that this area of land may become inhabited. Even Muhammad Hussain [one the Promised Messiah's (as) early friend who became his bitter enemy] has had to move out and settle on open farmland as well. Now when I am giving you a new land—a land which, if cultivated with purity and effort, can bring forth everlasting fruits—why do people not come here and build their houses on it? Then, if someone does accept this land, but does so with such a lack of concern that after swearing the oath of allegiance, they find it burdensome and difficult to come here and stay for even a few days, how can such a one expect that their crop would ripen and yield fruits? God Almighty refers to the heart as a 'land' as well.

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

Know that Allah is now quickening the earth after its death.

Just observe the amount of struggle that a farmer must bear. A farmer will purchase an ox, plough the land, sow the seed and irrigate the soil. In short, a huge effort goes into this work, and until farmers take this work upon themselves, nothing can be achieved. It is written that a man once saw an inscription with the words: 'Agriculture is gold and nothing but gold.' So, the individual took up farming, but delegated the work to servants. However, when it came time to calculate the earnings, far from making a profit, it turned out that he owed money instead. When he began to entertain doubts on this occasion, a wise person explained:

'The advice was true, but you were foolish. You must supervise everything yourself; only then will you make a profit.' The land of the heart is exactly the same in nature: one who shows it irreverence remains deprived of the grace and blessing of God Almighty. Remember that I have come for the reformation of humanity, and the one who comes to me shall inherit divine grace in accordance with their own individual capacity. However, I clearly state that a person who swears the oath of allegiance in a half-hearted manner and leaves, and then no one knows where he has gone and what he is engaged in, shall receive nothing. Such a one will leave empty-handed, just as he was empty-handed when he first came.

The divine grace and blessing of which I speak is received by remaining in my company. The companions of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, sat in his company. What was the ultimate result? The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: “*Allaho Allaho fi ashaabi*”

Essentially, the companions became a reflection of God. They could not have attained such a rank if they remained afar from the Holy Prophet (saw). This is a very important issue. Nearness to God is nearness to the servants of God. Further, God Almighty states:

كُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

Be with the truthful.

This too is a testament to what I have just said. This is a secret that few are able to comprehend. It is never possible for a person who is appointed by God to say everything at once. In fact, he will diagnose the illnesses of his friends and cure them as appropriate with exhortation and advice, and every so often, he will remove their ailments. Just take today as an example—I cannot say everything now. It is possible that certain people may leave today after listening to the speech that I am delivering now, and perhaps some of the things that I will have said today may not suit their disposition or mindset, and so they will have left here deprived. However, an individual who stays here repeatedly, continues to foster a change within himself and ultimately attains his objective. Every individual requires a sincere change. A person who is not transformed holds true to the following:

But whoso is blind in this world will be blind in the hereafter”

Let us all hope and pray that this will not be our situation and that by Allah’s Grace, each one amongst us will do our best to follow the advice of the Promised Messiah (as). May we all understand life’s real purpose and not allow ourselves to be deluded into thinking that we should go spend our life pursuing the pleasures of this world. We should use whatever is given us in this world to help us progress in spirituality. Without this purpose in mind, we will not attain much by the end of our life, even we leave behind much material wealth. Let us all strive to earn spiritual wealth and make all the necessary efforts for its attainment.

In all probability, the new moon for *Zill Hajj* will most probably be visible on 21st July this year and Eid ul Adha will be celebrated in most countries around the world on Friday 31st July. We will know better insha Allah by next Friday. Anyhow, remember that as soon as we enter zill Hajj we should increase our remembrance of Allah by reciting more *Subhanallah, Alhamdo Lilla wa laa ilaha illallah Allaho Akbar*. May Allah accept our humble efforts and may He admit us all among His righteous and obedient servants. Ameen.