

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

As we are all well aware, in Islam, belief and good deeds work together. When we say we believe in Allah and the Holy Prophet (saw), we show our determination to abide by what Allah has said and what the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) practiced or did not practice. We will read some extracts today about what Hazrat Masih Maood (as) wrote about faith and good deeds.

Commenting on the following verse of the Holy Quran:

“Give glad to those who believe and do good works, that for them are gardens beneath which flow streams. Whenever they are given a portion of fruit therefrom, they will say: ‘This is what was given us before’ and gifts mutually resembling shall be brought to them. And they will have therein mates perfectly pure and therein will they abide. (Ch.2:V.26), Hazrat Masih Maood (as) said:

“In this verse, God Almighty has described faith as a garden beneath which rivers flow, and has thus indicated that faith is related to righteous action as a garden is related to the water of the river or stream. As a garden cannot flourish without water, faith cannot survive without righteous action. If there is faith but no righteous action the faith is in vain; and if there are actions but not faith, the actions are mere show or display. The reality of the Islamic paradise is that it is a reflection of the faith and actions of a person in this life and is not something that will be bestowed upon a person from outside. A person’s paradise is developed inside him and everyone’s paradise is his faith and his righteous actions, the delight of which begins to be tasted in this very life and one perceives the hidden gardens and streams of faith and righteous action which will become concretely manifest in the hereafter. God’s holy teaching instructs us that pure and perfect and firm faith in God, His attributes and His designs, is a beautiful garden of fruit trees, and righteous actions are the streams”. (The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam pp.90-91)

“God Almighty has mentioned good deeds along with faith in the Holy Qur’an. The *A’maal-Saaliḥah* (righteous deeds) are those in which there is not an iota of disorder. Remember that the actions of human beings are under constant threat from thieves. Who are these thieves? They are ostentation (that is, when a person does something to show off); Ujb (or self-pride, that is, to feel elated at one’s own doings); and also various types of wicked deeds and sins which one commits. By these, one’s actions are completely ruined. Good deeds (*A’maal-Saaliḥah*) are those in which there is no thought of injustice,

self-praise, showing off, arrogance, or usurping the rights of others. As good deeds lead to salvation in the Hereafter so is a person protected in this life. If there is one person in the household performing good deeds the entire household is saved. Remember that until you have good deeds, mere belief is useless”. (Al-Badar Vol.1 p.9)

“Good deeds are not according to your own whim and determination [i.e. Good deeds are not those done according to one’s own liking. ‘*Amal Saalih* is not to be interpreted on one’s own.] In fact, good deeds are those in which there is no disorder of any sort. The word *Saalih* is the contrary of *Fasaad* (disorder), for example, just as food is wholesome (*Tayyab*) when it is neither raw nor burnt nor stale nor substandard – it should be such which is assimilated quickly – likewise, it is necessary that there should be no disorder in good deeds, that is, they should be sanctioned by Allah, the Almighty, and sanctioned by the traditions of the Holy Prophet^(saw). Moreover, there should be no laziness, nor self-praise, nor showing off, nor should it be by whimsical determination.” (Al Hakm Vol.8: pp.14-15)

The Promised Messiah^{as} says that *“Only those people benefit from our existence who have a strong bond with us. Those who oppose us with full vigour like Maulvi Sanaullah Sahib and others, achieve no benefit (as no one gives any importance to maulvis) compared to those who have a perfect bond of commitment. If a person starts a journey towards God, he will be rewarded in the same way as people of earlier times. The success seen by earlier Muslims can be seen today also. This can only happen if a person makes a true and concerted effort. God is no one’s enemy. What is required is that we show perfect submission to God. If we dedicate ourselves to the threshold of God, everything will be given to us automatically. All the resources needed for our progress will be granted to us. There is an easily understandable example that if one sits close to a fire, every part of his body warms up. So it is not possible for someone to remain deprived of Divine blessings if they give up everything in order to be close to God.”*^[6]

Now I would like to share with you a pamphlet which Hazrat Masih Maood (as) wrote on Sunday 6th February 1898. It concerned the plague epidemic which was ravaging India at that time. Listen carefully and note how what he said then is still relevant today. He wrote:

“The havoc this pestilence has caused and is still causing in Bombay and other towns and villages hardly needs to be mentioned. In just two years thousands of children have been orphaned and thousands of homes have been left desolate. Friends have forever been separated from friends, and relatives from relatives. And there is still no end in sight. There can be no doubt that, out of great sympathy and concern for its people, our kind government has taken all necessary measures, and has taken upon itself expenditure of hundreds of thousands of rupees, and has publicized medical instructions as widely as

possible. But this killer disease has not yet been fully eradicated. It is in fact on the rise in Bombay, and the land of the Punjab is undoubtedly in danger. At such a time everyone should come out to help mankind, according to his knowledge and understanding, for one who is lacking in sympathy is not a man...

There is yet another important thing which my overwhelming sympathy for mankind has moved me to mention. I know it well that those who are devoid of spirituality will look upon it with jest and ridicule, but it is my duty to reveal it for the benefit of mankind. It is as follows: This is Sunday, 6th February, 1898. Last night I saw in a dream that God's angels were planting black trees in different parts of the Punjab. The trees were black, ugly, terrifying and of small size. I asked some of those who were planting them, 'What kind of trees are these?' They replied, 'These are trees of the plague which is about to spread in the country.' I am not quite sure whether it was said that the plague would spread during the next winter or the winter after, but it was a terrible sight that I saw. Prior to this I had also received a Revelation concerning the plague:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنَّهُ أَوَى الْقَرْيَةَ

Translation:

"Surely, Allah changes not the condition of a people until they change that which is in their hearts. He will shelter the town."

It means that until the epidemic of sinfulness goes away, the physical epidemic will also not go away. The fact is that evil has become rampant in the country and love for God has cooled down, and a storm of greed and lust has taken its place. Most hearts have ceased to fear God and epidemics have come to be seen as ordinary afflictions that can be eradicated by human endeavours. Sin of every description is being committed with great brazenness. I do not speak of other communities, but those who call themselves Muslims, particularly the poor and deprived among them, indulge shamelessly in theft and fraud, and resort to unlawful means; they tell lies liberally, engage in all sorts of despicable and loathsome activities, and live like savages. They do not even wash their faces or clothes for days, let alone offer their daily prayers. As for the rich, and the chiefs and lords, and the big businessmen, and landowners, and contractors, and other wealthy people, most of them are steeped in licentiousness, and are given to drinking, adultery, immorality and extravagance. They are Muslims in name only. They are totally indifferent to religious matters and have no sympathy for their faith.

Now, since the Revelation which I have just mentioned shows that this is a matter of *Taqdir-e-Mu'allaq* [Conditional Destiny] and can be averted through repentance, seeking

God's forgiveness, doing good deeds, renouncing sin, offering charity, and bringing about a pious change in oneself, I therefore urge everyone to adopt piety from the bottom of their hearts, and occupy themselves with righteous deeds, and renounce all transgression and depravity. Muslims should sincerely follow the commandments of Allah, observe the daily prayers and eschew all kinds of sinful and immoral acts. They should repent and do good deeds, while fearing and remembering Allah, the Almighty.

They should conduct themselves kindly towards the poor, the neighbors, the orphans, the widows, the wayfarers and other helpless people. They must offer charity and alms and offer their prayers with congregation. They should cry and beseech God in their prayers so as to be saved from this calamity. They should wake up in the small hours of the night and supplicate in their prayers. In short, they should perform all kinds of good deeds and avoid wrongdoing of every description, and should fear God Who, in His wrath, can destroy the whole world in an instant...

Remember, these are extremely perilous times, and the calamity is close at hand! Be virtuous, and perform good deeds. God Almighty is Most Forbearing, but at the same time His wrath is a fire that consumes everything. He does not allow the virtuous to be wasted.

مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِن شَكَرْتُمْ وَآمَنْتُمْ

Why should Allah punish you, if you are thankful and if you believe? —(4:148)

He ended the pamphlet in a few Persian verses which have been translated as follows:

“Fear God, the Independent, the Most Supreme;

I do not imagine that a God-fearing and virtuous person ever comes to harm.

I do not believe that such a person is disgraced,

Who fears the Beloved—the Most Forgiving and Most Overlooking

If my dear friends could also have seen what I see;

They would have renounced the world and shed tears from their eyes.

The shining sun has become dark because of the evil of the people;

The earth is also filled with the plague to warn and to admonish.

If you come to think of it, this calamity is like doomsday;

And to ward it off there is no remedy except recourse to righteousness”

[Majmu‘ah Ishtiharat, vol. 3, pp. 2-7]

The devastation caused by this worldwide epidemic of Covid-19 seems to be worse than that caused by the plague when the Promised Messiah wrote these words. Although the materialist world might mock at what we say, the time is for repentance, righteous deeds and supplications full of great sympathy for mankind. May Allah help us turn to Him and may He avert the evil consequences of this calamity from us and from mankind at large. Ameen.