

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

Today we will continue to remind ourselves of what the Promised Messiah (as) taught us. Speaking about secular learning and the learning of the Holy Quran he said:

“There is a great distinction between the acquisition of worldly knowledge and knowledge of the Holy Qur’an. Righteousness is not needed for the study of grammar, physics, philosophy, astronomy, medicine, etc. It is not necessary that a student of these subjects should observe Salat and the fast and should be mindful of Divine commandments and prohibitions and should subordinate his every action and word to Divine directions. Indeed, it often happens that the seekers of such knowledge become atheistic and are involved in every kind of vice. Today the world presents a remarkable spectacle.

Though the people of Europe and America acquire high proficiency in worldly arts and sciences and daily make new inventions, their moral and spiritual condition is deplorable. We cannot even mention some of the scenes that are witnessed in the parks of London and the hotels of Paris and are published in the daily press.

On the other hand, righteousness is an essential condition for heavenly learning and for acquiring knowledge of the mysteries of the Holy Qur’an. For this purpose, sincere repentance is needed. For the door of Qur’anic knowledge is not opened until a seeker of it carries the burden of Divine commands with perfect humility and meekness and turns to Him humbly, trembling before His glory and His might. Without these he cannot obtain from the Holy Qur’an the means of fostering those qualities and faculties which generate delight and comfort for the soul. The Holy Qur’an is the Book of God and its knowledge is in the hand of God; thus, righteousness is the ladder for the acquisition of such knowledge. Then how can it be possible that the faithless wicked who are evil-minded and are held prisoner by their earthly passions should achieve such knowledge? A Muslim who does not purify his soul is not bestowed knowledge of the Holy Qur’an, however high may be his proficiency in grammar and literary subjects, and however much he might enjoy the esteem of the worldly. At this time the attention of the world is centered upon worldly knowledge and the light of Western learning continues to astonish mankind with new inventions and manufactures. Unfortunately, Muslims also have chosen to follow the West for the purpose of fostering their own welfare and they take pride in copying Europe and America. That is the attitude of Muslims who follow the new light. Those who are known as old fashioned Muslims and deem themselves the guardians of the faith are caught in the niceties of points of grammar and in determining the correct manner of the pronunciation of *Zaalleen*. They pay no attention to the true meaning of the Holy Qur’an, nor are they capable of doing so as they do not address themselves to the purification of their souls. [Malfuzat, vol. I, pp. 425-427]

In this extract, Hazrat Masih Maood (as) wants us to understand that acquiring the knowledge of the Holy Quran and acquiring knowledge of the arts and sciences is not done through the same means. To acquire the knowledge of the Holy Quran, we need to purify our souls whereas worldly knowledge can be acquired through the development of our mental faculties. I recall that I read somewhere and I made a note of it that Hazrat Masih Maood (as) used to pray thus for acquiring the knowledge of the Holy Quran : “ O my Lord this is your word and I can understand it only when you will grant me its knowledge.” In other words, we should seek true understanding of the Holy Quran by striving to purify our own self and by beseeching Allah to impart to us the meanings of His Holy Book. Regularly praying “*Rabbe zidni ilma*”, which means “O my Lord grant me increase in knowledge”, and “*Rabbe habli hukman wa alhiqni bis swaleheen*” will also help us a lot in better understanding the Holy Quran.

He said further:

“The spiritual beauty of man is to walk along all the finer ways of righteousness. They are the attractive features of spiritual beauty. It is obvious that to be mindful of the trusts of God Almighty, and to fulfil all the covenants of faith, and to employ all faculties and limbs both overt, like eyes and ears and hands and feet and others like them, and those that are covert, like the mind and other faculties and qualities, on their proper occasions and to restrain them from coming into action on improper occasions, and to be warned against the subtle attacks of vice and to be mindful of the rights of one’s fellow beings, is the way of perfecting one’s spiritual beauty. God Almighty has in the Holy Qur’an designated righteousness as a raiment. *Libas-ut-taqwa* (the garment of righteousness) is an expression of the Holy Qur’an. This is an indication that spiritual beauty and spiritual ornament are achieved through righteousness. Righteousness means that one must be mindful even of the smallest details of the Divine trusts and covenants and also of all the trusts and covenants of one’s fellow beings, as far as it may be possible. That is, one must try to fulfil, to the best of one’s ability, all the requirements in their minutest details. **[Brahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Part V, Ruhani Khaza’in, vol. 21, pp. 209-210]**

He said further:

“True righteousness and ignorance cannot subsist together. True righteousness is accompanied by a light, as God the Glorious, has said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۗ  
وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

That is, “O ye who believe, if you remain steadfast in righteousness and hold fast to it for the sake of Allah, with firmness and perseverance, He will single you out from among your detractors with marked distinction and will remove from you your sins. That is, you

shall be blessed with a light which will accompany you wherever you go. Allah is and Allah is *Lord* of great bounty”. (HQ 8:30)

In other words, that light would illumine all their actions and words and faculties and senses. Their intellect would be illumined and there would be light in all that they utter. There would be light in their eyes and in their ears and in their tongues and in their speech and in all their movements. The ways along which they walk would be lit up. All their ways, the ways of their faculties and their senses will be filled with light, and they will walk altogether in light. [*A’ina-e-Kamalat-e-Islam, Ruhani Khaza’in*, vol. 5, pp. 177-178]

He also said:

“To become truly righteous, it is necessary that a person abandoning utterly such outstanding vices as adultery, theft, trespass, hypocrisy, self-esteem, scorn of fellow beings, miserliness, should eschew all low morals and should make progress in high moral values. He should behave towards his fellow beings with politeness, courtesy and sympathy and should cultivate true fidelity and sincerity towards God Almighty. He should constantly seek occasions of beneficent service. He who combines all these qualities in himself is alone righteous.

The possession of any one of these qualities would not entitle a person to be accounted righteous unless he possesses collectively all of them. It is only these concerning whom it is said: ‘On them shall come no fear, nor shall they grieve.’—Al-A‘raf,

What more would they need? God Almighty becomes their guardian as it is said: ‘And He protects the righteous.’—Al-A‘raf, 7:197

In another *Hadith* it is stated that God Almighty becomes their hands with which they grasp, and becomes their eyes with which they see, and becomes their ears with which they hear and becomes their feet with which they walk.

In another *Hadith* it is stated that God has proclaimed that he who bears enmity towards a friend of Mine should become ready to contend with Me.

Still another *Hadith* declares that when anyone attacks a friend of God, He pounces upon him with the fierceness with which a tigress pounces upon one who seeks to deprive it of its young. [**Malfuzat, vol. IV, pp. 400-401**]

He said further:

“There are many elements in righteousness. It is righteousness to avoid pride and self-esteem and to refrain from unlawful acquisition and ill manners. A person who displays courtesy and good manners converts his enemies into friends. [*Malfuzat, vol. I, p. 81*]

Blessed is the one who adopts righteousness in a time of success and prosperity and most unfortunate is one who does not turn to righteousness after stumbling. [*Malfuzat, vol. I, p. 157*]

In all the above extracts, Hazrat Masih Maood (as) laid great emphasis on the necessity for each one among us to develop true piety within our own self. It is quite difficult. But with Allah's Help and with sincerity of purpose, Allah will facilitate the way for us. That is why Hazrat Maish Maood (as) taught us that we should pause when we read sura Fatiha and repeat the prayers found in it. Eventually such efforts on our part will pay off and we will take the path and Allah will clothe us with the garment of righteousness.

Explaining to us further about the philosophy of prayer he said:

“We should have recourse to prayer and should seek forgiveness from God Almighty for He is Self-Sufficient and is not subject to anyone's authority. He has no regard for a person who does not come to Him humbly and in submission. If a person goes to another begging or seeking a favour and puts forward his helplessness and poverty, he would be shown some favour, but if a person comes riding a horse and seeks a favour and threatens that if it is not granted he would have recourse to force, he would only be met by force. To seek a favour from God Almighty obstinately, and to make one's faith conditional, is a great mistake and is likely to prove a stumbling block. Perseverance and steadfastness in prayer is one thing, but obstinacy is quite another. To say that if one's purpose is not fulfilled one would deny faith or would say this or that is great foolishness and betrays ignorance of the manner of prayer and amounts to *shirk*. Such people are not aware of the philosophy of prayer. Nowhere does the Holy Qur'an say that God would accept prayer according to the desire of the supplicant. It is true that it is said in the Holy Qur'an: 'Pray unto Me, I will answer your prayer.'—Al-Mu'min 40:61. But it is also part of our faith, as the Holy Qur'an too says: 'And We will try you with something of fear and hunger.'—Al-Baqarah, 2:156

If by virtue of: 'Pray unto Me, I will answer your prayer.'—Al-Mu'min 40:61 God accepts your prayer, then by virtue of: 'We will try you . . .'—Al-Baqarah, 2:156, He enforces His own will. It is the Benevolence and Generosity of God Almighty that He accepts the supplications of His servants; otherwise, it would not be inconsistent with His Godhead and Providence that He should always enforce His will. When He says: 'And We will try you with something of fear....' at that time He desires to enforce His will. There is sometimes fear and sometimes hunger, and sometimes there is decline in wealth, or loss in trade, or poor harvest, or death of children or loss of fruits and harmful results. These are trials from God Almighty. At that time, God desires to display His authority and to enforce His will. At such times a sincere believer accepts the will of God cheerfully and gives it preference and is pleased with it and makes no complaint and thinks no ill. That is why Allah the Exalted says:

“And give glad tidings to the steadfast.”

God does not say that glad tidings should be conveyed to supplicants, but to those who persevere. It is necessary, therefore, that a supplicant should not lose heart if he meets

with failure in his prayers, but should prefer the pleasure of God Almighty with steadfastness and perseverance. The men of God perceive the hopefulness of an enterprise and in that case they supplicate; otherwise, they are content with Divine determination. When they perceive the signs of a calamity, they supplicate, but if they feel that such is Divine determination, they are steadfast, as was the case with the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) on the demise of his children, one of whom was Ibrahim".  
**[Malfuzat, vol. III, pp. 385-386]**

May Allah help each one amongst us to think over these extracts and may we all be motivated to understand and accept Allah's Will under all circumstances. Ameen.