

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

In the last sermon, we ended the reading of the booklet “The Advent of the Promised Messiah” where Hazrat Masih Maood (as) was telling us that we should stick to truth under all circumstances even if it is to our disadvantage. He continued:

“The fact is that those who are punished for speaking the truth are not penalized because they have adhered to honesty; rather, they are punished on account of certain other hidden vices or for having lied at some other occasion. God Almighty knows of countless other sins and vices committed by such people. Their wrongdoings are many and it is on account of one or the other that they are punished.

One of my teachers, Gul Ali Shah resided in Batala and also used to teach Partab Singh, the son of Sher Singh. He states that on one occasion Sher Singh beat his cook severely only on account of using an excess of salt and pepper. Since Gul Ali Shah was a simple person, he protested to Sher Singh that he had ill-treated the cook. Sher Singh replied, ‘Maulvi Ji is unaware that this man has stolen one hundred goats from me.’ Similarly, man indulges in a plethora of evil deeds, but he is caught on a particular occasion and then punished. A person who speaks the truth can never be disgraced for he basks in the protection of God Almighty. There is no fortress or citadel more secure than the protection of God Almighty. Half-hearted effort, however, brings no benefit. Would anyone suggest that when a person is thirsty, to drink one drop would suffice; or in the case of extreme hunger, one gram or morsel would satisfy? On the contrary, until such persons drinks or eats their fill, they will not be satisfied. Similarly, until actions are performed to perfection, they do not yield the fruits or benefits that are expected. Flawed actions neither please Allah Almighty nor can they be blessed. Allah Almighty promises to grant blessings only when deeds are performed according to His will. Therefore, worldly people themselves invent such notions that one cannot live without resorting to falsehood and deception. Some say that such and such person was sentenced to four years for speaking the truth in a lawsuit, but I reiterate that these are all baseless notions arising out of a lack of insight.

“Attain excellence so that you become endeared to the world”

All this is the result of weakness. Perfection does not yield such fruits. Just because a person can mend his own coarse cotton cloak, this does not make them a tailor, and does not guarantee that he will also be able to sew high quality silk clothes. If such clothes are given to such a person, ultimately, he will ruin them. Thus, virtue adulterated with filth is useless and amounts to nothing before God Almighty. But these people take pride in this

and seek salvation through it. If there is sincerity, Allah the Exalted does not allow even an iota of goodness to be lost. He Himself says:

“*Man ya'mal miskaala zarratin khayran yarahou*” meaning “Then whoso does an atom’s weight of good will see it. (99:8)

Therefore, even a grain of goodness will be rewarded by Allah Almighty. Why then is it that even after performing virtue some are not rewarded? This is because their actions lack sincerity. Indeed, sincerity is the prerequisite for deeds. It is stated: “*mukhleseena lahoud deen*” meaning “Being sincere to Him in obedience.” (98 :6)

Such sincerity is to be found in the elect of God. Those who act in this manner become the chosen ones of God and no longer remain of this world. Their every action possesses sincerity and worth. However, the case of worldly people is that even when they give alms, they do so only to seek praise and admiration. If they give charity for a meritorious cause, their only object is to be praised by the newspapers and the public. What relation does such ‘virtue’ have with God Almighty? Many people marry and give a feast to the whole village, but not for the sake of God, only as an expression of vanity and to seek acclaim. Had there not been such ostentation and had this action been performed out of sheer compassion for Allah’s creation, and purely for His sake, these people would have become saints. However, as such actions have no relation or connection with God Almighty, they fail to produce any good and blessed effect.

Know well that God Almighty becomes one with those who become His. God cannot be deceived by anyone. It is utterly foolish and absurd for one to surmise that they can fool God through pretence and deception. Such people only deceive themselves. The allure and love of the world is the root of all vice. Blinded by it, a person loses their humanity and does not realise what they are doing and what they ought to have done. When even a wise person cannot be deceived by another, how can Allah Almighty fall prey to deception? Indeed, it is the love of this world which lies at the root of such evil deeds. In this vein, the cardinal sin, which in this age has led the Muslims to their ruinous state and to which they are a victim, is none other than this same love of the world. Whether sleeping or awake, standing, sitting or walking, in every state, people are gripped by this very worry and distress. They have no concern or regard for the time when they shall be lowered into their graves. If such people feared Allah Almighty and possessed even little concern and grief for religion, they could have benefitted immensely. Sa’di says: “If only the vizier possessed fear of God”.

Those in employment work very actively and diligently even for minor jobs, but as the time for prayer approaches, they recoil at the sight of water that is even somewhat cold. Why is this so? It is because hearts are devoid of the greatness of Allah Almighty. If

people possessed even scant regard for the greatness of God Almighty and were cognizant and certain of death, all their indolence and negligence would flee from them.

Therefore, they should cultivate the greatness of God Almighty within their hearts and forever fear Him. He seizes fiercely. He overlooks and pardons, but when He takes hold of a person, He is firm to the extent that, "*laa yakhafo uqbaaha*" that is to say, He does not care even for those who are left behind by such a one. On the contrary, Allah Almighty honours those and becomes a shield for those who fear Him and cultivate within their hearts His greatness.

It is recorded in the Hadith "*Man kaana lillahi kaanal laho lahou*" , which means, Allah Almighty becomes one with those who become His. It is a pity, however, that many of those who pay heed and wish to gain the nearness of God Almighty seek immediate results. They know not the degree of patience and ambition that is required in matters of religion. It is surprising that they wait years on end for the acquisition of worldly objectives, for which they strive day in and day out, and for which they exert their best efforts. A farmer plants a seed and waits for quite some time, yet when it comes to matters of faith, they would like to be transformed into saints in a heartbeat. On the very first day, they expect to reach the throne of Allah, without undergoing any toil and hardship on this path, and without being subjected to trial. Remember well, this is not the law and practice of God Almighty. Even in religious matters, every form of progress is gradual, and God Almighty cannot be pleased with mere declarations that we are Muslims or believers.

As such He says:

That is, do these people think that Allah the Exalted will be pleased only because they claim to be believers and that they will be left alone, without being put to trial? It is contrary to the practice of Allah to turn someone into a saint in an instant. If this had been God's way, the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would have done the same, and would have instantly turned his devoted companions into saints. He would not have allowed them to be put to trial and thus to have laid down their lives. Moreover, God Almighty would not have said the following about them: "

مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَنْتَظِرُ وَمَا بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلًا

(There are some of them who have fulfilled their vow, and some who still wait, and they have not changed their condition in the least.) (33:24)

Hence, when even worldly gains cannot be secured without hardship and toil, how utterly foolish then is one who considers faith to be easy. It is true that religion is a thing of ease, yet every blessing demands travail. Regardless, Islam is not overly demanding. Observe the Hindus, whose yogis and ascetics go to great lengths— their backs are broken while

others grow out their nails. Likewise, celibacy was practiced by the Christians. Islam does not teach such practices but rather states:

“*Qad aflaha man zakkaha*” (91:10)

Meaning, a person who purifies their soul has attained salvation. In other words, one who abstains for the sake of God Almighty, from every kind of self-invented belief, sin, impiety, and from their base desires; who abandons every form of selfish pleasure, preferring hardships in the way of God; who gives precedence to God Almighty, discarding the world along with its luxuries, is truly one who has attained salvation.” In an additional note in the newspaper Badr reports: **‘One who gives precedence to religion becomes one with God. A person ought to humble their soul, and God Almighty ought to be given precedence over everything. This is the essence of faith. One ought to renounce all forms of evil and only then does a person find God.’** Then the Promised Messiah (as) continued: “Allah says: “*Qad khaba man dassaha*”(HQ 91:11)

One who adulterates his soul and inclines to the earth, is reduced to dust. This single phrase is a summary of all the teachings of the Holy Quran and it expounds the manner in which a person can reach God Almighty. It is a clear and established fact that until man renounces the misuse of his human faculties, he cannot find God. If you desire to escape the filth of this world and attain communion with God Almighty, then renounce these pleasures. For if not:

ہم خدا خواہی وہم دنیائے دوں      ایں خیال است و محال است و جنوں

“You seek God as well as this wretched world; this is wishful thinking, rather impossible, nay insanity”

In actuality, human nature is not inherently evil nor is a thing evil in itself; rather, improper use makes it so. Display, for instance, is not bad in itself. For if one performs an action for the sake of God Almighty alone and so that others are moved to perform that good deed as well, then such an exhibition is also virtuous.

There are two forms of display. Firstly, for the sake of the world. For instance, when a person is leading the congregational prayer, and a high-ranking person joins the congregation, he begins to prolong the prayer in view and consideration of the latter’s presence. On such an instance, some from among the congregation become overwhelmed with awe, and in turn, the person leading the prayer swells with pride. This is also a kind of ostentation, which is not always manifested, except on particular occasions like one who eats bread at a time of hunger, or one who drinks water at a time of thirst. On the contrary, however, one who beautifies his prayer only for the sake of God Almighty is free from ostentation. In fact, this is a means of seeking divine pleasure.

So, display too has its occasions and man is a creature that instinctively abstains from improper action. For instance, a person who considers himself to be truly virtuous and pious is travelling alone and comes across a pouch of jewels. He looks at it and realizes that there is no one around and no one can see him. If on such occasion the person does not fall upon the money, considering it to be the right of another and belonging to someone else, and thus refrains from taking it, not being driven by greed, then such a one has acted with true virtue and piety. Otherwise, if nothing but mere claims exist, his true character will be revealed on such an occasion and he will take the money. Similarly, a person about whom it is believed that they are free from pretensions, will only be proven as such when they do not exhibit ostentation even when an opportunity arises (p. 33-43).

May Allah help each one among us to deepen our understanding of these matters on our own, and may we all succeed in the truest sense of the word by Allah's Grace. Ameen.