

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

As you are all aware, Mauritius was put on lockdown again as from 5th March 2021 due to the appearance of new Covid-19 cases. Around the world, more than 2.5 million people have died due to this pandemic. Although up till now we have fortunately not reached the toll of the Spanish flu of 1918, which is estimated between 30 and 50 million people around the world, these death figures are still a cause for concern. In the very beginning of March 2020, I said that this was a sign from Allah. This week, I came across an article written by the Promised Messiah (as) in the **1902 Review of Religion (Volume 1)** which is as relevant today as it was when he published it almost 119 years ago. He wrote it in connection with the plague which was ravaging India then. Today I will share with you what he wrote. It is as follows:

“Praise be to God and peace be with His chosen ones! My beloved countrymen! May God show His mercy to you here and hereafter. You know that the plague has got a footing in your country and pitched its tents in the very hearts of your cities* Its onslaughts have drawn tears from your eyes and rent your heart-strings* Many among you have had to mourn for the loss of some dear friend, parent, child, kinsman or neighbour who has fallen a victim to its virulent attacks. Know it for certain that in sending this affliction upon you the Wise and Gracious God has tried you and visited you in wrath and vengeance.

The visitations of the Providence are due to **four** causes, and this is an unchangeable law which we witness in the workings of God as far back as the history of man can be traced.

Firstly, the judgment of God overtakes men when they do not walk in the paths of Divine pleasure, transgress the limits of purity and virtue, violate the laws of sanctity, lead their lives in vanity and self-conceitedness being bent solely upon the mean cares of this world without any solicitude for the next, unscrupulously indulge in wickedness and iniquity, transgress the commandments of God and trample them under their feet, commit enormities before His face, and offend Him by open revolt and shameless villainy.

Secondly, the just retribution of God is dealt out to people who are disobedient to Rulers appointed over them by Divine expedience for their material and religious welfare and the guarding of their lives and properties, run riot and set authority at naught, shake off the yoke of obedience, do not assist them in lawful and proper measures, look upon them with distrust, frustrate their plans by opposition and antagonism, disobey and defy their orders like disloyal and faithless, subjects, cut off the connections which God has established, and reject that which Almighty God has brought about by His consummate wisdom.

Thirdly, the wrath of God descends upon the people who reject the Divine Messenger who is raised in the beginning of the century with clear and conclusive arguments in support of his claim, deny his signs on account of their own meanness and narrow-mindedness, injure him, persecute him, abuse him declare him an heretic, mischievously plan his death and falsely and unjustly drag him into law courts.

The **fourth** iniquity which moves the Almighty to send a general calamity upon a people is the total absence of sympathetic and merciful feelings from among them which leaves them like beasts preying upon each other and recognizing no social distinctions.

It should be clearly borne in mind that these are the four causes which bring about devastating plagues, and we pray God that out of His infinite mercy and grace He may protect us and our friends from this devouring evil. But the wise and farseeing only can understand them. Fear God, therefore, and do not approach the evils, which bring havoc and destruction, that you may be saved. I declared it previously but you would not listen to my words, I pointed out the path of safety but you would not walk on it, and I showed you the way but you would not see. It has occurred to me therefore, that I should once more exhort you so that I should not be blamed for neglecting the performance of the duties entrusted to me ..."

"Whoever does not take my words lightly but listens to them as serious advice, shall meet with certain success. Come to the *Judge*, therefore, and repent of your past deeds. Believe what I say to you to be a benefit for yourself; in it lies my happiness and yours. Whoever accepts this advice shall see better days. The Lord shall deliver him from all afflictions and save him out of all his troubles and mend his broken heart. I am certain and my judgment assures me that all these afflictions are due to the sinfulness and transgressions of men, and God has justly sent them upon this generation, as He sent upon those of the past times. Walk in the paths of Divine pleasure and depart from all manner of evil and wickedness, and then shall you be saved from an ignominious death. I fear lest the plague should enter every city and every inhabited corner of the country and swallow up every soul, consume every pasture and dry every spring of water. Do deeds of righteousness and charity and give alms to the poor, and you shall surely be saved from destruction. Throw away the garments of pride and luxury and arise from the drowsiness of sleepers. Say your prayers in company with those who stand and bow in reverence to God. Seek deliverance from the affliction, with perseverance, prayer and charity and God will forgive your iniquities and deliver you from every affliction. Then being freed from every error you shall see the mercy of God. I have spoken to you as the inspired ones of God did speak and ere long you shall know the truth of my words." (**Vol. I. R. R. 1902.**)

This is a clear message and it makes it very clear that we should all turn to Allah and pray for this calamity to go away and at the same time we should resort to charity (*sadaqa*) and care for those who are less fortunate and do our best to relieve them of their

distresses in this time of great distress. Remember well what Allah says in the Holy Quran:

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ ۚ إِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ
الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

And seek help with patience and Prayer; and this indeed is hard except for the humble in spirit,

Who know for certain that they will meet their Lord, and that to Him will they return. (HQ 2:46-7)

Let us all learn these verses and meditate upon them especially when we are faced with difficulties or calamities. May Allah help each one amongst us to develop true patience and to pray in such a way that Allah accepts our prayers. May we also develop within ourselves true humility and rely in what is with Allah rather than what is with us. May we all have no doubt at all that one day we will return to Allah and we will have to account for our deeds.

Speaking about certainty Hazrat Masih Maood (as) said:

“Seekers after truth! Open your ears and listen to the words which I speak that there is no wealth in the world equal to certainty in faith. It is certainty which breaks the shackles of sin. It is certainty that gives you the power of doing deeds of virtue. It is certainty and certainty alone which makes a man a true and sincere lover of God. Can you keep from sin without certainty? Have you the power to overcome the passions of flesh without witnessing a manifestation of certainty? Do you think that your lives can be transformed to purity unaided by the light of certainty? Is it possible for you to attain to true happiness without certainty? Does there exist under heaven any redemption or atonement which can take away your sins? Has the son of Mary the power to release you from the bondage of sin with his supposed blood? Speak not a lie at which the earth might cleave asunder for Jesus himself stood in need of certainty for his own salvation. To whom it was granted and therefore he was saved. Woe to the Christians who deceive the world by saying that they have been purified of their sins by the blood of Jesus; whereas they are soaked in sin from head to foot. They do not know who their God is. They are drunk with wine but the pure intoxication which descends from heaven is not known to them. They do not lead their lives in the service of the Master, and are, therefore, devoid of the spiritual blessings granted to the pure in life. Remember that except by the light of certainty you cannot come out of a life of darkness nor can the holy spirit descend upon you. Blessed are they who have found the wealth of certainty for they shall see God. Blessed are they whose doubts are set at rest for they shall be delivered from sin. Blessed are you when the wealth of certainty is given to you for then you shall cease to. sin. Sin vanishes away where certainty finds an entrance. Can you thrust your hand into a hole in which you see

a poisonous serpent or stand in a place where a volcano is raining stones, or where lightning is failing or which is the haunt of a ferocious lion or where destructive plague prevails? If you have the same certainty about the destructive nature of sin as about the destruction which volcanic matter or a plague works, it is impossible that you should disobey God's commandments and go against His will or break off the connection of sincerity and love with Him.

Ye people that have been invited to virtue and righteousness, know it for certain that the Divine attraction cannot be generated in you nor the impure stain of sin washed off from your faces until your hearts flow with certainty. If you think that your lifeless traditional belief gives you certainty, it is nothing but a delusion. Had you the desired certainty, you would not have been destitute of its consequences. You do not keep back from sin; you do not eschew evil you do not take the forward step that you ought to take and you do not fear God as you ought to fear Him. Where is your certainty then? Do you ever thrust your hand into a hole when you are certain that it has a poisonous snake? Can you take a single morsel of a food which you certainly know to be poisoned? Or can you go inadvertently and unguarded into a jungle which you certainly know to be the abode of man-eaters? How is it then that your hands and your feet, and your eyes, and your ears are bold in the commission of sin, notwithstanding your alleged certainty in relation to God and the reward and punishment of good and evil deeds. Sin cannot overcome certainty. How can you throw yourselves into burning and consuming fire when you see it with your eyes? The citadels of certainty rise high to heaven, and Satan cannot ascend them. If anyone has been purified, it is through certainty that he has found this blessing. Certainty gives the power to meet every hardship, so much so that it makes the monarch throw away the royal scepter and don the garments of a dervish. Certainty lightens the labour and smooths the path. Certainty enables a man to see God....” (R.R Vol 2, 1903).

This is a long extract. We will take it up again another time. May we all think about and act on what the Promised Messiah (as) taught us. May Allah protect us all and the suffering humanity at large. Ameen.