

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

Ramadan is the month where each one among us do our best to manifest greater devotion to Allah. However, as we all know, Ramadan is for a very short period of time. The Holy Quran says “*ayyamam ma’doudaat*” meaning “a fixed number of days”. But as we all are well aware, in the other eleven months we do not just relax and forget about Allah. Muslims do not behave like that. Once a Muslim comes to have an idea why he or she is a Muslim, they feel the full weight of their tremendous responsibilities and they often turn to Allah to solicit Him to help them carry out their responsibilities. Throughout their life, they are engaged specially in the daily prayers to seek Allah’s Help so that they might succeed in their mission of being a Muslim. So, even after the month of Ramadan, our struggle to be a good Muslim should not stop. We continue our efforts in improving ourselves because we are aware that progress in spirituality never ends. It is with this spirit that we have moved out of the month of Ramadan and we are continuing our return journey to Allah. May Allah help each one among us to understand better and to do better throughout our life. Ameen.

Now, I will share with you some very interesting extracts from the writings of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) which will motivate us to go in the right direction in our attempts to conform to the teachings of Allah. Let us hope we can all benefit from it.

“In 1908, during an early morning stroll, the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said while advising his companions: ‘With some people it is in one ear and out of the other. They do not take these matters to heart no matter how much advice is given there is no effect on them. Remember that God is Independent and Besought of all. Unless prayer is made repeatedly and with profusion and tenderness of heart, He does not care...unless there is genuine angst in *dua*, it is ineffective and futile. Angst is conditional for acceptance of prayer. As it is stated: **‘Or, Who answers the distressed person when he calls upon Him, and removes the evil...’**” (27:63)

In an assembly in Lahore where non-Ahmadis were also present, the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) delivered a long address on *dua*, during which he said: “The true significance of Islam is that man makes his own preference secondary to the preference of God. However, the truth is that this station cannot be attained by one’s own power. Although there is no doubt that it is man’s obligation to make endeavours for this. The true and real source to attain this station is *dua*. Man is weak, unless he attains strength and help through *dua*, he cannot traverse this difficult route. God Himself has stated regarding man’s weakness and infirmity: **‘... for man has been created weak.’** (4:29). Thus, in spite of such weakness, it is vain imagination to claim attaining such an elevated station through one’s own strength. For this, there is a great need of *dua*;

dua has tremendous power which solves great difficulties and man traverses challenging paths with extreme ease. *Dua* is a channel which absorbs that power and beneficence which comes from God. One who engages in prayers with profusion, ultimately attracts this beneficence... Indeed, prayer on its own is not God's will. Rather, first all efforts and endeavours should be brought in action and then prayer made. To not avail of planning and only avail of prayer is ignorance of the etiquette of *dua* and is challenging God. And to only rely on planning and to consider *dua* nothing is atheism/non-belief...*Dua* is a great treasure. No calamity will befall one who does not abandon *dua*."

In August 1904, the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said in Lahore: "There are many who pay lip service to God's existence but if they are probed it is discovered that they are atheistic. Because when they are occupied in worldly matters, they completely forget God's wrath and His greatness. This is why it is very important that you should seek spiritual knowledge from God through *dua*. Without this one's faith can never be complete. It will be attained with the knowledge that there is death in separation from God. While praying to avoid sin do not let go of planning [in this regard]. Abandon all those gatherings and assemblies that instigate sin and pray alongside."

In January 1908, the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that *dua* is of two kinds. One that is made in an ordinary way and the other that it is taken to its extreme. The latter is the real *dua*. One should pray even if no troubles are faced because one does not know what God's will is and what the future holds. Thus, prayer should be made in advance so that one is saved in time. Sometimes adversity falls in a way that one does not even find any time for *dua*. At such difficult junctures, prayer that is made beforehand is of avail.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said *dua* is like a spring of delicious water and a believer can satiate himself on it whenever he wishes. Just as fish cannot survive without water, similarly *dua* is like water for a believer without which he cannot live. The most appropriate occasion of such *dua* is Salat in which a believer finds rapture and delight. The main outcome of *dua* is Divine nearness. When a believer's *dua* attains perfect sincerity and deep devotedness, then God has mercy and becomes his or her Friend.

In one of his assemblies, the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that the enemy only objects to us because of his enmity. They foolishly assert that he [the Promised Messiah] sits in one place and does not perform his work. They do not realise that it is not stated about the Messiah that he will raise a sword or will fight. Rather, it is stated that through his 'blowing' the disbelievers will die, that is, he will do all his work through *dua*. He said if he knew that his going out and about would help, he would not stay in one place even for one moment. He said he knew all his objectives were to be realized through *dua* and *dua* has great potency.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that God repeatedly informed him through revelations that whatever will be accomplished will be through *dua*. He said *dua* was the only weapon he had. He said whatever he asked privately, God made it evident. He said if fighting was destined for him, God would have provided all the arrangements. Pious is one who understands how God now wills faith to progress.

“Some people achieve such degree of perfection that Salat becomes a kind of food for them [...] without which they feel severe anguish and restlessness. However, Salat gives them a special joy and comfort. A righteous believer gets pleasure in Salat. Therefore, Salat should be performed in a decent and orderly manner. Salat is the basis and ladder for all spiritual advancements. That is why it is said that Salat is a believer’s pinnacle (*mi’raj*).” (Malfuzat Vol. 4 p 605)

“A complete and unfailing recipe to overcome difficulties and hardships that has been tested by millions of righteous persons does exist. What is that? It is the recipe called Salat.” (Malfuzat Vol. 9 p 20)

“Salat, in fact, is supplication. Each and every word that one utters during Salat aims at supplication. One, who is not attached to Salat, should prepare to face torment. One who does not supplicate brings himself to ruin. A sovereign is announcing repeatedly, ‘I relieve the distressed of their troubles; I resolve their problems; I am very merciful; I help the destitute’. However, a person who is in trouble passes by him, does not pay attention to his announcement, neither does he mention his problem to him to seek his help will ruin himself. That is how God is. He is prepared to provide comfort to man all the time only if one pleads for it. For acceptance of prayer, it is essential that one avoids disobedience and supplicates enthusiastically, because fire is produced only when a flint strikes against another one forcefully”. (Malfuzat Vol. 4 p 54)

Throughout our lives, we should live as good Muslims who take great care to offer their daily salat with great care. That is, we should do our best to pray on time as far as possible although this time might vary. We should do our best to pray together. Where men can join a congregation at the mosque it is their duty to do so. If this is not possible, at least one should do the Fajr and Esha prayers in the mosque. Where people cannot join prayers in a mosque, they should do their best to pray in congregation at home. If we are trying to develop true Islamic spirit within ourselves, praying together will greatly help. So, let us all take a firm resolution after this great month of Ramadan that we will try as best as we can to pray as many prayers as possible in congregation either at home or in the mosque and try our best to reap all the benefits that are attached to our Salat. May Allah help all of us to do so. Amee.

In the end I would like to call upon all our brothers and sisters to remember our fellow Muslim brothers and sisters who are bearing the brunt of Israel's and America's fury in Gaza. During the past 72 years, since the creation of Israel in 1948, episodic mass

elimination of Palestinians has been going on. There is nothing new in this situation, as tragic as it might be. But the Palestinians know what is at stake and they are ready to be sacrificed and they take pride in this martyrdom. Britain took possession of Palestine from the Turks in 1917 during World War 1 and slowly they allowed mass immigration of Jews fleeing Europe into the territory despite the protests of the Muslims. Eventually, the Jews took a large portion of Palestinian land and they forced thousands of Palestinians out of their land. This is a long tragic story that is continuing in our time and there does not seem to be any solution in sight.

But this does not mean that as Muslims living far away from them, we should cross our hands and wait and keep on commiserating with the Palestinians from time to time when violence flares up. Even if we cannot participate in this jihad physically, we should at least pray for them with great fervour and be convinced that “*Innallaha ala nasrehim la qadir*” meaning “Surely Allah has the Power to help them”. So, I urge you all to add the following prayers for our brothers and sisters in Palestine to your list of prayers :

1. *Yaa Arhamour rahemeen far’rij annil mouslemeen fil Falistine* – O You who are Most Merciful of those who show Mercy solve the problems of the Muslims in Palestine. (repeat a few times with anguish in the heart)
2. *Allahoumma Asleh man fi salaakehi salahan lil Islam e wal mouslemeen* – O Allah reform that one in whose reformation there is good for Islam and the Muslims.
3. *Allahoumma ahlik man fi halaakehi salahan lil islam e wal mouslemeen* – O Allah destroy that one in whose destruction there is good for Islam and the Muslims.

In the early years of the twenty-first century, there was a prime minister of the Jews who was killing innocent Palestinians. Some people prayed against him and he was crippled and he stayed in that situation for about ten years before he eventually died.

If one reads history books written by westerners, one will know that throughout history Jews have been better treated under Muslim govern compared to Christian ones. Muslim governments have not persecuted the Jews because they are protected under the commandments of the Holy Quran. Anyhow, this is a long history - we will talk about it some other time. For the time being, help the Palestinian people by offering these prayers. May Allah accept them. Ameen.