

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

Today, we will share a few extracts from the Malfuzaat of Hazrat Masih Maood (as). These are not scholarly writings. Ideas are explained in simple words so that simple people might easily understand. Let us hope that each one amongst us will do our best to understand these words and do our best to live by them in our daily life. Incha Allah.

“People desire progress, but they do not appreciate how progress is achieved. Worldly people assume that progress is achieved by emulating Europe. But I say that progress is achieved always through truthfulness. God has put before us a model of such achievement, namely, the example of the Holy Prophet (saw) and his companions. There will be progress now in exactly the same manner as progress was achieved before and it is a perfectly true statement to say that the progress achieved earlier (at the time of the Holy Prophet (saw) and his companions) was achieved through truthfulness. They put themselves under the yoke of winning God’s pleasure and brought themselves under the code of obedience to God Almighty. Any progress achieved now will have to follow exactly the same pattern.

Sayyed Ahmad Khan (a scholarly leader) always repeated the nationalistic slogan. However, one is sorry to note that he could not bring about the reform even of his own son. This makes it clear that to make a claim is one thing and to prove the truth of that claim is quite another. The fact of the matter is exactly that which has been taught by the Holy Qur’an. Until such time as Muslims fully practice the teachings of the Holy Qur’an, they cannot achieve any kind of progress. They move away from the Holy Qur’an, so by the same token, they are removed from the paths of progress. It is practice of the [teachings of] the Holy Qur’an that is the source of progress and guidance. God has not forbidden trade, farming and other legitimate pursuits of livelihood. Such things should not, however, be turned into ultimate aims. On the contrary, they should be considered as an aid in the service of one’s faith. One of the purposes of Zakat, for instance, is that a portion of wealth should be used in the service of religion. Remember this well that the real means of achieving progress is to be aware that until a nation takes some steps for the sake of God, until its people (take measures to) purify their hearts, its progress is not possible.

It is a misguided idea that it is only by learning to read English, by cladding oneself in English dress and by indulging in alcohol and other immoral acts of behaviour that any advancement can be made. On the contrary, this is the road to destruction. Did the people of Prophet Noah’s (as) time not have a standard of living that allowed much

comfort and indulgence? Similarly, at the time of Prophet Lot (as) people generally enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle. In our own time, there exist many means of earning a livelihood among which is the profession that uses language (as its main tool of trade). However, the language that is the language of God has been made the key to all knowledge and profound understanding. When a people leave aside all prejudice and carefully consider the word of the Holy Qur'an and engage in prayer rather than indulging in shallow objections, there will then be progress.

People who shout the slogans of 'national progress' amaze me and I wonder if they have forgotten that one day, they have to meet their end – yet they give precedence to a life that is transient. They wish that they too should become wealthy and great like Europe. I do not stop them from making some efforts to a degree [in that regard], but excess is contemptible. It is an unfortunate state of affairs that the people who want progress consider every type of immoral act to be legitimate, even acts such as adultery, as the European way of life is showing. If this is progress, what then is destruction? You should, therefore, purify your intentions and try to please God. Engage constantly in prayer and pray for the spread of the message of your religion. After that, it is not forbidden to make use of the God given capabilities in the pursuit of one's livelihood, be it farming, employment or trade. Do not, however, put all your heart into your profession or your trade by turning it into something to be pursued for its own sake. On the contrary, you should try to distance your heart from it, considering it to be a trial and keep praying to God Almighty that He may bring upon you a time when you may have freedom [from such worldly pursuits] for the remembrance of God. This is my purpose and this is my teaching. If someone wishes to oppose it or make fun of it, it is up to him. This is the truth [regardless of what people's reactions may be]. Those who consider themselves to be 'free-thinkers' deride these ideas and consider those who propose such views as immature people who are trying to take them back 1300 years. However, those who are of a righteous nature and who remember death, can decide for themselves as to which of the two is on the path of truth.

Moreover, I see that these people [of modern day thinking] say what they say only so far as they enjoy good health. As soon as they go through some trial or suffering, they soon come to their senses. The 'Naturalist', for instance, displays strength of belief in relation to the level of worldly and material comforts enjoyed by him. His belief weakens as soon as he is faced with some trial. He who holds a high position, enjoys worldly greatness and sees his honour as being something worldly to be granted by the people, how can such a one understand what religion is?" [Malfuzaat Vol. 8, pp.29-31]

“It is commonly accepted that a person who has no relevant knowledge on a subject has no right to give an opinion. To give one’s opinion on a subject, it is essential that one possess relevant knowledge. If a person who is ignorant of a particular subject, starts to give his opinion, would he not be considered foolish? Of course, he would be. Moreover, other more intelligent people would put him to shame by pointing out his ignorance of the subject. The same is the case of those who state that God does not exist. What right have they to give such an opinion when they have no knowledge about this matter and they have never made any effort in search of God. The people who have the right to an opinion in this matter are those who might have set upon a path in search of God but who [for the sake of argument] may have been unsuccessful in finding Him. It is such people who would have the right to say that there is no God. However, when a person has not undertaken a search and has not made any effort to seek God, he has no right to deny God’s existence. God does exist and He is a being such that the more one believes in Him, the greater is the power that is granted to the believer. God’s being is hidden and deeply concealed, yet it gradually manifests itself to the believer who strives in God’s path and he is eventually able to ‘see’ God clearly. The power of faith is such that it increases by the day. This is the one thing that should be sought by the world. The world, however, has become largely bereft of such powers.

Islam was the religion that had come [to grant] such powers of faith but it is now itself in a weak position and the Muslims generally feel that they are weak. If this is not the case, then what is the reason for all the meetings and conferences that take place daily and for the new groups that are formed who claim to be working to assist and support Islam. It is with much regret that I note that in these meetings slogans are raised for ‘our nation’ and calls are made for ‘national progress’ but the question is that previously when ‘the nation’ was formed, was it formed by following Europe? Was progress in the past achieved by following in the footsteps of the Western nations?

If it can be proven that the previous period of progress and success [in the world of Islam] was achieved in this way, then it would, indeed be a sin not to follow in the footsteps of Europe. However, should it be the case that it is not proven, and it will never be proven to be so, then it is an extreme injustice to abandon the principles of Islam and to abandon the Qur’an.

It was the Holy Qur’an that transformed the unruly people [of Arabia] by turning them, first, into human beings and then turned those human beings into godly human beings. Do they propose to abandon all this in order to follow a nation that worships the material world? Those who wish to see improvement in the condition of Islam while desiring a life that faces towards the West, can never succeed. Only those will succeed

who follow the Holy Qur'an. Success without the Qur'an is an impossible and difficult task and the thought of achieving such success is just wishful thinking.

One should keep before one the example of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (saw) and see how they followed the Holy Prophet (saw) and how they kept their religion paramount, above all else. Consequently, all the promises that God had made to them were fulfilled. In the beginning, opponents mocked and taunted them that they were not even able to walk about in the land freely, yet they claim they will one day become its rulers. They, h o w e v e r, lost themselves in obedience to the Holy Prophet (saw) and they attained that which for centuries had not been theirs. They loved the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet (saw) and they would strive day and night in obedience to both. They did not follow those whom they called 'non-believers', not even in customary traditions. As long as Islam remained in this state, it enjoyed a period of great progress and glorious success and its secret is [contained in this Persian verse]: **When one has God What need is there for worry.**

The key to the victories and successes of Muslims was the strength of their faith. Large numbers confronted Salahuddin, yet no one could gain victory over him and his motive was to serve Islam. This situation [in Islam] persisted for a long period. God's wrath began to fall upon them when Kings began to indulge in corrupt practices and gradually there was a steep decline, the final outcome of which can now be observed all around us. However, I disagree with the diagnosis that is being proposed of the 'ailment' [by the self-professed supporters of Islam]. In my view the cure recommended for such a diagnosis would prove harmful and dangerous. Until the Muslims turn to the Holy Qur'an and until there develops in them belief and faith, their situation will not improve. Respect and an upturn in their fortunes will come from the same direction as was the case before." These extracts have been taken from the Review of religions of September 2001 under the title *The path to success*.

May Allah help us all to understand and to do our best to practice what we know. Ameen.