

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

These days, we are talking about the steps in the development of the soul as explained by Hazrat Masih Maood (as) in his book Baraheen Ahmadiyya (Volume 5) where he comments on the first verses of Sura Al Moumenoune (ch. 23) of the Holy Quran. We will continue where we left off last time. Hazrat Masih Maood (as) writes:

“Having explained how the first stage of the spiritual self has complete affinity with the first stage of the physical self, it is now necessary to explain how the second stage of the spiritual self, too, has an affinity with the second stage of the physical self. To elaborate, as I have already stated, the second stage of spiritual development has been outlined in this noble verse [of the Holy Quran]; that is:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

Meaning that: Believers are those who shun all that is vain. They do not indulge in vain conversations, activities, or actions and keep away from vain assemblies, companions, and relationships. In parallel with this is the second stage of the physical self which God has described in His Noble Word as عَلَقَةٌ [‘*alaqah*—‘clot’]. As He says:

ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا نُطْفَةً عَلَقَةً

Meaning that: Then We fashioned the sperm into an عَلَقَةٌ [‘*alaqah*—clot]. That is, We saved it from being lost in vain and turned it into an [‘*alaqah*—clot] through the connection and influence of the رَحِمٌ [‘*rihm*—womb]. Prior to this, it was in a perilous state and it could not be said whether it would develop into a human being or would go to waste. But after establishing a connection with the رَحِمٌ [‘*rihm*—womb], it was saved from going to waste and a change came over it that did not exist before; that is, it took on the form of an عَلَقَةٌ [‘*alaqah*—clot] of blood and became thicker. And a connection with the رَحِمٌ [‘*rihm*—womb] developed, and thus it came to be named عَلَقَةٌ [‘*alaqah*—‘clot’], and the woman became eligible to be called pregnant. And by virtue of this connection, the رَحِمٌ [‘*rihm*—womb] became its guardian and the sperm began to grow and flourish under its care.

However, at this stage, the sperm has not acquired much of purity. It merely turned into an عَلَقَةٌ [‘*alaqah*—clot] of blood that was saved from going to waste on account of being linked to the رَحِمٌ [‘*rihm*—womb]. And as it would otherwise have spread and spilled out in an unseemly manner and desecrated one’s clothes, now, on account of its link, it has been saved from being wasted. But it is still only an عَلَقَةٌ [‘*alaqah*—clot] of blood and

not free from contamination of subtle impurities. Had it not become linked to the رحم [rihm—womb], it was likely that it would not have been able to stay therein, even if it had entered the woman's body, and would have just flowed out. But the power of the رحم [rihm—womb] held on to it and turned it into something like a clot of blood. And then, as I have said, it came to be called عَلَقَة ['alaqah— 'clot'] on account of that link—a link that had hitherto been missing. It is this that saved it from being wasted, and it is on this account that the fluid shed its watery form and became somewhat thicker.

Corresponding to this عَلَقَة ['alaqah—clot], which is the second stage of the physical being, is the second stage of the spiritual being which I have mentioned above and of which is indicated by the following Quranic verse:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

Meaning that, the emancipated believers are those people who shun vain actions, vain talk, vain behaviour, vain assemblies, vain company, vain relationships, and vain passions, and their faith rises to a level that it becomes easy for them to achieve that much. For, on account of the strengthening of their faith they do establish a certain link with the Merciful God, in the same way as the sperm, when it turns into an عَلَقَة ['alaqah—clot], becomes linked to the رحم [rihm—womb] and is saved from spilling out in vain or being wasted; otherwise, إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ [except as God wills].

Thus, in this second stage of the spiritual being, the relationship with the Gracious God is exactly similar to the relationship which the عَلَقَة ['alaqah—clot] has with the رحم [rihm—womb] in the second stage of the physical being. And just as before the advent of the second stage of the spiritual being it is not possible to become free of frivolous relationships and activities, and more often than not the first stage of the spiritual being—that of fervour and supplication—goes to waste and has an inauspicious end, so is the case with the sperm, which is the first stage of the physical being.

Before it becomes an عَلَقَة ['alaqah—clot], there is every chance that it will go to waste. But when it is willed by God that it should be saved from being unduly wasted, then by His command the same sperm turns into an عَلَقَة ['alaqah—clot]. This, then, is deemed as the second stage of the physical being.

So, the second stage of the spiritual being is when one shuns all frivolous acts, deeds, talk, relationships, and passions. And this stage too is only attained when one has established a link with the Merciful God, for it is this relationship that has the potential and force to break it free from the other relationship and save it from being wasted. Even if a person experiences fervour and devotion in one's Prayers—which is the first stage of the spiritual being—this state is unable to keep him from indulging in frivolous

talk, acts, and deeds, and cannot restrain his frivolous passions until one develops the link with God as in the second stage of the spiritual being.....

So, when God Almighty says:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

it means that the believers are only those who wean themselves away from vain relationships—and weaning away from vain relationships is a requisite for the relationship with God.”

In a footnote, Hazrat Masih Maood says the following at this point:

“The reason why weaning away from vain relationships leads to a relationship with God Almighty is that in these same verses God Almighty has used the word أَفْلَحَ [aflaha—‘succeeded’] to promise that whoever does something in order to seek God will find God to the extent of his labour and striving and to that extent will have a relationship with Him. So whoever shuns vain deeds for the sake of a relationship with Him is able to enjoy that bit of relationship with God as promised in the word أَفْلَحَ [aflaha—‘succeeded’]. This is because what he has done is nothing very heavy, he has merely cut off the light connection he had with that frivolous deed. Bear in mind that since the word أَفْلَحَ [aflaha—succeeded] is found in the first verse which is:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ

[Surely, success does come to the believers, who are humble in their Prayers (*Surah al-Mu'minun*, 23:2–3).] the same word is associated by way of a promise with all the subsequent verses.

Thus, the verses:] *Surah al-Mu'minun*, — وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

That is, ‘those who turn away from that which is vain’ means, ‘Verily, believers have succeeded who turn away from that which is vain.’ At each stage of development of faith, the word افلاح [Iflah—‘success’] has a distinctive meaning, holding out the promise of a special relation with God.

Then he proceeds:

“In other words, weaning one’s heart away from frivolous activities amounts to attaching one’s heart to God, because man has been created for eternal worship, and the love of God is by nature imbued in his heart. This is why his soul has an eternal relationship with God, as is evident from the verse:

أَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ

This is part of verse 173 of Chapter 7 of the Holy Quran and its translation is ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They say, ‘Yes, we do bear witness’ (*Surah al-A‘raf*, 7:173).

The relationship that man establishes with God Almighty by coming under the shade of Mercifulness (*Rahimiyyat*) through the medium of worship—the first stage of which is that, having attained faith in God, he should shun every vain conversation, vain deed, vain company, vain relationship, and vain passion—amounts simply to bringing that same eternal relationship from a potential into the realm of actuality. It is not something new.

And as I have already stated, the first stage of man’s spiritual being— which is to attain to the state of humility, fervour, and anguish in one’s worship and remembrance of God—this stage amounts in itself merely to that of general application. In other words, the anguished self does not necessarily shun the frivolous or show higher moral values or civilized traits. Rather, it is quite possible that the heart of the person who assumes humility and cries and supplicates in Prayer, so much so that it even affects other people, may not be free from frivolous things, deeds, actions, companionship, relationships, and passions; that is, he may not have attained emancipation from sin.

The reason is that the occasional experience of inner anguish, or feeling of pleasure and concentration in Prayer is one thing, and the purity of the self is something altogether different. Even when the supplication, humility, and crying of a seeker is free from the contamination of innovative practices and idolatry, still the person who has not yet reached the second stage of the spiritual self is only searching for the spiritual goal, wandering on the way which is yet beset at every step with many a desert, wilderness, thorny bush, mountain, great tempestuous ocean, and wild animal—all enemies of faith and spiritual life— unless he has attained the second stage of spiritual development.

Bear in mind that the states of humility, meekness, and submission do not at all necessitate a true relationship with God, for often times even mischievous people become humble upon witnessing a manifestation of the wrath of God, while in fact they have no relationship with God whatsoever, nor are they free of vain pursuits. For example, the earthquake that struck on 4th April 1905 caused hundreds of thousands of hearts to become so humbled and overawed that they did nothing but cry and beseech God, so much so that even the atheists forgot their atheism. But as the time passed and the shocks ceased, their humbleness also disappeared so much so that I heard that some atheists, who had—at that moment—believed in God, brazenly and shamelessly declared that they had been mistaken and overawed by the earthquake, but that otherwise there was no God.

In short, as I have written several times earlier, the state of humility and awe can be accompanied by much impurity. Of course, this state is like a seed for future excellences, but to consider this state to be perfection in itself amounts to self-deception, because there is a stage after this that a believer should seek and must not rest content or become lax until he has attained it.” (*Barahin Ahmadiyya* p.275-281)

Incha Allah we will read more next week.