

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

This week, we resume with what Hazrat Masih Maood (as) said about the sixth stage of spiritual development:

“Such a believer begins to show signs and characteristics of Divinity, just as the iron rod at this stage exhibits the qualities and effects of fire. But this does not mean that the believer has become God. The fact is that love of Allah has the quality of transforming the outward human self into its own form, while inwardly there still remains the inherent human frailty. At this stage, for the believer, God is the bread upon which depends his life, and God also becomes the water by drinking which he can save himself from death, and God is also for him the cool breeze that brings solace to his heart.

Hence, it would not be improper to say, by way of metaphor, that God at this stage enters into the believer and penetrates into his every fiber, making his heart into His throne. So the believer does not see by his own spirit but rather he sees by the Spirit of God, and it is by His Spirit that he hears and speaks and attacks his enemies. This is so because he is at this stage at the station of self-annihilation and destruction of his own being, and the Spirit of God manifests itself upon him with His personal love and grants him a second life. This is the moment that he becomes the spiritual embodiment of the verse:

ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ ۖ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

This then is the sixth stage of the spiritual being that I have described above. Corresponding to this is the sixth stage of the physical being, and it is described by the same verse cited above with reference to the spiritual being:

ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ ۖ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

Then We developed it into another creation. So, blessed be Allah, the Best of creators (*Surah al-Mu'minun*, 23:15).

It means: ‘Having created him once, We developed man into another creation.’ The word ‘another’ is meant to convey that this birth is so unfathomable as to be beyond the confines of human intelligence and very far from his understanding. In other words, the spirit that is infused into the body after its completion, both in a spiritual and physical sense, is so profound that all the philosophers and materialists are left to wonder about its nature. When they could not find their way to the reality, they started speculating. Some went so far as to deny the existence of the soul altogether, while others declared it

to be eternal and uncreated. What Allah the Exalted says here is that the ‘spirit’ is also a creation of God, but it is beyond worldly comprehension and just as the philosophers of this world are unaware of the spirit that is bestowed by God upon the physical human form at the sixth stage of its being, so are they devoid of the knowledge of the spirit that the true believer is granted at the sixth stage of his spiritual being and they have adopted varying creeds in this regard as well. Many started to worship the people who had been bestowed this spirit and declared them to be eternal and uncreated and deified them. And many denied the very existence of people who reach this stage, and refused to believe that man is even granted such a spirit.

But an intelligent person will readily understand that as man is the best of creation, and as God has—by granting him eminence over all birds and beasts of the earth, and by bestowing upon him mastery over all of them, and by having granted him intelligence and understanding, and having infused him with a thirst for gaining His cognizance—shown that man was created for the purpose of loving God. Why then should it be denied that having reached the stage of personal love with God Almighty, he should also progress to such a stage that God’s love falling upon his love in the form of a Spirit should remove all his weaknesses? As regards the sixth stage of the spiritual being, Allah the Exalted has said:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

And who are strict in the observance of their Prayers (*Surah al-Mu’minun*). Accordingly, man should demonstrate eternal obedience and earnest supplication and servitude so that in this way he may fulfil the purpose of his creation, as Allah the Exalted says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

Meaning: ‘I have created men and the jinn for the very purpose of worship.’

Of course, such worship and constant presence before the Lord of Honour is not possible without personal love for Him. And by love here is not meant a one-sided affair; rather, what is meant is both the love of the Creator and the love of creation so that the fire of lightning that falls upon the man who is ready to die and which also emanates from within such a man at such a time, should burn all human weaknesses, and joining together, they should take control of his whole spiritual being.

This is that perfect way in which man can, completely and at each and every appropriate occasion, fulfil his trusts and pledges that I have outlined while describing the fifth stage of the spiritual being. The only difference is that while at the fifth stage man fulfils his obligations and pledges to God and His creatures out of *taqwa* [righteousness], at this stage he does so on account of the personal love that he has now developed for God, and

which has also evoked in him the love of the creatures of God. Such people fulfil all their obligations naturally and in the most becoming manner due to the Spirit that God has bestowed upon them.

They are thus granted spiritual beauty—which is akin to man’s physical beauty—to a greater extent, because at the fifth stage the Spirit which is born out of personal love for God has not yet entered man, and so the beauty is not manifested to the fullest extent. But once the Spirit has entered the being, the beauty reaches its climax. It goes without saying that the splendour of beauty manifested by a dead body cannot equal that manifested by a handsome living being.

As I have already stated, man possesses two-fold beauty: One, the beauty of conduct; that is to say, that a man in the discharge of all the trusts and covenants of God should be careful not to overlook anything connected with them, as suggested by the expression رَاغُونَ [ra‘un—‘watchful’] in the Holy Quran. It is equally important that man remain vigilant about fulfilling his trusts and pledges to God’s creatures. In short, he should abide by *taqwa* in fulfilling his obligations to God and His creatures.

This is the beauty of conduct or spiritual beauty which becomes apparent at the fifth stage of the spiritual being but does not yet show its full brilliance, whereas at the sixth stage when the birth has been perfected with the infusion of the Spirit, this beauty manifests itself in all its splendour and glory. And it should be remembered that in the sixth stage of the spiritual being, the Spirit refers to God’s personal love which descends like a flame upon man’s personal love for Him, and drives away all inner darkness, and grants spiritual life, and is necessarily accompanied by all-encompassing help from the Holy Spirit also.

The second kind of beauty that attends man’s creation is physical beauty. Although both kinds of beauty begin to manifest themselves at the fifth stage of the spiritual and physical being, their true splendour and glory is only manifested after the advent of the Spirit. In the same way, as the soul enters the physical body after it has been perfected, so does the Spirit enter the spiritual being after it has been perfected; that is to say, when man takes upon himself the yoke of the Shariah and is prepared to abide by all the divine restrictions and prohibitions with effort and striving. Through practicing the norms of the Shariah and abiding by the injunctions of the Book of Allah, he becomes worthy that the Spirit of God should attend to him. But above all is the fact that through his personal love for God he becomes eligible for Almighty God’s personal love, which is white as snow and sweet as honey. As I have already stated, the spiritual being starts with the state of humbleness, and reaches its perfection at the sixth stage of spiritual development; that is, at the stage when the spiritual body having attained perfection, the

flame of the personal love of God falls like a Spirit on man's heart imparting to him a perpetual consciousness of the Divine Presence. It is then that the spiritual beauty shows its fullest manifestation, but this beauty which is spiritual—which may be called the beauty of conduct—is the beauty which, by virtue of its strong powers of attraction, is far greater than the physical beauty of a person.

The physical beauty of a person may excite the ephemeral love of, say, one or two persons, and will soon decline; its attraction being extremely weak. But the spiritual beauty which has been called the beauty of conduct is so strong and powerful in its attraction that it draws an entire world to itself—and every particle of heaven and earth is drawn towards it. This is also, in reality, the philosophy behind the acceptance of prayers; that is to say, when a man possessed of such spiritual beauty, into whom the spirit of the love of God has entered, prays for some impossible or extremely difficult matter, and exerts himself so completely in that prayer, then, as his being is equipped with spiritual beauty, so, by God's permission and by His command, every particle of the universe, is drawn towards him, and there come into being such means as are sufficient to ensure his success.

Experience and the Holy Book of God Almighty confirm that every single particle of the world has a natural relation of deep love with such a person, and his prayers draw all those particles towards him, as a magnet draws a piece of iron to itself. So it is that extraordinary phenomena—that find no mention in science or philosophy—come about as a consequence of this attraction. And this attraction is natural and inherent.

Ever since the All-Powerful Creator designed the material world with particles, He has placed in each particle this attraction, and every particle is a true lover of spiritual beauty as is every blessed soul. This is so because it is through spiritual beauty that the manifestation of God takes place. It was regarding the same spiritual beauty that God said:

اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ

‘Submit to Adam,’ and they *all* submitted except Iblis (2:35)

And even today there is many an Iblis that does not recognize this spiritual beauty, but it continues to perform great feats.”

So, from what we have read so far, a man or a woman goes through six spiritual stages as have been discussed in the first verses of *Sura Al Mo'menoune* and as we have been explaining in our previous sermons. The main characteristic of the last stage is that the person cannot live without giving proper respect to his/her prayers. At this stage, his prayers, so to say, are his spiritual nourishment. The more he looks after it, the closer

he/she becomes to Allah. And here, his/her progress will further develop in greater knowledge and love for Allah.

May Allah help each one amongst us to strive and to reach this sixth stage of spiritual development in our lifetime incha Allah. Ameen.