

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

We will continue from where we left off last week from the Arabic booklet *Sirat Abdaal* by Hazrat Masih Maood (as). He says:

“Among their signs is that they are raised at a time when utter darkness prevails—trees bearing scanty fruit and becoming like dry firewood—and in an era when people fall into a deep slumber and their faith becomes like a leafless branch of a palm tree. Such is the age that feeds worthless food to its children and fails to take responsibility for the hungry; it keeps the people mired in misguidance so that the buffaloes of their own selves eat away the verdure of good deeds.

Moreover, they are not ill-tempered like the ignoble; rather, they suppress their anger and forgive the ignorant who hurt them. Nonetheless, they are so brave that they never surrender to extreme oppression, even when they are unarmed in the battlefield. They fear their Lord and persevere in righteousness. Should a temptation from Satan cross their mind, they seek forgiveness. Thus, cravings that assail like mobs are defeated, and peace descends upon them, and Satan the accursed flees away.

Among their signs is that they recognize the liars and naked hypocrites who resemble chameleons. You will find them sound in judgement and brave like lions in all their affairs, albeit they never prey upon people. You will find their hearts self-sufficient, yet they appear poor. They are fast in the ways of Allah and do not need to be spurred. You see their tears flowing endlessly. They neither incline towards indolence nor do they walk arrogantly.

Among their signs is that destiny approaches them gently and whenever a trial is set to befall them, God apprises them of it in advance. Death comes to them slow and it never occurs like a sudden accident, as if God dislikes to cause them to die and hesitates to take their peaceful souls.

Among their signs is that they are helped, never to be forsaken. No desire intervenes between them and their Lord and they are never abandoned. They do not part with their Lord even if they are ripped apart. Nor are they like those who boast despite being ignorant; rather, they are endowed with knowledge and enlightenment. God Himself manifests their light and they are not ostentatious. They perform good deeds in the most befitting manner. You will find them like a tender plant even if they are wounded. The day and night bear witness that they are the *Auliya*’ [Friends] of the Gracious Lord, even though an ignorant one may call them heretics. Whenever a calamity befalls them, they

rush toward their Lord. Allah does not leave them in obscurity; rather, they are recognized and honoured among people. They are not like hyenas, but rather, they resemble an extraordinary man—elegant and youthful. They walk upon the earth in a dignified manner and do not stagger like the old.

Among their signs is that a group of fools entertains evil suspicions about them but God acquits them of all such accusations. They do not mourn or grieve over the calamities that befall them and there is a close affinity between them and the Prophets. They drink from that which the Prophets drank. Whenever a calamity befalls them, they stand upright and to God alone do they turn. They liberally spend whatever they possess for the sake of God and they never show miserliness. They distance themselves far from the pit of the world—they neither stand on its edge nor come close to it. In fact, they are God's lions and lie concealed in the lair of the unseen. There is no ferocious lion or hawk like them. They pounce on their enemies and destroy them. They are the branches of the Holy Tree and whosoever dares to crush them is himself crushed by the Almighty. Those who besiege them are themselves afflicted with painful suffocation. No one torments them except the ignorant one who is like the purslane that is carried away by the floodwater, or the one who is more vicious than a snake. They are the people for whose sake God Himself fights. Their enemies never succeed against them even if they run so fast that their feet ache, for they have chosen to fight the One from whom the transgressors are not hidden.

Among their signs is that they inspire the hearts of seekers after truth with their knowledge, and nourish them as birds feed their young and are affectionate to them, and safeguard them against all that is inappropriate for them, and listen to their cries with loving kindness, never becoming indifferent to them. Indeed, they are like shepherds in the land and when they see a wolf, they cry out. They never rely on their selves; rather, they keep glorifying and praising their Lord. They do not lead a life of a bulky animal; rather, as misfortunes befall them one after the other, they become more tender-hearted. They are purified by their Lord in such a way that all of their carnal desires vanish one by one, leaving behind only the soul, and thus they become peerless. Then they are sent to the people and invite them to virtue and success. That is the station of *Abdal* [Saints], who chose the paths whereby they do not have to suffer remorse in the end, nor grieve. They traverse through canyons that the obese could never cross. They die only after they are to be succeeded by a people who are bestowed true knowledge and are righteous. Without fatigue they continue inviting the ignorant to their fountainhead.

Everyone who hears their call hastens to them except those who are deaf and whose tongues are afflicted with disease and whose hearts are veiled so that they pay no heed. Such has been the practice of disbelievers that they turn a deaf ear to the call of the

Messengers, no matter how painfully they call out to them; neither are they awakened by a faint sound nor by a vehement voice until the day of chastisement overtakes them unawares. Prophets strive hard to remove the cloud of dust from their eyes so that they might see, yet they sit still like a divorced woman, and disobey their Lord and turn away as if they know not, and lose their senses like the one whose speech is incomprehensible, and become immoral and foul mouthed. They abuse the Prophets and find fault with them. They eat voraciously yet remain insatiable. Verily, those who believe strive hard in the cause of Allah, and, they reproach their legs despite them moving hastily and think they are falling behind. They endure hardships for the sake of Allah so that they may be accepted. Thus, the mercy of Allah supports them and they are not left in the straitened life; rather, they emerge victorious. The ignoble take them for discarded food which is spoilt, whereas [the truth is that] creation is saved on their account. They seek the pleasure of Allah and cry out [before their Lord] like a woman in the pangs of childbirth; only then are they included among the accepted ones.

Among their signs is that God removes the severity of intense grief from them, and rids their hearts of fear. Thus, their faces ever shine forth and they fear not. They are granted such morals as are not to be found in others, and their character is revealed when they meet people. They behave humbly with visitors even if they be lowly helpers in a monastery or savages like wild donkeys. This is how they conduct themselves.

Among their signs is that they cannot survive without their Lord; they keep away from their pillows. In the way of Allah even foul-smelling water is pure and fresh to them. They seek the pleasure of Allah. In their eyes the world is like excretion, and its seeker is good for nothing or is a hyena similar to the father of Abraham.

And, on account of their renunciation of the world, they are supplied with clusters of fresh fruit and great gifts. The world to them is like the piece of cloth with the help of which Allah takes down the cooking pot of their subsistence to save them from harm. This is [the bounty] from their Lord since they detach themselves from the world and forget it. In fact, they rush towards Allah and their tears continually flow in His remembrance. They are the people who consider this world to be as negligible as the amount a tiny ant can lift with its mouth. Since inciting the soul for this [material world] is misguidance, wherefore these are those knives through which the [sacrificial] slaughter is made. Its [the world's] seekers are lambs [which need to be slaughtered]; its water is little and its food is fatal.

The world is like a woman who is in the habit of refusing her husband under the pretext of menstruation. Its face is like a withered old man who has completely lost his elegance. Its beginning is ease but its end is hardship; you will not find anything more

wicked than it. Beware! It is the tree of *Zaqqum*; do not, therefore, mistake it for a cluster of grapes. [*Zaqqum* denotes the tree of disbelief. The Quran has compared true belief to a good tree which brings forth its fruit at all times (14:25–26) and disbelief to an evil tree—*Zaqqum* (14:27).] That is why the servants of God have drawn a sharp sword against it; they neither grab it with their hands nor do they seek to milk it; they have divorced it thrice and they are not like a woman suffering from miscarriages. They have perfected their words and deeds and they are never afraid of any shameless man, for they are ever ready to face death.

Among their signs is that they are nurtured like a child fed on a good diet and, by nature, swim like fish. Their blessings are like incessant rain. They appear when truth becomes like an uprooted tree. When an age is devoid of such people, it is as if it were without rain. Chaos and calamities, when they abound, serve as the sweet smell of their advent and betoken their approaching light. They run in the ways of Allah like a noble horse. They reveal the people's secrets like a belly that is being slit open. Their advent signifies daybreak and their departure signifies darkness. They are the beacons of faith and religion, and serve as the proof of God on the earth. Their message spreads across the sky like flashes of lightning and as the surging of the sea. Good-natured people hasten towards them much like gazelles emerge from their hideouts, and, except for the crooked, all good-natured people of the ummah accept them.

Those who reject them will definitely come to realize [the enormity of their rejection] during the pangs of death, even though at present they flare up like a blazing fire. They prefer this world and make it a temple for their hearts. They strut towards it as a rooster rushes towards a hen with ruffled feathers in order to mate with her. They show great stupidity and are hardened like a well-twisted rope. They are unlike a fresh and tender branch but are rather like food that has gone moldy; they are devoid of good and are like misers.

Verily, the case of those who believe in the Prophets of Allah is akin to a pure tree on a fertile sand hill; it is they who are taken to be the helpers of this purified religion. They move like an able-bodied youth in the ways of Allah because their [spiritual] eyes are opened and their cloaks of human [weakness] are peeled off, and divine light causes the blossom of their faith to bear fruit. Indeed, they are like lions yet they are never guilty of any misconduct.

Having renounced the world, they are not burdened; therefore, they fly towards Allah and are not among those who drag their feet. They sweep away all the dust of their inner selves leaving behind no trace of this transient world. Whatever they do, they do for the hereafter and for it alone do they strive. They are blessed with the unbored pearls of

wisdom and they constantly grasp such profound subtleties that a conceited ignoramus considers them to be heretics. Their faces are like a soft and tender branch and, by virtue of recognizing their Lord, they are not covered with darkness and they despair not. They are honoured in heaven; therefore, Allah fights those who damage their reputation or shed their blood, so that they are seized and destroyed. They [i.e. those who insult God's servants] are deaf, dumb, and blind and—due to extreme animosity—they are afflicted with the disease of the heart” [p. 9-18]

May Allah admit all of us in this category of His Servants. Ameen.