

◌ FRIDAY SERMON

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You will recall that we were reading extracts from a reply that Hazrat Masih Maood (as) was giving to someone who had travelled to Qadian in search for love, peace and tranquility. In the beginning of his reply, Hazrat Masih Maood (as) said that in the quest for God, one has to prepare the ground by stopping Shaitan from ruling over one's intentions and actions. It is only after a long period of struggle that we will reach the stage where Shaitan will be dislodged from our heart and we will progress little by little to practicing virtue. From there we will continue reading the extract from Malfuzaat Volume 3.

Hazrat Masih Maood (as) said:

“Bear in mind that patience is a condition for reformation. Secondly, one's morals and inner self cannot be purified until one remains in the company of someone who is able to purify the souls of others. Firstly, the door that is opened on this path can only be opened to a person when he cleanses himself of impurity. Those impurities which bear an affinity with a person's disposition remain hidden within, but when one is blessed with the antidote of saintly company, this inner impurity begins to gradually disappear. This is because a person cannot have a relationship with a pure soul—which in the Holy Quran and according to Islamic terminology, is referred to as the Holy Spirit—until they themselves bear an affinity in nature with such people. I cannot say how long it takes for such a relationship to be developed. Indeed, one ought to act as the saying goes:

Turn into dust before you return to dust.

Reduce yourself to dust in this way and tread this path with the utmost patience and perseverance. Ultimately, Allah the Exalted will not let the sincere effort of such a one to go in vain, and will grant him the light that he seeks. I am left astonished and fail to understand how human beings can be so audacious when they know that God exists. So, the person that I have mentioned said to me that the saints of the past would turn people into saints and divines of the highest order with spells. I told the individual that this was not true and that the way of God does not function in this way. I told him to

engage in spiritual discipline and only then will Allah Almighty open to him the avenues which lead to Him. The man who had come to me did not lend any attention to my words and left. After some time, the same person came to me again and I found him to be in an even worse state than before.

In short, the unfortunate thing about man is that he seeks a law which brings instant results, and when he observes that nothing can be attained instantaneously—because the law of Allah Almighty functions gradually and in stages—he becomes anxious. Ultimately, such people become atheists. This is the first step to atheism. I have seen people who either make extravagant claims and entertain overly bold aspirations about what they will become, but then ultimately settle for the most ignoble of lives. On one occasion, someone visited me and asked me for something. The man was a yogi. He told me that he went to a certain place; he visited so-and-so. But ultimately, it was evident from his state of affairs and manner of speech that he thought a life of begging was perfectly acceptable. The honest truth is that one ought to remain patient. Sa'di wonderfully states:

*Even if no path remains to lead one to the beloved;
love demands that one dies in this pursuit.*

Allah the Exalted observes a person until the very end. A person who is insincere and treacherous in the estimation of God, cannot advance towards Him.

*A seeker must remain patient and enduring;
Never have I seen an alchemist tire in his quest.*

Even though alchemists know that nothing has been achieved so far, they persistently endure in their magical experiments. What I mean to say is that first and foremost, it is patience that is required; and with this, if a person possesses a good nature, Allah the Exalted will not let them go to waste. The fundamental purpose of life is to love God Almighty. However, in my view, love is the next stage, or rather, it is the end result. The most important thing to begin with is that one possesses certainty of belief in the existence of Allah Almighty. It is only after this that a person's soul develops an attraction by itself and is naturally drawn towards God. The more one grows in cognizance and insight of the Divine the more one will increase in pleasure and joy. Without divine insight, no pleasure can be attained. The real source of pleasure and delight is, in fact, insight of matters divine.

It is deeper insight alone which gives birth to love. The union of insight and love begets pleasure. One ought to remember that the mere observance of beauty is not sufficient to arouse a sense of love, until one develops a deeper understanding and insight. Know for certain that love is impossible without insight. How can one love someone without first gaining a deeper understanding of their being? To think otherwise is to entertain an imaginary belief.

There are many people who consider a weak human to be God. What pleasure can such people derive from the true God? The Christians deify the Messiah (as) and go on chanting that ‘God is love, God is love.’ However, the love of such people cannot be true love. This will always remain to be a self-proclaimed and imaginary love, so long as they are deprived of true insight in respect of God Almighty.

Therefore, first and foremost, it is incumbent for one to correct one’s belief. The Hindus present their own concepts and the Christians put forth their own ideas. The Chinese present a completely different view of God, while Muslims believe in the God they have presented before the world in light of the Quran. Until that true God is recognized, no relationship and love can be fostered with Him. Mere claims are of no substance. Therefore, when a person has rectified his belief, the second step is to remain in holy company so that one may increase in one’s level of divine insight, and to seek understanding through prayer. The more one advances in divine insight and understanding, the more one will grow in love. It must not be forgotten that one cannot grow in love without deeper understanding. You can observe that people are not as fond of tin and iron as they are of copper, and they are not as fond of copper as they are of silver, while they love gold even more so, and then they hold diamonds and other gems dearer still. What is the reason for this? The reason is that people have a deeper understanding of the value of these metals and stones, which cause people to love one more than the other. So, the fact of the matter is that greater knowledge is what increases a person in love, and also gives him a greater sense of value and worth. Therefore, before an individual can hope to derive pleasure and joy from something, they must develop a deeper understanding of it. However, the most important factor on which all these things are based is patience and positive thinking. Until an individual develops an astonishing degree of patience, nothing can be achieved. When a person, purely to seek the truth, strives and struggles on the path of Allah Almighty with relentless patience, it is then that Allah the Exalted, by His grace and mercy, and in accordance with His promise, opens the way that leads to the divine threshold.

Wallazina jaahadu fii naa lanahdianna hum sobolanaa

In other words, as for those who strive and struggle in Our path, We ultimately guide them in Our ways; doors are opened to them. It is true that those who seek, find...

It is my view that those who come to visit me and engage in a brief exchange, and then leave hastily without sitting with me, as if mock God. This is not how one finds God, nor has Allah the Exalted established such a law. Hence, the first condition in the search for God is a sincere desire. Secondly, one must remain engaged in this quest with patience. It is a matter of principle that the older a man becomes, the more experience he accumulates. Then, in order to develop divine insight, is it not crucial for one to remain in the company of a holy person for a good amount of time? I have seen many people who in the prime of their youth abandon the world completely, and then they wail and lament. Ultimately, I have found that such people became engrossed in the world of materialism and turned into worms of the earth. You may observe how certain trees are accustomed to false fruiting. For example, a kind of temporary fruit grows on the mulberry tree, which eventually falls off completely. It is after this process that the real fruit grows. Similarly, the search for God is an inclination that grows temporarily at an inner level. If a person does not demonstrate patience and remain firmly persistent with a positive mindset, the temporary passion which surges forth from within, not only dissipates with time, but is in fact, forever expunged from the heart completely and turns a person into a worm of the earth. However, if one remains sincere and determined, after this temporary fervor and thirst to seek God, one develops a true and genuine yearning and desire which grows with every passing day. So great does this longing become that even if one is faced with a mountain of hardships and afflictions, one does not care in the least, and one continues to advance on this path. Therefore, an individual, who remains determined after this initial passion and desire, and who realizes that he must remain faithful to their last breath, is most fortunate indeed. An individual, who after a few attempts fails to remain determined and then gives up completely in his quest, is left with nothing in his hands except for their own constant tendency to claim that they have come across many loquacious individuals who are nothing more than profiteers, and not a single one of them was true and godly.

So, this is my advice. I am not aware of the state of those people who come to visit me and who express that they have come here for the sake of God and that they would like to seek God. I cannot know the intention of such people. But what I can say is that anyone who advances in search of Allah Almighty must first rectify his belief before anything else. Such an individual ought to determine for himself which God he wishes

to seek. Does the person seek that True God who is the Creator and Master of the universe, and the possessor of all perfect attributes and free from every ill and defect? Or is the individual in question searching for a god who is the child of a woman, or perhaps other similar gods who are weak and powerless, and number 330 million? For if the actual beloved and objective to be sought is on the coast, what use is there to dive into the sea in search of it?” (123-128)

We will stop here for today. The text is quite long. We will continue next week insha Allah. However, bear in mind that as Ahmadi Muslims we are expected to search for Allah. We do not receive this knowledge just by joining Jamaat Ahmadiyya. We should be prepared to discipline ourselves through the teachings of the Holy Quran as taught by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) and we should be prepared to run this marathonic quest as long as it takes. May Allah help us and make our path easy by His Grace. Ameen.