

FRIDAY SERMON

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By Imam Zafrullah Domun

We continue educating ourselves by reading extracts from the daily discourses or, we may say, informal conversations of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) as recorded in the third volume of his Malfuzaat translated in English. We continue from where we left off last time. The conversation was about reading prayers behind a non-Ahmadi Muslim Imam. The Promised Messiah (as) said:

“A Prayer that is offered behind an opponent of the community cannot be valid in any case. A person finds forgiveness by offering the Prayer behind a person who is virtuous. The formal Prayer is the key to all forms of blessings. Supplications are accepted in the Prayer. The imam is a representative; if his own heart is black, what blessings can he give to others?”. He also said:

“Show steadfastness and do not offer the Prayer behind anyone who is not a follower of this community. There is benefit and virtue in this course of action; herein lies your triumph and a manifest victory. It is this which shall prove a stepping stone for the progress of the community. Even in a worldly context, those who are discontent with someone nor displeased with their enemy do not speak to them for at least a few days, but your displeasure and discontent are for the sake of God. If you continue to mix with them just as before, you will deprive yourself of the special attention with which God Almighty has blessed you. When a pure community is separated from the rest, it is then that it flourishes.”

So, this is a reply to those who think that prayers can be offered behind non-Ahmadi Muslims. We have accepted the Hazrat Ahmad (as) of Qadian as our guide. When he gives an instruction, we should do our best to obey. May Allah help each one amongst us to understand this point of wisdom insha Allah.

The Promised Messiah (as) said:

“Worldly kings and rulers have put tests in place to confer high ranks to various individuals. This is precisely in accordance with the custom of Allah. Allah the Exalted also grants higher ranks to people after they undergo various tests. The tests of adversity and suffering which the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, passed were ones which no other person could ever bear.”

Here, I may add that the verses of the Holy Quran are very clear that we should all undergo trials. One of the most famous verses is:

R. 19.

154. O ye who believe! seek help with patience and Prayer; surely, Allāh is with the steadfast.

155. And say not of those who are killed in the cause of Allāh that they are dead; nay, they are living; only you perceive not.

156. And We will try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives, and fruits; but give glad tidings to the patient,

157. Who, when a misfortune overtakes them, say, 'Surely, to Allāh we belong and to Him shall we return.'

158. It is these on whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy, and it is these who are rightly guided.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا
بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ
الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ
وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَ
الثَّمَرَاتِ ۖ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا
إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَ
رَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

Like these, I can mention many other verses. When you read the Holy Quran, note these verses as you go along so that you might easily refer to them. They will be a great source of consolation whenever you are faced with great stress in your life.

A certain individual asked Masih Maood (as): “What invocation should I recite?” The Promised Messiah as said: “You ought to recite the prayer for God’s forgiveness. There are only two states of man: either that he does not sin or that Allah Almighty saves him from the bad outcome of that sin. Hence, when one invokes the forgiveness of God, one ought to keep both these concepts in mind. Firstly, one ought to beg God Almighty so that He covers and hides one’s past sins and secondly, one ought to seek from God the ability so that one may be saved from committing sin in the future. However, seeking forgiveness through a mere verbal recitation will not suffice; rather, one should seek forgiveness from one’s heart. One ought to supplicate in the Prayer in one’s own tongue as well; this too is necessary.”

Hazrat Masih Maood (as) is not telling us anything new concerning *Istighfaar*. There are many verses of the Holy Quran telling us to seek forgiveness from Allah. Here is one which speaks about the importance of seeking forgiveness and its benefits. Allah says:

وَيَا قَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا وَيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً إِلَى قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِينَ

“And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him; He will send you (from the sky) abundant rain and add strength to your strength, so do not turn away as the guilty ones” [Hood 11:52]

From the books of Hadith we learn that the Prophet Muhammad (saw) reported that the devil said to God: “I shall continue to lead Thy servants astray as long as their spirits are in their bodies.” And God replied: “(Then) I shall continue to pardon them as long as they ask My forgiveness.” Recorded in Tirmidhi, Hadith 742.

In a hadith *qudsi* Allah says **“ O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as it.”**

Furthermore, in the hadith it is reported on the authority of Abu Hurairah, may God be pleased with him, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) said: **“By God, I seek forgiveness from God and repent to Him more than seventy times a day.”** (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

So, if the noblest man did this, what should we poor souls do?

In another beautiful hadith reported by Hazrat Ibn Abbas (ra) bn 'Abbas (May Allah be pleased with them) said:

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, **"If anyone constantly seeks pardon (from Allah), Allah will appoint for him a way out of every distress and a relief from every anxiety, and will provide sustenance for him from where he expects not."** [Abu Dawud].

We will stop here for today. May Allah help each one among us to understand the importance of imploring Allah, to continuously seek His forgiveness. Ameen.