

FRIDAY SERMON

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By

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We continue with our reading of Malfuzaat Volume 10 from where we left off. Hazrat Masih Maood(as) was speaking about what it means to be faithful to Allah. He then said:

“No one knows the time of death. The days have come when the plague, cholera, earthquakes, epidemics, famine, and many types of diseases are attacking mankind. Yet if this were not to occur, even then the sudden clutch of Allah Almighty occasionally seizes a person, rendering him totally helpless. Therefore, it is necessary to continually keep in view the pledge that you will give precedence to [your] faith above all worldly objects and present the noble example of your practical life accordingly. There is no guarantee of life.

Look, several friends are parted from us every year and some foes have departed as well. Allah has conveyed some terrifying news [ahead], and He is Truthful in His word. Even greater fear arises from this. Those, too, are so very threatening. Diverse kinds of danger lurk all around.

Plague is another name for death. In the lexicon plague means ‘death’. Does anyone know how the wrath of God Almighty will unleash itself? May God protect us! It might be so severe as to be unbearable. It is a matter of principle, as I had also explained yesterday, that when Divine punishment or wrath dissipates—be it cholera, plague, an epidemic, or famine—people grow complacent, realizing that the adversity has passed. Then their hearts become hardened in this way. However, your duty should be to remain humble and fearful, keeping in mind the coming promises of God Almighty. Save yourselves before that time, repenting ever so often. One who repents inclines towards virtue, and the one who does not repent advances towards sin.

It is mentioned in the Hadith that Allah Almighty loves the servant who repents often. One who does not repent is drawn towards sin, and sin gradually leads to *kufir* [disbelief]. Your responsibility is to develop whatever distinction there may be. Should any [meaningful] distinction be attained between you and the others, only then will the help of God verily come.

Otherwise, look at the Children of Israel. When they did not attain any distinction in themselves over the others, they were made to suffer at the hands of the disbelievers,

despite Moses as) being present in their midst. A disbeliever was helped against them and they were punished.

The Prophet present, the Book present, the Law present— but they did not follow. Ultimately, they were defeated by the disbelievers. The disbelievers are ignorant of Divine commandments, and are, therefore, not held accountable in the same way as one who knows and understands.”

The Promised Messiah(as) then spoke about righteousness. He said:

“Allah the Exalted says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ

Verily, Allah is with those who are righteous and those who do good(16:129)

Those who adopt the path of piety, righteousness, and purity are with Allah, and always fear disobedience.

These days, living a hypocritical life has become the universal rule of the world. It begins with people deceiving people and they become complicit in a hypocritical manner although their hearts are filled with malice, anguish, and rancour. Then, this habit, growing steadily, reaches such a height that he even desires a hypocritical bond with God Almighty

and seeks to deceive God even though he knows that God is عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ the Knower of what is concealed within the hearts. He is not a true believer but tries to masquerade himself as a believer before God. Can God be duped by anyone? Absolutely not!

Behold! Righteousness is such a precious item that for the sake of just one pious person, Allah Almighty bestows mercy upon others as well, and it also has an impact upon his family, friends, relatives, and acquaintances. In the very same way, if the perpetration of sin, crime, and deception occurs, it also has an effect.

In short, to fear God Almighty and to be righteous is a magnificent feat. As a result of it, God shields [one] from thousands of calamities, and except for it, one does not fall under the protection of God Almighty. No one can claim immunity from affliction, nor should anyone feel secure. Calamities descend without warning. What knowledge does anyone possess of what is to come when night falls?

It is recorded that once the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, stood up. He wept profusely and then, addressing the people, said that O servants of Allah! Fear God. Misfortunes and trials cling to people like ants. There is no way to be safeguarded from them except being engaged in *istighfar* and repentance with a sincere heart.

The meaning of repentance and forgiveness is not what people have taken it to be these days. There cannot be any benefit from saying [*Astaghfirullah, astaghfirullah*], when the meaning is not even understood by anyone. **أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ** Arabic language. As this was the mother tongue of those people, they had understood its meaning well. The meaning of *istighfar* is to seek the protection of God Almighty from one's previous sins and the punishment of one's offences, and to beg protection from committing sin in the future. Prophets would always engage in *istighfar* as did the common people as well.

Some ignorant Christian priests have criticized the *istighfar* of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and have written that his performing *istighfar* is proof—God forbids!—of the sinfulness of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. These uninformed people do not even understand that *istighfar* is a lofty quality [in one's character]. Mankind, by nature, is created such that its natural tendency is feeble and frail. Prophets experience the fear of this inherent frailty and the weakness of human nature. For this reason, they pray that O my Allah, grant us such protection that those human weaknesses are not even capable of appearing. The [Arabic] word *ghafar* means 'to cover'. The essential point is that the power that God wields is not possessed by any Prophet, nor any *wali* [saint] or Messenger.

No one can possibly claim that they can safeguard themselves from sin through their own capability. Therefore, Prophets also stand in need of God for the sake of protection. Wherefore as a demonstration of his humble submission before God, the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, also used to pray to God Almighty for his protection like the other Prophets [did].

This belief of those people that Jesus (as) did not engage in *istighfar* is false. This is their stupidity and ignorance, and they level a false allegation upon Jesus (as). A study of the New Testament reveals that he repeatedly confessed to his weaknesses and even performed *istighfar*. What was meant by his cry —*Eli, Eli lama sabachthani*?¹ Why did he not cry out **أبي أبي** *Abi, Abi* [My Father, my Father!]? In Hebrew, God is called Eli. The very meaning of this [verse] is 'Have mercy and help me and do not leave me abandoned like this (in other words, Protect me).'

In reality, the difficulty is that the true meaning and purpose of *istighfar* is lost in India due to the burden of a difference in language. These prayers are considered the magic words, whether it be *Salat* [obligatory Prayers], *istighfar*, or repentance. If you advise someone to do *istighfar*, they reply that they recite *istighfar* one or two hundred times on a rosary, but if you ask them its meaning, they know absolutely

nothing. *Istighfar* is an Arabic term that means seeking forgiveness, that O my God, protect me from the consequences of previous sins—as sin is a poison that has an inevitable effect—and grant me such protection in the future that I will not commit sin. Mere verbal repetition of the words will not serve the purpose.”

Then the Promised Messiah(as) spoke about *Taubah*. He said:

“*Taubah* means to turn away from sin through repentance and remorse. There is no harm in it. On the contrary, it is written that Allah immensely loves the servant who repents. In addition, a name of God Almighty is *Tawwab*, the meaning of which is that when a person repents of his sins and becomes remorseful, vowing to avoid them in the future, then God Almighty turns to him with mercy. God turns to man more than the repentance of man, as it is reported in the noble hadith that if a person advances towards God by a distance of a portion of his hand, then God advances towards him by a measure of a full hand. If someone comes walking [towards Him], God Almighty comes running. Meaning that, if a person turns towards God, then Allah Almighty also favours him with the utmost degree of mercy, grace, and forgiveness, but if he turns his face away from God, then what care should God Almighty have?

Look, these are the ways of attaining the abundant bounties of God Almighty. Currently, the doors are open so the sunlight enters accordingly and we are benefiting, but if we now close all the doors in this house, then it is obvious that the light coming in will discontinue, and instead of light, darkness will abound.

Therefore, in this very way of shutting the doors of one’s heart, the darkness of sin and crime come to exist, and this is the way one grows greatly aloof from the favours of God’s grace and mercy. So, this demands that *taubah* and *istighfar* be not repeated like the magical words of some incantation; rather, keeping in view their true meaning and understanding, pray before God Almighty with a sincere yearning and restlessness.

Inherent within *taubah* is the hidden promise that whatever sin one used to commit, that sin will no longer be committed going forward. In essence, God Almighty conceals the weaknesses of mankind because He is *Sattar* [Concealer (of weaknesses)].

This concealment of God Almighty has made so many people appear noble; otherwise, if God Almighty were not to conceal [their weaknesses], then all the filth that lay hidden in people would become known. The perfection of man’s faith lies in the emulation of Allah’s virtues. In other words, one should follow to the best of one’s ability the various perfect virtues and attributes that exist in Allah, and try to dye oneself in the hues of God Almighty. For example, forgiveness exists within God

Almighty; man should also forgive. There is mercy, compassion, and benevolence. Man should also be merciful, compassionate, and benevolent with people. God Almighty is *Sattar*. Man should also partake from this quality of concealment and should forgive the flaws and sins of his fellow brethren.

Some people have the habit that when they see any weakness or shortcoming of anyone, their food won't digest until they publicly trumpet it all over. It is mentioned in a hadith that God Almighty conceals the sins of the one who conceals the sins of his brother. Man should not be impudent and shameless, nor behave rudely with the creation of God. Deal with them with love and kindness.” (P435)

The speech continues. we will read more of it next time. In the portion we have just read Hazrat Masih Maood(as) has explained about the sudden arrival of calamities and how we can be best prepared for them through *Tauba* and *Istighfar*. May what he said be a guide for all of us in our daily life. Ameen