

FRIDAY SERMON

27th June 2025

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delivered by Dr Mahmud Ahmad Sooltangos

Last week we finished the sermon saying that next time we will continue with the text we were reading. So, we continue from where we left off. Hazrat Masih Maood(as) was speaking about the nature of true repentance. He continued:

“I have repeatedly stated this fact and now repeat it before you that when a person performs an action, an act of God consequently follows upon it. For example, if we eat poison in sufficient quantity, the necessary consequence of this will be that we will be killed. Here taking the poison is our action over which God's act unfolds in that it kills. Or, as a further example, when we close the windows of a room in our house, this is our action upon which God's consequent action would be that there will be darkness in the room. This is the way in which the law of God's acts operates in the world in that the actions of a person are followed by a consequence that is God's act. Just as this system is apparent in the visible sphere and we daily find its examples in the physical world, it has a similar relationship with the inner realm of one's being. It is the very principle that is essential for understanding the law of punishment, that every action of ours, good or bad, carries an effect which comes into being after our action has taken place.

We can now easily understand the ideas of *Azab* and *Rahat* (i.e., torment and pleasure) which is given as a punishment for sins or as a reward for good deeds and I make this claim in the full knowledge that all other religions are completely unable and inadequate in explaining this philosophy. Everyone who believes in God affirms that the human being has been created for God. That is why the climax of all his happiness and the basis of all his pleasure can only be in his becoming totally God's and establishing the relationship that should exist between *Uloohiyyat* and *Aboodiyyat*, (i.e., between the Divine, the one who is worshipped and the one who worships). In other words, this relationship is given but until a person establishes it

firmly and brings it within the sphere of action (to promote it), he cannot attain true happiness.

The reason for the advent of Prophets is exactly this and they come with this important purpose that they wish to return to human beings the long-lost treasure of the true relationship between the Divine and the one who submits completely with devotion to the Divine, i.e., between *Uloohiyyat* and *Aboodiyyat*. However, when a person distances himself from God, he detaches himself from the chain of love which should exist between God and his servant. Such action on the part of a human being is followed by an act of God which comes into operation and (as a consequence) God too keeps away from such a person. It is as a result of this distancing from God that darkness appears on the human heart. Just as closing the door to the sun fills the room with darkness and invisibility, so turning away from God begin to fill the human heart with darkness. As he becomes more and more distanced, the darkness increases until the heart becomes completely blackened and it is this *Zulmat* (darkness) that is called *Jahannam* (hell) because from it emanates torment. However, if such a person were to adopt the means of escape from this torment such that would enable him to abandon actions which were the cause of his distancing from God, then God would turn to such a person with His Mercy. Just as opening of windows removes darkness by returning the lost light, so the light of goodness which had vanished, is returned to the person who turns to God and he begins to benefit from it fully. Such is the true reality of repentance, example of which is clearly witnessed by us in the physical laws of nature.” (Mafuzaat, Vol. 3. pp22-24]

Members of Jamaat Ahmadiyya should recall that when Hazrat Masih Maood (as) created the Jamaat in 1889 under divine instructions he specified some conditions for all those who wished to join it. There are ten conditions. The third one is as follows:

“That he/she shall regularly offer the five daily prayers in accordance with the commandments of God and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); and shall try his/her best to be regular in offering the *Tahajjud* (pre-dawn supererogatory prayers) and invoking Darood (blessings) on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); that he/she shall make it his/her daily routine to ask forgiveness for his/her sins, to remember the bounties of God and to praise and glorify Him.”

Further elaborating on the last part of the abovementioned extract about *Istighfar* he said:

“The true meaning of *Istighfar* is to supplicate God that no human weakness should be manifested and that God might support nature with His strength and Might enclose it in the circle of His Help and Protection. The root of *Istighfar* is *ghafara*, which means to cover up. Thus, the meaning of *Istighfar* is that God should cover up the natural weakness of the supplicant with His Power. This meaning is then enlarged to include the covering up of a sin that has been committed, but the true meaning is that God should safeguard the supplicant against his natural weakness and should bestow upon him power from His power, and knowledge from His knowledge, and light from His light. Having created man, God has not become separated from him, but as He is man’s Creator and the Creator of all his external and internal faculties, He is also All-Sustaining, that is to say, He safeguards with His support everything that He has created. It is, therefore, necessary for man that as he has been created by God, he should seek to safeguard the features of his creation through the All- Sustaining attribute of the Divine....

Thus, this is a natural need of man for which he has been directed to carry out *Istighfar*. This is referred to in the verse:

“*Allaho Laa Ilaha illa hou Al hayyoul Qayyooom*”

“Allah – there is no God but He, the Living, the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining.” (2:256)

He is both Creator and All-Sustaining. When man was created, the function of creation was completed, but the function of sustaining is forever and that is why *Istighfar* is needed all the time. Every attribute of God possesses a grace and *Istighfar* is needed for winning the grace of the attribute of ‘All-Sustaining’. The same is indicated in the verse of *Surah Fatihah*:

“*Iyyaka na’bodo Wa iyyaka nasta’een*”

This means that: we worship Thee alone and implore Thee alone for help. Thy attributes of Providence and All-Sustaining should help us and should safeguard us against stumbling, lest our weakness may become manifest and we should fall short of worshipping Thee. It is thus obvious that the true meaning of *Istighfar* is not that a default has occurred, but that no default should occur. Human nature finding itself weak naturally seeks strength from God, as a child seeks milk from its mother. As God has bestowed upon man from the beginning, tongue, eyes, heart, and ears, etc.,

so He has bestowed upon him from the beginning the desire for *Istighfar* and has made him feel that he is dependent upon God for help. This is indicated in the verse:

“Ask forgiveness for thy frailties, and for believing men and believing women.” (47:20)

This means that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) was directed to supplicate that his nature should be safeguarded against human weakness and should be so strengthened that that weakness should not become manifest. He was also directed to supplicate by way of intercession on behalf of the men and women who believed in him that they should be safeguarded against the punishment for the defaults that might have been committed by them and that during the rest of their life they should be safeguarded against sin. This verse comprises a very high philosophy of protection against sin and intercession. It indicates that a person can achieve a high stage of protection against sin and win intercession if he prays constantly for the suppression of his own weakness and for delivering others from the poison of sin and himself draws strength from God through his supplication and desires that those who are related to him through faith should also partake of that strength. A sinless person needs to supplicate God for strength inasmuch as human nature possesses no excellence of its own but receives excellence at every moment from God, and has no strength of its own but receives strength at every moment from God, and has no perfect light of its own but receives light from God. A perfect nature is bestowed an attraction so that it might draw to itself strength from above, but the treasure of strength is the Being of God. **Angels draw strength for themselves from this treasure and so also perfect man draws the strength of sinlessness and grace from this Fountainhead of strength through the pipe of servitude. Thus, from amongst men, he alone is perfectly innocent who draws Divine strength to himself through *Istighfar* and occupies himself throughout with humble supplication so that light should continue to descend upon him....** [Review of Religions—Urdu, vol. I, pp. 187-190]

May Allah, the Almighty grant to each one among us the wisdom to understand what is *Istighfar* and through it may Allah help us to make true repentance so that through it He effaces all our sins. He Is the Effacer of sins and He is Most forgiving. Ameen!