

Friday Sermon: Power of Prayers for Special Help

08 August 2014

‘Or, Who answers the distressed person when he calls upon Him, and removes the evil, and makes you successors in the earth? Is there a God besides Allah? Little is it that you reflect.’ [\(27:63\)](#)

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) repeatedly advised his Jama’at to greatly focus on prayer because the progress of the Jama’at and release from the evil of the enemy is through prayer! He clearly explained that our only weapon to triumph over the enemy is prayer. How much significance should we then pay to prayer and how much should we focus on it; indeed, how much significance and focus do we lay on it. This can be gauged by everyone by reflecting over their own condition.

Recently a relative recounted a dream of theirs to Huzoor in which Huzoor is telling them that Ramadan has passed very quickly while Huzoor intended to draw greater attention of the Jama’at towards prayer. One point of importance here is that our focus on prayers will not remain as it was during the days of Ramadan although the Jama’at is in great need of prayers. Even before this dream was recounted to Huzoor, Huzoor was divinely inspired to draw the attention of the Jama’at towards prayers post-Ramadan and this was heightened after listening to the dream. This is the way of God; although He inspires the heart towards something, He also motivates true believers to something through true believers. Generally speaking the intensity in prayer does not remain the same after Ramadan!

The current global affairs are dire; the situation in the Muslim world, in particular the continuous cruel attacks by Israel on Palestinians. Up until yesterday a temporary ceasefire was in place but it is said that it has been broken as of today. The allegation is that the ceasefire was broken from the Palestinian side although God knows best. May God somehow bring this persecution to an end! We also see the extreme of Muslims killing Muslims and the worst extremism from these people who profess the Kalima (Muslim declaration of faith) is that in the name of God and His Prophet, they are persecuting Ahmadis. And with utter stubbornness they look for excuses to continue this persecution. They want to persecute Ahmadis at every level, at every opportunity.

Influenced by the Mullahs, this has become the way of a large majority of non-Ahmadis in Pakistan. The young are being poisoned, their minds are being poisoned. They have no idea what faith is and who an enemy is but they say that Ahmadis are disbelievers and their murder is allowed. Students are rude to Ahmadi school teachers simply because of their faith. Proceedings are set in motion to dismiss them from schools and students refuse to be taught by them! Recently in a small town in Pakistan students and their parents took out a rally against an Ahmadi teacher boycotting him on the basis of his faith. The head master or some other sensible person told them that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) used to even release knowledgeable prisoners of wars on the condition that they imparted their knowledge to the Muslims although they had come to battle the Muslims with the intention of killing them. The belligerent people of the small town in Pakistan responded that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) may have said that to the pagans but they did not agree because the ‘Qadianis’ were worse than the pagans, adding, they would let the ‘Qadianis’ off although killing them is permissible.

This persecution and cruelty does not cease after any particular incident, rather, it continues. When the neighbours of Ahmadis in Gujranwala who used to socialise with them saw their homes vacated, they joined the mob. When morals plunge so low nothing except ‘Inna Lillah’ can be said! In light of these circumstances, we need to turn to God much more than before. We should not let our prayers lessen. While other Muslims respond to persecution aggressively to get even, our way is to turn to God in our grief and thus settle it. The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said in one of his poetic couplets:

When the enemy exceeds in his uproar

We absorb ourselves in our hidden Friend!

And this is what is needed; what is needed is to instil a condition within ourselves which will move the heavens. The dream recounted to Huzoor said that Huzoor was to further motivate the Jama'at to pray. Asking the Jama'at for collective/communal prayer is for the success and progress of the Jama'at and for the removal of difficulties. It is the wish of each one of us that the period of trial is over soon. Therefore the flow of our prayers should be for the Jama'at and for protection against the evil of the enemy. It is the need of the day to profusely pray for protection against the evil of the enemy. Huzoor is reminded of an old dream of his which he has mentioned before. In it he was informed that for the circumstances to be turned around quickly the entire Jama'at needs to turn to God with complete sincerity for His sake and pray to protect the Jama'at from trials. If this condition is instilled in the entire Jama'at and our nights are spent in prayers for the Jama'at, the revolutionary change can come to pass in a few days owing to the prayers made in a few nights. Indeed, a revolutionary change is destined to come, it is God's promise, but it will take its time. The message given to Huzoor in his dream was that the entire Jama'at which associates itself to the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) needs to turn to God in prayer with complete sincerity. The dream gave the impression that the message was specifically for Pakistani Ahmadis, be they rich or poor, men or women. The worst persecution of Ahmadis in taking place in Pakistan and Ahmadis of the world also need to pay attention to this. This is because the permanence of this world is associated with the triumph of Ahmadiyyat, for the Muslim Ummah to receive God's blessings is associated with Ahmadiyyat and the end of persecution is also associated with it. Whether it is the freedom of Palestinians or liberation of Muslims from tyrannical rulers, only the prayers of Ahmadis can guarantee it. Currently Ahmadis are the most persecuted people and this is why our prayer will be the prayer of مضطر (muztir; the distressed person – as cited in the Quranic verse above) and not only can it be a source of our liberation but also a source of removing persecution of mankind.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that amazing effects of prayer become evident during trials and the truth is that our God is recognised through prayers!

Who is more persecuted than Ahmadis in a few Muslim countries? The decency of the large majority of the people of this country (Pakistan) has, as Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (may Allah be pleased with him) used to say, become mute decency. The Quranic verse (as cited above) states who else but God listens to the prayer of those in trouble, when they are مضطر muztir! Muztir (the distressed) signifies that person who sees himself engulfed in trials from all directions and does not see any physical or worldly way out for himself and only sees the way of God as his solution. Muztir does not simply signify one who is perturbed at not finding any way out, rather muztir finds a ray of light and runs towards it and does not signify a person who runs around haphazardly when surrounded by fire. This way he can fall in that fire. Muztir is one who sees a specific light in times of trials and tribulations and follows it. God states that He is the cooling shade for the muztir that saves him from the fire. We should turn to God with the firm conviction that He will take us out of troubles. As the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said amazing peculiarities become evident in your support. One who becomes the kind of muztir who does not acknowledge or recognise any other refuge other than the refuge of God and does not acknowledge or recognise anyone other than God as a saviour from trials and tribulation is a true muztir and his prayers show wonders. In such situations God runs to the muztir and removes his troubles. His problems vanish, whether communal or personal. It is not that God only removes the troubles of such people, in fact when He confers His blessings on them they are limitless. Here, in the verse above God states that not only will He remove the troubles of true believers who are in difficulties but also promises to make them 'successors in the earth'. God ruins high and mighty tyrants and gives prominence to those in their place who appear meek. Thus He removes personal and communal troubles!

The Holy Qur'an states that when the earlier people were unjust to the Prophets of God, God destroyed them and gave the meek their place. Many a great tyrant was wiped out completely. This law prevails even today.

God destroys the unjust when the one who is victimised prays in the manner of a muztir and cries out saying: ‘...When *will come* the help of Allah?...’ (2:215) God’s mercy is generated and quick reckoning of the oppressors is brought about. May God give sense to those who are oppressing others in presumption of their power, otherwise the very same power and majority is about to become a source of ruination for them. God states that those who do not abide by righteousness because of their power and majority have bad ending. When people profess the Kalima and take the name of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) but go on to oppress others, the Kalima and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) are displeased with such people. God states that the oppressors will have bad ending. Whoever goes against the commandments of God will have a bad ending, however, in order to quickly rid of the oppression it is for us to adopt the condition of a muztir and call on God’s help and then see how He comes to help! Each one of us needs to inculcate this condition.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said: ‘You see, God Almighty is Most Self-Sufficient. He does not care unless prayers are made in abundance, repeatedly and with pathos. How distressed is one whose wife or child falls ill or one who is faced with a difficult court case. Unless prayer is made with sincere anguish and while generating a state of pathos it is completely ineffectual and useless. Acceptance of prayer is conditional to pathos.’

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said that for acceptance of prayers it is conditional that they are made in abundance and repeatedly. It should be clear that it is wrong to assume the prayers of Ramadan were sufficient. We need to pray continuously. Even when we will be granted clear triumph, in order to garner God’s blessings, we will still be in need of prayers. In short, a true believer’s connection with God is never lessened. Pathos needs to be generated during troubles and remembrance of God is needed during good times. A true believer is never selfish and does not consider temporary prayers as sufficient. It is this connection with God which shows signs of acceptance of prayer during ordinary times.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) once said: ‘Remember, turning to anyone other than Allah is cutting away from God Almighty.’ Indeed, this is an unthinkable scenario for a true believer yet at times due to weakness dues of prayers are not paid and one turns to worldly means. Therefore, each one of us should always self-reflect lest we become so involved in our own issues and problems that we do not remember to pray for those who are in difficulties because they belong to the Jama’at. We should remember that the prayer of every person made while being cognisant of God’s mercy, forgiveness and other attributes removes problems faced by the Jama’at.

Ahadith relate that there were three men from the earlier people who were caught in a storm. They took refuge from the storm in a cave. The storm was so fierce that it moved a large rock which fell on the mouth of the cave and the exit of the cave was blocked. The three men had gone in the cave to protect themselves from a lesser trouble and ended up in greater trouble. They could neither physically move the rock nor could anyone from outside move it for them. They were extremely anxious and began wondering if they were going to be buried alive in the cave. One of the men suggested that they should pray with reference to any good deed they had done in life, a deed done for the sake of God. One of them said, O God, I was in love with a relative girl and I wanted to do foul act with her but she did not agree. I did some planning, spent some money and at last she agreed. When I had overcome her, she said, ‘O man of God, I plead you for the sake of God, do not commit this sin.’ This is when I moved away from her. O God! If I did this for Your pleasure, remove the rock for us.’ Due to his prayer, the storm caused the rock to shift a little but not enough for them to get out. The second man said, O God, You know that a labourer came to me and did some manual work for me but he left before he could be paid for his labour. His wage worked out to be equal to a quantity of grains and I sowed that much grain which yielded a good crop. I bought some livestock with the proceeds which grew and multiplied into a herd of goats and flock of sheep. Many years later, the man came to me and asked for his wage. I told him the herd of goats spread across the valley was his and he could take it. He replied that he had come to collect his wage while I joked with him. I told him I had invested his wage in trade which had turned into such a large herd and said that

it was his. The man took the herd. O God, If I did this to seek Your pleasure, have mercy on us and remove this rock.’ A strong gust of wind slid the rock a little more but still there was not enough space for them to get out. Then the third man turned to God with this prayer: ‘O God, You know that I herd goats and we live on milk. One day I was late in getting home and my very elderly parents who lived with me and whom I gave milk before my children had gone to sleep. I did not want to awaken them, so I stood by them with the milk so that I could give it to them when they rose. My children cried with hunger but I stood beside my parents with the milk until it was daybreak and they woke up and I gave them the milk and then fed my children and wife. O God, if this act of mine was for Your pleasure, and it had no worldly motive in it, have mercy on me and remove this rock.’ The storm intensified and the rock moved some more and a way was opened and the men came out. These three men had done three different things; one was just and fair to a labourer, the other was kind and caring to his parents and the third shunned fornication for the pleasure of God. However, the objective of their prayers was mutual; they wanted the rock to be removed and it was removed. While this Tradition has many lessons, one of them is that individual acts of virtue become a source of removing communal troubles. Those who are moved to pathos during personal prayers should generate the same feeling when praying for the Jama’at. When offering the two units of optional Prayer (Nafl) as advised by Huzoor for progress of the Jama’at and for the situation to change, compassion-filled prayers should be made.

Empathy can be drawn with the men trapped in the cave. They had lost all hope of any worldly help and had prayed with reference to acts of virtues that had done to seek the pleasure of God. While we need to make our practices purely for the sake of God, we should also consider troubles faced by the Jama’at as our personal troubles and pray with great humility and tenderness.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said: ‘It is also very important for acceptance of prayer that man instils pure change in himself. If he cannot shun evil and breaks limits set by God Almighty, his prayers will have no effect.’

‘If you will become like the others, God Almighty will make no distinction between them and you. If you do not generate a distinctive difference in yourself, God too will not distinguish you from others. A fine man is one who follows according to the will of God Almighty. However, a man who is something else outwardly and something else inwardly is a hypocrite and a hypocrite is worse than a disbeliever. First and foremost purify hearts. What I fear the most is that we will not triumph through the sword or any other force. Our weapon is only prayer and purity of hearts.’

May God make it so that that we try and bring about pure changes in ourselves as the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) wished and do everything for the sake of God and pray like a muztir to Him! May we make prayers for progress of Jama’at and for removal of trials of the Jama’at with the same intensity as we make personal prayers! May we pray as one to be protected from the evil of the opponents! As mentioned earlier, unless we turn to God with sincerity for the removal of these communal trials we will not attain our objective quickly. After coming in the Bai’at of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) our communal prayers also remove our personal troubles. When everyone prays for each other the angels pray for them. Rocks are removed from the mouths of caves when the objective of prayer is mutual. Pain of Ahmadis living anywhere in the world should be our pain and we should pray with this feeling. This is the weapon we have to which the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) drew attention.

We should also remember in our fervour not to pray for torment to befall the enemy, rather, we should pray: O Allah, we wish for our success and we wish for our trials to be removed! While we pray for this difficult time to end, O God, we also wish betterment of the enemy and not their destruction. You have covered our weaknesses with Your grace and in spite of going through very difficult period we experience Your grace and blessings. If You also covered the opponents and guided them, it would be most fortunate for us and for them. However, if in Your wisdom, You do not deem some of them worthy of this and it is better to destroy them, then remove

them from our path in a way that their presence is not a hindrance in the progress of Islam which You have now destined through Ahmadiyyat, true Islam.

God's wisdom will make this a prayer where deemed right. This is how we should pray and not in the vein of malediction/prayer against them. May God enable all of us to pay the dues of prayers!