

Friday Sermon: The Essence of Worship of Allah

10th April 2015

'Surely, success does come to the believers,

Who are humble in their Prayers.' Surah Al Mu'minun (23:2 – 3)

The first of the aforementioned verses gives certain glad-tiding of success to believers. However, what sort of believers does it refer to? The verses that follow give out many conditions and requisites of being a believer. The first of these requisites or qualities that a believer must have is that they are humble in their Prayer/Salat. Being humble in this context usually means weeping during Salat, however, it has many other meanings and connotations and unless all of those are fulfilled the true condition of being a believer is not achieved. Being humble signifies showing great humility, greatly lowering oneself, to negate one's self, to cower, to try and make oneself lowly, to lower one's gaze and to speak softly and quietly. Thus one word encompasses a wide-ranging framework of who a believer is. A person who turns to God with extreme humility and adopts the other qualities stated gains Divine nearness. This in turn will draw his attention that while paying the dues of God he also has to pay the dues of God's creation. This will lead him to try and be an embodiment of what the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) expressed in an Urdu poetic couplet of his whose translation is:

Envisage yourself to be lesser than everyone else

Perhaps this will gain you entrance in the abode of Divine union

In addition to being humble in Salat, such a person will also try and practice humbleness in his daily life and will try and avoid all societal vices. He will be softly spoken and will shun arguments and confrontations. Indeed there are many ills which steer a believer away from the right path. It is people who maintain and uphold these matters who will be successful. The Arabic word *falah* (success) used in the aforementioned verse has wide-ranging connotations. It means state of ease, prosperity, good fortune, fulfillment of wishes, security, constant comfort and happiness and having life's bounties. These are the varied benefits enjoyed by those who do good as bestowed on them by God. The first and significant step to attain these bounties is to be humble in Prayer. Of course worldly people are also humble, but it is not simply a matter of weeping. Worldly people will weep and lower themselves to an extreme when it suits them. They do so because they have vested interests or they do it for simple pretence or owing to some short-lived emotion. Those who are humble to seek pleasure of God are most distant from these matters.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said about such people: 'I have personally seen many such ascetics and other people who promptly shed copious tears upon listening to painful poetry, or seeing a painful sight or hearing a painful account just as at times large and rapid raindrops start coming down at night not even allowing one to roll up one's bedding to take indoors without getting it drenched. [This refers to the sub-continental custom of sleeping outdoors at night during hot summer months] But I bear witness on personal account that mostly such people are cunning and worse than worldly people. I have found some of them to be wicked-natured, dishonest and immoral in every aspect. Seeing their practice of weeping and showing humility I am so repulsed to weep or overcome with emotion in any assembly.'

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I (may Allah be pleased with him) used to relate an account of an elder. The elder offered Salat at mosque for many long years with the thought that people would praise him. But owing to some past virtue of his, God put it in the

hearts of people that they used to call him a hypocrite. One day he realised that he had spent a lifetime worshipping at mosque but no one ever called him virtuous, he felt had he prayed for the sake of God, God would have been pleased with him. This thought struck him so strongly that he went out into wilderness and offered Salat in a most heartrending and humble manner, supplicating that now he was only offering Salat for the sake of God. Following this God put it in the heart of people that this elder was a pious man who was being disgraced needlessly. The elder was most grateful to God. His single sincere Salat offered for the sake of God turned the hearts of people and they started praising him. This account also shows that in appreciation of some good one may have done in one's past God can facilitate one's reformation. The elder thus was included among those who get falah (success). Virtues from one's past in spite of sins committed later on can save one from bad ending and one can be among those who are given alah. This is dependent on the Divine quality of Rahmaniyyat (being Gracious). However, real falah is given to those who try and attain the beneficence of the Divine quality of Raheemiyyat (being forgiving) and for this the first requisite is to offer Salat with humility.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) writes: The first stage of a believer's spiritual state is that humility, weeping and tender-heartedness which a believer experiences during Salat and remembrance of Allah. That is, to generate in oneself a spirit of supplication, poignancy, humility, extreme humbleness, meekness of soul, ardour and warmth. To assume a state of fear while turning to the Glorious God as this verse states: 'Surely, success comes to the believers, Who are humble in their Prayers.' (23: 2-3). That is, successful are the believers who are humble in their Salat and during remembrance of Allah and who are engaged in remembrance of their Lord with poignancy, tender-heartedness, ardour and heart-felt passion.'

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) also wrote: 'People who reflect over the Holy Qur'an may understand that state of humility during Salat is like seminal fluid for one's spiritual state. And just like seminal fluid, but in a spiritual sense, it has latent within it all the powers, qualities and features to make a perfect human form. Just as seminal fluid is in a precarious state until it reaches the womb (uterus) similarly this rudimentary spiritual state, that is humility, is not out of danger unless it connects to the Ever Merciful (Raheem) God. It should be remembered that when God Almighty's beneficence is granted without any effort, it is by virtue of the Divine quality of Rahmaniyyat. For example God created heavens and earth for man or He created man, all this manifested by virtue of the grace of Rahmaniyyat. However, when a grace is bestowed owing to some practice, worship, spiritual exercise and endeavour, it is a beneficence of Raheemiyyat. This has always been the way of Allah for mankind. As long as man adopts state of humility in Salat and during remembrance of Allah he prepares himself for the grace of Raheemiyyat. The difference between seminal fluid and the first stage of the spiritual state is that seminal fluid is dependent on being attracted by the womb and this state is dependent on the pull of Raheem God. Just as it is possible for seminal fluid to be wasted before being drawn to the womb it is also possible for the first stage of the spiritual state, that is, humility, to be ruined before being connected to Raheem God.

Many people weep and cry during Salat while they are in the early spiritual stages. They exhibit strange mannerisms and passion in their love of God but because they do not forge a connection with the Source of Grace, that is Raheem God, and they are not drawn to Him owing to His special manifestation, all their pathos and state of humility is baseless and at times they slip and stumble so much so that they regress beyond their initial spiritual stage. This is an amazing, interesting similarity that just as seminal fluid is the first stage of physical state and unless it is drawn to the womb it is nothing in itself, likewise humility is the initial stage of spiritual state and unless it is helped by Raheem God and is drawn to Him, humility is nothing in itself.

This is why you will find thousands of people who once derived pleasure in some part of their life in remembrance of Allah and during Salat, they had trance-like experiences and they wept but then some evil got hold of them that once they were drawn to selfish matters they lost all the spirituality due to their passion for worldly desires. It is a grave cause for concern that often state of humility is lost before being connected to

Raheemiyyat and is ruined before pull of Raheem God can work on it.' (Baraheen e Ahmadiyya, Part V. pp. 188 - 190)

Thus, no one can assert that their worship of God has reached a high stage of humility. Humility is comprised of all the elements as explained before. Indeed, one needs to make constant effort to draw the grace of Raheemiyyat. Just as no one knows when fertilisation will take place and foetus will be created and at times miscarriage takes place, similarly even if man's efforts bear fruit as regards humility, at times he develops arrogance. Like those who first accept Prophets of God and then turn away; they are connected to God as long as they are in touch with the one commissioned by Him. Failing that, they fall in a pit of disgrace and are lost. One has to constantly try for the grace of Raheemiyyat. A little bit of effort in this regard, the odd acceptance of prayer or a few true dreams should not make one feel proud. In spite of attaining nearness to God and attaining falah, in spite of be utmost humble, in spite of avoiding all idle matters, in spite of spending in the way of God, in spite of safeguarding their chastity, in spite of fulfilling their covenants, in spite of paying the dues of worship of God and Salat, those who have attained falah supplicate God to cover them in the wrap of His grace and blessings because they know without it, they are nothing. It is God's grace alone through which man's constant efforts to draw the grace of Raheemiyyat is drawn and accepted.

A true believer should always keep in view that no doubt God has stated that believers have attained falah, however in order to make this falah a constant part of one's life, one should not attribute every achievement to one's own efforts. Following every achievement one should consider that it was not one's doing but came to pass with the grace of God. Otherwise our good practices may be wasted like seminal fluid which ends up in miscarriage. We should focus on our ending so that the grace of Raheemiyyat may accept our efforts and this process gives birth to a being which is complete in every way. And may we be counted among those who increase in humility as they develop in spirituality.

Indeed, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) whose standard and level of worship of God is beyond our imagination said that even he would be granted Paradise only by the grace of God. How can anyone else's practice then take them to Paradise! In spite of being given guarantee by God the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), who had come to reform the entire world, so intensified his humility and meekness during Prayer at night by standing for long periods of time that his feet would swell. It is essential for every true believer that the state of his heart before offering Salat and after finishing Salat is distinctly different. If there is any sign of egotism or suchlike before Salat, once Salat is finished the heart should be clear of any negative feeling. At the end of every worship of God one should have vanquished any arrogance and adopted humility. In our daily matters we should be courteous to everyone, we should adopt humility to seek God's pleasure and worship of God should continue to turn us to God so that we may be recipients of fresh blessings of the grace of Raheemiyyat. Each day should identify our weaknesses to us and enhance God's grace on us. May God always make us those who engage in Istighfar (seek forgiveness) and may each virtue of ours, if it is a virtue in God's sight, be a source of attaining God's pleasure. May each one of us be among those who attain falah in God's sight!