

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

The Amīr/National President
Jamā‘at Ahmadiyya,

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Dear Brother,

السلام علیکم ورحمة اللہ وبرکاتہ

Extracts from the Friday Sermon delivered by *Hadrat Khalīfa-tul-Masīh V* (May Allāh be his Helper) on 8 June 2018 at Baitul Futūh Mosque, London.

“My mercy pervades everything.”

Our Imam, *Hadrat Khalīfa-tul-Masīh V* (May Allāh be his Helper) in the beginning of his sermon recited the following verse:

وَ اَكْتُبْ لَنَا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ اِنَّا هُدْنَا اِلَيْكَ قَالَ عَدَا اَبِي اَصْحٰبِ بِهٖ مِنْ اَشْءٍ وَ رَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَ فَسَا كُتُبِهَا
لِلَّذِيْنَ يَتَّقُوْنَ وَ يُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكَاةَ وَ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ .

“And ordain for us good in this world, as well as in the next; we have turned to You seeking forgiveness.’ God replied, ‘I will inflict My punishment on whom I will; but My mercy encompasses all things; so I will ordain it for those who act righteously, and pay the Zakāt and those who believe in Our Signs.” (7:157)

It is Allāh’s great favour upon His servants that His mercy encompasses everything. The word *Rahmah* means kindness, compassion and empathy. So this means that God is lenient towards His servants and overlooks their faults to an unlimited degree. God’s mercy and compassion is so comprehensive that it covers everything. His *rahmah* includes both *Rahmaniyat* and *Rahimiyat*. *Rahmaniyat* is His attribute whereby He grants without being asked and in this context He has created countless things for the benefit of man. And His attribute of *Rahimiyat* is manifested for His servants who fulfil His commandments and bow down before Him. Thus in this verse He says that it is not His intention to punish His creatures. This is a big misunderstanding some people have and they ask why did God create people if He had to punish them. Allāh says that His intention is not to punish, rather the punishment is merited by those who go to the extreme in their transgressions. And even this punishment is temporary, for there will come a time when His mercy will pervade hell and punishment will come to an end. And the torment of hell will also be the result of their wrongdoing and will serve as a means of reformation. In this respect this punishment is also a means to bring about reformation and thus it is also a mercy.

The first requirement for attaining God’s mercy is *Taqwa*:

In another verse, Allāh says:

اِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللّٰهِ قَرِیْبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِیْنَ۔

“Surely, the mercy of Allāh is nigh unto those who do good.” (7:57)

Muhsineen are those who fulfil their duties and live up to the requirements of *Taqwa*. The Lord of heaven and earth says that if you walk the path of *Taqwa*, act upon His commandments and believe in His signs then you will surely merit His mercy. The requirement here is *Taqwa*, and the fact is that if one understands *Taqwa* properly he will automatically be able to perfect the other virtues and strengthen his faith. The Promised Messiah (May peace be upon him) says, “A person’s spiritual beauty lies in treading the subtle paths of *Taqwa*. The subtle paths of faith are the comely curves and lines of spiritual beauty. Undoubtedly, man’s spiritual beauty is dependent on fulfilling the obligations of God and the pledges of faith and employing every part of the body from head to foot, and inner faculties such as emotions and morals at the proper place; and remaining vigilant about their hidden temptations; and being mindful of one’s obligations to one’s fellow beings. In the Holy Qur’ān God has described *Taqwa* as a garment, which shows that spiritual beauty comes from *Taqwa*. And *Taqwa* means to fulfil one’s pledges to God and faith and fulfil one’s obligations to one’s fellow creatures and to stick to the most subtle paths of *Taqwa*. When a person achieves this, he becomes entitled to God’s mercy.

Repentance is the means for attracting God’s mercy:

The Promised Messiah (May peace be upon him) says: Repentance and penitence are the means for attracting Divine mercy. The word *ghafr* (غفر) means to cover. This means that God with His power covers up the shortcomings of his servant who seeks forgiveness so that his natural shortcomings are not exposed and he does not succumb to sin on their account. For common people, the meaning is wider, and it means that God will cover up the sins which a person has perpetrated, save him from its ill effects and punishment. The true meaning however is that God uses His power to save the repentant person from falling prey to his natural shortcomings and grants him knowledge, strength and illumination.

Keep seeking forgiveness for all kinds of sins:

Further elaborating on the theme of *Istighfar* (seeking forgiveness), the Promised Messiah (May peace be upon him) says: Some people are aware of their sins while others are not, either because they have become heedless or because it is committed by error without their knowing it. This is why Allāh commands us to always offer *Istighfar* for every sin whether it is apparent or hidden, and whether it relates to one’s hands or feet or tongue or nose or ear or eyes, so that one does not commit sin with any part of his body. While we offer *Istighfar* we should also offer the prayer of Ḥaḍrat Adam (May peace be upon him)

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ۔

“Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves; and if Thou forgive us not and have not mercy on us, we shall surely be of the lost.” (7:24)

This prayer has already been accepted. Do not live a life of heedlessness. One who does not live a life of heedlessness is not likely to fall prey to an unbearable calamity. Nothing happens without God’s permission, as I was taught the prayer:

رَبِّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَادِمُكَ رَبِّ فَاحْفَظْنِي وَانصُرْنِي وَإِزِدْ حِمْنِي۔

“O my Lord, everything serves You. So O my Lord, protect me and help me and have mercy on me.”

The difference between *Taubah* and *Istighfar*:

Taubah and *Istighfar* are two different things. In one sense *Istighfar* has precedence over *Taubah* because it precedes the latter. *Istighfar* is God's help and power that is sought to be saved from sin, whereas *Taubah* means to stand on one's feet, which means to remain steadfast in seeking God's protection against sin. *Taubah* means to ask God that we remain steadfast on our pledge to avoid sin; and that having been granted safety from fire on account of our *Istighfar*, this salvation should be permanent. It means that we should not merit God's displeasure which would make all our efforts be in vain. *Istighfar* is for seeking forgiveness from sins, and then *Taubah* is so that God may keep us steadfast in this condition, that we may continue to be saved from sin and from fire. It is the Divine practice that when one seeks God's help, God grants a power whereby man stands on his feet and is given a new zeal for doing good deeds which is ingrained in the word *Taubah*. *Taubah* becomes possible after *Istighfar*. Without *Istighfar* one loses the capacity for *Taubah*. If you offer *Istighfar* and *Taubah* in this manner, the result will be that God will grant you the best provision till the time that has been ordained. It is the Divine practice that through *Taubah* and *Istighfar* you will achieve your true status. Every faculty has a circle within which it progresses. Not every person can be a Prophet or Messenger or *Siddiq* or *Shaheed*, but one should strive to achieve the highest status within one's capacity, and this is achieved through *Istighfar* and *Taubah*.

The requirements of true *Taubah*:

The Promised Messiah (May peace be upon him) says: There are three requirements for true *Taubah*. The first is to clear one's mind of evil thoughts, and this cannot be until you create in your mind an abhorrent image of sin. But if you keep those thoughts in mind and do not view them with abhorrence, then it becomes impossible to be saved from them. The second step is to feel remorse and be penitent if one is ever inclined towards or perpetrates something evil. Remorse should be the first thought to enter one's mind and one should realize that these evil deeds are destroying one's life and they only offer fleeting pleasure. Man's conscience always tells him what is good and what is evil, and as one listens to the voice of conscience one slowly begins to be saved from sin. The third step is to make a firm resolve never ever to come near such evil, and then to remain steadfast in this. Only in this way can those evils be overcome and good deeds will start taking their place.

Please convey these guidelines given by Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) to members of your Jamā'at.

Jazākumullāh.

Wassalām,

(Ch. Hameedullah)

Wakīl A'lā,

Tahrīk Jadīd Anjuman Ahmadiyya Pakistan.

Dated: 13 June 2018