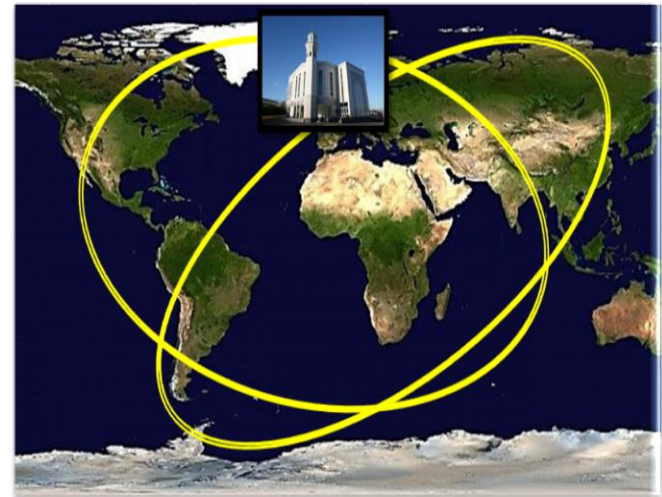


Vie with each other in good deeds



**Sermon Delivered by Hadhrat
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**relayed live all across the
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Summary

Vie with each other in good deeds

Allah Almighty has also referred to those, who perform righteous deeds and do good works as "best of creatures"

A righteous deed is a ladder to rise towards Islam and God.

The root of all righteous deeds and virtues is to have faith in God Almighty.

Our teaching is that one should treat everyone with kindness

The scope of sympathy is very broad and one should not leave out any nation or person.

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Hazrat Khalifatul Masih (ABA) said:

Allah the Almighty has also referred to those, who perform righteous deeds and do good works as "best of creatures"

Allah states to the believers that "Your goal must always be fastabiqul khairaat!"

It means that you must always endeavour to lead others in good works.

"Verily, those who believe and do good works — they are the best of creatures." (98:8)

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih (ABA) said:

The Promised Messiah (as) has, in light of the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith, expounded this matter in great detail for our guidance for instance:

What is virtue? How can one achieve true virtue?

Why is it necessary to believe in God Almighty in order to perform good deeds?

What should be the standard of one's belief? How can we enhance the standard of this belief?

What are the means for doing righteous deeds?

How does Allah the Exalted reward those who perform righteous deeds?

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih (ABA) said that now I will present some excerpts by the Promised Messiah (as).

The Promised Messiah (AS) said:

A righteous deed is a ladder to rise towards Islam and God. The reality of a good deed needs to be borne in mind." ... Satan misleads people in every way and leads them astray from the path of Truth.

Thus, in order to reform one's morals it necessary to have faith in a Being, Who is ever watchful over him, his actions, his deeds and Who is a Witness for the secrets of his hearts. Thus, this is none but the Being of God the Exalted.' Hence, only if a person has faith of this standard and is ever mindful of God Almighty will he be able to truly act virtuously.

The Promised Messiah (AS) said:

Righteousness means to abstain from the subtle paths of evil. ...Rather, true virtue is to serve mankind and demonstrate absolute truthfulness and loyalty in the cause of Allah the Exalted and to be ready to sacrifice one's life in His cause. For this reason Allah the Exalted has stated here: That is, verily Allah is with those who are righteous and those who do good.

Remember well that merely abstaining from evil is not a virtue (to say that I abstain from evil and am very pious is not an act of virtue), until he does not act virtuously alongside it.

The Promised Messiah (AS) said:

In the sight of Allah the Exalted, Islam is not the name of refraining from vices. Rather, until a person does not adopt virtues, whilst abstaining from vices, he will not be able to survive in this spiritual realm. The truth of Islamic teachings is to increase and improve one's spirituality.

Virtues are like food. In the same manner a person cannot exist without food, he will cease to exist until he adopts virtues. This state is acquired by increasing in faith.

The Promised Messiah (AS) said:

In fact, pious is he, whose outer and inner state is one and whose heart and outer appearance is one. He walks on the earth in similitude to an angel. All good results come about through faith. Hence, nobody puts his finger in the burrow of a snake having recognised it. When we know that a certain amount of poison is lethal then our belief is that it will kill. So the sign of that belief is that we will not pour it into our mouths and instead save ourselves from death.

The root of all righteous deeds and virtues is to have faith in God Almighty. The weaker one's belief in God Almighty is, the more weakness and laziness there will be in doing good deeds. However, when faith is strong and there is complete faith in all the attributes of God Almighty the more there will be an extraordinary type of change in the deeds of man.

The Promised Messiah (AS) said:

There are two very important things for a human being, that is to safeguard from evil and to strive towards virtue and there are two aspects of virtue; one is to abstain from evil and the other is to do more good. To shun evil is one aspect of virtue but the other aspect is to actually do good yourself. Faith is complete when we carry out virtuous deeds and become helpful for others....

It is very important to become beneficial for others. People revere kings and fear punishments by the state and there are many who do not violate the law of the land. Then how can they disobey the commandments of God, Who rules over all, with such audacity? Is there any other reason for this apart from lack of faith in God?

The Promised Messiah (AS) said:

The stage of refraining from evil is accomplished when there is belief in God. The second stage should be to seek the ways that were chosen by the beloved people of God. The first stage of safeguarding ourselves from evils is sought through the manifestation of the glorious attributes of God Almighty because He is an enemy of the sinful people. The second stage is accomplished through the manifestation of the merciful attributes of God Almighty. The last [stage] is that nothing is obtained without the strength and capacity obtained from Allah Almighty.

When someone establishes a connection with God Almighty and His holy spirit descends upon them, then righteous deeds become akin to delicious and pleasant-smelling sweet drink for them. They begin to recognise the innate beauty of virtues and run towards them. The mere thought of doing evil trembles their spirit.

The Promised Messiah (AS) said:

When man carries out virtuous deeds, there are two aspects to that; there are some which are compulsory and others which are voluntary." They are split into two parts; some pious deeds are compulsory, and some pious deeds are voluntary. Compulsory deeds, which are incumbent upon every individual include paying off ones debt.

Yet attached with every compulsory deed are voluntary deeds which are additional, i.e. a counter deed which is greater than the original deed. For example, if one returns a good deed in kind and further to it he performs a greater pious deed would be deemed as a voluntary deed.

The Promised Messiah (AS) said:

The saints and servants of God fulfil their religious obligations through these voluntary deeds. For example, aside from Zakat they also give Sadaqat. God Almighty befriends such individuals and this friendship becomes so strong that it is almost as if God Almighty becomes their hands and feet, as explained by the hadith of the Holy Prophet (sa) whereby God Almighty states "I become their hands and feet to the extent that I become the tongue through which they speak".

When man increases in his faith and his belief in God escalates, he then performs virtuous deeds in order to please God Almighty. As a result God Almighty grants that individual the opportunity to carry out more virtuous deeds. The Promised Messiah (as) states: It has been preordained in the design of Islam that one righteous deed gives birth to another righteous deed.

The Promised Messiah (AS) said:

The root of virtue is to not exceed in partaking of lawful pleasures and desires of the world. For example, God Almighty has not forbidden food and drink but if a man makes it his hobby of consuming the same food and drink night and day, then he has given it priority over his faith.....

Hence, in the same way the prophets partake of the delights of the world. Prophets also eat and drink but also partake of the delights of this world. They marry, have children, eat and drink. Prophets also partake in all these things.

The contentment they receive from worldly entities is of this nature, for the reason that the reformation of the world was a task assigned to them. If the grace of God was not with them then they would have perished.

The Promised Messiah (AS) said:

Our teaching is that one should treat everyone with kindness. Be truly obedient to those in authority as they serve for our protection.

One's life and wealth is protected by them [i.e. the government] and also one should treat their family members with kindness because they also have certain rights. However, we must not offer prayers behind those who are not righteous and involved in harmful innovations and Shirk and oppose us.

The Promised Messiah (AS) said:

Our principal is that one should treat everyone with kindness. One who does not deal with kindness with others in this world, what will he partake from the rewards of the hereafter?

The Promised Messiah (as) states: 'if someone says that the disbelievers were killed during the time of the Holy Prophet (sa), the response to that is that they were in fact guilty on account of their evil ploys and killing the Muslims without any reason.'

Therefore, they were punished on account of their crimes and not because they rejected [Islam]. If one simply rejects something and there is no element of evil or cruelty with that then it does not become the means of incurring punishment in this world.'

The Promised Messiah (AS) said:

Remember, the scope of sympathy in my view is very broad and one should not leave out any nation or person. ... I admonish you again and again that do not limit your scope of sympathy and adhere to the teaching which God Almighty has revealed in regards to sympathy, and that is:

The first stage of virtue is that one adopt *Adl* [justice] and so when one does good to you, you must also do good in return. The second stage is *Ihsan*, that in response to one's good you must do greater in return. And though this stage is greater than *Adl* however it is possible that one who does *Ihsan* can remind the other of his favours on him.

The Promised Messiah (AS) said:

Therefore, the greatest stage of all is that one should do good in a manner as if borne out of one's personal love for the other and it is not done with the intention of bestowing a favour on one but rather like a mother nurtures her child. The mother does not seek any reward or anything in return for bringing up her child, rather it is a natural impulse for which she is ready to sacrifice her every comfort for his nurturing.

So much so that if the king were to command the mother to stop feeding the child milk and even if the child dies as a result of this, she will not be held accountable but would the mother be happy to hear such a commandment and follow it? Certainly not! Thus, one should do good to others in the same manner and should reach the stage where it becomes a natural act because when a certain practise develops gradually into a natural phenomenon it is then that it attains the stage of perfection.'

The Promised Messiah (AS) said:

The sympathy for mankind borne out of a natural impulse is known as *lytai Zil Qurba* [giving like kindred].

By mentioning this sequence God Almighty desires that you should raise your standard of good deeds to the stage of *lytai Zil Qurba* i.e. where it becomes a natural impulse. Until an act does not reach this stage where it becomes a natural impulse, it cannot reach the state of perfection.'

The Promised Messiah (AS) said:

Remember that God Almighty is well pleased with good deeds and He desires that one should show sympathy to His creation. If He desired for ill-deeds then He would have urged one to do so, however God Almighty is pure of such a thing – Holy is He, and great is His majesty.

May God Almighty enable us to perform good deeds in order to attain His pleasure and may we attain the target of, 'Vie with one another in good deeds' which God Almighty has set for us.