

The eternal struggle of Good and Evil and our Responsibilities

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفِي النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ
يُدْهِبُنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ط ذَلِكَ ذِكْرِي لِلذَّكِّرِينَ ع وَأَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ
اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١١٦﴾ فَلَوْلَا كَانَ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِنْ
قَبْلِكُمْ أُولُوا بَقِيَّةٍ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْفَسَادِ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
مِّمَّنْ أَنْجَيْنَا مِنْهُمْ ع وَاتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَا أُتْرِفُوا فِيهِ
وَكَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١١٧﴾ (هود: ١١٥-١١٧)

Khalifatul Masih IV, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad delivered this Friday sermon on August 5, 1983:

There are many goals of worship and many benefits for man. One aspect is connection with God and the other is relationship with His creation. In the realm of mutual relations, *salat* (the formal Muslim prayer) helps to increase the good practices in a society and reduces the bad ones. The social structure continues to improve every day and becomes more desirable, pleasing and attractive. Hence the Holy Quran tells us to implement *salat* with the hope that our worship will change our society for the better. It tells us to protect our day with *salat* on both ends of it, as soldiers on guard. Protect our days by encircling them with *salat* and get up from sleep and worship in the nights. Why? إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُدْهِبُنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ Good has the power to eliminate bad. Apart from connection with God and benefit in the life hereafter, *salat* has the distinct benefit of bringing out good in us and in the society around us. It is a firm principle and we cannot find an alteration in it that “good dispels bad”. This assertion of Holy Quran is unique and different from common belief. The explanation that good dispels bad is at odds with the usual understanding of human mind. A cursory look gives the impression that evil is more powerful than good. It is said when evil enters a man it pushes out good in him.

The Holy Quran is an amazing book of wisdom. It mentors the weaknesses of human nature and corrects the wrong conclusions of human mind and points out the right path. Allah says that good is powerful and evil is weak. The nations where we see evil, their goodness gradually disappeared first. As there cannot be emptiness or vacuum, the evil creeps in for the lack of good. Human mind cannot be empty and cannot survive on nothing. Allah says that presence of good prevents against evil. Evil is darkness compared to light. If there is no light, darkness will surely prevail.

This scientific book of the spiritual world (the Holy Quran) uses such expressions and sheds light on subjects which are beyond the imagination of human mind. With the knowledge of the Holy Quran when we ponder on these subjects we find amazing truths. This is a fundamental principle that good is a positive force and lack of good is evil. As good recedes evil expands. It is not possible that good is still present and the evil takes root. God tells us that if we wish to uproot the social evils we need to adopt goodness. We need to guard our daily routine with worship, and there should be no part of our daily routine which is not guarded with worship. The goodness of worship will help to drive away evils of the society. This is the gist of the verses of the Quran that I have recited before you. If we indulge deeper in this subject we find that there are two types of *salati* (one who says *salat*). First there are those who are *salati* but the evils of their society are not disappearing. Second are those who manifest God’s grace as they become closer to Him. They experience a wholesome change and their minds are

transformed until they are able to receive God's grace. People around them sense this and feel protected in their company. They are not a threat to anyone. In fact we can always expect something good from them. These are the worshippers who are engaged in the righteous worship. The clear evidence of this are those manifest changes that appear in them in this world. If evil persists even with worship then that worship is false. There is some defect and weakness in that worship. The Holy Quran is announcing that worship is a virtue of high quality. In the presence of worship our evils should start to disappear. If we pour water in a vessel it starts pushing out the oil. Water is heavier and if we completely fill the vessel with water the oil will be completely gone. Good has weight and the ability to survive. In the presence of good the evil melts away.

The Holy Quran explains different aspects of this subject in different ways. Allah says,

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَرَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا ﴿٥١﴾

Righteousness and virtue are same. Allah says, when truth arrives, falsehood runs away. This is not an accident. It is impossible for truth to run away. إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا ﴿٥١﴾ It is in the nature of falsehood to melt away before truth as darkness cannot do anything but to disappear before light. Holy Quran defines truth and virtue elegantly,

فَأَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاءً ۗ وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي
الْأَرْضِ ۗ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ ﴿١٨﴾ (الرعد: ١٨)

Falsehood and lies are akin to froth. They have no weight and they don't survive.

وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ ﴿١٨﴾ But that which has been created for the benefit of mankind lasts.

فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ Beneficial things are given permanence and survive in the world.

Some who look at this assertion of the Holy Quran with a superficial eye contend that they have observed the exact opposite. Many religions came and went away. After every decline those lands were possessed with evil again. So every wave of good comes and goes away but evil is everlasting in this world. After looking at the history of human race a superficial person says that it does not make sense that good repels evil. It is more like evil pushes out good.

This contention is wrong on two grounds. Although a superficial study of history lends support to this contention but the claim of Holy Quran is true and based upon wisdom. A further look will lead to the conclusion that the claim of Holy Quran is indeed true, our cursory observation was wrong.

At first we observe that good spreads with the arrival of God's Messenger in a condition of such weakness that if evil had any strength it could not have been possible. Evil has all the means and resources to maintain its hold. It seeps into the deepest crevices of the society as Holy Quran describes:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ (الروم: ٤٢)

That Holy Prophet^{saw} appeared at a time when there was no possibility for good to gain a foot-hold neither on the ground nor in the sea. Sometimes evil spreads so much, that there is left but no space for good. The Holy Quran tells us that the Holy Prophet was sent at a time when there was complete absence of good. In these circumstances good started its march and gained ground. The evil started to shrink even when it had command of all those means and resources considered necessary for victory. It had them all and had completely thrown out good. In such state of weakness good flourished when there were no palpable reasons for it to do so. This success was not due to arms or coercion.

If we enter all those facts and forces into a computer which were favoring evil in the time of the Holy Prophet on the one hand and on the other feed the message and practice of the Prophet, who was a popular person but after his declaration that he will preach good and defeat evil with good, became the most hated person. His own family deserted him and turned away from him. All his friends and fans left him and evil engulfed the society completely. What should be the result of this enquiry? Every

time the computer will say that good has been defeated, therefore there is no question of its victory. But contrary to this assertion, what happened? The Holy Quran says,

أَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا أَفَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾ (الانبیاء: ٢٥٠)

these are fools who are boasting of their victory and making tall claims that how can good prevail in a state of such weakness over our strength? Allah says, why can these people not realize that We are squeezing the earth from under them and the land of Muhammad is increasing. Everyday their strength is breaking away at the edges and is being added to the strength of Muhammad. أَفَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾ How can those prevail whose strength is melting away?

Therefore, good comes when all odds are in favor of evil. In the words of the Holy Quran there is only one everlasting factor in favor of good and that is إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ good is a positive force with no negatives. When these positive forces appear, the negative forces start disappearing. Those nations who do not safeguard their positive forces, first abandon good and then evil finds its way into them. Until good is present, evil cannot dare to take root. When we analyze this view, the philosophical assertion that evil has always prevailed appears false. If we study the history of mankind in a shape of a chart and plot every civilization and determine its place we will be surprised to learn that even when good was apparently defeated it left behind certain qualities which raised the level of civility among successive generations.

The man of stone-age who learned to live in this world had wild habits. A comparison of his religious and social concepts with today's practices appears barbaric. Messengers of God taught them moral values. After these Messengers people gradually turned back to their evil practices but never went back to their original condition. The next wave brought them higher than before. The concept of freedom and human rights present in today's world did not exist just a few thousand years ago even in the least. Evil! Yes, but it has not gained such control over man as before. Some good remains and it prevents complete control of evil.

Once in the University of London, a Christian raised a question before me. "You make tall claims that Muhammad transformed the world and did such and such. The fact is that only after few years you fought among yourselves bitterly and all brotherhood was lost. All talk of civility that you attribute to Muhammad disappeared and became a thing of past". These people raise questions but are not stubborn in their argument. I pointed out to him that his study was only cursory. You are comparing the time of Muhammad with the time after him. How could it be that his presence or absence makes no difference? He was a person of such supreme spiritual strength and an extraordinary being as if a bright shining sun of goodness was rising. It is against common sense not to be able to see a difference between his presence and absence. So, answer to your question is that you should compare the time before his ministry with the time after him. What was the condition of Arabia when the Holy Prophet brought the Message to Arabs? He raised them and brought them to great heights! When he left it appeared as if they fell again. But the fact is that their society did not fall back to its previous condition. In fact when you compare the condition of Arabs before the Holy Prophet with their condition after him, the latter appear to be elevated sky high. How could you compare the ignorant Arabs with the time of *Umayya*, or ignorant Arabs with the dynasty of *Abbasides*? We are saddened because we compare this with the time of the Holy Prophet and see many blemishes and are tormented by them. But what Holy Prophet brought was not all lost. Even after thousands of years it is not all gone. Today, fourteen hundred years later Muslims are still carrying some of those values and even in this degraded condition are better in those areas compared to other nations.

The Holy Prophet infused the Arabs with such moral attributes that today when they have drifted far away from Islam, these attributes are still helping them. In many instances Muslims are clearly separated from others. For example, the Holy Prophet has taken away brutality from them. Some times it appears that a Muslim is acting brutally, but in actual matter of fact he is not. It appears to us as a

brutal action as the Holy Prophet has raised the attribute of justice to such a high standard. Consider the brutality of Hindus or the Sikhs or other nations and then look at what we believe to be brutal. Some followers of the Holy Prophet who are angry with some others act viciously which we consider brutality but in the eyes of the world it is nothing.

This is a gift of the Holy Prophet and the good he instilled did not entirely disappear. Whatever was left prevented the evil to some extent. Every wave of prophethood in this world left man higher than before. Some good was left behind which was important and was lasting. Evil has never been able to overwhelm it completely. This in short is human history. Each period of history has left man better and every next period improved upon this. The underlying secret of this evolution is the essence of prophethood. Every time man was educated further through prophethood.

Even today the theme of **إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ** is continuing. Today, Ahmadi's have been blessed with good by God's Grace. As a result our evil started to disappear. This is a blessing of the prophethood. What is the difference between us and others? Just that we have attached ourselves with the blessings of the ministry of Muhammad^{saw} where many others have rejected it. We have stepped into a place where good starts to push out evil. Learn from the past of humanity and strive to stick with good. If ever the positive force of good will start to decrease in us, evil will surely find its way back. When evil comes back mere verbal appeals do not work. No one abandons evil just on someone's words. But if a people adopt good then evil begins to melt away on its own.

With the Grace of God, this is the condition of Jamaat Ahmadiyya. This is a great beneficence of Promised Messiah^{as} that he assembled a group of men who pay more attention to call for good and then act on it with conviction. They have a natural aversion to evil. Therefore opponents have to work very hard to introduce any bad practices in Ahmadis. There exists a natural state of defense. This state is a result of goodness. As long as this good remains in you, the power to defend will also remain. Once good disappears then this power to defend will also vanish. Allah says,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ (الرعد: ١١)

Indeed, God does not create evil nor allows it to enter a people. Whatever good nations possess God does not take it away from them until, **لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ**, those nations themselves give it up and cause a change. **يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ**.

This is a great blessing that you attend to the cause of good and work for it. When opposite happens, nations fall. It is a different situation when nations are in a decline. They hear the call for good but ignore it and run after evil persuasions. You must maintain your distinction. ...

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To review the complete Urdu text of the Friday sermon go to:

<http://www.alislam.org/urdu/kt/1983/19830805.pdf>

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