



“ MORAL MIRACLES ”

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Whilst it is true that as ordinary Muslims without any pretensions to sainthood we are unable to perform sublime miracles like the Prophets of God or like those of inspired mujaddids [reformers or renovators] and saints of Islam, yet Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Mujaddid of the 14th Century Hijrah has expounded to us an area in which we, too, can perform miracles in our own conduct that can perhaps be of more import collectively to mankind than the signs that were shown to the peoples of the past by their Messengers.

But, first of all, as the farmer clears his land of weeds and pebbles, before ploughing and cultivating with healthy seeds that will bring forth beautiful fruits for all to relish, so, too, we must prepare our "soil". And the first step given to us in the Holy Quran is:

O you who believe, turn to Allah with taubatan nasuha (sincere repentance) (66:8).

Taubah means he returned to a place to which he had come before or he returned from disobedience to obedience to God; he repented. Nasaha signifies to advise and counsel sincerely, honestly, sedulously or faithfully for the good of the person advised; and taubatan nasuha means true or sincere repentance; repentance that mends life; such repentance that one never returns to such sin after one repents of it (Lane).

So merciful and loving is our God to us that He has promised that if we effect this kind of repentance He will change our evil deeds into good deeds:

Except him who repents and believes and does good deeds; for such Allah changes their evil deeds to good ones. And Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful (25:70).

However, this repentance has to be sincere and it is also conditional, and in the following excerpt, Mirza Sahib has given us three conditions that are to be fulfilled if this taubatan nasaha is to be a genuine, lasting and beneficial one.

Three Conditions:

"Indeed, in order to acquire fine morals, taubah (repentance) motivates and assists man and helps to make him perfect; that is, whoever wishes to change his evil behaviour, then it is an indispensable prerequisite for him to make taubah with a pure heart and with sincere intentions. One must also remember that there are three conditions to taubah without which perfect taubah or taubatan nasaha cannot be obtained.

The first of these three conditions is that which is called aqla in the Arabic language (from qala'a, verbal noun aqla'un – to root out, eradicate, pull out); that is, the banishing or eradication of all those evil thoughts which instigated those base habits. It is a fact that the influence of our imagination is very great, for, before any action comes into being, it must be preceded by thinking. So, as regards taubah, the first condition is to remove those evil thoughts or ideas. For example, if a man has contracted an unlawful relationship with a woman, then in making taubah it is incumbent upon him first to form an ugly picture of her in his mind and keep fresh in his heart the vile nature of this conduct, for, as I have just said, the influence of our imagination is indeed very powerful.

I have read in the memoirs of Sufis that so strong is their mental perception that they have seen people in the shape of monkeys and swine. In short, what happens is that a person tends to assume gradually the characteristics of whatever he meditates strongly on. Therefore, whatever ideas are understood to give rise to low pleasures should be rooted out. This is the first condition.

The second condition is to experience remorse and deep regret. Every man's conscience within him has this power which warns him concerning every evil he commits, but unfortunate is the man who neglects this faculty and leaves it in abeyance. Therefore, we must feel sorrow and show penitence for having committed sins and should keep in mind that this low pleasure is temporary and only lasts for a few days and more so, the intensity of this false pleasure and joy is constantly decreasing to the extent that in old age, when one's strength will have waned, all these worldly indulgences will have to be abandoned. So when all these pleasures have to be relinquished right here in this very life, what benefit is there in committing sins to taste them?

The third condition is that of iron determination; that is, to make a firm resolution never to return to those evils in the future. When this resolution is adhered to, then Allah will confer His divine assistance for achieving true taubah, so much so that when vile habits are completely extirpated, they will be replaced by beautiful morals and praiseworthy actions. It is the work of Allah to bestow on a person the power and strength to achieve this, for He is indeed the Master of all power and might, as is mentioned – all power belongs to Allah alone; and man's existence is built on a shaky foundation, as the Holy Quran testifies: Man is created weak (4:28).

So, in order to obtain strength from Allah, one should fulfil the above three conditions to perfection and must abandon sloth and laziness and make constant du'a (supplication) to Him. Then Allah will surely effect a transformation in one's morals" (Malfuzat, vol. 1, pp. 138-140).

Of course, before the above conditions can be fulfilled or even undertaken, they demand of us that we search for and recognise our shortcomings and entertain a genuine desire to mend our ways as we aim for moral and spiritual advancement. This calls for honesty and sincerity in self-examination and excludes all varieties of anxiety-evading techniques like denial, projection, rationalisation, etc.

Moral Miracles:

Mirza Sahib then puts forth three types of miracles and explains, with examples from the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), why the third kind is so much more efficacious in making a deep impression on the hearts of people and in bringing about a change in their lives, too. He says:

"I now desire to say a few more words and then conclude this topic. I return to the question of the different kinds of miracles and I affirm that miracles like the splitting of the moon, etc., belong to the category that requires deep knowledge for them to be understood, whilst other miracles hinge upon profound spiritual knowledge and insight. But in the third category fall moral miracles which cast a very deep and pervasive influence. Philosophers cannot find comfort in profound spiritual truths and insights. But outstanding and meritorious virtues exert a deep and penetrating effect on them.

From among the many moral miracles of His Excellency, the Chief of the Prophets (pbuh), is this one: Once he had fallen asleep under a tree when he was unexpectedly aroused by a loud shout. And what did he see? Standing right over him with a drawn sword was a wild, fierce-looking desert Arab who addressed him thus: 'O Muhammad! Who can save you from me now?' With perfect calmness and full composure, the Holy Prophet replied: 'Allah.'

This declaration was not like that of ordinary men. Allah, which is the personal name of God and which is a compendium of all perfect attributes, was uttered by the lips of the Holy Prophet in such a way that it really came from deep within his heart and struck the heart of the desert Arab also.

It is said that this is the mighty name of God and there are great and innumerable blessings in it. But what benefit can a person obtain if he does not remember Allah? In short, with such majesty did the word Allah come forth from the lips of the Holy Prophet that this wild Arab was struck with fear and his hand even began to tremble and so the sword fell out of his hand. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) took up the sword and spoke to him thus: 'Now, tell me, who can save you from me now?' And that by-now-weak-hearted barbarian could find not a single name to mention. Then, the Holy Prophet (pbuh), displaying that superb example of virtuous conduct, said to him: 'So, you are free! But learn kindness and bravery from me.' This moral miracle had such an effect on the desert Arab that he became a Muslim.

It is written that a person came to Abul Hasan Khuraqani and related this story: 'During his journey he met a lion and he said to it: "For the sake of God, leave me alone!" The lion still attacked him, but when he exclaimed: "For the sake of Abul Hasan, desist!" the lion moved away. This event created such a deep doubt in the faith of the traveller that he abandoned his journey. He returned and presented this enigma to Abul Hasan who told him that it was really a simple matter. He explained: "You were not truly conscious of the name of Allah, so genuine fear of Him and knowledge of His power were absent from your heart. However, you know my name quite well and so you had a high estimation of it in your heart."' "

Thus you can see that there are many great blessings and virtues in the word Allah, but one must accord it a place in one's heart and pay heed to His greatness.

Yet another of the Holy Prophet's many moral miracles is the following: 'Once he had a lot of goats and on seeing this a certain person remarked: "I have never seen this amount of wealth in anybody's possession before." Whereupon our Master gave him all the goats. At this, the person immediately expostulated: "You are indeed a true Prophet! This type of generosity is difficult to be performed by any other than a Prophet.' "

In short, such was the distinguished conduct of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) that the Holy Quran makes mention of it in the words: And surely thou hast sublime morals (68:4)" (Malfuzat, vol. 1, pp. 101-102).

Mirza Sahib also makes the point that people may make all kinds of excuses, learned or otherwise, to evade having to accept the first two kinds of miracles. For example, they may explain away the splitting of the moon or the eclipses of the sun and the moon in the month of Ramadhan (as signs of the appearance of the Mahdi) as acts of nature with no special spiritual significance. Likewise, miracles relating to deep spiritual knowledge and insight may be regarded as contrary to the demonstrable laws of physical science or may be considered as borrowed knowledge or even as the outpourings of a disturbed mind. However, moral miracles that bring about a distinct and astounding change in behaviour cannot be gainsaid and, in fact, their influence is not limited to time and space nor to race and social class. He then gives a few specific examples of the kind of change he invites us to institute in our lives.

"Every person who gives up evil morals and blameworthy habits and replaces them with beautiful and virtuous habits is a miracle-worker. For example, if he possesses a very harsh disposition and his temper is easily aroused and he forsakes them for forbearance and forgiveness or he exchanges miserliness for generosity or adopts compassion in place of envy, then, indeed he has wrought a miracle. And so, too, if he relinquishes egoism and self-conceit for humility and meekness, then, that, too, is a miraculous act. So, who is there among you who does not cherish the ambition to become a miracle-worker? I am sure that everybody will like to do this in his life. So, without doubt, it will go down as a perpetual and ever-living miracle if a man should change his moral condition, for this is such a miracle that is never destroyed, but instead its influence is spread far and wide.

A believer should become a miracle worker in the eyes of God and of people, too. There have been many drunkards and rakes who were unimpressed by any extraordinary sign but who were forced to bow their heads in acquiescence before a change in the moral conduct of another person (who was like them). If you examine the lives of many people, you will find that they accepted the religion of truth only after having witnessed a miraculous transformation in the moral conduct of someone else" (Malfuzat, vol. 1, pp. 141-142).

Advice to His Jama'at:

Mirza Sahib then directly addresses his Jama'at, which has been specially chosen to initiate the final triumph of truth over irreligion, on how to respond to the rabid attacks from even Muslim objectors who reject his explanations of the Holy Quran and are hostile to him and to his followers.

"It is absolutely necessary, therefore, for my Jama'at members to make progress in their moral conduct for the maxim 'steadfastness is greater than a miracle' is a well-known one. So, they should always remember that if someone should treat them harshly, they should, as far as possible, respond gently and kindly. They should not allow themselves to fall into the trap of meeting violence and harshness with the same.

Man possesses a soul too and it has three different stages – the nafs-ul ammarah (soul that commands evil), the nafs-ul-lawwamah (self-accusing soul) and the nafs-ul-mutma'innah (soul at rest).

In the ammarah stage, man finds himself unable to control his passions and unlawful emotions and loses his sense of equilibrium and falls from a high standard of morality.

But in the lawwamah stage, he has control over his passions. An interesting anecdote comes to mind here. Sa'adi wrote in his Bustan that a venerable old gentleman was bitten by a dog. When he came home his family observed that a dog had bitten him. Among them was a pretty little girl who asked him: 'Why didn't you bite back the dog?' He replied: 'Daughter, it is not mete for a human to behave like a dog.'

Similarly, if an evil person should abuse a believer, the latter should turn away, otherwise the example of the dog will be fulfilled in him. Those closest to Allah were severely cursed, abused and persecuted but they observed the command of the Holy Quran: Turn away from the ignorant (7:199).

Many evil kinds of punishment were perpetrated against the very person of the perfect man, the Holy Prophet (pbuh), not to mention curses, rudeness and impertinence. But what did this most virtuous of all personalities do in return? He made du'a (supplication) for them. And as Allah had given him a promise that if he withdrew from the ignorant, He would preserve his life and honour and uncouth people would not be able to attack him, so it came to pass – that the Prophet's opponents could not besmirch his honour in the least bit. On the contrary, they themselves suffered disgrace and humiliation and either fell at his feet in submission or were destroyed before his very eyes. In short, in this lawwamah stage, man struggles to reform himself and this is not a one-shot affair but a daily task. If an ignorant person or a vagabond should revile or do evil to you, then your honour will be preserved in the measure you turn away from him. On the other hand, if you clash with him in an angry confrontation, then you will be destroyed for you will have bought dishonour for yourself.

In the mutma'innah stage, man becomes the embodiment of beauty and goodness. He severs all connection with the world and from whatever is not of Allah. He goes about his business in this world and even cordially treats with worldly-minded people. But, in reality, he is not of this world. Wherever he is, the world is transformed – there the heaven and the earth become something else" (Malfuzat, vol. 1, pp. 102-103).

Allah's Promise to True Ahmadis:

"Allah, the Most High, says in the Holy Quran: And We shall make those who follow thee above those who disbelieve, to the Day of Resurrection. This heart-consoling promise was given as assistance to the son of Mary, the past Messiah. But I give you the good news that Allah has also used the name of the Christian Messiah in speaking to the present Messiah, son of Mary, and has given him the same good news in the same words, too.

Now, let those ponder, those who are associated with me and wish to be included in this mighty promise and good news, and let them ask themselves this question – Can they be like those who are still stuck in the ammarah stage and are still bound to the path of vice and immorality? Certainly and decidedly not! Those who truly value this promise of Allah, and do not treat my words like a fairy-tale, should remember and listen to me with sincerity of heart. Again, I say to those who are joined to me, that this is not an ordinary relationship. In fact, it is a most powerful one, the influence of which extends not only to me personally, but reaches that Being Who also joined me to that chosen and perfect man who came to the world with truth and purity of soul.

I affirm that if the effect of these words had concerned only me, then I would not have had any fear or anxiety, nor would I have paid any concern to them. But that is not the case. In fact, this impression extends to our Holy Prophet (pbuh) and even to the Supreme Being, Allah, Most High.

So reflect deeply and listen in the proper state of mind to this – if you wish to be part of the good news and you desire to prove its truthfulness and there is indeed a great thirst in you for that promised success (that you will triumph over the disbelievers until the Day of Judgement), then I say again to you that that success will never come unless you transcend the lawwamah stage and arrive at the minaret of the mutma'innah stage.

I say nothing more than this – that you people have grafted yourselves onto a person who is commissioned by Allah, Most High. Therefore, listen to his words with the ears of your heart and be totally prepared to act upon his words, and do not be like those who first accepted the truth then fell into the dirty pit of rejection and have thus bought for themselves eternal punishment" (Malfuzat, vol. 1, pp. 103-105).

Finally, we put forward from the Holy Quran another reference to the Messiah of the 14th Century Hijrah and his disciples:

O you who believe, be helpers (in the cause) of Allah, as Jesus, son of Mary, said to the disciples: Who are my helpers (in the cause) of Allah. So a party of the Children of Israel believed and another party disbelieved; then We aided those who believed against their enemy, and they became predominant (61:14).