

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا
وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

Praise be to **الله**.

We praise him and ask him for help and forgiveness. We ask him for protection from the evilness in ourselves and from our bad deeds. Whomever God guides to the truth no one will lead astray, and whomever He leads astray, no one will ever guide.

I testify that there is no God but **الله** to whom there is no partner
and I testify that Muhammad **ﷺ** is his servant and messenger

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the message (The Quran), and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)" (S15, A9)

Brothers and sisters, ASA. We carry on with the story of Youssof^{f(AS)} .

I am mindful of the fact that today is a public holiday, and we have many youngsters among us. Today is Good Friday. This is a celebrated day in Christianity as it indicates, according to their belief that Jesus Christ died on this day. According to Christian belief, Jesus Christ was crucified and died on the cross for our sins. I was reminded again this morning on TV that this is why the cross is a very important symbol in Christianity. It encompasses the beliefs of the Christians. It is a reminder of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ gave his life to redeem this world. We are also reminded that this was a very short death, as on Easter Monday, Jesus Christ was resurrected, and subsequent to that he was ascended to heaven. An interesting point is the terminology used. It is accepted that he was resurrected, and not that he resurrected himself. The terminology used would indicate that there was another power somewhere that resurrected Jesus Christ. However, this is not what this khutbah is about.

How do these events and symbols relate to us as Muslims? In the cross, we have a symbol and a belief. So what is our symbol in Islam? What do we see Muslims carry with them wherever they go? What do Muslims keep close to them wherever they are? We don't carry a crescent, we don't all go about with a special headgear, we do not all dress the same, we do not wear special necklaces, rings or medallions and we do not all go about with a rosary in our hands or pockets. We as Muslims do not have this type of symbol. So, the question is again asked, what is our symbol? The truth of the matter is that we don't have a symbol in this manner. What we have is something far more important. What we have has no myths or mystic about it. What we have is not open to the whimsical interpretation of anyone who wishes to come up with new ideas about creation, the universe and God.

What we have is the truth embodied in the Holy Quran. This is what Muslims keep close to their souls, hearts and minds. This is our symbol so to speak. This is our salvation. This is our fountain of knowledge. This is our redeemer. This is the book that will guide us onto the right path.

Brothers and sisters, as we carry on with the story of Youssof^{f(AS)} . I remind myself and you that the Holy Quran is a wonderful book. It is the book that Allah has blessed mankind with. It is a book of guidance for those who want to be guided. Allah reminds us regularly of the attributes of this Holy Book in many verses throughout, and these are but a few reminders:

ذَٰلِكَ ٱلْكِتَٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

"This is the book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, for those who fear Allah" (S2, A2)

Here we are reminded that the Quran is sure and has no doubts. It is guidance for those who fear Allah.

نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ بِٱلْحَقِّ

"It is He Who sent down to you in truth, the Book" (S3, A3)

Here we are reminded that this is the book of truth.

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ

لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

"And We have sent down to you the Book explaining all things, a guide, a mercy and glad tidings to those who submit" (S16, A89)

Here we are reminded of the fact that this book gives explanations to all matters, it is a guide, and in so it is also a mercy to those who submit to the will of Allah.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا ﴿١﴾

"Praise be to Allah, Who has sent to His servant the Book, and has allowed therein no crookedness" (S18, A1)

Here again we are reminded that this is a book of truth and that it does not contain crooked and misleading information.

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٢﴾

"These are the verses of the book that makes (things) clear" (S28, A2)

أَن يُلْقَىٰ إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابُ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ ﴿٣٥﴾

"That the book would be sent to you except as a mercy from your Lord" (S28, A85)

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿٣١﴾

"These are the verses of the wise book" (S31, A2)

وَلَكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَن نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ﴿٥٢﴾

"But We have made the (Quran) a light, wherewith We guide such of Our servants as We will" (S42, A52)

These four verses continue to remind us that the Quran clarifies things for us, it is a mercy, it is wisdom and it is a light with which we are guided.

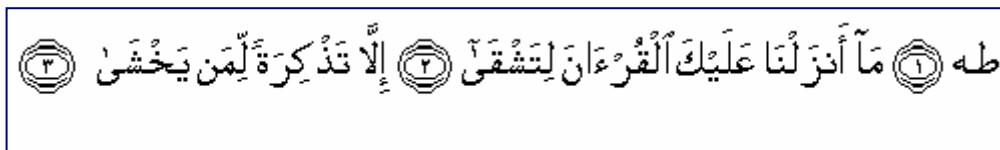
Brothers and sisters, and our children, if you feel a strong need to portray a symbol of Islam, then there is nothing more glorious than the Quran. This is the book that will guide you to the truth. This is the book that will guide you away from falsehood and from sin. This is the book that will guide you to a better conduct with our Creator, with each other and the world around us, this is the book that will, ISA, guide us along the straight path to heaven.

Brothers and sisters, these reminders are important for us. We need to read, to study and to understand the Quran. The Quran has all the attributes to guide us, but it will not do so by simply being there. It will guide us by our understanding it and working with it.

I have a message for our children and for some brothers and sisters who do not speak Arabic as their first language.

First to our children. ISA you should find that your parents are always on at you to read the Quran. They may well have you at a special school or have a tutor for that. You will be asked to learn some Arabic. You will be asked to do it again and again. Well, it is not surprising that at some stage you will ask have I not done enough. Have I not read enough? I have read this sura ten times, or may be a hundred times. When will it all finish.

The answer lies in many ayas in the Quran, but this is just one example:



“Ta, Ha. We have not sent down the Quran to you to be stressed, but only as a reminder for those who fear Allah” (S20, A1-3)

These ayas remind us that the message in the Quran is a reminder for us. This reminder does not come from reading some of the Quran. It does not come from reading the Quran once or twice. It comes from keeping this Quran as close to our minds and hearts as possible all the time. We need to read the Quran again and again and again. We need to listen to it again and again. We need to listen to the explanation of the ayas and the message they have. This is how the Quran becomes a reminder and ISA in doing so we gain our fear of Allah.

For the brothers and sisters who experience difficulty in reading the Quran, your reward is great. In every letter that you read there is a “Hassanah”. Allah promised us to reward us ten fold for each “Hassanah”. So even for the little that you do, your reward will be great. If you are able to read whatever little of the Quran that you can, Allah will guide you through this book onto the right path.

The message is that we need to read, listen and understand our Holy Book. This is our symbol, this is the truth and this should be the focus of our life.

Last week, I was listening to sura “Al-Waaquia”. These are the first three verses:

إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ۝ لَيْسَ لِمَنْ لَوْقَعَتْهَا كَاذِبَةٌ ۝ خَافِضَةٌ رَّافِعَةٌ ۝

“When the event inevitable comes to pass. Then will no soul deny its coming. Many will it bring low, many will it exalt” (S57, A1-3)

The sura is about the day of judgement. It is inevitable. When it happens, no one will be able to deny it any further, but it is too late, for it will bring low many, and it will exalt many.

I have read this sura many times, but when I heard it recited, it hit me. There is no escape from the day of judgement, many will be low, and many will be high. When I heard it I could not help myself from crying. Three ayas only.

Brothers and sisters, these reminders are important for us. We need to read, to study and to understand the Quran. The Quran has all the attributes to guide us into the truth. To guide us to better our faith. To guide us to better ourselves and to better the society around us.

In the past two khutbahs, we were going through the sura of Youssof^(AS). This sura takes us through the journey of Youssof^(AS) from a little boy by his father’s side to a man with the highest status and wealth in Egypt. In doing so, not only do we enjoy going through this journey, but we also learn a tremendous amount about Islam, about the Quran and most importantly, about our conduct as Muslims if we decide that we have a mission in life.

Most, if not all of us, have grown up with ambitions for ourselves and for our children. These ambitions revolve around a better future with a secure job and a secure income. We tell our children as to what value they should put on various things in life. In primary school, it is learning English, literacy and math. As they pass their first hurdle into secondary school, the subjects become more varied, but the message is the same. You need to work hard, you need to study hard if you want to succeed in this life.

In a nutshell, this is the message to our children, day in day out. We have many children here today. If I ask them what do your parents keep on telling you, I am quite sure it will be “stop playing, don’t waste your time and study harder”.

We know that in this day and age, a good education is a must if we want to achieve our ambitions in this life. But this is exactly what it is, **“this life”**.

The truth of the matter is that we, including myself, are very much drifting with everyone else. Our aims and ambitions are similar to those around us, those who do not believe in Allah. Or those who believe in Allah but are too distracted to follow in His path.

So, what is our mission in life? What is our mission, as Muslims, in this life?

The sura of Youssof^(AS) tells us exactly what it is. It is to spread the message of:

لا إله إلا الله

In a previous khutbah, we learned from brother Abu-Sondous that the most important message we should teach our children before anything else is the meaning of:

لا إله إلا الله

I am reminded by the advice that Luqman gave to his son. The first part of his message was:

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾

“Behold Luqman said to his son admonishing him: O my son, do not associate in worship others with Allah: for associating partners with Allah is indeed the highest wrong-doing” (S31, A13)

Back to the story of Youssof. I remind myself and you again that in going through the story of Youssof^(AS) we learn many lessons about conduct in Islam (when we submit to the will of Allah), about the message of Islam, about the conduct of a Muslim in **adversity** and in ease, about Allah^(SWT) and about human behaviour in general.

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٍ لِلْمُتَسَاءِلِينَ ﴿٧﴾

“Verily in Joseph and his brothers are signs for seekers (of the truth)” (S12, A7)

We left last khutbah at a very important point. This point expresses a certain belief that Muslims must accept as part of our existence. It is a belief that helps us understand our lives. It helps us accept our predicaments and makes us realise that everything that happens is but a part of a greater scheme. A scheme that Allah^(SWT) has decreed. This belief is summed up by the words:

وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَى أَمْرِهِ

And Allah has full power and control over His affairs.

The story of Youssof^(AS) helps us understand this belief. We witnessed in last khutbah the evil act of the ten brothers when they put Youssof^(AS) down the well. We then witnessed how he was taken by the passing caravan and sold off as a slave. We knew that this was not what Youssof^(AS) saw in his dreams of the stars, the sun and the moon prostrating to him. In fact, what has happened to him was so far removed, that as a slave, no one will be prostrating to him, but he will have new masters to obey.

The adversity that Youssof^(AS) was enduring is part of the scheme that Allah^(SWT) has set for Youssof^(AS), for his father and for his brother. When we read the verses of the story, we see how events unfold, and there is no changing to that scheme.

In doing so, we need to believe that Allah^(SWT) has determined for everyone of us a scheme that will unfold as we go through our lives. Sometimes we go through adversity and sometimes we go through periods of ease. We as Muslims need to believe that all that we come to face in this life, good or bad, is from Allah. Our losses are by the will of Allah. Our gains are by the will of Allah. Everything that we achieve is by the will of Allah, and we do not have the power to change this will.

وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِ

And Allah has full power and control over His affairs.

Why is this such an important point?

Firstly, we are told that there are people that have been instrumental in events that changed this world, and it is to them that we owe this change. We are told if you try hard enough you can change the course of events. We are told that the human spirit can conquer all, and so on. We look at human figures as being instrumental, and we forget the creator of these human figures.

As Muslims, our belief is that nothing happens without the will of God Almighty. The ultimate power of change lies with Him and Him alone. If change takes place for the better or for the worse, we praise Allah. If we desire a change, we ask Allah to guide us through that change.

Secondly, we sometimes feel that we are in control of our lives and our affairs. Be careful brothers and sisters of this trap. We are only in control in so much as Allah has allowed us to be, no more no less. So when you do feel that you are in control, thank and praise Allah for giving you this control. Of more importance, when you feel that you have lost all control over your affairs, remember that it is all in Allah's hands. Do not despair. Be strong with Allah, and know fully well that Allah will deliver you through this adversity.

It is the same point made over and over again. All power lies in the hands of God Almighty. The problem brothers and sisters is that we are not able to see the whole plan, the whole scheme. We do not have the wisdom or knowledge to do so.

Sometimes we get too excited, and sometimes we despair. We ask why. We question Allah's wisdom and so on. The sura of Youssof^(AS) takes us through a **full journey** of highs and lows to illustrate to us that all events are in Allah's hands. But it also takes us through the behaviour of Youssof^(AS) as he travels through the journey set for him by Allah. This is one of the aspects that makes this sura so important for us today.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلكم

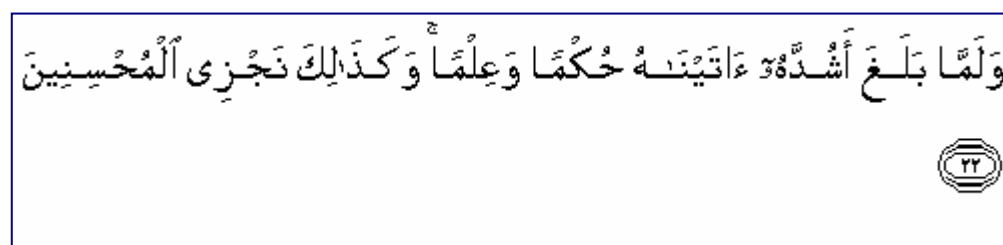
that they do not have the knowledge to apply this concept, for they themselves did not gain the knowledge that is needed. The lesson here is that they need to learn Islam themselves, so as they can teach their children by example.

A good example of knowledge without wisdom is our Muslim children. They are learning and gaining information, literally by the minute. They learn from school, from their peers, from the TV and from the Internet. Their problem is that they do not have the wisdom to assimilate this knowledge and know what is beneficial and what is harmful. It is the duty of their parents to guide them through this period of learning.

The issue of knowledge and wisdom can be looked at in simple terms in the two questions of “How and Why”. To have wisdom without knowledge is to know why but not to know how. To have knowledge without wisdom is to know how but not to know why.

To reiterate the message to our children here today, to simply know **“how”** is not enough, you must have the patience to grow up and learn the wisdom of **“why”**.

This concept makes that aya beautiful:



“When Joseph attained his full manhood, We gave him wisdom and knowledge, thus do we reward those who do right” (S12, A22)

It reinforces the important link between knowledge and wisdom, and it tells us that this attribute was granted once Youssof^(AS) grew up. This is the beauty of the Quran.

May Allah guide us to the truth, and bless us with accepting it.