

Friday, 5th August 2005

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 **اللَّهِ**.

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 **اللَّهِ** to whom there is no partner

and I testify that Muhammad **ﷺ** is his servant and messenger

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٍ وَلَا شَفِيعَةٍ ۗ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٥٤﴾

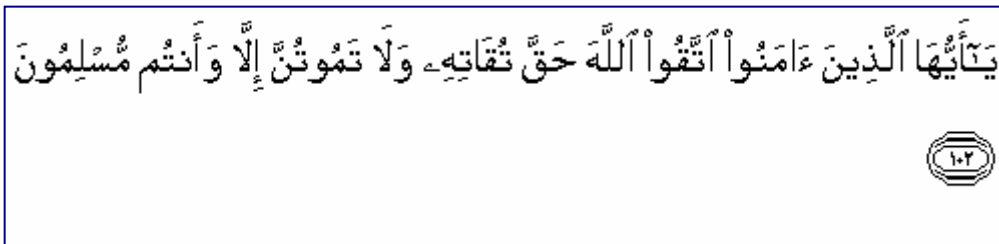
"O you who believe! Spend out of (the bounties) We have provided you, before the Day comes when no bargaining (will avail), nor friendship nor intercession. Those who reject faith, they are the transgressors"
(S2, A254)



Dear brothers and sisters, ASA

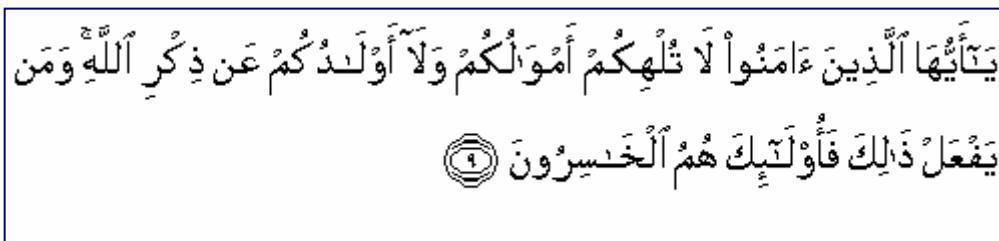
In the last khutbah, I did not carry on with sura Al-Fatiha due to the fact that many of our brothers, sisters and children were away on Living Islam camp. Unfortunately, today I will take another subject before we go back to Al-Fatiha. When we plan a khutbah, it is important to grasp an understanding of current events, and it is important for us to try and put these events into an Islamic perspective. This allows us to put Islam into practice, for we all know that Islam is the religion of practice and not just a religion of ritual worship.

An event took place last week which had a deep effect on me and made me rethink many aspects of my life as a Muslim. This event was the death of my father. We all have heard khutbahs and seminars on the subject of death, and Islam is full of reminders about this inevitable and calamitous event.



"O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam" (S3, A102)

However, as with many aspects of our lives, the impact never hits home until the event touches you personally. Suddenly all these verses of the Holy Book and all the hadeeth that one had come across start to take on a different meaning. The message finally hits the target. The question remains, for how long will this effect last, and what should we do before life goes back to its normal flow. No matter how calamitous the events that lead us back to Allah may be, we eventually get distracted and diverted away from the remembrance of Allah, as we are reminded by this verse:



"O you who believe! Let not your riches or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. If any act thus, surely they are the losers" (S63, A9)

For this reason I felt it was necessary to talk about the subject of death and the Muslim.

The first point that I wish to talk about is the way I felt immediately on hearing the news. The way one reacts, and what one thinks at that moment, when he or she know that someone close and dear has died is not something you practice for. It just happens. We end up learning more about ourselves at such moments than at any other time. The expression that we are familiar with is that: you show your true colours. It is this important point that I like to get across.

In this society, and probably in many societies across the world, when a person dies, we would probably hear some of the following comments. Some may be positive while others may be negative. We hear:

He had a fulfilling life.
He celebrated life to the full.
He was a person that took on life and enjoyed it.
He was a person that lived for the moment, and so on.

On the other hand, we might hear:
He never had the chance to achieve his ambitions.
Life was not kind to him.
His life was snatched from him too soon, and so on.

However, positive be it may, or negative, as you can see, the emphasis of all these comments revolve around **LIFE**. This is how many people react when a loved one pass away, the emphasis is based on what has passed, and not on what will follow. In Islam, this should not be the case, and we need to be very clear on that. For even these seemingly innocent comments can be grave as we shall see.

As a Muslim, when I heard that my father died, none of the above thoughts came to mind. My immediate thoughts towards him were:

Has he done enough for Allah to be pleased with him?

That was the first thought that came to my mind. What shook me at that moment was the fact that I suddenly realised what Islam means to me. Suddenly, one is facing his deepest thoughts and beliefs that are surfacing in response to this event. As people, one of the ways we define ourselves is the manner in which we react or respond to events. That immediate reaction which takes place before we start to think in a rational manner and before we start to analyse the situation. Probably for most of us, this means before satan starts to do his work. It is that immediate reaction that defines our deepest beliefs.

If I want to give an example to explain this, the best analogy would be the emergency paramedic. They are trained to react in certain life threatening situations in a manner which should not involve too much deliberation. They should react instantly. When they are able to do so successfully, they have achieved the necessary level of training to allow them to take on the role of an emergency paramedic. Well, our appreciation of Islam in practice is similar.

We read the Quran and try to understand its meanings. We read books on the hadeeth and sunnah. We attend khutbahs and seminars. We practice Islam on a daily basis. We do all that to increase our **training** as Muslims, so as when the emergency happens we react as Muslims.

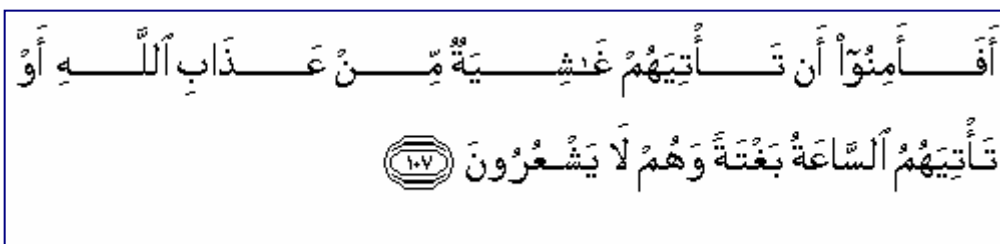
Therefore, the first lesson we should take from this khutbah is that when we **react** to any situation, adverse or otherwise, in the manner that Islam dictates, it is a probable indication that our training has been good. Islam is flowing through our veins, and we are truly living Islam. However, the reverse may also be true. If we **react** in a manner that is alien to the teachings of Islam, it is a probable indication that our training is deficient and we need to put more effort.

The second lesson that follows from this is that just as much as with paramedical training, or any training to that matter, it is vitally important to keep our skills and knowledge up to date and not marvel in a recent success. So, even if you think you are doing well now, you can only ensure that you will do well in the future by continuing to seek knowledge, and continuing to improve your understanding and your practice of Islam.

I hope this makes sense to you. If not, we will be discussing this khutbah in the study circle on Sunday ISA, and I would be grateful if you can attend.

Going back to the subject of death. When the full impact of the news sunk in, all I could think about was that my father can no longer pray for himself. He can no longer ask Allah for forgiveness. He can no longer give in charity. He can no longer fast, and he will never be able to perform Hajj. His actions in this world are over. Just a few days earlier he was an active member of the human race. Now, he is no longer so. A few days ago, he had choices, he was making decisions and he had an impact on this life. Now, he is no longer so. His personal contribution to this world by his presence has ended. So, on one side of death, there is choice, there is action, there is impact and so on, while on the other side, there is nothing.

Let us look closely at this concept, "the fence of death". One rule is that you cannot sit on the fence, it is one side or the other. On the one side you are fully active, on the other side you are totally inactive. On the one side you feel, you think and you do, on the other side you don't. The process is not necessarily gradual. It can be very sudden as we have witnessed in the recent events in London, and as we witness day in day out on our roads, in our homes, in our cities and all over the world. The impact can be sudden.



"Do they then feel secure from the coming against them of the covering veil of the wrath of Allah. Or of the coming against them of the (final) hour all of a sudden, while they perceive not" (S12, A107)

What is more horrific, is that for most of us, we don't know when this impact will take place. But what is clear is that on one side of death one has choices, one is fully active and making decisions, while on the other side one is dead. NO choices, NO decisions and NO actions. If that is not enough to scare the living daylights out of us, I don't know what will.

The Prophet^(SAAWS) said:

☆لم يلق ابن آدم شيئاً قط أشد عليه من الموت، ثم إن الموت لأهون مما بعده ☆ (أحمد)

The son of Adam has not come across anything that is more distressing than death. But what comes after is even more distressing.

Recently, a brother described to me life and death in an interesting way. This description should be familiar to the youngsters we have in the mosque today. We all know, as Muslims, that life is a test, it is an examination. Well, imagine this examination scene. We are all sitting at our desks at the end of year examination. Success is defined as passing to the next stage. You are given three hours to finish the exam. Some of us have done their studies, while others were not as studious. One good thing about this exam, is that we can help each other. Wouldn't that be a great exam. Well, we are all sitting there writing away. Some of us think the exam is easy, while others think it is unfair. Some are helping others, while others are being selfish. Some may think three hours is too much, others think it is too little. This scenario is very familiar, it is very real, isn't it? We have all sat exams, and for the young ones, you are still sitting exams, so we all know what this is about.

Now for the crunch. As you are sitting there feeling happy with yourself, the invigilator suddenly takes your paper away from you, and tells you your exam is over!

You shout at him, I have not finished yet. You tell him, you said I had three hours. This is not fair. I did not realise you could do that. If I only knew, I would have written faster. Please let me write some more. I don't think I have written enough to pass. Please, this is not fair!

Isn't that how you would feel if that was the case. Well, in Islam, our exam is this worldly life. The three hours is our average life span, the invigilator is the angle of death, and the end of the exam is death itself. Should you pass the exam, the reward is paradise. Should you fail, the outcome is so grave it is hard for us to contemplate failure. Brothers and sisters, please remember this.

Therefore, the third lesson, which is so familiar to us, is that we can be asked to submit our exam papers at any time. There is no warning. There is no sign. For many of us it can be very sudden. So let us remember this verse:

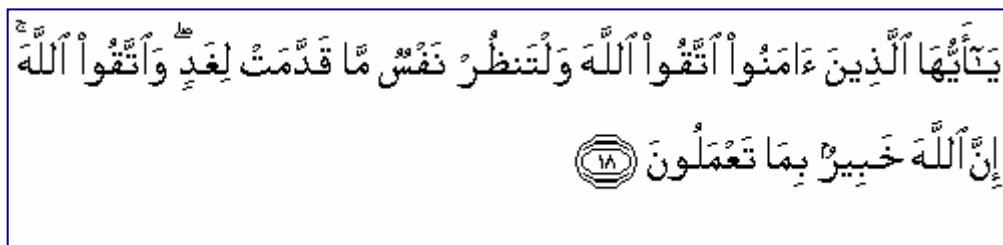
أَفَأَمِنُوا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ غَشِيَةٌ مِّنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ أَوْ
تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

"Do they then feel secure from the coming against them of the covering veil of the wrath of Allah. Or of the coming against them of the (final) hour all of a sudden, while they perceive not" (S12, A107)

Umar Bin Al-Kattab^(RAA) used to say: *"The angle of death has passed us to get to others, and he will pass others to get to us. Judge yourselves before you are judged, and weigh your deeds before they are weighed upon you".*

Profound words that puts Islam in practice. The one sure event in our lives is death. The one sure thing in the hereafter is the judgement of our deeds, and the one sure result is paradise or hell. All that is encompassed by these few words.

"The angle of death has passed us to get to others, and he will pass others to get to us. Judge yourselves before you are judged, and weigh your deeds before they are weighed upon you"



"O you who believe, fear Allah, and let every soul look to what (provision) it has sent forth for tomorrow. And fear Allah, for Allah is well-acquainted with (all) that you do" (S59, A18)

This is one of the regular reminders in the Quran to do enough before the exam is over.

Are we therefore prepared for that? Have we saved enough provisions? Have we done enough? That was my first thought, has my father done enough to pass his exam?

However, even when this concept is so very clear in my mind and in yours, the only time it hit me in relation to my father was when the event took place. When his exam paper was taken away. When it was all over, and not before. Granted, he was coming up to the end of the three hours, but now I am standing here thinking has he done enough to pass his exam? What did I contribute to his exam results? Did I make the necessary contribution when he was alive? Will I be able to make any further contributions now that he is dead? What should I tell my children, to prepare them for when my exam paper is taken away from me?

Therefore, the forth lesson for us today is to remember that we have a duty to all those around us to remind them of this inevitable event. It is our duty to remind them of the futile nature of this existence. It is necessary for us to guide ourselves and those around us. For when death hits, **it is all over.**

How many of us now have quarrels with others. How many of us have disputes. How many of us have anxieties. How many of us have worries. How many of us have

ambitions. Can we imagine the effort, time and resource that go into all that. Well, now for the real equation, how do all our quarrels, disputes, anxieties, worries, ambitions and everything else in this life balance against our inevitable death. Brothers and sisters, we all have to solve that equation for ourselves. But once we do that, we have to ask ourselves, what am I doing about it?

We see around us many that are running incessantly after this life. They are not interested in what is on the other side of the fence. The bounties of this world are so alluring, all their senses are drowned by desire, and tomorrow does not seem to matter. These are some of the warnings in the Quran about those who desire the bounties of this world only:

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ كِتَابًا مُؤَجَّلًا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ
الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الْآخِرَةِ نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَسَنَجْزِي
الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

"Nor can a soul die except by Allah's leave, the term being fixed as by writing. If any do desire a reward in this life, We shall give it to him; and if any do desire a reward in the Hereafter, We shall give it to him. And swiftly shall we reward those that (serve us with) gratitude" (S3, A145)

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ
الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

"To any that desires the tilth of the Hereafter, We give increase in his tilth; and to any that desires the tilth of this world, we grant somewhat thereof, but he has no share or lot in the Hereafter" (S42, A20)

What a grave warning. To any that desires the bounties of this life, he will get some of it, but he will have no share in the Hereafter. Isn't this a clear message. Do we want a share of the Hereafter, or don't we?

وَجَاءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى
يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي ﴿٢٤﴾

"And hell, that day, is brought (face to face). On that day will man remember, but how will that remembrance profit him? He will say, Only I wish I had sent forth (good deeds) for (this) my (future) life" (S89, A23-4)

أقول قولي هذا وأستغفر الله لي ولكم

2nd Khutbah:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ثُمَّ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ . الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ
أَنْفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا . أَمَا بَعْدُ :

Brothers and sisters, this worldly life is the prison of the believer and the paradise of the non-believer. The non-believer lives for this world. Death to the non-believer is a tragedy, death to the believer is a mercy. For the believer, death is a mercy. He or she will no longer have to wake up at every dawn to pray. There are no further acts of worship to do. No further Halal or Haram. No further duties. Death for the believer is a mercy. The ambition of a believer is to meet Allah with a sound heart. This ambition cannot be met without death. So, again, death to the believer is a mercy.

However, and a very important point to remember, even though we acknowledge that the death of a believer is a mercy on him, we are warned never to wish an early death, no matter what the circumstances are. The Prophet^(SAAWS) said:

☆ لَا يَتَمَنَّى أَحَدُكُمْ الْمَوْتَ ، إِمَّا مُحْسِنًا فَلَعَلَّه يَزِدُّهُ ، وَإِمَّا مُسِيئًا فَلَعَلَّه يَسْتَعْتَبُ ☆ البخاري

No one should desire death. Should he be one who does good he may increase his good deeds, and should he be one who is sinful he may seek forgiveness.

Now that we know that, what do we do to prepare for this inevitable event. Most of us have heard of the saying that the deceased goes to his grave followed by family, friends and deeds. The family and friends return, but the deeds are buried along with him. The grave, and it is very interesting that this is the word in English given to this hole in the ground, "Grave". Well, grave it is in name, and grave it is in event. We are reminded that the grave is the first level of the hereafter, and is the most horrific place on this earth.. The Prophet^(SAAWS) said:

☆ مَا رَأَيْتُ مِنْظَرًا قَطُّ ، إِلَّا وَالْقَبْرِ أَقْظَمُ مِنْهُ ☆ الترمذي

I have never witnessed anything that is more horrific than the grave. (Al-Tirmizi)

Isn't that amazing. We have regular reminders about death, the grave and the hereafter, but out of all things that we prepare for, death is the last thing on our minds. The Prophet^(SAAWS) said:

☆ أَكْبَسَ النَّاسَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ ذِكْرًا لِلْمَوْتِ وَأَشَدَّهُمْ لَهْ اسْتِعْدَادًا ☆ (مسلم)

The best of people is he who is most remembering of death, and most prepared for it.

He who is wise will make sure that he is well prepared for this eventuality. In preparing for the departure and the hereafter, five things we need to be aware of:

1. Firstly not to be complacent with the commands of Allah
2. Secondly to abide by what the Prophet^(SAAWS) has said: lessen the gravity of your sins you lessen the gravity of your death
3. Thirdly, do not get too attached to the goods and bounties of this world
4. Fourthly, do not over indulge in the luxuries of this world
5. And finally, be prepared for that day. Make sure you have repaid all your debts and make sure you have prepared a will.

This is what Umar bin Abdul-Aziz recited as he was dying, as a testimony to what he believed in, and the manner he understood his role in Islam, he was a leader of the Ummah:

تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا
وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

"That home of the hereafter we shall give to those who did not intend high-handedness or mischief on earth. And the end is best for the righteous" (S28, A83)

A good man passed by someone sitting crying at a grave. He asked him who is it that you are crying for? He replied, a loved one that has died. The good man said, you have done yourself injustice by loving someone, who dies, so much. If you loved the One who never dies, you will never have to grieve his loss.

Just before we finish, a very important reminder to the youngsters here. A reminder to the important role they will play in the future. This is a hadeeth that you need to learn, you need to remember and you need to apply. The Prophet^(SAAWS) said:

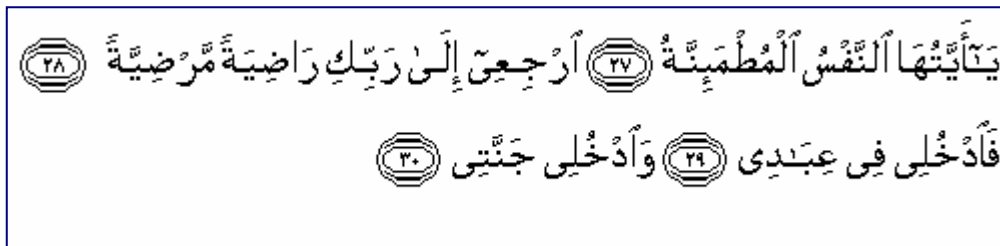
عن رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ ☆ إِذَا مَاتَ ابْنُ آدَمَ انْقَطَعَ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثٍ: صَدَقَةٌ جَارِيَةٌ، أَوْ عِلْمٌ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ،
أَوْ وَلَدٌ صَالِحٌ يَدْعُو لَهُ ☆ رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ

"When the son of Adam dies, his work ends except for three: an ongoing sadaqua, useful knowledge and a righteous offspring that prays for him" Narrated by Muslim from Abu Houraira

Even though we mentioned that on the other side of death there ends the work of that person, the Prophet^(SAAWS) reminds us that there is potential for ongoing good deeds under three conditions. Firstly an ongoing sadaqua, and this can be set up for our deceased parents. For those of us who have not done that yet, we need to look carefully at setting up a "sadaqua jaria" for our departed loved ones.

The second category is that of useful knowledge which we probably have little impact on. However, the third category is very important. It is a righteous offspring that prays for the deceased. All of us present here today, ISA all of us need to elevate our status to that of a "righteous offspring" so as we can carry on praying for our departed loved ones in the hope that their time in the grave is eased and their balance on the day of judgement is tipped in their favour. For our children, please remember that. When we depart, we will be desperate for your prayers. We will be in need of your dua'a.

Finally we end with these beautiful verses from the Holy Quran, praying to Allah Almighty to gather us on the day of judgement with our loved ones among those whose souls are in tranquillity and satisfaction.



"(To the righteous soul will be said) O thou soul in complete tranquillity and satisfaction. Come back thou to your Lord, well pleased (thyself) and well pleasing unto Him. Enter you, then, among my devotees, and enter you into My heaven" (S89, A27-30)