

Friday 27th May, 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

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ، وَالتَّنظُرُ نَفْسٍ مَا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ ،
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ (الحشر ، 18)

"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)



Dear brothers and sisters, ASA. You may recall in my previous three khutbahs, the subject matter was the story of Youssof^(AS). ISA, we will go back to that story in a future khutbah. For today, I would like to share with you a hadeeth that I came across recently. It is a simple hadeeth, but in its simplicity lays profound wisdom. A wisdom that is seldom mentioned in the non-Islamic literature. As Muslims, including myself, we come across such words but we fail to grasp that wisdom, so it is not difficult to understand why non-Muslims fail to understand the amazing gift of the hadeeth and the nature of the man that uttered these words, the Prophet^(SAAWS).

Indeed, we are told in the Holy Quran that the Prophet^(SAAWS) was not simply sent to teach us the “Deen” but to also teach us wisdom:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ
وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢﴾

“It is He Who has sent amongst the Unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to recite unto them His revelations, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom,- although they had been, before, in manifest error”
(S62, A2)

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٦٤﴾

“Allah Has conferred a great favour on the believers sending them a messenger from among themselves, reciting unto them His revelations, sanctifying them, and instructing them in the scripture and in wisdom, while, before that, they had been in manifest error” (S3, A164)

This hadeeth is made out of twelve Arabic words. Most of us should be able to memorise it. It is a hadeeth “Hassan” and has been narrated by At-Tirmizi. The subject matter of the hadeeth is clear. In these few words, the Prophet^(SAAWS) gives us a simple guide to help us deal with our lives. A few words that encompass our three

most important and critical relations. Our relation with Allah, our relations with ourselves and our relations with each other.

عن أبي ذرٍّ ومُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا، عَنِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ، قَالَ: ☆ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ حَيْثَمَا كُنْتَ وَاتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمْحُهَا، وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقِي حَسَنٍ ☆ (التِّرْمِذِيُّ)

“From Abi-Zar and Mu’az Bni Jabal^(RAA), the Prophet^(SAAWS) said: (Ittaqi) fear Allah where ever/when ever you are and follow a bad deed with a good one, it erases it, and deal with people with good conduct” (Narrated by At-Tirmizi)

This hadeeth has three sections. Each section is composed of four words. Each section is linked the next with the Arabic letter “Wa” which means “and”. This letter indicates that each section is related to the other, and accomplishing one deed helps with accomplishing the other.

Let us now go through each section in detail. Firstly, Ittaqi Allah where ever/when ever you are. In this section, the Arabic word used is Ittaqi. We automatically translate this term as fear Allah, which is not entirely correct. The accurate translation for fear Allah, is “Khaaf-Allah”. So we need to have a better understanding of the term Ittaqi, and we need to be clear about its relevance in the Quran.

First off all, why do we need to achieve this status of “Tuqa”? What is the big deal? The answer lies in the many verses in the Holy Quran about this special status, the status of “Tuqa”.

The following ayas tell us of the status of “Al-Muttaqeen” to Allah:

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾

“And fear Allah, and know that Allah is with Al-Muttaqeen [those who restrain themselves]” (S2, A194)

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

“And act aright, for verily Allah Loves Al-Muttaqeen [those who act aright]” (S3, A76)

وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

“But Allah is the protector of Al-Muttaqeen [the righteous]” (S45, A19)

These three ayas make it very clear for us. Allah is with, Allah loves and Allah is the protector of “Al-Muttaqeen”. What more do we need to know?

If that is not good enough, what can “Al-Muttaqeen” expect in the hereafter?

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿٤٥﴾

“The righteous (will be) amid gardens and fountains” (S15, A45)

وَلَدَارُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

“And the home of the hereafter is even better, and excellent indeed is the home of the righteous” (S16, A30)

يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَى الرَّحْمَنِ وَفْدًا ﴿٨٥﴾

“The day We shall gather the righteous to (Allah) Most Gracious, like a band (presented before a king for honours)” (S19, A85)

These three ayas leave us in no doubt as to what Allah has promised “Al-Muttaqeen” in the hereafter.

Again, if this is not good enough, what about in this life? What can “Al-Muttaqeen” expect in this life by achieving the status of “Taqua”?

These are a few ayas that again make it clear to us as to the benefits and rewards of achieving “Taqua”.

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ
مَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٨٢﴾

“So fear Allah, and it is Allah that Teaches you” (S2, A282)

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

“And fear Allah that you may prosper” (S3, A200)

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

“And be righteous, that you may receive mercy” (S6, A155)

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا ﴿٤﴾

“And for those who fear Allah, He will ease their matters for them” (S65, A4)

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَكْفِرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهُ أَجْرًا ﴿٥﴾

“And for the one who fears Allah, He will remove his evil deeds from him, and will expand his reward” (S65, A5)

These five ayahs tell us that if we achieve “Taqua” to Allah, Allah has told us in the Quran that He will teach us, He will make us prosper, He will give us mercy, He make our matters easier for us and He will forgive our sins and expand our reward.

Do we need any more confirmation as to whether we should be among “Al-Muttaqeen”? Are we still in doubt?

This is quite promising. With all these benefits and rewards, we should all be among “Al-Muttaqeen”. What we now need to know is how to be one?

First of all, let us read this aya:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ

“O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared” (S3, A102)

This is an important aya. It reminds us that if we want to achieve “Taqua” we should do that as Allah rightly demands our “Taqua”.

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ

“O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared” (S3, A102)

How do we do that? One of the most revealing and touching explanation of “Tuqa” is the following:

أَنْ يَجِدَكَ اللَّهُ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكَ ، وَيَسْتَفِدَّكَ حَيْثُ نَهَاكَ .

The explanation of this is for Allah to find you where Allah has ordered you to be, and to miss you where Allah has ordered you not to be.

Let us look more closely at this. Where has Allah asked us to be. We are asked to pray five times a day. Allah expects us to be present at the mosque for our congregational prayers. Allah expects us to be up at dawn to pray. Allah expects us to be at our work when we should be there. Allah expects us to be beside the weak, the poor and the sick. Allah expects us to be visiting our families and friends. Allah expects us to be using our time wisely with learning and with useful work. So we need to ask ourselves, are we where Allah has asked us to be?

The second part of the explanation is for Allah to miss us where Allah has ordered you not to be. The examples of this are also plenty, but the main theme is for you to be present in a situation where you end up disobeying Allah.

We need to start questioning ourselves everyday, how much “Taqua” have I achieved today? Can I consider myself to have been among “Al-Muttaqeen” today? If not, how close did I get? Can I do better tomorrow?

If you recall the beginning of the hadeeth, it stated: fear Allah where ever/when ever you are. Some may feel that it is OK to fear Allah when you are in Makkah, or in an Islamic society where it is the norm to fear Allah, but when you are in a non-Islamic society, you might be tempted otherwise. Remember however, that the exact wording of the hadeeth is:

اتق الله حيثما كنت

Fear Allah where ever/when ever you are. There are no geographical borders and no time restrictions on seeking the status of “Taqua”. Let us read this aya:

❁ لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ
 وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ
 وَالرَّسُولِ وَعَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ
 وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَعَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ
 وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ
 وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards east or west, but it is righteousness to believe in Allah, and the last day, and the angles, and the book, and the messengers, to spend of your wealth out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves. To be steadfast in prayer, and give zakat, to fulfil the contracts which you have made, and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, such are Al-Muttaqoon” (S2, A177)

This aya explains more as to what one has to do to be among “Al-Muttaqeen”. Suddenly it is a little bit depressing. We are told what “Al-Muttaqeen” can expect from Allah, what they can expect in this life and what they can expect on the day of judgement. And then we are told what we need to do to achieve this status. Many of us who truly believe in Allah will say “No Problem”, I am up for it.

Now, let us look at reality. How many of us can truly come to the end of the day and claim that they have achieved 100% “Taqua” on that day. Probably even 90% or 80% or even less. Sometimes it may even be less than 10%. Yes, we know how high we need to aim, but in reality, it is usually impossible to hit the target. We are after all human. This combination of enthusiasm and the inability to hit the target day after day will inevitably lead one to despair. One may even start accepting that I will never reach the status of “Taqua”, so why should I even try. We all have friends that feel that way, and probably some of us feel that way as well. So what is the answer?

The answer lies in the second section of this hadeeth: “and follow a bad deed with a good one, it erases it”. In the second part of the hadeeth, the Prophet^(SAAWS) is wise to the fact that human nature may take the better of us on occasions. For some it is more often than others, and **we will sin**. We will not be able to achieve a high level of “Taqua” all the time, even if we try. So what are we to do when we slip? Do we despair? Do we give up? The answer is clear. Whenever we slip up, we pull up our socks and do a good deed, and ISA, our slip up will be forgiven.

Remember the hadeeth:

وَأَتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمْحُهَا

“and follow a bad deed with a good one, it erases it”. We are asked not to despair. The Prophet^(SAAWS) is guiding us to become good Muslims. He initially guides us to our relationship with Allah. This relationship is based on “Taqua”. Then he guides us to our relationship with ourselves. The dilemmas that will arise when we are trying to achieve this “Taqua”. The moments of despair, the moments of giving up. The moments of slipping up. He gives us a very simple but powerful tool. As soon as you slip up, do something good. Do not give up, and do not despair.

Finally, to the last part of the hadeeth:

وخالقِ الناسَ بِخُلُقِ حَسَنٍ

“and deal with people with good conduct”.

We have had a number of khutbahs addressing the conduct of the Muslim, and many examples have been given. The previous khutbahs have also highlighted the importance of following the example of the Prophet^(SAAWS).

Having acknowledged our relationship with Allah, and our relationship with ourselves, the hadeeth ends by addressing our relationship with others. The message is very clear; deal with people with good conduct. It did not say deal with Muslims with good conduct, but deal with people. Deal with all people alike, Muslims and non-Muslims.

We sometimes take the high moral ground and decide that some people are not worthy of our good nature. We sometimes feel that with all that is going around us in this world, only Muslims deserve our good conduct. Only Muslims deserve our charity, our good will and our support. No, this hadeeth states that it is all people that should be treated with good conduct, and all people means ALL people. Again, the Prophet^(SAAWS) is wise to this difficult task. We will only be able to treat all people alike with good conduct when our relationship with Allah has been built on “Taqua” and when we have resolved our inner dilemmas and conflicts.

This is amazing. Twelve words sum it up for us.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلكم

2nd Khutbah:

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

This is this amazing hadeeth. In twelve words, The Prophet^(SAAWS) teaches us about Islam. If you ever forget what you need to do as a Muslim, remember this hadeeth:

☆ اتق الله حيثما كنت وأتبع السيئة الحسنة تمحها، وخالق الناس بخلق حسن ☆

(Ittaqi) fear Allah where ever/when ever you are and follow a bad deed with a good one, it erases it, and deal with people with good conduct”

- Remember that our relationship with Allah is based on “Taqua”.
- Remember the status that Allah has prepared for “Al-Muttaqeen”.
- Ask yourself everyday how much “Taqua” have you achieved.
- Remember to be where Allah has ordered you to be, and remember not to be where Allah has ordered you not to be.
- Be fully aware that as humans we will not be able to achieve this status at a high level every day.
- Do not despair, and always follow a bad deed with a good one.
- Deal with all people alike with the best of conduct.

Finally, do not forget that these are the words of the Prophet^(SAAWS). These are the words he uttered to his companions to pass on to us, generation after generation and hundreds of years down the line. It is our duty to teach these words to our children. It is also our duty to tell those around us of the profound effect that the Prophet’s^(SAAWS) teachings have on us. These are the words that keep on guiding us back to the straight path. These are the words that put tranquillity in our hearts and minds. These are the words that spread equality and justice among us. This is what is meant when we read:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

“We sent you not, but as a Mercy for all mankind” (S21, A107)