

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> July 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 وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيداً ☆ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ  
لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ، وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزاً عَظِيماً ﴾ (الأحزاب، 1-70)

*"O you who believe, fear Allah, and say what is the truth. That He may make your conduct whole and sound and forgive your sins. He that obeys Allah and His messenger has attained the great victory" (S33,*



Dear brothers and sisters, ASA.

We have been going through the first surat in the Holy Book, Al-Fateha. I am however mindful of the fact that many brothers and sisters are not with us today, as they are away this weekend on "Living Islam" camp. And I am also mindful that we have many youngsters off school attending today. I therefore like to take this opportunity to remind myself and all of us of the important aspects of **"Salat and Jama'a Prayers"**

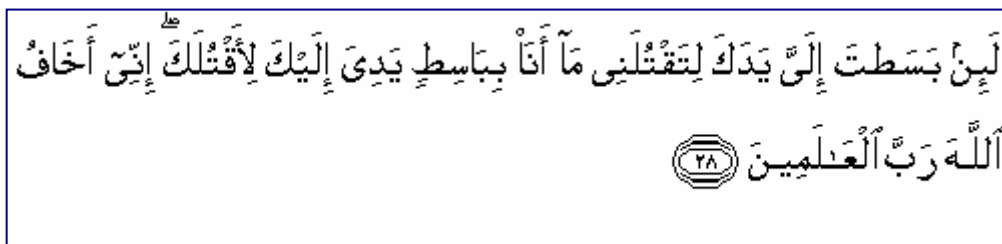
ISA, we will continue with the Fateha in next khutbah.

Before we get into this subject, I know that many of our youngsters have been going through a terrible time over the past few weeks trying to define for themselves how, as Muslims, do they fit in all that has happened in London, and the subsequent events. On the one hand they feel utter condemnation for the atrocities, yet on the other hand they realise that it is a Muslim that has committed these acts. They may hear from non-Muslims that our religion promotes such acts. Worst still, they may even hear that by simply being a Muslim one is implicated one way or another.

How should our youngsters and our teenagers feel, and how should they respond.

First and foremost, we should be absolutely clear that Islam does not, and never did, condone acts of indiscriminate murder against civilians what ever the cause. Islam values life, all life, all creation. Muslims, when in a state of war, are not even allowed to uproot a tree. We are not allowed to destroy a living plant, so how can anyone, Muslim or otherwise, justify destroying the most precious of Allah's creation, a human being.

Let us read what the Holy Quran say when Cain (Qabeel), wanted to kill Abel (Habeel). This is what Habeel said:



***"If you do stretch your hand against me to kill me, I will not stretch my hand to you to kill you, for I do fear Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds" (S5, A28)***

This is the way Habeel responded to his brother's aggression. He died unjustly as a result, but we as Muslims are aware of the punishment of one and the reward of the other. This is what read further on in the surat:

مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ  
فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ  
جَمِيعًا

***"On that account, We ordained for the children of Israel that if any one kills a human being, unless it be for murder or for spreading corruption in the land, it would be as if he killed the whole of humanity. And if any one saves a life, it would be as if he saved the whole of humanity" (S5, A32)***

How much clearer does one need to be after only reading these two ayahs, and there are many more verses in the Holy Quran testifying to the value of life in general and human life in particular.

For the young people here today, if you are challenged about what Islam has to say about the recent events, you need to be very clear, for yourselves and for others. Islam does not justify the extinguishing of an innocent life under any circumstance. It is the duty of Muslims who believe in Allah and the Day of Judgement, our duty, to spread the message of Islam, the message of peace and submission to the will of Allah. It is our duty to improve the lives of people around us through our understanding of Islam, and not to destroy it.

Again for the young ones among us, you may well come across some misguided Muslims who carry a lot of hate in their hearts for whatever reason. Your duty to such Muslim brothers and sisters is to guide them back onto the straight path of Allah. There is no room for hate or anger in the heart of the Muslim. I know, brothers and sisters, that when one looks at all the misery that millions of Muslims are enduring all over the world, these words may sound easy to say but are much more difficult to abide by as the burden on the Ummah is too heavy for any one heart to bear. For this reason, we as Muslims need to understand Islam as it should be understood, and we need to practice Islam as it should be practiced. One of the first starting points of putting Islam into practice is Salat.

We all know that Salat is an act of worship. Salat is not a custom or a tradition, but an act of worship. It is so fundamental that it is considered as one of the five pillars of Islam. As an act of worship, it is very special and has no equal and no alternative. It is not voluntary, and we know that it was made compulsory on all Muslims on the night of ascension.

## ‘ليلة الإسراء والمعراج‘

Indeed it was the first act of worship that was made compulsory in Islam. Initially, the command to the Ummah was for fifty acts of worship per day. This was eventually reduced to five acts of worship as we now know it, to reduce the burden on the

Ummah. However, God almighty confirmed to the Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> that the reward will still be for fifty, even though we are asked to pray five times only.

So, what is so important about Salat? Why are Muslims unique in this aspect? You hardly see anyone else from other faiths taking the time and effort to accomplish this task so diligently. Day in day out, waking up in the early hours, making sure Dhuhr and Asr are prayed to fit in with our daily work, and attending the mosque in the evening, and so forth. This is the case not only in our community, but all over the world. Imagine that today in every mosque on earth Muslims are celebrating Jum'a prayers. Every mosque on earth. What an amazing thing. And we, the Muslims of Altrincham are part of this Muslim Ummah. So, what is so important about Salat in Islam?

Well, we start with the following hadeeth. This is the hadeeth to remember for today, and it should remain a constant reminder for myself and for you.

عبدالله بن قرط قال، قال رسول الله ﷺ ☆ أول ما يحاسب عليه العبد يوم القيامة الصلاة، فإن صلحت صلح سائر عمله، وإن فسدت فسد سائر عمله ☆ (الطبراني)

Abdul-Llah Bin Qart said, the Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> said: *The first thing that a person is judged by on the day of judgement is Salat. If it was good, the rest of all his deeds will be good. But if it was poor, the rest of all his deeds will be poor. (Narrated by Al-Tabarani)*

This hadeeth, brothers and sisters, sets a clear declaration as to how we will be judged on the day of judgement, on that awesome day. We will not be asked how good we are in maths, in science, in sports, in internet surfing or in anything that constantly keeps us away from salat. No, here we are given a clear message, get your Salat in good order, and it will take care of the rest. Lose your Salat, and you are in big trouble. Very simple message, but very powerful, and very direct.

Salat was the last will of the Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup>. As his pure soul departed he said with his last breaths:

☆ الصلاة الصلاة ☆

This is how important Salat is. This is how important it is for the Muslim as an individual, and for the Muslim as part of a Muslim Ummah. It was the first command in Islam, it was the last will of the Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup>, and it is the first act that we will be judge by on the day of judgement.

We therefore need to know why it is so important, and how can we uplift our prayers and make our Salat in the manner that will give us the reward in this life and in the hereafter.

With regards to its importance, the next hadeeth confirms the importance of Salat to the maintaining the Muslim Ummah.

قال رسول الله ﷺ ☆ لتُقَضَّ عُرى الإسلام عروة عروة، فكلما انتقضت عُروة  
تثبث الناس بالتي تليها. فأولهن تقضاً الحكم، وآخرهن الصلاة ☆

The Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> said: *the knots "in the rope of Islam" will be undone one by one. Every time a knot is undone, people will adhere strongly to the next. (by undone, we understand that people no longer act by this aspect of Islam). The first knot to be undone is living by the law of Islam, and the last to be undone is Salat. (Narrated by Ibn Habban)*

What we take from this hadeeth, is that when a Muslim community gives up Salat, it will be the last act in giving up their Islam. We have seen this happening across the world and across the generations. This is also why we see that when a Muslim community wants to hold on to Islam, and wants to be recognised as faithful, people make that extra effort to return to Salat. Please remember that.

In this society, we can look at Salat in Islam as our last line of defence. Should we hold on to it, we preserve ourselves as Muslims, and God willing, we preserve our children and their children and so on, as Muslims. If we lose Salat, God forbid, we lose everything, in this life and in the hereafter. That is truly a disaster.

For the young among us today, this is a very important message to take home. You are now starting to adhere to your prayers and are encouraged to keep to it. Remember that when ever you drift away from salat for what ever reason, you are drifting away from Islam. Satan will try to convince you it is OK to leave one or two prayers now and again, and you can always make up for them. Very soon, you find that it is so difficult to go back to praying again, and very soon your discipline and resolve are eroded. So remember, do not give in even one raka'a to satan.

This is what the Holy Quran says about those communities who gave up their Salat.

***"But after them there followed future generations who lost the Prayers and followed after lusts. Soon, then, will they face destruction" (S19, A59)***

﴿ فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ  
وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهْوَاتِ فَسُوفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غِيًّا ﴿٥٩﴾

The following are just a few more verses from the Holy Quran to cast away any further doubts about the rule of establishing Salat in Islam.

***"And establish regular prayer and give zakat and obey the Messenger, that you may receive mercy" (S24, A56)***

﴿ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاطِيعُوا  
الرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَرْحَمُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا  
مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

*"And be steadfast in prayer; give zakat and bow down your heads with those who bow down 'in worship'" (S2, A43)*

Brothers and sisters, there should be no doubt in our minds and hearts about the need to establish regular prayers. It is vital for our present community, and it is vital for our future generations.

However, for the elders in our community, we need to now that we cannot instil in our children the need to establish regular prayers if we do not act as an example. We cannot understate this point any stronger. We have to act as an example to our children. We are asked to encourage our children by age seven, and we are asked to enforce prayers by age ten. There is no doubt as to what the instructions are. We are responsible for our children. We may feel happy that we have been able to establish regular prayers ourselves, and that we have preserved Islam in our community for this generation. But what about the next, and what about the one after. There is no room for complacency here, and we need to be very vigilant. Indeed, there is a Hadeeth that states that between the person and Kufur, is abandoning Salat on purpose. This was narrated by Muslim and by Ahmad.

أقول قولي هذا وأستغفر الله لي ولكم

2<sup>nd</sup> Khutbah:

الحمد لله ثم الحمد لله. الحمد لله نستعينه ونستغفره، ونعوذ بالله من شرور  
أنفسنا وسيئات أعمالنا. أما بعد:

﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ \* الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ﴾ (المؤمنون، 1-2)

*"Successful indeed are the believers. Those who humble themselves in their prayers." (S23, A1-2)*

How do we improve our prayers, and what is the relevance of the mosque. First of all, some general guidelines:

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ  
إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ  
وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا

***"O you who believe, when you prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands (and arms) to the elbows, rub your heads (with water) and (wash) your feet to the ankles. If you are in a state of impurity, bathe your whole body" (S5, A6)***

We are all aware of the importance of cleanliness and performing either Wudu or Ghussle before Salat depending on the circumstances.

What about the role of the mosque and the Jama'a prayers. This is an important concept in Islam. Islam encourages the Jama'a prayers. In an agreed Hadeeth, the Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> said, the prayers of the man in Jama'a is worth 25 times his prayers alone. When he performs good Wudu, and leaves his house for the sole purpose of prayers, with every step he takes his status is uplifted, and a sin is forgiven. As he prays, the angels will continue praying for him, saying, God bless him, God forgive him, until he finishes his Salat. This is the reward for establishing Jama'a prayers.

In another Hadeeth, the Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> mentions that if three Muslims are present in a community, they need to establish Jama'a prayers, or Satan will get to them, as we are weakened by being separate, and strengthened by the Jama'a. In fact, establishing Jama'a prayers is a definite Sunnah, to the extent that we are informed in another Hadeeth, that if we leave the Jama'a prayers, we are actually abandoning the way of the Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup>.

We are very fortunate in Altrincham. We have been blessed with this mosque within our own community. It is as if Allah is inviting us to accomplish our Jama'a prayers by blessing us with a mosque so near. We must make full use of this opportunity. We must establish Jama'a prayers to strengthen our community and give Satan no chance to get at us one by one in his own time.

There are however some simple rules. We are reminded to walk slowly and quietly to the mosque. We are reminded to respect our neighbours and give them a good picture of Muslim behaviour. Even if prayers have started, we come into the mosque quietly and gently and join the lines and make up what we have missed. There is no need to run or barge in, and we are always reminded as Muslims to keep calm and dignified.

Very occasionally we are permitted to miss the Jama'a prayers under special circumstances. In the case of very cold, very windy or very rainy weather, we are permitted to pray at home. These are exceptional circumstances, but the allowance has been granted.

The Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> also says when you witness a person that regularly attends to the mosque for prayers, it is a testimony of his faith.

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ

***"The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last day, and establish regular prayer" (S9, A18)***

The Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> said; *Shall I guide you to what wipes away the sins and lifts up your status. The mosque is the home of every pious person. God will look after this person with mercy and guides him along the straight path to paradise.*

Brothers and sisters. We all know that Salat is compulsory, but even with this pillar there are important issues that we need to address. The most important for us, for the community in Altrincham, is that we should encourage ourselves to attend the mosque for Jama'a prayers more and more. Not just the Jum'a prayers, but for most Jama'a prayers if we can. God willing, we will soon be starting Ramadan in no more than two months. During this month, Muslims tend to revitalise their faith, and it will be a good time to establish regular prayers and to establish Jama'a prayers.

Some of us when attending the Jum'a prayers believe that the prayer is the two raka'as at the end. We seem to have missed on the fact that the Friday's congregational prayers starts with the khutbah. Some of us are under the impression that as long as they catch the two raka'as at the end they have satisfied their duties. The reason that the Friday's Dhuhr has been reduced to two raka'as is to allow for the khutbah. The khutbah is an integral and vital part in accomplishing this prayer, and we need to keep this in mind.

Another important point is the value of the front row, and the one behind it and so forth. The most valuable of rows in prayers is that at the front. It has become a habit that when we enter the mosque on a Friday, we seem to like staying at the back, probably because we are not aware of the tremendous benefit of being at the front. The sahabah used to come in so early to the mosque to get that front line space. Let us make it our habit again by coming forward as soon as we enter the mosque. We are less likely to chat and drift away if we do not purposely sit among friends and chat during the khutbah.

One more important point about the Friday prayers is the need to remain absolutely silent during the khutbah as if you are in a state of prayers. There should be no talking, no reading of the Quran and no conduction of any other business except listening to the khutbah. May Allah guide us to the truth, and may Allah give us the strength, patience and resolve to abide by the truth.

Brothers and sisters, this is the establishment that will hopefully look after our children and their children. Please invest in this mosque. We no longer ask for substantial financial investment, but for investment in your time and in your efforts. This is where our community starts, and this is where we maintain our faith.