

16th June 2006

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا
وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ 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

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَايَ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴾ (٩٠)

"Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and the giving to the kin, and He forbids indecency, injustice and rebellion: He admonishes you that you may be mindful" (S16, A90)



Dear brothers and sisters, ASA.

We started in the last khutbah talking about a very important event in the seerah, and that was "Bai'att-Al-Aqaba Al-Kubra". We left the khutbah with the establishing of an early da'wah center in Madinah, away from the gazing eyes and influence of Qureish. This da'wah was organized by the early group of young men who met the Prophet^(SAAWS) during the Hajj season in the eleventh year of the message. These young men from Madinah gave their pledge to the Prophet^(SAAWS) in what is known as "Bai'att-Al-Aqaba Al-Oula", "The First Pledge of Aqaba".

We recall that the Prophet^(SAAWS) asked them to pledge:

- Do not associate with Allah,
- do not steal,
- do not commit adultery,
- do not kill your children,
- do not utter slander, intentionally forging falsehood and
- do not disobey me in any just matter.

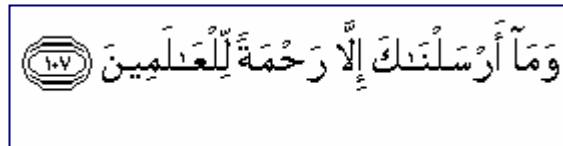
He who carries it out (this pledge), Allah will reward him; and he who neglects any of it and is punished for his sin in this world, it may prove a redemption for him in the Hereafter; and if the sin remains hidden from the eyes of the people and no grief (punishment) comes to him in this world, then his affair is with Allah. He may forgive him and He may not. Ubada Bin As-Samet narrated that, and this is narrated in Al-Bukhari.

The pledge starts with the absolute message of believing in the One Allah. It then defines particular changes in one's conduct for the benefit of oneself and the benefit of society. It then gives the warning of the judgment in the hereafter and makes it clear to us that on the day of judgement our affairs and the ruling regarding reward and punishment lies solely in the hands of Allah. In essence, these pledges were about bettering the society in the context of a belief in Allah and the Day of Judgment.

We recall that the Prophet^(SAAWS) sent Mus'ab Bin Umair as the first ambassador in Islam to teach the new converts and to help with the da'wah. We heard examples of how the da'wah was being conducted in Madinah, and we should all know that Islam did not enter Madinah by force or by the sword, but it did so by the conduct and the manners of these early Muslims who knew that the message of Islam was far greater and more important than any of their personal or tribal conflicts. These early Muslims understood that the message of Islam is to deliver ***Unity and prosperity to all.***

As Muslims, we need to regularly ask ourselves, is the message of Islam greater than any conflict or interest that we have with Muslims and with non-Muslims alike? The reward that these early Muslims have gained in the sight of Allah by promoting da'wah along with their arch enemy must be phenomenal, and we can hope to gain

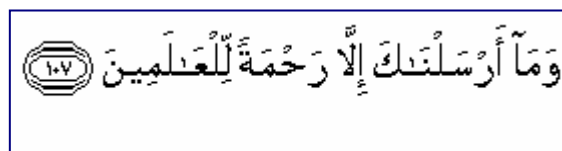
similar reward if we take the importance of the message of Islam on board in the same way these early Muslims did. **Every single human being under the sun has the right to hear the message of Islam in the proper way.** A common error is that we think that the main way of passing on the message is to make leaflets and have seminars and talks, and we forget that one of the most important ways of passing the message is through our conduct and behaviour. Many Muslims, including myself, occasionally forget this primary objective of this glorious message and revert into a siege mentality believing that Islam is for Muslims only. We forget this aya in the Quran:



"And We have sent you not, but as a Mercy for all creatures" (S21, A107)

When these early Muslims entered Islam, they did not perceive it as joining an exclusive club that will give them unique privileges. On the contrary, they sensed the blessing that Allah has bestowed upon them by guiding them into this great religion, and they wanted to share it with all. They wanted to share it with old friends and with old enemies. They understood that through the message of Islam, they were able to break down barriers, abolish divisions and promote unity. Is that how we feel about Islam in this day and age? When we look at Muslims now, we are lead to believe that all that Muslims ever do is create barriers and divisions and promote isolation and separation.

We should learn and remember this aya by heart, and make it our aim in life:



And We have sent you not, but as a Mercy for all creatures.

Now back to the Seerah. The Prophet^(SAAWS) needed to establish a center for da'wah outside Makkah. Qureish will have none of that. They were able to contain the da'wah for over eleven years in Makkah and limit the expansion of Islam to no more than 300 believers. The Prophet^(SAAWS) needed an outlet for the message and an outlet for these believers who have endured hardship and torture. What will happen at the next Hajj season will be vital for the success of the Prophet^(SAAWS) in spreading the message. The meeting that took place at "Bai'att-Al-Aqaba Al-Kubra" is worthy of any great historical event that changed the course of history. It determined the future of Islam. It determined the religious status of over one billion people living today including those in this mosque. Should it have failed, the consequences would have been grave.

Throughout this period, one of the biggest concerns of the Prophet^(SAAWS) was that Qureish should know nothing about this event, otherwise they would stamp it out without mercy.

In the 12th year of the message, 72 Muslims from Madinah traveled to Makkah among the convoy that was celebrating the season of Hajj. There were 70 men and two women. Brothers and sisters, the women in Islam were never excluded from the critical events that shaped the seerah. They were always there sharing in decision making and shaping the future. Islam has never sidelined women. Even when we read about the great American bill of rights, it had to be amended over a century later to include women as having equal rights, having been totally excluded from the original one. Islam, over 12 centuries before the American bill of rights, did not commit the same mistake.

Let us now imagine, 72 Muslims traveling over 500 km with non-Muslims who were heading to celebrate "shirk". What do you think will happen during this journey. If we believe what we read about Muslims now, then one would expect trouble. These hot blooded young new recruits to Islam, eager to confirm their identity, will not go the distance without at least one confrontation. Isn't that what we should expect? Well, the truth is far from that. During the journey from Madinah to Makkah, three more people in the convoy converted to Islam. Among them were Ka'ab Bin Malik and the head of the delegation itself, Al-Bara' Ibn Ma'rour.

What does this tell us about these early Muslims who have yet to meet the Prophet^(SAAWS). The majority of these early Muslims have not met The Prophet^(SAAWS), and they have not seen him in order to follow in his example. They only heard about him probably from Mus'ab Bin Umair. These early Muslims believed that they were entrusted with the message of Islam, even though they have not met the messenger yet. Why do many Muslims now feel that we are no longer the trustees of this message. We seem to have developed more of a consumer attitude to Islam rather than a provider attitude. We want to have Islam for ourselves, but we have no wish to pass it on.

Does the answer lie probably in the fact that being a trustee demands responsibility. Being a trustee of the message of Islam demands a great responsibility. It demands that we understand the message properly and it demands that we act and behave accordingly. Probably that is where we fail, the responsibility is far too great, but rest assured, the reward is even greater.

When the Hajj delegate arrived in Makkah, Mus'ab Bin Umair met the Prophet^(SAAWS) and provided him with detailed account of what has been developing over the past twelve months in Madinah, including the latest converts into Islam. Islam was being embraced by the Awss and Khazraj, and the time may be right to shift the center of da'wah from Makkah to Madinah. This will not be an easy task, and when the Prophet^(SAAWS) meets with the new Muslims from Madinah the future of the da'wah to Islam will be determined. The logistics of such a meeting will be immense if it is to succeed. I think a common expression we hear nowadays is that "he have one bite at the cherry", and so much is hanging on that.

The first thing the Prophet^(SAAWS) did was to meet with the new convert, Al-Bara' Ibn Ma'rour and with Saad Bin Malik who was a well-known poet. The organization of the meeting was then decided. The Prophet^(SAAWS) will meet these 75 Muslims on the last day of the Hajj season. The meeting will be in the middle of the night at "Jamrat-ul-Aqaba Al-Kubra", and this is where the name of the pledge comes from. Should

any one find out about the meeting, they can state that they were going to throw the stones before leaving in the morning, and it will be too late for Qureish to spoil the event. The Prophet^(SAAWS) asked them to sleep in their usual place among the disbelievers, and to arrive in twos, and not to wake anyone purposefully for this meeting. During the meeting, only Abu Bakr and Umar will stand in watch, and the Muslims in Makkah will only be told after the event. Every precaution was being taken to ensure that Qureish does not spoil the event.

On the last night of the Hajj season, the Muslims from Madinah arrived two by two, and gathered at "Jamrat-ul-Aqaba Al-Kubra" before the arrival of the Prophet^(SAAWS). The majority have not seen him yet, and you can sense the anticipation and excitement. They are all eager to meet this man who will lead them out of a dark past and into a brighter future. Among them were the two women, Noussaibah Bint Ka'ab and Assma' Bint Amrou Bin Addi. This was the most crucial meeting in the early history of Islam, and women were not left out. Can we now sense the responsibility of the Prophet^(SAAWS) as he addresses these people. This will be the meeting that will shape the future of Islam, so how will the Prophet^(SAAWS) conduct this event. We need to understand the process of this meeting as it has plenty of lessons for us.

The Prophet^(SAAWS) now arrives with one other person only. Who would you think he will bring with him. This is an important meeting for the Muslims, and it is to establish a centre for da'wah outside Makkah, so who do you think he will bring. It must be an influential Muslim from Makkah, isn't that right. Well, amazingly, the Prophet^(SAAWS) brings with him his uncle Al-Abbass. Even though his uncle was a "mushrik" and has not entered Islam yet, he was still the symbol of Bani Hashem, the clan who has protected the Prophet^(SAAWS) so far. The Prophet^(SAAWS) recognized the role of Al-Abbass in this critical Islamic event, and even though he was still a "mushrik" he had a role to play.

This is a very important message for us. Since Abu-Talib died, Al-Abbass, who was still a "mushrik" took on the mantle of protector of the Prophet^(SAAWS). This is one of the first important lessons for us. As Muslims, we should not dissociate ourselves from non-Muslims, we are part of their lives and they are part of ours. As long as each person is conducting his or her affairs in an acceptable manner, and as long as the message of Islam is not being threatened as a result of this association. This important event teaches us that this is acceptable. Al-Abbass was not excluded. Remember this, the Prophet^(SAAWS) brings to this important Islamic meeting his uncle who was still at the time a "mushrik". There must be a very important message in that. Not only that, but as the meeting started, who do you think will be the first to speak? It was also Al-Abbass.

Al-Abbass opened the meeting by addressing the people of Awss and Khazraj. He told them we, Banu Hashem, are aware of your meeting. We have been the protectors of Muhammad^(SAAWS) so far. Should he come to you, do you give an oath to protect him, for if not, we are capable of his protection.

This was the introduction of Al-Abbass. The people listened and then looked at the Prophet^(SAAWS) and said:

خذ منا لنفسك ولربك ما أحببت

Take of us for you and for your lord what you desire. These were the words of these new Muslims. Take of us for you and for your lord what you desire. Do we the Muslims of today say in our hearts “take of us for you and for your lord what you desire”.

The Prophet^(SAAWS) started by reciting verses from the Holy Quran, and then praised and thanked Allah. The Prophet^(SAAWS) always started his introduction by reaching to the hearts of new Muslims. He was aware of the influence of the words of the Quran on the heart, and he always started by reaching to the hearts of the people. The Prophet^(SAAWS) recognized that the path to many people's minds goes through their hearts.

This is a point that I keep on ignoring when I talk to non-Muslims about Islam. I tend to go straight into dialogue mode, trying to pitch my knowledge against that of the other person, and I tend to ignore the important element of the heart. If we truly believe that we are entrusted with da'wah, we need to remember that the path to many peoples' minds is through their hearts, and we need to highlight the spiritual and compassionate aspect of Islam. That is such an important aspect of da'wah, and it is highlighted to us by example of the Prophet^(SAAWS).

Now, for the next important point. The Prophet^(SAAWS) is about to lay down his demands. The Ansars have not yet taken the pledge, and the outcome of this meeting is not yet guaranteed. So how does the Prophet^(SAAWS) go about setting his demands. Will he be ambiguous, or does he leave room for backing up, or will he be straightforward to the point? Let us read what he said:

He addressed them and said: you take the pledge on five issues. This shows that The Prophet^(SAAWS) was fully prepared for this meeting. This meeting did not just happen, and there was no room for improvisation. A very clear start to everyone. There will be five points, no more and no less.

1. You will obey me in matters that you may like and dislike
2. You will spend your money in times of ease and times of difficulty
3. You will enjoin what is just and forbid what is wrong and unjust
4. Do not accept reproach in matters pertaining to Allah
5. You will protect me as you protect you children and women

Wow. Let us look at this again.

1. You will obey me in matters that you may like and dislike: *[You will pledge your allegiance that I will be your leader]*
2. You will spend your money in times of ease and times of difficulty: *[I will demand your wealth of you]*
3. You will enjoin what is just and forbid what is wrong and unjust: *[you have to reform society]*

4. Do not accept reproach by matters pertaining to Allah: *[you have to be steadfast]*
5. You will protect me as you protect you children and women: *[you have to protect me to the death]*

Was there any ambiguity?

How do you think they replied? These are new Muslims. Some of them are only a few days into Islam. Some have never met the Prophet^(SAAWS) before, and they are given these five demands in pledging their allegiance. If you were there, would you accept? Given the conditions of the pledge, would you have been willing to put your hand in the hand of the Prophet^(SAAWS)? There was still no Muslim Ummah. There have been no victories yet. It is these people that are about to shape the future. Would you have been willing to put your hand in the hand of the Prophet^(SAAWS)?

What was their reply?

They asked: what do we get if we do as you say?

They were right to think if we are about to give up so much, what will we gain?

Brothers and sisters, the response of the Prophet^(SAAWS) to this question is so important for us Muslims, because it defines to us what these early Muslims accepted in response to their pledge. It defines to us that particular Muslim who truly pledges himself or herself to the message of Islam. What was the reply of the Prophet^(SAAWS), what did he offer them in return?

He said, "Paradise", he said "Al-Jannah".

Muslims are asked to look into the books of the seerah and note what comes after the word "Al-Jannah", and in every single book, it is a full stop. "Al-Jannah". For the Ansars to pledge allegiance to the Prophet^(SAAWS) on these five points there will be no worldly gain what so ever. All they are to expect is the promised paradise.

We, the Muslims of today, we need to ask ourselves a very serious question. Do we want paradise? If so, what are we prepared to give in this pursuit? We know from the seerah what the people of Madinah gave in that pursuit. They pledged their obedience, their wealth, their actions and their lives for that. Islam teaches us that Al-Jannah is not a cheap commodity. If we truly want paradise we have to work for it. Just as much as we work very hard for a few square meters that we call home, how much work do we do for a few square meters in paradise. We are told that a small space in paradise is better than all that this world has to offer and more. We always dream and work hard to move from one area to another more expensive area. How much effort do we put in gaining a plot in paradise, and in moving from one level to a higher one. This was the deal for these Ansars. Take it or leave it. If you were there in this meeting, would you put you hand in the hand of the Prophet^(SAAWS). Would you pledge your obedience, your wealth, enjoining reform and being steadfast and pledge your life. Would you do that for a place in paradise. Do you think you are getting a good deal for your effort and your money?

The first person to respond was one of the newest in Islam, it was Al-Bara' Ibn Ma'rour, the head of the pilgrimage delegation who has just entered Islam on his way to Makkah. He said, put your hand forwards so as we take your pledge, we are the people of battle that we inherited down the generations. This old man had no hesitation what so ever. Al-Bara' Ibn Ma'rour was very enthusiastic, and probably did not consider carefully what he was about to do. Abul-Haitham Bin Al-Tehyan interrupted and asked, O Prophet of Allah, we have ties between ourselves and the Jews of Madinah, and we will be severing these ties when we pledge allegiance to you. Should Allah make you victorious, will you return to your people in Makkah and leave us?

In the heat of the occasion, some of the Ansars were well aware of what they are about to do. They did not go into this pledge blind, but recognized that their pledge will mean trouble and hardship for them. They were looking into the long-term future. They understood well what they are getting themselves in for. What did the Prophet^(SAAWS) say?

His response again is amazing and again teaches us very important lessons. The Prophet^(SAAWS) is still a "citizen" of Makkah. We all know how important this sense belonging was for the Arabs. The Prophet^(SAAWS) is preparing to leave Makkah and emigrate to Madinah to spread the message. This was by no means a simple action for any person in that period. This was his response:

بِالْدَمِ وَالْهَدْمِ وَالْهَدْمِ، أَنَا مِنْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ مِنِّي، أَحَارِبُ مَنْ حَارَبْتُمْ وَأَسَالِمُ مَنْ سَالَمْتُمْ

He said, our ties will be that of blood as kinship, and I will live with you until the grave, I am off you and you are off me, I will fight whom you fight and I will pledge peace to whom you pledge peace with.

What does this response tell us? Isn't that a pledge of citizenship? When immigrants arrive to their destination, do they not have to take an oath of citizenship. What better oath is there than that given by the Prophet^(SAAWS). The Prophet^(SAAWS) is telling them I am routing myself out from Makkah and rooting myself in Madinah, and the Prophet^(SAAWS) kept to his word. When Makkah was opened, the Prophet^(SAAWS) stayed no more than a few days before returning to Madinah, where he stayed to the end of his days and he was buried there as he pledged to these Ansars. The Prophet^(SAAWS) kept to his pledge of citizenship.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلكُمْ

2nd Khutbah:

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

The Ansars were now pleased; they are getting the Prophet^(SAAWS) for themselves. But just as they were about to put their hands in his, a young man stands in their way and shouts: People, are you aware what you are about to do? Look again at what you are pledging to this man (and he did not say the prophet). *{{By establishing Madinah as the Islamic da'wah centre}}*, you will surely be pledging to go to war with the Arabs and the non-Arabs, with the white and the black.

This young man was fully aware that establishing a centre of da'wah in Madinah to spread the message of Islam will unite all the Arab tribes and the empires surrounding the Arabs in war against them and they could well be annihilated as a result. History later proved this fact as in the battle of the trench when 10,000 people surrounded Madinah with the single aim of exterminating the Muslims. This young man was Asa'ad Bin Zararah. We recall that he was one of the first six to meet the Prophet^(SAAWS) two years ago. He was making sure that every single person there, man and woman alike, understood precisely what he or she is letting themselves in for. He said, if you will let him down, leave him now.

This young man understood that being a trustee of a message demanded tremendous sacrifices. These were the early Ansars that put their hands in that of the Prophet^(SAAWS) and sacrificed everything for us to enjoy the benefit of this wonderful message today. How much are we prepared to put in to make sure that generations in the future enjoy the same benefits that we ourselves enjoy by being Muslims. How much are we prepared to endure?

Are we prepared to spend a few extra minutes in the day reading the Quran with our children. Are we prepared to come to the mosque more often to do our prayers. Are we prepared to dig deeper into our pockets to help support and educate those who are in need. Are we prepared to change our conduct to better the Image of the Muslims in our society? What these Ansars were about to pledge was everything. How much are we prepared to pledge to put our hands in the hand of the Prophet^(SAAWS).

Who is the lucky one? Is it the one who puts his or her hand in that of the Prophet's^(SAAWS) and pledges endurance and sacrifices, or is it Muslims like us? The message of Islam demands something in return, and Asa'ad Bin Zararah was making sure that everyone there was and is fully aware of that. Are we in this mosque also fully aware of that?

So what was their response? Did they back up? No. They said to Asa'ad, out of the way, we have gained a great deal.

رجح البيع

They all rushed to put their hands in that of the Prophet^(SAAWS). How lucky were they to actually be the first in the history of Islam to make this pledge with the Prophet^(SAAWS). As they pledged they were saying:

لا قبيل ولا نستقبل

They were saying we will not be tireless and we will not go back on our pledge. That was how "The Greater Pledge of Aqaba" took place.

What was on offer was paradise, and these Ansars had a desire for paradise that is rarely matched.

ألا إن سلعة الله غالية، ألا إن سلعة الله الجنة

What is on sale from Allah is indeed expensive, for what is on sale from Allah is paradise.

Once the pledge was taken, the Prophet^(SAAWS) finished the meeting by organizing with the Ansars the process of the Hijra, which took place later on and was finalized when the Prophet^(SAAWS) traveled with Abu Bakr^(RAA) and a new chapter in Islam began.

Brothers and sisters, this was "Bai'att-Al-Aqaba Al-Kubra". It is an amazing historical event. It teaches us many lessons about Islam and about da'wah. Read it and study it and teach it, and ISA we will also make a pledge to put our hands in the hand of the Prophet^(SAAWS) in spreading the message of Islam through our actions and through our conduct.