

Friday 8th September 2006

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 يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

All 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 own bad deeds. Whom-so-ever God guides to the truth no one will lead astray, and whom-so-ever 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

﴿ 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, A70-1)



Brothers and sisters, ASA.

The topic for today's khutbah is **Patience and Forgiveness**

In a previous khutbah, we came across this hadeeth:

عن عبد الله بن عمرو: **قيل: يا رسول الله، أي الناس أفضل؟ قل: كل مخموم القلب، صدوق اللسان.**
قيل: صدوق اللسان نعرفه، فما مخموم القلب؟ قل: هو التقي، لا إثم فيه ولا بغي، ولا غل ولا حسد. ابن ماجه

From Abdullah bin Amrou: *The Prophet^(SAAWS) was asked who is the best of people? He replied, it is the one who is "makhmoum al-qalb" and of a truthful tongue. They said, we know what "of a truthful tongue" is, but what is "makhmoum al-qalb". He replied, it is a heart that is clean and that is fearful of Allah, a heart that has no oppression and no aggression, and a heart that is free of bitterness and free of envy and jealousy. (Narrated by Ibn Majeh)*

I think we all agree that this is a wonderful heart to have. However, as with most wonderful things in life, they do not come easy, and they do not come cheap. For any of us to want to have this type of heart, we need to put in a great deal of hard work, very hard work. Not only that, but we also need the guidance as to how to develop such a heart. This is why the Prophet^(SAAWS) gave us example after example of what Muslims need to do and how they should do it so that they can gradually move towards that goal, the goal of being "makhmoum al-qalb".

Of the many examples, two of the more important characteristics that we need to encourage and need to develop are **patience and forgiveness**. Somehow, these two characteristics tend to come together. When one is patient with others, it is somewhat easier for him or her to forgive, and when they are forgiving in nature, somehow they seem to be patient with others.

The Holy month of Ramadan is again at our doorsteps. It is the month of strengthening our acts of worship to Allah^(SWT). It is the month where we again attempt redemption for our sins and ask for forgiveness from Allah and ask for forgiveness from those that we have wronged. It is the month where we may be able to achieve the ultimate prize of being saved from the fire of hell and of being accepted among those who have gained the pleasure of Allah. With the help of Allah, Ramadan can be the month where we can re-discipline our hearts and encourage it to be patient and to be forgiving of others.

By the nature of Ramadan we have to develop our ability to be more patient. We must use this opportunity to also develop our ability to be forgiving. The ability to tolerate others and be patient with them demands a great deal of inner strength and self confidence. A Muslim who has self confidence is a Muslim who is able to tolerate the misgivings of others, be patient with them, and is able to excuse and forgive them.

Allah reminds us to be forgiving, for in our forgiveness to others, we gain Allah's forgiveness.

In the face of intimidation, Muslims vary widely in their response. Some are easily intimidated and angered and respond foolishly and aggressively. While some, keep their calm and kind nature despite the gravity of the intimidation. Who do you think is presenting Islam in the correct manner? The aggressive, loud mouthed Muslim shouting words of hate, or the calm and measured Muslim.

A good Muslim, in the face of intimidation and humiliation, shows no aggression, but equally he shows NO weakness. Somehow, being patient and forgiving is still thought of as being weak and as a sign of poor Iman. Some believe that the only way to demonstrate your Iman is through anger and aggression.

The message of Islam is a wonderful message. It is there for our benefit, and the benefit of others. What good is this message to us if we do not show that we have benefited from it. What good is the message to worship Allah if we present ourselves as angry and frustrated people? ***How can we convince others of the beauty of the message of Islam if that beauty has not touched us?***

This is the message for us Muslims. How can we convince others around us of the beauty of the message of Islam if we ourselves are not willing to abide by it, and are not benefiting from it. Patience and forgiveness are essential qualities that Muslims must develop. The Prophet^(SAAWS) was very particular about teaching the sahabah the lessons of patience and forgiveness.

In the sirah of the Prophet^(SAAWS) we come across the following incident: An Arabian came to the Prophet^(SAAWS) and demanded to be given something. The Prophet^(SAAWS) gave him what he demanded and then asked him; have I been fair to you?

The Arab replied in his harsh manner, "no, and you were not good enough".

Having witnessed what happened, understandably, the companions became angry and raced to teach this Arab a lesson in manners. *(You may feel that this was a natural reaction. The Prophet^(SAAWS) has just been insulted in the presence of the companions, and it is only appropriate that they should teach him how much they loved and respected Prophet^(SAAWS).)*

Despite the insult received, the Prophet^(SAAWS) asked the companions to stay calm. He went into his house and invited the man in, and gave him more. While they were together, he then asked the Arab again, have I been fair to you? The Arab now replied "yes, may Allah reward you". The Prophet^(SAAWS) reminded the man of what he had said previously in front of the companions, and that they still have anger in their hearts. He asked him to return to them, and tell them what he just said, which he did. The following day, the Prophet^(SAAWS) reminded the companions of the incident, and reminded them of what the Arab's initial response was, and what he ultimately said.

Then the Prophet^(SAAWS) gave his lesson, he said; *"The example of me and this person is like a man who has a camel that strayed. The helping people ran after the camel, and all that they achieved was to make the camel run further away. The owner of the*

camel said, leave my camel to me, for I am much kinder to it, and know it more than you. He took some food in his hands and gently went towards the camel. The camel gently came back to him, knelt down and he was able to ride it again. The Prophet^(SAAWS) said if I let you get to this man after what he said first, you may have killed him, and he may have entered the fire of hell by what he said and by your reaction".

This is the example of the Prophet^(SAAWS) teaching his companions the message of Islam. The clear message is to lead people into the light of Islam through patience, through forgiveness and through tolerance. We are told that people who wrong others are like this stray camel. They have lost their way. They can cause a tremendous harm to others, but it is still them who have lost their way, and not us. It is our aim, as Muslims, to lead them into the light of Islam through our ability to be patient, through our ability to forgive and through our ability to be tolerant. It is never our aim, as Muslims, to be so intolerant that we drive non-Muslims away, and in doing so, we lead them away from heaven.

In this example, the Prophet^(SAAWS) identified the defect in that person's behaviour, he tolerated it and then treated that defect. In doing so, he also managed to treat the response of the sahabah and calmed them down, and finally, after a period of time, he made the sahabah contemplate their actions the previous day and learn the example of what patience and forgiveness can achieve. And very importantly, he also warned them about the detriment of an irresponsible reaction waged in anger. This is the example of our teacher, the Prophet^(SAAWS). This is the example set for us.

I am not sure if some of you watch the program super-nanny, and other similar programs. These programs show how to deal with unruly children. Some of them are so out of hand, all that one can think of is "these children need a smack, that should teach them". However, through tolerance, firmness and love, week on week, we witness amazing turnaround in these children's behaviour. I must admit, I learned a few things from these programs.

For most of us, when we are taught Islam from childhood, we seem to have one message. Islam is the religion of fear and punishment. It is not taught as the religion of tolerance, love and forgiveness. If we take one message from today, it is for the parents in this community to focus on the aspects of tolerance, love and forgiveness in the message of Islam. It is our duty to teach our children the true message of Islam.

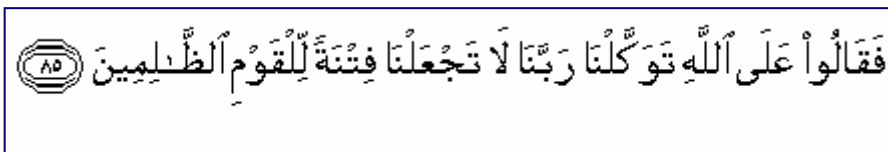
What would happen if through our intolerance and our actions we did in fact turn people away from Islam. Brothers and sisters, we need to be very clear about this serious point. You need to ask yourself, as a Muslim, have I done something today that convinced a non-Muslim that Islam is not the religion for him. Have I given Islam the wrong image? Just imagine this. I as a Muslim, I am entrusted in propagating this message. Have I driven people away from the message of Islam by my actions?

This point does not only relate to the non-Muslims. It also relate to Muslim brothers and sisters who are not practicing Islam, and need to come back to Islam. Imagine if we tell them you are a "kafir", you will go to hell whatever you do, and I will never

talk to someone like you. Ask yourself this question; what have I said or done to bring this person back into Islam?

The Prophet^(SAAWS) faced hardship after hardship to deliver the message of Islam. The companions were killed in their hundreds if not their thousands in their endeavour to preserve and pass on the message of Islam. They did that for our benefit. Imagine that after all these sacrifices, we portray, through our behaviour and conduct, that this religion is not good enough for those around us now. By our actions we are stopping the message of Islam. The message that we have been entrusted to pass on. This thought is un-imaginable.

Listen to these words from the Quran:



"They said: In Allah do we put out trust. Our Lord! make us not a trial for those who are oppressive (and wrong doers)" (S10, A85)

These are the words of the followers of Moussa^(AS) asking Allah not to make them a trial for the non-believers. They did not want the disbelievers to judge the religion of Allah through them, and when the day of judgement comes, the disbelievers can say we did not follow Islam because we saw nothing special about the Muslims.

Imagine if on the day of judgement a non-believer says the Muslim I came across was aggressive, he was full of hatred and anger, he was not forgiving and so on. Imagine if the disbeliever is using you as an excuse for not believing in Allah. What a calamity.

We need to remember this verse, and pray to Allah that we do not become the reason that deters people around us from accepting Islam, whether this was from something we say or something we do, or from something we did not say or something we did not do.

You see, back in the Islamic countries, we did not have this burden on our shoulders, because mostly everyone around us is a Muslim. But here, the situation is different. Suddenly, praying, fasting and giving in charity is no longer enough. Being a practicing Muslim is no longer enough. Whether we like or not, in this society we are all entrusted in the process of Da'wa. As such, one of the most important issues for us, the ordinary Muslim, is for us to enact Islam according to the example of the Prophet^(SAAWS). This is how we participate in Da'wa. This is where our behaviour is so important. This is why we continue to speak about the diseases of the heart, and this is why we continue to speak about the virtues of patience and forgiveness. In addition to all the benefits one can achieve through patience and forgiveness, one may achieve the ultimate prize and that is to guide a non-Muslim into Islam through his or her conduct.

Recently, one of our neighbours came to park his car during the khutbah, and found that someone has parked between the two cones reserved for his very ill wife. The brother who responded to his request was so rude one has to question which part of

Islam our brother failed to learn. Does Islam teach us to be rude, does it teach us to be intolerant, does it teach us to be aggressive? It doesn't, yet, the actions of our brother took place during a period recognised by non-Muslims as a period of worship. Imagine the picture that our neighbour will get about us the Muslims. The message that he received is that we can be as irresponsible to others as we like, as long as our acts of worship are accomplished. Yes brothers and sisters, we did come to the masjid, and yes we did pray as Allah has commanded us, but at what price?

The reason that I brought this example up is not to remind the brother again, because I know this is now behind us, and we spoke to our neighbour and apologised to him. The main reason is that we are now coming to Ramadan, and every night we will have a jama'a prayer. Please ask yourself every time you come to this masjid, what is the image of Islam that I am painting by my behaviour. Allah reminds us in surat Al-Kahf, that we will be asked about every little bit:

مَا لِهَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا

“What kind of a Book is this that leaves not a small thing nor a great thing but has counted them all” (S18, A49)

Let us ask ourselves which is more valuable to us. Let us ask ourselves to solve this equation, and every one here will need to solve this for themselves. What would you be prepared to give up to guide a non-believer into Islam? What value would you put on the knowledge that a person out there may accept Islam through you?

In a khutbah, the Prophet^(SAAWS) said: The children of Adam are of different levels. Of their best are those who are slow to anger and quick to forgive. Others are quick to anger and quick to forgive (*probably that covers most of us here; impulsive*), while some are slow to anger and slow to forgive and these even out. However, of their worst are those who are quick to anger and slow to forgive.

Here, the Prophet^(SAAWS) is reminding us that people are not alike, and we differ in the way we react. However, in doing so, the Prophet^(SAAWS) is also telling us what is considered as the best, as the average and as the worst, guiding us to better ourselves.

The Prophet^(SAAWS) continued to say that anger is like a red hot charcoal in ones heart, you see the redness in their eyes and their veins. If one should feel that way, the Prophet^(SAAWS) said, "stay put and stay seated".

The Prophet^(SAAWS) asked the companions: who among you do you consider invincible. They replied it is he who is not overcome by other men. The Prophet^(SAAWS) said it is he who is not overcome by anger. (narrated by Muslim)

A man came to the Prophet^(SAAWS) and asked to be given advice but not to make it too complicated so as he does not forget it. The Prophet^(SAAWS) said: Do not get angry. (Narrated by Malek)

When Islam came to the people of the Jahilia, there were two serious problems that needed addressing. These two problems were the fact that the people of the Jahilia did not see value in knowledge and did not see value in patience. These were two significant problems that Islam came to resolve; ignorance and anger. Imagine the sort of society that is based on ignorance and anger, and then imagine the sort of society that is based on knowledge and patience.

This is what Islam makes us strive for. Islam is enlightenment. It is knowledge, and there is tremendous comfort for us in knowledge. Islam teaches us patience and there is tremendous comfort for us and for those around us in patience.

When anger gets the better of us, some of us find great difficulty in holding back our tongues. We tend to let our tongues loose, we "let rip". The Prophet^(SAAWS) said: The believer does not backstab, does not curse others, is not indecent and is not vulgar. (Narrated by Al-Tirmizi)

قال رسول الله ﷺ ☆ ليس المؤمنُ بطعان ولا لعان ولا فحش ولا بذيء ☆ (الترمذي)

In a fit of anger, some may inadvertently curse others. The Prophet was asked pray Allah to punish the disbelievers and curse them. The Prophet^(SAAWS) replied, I was sent as a mercy and not as a curse.

قيل لرسول الله ﷺ: ادع على المشركين والعنهم. قال ☆ إنما بعثت رحمة ولم أبعث لعناً ☆ (مسلم)

The status of the Muslim in the eyes of Allah is reflected by his or her ability to control one-self, to control ones anger, to control ones words, to overlook the mistakes of others and to forgive them. It is through patience and forgiveness that we elevate our status in the eyes of Allah.

Listen to what the Prophet^(SAAWS) say about ones curse. The Prophet^(SAAWS) said, when a person curses someone, this curse ascends the heavens, but the doors of heaven are closed to it. It descends to earth, but the doors of earth close to it. When this curse finds no opening, it goes towards its intended victim. If the person was deserving of the curse, it sticks to him, but if not, the curse returns to the person who uttered it.

Islam encourages us to control our anger. Islam also encourages us to control our tongues when we are in anger. Islam forbids us to indulge in obscenities.

عن عبادة بن الصامت: قال رسول الله ﷺ ☆ ألا أنبئكم بما يُشرف الله به البنيان ويرفع الدرجات؟ قالوا: نعم يا رسول الله. قال: تحلم على من جهل عليك، وتعفو عمن ظلمك، وتعطي من حرمك، وتصل من قطعك ☆ الطبراني

The Prophet^(SAAWS) asked the sahabah, shall I tell you what would elevate your status by Allah. They replied: yes. He said, be patient with he who wronged you, and forgive he who has agressed you, and give to he who has denied you and to approach he who has abandoned you" (Narrated by Al-Tabarani)

أقول قولي هذا وأستغفرُ الله لي ولكم

2nd Khutbah:

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

Finally we end with verses from the Holy Quran:

﴿ وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ
أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴾ (١٣٣) الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكُظُمِينَ
الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

“And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord; and a Garden, the extensiveness of which is (as) the heavens and the earth, prepared for the Mutaqueen. Those who spend (of that which Allah has given them) in ease and in adversity, those who control their anger, and those who are forgiving of others. And Allah loves those who do good (to others)” (S3, A133-4)

These ayas give a clear message of the status of those who practice patience and forgiveness. It is for them that the promise of the Garden of Paradise has been given, and they are considered among “Al-mutaqueen”.

﴿ وَلَا يَأْتِلِ أَوْلِيَا الْفَضْلِ مِنكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أَوْلِيَ الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ
وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا ۗ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ
اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴾ (٢٢)

“And let not those of you who possess grace and abundance pledge against giving to the near of kin and the poor and those who have fled in Allah's way, and they should pardon and overlook. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful” (S24, A22)

This aya was revealed in response to Abu Bakr^(RAA) when he decided he will withdraw his benefit from one of his relations “Musstab” because of what he said of Aisha^(RAA). Despite the despicable actions of “Musstab”, this aya clearly asks Muslims to forgive

and to overlook. Abu Bakr responded by saying: I love Allah to forgive me, and he forgave his "Musstab".

As we finish, let us take a final look at these two characteristics, patience and forgiveness. In the ayas and hadeeth mentioned, these two characteristics go hand in hand. Why should this be the case? To me, the message is that without patience it is difficult to be forgiving. In anger, there is little forgiveness. So, brothers and sisters, if we want Allah to forgive us, we need to forgive others. If we want to forgive others we need to control our anger and we need to be patient with others.

Let us, ISA, develop our ability to be patient with others, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Ramadan is getting nearer and nearer, and there is no better time to develop the virtue of patience than in Ramadan, as we test ourselves against hunger and thirst. If we decide that we want to develop one characteristic this Ramadan let it be patience.