

Friday 29th June 2007

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.

All 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 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 **اللَّهِ** to whom there is no partner
and I testify that Muhammad **ﷺ** is his servant and messenger

قُلْ لِمَنْ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ قُلْ لِلّٰهِ كَتَبَ عَلٰى نَفْسِهٖ الرَّحْمَةَ

“Say To who belongs what is in the heavens and earth? Say: To Allah; He has ordained mercy on Himself” (S6, A12)

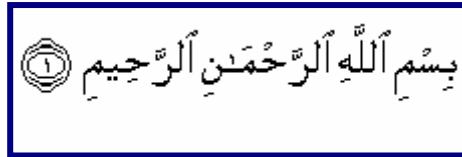


Brothers and sisters, ASA.

The topic for today's khutbah relates to various aspects of mercy in Islam.

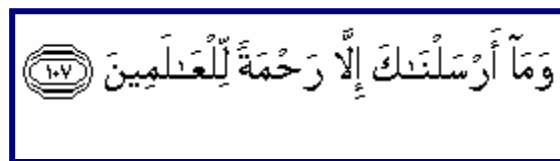
Mercy is a beautiful and noble characteristic that elevates the human being. A merciful person is someone who is sensitive to the pain and suffering of others and this sensitivity drives such a person to help alleviate their pain and suffering.

Mercy must therefore combine awareness of the feelings of others and action on this awareness. Subhan-na-Allah, when we understand that relationship between awareness and action of mercy, we understand the term:



To feel with others and not do anything about it is not enough, and to deliver acts of mercy without having a feeling towards others is equally not enough.

In Islam, this awareness and sensitivity to hardship is not just limited to being sensitive to the suffering of fellow humans, but encompasses everything. This awareness must include the suffering of animals, plants and the environment. We know of many organizations established with the sole purpose of alleviating the suffering of others. Organizations for alleviating the suffering of children, of orphans, of homeless people, of the elderly, of animals, of birds and so on. Muslims should be actively involved with such organizations, for it is the essence on which the conduct of a Muslim is based.



“And We have not sent you but as a mercy to all creatures” (S21, A107)

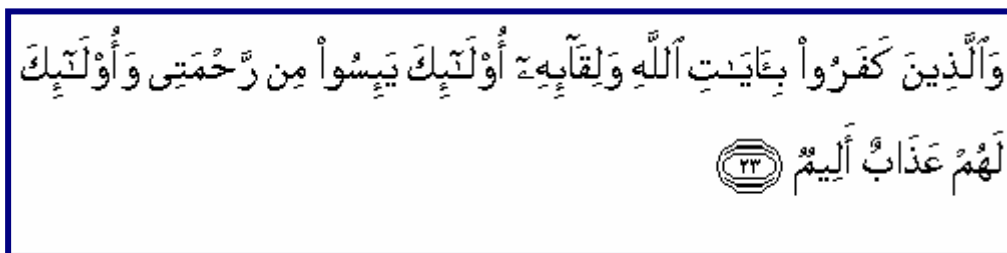
A heart that is full of mercy is a heart that is connected to its creator. A heart that is devoid of mercy is a heart that has no Islam in it.

Before we talk about the conduct of the Muslim, we need to look at some aspects of Mercy as understood by Islam.

Firstly, we need to appreciate the concept of the “divine mercy”. It is very human for people to occasionally despair when faced by adversity. In the recent past we witnessed the adversity caused by the torrential rains, the adversity of people dying in Iraq, the adversity of a child being abducted while sleeping in her bed, the adversity of teenage killings in London and so on. It seems that adversity is an integral part of our existence. Probably each and every one of us is going through or has gone through an adverse period where our Iman was tested, and our belief in a merciful Allah was shaken.

It is therefore essential for us to understand the concept of Devine mercy. However, to talk about divine mercy is an endless task, and we all need to go out of here today and find out for ourselves in the Quran, in the Hadeeth and Sunnah and in the works of scholars, we need to find out for ourselves what Islam says about Devine mercy.

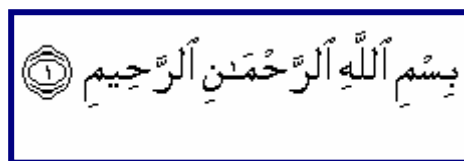
A Muslim is not permitted to despair from the Mercy of Allah:



Those who reject the Signs of Allah and the Meeting with Him (in the Hereafter), it is they who despair of My Mercy: it is they who will (suffer) a most painful punishment. (S29, A23)

It is the disbelievers that have despaired from the mercy of Allah, and not those who truly believe, and the evidence for us Muslims is enormous.

First of all, we all know that the religion of Islam opens with the words:



We know that Allah(SWT) has guided us to ninety nine of His beautiful names, and yet, as we open ourselves to Islam, Allah(SWT) wants us from the start to appreciate these particular two beautiful names: Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem.

Some scholars explained “Ar-Rahman” as being an essence of mercy, and “Ar-Raheem” as being the application of mercy. Subhan-na-Allah, awareness and action. These

beautiful names are repeated at the beginning of each surat in the Holy Quran (except surat 9), and are also repeated over 80 times within the text of the Holy Quran.

In a Hadeeth Qudsi: On the authority of Abu Hurayrah(RAA), who said that the Messenger of Allah(SAAWS) said: *When Allah decreed the Creation He pledged Himself by writing in His book, which is laid down with Him: My mercy prevails over my wrath.*

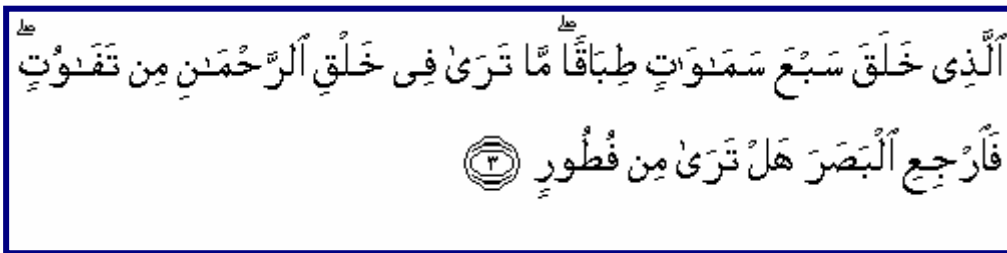
(This hadeeth was related by Muslim, by al-Bukhari, an-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah).

Allah(SWT) tells us that 100 mercies have been created. One has been given for this world, and ninety-nine are kept with Allah for the day of judgment. Can you imagine that all the mercies that we witness around us encompass just 1% of the mercies created.

Non-Muslims seem to only understand the concept of the mercy of God in so much as it relates to the forgiveness of sin and to the alleviation of the suffering of “man”.

The concept of mercy in Islam is far more encompassing.

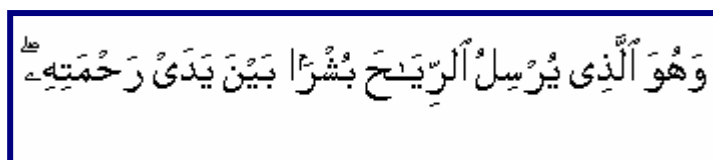
The mercy in the perfection of creation:



“Who created the seven heavens one above the other; you see no incongruity in the creation of Ar-Rahman; So turn your vision again, can you see any disorder?” (S67, A3)

The mercy in the manner in which everything has been ordained.

The wind:



“It is He Who sends the winds in glad tidings, going between the hands of His mercy” (S7, A57)

The night and the day:

وَمِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ
فَضْلِهِ وَلِعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾

“And of His mercy He has made for you the night and the day, that you may rest therein, and that you may seek of His grace, and that you may give thanks” (S28, A73).

The way seeds rest in the “dead” earth and come back to life with rain water

فَإَنْظُرْ إِلَىٰ آثَارِ رَحْمَتِ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ
لَمُحْيِ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

“Look then at the signs of Allah's mercy, how He gives life to the earth after its death, most surely He will raise the dead to life; and He has power over all things” (S30, A50)

The mercy of having tamed animals:

وَتَحْمِلُ أَثْقَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا بَلَغِيهِ إِلَّا بِشِقِّ الْأَنْفُسِ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ
لَرَّءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾

“And they carry your heavy loads to lands that you could not (otherwise) reach except with distress; for your Lord is indeed Most Kind, Most Merciful” (S16, A7)

These are but few examples of the endless mercies that we enjoy every day without even realizing, and this has nothing to do with the traditional understanding of “mercy”.

What is interesting about the above mercies is that they are ordained for every one. Muslim and non-Muslim, believer and non-believer. When a person commits a hideous crime, that person still wakes up the next day with his eyesight, with his hearing, with his

health. Allah(SWT) in his wisdom and mercy gives us all chance after chance after chance to repent and to turn back to him, and Allah's patience with us is a great mercy.

In Surat Al-Kahf:

وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَعَجَّلَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابَ

And your Lord is Most forgiving, full of Mercy. If He were to call them (at once) to account for what they have earned, then surely He would have hastened their punishment. (S18, A58)

The patience of Allah with us has been narrated in the story of S-Ibraheem(AS) and the old man. Probably most of us are aware of this story. Ibraheem(AS) came across an old man and invited him to share his food. Once Ibraheem(AS) lit the fire to cook, the old man prostrated to the fire. Ibraheem(AS) was angered by that and scorned the old man for worshiping the fire and not Allah, and sent him away without sharing his food with him. Jibreel(AS) descends immediately and says to Ibraheem(AS), Allah tells you, you could not tolerate this man for an hour, while Allah(SWT) has tolerated him for 60 years.

Allah tolerates us throughout our lives. How many of us have sinned in the past and most likely are still sinning. Imagine if your fate was sealed by your first action. Allah tolerates us, and covers our sins and gives us chance after chance to straighten ourselves. Brothers and sisters, please remember that when Allah has protected you after sinning, it is a mercy from Allah, so do not go out of your way to expose the sins of others.

Ibraheem(AS) runs after the man and calls him back to share his food. The man, surprisingly asked why? Ibraheem(AS) replied, my Lord has reproached me for what I did to you.

Imagine who is being reproached and for who? If there is a relevant message for us from this khutbah, I think this would be the one. Imagine in this story in Islam, who is being reproached and for whom? This was confirmed in the Quran:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ
مَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ

“And when Ibraheem said: My Lord, make this a secure town and provide its people with fruits, for those who believe in Allah and the last day. He said: And those who disbelieve as well” (S2, A126)

Allah responded to S-Ibraheem’s dua’: and those who disbelieve as well!

This is the amazing concept of Devine mercy in Islam. It is mercy for all. Muslim and non-Muslim. It is a concept of patience and tolerance. It is a concept of forgiveness and healing. It is a concept that should define our role on this earth as the Khalifah of Allah, as mentioned in the Quran:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

“Behold, your Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth." (S2, A30)

Umar(RAA) came across a thief who was pleading; “I swear that this is the first time I have ever stolen anything”. Umar replied; you are not telling the truth. Allah will not expose your sin from the first time.

قُلْ لِمَن مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلْ لِلَّهِ كَتَبَ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ

“Say To who belongs what is in the heavens and the earth? Say: To Allah; He has ordained mercy on Himself” (S6, A12)

And then we read this aya:

﴿ قُلْ يٰۤاَعْبَادِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسْرَفُوْۤا عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوْۤا مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥٣﴾

“Say O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful” (S39, A53)

This is the relationship that Allah wants us to have with him and with each other. It is a relationship of mercy, forgiveness, tolerance and patience.

Muslims should understand that mercy in Islam must include forgiveness for those who have transgressed against us, and even more so, we need to ask Allah for guidance to those who have transgressed against us. We sometimes forget that all of us in the past have transgressed and it was by the merciful grace of Allah(SWT) that we have found guidance. If we want to show mercy, we must seek to forgive others and ask Allah(SWT) to guide them as we were guided. That is what the Quran says:

كَذَلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِّن قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ

“you too were such before, then Allah conferred His grace upon you” (S4, A94)

This aya in surat An-Nissa, tells us that our guidance is a grace from Allah, and not of our own doing. We should recognize that and ask Allah(SWT) to guide others as we were guided.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَ لَكُمْ

2nd Khutbah:

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

كَذَلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِّن قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ

“you too were such before, then Allah conferred His grace upon you” (S4, A94)

Brothers and sisters, when we look around us, we know that what this world is lacking is mercy. Mercy is so rare nowadays. Just Imagine, with over two billion Muslims, Christians and Jews, Mercy is so rare nowadays. People's hearts have turned cold and hard. Many of us do not feel for the suffering of others. When we do, when we actually feel for someone then we have taken a positive step. However, should we fail to act on this feeling, then this was a wasted step.

It is in this period that the role of the Muslim has been clearly defined in Islam.

Allah tells us:

Have mercy on those on earth and you will gain the mercy of He who is in Heaven.

Allah will have mercy on those who show mercy.

Can anyone here claim that they will not be in need of the mercy of Allah on the day of judgement?

From these sayings, Muslims must know that showing mercy is not something that one does for the need of others. No, being merciful is a conduct that is necessary for our own salvation. To apply mercy now is to save ourselves on the day of judgement

Everyone here today can answer for himself or herself this question: will I be granted mercy on that awesome day? The day that is described in the first two ayas of Surat Al-Hajj:

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ أَتَقُؤْا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا
تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى
النَّاسَ سُكَرَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَرَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ ﴿٢﴾

O mankind! Fear your Lord! For the convulsion of the Hour (of Judgment) will be a tremendous thing. The Day you shall witness it, every breast feeding mother will be so stunned to forget her suckling-baby, and every pregnant shall deliver her burden, and you shall see people intoxicated while they are not intoxicated but the chastisement of Allah will be severe. (S22, A1-2)

Ask yourself, am I merciful. Do I have mercy in my heart? If not, then be warned.

We end with this beautiful hadeeth about the mercy of Allah: On the Day of Judgment, after the “Hissab”, those who have attained the victory are enjoying the fruits of their work, and those who have brought their book of deeds behind their back are in the torment of hell, it does not end there. The Prophet (SAAWS) is so merciful with his Ummah, he asks Allah for intercession for the transgressors from his Ummah, and Allah grants him that. Allah draws a line in the fire, and everyone on its side is granted salvation. The Prophet(SAAWS) asks Allah for intercession again, and the same is granted. The Prophet(SAAWS) asks Allah for intercession again, and the same is granted. The angels ask for intercession and more forgiveness is granted. The prophets ask for intercession and more forgiveness is granted. And when all the intercessions have been granted, Allah(SWT) Says, it is my turn. Allah tells us that He puts His hand in the fire of hell and takes out every single soul that has an atom's worth of “La-Allah-Illa-Allah” in its heart.

(man kana fee qualbihi zaratu-la-Allaha-Illa-Allah)