

Friday 5th October 2007

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 يُضِلِّ اللهُ 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

وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

"And seek Tawbah and return unto Allah together, O believers, in order that you may be successful" (S24, A31)

Dear brothers and sisters: ASA

We do not need a reminder to tell us that we are in the last ten days of Ramadan. We have been setting ourselves throughout the past twenty days to reach this goal. ISA we enjoyed the mercy of Allah as we started Ramadan. ISA we were all seeking Maghfirah and Tawbah during the second 10 days. Now we are in the last stretch. This is the stretch where one should push even further.

It is almost as if we are in a long distance race. A lot of effort and hard work has been used to set yourselves in a good position in this race. If you slow down now, you may well have wasted all your efforts so far. Keep up your resolve, and use these last days to gain the pleasure of Allah. This race is not against others, but it is against your “Nafss”.

“Lay-latul-Kadr” may be upon us any time. We need to seek the forgiveness of Allah through our fasting, our prayers and our Quran.

But, and it is a big but, do we think that fasting, prayers and Quran is enough. In an authentic hadeeth, we are told that Allah(SWT) will forgive all, except those who associate in worship (Shirk), and those described as “mushahen”. This word defines someone who has enmity against others and is unwilling to forgive his brothers or sisters, or to that matter anyone else. Brothers and sisters, if you have a quarrel with someone, if you have been unable to forgive someone who has transgressed against you, if you are still angry with someone, then for your own sake, “forgive”. How can we expect the forgiveness of Allah, if we do not forgive ourselves.

This is what we read in the Quran:

وَلْيَعْفُوا
وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

“and they should forgive and pardon. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful” (S24, A22)

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ
بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ
وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

“And those who come after them say: Our Lord! forgive us and those of our brothers who had preceded us in faith, and do not allow any hatred to remain in our hearts towards those who believe, our Lord! You are Kind and Merciful” (S59, A10)

Brothers and sisters, we all know that we have unresolved quarrels. We all know that there are brothers and sisters who we have yet to forgive. The last ten days of Ramadan are upon us. Let everyone here ask himself or herself; am I in need of Allah’s forgiveness? Do I want my salat to be lifted above my head? Do I want to gain from my acts of worship? If so, Allah(SWT) has given us another collective opportunity. In these last days of Ramadan, let us forgive, we need to forgive.

We are told that our “salat” will not even be lifted higher than our heads if we do not forgive. How can we expect our prayers to ascend to heaven and be accepted if it does not even get higher than our heads.

In the last days of Ramadan, Aisha(RAA) asked the Prophet(SAAWS), what should I ask Allah. The Prophet(SAAWS) replied:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ تَحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُو عَنَّا

O Allah, you are forgiving, you love to forgive; forgive us.

We also know about the aya that comes in the middle of the ayas concerning Ramadan::

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

"And when My worshipers ask you of Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me" (S2, A187)

Where ever we look for the forgiveness of Allah we find it. However, can we say the same about our brothers and sisters. These days for the Muslim is just as much about seeking the forgiveness of Allah as it is about giving forgiveness to those around him.

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 :

Brothers and sisters, we know that Islam is not just about fasting, praying, reading the Quran and asking Allah for mercy and forgiveness. Islam is about benefiting our society, about benefiting our country, about benefiting our world. The Prophet(SAAWS) tells us that the best of us are those who are of most benefit to others.

We also know of the hadeeth that compares conduct to acts of worship:

☆ من لم يدع قول الزور، والعمل به، فليس لله حاجة في أن يدع طعامه
وشرابه ☆ البخارى

"He who does not stop lying and giving false witness has no need to fast from food and water" Narrated by Al-Bukhari.

عن أسامة بن شريك قال: كنا جلوساً عند النبي ﷺ كأنما على رؤوسنا الطير،
ما يتكلم منا متكلم، إذ جاءه أناس فقالوا: من أحب عباد الله إلى الله تعالى؟
قال: ☆ أحسنهم خلقاً ☆ الطبرانى

Ussama Ibn Shareek said: we were sitting at the Prophet's(SAAWS), quite and silent as if we had birds resting on our heads, when a group of people came to him and asked: Of God's servants, whom does God love most? The Prophet(SAAWS) said, "those who have the best of conduct" Narrated by Al-Tabarani

In Ramadan, Muslims go through hardship by fasting, and praying during the night because we want to get close to Allah. Yet, this hadeeth tells us that if we want to be:

أحب عباد الله إلى الله تعالى

“those whom God loves most”, it does not mention fasting or night prayers, but it mentions “the best of conduct”. To me, the message is getting clearer. Fasting, prayers, the Quran, Zakat and Hajj are all ways of improving my character and becoming a person with good conduct. If, after all my fasting and my prayers I am not a better person with better conduct, I need to look very carefully at what I am doing.

ISA I finish with this hadeeth:

لقد سأل أصحابه يوماً: ☆ أتدرون من المفلس؟ قالوا: المُفلسُ فينا من لا درهم له ولا متاع، فقال: المفلس من أمتي من يأتي يوم القيامة بصلاة وزكاة وصيام، وقد شتم هذا، وقذف هذا، وأكل مال هذا، وسفك دم هذا، وضرب هذا؛ فيعطى هذا من حسناته، وهذا من حسناته، فإن فنيت حسناته قبل أن يقضى ما عليه، أخذ من خطاياهم فطرحت عليه، ثم طرح في النار ☆ مسلم

"The Prophet^(SAAWS) asked his companions: Do you know who is penny-less? They replied the penny-less among us is he who has no money and no possessions. The Prophet^(SAAWS) said: the penny-less of my nation (my Ummah) is he who comes on the day of judgement with prayers, with zakat and with fasting, but he swore at this person, slandered another, cheated another of his money, wounded another and hit another: so to each of these he gives of his good deeds. If his good deeds run out before he has repaid his debts, their sins are thrown onto him and he is thrown in the Fire" Narrated by Muslim

Brothers and sisters, let us not forget that all our acts of worship are there to get us close to Allah. However, part of the deal is that we should improve our conduct. There is no compromise on this deal, as we see from this hadeeth. Worship without conduct will not save us from punishment. As we all seek salvation in these last ten days of Ramadan, let us not forget our conduct, for there is no salvation without good conduct.