

24th August 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.

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

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ
لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ
نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

"O you who believe! Fear Allah, and let every soul look to what (provision) it has sent forth for tomorrow. And fear Allah: for Allah is well-acquainted with (all) that you do. And be not like those who forgot Allah; and He made them forget their own souls! Such are the rebellious transgressors" (S59, A18-9)



Dear brothers and sisters, ASA.

All praise be to Allah. It is always great to see our children in the Masjid. Most of the khutbah today is addressed to our children, and I hope that the parents can also take benefit from that. So probably, the children should ask their parents later on if they understood from the message of this khutbah. As we are going through a special month, and heading towards a holy month, it is important to include in this khutbah something about the month of Sha'ban. ISA, time permitting, the khutbah will also have other topics to continue with the previous khutbah on aspects of scenes of the Day of Judgment.

First of all, if we look at any calendar year, many countries will have special dates that are considered so important that they are regularly commemorated. I think most children here would recognize New Year's Day, Christmas day, St Valentine, Easter Friday and Good Monday, May Day and so on. Some of these days are so special that everything that happens during that time is dictated by the occasion. All we need to do is to look at Christmas day to get the idea. The question for our children here today is how well do we know the special days in the Muslim calendar, and what is the relevance of Sha'ban.

Let us think for a moment. How many special days do we know? I think it is safe to say that we definitely know about the two Eid days, we definitely know about the holy month of Ramadan and in that month, and from the Quran, we also know about "Lailatul-Qadr". For some of the older children, you may also know about "The day of Arafat". One of the reasons that we already know these occasions very well is probably the fact that these occasions are celebrated across the entire Muslim world at the same time. This is also probably the reason why other equally important days in the Muslim calendar are less well known, because they are celebrated on a lesser scale.

That is why the parents must come in on this and help the children recognize these important days. It is therefore important for our families to have an Islamic calendar at home, and to also recognize these days. Now that we are on holiday, and there is a bank holiday Monday, it is probably a good idea that before the weekend is over, we all get with our children and define those important days in the Muslim calendar, which is also known as the Hijri calendar: We read in the Holy Quran:

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ

"The number of months in the sight of Allah is twelve (in a year)- so ordained by Him the day He created the heavens and the earth; of these four being sacred" (S9, A36)

First of all, do our children know the 12 months of Hijri calendar and their sequence.

1. Muharam
2. Safar
3. Rabi'-Alawal
4. Rabi'-Athani
5. Jamadi-Alawal
6. Jamadi-thani
7. Rajab
8. Sha'ban
9. Ramadan
10. Shawal
11. Zil-Qui'da
12. Zil-Hijja

Our families should have a little quiz. By the end of the weekend, why do we not give our children a task and reward them on it. If they are able to memorize the months in order, they get a prize. (go through them again). Let us now look at some special days in the Muslim year.

We start with the first day of the Hijri calendar, the 1st day of Muharam. As Muslims, we need to define for ourselves the relevance of this day, and what it means for the Muslim Ummah. We know from the usual "Georgian" calendar that new year's days is a special occasion as it defines the end of a time period and the start of a new one. With the start of a new "Dawn", people make resolutions; they look at that day as an important day for change. It is a day that has a collective feel to it, and there is a sense of excitement at the expectation of the future. With that in mind, what should the first day of Muharam mean to Muslims of our time. To understand that, we need to look at what the early Muslims thought when they decided to establish and define an Islamic calendar.

A question for the children. If you are asked now to come up with a name to define the Islamic calendar, what will be your response? What would you call it, and when would you start it from? You probably know of many monumentous events in Islam that are worthy of defining the start of the Islamic calendar. Possibilities include the first day S-Jibreel(AS) reveled the message to the Prophet(SAAWS). This was the first day of the message. Another possibility would be the birth day of the Prophet(SAAWS), or probably "Laylatul-Qadr", or probably "Laylatul-Isra'-Wal-Mi'raj", or even some of the most important battles in early Islam. You would probably be right in most of them as they are all fundamental events that shaped early Islam. Would you be surprised to know that the start of the Islamic calendar is not based on commemorating any of these? S-Umar(RAA) had the task of defining for the Muslim Ummah their calendar, and to define it for us. After consultation, the defining event that the Muslims of that time decided as being the most important was that of the Hijra, the migration of the early Muslims from Makkah to Madinah. This took place after 13 years of the start of the revelation, and according to "Georgian calendar", it was in the year 622 AD. The Muslims that shaped and defined Islam for us today recognized the Hijra as being the

central historical event of early Islam. It was this event that led to the foundation of the first Muslim city-state which was a turning point in Islamic and world history.

For Muslims, The first day of the Hijri year defines for us one of the most important collective events in early Islam. It is the time when the centre of da'wah was uprooted from Makkah and planted in Madinah. It defines that period when the majority of early Muslims left their past in Makkah, and went onto, what then, would have been an unknown future for them under the leadership of The Prophet Muhammad(SAAWS). It was definitely the start of a new dawn.

For Muslims, the Hijri calendar has a deep religious and historical significance. It is worth recognizing that the Islamic Era did not start with the victories of Islamic wars, nor with the birth or death of the prophet (PBUH), nor with the Revelation itself. It starts with Hijra. For the majority who were involved in Hijra, this act defined sacrifice for the cause of Truth and for the preservation of the Revelation. By defining our calendar as the Hijri calendar, Allah wanted to teach us even now that struggle between Truth and Evil is eternal. The Islamic Hijri calendar should remind Muslims every year not of the pomp and glory of Islam but of the sacrifices of many ordinary Muslims to raise the word of Allah.

The next day of significance is the day of Ashoora. This is the 10th day of Muharam. For many Muslims, this day is coined with the death of S-Al-Hussain(RAA), the son of S-Ali(KAW) and the Grand-son of The prophet(SAAWS). The significance of this day for Muslims is much more enormous due to many other events. Muslims recognize this day as the day in which the messengers of Allah were saved. It is the day when S-Nuh(AS) was saved:

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَتَبَايَعُوا وَكَفَرُوا فِي الْفُلِكِ (S10, A36)

The day when S-Nuh(AS) went in the arc and was saved from the great flood was the day of Ashoora. It is also the day when S-Ibrahim(AS) was saved:

قُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ (S21, A69)

It is the day when S-Ibrahim(AS) was thrown into the fire, but Allah(SWT) ordered the fire not to burn. It is also the day when S-Mousa(AS) was saved with the children of Israel:

وَأَنْجَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَمَنْ مَّعَهُ وَأَجْمَعِينَ (S26, A65)

It is the day when S-Moussa(AS) and the children of Israel were given safe passage across the sea. It is also the day when S-Younoss(AS) was saved from the belly of the whale after his supplication:

فَأَسْتَجِبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُخَيِّضُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

(S21, A88)

What a day? For our children, did you realize when you read about the messengers of Allah, did you realize that when they were being saved, they were saved on the same day? Isn't this day a day worth commemorating? Once we recognize this fact, the 10th of Muharam takes on a significant position in our hearts. It is a day that defines our Iman in that Allah stands by those who believe in Allah. The Prophet(SAAWS) reminded us that it is more appropriate for the Muslims to fast this day.

The next day of importance in the Hijri calendar is the 12th of Rabi'-Alawal. This is the birth date of the Prophet(SAAWS). Do the children know on which day of the week the Prophet(SAAWS) was born? He was born on a Monday. Did the prophet(SAAWS) celebrate his birthday in any way? We are told that the answer lies in a hadeeth where the Prophet(SAAWS) was asked why he fasted every Monday, and he replied that this was the day he was born. Probably we should take a leaf out of our prophet's book and celebrate our birthdays by fasting to Allah for the mercy and perfection of his creation. I wonder whether any of the children or teenagers here would take on this challenge.

The next day of significance in our calendar is the 27th of Rajab. Do we know what this date signifies? We had a khutbah by brother Saad two weeks ago on the subject, because that was the 27th of Rajab. It is the event of Al-Isra' & Mi'raj. This is again a huge event in Islam, and our children and indeed ourselves need to be familiar with it. A surat in the Quran has been named after the event. It is an event that tested the faith of the early Muslims. It is an event that defined to early Muslims their measure of Iman. The question that this event posed on the early Muslims was: the journey ahead is even more arduous than what you have just been through, and you need a tremendous level of Iman, so are you ready for this journey. If you are not ready, then stand aside. It was the event that defined S-Abu Bakr as As-Siddiq. It was the event that established our 5 daily prayers. It was the event that defined the status of our Prophet(SAAWS). It was The Prophet(SAAWS) that reached "Sidrat Al-Mutaha". Even S-Jibreel(AS) could not go further. In the Muslim calendar, this event was just two weeks go.

Next is the event that I wanted to speak to you about. It is in chronological order and is due in the next four days. Have we guessed what this day is? This is a day that is important not just for us, but for the whole of humanity. It is the middle of the month of Sha'ban, which will most likely be this Tuesday the 28th of August. Our children may well ask, I know Ramadan is less than three weeks away. (Oh, that reminds me, I need to make sure I have seen Shrek 3, Harry Potter 5 and a couple of other films, because once

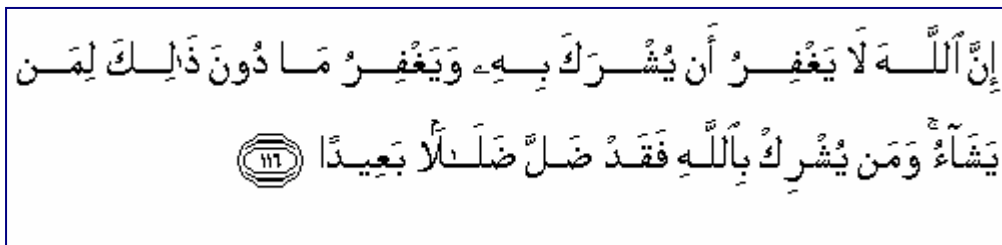
Ramadan is here, there is no time for the cinema). But what about the middle of Sha'ban? What is so special about it.

Brothers and sisters and children, listen very carefully to what the middle of sha'ban is about, for this day should not pass us without us getting the most out of it.

First of all, the month of Sha'ban had a special significance for the Prophet(SAAWS) in that he used to fast most of it. I read that the many of the hadeeths mentioned in relation to Sha'ban are mostly not authenticated, but the following hadeeth has been narrated by At-Tabarani: The hadeeth is from Mu'az Bin Jabal:

“Allah will look at **all** his creation on the night of the middle of Sha'ban. And He forgives **all** his creation except the one who associates with Allah (Mushrek), or the one who has an enmity to another person (Mushahen)”.

The following aya adds emphasis to this hadeeth:



“Surely Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and He forgives what is besides this to whom He Wills; and whoever associates partners with Allah, he indeed has strayed deeply into error.” (S4, A116)

As Muslims, we are aware that our deeds are brought before Allah regularly, and one such occasion is the night of the middle of Sha'ban. This is a very important occasion for us Muslims because at least we have been told about it, but now that we know of this occasion, are we prepared for it? It is only 4 days away.

The hadeeth mentions that Allah(SWT) will look at all his creation with forgiveness in mind. Who in this Masjid today is not in need of forgiveness? Well, this is our chance. Most of us probably were not aware of the significance of the middle of Sha'ban, but now that we know, we should make full use of it. The hadeeth mentions two types of people that will not gain Allah's forgiveness. The first type is an obvious one, it is the one who associates with Allah, and this should not affect us as we are the ummah of “La-Ilaha-Illal-Laah”. We do not associate with Allah(SWT).

So who else will miss badly on this momentous night? It is “Al-Mushahen”. For a Muslim, “Al-Mushahen” is described as one who has an ongoing feud, quarrel, enmity or disagreement or has severed his ties with a brother or a sister. This particular person is exempt from forgiveness. Just imagine, this Muslim brother or sister is exempt from forgiveness. The doors of forgiveness are open wide to everyone except those who have

been described as “Mushahen”. Why should that be the case? What is it about a “Mushahen” that makes him or her so undeserving of Allah’s forgiveness and puts him and her in the same category for not deserving forgiveness as that of a “Mushrek”. How bad can a “Mushahen” be that he or she is lumped with a “Mushrek”. Isn’t that a disturbing thought?

We need to look again at the description of a “Mushahen”, and we need to ask ourselves, what sort of a Muslim is it that will have an ongoing quarrel with a brother or a sister? What sort of a Muslim is it that severs his ties with another brother or sister? What sort of a Muslim is it that cannot find it in his or her heart to forgive his brother or sister. Now it starts to make more sense.

Do we now understand this wonderful religion of Islam. Yet again the focus is on conduct and not just worship. Allah(SWT) wants us to build a strong, cohesive and supportive society. Those who are deserving of Allah’s forgiveness are those who are forgiving themselves. The one who is not deserving of Allah’s forgiveness is the one who cannot find it in his or her heart to forgive for the sake of Allah. Allah will be looking at me next Tuesday. Do I want, or more realistically, do I need to beg for forgiveness?

Another point that we need to be clear on. Some may say that my salat is much more important to me than all this. Salat is one of the foundations of Islam, it must be more important. If that is the case we need to be aware of a very scary hadeeth; “Three types of people for whom their prayers is not lifted even above their heads. The meaning of lifted here is that when we do a good deed it is lifted to the heavens. So imagine now that all the salat that we do does not get lifted beyond our heads. Those three are a leader that is hated by his people, a wife whose husband is angry with and two brothers that have a quarrel between them”. Brothers and sisters, and children, for the acts of worship to be lifted to the heavens and to be accepted we need to be clean in heart. That is what is most important in Islam.

When we ask ourselves, what is the most common cause of quarrels, feuds, disagreements and so on, we realize that it is all to do with this dunia. This is the dunia that Allah(SWT) described as being no more worthy than the wing of a mosquito. We quarrel about a few pounds. We have quarrels driven by jealousy, envy and greed. We have quarrels driven by hatred, and quarrels driven by anger and by pride. These are the characteristic of a “Mushahen”. A “Mushahen” can only be so if dunia means so much to them and if his or her heart is not clean. Allah(SWT) tells us that these people are not deserving of His mercy.

أقول قولي هذا وأستغفر الله لي ولكم

2nd Khutbah:

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

Listen to these two ayas:

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 مِن
بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ
وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا 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 have yet to forgive. The middle of Sha’ban is just four days away. 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 4 days it will be the middle of Sha’ban. Let us forgive. For the children here today, you too can practice to forgive. The best time to practice something is at a young age. You can even go to your parents and remind them to forgive.

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)

Finally, I end with another section of the hadeeth:

I saw yesterday astonishing things. I saw a man of my Ummah:

We heard about the benefit of being dutiful to your parents and we heard of the benefit of “Wudu”, the next is salat.

ورأيت رجلاً من أمتي قد احتوشته ملائكة العذاب، فجاءته صلاته فاستنقذته من أيديهم

And I saw a man of my Ummah who was surrounded and engulfed by the angels of punishment, but his salat came and saved him from them. Subhana-Allah how Islam is well inter-twined. We need a clean heart to gain forgiveness, but we must not despair, and we must carry on with salat, for we will never know when our salat will save us.