

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

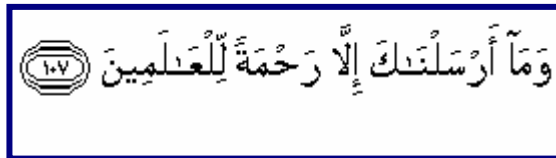
﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ، وَالتَّنظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ ،
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ (الحشر ، 18)

"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" (S59, A18)



ASA brothers and sisters. I cannot tell you how important it is for us to be able to gather here every Friday and get a dose of Islam into our veins and into our souls. Praise be to Allah, Islam has made it obligatory for us to gather like this every Friday, as it is for all our brothers and sisters throughout this world. I truly believe that Muslims, including ourselves, are very lucky indeed, and very blessed to have this centre, and to have the brothers and sisters that we have. Every week that passes us by, we face a barrage of events that test our resolve and test our faith, sometimes to the limit if not beyond. To be able to come here on the Friday, to join our brothers and sisters in the worship of Allah and to feel that we are part of a greater existence goes a long way to settle our anxieties. Praise be to Allah for this wonderful blessing.

Every time we read the ayah:

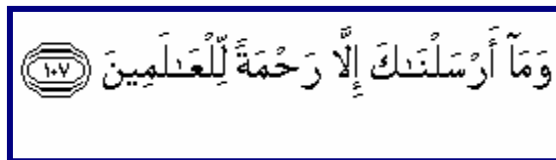


“And We have not sent you but as a mercy to all creatures” (S21, A107)

We wonder, what does this mercy mean to us? How much mercy is there? And how is this mercy delivered?

When we come here on Friday, we realize just one of these mercies. This mercy of the Friday prayers exists because the Prophet(SAAWS) established a protocol for us Muslims. The Prophet(SAAWS) established a timetable for many things in our lives. As youngsters, some of these timetables did not make much sense to us. They appeared more of a burden than a blessing. When we were growing up, coming to Juma' prayers did not seem to fulfill much. We did it because our parents did it, and we simply followed them, or more likely, were told to follow them. Now that we have grown up, and our responsibilities and burdens have grown with us, being here on a Friday is the highlight of my week. I need this gathering, and we need this gathering. We need this congregational remembrance of Allah. We need to be reminded of our beautiful religion. We need to be lifted spiritually. We need to feel the mercy of Allah.

How relevant this ayah is for everything that we do in our daily lives, and how blessed we are to be Muslims.



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

I did not initially have a defined topic for today's khutbah, but with so many events taking place in the past few days, I decided to call the khutbah “this week that was”. Many of the events that

have taken place over the past week have been overwhelming. The complexities faced by the Muslim in every day life are getting much harder and more difficult to be able to sum them up at the end of the week. As an example, within the past week these are just some of the events that the British Muslim is having to cope with:

- Program on Palestine last Sunday defining how the land of Palestine has been stolen from the Palestinians under the leadership of previous British governments, defining the suffering of the Palestinians and defining the relevance of Zionism.
- Headline about the Saudi authorities dishing out 200 lashes and a 6 months jail sentence to a 19 year old rape victim and suspending her lawyer.
- Lesbian couples get the go ahead to have IVF treatment so that they can have children in the natural way, which otherwise they would have never been able to achieve except if they have a husband or a male partner.
- Discussion on ITV2 on forced and arranged marriages in the Asian communities, with Sheikh Ibrahim being given the platform to put forward an Islamic perspective, which he did in a very dignified and beautiful manner.
- Cyclone disaster in Bangladesh.
- Imran Khan is still in jail and is on hunger strike.
- The death of family members of two close friends in our community with one Janazah in Nottingham earlier this week, and one Janazah on Wednesday here in Manchester.

Some of these events are local, others are national and some are global. Yet each event has an impact on us as Muslims. There is no escaping the issue of Palestine. This is a deep wound for the Muslims that keep on hurting and bleeding and there is no end in sight for the humanitarian disaster for our brothers and sisters in Gaza or the West Bank.

There is no escaping the fact that whatever happens in the Muslim world that is evidently despicable will inevitably be used as a label for all Muslims. With the recent Saudi State visit to the UK, it was an ideal time to highlight the human rights abuses that take place in Saudi Arabia, which is recognised as the centre of Islam, and we cannot escape that.

With all that is taking place in Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Saudi and so on, we inevitably pay less attention to local issues that are very relevant to our faith. Allowing lesbian couples to have IVF treatment so as two women can conceive a child and bring that child up deliberately without a father is such a hideous crime against this child who has no say in his or her predicament. We live in the era of “I want” and “I want it now”. It hurts me as a Muslim to see such abuse and there is little that I can do.

Just as one is getting his head around this debate, we hear of the cyclone disaster in Bangladesh. Suddenly, the thought of a fatherless child born to two mothers pales into insignificance when compared to the thousands that have died as a result of this devastating cyclone and the ensuing humanitarian disaster.

This is why Friday for us is such a vital part of our week. We need this gathering and we need this mosque.

I will not talk again today about being a good neighbour or about parking as last week, Brother Basil gave us a lovely khutbah about the importance of good deeds in Islam. Islam is not just about faith and belief. It is also about actions and deeds. To have faith without deeds is not good enough in Islam, and to have deeds but deny the existence of Allah is just not acceptable.

قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا ﴿١١٣﴾ الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا ﴿١١٤﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ

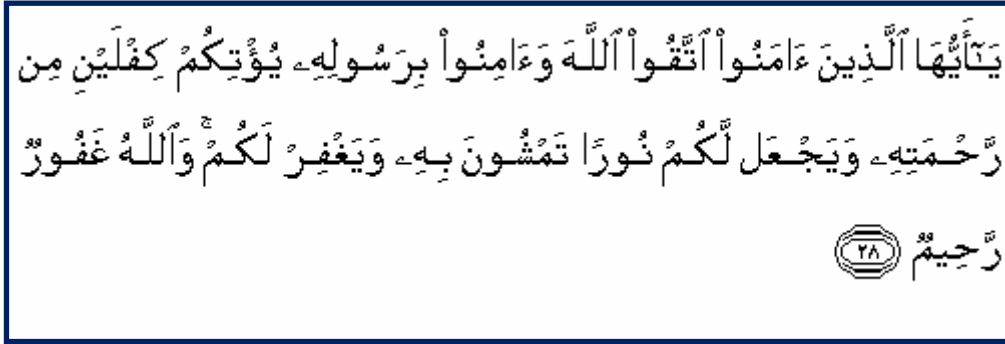
“Say: Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in (their) deeds? Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life, while they thought that they were acquiring good by their works. They are those who disbelieve in the Signs of their Lord and in the fact that they will meet Him”
(S18, A103-5)

This warning is to the disbelievers. But for us, the Muslims who claim to believe in Allah, but do nothing to confirm this belief we are equally at a loss. The Prophet(SAAWS) tells us that faith is what has settled in the heart and is confirmed by actions.

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢﴾ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ
تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣﴾

“O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? It is most hateful to Allah that you should say that which you do not do” (S61, A2-3)

Brothers and sisters, we are in desperate need of Islam. Islam is our light and our guide.



“O you who believe! Be mindful of your duty to Allah and believe in His messenger. He will grant you twofold of His mercy and will appoint for you a light by which you shall walk, and He will forgive you. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful“ (S57, A28)

For Islam to be our guide and our light, we need to have taqwa in our hearts and we need to follow the example of the Prophet(SAAWS). This is how we gain this mercy. This is how we settle our anxieties and our fears. This is how we get on in this life. This is how we become the light for others.

We need to be strong and steadfast for our brothers and sisters and for everyone else. Going back to last week, whichever way you look at it, such events will have a different impact on us Muslims for various reasons. When it comes to Palestine, the Muslims of Briton have links with their brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, just as much as our Jewish colleagues. Whenever we hear of their plight, it always leaves us with a bitter taste and a heavy heart.

As Muslims, we need to express our deepest concerns about same sex marriages and the experiments that involve children born to lesbian couples through IVF without consideration to the wishes of the children who are being forced into such relationships. I have not heard of any pole conducted asking children if they rather substitute a father for a second mother or a mother for a second father. The conservative opposition is trying to enforce that the biological father's name should be included on the birth certificate. We will therefore have a situation in the future where such a child will have three parents. There will be one biological mother, one non-biological female parent, or another mother and one biological but not relevant father. The whole scenario goes against the fundamental concept of a family in Islam, Christianity and Judaism, yet as Muslims, we face these events and feel somewhat helpless. What are we to do and what are we to say.

Then we read about the plight of the Saudi girl who was a rape victim, and was punished, in an Islamic country, with 200 lashes and 6 months in prison. Imagine how strong our position will be on Lesbian couples when we are perceived to be part of this ideology that subjects rape victims

to physical punishment and imprisonment. Not easy. As a Muslim, we somehow feel embarrassed to express our opinion. But should we?

It is not easy for us to be Muslims in this day and age. The Prophet(SAAWS) stated that the day will come when the believer who is holding onto his faith is like the person holding onto a piece of red-hot charcoal. Holding onto the faith will be painful, and how true this is now.

Brothers and sisters, as British Muslims, we have been blessed with a relatively safer and easier life than brothers and sisters living under more oppressive conditions. We have freedom of speech and we have rights which millions of Muslims are denied throughout the world. We therefore need to hold onto our faith and we need to express our opinion in the manner that is fitting to Islam. We have been entrusted with the message of Islam, and we need to recognise that. I keep reminding myself that I cannot afford to become depressed or negative. If ever a Muslim is able to make an impact, it will be a Muslim in this society. We need to be up to this responsibility brothers and sisters.

With the ever-increasing complexities of this world, we sometimes need some simple guidelines to help us cope. I leave you with beautiful hadeeth, which we discussed in the past. It is a hadeeth “Hassan” and has been narrated by Al-Tirmizi.

عن أبي ذرٍّ ومُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ، رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا، عَنِ رَسُولِ اللهِ ﷺ، قَالَ ☆ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ حَيْثَمَا كُنْتَ وَاتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمْحُهَا، وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقٍ حَسَنٍ ☆ (التِّرْمِذِيُّ)

“From Abi-Zar and Mu’az Bni Jabal^(RAA), the Prophet^(SAAWS) said: (Ittaqi-Llaha) where ever/when ever you are and follow a bad deed with a good one, it erases it, and deal with people with good conduct”.

This is a hadeeth with three sections. The first defines our relationship with Allah(SWT). It is very clear. We must always keep Allah at the forefront of all our thoughts and actions, wherever we are and at all times. The second section defines our relationship with ourselves. When we slip up, you need to pull yourself up straight away, and do something good and get on with it. And finally, the third section defines our relationships with others. It is based on good conduct.

When life has a go at us, let us apply this simple rule. Let us ask ourselves: Am I mindful of Allah at all times? How do I deal with my mistakes? And how good is my conduct?

That is practical Islam. This is the practice of Islam.

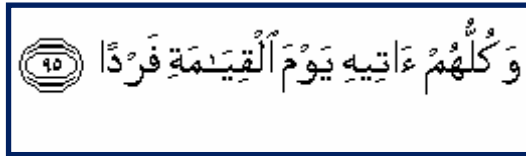
أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلكم

2nd Khutbah:

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

Now for the difficult part of this khutbah. We all know that this week on Tuesday a close friend of this community passed away after battling bravely against overwhelming illness. Many of us were at the Janazah. Somehow, during the Janazah, when we looked down the empty grave, everything else that has happened earlier in the week did not have the same impact. When one stands in front of this hole, one realizes just how much is this life worth and how helpless we will be once we are carried into the grave.

Just as much as we carried the deceased into the grave, one day, someone will carry us as well. We stood by the grave offering prayers to the deceased and asking for “sabr” to her family. But then we all left. Family, friends and everyone else. As one friend said to me, the journey now starts. It is a journey that we do by ourselves, on our own and no one can help us anymore.



“And each one of them will come to Him on the Day of Resurrection, alone” (S19, A95)

All that was left with the deceased is their deeds and nothing else.

When I look at myself in the mirror every morning, I see plenty of gray hairs. Some of my joints are getting stiff and ache now and again. My age tells me that more has passed than there is left. I have seen an example of the hole that has been prepared for me. I know my children and my friends will only stay for a few minutes and then they will leave me alone. I will be helpless and motionless. All that I will have with me is my faith and my deeds. My judgment starts there and then. This period of my judgement is frightening. If we want to have a visual idea of how this judgment is going to be, we need to imagine a court with no legal representation, you cannot say anything and your file has already been written for or against you. Probably the closest one gets to that is the terrifying ordeal of the detainees in Guantanamo Bay. The grave is even worse.

Should my family and friends wish to help me, they can do so by setting up an ongoing charity in my name, and for them to always keep praying for me. For the family of those who passed away, you have a duty to them by strengthening your faith and by praying for them in every salat. It is important to learn a few Duas and to learn the last verses of Surat Al-Fajr:

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ﴿٢٧﴾ أَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ﴿٢٨﴾
فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي ﴿٢٩﴾ وَأَدْخُلِي جَنَّتِي ﴿٣٠﴾

“To the righteous soul will be said: O you soul, in complete tranquility, come back to your Lord, well pleased (with Him), and well-pleasing to Him. So enter among My devotees, and enter into My Heaven” (S89, A27-30)

Let us pray that those who have departed, and those who are to depart, let us pray that we all are among those who are in tranquillity on the day of judgement, those who are gathered with the devotees to their Lord, and those who are granted to enter into Allah’s heaven.

Inna Lillah wa inna Ilyahi Raji’oun

To Allah belongs what Allah has taken, and to Allah belongs what Allah has given, and to everything Allah has an appointed a time.

We ask Allah to ease the torment of the grave on our deceased.