

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلّٰهِ ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَ نَسْتَعِينُهُ وَ نَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَ نَعُوذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ  
شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللّٰهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ  
لَهُ، وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ. وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهُ  
لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

All Praise be to اللّٰهُ .

We praise him and ask him for help and forgiveness. We ask him for protection from the evilness within ourselves and from our own bad deeds. Whom-so-ever God guides to the truth no one can lead astray, and whom-so-ever He leaves misguided, no one has the power to guide.

I testify that there is no God but اللّٰهُ to whom there is no partner and I testify that Muhammad ﷺ is his servant and messenger

وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهَادِي الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

*“And that those who have been given knowledge may know that it is the truth from your Lord, so that they may believe in it, and their hearts may then submit humbly unto Him. And most surely Allah will Guide those who believe onto a straight path” (S22, A54)*



Dear brothers and sisters ASA. ISA, from last khutbah we have all started on a journey of change to the better. It is always difficult to put forward the issue of change to the better without hinting that we are not as good as we like to be. It is almost by default that if one sets on a journey of change to better him/herself that one admits that he or she is lacking and needs improvement. In our last study circle, one of the brothers reminded me when he said that in Islam, the believer should be the mirror of the believer. When we look at ourselves in the mirror, we do it to check how we look, we do it to improve how we look and we do it to confirm that there has been an improvement. Without this mirror, it is impossible to do all these things.

To contemplate that the believer is the mirror of the believer is a wonderful concept. If I want to improve myself, I look at my brothers and sisters to see myself through their eyes. They will reflect for me the way I am. They will reflect for me what my needs are and in time ISA, they will also reflect for me my positive progress. Imagine if we can look at each others in this way. Umar(RAA) used to say; I am grateful for those who “gift” me my defects.

We can only change for the better if we recognise that we need to do so. “Shaitan” does not want us to change for the better, and if we use “shaitan” as our mirror, he will definitely make our bad conduct and our defects seem acceptable to us:

وَإِذْ زَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ

***“Remember that Satan makes their bad deeds seem alluring and acceptable to them” (S8, A48)***

As well as “shaitan”, we also have our own desires and egos that will equally misguide us;

أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ كَمَن زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوٓءُ عَمَلِهِ ۖ وَاتَّبَعُوا  
أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ﴿١٤﴾

***“Is it then that the one who is on a clear (Path) from his Lord the same as the one to whom the sinful error of his conduct seems pleasing to him and they follow their own desires” (S47, A14)***

It is not easy for us to always know that we are drifting away from the path of Allah(SWT) because “shaitan” and desires are lurking there to fool us and make us think that what we are doing is good enough. That is why we the Muslims need to be the mirrors of our brothers and sisters. Shaitan is weakened by unity and weakened by brotherhood and sisterhood, especially when we allow ourselves to be the mirrors of each other.

We all know we need to better our Islam for our sake and for our children's sake, and we all need no reminder of this terrifying aya:

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قُتُوبًا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ  
وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ  
مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٦﴾

***“O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern and severe. They do not disobey Allah in what He commands them to execute, and they do as they are commanded” (S66, A6)***

When we seek change, it may not be enough for us to recognise and to hate the error of our ways. Another very important factor in positive change is for us to recognise the beauty of doing what is right and to love to do it. To really change to the better, we need our hearts to love to do what is right. This is what the Quran says:

وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ  
الْكَفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّشِدُونَ ﴿٧﴾

***“But Allah has endeared the faith to you and has made it beautiful in your hearts. And He has made disbelief, transgression and disobedience hateful to you. Such are they who are the rightly guided” (S49, A7)***

So there we have it. Do we want to be among those whose errors seem acceptable to them, or do we want to be among those whose hearts are ready to love what is right and hate what is wrong. This is a critical issue when a community is trying to help itself to embrace a positive change. When we mention our misgivings, and I am the first to remind myself of my misgivings, it is to embrace this opportunity to better myself. It is in this spirit that I talk about change, and not from the standpoint of “Holier than Thou”. We should allow ourselves to be the mirrors of each other. What a wonderful community we can be if we can adopt this Islamic principle.

We ended last khutbah with this aya:

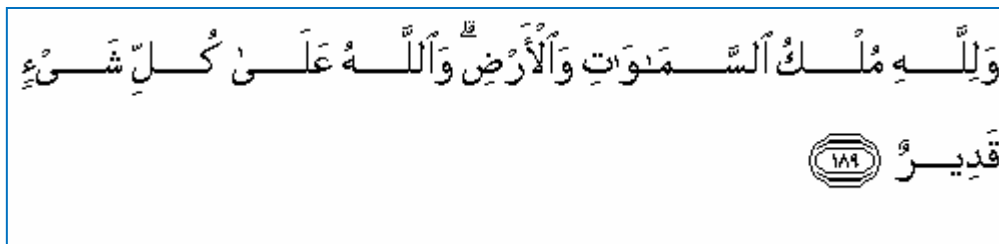
إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ ﴿٣٥﴾

***“Truly, those who fear Allah, from among His Servants are those who have knowledge” (S35, A28)***

Making a positive change in any aspect of society demands awareness and knowledge. We mentioned the importance of knowledge and education in Islam.

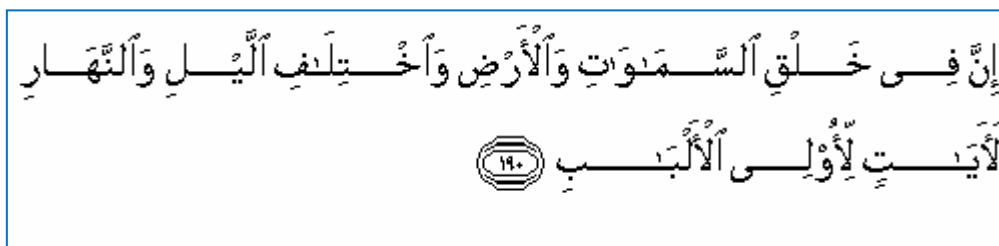
Islam demands seeking knowledge. Islam demands learning. Islam demands disseminating and sharing knowledge. Islam demands respect for those of knowledge and those involved in disseminating this knowledge. There is no conflict in Islam between knowledge and faith, for each leads to the other. In knowledge we get closer to Allah, and as we get closer to Allah we seek and we enjoy more knowledge.

The following are ayas 189 to 191 in surat Al-Imran:



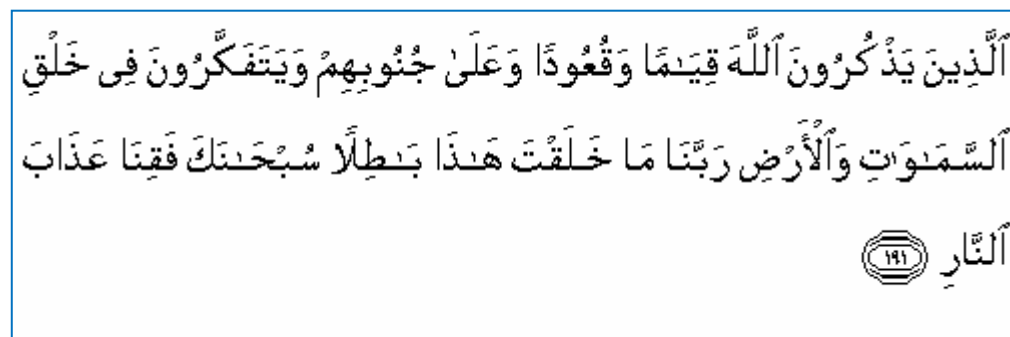
***“And to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and earth, and Allah has power over all things” (S3, A189).***

We have many reminders in the Holy Quran as to the power and Sovereignty of Allah over everything. This belief is a fundamental hallmark of our belief in Allah(SWT). The next aya reads:



***“Most surely, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for those of understanding” (S3, A190)***

Having accepted that Allah(SWT) is The creator and has The power and sovereignty, those of knowledge and of understanding will inevitably recognise the miraculous signs in the enormity and perfection of this creation, from the smallest electron to the largest nebula. Then we read:



***“Those who remember Allah while upright, sitting, and while reclining and consider and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord! You have not created this in vain. Glory be to You! Save us from the torment of the fire” (S3, A191)***

In the first aya we start by declaring and testifying to the Might of Allah(SWT) in the creation of the heavens and earth. In the second aya we recognise that in this creation there are signs for those who think and reflect. In the third aya we get a wonderful link between those who remember Allah and those who think and reflect.

Remembering Allah is to do with “faith” and thinking and reflecting on creation is to do with “knowledge”. Is there a more beautiful way that links faith to knowledge?

***“Those who remember Allah ..... and consider and reflect on the creation”***

Once these two are linked; once faith and knowledge substantiate each other, the obvious outcome for the human mind is to seek the forgiveness of Allah and ask for the protection from punishment. Suddenly, everything fits. There will be a Day of Judgement, and The Master is Allah(SWT), and it is from Allah that we seek forgiveness for our misgivings.

If I may side track for a second, I would like to bring to your attention a subtle point in these two ayas:

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

***“Truly, those who fear Allah, from among His Servants are those who have knowledge” (S35, A28)***

And

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ  
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ  
النَّارِ

***“Those who remember Allah while upright, sitting, and while reclining, and they consider and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord! You have not created this in vain. Glory be to You! Save us from the torment of the fire”***  
(S3, A191)

These two ayas seem to suggest that those of knowledge are more likely to fear Allah. It seems that when the mind is working, when knowledge is gained, there is a sense of fear that this knowledge brings out. This is known in Arabic as “At-Tarheeb”. This is probably inevitable since the knowledge that one gains by looking at this vast creation

will ultimately reflect the Power, the Might and the Majesty of Allah(SWT). When power is involved, it seems natural to generate a sense of fear. This fear may be the key for some of us to consider change. For example, the only way that some of us will not park inappropriately if **they fear** that their car may be clamped or they will be fined. For others, they will not park inappropriately out of their love to this Masjid, to this community and to this neighbourhood. Fear is not a bad thing, but love is far greater.

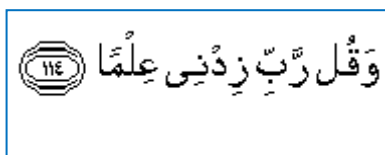
Sorry for this side track. We go back to the main issue of this khutbah, and that is the value of knowledge in Islam.

The Prophet(SAAWS) said *“should Allah wish goodness on a person, He makes him more knowledgeable in Deen.”*

He also said *“the best that one can gain is knowledge that leads one onto guidance, or leads him away from error. The Deen of a person is not right until his deeds are made right.”*

Islam insists on knowledge and drives us to gain knowledge because Islam recognises that with knowledge, one can define right from wrong, one can define what is good and what is not, one can define what is to be guided and what is to be lost, and with knowledge nations go forward and people’s lives are elevated. There is no substitute for learning and for gaining knowledge and in a hadeeth, the Prophet(SAAWS) said *“seeking knowledge is a ‘Faridah’ (an obligation) on all Muslims”*.

In surat Ta-Ha, we read:



*"O my Lord! advance me in knowledge" (S20, A114)*

After this aya was revealed, the Prophet(SAAWS) used to ask Allah(SWT);

اللَّهُمَّ اَنْفَعْنِي بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنِي ، وَعَلِّمْنِي مَا يَنْفَعُنِي ، وَزِدْنِي عِلْمًا

*O Allah, benefit me with what you have taught me, teach me of what is of benefit to me, and advance me in knowledge.*

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَ لَكُمْ

2<sup>nd</sup> Khutbah:

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

In last khutbah, we mentioned this aya that defines the process of change as we understand it in Islam:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ

**“Allah does not change the condition of a people until they (first) change what is within themselves” (S13, A11)**

One of the first important steps in setting ourselves on an agenda of change to the better is to recognise the importance of learning and knowledge. Our best example in this is our beloved Prophet(SAAWS), and we need to learn and repeat this Du'a;

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْفَعْنَا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَا ، وَعَلَّمْنَا مَا يَنْفَعُنَا ، وَزِدْنَا عِلْمًا

*O Allah, benefit us with what you have taught us, teach us of what is of benefit to us, and advance us in knowledge. Ameen*

In a hadeeth, the Prophet(SAAWS) said: *“the one who leaves in the quest of knowledge is on a path towards Allah until he returns”*. And in another hadeeth, the Prophet(SAAWS) said; *”the one who takes a path seeking knowledge, Allah will ease a path for him to Paradise”*.

The knowledge that Islam promotes is not limited to religion, but includes all knowledge that is of benefit. It includes all knowledge that will expand the boundaries of the mind, knowledge that will open the mind to further understanding, knowledge that will get us closer to our Lord, knowledge that will make us make best use of the resources of this planet and knowledge that will make us serve and advance humanity. One of the Imams, and I think it was Imam Al-Bukhari, was told by his mother as he was about to set to Baghdad seeking education; *“good knowledge is what is of benefit”*.

This is how these early Muslim generations understood the message of Islam when it came to seeking and to sharing and disseminating knowledge. This is how the Golden Era of the Islamic civilization took on the mantle of knowledge for hundreds of years when the rest of the world was in darkness. They did not see any conflict between sciences, arts, mathematics, etc and the teachings of Islam. In fact they recognised that this was exactly what Islam demanded of them. And not only that, but it is a demand on the Muslims that they should also share this knowledge. Knowledge in Islam is recognised as a blessing from Allah for all to share and to benefit from. The fact that the rest of the world has buried 800 years of Islamic history does not mean that this did not exist, it is just that the modern man of science has not been able to come to terms that religion can actually advance science and knowledge, and worse still, this religion is Islam. Thus they chose to simply bury it. Those who do not like Islam bury the truth out of hate, let us, the Muslims, not help to bury the truth out of ignorance.

Let us as parents remind our children that when they go to school to study, they are on a path to Allah. When they go to college and university, they are on a course to Allah. Let us encourage them and guide them that this is what Islam demands of them. Just as much as Islam demands prayers, fasting, Zakat and so on, Islam also demands education. Knowledge is enlightenment:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

*“Say: Can they be equal, those who have knowledge and those who have not”*

Brothers and sisters, we are on a journey of change. Our Islam must improve. Our Iman must get stronger. We cannot afford to come back next week to Juma’, and we are exactly the same people as we are here today.

We need to take learning and knowledge very seriously. We cannot start to change ourselves if we do not improve our knowledge. This may start by little steps such as learning some hadeeth, learning something about the seerah, learning a few ayas or a few dua’s. Some of you may want to improve your salat, your “Wudu”, your knowledge of cleanliness in Islam, matters to do with making your house an Islamic home and so on. There is so much to learn, and most of us are in desperate need of this knowledge.

Let us set ourselves a real target. We should all take a vow today to Allah(SWT), and ask Him to help us in this, that by next Juma’ prayers, we have learnt something new in Islam. We can all do that. Next week we do the same, and slow but sure, we set ourselves on a path of learning towards Allah. Let us remember this Du’a and keep it close to our hearts all the time:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْفَعْنَا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَا، وَعَلَّمْنَا مَا يَنْفَعُنَا، وَزِدْنَا عِلْمًا

*O Allah, benefit us with what you have taught us, teach us of what is of benefit to us, and advance us in knowledge. Ameen*