

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَ نَسْتَعِينُهُ وَ نَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَ نَعُوذُ 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 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 **اللَّهِ** 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 لَهُمْ
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. Two weeks ago, we finished the khutbah with 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

We carry on with the theme of change. We recognized from last khutbah that Allah(SWT) will not permit change in a people until they make a conscious decision that they want to change themselves.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ

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

We also recognized that in Islam there is a link between faith and knowledge and that in Islam there is no conflict between knowledge and faith. As the Muslim gets better and better in chemistry, in mathematics, in medicine, in physics and in every branch of science, the Muslim does not find himself or herself drifting away from Allah because of what they have learned. In deed they find themselves getting closer and closer to Allah. Similarly, when a Muslim decides to get closer to Allah and to strengthen his faith, this does not demand that he or she must withdraw from this world and turn his back on scientific knowledge. I cannot stress it more that in Islam there is no conflict between knowledge and faith.

I do not want to indulge in the “scientific miracles” of the Quran, as this topic creates mixed feelings for both Muslims and non-Muslims. However, for me, there is a verse in the Quran that always brings me back to Allah when ever I feel my faith is being weakened or tested. This aya is verse 25 in Surat Al-Hadeed:

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ
لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ
وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

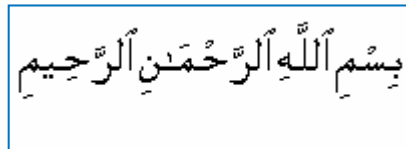
“We have sent our messengers with Clear Signs and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance (of Right and Wrong), that people may conduct themselves with equity and justice; and We have sent down Iron, in which is there is great

strength as well as many benefits for mankind, that Allah may test who it is that will help in Allah's cause and help His messengers (Bil-Ghaib: without seeing Him): For Allah is Exalted in Strength and in Might” (S57, A25)

When one first reads this ayah, there is probably little impact. But, when we start to acquire various knowledge relating to geology, chemistry, the solar system and the make up of our earth, suddenly, this ayah becomes an immense comfort to the believers. In this case, new scientific knowledge is strengthening faith.

In this verse, it is all to do with Iron. Iron is everywhere, from the building materials in our homes to the elements in our red blood cells helping us to live. It is now an undisputed fact that the Iron on this earth is not part of the solar system, but was sent down through meteorites from other star systems probably billions of years ago. Our sun is only good enough to produce Hydrogen and Helium, the first two elements in the periodic table. I think all our GCSE students who take chemistry will know this fact. So, as the ayah says, Iron was sent down onto earth.

One may think that this is not such a great deal, until one looks at the exact location of the word Iron in this surat. According to current numbering of surats and ayas in the Quran, the word Iron features in surat 57 ayah 25 which does not raise any eye brows. However, when we know that the Holy Book is made out of the Fatiha (Sab'ul-Mathani) and the Mighty Quran (Al-Qura'an Al-Atheem) (S15, A87), and that each surat (except surat 9) starts with:



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

And this ayah is only numbered in Surat Al-Fatiha.

When both conditions are taken into consideration, we realize that the words stating that Iron was sent down to earth are mentioned in chapter 56 of the Mighty Quran, verse 26. For those of you who do not know chemistry and the periodic table, these two numbers are the atomic weight and atomic number of Iron in this table, 56 & 26. To me, this is mind boggling. To me, this is an absolute testimony that knowledge and faith go hand in hand. To me, sound scientific knowledge brings me back to Allah. However, I do recognize that this can only happen if the person is willing to seek knowledge with an open mind and does not blind himself to faith.

Brothers and sisters, in our last khutbah, we took a vow that we should learn something new about our religion every week, and that we should never let a day pass without us gaining something new. We should never look at ourselves as we were last week and find that we are much the same this week. Let us continue with this vow.

Some of you may wonder, what is so important about new knowledge. Many of you would say I am a good Muslim. I know enough about Islam to get me to where I am today. Surely if this is enough for what I am now, why bother with more. Why bother with something new every week or every day. This is, brothers and sisters where I would disagree in the strongest possible way. I try to listen daily to lectures and to TV

programs about Islam. I am ever trying to read books on various subjects to learn about the seerah, the sahabha, the tabi'in, the scholars, the hadeeth, the Quran and so on. What is astonishing is that everyday I come across something new. Everyday I come across something that is amazing, but occasionally I come across something that literally blows me away. It is actually exciting to learn and to understand Islam. I can vouch that reading about Islam is more exciting than reading novels because it is not fictional. It relates to me and to everyone and to everything that is around me. It is truly exciting.

I have found that the knowledge I gain has various aspects that relate to my daily life. There is knowledge that is necessary for me to fulfill my Islamic duties in a way that is acceptable and a manner that will make my actions accepted ISA. For example, it is important to know about "Wassia" in Islam. I now know that it is an obligation on every Muslim to have a "Wassia" or a will. For many years, this fact has escaped me. Now, I find that this is an obligating. With this new acquired information, various things will have to happen for me to fulfill my Islamic obligations. I need to get advice about this matter from knowledgeable people in Islamic Wills. I need to get on with it and make a will for myself. But, of equal importance, I need to tell you all that this is a very important obligation. All adults, all Muslim adults need to consider having a will. This piece of knowledge does not advance my faith, but it is of great practical importance.

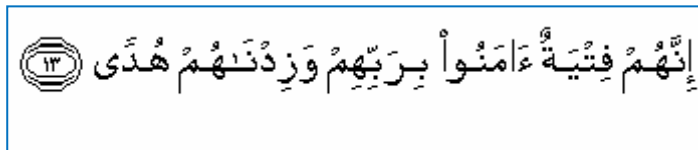
Similarly, how we do "Wudu", how we clean ourselves, how we keep our clothes clean are all pieces of knowledge that are vital for our Salat to be proper and to be acceptable. Imagine going to the toilet, then coming to salat without wudu. Does any Muslim think that this salat is acceptable? The answer is clearly not. If that is the case, do we know if our salat is acceptable when we wear cloths that are soiled? We mentioned this in a previous khutbah highlighting the fact that some people's trouser legs are so long that invariably they get soiled, and most likely they get soiled when they entre a public toilet. So, as Muslims, do we think that if one of us stands to pray in the hands of Allah with soiled trousers from a toilet, will this salat be accepted?

Another piece of practical knowledge. Islam tells us that "Awra" for men is that part of the body that is between the belly button and the knees. Everything between, whether in the front or the back, is considered as "awra" and should be covered completely during salat. One of the acts that makes salat void is exposing the "awra" for both men and women. I have personally witnessed some of our young men inadvertently exposing their backs during salat when they bow during the "rak'a". Are they aware that this exposure makes their salat void?

These are little pieces of important practical information that is necessary for us to make our practice of Islam better, and we need to always improve. They do not have a spiritual impact per se.

However, there are pieces of knowledge that when we come across, they have an immense impact on our Iman and they elevate us tremendously. They touch our hearts and our minds. This type of knowledge helps our spirituality and helps us get closer to Allah. This type of knowledge fuels our Iman and drives us closer to the state of Ihssan.

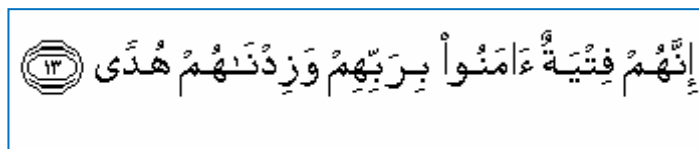
There is a beautiful clue in the Quran which states that when we want to get closer to Allah, Allah tells us that He will help us and guide us. We read in Surat Al-Kahf:



“They were young men who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance” (S18, A13)

That is indeed a wonderful statement in the Holy Quran. Allah will guide you to the knowledge that lifts your spirits and puts you literally on a different planet. This ayah tells us of Young men believing truly in Allah, and in return Allah strengthens their resolve and increases them in guidance. Brothers and sisters, sometimes, when everything around is falling apart, remember this ayah, and ask yourself: who do you want to be your guide? In this ayah, Allah tells us, believe in your Lord, and Allah will guide you.

Last Friday, brother Basil and his family were attacked at his home at night during a burglary. He was facing three men on his own. He told me that as he was facing them, all he was saying was “Allahu Akbar”, and he said that somehow he did not feel that he was alone. Allah guides us towards him if we want to be guided, and therefore, let us try to remember this ayah:



“They were young men who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance” (S18, A13)

أقول قولي هذا وأستغفر الله لي ولكم

2nd Khutbah:

الحمد لله ثم الحمد لله. الحمد لله نستعينه ونستغفره، ونعوذ بالله من شرور
أنفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. أما بعد:

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

As mentioned earlier, sometimes you come across a new piece of knowledge that simply blows you away. I have recently come across something which I found very moving. There is definitely knowledge that touches the heart. The e-mail I received was headed “knowing your Tashahud”. We all know that “Tashahud” is the term used to what we say when kneeling after the two rak’as.

During our salat, we are all well aware that shaitan does not like us to connect with Allah. He sits there for us trying to distract us from asking Allah to guide us on the straight path. Shaitan wants us to stay in this Dunia during our salat and does not want us to connect with Allah, which is exactly what the word “Salat” means. It means to connect with Allah. When you start with Al-Fatiha, shaitan keeps at you trying to stop you saying:

أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Shaitan does not want you to ask Allah for His guidance. As you progress with your salat and sit down to do the “Tashahud” shaitan is there again trying to distract you from taking the most important testimony in Islam.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

This piece of knowledge in the e-mail has definitely changed my salat and ISA has affected me ISA to the better. So what is all about?

We know from the seerah that the Prophet(SAAWS) ascended the heavens on the night of “Al-Issra’ wal-Mi’raj”, in the company of Jibreel(AS); we read in Surat An-Najm:

وَلَقَدْ رَءَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ
عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾

“And he saw him (Jibreel) in his different form. At “Sidrat-Al-Muntaha” in the seventh heaven. Near which is the garden of abode” (S53, A13-15)

The Prophet(SAAWS) said that as he and Jibreel(AS) approached “Sidart-Al-Muntaha” Jibreel(AS) could not go beyond that, but the Prophet(SAAWS) was permitted to progress.

Can we as Muslims imagine this amazing scene? The Prophet(SAAWS) at “Sidart-Al-Muntaha” where no being has ever been. As he approaches forwards, what does he say? The Prophet(SAAWS) greets Allah(SWT) saying:

التحياتُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلواتُ وَالطَّيِّباتُ

The prophet(SAAWS) greets Allah with these words: *Greetings, prayers and all goodness be to Allah.* What do you think the response was?

In response, the Prophet(SAAWS) hears:

السلام عليك أَيها النبيُّ ورحمةُ اللَّهِ وبركاتُهُ

O messenger, Peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you.

السلام عليك أَيها النبيُّ ورحمةُ اللَّهِ وبركاتُهُ

Just imagine this most incredible encounter. This encounter has only occurred once in the whole of the history of mankind, and it was with our Prophet(SAAWS). Allah(SWT) greets him with these words. Peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you.

How, do you think, does our Prophet(SAAWS) respond. Everyone that is here today, just ask yourselves, what would the Prophet(SAAWS) say at this incredible juncture where one can be excused for forgetting everything, even himself. The Prophet(SAAWS) replies: *Peace be upon us and upon the righteous servants of Allah.*

السلام علينا وعلى عبادِ اللَّهِ الصالحين

At this moment in history, when Allah is granting peace to the Prophet(SAAWS), our beloved prophet did not forget us. He included us in this encounter, and included all the righteous worshipers and servants of Allah. This inclusion is for us to remember for ever and to recount every time we accomplish two rak'as. Our beloved Prophet(SAAWS) did not leave us out.

السلام علينا وعلى عبادِ اللَّهِ الصالحين

Peace be upon us and upon the righteous servants of Allah.

At this point, and this is when your heart literally reaches your throat, at this point, Jibreel(AS) testifies and says:

أشهدُ أن لا إلهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ وحدهُ لا شريكَ لَهُ وأشهدُ أن مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

I testify that there is no god but Allah to whom there is no partner, and I testify that Muhammad is his servant and messenger.

Once you read this you get a completely different picture of the “Tashahud” during and at the end of salat. Shaitan wants you to drift away from the remembrance of Allah. He wants your mind to drift away during “Tashahud”. Imagine now that you know how “Tashahud” came to be, and you know the whole scenario:

التحياتُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ
أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

We need to imagine the Prophet(SAAWS) in this incredible event greeting Allah(SWT). When we are in prayers, we are in the hands of Allah, and in His infinite mercy and wisdom, Allah has given us these words to recite. Imagine now the esteemed status of the prophet(SAAWS) when Allah(SWT) greets him. Imagine the Prophet(SAAWS) remembering us all in this encounter, and remember the testimony of Jibreel(AS).

With this knowledge we can defeat shaitan when we sit to do “Tashahud”. Our hearts get closer to Allah and further away from shaitan. Brothers and sisters, knowledge is enlightenment, and in knowledge there is safety. In sharing knowledge there is even greater safety. This is the crux of this khutbah. Gain knowledge and protect yourselves.

It has been Allah’s will that humans can wonder in their minds and can end up forgetting things. To remember something, you need to put effort to help you against forgetting. It seems that the default is to forget. So, if we do not put the effort in remembering, shaitan will work on this particular weakness. We need to work on the remembrance of Allah. Standing in the hands of Allah at each prayer is not a guarantee that we will be remembering Allah. Some of us, including myself, as we start the salat we begin a journey in our minds. This journey may take us through our plans for the weekend. Some will be thinking about this afternoon. Some will think about work, some about the new England manager, some about the African Nations Cup, some about who will pick up the kids from school, and the list is endless. The mind wonders away. As we try to connect with Allah and leave the Dunia for these few minutes, we end up forgetting the most important reason why we are in salat, and that is to remember Allah. Should we achieve this remembrance we gain Allah’s remembrance of us:

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرْكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴿١٥٢﴾

“And do remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful to Me, and do not disbelieve in Me” (S2, A152)