

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا  
وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللّٰهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يُضِلِّهِ 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 in ourselves and from our own bad deeds. Whom-so-ever God guides to the truth no one will lead astray, and whom-so-ever He leads astray, no one will ever 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

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ  
الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٢١﴾

*”You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah the most beautiful example for the one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who remembers Allah much.” (S23, A21)*



Dear brothers and sisters, ASA. The topic for today's khutbah is "leading by example".

You can always tell that there is a holiday when we see so many children and youth with us. You always get a feeling of joy at such a sight, but with that joy there must come a heavy feeling of responsibility. Probably we are among the lucky ones that have been able to link our children with this centre. We need to build on that and we need to make full use of such opportunities to educate our young in the "Deen" of Islam. It is the young of today that will build the future. It is them that will be establishing the foundations for the following generation. When I look at myself, and this probably goes for all parents, I feel that my role now is primarily to set a strong and healthy foundation for the next generation. Even then, there is a selfish element in this endeavour. Do we remember the hadeeth of the three things that will continue to work for us after we die: they were knowledge that is of benefit, a running charity and a pious offspring that prays for the deceased.

It is in my interest, and it is in our interest to bring our children up to pray for us when we face our first trials in the grave. I know of people who curse their parents for the way they were neglected, and I know of people who keep on praying for their parents for the way they were guided. What our children think and say of us after we leave this world is in our hands.

When I look at our youth, it reminds me of what I was when I was at that age. I was in the process of building a future for myself. During that period, all that I thought about was myself. I could only focus on my needs, my ambitions, my goals in life and so on. Now that I have a family and children of my own, somehow, things need and must change. My role in life must change. For that to be effective, I also need to change.

The future is sitting here with us. They are young. Their experience is limited. Their knowledge is poor. Their level of concentration is even poorer. And, as I was when I was young, their main focus of attention, and so it should be, is on themselves. We have a great duty, now that we have such a wonderful blessing, we have a great duty to guide them along the rightful path of Islam.

We have witnessed how these young and fresh minds can be corrupted by both extremes. On the one hand we have the limitless freedom of this society. We see the disastrous effects of unrestricted permissiveness. All you have to do is look at what the newspapers say about the present young culture. All you have to do is visit an obstetric theatre and count the daily numbers of teenage abortions, or visit the GUM clinic to find how many teenagers have sexually transmitted diseases. This is one obvious extreme, but there is another one where our young are being indoctrinated in a ruthless, hard and violent understanding of Islam that is alien to all the teachings of the Quran and the Prophet(SAAWS).

As parents, we have the future in our hands. We need to have a good balance. We need to be smart and we need to be knowledgeable. You cannot start guiding your children if you do not have the knowledge. One of the best ways of teaching and of leading is by example. It is so much easier to teach our children honesty when we are honest. It is so much easier to teach them forgiveness when we forgive. It is so much easier to teach them how to work hard when we are seen to work very hard. Teaching by example is so crucial.

One of the classic issues that I have with the culture in the UK is the classification that we come across that something is “Adult”. Let us take a closer look at what that means. If you are an adult, you are allowed to drink alcohol, you are allowed to gamble, you are allowed to watch violence and sex, you can buy cigarettes and booze and a few other things. You are liberated into adulthood when you are allowed to do all these things. Imagine now trying to teach your children by example. You cannot drink alcohol because you are too young to do it, but I can, and I will. One of my most satisfying comments when I discuss Islam with friends and colleagues is that everything that I do, that I watch, that I eat, that I drink and whatever you can think of, my children can share in it. There is no such divide. There is no “adult” watershed. The main difference between us and them is that they are still in the process of becoming an adult. When they reach adulthood, they start to share with us our responsibilities. Until then, they can enjoy their childhood away from adult responsibilities.

Leading by example has been the hallmark of our beloved Prophet(SAAWS). We know that the Quran is one of the miracles of the “Deen” of Islam. The next miracle of Islam is our beloved Prophet(SAAWS). It is so soothing to our hearts when we learn about the character of our Prophet(SAAWS). It therefore grieves me when some Muslims, Muslims of our own Ummah portray him as a hard unforgiving man only to entice our young Muslims to follow in this fabricated example. What these people describe should fit with what the Quran, the word of Allah, says about him.

First we read:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ

***“It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, that he may proclaim it over all religion” (S61, A9)***

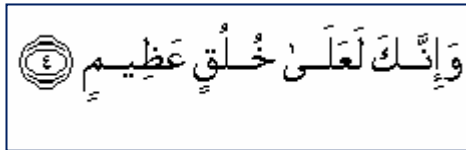
Allah(SWT) testifies that He has sent our beloved Prophet(SAAWS) with the guidance and the true religion. Then we read:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

***“And most surely you are of an exalted standard of character” (S68, A4)***

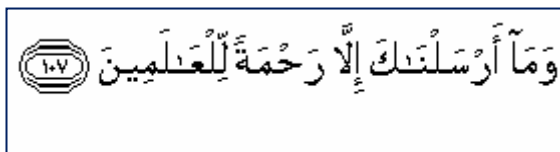
One can almost say, it goes without saying. One of the most inevitable pre-requisites of spreading the message of God Almighty is that the person entrusted with this task will be of an exalted standard of character. When ignorants write about our Prophet(SAAWS) and draw obscenities about him, we need to ask ourselves what did the people who lived at the time thought of him. One of the first striking and amazing fact is what those who hated him thought of him.

Our Prophet(SAAWS) was known by those who wanted to kill him as the “Ameen”, the most trustworthy. When Qureish set up a trap to assassinate the Prophet(SAAWS) before the “Hijra”, it was the same people who had entrusted him with their possessions for safe keeping. Can we imagine this scenario in our present time? We know from the seerah that the Prophet(SAAWS) asked s-Ali(RAA) to stay in Makkah after he leaves to return all the entrusted goods to their rightful owners. Those who hated him and wanted to kill him expected nothing less from him, and the Prophet(SAAWS) would not have had it any other way. This is why Allah(SWT) testified:



***“And most surely you are of an exalted standard of character” (S68, A4)***

With the message of truth and with this standard of character, this is how we come to understand this aya:



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

Some scholars have even translated this aya as a mercy to all creatures because the teachings of Islam go beyond personal relationships and deals with our relationship with nature, with animals, with our resources and inevitably with our earth. It does make sense that the message of submission to Allah needs such an example and this is why we read next:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ

*“And We have not sent you but to all people” (S34, A28)*

That is what leading by example dictates.

When we speak about securing our future generation, we instinctively think about what we should teach our children with regards to learning Arabic, learning the Quran and learning the pillars of Islam. Somehow we tend to forget that critical ingredient, the vital ingredient of us setting the example.

The most important message of today is that we must teach and we must lead by example. If I want my child to love Islam, I must love Islam. If I want my child to learn the Quran I must learn the Quran. If I want my child to pray, I must pray. If I want my child to be forgiving, I must be forgiving with him and he needs to see me being forgiving with others. If I want my child to be honest, I must be honest with him and he needs to see me being honest with others. If I want my child to be trustworthy I must be trustworthy. And not to forget one of the most relevant behaviours which is, if I want my child to be responsible for his community I must be responsible for my community. When my child sees me caring for this center, he may grow to care for it too. Wishing and asking my child to be something is so difficult to achieve if he finds out that I am nothing of the sort.

The lesson to me is very clear; we need to teach and we need to lead our children by example. Nothing less will do. There is no such thing as “adult” time in Islam as we see in this society. If anything, adult time in fact dictates more responsibility and more hard work, not alcohol, gambling, night parties and adult-rated television.

When we look at the example of the Prophet(SAAWS) we find bewildering examples. The following are just a few examples of what the companions said of him: he was a man of silence. Can we imagine that? The Quran was uttered by the Prophet(SAAWS) and we know about the many thousands of hadeeth, yet we learn that the Prophet(SAAWS) was a man of silence. We, both young and adults can learn tremendously by the example of being silent. The Prophet(SAAWS) was a good listener. When one spoke to him, he would give him all the attention to the extent that that person would feel the love of the Prophet(SAAWS).

The Prophet(SAAWS) was extremely generous. Are we surprised to find out that he was generous with his companions as well as with those who disbelieved. Once a disbeliever asked him for a herd of sheep that the Prophet(SAAWS) had, and he gave it to him. The amazing thing was that this was all the sheep that the Prophet(SAAWS) had that he gave away to a non-believer.

s-Ali(RAA) was very brave, and yet he said that in the heavy heat of battle, the companions used to protect and shield themselves by the Prophet(SAAWS). They considered the brave among them as those who can fight by his side.

The companions said of the Prophet(SAAWS) that whenever he was asked for something he never said no. Whenever he was given a choice between two matters he chose the more lenient unless it was sinful.

The Prophet(SAAWS) was the leader of the Ummah. His status was equivalent to that of a ruler ranking with kings, and yet he would be seen riding his donkey, and he would attend to the invitation of a slave. He was tolerant, joyful and playful with children. He made his own footwear, and used to help his family with the house chores. He was extremely patient, especially with those who have harmed him.

I know that many of us have heard these examples before and I know that we are aware of the need to lead by example, but where are we from our best of examples. Even though we have heard this before, we need to keep reminding ourselves and we need to keep questioning ourselves. Are we patient, are we trustworthy, are we brave, are we humble, are we joyful to be with, are we generous, do we lead our children by example or do we lead them by authority.

أقول قولي هذا وأستغفر الله لي ولكم

2<sup>nd</sup> Khutbah:

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

Children or adults, one of the examples that we have lost in the manner in which this life distracts us is the way the Prophet(SAAWS) used to care after his companions. He loved them and cared for them. He attended to their affairs when they were alive and after they died. If a companion has been absent for three days he would ask about him, and if he finds that he is away he will pray for him. If he is not away he will visit him. If he is ill he would check on him. The Prophet(SAAWS) said: *“My duty for every believer is greater than his duty for himself. Whoever leaves a debt, then it is on me, and whoever leaves some money, it is for those who will inherit him.”*

We sometimes feel that we desperately need such a living example in our lives, and at times we do feel envious of the companions who witnessed and shared the care of the Prophet(SAAWS). Let us be as good an example to our children.

I leave you with these two ayas from Surat As-saff:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا هَلْ أَذِلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ  
مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿١٠﴾

**“O you who believe! Shall I guide you to a trade that will save you from a painful penalty”  
(S61, A10)**

تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۚ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ  
ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١١﴾ يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ  
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۖ وَمَسْكِنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ ءَعَدْنَ ذَٰلِكَ  
الْفَوْزَ الْعَظِيمَ ﴿١٢﴾

**“Believe in Allah and His Messenger. And strive in the cause of Allah, with your wealth and yourselves: That will be best for you, if you only knew. He will forgive you your trespasses, and lead you into Gardens beneath which Rivers flow, and into beautiful mansions in Gardens of Eternity: that is indeed the Supreme triumph” (S61, A11-2)**

Can we teach our children this trade by setting them an example?