

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 اللَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ. وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ
لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

All Praise be to **الله** .

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 **الله** to whom there is no partner and I testify that Muhammad **ﷺ** is his servant and messenger

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا .
إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ . إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴾ (الحجرات، 13)

"O mankind. We created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you many know each other. Verily the most Honoured amongst you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous. Allah has full knowledge and is fully acquainted with all matters" (S 49, A 13)

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ يَوْمَ تَرَوُنَّهَا
تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمَلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى
النَّاسَ سُكَرَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَرَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ ﴿٢﴾

“O people fear your Lord! For the convulsion of the Hour will be an incredible event. On the day you see it, every nursing mother will be shocked away from its baby, every pregnant woman shall deliver her burden and you shall see people in a state of drunkenness and yet they are not drunk, but the punishment of Allah will be severe”
(S22, A1-2)

Brothers and sisters, ASA.

Brothers and sisters, yet again, we continue to witness the catastrophic events in Gaza that are testing our beliefs. The cruel and destructive machinery of the Israeli army is an example of what is meant by: absolute power corrupts absolutely. Hundreds of children have been murdered. The infrastructure of Gaza which was already in a devastated state is now on the brink of collapse, if not already collapsed. Collective punishment in a manner that is cruel and inhumane and probably not seen since the ethnic cleansing of Muslims in Bosnia.

Many Muslims around the world will be asking “where is Allah(SWT)?” “Why does Allah not step in and save our brothers and sisters in Palestine, and to that matter, our brothers and sisters in all those places where we witness injustice and inhumanity?” “Are the children, women and old people not innocent victims?”

As you start to expand your thoughts, you may also become aware that these questions are not limited to us Muslims. The people of Zimbabwe may be asking where is God? The people of Rwanda may have asked where was God? There are many “Ex-Muslims” who left Islam because they found no answer when they asked “where is Allah?” Their inhumane experience was at the hands of fellow Muslims. When we witness all these atrocities, irrespective of who is the perpetrator or who is the victim, we hear the same cries again and again “where is Allah? Or, where is God?”

A senior Rabi was once asked the same question, where was “your God” when the Holocaust was taking place. If your God was such a loving and compassionate God, why did He allow this suffering? His answer was very revealing and very poignant and it is just as relevant now as it was then. He first replied by saying; why do you want to put the blame on “God” for something that man has purposely done. In doing so, you are in effect excusing the actions of “man”. You are saying that it is not “man” that has caused the suffering, but it was “God” that allowed it. Man must be made accountable for what man does.

The next thing he said was equally poignant. He said; **God was indeed there**, but man decided to ignore Him. The teachings of God were there in every soldier. When a soldier decides to kill an innocent victim, was there no one in the chain of command, including the soldier, that was not aware that this was a crime against humanity and against God? In every action against humanity, God is indeed there, because God has made it abundantly clear that to kill an innocent human being is “un-Godly”. “Thou shall not kill”. God has taught mankind through messenger after messenger as to what mercy, compassion and love is, and man has denounced or killed messenger after messenger and decided that it is not in his interest to be merciful, compassionate or loving.

Brothers and sisters, the opening ayahs addressed mankind as a whole when we are reminded of the convulsion of the Hour. The description of this catastrophic event has been defined to us in such a graphic manner that we should be left in no doubt as to how severe it will be. A nursing mother will be so dazed that she will let go of her baby. Is there anything more protective than a nursing mother? Yet Allah warns us that this is indeed such a grievous event. Brothers and sisters, we have all been warned. “WE” have all been warned that we will all be accountable for our deeds.

Let us be clear on one simple fact, Allah(SWT) is رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ , The Lord of all the worlds.

Allah(SWT) is the Lord of the Muslims, the Christians, the Jews, the Hindus, the Sikhs, the Buddhist and anyone you care to mention. Allah(SWT) does not condone in any of His books the murder of innocent people. We even read in Surat-Al-Maa’ida, when Allah(SWT) specifically addressed the children of Israel:

مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ
فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ
جَمِيعًا وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ لَمُسْرِفُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

“For this reason did We decree to the children of Israel that whosoever kills a human being, unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land, it is as though he killed all mankind; and whosoever saves a life, it is as though he saved all mankind. And certainly Our messengers came to them with clear signs, but even after that many of them certainly were extravagant in the land”(S5, A32)

Brothers and sisters, we need to be very clear on the fact that when it comes to these atrocities, Allah (SWT) has given very clear orders over thousands of years as to what is clearly forbidden, but people willingly and unwillingly have chosen to disobey. That is the critical characteristic of the human being; Allah (SWT) has given us the burden of choice. We chose what we do. It is probably safe to say that when an atrocity has been committed, by default, it indicates that there was a choice. As human beings, this is our biggest burden; we have a choice. Israel has chosen to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity.

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 :

Brothers and sisters, as human beings, Muslim or otherwise, our biggest burden is that we have a choice. **We have a choice in everything that we do.** In fact, it is our choices that define us and it is our choices that define how people see us and how they react to us. When a Muslim chooses to be honest, he is defined as honest and people will react accordingly. When a Muslim chooses to cheat, he is defined as a cheat and people will react accordingly. This is the “Sunnah” of Allah. It is therefore important that when we talk about people making the right or wrong choices, we need to take the time and look at our own choices. It is not an act of God when we make a choice and it is not an act of God when people react to our choices.

For instance, when we chose to park with total lack of consideration to our neighbours, will it be an act of God when we fail in our planning permission, or is it our actions that deserved such a response. When we, the Muslims of Altrincham, are seen as inconsiderate and un-neighbourly, is it an act of God that people care less for Muslims, or is it an inevitable reaction. When the Muslim parents are careless in their duties to Islam, is it an act of God that their children will care less about Islam or is it an inevitable consequence.

This is brothers and sisters when the penny starts to drop. As Muslims, we want to put everything at the hands of Allah and we do not want to take the consequences of our own choices. Brothers and sisters, if there is one thing that we should take from what we see happening in Gaza now it should be that our total failure as an Ummah is nothing more than the consequence of our own choices.

This is why we have regular warnings from Allah (SWT) about the Day of Judgment, but we chose to ignore these warnings. When we open the khutbah with the ayah:

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ أَتَقْوُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١﴾

“O people fear your Lord! For the convulsion of the Hour will be an incredible event”
(S22, A1)

Do we actually feel anything? Do we tremble, or do we simply say to ourselves; oh yes, I have heard this before. It is probably nothing to do with me. Why does the Imam keep on going about this and about parking? I am here to pray and go back to work and the khutbah is an irritating inconvenience.

The first two ayahs of surat Al-Hajj were revealed during the night when the Prophet(SAAWS) and the companions were in the expedition of Al-Musstalaq. When they heard these two verses they could not stop crying for the effect these ayahs had on them. When the companions read the Quran, they had a much deeper understanding of its meanings to the one that we now have. They truly believed what they read and they made their choices accordingly.

We need to ask ourselves a serious question: what do we feel when we read or listen to such an ayah.

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ أَتَقْوُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١﴾

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If some of us do not feel anything within ourselves when we hear such a warning, then some of us do actually share a characteristic with those who are committing the atrocities. We are both choosing willingly to ignore Allah(SWT). Our circumstances may be different, but our disregard to the commands of Allah is the same. We know from the teachings of the Prophet(SAAWS) that when we persist in the minor sins, it is inevitable that we graduate to the major sins. It is only a matter of time and circumstance, but the willingness to choose to ignore Allah is the common factor.

Why is this important? Why am I being heavy handed with this comparison? The reason is simple; just as much as we must not put the blame of the suffering at the hands of Allah, we cannot expect the suffering to stop by simply asking Allah for that. We can pray for our brothers and sisters as much as we want, but most likely nothing will change.

I remember in one Ramadan the Imam in the sacred Mosque was supplicating with hundreds of thousands of worshipers with him in the mosque, and millions of Muslims raising their hands all over the world. They were pleading and crying, and yet nothing has changed. Why!! I may stand corrected, but in my humble understanding it is probably because we have not changed.

Brothers and sisters, in my humble understanding, nothing will change until we change. In the past, the khutbah used to focus on change for the sake of our children, but in the current climate, change takes a much more important role. We need to change for the sake of our Ummah. If we expect Allah's help, there is a simple pre-condition; we need to be helping in the cause of Allah.

وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذْ مَكَتْنَاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوْا
الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ

“And surely Allah will help those who help in His cause; most surely Allah is Exalted in strength and in might. Those who, when We establish them in the land, will establish regular prayers, give Zakat, enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong; and to Allah rests the end of all affairs”(S22, A40-1)

This is where we need to make a choice. When you park inconsiderately, when you backbite, when you cheat, when you miss prayers, when you ignore the hijab, when you are not neighbourly, when you fall out with your family, when, and when and when, do you really think that you can be part of the solution to the problems of this Ummah?

Brothers and sisters, we cannot kid ourselves anymore. We cannot ask where is Allah. If we want Allah(SWT) to be with us, we need to be with Him. You see brothers and sisters we have demonstrated that it is much easier for us to show anger and frustration than to park a few meters down the road. Do we really think that what Allah(SWT) wants from us is expression of anger and frustration. If you are not even prepared to walk a few extra meters for the sake of Allah, do you really think that you are among those who Allah has promised to help? And what about the hijab? We have mentioned that many times, but somehow many sisters do not feel that it is necessary. It remains their choice.

If there is one moment in our lives that we need to get closer to Allah it must be now. Get closer to Allah for the sake of the people of Gaza. If you want Allah to listen to you then you need to listen to Allah. Our brothers and sisters of Gaza are telling us: pray to Allah for us. Do you really think that our prayers and our supplications are even getting above

our own heads? For our prayers to reach Allah(SWT), we need to be in reach of Allah(SWT). We need to reach Allah(SWT) through our actions and through our behaviour. This is the main message of today.

وَقُلِ اعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَسَتُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ
عَلِيمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

“And say (unto them): Work; for Allah, His Messenger and the believers will see your work; and you shall be brought back to the Knower of what is evident and What is not and then He will reveal to you what you did” (S9, A105)

Let us pray that we will be among those who Allah(SWT) guides to do good work for His sake and be among those who are righteous.