

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ 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

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

*“Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example for the one whose hope is with Allah and the final day and remembers Allah much” (S33, A21)*



Dear Brothers and Sisters, ASA.

If a person is asked to define our current era, our century, what would the answer be?

We always hear the expression “we are now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”, “the world has moved on”, “science has answered all the myths and questions” and so on. These expressions are usually aimed at those, like us, who have certain beliefs, usually old and established beliefs; beliefs that seem to have no further value in our current time.

If that is the case, then how can or should we define our current era? There is no doubt that this is the era of science, the era of speed, the era of technology, indeed the era of the micro-technology and so on. Scientists are now able to work with genes, stem cells and embryos in a manner that could only be described as fiction only 60 to 70 years ago. But, with all that, and knowing what human nature is, and what human nature needs, can we go as far as saying that this is the era of tranquillity, the era of happiness, the era of humanity? Do or can scientific advances by themselves deliver on such needs?

Why should there be such a discrepancy between one saying, this is the 21<sup>st</sup> century and we do not want old fashion ideas that no longer have a place in our time, yet, very clearly the same person cannot define this era, the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the era of happiness, the era of tranquillity or even the era of humanity. The atrocities committed by man over the past 30 to 40 years are a testament to this fact. There are immeasurable man made and science made miseries all over this world in this day and age. People are slowly and surely, are realising that science, speed, technology and so forth do not provide tranquillity or happiness by themselves, and they evidently do not promote a better humanity. I think deep inside, we have always known this to be the case.

I will give you just one relevant example; in this day and age, a person sitting on top of a mountain can pick up his or her mobile phone and speak to virtually anyone on earth. Yet, next door neighbours cannot have a reasonable conversation with each other. Technology cannot bring people together if they have no wish to do so. If you give these neighbours the most up to date mobile phone, will they start speaking to each other?

The unfortunate fact is that with science, technology and wealth, our expectations have been steadily rising. We have probably moved towards an ideology that dictates that “I deserve better”. With such high expectation, we inevitably will be disappointed and we will inevitably despair. This is no more than what human nature is about:

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا

عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَسَى بِجَانِبِهِ ۖ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يَئُوسًا ﴿٨٣﴾

**“And yet when We bestow Our favours on man, he turns away and becomes averse: and when ill touches him he is in despair” (S17, A83)**

These words were revealed over 1400 years ago, and they would probably resonate in most other faiths. When things are good, people are happy and carefree. Carefree enough even not to care about God. But when things are not so good, we despair.

When one looks closely at this ayah, there seems to be a common factor to both situations. When there was ease there was no connection with Allah, and when there was hardship, there still was no connection with Allah. There is no belief and there is no connection with a creator. This is where Muslims need to spread the beautiful message of Islam. Through our beliefs and through our teachings, we can attain tranquillity and happiness. If, however, as a Muslim you have failed to achieve that for yourself, then you need to question the level of your commitment to Allah.

This is why Allah has told us in the Holy Quran:

وَنُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ  
إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٨٢﴾

**“And we reveal of the Quran that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe: but to the transgressors, it only compounds their loss” (S17, A82)**

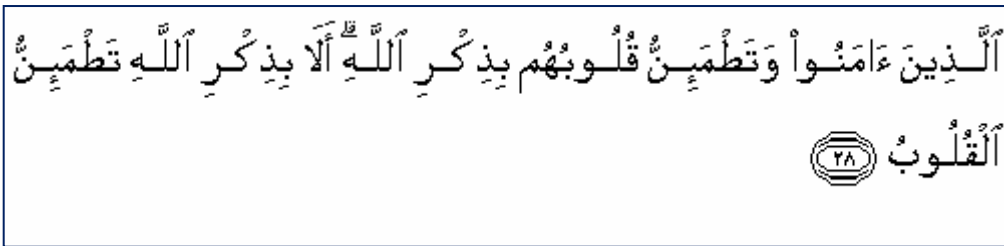
These are the comforting words of Allah(SWT); and we reveal of the Quran that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe. However, at the same time, the same words, the same revelations, will have a completely different impact on those who transgress.

When we know that in this Quran there is a tremendous capacity for tranquillity, for healing, for happiness, for satisfaction and more; everything that everyone wants in this life without exception. When we as Muslims know this fact, what is stopping us from going down the path of becoming a “believer”?

When it comes to scientific and technological advances, you may find some satisfaction in buying the latest HD flat screen or a blue ray or whatever. In some cases, it is probable that the

main satisfaction comes from owning the latest gadget. Once it is no longer “the latest”, it is curtains, and with that goes the initial satisfaction. Yet, we are constantly bombarded with advertisements that translate these moments of excitement and moments of satisfaction as equating to achieving happiness.

But Allah(SWT) has a plan for us. Allah wants us to have an abundance of these moments of excitement and satisfaction but to also achieve a longer lasting state of happiness and tranquillity.. Allah(SWT) tells us, be a believer, speak like a believer, behave like a believer and feel like a believer, and your tranquillity is guaranteed.



***"Those who believe, and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah: it is without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction" (S13, A28)***

Most of us who have lived long enough will recognise that as part of life, we all go through periods of ease and through periods of hardship and stress. This is the way it is. This is what it is all about, and this has nothing to do with Islam.

You are probably familiar with a famous saying from a poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson:

I hold it true, whatever befall; I feel it, when I sorrow most;  
'Tis better to have loved and lost; Than never to have loved at all.

Wonderful words that explain this amazing aspect of human nature. The sense of loss gives the person a sense of existence.

People recognize that the richness of life is not simply to not have to want. I think another famous saying goes: Happiness is not to have what you need but it is to need what you have.

These are all difficult but serious issues for us. We claim that we are believing Muslims, yet our search for happiness and tranquility does not rest with the remembrance of Allah. It mostly rests with the pleasures of this life. It rests with these moments of satisfaction, moments of pleasure and moments of excitement. We still coin happiness with what we have. Yet, we are told by Allah(SWT) that the distribution of the comforts of this life is purely in the Hands of Allah.

اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ وَفَرِحُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ  
الدُّنْيَا فِي الآخِرَةِ إِلَّا مَتَعَةٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

***“Allah expands livelihood for whom He Wills, and restricts for whom He Wills. And they rejoice in the life of this world, whereas the life of this world compared with the hereafter is no more than a temporary enjoyment” (S13, A26)***

This aya is a good eye opener for those who feel that they have it all in this life, and it is equally a good eye opener for those who do not have it all in this life. Allah(SWT) has blessed some people with expanded wealth, power, strength, children, followers and so forth. But Allah reminds us that even when we think that one may have achieved happiness through what one has, Allah gives us this reminder. This life can never be a paradise, and it can never be a hell. This life is no more than a temporary enjoyment. When this life is compared with the hereafter, it is no more than a moment.

Allah(SWT) wants us to enjoy this worldly life but not at the expense of the hereafter. For this, Allah(SWT) tells us, if you want happiness on earth, then come to me. If you also want happiness of the hereafter, then also come to me. Very simple formula. The problem lies in the fact that to obtain this happiness we have to move towards Allah. We have to set on a journey heading towards Allah(SWT). But Allah(SWT) tells us that to go in his direction, we need to put some effort. The Holy Quran has many such examples like this one:

وَالَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ  
سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً وَيَدْرءُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةِ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿٢٢﴾

***“Those who patiently persevere, seeking the pleasure of their Lord; And establish prayers; And spend out of what We have bestowed upon them, both secretly and openly; and turn an Evil act with a good one: for such there is the final attainment of the eternal home” (S13, A)***

As expected, to set on a journey towards Allah(SWT) to achieve eternal happiness, we need patience, we need perseverance, we need to establish our contact with Allah, we need to give of what we have, and probably most difficult, we need to be forgiving. The path is there. We know

that the obstacles and we know how to go through them. Science will not get you there. Being a good believer hopefully, by the grace of Allah, will.

## أقول قولي هذا وأستغفرُ الله لي ولكم

2<sup>nd</sup> Khutbah:

الحمدُ لِلَّهِ ثم الحمد لِلَّهِ . الحمد لِلَّهِ نَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ  
أَنْفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا . أَمَا بَعْدُ :

Now for some good news. It is with great pleasure and pride that I can announce that following a hearing at the council yesterday, we have obtained planning permission to demolish and rebuild this hall. We have had tremendous objections from our neighbours for many reasons, the most notorious being our parking. I was at the meeting yesterday, and we can be very proud of the professionalism that was displayed by our committee and community. The chief planning officer, the highway officer and many of the councillors that voted in our favour had nothing but praise for the AMA and for our community for the manner in which we have proceeded with this application.

The Prophet(SAAWS) said that he who does not thank people does not thank Allah. To thank people openly is not forbidden in Islam. I would like to personally thank brothers Mosain Choan and Iftikhar Awan for their tremendous efforts. I would like to thank all that have contributed to the success of our application, and that goes for all who took the time and effort to write to the council, for those who wilfully changed their parking habits, for those who have volunteered to police our parking during the khutbahs, for the parents who have changed their habits when dropping their children at the centre, and for those who have been patient and dignified when dealing with our neighbours. If I am allowed, I would like to thank by name Councillor Neil Taylor who lives not too far from this centre for speaking on behalf of our application yesterday, and thank Councillor Delriaz Butt fir his support throughout the process. I know I must have left someone out, and I am very sorry for that.

Even though this was a successful outcome, we cannot say that we have been successful. We exist in a neighbourhood, and our success can only be complete if we prove to our neighbours that we are truly good neighbours. I would therefore urge all of you to continue showing good parking sense and continue to demonstrate to our neighbours our understanding of Islam. This is the time to exercise our understanding of Islam.