

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 **اللَّهُ** .

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

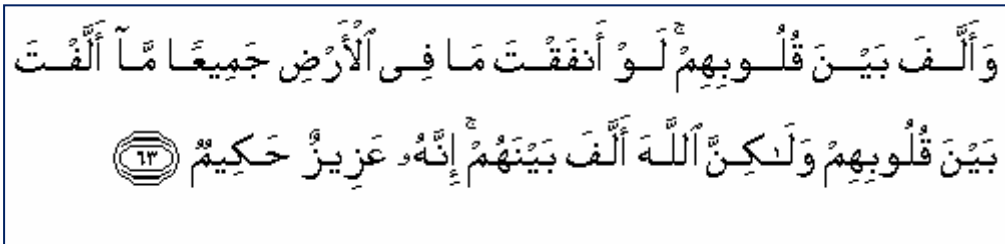
قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾

“Say: If you do love Allah, Follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: For Allah is the Forgiving, the Merciful” (S3, A31)



Dear brothers and sisters, ASA.

As we are nearing the Holy month of Ramadan, let us take this opportunity to revive a very important characteristic of the true Muslim Ummah. At the time of the Prophet(SAAWS) this characteristic raised the Muslim Ummah from a few companions to a nation that lead the world. This, brothers and sisters, is the true sense of Brotherhood and Sisterhood in Islam. The love and compassion that should exist between us should be more valuable to us than anything else in this world. We tend to lose sight of this wonderful gift. The demands of everyday life act as a set of blinkers on our eyes and somehow we ignore the tremendous value of such a bond. I am certain that we do not realise what a blessing we are turning down. Allah tells us in the Quran:



“And He has created unity amongst their hearts: for if you had spent all that is in the earth, you would not have been able to attune their hearts, but Allah has united them: for He is Exalted in might, the Wise” (S8, A63)

Allah is telling us that the unity that existed in the hearts of the companions was a Devine act. It did not come from any other source. This unity was indeed a Devine blessing. The Holy Quran states that should the Prophet(SAAWS) spend all that is in this earth to unite their hearts, such a level of unity between their hearts will not be achieved, but it is the act of Allah(SWT) that has achieved that.

Again, when one looks at this ayah more closely, it starts to deliver the message to us 1400 years on. Imagine if it was indeed the action of the Porphet(SAAWS) that was the uniting factor for the companions. One can just imagine us nowadays saying: no wonder we do not have unity between our hearts because the Prophet(SAAWS) is no longer with us. Allah(SWT) in his infinite wisdom and mercy tells the Prophet(SAAWS) that it is Allah’s intervention that unites the hearts. Indeed we all know that our hearts are in the hands of Allah(SWT). Allah(SWT) is telling us that our own unity is ultimately a blessing from Him. No matter how we try to build the affection and compassion between our hearts, it will only happen by the will of Allah.

Having thought about it, it starts to make sense. We all have many friends and associates. Our initial associations are based on a potential shared interest. As we get to know each other better, we either grow towards each other or away from each other. This is the nature of life. People can either drift away from each other or drift towards each other based on worldly interests and needs.

However, when we look at each other coming into this masjid, there is an instinctive association based purely on the fact that we all share a common denominator; we are brothers and sisters in Islam. I am sure that we all have had this feeling. You meet a total stranger in a mosque, and the first instinctive feeling towards that person is Islamic brotherly affection. You know nothing about this person other than the fact that he or she shares with you in the worship of Allah. What happens after that will depend on how we interact with each other, but in Allah's wisdom and mercy, Muslims have been given a head start in building a relationship. It is then up to us to either build on this opportunity or to simply waste it.

When you enter any other establishment, this head start does not exist, but as a Muslim entering a house of Allah, there is this mystical relationship between us. It is then up to us to either develop or dissolve this relationship.

The Prophet(SAAWS) said in "Sunnan At-Tirmizi": *By the one in Whose Hand is my soul, you will not enter paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love each other.*

In another hadeeth in saheeh Muslim, the Prophet(SAAWS) said: *"You do not become a believer until you love for your brother what you love for yourself"*

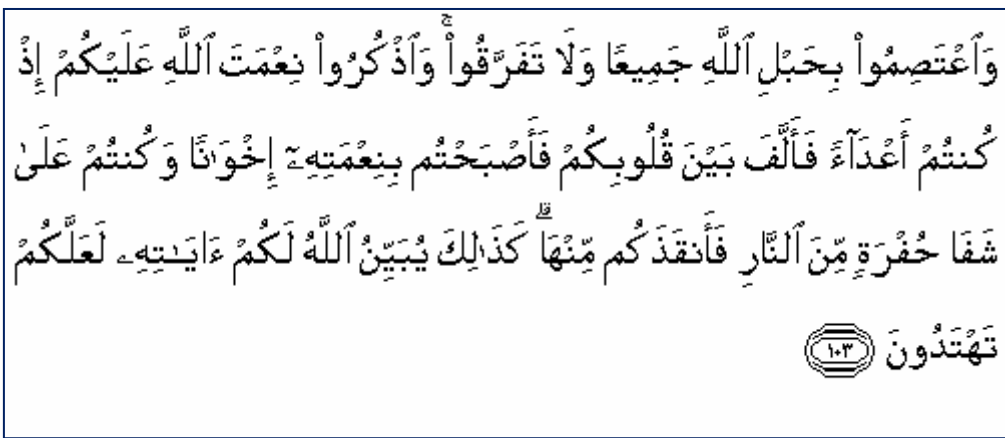
From these two hadeeth, we recognise that the brotherly love that Allah(SWT) has blessed us with is inevitably linked to our level of belief. Our love for each other is a testament to our belief in Allah(SWT). This is a fact that we cannot escape from. **We cannot develop our brotherhood without developing our Iman. The other side of the coin would state that if we can develop our brotherhood we will strengthen our Iman as well.** Isn't that amazing? As Muslims, Allah(SWT) demands us to better our Iman but then, Allah(SWT) links our Brotherly love to this Iman. I can only see one clear message from that: Allah(SWT) wants us to be brothers in Iman. There is something about being brothers in Iman that Allah does not want us to miss. We are being told that our unity of heart is something very precious.

The Prophet(SAAWS) said: *"of the supplications of s-Dawood(AS) was: O Allah, I ask you to grant me your love, and grant me the love of the one who loves you, and grant me the work that will lead me to your love. O Allah, make your love dearer to me than myself, my kin and the cool water"*

The Prophet(SAAWS) is teaching us many aspects of the love of Allah from this hadeeth, and one of them is to ask Allah(SWT) to open our hearts to the one who loves Allah. You see brothers and sisters, there are many things in life that drive us to get closer to another human being and drive us to love them. S-Dawood(AS) is asking Allah to grant him to love another

person based on a very specific characteristic, and that is that this person loves Allah(SWT). Imagine if Allah(SWT) blesses us with this mercy; the mercy to love those who love Allah. Last week, brother Ghaleb spoke to us about the example of the good companion. The good companion was likened to the one who deals with perfume. All you will get from him is good and the least you will get from him is the chance to smell something nice.

Brothers and sisters, we need to understand and appreciate the comfort and strength we all get from our brotherhood. From my own experience, I myself know that for a fact. We in Altrincham are extremely blessed. One of our greatest blessings is that when we look at each other, we are mostly different. It is not tradition or language that unites us in this masjid, but it is our Islam. The fact that we are different is a great strength for us, because we know that our association is built on Islam. Allah(SWT) tells us in the Holy Quran of the blessing of brotherhood:



“And hold fast, all together, by the lead of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you; for you were enemies and He united your hearts, so that by His Grace, you became brothers; and how you were on the brink of an abyss of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes His Signs clear to you: That you may be guided” (S3, A103)

We spoke in the past about unity, love and brotherhood, but the essence of today's khutbah is that at the end of the day, our unity is a blessing from Allah(SWT). This blessing is a testimony to our belief. When our association with each other is weak, it is telling us that our level of Iman is diminishing, for whatever reason. Our brotherly love for each other is almost like another thermometer of the temperature of our Iman.

So, what is the big deal?

Brothers and sisters, Allah(SWT) is blessing us with another opportunity to witness Ramadan. As Ramadan is nearing, we need to start working on regaining our brotherhood and we need to use this opportunity to bury many hatchets and to move on. Allah is giving us the opportunity

again to strengthen our Iman, and we need to use this opportunity to strengthen our brotherly love.

From personal experience, I am quite sure that many of us here are already thinking: “yes, I have heard that before. I am sure that I should forgive and forget, but the other person needs to show a commitment before I do anything, after all it is his or her fault in the first place”. Some may even think: “a lot has happened, and there so much water under the bridge, I just cannot see how we can be brothers in Islam after all that has happened. A line has been crossed”. Some may say: “I am happy to come and worship here, but other than that I am not interested”. There are many other scenarios that go through our minds, all aiming at putting a stop to this.

We all have these feelings. Events in our lives do really make it very difficult for us to forget and move on. I am quite sure that because we are Muslims, We expect a lot of each other. This is nothing more than human nature. We are after all human, and this is no more and no less than what we are. So what do we do? How can we move forwards with all the baggage from the past? How can we move forwards to the point that we ask Allah to grant us the love of those who love Allah?

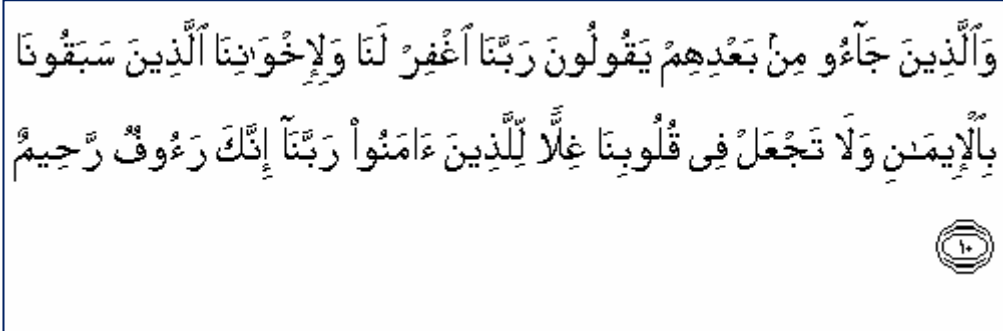
For me, I think the way forward is to start with the fact that we are all here in this masjid for the sake of Allah and nothing else. The first thing I need to do is to strengthen my own individual Iman and strengthen my love of Allah. The only heart that each and every one of us is able to clean is one’s own. Let us use the Holy month of Ramadan to do that. I myself know that I need to do that for my own heart. Over ten months of hardship has passed since last Ramadan, and I am desperate to embrace next Ramadan ISA. Let us all, each and everyone of us start concentrating on our own hearts. Let us show each other that we truly love Allah(SWT) and then ask Allah to grant us the love of those who love Him.

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 :

Brothers and sisters, Allah(SWT) tells us in the Holy Quran:



And those who came after them say: "Our Lord! Forgive us, and our brothers who came before us into the Faith, and leave not, in our hearts any ill feelings towards those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed Full of Kindness, Most Merciful" (S59, A10)

At the time of Umar(RAA), he sent his servant with 400 dinars to Abi Oubaida(RAA) and asked the servant to stay for some time to see what he does with it. When the servant arrived, he told Abu Oubaida this is for you to do what you want. Abu Oubaida said, may Allah have mercy on Umar. He then called for a girl and asked her to take a few dinars to this person and a few dinars to another and so on until it was all spent. Umar(RAA) did the same to Mu'az and Mu'az did the same with the money. Umar(RAA) was pleased with that and said: they are all brothers, they are all from amongst each other.

Brothers and sisters, as Ramadan is nearing, we need some practical advice as to how we can strengthen our brotherhood. One of the main characteristics that strengthened the brotherhood amongst the companions was that they favoured others above themselves. The need of others is greater to them than their own needs. In short, they were **selfless**.

One of the nastiest characteristics in a person is selfishness. Selfishness puts the needs of a person above all else. It puts it above friends and sometimes above family. Should we decide to strengthen our Iman and our hearts, I truly believe that we need to work on our own **selfishness**. Selfishness dictates that you instinctively think about your needs, your demands and your rights before anyone else's. When selfishness dictates our feelings, we will never achieve the selflessness that the companions aspired to.

We are the only ones in charge of our own selfishness. If we want our brotherly love to grow, if we want the blessings of Allah to fill this masjid, we need to put the need of others ahead of our own. I am not naïve to think that this is easy. It is not. However, if we ever have a time to control our hearts it is Ramadan.

One of the main difficulties we face when dealing with selfishness is that none of us actually think that he or she is selfish, and that goes for me. So, a good starting point for us is to make a general rule that in essence we are all selfish. With this in mind, why don't we make a pledge this Ramadan to work on our own selfishness.

Ramadan, brothers and sisters, is a wonderful blessing. Here we are getting along in our usual daily lives. We have allowed our brotherhood to be affected by our behaviour and conduct. We know that Allah is not happy with us to carry on in the same way, and Allah is giving us another chance to rebuild these bridges. Let us make the best use of Ramadan and emerge at the other end a better and stronger Muslim community.

Brothers and sisters, in keeping with last year, it gives me great pleasure to announce that according to the European Council of Fiqh and Science, it has been decided that the first day of Ramadan will be Friday 21st August ISA. Accordingly Taraweeh will start on Thursday evening. The timetable for Ramadan is finalised and should be available shortly. Ramadan this year ISA will be thirty days and the first day of Eid will be Sunday the 20th of September.

Travel, parking and coming to and leaving the masjid so late at night will be issues that we need to work on during this Holy month. I ask Allah to shower us with the blessings of Ramadan, and I ask Allah to grant us the strength to work on our selfishness and to help us strengthen our brotherhood. Ameen.

وَقُلِ اعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَسَتُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ
عَلِيمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنبِّئُكُمْ 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)

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ
وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨١﴾

“And guard yourselves from the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah. Then every soul shall be recompensed what it has earned, and none shall be dealt with unjustly” (S2, A281)