

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلّٰهِ ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَ نَسْتَعِينُهُ وَ نَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَ نَعُوذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ
شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللّٰهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ
لَهُ، وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ 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 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 **اللّٰهُ** to whom there is no partner and I testify that Muhammad **ﷺ** is his servant and messenger

وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

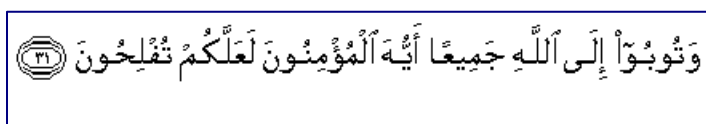
"And seek Tawbah and return unto Allah altogether, O believers, so that you may be successful" (An-Noor, 24:31)



Brothers and sisters, ASA. I believe that we are now 4 weeks on from Ramadan and we are in the last day or two of Shawal. Just a quick reminder if you have any more days of Shawal to fast then go ahead and do so.

As we move further away from our training camp of Ramadan, there is no doubt that already we are not the same believers that have emerged from that great experience. Most of us have now drifted back to our routine lives with the hope that we are all trying to put into practice some of the good habits that we gained during Ramadan.

Brothers and sisters, this is not an aimless task. To put good Islamic habits in the centre of our routine lives is not an aimless task. Our opening ayah reads:



"And seek Tawbah and return unto Allah altogether, O believers, so that you may be successful" (An-Noor, 24:31)

We mentioned many times that one of the good habits that we need to develop in our lives is seeking "Tawbah" as Allah(SWT) commands us to do. However, the ayah ends with a very important message; it ends with the statement "that you may be successful". The message of this ayah is not simply to seek "Tawbah" but it is that Allah(SWT) wants to guide us towards success. Allah(SWT) wants us to be successful.

This statement leads to the obvious question: what is the measure of our success? How would you judge yourself or others for that matter, as being successful and what would that success actually mean to you.

When you achieve a goal in life, how much happiness and satisfaction does this bring to you? To succeed in what we do has an immense impact on our wellbeing and the wellbeing of those close to us. Success means a lot to us; success brings us happiness, joy, comfort, confidence and so on. So we go back to the question; in the context of dealing with Allah(SWT), what is the measure of our success?

I was listening to a lecture recently when the issue of success was mentioned, and the scholar said: the height of success for a person is when he or she gains the love of Allah(SWT). This level of success goes beyond any measure of success that we can think of. For that, gaining the love of Allah(SWT) must be the most important goal in our lives.

We sometimes are not very ambitious or probably we do not have a clear order of priority when we set goals for ourselves. The take home message for today is that if

we truly want to be successful, we need to set our targets high. We need to seek and we need to gain the love of Allah.

With this in mind, we also need to ask ourselves the opposite question: what can be our worst failure? I am sure that now we know what ultimate success is, then ultimate failure is when one loses the love of Allah(SWT). What can be a worst outcome for us when we fail to gain Allah's love.

Brothers and sisters, the topic for today's khutbah relates to this issue. It relates to an important concept in the Holy Quran which deals with two types of people. It deals with those who Allah(SWT) loves, and those who Allah(SWT) does not love.

In the Holy Quran, we come across the statement: إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ

“Surely Allah loves those”.

And we also come across the statement: إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ

“Surely Allah does not love those”.

When we come across such ayahs, we have to stop and ponder the significance of such statements: “Surely Allah loves those and surely Allah does not love those”.

This love brothers and sisters is the measure of our success and the measure of our failure. To put it plainly, when you come across “surely Allah loves those”, Allah is telling us if you are amongst this group of people then you will gain the love of Allah. Equally, when you come across “surely Allah does not love those”, Allah(SWT) is warning us not to drift into this group and fail to gain Allah's love. This is the Muslim's simple guideline for failure and for success in this life and in the hereafter.

Islam does not buy into the concept “God created me the way I am, surely God must love me for what I am”. There is no doubt that when we look at the perfection of our creation and the perfection of everything around us you can only come to one conclusion; there is nothing but mercy and love in this creation. Allah's bounties on us cannot be counted:

وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“And should you count the favour of Allah you will not be able to count them. Surely Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful” (An-Nahl, 16:18)

However, on top of all this, the love of Allah is also present in Allah's guidance for us and helping us to be successful. Should we chose to refuse the guidance and walk away from it, we cannot claim “God created me the way I am, surely God must love me for what I am”.

Islam has a different outlook on this. When one does a word search of the Holy Quran, you will come across eight distinct groups of people that Allah(SWT) testified to us that He Loves. For this khutbah, we will run through some and hopefully continue with future khutbahs. ISA We will also be covering the other group. I know that time will not allow us to address this fully and for that I strongly recommend to you that we should all go back to the Holy Quran and do this simple word search.

When we do the search using the word “loves”, we come across eight types of people where we read “surely Allah loves those”. One of the first we come across is:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“Surely Allah loves those who are “Muhsineen”.

We are all familiar with the concept of Ihssan; the concept of seeking perfection in our dealing with Allah and in our dealing with others. In Islam, the concept of Ihssan when dealing with Allah is to worship Allah(SWT) as if you see him, and even though you do not see him you know that He sees you.

Ihssan demands that we seek to raise the level of perfection. Even when dealing with others, when dealing with the world around us and with our daily duties we should seek to perform our dealings at the level of Ihssan. Ihssan is to seek perfection in all that you do. Allah(SWT) loves those who are “Muhsineen”.

To gain the love of Allah, we need to lift our standards. Allah(SWT) wants His worshipers to be the best of the best. Should we chose to be the representatives of Allah on this earth, Allah tells us we need to lift our standards from the standard of “Iman” to that of “Ihssan”. Seeking the level of “Ihssan” in our worship, in our conduct, in our behaviour, in our work, and in everything that we do is not easy and will demand change.

When you work, you must seek perfection in your work. When you communicate with people you must seek perfection in that. When you deal with the environment you must seek perfection. When you look after your children, you must seek perfection. When you study, you must seek perfection. Even when you drive and when you park anywhere, especially outside our Masjid, Allah loves those who seek and those who exercise Ihssan in all their actions.

The level of mediocre should not be an aim for us. As a Muslim and a believer, our aim should be Ihssan and not less. As Muslims, when we carefully analyse our actions and our behaviour, we are more than happy to be even less than mediocre. To prove my point, just go out now and look at the way we represent the “Deen” of Allah on the streets. Go out and look at how we want to spread the concept of “Ihssan” to others. I ask you an honest question: if you are not a Muslim, and you pass the Masjid on a day like this, what would you think. Brothers and sisters, there is no escaping the fact that for those who do not know Islam, our behaviour is their benchmark of our “Deen”. This is one of the reasons why Allah(SWT) demands Ihssan for us and of us, and this is why the reward is so great.

Some of us have fallen into the trap that as long as I do Ihssan in my acts of worship I am ok with Allah. Somehow we think that Allah(SWT) will overlook our misgivings when dealing with his creation. Brothers and sisters, this is not what Allah(SWT) has asked of us.

When we read in the Holy Quran:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“Surely Allah loves those who are “Muhsineen” it does not specify “acts of worship” but includes “ALL” actions. As a believer we need to sign up for the concept of Ihssan.

Allah(SWT) reminds us in Surat Ar-Rahman:

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ

“Can the reward for Ihssan be anything but Ihssan” (Ar-Rahman, 55:60)

Allah(SWT) tells us that He loves those who are “Muhsineen” and tells us that the reward of those He loves is no less than Ihssan from Allah. What more do we want brothers and sisters?

Brothers and sisters, with such rewards, we must seek to exercise Ihssan in our lives. This unfortunately is where the difficulty lies. To exercise Ihssan we will most likely require us to change something about our behaviour and our conduct. To seek Ihssan is to seek change. Ihssan was never an easy task. Seeking perfection in conduct and seeking perfection in behaviour is by no means an easy task. To gain the love of Allah is by no means an easy task.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلكم

2nd Khutbah:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ثُمَّ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ . الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ
أَنْفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا . أَمَا بَعْدُ :

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“Surely Allah loves those who are “Muhsineen”.

Brothers and sisters, before we get to the rest of those who Allah(SWT) loves, let us ask ourselves a serious question: is it really important for us to gain the love of Allah?

To answer such a question, we need to look at it from many aspects. First of all we need to consider what sort of loss we will be in if one of us comes to Allah(SWT) only to find that Allah is displeased with him or her. Is this something we are prepared to face? Can we actually imagine the calamity of such a situation? Can we imagine what our lives would be if we end up losing the love of Allah.

If we truly want to seek “Thssan”, we must decide for ourselves how important the love of Allah(SWT) is to us? If you decide for yourself that this love is above all else, then start working for it. If you decide you do not want or you do not need the love of Allah, then reconsider after listening to this.

Brothers and sisters, should you succeed and gain the love of Allah, know for sure that you have achieved the ultimate success in this life and in the hereafter. If you are able to connect to Allah, you have connected with everything. If Allah loves you, then all the creation of Allah will love you. If Allah loves you, Allah will make you successful, Allah will stand by you, Allah will support you and Allah will instil in your heart peace, tranquillity and security. Is this something that we are willing to give up?

Feeling secure in this life is something that everyone strives and long for, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. Should you gain the love of Allah(SWT), you gain success, security and peace.

If Allah loves you, Allah will bless you with wisdom. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا

“Allah grants wisdom to whom He pleases; and he to whom wisdom is granted, indeed he has been granted a great deal of goodness” (Al-Baqara, 2:269)

Brothers and sisters, please be in no doubt that gaining the love of Allah(SWT) is the ultimate success. If Allah loves you, He will also grant you the feeling of content. To be content with what you have been given in this life is the ultimate blessing that leads to happiness. A heart that is content is indeed a happy heart. When you possess a heart that is content and happy, you praise Allah for what you have been given and you praise Allah for what you have not been given. When Allah(SWT) loves you Allah will instil in your heart the feeling of content and you no longer run after this “Dunia” as if there is no hereafter. When one is denied the feeling of content, nothing in this “Dunia” will ever give them satisfaction or true happiness. There will always be something missing. Peace, security, wisdom and content. Can we start to imagine what sort of life this can be? Brothers and sisters, gain the love of Allah(SWT) and find out for yourself.

If Allah loves you, He will be in charge of looking after you. Can we imagine this? Allah is in charge of our affairs. Everything that you encounter day in day out,

Allah(SWT) is in charge of this for you. Are we starting to get an idea of the enormity of gaining the love of Allah and are we in any doubt of what this blessing means for us?

An interesting statement by a scholar was that if Allah loves you, he will make those who have enmity towards you serve your interest. Can we now imagine a life where Allah(SWT) is in charge? Can you start to imagine if that is your life? Brothers and sisters, we really have to ask ourselves, do we truly want to gain the love of Allah?

Just like everything in this life, there is a price. The price is a commitment to change. We started by:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Surely Allah loves those who are “Muhsineen”.

Brothers and sisters, I remind myself before anyone else that I need to seek Ihssan in my conduct and behaviour, and we all need to seek Ihssan in our conduct and behaviour. Time does not permit to go in detail through the other seven who Allah loves, so I will quickly run through them:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

Surely Allah loves those who are seeking “Tawbah” and loves those who seek cleanliness and purity.

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

Surely Allah loves those who are “Mutaqeen”.

وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ

Surely Allah loves those who are patient.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

Surely Allah loves those who depend on Him.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

Surely Allah loves those who are Just.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا كَانَهُمْ بُتَيْنٌ مَّرْصُومٌ

Surely Allah loves those who when they fight in the cause of Allah, they do so in ranks like a solid build.

These, brothers and sisters are the eight categories which Allah(SWT) included in the Holy Quran as those who Allah loves. Ihssan, Tawbah, seeking cleanliness and purity, Taqwa, Patience, Depending on Allah, Being Just and being solidly together when we have to fight in the cause of Allah. These are those who will gain the love of Allah.

When you see a list like this, you just do not know where to start from. It is a daunting list and it does look so difficult. We only spoke about Ihssan, and it is already a big ask.

Let us take comfort in the knowledge that Allah(SWT) is most forgiving and most merciful, for Allah(SWT) tells us:

كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ مَن عَمِلَ مِنكُمْ
سُوءًا بِجَهْلَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِن بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

"Your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself, (so) that if any one of you does evil in ignorance, then turns after that towards Allah and acts righteously, then He is Forgiving and Merciful" (Al-Anaam, 6:54)

Let us start seeking the love of Allah.