

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

وَأَنْتَقُوا يَوْمَ مَا 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” (Al-Baqara, 2:281)*



Allah(SWT) tells us in the Glorious Quran:

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ

***“And obey Allah and His Messenger; and do not dispute amongst yourselves, lest you fail and lose your strength” (Al-Anfal, 8:46)***

Brothers and sisters, the topic for today’s khutbah ISA will address how Muslims should value the concept of unity. We invariably talk about the Muslim Ummah and our responsibilities towards it, but when we look closely at the Ummah, do we feel that there is indeed a sense of unity amongst the 1.2 billion Muslims. Are we united by a single religion, or are we in fact divided by a single religion.

Unity of the Ummah is undoubtedly a noble goal, but before we even get there, we need to start much closer at home. We need to ask ourselves if there is unity within our own households. Is there unity within the family unit of parents and children. Is there unity within the wider family such as between uncles and between cousins. When we look at Muslim families, do we really get the picture of unity through Islam, or are we divided by our needs and our desires. If we now take this further to a wider community like ours, do we sense that we are indeed united to make this community successful for ourselves and for our children, or are we still indulging in the same worldly issues that are invariably divisive.

In the opening ayah, we are given three commands by Allah; Obey Allah, obey His messenger and do not dispute amongst yourselves. The command of not disputing amongst ourselves comes straight after obedience to Allah and the messenger. That is how important this command is. Three million Muslims were gathered last week on mount Arafat raising their hands to Allah(SWT). When one looks at this magnificent scene, it is not just the numbers that is bewildering, but it is also the diversity that is simply amazing. It is a testimony to the Ayah:

وَأَدْنَىٰ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ

***“And proclaim for Hajj among people: they will come to you on foot and mounted, coming from every deep mountain path” (Al-Hajj, 22:27)***

When we witness such a scene, it is inevitable that one senses unity through Islam. Three million Muslims united by belief, united by conviction, united by purpose. The

diversity is there for all to witness, men and women of all colours, all ages and all backgrounds, united through Islam. For a short period of time, these Muslims do appear to be united through their beliefs. When we gathered here last week, we also felt a sense of unity. When we gather here every Friday, we also get that sense. ISA, guided by Allah(SWT), we should all have the same purpose in life. Unfortunately, once we get back to our daily activities and to the demands of this “Dunia”, this is where we start to divert away from each other. We need to understand this process very carefully if we want to maintain our unity and the strength that this unity brings with it. As we are all sitting here, we feel a sense of belonging, but an hour later, we are all busy with our daily lives.

Unity in Islam is a very important concept, for if we fail to recognise this and we allow disunity to slip in, we are letting ourselves down a slippery slope.

Understandably, there is a more sinister type of disunity amongst Muslims which relates to an established disagreement in the understanding and in the application of Islam. Allah(SWT) warns us about such disunity and divisions when we read in Surat Al-Imran:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

*“And do not be like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputes after receiving Clear signs; for them is a grievous penalty” (Al-Imran, 3:105)*

This sinister type of division is not simply followed by “losing our strength” as is the case in the first ayah. No, this type of division has much more serious consequences as the ayah states “for them is a grievous penalty”.

However, whether it is divisions based on “Dunia” or divisions based on articles of belief and practice in Islam, the message is much the same: Unity in Islam is not a choice or a luxury but is an obligation.

When Muslims recite Al-Fatiha, we read:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

*“It is only you that we worship, and it is only you that we seek for help” (Al-Fatiha, 1:5)*

It is very interesting that Allah(SWT) did not tell us to say: it is only you that I worship, and it is only you that I seek for help. Al-Fatiha is a very personal Dua’ for all of us. We mostly recite it in silence and there is no doubt that we as individuals are seeking to worship Allah and seeking the help of Allah. Yet even in this Allah(SWT) reminds us that this is a collective event. Islam wants to better the individual and to

better the collective. Our sense of unity is so crucial that when we read the next ayah asking Allah(SWT) for his guidance, we also ask for it in the collective:

أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

**“Guide us unto the straight path” (Al-Fatiha, 1:6)**

This is our daily Dua’ when we read this Surat. It is asking Allah(SWT) to guide us unto the straight path, but when we do it, we ask Allah to guide us all, and not individually. When we read this Surat, even without realising what we have just said, we have actually asked Allah(SWT) to guide our brothers and sisters as well. You have asked Allah to grant guidance for the brother standing next to you. You have even asked Allah to grant guidance for a Muslim brother you have fallen out with. A Sunni Muslim is asking Allah for guidance for a Shii’ brother and vice versa. A Wahabi brother is asking for guidance for his Sufi brother and vice versa. Without realising the significance of these words, we are asking guidance for the entire Muslim Ummah. Who ever you are, you simply cannot say: Guide me, and me alone, unto the straight path.

Brothers and sisters, when we next recite this wonderful Surat, let us take time to ponder the importance of unity in Islam and remember the ayah:

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ

**“And obey Allah and His Messenger; and do not dispute amongst yourselves, lest you fail and lose your strength” (Al-Anfal, 8:46)**

You see brothers and sisters, unity in Islam is a source of strength. Entertaining disputes amongst ourselves is a guaranteed recipe for failure and weakness. Brothers and sisters, as Muslims living in a predominantly non-Muslim society, we cannot afford to entertain disputes amongst ourselves. We are already weakened by our circumstance; we cannot afford to weaken ourselves further by our own disputes.

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  
أنفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. أما بعد:

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ

*“And obey Allah and His Messenger; and do not dispute amongst yourselves, lest you fail and lose your strength” (Al-Anfal, 8:46)*

Brothers and sisters, can I please remind you again about our annual Eid dinner celebration for the community tomorrow. Unfortunately, this year it seems that our Eid celebration dinner has coincided with a charity dinner at the Sheridan Suite hosted by Imran Khan for the flood relief. I know that we all have a deep sense of commitment to our brothers and sisters who have suffered so terribly, and indeed continue to suffer as a result of these devastating floods, and I am confident that we all share in wishing brother Imran Khan a fantastic success on that evening.

This does not however take us away from the conflict of having both events on the same night and as such I need to mention a few words about such an occurrence, especially since I heard that some within our community wished for us to either cancel our annual Eid Dinner celebration altogether, or try to combine both events at very short notice. It very heartening that within our community we have such an attitude to helping others, but there needs to be a balance and a sense to what we do.

Allah(SWT) has declared for us the celebration of two Eids. This celebration is an integral and an important part of our lives as a community. If we were back in Muslim countries, we know that such celebrations are grounds for a national holiday of at least three days to allow the Muslims to enjoy these joyous occasions with their families and their friends. I am afraid that as Muslims living in a predominantly non-Muslim society, we are not afforded such a luxury. I for one went to work straight after the Eid Khutbah, as did probably all those that joined in for the first Eid prayers. As much as we try to enjoin in the celebration, it is not possible for us as a community to celebrate effectively during weekdays, and it does mean that the most convenient time for such a celebration is a Saturday evening where all the families can get together. As it is a community event celebrating Hajj, it is customary for us to wait for our own Hajjis to come back and share with them such a celebration. For this reason, we always aim to have our Annual Eid Dinner celebration within two to three weeks from Eid day.

Brothers and sisters, our Eid dinner celebration is exactly what it says. It is intended for us to go out as a community and for us to enjoy each other's company and for us to celebrate and have fun, young and old. For some to consider the possibility of cancelling such an event shows an unfortunate lack of understanding of the need for a community to celebrate as a unit.

The charity event on the other hand is not a celebration but an occasion to demonstrate our willingness to give for the sake of Allah. I am confident that we all agree on the principle that going to a charity event should be based primarily on the wish to donate for the sake of Allah(SWT) and not to go out for a night of fun and entertainment. If however you are intending to go out to a charity function to enjoy yourself then you do have a conflict and you have to ask yourself, why am I going? For those who have conscientiously struggled with having both functions on the same night, ISA I have a fare and helpful solution for this dilemma. On an individual basis,

if you genuinely want to participate in the charity dinner for the sake of Allah but equally want to share in the celebration of your community, you can still do so. Buy tickets for both functions. Come to the Eid Dinner Celebration and celebrate and enjoy yourself with your brothers and sisters of your community who you are with every day of the year, and then go and donate for the sake of Allah.

Allah(SWT) tells us in Surat Al-Imran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ ۖ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ  
وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۗ

***“O you who believe! Maintain your duty to Allah as it is deserving of Him, and do not die except in a state of Islam. And hold fast, all together by the rope of Allah and do not disunite” (Al-Imran, 3:102-3)***

Linguistically, “the rope” in Arabic can be taken as “the covenant” or as “the guidance” and in this context it encompasses both meanings. However, of the essence in the ayah is the command to hold fast “All together” as a unit, and not as individuals.

Finally, and to sum it up, Allah(SWT) tells us in surat Al-Anbiya’:

إِنَّ هَذِهِ ۖ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ

***“Verily, your Ummah is a single (united) Ummah and I am your Lord: therefore worship Me (and no other)” (Al-Anbiya’, 21:92)***

In Tafseer Ibn Katheer, the word Ummah is expressed as a nation, but also explained as the religion and as the path. What this ayah essentially tells us is that we the Muslims are a single united Ummah, united by our religion and united by our path and our journey to Allah. When we deviate from our unity, we deviate from the path to Allah(SWT).