

March 11th 2011

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَ نَسْتَعِينُهُ وَ نَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَ نَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ
شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ
لَهُ، وَ مَنْ يُضِلِّ 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

وَتَوْبُوا 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)



Allah(SWT) tells us in the Holy Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

“O you who believe, have Taqwa of Allah and be among those who are truthful” (At-Tawba, 9:119)

Dear brothers and sisters, this is ayah 119 in Surat At-Tawba. It follows an ayah that relates to “Ghazwat Tabouk”, also known as “Ghazwat Al-Ussra”; the Ghazwah of hardship. This expedition was prompted by news that the northern tribes allied to the Romans have prepared a substantial army 40,000 strong to invade Madeena. By now, Islam had taken a stronghold in the middle of the Arabian Peninsula and the northern tribes were getting worried. Based on this information, the Prophet(SAAWS) declared a universal call to Jihad and called upon The Muslims in Madeena, the neighbouring tribes and on the people of Makkah

This expedition was the last that the Prophet(SAAWS) led personally and was in the month of Rajab in the ninth year of Hijra. It was a very testing event for the believers for many reasons. It took place in the summer, it was nearing the harvest, it involved an extensive period of travel, almost 900 km and it needed a great deal of preparation and finance to set up an army 30,000 strong and it was the Muslim army setting off to confront this aggression.

We now know from the Seerah that in this expedition, by the time the Muslims arrived at “Bi’r Tabouk” (the well of Tabouk), the opposing army had disbanded and fled and the sahabah did not have to fight. Scholars of the Seerah concluded that one of the most important lessons of this expedition was the trial of the **truthfulness** of the believers. It was a test of the truthfulness of their Iman. Scholars define “Iman” as the belief that is free of doubt, a belief that is firmly established in the heart, a belief that is declared by the tongue and a belief that is testified by ones deeds. In Arabic, “testified by ones deeds” is expressed as: **صَدَقَهُ الْعَمَلُ** which literally means: is made truthful by deeds.

It is during the preparation for this “Ghazwah” that we come across the incident when sUmar(RAA) wanted to surpass sAbu Bakr(RAA) in his commitment and love to Allah(SWT) and the Prophet(SAAWS). The seerah tells us that as it happens, at the time sUmar had some money, so he came to the Prophet(SAAWS) with a significant amount that surpassed what he gave in the past. The Prophet(SAAWS) asked him what did he leave for his family and he replied; the same. In that we understand that sUmar(RAA) donated half of his wealth. He was confident that in doing so he has surpassed what sAbu Bakr might do. sAbu Bakr(RAA) walks in and puts down his contribution and sUmar was observing in anticipation. The Prophet(SAAWS) asks him: and what did you leave for your family. sAbu Bakr replied; I left them Allah and his messenger. sAbu Bakr(RAA) has donated all his wealth and sUmar said; I could never surpass him.

We know from the seerah that this “Ghazwah” not only exposed the truthfulness of Iman of the sahabah but it also exposed the hypocrites for what they were. Some came to the Prophet(SAAWS) giving him various reasons to excuse them from joining the expedition while others failed to join and later made up excuses. Amongst those who failed to join the expedition were three sahabah. When the Prophet(SAAWS) returned, he met those who stayed behind and asked for their reason. The hypocrites lied, and the Prophet(SAAWS) excused them knowing well that they lied. These three sahabah however said the truth and admitted that they did not have an excuse. For fifty days, the sahabah were ordered not to interact with these three until Allah(SWT) delivers His verdict. Ayah 118 in Surat At-Tawba addresses these three sahabah as they were forgiven by Allah(SWT) for their truthfulness. We know the ayah very well as it starts with:

وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خُلْفُوا

“And of the three that remained behind” (At-Tawba, 9:118)

And it is in the following ayah that we read:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

“O you who believe, have Taqwa of Allah and be among those who are truthful” (At-Tawba, 9:119)

Brothers and sisters, the topic of this khutbah, and ISA I will try to continue with it in forthcoming khutbahs, is not about “Ghazwat Tabouk” but is about an important character of the believer which was greatly tested by this event. This is amongst one of the most important characters of the believer and ISA the reasons will become clearer to us. This character is called:

الصدق

As-sidq means to be truthful. “Sidq” is not simply about speaking the truth, but the character of “Sidq” goes beyond that. It is about having a character that has truthfulness at its core and has truthfulness in every way it expresses itself.

The Prophet(SAAWS) said:

عَلَيْكُمْ بِالصِّدْقِ، فَإِنَّ الصِّدْقَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْبِرِّ، وَالْبِرُّ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ

Be truthful, for truthfulness leads to what is of goodness, and this leads to paradise.

In essence, truthfulness leads to paradise and as the hadeeth states, this is probably by the impact that truthfulness has and by the goodness it delivers to the individual and to society as a whole (*for truthfulness leads to what is of goodness*).

People in general tend to understand that being truthful is essentially saying what is true and not telling lies. Brothers and sisters, in Islam, being truthful does not only mean to say what is the truth, but as you would have guessed by now, it goes beyond that. Scholars have defined for us “four” aspects of truthfulness that we need to understand. These are:

- Truthfulness of “intentions”, “Niyaa”
- Truthfulness of “Iman”
- Truthfulness of “deeds”, and
- Truthfulness of the tongue.

ISA over the next few khutbahs we will go through these different aspects of truthfulness.

It is inevitable that the first aspect of being truthful should relate to our intentions. The concept of “intention” is a very interesting one when one takes a closer look. It is probably one of these characteristic that is unique to humans, probably similar to choice. Every other living creature behaves according to its instincts and training. Even humans mostly behave according to an instinct, an impulse or pre-conditioning, but we humans have this unenviable characteristic; we have “intentions”.

When we look at intentional behaviour, “intention” is something that takes place very early in the process and dictates what we end up doing. Our intentions precede what we say and what we do. Islam recognises this important characteristic of our behaviour and focuses on getting it right for us. If we get our intentions right, ISA, this paves the way for us to say and to do what is right and ISA this paves the way for us to paradise.

The Prophet(SAAWS) said in a familiar hadeeth to us:

On the authority of Omar bin Al-Khattab, he said: I heard the messenger of Allah(SAAWS) say :

"For indeed actions are but by intentions and to every person shall have but that which he intended. As for he whose migration was to Allah and His messenger, his migration was to Allah and His messenger. And as for he whose migration was to achieve some worldly benefit or to take a woman in marriage, his migration was for that for which he migrated." related by Bukhari and Muslim

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى . فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ
وَرَسُولِهِ فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ . وَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ لِدُنْيَا يُصِيبُهَا أَوْ امْرَأَةٍ
يَنْكِحُهَا فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ

Brothers and sisters, understanding the concept of “Niyaa” in Islam is very important for us. Indeed, this is where everything starts. In the collection of 40 hadeeth by An-Nawawi this was the first hadeeth in the book. This is how important Imam Nawawi felt about this particular hadeeth to put it first in this book. Indeed, when we examine human behaviour, everything revolves around our intentions. In most instances when we judge behaviour it is the intention that we judge most critically.

When we deal with people, one of the first things we try to find out about them is what their intentions are. Whether this is part of a friendship, setting up a business, developing a relationship, applying for work and so on, we are always keen on finding out people’s intentions. For us, intention is what defines the question “why”.

It is interesting that when we communicate with adults about an action, we ask “what” did you do and we also ask “why” did you do it. That knowledge of intent bears heavily on our decision making and on our judgement.

This hadeeth is an amazing and beautiful hadeeth because it gives us one of the greatest clues of how to be successful. It defines our success by our intentions. Our success in the world and in the hereafter starts with us taking a step back, examining our intentions and then setting our intentions right. When you look at it, you will be excused for thinking that this is so obvious and so basic, but this is exactly what it is all about. It is about getting back to the first basic step of asking oneself before an action “why am I doing this”.

We all go about our daily lives seeking to achieve a worldly benefit. Praise be to Allah that in this difficult climate, most of us can still set off on our daily work or business seeking of that which Allah(SWT) has made lawful for us. Do we ever ask ourselves as we step out of the house in the morning “why” am I going to work? “Why” am I working the way I am. “Why” am I setting up this new business deal? “Why” am I looking for a new car or a new house? “Why” do I want to study medicine, law or whatever? Do we actually question ourselves in that way, or do we simply get on with our routine daily lives without questioning our deepest motives. You see brothers and sisters, by not asking why, or by not re-examining “why”, we are getting on with our lives with no clear “intention” that has Allah(SWT) in the framework. As a Muslim, this is not acceptable. The Prophet(SAAWS) said:

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ *"For indeed actions are but by intentions"*

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلكم

2nd Khutbah:

الحمد لله ثم الحمد لله. الحمد لله نستعينه ونستغفره ، ونعوذ بالله من شرور
أنفسنا وسيئات أعمالنا . أما بعد :

Dear brothers and sisters, to be successful we first need to set our intentions right. The hadeeth gives us two options. On the one hand, we can set our intentions to please Allah(SWT) and the Prophet(SAAWS) in all that we do, or alternatively, we can still get on with all that we do but Allah(SWT) and the Prophet(SAAWS) do not feature in that.

The khutbah for today is not just about setting our intentions, but it is about being truthful to our intentions once they have been set. By this we Muslims assume that we have asked ourselves “why”, and our answer was “for the sake of Allah”. It is now that the test begins. It is now that the truthfulness of our intentions gets tested.

To give an example, many people on New Year’s eve set resolutions for themselves; stop smoking, lose weight, do more exercise, reduce time wasting on X-box, watch less TV and so on. These resolutions are not directly related to Islam, but they illustrate people’s intentions. By setting a resolution, they have already recognized the need to positive change. Their truthfulness to their intentions is judged by what they do next. It is very important that they have identified the need to change to the better, but it is an empty resolution if you do not set about fulfilling your obligation to it. Fulfilling a resolution is a testament to your resolve, your determination and your patience. I am afraid, brothers and sisters, that truthfulness demands all that.

With that in mind, can we say that we have been truthful with our resolutions and with our covenants with Allah(SWT). Do we do what we do for the sake of Allah or do we do what we do for the sake of others. Do we have this feeling in our hearts that our lives and our deeds are for the sake of Allah, or have we lost touch with our intentions as Muslims. Do we have the resolve, the determination and the patience?

Allah(SWT) tells us in Surat Muhammad, ayah 21:

فَإِذَا عَزَمَ الْأَمْرُ فَلَوْ صَدَقُوا اللَّهَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ

“And when the matter has been resolved {preparation for jihad}, then if they are truthful to their intentions to Allah it would be better for them” (Muhammad, 47:21)

Allah(SWT) used the term , فَلَوْ صَدَقُوا ***“if they are truthful to their intentions”***. Allah(SWT) wants us to be truthful to our intentions and for that, Islam gives us great rewards by setting our intentions right and by being truthful to them. This concept is so important in Islam, that Allah(SWT) has promised us great rewards in return.

The Prophet(SAAWS) said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى كَتَبَ الْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ ثُمَّ بَيَّنَ ذَلِكَ، فَإِذَا هُمَّ الْعَبْدُ بِحَسَنَةٍ
وَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كُتِبَتْ لَهُ حَسَنَةٌ، فَإِذَا عَمِلَهَا كُتِبَتْ لَهُ عَشْرَ حَسَنَاتٍ

Allah(SWT) has decreed the good deeds, the bad deeds and then clarified that. If the person has the intention of doing a good deed but was unable to carry it out, he is rewarded for the deed. If he achieves it, he is rewarded tenfold. (in other narrations, it is declared as tenfold, to seven hundred fold and more)

This is the beauty of Islam. Allah(SWT) wants us to set our intentions right and will reward us simply for having the right intentions even if we end up doing nothing. This is why scholars tell us; what are we waiting for. We can gain mountains of good deeds simply by setting our intentions right and by being truthful to them.

The prophet(SAAWS) also said:

مَنْ سَأَلَ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى الشُّهَادَةَ بِصِدْقٍ بَلَغَهُ اللَّهُ مَنَازِلَ الشُّهَدَاءِ وَإِنْ مَاتَ عَلَى فِرَاشِهِ

Whoever asks Allah(SWT) for martyrdom with a truthful intention, Allah will place him amongst the martyrs even if he dies on his bed.

Indeed we know from the seerah the story of sKhalid bin Alwaleed(RAA) who was termed “Saiful-Lah Al-Masloul” by the Prophet(SAAWS). As he lay dying on his bed, he said there is no place in my body that does not have the scar of a sword or a spear, and yet here I am dying on my bed like cattle. The eyes of the coward should never sleep. sKhalid bin Alwaleed is amongst the martyrs by the truthfulness of his “Niyaa”.

In “Ghazwat Tabouk”, as the Prophet(SAAWS) was travelling with the sahabah, he said:

إِنَّ بِالْمَدِينَةِ لَرِجَالًا مَا قَطَعْتُمْ وَاذِيًّا وَلَا سِرْتُمْ مَسِيرًا إِلَّا
شَارَكُوكُمْ بِالْأَجْرِ، حَبَسَهُمُ الْعُدْرُ (الْمَرَضُ)

In Madeena, there are indeed men that will join you in reward for every valley that you crossed and every path that you walked, for they were restrained by illness.

Islam rewards being truthful to your intentions greatly. Brothers and sisters, we start our journey on the concept of truthfulness by re-examining our intentions. Let us make an effort to take a step back, consider what we are doing and asking ourselves these critical questions; “what is my intention in what I am doing”. “Is it for the sake of Allah and the Prophet or is it for something else”. Once we have addressed this question and sorted our intentions, let us develop our resolve, determination and patience to be truthful to our intentions, and let us start gaining the rewards ISA.