

May 13th 2011

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 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

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

“For indeed the believers are those who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and have never since fell in doubt and have striven with their wealth and themselves in the Cause of Allah: Such indeed are the truthful ones” (Al-Hujurat, 49:15)



Dear brothers and sisters, ASA. ISA this will be our last khutbah in the series on Ikhlass. We read in Surat Al-An'aam:

قُلْ إِن صَّلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۗ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

“Say: indeed, my prayers and my rituals, my life and my death are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds: No partner has He: In this I have been commanded, and I am the first of those who submit to His Will” (Al-An'aam, 6:162-3)

This brothers and sisters, is the basic premise in Islam. Our Ibada, our rituals, our living and our death are all for Allah(SWT) and for none other than Allah. In that we really have no choice. Our salvation and our success lie in this concept of Ikhlass.

A man came to the Prophet(SAAWS) and asked:

أَرَأَيْتَ رَجُلًا غَزَا يَلْتَمِسُ الْأَجْرَ وَالذِّكْرَ ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ : لَا شَيْءَ لَهُ . أَعَادَهَا ثَلَاثَ

What becomes of a man who fights seeking the reward from Allah and seeking to be recognised by others. The Prophet(SAAWS) replied: For him there is nothing (in that there is no reward from Allah). The man asked the question three times as he was surprised to be told that fighting and dying in the cause of Allah bears no reward should the person wish to also be recognised by others. This recognition was an important concept in pre-Islam as people were usually remembered for their battles and their bravery. Poems galore were read glorifying such achievements. This man was asking can I fight in the cause of Allah and also seek to be remembered. The response of Islam through the words of the Prophet(SAAWS) was unequivocal and very clear. No reward from Allah.

The prophet(SAAWS) then said:

ثُمَّ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ : إِنْ اللَّهُ لَا يَقْبَلُ مِنَ الْعَمَلِ إِلَّا مَا كَانَ لَهُ خَالِصًا وَابْتِغَى بِهِ وَجْهَهُ

Allah does not accept from deeds except that which has been purely for Him and through which His pleasure has been sought.

In a hadeeth Qudssi, Allah(SWT) tells us:

حَدِيثٌ قُدْسِيٌّ : أَنَا أَعْنِي الشُّرَكَاءَ عَنِ الشِّرْكِ ، فَمَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا
أَشْرَكَ فِيهِ غَيْرِي فَهُوَ لِلَّذِي أَشْرَكَ وَأَنَا مِنْهُ بَرِيءٌ

I am the least in need of partners in association. Who so ever does a deed and associate others with Me in this deed, the deed is then for the associate, and I am disowned of that deed.

Brothers and sisters, the sahabah were left in no doubt as to the meaning of Ikhlass and Riya'. The reason for that will become very clear in the next few hadeeths. We know from the seerah, that the biggest obstacle for the initial spread of Islam was the nature of the message. The message of Islam demands "Tawheed" and to abandon all false idols. Tawheed meant no association with Allah(SWT) especially in worship. Prior to Islam, every messenger from Allah gave the same message: worship Allah and none but Allah. The message of Tawheed gets re-established with the new messenger, but a few years later, association and idol worship creeps in.

The Prophet(SAAWS) made the statement that still holds true, and will hold true until the day of judgement in that there will be no more idol worship in that land. Associating in worship with Allah is considered as the "Great Shirk", a sin that is unforgivable.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَعْزِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ - وَيَعْزِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ
يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا

"Allah does not forgive that partners are associated with Him; but forgives what is less than that to whom He wills; to associate partners with Allah is to commit a great sin" (An-Nissa', 4:48)

Brothers and sisters, in last khutbah, we came across the term Riya' which is best translated as "ostentation". Ostentation is defined as behaving and acting in such a way as to be seen by other people and to impress them. The origin of this word in the Arabic language comes from the derivative: to see. We come across this term in the Holy Quran in Surat Al-Maoon:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ
الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ
الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ

"So woe to those who pray. Those who are neglectful of their Prayers. Those who want to be seen (by others)" (Al-Maoon, 107:4-6)

You see brothers and sisters, Ikhlass and Riya' are actions that relate to good deeds. In this Surat, ostentation is ascribed to one of the pillars of Islam; Salat.

In the first of these three ayahs, a warning is given to those who pray.

فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّينَ

“So woe to those who pray”

Even with such an obligation that we all do there is a warning. Two types of people are being warned. The first are those who have neglected the essence of Salat. For instance, we spoke many times about those who come to do Salat simply as an act, but not as an act of worship. They neglect many if not all the essential characteristics of the Ibadat apart from the physical motions. For those, the essence of Salat has been lost, and only the physical ritual actions are left.

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ

“Those who are neglectful of their Prayers”

The second warning from Allah(SWT) is for those who pray to show.

الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ

“Those who want to be seen (by others)”

I am sure that in a predominantly non-Muslim society, those who are in a Masjid praying are doing so out of conviction, but in our societies, there are still people who come to pray so as others will say: look how devoted this brother is.

Brothers and sisters, do you know what Islam defines Riya' as. You will be shocked. Riya' is defined as the lesser Shirk. The greater shirk is to associate worship with Allah, the lesser shirk is to have Riya'. This is what the Prophet(SAAWS) says:

إِنَّ أَحْوَفَ مَا أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمُ الشِّرْكَ الْأَصْغَرَ. قَالُوا وَمَا الشِّرْكَ الْأَصْغَرُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. قَالَ الرِّيَاءُ

The Prophet(SAAWS) said: of the most that I fear for you is the lesser shirk. The sahabah asked: what could the lesser shirk be? The Prophet(SAAWS) replied: Ar-Riya' (ostentation).

In another hadeeth the Prophet(SAAWS) was asked: will your ummah fall into “shirk” after you (like other nations did after their messengers). The Prophet(SAAWS) replied yes, but they will not worship a sun nor a moon, nor a stone or an idol, but they will have Riya’ in their deeds.

قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَتُشْرِكُ أُمَّتُكَ مِنْ بَعْدِكَ . قَالَ : نَعَمْ ، أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ لَا
يَعْبُدُونَ شَمْساً وَلَا قَمَراً وَلَا حَجَراً وَلَا وَثْناً وَلَا كِنَ يُرَآؤُونَ بِأَعْمَالِهِمْ

Brothers and sisters, there are many examples of Riya’ in our deeds because the essence of Riya’ is the fact that one’s actions are influenced by others than Allah(SWT). One seeks to impress others and to be praised by them. If one is not praised one feels unrewarded, and if praised, one feels satisfied. Indeed, scholars said that one of the ways that we can check if we have Riya’ in our hearts is by asking ourselves some simple questions: Do I feel happy when I am praised by others; do I feel the need to be praised: do I get upset by criticism. To be able to take on praise and criticism in the same manner without them influencing your actions is an indication that you do not have Riya’ in your heart. A scholar who was being praised by his people told them: say what you wish, on the day of the judgement, when I am being dragged by my arms and legs into the fire of hell, none of you will have the power to save me.

Another way of checking if you have Riya’ is to ask yourself; are my actions based on what others think. For instance, if a sister took off her Hijab because her friends did so or because she was concerned about the opinion of others, her initial actions were not based on Ikhlass to Allah. Riya’ can be understood very simply in that our actions are intended with others in mind rather than Allah(SWT). This is why it is defined as the lesser shirk.

Riya’ can creep into one’s action and behaviour very insidiously. This is why the Prophet(SAAWS) said: of the most that I fear for you is the lesser shirk (Ar-Riya’).

The Prophet(SAAWS) told the Sahabah: Avoid the lesser “Shirk”, that is less conspicuous than the walking of the ant on a silent stone in the dark night.

إِتَّقُوا الشِّرْكَ الْأَصْغَرَ، الَّذِي هُوَ أَخْفَى مِنْ دَيْبِ النَّمْلَةِ عَلَى الصَّخْرَةِ الصَّمَاءِ فِي اللَّيْلِ الظُّلْمَاءِ،

That is how insidious Riya’ can creep into our actions. The Sahabah asked how can they avoid this lesser shirk when it can be so insidious. The Prophet(SAAWS) told them to repeat

this Dua' three times in the morning and three times at night asking for Allah(SWT) to help them:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أُشْرِكَ بِكَ شَيْئاً أَعْلَمُهُ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُكَ لِمَا لَا أَعْلَمُهُ

O Allah, I seek refuge in you from associating with you that which I know and I ask your forgiveness for that which I do not know.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَ لَكُمْ

2nd Khutbah:

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

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أُشْرِكَ بِكَ شَيْئاً أَعْلَمُهُ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُكَ لِمَا لَا أَعْلَمُهُ

O Allah, I seek refuge in you from associating with you that which I know and I ask your forgiveness for that which I do not know.

Brothers and sisters, I hope that the calamity of Riya' has been brought home to us all, and how easy Riya' can creep into our deeds. Learn this hadeeth and use it with your morning and night-time "Zikr". ISA this Dua' will be included in the next newsletter.

For the rest of the khutbah, we need to understand some strategies to help ourselves to strengthen the character of Ikhlass in our hearts. This will not be easy as this can be one of the most difficult of characters to develop. Sohail Ibn Saad was asked what is the most difficult character for the soul. He replied "Ikhlass", for there is no share for the soul in Ikhlass.

You see brothers and sisters, when our souls develop the character of Ikhlass, this soul can no longer seek the reward from others as it can only seek if from Allah(SWT). For many of us, this is very difficult.

To nurture our characters on Ikhlass, we return to the basic concept of “Niya”, the concept of setting our intentions. The sahabah used to be known as traders in Niya. For instance, if one sets off to the Masjid for Maghreb and Isha’ they will not simply do a Niya for that. They will set many niyaas including: Niya of Salat, Niya of I’tikaf between Maghreb and Isha’, Niya to keep away from bad deeds in that period, Niya of meeting a brother in Islam to get closer with him to the obedience of Allah(SWT) and a Niya of seeking tawbah. They understood that the reward of Ikhlass can be 700 fold and more, so they multiply this even further.

Brothers and sisters, the Niya is a great gift from Allah(SWT). We remember the hadeeth that our deeds are but by intention, and we remember the hadeeth that we are rewarded for our Niya. Scholars have defined the Niya as a great gift from Allah(SWT). If we develop this gift we will reap the reward. For instance, if a student sets off to school or college for his daily studies, and as he or she does that, that student sets a Niya for the day; I will study for the sake of Allah. I will observe my obligations. I will work hard for Allah’s sake and so forth. How many sins will this person do in the day, once he or she has set their Niya first thing. If we now apply this to most if not all that we do, can we see how beneficial setting a Niya can be. How many of us would set a bad Niya. No one. Do we see it now brothers and sisters, by setting our Niyas first thing in the day, we are actually protecting ourselves. We are reminding ourselves of our obligations, and to whom these obligations are. Let us develop this character in ourselves and let us start teaching it to our children.

In the seerah of the “Tabi’een” {those who came after the Prophet(SAAWS)} it is narrated that as a janazah of one of the sahabah was passing through, one asked his friend let us walk with the janazah. His friend said, give me a moment. After the moment he said, let us now walk. When asked why did you want a moment, he replied; I was preparing my Niya. The sahabah and Tabi’een did not set off on anything without renewing their Niya.

This is how important the sahabah and the Tabi’een viewed the Niya. It was integral to their daily routine, and we need to revive this ISA into our routines. We learned from the previous khutbahs that even if we did not achieve what we set for, ISA Allah(SWT) will reward us none the less. It is a win-win-win-win situation.

Brothers and sisters, the Niya is indeed a great gift from Allah to us. Let us practice not to do anything without a clear Niya. If we lose the instincts of Niya and lose Ikhlass, we will insidiously fall into Riya’. On the day of judgement, those who fell into Riya’ are told “*go and get your reward from those whom you were seeking gratification*”. That is what we are doing in this life; we are seeking gratification from others, and that is what we will be asked

to do on the Day of Judgment. Do people have any influence on our fate in the hereafter; so why do we think they will have any influence now. We know the clear answer and yet we still have Riya' in our hearts.

Brothers and sisters, is it possible for us to check that we are getting more Ikhlass in our deeds. Scholars guide us to a number of points. Firstly, we need to ask ourselves if praise and criticism have the same impact on us. Secondly, we need to always question if we have Ikhlass in our deeds. The more we keep questioning, the less likely we fall into Riya'. Thirdly, and an interesting point, do we have a secret good deed that no one knows about. A good deed that has remained purely between us and Allah(SWT). Lastly is to remember the Duas from this khutbah and the previous one. Both ISA will be in the newsletters. The current newsletter has the Dua' from last khutbah.

Finally brothers and sisters, I leave you with this very difficult hadeeth. As summer is nearing, most likely the BBQs will start. You know that when you want to start the fire, you need something to get it going. In Arabic, this process is defined as "Tussa'ar". The hadeeth states that the first that the fire of hell will use to get going, "Tussa'ar", are three types of people. The first is a martyr. The martyr will be shown his deed on the Day of Judgment and he will recognise it. He will then be asked why did he die. He will reply I died for the sake of Allah. Allah(SWT) will tell him; you have lied. You died so that people will say "he was brave", and they have said so. He will then be dragged on his face into the fire. The second is a man who is a scholar in knowledge and in recitation. He will be shown his deeds and he will recognise them. He will be asked why did you do that, and he will reply it was for the sake of Allah. Allah(SWT) will tell him: you have lied. You learned and you recited so that people will say "he is knowledgeable and he is a good reciter", and they have said. He will then be dragged on his face into the fire. The third is a man who has been blessed with wealth and gave in charity plenty. He will be shown his deeds and he will recognise them. He will be asked why did you do that, and he will reply it was for the sake of Allah. Allah(SWT) will tell him: you have lied. You gave so that people will say "he is generous" and they have said. He will then be dragged on his face into the fire.

Brothers and sisters, the difference between Ikhlass and Riya' is the difference between heaven and hell. Let us ISA learn to develop our Ikhlass and our niyaa, and let us teach our families and our children the same and ISA we will be successful.

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۚ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

“Say: indeed, my prayers and my rituals, my life and my death are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds: No partner has He: In this I have been commanded, and I am the first of those who submit to His Will” (Al-An’aam, 6:162-3)