

19th August 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 **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

وَأَنْتُمْ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ يَوْمَ تَرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَمَّ تَوْفَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ
وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

“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)



رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ

"Our Lord: Let not our hearts deviate now that you have guided us, and grant us mercy from you; for you are the grantor of bounties without measure" (Al-Imran, 3:8)

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ جَامِعُ النَّاسِ لِيَوْمٍ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخِيفُ الْمِعَادَ

"Our Lord: You will gather all people to a day of which there is no doubt: for Allah does not fail His promise" (Al-Imran, 3:9)

Brothers and sisters, one of the articles of our beliefs as Muslims is that we will all return to our creator, and we will all face the judgement of our actions. No matter how small a good deed we have done, Allah(swt) will reward us, and no matter how small a bad deed we have done, Allah(swt) reserves the option to forgive or to punish us, and he is the Most Forgiving. As the A-level results are out, one can see the excitement of our young students who have worked so hard for these exams and are very excited to find how good they have done and what the rewards will be. Just imagine our excitement on the Day of Judgment when ISA we have done enough to gain Paradise. And just as much as there are levels of reward in this life, there will be levels of Paradise, the highest of which is "Al-Firdawss Al-A'laa". This is our chance ISA to guarantee our entry to Paradise and this is our chance to get a higher status as well.

There is an interesting Surat in the Holy Quran, Surat At-Taghabun, which is Surat 64. In ayah 9 we are reminded that we will be gathered on the day of gathering and this day will also be known as the day of Taghabun.

يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّغَابُنِ

"The day when He shall gather you unto the day of Assembling, that will be a day of mutual disillusion" (At-Taghabun, 64:9)

One description of the word "Taghabun" is that when once you realise what the rewards are and how much more you could have gained you start telling yourself; I wish I did just that little bit more. You know you have done OK, but you also know you had the chance to do that little bit more and the reward would have been much greater. "I wish I did that little bit

more". It is almost like scoring a B and finding out you were one or two marks from an A, or an A and you were one or two marks from an A*. How would you feel? That is one of the meanings of Taghabun. Let us take advantage of the last ten days of this glorious month and make sure we do not regret not having done that little bit more. The worst case scenario is when you find out that you have failed by one mark only.

Today brothers and sisters is the 19th of Ramadan, and tomorrow night we enter the last ten nights of this blessed month. Brothers and sisters, Allah(swt) tells us that Ramadan is the month of the Quran:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ
وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ

“The month of Ramadan in which the Qur'an was revealed. A guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion (of right and wrong)” (Al-Baqara, 2:185)

With such a profound statement for us Muslims, yet we read in Surat Al-Furqan, Surat 25 a very disturbing ayah. It was yesterday that we went through this Surat during “Taraweeh”:

وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا
الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا

“And the messenger said: My Lord, indeed my people have taken this Quran to be abandoned” (Al-Furqan, 25:30)

The description of abandoning the Quran is described in this ayah as a wilful act.

اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا

“They have taken this Quran to be abandoned” (Al-Furqan, 25:30)

You may all wonder why, as we are entering the last third of Ramadan, when all of us are putting that extra effort into the Quran, we need such a reminder. Every day all of us, at the least, listen to the Quran during “Taraweeh” and most likely we also read a bit more at home. However, brothers and sisters, we all know that Allah(swt) has made this month easy for us. The gates of heaven are open and the gates of hell are closed. The sheitans are chained. The

sense of unity amongst our community is strengthened. We see it every night. During Ramadan, it is somehow easy for us to get closer to the Quran. Everything is geared towards that. But this will not last forever. After ten days, Ramadan will start to become a memory, and within a few weeks, it will probably become a distant memory for some if not for many of us.

We need to develop as many good habits before we all get back to our routine lives and Ramadan is the best time for developing good habits. This is the time for us to make covenants with Allah(swt). Let every family sit together over the next few blessed nights and set a program for the next eleven months. Specify a time in the day or the week where this time becomes sacrosanct and is dedicated for the reading, recitation and understanding the meanings of the Quran and make this time a family orientated time. This does not even have to be a full hour. If we specify 10 - 15 minutes a day but on a regular basis, just imagine how this little change can transform our lives. To make life easy, probably the best time to do so is after one of our “Fard” prayers. You are already in the mood, you have “wudu” and you are in the hands of Allah. Just make sure the Quran is next to you and read for a few minutes. This dedicated time is for the Quran and nothing else. Set your timetables now, during Ramadan and make sure all the family is involved as we are more likely to stick to such a routine when all the family are in it.

Do not leave this until after Ramadan, because if you do so, it will never happen. If you are seeking change and you are seeking to maintain such a change, it is now that you set your timetable before the sheitan is unchained. During Ramadan, we are helped to overcome sheitan, once Ramadan is over; we are back on our own. If we want help then, we need to seek it ourselves through our own actions and this is not easy.

Brothers and sisters, the Holy Quran is our guide, our comfort and our healer. But none of that will happen if it goes back on the shelf. Ramadan gives us the opportunity to get this amazing book back into our lives. Allah(swt) reminds us that the Quran is a healing for us:

وَنُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ
الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

“And we reveal of the Quran what is a healing and a mercy for those who have faith; yet it adds only to the ruin of the transgressors” (Al-Issra’, 17:82)

ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAmr reported that the Messenger of Allah(swt) said: *“The fast and the Quran are two intercessors for the servant of Allah on the Day of Resurrection. The fast will say: ‘O Lord, I prevented him from his food and desires during the day. Let me intercede for him.’ The Quran will say: ‘I prevented him from sleeping at night. Let me intercede for him.’ And their intercession will be accepted.”* [Ahmad]

On the day where no one can help anyone else, we will find this Glorious Book standing up for us; and yet we keep it on the shelf. What would you think of a patient who leaves his medicines on the shelf and ignores taking what is of need and benefit for his wellbeing. That is what we are when we ignore the Quran. In Surat Al-Issra', we also read:

إِنَّ فُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا

“For indeed, the recitation of the Quran in Fajr will be witnessed” (Al-Issra', 17:78)

Brothers and sisters, there is beauty in reading and listening to the Quran even when we do not understand every word. This beauty gets magnified once we start to learn how amazing this Quran is. Imagine now if we actually applied this book to our daily lives. Just to give you one example, we read in Surat Fussilat:

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ
فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

“A good deed and a bad deed are not equal. Respond to (a bad deed) with that which is good, and you will see that the one between whom and you there was enmity, shall become as if he were a very close friend” (Fussilat, 41:34)

Just imagine how our lives and the lives of those around us will be transformed when we apply this ayah in our lives and when we routinely respond to a bad deed with a good one as the Quran tells us. Nowadays in our society, we are more likely to find people responding to a good deed with a bad one. Many of us take advantage of our friends, our families and even our husbands and wives. Someone helps you, but all you want is to take advantage of them. How unhappy is such a society. Just imagine now if we start applying this ayah into our lives. Imagine if we start repelling a bad deed with a good one, what sort of society do we end up with. A scholar once described the true believer as being like a fruit tree, when one throws stones at it, it drops fruits in return. We all know this is not easy and you may rightly think that this is the character of a saint. However, the Quran tells us we do not have to be saints to do such a thing. The next ayah states:

وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا دُونَ حَظِّ عَظِيمٍ

“But none attains this except those who are steadfast; and none attains this except those endowed with great deal of good fortune” (Fussilat, 41:35)

Allah(swt) tells us that what is needed is patience. To develop such a “saintly” character, all we need is patience. In fact, most if not all good characters demand patience and being steadfast and what is a better time than Ramadan to develop such a character.

The Prophet(saaws) said: Developing knowledge is through learning and developing patience is attained through practicing patience:

إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ بِالتَّعْلَمِ ، وَإِنَّمَا الْحِلْمُ بِالتَّحْلَمِ

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَ لَكُمْ

2nd Khutbah:

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

وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا دُونَ حَظِّ عَظِيمٍ

“But none attains this except those who are steadfast; and none attains this except those endowed with great deal of good fortune” (Fussilat, 41:35)

Brothers and sisters, what we need to appreciate is that Ramadan is just a start for us. Ramadan is not a task to be accomplish, then congratulate ourselves and put it behind us. With every Ramadan, Allah(swt) gives us another fresh start. This is one of the reasons why Ramadan is so generous because we get our Quran off its shelf.

When the Sahabah used to speak of the Quran, they did not use to say: “I heard the Quran say”, but they used to say: “I hear Allah(swt) say”. The Quran is not just a book, but for us it is the word of Allah(swt). It is Allah(swt) speaking to us. Are we able to get this feeling of awe when we read the Quran. That is what the word of Allah(swt) should mean to us. These words were revealed by sJibreel from Allah(swt) directly to sMuhammad(saaws) and there we have it, lying on the shelf of each of our homes.

In Musnad Ahmad, Sahih Muslim, At-Tirmidhi and An-Nasa'i, it is recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Prophet(saaws) said;

لَا تَجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قُبُورًا فَإِنَّ الْبَيْتَ الَّذِي نُقْرَأُ فِيهِ سُورَةَ الْبَقَرَةِ لَا يَدْخُلُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ

Do not turn your homes into graves. Verily, sheitan does not enter the house where Surat Al-Baqara is recited. At-Tirmidhi said, this hadeeth is "Hasan Sahih".

Can we imagine what the Prophet(saaws) is telling us. Our homes are like graves because the sheitan has an open access to us. In the grave, we are helpless, we have no more deeds and we are in darkness. In a home where the sheitan is resident with us, this only means that we have driven the angels away. Can we imagine our homes without the angels? We the Muslims believe in the angels and if we want to call them back into our lives, if we want to be in the company of angels, we need to get the Quran off the shelf brothers and sisters. Ask yourself what sort of home you want. Ask yourself who you want to share your life with. Once you decide you want to get rid of sheitan, now you know what you need to do.

In many of the books of the power of Dua', we read about the powerful nature of many Suras in the Quran which will defend us and help us in difficulty, and many Suras that will give us tremendous reward. We know about Surat Al-Kahf, Surat Ya-Seen, Surat Ar-Rahman, Surat Al-Waqi'a, Surat Al-Mulk and so on. Brothers and sisters, let us not make our homes graves by leaving the Quran on the shelf. We ask Allah(swt) to make this Quran a light and a comfort for us, and we ask Allah(swt) to get us closer to it, to help us read it, learn it and work by it; Ameen.

Last, brothers and sister, I do not need to remind you again that we are entering the last ten of Ramadan. We do not need a reminder of "Laylatul-Qadr". In a Hadeeth "Hassan", the Prophet(SAAWS) said: *this month has come upon you, and in it is a night that is better than one thousand months. The one who has been denied this night, he has indeed been denied all the goodness, and no one will be denied its goodness unless he is indeed among the deprived.*

There are many Hadeeth as to which night this could be, and the most authentic is that where the Prophet(saaws) tells us to look for it in the odd nights of the last ten of Ramadan. Tomorrow is Saturday and is the 20th day of Ramadan, and therefore tomorrow night will be the 21st night. I ask Allah(swt) to bless us and make us amongst those who witness the night.

Aisha(raa) asked the Prophet(saaws), in the last days of Ramadan, what should I ask Allah. The Prophet(saaws) replied:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوفٌ تَحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْنُوْنَا

O Allah, you are forgiving, you love to forgive; forgive us.

