

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 يُضِلِلْ 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 أَيُّومًا تَرْجَعُونَ 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)*



Dear brothers and sisters, ASA. Allah(swt) tells us in the Holy Quran:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

***“And as for those who strive and struggle in our cause, We will surely guide them to Our paths. And Allah is surely with those who are Muhsineen” (Al-Ankabout, 29:69)***

Brothers and sisters, the khutbah for today is about the strive and the struggle against one’s self. It is about the inner struggle and about the meaning of striving and struggling in the path of Allah(swt).

Fatimah Bint Abdil-llah Al-Asdiya was a Hashemite lady and a descendent from A’al Al-Bait. She was of those who learned and memorised the Quran. She was knowledgeable in hadeeth and in the rules of “Shari’a”. She lived in Gaza, and was widowed at an early age. She moved from Gaza to Makkah which at the time was a centre for knowledge and Islamic scholars. Despite her predicament, she had an aim; she wanted her son to gain the knowledge and education and to learn the book of Allah. At the time her son was only 4 years of age, and she was a widow with limited means. She consoled her son saying: my son, your father died and we are poor, and we do not have much money. I will not remarry for your sake and I have taken an oath with Allah that I will dedicated you for knowledge for Allah’s sake in the hope that Allah may unite this Muslim Ummah through you.

This was indeed a great dream for this widow from Gaza who was of limited means and had a young son. Through strive and struggle, this lady was able to subjugate her dream and make it a reality. Her 4 year old boy is better known to us as Al-Imam Ash-Shafi’i.

Al-Imam As-Shafi’i narrates: when I was young, I was taken to Makkah and I was an orphan in the care of my mother. She passed me onto the scholars but she did not have much money to pay them.

Brothers and sisters, can we take a moment to reflect on this achievement. Imam Ash-Shafi’i is one of the most prominent scholars in Islam. When we think of him, it is usually after he has achieved his status, but I did not know how it all started. His Mum had a vision but had limited means. We all have visions for our children, and we all have much more means than she had, yet with so little she was able to achieve so much. The lesson brothers and sisters is that when one struggles in the path of Allah and for the sake of Allah, Allah will guide us unto His path. The obstacles in providing an education for her son were monumental. She was a widow; she lived away from the centre of excellence and she was poor. She was in effect a single working mum, but she had a vision and this was purely for the sake of Allah.

She has taken an oath with Allah, and she struggled in the path of Allah and Allah(swt) by his mercy and grace guided her in her endeavour.

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

***“And as for those who strive and struggle in our cause, We will surely guide them to Our paths. And Allah is surely with those who are Muhsineen” (Al-Ankaboot, 29:69)***

The term that is used in this ayah is “Jihad”. This term conjures certain images in the mind for both Muslims and non-Muslims. In our present day, “Jihad” seems to paint a picture of armed conflict and of young angry Muslims blowing themselves up in the cause of Allah, and unfortunately the term “Jihad” has been linked to acts of terrorism. There is no doubt that the concept of “Jihad” has been hijacked by those who do not understand Islam.

The classic meaning of Jihad in the Arabic language is that of expending all efforts in fighting and defending against an enemy. In its classic form the term “Jihad” does pertain to “military struggle” but Islam is very specific that this is to defend against the enemy and not to transgress. The famous ayah is:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعَدُّوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

***“And fight in Allah’s cause those who wage war against you, but do not commit aggression. Verily, Allah does not love aggressors” (Al-Baqara, 2:190)***

With that in mind, “Jihad” in Islam is not just about armed conflict; Jihad is about the conflict within. Jihad is about striving and struggling against one’s desires and against the love of this life. Jihad is about striving and struggling against sheitan and against one’s “Nafss”.

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

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Scholars state that this ayah, ayah 69 in Surat Al-Ankaboot, which is the last ayah, did not come after a string of ayahs relating to fighting the disbelievers, but came after a string of

ayahs relating to the bounties of this life of “Dunia”. In ayah 64 of the same Surat, Allah(swt) tells us:

وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهْوٌ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

“And the life of this world is no more than a pastime and a play. Whereas behold, the life of the Hereafter is indeed the true Life, if they but knew” (Al-Ankabout, 29:64)

Brothers and sisters, Islam stresses to us again and again that this life is no more than a passing phase and the Hereafter is where the true life is. To struggle and strive in the path of Allah is to recognise what this world is about. But to do so, there needs to be a great struggle against all those huge desires that keep pulling us back towards the comforts and joys of this life. To struggle against one’s desires is indeed the greater struggle.

أقول قولى هذا وأستغفر الله لى و لكم

2<sup>nd</sup> Khutbah:

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

The Prophet(saaws) said:

جاهدوا أهوائكم كما تُجاهدون أعدائكم

*Strive against your desires as you strive against your enemies.*

The Prophet(saaws) is telling us that to control our desires and our whims takes nothing less than what it takes to fight an enemy that is waging war against you. The struggle against one’s desires is absolutely monumental and it is not easy but there are very serious reasons for taking on this fight.

Firstly, we go back to our ayah:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِيْنَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

*“And as for those who strive and struggle in our cause, We will surely guide them to Our paths” (Al-Ankabout, 29:69)*

To struggle in the cause of Allah carries a promise from Allah(swt) to guide us unto His paths. Allah(swt) is making it abundantly clear that struggling against our desires is a sure means to return unto His path. The flip side is that to follow one’s desires and whims is a sure means to turn away from the path of Allah. Brothers and sisters, there is no third option.

المُجَاهِدَةُ تَهْدِي إِلَى سَبِيلِ الْهُدَى وَاتِّبَاعُ الْهَوَى يُضِلُّ عَن سَبِيلِ الْهُدَى

*To struggle in the cause of Allah is a means to return unto the path of Allah, and to follow one’s desires and whims is the means to turn away from the path of Allah.*

The ayah in Surat Saad is also very clear:

وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَىٰ فَيُضِلَّكَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

*“And do not follow desire for it makes you lose the way of Allah” (Saad, 38:25)*

And the message in Surat An-Nazi’at is also very clear:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ  
فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

*“But as for him who fears the status of his Lord and restrained his soul from desires, then truly Paradise will be the shelter” (An-Nazi’at, 79:40)*

Brothers and sisters, the desires of this life are adornments that Allah(swt) has put in all of us to help us cope with the needs of this life. These desires are means to an end, but not an end

in their own right. For most, the desires of this life are not forbidden in Islam but they are not something to get hooked on or to be taken by. Should one's heart lean too much towards these adornment, it is then that one follows the whims of one's heart and the true purpose of life is forgotten and lost.

The love of desires and to follow one's whims will inevitably deviate the heart away from Allah(swt).

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ

*“Do you see the one who takes for his god his own desires” (Al-Furqan, 25:43)*

The Prophet(saaws) said:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونَ هَوَاهُ تَبَعًا لِمَا جِئْتُ بِهِ

*The one of you will not become a believer until his desires are in keeping with the message I came with.*

We all remember the story of sUmar(raa) when he said to the Prophet that I love you more than anything else, but not more than myself. The Prophet(saaws) said to him, not until I become dearer to you than yourself. The Prophet(saaws) was trying to get sUmar(raa) to strive and struggle against the love of everything, including the love of himself and to develop in his heart the love of the Prophet(saaws).

So with all that in mind, how do we develop our abilities to strive against ourselves?

Yahya Bin Muaz said: *Strive against yourself through acts of obedience and through exercise.*

In our present world, this concept is actually not alien to us. Those involved in training stress that repetition is the essence of developing a skill. Developing a skill initially starts by learning the skill, then through practice and then through perseverance until the skill becomes second nature. Once it becomes second nature and one carries on in its practice, the person becomes an expert. This is what Allah(swt) tells us at the end of Surat Al-Imran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

***“O you who believe! persevere in patience and constancy: and be collective in such perseverance and strengthen each other; and fear Allah; that you may prosper” (Aal Imran, 3:200)***

How did the sahabah understand the significance of this ayah, and how did they apply it to their lives. It is narrated that sUmar once missed a jama'a prayers. For that, he prayed throughout the night to strive and struggle against himself. That is how sUmar(raa) tamed and controlled himself, through acts of obedience and worship.

There are many ways that the Sahabah and the Tabi'in helped each other in the struggle against one's self. They stressed the importance of good company. They stressed the importance of the remembrance of death and the remembrance of the hereafter. They recognised that to strive in the path of Allah(swt) you need to free yourself from the shackles of your desires and whims.

I leave you with the final story of Ka'b Bin Rabi'a Al-Aslami. The Prophet(saaws) asked him to have a wish. Ka'b said: I would like to be your companion in paradise. The Prophet(saaws) knew what the difficulties are in achieving such a status and that this was a very difficult task to achieve. So he asked Ka'b to wish for something else, but Ka'b said: this is what I wish for. The Prophet(saaws) admonished him to achieve his wish and told him: In that case Ka'b, help me to help you by performing excessive prostration (Kathratul-sujood). The Prophet(saaws) wanted Ka'b to achieve that status, and to do so Ka'b needed to strive against himself and against his whims and desires. To do so, the Prophet(saaws) tells him to increase his acts of worship.

Brothers and sisters, the inner "Jihad" is not easy. We already have sheitan to contend with, but to also strive against our "Nafss" our "desires" and the love of this life is a very tall order but the reward is immense.

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ  
فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

***“But as for him who fears the status of his Lord and restrained his soul from desires, then truly Paradise will be the shelter” (An-Nazi'at, 79:40)***