

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ

، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا

، مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ ، وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ

وَنَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ، يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ . وَنَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَرْسَلَهُ بِدِينِ الْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا ، بَيْنَ يَدَيْ السَّاعَةِ ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ

عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَمَنْ تَبِعَهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَوْصِيكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ بِتَقْوَا اللَّهِ وَأَحْذَرُكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ مِنْ مَعْصِيَتِهِ

تاريخ اليوم الخامس عشر من شهر محرم سنة ألف و أربعة مآت واحد و ثلاثين

I council you and myself to have taqwa of Allah, and I council you and myself to avoid and beware of disobeying Him.

The date today is the 15th of Muharram in the year 1431.

قال الله تعال في كتابه العزيز

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرْمٌ ذَلِكَ

الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا فِيهِنَّ أَنْفُسَكُمْ

Allah t'ala says in His Mighty Book that whose meaning is (9:36):

There have been twelve months with Allah in the Book of Allah, From the day He first created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are haram. That is the True Deen. So do not wrong one another during them.

We know from the words of the Rasul (s.a.w) during his farewell pilgrimage that the four sacred months are Dhul-Qa`dah, Dhul-Hijjah, Muharram and Rajab. Some say the most sacred of these is the month of Muharram, this is perhaps based on the hadith narrated by Abu Hurayra (r.a.h) that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said, "The best fast after Ramadan is the month of Allah, al-Muharram."

It is clear that we must perform good actions and avoid wrong actions at all times, but in this ayat Allah t'ala warns us against wronging one another in these months in particular. Sayidunnah Ali (karam Allahu wajhah) narrated that ibn Abbas (r.a.h) said "Allah then chose four out of these months and made them sacred, emphasising their sanctity, making sinning in them greater, in addition to, multiplying rewards of righteous deeds

during them." And likewise Qatadah (r.a.h) said: "Injustice during the Sacred Months is worse and graver than injustice in other months. Verily, injustice is always wrong, but Allah makes things graver than others as He wills." He also said, "Allah has chosen some of His creation above others. He chose Messengers from angels and from men. He also chose His Speech above all speech, the Masajid above other areas of the earth, Ramadan and the Sacred Months above all months, Friday above the other days and Laylatul-Qadr above all nights. Therefore, sanctify what Allah has sanctified, for doing so is the practice of people of understanding and comprehension." So during this month of Muharram we must endeavour to increase our good actions and to avoid wrong actions even more than usual. And so we ask Allah (swt) to guide us to actions that are pleasing to Him and away from those which will earn His anger.

Today I would like to look at a passage from Allah's Book, which is truly majestic and contains great knowledge and lessons for us in this time. Allah t'ala says (41:29-34):

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ {30} نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَائُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِي أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدْعُونَ {31} نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ {32} وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ {33} وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ {34} وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ

Whose meaning is:

The angels descend on those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then go straight: 'Do not fear and do not grieve but rejoice in the Garden you have been promised. We are your protectors in the life of the dunya and the akhira. You will have there all that your selves could wish for. You will have there everything you demand. Hospitality from One who is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.' Who could say anything better than someone who summons to Allah and acts rightly and says, 'I am one of the Muslims'? A good action and a bad action are not the same. Repel the bad with something better and, if there is enmity between you and someone else, he will be like a bosom friend. None will obtain it but those who are truly steadfast. None will obtain it but those who have great good fortune.

The name of the sura from which these ayats are taken is Fussilat or in English; "Made Plain". According to authentic Traditions, it was sent down after Sayidunnah Hamza (r.a.h) entered Islam and before Sayidunnah Umar (rah) did. It is related that one day some of the Quraish chiefs were sitting in their assembly in the Masjid al-Haram, while in another corner of the Mosque there was the Prophet (s.a.w) sitting by himself. This was the time when the mushrikun of Makkah did not know what to make of this phenomenon sweeping their ranks, dividing – as they claimed – between a man and his son, and between a man and his wife. Sayidunnah Hamzah had already embraced Islam and the

people of the Quraish were feeling increasingly irritated at the increasing number of the Muslims. On this occasion, Utbah bin Rabi'ah offered to make a proposition to the Rasul (s.a.w). He went and sat by the Prophet (s.a.w) and said to him: "Nephew, if by what you are doing, you want wealth, we will give you enough of it so that you will be the richest man among us; if you want to become an important man, we will make you our chief and will never decide a matter without you; if you want to be a king, we will accept you as our king; and if you are visited by a jinn, whom you cannot get rid of by your own power, we will arrange the best physicians and have you treated at our own expense." When he had exhausted the offers, RasulAllah (s.a.w) asked him politely, "Have you said, O Abul Walid, what you had to say?" He replied that he had. The Prophet (s.a.w) said: "Well, now listen to me." Then he began to recite this very Surah, and Utbah listened. Coming to the verse of prostration the Prophet prostrated himself; then raising his head, he said, "This was my reply, O Abul Walid, now you may act as you please." then Utbah arose and walked back towards the chiefs, the people saw him from afar, and said: "By God! Utbah's face is changed. He does not look the same man that he was when he went from here." Then, when he came back and sat down, the people asked, "What have you heard?" He replied, "By God! I have heard something the like of which I had never heard before. By God, it's neither poetry, nor sorcery, nor magic. O chiefs of the Quraish, listen to what I say and leave this man to himself. I think what he recites is going to have its effect." Hearing this the chiefs spoke out: "You too, O father of Waleed, have been bewitched by his tongue." Utbah replied, "I have given you my opinion; now you may act as you please."

Now that we have some picture of the time in which this blessed sura was revealed, let us look specifically at the ayats we mentioned earlier. It begins with the words:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا

Certainly those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then go straight.

First comes belief, or better still submission to the truth; that "Our Lord is Allah", then immediately comes ACTION - go straight. Allah t'ala combines belief with good action, you cannot have one without the other. This is a central theme, which is repeated throughout the Qur'an. In almost every occasion when Allah t'ala mentions those who have *iman* - الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

- He immediately says: وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ "and do right actions".

This is the contract, if you believe, you must act rightly. Shaykh Abdul Haqq reminded us recently that nothing in Islam is theoretical, all of it is based on action. We live in a time where people often describe themselves or others as 'non-practicing Muslims'. Meaning that they believe in Islam but they are not practicing what they believe. We must ask ourselves whether or not this state is truly possible. Clearly we all experience times when our iman is strong and other times when it is weak. We all make mistakes, and as such we have the gift of tawba and istighfar, and we know that our Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. However it is not acceptable to take on for yourself or others some permanent or even semi-permanent state of being a non-practicing Muslim. It's a contradiction. *The reality of the belief which is contained in our hearts, becomes apparent in our actions, whether we like it or not.* Allah

t'ala says (9:106):

وَقُلْ اَعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللّٰهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَسَتُرَدُّونَ اِلٰى عَالَمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

Whose meaning is: *Say: 'Act, for Allah will see your actions, and so will His Messenger and the muminun. You will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible and He will inform you regarding what you did.'*

As we have said our deen is based on action. The Qur'an did not descend from Heaven by itself as a book for us to read. It was sent with the best of creation (s.a.w); a Messenger who would act as a guide for all of mankind until the end of time. As his wife Aisha (r.a.h) said "He was the Qur'an walking" and in another narration "His character was the Qur'an" (s.a.w). And it is this quality of our Prophet (s.a.w) that we must strive to emulate. Islam cannot be a set of rules or rituals which we follow because we have to, our characters must be Islam, so that we are as much Muslims when we are walking down the street or at work as we are when we are praying or reading the Qur'an. We must be truly MUSLIM - submitted to Allah - in every moment and in every state. Now this doesn't mean spending our lives studying books of fiqh trying to find out how to live, because the truth is that this knowledge is already within all of us. As we have said before Islam is deen ul-fitr; the natural way. We have to recognise that for many of us, our natural values have been clouded by those of the kafir political and media institutions which surround us. And so we must constantly strive to free ourselves of this falsehood and look for the truth which every heart naturally recognises.

When people are coming close to entering Islam and begin to learn about the deen they often say that what they find in Islam is exactly what they were already feeling but they didn't know that was Islam. The truth is that they have already begun the journey to uncovering the fitr. It is natural to worship your creator, and it is natural to give to those in need, and it is natural to be true to your word, just as the opposite is unnatural. Our hearts know this and so we must act accordingly.

It is narrated in Sahih Muslim that one day Sufyan bin `Abdullah (r.a.h) went to the Rasul (s.a.w) and said: "Messenger of Allah tell me something on Islam about which I will not ask anyone other than you." He (s.a.w) said: *قُلْ: آمَنْتُ بِاللّٰهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَقِم*: "Say I believe in Allah then go straight".

In his commentary on this hadith An-Nawawi (rahimahullah) says that to go straight is persevering in the path by doing what is obligatory and leaving what is forbidden. This requires taqwa, based on certain knowledge that Allah witnesses everything we do. But not a taqwa, which paralyses, leaving one unable to act out of fear of punishment. Rather a taqwa based on sincere love of Allah, which leads to hatred of those actions which are displeasing to Him and a love for those which He (swt) loves. Shaykh Abdalqadir has said, "The man of taqwa is heard when he speaks, is copied when he acts and illuminates others when he emerges".

May Allah increase us in taqwa,
And guide our actions,
And make us among those who go straight.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ مِنْ لَأِ نَبِيِّ بَعْدَهُ،

أَوْصِيكُمْ بِتَقْوَا اللَّهِ وَطَاعَتِهِ، وَأُحَذِّرْكُمْ عَنْ مَعْصِيَتِهِ وَمُخَالَفَتِهِ . فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ فِيمَا أَمَرَ، وَأَنْتَهُوا عَمَّا نَهَى عَنْهُ وَزَجَرَ .

قال تعالى :

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ {7} وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ {8}
أَمَّا بَعْدُ :

قال المول عز و جل :

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

Allah t'ala says that whose meaning is:

Who could say anything better than someone who summons to Allah and acts rightly and says, 'I am one of the Muslims'?

Again we see the matter of acting rightly, this time coupled with da'wa, or calling to Allah. Therefore there can be no calling to Allah without right action. And it begins with ourselves, we must be sincere and call people to Allah by our actions as well as our words. In his tafsir ibn Kathir (rahimahullah) says about this ayat that it means, "he himself follows that which he says, so it benefits him as well as others. He is not one of those who enjoin good but do not do it themselves, or who forbid evil yet they do it themselves. He does good and avoids doing evil, and he calls people to their Creator, may He be blessed and exalted".

Allah t'ala says in Sura Baqara:

أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ

Do you order people to devoutness and forget yourselves?

We cannot and will not establish the deen unless we establish it within ourselves first. If your intention is to establish Allah's deen and call people to it, than know that you will not have success until you have the deen in you, it must resonate from your words and your actions in

every moment. This must be our constant focus and sole intention at all times. We must establish the deen completely, within ourselves by acting rightly according to the Qur'an and the sunnah and we must call people to Allah's deen with every breath and every action.

So do not see da'wa as simply speaking to people about Islam, it is much more than that and in most cases it is much more subtle. Da'wa is good manners, it is the way we dress, it is the way we treat our parents and educate our children. Da'wa is visiting a person when they are ill, it is always taking a gift when invited to someone's house. Da'wa is how we conduct business. It is keeping your word, being punctual and reliable. Da'wa is submitting to authority and having the best opinion of others and it is returning hostility with kindness, it.

As Allah t'ala says, continuing in Sura Fussilat:

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

Repel the bad with something better and, if there is enmity between you and someone else, he will be like a bosom friend.

There is a great secret and profound knowledge contained in this ayat. Allah t'ala has ordered us to bring harmony between the Muslims. This is an extremely important element of our deen as by bringing harmony and ending animosity between fellow Muslims one is mending the cracks and repairing the wounds, which keep us from being unified. There is no room for enmity among us. Remember Allah t'ala says in a hadith qudsi, "Whoever shows enmity to a close friend of Mine, then I declare war on Him."

It has been said that you should seek seventy excuses for your brother's misdeed, and if your heart will accept none of them you should turn the blame upon yourself.

And Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) said; "If a man gives up contention when he is in the wrong, a house will be built for him within the Garden, but if a man gives up contention even when he is in the right, a house will be built for him in the highest part of the Garden.

And for all of this Allah promises us an immense reward, as He says:

تَنْزَلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ {30} نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَائُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِي أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ {31} نَزَلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ

'Do not fear and do not grieve but rejoice in the Garden you have been promised. We are your protectors in the life of the dunya and the akhira. You will have there all that your selves could wish for. You will have there everything you demand. Hospitality from One who is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.'

The mufassirun say these ayats relate to the time of death when the angels will descend and say to the dying believer; "Do not fear that which you will face in the Hereafter. And do not grieve for what you have left behind of worldly things, children, family, wealth and debt, for we will take care of it for you.' And they give glad tidings of the end of bad

things and the arrival of good things:

وَأَبَشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

rejoice in the Garden you have been promised.

This is like what is said in the Hadith narrated by Al-Bara', (r.a.h):

إِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَقُولُ لِرُوحِ الْمُؤْمِنِ: اخْرُجِي أَيْتَهَا الرُّوحُ الطَّيِّبَةُ فِي الْجَسَدِ الطَّيِّبِ كُنْتَ تَعْمُرِينَهُ، اخْرُجِي إِلَيَّ

رُوحٍ وَرِيحَانٍ وَرَبٍّ غَيْرٍ غَضَبَانَ

The angels say to the soul of the believer, "Come out, O good soul from the good body in which you used to dwell, come out to rest, and provision and a Lord Who is not angry." Zayd bin Aslam said, "They will give him glad tidings when he dies, in his grave, and when he is resurrected."

نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِي أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدْعُونَ

We are your protectors in the life of the dunya and the akhira. You will have there all that your selves could wish for. You will have there everything you demand.

Ibn Kathir says this means, the angels will say to the believers when death approaches: "We have been your friends, i.e., your close companions, in this world, protecting you and helping you by the command of Allah, and we will be with you in the Hereafter, keeping you from feeling lonely in your graves and when the Trumpet is blown; we will reassure you on the Day of Resurrection and will take you across the Sirat and bring you to the Gardens of delight." `In Paradise you will have all that you wish for and that will delight you and whatever you ask for, it will appear before you as you wish it to be.'

نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ

Hospitality from One who is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.'

Meaning `a welcoming gift and a blessing from the One Who has forgiven your sins and Who is Merciful and Kind towards you, Who has forgiven you, concealed your faults and been Kind and Merciful.'

And so we ask Allah to grant us this great victory He has promised,

To make us among those who act rightly and establish His deen completely,

And to make us among the inhabitants of His Garden, among the best company, in the presence of His Messenger (s.a.w)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ ، يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلِّمْ تَسْلِيمًا
وَارْضَ اللَّهُمَّ عَنِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرَ وَعُثْمَانَ وَعَلِيٍّ ، وَسَائِرِ الصَّحَابَةِ خُصُوصًا
الْمُهَاجِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ وَالْأَنْصَارِوَالتَّابِعِينَ لَهُمْ وَتَابِعِي التَّابِعِينَ وَمَنْ تَبِعَهُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ
اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِ وِلَاةَ أُمُورِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ لِمَا يَرْضِيكَ وَلَا تَبَاعِ سُنَّةَ مُحَمَّدٍ
اللَّهُمَّ أَعِزِّ الْإِسْلَامَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ ، وَاخْذُلِ الْكُفْرَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ ، وَانصُرِ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ،
وَاجْعَلْ كَلِمَتَكَ هِيَ الْعُلْنَا ، وَكَلِمَةَ الْكُفْرِ هِيَ السُّفْلَى
رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ
رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا
رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ
رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا
إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ
وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ

يَعْظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ
وَقُومُوا إِلَى صَلَاتِكُمْ يَرْحَمُكُمُ اللَّهُ