

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 وَأَحْذَرِكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ مِنْ مَعْصِيَتِهِ

تاريخ اليوم السادس من شهر صفر سنة ألف و أربعة مآت واحد و ثلاثين  
قال الله تعال في كتابه العزيز

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ

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 6th of Safar in the year 1431.

Allah t'ala says in His Mighty Book that whose meaning is (7:42): 'Praise be to Allah who has guided us to this! We would not have been guided, had Allah not guided us.'

Wa alhamdulillah! We should reflect in every moment on the great gift that Allah (swt) has bestowed upon us by guiding us to Islam. We did not earn it, we have not inherited it and we have no right to it. Allah t'ala guides who He wills and misguides who He wills as He says many times in **His** Book -

يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ

*He guides who He wills and He misguides who He wills.* Reflect on how many people come close to you of your relatives and friends and yet the *iman* which is in your heart does not enter theirs. And so we say in the words of Sayidunnah Shu'ayb (alayhi salaam)

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى نِعْمَةِ الْإِسْلَامِ وَكَفَىٰ بِهَا نِعْمَةً

*Praise belongs to Allah for the blessing of Islam, and it is blessing enough.*

And within the blessing of Islam there are many gifts. And I would like to focus on two of them in particular in this khutbah insha'Allah, may it be a reminder to you and myself of Allah's generosity to us and of our inability to thank Him enough. Amin.

The first of these gifts is tawba, which we can translate as the act of turning to Allah in

repentance for wrong actions. Allah t'ala says:

وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعاً أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

Whose meaning is: *Turn towards Allah, O believers, every one of you, so that perhaps you will have success,*" (24:31) and He says,

وَأَنْ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ

"Ask your Lord for forgiveness and then turn in repentance to Him," (11:3) and He (swt) also says,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحاً

"O you who believe! Turn in sincere repentance to Allah." (66:8)

The scholars say that it is a duty to repent of every wrong action. If it is disobedience which occurs between a person and Allah and does not involve the right of another human being, repentance has three preconditions. The first is that one desist from disobedience immediately. The second is that he regret doing it. The third is that he resolve not to ever return to it. If one of the three is lacking, then his repentance is not sound.

If it involves another human being, repentance has four preconditions: these three that we have mentioned, and, that he discharge his duty to the other person. If it is money or the like, he pays it to him. If it is a legal punishment because of slander and the like of it, he should give him power over him or seek his pardon. If it is slander, he must undo it. He must repent of all wrong actions.

True repentance is characterised by signs, among which are a softness of the heart, frequent weeping, adhering to obedience and forsaking evil companions and places. It is our duty to guard ourselves against sins, both small and great. We should strive to avoid wrong actions and must never intend them. We should not talk about our wrong actions nor take delight in them after they have happened. And if we do fall into wrong action we should conceal it and hate it and hasten to turn to Allah immediately.

Seek Allah's forgiveness frequently because wrong actions are numerous and the slave is never truly free - inwardly or outwardly - from a great number of wrong actions even if his state is good, his behaviour upright and his obedience continual. Know that the Rasulullah (s.a.w) would ask Allah's forgiveness many times a day. As narrated by Abu Hurayra (r.a.h), that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said, 'By Allah, I ask Allah's forgiveness and turn towards Him in repentance more than seventy times a day.' Now if this was the custom of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w), who was the best of creation, who had been promised forgiveness of all previous and later wrong actions, and who in fact was incapable of disobeying his Lord, than how should we be in relation to seeking Allah's forgiveness?

As well as the preconditions of tawba which we mentioned earlier, ibn Juzayy (rahimahullah) adds three courtesies which must exist if the believer's turning to his Lord is sincere. They are acknowledgement of the wrong action coupled with remorse, to make a great deal of entreaty and asking forgiveness, and to do a great deal of good actions in order to erase previous wrong actions.

The purpose of seeking Allah's forgiveness is not to make us feel guilty for our mistakes and the wrong actions we commit. Rather, its purpose is to *remove* the guilt from our hearts and to lighten our hearts in the knowledge that in the act of turning to Allah we are in fact answering the command of our Lord and by that; shielding ourselves from punishment. The essence of istighfar or seeking forgiveness is that it earns one the prevention from the evil of the sin. As Allah t'ala says:

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

Whose meaning is (8:33): *Allah would not punish them as long as they sought forgiveness.*

But how can we truly seek Allah's forgiveness if we cannot first forgive those among our fellow Muslims who have wronged us? 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. We cannot keep rancour in our hearts towards other Muslims for the wrong actions they have committed towards us just as we cannot keep guilt in our hearts for the wrong actions we have committed towards Allah and towards our own selves. We can only free our hearts by turning sincerely to the One who knows them best. We must know that our turning to Allah is proof enough of His love for us, and it is proof enough of His having elevated us above much of His creation. As He (swt) wants to forgive us so He decreed that we should turn to Him, wa alhamdulillah. He says:

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ  
الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

(39:50) Say: 'My slaves, you who have transgressed against yourselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Truly Allah forgives all wrong actions. He is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.'

And the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said, "the one who repents of a sin is as he who has not sinned".

In the time of Imam al-Junayd (rahimahullah) some of the ulamah were gathered in the Mosque of Baghdad, and they were asked what *istighfar* is. One of them replied that it is to turn and ask Allah to forgive the wrong action. Then they asked Imam al-Junayd (rahimahullah), and he said "No, it is to forget your wrong action in acceptance of the forgiveness of Allah."

So we ask Allah t'ala to make us sincere in worshipping and obeying Him,

And to make us sincere in turning to Him,

And to purify our hearts of everything other than Him.

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

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الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ مِنْ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدَهُ،

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

قال تعالى:

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

أَمَّا بَعْدُ :

The second gift of our Deen, which I would like to look at is the gift of du'a. The word du'a in Arabic is used for calling someone who is near as opposed to the word nida', which is for someone far away. Allah t'ala says in Sura Baqara:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

(2:185)Whose meaning is: *If My slaves ask you about Me, I am near. I answer the call of the caller when he calls on Me.*

And in Sura Hud He (swt) says, reminding us of the words of Sayidunnah Salih (alayhi salam) to the people of Thamud:

فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ

*So ask His forgiveness and then make tawba to Him. My Lord is Close and Quick to Respond.*

The Prophet (s.a.w) has told us that du'a is worship and in another narration he has said (s.a.w) that it is the marrow of worship, meaning the purest, very best part of it. The act of calling on Allah in du'a is an expression of slavehood and humility in the knowledge that He has Power over all things and that we are poor and He is Rich Beyond Need. He (swt) has ordered us to call on Him as He says (7:54):

ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً

*Call on your Lord humbly and secretly.*

As we have seen from the words of Allah, He (swt) will always answer the sincere du'a of a believing slave. We must have no doubt about that even if it seems as if our prayers have not been answered. The Prophet (s.a.w) has taught us that the answer, whether spontaneous or delayed, is good for the asker. Thus his du'a is ultimately beneficial for him. The Prophet (s.a.w) said: "If a Muslim invokes Allah for other than sin or the severing of relations, Allah in turn responds to his Du'a in one of three ways; either He accepts it (and grants what was asked for), or He delays its reward to the Hereafter, or He removes a calamity from him that equals his Du'a (in magnitude). The Companions said, " We will then supplicate often." The Prophet (s.a.w) replied, "Allah will reward you greatly."

Just as seeking Allah's forgiveness can shield one from harm in this life and the next, so too can the sincere du'a. As the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said "Nothing prevents the decree except du'a" and he also said; "A calamity may have descended from heaven when du'a meets it. Consequently, a confrontation between them will take place until the Day of Judgement."

Only very few get to taste and understand the true meaning of this knowledge - so reflect!

There was a news report this week from Haiti following the earthquake there. First they spoke to a woman who's house had been destroyed and had lost all her possessions and she said "We need money, and clothes and food. Someone needs to come, I don't know who but someone needs to help us". Then they spoke to another lady who had been in the house of her local Priest when the earthquake struck, completely destroying the house and leaving them buried together underneath. They were separated by the rubble but they could hear each other, so they spoke, comforting one another. Then after a couple of days she could no longer hear the Priest so she began speaking to Allah. 6 days later they rescued her, and when they interviewed her, asking how she'd survived her ordeal, she said "I was speaking to God. I didn't need anyone else".

Subhanallah, out of this tragedy Allah has granted this woman a chance of victory by showing her the secret in the affair. We often hear of this kind of realisation in times such as this, when people are saved from so called 'near death experiences'. But the truth is how many near death experiences do we ourselves have everyday? I'm not talking about the time when a car just avoided hitting you in the road, or when you were rescued from a fire. I'm talking about the time when you decided to turn left instead of right, or you remembered to lock the door before going to sleep, or you missed your bus to school. It may be that because you recited ayat al-kursi before sleeping, or you made a dua when leaving your house or when starting a journey, that you were saved from some great

misfortune that was heading towards you. Remember the words of the Rasul (s.a.w); “Nothing prevents the decree except du'a”. Allah t'ala is with us in every moment guiding our affair. In the very moment He caused the earth to convulse in Haiti, He caused *you* here in Norwich to wake up and worship Him. He has power over everything, He witnesses everything and all of that is easy for Him (swt).

So call on Allah much, in times of difficulty and ease. The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said “Whoever desires to have his du'a accepted by Allah in times of adversity, should make frequent du'a in times of prosperity.”

One of the conditions of du'a is sincerity in your calling on Allah (swt). As He says:

فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ

(40:13) *So call upon Allah, making your deen sincerely His*

The Rasul (s.a.w) said to his young cousin ibn Abbas (r.a.h) “O little one! If Allah is always in your thoughts He will protect you and you will always find Him with you. When you ask, ask Allah and when you seek help, seek help from Allah.”

Another condition of sincerely calling on Allah (swt) is complete consciousness of the heart during it. As the Rasul (s.a.w) said; “Supplicate to Allah and bear in mind that He will surely answer you. Beware Allah never answers the dua of someone who is heedless (i.e those who do not concentrate in their du'as to such an extent that their hands are raised and their hearts are elsewhere).”

Fadala ibn 'Ubayd said that the Prophet heard a man making supplication in his prayer without blessing the Prophet. The Prophet said, “This is hasty.” Then he called him and told him and the others, “When one of you prays, he should begin with praise of Allah and then pray on the Prophet and then make whatever supplication he wishes.”

'Umar ibn al-Khattab stated, “Supplication and prayer are suspended between the heaven and the earth and none of it rises to Allah until you pray on the Prophet (s.a.w).” 'Ali related something similar and added, “and on the family of Muhammad.” It is related that supplication is veiled until the one making the supplication prays on the Prophet.

Ibn Mas'ud said, “When one of you wants to ask Allah for something, he should begin by praising and extolling Him as He deserves and then bless the Prophet. Then his supplication is more likely to be successful.”

Ibn 'Ata' said, “Supplication has pillars, wings, means and moments. If its pillars are acceptable, it is strong. If its wings are acceptable, it flies. If its moments are acceptable, it has success. If its means are acceptable, it wins. Its pillars are presence of the heart, compassion, humility, humbleness and the heart being suspended before Allah and cut off from reliance on means. Its wings are truthfulness and sincerity. Its moments are before dawn. Its means are the prayer on the Prophet, (s.a.w).”

And so as well as conditions there are also optimum times and places for du'a. Among them are on the Night of Power during Ramadan and on the Day of Arafat. Also during the last third of the night as Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: 'In the last third of every night our Lord descends to the lowermost heaven and says; "Who is calling Me, so that I may answer him? Who is asking Me so that may I grant him? Who is seeking forgiveness from Me so that I may forgive him?."

And there is the time between the Adhan and the Iqama, as he said (s.a.w) 'A supplication made between the Adhan and Iqama is not rejected.' So do not waste this blessed time.

And he said (s.a.w); 'The nearest a slave can be to his Lord is when he is prostrating, so supplicate Allah (SWT) much in it.

And finally about this blessed day the Rasul (s.a.w) said; 'There is an hour on Friday and if a Muslim gets it while making dua and asks something from Allah (SWT), then Allah (SWT) will definitely meet his demand.' And he (SAW) pointed out the shortness of that particular time with his hands.

And so reflect on the enormity of Allah's generosity to us by guiding us to this deen and the gifts contained within it. And remember Allah much. Do not make the mistake of the kuffar and place Allah outside of the affair, know that He controls creation from within the creation and that He is closer to us than the jugular vein. He is the All Merciful, the Ever-Returning, The Close, Quick to Respond. So Glory be to Him, and we ask His forgiveness, and turn to Him and rely upon Him alone.

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 وَعَثْمَانَ وَعَلِيٍّ ، وَسَائِرِ الصَّحَابَةِ خُصُوصًا  
الْمُهَاجِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالتَّابِعِينَ لَهُمْ وَتَابِعِي التَّابِعِينَ وَمَنْ تَبِعَهُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ  
اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِ وِلَاةَ أُمُورِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ لِمَا يَرْضِيكَ وَلَا تَبَاعِ سُنَّةَ مُحَمَّدٍ  
اللَّهُمَّ أَعِزَّ 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

يَعْظُكُم لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ  
وَقُومُوا إِلَى صَلَاتِكُمْ يَرْحَمُكُمُ اللَّهُ