

*Qhutbah, Insha Allah, Friday, July 9, 2010*

*Alhamdu lillah, wa ash hadu ala ila ha ill lallah*

*Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim*

Many people consider that to be righteous is to believe in God, pray 5 times a day, pay zakat, fast in the month of Ramadan and perform Hajj. These are understood as an assessment of righteous deeds and the more one holds on to these the more virtuous he is deemed. Such people may also think that what one does apart from these religious duties has little bearing on the character of a person or his consequent reward.

Undoubtedly, these so called pillars are a vital component of many other deeds which are performed during one's life span. During our daily existence most of our time is utilised in our work which we perform for our livelihood. We cannot only strain on the performance of rites and lay scant attention to other aspects of life.

*Divine Guarantee [2:277] Those who believe and lead a righteous life, and observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), and give the obligatory charity (Zakat), they receive their recompense from their Lord; they will have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.*

From this verse, we understand that a righteous life has to be present while adhering to Salat and Zakat. *Our Children Can be Idols [7:189-190] He created you from one person (Adam). Subsequently, He gives every man a mate to find tranquility with her. She then carries a light load that she can hardly notice. As the load gets heavier, they implore GOD their Lord: "If You give us a good baby, we will be appreciative." But when He gives them a good baby, they turn His gift into an idol that rivals Him. GOD be exalted, far above any partnership.*

Such parents crave for their child to be healthy and perfect. They are more concerned about these features rather than the desire that the yet to be born child is pious. *[3:35] The wife of Amram said, "My Lord, I have dedicated (the baby) in my belly to You, totally, so accept from me. You are Hearer, Omniscient."*

The Arabic word “*taqwa*” has different implications – usually it means righteousness. *The First Murder [5:27] Recite for them the true history of Adam's two sons. They made an offering, and it was accepted from one of them, but not from the other. He said, "I will surely kill you." He said, "GOD accepts only from the righteous. [47:17] As for those who are guided, He augments their guidance, and grants them their righteousness. The Only Criterion For Distinguishing Among The People [49:13] O people, we created you from the same male and female, and rendered you distinct peoples and tribes, that you may recognize one another. The best among you in the sight of GOD is the most righteous. GOD is Omniscient, Cognizant. [74:56] They cannot take heed against GOD's will. He is the source of righteousness; He is the source of forgiveness.*

It also means reverence - *[8:29] O you who believe, if you reverence GOD, He will enlighten you, remit your sins, and forgive you. GOD possesses infinite grace. It also means fear - [15:69] “Fear GOD, and do not shame me.”*

When we fear God, it leads to the beginning of wisdom and reliability of judgment. We learn to refrain our mind, body and speech from evils and the effect is righteousness, piety and good conduct. We learn the ability to distinguish between right and wrong with our conduct and all other features of life. God has endowed us with this faculty. *[91:8] Then showed it what is evil and what is good.*

People think that we talk of fearing God only because of God’s punishment and fear is a negative way of motivation to make a person do or not do a thing as long as a sword is hanging on his neck. This is blatantly unfair. The fear of God has a totally different connotation. It is not an irrational fear.

The fact remains - *God's Infinite Mercy [6:54] When those who believe in our revelations come to you, you shall say, "Salamun `Alaykum (Peace be upon you). Your Lord has decreed that mercy is His attribute. Thus, anyone among you who commits a transgression out of ignorance, and repents thereafter and reforms, then He is Forgiving, Most Merciful." [11:90] “You shall implore your Lord for forgiveness, then repent to Him. My Lord is Most Merciful, Kind." [39:53] Proclaim: "O My servants who exceeded the limits, never despair of GOD's mercy. For GOD forgives all sins. He is the Forgiver, Most Merciful." [39:75] You will see the angels floating around the throne, glorifying and praising their Lord. After the equitable judgment is issued to all, it will be proclaimed: "Praise be to GOD, Lord of the universe."*

The certainty that God alone is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent should be what we should be concerned about as we know that if we do anything wrong we will be

answerable for it. No argument, justification, excuse, persuasion and negotiation will be of any avail. If we commit excesses, God will restore the balance and we will be reprimanded. Fear is especially for those who insist on committing evil. [45:8] *The one who hears GOD's revelations recited to him, then insists arrogantly on his way, as if he never heard them. Promise him a painful retribution.* What seems to be fear is in essence firm faith that God is the Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

We also know that God does not wrong anyone. We are the ones that wrong ourselves! *Nothing Bad Comes From God [4:79] Anything good that happens to you is from GOD, and anything bad that happens to you is from you....* The same faith that generates fear in our minds also makes us refrain from evils and also inculcates a tendency to perform good deeds. If we do good, then God guarantees - [10:64] *For them, joy and happiness in this world, as well as in the Hereafter. This is GOD's unchangeable law. Such is the greatest triumph.*

A unique feature of righteousness is that we all have the same and equal opportunity to attain it. A prince or a pauper can, Insha Allah, achieve it if they have the required faith. It is valid even in war. [34:11] *"You may make shields that fit perfectly, and work righteousness. Whatever you do, I am Seer thereof."* It would apply to a merchant or a warrior. It is like knowledge, if you share it you do not lose anything but in fact, you gain.

To err is human and we all commit many blunders from time to time. God has given us the Criterion to view all our acts which have either been enjoined and declared as right or forbidden and condemned in the Quran. *No Compulsion in Religion [2:256] There shall be no compulsion in religion: the right way is now distinct from the wrong way. Anyone who denounces the devil and believes in GOD has grasped the strongest bond; one that never breaks. GOD is Hearer, Omniscient. [90:10] Did we not show him the two paths?* We learn to evaluate what we are doing – is it right or wrong? For example – the urge to become rich which by itself is not a bad thing, but we discover the right way to go about it. We can do it by honest means and greater effort or go about it dishonestly. We may want to take a short cut if we can get away with it but if we fear God we will know that dishonesty is forbidden in the Quran and we will avoid it.

As Submitters we know that God will take into consideration every moment in our life. [99:7-8] *Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.*

The function of worship is the foundation for doing righteous deeds. It is like a craftsman who organises his apparatus before initiating an actual task or a chef who gathers and readies the entire ingredients necessary. No matter what we are – students, workers,

labourers, businessmen, shopkeepers, housewives etc – we all have to do our duty to our fellow beings fully and dependably.

The instant people lost their righteousness, they were punished. *Lessons from the Past [10:13] Many a generation we have annihilated before you when they transgressed. Their messengers went to them with clear proofs, but they refused to believe. We thus requite the guilty people. [10:14] Then we made you inheritors of the earth after them, to see how you will do.* This law is very simple and applies to all the people for all times.

*Psalm 37:11 (King James Version) But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. Matthew 5:5 (King James Version) Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Matthew 5:38-40 (King James Version) Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. Luke 6:27-29 (King James Version) But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also.* Now compare this to the Quran - [21:105] *We have decreed in the Psalms, as well as in other scriptures, that the earth shall be inherited by My righteous worshipers. [42:39-41] When gross injustice befalls them, they stand up for their rights. Although the just requital for an injustice is an equivalent retribution, those who pardon and maintain righteousness are rewarded by GOD. He does not love the unjust. Certainly, those who stand up for their rights, when injustice befalls them, are not committing any error.*

This is the triumph to come in the domain of the Hereafter. When God exercises His laws of reckoning it does not discriminate between Muslims and other religions. Muslims have become corrupt and are indifferent to Divine Teachings. God gives due importance also to others. *Unity of All Submitters [2:62] Surely, those who believe, those who are Jewish, the Christians, and the converts; anyone who (1) believes in GOD, and (2) believes in the Last Day, and (3) leads a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Lord. They have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.*

Our performance in this world is evaluated not only on how well we performed our religious obligations but whatever we did all 24 hours of the day. We have to perform righteous deeds at every opportunity in our social, business and professional life.

To attain righteousness we also have to repent and reform and vow not to do it again. Satan misled Adam and Eve and made them do something forbidden. [7:23] *They said, "Our Lord, we have wronged our souls, and unless You forgive us and have mercy on us, we will be losers."* [2:37] *Then, Adam received from his Lord words, whereby He redeemed him. He is the Redeemer, Most Merciful. Moses killed an Egyptian. [28:16] He said, "My Lord, I have wronged my soul. Please forgive me," and He forgave him. He is the Forgiver, Most Merciful. [21:87] And Zan-Noon (Jonah, "the one with an 'N' in his name"), abandoned his mission in protest, thinking that we could not control him. He ended up imploring from the darkness (of the big fish's belly): "There is no god other than You. Be You glorified. I have committed a gross sin." [21:88] We responded to him, and saved him from the crisis; we thus save the believers. All of them unconditionally admitted that it was they who wronged their souls and prayed for pardon.*

Only a righteous person will take the remedy of repentance. This involves three things - we have to realise that we have wronged ourselves by an unequivocal admission of guilt, rectifying and restoring the damage done and solemnly resolving never to commit such an evil again. This is the minimum acceptable standard of human conduct.

God encourages us - [25:70] *Exempted are those who repent, believe, and lead a righteous life. GOD transforms their sins into credits. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.* So this is as important as the performance of righteous deeds. [25:71] *Those who repent and lead a righteous life, GOD redeems them; a complete redemption.*

We see around us countries which Muslims deem as disbelievers and not righteous yet progressing and its people prospering and in fact ruling the world. Why is this? Our so-called religious scholars (*ulema*) tell us that righteous people have to be miserable in this world and get their reward only in the Hereafter which is exclusively reserved for them. This is absolutely wrong.

If we are righteous and perform good deeds we will, Insha Allah, expect - *God's Promise Kings and Queens on Earth [24:55] GOD promises those among you who believe and lead a righteous life, that He will make them sovereigns on earth, as He did for those before them, and will establish for them the religion He has chosen for them, and will substitute peace and security for them in place of fear. All this because they worship Me alone; they never set up any idols beside Me. Those who disbelieve after this are the truly wicked.*

Though the Hereafter is certainly all important we must strive to excel to the best of our ability in the most righteous manner in this world too.

*God be glorified!*