

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Khutbah 9/6/17 – forgiveness and the ‘Islamic State’

تاريخ اليوم الرابع عشر من شهر رمضان، في السنة الف وأربع مائة وثمانية وثلاثين

Today is the 14th of Ramaḍān 1438

وَأَنْ أَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ

Ask your Lord for forgiveness and then repent to Him.

أي أستغفروا مما تقدم من الشرك والمعاصي ثم ارجعوا إليه بالطاعة والإستقامة عليها

i.e. ask forgiveness for the shirk and acts of disobedience you have previously done, then return to Him with acts of obedience and by going straight.

We are in the middle third of Ramaḍān which is as as Salman al-Farisi narrated from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

وهو شهر أوله رحمةٌ وأوسطه مغفرةٌ وآخره عتقٌ من النار

“It is a month whose first part is mercy, whose second part is forgiveness and whose end is freedom from the Fire.”

Thus, after our *khutbah* on mercy it is appropriate to devote a *khutbah* to forgiveness, which is the very purpose of Ramaḍān.

قال ﷺ كما روى عنه أبو هريرة في الصحيح: من صام رمضان إيماناً واحتساباً غفر له ما تقدم من ذنبه، وقال كذلك: من قام رمضان إيماناً واحتساباً غفر له ما تقدم من ذنبه

He ﷺ said, as narrated by Abū Hurayrah in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, “Whoever fasts Ramaḍān with *īmān* and anticipating a reward will be forgiven whatever wrong action he has previously done,” as well as, “Whoever stands in *ṣalāh* in Ramaḍān with *īmān* and anticipating a reward will be forgiven whatever wrong action he has previously done.”

But first of all what is forgiveness? In Arabic it is from the root *غفر* which shares something with the root *كفر* and indeed with an English word that almost sounds the same ‘cover’. For *kufr* is to cover over the truth. And *ghafara* is when Allah draws a veil over the wrong actions that are in one’s record. This was well expressed by Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥabīb, may Allah be merciful to him, in his Diwan:

وَمَعْنَاهُ سِتْرُ اللَّهِ لِلْعَبْدِ عَنِ ذَنْبٍ
فِيحْفَظُهُ مِنْ كُلِّ هَوْلٍ وَفِتْنَةٍ

Its real meaning is Allah’s veil over the wrong action of His slave,
and so it protects him from every terror and trial.

So when you say *أستغفر الله* you are asking Allah to draw His veil over the wrong action you have done so that you will not see it in your record on the Day of Reckoning. Seeking forgiveness is always coupled with *tawbah*, turning to Allah from the wrongdoing.

التوبة واجبة على كل مؤمن مكلف بدليل الكتاب والسنة وإجماع الأمة

Turning to Allah (tawbah) is incumbent on every mu'min who is charged with responsibility (*mukallaf*) as is proved by the Book, the Sunnah and the consensus of the Ummah.

وفرائضها ثلاثة الندم على الذنب من حيث عصى به ذو الجلال لا من حيث أضر ببدن أو مال والإقلاع عن الذنب في

أول أوقات الإمكان من غير تأخير ولا توان والعزم أن لا يعود إليها أبدا ومهما قضى عليه بالعود أحدث عزمًا مجددًا

It has three obligations:

regret for the wrong action from the point of view that one has disobeyed the Possessor of Majesty not from the point of view that one has harmed one's body or finances;

desisting from the wrong action at the very first possible moment without delay or *tawān*;

a strong resolve never to return to it ever again, and whenever it is decreed that one return to it, to renew the resolve afresh.

وآدابها ثلاثة الاعتراف بالذنب مقرونا بالانكسار والإكثار من التضرع والاستغفار والإكثار من الحسنات لمحو ما تقدم

من السيئات

It has three courtesies:

acknowledgement of the wrong action coupled with contrition;

to make a great deal of entreaty and asking forgiveness;

and to do a great deal of good actions in order to erase previous evil deeds.

Tawbah has seven degrees:

ومراتبها سبع فتوبة الكفار من الكفر وتوبة المخلطين من الذنوب والكبائر وتوبة العدول من الصغائر وتوبة العابدين من

الفترات وتوبة السالكين من علل القلوب والآفات وتوبة أهل الورع من الشبهات وتوبة أهل المشاهدة من الغفلات

It has seven degrees:

the kuffār turn from kufr;

those who have mixed matters turn from wrong actions and major wrong actions;

People of integrity (*'udūl*) turn from minor wrong actions;

devotees turn from slackness;

people who are travelling the path methodically (*sālikūn*) turn from the illnesses of the heart and its defects;

people of scrupulousness turn from ambivalent matters;

people of witnessing turn from moments of forgetfulness.

The greatest of the Messengers, Prophets, and *awliyā'* ﷺ had this to say about seeking forgiveness and tawbah.

{ قَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ فِي الْيَوْمِ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ

سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً (البخاري) }

Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying, 'By Allah! I seek forgiveness of Allah and turn in *tawbah* to Him more than seventy times a day.'" (al-Bukhārī)

فذاك رسول الله ﷺ مع وعدِ ربه له غفرانَ ما تقدم من ذنبه وما تأخر . ففي الحقيقة ليست له ذنوبٌ ﷺ لأنه معصوم منها ، ولكنه كحبيبٍ مع محبوبه يشعرُ بكِمالِ المحبوبِ وتقصيرِ نفسه .

That was the Messenger of Allah ﷺ whose earlier errors and any later ones Allah promised to forgive. In reality he ﷺ was protected from error. He had no wrong actions ﷺ, but his behaviour was that of the lover who is always aware of his shortcomings before his beloved.

And the fruit of seeking forgiveness?

يُمَتِّعُكُمْ مَتَاعًا حَسَنًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَيُؤْتِ كُلَّ ذِي فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهُ

He will let you enjoy a good life until a specified time, and will give His favour to all who merit it.
(Sūrah Hūd 11:3)

^ يُمَتِّعُكُمْ مَتَاعًا حَسَنًا ^ أي ينفعكم في الدنيا بالأرزاق والنعم والخيرات وقيل هو طيبُ عيشِ المؤمن برجائه في الله ورضاه بقضائه لأن الكافر قد يمتنع في الدنيا بالأرزاق

“*He will let you enjoy a good life*” i.e. He will give you the benefit of provision, blessings and good things in the world. It has been said that it refers to the good life of the believer with his hope in Allah and his contentment with His decree, because the unbeliever may enjoy provision in the world.

And Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥabīb, may Allah be merciful to him, said in his Diwan:

فَلَا هَمَّ يَبْقَىٰ مَعَ دَوَامِكَ ذِكْرُهُ وَلَا رَيْبَ فِي تَسْهِيلِ رِزْقٍ بكَثْرَتِهِ

No care can remain when you persevere in its dhikr,
and no doubt can remain when your needs are amply met.

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

To make sense of many recent events, we have to see the effect of a certain idea on mankind: the state. In Europe, the false Christianity of Catholicism found its support by giving kings arbitrary and despotic power. People talked about the Divine Right of Kings, when they should have spoken about their Divine duties. Europeans struggled for centuries to escape from this absolute power that had been handed to kings. It was in that process that they invented the modern state, which was an attempt to balance all the interests, first, of the powerful and wealthy and then later the poor and powerless. But because it was born in such a way, the state too came to embody arbitrary despotic power, wielded by some élite that had taken hold of it. The poor and powerless were at the mercy of this terrible force.

A threshold was reached in our story, when Muslims also began to wish for a state. But the state is a nation-state restricted to a nation of people of the same race or language. So the appearance of the state in the ummah meant to break it up into separate pieces.

Then in our time, a new monster was born. It was called the ‘Islamic State’. People have talked about this concept for a long time. Like many other uses of the term ‘Islamic’ it was used simply to take something foreign and alien to our *dīn* and to try and disguise its essential nature by the use of an adjective. I challenge anyone to find the term Islamic in the Book or the Sunnah just as I find anyone to find the word ‘state (*dawlah*)’.

Finally, they called the ‘Islamic State’ the ‘caliphate’. The young men accused of having committed the atrocities in Manchester and London were apparently driven by their commitment to this idea.

But caliphate is not a state. *Khilāfah* means succession. It is the succession of a man to another man who in turn succeeded another man in a chain that goes back to Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq and to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Not every man in that chain was perfect, but certainly not every single one of them was a tyrannical king, as some people try to tell us, claiming that only the *al-Khulafā’ ar-Rāshidūn* were ‘real’ caliphs, and then they begin to speak badly even about them.

So this idea of an ‘Islamic state’ and this ‘caliphate’, being false have produced these abominable manifestations of terror in our midst. The only cure for this is that again we look at the men, the quality of the men and that we stop being seduced by ideas and clever words.