*Developing Our Faith – Knowing Allah – Ramadan – Ashton Central Mosque – 21/07/13*

*The Guide*

In the name of Allah, The All-Merciful, The Ever-Merciful, praise be to Allah the Lord of the whole universe, and all Prayers and Blessings of Allah be upon our master, the most noble Prophet Muhammad.

**What is meant by the "straight Path"?**

**قَالَ فَمَنْ رَبُّكُمَا يَا مُوسَى قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى**

 “he (Pharaoh) said, ‘Who then is the Lord of both of you, O Musa?’. He said, ‘Our Lord is He Who gave everything its creation (and) thereafter guided (it)’.” (20: 49 – 50). What does this ayah[5] indicate?

Is guidance restricted to human beings only, or does it encompass all other creatures?

How would you respond to those who say that they do not follow the straight Path because Allah has not yet guided them?

**The meaning of Allah's name "The Guide"**

Linguistically, the word "guidance" means to direct someone to the right path gently. Notice that the word "guidance" is associated to the word "path". Accordingly, Allah's Name "The Guide" means that He guides all the creatures to the straight Path.

The above-mentioned ayah denotes that Allah guides all the creatures to the proper means of living and performing their role in the worldly life, and He also guides people to the Path of jannah (paradise). Hence, guidance is not restricted to man, but it embraces all the creatures in the universe.

**Today’s message is directed towards three types of people:**

* Those who are astray from the straight Path: Allah, The Guide, calls you to His guidance.
* Those who are already following the straight Path: strive to gain more guidance.
* Those who have been guided, and guide others gently to the straight Path: have good tidings of great reward from Allah.

**Four Types of Guidance**

* General guidance for all the creatures to live aptly and to accomplish their specified function in life.
* Guidance to have faith in Allah's straight Path.
* Guidance to a reach a higher degree of faith. **وَيَزِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى** "And Allah increases the ones who have been guided in guidance…" (19:76)
* Guidance to Jannah. "…and they will say, “Praise be to Allah, Who guided us to this; and in no way could we have been guided, unless Allah has guided us..." (7:43)

**How Allah Guides Us**

Man is guided by his natural disposition; Allah says what can be translated as, "And (remember) as your Lord took from the Seeds (Or. sons) of Adam, from their backs, their offspring, and made them bear witness concerning themselves, “Am I not your Lord?” They said, “Yes indeed, we bear witness.” (So) that you should not say on the Day of the Resurrection, “Surely we were heedless of this,” (7:172).

The Prophet emphasized the same meaning, saying that every child is born with a natural disposition, but his parents turn him into a Christian or Jew. Moreover, Allah revealed the way of goodness and the way of evil to man.

**وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا**

"And (by) the self and That (i.e., The Command) which moulded it, So He inspired it to its impiety and piety!" (91:7-8).

Thus whenever an act of wickedness is committed one feels ashamed and upset. This inspiration is from Allah The Guide to show you the right way. Allah has instilled within us the ability to differentiate between good and bad. Do not say, “I have not received guidance,” for Allah guides all. For those who do not feel that they are instinctively guided, it is their sins and lusts that estrange them from their good nature. Just as an abandoned route through the desert becomes covered with sand, a heart without guidance becomes full of sins. This ayah affirms the fact that every human being is instinctively guided. Therefore never say, “I have not been guided.” Ask Allah for forgiveness.

There are various means to help guide you to the straight Path, one of which is to reflect upon this immense universe. Look around you. Contemplate the heavens and earth. Then Allah says to those who do not find guidance in the universe in what can be translated as “…And in no way do the signs and warnings avail a people who do not believe” (10: 101).

Another way to receive guidance in through the Qur'an. Allah says what can be translated as, “Surely this Qur’an guides to (the way) that is more upright, and gives good tidings to the believers who do deeds of righteousness that they will a great reward (17: 9).

**قَالُوا يَا قَوْمَنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَابًا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَإِلَى طَرِيقٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ**

And in another ayah, “They said, ‘O our people, surely we have heard a Book that was sent down even after Musa, sincerely (verifying) what was before it, (Literally: between its two hands) guiding to the Truth and to a straight road’” (46:30). The vast universe and the Qur’an complement one another in providing guidance to the straight Path.

Another means to guide you to the straight Path is through people. Whoever calls people to Allah receives a great reward. Indeed, a most esteemed form of worship is to guide people to Allah in a lenient and gentle way.

Another form of guidance from Allah is through actions, signs, or even words. Abdullah Ibn-Masoud one of the Prophet's companions, once passed by a group of people and heard a man singing. He turned to the person next to him and remarked if only the lovely voice were reciting Qur'an. When the man heard what was said about him, he ran to Ibn-Masoud asking to be taught Qur’an. This shows how Allah wishes for you to be guided. He wants you to enter jannah.

It is important that you guide people gently to the path of Allah. A polytheist was told that the Prophet was possessed by the jinn. Being an exorcist, he approached the Prophet and asked what ails him. Look at the Prophet’s manners. He was not abusive, nor did he send him away. Instead, he told the man that we praise Allah, thank Him, and seek His help, guidance and forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil in our souls and the sinfulness of our deeds. After hearing this, the man embraced Islam.

In the Qur’an, Allah says what can be translated as, “Guide us in the straight Path” (1: 6). Just as the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, the straight Path is the shortest and surest way to guidance. That is why when praying we recite what can be translated as, “In The Name of Allah, The All-Merciful, The Ever-Merciful. Praise be to Allah, The Lord of the worlds. The All-Merciful, The Ever-Merciful. The Possessor of the Day of Doom. You only do we worship, and You only do we beseech for help. Guide us in the straight Path. The Path of the ones whom You have favoured, other than that of the ones against whom You are angered, and not (that of) the erring (1:1-7)