*Al Ghafur The Ever Forgiving*

*Ramadan – Ashton Central Mosque – 24/07/13*

All Muslims, whether they are true believers or not, worship Allah through this name, though many of them do not appreciate its accurate meaning. Today, we are going to talk about Allah’s name, the Ever-Forgiving.

Let us start with the meaning of forgiveness. When we say that Allah is the Ever-Forgiving, this means that He covers our shameful deeds in this life and in the hereafter and protects us against the hellfire on the Day of Judgment. Thus, when we ask Allah for His forgiveness, this means that we ask Him to cover our sins and our imperfections in this life and in the hereafter and to protect us from hellfire in the hereafter.

We should all be attached to Allah through this name because He is the only one who forgives our sins. Notice that this name of Allah was mentioned by many Prophets

**فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا**

“So I have said, ‘Ask forgiveness of your Lord; surely He has been (The) Superb Forgiver;” (71:10).

Ibrahim said to his people about Allah, while inviting them to Islam

**الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ (٧٨)وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ (٧٩)وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ (٨٠)وَالَّذِي يُمِيتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ (٨١)وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ**

“Who created me. And so He, Ever He, guides me. And (it is He) Who, Ever He, feeds me and He gives me to drink; and when I am sick, then He, Ever He, cures me; and (it is He) Who makes me to die; thereafter He gives me life. And Whom I long (that) He will forgive me my offense (s) on the Day of Doom. (Or: Judgment)” (26: 78-82)

Ibrahim considered that asking Allah to forgive his sin was as important as asking Him for food, drink or the cure of an illness. The companions of the Prophet said that they used to hear him asking for Allah’s forgiveness more than 70 times in each meeting with him.

We should all get close to Allah by asking His forgiveness because we are imperfect; we commit many sins and we are weak. We need Him to cover our imperfections, sins and disgrace in this life and in the hereafter and to protect us from hellfire. That is why the last ayah in Surat al-Baqarah

**وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا**

“…And be clement towards us, and forgive us, and have mercy on us…” (2:286)

Also, note that Allah's forgiveness of our sins in this life is considered as a proof that He will not expose us in the hereafter. If you need to know to what extent Allah will forgive your sins in the hereafter, try to remember how many times you committed sins without Him exposing you.

Allah forgives whoever He wants and whatever He wants

**إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ**

“Surely Allah does not forgive that (anything) should be associated with Him, and He forgives (anything) whatever apart from that for (Literally: to) whomever He decides…” (4:48)

 All we have to do is to insist on asking Allah for His forgiveness, to regret our sins and to visualize that every time we ask for Allah's forgiveness, a sin being forgiven.

Now let us move to the difference between the three names of Allah, The Ever-Forgiving, The Superb Forgiver and the Forgiver. Allah's name, the Ever-Forgiving, was mentioned 91 times in Qur'an, while The Superb Forgiver was mentioned five times and the Forgiver was mentioned only once. Scholars said that the Forgiver forgives one sin, the Ever-Forgiver forgives all your sins even if they are thousands, whereas the Superb Forgiver forgives the horrible and grave sins. Thus, Allah forgives all kinds of sins.

Moreover, the Prophet taught us that if one persists in asking Allah for His forgiveness, He will drive away his distress, dispel his grief and He will provide for him from where he does not expect.

**فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا (١٠)يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا (١١)وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا**

So I have said, ‘Ask forgiveness of your Lord; surely He has been Superb Forgiver; He will send down on you (rain) from the heaven showering plentifully, and He will supply you with riches and sons, (Or: seeds) and will set up (Literally: make) for you gardens, and will set up for you rivers.” (71:10-12)

Allah conceals the good things too, to let people make more use of it. For example, He concealed the Night of Determination to let people exert their best efforts during the last ten days of Ramadan. He concealed the hour in which prayers are answered on Friday, to let them supplicate to him throughout the day. He concealed patrons of Allah from being recognized, so that we would respect all people. He concealed Himself, so that we would invoke Him with all his names. He concealed thoughts from being heard or read by others, or it would have caused severe problems amongst people. He protected people's secrets by limiting human hearing, so that their secrets would not be overheard. He concealed the time of death, so that Muslims prepare for it throughout their lives.

Imagine yourself on the Day of Judgment when you are called to be judged before Allah, with the presence of Prophet Muhammad, your wife, your neighbours and others. Imagine yourself when you read your book, in which your sins are written, before all of them. On that day, the flesh of some people's faces will fall out of shame. However, while you are standing amidst all these horrors, Allah would call you, asking you to get nearer to him, and He would conceal you from all the surroundings. He would ask you, “Do you remember your sins? I have concealed them in the worldly life and today I forgive you.” See how forgiving he is?

Allah does not disclose his slave’s sins at the first time of sinning. Rather, he gives him/her time to repent. Also, Allah forgives everyone except for those who commits sins openly. Allah wants beauty and purity to spread, and for sins to be concealed. He hates for obscenities to be done or spoken of loudly.

We should not hasten to disclose others’ faults. Some kinds of media have made the disclosure of people part of their job, because they are searching for excitement.

**إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لا تَعْلَمُونَ**

“Surely the ones who love that (the) obscenity should be widespread among the ones who have believed, (they) will have a painful torment in the present (life) and the Hereafter; and Allah knows, and you do not know. “ (24:19).

How do we live in Allah’s Name “The Superb Forgiving”?

**There are three things to do:**

1. Do as many good deeds as you can. If you wish that Allah would forgive your sins, do something great for his sake. Take advantage of the month of Ramadan with all its blessings.
2. Keep asking for Allah's forgiveness.
3. Do not disclose people's secrets, so that Allah would not disclose yours. Prophet Muhammad taught us that he who shields a Muslim, Allah would shield him on the Day of Judgment.