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A GOOD MUSLIM ACCORDING TO THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ.



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ.



Honorable Muslims!

Allah the Almighty (swt) states in the verse I have just recited: “O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims [in submission to Him].”¹

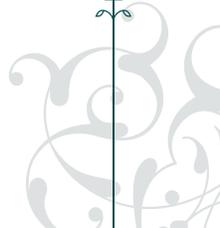
The Prophet Muhammad (saw) says in the hadith I have read: “A Muslim is he from whose hand and tongue the Muslims are safe.”²

Dear Muslims!

The most precious treasure of Muslims is their faith. Faith is the biggest blessing that will rejoin us with peace in this world and with salvation in the Hereafter. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) gives glad tidings to the ones who own this blessing as: “Whoever testifies sincerely that there is no

1 Al-i 'Imran, 3/102.

2 Muslim, Iman, 65; Bukhari, Iman, 4.



god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, Allah will prohibit the fire of hell for him.”³

Iman (faith) is an unequalled jewel and a unique opportunity. It is recovery for sorrows and shield against sins. It is a power that protects Muslims from evil under any circumstances and that leads them to benevolence. A person who is aware of the value of their faith should preserve it and exercise due care to live a life suitable to their faith. Thus, they can be closer to the Almighty Allah (swt) and be protected from being the slave of the meaningless desires and whims.

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

The way to strengthen the iman in our hearts goes through not skipping our worships, because iman is fed with worship. Worship is the essence of servitude and the purpose of the creation of human. It is to submit our condition to the Almighty Allah (swt) without any mediator and means. The Messenger of Allah (saw) advises believers on this issue: **“Keep worshipping, establishing fardh prayers, giving fardh zakat and observing the fasting in Ramadan without assigning partners to Allah. Behave towards people in a way you would like to be behaved.”⁴**

Then, the requirements of loyalty to tawhid and the faith in Allah (swt) are primarily to perform the fardh worships such as prayer, fasting, zakat and hajj. It is the virtue of Muslims to try to receive the approval of Allah (swt) by means of nafl (supererogatory) worships.

Honorable Believers!

What completes iman and worship is only the good morals. The Messenger of Allah (saw) states in a hadith, **“The most complete of the believers in faith are those with best character.”⁵** To adopt moral virtues and to stay away from ill tempers are essential responsibilities of believers.

Believers take the Prophet Muhammad (saw) “who was only sent to perfect good character”⁶ as an example at every stage of their lives. They have mercy on the young people and show respect to the elders. They assure the people around them and observe whatever is entrusted to them. They are

3 Bukhari, 'Ilm, 49.

4 Ibn Hanbal, VI, 384.

5 Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 15.

6 Ibn Hanbal, II, 381.



truthful and do not resort to lies. They are generous and do not be stingy. They behave towards their mother, father, spouse, children and all creatures animate or inanimate with affection, and they never resort to violence.

Honorable Muslims!

What a great honor it is to be a member of the ummah of Muhammad (saw)! However, being the members of the best ummah selected out of the family of humanity requires responsibility at the same time. When we read the hadiths of our Beloved Prophet (saw), we see that he describes a Muslim as follows: A Muslim is the person who knows that they will not enter Paradise until they have faith, and will not have faith until they love their brothers.⁷ A Muslim is the person who becomes happy when they do a favor and get sad when they do an evil.⁸ A Muslim does not defame and curse people, does not use rude and bad words, and does not be shameless.⁹ They stay away from alcohol, the mother of evils, from gambling, which wastes one's life, and from adultery, which requires the wrath of Allah (swt).¹⁰ A Muslim avoids associating partners to Allah (swt), does not murder people, does not utilize interest, and does not take advantage of the wealth of an orphan. A Muslim does not slander their brothers and sisters, does not be a talebearer, and does not take part in fitnah and mischief.¹¹

Dear Muslims!

The Messenger of Allah (saw) says in a hadith: **“The best of you is the one from whom people expect good deeds, and from whose evil deeds people are safe; the worst of you is the one from whom people expect good deeds but from whose evil deeds people are not safe.”**¹² Then, let us exert efforts to be a good Muslim as our Prophet Muhammad (saw) taught us. Let us enlighten our hearts with iman. Let us feed them with worships. Let us polish them with good deeds and good morals. Let us be the key for goodness and the lock against evil at every stage of our lives.

May the Almighty Allah (swt) accept all of our previous and future good deeds and acts of charity.

7 Muslim, Iman, 93.

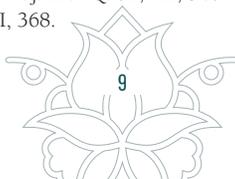
8 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 399.

9 Tirmidhi, Birr, 48.

10 Ibn Majah, Ashriba, 1; Abu Dawud, Ashriba, 5; Bukhari, Qusuf, 2.

11 Bukhari, Wasaya, 23; Tabarani, al-Mujam al-Qabir, XII, 340.

12 Tirmidhi, Fitan, 76; Ibn Hanbal, II, 368.





A SACRED JOURNEY: HAJJ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَعْلُومَاتٌ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي
الْحَجِّ وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُولِي
الْأَلْبَابِ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ...الْحَجُّ الْمَبْرُورُ لَيْسَ لَهُ جَزَاءٌ إِلَّا الْجَنَّةُ



Honorable Believers!

Allah the Almighty states in the Holy Qur'an, "Surely the first House of worship established for humanity is the one in Makkah - a blessed sanctuary and a guide for all people. In it are clear signs and the standing place of Ibrahim. Whoever enters it should be safe. Pilgrimage to this House is an obligation by Allah upon whoever is able among people. And whoever disbelieves, then surely Allah is not in need of any of His creation."¹

Dear Believers!

As expressed by the Prophet Muhammad (saw), hajj is one of the five pillars on which Islam is established. Hajj means circumambulating the

¹ Al-i 'Imran, 3/96-97.



Ka'bah and standing (waqfah) at Arafat to gain Allah's (swt) consent. It means the gathering of Muslims, after a sacred journey, in the shade of the Ka'bah, towards which they turn for prayer all around the world. The Muslims who set out to visit the House of Allah are addressed in the Qur'an as follows: **"The Hajj is in appointed months. Whoever commits to performing hajj, let them stay away from intimate relations, foul language, and arguments during the hajj. Whatever good you do, Allah fully knows of it. Take necessary provisions for the journey. Surely the best provision is righteousness (taqwa). O people of reason, be mindful of Me!"**²

Dear Muslims!

Muslims who make their intention to perform hajj and set off for it put on ihram physically, and taqwa spiritually. They promise to follow the commands of Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw); and to stay away from any kind of sins, wrongdoings, and evil. Together with their Muslim brothers and sisters of different skin colors, languages, and countries of origin but with the same objective on mind, they pray reciting the talbiyah,

لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ. إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَالنِّعْمَةَ لَكَ وَالْمُلْكَ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ.

"Here I am, o Allah, here I am! I am obedient to Your commands! You have no partner. Here I am, o Allah! All praise is for you. All blessings and all sovereignty is yours. You have no partner."³

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) says that "the voice of a believer who recites the talbiyah is accompanied by stones, trees, and even earth."⁴ An amazing choir of universe prays along with prospective pilgrims.

Honorable Believers!

The glad tiding by the Prophet Muhammad (saw) is responded in the hearts of Muslims in every step of theirs during the hajj: **"The reward of Hajj that is accepted by Allah is nothing but heaven."**⁵ Prospective pilgrims who want to be on the receiving end of this glad tiding climb to

2 Baqarah, 2/197.

3 Muslim, Hajj, 19,21.

4 Tirmidhi, Hajj, 14.

5 Bukhari, Umrah, 1.



Mount Arafat, rehearsing the Day of Judgment. Arafat means to know the truth, reach wisdom, and bring oneself to account before death.

Pilgrims flood to Muzdalifah after the Arafat waqfah, and then to Mina. While Muzdalifah is the second place where they stand for waqfah in the sight of Allah in order to gain awareness, Mina is where the expression of forsaking all the worldly blessings and asking for the consent of Allah only is manifested.

Muslims who stone the Devil at Jamarat actually stone their own nafs, greed and passions that keep inviting them to committing sins. Then, they head to the Ka'bah for the tawaf al-ziyarah. Their eyes turn to the Ka'bah, and their hearts to Allah (swt).

The animals sacrificed during the hajj are of the symbols of Allah. But neither their meat nor their blood reach Him (swt). What is going to reach Him is our taqwa only.

Dear Muslims!

Hajj is literally a cornerstone for Muslims. Pilgrims manifest on themselves the Prophet Ibrahim's loyalty, the Prophet Ismail's submission, and Hajar's tawakkul (reliance on Allah). They express their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the sake of Allah (swt). Pilgrims who visit the places bearing the Prophet Muhammad's (saw) footprints experience patience, gratefulness, revitalization, and tranquility all at the same time. Muslims who bring with them taqwa for this sacred journey should stay away from any kind of bad words and acts in order not to waste it. They should pay utmost care not to cause any damage to any living being and the nature during the performance of hajj. Pilgrims returning from those sacred places by leaving behind all their past mistakes and sins should never repeat the same mistakes and sins in the remainder of their lives.

I would like to take this opportunity to pray Allah (swt) to accept the worships of hajj that members from among our community will perform. I would like to conclude this khutbah with the Prophet Muhammad's (saw) following words: **“Those who go on pilgrimage and umrah are the messengers of Allah. If they pray to Allah, He accepts their prayers; and if they ask Allah to forgive their sins, He forgives their sins.”**⁶

⁶ Ibn Majah, Manasiq, 5.





AFTER PATIENCE COMES EASE AND RELIEF

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ...



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: الْكَيْسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ
وَالْعَاجِزُ مَنْ أَتْبَعَ نَفْسَهُ هَوَاهَا وَكَمَتَى عَلَى اللَّهِ.



Honorable Muslims!

Every human being is, in a manner of speaking, a passenger in this worldly life. In this temporary and mortal life, whoever comes in goes out one day. The path to paradise for each of us passes through ups and downs, and joys and hardships. As we continue our journey while enduring the sorrows and at the same time keeping up our hopes, our Lord (swt) grants us a unique blessing that saves our heart from haste, our tongue from complaints, and our body from malevolent conducts. The name of that blessing is patience.

Dear Believers!

Patience does not mean contempt or apathy. It does not mean weariness or helplessness either. It means forbearance, and continuing worship and obedience to Allah with the awareness of servitude to Him.



It means endurance; breasting numerous tests and trials of the world. It means discernment; making the effort to carry on living without heeding the whispers of the Satan and falling for the desires of the nafs. It means resoluteness; demonstrating a moderate and cold-blooded stance against occurrences of unexpected events. It means tawakkul (reliance on Allah): being satisfied and contented with the divine decree after making every effort possible and taking all necessary measures. And patience means, a requirement of faith, a gate to salvation, and a heavenly treasure.

Dear Muslims!

Sometimes people fail to display patience even in the face of trivial problems. Some other times they lose patience due to great calamities and fall into the swirl of hopelessness. They think their illnesses will never heal, financial problems will not be over, and family problems will not be solved. They are drawn into the delusion that peace, success, and health are far away from them. The good news in the Qur'an, however, is quite clear: **“For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.”**¹ Many a grace is hidden in many a trouble. An evil-looking and foul matter may bring about unexpected auspicious and fair outcomes. What matters most is that the servants of Allah should keep their patience and resoluteness. What matters most is that people should keep up the faith that Allah is always with the patient.

Dear Believers!

On one occasion, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, **“Whoever remains patient, Allah will make him patient. Nobody can be given a blessing better and greater than patience.”**²

Then, let us know the value of such a rare blessing as patience. Let us keep in mind that Allah will test us with both the existence and lack of something and that every test and trial can be overcome with effort and patience. Let us never give up our hopes that Allah (swt) shall help us and be merciful to us.

As I conclude the khutbah, I would like to share the following verse of the Holy Qur'an, **“Whoever fears Allah and is patient, then indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.”**³

1 Sharh, 94/5-6.

2 Muslim, Zakat, 124.

3 Yusuf 12/90.





ALLAH IS CLEAN AND LOVES CLEANLINESS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا لَمَسْجِدٍ أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَى مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ فِيهِ رِجَالٌ
يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ طَيِّبٌ يُحِبُّ الطَّيِّبَ نَظِيفٌ يُحِبُّ النَّظَافَةَ
كَرِيمٌ يُحِبُّ الْكَرَمَ.



Honorable Muslims!

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) received a revelation for the first time in the Cave of Hira. Overwhelmed with the heaviness of the duty he assumed, he returned home, and asked his beloved wife Khadijah, “**Cover me!**” She put a garment on him to cover, tried to calm him down, and uttered comforting words. A while later, Allah the Almighty revealed the following verses, “**O you who covers himself with a garment. Arise and warn. And glorify your Lord. And purify your clothing. And avoid uncleanness.**”¹

¹ Bukhari, Tafsir, 74 (1-5); Muddaththir, 74/1-5.



Dear Believers!

These first verses of the Surah al-Muddaththir command the Prophet Muhammad (saw) to keep his clothing and body clean in the material sense, and purify himself in the spiritual sense by avoiding superstitions and committing sins. This is because cleanliness, which is one of the most fundamental qualities of Muslims, denotes having a clean body and clothes free from dirt as well as a peaceful heart. Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad explains the relation between cleanliness on the outside and faith in the heart as follows, **“Cleanliness makes up half of the faith.”**²

Dear Muslims!

People who are not clean and who wear unclean clothes, have disorderly hair and beard, and untidy homes although they have the necessary means to clean themselves are not only welcome by other people but also by Allah (swt). This is because it is possible to duly worship Allah and obtain His approval only through being clean. Let us not forget that wudu and ghusl make up a unique system of cleanliness and the prerequisite for many worships, particularly salah. Paying due attention to cleanliness after using the toilet, mouth and nail care, and having a bath at least once a week on Fridays are among the Sunnah of our Prophet (saw).

Allah’s love encompasses clean, pure, and pious people. In this respect, it is stated in the Holy Qur’an, **“Do not stand [for prayer] within it [Masjid al-Dhitar] - ever. A mosque founded on righteousness from the first day is more worthy for you to stand in. Within it are men who love to purify themselves; and Allah loves those who purify themselves.”**³

When Prophet Muhammad asked the people of Quba’, who are praised in the above verse, **“How do you purify yourselves that Allah praises you in the Qur’an?”**, they replied as, **“We use water to clean ourselves off any impurity.”**⁴

Dear Believers!

On top of every good and nicety comes being healthy, and being healthy requires being clean. Today epidemics wander the earth, just as in the past. Viruses that threaten all corners of the world cause mass casualties. We

2 Muslim, Taharah, 1.

3 Tawbah, 9/108.

4 Ibn Kathir, 4, 213-214.



should always keep in mind that we all have our responsibilities to take care of ourselves and our loved ones.

Dear Muslims!

Let us ensure that we have taken every measure to protect ourselves against epidemics. Let us pay attention to the principles of cleanliness more than ever. Let us wash our hands with soap and water several times a day. Let us not touch our eyes, nose, or mouth if our hands are not clean. Let us stay hydrated for our body not to get weak. Let us follow a balanced diet and take enough sleep. Let us cover our mouth with a piece of tissue while sneezing or coughing, or use the inside of our elbow otherwise. Let us keep well-ventilated the indoors we live in. Let us stay away from smoking, alcohol, drugs and other harmful substances that are not only considered haram by the religion but also make our body prone to several diseases.

Honorable Muslims!

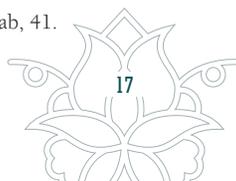
The Prophet Muhammad (saw) advises, “**Know the value of your health before an illness.**”⁵ Sometimes we fail to heed this warning of him. We happen to better understand the value of having a healthy body only after we lose our health. However, it is our duty to live cleanly and protect our health. We need to take our precaution and then rely on Allah the Almighty for the rest. Let us not forget that our Prophet (saw) says, “**Allah is good, loves what is good; He is clean, loves cleanliness; He is generous, loves generosity.**”⁶

O Allah! Protect our country and all Islamic lands, and all humanity from epidemics, troubles, and disasters.

Amin!

5 Hakim, Mustadrak, IV, 341.

6 Muslim, Iman, 147; Tirmidhi, Adab, 41.





BEING A FAMILY AND REMAINING AS A FAMILY

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً
وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِهِ. وَأَنَا خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِي.



Honorable Muslims!

Allah the Almighty (swt) states in the verse I have recited: “And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): Verily in that are Signs for those who reflect.”¹

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said in the hadith I have read: “The best of you is he who is best to his family, and I am the best among you to my family.”²



1 Rum, 30/21.

2 Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 63.

Dear Believers!

Allah the Exalted (swt) sent human, the most precious being, to this world in two different genders as man and woman. He created a strong bond of love and compassion between them to be spouses and to start a peaceful family. He bestowed upon them a family atmosphere in which they can cooperate in benevolence and feel safe.

Honorable Muslims!

Getting married and establishing a family, first of all, inheres in human nature by creation. While Allah the Exalted encourages marriage for man and woman with the command **“Marry those among you who are single.”**³, He (swt) also advises the whole society, especially their relatives, to support those who are in the age of marriage.

Starting a family is also a sunnah of our Prophet (saw). The Messenger of Allah (saw) said in a hadith: **“Marriage is part of my Sunnah, and whoever does not follow my Sunnah has nothing to do with me.”**⁴ It is an honor and reason for gratitude for every human to have a decent marriage by correct way and in a manner appropriate to his nature. Because our Prophet (saw) stated, **“O young men, whoever among you can afford to get married, let him do so.”**⁵, and expressed, **“Marriage is the best way to turn eyes away from haram, and protect the honor.”**⁶

Dear Believers!

Living in a family is a blessing that gives trust and happiness to people of all ages. What other blessing can substitute for the taste of a warm home, its affectionate hand that solves one's problems, and its support that adds meaning to life? Spouses who build their family life on sound grounds will be happy not only in this world but also in the Hereafter, and they will take each other to heaven.

Being a family does not mean just living under the same roof. Family is also a togetherness in feeling, ideal, hope, and thought. It means spouses to be friends and compete in benevolence and piety. Being a family is to live a life that complies with the consent of Allah (swt). It is to share both joy and

3 Nur, 24/32.

4 Ibn Majah, Nikah, 1.

5 Bukhari, Nikah, 3; Muslim, Nikah, 1.

6 Bukhari, Nikah, 3; Muslim, Nikah, 1.



grief, and both richness and poverty. It is to overcome all kinds of difficulties together and to be a compassionate spouse, a loyal lover, a merciful parent, and a good child.

Honorable Muslims!

Remaining as a family is as much important as starting a family. To value and protect one's family are the duties of every male and female Muslim. Remaining as a family means that the spouses cover each other like a garment, protect each other from all kinds of evil, and integrate each other with love and care. For this reason, the Almighty Allah (swt) states: **“They are your garments and ye are their garments.”**⁷

Remaining as a family requires leaving the mistakes and flaws that threaten home. A believer tries to be tolerant and forgiving, and act in a patient and persistent manner in his/her family. In this regard, our Beloved Prophet (saw) recommends: **“A Muslim man must not bear hatred against his Muslim wife as she has an unlikeable temper; because she must have many other tempers that he will like.”**⁸

Remaining as a family is possible only if each woman, man, elder person, and young person fulfill their responsibilities and observe the rights of others as well as their own rights. It requires thinking about the benefits of the family under any circumstance rather than one's own interest. Our Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, **“It is enough sin for a man not to give food to the one whom he is supposed to feed.”**⁹

Dear Believers!

Let us exert efforts to have a family where love and joy increase while sadness and sorrow disappear. Let us introduce our youth to a family's strong and sincere spirit. Let us present a family atmosphere that will give peace to our children and spouse. Let us appreciate the value of our family. Let us remember that our family is the trust of Allah (swt), and that people will firstly account for their behavior towards their parents, spouses, and children in the Hereafter.

7 Baqarah, 2/187.

8 Muslim, Rada', 61.

9 Abu Dawud, Zakat, 45.





BELIEVERS: THE GUARANTEE OF A PEACEFUL SOCIETY

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ
وَالْمُؤْمِنُ مَنْ أَمِنَهُ النَّاسُ عَلَى دِمَائِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ



Dear Muslims!

The most basic principle that sustains a society and helps it live in peace is justice. The verse “**O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, ...**”¹ points out the fact that being a believer requires to stand by the truth and justice. Justice is also the most important balance element and the guarantee of social life.

Another must-have principle that is needed in order to implement peace in a society is truth. Believers assure all people by taking the example of their Prophet called as Muhammad al-Amin (the Trustworthy). Because the Messenger of Allah (saw) described them as, “**The Muslim**

1 Ma'idah, 5/8.



is the one from (the harm of) whose tongue and hand (other) Muslims are safe, and the believer is the one with whom people trust their blood and their wealth.”²

Honorable Believers!

Another principle for establishing a peaceful and safe society is righteousness. Being sincere and honest is a requirement of being a believer. Believers are frank and transparent. They tell exactly what they think. Their intentions and deeds are consistent with each other. Not leaving the right path is the slogan of believers in accordance with the command of the Almighty Allah (swt): **“So remain on a right course as you have been commanded.”**³ Believers do not lie or slander, nor do they violate rights of others!

Dear Muslims!

One of the most harmful behaviors which damages society’s consciousness of solidarity and leaves the door open for separation is *su’ al-dhann* (bad assumption). It means to defame people baselessly and without a proof, and to build assumptions on evil thoughts. However, just like the lives and properties of believers, their honor and chastity are entrusted to each other as well. The law and ethics of brotherhood and should dominate over the relationship between them. It is a requirement of faith to have good intentions towards our believer brothers and sisters. In the verse I recited at the beginning of my khutbah, Allah the Exalted (swt) warns believers as follows,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”⁴

Honorable Believers!

Islam also prohibits spying on secret conditions of people and disclosing them to others just as it prohibits bad assumption. Criticizing each other maliciously, saying bad words behind each other’s back, and disclosing

2 Tirmidhi, Iman, 12.

3 Hud, 11/112.

4 Hujurat, 49/12.



mistakes and flaws of your brother and sister are haram in Islam. Because all these ill tempers cause unrest and corruption to become widespread and the establishment of an unrestful and chaotic society by people who do not trust each other. It is impossible for such a society to sustain and look future with hope.

وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا

“And spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs ...”⁵, With the command of the Almighty Allah invites us to be sensitive on this subject. Otherwise, the destination will be disappointment in the world and regret in the Hereafter. However, Allah the Exalted informs us as follows about the fact that Satan will drive a wedge between believers who do not say the true and beautiful words, “And tell My servants to say that which is best. Indeed, Satan induces [dissension] among them. Indeed Satan is ever, to mankind, a clear enemy.”⁶

Dear Believers!

The Beloved Prophet Muhammad (saw) stated, “It is enough sin for a man to speak of everything that he hears.”⁷ By sharing an information before checking its correctness, one becomes an instrument to spread groundless words and feed lies and slanders. Allah the Exalted (swt) states in the Holy Qur’an as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate. ...”⁸

Believers do not rely on groundless news and comments released irresponsibly and unconsciously. They stay away from saying a word about the honor and chastity of innocent people just like they run away from fire. They know that they will give account for every word uttered, every comment written, and every deed committed by them. They adopt this verse of Allah (swt) as a principle to their lives, “And do not pursue that of which

5 Hujurat, 49/12.

6 Isra, 17/53.

7 Abu Dawud, Adab, 80.

8 Hujurat, 49/6.



you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned.”⁹

Honorable Muslims!

Let us be tied to our divine book the Holy Qur’an and the sunnah of our Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (saw) in order to establish a peaceful, safe and powerful society. Starting from our family, let us spread, live, and make others live the consciousness of tawhid, the awareness of brotherhood, and good morals. Let us stay away from all kinds of behaviors that will weaken the bonds between us and make us mistrustful against each other. Let us work altogether for a peaceful environment in which spouses, parents, children, chiefs, civil servants, workers, employers, neighbors, relatives, friends, fellows, and in short all the members of the society trust each other. Let us not forget the following warning of Prophet Muhammad (saw) not even for a moment, **“Do not hate each other, do not envy each other, do not turn away from each other. O servants of Allah! Be brothers.”¹⁰**

9 Isra, 17/36.

10 Bukhari, Adab, 62.





EID AL-ADHA

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا تَبْدَأُ بِهِ فِي يَوْمِنَا هَذَا أَنْ نُصَلِّيَ، ثُمَّ نَرْجِعَ فَنَنْحَرَ، فَمَنْ فَعَلَ فَقَدْ أَصَابَ سُنَّتَنَا.



Honorable Muslims!

Today is the Eid al-Adha. It is an exceptional time when we submit our servitude to Allah and express our gratitude to Him (swt) for all the blessings He bestowed upon us. It is an offering by Him for those who bear the Prophet Ibrahim's faith, Hajar's loyalty, and the Prophet Ismail's submission. It is the day when the pilgrims enjoy the peace and joy of becoming pilgrims by going to Muzdalifah from Arafat, and to Mina thereafter where they stone the devil, and performing the tawaf al-ziyarah. Today is one of the rare times when we get closer to Allah (swt) by performing the worship of qurbani which is a distinctive sign of Islam.

Dear Believers!

It was an eid morning just like now, when the Prophet Muhammad (saw) left home to perform the eid prayer. Arriving the place to perform the prayer, he addressed his Companions as, "The first thing to do today



is to perform the eid prayer, and then perform the worship of qurbani. Those who follow this are in conformity with my sunnah.”¹

In the khutbah he delivered to his companions after performing the eid prayer, he gave the following good news to his ummah, “**A human does no action from the actions on the day of nahr (eid al-adha) more beloved to Allah than spilling blood (i.e. sacrificing the qurbani). On the Day of Judgement, it will appear with its horns, and hair, and hooves, and indeed the blood will be accepted by Allah from where it is received before it even falls upon earth, so let your heart delight in it.**”²

After the prayer and the khutbah, it was time to sacrifice the animal. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) warned the believers about treating nicely the animals to be sacrificed, and showing mercy and compassion to them as follows, “**Allah made it a fardh for people to act based on ikhsan, in other words to act nicely in every affairs. Then, whoever will sacrifice an animal should do it nicely.**”³ He placed the animal to be sacrificed on the ground facing the qiblah, recited the Basmalah and takbir, and then recited the following verses:

“I have turned my face toward Allah, Who created the Heavens and the Earth. I am not of the idolaters. Verily, my salah, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are for Allah. He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.”⁴

Dear Muslims!

Let us spend the days of the Eid al-Adha in conformity to the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) as he taught us. Let us bear in mind that we need to recite the takbir al-tashriq, starting from the fajr prayer on the Day of Arafah and ending with the ‘asr prayer on the fourth day of the Eid.

As members of the ummah of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) who says, “**Cleanliness makes up half of the faith**”⁵, let us pay attention to environmental cleanliness. We should bury deep in the ground any piece of diseased-looking meat from the sacrificed animal. For, in the event that stray cats and dogs eat such meat, they may transmit diseases to people.

1 Bukhari, ‘Eidayn, 3.

2 Tirmidhi, Adahi, 1.

3 Muslim, Sayd, 57; Abu Dawud, Dahaya, 10-11.

4 An’am, 6/79, 162-163; Ibn Majah, Adahi, 1.

5 Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 86.



We should also ensure that the animals to be sacrificed be slaughtered and apportioned at a clean place.

Dear Believers!

Eid days are the days of sharing, offering, and helping. We should bear in mind that our neighbors, relatives, poor people, orphans, and people in need have a share over our qurbani. Let us remember that we gain as much as we give out, and we get richer as much as we share out.

The silat al-rahim (maintaining family ties) is the essence of the days of eid. We should not consider the days of eid as an opportunity for off days only. Let us visit the elderly members of our family and show our care in their well-being, particularly our parents. Let us make the younger family members happy with little gifts. Let us ensure that the sick, the elderly, and the lonely people have their share from the joy of the eid.

Dear Muslims!

The occasions of eid are the days of forgiving and embracing one another. Let us regard the days of the eid as an opportunity to put an end to conflicts and hard feelings between our brothers and sisters. Let us fully enjoy the peacefulness and brotherly climate of the eid.

As I conclude the khutbah, I would like to congratulate the whole Muslim world for the Eid al-Adha. May Allah's (swt) peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you. May this Eid al-Adha bring many beauties for all of us.





EID AL-FITR

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَفْشُوا السَّلَامَ وَأَطِعُوا الطَّعَامَ
وَصَلُّوا الْأَرْحَامَ وَصَلُّوا بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِسَلَامٍ



Honorable Muslims!

We are grateful to once again reach the month of Ramadan whose beginning is mercy, middle is forgiveness, and end is salvation from the hell. Although we are sad that this blessed month has ended, we are also happy to have this morning of eid, with the feelings of solidarity and brotherhood spread all over the nation in waves. May endless praise and thanks be to the Almighty Allah (swt) who has let us reach the eid. May salat and salam be upon our Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (saw) who describes the days of eids as the days of joy, happiness and remembrance of Allah (swt). Eid Mubarak! I wish you all a happy eid!

Dear Believers!

We endeavored to seek the consent of Allah (swt) day and night, with fasting, tarawih and so on throughout the month of Ramadan. We tried to worship more, increase our good deeds, patience and repentance, nourish



ourselves with the Qur'an, and be embellished with taqwa (piety). While practicing the sunnah of our Prophet (saw) with muqabala, we shared our food with our loved ones and the people in need at iftar tables. We prayed that our zakat and sadaqah save us from the hunger for wealth and property, and from the greed of the world. While we felt the joy of being ummah in our mosques where takbirs and salawats were heard, we also refreshed our awareness of servitude to Allah (swt) with itikaf. We reviewed the past years, repented for our mistakes and sins, and sought refuge in the forgiveness of al-Rahman. Alhamdulillah, in the end of such a bountiful and blessed month, we have reached the morning of the eid.

Honorable Muslims!

Eid is a bestowal of Allah the Exalted (swt) to His servants who fasted in the month of Ramadan. Today is the time to come close to each other, to open the doors of our hearts and homes, and to share our happiness. Today is the time to bring the hope, gratitude, and joy of being a believer who rejoined with the eid to all the places we go.

Then, let us experience this joy with our parents, who deserve respect and kindness most, with our wives who are our faithful companions and the witnesses of our bad and good days, and with our children who are the little sources of joy and hope in our homes. Let us visit family elders, relatives, neighbors, and friends.

Let us ask each patient around us of their condition, and make each old person around us happy. Let us add meaning to our eid with the smile of the orphans, the needy, and the lonely.

In the morning of this eid, let us end the resentments and offenses between us as brothers and sisters with whom we turn to the same qiblah shoulder to shoulder. Let us strengthen the bonds of affection and trust between us by obeying the divine command of **إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ** “**The believers are but brothers.**”¹

Let us remember our relatives who passed away and our glorious martyrs who sacrificed their lives for our blessed homeland. Let us raise our hands and beg to Allah (swt) for our Muslim brothers and sisters in trouble, and

1 Hujurat, 49/10.





pray that Allah (swt) let them experience the eids to which they will also reach in peace, tranquility, and security.

Dear Muslims!

We are bidding farewell to another month of Ramadan. We know that our duty of servitude to Allah (swt) is not limited to the month of Ramadan only. The mosques must be filled with people not only at tarawih but also five times a day; the tables of needy people must be filled with food not only at iftar but also all the time; and the vitality of fasting and the generosity of sadaqah should be spread over the year. Indeed, the Almighty Allah (swt) invites us to spend every moment of our lives with the consciousness of servitude by stating in the Holy Qur'an, "**And serve thy Lord until there come unto thee the hour that is certain.**"²

In accordance with this command of Allah (swt) and by responding to this divine invitation, let us continue the good traits we have gained in the month of Ramadan throughout our lives. Although the month of Ramadan has come to an end, may the divine abundance and sincerity of the month of Ramadan always be in our lives.

With these thoughts and feelings, I would like to wish a happy eid to our nation and the entire Muslim world. May Allah the Almighty (swt) let this eid bring goodness to humanity.

I would like to conclude my khutbah with this hadith of Prophet Muhammad (saw): "**O people! Spread salaam amongst you, share foods with each other, observe your kinship relations and establish prayer while people sleep so that you can enter heaven safely.**"³

² Hijr, 15/99.

³ Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyamah, 42.





FAITH IN ALLAH

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صِدْقًا مِنْ قَلْبِهِ إِلَّا حَرَّمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّارِ...



Dear Muslims!

Allah the Almighty (swt) states in Surah al-Ikhlās which I have recited at the beginning of the khutbah, “Say: He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent.”¹

In the hadith I have quoted, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) states, “Whoever sincerely testifies that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger, Allah will save him from the Hellfire.”²

1 Ikhlas, 112/1-4.

2 Bukhari, ‘ilm, 49.



Honorable Believers!

Allah the Almighty is the Lord of the worlds. All kinds of praise and thanks, power and magnificence, supremacy and superiority pertain to Him (swt). Whatever exists in the heavens and on earth is owned by Him. Allah the Exalted has absolute power and endless wisdom. He is the one who creates death and life, bestows property and authority, and glorifies or abases those whom He desires. He is the one Who creates and continues to create. He is the one Who lets people live, gives livelihood to them, and feeds and protects them. He (swt) is the only one Who dominates in, executes and manages every field and moment of life. It is stated in the Holy Qur'an, "**Whoever is within the heavens and earth asks Him; every day He is bringing about a matter.**"³

Dear Believers!

Faith in Allah is the first condition of being honored with Islam. Believing in Allah's (swt) existence, oneness, uniqueness, and having no equivalence or partner, that is to say, adopting the tawhid belief is the basis of the principles of faith. The greatest right Allah (swt), Who created us from nothing and lets us live with His endless blessings, has over us is us having faith in Him.

Honorable Muslims!

Faith in Allah (swt) requires following the Prophet assigned by Him, living by the Holy Qur'an sent down by Him, and showing submission to His commands and rulings. Muslims do not consider faith in Allah (swt) as uttering some words only. On the contrary, faith in Allah (swt) makes it obligatory to know Allah (swt) by means of both the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), and to live a life in line with this faith. Having faith in Allah (swt) adds meaning to the lives of Muslims, guides their ideas and decisions, and affects all their relations with living and non-living beings. Therefore, the faith uttered by Muslims and takes root in their hearts is, in fact, the assurance of goodness on earth.

³ Rahman, 55/29.



Dear Believers!

Those who believe in Allah (swt) observe the consent of Him in everything they do. They protect the rights of their family, relatives, neighbors, and employees. They fulfill every job they have undertaken meticulously.

Those who believe in Allah (swt) know that even the smallest good deed will be rewarded and even the smallest evil will be punished. They do not attach more importance to the world than the Hereafter, and they live a life for which they can account.

Those who believe in Allah (swt) cannot be rude and oppressive. On the contrary, they value consultation in all their affairs. They adopt mercy and compassion as principle.

Muslims who believe in Allah (swt) are tightly bound to their homeland, fellow citizens, religion, and values. They may sacrifice their property and even their life, but they do not turn away from their sacred values.

Honorable Muslims!

Faith in Allah (swt) is a reliable guide to lead us to the true path in the world, and take us to heaven in the Hereafter. Our faith in Allah the Exalted is our most precious treasure as His servants. Spending a life with faith in Allah, accompanying our deeds with our faith, uttering the words of faith in our last breath, and leaving faithful generations behind are the wish of all of us.

I would like to conclude with the following words of the Prophet Ibrahim (as) as stated in the Holy Qur'an, **“He is the One Who created me, and He alone guides me. He is the One Who provides me with food and drink. And He alone heals me when I am sick. And He is the One Who will cause me to die, and then bring me back to life. And He is the One Who, I hope, will forgive my flaws on the Day of Judgement.”**⁴

4 Shu'ara, 26/78-82.





FALSE BELIEFS AND SUPERSTITIONS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ...إِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ اللَّهَ وَإِذَا اسْتَعَنْتَ فَاسْتَعِنْ

بِاللَّهِ



Dear Muslims!

One day the Prophet Muhammad (saw) was on a road trip with his paternal uncle's son Abdullah ibn Abbas and he gave him the following advices: "O young man, I shall teach you some words of advice. Be mindful of Allah and Allah will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, then ask Allah alone; and if you seek help, then seek help from Allah alone. And know that if the nation were to gather together to benefit you with anything, they would not benefit you except with what Allah had already prescribed for you. And if they were to gather together to harm you with anything, they would not harm you except with what Allah had already prescribed against you..."¹

¹ Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyamah, 59; Ibn Hanbal, I, 293.



Dear Believers!

The sublime religion Islam points out for all people the truths of faith and the paths to peace in this world and in the Hereafter. Islam wants people to worship, rely on, seek refuge in the mercy of, and ask help from Allah (swt) only. Accordingly, it rejects all false beliefs and superstitions. Islam regards it as a great sin to exploit people’s feelings and values by taking advantage of their lack of knowledge and desperateness. People, however, have from time to time failed to pay attention to such principles of the religion and found themselves hoping for help from fortunetellers, sorcerers, soothsayers, magicians, and mediums.

Honorable Muslims!

It is against the essence of Islam to assert claims about, and hope for help from practices such as, predicting the future, changing people’s fate, bringing luck, and offering cures. Because the future and ghaib (unknown/unseen) is known to Allah only. For He (swt) alone is the Most Powerful over all things. For He is the One Who provides us every piece of food we eat and every drop of water we drink. For at Him (swt) alone rests the remedy to sorrows, the cure to diseases, and the solution to problems. For He is the One Who at all times oversees us and responds to our heartfelt entreaties and sincere prayers.

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

It is never appropriate to make plans about the future by placing one’s hopes on fortunetelling, sorcery, and soothsaying while we have faith and trust in Allah (swt). It would be against the Islamic standpoint to suggest that one has obtained knowledge of people’s fates through observing the movements of stars. It would also be against the Islamic faith to attribute mystery and bad omen to numbers, days, months, and objects that have no ability and power to do or change anything. Among such practices prohibited by Islam are to view a piece of bead as holy for thinking it protects against evil, tying a piece of cloth to a tree, and throwing away coins into a pool of water in the hope that they bring good luck.

Dear Muslims!

Let us think for a moment. Why are those people, who claim to find solutions to other people’s problems through such illegitimate means as



sorcery and magic, not able to find solutions to their own problems? Why are those people, who exploit other people’s hopes through lies that they know what will happen in the future, not able to find the right path with the knowledge they claim to have? Why are those people, who deceive other people by telling them that they have cure for their illnesses, not able to use the same cure for their own illnesses?

Dear Believers!

In Surah al-Falaq, which I have recited at the beginning of the khutbah, Allah the Almighty (swt) states, **“Say, ‘I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak, from the evil of that which He created, and from the evil of darkness when it settles, and from the evil of the blowers in knots, and from the evil of an envier when he envies.’”**²

Let us then not spoil our clean human nature, created by Allah (swt) as fit for faith and inclined to do good, with false beliefs and superstitions. Let us strengthen our faith, which is our most precious treasure, with sincere feelings and our intentions with authentic religious knowledge. Let us make it a principle for a peaceful life to work and earn our livelihood through halal means, get treatment when ill, and seek for reasons to rely our efforts on. Let us not fall for hope-mongers who promote shortcutting the efforts through illegitimate means to earn a living. Let us ask Allah (swt) only for success, salvation, cure, and providence in this world and in the Hereafter. Let us always believe that He (swt) does not leave our prayers without a response when uttered in a heartfelt manner.

2 Falaq, 113/1-5.





FRIDAY PRAYER AND ITS CUSTOMS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا
الْبَيْعَ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ فِي الْجُمُعَةِ سَاعَةً لَا يَسْأَلُ اللَّهُ الْعَبْدَ فِيهَا
شَيْئًا إِلَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ إِيَّاهُ



Honorable Muslims!

Today is Friday. The most blessed and bountiful day of a week. Today is an eid of believers and a time of weekly meeting. It is an occasion of mercy and forgiveness, and brotherhood and friendship.

It is a unique spiritual climate that differs from the other days in terms of its value and merit. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) expressed the following about Friday, “The best day on which the sun rises is Friday. [On Friday] Adam was created, and on that day he entered Paradise, and on that day he was expelled from Paradise. And the Hour will come to pass on Friday.”¹

¹ Muslim, Jumu'ah, 18.



Dear Believers!

Today, our most important responsibility is to perform the Friday prayer. Because Friday prayer is a fardh for Muslims. Allah the Almighty (swt) states in the verse I recited at the beginning of my khutbah, **“O you who have believed, when [the adhan] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu’ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew.”**²

Neglecting Friday prayer without a valid excuse is a great sin. The Messenger of Allah (saw) warned us about this issue, **“Whoever does not establish Friday prayer three times because he does not care about it, Allah sets a seal on his heart.”**³

Honorable Muslims!

Every believer who wants to benefit from the barakah of Friday gets prepared for Friday prayer by complying with the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). They perform ablution properly and clean their body. They make a point of wearing clothes that are clean and suitable to satr awrat (covering the private parts). They know that it would not be good to come to mosque after eating stinky food. They wear nice scents. They behave in accordance with the soul of the worship and the awe of the community. They make effort to form close and regular ranks. They respect Friday prayer and avoid from making noise and disturbing the people who stand near them in the presence of Allah (swt).

Dear Muslims!

On this blessed day, another point we need to be careful about is the Friday khutbah. Khutbah is a call on the ummah from the minbar. It is a recommendation, reminder, and warning for Muslims. It is an invitation to iman, wisdom, and morals, and a call for the truth. Khutbah is also a must of Friday prayer. Khutbah is a worship, too, just like the prayer.

It a religious necessity to listen to the khatib (the person who delivers the khutbah) in awe, silently and by hanging on his every word. Talking with friends or playing with phones during the khutbah causes us to stray from the essence of khutbah and miss out the rewards of it. Sadly, I need

² Jumu’ah, 62/9.

³ Ibn Majah, Iqama, 93.



to say that such behaviors that are contrary to the soul of worship are becoming widespread among our community day by day. However, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) did not tolerate even speaking for warning a friend who speaks near us, and warned his ummah about this issue as, **“You are wrong even to say “Hush!” to your friend while imam reads khutbah on Friday.”**⁴

Honorable Believers!

Let us try to benefit from the bounty and blessing of Friday that is the best day on which the sun rises. Let us make this this day an opportunity to meet, become friends, and strengthen our brotherhood bonds. Let us take this opportunity to ask how we are doing, to share each other’s happiness, and to give hand to each other when one of us suffers. Let us look for ways to help the needy people, those who are short of money, and the ones who are in bad health. On Fridays, let us run to mosques with all members of our family as it was in the ‘Asr al-Sa’adah. Let us familiarize our children with Friday prayer and invite our young people to the peaceful atmosphere of Friday.

Let us remember that khutbah is a part of the prayer. Let us give our interest and attention only to khatib and khutbah while it is being delivered. Let us stay away from behaviors that do not suit the soul of the worship. In this time of acceptance when duas are responded, let us turn to al-Rahman with our bodies, minds, hearts, and feelings.

I would like to conclude my khutbah with these glad tidings of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), **“There is such a moment on Friday that if servants ask something, Allah certainly bestows what they ask to them.”**⁵

4 Muslim, Jumu’ah, 11.

5 Tirmidhi, Jumu’ah, 2.





GOODNESS INCREASES WHEN SHARED

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعِ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ
كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَلْبِرُ مَا اطْمَأَنَّتْ إِلَيْهِ النَّفْسُ وَاطْمَأَنَّ إِلَيْهِ
الْقَلْبُ، وَالْإِيمُ مَا حَاكَ فِي النَّفْسِ وَتَرَدَّدَ فِي الصَّدْرِ وَإِنْ أَفْتَاكَ النَّاسُ وَأَفْتَوْكَ



Dear Muslims!

Nine years had passed since the Prophet Muhammad's (saw) migration to Madinah. Islam was spreading in waves, and the souls thirsty of faith was flowing toward Madinah. Among those souls heading to Madinah al-Munawwarah to enter into Islam was a man named Wabisa. Having uttered the Kalimah al-Shahadah and honored by becoming a Muslim, he asked the Prophet Muhammad (saw) about what the good and the evil meant. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) held his three fingers together, tapped on Wabisa's chest, and said, "Goodness is the thing that brings your heart to peace and what you are comfortable with. Evil is the thing that makes you feel uneasy, doubtful, suspicious, and anxious even if people gave you a fatwa."¹

1 Darimi, Buyu, 2.



Honorable Believers!

With the expression of the Qur'an as the guide of our lives, goodness means to have faith in Allah, in the Last Day, in the angels, in the divine books, and in the prophets. It means to ensure that our faith is accompanied by good deeds. It means to spend from our loved properties for our close ones, for the orphan, for the poor, for those who were lost in a journey, and, in short, for all those in need. It means to perform prayer, to pay zakat, and to keep a given promise. It means to show patience in poverty, illness, and wartime, and to be thankful to Allah in wealth and health.²

Honorable Muslims!

Goodness is one's most profitable gain and the most valuable inheritance in life. It means to give an ear to the voice of a compassionate soul, to be a brother for the orphan, the source of happiness for the poor, and the helpers for the refugees and the immigrants. It means to give a hand, and open our house and heart for the oppressed. It means to protect the environment and not even hurt an ant. It means to treat compassionately all created beings for the sake of the Creator. It means to share one's food, pray, love, and sorrow.

Dear Muslims!

Nothing can and should surpass the approval of Allah (swt) in value for Muslims. They pursue goodness and good deeds without expecting to be appreciated by other people, and falling for arrogance, boastfulness, and pretentiousness. They seek out opportunities to be a source of goodness, motivated by the feelings of mercy and compassion as blessings by Allah (swt). They spend all blessings entrusted to them by Allah for the cause of gaining the consent of Him (swt).

Muslims are aware that they can be good in the real sense only when they spend what they love most in Allah's cause. They fight against evil by inviting to good and by increasing goodness. They take the following commandment of Allah as their principle for life, "**And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.**"³

² Baqarah, 2/177.

³ Fussilat, 41/34.



Honorable Believers!

It is deeply saddening that evil is all over the world today and those investing in it cause great sufferings for humanity. Muslims are exposed to oppression, pressure, and violence in the oppressed corners of the Islamic geography. Particularly, women and children who are squirming in despair, imprisoned, and forced to migrate are breaking our hearts. Yet, women are our mothers who teach us the unrequited good by stretching the wings of compassion upon us. They are our spouses who work for the increase of goodness in our homes, and for the happiness and peace to take root. They are our daughters as the light of our eyes and our prayers for goodness in both worlds. To hurt them, to condemn them to a world devoid of compassion and justice, to make them victims and oppressed are both a grave sin and a humanitarian crime.

Dear Believers!

Every good deed done is precious even if small. One can do many good deeds with their hand, tongue, wealth, knowledge, and experience. Even if small as the size of a date palm, the Almighty Allah (swt) makes it large as the Mount Uhud, as long as humans favor the good and take the side of the good, endeavor to let the good prevail the world by standing against the evil, wars, poverty, and violence. In this respect, the Messenger of Allah (saw) says, **“He who amongst you sees something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue, and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of faith.”**⁴

Honorable Muslims!

Let us follow in the footsteps of the good, conscience, justice, and compassion. Let us stand against the evil, the depravement, the oppression, the sedition, and the violence. It is the good that will change the world and save the future. Let us not forget that Allah (swt), the Lord of the Worlds, will certainly support those who endeavor to spread the good in the world, and will never leave them alone, nor unaided.

⁴ Muslim, Iman, 78.





HAYA' (PIOUS SHYNESS): THE ESSENCE OF ISLAMIC MORALITY

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا الزِّنَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ مِمَّا أَدْرَكَ النَّاسُ مِنْ كَلَامِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُولَى: إِذَا
لَمْ تَسْتَحْيَ قَاصِنَعٌ مَا شِئْتَ.



Honorable Muslims!

Islam aims to direct the emotions in the essence of human towards better in line with the principles determined by Allah the Almighty. It puts universal principles in place for human to avoid bad and unpleasant words and deeds, abandon evil, and embrace good deeds. Haya', which also includes conscience, compassion, and a sense of shame in it, comes on top of these principles, which not only direct human closer to attaining the approval of the Exalted Creator, but also regulate human relations in the social life.

Haya' is an inherent human feeling which ensures that human observes the boundaries of privacy and pursues good deeds. Appreciated by Allah (swt), this valuable faculty is the ornament of faith, and a basic inherent human quality. It is the most effective shield that protects believers against



sins. Haya' fills the believing hearts with love, respect, and trust; prevents extremism, thereby forming a peaceful society. In this respect, says our beloved Prophet (saw), **“One of the sayings of the early prophets which the people have got is: ‘If you don’t feel ashamed (out of Haya’) do whatever you like!’”**¹

Dear Muslims!

Our Lord Almighty (swt) mentions living a chaste life among the most valuable qualities to lead human to eternal salvation, as expressed in the Holy Qur’an, **وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأُؤْتُوا لَهُمْ حَافِظُونَ** **“And they who guard their private parts.”**² Right after the command of **“Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts.”**³, comes the command, **“And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision, guard their private parts, and not exposes their adornment...”**⁴ All believing men and women are obliged before Allah to avoid haram, and pursue a chaste life.

In an environment where societies lost moral and spiritual values in the darkness of the age of ignorance (jahiliyyah), our beloved Prophet (saw) insistently encouraged people to live a chaste life. In addition, after taking on the duty of prophethood, he (saw) drew attention to the unbreakable bond between faith and haya' by stating, **“The essence of Islamic morality is haya’.”**⁵ He further said, **“Haya’ does not bring anything except good.”**⁶

Honorable Muslims!

Our sublime religion Islam enjoins haya' and modesty on the one hand, and forbids zina (fornication and adultery) that disrupts such values on the other. According to Islam, zina is an act that the religion regards as a grave sin, the mind as foul, and the morality as unpleasant. It means to act against human nature, and to damage human’s honor and self-respect. It gives a feeling of worthlessness, and breaks the ties of compassion and love. It undermines the spiritual and moral values of the society by sowing the seeds of distrust, hatred, and grudge among people.

1 Bukhari, Adab, 78.

2 Mu'minun, 23/5.

3 Nur, 24/30.

4 Nur, 24/31.

5 Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 17.

6 Bukhari, Adab, 77.



Valued Believers!

There are many wisdoms underlying all the commandments and prohibitions established by Allah (swt). The most important wisdom underlying the commandment of being chaste and the prohibition of adultery is the protection of the family structure. Because extramarital relationships both cause the collapse of the institution of family and threaten the existence of pure generations.

Dear Muslims!

Being deprived of chastity and dignity is a disaster for humans. It is a painful situation that distances human from attaining the approval of Allah, brings them closer to the wrath, and drags them into never-ending frustration. Therefore, Islam forbids not only adultery but also the acts and behaviors that lead to it. No matter how small an immoral step may look in the first place, not avoiding such steps would possibly cause one to fall into haram. Our Sublime Lord (swt) warns us, **“And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way.”**⁷

Esteemed Believers!

Let us pay utmost attention to remain within the boundaries set by our religion and distance ourselves from the sins. Let us strive not to make even the slightest of a mistake that may lead to moral corruption. Let us put the dress of taqwa on and equip ourselves with chastity and haya'. Let us never forget that the life, the property, and the body we have are all entrusted to us by Allah, and that we all will be brought to account for each of these blessings. Let us not fall for the deceiving colors and the ephemeral desires of the life in this world. Let us always keep in mind that a Muslim who follows the path of revelation and fulfills the requirements of their faith will be glorious while those who follow their whims and desires will be in frustration.

⁷ Isra, 17/32.





HUMAN, FAITH AND LIFE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ذَاقَ طَعْمَ الْإِيمَانِ مَنْ رَضِيَ بِاللَّهِ رَبًّا وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ نَبِيًّا رَسُولًا



Honorable Muslims!

In the verse I have recited, Allah the Almighty (swt) states, “We have indeed created man in the best of moulds, then do We abase him (to be) the lowest of the low, Except such as believe and do righteous deeds: for they shall have a reward unfailing.”¹

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said in the hadith I have read, “Those who are content with Allah as their Lord, with Islam as their religion, and with Muhammad as their Prophet has found the taste of faith (iman).”²

Dear Believers!

Allah the Exalted (swt), the one and only Owner of the earth and the heavens, has created human in the perfect form. He has bestowed upon

1 Tin, 95/4-6.

2 Muslim, Iman, 56.



them a mind to distinguish between right and wrong, and a conscience to guide them on the path to goodness. As a strong and conscious being with free will and sense of responsibility, human is the treasure of the universe.

Allah the Almighty (swt), Who has created human from nothing, bestows upon them blessings to feed them, and protects them, wants them to have faith and do good deeds. The reason for the existence of humans is to bear the amanah as a servant, and to make the world a peaceful, fair, and livable home for humanity.

Dear Muslims!

Humankind has quite superior qualities, privileged power and abilities. They can intend to do good and manage life in a good way thanks to those qualities. But they can also desire evil and spread cruelty around the world. As they can build a happy world with their patient, determined, peaceful and fair attitudes, they can also endanger both themselves and their surroundings with their ignorant, selfish, ambitious, hasty, and ungrateful attitudes.

Therefore, our Lord (swt) never gives rein to human. He has not abandoned the universe after creating it. Allah (swt) always sees, looks after, and manages. He never leaves human alone, deprived of blessings, and helpless in life. He (swt) is with us each moment; closer to us than our jugular vein. The greatest support of Allah the Almighty to us is the guidance He gives us through His Prophet and His Book.

Dear Believers!

The divine law sent by Allah (swt) to humanity as a guide, a light of life, and a source of salvation which invites men of understanding to accept the guide of salvation brought by our Prophet is called religion. Religion came into being with the first human, and will exist until the last day. We all know as believers who came together in this holy masjid in this hour of Friday that **“The Religion before Allah is Islam.”**³ All humans until the Day of Resurrection are obliged to be one of the Ummah of our Beloved Prophet (saw), and to respond to his invitation. Because, **“If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good).”**⁴

3 Al-i 'Imran, 3/19.

4 Al-i 'Imran, 3/85.



Religion is the soundest source of knowledge where people can find answers to their questions, and solutions to their problems. Those who believe by responding the invitation of the religion have given the best decision of their life. They have been honored by becoming Muslims. They turned to Allah with their own choice voluntarily without being forced. They have sincerely accepted the commands and prohibitions of Him (swt). From that moment on, they are expected to fulfill the requirements of their faith, and to live as a believer does.

Dear Muslims!

Islam is a unique system of faith, worship, and morality. **أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ** Taking the kalimah al-shahadah by uttering these words is to open the gate to faith, hope, and happiness both for the world and the Hereafter. Those who enter through this gate perform their prayers regularly and meticulously. Prayer (salah) is the pillar of our religion and the light of our hearts. They fast zestfully and patiently. Fasting is the shield protecting us from being captive to our nafs and to Satan. They pay their alms (zakat) sincerely and kindly. Zakat is the bridge turning the ephemeral worldly belongings into eternal gain and brotherhood. They fulfill their duty of hajj devotedly and submissively. Hajj is the holy journey which makes people meet with themselves and other faithful hearts around the Ka'bah.

The aim of worship in Islam is to enable people to establish a sound communication with themselves, with Allah (swt), and with all other beings. For this reason, each worship requires to be completed with good morality. A way of life befitting to Muslims can be lived by observing the moral principles as well as the worships. It is an indispensable requirement of being Muslim to observe the rights, to not let cruelty and oppression, to spread mercy, and prevent violence. Making life blessed with justice, honesty, humbleness and generosity is the essential of a Muslim's personality. Let us not forget that those whose minds are with the truth, whose hearts are with goodness and whose possibilities are with beneficial deeds will fulfill the requirement of their faith.

May the Almighty Allah (swt) accept all the donations we have made up to now and we will make from now on.





HUMILITY EXALTS US

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَنْ تَوَاضَعَ لِلَّهِ تَخَشُّعًا رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ تَطَاوَلَ تَعَظُّمًا وَضَعَهُ اللَّهُ أَلْيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ



Honorable Muslims!

In the verse I have recited, Allah the Almighty states, “The servants of Allah the Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility...”¹

In the hadith I have read, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, “Allah shall exalt humble people on the Day of Judgment for showing humility for His sake. He shall degrade arrogant people on the Day of Judgment for showing disdainful pride.”²

Dear Believers!

Having good morals along with doing righteous deeds are the greatest manifestation of perfect faith in one’s life. This is because good morals

1 Furqan, 25/63.

2 Ibn Hanbal, III, 76.



are the most valuable asset to illuminate the life in this world and turn the eternal life in the Hereafter into heaven. We as Muslims believe that a life can lead to heaven with good morals only. On top of these good morals comes humility that will exalt us in the presence of Allah.

Humility is the quality or state of being unpretentious and modest. It means staying away from self-praise and boastfulness. It means adopting a life free of pride and arrogance. It means showing respect, compassion, and mercy to all living beings and treating them gently.

Dear Muslims!

We Muslims learnt humility from the Prophet Muhammad (saw). He led a simple and modest life.³ He valued and respected people for the sake of being human. He informed people that being humble is one of the characteristics of those people to enter to heaven.⁴ He warned us that looking down upon our Muslim brothers and sisters would be enough as an evil act.⁵ In one occasion, referring to the fact that humility was a personal trait that would exalt people in the presence of Allah (swt), he said, “...**Allah increases his dignity who is tolerant, and exalts him who is humble.**”⁶

Dear Believers!

Humble Muslims whose role model is the Prophet Muhammad (saw) know that the true Owner of all the blessings is the Almighty Allah (swt). They also know that all blessings in their possession are at the same time tools for them to be tested. They spend all their capabilities in the cause of attaining Allah’s consent and approval. They never place themselves in a superior position compared to other people, regardless of their level of authority or status, or richness. They believe that the superiority of people in the presence of Allah (swt) is measured only by their taqwa (piety).

Dear Muslims!

Islam aims to equip Muslim souls with humility on the one hand, and on the other hand, it warns them to be far from being arrogant to the extent

3 Muslim, Zuhd, 33.

4 Bukhari, Adab, 61.

5 Muslim, Birr, 32.

6 Muslim, Birr, 69.



possible. This is because, as expressed in the Prophet Muhammad's (saw) words, **“Arrogance means rejecting the truth and despising people.”**⁷

Arrogant people think the world turns around them. They belittle other people and turn their back on them. Muslims, however, should never despise anybody for any reason whatsoever. In this regard, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) warns us as follows, **“Allah has revealed to me that you should be humble and that you should not wrong one another.”**⁸

Dear Believers!

Muslims, just like in all their affairs, should not go to extremes in humility. This is because while they are obliged to lead a humble life, they are also responsible for protecting their own honor and dignity as well as those of their Muslim brothers and sisters. They maintain their dignified and temperate stance against people who depreciate Muslims. They do everything in their power to protect Muslims' honor and dignity. They take to their hearts the following commandment of the Almighty Allah (swt), **“Muhammed is the Messenger of Allah. Those who are with him are strong against unbelievers, but compassionate amongst each other...”**⁹

Honorable Believers!

Let us adopt humility in all domains of our lives. Let us not hurt anybody. Let us not sadden each other by falling for the temporary desires of this mortal world. Let us avoid arrogance, haughtiness and hypocrisy, which will turn our world into a prison and our eternal life into hell. Let us not belittle people or make a face at them. Let us not walk on earth arrogantly. Let us not forget that the Almighty Allah (swt) does not like those who self-praise themselves and are arrogant.

7 Muslim, Iman, 147.

8 Muslim, Jannah, 64.

9 Fath, 48/29.





IMAN AND ITS REFLECTIONS ON OUR LIVES

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: الْإِيمَانُ بِضْعٌ وَسَبْعُونَ شُعْبَةً، أَفْضَلُهَا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَوْضَعُهَا إِمَاطَةُ الْأَذَى عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ، وَالْحَيَاءُ شُعْبَةٌ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ.



Dear Muslims!

Iman means to believe in heart in the existence and oneness of Allah, His angels, divine books, prophets, the Last Day, and that qada and qadar are controlled by Him (swt). It means to acknowledge through heart and testify through tongue all the verities conveyed to people by the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

Honorable Believers!

In the case of the Prophet Adam (as), iman means not losing one's hope and not giving up on the struggle to deserve the Heaven again despite failing once. It means the spirit to stand up on one's feet again to make it to the end of the road despite toppling down along the way. It means constructing the ship of salvation in the case of the Prophet Nuh



(as). For a Muslim who gets on the board of the ship of iman, just by having faith in their Lord, will reach the eternal salvation after dropping anchor by the port of peace.

Iman is the remedy in the Prophet Ayyub's (as) house of suffering. It is the justice manifested at the tribunal of the Prophet Dawud. It is the knowledge and wisdom in the Prophet Sulayman's (as) realm. A person who is put on trials through poverty sometimes and wealthiness at others should not forget that they have the capability to pass through those trials. For Allah holds a person responsible only to the extent they can afford. He (swt) certainly provides a relief with every difficulty.

Honorable Believers!

Iman is manifested in the morals and manners of the Prophet Yusuf (as), and in the patience and prayers of the Prophet Yaqub (as). Iman is the source of the submission exhibited by the Prophet Ismail (as) through agreeing to his life being sacrificed by his father, and by the Prophet Ibrahim (as) through agreeing to sacrificing the life of his beloved son. It is a great uncompromisable and indispensable cause even though the Sun is offered in one's right hand and the Moon in his left, like in the case of the Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (saw).

Dear Muslims!

Iman is not a set of words, or emotions that cannot be manifested in the course of life. It is a unique power springing up in heart and spreading all over the body, and being exhibited in the actions. There is a strong tie between iman and all the aspects of life. In this respect, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) referred to this fact saying, "**Iman has seventy something branches. The most virtuous of them is **لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ** 'La ilaha illallah (there is none worthy of worship except Allah)' and the least of which is removing something harmful from the road. And modesty (al-haya') is a branch of faith.**"¹

Dear Believers!

Iman is reflected on the essence of a person. It adds meaning to life. It draws a direction to follow. It helps to establish good relations with oneself,

1 (Nasa'i, Iman, 16)



their family, society, and all the world of existence. It instills the consciousness to live a life in accordance with the purpose of creation.

Iman is manifested in one's words and actions. Mu'min (believer) is a good-mannered person from whose tongue and hand people are safe. They speak the truth when they talk. They have good intentions, are humble, honest, and merciful. They know that only that way they can get to and keep on the right path (sirat al-mustaqim).

Iman is reflected on the face of a mu'min. A mu'min who is aware that exchanging a smile with people is regarded as charity looks through loving and compassionate eyes. It refers to barakah (abundance) when manifested in one's livelihood, happiness in one's home, and salvation in the entirety of life.

Dear Muslims!

Having iman in heart truly and living a life by fulfilling what iman requires one to do is the only way of becoming a Muslim and of having rewards in the Hereafter. Then, let us embellish our iman with good deeds and good morals, which will turn the world into a peaceful place, and the Hereafter into paradise. Let us endeavor to live up to and spread around the values we believe.

I would like to conclude this khutbah with the following statement of Allah the Almighty in which He gives glad tidings to people who have iman and live up to the requirements of it, **“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”**²

2 Nahl, 16/97.





INDIVIDUAL AND PUBLIC RIGHTS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيِّ أَنْ يَعْلُومَنَّ يَأْتِ بِمَا عَلَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ تُؤْفَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا
كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَا يَأْخُذُ أَحَدٌ شَيْئًا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ حَقِّهِ، إِلَّا
طَوَّقَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَى سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.



Honorable Muslims!

One day the Prophet Muhammad (saw) asked his Companions, “Do you know who is a bankrupt?” His Companions there replied, “O Messenger of Allah, bankrupt is the one who has neither money nor any property.” Thereupon, he said, “The real bankrupt would be those who would come on the Day of Resurrection with salat, sawm, and sadaqah, but they will find themselves bankrupt on that day as they will have exhausted the good deed because they reviled others, brought calumny against others, unlawfully devoured the wealth of others, shed the blood of others, and beat others; therefore, their



good deeds would be credited to the account of those who suffered at their hands. If their good deeds fall short to clear the account, their sins would be entered in their accounts and they would be thrown in the Hellfire.”¹

Dear Muslims!

Islam is the religion of rightfulness, truth, law, and justice. The concept of “right” denotes both our responsibilities and the values we need to protect. Our source of life and peace, the revelations by Allah (swt) invite us to protecting the right. One of the Asma al-Husna (the Beautiful Names of Allah) is “al-Haqq”. For this reason, when people observe the rights, they actually take the side of the righteousness and the truth, that is the conformity to Allah’s (swt) commandments and consent.

Dear Believers!

Humans, from the moment they fall into the mother’s womb, have the right to life and the security of life. This principle is referred to in the words of Allah the Almighty (swt) as follows, **“Whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption done in the land, it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one, it is as if he had saved mankind entirely.”**²

Every person has the right to protecting their property and legitimate income. Engaged in haram are those people who gain property illicitly, deceive their customers by resorting to fraud in business, and do not pay, thereby stealing from, their employee’s rightful share.

People’s individual values, honor, chastity, and beliefs are inviolable as well. Insulting people’s values, defaming them, and damaging their reputation by uttering lies and slanders about them are considered to be among the worst violations of rights. The violation of rights is a crime according to our laws in force, and a grave sin according to Islam.

Honorable Muslims!

Being a Muslim requires all of us to adopt a middle-of-the-path approach, be conscientious and righteous in all domains of life. A distinctive sign of being a Muslim is to protect their own rights and the rights of other people

1 Muslim, Birr, 59.

2 Ma’idah, 5/32.



around them. People who encroach upon the rights of other people, as well as of animals and the nature, for personal interests and benefits are doomed to lose and go bankrupt in the end although they may seem to gain profit in the first place.

Being a responsible person conscious of the rights requires giving the rightful due to whoever has the right, particularly the family members in the closest circle. Respecting the rights of our parents, observing the rights of our spouses duly and lovingly, and protecting the rights of our children compassionately are all responsibilities upon us. It is a duty upon all of us to strive to ensure that the rightful due is paid for those involved in kinship relations, particularly those who are party to any business partnership, wedding, or inheritance.

Dear Believers!

The sphere completely influenced by the rights of individuals is that of the rights of the public. The rights of the public require us to be even more responsible compared to the rights of individuals. Failure to observe the rights of the public drag people to frustration both in this world and in the Hereafter. In this regard states the Almighty Allah (swt), **“No prophet could (ever) be false to his trust. If any person is so false, they shall, on the Day of Judgment, restore what they misappropriated, and then shall every soul receive its due, whatever it earned, and none shall be dealt with unjustly.”**³ Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) warned his ummah, **“Whoever takes a piece of the land of others unjustly, he will sink down the seven earths on the Day of Resurrection.”**⁴ On another occasion, he said, **“Whoever is charged with a work and earns wage in turn, everything that he gets except for this earning is the breach of trust.”**⁵

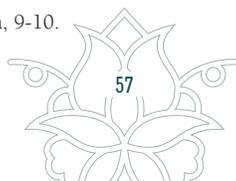
Dear Muslims!

Let us not forget that the relations based on righteousness lead to peace in this world and salvation in the Hereafter. Let us be careful not to infringe the rights of other people in our private life. Let us perform our public duties and services as conscious of them being entrusted to us for a given

3 Al-i 'Imran, 3/161.

4 Muslim, Musaqat, 141.

5 Abu Dawud, Haraj, Fay' wa Imara, 9-10.





period of time, keeping in mind that we are responsible even for the rights of orphans. This is so because any right of the public infringed and any waqf property damaged mean thousands of rights of individuals violated. Let us live in the know of the fact that just as every good deed has its rewards, every negligence and mistake will cause the violation of the rights of individuals and of the public.





INSIGHTFULNESS AND PRUDENCE AGAINST EXPLOITATION OF RELIGION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ
وَصِيصُكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ أَصْدَقَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَأَحْسَنَ الْهَدْيِ
هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ.



Honorable Muslims!

In the verse I have recited, Allah the Almighty states, “And, [moreover], this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way. This has He instructed you that you may become righteous.”¹

In the hadith I have read, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, “The best discourse is Allah’s Book. The best guidance is that given by Muhammad.”²

1 An’am, 6/153.

2 Nasai, ‘Idayn, 22.



Dear Believers!

Our sublime religion Islam is revealed to teach people about their Lord (swt), inform them of their reason for existence, and ensure their happiness in this world and in the Hereafter. Islam is a complete set of values and rules formed by the guidance of the Qur'an and the example of Prophet Muhammad (saw). Muslims have held on tightly to these values and endeavored to understand, tell about, and live by Islam correctly by conforming to these rules. From past to present, however, there have been people who have tried to exploit and abuse Islam, the religion of right, truth, and true path, for worldly interests and benefits.

Dear Muslims!

Exploitation of religion means to obtain material gain, power, fame, and high ranks through using the spiritual authority of the religion. Those who exploit religion attempt to have people's will handed over to them by claiming that they see and talk with Allah and the Prophet Muhammad. They try to show themselves as the single representative of the truth by uttering lies that they are infallible and innocent. They aim to manage pure and innocent Muslims with so-called karamah, dreams, bid'ah, and superstitions. They derive benefits from people's despair with promises to heal them and bring them good fortune and luck. They exploit the society's enthusiasm, dreams and ideals, religious beliefs and emotions particularly by targeting the youth.

Exploiters of religion ostracize those who do not think the way they do. They even otherize and declare polytheist those who do not show absolute obedience to them. They weaken family, national, cultural, and identity ties by conditioning people to be unquestionably obedient to them. They take lies, hypocrisy, theft, blackmailing, and violence as legitimate for their interests. In the end, they not only drift away from the true path but also make others go astray.

Dear Believers!

What falls upon each one of us is to act in an insightful and prudent manner. We need to stay alert to distinguish the exploitation attempts from sincere efforts. We need to learn and know the strong and reliable vessels of spirituality that have been feeding our religious life for hundreds of years.



We must not forget that one of the aims of those who want to distort and exploit Islam is to damage the Anatolian wisdom.

It is also a fact that deceiving people through their faith and religious values is as much an exploitation of religion as bringing Muslims under suspicion through slanders, insults, and raising fear and hatred about Islam.

Dear Believers!

As the members and followers of the final and perfected religion, we are granted reason and will by Allah the Almighty (swt). We have unchangeable religious principles, cultural values, and a 14-century old strong tradition of knowledge and wisdom. Let us know their value and not waste our treasure. Let us learn about our religion from experts, well-intended and authentic sources in order to prevent exploitation. Let us take only the unalterable truths of the Holy Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad's sunnah as our measure.

Honorable Muslims!

As I conclude this Friday's khutbah, I would like to remind once again an oft-mentioned issue. We need to act responsibly and sensibly in the fight against the pandemic disease. Let us not jeopardize ourselves, our families, our loved ones, and our society with careless acts. Let us, please, heed the warnings. Let us heed the warnings so that we can be sure not to be held responsible or that we are not in violation of the rights of other people.





ISLAM ENJOINS CLEANLINESS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: الطُّهُورُ شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ



Honorable Muslims!

In the verse I have recited Allah the Almighty states, “**Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves.**”¹

In the hadith I have read the Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, “**Cleanliness makes up half of faith.**”²

Dear Believers!

Cleanliness is an inherently human need that is also present in the essence of nature. What befits a person is to be clean, decent, pure, and elegant. Our sublime religion Islam considers cleanliness as an irreplaceable component of faith. It enjoins Muslims to purify themselves of material and spiritual impurities, and be clean and pure in all spheres of life.

1 Baqarah, 2/222.

2 Muslim, Taharah, 1.



Dear Muslims!

Cleanliness means to attain beauty not only materially but also spiritually. To distance oneself from spiritual impurities that exhaust the soul and blacken the mirror of heart... To reach peace by keeping clean both our inner and outer world... To abandon any wrongful attitude that makes us forget our servitude and reason for existence... To keep ourselves away from sin and haram... To purify ourselves from spiritual illnesses, such as anger and envy, grudge and hatred, lie and slander, and conceit and arrogance... To gravitate ourselves toward attaining the consent of Allah, good morals, and halal...

Dear Believers!

Muslims who make efforts to be spiritually purified also pay attention to their physical cleanliness. It is a virtue of Muslims to live clean and protect their health as something that is entrusted to them. Muslims who, by performing wudu (ablution), prepare for salah (prayer), which is the pillar of the religion and the apple of our eyes, happen to clean their limbs, which get dirtied the most, at least five times a day. They take care of personal hygiene as required by Prophet Muhammad’s teachings. They keep their bodies, clothes, homes, and surroundings clean.

Dear Believers!

The Prophet Muhammad refers to health as one of the two blessings, the value of which people are aware the least.³ Regret is naturally the ultimate feeling that haunts people who jeopardize their health because of carelessness.

Therefore, let us pay even better attention to cleanliness these days when we are going through a fight against the pandemic disease. Let us show our respect for our surroundings, love for our loved ones, and responsibility to Allah by observing the mask-wearing and social distancing rules. Let us regard public health as valuable as that of our own. Let us not forget that neglect in taking and observing measures is an undesired act before Allah (swt).

3 Bukhari, Riqaaq, 1.





LAILAT AL-BARA'AH (THE NIGHT OF FORGIVENESS)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ
أَنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِذَا كَانَتْ لَيْلَةُ النِّصْفِ مِنْ شَعْبَانَ قَعُومُوا لَيْلَهَا
وَصُومُوا يَوْمَهَا



Dear Muslims!

Time is one of the greatest blessings granted by the Almighty Allah (swt) to His servants. Time is a field of possibilities and opportunities which surrounds a human's life story entirely. Therefore, it is a unique wealth, every moment of which is precious and worthy of spending well. The ones who value and do not waste their time and the ones who follow the guidance of the Messenger of Allah (saw) by pursuing Allah's (swt) consent at every stage of their lives are going to be honoured with the blessings of the Almighty Allah. Wasting time, on the other hand, is the biggest loss and frustration for human.



Honorable Believers!

Regardless of any specific month, day or hour, every moment of ours spent with the awareness of servitude to Allah (swt) is valuable. But there are certain times that are bestowed as the times of divine grace and are the occasions for the acceptance of prayers and the forgiveness of sins. These periods of time are the signs of the infinite mercy of Allah (swt) on the people. Here is the Lailat al-Bara'ah that we shall comprehend this evening, it is one of such valuable times.

Dear Muslims!

The sacred months of Rajab and Shaban prepare us for the month of Ramadan both spiritually and physically. The first one, the month of Rajab, is blessed with Lailat al-Raghaib and Lailat al-Mi'raj. The middle one, the month of Shaban, leads to forgiveness and mercy by means of Lailat al-Bara'ah. The Messenger of Allah (saw) gave us the glad tidings that the worship, prayer, and supplications to be performed on Lailat al-Bara'ah are going to conduce to our forgiveness by saying, **“Spend the fifteenth day of the month of Shaban by observing a fast. And its night in prayer. Because, when the sun sets at that night, Allah the Almighty manifests Himself at the nearest heaven in a state which we cannot know of, and until the time of dawn He says, ‘Is there nobody asking for forgiveness? Forgive I shall! Is there nobody asking for sustenance? Sustenance I shall give him! Is there nobody suffering a calamity? Felicity I shall give him!...”**¹

Dear Believers!

Lailat al-Bara'ah is a time to open a path towards al-Rahman (swt) from the deepest part of our hearts. Lailat al-Bara'ah is high time for us to turn to Allah (swt) and repent and seek His mercy and forgiveness.

The most basic requirement of benefiting from this blessed night is to get ourselves away from the turmoil of life a bit and question our servitude. It is to ask ourselves the questions of ‘What am I busy with? Which goal do I live for? Where do my intentions and deeds bring me to?’ It is to turn to our inner world, review our past, and contemplate. It is to promise the Almighty Allah (swt) to be an obedient servant and a good person. It is to ensure redemption from the cravings of our nafs and to repent of our

1 Ibn Majah, Iqamat, 191.



mistakes and sins. Then, tonight is going to turn into an opportunity in real sense for us and be our certificate (i.e. another meaning of the word bara'ah) of salvation. Thus, the Almighty Allah (swt) states in the Holy Qur'an by addressing to the Prophet Muhammad (saw), **“And when those come to you who believe in Our verses, say, ‘Peace be upon you. Your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy: that any of you who does wrong out of ignorance and then repents after that and corrects himself - indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful.’”**²

Dear Believers!

Let us benefit from the teaching and barakah (abundance) of this night to receive the certificate of salvation in eternal life. Let us pursue Allah's (swt) consent in each breath. Let us shape our lives according to the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Let us remember that every moment of ours that we do not spend with the awareness of servitude to Allah (swt) is going to return to us as damage and loss.

With this occasion, I would like to congratulate your Lailat al-Bara'ah. May the Almighty Allah (swt) let this holy night bring prosperity to our noble nation, to the Muslim world, and to all humanity.

2 An'am 6/54.





LAILAT AL-MI'RAJ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي
بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: وَجُعِلَتْ قُرَّةُ عَيْنِي فِي الصَّلَاةِ.



Dear Muslims!

As observed in all periods of history, the polytheists of Mecca also knew no bounds in torture and oppression. They applied social and economic boycott against Muslims in order to prevent the invitation to Islam. Shortly after the boycott ended, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) lost both his uncle Abu Talib who had protected him and his beloved spouse and our mother Khadijah who had been his supporter during troublesome days. Thinking that our Prophet Muhammad (saw) became unprotected with their demise, the polytheists increased the oppression and torment which they deemed he (saw) deserved. Looking for a remedy, the Messenger of Allah (saw) went to Ta'if in order to convey the message of Islam. However, he was exposed to insults there as well. Moreover, he was stoned and his blessed feet drenched in blood. During such a period



when he was in need of consolation most, the Almighty Allah (swt) guarded his Beloved one and granted the miracle of al-Isra and Mi'raj to him.

Honorable Believers!

Allah the Almighty (swt) states in the verse I have recited at the beginning: **“Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.”**¹

Al-Isra is the night journey of our beloved Prophet (saw) from Masjid al-Haram in Mecca to Masjid al-Aqsa in al-Quds. Mi'raj is the name of the acceptance to the highest level from Masjid al-Aqsa.

Dear Muslims!

The Messenger of Allah (saw) returned from Mi'raj with three great gifts to his Ummah.² First of these gifts is the five daily prayers (salah), which is called by the Prophet Muhammad (saw) as **“the light of my eye”**³. Prayer is the manifestation of the powerful faith link between Allah (swt) and the servants. It is the spiritual rise of the believer who turns toward the qiblah and prostrates before Allah. Salah does not consist of certain gestures and moves only. Rather, it is a worship surrounding human both in physical, mental and moral aspects. A person who performs prayer is the one who is expected to have good morals and to be honest, modest, compassionate, and just. Therefore, Allah (swt) states, **“Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing.”**⁴

Another gift of Mi'raj is the last two verses of Surah al-Baqarah, which we know as “Amanar Rasul” and read after the ‘isha prayer every day. These Qur’anic verses remind us the principals of faith, consciousness of servitude, and the sense of responsibility. These verses state that we will give account for whatever we do in this world, and teach us how to pray and invoke Allah.

The last gift of Mi'raj is the herald that sins of the ones among the Ummah of Muhammad (saw) shall be forgiven if they do not associate any partners to Allah (swt) and will finally enter Heaven.

1 Isra, 17/1.

2 Muslim, Iman, 279.

3 Nasa'i, Ishrat al-Nisa', 1.

4 Ankabut, 29/45.



Honorable Muslims!

The bleeding trust of Mi'raj in our hearts is al-Quds and Masjid al-Aqsa. Called as “the land of peace and salvation” under the rule of Muslims for centuries, al-Quds now has been transformed into a land of occupation, oppression, violence, and sorrow. Those who disregard freedom of worshipping and violate the immunity of temples on one hand prevent Muslims from worshipping in Masjid al-Aqsa and on the other hand brutally murder the innocent Muslims while worshipping in the mosque in New Zealand during the Friday prayer.

It should not be forgotten that any despotism cannot prevent Muslims from worshipping in unity and peace in al-Quds, Masjid al-Aqsa, and in all other mosques of the earth. The oppressors who attempt against tranquility, peace and hope will be the victims of the fire that is lit by themselves. In this regard, Allah the Almighty (swt) expresses in the Holy Qur'an: **“And who are more unjust than those who prevent the name of Allah from being mentioned in His mosques and strive toward their destruction? It is not for them to enter them except in fear. For them in this world is disgrace, and they will have in the Hereafter a great punishment.”**⁵

Dear Believers!

May Lailat al-Mi'raj conduce to clearness in our minds, freshness in our hearts, and peace in our lives. Let us stand up (for qiyam) shoulder by shoulder by obeying wholeheartedly to the call of Allah (swt) for prayer. Let us prostrate (sujud) with the fruitfulness of Lailat al-Mi'raj. Let us remember the honor of faith and the responsibility of being a servant once more. Let us not refrain our hope and pray for reaching to the nights of Lailat al-Mi'raj when al-Quds and Masjid al-Aqsa are free.

May Allah (swt) let the Lailat al-Mi'raj conduce to the unity and togetherness, the rise and elevation of the Muslim world.

5 Baqarah, 2/114.





LIVING BY THE QUR'AN (LAILAT AL-QADR)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ
تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَكِ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَنْ قَامَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا
تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.



Honorable Muslims!

In the verse I have recited, Allah the Almighty states, “Indeed, We sent the Qur’an down during the Night of Qadr. And what can make you know what is the Night of Qadr? The Night of Qadr is better than a thousand months. The angels and the Spirit descend therein by permission of their Lord for every matter. Peace it is until the emergence of dawn.”¹

In the hadith I have read, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) gives the following good news, “Whoever spends the night of Qadr in prayer out of faith and in the hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven.”²

1 Qadr, 97/1-5.

2 Bukhari, Fadl al-Lailat al-Qadr, 3.



Dear Believers!

Inshaallah, we will welcome and enjoy the Lailat al-Qadr the night when the next Tuesday turns to Wednesday. The Lailat al-Qadr is a night full of divine blessings and offerings when our Lord's forgiveness, mercy, and compassion for His servants are manifested. It is the night when the Qur'an was revealed as a guide for humanity with clear proofs of guidance and the standard to distinguish between right and wrong. It is an exceptional night when humanity met for the first time with the light of the Qur'an and had the opportunity to see a unique horizon.

Dear Muslims!

The Lailat al-Qadr is precious because of the Holy Qur'an. This is because the Qur'an is a body of advice for humanity and a cure for the hearts. It is a source of mercy for Muslims. It is the light that illuminates people's path. The most beautiful of all words, it is the greatest blessing by Allah (swt) for us as His servants. It is the book of life to be read, understood, and lived by. It is a matchless guide for people to overcome hardships, make right decisions, and take solid steps leading to peace and success. It is a source of hope and divine blessings for the young and old, men and women, in short all people. It includes the most perfect provisions related to faith and behavior that people need most. In this respect, our Exalted Lord (swt) states, **“And this [Qur'an] is a Book We have revealed [which is] blessed, so follow it and fear Allah that you may receive mercy.”**³

Then, come! Let us contemplate on some verses of the Qur'an as a sign of our gratitude to Allah who enabled us to reach the Lailat al-Qadr when the Qur'an started to be revealed, as an indication of our obedience to the Prophet Muhammad, and as an eve of a new beginning in our lives.

Dear Believers!

The first message revealed was the commandment of “Read!”

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

The verse **“Recite in the name of your Lord who created!”**⁴ reminds us of the value of knowledge. It commands us to comprehend the revelation,

3 An'am, 6/155.

4 Alaq, 96/1.



know Allah, read and draw lessons from the universe of existence. It advises us to acquire knowledge in the name of and to obtain the appreciation of Allah only and to be useful for humanity.

The Qur'an teaches us about Allah the Creator. It instills a true description of Allah in our minds.

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ . اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ . لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ . وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

“Say, ‘He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent.’”⁵

This surah provides a summary of tawhid on which Islam is founded. It explains the oneness, singleness, and uniqueness of Allah. It informs that while everything needs Him, He does not need anything. It declares that our Lord (swt) is the owner and ruler of all things.

Dear Muslims!

Allah the Almighty has sent numerous prophets and divine books to guide people to the true path. However, people have deviated from common sense from time to time in history, and fell captive to their ambitions instead of walking in the path illuminated by the revelation. Allah (swt) have perfected His religion with the last Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (saw) and the last divine book the Holy Qur'an, completed His favor upon His servants, and has chosen Islam as the religion for them.⁶

“Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam.”⁷ The only way to obtain the appreciation of Allah and acquire the right to enter Paradise is to have complete faith in and live by the provisions of Islam.

Honorable Believers!

It is stated in the Holy Qur'an, our guidance to salvation, as follows:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّيْنَاهَا . قَالَ هَمْهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا . قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ رَزَقْنَاهَا . وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّيْنَاهَا

5 Ikhlas, 112/1-4.

6 Ma'idah, 5/3.

7 Al-i 'Imran, 3/19.



“And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it and inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness, He has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”⁸

The verses above inform us that Allah the Almighty has granted in the natural disposition of people the willpower and freedom to distinguish and make a choice between right and wrong, good and evil, and sin and merit. He (swt) asks people to use that freedom to choose righteousness over corruption, merits over sins, and worship over rebelliousness. Only then can they obtain the appreciation of Allah and attain eternal salvation.

Dear Believers!

To be a servant of Allah requires to be respectful to Him, not be rebellious against Him, not be ungrateful for the blessings He provides, and not ever forget Him (swt). This truth is stated in the Holy Qur’an as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

“O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims [in submission to Him].”⁹ Then, Muslims, with such awareness, should always obey Allah, be grateful for His blessings, and not forget about Him even for a moment. They should preserve their faith all their lives with such sensitivity.

Dear Muslims!

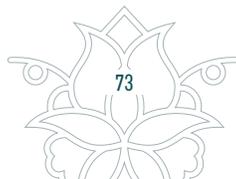
وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ

To be a servant requires to take the above verse as guidance for oneself which means, “Cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression.”¹⁰ It is for this reason that a believing servant should always observe the appreciation of Allah and strive for the benefit of humanity. They should cooperate in servitude to Allah and piety, and benevolence and kindness, and avoid any utterance of words or behaviors that may lead to sin and denial, and oppression and enmity.

8 Shams, 91/7-10.

9 Al-i 'Imran, 3/102.

10 Ma'idah, 5/2.



To be a servant means to be with and take as example those who are honest in their words and actions, intentions and faith, and respect and devoutness to Allah. It is to heed the verse,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are true.”¹¹

Honorable Believers!

In the Holy Qur'an, it is stated that people will go through numerous tests and trials in life in this world as fit for the purpose of creation.

أَحْسَبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ

“Do the people think that they will be left to say, ‘We believe’ and they will not be tried?”¹² It should not be forgotten that while many succeed in these trials, still many others fail in them. What falls upon us is to not forget that we are not created for no reason and left unattended. It is to strengthen our frontier of faith with our worship, good deeds, and good morals. It is to wholeheartedly have faith in the following good news from Allah (swt):

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا

“Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds - indeed, We will not allow to be lost the reward of any who did well in deeds.”¹³ For Allah the Almighty is the only owner of sovereignty. Good or evil, all is known to Him (swt). He never overlooks those who work in the cause of His appreciation, those who win hearts, those who make the poor happy, and those who render their lives prosperous as required by faith. He never leaves unanswered any good deed done and any effort put sincerely.

Dear Muslims!

Around the corner is the Lailat al-Qadr, about which Allah the Almighty states, as good news, that it is better than a thousand months. Let us know the value of and benefit from the divine blessings of this holy night. Let us

11 Tawbah, 9/119.

12 'Ankabut 29/2.

13 Kahf, 18/30.



take the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, which fills hearts with peace, as a blessing. Let us satisfy our spiritual hunger with the Qur'an. Let us reflect upon its verses, draw lessons from them, and open the doors of wisdom. Let us let the Qur'an communicate to us the divine truths. Let us instill hope with it in our hopelessness. Let us find cure with it for our spiritual troubles. Let us beautify our morals with it. Let us direct our lives with the revelation of Allah the Almighty. Let us live by the Qur'an for a life we can account for. Let us make it the guide for our lives.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish that the Lailat al-Qadr may bring prosperity to our noble nation, to the Muslim world, and to all humanity. May Allah the Almighty allow each and every one of us to welcome the eid with health, peace, and wellness. May He (swt) enable us as soon as possible to be saved from the pandemic that hit our country and the entire world.





HUMAN'S JOURNEY TO PERFECTION: ISLAM, FAITH AND BENEFICENCE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَآخَبَتُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا
خَالِدُونَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي لِأَحْسَنِ الْأَعْمَالِ وَأَحْسَنِ الْأَخْلَاقِ
لَا يَهْدِي لِأَحْسَنِهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ وَقِنِي سَيِّئَ الْأَعْمَالِ وَسَيِّئَ الْأَخْلَاقِ لَا يَقِي سَيِّئَهَا إِلَّا
أَنْتَ



Honorable Muslims!

One day while the Prophet (saw) was sitting with his Companions, a man came up, whose clothes were extremely white, whose hair was extremely black, upon whom traces of traveling could not be seen, and whom none of the Companions knew. He sat down close to the Prophet (saw) and asked, “What is Islam?” Allah’s Messenger (saw) replied: “To worship Allah Alone and none else, to offer prayers perfectly to pay the compulsory charity (Zakat) and to observe fasts during the month of Ramadan, and you perform the hajj of the House if you are able to take a way to it.”



He said, “You have told the truth.” Companions were amazed at him asking and [then] telling that He told the truth. Then he further asked, “Tell me about Iman/faith.” Allah’s Messenger (saw) replied: “**Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Apostles, and to believe in Resurrection, and that you believe the Decree, the good of it and the bad of it.**” He said again, “You have told the truth.” Then he further asked, “Tell me about ihsan/ beneficence.” Allah’s Messenger (saw) replied: “**To worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion then you must consider that He is looking at you.**” He also asked some questions about the apocalypse and left. Our Dear Prophet (saw), told Umar (ra) who witnessed the event: “**That was Gabriel who came to teach you, your religion.**”¹

Dear Believers!

Faith is the affirmation of Allah’s existence and unity and what Our Prophet brought from Almighty Allah, with the heart and the language. Faith is the bond of love and trust between the servant and Allah. Faith is the loyalty and sincerity promise of man who knows the purpose of creation. What is befitting to human beings, is to stand by this promise and fulfill its requirements.

Valuable Muslims!

Islam is to live as we believe and to reflect faith on our lives. To worship Allah with complete submission, to devote all our material and spiritual existence to His way, to obey his orders, to avoid prohibitions. It is this Muslim’s loyalty to Allah in His words, deeds and behaviors, and his willingness not to associate anything with Him.

Honorable Muslims!

The beneficence in the Gabriel hadith is the awareness of servitude and the peak of beautiful morality. Beneficence is to feel the presence of Our Lord in every moment of life, who declares that “...**We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein.**”² This is to live in the presence of Our Lord (swt) in divine supervision and blessings, in accordance with the “...**He is with you wherever you are. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing.**”³ verse, in the spirit of needing His favors and His support.

1 Bukhari, Iman, 37.

2 Qaf, 50/16.

3 Hadid, 57/4.



Dear Brothers and Sisters!

To believe, to carry out the worship of Islam, and to act with the consciousness of beneficence, is like steps that complement each other. A person who believes in Allah and the verities that He has revealed will of course strive to be a sincere Muslim by not disrupting or hindering his worship. The indispensable necessity of faith and worship is to have good morals. The person who believes but does not perfect it with worship and good morality, is in a misadventure. A person who is not crowning his morality with faith and worship will be deprived of the contentment of Allah. Anyone who is worshipping, but who has a weakness in terms of faith and morals, cannot see the benefits of the worship which remains as only a form, not the full content of worship. Therefore, every person who is pleased being a servant of Allah, Islam as a religion, Muhammad (s.a.w.) as the Prophet, should beautify their faith, worship, and morality altogether. That is when the believer will receive this herald of the Holy Qur'an: **“Indeed, they who have believed and done righteous deeds and humbled themselves to their Lord - those are the companions of Paradise; they will abide eternally therein.”**⁴

Honorable Muslims!

Let us not deprive our soul of a blessing such as faith, a food such as worship, a consciousness like beneficence. Because all kinds of good, auspiciousness and the base of verity, the meaning of being human, and the value of servitude are hidden in these three ores.

Let's be sincere and diligent on the road to servitude. Let us keep in mind that every word that is poured out of our tongue, every work that is out of our hands, every view we see with our eyes, every step we take has a return on the level of Supreme Allah.

I conclude my khutbah with the prayer of Our Dear Prophet (saw): **“O Allah, guide me to the best of deeds and the best of manners, for none can guide to the best of them but You. And protect me from bad deeds and bad manners, for none can protect against them but You.”**⁵

4 Hud, 11/23.

5 Nasa'i, Salah, 16.





MOSQUE AND LIFE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ
يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَحَبُّ الْبِلَادِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَسَاجِدُهَا



Honorable Muslims!

In the verse I have recited, the Almighty Allah (swt) states, “The mosques of Allah are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and establish prayer and give zakah and do not fear except Allah, for it is expected that those will be of the [rightly] guided.”¹

In the hadith I have recited, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, “... The most beloved places on Earth to Allah are its mosques.”²

Dear Believers!

Islamic civilization is centered around the mosque. Mosques are the holy places that have borne witness the social life from the past to the

1 Tawbah, 9/18.

2 Muslim, Masajid, 288.



present, where the Islamic places develop and Muslims unite. It is the heart of our streets, the spirit of our cities, and the safe haven for the Muslim ummah. They are not only places for worship, but also hubs where our history, literature, customs and traditions, and culture are intertwined.

Dear Muslims!

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) placed a special emphasis on building mosques and masjids. Upon the Hijrah from Mecca to Madinah, first of all, he built the Masjid al-Nabawi. He turned Yathrib into Madinah, and the Masjid al-Nabawi into the cradle of science and knowledge. That way, the Messenger of Mercy (saw) actually designed a city model centered around the mosque and established strong ties between the mosque and the life. It was the Masjid al-Nabawi where he laid the foundations of the Islamic civilization that has shaped everywhere it reached with justice, wisdom, compassion, peace, safety, and knowledge since the 'Asr al-Sa'adah. In the Suffa, a special section in the Masjid al-Nabawi, a group of young and self-sacrificing Companions who devoted themselves to knowledge and worship turned out to be the forerunners of a benevolent generation. On one occasion, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) gave the good news that Allah will let those people whose hearts are connected to masjids enjoy the shade of the sky on the Last Day.³ In this regard, he encouraged Muslims to build and improve mosques that are the apple of the eyes of cities by saying, **“Whoever builds a masjid for Allah, Allah will build for him a house like it in heaven.”**⁴

Dear Believers!

Just as we need to eat, drink, and work, and just as they are important to us, it is also necessary and valuable to center our lives around mosques. This is because mosques are exceptional places where we can listen to our own self in the rush of the daily life, and under the domes of which we can submit our servitude to Allah (swt). They help us as Muslims to strengthen our brotherhood and consolidate our unity and togetherness. They are the blessed places that unite our bodies, as well as our hearts, as clear of all kinds of selfishness. Mosques, for all of us, are sometimes places of peace and tranquility, and sometimes sources of hope and consolation.

³ Muslim, Zakat, 91.

⁴ Muslim, Zuhd, 44.



Dear Muslims!

The sound of the adhan rising from the minarets does not only call us to performing prayer five times a day. Mosques, together with their adhan, minaret, dome, mihrab, and minbar, invite people to servitude, worship, piety, knowledge, and good morals as well. Then, Muslims who submit their servitude to Allah by standing in prayer should be aware that He (swt) oversees them outside mosques as well. Standing side by side in the same row with iman and ikhlas (sincerity), they are responsible to always protect and take care of their brotherly relations. Muslims, who build and improve mosques, also protect and beautify the environment they live. They do not damage a growing plant by itself, nor do they harm an ant in pursuit of its own sustenance. Muslims, who keep their mosques clean, also keep clean the world, the entirety of which is made a masjid for Muslims by Allah (swt).

Dear Muslims!

How sad it is that today, when we are taken down by getting isolated and alienated, our mosques are gradually losing their position of being the heart of cities. However, the only places that will welcome us like a compassionate mother are our mosques. Our exhausted souls will rest in mosques, our spirituality will get stronger in mosques, and our search for meaning will be responded in mosques.

Then, come! Let us center our lives around the mosques again. Let us take a break from our busyness during the prayer times, whether we are a superior or a subordinate, an employer or an employee, a business owner or a student of any walk of life. Let us all, women or men and children and elderly, go to mosques and be revived in mosques. Let us not leave our mosques unattended and abandoned. Let us attain true peace by standing for prayer in mosques for Allah (swt). Let us not forget that mosques are in the center of life and full of life.

Dear Believers!

I would like to take this opportunity to wish Allah's mercy upon the deceased religious officials, who guide our life starting with the adhan, and the deceased members of our congregation, which is the most valuable wealth of our mosques, and to wish health and a long life for those alive yet. May Allah never leave our homeland without mosques, our mosques without congregation, and our minarets without adhan.





MOSQUES FULL OF CHILDREN, CHILDREN FULL OF QUR'ANIC MANNERS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَا نَحَلَ وَالِدٌ وَلَدًا مِنْ نَحْلِ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ آدَبٍ

حَسَنِ.



Honorable Believers!

Allah the Almighty (swt) states in the verse I have recited: “**This is a blessed Book which We have revealed to you so that they may contemplate its verses, and people of reason may be mindful.**”¹

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) reminds us in the hadith I have just read: “**No father can leave a better heritage to his child than good manners.**”²

Dear Muslims!

Every child is born with the innate inclination to believe in, love, and be connected to Allah (swt). It is human nature to turn towards what is

1 Sad, 38/29.

2 Tirmidhi, Birr, 33; Ibn Hanbal, IV, 77.



good, prefer what is pleasant, and search for the truth. The inner compass, since childhood, points to what is true and authentic. However, the paths children follow differ, their beliefs are formed, and their manners are changed as they grow up, under the influence of their parents and circle of friends.

Honorable Believers!

Our children are among the most precious blessings bestowed upon us by Allah (swt) that we need to hold in trust. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (saw) encourages us to appreciate the value of and look out for our children as rare treasures entrusted to us. There is a delicate balance of rights and responsibilities between parents and children. The greatest right our children have on us is for us to protect them from all kinds of evil by preserving their pure and uncorrupted nature.

Dear Believers!

Children are the apples of our eyes and hopes of our future. We are responsible for meeting their non-material needs as well as their material needs. Our fundamental duty is to ensure that our children know about the Almighty Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (saw), that they have acquired the habit of worship, and that they are instilled with good manners. We should embellish their innocent hearts and clear minds with knowledge, wisdom, and decency. We should keep them away from all kinds of perverted ideas, immoral behaviors, superstitions, and bid'ah. We should exert efforts to rear them as sincere believers who lead their lives with the Holy Qur'an in their hands and faith in their hearts. We should not forget that it is the essential responsibility of each one of us to leave behind a beautiful young generation who knows the Book of Allah (swt), takes the Messenger of Allah (saw) as their role model, and is loyal to their homeland and fellow citizens.

Dear Muslims!

It is among the signs of being a believer to recite the Holy Qur'an beautifully, understand it in the most correct way, and live by it in every phase of their life. It will be easier for our children to lead a life as described above if we ensure that they, from their early years on, read the Qur'an, and are familiar with the core values of Islam. Children are more inclined to the warm and sincere call of the Qur'an, and to its spiritual offerings, than any of us are. Childhood is the best and most appropriate time to learn our sublime



religion, to acquire the habit of such worships as prayer and fasting, and to adopt such virtues as honesty and compassion. If we want to instill the love for the Qur'an in our children, and to ensure that they take the first steps into a life that will continue in the light of the Qur'an, the summer vacation is a unique opportunity.

Dear Muslims!

We would not like our children, who are easily attracted by the technology, to waste their days in front of computer and phone screens. Therefore, it is our duty to save our children from addiction to technology, and to create opportunities to strengthen their mental and physical health. One of the greatest opportunities to help develop the hearts of our children and enrich their dreams and ideals is the courses of the Qur'an. Our mosques are going to spring up flowers, and our courses are going to be filled with joy with the presence of our children. In addition to the lessons on faith, worship, and morals, our children will have fun while learning through social and cultural activities. We welcome all our children, and pray Allah (swt) for a successful, auspicious, happy, and healthy future for all of them.





MUSLIMS ARE BENEFICENT NEIGHBOURS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ
وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا
مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: خَيْرُ الْجِيرَانِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرُهُمْ لِعَارِهِ.



Dear Muslims!

Allah the Almighty (swt) states in the verse I have recited: “Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful.”¹

The Messenger of Allah (saw) states in the hadith I have read: “The best neighbor in Allah’s estimation is the one who is best to his neighbor.”²

1 Nisa, 4/36.

2 Darimi, Siyar, 3; Tirmidhi, Birr, 28.



Dear Believers!

Neighborhood is an inseparable part of our social life. Our neighbors are the people with whom we encounter every day, to whose soothing and trustful greeting we are accustomed, and who stand by us when we need. Our village, quarter, district, province, and country also have neighbors. The main principle in all neighborhood relations is equity, kindness, respect, and mercy. A neighbor who has ethical virtues, respects humanitarian values, and protects the honor and dignity of their neighbor is one of the biggest blessings of the life in this world.

Honorable Muslims!

Neighbors have so many rights upon each other that Our Beloved Prophet (saw) states: **“Gabriel kept on commending the neighbor to me so that I thought he would make neighbors an heir to each other.”**³ Favoring the neighbors and being nice to them, with the expression of the Prophet (saw), is a necessity of being a believer.⁴

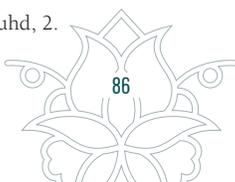
Believers do not leave their neighbors alone and helpless, in accordance with the maturity of their faith. They support their neighbors both materially and spiritually for whatever they need. So much so that a believer woman knows while even cooking that it is the Prophet’s (saw) recommendation to add some extra water to the soup for the favor of her neighbor. It is a neighborhood duty to share good and bad days, visit them when they are sick, be present at their funeral, and look out for their family members in case of their death.

Dear Believers!

How sorrowful it is that so many neighbors who live under the roof of the same building and lean on the same wall in the evenings do not know each other today. Neighbors deny each other to even a greeting, the pains suffered are heard after days and happiness stays within the walls of houses. Today’s people neglect their souls and hearts in the rush of life and fail to notice the neighborhood relations that can help to solve their problems. With the weakening of neighborhood relations, unfortunately, our good characteristics such as knowing, understanding, tolerating, and forgiving each other are disappearing.

3 Tirmidhi, Birr, 28.

4 Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 24; Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 2.



Honorable Believers!

Let us, the believers, question ourselves at this time of Friday about to what extent we comply with neighborhood ethics and rights. Let us not neglect to greet our neighbors warmly and sincerely, ask how the children are, and smile to the young people. Let us share the grieves and joys of our neighbors. Let us pay attention to the graveness of the warning of our Prophet (saw) who says: **“He will not enter Paradise whose neighbor is not secure from his wrongful conduct.”**⁵ Let us pay ultimate attention not to hurt our neighbors by our hands or words. Let us accept this hadith of our Prophet (saw) as touchstone: **“A man is not a true believer who fills his stomach while his neighbor is hungry.”**⁶ Who was the last neighbor of ours that we visited or hosted in our house? Let us ask ourselves.

Dear Muslims!

Establishing good relations with neighbors is a necessity of our faith just like worship. Our ethics require making the senses of love, respect, cooperation and solidarity dominant in our neighborhood relations.

Let us ask all the good we ask for ourselves for our neighbors, too. Let us protect our neighbors from all the evils we do not desire for ourselves. Let our hearts be neighbors, as well as our bodies.

5 Muslim, Iman, 73.

6 Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra, X, 7.





MUSLIMS: REPRESENTATIVES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND INVITERS TO TRUTH

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِيرٌ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا وَبَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا.



Honorable Believers!

Allah the Almighty (swt) states in the Holy Qur'an as follows: **“O you who covers himself [with a garment], arise and warn! And your Lord glorify.”**¹ The verses above that were revealed on the first days of Islam in Mecca call on the Prophet Muhammad (saw) to ready himself and rise, assume responsibility and communicate Islam, the religion of tawhid, to people. The name of this sacred duty that the Prophet Muhammad honorably assumed and bequeathed to his ummah is called tabligh.

Dear Muslims!

Allah the Almighty wants us to continue the duty of tabligh with an awareness extending beyond time and place by stating, **“And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining**

1 Muddaththir, 74/1-3.



what is right and forbidding what is wrong.² Then, we must invite people to the truth and righteousness undauntedly and tirelessly.

Allah the Almighty informs that tabligh requires common sense and sensitivity by stating, **“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best.”**³ Then, we must employ a peasant discourse and behave patiently and politely while inviting people to the truth.

Dear Believers!

Each of us is as much tasked with the duty of tabligh as representation. Every Muslim is responsible to live by the high values they disseminate, by firstly observing the boundaries of Islam in their own lives, and by being coherent in their words and actions. In this regard, our Lord’s warning is quite clear: **“O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do? Great is hatred in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do.”**⁴

Dear Muslims!

Our Lord (swt) states, **“And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah and does righteousness and says, ‘Indeed, I am of the Muslims.’”**⁵

Let us make the utmost effort to tell about the unshakable truths of the sublime religion Islam and live by them in order to be the addressee of the above appraisal. Let us take as example the Prophet Muhammad’s method of tabligh who says, **“Make it easy, and not difficult. Give good news, and not cause hatred.”**⁶ Let us act sensibly in our invitation and guidance efforts in order not to cause damage unintentionally while working to uphold the good through good intentions.

Dear Believers!

As I conclude this Friday’s khutbah, I pray to Allah the Almighty that the new Hijri year may bring along health, peace, and abundance of divine blessings for our great nation and all humanity. Also, I would like to point

2 Al-i ‘Imran, 3/104.

3 Nahl, 16/125.

4 Saff, 61/2-3.

5 Fussilat, 41/33.

6 Bukhari, ‘ilm, 11.



out to another issue that requires us to be sensible about. Let us behave in a way that would best suit a Muslim in order to protect both ourselves and the people around us from the pandemic disease facing us. Let us be role models with our carefulness and seriousness in observing the measures. Let us politely warn people against neglectful behaviors. Let us not forget that it is a great irresponsibility before Allah and a violation of the rights of other people to act carelessly while this disease, which we can beat together, is still among us.





MUSLIMS TAKE PRECAUTION AND RELY ON ALLAH FOR HIS DISCRETION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ^١ وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ^٢ وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ^٣ وَالَّذِي
يُمِيتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ^٤



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ دَاءً إِلَّا أَنْزَلَ لَهُ شِفَاءً.



Honorable Muslims!

Illnesses, whether minor or major, are among the tests for people in this world. Throughout the history, many illnesses have been treated with the help of Allah (swt) and the effortful researches of people. Inshaallah, the cure will also be found for the Covid-19 pandemic that spread all around the world today. In this respect, as the Prophet Muhammad (saw) stated, “**There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also has created its treatment.**”¹ Our responsibility is to take all precautions not to contract the illness.

1 Bukhari, Tibb, 1.



Dear Believers!

In order to be safe from this pandemic, let us first pay attention to bodily, clothing, food, and environmental cleanliness. Let us frequently ventilate the places we live in. When we cough or sneeze, let us cover our mouth and nose with single-use tissues or with the inside of our elbow. Let us try to stay out of crowded places.

Let us keep clean particularly lavatories, toilets, places to perform ablution, door handles, and desktops with which our hands contact frequently. Let us wash clean our hands with soap and water by rubbing better than ever. Let us not touch our eyes, nose, or mouth if our hands are not clean. Let us use our fingers or personal misbaha instead of using the shared misbaha in mosques.

If we have recently returned from abroad, let us pay attention to staying home and not going out for fourteen days. We should make sure that those who have returned from umrah pay attention to this issue and not receive guests.

Dear Muslims!

We are a sincere and warm-blooded nation. We love shaking hands and hugging each other. These practices are, of course, fine and valuable. However, it is a requirement of being responsible and taking precautions to avoid such practices at a time like this, when contagious illnesses are widespread. Let us particularly suspend the commonly practiced handshaking after the prayers in mosques. Let us greet each other and have our conversations from a distance without shaking hands.

People above a certain age are in the risk group and more vulnerable to coronavirus. Therefore, elderly people had better rest at their homes and avoid crowded places.

Dear Believers!

Health is a blessing entrusted to us by Allah (swt). What falls upon Muslims is to preserve what is entrusted to them and do their best to look after their health. This way we attain peace thanks to the help of Allah. And this way we find solutions to our problems and cure to our illnesses. In this respect, the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) speaks of Allah in the Holy Qur'an as follows: **“It is He who created me and guides me. It is He who feeds**



me and gives me drink. When I am ill, it is He who cures me. It is He who will cause me to die and then bring me to life.”²

So, let us be precautious to look after our own health and that of the people around us in the face of this pandemic. Let us not forget that, otherwise, we endanger both our health and that of others, which means a violation of their rights.

Without a doubt, Allah has a decree in this regard. The responsibility of the Muslim is to take precautions. The Muslim is moderate and balanced in all situations. It is a duty upon all of us to fight, in a calm manner and using our reason and knowledge, against this pandemic, without downplaying it or getting panicked.

² Shu'ara, 26/78-81.





OUR HOME EARTH IS ENTRUSTED TO US

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِنْهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ قَامَتْ عَلَى أَحَدِكُمُ الْقِيَامَةُ وَفِي يَدِهِ فَسِيلَةٌ
فَلْيَغْرِسْهَا.



Honorable Muslims!

Pondering over carefully, we can see that all creatures around us, from tiny little ants to inconceivably large planets sailing in their orbits, are all Allah the Almighty's works. With His unexampled power and inimitable artistic style, our Lord (swt) has created countless kinds of living beings. Each and every single one of them is a blessing for and entrusted to us. In the verse I have recited at the beginning of the khutbah, this truth is referred to as follows, “**And He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth - all from Him. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.**”¹



1 Jathiyah, 45/13.

Dear Believers!

The sole authority to determine the value of all things is Allah (swt). Having created each creature for a specific reason to serve a specific purpose, Allah the Almighty states, **“And We did not create the heaven and earth and that between them in play.”**² The universe is a balanced and sublime whole with all its atoms having certain meanings. All created beings on this planet on which we came to life have a distinctive function and value.

Dear Muslims!

Allah has not created a universe distant and independent of His watch. All creatures speak of and belong to Him (swt). By Him is overseen all existence. This is referred to in the Holy Qur’an as, **“Whoever is within the heavens and earth asks Him; every day He is bringing about a matter. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?”**³

In this regard, we are responsible towards the nature and the environment, as our respect for the Lord’s work and sovereignty would require. Causing harm and damage to the nature by going against Allah’s rules and laws means the negligence of our responsibilities towards Him (swt).

Dear Believers!

We are the members of the Prophet Muhammad’s (saw) ummah, who would view affectionately even a mountain and say, **“We love Uhud, and Uhud loves us.”**⁴ We follow his path, who says, **“If the Resurrection were established upon one of you while he has in his hand a sapling, then let him plant it.”**⁵ We take him as our guide and example who would always warn his Companions about protecting the rights of all animals.

Dear Muslims!

We are going through bitter times when on the one hand tons of bread are wasted and thrown in the garbage, and on the other hand many people lose their lives due to hunger and poverty. How sad it is that today humans who are the captives of their worldly desires and ambitions fail to establish a friendly, fair and humane relationship with the nature. They set on fire

2 Anbiya, 21/16.

3 Rahman, 55/29-30.

4 Bukhari, Maghazi, 82.

5 Ibn Hanbal, III, 184.



forests that are the source of breath for all living beings, turn into desert the earth, with the products grown on which we feed ourselves, and pollute the rivers that satisfy our thirst.

For how long will we have to put up with the fact that tons of food are being wasted in the garbage while our civilization considers unwelcome even a tiny little bit of bread crumb thrown away on the ground? For how long will we carelessly keep recyclable waste in containers on the streets?

We should know, however, that we can be peaceful and healthy to the extent we treat the nature with love and compassion. Otherwise, the damage will not hit the nature only, but us, as well. In this regard, humankind is warned in the Holy Qur'an as follows, **“Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness].”**⁶

Honorable Believers!

We humans are the vicegerent of Allah the Most Merciful (swt) on earth. Being a vicegerent means being held responsible; that is, being the protector of the earth, not its landlord. It means making use of the earth in accordance with Allah's approval. It means not spoiling and damaging the earth.

Then, let us be more sensitive towards the nature that is entrusted to us by our Lord, the Creator and the Ruler. Let us not forget that one day we will be brought to account for everything by the Owner of all things entrusted to us. Let us continue our lives as conscious of the fact that the earth belongs to not only humans but also all living beings.

6 Rum, 30/41.





PHYSICAL PRIVACY AND ISLAMIC DRESSING

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بَيِّ أَدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي سَوَاتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَى ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ ذَلِكَ
مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حَلِيمٌ حَيُّ سِتِيرٌ يُحِبُّ الْحَيَاءَ
وَالسَّتْرَ...



Honorable Muslims!

In the verse I have recited, Allah the Almighty (swt) states, “O Children of Adam! We have provided for you clothing to cover your nakedness and as an adornment. However, the best clothing is righteousness. This is one of the signs of Allah, so perhaps you will be mindful.”¹

In the hadith I have read, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, “Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, is forbearing, modest and concealing, and He loves modesty and concealment.”²

1 Araf, 7/26.

2 Nasa'i, Ghusl, 7.



Honorable Muslims!

Our bodies, just like our souls, are great blessings bestowed upon and entrusted to us by Allah (swt). Every believing man and woman is obliged to protect it. In this respect, our bodies, just like all blessings bestowed upon us, have rights over us. All believers in the know of the value of the blessings should use their bodies in the way of doing good deeds and helping spread the good. For there will come a day when we all will be questioned about for what purposes we have used our physical strength, beauty, and skills.

Dear Believers!

On top of the responsibilities towards our bodies comes covering it, and protecting it from evil eyes and bad words. Before everything else, it is a religious obligation to cover up one's body. It is also an innate and moral need to do so.

Dressing up one's body is done primarily for one's own good other than for others. It is a demonstration of one's self-respect and protection of privacy. Covering up one's private parts reflects one's decency and attentiveness to the body. A specific feeling felt by humans only, haya (modesty and bashfulness) stems from faith, as expressed by the Prophet Muhammad (saw). Covered up in a piece of cloth and entrusted to the mother after birth, humans are washed clean under another piece of cover and buried after being shrouded when they die.

Dear Muslims!

Just as they respect their bodies, Muslims need to show the same respect to other people. Not only do they need to cover up their bodies against unpermitted stares by other people, but they also need to respect the privacy of others. Aware of their boundaries, they should not disturb other people with their stares. For all persons have the right to privacy regardless of their appearance. In this respect, Allah the Exalted warns Muslims as follows:

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ

“Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts.”³

3 Nur, 24/30.



وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ
مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ

“And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests. ...”⁴

As clearly stated in the verses above, the Almighty Allah (swt) asks all believing people, man or woman, to pay attention to decency and privacy. He declares that turning our gazes from haram and observing Islamic dress code are duties upon us. Men’s clothes that fit so tightly, thereby also threatening the physical health, are in violation of Islamic dressing. The awareness of Islamic dressing is not only about covering up the body, but also covering up and protecting the heart and mind against all kinds of evil, extremism, and what is forbidden (haram).

Honorable Believers!

Decency is a highly valued virtue that beautifies all people. The inviolability of decency is a shared value for all people. Due diligence to it makes both women and men respectable in the same way. For all persons, whether woman or man, deserve respect.

Dear Believers!

Paying attention to privacy is a requirement of piety (taqwa), namely the sense of respectfulness and respectability towards Allah. Then, let us not let weaken the connection between us and Him (swt), by whom our bodies are bestowed upon us. Let us struggle to live a life He would approve and appreciate. Let us be aware that our bodies are valuable and inviolable, and our souls are graceful and respectable. Let us instill self-confidence through the sense of privacy in our family members and particularly our children from early ages on. Let us not forget that virtuous societies are formed by people who protect their moral, spiritual, and cultural values.

4 Nur, 24/31.





PROTECTING FUTURE GENERATIONS: A VIRTUOUS GENERATION AND PEACEFUL FUTURE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ
أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: فَإِنَّ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَأَمْوَالَكُمْ وَأَعْرَاضَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ حَرَامٌ
كَحُرْمَةِ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا، فِي شَهْرِكُمْ هَذَا، فِي بَلَدِكُمْ هَذَا.



Honorable Muslims!

Allah the Almighty (swt) states in the verse I have recited, “O people! Indeed, We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into tribes and nations so that you may get to know one another. Surely, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware.”¹

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) says in the hadith I have quoted, “O people! Your blood, property, and honor are sacred to one another like

¹ Hujurat, 49/13.



the sanctity of this day of Eid al-Adha in this month of Dhu al-Hijjah in this city of Makkah.”²

Dear Muslims!

We are born the time decreed by the Almighty Allah, to the mother and father predestined by Him (swt), and again with the gender designated by Him. The creation of human beings in two genders as male and female is one of the proofs of the Existence and Power of Allah (swt). In this sense, it is Allah (swt) who has bestowed different abilities and superiorities upon man and woman, made them spouses to each other, and had them have children since Adam (as) and Hawwa (ra).

The creation of human beings as male and female, which bears many wisdoms in it, is the decree of Allah (swt) and a condition required by the laws of Allah. What falls upon us as His servants is to respect His decree, display respect to both genders, and establish and sustain justice and compassion between them.

Honorable Muslims!

Allah the Exalted wants us to live a life in accordance with the wisdom underlying our creation, and the honor and dignity of being human. He (swt) wants us to get married, have a family, and bring up faithful and healthy generations. Protecting our children and safeguarding our future are the duties of all of us as His believing servants. The security of generation is as much valuable and inviolable as the security of our lives and properties. Our chastity, dignity, and efforts to live by halal means are sacred.

Dear Believers!

The most valuable institution that helps to protect the chastity, respectability, and rights of both man and woman is family. Family life establishes bonds of trust and peace between us. All kinds of opinions and behaviors that ignore family and destroy family structure, in fact, target social bonds.

In order for a society to look to its future with hope, the first thing to do is to encourage young people of marriage age to get married and set up legitimate relations. For family is the oldest and the most deep-rooted unit,

² Bukhari, 'Ilm, 9; Muslim, Qasamah, 30.



and the strongest tower for humankind to live in a proper way and provide the future generations to be healthy and sound.

Dear Muslims!

Marriage is the most blessed contract concluded pursuant to the commandment of Allah (swt) with reference to the Prophet Muhammad (saw). Marriage means both happiness and responsibility for man and woman. Extramarital relationships and “unrestricted approaches” disguised under the name of “sexual freedom” are far from observing the rights and dignity of men and women. Living together without a legal and recognized marriage is prohibited by Allah (swt). Nothing good results from a wrong path full of haram. For haram always causes misperceptions and is destructive; it harms people and damages the society.

Honorable Muslims!

Allah the Exalted (swt) has predestined our gender just like our race, skin color, and lifetime. Trying to change the codes of human nature and the innate characteristics of genders are against the laws of Allah (swt). The attempts for gender intervention and the efforts to promote genderlessness would eventually destroy not only individuals but also the entire generation. Disregarding the divine will by presenting the choice of gender as if it were an individual freedom and choice means to step out of line and deviate from servitude to Allah (swt). All beliefs have rejected and cursed such understandings throughout the history.

Honorable Believers!

Nations survive thanks to their religious and moral values. When these values are weakened, the society starts to dissolve, and our future will be endangered. Allah the Almighty informs us of the destruction of many communities throughout the history because they ignored the revelation and went through moral corruption and perversion. According to the Holy Qur’an, the Prophet Lot addressed his people of corrupted human nature as, **“We had sent Lot as a prophet. He scolded the men of his people: Do you commit a shameful deed that no man has ever done before? You lust after men instead of women! You are certainly transgressors!”**³

3 Araf, 7/80, 81.



Dear Muslims!

Let us draw a lesson from the communities that were destroyed because of their depravity and stepping out of line. Let us strive to live a decent life in compliance with our nature. Let us protect human’s honor and dignity by considering them as our dearest and most precious values just as we protect our lives. Let us stay away from extremisms and improper practices that may harm the honor of man and woman. Let us value and show due care to our daughters and sons as they deserve. Let us remember that we are all responsible for bringing up proper generations, which is only possible through educating our children and young people against perverted understandings, raising their awareness, and protecting them.





RAMADAN: THE MONTH OF SPENDING IN THE CAUSE OF ALLAH, HELPING, AND SHARING

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ.



وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَنْ كَانَ فِي حَاجَةِ أَخِيهِ كَانَ اللَّهُ فِي حَاجَتِهِ
وَمَنْ فَرَّجَ عَنْ مُسْلِمٍ كُرْبَةً فَرَّجَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ بِهَا كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ سَتَرَ
مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ..



Honorable Muslims!

Our sublime religion Islam aims to ensure that peace and prosperity prevail in social life. For this, it enjoins good and altruism, and helping and sharing. It forbids evil, selfishness, and stinginess. Due to their natural disposition, humans need another human's care, love, help, and support. Allah the Almighty informs us of this fact as follows: **"It is We who have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of this world and have raised some of them above others in degrees [of rank] that**



they may make use of one another for service.”¹ What falls upon us as people is not to utilize our sources selfishly, but to share them with our brothers and sisters. This is what infaq (spending in the cause of Allah) is about as a collective term that refers to all worships that instills in us the sense of sharing, thus enabling us to attain happiness in this world and in the Hereafter and finally earning the appreciation of Allah (swt).

Dear Believers!

Infaq means that people allow others to benefit from their own property, wealth, and material and spiritual blessings that Allah has entrusted to them. It is the endeavor to do good to and help all living beings. It is the effort to be beneficial to one’s parents, spouse and children, close or distant relatives, friends and neighbors, and, in short, all people.

Infaq mobilizes the high emotions inherent in human nature. It helps people to purify their nafs, strengthen relations with people around them, save themselves from sadness and sorrow, and attain the appreciation of Allah. In this respect, Allah the Almighty (swt) states, **“Those who (in charity) spend of their goods by night and by day, in secret and in public, have their reward with their Lord: On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.”²**

Dear Muslims!

It is stated in the Holy Qur’an as, **“And spend in the way of Allah and do not throw [yourselves] with your [own] hands into destruction [by refraining]. And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good.”**With the commandment in the verse “Do not throw yourselves with your own hands into destruction”, our Lord Almighty informs that being stingy and refraining from spending in the way of Allah poses a danger for individuals and society alike.³

Dear Believers!

As in all matters, our best role model in the matter of infaq is also the Prophet Muhammad (saw). He always called on his ummah to be generous, contented, sharing, and helping. He built bridges of goodness between the wealthy and the poor by voluntary charities in addition to zakat, sadaqah, fitr,

1 Zukhruf, 43/32.

2 Baqarah, 2/274.

3 Baqarah, 2/195.



and fidyah. On one occasion, he asked Aisha (ra) what was left of the sheep slaughtered, and upon Aisha's reply, "Only a shoulder-bone, o Messenger of Allah!" he said, "**O Aisha, so it was all ours except a shoulder-bone.**"⁴ The Prophet Muhammad (saw) pointed out in this fine example that we gain as much as we give out, and to the abundance of divine blessings obtained through spending in the way of Allah. He encouraged Muslims to do good in another hadith with the following words: "**Whoever fulfilled the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs; whoever brought his (Muslim) brother out of a discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection, and whoever screened a Muslim, Allah will screen him on the Day of Resurrection.**"⁵

Dear Muslims!

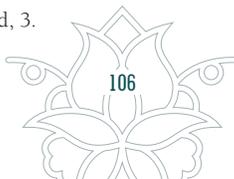
Muslims who are attached to Allah and His Messenger from heart have throughout history embraced the sense of infaq and placed helpfulness at the center of their lives. They have shared with others their accumulation of knowledge and material gains. Our ancestors who were always on the forefront in terms of generosity and sacrificing have made infaq permanent by building a civilization of waqf (endowment) and mercy in every geography they lived. It is deep in our roots to work to ensure that charitableness, goodness, pleasantness prevail on the face of the earth. Today, too, our great nation continues to be the forerunner of goodness, humanity's hope, and assurance of peace and security with the same awareness and ideals alhamdulillah.

Honorable Believers!

Infaq does not refer to material assistance only. The Messenger of Allah (saw) regarded every good act that stems from soul, touches on hearts, and provide solutions to problems within the scope of infaq. Infaq, according to Prophet Muhammad, is sometimes a step taken to perform a prayer, and some other times it is to share joy, sorrow, wealth, and financial hardships. Sometimes it is to extend a helping hand to those in need, oppressed, and immigrants, and some other times it is to give directions to those lost and remove any thing troublesome from the way of people. Sometimes it is to treat a debtor emphatically, and some other times it is to treat one's spouse

4 Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyamah, 33.

5 Muslim, Birr, 58; Tirmidhi, Hudud, 3.



and children, parents, siblings, relatives, and neighbors with a smiling face and nice words. Sometimes it is to treat animals compassionately, and some other times it is to exert efforts for the peace and improvement to prevail the world.

Dear Muslims!

Unfortunately, we live at a time when consumption and selfishness are prioritized while helping and sharing are graded down. Wars that destruct our world strike around the globe due to unending ambitions and conflict of interests. While people are in need of a piece of bread and a drop of water on one part of the world, tonnes of food and blessings are insensibly wasted on the other part. What falls upon humanity, however, is to build a just and merciful life as expected by Allah the Almighty. In the core of life itself there is nothing that contradicts the essence of religion and common sense. Stinginess and selfishness, namely refraining from being charitable, does not exist in the essence of life. Rather, goodness, helping, sharing, generosity, and infaq are inherently present in life.

Dear Believers!

The month of Ramadan, with its shade of mercy started to be casted upon us, is the month of infaq, helping, and sharing. It is the time to feel the joy of spending out for those in need for the consent of Allah, without expecting anything from them in return, and to open our hearts to the poor, abandoned, orphan, and those in dire straits. It is the time to give out our zakat, fitr, and sadaqah to those in need.

Then, let us strive to spend in the way of Allah in this blessed month as much as possible. Let us deliver our aids in a courteous and elegant way as would fit a Muslim and in line with the benevolence ethics, without hurting anybody and never falling for pomposity. Let us not forget that our charitable deeds will get back to us as merits and rewards, as expressed by Allah the Almighty in the following glad tiding, **“But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it.”**⁶ Let us not forget that it is not possible to be beneficial to oneself or to the society and instill peace and trust if a person is stuck in stinginess, struggling in the whirl of wastefulness and not able to enjoy the pleasure and peacefulness of spending in Allah’s cause.

6 Saba, 34/39.



I would love to conclude this Friday's khutbah with the following warning of our Lord Almighty, "**And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, 'My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be among the righteous.'**"⁷

⁷ Munafiqun, 63/10.





RIFQ (GENTLENESS): ALLAH LOVES GRACIOUSNESS IN ALL AFFAIRS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَلَا تَسْتَوِی الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّیِّئَةُ اِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِی هِیَ اَحْسَنُ فَاِذَا الَّذِی بَیْنَكَ وَبَیْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ
كَانَتْهُ وَلِیٌّ حَمِیْمٌ.



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَنْ يُحْرَمِ الرَّفْقَ يُحْرَمِ الْخَيْرَ كُلَّهُ.



Honorable Muslims!

The Almighty Allah states in the verse I have recited, “**And not equal** are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”¹

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) stated in the hadith I have read, “**He who is deprived of gentleness is deprived of good.**”²

1 Fussilat, 41/34.

2 Abu Dawud, Adab, 11.



Dear Believers!

Faith, worship, and good morality constitute the basis of Islam. Rifq (gentleness) is one of the moral virtues that enables human to have higher value in presence of Allah (swt) and among the society. Being gentle means to have a smiling face, a sweet tongue, and being humble and compatible. It means to not behave rudely and harshly, or break hearts. It means not falling for anger that darkens the mind and results in frustration, but rather being patient and calm.

Honorable Muslims!

Allah loves people to act with gentleness in all affairs.³ He (swt) commands all believers in the name of the Prophet to be forgiving and tolerant, as expressed in the verse, **“Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant.”**⁴ In another verse, “restraining anger and pardoning people” are mentioned among the characteristics of the righteous people who are given glad tidings of forgiveness of Allah and paradise.⁵

Dear Believers!

The Messenger of Allah (saw) is the finest example for us to have kind behaviors. He treated kindly and compassionately towards not only people but also all beings. He always sought to make things easy, and avoided causing any difficulty and hurting the people around him. Instead of punishing those who made mistakes, he opted to be forgiving. He advised not being oppressive, destructive and rude, but rather any constructive behavior that fostered love and respect. Thanks to such virtues bestowed upon him by Allah, Muslims held together around him.

In this respect, the Almighty Allah states in the Holy Qur’an, **“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So, pardon them and ask forgiveness for them ...”**⁶

3 Bukhari, Adab, 35.

4 A’raf, 7/199.

5 Al-i Imran, 3/134.

6 Al-i Imran, 3/159.



Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Believers who take the Prophet Muhammad's morality as an example for themselves conduct all their relations with gentleness. They do not avoid being compassionate even for the smallest living beings. They represent the noble values and the high morals of Islam with their simplicity and elegance, as well as polite and considerate manners. They refrain from any kind of extremism, rudeness, and violence. In this respect, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, **“Believers do not insult the honor of others, utter curses, go to extremes, or nor do they foul.”**⁷

Dear Believers!

Today, at a time when neglect of responsibility and values of being human is increasing, and violence is threatening humanity regardless of religion, language, ethnicity or geography, we should know that any attempt that fuels violence has nothing moral, humane, or Islamic in it. What falls upon us is to refrain from committing any act that damages human honor and dignity. We should approach and treat our parents, spouses, children, relatives, and neighbors in a gentle and compassionate manner with our smiling faces. We should be forgiving even when we are right, and be patient even when we are angry. As stated by the Prophet Muhammad (saw), **“The strong-man is not one who wrestles well, but the one who controls himself when he is in a fit of rage.”**⁸ We should also know, however, that standing up rightfully against any attack targeting our national and religious values is a noble sign of moral excitement, religious awareness, piety, and loyalty to homeland.

Honorable Muslims!

Whoever has rifq has compassion for others, and whoever has compassion for others has Allah's mercy. Whoever abandons rifq heads to violence, and violence results in regret and frustration on the Day of Judgment. Then, we should not let anger seize our mind and conscience, nor should we let impatience cast a shadow over our eternal salvation. We should always bear in mind the following words of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), **“Allah is gentle (al-Rafiq), likes gentleness, and gives for gentleness what he does not give for harshness.”**⁹

7 Tirmidhi, Birr, 48.

8 Muslim, Birr, 107.

9 Muslim, Birr, 77; Abu Dawud, Adab, 11.





SALAH: STRUGGLE FOR GETTING CLOSER TO ALLAH

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ
وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَنْ حَافَظَ عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ الْخَمْسِ رُكُوعِهِنَّ
وَسُجُودِهِنَّ وَوُضُوءِهِنَّ وَمَوَاقِيَتِهِنَّ وَعَلِمَ أَتَّهَنَ حَقٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ.



Honorable Muslims!

One day the Prophet Muhammad (saw) was having a conversation with his Companions and asked them, “**If there was a river at the door of any of you and he took a bath in it five times a day, would you notice any dirt on him?**” The Companions replied, “Not a trace of dirt would be left.” Thereupon said the Prophet Muhammad (saw), “**That is the example of the five prayers with which Allah annuls sins.**”¹

Dear Believers!

The most deeply-rooted form of worship in the history of prophets, salah is one of the five pillars of our exalted religion Islam. It is the

¹ Bukhari, Mawaqit al-Salat, 6.



symbol of turning towards Allah (swt) with the soul, body, mind, heart, love, respect, and the entire being in short. We as humans can attain true peace if we wholeheartedly respond to Allah's invitation to servitude and perform the worship of salah. But when we neglect our salah, thereby causing the connection between Him (swt) and us to weaken, then we fall captive to our worldly desires, thereby becoming frustrated.

Dear Muslims!

Standing in awe of Allah for salah upon the lofty call of the adhan, Muslims submit their love, devotion, obedience, and submission to Him (swt). Salah, in this sense, is the moment Muslims look forward in which they meet Him in the closest manner. It is a holy journey Muslims set out on, leaving behind all the worldly rush, problems, and troubles. It is the desire, of people who have fallen far away from the true homeland of heaven, to return to Him after living a sincere life without going astray from the true path. In this respect, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, "**The key to Paradise is salah.**"²

Salah is the time to give thanks and express gratitude. It is the duty of loyalty for Muslims towards Allah the Almighty, Who creates, allows to live, feeds with blessings, protects, and forgives.

Dear Believers!

In the verse I have recited at the beginning of the khutbah, Allah the Almighty states, "**Recite, o Muhammad, what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do.**"³ Salah, then, is the struggle to get purified and protected. A Muslim conscious and aware of worship is the one who values and pays great attention to salah, fulfilling all its requirements duly and in awe, from takbir recited at the beginning to the salam at the end. The awareness of worship is about the awareness of servitude to Allah (swt). It is to live piously, mercifully, and kindly with the awareness that Allah (swt) always oversees and hears.

This is why salah does not only represent the debt of worship for Muslims, but also their superior morals. People who perform salah are

2 Tirmidhi, Taharah, 1.

3 Ankabut, 29/45.



protected against any kind of extravagancy, rudeness, and violence. Because of the strengthened spirituality due to salah, they stay away from behaviors that are against the sense of shame and rules of etiquette.

Dear Muslims!

In the Qur'an, all people are addressed in the person of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) as follows, **“And enjoin prayer upon your family and people and be steadfast therein. We ask you not for provision; We provide for you, and the best outcome is for those of righteousness.”**⁴ As required of this commandment, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) would go to the door of his daughter Fatimah every morning and invite everybody in the house to performing salah, **“O Ahl al-Bayt (the members of the Prophet’s family)! Come on, to salah!”**⁵ We are similarly responsible to get ourselves and our families accustomed to performing salah.

Then, let us, with our families, not remain deprived of the chance to meet Allah (swt) in the healing, comforting, and calming climate of salah. Let us not neglect performing salah which is both “the pillar of the religion” in this world and “the first question to be asked of us to give account for” in the Hereafter. Let us not forget that salah is not a burden on us but, on the contrary, it is a unique opportunity to get to know and refresh our own self, as well as to get mature through remembering, thanking, and contemplating. I would like to conclude the khutbah with the following good news from the Prophet Muhammad (saw), **“Whoever continues to perform five-times daily salah, knowing that to do so is the commandment of Allah, and showing due diligence to the salah’s ruku’, sajdah, wudu’, and time, goes to heaven.”**⁶

4 Ta-Ha, 20/132.

5 Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 33.

6 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 266.





SECULARIZATION: DELIGHT IN THE TEMPORARY LIFE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: يَقُولُ ابْنُ آدَمَ: مَالِي، مَالِي قَالَ: وَهَلْ لَكَ، يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ مِنْ مَالِكَ إِلَّا مَا أَكَلْتَ فَأَقْنَيْتَ، أَوْ لَبِستَ فَأَبْلَيْتَ، أَوْ تَصَدَّقْتَ فَأَمْضَيْتَ؟“



Dear Muslims!

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) had made a peace agreement with the people of Bahrain and appointed an envoy there. After some time, the envoy returned to Madinah with a significant amount of goods. Curious, the Companions gathered around the envoy and the goods he brought. As the Prophet Muhammad (saw) came out of the masjid, he saw the situation, smiled, and said, **“Rejoice and hope for what will please you! By Allah, I am not afraid of your poverty. But I am afraid that you will lead a life of luxury as past nations did, whereupon you will compete**



with each other for it, as they competed for it, and it will destroy you as it destroyed them.”¹

Dear Believers!

The sublime religion Islam encompasses all aspects of life. The commandments and prohibitions of Allah (swt) lead us to the right path in this world, and to the heaven in the Hereafter. Yet despite all this, we get lost in the busyness of worldly affairs, whereby neglecting the life-enhancing principles of Islam. We drift away from the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) as our role model, and slowly we lose the influence of Islam in our life that gives meaning to it. We cherish what is transient, lose the balance between the worldly affairs and the affairs relating to the Hereafter, and finally become secularized.

Dear Muslims!

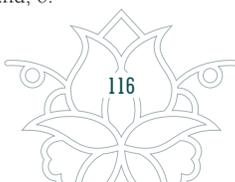
Secularization is one’s striving ambitiously for worldly affairs, becoming unaware of Allah (swt) and the Hereafter. It is to ignore one’s responsibilities towards Allah (swt), and care about the worldly affairs only. It is when they place religious beliefs, values, and attitudes away from the center of their lives. It is when all they crave, as if they will never die, for are the worldly possessions. Regarding this wrong attitude of people Allah the Almighty states, **“Behold, you prefer the life of this world. But the Hereafter is better and more enduring.”²**

Dear Believers!

The Almighty Allah (swt) has sent us to this temporary life for test and trial. This is not to say that Muslims should completely quit working for their livelihood. It is just that they should not neglect their affairs relating to the life in the Hereafter. It is essential to make legitimate use of the worldly blessings although the main purpose is to work to deserve going to the heaven in the Hereafter. What is important is that Muslims should not be captivated by the means they earn, and that they should use them in accordance with the consent of Allah (swt). In this regard states the Almighty Allah (swt) in the Holy Qur’an, **“But seek, with the wealth which Allah has bestowed on you, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget your portion in this world.**

1 Bukhari, Maghazi, 12; Muslim, Zuhd, 6.

2 Ala, 87/16, 17.



But do you good, as Allah has been good to you, and seek not occasions for mischief in the land, for Allah loves not those who do mischief.”³

Dear Muslims!

Unmindful consumption comes on top of the damages caused by secularization. While some people are in need of and crave for a piece of food in one corner of the world, other people in another corner push the limits of wasting resources extravagantly. It is unfortunate that today people think happiness rests in consumption. They are under the delusion that they will be happy when they spend more and consume expensive things. However, excessive and immoderate consumption erode our humane and moral values. Many people are lost in the swamp of debt and interest accrued due to unmindful consumption and irresponsible spending. Many families suffer from uneasiness and helplessness. The Prophet Muhammad (saw), however, warned people from ages ago, **“The son of Adam says: ‘My wealth, my wealth.’ O son of Adam! Is there anything as your belonging except that which you consumed, which you utilized, or which you wore and then it was worn out or you gave as charity and sent it forward?”⁴**

Honorable Believers!

If a delicate balance is ensured between the world and the Hereafter, then wastefulness turns into mindful spending, greed and ambition into contentedness, uneasiness into reliance on Allah (swt), and abundance into barakah. Then, more mindful investments should be made in this life and the life in the Hereafter as per their worthiness. So, let us not forget that the life in this world is only as short as a blink of an eye. Let us get prepared for the eternal life in the Hereafter. Let us be unpretentious, humble, and moderate in all our affairs and actions.

I would like to conclude this khutbah with the following words of Allah the Almighty, **“O People! Certainly the promise of Allah is true. Let not then this present life deceive you, nor let the Chief Deceiver deceive you about Allah.”⁵**

3 Qasas, 28/77.

4 Muslim, Zuhd, 3.

5 Fatir 35/5.





SINCERITY: THE ESSENCE OF FAITH

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبَلُ مِنَ الْعَمَلِ إِلَّا مَا كَانَ لَهُ خَالِصًا
وَأَبْغَى بِهِ وَجْهَهُ.



Dear Muslims!

In the verse I have just recited, the Almighty Allah (swt) states, “Indeed, We have sent down to you the Book in truth. So worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion.”¹

In the hadith I have read, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, “Allah does not accept any deed except that which is purely for Him and for His sake.”²

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

The essence of the sublime religion Islam is sincerity. Whether or not our words and actions have any value before Allah (swt) depends on our sincerity. Sincerity is to have heartfelt faith in Allah and to live a life

1 Zumar, 39/2.

2 Nasa'i, Jihad, 24.



seeking His (swt) approval only, without expecting any worldly benefit in return, as required by such faith. It is to have good intentions towards all living and non-living beings. It is to either seem as you are or be as you seem.

Dear Muslims!

In one occasion the Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, **الدِّينُ النَّصِيحَةُ** “**Religion is sincerity.**” When the Companions asked “To whom, o Messenger of Allah?”, he replied, “**To Allah, to His Book, to His Messenger, to the leaders (imams) of the Muslims, and to all Muslims.**”³

Religion should remind us of sincerity, as we understand from his words. It is not possible to view Islam as apart from ikhlas, sincerity, good intentions, and clean hearts.

Muslims worship Allah (swt) sincerely. They worship Him alone, they pray Him alone, and they ask for His help alone. They adhere to the Holy Qur’an, “the best of the words”, sincerely. They strive to engrave the words of the Qur’an in their memory, and practice its rules in their lives. They follow the Prophet Muhammad (saw) steadfastly. They, with deep love and sincerity, take him as a role model and try to live the way he did.

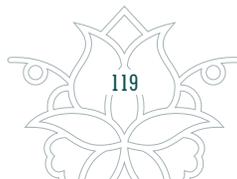
They observe the rights of people in order for the establishment and prevalence of peace and security in the society they live. They uphold the truth, rule of law, and justice in all areas, from education to commerce and from family to broader circles of the society, under any circumstances. They sincerely fulfill their responsibilities towards all people in their environment, regardless of their title, gender, or age.

They are aware of the fact that each Muslim is an honorable member of the family of “Prophet Muhammad’s ummah”. They treat generously all Muslims without discrimination on any ground such as gender, race, skin-color, or language. For them no profit is more valuable than arms wide open with brotherly feelings of affection and compassion, and sincere prayers uttered with brotherly sympathy.

Dear Believers!

Ostentation and show-off are the greatest reasons to cause people to be captives of their ambitions and to cast a shadow over their sincerity. Islam orders that our words and actions be free from any kind of deceit and far

3 Muslim, Iman, 95.



from any play of interests. It advises us to “do good in expectance of its outcomes from Allah only”. It makes clear that people who make concessions on honesty and sincerity and who think they derive benefits from people by deceiving them are actually doomed to lose. This is because all that the pretentious people will derive as benefit, who only seek to show off to others what they do, is loss in this world and in the Hereafter.

Dear Muslims!

In one occasion, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) warned us, “**Allah does not look to your appearance or your wealth but He looks only to your hearts and your deeds.**”⁴ Then, let us ensure that our hearts are clean and our deeds are sincere if we want to be decent Muslims and good servants of Allah (swt). Let us set getting the approval of Allah as the purpose of our lives. Let us never forget that He (swt) is All-Seeing and All-Knowing of what we do openly and secretly, and that He does and will reward our deeds if done sincerely only. Let us turn away from pomposity and hypocrisy. Let us all pray to Allah in the Prophet Muhammad’s (saw) words, “**O Allah, our Lord, and Lord of everything! Make me and my family sincere to You at every moment in this world and in the Hereafter. O Possessor of glory and honor!**”⁵

4 Muslim, Birr, 34.

5 Abu Dawud, Witr, 25.





SOCIAL HARMS OF RIBA (INTEREST)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا أَضْعَافًا مُضَاعَفَةً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: . مَا أَحَدٌ أَكْفَرَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِلَّا كَانَ عَاقِبَتُهُ أَمْرَهُ إِلَى قَلْبَةٍ



Dear Muslims!

It was tenth year of the Hijrah and the last year of prophethood. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) set off from Madinah and arrived Arafat with his Companions in order to perform Hajj obligation. There, he delivered his khutbah that was going to be known as “The Farewell Sermon” afterwards. He gave recommendations that will enlighten the road of humanity. He warned his ummah against some harams and deviations. One of the issues he irreversibly prohibited in the Farewell Sermon by saying, “**All practices of the days of ignorance are now under my feet.**” was interest. By declaring that he trampled on all kinds of interest, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) addressed to the believers as follows, “**Beware! All dues of interest shall stand cancelled.**”¹

¹ Muslim, Hajj, 147.



Honorable Believers!

Interest means taking the money lent to someone back at the end of certain period by adding some money to the initial capital. It is illegal, unreturned, and unmerited extra money that is paid by debtor to creditor compulsorily. It means an unearned gain without turning an honest penny and exerting efforts. It means turning the trouble of people who are in need into opportunity.

Dear Muslims!

Islam declares all kinds of interest as haram definitely. It considers the operations with interest as one of the greatest sins. In this regard, Allah the Almighty (swt) warns believers in the verse I recited in the beginning of my khutbah as follows, **“O you who have believed, do not consume usury, doubled and multiplied, but fear Allah that you may be successful.”**²

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

All commands and prohibitions of Allah is for the good of His servants. They are for their peace in the world and the happiness in the Hereafter. Likewise, prohibition of interest in Islam has many wisdoms in terms of both individuals and societies.

Interest decreases the barakah of not only the property but also the life. Interest causes many bankruptcies suicides, dissolution of families, and wasted lives. Low-incomers and the poor are degraded in the societies in which interest is common. The gap between the rich and the poor goes deeper day by day. Virtuous behaviors such as lending for the consent of Allah (swt), solidarity, affection, mercy, compassion, benefaction, and infaq are eliminated. Religious and moral values are damaged. Sensitivity to halal and haram weakens. Consequently, trying to make profit without considering whether it is legal causes great unrest in the society.

Dear Muslims!

Although people who make operations with interest think that they make profit effortlessly and easily, in fact, they are deemed to lose. The Almighty Allah (swt) points out this fact in the Holy Qur’an as follows, **“Allah destroys interest and gives increase for charities.”**³ Because the

2 Al-i ‘Imran, 3/130.

3 Baqarah, 2/276.



property of those who give zakat and sadaqah increases. They benefit from their wealth. Their hearts are filled with peace and their book of deeds is filled with rewards. Interest, on the contrary, eliminates the barakah of a wealth. Its owner cannot make any profit out of it other than sins. It sets up the bankruptcy of its owner both spiritually and materially. The Messenger of Allah (saw) expressed that interest would make its owner lose eventually as follows, **“Those who increase their property by way of interest cannot benefit from their property.”**⁴

Dear Believers!

Our supreme religion commands us to earn our living through halal ways. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, **“No one can eat a food that is more favorable than their own gain.”**⁵

I regret to say that operations with interest are sometimes evaluated as a part of trade today as it was in the jahiliyyah (age of ignorance), and the ideas and practices indicating the indispensability of it are tried to be spread. However, trade and interest are completely different things. The Holy Qur’an states, **“Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest.”**⁶ For this reason, our responsibility is to act extremely sensitive not to make use of interest while trading.

Dear Muslims!

The frustration to be faced by those who do not give up on interest despite all the warnings from our religion is stated in the Holy Qur’an as follows, **“Those who consume interest cannot stand [on the Day of Resurrection] except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity. That is because they say, ‘Trade is [just] like interest.’...”**⁷

Then, let us stay away from the disaster of interest which has been one the biggest means of exploitation and oppression in economic life throughout the history. Let us understand that we cannot benefit from the property gained by interest. In this temporary world life, let us try to earn halal money and spend it for halal ways rather than trying to earn more money. Let us always remember that we will not be able to leave the presence of Allah (swt)

4 Ibn Majah, Tijarah, 58.

5 Bukhari, Buyu, 15.

6 Baqarah, 2/275.

7 Baqarah, 2/275.



on the Day of Judgment before accounting for how we earned our property and for what we spent it. I would like to conclude the khutbah with this warning of Allah the Exalted (swt), **“O you who have believed, fear Allah and give up what remains [due to you] of interest, if you should be believers. And if you do not, then be informed of a war [against you] from Allah and His Messenger. But if you repent, you may have your principal - [thus] you do no wrong, nor are you wronged.”**⁸

8 Baqarah, 2/278-279.





SOME DU'AS IN THE WORDS OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي
وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ.



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَكْرَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى مِنَ الدُّعَاءِ.



Honorable Muslims!

In this temporary world we have some days we show gratitude for the blessings we are bestowed upon and some other days we show patience for the troubles we have to endure. We try our best to welcome sorrow and hardships as would be appropriate for a Muslim just like we do so when it comes to success and happiness. We are blessed with a unique blessing that strengthen our faith in and reliance upon Allah (swt) in every situation, and gives us hope and perseverance. That blessing is the essence of the whole worships: du'a.

It is our sincere entreaty and appeal to Allah (swt). It is our confession that we are weak before His omnipotent power. It is our seeking refuge in His grace and forgiveness. It is our submission of servitude to Him (swt) and asking help from Him.



Dear Believers!

In the verse I recited as I began the khutbah, Allah the Almighty states, **“And when My servants ask you, o Muhammad, concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me by obedience and believe in Me that they may be rightly guided.”**¹

One of the names of Allah, al-Mujib, means the answerer of du'as. He (swt) is the One Who is closer to us than even our own self, and hears, knows and responds to all our du'as whether implied or express.

Dear Muslims!

The Prophet Muhammad (saw), in all actions of whom we see his love and loyalty to Allah, was in a constant state of invocation to Him (swt). Day or night, with people around or by himself, when happy, afraid, or sad, while thinking about the Hereafter, in his home, by the minbar of the masjid, during travel, in short in all instances of life he would make du'a. Du'a in his life was like threads interlaced in a piece of fabric. It was he who taught us how to make du'a.

Waking up in the morning, he would start his day with the following du'a, **“O Allah! With Your Power we have come to the morning, with Your Power we come to the evening, with Your Power we live and die, and to You will we return.”**²

In observance of the approval of Allah (swt) all day long in everything he does, he would always rely on and trust in Him (swt) and pray as, **“O, Allah! Give me what is good for me and choose what is best for me.”**³

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

“O, Allah! Grant us good both in this world and in the Hereafter. Save us from the torment of hellfire!”⁴ was how he supplicated to Allah (swt).

1 Baqarah, 2/186.

2 Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 13.

3 Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 85.

4 Abu Dawud, Witr, 26.



When by gone is the day and down falls the night, he would pray, “O, Allah! I want from You the good out of what will happen tonight and in its aftermath. I seek refuge in You from the evil of what will happen tonight and in its aftermath.”⁵ While going to sleep, he would pray as, “All praise and thanks be to Allah, Who provides us with food and drink, covers our needs and shelters us while there are countless people who has no place for accommodation and no person to provide for them.”⁶

Dear Believers!

Du’a is the servant’s search for refuge in Allah (swt) for remedy to sorrows, protection from all evils, and safety against troubles whether visible or invisible. In this respect the Prophet Muhammad (saw) would seek refuge in Allah (swt) as follows: “O, Allah! Verily, I seek refuge in You from weakness, laziness, senility (of old age), cowardliness, stinginess and the torment of the grave. Give my soul its good and purify it, for You are the best to purify it. You are its Guardian and Master. Verily, I seek refuge in You from a heart that is not humble, a soul that is not satisfied, knowledge that does not benefit and a supplication that is not answered.”⁷

Honorable Muslims!

Muslims should never give in to the thought that their supplication is not responded to. In this respect, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) states, “The supplication of every one of you will be granted if he does not get impatient and say, ‘I supplicated to Allah, but my prayer has not been granted.’”⁸ This is because sometimes Allah gives us countless blessings for the sake of our du’as. Some other times He (swt) takes our troubles away. Sometimes He forgives our sins. Some other times He gives us something better than what we actually want.

Let us then have faith that all our heartfelt du’as will be certainly responded to. Let us not be bereft of abundance of divine blessings, peace, and confidence that come with du’a. Let us not forget to pray for our families, loved ones, Muslim brothers and sisters, and the oppressed, as much as we

5 Muslim, Dhikr, 75.

6 Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 16.

7 Muslim, Dhikr, 73; Nasa’i, Isti’adha, 13.

8 Abu Dawud, Witr, 23.



pray for our own selves. Let us try to deserve the du'a of our parents, the patients, the elderly, and those people in need.

I would like to conclude this khutbah with the following dua of the Prophet Muhammad (saw):

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالتُّقَىٰ، وَالْعَفَافَ وَالْغِنَىٰ

“O, Allah! I ask you to bless me with guidance, piety, chastity, and contentment.”⁹

9 Muslim, Dhikr, 72.





STRENGTHENING OUR BROTHERHOOD WITH ZAKAT AND SADAQAH AL-FITR

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: دَاوُوا مَرَضَاتِكُمْ بِالصَّدَقَةِ، وَحَصِّنُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بِالزَّكَاةِ...



Dear Muslims!

As required by our iman, we sincerely love our Muslim brothers and sisters, and have respect and affection for them. We support each other just like the organs of a body. Sometimes we ease the hearts of our brothers and sisters with a conversation, sometimes we help them with their problems. We provide financial assistance to them along with standing by them spiritually with our prayers. Because our source of honor, the supreme religion Islam, commands us to be in solidarity. The Almighty Allah (swt) wants us to gain the sense of solidarity and cooperation under favor of our different worships, primarily zakat and sadaqah al-fitr.



Dear Muslims!

Zakat is one of the five basic pillars on which the clear and righteous religion of Islam is built. It is a fardh worship which is strictly commanded by Allah (swt) to be fulfilled. It is an essential responsibility of the people who are considered as rich according to religious criteria to share a certain part of their wealth with the ones in need once a year.

Zakat is a financial worship and an expression of gratitude to Allah for all the blessings He bestowed upon us. Zakat prevents the accumulation of wealth in a manner useless to anybody. It establishes love and trust between the rich and the poor by reinforcing the feelings of brotherhood. It protects believers against several bad traits, particularly such as stinginess and hunger for property. It purifies both the properties and hearts of believers. It adds barakah to both the donor and donee's lives. The Almighty Allah (swt) commands in the Holy Qur'an, **“Take, [O, Muhammad], from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase, ...”**¹ Accordingly, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) instructs us, **“Ask recovery of your patients from Allah by giving sadaqah and protect your properties by giving zakat.”**²

Honorable Muslims!

The sadaqah al-fitr is a display of gratitude of being created honorable as human, of reaching the month of Ramadan that is the most profitable times of our lives, and of finally reaching the Eid al-Fitr. Every Muslim who lives until the end of the month of Ramadan should give a certain amount of donation to those people in need, for himself and on behalf of his dependents before the Eid al-Fitr. Thus, they reach the end of the blessed month of Ramadan, which invites people to worship day and night, with benevolence. The sadaqah al-fitr helps the people in need to get prepared for the Eid al-Fitr, and to share the peace and joy of the Eid with others.

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

It is completely natural that people of different financial status live together in the society. Not turning this difference into a huge gap is only possible if the rich take care of the poor. The rich who cannot comprehend that there is a share for the poor in their wealth are in loss until they give

1 Tawbah, 9/103.

2 Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra, III, 542.



this share to its owner. Neglecting zakat and sadaqah al-fitr is a major sin. Allah the Exalted (swt) warns the believers in the Holy Qur'an as follows, **“O you who have believed, spend from that which We have provided for you before there comes a Day in which there is no exchange and no friendship and no intercession. ...”**³

Honorable Believers!

Let us add strengthen our brotherhood by means of zakat and sadaqah al-fitr. As in every moment of our lives, let us be pioneers in charity and goodness in this month of Ramadan as well. Let us make sure that our sadaqah al-fitr is delivered to our brothers and sisters in need before the morning of the Eid. Let us not hurt and break hearts of anyone while giving our charities. Let us always remember that we will never be able to reach goodness unless we spend in the way of Allah (swt) out of our beloved things.

May the Almighty Allah (swt) accept all of our previous and future acts of charity. I would like to conclude my khutbah with a verse, **“And establish prayer and give zakah, and whatever good you put forward for yourselves - you will find it with Allah. Indeed, Allah of what you do, is Seeing.”**⁴

3 Baqarah, 2/254.

4 Baqarah, 2/110





TAKING GOOD CARE OF THE ELDERLY MAKES LIFE BLESSED

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا
وَشَيْبَةً يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ.



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَا أَكْرَمَ شَابٌ شَيْخًا لِسِنِّهِ إِلَّا قَيَّضَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مَنْ
يُكْرِمُهُ عِنْدَ سِنِّهِ.



Dear Muslims!

It was the day Makkah was conquered and the longing had come to an end when the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions could return to their hometown from which they were exiled years ago. Muslims were all hugging each other with joy and relief, and thanking Allah for blessing them with such a day. As soon as they arrived in the city, the Prophet Muhammad's loyal friend Abu Bakr went directly to his father. He had a great wish for his father to become a Muslim, so he took him to the Prophet Muhammad. Seeing Abu Bakr's father Abu Quhafah, with his hair and beard gray and his eyes blinded due to old age, the Prophet Muhammad, with his usual humble and respectful manner, said, "Would



not it have been better if you had left him home and we had gone to him?”¹

Honorable Believers!

Life is much like the seasons in a year and has its spring, summer, fall, and winter. Every stage of life has its own features and beauty. Each is an opportunity for Muslims as servants of Allah to add meaning and value to life through good deeds and worship. The most valuable stage of life, during which people attain the peace and pleasure of feeling mature, is the old age stage. It is the stage full of wisdom where the body is exhausted, but the soul is stronger than ever with experience acquired until then.

Dear Muslims!

Allah particularly answers the prayers of the elderly, and offers blessings to them. They are the bridges who link the past to the future, handing down our national and immaterial values and culture to future generations. They are the pillars of our homes and the source of blessings. With their hair gray and their posture arched, they are sources of mercy and compassion for the society. There is no better person than an elderly who has lived a life as aware of the value of health and years gone by, as expressed in the words of the Prophet Muhammad when they asked him about who the best person among people was, “...**Whose life is long and deeds are good.**”²

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

People are in constant need of keeping contact with their family and environment, and maintain relations with others. Such a need and dependency are felt even more during the old age. Excluding the elderly from the joy of life and from the society leads them to unhappiness and loneliness. On the other hand, the elderly who are respected, taken care of, and consulted will feel peaceful and secure, and they do not feel the distress of loneliness and abandonment.

Honorable Believers!

On top of the people who deserve and need our care, love, and support come our parents, as expressed in the words of the Prophet Muhammad, “**The Lord’s pleasure is in the parent’s pleasure, and the Lord’s anger**

1 Ibn Hanbal, VI, 350.

2 Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 21.



is in the parent's anger."³ The compassion and affection that we will show to our parents are of particular importance in their old age when they need a peaceful home most. To be by their side, to meet their needs, and to receive their good du'a and wishes for us are among the most important opportunities for us to get the approval of Allah (swt).

It is a grave act of disloyalty to leave and abandon one's parents in their old age. In this respect, the Prophet Muhammad pointed to the misfortune of a person, who would not be able to enter the heaven because of not getting the approval of either of his/her parents in old age, **"Let him be humbled into dust."**⁴

Dear Muslims!

Being a reasonable person requires us to see the journey of our own life in those of the elderly. Just as yesterday's young people are today's elderly, today's young people will be the elderly of tomorrow. In this respect, Allah says, **"Allah is the one who created you from weakness, then made after weakness strength, then made after strength weakness and white hair. He creates what He wills, and He is the Knowing, the Competent."**⁵

Then, let us take care of our old people who prepared us for life when we were young. Let us fulfill our responsibilities to make their lives easier, and let us benefit from their experiences. Let us not forget that respect for our elderly will bless our life. I would like to conclude my khutbah with the following hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, **"No young person honors an elder due to his age, except that Allah appoints for him, one who will honor him at that age."**⁶

3 Tirmidhi, Birr, 3.

4 Muslim, Birr, 10.

5 Rum, 30/54.

6 Tirmidhi, Birr, 75.





TAQWA: THE BEST PROVISION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ.



إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتُمْ، وَأَتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمَحُّهَا، وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقٍ حَسَنٍ.



Honorable Muslims!

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) had appointed one of his young companions Muadh ibn Jabal as ambassador to Yemen. He set out with him as he was going to bid farewell, and offered him some recommendations. Muadh was riding and the Prophet Muhammad (saw) was walking next to him. Before concluding his recommendations, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, “O Muadh! Perhaps you may not see me again next year, except visit this masjid or my grave.” Saddened because of having to be separated from the Prophet Muhammad (saw), Muadh started to cry upon those words. The Messenger of Allah (saw) turned facing Madinah and said, “The most superior people in my eyes, regardless of who they are and what status and authority they may have, are the ones who have taqwa.”¹

1 Ibn Hanbal, V, 236.



Dear Believers!

Taqwa is to live in the know of one's material and spiritual responsibilities as a servant of Allah (swt). It is to obey His commandments and earn His approval. It is to turn away from those acts to earn His disapproval, and seek refuge in the shade of His mercy. It is to follow in the Prophet Muhammad's (saw) footsteps, whom Allah the Almighty (swt) sent to us as the perfect role model and the unique guide.

Dear Muslims!

Only through taqwa is it possible for people to be honored with divine mercy and protection. In the verse I have recited at the beginning of the khutbah, the Almighty Allah (swt) states, **“O believers! Fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims in submission to Him.”**²

Proper taqwa takes people to always feel as if they are in the presence of Allah, to not show a lack of respect for Him (swt), and to obey Him with deep love. Taqwa, in this sense, is to be concerned about doing acts to earn Allah's wrath and appearing with a face down before Him (swt). It is to make preparations in this world for the life in the Hereafter, as commanded in the verse, **“O believers! Fear Allah. Let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow.”**³

Dear Believers!

One day the Prophet Muhammad (saw) pointed his chest and repeated three times, **“Taqwa is right here.”**⁴ Taqwa is in the heart, right, but it is reflected on the body, in the words and behaviors. The comforting effect of taqwa manifests itself in our worships, good deeds, and good morals. Our awareness of taqwa increases when we avoid what is evil and forbidden, and matures and reaches perfection through honesty and sincerity.

Taqwa is like the shield of Muslims. It is the shiver felt in the heart, the voice heard in the conscience. The barrier set up against the sins, and the bridge towards the merits... Then, Muslims who have taqwa thereby protect their hearts from sedition and corruption, their tongue from lies and slanders, and their eyes from what is forbidden. Their hands from unfairness,

2 Al-i 'Imran, 3/102.

3 Hashr, 59/18.

4 Ibn Hanbal, III, 134.



and their feet from racing for the evil... Let alone knowingly committing a sin, they do not even fall in two minds about going for things that may potentially lead to committing a sin. This is because a truly pious Muslim knows that observing the commandments and prohibitions of Allah (swt) will bring happiness in this world and salvation in the Hereafter.

Dear Muslims!

Taqwa is the only measure to determine our value in the sight of Allah (swt). This is because the superiority according to Islam does not depend on one's property, status, authority, profession, race, or gender. This is pointed out clearly in the verse as, **“The most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you.”**⁵ The most virtuous of people are the ones who are honored with faith, have the clothing of taqwa on, a perfectly clean heart and a record of good deeds. These are the people with whom Allah is together. Their friend He (swt) is. For them are prepared the Paradise and all the unique blessings in it.⁶

Dear Believers!

The Almighty Allah (swt) states, **“Take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is taqwa. Fear Me, o you who understand.”**⁷

Then let us enrich our temporary life in this mortal world with taqwa. Let us continue to avoid evil and always be good and do good. Let us not frustrate our life in this world and in the Hereafter by trying to satisfy the insatiable desires of our nafs and by falling for the Satan's deceit. Let us not forget that one day we will give account for every word out of our mouth and for every deed we do. I would like to conclude the khutbah with the following hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), **“Have taqwa of Allah wherever you are, and if you do evil knowingly or unknowingly, follow it with a good one to wipe the former out, and treat the people with good behavior.”**⁸

5 Hujurat, 49/13.

6 Nahl, 16/128; Jathiyah, 45/19; Ra'd, 13/35.

7 Baqarah, 2/197.

8 Tirmidhi, Birr, 55.





TECHNOLOGY ADDICTION AND SOCIAL MEDIA ETHICS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا.



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُوبٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ ، الصِّحَّةُ
وَالْفَرَاعُ.



Honorable Muslims!

Islam primarily aims to ensure that the life, property, mental health, dignity, and faith of human, who is created to be the most honorable being on earth, are protected. It regards these five values inviolable. It does not approve in any manner these values being undermined for any reason. Binding all spheres of life, this fact is also applicable to using technology, the internet and social media.

Dear Believers!

What fits a Muslim is to use the technology properly as approved by the religion, ethics, and common sense. To consider the internet as a purposeless, useless and uncontrolled medium means to violate the five fundamental values commanded in Islam to be protected. This is because



the inconsiderate use of technology harms human life by exposing threat to human health and inflicts costly damage to property by causing financial loss. It erodes human dignity through unethical orientations and human faith through radical and perverse ideologies. It impairs the ability to think and comprehend, and challenges the mental faculties.

Dear Muslims!

People who produce technology using the reason and material given by Allah (swt) are accountable to use it in good cause. By using technology, if they go after gambling instead of halal earning, extravagance instead of moderate spending, morally ill practices instead of honorably living, and violence instead of compassion, then greatly mistaken are they. It means they spread sedition by their own hands, and put their future in danger. Moreover, if they kill their time behind a television or computer screen, then they become accountable against themselves, their families, and Allah (swt). It is unfortunate that the number of families living under the same roof unaware of each other is increasing day by day. The technology, expected to buy time by speeding up the processes for human, has turned into the most deceiving trap for waste and loss of time today. The Prophet Muhammad (saw), however, warns us as follows, **“There are two blessings which many people are deceived (to evaluate): Health and free time.”**¹

Dear Believers!

Occupying a great place in the lives of everyone, the internet and social media should be prevented from turning into an area uncontrolled, unprincipled, and free of responsibility. What suits a Muslim is to always act responsibly, to observe the boundaries set by Allah (swt), and to uphold the truth and the right at all times. Let us not forget that just as in the offline life, it is haram to violate the rights and privacy of people on the social media as well. Any step in disrespect of privacy of people contradicts the divine commandment of Allah (swt), **“Do not spy or backbite each other.”**² Just as it is a sin to tell a lie, defame people, and utter slanders at them in offline life, it is also a sin to do so online. Allah as the Lord of the Worlds watches us over online, too. He (swt) will bring us to account for all our words and acts online, too. In the verse I recited as I began the khutbah,

1 Bukhari, Riqaq, 1.

2 Hujurat, 49/12.

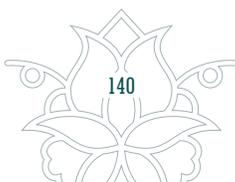


Allah (swt) states, **“Do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those one will be questioned.”**³

Dear Muslims!

Today it is not possible to live in a way completely isolated from technology. In fact, Islam does not want such a thing either. However, it is the primary responsibility of all of us to use the technology as aware of halal-haram, paying attention to protecting moral principles, without violating human rights and liberties. That way we might make our time more productive and our efforts more meaningful. We might render the world better and peaceful. As long as we use the technology in accordance with the limits and boundaries set by Allah (swt) as in all His blessings.

³ Isra, 17/36.





THE BARAKAH OF BUSINESS LIFE: WORK ETHICS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَفَعْنَا
بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ سُخْرِيًّا وَرَحِمْتَ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا
يَجْمَعُونَ .



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: فَلَإِنَّهُ أَنَا خَصْمُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ رَجُلٌ أُعْطِيَ بِي ثُمَّ
عَدَرَ، وَرَجُلٌ بَاعَ حُرًّا فَأَكَلَ كَمَنَّهُ، وَرَجُلٌ اسْتَأْجَرَ أَجِيرًا فَاسْتَوَى مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُعْطِهِ أَجْرَهُ .



Dear Muslims!

Humans pursue their livelihood in order to ensure the maintenance of their own and their dependents. With this aim, each person works in jobs in compliance with the sunnat Allah imposed by the Almighty Allah (swt). Some people work as employees, others as employers, some others as public servants, and others as supervisors. There is much wisdom underlying this obligatory division of labor in life. In this regard, the Almighty Allah (swt) states, “Do they distribute the mercy of your Lord? It is We who have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of this world and have raised some of them above others



in degrees [of rank] that they may make use of one another for service. But the mercy of your Lord is better than whatever they accumulate.”¹

Honorable Believers!

All people are equal like the teeth of a comb, regardless of their financial status, authority, or duty. No one is privileged or superior to the other in terms of being servants of Allah. The superior-subordinate relationship in business life does not give a specific rank to the humans before Allah the Exalted. What makes a person worthy in the presence of Allah (swt) is nothing but his faith, worship, morals, and taqwa (piety). The Prophet Muhammad (saw) warns us, **“Allah does not look at your outward appearance and your wealth but He looks only at your hearts and your deeds.”²**

Dear Muslims!

It is a great favor to provide a job for somebody and help them earn their livelihood and maintain their family in a halal way. However, this also brings along mutual rights and responsibilities. When these responsibilities are fulfilled and mutual rights are protected, people are going to gain the consent of Allah (swt) and the society is going to live in peace and prosperity.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) qualifies the relation between workers and employers, and supervisors and public servants as a “brotherhood relation”. Love and respect, compassion and mercy, and solidarity and cooperation are the essential elements in the relationship between brothers.

Employers who heed the warnings of the Messenger of Allah (saw) observe the rights of their employees. They provide them with a peaceful working environment. They offer them opportunities necessary for their needs such as worship and rest. They pay the amount they deserve on time. They do not task them with duties that they are unable to perform. They do not endanger their health and life. They take all necessary precautions for occupational safety. They see their employees as a trust and act by knowing that they are accountable to Allah (swt) for them. They establish a brotherly, merciful, warm, and sincere relation with their employees. They do not deprive their employees of their social rights nor victimize them, or employ unregistered workers.

1 Zukhruf, 43/32.

2 Muslim, Birr, 34.



Honorable Believers!

Business life also lays some responsibilities on employees. Muslims work properly in accordance with the advice of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). They protect their workplace, its properties, and materials as their own goods. They do not utilize the facilities of the workplace to satisfy personal needs. They know that if they do not deliver an efficient and a high-quality job, it will result in undeserved earning.

Anyone who works for the public service should also see it as entrusted to them by our nation. They should never forget that just as every good deed has its rewards, every negligence and mistake will cause the violation of the rights of individuals and the public.

Dear Muslims!

The Almighty Allah (swt) states in the Holy Qur'an, **"It was We who created man, and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him: for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein. Behold, two (guardian angels) appointed to learn (his doings) learn (and note them), one sitting on the right and one on the left."**³

In accordance with this warning of Allah (swt), we need the awareness of servitude in our business life as well as in every area of our lives. Let us all work to produce and earn through halal ways. As handicraftsmen and craftsmen, let us not only teach the profession to our apprentices, journeymen, and masters, but let us also teach them virtue, honesty, loyalty, and the value of elbow grease and halal earnings at the same time. Let us instill in them modesty and good morals. Thus, let us pass the business ethics based on Islamic brotherhood and prophetic wisdom down to next generations.

I would like to conclude my khutbah with this hadith qudsi, **"Allah the Exalted (swt) states, 'There are three whose adversary I shall be on the Day of Resurrection: a man who has given his word by Me and has broken it; a man who has sold a free man and has consumed the price; and a man who has hired a workman, has exacted his due in full from him but has not given him his wage.'"**⁴

3 Qaf, 50/16-17.

4 Bukhari, Ijarah, 10.





THE BOND BETWEEN ALLAH AND HIS SERVANTS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَمَنْ يُسَلِّمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ
الْأُمُورِ.



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ، وَمَنْ كَرِهَ
لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ.



Honorable Muslims!

In the verse I have recited, Allah (swt) states, “**And whoever submits his face to Allah while he is a doer of good - then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold. And to Allah will be the outcome of all matters.**”¹

In the hadith I have recited, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, “**Whoever wants to meet Allah, Allah wants to meet him, too. Whoever does not want to meet Allah, Allah does not want to meet him, either.**”²

1 Luqman, 31/22.

2 Bukhari, Riqaaq, 41; Muslim, Dhikr, 14.



Dear Believers!

Allah the Almighty is the only reason for our existence. Upon His command “Be!”, all creations between heavens and earth find their place in the world. It is Allah Who creates us from nothing, makes us live through His might, bounty and help, and puts us to a test through His blessings.

We are responsible against Allah from the moment we wake up in the morning till we go to sleep at night, in every breath and every step we take, and in every decision we make. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) refers to this responsibility in one occasion, **“The right of Allah over His slaves is that they should worship Him and not associate anything with Him.”** Then Allah promises them, **“He shall not punish them, and He shall put them in paradise.”**³

Dear Muslims!

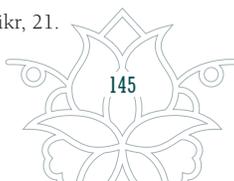
When the servants of Allah have sincere faith in Him (swt), He becomes pleased with them. Having sincere faith requires worshipping wholeheartedly and living in accordance with good morals. Muslims show their love, respect, and obedience to Allah not only through worships but also their moral behaviors.

Allah responds to the prayers and supplications of His believing servants. He (swt) does not leave those, who try to obtain His consent, alone and unaided. Whenever the servants ask, **مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ** **“When is the help of Allah?”**, He (swt) welcomes their question with, **أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ** **“Unquestionably, the help of Allah is near.”**⁴ In a hadith qudsi, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, **“I am just as My servant thinks I am, (i.e. I am able to do for him what he thinks I can do for him) and I am with him if He remembers Me. If he remembers Me in himself, I too, remember him in Myself; and if he remembers Me in a group of people, I remember him in a group that is better than them. If he comes one span nearer to Me, I go one cubit nearer to him; and if he comes one cubit nearer to Me, I go a distance of two outstretched arms nearer to him; and if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running.”**⁵

3 Muslim, Iman, 48; Ibn Hanbal, V, 239.

4 Baqarah, 2/214.

5 Bukhari, Tawhid, 15; Muslim, Dhikr, 21.



Dear Believers!

People can sometimes be ungrateful and egoistic, and pushy and careless. We are merely servants. Sometimes we happen to forget that Allah sees, hears, and expects good deeds from us at all times. We find ourselves committing sins, and making mistakes, knowingly or forgetfully. We happen to do things we would greatly regret when the dark clouds set down on our way, when our foot slips, and when our eyes are closed.

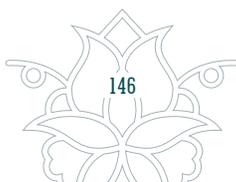
No matter what, our only shelter is Allah (swt), Who is the Most Merciful of all the Merciful. Allah is forgiving and loves to forgive. He (swt) keeps open the door of mercy and forgiveness until our last breath. It is stated in the Holy Qur'an, **“O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”**⁶

Dear Muslims!

Allah (swt) warns us in the Qur'an, **“And be not like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget themselves.”**⁷ Let us heed this warning. Let us properly protect and strengthen the bond of servitude between Allah and us. Let us duly worship Him and ask for help from Him (swt) only. Let us wholeheartedly pray to Him. Let us repent for all our sins. Let us not forget that if one forgets Allah and loses their bond with Allah, then He pushes them away from His mercy. He (swt) instills fear in their hearts in the world, and He does not care about them and puts them in a great punishment in the Hereafter.

6 Zumar 39/53.

7 Hashr, 59/19.





THE INVIOLEABLE RIGHT TO LIFE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَعَصَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعْنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ
عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا.



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَنْ ضَارَّ أَضَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ وَمَنْ شَاقَّ شَاقَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ.



Honorable Muslims!

In the verse I have recited, the Almighty Allah (swt) states, “If a man kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell, wherein he will abide eternally. The wrath and the curse of Allah are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him.”¹

In the hadith I have recited, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, “Whoever harms others, Allah will harm him. Whoever causes hardship to others, Allah will cause hardship to him.”²

Dear Believers!

The sublime religion Islam is known for its promotion of justice, harmlessness to others, mercy, and trust. The right to life comes on top

1 Nisa, 4/93.

2 Abu Dawud, al-Qada' (Aqdiyyah), 31.



of the values that Islam protects. All people, regardless of their religion, language, race, and gender, have the inviolable right to life. In this regard, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) declared in his the Farewell Khutbah, **“Verily! Your blood, property, and honor are sacred to one another like the sanctity of this day of Arafah, this month of Dhu al-Hijjah, and this city of Makkah.”**³

It is a great oppression when a person takes another person’s life unlawfully. It is a great honor, on the other hand, when a person saves another person’s life who is victimized and in need of help. As the unchanging principle of the divine message revealed to all prophets, this issue is referred to in the Holy Qur’an as follows, **“...Whoever takes a life, unless as a punishment for murder or mischief in the land, it would be as if killing all people. And whoever saves a life, it would be as if saving all people...”**⁴

Dear Muslims!

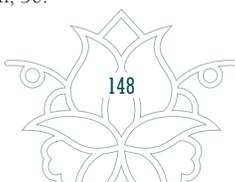
Every human being deserves to be respected from the moment of falling into the mother’s womb. According to the legal and moral restrictions put in place by Islam, abortion can never be an option for personal benefits unless there is a medical reason such as the unborn infant’s posing a risk to the mother’s life. Honor killing can never be an excuse to throw a woman into the brutal claw of violence. An explanation showing great ignorance, such as “Our traditions force us to do so” can never be a justification for the cause of blood feud or killing a person. Since, in fact, even our own life is entrusted to us and we do not have the right to commit suicide by claiming, “This life is mine.”

Dear Believers!

It should never be forgotten that Islam, the religion in the sight of Allah the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, is founded on mercy. Similarly, Muhammad Mustafa (saw) the Last Prophet is the Messenger of Mercy. Never do violence and oppression have a room in Islam. For violence is the wound of conscience, not faded away over time, nor forgotten in the heart. Violence is a blatant oppression, no matter whom it hurts, be it a woman or a man, or a young or an old person. Oppression is definitely haram.

3 Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 9; Muslim, Qasamah, 30.

4 Ma’idah, 5/32.



Miserable are those people who yield to their anger, hatred, or ignorance, and subdue the oppressed ones. A pit of utter darkness is the destination of those who are devoid of compassion and mercy and who are far from being fair and just.

Dear Muslims!

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) himself was very respectful, compassionate, and polite to his family particularly and to all people around him. He would not utter any rude or hurtful word to anybody, nor would he allow any Muslim to resort to violence in any way. On one occasion he warned Muslims as follows, **“Those who torment people most in this world will be punished most severely on the Day of Resurrection.”**⁵

Honorable Believers!

How sad it is that sometimes we Muslims attempt against others’ lives because of such unimaginable reasons as “throwing an oblique look at someone” or “horning someone’s car in traffic” while we are expected to not hurt even an ant. We Muslims look as if we forgot that Allah (swt) commands that an arbiter be appointed if a dispute arises and friendly settlement of conflicts be sought, and that the Prophet Muhammad (saw) would forgive even those people who had tried to commit suicide when they regretted. Today, Muslims have turned into people who hurt one another because of losing temper in a moment of anger while they are expected to treat each other with patience and tolerance in family, at school, at work, or in the street. In this regard, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) criticized one’s resorting not to the intellectual strength but to the physical strength, and said, **“The strong man is not the one who is good at wrestling. But the one who controls himself in a fit of rage.”**⁶

Dear Muslims!

Let us try to see the Might of our Lord (swt) through all living beings. Let us love all the created for the sake of the Creator. Let us ensure that we do not cause any harm to any creature through our actions or words. Let us follow the prophetic principle, **“Neither harm, nor get harmed!”**⁷ Let us hold on to the virtue of “being reliable”, bequeathed to us by our Beloved

5 Ibn Hanbal, IV, 90.

6 Bukhari, Adab, 76; Muslim, Birr, 107.

7 Ibn Majah, Ahkam, 17.





Prophet (saw). Let us never resort to violence regardless of the magnitude of our problems and troubles. Let us adopt a manner of speaking, listening, understanding, and getting along well with each other, as would be finely fit for human dignity. And the most important of all, let us not frustrate our life in this world and in the Hereafter by attempting against one's life that our Lord (swt) regards sacred and inviolable.





THE ISLAMIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS CALAMITIES

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَلَتَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ
الصَّابِرِينَ.



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: عَجَبًا لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ، إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ



Honorable Muslims!

One day the Prophet Muhammad (saw) saw a woman crying out loud by the grave of her deceased child. “Fear Allah and be patient!”, he advised to the sorrowful mother. “Mind your own business! What has troubled me has not troubled you!”, said the woman, failing to recognize him because of her pain. A while later when she realized that it was the Prophet Muhammad (saw) who advised her to do so, she went near him and expressed her apologies. Then came the following striking advice from the Messenger of Mercy (saw), **“True patience is that which comes at the first blow.”**¹

1 Bukhari, Jana'iz, 31.



Dear Believers!

It is inevitable that all of us have troubles, pains, sorrows, material and spiritual problems in life. This is the reason why this world is called “the world of trials”. In this respect, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) endured worse trials than what we strive to come through in our own lives. He lost his father before he was even born, and his mother when he was only six years old, and had to grow up without a father and mother. Moreover, he suffered the loss of his beloved wife and his six children. He, together with a handful of believers, had to endure the polytheists’ merciless pressures, tortures, restrictions, and exclusionary behaviors. Despite all these troubles and problems, he never lost his faith and hope, always sought refuge in Allah, and asked only Him (swt) for help. He embraced mercy other than violence, and never resorted to solutions that Allah would disapprove.

Dear Muslims!

In the verse I have recited at the beginning of the khutbah, Allah the Almighty states, **“We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient!”**²

None of us would like to encounter hardships. But as Muslims we all know that while there are good times in life, we also have bad times as a part of our trial in this world. Allah the Almighty tests us through depriving us of our possessions at times, and through giving us plenty of blessings at other times. Therefore, it is important for us not to lose control and go rebellious in the face of problems, but rather be patient and remain strong. We act in line with the common sense and reason. We fulfill our responsibilities to overcome the problems. We seek wisdom in and draw lessons from all troubles for our life in this world and for the one in the Hereafter. We self-question ourselves regarding our mistakes and failures in order not to experience similar problems again. We consult the knowledgeable and experienced people, and then rely on Allah (swt) for the consequences.

Dear Believers!

In one occasion the Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, **“How wonderful is the case of a believer; there is good for him in everything and this**

2 Baqarah, 2/155.



applies only to a believer. If prosperity attends him, he expresses gratitude to Allah and that is good for him; and if adversity befalls him, he endures it patiently and that is better for him.”³

Then, holding on to life both in good and bad times and taking strength from our connection to Allah is a sign of the beauty of the faith we have. It is cruel for people to turn their despair into violence and vent their anger on women and children in overwhelming situations. Any problem, disagreement, or overwhelming situation cannot be an excuse for violence against women. Because violence means to infringe upon the rights of people and to poison family members by sowing seeds of pain and hatred. Muslims, however, should remain to be such people from whose hand and tongue can come only mercy and who instill peace and trust in their environment. It is never a solution to harm oneself or family members in the face of problems. Islam does not approve taking the lives of one’s own or others that is entrusted by Allah, even to cease the pain. This is because if there is a problem, so is Allah as the Solver of problems. **“Allah is the best Protector and Helper!”⁴** If there are troubles, there are also friends, neighbors, and relatives to find solutions to them together. **“The believers are but brothers!”⁵**

Dear Muslims!

Let us not turn our pains into rebellion and oppression. Let us not forget that our patient and strong stance against our problems indicates that there will be much easiness for us before Allah (swt). We are here in this world to have faith and do good deeds. Let us remember the Prophet Muhammad’s (saw) hope-increasing and comforting words, **“All troubles that befall a Muslim, even if it is the pricking of a thorn, serve for his/her sins to be forgiven.”⁶** Let us not give up our hopes from the help and mercy of Allah. Let us pray to Allah (swt) in the words of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), **“We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return. O Allah! Compensate me in my affliction, recompense my loss and give me something better in exchange for it.”⁷**

3 Muslim, Zuhd, 64.

4 Anfal, 8/40.

5 Hujurat, 49/10.

6 Bukhari, Marda, 1.

7 Muslim, Jana’iz, 4.





THE MONTH OF MUHARRAM AND THE DAY OF ASHURA

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٌ.



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَا تَبَاغَضُوا، وَلَا تَحَاسَدُوا، وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا، وَكُونُوا
عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا..



Honorable Muslims!

As the Almighty Allah (swt) states in the Holy Qur'an, "The number of months in the sight of Allah is twelve."¹ One of these months that we are currently in is the month of Muharram. It is an exceptional period of time blessed by the mercy of Allah. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) referred to the abundance of spiritual blessings in this month by saying, "The most excellent fast after Ramadan is the fast in Allah's month al-Muharram."²



1 Tawbah, 9/36.

2 Muslim, Siyam, 202.

Dear Believers!

The month of Muharram holds a special place in our history and our culture as well. The month of Muharram is the month of Ashura. Ashura is one of the symbols of our unity, togetherness, sharing, and solidarity. Just as the ashura (Noah's pudding) brings together a variety of ingredients and creates a balanced flavor, our civilization, as required by the ethics of living together, has been sharing the joy and sorrow, the blessings and hardships, and the affection and hard feelings for centuries.

Dear Muslims!

The month of Muharram is also the month in which the Battle of Karbala took place, which is our shared sorrow and the heart wound of our history. Over 70 Muslims, the majority of whom were from Ahl al-Bayt, including the Prophet Muhammad's (saw) grandson Hussain, were martyred in Karbala. Karbala is the name of a challenging test and a deep sorrow. Karbala is a heavy experience bequeathed by the Prophet Muhammad's (saw) family members for centuries to come. Every Muslim whose heart burns and sighs with pain in the chest at the mention of Karbala and Hussain should contemplate about Karbala, understand it correctly, and draw lessons from it.

Dear Believers!

In order to understand Karbala, one needs to be knowledgeable about Hussain. Hussain was an honorable believer following the path of his grandfather Muhammad Mustafa (saw), the Last of the Prophets (Khatam al-Nabiyin). He was a graceful Muslim who stood against injustice and oppression, and set his heart on upholding the truth, justice, loyalty, fidelity, and righteousness.

To love him requires defending the values he sacrificed his life for. For he is a sublime example of an honorable life and a noble stance for all generations and centuries. It is a duty upon us to equip ourselves with his faith and morals, and, at the same time, to pass down his personality traits of bravery and self-sacrifice to our youth.

Dear Muslims!

The greatest message of the month of Muharram for Muslims is to hold on to our unity and peace, and to never make any concessions on



our brotherhood. Allah the Almighty (swt) warns us in the Holy Qur'an as, **“Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving Clear Signs. For them is a dreadful penalty.”**³ Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, **“Do not hate one another. Do not envy one another, and do not desert each other. O servants of Allah! Be brothers.”**⁴

Dear Muslims!

Let us unite our hearts of the same faith, the same pain, and the same longing, in order not to let new incidents of Karbala take place. Let us spare rooms in our hearts for each other, and embellish our lives with affection. Let us deal with our shared sorrows and problems in need of solution through discernment, prudence, sense of responsibility, and sensitivity. Let us lock together around the sacred values that make us “us”. Let us make Hussain's nobility and good morals our distinctive marks.

I would like to take this opportunity to commemorate, wishing Allah's mercy upon and with heartfelt gratitude for, Hussain the leader of martyrs, in particular, and all our martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the truth, freedom and independence, dignity and sacred values, from Karbala to today.

3 Al-i 'Imran, 3/105.

4 Bukhari, Adab, 57





THE QUR'AN AND THE SUNNAH ARE AN INSEPARABLE WHOLE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ
وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا.



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَأَحْسَنَ
الْهُدَى هُدَى مُحَمَّدٍ



Dear Muslims!

The Almighty Allah (swt) states, “And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger –those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favor of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions!”¹

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, “The truest word is the Book of Allah and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad.”²

1 Nisa, 4/69.

2 Nasa'i, 'Eidayn, 22.



Honorable Believers!

Allah the Most Merciful (swt) has not left humans alone and unaided in the world. He (swt) has sent prophets to show His servants the right path, and divine books to guide them to salvation. The duty of prophethood that started with the first human the Prophet Adam ended with the Last Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (saw). The divine message that started to be revealed with the Prophet Adam was crowned by the Holy Qur'an revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

Dear Muslims!

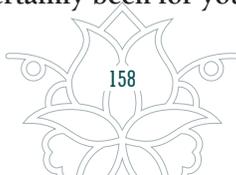
The Holy Qur'an is the final divine words by Allah (swt) to all humanity. It is the words and verses of the Almighty Allah. It is the Book, reading which is a form of worship. It is al-Furqan to distinguish the truth from the falsity, the right from the wrong, and the halal from the haram. It is the cure for body and soul, and the source of remedy for moral diseases. It is the guide that shows the ways of attaining happiness in this world and in the Hereafter. It is al-Dhikr (the remembrance) that reminds people of the purpose of creation.

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

The Sunnah is the Prophet Muhammad (saw)'s lifestyle, words, acts, and approvals. While the Qur'an enjoins people to have faith in Allah (swt) and be in servitude to Him (swt) only, the Sunnah teaches people the verities of the faith. While the Qur'an enjoins people to worship as required by the faith, the Sunnah indicates how to perform the worships. While the Qur'an enjoins people to have good morals, the Sunnah functions as the model for such a virtuous life.

Dear Muslims!

Not only did the Prophet Muhammad (saw) convey the revelations sent by the Lord of the Worlds (swt), but he (saw) also clarified them to people. His distinguished life is the best example for us to become good Muslims and lead a life as approved by Allah (swt). If we want to attain peace in this temporary life on earth and in the eternal life in the Hereafter, the only way is to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, and exert efforts to live, think, and behave the way he (saw) did. In this respect, it is stated in the Holy Qur'an, **"There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah**



an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”³

Honorable Believers!

The Prophet Muhammad lived a life under the observation of the Almighty Allah, Who tasked him (saw) with the duty of prophethood, and was immediately warned by Allah (swt) when he as a human being made even a small mistake. According to the Qur’an, he (saw) never said any word arising out of his own self and his desires, but only said what was revealed to him (saw).⁴ His Companions carefully observed his blessed words and behaviors, and meticulously transferred them to the future generations.

The Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah are an inseparable whole. It is not possible to think of the Holy Qur’an that is the foundation of Islam as separate from the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). Trying to put a distance between the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah, undervaluing the place of the Sunnah in Islam by claiming “The Holy Qur’an is sufficient for us”, and raising doubts about the authentic knowledge passed down on to us from the Prophet Muhammad (saw) are all far from well-intended endeavors that place a heavy burden on a person. Because the traditions of the Muslim communities that have faith in the Holy Qur’an have been kneaded with the Sunnah, and the foundations of the Islamic civilization have been laid upon the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah. In this respect, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) said in his Farewell Sermon, **“I leave behind me two things, the Qur’an and my example, the Sunnah and if you follow these you will never go astray.”**⁵

Dear Muslims!

Then, let us hold on tightly to the Holy Qur’an, and, as it commands, follow the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). Let us not leave from the guidance of the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) for learning and practicing our religion in the most accurate form. Let us be wary against those people who pave the way for the exploitation of religion and attempt to derive fame and benefit through distancing the Qur’an from the Sunnah. Let us never respect such mindsets claiming that the

3 Ahzab, 33/21.

4 Najm, 53/3-4.

5 Muwatta’, Qadar, 3.





entire hadith corpus transmitting the Sunnah to our day is not reliable. Let us be wary also against those people who exploit the authentic Sunnah with the words and superstitions that do not belong to the Prophet Muhammad (saw). Let us exert all efforts to raise generations that align their lives with Allah (swt)'s divine revelation, the Holy Qur'an, and the Prophet Muhammad (saw)'s distinguished Sunnah.





THE WAY OF MAKING LIFE LIVABLE: RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ
كُلُّهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ.»



Honorable Muslims!

Human beings need love, compassion and company from birth to death. They search for a friend who will treat their spiritual gaps and tremors throughout their life. Our Lord's mercy is the only support that will give us peace in the world and the Hereafter. Indeed, Almighty Allah is closer to human beings than their jugular veins. When they pray, He (swt) answers them. He (swt) never leaves them alone in the misfortunes, equips them with reason, heart, consciousness, and conscience. To the person who thinks that s/he is helpless, He (swt) grants exits in the example of Our Beloved Prophet.



Dear Believers!

Every period of life is accompanied by its own blessings and burdens. The years of childhood, youth, adulthood and old age sometimes go with beautiful memories, sometimes in distress and sadness. Confronting the examinations we face in life and finding a solution are primarily possible with a sound heart. A sound heart is a heart that finds peace in submission to Allah. Muslims nourish their hearts with faith. They keep their inner world strong. They take motivation through worship. The doctor of hearts, our Beloved Prophet (saw), described the importance of spirituality that settles in the heart as follows: “...**Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body, if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good, but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt, and that is the heart.**”¹

Dear Muslims!

Those who believe that they are under the matchless mercy and protection of Allah and that He (swt) sees and hears them at any moment do not experience the fear of being alone and forlorn. They take power from faith and spirituality to make life livable, to overcome difficulties, and to increase goodness. As they feed their inner world through proper ways, they distance themselves from stress and conflicts. They will attain peace and their hope increases. Because, as our supreme religion teaches us, human beings have spiritual needs as much as material needs. Spirituality is a natural part of life. It is a source of hope, patience, and tolerance.

Dear Muslims!

Today, human beings are lonelier although the means of communication has increased. Family ties have been weakened and kinship relations lost their vitality. The culture of consumption based on waste and pretentiousness has brought humanity to the brink of extinction spiritually and physically. Spiritual support and guidance for people of all ages is an indispensable need in such a period. Moral support instills perseverance in those who go through tough times and are in need of help to stay strong. It spreads compassion by saying stop to violence and persecution. It becomes hope in coping with pain and grief, and in getting rid of addiction.

1 Bukhari, Iman, 39.



Honorable Believers!

Allah the Almighty states: **“O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah intervenes between a man and his heart and that to Him you will be gathered.”**²

Our religious officials as the workers of goodness are responsible for the task of enlightening the society with the life-giving message of Islam. They serve the society day and night with authentic religious knowledge and deep-rooted experience of our tradition. They give spiritual counseling and guidance service to our people in every area of life such as hospitals, penitentiary institutions, nursing homes, health institutions, dormitories, and particularly mosques and Qur’an courses.

Dear Believers!

The only way of salvation to make life meaningful for the human who is under the burden of the world of trials is to return to the essence, to search for the truth, and to keep their spirituality alive. Let us not forget that the exhausted hearts are refreshed through faith and affection. Damaged values are repaired with conscience, and lives are stabilized with spiritual support and guidance.

I would like to conclude my khutbah with the translation of Surah al-Sharh, which is a chapter from the Qur’an that is bestowed by Allah (swt) upon all humanity in the name of our Prophet as a source of inner peace: **“Did We not expand for you, [O Muhammad], your breast? And We removed from you your burden. Which had weighed upon your back. And raised high for you your repute. For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease. Indeed, with hardship [will be] ease. So when you have finished [your duties], then stand up [for worship]. And to your Lord direct [your] longing.”**³

² Anfal, 8/24.

³ Sharh, 94/1-8.





TO BE A RESPONSIBLE FATHER

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَنُ لِبَنِيهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَا نَحَلَ وَالِدٌ وَلَدًا مِنْ نَحْلِ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ آدَبٍ حَسَنٍ.



Honorable Muslims!

Being a family is one of the greatest blessings granted for human by Allah (swt). This is so because family means trust, support, and refuge. It refers to joining hands all together to foster the good and prevent the evil. It is also the most important institution that prepares human for the future. The first education ever is given within family. Within family is formed the personality. Before everyone else, love, respect, and honesty are taught by parents.

Important duties fall upon the father in family as well as the mother. A father's responsibility is not limited to the financial maintenance of the family's material needs only. It is the primary responsibility of all fathers to rear children who are aware of the significance of mercy, equipped with good morals and values. In the hadith I recited as I began the khutbah, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, “**No father can leave a better heritage to his child than good manners.**”¹



¹ Tirmidhi, Birr, 33.

Dear Believers!

To be a father means to strive for ensuring that his child is honored with iman, like the Prophet Nuh. It is to make every effort so that the child could be happy in this world and in the Hereafter. Prophet Nuh called out to his son, who refused to get aboard the ship to tawhid, with his final hope, “...**O my son, come aboard with us and be not with the disbelievers.**”²

Dear Muslims!

To be a father means to be in a state of constant supplication like the Prophet Ibrahim. It is to seek refuge with Allah to be an obedient servant of His (swt). It is to pray earnestly to Him (swt) for good children. In this respect, the Prophet Ibrahim prayed to Allah (swt) as, “**Our Lord! Make us Muslims in submission to You and from our descendants a Muslim nation in submission to You. And show us our rites and accept our repentance. Indeed, You are the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful.**”³ “**O Allah! Make me an establisher of prayer, and many from my descendants. O Allah, accept my supplication.**”⁴

Dear Believers!

To be a father means to preserve one’s perseverance in the face of hardships, like the Prophet Yaqub. It is to bear the tests and trials of the world, however heavy they may be, with patience and reliance on Allah. It is to continuously instill love, mercy, justice, and compassion in one’s children. It is to warn them when they fail, but not ever give up hope in them. The Prophet Yaqub said to his children who, out of jealousy, threw their brother Yusuf in a well, “...**Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting. And Allah is the one sought for help against that which you describe.**”⁵

Dear Muslims!

To be a father means to give advice to one’s child in a compassionate manner, like Luqman. It is to teach them what is right and what is wrong, as well as what is haram and what is halal. Luqman advised his child so finely, “**O my son, do not associate anything with Allah. Indeed, association**

2 Hud, 11/42.

3 Baqarah, 2/128.

4 Ibrahim, 14/40.

5 Yusuf, 12/18.



with Him is great injustice.” “O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you.” “And do not turn your cheek in contempt toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like anyone self-deluded and boastful.” “And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice...”⁶

Dear Muslims!

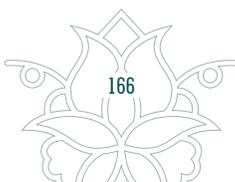
To be a father means to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), who was sent as mercy to the worlds. He (saw) was an exemplary father. He would not make any discrimination among his children. Seeing his daughter Fatima, he would stand up, let her have his seat, kiss and hug her compassionately. He would treat considerately not only his own children but all children. Grown up under Prophet Muhammad’s (saw) supervision, Anas said about him, “**I served him for ten years. He never said ‘uff’ to me.**”⁷

Honorable Believers!

Our children expect care and compassion from us. They want to feel around us that they are valued. They need us to be the compass guiding them on their way and the safe harbor taking shelter in as they learn the life. Then, let us not neglect our children in the busyness of the daily life and the rush of earning livelihood. Let us make every effort to raise children who serve their religion, homeland, and all humanity. Let us not leave our children deprived of our love, care, and du’a for them.

6 Luqman, 31/13, 17-19.

7 Muslim, Fadha'il, 51.





TOWARDS THE SPIRITUAL CLIMATE OF THE THREE HOLY MONTHS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ .



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: اَللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ كَرِيمٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي.



Honorable Muslims!

In the verse I have recited, Allah the Almighty states, “**And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous.**”¹

In the hadith I have read, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) teaches us the following du'a: “**O Allah, You are the Forgiving, al-Karim, and You love forgiveness, and so forgive me.**”²

Dear Believers!

Over us is the shade of the three holy months that bring barakah to our life and peace to our soul through the countless blessings and ikhsan of Allah the Almighty. We will reach the month of Rajab soon. We will be enjoying the Raghaib, too, inshallah.

1 Al-i 'Imran, 3/133.

2 Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 84.



Endless praise be to Allah the Almighty for allowing us to reach these spiritual days, and salat and salam be upon the Prophet Muhammad for teaching his ummah the worship and obedience, tawbah and istighfar, and du'a and supplication.

Dear Muslims!

The three holy months denote waking up from heedlessness (ghaflat) and getting oneself purified through the awareness of servitude to Allah (swt). The three holy months are among the rare times the coming of which we long for every year. These are the months in which the divine mercy and forgiveness embrace all creation, and Muslims gravitate toward worshipping together.

The first door opening to Allah the Almighty's endless blessings for His servants is the month of Rajab. It is the sign of our iman and seeking refuge in Allah; and our loyalty and affection to the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

Dear Believers!

Two holy nights come over in our hearts as guests in the month of Rajab. One of them is the Raghaib night. Raghaib refers to our efforts to direct all our wishes and desires to obtaining the consent of Allah. The Raghaib night teaches us that our only true achievement in this life that slips away is to turn to Allah and keep our promise of servitude to Him (swt).

The other holy night in this month is the night of Mi'raj that brings to mind the Masjid al-Aqsa as Prophet Muhammad's entrustment to his ummah. The Mi'raj night reminds us to move ourselves from material desires to spiritual values and lifting ourselves up from what is temporary to what is eternal.

Honorable Believers!

After the month of Rajab welcomes us the month of Sha'ban in which we prepare ourselves spiritually and physically for the month of Ramadan. Shining in the middle of the month of Sha'ban, the Bara'ah night makes us think that saving ourselves from sorrow and divine punishment, and attaining forgiveness and peace lie in the servitude to Allah (swt).

Ramadan, the beginning of which denotes mercy, the middle of which forgiveness, and the end of which salvation from hell, is the last of the three

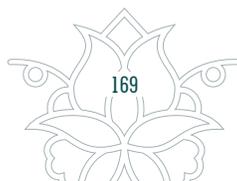


holy months. Ramadan is the month of fasting, Qur'an, spending in the cause of Allah, zakat, purification, and contemplation. Towards the end of Ramadan we celebrate the Laylat al-Qadr, which is better and more bountiful in divine blessings than a thousand months for those who know its value. And finally, with the happiness of being obedient servants of Allah, we make it to the Eid al-Fitr.

Dear Muslims!

Let us regard the three holy months as an opportunity to be attached to Allah from heart, duly worship Him (swt), and lead a life in accordance with good morals. Let us repent for our wrongs and sins. Let us quit our bad habits if we have any. Let us open a brand new page for the right, truth, good, and nice. Let us carry joy and happiness to sad hearts. Let us purify ourselves from the feeling of "I" and get the feeling of "we". Let us thus attain peace in this world and in the Hereafter.

I would like to take this opportunity to pray to Allah that the three holy months and the Raghaib night may lead to good developments for our nation and the ummah of Prophet Muhammad (saw). May Allah make Rajab and Sha'ban blessed and allow us to reach Ramadan.





WELCOME, THE MONTH OF RAMADAN!

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن
شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَنْ صَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا
تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.



Dear Muslims!

We will have reached Ramadan, the Sultan of the Months, soon with the first tarawih we will perform after the 'isha prayer. The same night we will wake up for suhoor, take our intention to start fasting, and enter the season of blessing and mercy, inshaallah.

May endless praise be to Allah (swt) who have allowed us to reach Ramadan. May salat and salam be to the Prophet Muhammad (saw), of whose ummah we are honored to be members.

Honorable Believers!

Ramadan is the month of blessing that for one year we have longed for. It is an unprecedented period of time in which faith, worship, good morals, consciousness of being ummah, and brotherhood in Islam are



consolidated. It is the time for Muslims to review their relationship with Allah on the one hand, and with their brothers and sisters on the other, thereby questioning their own selves. With the peacefulness of reaching such a sacred month, the Prophet Muhammad said to his Companions, **“The month of Ramadan has come with its blessings. Allah enriches you, blesses you, conceals mistakes, and accepts your prayers and du’as in this month. The Almighty Allah takes into account your competition in benevolence, and praises you to His angels. Then, do your best to be prominent in your efforts in good deeds and benevolence. The miserable is whoever is deprived of Allah’s mercy in Ramadan.”**¹

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Ramadan is the month in which the worship of fasting, which turns us into pious Muslims as patient and contented, was made obligatory. It is the month in which the Holy Qur’an, our guide to true path and salvation, was started to be revealed. Allah the Exalted (swt) refers to it as follows, **“Ramadan is the month in which the Qur’an was revealed as a guide for humanity with clear proofs of guidance and the standard to distinguish between right and wrong. So, whoever is present this month, let them fast...”**²

Ramadan is the month of repentance which purifies Muslims from sins like autumn rains at the end of summer washing the dirt and dust away from the earth. Likewise, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, **“Whoever observes fasts during the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith, and hoping to attain Allah’s rewards, then all his past sins will be forgiven.”**³

Honorable Muslims!

The Month of Ramadan is the most valuable harvest season of our lives and an opportunity of material and spiritual renewal for all of us. It is a hope, excitement and awakening for Muslims. It is the mobilization of hearts, during which the poor, the needy, and the lonely are remembered and protected by means of infaq (spending in the way of Allah). Those people who do not know the value of Ramadan though reaching it will be deprived of a great treasure!

1 Haythami, Majmua al-Zawaid, III, 344.

2 Baqarah, 2/185.

3 Bukhari, Iman, 28.





Dear Believers!

The places where the sacred month of Ramadan is best experienced are the mosques in which the hearts of Muslims are filled with awe and peacefulness as they stand in prayer. The mosques, in which we as Muslims are purified of all our senses of self-centrism and submit our servitude to Allah, are the heart of the Islamic civilization. Our mosques are constructed thanks to the efforts, sacrifices, material and non-material support of our noble people. The adhans echoing around over ninety thousand mosques today in Turkey are the symbols of our independence and of our future. I would like to take this opportunity to commemorate, in gratitude, all those charitable people who have paved the way for and supported the construction, maintenance, and services of mosques, from the past to the present.

Honorable Muslims!

Let us try to benefit from the abundance of divine blessings of Ramadan. Let us bring our houses and hearts together with the Qur'an in this month of Qur'an. Let us try to maintain the tradition of muqabala (gathering for reciting the Qur'an), as done by the Prophet Muhammad (saw). Let us try to attend the sermons and the tarawih prayers altogether, men and women, children and youth. Let us make the needy people smile with the zakat and sadaqah we will give. Let us try to be among those people who spend this sacred month in the best way, as expressed by the Prophet Muhammad (saw), "from the first night of which the devils are chained up, the gates of the Hell are closed, of the Heaven are opened, and countless Muslims are saved from the fire of the Hell."⁴

4 Tirmidhi, Sawm, 1; Ibn Majah, Siyam, 2.





WITH GRATITUDE COMES PEACE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ.



وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَنْ لَا يَشْكُرِ النَّاسَ لَا يَشْكُرِ اللَّهَ.



Honorable Muslims!

One night while performing prayer, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) cried so much that the tears running down his beard reached his chest and fell off to the ground. Seeing this, Aisha (ra) was surprised and asked him, “O Messenger of Allah! Allah the Almighty forgave your past and future sins. Why do you still cry?” Thereupon replied the Prophet Muhammad, “**Should I not be a servant of Allah who shows gratitude to Him?**”¹

Dear Believers!

The sense of gratitude behind Prophet Muhammad’s tears means to know the value of favor done and reciprocate a favor with another favor. Gratitude embedded in the meaning of prayer means to comprehend that the true owner of all blessings, material or spiritual, is Allah the Almighty. Gratitude constantly expressed in a servant’s words means to admit being

¹ Bukhari, Tahajjud, 6; Muslim, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 79; Ibn Hibban, Sahih, II, 386.



indebted for the blessings by obeying Allah from deep in heart and staying away from committing sins.

Dear Muslims!

Allah the Almighty states in the Holy Qur'an as follows: **“So remember Me and I shall remember you; give thanks to Me and do not be ungrateful to Me for My favors!”**²

Allah is al-Wahhab, al-Razzaq, al-Malik, and al-Karim. Every human being, whether young or old, rich or poor, strong or weak, sustain their lives only through the means and offerings bestowed by Allah (swt). It is an indispensable requirement of being a believing servant of Allah to be aware of this fact, to know its value, and to express gratitude to the Owner of Blessings.

A Muslim feels, expresses, and demonstrates his gratitude to Allah thoroughly. They are thankful in heart, and know that they are indebted to Allah by always feeling Him (swt) in their hearts. They express their gratitude in words by always praising Allah. They demonstrate their gratitude physically by using their hands, tongues, eyes, and ears in good and keeping them clear off any kind of evil.

They know that the gratitude for mind is expressed through having faith and producing beneficial knowledge; gratitude for knowledge through teaching and practicing what is known; gratitude for wealth through sharing it with those in need; and for health through making all the efforts to become a benevolent human.

Dear Believers!

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, **“Those who do not thank people do not show gratitude to Allah.”**³ Then, a Muslim never underrates a favor done to them, nor do they show ungratefulness or arrogance. They get happy by giving thanks to all people who have done a favor for them, including primarily their parents, their spouses, and their children.

² Baqarah, 2/152.

³ Tirmidhi, Birr, 35.



Dear Muslims!

Allah is al-Shakur, Who rewards any beneficial work done. He (swt) loves the servants who are not desirous and greedy but on the contrary are contented and satisfied with the available blessings. I would like to conclude this Friday's khutbah with a verse expressing this truth: **“Also call to mind when your Lord proclaimed: ‘If you give thanks, I will certainly grant you more; but if you are ungrateful for My favours, My chastisement is terrible.’”**⁴

⁴ Ibrahim, 14/7.





WORSHIP: AWARENESS OF SERVITUDE TO ALLAH

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ



قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ...فَإِنَّ أَحَبَّ الْعَمَلِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَدْوَمُهُ وَإِنْ قَلَّ.



Dear Believers!

In the verse I have recited, the Almighty Allah commands, “Worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty (death).” In the hadith I have read, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) says, “The acts most pleasing to Allah are those which are done most continuously, even if they amount to little.”
Honorable Muslims!

Allah created human to only worship Him. Servitude to Allah means to know Him (swt), to be attached to Him in heart, to have faith in Him and do good deeds. The essence of servitude to Allah is to obey Him knowingly and willingly, and to worship Him (swt) sincerely.

Dear Believers!

Worship is the sign of the Muslim and the reflection of faith on life. It is the indication of the desire to be closer to Allah and of the effort to



become a good servant of Him (swt). It is the finest manifestation of love and devotion to the Almighty Allah. It is the expression of gratitude for the blessings and favors bestowed upon us by Him (swt). It is to seek refuge in and to submit ourselves to Him, Whose forgiveness and mercy are limitless.

Dear Muslims!

Thanks to worship, people do not only earn rewards but also acquire several good traits and habits. Above all, worship raises in people the awareness of being always under the supervision of Allah. It directs people to what is good, what is pleasant, and what is right. In fact, people who perform salah, knowing that they will stand before Allah again soon, feel responsibility on their shoulders. The salah they perform in peace and awe of Allah distances them from extremism and unpleasant deeds.

Similarly, fasting strengthens our willpower and increases our patience, in addition to enabling us to earn rewards of worship. It protects us from being a slave to our nafs, fancy and whims, attempting to have what is haram, and uttering unpleasant and evil words.

Hajj and umrah instills the love of tawhid and sense of being a member of the Ummah while also reminding us of the Day of Judgment and its hardships. Every Muslim who leaves behind their worldly clothes and puts ihram on for hajj and umrah comprehends that what is valuable before Allah is not property, authority, or position, but faith, worship, and good morality. Coming from all around the world with different languages, colors, and ethnicities, they stand shoulder to shoulder and feel deep in heart the divine expression, **“The believers are but brothers.”**¹ .

Zakat, sadaqah, and infaq, which are among the most valuable worships, purify and increase the barakah of the property. They enrich our heart while decreasing our rush and ambition for worldly property and increasing our gratitude. Those who save themselves from selfishness and stinginess enjoy the taste of brotherhood when they share with others what they have in hand.

Qurbani helps Muslims get closer to Allah, allowing them to re-experience the Prophet Ibrahim's loyalty and his son Ismail's submission.

1 Hujurat, 49/10.



Dear Muslims!

As a being created for worshipping Allah, humans strive to deserve Allah's approval through obligatory and supererogatory worships, and aim to earn His contentment and love. Ultimately, they attain the mercy, help, and protection of Allah the Almighty. In a hadith qudsi, Allah (swt) states, "... **the most beloved things with which My servant comes nearer to Me, is what I have enjoined upon him; and My servant keeps on coming closer to Me through performing Nawafil (praying or doing extra deeds besides what is obligatory) till I love him, so I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will give him, and if he asks My protection, I will protect him (i.e. give him My Refuge)...**"²

Dear Believers!

In addition to the obligatory worships as daily prayers and fasting, any act done with good intention and sincerity in the hope of attaining Allah's approval is regarded as worship. It is also a form of worship to maintain peace and trust in family, to make the orphans and the forlorn happy, and to seek remedies for the problems of those in need. It is a form of worship to work in order to sustain our lives through halal ways, to say nice words to people, and to be a compatible person. It is a form of worship to be honest in trade, to exchange and spread greeting among people, and, even, to remove an obstacle out of the path.

Honorable Muslims!

Being servants of Allah, which is the meaning and the purpose of our existence on earth, is an honor for us. We should fulfill our responsibilities with due diligence to be worthy of such an honor. We should strive to keep alive the sense of servitude to Allah for all our life. We should embellish our life with worships, good deeds, and good morality. Let us always remember that Allah is always with us.

2 Bukhari, Riqaq, 38.



