

THE BOOK **OF** **SERMONS**

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AWQAF MINISTRY
1437AH/2016CE

Introduction

All praises are due to Allah, the Lord of all worlds. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon the Last of all Prophets and Apostles Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdullah and upon his Family and Companions, and those who follow their example to the Last Day.

It is pleasure to introduce this selection of sermons, compatible with modern times, to imams, preachers, cultured people and others concerned with Da‘wah affairs in the Arab and Muslim Worlds. It is a selection prepared by the Research General Directorate of the Ministry of Awqaf (Religious Endowments).

Supervising and editing the project, due care are taken regarding the religious discourse within the framework of Islamic tolerance and moderation. We are also keen to avoid all sorts of intransigence, immoderation, negligence and extremism. It is our intent to invigorate the message of the mosque to bring about the objectives of unity and national welfare and escape disunity and disruption.

Actually, the Divine Sharia is based on comporting with these public objectives and benefits. And, where the benefit materializes, the Sharia is effective. This perspective could lead to constitute a rightly guided religious welfare and truthful and noble patriotism. It is out hope

that these sermons would prove richly fruitful and useful reference to those in need of English-written sermons, whether they deliver their sermons in Arabic and English simultaneously or in English only.

At last, it is Allah alone that we seek for success and help!

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**ISLAM
A MEANS TO CONSTRUCTION AND
CIVILIZATION**

Rabī‘ Al-Awwal 1437 AH/January 1, 2016 CE

Sermon Plan

1. Global Cultivation is a Religious Duty
2. Islam Encourages Settlement and Construction
3. Qualitative Work Leads Nations to Prosper
4. Islam Denounces All Aspects of Idleness
5. Warning Against Global Corruption and Destruction

Sermon Text

Allah has created humankind in the best form; He has honored and graced them over all the creation subjecting all things in the world to them. He, the Almighty, says, “We have honored the Children of Adam and carried them in the land and the sea, and We have provided for them of the good things, and We have preferred them over many of those We created” (the Qur’ān, 17: 70). He also says, “He is the One who has created for you all that is on the earth, then He attended to the heaven and has made it seven heavens, and He is aware of all things” (the Qur’ān, 2: 29). As such, man was entrusted with stewardship over the earth: “And your Lord said to the angels: “I am placing a vicegerent on the earth.” They said: “Will You place in it he who would make corruption in it, and spill blood; while we praise by Your glory,

and exalt to You?" He said: "I know what you do not know" (the Qur'ān, 2: 30).

Indeed, the Lord assigned a great mission to humankind; that is to worship Him, cultivate and develop the world and discover its treasures and resources. Allah, the Almighty, says, "He (Allah) has established you from the earth and has made you settle in it (reform the earth and discover its resources and graces)" (the Qur'ān, 11: 61). Allah encourages man to work in dependence on the physical means placed in the universe without inclination to idleness and s. Allah, the Almighty, says, "He is the One who made the earth subservient for you. So roam its paths, and eat from His provisions; and to Him is the final summoning" (the Qur'ān, 67: 15).

Hard work is not restricted to a specific time. A human being has to pursue the course of reform to his/her last breath as indicated in the narration of Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "If the Last Hour comes while you have a palm-cutting in your hands and it is possible to plant it before the Hour comes, you should plant it" (al-Bukhari in al-Adab al-Mufrad). Islam sanctifies and encourages building and construction, even at the hardest moments, since they are the backbone of life and the means to the progress of nations and communities.

As such, Islam encourages all areas of learning and education, which lead to the settlement and construction of the universe. All Muslims are deeply animated to explore the world and discover resources in land and sea. Persistent work has a very special in Islam as cited in the narration of al-Miqdam (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "Nobody has ever eaten a better meal than that which one has earned by working with one's own hands. The Prophet of Allah, David, used to eat from the earnings of his manual labor" (al-Bukhari).

Evidently, Islam is an open call for work, settlement and human welfare. For Islam, hard work yields great esteem and veneration, as a means to progress and development. Like acts of worship, it is divinely rewarded. The Qur'ānic verses encourage lawful means and work for seeking one's livelihood. In fact, encouragement of good work for lawful provision comes next only to the command of prayers. Allah, the Almighty, says, "When the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah, and remember Allah often that you may succeed" (the Qur'ān, 62: 10). After praying the Friday prayer, 'Irak Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) used to leave the mosque saying at the threshold of the mosque: "O Allah, I have

responded to your call, have done your obligatory *salah* and left as You commanded, so provide for me out of Your Graces and You are the best of providers. Many Qur’ānic and prophetic texts speak of the higher objectives of construction and reform and encourage hard working and building. They also discourage from idleness and laziness. Hard work is the way to save face, earn respect and human dignity. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Surely, you had better gather a bundle of wood and carry it on your back (to earn your living) rather than ask somebody who may give you or not” (al-Bukhari).

When Sufyan al-Thawri passed by some people while they were sitting in the Sacred Mosque, he asked why they sat there. In reply, they questioned: “What shall we do? He said, “Seek the grace of Allah and do not depend on (other) Muslims (in your provision).” In Islam, the one who seeks the livelihood of his family through the lawful means has a rank equal to that of martyrs and guards of far borders. Ka‘b Ibn ‘Ujrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that a man once passed by the Prophet. Observing his power and vigorous activity, the Prophet's Companions said, "O Messenger of Allah, if only he had made use of his power and activity in the cause of

Allah!" In reply, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "If he is seeking the provision of his children, he is in the Cause of Allah. Likewise, if he is seeking the provision of his old parents, he is in the Cause of Allah. Also, if he seeks to meet his own needs, he is in the Cause of Allah and if he seeks to meet the needs of his family, he is in the cause of Allah but if he seeks the means to vain glories and riches, he is in the cause of falsehood" (Narrated by al-Tabarani).

Not only does Islam call Muslims for work as a means to construction and civilization, but also encourages qualitative and accurate work as a way to earn the Divine Love and Mercy. 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "Surely, Allah loves anyone doing a work to do it in the best qualitative manner" (Narrated by al-Tabarani).

Qualitative and careful work is one of the most significant values and principles that Islam encourages. It is also one of the key Islamic objectives, whereby a Muslim earns the Divine satisfaction and achieves the right devotion. Actually, Allah only accepts the deeds sincerely devoted to Him and a sincere work must fulfill the quality standards. Allah creates inimitable things everywhere as speaks of this miraculous power saying:

“This is the work of Allah, who perfects all things. Indeed, He is Acquainted with that which you do” (the Qur’ān, 27: 88). Allah also encourages man to do what is good and do it in the most qualitative manner and to refrain from all aspects of corruption: Allah, the Almighty, says, “And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good”, (the Qur’ān, 2: 195) and He also says, “And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters.” (77) He, the Almighty, said, “I was only given it because of knowledge I have” (the Qur’ān, 28: 77).

The Qur’ānic verses frequently preach good and qualitative work that shall be sincerely done in pursuit of the Divine satisfaction and public welfare. It is a devotional way to serve the members of the community. Promises of great rewards and good repute in this life and in the afterlife are always at the ready for hard workers who serve their communities while being conscious of God's Control and Awareness of all hidden notions in the depths of hearts and chests. He is always aware people's deeds as He told: “And, (O Muhammad), you are not (occupied by) any matter or recite any of the Qur’ān and you (people) do not do any deed except that we are witness over you when you are involved in it. And not absent from your Lord is any (part) of an atom's weight within the earth or within the

heaven or (anything) smaller than that or greater but that it is in a clear record” (the Qur’ān, 10: 61). Allah sees humans in all of their affairs; in plants, farms, bookshops and all other areas. Allah, the Almighty, says, “And say, "Do (as you will), for Allah will see your deeds, and (so, will) His Messenger and the believers. And you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you of what you used to do" (the Qur’ān, 9: 105). Allah is well-aware of all affairs and deeds, so expedite to do the good wholeheartedly devoted to Allah and keep away from all evils, as He is witness over you. Zuhayr, an Arab poet, said:

No trait a person may have as hidden from people, but will be disclosed

The pure tradition of the Prophet also encourages hard work and building to achieve the best outcome, a rule generally applied to all ritual and worldly activities. For example, in the prayer, which is a communication between a servant and His Lord; the best reader should lead prayers. Good readers are promised the company of the honorable angels. Likewise, the shroud should be properly chosen, as the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “If anyone of you is charged with taking care of his brother (after death), let him shroud him well” (Muslim). ‘Asim Ibn Kulayb al-Jarmi said, “My father

Kulayb attended funerals with his father in the company of the Prophet when he was mindfully a boy of good perception. The Prophet approached the grave when the burial was in process. He kept saying, "Level the inside of the grave" until people thought it is an act of sunnah. Then, he turned to them saying, "Indeed, this act (of leveling) carries no benefit or harm to the deceased but Allah loves anyone doing any work to do it in the best" (al-Bayhaqi).

It is necessary for any work a man does to perform it in the best manner and devote it to Allah. Allah alone is the Omniscient of the secrets of human hearts and He counts their deeds, small or big. Inept workers do not regard the divine observation over their work and their sin is equal to the loss and damages in property and energy they cause. A clumsy employee, who carelessly neglects his work while getting his wages, will have the whole community against him on the Last Day. Those malicious persons carry the onus of nations' backwardness. 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Only to Allah, I complain of the weakness of honest people and the dauntless betrayal of powerful ones."

Islam is against all aspects of despair and indolence that hinder construction and cultivation. As far as Islam is concerned, laziness is a disgusted vice whose bearers are worthy of divine

dispraise and are similar to hypocrites who “come not to prayer except while they are lazy” (the Qur’ān, 9: 54). Laziness is a destructive fault that spoils nations and causes them to lag behind other developed civilizations. It is a fatal disease that could lead man to lose the essence of his humanity. To use the expression of Imam al-Raghib, “He who intentionally neglects his work and falls to inactivity removes himself from humankind and even from animals as s/he is closer to the dead” (*al-Dharī‘ah ila Makarem al-Sharī‘ah*).

That is the reason why the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) sought refuge in Allah from incapacity and laziness. He said, “O Allah, I seek refuge in You from incapacity, laziness, old age, miserliness and cowardice, and I seek refuge in You from the torment of the grave, and from the trials of life and death” (Muslim in his Authentic Collection from Anas Ibn Malik). Note how he (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) gathered incapacity and laziness together, as they equally lead people to neglect their duties.

Laziness is a mental and psychological defect that deadens mettle and weakens will. Like a lethal germ and fatal disease, it leads to inactivity and impedes nations' endeavors to progress. It also hinders individuals from serious work and useful

activity. Islam blames laziness, as it causes man to overlook duties and begets feelings of boredom and hate, may Allah save us. As such, a person may dislike the good only because of lack of power and determination. It disregards duties, opposes success and kills its victims. A victim of laziness is a parasitic and independent being, who fails to carry out his human responsibility and constitutes an impending danger to individuals in the community. Imam 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Idleness is the key to despondence. Indeed, inability and inactivity beget poverty and breed ruins. Anyone who fails to pursue (an active course of life) gets no useful outcome and, hence, leads a corrupt course."

Laziness is against the ethics and guidance of Islam. Islam invites people to do good and reform the universe; the lazy people never build civilization; rather, they may cause the destruction of civilizations. Islam also fights against corruption. Indeed, corruption is the vice of evildoers and hypocrites whom Allah describes saying, "They strive throughout the land (causing) corruption and Allah does not like corrupters" (the Qur'ān, 5: 64). Allah also says, "Do not walk on the earth spreading corruption" (the Qur'ān, 2: 60).

Corruption has many forms; the most dangerous thereof is the corruption in religion. Muslims have

been afflicted with corrupt people who spread mischief on the earth in the name of religion. They kill the innocent and violate the honors and properties of people. Allah dispraised them in the Qur’ān as follows: “And from among the people are whose words you admire in this worldly life, but Allah is witness as to what is in his heart, for he is the worst in opposition. And if he gains power, he seeks to corrupt the earth and destroy its crops, and the lineage. Allah does not love corruption. And if he is told: "Be aware of Allah," his pride leads him to more sin. Hell shall be sufficient for him; what a miserable abode” (the Qur’ān, 2: 204-206).

All forms of corruption destabilize the values of construction and development. It promotes negativism and irresponsibility. We shall all resist corruption and corrupt makers to relieve the whole community; otherwise, the community may come to ruins.

Al-Nu‘man Ibn Bashīr (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “The likeness of the man who observes the limits prescribed by Allah and that of the man who transgresses them is like the people who get on board a ship after casting lots. Some of them are in its lower deck and some of them in its upper (deck). Those who are in its lower (deck), when

they require water, go to the occupants of the upper deck, and say to them, 'If we make a hole in the bottom of the ship, we shall not harm you.' If they (the occupants of the upper deck) leave them to carry out their design they all will be drowned. But if they do not let them go ahead (with their plan), all of them will remain safe” (al-Bukhari). Mutual cooperation, support and solidarity are essential to achieve the essence of faith and fraternity.

Saving the earth from the corrupt people and safeguarding the roads and institutions are some of the best good deeds. Actually, Allah removes the corruption at the hand of the defenders of reformation. Allah, the Almighty, says, “If only there was from the previous generations a people with wisdom who prohibited corruption on the earth, except the few that We saved of them. And those who were wicked followed the enjoyment they were in, and they were criminal” (the Qur’ān, 11: 116). A corrupt person is a destructive means that undermines community and harm people. Only elimination of corruption can save people from evils.

The Muslims have many resources, vast lands, seas, lakes and rivers. Their lands are rich with most of the contemporary world's needs of minerals and oil reserves, let alone their precious treasures of experts and manpower. It is the duty

of all Muslims to invest their possessions and rich resources in the best manner for the welfare of humankind as a whole in order to build a progressive civilization and achieve scientific advancement. The Muslim community forms an active nation of work and construction, not of idleness and destruction. They are the people of civilization, not of backwardness. A Muslim shall love his/her faith and proudly work hard for his religious and national progress.

(2)

**THE LOFTY ETHICS OF PROPHET
MUHAMMAD**

Rabī‘ al-Awwal 14, 1437 AH / Dec. 25, 2015
CE

Sermon Plan

1. Islam is a faith of lofty ethics

2. Fall of ethics signifies the fall of nations
3. Ethics is the fruit of right worship
4. The way to improve your ethics

Sermon Text

Undoubtedly, the greatness of Islam has several facets; Islam is a law and ethics, lofty human values and ideal life patterns, inclusive of all virtues and merits and exclusive of all vices and evils. Islam highly encourages high morals of patience, forbearing, lenience, truthfulness, honesty, mercy, fulfillment of one's promises, generosity, shyness, modesty, courage, justice, benevolence and fulfilling people's needs. It also calls for lowering one's gaze, harm prevention, cheerful face, nice talks, good thoughts of others, respect of the elder, making peace between people, altruism and good consideration of others' feelings as well as other ethical values.

Evidently, the texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah are very rich with indications to these ethical values. Allah, the Almighty, says, "Surely, this Qur'ān guides to that which is most upright and gives the believers who do good deeds the glad tiding that theirs will be a great reward" (the Qur'ān, 17: 9).

Allah also commands His Prophet to "Take to pardoning, and order what is good, and turn away from the ignorant ones" (the Qur'ān, 7: 199). He also recommends all to "say kind things to the people" (the Qur'ān, 2: 83).

Allah also says, “There is no good in most of what they privately confer, except whoever orders a charity or kindness or making-peace between people. Yet, whoever does this seeking the grace of Allah, We will give him a great recompense” (the Qur’ān, 4: 114).

Careful contemplation of the Qur’ānic verses reveals that many verses call for lofty ethics as a social duty. Actually, ethics is the legal mechanism for human refined morality and the way to human perfections.

Texts of the Prophet's Tradition also stress the paramount significance of ethics in human life and promise great rewards for those endowed with high morals. Declaring the essence of virtue, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Virtue is the nobility of behavior” (Muslim in his Hadith Authentic Collection). The Prophet also said, “The heaviest thing in the believer’s scale will be good morals.” According to another narration, “Nothing is heavier on the believer's Scale, on the Day of Judgment, than the noble character; indeed Allah dislikes the shameless obscene person” (Al-Tirmidhi in his Sunan from Abu al-Darda).

The Prophet frequently invited people to adhere to high morals as in his statement: “The most perfect of the believers in faith is the one whose behavior is most excellent; and the best of you are those

who are the best to their wives” (Ahmad in his Musnad).

When the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) was asked about the best of believers, he said: “the best in conduct” (Ibn Majah in his Sunan). When the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) was asked about the deed which will be foremost to lead people to Paradise. He said, "God-fearing and good conduct", (Al-Tirmidhi in his Hadith Collection). Furthermore, the lofty ethics is the way to earn the Prophet's love: “The dearest and the closest of you to me on the Day of Resurrection will be those who have the noblest morals” (Al-Tirmidhi in his Sunan).

For Islam, ethics holds a lofty rank and special position; it is the essence of and kernel of faith. When the Prophet was asked about the essence of faith, he said: “the nobility of conduct.”

He even epitomized the ultimate end of Islamic Message, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “I have been sent to perfect the noblest of morals” (al-Bukhari in al-Adab al-Mufrad).

Even before his mission, the Prophet had the epithet: the Truthful and the Honest. Ethics and faith are inseparably associated; He (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) was the best model for noble character, so His Lord described

him saying, “And indeed, you are of a great moral character” (the Qur’ān, 68: 4). It is a great testimony from the Sublime Majestic Lord to His prophet's ethics and noble conduct.

The Prophet was the best of creation in his personification of the Qur’ānic morals, obedience of Qur’ānic commands and abandonment of Qur’ānic proscriptions. Thus, he was the living Qur’ānic ethics as stressed by ‘Aishah—the Mother of the Believer— when she was asked about the Prophet's morality, she answered, “His morality was that of the Qur’ān.”

He was a practical example of the Qur’ānic ethics. Occupying the peak of ethics as being the kindest, most beloved and merciful of humankind—he was deeply forbearing and inclined to forgive others. His speech ranked most truthful; he frequently kept his promises and honored his friends. He was the master of humankind, yet proved most modest. Anyone who knew him closely would love him. Khadijah, the Mother of the Believer, (may Allah be pleased with her) described him saying, “By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your Kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones.”

Describing Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him), He, the

Almighty, says, "And it was by God's grace that you (O Prophet) dealt gently with your followers: for if you had been harsh and hard of heart, they would indeed have broken away from you. Pardon them, then, and pray that they be forgiven. And take counsel with them in all matters of public concern; then, when thou hast decided upon a course of action, place thy trust in God: for, verily, God loves those who place their trust in Him" (the Qur'ān, 3:159).

He (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) educated his Companions to follow the best of morals in his advice to Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him): "Fear Allah wherever you may be, after each sin do a good deed to efface it and deal with people gently."

All the Companions kept to kindness and benevolence and kept apart from extremism and anger; they proved most forbearing and forgiving and were the best examples in high morality, good treatment and generosity. When the Prophet migrated from Mecca to Medina, he concluded the bond of fraternity between the Muhajirūn (immigrants) and the Ansār (the Helpers) whereby they shared wealth. Human ethics shall entrench the grace of giving. The Qur'ān stresses the lofty examples of benevolence to strengthen the merit of giving in the Muslim community.

Allah, the Almighty, says, “They (i.e., the Helpers) love those who migrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what they (i.e., the emigrants) were given but give (them) preference over themselves, even though they are in privation” (the Qur’ān, 59: 9).

In their adoption of these ethics, they became the leaders of nations, the focus of eyes and the optimal models to follow. People accepted Islam in multitudes for the lofty treatment and high morality they experienced when dealing with Muslims. However, when Muslims deviated from the right way, morals faded, ideals ended, values lost and concepts changed. Imam Malik proved wise when saying, “The late generations of this nation can only prosper when they follow the same approach of the early Muslim generation.” Lofty morals protect communities from disintegration, chaos and loss. Actually, Muslim safety, power, prosperity and greatness are all conditional upon the adoption of noble ethics. Conversely, immorality and vices are the natural outcome of forsaking ethics and good deeds.

Setting your affairs right lies with good ethics
So, educate yourself with ethics to get it
under control

For one's self when set right is in the best
grace

Yet, one's self when given to evil is in the worst place

The Prophet thus warned against the fall and deterioration of morals. Sahl Ibn Sahl al-Sa'idi (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "I heard the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) saying: "Allah is generous and love generosity; He likes lofty matters and dislikes low concerns" (al-Hakim in his al-Mustadrak). The ethics are not a luxurious part but a bulwark against the collapse of nations and communities. Ethics awards nations life and eternal achievements while the loss of ethics marks the destruction and fall of nations. Many powerful nations of mighty economy and military fell to ruin only when their ethics deteriorated.

The Emir of Arab poets Ahmad Shawqi (may Allah rest his soul in peace) said,

Nations are nothing but their ethics

Once their ethics lost, nations are no longer

Indeed, all acts of worship aim to guide the behavior of individuals and inculcate the lofty morals in the society. Islam is not a combination of empty rites done in mosques apart from the social life. Actually, acts of worship in all religions aim to educate human beings and refine their conduct. For example, indicating the wisdom of prayers, Allah, the Almighty, says, "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” (the Qur’ān, 29: 44).

Keeping away from vices, misdeeds and malpractices is the kernel of prayers. Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Allah (may He be Exalted and Glorified) said:

I only accept the prayers from the one who humbly does it for My Majesty without feeling the least pride therewith over my creation or persistently committing sins at night. Meanwhile, his/her day is busy with my remembrance and s/he is extending mercy to the needy, the wayfarer, the widowed and afflicted ones” (al-Bazzar).

Ibn Mas‘ūd said, “The one whose prayers fail to make him do good deeds and keep him from evil-doing will have nothing but driven further from Allah” (al-Tabarānī with authentic chain of transmission).

When the prayer fails to keep a servant away from verbal and practical vices, then it failed to achieve its ultimate objective. The same goes true for obligatory charity, fasting, pilgrimage and all other acts of worship. They all aim to educate high morals and purify human souls. Allah, the Almighty, says, “(O Muhammad) Take from their

wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase, and invoke (Allah's blessings) upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing,” (the Qur’ān, 9: 103).

The Prophet intentionally broadens the sense of sadaqa i.e. charity, to include several areas as narrated by Abu Dharr that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said:

1. Your smiling in the face of your brother is sadaqa,
2. Your putting some of the water from your bucket in your brother's bucket is sadaqa,
3. Your enjoinder of right and forbidding of wrong is sadaqa,
4. Your removing stones, thorns and bones from people's path is sadaqa
5. Your guiding a man in a place where no guide exists is sadaqa” (al-Bazzar).

The duty of fasting is divinely ordained for servants to achieve the righteousness as the ultimate end and fruit of fasting. Allah, the Almighty, says, “O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous” (the Qur’ān, 2: 183).

Fasting teaches Muslims to strengthen their will and control their ethics and desires. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the

Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Fasting is a protection for you, so when you are fasting, do not behave obscenely or foolishly. Yet, if anyone argues with you or abuses you, say, 'I am fasting, I am fasting’” (al-Bukhari). Fasting thus is a protection from immoral behavior and vices; it must positively affect the Muslim behavior and ethics.

In respect of Hajj, Allah, the Almighty, says, “Hajj is (during) well-known months, so whoever has made hajj obligatory upon himself therein (by entering the state of ihrām), there is (to be for him) no sexual relations and no disobedience and no disputing during hajj. And whatever good you do – Allah knows it. And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah. And fear Me, O you of understanding” (the Qur’ān, 2: 197).

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Whoever visits this House (for hajj) and neither speak indecently nor does s/he act wickedly will return free from sin as on the very first day his/her mother bore him” (Muslim).

Acts of worship must leave a positive effect on the morals and behavior of individuals and the whole society; otherwise, it is fruitless in the Afterlife. Immoral behavior consumes the good deeds just as the fire consumes the firewood. Abu Hurayrah

(may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said:

“Do you know who is poor? The Companions of the Prophet said: For us, a poor man is one who has neither dirham with him nor wealth.

The Prophet said: The poor of my Ummah is the one who would come on the Day of Resurrection with prayers, fasting and charity but he also comes as bankrupt, since he hurled abuses upon others, brought calumny against others and unlawfully consumed the wealth of others and shed the blood of others and beat others. His virtues would be credited to the account of one (who suffered at his hand). If his good deeds fall short to clear the account, then his sins would be entered in (his account) and he would be thrown in the Fire.” (al-Tirmidhi)

Once a question was raised before the Prophet, there is a woman who persistently does night prayers, fasts many days and gives much charity, but injures her neighbors with her tongue.' The Messenger of Allah said, “She is in the Fire.”

They said, 'Another woman only prays the prescribed fasting, charity and prayers but she gives bits of curd in charity and never harms anyone.' The Messenger of Allah said, 'She is in Paradise” (Ahmad).

Allah, the Almighty, has dignified all human beings without discrimination. Ethics are for all people, Muslims and non-Muslims, and human beings are all brothers in humanity. He, the Almighty, says, "We have honored the Children of Adam and carried them in the land and the sea, and We have provided for them of the good things, and We have preferred them over many of those We created" (the Qur'ān, 17: 70). When the Prophet stood up for the funeral of a Jew that passed by him, it was said, 'It is the funeral of a Jew.' In reply, he said, "Was he not a human being!" (al-Bukhari).

Allah, the Almighty, says, "And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and say, "We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are Muslims (in submission) to Him" (the Qur'ān, 29: 46).

Mujahed narrated that 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr had a sheep slaughtered for his family. When he came, he said, 'Have you given some to our neighbor, the Jew? Have you given some to our neighbor, the Jew? I heard the Messenger of Allah saying: 'Jibrīl (Gabriel) continued to advise me about (treating) the neighbors so (kindly and politely), that I thought he would order me (from Allah) to make them heirs" (al-Tirmidhi).

High ethics is not only for treatment with humankind but also for animals. Allah forgave a man because of watering a dog. Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "A man saw a dog eating mud from the severity of thirst. So, that man took a shoe and filled it with water and kept on pouring the water for the dog until it quenched its thirst. Allah then approved of his deed and made him to enter Paradise" (al-Bukhari).

Conversely, Allah caused a woman to enter Hell due to a cat that she persecuted. 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "A woman was tortured and was put in Hell because of a cat which she had kept locked till it died of hunger." Allah's Messenger further said, (Allah knows best): "Allah said (to the woman), 'You neither fed it nor watered when you locked it up, nor did you set it free to eat the insects of the earth'" (al-Bukhari).

If we are seriously resolute to refine and improve the ethics in our society, it is necessary to have the optimal model. The model is essential for good ethics. Allah, the Almighty, says, "The messenger of Allah has set up a good example for those among you who seek Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah unceasingly" (the Qur'an, 33: 21).

Parents are good examples for their children. The Prophet stressed the educational role of good examples in human life and warned against deviant examples. For instance, deviant parents can mislead their children as narrated by Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet said, “No child is born but has the pure faith (Islam); however, his/her parents turn him/her into a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian.” Abu Hurayrah added, “The nature of Allah in which He has created humankind; there is no alteration in Allah's creation; that is the right religion” (the Qur’ān, 30: 30), (al-Bukhari).

Likewise, the teacher is a model for his students in integrity and ethics. Al-Shafi‘i once entered into the court of Harūn al-Rashīd in the company of his servant Sraj. Al-Shafi‘i left his servant with Abu ‘Abd al-Samad, the private tutor of al-Rashīd's children. Sraj said to al-Shafi‘i, “O Abu ‘Abdullah, those are the children of the Commander of the Believers. Here is the one in charge of educating them, so advise him in this regard.” Al-Shafi‘i addressed Abu ‘Abd al-Samad saying, “Let your first step to educate the children of the Commander of the Believers be the reform of yourself. For their eyes actually observe yours; the good in their sight follows the good in your sight and the evil in their vision follows the evil in your vision” (Abu Nu‘aym, *Hilyat al-Awliyā*).

It is worth mentioning that ethics is not restricted to the individual; some ethics are individualistic but others are social, such as family ethics between spouses, parents and children, Kith and kin, as well as other social ethics of sales, neighborhood, friendship and work. Some are international such as the ethics of international relationships between the states and the ethics of war and peace.

Sincerity to Allah and supplicating Him for noble character are seriously significant for a servant to have a good character. S/he should also strive against one's desires and frequently examine his/her personal deeds with consideration of the ultimate evils of immoral conduct and its bad consequences on the individual and the society.

(3)

SIGNS OF HONORING THE PROPHET

Rabī‘ al-Awwal 7, 1437 AH / December 18,
2015 CE

Sermon Plan

1. Honoring the Prophet at the beginning of creation
2. Honoring the Prophet before his birth
3. Honoring the Prophet with the noblest ancestral lines
4. Honoring the Prophet by opening some Qur’ānic Suras with the vocative case

5. Love and obedience of the Prophet
6. Allah's Defense of His Prophet
7. Universality of the Prophet's Mission
8. His Mission is a Universal Mercy

Sermon Text

Allah conferred the noblest honors on his Prophet Muhammad since the beginning of creation before his birth, in his life and after his death. At the beginning of creation, Allah honored his Prophet since the first generation of humankind. Each prophet gave his pledges to believe in the mission of Prophet Muhammad as confirming the truth with which all prophets were sent:

“Allah took a covenant from the prophets: "For what I have given you of the Book and wisdom, a messenger will come to you confirming what is with you; you shall believe in him and support him." He said, "Do you testify, and agree to this duty?" They said, "We testify." He said, "Then bear witness and I am with you bearing witness" (the Qur'ān, 3: 81).

Early prophets gave good news about the Prophet as cited in the narration of al-‘Irbād ibn Sariyah (may Allah be pleased with him) that he heard the Prophet saying:

“I am the supplication of my father Ibrāhīm (Abraham) and the glad news promised by my brother ‘Isa (Jesus) and the true vision of my

mother Aminah, who saw a light coming out from her to light the palaces of Czar” (Ahmad, *Musnad*).

The Qur’ān affirms the supplication of Ibrāhīm: “Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from among themselves, that he may recite to them Your revelations and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them. You are the Noble, the Wise” (the Qur’ān, 2: 129). Likewise, the Qur’ān mentions the good news of ‘Isa: “When Jesus, son of Mary, said: 'O children of Israel, I am a messenger of God to you, authenticating what is between my hands of the Torah and bringing good news of a messenger to come after me whose name will be 'most acclaimed.'" But when he showed them the clear proofs, they said: "This is clearly magic" (the Qur’ān, 61: 6).

Allah also honored his prophet before birth as he had the name of Muhammad. His mother Aminah Bint Wahb told that she used to hear some divine whispering telling her: You will give birth to the master of this nation; when you give birth, say I supplicate for his protection with Allah's Providence from the envious. Call him Muhammad, for his name in Torah is Ahmad i.e. the praised one, who is praised by the inhabitants of heavens and earth. Likewise, his name in the Gospel is Ahmad i.e. the praised one, who is praised by the inhabitants of heavens and earth and

his name in the Qur’ān is Muhammad i.e. the praised one” (al-Bayhaqi, *Shu‘ab al-Imān*).

Similarly, he has the noblest blood lineage; Allah, the Almighty, says, “Your frequent transmission through the prostrating ancestors” (the Qur’ān, 26: 219). For Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him and his father), it means that he moved through the dorsa of noble fathers: Adam, Noah and Ibrāhīm until he emerged as a prophet. He was born to the noblest ancestral line and the most honorable of Arab families. Shielded from pre-Islamic illicit relations, he moved through the pure dorsa of lofty fathers to the chaste mothers. His best ancestors were chosen from each generation; Kinanah was chosen from the children of Isma‘īl, and Quraysh from the children of Kinanah, and Banu Hashim from Quraysh (Muslim, *ṣaḥīḥ*).

Allah also highly honored his Prophet in mention; no one mentions the Name of Allah but s/he also mentions the name of His Prophet. Allah, the Almighty, says:

“We have raised your remembrance” (the Qur’ān, 94: 4).

Abu Sa‘īd (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated from the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) that Gabriel asked him how has our Lord raised you remembrance. In response, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Allah knows well.”

“When He is mentioned, you are also mentioned” Gabriel responded as related from Allah (al-Haythami, *Majma‘ al-Zawa‘id*).

His name is associated in several contexts with the name of Allah; when someone declares his/her testimony of faith, his faith is not right until s/he testifies to the mission of Prophet Muhammad following the declaration of belief in Allah's Oneness. Ḥassan Ibn Thabit, the poet, said, God's Name is associated with the Prophet's name whenever the muezzin declares the testimony five times a day

His name was derived from the same root of God's attribute; the Companion of the throne is Maḥmūd and His Prophet is Muhammad

The Prophet's name is frequently repeated in the two testimonies of faith, in the first and second calls to prayers and in sermons and Qur’ānic verses (the Qur’ān, 4: 80).

Ibn ‘Abbas affirmed that three meanings are firmly associated together in the Qur’ānic verses and are only accepted when jointly observed; they are the prayers and obligatory charity (the Qur’ān, 2: 43), thanksgiving to Allah and to one's parents (the Qur’ān, 31: 14) and obeying Allah and his messenger (the Qur’ān, 4:59).

It is unacceptable to obey Allah and disobey the Messenger, since obeying the Prophet signifies the submission to Allah: “Those who pledge

allegiance to you are in-fact pledging allegiance to Allah” (the Qur’ān, 48: 10). Obeying Allah and his messenger is the sign of success and salvation (the Qur’ān, 33: 71).

According to the narration of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said, “All my followers will enter Paradise except those who refuse.”

They said, "O Allah's Messenger, who will refuse?"

He replied, “Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise and whoever disobeys me is actually refusing it” (al-Bukhari).

When ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) visited the Black Stone, he kissed it and said, “I know that you are just a stone; you can neither do any harm nor give any benefit; had I not seen the Prophet kissing you, I would not have kissed you” (al-Bukhari).

Obedience to Allah is only affirmed by obeying His Prophet. It is also a sign of honoring the Prophet that Allah makes his love a requisite for true faith and following his example a sign of Allah's love to a servant:

“Say (O Prophet): “If you love Allah then follow me, so Allah will love you and forgive your sins. Allah is Forgiver, Merciful” (the Qur’ān, 3: 31).

It is the duty of each Muslim to love Allah. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said,

“None of you is a perfect believer until I am dearer to him than his child, his father and the whole of mankind” (al-Bukhari and Muslim).

More to the point, one's faith is not perfect until he gives precedence to the Prophet's love to the love of one's soul, children and all people. ‘Abdullah Ibn Hisham (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “We were in the company of the Prophet while he was holding the hand of ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khattab. ‘Umar said to Him, "O Allah's Messenger, you are dearer to me than everything except my own self. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "No, by Him in Whose Hand my soul is, (you will not have perfect faith) until I am dearer to you than your own self." Then ‘Umar said to him, "Now, by Allah, you are dearer to me than my own self." The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "Now, O ‘Umar (you are a perfect believer)" (al-Bukhari).

It is enough merit and honor for lovers of the Prophet that they would accompany him on the Last Day. No grace can anyone earn beyond that. Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said while the Prophet and I were coming out of the mosque, a man met us outside the gate. The

man said, "O Allah's Messenger, when will be the hour?" The Prophet asked him, "What have you prepared for it?" The man became afraid and ashamed and then said, "O Allah's Messenger, I have not prepared for it much of fasts, prayers or charitable gifts but I love Allah and His Apostle." The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "You will be with the one whom you love" (al-Bukhari).

Furthermore, Allah never called him by his name as He did with other messengers whom Allah called by their names:

- "O Adam, reside you and your mate in the paradise," (the Qur'ān, 2: 35)
- "O Jesus, I am terminating your life, raising you to Me" (the Qur'ān, 3: 55)
- "O Noah, descend in peace from Us and blessings upon you" (the Qur'ān, 11: 48)
- "O Moses! Verily, I am Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds!" (the Qur'ān, 28: 30)
- "O Moses, I am your Lord" (the Qur'ān, 20: 12).
- "O John, take the Book with confidence" (the Qur'ān, 19: 12).
- "O Abraham, "You have acknowledged the vision" (the Qur'ān, 37: 104-105).
- "O Zachariah, We give you glad tidings of a son whose name is John" (the Qur'ān, 19: 7).

- In his address to Prophet Muhammad, Allah used the honorable epithets of prophecy and mission saying:
- “O prophet, We have sent you as a witness, and a bearer of good news, and a warner” (the Qur’ān, 30: 45).

He also called him saying,

“O messenger, deliver what was sent down to you from your Lord, and if you do not then you have not delivered His message; and Allah will protect you from the people. And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people” (the Qur’ān, 5: 67).

Allah even forbade Muslims to call the Prophet by his name as past nations did and warned those who violate this command lest they shall taste painful punishment:

“Do not let the calling of the messenger between you be as if you are calling each other. Allah is fully aware of those among you who slip away under flimsy excuses. Let those who oppose his command beware, for an ordeal may strike them, or a painful punishment” (the Qur’ān, 24:63).

Honoring His Prophet, Allah commands the believers to follow his example: “Indeed, in the messenger of Allah a good example has been set for you for him who seeks Allah and the Last Day and thinks constantly about Allah” (the Qur’ān, 33: 21). This verse sets the rule for the duty of following the example of the Prophet in

statements, practices and conditions. We shall thus adopt his example in all affairs. Allah and His angels send his blessings on the Prophet encouraging the believers to do the same:

“Allah and His angels bless the Prophet: (hence,) O you who have attained to faith, bless him and give yourselves up (to his guidance) in utter self-surrender!” (the Qur’ān, 33: 56).

Allah, Himself, also defended his Prophet against false accusations whereas all other prophets used to defend themselves against such claims. The following examples prove that fact:

- When the people of Noah said, “Verily, we see that you are obviously lost in error!”, Noah defended himself saying, “O my people! There is no error in me, but I am an apostle from the Sustainer of all the worlds. I am delivering unto you my Sustainer's messages and giving you good advice: for I know (through revelation) from God what you do not know” (the Qur’ān, 7:60-62).
- When the people of Hūd accused him of foolishness, insanity and telling lies: “We see you in foolishness, and we think you are one of the liars” (the Qur’ān, 7:66). He then defended himself saying, “My people, there is no foolishness in me, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds, to deliver to you the

messages of my Lord, and to you I am a trustworthy advisor” (the Qur’ān, 7: 67-68).

- However, when they accused the Prophet of falsities and lies, Allah defended him. When they accused him of being a poet, Allah said, “They said: "No, these are just bad dreams; no, he made it up; no, he is a poet. So let him bring us a sign like those who were sent before” (the Qur’ān, 21: 5) but Allah replied to them saying, “We have not taught him poetry, nor has he needed it. This is a reminder and a clear Qur'an” (the Qur’ān, 36: 70).
- When they accused him of being a soothsayer, Allah, the Almighty, said, “Therefore, you shall remind. For by the grace of your Lord, you are neither a soothsayer, nor crazy” (the Qur’ān, 52: 29). Allah even swore in affirmation of his defense and the truth of revelation he brought to refute their claims: “I do swear by what you see and what you do not see, this is the word of an honorable messenger. It is not the word of a poet; rarely do you believe. Nor the word of a soothsayer; rarely do you take heed; (it is) a revelation from the Lord of the creation” (the Qur’ān, 69: 38-43).
- When they said he was a magician, Allah refuted their false claims and reminded of the past claims made against prophets, saying:

‘Likewise, when a messenger went to those before them, they said: "A magician, or crazy" (the Qur’ān, 51: 52). Similarly, when they accused him of being bewitched, Allah refuted their claim saying: “The wicked said: "You are but following a man bewitched! See how they put forth examples for you; they fall badly misguided that they cannot find a path” (the Qur’ān, 25: 8-9).

- They also accused him of being crazy, then Allah, the Almighty, says, “Have they decided that he is crazy? Indeed, he has brought the truth to them, but most of them hate the truth” (the Qur’ān, 23: 70). Allah also says, “Nun, the pen and what they write, you are not, by the blessing of your Lord, crazy. Yet, you will have a reward that will not end. And you are of a high moral character” (the Qur’ān, 68: 1-4).
- When they accused the prophet of misguidance and deviation, Allah defended his prophet saying, “By the star falling away, Your friend was not astray, nor was he deceived, nor was he speaking out of personal desire; It is but a divine inspiration” (the Qur’ān, 53: 1-4).
- Allah guaranteed the protection and safety of his prophet saying, “O messenger, deliver what was sent down to you from your Lord, and if you do not then you have not delivered His message; and Allah will protect you from the

people. And God does not guide the disbelieving people” (the Qur’ān, 5: 67).

- It is also a sign of Allah's honor of his prophet that his message is for all humankind in all times and generations. Before Prophet Muhammad, each prophet was sent to a specific people, but the Prophet was sent to all humankind: “We have sent you to all people to be a bearer of good news, and as a warner; but most of the people do not know” (the Qur’ān, 34: 28). Jabir Ibn ‘Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said,
 - “I have been given five things which were not given to any of the prophets before me:
 - Allah made me victorious by awe (frightening my enemies) for a distance of one month's journey.
 - The earth has been made for me (and for my followers) a place for praying and a means to purification. Anyone of followers can pray wherever the time of a prayer is due.
 - The booty has been made lawful for me (as it was not lawful for any previous prophet)
 - Every Prophet used to be sent to his nation exclusively but I have been sent to all humankind

- I have been given the right of intercession (on the Day of Resurrection)” (al-Bukhari).

Allah also preferred his Prophet over all other honorable prophets; the Qur’ān tells, “Such messengers, We have preferred some over others; some of them talked to God, and He raised some of them in rank,” (the Qur’ān, 2: 253). For the well-versed scholars and exegetes, “He raised some of them in rank” refers to Prophet Muhammad, as he is the one endowed with the highest rank, the eternal miracle (the Qur’ān) and the universal divine message containing all merits of past divine message. According to the narration of Muslim and al-Tirmidhi, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “I have been sent to all the creation and have been made the last of all prophets.”

Allah never swore by the life of any human being except the life of His Prophet. The act of swearing means affirmation using many things of various kinds including inanimate matters, animals, angels, places, times and cosmic phenomena. In this regard, Allah never swore by the life of any human being except the life of his prophet: “By your life, they are in their heedlessness, blundering” (the Qur’ān, 15:72).

He swore by his prophet's life that they are entirely misguided in confusion knowing no way to the right and guidance. When the polytheists claimed

that Allah left his prophet, Allah swore that He never left or abandoned him: “By the late morning and by the night when it falls, Your Lord has not left you, nor did He forget you. Yet, the Hereafter is better for you than the first. And your Lord will give you and you will be pleased” (the Qur’ān, 93: 1-5).

After the Prophet's death, Allah also honors him with the major intercession on the Last Day. Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said:

“I shall be the leader of the children of Adam on the Day of Resurrection; I will be the first to be resurrected and the first intercessor and the first whose intercession will be accepted (by Allah).”

It is one of the greatest signs of honor that Allah made his prophet a mercy to humankind. Allah, the Almighty, says, “We have not sent you except as a mercy to all creations” (the Qur’ān, 21: 107).

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “I am a gifted mercy” (al-Ḥakim in his Mustadrak). According to another narration, “I have been sent as a gifted mercy.”

(4)

OUR DUTY TOWARDS THE QUR'ĀN

Jumada al-Ula 3, 1437 AH / Feb. 12, 2016

CE

Sermon Plan

1. The Qur'ān is the Eternal Miracle of Islam
2. The Position and Merits of the Qur'ān
3. The Lofty Status of the People of the Qur'ān
4. Muslim Duties towards the Qur'ān
 - A. Glorification, Recitation and Contemplation
 - B. Respect of the Qur'ān and Following of the Qur'ānic exemplary ideals
 - C. Obeying Qur'ānic Commands and Avoiding Qur'ānic Prohibition

Sermon Text

The Noble Qur'ān is the major miracle of all times; both the humankind and Jinn failed to produce the like of it or the like of any part of it (the Qur'ān, 17: 88, 11: 13; 2: 23). It was revealed to the heart of Prophet Muhammad as a guidance and light to this life; it guides the confused souls forming the constitution of Muslims whereby hearts are revived, souls are purified and ethics are refined. Allah, the Almighty, says:

- “Alif, Lām, Meem. (1) This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah – (2) Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what

We have provided for them” (the Qur’ān, 2: 1-3).

- “Indeed, this Qur’ān guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward” (the Qur’ān, 17: 9).
- Adhering to the Qur’ānic teachings relieves from trials. It is the guiding spirit and light of believers, as Allah, the Almighty, says, “And thus We have revealed to you an inspiration of Our command (i.e., the Qur’ān). You did not know what is the Book or (what is) faith, but We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants. And indeed, (O Muhammad), you guide to a straight path – (52) The path of Allah, to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Unquestionably, to Allah do (all) matters evolve (i.e. return)” (the Qur’ān, 42: 52-53).
- Hearing to the imposing beautiful Qur’ānic message, a group of the jinn believed in and glorified it. They were thus guided to the straight path and immediately returned to warn their nations “And (mention, O Muhammad), when We directed to you a few of the jinn, listening to the Qur’ān. And when they attended it, they said, "Listen quietly." And when it was concluded, they went back to their

people as warners. (29) They said, "O our people, indeed we have heard a (recited) Book revealed after Moses confirming what was before it which guides to the truth and to a straight path. (30) O our people, respond to the Caller (i.e., Messenger) of Allah and believe in him; He (i.e., Allah) will forgive for you your sins and protect you from a painful punishment. (31) But he who does not respond to the Caller of Allah will not cause failure (to Him) upon earth, and he will not have besides Him any protectors. Those are in manifest error" (the Qur'ān, 46: 29-32).

- Like the jinn, the angels are also moved by the Qur'ān, as narrated by Usayd Ibn Ḥuḍayr (may Allah be pleased with him) that while he was reciting Surat Al-Baqarah (the second chapter of the Qur'ān) at night, and his horse was tied beside him, the horse was suddenly startled and troubled. When he stopped reciting, the horse became quiet, and when he started again, the horse was startled again. Then he stopped reciting and the horse became quiet too. He started reciting again and the horse was startled and troubled once again. Then he stopped reciting and his son, Yaḥya, was beside the horse. He was afraid lest the horse might trample on him. When he took the boy away and looked towards the sky, he could not see it.

The next morning he informed the Prophet who said, "Recite, O Ibn Ḥuḍayr! Recite, O Ibn Ḥuḍayr!" Ibn Ḥuḍayr replied, "O Allah's Messenger! My son, Yahya, was near the horse and I was afraid that it might trample on him, so I looked towards the sky, and went to him. When I looked at the sky, I saw something like a cloud containing what looked like lamps, so I went out in order not to see it." The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "Do you know what that was?" Ibn Ḥuḍayr replied, "No." The Prophet said, "Those were angels, who approached you for your voice and if you had kept on reciting till dawn, it would have remained there till morning when people would have seen it as it would not have disappeared" (al-Bukhari). Such is the impact of the Qur'ān when recited.

- It is the word of Allah whose miracles never end. It is divinely preserved and saved from distortions and changes; Allah, the Almighty, says, "Indeed, it is We who sent down the message (i.e., the Qur'ān) and indeed, We will be its guardian" (the Qur'ān, 15: 9). Whoever speaks it declares the truth; and whoever acts upon it is rewarded; and whoever judges by it has judged justly; and whoever invites to it guides to the straight path. Allah makes it a mercy and healing saying, "And We send down of the Qur'ān that which is healing

and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss” (the Qur’ān, 17: 82).

- ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “This Qur’ān is the banquet of Allah. Learn as much as you can from His banquet. This Qur’ān is the rope of Allah, and it is the clear light and the effective healing. A protection to the one who adheres to it and a rescue to the one who follows it. It is free from deviation and perversion and thus needs no apology or rectification. Its wonders never end. It does not wear out with much repetition. So recite it, for Allah will reward you for the recitation of each letter gets ten times the like of its rewards. I do not say that Alif, Lam, Mim, is a letter, but Alif is a letter, Lam is a letter and Mim is a letter.” (Ḥakim in his *Mustadrak*)
- Allah attributes to it the lofty characters using the grandest names, so people could know the Qur’ānic merits and greatness. Allah, the Almighty, says, “(This is) a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from (one who is) Wise and Acquainted” (the Qur’ān, 11: 1). Allah also says, “Indeed, it is a mighty Book. (41) Falsehood cannot approach it from before it or from behind it; (it is) a

revelation from (Lord who is) Wise and Praiseworthy” (the Qur’ān, 41: 41-42).

- The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) told us of the great merits and excellences of the Noble Qur’ān, which are beneficial to man in this life and in the afterlife. The following are a few examples of the Prophetic statements in this regard:
- **Superiority of the People of the Qur’ān:** ‘Uthman Ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “The best of you are those who learn and teach the Qur’ān” (al-Bukhari in His Authentic Collection).
- **Lofty Position Promised to a Companion of the Qur’ān:** ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) said that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “It would be said to the one who memorizes the Qur’ān: ‘Recite and ascend, recite melodiously as you did in the world. Indeed, your rank shall be at the last verse you recite” (Abu Dawud in His Sunan).
- **Intercession:** Abu Umamah al-Baheli (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that he heard the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) saying, “Recite the Qur'an, for on the Day of Resurrection it will

come as an intercessor for those who recite it” (Muslim in His Authentic Collection).

- **Great Rewards for Qur’ān Readers:** ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Whoever recites a letter from Allah's Book, then he receives the reward from it, and the reward of ten the like of it. I do not say that Alif, Lam, Mim, is a letter, but Alif is a letter, Lam is a letter and Mim is a letter” (al-Tirmidhi in his Sunan).
- **Preservation of Houses in which the Qur’ān is read:** Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Make not your houses graveyards; indeed, Satan runs away from the house in which Surat al-Baqarah is recited” (Muslim in His Authentic Collection).
- **Ibn Sirīn said,** “A house in which the Qur’ān is recited is visited by angels and is freed from devils. It even becomes so roomy for its people and richly prosperous. Conversely, the house in which the Qur’ān is not recited is attended by devils and deprived of angels; it becomes so narrow for its people and lacking prosperity” (Ibn Abi Shaybah, al-Muṣannaf).

- Reflecting on the conditions of the Honorable Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) with the Qur'ān reveals that they were not satisfied with reading or listening. Instead, they contemplated the Qur'ān giving it hearts and souls. They applied it in word and deed following its commands and avoiding its prohibitions. Thanks to their obedience to Qur'ānic teachings, they had their lofty merits and greatness. 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭab (may Allah be pleased with him) memorized Surat al-Baqarah in eight years. It was not due to his weak memory but because he was keen to practice each verse before moving to the other. Abu 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Sulami (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "When we learned ten Qur'ānic verses, we would not move to the other following ten verses before learning what permissible and what is impermissible, what is obligatory and what is forbidden thereof" ('Abd al-Razzaq in His Muṣṣannaf).
- Since the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) used to understand and practice the Qur'ānic verses, they were quickly in obeying Allah and avoiding forbidden matters. When the verse forbidding wine was revealed and a caller declared that "Wine has been peremptorily prohibited," they responded effectively on the spot. Anyone who had any

glass of wine poured it; and anyone who had a mouthful of wine spat it; and anyone who had preserved some vessels of wine poured them out in response to the imperatives of the Qur'ān. The streets of Medina became muddy with it. They said we have already abstained!

- Likewise, when Allah, the Almighty, says, “Never will you attain the good (reward) until you spend (in the way of Allah) from what which you love. And whatever you spend – indeed, Allah is Knowing of it” (the Qur'ān, 3: 92). Abu al-Daḥdah at once gave his most beloved valuable orchard in charity. Such was the way the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) preserved the Book of Allah. For them, it was not a group of words but a way of life, education and faith manifested in behaviors and everyday activities between themselves and also with others.
- As such, a lofty position is promised by Allah to the People of the Qur'ān who read and acted upon it. Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Allah has His own people among mankind.” They said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, who are they?’ He said: ‘The people of the Qur'ān, the people of Allah and those who are closest to Him” (Ibn Majah in His Sunan). A reader of

the Qur'ān is very close to Allah, what a great honor! The more you memorize of the Qur'ān, the more honor you earn.

Our Duty Towards to the Qur'ān:

- **Learning and Teaching:** We should continuously read and study the Qur'ān as the best of people are the Qur'ān teachers and learners: “The best of you are those who learn and teach the Qur'ān.” The Prophet also commanded us to read it constantly; Abu Musa (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Read the Qur'ān regularly. By the One in Whose Hand Muhammad's soul is, it escapes from memory faster than a camel does from its tying ropes” (al-Bukhari in his Authentic Collection).
- The Qur'ān is the main element of the Muslim person's entities from which the Muslim derives religious teachings and morals. The Muslim shall read it well, which is an easy task. Many people, for instance, learn foreign languages and endure difficulties to learn some areas of specializations to get a well-paid job. How could one lazily neglect the learning of the word of Allah under a pretext that it is difficult to read? ‘Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “The one who recites the Qur'ān

and he is proficient with it, he is with the noble and blessed angels, and the one who recites it and it is hard for him, then he gets two rewards” (Abu Dawud in His Sunan). Allah, the Almighty, promised us easiness in reading the Qur’ān: “And We have certainly made the Qur’ān easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember?” (the Qur’ān, 54: 17).

- **Contemplation as being revealed to readers:** It is our duty to contemplate the Qur’ān and taste the sweet and grand impression it reflects. Allah, the Almighty, says, “Then do they not reflect upon the Qur’ān, or are there locks upon (their) hearts?” (the Qur’ān, 47: 24). Allah also says, “Then do they not reflect upon the Qur’ān? If it had been from (any) other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction” (the Qur’ān, 4: 82). The best rewarded of the people of the Qur’ān are those who recite with tongues and deeply understand with hearts and minds. Allah, the Almighty, says, “(This is) a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, (O Muhammad), that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded” (the Qur’ān, 38: 29). Praising readers who grow firmer in faith by reading, Allah, the Almighty, says, “The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited

to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely” (the Qur’ān, 8: 2).

- Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “Allah is the guarantee for him/her who recites that Qur’ān and acts upon it that s/he will neither go astray in this life nor suffer in the afterlife,” as Allah, the Almighty, says, “(Allah) said, “Whoever follows My guidance will neither go astray (in the world) nor suffer (in the afterlife). (123) And whoever turns away from My remembrance –indeed, he will have a distressful life, and We will gather (i.e., raise) him on the Day of Resurrection blind.” (124) He will say, “My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was (once) seeing?” (125) (Allah) will say, “Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot (i.e., disregarded) them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten” (the Qur’ān, 123-126).
- **The Prophet sets examples to us** in contemplation and reaction to the Qur’ān. Once he said to ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) “Recite the Qur’ān to me.” ‘Abdullah said, “Shall I recite (it) to you while it has been revealed to you?” He said, “I like to hear it from another person.” So he recited Surat al-Nisā’ (the fourth chapter of the Qur’ān) till he reached the Verse: ‘How (will it be) then when We bring from each nation a witness, and We

bring you (O Muhammad) as a witness against these people.' (4.41) Then he said to him, "Stop!" "Thereupon, I saw his eyes overflowing with tears," 'Abdullah said. (Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim). A believer is wholly moved and impressed by the word of Allah. Allah, the Almighty, says, "Allah has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance (i.e., mention) of Allah. That is the guidance of Allah by which He guides whom He wills. And one whom Allah leaves astray – for him there is no guide" (the Qur'ān, 39: 23).

- **Respect of the Qur'ān and Following Qur'ānic Morals:** It is the duty of Qur'ānic readers to assume the morals, ethics and teachings of the Qur'ān whereby a human being is free from the dominance of desires and lust and has an elevated soul backed by lofty ethics: "“Indeed, this Qur'ān guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward” (the Qur'ān, 17: 9).” Our ideal example is the Prophet who was a living Qur'ān on the earth; he followed the morals of the Qur'ān, is pleased or displeased according to the criteria of the Qur'ān. When ‘Aishah was

asked about the morals of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with her), she said, “His morals were that of the Qur’ān” (Ahmad in His Musnad).

- Most Qur’ānic verses encourage the lofty morals and high ethics. The Qur’ān is the teacher of mercy, truthfulness, justice, tolerance, honesty and fulfillment of one's promise among other ethics necessary for a Muslim to win the happiness in this world and in the afterlife.
- **Obeying Qur’ānic Commands and Avoiding Qur’ānic Prohibition:** It is also our duty, beside recitation, memorization and contemplation, to abide by its commands and avoid its prohibitions in deeds and behaviors as the Prophet and His Companions did. A Muslim shall obey the Qur’ānic commands and avoid the Qur’ānic prohibitions. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “the Holy Qur’ān is a proof on your behalf or against you” (Muslim in his Authentic Collection). It is a proof against you when you read it heedlessly and it has no effect on your behaviors. Actually, one may read the Qur’ān while the Qur’ān curses him.
- It is also necessary to face the distortions of the extremists and the misinterpretations of the false deniers, who attempt to employ the Qur’ān politically or ideologically to win some interests

or gains. It is a must to learn the Qur'ān in word and meaning from the specialized scholars, who are reliable in knowledge. Those scholars teach people the right faith and teachings. They never employ religion for their favor or interpret it in line with their desires.

- The today world is urgently in need of the Qur'ānic guidance; the present world is essentially ethical. No other book urges lofty morals with all people as frequently as the Qur'ān does. The mistake of contemporary Muslims is their being away from the ethics of the Qur'ān. The most significant duty the Muslims must do is to return to the ethics of the Qur'ān following the lofty practical ideal example of the Qur'ān, namely, the Prophet who was described by the Lord as the companion of the great moral character as he followed the moral teachings of the Qur'ān. He was the best ideal of Qur'ānic morals in practice and obedience. Allah, the Almighty, says, "And indeed, you are of a great moral character" (the Qur'ān, 68: 4). This is the declaration of 'Aishah when she was asked about the morals of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with her), she said, "His morals were that of the Qur'ān" (Ahmad in His Musnad).
- We defend the Qur'ān in hope to win the Qur'ān's defense of us on the last day as Abu

Umamah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that he heard the Prophet saying, “On the Day of Resurrection, the Qur’ān and those who acted according to it will be brought with Surat al-Baqarah and al-‘Imrān (2nd and 3rd chapters of the Qur’ān) preceding them. The Messenger of Allah likened them to three things, which I did not forget afterwards. The Prophet likened them to two clouds, or two black canopies with light between them, or two flocks of birds in ranks pleading for one who recited them” (Muslim in his authentic Collection).

- Only when Muslims recite the Qur’ān continuously in contemplation, practice its teachings and educate it to children, they will get the greatest prosperity. It is with the Qur’ān that the social reform comes true, the mercy and justice dominate, hearts are purely refined and good things increase and evils are eliminated.

(5)
**REFORMATION IS THE CORE OF
PROPHETS' MISSION**

Rabīʿ A-Akhar 12, 1437/January 22, 2016

Sermon Plan

1. Islam is a Faith to Reform Man and the World
2. Qurʾānic Reform Examples from the Lives of Prophets
3. Needs to Individual Reform
4. Reforms Positively Affects Individuals and Society
5. Dangers of Neglecting Reformation

Sermon Text

Islam highly encourages and appreciates the value of private (personal) and general (universal) reform. It is a great human value for the achievement of human happiness, civilization and

universal reform. Reform, in principle, implies the elimination of all means to corruption and discrepancy and activating all means to rapprochement among people for a prosperous right life.

Undoubtedly, refining one's behavior and promoting reform are the ultimate ends of all human words and deeds. Without reform, deeds are unacceptable. It is necessary for a good man in soul, statement and deed to promote reform and goodness and to relieve people from worries. Reflecting on the Qur'ānic verses proves that they pay due concern for the great value of reform. The Qur'ān mentions the term “islāḥ” (reform) and its derivatives one hundred and seventy times in an indication of the Qur'ānic due care and high appreciation of reform. The various meanings of islāḥ generally prove that Islam aims to reform humankind in creeds, behaviors, worships, transactions and all other activities of life.

Faith and reform are frequently associated in several Qur'ānic contexts: “So whoever believes and reforms – there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve” (the Qur'ān, 6: 48); “They ask you about the bounties (of war). Say, “The (decision concerning) bounties is for Allah and the Messenger.” So fear Allah and asliḥu (reform/amend) that which is between you and

obey Allah and His Messenger, if you should be believers” (the Qur’ān, 8: 1).

Likewise, righteousness (God-fearing) and reform come in the same Qur’ānic contexts, “Whoever fears Allah and reforms – there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve” (the Qur’ān, 7: 35). By the same token, repentance and reform are mentioned together (the Qur’ān, 2: 160; 4: 16; 24:5). Reform is the fruit of belief in Allah, keeping to righteous conduct and frequent repentance to the Lord of all worlds.

The Qur’ān encourages reform for the great rewards it renders: “No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or making peace between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah – then We are going to give him a great reward” (the Qur’ān, 4: 114). The stories of prophets with their peoples prove that they all came to reform the corruption that people committed on the earth; their mission was one and the same: reforming the universe by eliminating evils, sins and social diseases. Each prophet came to reform the corruption of his time. Allah sent them with glad tidings and warnings; they introduced the divine creed, laws and ethics that can purify human souls from the dirt of polytheism. Allah, Almighty, says, “And We sent not before you any messenger except that We

revealed to him that, "There is no deity except Me, so worship Me" (the Qur'ān, 21: 25). Their ministry aimed to reform human deeds in this world and qualify them for divine satisfaction in the afterlife.

Noah, for example, invited his people to reform themselves by the pure monotheistic creed and worship of Allah alone with no partner in abandonment of the useless idols that can neither benefit or harm. Allah, Almighty, says, "And said, 'Never leave your gods and never leave Wadd or Suwā' or Yaghūth and Ya'ūq and Nasr. And already they have misled many. And, (my Lord), do not increase the wrongdoers except in error" (the Qur'ān, 71: 23-24). He also encouraged them to seek Allah's forgiveness to have more provision, wealth and children: "And said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver. (10) He will send (rain from) the sky upon you in (continuing) showers (11) And give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers. (12) What is (the matter) with you that you do not attribute to Allah (due) grandeur" (the Qur'ān, 71: 10-13).

Shu'ayb, the Prophet's Orator, (may Allah's Peace be upon him) also addressed the doctrinal corruption that led to economic corruption. His people used to give less than due in measure and

scale. This vice was widespread among them. He thus invited his people to reform in preservation of the rights of both buyers and sellers. Shu‘ayb said to his people, as Allah says, “O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. And do not decrease from the measure and the scale. Indeed, I see you in prosperity, but indeed, I fear for you the punishment of an all-encompassing Day. (84) And O my people, give full measure and weight in justice and do not deprive the people of their due and do not commit abuse on earth, spreading corruption. (85) What remains (lawful) from Allah is best for you, if you would be believers. But I am not a guardian over you” (the Qur’ān, 11: 84-86). He then explained that reform is the essence of his mission: “And I do not intend to differ from you in that which I have forbidden you; I only intend reform as much as I am able. And my success is not but through Allah. Upon him I have relied, and to Him I return” ((the Qur’ān, 11: 88).

Another context indicates his determination to reform the economic corruption that his people did: “Give full measure and do not be of those who cause loss. (181) And weigh with an even (i.e., honest) balance. (182) And do not deprive people of their due and do not commit abuse on earth, spreading corruption” (the Qur’ān, 26: 181-183). Shu‘ayb’s sincerity in materializing reform is

very clear in conditioning his success upon Allah's help, a virtue that all reformers should have. Reform shall be free from personal desires and interests as well as from psychological stimuli and personal conflicts. It is a pure reform for public welfare that benefit all individuals of the community.

Prophet Ṣalīḥ (may Allah's Peace be upon him) called upon his people: “So fear Allah and obey me. (150) And do not obey the order of the transgressors, (151) Who cause corruption in the land and do not amend” (the Qur’ān, 26: 150-152). When Moses (may Allah's Peace be upon him) entrusted his brother Aaron with leading his people after him; he advised him to work on achieving reform and avoiding the ways of corrupters: “And We made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights and perfected them by (the addition of) ten; so the term of his Lord was completed as forty nights. And Moses said to his brother Aaron, "Take my place among my people, do right (by them), and do not follow the way of the corrupters” (the Qur’ān, 7: 142).

Prophet Muhammad only came to complement the call to reform in all religious, social, economic and political areas of life initiated by past prophets and apostles. An in-depth evaluation of the life and biography of the Prophet reveals that he built an Islamic civilization associated with values and

ethics in a contaminated corrupt society tainted with many vices. Vices of illegal sexual relations, theft, killing, usury, unjust holding of people's property, and consuming the wealth of orphans were widely practiced among many other evils. In face of all these vices, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) adopted a reformatory approach. His call was that for life and social reform of individuals and communities: "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" (the Qur'ān, 8: 24).

In the religious reform, he called humankind to reform souls by faith and belief in Allah as the only Lord that has no partner. Proofs for monotheism are many and they testify to the truth that the Prophet brought. In the area of reforming behaviors, the Prophet encouraged good conduct and lofty morals as the essence of his call. Al-Bayhaqi narrated that the Prophet said, "I have been sent to perfect the loftiest of morals." He also urged them to observe high ethics and values whereby social reform comes true and social unity, power, solidarity and association materialize. As such, humankind can live in peace away from dispute, difference, violence and terror against the

scenes of violence, killing and destruction we frequently see.

All human virtues that have universal approval in their support from the heavenly messages aim to achieve reform, such as justice, tolerance, keeping one's word, honest conduct, right statements and deeds, gratitude to parents, honoring the sanctity of orphan's wealth, good neighboring and good talks. Indeed, the source of divine laws is one and the same. That is why the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "The prophets are paternal brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is one" (al-Bukhari in his authentic collection of Hadith).

The laws may vary in forms of worship that accorded the nature of times and places but the human ethics and values, as the basis for coexistence, remain the same in all laws: "One of the statements of early Prophets that people have got is: If you feel no shame (shyness from committing irreligious acts) do whatever you like." No Sharī'ah (Divine law) allowed killing without justice, as Allah prohibits to kill the soul unless it be for a just cause. No Sharī'ah allowed ingratitude to parents, or ill-gotten gains, or violating the financial rights of orphans, workers or wage-earners. No Sharī'ah allowed telling lies, dishonesty, betrayal, breaking one's promises or meeting good deeds with bad ones.

Conversely, the divine laws unanimously approve all lofty human virtues that anyone who breaks them violates the limits of religion and goes beyond the limits of humanity in an open violation of the affiliation to humankind and good nature. In his commentary on the following verses: “Say, “Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited to you. (He commands) that you not associate anything with Him, and to parents, good treatment, and do not kill your children out of poverty; We will provide for you and them. And do not approach immoralities – what is apparent of them and what is concealed. And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden (to be killed) except by (legal) right. This has He instructed you that you may use reason. (151) And do not approach the orphan's property except in a way that is best (i.e., intending improvement) until he reaches maturity. And give full measure and weight in justice. We do not charge any soul except (with that within) its capacity. And when you speak (i.e., testify), be just, even if (it concerns) a near relative. And the covenant of Allah fulfill. This has He instructed you that you may remember. (152) 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 (the Qur’ān, 7: 151-153),” Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be

pleased with him and his father) said, “These are decisive verses that no other verses abrogated them in all books. They are divine limits for all humankind. They are the mother of the Book; whoever acts upon them enters paradise and whoever neglects them enters hellfire.” Any call opposing the call of prophets and violating the Divine laws is indeed a call to corruption on the earth.

The Prophet gave the perfect example in personal and social reform in word and deed; he used to supplicate for reform of all affairs saying, “O Allah, reform for me my religion, which is the safeguard of my affairs. And reform for me the affairs of the world wherein is my living. Decree the Hereafter to be good for me. And make this life, for me, (a source) of abundance for every good and make my death (a source) of comfort to me and protection against every evil” (Muslim in his authentic collection of Hadith).

He used to resolve disputes and make peace between people in encouragement of reform and discouragement from disintegration and dispute. Sahl Ibn Sa’d (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “Once the people of Qubā’ fought with each other till they threw stones on each other. When Allah's Apostle was informed about it, he said, "Let us go to bring about a reconciliation between

them” (al-Bukhari in his authentic collection of Hadith).

Personal and social reforms are the strong safeguard for the survival and progress of society. We first need personal reform and then social reform to refine all political, social, economic and scientific areas of life. However, personal reform is a legal prerequisite and religious duty, especially in the present times corrupted with weakness of faith and spoiled morality. Rights and duties are so badly lost that many people admit no right to senior notables, scholars, relatives, parents or nations.

It is an aspect of reform to know about rights and duties; a person thus never violates others' rights. A person realizes one's duties to do them in the best manner. Individual integrity and spiritual progress on the way of lofty ethics and noble morals apart from perversion, corruption, wrongdoing, rancor and hate— form the essence of reform. As such, man is straightforward in his relation with his self, lord, humankind and the universe. When a human being is self-reformed, he can promote reform to others. In other words, personal progress by means of lofty ethics is a means to self-reform that prevents wrongdoing, sins and violation of things forbidden by Allah. It also a means to universal reform on the earth; it

extract resources and discovers secrets for the sake of public welfare.

Reform is the way to friendship and unity against disunity in personification of the teachings of the Glorious Qur'ān. Reform reflects the values of universal mercy, tolerance and forgiveness. It also a means to dismiss violence, hate, rancor and grudge. Reform is not confined to a specific time. It is a life-duty to one's last breath. Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "If the Last Hour comes while you have a palm-cutting in your hands and it is possible to plant it before the Hour comes, you should plant it" (al-Bukhari in al-Adab al-Mufrad).

However, reform can only come true and its fruits can appear when a person gradually achieves self-reform, the family-reform and finally community-reform until the whole society is reformed, which is necessary for good life and prosperous nations in which security, work and advancement are guaranteed. The virtue of love and friendship thus dominate. A self-reformed and reform-making person sacrifices efforts and wealth for making peace to be included in the prophetic prayers for reform-makers: "Indeed the religion began as something strange and it will return to being strange. So Tuba is for the strangers who reform

what the people have corrupted from my Sunnah after me” (al-Tirmidhi in his collection of Hadith). Reform has many positive impacts on individuals and society:

- It guarantees honorable life: Allah, the Almighty, says, “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” (the Qur’ān, 16: 97).
- Salvation from destruction: Allah, the Almighty, says, “And your Lord would not have destroyed the cities unjustly while their people were reformers” (the Qur’ān, 11: 117).
- Inheriting the world leadership: Reform is a condition for inheriting the leadership of the world: Allah, the Almighty, says, “And We have already written in the book (of Psalms) after the (previous) mention that the land (of Paradise) is inherited by My righteous servants” (the Qur’ān, 21: 105)..
- Qualifying human beings to receive divine support and providence: Allah, the Almighty, says, “Indeed, my protector is Allah, who has sent down the Book; and He is an ally to the righteous” (the Qur’ān, 7: 196).
- Preservation of progeny: “And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and

there was beneath it a treasure for them, and their father had been righteous. So your Lord intended that they reach maturity and extract their treasure, as a mercy from your Lord. And I did it not of my own accord. That is the interpretation of that about which you could not have patience” (the Qur’ān, 20: 82). The story of building the wall of the two orphans, as related in the account of Moses with the godly man is well known. It was not an accidental process but a consequence of the good deeds of their father. Ibn ‘Abbas said, “They were preserved because of the good deeds of their fathers even if no good deed was attributed to them.”

- Reform guarantees security from horrible fears of this world and the hereafter: Allah, the Almighty, says, “And We send not the messengers except as bringers of good tidings and warnings; so whoever believes and reforms – there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve” (the Qur’ān, 6: 48).
- Reform is a means to forgiveness and mercy: Allah, the Almighty, says, “And if you reform (your affairs) and fear Allah – then indeed, Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful” (the Qur’ān, 4: 129).
- Reform is the beauty and decoration of things as well as a merit deeply beloved by Allah and

His Messenger. It is a requisite for straight life and coherent nation becomes in which the infirm are honored and Muslims are united in word and essence by the power of love and kindness. It is also a proof for the fraternity of the faithful, as Allah says, “The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy” (the Qur’ān, 49: 10).

- Loss of the value of reform leads society and families to destruction and, as such, chaos dominates, corruption exacerbates, divine laws are broken and false desires are committed. Loss of reform foreshadows the fall of society, state and civilization and worse indeed are the general punishment and social poverty, dishonor and disregard divinely decreed for neglect of reform.

TRUE BELIEVERS FROM THE QUR'ĀNIC PERSPECTIVE

Jumada al-Ula 17, 1437 AH / February 26, 2016
CE

Sermon Plan

1. Knowledge and Faith
2. Faith is associated with Good Deeds
3. Believers' Qualities
 - A. God-Fearing
 - B. Placing Trust in Allah
 - C. Keen and Humble Observation of Salah
 - D. Giving in Charity
 - E. Telling the Truth, Honesty, Keeping One's Word, Shyness and Good Morals
4. Divine Rewards Promised to Believers

Sermon Text

It is out of divine mercy and kindness that Allah sent messengers to humankind to guide them to the truth and lead them along the straight path. As such, no one can have an argument against Allah. Allah, the Almighty, says, “Those messengers brought good tidings as well as warnings so mankind will have no argument against Allah after the messengers. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise” (the Qur’ān, 4: 165).

Faith is the highest relation that messengers (may Allah's peace be upon them) preached; it is the firm belief in Allah, His angels, scriptures and messengers, as well as the last day and the divine

decree, good or bad. Believers shall abide by the necessary condition of faith; namely, the enforcement of their duties—commands and prohibition, in conformity with the divine plan as delivered by Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him).

Knowledge is the first step towards faith: Allah, the Almighty, says, “Know that there is no god but Allah and seek forgiveness for your sin and for the believing men and women. Yet, Allah knows of your movement and your resting place” (the Qur’ān, 47: 19). Faith and good deeds are inseparably associated. The Qur’ān expresses this fact in several verses, of which the following are exemplary:

- Allah, the Almighty, says, “But they who believe and do good deeds – those are the residents of Paradise; they will abide therein eternally” (the Qur’ān, 2: 82).

- “Surely, those who have believed and done good deeds – their Lord will guide them because of their faith. Beneath them rivers will flow in the Gardens of Pleasure” (the Qur’ān, 10: 9).

- “Those who have believed and done good deeds – they will have the Gardens of Paradise as a lodging” (the Qur’ān, 18: 107).

Faith increases by obedience and decreases by disobedience. It has many practical dimensions, which vary from a believer to another in line of

one's degree of faith in Allah. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "Faith has over seventy branches - or over sixty branches - the uppermost of which is the declaration that no one has the right to be worshipped but Allah; and the least of which is the removal of harmful object from the road, and modesty is a branch of faith" (al-Bukhari and Muslim). Good deeds are rightly a reflection of good faith. The facts of faith are made clear in the famous account of Gabriel's visit to the Prophet as reported by 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) that:

"While we were one day sitting with the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him), there appeared before us a man dressed in extremely white clothes and with very black hair. No traces of journeying were visible on him, and none of us knew him. He sat down close by the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) rested his knees against the knees of the Prophet and placed his palms over his thighs, and said: "O Muhammad, tell me about Islam." The Messenger of Allah (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) replied: "Islam is to testify that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, that you should perform salah

(prayers), pay zakah (obligatory charity), fast during Ramadan, and perform Hajj (pilgrimage) to the House (in Mecca) if you can find a way to it." He said: "You have told the truth." We were astonished at his thus questioning him and telling him that he was right.

He went on to say, "Tell me about faith." The Prophet answered, "It is to believe in Allah and His angels, Books and Messengers as well as in the Last Day, and in predestination, good or bad." He said, "You have told the truth." The man said, "Inform me about iḥsan." The Prophet said, "It is to worship Allah as though you see Him, but if you cannot see Him He sees you."

He said, "Tell me about the Hour." The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "Indeed, the one questioned knows no more than the questioner." "Well, tell me of its signs, he said." The Prophet said, "They are that the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress and that you will see the barefooted ones, the naked, the destitute, the herdsmen of the sheep (competing with each other) in raising lofty buildings." Thereupon, the man went off. After a while of waiting, the Prophet asked, "O 'Umar, do you know who that questioner was?" I replied, "Allah and His Messenger know better." He said, "He is Gabriel; he came to educate you in your religion" (Muslim in his authentic collection).

In His wise Book, Allah, the Almighty, mentions many of the believers' characteristics as follows:

- **Perfect fear of Allah as a high and grand status of believers:** “The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts are held in fear, and when His verses are recited to them, they are raised in faith; and upon their Lord they rely – the ones who establish prayer, and from what We have provided them, they spend. Those are the true believers; for them are degrees of high position with their Lord and forgiveness and noble provision” (the Qur’ān, 8: 2-4). This perfect fear personifies the perfect apprehension of Allah, as Allah says, “Indeed, those who are apprehensive from fear of their Lord; and those who believe in the signs of their Lord; and those who do not associate anything with their Lord; and those who give what they give while their hearts are fearful because they will be returning to their Lord— It is those who hasten to good deeds” (the Qur’ān, 23: 57-61).
- Allah, the Almighty, also says, “You shall only warn those who follow the reminder and are in awe of the Most Merciful while unseeing of him. So give him good news of forgiveness and noble reward” (the Qur’ān, 36: 11).
- Indeed, the Prophet set us the example of the best fearing-God human being. Mutarrif narrated from his father who said, “I saw the Prophet

praying while his chest is loudly sounding like a boiling kettle” (Ibn Khuzaymah). The Prophet even used to supplicate Allah for a good watchful heart filled with apprehension of Allah.

- Abu Mijlaz said, “Once ‘Ammar Ibn Yasir led us in a prayer, which he made brief. Some people disliked his act. He said: “Have I not perfected its bowing and prostration?” “Yes”, they replied. However, I have made a supplication that I heard the Messenger of Allah saying, “O Allah, by Your knowledge of the unseen and Your absolute power over the creation, keep me alive so long as You know that life is good for me and cause me to die when You know that death is better for me. O Allah, decree me to harbor fears of You in all circumstances; and to say the truth in times of pleasure and anger; and to prove prudently moderate in poverty and riches; and grant me the everlasting joy of looking at Your face and longing for your meeting. I seek refuge with you from a harmful calamity or a misguiding trial. O Allah, beautify us with the adornment of faith and make us among those who guide and are rightly guided” (Ahmad).

- A poet once said,

Fear God and hope Him for all calamities and
obey not a disobedient soul to escape regret
Be between fear and hope, and have good news of
divine pardon if you're proved a true Muslim

- **Placing Trust in Allah:** It is also a sign of good faith to rely on Allah and sincerely put your trust in Him in securing benefits and avoiding evils of all matters. One should have firm belief that the only one who can benefit and harm and relieve from evils is Allah alone. A believer should take all necessary means leading to perfect work without placing trust in anything but Allah. Sincere trust does not contradict taking necessary means. ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “I heard the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) saying: ‘If you really put your trust in Allah as due, you will be given provision like birds; they go out hungry in the morning and come back with full bellies in the evening” (al-Tirmidhi). As to the claims of putting sincere trust in Allah without good endeavors and work, it is not a case of trust but a case of idle dependence against which the Prophet forewarned.
- Mu‘adh Ibn Jabal narrated said “I was riding behind the Messenger of Allah on a donkey known as 'Ufayr when the Prophet said: Mu‘adh, do you know what right has Allah over His slaves and what right have His slaves over Him? Mu‘adh said: Allah and his Messenger know best. Upon this the Prophet remarked: The right of Allah over His slaves is that they should worship Allah and should not associate anything

with Him, and the right of His slaves over Allah, Glorious and Sublime, is that He does not punish anyone who associates not anything with Him. Mu‘adh said to the Messenger of Allah: Should I give this good news to people? The Prophet said: Do not tell them this good news, for they may trust in it alone” (Muslim in his authentic collection). Placing trust in Allah is closely associated with a believer's life. Indeed, securing the benefits and fending off harms can only come true with placing sincere trust in Allah.

- **Keen and Humble Observation of Salah:** It is also a sign of good believers that they permanently perform the prayers in humbleness and submission. Allah, the Almighty, says: “Certainly will the believers have succeeded: They who are during their prayer humbly submissive” (the Qur’ān, 23: 1-2).
- **Salah is the symbol of Islam** as asserted in several Qur’ānic verses: “And establish Salah and give zakah and bow with those who bow (in worship and obedience)” (the Quarn, 2: 43). It is also one of the main five pillars of Islam. Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: “Islam is based on five pillars: testifying that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger; offering the

prayers perfectly; paying Zakah (i.e. obligatory charity); performing Hajj i.e. pilgrimage to Mecca; observing fast during the month of Ramadan” (al-Bukhari and Muslim).

- Admittedly, people vary in their humble performance of prayers; some get the full reward when others only suffer and toil unrewarded. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that he heard the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) saying: “Many people fast and get nothing from their fast but hunger; and many others pray and get nothing from their prayer but a sleepless night” (al-Bayhaqi in his sunan).
- Salah is also a means to good behavior and lofty character; it keeps a person away from bad deeds, sins and indecencies. Allah, the Almighty, says, “Establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing” (the Qur’ān, 29: 45). Humble observation of prayers in full submission is a duty indicated in the narration of Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: “What is the matter with people who lift their gaze to the sky while praying?” He spoke sternly against that until he said: “They must stop that or else they will certainly lose their eyesight” (al-Bukhari in his authentic collection).

- **Giving in Charity** is also a sign of true believers. Charity here is generally applied to all forms of giving, be they obligatory or voluntary. The Prophet said, “The upper hand is better than the lower hand (i.e. the giver of charity is better than the one who receives it) and one should first provide for his dependents. Yet, the best charity is that which is given by a wealthy person but whoever abstains from beseeching others for financial help, Allah will give and relieve him sufficiently” (al-Bukhari in authentic collection).
- Abu Mas‘ūd al-Badri narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “If a man spends on his family (with the intention of having a reward from Allah) sincerely for Allah's sake, it is a form of alms-giving in reward for him” (Muslim in his authentic collection). A believer knows that he is just in charge of the wealth and that all blessings only rest in the hands of Allah; s/he is generous and Allah is generous to him.
- Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: “While a person traveling through the wilderness, he heard a voice in the cloud saying: Water the garden of so and so. The clouds soon took aside and poured water on a stony ground filling a certain channel. The traveler followed the water to come upon a

person standing in a garden busy with changing the course of water with a hatchet. He said to him: O Servant of Allah, what is your name? He said: So and so. Surprisingly, it is the same name heard in the clouds. The farmer asked: O Servant of Allah, why do you ask about my name? He said: I heard a voice from the clouds of which is the downpour, saying: Water the garden of so and so mentioning the like of your name. What do you do (to receive this divine grace)? He said: Now, as you said that, I look what yield I get from it and give one-third as charity, one-third to sustain myself and my children; and one-third I return to cultivate a new harvest therewith” (Muslim in his authentic collection).

- The Noble Qur’ān also mentions other qualities for which believers are distinctively noted, e.g. turning away from idle talk and fulfilling their trusts. Allah, the Almighty, says, “Successful in deed are the believers; (1) they who are submissively humble in their prayer; (2) and they who turn away from idle talk; (3) and they who persistently pay the charity; (4) and they who guard their private parts (5) except from their wives or the female slaves in their possession, for indeed, they will not be blamed— (6) yet, whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors— (7) and they who are true to their trusts and promises; (8) and they who carefully

maintain their prayers— (9) those are the inheritors, (10) Who will inherit paradise therein they will abide eternally” (the Qur’ān, 23: 1-11). These verses show the good characters of believers as including humbleness in prayers, avoidance of idle talk, payment of charity, keeping away from illicit relations, maintaining trust, repaying them to their rightful owners and fulfilling one's promise.

- A true Muslim shall assume these highly Qur’ānic ethics to join the people of true faith and save himself in this world and in the hereafter. True faith that controls a believer's heart helps him/her escape all forms of deviation, intransigence and fanaticism. The believer loves for others the same good he loves for himself; s/he avoids perjury, lying and idle talk sessions and works hard to achieve the welfare of his community and nation. Conversely, pretenders of faith are morally deviant even if their behaviors are apparently legal, but their faith is imperfect and meaningless.
- Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) once came out when a young man of al-Anṣār called Harithah ibn al-Nu‘man met him. The Prophet asked, “How are you this morning, O Harithah?” He replied, “I

have become a true faithful in this morning.” The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Consider what you are saying, for each true essence reveals real facts, what are the real facts of your faith?” In reply, he said: “My soul is really turned away from the world, so I kept my night praying and kept my daytime fasting. It seems as if I look at the Throne of my Lord outstanding and look at the residents of Paradise visiting each other and at the residents of the Fire aggrieving one another.” The Messenger of Allah (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: “Really, you know the truth, keep to that. What a servant whose heart is divinely illuminated by faith!” (al-Bayhaqi in Shu‘ab al-Iman).

- A believer is also characterized by good morals; he is truthful, honest, faithful, generous, shy, upright, merciful, tolerant, modest, just, benevolent, altruist and perfectly follows the Qur’ānic ethics. Allah, the Almighty, says, “O you who believe, fear Allah and be with those who are truthful” (the Qur’ān, 9: 119).
- Allah, the Almighty, also says, “And those who faithfully keep their trusts and promises” (the Qur’ān, 70: 32).
- It is also a sign of the true righteous believers that “they fulfill their promise when they promise and are patient in poverty and hardship

and in battlefield. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous” (the Qur’ān, 2: 177).

- For believers of noble morals Allah promises the best reward saying: “Indeed, those who have believed and done good deeds will have the Gardens of Paradise as a lodging wherein they will abide eternally and never will they desire any other substitute” (the Qur’ān, 18: 107-108).

(7)

THE MERITS OF PROPHET'S COMPANIONS

Jumada al-Akhirah 16, 1437 AH/March 25,
2016

Sermon Plan

1. Prophet's Companions: High Position and Lofty Merits
2. Their Merits in the Qur’ān and Sunnah

3. Love of Prophet's Companions is a Sign of Belief
4. Encouragement to Follow Their Examples
5. Banning Insults and Impugnance of the Prophet's Companions
6. Examples of the Prophet's Companions

Sermon Text

Allah chose the best of people to the company of his prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him); they sincerely believed in his message and upheld his cause proving most truthful in faith, deepest in understanding and best in good deeds. Those are the Prophet's Companions, who fearlessly conveyed the divine message to all corners of the world and won the divine pleasure and good praise: “The first forerunners (in the faith) among the emigrants and the Helpers and those who followed them with good conduct, Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him; He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment” (the Qur’ān, 9: 100).

It was a generation decreed to make the difference and change life. They bore the torch of light to all humankind. It is beyond our abilities to realize their merits. However, it is sufficient to know that if we give a great deal in charity as huge as the mount of Uhud, it is even less than a handful or

half of a handful of the Prophets' Companions; the Prophet said, "Do not abuse my Companions, for by the One in Whose Hand is my soul, if any of you would have spent as much gold as Uhud Mount, it would not equal a Mudd or even half a Mudd of one of them" (al-Bukhari and Muslim).

They undertook the burdens of promoting the religion and paid the ultimate sacrifice in that cause to support Allah and His Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him): "Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties in exchange for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed; it is a true promise He made in the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'ān. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So rejoice in your commitment which you have made. Such is the great success" (the Quran, 9: 111).

It is the Prophet's right upon us to read his biography and follow his example and law. Likewise, we shall read the biographies and know the merits and virtues of the Prophet's Companions to follow their ideal ethics and obedience to Allah. Their life is rich with useful lessons and reminders. Actually, Allah chose them as the best group to accompany his Prophet and promote his message. They are divinely decreed to be the best and most perfect of all Muslims. Unprecedented in

piety and devotion, the human history never knew their like—as they are the first forerunners and the closest to Allah's Pleasure (the Qur'ān, 56: 10-14).

In celebration of their high status and merits, Allah honored their company of his Prophet in the Divine Word ‘Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and prostrating in prayers, seeking the grace and pleasure of Allah. Their mark is on their foreheads from the trace of prostration. That is their description in the Torah. And their description in the Gospel is as a plant which produces its offshoots and strengthens them so they grow firm and stand upon their stalks, delighting the farmers, so Allah may enrage by them the disbelievers. Allah has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them forgiveness and a great reward’ (the Qur'ān, 48: 29).

This verse declares them true believers, sincere servants and dedicated worshippers who are frequently bowing and prostrating in prayers. They only seek the grace from Allah and the worship left marks on their bodies. You can easily identify them by their fear and love of Allah. That is why they won the divine pleasure—the greatest of graces: “Surely, Allah was pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you

under the tree; He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest” (the Qur’ān, 48: 18).

If we reflect on the Sunnah of the Beloved Prophet, we have several indications to their great excellence, high position and loftiness. The following are just examples of these prophetic statements:

- “The best of my people are those of my generation. Then those succeeding them, then those succeeding them, then people would come whose witness would precede their oath and their oath will precede their witness” (al-Bukhari and Muslim). Simply, they are the best in faith, advocacy and console of the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him).

- Imam Ahmad narrated that Ibn Mas‘ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “Allah looked into the hearts of His servants, and found that the heart of Muhammad is the purest of all, so He chose him for Himself and sent him with His message. Then He looked into the hearts of His servants, next to the heart of Muhammad, and He found that the hearts of his companions were the best of people’s hearts, so He made them supporters of His Prophet, who defended His religion. So whatever the Muslims think is good is

divinely good and whatever they think is bad is divinely bad.”

- The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) described them as the source of Muslim security, as he said, “The stars are a source of security for the sky; when the stars disappear there comes to the sky what has been promised (of dooms). And I am a source of safety and security to my Companions and when I would go away there would befall my Companions) what they have been promised and my Companions are a source of security for my people and when they would go there would fall my people what they have been promised” (Muslim). The Companions were the source of relief from heresies; their blessings extended to bless two successive generations.

- Abu Sa‘īd al-Khudri narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Time will come when a group of people will wage a war and it will be said, 'Do you have with you anyone who has accompanied Allah's Messenger? They will say, 'Yes'; and then victory will be given to them. Then a time will come when a group of people will wage a war and it will be said, " Do you have with you anyone who has accompanied the companions of Allah's Messenger?" They will say, 'Yes and then victory will be given to them. A time then comes when a

group of people will wage a war, and it will be said, " Do you have with you anyone who has been in the company of the companions of the companions of Allah's Messenger?" They will say, 'Yes; and victory will be given to them" (al-Bukhari and Muslim).

- Allah also testifies to their benevolence, generosity and struggle in pursuit of Allah's pleasure. Allah promised them eternal paradise: "But the Messenger and those who believed with him fought with their wealth and their lives. Those will have all that is good, and it is those who are the successful (88) Allah has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide eternally. That is the great Success" (the Qur'ān, 9: 88-89).

- 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Once the Prophet commanded us to give in charity. Meanwhile, I had some property; I thought it was time to surpass Abu Bakr in a good deed. I brought half my property. The Messenger of Allah asked: What did you leave for your family? I replied: The same amount. Abu Bakr brought all that he had. The Messenger of Allah asked him: What did you leave for your family? He replied: I left Allah and His Prophet for them. I said: I shall never compete you in anything" (al-Tirmidhi).

- The love of the Prophet's Companions is a sign of firm faith and true love of the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him), as He said, "(I emphatically command you to fear) Allah regarding my Companions; do not make them objects of insults after me. Whoever loves them, it is out of love of me that he loves them. But whoever hates them, it is out of hatred for me that he hates them. Whoever harms them has harmed me and whoever harms me has offended Allah; whoever offends Allah shall soon be punished" (al-Tirmidhi and Ahmad from 'Abdullah Ibn Mughaffal).

- The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) even made the love of al-Ansaar a sign of faith and their hate a sign of hypocrisy: Al-Barā' Ibn 'Azib narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said in respect of al-Ansaar: "None loves the Ansaar but a believer, and none hates them but a hypocrite. So Allah will love him who loves them, and He will hate him who hates them" (al-Bukhari and Muslim). Anas Ibn Malik also narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: "Love for the Ansaar is a sign of faith and hatred for the Ansaar is a sign of hypocrisy" (al-Bukhari).

For the Sharia, abusing the Prophet's Companions is strictly forbidden; Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be

pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet said: ‘Do not abuse my Companions! Do not abuse my Companions! By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, if any of you would have spent as much gold as Uhud Mount, it would not equal a Mudd or even half a Mudd of one of them’ (Muslim).” ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar further said, “Do not abuse the Companions of Muhammad; an hour of anyone of them is better than a forty-year worship of anyone of you” (Ahmad in Fadā’il al-Sahabah). We have to respect and honor them in recognition of their lofty position and merits.

The life of the Prophet's Companions personified the grandness of faith and sincere love of Allah and His Prophet. It was a real translation of the high morals; they proved the best leaders in sacrifice and giving and the best masters of generosity, knowledge and good deeds. As such, they proved truthful: “For the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties, seeking bounty from Allah and (His) approval and supporting Allah and His Messenger, (there is also a share). Those are the truthful” (the Qur’ān, 59: 8). Outstanding examples include the following:

1. ‘Ali Ibn Abi Taleb (may Allah be pleased with him) spent in the Prophet's bed at the Night of Migration exposing his life to grave dangers while

knowing that the polytheists besieging the house to kill him.

2. Suhayb, the Roman, (may Allah be pleased with him) also sacrificed his wealth in support of the Religion and the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him). When Suhayb رضي الله عنه decided on migration to Medina, the disbelievers followed him. They insulted him claiming that he had come to Mecca as a worthless tramp, but their town was gracious enough and thanks to them he managed to make a good deal of wealth. They gave orders that he would not leave. Seeing this, he offered a compromise to give away all his wealth to them, so they let him depart peacefully; they eventually agreed to release him on condition of giving away his wealth for them. Arriving at Medina, the Prophet gave him good tidings, "The bargain proved lucrative, Abu Yahya! the bargain proved lucrative, Abu Yahya i.e. the nickname of Suhayb." Allah ﷻ then revealed, "And there is the type of man who gives his life to earn the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is truly kind to His servants" (the Qur'ān, 2: 207) (Ibn Hibban in his authentic collection).

3. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) gave the best moral example and noble ethics. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: "Who amongst you

is fasting today? Abu Bakr said: I am. He again said: Who amongst you followed a funeral procession today? Abu Bakr said: I did. The Prophet again said: Who amongst you served food to the needy? Abu Bakr said: I did. The Prophet said: Who amongst you has today visited the sick? Abu Bakr said: I did. Thereupon, the Prophet said: Anyone in whom these good deeds are combined will certainly enter paradise” (Muslim).

4. ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) once went out at night when he passed by a woman and her children; she had a pot on the fire. The children were crying. ‘Umar greeted her with peace and she replied. He did not like to say: “O people of fire, so he called them: O people of light, may I come closer? he asked. ‘Come closer or leave us, she responded. ‘Umar drew closer and asked: ‘What is the matter? We are detained by the night and the cold,’ she replied. Why are the children crying? ‘Umar inquired. She said, “They are hungry.” What are you cooking,’ ‘Umar persisted in asking. There is only water boiling until the children fall asleep. Allah will judge between me and ‘Umar, the woman said, unaware of the one with she was speaking.

‘Umar immediately went to the state granary and put together the necessary provisions in a bag, and said, ‘Put it on my back, O Aslam.’ I objected and said, ‘I will carry it on your behalf.’ ‘Will you carry

my burden for me on the Day of Resurrection?' he wondered. I placed the load on his back, Aslam said, and he carried it to the woman. 'Umar placed some flour into the pot and added some fat. He blew at the fire until smoke came out of his thick beard. He took off the pot from the fire when the food was ready. He said: 'Let me have a plate.' When the plate was brought, he dished the food and placed it in front of the children. 'Eat,' he said to them and the children ate until they are full. They kept praying for 'Umar, unaware of his identity, saying that he is worthier of the emirate than 'Umar! 'Umar stayed with them until the children fell asleep. He gave them the remaining provision and then took leave of them saying: Say good when you visit the Commander of the Believers. On the way, he turned to me and said: 'O Aslam, hunger kept them awake and made them cry; I loved to keep their company until I see in them what I just saw. I did not like to leave them unless I see them in comfort (Imam Ahmad Fada'il al-Sahabah).

Female Companions

Female Companions also have great situations of giving and support of Allah's religion. The following situations are exemplary of their contributions:

- Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her), the Mother of the Believers, had a great role in the

promotion of Islam and defense of her husband i.e. the Prophet, for whom she paid the ultimate sacrifice and consoled him. She gave him a comforting message saying, "By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you, for by Allah, you keep good relations with your Kith and kin, speak the truth, help the poor and the destitute, entertain your guests generously and assist those who are stricken with calamities" (al-Bukhari).

- She was so loyal to the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) that he kept her praise after her death. 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that the Prophet well praised Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) whenever her name was mentioned. One day, I felt jealous and said. What makes you remember an old toothless woman of red gums, who died long ago while Allah replaced you with a better one? In reply, Allah has not replaced me with a better than she; she had faith in my message when people disbelieved, believed me when people belied and aided me with her wealth when people deprived me, and Allah gave her children from her to the exclusion of other women" (Ahmad).
- Nusaybah Bint Ka'b al-Ansaariyyah (may Allah be pleased with her) also sets a good example to follow. The Prophet (may Allah's

Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "During the battle of Uhud, I did not turn right or left but I had seen Um 'Umarah fighting to defend me." Someone came in determination to kill the Prophet but whenever he wanted to pierce the Prophet, she confronted him. He kept hitting her with the sword until her shoulder blade was badly damaged. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "What a grave pain you endure, Um 'Umarah! In reply, she said: I can endure more and more and more, O Prophet. He responded, "Ask me for anything, Um 'Umarah! She said, "I want to accompany you in Paradise." The Prophet responded, "You are not alone but you and your family will be with me." I do not care what may befall me in this world after that, she said. (Siyar A'lam al-Nubalā')

- If we really seek for progress, advancement, salvation and divine pleasure in this world and in the hereafter, we shall follow the brilliant examples of the Prophet's Companions in life and ethics. The Prophet encourages us to follow in their footsteps saying, "I urge you to adhere to my Sunnah and the path of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, and hold fast to that; beware of newly-invented matters, for every innovation is a way of misguidance" (Ibn

Majah from al-‘Irbād Ibn Sariyah, may Allah be pleased with him).

- We have to take lessons and clue children and women in the noble morals of the honorable Companions, and the way they followed the Prophet and sacrificed their lives and wealth in support of the religion.

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ZAKAH AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

Şafar 8th, 1437AH/November 20th, 2015CE

Humans are social beings by nature. They cannot live in isolation; rather they are here on earth to coexist in one society where they exchange ideas and benefit from one another. Islam pays attention to human society and recognizes human rights. Allah the Almighty says, “And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with (definite) preference,” (the Qur’ān, 17: 70)

Islam pays attention to the individual and the society in which the individuals live. Islam establishes the rules and standards that aim to produce solidarity at its best form with due care for the less-fortunate people. For example, Islam commands us to take care of the orphans and the needy insomuch that they can lead a secure and decent life. Every human has the right to live a life free of poverty and need. Islam imposes the religious duty of zakah whereby the rich pay amounts of their wealth in support of the poor and the needy.

Zakah is one of the fundamental principles of Islam. The Prophet (May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "Islam is built on five pillars: to profess Islamic faith, establish prayer, pay zakah, perform hajj, and fast Ramadan," (Al-Bukhari).

Zakah is obligatory, for Allah says, "Establish prayer, give zakah and bow with those who bow (in worship and obedience)," (the Qur'ān, 2: 43). Allah also says, "Give the zakah on crops on the day of harvest," (the Qur'ān, 6: 141). Allah also says, "Zakah recipients are only the poor and for the needy and for those employed for it⁴⁵⁰ and for bringing hearts together (for Islam) and for freeing captives (or slaves) and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the (stranded) traveler –

an obligation (imposed) by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise,” (the Qur’ān, 9: 60).

Ibn ‘Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that when the Prophet (May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) appointed Mu`adh as the governor of Yemen, he gave him instructions saying, “You are going to govern a people who belong to the People of the Scripture (Christians and Jews). You first call them to believe in Allah as the only one God to be worshipped and in me as the messenger of Allah. If they obey you, then second you teach them that Allah the Almighty has prescribed five daily prayers upon them. If they comply, then third you tell them that Allah has made it obligatory on them to pay zakah; zakah is to be taken from the wealthy and given to the poor. If they listen to you, then when you collect zakah from the rich, do not take the best of what they own. You had better avoid injustice, since Allah the Almighty immediately attends to the prayer made by the oppressed.”

Abu Hurayrah (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “There are two angels who descend to earth everyday and they pray to Allah saying, ‘O Allah! Bless the wealth of those who give in charity in Your Cause! O Allah!

Give loss to those who do not give in charity!”” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Allah gives a great warning to those who do not observe the ritual of zakah. Allah the Almighty says, “And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah – give them tidings of a painful punishment. The Day when it will be heated in the fire of Hell and seared therewith will be their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs, (it will be said), ‘This is what you hoarded for yourselves, so taste what you used to hoard,’” (the Qur’ān: 9: 34–35). Allah promises severe punishment for any negligence in this regard.

In assertion of zakah's paramount importance, Allah always associates it with the greatest ritual of Islam, i.e. prayer. Such association aims to stress the importance of zakah, encourage people to observe it, and warn them against its neglect. Zakah is given various names in the Qur’ān; it is called spending, charity and zakah.

Allah says, “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,” (the Qur’ān, 2:10) Allah also says, “O Muhammad! Take from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase, and invoke (Allah's blessings) upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for

them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing,” (the Qur’ān, 9: 103)

Zakah's position in Islam is great. As mentioned, it is a fundamental principle that aims to achieve solidarity and harmony between the members of human society. Yet, zakah is not an optional ritual. It is a financial duty imposed on the rich to protect the marginalized and impoverished individuals.

The rationale behind zakah is that it purifies human souls and helps Muslims overcome greed and stinginess. It also aims to help those who are less fortunate in this world. Zakah brings back blessings on one’s wealth; it protects money and provides insurance against unexpected failures. Zakah is not a tax but an act of worship that seeks to reinforce unity, love and sympathy among the members of the same community.

Uncovering the underlying reasons behind zakah, the Qur’ān states: “(O Muhammad,) Take from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase, and invoke (Allah’s blessings) upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing,” (the Qur’ān, 9: 103). Allah also says, “And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul – it is those who will be the successful,” (the Qur’ān, 59: 9). The Prophet (May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also said, “Three qualities bring devastating losses to

humans; they are overwhelming stinginess, obsessing desire for evil and self-conceit” (Al-Bayhaqi).

As far as the poor are concerned, zakah is a great means for the purification of one’s soul; it eliminates envy, grudge and other bad sentiments that a poor person may harbor against the rich in society. Spiritual purification and social security are the first and foremost goals of zakah or charity-giving. Charity is not necessary materialized in material support; kind treatment features another form of charity; the Prophet (May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) says, “To smile to a person is an act of charity. To promote that is good and prevent that is evil is an act of charity. To show a lost person the way is an act of charity. To lead a blind person somewhere is an act of charity. To remove harm from the environment is an act of charity. To be helpful to others is an act of charity,” (Al-Tirmidhi).

Wonders of zakah never end as it actually causes one’s wealth to grow. Allah the Almighty says, “But whatever thing you spend (in Allah’s cause) – Allah will compensate it; and He is the best of providers,” (the Qur’ān, 34: 39) The Prophet (May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also promises, “Charity never causes wealth to be diminished, forgiveness brings but dignity, and

humility brings but high esteem in Allah's sight," (Muslim).

Abu Hurayrah (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "Once, a man was in the desert, and he heard a voice coming from the sky. The voice was talking to a cloud saying, 'Go and water the garden of so-and-so'. That cloud moved ahead and poured rain on the top of a high place that gradually slopes downwards. The man stood up and went to the place where the cloud poured the rain. He ended up in a garden where he saw a man collecting the water of the rain with a gardening tool. He said to him, 'Excuse me! What is your name?' The man of the garden said, 'My name is So-and-so', and the man's name was that which was heard from the sky at the very beginning of the story. The man of the garden said to the first man, 'Why are you asking?' He replied, 'I heard a voice from the sky commanding the cloud that poured the rain on your garden to move and water the garden of so-and-so', and this so and so was your name. Could you please tell me what you do with your garden?' The man of the garden said, 'Since you asked, I will tell you. Whatever comes out of the garden, I give a third of the crops in charity and a third to my family and myself, and I invest the last third in the garden," (Muslim).

Zakah significantly uproots poverty and creates love and peace among the members of society. Allah the Almighty highly encourages Muslims to observe zakah; He praises those who pay charities and promises them success in this life and in the Afterlife. Allah the Almighty says, “Certainly will the believers have succeeded; those who are during their prayer humbly submissive, turn away from ill speech, and are observant of zakah,” (the Qur’ān, 23:1–4). He also promises Paradise to the charitable people endowed with these merits; He, the Almighty, says, “Those are the inheritors who will inherit Paradise where they will abide therein eternally,” (the Qur’ān, 23: 10–11).

Over history, no human system pays due care for the value of charity-giving as Islam does in zakah. The teachings of Allah and His Prophet obviously show how Islam seeks to spread good and peace and eliminate evil and misery. Islam seeks to create a smile on everybody’s face. Zakah is established to secure a good life for everyone, since it mainly seeks to build a strong system of solidarity and unity. These are the values of Islam. Allah the Almighty says, “Cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty,” (the Qur’ān, 5: 2). In his commentary on the Qur’ān, Imam Al-Qurtubi maintains that this verse commands all humans to

work hand in hand for the welfare of human society. Allah commands us to work together to achieve all that is good and He associates goodness with piety. It indirectly reveals that when you work for the welfare of people you are indeed working for the sake of Allah. Such is the real happiness when a person does that is good in the sight of Allah and that is good in the sight of people as well.

Allah the Almighty says, "Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but (true) righteousness is (in) one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, wayfarers, those who ask (for help), and for freeing slaves; (and who) establishes prayer and gives zakah; (those who) fulfill their promises when they promise; and (those who) are patient in poverty and hardship and during wartimes. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous," (the Qur'ān, 2: 177).

The aforementioned texts urge the wealthy to give charities and constantly extend help to the orphans, the poor and all those in need of help. Actually, many people may need help and keep waiting for hands to relieve them from the darkness of need and wrap them in love and compassion.

The texts also explain that when the wealthy give charities, they fulfill the mission of Islam and create social security and stability among the individuals of their respective communities. It is through zakah that people can live in sustainable peace and prosperity under the Islamic faith and noble teachings.

Islam commands Muslims to be compassionate to one another, sympathize with the hard conditions of one another, and help one another at times of need. Muslims stand as one building whose bricks are strongly connected to one another. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) says, "Muslims stand as one building whose bricks hold it strong," (Al-Bukhari). In another narration, the Prophet (May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) describes all believers as one body in the sense that if one part of the body is in pain, the rest parts suffer pain as well. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) says, "The believers in their love and compassion to one another are like one body in which if a limb is afflicted with a disease then the whole body will go through sleeplessness and fever," (Muslim).

Abu Sa'īd Al-Khudri said, "We were on a trip with the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him). One man came over on a camel; he kept hanging around us and he was looking around. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and

Blessings be upon him) had the sense that the man might have been in need of something. He (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said to the Companions, "If any of you has an extra riding animal, so he should give it away to somebody who does not have one. And, if any of you has extra food, so he should give it away to somebody who does not have any." (Muslim)

All these teachings urge us to show mercy and love to one another, and emphasize the virtue of giving charities as much as we can. These teachings highlight the Prophet's aim to establish a society inspired by love, coexistence, solidarity and sincerity. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) succeeded in establishing a society that featured all these qualities. This can be projected back to the early generations of Islam who sincerely followed the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) in all that which he commanded.

Solidarity is not necessarily concerned with financial assets, even though the financial element is so essential. Solidarity means sympathy that extends to every single individual in society. Solidarity is to help the needy satisfy their needs and to respect the human right to live a decent life in sufficiency and security.

The Islamic teachings stress solidarity in the broad sense of the word. Therefore, the Muslim society

is supposed to be free of selfishness and passivity and to reinforce love, fraternity and cooperation. In Islam, solidarity seeks to build up a strongly united society that is based on love, benevolence and moral order. Conversely, when an individual feels insecure and the society fails to meet their needs, they will start harboring envy, grudge and hatred in their hearts against others. The Islamic system of solidarity aims to provide every single person with a decent life without the least violation of others' rights. Contemplating these facts unveils the role of zakah as an essential element for the achievement of human security, stability and unity.

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TOWARDS BETTER FAMILY RELATIONS

Jumada AL-Akhirah 23, 1437 AH/April 1, 2016
CE

Sermon Plan

1. The Importance of Family in Islam
2. The Islamic Way to Family Stability
 - A. Good Choice of One's Spouse
 - B. Care for Rights and Duties
 - C. Love and Mercy
 - D. Kind Treatment
 - E. Fairness to Children
3. The Impact of Family Stability on the Society

Sermon Text

Islam paid due care for the family; it is the nuclear unit of society. When the family is good, the whole society is good and vice versa. Islam sets specific standards and criteria for family organization, safety and stability to maintain

humankind and society. Islam even cares for the earlier decisions that help the creation of families. As such, Islam encourages Muslims to build families on mutual love and mercy with a view to protecting the family from destruction and fall. It shall be legally formed through marriage to maintain human dignity and sound nature. Indeed, marriage is a natural phenomenon in the universe; Allah said, “And of all things, We have created two mates—male and female; perhaps you will remember” (the Qur’ān, 51: 49). Allah, the Almighty, also says, “Exalted is He who created all pairs – from what the earth grows and from themselves and from that which they do not know” (the Qur’ān, 36: 36).

Marriage is a universal norm and a marvelous sign of Allah's greatness: “It is of His signs that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought” (the Qur’ān, 30: 21). Therefore, family formation and stability form the Islamic way to build civilization and promote the social and national welfare. Family formation promotes chastity and virtue, protects the society from profane practices and vices, and brings families together through the ties of family relations among other noble wisdoms and purposes.

Allah, the Almighty, says, “And marry the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. If they should be poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty, and Allah is All-Encompassing and Knowing. (32) But let them who find no means for marriage abstain from sexual relations until Allah enriches them from His bounty. And those who seek a contract for emancipation from among whom your right hands possess—then make a contract with them if you know there is within them goodness and give them from the wealth of Allah which He has given you. And do not compel your slave girls to prostitution, if they desire chastity, to seek (thereby) the temporary interests of worldly life. And if someone should compel them, then indeed, Allah is (to them), after their compulsion, Forgiving and Merciful” (the Qur’ān, 24: 32-33). Likewise, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) encouraged the youths to marry and said, “O young men, those among you who can support a wife should marry. Indeed, marriage restrains eyes (from casting evil glances) and preserves one from immorality; but he who cannot afford It should observe fast for it is a means of controlling the sexual desire” (al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Islam discourages all ideas and practices that go against the cultivation and settlement of the

universe including celibacy and castration. Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas said, "The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) disapproved of 'Uthman Ibn Maz'un's desire to remain celibate; if he had given him permission, we would have gotten ourselves castrated" (al-Bukhari).

Narrated Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that a group of three men came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) asking about his worship. When they were informed of that, they considered their worship insufficient and said, "Where are we from the Prophet; his past and future sins have been forgiven." One of them said, "I will pray throughout the night forever." The other said, "I will fast throughout the year and will not break my fast." The third said, "I will keep away from women and will not marry forever." When Allah's Messenger came, he said, "Are you the same people who said so-and-so? By Allah, I am the most pious and afraid of Allah than you all; yet I fast and break my fast, I do sleep and marry women. Then, he who does not follow my way in religion does not belong to me" (al-Bukhari).

Family stability is a legally as well as worldly required aim. As such, Islam puts the true foundations and principles for the family to maintain marital affection and love. These principles include the following:

- The right choice of one's partner; the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) encourages men to choose the right wives, for they are the educators of generations and the keepers of wealth and honor. Indeed, the good wife is the best of world's pleasures as narrated by 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr from the Prophet: "This world is but a quick passing pleasure and the best of its pleasures is the good wife." Good choice of one's partner leads to serenity, stability, constant love and mutual mercy. Only then, marriage personifies the best grace and blessing.
- This choice must be based on religion and good ethics. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet said, "A woman is chosen as a wife for four reasons: wealth, family, beauty and religion; so win the religious woman; it is enough riches to you" (al-Bukhari). The narration of Ahmad adds, "Win the woman noted for her religion and ethics." A wife has a great role in paying due care for the family; a good wife is the source for the stability of the family and community but a corrupt wife lead to destruction. The poet rightly said,
- *A mother is a school, when rightly prepared—a complete illustrious nation is prepared*

- The Prophet also advises women to choose their husbands on the basis on religion and ethics. Abu Hatim al-Muzani (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet said, "When someone, whose religion and ethics are satisfactory, proposes (to marry any of your women), then marry her to him; otherwise, a grave chaos and corruption will take place. They said, "O Messenger of Allah, what if there is something with him? He replied, "When someone, whose religion and ethics are satisfactory, proposes (to marry any of your women), then marry her to him," he repeated it three times" (al-Tirmidhi). In short, religion and good ethics are the basic characteristics of both men and women for the welfare and progress of families.
- Family members must respect rights and duties of one another. Each one shall do his/her duties before asking for one's rights. Love, mercy and serenity can thus come true. Some of these rights are physical and others are moral and educational. They include the constructive participation in responsibilities and cooperation of all members to meet the needs of the family. 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) heard the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) saying: "Everyone is a guardian and is responsible for

what is in his custody; the ruler is a guardian of his people and is responsible for them; a husband is a guardian of his family and is responsible for them. Likewise, a woman is a guardian of her husband's house and is responsible for it and a servant is a guardian of his master's property and is responsible for it. Al-Zuhri said, "I think that 'Abdullah added that the Prophet said, "The man is a custodian of the wealth of his father and he would be responsible for what is in his custody. Yet, everyone is a guardian and is responsible for what is in his custody" (al-Bukhari). The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also said, "It is sufficient sin for a man that he neglects him whom he maintains" (Ahmad from 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr).

- One of the Companions once asked the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him): O Messenger of Allah, what is the right of a wife over a husband? He replied, "You should give her food when you eat, clothe her when you clothe yourself, do not strike her on the face, do not revile her or separate yourself from her except in the house" (Abu Dawud).
- Asmaa Bint Yazid al-Anṣāriyyah (may Allah be pleased with her) once asked the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) saying, "We, women, are limited and

constrained, though we are the pillars of your houses and with us you fulfill your desires and lusts, and we carry your children. Indeed, you men have been favored over us by congregational Friday prayers and all other congregational prayers, visits of the sick, funeral prayers, performing hajj successively and better than all indeed is the *jihad* in the way of Allah. When anyone of you goes out for hajj, *‘umrah* or *jihad*, we protect your wealth, spin you garments and raise your children. Shall we not share with you the same recompense and reward? The Prophet turned to his Companions and said, “Have you ever heard a better speech of a woman said, which is more beautiful than this woman’s questioning regarding the affairs of her religion?” They said, “O Messenger of Allah, we never thought that a woman should be guided to something like this.” The Prophet turned to her and said, “You can go now and tell women behind you that a woman’s good treatment with her husband, seeking his pleasure and following him is equal in reward to all that. She left while proclaiming *tahleel* (*La Ilaha Illa Allah* i.e. there is no god but Allah) and *Takbīr* (Allah Akbar i.e. Allah is the Great), in expression of her happiness. (Shu‘ab al-Imān).

- Mutual mercy is also essential for a happy and successful family. Allah, the Almighty, says, “It is of His signs that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought” (the Qur’ān, 30: 21). The dominance of mercy in the community is conditional upon the promotion of mercy in the family. The Prophet set the optimal example in good treatment with his wives, children, grandchildren and servants. He was the best to his family. When a family is deprived of mercy, it leads life to destruction. All members of the family must work seriously to achieve mercy.
- Kind treatment is another principle for family welfare and stability (the Qur’ān, 4: 19); both spouses shall be kind to one another in warm intimacy and cooperation. Portraying this intimate relationship, Allah says, “They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them” (the Qur’ān, 2: 187). He also says, “It is of His signs that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy” (the Qur’ān, 30: 21).
- Nice word, kind behavior, tolerance, cooperation, respect, counseling, preservation

of secrets and avoiding ways to disputes and difference are all essential for good treatment. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) and his Companions set the best example of good treatment as narrated by al-Aswad that he asked 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her): What did the Prophet use to do at home? She replied that he used to keep himself busy serving his family until it was time for prayers when he would get up for prayer (al-Bukhari).

- Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "I like to beautify myself for my wife just like I love that she beautifies herself for me because Allah says, "And due to them is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable" (the Qur'ān, 2: 228). However, I do not like to take all my rights due on her, because Allah says, "But the men have a degree over them" (the Qur'ān, 2: 228) (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaf*).
- It is a sign of kindness not to burden one's marital partner with your problems. Kindness is inclusive of all meanings of good marital life. Islam is keen to build the marital bond on love, mutual understanding and harmony as the foremost step to reform the society.
- Mutual consultation is also necessary between the spouses for greater friendship and love

even in usual matters such as the weaning of their child. Allah, the Almighty, says, "And if they both desire weaning through mutual consent and consultation, there is no blame upon either of them" (the Qur'ān, 2: 233). Consultation between spouses as well as other members of the family personifies the right approach of our Islamic religion. Commanding consultation is generally declared to all, as Allah says, "And those who have responded to their lord and established prayer and whose affair is determined by mutual *consultation*, and from what We have provided them, they spend" (the Qur'ān, 42: 38). It is also the tradition of the Prophet as he used to consult his wives. For example, on the Day of al-Hudaybiyyah, he consulted his wife Um Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her).

- After concluding the peace treaty, the Prophet said to his companions, "Get up and slaughter your sacrifices and get your head shaved. In response, the narrator said: By Allah no one got up. The Prophet repeated his order three times. When no one got up, he left them to Um Salamah and told her of people's negative response. Um Salamah said, "O Prophet of Allah, do you want your order to be carried out? Go out and do not say a word to anybody till you have slaughtered your sacrifice and call

your barber to shave your head." The Prophet did not talk to anyone of them till he did that. Seeing that, the companions got up, slaughtered their sacrifices and started shaving the heads of one another. There was so much rush that there was a danger of killing each other (al-Bukhari). Al-Hasan al-Basri (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet was in no need to consult Um Salamah but he wanted people to follow his example and thus men find no qualm in consulting women.

- Providing for one's family is also essential for stable family life; all members are entitled to receive enough provision. It is a right that Islam imposes upon the man, as Allah, the Almighty, says, "Men are in charge of women by (right of) what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend (for maintenance) from their wealth" (the Qur'ān, 4: 34). Allah, the Almighty, also says, "Upon the father is their (i.e., the mothers') provision and their clothing according to what is acceptable. No person is charged with more than his capacity. No mother should be harmed because of her child or father because of his child. And upon the father's heir is a duty equal to that of the father" (the Qur'ān, 2: 233). Allah, the Almighty, also says, "Let a man of wealth spend from his wealth, and he whose provision

is restricted – let him spend from what Allah has given him. Allah does not charge a soul except (according to) what He has given it” (the Qur’ān, 65: 7).

- Fairness to all family members and educating the children the rites of religion are also indispensable. The Prophet even forewarned against unfair treatment with one's children. Al-Nu‘mān Ibn Basheer (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “My father donated to me some of his property. My mother ‘Amrah Bint Rawahah said: I shall not be pleased until you make Allah's Messenger a witness to that. My father went to the Prophet in order to make him the witness of the donation he gave to me. The Prophet said, “Have you done the same with all of your children?” He said: “No. Thereupon the Prophet said: Fear Allah, and be just to your children. My father returned and got back the gift” (Muslim).
- For Islam, family is deeply respected and honored. It is a sacred bond that aims at achieving several high purposes. Islam is keen to keep it strong and coherent to achieve these purposes and overcome challenges and problems. Islam introduces many morals to preserve the structure of the family strong, keep the society stable and protect it from extremism, intransigence and aggression. As

such, Islam cares much for family formation and stability to help the building of good social relations and achieve progress and welfare.

- When the family is stable, all members feel psychologically, physically, socially and economically safe, and thus the whole society is safe. For Islam, family stability is an effective way to bring about societal security and escape chaos and corruption. Family is the key builder of societal security and next to it come the school and the community.
- Family is the first school in which a child knows the right from the wrong, the good from the evil, and learns responsibility and freedom of opinion. It forms the main features and identity of a child to become a good citizen. Security is not imposed by powers; it is maintained by the conscience of the members in the society. Actually, family plays the key role in the formation of conscience in all members.

(10)
**CHILDREN'S RIGHTS TO GOOD
EDUCATION, HONORABLE LIFE AND
HOPEFUL FUTURE**



Jumada Al-Ula 10, 1437 AH / February 19,
2016 CE □

Sermon Plan

1. Children, a Divine Grace Worthy of Thanksgiving
2. Islamic Care of Children
3. Principles for Good Upbringing:
 - A. Choice of Good Names
 - B. Natural Breastfeeding
 - C. Kindness
 - D. Fair and Equal Treatment between Children
4. Guaranty of Honorable Life for Children
5. Importance of Hope in our Life

Sermon Text

The grace of children is a great divine grace comes next only to the grace of having faith in Allah. It is with this grace that human future generations continue. Children are the joys of eyes and a grand divine grace that Allah gives whom He wishes of His slaves. Allah, the Almighty, says, "To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; He creates what he wills and gives to whom He wills female (children) and

whom He wills males. Or He makes them both males and females, and He renders whom He wills barren. Indeed, He is Knowing and Competent” (the Qur’ān, 42: 49-50).

Children fill life with happiness turning the darkness of houses into light; they are the lamps of houses, the joys of souls and the beauties of life. Allah, the Almighty, says, “Wealth and children are but adornment of the worldly life. But the lasting good deeds are better to your Lord for reward and better for one's hope” (the Qur’ān, 18: 46).

The grace of children is worthy of great thanksgiving to Allah: Prophet Ibrāhīm, (Peace be upon him) thanked Allah, the Almighty, after giving him the grace of children saying: “Praise to Allah, who has granted to me in old age Ishmael and Isaac. Indeed, my Lord is the Hearer of supplication. (39) My Lord, make me an establisher of prayer, and (many) from my descendants. Our Lord, and accept my supplication” (the Qur’ān, 14: 39-40). Actually, the more you thank the greater graces you receive; Allah, the Almighty, says, “Your Lord have solemnly proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you (in favor); but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe” (the Qur’ān, 14: 7). It is highly important to give due care for this grace, so the new generation becomes a godly-

oriented generation well acquainted with the rights of Allah as well as the rights of parents, nation and society.

Islam gives due care for child-raising and education with the aim of helping both children and parents achieve happiness and success in this world and in the hereafter. Indeed, the Islamic care for children begins very early even before their arrival to life. For example, Islam makes it compulsory upon a person desirous of marriage to choose a good partner. It is in the houses of faith that one gets blessed with happiness, prosperity and success. In his tradition, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) indicates this meaning saying: "Win the one who is religious, may you win the bliss" (Muslim in his authentic collection). The Islamic care for children is prior to the rise of the international child organizations. For Islam, this phase is very serious and impressive in human life.

Childhood is a very crucial phase of human life through which man moves towards the age of majority. Child care aims to introduce children as a positive addition and active element in the society. Many laws are in force for the benefits of children and family and in turn the whole society gets benefits.

The Islamic care for children began very early during the fetal stage of development. Several

laws organize this starting serious period with the aim of guaranteeing the fetus' right to life, dignity, due maintenance and inclusive care. While in the womb, a child is guaranteed the right to life and, as such, abortion is declared a crime.

The mother is deservedly entitled to receive due care during pregnancy insomuch that she is allowed to break the fasting during Ramadan when she fears any expected harm, so the fetus has a full natural growth. Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "Allah has remitted half the prayer to a traveler (s/he may pray only two units instead of the four-unit prayers)) and fasting (during Ramadan and must make up for the days missed), the woman who is suckling an infant and the woman who is pregnant (also have the same concessions)" (al-Nasā'i).

Aspects of Islamic care for children are many; the parents shall choose him a good name. Unlike the bad names, a good name brings about comfort and serenity in hearts. Abu al-Dardā' (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "On the Day of Resurrection, you will be called by your names and by your fathers' names, so give yourselves good names" (Abu Dawud).

After giving birth, the parents shall choose a nice name to their child. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "It is necessary for a boy to have a sacrificial animal sacrificed for him on the seventh day; he should also be given a name and has his head shaved" (al-Tirmidhi). The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) encouraged Muslims to choose the best of names and the most beloved names to Allah. Nafi' narrated from Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him and with his father) that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "The most beloved of names to Allah are 'Abdullah and 'Abd al-Raḥmān" (Abu Dawud in his Sunan).

According to the narration of Imam Muslim: "The most beloved of your names to Allah are 'Abdullah and 'Abd al-Raḥmān." The Prophet also prohibited bad names, lest their ugly impression causes children any psychological injury or pains. A man once came to 'Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him) complaining of his son's disobedience. 'Umar summoned the boy and rebuked him for disobeying his father and neglecting his rights. The boy replied: "O Commander of the Believers, does a child have no rights over his father?" "Certainly," replied 'Umar. "What are they, O Commander of the Believers?" He should choose

him a good mother and a good name and teach him the Book (the Qur'ān), 'Umar said." O Commander of the Believers, my father did nothing of this. My mother was a black bondwoman owned by a Magian (fire worshipper). He gave me the name of Ju'l (meaning dung beetle or scarab) and did not teach me a single letter of the Qur'ān. Turning to the father, 'Umar said: "You have come to me complaining about your son's disobedience but you failed to pay him his due rights before he disobeyed you; you had wronged him before he wronged you" (Tarbiyat al-Awlād fi al-Islam).

Sufyan al-Thawri said, "It is the right of a child over his parents to choose him/her a good name, provide him/her a good education and help him/her marry when they are adult." Good names help children escape any ridiculous and slight signs and inspire them with good feelings when mentioned. The name is the title of a personality.

Islam also imposes a certain period of breastfeeding; Allah, the Almighty, says, "Mothers may breastfeed their children two complete years for whoever wishes to complete the nursing (period). Upon the father is their (i.e., the mothers') provision and their clothing according to what is acceptable. No person is charged with more than his capacity. No mother should be harmed through her child, and no father through

his child. And upon the father's heir is a duty like that of the father. And if they both desire weaning through mutual consent from both of them and consultation, there is no blame upon either of them. And if you wish to have your children nursed by a substitute, there is no blame upon you as long as you give payment according to what is acceptable. And fear Allah and know that Allah is Watchful of what you do” (the Qur’ān, 2: 233).

According to this noble Qur’ānic verse, the period of breastfeeding is two complete years as a child in this period needs a certain kind of food to help his/her body formation. Mother's gifted milk is the best meal a child may have in this stage as divinely planned by the Creator, who said, “Does He, who created not know, while He is the Subtle, the Acquainted?” (the Qur’ān, 67: 14).

However, if the mother has any medical barrier to lactation, or if the child stopped sucking, or if the mother dies— it is obligatory upon the father to hire them a nurse and guarantee their safety. Recent medical and psychological studies prove that the two-year period of breastfeeding under the Sharī‘ah is essential for the child healthy physical and psychological growth. It strengthens the child sense of warm feeling, kindness and security as closely related to the mother. As such, a child grows healthily and lives honorably.

It is also substantially important for child-raising to give the children good treatment in kindness without any cruelty or harshness. It is a truism that kindness begets nothing but good outcome. ‘Aishah—the Mother of the Believers, may Allah be pleased with her, narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “O ‘Aishah, surely Allah is kind and He loves kindness and grants for kindness that which He does not grants for cruelty and even does not grants for anything else (but kindness)” (Muslim in his authentic collection). Harsh upbringing and education lead most children to dislike educators and disobey them.

Contrary to this harshness, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) was reported to have carried his grandsons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn on his shoulders. His principal way of education was kindness and gentleness. Ibn Buraydah narrated from his father Buraydah who said, “While the Messenger of Allah was on the pulpit, Al-Ḥasan and Al-Ḥusayn came, wearing red shirts, walking and stumbling. He came down and picked them up, then said: 'Allah has spoken the truth: ‘Your wealth and your children are only a trial.’ I saw these two walking and stumbling in their shirts, and I could not be patient until I went down and picked them up” (al-Nasā’i in his sunan).

A good educator, a parent or a teacher, should consider this great principle of good and kind treatment. Mistakes shall be wisely and mercifully addressed. Cruelty begets fears and cowardice and may lead to psychological disorder, repugnance and hesitation. In one of his advice, al-Aḥnaf Ibn Qays said, “Do not be a lock of your children. Or else, they would hope for your death, dislike approaching you and feel boring with your life.” Kind treatment is different from discreet, and wisely used, punishment when necessary.

Justice and Fair Treatment: Justice and fair treatment are essential for good child-raising. For Islam, justice is an original Islamic principle that must be well considered. Allah, the Almighty, says, “O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do” (the Qur’ān, 5: 8). This principle must be applied, especially in the child-parent relationships.

The Prophet directed parents to take care of and abide by this principle. It is even coupled with God-fearing as narrated from ‘Amer that he heard al-Nu‘mān Ibn Bashīr (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) on the pulpit saying, “My father gave me a gift but ‘Amrah Bint Rawḥah

(my mother) said that she would not agree to that unless he made Allah's Messenger (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) as a witness to it. My father went to Allah's Messenger and said, 'I have given a gift to my son from 'Amrah Bint Rawahāh, but she ordered me to make you as a witness to it, O Allah's Messenger (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him). Allah's Messenger asked, 'Have you given (the like of it) to everyone of your children?' He replied in the negative. Allah's Messenger said, 'Be afraid of Allah and be just to your children.' My father then returned and took back his gift" (al-Bukhari in his authentic collection).

Likewise, 'Abd al-Razzaqq narrated in his al-Muṣannaf that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) received an invitation from a man from al-Ansār. In the host's house, his son first came and the father kissed and hugged him placing him to his side. Later, a daughter of that man came and her father only placed her to his side. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "If you proved just in treatment, it would be much better for you; be gently just with your children even in kisses." Just treatment between children has some great benefits. It is a main cause for fair gratitude. It also introduces a good generation to the society and

helps fraternity to dominate the relationship of brothers and sisters in essence and form.

Contrary to justice, unfair treatment is the worse source of ingratitude, family disintegration and hate. It is the seed of malicious grudge sowed in the children. Psychological research proves that most of mental and social disorders that a child suffers originate from feelings of injustice and unfair treatment compared to his brothers and sisters. Examples of this fact is found in the story of Yūsuf (Joseph, peace be upon him) and his brothers when they misunderstood the treatment of Ya‘qūb (Jacob, peace be upon him) with Yūsuf and saw it a sort of unfair preference. Allah, the Almighty, says, “Certainly were there in Joseph and his brothers signs for those who ask, (such as) (7) When they said, "Joseph and his brother are more beloved to our father than we, while we are a clan. Indeed, our father is in clear error. (8) Kill Joseph or cast him out to (another) land; the countenance (i.e., attention) of your father will (then) be only for you, and you will be after that a righteous people” (the Qur’ān, 12: 7-9).

Islamic Education: Islam also makes it necessary to educate the children according to the Islamic teachings, as the Qur’ān commands fathers and mothers to work on relieving themselves and their families from destruction. Allah, the Almighty, says, “O you who believe, protect yourselves and

your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are (appointed) angels, harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded” (the Qur’ān, 67: 6).

Child education and training according to the Islamic principle are religious duties and a right of child over his/her parents. ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah's be pleased with him and his father) narrated that they said, “O Messenger of Allah, we knew the rights of parents on their children but what are the rights of children on their parents? In reply, he said: “They should choose him/her a good name and teach him good morality” (al-Bayhaqi in Shu‘ab al-Imān).

Al-Tirmidhi narrated in his sunan that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “There is no gift that a father gives his son more virtuous than good manners.” It is highly important to teach children good education, direction and moral conduct. Education and training should be kindly given without upsetting the children, especially in front of foreigners.

The Prophet's gentle example of education is indicative of this method. ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah's be pleased with him and his father) said, “One day, I was riding behind the Prophet when he said, "O boy! I will teach you in some matters. Be watchful of Allah (Commandments of

Allah), He will preserve you. Safeguard His Rights and He will be ever with you. If you beg, beg of Him Alone; and if you need assistance, beseech Allah Alone for help. And remember that if all the people gather to benefit you, they will not be able to benefit you except that which Allah had foreordained (for you); and if all of them gather to do harm to you, they will not be able to afflict you with anything other than that which Allah had predestined against you. The pens had been lifted and the ink had dried up” (al-Tirmidhi).

The noble Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) used to educate, guide and instruct children gently. ‘Umar Ibn Salamah (may Allah's be pleased with him and his father) related the Prophet's good example saying, “I was a boy under the care of Allah's Messenger and my hand used to go around the dish while I was eating. So Allah's Messenger said to me, 'O boy, mention the Name of Allah and eat with your right hand, and eat of the dish what is nearer to you” (Muslim in his authentic collection).

Imam al-Ghazali said, “A child is divinely entrusted to his/her parents; his/her pure heart is a precious pearl when getting accustomed to good, s/he learns it and earns happiness and success in this life and in the hereafter.” A good educator should be an ideal for the children in assuming the loftiest of noble ethics before directing them.

Children are the best imitators of their fathers.
What a wonderful is the following line saying:

*A child grows up following the habits s/he
earns from his/her father*

It is considerable to mention that the process of child education is not the sole duty of parents but the duty of teachers and schools as well. For children, the teacher is symbolic of the ethical vales of the society and, as such, they should educate the children in the values and ethics of society. Child education is the responsibility of the whole society; all members shall care for their good behavior and discipline. Child education is a very heavy duty that all should undertake. This sort of collective social duties is indicated in the Prophet's statement: "Everyone of you is a guardian and is responsible for what is in his/her custody. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects and is responsible for them; a husband is a guardian of his family and is responsible for it; a lady is a guardian of her husband's house and is responsible for it, and a servant is a guardian of his master's property and is responsible for it." The narrator added, I think that the Prophet also said, "A man is a guardian of his father's property and is responsible for it, so all of you are guardians and responsible for things under your care" (al-Bukhari in his authentic collection).

For Islam, the parents are responsible for maintaining their children. Qatadah narrated from al-Ḥasan that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Surely, Allah would hold accountable every guardian for what was under his/her custody, whether s/he maintained or wasted, until a man would be questioned about his own household” (Ibn Ḥibban).

In Islam, the child is a perfect human being, who is entitled to physical, psychological, financial, educational and pedagogical rights. Furthermore, Islam imposes the respect and protection of these rights to guarantee children an honorable life within a civilized human community. Only then, the spirit of friendship, kindness, love and mercy predominate.

Finally, it is highly important to have hopes in better future for us and for our children. Man cannot live and prosper without hopes. Indeed, a hopeless life is not a life, so hopelessness shall have no place in life. In the view of the people of knowledge, despair, discouragement and disappointment are all grave sins.

‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah's be pleased with him and his father) narrated that a man once said: O Allah's Messenger, what are the grave sins? In reply, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Associating others with Allah in divinity or worship, being despaired

of the relief of Allah or hopeless of the Mercy of Allah. I guarantee Paradise for anyone that Allah relieves from that.”

(11)

GOOD WORDS AND ETHICS OF DIALOGUE

Şafar 1st, 1437 AH/November 13th, 2015CE

Allah, the Almighty, has created human beings in the best form. Revealing His miraculous powers, He endowed human tongues with several fine functions. Allah, the Almighty, says, “And among his wonders is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colors: for in this, behold, there are messages indeed for all who are possessed of (innate) knowledge” (the Qur’ān, 30: 22). The human difference in languages is a very normal human characteristic.

Indeed, humans have variant colors, speak different languages, go through diverse experiences, reach various perceptions, master different areas of knowledge and have a variety of mindsets. These differences could become a means to enrichment only if humans utilize them

in creating balanced discourses whereby they can address issues of disagreement in an ethical language and consequently reach a far grander view of the universe.

The Good Word is an ethical way to guide humans to goodness, happiness and right. It constitutes a successful means of communication. Giving the parable of good words, the Glorious Qur’ān likens it to a fruitful tree. Allah, the Almighty, says, “Have you not seen how Allah puts forth the example that a good word is like a good tree, whose root is firm and whose branches are in the sky. It bears its fruit every so often with the permission of its Lord; and God puts forth the examples for the people, so that they might bethink themselves (of the truth)” (the Qur’ān, 14: 24 – 25). Allah also says, “Unto Him ascend all good words, and the righteous deed does He exalt” (the Qur’ān, 35: 10).

The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) loved and promoted good communication. Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “There is no transitive disease, no divination, but good omen pleases me. It was said: What is good omen? He said: Good Words” (Reported by al-Bukhari).

In the same context, al-Nu‘man Ibn Sa‘d (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated from ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: “There are rooms in Paradise with transparent walls that one can see through them.” A Bedouin was there and asked the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him): “Who are the ones to win them?” The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: “Allah has prepared those rooms for those who speak well to others, give food in charity, fast regularly, and pray at night when people sleep” (reported by al-Tirmidhi).

Good words have many benefits; it is a means of attaining piety, righteousness, and forgiveness. They settle disputes, eliminate conflicts, and promote love and peace. They bring about all that is good both in this life and in the Afterlife. Allah commands us to say good words to all people regardless of race, color, and religion. Allah, the Almighty, says: “And speak to people good (words)” (the Qur’ān, 2: 83). Another Qur’ānic verse commands the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him): “Tell My servants that they should speak in the most kindly manner (unto those who do not share their beliefs):” (the Qur’ān, 17: 53)

A person is hidden under their tongue and they are seen who they are only when they talk. Speaking constitutes a great deal of one's everyday life. A word can take a person to the highest rank of heaven and can bring a person down to the lowest abyss of hell.

Abu Hurayrah (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: "A person may say a word that pleases Allah so much that He will raise high this person's status in the hereafter, even though the person might have thought the word he said was insignificant. Similarly, a person may say a word that displeases Allah so much that He will send this person to the hellfire, even though the person again might have thought the word he said was no issue" (Al-Bukhari).

People of different views should carry on dialogues provided they adhere to its necessary ethics. Such dialogues are healthy and necessary for better communication and understanding. No doubt, good words strengthen human relationships. A nicely dialogue guided by ethics is a means to resume the way of truth, refine souls and develop human character.

Allah teaches us through the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) the rules of ethical dialogue that humans need to abide by in order for them to reach real solutions and establish

the truth. A thorough look into the Qur'ān and the traditions of the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) reveals the positive influence of ethical dialogues on people's life. The Qur'ān and the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) set ethical rules for dialogue and debate; dialoguers need to argue in the most ethical manner as they work out their persuasion skills. The ultimate purpose of dialogue is to establish the truth and call others to it, taking into consideration the rules that Islam has established for that. Time and again, good words are the key. Allah, the Almighty, says: "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good words, and dialogue with them in a way that is best" (the Qur'ān, 16: 125).

We have to abide by the ethical dialogue and only utter the good words even when debating with the people of the scriptures, who hold religious principles and beliefs entirely different from ours. Good words, gentle talks, kindness and lenient conduct are the means to carry on ethical dialogues. Kindness is an absolute beauty of everything: 'Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: "Kindness is not to be found in anything but that it adds to its beauty and it is not withdrawn from anything but it makes it defective" (Muslim).

Allah, the Almighty, says: "And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice, and say to them, 'We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are Muslims (in submission) to Allah'" (the Qur'ān, 29: 46).

The Qur'ān is rich with many examples of ethical dialogues. One example in case is Allah's conversation with the angels over Adam's creation. The Qur'ān relates part of this conversation as follows: "Recall that your Lord said to the angels, "I am placing a representative on Earth." They said, "Will You place therein one who will spread evil therein and shed blood, while we sing Your praises, glorify You, and uphold Your absolute authority?" He said, "I know what you do not know. And He imparted unto Adam the names of all things; then He brought them within the ken of the angels and said: "Declare unto Me the names of these (things), if what you say is true. They replied: "Limitless are You in Your Glory! No knowledge have we save that which You has imparted unto us. Verily, You alone are all-knowing, truly wise. Said He: "O Adam, convey unto them the names of these (things)." And as soon as (Adam) had conveyed unto them their names, (God) said: "Did I not say unto you, 'Verily, I alone know the hidden reality of the

heavens and the earth, and know all that you bring into the open and all that you would conceal?" (the Qur'ān, 30 – 33).

Another example from the Qur'ān is a conversation between Allah and Prophet 'Isa (Jesus, may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him). The Qur'ān relates the story as follows:

"Allah says, 'O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah?' Jesus says, 'Exalted are You Allah! It was not for me to claim that is not my right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is the Knower of the unknowable. I only commanded them what You commanded me – that is 'worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.' And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them; but when You took me up, You were the Observer over them, and You are, over all things, a Witness. If You should punish them – indeed they are Your servants (and You are free to do whatever you want); and if You forgive them – indeed it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.' Allah says to Jesus, 'This is the Day when the truthful will benefit from their honesty. They will attain gardens (in Paradise) beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with

Him. That is the great attainment” (the Qur’ān, 5: 116 – 119).

In the same regard, the Qur’ān relates the prophet’s dialogues with their peoples, where the prophets utilized both intellectual and textual arguments in order to reveal the truth and guide people to it. For example, Prophet Muhammad conducted an ethical dialogue with the idolaters of Mecca who stubbornly insisted that they were on the right path even though they were obviously wrong.

The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) in kind fair style told them: “Tell me who provides for you from the heaven and the earth?” Then, Allah commands the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) to answer: “It is Allah who provides for you. And yet, either you or we shall be on the right path or on the wrong one” (the Qur’ān, 34: 24).

Elaborate contemplation on this conversation reveals that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) was fair enough in the way he spoke with them; he did not tell them upfront: “We are right and you are wrong,” even though that was the case. This style of speaking is so indicative of the Prophet’s respect to his opponents and their choices, even though his opponents were obviously wrong. The dialogue further goes on to tell: “You will not be asked

about what we did wrong, and we will not be asked about what you did” (the Qur’ān, 34: 25). After the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) stated that one party (either he or his opponents) should be right and the other should be wrong, he continued to describe his view as wrong from the perspective of his opponents while he withholds from judging their view to be either right or wrong. This prophetic style aims to soften the hearts of opponents and show sensitivity to their beliefs. At the end of the conversation, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) puts the whole issue in Allah’s Hands as he says to his opponents: “Our Lord will bring us together; then He will judge between us in truth. And He is the Knowing Judge” (the Qur’ān, 34: 26).

The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) sets another example for ethical dialogue as he consults his wife Umm Salamah (May Allah be pleased with her) on the Day of Al-Hudaybiyah. Their conversation aimed to reach a solution for a political crisis that was going to undermine the Muslim front on the event of Al-Hudaybiyah treaty.¹

1 The Prophet and his companions aimed to Mecca for ‘Umrah but the idolaters denied them entry to Mecca.

After signing the treaty, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) commanded the companions to "Get up and slaughter your sacrifices and get your head shaved." By Allah, none of them got up. The Prophet repeated his order three times but no one got up. He left them and went to Um Salamah and told her of people's response. She then said: "Do you want your order to be carried out? Go out and do not say a word to anybody till you have slaughtered your sacrifice and call your barber to shave your head." "The Prophet went out and did not talk to anyone of them till he did that, i.e. slaughtered the sacrifice and called his barber who shaved his head. Seeing that, they hurried in crowds to do as the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) did" (Reported by al-Bukhari).

We learn from this how important to dialogue with others and listen to their views even if we do not agree with them. Be a good listener and you will be able to contain your opponents and understand their arguments. Before you dialogue with an opponent, let him feel your sympathy with him; you share them worries and only wish them good. The following rules and morals are highly necessary for constructive dialogue:

- **Sincerity:** Before you carry on a dialogue with someone, you must be free from intentions of showing-off or searching after repute. Your

ultimate goal is to reach the truth, not to win others. Do not be self-centered. Do not seek praise or recognition from others. Al-Shafi'i said: "I never debated with anyone but that I wished Allah guides him to declare the truth."

- **Objectivity and Neutrality:** The true believer persistently seeks the truth; whenever they find it, they get it. You will never reach the truth unless you are neutral and objective.
- **Fairness:** Perfect fairness is to accept the truth regardless of the one who told it. The Qur'ān fairly declares how different are the people of the scriptures in their behaviors: "They are not all alike: among the followers of earlier revelation there are upright people, who recite Allah's messages throughout the night and prostrate themselves (before Him)" (the Qur'ān, 3: 113). Another Qur'ānic example of fair judgment is revealed in the statement of the ant to her ant colony: "When they approached the valley of the ants, one ant said: "O ants, go into your homes, lest you get crushed by Solomon and his soldiers, without being aware (of you)" (the Qur'ān, 28: 18). She fairly judged that Solomon and his soldiers may unknowingly crush the ants without being aware of that.
- **Quietness and Respect of Arguments:** Loud voice stands for weak situations. For example,

when ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib (May Allah be pleased with him) sent ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) to negotiate with the Kharijites—a deviant Muslim sect who, following their delusive views, ignorantly violated people's lives and honors. ‘Abdullah approached them wearing a very beautiful garment, which they disliked and asked, “What have you come for? And what is that you are wearing?”

- Ibn ‘Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) said: “Regarding the garment, what is wrong with it? The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) used to wear nice clothes and none was better looking than he was.” Then, Ibn ‘Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) recited Allah's saying: “Say (O Muhammad), ‘Who has forbidden adornments and the good things that Allah has produced for His servants?’ Say, ‘They are for those who believe in the life of this world and in the life hereafter’” (the Qur’ān, 7: 32). The Kharijites asked Ibn ‘Abbas: “Why are you here?”
- Ibn ‘Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) said: “I was sent by the Companions of the Prophet and I do not see among you any of the Companions of the Prophet. I was also sent to you by the Prophet's Cousin, e.g. ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib. I would like to remind you that the

Qur'ān was revealed to the Companions of the Prophet and they must be more versed in its interpretation. I came here today to tell you what the companions wanted to say to you and then tell them back your responses. I am just a messenger.

- Some Kharijites said: "Do not talk to Ibn `Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him); he is from Quraysh whom the Qur'ān describes as: "they are a contentious people." The Kharijites feared Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) would overcome them. Some others said, "Why not we talk to him and see what he will say?" Ibn `Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) commented that only two or three of the Kharijites should talk to him.
- He (May Allah be pleased with him) said to them: "What is that makes you angry with `Ali?" They said, "We have three points against him."
- Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "Go ahead!" They said: "He let men judge over Allah's judgment." They refer to the incident in which `Ali accepted the arbitration during the first civil war in Islam between him and Mu'awiyah. May Allah be pleased with both! The Kharijites cited the Qur'ānic verse: "the judgment should have rested with Allah alone" (the Qur'ān, 6: 57).

Ibn ‘Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) said: “What else?” The Kharijites said, “‘Ali fought his opponents but he was reluctant to captivate their women. If he thought his opponents were still Muslims and he did not accept them as captives, then he had no right to fight them. But if he was sure his opponents were not Muslims any longer, then why would he not captivate them?”

Ibn ‘Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) said: “What else?” The Kharijites said, “When he signed the treaty based on the arbitration, he did not sign it with his title as the Muslim ruler. He just wrote his name: ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib.” Ibn ‘Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) said: “Are you finished?”

The Kharijites said: “Yes!” Ibn ‘Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) said: “You said that ‘Ali let men judge over Allah’s judgment. To this question, I respond that Allah says, “O who believe, do not kill wild animals while you are in the state of performing pilgrimage. And whoever of you does intentionally – the penalty is to offer a sacrificial animal equivalent to what they killed. The judgment of such a case is to be referred to two just men’ (the Qur’ān, 5: 95). According to this verse, Allah authorizes two just men to settle the issue of killing a wild animal while performing

pilgrimage. Now, let me ask you a question: Which is worthier of being settled: Muslim bloodshed or the killing of wild animals?"

The Kharijites said, "Of course Muslim bloodshed!" Ibn 'Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) set another example to the Kharijites—Allah says, "If you fear a quarrel between a husband and wife, appoint two arbitrators; one from the husband's family and the other from the wife's family (to reconcile between them)" (the Qur'ān, 4: 35). I appeal to you by Allah, which is more important: Arbitration in Muslim bloodshed or marital conflict?" The Kharijites said, "Of course arbitration in Muslim bloodshed!"

Ibn 'Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) went on saying, now the first question is cleared. The Kharijites affirmed saying, "Yes, but what about the second?" Ibn 'Abbas said: "As to the second question, you said that 'Ali fought his opponents but was reluctant to captivate their women, which indicates his vacillation about what he did; otherwise, he would take the women of his opponents as prisoners of war. Now, I ask you: Would it be okay for you to captivate 'Aishah—the mother of the believers that was the wife of your Prophet and treat her as a prisoner of war? If you say yes, you are out of Islam and if you

say she is not the mother of the believers any longer then you will be out of Islam as well. They felt abashed and shamed.

The Kharijites said, "Then what about the third question?" Ibn 'Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) said: "You said that 'Ali deposed himself as the ruler of the believers and if he is not the ruler of the believers, then he is the ruler of the disbelievers.

I would like to remind you of the Hdaybiyah event when the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) signed the treaty with Abu Sufyan and Suhayl Ibn 'Amr, who were then disbelievers. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) wanted to write in the treaty this is the peace agreement between Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah. However, the idolaters of Mecca refused as they said to the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him): 'If we were sure you are the messenger of Allah, we would not fight you. Rather we state your name in the document as Muhammad Ibn 'Abdullah. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) responded positively to their request and his name was written with no titles."

After such successful dialogue, two thousands of the Kharijites retracted their ideology and

only a few kept to their deviant view whom ‘Ali (May Allah be pleased with him) fought the rest of Kharijites. Now, observe the effect of quiet dialogue on these stubborn minds; only one session could drive two thousands to the right way of the Sunni Muslim Community.

- **Modesty:** It is a persuasive instrument whereby you respect others and their opinions. It makes your opponents more open to listen to you and consider your views. Needless to mention, when you respect your opponent he will definitely pay you equal or even more respect. A dialogue in which two parties modestly behave shall come up with effective conclusions. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) promises that Allah will raise the status of those who are humble: “One who displays humbleness towards another seeking the pleasure of Allah, Allah exalts him in ranks” (Muslim). Modesty is to accept the truth even if it comes from your opponents.
- **Avoid Vain Talk and Argumentation:** Every word counts. You should better avoid argumentation that yields no practical value. Such kind of argumentations usually aims to overcome one's opponents and show their failures. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) enjoins that we must

avoid vain argumentation. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) says, "The worst of people are those of argumentative personality (in the negative sense of the word)." The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also promises that Allah will grant a house in Paradise to whoever gives up on argumentation even if they are right.

- As far as Islam is concerned, stern debates form a kind of religious extremism and exaggeration which the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) declared forbidden: "The most despicable amongst people in the sight of Allah is the ruthless argumentative (person)" (Related by al-Bukhari in his Authentic collection). The Prophet also said, "I guarantee a house in the surroundings of Paradise for the one who avoids argumentations even if he were in the right, a house in the middle of Paradise for the one who avoids lying even if he were joking, and a house in the upper part of Paradise for the one who perfects his character" (Reported by Abu Dawud). Showing-off and argumentative debates are forms of the disliked in-depth questioning of religious issues. 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd reported that the Prophet said, "Ruined, were those who indulged in

hair-splitting. He (the Holy Prophet) repeated this thrice” (Reported by Muslim).

- **Referring disagreements to the Book of Allah and the Prophet's Sunnah for Judgment:** Allah, the Almighty, says: “If you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger. That is the best (way) and best in result” (the Qur’ān, 4: 59) Yet, the interpretation of religious text must meet the scholarly rules of interpretation as outlined by the early Muslim doctors of law and interpretation.
- **Be a Good Listener:** We all like to speak more and listen less. Just remember a human being is created with one tongue and two ears in order to listen more and speak less. Therefore, we need to be good listeners; we need to spend more time understanding others than being understood: “Only the people of knowledge can understand it” (the Qur’ān, 29: 43). The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) was a good listener and he would carefully listen to his opponents no matter how vain their talks were as he, for instance, did with ‘Utbah Ibn Abi Rabi’ah. After finishing his talks, the Prophet said: O Abu al-Walid, have you finished. Yes, he replied. Then, listen to me—the Prophet said. He then recited: “Ha. Meem; a revelation from

the Most Gracious, Most Merciful; a divine writ, the messages whereof have been clearly spelled out as a discourse in the Arabic tongue for people of (innate) knowledge to be a herald of glad tidings as well as a warning. And yet, (whenever this divine writ is offered to men,) most of them turn away, so that they cannot hear (its message); and so they say, (as it were:) Our hearts are veiled from whatever you call us to, (O Muhammad,) and in our ears is deafness, and between us and thee is a barrier. Do, then, behold, we shall do (as we have always done)!"... (the Qur'ān, 41: 1-5). The Prophet went on reciting while 'Utbah was quietly given to listening.

- These ethical rules could create informative and fruitful dialogues that unite rather than divide people. However, some defects may render a dialogue fruitless. These defects include the following:
- **Angry Voice:** Some might think that loud and angry voice is the best way of persuasion. However, Allah teaches us that: "The ugliest of all voices is the braying of donkeys" (the Qur'ān, 31: 19).
- **Overstatement of Others' Views:** Someone may overstate their opponent's views and may even accuse them of disbelief, profanity or heresy.

- **Telling lies about the Opponent:** Some may maliciously slander the opponents and damage their reputation.
- The ethics of dialogue are highly urgent even when we communicate with those who disagree with us just to respect and safeguard their rights as the Prophet did with all people. The ethics of dialogue and justice are necessary for teachers with their students, for parents with their children and only the good words can serve this purpose.

(12)

**HASTENING TO GOOD DEEDS AND
NATIONAL SERVICE**

**Muharram 24th, 1437 – November 6th,
2015**

Allah Almighty has created human beings, honored and favored them over all other creatures

and equipped them with significant qualities and faculties to lead a stable prosperous life. For example, Allah created in humans the intellect whereby they can think and recognize what is good and what is evil. Humans are created with senses in order to figure out their surroundings. They have emotions in order to better communicate with others. Human being is born with all these qualities in order to enjoy and lead a balanced life. Allah Almighty has privileged humans with such qualities and capabilities and has put them on this earth to populate it. With this in mind, life has become a big field for humans to compete with one another according to the rules that Allah has established.

A thorough look into our world reveals that people are of different interests and consequently have different conditions of life. Some people only search for money and, therefore, they are fully preoccupied with accumulating wealth. Others are fond of discovering and inventing new things; they hopefully maintain the world with discoveries and inventions. Others are so keen on gratifying their desires whatsoever and take so much as they can from worldly pleasures. Each one of those people uses their talents and God-given qualities in achieving what they aspire for. Some other people are gifted in physical strength and body building, and they consequently invest their physical

strength wherever it fits. This difference in interests does not apply only to individuals but it extends to communities and nations at large as well.

But what about the Muslim Person? Where should the ambitions of Muslims fit in? The Muslim is of a good character; therefore, he always seeks all that is good. Allah Almighty explains that He set a direction for every nation to follow. However, He extremely urges Muslims to hasten to do all that is good (the Qur’ān, 2: 148). In the same context, Allah explains that the return of all humans will be unto Him and then He will judge people according to how much good they have accomplished (the Qur’ān, 5: 48). Somewhere else in the Qur’ān, Allah also calls upon all of us to seek His forgiveness and work hard to attain Paradise by doing all that is good (the Qur’ān, 3: 133).

Islam is the religion of goodness and happiness. Islam aims at populating the earth with righteous individuals and communities. Islam recognizes the virtue of competition and encourages humans to utilize their talents in attaining all that is good for themselves and their communities. One goal that Muslims are commanded to achieve is to attain happiness in the life of this world and the hereafter. Allah the Almighty teaches that we should seek the hereafter through whatever we do; yet we may enjoy the life of this world provided

we do not go against the religion (the Qur'ān, 28: 77). The Muslim believes that the life of this world is just a bridge to the life hereafter.

Competition in doing good deeds is highly recommended in Islam, whereby competitors spare no efforts in serving their communities. Muslims are motivated to take part in such competition since the reward will be Paradise and eternal bliss. In this regard, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) encourages Muslims to get involved and take the lead.

Narrated Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him): "A group of poor people came to the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) and complained: "O Prophet! The wealthy people get away with all the rewards." The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: "And what is that?" |They explained: "The wealthy people pray as we pray and they fast as we fast. However, they have money to give in charity but we do not." The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said to them: "Shall I teach you a deed whereby you will attain the rank of those who excelled you in the religion, and you will excel others in the religion, and none will be like you in this regard unless they do like what you do?" They said: "Yes Prophet!" The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: "Say Glory be to Allah, Praise be to

Allah, and Allah is the Greatest thirty three times after each prayer.”

According to this narration, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) teaches the poor people to fix their inability to give charities by confessing glory and praise to Allah, which is one of the best deeds ever in Allah's sight. Looking into the following Prophetic narration we can easily notice how the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) extremely encourages Muslims to keep up with acts of worship on top of which ritual prayer sits.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: "If the people knew what the reward of calling the Adhan (the call to prayer) and for attending in the first row in congregational prayers, they would draw lots for who would do it. And if the people knew (the reward of) praying dhuhr (noon) prayer on time, they would race for it. And if the people knew the reward of attending 'Isha (evening) and Fajr (dawn) prayers on time and in congregation, they would come to them even if they had to crawl."

Actually the spirit of competition inspired the companions of the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him). Abu Bakr would always race for all that is good.

Once, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) asked the companions to give in charity. 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "At that time I had some money. I said to myself: 'Today I shall excel Abu Bakr, if I were ever to excel him one time.'" `Umar took half of his wealth to the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him). The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) asked him: "What have you left for your family `Umar?" `Umar said: "This is the half of my wealth and I left for my family the second half." Then, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) came in with all his wealth. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said to him: "What have you left for your family Abu Bakr?" He said, "I have left Allah and His Messenger for them." Thereupon, `Umar said: "It seems like I will never be able to beat Abu Bakr." Here is another example that clearly shows how the companions compete in doing good. Narrated Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd: Allah the Almighty revealed: "Who is he that will lend to Allah a goodly loan so that He may multiply it for him many times? And it is Allah that decreases or increases (your provisions), and unto Him you shall return." (the Qur'ān, 2: 245)

When this verse was revealed, Abu Al-Daḥḍaḥ was a companion of the Prophet who said to the Prophet: "O Prophet! Does Allah need a loan from us?" The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: "Yes! O Abu Al-Daḥḍaḥ!" Abu Al-Daḥḍaḥ said: "O Prophet! Stretch your hand." The Prophet stretched his hand and Abu Al-Daḥḍaḥ took the Prophet's hand and said: "O Prophet! I have given my garden as a loan to my Lord." Abu Al-Daḥḍaḥ had a garden with six hundred date trees and his wife and children were living in that garden too. Abu Al-Daḥḍaḥ went back to his wife and called her: "Umm Al-Daḥḍaḥ!" She said: "Yes!" He said: "Let us get out of the garden, because I have given it as a loan to my Lord, the Exalted and Most Honored." She said: "That must be a successful transaction Abu Al-Daḥḍaḥ!" She then collected her things, took the children, and left." The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) was so pleased with what Abu Al-Daḥḍaḥ did and said: "Abu Al-Daḥḍaḥ! You have plentiful sweet date clusters in Paradise!"

Narrated Anas (may Allah be pleased with him):

Abu Ṭalḥa was the richest man in Medina; the best property he owned was a garden called Bayruḥā' and it was located in front of the

Mosque of the Prophet. The Prophet used to visit this garden and drink from its nice water. Allah has revealed his saying: "By no means shall you attain righteousness unless you spend (in charity) of that which you love." (the Qur'ān, 3.92) Hearing this verse, Abu Ṭalḥa went to the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) and said: "O Prophet! Allah says: "By no means shall you attain righteousness, unless you spend (in charity) of that which you love." As you know Bayruḥā' garden is the most beloved of my wealth to me. So, I want to give it in charity for Allah's sake. I am looking for the reward of this from Allah. You could spend it where you see fit." The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: "That is great Abu Ṭalḥa! That should be a successful deal. However, I think you better give it away to your relatives." Abu Ṭalḥa said: "I will, Prophet!" Then, Abu Ṭalḥa distributed the garden amongst his relatives. (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Those who came after the Prophet and his companions followed in the same path as they would compete in doing all that was good. Wuhayb Ibn Al-Ward says, *"If you could excel everybody in the way to Allah, then do."*

The wise person is the one who takes the opportunity to do all that is good as long as he

is able to. You never know: now you have the opportunity to do good deeds but maybe in the future you will not. Now you are young but soon you will become old. Now you have good health, maybe in the future you will fall sick. Therefore, we need to race against time and hasten to do as much of good as we can. You never know what is going to happen in the future.

In this regard, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) says: "Hasten to do good deeds before trials and tribulations come over. When they occur, such trials and tribulations will be as confusing as darkness is. A person will be a believer in the morning and a disbeliever in the evening and another person will be a disbeliever in the morning and a believer in the evening; they will sell out the religion for a worldly gain."

There are multiple fields of goodness. The Muslim should actively enter all these fields before it becomes too late. Allah praises those who hasten to goodness; He says: "Indeed, they who are apprehensive from fear of their Lord, and they who believe in the signs of their Lord, and they who do not associate anything with their Lord, and they who give what they give while their hearts are fearful because they will be returning to their Lord, it is those who hasten to good deeds, and they outstrip (others) therein." (the Qur'ān, 23: 57 - 61)

The Muslim is required to hasten to do that is good. Allah says: "Race toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and earth." (the Qur'ān, 57: 21). The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) explains that Allah the Almighty has prepared for the righteous a Paradise which has pleasures and enjoyments that none may ever expect.

Competition in doing good deeds is characteristic of all Allah's prophets as Allah Almighty states (the Qur'ān, 21: 90). It is characteristic of the believers as well (the Qur'ān, 56: 10 – 12). The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) says: "The people of Paradise will see those who will live in levels above them as you see the stars all over the sky. The distance is big between them since they are different in their degrees of righteousness." The companions asked the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him): "Do you mean that those who are above are higher in rank and they will be the prophets of Allah who none will attain their ranks?" The Prophet said: "No! Those who are above are normal people who believed in Allah and accepted the prophets."

All the companions of the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) took part in this competition; they all, individuals and

communities, would compete in doing all that is good.

Narrated Abu Hurayrah: "One day, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) asked: "Who is fasting today?" Abu Bakr said: "I am." The Prophet again said: "Who has attended a funeral procession today?" Abu Bakr said: "I did." The Prophet again said: "Who offered food to the needy today?" Abu Bakr said: "I did." The Prophet again said: "Who visited a sick person today?" Abu Bakr said: "I did." Thereupon, the Prophet said: "Anyone who does these four deeds combined will certainly enter Paradise."

Ubay ibn Ka'b said that there was a man whose house was too far from the mosque. But, he never missed a congregational prayer at the mosque. Someone advised him to buy a donkey and ride it to the mosque, especially when it is too hot or dark. The man said: "You know what. I do not wish my house to be close to the mosque; I would rather walk many steps to the mosque and even more back to my house so that all these steps back and forth are recorded as good deeds in my account. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said to this man: "You have been already given what you sought." (Muslims).

Competition is one way to develop strong determination and ignite enthusiasm. Competition

reveals who is good and who is bad. Competition reveals points of weakness and strength in one's character. They will never be equal; those who hasten and those who are sluggish. Allah the Almighty Says: "And why do you not spend in the cause of Allah while to Allah belongs the ownership of the heavens and the earth? Not equal among you are those who spent before the conquest of Mecca and fought and those who did so after. The former are greater in degree than those who spent afterwards and fought. But to all Allah has promised the best reward." (the Qur'ān, 57: 10)

In fact, competition contributes to the progressiveness of nations. A nation should advance if there is a competition among its individuals, parties and organizations in serving people and sparing no effort to protect the society. Let us walk the talk and translate our beliefs into actions.

The principle of competing for goodness should be highly featured through social work and community service that always aim to enhance people's life and improve the overall condition of society. Such is a mission and not a slogan to chant; it is a mission that practically stands for the protection of human interest. Let actions speak louder than words when it comes to national work. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be

upon him) deferred it to us to manage our worldly life affairs our own way and taught that we must balance the life of this world with the life hereafter. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) says: "Work on maintaining the life of this world as if you would live forever and work on maintaining the life hereafter as you would die tomorrow."

The feeling of belonging to one's nation must materialize in our everyday life to maintain growth and stability. Let everyone strengthen the national feeling by positive participation in social work and community service. Let everybody defend the overall interest of their country and let everyone raise their heads and be proud of their belonging to their country. To wrap it up, there are many ways to compete for the goodness of one's country. Some examples include hard work, religious commitment, and national love. Other examples include defending religion and keeping it away from being a cause of civil strife and fragmentation.

(13)

**DANGERS OF DESTRUCTIVE CALLS AND
THE NECESSITY OF COMBATING THEM
TO ACHIEVE SECURITY AND STABILITY**

Şafar 29, 1437AH/December 11, 2015CE

Sermon Plan

1. Grace of Security and Stability
2. Stability is a Religious and National Duty
3. Factors of national stability:
 - A. Patriotism
 - B. Promotion of Mutual Kindness and Cooperation among People
 - C. Obeying the Ruler in Good Deeds and Service of One's Nation
 - D. Warning against Disorders
 - E. Dangers of Destructive Calls on Individuals and Community
 - F. Resisting These Destructive Calls is Urgently Necessary

Sermon Text

Security and stability are of the divine greatest graces; without them, human beings suffer unease and insecurity and cannot enjoy life even if they have all means to the worldly happiness and pleasures. The true happiness and pleasure of this world entirely depends upon the procurement of security and stability. According to the Prophet's

statement: “Anyone of you who is secure in his property, healthy in his body and has his food for the day has actually—as if he—possessed the entire world” (Al-Tirmidhi).

The grace of security and stability is the goal of all creation on the earth. Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) prayed for the security and stability of his family and people. He said, “My Lord, make this a land of peace and provide for its inhabitants of the fruits for whoever believes in God and the Last Day” (the Qur’ān, 2: 126). Evidently, Ibrāhīm supplicated Allah to endow the people of Mecca with security and provision, giving precedence to security over provision. Security is essential for human serenity and life. Allah responded to his prophet's supplication and endowed Mecca with stability and safety by His Will and Decree until it became the blessed home of Islam, thanks to Ibrāhīm's prayers. In another context, Ibrāhīm gave precedence to the grace of security over the grace of worship and true belief in the oneness of Allah: “My Lord, make this a land of peace, and keep me and my sons away from serving statues” (the Qur’ān, 14: 35).

Allah also reminded the people of Mecca of the great graces of security and prosperous life that He conferred on them: “So let them serve the Lord of this Sanctuary; the One who fed them from

hunger, and protected them from fear” (the Qur’ān, 106: 3-4).

He also reminded them of the secure sanctuary that He made for them: “Have they not seen that We have set up a sanctuary secure, while all around them the people are in constant danger? Would they still believe in falsehood, and reject the blessings of God?” (the Qur’ān, 29: 67).

Security and stability are the main ways to the progress of nations and communities, whereby people enjoy their lives; economy develops and grows as evident in the Glorious Qur’ān. Allah reminded the people of Sheba of the Grace of security and stability, as He, the Almighty, says, “And We placed between them and between the towns that We blessed, towns that were easy to see; and We measured the journey between them: “Travel in them by night and day in complete security” (the Qur’ān, 34: 18). The progress of nations and civilization is conditional upon the domination of security and stability among all members.

Insecurity and instability affect nations and peoples even in performance of religious rites, which is the first objective behind the human creation. The manner of Fear Prayer thus differs from the ordinary prayers in case of security. Likewise, the obligation of *hajj* is conditional upon the available secure roads; if the road is

insecure, the hajj is not obligatory. In other words, acts of worship can only be observed in the optimal manner when both security and stability are guaranteed.

When the nation enjoys security and all citizens feel their life, wealth and dignity secure and respected, the whole community enjoys tranquil and stable life free from terrors, worries and disorders. The community achieves progress and prosperity; the stability of nations is thus a religious necessity and national request. It is also one of the greatest Islamic objectives.

Important factors of stability also include patriotism; a human being shall love his homeland where he enjoys all legal freedoms and feels the value of one's homeland. In his migration way from Mecca to Medina, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) practically gave a lofty example of human love of homelands; he deeply loved Mecca and felt its great value despite the given cruelty of its people. Revealing this feeling, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "By Allah, you are the best of Allah's lands and the most beloved land to Allah; if it were not that your people expelled me from you, I would not have departed" (Ahmad and Al-Tirmidhi). According to the narration of Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him and with his father): "How sweet of a land you are and

how dear you are to me, and if it were not that my people expelled me from you, I would not have resided in any other land” (al-Tirmidhi).

After his migration to Medina, he began his endeavors to construct the newborn state; he wanted to teach his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and all humankind that only those who love nations will build them. He thus used to supplicate Allah, as narrated by ‘Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her), saying: “O Allah! Make us love Medina as You made us love Mecca, or more” (al-Bukhari). The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) only prayed for the love of his new homeland for the achievement of national stability and security.

It is then obligatory upon a human being to safeguard and preserve his homeland undertaking his national duties and responsibilities in the best manner. The value of homeland is a basic Islamic value, which shall not be violated. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) praised highly the one who protects his homeland and sacrifices his rest for it promising him a relief from punishment. Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him and with his father) said, I heard the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) saying, “Two eyes shall not be touched by Fire: an eye that weeps from the fear of Allah and an eye that spends the night

standing on guard in the cause of Allah” (al-Tirmidhi).

National love is essential for any stable society; when a human being loves his homeland he feels responsible for its security and stability and never yields to false destructive calls. When a person feels secure in his homeland, his psychological state becomes secure and he proves creative in his works giving the best production and growth he can.

Stability factors also include the promotion of mutual kindness and cooperation among people; the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other; the Prophet then clasped his hands with the fingers interlaced (while saying that)” (al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Keep apart from disputes and discrepancies, as they only lead to disunity and destruction. Allah, the Almighty, says, “And obey Allah and His messenger, and do not dispute else you will fail and your momentum will depart, and be patient. God is with the patient” (the Qur’ān, 8: 46).

Beware of differences and disputes; they only incur disunity and loss. Beware of biased and partisan affiliations, as they only lead community to ruin and disintegration. All must concertedly cooperate for the achievement of secure homeland

in submission to Allah's command: "And help each other in piety and righteousness, and do not help each other in sin and aggression. And be aware of Allah, for the retribution of Allah is severe" (the Qur'ān, 5: 2).

The most important factor for national security is to hear and obey the rulers apart from disobeying Allah, Allah, the Almighty, says, "O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the messenger and those in authority among you. If you dispute in any matter, then you shall refer it to Allah and His messenger if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for knowing" (the Qur'ān, 4: 59). The rulers are in charge of implementing the laws of Allah on the earth. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "Sultan is the shadow of Allah i.e. viceroy, on the earth; he who respects him will have God's respect and he who disrespects him will be disgraced by God" (al-Tabarani and al-Bayhaqi). According to another prophetic statement: "He who respects Allah's laws in this world will have the divine respect on the Day of Resurrection. Yet, he who disregards them in this world will be disregarded on the Day of Resurrection" (Ahmad).

It is a religious duty to obey the rulers in matters of obedience to Allah and national interests; their orders and prohibitions shall be obeyed unless

they lead to a sin. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said, I heard the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) saying, "Whoever obeys me, obeys Allah; and whoever disobeys me, disobeys Allah, and whoever obeys the ruler I appoint, obeys me, and whoever disobeys him, disobeys me. The Muslim ruler is like a shield behind him people fight and get protection (from wrongdoing and aggression). If he enjoins fear of God, the Exalted and Glorious, and dispenses justice, there will be a (great) reward for him; and if he enjoins otherwise, it redounds on him" (al-Bukhari). Obeying the rulers in matters free of sins leads to the reform of religion and life whereas disobeying the ruler leads to mischief and ruin.

A person shall obey the rulers and keep to the Muslim main community apart from rebellion that incurs disunity. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said, I heard the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) saying, "One who defects from obedience (to the ruler) and separates from the main body of the Muslim community— if he dies in that state— would die in darkness. Likewise, the one who fights under a blind banner and gets flared up with family pride, calls (people) to fight for their family honor and supports kith and kin (i.e. is not fighting in the

cause of Allah but for the sake of family or tribe)— if he is killed (in this fight), he dies in darkness. Whoso attacks my ummah (indiscriminately) killing the righteous and the wicked of them, sparing not (even) those staunch in faith and fulfilling not his promise made with those who have been given a pledge of security - he has nothing to do with me and I have nothing to do with him” (Muslim).

The reason behind the necessity of obeying rulers is most likely the avoidance of evils that follow disobedience; such evils are greater in scale than the benefits expected from rebellion against them. Actually, extending advice and promoting reform have several peaceful and democratic means to escape disunity and differences and their consequences of bloodshed, violations, destruction, loss of properties and *diaspora*. All these evils are seen to all following the chaos caused by disobedience of some rulers.

Evoking disorder and chaos is the gravest danger that destabilizes nations, leading graces to disappear and afflictions to befall, disintegrating peoples and nations, spreading vices and expelling virtues. It strengthens the spirit of enmity and grudge and uproots the spirit of love and fraternity. Like fire, disorder consumes everything separating a person from his brother, mother, children and wife. It only drives away from the

obedience of Allah, the Lord of all. Damned is the one who fuels chaos and inflames conflicts, which spoil life and lead to bad consequences. Hellfire is the last abode awaiting both the killer and the one killed in chaos.

Islam proves keen on relieving the community from the evils of chaos. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) teaches us to take the necessary preventive measures in case of chaos. He educates Muslims how to face this case as cited in the prophetic tradition narrated by Abdullah Ibn Amr Ibn al-As (may Allah be pleased with him and his father). He narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: "How will you be at a time that will soon come, when the good people will pass away and only the worst ones will be left, who will break their promises and betray their trusts. They will differ while they were previously together like this," – and he interlaced his fingers. They said: "What should we do, O Messenger of Allah, when that comes to pass?" He said: "Follow that which you know is true, and leave that which you dislike. Take care of your own affairs and turn away from the common folk" (Abu Dawud).

Keep to union and safeguard your nation; beware of disorders, hidden or manifest. Allah warns us against chaos and disorder in several contexts of His Glorious Book. For example, He, the

Almighty, told us that chaos will bring all to ruin, those who advocate it and those who oppose it: “And be aware of a disorder that will not only afflict those of you who were wicked; and know that Allah is severe in retribution” (the Qur’ān, 8: 25).

The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) warned us in so many traditions. For example, Ḥuzayfah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that he heard the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him): “Temptations will be presented to men's hearts as reed mat is woven stick by stick and any heart which is impregnated by them will have a black mark put into it. However, any heart which rejects them will have a white mark put in it. The result is that there will become two types of hearts: one white like a white stone which will not be harmed by any turmoil or temptation, so long as the heavens and the earth endure; and the other black and dust-colored like a vessel which is upset, not recognizing what is good or rejecting what is abominable, but being impregnated with passion” (Muslim).

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that he heard the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) saying: “There will be afflictions (in the near future) during which a sitting person will be better than a standing one,

and the standing one will be better than a walking one, and the walking one will be better than a running one, and whoever will expose himself to these afflictions, they will destroy him. So whoever can find a place of protection or refuge from them, should take shelter in it” (al-Bukhari and Muslim).

It is incumbent upon a Muslim of sound mind to escape chaos and take necessary precautions against them. Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said to al-Anṣār: “After me you will see others given preference to you; so be patient till you meet me, and your promised place (of meeting) will be the Tank (i.e. Lake of KaWthar)” (Al-Bukhari).

It is one of the basics of Muslim character, who seeks salvation in this life and in the life to come, to escape disorder. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) advised him who seeks for success to escape disorder as possible as he could.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “There will be soon a period of turmoil in which the one who sits will be better than one who stands and the one who stands will be better than one who walks and the one who walks will be better than one who runs. He who

would watch them will be drawn by them. So he who finds a refuge or shelter against it should make it as his resort” (al-Bukhari and Muslim).

To escape chaos one shall obey the commands of Allah and his Messenger. More to the point, one shall adhere to the main body of Muslims and obey the rulers in good deeds that bring about the national interests. Allah warns against any deviation or involvement in disorder, which may incur painful punishment. Allah, the Almighty, says, “Let those who oppose his command beware, for an ordeal may strike them, or a painful retribution” (the Qur’ān, 24: 63).

All shall cooperate for the prosperity and progress of this blessed homeland by virtue of hard work and preservation of properties. All shall also keep to the national ethics and morals, systems and laws to achieve security and stability. A good citizen helps the construction of his homeland and safeguards the national security without following the deviant people driven by personal interests.

Destructive calls and their mongers seek to spread chaos and destroy nation whereas Allah, the Almighty, says, “And hold firmly to the rope of Allah, all of you, and do not be separated. And remember the blessing of Allah upon you when you were enemies and He united your hearts. Then you became, with His blessing, brothers; and you were on the edge of a pit of fire and He saved you

from it; it is thus that God clarifies for you His signs that you may be guided” (the Qur’ān, 3: 103).

The gravest chaos that endangers society and incurs instability is the destructive calls that only arise from the diseased hearts of those who have fragile faith and weak sense of their homeland. The extremists always work on dismembering societies and bring about instability and insecurity that result in disunity and disintegration. Their strategies and plots are endlessly malicious; they only aim to topple and destabilize the state.

Abuse of religion is one of the worst means to disunity and rancor; it launches false and empty slogans, redundant speeches and fruitless debates that ultimately achieve no good end. Recently, some odd voices and destructive calls find no qualm or shyness to spread mischief and bloodshed and to terrify the secure people; they promote evil calls while Allah, the Almighty, says, “As for those who enjoy that immorality spreads amongst those who have acknowledged, they will have a painful retribution in the world and the Hereafter. God knows while you do not know” (the Qur’ān, 24: 19).

The advocates of destructive calls seek to destroy society, spread chaos and waste the respect of laws that seriously endanger the national security. The destructive calls are the fuel of terror and

extremism; they provide a pretext to slander society and may lead to grave seditions throwing lands and citizens into evil ends of bloodshed, destruction and devastation. More to the point, they destabilize the individual and social security. Lessons to be taken from the neighboring countries that fell to ruin and chaos. At last, Islam strongly promotes security, safety and stability and warns against aggression and terrorism.

(14)

WORD'S TRUST AND RESPONSIBILITY

Rajab 1, 1437 AH/April 8, 2016 CE

Sermon Plan

1. Word's importance in Islam
2. Tongue restrain is a sign of one's faith
3. Word's responsibility is a legal and ethical duty
4. Word's serious impact on individuals and communities

Sermon Text

The divine graces on man are great, innumerable and countless. Allah, the Almighty, says, "Should you try to count Allah's blessings, you could never compute them!" (the Qur'ān, 16: 18). Tongue is one of the best blessings, as Allah, the Almighty,

says, "Have We not given him two eyes, and a tongue, and a pair of lips" (the Qur'ān, 90: 8-9).

Allah also beautifully perfects man's tongue with the ability to speak. Allah, the Almighty, says, "The Most Gracious has imparted the Qur'an (unto man); He has created man and has distinguished him with the ability to clearly express his feelings and thoughts" (the Qur'ān, 55: 1-4).

One's word is one's title and means to approach others and administer life affairs. The kind of concern and significance that Islam pays to the word is unprecedented, even at times of amusement. A word may bring about the success of a nation and the misery of others. A word may protect and preserve lives and honors and may shed blood and dishonor.

The divine command is definite in imposing tongue restrain and prudence to safeguard people's honors and avoid idle talks. Allah, the Almighty, says, "Not even a word can he utter but there is an ever-vigilant watcher with him" (the Qur'ān, 50: 18). Man's parts are all subject to tongue. If the tongue is straight, they are straight, but if it is deviated, they are deviated

Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "When a child of Adam wakes up in the morning, all of his body parts bow to the tongue. They say, 'Fear Allah

regarding us; we are only part of you; if you are straight we are straight and if you deviate, we are deviated" (al-Tirmidhi).

The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) explained to Mu'adh Ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) that one's tongue may take one to paradise or hellfire. Mu'adh said, "I accompanied the Prophet on a journey. One day I was near him... the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) asked, 'Shall I not inform you about what governs all of that?' I said, 'Of course, O Messenger of Allah!' Therefore, he (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) grabbed his tongue and said 'Restrain this.' I said: 'O Prophet of Allah! Will we be taken to account for what we say?' He said: 'May your mother grieve your loss O Mu'adh! Are the people tossed into the Fire upon their faces, or upon their noses, except because of what their tongues have wrought'

A word is a trust; a person must carefully utter his words in due observation and fear of Allah. One's word may admit you to the highest rank of paradise and can bring you down to the lowest abyss of hell. Abu Hurayrah (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: "A person may say a word that pleases Allah so much

that He will raise high this person's status in the hereafter, even though the person might have thought the word he said was insignificant. Similarly, a person may say a word that displeases Allah so much that He will send this person to the hellfire, even though the person again might have thought the word he said was no issue" (Al-Bukhari).

Since the good word is indicative of one's faith; the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, "He who believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent."

Allah orders us to speak the truth with all people without distinction, to tell the right reformative and constructive talks and to avoid all kinds of disruptive and destructive speeches. Allah, the Almighty, says: "And speak to people good (words)" (the Qur'ān, 2: 83). Another Qur'ānic verse commands the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him): "Tell My servants that they should speak in the most kindly manner (unto those who do not share their beliefs):" (the Qur'ān, 17: 53).

Allah also says, "O you who believe, be aware of Allah and speak only the truth; He will direct your works, and forgive your sins. Indeed, whoever obeys Allah and His messenger has triumphed a great triumph" (the Qur'ān, 33: 70-71).

Success and forgiveness are made contingent upon the good word and truthful speech. Islam is keenly concerned with verifying information and vindicating the truth of all statements, especially the widely circumnuted ones. Actually, it is absurdity to believe all claims and statements. Allah, the Almighty, says, "O you who believe, if a wicked person comes to you with any news, then you shall investigate it. Lest you harm a people out of ignorance, then you will become regretful over what you have done" (the Qur'ān, 49: 6).

Evidently, restraining one's tongue is an indication of perfect faith and good Islam. It is also a means to Paradise. Allah describes the believers as "those who abstain from vain talk... Such are the inheritors; they will inherit Paradise, wherein they abide forever" (the Qur'ān, 3, 10-11). Sahl Ibn Sa'd (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet said, "Whoever can guarantee (the purity of) what is between his two jaw-bones (i.e. tongue) and what is between his two legs (i.e. private parts), I guarantee Paradise for him" (al-Bukhari).

The word is a legal and ethical trust and duty. It can unify the nation and mobilize determination. It can turn enemies into friends and hate into love. It is also capable of thwarting the plots of devils. Allah, the Almighty, says, "Not equal are the good and the bad response. You shall resort to the one

which is better. Thus, the one who used to be your enemy, may become your best friend” (the Qur’ān, 41: 34). Undoubtedly, good words make good friends, refine souls, remove grief and anger and fill hearts with contentment and happiness, especially when backed by truthful smiles. Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Your smiling in the face of your brother is an act of charity” (al-Bukhari in al-Adab al-Mufrad).

The trust of word ordains the declaration of good and truthful words free from lies, deception, perjury, fraud and misreported and ignorant talks. Allah, the Almighty, says, “And do not say, as to what your tongues falsely describe: 'This is lawful and that is forbidden;’ that you seek to invent lies about Allah. Those who invent lies about Allah will not succeed” (the Qur’ān, 16: 116).

It is also a trust to prove truthful in advice and consultation. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) even declares that perfect religion is extending of advice. Tamīm al-Dari narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “Religion is extending of sincere advice.” We said: "For whom?" He replied, "For Allah, His Book, His Messenger and for leaders and masses of

Muslims” (Imam Muslim in his authentic collection).

Abu Hurayrah also narrated that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “One who is sought for consultation is called accountable for his advice” (Abu Dawūd). Extending sincere advice and truthful consultation can reform people and promote security, safety and prosperity.

Word is a double-edged sword; when truthfully and honestly said, it leads to construction and building but when falsely coined, it leads to destruction and corruption. Word is not a slight matter in man's life. One's transactions of sales, contracts and treaties are all dependent on truthful statements.

It is unhidden that good words yield great positive effects on people relations. Kindness to one's neighbors is a bridge to Paradise and hurting them is a means to hellfire. Abu Hurayrah said, “the Prophet was asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, a certain woman prays in the night, fasts in the day, acts and gives in charity but injures her neighbors with her tongue.' The Messenger of Allah said, 'There is no good in her. She is one of the people of the Fire.' They said, 'Another woman prays the prescribed prayers and gives bits of curd as charity and does not injure anyone.' The Messenger of

Allah said, 'She is one of the people of Paradise' (al-Bukhari in al-Adab al-Mufrad).

The good word also has a deeply good effect on creating good relations with Muslims and non-Muslims alike, insomuch that Allah commands nice words even with enemies of Allah. Allah, the Almighty, says, "Go, both of you, to Pharaoh, for he has transgressed, and speak to him nicely; so that he might bethink himself or (at least) be filled with apprehension" (the Qur'ān, 20: 43-44).

Considerably, the written words also have deep positive and negative effects. Both written and said words are two forms of trust. Each penman shall respect the duty of his/her pen and avoid all possible errors. Indeed, one's pen reflects his/her ethics and opinions. A writer shall use his/her pen in advocacy of the truth and calling for virtues. Al-Jahīz said, "Pen is one of the two tongues (sword and tongue). Indeed, the pen is longer in life and more surviving in effect!" The pen is sharper and stronger than a sword is. As such, spreading false news, misreporting facts and defaming people as well as other forms of social slanders are all forms of dishonesty and treachery.

Let writers fear Allah and know for sure that their writings will stand as witnesses for or against them before Allah; the poet, may his soul rest in peace, said:

Writings live long after their writers die

Only write a thing therewith you are pleased to see on the last Day

Let each person realize the responsibility s/he bears for his/her words before Allah, conscience and all the creation as well. One shall care for their words, lest they may disunite hearts, create social disruption in the society, cut off kinsfolk's ties or spoil relations of peoples.

We badly need good and sincere words for the good effect they have on promoting love and friendship and eliminating disunity and grudge. Success and forgiveness are made contingent upon the good and truthful word. Allah, the Almighty, says, “O you who believe, be aware of Allah and speak only the truth; He will direct your works, and forgive your sins. Indeed, whoever obeys Allah and His messenger has triumphed a great triumph” (the Qur’ān, 33: 70-71).

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