

Khutbah: Illness, death, and bereavement.

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*"A-úthu billaahi minash shaytaanir rajeem. Bismillaahir rahmaanir raheem
Al hamdu lillahi nahmaduhu wanasta'eenahu, wanastagh-firuhu, wanatoobu ilayhi,
wana'oothu Billaahi min shuroori an-fusinaa, wamin sayyi aati a'maalinaa. May-
Yahdillahu fa huwal muhtad, wa may- yudlill falan tajidaa lahu waliyan murshida.
Wa ash-hadu an Laa ilaaha ill-Allah, wahdahoo laa shareeka lah, wa ash-hadu anna
Muhammadan 'abduhoo warasooluh"*

All Praise is due to Allah, We praise Him and we seek help from Him. We ask forgiveness from Him. We repent to Him; and we seek refuge in Him from our own evils and our own bad deeds. Anyone who is guided by Allah is indeed guided; and anyone who has been left astray, will find no one to guide him. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, the Only One without any partner; and I bear witness that Muhammad ﷺ, peace and blessings on him, is His servant, and His messenger.

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ)

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem! Ya Ay-yuhal-latheena 'aamanut taqul-laaha, haqqa tuqaatihee wala tamu tun-na, il-la wa antum Muslimoon."

O You who believe, - Be aware of Allah, with correct awareness, an awe-inspired awareness, and die not except as Muslims.

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ
ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا)

Ya Ay-yuhal-latheena 'aamanut taqul-laaha, wa qooloo qawlan sadeedaa. Yuslih-lakum a'malakum wa yaghfir lakum thunoobakum, wamay yu-til-laaha warasoolah, faqad faaza fawzan atheemaa."

O You who believe, - Be aware of Allah, and speak a straightforward word. He will forgive your sins and repair your deeds. And whoever takes Allah and His Prophet as a guide, has already achieved a mighty victory.

In the opening verse of Sura An-Nisaa', Allah says:

"O mankind! Show reverence towards your Guardian-Lord Who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate and from the two of them scattered (like seeds) countless men and women. Be conscious of Allah, through Whom ye demand your mutual (rights) and (show reverence towards) the wombs (that bore you): for surely, Allah always watches over you."

My Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As Covid-19 and its later mutations sweep across the world, there is hardly anyone who hasn't been affected by its devastating consequences. If the virus has until now not reached you and your family, you are indeed fortunate. But you probably know someone or know of someone who became ill or died from it. There are so many tragic stories of loss and bereavement every day.

How should a Muslim deal with severe illness and death of a loved one? What good advice is needed by those left behind, before, during and after tragic loss of life?

Illness and death are not taboo subjects in Islam.

Firstly, we Muslims believe that there is *dunya* and *akhirah*; after this life there is an eternal after-life. We also believe that everything that happens to us, good or bad, is a test from Allah. In a well-known *hadith*, Rasool Allah ﷺ said:

"No fatigue, no disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that."

The ups and downs of life are tests of patience and gratitude. Illness is a mercy from Allah. It removes some of our sins. Better to suffer a little over here, than to suffer a lot more over there!

Whenever we get news of someone's death, we always say:

"Inna lil laahi wa inna ilayhir raaji oon." - "From Allah we came, and to Allah we will return."

These words are from Sura Al Baqara 2:156. But let's see what comes before and what comes after this verse:

"Wa lanb'luwan nakum bi shay in minal khowfi wal joo'i wanaqsin minal amwaali wal anfusi wath-thamaraat. Wa bash-shiris-saabireen. (2:155) "Al latheena ithaa asaabat hum-museebatun qaaloo inna lil Laahi wa inna ilayhir raaji oon."Ulaa ika 'alayhim salawaatun min Rabbikum wa rahma. Wa ulaa ika humul muhta doon. (2:157)

"Be sure we will test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your hard work), but send good news to those who are patient, those who say, whenever disaster strikes them, "Truly, we belong to Allah and indeed to Allah we will return."

"They are the ones who receive blessings from Allah, and Mercy, and they are the ones that receive guidance."

So, there we have it, my dear Sisters and Brothers. The Quran assures us that we will all be tested with loss, illness, and death at some point in our lives. This is inevitable. How we deal with these changed circumstances is crucial. If we accept it with good grace, that's best for us. Guidance from Allah only comes to those who put their complete trust in their generous Life-Giver. When we trust Allah and when we invoke His holy Names in constant remembrance (dhikr), Allah raises us to a higher station. We become more resilient. We don't get anxiety attacks. We're calm. We take all the ups and downs of life with a smile. Our hearts are always in a state of peace, tranquillity (*sakeena*). Our inner peace can then shine outwards, to shine a light on our other relationships.

Those who have no faith in Allah and in the life to come after physical death, are often bewildered, angry and in denial in times of sickness or loss of loved ones. On the other hand, believers are blessed with the certainty that any loss we endure patiently in this life will be only temporary. We know that our real reward awaits us after death where we will be re-united with our loved ones. The Holy Quran constantly reminds us of Allah's promise to reward His servants in gardens with flowing rivers: "*Jannaatin tajree min tah tihal an haar..*" (Ch :)

We should therefore be thankful to Allah, for giving us *iman* (true faith) in our hearts. This is a precious gift that helps us endure whatever comes our way.

InnAllaha wa malaaikata yusallúna alan nabi. Yá ay yuhal latheena ámanu sallú alayhi wasalli mú tas leema. Allahumma salli alá Muhammad, wa ala áli Muhammad, kama salayta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali Ibrahim. Allahumma barik ala Muhammad, kama barakta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali ibrahim. Fil ála meen, innaka hameedun majeed.

Second Khutbah:

*Sub' hanallahi wal hamdu lillah, wala hawla wala quwwata illah billah yu althi yual
theem*

*Glory to Allah! Praise to Allah! There is no power and no strength except from
Allah!*

My dear respected sisters and brothers,

"Inna lil-laahi wa inna ilayhir raaji oon."

"Surely we belong to Allah and to Him we will return." (Sura Al-Baqara 2:156)

We say these words instinctively as soon as we hear of someone's death. Yet when that someone is one of our nearest and dearest, the emotional impact is profound. It is perfectly normal to feel sadness and to grieve when a loved one dies. Even Prophet Muhammad ﷺ shed tears when his son Ebrahim died. An authentic *hadith* in Sahih Bukhari no. 1241 describes the moment when 'Abdur Rahman Ibn Awf (the husband of Ebrahim's wet nurse) noticed the tears and asked Rasool Allah ﷺ "Even you, O Messenger of Allah?" The Prophet said: "O, Ibn Awf, this is mercy." Then he wept even more, and he said: "Truly, the eyes shed tears and the heart is grieved, but we will not say anything except what is pleasing to our Lord. We are saddened by your departure, O Ebrahim."

What can we learn from this deeply touching Prophetic example? We learn that to weep in moments of sadness and grief is perfectly normal. It's a sign of a gentle and spiritually awakened heart. It's a sign of Allah's mercy in our hearts. Even so, we do not say or do anything that would be displeasing to Allah. We do not shout, or curse, or throw tantrums. We do not question Allah's Decree. We accept it with good grace. We must always conduct ourselves in a dignified manner.

When we do this, we earn Allah's good pleasure. Allah will surely soothe our pain and raise our status.

My dear sisters and brothers,

Let us pray for those who have lost loved ones. Let us pray for their families and friends, those they leave behind. Let us pray for the thousands of frontline workers, the doctors, nurses, porters, cleaners, paramedics, teachers, transport

drivers and others who risk their lives keeping essential services going through this pandemic. May Allah forgive their sins and reward them all for their selfless service to others. Say, "Ameen!"

Brothers and sisters, to conclude our khutbah:

"Surely Allah commands justice, good deeds and generosity to others and to relatives; and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, so that you may be reminded."

Allah says: "and remember Me: I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and do not reject faith." "and without doubt, Remembrance of Allah is the Greatest Thing in life, and Allah knows the deeds that you do."

InnaAllaha, Yamuru bil adel, wal ihsaan, wa eetaa-i zil qurba; wa yanha anil fuhshaa-i, wal munkari walbaghi; ya-idzukhum lallakum tathak-karoon. (Sura 16:90),

Fadth kuroonee adth kurkum, wash kuroolee walaa tak furoon [2:152].

wala thikrul-Laahi akbar, Wal-Laahu ya'lamu maa tasna'oon." [29:45]

Ameen. Aqeemus salaah!

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