

Khutbah: We learn from stories

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أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

“A-ūthubillāhi minash shayṭānir rajīm. Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm
Alhamdu lil Lāhi nahmaduhu wanasta’eenahu, wanastagh-firuhū, wanatūbu ilayhi,
wana’ūthu Billāhi min shurūri an-fusinā, wamin sayyi āti a’mālinā. May- Yahdil-lahu
fa huwal muhtad, wa may- yudlill falantajidā lahu walīyan murshidā. Wa ash-hadu an
Lā-ilāha ill-Allah, wahdahū lā sharīkalah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhū
warasūluh”

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)

Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm! Yā Ay-yuhal-lathīna ‘āmanut taqul-lāha, ḥaqqā tuqātiḥi walātamū tun-na, il-lā wa-antum Muslimūn.”

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, waqooloo qawlan sadeedaa. Yuslih-lakum a’maalakum wayaghfir lakum thunoobakum, wamay yu-til-laaha waRasūl-Allāh ahu, 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:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا

كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴿١﴾

“Ya ay-yhan naasut-taqoo Rabbukumul lathee khalaqakum min nafsini waahidati(n) wa khalaqa minha zawjaha wabath-thamin huma rijaalan katheeran wanisaa-aa. Wat-taqul-Laahal lathee tasaa-aloon bihee walarhaam. Innal Laaha kaana ‘alaykum raqeebaa.”

“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,

Everyone loves a good story. Human beings are natural story seekers and story tellers. Allah swt uses His Noble Book to teach us through stories. One *Sūrah* is named *Al Qasas, The Story*. It relates the story of Moses and Pharaoh. Another *Sūrah* is described as the most beautiful of stories, describing the most beautiful of men, Joseph, *Nabi Yūsuf, alayhis salām*.

The stories in the *Qur’ān* are not just there for amusement. They are moral stories that teach us right conduct, and there are so many lessons that we can learn from them. Let’s just take *Sūrah Yūsuf* as an example. Read verse 3:

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ

قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿٣﴾

“(O Muhammad), by revealing the Qur'an to you, We narrate to you in the best manner the stories of the past although before this narration you were utterly unaware of them.”

Sūrah Yūsuf is full of lessons for us. We learn about his beauty, both inward and outward. He was the handsomest of men, and most virtuous in character. We learn about the jealousy of his brothers that led them to dump him in a well. We learn about his utter reliance on Allah, when he was rescued and sold into slavery. His self-control when his master’s wife tried to seduce him; his

resilience in prison, helping fellow prisoners by interpreting their dreams; his rise to power when the king appointed him controller of the grain stores (a kind of Minister of Food and Agriculture that we have today); his wisdom in devising a way to reunite with his brother Benjamin; his clemency shown to his older brothers who abandoned him; *Sūrah Yūsuf* has a classic happily-ever-after ending, and it teaches us so much wisdom that we can apply in our own lived experiences today.

Sura Ibrahim describes the amazing story of Abraham, *alayhis salām*, the great-great-grandfather of so many prophets. Then there's the story of Nabi Muhammad ﷺ sws. His story is the most minutely recorded biography of any person in history. Countless books in the *sīrah* literature are supported by thousands of authentic *hadīth*. They offer us the best guidance for our own journey through life. My dear brothers and sisters, with the help of the Qur'ān and the Prophetic *Sunnah*, you and I have no excuse!

The Holy Quran reminds us:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ

“O you who believe, obey Allah, and obey His Messenger.” (4:59)

Dear brothers and sisters, our obedience to Allah and our obedience to his beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the true meaning of our bearing witness, as we testify in our *kalima shahāda*.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

“*Ash-hadu Allāh ilāha il-lal-Lāh, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan rasūl-Allāh*”

“I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”

We recite this first pillar of Islam many times a day. It is not just a nice sound on our lips, with no meaning. It is a legal testimony, a sworn statement in the Court of the Supreme Judge of the Universe. It must be said with the utmost sincerity. It has to penetrate our hearts, and transform us from what we are to what Allah wants us to be: His loving and obedient Ambassadors on Planet Earth. The *Shahādah* is part of the *adhān*. We all heard it for the very first time as newborn babies. It was the beginning of our own life story, and Insha-Allah, it will be the last words we say when our story ends. Please say: “Ameen!”

InnAllaha wamalaaika tahu yusallúna alannabi. Yá ay yuhal latheena ámanu sallúalayhi wasallimú tasleema. Allahumma salli alá Muhammad, wa ala áli Muhammad, kamasalayta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali Ibrahim. Allahumma barik ala Muhammad, kamabarakta ala Ibrahim, wa ala aliibrahim. Fil álameen, innaka hameedun majeed.

“Allah and His angels send greetings on the Prophet. O you who have faith, send your greetings on him, and salute him with a worthy salutation.

O Allah, send Your greetings on Muhammad and his family, just as you sent greetings on Abraham and his family. O Allah, send your blessings on Muhammad and his family, just as you sent blessings on Abraham and his family. In both worlds, You are Praiseworthy and Exalted.”

Second Khutbah:

Sub' hanallahi walhamdulillah, wala hawla wala quwwata illah billah yualthiyu altheem

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

My dear respected sisters and brothers,

The stories of the Prophets in the Quran are full of inspiring examples of how to live a noble life that is pleasing to Allah. But what about your story? You may have an amazing life story. Every person's life is unique. You and I can be the authors of our own life story. With Allah's permission, *bi ithnil-Lāh*, you and I can steer our lives back in the direction that pleases Allah. We can still redeem ourselves, despite all the clumsy mistakes we've made in the past.

Just take some time to sit down and reflect. Think of all the good things and bad things that you've done, and the narrow scrapes you've had, where things could have got nasty, but somehow you survived it. That was no coincidence. Allah's Hand of Mercy was there to save you. Think about the many good things that came your way, unexpectedly. Coincidence? NO WAY! Allah was there, is there, will always be there because Allah loves you! Trust Him!

Just like the lives of the Prophets described in the Quran, with all the ups and downs, your life can have a good ending also. Insha-Allah, your life and my life WILL have a good ending, even if the middle part gets a bit messy sometimes.

The key is to remember Allah in good times and in hard times. *Dhikrullāh* is the key. *Dhikrullāh* is the constant loving Remembrance of Allah that moistens the lips and warms the heart. Never stop remembering Allah. Recite His Beautiful Names constantly, and do the things that please Allah.

Hadith 19 of An-Nawawi reminds us to:

“Remember Allah in times of ease, and He will recognise you in times of distress. What hit you could not have missed you, what missed you could not have hit you. Remember that victory comes with patience, relief comes with affliction and ease comes with hardship”.

My dear sisters and brothers, we should never despair, no matter how much we may have messed things up and perhaps made a car crash of bad deeds. Never despair. Allah is always there. Remember Allah. Pray and seek help. Allah is The Patient One, *As-Sabūr*. Allah is also *Al Ghaffūrur Rahīm*, The Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

I pray that Allah will help you and me to find the skill, strength and courage to write the final chapters of our life story in a way that leaves an inspiring example for our children and grandchildren. I pray that Allah will forgive us for all our sins so that our story has a happy ending. Where there is still a mustard seed of *īmān* in our hearts, there is still hope. Please 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 biladel, wa lihsaan, waeetaa-izilqurba; wayanha anil fuhshaa-i, walmunkariwalbaghi; ya-idzukhum lallakum tathak-karoon. (Sura 16:90),

Fadthkuroonee adthkurkum, wash kuroolee walaa takfuroon [2:152].

walathikrul-Laahi akbar, Wal-Laahu ya’lamu maa tasna’oon.” [29:45].

Ameen. *Aqeemus salaah!*

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