

Khutbah: Be authentic: be yourself

Arshad Gamiet Jurgens Centre, 25th November 2022

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

“A-ūthubillāhi minash shayṭānir rajīm. Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahīm

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-Allāh, wahdahū lā sharīkalah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhū warasūluh”

All Praise is due to Allāh, 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 Allāh is indeed guided; and anyone who has been left astray, will find no one to guide him. I bear witness that there is no All but Allāh, 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 tuqātihi walātamū tun-na, il-lā wa-antum Muslimūn.”

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

In the opening verse of Sura An-Nisaa’, Allāh says:

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ آتِفُوا رَبِّكُمْ 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 nafsin waahidati(n) wa khalaqa minha zawjaha wabath-thamin huma rijaalan katheeran wanisaa-aa. Wat-taqul-Laahal lathee tasaa-aloona 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 Allāh, through Whom ye demand your mutual (rights) and (show reverence towards) the wombs (that bore you): for surely, Allāh always watches over you.”

My Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We live in a time of multiple challenges. The climate crisis, the war in Ukraine, the higher cost of living, the weak and often corrupt leaders in so many countries, the fear and hate towards minorities and migrants, especially towards Muslims. These days, we Muslims are being treated as strangers. But that’s not such a bad thing, really. We should expect it. Didn’t our beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ say, in a Hadith reported by Abu Hurairah:

“Islam began as something strange, and it will return to being strange, so blessed are the strangers.”

As blessed strangers in a changing world, we know that all challenges only come with Allah’s permission. This is how it was always meant to be! Challenges enable us to increase our faith and reliance on Allah. They also give us the chance to show how Islam deals with so many problems of today, from ethical stewardship of the environment to respect for human rights, and the complete elimination of world poverty based on *Zakaat* and an interest-free financial system. Islam has the answer to every human problem. Our noble and illustrious ancestors understood that perfectly. They often faced much bigger crises than we do today, but they always behaved with grace and forbearance. They knew that Allah has complete control of every part of His creation. They knew that with Faith in Allah, after every challenge, success awaits; after pain comes relief. The Qur’ān assures us that (Qur’ān 94:5-6)

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٦﴾

“Fa inna ma’al ‘usri yusra(n). Inna ma’al ‘usri yusra(n)

“Surely, with hardship comes relief. Surely, with that hardship comes relief.”

We should remember to treat every failure as a stepping stone to success.

Despite their many hardships, the *Sahāba* and those who followed their example over the centuries, continued to spread Islam’s message of hope and mercy. We should never give up, never despair and never be pessimistic. Our Prophet ﷺ loved optimism. Always look on the bright side of life!

During the dark and dangerous early years of his mission, Sura Duhā was revealed to Allah’s Chosen One, Nabi Muhammad ﷺ. It came as a soothing balm to his lonely and aching heart. Likewise, this *sūra* can bring hope and reassurance to us all in times of anxiety and loss.

In such difficult times such as ours, our *Nabi* ﷺ taught the *Sahāba* to avoid placing heavy burdens on anyone. They made things easy for people to accept Islam. Even though they received constant abuse from their enemies, the *Sahāba* and those who followed took their advice from the Qur’ān to

“Follow an evil deed with something better” (Qur’ān 41:34) and they obeyed the command

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ

“Ud’ ū ilā sabīli Rabbika bil hikmati wal maw’idatil hasanah”

“Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful speech.” (Qur’ān 16:125)

My dear brothers and sisters, remember that Allah is the Turner of Hearts, *Muqallibul qulūb*. If we follow the Qur’ān and the Prophetic example we go beyond tolerance. We can earn respect and even love from those who hate us. Holding tight to the Qur’ān and Sunnah is like holding on to a strong safety rope that never breaks. Allah uses this analogy in the Qur’ān (3:103)

“Wa’taṣimū bi ḥab’lilLāhi jamī-‘ā, wa lā tafarraqu...”

“And hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allah do not be divided amongst yourselves; and remember the favour of Allah which He bestowed upon you when you were enemies and He united your hearts in love, so that by His

grace you became as brothers; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire and He saved you from it.”

In North America today, Islam is spreading rapidly where our brothers and sisters welcome others, without judgement, in the spirit of *ta’līf*, which means, to bring together, or to reconcile. Their motto is:

“Come as you are, to Islam as it is.” No fuss, no bother, no complicated rituals. It’s a simple invitation to just “Come as you are, to Islam as it is.”

It’s a way of being authentic, being true to yourself, being true to others, and accepting the real, Authentic Truth that is Islam.

This also means that to be a good Muslim, one doesn’t have to change your name or your appearance as long as long as your clothing is modest and covers the *awrāh*. To be a Muslim shouldn’t be like you’re coming to a fancy-dress party. We shouldn’t confuse Islam with our colourful but often confusing ethnic cultures. We don’t have to look like wannabe Arabs or wannabe Pakistanis in order to prove that we are ‘authentic’ Muslims. We should dress appropriately for the climate that we find ourselves in. Ethnic dress is cultural, not Islamic. In fact, our obsession with our ethnic cultural identity makes da’wah more difficult. People think they have to look and dress in awkward and exotic ways to be real Muslims.

There’s actually no such thing as “Islamic” clothing. Ask yourself, what did the men of 7th Century Makkah wear? Did the enemies of Islam wear anything different to the *sahāba*? In all probability, you couldn’t tell the difference between a Muslim and a pagan just by looking at what they wore. What about the women? For centuries, most European women wore long dresses and covered their hair. You could easily mistake some of them for Muslims. In Islam, men and women can wear any style of clothing that is modest. As long as it covers the *awrāh* it’s completely acceptable. It’s *ḥalāl*.

Authentic Muslims are conspicuous not by their clothing, but by their conduct

Authentic Muslims learn their lessons from the Qur’ān and the Prophetic *sunnah*, always striving to put those lessons into practice. It’s no good memorising the whole Qur’ān and hundreds of Hadith and you make no effort to become a better human being. Knowledge brings responsibility. Knowledge should improve behaviour. The Qur’ān describes some learned Rabbis who carry their knowledge like donkeys carrying books. A Muslim’s knowledge should become information for transformation. If our lives are not transformed by what we have learned, then we’re the losers.

I pray that every time we increase in knowledge, Allah will help us all to improve our character and increase our faith, our *imān*, by that knowledge.

Please say Ameen!

InnAllāha wamalaaika tahu yusallúna alannabi. Yá ay yuhal latheena ámanu sallúalayhi wasallimú tasleema. Allāhumma salli alá Muhammad, wa ala áli Muhammad, kamasalayta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali Ibrahim. Allāhumma barik ala Muhammad, kamabarakta ala Ibrahim, wa ala aliibrahim. Fil ál”Amīn!” , innaka hameedun majeed.

“Allāh 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 Allāh, send Your greetings on Muhammad and his family, just as you sent greetings on Abraham and his family. O Allāh, 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’hanAllāhi walhamdulillah, wala hawla wala quwwata illah billah yualthiyu altheem

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

My dear respected sisters and brothers,

Some of you may have seen the recent video that has gone viral on social media. It shows how some courageous Muslim students have defended their beliefs regarding gender issues and same sex relationships. Their teacher’s reaction was shocking. He gave them an irrational, bullying rant and shouted at them to “Shut up!” His behaviour was quite disgraceful. He was demanding tolerance from his students while showing no tolerance for their beliefs.

We Muslims must not remain quiet when Islam is being misrepresented. We have every right to be authentic, to say and do what we believe in. The essence of a well-rounded education is to explore other beliefs in a respectful manner. This is the Golden Rule: Treat others the way you’d like to be treated. Nobody likes to be ‘tolerated,’ like tolerating a pain or someone’s awkward behaviour. Tolerance is the grudging acceptance of something you don’t like. For communities to develop and flourish, ‘Tolerance’ isn’t enough. Respect is a

lot better, but respect must go both ways. People must value one another as fellow human beings, even if we cannot agree with beliefs and lifestyles. Our schools must never be allowed to become a threatening place for people of faith. Teachers who cannot treat all students, especially their Muslim students with respect are in the wrong job.

This is not the first time and it won't be the last time that Muslims will be attacked for speaking the truth, for being authentic. But we mustn't panic; we mustn't give in. We should prepare our children for the challenges they will face, in school and in life afterwards. We should teach them resilience, and seek Allāh's help to strengthen their faith. We should take heart from the noble *Sahāba* who were warned that a mighty army was approaching Mount Uhud to attack them. This didn't frighten them. It only increased their resolve. It strengthened their *imān*. Their reply to the warning is recorded in the Qur'ān:

"Hasbun-Allāh wa niya'mal wakīl, Niya'mal Mauwlā wa niya'mal nasīr" -:

This means: "Allāh is sufficient for us. He is the best Protector and Helper."

The Qur'ān describes those who put their trust in Allāh in these words:

"Lā khawfun 'alayhim wa lā hum yahzanūn"

"On them there is no fear, nor do they grieve."

Let us pray that Allah will help us and elevate us all to that lofty status, so that we will fear no one but Allah, and we will not grieve over any challenge that comes our way. Please say, "Amīn!"

"Rabbanā lā tuzigh qulūbannā ba'da ith haday tanā wahab'lanā milla dunka Raḥma. Inaka antal wah-hāb."

"O my Lord, do not let our hearts deviate, now that we have been guided, but grant us Mercy from Your very Presence, for You are the granter of bounties without measure."

Please say, ""Amīn!"

Brothers and sisters, to conclude our khutbah:

"Surely All 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."

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

InnaAlla, 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].

“Amīn!” . Aqīmus salāh!

1 Alif, Lām, Mīm

2 Al Ikhlas