

First Sermon

All praise is due to Allāh. We praise Him, seek His help and seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh, the Most High, from the evil within ourselves and our evil actions. Whomever Allāh guides no one can misguide him, and whomever He misguides no one can guide him.

I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh alone. He is far above and exalted from any form of resemblance, equal, or counterpart. I also bear witness that Moḥammad is His servant and messenger, His best, intimate friend, the most excellent of His creation, and the guardian of His revelation. Indeed, his Lord sent him as a mercy for the entire creation and as an argument against all of His servants.

May Allāh send His abundant salutations and peace upon him, and may He bestow His blessings upon him, his pure family. and shining Companions so long as eyes can see and ears can hear.

To proceed, my dear brothers in faith:

When Allāh, Exalted and Sublime be He, created the creation, He said, after creating them, placing Adam in Paradise, and then sending him and his progeny to earth:

اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ

“Allāh chooses from the angels messengers and from the people.”

[Sūrah al-Ḥajj: 75]

Allāh, the Most High, gave these Messengers perfect characteristics that they deserved to become callers to the religion as well as role models for others. Then, Allāh, the Most High, encouraged all people to emulate those Messengers as He says:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهِدَاهُمْ أَقْتَدَهُ

“Those are the ones whom Allāh has guided, so from their guidance take an example.”

[Sūrah al-An‘ām: 90]

He thus ordered for us to emulate all of Messengers, especially our master, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). He (ﷺ) says:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allāh an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day...”

[Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 21]

If a person is guided to emulate the Prophets, Allāh, the Most High, will certainly allow for him to leave a good legacy within this religious community. We spoke in a

previous sermon about how the Prophet (ﷺ) took care of those who had an impact on this religious community: the gifted and talented Companions.

Amongst them was Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) who was gifted in memorizing and narrating Prophetic traditions. Likewise were Companions such as Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, and others from his (ﷺ) Companions.

My fellow Muslims, the religious community today is in need of those who can also give attention to those who are gifted as they are whom Allāh, the Most High, gave distinguished abilities that, perhaps, others have been prevented from.

It was because of this that the Prophet (ﷺ) encouraged everyone to be talented and proficient in their deeds. He (ﷺ) said: **“Indeed Allāh loves that if one of you were to do a deed that he perfects it.”** This was narrated in the *Musnad* of Abī Ya‘lā.

And he (ﷺ) also said: **“Verily Allāh has prescribed proficiency and perfection in all things.”** Meaning: in everything that you desire to do, you are commanded to perfect it to the utmost degree. He said: **“Verily Allāh has prescribed proficiency and perfection in all things.”**

He (ﷺ) then elaborated this by saying: **“So if you kill then kill well; and if you slaughter, then slaughter well. Let each one of you sharpen his blade and let him spare suffering to the animal he slaughters.”**

Once a man entered the mosque and prayed very quickly. He then approached the Prophet (ﷺ) to greet him, yet he did not perfect his prayer. So, he told him: **“Go back and pray, for you have not prayed.”**

The man then went back and prayed as he did the first time with its shortcomings and hastiness. He would prostrate at the speed of a pecking raven.

He would also perhaps turn left and right. He then came again to greet him but he was told again: **“Go back and pray, for you have not prayed.”**

He went back and did the same thing several more times until he said: “O Messenger of Allāh! By He Who has sent you with the truth, I can’t do this any better so please teach me.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) then taught him how to perfect the prayer...

Therefore, if you desire to pray, perfect your prayer. If you desire to sacrifice an animal, perfect the animal’s slaughtering. If you desire to do any worldly deed or any deed for the Hereafter, Islām encourages you to be talented and proficient in performing your deed so that you may reach the loftiest of ranks.

As a matter of fact, he (ﷺ) warned from being a person who perfects something and then neglects it until he forgets how to do it. He (ﷺ) said: **“Whoever learns how to shoot (arrows), then abandons it, is not considered from amongst us.”**

And in another narration: **“then he has disobeyed me,”** as it’s worded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

In addition, He (ﷺ) said: **“O ‘Abdullāh, don’t be like so-and-so…”**

Interesting! What’s so-and-so’s case, and why shouldn’t I be like him? What’s his shortcoming or fault?

He continued: **“...don’t be like so-and-so who used to pray late at night and then left it off.”**

Meaning: he would drive himself to perform the late night prayer so much so that he was able to wake up to pray, yet he then neglected it until he ended up sleeping instead of praying.

Indeed, he (ﷺ) would deal with the gifted Companions in a special way.

We, my noble, beloved brothers, perhaps may see a student stand out amongst his peers in school or university, or he may stand out with the Imam of the neighborhood mosque, or even in front of his parents, brothers, or sisters. Thus, sometimes some of these individuals stand out from amongst the people.

The Prophet (ﷺ) would give them special attention so that he could produce leaders from amongst them. Hence, how did he deal with gifted individuals?

He (ﷺ) would accept their counsel if a specific deed was to be carried out and then approve of it. Likewise, if another Companion were to come with a suggestion, he (ﷺ) would accept it and always encourage him to offer his opinion so that he would not always be a follower but also be a leader.

During one of his (ﷺ) expeditions, like the Battle of Tabūk, when some of their food supplies depleted, some of the Companions sought the Messenger of Allāh’s (ﷺ) permission to sacrifice few of their camels to provide some food to eat.

They said: “O Messenger of Allāh, there’s no food so we seek your permission to sacrifice one of the camels that we’re riding.”

So, he (ﷺ) let them do so. They sacrificed several camels and ate from them. After two or three days, they approached him again and said: “O Messenger of Allāh we’ve become hungry again, O Messenger of Allāh. We seek your permission to sacrifice again.”

When he permitted them to do so ‘Umar said: “O Messenger of Allāh, if you continue to permit them to do so, our modes of transport will deplete so we won’t find anything to carry our supplies nor ourselves! If every day we sacrifice five, ten, twenty, or fifty camels to feed an army of 30,000 men. O Messenger of Allāh, our rides will cease to exist. However, O Messenger of Allāh, perhaps it is better for you to order each one of them to come to you with whatever food he had in a small cloth so that you may supplicate to Allāh to bless it for him and then have it allocated amongst each of them, O Messenger of Allāh.”

Consequently, the Prophet (ﷺ) responded: “What a beautiful idea.”

He didn't reject 'Umar's suggestion and say: “I'm a Prophet. Revelation comes to me from the heavens!” No!

Rather, he implied that O 'Umar, you're an intelligent man and you have gifted abilities by his statement “what a beautiful idea.” He then ordered 'Umar to spread out his small cloth.

Likewise, he ordered the rest of his Companions to each come with what they had. So, a man would come with a broken piece of bread. Another would come with a date or two. Another would have some barley with him. They placed it all in front of him and he supplicated to Allāh to bless the food for them and then he (ﷺ) divided it amongst them so much so that it was enough for all of them.

Likewise, the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered his Companions to shave their heads at Ḥudaybiyah when they were prevented from performing the minor pilgrimage as they were blockaded from entering the city.

He ordered them to shave their heads and sacrifice their animals. They did not do so in hope that he would change his mind. This was because their hearts—and they were 1,400 in number—were yearning to circumambulate the Ka'bah and perform the minor pilgrimage in order to complete the religious rituals.

When they didn't do so, the Prophet (ﷺ) entered upon Umm Salamah in a state of anger. When she saw that anger on his face, she asked him: “What's on your mind, O Messenger of Allāh?”

He told her what happened. She (رضي الله عنها) then said: “O Messenger of Allāh, do you want them to do so?”

He replied: “Yes.”

She said: “Go out yourself and call for someone to shave your head. Then, sacrifice your animal. If they see you do that, they will follow.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) didn't reject her idea. Rather, he embraced the idea and appreciated it. Umm Salamah was amongst those who counseled the Prophet (ﷺ) with such enthusiasm without holding back her opinion.

From our nurturing instruction is to encourage anyone who is skilled in their talent to freely express their opinion whether they're right or wrong, even if they're your wife, mother, sister, or daughter.

Also, of his (ﷺ) exemplary interactions with them is that he would guide a gifted individual who enthusiastically came to him towards prioritizing his affairs wisely. Meaning: what should be on the top of the priority list and what should be at the bottom.

When Abū Ṭalḥah came to the Prophet (ﷺ), he said to him: “O Messenger of Allāh, indeed Allāh, the Most High, has revealed: ‘Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allāh] from that which you love, and the most beloved of my wealth to me is Bayraḥā’ (a farm that had pure water in front of his (ﷺ) mosque).”

The Prophet (ﷺ) would enter it and drink from its water at times. He said: “O Messenger of Allāh, this is the most beloved of my wealth to me. Should I give it in the cause of Allāh?” Meaning: I would give it as charity for Allāh’s sake.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: **“Wonderful! This is a pleasant property!”** He then pointed to it.

Abū Ṭalḥah wanted to donate it to the poor yet the Prophet (ﷺ) said: **“I think you should donate it to your relatives.”** This is because spending on one’s relatives is charity and a means of keeping the ties of kinship.

Thus, he said: **“I think you should give it to your relatives.”** So, Abū Ṭalḥah gave it to some of his relatives.

The Prophet (ﷺ) would also regulate the enthusiasm of the gifted individuals. An enthusiastic Companion would come to him wanted to do a lot of deeds, and he would regulate that enthusiasm whether it be regarding charity, praying the late night prayer, fasting, etc.

One time, he (ﷺ) entered the mosque and saw a rope hanging from the ceiling. He then asked about this rope.

They said: “O Messenger of Allāh, this is for Zaynab. She prays the late night prayer and if she grew tired, she should attach herself to this rope.” Meaning: if her body got tired and she wasn’t able to continue, she would attach herself to this rope for support.

The Prophet (ﷺ) cut the rope, pulled on it, and then removed it. He then said: **“Let one of you pray when he has energy to do so.”** Meaning: one shouldn’t overburden himself with what he cannot handle so that he does not end up hating prayer. **“Let one of you pray when he has energy to do so. If he grows tired, then let him sleep.”** And in another narration: **“If he grows tired, then let him sit down.”**

Accordingly, he (ﷺ) would regulate their enthusiasm. ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Amr came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he was known for fasting all year long and praying the entire night.

When he came to the Prophet (ﷺ), he began the conversation by saying: **“I’ve been told that you complete the recitation the Qur’an every day.”**

‘Abdullāh b. ‘Amr responded: “Yes.”

The Prophet said: **“Don’t do that. Rather, complete it once every month, or once every week, or every Friday.”** Until he said: **“Complete it every three days.”**

“I’ve also been told that you fast all year long.”

‘Abdullāh b. ‘Amr responded: “Yes.”

He said: **“Don’t do that. Rather, fast three days from every month, or fast Mondays and Thursdays.”** Until he said: **“Fast one day and break it another.”**

The Prophet (ﷺ) saw a man in front of him who had complete energy and desire to do these deeds, but he taught him the correct way to prioritize. He (ﷺ) would distinguish these individuals—the gifted—from amongst the Companions and defend them if any problems were to arise.

When one of the Companions who were assigned to collect the obligatory charity came forth to the Prophet (ﷺ), he said: “O Messenger of Allāh, Khālid did not pay his obligatory charity.” He was referring to Khālid b. al-Walīd. “We passed by him several times to collect it but he did not have any money nor horses to give so he kept on refusing.”

When they kept on persisting with their complaint, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: **“You are being unjust to Khālid. You are being unjust to Khālid. You are being unjust to Khālid. He’s saving his armor and horses for the cause of Allāh.”**

Likewise, he (ﷺ) would always defend them. How many times did he defend Abū Bakr if someone spoke up against him or belittled him?

He (ﷺ) said: **“Are you (people) abandoning my companion? When I was sent with prophethood, everyone said: ‘You have lied’ yet Abu Bakr said: ‘You have spoken the truth.’ By Allāh, no wealth has benefited me like the wealth of Abu Bakr.”**

He would praise him and defend him until Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) became, after him, the first caliph of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).

At the same time, he (ﷺ) would not neglect remedying the mistakes of these distinguished individuals. He wouldn’t say: “I don’t want to fix his mistakes so that I don’t break him apart.” No! Even though a person is intelligent, it would still be possible that he commits mistakes and thus need a remedy.

A young man once came to him complaining about Mu‘ādh b. Jabal (رضي الله عنه) because he would lengthen the prayer when leading them. Mu‘ādh would pray the night prayer with the Prophet (ﷺ) and then go lead his people in prayer. He would lengthen that prayer and perhaps even read Sūrah al-Baqarah in it.

So, this young man came to the Prophet and complained. The Prophet (ﷺ) then said: **“O Mu‘ādh, do you want to cause hardship for the people? [thrice]”**

It’s as if he was saying: “Yes, Mu‘ādh, you’re my companion and you have memorized the Qur’ān or at least the majority of it. You are from those who are always with me, but even with all that, you must fix your shortcomings.”

“O Mu‘ādh, do you want to cause hardship for the people? Read ‘Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High’; read ‘Has there reached you the report of the Overwhelming [event]?’...” until the end of the narration.

He (ﷺ) would also motivate and encourage these gifted individuals. If you know someone distinguished such as your son, wife, daughter, sister, student, or even someone who prays in your local neighborhood, you must encourage them.

Ḥassān b. Thābit (رضي الله عنه) would bombard the polytheists with his poetry. It would be more severe on them than the pelting of arrows.

If the Prophet (ﷺ) were to hear his poetry, he would say: **“Agitate them! Agitate them! [Archangel] Gabriel is with you.”** In another narration: **“he will help you.”**

When one of the Companions memorized poetry, the Prophet (ﷺ) would request him to recite it. One day, he said: **“Recite to me such-and-such poem.”**

The companion said: “I recited the first stanza to him.”

He said: **“Yes (more).”**

The man said: “I recited the second stanza.”

He said: **“Yes (more).”**

The man said: “I recited the third stanza.”

He said: **“Yes (more).”** Meaning: he would encourage me to continue reciting.

The companion said: “I recited to him up to one-hundred stanzas.”

Similarly, in the Battle of Uḥud, in the heat of the battle Sa‘d b. Abī Waqāṣ would continue to strike against the polytheists, even though there were seventy martyrs from the Muslims in front of him whereas the Prophet (ﷺ) was by his side, wounded severely while his mouth and armor were covered with blood. When the Prophet (ﷺ) saw the vigor and steadfastness of Sa‘d, he said to him: **“Throw (arrows); let my father and mother be sacrificed for you.”** This is indeed an encouragement.

“Throw (arrows); let my father and mother be sacrificed for you.” He implied: You have remained firm, battled, and have proven victorious.

The Prophet (ﷺ) would say about the great and righteous Companion Abū ‘Ubaydah (رضي الله عنه): **“For every nation there is an honest, trustworthy person and the honest, trustworthy person of this nation is Abū ‘Ubaydah.”** This is definitely encouragement for the likes of these individuals.

At times, he would encourage them through gifts, and at other times he would entrust them with important affairs. Indeed, it is very wise for a father to entrust responsibilities upon his children, or for a teacher to entrust one of his students to explain a lesson or to carry out an important task.

He would entrust certain affairs to the likes of Bilāl and ‘Ammār, while preceding them, the four rightly guided caliphs Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, and ‘Alī. Due to this great strategy, the likes of them were produced after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ).

They produced for this religious community glory as they conquered lands, taught people, traveled and abandoned their homes in order to teach the religion to others. This was because they had found a man (ﷺ) who excelled in dealing with their talents until he developed and nurtured them to such a merit.

I ask Allāh (ﷻ) to benefit me and you all through what we have heard. I ask Allāh to make us all from those who help in the progress and advancement of this religious community as well as in nurturing our sons and daughters upon good.

I have said what you have heard and I seek the forgiveness of Allāh, the Almighty, for me and you all from every sin. Seek His forgiveness and repent to Him as he is Oft-Forgiving and Lovingly Merciful.

Second Sermon

All praise is due to Allāh for His kindness, and all gratitude is for Him due to His prosperity and blessings. I bear witness in that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh alone, without partners, in reverence of His Esteem. I also bear witness that Mohammad is His servant and messenger, and the caller to His pleasure. May Allāh’s peace and blessings be upon him, his family, brothers and close friends, and all those who tread upon his path and followed his traditions until the Day of Judgment.

To proceed, my noble brothers:

How is it possible for a person to develop himself to be amongst the gifted and the illustrious?

We spoke about how he can give special attention to those gifted individuals. So, the question arises now is how can you yourself be distinguished and beneficial for the religious community instead of being a useless person who is not looked up to nor bring about benefit to this religious community?

Firstly: Establishing strong connection with the gifted individuals. It means that you should stick close to someone that has these qualities. If one were to desire to become proficient in Islāmic knowledge, he should establish strong connection with the scholars. If someone desires to excel in giving speeches, he should establish strong connection with the preachers so that he can learn from them.

If someone desires to become proficient in the fields of engineering or computers, he should stay close to whoever is ambitious and established in those fields.

Don’t you see how Abū Bakr and ‘Umar (رضي الله عنهما) would always be around the Prophet (ﷺ) so much so that he would say: “**Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and me went...**”, or “**Abū**

Bakr, ‘Umar, and me came and did such-and-such...” all because of their strong adherence to remain in a close company of the Prophet (ﷺ).

When ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) was placed upon this deathbed and eventually passed away, in order to prepare him for burial, ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās said: “I was looking at ‘Umar who was shrouded on his bed when a man placed his hand on my shoulder and said: ‘Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and I.’”

The man uttered: “By Allāh, I haven’t followed anyone whom I love to meet Allāh with the likes of his deeds other than you. By Allāh, for a long time, I have heard the Messenger say: ‘I went with Abū Bakr and ‘Umar’ and ‘I came with Abū Bakr and ‘Umar’ and ‘I did such-and-such with Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.’ Indeed, I hope from Allāh that He joins you with them both.”

Ibn ‘Abbās then said: “I turned to this man who was speaking and it was ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه).”

How did Abū Hurayrah stand out in memorizing and narrating Prophetic traditions? Because he stayed close to the Prophet (ﷺ).

Abū Hurayrah said: “The people would say: ‘Abū Hurayrah has narrated a lot.’” Meaning: “I would narrate so many Prophetic traditions that they would accuse me of authoring these narrations or making them up.”

He said: “The people would say: ‘Abū Hurayrah has narrated a lot.’” He would then clarify the reason for that. He said: “Indeed, my brothers in faith from the Emigrants [of Makkah] busied themselves with trading in the marketplace.” Meaning: instead of accompanying the Prophet (ﷺ).

“And my brothers in faith from the Anṣār [of Madīnah] would busy themselves with farm work. I was a poor man and would accompany the Prophet (ﷺ) instead of making my own living.” Thus, he would frequently accompany the Prophet (ﷺ).

Of the ways to become proficient is through supplication. The Prophet (ﷺ) supplicated for ibn ‘Abbās: “**O Allāh, give him the understanding of the religion.**” He later became a great luminary in the religion in regards to deep understanding and knowledge.

Moreover, a person should have high ambitions just like ibn ‘Abbās had after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ). He would seek sacred knowledge and travel for it, so much so that he became a scholar of this religious community. The same goes for Muṣ‘ab b. ‘Umayr when the Prophet (ﷺ) sent him to Madīnah in order to call its people to Islām. Many, many people accepted Islām at his hands...and that is the example of someone who has high ambitions.

It’s also incumbent upon a family, my noble brothers, to show concern for talented individuals. How did ‘Umar raise his son ‘Abdullāh? How did al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwam raise his son ‘Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr?

When the Prophet (ﷺ) arrived in Madīnah and the rest of the people pledged their allegiance to him, it was said to him: “O Messenger of Allāh. Here are our young children who want to pledge their allegiance to you.” Just imagine, young children wanted the honor to pledge their allegiance to him.

He said: **“Okay.”**

They came forth and they were indeed very young children. They revered the Prophet (ﷺ) so much so that they were afraid to get closer in order to shake his hands and pledge their allegiance to him.

Each one of them was a bit afraid to come forth due to their reverence for him. From amongst them was ‘Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr who cut through their lines and shook the hand of the Prophet (ﷺ) and pledged his allegiance to him—while he was only a young child!

The Prophet (ﷺ) asked: **“Who is this?”**

They said: “He is ‘Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwam.”

He then remarked: **“This is indeed his son.”** Meaning: We’re not surprised that this young boy is in fact the product of the excellent upbringing of al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwam. **“This is indeed his son.”**

His father would go out with him during expeditions and he would observe those who were fighting while he was only twenty years old. He was nurtured and trained upon that path until he embraced such a tremendous passion for Islām.

My beloved brothers, lastly, whoever wants to succeed and benefit this religious community and become proficient and beneficial, he should consider changing the environment that he’s in, especially if the environment he is in calls to slackening, remained seated, motionless, or minimalist thinking.

The man who killed ninety-nine people and then asked a worshiper: “Is there any room for repentance for me?”

The worshiper replied: “No, there’s no repentance for you.” The man then killed the worshiper.

He then asked a scholar: “Is there any room for repentance for me? I’ve killed one-hundred people.”

The scholar responded: “Yes, but change your current surroundings because it’s a bad place. So, go to such-and-such place as there are people who worship Allāh, the Most High, in that place. In turn, you can worship Allāh with them.”

“Change your current surroundings.”

My dear brother, if they are not keen in benefiting themselves or keen in seeking sacred knowledge, their time will vanish like dust dispersed. Likewise, keep close company with the one who invites you to good and leads you towards it.

O Allāh, send Your salutations upon Mohammad and his family just as You sent Your salutations upon Abraham and his family. And bless Mohammad and his family just as You have blessed Abraham and his family. Indeed You are the Praiseworthy and Most Glorious One.

Exalted is your Lord, the Lord of might, above what they describe. And peace upon the messengers. And all praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds.