

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

خطبة الجمعة

Friday Sermon

*Dhul-Hijjah: The Best Ten Days and
the Day of 'Arafah*

DELIVERED AT

Masjid Adam

DELIVERED BY

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ŞİFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

Dhul-Hijjah: The Best Ten Days and the Day of 'Arafah

The First Khutbah

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَإِنَّ أَصْدَقَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، وَخَيْرُ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ، وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحْدَثَاتُهَا، وَكُلُّ مُحْدَثَةٍ بِدْعَةٌ، وَكُلُّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ.

All praise belongs to Allah. We praise Him, we seek His help, and we seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil within ourselves and from our sinful deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever He leaves astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, having no partner, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and His Messenger. To proceed: the truest speech is the Book of Allah, the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad ﷺ, the worst of affairs are the newly invented matters, every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Fire.

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ، أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ، بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ.

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي * وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي * وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي * يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي *

We praise Him, and we send blessings upon His noble Messenger. To proceed: I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the accursed; in the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. My Lord, expand for me my breast, and ease for me my task, and untie the knot from my tongue, that they may understand my speech.

Sūrah Ṭā Hā (20:25 to 28)

Dear brothers and sisters, **assalāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh.**

A Season of Mercy Has Arrived

There are moments in the year when the doors of mercy are opened so wide that a believer would be at a loss if he let them pass without notice. The month of Ramadān is one such season, and most of us feel its arrival in our bones. Yet there is another season, beloved to Allah above all the days of the year, that arrives quietly and is missed by so many: the first ten days of Dhul-Ḥijjah. These are upon us now, brothers and sisters, and the one who understands their worth will not let a single one of them slip by in heedlessness. For Allah Himself swore by them, and Allah does not swear by a thing except to draw our attention to its greatness.

وَالْفَجْرِ * وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ *

By the dawn, and by the ten nights.

Sūrah al-Fajr (89:1 to 2)

The early scholars of this Ummah, foremost among them Ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, explained that these ten nights by which Allah swore are the first ten of Dhul-Ḥijjah. When the Lord of the worlds takes an oath by a span of time, He is telling His servants that something immense is contained within it, and that the wise are those who fill it with worship. And He mentioned them again, calling our attention to the worship they were made to carry.

وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْلُومَاتٍ *

And that they may mention the name of Allah on the known days.

Sūrah al-Ḥajj (22:28)

Many of the scholars of tafsīr, again following Ibn ‘Abbās, understood the known days to be these same ten days of Dhul-Ḥijjah. And look at what Allah calls us to within them: the remembrance of His name. These are days of dhikr, days in which the tongue should be moist with the praise of Allah and the heart awake to His greatness. What makes this season unique is that it gathers within itself every great act of worship at once. There is prayer, and there is fasting, and there is charity, and there is dhikr, and there is the sacrifice, and there is the Ḥajj itself. No other ten days of the year bring together so many forms of drawing near to Allah. They are like a marketplace of good deeds opened for a brief season, and the wise merchant does not arrive late.

Days More Beloved to Allah Than Any Other

Let no one think this is an exaggeration of the preachers. It is the plain statement of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself, who weighed these days against every other day of the year and declared them the most beloved to Allah for righteous action. Ibn 'Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated:

مَا مِنْ أَيَّامِ الْعَمَلِ الصَّالِحِ فِيهِمْ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأَيَّامِ. قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَلَا الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: وَلَا الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، إِلَّا رَجُلٌ خَرَجَ بِنَفْسِهِ وَمَالِهِ فَلَمْ يَرْجِعْ مِنْ ذَلِكَ بِشَيْءٍ.

There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allah than these ten days. They said: O Messenger of Allah, not even jihād in the path of Allah? He said: Not even jihād in the path of Allah, except for a man who goes out with himself and his wealth and returns with none of it.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī **Hadith No:** 969 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Pause and weigh these words carefully, brothers and sisters. The Prophet ﷺ did not say the deeds of these days are merely rewarded. He said they are more beloved to Allah than the deeds of any other time. And when the Companions, astonished, asked whether even jihād was surpassed, that highest of sacrifices in which a man offers his very life, the Prophet ﷺ confirmed that even jihād does not exceed the worth of righteous deeds in these ten days, save for the one who gives everything and never returns. Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalānī, may Allah have mercy on him, reflected that what raises these days above all others is precisely that they gather every kind of worship, and that this gathering is found in no other season. So a simple deed in these days, a prayer prayed on time, a portion of Qur'an, a dhikr upon the tongue, a charity given quietly, is dearer to Allah now than it would be at any other time of the year. Knowing this, who among us would waste a single hour of them?

This is exactly how the righteous predecessors understood these days, and how they raced through them. They did not treat them as a quiet stretch of the calendar but as the harvest season of the year, in which a believer gathers what he will live upon. Saʿīd ibn Jubayr, may Allah have mercy on him, the noble student of Ibn 'Abbās who narrated to us the very virtue of these days, would change entirely when they arrived.

كَانَ سَعِيدُ بْنُ جُبَيْرٍ إِذَا دَخَلَتِ الْعَشْرُ اجْتَهَدَ اجْتِهَادًا شَدِيدًا حَتَّى مَا يَكَادُ يَقْدِرُ عَلَيْهِ.

When the ten days entered, Saʿīd ibn Jubayr would strive so hard in worship that he could scarcely bear it.

Reported by ad-Dārimī, **cited by** Ibn Rajab in *Laṭāʾif al-Maʿārif*

Let that example shame our heedlessness, brothers and sisters. Here was a man of deep knowledge and constant worship throughout the year, and yet when these ten days arrived he raised his striving

to a height that exhausted him, because he knew their worth. We who fall so far short of his ordinary days, what excuse do we have to let his most beloved days pass us by as if they were nothing?

Fill These Days With the Remembrance of Allah

Among all the deeds of these ten days, the Prophet ﷺ singled out the remembrance of Allah for special emphasis. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

مَا مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أَعْظَمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَحَبُّ إِلَيْهِ الْعَمَلُ فِيهِنَّ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأَيَّامِ الْعَشْرِ، فَأَكْثَرُوا فِيهِنَّ مِنَ التَّهْلِيلِ وَالتَّكْبِيرِ وَالتَّحْمِيدِ.

There are no days greater in the sight of Allah, nor any in which deeds are more beloved to Him, than these ten days. So increase in them the saying of lā ilāha illā Allāh, of Allāhu akbar, and of al-ḥamdu lillāh.

Source: Musnad Aḥmad **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ (authenticated by Aḥmad Shākir)

The Companions did not keep this remembrance hidden in their chests. They raised their voices with the takbīr in the markets and the streets and the homes, until the words of Allah's greatness filled the air of these days. We have nearly lost this beautiful sunnah, brothers and sisters, and these ten days are the season to revive it. Let the takbīr return to your tongue as you walk, as you drive, as you wait, as you work.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، وَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ.

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, there is no god but Allah, and Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, and to Allah belongs all praise.

This is a remembrance that revives the heart and reminds it of the only One who is truly great, before whom every power on earth is small. When the tongue is busy magnifying Allah, the heart finds it difficult to magnify its worries, its fears, and the fleeting glories of this world. The dhikr of these days is not a ritual to be rushed through. It is medicine for a heart grown distant, and these ten days are the season in which that medicine is most potent.

And this was no private whisper among the Companions. It was a public revival of the greatness of Allah that swept through the gathering places of the Muslims. Al-Bukhārī records that Ibn 'Umar and Abū Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with them, would go out into the marketplace during the ten days raising their voices with the takbīr, and the people would raise their voices in takbīr along with them, until the markets themselves rang with the magnification of Allah. Picture that scene, brothers

and sisters, two of the most beloved Companions walking among the buyers and the sellers, not ashamed to proclaim the greatness of their Lord in the most worldly of places, and the whole crowd answering them. Our markets today are the screens we scroll and the places we gather, and they are filled with everything except the remembrance of Allah. What would it mean for us to carry the takbīr back into them, to be unembarrassed, as those great men were, to let the name of Allah be heard where His name is so often forgotten?

The Day of 'Arafah, the Crown of the Year

And then, brothers and sisters, in the heart of these ten days stands a day unlike any other in the entire year, the ninth of Dhul-Hijjah, the Day of 'Arafah. It is the day upon which millions of pilgrims gather upon a single plain, stripped of their wealth and titles, dressed in simple white, raising their hands and their voices to their Lord. The Prophet ﷺ taught us that this single day is the very pillar of the pilgrimage, so much so that whoever misses it has missed the Hajj. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Ya'mar narrated that he said:

الْحَجُّ عَرَفَةٌ، فَمَنْ أَدْرَكَ لَيْلَةَ عَرَفَةَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الْفَجْرِ فَقَدْ أَدْرَكَ الْحَجَّ.

The Hajj is 'Arafah. Whoever reaches the night of 'Arafah before the break of dawn has reached the Hajj.

Source: Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** 889 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ (graded Ṣaḥīḥ by al-Albānī)

If the standing at 'Arafah is the heart of the greatest journey a Muslim can make in his life, then consider the rank of that day in the sight of Allah. It was upon this day, while the Prophet ﷺ stood at 'Arafah during the Farewell Pilgrimage, that the final completion of this religion was revealed. Allah declared:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتِمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا *

This day I have perfected for you your religion, completed My favour upon you, and approved Islam as your religion.

Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5:3)

This verse carries such weight that a man once came to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, may Allah be pleased with him, and said that there is a verse in your Book which, had it been revealed to us, we would have taken the day of its revelation as a festival of celebration. 'Umar asked which verse he meant, and the man recited this very āyah, the perfection of the religion. 'Umar replied that he knew exactly the day and the place in which it was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ. It was revealed while he stood at 'Arafah, on a Friday. This account, preserved in al-Bukhārī and Muslim, shows us the towering status of this day, a day on which Allah perfected for us the very religion by which we live and die. And the mercy that

descends upon it is beyond our reckoning. 'Ā'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

مَا مِنْ يَوْمٍ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ أَنْ يُعْتَقَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ عَبْدًا مِنَ النَّارِ مِنْ يَوْمِ عَرَفَةَ، وَإِنَّهُ لَيَدْنُو ثُمَّ يُبَاهِي بِهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ، فَيَقُولُ: مَا أَرَادَ هَؤُلَاءِ؟

There is no day on which Allah frees more servants from the Fire than the Day of 'Arafah. He draws near, then boasts of them to the angels, saying: What do these people want?

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 1348 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Reflect on this scene, brothers and sisters. On this day Allah, in His majesty, draws near to His servants and boasts of them before the angels, pointing to the dishevelled and the dusty who have come seeking nothing but His forgiveness. There is no day in the entire year on which more people are released from the Fire than this one. Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, weighed the days and nights of the year against one another and reached a conclusion the believer should hold close.

أَفْضَلُ أَيَّامِ الْعَامِ يَوْمُ عَرَفَةَ، كَمَا أَنَّ أَفْضَلَ لَيَالِي الْعَامِ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ.

The Day of 'Arafah is the best day of the year, just as the Night of Decree is the best night of the year.

Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Zād al-Ma'ād

Imagine, then, the loss of the one who lets the best day of the year pass like any ordinary day, busy with his work and his screen, while the doors of forgiveness stand open and the mercy of Allah pours down upon those who reach for it. This day asks something of us. It asks us not to be among the heedless.

The Sermon the Prophet Delivered on This Plain

It was upon the plain of 'Arafah, on this very day, that the Prophet ﷺ delivered the greatest sermon of his life, the Farewell Sermon, before a gathering of more than a hundred thousand of his Companions. Knowing that his time among them was drawing to a close, he chose this day and this place to leave them his final counsel, and in doing so he honoured the Day of 'Arafah forever. He proclaimed the sanctity of their lives and their wealth, declaring that the blood and the property of every believer are sacred and inviolable, as sacred as this day, in this month, in this land. He lifted from the people the burdens of the age of ignorance, abolishing its blood feuds and its usury beneath his feet. And he reminded them that no Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab, nor any white over any black, except by taqwā, by their God-consciousness before Allah.

Reflect on what it means, brothers and sisters, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ chose the Day of 'Arafah for these words. He could have spoken them in Madinah, in the masjid, at any time. Yet he gathered the rights of human beings, the sanctity of life and wealth and honour, the equality of all people before their Lord, and entrusted them to this day. So when 'Arafah returns to us each year, it returns carrying that message: that our faith is not only worship between us and Allah, but justice and mercy between us and one another, and that the measure of our worth is nothing but our taqwā. The one who fills the Day of 'Arafah with prayer while wronging his neighbour, devouring forbidden wealth, or severing his family has missed the heart of the very sermon the Prophet ﷺ delivered upon its plain.

A Single Fast for Two Years of Sins

For those of us who are not standing upon the plain of 'Arafah this year, Allah in His generosity has given us a way to share in the blessing of this day from wherever we are. The Prophet ﷺ was asked about fasting on the Day of 'Arafah, and his answer should make every believer eager for it. Abū Qatādah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated:

صِيَامُ يَوْمِ عَرَفَةَ أَحْتَسِبُ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُكَفِّرَ السَّنَةَ الَّتِي قَبْلَهُ وَالسَّنَةَ الَّتِي بَعْدَهُ.

Fasting the Day of 'Arafah, I hope from Allah, expiates the sins of the year before it and the year after it.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 1162 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Consider the generosity of your Lord, brothers and sisters. A single day of fasting, from dawn to sunset, becomes a means of wiping away the sins of two whole years. The scholars clarify that this expiation is of the minor sins, while the major sins require sincere repentance, but even so, what an offer this is, and how foolish is the one who lets it slip. This fast is not for the pilgrim standing at 'Arafah, for the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ on his Farewell Pilgrimage was not to fast that day so that he would have strength for the supplication. But for the rest of us, away from the plain, it is among the most precious fasts of the entire year. Mark the day, prepare for it, and do not let it pass you by.

The Best of Supplications Is Made on This Day

And what should fill the hours of this great day? Above all, the raising of the hands in du'ā. The Prophet ﷺ taught us that the supplication of this day stands above all others.

خَيْرُ الدُّعَاءِ دُعَاءُ يَوْمِ عَرَفَةَ، وَخَيْرُ مَا قُلْتُ أَنَا وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ قَبْلِي: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ.

The best of supplication is the supplication on the Day of 'Arafah, and the best of what I and the Prophets before me have said is: there is no god but Allah alone, without partner.

Source: Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** 3585 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan (graded Ḥasan by al-Albānī)

Notice that the Prophet ﷺ joined the best supplication of the year to the greatest words ever spoken, the words of pure monotheism. The most precious thing you can fill this day with is not a long list of worldly requests, but the affirmation of Allah's oneness, His sole right to be worshipped, and His complete dominion over all things. Let your tongue rest in these words on the Day of 'Arafah, and let your heart mean them.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ.

There is no god but Allah alone, without partner. To Him belongs the dominion and to Him belongs all praise, and He is able to do all things.

The hours from after the noon prayer until the setting of the sun on the Day of 'Arafah were treated by the righteous predecessors as the most precious hours of the whole year. Many of the Salaf would devote them entirely to supplication, weeping and hoping in the mercy of Allah, asking for themselves, their families, and the whole Ummah. So plan your day, brothers and sisters, that those final hours before Maghrib are not lost to distraction, but spent with your hands raised to the One who frees from the Fire.

The Tenth Day and the Meaning of True Sacrifice

Then comes the tenth day, the Day of Sacrifice, on which we honour the legacy of Ibrāhīm, 'alayhi as-salām, the father of the Prophets. We remember his willingness to surrender even his beloved son when his Lord commanded it, and how Allah ransomed the boy with a great sacrifice. On this day the pilgrim and the resident alike offer the udḥiyah, the sacrifice, in remembrance of that pure devotion. But Allah teaches us that He has no need of the meat or the blood. What He seeks from us is something deeper.

لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْكُمْ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ
لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ *

Their meat will not reach Allah, nor their blood, but what reaches Him is the piety from you. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may magnify Allah for that to which He has guided you.

Sūrah al-Ḥajj (22:37)

Here is the lesson that runs through the whole of Dhul-Hijjah, brothers and sisters. What reaches Allah is not the outward act alone but the taqwā behind it, the sincerity, the devotion, the willingness to give up what we love for the sake of the One we love more. And so the question that Ibrāhīm's example places before each of us is a searching one: what am I willing to sacrifice in order to obey my Lord? How far am I willing to go to seize the gift that is being offered in these days? True sacrifice is rarely comfortable. It often demands action precisely when we feel tired, and giving precisely when we feel we have little to spare. It is easy to be generous when generosity costs us nothing. The believer is tested by what he is willing to give when it actually costs him something, an hour of sleep for the night prayer, a portion of wealth for the poor, a habit abandoned for the sake of Allah.

Return for a moment to the trial of Ibrāhīm, 'alayhi as-salām, that this tenth day commemorates, for it is the very summit of what sacrifice means. After long years of longing, Allah granted him a forbearing son, and when that son had grown old enough to walk and work beside his father, Ibrāhīm saw in his dreams that he was sacrificing him, and the dreams of the Prophets are revelation. Imagine the weight of that command upon a father's heart. Yet observe how he carried it, turning to the boy not as a tyrant but as a believer seeking his son's share in submission.

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَىٰ ۚ قَالَ
يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ *

And when he reached with him the age of striving, he said: O my son, I have seen in a dream that I am sacrificing you, so see what you think. He said: O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, among the patient.

Sūrah aṣ-Ṣaffāt (37:102)

Look at the son, brothers and sisters, a young man told that his own father has been commanded to slaughter him, and his reply is not protest but surrender: do as you are commanded, you will find me patient, if Allah wills. Father and son both submitted, the one ready to give and the other ready to be given, and when they had both surrendered completely and Ibrāhīm laid him down upon his face, the command was fulfilled in their hearts and Allah ransomed the boy with a great sacrifice. Allah never intended the boy to die. He intended to see the submission, and when He saw it, He gave the son back

and immortalised the obedience of His friend. This is the meaning we honour on the Day of Sacrifice. It is not the blood that Allah wants, it is the heart that says, whatever You command, my Lord, I will obey, even when it is the hardest thing I own. So ask yourself in these days: what is the thing I am holding back from Allah, the habit, the wealth, the comfort, the pride, that I am unwilling to lay down for Him? That is your sacrifice, and these are the days to offer it.

These Days in a World of Distraction

We live in an age, brothers and sisters, that is engineered to steal our attention, and there is no greater thief of these ten days than the device in our pocket. A season that the Prophet ﷺ declared the most beloved to Allah can pass us by entirely while we scroll, while we are pulled from one trivial thing to the next, our hours leaking away unnoticed. So let these ten days be different. Let them be days in which we put the phone down and pick up the Qur'an, days in which the takbīr replaces the endless feed, days in which we are present with Allah rather than absent with our screens. Imagine measuring these ten days not by what we consumed but by what we offered to Allah.

And bring this worship into the real texture of your life. If you work, plan now how you will fast the Day of 'Arafah while meeting your responsibilities, preparing your meal before dawn and shaping your day around it. If Allah has given you wealth, let these days carry a stream of charity, and how easy our age has made it, for a gift to the poor and the hungry is now a matter of moments from the same device that so often distracts us. Use the tool against the distraction. Gather your family in the evenings of these days to make the takbīr together, to read a little Qur'an together, so that your children grow up knowing in their bones that these are sacred days and not ordinary ones. Teach the young ones the words of the takbīr, and let them hear their parents magnifying Allah, for the habits we model in these days are the inheritance we leave behind.

Ask yourself honestly as these blessed days unfold: how is my prayer in them, am I guarding it at its time and praying it with presence? How is my tongue, is it busy with the remembrance of Allah or lost in idle talk? What am I preparing to present before Allah from this season, when it has passed and I stand to give account? These ten days are a gift renewed for us year after year, and the one who treats them as a treasure will find his heart transformed by the time the Day of Sacrifice arrives.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.

I say these words of mine, and I seek the forgiveness of Allah for myself and for you, so seek His forgiveness, for indeed He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

The Second Khutbah

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ، نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ
وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ:

All praise is for Allah, Lord of the worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon the noblest of the Prophets and Messengers, our Prophet Muḥammad, and upon his family and all his companions. To proceed:

Dear brothers and sisters, we have heard how Allah swore by these ten days, how the Prophet ﷺ declared their deeds the most beloved to Allah in all the year, how the Day of 'Arafah frees more people from the Fire than any other, and how a single fast upon it can erase the sins of two years. Knowledge such as this is a trust. The one who hears it and acts is among the successful, and the one who hears it and lets the season pass unchanged has wronged only himself. So let us turn this knowledge into a plan we can actually live in the days ahead.

Begin with the prayer, for it is the pillar, and let these ten days be a season in which you return any prayer you have been neglecting to its proper time and pray it as if it were your last. Then revive the takbīr upon your tongue, in the home, in the street, at your work, until the greatness of Allah colours your whole day. Fix in your calendar the fast of the Day of 'Arafah, and guard those final hours before Maghrib for earnest supplication. Keep a daily appointment with the Book of Allah, even a single page read with reflection, and take a fixed portion of each day for istighfār, for the one who seeks forgiveness abundantly finds Allah opening for him doors he could not see. Give in charity across these days, even a little and even in secret, for charity in a beloved season is multiplied, and reach out to your parents and your kin, for the ties of family are themselves among the most beloved deeds to Allah.

And for the one whom Allah has enabled to offer the sacrifice, there is a sunnah of these days worth remembering. Umm Salamah, may Allah be pleased with her, narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا دَخَلْتَ الْعَشْرَ وَأَرَادَ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَضْحِيَ فَلَا يَمَسْ مِنْ شَعْرِهِ وَبَشَرِهِ شَيْئًا.

When the ten days begin and one of you intends to offer a sacrifice, let him not remove anything from his hair or his skin.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 1977 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

This is a small act, the holding back from cutting hair and nails for the one intending to sacrifice, yet it carries a beautiful meaning. It links the one who stays at home to the rites of the pilgrim, so that even far from Makkah a believer feels himself drawn into the sacred season, his very body marking the days as set apart for Allah. So whoever among you intends the udḥīyah, let him begin this practice with the sighting of the new moon of Dhul-Hijjah.

Let us also carry away the deeper lessons of these days, brothers and sisters. Dhul-Hijjah reminds us that life itself is a journey toward Allah, just as the pilgrim journeys to Makkah, and that every one of us is travelling toward the meeting with his Lord. It reminds us that true honour is not in wealth or title or status, for the millions at 'Arafah stand equal in simple white garments, and what raises a person before Allah is only his taqwā. It reminds us that the door of repentance is never closed, for 'Arafah is the very picture of Allah's mercy and His joy at the return of His servants. And it reminds us that time is itself a gift, that Allah has placed special seasons within the year as opportunities to draw near, and that the wise are those who recognise the season and seize it.

So let us hold the balance the believer is meant to hold, between hope and fear. Let no one despair of these days because his past is heavy, for 'Arafah was made for the heavy-laden, and Allah frees from the Fire on this day those who come to Him dishevelled and dusty and full of regret. And let no one grow complacent and waste the season in heedlessness, presuming upon a mercy he made no effort to seek. The believer hopes like one who knows the generosity of his Lord, and strives like one who knows that the season will not return, and he lets neither hope nor effort stand alone.

Closing Du'ā

Dear brothers and sisters, in these blessed days let us raise our hands to the One who frees His servants from the Fire, and let us ask Him while the season of mercy is upon us.

O Allah, allow us to reach these blessed days in faith and good health, and grant us the strength to fill them with worship that is pleasing to You. O Allah, accept our fasting, our prayer, our dhikr, and our charity, and free our necks and the necks of our parents and our families from the Fire on the Day of 'Arafah. O Allah, forgive us our sins, the small of them and the great, the first of them and the last, the hidden of them and the open.

O Allah, set right the affairs of this Ummah, relieve the distress of the distressed, heal the sick, settle the debts of the indebted, and grant safety, mercy, and relief to our brothers and sisters who are oppressed and afraid in every land. O Allah, forgive our parents and have mercy upon them as they raised us when we were small, and forgive the believing men and women, the living among them and those who have passed on. O Allah, make the Qur'an the spring of our hearts, grant us beneficial knowledge and hearts that fear You, accept our worship in this blessed season, and seal our lives with the best of deeds and our words with the testimony that there is no god but You.

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ *

Our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.

Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:201)

The Final Reminder

Remember the command of your Lord, with which He gathers the whole of right conduct in a single verse, the command of justice, excellence, and generosity.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ
يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ *

Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence, and giving to relatives, and He forbids immorality, wrongdoing, and oppression. He admonishes you that you may take heed.

Sūrah an-Nahl (16:90)

So remember Allah, the Most Great, and He will remember you. Magnify Him in these ten days as He has guided you, thank Him for His favours and He will increase you. And establish the prayer.

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ