

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

خُطْبَةُ الْجُمُعَةِ

# Friday Sermon

*Four Golden Deeds: The Easy Path to  
Paradise*

DELIVERED AT

Masjid Adam



ŞİFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC  
FOUNDATIONS &  
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

## Four Golden Deeds: The Easy Path to Paradise

### 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 أصدقَ 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.**

## The Heart at the Hour of Departure

Allah, the Most High, addressed the believers in His Book with a command that should make every heart tremble, a command that joins the way we live with the way we will one day die. He said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ \*

*O you who believe, fear Allah as He ought to be feared, and do not die except as Muslims, in submission to Him.*

**Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān (3:102)**

To fear Allah as He ought to be feared is to keep away from what He has forbidden and not to delay in what He has commanded. Then He joins to this a second command, that we not leave this world except in a state of Islam. Brothers and sisters, pause over the wisdom here. The hour of our death is not in our hands. No one among us knows whether he will see the next Jumu‘ah, or whether this breath he now takes is among his last. But while the timing of death is hidden from us, the state of our heart at that moment is something we are quietly building every single day. The way to die well is to live in a state of constant readiness, guarding ourselves from sin at all times, and whenever a sin does slip out, hastening back to Allah in repentance before the moment of return arrives.

Allah, in His boundless mercy, has left the door of repentance open. A servant sins and repents, and Allah forgives, and he sins again and repents again, and Allah forgives again, and this continues until the throes of death begin and the angel of death appears, for at that moment the door is shut. So the one who has made repentance and seeking forgiveness a habit of his life walks toward death already prepared. Even if death were to overtake him in a moment of weakness, there would be only that single slip for which he had no time to repent, while the long habit of his heart was turning, returning, and seeking his Lord. This uncertainty of death is one of the strongest reasons a believer keeps his soul on guard.

Yet we live in a time when temptation has flooded the streets, the markets, and the very screens in our pockets. How is a person to guard his eyes, his ears, his hands, and his tongue when sin is offered to him a thousand times a day, often before he has even risen from his bed? To protect oneself in such an age is easier said than done, and Allah and His Messenger ﷺ did not leave us without a means.

## Keep the Company of the Truthful

The first protection the Qur'an offers is the company we keep. Allah commanded the believers to anchor themselves beside the righteous, so that the heart catches their love of good and their distaste for sin, and the road away from disobedience becomes easier to walk. He said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ \*

*O you who believe, fear Allah and be with the truthful.*

**Sūrah at-Tawbah (9:119)**

The truth, brothers and sisters, is that once a real connection with Allah takes root in the heart, sin becomes heavy and unwanted even when it is within reach. The heart fills with a light that makes a person uneasy at the mere approach of wrongdoing. Allah then turns that heart away from sin and arranges the person's affairs, sometimes without any effort on his part, so that he is shielded from what would have harmed him. This is the generosity of Allah, that He guards His servant when His servant has chosen to be guarded. And alongside good company, He has given us a prescription of four deeds, brief and light, that build exactly this connection.

## Four Deeds, Light on the Limbs

These four deeds are the life of our religion, and they are so easy that they cost you neither your wealth, nor your time, nor your strength. If a person takes them up as a daily habit, a special bond with Allah is woven whose effect he soon begins to feel in his life. The heart becomes ready to be set right, and gradually a state is reached where even when the soul reaches for sin, it finds itself held back. Those four deeds are Shukr, which is gratitude to Allah; Ṣabr, which is patience and perseverance; Istighfār, which is seeking the forgiveness of Allah; and Isti'ādhah, which is seeking the protection of Allah. We will sit with each of them this morning, one by one.

## The First Deed: Shukr, A Heart that Gives Thanks

Make it a habit that every morning when you wake and every night before you sleep, you take one honest glance at yourself and your circumstances, and you reflect on the gifts of Allah upon you, the gifts of the spirit and the gifts of the body, and you give Him collective thanks for them. Reflect above all on the wealth of imān He placed in your chest and the ease He has spread across your days, and thank Him from the heart, and resolve to use His gifts as He would want them used. Then, throughout the day, whenever a bounty crosses your mind, thank Him quietly within yourself. Whenever something goes the way you hoped and your heart feels a moment of ease, say in your heart, al-ḥamdu lillāh, or say, Allāhumma laka-l-ḥamdu wa laka-sh-shukr.

Consider how many such moments fill a single day, brothers and sisters. You open your eyes in good health, and you say al-ḥamdu lillāh. You see your family also well, and you say al-ḥamdu lillāh. You reach the masjid in time for the congregation, and you say al-ḥamdu lillāh. Your provision comes to you, you arrive at your work, you find the seat you feared you would lose, a cool breeze blows on a hot day, and at each of these you say al-ḥamdu lillāh. No affair is too small to be thanked for. And if, Allah forbid, a hardship descends, then before you even begin to escape it, count how many undeserved bounties already surround you, for this steadies the heart and gives it the strength to face what has

come. By this habit you will find peace even while the problem remains, and you will have thanked Allah for at least a portion of the bounties He pours upon you at every moment. Because you do it in secret, no eye sees it, and so it becomes a hidden worship untouched by showing off, and a servant's rank with Allah is raised through it beyond what he can imagine.

Allah has tied gratitude to two great promises. The first is protection from His punishment. He said:

مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِن شَكَرْتُمْ وَآمَنْتُمْ<sup>ج</sup> وَكَانَ اللَّهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا \*

*Why should Allah punish you if you are grateful and believe? And Allah is ever Appreciative and Knowing.*

**Sūrah an-Nisā' (4:147)**

And the second promise is increase. The grateful servant finds his bounties growing rather than shrinking, so that his very life is made easier. Allah said:

لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ<sup>ص</sup> وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ \*

*If you are grateful, I will surely increase you; but if you are ungrateful, indeed My punishment is severe.*

**Sūrah Ibrāhīm (14:7)**

How beloved gratitude is to Allah can be seen in His own Book. The greatest and most beloved of all His revealed Books is the noble Qur'an, and He opened it with Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, and the first word of al-Fātiḥah is al-ḥamd, all praise. He so loves this Sūrah that He commanded it be recited not merely in every prayer but in every single unit of every prayer. So great is the standing of praise that, although prayer and fasting and zakāh and ḥajj will all come to an end in Paradise, where there is no longer any obligation, the praise of Allah will never cease there. The people of Paradise will be inspired with His praise as naturally and effortlessly as they breathe.

يُلْهَمُونَ التَّسْبِيحَ وَالتَّحْمِيدَ كَمَا يُلْهَمُونَ النَّفْسَ.

*They will be inspired to glorify and praise Allah as easily as they are inspired to breathe.*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Muslim 2835 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Our beloved Prophet ﷺ was the most grateful of all creation, and his gratitude was not a reaction to good fortune but a settled state of his heart. He would stand in the night until his blessed feet became swollen, and when 'Ā'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, asked why he burdened himself so when Allah had already forgiven him, he gave an answer that should reshape how every one of us thinks about worship.

أَفَلَا أَكُونُ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا.

*Should I not be a grateful servant?*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 1130, Muslim 2819 **Authenticity:** Muttafaquun ‘Alayh

See what gratitude does to a person, brothers and sisters. When a servant is always thanking his Lord, the quality of patience grows in him, so that he no longer complains in hardship. He begins to feel shy before sin, for how can he disobey the One he has been thanking from morning to night? He is protected from arrogance, because he traces every gift back to Allah and never to his own cleverness, and a man who owns nothing of his own has no ground left to stand upon in pride. And arrogance is no small matter.

لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ.

*No one will enter Paradise who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of arrogance.*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Muslim 91 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

## The Second Deed: Ṣabr, Holding Firm When Life Goes Against You

Ṣabr is to restrain yourself from sin and from despair when something happens against your wishes. In a single day, many things go as we want, and many things do not. The bus pulls away as you reach the stop. News arrives that a loved one is ill, or in difficulty, or has died. Money earned by hard labour is lost, or a job slips away. Each of these wounds us, and each is a quiet test of our patience, and none of it is within our control, so we can never force the outcome to match our wish. The believer therefore plants a firm conviction in his heart that these things come from Allah, and in that conviction is wisdom and mercy beyond counting.

For these moments Allah has given us a treatment of remarkable power that costs nothing. He taught us to say, upon every difficulty, whether a crushing grief or the smallest discomfort, the words: innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji‘ūn, to Allah we belong and to Allah we return. Many in our society imagine these words belong only to the moment of someone's death, but this is a mistake. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught that every hurt a Muslim meets is a kind of calamity, and that bearing it with these words carries the promise of reward, even a discomfort as small as a lamp going out at night. And patience is most precious at the very first blow.

إِنَّمَا الصَّبْرُ عِنْدَ الصَّدْمَةِ الْأُولَى.

*Patience is only at the first strike.*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 1283, Muslim 926 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

The reward of this patience is vast. The Messenger ﷺ told us that nothing befalls the believer, however small, without Allah wiping away his sins because of it.

مَا يُصِيبُ الْمُسْلِمَ مِنْ نَصَبٍ وَلَا وَصَبٍ وَلَا هَمٍّ وَلَا حُزْنٍ وَلَا أَذًى وَلَا غَمٍّ، حَتَّى الشَّوْكَةِ يُشَاكُهَا، إِلَّا كَفَّرَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ خَطَايَاهُ.

*No fatigue, illness, anxiety, grief, harm, or distress befalls a Muslim, even the prick of a thorn, except that Allah wipes away some of his sins by it.*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 5641, Muslim 2573 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

This is why the affair of the believer is a wonder. The Prophet ﷺ said that there is good for him in everything, and this is true of no one but the believer: if good reaches him he gives thanks, and that is good for him, and if harm reaches him he is patient, and that too is good for him.

عَجَبًا لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ، إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ لَهُ خَيْرٌ، وَلَيْسَ ذَاكَ لِأَحَدٍ إِلَّا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ: إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَاءٌ شَكَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ، وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَاءٌ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ.

*How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for all his affairs are good. If something good happens to him he is grateful, and that is good for him; and if something harmful happens to him he is patient, and that is good for him. This is for no one but the believer.*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Muslim 2999 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

And Allah does not leave the patient to stand alone. He draws near to them with a closeness no harm can reach through. He said:



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وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ \*

*And seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.*

**Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:153)**

And of those who, when calamity strikes, return to Him with these words, Allah declared their reward in words that should lighten every burden in this room:

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ \* أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ \*

*Those who, when disaster strikes them, say: indeed we belong to Allah and indeed to Him we will return. Upon them are blessings from their Lord and mercy, and it is they who are rightly guided.*

**Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:156 to 157)**

Our Prophet ﷺ lived this patience before our eyes. When his infant son Ibrāhīm lay dying in his arms, the tears flowed from the eyes of mercy itself, and he said words that mark the boundary between grief that is permitted and complaint that is not.

إِنَّ الْعَيْنَ تَدْمَعُ، وَالْقَلْبَ يَحْزَنُ، وَلَا نَقُولُ إِلَّا مَا يَرْضَىٰ رَبُّنَا.

*Indeed the eye sheds tears and the heart grieves, but we say only what pleases our Lord.*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 1303 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

And his Companions inherited this strength. When the Prophet ﷺ himself passed away and the strongest hearts were shaken, Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq, may Allah be pleased with him, stood and steadied the whole Ummah with a single truth, that whoever worshipped Muḥammad, then Muḥammad has died, and whoever worshipped Allah, then Allah is the Living who never dies. That is what ṣabr looks like when it has been built over a lifetime, brothers and sisters. It does not arrive at the moment of the blow. It is stored up, day after day, in the small patiences, until the great one comes.

### The Third Deed: Istighfār, The Open Door of Forgiveness

The third deed is Istighfār, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, and it too asks nothing of your wealth or your time. Whenever a person slips into a sin, small or large, he should feel the sting of remorse at once and say, astaghfirullāh, meaning, O Allah, I seek Your forgiveness. Allah has placed within us an inclination toward sin and has put a certain pleasure in it, so that staying away is no simple matter and the soul drifts toward it on its own. This is precisely why, in His all-encompassing mercy, He has



flung the doors of forgiveness so wide: that when we slip we need only feel true remorse, turn back sincerely, and ask, and the sin is wiped away. He promised that He does not punish a people while they are seeking His forgiveness.

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ \*

*But Allah would not punish them while you are among them, nor would Allah punish them while they seek forgiveness.*

**Sūrah al-Anfāl (8:33)**

There is a tradition that when our father Ādam was sent down to this earth, he feared the power Allah had granted to Shayṭān, who sees us while we cannot see him and pursues us in ways we cannot guard against. So Allah granted Ādam one weapon to answer all of Shayṭān's many powers, and as long as he kept using it, none of those attacks could finally succeed. That weapon was Istighfār. Whatever the precise wording of that account, its lesson is woven all through the Book and the Sunnah, for Allah loves the returning servant. He said plainly in His Book that He loves those who constantly turn back to Him.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ \*

*Indeed, Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly in repentance, and He loves those who keep themselves pure.*

**Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:222)**

So do not despair, whatever your record. If you sin once and repent, Allah forgives. If you fall into the same sin again and repent again, He forgives again. Even were the rope of your repentance to snap a thousand times, mend it a thousand times, and the Most Merciful, the Most Generous, will forgive a thousand times. The Messenger ﷺ told us the plain truth about ourselves and the way out of it.

كُلُّ بَنِي آدَمَ خَطَّاءٌ، وَخَيْرُ الْخَطَّائِينَ التَّوَّابُونَ.

*Every son of Ādam is a sinner, and the best of sinners are those who repent.*

**Source:** Sunan at-Tirmidhī and Sunan Ibn Mājah **Hadith No:** Tirmidhī 2499 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan

And repentance does not merely erase the harm of a sin, it works a transformation upon the heart. The Prophet ﷺ taught that when a servant sins, a black spot is placed upon his heart, and when he leaves the sin, seeks forgiveness, and turns back, his heart is polished clean again.

إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ إِذَا أَخْطَأَ خَطِيئَةً نُّكِّتَ فِي قَلْبِهِ نُكْتَةٌ سَوْدَاءٌ، فَإِذَا هُوَ نَزَعَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ وَتَابَ سَقِلَ قَلْبُهُ.

*When a servant commits a sin, a black spot is etched upon his heart; but if he abandons it, seeks forgiveness, and repents, his heart is polished clean.*

**Source:** Sunan at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** Tirmidhī 3334 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan

The scholars drew out of this the most hopeful of meanings. Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, reflected that Shayṭān rejoiced when he saw Ādam fall, but he did not understand that a diver descends into the dark of the ocean only to rise again with the pearls in his hand.

*Shayṭān rejoiced when Ādam was brought out of the Garden, but he did not realize that when a diver sinks into the sea, he gathers the pearls from its floor, and then he rises once more. So Ādam returned higher in rank after his repentance than he had been before his slip, and Yūnus was better after the belly of the whale than before he entered it, for Allah chose him and made him among the righteous after he called out: there is no god but You, glory be to You, indeed I was among the wrongdoers.*

Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah

So measure the mercy of your Lord, brothers and sisters. There is no failure in Islam except the refusal to do anything about your failure. There is no deed in your past that can permanently bar you from the love of Allah if you return to Him afterward and let that very return drive you toward Him. The remorseful heart that is always aware of its own faults will never grow arrogant or boastful over its worship, because it remembers its sins more than its deeds. Istighfār has no fixed hour, for we do not know how many sins we commit knowingly and unknowingly across a day. So whenever you sense that a sin may have touched you, turn at once to Allah with a heart full of remorse and a tongue that says, astaghfirullāh, O Allah, I am sorry, forgive me, and protect me from this in the days to come.

## The Fourth Deed: Isti‘ādhah, Taking Shelter in Allah

The fourth deed is Isti‘ādhah, which means to seek protection. Before we recite the Qur'an we say, a‘ūdhu billāhi mina-sh-shayṭāni-r-raġīm, I seek Allah's protection from the rejected Shayṭān, and this itself is Isti‘ādhah, for in saying it we are pleading, O Allah, take us into Your shelter from the harm of Shayṭān. We are commanded to say it before reciting because Allah commanded it in the Book itself.

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ \*

*So when you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge in Allah from Shayṭān, the rejected.*

**Sūrah an-Naḥl (16:98)**

But Isti'ādhah is not for recitation alone, brothers and sisters. This worldly life is crowded with dangers, and we face the whispering of Shayṭān and the pull of our own desires at every turn. From morning to night a person is surrounded by anxieties about what is to come: I do not know what tomorrow holds, what if I lose my work, my respect, my wealth, what if illness or accident finds me. No one is free of such fears. And notice, the more a person possesses of wealth and rank, the more his worries multiply, while the one with little is often granted more peace. The way to be saved from every danger of this world and the next is this single great worship of taking shelter in Allah. So whenever the heart receives a whisper from Shayṭān or a worry about what might happen, say quietly, a'ūdhu billāh, O Allah, I seek Your protection. And if the Arabic does not come, raise the same plea in your own language, for Allah hears every tongue.

There is a beautiful supplication for these moments that the Prophet ﷺ would say, which lays the whole truth of our helplessness bare before Allah:

اللَّهُمَّ لَا مَلْجَأَ وَلَا مَنْجَا مِنْكَ إِلَّا إِلَيْكَ.

*O Allah, there is no refuge and no escape from You except to You.*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 247, Muslim 2710 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun 'Alayh

Reflect on the meaning, for it is the heart of Isti'ādhah: the very difficulties we flee are sent by Allah, and there is no shelter from Allah except in Allah Himself. Through this worship a servant tastes the majesty of Allah, the greatness of His Lordship, and the reach of His care, and his heart fills with a protection and a peace nothing else can give. He is granted the wealth of tawakkul, true reliance upon Allah, and the contentment of a soul that is pleased with whatever its Lord decrees, and such a person harbours no wish to harm anyone. When we seek His protection in earnest, we will see with our own eyes how Allah's mercy opens strange and unexpected doors of escape for us as the dangers advance.

And see, brothers and sisters, how these four deeds together stand guard over the whole of a life. Through Istighfār, the past is protected, its sins wiped clean. Through Shukr and Ṣabr, the present is protected, its blessings preserved and its trials turned to reward. And through Isti'ādhah, the future is protected, its fears placed in the hands of Allah. When the past, the present, and the future are all secured, the entire life is secured, and the servant feels at every moment the help and the kindness of his Lord.

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

*I say this statement of mine, and I seek the forgiveness of Allah for myself and for you, so seek His forgiveness, for He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.*

**Closing of the First Khutbah**

## The Second Khutbah

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ، نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ  
وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ  
وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ.

*All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon the noblest of the Prophets and Messengers, our Prophet Muḥammad, and upon his family and all his Companions. O Allah, send blessings upon Muḥammad and upon the family of Muḥammad as You sent blessings upon Ibrāhīm and upon the family of Ibrāhīm. Indeed, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious.*

### A Reminder Carried Home

Dear brothers and sisters, in the first khuṭbah we learned that the state in which we leave this world is built quietly across all the days that precede it, and that Allah has given us a short prescription of four deeds, light on the limbs, by which a servant weaves a special connection with his Lord. We saw that Shukr fills the heart with thanks and shields it from arrogance, that Ṣabr holds it firm when life turns hard, that Istighfār keeps the door of return forever open, and that Isti'ādhah places our fears in the only hands that can hold them. The danger now is that we admire these four for an hour and leave them at the door of the masjid. So let us turn admiration into a plan.

### A Practical Plan for the Week Ahead

Do not resolve this Friday upon some mountain you will abandon by Monday, brothers and sisters, for the deeds dearest to Allah are not the largest but the most constant.

أَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَدْوَمُهَا وَإِنْ قَلَّ.

*The most beloved of deeds to Allah are the most constant of them, even if they are few.*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 6464, Muslim 783 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun 'Alayh

So take up the four as small, daily habits. For Shukr, fix a moment each morning and each night to glance over your blessings and say al-ḥamdu lillāh from the heart, and let every small mercy of the day, the meal, the seat, the breeze, the safe arrival, draw a quiet thanks from your tongue. For Ṣabr, train yourself to meet every discomfort, from the loss of a loved one to a missed bus or an hour

without electricity, with *innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rājiʿūn*, and let the lamp that goes out and returns teach you to say it at the small things so it is ready for the large ones. For *Istighfār*, follow every slip at once with *astaghfirullāh*, and make a fixed portion of *istighfār* part of your day so the heart is never left to rust. And for *Istiʿādhah*, answer every whisper and every fear with a *ʿūdhu billāh*, handing your tomorrow back to the One who owns it. And around all four, guard your company, for a person follows the way of his close friend, and choose those whose presence makes good easy and sin heavy.

## Between Hope and Fear

Let no one leave this place crushed by despair, and let no one leave deceived by false security. Brothers and sisters, the believer walks toward his Lord upon two wings, the fear that holds him back from sin and the hope that keeps him from despair, and a bird cannot fly upon one wing. Allah is severe in punishment, and Allah is the Most Forgiving and Most Merciful, and both are true at once. If your record troubles you, remember that the door of repentance does not close until the soul reaches the throat, and that the One who said He loves those who turn back to Him will never turn away a sincere returning servant. And if your deeds please you, remember to keep them sincere and hidden, and let a healthy fear keep your worship pure, for the heart that thanks and the heart that fears are the same heart kept alive.

## The One Who Returns Is Like One with No Sin

Brothers and sisters, hold on to the mercy in this prescription. A person who lives in the cycle of slipping and then repenting, breaking his repentance and then renewing it, and who dies upon that returning, is among the successful, because he followed each sin with a repentance that erased it. The only sin not lifted by repentance alone is a right owed to another person, which is not settled until you restore it or seek that person's pardon. So clear your accounts with Allah through *Istighfār*, and clear your accounts with people by returning what is theirs and asking their forgiveness, and meet Allah with a polished heart. Be constant upon the four deeds, make them a habit, and step by step your whole life will be patterned upon the way of Islam, your religion and your worldly life both protected, your love of good growing and your distaste for sin deepening, until you feel a nearness to Allah you did not know before.

## Closing Duʿā

Dear brothers and sisters, let us raise our hands to the One who never turns away a sincere servant. O Allah, make us among those who thank You and do not deny You, who are patient and do not despair, who seek Your forgiveness and do not persist, and who take shelter in You and rely on none besides You.

O Allah, protect our past with Your forgiveness, our present with gratitude and patience, and our future with Your shelter, and secure for us the whole of our lives. O Allah, forgive the believing men and the believing women, the living among them and those who have passed. O Allah, set right the

affairs of this Ummah, unite the hearts of the Muslims upon truth, protect our families and our children, and keep our young ones firm upon faith in an age of trial. O Allah, relieve the distressed, heal the sick, settle the debts of the indebted, and grant safety and provision to our brothers and sisters who are oppressed and afraid in every land, for You are the All Powerful and they have none besides You.

O Allah, forgive us and our parents, and have mercy upon them as they raised us when we were small. O Allah, accept from us our prayers, our fasting, and our standing before You, and overlook our shortcomings and our sins. O Allah, make the Qur'an the spring of our hearts and the light of our chests, grant us beneficial knowledge and hearts that truly fear You, and let our deeds be sincere for Your Face alone. O Allah, seal our lives with the best of deeds, and let the last of our words in this world be the testimony that there is no god but You. Our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.

## The Final Reminder

Remember the command of your Lord, with which Allah closes the affair, the command of justice and excellence.

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. Thank Him for His favours and He will increase you. And establish the prayer.

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ