

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

خطبة الجمعة

Friday Sermon

The Heaviest Deed: The Power of Good Character

DELIVERED AT

Masjid Adam



ŞİFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

The Heaviest Deed

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 Crisis of Character

Dear brothers and sisters, if we look honestly at the greatest crisis facing our families and our communities today, we will find that it is not a crisis of wealth, for many of us have more than our grandparents ever dreamed of. It is not a crisis of education, for knowledge has never been more available. It is not a crisis of technology, for the whole world now sits in our pockets. The crisis of our age is a crisis of character: a loss of manners, of humility, of respect, of mercy between people. We live in a time when the screen teaches our children that arrogance is confidence, that rudeness is independence, and that rebellion is strength. They are told that arguing with parents is a right, that mocking elders is clever, and that putting oneself first is a virtue. And into this confusion Islam comes to teach the exact opposite, for Islam came to teach us two things: how to worship our Lord, and how to deal with His creation. The Messenger ﷺ described his entire mission in a single sentence.

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ.

I was only sent to perfect noble character.

Source: Al-Adab al-Mufrad **Hadith No:** 273 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Reflect on the weight of that, brothers and sisters. The Messenger ﷺ did not say he was sent only to teach prayer, or only to teach fasting, though these are pillars of the religion. He summarized the purpose of his coming as the perfection of character. This tells us that good manners are not a small or optional branch of Islam that we may take or leave. They are among the very reasons that Allah sent His final Messenger to mankind.

And let us be clear about what this character is, brothers and sisters, so that no one imagines it is a small or sentimental thing. Good character is honesty when a lie would be easier. It is keeping a promise when breaking it would cost us nothing. It is gentleness with the one who has no power over us, patience with the one who irritates us, and fairness with the one we dislike. It is the way we speak to the cashier, the way we drive among strangers, the way we treat the worker who serves us and can do nothing for us in return. It is who we are when no one of importance is watching, and when we believe no one will ever find out. That is the character Allah sent His Messenger ﷺ to perfect, and that is the character that will weigh upon our scales.

The Character That Allah Himself Praised

When Allah wished to honour His Messenger ﷺ in the Qur’ān, He did not praise him for his lineage, though it was the noblest. He did not praise him for his wealth, his status, his leadership, or his power. Of all the things Allah could have raised him by, He chose to praise his character.

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ *

And indeed, you are upon an exalted standard of character.

Sūrah al-Qalam (68:4)

This is among the greatest praises Allah gave to any human being, and He gave it for character. And when the Mother of the Believers, ‘Ā’ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, was asked to describe the character of the Prophet ﷺ to those who had not met him, she did not give a long list. She gave an answer of breathtaking depth.

كَانَ خُلُقُهُ الْقُرْآنَ.

His character was the Qur’ān.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 746 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

His character was the Qur’ān, brothers and sisters. Everything the Book commands, the mercy, the patience, the justice, the humility, the forgiveness, the generosity, was made visible in a walking, living human being. He was the Qur’ān you could see. And in this there is a key for every one of us who longs for better character: the closer we draw to the Qur’ān, reading it, understanding it, and living it, the more our own character begins to resemble the character of the one whose every manner came from it.

The Heaviest Deed on the Scale

Many people spend their entire lives accumulating things they believe will weigh heavily in their favour: money, houses, degrees, and titles. But the Messenger ﷺ told us what will actually be the heaviest thing placed on the believer's scale on the Day of Judgement, and it is not any of these.

مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَثْقَلُ فِي مِيزَانِ الْمُؤْمِنِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ حُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ، وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيُبْغِضُ
الْفَاحِشَ الْبَذِيءَ.

Nothing is heavier on the believer's scale on the Day of Resurrection than good character. Indeed, Allah detests the one who is obscene and foul in speech.

Source: Jāmi‘ at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** 2002 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Nothing heavier, brothers and sisters. Not the wealth we guarded, not the titles we chased, but our patience with people, our honesty, our forgiveness, our kindness, and our mercy. And the Prophet ﷺ told us that good character does not only weigh heavily on the scale; it draws us near to him in the

place we should desire above all others. He said that the most beloved of us to him, and the closest to him in sitting on the Day of Resurrection, are those of the best character, and that the furthest from him are the arrogant, the boastful, and those who speak with contempt. Who among us, brothers and sisters, does not wish to sit near the Messenger ﷺ on that Day? The path to him is not paved with knowledge alone. It is paved with character.

And consider how much of this is tested in the world we now live in, brothers and sisters. Behind a screen, hidden by a name no one recognizes, many people allow themselves a cruelty they would never show face to face. They mock, they belittle, they spread what they have not verified, and they wound people they have never met, all while imagining that none of it is written down. But the angels do not stop recording when we pick up our phones. The same tongue that must speak good or stay silent in the masjid must speak good or stay silent in every message we send. If our manners collapse the moment we are anonymous, then we never truly had manners; we only had an audience.

Character Is the Proof of Faith

We sometimes imagine that faith is a private matter between us and Allah, measured only in prayers prayed and fasts kept, and that how we treat people is a separate, lesser thing. But the Messenger ﷺ tied faith and character together so tightly that they cannot be pulled apart.

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا، وَخَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ خُلُقًا.

The most complete of the believers in faith are those with the best character, and the best of you are those who are best to their wives.

Source: Jāmi‘ at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** 1162 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ

Look at how the Prophet ﷺ measured the completeness of a person's faith: not by the length of his standing in prayer alone, but by the beauty of his character. And then notice where he immediately pointed, to how a man treats his wife, the person who sees him with his guard down, behind closed doors. For character, brothers and sisters, is not what we display in public. It is what remains when the audience is gone. It is tested precisely when we are angry, when we are disagreed with, when we are criticized, and when life does not go our way. Anyone can be pleasant when everything is easy. Real character shows itself when everything is hard.

The Right of Parents and Elders

And there is no relationship in which our character is more tested, or more rewarded, than our relationship with our parents. Allah placed kindness to them directly beside His own worship, and He commanded a humility toward them that the proud heart of this age finds almost impossible.

وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا *

And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy, and say: My Lord, have mercy upon them as they raised me when I was small.

Sūrah al-Isrā' (17:24)

Lower the wing of humility, Allah says. Our parents gave up their sleep, their time, their wealth, and their comfort so that we could have ours, and yet in our time many parents are spoken to harshly by the very children they raised, children who have been taught by their friends and their screens that respect must be earned from a parent rather than given to them. But the Prophet ﷺ taught that the pleasure of the Lord lies in the pleasure of the parent, and that the anger of the Lord lies in the anger of the parent. And he ﷺ declared plainly that the one who does not show mercy to our young and does not honour the rights of our elders is not upon his way. A community that has lost its respect for elders and its tenderness toward children has lost something at the very root of its faith.

Good Manners Begin at Home

It is a strange thing, brothers and sisters, how a person can be gentle with strangers and harsh with his own family. He smiles at his coworkers, he is patient with his customers, he is the picture of good manners in the masjid and the marketplace, and then he walks through his own front door and becomes short-tempered, cold, and unkind to the people who deserve his best. The Messenger ﷺ overturned this completely.

خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِهِ، وَأَنَا خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِي.

The best of you are those who are best to their families, and I am the best of you to my family.

Source: Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** 3895 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Notice that he ﷺ did not say the best of you are the best to the public, or the best in the eyes of the community. He said the best to their families. The true measure of a person's character is taken at home, by the people who live with him, not by the people who only see his polished surface. So let us bring our finest manners through our own front doors, and give the people we love the best of us, not the leftovers.

The Strength of Self-Control

Much of the harm we do to those around us is done in a single moment of anger, a moment that destroys what years of love had built. A man once came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked for advice, for a single piece of guidance to hold onto. And the answer the Prophet ﷺ gave, and repeated, was short and unforgettable.

لَا تَغْضَبْ.

A man said: Advise me. The Prophet ﷺ said: Do not become angry. The man repeated his request several times, and each time he said: Do not become angry.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī **Hadith No:** 6116 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

He repeated it because anger is the doorway through which so much ruin enters: it destroys marriages, severs friendships, breaks families, and divides communities. And the Prophet ﷺ taught us to measure strength not by the body but by the control of the soul.

لَيْسَ الشَّدِيدُ بِالصُّرْعَةِ، إِنَّمَا الشَّدِيدُ الَّذِي يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ الْغَضَبِ.

The strong person is not the one who overcomes people by his strength. Rather, the strong person is the one who controls himself when he is angry.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 6114, Muslim 2609 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

Real strength, brothers and sisters, is not the strength of the arm that wins a fight. It is the strength of the heart that holds its tongue, that swallows its anger, that chooses gentleness when it has every power to be harsh. That is the strength of the believer.

And how greatly we need this strength inside our own homes, brothers and sisters, where the smallest sparks so often become the largest fires. A tired word at the end of a long day, a raised voice over something that will not matter by next week, a harshness toward a spouse or a child that lingers in their heart long after we have forgotten it. The Prophet ﷺ, who carried the weight of an entire Ummah, never struck a servant, never struck a woman, and never took revenge for himself. If he, with all that burdened him, could master his anger, then we can learn to pause, to breathe, to seek refuge in Allah from Satan, and to lower our voice when everything within us wants to raise it.

The Safety of the Tongue

And of all the limbs that test our character, none is more dangerous than the small piece of flesh behind our teeth. The Prophet ﷺ tied the safety of our speech directly to our faith in Allah and the Last Day.

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ جَارَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ.

Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent. And whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honour his neighbour. And whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honour his guest.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 6018, Muslim 47 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

Our tongues can build relationships or destroy them, bring people together or tear families apart, and we will answer for every word. That is why the Messenger ﷺ defined the true Muslim by the safety others feel around him. He said that the Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the people are safe, so that no one fears our speech, our actions, or our behaviour. Ask yourself, brothers and sisters: do the people in my life feel safe from my tongue, or do they brace themselves when I begin to speak?

The Danger of Hollow Worship

Now let me share with you a narration that should make every one of us pause and examine ourselves, for it shows that worship without character is a building with no foundation. A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and mentioned a woman known for praying much in the night, fasting much in the day, and giving much in charity, but who harmed her neighbours with her tongue. The Messenger ﷺ said of her something terrifying.

هِيَ فِي النَّارِ.

It was said: O Messenger of Allah, a certain woman prays much, fasts much, and gives much charity, but she harms her neighbours with her tongue. He said: She is in the Fire. Then a woman was mentioned who prayed only the obligatory prayers and gave little charity but harmed no one, and he said: She is in Paradise.

Source: Musnad Aḥmad **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Stop and consider that, brothers and sisters. Her night prayer and her fasting and her charity did not save her, because she wounded the people around her. And the other woman, with only her obligations and a small charity, entered Paradise because she harmed no one. This does not mean that worship is unimportant; the prayer and the fast are the pillars of our faith. It means that Islam is never only about our relationship with Allah. It is also, inseparably, about our relationship with His creation, and the one who is careful with the first while careless with the second has misunderstood the religion.

Mercy, and the Rank It Raises

At the heart of all good character is mercy, and mercy is the quality by which we earn the mercy of Allah Himself. The Messenger ﷺ tied the two together in a promise.

الرَّاحِمُونَ يَرْحَمُهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ، ارْحَمُوا مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَرْحَمْكُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ.

The merciful are shown mercy by the Most Merciful. Show mercy to those on the earth, and the One above the heavens will show mercy to you.

Source: Jāmi‘ at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** 1924 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Mercy to our parents and our spouses, mercy to our children, mercy to our neighbours, to the poor, to the elderly, and to the weak. The Prophet ﷺ was the most merciful human being who ever walked the earth, and the closer we come to his mercy, the closer we come to him. And here is the astonishing reward that good character can earn. The Messenger ﷺ told us that a believer, simply through his good character, can reach the rank of those who fill their nights with prayer and their days with fasting.

إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لَيُذْرِكُ بِحُسْنِ خُلُقِهِ دَرَجَةَ الصَّائِمِ الْقَائِمِ.

Indeed, a believer attains, by his good character, the rank of one who regularly fasts and stands in prayer at night.

Source: Sunan Abī Dāwūd **Hadith No:** 4798 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Imagine that, brothers and sisters. The reward of a lifetime of fasting and night prayer, earned through patience, kindness, forgiveness, and humility in how we treat one another. This is the tremendous, often forgotten value of good character. It is worship in the marketplace, worship in the home, worship in every word and every dealing.

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

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.

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 khutbah we saw that the Messenger ﷺ described his very mission as the perfection of character, that Allah praised him for his character above all else, and that good character is the heaviest deed on the scale and a means to the company of the Prophet ﷺ in Paradise. We saw that character is the proof of faith, that it begins in our homes, that strength is self-control, that the tongue must be made safe, and that worship without good treatment of people is hollow. Now let us turn to how we actually build this character, for it is not a gift handed to a lucky few; it is a skill that is learned and a habit that is grown.

Building Beautiful Character

Let me leave you with a few practical steps, brothers and sisters. First, ask Allah for it directly and daily, for the Prophet ﷺ himself would supplicate, O Allah, guide me to the best of character, for none guides to the best of it except You. If he asked, how much more do we need to ask? Second, study the life of the Messenger ﷺ, for we cannot imitate an example we do not know; let his Sīrah be read in our homes. Third, place a guard upon the tongue, and before you speak, ask three questions: is it true, is it beneficial, and is it kind. Fourth, learn to forgive and to pardon, for Allah loves those who pardon people, and a heart that holds no grudges is a heart at peace. Fifth, be most patient with your family, for they test our character the most and deserve our best. And sixth, keep good company, for character spreads from person to person like a scent, and we become like those we sit with.

What Allah Will Ask

When we finally stand before Allah, brothers and sisters, He will not ask us how many followers we gathered, how many likes we collected, how famous we became, or how much wealth we piled up. He

will ask us about our honesty and our humility, about how we treated our parents, our spouses, our children, our neighbours, and our fellow Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ taught us that the people most beloved to Allah are the ones most beneficial to others.

أَحَبُّ النَّاسِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَنْفَعُهُمْ لِلنَّاسِ، وَأَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ سُرُورٌ تَدْخِلُهُ عَلَى مُسْلِمٍ، أَوْ تَكْشِفُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً، أَوْ تَقْضِي عَنْهُ دَيْنًا، أَوْ تَطْرُدُ عَنْهُ جُوعًا.

The most beloved of people to Allah are those most beneficial to people, and the most beloved of deeds to Allah is a joy you bring to a Muslim, or a hardship you relieve from him, or a debt you settle for him, or a hunger you drive away from him.

Source: al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ (aṭ-Ṭabarānī) **Authenticity:** Ḥasan

This is what our religion looks like when it is lived: a person whose worship of Allah overflows into goodness toward everyone around him. The Messenger ﷺ summarized Islam through beautiful character, and so if we truly love him, we have no choice but to strive to resemble him in it. Loving him is not only a feeling in the heart; it is a manner in the hand and a softness on the tongue.

So let each of us choose, before we leave this masjid, one relationship in which our character has been weak, and let us resolve to mend it for the sake of Allah. Perhaps it is a parent we have been short with, a spouse who has not seen our best side in a long time, a sibling we have not spoken to out of pride, or a neighbour we have ignored. Beautiful character is not built by admiring it in a sermon. It is built one choice at a time, one swallowed word, one act of forgiveness, one moment of patience, until what we practise becomes who we are.

Closing Du‘ā

Dear brothers and sisters, let us raise our hands to the One who alone can beautify our character. O Allah, guide us to the best of character, for none guides to the best of it except You, and turn away from us its evil, for none turns away its evil except You. O Allah, beautify our character as You have beautified our creation. O Allah, make us merciful to Your creation, gentle in our speech, patient in our homes, and forgiving of those who wrong us. O Allah, make us among the most beneficial of people to people, and among those closest to Your Messenger ﷺ on the Day of Judgement. O Allah, forgive us and our parents, and have mercy upon them as they raised us when we were small. O Allah, purify our hearts, forgive our shortcomings, and grant us the highest levels of Paradise. 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, the command of justice and excellence with which Allah closes the affair.

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-Naḥl (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