

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

خطبة الجمعة

Friday Sermon

*Mind Your Own Path:
The Forgotten Excellence of Islam*

DELIVERED AT

Masjid Adam



ŞİFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

Mind Your Own Path

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 * وَيسِّرْ 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 Sickness of the Tongue and the Eye

Dear brothers and sisters, there is a quiet sickness that spreads through families and communities, and it does not announce itself as a sin. It dresses itself up as concern, as curiosity, as keeping informed. It is the habit of busying ourselves with the lives of other people: their faults, their failures, their private affairs, their choices that are no business of ours. We discuss what so-and-so said, why this family did that, how much that brother earns, why this sister is not yet married. And in our age this sickness has been handed a weapon it never had before, for now a rumour can travel to a thousand hearts in the time it takes to lift a thumb, and the faults of a Muslim can be exposed to the world in a single careless message. Allah, the Most High, warned us against this disease in words so vivid that they should stop us every time our tongue begins to move toward another person's honour.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ *

O you who have believed, avoid much suspicion. Indeed, some suspicion is sin. And do not spy, nor backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful.

Sūrah al-Hujurāt (49:12)

Look at how Allah gathers three diseases into one verse, brothers and sisters. First the suspicion of the heart, then the spying of the eye, and then the backbiting of the tongue, for the one usually leads to the next. We assume the worst of someone, so we begin to watch them, and then we speak of what we found. And Allah does not merely call it forbidden; He paints it as a thing so revolting that our very nature recoils from it, the eating of the flesh of our dead brother. The scholars of tafsīr, among them Ibn Kathīr and al-Qurṭubī, explained that this image is meant to make the soul feel the ugliness of backbiting that the tongue has grown too comfortable with. We would never tear at the flesh of a corpse, yet we tear at the honour of a living brother in his absence and feel nothing.

And do not let anyone excuse himself by saying that what he said was true. For the Messenger ﷺ defined this sin precisely so that none of us could hide behind that excuse.

أَتَدْرُونَ مَا الْغِيْبَةُ؟ قَالُوا: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ: ذِكْرُكَ أَخَاكَ بِمَا يَكْرَهُ. قِيلَ: أَفَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ فِي أَخِي مَا أَقُولُ؟ قَالَ: إِنْ كَانَ فِيهِ مَا تَقُولُ فَقَدْ اغْتَبْتَهُ، وَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِيهِ مَا تَقُولُ فَقَدْ بَهْتَهُ.

Do you know what backbiting is? They said: Allah and His Messenger know best. He said: It is mentioning your brother with what he dislikes. It was asked: What if what I say about him is true? He said: If what you say is true, you have backbitten him, and if it is not true, you have slandered him.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 2589 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

So the truth of the matter is no defence, brothers and sisters. If the fault is real, naming it behind his back is the very backbiting Allah forbade; and if it is false, we have piled the greater crime of slander on top of it. There is no safe path here except silence about what does not concern us.

The Excellence of Leaving What Does Not Concern You

And the cure that the Messenger ﷺ gave us is breathtaking in its simplicity. He did not hand us a complicated formula. He told us that a great portion of the beauty of our very Islam lies in a single act of restraint.

مِنْ حُسْنِ إِسْلَامِ الْمَرْءِ تَرْكُهُ مَا لَا يَعْنِيهِ.

Part of the excellence of a person's Islam is his leaving alone that which does not concern him.

Source: Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** 2318 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan

Reflect on the weight of that, brothers and sisters. The Messenger ﷺ tied the quality of a Muslim's Islam to how well he minds his own affairs. The more a person leaves alone what does not concern him, the more beautiful his Islam becomes; and the more he meddles, pries, and gossips, the more his Islam is diminished. And notice the freedom hidden in this teaching. The one who minds his own business is set free from a thousand burdens that were never his to carry. He is not exhausted by the dramas of others, not poisoned by their faults, not weighed down by news that brings him nothing but sin. The believer who looks away has lightened his own heart.

And consider how much of our prying hides behind the mask of friendly conversation, brothers and sisters. How old are you? Are you married yet? Why do you not have children? How much do you earn? Why did you sell your house? These questions, asked without right, are not warmth; they are intrusions into a private trust that Allah gave to another soul and not to us. Every person carries circumstances, struggles, and tests that Allah alone fully knows, and it is not our place to pull back the

curtain He has drawn over them. The believer learns to ask after a person's wellbeing without digging into their private affairs, and to offer help without demanding to know what does not belong to him.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were people of this restraint. They were so occupied with correcting their own hearts that they had little appetite for inspecting the hearts of others. It is related that some of the early Muslims would say that they met people who had no faults of their own to keep them busy, so they busied themselves with the faults of the people, and they met others who were so aware of their own faults that they had no time left for anyone else's. Which of the two, brothers and sisters, do we wish to be? The one whose own account is so neglected that he has the leisure to audit everyone around him, or the one who knows that his own reckoning is heavy enough to fill all his days?

The Idle Tongue and the Wasted Hour

How much of our speech, brothers and sisters, falls into the category of what the Arabs called qīl wa qāl, the endless cycle of they said and it is said? The Messenger ﷺ named this among the things Allah dislikes for us, placing idle gossip beside the wasting of wealth and the asking of needless questions.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَرِهَ لَكُمْ قِيلَ وَقَالَ، وَكَثْرَةَ السُّؤَالِ، وَإِضَاعَةَ الْمَالِ.

Indeed, Allah dislikes for you idle gossip, asking too many questions, and the wasting of wealth.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 5975, Muslim 593 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun 'Alayh

Idle gossip, brothers and sisters, is not counted as harmless. It is named among what Allah dislikes, because the tongue that is always busy with others is a tongue with no time left for the remembrance of Allah, and the heart that is always watching others has no time left to watch itself. And so the Messenger ﷺ gave us a golden rule for every word that is about to leave our mouths, a rule that, if we lived by it, would silence the greater part of our sins.

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ.

Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent.

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

Speak good, or stay silent. There is no third option offered for the believer, no permission for the careless word, the cutting joke at another's expense, the rumour passed along without a thought. If what we are about to say is not good, the Messenger ﷺ has already told us what to do with it: leave it unsaid.

And how heavy this responsibility has become in our time, brothers and sisters, when the tongue has been joined by the thumb. A word of backbiting once died in the room where it was spoken; today a single message can carry a Muslim's fault into a hundred homes before the sun sets, and a rumour can be forwarded a thousand times by people who never paused to ask if it was even true. The group chat, the comment, the forwarded screenshot, all of these are speech, and all of them are written down by the two angels who do not sleep. Allah said that not a word is uttered except that there is a watcher by him, ready to record. Let us imagine that record read back to us, on the Day of Judgement, every message we ever sent about another person, and let that imagining soften our hands before they type.

Do Not Hunt for the Faults of Others

There is a kind of person, brothers and sisters, who appears outwardly religious, whose tongue is busy with the name of faith, and yet who spends his energy searching out the hidden faults of his brothers and sisters. The Messenger ﷺ had the severest of warnings for such a person, and it should make every one of us guard our eyes and our suspicions.

يَا مَعْشَرَ مَنْ آمَنَ بَلِسَانِهِ وَلَمْ يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ قَلْبَهُ، لَا تَغْتَابُوا الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا عَوْرَاتِهِمْ،
فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ اتَّبَعَ عَوْرَاتِهِمْ يَتَّبِعِ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ، وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ يَفْضَحْهُ وَلَوْ فِي جَوْفِ
بَيْتِهِ.

O you who have believed with your tongues while faith has not entered your hearts, do not backbite the Muslims, and do not seek out their faults. For whoever seeks out their faults, Allah will seek out his fault, and whomever Allah pursues, He will expose, even were he in the depths of his own house.

Source: Sunan Abī Dāwūd **Hadith No:** 4880 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan

What a terrifying exchange, brothers and sisters. The one who hunts the faults of others invites Allah to hunt his, and the one who exposes a brother invites his own exposure, even in the privacy of his home where he thought no one could see. How much safer, then, is the one who covers the faults of others, for the Prophet ﷺ promised that whoever conceals the fault of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and the next. The believer is not a hunter of flaws. He is a concealer of them. He is not given to taunting, cursing, foul speech, or vulgarity, for these are not the manners of faith.

مَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ.

Whoever conceals the fault of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and the Hereafter.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 2580 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

What a trade, brothers and sisters: we conceal one fault of a brother, and Allah conceals our faults in both worlds. Who among us does not carry faults he prays will stay hidden on the Day when the secrets are tested? Then let us earn that concealment by becoming people who conceal. The believer is a shelter for the honour of his brothers, not a window onto their flaws.

The Believers Who Succeed Turn Away

And when Allah described the believers who have truly succeeded, the believers who have won, He placed among their very first qualities not a great act of worship, but an act of turning away.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ * الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ * وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ *

Successful indeed are the believers, those who are humbly submissive in their prayer, and those who turn away from idle talk.

Sūrah al-Mu'minūn (23:1 to 3)

Notice the order, brothers and sisters. Right after humility in prayer, the very next quality of the successful believer is turning away from idle talk, from al-laghw, from everything that is empty and brings neither benefit in this world nor reward in the next. Allah connected the success of a soul to its ability to look away from what does not concern it. The believer who has mastered his tongue and his curiosity is already walking the road of the successful.

And do not think, brothers and sisters, that idle talk is only the obvious backbiting and slander. Al-laghw is everything empty, every hour poured into matters that will not be asked about except to our loss, every argument we are drawn into that concerns us not at all, every controversy we adopt as our own though it has nothing to do with our path to Allah. The believer guards his time as he guards his wealth, knowing that the hour spent dissecting the lives of others is an hour stolen from the only life he will answer for, his own. To turn away from all of this is not weakness or indifference; it is the discipline of a soul that has understood what truly matters and refuses to be pulled away from it.

The One Who Arrives Bankrupt

Let me leave you with a scene the Messenger ﷺ described that should make every one of us tremble before we next speak ill of someone. He asked his Companions who the bankrupt person is. They answered as we would, that he is the one with no money and no possessions. But the Messenger ﷺ corrected them with a definition of poverty far more frightening.

الْمُفْلِسُ مَنْ يَأْتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِصَلَاةٍ وَصِيَامٍ وَزَكَاةٍ، وَيَأْتِي قَدْ شَتَمَ هَذَا، وَقَذَفَ هَذَا، وَأَكَلَ مَالَ هَذَا، وَسَفَكَ دَمَ هَذَا، وَضَرَبَ هَذَا، فَيُعْطَى هَذَا مِنْ حَسَنَاتِهِ، وَهَذَا مِنْ حَسَنَاتِهِ.

The bankrupt of my Ummah is the one who comes on the Day of Resurrection with prayer, fasting, and zakāh, but he comes having insulted this one, slandered that one, devoured the wealth of this one, spilled the blood of that one, and struck this one. So this one is given from his good deeds, and that one from his good deeds, until his good deeds are gone.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 2581 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Imagine arriving on that Day, brothers and sisters, carrying a lifetime of prayer and fasting, only to watch it handed away, deed by deed, to the people whose honour your tongue tore apart in the gatherings of this world. The gossip felt free in this life, but its price is paid in the only currency that will matter on that Day. So before we repeat the rumour, before we expose the fault, before we pry into the affair that was never ours, let us ask a simple question: is this worth my prayers? Is this gossip worth handing my good deeds to the very person I am speaking about? For that, brothers and sisters, is exactly what we are doing.

The righteous before us understood this so deeply that they made it a way of life. There is a well-known story of a man who came to a scholar of the Qur'an asking about the meaning of a single verse, and the scholar asked him, what is the verse before it? The man did not know. And the verse after it? He did not know that either. The scholar then asked, what is your trade? The man said, I repair vehicles. The scholar said gently, then return to repairing vehicles. He was not mocking the man; he was teaching all of us that there is dignity and safety in tending to what Allah has actually placed in our hands, rather than wandering into matters that are not ours to carry. Every one of us has a path Allah has assigned to him, and our peace lies in walking it, not in watching everyone else walk theirs.

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 heard Allah forbid us from suspicion, from spying, and from backbiting, painting that last sin as the eating of our dead brother's flesh. We heard the Messenger ﷺ teach that the beauty of our Islam lies in leaving what does not concern us, that we must speak good or stay silent, that the one who hunts the faults of others will have his own faults exposed, and that the gossipier arrives on the Day of Judgement bankrupt, his good deeds carried off by those he wronged with his tongue. Now let us turn this reminder into a practice we can actually carry through the week.

Turning the Gaze Inward

The cure for minding everyone else's business, brothers and sisters, is to become busy with our own. Each of us has been given a unique trust by Allah: our own prayers to perfect, our own heart to purify, our own faults to repair, our own family to raise, our own knowledge to grow. If we gave to our own souls even half the attention we give to the affairs of others, we would be among the righteous. So let us make some practical resolutions. Before we speak of another person, let us pause and ask whether it concerns us at all, and if it does not, let us leave it. Let us assume the best of our brothers and sisters rather than the worst, for good assumption, ḥusn al-ẓann, is the default of the believing heart. Let us step back from the gatherings and the group messages where honour is torn apart, even if it costs us, for our good deeds are too precious to gamble. And let us take the time and energy we once poured into the lives of others and pour it instead into our own prayer, our own Qur'an, our own children, and our own service to those in need.

And let us be especially careful with the smaller habits that feel harmless, brothers and sisters. The casual question that pries. The forwarded message we did not verify. The lingering on a post to find

something to criticize. The conversation that begins with did you hear about and ends in sin. Each of these can be cut off at its root with a single decision: that we will be people who turn away. When a gathering turns to backbiting, let us change the subject or quietly excuse ourselves. When a message carrying a Muslim's fault reaches us, let it stop with us and travel no further. When suspicion whispers in our heart, let us answer it with a good assumption and a prayer for our brother. These are small acts, but they are the very acts by which Allah described the successful, and they are within the reach of every one of us this very afternoon.

Cover, and You Will Be Covered

And let us become, brothers and sisters, a people who cover rather than expose. When we learn of a fault in a brother, let us conceal it as we would wish our own faults to be concealed on the Day when every secret is laid bare. The Messenger ﷺ promised that Allah aids His servant as long as the servant aids his brother, and that whoever relieves a believer of a hardship, Allah relieves him of a hardship on the Day of Resurrection. Imagine being a source of relief and safety to the people around you, someone whose presence in a gathering means that no absent person will be harmed, someone whose tongue is known for good or for silence. That is the character of the believer, and it is within the reach of every one of us, starting today.

Closing Du‘ā

Dear brothers and sisters, let us raise our hands to the One who knows every secret and conceals what He wills. O Allah, guard our tongues from backbiting, our eyes from spying, and our hearts from suspicion. O Allah, make us busy with our own faults rather than the faults of others, and beautify our Islam by helping us leave what does not concern us. O Allah, conceal our faults in this world and the next, and make us among those who conceal the faults of their brothers and sisters. O Allah, do not let our good deeds be carried away on the Day of Judgement by the honour of those we have wronged; purify our records and forgive the harm of our tongues. O Allah, forgive us and our parents and have mercy upon them as they raised us when we were small. O Allah, unite the hearts of this Ummah upon love and good assumption, and remove from us discord, envy, and division. 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