

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

خطبة الجمعة

Friday Sermon

Sadaqah: Bringing Joy to Hearts



ŞİFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

Sadaqah: Bringing Joy to Hearts

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.**

The Most Beloved of People

There is a hadith of our Prophet ﷺ that is often quoted from one of its windows while the rest of the house is left in shadow. We hear the first half of it on the night of a fundraiser, and we move on. But when you sit with the whole of it, you find that Allah has placed an entire path to His pleasure inside a single sentence, and that the path runs straight through the hearts of the people around you. The Prophet ﷺ told us who, of all of humanity, stands most beloved to Allah, and then he told us why.

أَحَبُّ النَّاسِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَنْفَعُهُمْ لِلنَّاسِ، وَأَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ سُورٌ تَدْخُلُهُ 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 into the heart of 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: at-Ṭabarānī, al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ **Hadith No:** Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘ 176 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan (graded by al-Albānī)

Look closely at the order of the words. Allah did not say that the most beloved of people are the most learned, though knowledge is a light. He did not say the most worshipful, though worship is the purpose of our creation. He said the most beneficial. And then, when He listed the deeds He loves most, He began not with the loaf of bread, not with the debt, not with the hunger, but with *surūr*, an inner joy that you carry into the heart of your brother. The food and the debt and the hunger are all there, and they matter, and our community must carry them. But the first thing named is the one we are least likely to put on a donation form. You cannot fundraise for joy. You cannot weigh it on a scale or wire it across a border. And yet Allah, who weighs every atom, placed it at the front of the line.

Brothers and sisters, think about your own seasons of hardship for a moment. When a person is buried under debt, or grief, or fear, there comes a point in that difficulty when he grows tired of his own story. He is exhausted by the conversation about his problems. He does not want, in that moment, another reminder of what he lacks. He wants, even for an hour, to forget that he is in difficulty at all. He wants to feel that life is still normal, that he is still a person and not a problem to be managed. And often the people we never forget, the friendships that anchor us for the rest of our lives, are not the ones who solved the crisis. They are the ones who simply showed up, sat with us, made us laugh, and gave us back a sense of normalcy when the world had turned strange. They handed us joy, and joy, it turns out, was the thing we could not buy.

Kind Words Above Charity

If this seems like a small matter beside the weight of real giving, then listen to how Allah Himself ranks it. In the second sūrah of the Qur'an, in the heart of the verses about charity, Allah places kind speech above a gift that wounds the one who receives it.

قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أَذًى وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٌ *

A kind word and forgiveness are better than a charity followed by injury. And Allah is Free of need and Forbearing.

Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:263)

The scholars of tafsīr paused long over this verse. Imām as-Sa'dī explains that a gentle word offered to the one in need, and the covering of his slip when he stumbles before you, is dearer to Allah than wealth handed over with a frown, or with a reminder of the favour, or with anything that breaks the dignity of the one who receives it. For the poor man has already been tested by his poverty. To feed his body while you starve his honour is not charity at all. Ibn Kathīr notes that Allah seals the verse with two of His names, the Free of need and the Forbearing, as if to say that He has no need of the gift you give, and that He is patient with the one who has nothing, so how could the giver be harsh with him? The lesson lands on us with force. It is not enough to give. We are commanded to give in a way that lifts the heart of the one who receives, and a true kind word can outweigh a careless gift of gold.

The Charity that Costs Nothing

Now the Prophet ﷺ takes this teaching and places it within the reach of the poorest among us, the one who has not a single coin to give. He tells us that the face itself can be charity.

تَبَسُّمُكَ فِي وَجْهِ أَخِيكَ لَكَ صَدَقَةٌ.

Your smiling in the face of your brother is a charity for you.

Source: Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** 1956 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan

And lest anyone think a smile is too slight a thing to be written in the book of his deeds, the Prophet ﷺ closed that door directly, in a narration that Imām Muslim preserved for us with the highest grade of authenticity.

لَا تَحْقِرَنَّ مِنَ الْمَعْرُوفِ شَيْئًا، وَلَوْ أَنَّ تَلَقَّى أَخَاكَ بِوَجْهِ طَلَقٍ.

Do not belittle any good deed, even that you meet your brother with a cheerful face.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 2626 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Do not belittle it. The Prophet ﷺ repeated this counsel in narration after narration, more than forty times by the count of some scholars, always returning to the same humble example, the smile. Why would the Messenger of Allah ﷺ insist so firmly on something the world considers worthless? Because he knew what a smile carries. Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, observed that a smile needs no translation. There is no Arabic smile and Somali smile and Turkish smile and American smile. There is only the smile, and every human heart on earth reads it without a dictionary. At the season of Hajj you will hear people frown at one another in a hundred languages and quarrel in a hundred more, but a smile passes between strangers who share not a single word, and it is understood. It is the one language no one has to learn.

And consider what it actually costs you. What does it cost you to soften your face for the brother praying beside you? What does it cost you to say a kind word, to laugh gently with someone who has not had much to laugh about? Nothing. It empties no pocket. Yet a person may walk into this masjid carrying a day that has crushed him, and find here a row of faces that are glad to see him, and a few warm words at the door, and he may go home a different man. You will have lifted him out of a pit, and it will have cost you nothing at all. Brothers and sisters, that is the strange economy of Islam, where the cheapest currency can purchase the most expensive thing a human being owns, which is peace of heart.

Why the Smile Reaches So Deep

The scholars asked why such a small act carries such weight, and their answers are worth our reflection. Ibn al-Qayyim said that when you smile at a person who feels low in society, who has come to believe that he is a burden on his community and a weight upon the world, your smile tells him something his ears have been starving to hear: that he is not a burden to you, that you are glad of his company, that his arrival is a pleasure and not an imposition. Think of the one who is used to receiving help, who lowers his head when he walks among people because he is afraid of how they will look at him. He has learned that even the salām he receives is hurried, given quickly so that the giver can move past him. To such a person, an unhurried smile is a declaration. It says: you belong here, you are not less, you are my brother. There is a saying remembered of Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyāḍ that captures this spirit better than any sermon.

When a poor man came to him, Fuḍayl would embrace him and say: Welcome to the one who has come to carry my sins away, who takes from my worldly portion and gives me, in exchange, a share of the Hereafter. How can I see you as a misfortune Allah has sent into my life, when in truth you are a mercy? The honour that Allah has chosen me to be the hand that reaches you in your need is an honour I should rejoice in.

Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyāḍ, may Allah have mercy on him

Sit with that reversal, brothers and sisters, because it can heal something in us. We tend to imagine that the one who gives stands above the one who receives. Fuḍayl saw it the other way. He understood that the poor man was carrying a gift in his open hand, the gift of reward from Allah, and that the

giver was the one truly enriched. So turn the lens onto your own life. If Allah has chosen you to be the source of relief rather than the one in need of it, that is not your achievement, it is His selection. Many people would give anything to be in the position to help, to be, as the Prophet ﷺ described, the upper hand that gives rather than the lower hand that takes. Allah chose you for it. He placed someone's hardship within reach of your hand. And He has promised that He remains in the aid of the servant for as long as the servant remains in the aid of his brother, so the relief you bring to another may be the very door through which Allah lifts a hidden weight from your own life.

The Smile of the Prophet ﷺ

If you want to know how heavily this weighs in the scale of the noble, look at how the Companions remembered the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. They had walked with the man who divided the world, who led armies and received revelation, who interceded for nations. And when they searched their memories for the sweetest thing, again and again it was his smile. Jarīr ibn ‘Abdullāh, a Companion of high standing, gave a testimony that should stop every one of us.

مَا حَجَبَنِي النَّبِيُّ ﷺ مِنْذُ أَسْلَمْتُ، وَلَا رَأَيْتُ إِلَّا تَبَسَّمَ فِي وَجْهِهِ.

The Prophet ﷺ never kept me from entering upon him since I embraced Islam, and he never saw me except that he smiled in my face.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 3035, Muslim 2475 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

Never once did he see this man without a smile. Not on the easy days and not on the hard ones. And it was said of Bilāl, may Allah be pleased with him, that he could not pass a place in Madīnah without remembering the Prophet ﷺ smiling at him from that very spot, until the whole city became, to his eyes, a map of that smile. He did not say, I remember the great favours the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did for me, though they were many. The sweetest memory was the smile. And there is the testimony of ‘Abdullāh ibn Salām, a learned man of the People of the Book in Madīnah, who looked upon the face of the Prophet ﷺ for the first time and said, I knew at once that this was not the face of a liar. The face carried a truth that words had not yet spoken. This is what a face can do, brothers and sisters. It can carry mercy across a room before a single word is exchanged.

And he ﷺ carried this same light home. It was said of him that he never entered his house as one returning from a battlefield of troubles, though troubles had filled his day. He had left behind funerals, the disputes of the community, the poverty of the poor, the weight of an entire Ummah, and still, when he crossed his own threshold, it was as though he arrived from a wedding, bringing a celebration in with him. ‘Ā’ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, knew that something was wrong on a certain day for one reason only: the Prophet ﷺ entered, gave the salām, and asked her how she was, and did not draw her into his usual warm conversation. The absence of his joy was so unusual that it

became a sign. For how many of our households, brothers and sisters, would warmth at the door be the strange thing, and silence the normal one?

Gentleness that Draws People In

This was not a stray feature of the Prophet's character ﷺ, pleasant but incidental. It was a method, a deliberate way of carrying the religion to people so that the faith arrived on a smiling face and not a scowling one. He laid it down as a command to those who would call others to Allah after him.

يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تَعْسِرُوا، وَبَشِّرُوا وَلَا تَنْفِرُوا.

Make things easy and do not make them difficult, give glad tidings and do not drive people away.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 69, Muslim 1734 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun 'Alayh

See how he lived it. A bedouin, new to Islam and ignorant of its manners, once stood up in the masjid of the Prophet ﷺ and began to relieve himself in a corner of it. The Companions, in their love for the sacred space, leapt up to seize him and rebuke him. But the Prophet ﷺ stopped them. He told them to leave the man, to let him finish, and then to pour a bucket of water over the place. And he called the bedouin gently and explained to him, with a soft tongue and not a raised one, that the masjid is a place for prayer and the remembrance of Allah, not for such things. Imagine the two paths that opened in that moment. Had the man been shamed and beaten before the eyes of the congregation, he might have fled Islam forever and carried a wound about the Muslims for the rest of his days. Instead he was met with patience, and he later said of the Prophet ﷺ that he had never seen a teacher better or gentler. A single act of gentleness can keep a soul inside the religion. A single act of harshness can drive it out. The Prophet ﷺ knew exactly what was at stake, and he chose ease and glad tidings every time. This is what the early Muslims understood good character to be at its root.

Good character is a cheerful face, the giving of what is good, and the restraining of harm.

al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, may Allah have mercy on him

Three things, and a child could do all three. A cheerful face, costing nothing. The giving of good, even a kind word. And the restraining of harm, simply that your tongue and your mood do not wound the people around you. Brothers and sisters, when we hear of high character we sometimes imagine grand acts beyond our reach. al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī brought it back to the doorstep of every believer. You are capable of all three today, before you leave this masjid, and capable of them tomorrow at your own table.

In Your Home Before the World

This is where the teaching presses closest to us. We are quick to imagine that worship lives in the masjid, in the rows of ṣalāh, in the pages of Qur'an, in the fast of Ramadan. All of that is worship, and the heart of it. But the Prophet ﷺ taught us that worship also lives in the way we treat the people Allah has placed in our care. If a smile to a stranger is charity, what is a smile to your mother? What is a smile to your father in his old age? What is a warm face for your wife after a long day, or for your husband, or for a child who has been waiting all afternoon for you to come home? The Prophet ﷺ taught that what you give to your family is charity twice over, both a charity and a strengthening of the ties of kinship, and so the kindness you carry through your own front door is among the most blessed kindness of all.

Yet consider how we often arrive. The family was happy. They were waiting, glad that you were coming home. And instead of receiving their gladness and adding to it, we walk in carrying the misery of the day, and we set it down in the middle of the room, and within minutes everyone is breathing our exhaustion. What did we gain by it? The first moments after you cross the threshold set the temperature of the whole evening. Walk in heavy, and a good mood meets your bad one and curdles into argument. Walk in with a soft face and two kind words, and you have given your household a gift that the richest man could not buy them. It costs you nothing but the decision to leave the weight of the road outside the door.

How a Companion Carried This

The Companions did not treat this as a sermon to be admired. They walked the streets at night looking for hearts to lift and burdens to carry. It is related of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, may Allah be pleased with him, the commander of the believers, that he would slip out of his house in the dark to see to the needs of his people. On one such night he passed a small house and heard children crying, and he found a woman with a pot on the fire and the little ones around her weeping. He asked what ailed them, and she told him they were crying from hunger, and that she had set a pot of water with stones in it on the fire and was stirring it to deceive them into thinking food was coming, hoping they would tire and fall asleep, for she had nothing to feed them. She did not know she was speaking to 'Umar. He wept where he stood, and he hurried back to the store of provisions and filled a sack with flour and fat and carried it himself upon his own back. His servant offered to carry it for him, and 'Umar refused with words that should be written on the wall of every heart: Will you carry my burden for me on the Day of Judgement? He carried the sack himself through the night, cooked for the family with his own hands, and did not leave until he saw the children eat and laugh. He had relieved a hunger and driven away a grief, exactly as the Prophet ﷺ described, and he counted it not as a favour he was doing them but as a provision he was sending ahead for himself.

That is the spirit, brothers and sisters. The greatest of this Ummah after its Prophets did not hold themselves above the small and hidden act of mercy. They went looking for it. They understood that relieving a hardship in this world purchases the relief of a hardship on the Day when relief will be the only currency worth owning.

The Ones Who Carry Silent Burdens

Brothers and sisters, look around you in this very room. How many of the people you will greet today are carrying something they will never name? A debt they cannot speak of. A marriage that is straining. A child who has wandered. A loneliness that follows them home and sits with them in an empty flat. They will not announce it. They will return your salām and they will move on. And Allah, in His wisdom, may have sent you across their path precisely so that you could be the relief, not through your wealth, which they did not ask for, but through a face that tells them they are seen, a few words that tell them they matter, a warmth that says they are not alone. These are not small things deposited into a small account. Allah is the One who multiplies, and He multiplies an investment made into a human heart beyond anything we can picture.

And when you give, give in the spirit that Allah praised in the people of Paradise, who fed others while loving the food themselves, seeking nothing in return, not even a word of thanks.

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا * إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا *

And they give food, despite their love for it, to the needy, the orphan, and the captive, saying: We feed you only for the Face of Allah. We wish from you neither reward nor thanks.

Sūrah al-Insān (76:8 to 9)

Notice what they say as they serve. We feed you for the Face of Allah alone, we want neither repayment nor even your gratitude. These are not words spoken aloud to the poor, for that would itself be a kind of injury. It is an attitude carried in the heart, a humility in the act of serving. They are not standing above the one they feed. They are humbled to have been chosen as the hand that delivers Allah's provision. And what does Allah grant such people in return? He removes from them the dread of the Day they feared, and He meets them with radiance and with joy. The reward fits the deed exactly. They brought joy to hearts in this world, and Allah brings joy to their faces in the next.

Present in Body, Absent in Heart

There is a new obstacle in our age that the people before us did not face, and we should name it plainly. We can now be in the same room as the people we love and be utterly absent from them. A family gathers at one table, and each face is lit by a different screen, and not one of them has truly looked at another in an hour. A father comes home and the children run to meet him, and his eyes never leave the phone in his hand, and slowly the children learn not to bother running. We have become present in body and absent in heart, and the joy we are commanded to bring into the homes of those we love cannot pass through a lowered, glowing face. A smile that no one receives because no one looked up is not a smile at all.

So the application for our week is concrete. When you walk through your door, let the phone go into your pocket for the first few minutes, and give your face and your eyes to the people who waited for you. When someone is speaking to you, let them see that you are listening with more than your ears. And carry this same conscience into the world inside the screen, for our words travel there too. How easy it has become to type something cutting under a stranger's post, to mock, to belittle, to wound a person we will never meet, all from behind a name. The believer who has understood this khutbah will pause. He will ask whether his comment brings joy to a heart or a sting to it, and he will remember that the angels are recording the keystrokes as surely as they record the spoken word. A kind message sent to a brother who is struggling, a word of encouragement under the post of someone who is trying, a refusal to join the pile-on against a person already down, these are the smiles of our time, and Allah writes them as charity just the same.

The Reward Above Every Reward

And here the teaching rises to its summit. Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, said something that should make every heart in this masjid lift. He said the greatest thing a believer can hope for from his Lord is not the gardens, and not the rivers, and not the mansions of Paradise, beautiful as all of these are. The greatest hope is this: to meet Allah while He is pleased, to see Him on that Day and find Him smiling upon you in a way that shows His good pleasure. There is no gift above that gift. And then ask yourself the question that turns this whole khutbah back upon your own week. The thing you most long for Allah to give you on that Day, His pleasure, His smile, is the very same thing He has placed within your power to give to His servants now. You give to people what you are begging Allah to give to you.

So take a moment and picture it, brothers and sisters. The Day of Judgement. Your first meeting with your Lord. The first time you will ever see Allah. Imagine the comfort and the joy that would pour into your heart if, in that moment, you found Him pleased with you. Is there anything in all the world you could want more than that? And if that is what you want, then begin to scatter the same thing now, in the small change of daily life: a smile at the door, a kind word to the one with a heavy heart, the relief of a brother's burden, a face that tells your family they are loved. You may forget the moment five minutes later. Allah will not forget it. And on the Day when every soul is anxious for itself, He may show you a reward you cannot imagine for every time you chose mercy over a frown.

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; 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. 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 saw that the most beloved of people to Allah are the most beneficial, and that at the front of the deeds He loves is the joy you carry into another heart. We saw that a kind word can outweigh a gift, that a smile is a charity the poorest can give, and that the Prophet ﷺ was remembered most of all for his smile. The danger now is the danger of every Friday, that we admire these meanings for an hour and leave them at the door of the masjid. So let us turn admiration into a habit we can actually keep.

A Plan for the Week Ahead

This worship asks nothing you do not already possess. You do not need wealth to begin, nor status, nor to have your own life perfectly in order. Begin at home, where it is hardest and counts the most. Resolve that when you cross your own threshold this week, you will leave the weight of the day outside it, and carry in a soft face and a warm word for the people waiting on the other side. Resolve to greet the brothers in this masjid as though you are glad of them, because you should be, with an unhurried salām and a face that does not look past them. Resolve to notice the one who sits alone, the new face, the elder, the one whose head is lowered, and to give him a moment that tells him he is seen. And when Allah opens for you the chance to relieve a real hardship, a debt you can quietly help settle, a hunger you can drive away, a burden you can lift from a brother's shoulders, take it, and remember the promise the Prophet ﷺ attached to it.

مَنْ نَفَسَ عَنْ مُؤْمِنٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ الدُّنْيَا، نَفَسَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ،
وَاللَّهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ.

Whoever relieves a believer of a hardship from the hardships of this world, Allah will relieve him of a hardship from the hardships of the Day of Resurrection. And Allah remains in the aid of the servant for as long as the servant remains in the aid of his brother.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** 2699 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

Hold on to the last clause, brothers and sisters, because it is a mercy aimed straight at your own life. Allah is in the aid of the servant for as long as the servant is in the aid of his brother. It means that in your own darkest moment, when you feel you have nothing left to give, Allah may open a door of relief for you, and the key to it may be that you turned to ease the suffering of someone else. This is the secret that the people who serve through their own hardship discover. The charity they give does not only reach the other person. It circles back and becomes a healing for their own soul. The Prophet ﷺ told us that charity never decreases wealth, and those who give sincerely watch that truth unfold before their eyes, as doors open in their lives that they did not know existed.

Between Hope and Caution

Let no one leave this place thinking that the small kindnesses are a substitute for the obligations Allah has placed upon him, and let no one leave thinking they are too trivial to bother with. The believer walks between the two. He guards his ṣalāh and his honesty and his duties, and alongside them he scatters mercy in the small moments, knowing that Allah sees the atom of good and never loses it. Anyone can be generous when life is easy. The ones Allah raises in rank are those who keep a soft face and an open hand when their own life is heavy. So do not wait for the perfect season to begin. Give what you can, even if it seems small, for in the sight of Allah nothing sincere is ever small, and the one who takes care of others, Allah takes care of him in ways he never expected.

Closing Du‘ā

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 bring joy to hearts, who relieve the distressed, and who carry mercy wherever they go. O Allah, soften our faces and our words for our families, our neighbours, and the strangers we meet. O Allah, set right the affairs of this Ummah, relieve the hardship of the oppressed and the indebted, heal the sick, and grant safety and provision to our brothers and sisters in every land of trial. O Allah, forgive us and our parents and have mercy upon them as they raised us when we were small. O Allah, accept our deeds, grant us beneficial knowledge and sincere hearts, and

let the first time we see Your noble Face be a meeting in which You are pleased with us. 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 seals 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-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