



## On honouring the elderly

### First Sermon

All praise is due to Allah, the Doer of Good, and the Entirely Merciful. He sent His noble Messenger who advised the believers to take care of their elderly. I bear witness that there is no deity save Allah, having no associates. He is the Mighty and Generous. I also bear witness that our Master Muhammad is the servant of Allah and His Messenger. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, his pure blessed family and companions, and all those who follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment.

### As to what follows,

I urge you, O servants of Allah, and myself to be aware that you are asked to obey Him the Most Exalted, in line with His orders: **“and fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be treated unjustly.”** (Al-Baqara: 281).

### O Worshipers,

Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, has created man in stages and endowed upon them innumerable provisions and bounties. He, by His Wisdom, made human beings go over phases of strengths and weaknesses throughout their life. As such, a person is born weak as infant, after that he grows to be a spirited youth, and then a strong adult to return to the state of weakness as he grows older in age and his body become delicate.

Allah, the Almighty described these phases in His holy Book as he says, **“Allah is the one who created you from weakness, then made after weakness strength, then made after strength weakness and white hair. He creates what He wills, and He is the Knowing, the Competent.”** (Ar-Room: 54).

Indeed, old age is an honour attributed by Allah, the Most Exalted, to mankind for He makes them amongst the best of people if they adhere to His commands. It was narrated that when the Messenger of Allah pbuh was asked about which amongst people is the best. He pbuh said, “He whose life is long and his deeds are good.”

On a related note, it was narrated that Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “With old age and long life, a Muslim will not increase but in honour with Allah, the Almighty.” Growing grey-haired, thus, is a great blessing for the Messenger of Allah pbuh said, “Whoever has one hair that turns grey in Islam, it will be light (noor) for him on the Day of Resurrection.” In another narration he said, “Allah will record on his behalf a good deed for it, and will wipe out a sin for it.”

Islam attributes a special status to the elderly and orders us to treat them with respect and show compassion to them in their old age. Honouring the old-aged is even associated with exalting Allah, the Most High. The Messenger of Allah pbuh said, “Part of glorifying Allah is to show honour to a grey-haired Muslim.”

### **O Believers,**

This calls us to ask about how one can honour the elderly. The answer is we can show respect to them through many actions, attitudes and words of mouth. For instance, one can pay due respect to the elderly by appreciating their character and valuing what they say. The Prophet pbuh said in this regard, “He belongs not to us (i.e., not a true Muslim) who does not respect the elder amongst us.”

Moreover, in Islam, serving the older people, treating them mercifully, providing for their needs and comfort and taking care of their health and wellbeing are duties incumbent on each Muslim.

Such merits were part of the character of the past righteous people. It was narrated in this regard that Abu Bakr As-Siddiq, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab and the other companions, may Allah be pleased with them, served the elders amongst them out of respect and honour to their standing.

On the same matter, it was narrated that a righteous scholar went to a village and there he saw old women who did not have any one to serve them and take care of their needs. So, he paid from his money for arranging a helper for each of those women.

Amongst the other attitudes that involve respect to the white-haired is to greet them before they do that as advised by the Prophet pbuh when he said, “The young should greet the old.” Furthermore, in assemblies, one should show hospitality to them and make them sit

in the best place. We should also listen and pay attention to their speech.

Indeed, the Prophet pbuh set the best role model in this regard. It was narrated that when three of the companions, may Allah be pleased with them, came to the Prophet pbuh, the younger amongst them wanted to start the conversation. Thereupon, he pbuh said, "Let the elder begin, let the elder begin," in an indication that the elder should speak first.

Another good example on the firmly rooted tradition of respecting the elderly at the time of the Prophet pbuh is that he wanted to test his companions once so he asked them, "Amongst the trees, there is a tree which resembles a Muslim." Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "I wanted to say that it was the date-palm tree but as I was the youngest of all (of them) I kept quiet."

More to the point, it was reported that Samura Ibn Jundub, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "I was a boy during the lifetime of Messenger of Allah pbh, and used to memorise what he said, but I do not narrate what I preserved because there were amongst us people who were older than me," to whom the Prophet pbuh used to speak.

Truly, it is a duty on the young people to communicate with the elders, have a gentle and pleasant attitudes towards them, call them with the names that are dearest to them and give them the privilege to be the first to speak and take action too.

Another token of respect to, honouring of and gratefulness for the white-haired is to attend to their needs without making them take the burden of leaving their house. Instead, the younger should go to the elder to provide for his needs. This is summed up in the following Hadith. It was narrated that on the day the Prophet pbuh conquered Mecca, Abu Bakr As-Siddiq, may Allah be pleased with him, carried his father, Abu Quhafah, and took him to the Prophet. On seeing him, the Prophet pbuh said, "Why did you trouble the respected old man; I would have come to him in his house".

Drawing from such lessons, it is then a right for the elderly, whether man or woman, on the young people to give them priority in all aspects of the daily life affairs. For instance, the youth must give precedence to the old-aged at government service departments by

offering them their seats or allowing them to take their turn in the queue. They should also give them the preference to enter the lift first and to cross the road. Indeed, they are successful those who embrace such gracious conducts and will, by Allah's favour, attain great rewards.

Another aspect of the Prophet's respect of and mercy towards the elderly people is that he enjoined Muslims not to prolong the prayer too much when they lead the worshippers lest it becomes a burden for the elders amongst them. He pbuh said, "If anyone of you leads the people in the prayer, he should shorten it for amongst them are the weak, the sick and the old."

Following such a gracious approach, Muslim scholars respected the old-aged people and cared for them. As such, all their books about Hadiths (Prophet's traditions) and preaching contained one or more chapters on respecting the elderly. For example, they laid down principles and etiquettes for treating the white-haired and walking with them. One of the righteous scholars said in this regard, "Whoever walks with someone who is elder and more knowledgeable than him, then let him be on the right side of the elderly, attributing to him the standing of the Imam in prayer.... And if they were a group of people, they should walk behind the eldest amongst them."

With this in mind, we implore to Allah, the Most Giving, to let us enjoy our hearing, our sight and our power as long as He keeps us alive. O Allah, please grant us to be good and dutiful to our parents, respectful to and caring for our elderly.

O Allah, we beseech You to guide us all to obey You and obey Your Messenger Muhammad pbuh and obey those You have commanded us to obey in line with Your orders: "**O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.**" (An-Nisaa: 59).

May Allah direct us all to the blessings of the Glorious Quran and the Sunna of His Messenger pbuh.

I say this and ask Allah for forgiveness for me and you, so invoke Him for forgiveness, for He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

## Second Sermon

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. I bear witness that there is no deity save Allah, having no associates. I also bear witness that our Master Muhammad is the servant of Allah and His Messenger. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Master Muhammad, his pure family, companions, and all those who follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment.

I urge you, **O servants of Allah**, and myself to be aware that you are asked to obey Him, the Most High and Exalted.

### **O Worshipers,**

Showing utmost care and dutifulness to the elderly is amongst the noble deeds and is an authentic character. This is because our past, which is a source of pride to us and the bounties of the present that we are cherishing are all the produce of our grey-haired ones. It is our duty, therefore, to show gratitude to them for all the good they did to us. This is in line with the teachings of the holy Quran in which Allah, the Almighty says, **“is the reward for good [anything] but good?”** (Ar-Rahman: 60).

Throughout their life, our forefathers have spared no efforts to ensure comfort and well-being of their sons and daughters. In return, they have a great right on us, which was emphasised in the holy Quran and stressed by the seal of the Prophets, our Master Muhammad pbuh.

Truly, it such a gracious attitude that one sit with the elderly and check on their wellbeing, share their memories with them, benefit from their experiences and listen to their words of mouth. We should also raise their spirits by receiving them well, showing hospitality to make them feel our happiness for meeting them, in addition to filling their spare times by engaging them with activities that may benefit them in this life and the next.

Furthermore, it is our duty also to teach our children the etiquette of dealing with the elderly and how to show respect to them. Such traditions are deeply rooted in our society and should be inherited from one generation to the next. This way, we can pay back to our elderly people part of their rights on us and foster the good bonds between generations. It is also conducive to allow transfer of the

experiences of the forefathers to their children and grandchildren. Ultimately, all the members of the community will draw closer to one another with further coherence and collaboration.

Having this in mind, we are responsible to raise our little ones on respecting and honouring their old-aged and treating them in kindness.

That is said, please bear in mind that you are instructed to invoke peace and blessings on the Prophet pbuh. Allah, the All-High, says, **“indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace.”** (Al-Ahzab: 56).

O Allah, please confer Your blessings and grant peace upon our Prophet Muhammad pbuh, his family and all of the companions.

May Allah be pleased with the Rightly Guided Caliphs: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali, all of the Companions, and all those follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment.

O Lord, we seek Your grace to be pleased with our elderly and grant them on our behalf the best of rewards. O Lord of the Worlds, please also grant success to our youngsters and youths and guide them to the best of words and deeds.

May Allah have mercy on the honourable martyrs of our country and those of the coalition and gather them with the righteous. May Allah make their dwelling with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favour of the prophets and the steadfast affirmers of truth, O the Most Gracious the Most Forgiving.

O Allah, please grant the best reward for the families of the martyrs and offer them patience and solace. May Allah grant victory to the soldiers of the Arab Coalition who gathered to restore the rights to their owners. O Lord, please be by their side and guide the Yemeni people to everything that is good. O Allah, make them rally for the word of truth and legitimacy, and bless them with welfare and stability, O the Most Generous.

O Lord, we beseech You to bless all of the Muslim countries and the whole world with stability and peace.

O Allah, may we ask You for all that is good, in this world and in the Hereafter. O Allah, we seek Your favour to admit us, our parents, whoever has done a favour to us and all Muslims to Your Paradise.

May Allah grant success and continued health and care to the UAE President HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. May Allah also ensure success to his Vice-President, trustworthy Crown Prince and his brothers, Their Highnesses the Rulers of the Emirates.

O Allah, please forgive all of the Muslims, men and women, living and dead. May Allah have mercy on Sheikh Zayed, Sheikh Maktoum and the Late UAE Sheikhs. O Lord, forgive and show mercy on our parents, relatives and whoever has done a favour to us.

O Allah, make this gathering one of compassion, and our dispersion after it one that is infallible. O Allah, do not let anyone amongst us be deprived or desperate.

We pray to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, to protect the UAE against any of temptations, both apparent and hidden, and continue blessing the UAE with safety and security.

Our Lord, give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire.

O Allah, we implore you to send upon us wealthy rain and make us not amongst those who are desperate. O Allah, relieve us! O Allah, relieve us! O Allah, relieve us! O Lord, provide us from the blessings of the sky a beneficial rain and make our crops grow.

**O Servants of Allah “indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.”** (An-Nahl: 90).

Remember Allah and He will remember you. Be grateful of His benevolence and He will increase His blessings to you. Allah says, **“and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do.”** (Al-Ankaboot: 45).