

We shall increase the doers of excellence

First Khutbah

All praise belongs to Allah, who has praised His servants who practice excellence (al-muḥsinīn), who has made them inheritors of the Gardens of bliss, who has honoured them with gazing upon His Noble Countenance. We bear witness that there is no god but Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate, and we bear witness that our master and our Prophet Muḥammad is the servant of Allah and His trustworthy Messenger. O Allah, send prayers, peace, and blessings upon him, upon his family, his companions, and those who follow them.

To proceed:

I advise you, O servants of Allah, and I advise myself to have consciousness of Allah (taqwā). For He, exalted is His Majesty, says:

وَأِنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

And if you do good and have taqwā, then indeed Allah is
ever aware of what you do [al-Nisā': 4: 128]

O believers:

It is narrated from Anas ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) who said:

“I was walking with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and he was wearing a coarse cloak. A Bedouin came up to him and pulled him violently by his cloak. I looked at the side of the Messenger of Allah’s neck ﷺ and saw the mark left by the edge of the cloak because of how hard he had pulled it. Then the man said, ‘O Muḥammad, order that I be given from the wealth of Allah which you possess!’ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ turned toward him, smiled, and then ordered that he be given something” [al-Bukhārī and Muslim].

That is our Prophet ﷺ He teaches us that we must condition our souls upon excellence (iḥsān): If people act with excellence, we act with excellence. If they act wrongly, we do not act wrongly. Excellence is a value that remains firmly attached to its people in every circumstance: in affection and in estrangement, in anger and in contentment, in hardship and in ease. For Yūsuf عليه السلام was told while he was in hardship:

إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Indeed, we see you to be among the doers of excellence

[Yūsuf: 12: 36]

And he did not abandon excellence when his rank was elevated and his station became lofty, when his brothers said to him:

إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Indeed, we see you to be among the doers of excellence

[Yūsuf: 12:78]

The meaning of iḥsān is: to increase in goodness, by giving others more than what is strictly required of you, in obedience to Allah and in response to His command, exalted is He:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ

Indeed, Allah commands justice and excellence

[al-Naḥl :16: 90]

Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (رضي الله عنه) embodied the meaning of excellence in his response to the command of the Most Merciful. He used to provide for Miṣṭaḥ ibn Uthāthah because of their kinship and his poverty. But Miṣṭaḥ wronged Abū Bakr and his family. So Abū Bakr said, “By Allah, I will never spend upon Miṣṭaḥ again”. Then, Allah revealed the verse in Surah Nūr :

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُو الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولَى الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ
وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلِيَعْفُوا وَلِيَصْفَحُوا ۗ أَلَا تَحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ
لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Let not those of virtue and wealth among you swear not to give to their relatives, the needy, and those who have emigrated for the sake of Allah. Let them pardon and overlook. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you?

And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful [al-Nūr: 24: 22]

So, Abū Bakr said, “Yes, by Allah, I love that Allah forgive me,” and he returned to his generosity toward him and said, “By Allah, I will never withdraw it from him again”. Thus, the slogan of the believers is: We shall remain people of excellence. The wrongs of wrongdoers will not prevent us from doing good, in obedience to the saying of the Lord of the worlds:

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةِ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ

Repel evil with that which is better. We are most knowing of what they describe [al-Mu'minūn: 23: 96]

No matter what obstacles the people of excellence encounter in their path, they overcome them with firmness, being certain that beyond them lies abundant goodness and immense favour.

O servants of Allah:

The fields of excellence are many and its forms are diverse. The greatest of them is excellence toward one's parents: showing them kindness, fulfilling their rights. Then the circle of

excellence expands to include the family: maintaining its cohesion, care, affection, and tenderness. Then goodness and excellence continue to spread until they encompass every human being, as Allah the Exalted says:

وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ
وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ

Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and be good to parents, and to relatives, and orphans, and the needy, and the near neighbour, and the distant neighbour, and the companion at your side, and the traveller

[al-Nisā' : 4: 36]

Excellence is the hallmark of a refined society: a society that obeys its Lord, follows the guidance of its Prophet, walks upon the path of its leadership, clings to its values, and expresses the purity of its inner essence.

O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. I say these words of mine, and I seek forgiveness from Allah for myself and for you, so seek His forgiveness.

Second Khutbah

All praise belongs to Allah alone, and peace and blessings be upon the one after whom there is no prophet.

To proceed:

O you who practice excellence: The believer keeps before his heart Allah's excellence toward him, and that drives him to show excellence to others, acting upon the saying of his Lord:

وَأَحْسِنْ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ

“And do good, just as Allah has done good to you”. [al-

Qaşāş :28: 77]

And why should it not be so? For Allah, exalted is He, has encouraged His servants toward excellence and promised to preserve their good deeds for them and not allow their reward to be lost:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

**Indeed, Allah does not allow the reward of the doers of
excellence to be lost**

Rather, He repays them for what they have put forward and shows excellence to them just as they showed excellence. This is a divine law:

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ

Is the reward for excellence anything but excellence?

How beautiful is the saying of the poet:

Whoever does good will never lack its reward;
goodness does not perish between Allah and the people.

Allah elevates the rank of the people of excellence, raises their status, and encompasses them with His love. The Anṣār used to show excellence and give as Allah willed, until hardship and drought afflicted them and they withheld. Then Allah revealed:

وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of excellence.

Allah, glorified is He, shelters the people of excellence with His care and spreads for them His mercy:

إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of excellence

And on the Day of Resurrection He will admit them into the Gardens, grant them the finest gifts and bestowals, and honor them with gazing upon His Noble Countenance. He, exalted is He, says:

لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ

For those who do excellence is the best reward and more

We are now in the month of Sha‘bān, the month of preparation for Ramaḍān: through righteousness and excellence, fasting and recitation of the Qur’ān, and purification of hearts — hoping for the forgiveness of the Knower of the unseen.

O Allah, make us among the people of excellence, among those who turn away from wrongdoing, and honor us with gazing upon Your Noble Countenance. O Allah, send prayers, peace, and blessings upon our master and our Prophet Muḥammad, and upon his family, his companions, and those who follow them. O Allah, be pleased with Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, and ‘Alī, and with all the noble Companions. O Allah, we ask You to grant each one of us his request, to expand his chest, and to ease his affairs. O Allah, grant us a share of every good You distribute, every provision You spread, every mercy You unfold, and every happiness You cause to endure. Bless us in Sha‘bān and allow us to reach Ramaḍān.

O Allah, make us believers through You, worshippers for You, followers of the guidance of our Prophet, people of excellence toward Your creation, dutiful to our parents. Have mercy upon them as they raised us when we were small, O Most Merciful of the merciful.

O Allah, preserve the United Arab Emirates with Your protection, take charge of it with Your care, encompass it with Your guardianship, and perpetuate its unity, compassion, stability, and prosperity. Protect it from the envy of the envious, the schemes of the schemers, the aggression of aggressors, and the evil of enemies and those who harbor hatred — O Lord of the worlds.

O Allah, preserve with Your protection the possessor of wisdom, courage, and noble generosity — Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Zāyed, President of the State — and grant him continued sound judgment and divine assistance. Grant success to him, his deputies, his brothers the rulers of the

Emirates, and his trustworthy Crown Prince in what You love and are pleased with.

O Allah, have mercy upon Shaykh Zāyed, Shaykh Rāshid, and all the shaykhs of the Emirates who have passed on to Your mercy. Admit them, by Your grace, into the vastness of Your Gardens, and encompass the martyrs of the nation with Your mercy and forgiveness. O Allah, have mercy upon the Muslim men and women, the living among them and the dead.

O Allah, send down rain upon us and do not make us among the despairing. O Allah, grant us relief. O Allah, grant us relief. O Allah, grant us relief.

O servants of Allah:

Remember Allah, the Mighty, the Majestic, and He will remember you. Give thanks to Him for His blessings and He will increase you. And establish the prayer.