The Danger of Showing Off

Standard version · English Friday sermon

First Khutbah — Arabic Opening

Innal hamda lillah,
nahmaduhu wa nasta‘eenuhu wa nastaghfiruhu,
wa na‘oodhu billahi min shuroori anfusina
wa min sayyi’aati a‘maalina. ▶ Audio

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا.

Man yah-dihi-llahu falaa mudilla lah,
wa man yud-lil falaa haadiya lah. ▶ Audio

مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يُضْلِلْ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.

Wa ash-hadu an laa ilaaha illallahu wahdahu laa shareeka lah,
wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhu wa rasooluh. ▶ Audio

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

Yaa ay-yuhal-ladheena aamanut-taqul-laha haqqa tu-qaa-tihi
wa laa tamootunna illaa wa antum muslimoon. ▶ Audio

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ.

Yaa ayyuhan-naasu-ttaqu rabbakumul-ladhee khalaqakum min nafsin waahidah,
▶ Audio

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ،

wa khalaqa minhaa zawjahaa,
wa baththa minhumaa rijaalan katheeran wa nisaa’aa. ▶ Audio

وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا، وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً.

Wattaqullahal-ladhee tasaa’aloona bihi wal-arhaam.
Innallaha kaana ‘alaykum raqeebaa. ▶ Audio

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا.

Yaa ayyuhalladheena aamanu-ttaqullaha wa qooloo qawlan sadeedaa. ▶ Audio

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا.

Yuslih lakum a‘maalakum wa yaghfir lakum dhunoobakum. ▶ Audio

يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ.

Wa man yuti‘illaha wa rasoolahu faqad faaza fawzan ‘azeemaa. ▶ Audio

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا.

Ammaa ba‘d. ▶ Audio

أَمَّا بَعْدُ.

Fa inna asdaqal hadeethi kitaabullah, ▶ Audio

فَإِنَّ أَصْدَقَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ،

wa khayral hadyi hadyu Muhammadin sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam, ▶ Audio

وَخَيْرَ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ،

wa sharral umoori muh-dathaa-tuhaa,
wa kulla muh-dathatin bid‘ah,
wa kulla bid‘atin dalaalah,
wa kulla dalaalatin fin-naar. ▶ Audio

وَشَرَّ الْأُمُورِ مُحْدَثَاتُهَا، وَكُلَّ مُحْدَثَةٍ بِدْعَةٌ، وَكُلَّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَكُلَّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ.

First Khutbah — English

My dear brothers in Islam,

I advise myself first, and then all of you, to have taqwa of Allah.

Fear Allah, be aware of Allah, and remember that one day we will stand before Him and answer for how we lived our lives.

Today's khutbah is about a dangerous sin that can enter our hearts without us even realising it.

A sin that can affect our prayers, our charity and the good deeds we perform.

The danger of showing off.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Every one of us wants to be respected.

We like it when people say good things about us.

We feel happy when someone appreciates our efforts.

And there is nothing necessarily wrong with being pleased when someone recognises something good we have done.

But there is a danger when gaining people's praise becomes the reason we do good deeds.

When we pray so that people will admire us.

When we give charity so that people will call us generous.

Or when we speak about Islam so that others will believe we are knowledgeable and religious.

My dear brothers in Islam,

A good deed can look beautiful on the outside, but what matters to Allah is also the intention behind it.

In Islam, showing off in worship is known as *riya*.

It happens when a person performs an act of worship to gain the admiration of others rather than sincerely seeking the pleasure of Allah.

And this is something we must take very seriously.

The Prophet Muhammad, Sallahu Alayhi wa Salam, taught us in Sahih al-Bukhari, (Hadith 1):

"The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions."

Think about these words.

Two people may perform the same good deed.

Both may give the same amount of charity.

Both may pray beside each other in the masjid.

And both may appear equally sincere to the people watching them.

But their intentions may be completely different.

One is doing it to please Allah.

The other is doing it because he wants people to praise him.

People may see the same action.

But Allah knows what is inside our hearts.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Allah warns us about showing off in Surah Al-Ma'un, (verses 4–6).

Allah describes people who are careless about their prayers and says:

"those who are all show"

Think about how serious this warning is.

A person may appear to be performing an act of worship.

But if his intention is simply to impress others, he has lost sight of the purpose of that worship.

We should never forget that salah is an act of worship for Allah.

It is not a performance for people.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Imagine someone who normally prays very quickly.

But one day, he notices that people are watching him.

Suddenly, he begins praying slowly.

He spends longer in sujood.

He makes his recitation more beautiful.

And he tries to appear especially devoted.

But why has his behaviour changed?

Is it because he has become more aware of Allah?

Or is it because he wants the people watching to think highly of him?

My dear brothers in Islam,

We should be careful that our worship does not become a way of gaining people's admiration.

Of course, taking our time in salah and improving our recitation are good things.

But we should do them for Allah.

Not simply because someone is watching us.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Showing off can also affect our charity.

Imagine someone who gives money to help a struggling family.

The family is grateful.

Their needs are met.

And the person who donated may receive praise from the community.

But what was his intention?

Did he give because he wanted to help people and please Allah?

Or did he give because he wanted everyone to know how generous he was?

Sometimes, a person does something charitable and immediately begins telling everyone about it.

He wants his name mentioned.

He wants his photograph taken.

And he becomes upset if nobody publicly thanks him.

My dear brothers in Islam,

We should ask ourselves:

Would I still do this good deed if nobody ever knew I had done it?

This is an important question.

Because sincerity means that pleasing Allah matters more to us than receiving praise from people.

Allah warns us in Surah Al-Baqarah, (verse 264):

"do not cancel out your charitable deeds with reminders and hurtful words"

The same verse also warns against giving charity merely to be seen by others.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Charity should be an act of kindness and worship.

It should not become a way to make ourselves look important.

And we should not remind people of our generosity simply to make them feel indebted to us.

If Allah has given us wealth, let us use some of it to help others sincerely.

Whether people praise us or not.

My dear brothers in Islam,

But we must also understand something important.

Doing a good deed in public does not automatically mean we are showing off.

Sometimes, charity is collected openly to encourage others to contribute.

Sometimes, a person teaches Islam publicly because people need knowledge.

And sometimes, someone shares a beneficial Islamic reminder online so that others may benefit.

These actions can be good when performed with the right intention.

The question is not simply whether people can see what we are doing.

The question is why we are doing it.

Are we seeking Allah's pleasure?

Or are we mainly seeking attention and praise?

My dear brothers in Islam,

Another danger is showing off through Islamic knowledge.

A person may begin learning the Quran.

He may study hadith.

He may attend lessons and gain knowledge about his religion.

All of these are good things.

But as his knowledge grows, he may begin wanting people to admire him.

He may become upset when others are given an opportunity to speak.

He may constantly correct people in public to show how much he knows.

Or he may use religious knowledge to win arguments and embarrass others.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Islamic knowledge should make us more humble, not more interested in being admired.

The purpose of seeking knowledge is to understand our religion, obey Allah and benefit others.

Not simply to become known as an important or knowledgeable person.

The Prophet Muhammad, Sallahu Alayhi wa Salam, gave us a frightening warning about insincere intentions.

In Sahih Muslim, (Hadith 1905a), he described people who would be brought for judgment after performing deeds that appeared very great.

Among them was someone who had learned and taught religious knowledge and recited the Quran.

Another was someone who had given generously from his wealth.

And another was someone who had fought and died.

But their intentions were not sincere.

They wanted people to praise them.

They wanted to be known as knowledgeable, generous or brave.

And they had already received the praise they were seeking in this world.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Think carefully about this warning.

These were not small deeds.

Teaching the Quran.

Giving charity.

And sacrificing one's life.

Yet the hadith warns us that even actions that appear great can lead to punishment when performed for the wrong reasons.

The importance of a deed is not measured only by what people see. Our intentions matter enormously.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Today, showing off has become even easier through social media.

People can share almost every part of their lives.

Their holidays.

Their possessions.

Their achievements.

And even their acts of worship.

Sometimes, a person gives charity and immediately posts a photograph.

Someone performs Umrah and spends more time thinking about photographs than reflecting on the blessing of being there.

Another person shares every good deed and becomes disappointed when the post receives little attention.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Not every photograph or public announcement is wrong.

A person may share something beneficial with a sincere intention.

But we should examine our hearts.

Are we sharing something because it will genuinely benefit others?

Or because we want people to think highly of us?

And would we continue doing these good deeds if nobody liked, shared or commented on them?

My dear brothers in Islam,

There is another danger we must avoid.

Sometimes, we become so concerned about showing off that we stop doing good deeds altogether.

We may refuse to give charity publicly, even when there is a genuine need.

Or we may avoid helping someone because we are worried that people will praise us.

But this is not the answer.

We should not abandon good deeds. We should work on correcting our intentions.

If you have an opportunity to help someone, help them.

If you can teach something beneficial, teach it.

If you can support an Islamic project, support it.

But remind yourself that your reward comes from Allah, not from people's admiration.

My dear brothers in Islam,

We should also be careful about judging the intentions of others.

We may see someone giving charity publicly.

We may see someone posting an Islamic reminder.

Or we may see someone performing a good deed in front of others.

But we do not know what is inside that person's heart.

We should not immediately accuse them of showing off.

Allah knows their intentions, just as He knows ours.

Our responsibility is to examine ourselves rather than constantly questioning the sincerity of other people.

My dear brothers in Islam,

One day, we will stand before Allah.

The praise we received from people will no longer matter.

The compliments.

The recognition.

The number of followers we had.

And the number of people who admired us.

None of these things can replace sincere faith and righteous deeds.

So let us ask ourselves today:

Why do I perform my salah?

Why do I give charity?

Why do I help people?

And why do I want others to know about the good things I have done?

Let us seek the pleasure of Allah rather than the praise of people.

May Allah purify our hearts and intentions.

May Allah protect us from showing off in our worship.

May Allah help us perform good deeds sincerely, whether people see them or not.

And may Allah accept our worship and make us among His sincere servants, Ameen.

End of First Khutbah — Asking for Forgiveness

Aqoolu qawlee haadhaa,
wa astaghfirullaha lee wa lakum,
wa li saa'i-ril muslimeena min kulli dhanb.
Fastaghfirooh, innahu huwal ghafoorur raheem. ▶ Audio

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا، وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ، إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.

Sit briefly between the two khutbahs.

Second Khutbah — Arabic Opening

Alhamdulillahi rabbil 'aalameen, was-salaatu was-salaamu 'alaa ashrafil anbiyaa'i wal mursaleen, nabiyyinaa Muhammadin, wa 'alaa aalihi wa sahbihi ajma'een. ▶ Audio

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ، نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ، وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

Ash-hadu an laa ilaaha illallahu wahdahu laa shareeka lah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasooluh. Ammaa ba'd. ▶ Audio

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ.

Second Khutbah — English

My dear brothers in Islam,

Again, I advise myself and all of you to have taqwa of Allah.

We have spoken about the dangers of showing off and the importance of sincerity.

But now we need to ask ourselves:

How can we protect our intentions when performing good deeds?

My dear brothers in Islam,

The first thing we should do is examine our intentions before we act.

Before giving charity, ask yourself why you are giving.

Before sharing an Islamic reminder, ask yourself what you hope to achieve.

And before doing something good, remind yourself that you are seeking the pleasure of Allah.

Sometimes, this simple reminder can help us recognise when pride or the desire for praise is entering our hearts.

My dear brothers in Islam,

The second thing we can do is perform some good deeds privately.

Give charity without telling people.

Help someone without expecting recognition.

Make dua for someone without announcing it.

And perform voluntary acts of worship that nobody else knows about.

Having good deeds that remain between ourselves and Allah can help us develop sincerity.

My dear brothers in Islam,

The third thing we should do is avoid constantly seeking praise.

If someone thanks you for helping them, there is nothing wrong with accepting their thanks.

But do not become upset if nobody notices your efforts.

Do not stop helping people simply because they failed to praise you.

And do not measure the value of your good deeds by how much attention they receive.

Remember that Allah knows every sincere act of goodness.

Even when nobody else sees it.

My dear brothers in Islam,

We should also remember that sincerity is something we must continue working on.

A person may begin a good deed with a sincere intention.

But later, he may begin enjoying the attention it brings.

When this happens, he should correct his intention and remind himself why he began.

We should not assume that because we were sincere yesterday, we no longer need to examine our hearts today.

My dear brothers in Islam,

We should also teach our children the importance of sincerity.

Encourage them to pray because they love Allah and want to obey Him.

Teach them to help others because it is right.

And remind them that doing something good is valuable even when nobody gives them a reward or praises them.

Most importantly, let them see these qualities in us.

If our children see us constantly seeking recognition for every good deed, they may begin believing that helping people is only worthwhile when others notice.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Allah reminds us in Surah Al-Kahf, (verse 110), that whoever hopes to meet his Lord should perform good deeds and worship Him without associating anyone else in that worship.

This is an important reminder about sincerity.

Our worship belongs to Allah alone.

We should not allow the desire for praise to take the place of seeking His pleasure.

My dear brothers in Islam,

If we recognise that we have been showing off in the past, we should not lose hope.

Make sincere tawbah.

Ask Allah for forgiveness.

Correct your intentions.

And continue performing good deeds for His sake.

Do not allow past mistakes to stop you from becoming better.

My dear brothers in Islam,

One day, the admiration of people will mean nothing.

Our money and positions will remain behind.

Our reputation will no longer be able to help us.

But the deeds we performed sincerely for Allah will be of lasting importance.

So let us become Muslims who do good because it is right.

Who worship Allah because He deserves our worship.

And who help others without constantly seeking attention.

Let us be more concerned about being accepted by Allah than being admired by people.

May Allah purify our intentions.

May Allah protect us from pride, arrogance and showing off.

May Allah accept our prayers, charity and every good deed we perform sincerely.

May Allah teach our children to value sincerity over praise.

And may Allah make us among those who meet Him with sincere hearts and enter Jannah, Ameen.

Closing Dua — Arabic Transliteration

In-nal-laaha wa ma-laaa-e-ka-ta-hoo yu-sal-loo-na 'alan-na-bee,
yaaa ay-yu-hal-la-thee-na aa-ma-noo sal-loo 'a-lay-hi wa sal-li-moo tas-lee-maa.
▶ Audio

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ، يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا.

Allah humma Sali wa salam wa barik ala Muhammadin wa ala alley Muhammad
▶ Audio

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ.

Allahummaghfir lil-muslimeena wal-muslimaat, wal-mu'mineena wal-mu'minaat, al-ahyaa'i minhum wal-amwaat. ▶ Audio

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، الْأَحْيَاءِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْأَمْوَاتِ.

Rabbanaa zalamnaa anfusanaa, wa illam taghfir lanaa wa tarhamnaa, lanakoonanna minal-khaasireen. ▶ Audio

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ.

Rabbanaa aatinaa fid-dunyaa hasanah, wa fil-aakhirati hasanah, wa qinaa 'adhaaban-naar. ▶ Audio

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ.

Final Khutbah Closing — Arabic Transliteration

Ibaadallah,
innallaha ya’muru bil-‘adli
wal-ihsaani
wa eetaa’i dhil-qurbaa,
wa yanhaa ‘anil fahshaa’i wal-munkari wal-baghy.
Ya‘izukum la‘allakum tadhakkaroon. ▶ Audio

عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ، وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ، يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ.

Wa akhiroo da3wanal humdoolilahi rubul Alameen.
Wa Aqimis-salaah. ▶ Audio

وَآخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ. وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ.