The Importance of Forgiving Others

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 treated the people in our lives.

Today's khutbah is about something that can be very difficult, especially when someone has hurt us deeply.

Something that can bring peace into our hearts, repair relationships and earn the pleasure of Allah.

The importance of forgiving others.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Every one of us has been hurt by someone at some point in our lives.

Perhaps a friend betrayed our trust.

Perhaps a family member said something deeply hurtful.

Perhaps someone spread a false story about us.

Or perhaps someone treated us unfairly when we had done nothing wrong.

And sometimes, the person who hurt us was someone we loved and trusted.

These experiences can leave us feeling angry, disappointed and deeply upset.

But there is something we need to ask ourselves.

How long are we going to allow what happened in the past to control our hearts today?

My dear brothers in Islam,

Sometimes, a person hurts us once, but we continue reliving that experience for years.

We think about what they said.

We remember what they did.

We imagine what we should have said in response.

And every time we remember the incident, our anger returns.

Meanwhile, the other person may have moved on with their life.

They may not even realise how much we are still thinking about them.

But we continue carrying the pain.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Forgiveness can help us release some of that burden.

It does not mean pretending that nothing happened.

It does not mean that the other person was right.

And it does not mean that we must forget what they did.

It means making a sincere effort to let go of the desire to take revenge and allowing ourselves to move forward.

Allah praises those who forgive others.

In Surah Ali Imran, (verse 134), Allah describes the righteous as people who control their anger and forgive others.

Allah then tells us that He loves those who do good.

Think about these qualities.

Controlling anger.

Forgiving others.

And doing good.

These are not signs of weakness.

They are qualities that Allah loves.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Sometimes, we believe that forgiving someone means we have lost.

We think that if we forgive them, they will believe they have won.

Or that other people will think we are weak.

But this is not how Islam teaches us to understand forgiveness.

The Prophet Muhammad, Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam, taught us in Sahih Muslim, (Hadith 2588), that when someone forgives another person, Allah increases that person's honour.

Think about that.

We may believe that forgiveness lowers our position.

But the Prophet, Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam, teaches us that Allah raises our honour through forgiveness.

There is strength in being able to forgive when we have the power to remain angry.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Let us think about the disagreements that sometimes happen within our families.

Two brothers argue over money.

A husband and wife have a serious disagreement.

A parent and child exchange hurtful words.

Or relatives stop speaking because of something that happened many years ago.

At first, everyone may believe that the disagreement will be resolved quickly.

But days become weeks.

Weeks become months.

And sometimes, years pass without anyone making an effort to repair the relationship.

Children grow up without knowing their cousins.

Family gatherings become divided.

And people who once loved one another begin behaving like strangers.

My dear brothers in Islam,

How many families have been damaged because nobody was willing to take the first step towards forgiveness?

Sometimes, all that is needed is a sincere apology.

Sometimes, it is a phone call.

And sometimes, it is simply a willingness to sit down and listen to the other person's side of the story.

We should not allow pride to destroy relationships that can still be repaired.

My dear brothers in Islam,

There is also something important we should remember.

We all make mistakes.

There may be people in our lives who have forgiven us for things we said or did.

Perhaps our parents forgave us for the way we treated them.

Perhaps our spouse forgave us after an argument.

Perhaps a friend overlooked something hurtful we said.

We appreciate being forgiven when we are the ones who made a mistake.

But are we equally willing to forgive others?

My dear brothers in Islam,

Allah reminds us of something beautiful in Surah An-Nur, (verse 22):

"Do you not wish that Allah should forgive you?"

Think carefully about this question.

Every one of us needs Allah's forgiveness.

We have all committed sins.

We have all said things we regret.

And we have all fallen short of what Allah expects from us.

Yet we ask Allah to forgive us.

We hope that He will overlook our mistakes and show us mercy.

So should we not also try to show mercy towards others?

My dear brothers in Islam,

If we want Allah to forgive our shortcomings, we should make an effort to forgive the shortcomings of others.

This does not mean that our forgiveness is equal to Allah's forgiveness.

His mercy is far greater than ours.

But it means that forgiveness should be a quality we try to develop in ourselves.

My dear brothers in Islam,

We should also understand the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation.

Forgiveness is something we may work towards within our own hearts.

Reconciliation means restoring a relationship.

And these are not always the same thing.

Sometimes, a person sincerely forgives someone and the relationship becomes stronger than before.

But sometimes, a person may forgive someone while still needing to keep a distance.

Perhaps trust has been seriously damaged.

Perhaps the other person continues behaving in a harmful way.

Or perhaps there has been abuse.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Forgiveness does not mean that we must place ourselves or our families back into danger.

Islam does not require us to ignore injustice.

A person who has been abused can seek protection.

Someone who has been cheated can seek the return of their money.

And someone who has been seriously harmed can seek justice through lawful means.

Forgiveness can be a noble choice, but it should never be used to pressure someone into accepting continued harm.

We must be careful about this, especially when advising people who have experienced serious mistreatment.

My dear brothers in Islam,

There is another side to this subject that we must not forget.

What if we are the ones who need to be forgiven?

Sometimes, we spend so much time thinking about the people who have wronged us that we forget the people we have wronged.

Perhaps we have spoken harshly to our wife.

Perhaps we have embarrassed our children.

Perhaps we have treated our parents with disrespect.

Or perhaps we have damaged someone's reputation through gossip.

And instead of apologising, we make excuses.

We tell ourselves that they deserved it.

Or that we were angry.

Or that it happened a long time ago.

But my dear brothers in Islam,

Time passing does not automatically make a wrongdoing disappear.

If we have hurt someone, we should try to make things right.

The Prophet Muhammad, Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam, warned us in Sahih al-Bukhari, (Hadith 2449), that whoever has wronged another person should seek their forgiveness before the Day of Judgment.

He explained that on that day, money will not be available to settle these wrongs.

Instead, a person's good deeds may be taken to compensate those they harmed.

My dear brothers in Islam,

This is a serious warning.

We may have spent years performing salah, fasting and giving charity.

But if we have also been harming other people, we may have to answer for those actions.

So do not delay making things right.

If you owe someone money, make an effort to repay it.

If you have spread a false story, correct it.

If you have hurt someone, apologise sincerely.

And if you have broken someone's trust, take responsibility for what you did.

My dear brothers in Islam,

We should also remember that an apology must be sincere.

It should not simply be a way of ending an argument without accepting responsibility.

Sometimes, a person says, "I'm sorry you got upset."

But they never admit that what they did was wrong.

A sincere apology means recognising the harm we caused.

It means expressing regret.

And it means making an effort not to repeat the same behaviour.

Saying sorry is important, but changing our behaviour is what gives that apology meaning.

My dear brothers in Islam,

We should also teach our children the importance of forgiveness.

Children will have disagreements.

They will argue with their brothers and sisters.

They may fall out with friends.

And sometimes, they will say things that hurt one another.

Teach them to apologise when they are wrong.

Teach them to forgive when it is appropriate.

And teach them that they do not need to respond to every insult with another insult.

But most importantly, let them see these qualities in us.

If our children see us holding grudges for years, they may grow up believing that this is normal.

But if they see us apologising, forgiving and resolving disagreements fairly, they will learn something valuable.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Let us examine ourselves today.

Is there someone we are refusing to forgive over a small matter?

Is there a family relationship that could be repaired?

Is there someone waiting for an apology from us?

And is our pride preventing us from taking the first step?

One day, our lives in this world will come to an end.

The arguments we believed were so important may no longer matter.

The possessions we fought over will remain behind.

And we will stand before Allah and answer for how we treated one another.

Let us not carry unnecessary hatred into the future when we have an opportunity to make peace today.

May Allah forgive our sins and shortcomings.

May Allah remove hatred and bitterness from our hearts.

May Allah bring peace to families that have been divided.

May Allah help us forgive others and seek forgiveness from those we have wronged.

And may Allah make us among those who show mercy and receive His mercy, 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 importance of forgiving others and the harm that can come from holding on to anger.

But now we need to ask ourselves:

How can we begin practising forgiveness in our everyday lives?

My dear brothers in Islam,

The first thing we can do is examine the disagreements we are carrying.

Think about whether there is someone you have stopped speaking to.

Perhaps it is a brother or sister.

Perhaps it is a friend.

Or perhaps it is a relative you have avoided for a long time.

Ask yourself whether the matter can be resolved peacefully.

If it can, consider taking the first step.

A phone call.

A message.

Or a sincere invitation to talk.

Sometimes, a small effort can begin repairing a relationship that has been damaged for years.

My dear brothers in Islam,

The second thing we can do is learn to apologise properly.

If we have made a mistake, admit it.

Do not immediately blame the other person.

Do not make excuses.

And do not allow pride to prevent us from saying that we were wrong.

If we have taken something that belongs to another person, return it.

If we have caused damage, try to repair it.

And if we have spoken hurtfully, ask for forgiveness and work towards changing our behaviour.

Seeking forgiveness requires humility, honesty and a sincere effort to put things right.

My dear brothers in Islam,

The third thing we should do is stop bringing up old mistakes unnecessarily.

Sometimes, a husband and wife resolve an argument.

They apologise.

They agree to move forward.

But during the next disagreement, one of them brings up everything that happened years ago.

And suddenly, the argument becomes much bigger.

My dear brothers in Islam,

When a matter has genuinely been resolved, we should try not to use it as a weapon in future disagreements.

Of course, serious or repeated harmful behaviour may still need to be addressed.

But constantly reopening old arguments simply to hurt someone does not help a relationship become stronger.

My dear brothers in Islam,

We should also understand that forgiveness may take time.

Sometimes, the hurt is small, and forgiveness comes easily.

But sometimes, the harm is serious.

A person may need time, support and distance before they can begin moving forward.

We should not pressure someone who has been deeply hurt to forgive immediately.

And we should never tell someone that their faith is weak simply because they are still struggling with painful experiences.

Instead, offer kindness and support.

Encourage what is right.

And remember that Allah knows what each person has experienced.

My dear brothers in Islam,

Another way to develop forgiveness is to remember how much we need Allah's mercy.

We ask Allah to forgive our sins.

We ask Him to overlook our mistakes.

And we hope that He will be merciful to us when we stand before Him.

So let us make an effort to show mercy towards the people around us.

Our spouses.

Our children.

Our parents.

Our friends.

And our fellow Muslims.

The mercy we hope to receive should remind us to show mercy to others.

My dear brothers in Islam,

We should also teach our children that forgiveness and fairness can go together.

They should learn not to hold grudges over every small disagreement.

But they should also understand that they have the right to be safe and treated respectfully.

Teach them to apologise when they are wrong.

Teach them to seek help when someone is harming them.

And teach them that forgiveness does not require them to accept bullying or abuse.

My dear brothers in Islam,

One day, every one of us will leave this world.

There will come a time when we can no longer make that phone call.

When we can no longer apologise to someone we hurt.

And when the opportunity to repair a relationship may be gone forever.

So while we still have time, let us make a sincere effort.

Let us release unnecessary grudges.

Let us apologise for our mistakes.

And let us become people who are willing to forgive for the sake of Allah.

Because the peace that comes from forgiveness can be far more valuable than the satisfaction of holding on to anger.

May Allah forgive our past mistakes.

May Allah soften our hearts and remove unnecessary hatred.

May Allah reunite families that have been divided.

May Allah protect those who have suffered injustice and grant them relief.

And may Allah make us among those who forgive others and receive His forgiveness, 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.