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Preface

The man, driving down the street, saw children begging at the street corner. The sight always affected him and as always he wondered at the inequities of life. "Master!" he cried to his teacher, "Why doesn't Our Creator do something about these people?"

"He did", said the Master. "He made you."

If there is one word that can claim to sum up the entire question of leadership, it is Responsibility. When we choose to take a leadership stance we choose to hold ourselves responsible. To be held responsible. We say to the world that we are prepared to account for what we say and do and to be judged by the effects of those things on our environment. Without the willingness to accept responsibility, there is no leadership. Accepting of responsibility is 'accountability'.

If there is one thing that ails us it is that we don't act on what we know. Most of us know enough to enter Jannah without reckoning if we only practice what we know. But we don't practice and so we condemn ourselves to a life of misery in this world and if Allahﷻ decides to hold us accountable, to much more when we face Him. I ask Allahﷻ to forgive us and to save us from ourselves.

This book is not a Tafseer of Sura Al Hujuraat even though all the six Khutbas are based on this beautiful Sura. I call this Sura – Suratul Ummah – because it has in it all that we need to know and do in order to once again revive the Ummah which Rasoolullahﷺ built and created history. That history can be recreated if only we are prepared to act on what Allahﷻ has told us in the light of what His Nabiﷺ demonstrated.

My request to those who read this book is to read it one Khutba at a time and then implement the lessons that are mentioned in it and monitor the beauty and benefit of those lessons. Approach this from the perspective of something which has the potential to change your life and make you a winner in this world and the next. Not as a burden to be discharged.

I ask Allahﷻ to fill your lives with His Noor and bless you and draw you close to Himself and accept your work and your worship.

And I request you for dua for myself and my family.

Mirza Yawar Baig

Khutba # 1

Attitude drives Behavior and Behavior drives Results

Everything begins with attitude. If we love something, we need no encouragement to do it. If we find something meaningless, then all the money in the world will not put any energy and enthusiasm in our engagement with that activity. The same applies to religion. If we love Allah ﷻ then we will be encouraged to obey Him as we look forward to our meeting with Him. And vice versa. In this series of lectures we will look at the Tarbiyya that Allah ﷻ did of the Sahaba with a view to inculcating those values in our own lives.

The only people who had a guarantee of Jannah, after the Anbiya, are the Sahaba of Rasoolullah ﷺ. He called them the Best Generation and all those who resemble them in their practice of Islam, Rasoolullah ﷺ called them as those who would be saved from the Jahannam. There is no guarantee for anyone else. Those who introduce new practices into Islam must beware of potentially placing themselves out of the definition of this blessed group – those who follow the Sahaba in excellence. The Sahaba of Rasoolullah ﷺ were taught directly

by Rasoolullah ﷺ himself and in some cases Allah ﷻ did their Tarbiyya as we shall see. They were a special generation that Allah ﷻ created and blessed with the company of His Messenger ﷺ in order that they may learn the Deen in its purest form and take that message to the rest of the world. Today the fact that we are all gathered here is proof that they fulfilled their responsibility to a level of excellence. We ask Allah ﷻ to reward them in keeping with His Majesty and Grace.

Sura Al Hujuraat is a Sura of the Qur'an which has perhaps the maximum number of instructions about attitude and behavior with respect to Rasoolullah ﷺ and the Akhlaaq that Allah ﷻ likes. There is mention about these matters also in Sura Al Ahzab, Sura Noor and other places also but in this Sura these matters are stated very clearly and powerfully. That is why I thought it would a good idea for us to focus on this most critical of matters, Adab, as it is the foundation of our religion.

Allah ﷻ said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْدُمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا
تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالِكُمْ
وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَعْضُونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ
اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَى لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

Hujuraat 49: 1. O you who believe! Do not put (yourselves) forward before Allah and His Messenger and fear Allah. Verily! Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. 2. O you who believe! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud to him in talk as you speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds may be rendered fruitless while you perceive not. 3. Verily! Those who lower their voices in the presence of Allah's Messenger they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for piety. For them is forgiveness and a great reward.

In the famous book: **Asbab-un-Nuzool** by the great scholar **Ali ibn Ahmad Al-Wahidi** it is narrated from Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr رضي الله عنه who related that horsemen from the Banu Tamim went to see Rasoolullah ﷺ, and so Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه said: "Appoint al-Qa'qa' ibn Ma'bad as their leader", 'Umar رضي الله عنه, on

the other hand, said: "No, appoint al-Aqra' ibn Habis as their leader!" Abu Bakr ﷺ said to 'Umar ﷺ: "You just want to oppose me!" 'Umar ﷺ said: "I do not want to oppose you", and they argued to the extent that they raised their voices on each other. About this incident, these words of Allah ﷻ were revealed: Ayaat 1-2: [Bukhari from al-Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn al-Sabah]

49: 1 & 2. O you who believe! Do not put (yourselves) forward before Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, and fear Allah. Verily! Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. O you who believe! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet ﷺ, nor speak aloud to him in talk as you speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds may be rendered fruitless while you perceive not.

Thabit ibn Qays ibn Shimas ﷺ was a famous Qari and one of the Sahaba of Rasoolullah ﷺ was hard of hearing and so when he spoke he always raised his voice. When these Ayaat were revealed he stopped coming to the Majlis of Rasoolullah ﷺ and simply sat in his house weeping. Anas ﷺ reported: "When this Ayah (*Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet ﷺ*) was revealed, Thabit ibn Qays ﷺ said: 'I am the one who used to raise his voice above the voice of Rasoolullah ﷺ ; I am therefore of the

inhabitants of hellfire'. This was mentioned to Rasoolullahﷺ and he said: 'Tell him that he is of the people of Jannah'''. So the Sahaba used to point to him and say, 'There goes a man of the Jannah.'

Ibn al-Zubayrؓ said: "After this Ayah was revealed, Rasoolullahﷺ could hardly hear what 'Umar ibn al-Khattabؓ said to him; he had to ask again about what he said".

Ibn 'Abbasؓ said: "When the words of Allahﷻ (*Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophetﷺ*) were revealed, Abu Bakrؓ vowed not to address Rasoolullahﷺ except in whisper. That is when (*Verily! Those who lower their voices in the presence of Allah's Messengerﷺ they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for piety. For them is forgiveness and a great reward*) was revealed. This Ayah was revealed for Abu Bakr Siddiqueؓ. What manner of man he must have been to have the Qur'an revealed for him, promising him forgiveness and great reward? These people are our standard – the Gold Standard of the original Standard Bearers of Islam – which Allahﷻ gave to the world as a benchmark for all time.

So how do we understand these Ayaat in our own context? What must we do and what must we guard against? The Ayaat are not simply important as are all the Ayaat of the Kalaam of Allahﷻ but they are even more important because Allahﷻ defined what our attitude towards Rasoolullahﷺ should be and told us in clear terms what would happen if we failed to develop this attitude. These Ayaat teach us the manners, the Adaab relating to dealing with Rasoolullahﷺ and his blessed Sunnah.

There are three matters that are addressed in these Ayaat.

1. How to deal with the orders/rulings of Allahﷻ and His Messengerﷺ?
2. What if you argue with these orders or refuse to accept them?
3. What of those who accept the orders and bow in submission?

1. How to deal with the orders/rulings of Allahﷻ and His Messengerﷺ?

Allahﷻ mentioned His Messengerﷺ along with Himself to reiterate the importance of Rasoolullahﷺ as the Law Giver. *'Putting yourself forward before*

Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ refers to elevating our own opinion and desire in competition with the orders of Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ. This form of address – *Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ* - has come numerous times in the Qur'an to emphasize the importance and high status of Rasoolullah ﷺ and to emphasize that Rasoolullah ﷺ only conveys the orders of Allah ﷻ. The orders of Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ are never at odds or contradictory to one another. What Rasoolullah ﷺ says is always in support of and explaining what Allah ﷻ has ordered. That is what Allah ﷻ draws our attention to.

This Ayah and its meaning and instruction that Rasoolullah ﷺ is to be obeyed without question or argument even to the extent of accepting his rulings not only outwardly but also in the heart – is supported by several other Ayaat. Allah ﷻ equated obedience to Rasoolullah ﷺ to obedience to Himself ﷻ. This doesn't confer any divine status on Rasoolullah ﷺ but underlines the fact that Rasoolullah ﷺ didn't say anything of his own will but said only what he was ordered to say by Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ said:

مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ
حَفِيفًا

Nisa 4: 80. He who obeys the Messenger (Muhammad), has indeed obeyed Allah, but he who turns away, then we have not sent you (O Muhammad) as a watcher over them.

This matter that Rasoolullah ﷺ only orders what he is instructed to, is even more clearly spelt out by Allah ﷻ when He ﷻ said:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ
إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ

Najm 53: 3. Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. 4. It is only Wahi that is sent.

Allah ﷻ made complete obedience to Rasoolullah ﷺ a condition of Imaan and said that anyone who didn't obey Rasoolullah ﷺ completely both inwardly and outwardly was not even a Muslim. I invite those who speak against the Sunnah to reflect on what they are doing to themselves and of the Day when they will meet Allah ﷻ.

2. What if you argue with these orders or refuse to accept them?

Allah ﷻ took an oath by Himself ﷻ and declared anyone who doesn't accept the ruling of Rasoolullah ﷺ to have exited Islam. What can be more severe and stronger as a ruling than the ruling of Allah ﷻ Himself?

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

Nisa 4:65 But no, by your Rabb, they can have no Imaan, until they make you (O Muhammad ﷺ) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission.

The Ayah clearly mentions the two things: accepting both outwardly and in your heart. This means to obey and to do so with complete acceptance and joy – not as a burden, with bad grace. This happens only if we love Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ.

Allah ﷻ described the attitude of the Believers as an attitude of complete and total joyful obedience –

not only obeying but being eager to obey and please Allah ﷻ. To such people, Allah ﷻ promised Jannah.

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ
أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

Nur 24:51 *The only saying of the faithful believers, when they are called to Allâh (Qur'an) and His Messenger ﷺ, to judge between them, is that they say: "We hear and we obey." And such are the successful ones (people of Jannah).*

Allah ﷻ gave a blanket order to the Believers to do whatever Rasoolullah ﷺ told them to do and to stop from whatever he stopped them from.

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

Hashr 59:7 *And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it) and fear Allâh. Verily, Allâh is Severe in punishment.*

The biggest sign of this is the fact that in the Arkaan – Pillars of Islam, which are all acts of

worship – Allahﷻ deliberately left the implementation – how they are to be fulfilled – to His Messengerﷺ to explain. In the Kalima, Salah, Zakat, Fasting and Haj we have to look to the Sunnah of Rasoolullahﷺ to see how each of these acts of Ibaadah are to be done. I want you to reflect on these Ayaat and ask yourself, ‘If Allahﷻ said in all these cases, ‘Make my Messengerﷺ the judge between yourselves and accept without question and without any resistance whatever judgment he passes and take whatever he gives you and leave whatever he forbids you from’; would He then have allowed the teachings and rulings of the Messengerﷺ to be corrupted? If this were true, how could we follow Islam? This is to blame Allahﷻ.

This is the false doctrine of those who seek to reduce the authority of Rasoolullahﷺ and to replace his authority with their own authority about what is right and wrong. We have already seen what Allahﷻ Himself ruled in their favor. I rest my case.

3. What of those who accept the orders and bow in submission?

Allahﷻ Himself guaranteed Jannah for the Sahaba and those who follow them in excellence.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَعْضُونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ
اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِتَتَّقُوا لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

49: 3. Verily! Those who lower their voices in the presence of Allah's Messenger ﷺ they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for piety. For them is forgiveness and a great reward.

This Ayah as I mentioned came in honor of Abu Bakr As-Siddique ؓ but its meaning applies to all those who submit to the orders of Rasoolullah ﷺ and don't put their own opinions and desires above his orders. All those today who seek to make music Halaal which Rasoolullah ﷺ prohibited; all those who seek to deny the importance of the Sunnah of Rasoolullah ﷺ in terms of their appearance; all those who seek to introduce customs and practices into Islam that Rasoolullah ﷺ prohibited must reflect on what they are doing to themselves. Why are they so insistent on refusing the Bashara of Jannah? Because remember that Bashara is only for those who lower their voices i.e. submit their own opinions to the teachings of Rasoolullah ﷺ.

I will not even mention those who mock the Sunnah because there are other Ayaat where Allah ﷻ has dealt with them specifically. For this

Khutba it is sufficient for us to have the best belief about our brothers and sisters that their disobedience is a matter of lack of knowledge and not a sign of rebelliousness. So let us become aware of the attitude of the people of Jannah and inculcate that attitude in ourselves so that we may be included in that list. It will be necessary to reflect, face some painful facts and make some changes in lifestyle and friendships. Allahu Musta'an.

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ
 بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي
 تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْمَوْزِعُ الْعَظِيمُ

Tawba 9: 100. *And the first to embrace Islam of the Muhajirun and the Ansar and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Jannah), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.*

Remember that this guarantee is not for anything other than following the Sahaba faithfully without question. It is a guarantee only for those who submit to the Sunnah. Not for those who think they know the Deen better than the Sahaba.

That is why I began with my quote on attitude because it is attitude which is at the root of all good and all evil. It was the attitude of Iblis, which drove his action of rebellion which produced the result – of eternal damnation. And it was the attitude of Adam ﷺ and Hawwa ﷺ which drove their behavior of seeking forgiveness and led to being forgiven and Jannah.

Let us check our own attitude towards the orders of Allah ﷻ and towards the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ and see if it is one that is likely to get us Jannah or the other place. Let us ask, 'Am I serving Islam or am I using Islam to serve my Nafs?'

Let us ensure that we don't allow our so-called knowledge to become a trap for us. Knowledge without practice – Ilm without Amal – is like a horse without a rider. It may be the fastest horse in the world but without a rider it will have no direction or drive and will never win a race. So stop collecting horses and learn to ride. Practice what you know. Let us create metrics to measure how well we are submitting our will to the Will of Allah ﷻ. Measure the number of Sunnah you

follow. Measure the number of Sunnah you break.
Measure, because one day we will be measured.

Khutba # 2

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا
بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْحَبُوا عَلَيْهِ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ
وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ
الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ
فَضَلَّأَ مَنِ اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

Hujuraat 49: 6. O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with a news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful to what you have done. 7. And know that, among you there is the Messenger ﷺ of Allah. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you **would** surely be in trouble, but Allah has endeared the Faith to you and has beautified it in your hearts, and has made disbelief, wickedness and disobedience hateful to you. These! They are the rightly guided ones, 8. (This is) a Grace from Allah and His Favour. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

These verse were revealed about al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt. The Messenger of Allah,

Allah bless him and give him peace, sent him to collect the Zakat from Banu'l-Mustaliq. However, there was an old enmity between him and them in the pre-Islamic period. When these people heard of his coming, they came out to receive him out of reverence for Allahﷻ and His Messengerﷺ. But he got scared of them and Shaytaan whispered to him that they wanted to kill him.

He returned without meeting them and went to the Messengerﷺ saying: "Banu'l-Mustaliq have refused to pay the Zakat and wanted to kill me". Rasoolullahﷺ became angry and was about to attack them.

Meanwhile, when Banu'l-Mustaliq realised that the emissary had gone back, they went to Rasoolullahﷺ and said: "We heard of your emissary and we went out to receive him, honour him and give him that which was due upon us of the right of Allahﷻ. But your emissary went back and we feared that what sent him back might be a message he received from you because you are angry with us. And we seek refuge in Allahﷻ from His wrath and from the wrath of His Messengerﷺ". Allah, exalted is He, then revealed (*O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with a news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful to what you have done.*)

How many times has it happened in our lives that someone comes to us with a story about someone else and we believe that person and form a negative opinion about the other person without even bothering to verify the story? And then the ignorant among us even start slandering and vilifying that person and donating our deeds to him, all without any firsthand knowledge of that person or the truth of the story. Then one day perhaps we meet that person and feel highly embarrassed and ashamed for what we used to say about him.

That is why Rasoolullahﷺ warned us that if a man comes to us whose one eye has been blinded and complains about another person and says, 'So and so is evil. See how he put out my eye;' verify the story because you may discover that this man attacked him first and blinded him in both eyes and got blinded in one eye as a result of his own attack. This is a basic principle of justice which we forget to follow.

This Ayah is also one of the many which show that Rasoolullahﷺ didn't have knowledge of Al Ghaib otherwise he wouldn't have believed Al Walid's story and there would have been no need for Allahﷻ to reveal this Ayah.

However Allah ﷻ wanted to teach a lesson to all of mankind so He didn't reveal the reality of the incident to His Nabi and then corrected his impression by His Revelation.

Allah ﷻ then emphasized for us the position of Rasoolullah ﷺ as the Divinely Guided Leader who it is our job to follow. He said:

*7. And know that, among you there is the Messenger ﷺ of Allah. If he were to obey **you** in much of the matter, you would surely be in trouble, but Allah has endeared the Faith to you and has beautified it in your hearts, and has made disbelief, wickedness and disobedience hateful to you. These! They are the rightly guided ones, 8. (This is) a Grace from Allah and His Favor. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.*

Allah ﷻ drew attention to the fact that without Divine Guidance we are unable to see beyond the appearance of things and are unable to see the long term results of our actions. In another place Allah ﷻ mentioned this specifically and said:

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ
خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ
لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Baqara 2: 216. *Qitaal (warfare to defend Islam) is ordained for you (Muslims) though you dislike it, and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you **like** a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know.*

Allahﷻ sent His Messengerﷺ with a way of life which takes into account not momentary satisfaction of desire but the long term results of actions. No intelligent person will dispute that it is necessary to judge every action in terms of its long term effect and to do something which may well give momentary pleasure but which is harmful in the long run, is foolish and detrimental. So what about actions whose long term effect is not only harmful but that harm is permanent and everlasting? It was to save mankind from this, that Allahﷻ sent the Anbiya.

It is to this favor on us that He refers to in His way of drawing attention to something which was a visible obvious fact to the Sahaba when He said:

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ

*7. And know that, among you there is the Messengerﷺ of Allah. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would **surely** be in trouble,*

Allah ﷻ is saying to the Sahaba and even more to us, 'Don't get distracted by the fact that you know *Muhammad* ﷺ or are related to him or that you see him day and night. Don't start considering him ﷺ equal to you, don't argue with him and don't forget who he ﷻ really is. He ﷻ is the Messenger ﷺ of Allah ﷻ. Which means that he ﷻ knows what you don't know. And so when he ﷻ doesn't obey you or doesn't give in to your pressure to do this or that, don't feel sad, bad or mad, but know that this is actually a favor from Allah ﷻ on you. If he ﷻ did all you ask him ﷻ to do, or allowed you to do what you want to do, it would land you in great trouble because you don't know the long term results of your actions.'

Then Allah ﷻ drew our attention to the fact that all guidance is from Him alone and that if we are on the right path it is not because of our own talent but because Allah ﷻ was merciful on us and guided us. He said:

وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ
 الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ
 فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

7. ...But Allah has endeared the Faith to you and has beautified it in your hearts, and has made disbelief, wickedness and disobedience hateful to you. These! They are the rightly guided ones, 8. (**This** is) a Grace from Allah and His Favor. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

This is a great reminder for those who open their eyes to Islam and make major life changes to become obedient to Allahﷻ and to follow the Sunnah of Rasoolullahﷺ. Shaytaan in his inimitable style proceeds to lead them down his own path using their new-found piety as the bridle and halter. Shaytaan gives them an inflated sense of their own importance. They acquire a permanent bad smell under their nose and so they turn their nose up at others. He tells them that it is their job to give Hidaya to everyone else and so they walk around finding fault with everything and everyone else. They lose their sense of humor, become highly irritable and irritating.

Allahﷻ said to all those, that the reason they have chosen to obey Him is because He endeared the faith to them and made disobedience hateful. If Allahﷻ had not done this, then they would also have been disobeying Him and making way for themselves into the Hellfire. Allahﷻ said that those

people who love to obey Allah ﷻ and who hate disobeying Him are the rightly guided ones and this condition is a favor from Himself. *And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.*

I want to remind myself and you that if being obedient to Allah ﷻ and hating all that is His disobedience is a sign of His Grace and Favor, then what is the tendency to disobey Him and obey our own desires, a sign of? Allah ﷻ clarified this and didn't leave it to us to guess – following the desires of the Nafs is a clear sign of having incurred the anger of Allah ﷻ. We must make Tawba and correct our ways before it is too late. Allah ﷻ even forbade Rasoolullah ﷺ from interceding for people like that.

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ أَفَأَنْتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلاً
أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ
بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلاً

Furqan 25: 43. *Have you (O Muhammad) seen him who has taken as his ilah (god) his own desire? Would you then be a Wakil (intercessor) over him? 44. Or do you think that most of them hear or understand? They are only like cattle; nay, they are even farther astray from the Path. (i.e. worse than cattle).*

Need I say more?

Khutba # 3

We continue with the instructions in Sura Al Hujuraat about attitude and behavior which lead to the safety and security of the self in this world and to Jannah in the Aakhirah. It is the beauty of Islam that these instructions are such that no matter whether you are Muslim or not, they are matters that can only lead to good for the one who applies them in his life.

If there is a single incident in the Seerah about which it can be said that this is the most significant, then it is the Hijra from Makkah to Madina. The Sahaba considered it to be so significant that when they had to begin the Islamic calendar they didn't choose the date of birth of Rasoolullah ﷺ which was unknown in any case or his date of passing away which was well known (12th Rabi-ul-Awwal) but they chose the date he arrived in Madina.

It was to symbolize that life itself begins from the time that a person chooses to accept the Will of Allah ﷻ over his own desires and submits to the orders of Allah ﷻ knowing that in that alone lies his salvation and success. The Hijra is also the moment when the Ummah of Rasoolullah ﷺ came into being. That is when the Muslims became one nation – not

on the basis of nationality or race or color but on the basis of faith. That was when centuries old bonds of tribal and national identity were wiped out and a new bond of faith was established. That was the moment when the reason for brotherhood was established. That the worship of Allahﷻ alone and the following of His Messengerﷺ were the only criteria for belonging. How tragic that today not only has the Muslim Ummah stopped using the Hijri calendar but has once again embraced all the old bases of bonding of race, tribe, family, color and nationality, which Rasoolullahﷺ had wiped out. The result is clear.

I believe it is essential for us to look at some of the lessons in this journey which is considered so important in Islam that it is the beginning of the Islamic calendar. As I mentioned earlier it is the journey of the Messengerﷺ from the land of polytheism and corruption to the land which was ready to give him succor and support for his Message which was chosen as the beginning of the Islamic calendar. This is indicative that Islam is a religion of action and that to move away from a place where obeying Allahﷻ was not possible or was difficult to a place where it was possible to live

according to the orders of Allahﷻ is considered the most significant of all actions.

The concept of Hijra therefore has both a figurative and a literal meaning. Figuratively to make Hijra is to leave what Allahﷻ dislikes and do what He likes. Hijra is to bring about positive changes in your life that reflect obedience to Allahﷻ and to His Messengerﷺ. Figuratively speaking Hijra is to emigrate from the state of sin to the state of obedience to Allahﷻ. This type of Hijra is mandatory on all Muslims; to consciously move from all kinds of disobedience to the obedience of Allahﷻ. Literally speaking Hijra is to move from a place of evil to a place which is better. Shaytaan stops this by pointing out that no place is perfect but the reality is that in some places there are intrinsic problems which make the proper practice of Islam almost impossible. It is for each of us to decide what he should do.

Hijra is a reality of the history of Da'awa. Many Anbiya were driven out of their lands. Some were killed. Many other people who were not Anbiya but who stood for the truth were killed and this opposition to the truth continues. Waraqa bin Nawfal predicted this opposition for Rasoolullahﷺ

when he heard the story of the Revelation. That is why the reward for Hijra is so great.

The Qur'an is called Al-Furqan because it separates good from evil. The Battle of Badr was also called Al-Furqan for the same reason. Islam came to proclaim good and forbid evil so that all people can live in peace and harmony in an ethical and moral society. Shaytaan and his agents oppose this and will continue to do so. This is the primordial struggle. Islam will always call for its followers to make the choice between good and evil so let us be prepared.

The world today that we live in and even more the one in the future as we can envisage it is a world of high complexity. Where information is ever easier to access; power is concentrated in the hands of an elite; the balance of factors that dictate the very survival of our planet is in great danger of being upset – perhaps irretrievably. The society we live in is one that is stratified on lines of economic, racial, national, religious and power divisions. And this divide is growing.

Materially, in terms of gadgets, tools, resources and money, we have more than we have probably ever had before. What we don't have are criteria for

decision making that are based on ethical and moral values, criteria that are inclusive and take into account those who have little and that little is in danger of being eliminated. Criteria that place greater importance on integrity than on accumulating material wealth. Criteria that focus on the long term impact of short term strategies. Criteria where we hold ourselves accountable for our actions, even if nobody else does. Criteria where we stand by our word, live by our creed and act according to our values; concerned about leaving a legacy of honor for those who will come after us.

When we read the Seerah of Rasoolullahﷺ we realize that the world that he lived in was uncannily similar to the one we live in today in terms of its trends, focus of attention and problems. This gives us great hope when we look at learning leadership lessons from his life because if the problems were very like our own and they were solved using his methods, then we have reason to believe that those methods will transcend the centuries and come to our aid today when we are reeling under the negative impact of the forces we face. A tried and tested method which works is preferable to a theory that is new and at best

experimental. Especially when that method was Divinely inspired and the one implementing it was Divinely guided. Such a method can never fail. History is witness of this.

Conflict is inevitable. Breaking relationships and breaking hearts is not. The key word which makes all the difference is EGO and that is our attitude. That is why I began this series with my quote: Attitude drives behavior. Behavior drives results. I want to give you another one here: Attitude is not everything. Attitude is the only thing. Vince Lombardi, the famous coach of Green Bay Packers said, 'Winning is not a one-time thing. It is an all the time thing. Winning is a habit. Unfortunately so is losing. My brothers and sisters – welcome to the world of losers. The world of the global Muslim Ummah. May Allah ﷻ forgive us, but we have become a people who like to talk of our ancient past – a lot of it conveniently sanitized to remove all offending material – the only material which would have been able to change our destiny if only we learnt from it. But we believe that it is better to hide it than to face it. The reality however is that not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed unless it is faced. As they say, 'I met the enemy. The enemy is me.' The

solution is very simple – accept that EVEN YOU can be wrong and say, ‘Sorry.’ Apologize, forgive and remember the lesson so that you don’t repeat the mistake.

It is in this context that I want to present to you the next Ayaat of Sura Al Hujuraat that we have been studying to understand what Allahﷻ tells us about remaining together. I can say with total certainty that if I ask any Muslim anywhere to tell me the single most critical problem that we face, he or she will tell me, ‘Divisions in the Ummah.’ We all agree that we are divided. So what is the solution? It is to go back to the Seerah of Rasoolullahﷺ and see how he brought together people who were as divided as we are and forged a single community which became Benchmarks to the world. That is the blessing of Divine Guidance – the miracle of Rasoolullahﷺ which is with us to this day. The Qur’an is Divine. It is not a created thing. It is the Kalaam of Allahﷻ, His Speech and His Revelation. This is a proven fact with incontrovertible evidence. It is part of our creed to believe this with complete certainty. The one who denies the Divine nature of the Qur’an has left Islam. May Allahﷻ help us all.

Allahﷻ directed us and said:

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ
 إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ
 فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ
 الْمُقْسِطِينَ
 إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
 تُرْحَمُونَ

Hujuraat 49: 9. *And if two parties or groups among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both, but if one of them rebels against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that which rebels till it complies with the Command of Allah; then if it complies, then make reconciliation between them justly, and be equitable. Verily! Allah loves those who are equitable. 10. The believers are nothing else than brothers (in Islamic religion). So make reconciliation between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy.*

Asbab-un-Nuzool, Al Wahidi: Anas bin Malik ﷺ related: "I said: 'Ya Rasoolullah ﷺ, why don't you visit 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy?' Rasoolullah ﷺ decided to go and visit him. He mounted an ass and the Muslims

walked with him. It happened that the ground was full of manure. So when Rasoolullah ﷺ reached 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy, the latter said: 'Keep away from me, the stench of your ass is offending me'. A man from the Ansaar said to him: 'By Allah, the ass of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ smells better than you'. One of the men of 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy got angry; then the men of both parties became angry because of what was said. They exchanged blows and hurled leafless palm leaves and sandals at each other. We heard that it is about them that (And if two parties of believers fall to fighting...) was revealed".

This was narrated by Bukhari from Musaddid and by Muslim from Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-A'la;

Narrated Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه that Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "The doors of the Garden are opened on Monday and Thursday. Every Muslim slave who does not associate anything with Allah is forgiven except for the man who has enmity between him and his brother. It is said, 'Leave these two until they have made a reconciliation. Leave these two until they have made a reconciliation.' " Malik Book 47, 47:4:17

Abu Huraim رضي الله عنه reported Rasoolullah ﷺ as saying The deeds of people would be presented every week on two

days, viz. Monday and Thursday, and every believing servant would be granted pardon except the one in whose (heart) there is rancor against his brother and it would he said: Leave them and put them off until they reconcile. Muslim Book 32, Hadith 6224

Allah ﷻ directs us about what we should do when faced with the conflict between two people or two groups of people. Allah ﷻ told us to be just. Not to side with our own friends and relatives but to be just. Allah ﷻ said in another place:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ
أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِن يَكُنْ عَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ
بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا وَإِن تَلُؤُوا أَوْ تُعْرِضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

Nisa 4:135 O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allâh, even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, be he rich or poor, Allâh is a Better Protector to both (than you). So follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you may avoid justice, and if you distort your witness or refuse to give

it, verily, Allâh is Ever Well Acquainted with what you do

This Ayah was recently displayed in Harvard Law School as an exemplary statement which shows the pinnacle of justice that Islam advocates. Many people sent me this news and the internet was buzzing with what Harvard Law School had done.

I wonder however, how many of those who were clicking their mice sending this Ayah all over the internet took a moment to look into their own lives to see what they were doing with respect to ensuring justice to their wives and husbands, their brothers and sisters and to those in their own circle of influences. Remember that the Qur'an and the Ahadith of Rasoolullahﷺ came to be read and implemented in our lives. Not simply to be forwarded on the internet.

So the first principle that is being emphasized is that we must ensure that justice is done, no matter who is involved. Then we are directed that if one of the parties reneges on the agreement and goes back on their word, then we must side with the party that honored the agreement to ensure that justice is done. But if those that reneged return to the truth then there must not be any more enmity against

them. Allah ﷻ directly ordered us to reconcile and make peace between our brothers. Islam accepts and understands that justice is the cause of peace. And so the focus is on establishing justice.

When Rasoolullah ﷺ conquered Makkah he had his mortal enemies who had tortured him, dispossessed him, killed his companions and hounded him out of his home, in his hand. They were in his power to do what he willed with them.

Before we look at what he did, let me ask you a question, 'Those who you dislike and slander and hold enmity in your hearts against; did any one of them dispossess you and torture you and kill your family and companions and drive you out of your home?' If not, then how is it that you say that you love Rasoolullah ﷺ but you don't do what he did? That is our problem. We are prepared to die for Rasoolullah ﷺ but we are not prepared to live for him.

Rasoolullah ﷺ when he had his enemies in his hand, eliminated enmity. He didn't eliminate his enemies; he eliminated enmity. He forgave them, thereby putting an end to enmity forever. If he had extracted revenge as was his right, some enemies would have been eliminated but enmity would

have got a new lease of life and would have poisoned his life and his mission forever. By forgiving his enemies he took the wind out of their sails and made them his slaves without tying a single chain round their necks or ankles.

What had to be said has been said. Now all that remains is to act. For results to happen, it is action, not speech which matters.

Khutba # 4

If there is a name for Suratul Hujuraat that suits it, it would be – Suratul Ummah. It is the Sura which has priceless instructions about building a community and keeping it together while honoring all kinds of diversity. In our world today this is a huge challenge and one of the factors which is critical to our success as leaders. Allah ﷻ mentioned in the following Ayaat something which is a terminal illness so to speak with respect to building the Ummah. Something which destroys all the good work of bringing hearts together as surely as the hidden work of termites in the massive beams of a roof will suddenly bring it down on the heads of the occupants of that house. This is such a major danger that Allah ﷻ explained it with a graphic example.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا
مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا
أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ
وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا
تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ
أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

Hujuraat 49: 11. *O you who believe! Let not a group mock another group, it may be that the latter are better than the former; nor let (some) women mock other women, it may be that the latter are better than the former, nor defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. How bad is it, to insult one's brother after having Faith? And whosoever does not repent, then such are indeed Zalimun. 12.* *O you who believe! Avoid suspicion, indeed some suspicions are sins. And don't spy, and don't backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting). And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is the One Who accepts repentance, Most Merciful.*

The Asbaab-un-Nuzool of these Ayaat are related to two incidents – one concerning Thabit bin Qais bin Shammās who was hard of hearing and used to sit next to Rasoolullah ﷺ. One day he came late and then started to step over people to get close to Rasoolullah ﷺ and called out, 'Move, move.' Someone told him, 'Sit down where you are. There is place there.' So he reviled that man and Allah ﷻ

revealed these Ayaat. Also the circumstances of revelation refer to an incident where our Mothers Ayesha and Hafsa made fun of Umm Salama because she was short and others made fun of Safiyya bint Huyayy bint Akhtab because she was ethnically Jewish. She complained to Rasoolullah ﷺ and he said, 'You should have told them, my father is Haroon, my uncle is Moosa and my husband is Muhammad ﷺ.' People also complained to Rasoolullah ﷺ that others were calling them by derogatory nicknames. Allah ﷻ then revealed these Ayaat.

My brothers and sisters, what is the result of suspicion which Allah ﷻ forbade us from having and called it a sin? What is the result of being so eager to believe the worst about our brothers and sisters and so reluctant to change that opinion, no matter how much evidence is produced to show that you are wrong? This is the cause of the terminal illness of the heart. I refer to the terminal illness called Gheeba and its related branches, Buhtaan and Nameema. May Allah ﷻ protect us from them.

Allah ﷻ begins this Ayah by warning us to remember the basis of our brotherhood which is faith in Him and worshipping Him alone as He

alone is worthy of worship. So Allahﷻ prohibited people from mocking one another and laughing at one another. Laughing with one another is good. Laughing at yourself is essential but laughing at one another is Haraam. To mock someone, especially a believer is clearly prohibited in this Ayah. Let us reflect on why mocking is prohibited so emphatically. Mocking is the result of arrogance. You only mock those you look down on and consider inferior to yourself. This is the surest way to reach Jahannam.

It is narrated on the authority of Abdullah b. Mas'ud ؓ that Rasoolullahﷺ said: He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter Jannah. A person (amongst his hearers) said: Verily a person loves that his dress should be fine, and his shoes should be fine. He (Rasoolullahﷺ) remarked: Verily, Allah is Graceful and He loves Grace. Pride is disdainning the truth (out of self-conceit) and contempt for the people. [Muslim Book 1, Hadith 164]

As someone said, 'Conceit only needs a mirror but arrogance needs another person to demean and oppress.' Confidence and feeling good about yourself is not arrogance. But feeling that you are superior to someone else, is.

So let us make Tawba and let us change our attitudes and language. Language both reflects and moulds attitude. Let us develop the right language and our attitude will match it. Where our language reflects an attitude which needs to change, let us hasten to make Tawba and change that attitude before it is too late. Let us not use bad nicknames. There is nothing remotely funny in referring to someone without respect or in making racial or other such comments. Let's stop this Haraam practice.

The next terminal illness that Allahﷻ warned us against is Gheeba or backbiting. Allahﷻ compared it to eating the flesh of our dead brother and then said, *'Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting). And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is the One Who accepts repentance, Most Merciful.'*

Rasoolullahﷺ was walking with some of his companions one day when he overheard two of them talking about a third. At that moment they passed by the decomposing carcass of a goat. Rasoolullahﷺ called to them and asked, 'Would you like to eat that meat?' The two men were shocked and said, 'Certainly not, Ya Rasoolullahﷺ.'

Rasoolullahﷺ said, 'What you were speaking just now is worse than that.'

In another incident from the Seerah someone came and asked Rasoolullahﷺ for a remedy for two women, complaining of severe stomach-ache. Rasoolullahﷺ summoned them and made them vomit. They vomited out lumps of raw meat. Rasoolullahﷺ said, 'You were eating dead meat because you were doing Gheeba.' This is one of the miracles of Rasoolullahﷺ to show people graphically the meaning of the Ayah from Sura Al Hujuraat, which we are studying.

So what is Gheebah (backbiting)?

Abu Hurairaؓ reported that Rasoolullahﷺ said: Do you know what is backbiting? They (the Companions) said: Allah and His Messenger know best. Thereupon he (ﷺ) said: Backbiting implies your talking about your brother in a manner which he does not like. It was said to him: What is your opinion about this that if I actually find (that failing) in my brother which I made a mention of? He said: If (that failing) is actually found (in him), you in fact backbited him, and if that is not in him it is slander. [Muslim :: Book 32 : Hadith 6265]

In another Hadith a man asked Rasoolullahﷺ, "What is backbiting?" Rasoolullahﷺ replied, "It is to mention about a man what he does not want to hear." He said, "Ya Rasoolullahﷺ! Even if it is true?" Rasoolullahﷺ said, "If you utter something false, then it is slander." [Malik :: Book 56 : Hadith 56.4.10]

How bad does it have to be to qualify to become Gheeba?

In one incident from the Seerah, Sayyidatina Ayesha Siddiqa (RA) mentioned in passing about Sayyidatina Sawda (RA) that she was rather heavy. Rasoolullahﷺ said to her, 'Ayesha, if those words of yours are put into the oceans they would make all the water in the oceans bitter.' Truly it is a very high standard that is set for us.

Why is Gheeba so bad and prohibited so severely?

For any community to be formed and grow together and form bonds of belonging it is essential that people respect one another. Love is the result of respect. Gheeba destroys respect. And so it destroys love for one another. Without love for one another divisions are created and the Ummah is

destroyed. Truly we don't need to look too far for examples in our society today.

The one who does Gheeba gives away his good deeds to his victim. Now how intelligent is it to give away good deeds to the one you hate? That is why Imam Bukhari is said, 'If I have to do Gheeba, I will do the Gheeba of my mother because then at least my good deeds will go to the one I love.' Imam Shafa'ee was informed that someone was backbiting him. So he went to him with some fruits. The man was surprised and asked him the reason for the gift. Imam Shafa'ee said, 'Since I believe you are giving me your good deeds, I thought I should at least thank you and so this is a gift for you.' That is why I say, 'Thank the slanderer for he gives unasked.' It is strange to reflect that we don't even imagine giving away our good deeds to our own brothers and friends who we love. Yet we gladly give them away to those we hate. What a shame? And how destructive it is for the well-being of brotherhood? That is the reason why Gheeba has been prohibited so strongly.

What is not Gheeba?

1. To give information about a criminal is not Gheeba

2. To give information about someone that you are asked about, who someone else wants to marry or do business with, is not Gheeba
3. To speak and warn people about someone who is corrupting society or Islam is not Gheeba

All of these must be done in the interest of the people and for their safety and wellbeing.

A branch of Gheeba is Nameema (carrying tales and insinuating).

It was narrated that al-Haafiz al-Mundhiri said: "The Ummah is unanimously agreed that Nameema is forbidden and that it is one of the greatest sins in the sight of Allahﷻ." There are many texts which condemn Nameema and spying and seeking out people's faults, which must deter the Muslim from committing these Haraam actions:

Rasoolullahﷺ said: "No person who spreads Nameema will enter Jannah." According to another report, "No eavesdropper (Qattaat) will enter Jannah." [Bukhaari, 6056; Muslim, 105.]

A Qattaat is someone who spreads Nameema. It was said that the one who spreads Nameema is the person who is

with a group who are speaking, then he spreads gossip about them, and that the Qattaat is the one who listens to them without them realizing, then he spreads gossip about them.

What should be our attitude towards the gossip

Ibn Hajar al-Haythami said in his book al-Zawaajir ‘an Iqtiraaf al-Kabaa’ir: “The person who hears some malicious gossip, such as being told ‘So and so said this about you’ or ‘he did this to you,’ must do six things:

1 – He should not believe it, because the one who spreads Nameema is a Faasiq (evildoer) according to scholarly consensus, and Allahﷻ says: “If a Faasiq (liar – evil person) comes to you with any news, verify it, lest you should harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful for what you have done” [al-Hujuraat 49:6]

2 – He should tell him not to repeat this evil action (of Nameema), which is evil in both religious and worldly terms.

3 – He should hate him for the sake of Allahﷻ if he shows no sign of repenting.

4 – He should not think badly of the one of whom it was said, because he does not know whether that person really said it or did it.

5 – What he has been told should not make him spy on others or look for their faults for the purpose of verifying what was said, because Allahﷻ says: “Avoid much suspicion; indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not...”[al-Hujuraat 49:12]

6 – He should not approve for himself that which he has told the other person not to do, so he should not pass on the malicious gossip and say, ‘So and so told me this,’ otherwise he will also be gossiping and backbiting, and he will be doing that which he told someone else not to do.

In al-Saheehayn it is narrated that Ibn ‘Abbaasؓ said: “Rasoolullahﷺ was in one of the gardens of Madina, and he heard the sounds of two people who were being tormented in their graves. He said, ‘They are being punished, not for something that was difficult to avoid, but it is nevertheless a major sin. One of them did not protect himself from urine (i.e., didn’t take measures to avoid contaminating himself or his clothes) and the other used to walk

about spreading Nameema.” [Bukhaari, 216; Muslim, 292]

It is also narrated in al-Saheehayn from Abu Hurairahؓ that Rasoolullahﷺ said: ‘Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the falsest of speech. Do not eavesdrop; do not spy on one another; do not envy one another; do not forsake one another; do not hate one another. Be, O slaves of Allahﷻ, brothers.” [Bukhaari, 5144; Muslim, 2563]

Ahmad (19277) and Abu Dawood (4880) narrated that Abu Barzah al-Aslamiؓ said: “Rasoolullahﷺ said: ‘O you who have spoken the words of faith but faith has not truly entered your hearts! Do not backbite about the Muslims, and do not seek out their faults. For whoever seeks out their faults, **Allah will seek out his faults, and if Allah seeks out a person’s faults He will expose him even in his own house.**” Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood, 4083.

Al-Hasanؓ said: “The one who tells malicious gossip to you will tell malicious gossip about you. This indicates that the person who spreads malicious gossip should be hated and not believed or trusted. How can he not be hated when he persists in lying, backbiting, slandering, betraying,

deceiving, envying, spreading mischief among the people and cheating? He is one of those who try to sever the ties which Allah ﷻ has commanded must be upheld and who spread mischief on earth.

Allah ﷻ says (interpretation of the meaning):

إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ
الْحَقِّ أُولَئِكَ هُمْ عَذَابُ أَلِيمٍ

Shoora 42: 42 'The way (of blame) is only against those who oppress men and rebel in the earth without justification; for such there will be a painful torment'

Imam Ash-Shafi'i (rahimahullah) said, "Whoever spreads gossip for you spreads gossip against you. Whoever relates tales to you will tell tales about you. Whoever when you please him says about you what is not in you, when you anger him will say about you what is not in you." [Siyaar A'lam an Nubala – Imaam adh Dhaabee]

Abu Hurairah ؓ reported Rasoolullah ﷺ as asking: Do you know who is poor (destitute)? They (the Sahaba) said: A poor man amongst us is one who has neither dirham with him nor wealth. He (Rasoolullah ﷺ) said: The poor of my Ummah would be he who would come on

the Day of Resurrection with prayers and fasts and Zakat but (he would find himself bankrupt on that day as he would have exhausted his funds of virtues) since he hurled abuses upon others, brought calumny against others and unlawfully consumed the wealth of others and shed the blood of others and beat others, and his virtues would be credited to the account of one (who suffered at his hand). And if his good deeds fall short to clear the account, then his sins would be entered in (his account) and he would be thrown in the Hell-Fire. [Sahih Muslim Book 032, Number 6251]

My brothers and sisters, let us save ourselves from deeds which will wipe out the good that we do and make us among those who deserve the punishment of Allahﷻ. Let us ensure that we don't do anything to harm the Ummah of Muhammadﷺ for heﷺ made dua against those who seek to harm hisﷺ Ummah. Beware of the dua of Rasoolullahﷺ.

Khutba # 5

Allah ﷻ gave instructions in Sura Al Hujuraat which we have been studying these past weeks for the building and protection of the Ummah. Instructions which we seem to have forgotten and the results of which are clearly visible in our lives. But solutions are useful only when applied. So let us look at what changes we need to bring about in our attitude and behavior; lifestyle and environment which will help us to get out of the morass that we are rapidly sinking into. Allah ﷻ said:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا
وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

Hujuraat 49: 13. *O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has (the most) At-Taqwa. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.*

The Asbaab-un-Nuzool of this Ayah are as follows:

Said Ibn 'Abbas رضي الله عنه: "This was revealed about Thabit ibn Qays رضي الله عنه when he made a remark about the man who did not make room for him to sit: 'What, the son of so-and-so [referring to his mother]'. Rasoolullah ﷺ said: 'Who mentioned that woman?' Thabit stood up and said: 'I did, Ya Rasoolullah ﷺ!' Rasoolullah ﷺ said to him: 'Look at the faces of these people. And when he looked, he asked him: 'What do you see?' He said: 'I see white, red and black people'. Rasoolullah ﷺ said: 'You are not better than any of them unless it be through [the good practice of] religion and Taqwa'. Allah ﷻ then revealed this Ayah." Muqatil said: "On the day Mecca was conquered, Rasoolullah ﷺ, ordered Bilal رضي الله عنه to climb on the roof of the Ka'aba and call the Adhaan. 'Attab ibn Asid commented on this: 'Praise be to Allah, that Allah has taken my father to Him and made that he did not see this day'. Al-Harith ibn Hisham said: 'Did Muhammad not find any other caller to prayer except this black raven?' Suhayl ibn 'Amr said: 'Allah willing, he will change him'. Abu Sufyan, on the other hand, said: 'I am not going to make any comment; I am afraid that the Rabb of heaven will divulge what I say!' Jibreel عليه السلام came to Rasoolullah ﷺ and informed him about what they said. Rasoolullah ﷺ summoned them and asked them about what they said and they admitted it. Allah ﷻ then revealed this Ayah warning them against boasting about

their lineages and abundance of wealth and against looking down on the poor”.

Every Ayah of the Qur’an is replete with meaning and lessons for those who reflect and whose hearts are pure and submitted to Allahﷻ - Qalb-un-Saleem.

Allahﷻ reminds us in this Ayah about two very crucial matters which are the cause of so much strife and conflict in the world – racism and class struggle.

Allahﷻ tells us how He created us. And who can be more knowledgeable and truthful about that than the Creator Himself?

Allahﷻ reminded us about the fact that not only did He create us from one man and woman, our father Adamﷺ and our mother Hawwaﷺ but that He is not bound by genetic codes which decide heredity – because He created those genes and programmed those codes in them. So from the same man and woman He gave rise to races from Mongol to Caucasian, Nubian to Arab. There used to be three main racial classifications: Caucasoid, Negroid and Mongoloid which interestingly had to do with facial features and not color at all. Yet

today discrimination is based on color. By this classification Indians are Caucasoid – but try convincing British Immigration that you are actually related to the Queen. However a little research produced this gem: *The "racial" classifications of Caucasoid, Negroid and Mongoloid is an outdated classification system. As our knowledge of genes grows these morphological distinctions that used to be defined as "race" actually turn out to be a very small proportion of the human genome compared to the VAST amount of the "average" genome between each geographic area and the populations around the Earth being 99.9% similar.* Interestingly also the current classification used where people are called African, American, Asian, European is not a racial classification at all and refers to continents. So also in our rather confused thinking, Jews (including European Jews) are Semitic while Arabs who come from exactly the same place and ancestry are not. So being anti-Semitic is to be anti-Jew and not anti-Arab.

Allahﷻ told us that He created us from one pair and divided us among different races and tribes so that we may recognize His Power and Majesty of creation and draw closer to one another as each of us is an Ayah of Allahﷻ - a sign of Allahﷻ.

Allah ﷻ told us that our differences are actually something that should draw us closer, enable us to honor one another and love one another because we come from the same parents and have been created by the same Creator. Yet we fall into the trap of Shaytaan and look down on one another because of racial differences. What did Shaytaan say when he was asked why he didn't obey Allah ﷻ's command to make sujood to Adam ﷺ?

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ إِلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي
مِنْ نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ

A'araf 7: 12. (Allah) said: "What prevented you (O Iblis) that you did not make sujood, when I commanded you?" Iblis said: "I am better than him (Adam), You created me from fire, and him You created from clay."

That is the primeval statement of racial discrimination which landed Iblis in the Jahannam. Let us ask ourselves whose lead we are following when we are being racist. Muslim societies are rampantly racist. I have innumerable examples of Muslims being racist in schools, communities and even in Masaajid. So whose example are we following? Let us ask ourselves, before we are asked by Allah ﷻ.

What was the example of Rasoolullahﷺ and his Sahaba?

Rasoolullahﷺ entered Makkah as the conqueror. He cleaned the Ka'aba from all the idols which had been placed therein. Then came the time to call Adhaan. Rasoolullahﷺ had an army of 10,000 Muslims. Every single one of them would have given an arm and a leg to be the one chosen to call the first Adhaan in the Haram Shareef. Who did Rasoolullahﷺ choose when he had the opportunity to choose? Abu Bakrؓ, Omarؓ, Othmanؓ or someone from his own family like Ali bin Abi Talibؓ or anyone from the aristocracy of the Quraysh who had accepted Islam? No! He chose a former slave, a black man after whose name we say Radhiallahu Anhu – Bilal bin Rabahؓ. Not only did he choose Bilalؓ but he commanded him to climb on to the roof of the Ka'aba to call the Adhaan.

Now why did Rasoolullahﷺ choose Bilal bin Rabahؓ for the greatest of honors of calling Adhaan from the Ka'aba? Was it because he was trying to establish racial equality alone? Allahﷻ knows best but I believe that he did that because Bilal bin Rabahؓ had paid his dues. He was among those Sahaba who had suffered the most because of

Islam. Bilal ؓ was known for his piety and devotion to Islam which he had proven beyond doubt. Bilal ؓ was the one whose footsteps Rasoolullah ﷺ heard in Jannah when he went in Me'raj. Bilal ؓ was honored not because he was black but because he was a man of Taqwa. And that is the Tafseer of the second part of this Ayatul Kareema where Allah ﷻ said:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاكُمْ

Yazid ibn Shajarah ؓ said: "One day, Rasoolullah ﷺ passed by some of the marketplaces of Madina and saw a black slave standing while his seller was calling: 'This is for sale for whoever wants to offer more!' The slave kept repeating: 'I have a condition for whoever wants to buy me'. He was asked: 'What is your condition?' He said: 'He should not stop me from performing the five prescribed prayers behind Rasoolullah ﷺ'. A man bought him on this condition. Rasoolullah ﷺ saw him at each Salah until he failed to see him one day. He asked his owner: 'Where is the slave boy?' He said: 'He has fever, Ya Rasoolullah ﷺ!' Rasoolullah ﷺ said to his Sahaba: 'Let us go and visit him'. They went and visited him. After a few days, Rasoolullah ﷺ asked his owner: 'How is the slave boy?' The man said: 'Ya Rasoolullah ﷺ the boy's lips have turned dark'.

Rasoolullahﷺ went to see the boy. He found him feverish and he died in that state. Rasoolullahﷺ took charge of his washing, shrouding and burial. Some of his Sahaba were horrified and became greatly disturbed.

The Muhajiroon said: 'We have left our homes, wealth and family, but none of us has seen in his life, sickness or death what this slave boy has'. The Ansaar said: 'We received him (Rasoolullahﷺ) in our homes, helped him and supported him with our riches but he preferred this Abyssinian slave over us'. Allahﷻ then revealed this Ayah (O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female), i.e. you are the children of one father and one mother, and He showed them the merit of Taqwa by His words (Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah...)'.

Allahﷻ taught us the basis on which to choose people, the basis on which people deserve honor and respect and His Messengerﷺ exemplified this in his life. In a world where we have become used to applying the standard of Qaroon (wealth) as our only criterion for determining who is to be honored, it would do us well to remember the standard that Islam set forth. In Islam a person is

not distinguished on the basis of his wealth or race or nationality or temporal authority. A person is not even distinguished on the basis of his knowledge. He is distinguished only on the basis of his actions. Allah ﷻ is not visible. But Taqwa – the fear of displeasing Allah ﷻ - is visible in our actions. And with Allah ﷻ, that is the only thing that counts. A picture is worth a thousand words, an action is worth a million. So watch those actions because they speak volumes.

As we have seen from the Asbaab-un-Nuzool of this Ayat, there were many in the Quraysh who hated the fact that not only did this black man call the Adhaan but that he was made to climb on top of the Ka'aba to do it. But they remained silent for obvious reasons. However that incident rankled.

After Fatah Makkah, Rasoolullah ﷺ took his army to face the Banu Thaqeef from Ta'aif who had gathered to attack the Muslims. In this army were many young aristocrats of the Quraysh and other Makkan tribes who had recently accepted Islam but didn't have the benefit of the Tarbiyya of Rasoolullah ﷺ. Along the way when it was time for Salah, Bilal ؓ called the Adhaan. Some of the young men from Quraysh started laughing at him and passing comments about this black man calling

people to Salah. One of them was particularly vociferous and obnoxious about it. Someone informed Rasoolullah ﷺ about this. He summoned the people concerned. The young men were terrified. They were in the middle of the Muslim army and were being summoned by the Commanding Officer because they had mocked his Muezzin. But they had no alternative but to go. So they arrived in the presence of Rasoolullah ﷺ.

Rasoolullah ﷺ asked, 'Who was mocking Bilal?' The one who was their leader stood up. Rasoolullah ﷺ asked him to come near. The man was terrified as he thought that was the prelude to being beheaded as an example to everyone. But Rasoolullah ﷺ was smiling and asked him to sit close to him. Then he asked the man, 'Would you like me to teach you to make the Adhaan?' The man was astonished. Here he had been mocking Sayyidina Bilal bin Rabah ؓ, the Muezzin of Rasoolullah ﷺ and richly deserved and expected to be punished severely for his trouble and here was the Messenger ﷺ of Allah ﷻ asking him if he would like to learn the Adhaan from himself?

The man said, 'Yes Ya Rasoolullah ﷺ.' Rasoolullah ﷺ then told the man, 'Repeat after me,' and called the Adhaan and the man repeated and learnt how to

call the Adhaan. Then when the lesson was over, the man said, 'Ya Rasoolullahﷺ, you taught me the Adhaan. Now I have a request. Bilal is your Muezzin in Madina. Please make me your Muezzin in Makkah.' Rasoolullahﷺ agreed and appointed him the Muezzin for Al Masjid Al Haraam in Makkah. They say that this man lived to a very advanced age but until his last day he would come to the masjid, make Tawâf and then call the Adhaan for every Salah.

We who like to talk about Aqeeda forget that to practice what Allahﷻ ordered in our lives is a reflection of our Aqeeda. Aqeeda is not merely to recite the creed or to argue about the nature of Allahﷻ's Dhaat. Aqeeda is to demonstrate our belief in practice by living by that Aqeeda. When Allahﷻ said that the only criterion of distinction among human beings is the level of their Taqwa, to treat everyone as equal and to wipe out all discrimination from our attitude, language and actions, is the demonstration of our Aqeeda that the Qur'an is the book of Allahﷻ, is true and came to be obeyed. Our societies are highly racist. We discriminate against each other on the basis of color, race and wealth. All these are Haraam in

Islam and are indicators of the worst of all terminal illnesses – Kibr (arrogance).

I ask Allahﷻ to save us from practicing all forms of racism and to enable us to do our best to root out racism from our hearts, attitudes, actions and societies. This is the secret of the unity of this Ummah. It is an Ummah that came together on the basis of faith and it must be kept together only and only on that basis. The Muslim is the brother of every other Muslim, no matter his origin or glory. Only then will hearts be healed, brought closer and cemented together so that we all stand shoulder to shoulder as one. Salah is the biggest reminder of this. I ask Allahﷻ to enable us to remember as we stand before Him and to forgive our transgressions.

Khutba # 6

We come today to the conclusion of this great and beautiful Sura – Suratul Hujuraat. Allah ﷻ said:

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا
يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ
أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ
إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ
قُلْ أَنْتَعْلَمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ
يَمُنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا تَمُنُّوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ
عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

Hujuraat 49: 14. The Bedouins say: "We believe." Say: "You believe not but you only say, 'We have surrendered (in Islam),' for Faith has not yet entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger ﷺ He will not decrease anything in reward for your deeds. Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." 15.

Only those are the believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and afterward doubt not but strive with their wealth and their lives for the Cause of Allah. Those! They are the truthful. 16. Say: "Will you inform Allah about your religion? While Allah knows all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, and Allah is All-Aware of everything. 17. They regard as favor upon you (O Muhammadﷺ) that they have embraced Islam. Say: "Count not your Islam as a favor upon me. Nay, but Allah has conferred a favor upon you, that He has guided you to the Faith, if you indeed are true. 18. Verily, Allah knows the unseen of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is the All-Seer of what you do.

The Asbaab-un-Nuzool (Al Wahidi) of these Ayaat are as follows:

These Ayaat were revealed about some desert Arabs from Banu Asad ibn Khuzaymah. They went to Rasoolullahﷺ in Madina because there was drought in that year. They declared themselves to be believers outwardly but were actually disbelievers. They dirtied the streets of Madina with excrement and caused a rise in prices. They used to say to Rasoolullahﷺ: "We have come to you with dependents and refrained from fighting against you unlike such-and-such a tribe, so give us alms". They

kept mentioning to him the favors that they thought they had done. Allah ﷻ then revealed these Ayaat about them.

My brothers and sisters, there are three conditions of belief as we know. To believe in the heart, to say it aloud and to act according to that belief. Allah ﷻ mentioned this in these Ayaat and said:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

49: 15 *Only those are the believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and afterward doubt not but strive with their wealth and their lives for the Cause of Allah. Those! They are the truthful.*

I remind myself and you that Allah ﷻ knows the state of our hearts. Nobody can deceive Allah ﷻ and about those who try to do so, Allah ﷻ said very clearly:

وَمَنْ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ
يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يُخْدَعُونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا وَهُمْ عَدَابٌ آلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَكْذِبُونَ

Baqara 2: 8. *And of mankind, there are some (hypocrites) who say: "We believe in Allah and the Last Day" while in fact they believe not. 9. They (think to) deceive Allah and those who believe, while they only deceive themselves, and perceive (it) not! 10. In their hearts is a disease (of doubt and hypocrisy) and Allah has increased their disease. A painful torment is theirs because they used to tell lies.*

So it is not what we say but what we do which counts. People don't care what we say until they see what we do – neither does Allah ﷻ. So let us look to our actions to see if they reflect the basic conditions of Imaan that Allah ﷻ mentioned in this Ayah.

Allah ﷻ is also saying with great emphasis that it is not for anyone to list the favors that he or she thinks they are doing to Allah ﷻ or to Islam. Nobody does any favor to Allah ﷻ or to Islam for two major reasons:

1. Without the Tawfeeq from Allahﷻ and the resources He granted us, we would never be able to do anything at all for Him or His Deen.
2. Allahﷻ then rewards us for using what He gave us in His path – the minimum of which reward is 1:10 - 10 rewards for each good deed.

So when you are using someone else's resources and when you return them to Him, He then pays you @ 1000% at the basic minimum, that is not a favor that you are doing to Him but a favor that He is doing to you. And that is precisely what Allahﷻ said in these Ayaat and ordered His Messengerﷺ to inform those people:

قُلْ أَنْتَعْلَمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
 الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ
 يَمُنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا تَمُنُوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ
 عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

49:16. Say: "Will you inform Allah about your religion? While Allah knows all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, and Allah is All-Aware of everything. **17.** They regard as favor upon you (O Muhammadﷺ) that

they have embraced Islam. Say: "Count not your Islam as a favor upon me. Nay, but Allah has conferred a favor upon you, that He has guided you to the Faith, if you indeed are true. 18. Verily, Allah knows the unseen of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is the All-Seer of what you do.

Thankfulness is at the root of all good and treason is the worst of all crimes. It is treason to take something from someone and then to try to use it against him. What then do we say about our faculties, our wealth and our strength – all of which we were given by Allahﷻ, unasked; but which we don't hesitate to use in things which He prohibited? How do we justify looking at Haraam, listening to Haraam, speaking Haraam, earning and spending Haraam and seeking entertainment and relaxation in Haraam? We wouldn't be able to do any of those things if Allahﷻ had not given us our faculties, health and wealth. Yet we have no hesitation and feel no shame in using those gifts of Allahﷻ in things that anger Him. This is a very dangerous game my brothers and sisters. Let us cease and desist and not play these games.

Let us take lessons from the lives of the Sahaba about what they did with the blessings of Allahﷻ.

A very poor man came to Rasoolullahﷺ and asked him for some money. Rasoolullahﷺ sent him to Othman ibn Affanؓ. When the man reached Othmanؓ's house it was getting dark and as he raised his hand to knock on the door, he overheard Othmanؓ saying to his wife, 'Turn down the wick of the lamp. It burns too much oil when it is so bright.' The man thought to himself, 'Who did Rasoolullahﷺ send me to? This man is so stingy. He even wants the wick of the lamp to be lowered to save money. What can he possibly give me?' Thinking this, the man walked away without even knocking on the door. When he had gone some distance he thought to himself, 'Rasoolullahﷺ sent me to this man and so maybe he knows him better than I do. So let me go and ask. What harm can it do?' So he returned and knocked on the door.

Sayyidina Othman ibn Affanؓ answered the door. The man said to him, 'Rasoolullahﷺ sent me to you as I am in need.' Othmanؓ told him to wait; went into his house and returned with a bunch of keys. Then he took the man to his warehouse and opened the door and said to him, 'Take whatever you need, as much as you wish and then lock up and bring the keys back to me.' Saying this Othmanؓ gave him the keys and turned away to go home.

The man was astonished and called out to him. 'I have a question,' he said. 'I came by your house a little while ago and I overheard you telling your wife to lower the wick of the lamp as it was burning too much oil. But when I ask you for charity you give me the keys to your warehouse. I can't understand this. How can you do this?'

Othmanؓ said, 'That is very simple. The oil is my wealth that I am spending on myself which Allahﷻ will question me for. This charity is wealth that I am giving to Allahﷻ as a loan and He will reward me for it. That was expense. This is investment.'

The last words are mine – expense or investment – but I want to remind you and myself, let us differentiate in our own lives and our spending and minimize expenses and maximize investment. For we too will be questioned about our expenses and rewarded for our investment.

Get honest people! Be truthful and be with those who are truthful. Because on the Day of Judgment it is only the truth which will help.

I ask Allahﷻ to be pleased with you and to enable you to understand His Word and to practice it in the Sunnah of His Messengerﷺ and to illuminate

your lives with the Noor that comes from walking on that path. I ask this dua for you and for myself.

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