COLLECTIONS OF SERMONS
# Table of Contents

*Symbols Used in This Book*

*Foreword*

1. Causes of Guidance
2. Muslim Brotherhood
3. Ramadhan – A School of Character
4. Matters That Precede Marriage
5. Happiness
6. Guidelines for Raising Children
7. The Importance of Performing Hajj
A Collection of Friday Sermons

Foreword

Due to the extreme importance of preparing sermons appropriate for Western intellect and lifestyle, *al-Jumuah* magazine presents to its readers the first volume of the invaluable collection of *Jumuah* sermons.

The sermons compiled in this booklet were initially delivered in Arabic by Sheik Sulaiman b. Hamad al-Awdah, may Allah preserve him. They have been adapted to suit non-Arabic speaking communities.

The topics have been carefully chosen, and the language has been simplified so that it can be understood by the average reader and interpreted with ease.

*We hope you enjoy this first edition of the series!*

Translated and edited by:
*al-Jumuah Staff*
Symbols Used in This Book

(۔) sal'lal-laa-who a'lai'he wa sal'lam, i.e. may Allah praise him and safeguard him from all evil.

(ە) ra'de al'laa-who an'who, i.e. with whom Allah is pleased.

(ۖ) ra'de al'laaho an'hom, plural of (ە).

(ۗ) a'lai'hiss sa'laam, i.e. may Allah safeguard him from all evil.

(ۘ) jal'la ja'laa-lo-who, i.e. the Exalted.
Causes of Guidance
Causes of Guidance

First Sermon

All praise is due to Allah Whom we praise, and Whose aid we implore. We seek His forgiveness and guidance, and we take refuge with Him against our own evils and sinful acts. Whomsoever Allah guides aright none can lead astray; and whomsoever He leads astray, none can guide aright. I testify that there is no god worthy of being worshipped except Allah alone, Who has no partner, and I testify that Muhammad (ﷺ) is the slave of Allah and His Messenger. May Allah exalt his mention, and render him, his household and companions safe from every evil.

O Muslims fear Allah and fear a Day when you will return to Him. On that Day every soul will be compensated for what it has earned, and will not be wronged.

Dear brothers in Islam, there is no doubt that every Muslim wishes to be guided to the Straight Path. Muslims differ in seriousness in attaining this goal. For those who desire guidance, the pleasures of Jannah and protection from the torment of the Fire, I present to you the causes of guidance:
1° cause: Tranquility and peace of one’s heart and open mindedness towards the teachings of Islam. Allah, the Exalted, says:

So whoever Allah wants to guide- He opens his chest to Islam and whoever He wills to send astray, He makes his chest tight and constricted as though the person were climbing into the sky. Thus Allah puts the wrath on those who believe not. [Qur'an, 6:125]

The key to tranquility and peace of one’s heart is in the Islamic creed, which affirms that Allah alone is worthy of worship. If this is the greatest source of tranquility, then by right, the greatest cause for discomfort is *Shirk* (polytheism). Therefore fulfill the requirements of the Islamic creed and strengthen your Iman. Beware of all types of *Shirk* that are practiced. Ibn 'Abbas (ﷺ) said on the exegesis of the words of Allah:

So whomever Allah wants to guide- He opens his chest to Islam. [Qur'an, 6:125]

"Allah opens his heart to accept the Tawheed (belief in the oneness of Allah) and to believe in it."¹

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was asked which of the believers was most wise. He (ﷺ) said:

"Those of them who are mindful of death and prepare themselves for what comes after it."

¹ Ibn Katheer's *Tafseer* 3:327.
The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was also asked about the meaning of the ayat:

So whoever Allah wants to guide- He opens his chest to Islam. [Qur'an, 6:125]

He (ﷺ) answered:

'This is a noor (i.e. light) which Allah casts into the heart, which comforts it.' They said, "Is there a sign for this?" He (ﷺ) said: "To strive to attain the comforts of the Hereafter, to detach one's self from the life of this world, and to prepare for the Life to come."

Dear brother in Islam, if the key to guidance is Tawheed, then the ridges of this key are the acts of obedience with which one seeks nearness to Allah. Therefore, make sure that you practice all the acts of worship, try your best to seek nearness to Allah by doing that which He has ordained. Allah will safeguard you on account of an act of worship and raise your rank in the Hereafter. Allah will reward you greatly and you will feel comforted and at peace, and will taste the true meaning of life in this world, before the sweetness of the life to come. Beware of indulging excessively in the pleasures of this world. Avoid sinning for this will cause you great discomfort. In exegesis of the words of Allah:

Whoever He wills to send astray, He makes his chest tight and constricted as though the
person were climbing into the sky. [Qur'an, 6:124]

It has been said, 'This person will not accept the guidance neither will he benefit from his Iman.'

Umar b. al-Khattab (ﷺ) asked a Bedouin: "What is 'Harajah'?" The Bedouin answered: "It is a tree in the midst of a forest; nothing can reach it, no grazing or wild animals, or anything else!" Umar (ﷺ) said: "The same applies to the heart of a hypocrite; no goodness will enter his heart!"³

Dear brother and sister, do not become careless or distracted by a fleeting desire for this will make you heedless of Allah’s commandments and prohibitions. Be mindful of the conversation that will take place between the people of Hell-Fire:

"What has caused you to enter Hell?" They will say: "We were not of those who used to offer their Salât (prayers) nor did we used to feed Al-Miskin (the poor); and we used to talk falsehood (all that which God hated) with vain talkers. And we used to belie the Day of Recompense, until there came to us (the death) that is certain. So no intercession of intercessors will be of any use to them. Then what is wrong with them (i.e. the disbelievers) that they turn away from (receiving) admonition? [Qur'an, 74:42-9]

¹ i.e. the Arabic word for 'tight and constricted'.
² Ibn Katheer’s Tafseer 3:328.
Perform the *Jumuah* and all congregational prayers. Feed the poor and needy and maintain the relations of the kith and kin. Do righteous acts to the best of your ability and forsake all evil. These are all causes for one to feel at peace in this life. Doing the opposite will only make one feel uneasy and cause him great discomfort.

Ponder with me the grave effects of not performing prayer or being negligent in performing them in congregation and how this is a means for Shaytaan to overcome that individual. The Messenger (ﷺ) said:

"Whenever there are three people in a village and congregation prayer is not established among them, Shaytaan overcomes them, so adhere to the congregational prayer. Surely, the wolf only eats the lone sheep!"⁴

The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"The son of Adam does not do a thing better than performing prayer, resolving problems between two and upholding good, ethical manners."

2nd cause: *Remembering Allah often*. Another cause that will lead one to being steadfast upon the Straight Path is being mindful of Allah, and saying

⁴ Reported by Abu Daawood, 547, and Nasaa'y, 847, and graded as of *hasan* authenticity by Albaany, *Saheeh Al-Jaami’,* 5701.
the Dhikr (remembrance of Allah). The Dhikr will draw one closer to Allah and cause one to feel at ease. Allah, the Exalted, says:

Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest. [Qur'an, 13:28]

Do you know that the more you remember Allah, the more Allah remembers you? Allah says: Therefore remember Me (by praying and glorifying Me) I will remember you. [Qur'an, 2:152]

Allah clarifies this, as in the Hadeeth Qudsi (i.e. Divine Hadeeth):

"Whoever mentions Me amongst a company, I will mention him in a company that is greater."

When you become lazy in remembering Allah, Satan will overcome you and accompany you! Allah, the Exalted, says:

And whosoever turns away blindly from the remembrance of the Most Gracious (Allah) We appoint for him a devil to be a companion to him. [Qur'an, 43:36]

What a great difference between the companionship of the Angels and that of the devils! Ponder this Hadeeth in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"No rider on his trip who remembers Allah, except that Allah assigns for him a companion from the Angels. No rider on his trip who sings poetry except that a devil accompanies him."
Dear Muslim brother and sister!
O you who seeks the truth!
O you who seeks Jannah regardless of its cost!

I give you this advice—an advice given to our Prophet (ﷺ) by Prophet Ibraheem (عليه السلام) when he met him in Jannah. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"I met Prophet Ibraheem (عليه السلام) on the night I was taken on the night journey and he said: 'O Muhammad! Convey to your Ummah my Salaam and inform them that the soil of Jannah is beautiful. Its water is pure and refreshing. Its surface is flat and open. Its trees are planted on account of saying Subhanallah, Alhamdulilah, Laa ilaahah il'la Allah, and Allahu Akbar.'"

As it has been narrated in the Hadeeth, that the key to Jannah is Laa ilaaha illa-llaah and that Laa hawla wa laa quwwata illaa willah (There is no power or ability to change from one state of affairs to another except with Allah) is one of its treasures. As for asking Allah to praise His Prophet (ﷺ)—which also is a form of Dhikr (remembrance of Allah)—it is enough to know its value by reading the words of the Prophet (ﷺ):
"If I am mentioned and those around fail to ask Allah to exalt my mention, they would falter away from the Path of Jannah!"⁵

A cause: Reciting the Book of Allah in a humble manner. Recite it while trying to understand its meanings. Even though reciting the Qur'an is a type of Dhikr, we have mentioned it independently due to its importance. Allah, the Exalted, says:

Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable. [Qur'an, 17:9]

This verse mentions 'guidance' in a general form, and due to this it is inclusive of all types of guidance, and is not restricted to a certain people or a certain time, or a certain place. The guidance in the Qur'an will last till the end of time.

The Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable in relation to one's conscience and true Aqeedah, which is straightforward and lucid. The Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable and creates equilibrium between a man's outer actions and inner beliefs and between a man's feelings and mannerisms. All this is tied to the Declaration of Faith, which is 'the strong handhold' that will never break. Therefore, the lawful actions a man does are

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Reported by At-Tabarani and authenticated by Sh. Al-Albani in ‘Litha’ Al Jannah’, 6245.
considered as acts of worship as long as he intends to please Allah, even if it is something of leisure.

O Muslims the Qur'an is a means of healing and a mercy to mankind. Allah says:

And We send down of the Qur’an, that which is healing and mercy for the believers. [Qur’an, 17:82]

Those who have been given knowledge know this great matter, as Allah states:

And those to whom the knowledge has been given see that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, that is the truth, and it guides to the path of the all-Mighty, the Praised. [Qur’an, 34:6]

Allah also says:

And those who disbelieve say: "Do not listen to this Qur’an and speak noisily during the recitation of it that perhaps you will overcome. [Qur’an, 41:26]

The effect of the Qur’an on people is well-known, regardless of how 'hard' one's heart may become or how misguided and miserable one may be. Imam al-Bukhari, may Allah have mercy on him, narrated in his authentic collection a narration which proves the effect of the Qur'an on a Kafir (unbeliever). Jubair b. Mut'im, a nobleman from Quraish who went to Madinah to free some prisoners of war, heard the Prophet (ﷺ) recite Surah at-Toor, and when reached:
Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators of themselves? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain. Or have they the depositories containing the provision of your Lord? Or are they the controllers of them?

(Qur'an, 52:35-7)

Jubair said that he felt as though his heart was about to fly. [Al-Fath 8:603]

Similar to this is the story of al-Fudail b. ِIyadh who was a thief. He used to ambush all who passed by him and burglarize people's homes and rob travelers. How did he return to the Straight Path? One day while he was climbing the wall of a house, he heard someone reciting the words of Allah:

Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive to the Remembrance of Allah? [Qur'an, 57:16]

May Allah make me and you of the people of the Qur'an and benefit me and you with the Guidance and Criterion therein. I say these words of mine and I ask Allah for Forgiveness for me and you.
Second Sermon

All praise is due to Allah, Rubb of the worlds, he leaves astray whom He wills and guides those who repent and turn back to Him. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of being worshipped except Allah, Who has no partner. I also bear witness that Muhammad is the slave of Allah and His Messenger. He called the Ummah to the Straight Path until he passed away. O Allah, praise our prophet Muhammad and render him, his household, all the Prophets and Messengers and companions and those who follow in piety safe from every evil.

Dear brothers and sisters one of the causes of guidance is pondering the perfection of Allah's creation in the heavens and the earth. There is no doubt that the sane intellectual being, will become a better believer and more god-fearing after this! None of the wonders that surround us can possibly be created by nature! It is also impossible that everything was created by chance. Allah says:

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alteration of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding- who remember Allah while standing or sitting or lying on their sides and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying, "Our Lord, You did not
create this aimlessly; exalted are You; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.

[Qur'an, 3:190-1]

Allah challenges all to find any faults in His creation. After one ponders the beauties and wonders of the heavens and earth, he will return in a state of humiliation. Allah says:

Who has created the seven heavens one above another; you can see no fault in the creation of the Most Gracious. Then look again: Can you see any rifts? Then look again and yet again: your sight will return in a state of humiliation and worn out. [Qur'an, 67:3-4]

The Creator calls the slave to ponder the human body. He, the Exalted, says:

And in yourselves. Then will you not see? [51:21]

An intellectual's belief will increase as he witnesses the power and might of Allah in His creation. He has no power or ability to do anything by himself. His organs work without his control. They do the jobs they are assigned, without him even aware. Isn't this amazing? Isn't this a clear sign?

Another cause of guidance is accompanying the pious. One should choose his companions carefully. How often a deviant is brought back to the religion on account of his good friends! How often have we heard of a pious person who was misled on account of his evil friends? If a person
must have a friend in this life, let him be selective and make sure that he is accompanying the pious, for one will definitely be affected by the character of his companion.

Simply loving the pious and their actions is sufficient to lead a person to good things, especially if his intention is good. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was asked about a person who loves a people although he is not able to reach their level. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"An individual will be summoned on the Day of Resurrection with him whom he loves."²

Dear brother and sister, I am sure that you are aware of the effect a righteous or evil companion has upon an individual? The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) described the good companion as one who carries musk and the evil companion as a blacksmith. The evil companions will be enemies one to the other on the Day of Resurrection. Allah says:

Close friends that Day will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous. [Qur'an, 43:67]

 Depend on Allah and befriend the righteous. Train yourself to become accustomed to their company. Safeguard yourself from the evil-doers, for this

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² Agreed upon, Bukhari, 5702, and Muslim, 4779.
indeed is an important factor in being guided to the path of Allah.

Dear brother and sister do not be heedless of the power of supplication, which is dubbed as 'the weapon of the believer'! No matter what you do to be steadfast on the path of guidance, always supplicate Allah to affirm yourself on the Straight Path. Do not become bored or say, 'I supplicated and have not seen the effect of my supplication!'

Know that Allah will either give you what you have asked for, or waive away an evil similar to what you asked for, or keep it in store for you and give it to you on the Day of Resurrection, when you will be in need of it most!

Allah, the Exalted, says,

And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you." Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell rendered contemptible. [Qur'an, 40:60]

Allah (the All High) says, as in the Divine hadith, "O My slaves! All of you are misguided except those whom I guide. So ask Me for Guidance and I will guide you!" (Nasaa'y)7

The Prophet (ﷺ) supplicated Allah continuously although he was infallible. Allah forgave him his past and future sins. We know many supplications

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7 Reported by Nasaa'y, 3878, and authenticated by Sheik al-Albani, Saheeh Al-Jaami', 3124.
the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say. Among them is the following:

O Allah! Lord of Jibraa’eel, Meechaa’eel and Israafeel! Creator of the heavens and the earth! Knower of the hidden and the apparent! You judge between Your slaves about that which they dispute! Guide me to the Truth regarding that which has been disputed by Your Permission! Indeed, You guide whom You will to a straight Path!"

(Muslim)\(^8\)

Persistently supplicate to Allah, and ask Him in times when the Du’aa is likely to be accepted.

I ask Allah to guide us to the Straight Path and to make us steadfast upon it.

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\(^8\) Reported by Muslim, 1289.
Muslim Brotherhood
Muslim Brotherhood

First Sermon

All praise is due to Allah, Whom we praise and Whose aid we implore. We seek His forgiveness and guidance, and we take refuge with Him against our own evils and sinful acts. He whom Allah guides aright not can lead astray; and he whom He leads astray, none can guide aright. I testify that there is no god worthy of being worshipped except Allah alone, Who has no partner, and I testify that Muhammad (ﷺ) is the slave of Allah and His Messenger. May Allah exalt his mention, and render him, his household and companions safe from every evil.

O Muslims! The brotherhood of Islam exhibits our strength and unity. It is a sincere expression of our cooperation and mutual love. The brotherly love found in the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ) cannot be found in any other nation. No legislation or religion stresses its importance like Islam. Allah, the Exalted, says:

The believers are nothing else than brothers.

[Qur'an, 49:10]

This love is exemplified by the Muslims in practice. In short, we find many Muslims to be true paradigms of altruism and love. Allah, the Exalted, praises them, saying:
They give them (i.e. the emigrants) preference over themselves even though they were in need of that. [Qur’an, 59:9]

It is imperative that we understand the importance of the concept of 'brotherhood' in Islam, its many objective aims and appropriate mannerisms. We should also be aware of what ruins the true Islamic brotherhood.

The 'trustworthy handhold' of faith is to love and hate for the sake of Allah. It is a sign of the completeness of one's Iman. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Whoever loves and hates for the sake of Allah, gives and withholds for the sake of Allah would have completed his Iman." (Abu Dawood)

On account of one's brotherly love towards other Muslims, Allah will love an individual. The Prophet (ﷺ) reported that Allah, the Exalted, said:

"My love is due to the one who loves another for My sake, to the one who gathers with others for My sake, to the one who visits others for My sake, and to the one who expends in charity for My sake." (Ahmed)

On account of brotherly love, one will be shielded under the shade of the throne of Allah on a day when there is no shade but His shade. The Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned the seven whom Allah will shade in His shade on the Day of Resurrection, among whom:
"And two who loved each other for the sake of Allah; they were brought together on account of that in this life and departed while they were on this state." (Abu Dawood)

This type of brotherhood will efface one's sins and purify one spiritually. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Allah will forgive two Muslims who meet and shake each other's hand before they depart." (Abu Dawood)

Brotherhood in Islam, for the one who fulfills its rights, is a path to Jannah. It is reported in the authentic Hadeeth:

"Whoever visits a sickly or a brother for the sake of Allah, it will be said to him: "You have done well, your visit is good, and you have earned a place in Jannah." (Abu Dawood)

O Muslims! How negligent we are in upholding the true meanings of brotherhood and its necessary requirements! How heedless we are of its merits and virtue! The relationship of true brotherhood will bring happiness to an individual in this life and in the Hereafter. Shall we not then realize its importance and perceive its aims?

One of the aims of Islamic brotherhood is to cooperate in matters of faith and piety: to fear Allah and to recommend one another to be patient and to uphold the truth. Those who uphold this will be successful even if humanity is in a state of loss.
Another aim of Islamic brotherhood is to seek the help and support of one’s brothers in times of need and hardships. It is mentioned that some wise men said: “We need the comfort of brotherly companionship during times of hardship!” (Se’yar A’laam an-Nubala)

Shall we not value the aims of true brotherhood in Islam? A brother should give sincere counseling, be supportive and help his brothers in times of ease and hardship. One will see many ‘brothers’ during times of ease, but much less during times of need!

The aims of brotherhood have far-reaching effects. It will not only affect an individual, but the Ummah at large! The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) expressed this in his words:

"The example of believers in their mutual love, mercy and care for one another is similar to a body. If a limb suffers, one would stay awake with fever and not be able to sleep." (Bukhari)

This aim of Islamic brotherhood exemplifies the strength and togetherness of the Ummah.

Dear brothers! The fulfillment of these aims will anger the enemy and make them fearful of the Muslim’s strength. When a Muslim supports his brother and feels for his pain, this will indeed strengthen him. He will also be fulfilling the command of the Prophet (ﷺ):
“Support your brother whether he is wronging or has been wronged.”

Dear brothers! When we realize the virtue and aims of brotherhood in Islam, we should also be aware of the rights of our Muslim brothers. We should ask ourselves whether we have fulfilled them or have been negligent in that regard.

One of the rights we owe our Muslim brothers is to greet them with 'Salaam' (i.e. to say as-salaamu alaikum). This greeting has a great impact on society. Abdullah b. Amr (ﷺ) said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ):

"Worship ar-Rahman (The Merciful), feed the poor and needy, greet one another with the 'Salaam' and you shall enter Jannah (i.e. Heavenly Garden).” (Bukhari)

The better of two who have boycotted each other is the one who greets the other with 'Salaam'. The greatest miser is he who does not greet the other with 'Salam'.

Another right a Muslim owes his brothers is to visit the sickly. The reward for this is great indeed! One would bring happiness and keep the sickly company by this visit.

Another right is to perform the Jinazah (i.e. funeral) prayer and to help in the burial. Also,

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9 The meaning of this is that one should prevent his Muslim brother from wronging others.
saying, 'Yarhamuka-llaah! May Allah have mercy on you!' to a person who sneezes and says, 'Alhamdu lillaah! Praise be to Allah!'

Other rights include to support the oppressed, to accept a fellow Muslim's invitation, to give him sincere counseling and to accept it from him.

All these are rights a Muslim owes to his fellow Muslim brothers. These rights spread love and goodness in society. Truly a religion that considers a smiling face an act of charity is indeed a great religion!

Dear brother do not belittle any good deed. Do not limit your goodness to family members, or friends. Instead, be kind and helpful to every Muslim. Whoever cannot help monetarily, can help with his prestige, warm welcome and kind words. Do not forget to supplicate Allah for your brothers; it doesn't cost a thing! Moreover, an Angel will respond to you, as you supplicate and will say, "May you receive similar to it as well."

Dear brothers there are other mannerisms one should uphold as well, including:

*Abiding by the proper conduct of speech. When talking one should use kind words, Allah says:

And tell My slaves to say that which is best.

[Qur’an, 17:53]

One should also listen attentively and not interrupt the one who is talking. Furthermore, one should not
mock or scoff at his brother, nor make sarcastic comments about what he has said.

Another manner is to forgive mistakes. Whoever keeps track of every mistake his brother does will have no friends at all! We have to realize that every son of Adam commits mistakes!

Another manner that a Muslim should adhere to is to think well of his brother and to interpret his actions in a good way. Surely, this will preserve brotherly affection.

One should also inform his brother that he loves him for the sake of Allah. This will increase the love one has for his brother. The Prophet (ﷺ) said

“If one of you loves his brother for the sake of Allah, let him inform him, for this will strengthen one's love and companionship.”

(Saheeh al-Jami)

In another narration:

“If one of you loves his brother for the sake of Allah, let him visit him in his house and inform him that he loves him for the sake of Allah.” (Saheeh al-Jami)

Another manner of Islamic brotherhood is to seek advice and to give sincere counseling if you are asked, and to be kind. One should give gifts and forgive his brother if he makes a mistake. Beware! Do not overburden your fellow Muslim with many requests; if he were unable to fulfill them, he would
not be able to confront you. Try your best to give when you are asked for something, and to be grateful when you are given. Allah, the Exalted, says:

The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give alms and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those- Allah will have Mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise. [Qur'an, 9:71]
Second Sermon

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, as befits His Majesty. I am grateful to Him for His Blessings. Allah, the Exalted, says:

If you are grateful, I will surely increase you in Favor... [Qur'an, 14:7]

I testify that there is no god worthy of being worshipped except Allah, Who has no partner nor equal in His Lordship, Oneness, and perfect Names and Attributes. I testify that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger. May Allah praise him and safeguard him, his household and his companions from all evil.

Brothers in Islam! Due to the greatness of a Muslim’s right, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Every Muslim is inviolable, his blood, property and family." (Muslim)

The Prophet (ﷺ) reminded his fellow Muslim brothers of these rights in large gatherings, on the Day of Arafah and the tenth day of Hajj.

O Muslim! Now that you know some of the virtues, aims, rights, and manners that pertain to brotherhood in Islam, you should know of the problems that ruin the spirit of brotherhood in Islam.

The first problem that ruins the spirit of brotherhood in Islam is not fulfilling the rights due to a brother, not caring to uphold the appropriate
mannerisms that go hand in hand with it. When one does not care about his brother, does not help him, nor treat him appropriately, this will indefinitely ruin the relationship.

Another problem that ruins the spirit of brotherhood in Islam is not spending time with your fellow Muslim brothers, and being a miser such that you help no one. The story of Salman al-Farsi ( ), who visited his fellow Muslim brother whom he loved for the sake of Allah, Abud-Dar'daa, ( ) is truly amazing! He walked from Al-Ma’daaain (an area in Persia) to Ash-Shaam (the Greater Syria Area) in order to visit him. One of us may become lazy and not visit his Muslim brother who lives close to him, although he may even own a fancy car!

Another matter that ruins the spirit of brotherhood is to be overly critical and to blame others for their shortcomings. Looking at others’ shortcomings instead of considering their positive points, pardoning, and treating others in a benevolent manner is a factor that ruins the spirit of brotherhood as well. Rajaa b. Hai’ya’wah said: “The one who befriends him who has no faults will have few friends. The one who wants his friends to be sincere to him will not be pleased. And the one who is over critical of his brothers will have many enemies.”
Another matter that ruins the spirit of brotherhood is thinking negatively about one's fellow Muslim brothers. This will certainly ruin the relationship between fellow Muslims. Satan capitalizes on these thoughts, leading one to boycott his fellow Muslim brothers for a period of time. After this damaging affair, one will realize that the whole matter was nothing, and there was no reason for the boycott. So beware of this, and always interpret your fellow Muslim brother's actions in a good manner.

Of the things that ruin relationships is committing sins. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Any two who love one another will not be separated except on account of a sin that either of them does." (Bukhari)

Another matter that will ruin a relationship is envy. Enviousness is certainly the sickness or disease of all nations. Seek refuge with Allah from envy and recite the supplications of the day and night, of which are the words of Allah:

And from the evil of an envier when the person envies. [Qur'an, 113:5]

Another matter that will ruin one's brotherly affection towards his fellow Muslim brothers is to be excessive in brotherly love and to joke unnecessarily. Whatever exceeds its limit turns into its opposite. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:
"Love your loved one reasonably, for he may become one whom you despise. Hate him whom you despise reasonably, for he may become one whom you show affection to in the future." (Tirmidthi)

You should be aware of these issues that ruin the relationship and brotherly affection among Muslims. There may be other matters as well, keep in mind that you should stay away from every manner and action which causes problems between your fellow Muslim brothers. Severing relations is a grave sin according to Allah. The words of the Prophet (ﷺ) are an admonition enough. He (ﷺ) said:

"Peoples' deeds are displayed before Allah every Monday and Thursday. Every person will be forgiven except for two between whom is a grudge. Allah will say: 'Leave these two aside, till they reconcile.'" (Muslim)

Dear brother, do not let Satan fool you into saying, "My companion is the one at fault, and he is the one who will bear the sin alone." Know that your companion is probably thinking the same thing! Keep the words of the Prophet (ﷺ) in mind:

"The better of the two is he who greets his brother with Salam (before the other)."

Don't you want to be the better person?

Dear brothers, true brotherly affection requires that one be magnanimous, generous in all aspects, and that one hopes for the reward of Allah.
When Muslims realize these rights and fulfill them, their societies will transform into societies of mutual love and respect, wherein the poor are helped and the wronged have their rights restored. Orphans will be taken care of properly, the sickly visited, and the deceased given a proper burial.

The life of this world is filled with hardships, so ease them with the love of Islamic brotherhood. You should realize that when one fulfills these rights, he will be happy in this life and in the next. Dear Muslims, let us be living examples of what the true Islamic brotherhood stands for!
Ramadan –
A School of Character
Ramadan - A School of Character

First Sermon

All praise is due to Allah Whom we praise, and Whose aid we implore. We seek His forgiveness and guidance, and we take refuge with Him against our own evils and sinful acts. Whomsoever Allah guides aright, none can lead astray; and whomsoever He leads astray, none can guide aright. I testify that there is no god worthy of being worshipped except Allah alone, Who has no partner. And I testify that Muhammad (ﷺ) is the slave of Allah and His Messenger. May Allah exalt his mention, and render him, his household and companions safe from every evil.

O Muslims! Ramadan is a month of goodness and virtue. It teaches Muslims good character. But many are unaware of the secrets and wisdoms behind fasting; therefore, let us remind each other of its wisdoms and its relation to good manners and virtues.

Allah, the Exalted, reminds us that an important wisdom of fasting is to gain piety, as He says:

O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous. [Qur'an, 2:183]
Besides this, fasting has other wisdoms and secrets. It also has a positive effect on one's character. One would not be incorrect to say that fasting has a direct impact on matters such as sincerity, patience, fear, hope, righteousness, maintenance of the relations of the kith and kin, remembrance, supplication, being mindful of one's own deeds, modesty, dignity, forbearance, repentance, control of one's base desires, Da'wah, nurturing one's self on the Straight Path, Jihad, generosity and other pious deeds.

A fasting person fosters sincerity when he puts into practice the words of the Prophet (ﷺ):

"Whoever fasts the month of Ramadhan out of belief and in hope of Allah's reward, will have his past sins expiated." (Agreed upon)

In the narration of Imam al-Bukhari:

"He abstains from eating and drinking and from fulfilling his sexual desires for My sake! Fasting belongs to Me and I shall reward on account of it."

Is there a greater lesson in sincerity than this! Indeed, fasting is a private act of worship, a secret between you and Allah. Some scholars said: "One cannot be boastful in doing this act. Re'yaa (boastfulness) affects this deed only when the fasting person informs others that he is fasting. This is unlike all other acts of worship for a person may boast by simply doing other deeds."
Fasting nurtures and trains one to be patient in a practical manner, for it not only commands one to abstain from eating and drinking; rather, it also trains one to abstain from certain lawful pleasures during the fasting hours. This in itself serves to nurture the individual to be patient and rids him of evil qualities.

Fasting also trains one to be patient in times of calamities, to be tolerant, and to pardon the one who wrongs him by simply saying, "I am fasting."

Fasting has a clear effect on the individual in relation to fearing the punishment of Allah and hoping for His reward, which are vital for the success of the slave in this life and in the Life to come. The fasting person fears Allah alone, and this is sufficient to cause the individual to safeguard his fast from anything that will tarnish it. He also hopes for the reward of Allah when he fasts. Fear of the punishment of Allah and hope of His reward are two focal points that cause one to fast out of belief. In this manner the fasting person will fulfill both these matters. There is no doubt that fasting makes one fearful of the punishment of Allah and hopeful for His reward. Whoever worships Allah with love, hope and fear is one who worships Him alone and this individual is truly a believer.

The trait of being mindful of Allah materializes with fasting, for the fasting person abstains throughout fasting hours from anything
which nullifies his fast, whether it is something material or immaterial.

The fasting person ensures that he keeps his fast, for he is fearful of the punishment of Allah. He knows that Allah is watching him; thus, he would not be tempted to break his fast! This level of being mindful of Allah is called 'Ihsaan'. A Muslim must continuously train himself to be mindful of Allah. It has been said about being mindful of Allah that: Isolation and solitude have positive results that appear openly. How many believers, who fear Allah while in isolation of people, leave the fulfillment of their desires out of fear of His punishment and in hope of His reward? This action is similar to one who places a piece of Indian Sandal wood on a burning coal. Its scent flows and people smell it without realizing its source.

Modesty is a character that obliges one to do good and to abstain from doing the unlawful. It prevents one from being negligent in discharging the rights of others. This trait is enriched and strengthened during the Month of Ramadan. The fasting person is mindful of Allah and will not do anything that nullifies his fast, nor will he harm a Muslim. Whenever he is tempted to do a thing, he will remember that Allah is ever Watchful over him and will abstain from it!

O Muslims! Forbearance is a trait which is enriched while one fasts. This is clear from the words of the Prophet (ﷺ) who said:
"If one of you is fasting, let him not have sexual relations with his wife; neither should he become angry. If someone swears at him or wants to fight him, let him say: 'Indeed I am fasting!'" (Bukhari & Muslim)

The fasting person controls himself and his desires. He does not react in a harsh manner to those who act harshly towards him; instead, he pardons and forgives. How great is the reward of Allah for him who controls himself, even though one may be able to avenge himself.

It is mentioned that someone swore at al-Ahnaf b. Qais, and continued doing so until he reached his home. Al-Ahnaf replied to him, saying: "If you have anything else to say, say it; otherwise leave! Let none of the commoners hear you, otherwise they will treat you badly." The poets composed verses praising these types of people, even if they did not receive any money from them. Shall we not learn and apply in our daily lives this important trait?

O Muslims! We also learn important lessons about Jihad from our Pious Predecessors, and in particular from our Prophet (ﷺ), for they fought numerous battles in the month of Ramadan. The Battle of Badr was fought in this month and Makkah was conquered in this month as well. People entered the folds of Islam in large numbers. Thereafter, the Muslims fought many battles against
the enemies of Allah in this great month till present times.

A Muslim must also strive to purify himself and to overcome the temptations of worldly desires. Therefore, a true fasting person is one who abstains from lying, spreading rumors and taking false testimony.

A true fasting person is the one who abstains from listening to the Haram (unlawful) and from looking at the unlawful. A true fasting person is the one who safeguards himself from walking towards the evil, and from taking the evil. This is how a fasting person overcomes the temptation of fulfilling base desires.

This 'Jihad' (i.e. struggle) to overcome base desires should continue with the Muslim even after the Month of Ramadhan. One should worship Allah continuously, for Allah says:

And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty (i.e. death). [Qur'an, 15:99]

Allah guides the Mujaahideen (those who struggle in His path) and keeps them aright. Allah says:

And those who strive for Us- We will surely guide them to Our Ways and indeed, Allaah is with the doers of good. [Qur'an, 29:69]
one excels in doing the good. It is an excellent means by which one nurtures and trains himself to do the good. How evil are a people who only know Allah and fear Him in the month of Ramadan!

Some of the Pious Predecessors were asked about people who excelled in doing the good during the month of Ramadhan and after it had passed stopped doing good deeds. They said: “Woe to them! How evil are they who are only mindful of Allah during Ramadhan!”

The third category, are the good, pious ones whom Allah granted success in purifying themselves during Ramadan, and who continue living a pious life throughout the year. Whenever they are tempted by Satan, they remind themselves and repent to Allah.

One should be mindful that they should always repent to Allah. It is important to repent to Allah throughout the year. Repentance becomes more important during the month of Ramadhan; it is a season of repentance. During this month, people find elements that facilitate sincere repentance. Allah invites us to repent to Him. He says:

And turn to Allaah in repentance, all of you, O believers that you might succeed. [Qur'an, 24:31]

At times, repentance may be considered an obligatory duty, and at other times it may be considered a praiseworthy matter. The obligatory repentance is to be made in expiation of one's sins
oneself to uphold righteous character and to do good.

Dear brother and sister! Do not allow the month of Ramadhan to pass without benefiting from its wisdoms and secrets. Do not limit its benefit to a few days. Make Ramadan an opportunity for purifying yourself. Allah says:

**He has succeeded who purifies it. [Qur'an, 91:9]**

This means one who succeeds in purifying oneself from sins and trains one’s soul to be obedient and compliant to the commands of Allah. Beware! Do not commit sinful acts, for Allah says:

**And he has failed who instills it with corruption. [Qur'an, 91:10]**

Meaning, the one who instills it with sinful acts and does not do good and follows the path of Satan and does immoral deeds.¹⁰

Dear Muslims, conclude all your deeds by seeking forgiveness from Allah. Umar b. Abdul-Aziz (ﷺ) sent a letter across the lands in which he ordered people to conclude the month of Ramadan by seeking forgiveness from Allah and to pay the Zakah of Fitr.¹¹ It is easy to pronounce the *istighfaar*!

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¹⁰ Editor of *Tayseer Al-Kareem Ar-Rahmaan*, As-Sa’dy’s commentary, 7:633.

It also has great meanings. Allah mentions it with Tawheed (the oneness of Allah) in his words:

**So know that there is no deity except Allah and ask forgivness for your sin.** [Qur'an, 47:19]

Sheik Islam b. Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "The Testimony of Faith opens the gates to all goodness; whereas, seeking forgiveness closes the path to all evil." He quoted Abu Hurairah (ﷺ), saying:

"I have not seen anyone who said: 'Astaghfirullah wa atoobo ilaihi' (i.e. I repent to Allah and return to Him) more than the Prophet (ﷺ)."

He is the greatest and most perfect of Allah's creation. It is narrated that Luqman advised his son saying:

'O my son make istighfaar (i.e. saying Astaghfirullah – I repent to Allah) for there are certain hours in which Allah answers directly.'

**Dear Muslims, seek forgiveness from Allah so that your sins will be expiated and your fast will be perfected. In general the hearts become calm and find rest in the remembrance of Allah. By seeking forgiveness one's sins will be effaced.** Qatadah, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "The Qur'an guides you to

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recognize the sickness that ails you and its cure. As for
the sickness it is sinful acts; whereas the cure is seeking
goodness from Allah.” It is narrated that Abu
Hurairah (r) said: “Backbiting diminishes the
reward of one’s fast, seeking forgiveness 'patches'
his fast; therefore, whoever can fast in this manner
let him do so.” We seek Allah’s forgiveness and repent
to Him from all our sinful deeds and mistakes.

Each of us should ask ourselves, how has
fasting changed us? Are these changes lasting?
Have our manners changed for the better? Test
yourself. Are you as sincere after Ramadan as you
were in Ramadan?

Realize that Allah is ever-watchful over you.
Therefore, be modest, polite, kind, and generous.
Maintain the relation of the kith and kin. Be mindful
of the remembrance of Allah and ask Him alone.
Seek his forgiveness. Do all this in Ramadan, and
continue doing these deeds after the month of
Ramadan as well.

O Allah you are our Lord; there is no god worthy of
being worshipped except You. You created us, and
we are Your slaves. And we are on Your covenant
and Promise to the best of our capability. We seek
refuge with You from the evil of our sinful deeds.
We acknowledge Your Blessings on us, and we
confess our sins, so forgive us. Indeed, no one
forgives sins but You!
Matters That Precede Marriage
Matters That Precede Marriage

First Sermon

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds; and I testify that there is none worthy of worship but Allah, Who has no partner. Allah says:

And of His Signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought. [Qur'an, 30:21]

I testify that Muhammad is Allah's slave and Messenger. His Sunnah encourages us to do every type of goodness. It addresses the natural disposition of man and safeguards one from the evils of their carnal and whimsical desires. May Allah praise our Prophet (ﷺ) and safeguard him from all evil.

May Allah safeguard the Messengers and Prophets from all evil. May Allah be pleased with the Companions and all the Ta'bi'een and those who follow them in piety until the Day of Requital.

O humankind, Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women and fear Allah, through Whom you demand (your mutual
rights) and (do not cut the relations of) the womb [kinship]. Surely Allah is ever an All-Watcher over you. [Qur'an, 4:1]

And He, the Exalted, says:

O humankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most honorable of you with Allah is the most pious. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted. [Qur'an, 49:13]

O slaves of Allah! The issue of marriage is a matter of great importance and needs to be addressed in this time and age. In this sermon, I will talk about premarital matters, namely the 'what, when, why and how' type of questions. I will specifically talk about the issue from the following points:

• Why should I marry?
• Who should I marry?
• Why am I getting married? Is it for a certain reason or for a number of reasons?
• Am I aware of the wisdoms and goals behind marriage?
• What prevents me, or makes me dread marriage?

I will also address similar matters that concern our sisters, namely:

• Why should I get married?
• Who is the best husband for me?
• Why do women sometimes reject the idea of getting married?
• What are some of the factors that negatively affect a woman's decision to delay marriage?
• Are there any negative affects when one delays marriage?
• What is said about remaining unmarried?

Regarding society at large, I will address the following matters:
• What are the means for making marriage easier?
• What are the obstacles and social customs that burden the shoulders of the spouses and are a factor in the delay of marriage?

O Muslim youth! Know that many positive things can be achieved through marriage, the most important of which is that you will safeguard yourselves from the unlawful. Allah, the Exalted, says:

And they who guard their private parts except from their wives or those their right hands possess, for indeed, they will not be blamed but whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors.

[Qur'an, 23:5-7]

One cannot achieve the divine aims of marriage by looking at pictures and images that excite one sexually, by masturbation or by engaging in illicit relations.
One should not heedlessly forsake the Sunnah (practice) of the Prophets (ﷺ). Indeed, getting married will complete one's religion! Allah, the Exalted, informed His Prophet (ﷺ):

And We have already sent Messengers before you and assigned to them wives and descendants. [Qur'an, 13:38]

Marriage increases the progeny of the Ummah (i.e. nation) of Muhammad (ﷺ). Marriage will also benefit a Muslim after death! For this reason, the Prophet (ﷺ) advised his Ummah to get married to fertile, amicable women. He (ﷺ) said:

"Marry the amicable, fertile woman, for I will boast the large number of my Ummah (nation) on the Day of Resurrection" (Nasa’ee)

One of the blessed aims of marriage in Islam is to strengthen family bonds and to increase the love between spouses. Another aim is to nurture the instinct of fatherhood and motherhood in the parents and to make sure that they will raise their children with love.

Another aim of marriage is to make one aware of the responsibility marriage incurs upon an individual. Nevertheless, this does not mean one cannot enjoy what Allah has made lawful for him according to the Shari’ah. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"This world is only an enjoyment, and the best of its provision is a righteous woman."

(Muslim)
Dear Muslims, when you realize the goals and aims specific to marriage, choose your wife appropriately! Do not choose a wife on the basis of beauty, for a beautiful woman may not necessarily be pious! The Prophet mentioned to us the reasons a woman is usually married, and at the end of that narration, he said:

"Marry on account of religion, may your hands be full of dust!"

You should get married to one who is from a good background, who is known for her amicable disposition and self-control, and who is mentally stable and sane and whose behavior is excellent. This type of woman will be kind to her child and take care of her husband. The Prophet said:

"The best women who have ridden camels are the righteous women of Quraish; they are the most caring for a child in his young age, and they take care of their husbands' wealth." (Agreed Upon)

O Muslims! We remind you that fulfilling your sexual desire should not be the only goal you wish to achieve through marriage. One should understand that there are a number of goals that can be achieved through marriage which relate to the individual, his wife and children, and society at large.

Do not fear poverty on account of marriage. This false apprehension prevents many from getting
married. Abdullah b. Masood (ﷺ) said: “Seek affluence in marriage,” for Allah says:

If they should be poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty, and Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing. [Qur’an, 24:32]

Allah will bless and grant you an easy way out, and provide you from places you least expect. Obey Allah's command:

But let them who find not the means for marriage abstain from sexual relations until Allah enriches them from His bounty. [Qur’an, 24:33]

Adhere to the guidance of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ): "O youth! Whoever of you can afford to get married let him marry, for it will lower one's gaze, and safeguard one from doing the unlawful. Whoever cannot let him fast, for it will protect him." (Agreed upon)

Dear sister! That which applies to the young men in relation to the goals and wisdoms of marriage applies to you as well. Do not be heedless of the fact that you are an important element in the Muslim family. The enemies of Islam are keen to destroy the family through various means. Know that when you delay your marriage and justify your actions with inappropriate reasons, you in fact delay the creation of a Muslim family and indirectly become instrumental in decreasing the progeny of
this *Ummah*, favorably responding to the enemies' requests!

Dear sister! In times of strife, the woman tends to be targeted; therefore, she should not refuse to get married to a religious man who is well-mannered and trustworthy. It is her right to ask about his mental stability, personality, family background and other matters of importance. She should not be concerned only with his looks, job or social status. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"If one whom you are pleased with his *Deen* and manners seeks to marry, then get him married. If you do not, strife and great corruption will spread throughout the lands."

(Tirmidthi)

O sister! Getting married early is better for you and your society. Do not let the pursuit of an education, the desire to get a job, or the ill advice of friends or family delay you from getting married young. Do not be swayed by false media, which time and again 'highlights' the harms, woes and negative effects of getting married young.

Dear sister, you should realize that many women in our society have become spinsters on account of their refusal to get married at an early age, or on account of their refusal to accept pious men who propose to them!
Dear brothers and sisters, do not intermingle with the opposite sex for this is unlawful in Islam and has many evil results.
Second Sermon

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. He made marriage an act of worship through which His slaves seek nearness to Him. He also bestowed the blessing of marriage and children on His slaves. Allah says:

*And Allah has made for you from yourselves mates and has made for you from your mates sons and grandchildren and has provided for you from the good things.* [Qur'an, 16: 72]

I testify that there is no god worthy of being worshipped except Allah, Who has no partner.

And I testify that Muhammad is Allah's slave and Messenger. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Whomever Allah grants a pious woman, Allah has helped him in half of his faith, so let him fear Allah in the other half." (Haakim)

Abdullah b. Masood (ﷺ) said: "Were I to know that there were only ten days left in my life, after which I would surely die, and I was able to get married, I would marry to safeguard myself from the Fitnah."

O Allah! Praise our Prophet, and all the Prophets and Messengers, and render them safe from all evil.

O Muslims! Society can either be a positive or negative element in marriage. Charitable organizations should be established to help the
youth get married and to loan them money for this cause.

Another aspect which should be taken into consideration is the overall cost of marriage. If the overall cost of marriage is decreased and dowries made lower this will indeed help the youth get married.

Among the mistakes related to marriage is to force the girl to get married to someone without taking her opinion on the matter. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"A matron is not to be married until her permission is sought, and the permission of the virgin is to be sought."
The Companions (ﷺ) asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): 'How do we seek the virgin's permission?' He answered:

"Her permission is sought when she keeps silent." (Agreed upon)

Dear guardian, you have no right to force your daughter or sister to get married to someone she does not like. If the man you want her to get married to is a sinning person, you should not marry her to him.

Dear guardian, it is of the Sunnah that a man can look at the woman he has proposed to; of course, not in privacy. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Look at her, for it will bring you closer and make the marriage last."
The scholars said: "This ruling, i.e. for the man to look at the woman, is not only for men; rather, it includes women, for she likes what men like, and hates what they hate."

The engagement should not be for a lengthy period of time. The process should be quick so that the woman is not harmed. A lengthy period of time is painful and undesirable; no one will understand this except one who has suffered on account of it. The harm increases if the engagement is called off after the woman has grown old; and this is one of the reasons that women become spinsters.¹³

Giving engagement rings, which is part of the Western culture, has no basis in Islam. A marriage is not consummated in Islam except through a valid marriage contract, which includes the proposal and acceptance. Sheik Islam bin Taymiyah, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "Marriage is completed with whatever people regard as marriage, in any language, term or action."¹⁴

O Muslims! Since mass media has corrupted youth (as we can clearly see), be sure that Muslim girls have been affected by it as well. On the other hand, mass media can be used to promote the Deen of Allah and to portray the correct image of Islam and to clear many misconceptions. O Youth and

¹³ Aal Nawwaab, Ta’akh-khur Sin Az-Zawaaj, p 363.
¹⁴ Al-Ikhtibaaraat Al-’Ilmiyyah, p 119.
guardians, beware of the evil found in mass media that negatively affects one's behavior and code of conduct, and excites one sexually. Muslims should realize that a war is being waged against them in their homes! A Muslim should be wary and not fall prey to this. Although mass media could potentially be a useful tool in propagating the radiant message of Islam, the unfortunate reality of modern times is that mass media generally plays a central role in giving a negative image to Islam in the West and poisoning the culture of Muslim youth around the world.

O Allah! Make marriage easy for the young men and women. O Allah bless them and gather between them in goodness. Ameen
Happiness
Happiness

First Sermon

The pursuit of happiness is one of the primary goals of all humans without exception. However, people are at variance as to its true meaning and the ways that lead to it. Some people link it with wealth, power and prestige; some others attribute it to all forms of whims and desires, whether lawful or unlawful; yet others ascribe it to taking the lead in the field of inventions and industry; another group assigns it to luxurious palaces, pretty women, stored-up heaps of gold and silver, pastured horses and cattle and crops. However, all of these are transient possessions of the life of the world, and there is something that is better and everlasting in store for the righteous:

Say, 'Shall I inform you of [something] better than that? For those who fear Allah will be gardens in the presence of their Lord beneath which rivers flow; therein shall they abide forever; and purified spouses and Allah's Pleasure; and Allah is Mindful of His servants.' [Qur'an, 3:15]

Pharaoh took the wrong path to happiness when he wrongly believed that power and tyranny would lead him to find it. He boasted:
Does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me and these streams flowing beneath me?  
[Qur'an, 43:51]

He also arrogantly declared,

I am your most exalted lord. [Qur'an, 79:24]

But Almighty Allah seized him in exemplary punishment for his transgressions. In fact, he and his misled army experienced misery while still in this life. He tried to repent, but it was too late:

What? Now, while you were disobedient before and were of the corrupters? So today We will save you in your body that you may be a sign to those who come after you; and surely, many of mankind are heedless of Our signs. [Qur'an, 10:91-2]

While affluent Pharaoh and his minions took the wrong path to happiness, some oppressed young believers found bliss with the simplest worldly means. They believed in their Lord and kept away from the false gods of their people. The cave in which they hid to avoid religious persecution was constricting, and yet they genuinely enjoyed the benefits of this faith and experienced tremendous relief and joy.

The Qur'an outlines the ways to happiness in many verses, sometimes by linking it to following Allah's guidance:

Whoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. [Qur'an, 2:38]
At other times, by making happiness the outcome of true faith and good deeds:

**Whoever does good righteous acts, whether male or female, and is a believer, We will surely grant him a good and pure life; and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of what they used to do.** [Qur’an, 16:97]

At other times by considering it the outcome of purifying the soul, adopting noble qualities and avoiding evil traits:

**He indeed truly prospers who purifies it (the soul); but he who corrupts it is ruined.** [Qur’an, 91:9-10]

At other times, by observing Allah's commands and avoiding the prohibitions:

**Successful indeed are the believers—Those who humble themselves in their prayers, who avoid vain talk, who are active in paying the Zakah, who guard their modesty—except for their wives or what their right hands possess, for then they are not to be blamed; but those who seek [anything] beyond that are the transgressors; and those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants; and who are strict in the observance of their prayers; these will be, who will inherit Paradise: They will dwell therein [forever].** [Qur’an, 23:1-11]
While confusion, doubt and misguidance lead to intolerable misery in this life and severe punishment in the hereafter, faith and certainty are the causes of happiness in this life and eternal bliss in the life to come. Almighty Allah says:

But he who does righteous deeds, being a believer, will have no fear of injustice or loss. [Qur'an, 20:112]

And:

On those who believe and do righteous deeds will the Most Gracious bestow love. [Qur'an, 19:96]

Happiness is impossible for immoral people who pursue this trivial life and commit sins to find bliss. No matter what worldly possessions they may attain, humiliation is attached to sins surrounding them from all sides and keeping them far away from contentment. Qarun, who had been given treasures whose very keys would have been a burden to a body of strong men, never found happiness. The pride of his worldly glitter led to his misery and ultimate doom.

In fact, faith and uprightness are signs of success and happiness in this life and in the hereafter:

As for those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah' and remain steadfast, the angels descend on them, [saying], 'Fear not, nor grieve; and
receive the good news of paradise which you were promised.' [Qur'an, 41:30-1]

Obeying Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) is bound to lead to happiness:

And he who obeys Allah and His Messenger shall surely attain a mighty success. [Qur'an, 33:71]

Commenting on the verses:

Indeed, the virtuous will be in enjoyment, and the wicked will be in the Hellfire. [Qur'an, 82:13-4]

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, writes in Ad-Daa' wad-Dawaa' (The Disease and the Remedy, pp. 218-9),

"Do not mistakenly think that, "Indeed, the virtuous will be in bliss, and the wicked will be in the Hellfire" applies only to the Hereafter. Rather, [the righteous] will be in bliss in their three abodes, and [the wicked] will be in misery in their three abodes as well. Indeed, no bliss is better than having a faithful heart, a clear chest, knowledge of and love for Almighty Allah, and acting according to His dictates. The true life is in fact that of the sound heart which is free from shirk, rancor, jealousy, miserliness, arrogance and love for the life of the world and power. Such a heart is in fact in a paradise in this very life, a paradise in the period between life and
resurrection (al-barzakh) and Paradise on the Day of Judgment."

Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, also writes in Zaad Al-ma’aad (Provision for the Day of Judgment, Vol. 2, p.25),

"Expressing his love for Allah and his joy in worshiping Him, a wise pious man once said, 'If I am to experience in Paradise the same [pleasure] that I am going through [in this life], then I will certainly be living a happy life."

Acceptance of Allah's decrees and contentment with one's lot is also bound to lead to happiness in this life and abundant reward in the hereafter. Almighty Allah says:

There falls not any affliction but by the leave of Allah; and whoever believes in Allah—He guides his heart [aright]. [Qur’an, 64:11]

The religion of Islam is undoubtedly the source of happiness and guidance; and any other religion or philosophy is without doubt a source of misery. Almighty Allah says:

Is one whose heart Allah has opened to Islam so that he has received light from Allah [no better than one hard-hearted]? Woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of Allah. They are manifestly wandering [in error]. [Qur’an, 39:22]
The Qur'an is the way to guidance. Whoever turns away from it will certainly have a miserable life, even though it may seem to others that he is happy. Allah says:

But whoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life narrowed down, and We will raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment. He will say, 'O my Lord! Why have You raised me up blind while I had sight [before]?' [Allah] will say, 'Thus did you, when Our signs came to you, forget them, so will you, this day, be forgotten'. [Qur'an, 20:124-6]

Acquisition of religious knowledge is also a pathway to finding happiness. People with such knowledge are always high spirited, enjoy the best moral character and lead a happy life. Conversely, people who lack religious knowledge are downcast and often undergo depression and dejection. Almighty Allah rightly says:

Say, 'Are those who know equal to those who know not?' [Qur'an, 39:9]

Remembering Allah under all circumstances also leads to happiness. It is ever in the remembrance of Allah that hearts find comfort. Negligence of such a magnificent act of worship is bound to lead to different forms of depression and torment; it also paves the way to the heart's death. The Prophet (ﷺ) once observed,
"The example of the one who remembers Allah and the one who does not remember Allah is like that of the living and the dead."

Worse yet, if someone is heedless of the remembrance of Allah, the natural consequence under Allah's decree is that he accompanies the devil. Almighty Allah says,

> And whoever turns away from the remembrance of the Most Glorious, We appoint for him a devil, who becomes his companion. [Qur'an, 43:36]

Showing kindness to people and providing them with all forms of assistance they need is also a pathway to happiness. Good-hearted and generous people are always cheerful and lead happy lives. Misers, however, are always miserable and deeply depressed because they lack this virtue.

Courage also brings happiness. Brave people are always in high spirits, while cowards feel wretched and dejected.

Enjoyment of life to the full and experiencing its best forms of beauty can only be realized while being obedient to Allah. Seeking happiness with other than this is just an illusion. The life of the world is so insignificant in the sight of Allah that He describes it as 'fleeting' no matter how long it may seem in the eyes of ignorant and misguided people. Allah says,
Short is the enjoyment of this world, but the hereafter is better for him who is pious. [Qur'an, 4:77]

Indeed, all false glitter and adornments of this world are as naught. The entire world, with all its false attractions, is nothing in the sight of Allah:

And were it not that all people would become one community [of disbelievers], We would have made for those who disbelieve in the Most Gracious, silver roofs for their houses, and [silver] stairways on which to go up, and [silver] doors to their houses, and couches [of silver] on which they could recline, and also adornments of gold. But all this is nothing but enjoyment of the present life; the hereafter, in the sight of your Lord, is for the righteous. [Qur'an, 43:33-5]

Muslims must be on their guard against being distracted by the transient enjoyment of the present life. They should not allow such 'fleeting' enjoyment divert them from everlasting happiness and cause them great remorse in the hereafter. They should not let the temptations of this life keep them away from the reason they were created, for if they do, they will certainly only realize their loss when it is too late!

Believers must question themselves about the daily obligatory prayers and see if they offer them on time with all their conditions. For how can
they find happiness when they neglect them? Allah says,

Woe to those who pray [but] who are heedless of their prayer. [Qur’an, 107:4-5]

How can some of them find happiness when they think that listening to music is a form of happiness? In reality, indulging in music is blatant deviation from the true path and is absolute misguidance. Allah says,

And of the people is he who buys the amusement of speech to mislead [others] from the way of Allah without knowledge and who takes it (i.e. his way) in ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment.

[Qur’an, 31:6]

How can they find happiness when they obtain unlawful earnings? Those who believe so while undertaking usurious transactions should read the verse:

Allah destroys usury. [Qur’an, 2:276]

Their punishment in this life and in the hereafter is obvious:

Those who devour usury do not rise [on the day of resurrection] except as rises one whom Satan has smitten with insanity. [Qur’an, 2:275]

A far more severe punishment awaits them then. What kind of happiness is this?
Indeed, the way to happiness can be found by taking Satan a foe and stubbornly refusing to follow into his footsteps. Almighty Allah says:

Do not follow the footsteps of Satan; surely, he is to you an open enemy. [Qur'an, 2:168]

Happiness can also be attained by giving up evil qualities and adopting good moral traits. Almighty Allah says,

Indeed, the human was created grudging and impatient. When evil comes upon him he is impatient; but when good comes upon him, he is grudging. Except those who are constant in prayer; those who, from their wealth is a known right for the petitioner and the deprived; and those who believe in the Day of Reckoning; and those who go in fear of the punishment of their Lord—for the punishment of their Lord is not that from which one is secure; and those who guard their private parts, except from their wives and what their right hands own—for these they are not blameworthy. But whosoever seeks beyond that, then they are the transgressors. And those who keep their trusts and their covenant; and those who are in their testimonies upright; and those who [carefully] maintain the prayer—they will be in gardens, honored. [Qur’an, 70:17-35]
We pray to Almighty Allah to give us happiness in this life and the hereafter.
Guidelines for Raising Children
Guidelines for Raising Children

First Sermon

Children are a gift from Almighty Allah. The Qur'an says:

He bestows daughters upon whom He pleases, and He bestows sons upon whom He pleases; or He mixes them, males and females; and makes whom He pleases barren. [Qur'an, 42:49-50]

All nations are concerned with the welfare of children; national child days are even held to stress their importance. However, Islam remains unique in the great significance and utmost care it attaches to the welfare of children. In fact, such care begins well before birth. First, the mother is chosen on the basis of her piety and good character. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"A woman is married for four reasons: her property, her status, her beauty, and her religion. So try to wed one who is religious, may you be blessed."

Islam even teaches us to recite a special supplication before having sexual intercourse with one's spouse. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"If anyone of you, when intending to have sexual intercourse with his wife, says: 'O Allah, keep Satan away from us and keep
him away from what you have bestowed upon us in the way of children),' and if the couple are destined to have a child [out of that very sexual relation], then Satan will never be able to harm that child.' (Muslim)

The questions that arise here are:

- What have we done regarding our responsibility to bring our children up as Allah commands us?
- What are our mistakes in dealing with them? And what are the best methods to bring them up?

Children are like blank slates on which educators etch whatever they please; however, it has to be remembered that whatever children are taught and have been exposed to today will ultimately have its effects on them in the future. Hence the importance of paying careful attention to every word we utter and every deed we do in front of them. Whatever we teach them definitely stay in their minds and will surely influence their behavior in one way or another later on.

One of the mistakes that we make is our concern with their outward appearance at the expense of their moral qualities. We care a great deal about providing them with clothes and food, and we get extremely worried when they fall sick. However, when we do not display as much concern over their spiritual advancement and moral
character, this approach leads them to attach much more attention to life's trivial luxuries and neglect moral values and the sublime goals in life.

Another mistake is our failure to sit with them. If we socialize with our children, it is more often than not planned in advance. It may be that we are not aware of the educational aims behind intermingling with them. Or perhaps we do not utilize the appropriate educational methods when we interact with them. Such meetings would certainly be beneficial to them if, every time we sit with them, we teach them a verse from the Qur'an, call their attention to a mistake or teach them anything that may be useful to them. With little effort and time, by using an appropriate and straightforward style, they will learn something that will incite them to good character and keep them away from falling into error.

One particular mistake made at school is that some teachers encourage them to memorize information without translating what they have committed to memory into reality. Thus, they learn what they do not practice, or they may learn something in the lower grades which they start practicing only later on in their upper grades. With this ineffective teaching method, the practical value of teaching is lost, and the main goal in the learning process ends up indirectly focusing on success or
failure rather than on knowledge and application of skills.

Another mistake in solving children's' problems is that we treat them as though they are adults who are aware of their mistakes but stubbornly and intentionally persist in them. This faulty approach induces us to treat them harshly and even, at times, severely punish them unjustifiably.

Another mistake lies in the fact that we do not seem to be particularly concerned about their friends in childhood. They may associate with ill-mannered children who introduce them to the first steps of corruption and deviation. We might be unaware that these companions do more harm than good.

Another common mistake is that we give up hope regarding their pedagogy. Sometimes we simply give up the noble task of bringing them up altogether before it stands a chance of paying off. One of the things we should do to carry on with this task without giving up hope is to visualize such weak and helpless children becoming one day great men and women who will benefit others and serve their religion and society. This positive attitude will prevent us from regretting any effort made in this regard or underestimating children. Imam Ash-Shaafi'ee, may Allah have mercy on him, once said:
"I learnt the entire Qur'an by heart when I was seven, and I memorized Al-Muwatta' [book] when I was ten."

As parents, we have the ultimate responsibility to bring our children up properly. Islam stresses this responsibility; and the Prophet (ﷺ) exhorts us to preserve their pure nature (fitrah): "Every newborn child is born in a state of fitrah. Then his parents make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian. Just as an animal is born intact, do you observe any among them that is mutilated?" (Muslim)

This hadith explicitly highlights the critical role of parents in the upbringing of their children. Therefore, it is our duty to nurture this pure nature and to protect it from corruption.

Studies have also shown beyond any shadow of a doubt that young children's intellectual, social and moral inclinations are primarily influenced by their immediate environments: the parents—their thoughts, moral conduct and methods of educating them.

Are we therefore aware of the huge responsibility towards our children? Do we ever attempt to show them the true reality of Islam in words and deeds? Do we try to set a good example for them to follow? Do we practice what we preach or not? Allah says:

O you who believe! Why do you say what you do not do? Most hateful is it in the sight
of Allah that you say what you do not do.  
[Qur'an, 61:2-3]
Setting a good example is without doubt an effective disciplinary method. Because children tend to imitate what they see and hear, we must utilize this method appropriately to obtain good results.
We must make them accustomed to all forms of goodness and teach them what is useful to them in this life and the hereafter. Once they learn good manners, for instance, these manners become second nature to them, automatic behaviors that do not require any effort.

The first and best thing to teach them at a tender age is the Qur'an and its amazing teachings. Teaching them the Book of Allah is essential to their healthy upbringing. Jalaal Ad-deen As-Suyutee said: "Teaching children the Qur'an is one of the fundamentals of Islam; for this will enable them to be brought up upon the pure nature, and 'the lights' of wisdom will reside in their hearts before whims and desires have a chance to pollute them..."

In fact, there is nothing better for us than inculcating in their hearts and minds the true concept of Allah, His Greatness and Wisdom by helping them reflect on His wonderful signs within ourselves and in the universe in a simple style suitable for their mentality and understanding. Then we gradually proceed to teach them about the five pillars of Islam, some obligatory and
recommended acts of worship, as well as general etiquettes of everyday life, such as eating and drinking, greeting others, going to bed, using the toilet and some easy forms of supplications in these contexts.

When a child turns seven, we should teach and gently order them to perform the prayer. The child should be punished for neglecting it when he reaches ten years. In this way the prayer becomes a natural practice that the child will observe even after puberty. We should not allow children at this age to sleep together either, to prevent any chance of deviation. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Teach your children prayer when they reach seven, and punish them [for neglecting it] when they reach ten, and also separate them in their beddings." (Ahmed)

It was the practice of the early generations of Muslims to get their children used to fasting. Some of them would also take their young ones on a pilgrimage to Mecca. It is worth noting here, however, that children generally respond to whatever forms of education they get once incentives are provided and so long as true promises of reward are given and kept.

Children also show a favorable reaction to interesting stories, which are bound to influence them more than anything else. Therefore, we should carefully select stories with educational
aims and use them in the disciplinary process. The fact that the Qur'an is replete with stories of the past nations to derive lessons from them and sometimes find solace in their events makes it clear that stories play a major role in influencing thought and behavior. Stories of Allah's Messengers and the pious scholars also provide an indispensable source of information. These and others should, however, be recounted in a straightforward style that children easily grasp. In this respect, it is also recommended to comment on the lessons involved so they can comprehend them.

It goes without saying that choosing the right time to discipline children is a matter of utmost importance. There are certain occasions when children seem to accept instructions more easily than others, such as while traveling or when they are sick. We should therefore invest significant amounts of time and energy in instructing them during such occasions. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to do this. Al-Bukharee reports that when a Jewish boy who used to serve Prophet (ﷺ) fell sick, the Prophet (ﷺ) went to visit him. He requested that he obey him, so the boy embraced Islam. Elated with joy, the Prophet (ﷺ) left him saying,

"Thanks be to God, Who saved him from the Fire!"
Given the weighty trust placed upon our shoulders regarding the pedagogy of our children, Islam pays great attention to this particular issue. We are therefore required to do our utmost to discharge our duties towards them. Commenting on the verse,

O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones. [Qur'an, 66:6]

Muqaatil, may Allah have mercy on him, said, "This means that a Muslim is required to discipline himself and his family members, and to enjoin them to do good and forbid them to do evil." Commenting on the same verse, another Muslim scholar said, "On the Day of Judgment, Almighty Allah will question parents about their duty towards their children before questioning the children about their duties towards their parents."

Stressing the importance of bringing children up properly, Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, writes in Tuhfatul-Wadood, "Whoever fails to teach his children what will benefit them and neglects them has indeed made an extremely serious mistake. For most children's corruption comes as result of their parents' neglect of them and their failure to teach them the obligatory and recommended acts of religion. They neglected them when they were young, so they did not benefit themselves, nor did they benefit their parents."
We should ask them to run errands for us to train them in life and help build their confidence. At the same time, we must supervise their movements and give them counsel whenever the need arises.

Social skills education is also of paramount importance. We should take our children with us to attend our gatherings with our friends to learn from their interactions. It is a big mistake to interrupt children when they want to express their own points of view or to scold them when they express a desire to sit with their elders. Doing so will shatter their confidence and even drive them to introversion.

In fact, it was the practice of the pious predecessors to take their children to the elders' gatherings. Ibn Umar (ﷺ) is a case in point. His father, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, the second Rightly-Guided Caliph, would take him to the gatherings of the Prophet's companions. Once, the Prophet (ﷺ) asked them to name a tree which is like a Muslim in his goodness. The companions gave wrong answers. Ibn Umar (ﷺ) knew that it was the palm tree; however out of respect to his elders, he kept silent. Later on, when he informed his father of this, he encouraged him even more and said to him that he should have expressed himself. (Related in al-Bukharee)
Another method of socialization is to teach them to exchange greetings of peace with fellow Muslims, and to instruct them in other social etiquettes, such as asking for permission to enter, visiting the ill, showing mercy towards the poor, attending congregational prayers in the mosque and helping to bury the dead. Other principles of Islamic socialization include etiquette towards the parents, scholars and the elders, the etiquette of mutual respect and conversation, the etiquette towards relatives and neighbors, the etiquette of eating, dressing, socializing and praying in the mosque, to mention but a few examples.

We should also coach them to tell the truth under all circumstances, to keep secrets and trusts, to forgive and not to bear any grudge against anyone, to be generous and brave, and all other forms of good moral character.

People in general and children in particular need emotional support. Attending to this need is also an important factor in successfully dealing with children. Smiles, hugs, kisses, patting the back, rubbing the head, giving gifts and joking all prepare children to accept our guidance and counsel. Indeed, the Prophet (ﷺ) was particularly compassionate toward children and would joke with them and cheer them up whenever they were sad or ill. Anas ibn Maalik (ﷺ) had a younger brother, Abu Umair, who owned a small bird (like a
sparrow) called 'an-nughair'. The Prophet (ﷺ) loved Abu Umair and always played with him. One day he noticed that Abu Umair was depressed. The Companions told him that it was because an-nughair had died. The Prophet (ﷺ) tried to make him laugh, using a rhyming phrase:

"O Abu Umair! What happened to an-nughair?" (Bukhari)

Showing harshness towards children and being hard on them is by no means a glorious trait; similarly, acting their age and cheering them up is not a disgraceful act, as some people mistakenly believe. Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) kissed al-Hasan ibn Ali. Al-Aqra' ibn Haabis (ﷺ) said, "I have ten children and I have never kissed any of them." The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"He who does not show mercy will not be shown mercy." (Muslim)

The Prophet (ﷺ) always sought to instill the quality of mercy and compassion in people's hearts and to awaken their potential for love and affection. One day a Bedouin came and asked him, "Do you kiss your sons? We do not." The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"What can I do for you if Allah has removed mercy from your heart?" (Bukhari)

Once, while the Prophet (ﷺ) was leading the congregation in the mosque and was in the prostration, Al-Hussein (ﷺ) came along and climbed onto his back. The Prophet (ﷺ) remained
in that position for a long time, until Al-Hussein got off. When the companions (ﷺ) asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about the reason why he lengthened the prostration, he informed them that his grandson was playing on his back, and he wanted to allow him to finish his game.

Despite the effectiveness of tenderness to teach children goodness and to keep them away from vice, this method should not be used all the time. There are times when firmness, and even hitting, are required to obtain the desired disciplinary outcomes. Hitting as a form of punishment, however, has rules and conditions; and an educator should know when it is or is not recommended. After all, it is a form of discipline and not a form of taking revenge. It is not recommended while in a fit of anger, nor is it suitable for all children.

It needs to be noted, no matter how sophisticated our disciplinary methods may be, and no matter how hard we try to bring our children up properly, we always need to pray to Almighty Allah for help and support. The Qur'an recounts that Prophet Zachariah prayed to his Lord saying:

My Lord, grant me from Yourself goodly offspring. Surely, You are the Hearer of prayer. [Qur'an, 3:38]

89
The Qur'an also mentions a wonderful prayer of the righteous, who pray thus:

Our Lord, grant us of our wives and children the delight of [our] eyes. [Qur'an, 25:74]

Another effective method lies in the parents' mutual assistance in correcting children's mistakes. When the mother is hard on the children, the father should be soft on them, and vice versa. To illustrate this point, when a child makes a mistake and the father reprimands him so severely that the child keeps away from him for fear of being exposed to physical punishment, the mother should, in the father's absence, be soft on him while gently making him aware of his mistake. Whenever this method is used alternately between the father and the mother, the child realizes his mistake, understands why his father scolded him and even tries to apologize to him. The child also appreciates his mother's favor for drawing his attention to his mistake and even thanks her for being so benign. The end result is that he will not make the same mistake again.

This method is better than that in which either parent apologizes to the child for his mistake and defends him while disciplining him! When this method is used, the child might be tempted to be haughty and to believe that he is beyond reproach, even though he is unquestionably in the wrong. In this case, he will
not accept other people's advice, although he knows in his heart that they intend good for him.

As parents, we should also spend some time with our children—holding study circles with them, discussing subjects of use, listening to their complaints and considering their points of view—no matter how humble they may be. This will certainly build their confidence, encourage them not to be afraid to speak their mind and will give them confidence to express themselves in public whenever the need arises.

Another effective method is to exchange family visits with families known for their deep concern about the education of their children. This will definitely help families exchange successful experiences and tactics. It also paves the way to organize programs suitable for children and even foster and strengthen the bonds between families.

A common mistake some parents make is that they provide all forbidden forms of entertainment to their children, providing them with various opportunities to see all kinds of dirty films and indecent pictures. Children become addicted to satellite TV channels and get infatuated with films and other forms of entertainment—in many cases, at the expense of moral values. Their minds become polluted with the erroneous concepts and practices they watch. In fact, it is the 'one-eyed monster' that undertakes
their upbringing, teaching them all kinds of indecency and impropriety. Wise parents always look for alternatives for their children if they really care about their proper upbringing.

Another common mistake is the tendency of some parents to call their children names and even curse them, especially in a fit of anger. In fact, cursing and hitting children is nothing more than a hasty reaction from the parents, cloaked in the guise of 'discipline'. The Prophet (ﷺ) warned against doing so thus:

"Do not curse yourselves, nor curse your children, nor your property; it may be that you do so at a time when your supplication may be answered." (Muslim)

Another mistake some parents make is that they feel too embarrassed to discuss Islamic rulings regarding adulthood and its signs before they come of age. As a result, children who are not aware of such rulings can easily commit serious religious mistakes. A young man may still offer the prayer without taking a bath after having a wet dream, and a girl may also offer the prayer even when she is on her menses or without taking a bath after the end of monthly cycle.

Another oversight in parenting is to neglect to warn children against the dangers of certain practices beforehand, such as the dangers of smoking, drinking and drugs. In their innocence
and ignorance, children can fall into such bad habits thinking that doing so is a sign of adulthood! They may also take corrupt companions, thinking that they are sincere and truthful friends.

Another grave parenting error is unfairness. Some parents do not exhibit fairness when dealing with children, whether this fairness refers to material or moral arenas. Failure to exhibit fairness may give rise to jealousy and hatred. Wise parents treat all their children fairly and equally. They do not prefer one of them over another in any way. They know that Islam forbids favoritism, which can have negative psychological impact on children. The father of an-Nu'maan ibn Basheer (ﷺ) brought him to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, "I have given this son of mine a slave I have." The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

"Have you done the same for all your children?" [My father] said, "No." So the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Fear Allah and treat all of your children equally." (Bukhari and Muslim)

Parents are particularly required not to reveal their personal differences in the presence of their children, nor should they fight or abuse each other in their presence. That sort of display is bound to negatively influence children's personalities as well as their behavior.

Another deplorable course is to intimidate children into accepting parental demands via
constant threat of punishment. Intimidation of this kind leaves far-reaching negative effects on their future development.

In this limited space, it is impossible to mention all the mistakes we make while rearing our children. But we must keep in mind that this is a solemn responsibility about which Allah will indubitably ask us on the Day of Judgment. We must respond to Allahs' command:

O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones. [Qur'an, 66:6]

Parents and guardians should appreciate this weighty trust and carry out their duties perfectly, to the best of their ability. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Every one of you is a protector and guardian and responsible for your wards and things under your care, and a man is a guardian of his family members, and is accountable for those placed under his charge." (Bukhari and Muslim)

We pray to Almighty Allah to give us all the assistance we need to undertake such a huge responsibility.
The Importance of Performing Hajj
The Importance of Performing Hajj

First Sermon

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, Who has blessed us with seasons of goodness, wherein Allah forgives the sins, and grants His slaves great rewards. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of being worshipped except Allah, Who has chosen for us the religion of Islam. I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, may Allah praise him. He taught the Ummah (i.e. nation) everything which is beneficial to them. He guided the Ummah to worship Allah in a method which is congruent with the Shari'ah. He (ﷺ) said:

"Pray as you have seen me praying."

He also said:

"'Take from me the rites of Hajj.'"

Dear Muslims, I advise you all to fear Allah, for this is the advice of Allah to the first and the last. Allah says:

And certainly We enjoined those who were given the Book before you and (We enjoin) you too that you should be careful of (your duty to) Allah. [Qur'an, 4:131]

Dear brothers and sisters, I will talk to you today about some of the rulings that are pertinent to Hajj.
and some common mistakes people commit during Hajj.

All of us should realize that any act of worship we do should be done sincerely for the sake of Allah and in accordance with the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). One should not show off or deviate from the method by which the Prophet (ﷺ) performed it in. Allah says:

Therefore, whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds, and not associate any partners with Allah. [Qur’an, 18:110]

And He, the Exalted, says:

Allah only accepts from those who are pious.
[Qur’an, 5:27]

It is appropriate for him who wants to travel to advise their family to fear Allah. He should also write his will and testament and have it attested. He should repent to Allah and return any valuables he may be keeping for people. He should also pay off all his debts, for one does not know what might happen during this trip.

One should also choose good companions for the trip and educate himself with the necessary rulings pertinent to travel and to the Hajj ritual.

When one reaches the Meqat station, he should purify himself and bathe. One should also cut his fingernails if they are long, and remove pubic and armpit hair.
After the Muslim bathes, purifies himself, wears some perfume (on his body and not on the two pieces of Ihram cloth), and then dons the two towels, it is praiseworthy for him to enter the state of Ihram after a Fardh prayer. Otherwise, one should not perform a specific prayer for the Ihram itself, as is clarified by Sheik al-Islam b. Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him.

Before entering the state of Ihram, it is praiseworthy for one to praise Allah, glorify Him, and to say Allah Akbar. This is taken from the Hadeeth of Anas b. Malik (4®), which states:

"The Messenger of Allah (3©) then mounted his riding animal and praised Allah, glorified him, and said Allah Akbar. He then entered the state of Ihram."

This is among the Sunnan which many are heedless of. For this reason Al-Hafidh b. Hajar, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "Very few have mentioned this Sunnah, although it is authentic."

When one wants to enter the state of Ihram, he should intend in his heart that he wants to enter the state of Ihram, and should pronounce the Talbiyyah specific to the type of Hajj he wants to perform.

If the individual wants to perform Qe'raan, he should say: 'Lab'baika omra'tan wa haj'jan.' If he wants to perform Ta'mat'to, he should say: 'Lab'baika omratan mo'ta'mat'te-an e'Ial Hajj.' If he
wants to perform *Ifraad*, he should say: 'Lab'baika Haj'jan.'

The *Tamat'to* type of Hajj is the Hajj in which one performs the Umrah and after completing it, leaves the state of Ihram completely. On the 8th day of Hajj, one reenters the state of Ihram and performs the Hajj. When one performs this type of Hajj, he must offer a sacrificial animal. One performs a set of Tawaf and Sa'ee for the Umrah and another for the Hajj. Many scholars consider this to be the greatest type of Hajj, due to the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered his companions to perform it.

The *Qe'ran* type of Hajj is the Hajj in which one performs Umrah and Hajj together, and remains in the state of Ihram till he completes known rites on the 10th day of Hajj. The one performing this type of Hajj must also offer a sacrificial animal, but only has to perform one Sa'ee.

The *Ifraad* type of Hajj is the Hajj in which the individual enters the state of Ihram with the intention of performing Hajj alone. The one performing this type of Hajj does not have to offer a sacrificial animal. His situation is similar to the one who is performing *Qe'ran*. He only has to perform one Sa'ee.

Of the common mistakes many commit when performing Hajj is that they utter their intention: 'Oh Allah, I intend to enter the state of
Ihram to perform Hajj *Tamat'to...* This is inappropriate. The place of intention is in the heart; uttering it is an act of *Bid'ah* (i.e. religious innovation). Sheik Islam b. Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "It is not praiseworthy for one to utter the intention, for the Prophet (ﷺ) did not obligate this upon any of the Muslims. The Prophet (ﷺ) did not say anything indicative of his intention before uttering the *Talbiyyah* of the Hajj."

In relation to the *Talbiyyah*, men should utter it aloud, whereas women should say it to themselves. The Prophet (ﷺ) clarified the merit of saying the *Talbiyyah*. He (ﷺ) said:

"*Jibreel* (ﷺ) has ordered me to raise my voice with the *talbiyyah*, for it is of the rites of Hajj."

When the pilgrim reaches Masjid al-Haram, he should enter with his right foot first and say the supplication specific to entering Masjids. If he can kiss the Black Stone, he should do so; otherwise, he can touch or point at it and begin his *Tawaf* saying, 'Bismilllah. Allah Akbar.'

With a humble heart, the pilgrim circumambulating the Ka'bah should supplicate to Allah and recite Qur'an. There is no specific supplication for each round. Many people make the mistake of carrying booklets which state a specific *du'aa* (i.e. supplication) for each round. Some laymen may not understand the meaning of these
supplications; nor can they pronounce them properly! Were they to supplicate Allah with supplications they know, it would be of more benefit to them, and their du’aa would more likely be accepted by Allah.

When the pilgrim reaches the Yemeni corner (*Rukn al-Yamani*), he should touch it. If he cannot, then he should not kiss it, or point at it. Between the Yemeni corner and the Black Stone, one should say:

'Rab`bana aate`nna fid`dunya ha`sanah wa fil aakhe`ra`te hasanah wa qe`nna a`dthaab an-naar.'

Meaning:

Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire. [Qur’an, 2: 201]

Thereafter each time the individual passes by the Black Stone, he should say 'Allah Akbar' and point at it (if he cannot kiss it).

Many pilgrims make the mistake of touching and kissing different parts of the Ka`bah. Sheik Islam b. Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "One should not touch anything of the Ka`bah save the two corners: the Yemeni corner and the Black Stone. The Prophet (ﷺ) touched the two Yemeni corners since they were built on the foundations of Prophet Ibrahim (ﷺ). The other two corners are in the confines of the Ka`bah... One should not touch or kiss
any other part of the Masjid, according to the consensus of the scholars.”

It is of the Sunnah that a man uncover his right shoulder throughout the seven rounds and walk in a fast pace during the first three rounds. Some believe that they should leave their arm uncovered till the end of the Hajj rituals. This is incorrect, for this is specific to the Tawaf. Ibn Aa'be'deen, may Allah have mercy on him, said: “The Sunnah regarding uncovering the right shoulder is that, the man should do it till the end of Tawaf.”

As for walking in a quick pace, one should only do this during the first three rounds. When one completes the Tawaf, he should cover his shoulders and perform two Rakah after the Tawaf, behind the Maqam (i.e. station) of Ibrahim if possible, otherwise one may perform them anywhere in the Haram. One should recite Al-Fatihah and Surat al-Kafiroon in the first Raka'h (i.e. unit) and al-Fatihah and al-Ikhlaas in the second.

After this, one should head towards Safa. Upon reaching it, the pilgrim should face the Ka'bah and say: ‘Laa e'laahah il'lal laah wahda-who laa shareeka laah lahol mulk wa lahol hamd wa who-wa ala kol'lee shai'in qadeer. Laa e'laahah il'lal laah wahda-who laa shareeka laah Anjaza wa'dah, wa nasara abdah, wa hazamal ahzaaba wah'dah.’ Meaning: There is no deity [that deserves
to be worshipped] except Allah, He has no partner, to Him belongs the dominion and praise; and He is over all things Competent. There is no deity [that deserves to be worshipped] except Allah. He fulfilled His promise, gave His slave (i.e. Muhammad) victory and He alone defeated the confederates.

The pilgrim should repeat this three times and should supplicate Allah, as is affirmed in the Hadeeth of Jabir (ﷺ) in Saheeh Muslim. Very few actually apply this Hadeeth although it is authentically reported.

After this, one should walk towards Marwah, and run between the two green posts. One may supplicate or recite the Qur'an. Ibn Umar (ﷺ) used to supplicate Allah saying: "Rab’bigh fir-lee wur’ham In’naka antal a’az al-Akram," meaning: "O my Lord, forgive Me, and have mercy upon me. Indeed you are the most powerful and gracious."

The pilgrim should realize the greatness of the Hajj ritual, and its merit; therefore, one should not waste their time needlessly. To help one stay focused in Hajj, they should realize that the one who obeys Allah as Prophet Ibrahim (ﷺ) obeyed Him will be protected and safeguarded by Allah and He will answer their supplications. Allah says:

The pilgrimage is (performed in) the well-known months; so whoever determines the performance of the pilgrimage therein, there
shall be no intercourse nor fornication nor quarrelling amongst one another; and whatever good you do, Allah knows it; and make provision, for surely the provision is the guarding of oneself, and be careful (of your duty) to Me, O men of understanding. [Qur'an, 2:197]
Second Sermon

All praise is due to Allah, Whom we praise and Whose aid we implore. We seek His forgiveness and guidance. I testify that there is no god worthy of being worshipped except Allah alone, Who has no partner. And I testify that Muhammad (ﷺ) is the slave of Allah and His Messenger. May Allah exalt his mention, and render him, his household and companions safe from every evil.

Dear brothers and sisters, on the eighth day of Dhul-Hijjah, which is called the day of Tarwe’yah, the pilgrim who has not yet entered the state of Ihram should enter it. On the ninth day of Dhul-Hijjah, pilgrims move to Arafah. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Hajj is Arafah."

I.e. the most important pillar of Hajj is Arafah.

One should be in Arafah from the time the sun moves from its zenith till sunset. One should also be sure that they are staying in the boundaries of Arafah. It is not lawful for one to leave Arafah till the sun has set.

One should feel the greatness of this day, and should spend his time constructively, by supplicating Allah and making Dhikr (i.e. the remembrance of Allah). The Prophet (ﷺ) said:
"The best du`aa (i.e. supplication) during this day is that which I and the Prophets before me have said: 'Laa e'laahah il'lal laah wahda-who laa shareeka lah lahool mulk wa lahool hamd wa who-wa ala kol'lee shai'in qadeer.'"

One should refrain from pointlessly wasting time with idle talk. Many make the mistake of climbing the mount of Rahmah, believing it is praiseworthy. There is no proof that states the merit of doing this.

When the sun sets, the pilgrims should move from Arafat to Muzdale'fah in an orderly, calm fashion. When they reach Muzdalifah they should perform Maghrib and Isha, shortening the Isha prayer. They should spend the night there. Spending the night in Muzdalifah is compulsory; therefore, one should not be heedless regarding this. The Prophet (ﷺ) only allowed the weak and people who had valid reasons to leave after midnight.

When Fajr time arrives, pilgrims should perform the Fajr prayer in its earliest possible time, as is narrated in the Hadeeth of the Prophet (ﷺ). They should face the Qiblah (i.e. direction of the Ka'bah) and make Dhikr and supplicate Allah, until the sky becomes very bright. After this, they should head towards Mina before the sun comes out, moving in a calm manner.
When the pilgrims reach Mina, they should stone *Jamratul Aqabah* (the pillar closest to Makkah) with seven pebbles. During the 11th, 12th and 13th days one should stone all three pillars, with seven stones each, starting with *Jamratus-Sughra* (i.e. the one furthest from Makkah).

One should realize stoning is a rite of Hajj, and is meant to praise Allah. Prophet Ibrahim (ﷺ) stoned Satan with seven pebbles, when he came to him at the place of *Jamratul-Aqabah*. Satan then fled, but returned, and Ibrahim (ﷺ) stoned him once more with seven pebbles at the place of *Jamratul-Wusta*. He fled and once again came to him at the place of *Jamratus-Sughra*, and he stoned him. So we are following our father Ibrahim (ﷺ) in this ritual and openly displaying our enmity to Satan.

It is of the Sunnah that one stands after stoning the first and second *Jamrah*, and supplicates Allah. This is among the Sunnan acts many pilgrims disregard. After stoning *Jamratul-Aqabah* one should not stand to supplicate Allah.

One should be sure that the stones they have thrown have fallen into the enclosed area around each pillar. Some raise their voices when throwing the stones, and others throw sandals! Indeed these are acts of ignorance.

Of the greatest mistakes committed by the pilgrims is that they shove and harm their fellow Muslims when throwing the stones. Sometimes this
may even lead to the death of a fellow pilgrim. Let these people fear Allah, and treat their fellow pilgrims kindly!

Some pilgrims deputize others to throw the stones on their behalf. Some deputize others and then travel back to their homes. It is better that one does not deputize except if there is a valid reason to do so. It is also lawful for one to stone during the night.

After throwing the stones at Jamratul-Aqabah on the 10th day, the pilgrim who is performing Hajj Tamat'to should slaughter his sacrificial animal and then shave off his hair or shorten it; and shaving it off is better.

When the pilgrim completes the stoning on the 12th day (if he is leaving early) or the 13th day if he is staying behind, he should circumambulate around the Ka'bah seven times. If a person wants to leave on the 12th, he should make sure that he leaves before the sun sets. The pilgrim should perform Tawaf al-Wada' (farewell Tawaf) before leaving back to his home (i.e. on the 12th or 13th). If one has not performed Tawaf al-Ifadah, which is a pillar of Hajj, he should do so and this will be sufficient and he will not have to make Tawaf al-Wada'.

The pilgrim should ask Allah to forgive him and to accept from him the Hajj, for in Hajj, one's du'aa will be accepted, and one's sins will be effaced.
During the Hajj one has a golden opportunity to meet their fellow Muslims. The pilgrim should try his best to help fellow pilgrims. One should give charity and food to needy pilgrims, and give beneficial tapes and booklets to them as well.

Dear brothers and sisters, know that he who wants to give an Udhiyyah (sacrifice) should not cut their fingernails or snip their hair.

Dear brothers and sisters, the days of Dhul-Hijjah are virtuous days. Allah takes an oath by them saying:

I swear by the daybreak, and the ten nights.

[Qur’an, 89:1-2]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

‘There are no days in which the good deeds are more beloved to Allah than in these ten days.

The Companions asked, 'Not even Jihad for the sake of Allah?' The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Not even Jihad for the sake of Allah, except for an individual who goes out in the Path of Allah with his wealth and does not return.”

Dear brothers and sisters, make the most of these precious days by doing acts of worship. Do not let these days pass by like ordinary days. Seek forgiveness, repent to Allah, and ask Allah to better the situation of the Muslims, and to grant them success.
O Allah accept from the Muslims their Hajj, and make easy for them their acts of worship, and accept it from them. Ameen