

## **In the Name of Allah: The Most Compassionate, the Most Beneficient.**

### **The Foremost, The Foremost**

#### **The First Khutbah:**

All praises are due to Allah, who has drawn the sincere believers close to Him, making them from the Forerunners. Forerunners towards Paradise and His intimate company. And I bear witness, with every facet of my being, that there is nothing worthy of absolute love; nothing worthy of attaching our hearts upon in worshipful adoration, except Allah, the Uniquely One, having no competing second in that One-ness. And I bear witness that our Leader and Master, our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon his name), is the perfect example of dutiful servanthood towards Allah, and is His sent Messenger unto the entirety of the created cosmos. O Allah: We ask you to bestow Your peace, blessings and grace upon him; his family; all of his companions; and whomsoever follows and seeks to emulate him in the most excellent of ways till the Last Day.

**To Continue:** I advise you, dutiful servants of Allah, and myself, to adhere to a heartfelt consciousness (Taqwa) of Allah, for He, the Most Gloriously Transcendent, states:

**And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah . Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be treated unjustly.** [Qur'an: ٢:٢٨١]

#### **O You Who Believe:**

Allah (Glorified be He) informs us in His Book, in Surat al-Waqiah:

**And you become [of] three kinds: Then the Companions of the Right - who are the Companions of the Right? And the Companions of the Left - who are the Companions of the Left? And the Foremost, the Foremost - Those are the ones brought near [to Allah ] in the Gardens of Bliss,** [Qur'an: ٥٦:٧-١٢]

In these noble verses Allah (Glorified be He) informs that mankind on the Day of Judgment will be divided into three groups: A group who will be given the book of their account and deeds in their right hands ['companions of the right'], who will make the majority of the people of Paradise. Another group who will be given the book of their account and deeds in their left hands ['companions of the left'], and then a group called the 'Foremost'. The 'Foremost' are those who are closest to Allah (Glorified be He), even closer than the 'companions of the right'; amongst them being the Prophets, Messengers, the Truthful Ones (Siddiqun), the Martyrs, the Righteous, and those characterized by God-consciousness (those of Taqwa). They are those who superceded others and were forerunners compared to others in their piety towards their Lord, so Allah drew them near to His pleasure, and made manifest for them the ranks of proximity they have towards Him in His Gardens of Bliss.

It behooves every Muslim to desire to be from this group of the 'Foremost', those closest to the Lord of all the Domains, for in this is the greatest of rewards, the most noblest of bounties. As Allah (Glorified be He) says:

**And if the deceased was of those brought near to Allah , Then [for him is] rest and bounty and a Garden of Bliss. [Qur'an: ٥٦:٨٨-٨٩]**

For people in this high rank, their happiness lies in the gardens raised up high, their resting places therein being from brocades of silk, interwoven with inlaid rubies and gold. They will see no-one higher than them in stature, nor of greater standing. As Allah (Glorified be He) says:

**On thrones woven [with ornament], Reclining on them, facing each other. [Qur'an: ٥٦:١٥-١٦]**

They shall have whatsoever they desire. Whatsoever their eyes take delight therein. As Allah (Glorified be He) says:

**There will circulate among them young boys made eternal - With vessels, pitchers and a cup [of wine] from a flowing spring - No headache will they have therefrom, nor will they be intoxicated - And fruit of what they select - And the meat of fowl, from whatever they desire. And [for them are] transcendent maidens with luminous, [beautiful] eyes - The likenesses of pearls well-protected, As recompense for what they used to do. [Qur'an: ٥٦:١٧-٢٤].** In other words, a recompense based on their good deeds and beautiful character.

**O You Who of Faith:**

**Who are the 'Foremost', brought closest to Allah?**

They are those who most excelled and were foremost in their faith towards Allah (Glorified be He) and His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him). From them we see the noblest of the Sahaba, from the companions of the Prophet, and whomsoever follows them in the best of ways till the Last Day. As Allah (Glorified be He) says:

**And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhajireen and the Ansaar and those who followed them with good conduct - Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment. [Qur'an: ٩:١٠٠]**

The 'Forerunners' are those who strive their utmost in doing the good, expending themselves unto everything they have been summoned to do by their Lord from worship. Allah (Glorified be He) praises the Prophet Zakarriya (peace and blessings be upon him) and his family in this regards by saying:

**Indeed, they used to hasten to good deeds and supplicate Us in hope and fear, and they were to Us humbly submissive. [Qur'an: ٢١:٩٠]**

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

**As for those who were foremost through their good, they are those who will enter Paradise without being taken to account. [The Musnad of Imam Ahmad]**

The Companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them) presented the best of models in the race to good. Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) ordered us one day to give charity, this happened to coincide with some money that I possessed. So I said

[to myself]: Today, I will supercede Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) in that I have preceded him this day, so I came with half of my wealth [to donate], and the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) asked me: “What did you leave for your family?” I responded by saying: “The like of it”. Then Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) came with everything he possessed and when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) asked him: “What did you leave for your family?”, he responded by saying: “ I left for them - Allah and His Messenger”. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) then said to Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) : “I will never supercede you in anything ever.” [As narrated in Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi].

### **O You Who Pray:**

The foremost in this world are those you see as being foremost in their obligatory prayers, preceding others in their attainment of Paradise, drawing ever closer to the Lord of the heavens and the earth. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) narrates: **Allah (Glorified be He) says: My servant draws not near to Me with anything more beloved to Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him** [As narrated in Bukhari]. Sayyidina Ali (may Allah enoble his countenance) in clarifying who the “Foremost” mentioned in the Qur’an are is reported to have said : “they are the foremost in their five obligatory daily prayers” [As narrated in Tafsir al-Baghawi]. In this regard, some Scholars say they literally are the foremost in their going to the mosques, for their hearts are attached to the mosques and the prayer, as Allah (Glorified be He) says: **You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer], seeking bounty from Allah and [His] pleasure.** [Qur’an: ٤٨:٢٩]. You also see them avid to be in the front rows, preceding others therein, coming ever closer to attaining the mercy of Allah, believing in the statement of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) who said: **“If the people were to know what excellence there is in the Adhan and in the first row, and then were unable to avail it (these opportunities) except by drawing lots, they would have definitely done so. And if they were to know what excellence lies in joining the prayer in the first takbir (prayer), they would have vied with one another. And if they were to know what excellence lies in the night prayer and morning prayer, they would have definitely come even if crawling (on their knees).** [Sahih Muslim]

Similarly the foremost are those you see having a special relationship with the Book of Allah, they are engaged in reciting it, contemplating upon it, learning its meaning and teaching it. As Allah (Glorified be He) says: **Then we caused to inherit the Book those We have chosen of Our servants; and among them is he who wrongs himself, and among them is he who is moderate, and among them is he who is foremost in good deeds by permission of Allah . That [inheritance] is what is the great bounty.** [Qur’an: ٣٥:٣٢]. So Allah swears in these verses by three categories of people with regards to their inheritance of the Book, the greatest of them being the foremost in good

deeds. Some of the Scholars have said: “The ‘foremost in good deeds’ they are the people of the Qur’an, the frontrunners on the Day of Judgement”.

This was the nature of many of the Sahaba and the Tabi’een (the generation after the Sahaba), they were the foremost in their drawing near to Allah through their attachment to the Qur’an. The great Sahabi Khabab ibn Arat (may Allah be pleased with him) says: “Draw near to Allah with everything you can, and there is nothing you can draw nearer to Him by than His own words.” So busy yourselves with the recitation of the Qur’an and remembrance of your Lord so that you too can be from the foremost. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “The Mufarradun (literally ‘those who establish One-ness’) have preceded everyone”, he was asked: “Who are the Mufarradun - O Messenger of Allah?”, he responded by saying: “The men and women who make much remembrance and re-cognition of Allah”. [Sahih Muslim].

O Allah, make us from those who are the foremost of your servants, those closest to You. And assist us all in the way of piety and obedience. Piety towards Your trustworthy Messenger, Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), to be dutiful towards those You have commanded us to be dutiful towards, in accordance with Your words: **O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.** [Qur’an: ٤:٥٩]

May Allah bless me and bless you with the Noble Qur’an and with the Way (Sunnah) of His Noble Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). I say this, and I seek forgiveness for me and for you, so seek His forgiveness, for He is the All-Forgiving and the All-Merciful.

### **The Second Khutbah:**

All praises are for Allah, The Most Gentle, the Most Merciful, the Most Generous, the Most Noble. And He is the Possessor of the most Gracious of Bounties. I praise Him with a praise commensurate to the majesty of His countenance, and the immensity of His authority. And I bear witness, with every facet of my being, that there is nothing worthy of absolute love; nothing worthy of attaching our hearts upon in worshipful adoration, except Allah, the Uniquely One, having no competing second in that One-ness. And I bear witness that our Leader and Master, our Prophet, Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon his name), is the perfected example of dutiful servanthood towards Allah, and is His sent Messenger unto the entirety of the created cosmos. O Allah: We ask you to bestow Your peace, blessings and grace upon him; his family; all of his companions; and whomsoever follows and seeks to emulate him in the way of embodied spiritual conduct till the Last Day.

I advise you, O servants of Allah, and myself, with Taqwa of Allah (glorified be He).

**O Worshippers:**

Allah joins the attributes of the ‘foremost’ towards Allah, those closest to Allah, in His saying:

**Indeed, they who are apprehensive from fear of their Lord. And they who believe in the signs of their Lord. And they who do not associate anything with their Lord. And they who give what they give while their hearts are fearful because they will be returning to their Lord - It is those who hasten to good deeds, and they outstrip [others] therein.** [Qur’an: ٢٣: ٥٧-٦١]

So let us strive to be the foremost in acts of devotion, for indeed the most gracious of bounties lies in striving to be the foremost. And let us compete with each other in acts of piety and orientating ourselves towards the good, such that we attain this lofty rank, this high status, that we become from the ‘foremost’ servants of Allah, the closest of those to His proximity.

And with this, let us send our peace and blessings upon the one we have been commanded to send our peace and blessings upon, as Allah says: **Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [ Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [ Allah to grant him] peace.** [Qur’an: ٣٣:٥٦]. So, O Allah, bestow Your peace, blessings and grace upon our Master, our Prophet and upon his family and all of his companions.

And O Allah be pleased with the Righteous Caliphs: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali ; and the noble companions of the Prophet, the Sahaba, May You be pleased with all of them. O Allah, we ask You for soundness in our faith, and trust in good character, and a true success that will be followed by eternal bliss. O Allah, we ask You for Your mercy, for true prosperity, for Your redemptive forgiveness and Your pleasure. O Allah, make us from those who are obedient, respectful, those who venerate their parents, honoring their mothers and their fathers, embodying excellent character towards their families and wider societies.

O Allah, grant success to the UAE President HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan and guide him to all that is good. O Allah, we seek Your favour in granting him continued good health and care. O Allah, we also ask You to grant success to the Vice-President, the Crown Prince and his Brothers, their Highnesses, the Rulers of the Emirates.

O Allah, we ask You to forgive all of the Muslims, both the men and women, the living and dead. O Allah, bestow your mercy on the late Sheikh Zayed, Sheikh Maktoum and the other late UAE Sheikhs who have passed onto the mercy of their Lord. O Lord, grant

them from your abundant mercy and bless them with Your kindness and satisfaction. O Allah, we ask you to admit them into Paradise, being given bounties therein without being taken to account. O Lord, forgive and show mercy on our parents, relatives and whosoever may have a right upon us.

O Allah, we ask You, from and for your loving kindness, for the immensity of your forgiveness, for the reward of all righteousness, for the safety and protection from all sin. O Allah, we ask you for the ultimate success in attaining Paradise, and the ultimate relief in being saved from the Fire. O Allah, do not allow us to sin except that You forgive us, nor to have any worry except that you relieve us therein, nor for any debt to come upon us except that You see it compensated, nor for there to be any sick amongst us except that You see them healed. Let there be no dead, except that You have covered them in Your mercy, and let there be no pressing need, amongst us, except that You see it met and fulfilled. O most Noble of the Noble, You are capable over all things, and You are the most generous in responding to those who call upon You.

We ask You, O Allah, the Lord of all domains, to continue blessing the UAE with stability, welfare, increase in its bounties, knowledge, civilization, happiness, beauty and tolerance. O Allah, please continue blessing it with safety and security. O Allah, have mercy on the honourable martyrs of our nation and gather them with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favour of the Prophets. O Allah, make the dwelling of the martyrs, their families, parents and relatives with the righteous. Indeed, You are ever-responsive to those who call upon You. O Allah, grant to the people of Yemen that which is good, and unite them upon that which is True and Sacred, and provide for them all manners of prosperity, O most Noble of the Noble.

O Allah, spread peace and security amongst all the Muslim nations, and the entirety of the world. O our Lord, we ask You for the best of this World, the best of the Hereafter, that You will protect us from the punishment of the Fire, and that You enter us into Your paradise with the righteous, You are the Most Generous and Most Forgiving.

**Servants of Allah:** Remember Allah, the Majestic, and He will remember you. Thank Him for His blessing, and He will increase you therein. And establish the prayer. Stand up for prayer.