

The Elder Sister

First Sermon:

All praise is due to Allah, the Possessor of Majesty and Honor, who has made the sister among the closest of kin. We bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, and we bear witness that our Prophet Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets. May Allah's peace, blessings, and grace be upon him, upon his family, his companions, and all who follow his guidance.

To proceed: I advise you, servants of Allah, and I advise myself to have taqwa of Allah. Allah, the Exalted and Most High, says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ﴾

“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from a single soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs (ties of kinship). Indeed,

Allah is ever, over you, an Observer^(١).”



O believers: Our khutbah today is about a person who is dear to our hearts and beloved to our souls, one who holds an honorable and noble status within our families. She was mentioned by our Prophet ﷺ after the father and the mother, when he said: «أَبْدَأُ بِمَنْ تَعُولُ: أُمُّكَ وَأَبَاكَ، وَأَخْتُكَ وَأَخَاكَ».

“Begin with those whom you support: your mother and your father, your sister and your brother^(٢).”

Indeed, she is the elder sister, a second mother to her siblings. She carries them when they are young and shows them tenderness when they grow older. She gives without seeking gratitude and sacrifices without expecting anything in return. She is a source of compassion and mercy, of love and affection. She holds a noble mention in the Book of our Lord and in the life and Sunnah of our Prophet ﷺ.

The Noble Qur'an has mentioned the elder sister so that we may recognize her virtue. This is seen in the story of Moses, peace be upon him, when his mother cast him into the river. She then said, as Allah relates^(٣):

“And she said to his sister, ‘Trace him.’”

﴿وَقَالَتْ لِأُخْتِهِ قُصِّيهِ فَبَصَّرَتْ بِهِ عَنْ جُنْبٍ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ﴾

Meaning: follow his trace and watch over him. Thus, the elder sister risked her own life in order to save her brother from destruction. With courage and wisdom, she said:

﴿هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَهْلِ بَيْتٍ يَكْفُلُونَهُ لَكُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ نَاصِحُونَ﴾

“Shall I direct you to a household who will take care of him for you, and they will be sincere toward him?”

Through her intelligence and sound judgment, she became the means for her brother’s safety and her mother’s happiness. Allah then says: ﴿فَرَدَدْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ أُمِّهِ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ﴾

“So, We returned him to his mother so that her eyes might be comforted and she would not grieve.”

In the Prophetic biography, we read the story of Ash-Shaymā’ sister of our Prophet (through bint al-Hārith, the elder foster . She carried him as an infant in her arms, gave) breastfeeding him her affection, and looked after him alongside her mother, Ḥalimah as-Sa’diyyah. While playing with him, she used to say:

يَا رَبَّنَا أَبْقِ لَنَا مُحَمَّدًا *** وَأَعْطِهِ عِزًّا يَدُومُ أَبَدًا

O our Lord, preserve Muhammad for us,

and grant him glory that lasts forever.

When the Prophet ﷺ later met her in her old age, he honored her and welcomed her warmly, in order to instill in hearts the most beautiful images of dutifulness and to embody through his actions the highest meanings of loyalty and gratitude. He spread his cloak for her, his eyes filled with tears, and he said to her:

«إِنْ أَحْبَبْتَ أَنْ تَرْجِعِي إِلَى قَوْمِكَ أَوْصَلْتُكَ، وَإِنْ أَحْبَبْتَ فَأَقِيمِي عِنْدِي
مُكْرَمَةً مُحَبَّبَةً».

“If you wish to return to your people, I will provide for your return; and if you wish, then stay with me, honored and beloved (٤).”

He then gave her camels, sheep, and an abundance of wealth.

Through this, the Prophet ﷺ teaches us how to respect the status of the elder sister, appreciate her kindness, and be grateful for her efforts. And all of this loyalty, appreciation, and love was shown to her while she was his sister through breastfeeding, so how much greater would it be if she were his full sister, sharing the same father and mother?

Servants of Allah: Indeed, the elder sister is among the relatives most deserving of honor, and maintaining ties with her is part of true faith. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَصِلْ رَحِمَهُ»

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him maintain his ties of kinship^(٥).”

How many a brother has shown kindness to his sister, seeking thereby the pleasure of his Lord and the strengthening of family ties, and Allah has rewarded him with blessing in his life and expansion in his provision. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَبْسُطَ لَهُ فِي رِزْقِهِ، وَأَنْ يُنْسَأَ لَهُ فِي أَثَرِهِ، فَلْيَصِلْ رَحِمَهُ»

“Whoever would like his provision to be expanded and his lifespan to be extended, let him maintain his ties of kinship^(٦).”

There is no doubt that the rights of the elder sister become even greater when there is no one to attend to her affairs or care for her needs, when she has neither a husband nor children, neither a helper nor a source of support, especially in her old age, as her strength fades and her health weakens. For she then becomes in

the greatest need of someone to look after her and fulfill her emphasized when ﷺ rights. This is what the Messenger of Allah he said:

«لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا، وَيَعْرِفْ حَقَّ كَبِيرِنَا»

“He is not one of us who does not show mercy to our young and does not recognize the right of our elders^(٧).”

So, fear Allah regarding your sisters, and take glad tidings from the words of your Prophet ﷺ: «لَا يَكُونُ لِأَحَدٍ ثَلَاثُ بَنَاتٍ، أَوْ ثَلَاثُ أَخَوَاتٍ، فَيُحْسِنُ إِلَيْهِنَّ، إِلَّا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ».

“No one has three daughters or three sisters and treats them kindly except that he will enter Paradise^(٨).”

Allah the Exalted says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ﴾

“O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you^(٩).”

I say these words of mine, and I seek forgiveness from Allah for myself and for you, so seek His forgiveness.

Second Sermon:

All praise is due to Allah; there is no deity worthy of worship except Him. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, after whom there is no prophet.

To proceed: O you who maintain ties with your sisters, the elder sister has a lasting favor and debt of gratitude upon her siblings. How much she contributed to their upbringing, how keen she was to guide and direct them. Therefore, preserve the elder sister's kindness, honor her with the respect she deserves, place her in the position befitting her, hasten to visit her, show her honor in front of her husband and children, do not sever ties with her, seek her counsel, give her the rights Allah has ordained for her, and do not diminish her share of inheritance.

Listen to the story of the Companion Jābir, may Allah be pleased with him: when he became so ill that he lost consciousness, and when he regained awareness, the first thing he asked about was the rights of his sisters in inheritance. He said, "O Messenger of Allah, I have sisters^(١٠)." **لِي أَخَوَاتٌ**

Thereupon, the Qur'an was revealed concerning the inheritance of sisters. So, fear Allah regarding the inheritance of your sisters, and act upon the saying of your Lord:

﴿وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا﴾

“For women there is a share of what parents and close relatives leave, whether little or much, a prescribed share^(١١).”

Be consistent in honoring the elder sister with your gifts, and do not withhold your support from her, for that brings greater reward for your charity and is better for you with your Creator. The Mother of the Believers, Maymūnah, may Allah be pleased with her, once gave charity, and the Prophet ﷺ said to her:

«لَوْ أَعْطَيْتَهَا أُخْتَكِ... لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّكَ»

“Had you given it to your sister, it would have been better for you^(١٢).”

Among the greatest doors of goodness is to relieve her distress, to settle her debts, and to fulfill her vows—during her lifetime or after her death. A man said to the Prophet ﷺ, “My sister vowed to perform Hajj, but she passed away.” The Prophet ﷺ

said: "If she had a debt, would you repay it?" He replied, "Yes."

The Prophet said: «فَاقْضِ اللَّهَ، فَهُوَ أَحَقُّ بِالْقَضَاءِ».

"Then repay the debt owed to Allah, for Allah has more right to be fulfilled^(١٣)."

And O fathers and mothers: strengthen the status of the elder sister among her siblings by honoring her properly, making her rank known, teaching them her rights, and raising them to respect her. Thus, our children will grow in love and compassion, our families in affection and cohesion, and our society in unity and solidarity.

Servants of Allah:

Send prayers and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad. O Allah, send prayers, peace, and blessings upon him and upon his pure and noble family. **O Allah**, be pleased with Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī, and with all the honorable Companions. **O Allah**, the Satisfier of needs and the Answerer of supplications, we ask You to make us among those whose prayers You answer, whose rank You raise, whose hearts You open, whose character You beautify, whose affairs You make easy, whose lives You



make wholesome, and whose conduct You make upright. **O Allah**, make us believers through You, worshippers devoted to You, kind and dutiful toward our sisters, and righteous toward our parents. Have mercy upon them as they raised us when we were young, O Most Merciful of the merciful. **O Allah**, protect the United Arab Emirates with Your protection, take it into Your care, and surround it with Your providence, O Lord of all worlds. **O Allah**, protect His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, the President of the State; clothe him continuously with righteousness and wisdom; and grant success to him, his deputies, his brothers, the Rulers of the Emirates, and his trusted Crown Prince, in all that You love and are pleased with. **O Allah**, have mercy upon Sheikh Zayed, Sheikh Rashid, and all the sheikhs of the Emirates who have passed on to Your mercy. Admit them, by Your grace, into Your spacious Gardens, and encompass the martyrs of the nation with Your mercy and forgiveness. **O Allah**, have mercy upon the Muslim men and Muslim women, those who are alive and those who have passed away. **O Allah**, to You belongs all praise for the rain You have

bestowed, the goodness You have spread, and the mercy You have disseminated. O Allah, increase us in rain, and make it a rainfall of mercy, general, beneficial, and not harmful; a relieving rain, wholesome and pleasant, by which You give life to the land and show mercy to the servants.

Servants of Allah: remember Allah, the Most Great and Majestic, and He will remember you; and be grateful to Him for His blessings, and He will increase you. And establish the prayer

(١) An-Nisā' : ١.

(٢) An-Nasā'ī.

(٣) Al-Qasas ١١-١٣.

(٤) Al-Iṣābah fī Tamayiz aṣ-Ṣaḥābah..(٢٠٦/٨) :

(٥) Al-Bukhārī.

(٦) Agreed upon.

(٧) Al-Adab al-Mufrad

(٨) Al-Adab al-Mufrad.

(٩) An-Nisā' : ٥٩.

(١٠) Al-Bukhārī

(١١) An-Nisā' : ٧

(١٢) Al-Birr wa aṣ-Ṣilāh by al-Ḥusayn ibn Ḥarb.

(١٣) Al-Bukhārī.