

Speak of People's Good Qualities The First Sermon

All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the earth and the heavens, who has commanded us to mention virtues and good deeds. We bear witness that nothing is worthy of worship except Allah, and we bear witness that our master and Prophet Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah. May Allah bless him, grant him peace, and bestow His blessings upon him, his family, and all his Companions.

To proceed: Servants of Allah, I counsel you and myself to remain mindful of Allah. Mindfulness of Him restrains the tongue and leads to His pleasure. Our Lord, the Most Merciful, says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا * يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ
لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ

“O you who believe, be mindful of Allah and speak words that are right. He will rectify your deeds for you and forgive you your sins.” (Qur’ān ٣٣:٧٠-٧١).

Part of being mindful of your Lord is to listen carefully to what is said and to follow the best of it through action. Allah Most High says: فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ * الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

“So, give glad tidings to My servants: those who listen to what is said and follow the best of it. Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, and it is they who possess understanding.” (Qur’ān ٣٩:١٧-١٨).

Believers, during one of the Prophet’s ﷺ journeys, a man fell behind and did not catch up with him. The Prophet ﷺ asked about him, and one of those present spoke ill of him. Mu‘adh ibn Jabal

(may Allah be pleased with him) immediately defended him in his absence and mentioned his good qualities, saying:

يُسْ مَا قُلْتَ، وَاللَّهِ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا خَيْرًا

“What you have said is terrible! By Allah, O Messenger of Allah, we have known nothing but good of him.” (al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. ٤٤١٨; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. ٢٧٦٩a).

How great a value and how noble a quality it is to mention people’s good qualities and worthy deeds, to make their praiseworthy qualities known, recount their virtues, and acknowledge their noble character. Reflect upon the example of your Prophet ﷺ and you will find that no one praised good qualities more generously or commended virtuous people more graciously. He said to al-Ashajj of ‘Abd al-Qays (may Allah be pleased with him): **إِنَّ فِيكَ لَخَصْلَتَيْنِ يُحِبُّهُمَا اللَّهُ: الْجَلْمُ وَالْأَنَاءُ**

“You possess two qualities that Allah loves: forbearance and deliberation.” (Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. ١٧).

What encouragement could be greater than praise that makes a person aware of the good within himself so that he may preserve and increase it? The Prophet ﷺ also wished to encourage ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) to pray during the night. He therefore combined praise with guidance, saying: **نِعَمَ الرَّجُلُ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، لَوْ كَانَ يُصَلِّي مِنَ اللَّيْلِ**

“What an excellent man ‘Abd Allāh is—if only he would pray during the night.” (al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. ١١٢٢; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. ٢٤٧٩).

After that, ‘Abd Allāh slept only a little during the night. Consider how the Prophet ﷺ combined appreciation of what he already did well with guidance towards what was even better.

How beautiful it is for a person to possess a heart that recognises goodness and preserves it, an eye that sees kindness and

appreciates it, and a tongue that speaks of what is beautiful and makes it known. Only a person of virtue recognises the virtue of others, and only one who possesses goodness bears witness to the goodness of others. This indicates nobility of character and soundness of heart.

This is the quality of the possessor of a pure heart, whom the Prophet ﷺ described as: **لَا إِثْمَ فِيهِ وَلَا بَغْيَ، وَلَا غِلَّ وَلَا حَسَدَ**

“The mindful and pure person in whose heart there is no sin, transgression, rancour, or envy.” (Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, no. ٤٢١٦).

Such a person is like a bee: it alights upon what is wholesome, produces what is wholesome, and spreads benefit. As for a person with a diseased heart and ignoble disposition, the corruption of his inward state and intention causes him to overlook people’s virtues and good qualities while fixing his attention upon their faults and shortcomings. He neither mentions their virtues nor conceals their faults. He is like a fly that passes over flowers and seeks out filth.

What a dangerous quality and an ugly failing this is. Our Prophet ﷺ warned against it when he called out from the pulpit in a voice so loud that the women heard him inside their homes. He said:

يَا مَعْشَرَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِلِسَانِهِ، لَا تَغْتَابُوا الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا عَوْرَاتِهِمْ، فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ تَتَّبَعَ عَوْرَةَ أَخِيهِ تَتَّبَعَ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ، وَمَنْ تَتَّبَعَ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ يَفْضَحْهُ فِي جَوْفِ بَيْتِهِ

“O people who have believed with their tongues while faith has not entered their hearts: do not backbite Muslims and do not search for their faults. Whoever searches for his brother’s faults, Allah will search for his faults; and whoever has his faults exposed by Allah will be disgraced even within his own home.” (Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, no. ٤٨٨٠).

One of the wise said: **مَنِ اشْتَغَلَ بِعُيُوبِ النَّاسِ عَنْ عُيُوبِ نَفْسِهِ؛ عَجِيَ قَلْبُهُ، وَتَعَبَ بَدَنُهُ، وَتَعَذَّرَ عَلَيْهِ تَرْكُ عُيُوبِهِ**

“Whoever becomes occupied with people’s faults instead of his own will have his heart blinded, his body exhausted, and the abandonment of his own faults made difficult for him.”

(Ibn Hibbān, *Rawḍat al-‘uqalā’ wa-nuzhat al-fuḍalā’*, p. ١٣١).

Servants of Allah, conceal the faults of others, and Allah will appoint someone to conceal yours. This confirms the saying of your Prophet ﷺ **مَنْ سَتَرْتُ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ**

“Whoever conceals the fault of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and the Hereafter.” (Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. ٢٦٩٩).

Imam Mālik (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: “I encountered people who had no known faults, but they occupied themselves with the faults of others, so people found faults in them. I also encountered people who had faults, but they remained silent concerning the faults of others, so people remained silent concerning theirs.”

Do not, however, allow the concealment of faults to lead you to remain silent about wrongdoing or abandon sincere mutual counsel. Offer advice in a manner that preserves the cohesion of your society and serves the interests of your nation. Act upon the words of your Lord: **“O you who believe, obey Allah, obey the Messenger, and those entrusted with authority among you.”** I say these words and seek Allah’s forgiveness for myself and for you, so seek His forgiveness.

The Second Sermon

All praise belongs to Allah alone, and may blessings and peace be upon the one after whom there is no prophet.

To proceed: Servants of Allah, speaking of people's good qualities is a value whose reality becomes evident during disagreement and whose true worth becomes apparent when reproach arises. Do not allow a momentary lapse to make you forget years of kindness, nor allow a single mistake to erase abundant virtue. How many people have done good for many years, only to make one mistake and be told: "We have never seen any good from you."

Acknowledge the virtue of those who possess it. Make the mention of good qualities part of your character within your homes and gatherings, and part of the way you speak and communicate through social media. Do not accept backbiting in your presence. Act upon the words of your Prophet ﷺ:

مَنْ رَدَّ عَنْ عَرَضِ أَخِيهِ، رَدَّ اللَّهُ عَنْ وَجْهِهِ النَّارَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

"Whoever defends his brother's honour, Allah will protect his face from the Fire on the Day of Resurrection." (al-Tirmidhī, *Jāmi'*, no. ١٩٣١).

May Allah have mercy upon you: remember the virtues of those who have departed from this world and recall their good qualities, for this carries great merit with your Lord. When a funeral procession passed before the Prophet ﷺ and the people spoke well of the deceased, he said:

مَنْ أَثْنَيْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ خَيْرًا وَجَبَتْ لَهُ الْجَنَّةُ ... أَنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءُ اللَّهِ فِي الْأَرْضِ

"The one whom you praise for goodness has been granted Paradise ... You are Allah's witnesses upon the earth." (al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. ١٣٦٧; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. ٩٤٩).

Our Prophet ﷺ frequently mentioned the virtues of his wife Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) after her death. He said:

أَمَنْتُ بِى إِذْ كَفَرِى النَّاسُ، وَصَدَّقْتَنِى إِذْ كَذَّبَنِى النَّاسُ، وَوَأَسْتَنِى بِمَالِهَا إِذْ
حَرَمَنِى النَّاسُ

“She believed in me when people disbelieved in me, affirmed my truthfulness when people accused me of lying, and supported me with her wealth when people deprived me.”
(Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, no. ٢٤٨٦٤).

Her death did not cause him to forget the kindness she had shown him. Among the rights our society has over us is that we make its goodness known, highlight the virtues of its people, and commend the achievements of its citizens. Do not withhold a kind word from anyone who deserves it. Supplicate with the prayer of those who are faithful and pure-hearted:

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًا لِلَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

“Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers and sisters who preceded us in faith. Do not place within our hearts any rancour towards those who believe. Our Lord, You are truly Most Kind, Most Merciful.” (Qur’ān ٥٩:١٠).

O Allah, send Your blessings, peace, and grace upon our master and Prophet Muḥammad, the Seal of the Messengers, and upon all his family and Companions.

O Allah, be pleased with Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, and ‘Alī, and with all the noble Companions.

O Allah, make us among those who mention the good qualities of others, conceal their faults, and offer them sincere counsel. Forgive us and our parents, O Lord of all worlds.

O Allah, perpetuate the honour, victory, stability, prosperity, goodness, and wellbeing of the United Arab Emirates. O Allah, preserve Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, President of the State,

through Your protection. Be his aid and support, and bless his life and his work.

O Allah, grant him, his deputies, his brothers the Rulers of the Emirates, and his trustworthy Crown Prince success in all that You love and are pleased with.

O Allah, have mercy upon Sheikh Zayed, Sheikh Rashid, and the Sheikhs of the Emirates who have passed into Your mercy. By Your grace, admit them into Your spacious Gardens, and encompass the nation's martyrs with Your mercy and forgiveness.

O Allah, have mercy upon the Muslim men and women, the living among them and the deceased.

O Allah, grant us rain and do not make us among those who despair.

O Allah, send us rain. O Allah, send us rain. O Allah, send us rain. Servants of Allah, remember Allah, the Magnificent and Majestic, and He will remember you. Give thanks to Him for His blessings, and He will increase you. Establish the prayer.