

Khutbah Faith and Building Societies

Beloved brothers and sisters in Islam we are at a critical time in history where trials and tribulations are on the constant rise, we have been witnessing the increase in natural disasters, ongoing wars and military conflicts; pandemics and plandemics, we are at a time where two major aspects of human existence and life are facing challenges. Faith and civilization.

Today in _____, civilization as a whole is experiencing weakness in their faith, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and many more are completely without faith (atheism, agnosticism, ilhaad, scientology). Even those who may have some type of faith in something, they themselves are losing faith in their own civilizations and the places they call home. So what is faith brothers and sisters? Is faith only something we believe and store in our hearts? Is faith just something we wear in Ramadan? Is faith just something we do on Fridays? What is faith? How do we understand it? How do we practice it?

Faith according to Islam is not only some collection of beliefs that we hide inside our hearts, and keep to ourselves, or a garment that we wear when we're in trouble or difficulty. True Islamic faith is a combination of belief in the heart, statements with the tongue and actions upon the limbs. It increases with righteous actions and obedience to Allah and decreases with bad deeds and disobedience to Allah.

The Prophet Muhammad informed us about this in his statement:

الإِيمَانُ بِضْعٌ وَسَبْعُونَ أَوْ بِضْعٌ وَسِتُّونَ شُعْبَةً فَأَفْضَلُهَا قَوْلُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَدْنَاهَا إِمَاطَةُ الْأَذَى عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ
وَالْحَيَاءُ شُعْبَةٌ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ

"Faith is sixty and some odd branches, the highest branch of faith is the statement that there is not deity worthy of worship except Allah, the lowest branch of faith is removing something harmful from the path, and shyness/modesty is also a branch of faith." (Saheeh Muslim #35)

On one occasion some of the non-Muslims and hypocrites came to the Prophet Muhammad and inquired about faith, upon which the Prophet Muhammad responded with Allah’s statement:

﴿لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَءَاتَى الْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَأَبَى السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْفُونَ بَعْدَهُمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ﴾

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East or West, but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, to believe in the Angels, the Books and the Messengers. Also to spend from your provisions that Allah has provided you with, out of love for Him, spend upon your relatives, the orphans, the needy, the traveller, for those who ask and to free the slaves. Faith is also to be steadfast in the prayer, practice regular charity, to fulfill the oaths you have made, and to be firm and patient in times of suffering and adversity. These are the people of truth, those who truly believe and fear in Allah” (Al Baqarah: 177)

This verse in surah al Baqarah is Ayat Ul Birr. This verse was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in Al Madinah when some of the hypocrites and non-believers wanted to dispute with the Muslims over the issue of the Qiblah. They came to the prophet Muhammad and asked him why did you change the direction of prayer from Jerusalem to Makkah? Allah responded to their foolish claim by saying:

سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّاهُمْ مَا وَلَّاهُمْ عَن قِبَلَتِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا ۗ قُلِ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۗ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

“The foolish amongst the people are saying: “What made them change their direction of prayer from Jerusalem to Makkah?” Say to them O Muhammad: “To Allah belongs the East and the West: He guides whom He wills to a way that is straight.” (Al Baqarah:142)

Allah reminded the Prophet Muhammad and the Muslims to not be distracted, disturbed by what the foolish people say to you. Focus and concentrate upon the fundamentals of your religion.

So when pondering and reflecting over these verses we come to realize that true Islamic faith is:

- Strong faith in Allah, His Angels, His books, His Prophets, the Pre decree and the Day of resurrection.

- Giving charity to those in need, parents, relatives, orphans, poor, needy, those travelling.

- Devotion and worship: praying regularly five times a day, on time, in congregation, practicing the five pillars of Islam

- Fulfilling your promises, contracts and commitments; and being fair and just with all people, while standing up for goodness, and speaking out against injustice, oppression and wrongdoing.

- Patience and perseverance, steadfastness and discipline.

Brothers and sisters in Islam...Allah loves you, Allah wants good for you, for your families, your neighborhoods, your communities... when we realize this, then we will truly understand what our purpose is here on His earth. Allah wants more for us than just individually believing and having faith...Yes this is the foundation, but Allah wants to build us, nurture us, and develop us as individuals, to pave the way to build strong families and whole societies based on these principles found within Ayatul Birr.

So where is our faith brothers and sisters? Have we taken account of our faith, the application of it, within our households, within our Muslim communities, and within our civilizations. True Islamic faith is not only beliefs in the heart, but it is also actions upon the limbs and statements upon the tongue.

So our next question my dearly beloved brothers and sisters is, what is a civilization, what things make up a true civilization. What concepts, beliefs, teachings should a true civilization be based upon? What are the traits, characteristics and facilities that determine whether or not a place can be called civilized or uncivilized? Is it the high-rise buildings or smoothly paved highways? Is it the great factories and shopping malls? Is it the big sports stadiums, big theatres? Is it big armies with the latest technological airplanes, tanks and satellites?

Brothers and sisters in Islam, a true civilization is not just material progress, developments and advancements. Indeed determining that a place is a civilization or not based upon the apparent alone is completely deficient; and completely in agreement with the ideologies of the atheists, who only believe in the things which are sensed with the five senses. Allah tells us that it is from the traits of the non believers that they only perceive their existence to be relevant to the apparent world around them.

يَعْلَمُونَ ظَهْرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُونَ- أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ ۗ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۗ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَآئِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكَفِرُونَ

“They only know what is apparent of the worldly life, but they, of the Hereafter, are unaware. Have they not reflected upon their own being? Allah only created the heavens and the earth and everything in between for a purpose and an appointed term. Yet most people are truly in denial of the meeting with their Lord!”

True civilization brothers and sisters is that human beings act like human beings, having upright morals, ethics, beliefs and values in line with the Quran and Sunnah. True civilizations are based upon love, kindness, charity, politeness, good manners, generosity, peace, justice and fairness.

Brothers and sisters...in order for any place on the earth to be considered civilized or a true civilization it must be based upon true faith, true Islamic faith. Without faith the civilization and those living within it become shallow, lop sided, self destructive, oppressive, harmful and unbalanced. They pay more attention physical and mental aspect of life than the spiritual.

Our Islamic faith is a type of faith that inspires the building and development of true civilizations and encourages social solidarity. Yes, material prosperity is good, new technological developments and innovations are superb, progress in science, medicine, building techniques, is all praiseworthy; but more important my beloved brothers and sisters is spiritual prosperity, joined with moral and ethical goodness and righteousness based upon the Quran and Sunnah. There were many so called civilizations that progressed and advanced themselves materially in the past, however they neglected worshipping and submitting to Allah, they abandoned fine morals, upright manners and ethics; so as a result they were

destroyed. Allah tells us in numerous verses in the Quran what happened to them:

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَثَارُوا الْأَرْضَ
وَعَمَرُوهَا أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا عَمَرُوهَا وَجَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ۖ فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَٰكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

Have they not travelled through the lands and observed what was the end result of those who came before them? They were greater than them in power, and they plowed the land and developed it more than what you have built. And Our messengers were sent to them with clear evidences. And Allah never wronged them, rather they wronged themselves.

They wronged themselves because they abandoned true faith and abandoned showing sincere concern to the spiritual aspect of their being. They wronged themselves because they gave too much attention and concern to developing their minds and bodies while neglecting their souls. They wronged themselves, their families, their communities, their masajid, their neighborhoods because they were only focusing on the apparent, and amassing large amounts of the material things of this world, the money, the wealth, the nice cars, the big mansions, the big businesses; they neglected worshipping Allah, they neglected praying on time, they neglected spending for the sake of Allah and were hoarding their wealth and refusing to paying zakat, they love food too much so abandoned fasting Ramadan, they loved music, nasheed, and frivolous and vain speech which led them to abandon reading and reciting of the Quran, they preferred the ways of the non-muslims and deemed them superior over following the Quran, Sunnah and ways of the righteous predecessors...this is how they wronged themselves.

So Don't be deceived by the illusions of materialistic ideologies, beliefs and principles brothers and sisters, don't let the amassing of temporary worldly enjoyments distract you from amassing permanent rewards of the Hereafter, Allah tells us in the Quran in numerous verses:

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion. (3:185)

and Allah says:

يَقُومُ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ

O my people! This worldly life is only 'a fleeting' enjoyment, whereas the Hereafter is truly the home of settlement. (40:39), He also says:

وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتُهَا وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ {القصص:60}

Whatever you have been given is no more than 'a fleeting' enjoyment and adornment of this worldly life. But what is with Allah is far better and more lasting. Will you not then understand?

وقال سبحانه: فَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ {الشورى:36}

Whatever you have been given is 'no more than a fleeting' enjoyment of this worldly life. But what is with Allah is far better and more lasting for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord;

So don't be deceived my brothers and sisters by the glitters, gold, fame and temporary enjoyment and illusions of this dunya, make the attaining the hereafter your goal, make competing in doing righteous deeds be your aim and focus, make your intentions sincerely for Allah in everything that you do, and everything of this dunya will come to you whether you want it or not. The Prophet Muhammad said:

مَنْ كَانَتْ الْآخِرَةُ هَمَّهُ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ غِنَاهُ فِي قَلْبِهِ وَجَمَعَ لَهُ شَمْلَهُ وَأَتَتْهُ الدُّنْيَا وَهِيَ رَاغِمَةٌ وَمَنْ كَانَتْ الدُّنْيَا هَمَّهُ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ فَقْرَهُ بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ وَفَرَّقَ عَلَيْهِ شَمْلَهُ وَلَمْ يَأْتِهِ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَا قُدِّرَ لَهُ .

"Whoever makes the Hereafter his goal, Allah makes his heart rich, and organizes his affairs, and the world/worldly things come to him whether he wants them or not. And whoever makes this world/worldly things his goal, Allah puts his poverty right before his eyes, and disorganizes his affairs, and the world/worldly things do not come to him, except what has been decreed for him." (Sunan Tirmidhi)

Brothers and sisters in Islam...we as Muslims in America have a great responsibility upon our shoulders...responsibilities to our creator, to our families, to our communities and to our societies that we live in.

Brothers and sisters...we must lead our communities here in the USA towards a new way of life, a life that is balanced between nurturing all aspects of our being. When I say communities, I mean our greater communities, our cities, towns, neighborhoods, our non-Muslim neighbors who are waiting upon us to bring them the light and mercy of Islam. The responsibility is upon our shoulders, so let's work hard in fulfilling it before we don't have the opportunity any more.

Second khutbah

From Allah's mercy upon the creation is that He's provided beneficial sustenance for the proper growth, nutrients and maintenance of all aspects of our being. He's provided all of the wholesome foods, drinks, vitamins, and minerals to enable us to have strong bodies, from His mercy is that He's clarified the beneficial/Halaal things, and warned us from the haraam/harmful things to consume. He's blessed us with senses to be able to acquire knowledge and experience through the things that we read, see, hear, touch, and taste so that we can have strong minds and intellects. He's clarified for us what we should occupy our minds with, pondering over Allah, his verses, his signs, his remembrance, and he also clarified what we should avoid occupying our minds with; doubts, misconceptions, vain speech, rumors, music, lies, falsehood and the likes. Most importantly Allah has also provided nourishment for our souls and hearts; which is found in the revelation of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger.

We as Muslims must lead our communities towards a new way of life that is filled with and based upon true faith, morals and social service. We must take our roles seriously in the societies we live in. However, in order to be effective in our communities we must first act and practice those principles mentioned in Ayatul Birr.

Your community, your neighborhood, your society needs you; if we don't act now, then we will see the results of our inaction right before our eyes. You will see the evil results manifesting in your children, grandchildren and those in our surrounding neighborhoods. Anyone who goes to the inner cities can already see it manifesting right in front of our eyes...Brothers and sisters... We need to be from amongst those that Allah mentions:

فَلَوْلَا كَانَ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ أُولُوا بَقِيَّةَ يَنَّهُوْنَ عَنِ الْفَسَادِ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّمَّنْ أَنجَيْنَا مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَاتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَا أُتْرِفُوا فِيهِ وَكَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ - وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ لِيُهْلِكَ الْقُرَىٰ بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلِهَا مُصْلِحُونَ

If only there had been among those who were destroyed before you, reformers/rectifiers/ virtuous individuals who forbade corruption in the land— other than the few We had saved 'from the torment'. But the wrongdoers 'only' pursued their 'worldly' pleasures, becoming wicked. And your Lord would not have destroyed the cities unjustly while their people were reformers. (Hud:116-117)

Brothers and sisters the only way the people of true faith will be safe in the societies that they live in is if they are consistently reforming and forbidding corruption in their societies. We have to be social reformers, social leaders, speaking out against oppression, wrongdoing, tyranny, and transgression wherever we see it and whenever we have the ability to do so.

The reform of society was one of the main targets of the Prophet Muhammad's message over 1442 years ago. Him and his companions reformed a society filled with alcoholism, prostitution, tribal wars, oppression of women, oppression of orphans, stealing, robbing and taking the money of the weak and impoverished. The society that the Prophet Muhammad was sent to reform was much worse than the societies we live in today...their material resources may have been much more limited than us, however their true faith, sincerity and certainty was far exceeding us in numerous aspects...They had the most important factor for rectifying and reforming their societies, and this is why Allah granted them success. So brother and sisters, if we want to be successful in our endeavors, whether religiously or worldly, we need to start with learning, revising and studying the correct Islamic faith, unite upon it and act upon it in our homes, our masajid, our communities and our societies.