

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا. إِنَّمَا

نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِرِجَالِهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا.

وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ.

THE PINNACLE OF SELFLESSNESS: ITHAR

Honorable Muslims!

One of the fundamental aims of our sublime religion, Islam, is to establish a society composed of virtuous individuals who love one another for the sake of Allah the Almighty, help one another, and compete in doing good. Islam has also shown us the way to achieve this. This path is the sense of ithar, which is based on love and brotherhood and purifies a person from negative traits such as selfishness, stinginess, and envy.

Dear Believers!

Ithar is striving to meet the needs of others to the extent of our means, solely seeking the pleasure of Allah the Almighty. It is to think of others as much as, or even more than, we think of ourselves. Ithar is being able to please the hearts of our parents, spouses, and children with compassion, mercy, and patience. It is to ease the lives of our brothers and sisters with disabilities—to be the eyes of those who cannot see, the tongue of those who cannot speak, the ears of those who cannot hear, the feet of those who cannot walk, and the hands of those who cannot hold. Ithar is to sometimes give up our wealth and at other times our comfort for the sake of the well-being and goodness of the society we live in, even for the benefit of all humanity. It is to stand by our neighbors at times, our relatives at others, and at times our oppressed brothers and sisters in Gaza, never withholding our material and moral support from them. And when the time comes, it is to sacrifice our very lives for the sake of our religion, our homeland, and our sacred values.

Esteemed Muslims!

We have learned the most exemplary models of selflessness from the Prophet Muhammad (saw) and his noble Companions. They endured all the hardships that came their way, strove with all their might so that hearts would be inclined toward Islam, and constantly prayed to Allah the Almighty on behalf of others. They

became living embodiments of the verse: “... and give food—despite their desire for it—to the poor, the orphan, and the captive, ‘saying to themselves,’ ‘We feed you only for the sake of Allah, seeking neither reward nor thanks from you.’”¹

Dear Believers!

In a hadith, our beloved Prophet (saw) states: “None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.”² Given this, we witness many behaviors today that may seem minor but can, in fact, be addressed through the morality of ithar. How thought-provoking it is that while some people race to show generosity toward one another, the same individuals may, on the other hand, refuse to give way in traffic—going so far as to argue over it, block the passage of ambulances and fire trucks, violate the emergency lane, and park their vehicles in spots reserved for the disabled. How troubling a scene it is when those who walk on tiptoe and speak in whispers at home while putting their children to sleep or caring for a sick loved one then disturb their neighbors and the ill by turning the volume of the television or music all the way up. How tragic it is when those who are extremely meticulous about what they buy for themselves or bringing healthy food to their families then go on to conceal defects in the products they sell, alter the expiration dates of expired goods, and lose their sensitivity toward what is halal and haram. How saddening it is when a person prioritizes their own comfort on public transportation while disregarding the needs of the sick, the pregnant, and the elderly.

Dear Muslims!

Acting upon ithar means responding to the divine call, “Cooperate with one another in goodness and righteousness,”³ by rushing to the aid of anyone in need, wherever they may be, and making life more livable for one another. It is to bring peace and happiness to every heart—to have a place in the prayer of an orphan and in the smile of the destitute.

I would like to conclude this Friday’s khutbah with the following hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (saw): “If anyone cares for his brother’s need, Allah will care for his need.”⁴

¹ Insan 76/8,9

² Bukhari, Iman, 7.

³ Ma’idah, 5/2.

⁴ Abu Dawud, Adab, 60.

