

FRIDAY SERMONS BY SH. MUHAMMAD JUMUAN

TOPIC: TOLERANCE IN ISLAM

INTRODUCTION:

All praise is due to Allah who sent His messenger with the religion of tolerance and purity and enjoined Muslims to follow the path of tolerance and brotherhood and warned them against all ways leading to hatred and cutting off relations. I praise Allah and thank Him and seek His forgiveness from my evil deeds. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon His prophet Muhammad who attained the highest position in good conduct and character.

The person who contemplates on the qualities of those people who have been praised in history for their great achievements will find that the quality of tolerance played a great role in their characters. Allah the Almighty has made tolerance to be among the characteristics of His most pious and righteous servants. Allah says in the Holy Qurán: “And hasten towards forgiveness from your Lord and paradise, as wide as the width of the heavens and the earth prepared for the righteous. Those who spend from their wealth in the way of Allah in times of ease and hardship and those who restrain their anger and pardon the people who wrong them. And Allah loves the good doers.” Allah also enjoined this quality upon His messenger as clearly mentioned in the Holy Qurán:

“By the grace of Allah you are lenient with them. If you were bad tempered and harsh in dealing with them, they would have abandoned you and left you alone. So pardon them and seek Allah’s forgiveness for them and consult them in public matters.”

The prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) strictly complied with this commandment from Allah-The Almighty until the hearts of the people were filled with love and respect for him. The writers of the prophet’s biography have narrated that when the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) conquered Makkah, he gathered all the people of Makkah in front of the Kaaba and asked them; “What do you think that I will do to you? These same people of Makkah had persecuted him and his followers, tortured and killed many of his followers and waged many wars against him and the Muslims in Madinah and had harmed him and even tried to assassinate him. They all replied: “Goodness. You are a good and generous brother, son of a generous brother. The prophet told them: “Go for you are free!” By this kind of excellent behaviour and character, the Arabs ruled over other nations in the past.

It was narrated that Al- Ahnaf Bin Qais who was a leader of the tribe of Tameem and famous among the Arabs for his forbearance and tolerance was once asked: “where did you learn your tolerance from? He answered: “from Qais bin Asim Al-Munqari. I saw him one-day sitting in his courtyard talking to his people, when suddenly two men were brought to him one was dead and the other was tied up. It was said to him: “This is the son of your brother who killed your son!” I swear by Allah; He didn’t change his facial expression nor stop his speech to the people. After he finished his speech, he turned to his nephew (The killer of his son) and said:” O son of

my brother! Evil indeed what you have done. You have sinned against your Lord and cut the ties of kinship and have killed the son of your father's brother. You have shot yourself with your own arrow. Then he told another son of his, get up my son and bury your brother and untie your cousin and send 100 camels as blood money to your mother for the killing of her son as she is a stranger."

Similarly, the Bahraini people were known in the past for possessing such noble qualities of forbearance and tolerance. In the book "Attabaqat by Ibn Saad", the author mentioned that when the Bahraini delegation led by Abdi Qais when to meet the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Madinah, the latter welcomed them saying, "blessed are the people of Abdi Qais". The prophet (peace be upon him) then asked them: "who among you is Abdullah ibn Al Shaaj?" They replied: He will come to you O prophet of Allah. So when he came to the prophet (peace be upon him) and the prophet looked at him and saw that he had an ugly appearance. Abdullah Al-Ashaaj then said to the prophet Muhammad; my appearance will not impress you but only my tongue and heart. The prophet (peace be upon him) relied to him: "You have two characteristics which Allah loves. So Abdullah asked the prophet: Which are those characteristics? The prophet said to him: tolerance or forbearance and not making rash decisions. Then Abdullah asked the prophet: "O messenger of Allah! Have I acquired these qualities or were they ingrained in me from birth? The prophet (peace be upon him) said: They were ingrained in you."

If forbearance is the king of good manners, then tolerance and pardoning others is the foundation and main component forbearance. In fact, if there was no merit for tolerance except to attain the prayer of the Prophet for the person who has this characteristic, it will be sufficient reason to possess it. It has been narrated that the prophet (peace be upon him) said: "May Allah show mercy to the person who is easy and flexible and tolerant when selling or buying or lending money or demanding payment for money lent."

The Judge, Al-Baithawai (May Allah show mercy to him) in his comments and explanation of this prophetic tradition said: The prophet assigned this special prayer for this type of person to emphasize that tolerance and easy dealing with other people is a cause to be eligible for Allah's mercy and attain the honour of being among those included in this prophetic tradition.

Part 2 of the Speech:

O slaves of Allah! Our forefathers and grandfathers were the epitome of epitome of tolerance and forbearance. Their stories are well known and too many to mention. People still remember them until today, for their kindness, easy dealing and tolerance. The historical sources confirm that Bahrain accepted Islam when the King and ruler of Bahrain at the time- Al-Mundhir Ibn Sawa at-Tamimi-received a letter of invitation from the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to accept Islam. The letter was delivered to the King of Bahrain by the companion of the Prophet Alaa Al-Hadrami (May Allah be pleased with him). The King and the people of Bahrain accepted Islam peacefully by conviction and not by force as Bahrain was a civilized and a very

tolerant society. The Bahraini people have assimilated the principles of the Islamic faith which enjoins on its adherents to be united and cooperate with one another and to reject division, extremism, fanaticism and narrow mindedness. This reliance on Islamic teachings and principles has increased the spirit of tolerance and moderation in the Bahraini Society and has enabled it to overcome any major challenges it faced in the past or any new challenges it might face in the future by Allah's Grace and the unity and general awareness of the Bahraini people and their loyalty to the wise leadership of H.M. King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa and the Bahraini Government. May Allah, the Almighty bless him and continue to support him.

Finally, although the good manners of tolerance and forbearance are strongly encouraged in dealing with other people or the general public, it is however more emphasized and even becomes obligatory in some cases when dealing with close family members and relatives. The people closest to you deserve your best manners and highest consideration. How wonderful is the saying of the poet Al-Hariri when he said;

Forgive your brother when he mixes up good with bad deeds,

Avoid blaming him if he goes astray or commits injustice,

And keep doing good to them whether they thank you for it or not,

And intend to fulfil your promises even to your own brother,

By what you have stipulated even though they didn't put any conditions,

And know that if you seek someone who is always polite, you will never find him.

Who is he who has not made a mistake and who is the one who is always perfect?

May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon His final messenger and prophet Muhammad.