

Reflection: Reconnect with yourself

Khutbah Selection: Hafiz Sajjad

London, United Kingdom

حَامِدٌ أَوْ مُصَلِّئٌ _____ أَمَّا بَعْدُ

Allah swt said:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا﴾

"O you who have believed, be mindful of Allah and speak words of appropriate justice⁽ⁱ⁾."

reflection, a virtue often overlooked in the noise of modern life, is a praiseworthy trait in our faith, and a sign of wisdom, and dignity.

The Qur'an and Hadiths provide ample evidence of the significance of quiet moments of reflection as both a spiritual and practical practice. It symbolizes control over tongue, a commitment to thoughtful speech, and a pathway to inner peace.

The divine command guides us towards the importance of intentional and purposeful words. Speaking with clarity, justice, and truth is an essential aspect of our faith. Episodes of silence become adjunct to this principle, ensuring that one refrains from harmful or frivolous speech. Wisdom does not merely rest in the ability to articulate well but also in knowing when to speak and when to remain silent. Silence acts as a safeguard, protecting individuals from saying what might lead to regret or discord.

The Prophetic Example

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the epitome of wisdom and guidance, practiced prolonged episodes of silence. In the Hadith, it is stated:

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يُطِيلُ الصَّمْتَ

"The Prophet ﷺ was known for prolonged time of silence".

His silence was not rooted in disengagement but in reflection, patience, and the avoidance of unnecessary speech. It became a model for his followers, teaching them that silence could often be more powerful than words.

Furthermore, he ﷺ provided clear guidelines on when silence is preferable:

«مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ»

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent".

This Hadith encapsulates the balance between speech and silence. It advises believers to weigh their words carefully, ensuring they contribute positively or remain quiet.

Silence offers numerous benefits, both spiritually and socially:

1. A Source of Inner Peace

Quiet moments create a space for introspection and connection with Allah swt. It allows individuals to retreat from the chaos of the external world and cultivate tranquillity within themselves. This inner peace is crucial for spiritual growth, repentance, and making reconnection with Allah.

2. A Guard Against Sin

The tongue, though small, can lead to significant harm if unchecked. Gossip, slander, backbiting and harsh words can sever relationships and corrupt the heart. Silence prevents such sins, enabling individuals to safeguard their integrity and reputation.

3. An Indicator of Strength

Maintaining silence in challenging situations demonstrates immense self-control and emotional resilience. It signifies the ability to rise above provocations and respond with wisdom rather than impulse.

4. Fostering Thoughtful Communication

Reflection encourages individuals to think deeply before they speak. This leads to meaningful and impactful conversations rather than hurried or superficial exchanges.

Lessons from the Prophets

The way of the prophets is marked by wisdom, patience, and often silence. Their silence was purposeful, allowing them to reflect, observe, and choose their

words wisely. It is through silence that they demonstrated their strength and faith. Believers are encouraged to emulate this trait, using silence as a means to strengthen their character and deepen their relationship with Allah SWT.

Quiet moments in Modern Life

In today's fast-paced world, silence is a lost art. The constant barrage of information, social media chatter, and noise can overwhelm the senses and cloud judgment. Yet, the virtue of silence remains as relevant as ever. Practicing silence can lead to greater focus, clarity, and a more meaningful life. It allows individuals to listen better, think deeper, and connect with others on a more profound level.

The Distilled Wisdom of Scholars

Throughout history, silence has been revered as a virtue of the wise. Abu al-Darda (may Allah be pleased with him) succinctly encapsulated its importance when he said:

"تَعَلَّمُوا الصَّمْتَ كَمَا تَتَعَلَّمُونَ الْكَلَامَ"

"Learn silence just as you learn speech."

Silence is not mere passivity but an active and intentional practice that complements speech. It is the ability to discern when words are necessary and when they are better withheld.

Silence an integral part of righteous conduct

The Qur'an and the Hadith underscore the virtue of silence as an essential aspect of righteous conduct. Allah the Exalted says in Surat An-Nisa:

﴿لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنْ نَجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ﴾

"There is no good in much of their private conversation, except for those who advocate charity, or righteousness, or reconciliation between people".

This verse reminds believers to ensure that their speech carries purpose and goodness.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also emphasized the weight of silence. When asked about the doors to goodness, he concluded by saying:

"وَحَيْرٌ مِنْ ذَلِكَ: الصَّمْتُ إِلَّا مِنْ حَيْرٍ"

"And better than all of that is silence, except in matters of goodness".

These teachings inspire us to carefully weigh our words, speaking only when our speech brings clear benefit or serves a noble purpose.

Silence, when practiced thoughtfully, enhances various aspects of life, relationships, and spirituality. Its application spans a wide range of contexts:

Reflection and Worship

Silence is a gateway to spiritual closeness and reflection. In moments of solitude, it allows the soul to connect with Allah, fostering mindfulness and sincerity in prayer. The Qur'an recounts the story of Prophet Yusuf:

﴿فَأَسْرَهَا يُوسُفُ فِي نَفْسِهِ وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا لَهُمْ﴾

"So, Joseph suppressed it within himself and did not reveal it to them".

This verse illustrates the strength and wisdom of holding one's thoughts in silence while contemplating deeply.

Wisdom in Debates

In fruitless debates, silence is a sign of strength and steadfastness. It reflects the ability to rise above provocation and avoid unnecessary conflict. During disputes between spouses or within family, silence can act as a shield against division, preserving harmony and affection.

Reverence and Respect

Silence in the presence of elders reflects dignity and reverence. Before one's parents, it is a profound gesture of honour and compassion. By listening attentively and choosing words carefully, silence becomes a testament to love and gratitude.

Intellectual Growth

The intelligent believer is one who knows when to speak and when to remain silent.

As the saying goes, **"How often does a person regret what they have said something, and how rarely do they regret when they were quiet."**

Silence enables deep thought, better listening, and the cultivation of meaningful ideas. For the knowledgeable, it is an adornment; for those less learned, a dignified cover.

When Silence is Praiseworthy

Silence is praiseworthy in instances where speech holds no greater benefit, serves no clear purpose, or yields no evident good. However, the absence of speech should not be mistaken for virtue in situations where speaking up is necessary for justice, witness of truth, or reconciliation.

Conclusion

The art of silence, as exemplified in these teachings, is not merely about withholding words but discerning their power and purpose. A believer who refrains from idle talk and harmful speech safeguards their heart from the seeds of discord, planting instead the virtues of patience, humility, and understanding.

Silence becomes a sanctuary, not an escape, where wisdom flourishes and emotions find balance. It is within this sacred pause that one finds clarity, understanding the weight of words and the impact they hold on relationships and communities.

In our modern world, where words are often wielded carelessly and misunderstandings abound, embracing silence as an intentional act of strength and goodness becomes even more essential. To remain silent in the face of provocation is to choose dignity over retaliation, to embody the noble traits of the faithful, and to contribute to the well-being of society.

Indeed, silence holds the power to diffuse tensions and ignite love, as the Prophet ﷺ advised. When anger swells within, choosing silence over retaliation becomes a noble act of self-discipline. By remaining silent, not out of weakness but out of wisdom, one preserves the sanctity of relationships, protects their heart, and cultivates an environment where harmony can thrive.

The eloquence of silence extends beyond personal interactions; it is an essential principle in every sphere of life—be it within one's family, workplace, or community. It is a pause that allows understanding to deepen before words are spoken, ensuring that they are purposeful, kind, and just.

In moments of conflict or provocation, silence often serves as the most eloquent response. When a fool speaks, silence is the better reply. It is through silence that we rise above ignorance, displaying restraint and steadfastness.

Let us remember the Messenger of Allah ﷺ's teachings, applying silence as a key to safety, a means to foster love, and a way to shut the door to turmoil. By taming our tongues and responding with thoughtful silence, we embody the noble qualities of patience, understanding, and kindness, cultivating a life of tranquillity and righteousness.

Once, someone insulted Abu Bakr Siddique (R.A), but Abu Bakr remained silent, and the Prophet ﷺ was sitting there, when that person insulted him again, Abu Bakr responded to the insult, then, the Prophet ﷺ got up and left. Abu Bakr said:

"O Messenger of Allah, he insulted me while you were sitting, but when I replied, you stood up!" The Prophet ﷺ said:

«إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَلَكٌ يَرُدُّ عَلَيْهِ، يَقُولُ: كَذَبْتَ، فَلَمَّا تَكَلَّمْتَ قَعَدَ الشَّيْطَانُ، فَكَرِهْتُ أَنْ أَجْلِسَ».

"An angel was responding on your behalf to the insulter, saying: 'You are lying.' But when you replied, the Satan came, so I disliked sitting in a gathering where the Satan is present. "

May we all strive to cultivate this timeless wisdom, using our voices sparingly yet powerfully, in service of truth, justice, and harmony.

I conclude my sermon with the following verse of the Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

O You who have faith! Be mindful of Allah and let every soul look to what 'deeds' it has sent forth for tomorrow. And fear Allah, 'for' certainly Allah is All-Aware of what you do. (Qur'an: 59:18)

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَاسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.

I say this and I seek forgiveness for myself and for you, so seek His forgiveness, indeed He is the most Forgiving, most Merciful.

وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

And our final supplication is: All praise is for Allah, Lord of all the worlds.
