

Make Allah ﷻ first in your life

On October 26, 1994, a book was published which sought to explain the secret of longevity of great corporations. It was called, 'Built to Last' and was co-authored by two professors of Stanford University, Jim Collins and Jerry Porras. I read that book for the first time soon after it was published, when I set up Yawar Baig & Associates in Bangalore in January 1994 and tested in my consulting practice over two decades, the theory that they postulated in the book and found it to be true. I saw it reflected in practice in many of the companies they researched which have been my clients and saw it work wonders in other organizations; family businesses, NGOs, educational institutions, and even in the case of individual development; where I introduced people to it. The theory presented in the book is what I call, "The Theory of Enduring Leadership". It explains how in the midst of the roller coaster fluctuations of the global economy, some organizations not only survive but thrive.

I quote from Wikipedia, "*Collins and Porras listed a total of eighteen companies they identified as 'visionary.'* They defined a visionary company as one that is a premier institution in its industry, is widely admired by knowledgeable businesspeople, made an imprint on the world, had multiple generations of Chief executive officers (CEOs), had multiple product/service life cycles, and was founded before 1950. The list of visionary companies was determined based on the results of a survey of 1,000 CEOs. The authors ensured representation across all industries and various sized organizations by sampling from Fortune 500 industrial companies, Fortune 500 service companies, Inc. 500 private companies and Inc. 100 public companies. The survey yielded a 23% response rate with 3.2 companies listed per response. An important caveat the authors express is the fact that through their research, they can claim a correlation, not a causal link between their findings and the success of companies.

The list of eighteen companies identified as visionary:

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|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. 3M | 7. General Electric | 13. Motorola |
| 2. American Express | 8. Hewlett Packard | 14. Nordstrom |
| 3. Boeing | 9. IBM | 15. Philip Morris (Altria) |
| 4. Citicorp (Citigroup) | 10. Johnson & Johnson | 16. Procter & Gamble |
| 5. Disney | 11. Marriott | 17. Sony |
| 6. Ford | 12. Merck | 18. Wal-Mart |

These companies have taken leadership roles in their industries, offering innovative products and services and consistently outsmarting rivals. What made the research particularly useful and interesting is that Collins and Porras compared and contrasted these visionary companies with a control set of rivals.

For instance, Boeing was compared and contrasted with Douglas Aircraft, Marriott was compared and contrasted with Howard Johnson's, and Merck was compared and contrasted with Pfizer. The findings are based on what the visionary companies do that is different than close competitors who have achieved a high level of success, but not to the extent of the visionary companies. From 1926 through 1990 the comparison companies outperformed the general stock market by 2 times whereas the visionary companies outperformed the market by 15 times."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Built_to_Last:_Successful_Habits_of_Visionary_Companies

I am mentioning this here in my Khutba because I believe that we can see this theory working in the case of the Seerah which is a record of the astounding success of Rasoolullah ﷺ and the First Generation, his Sahaba. Living in today's world, which feels like traveling on a ship caught in a storm, I believe it is essential for us to understand what this theory is and to implement it in our lives. If you are the captain of a ship caught in a storm, you need to be able to do two apparently paradoxical things, simultaneously very well. You need to be single-mindedly focused on your goal and not allow the battering of winds and the pull of cross currents to distract you and take you off-course. Simultaneously, you need to be aware of the forces around you, the very same winds and currents, so that you can counter them to remain on-course. If you imagine being on a sailing ship you will realize that it is the same wind that has the potential to sink you, which has the power to take you out of danger. That is why they say, 'There are no favorable winds. Only good sailors.' Sailors who understand how to use the wind. Sailors who are focused on solutions, not engrossed in complaining about problems.

The Theory of Enduring Leadership postulates that visionary organizations (and individuals) have complete clarity about their Core Ideology which they believe in totally and which they hold sacred, inviolable, unchangeable, non-negotiable under any circumstances. This is the very core of their being. It is who they are.

It defines them and differentiates them in the environment. It enables them to stand out, be identified and makes them follow-able. This is the core of their leadership. Everything else they do, revolves around this core; exists to serve the core; is changeable and will be changed according to circumstances; is dynamic, flexible and malleable. Everything else exists to implement the Core Ideology.

People who work in such visionary organizations, identify themselves by the Core Ideology of the organization. It becomes their own Core Ideology. They breathe it, live it and are willing to die for it. They create an internal language that sifts the 'insiders' from the 'outsiders'. The Core Ideology invokes their emotion, gives meaning to their lives and is their legacy to the world. Every decision that is taken at any level in such organizations is taken based on its fit with the Core Ideology. If it fits, it is done. If not, it is not done, even if there is a penalty to pay for not doing it. The Core Ideology is the touchstone, the criterion the basis for all that happens and is the secret of the astounding success of these organizations over, in some cases, more than a century of being in existence.

Let us see what this **Core Ideology** is. It consists of two intertwined principles which relate to and are dependent of each other. One is called: **Core Values**. The second is called: **Core Purpose**.

Core Values refers to the 2-3 values that are so core and so dear to you that you will not give them up, irrespective of the cost of holding on to them. The key question I ask, when I do my Core Ideology Workshop is, 'What are the values that you will hold even if you were penalized for holding them? Please look for instances in your history where you did this.' That is why we call this part of Core Ideology; Core Values as, '**Who are you?**' That is because your Core Values define you. They are your signature, your face and your identity. You are a reflection of your Core Values. That is why Rasoolullah ﷺ was given this title long before he announced Islam in Makkah; Al Sadiq ul Ameen. And that is what he stated as being the definition of his followers.

Core Purpose is the reason you exist. It is what you are on this earth to do. The key question I ask in the workshop to identify Core Purpose is, 'What will be lost to your constituents, if you no longer exist? What are you prepared to pay to do, even if

nobody pays you for it? What is it that gives meaning to your life?' This helps them to identify the purpose of their existence and how it adds value to their environment, which in the end translates into brand loyalty, repeat customers and enduring business success. To relate this to ourselves and to our practice of Islam, let us see how this theory fits in with the Seerah, as I mentioned earlier. The two elements of Core Ideology that I see in the Seerah and which I believe we need to reflect on and incorporate into our lives are:

Core Value: Make Allahﷻ No. 1 in my life.

Core Purpose: Become a source of benefit for the world.

As you can see, for the Muslim, it is really very simple. Just one Core Value which is the criterion for every decision and one clear Core Purpose, which gives meaning to his life. The beauty is that when we live by this Core Ideology, we fulfill all the requirements of Huqooq-ullah (Rights of Allahﷻ) and Huqooq-ul-Ibaad (Rights of people). This is the essence of the message of Rasoolullahﷺ and it is the reflection of his blessed life.

About the **Core Value: Make Allahﷻ No. 1 in my life;** Allahﷻ said:

إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

Ta-ha 20: 14. "Verily! I am Allah! La ilaha illa Ana (none has the right to be worshipped but I), so worship Me, and establish As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat) for My Remembrance.

To make Allahﷻ No. 1 in our lives is to remember the reason for our creation.

Allahﷻ said:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

Dhariyat 51: 56. And I (Allah) have not created the jinn and humans except they should worship Me (Alone).

To fulfill this purpose means to make everything we say or do, obedient to the Will of Allahﷻ. Allahﷻ orders us to establish Salah as the proof that we have accepted Him

as No. 1 in our lives, because Salah is the symbol of obedience. Salah is the template of our entire life. To begin with purity of heart and body, to have the intention to please Allah ﷻ, to do what He ordained, in the way that He ordained, at the time which He ordained. And to do that irrespective of whatever else may be happening in our lives. That is why he ordered us:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ
اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

Jumu'ah 62: 9. *O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed for the Salat on the day of Friday (Jumu'ah prayer), come to the remembrance of Allah and leave (your) business (and every other thing), that is better for you if you only know!*

Making Allah ﷻ No. 1 means that everyone and everything else is No. 2 or less. It is natural therefore to leave that which is less important for that which is supremely important. This is the test. What do we do when the order of Allah ﷻ and a conflicting demand or desire comes before us? We know what we should do, of course. But the question is, 'What do we actually do?' Ask what we do in our weddings and death ceremonies, for example. Do we follow the Sunnah, or do we follow all kinds of local customs and practices which amount to Bida'at? This is where the rubber meets the road. This is what we will be faced with when we meet Allah ﷻ. Not our statements alone but what we practiced. Any gap between walk and talk is matter of serious concern and something to be urgently corrected before we meet Allah ﷻ.

As I mentioned earlier, Salah is the template on which to model our entire life. We pray the way Rasoolullah ﷺ showed us. The same logic extends to all other Ibadath; fasting, zakat, hajj, umrah or anything else. It is permissible to do it the way Rasoolullah ﷺ showed us and impermissible and Haraam to do it in any other way. The same logic extends to the Nikah, which is also an Ibadah and to death ceremonies which are also Ibadath. Why do we imagine that we have the freedom to change them as we wish? We don't. If we do, then we are creating Bida'at and are liable for punishment.

How strange and unfortunate to consciously begin a new phase in your life with the disobedience of Allah ﷻ and expect that life to be full of Baraka? How odd to imagine that in the disobedience of Allah ﷻ lies relief and goodness for your dear departed? If obedience and disobedience were truly so meaningless then why did Allah ﷻ send His Messenger ﷺ and His Kitaab? It is time we sit down seriously and look at our lives and make changes before it is too late. Let us forget about the pleasure and approval of those who don't know Allah ﷻ and don't care about His approval. They are nothing and their approval means nothing. The only thing that matter is the approval of Allah ﷻ and the way to get that is to follow the Sunnah of Rasoolullah ﷺ. Nothing can be simpler than that for anyone who wishes to make Allah ﷻ No. 1 in his/her life and to life their life seeking Allah ﷻ's pleasure alone. This is what Rasoolullah ﷺ taught us.

That is why let alone leaving Salah, even for those who delay Salah, Allah ﷻ said:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ
الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ

Maoun 107: 4. *So woe to those who pray (hypocrites), 5. Who delay their Salat (prayer) from their stated fixed times*

It is all about attitude which depends on our REAL belief. Not what we portray or state. But what we truly believe. It is our real beliefs which create our actions and are reflected in them. Making Allah ﷻ No. 1 means to demonstrate that in our choices and actions. Not in some of them but in every single one of them. That is the whole meaning of a Core Value. It is what you use for every decision in your life. What is the value of making Allah ﷻ No. 1 in our lives? I am sure I don't need to spell that out to you. But let me make a few points. It means that we are intelligent people who understand where the source of power is and don't play games with it.

It means that we are true to our faith and are not hypocrites who have been promised Jahannam because they were liars. Allah ﷻ said:

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرَكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا

Nisa 4: 145. Verily, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths (grade) of the Fire; no helper will you find for them.

It means that we know that selective obedience is disobedience. It means that we know that disobeying Allah ﷻ and obeying our desires (Nafs/Hawa) is Shirk.

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ أَفَأَنْتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلاً

Furqan 25: 43. Have you (O Muhammad ﷺ) seen him who has taken as his ilah (god) his own desire? Would you then be a Wakil (a disposer of his affairs or a watcher) over him?

It means we know that when we meet Allah ﷻ, the only thing which will matter is whether we pleased Him or not. Even before that, it means that we know and believe that one day we will meet Allah ﷻ. It means that we know that if we want success in this world and the Aakhira, then keeping Allah ﷻ No. 1 in our lives is the only way to do it. That is why Abdullah bin Masood ؓ said: Hifz (memorizing/protecting) the Qur'an is not by doing Hifz of the words. But rather, it is done by establishing its boundaries.

<http://mohammadawan.com/2018/06/20/what-hifz-really-means/>

Abu Hurairah ؓ reported: Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "When Allah ﷻ loves a slave, calls out Jibril ؑ and says: 'I love so-and-so; so love him'. Then Jibril ؑ loves him. After that he (Jibril) announces to the inhabitants of heavens that Allah ﷻ loves so- and-so; so love him; and the inhabitants of the heavens (the angels) also love him and then people on earth also love him". [Al- Bukhari and Muslim].

The one who makes Allah ﷻ No. 1 in his life has understood the secret of success. May Allah ﷻ make us among them.

We come to the second element of Core Ideology; Core Purpose. As I mentioned earlier Core Values are the inner reality that make you who you are and a reflection of it. **Core Purpose** is the driving force which defines why you exist. The question I ask my clients is, 'What are you here to do? Why do you exist? What will be lost to your constituents if you no longer exist?' And of course, the final test of the pudding, 'How do you know?'

Core Purpose is what drives the organization, and which remains constant despite changes in markets, products, services and CEOs. Everyone and everything is geared to achieve the Core Purpose. Core Values and Core Purpose, together, comprise Core Ideology which is the root cause for the longevity and continued success of the organization. We were looking at how this connects with the Seerah and message of Islam. I spoke about the Core Value of the Muslim (Make Allah ﷻ No. 1) which is reflected in the life and message of Rasoolullah ﷺ and the benefits of making this our own. Today let us see how Core Purpose fits into this model.

Allah ﷻ defined our Core Purpose and said:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

A'al Imraan 3: 110. You [Muslims] are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin Al-Ma'ruf (all that Islam has ordained) and forbid Al-Munkar (all that Islam has forbidden), and you believe in Allah.

It is important to note that Allah ﷻ defined us in terms of what we do and called that the reason for our status of being the 'best of people'. And that is to benefit the people. Allah ﷻ mentioned specifically that we Muslims have been chosen for the benefit of all people; not of our own community alone but everyone who inhabits the earth and that our Core Purpose is to benefit others. Rasoolullah ﷺ reinforced this command and said: خير الناس من ينفع الناس

The best among You is the one who Benefits People...!!!

Collins and Porras state that Core Ideology comprising of Core Values and Core Purpose in a dynamic relationship, each supporting the other, remains constant, unchangeable, inviolable and non-negotiable. This drives all decision making, hiring, promotion, firing, products, services, markets and customers. Everything in the life and operation of the organization is designed to serve its Core Ideology and this is what makes the organization (and individual) highly productive and influential. Core Ideology remains constant. Everything else revolves around it.

We can see this principle in the Seerah and the lives of the Sahaba, very clearly. Pleasing Allah ﷻ was central to their lives. Everything else was secondary. Three of the finest examples of this from the Seerah are the prohibition of interest-based banking, the prohibition of alcohol and the priority given to charity.

Allah ﷻ declared:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنتُمْ
مُؤْمِنِينَ

فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِن تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُؤُوسُ
أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ

Baqara 2: 278. *O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah and give up what remains (due to you) from Riba (usury) (from now onward), if you are (really) believers.*
279. *And if you do not do it, then take a notice of war from Allah and His Messenger but if you repent, you shall have your capital sums. Deal not unjustly (by asking more than your capital sums), and you shall not be dealt with unjustly (by receiving less than your capital sums).*

When the prohibition of interest-based banking was decreed by Allah ﷻ, Rasoolullah ﷺ announced it and said that in obedience to it, he was waiving all the interest owed by all the debtors of his uncle Al-Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib ﷺ who owned what was perhaps

the largest bank in Makkah. As I have mentioned earlier in my Sahaba, the Gold Standard, Khutbas, businessmen like Al-Abbas bin Abdul Muttalibؓ, Abdur Rahman ibn Awfؓ, Othman ibn Affanؓ and others were equal to and more than the major billionaires we talk of today with businesses that spanned several countries. What Rasoolullahﷺ wrote off would have amounted to, Allahﷻ knows best, millions of dollars' worth of revenue. But Al-Abbasؓ didn't protest, then or ever. Pleasing Allahﷻ took precedence with him over whatever monetary 'loss' it may have entailed. Accepting a declaration of war from Allahﷻ and His Messengerﷺ was not part of his retirement plan. I ask you, is it a part of yours?

The second incident is the prohibition of alcohol. Abu Hurairahؓ narrated that he was in his house entertaining some friends including Abdur Rahman ibn Awfؓ and others. He was pouring out wine for them into goblets, when the announcer of Rasoolullahﷺ called out:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ
مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

Ma'aida 5: 90. *O you who believe! Intoxicants (alcohol, narcotics, all addictive substances), gambling, Al-Ansab idolatrous practices and Al-Azlam (fortune telling, divining of the future, Feng Shui, Vaastu) are an abomination of Shaytaan's handiwork. So, avoid (don't go near) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful.*

He said that as soon as he heard the call, he moved his hand and poured the wine into the drain. His guests emptied their goblets. Anyone who had taken a sip, spat it out. Then they broke the vessels that contained the wine. This is not something that only this group of people did. Historians record that the drains of Madina flowed with wine on that day as wine making was a big commercial enterprise in Madina and Makkah and Arabia itself. It came to an end on the day this Ayah was revealed. It is interesting to note that to end something that represented not only so much monetary value, but which was a part of the social fabric of society and which is an addiction that is among the most difficult to break (ask Alcoholics Anonymous), all it took was

one announcement. No police, no enforcement, no fines, no jail sentences, no arrests, nothing. People obeyed because for them, pleasing Allahﷻ was the No. 1 priority. Contrast this with the prohibition of alcohol that was 'experimented' with in the US at the time of J. Edgar Hoover's presidency. Prohibition was enshrined in the US Constitution (1920) and the term, 'noble experiment' was coined. I quote from an article written about the unintended consequences of prohibition: *One of the most profound effects of Prohibition was on government tax revenues. Before Prohibition, many states relied heavily on excise taxes in liquor sales to fund their budgets. In New York, almost 75% of the state's revenue was derived from liquor taxes. With Prohibition in effect, that revenue was immediately lost. At the national level, Prohibition cost the federal government a total of \$11 billion in lost tax revenue, while costing over \$300 million to enforce.* A decade later, the US gave up.

<http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/prohibition/unintended-consequences/>

\$100 in 1920 is equivalent in purchasing power to \$1,200.04 in 2016. USD 300 million is equal to USD 3.6 billion in today's terms. They spent all that and were still unsuccessful. Rasoolullahﷺ spent nothing but was successful. The reason was that people were already oriented to making Allahﷻ No. 1 in their lives.

When Rasoolullahﷺ heard that Sahaba had smashed wine storage containers, he called them and asked why they had done that. He told them that they could have used the containers to store something else after washing them, so why had they decided to smash them? They replied, 'Ya Rasoolullahﷺ, we didn't even want to be reminded of the time when we didn't obey Allahﷻ.' Think about this statement. When the Sahaba used to drink alcohol, there was no prohibition in force. So where was the question of disobedience? Yet they were so careful with the boundaries of Allahﷻ that they didn't even want to recall those days when they did something which was later prohibited.

The desire to please Allahﷻ extended everywhere to every individual. Sayyidina Ali bin Abi Talibؓ and his blessed wife Fatima bint Muhammad (RA) and their children were sitting down to eat. All they had was some barley bread and meat, when a man called out, 'Please give me some food for the sake of Allahﷻ.'

Immediately they sent out one portion of their meal to him. As they sat down preparing to eat, a young boy called out, 'Please give me some food for the sake of Allah ﷻ. I am Yateem (orphan).' They sent him another portion of their food. Finally, as they sat down once more, a man called out, 'Please give me some food for the sake of Allah ﷻ. I am a prisoner ﷻ.' They sent out whatever was left of their uneaten meal and went to bed hungry. Next morning when Ali bin Abi Talib ﷺ met Rasoolullah ﷺ, he told him, 'Allah ﷻ has revealed this Ayah to me about what you did last night:

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا
 إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا

Insaan 76: 8. *And they give food, despite their love for it (and need for it), to the Miskeen (poor), the orphan, and the captive. 9. (Saying): "We feed you seeking Allah's Countenance only. We wish for no reward, nor thanks from you.*

If this had been the behavior of a few select people, it would have been remarkable enough. But with the Sahaba, this was how everyone behaved. This was the culture. They competed with each other to see who could do more to please Allah ﷻ. In the process, everyone benefited, and a compassionate and caring society was created, the like of which the world has not seen since. The pilot project was successful, and the concept was proved. It is for us to emulate and create such a society for ourselves, if we wish to escape the selfish, cruel, uncaring and miserable society that we have created for ourselves.

To bring it all together, the two elements of Core Ideology, Core Values and Core Purpose, act together in the case of the Muslim, complementing each other and creating a virtuous cycle where the person focuses on spreading goodness all around him in order to please Allah ﷻ. This automatically ensures that all the requirements of Huqooq-ullah and Huqooq-ul-ibaad are fulfilled and a positive social environment is created. Who can do anything other than love and respect people who always try to help them and be good to them? That is what the Muslim is supposed to be. And to

be that not for the sake of popularity or for any kind of material gain. But for the pleasure of Allah ﷻ alone.

The fact remains however, that even though your intention is not to become popular, you will become hugely popular and influential if you are focused on the benefit of people. I want to close by sharing with you some Ahadith with respect to fulfilling our Core Purpose. Rasoolullah ﷺ is reported to have said:

'Forgive him who wrongs you; join him who cuts you off; do good to him who does evil to you and speak the truth although it be against yourself.'

Anyone who walks with a wrong doer to strengthen him knowing all the while that he is a wrong doer, has departed from Islam.

Rasoolullah ﷺ said to me (Anas), Son, if you are able, keep your heart from morning till night and from night till morning free from malice towards anyone; then he said, Oh! My son, this is one of my laws, and he who loves my laws loves me.

Assist your brother or sister Muslim, whether he be an oppressor or an oppressed. 'But how shall we do it when someone is an oppressor?' Muhammad ﷺ said, 'Assisting an oppressor is by forbidding and withholding that person from oppression.'

The exercise of religious duties will not atone for the fault of an abusive tongue. A person cannot be a Muslim till his heart and tongue are so.

I came to Medinah, and saw a man whose counsels men obeyed, and he never said anything but they obeyed him. I said, 'Who is this man?' They said, 'This is the Rasul of Allah ﷻ.' Then I went to him and said, 'Give me advice.' Prophet Muhammad said, 'Abuse nobody.' And I never did abuse anybody after that, neither freeman nor slave, nor camel nor goat. And he added, 'And if a man abuses you, and reveals a vice which he knew in you then do not disclose one which you know in him.'

One who humbles himself for the sake of Allah ﷻ, Allah ﷻ will exalt; such a person is small in their own mind, and great in the eyes of the people. And one who is proud and haughty, Allah ﷻ will render that one contemptible, and such a person is small in the eyes of the people and great in his own mind, so that he or she becomes more contemptible to them than a dog or a swine.

Anyone of you who sees wrong, let him undo it with his hand; and if he cannot, then let him speak against it with his tongue, and if he cannot do this either, then (let him abhor it) with his heart, and this is the least of faith.

A man asked, 'Ya Rasoolullah ﷺ! What is faith?' Rasoolullah ﷺ said, 'When your good work gives you pleasure, and your evil work grieves you, and you are a person of faith.' The man said, 'And what is sin?' he said, 'When anything disturbs you within yourself, forsake it.'

What actions are most excellent? To gladden the heart of a human being, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the wrongs of the injured.

My brothers and sisters, this is a religion of action because only action counts and can be counted. Today we are aggrieved because people appear to be against Islam and Muslims. I submit to you that they are not against us but have been set up by Allah ﷻ to remind us of what we are supposed to be and do. Since we seem to have forgotten this and don't seem to care about it, Allah ﷻ has set the rest of the world to remind us, sometimes in ways that are painful. Remember that nobody destroys anything that is beneficial, and everyone seeks to remove that which is harmful. Ask yourself, 'If all signs of Islam and Muslims disappear from the world today, what will be lost to the rest of the world?' That is the reason the world seems to be against us.

If we remember our Core Ideology and start living by our Core Value and fulfilling our Core Purpose, the world will turn to us with love and accept our leadership once more as it did when we lived by our covenant. Our covenant is with Allah ﷻ and to it we will be held accountable. For us it is not a matter of being or becoming popular in the world but to be able to answer Allah ﷻ when He asks us whether we fulfilled the purpose for which He sent us into the world.

Let us reflect on where we are going in life and change before it is too late. Make Allah ﷻ No. 1 in our lives and live our lives focused on benefiting others. The rest will follow.