

Dear brothers in Islam:

Today is the first Friday of Ramadan .. the month of fasting .. the month of Qur'an.

The month of worship in which Muslims all over the world try to bring about the best of their faith .. try to exercise the most of their piety .. try to get closest to their creator and in this regard I would like to speak to you today about a very dear subject to all of us Muslims .. a very timely subject that we are all ought to be concerned about.

The subject of carrying out our Islamic duty towards change .. The true change .. the Islamic change..The change that would lead to achieving a strong and united Islamic Ummah.

Allah (swt) told us in His Holy book, the Qur'an: (Ar'Rad, 13:11)

"Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change their own status and their own soul"

If we truly and sincerely try to get closer to our Creator .. try to be as positive as we can be with our religion .. we cannot ignore two main aspects of this religion .. two main forms of worships of this religion .. the ritualistic form as well as (s>b...>a@œ œ>a) the Islamic work and the good deed form.

The ritualistic form of worship includes prayer, zakat, fasting, as well as hajj.

Ritualistic worships are prescribed to us to keep our relationship to each other as well as to our Creator in the most perfect and the most continuous form.

Our prayers are not widely spaced apart .. we do five prayers a day .. there is no more than two to three hours time passed between one prayer and the next .. even at night as we don't spend much of wake time.

With that kind of continuous remembrance of our being as worshipers to Allah .. the Creator (swt), it is hard to go astray .. with this continuous attraction and this continuous return to the right path, it is hard to go astray.

With each prayer every few hours .. we make this repentance .. we make this renewal of commitment to Allah (swt), and hence it becomes hard to go astray.

With our foreheads touching the ground over thirty four times a day it is hard to keep that self pride and that arrogance ..

with our recitation and with our hearts and

soles turned towards Allah (swt) in commitment and in piety, there will be no place for fear or anxiety in one's heart or sole.

That is why all the importance that was revealed about maintaining and keeping our daily prayers, all five of them, on time, and with no tardiness, and with all piety.

Zakat, Fasting, and Hajj are also forms of remembrances and piety .. other forms of maintenance to our relationships to other and our relationship to our Creator.

When we give out of our time, our effort, and our wealth .. to maintain our relationship with Allah (swt) and to renew our commitment to abiding by his Deen and his commands and subscribe to his prescribed way of life .. it is hard to go astray.

The continuity here is on annual basis rather than on daily basis .. we do these worships once every year except for Hajj where it is once in a life time.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ
حَتَّىٰ يَغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ
﴿١٨٨﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ
صَالِحًا فَلَهُ جِزَاءٌ الْحَسَنَىٰ

﴿١٣٢﴾ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِمَّن دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ
وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

﴿٧١﴾ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ
أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ
الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

(سب...ا@œ œا) Righteous Islamic work and righteous deeds is another form of worship that Allah (swt) has commanded for us.

It is a must .. and is a requirement that has to be done on daily basis just like prayer .. and it is amazing to see the analogy and the similarity between these two commitments.

There are many forms of righteous Islamic work as we all know .. work to earn our living in the way of Allah (swt) .. work in giving charity to relieve others from hardships .. and work to correct and modify the status of the Muslims in the way of Allah (swt)

Today, I would like to focus the discussion on our duty regarding the Islamic work leading to revival of the Islamic Ummah .. the Islamic work leading to the perfection of our belief .. the Islamic work leading to the correction of our path .. the Islamic work

involving•Azœ bi@z àa z™ÿ a@ÿ@ÇÂÿaÂ enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong.

Allah (swt) reveals to us in the Qur'an, Al Kahf 18:88- "But whoever believes and works righteousness, he shall a goodly reward."

and in Fussilat 41:33- "Who is better in speech than one who calls people to Allah, works righteousness, and say I am of those who are Muslims."

also, in At Tawba 9:71- "The believers, men and women, are protectors one of another - they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong - they observe regular prayer, give zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His Mercy - for Allah is Exalted in Power and Wise."

This kind of Islamic work must be done by every one of us just as important as our prayers .. Every one of us is committed to that kind of work because it is a vital and an essential element which is missing in our existence nowadays .. and because it is missing, it is then an Islamic duty for all of us to work towards it.

Yes, brothers in Islam سب...ا@œ œا and z™ÿ a@ÿ@ÇÂÿaÂ •Azœ bi@z àa are very vital to our existence .. and in regard to the status we are in nowadays, it becomes even more vital.

To a healthy body, regular exercise is a maintenance .. but to a weak body, an intensified course of exercise is far more essential.

We look at our status today and we see how important it is to be as sincere and as ethical and as Islamic as we can be with our Islamic work.

We have to do such work with clear continuous and commitment that we will be judged on our actions our intentions by our Maker and our Creator.

We can't deceive anybody and pretend, and claim, and use slogans of Islamic terminology and piety and convince ourselves that we are doing all we can do.

We can't deceive anybody but ourselves if we follow such rout.

Think about how short life is .. and after this short - short life we will be denied any opportunity to make up for the many missed opportunities that came to us during our lives.

When we are dead in the grave .. when our bodies vanish .. when our lives on this earth ends .. that is the end of our opportunities .. and we don't know when that will happen to each one of us .. it may happen anytime .. it may happen now .. it may happen years later .. but we cannot count on having the opportunity later we've got to take that opportunity now.

The Islamic work is a commitment that we all have to worry about .. and just like the prayer it is a daily action that we all have to do .. and just like the prayer the group form of it is the worthy form that we ought to make the most out of.

There are some things that we can do on our own .. just like some prayers that we can do on our own .. however, there are also some prayers that have to be done in a group, so is the Islamic work .. there are certain things that must be done in groups.

We can do charity on our own by ourselves .. we can do some Da'wa action on our own by ourselves .. but there is work towards the ultimate goal to establishing the Islamic community on the local scale and Islamic Ummah on the global scale .. this work requires collective group efforts.

The case of performing the prayer in the neighborhood masjid is similar to working on the Islamic community level .. and fasting as well as performing Hajj with Muslims of the whole world at the same time is similar to working on the global level.

Not only that we must do certain Islamic duties in groups .. but also there are formats for doing that .. and again we can see the analogy to the group prayer.

We all get ready for that group prayer individually .. each one on his own .. as individuals .. we prepare ourselves to be part of that group .. we prepare ourselves to enter into that group .. and that preparation is a must .. and is essential.

Similar preparation is also needed for each one of us to bring him- or her- self as individual to be qualified to join a group for Islamic work.

Then, there comes the part that each one of us has to perform as his role as part of that group .. now it is time to group work .. now it is time to be part of the congregation.

The structure .. the format .. is all very important .. and just like the prayer, we have to have a leader .. yes brothers there is a format and there is a structure to group worships .. so is the case for the format and the group structure for group Islamic work.

A leader leads the prayer and no body leads but him .. he leads and we follow .. but the leadership here is within the frame work of Islam .. the leadership is taken with the proper understanding of Islam.

The leader is selected on Islamic basis .. he is not selected because he is the richest or because he is the strongest .. but because he is the best qualified based on the Islamic principles .. he is the most suited for the function that he is going to be leading in.

In the prayer he is chosen because of his best knowledge and recitation of Qur'an .. a military leader is chosen because of his best knowledge of military action and military tactics.

In all cases the Islamic ethics, Islamic values, and Islamic attitudes, must be the prime criterion for selecting the leadership of the group.

١٣٨٤ - (٤) وعنه ، قال : قال رسولُ الله ﷺ : « إذا كانَ يومُ الجمعةِ ، وقَعَتِ الملائكةُ على بابِ المسجدِ ، يكتُوبونَ الأوَّلَ فالأوَّلَ ، ومثَلُ السَّهْجِ كمثلِ الذي يُهْدِي بَدَنَةً ، ثمَّ كالذي يُهْدِي بقرَةً ، ثمَّ كبشاً ، ثمَّ دجاجةً ، ثمَّ بيضةً ، فإذا خرجَ الإمامُ طَوَّأَ مُصَفِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَمِعُونَ الذِّكْرَ » . متفق عليه .

١٣٩١ - (١١) وعنه سَمُرَةُ بْنُ جُنْدُبٍ ، قال قال رسولُ الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : « احضروا الذِّكْرَ وادُّنُّوا مِنَ الْإِمَامِ ؛ فَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَا يَزَالُ يَتَّبَعُهُ حَتَّى يُوَخَّرَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَإِنْ دَخَلَهَا » . رواه أبو داود (٤) .

Comes after that .. the role of each one of the followers .. in the prayer, we come early to the Masjid, and we seek the furthest line in the front .. that how the Prophet (pbuh) have told us in his Hadeeth.

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Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said, " On Fridays, the Angles stand at the Masjid's door, recording the order of people as they arrive. The early ones get the higher credit, and they stop recording when the khutba starts and they listen to it.

We look at ourselevs nowadays as we come late to the Juma'a, and we walk in, and each one of us sit in a favorite spot in the Masjid .. and we don't really worry about filling the vacancies in the front.

The Prophet's Hadeeth is clearly urging us to come early to compete for a front line position during Khutbah as well as during prayer .. without pushing others or stepping them in their sitting.

Samurah bin Jundub, narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said, "Attend the Khutbah and and sit close to the Imam. As a man distance himself from the Imam, he is delayed in entering Paradise if he was to enter.

We sit down and listin to the Khutbah attentively .. and then we stand in lines for the prayer .. we form even lines, with no holes and no gaps .. with no place for Satan to come between us.

Ibin Omar, narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said, "Straighten your lines and align your shoulders, and close the gaps, and respond to the hands of your brothers, and do not leave openings for Satan. Whomesoever joins a line, Allah connects to him, and whomesoever braks a line, Allah diconnects from him."

It is the same thing with Islamic work, we all have to compete to take these front positions .. we don't sit in the back and wait for somebody to push us and tell us please come forward we need we up here .. we need somebody to fill this position.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقْتَلُونَ
فِي سَبِيلِهِ، صَفًّا كَانَتْهُمْ بُنْيَنٌ مَرْمُوسٌ

That is a very un-Islamic attitude .. the Islamic attitude is for each of us to volunteer and to step forward and to recognize where the vacancy is .. and to say I have to fill it .. it's a commitment .. it's a must.

As we continue So, when we sit to listen to the Khutbah .. we sit as close as possible to this Khateeb .. to this leadership of the Juma'a prayer .. the leadership that was chosen to organize and coordinate this function .. we stay as close as possible to him during the instruction part of the plan .. also, we are there during the execution of the plan in the front line.

See, there are two phases here that we need to recognize .. there is that reminder and remembrance part .. the Khutba is that reminder part .. the Hadeeth named it zTMy .. supposedly we all know what we ought to be doing .. supposedly we all know what our objectives and our goals are .. but there is a phase of reminder .. a phase of education .. a phase of spiritual charging .. a phase of preparation.

This phase of preparation .. is very important .. we cannot ignore it and say that it is not an essential corner of our function and therefore I can just walk in at the action time .. or I know what is going on and therefore I can just walk in at prayer time.

Just like the Hadeeth said, the angles stop recording attendance once the Khateeb starts.

NO, we have got to be there .. and we have got to take the front line .. and we got to compete to be among those who volunteer and present themselves as a front line.

If it is done in the proper spirit, the spirit of Islam .. we are not stepping on each other's toes .. and we are not stepping or bypassing each other .. we are not competing at the level of pushing each other.

NO, we are competing to assist and aid each other .. to fill the voids .. to close the gaps .. to stand in one frontage .. one line .. each one of us to the other is nothing but the assistance and the support.

In Surat As Saff, 61:4, Allah (swt) tells us, "Truley, Allah Loves those who fight in His cause, in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure.

This is how it is .. this is how important it is .. this is how essential it is to the Islamic work as well.

The group prayer is our practice that we do as often as at least once a week .. if not more .. on how to coordinate an Islamic work together .. and how to become the leadership .. or how to become a follower .. or how to become a member of that action or that function .. how not to stay behind and have excuses about this and that.

The time has come and so we will be there .. the time has come for that function .. or that lesson or that reminder .. and we are there to participate .. this is how critical it is to the Islamic work just as critical it is to the group prayer.

So we go through this practice .. and we go through this exercise .. we go through the mechanics of it and how much do we learn?

Brothers and sisters: let us not forget that a key factor in the Islamic work is our intentions and our objectives of it .. the reward is dependent on our intentions .. the reward is dependent on our conscious and our sincerity.

If we go through our lectures, coursework, exercises and practices and we learn nothing .. we don't deserve the degree .. we don't deserve the reward .. we don't deserve the mercy of Allah (swt) .. and that is what Allah (swt) Has told us .. He is the judge of these intentions .. He is the judge the sincerity .. He is the judge of our souls and hearts .. He is the judge of all that .. and we have to be conscious about that.

It is not what we pretend that we are .. it is not what that we try to show of ourselves .. it is what we are .. and what our hearts are about .. and how sincere are we .. that what counts.

So, Brothers and Sisters: Think about the analogy that we have just explored .. think about how comprehensive it is .. think how beautiful and simple it is to be part of the group worship or the group Islamic work.

Think all that and then let us ask ourselves .. let each one of us ask himself .. are we sincere in our commitment to this religion .. are we sincere in our Islamic work .. are we sincere about our worships .. are we sincere about our concern to this ummah.

Each one of us in his own heart knows his own answer .. each one of us in his own heart should be able to find that answer.

Let us not deceive ourselves or others .. or pretend .. or close our eyes .. or bury our head in the sand .. because no matter what we do, Allah (swt) Knows .. and we will be judged about how sincere we are.

This is the month of Ramadan, and in this month it's our opportunity .. it is a golden opportunity that Allah (swt) provides for us once every year .. to clean our souls and purify our hearts .. and to come closer to each other .. to put differences behind .. to perfect our religion .. to perfect our own deen .. in all forms .. ritualistic .. spiritual .. as well as in the Islamic work form.

Whatever it is this .. this is our opportunity to work on it .. our personal, family, community relationships and attitudes.

This is our opportunity to practice our prayers .. do them on time..perfect them in terms of piety and concentration .. get more out of them .. to learn from them .. to take this prayer as the training that benefits us beyond the ritualistic and the spiritual side to the action side .. and become active members of the community .. and become a positive and productive members of the Islamic Ummah.

Brothers and Sisters: there is plenty of Islamic work waiting for each one of us .. and it is our responsibility to get involved.

There is a lot of work towards establishing a good and strong Islamic Ummah .. starting with the individual .. each one of us needs to prepare himself as a good Muslim .. as a good member of the cemented structure (Albunian Almarsoos).

Then there is the work on the other members of the structure .. the other Muslims .. by Da'wa .. education of the young .. reminder .. and zTMÿ ›a@ÿ‹@ÇÂÿ›aÅ •Åzœ ›bi@z àa .

And there is the work that we need to do on the cement that ties all these elements together .. including simple things as social relations and community activities.

Also, there is the work on securing the know how and the material to fight the battle with .. all forms of strength .. wealth strength .. knowledge strength .. belief strength .. material strength .. unity strength.

For each one of us there is an opportunity in this month .. for every one of us there is a role to be played.

So I close today by making dua'a to Allah (swt) to help us help ourselves .. to bring about the best of our Islamic attitudes .. to enhance our faith and strengthen our believe.