

Islamophobia Awareness Month Khutbah 2024

With the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Especially Merciful

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. We praise Him, seek His help, and ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evils of our own souls and from our sinful deeds. Whoever Allah guides, no one can misguide, and whoever Allah allows to go astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, without any partners, and I bear witness that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His servant and Messenger.

Dear brothers and sisters:

The simple fact that we are gathered here today as a community in relative ease and comfort, listening to the Words of Allah and His Messenger, is in no small thanks due to the efforts of the generations before us in this country in coming together to create these spaces and institutions.

Many of us will remember those early times, our parents and elders, with the little that they had, donating as best as possible, with big dreams but having to put up with small and difficult conditions for so many years.

Could they have ever imagined that the community would get to where it is now? So how was it possible that they remained motivated when they had so little, and there was nothing to show for it for decades?

Because they knew the rewards on offer for even the smallest of good deeds, and because they knew that being patient with the long game is the way of our Prophets and righteous before us. As long as they did right, then the returns would be huge, in both this life and the next.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

مَا تَصَدَّقَ أَحَدٌ بِصَدَقَةٍ مِنْ طَيِّبٍ وَلَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا الطَّيِّبَ إِلَّا أَخَذَهَا الرَّحْمَنُ بِيَمِينِهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ تَمْرَةً فَتَرَبُّو فِي كَفِّ الرَّحْمَنِ حَتَّى تَكُونَ
أَعْظَمَ مِنَ الْجَبَلِ كَمَا يُرَبِّي أَحَدُكُمْ فَلُوهُ أَوْ فَصِيلَهُ

“None gives charity from what is good, for Allah only accepts what is good, except that the Merciful takes it with His right hand. Even if it is a date, it is nurtured in the hand of the Merciful until it becomes greater than a mountain, just as one of you nurtures his young horse or camel.” (Muslim)

Unfortunately it's human nature to doubt our ability or what we think we can actually achieve. We tend to belittle even our own good deeds!

But why is that when Allah says:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ
وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

“So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it.”

(Surah al-Zalzalah, 8-9)

What superpower do you think you possess to know where Allah has placed the barakah and reward of your actions?!

The Prophet (peace be upon him) even said:

لَا تَحْقِرَنَّ مِنَ الْمَعْرُوفِ شَيْئًا، وَلَوْ أَنْ تَلْقَى أَخَاكَ بِوَجْهِ طَلِيقٍ

“Do not belittle any single good deed, even if it is just you smiling at your brother.”

(Muslim)

It is absolutely the devil’s work to be put off from doing good, for whatever reason. Don’t let the human shayateen put you off either, for this is nothing but the handiwork of the Munafiqeen, as Allah tells us in the Qur’an:

الَّذِينَ يَلْمُزُونَ الْمُطَّوِّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ سَخِرَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

“It is they who criticise the believers whether they donate freely or those who can only give the little they can afford. They mock such people, but Allah will throw their mockery back at them, and they will suffer a painful punishment.” (al-Tawbah, 79)

This verse was revealed when some of the Sahabah weren’t able to donate for good causes as much as others could, and were mocked by the Munafiqeen - the Hypocrites.

How many of us can think back to when we were younger where we might see our parents - who were born in foreign countries with foreign cultures but holding onto a clear set of values and guidance from our Islam - do small things according to their ability, that we might have considered pointless or even embarrassing?

Did you ever remember being mocked for giving food to your neighbour? Did you ever remember anything except a smile and appreciation for even the smallest of gifts?

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

يَا نِسَاءَ الْمُسْلِمَاتِ، لَا تَحْقِرَنَّ جَارَةً لِجَارَتِهَا، وَلَوْ فِرْسِينَ شَاةٍ

“O Muslim women! None of you should belittle the gift from a neighbour to her neighbour, even the trotters of a sheep.” (Bukhari)

The few samosas and pakoras that our parents gave, are certainly at least on a par with just the trotter of a sheep, so why would we belittle something like that? The amount of khayr that was built up slowly but surely with our neighbours over the last 30/40/50 years through these small but genuine loving acts of kindness and generosity, is without doubt one of the

reasons why we have so many allies in the wider community to be on our side when the ugly rise of Islamophobia causes chaos and hate in our lives.

We must not take our position for granted, and we must not take our allies for granted.

Brothers and sisters:

We live in a time where everything we do is scrutinised to an incredible level. Whoever you are, whatever the reason, wherever you may be, somebody is watching.

This isn't always a bad thing. It helps us stay on the straight and narrow. It helps us maintain higher standards. It helps us be more aware of ourselves and what we do.

But it can only ever help. It must never be the *reason* or justification for what we do. That is because we are Muslims and we should only do what we do for the sake of Allah.

And when that happens, and you act for Allah alone, you will ignore the naysayers and the doubts and the whisperings of Shaytan who will make you think it's just not worth it.

It's *always* worth it. Even if the people don't see it. **Because Allah sees it.**

Allah tells us:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِنْ تَكَ حَسَنَةً يضاعفها وَيؤتِ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

“Indeed, Allah never wrongs anyone even by an atom’s weight. He multiplies any good deed and gives a tremendous reward of His own.”

(Surah al-Nisa, 40)

Sometimes you will be fortunate enough to see the results of your actions but that should *never* be the motivating force for doing good. What should motivate you is knowing that even if nobody gets to see or realise what little action and work you have done, you did the right thing and the blessed thing, because this is Allah's work.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

إِنْ قَامَتْ عَلَى أَحَدِكُمُ الْقِيَامَةُ وَفِي يَدِهِ فُسْلَةٌ فَلْيَغْرِسْهَا

“Even if the Resurrection were established upon one of you while he has in his hand a sapling, let him plant it.”

(Ahmad, 12902, Sahih)

Can you imagine that? Knowing that the world and life as anyone will ever know it, is about to end and yet we should still carry on with our small good actions?

It is from this premise that we get this year's Islamophobia Awareness Month theme: Seeds of Change. We can see from these countless examples in the Quran and the sunnah of our

Prophet (peace be upon him) that all deeds, no matter how small, count. The little actions we take and steps that we make, contribute to a bigger change.

Just as the Sahabah didn't know what difference their donations for good would make, and Muslims in the UK didn't know how their community would grow, we don't know the impact the Seeds of Change we plant this November will have.

Islamophobia has taken on new and more vicious forms, from discriminatory policies to hate crimes that specifically target Muslims. This is not just a matter of individual prejudice; it is embedded in media portrayals, political rhetoric, and even in the policies that shape our daily lives.

We must remind ourselves that in such an environment, planting the 'Seeds of Change' is not just an option but an obligation for every Muslim. As we face these challenges, we must hold firm in our faith and take action against false narratives and misconceptions, showing the true beauty of Islam in our words, actions, and examples.

As we remember the shocking scenes of racism and Islamophobia that have been on the rise, particularly after events like the Southport murders and the discrimination Muslims faced in various parts of society, we must also remember the allies who stood by us.

Acts of kindness from our non-Muslim neighbours, standing up against hate, are all part of a broader response. We must continue to build bridges and work together to combat Islamophobia, racism, and xenophobia.

Brothers and sisters, let us ask ourselves: What will be our Seed of Change this Islamophobia Awareness Month? How will we combat the forces that seek to demonise our faith? Our actions, no matter how small, will contribute to change.

We ask Allah to give us the courage to keep on doing good - in whatever shape or form that may present itself.

We ask Allah to give us the tawfeeq to do good and for Him to accept it from us.

We ask Allah to allow the good that we do be the Seeds of Change and khayr, to allow His Deen to be seen in its true light, for it to become known and loved, for it to inspire and educate, and most important of all for us to act on it and live it until our final day. Ameen.