

Provision of the Muslim Preacher

Written by His Eminence Shaykh, the erudite scholar

Muhammad ibn Sālih al-'Uthaymīn

May Allah forgive him, his parents, and all Muslims

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Praise be to Allah, we praise Him, seek His help and forgiveness, and repent to Him. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our selves and from our bad deeds. Whoever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whoever He leads astray none can guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, Who has no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger. Allah Almighty sent him with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religions. He delivered the message, accomplished his mission, advised his Ummah and made every effort to fulfill the will of Allah. He left his nation guided to the right path, which is as bright as daylight is; thus, whoever deviates from this path is doomed to perdition. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, his family, his Companions, and those who follow them with righteousness until the Day of Judgment. I ask Allah to make us from those who follow him inwardly and outwardly, to cause our death while on his religion, to gather us among his followers on the Day of Resurrection, to make us receive his intercession, and to let us be in his company in Paradise among those whom Allah blessed from the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous ones. To proceed, brothers, it is my pleasure to meet my fellow Muslims here ¹ and anywhere else where good outcomes are prospective, allowing the spread of this religion, because Allah Almighty took a covenant from all those whom He conferred knowledge upon to clarify it to people without concealing it. Allah Almighty said: {And [mention, O Muhammad], when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the Scripture, saying: "You must make it clear to the people, and not conceal it" ...} [Āl 'Imrān: 187]

This covenant that Allah took is not a written document visible to people, but is rather underpinned by the knowledge Allah gave to any individual. If Allah confers knowledge upon anyone, this conferral is a token of the covenant Allah took upon that man or woman who received the knowledge. Therefore, anyone given knowledge of the Shariah of Allah, Exalted and Glorified, must convey it anywhere and in any occasion. Brothers, the topic of our lecture today is "Provision of the Muslim Preacher". The provision of every Muslim lies in what is between him and Allah Almighty as expounded by Allah in His saying: {...And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah. And fear Me, O you people of understanding.} [Al-Baqarah:197] The provision of every Muslim is to adopt piety with Allah, Exalted and Glorified, which is stressed repeatedly by Allah Almighty in the Qur'an as a command, as a praise of whoever commits to it, and in clarifying such person's reward, and in other styles of speech. {And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous. Who spend in the cause of Allah during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good; And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves by transgression, remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and who do not persist in what they have done while they know. Those - their reward is forgiveness from their Lord and gardens beneath which rivers flow in Paradise, wherein they will abide forever; and excellent is the reward of the righteous workers.} [Āl 'Imrān: 133-136]

So, brothers, you may ask what is meant by piety?

The answer is found in a report related from Talq ibn Habīb (may Allah have mercy upon him) where he said: "Piety is to act in obedience to Allah, with light from Allah, hoping for reward from Him, and to avoid disobedience of Allah, with light from Allah, fearing His punishment." In these few words, he combined between knowledge and action, anticipating the reward while fearing the punishment, all of which make up piety.

We all know that the preacher is the most expected one to embrace this moral of piety, in public as well as in secret. In the following lines, I shall address aspects related to the Muslim preacher and the provisions he should possess.

First: the preacher must have knowledge of what he is preaching. It should be sound knowledge that fundamentally depends on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him),

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because any knowledge acquired through outside sources must, initially, be tested against them, in which case there are two outcomes: either it is consistent or inconsistent. It will be accepted if the outcome is the former but it will be rejected if it is the latter regardless of who brought it forth.

It was authentically reported that ibn ‘Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) said: “You are about to be punished by rocks falling upon you from the sky; I say: ‘The Messenger of Allah said so-and-so’ and you say: ‘Abu Bakr and ‘Umar said so-and-so.’”

If that is the case with the statements of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar that are brought in opposition to the statement of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him), then how about the statements of others who are significantly inferior to them with regard to knowledge, piety, companionship of the Prophet, and the caliphate?

It becomes all the more reason to reject such people’s statements if they are inconsistent with the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him). Allah, Exalted and Glorified, said:

{...So let those beware who dissent from the Prophet’s order, lest Fitnah strike them or a painful punishment.} [Al-Nūr: 63]

Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy upon him) said:

“Do you know what Fitnah is? It is polytheism, perhaps if someone rejects some of the sayings of the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him), he might have some doubt in his heart and thus goes astray.”

The first type of provision the preacher must possess is to have knowledge derived from the Book of Allah Almighty and the sound and authentic Sunnah of His Messenger (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him). Preaching Islam without knowledge is a call based on ignorance, which incurs more harm than benefit, because such a preacher has undertaken the position of an instructor and a guide. Thus, his ignorance renders him astray as far as he is concerned and causes others to go astray as well; we seek refuge in Allah. The ignorance of this person is compound, which is severer than regular ignorance. The latter restrains one from speaking and is liable to be removed by acquiring knowledge. Compound ignorance, on the contrary, is a serious problem, because such an ignorant person does not refrain from speaking even though he is ignorant, as a result of which he becomes more destructive than enlightening. Brothers, preaching Islam without knowledge is the opposite of the tradition adopted by the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) and embraced by his followers. Consider the saying of Allah Almighty when He commanded His Prophet Muhammad (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him): {Say: “This is my way; I invite to Allah with insight, I and those who follow me. And exalted is Allah; and I am not of those who associate others with Him.”} [Yūsuf: 108] {I invite to Allah with insight, I and those who follow me.} This means that those who follow him must call to Allah with insight rather than ignorance.

O Muslim preacher, reflect on the saying of Allah Almighty {with insight}. It features having insight in three issues:

1- To have insight into the content of his call to Allah such that one knows the relevant Shariah ruling regarding what he is preaching. This is because one may call to something he thinks to be obligatory, while, in fact, it is not obligatory in the Shariah of Allah. If done in such a manner, he is mandating the servants of Allah to do something Allah has not made obligatory for them. Likewise, he may call to avoiding something he thinks to be prohibited whereas it is, in fact, not prohibited. In this manner, he has prohibited something Allah has made lawful for His servants.

2- To have insight into the situation of the recipient of his call. For this reason, when the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) sent Mu’ādh to Yemen, he instructed him saying:

“Verily, you are going to people who are from the People of the Scripture.”

The intention was to make him aware of their condition and get ready for them accordingly. One must learn about the condition of the recipient and the extent of his educational and polemical level.

This affects one's preparation for discussion and argument. For instance, if you were to engage with someone in a debate but lose to his superior skill of debate, it would become a serious blow to the truth caused by you.

Do not think that advocates of falsehood always lose, because the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"You bring me your disputes (seeking my judgment), some of you perhaps being more eloquent in their plea than others, so I give judgment in their favor according to what I hear from them."

This proves that the disputant, though mistaken, may be more skilled in introducing his dispute, thus securing a judgment in his favor. In short, the preacher must be aware of his recipient's condition.

3- To have insight into the manner of preaching Islam. Allah, Glorified and Exalted, said:

{Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best...} [Al-Nahl: 125]

Some people may come across some evil and rush to counter it rather heedlessly without considering the consequences not only on him but also on his peer preachers. Hence, the preacher must measure the consequences firstly before making any move.

The rushed response may satisfy his urge but deliberateness will be much more effective for him and others in the future,

which may be sooner than he thinks. For this reason, I encourage my fellow preachers to implement deliberateness and wisdom. It may take longer but the outcome is praiseworthy by the will of Allah Almighty.

Just as the Shariah texts indicate the necessity of seeking provisions of sound knowledge from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), it is also the natural indication of sound reason, free from misconceptions and desires.

Obviously, how do you expect to call to Allah, Exalted and Glorified, while being unaware of the path leading to Him such that one is ignorant of His Shariah? How could someone like that be a preacher?

If one lacks knowledge, he should first learn and then preach others later.

Someone may argue: Does this statement not contradict the saying of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him):

"Convey from me, even if it is a single verse"?

The answer is there is no contradiction because the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "convey from me," which implies that what is conveyed must come from the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him); which is exactly our goal.

By saying the preacher needs knowledge, we do not mean that he must spend significant amount of time learning specialized knowledge. Instead, we merely mean that he should limit his preaching to what he knows only, without venturing in areas of which he has no knowledge of.

Second type of provision: the preacher must maintain endurance throughout his preaching mission and commit himself to patience when his call or himself are exposed to harm.

Endurance entails the continuation of his preaching mission without abandoning it or feeling boredom during the process. Rather, he should keep committed to his call to Allah to the best of his ability so as to introduce it in situations when it is most effective and beneficial. Furthermore, he should avoid boredom, because one will abandon his mission as soon as he feels bored. On the other hand, perseverance in this field secures the reward of the patient as well as facilitates the best eventual outcome. Consider the words of Allah, Exalted and Glorified, addressing His Prophet: {That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muhammad]. You knew it not, neither you nor your people, before this. So be patient; indeed, the best outcome is for the righteous.} [Hūd: 49] One must commit himself to patience in the face of resistance and arguments against his preaching mission,

because any caller to Allah has to be opposed;{And thus have We made for every prophet an enemy from among the wrongdoers. But sufficient is your Lord as a guide and a helper.} [Al-Furqān: 31]Each true call must be faced with opposition, rejection, arguments, and doubts.However, the preacher must maintain patience even if his preaching is described as being wrong or false, as long as he knows it is consistent with the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him).Definitely, this does not mean that one should insist on what he says or preaches even after realizing the truth. One who sticks to what he is advocating even after knowing the truth shares the same blame with those whom Allah described:{Arguing with you concerning the truth after it had become clear, as if they were being driven toward death while they were looking on.} [Al-Anfāl: 6]Arguing against the clear truth is a blameworthy trait. Allah said about those who abide by this trait:{And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers - We will give him what he has taken and drive him into Hell, and evil it is as a destination.} [Al-Nisā': 115]If truth was not on your side, as a preacher, you must embrace it. If, on the other hand, falsehood is what opposes your mission, do not let it dampen your spirit and continue with your path.In addition, the Muslim preacher must withstand any harm inflicted upon him, because the preacher must face harm either verbally or physically. The Messengers (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon them), for example, were verbally and physically abused.Read the saying of Allah, Exalted and Glorified: {Similarly, there came not to those before them any messenger except that they said: "A magician or a madman."} [Al-Dhāriyāt: 52]What do you think of the one receiving divine revelation and being accused of magic or madness?Definitely, he feels hurt. In spite of this harm, the messengers patiently withstood the verbal and physical abuse. Consider, for instance, how the first of the messengers, Nūh (Noah) (peace be upon him), faced ridicule by his people during his construction of the ark. He replied to them saying, as mentioned in the Qur'an:{...If you ridicule us, then we will ridicule you just as you ridicule. And you are going to know who will get a punishment that will disgrace him on earth and upon whom will descend an enduring punishment in the Hereafter.} [Hūd: 38-39]Not only did they ridicule him, but they even threatened to kill him:{They said: "If you do not desist, O Noah, you will surely be of those who are stoned."} [Al-Shu'arā': 116]It means you will become one of those murdered by stoning. This threat implies they had stoned others to death before. They said that out of showing off.This, however, did not thwart Noah (peace be upon him) in his call to Allah. Rather, he persevered until Allah judged between him and his people.Another example is Ibrahim (Abraham) (peace be upon him) who was rejected and defamed by his people publicly:{They said: "Then bring him before the eyes of the people that they may testify."} [Al-Anbiyā': 61]Then they threatened to burn him alive:{They said: "Burn him and support your gods - if you are to act."} [Al-Anbiyā': 68]They set a huge fire and casted him inside it with a catapult because the fire was so fierce and they were distant from it. However, Allah Almighty said:{Allah said: "O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham."} [Al-Anbiyā': 69]Thus, it became cool and safe. Abraham survived the fire as well as secured the best outcome.{And they intended for him harm, but We made them the greatest losers} [Al-Anbiyā': 70]Moreover, Mūsa (Moses) (peace be upon him) received a death threat from Pharaoh:{...“Let me kill Moses and let him call upon his Lord. Indeed, I fear that he will change your religion or that he will cause corruption in the land.”} [Ghāfir: 26]He threatened to kill him but the final outcome was in favor of Moses (peace be upon him){...And the people of Pharaoh were enveloped by the worst of punishment.} [Ghāfir:45]’Isa (Jesus) (peace be upon him) sustained substantial harm so much that the Jews accused him of being the son of a prostitute and killed him and crucified him - according to their claim.Allah Almighty, however, said: {...And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but another was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain. Rather, Allah raised him to Himself. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise.} [Al-Nisā': 157-158]Jesus was, thus, saved from them.Another example is the seal of the messengers, their leader, and the master of the children of Adam, Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Allah said about him:{And [remember, O Muḥammad], when those who disbelieved plotted against you to restrain you or kill you or evict you from Makkah. But they plan, and Allah plans. And Allah is the best of planners.} [Al-Anfāl: 30]{And they say: "O you upon whom the message has been sent down, indeed you are mad."} [Al-Hijr: 6]{And were saying: "Are we to leave our gods for a mad poet?"} [Al-Sāffāt: 36]The verbal and physical abuse perpetrated by the disbelievers is historically well-known to scholars. In the face of all of this, he maintained patience, thus, the best outcome was his.Accordingly, every Muslim preacher must face some sort of harm but he must remain steadfast. Interestingly, when Allah Almighty said to His Messenger (may Allah's

peace and blessings be upon him):{Indeed, it is We Who have sent down to you, [O Muḥammad], the Qur'an progressively.} [Al-Insān: 23]it was expected that Allah would say: "Show gratitude to Allah for the revelation of this Qur'an." However, Allah said to him:{So be patient for the decision of your Lord and do not obey from among them a sinner or an ungrateful disbeliever.} [Al-Insān: 24]This indicates that anyone who advocates the cause of this Qur'an will suffer a relative harm that demands sustainable patience. The preacher must therefore be patient and proceed with his mission until Allah grants him success.It is, nevertheless, not necessary that success will emerge during his lifetime. Instead, the important part is that his preaching persists with popular acclaim; the call to Allah is what counts not the caller.If his preaching remains even after his death, such a person will still be alive. Allah, Exalted and Glorified, said:{And is one who was dead and We gave him life and made for him light by which to walk among the people like one who is in darkness, never to emerge therefrom? Thus it has been made pleasing to the disbelievers that which they were doing.} [Al-An'ām: 122]In fact, the life of the preacher is not limited to his physical presence but it is also tied to how his cause remains alive among people.Consider the story of Abu Sufyān with Heraclius who had heard of the emergence of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). He invited Abu Sufāyn and asked him about the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), his lineage, and what he and his Companions were advocating.After Abu Sufyān had answered his questions, Heraclius said to him: "If what you are saying is true, he will own what is beneath my feet (i.e. rule my kingdom)."How amazing this is! Who would have thought that an emperor would say such words about Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) at the time when he had not even freed the Arabian Peninsula from the bondage of the devil and ill desires!Who would have imagined a man in his position saying such words!When Abu Sufyān came out, he said to his people: "The cause of Ibn Abi Kabshah (i.e. Muhammad) has become significant as the King of Bani al- Asfar is afraid of him."Relevant to the word 'significant' is the saying of Allah Almighty: {...You have certainly done a grave thing.} [Al-Kahf: 71]

Indeed, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) ruled over the kingdom of Heraclius but with his cause rather than in person. The cause advocated by the Prophet reached that land and eradicated all idols and polytheism and their advocates. The Rightly Guided Caliphs ruled it after the death of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) in the name of his call and his Shariah.

Hence, the preacher must have patience and he shall attain the best outcome if he is truthful with Allah, whether during his lifetime or after his death.Allah, Exalted and Glorified, said: {...Indeed, the earth belongs to Allah. He causes to inherit it whom He wills of His servants. And the best outcome is for the righteous.} [Al-A'rāf: 128]Allah Almighty also said: {...Indeed, he who fears Allah and is patient, then indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.} [Yūsuf: 90]Third type of provision is wisdom. The preacher must advocate the cause of Allah with wisdom, which is indeed a difficult task for those who lack it. Calling to Allah should be done with wisdom, then with a good admonition, then with argument in a well-mannered approach for those who are not wrongdoers, and then with argument in an ill-mannered approach for the wrongdoers. Following this breakdown, the phases of the call to Allah are four:Allah Almighty said: {Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good admonition, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is All-Knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is All-Knowing of who is rightly guided} [Al-Nahl: 125]Allah Almighty said: {And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and say: "We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are Muslims in submission to Him."} [Al-Ankabūt: 46]Wisdom is to perform something in the ideal and optimum way such that one weighs situations appropriately and rightfully. Wisdom contrasts with rushing people to transform their previous lives and embrace the lifestyle of the Companions overnight.Anyone with this goal in mind is a fool, because this is not what the wisdom of Allah entails.As a proof, the Shariah was revealed upon the Messenger Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings upon him) gradually until it settled in the hearts and became complete despite the fact that the Prophet was the one receiving the Qur'an. Prayer was made obligatory during the Ascent Journey three years before the Hijrah (Migration) (though other opinions maintain it was a year and half while others say it was five). Still, prayer was not obligated in the manner it is observed today.When prayer was first prescribed, it was two Rak'ahs for Zhuhr, 'Asr, 'Ishā', and Fajr, while the Maghrib prayer was three Rak'ahs, so that it would act as a Witr for daytime. After thirteen years in Makkah and after the Migration, the prayer of the resident

increased to four Rak'ahs for Zhuhr, 'Asr, and 'Ishā'. The Fajr prayer remained two Rak'ahs because recitation takes considerably more time. The Maghrib has also remained three Rak'ahs because it is still the Witr of daytime. Zakah was made obligatory on the second Hijri year. It was probably enjoined in Makkah but without its designated measures and relevant duties. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) did not dispatch the collectors of Zakah except in the ninth Hijri year. Zakah developed in three gradual stages: First in Makkah {...And give its due Zakah on the day of its harvest...} [Al-An'ām: 141] In this verse, neither what is mandatory nor the obligated portion was clarified but instead it was left to people's volition. In the second Hijri year, the amount liable to Zakah was clarified; and in the ninth Hijri year, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) started sending the Zakah collectors to collect it from the owners of cattle and fruits. So, reflect on how people's conditions are taken into account in the Shariah of Allah, Exalted and Glorified, Who is the Most Just of Judges.

Allah Almighty also said: {...Indeed, he who fears Allah and is patient, then indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.} [Yūsuf: 90]

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Allah Almighty said: {Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good admonition, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is All-Knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is All-Knowing of who is rightly guided} [Al-Nahl: 125]

Allah Almighty said: {And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and say: "We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are Muslims in submission to Him."} [Al-'Ankabūt: 46]

Wisdom is to perform something in the ideal and optimum way such that one weighs situations appropriately and rightfully. Wisdom contrasts with rushing people to transform their previous lives and embrace the lifestyle of the Companions overnight.

Anyone with this goal in mind is a fool, because this is not what the wisdom of Allah entails.

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Likewise, fasting followed a gradual path in its obligation. First, people were given the choice either to fast or feed others; then fasting became obligatory and feeding became an option for those incapable of fasting consistently.

The world will not change overnight because this is against wisdom. Perseverance is, thus, a must. Accept the truth that your audience have today and gradually work with them until you bring them out of falsehood. Do not treat people on an equal footing as there is admittedly a difference between an ignorant and a stubborn person.

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Perhaps it is suitable to give examples from the preaching mission of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him).

The first example: a Bedouin entered the mosque when the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was sitting with his Companions. He urinated in a corner inside the mosque. People therefore scolded him. However, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) whom Allah Almighty blessed with wisdom, instructed them to stop scolding him. After the Bedouin had finished, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) ordered for a bucket of water to be spilled over the urine, which removed this impurity. Thereafter, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) called the Bedouin and said to him: "These mosques are not places meant for urine and filth, but are only for prayer and the recitation of the Qur'an." or he (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said something like that. The Bedouin was pleased with this gentle treatment. I even read that some scholars reported that Bedouin to have said: "O Allah, bestow your mercy upon me and Muhammad and none else;" because he was fascinated by this gentle treatment. The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) rushed to remove this wrongdoing without appropriately considering the condition of this ignorant person. Second example: Mu'āwiyah ibn al-Hakam (may Allah be pleased with him) came while the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was leading people in prayer. One of those praying sneezed and said: "Praise be to Allah." When one sneezes during prayer, he should say "praise be to Allah" whether it was during standing, bowing, or prostration. That man said: "Praise be to Allah;" to which Mu'āwiyah replied: "May Allah have mercy upon you!" This response involves an alien speech to prayer which therefore invalidates it. People turned their eyes to him disapprovingly and kept looking at him. Mu'āwiyah said: "May my mother lose me!" This phrase is usually said as an interjection without intending its meaning. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said it himself to Mu'ādh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) when the following conversation went between them: "Shall I tell you of what holds all these things?" Mu'ādh said: "Yes, O Messenger of Allah." So he took hold of his tongue and said: "Keep this under control." Mu'ādh replied: "Shall we be held accountable for what we speak?" He said: "O Mu'ādh, may your mother lose you! What else can cast people on their faces - or on their noses - into Hellfire more than the harvests of their tongues?!" Mu'āwiyah (may Allah be pleased with him) continued his prayer. After he had concluded it, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) called him [to teach him]. Mu'āwiyah (may Allah be pleased with him) then said: "I have never seen before an instructor who gave better instruction than him. By Allah, he neither rebuked me nor abused me. He only said: 'In prayer, nothing of people's ordinary speech is allowed. Only Tasbīh (glorifying Allah), Takbīr (declaring Allah's Greatness), and recitation of the Qur'an are allowed.'" or he (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said something like that. Consider how appealing this preaching is and how accepted and welcomed by people it is.

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That man said: "Praise be to Allah;" to which Mu'āwiyah replied: "May Allah have mercy upon you!" This response involves an alien speech to prayer which therefore invalidates it. People turned their eyes to him disapprovingly and kept looking at him.

Mu'āwiyah said: "May my mother lose me!" This phrase is usually said as an interjection without intending its meaning. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said it himself to Mu'ādh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) when the following conversation went between them: "Shall I tell you of what holds all these things?" Mu'ādh said: "Yes, O Messenger of Allah." So he took hold of his tongue and said: "Keep this under control." Mu'ādh replied: "Shall we be held accountable for what we speak?"

He said: "O Mu'ādh, may your mother lose you! What else can cast people on their faces - or on their noses - into Hellfire more than the harvests of their tongues?!"

Mu'āwiyah (may Allah be pleased with him) continued his prayer. After he had concluded it, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) called him [to teach him]. Mu'āwiyah (may Allah be pleased with him) then said: "I have never seen before an instructor who gave better instruction than him. By Allah, he neither rebuked me nor abused me. He only said:

'In prayer, nothing of people's ordinary speech is allowed. Only Tasbīh (glorifying Allah), Takbīr (declaring Allah's Greatness), and recitation of the Qur'an are allowed.'"

or he (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said something like that.

Consider how appealing this preaching is and how accepted and welcomed by people it is.

One of the jurisprudence rules we derive from the Hadīth is that the prayer is valid if the one who speaks during it is unaware that speaking invalidates prayer.

Third example: A man came to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) during Ramadān and said: "I am ruined, O Messenger of Allah!" The Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) asked him: "What has ruined you?" The man replied: "I had intercourse with my wife during the day in Ramadān while fasting." The Prophet ordered him to free a slave but the man said he could not afford that. The Prophet ordered him to fast two consecutive months, but the man said he could not do that either. The Prophet then ordered him to feed sixty of the needy, but the man said he could not afford that as well. Then the man sat down. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) brought a basket of dates, gave it to the man and said: "Give this as charity." The man, however, desired more of the generosity of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) who is the most generous of all humans. The man said: "To someone who is poorer than us, O Messenger of Allah! By Allah, there is no one in this city who is in need of these dates more than us!" The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him)

laughed until his molar teeth could be seen; because this man came to him with the fear of ruin but instead he left with gains. Then the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said to him: "Feed your family therewith." The man returned with gains and happiness because of this great religion of Islam. He experienced ease at the hands of the first preacher of this religion (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Fourth example: let us see how the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) treated the sinner. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) saw a man wearing a gold ring on his finger. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) took it off with his honorable hands and threw it on the ground. He then said: "Why would any of you take a live coal and put it on his hand?" The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) did not treat him like the previous ones above. Instead, he took the ring off his hand and threw it on the ground. When the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) left, the man was told to pick up his ring and make good use of it. He refused and said: "By Allah, I would not take a ring that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) threw away." How great that is! Indeed Allah is the Most Great. Such incredible compliance of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them).

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The important thing is that the preacher must utilize wisdom in calling to Allah, Exalted and Glorified. Treatment of the ignorant is not the same as the treatment of the knowledgeable, nor a stubborn person is the same as a compliant one; each of whom warrants a tailored approach.

Fourth type of provision: the preacher must adopt upright morals that are reflected on his beliefs, worship, demeanor, and his entire attitude in order to become a true representative of the call to Allah. But if he projects a different image than this, his preaching will be doomed to failure and any success would be a minor one.

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The Muslim preacher must be an embodiment of what he preaches of the acts of worship, etiquettes of business transactions, morals, and behavior to boost the chances of the acceptance of his preaching and to avoid being among those who are the first to be admitted to Hellfire.

Brothers, the reality we are currently living shows that we do not abide by what we are inviting people to follow, which is undoubtedly a grave wrongdoing unless there is something preventing us from realizing what is better, for different situations demand different approaches. In certain situations, what seems to be the plausible choice becomes less plausible due to emerging circumstances. Hence, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) used to encourage some traits, but sometimes would do something more important. He would probably fast until it was believed he did not break his fast, while in other times, he would eat until he was believed not to fast at all.

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Brothers, I ask every Muslim preacher to adopt the morals suitable for a preacher so as to become a true preacher and his statements gain more acceptance.

Fifth type of provision: the preacher should break the barriers between him and people, because many of our fellow preachers may, out of zeal and hatred for wrongdoing, refuse to approach and advise people whom they saw committing a wrongdoing. This is, indeed, a mistake and lack of wisdom. A preacher should, instead, approach, invite, advise, encourage, and warn without branding them as sinners and refusing to approach them. If you, as a caller to Allah, refuse to approach them, who would then advise them? Will advice come from someone like them or from people who are ignorant? It would never come, and hence the preacher must be patient as mentioned above. He must endure, force himself, and break any barrier standing between him and people so as to convey his preaching to those in need of it. But to disdain approaching such people, it would be the opposite of what the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) used to do. It is well-known that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) used to approach the polytheists in Mina at their usual places and invite them to Allah. It was reported that he (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Is there anyone to take me to convey the words of my Lord? Quraysh have prevented me from conveying the words of my Lord." Since this was the attitude of our Prophet and role model Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), it becomes obligatory for us to follow his example in calling to Allah.

Sixth type of provision: the preacher must welcome voices of difference, especially when learning that they come from people with good intentions and driven by their understanding of the textual proofs. At such instances, one should be flexible and abstain from making this difference in opinion a cause for enmity and hatred, unless such difference is adopted by a stubborn person who insists on falsehood after truth has been made clear to him. In this case, such a person deserves to be treated equally by driving and warning people against him, because he declared enmity and refused to comply though the truth has been made clear to him. Admittedly, there are secondary issues that are liable for people's differences. In fact, Allah provided ease for His servants concerning those issues. I certainly refer to secondary issues that are not as fundamental as the ones that require accusing the opposer with disbelief. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "If a judge passes judgment after due diligence and his judgment is correct, he will receive two rewards, and if it is incorrect, he will receive one reward." The one practicing *Ijtihād* (personal reasoning) will always be rewarded, either a double reward in case of a correct judgment, or a single reward in case of an incorrect judgment. If you are displeased by others' different opinions, they are also displeased by opposing their views. Just as you want people to follow your statement, others desire the very same thing. The final resort, however, remains what Allah, Exalted and Glorified, has made clear in His saying: {And in anything over which you disagree - its ruling is to be referred to Allah. Say: "That is Allah, my Lord; upon Him I have relied, and to Him I turn back."} [Al-Shūra: 10] Allah, Exalted and Glorified, said: {O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and in the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result.} [Al-Nisā': 59] All disagreements and discord must be referred to these two essential sources, namely, the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). No one is permitted to oppose the word of Allah and that of His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) by the statement of any human being, no matter who he is. After the truth is made clear to you, you must completely disregard the statements of

others regardless of how religious and knowledgeable they are, because humans err whereas Allah Almighty and His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) do not err. Unfortunately, some people are in disagreement among each other though they are considered sincere in their quest of the truth. Each one of them has his own branding, which is inappropriate. The religion of Allah, Exalted and Glorified, is one and the nation of Islam is one. Allah, Exalted and Glorified, said: {And indeed this, your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so fear Me.} [Al-Mu'minūn: 52] Allah Almighty says to His Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him): {Indeed, those who have divided their religion and became sects - you, O Muhammad, are not associated with them in anything. Their affair is only left to Allah; then He will inform them of what they used to do.} [Al-An'ām: 159] Allah, Exalted and Glorified, said: {He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein. Difficult for those who associate others with Allah is that to which you invite them. Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back [to Him].} [Al-Shūra: 13] Since this is Allah's instruction to us, we must follow this instruction, collaborate on research, and engage in a discussion meant for achieving reform rather than reproach or vengeance. Anyone who engages in a debate with the intention of advocating his opinion at the cost of his opponent's opinion and criticizing instead of being constructive, the debate is likely to conclude in a manner displeasing Allah and His Messenger. In such cases, we must be united. I, by no means, imply that nobody makes mistakes; everyone is right sometimes and wrong sometimes. The point is the attempt to mend this wrong, rather than speaking ill of someone in his absence to fix a wrong situation, one should attempt to meet him and discuss the issue with that person. Afterwards, if he stubbornly insists on his mistake, you have the right to expose his mistake and warn people against it. Only in such a manner affairs can be settled. On the other hand, separation and partisanship would not please anyone but the enemies of Islam and Muslims.

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It is Allah Whom I implore to gather our hearts on His worship, make us among those who refer to Allah and His Messenger, make our intentions sincere, and make clear that which is ambiguous for us in His Shariah; for indeed He is All-Generous.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and may Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and all of his Companions.

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Provision of the Muslim Preacher.....	1
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