

Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh narrated that God's Messenger addressed the people during the days of the hajj and said:

- 1 Your blood and your property are forbidden to you to violate in the same way as the sanctity of this day of yours, in this month of yours, in this city of yours.
- 2 All claims pertaining to the days of Ignorance [i.e. pre-Islamic] are under my two feet and invalid.
- 3 Vengeance killings of pre-Islamic days are written off. The first killing I write off is that of Ibn Rabī'ah ibn al-Ḥārith: he was being nursed in the clan of Banī Sa'd, but the Hudhayl tribe killed him.
- 4 The usury of pre-Islamic days is hereby written off, and the first usury I thus write off is the one belonging to us [i.e. his clan], the usury of 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. It is all written off.
- 5 Fear God in your treatment of women. You take them in trust granted by God, and they become lawful to you by God's word.
- 6 They have a duty towards you that they do not admit into your homes anyone you dislike. If they do this, you may discipline them without severity. Your duty towards them is to feed and clothe them according to what is reasonable.
- 7 I am leaving with you what ensures you shall never go astray if you hold on to it: God's Book.
- 8 You shall be asked about me; so what will you say? They said: We testify that you have delivered your message and given sound counsel. He pointed with his forefinger to the sky and to the people, and said: 'My Lord, bear witness, My lord, bear witness' three times.<sup>(1)</sup>

1 Related by Muslim, 1218.

### From the Qur'an

- ﴿Do not devour one another's property wrongfully, nor bribe with it the judges in order that you may sinfully, and knowingly, deprive others of any part of what is rightfully theirs.﴾ (2: 188)
- ﴿Believers, fear God and give up what remains outstanding of usury gains, if you are true believers. (278) If you do not, then war is declared against you by God and His Messenger. If you repent, however, you shall remain entitled to your principal. Thus, you shall commit no wrong, nor suffer any wrong yourselves.﴾ (2: 278-279)
- ﴿Men shall take full care of women with the bounties with which God has favoured some of them more abundantly than others, and with what they may spend of their own wealth. The righteous women are devout, guarding the intimacy which God has ordained to be guarded. As for those women from whom you have reason to fear rebellion, admonish them [first]; then leave them alone in bed; *wadribūhunn*. Then, if they pay you heed, do not seek any pretext to harm them. God is indeed most high, great.﴾ (4: 34).
- ﴿He who deliberately kills a believer, his punishment is Hell, therein to abide permanently. God will be angry with him, and will reject him, and will prepare for him a dreadful suffering.﴾ (4: 93)

### The Narrator

Abu 'Abdullāh Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn Ḥarām al-Anṣārī belonged to the Salimah clan of the Anṣār. He attended the second pledge given by the Anṣār to the Prophet at Aqabah. He was a youth at the time, accompanying his father who was one of the twelve representatives. His father took part in the Battles of Badr and Uḥud. It is reported that Jābir took part in the Battle of Ṣiffīn alongside 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib. He was the mufti of Madinah during his lifetime. He died in Year 78 AH, 698 CE. Thus, he was the last survivor of the Prophet's companions who attended the second Aqabah pledge of the Anṣār.

### Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) addresses his companions during his Farewell Pilgrimage, reminding them of the sanctity of life and other people's money. He outlines prohibited traditions inherited from the days of ignorance. He discards whatever is prohibited by Islam of such practices, starting with what belonged to his own clan and relatives. He then urges good treatment of women and strict adherence to God's Book, the Qur'an.



# Message and Meaning

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was keen to disseminate religious teachings and rulings. Therefore, in his speech on the Day of Arafat during his Farewell Pilgrimage he highlighted many important issues before an audience in excess of 100,000 of his companions.



1 He started his speech with praising and glorifying God and immediately followed that with a strict order forbidding the shedding of Muslims' blood or taking their money and property. It is strictly forbidden for a Muslim to kill another Muslim unfairly, or to take his money or property unlawfully. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'All that a Muslim has is forbidden to another Muslim: his blood, property and honour'.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Prophet mentions blood first, because it is far more strictly forbidden than property. Therefore, God gives a much stronger warning to anyone who deliberately kills a believer than the perpetrator of any other crime. He says: 'He who deliberately kills a believer, his punishment is Hell, therein to abide permanently. God will be angry with him, and will reject him, and will prepare for him a dreadful suffering'. (4: 93) The Prophet (peace be upon him) makes it one of the cardinal sins, stressing this very strongly as he said: 'Every sin may be hoped to be forgiven by God except that of a person who deliberately kills a believer, or a person who dies an unbeliever'.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasizes the prohibition of any assault on people's lives and property, comparing these to the sanctity of the Day of Arafat, the sacred month and Makkah. However, the sanctity of people's lives and property is greater than that. The Prophet addressed the issue in this way because according to their traditions, the Arabs believed in the sanctity of the sacred month, and the most distinguished day of these is the Day of Arafat, and they also believed in the sanctity of Makkah. They used to attach little importance to killing and looting in other months and other places, but refrained from such actions during these times and in these places. Therefore, the Prophet told them that they must treat the blood and property of other people with the same sanctity as they gave to the sacred months and the forbidden city. It is a sanctity that is thrice emphasized.



2 The Prophet then states that all the rituals and acts of worship invented in pre-Islamic days are void and unacceptable, whether these pertain to hajj rituals or otherwise. Acts of worship are only those stated by God and explained by His Messenger. God says: 'Do they desire to be ruled by the law of pagan ignorance? But for those who are firm in their faith, who can be a better law-giver than God?' (5: 50)



3 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then rules that all killings that occurred in pre-Islamic days were void: they incur neither blood money, nor retaliatory execution, nor indemnity. No demands may be made for these. The Prophet started with himself and his family's claim, voiding the killing of the son of Rabī'ah ibn al-Ḥārith ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, who was an infant given to a wet nurse from the Banī Sa'd tribe and killed by mistake by the Hudhayl tribe.

1 Related by Muslim, 2564.

2 Related by al-Nasā'ī, 3984.



The Prophet also nullified all outstanding usurious transactions dating to the time of ignorance, i.e. pre-Islamic days. Whoever entered into such a transaction prior to becoming a Muslim and had not yet been paid would be entitled only to the sum he advanced, taking nothing more. A person who dealt usuriously prior to Islam, and completed the deal, getting his dues before becoming a Muslim, his past practices are waived, because embracing Islam atones for whatever was committed previously.

Indeed, the prohibition of usury predated the time when the Prophet delivered this speech, and the Muslims stopped it, but the Prophet was emphasizing it, particularly for newcomers to Islam. Its prohibition is stated in the Qur'anic verses: 'Believers, fear God and give up what remains outstanding of usury gains, if you are true believers. If you do not, then war is declared against you by God and His Messenger. If you repent, however, you shall remain entitled to your principal. Thus, you shall commit no wrong, nor suffer any wrong yourselves'. (2: 278-279) Taking usurious money is a major sin, and the Prophet describes it as such. Jābir narrated: 'God's Messenger (peace be upon him) cursed the one who devours usury, the one who pays it, the one who writes [the agreement] and the two witnesses'. He said: 'They are all the same'.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Prophet (peace be upon him) started by writing off the usurious gains of his uncle al-'Abbās who used to lend money usuriously before Islam. He became very rich, and amassed a lot of money in such transactions. The Prophet voided all usury from being incurred by his loans but allowed him to retain what he had gained prior to the prohibition of usury.



Next, the Prophet (peace be upon him) urges kindness to women. They must be treated fairly and caringly. Men must be considerate of women and their feelings, and they must meet their needs. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Take good care of women. A woman is created from a rib. The most crooked part of a rib is its top. If you try to straighten it, you break it, and if you leave it, it remains crooked. Take good care of women'.<sup>(2)</sup> He urged good treatment of women, saying: 'The best of you are those who are best to their women; and I am the best of you to my women'.<sup>(3)</sup> Indeed, he made what a man spends in looking after his family an act that earns God's reward. He said: 'Whatever you spend, seeking God's pleasure, will earn a reward for you, even a bite you put in your wife's mouth'.<sup>(4)</sup>

The Prophet explains the basis of his emphatic recommendation of taking good care of women, stating that a woman becomes a man's lawful wife according to God's covenant and law. Whoever goes back on his covenant with God incurs His wrath and deserves His punishment.

1 Related by Muslim, 1598.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 3331; Muslim, 1468.

3 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 3895; Ibn Mājah, 1977.

4 Related by al-Bukhari, 1295; Muslim, 1628.

# Message and Meaning

6

The Prophet then mentions that a woman's duty towards her husband includes that she may not admit anyone into his home without his explicit or implicit permission. An implicit permission means that she thinks that that person's entry does not upset her husband. If she does not observe this, her husband may discipline her as may be suitable in her case, such as staying away or resorting to punishment that gives little or no pain, either physical or mental.

God has also given certain rights to women. It is a man's duty to ensure that her rights are fulfilled. God says: 'Women shall, in all fairness, enjoy rights similar to those exercised against them'. (2: 228) His duties include looking after her, providing her with what she needs of food, drink, residence and clothing, according to his means: 'Provide for them, the rich according to his means and the straitened according to his means'. (2: 236)

7

The Prophet (peace be upon him) then mentions that he was leaving with the believers something that will always provide guidance for them and never let them go astray, provided that they implement its rulings and principles. He was certainly referring to the Qur'an, God's Book: 'It is indeed a sublime Book; no falsehood can ever touch it openly or in a stealthy manner. It is bestowed from on high by One who is wise, worthy of praise'. (41: 41-42) God, Blessed and Exalted describes it in the following terms: 'This is a blessed Book which We have revealed, confirming what came before it, that you may warn the Mother City and all who dwell around it. Those who believe in the life to come do believe in it, and they are ever-mindful of their prayers'. (6: 92) The Prophet does not mention the Sunnah in this instance, because the Qur'an orders Muslims to implement it. Therefore, implementing the Qur'an includes implementing the Sunnah.

8

The Prophet (peace be upon him) then tells his companions that they will be questioned about him, as they are witnesses to his delivery of God's message. He asks them how they will respond to this question. They tell him that they will testify that he is faithful to his trust, delivering God's message and giving his community good counsel. The Prophet moved his hand pointing to heaven and then to his companions, asking God to witness their admission that he had been faithful to his trust.



# Implementation

1

The sanctity of the life of an individual Muslim is great in God's sight. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'For this world to entirely disappear is lesser, in God's view, than the unjustified killing of a single believer'. It is not permissible for a Muslim to kill another without proper justification.

2

The Prophet (peace be upon him) stresses the importance of life to the extent that he stated that unjustified killing is unforgivable. He said: 'Every sin may be hoped to be forgiven by God except that of a person who deliberately kills a believer, or a person who dies an unbeliever'.<sup>(1)</sup> However, like other sins, murder is subject to God's will: He may wish to forgive or punish its perpetrator. The hadith is intended to stress the horror of the crime and that its perpetrator deserves severe punishment.

3

It is not permissible for a Muslim to refer in his belief and thoughts to the practices of the days of ignorance that preceded Islam, permitting what its people considered legitimate and forbidding what they prohibited.

4

The hadith makes clear that what a person did before embracing Islam is waived and forgiven. If he had taken money from an unlawful source before becoming a Muslim, he may keep it as it remains permissible to him. However, if before becoming a Muslim, he lent money on usury, sold alcoholic drinks or pig meat or some other forbidden thing, and had not received the money, it is unlawful for him to take the usurious excess or the price of the forbidden article.

5

A scholar, an advocate of Islam, an educator should make himself a role model. If he enjoins something right, he should be the first to do it, and if he points out something wrong, he should be the first to refrain from it. This will make what he says more acceptable and enforceable.

6

Every Muslim must be kind to his wife and God-fearing in how he treats her. He should consort with her in a goodly manner, be patient with her and overlook her mistakes.

7

The Prophet (peace be upon him) set the finest example in his treatment of his wives. When 'Ā'ishah fancied something permissible, he would do as she wished. When she drank from a jug, he would take it and place his mouth at the point where she drank and drink. If she was biting a piece of meat on a bone, he would eat of it at the same spot she ate. He would recline on her lap, and he would recite the Qur'an placing his head on her lap.

8

It is the duty of a woman to respect her husband's rights. She may not admit in his home anyone he dislikes without his permission.

1 Related by al-Nasā'ī, 3984.

9

It is the woman's duty not to admit anyone into her husband's home without his permission, which may be either clearly stated or implicitly understood. If he expressly refuses permission, or she gathers from his attitude that he does not wish to admit a certain person, this is treated as non-permission. At the same time, it is not permissible for the husband to abuse this right and prevent her visiting her family or prevent them visiting her, particularly her parents, because this becomes a matter of severance of kinship relations. He must not submit to the dictates of a personal mentality that leans towards boycott. Only when there is a clear negative result to such visits should he treat the matter in the best suitable way.

10

It is very important to conduct the relationship between man and wife in the best way that ensures mutual care and kindness and that promotes a fine family atmosphere.

11

A wife has the right and her husband has the duty to support her and meet all her needs for food, clothing and residence, according to his means. She may not ask him for what is beyond his means.

12

If a husband refuses to support his wife or he is tight-fisted, despite having the means, she may take from his money what she reasonably needs. When Hind complained to the Prophet that her husband, Abu Sufyān, was stingy, he said to her: 'Take what is reasonable to meet what you and your children need'.<sup>(1)</sup>

13

Whoever wants to be rightly guided and to have his affairs on the right course should follow what the Qur'an says. It is the guide and light for everyone who needs guidance.

14

The Qur'an does not only guide people to the truth and show them the right way; it also raises the status of those who adhere to it in both this life and the life to come. Those who want to improve their status should study it and implement it. The Prophet said: 'God elevates some people by means of this Book and brings down others'.<sup>(2)</sup>

15

To neglect the duty of delivering the message of Islam is a great offence. The Prophet was delighted when his companions testified that he delivered his message and gave good counsel. He prayed to God to be his witness. The Muslim community has undertaken this task, and should make sure to fulfil it. God says: 'You are the best community that has ever been raised for mankind; you enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid what is wrong, and you believe in God'. (3: 110)

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5364; Muslim, 1714.

2 Related by Muslim, 817.

