



اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ  
جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا وَشَيْبَةً يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ  
الْقَدِيرُ.

وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

مَا أَكْرَمَ شَابٌ شَيْخًا لِسِنِّهِ إِلَّا قَبِضَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مِنْ يُكْرِمُهُ عِنْدَ  
سِنِّهِ.

## FAMILY ELDERS: OUR GATE TO PARADISE

### Dear Muslims!

It was the day Mecca was conquered. Over was the longing; real was the reunion. The believers were filled with festive joy, offering thanks to Allah (swt) together. Upon entering Mecca, Abu Bakr (ra), our Prophet's loyal friend and fellow Hijrah companion, immediately went to visit his father. He brought his father, whom he sincerely hoped would embrace Islam, before the Messenger of Allah (saw). When our beloved Prophet (saw) saw the man struggling to walk, he turned to Abu Bakr (ra) and said, **"I wish you had not tired this old man all the way here and instead I could have gone to him."** Abu Quhafa, the father of Abu Bakr (ra), embraced Islam after witnessing this compassionate act.<sup>1</sup>

### Dear Believers!

Our family elders, especially our parents, are our key to heaven, leading us to the pleasure of our Almighty Lord (swt). They are the conduits of Allah (swt)'s mercy and forgiveness for us. They are the blessings of our homes and the joy that brightens our conversations. Their presence is the source of peace and the warranty of safety; their absence causes heartache and deep sorrow. They are the exceptional individuals who hold the family together. Our families and communities are stronger with their presence. Our unity and solidarity are even stronger with them. With their support and du'a, we can more easily overcome our problems and difficulties, no matter how big they are.

### Dear Muslims!

Our elders have made countless sacrifices as they raised us. They have always guided us with their experience. From them, we have learned love and respect, kindness and justice, as well as reverence and affection. They have been our refuge and support throughout our journey in life. It is they who have passed our national and spiritual values down on us.

They are our living history, and our memory that can never be replaced. Respecting and caring for our elders means owning our past and securing our future.

### Dear Believers!

Sadly, each passing day sees many of our elders, who are like great plane trees, left alone. Many of our elders wait to see their children and grandchildren alone in their homes, from within the confines of four walls. Our holidays and vacations are increasingly viewed as opportunities for fun and entertainment, rather than as chances to visit our elders. Many people have come to seek peace and happiness in individualism. However, we are members of a religion that commands us to care for our family members, elders, and relatives. It would never be appropriate for us to break away from our family and choose an isolated life, or to confine ourselves to our own world, separate from our elders and relatives. In fact, our Prophet (saw) taught us that the stronger our relationships with our relatives, the stronger our bond with our Lord (swt).<sup>2</sup> He (saw) also warned those who live to see their parents or one of them in old age, and fail to please them, saying, "May his nose be dusted."<sup>3</sup>

### Dear Muslims!

Allah the Almighty informs us in the Holy Qur'an that today's elderly were once the youth of yesterday, and today's youth will become tomorrow's elderly: **"It is Allah Who created you in a state of weakness, then developed your weakness into strength, then developed your strength into weakness and old age. He creates whatever He wills. For He is the All-Knowing, Most Capable."**<sup>4</sup> Therefore, our duty today is to treat our elders with compassion and mercy. We should speak kind words to them and to never break their hearts. We should be the subject of their supplications through our visits and care. We should remember that every effort we make to ease their lives will lead us to the pleasure of Allah. It is our duty to strive to raise generations that are loyal to their values, respectful to their parents and elders, and beneficial to all humanity.

I would like to conclude this Friday's khutbah with the following hadith of our Prophet (saw), **"When a young person honors an elder due to his age, Allah appoints for him someone who will honor him at that age."**<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Hanbal, VI, 350.

<sup>2</sup> Abu Dawud, Zakat, 45.

<sup>3</sup> Muslim, Birr, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Rum, 30/54.

<sup>5</sup> Tirmidhi, Birr, 75.