



The General Presidency for the Affairs of
the Grand Holy Mosque and the Prophet's Holy Mosque

Translation of the Two Holy Mosques Khutbahs
A Joint Project



Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University
College of Languages and Translation

[1-8-35 – B –Ath-Thubaiti]

Commendable and Harmful Competition

His Eminence Sheikh Abdul-Bari' ibn Awwad Ath-Thubaiti, may Allah preserve him, delivered the Friday *khutbah* entitled, “Commendable and Harmful Competition”, in which he said that Muslims should vie for good deeds and hasten to do acts of obedience to Allah, citing several examples from the lives of the prophets and the Companions to this effect. He also referred to harmful competition, showing its different forms that each Muslim should guard against.

Part One

All abundant, good, and blessed praise be to Allah, Who has urged us to vie for righteousness and to love competition in this regard. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone, Who has no partners and whose signs and miracles can be seen in the processes of mating and fertilization. I also bear witness that our master and prophet, Muhammad, is His servant and messenger, who called to mercy and tolerance. May Allah bestow His peace upon him and upon his family and all his Companions.

O Muslims!

I advise you and advise myself to fear Allah. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

﴿O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth. He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him), he has indeed achieved a great achievement (i.e. he will be saved from the Hell-fire and will be admitted to Paradise).﴾ (Al-Ahzab: 70-71)

Allah, Exalted be He, also says:

﴿... and for this let (all) those strive who want to strive (i.e. hasten earnestly to the obedience of Allah).﴾ (Al-Mutaffifin: 26)



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A Muslim should compete with others in performing acts of obedience to Allah and should hasten to do good deeds, for one's life is short and its term is fixed. A sensible person is one who hastens to do good before he is faced with impediments and obstacles. Those who race to do good deeds and vie for virtues cannot be equated with those who tarry and show reluctance to perform acts of righteousness. Commendable competition enriches life and makes the Muslim aspire to get ahead and advance his knowledge and work in an attempt to achieve perfection.

The spirit of competition has always spread among the people of strong will and determination, most notably the prophets, peace and blessings be upon them. Prophet Musa (Moses), peace be upon him, wept when he learnt that Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would get ahead of him, out of the desire to be equal to him. When he was asked, "Why are you weeping?" he said, "I am weeping because a prophet will be sent after me whose followers will outnumber my followers in Paradise." The Noble Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "I hope I will have the largest number of followers on the Day of Resurrection."

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, established the principle of competition among his Companions so that they may reach the lofty goals that he had set for them. There are a large number of *hadiths* to this effect. For instance, it was reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

"There should be no competition among you except in two cases: a man whom Allah, Might and Majesty be to Him, has given knowledge of the Qur'an and he recites it during the hours of night and day and acts according to it, in which case one may say, 'If I were given the same as this man has been given, I would do the same as he is doing,' and a man whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it in the just and right way and gives in charity out of it, in which case one may say as the previous one said."

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, also said, "If anyone prays at night reciting regularly ten verses of the Qur'an, he will not be recorded among the negligent; if anyone prays at night and recites a hundred verses, he will be recorded among those who are obedient to Allah; and if anyone prays at night reciting one thousand verses, he will be recorded among those who receive huge rewards."

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, urged Muslims to vie for occupying the first row in congregational prayers. He said:

"If the people knew what (virtue) there is in the call to prayer and the first row, and they had no other way but to draw lots for them, they would draw lots. If they knew what (virtue) there is in coming



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early for the prayer, they would race for it. And if they knew what (virtue) there is in Nightfall and Dawn prayers, they would go for them even if they had to crawl.”

Abu Bakr As-Siddiq and Umar ibn Al-Khattab, the noble Companions and the best ones of this *Ummah* after the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, were both highly determined and very vigorous in the field of competition for each virtue, so much so that, by virtue of their deeds, they attained high ranks that no other Companion could ever reach. Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said,

“The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered us to give in charity, and at that time I had some property, so I said to myself, ‘If ever I were to surpass Abu-Bakr, then today is the day to surpass him.’ I brought half my property to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, who asked me, ‘What have you left for your family?’ I replied, ‘The like of it.’ Then Abu Bakr came with everything he had, and the Prophet asked him, ‘O Abu Bakr! What have you left for your family?’ He said, ‘I have left for them Allah and His Messenger.’ Upon that I said to myself, ‘By Allah! I will never surpass him in any virtue!’”

The flame of fair competition sparked among the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, so they made full use of their time and their lives, attained better positions, reached higher levels of knowledge and accomplishment, and even had virtue and precedence over others. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Seventy thousand people from my *Ummah* will be admitted to Paradise without being held to account.” A man said, “O Messenger of Allah! Pray to Allah to make me one of them.” He said, “O Allah! Make him one of them.” Another man rose and said, “O Messenger of Allah! Pray to Allah to make me one of them.” He said, “Ukasha has anticipated you in that matter.”

During the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, triggered the spirit of fair competition among his Companions when he said to them, “Who would take this sword and fulfil its right?” Upon that, Abu Dujana Simak ibn Kharashah, who was a brave man, rose and said, “O Messenger of Allah! I will take it and fulfil its right. What, then, is its right?” The Prophet said, “You must not kill a Muslim with it nor flee with it from a disbeliever.” Then he gave it to him.

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, raised his Companions to hasten to do good deeds, race for acts of obedience to Allah, and vie for acts of righteousness. Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

“The poor among the Muslims came to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and said, ‘Only the wealthy people will get the highest ranks



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in Paradise and enjoy its everlasting delights. For they pray as we do and fast as we do, but they have more money with which they can perform *hajj* and *'umrah*, strive in Allah's Cause, and give in charity.' He said, 'Shall I tell you of something which, if you did, would help you catch up with those who have surpassed you, would make nobody catch up with you, and would make you better than all those amongst whom you live, except those who would do the same? Say "*Subhan Allah*" (Glorified be Allah), "*Al-hamdu lillah*" (Praise be to Allah) and "*Allahu Akbar*" (Allah is the Greatest) thirty-three times each after every obligatory prayer.'"

The effect of such competition, servants of Allah, will appear in the hereafter and will last even in Paradise, for it will raise the people of the Qur'an up the levels of Paradise according to how much they read and recited of it in this world. It will be said to the reciter of the Qur'an, "Read, ascend, and recite as you used to recite in the world. For indeed your rank will be at the last verse of the Qur'an that you read." This commendable competition to which Islam has raised us leads to excellence, promotes ambition, and increases development and achievement. In the midst of such competition, a Muslim can overcome any bitterness, cover any distance, and surmount any obstacle.

When established upon truthful, sincere intentions, with hearts cleansed from all impurities that corrupt deeds and make them as useless as floating particles of dust, competition raises people to the loftiest levels of excellence. The loss of the spirit of competition is bound to turn the *Ummah* into a feeble, shaky society that is dominated by dependency and backwardness and stricken by idleness and laziness, and that produces generations of people who lack strength and determination.

On the other hand, Islam forbids harmful competition, which is based upon rivalry for worldly matters and upon following one's whims and desires. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "By Allah, it is not poverty that I fear for you. What I fear for you is that the worldly riches be extended to you as they were extended to those who were before you, so you may vie with one another for them as they did, and so such riches may destroy you as they destroyed them". Competition for worldly matters is condemnable when it distracts one from Allah and the hereafter or leads one to do detestable, evil deeds, to deny a duty, to receive an unlawful gain, or to encroach upon others' rights.

Competition over worldly matters has often led to conflicts between brothers and relatives, has been the reason for much discord, hatred, and envy, and has resulted in many serious disputes and bitter feuds among people. Al-Hasan Al-Basri, may Allah have mercy on his soul, said, "If someone competes with you in matters of religion, then



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compete with him, but if someone competes with you in a worldly matter, then leave it all to him.”

Servants of Allah! One of the main causes of the deadly competition that undermines the pillars of Islamic brotherhood and deprives Muslims of security is envy, for one who envies his fellow Muslim in fact desires the withdrawal of a favour bestowed upon him, and may even use force to remove such a favour.

One form of harmful competition sometimes occurs between peers and people who have similar abilities or who aspire to some religious or worldly position of authority. One may dispraise another by pointing to his vices or ignoring his merits simply because there is some sort of enmity and hatred between them. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

﴿... and reduce not the things that are due to the people
...﴾ (Hud: 85)

Competition may lead to showing aversion to others or to denigrating, oppressing, assaulting, or insulting them.

Harmful competition may also occur in the world of trade. Therefore, Islam has set a number of rules and regulations that govern competition in trade activities. Islam has also established the right values, principles, and ethics to regulate trade. For instance, Islam forbids all forms of monopoly. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “None exercises monopoly except a sinner.” Islam also forbids trickery, cheating, fraud, and aleatory transactions. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Whoever cheats us is not one of us.” The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, also gave the weak-minded the right to provide for non-deception in trade dealings, as understood from the *hadith* narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, which states that a man told the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, that he was often deceived in sale transactions, so he said to him, “Whenever you make any transaction, say, ‘No cheating!’”

Allah, Exalted be He, says:

﴿And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your
Lord, and for Paradise as wide as are the heavens and the earth,
prepared for *Al-Muttaqun* (the pious).﴾ (Al ‘Imran: 133)

May Allah bless you and me with the Great Qur’an and make us benefit from its verses and wise words. I have said what you have heard and I ask forgiveness of Allah, the Most Great, for myself, for you, and for all Muslims for any sin we have committed. Ask Allah for forgiveness. He is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.



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Part Two

Praise be to Allah. Praise be to Allah, Who has sent down the Book upon His servant Muhammad. I praise Him, Glorified be He, and thank Him at present and in time to come. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone, Who has no partners, the Lord of lords, and I bear witness that our master and prophet, Muhammad, is His servant and messenger, the Prophet of Guidance, who was kind and merciful to the believers. May Allah bestow His peace upon him, his family, and all his Companions.

O Muslims!

I advise you and advise myself to fear Allah. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

﴿O you who believe! Fear Allah (by doing all that He has ordered and by abstaining from all that He has forbidden) as He should be feared. [Obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always], and die not except in a state of Islam [as Muslims (with complete submission to Allah)].﴾ (Al 'Imran: 102)

One form of harmful competition is that which occurs between satellite channels in their attempt to seduce and tempt people with prohibited attractions and evil deeds which Satan adorns for them. They in fact compete for sheer loss and misguidance, for they ruin people's minds, corrupt their pure nature, and damage their morality.

Another form of harmful competition leads to extravagance and wastefulness at weddings, in a way that shows lack of respect to Allah's favours, in addition to the forbidden acts that are committed at such celebrations without being mindful of Allah and without observing reason or common sense. Such extravagance is all the more condemnable given the poverty, distress, and misery that many people all over the world are suffering from.

Also included under harmful competition are the wrong practices in the field of sports, which have often led to discord, dissension, hatred, and enmity among competitors, to the extent that sport has deviated from its route and missed its goals and objectives.

Allah, Exalted be He, says:

﴿Race with one another in hastening towards forgiveness from your Lord (Allah), and Paradise, the width whereof is as the width of the heaven and the earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and His Messengers. That is the



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Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He is pleased with. And Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty.﴾ (Al-Hadid: 21)

O Servants of Allah! Ask Allah to bestow His blessings on the Messenger of Guidance, as Allah has ordered you to do so in His Book. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

﴿Allah sends His *Salat* (Graces, Honours, Blessings, Mercy) on the Prophet (Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)), and also His angels (ask Allah to bless and forgive him). O you who believe! Send your *Salat* on (ask Allah to bless) him (Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)), and (you should) greet (salute) him with the Islamic way of greeting (salutation, i.e. *As-Salamu 'Alaikum*).﴾ (Al-Ahzab: 56)

O Allah! Send Your prayers upon Muhammad, his wives, and his offspring as You sent Your prayers upon the family of Ibrahim, and send Your blessings upon Muhammad, his wives, and his offspring, as You sent Your blessings upon the family of Ibrahim; You are All-Praiseworthy, All-Glorious. O Allah! Be pleased with the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali, along with their families and the Prophet's honourable Companions, and also be pleased with us together with them, by Your forgiveness, generosity, and benevolence, O Most Merciful of all the Merciful!

O Allah! Grant power and glory to Islam and Muslims. O Allah! Grant power and glory to Islam and Muslims. O Allah! Grant power and glory to Islam and Muslims, subdue disbelief and the disbelievers, and destroy Your enemies, the enemies of Your religion. O Allah! Make this country of ours and all other Muslim countries safe and secure.

O Allah! Let our rulers be from among those who fear You and seek Your good pleasure, O Most Merciful of all the merciful!

O Allah! Grant victory to whoever supports Your religion, and forsake, O Allah, whoever forsakes Islam and Muslims! O Allah! Grant victory to Your religion, Your Book, Your Prophet's *Sunnah*, and Your believing servants. O Allah! Grant victory to Your religion, Your Book, Your Prophet's *Sunnah*, and Your believing servants.

O Allah! Grant victory to those who strive in Your cause to make Your word reign supreme everywhere. O Allah! Make their hearts firm and strong, unite their rows, gather them around a single word, guide their shots, and grant them victory over Your enemy and their enemy, O Lord of the Worlds!

O Allah! We ask you for Paradise and every word or deed that brings us closer to it, and seek refuge in You from Hellfire and every word or deed that brings us closer to it.



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O Allah! Make good for us our religion, which safeguards our affairs; make good for us this world in which we live; and make good for us the hereafter which will be our eternal abode. O Allah! Make our life an increase for us in all goodness and our death a respite for us from all evil, O Lord of the Worlds!

O Allah! We ask You for guidance, piety, chastity, and freedom from want. O Allah! Be with us and not against us, render us victorious and not defeated, plan for us and not against us, guide us and lead us to guidance, and grant us victory over those who have oppressed us.

O Allah! Make us among those who remember You and praise You, who are humble to You, and who often implore You and return to You in repentance.

O Allah! Accept our repentance, forgive our sins, approve our cause, guide our tongues to say the truth, and purify our hearts from envy.

O Allah! Relieve our distress, alleviate our suffering, have mercy on our dead, and cure the sick among us; You are Powerful over all things!

O Allah! Lavish upon us some of Your blessings, mercy, grace, and provision. O Allah! Lavish upon us some of Your blessings, mercy, grace, and provision, O Lord of the Worlds!

O Allah! Guide our Imam to what You love and accept. O Allah! Lead him to Your guidance, make his deeds pleasing to You, and guide his two Deputies to what You love and accept, O Lord of the Worlds!

﴿... Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers.﴾ (Al-A'raf: 23)

﴿... Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful.﴾ (Al-Hashr: 10)

﴿... Our Lord! Give us that which is good in this world and that which is good in the Hereafter, and save us from the torment of Hellfire!﴾ (Al-Baqarah: 201)

﴿Verily, Allah enjoins *Al-'Adl* (i.e. justice and worshipping none but Allah Alone – Islamic Monotheism) and *Al-Ihsan* [i.e. to be patient in performing your duties to Allah, totally for Allah's sake and in accordance with the *Sunnah*



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(legal ways) of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in a perfect manner], and giving (help) to kith and kin (i.e. all that Allah has ordered you to give them, e.g. wealth, visiting, looking after them, or any other kind of help), and forbids *Al-Fahsha'* (i.e. all evil deeds, e.g. illegal sexual acts, disobedience of parents, polytheism, to tell lies, to give false witness, to kill a life without right), and *Al-Munkar* (i.e. all that is prohibited by Islamic law: polytheism of every kind, disbelief and every kind of evil deeds), and *Al-Baghy* (i.e. all kinds of oppression), He admonishes you, that you may take heed. ﴿An-Nahl: 90﴾

Remember Allah and He will remember you. Thank Him for His favours and He will give you more. Verily, remembrance of Allah is greater than all, and Allah knows what you do.