



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

Sheikh Dr. Abdulbari al-Thubaiti

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Seizing Opportunities Before It Is Too Late

His Eminence Sheikh Abdulbari ibn Awwad al-Thubaiti, may Allah preserve him, delivered the Friday *khutbah* entitled, “Seizing Opportunities Before It Is Too Late”, in which he talked about the importance of seizing the various opportunities for righteous deeds that we have in life. He explained that Allah, Exalted be He, prompts us to do so and that our Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, gave excellent examples of seizing opportunities and making the most of them, in addition to teaching his Companions to do so.

Part One

Praise be to Allah, Who has bestowed His favours upon us and has given us more time to live. I praise Him, Glorified be He, and I thank Him for every blessing and every pious act He helps us to do to be closer to Him. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone, Who has no partners, and Who has brought the believers’ hearts together through love and affection; and I bear witness that our master and prophet, Muhammad, is His servant and messenger, the best example ever to follow. May Allah bestow His peace upon him and upon his family and Companions, whose company to their prophet was the most honourable company and the greatest opportunity.

Now then,

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)

Life is an opportunity in itself, and it is, in its turn, full of countless opportunities that are always open to man and that Allah makes available to His servants one after another. There are opportunities of all types and in every field. Some of them change the entire course of people’s lives, while others effect drastic changes for those who seize them and make the best of them. Some opportunities, however, never recur. One of the



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righteous predecessors once said, "If a door to goodness opens up before any of you, then hurry to go through, for you do not know when it may be closed against you."

An opportunity may be an act of obedience to Allah or a pious act to build the nation and help develop society. It may be a high status or position which can be used in the service of the religion and the *Ummah*. It may also be trade, as the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "How excellent good money is in the hands of a good man!" ("Good money" is money that is gained by lawful means and spent for lawful purposes.)

Opportunities in the life of nations extend across the length of life on earth itself and will continue to occur till one's last breath. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "If the Last Hour comes while one of you is holding a palm-tree cutting, then if he can plant it in the soil before the Last Hour takes place, let him do so." Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, was an excellent example to emulate in his constant vigilance and illuminating insight about seizing opportunities for good deeds; he would urge his Companions to show obedience to Allah, prompt them to perform acts of worships, and guide and instruct them. Once he let Abdullah ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, ride behind him and said to him, "O young man! I shall teach you some words: Be mindful of Allah, and He will be mindful of you. Be mindful of Allah, and you will find Him before you. When you ask, ask Allah. When you seek help, seek help from Allah." In addition, when he once saw Umar ibn Abu Salamah's hand wandering all over the plate, he said to him, "O young man! Say, '*Bismi-llah*' (In the name of Allah), eat with your right hand, and eat from what is directly in front of you."

Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, may Allah be pleased with him, seized the opportunity and became the first man ever to embrace Islam. Therefore, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said of him, "Indeed! Allah sent me to you, and you said, 'You have told a lie,' but Abu Bakr said, 'You have spoken the truth.' He supported me with his life and his wealth, so are you leaving for me my companion?" He said it twice, and Abu Bakr was never offended after this incident.

Uthman ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, seized the opportunity of the presence of the Prophet's Companions, may Allah be pleased be with them, in al-Madinah to compile the verses of the Qur'an into an authentic, standard book which the Companions unanimously approved and adopted. It is through this authentic compilation that, Allah, Exalted be He, saved the Muslims from far-reaching evil and wide disagreement.

Those who seize opportunities and take the initiative go many stages and levels ahead of others. The foremost Muslims who were the first to embrace Islam, namely, the *Muhajirun* (those who migrated from Makkah to al-Madinah) and the *Ansar* (the residents of al-Madinah who helped the *Muhajirun*) are far better than those who



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embraced it after them. Those from among them who fought the Battle of Badr are better than others. Similarly, those who embraced Islam, migrated, and strove in the cause of Allah by offering their wealth and their lives before the Prophet's victorious return to Makkah deserve more merit than those who did so after this event. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

﴿And the foremost ones [(in Islamic Faith of Monotheism and in performing righteous deeds) in the life of this world on the very first call for to embrace Islam,] will be the foremost (in Paradise). These will be those nearest (to Allah), in the Gardens of Delight (Paradise). A multitude of those (foremost) will be from the first generations (who embraced Islam). And a few of those (foremost) will be from the later generations.﴾ (Al-Waqi'ah: 10-14)

Valuable opportunities pass quickly; they are brief and short-lived. Just reflect on the course of life of someone in his advancing years, and you will see how quickly his conditions change from health to illness, from affluence to poverty, from security to fear, from occupation to idleness, and from youth to old age.

The necessity to take opportunities becomes all the more important in times of trials and adversities. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Hasten to do good deeds before you are put to trials and tests that are as deluding as the dark of night. A man would be a believer in the morning and a disbeliever in the evening, or he would be a believer in the evening and a disbeliever in the morning, abandoning his faith in exchange for some worldly goods." It is for this reason that our Noble Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, instructed his *Ummah* to seize opportunities and hasten to do good deeds before it is too late. He said, "Take advantage of five [states] before [you get into] five [others]: your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before your being busy, and your life before your death."

Take advantage of your life, for when you die, your deeds will come to an end, your hopes will be shattered, and you will regret every lost opportunity. Take advantage of your health, for whoever falls sick becomes too weak to perform many good deeds and wishes he were only able to fast and pray. Take advantage of your free time before you are overcome with distractions and become preoccupied with worldly matters. Take advantage of your youth before you get old, your body becomes heavy and sluggish, and your strength declines. Take advantage of being rich: help the needy, give alms to the poor, and give money to charity before you waste your money or it leaves you.



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Every opportunity, servants of Allah, is an advantage, no matter how insignificant it may be in your sight. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Do not belittle any good deed, even the act of meeting your brother with a cheerful face." The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, also said, "Guard yourselves against Hellfire even by giving half a date as charity; and if you cannot afford that, then by saying a good word." He also said, "A man may utter a word which pleases Allah without realizing the full extent of its outcome, and because of it, Allah raises him in degree." This is the constant condition of a Muslim. He takes every opportunity to give, no matter how small the amount is, and makes every possible effort, no matter how little it is. Take the case of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph), peace be upon him. Despite the alienation and the horrid oppression that he suffered while he was in prison, he served the religion and called to the plain truth:

﴿O two companions of the prison! Are many different lords (gods) better or Allah, the One, the Irresistible?﴾ (Yusuf: 39)

Repentance is an opportunity that is always available in one's life, and nobody knows when his life will come to an end. 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)

Through repentance, Allah gives His servants the opportunity to reconsider their situation and reflect on their conditions so that they may quickly turn to Allah before He subjects them to humiliation and puts them to trials and tests. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "The angel on the left [who is charged with recording sins] waits for six hours before recording the sin of a Muslim servant. If he repents and seeks Allah's forgiveness for it, the angel drops it. And if he doesn't ask Allah for forgiveness, the angel records it as one sin."

Blessed spiritual seasons are also recurrent opportunities and great gifts which only sensible people seize. There is the season of *hajj*, in which sins are washed away, and there are plenty of opportunities for performing '*umrah*', which makes amends for the servants' sins and misdeeds. There is also the month of Ramadan, with its marvellous days and blessed nights. Living near the sacred sites is also a priceless opportunity to multiply rewards. Indeed, rewards for doing good deeds are multiplied in Makkah and al-Madinah. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Offering one prayer in my mosque is better than offering one thousand prayers elsewhere, except the Sacred Mosque, and offering one prayer in the Sacred Mosque is better than offering one hundred thousand prayers elsewhere." Even those who are inflicted



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with adversities have the opportunity to gain manifold rewards if they show patience and accept Allah's will and decree.

A sensible Muslim who has strong determination takes the initiative; he creates his own chances and undertakes purposeful activities to gain rewards and make the best use of his time and his life so that he can benefit himself, increase his provision for the hereafter, and serve his country and the Muslim *Ummah* at large. The truly successful are those who consider every season in their lives an opportunity to purify their souls and develop themselves. They take initiatives, race against time, and hasten to achieve high goals. By contrast, if Muslims lack the initiative and are totally dependent on others, they will lose significant opportunities and remarkable gains. Their energy will fade away, and they will not have any positive impact on their country or on the Muslim *Ummah*. To this end, O Muslims, we need to base our life upon serious education. We should take advantage of all opportunities so that we can develop our worldly life and achieve peace in the hereafter, the home that will remain forever.

Whoever sets insignificant goals for himself and underestimates his worth in this world will lose all chances and will spend his life chasing his evil whims and lustful pleasures. In this way, all his days and years will be wasted away and he will end up saying:

﴿... "Alas! Would that I had sent forth (good deeds) for
(this) my life!"﴾ (Al-Fajr: 24)

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, Who has blessed us with the grace of following Islam. I praise Him, Glorified be He, and thank Him constantly. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone, Who has no partners, and Who has granted His servants the favours of fasting and performing voluntary night prayers; and I bear witness that our master and prophet, Muhammad, is His servant and messenger, the best of all those who have performed obligatory prayers, observed fasting, and offered voluntary prayers at night. May Allah bestow His perpetual and perfect peace and blessings upon him and upon his family and Companions.

Now then,

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)

Servants of Allah!

Procrastination results in losing chances, thus causing the accumulation of duties, delay of tasks, and lack of concentration. As a result, one may not realize the available chances ahead of them and may not be able to accomplish any job. Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "A sign of strength is not to delay until tomorrow what you should do today." Opportunities are also lost through hesitation, which causes one to miss one's goals and remain in place when others are moving forward. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

﴿... Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah; certainly, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).﴾ (Al 'Imran: 159)

The heedless will lose all chances, squander all favours, and waste time by their idleness. It is the heedless that will suffer grief and regret on the Day of Judgement:

﴿And warn them (O Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) of the Day of grief and regrets, when the case has been decided, while (now) they are in a state of carelessness, and they believe not.﴾ (Maryam: 39)



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The wretched will suffer the greatest remorse when they ask for another chance.
They will say:

﴿... "Our Lord! Our wretchedness overcame us, and we were (an) erring people. Our Lord! Bring us out of this; if ever we return (to evil), then indeed we shall be *Zalimun*: (polytheists, oppressors, unjust, and wrong-doers).">﴾ (Al-Mu'minun: 106-107)

Allah will then say to them:

﴿... "Remain you in it with ignominy! And speak you not to Me!">﴾ (Al-Mu'minun: 108)

O Servants of Allah! Ask Allah to bestow His peace and blessings on the Messenger of Guidance, as Allah has commanded 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! Bestow Your peace upon Muhammad, his wives, and his offspring as You bestowed Your peace upon the family of Ibrahim, and bestow Your blessings upon Muhammad, his wives, and his offspring, as You bestowed 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, subdue disbelief and the disbelievers, and destroy Your enemies, the enemies of Your religion. O Allah! Make this country and all other Muslim countries safe and secure.

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



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Book, Your Prophet's *Sunnah*, and Your believing servants. O Allah! We ask You for Your support for Islam and Muslims.

O Allah! Make whoever harbours evil intentions towards us and towards Islam and Muslims preoccupied with his own problems and make his plotting the cause of his own destruction, O All-Hearer of Supplication!

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.

O Allah! We ask You for all that is good in this world and in the hereafter, both what we know and what we do not know. O Allah! We seek refuge in You from all evil in this world and in the hereafter, both what we know and what we do not know.

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 and alleviate our suffering. O Allah! Have mercy on our dead. O Allah! Have mercy on our dead, cure the sick among us, release our prisoners, and protect us, O Lord of the Worlds!

O Allah! Bless our life, our deeds, our spouses, our offspring, our wealth, our children, and our time, and make us blessed, O Lord of the Worlds!

O Allah! We beseech You, O Allah! You are the Rich and the One Free from all needs, and we are the poor who are in need of Your favours. O Allah! Send down rain upon us and do not make us among the despairing. O Allah! Grant us rain. O Allah! Grant us rain. O Allah! Grant us rain. O Allah! Grant us rain. O Allah! Let the rain bring forth mercy with it and let it not cause torment, affliction, destruction, or flooding. O Allah! Let the rain bring forth mercy with it and let it not cause torment, affliction, destruction, or flooding. O Allah! Let the rain bring forth mercy with it and let it not cause torment, affliction, destruction, or flooding.



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

O Allah! Guide all Muslim rulers to act according to Your Book and to rule according to Your *Shari'ah*, O Most Merciful of all the merciful!

﴿... 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* (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.