



Synopsis of Friday Sermon

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IONA
REPENTANCE
REVITALIZATION OF FAITH
RENEWAL OF COVENANT

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

Synopsis of Friday Sermon

Political Engagement and Voting

(2024-10-11)

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
وَلَوْ ءَامَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِّنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

“You are the best nation produced for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. Had the People of the Book believed, it would have been better for them. Some of them are faithful, but most are defiantly disobedient.” [Aal Imran, 3:110]

The importance of Political Participation and Voting has become increasingly relevant for Muslims living in North America and other minority settings—Particularly in light of the ongoing genocidal actions we are witnessing in Gaza, Lebanon, and other parts of the Muslim world. The question arises: What is our responsibility as Muslim minorities in non-Muslim lands? What role should we play in the political process?

The Responsibility of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

Islam encourages all Muslims to engage in their communities and promote justice, truth, and compassion. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur’an, *“You are the best nation (ummah) produced for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah.” [Aal-Imran, 3:110]*

This ayah sets the foundation for our role as Muslims wherever we may reside. Our purpose is to be witnesses to humanity by advocating for what is right and opposing what is wrong. This is articulated in surah al-Hajj. *“...so that the Messenger be a witness over you and be witnesses over mankind.” [al-Hajj, 22:78]* Similarly, in surah al-Baqarah, *“Thus We have made you a middle (balanced and just) nation (ummah) so that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger be a witness over you.” [al-Baqarah, 2:143]*

Political engagement is a form of enjoining good and forbidding evil, especially when we can contribute to stopping injustices and promoting the welfare of society.

Political Engagement is A Duty, NOT a Choice

Political participation is not only a right for Muslims living in democratic countries, but it can also become an obligation, especially when lives are at stake, as we see today in places like Gaza and Lebanon. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, *“Whoever among you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand. If he cannot, then with his tongue. If he cannot, then with his heart and that is the weakest of faith.” (Sahih Muslim)*

For Muslims in North America, where we have the freedom to vote and engage politically, staying silent is not an option. We have the ability to raise our voices through the political process, whether by voting, lobbying, or speaking out against injustice.

The Gaza and Lebanon Crises: A Call for Political Action

The ongoing genocides and human rights violations against our brothers and sisters in Gaza and Lebanon should serve as a wake-up call for all Muslims. These atrocities are a violation of all ethical and moral principles, and they demand a strong response from the global Muslim community.

If we, as Muslims, do not use our platforms to advocate for the oppressed, then who will? We cannot afford to be complacent when innocent lives are lost. The political system in which we live allows us a unique opportunity to influence foreign policies, challenge unjust practices, and bring awareness to issues that affect our Ummah.

Navigating the Political Landscape: Choosing Wisely

While the political climate may seem polarized between the left and the right, between democrats and Republicans. Muslims are not required to wholly align with one political party. The guidance from the Qur'an and Sunnah instructs Muslims to follow the middle path in all aspects of life. As Allah (SWT) says, "*Thus, We have made you a middle (balanced and just) nation (ummah).*" [al-Baqarah, 2:143]

Being a "just and balanced Ummah" means that we do not lean to extremes. Consider the following two extremes. Dr. Jamal Badawi once wisely said, "Assimilation is not an option, and isolation is not an option." So what is it one may ask? "Positive integration."

One common question asked is: *Are you a Democrat or a Republican?* As Muslims, the answer should transcend the labels of political parties. We are neither Democrats nor Republicans; we are Muslims who are called on to positively integrate with the community, society, city, state, and country. Our identity, values, and principles are derived from the guidance of Allah (SWT), the Qur'an, and His Messenger (SAW), the Sunnah.

Muslims in America are encouraged to engage politically, socially, and economically, but in a way that upholds Islamic values. Positive integration means actively participating in the system but ensuring that our actions and decisions are based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an, "*You are the best of nations evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah.*" [Aal Imran, 3:110]

This ayah emphasizes that our role in society is to promote good and resist wrong. Our engagement must always reflect these goals, whether through voting, advocacy, or standing for justice.

We must be wise in choosing candidates. Our duty is to assess candidates and policies according to our values as Muslims. We should choose those who align with Islamic principles of justice, compassion, and righteousness. We may agree with some policies of Democrats, and we may agree with some of the Republicans' policies. But our loyalty is not to any political party - it is to Allah (SWT) and His guidance.

During his 2020 campaign to garner Muslim Votes, President Biden quoted a well-known hadith from the Prophet (SAW), "Whomever among you sees wrong, let him change it with his hand, if he is not able, then with his tongue, if he is not able, then with his heart."

The hadith Mr. Biden quoted reminds us of our responsibility to speak and act against injustice. Today, we see ongoing atrocities against our brothers and sisters in Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon.

If the ongoing genocide; the murder of tens of thousands of children, women, and the elderly; the destruction of 70% of Gaza and the entire infrastructure; the destruction of hospitals, schools, universities, mosques and churches; the killing of more than 170 journalists, among other war crimes is not evil and wrong then what is?

How can then one vote for a party whose hands are stained with blood, for a party that enables the Zionist regime to in a matter of minutes drop 83 tons of explosives over residential buildings in Lebanon destroying an entire block while Tim Walz is calling for Israel's expansion.

The Jewish Voice for Peace had the right idea, "Divest from Death. Invest in Life." The recent Hurricane Helene raged through the southern United States, killing more than 200 people. But before a full assessment of the damage, FEMA announced a \$9 billion funding shortfall. That same day, Israel announced it would receive another \$8.7 billion in military aid from the U.S. government.

The Biden administration would rather pay for the murder of Palestinian children than the rescue and rebuilding of communities in the U.S.

We are faced with a difficult political choice. On one side, the Biden administration continues to support actions that result in the oppression of Palestinians and the destruction of Gaza. On the other hand, we have Trump, who has promised to crack down on pro-Palestinian protests and support extreme measures by Israel. Trump said, "Israel is the one. And you should let them go and let them finish the job. And tells Israel bomb Iran's nuclear sites." As Muslims, we cannot turn a blind eye to these realities. How can we support any party that actively enables oppression?

On the domestic front, we are living in times where moral values and ethics are being challenged in ways that affect not only adults but, most disturbingly, our children. There is a growing movement promoting LGBTQ ideologies, transgenderism, and other concepts that seek to normalize behaviors that are not just against the teachings of Islam, but also against the moral values upheld by Christianity and Judaism. This way of life is being institutionalized in schools, taught to young children, and promoted in public libraries through books that contain explicit and inappropriate content. As Muslims, we must understand this threat, protect our families, and engage in the political process to influence the outcomes of elections.

What does Islam say about Morality and Family Values

In Islam, the family unit is the cornerstone of a healthy and functional society. The relationship between a man and a woman is sacred and ordained by Allah (SWT) in the institution of marriage. Allah says in the Qur'an, *"And We created you in pairs (males and females)."* [al-Naba', 78:8] He (SWT) further says, *"And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves spouses (husbands and wives) that you may find tranquility in them, and He placed between you affection and mercy."* [al-Roum, 30:21]

The foundation of human relationships as ordained by Allah (SWT) is based on the natural union between man and woman, as exemplified by the creation of Adam and Eve. This sacred relationship between male and female is designed for procreation and building stable families, which in turn ensure the stability of society.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) emphasized the importance of modesty and moral conduct. He said, "Modesty is part of faith." (Sahih Muslim)

Modesty and chastity are fundamental elements of our faith, and anything that seeks to undermine these principles is contrary to Islam's teachings. Promiscuity and immoral behavior are not only harmful to individuals but have broader societal consequences. Allah (SWT) tells us in the Qur'an, *"And do not approach immoralities—what is apparent of them and what is concealed."* [al-An'am, 6:151]

The LGBTQ and Transgender Agenda is being promoted in Schools

What we are seeing today, particularly in the West, is the systematic indoctrination of our children into accepting behaviors and lifestyles that are not only against Islam but also against natural human disposition (*fitrah*). School curricula and children's books are being designed to teach even the youngest children about homosexuality, same-sex marriage, and transgenderism as "normal" and acceptable.

These teachings often begin in elementary schools and aim to desensitize children to things that would normally be seen as abnormal or unnatural. For example, some children's books feature explicit illustrations and graphic content that showcase same-sex relationships or transgenderism. This material is inappropriate, confusing, and harmful to the innocent minds of young children.

As believers, we have a responsibility to protect our children from this kind of moral corruption. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, "Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you will be questioned about those under his care." (Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

We are responsible for raising our children with Islamic values, ensuring they grow up in a morally sound environment. Exposing them to ideas that are repugnant to Islam not only harms their faith but also confuses their sense of right and wrong.

Islam grants Freedom of Choice

People are free to choose their way of life. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an, *"There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the right path has become distinct from the wrong path."* [al-Baqarah, 2:256]

People are free to live as they choose in private. What they do behind closed doors is between them and Allah. However, promoting such behaviors in the public sphere, especially to children, is where the line must be drawn. Islam, Christianity, and Judaism all agree that the promotion of immoral behaviors in public is harmful to society and to the future of our children.

We must protect our children from the moral corruption that is being normalized in our society.

Political Engagement is Our Responsibility

We must consider our political engagement carefully. Allah (SWT) commands us in the Qur'an to stand up for justice, *"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even if it be against yourselves, your parents, or your kin."* [al-Nisa, 4:135]

As Muslims, we cannot support candidates who openly advocate for policies that promote the LGBTQ agenda and transgenderism, especially in schools. While it is true that both major political parties have their flaws, we must support candidates who align with our values and principles as much as possible.

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, “Whoever among you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; if he cannot, then with his tongue; if he cannot, then with his heart—and that is the weakest of faith.” (Sahih Muslim)

We may not have the power to stop these movements entirely, but we have a voice. We can vote, advocate, and engage in the political process to promote candidates who support family values and the protection of our children from moral corruption.

Third-Party Alternatives

It is crucial to remember that there are other choices beyond the two main parties. There are candidates from third parties, such as the Libertarian and Green parties among others. These alternatives may align more closely with our values.

Unlike the primaries, where you have no choice except to vote either democrat or republican, you have the option in the general elections to vote for candidates from different parties depending on their stance on specific issues.

We must be informed, research our local candidates, and vote for those who best align with our values—be they Democrats, Republicans, or from other affiliations.

The best advice is, VOTE your CONSCIENCE.

Voting Your Conscience

At the end of the day, the choice is yours. As Muslims, we must vote with a clear conscience, guided by our faith, principles, and values. Voting is a trust (*amanah*) given to us, and we will be accountable for how we use it. The Prophet (SAW) said, “There is no person to whom Allah has entrusted with responsibility and he dies neglecting that responsibility, but that Allah will forbid him Paradise.” (Sahih al-Bukhari)

This means we must take our responsibility seriously, whether in governance, leadership, or even voting.

We do not entirely assimilate into societies at the expense of our Islamic values, nor do we isolate ourselves to the point where we are inactive in society. Instead, we adopt a middle course—engaging positively and constructively in the political, social, and economic arenas.

The Balanced Ummah

We are and should be, as the Quran describes, the balanced Ummah. We are an ummah that takes the middle ground in all affairs, “*Thus We have made you a middle (just and balanced) Ummah, that you may be witnesses over mankind, and the Messenger a witness over you*” [al-Baqarah, 2:143]

The ayah teaches us that we should not lean towards any extremes - whether left or right, but rather take a balanced, just approach based on Islamic teachings. This principle is vital when engaging in politics and deciding whom to support.

We are neither Democrats nor Republicans. We are Muslims first and foremost. As such, we have to critically evaluate the candidates and parties not based on their labels but on their policies and actions, especially in terms of justice, equality, and their stances on issues that impact Muslims locally and globally.

The challenges we face are great, but Allah has given us the guidance and strength to stand up for what is right. Let us engage politically with wisdom and stand for justice, as Allah has commanded us.

“*O you who believe, stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah ; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do.*” [al-Ma'idah, 5:8]

This means we vote for justice, for righteousness, and for policies that align with Islamic principles. As Muslims in North America, we must assess which candidates, regardless of their party, uphold justice and fairness, especially concerning foreign policies toward Muslim-majority nations.

What Can We Do?

Here are some Recommendations for Political Engagement

1. Engage Politically with Wisdom: Research the candidates running for local, state, and federal offices.
2. Vote Your Conscience: When you vote, vote for the candidate who most closely aligns with Islamic values, particularly in matters of family, morality, and education. regardless of their party. Consider their stance on social justice, human rights, and global peace, especially concerning Palestine and Lebanon.

Support Local Candidates: Local elections are just as important. These are the politicians who directly affect your community, so research and support candidates who align with our values.

Note that there are candidates, including Muslims, who run under either the Democratic or Republican ticket. These candidates do not necessarily subscribe to the entire ideology or worldview of either party. Instead, they align with certain positions to increase their chances of winning. This strategy has proven effective in many cases.

4. Voting is a Duty: Voting is a critical responsibility for all eligible and registered voters. If you are a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old, and not yet registered to vote, it is important to do so and exercise your right to participate in shaping the future of your community and country. There are other options to vote such as mail-in ballots, and early voting.
5. Choice of Candidates: Unlike the primaries, where one typically votes for an entire party's ticket, in the general election, you have the flexibility to choose candidates from different parties. This means that you can vote for a Democrat in one race and a Republican in another if their views align more closely with your values. Note: It is crucial to thoroughly research all candidates, particularly the local ones, and cast your vote for those whose positions are in line with our Islamic values and principles, regardless of whether they are Democrats, Republicans, or affiliated with any other party.
6. Engage with Your Community: Encourage your family, friends, and neighbors to be politically engaged.
7. Advocate for Justice: Contact your local and national representatives to express your concerns about Gaza, Lebanon, and other Muslim issues. Use your voice to stand up for the oppressed.

Speak Out: Do not be afraid to raise awareness on social media, at community events, or in your personal networks. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, “The best form of Jihad is a word of truth in the face of a tyrant ruler.” (Sunan Abu Dawood)

Allah (SWT) has granted us a great blessing in the form of political freedom here in North America. With this freedom comes a responsibility—to ensure that justice prevails for all, including our Muslim brothers and sisters who are suffering globally.

Our role as Muslims is to stand for justice, support the truth, and promote good. Whether in political engagement or everyday life, we take the middle path, balancing all matters according to Islamic teachings. We are not defined by political parties but by our faith in Allah (SWT) and our commitment to justice.

Remember the words of Allah (SWT), “*And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided.*” [Aal Imran, 3:103]

Let us remain united as an Ummah, actively engaging in society while holding firmly to our principles and seeking the pleasure of Allah (SWT) in all that we do.

May Allah (SWT) guide us and protect our families and to make the best decisions for ourselves, our communities, and the world. May He give us the strength to stand firm in our beliefs and make a positive impact in our communities.

May Allah (SWT) guide us to make informed, just, and righteous decisions in the elections. May He grant us the wisdom to advocate for the oppressed, the strength to stand firm against injustice, and the courage to engage positively in our communities, following the guidance of the Quran and the Sunnah. And may Allah (SWT) protect our brothers and sisters in Gaza, Lebanon, and all places where Muslims are oppressed.

Ameen.

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