

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Ever Merciful

لِحَمْدِ اللَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْوِرُهُ وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ
فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

قال الله تعالى يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

وقال الله وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

Part 1: What is happening?

عن النعمان بن بشير رضي الله عنهما قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم " مثل المؤمنين في توادهم وتراحمهم وتعاطفهم، مثل الجسد إذا اشتكى منه عضو تداعى له سائر الجسد بالسهر والحمى " ((متفق عليه)).

Nu'man bin Bashir (May Allah bepleased with them) reported:

Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever".

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

We all know this hadith, so today we will talk about our fellow Muslims who are suffering, but our fever has not yet risen high enough to the level of wakefulness and action.

What is happening in East Turkestan – that area of the world known as Xinjiang by the Chinese? If we do not even know the extent of what is happening there, then how can we respond with wakefulness and fever?

East Turkestan was a Muslim country that existed in some form or another until 1949. It was then forcibly taken over by Communist China. Today there are more than 12 Million Muslims in the region. Since then has begun a campaign of oppression and destruction that has transformed into all out genocide in the past few years.

This claim of genocide is not just something we are saying as Muslims because we have a bias towards our fellow Muslims. This is the definition used by Governments across the world.

More than a Million Uyghurs are put into internment camps where they are forcefully trained to remove any trace of Islamic faith and to conform to Chinese communist policy.

There is forced sterilisation with population growth dropping by more than 80%. Inside the camps, torture, intimidation and even murder all take place.

An Imam was sentenced to 5 years in prison for taking his son to a Madrasah and the famous economist Ilham Toti was jailed for life.

Even the dead are not left in peace with multiple cemeteries being obliterated.

They hold competitions and give cash rewards for Uyghur women who marry non-Muslims and celebrate them in the media as a positive example. Worse than this even, they have forcibly placed hundreds of thousands of Communist party workers into the homes of the Uyghur Muslims and advised that they must sleep in the same bed. What follows is unimaginable horror.

They have banned the wearing of the hijab, beard and any other Islamic attire.

If any Uyghur children are born, then the name Muhammad is banned for them to give to their sons.

An estimated 16,000 Mosques – yes 16,000 – have been destroyed by the Chinese Communist Government.

Much of this is covered up using TikTok and other social media platforms that are directly controlled from within China.

The scale and depth of the tragedy in East Turkestan is difficult to comprehend. “They seek to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light though the disbelievers hate it.” [Quran 61:8]

Part 2: What can we do?

One of the biggest obstacles to helping our Uyghur brothers and sisters is the feeling of powerlessness that Shaytan tries to instil in us. What can we do against a growing superpower? How can anyone stand up to China?

The first step is for us to realise that Allah has given us an incredible amount of potential for positive change, we just need to be motivated enough to use it and coordinated enough to use it wisely.

Therefore the Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ، وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ

“Whoever among you sees a single evil, he must change it with his hand. If he is unable to, then he must change it with his tongue. And if he is unable to do even that, then he must change it with his heart, and that is the weakest of faith.”

There is no fourth option for the believer – we are not allowed to ignore it because we feel we are unable to change it.

There is a famous parable taught in leadership circles of a man on the beach, picking up starfish stranded by the receding tide, and throwing them back into the sea before they dry up and die. As he is throwing them back into the water one by one, an onlooker approaches him and says, obnoxiously:

“There are THOUSANDS of these things, do you think you’re going to make a difference? Hah!”

The man pauses for a moment, picks up another starfish and shows it to the onlooker before throwing it back into the water, saying:

“I made a difference to that one, didn’t I?”

The dumfounded onlooker had fallen prey to the perfectionist fallacy; another trick of Shaytan (and our nafs) to deactivate us and prevent us from doing all types of good deeds.

In other words, just because you cannot fully solve a problem, it doesn't mean you're not supposed to work towards the solution. Allah will not ask you why you did not liberate Palestine, for example, since doing that was not in your sphere of influence. But He may, on the other hand, ask you why you didn't speak to your local MP about it, or raise awareness to your circle of influence, or donate some of your wealth to help their cause, and so on.

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا

"Allah does not charge a soul except [according to] what He has given it."

Allah will not judge us according to what is outside of our ability, in fact He rewards and punishes also according to what is within our ability.

With that in mind, the fact that we should not belittle any effort done sincerely however small, what are some of the things we can do for our brothers and sisters suffering genocide?

Today, mosques all over the world are talking about the same thing as part of an **International Khutbah Day**. The community is coming together for the Uyghur campaign to channel people towards effective action for the Uyghurs.

We all have an opportunity to show our Uyghur brothers and sisters that we will not remain silent while people lock them up in concentration camps, harvest their hair and organs, force them into slavery, torture them, and much worse than cannot be mentioned while our younger brothers and sisters may be listening here.

Whether it is writing letters to our MPs, raising awareness online, raising funds for refugees or uniting the Muslim communities so that our response is more powerful and coordinated – there are many ways of showing our fever and wakefulness at the plight of our brothers and sisters in East Turkestan.

Do not underestimate the power of sincere deeds that may be small in the materialistic sense; remember that our primary objective is to please Allah and be absolved of blame when we meet Him.

Let us make dua for our brothers and sisters that what we have heard here today means we are not going to pass by heedless. We will respond with the wakefulness and fever that our Prophet (SAW) mentioned, because once we have that - we will begin to do something about it.