

THE SEMINAL ADVICE



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In the sacred City of the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him), during the summer of 2004, Habib Umar bin Hafiz was requested to give advice to the Muslims living in the West. The following is a translation of his inspiring and decisive response...

Praise be to God, who has blessed us with the sending of His servant, His Beloved and Chosen One, our Master, Muhammad, the son of 'Abdullah. May God bless him and grant him peace, as well as his family, companions, and all those who seek rectitude through his guidance. It is solely through *his* agency that God made us the best nation and raised us up in the ranks of nobility. Again, may God bless him and grant him peace, as well as his family, companions, and all those who follow on his path.

To proceed:

Dear brethren in faith, those whom God has dignified, honored, and crowned with the carrying of "*La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad Rasulallah*" [There is no divinity but God, Muhammad is the Messenger of God] in the lands of the West and throughout the earth.

From the sacred city of our Master, the Chosen One, Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), we present to them the obligation of giving and receiving advice; a way that the Messenger of God himself commanded us to abide by. This is part and parcel of the legacy that he left behind for us. It is a responsibility that has been placed on our necks and we are to carry on his message throughout the ages, in hopes that we may be of those "*who believe and do righteous deeds, give mutual advice concerning the truth, and give mutual advice concerning patience*" [Quran 103:4].

To our dear and noble brethren, those whom the banner of the testimony of faith in the One God and the messengership of Muhammad has joined us together:

FIRST ADVICE: CAREFULLY STUDY THE SIRAH

My first advice is to carefully study the blessed life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). This study should be coupled with deep reflection concerning the events that transpired during his noble lifetime, the method by which he interacted [with individuals and groups], the way in which he faced the trials and tribulations that befell him, and the very content of the teachings of His Lord that he was commissioned to disseminate.

Careful consideration should also be given to the way in which he displayed patience, exertion, humility, reverence, humbleness, sincerity, and firm resolve. All of this will bequeath to them a light-giving illumination in anything and everything that arises or occurs.

SECOND ADVICE: DEVELOP STRONG CERTAINTY

We advise them to have strong certainty and to pursue the means and methods to further strengthen this quality. This certainty should be in the greatness of God, His divine power, and in His unique oneness and lordship. This certainty should also be in the fact that all affairs are in His hands alone, before as well as after, and that all that He has informed us of is true, as is that which His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) has informed us of.

The way by which they can achieve this is through deep reflection on the verses of the Noble Quran, careful and contemplative consideration of the creation of God, meticulous performance of the prescribed acts of worship, and through dutiful obedience.

THIRD ADVICE: DISPLAY RAPPORT & COMPOSURE

We advise them not to permit the presence of differences of opinion, the existence of diverse schools of jurisprudence, or even sectarian groups, to hurl them into disunity and disparity.

They should also be aware that the various, but valid, schools of jurisprudence (*madhabib*), as well as the multiple paths of spirituality (*turuq*), are but proper expressions of the vastness of the Islamic tradition and the way of prophetic guidance.

All of this should be a cause for them to recognize the greatness of this way of life—this *Deen*—and a means for them to unite the various affiliates [of

these groups] upon the foundational principles and timeless maxims that bring them all together. With this recognition in sight, they should also strive to have a good opinion of one another and to always hold each other in good faith.

This way is the right way—at all times—but especially in these times in which the worldwide Muslim community is in great need for unity upon the foundational principles and timeless maxims of their noble way of life (*Deen*).

This matter is even more incumbent upon those who lay claim to follow the way of *Ahl al-Sunnah* (the followers of the four well-known *madhhabs* and those acceptable paths of spirituality, all of which are attributed to masters of the highest caliber). Of all people, such are the ones that should understand that their main goal is to gather the hearts upon the Divine. They are not callers to their particular schools of jurisprudence (*madhabib*), nor are they callers to the specifics of their particular spiritual paths (*turuq*); rather, they are callers to the One God, His Messenger, and to His sacred law.

One's *madhab*, or one's *tariqah*, is nothing but a necessary means for understanding the particulars of religious life and practice, whereas *da'wah* (outreach) is a call to matters of comprehensive significance: God, the Almighty; His noble Messenger; and the sacred law.

It is upon this broad foundation that all discourse and interaction should be based, and it is this that we strongly advise them with. Nonetheless, we do hope that they will adhere to their particular *madhhabs* and *tariqahs*—those that are founded in truth—in a proper and appropriate way, in hopes that this will be a means for unification, not disunity, and a means for proximity, not estrangement.

FOURTH ADVICE: DEVOTE YOURSELF TO REMEMBRANCE

We advise them to prepare for the journey with a special provision of the remembrance of the Most Merciful (*dhiker al-Rahman*), especially through those supplications that have come to us in the prophetic example (Sunnah). They should also send abundant peace and blessings upon their Prophet, the Chosen One, Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

FIFTH ADVICE: BE NOT AFFECTED

We advise them not to be affected by the difficulties, trials, and bleak circumstances that will come to pass. They should not be hopeless, powerless, and devastated, and they should realize that God has a divine wisdom and purpose behind everything that transpires.

SIXTH ADVICE: HAVE FIRM RESOLVE

We advise them to make firm their resolve to give victory to God and His Messenger, thereby fulfilling the covenant that He has placed upon them, namely, excellence in outreach (*da'wab*) and in guiding to the Divine, regardless of the circumstances or difficult state of affairs that may surround them. They should also take glad tidings in the fact that the more difficult things become, the closer the divine aid, victory, and relief draw near.

Let them place in front of their eyes the statement of the truthful emissary of the divine message, the beloved of the Creator and the most noble of all creation (peace and blessings be upon him): "... And have sure knowledge that victory comes through patience, relief comes with tribulation, and with difficulty comes ease."

SEVENTH ADVICE: FOCUS ON DIVINE ACCEPTANCE

In all of this, we advise them to not allow their hearts to be attached except to their Lord's good pleasure for them, and that they should always do what is best and most beneficial. They should couple this with **excellence in translating the beauty, majesty, and completeness of Islam through their verbal conveyance and public interaction—all expressed in accordance with the sacred law, with both those near and far—and by spreading the carpets of the good and noble character that has been received from the magnificent Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him.** Therefore, let them work hard to both manifest and self-actualize this level of noble prophetic character in their familial interactions, as well as in other human relations.

EIGHT ADVICE: LOOK AFTER YOUR FAMILY

We also advise them to conscientiously look after their families and children so that they may be raised with upright character and given a proper view of the various communities around them.

If the forces of disbelief happen to confront them, then it is the religious obligation of their parents to provide them with the prophetic methodology for their response to such forces. **This methodology consists of first-rate elucidation, excellent elocution, noble interaction, upholding the right of humanity and the nobility of self, and gracious disposition (even with those that have been unjust and transgressed the bounds).** Also, one should be careful not to actually open the doors of retaliation. Such is the guidance of the Chosen One, Muhammad, may peace and blessings be upon him, his family, and his companions.

NINTH ADVICE: MAKE YOUR GOAL ALLAH

We advise them, and our own selves, as to everything that has been mentioned thus far, and that they should make their sole goal --- Allah ---, and their sole desire --- Allah ---. They should not make anything else a goal in and of itself; rather, they should make their purpose the pleasure of God, the Almighty.

Everything that has been mentioned concerning “victory”, “aid”, and so forth, are also not to be taken as goals in and of themselves, rather, they are to be recognized as matters that are fixed in accordance with the divine precedent of God (*Sumnat-Allah*)—that which God has determined for the way in which He interacts with His creation and how circumstances play out. Instead of making all of these things actual goals, our aspirations should instead be to realize our slavehood to God, the Almighty, and to live in accordance with what is most pleasing to Him, and to utter what is most pleasing to Him.

I ask the Supreme Reality (God) to sustain and enrich them—and us—with total success and complete uprightness, and that He bless them—and us—with pure interaction (with Him), and that He strengthen their—and our—connection to the chain that leads directly to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), via the currently present scholars (of truth), those who live according to their knowledge.

TENTH ADVICE: RESPECT ALL SCHOLARS & SHOW GRACIOUSNESS TO HUMANITY

[I also ask God] that every student, of every shaykh, would come to recognize that all other shaykhs are also the imams of his Deen and that he should magnify them, honor them, and love them as well. He should not see this as an affront to his own shaykh, rather, it is actually from the respect of his shaykh that he live according to the light and guidance that he has received from him. Such is done by respecting the Muslim community at large and by giving special regard to the scholars and the righteous among them. One should also display gracious interaction with all the children of Adam, as well as the animal kingdom, and even inanimate objects. This is the way to the attainment of true slavehood to God, the Almighty.

ELEVENTH ADVICE: FERVENTLY SEEK FORGIVENESS

I would also like them not to neglect seeking the forgiveness of God (making *istighfar*), especially at the time before sunset and in the moments before dawn. May God make us, and them, of the people of excellence (*ibsan*), those whom God referred to in the Quran when He said, “*They were people of excellence even before that. They used to sleep very little at night and they sought forgiveness in the early hours before dawn. And in their wealth was a portion for the beggar and the destitute*” [Quran 51:17-19].

Oh Lord God, give us strength, and give strength to our brethren, through success, aid, and levelheadedness. Give victory through us to the banner of truth and guidance, in the best of ways, with uprightness and with usage of the finest methods and mediums, as is most beloved to You and Your Messenger. [Let this be] by Your mercy... Preserve them, take charge of their affairs, strengthen their hearts, rectify that which is between them, and avert all evil from them, by Your mercy, Oh Most Merciful of those who show mercy...

May peace and blessings be upon our Master, Muhammad, and upon his family and companions...

All praise is due to God...

About the Translator:

Christopher 'Khalil' Moore was born in the United States into a practicing Christian family. He came to the path of Islam in the summer of 1994 at the age of 19. Since then he has studied Arabic and Islamic knowledge in the blessed city of Madinah (1996-1999), the deserts of West Africa, the Atlas Mountains of southern Morocco, and the Hadramawt Valley of Yemen. He holds a Bachelor's degree in English, with a minor in Religious Studies (George Mason University), and hopes to complete his Master's and PhD in the fields of translation, interpretation, and Oriental Studies.



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