

May Day

As-salámu ‘alaikum wa rahmatul láhi wa barakátuh!”

“A-úthu billáhi minash shaytánir rajeem. Bismilláhir rahmánir raheem.

Al hamdu lillahi nahmaduhu wanasta’eenahu, wanastagh-firuhu, wanatoobu ilayhi, wana’oothu Billaahi min shuroori an-fusinaa, wamin sayyi aati a’maalinaa.

May- Yahdillahu fa huwal muhtad, wa may- yudlill falan tajidaa lahu waliyan murshida. Wa ash-hadu an Laa ilaaha ill-Alláh, wahdahoo laa shareeka lah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhoo warasooluh”

In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Next week is a public holiday due to May Day and in today’s Khutbah, I would like to take this opportunity to talk to you about the value of work and the rights of employees in Islam. May Day also known as International Workers Day, or Labour Day in other countries celebrates the achievements attained for the working people through campaigns for better working conditions. In the UK, May Day is generally viewed as a public holiday and is not a day used by political groups or collective organisations for protests.

Islam places great importance on work and sees it as an act of worship. Allah (SWT) indicates the following in the Qur’an;

“Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions. ”

(An Nahl16: 97)

Dear brothers and sisters, Allah (SWT) gave human beings, which are the most respectful and wisest of His creation, only a limited lifetime in this world. This means, that as mankind we are responsible for every second of our life. Therefore, we must struggle hard for the best by utilizing our time very efficiently.

Making the best of life is only attainable through hard work and peace and happiness in this world and in the Hereafter depends on good deeds and efficient work.

Our Lord of Mercy, Allah (SWT) tells us in Surat-un Najm 39-40:

“That man can have nothing but what he strives for; that (the fruit of) his striving will soon come in sight”

Allah’s Messenger Prophet Muhammad (SAW) set an example for all of mankind as he worked very hard during his lifetime and advised all people to do so. He carried stones during the construction of Masjid-i Nabawi and he never forgot to help with housework. The Prophet’s (SAW) principle was “to not be burden on nobody” but “helping others” wherever possible.

In one of His Hadiths he says:

“No food is better to man than that which he earns through his manual work. Dawud (as), the Prophet of Allah, ate only out of his earnings from his manual work.”

(Riyaz-us Salihin, V1, P569, N545)

Dear brothers and sisters, Islam defines certain rights and duties on the part of the employers and the employees. Firstly, it is important to note that justice and fair dealings are basic values of Islam and they must always be upheld. Justice in Islam is to recognise that all people have rights and injustice is to deprive the people of the rights that are due to them.

Allah The Almighty (SWT) says in the Qur’an: **“O you who believe, stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you swerve, and if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well acquainted with all that you do”** (An-Nisaa’ 4:135).

All people are equal and therefore should be treated equally. In the workforce, equality between workers should be maintained. Allah The Almighty (SWT) says in the Qur’an: **“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full Knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)”** (Al-Hujurat 49:13).

Prophet Muhammad (SWT) said the following words in his last sermon:

“O people, indeed your Lord is one and your father is one. Behold, there is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for a non-Arab over an Arab, nor for a white person over a black person, nor for a black person over a white person, except through piety.” (Musnad Ahmad)

In the workforce, it is important that all employees and employers know their responsibilities and duties and all agreements such as those relating to annual leave, holidays and compensation are not only just and fair, but that they are clearly communicated whether orally or in written format.

Allah says in the Qur’an; **“O you who believe, fulfil your contracts”** (Al-Ma’idah 5:1)

The Prophet (SWT) said, **“Muslims must abide by their agreements, unless there is an agreement that makes halal what is haram or makes haram what is halal”** (At-Tirmidhi).

Islam places such great importance on workers to the degree that the Prophet Muhammad (SWT) said, **“Give to the worker his wages before his sweat dries”** (Ibn Majah). This is a beautiful example of the thoughtfulness of our prophet and also the importance of rewarding employees in haste. I would like to conclude this khutbah with this thought, let’s make the most of this public holiday by taking the opportunity to reflect on our lives and pray for Allah (SWT) to bring *barakah* to our daily lives within our working lives and family lives. May Allah (SWT) keep us on the straight path and reward us in the hereafter with his blessings. Ameen!