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POST-SUICIDE KHUTBAH

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Post-Suicide Khutbah/Friday Sermon

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About Imam Hosam Helal

Imam Hosam Helal is an Imam and Religious Educator with ISNA and a member of the Canadian Council of Imams. He is the founder of Quran Journey, a consultant with the Stanford Muslim Mental Health Lab, and a Spiritual Care Leader at McMaster University. Born in Egypt and having memorized the Qur'an at a young age, he now lectures across Canada and the U.S., focusing on Qur'an-centered scholarship, community outreach, and youth engagement.

Disclaimer

This resource is intended for educational and community use. It does not replace professional mental health care, counseling, medical advice or formal sucidide prevention/intervention training. If you or someone you know is in crisis or experiencing thoughts of self-harm or suicide, please seek immediate help from qualified professionals or contact your local emergency services.

To request comprehensive Suicide Response Training in your community, please email **education@maristan.org.**

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Allah جل جلاله says in Surat al- Isra:

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ (الإسراء: 70)

“We have honored the Child of Adam” (17:70)

And Allah SWT says in Surat al-Baqarah:

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ (البقرة: 34)

“We have commanded the Angels — who are perfect beings — to prostrate (as a form of honourable greeting) to the first human being, Adam, indicating the honour associated with the humankind.” (2:34)

In addition, according to the reliable Hadith reported by al-Nisa'i in his Sunan and al-Tirmidhi that 'Abdullah bin 'Amr ibn al-'As
said that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

لَزَوَالُ الدُّنْيَا أَهْوَنُ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ قَتْلِ رَجُلٍ مُسْلِمٍ

For the whole world to perish is less severe in the sight of Allah SWT than the unjustifiable killing of a single believer.

My dear brothers and sisters, let us take a moment to reflect on the **value of life**.

It became a clear belief among the early Muslims that to protect one single human being is better than preserving the entire sanctity of the Ka‘bah. The saying goes:

لَأَنْ تُهْدَمَ الْكَعْبَةُ حَجَرًا حَجَرًا أَهْوَنُ مِنْ قَتْلِ رَجُلٍ مُسْلِمٍ

“For you to destroy the Ka‘bah stone by stone is less severe than taking the life of a single Muslim.”

Imagine how you’d feel if you saw the Ka'bah being destroyed.

And how many times have you heard the ayah in the Quran (5:32):

مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَٰلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا ۚ وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا (المائدة: 32)

"That for you to save one life or prevent destruction upon earth, is better than, or is equivalent to saving the entire humanity. And for you to contribute to the loss of a single life, is equivalent to the destruction of the entire human kind."

Let that sink in. That's the value of life. And we have to think about the things that we do on a day-to-day basis that contribute to people evaluating and appreciating life. And we must also think about the things that we do on a day-to-day basis that contribute to people feeling as though their worth is diminishing. Or that their life means nothing.

As a matter of fact, Allah SWT says (2:83):

وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا (البقرة: 83)

Speak well, speak kindly with people. Because words are very powerful.

In one of the most beautiful parables in the Quran, Allah says in Surah Ibrahim (14:24):

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ (إبراهيم: 24)

*Al*lah SWT gives a metaphor of what the beautiful word is like. A beautiful word, Allah says, is like a beautiful tree that has deep roots. This beautiful word emerges out of the heart with deep roots. And its branches are reaching high into the sky. This tree is approached by all kinds of individuals, that love to eat from its crop, that love to eat from its fruit. So imagine Allah SWT is reminding us in this Ayah, to let the words that we share with people, the people around us, to be beautiful enough that they are like fruits that are eaten and appreciated by all kinds of people.

And we know that the Prophet Muhammad SAW taught us, again, to appreciate the power of words:

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ *[Muslim]*

"The one who believed in Allah and the hereafter shall say that which is beautiful, kind, true, and good or remain silent." [Muslim]

So when it comes to speech, we must be cognizant and aware of the power and impact of our speech on people's lives around us.

And also our actions. One of the most beautiful, profound hadith that demonstrates the power of being there for people in those difficult times that people go through, the Prophet Muhammad SAW says in the authentic hadith:

[Muslim] مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ

"The most beloved people to Allah are those who are beneficial to the people around them.

وَأَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ سُرُورٌ يُدْخِلُهُ عَلَى مُسْلِمٍ

And one of the most beloved actions to Allah is to allow joy to overcome a fellow Muslim

أَوْ يَكْشِفُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً

,or to alleviate a hardship

أَوْ يَقْضِي عَنْهُ دَيْنًا

.or to help that person pay off a loan or debt that they have

أَوْ تَطْرُدُ عَنْهُ جُوعًا

or to alleviate hunger from an individual

وَلَأَنْ أَمْشِيَ مَعَ أَخٍ فِي حَاجَةٍ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ أَنْ أَعْتَكِفَ فِي مَسْجِدِ الْمَدِينَةِ شَهْرًا

Which means, “And for me to attempt to walk with the intention of helping an individual”, so imagine, not even fulfilling, but just attempting, walking, being there, supporting an individual, is better than 30 days of secluded worship in the Masjid of the Prophet PBUH.

And we know according to another authentic hadith, that any worship inside of the Masjid of the Prophet is equivalent to a thousand outside. So this means, trying to help someone, is better than 30,000 days of worship secluded in the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina.

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad SAW taught us that even bringing a smile to someone around, that is a sadaqah, that is a charity. Not only that, the first hadith — now sometimes it’s important to go back to the principles, the basics — the first Hadith that the Prophet Muhammad SAW shared with the people of Medina, he says:

فْشُوا السَّلَامَ وَأَطْعِمُوا الطَّعَامَ وَصِلُوا الْأَرْحَامَ وَصَلُّوا بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِسَلَامٍ

“Oh people, spread peace” spread greetings of salam or spread peace, “and feed people” and in another narration *“help keep the connections of kinship”* and *“pray at night when the world is asleep, and you will enter Jannah with peace.”*

So the ticket to Jannah is being there for people, **helping people**.

And the hadith and the surahs and the ayahs in the Quran that speak about the importance of helping people, and being there for people, are many.

So in our discussion of suicide, its important first and foremost to **focus on affirming life**. And reminding each other, of the **value of life**. And reminding one another that it can be very difficult in this dunya.

وَلَتُبْلَوُنَّ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ (آل عمران: 186)

You will surely be tested in your wealth and in your souls, and in your health.

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ (البلد: 4)

That life and human being is in a constant state of struggle. So we need to be there as supporters of one another. To embrace each other's struggle and to be there and to feel for one another.

And we know that life can be full of challenges, for the prophets, for the messengers, for those that are closest to Allah SWT. We know that Yusuf AS' father, Yaqoob AS, lost the ability to see because of the sorrow and immense grief that he was experiencing.

And we know, for example, that Prophet Ayub he raised his hands to Allah out of desperation (21:83):

وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ (الأنبياء: 83)

My Lord, I have been afflicted with so much harm, so much difficulty, and you are the Most Merciful Out of anyone who is capable of showing Mercy.

And Allah SWT says (9:126):

أَوَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ يُفْتَنُونَ فِي كُلِّ عَامٍ مَرَّةً أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ لَا يَتُوبُونَ وَلَا هُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ (التوبة: 126)

"Do they not see how they are tested once or twice a year. Yet little do they turn back and remember."

لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ أَلَّا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ (الشعراء: 3)

Allah tells Rasulullah, **perhaps you are going to lead yourself to demise because of your worry.**

Life can be difficult. It can be challenging. And so let us be there for one another when those tests are taking place.

And Allah says,

وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً (الأنبياء: 35)

You'll be subject to trials through that which you think is good for you, and through that which you think to not be good for you.

وَعَسَىٰ أَن تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ وَعَسَىٰ أَن تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (البقرة: 216)

"And perhaps you may dislike something and it is good for you. And perhaps you may like something and it may not be the best for you."

وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (البقرة: 216)

"And Allah knows. And you are not always fully aware,"

So recognizing the power of words, recognizing the power of a kind word, a gentle word. Let us be from those who remind others of the Mercy of Allah. Of the forgiveness of Allah SWT. That we should not be from those who are defined by their sins.

Allah SWT says,

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ (الزمر: 53)

"My servants" Allah SWT is calling on to you and me. Which kind of servants?

"Oh you who have transgressed against yourselves, through sins. Don't ever lose hope in the mercy of Allah."

And additionally, don't be one of the people who causes someone else to lose hope in the mercy of Allah SWT, as the Tabi'een would say.

"**Indeed, it is He who is the All-Forgiving, the Most Merciful."**

"Allah forgives all the sins altogether." All of the sins you can imagine, Allah is capable of forgiving. You cannot commit a sin that is too great for Allah to forgive. That faulty thinking is an insult to Allah's mercy. It is arrogance!

So let us be of those who bring **good news**:

يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا، وَبَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنَفِّرُوا

"Bring good news, bring glad tidings, share positive reminders. And don't repel people with your words." This is what the prophet Muhammd SAW taught the companions. When you are meeting people, when you are explaining Islam to them, when you are explaining and talking to people about Allah SWT, don't repel them. Be kind in your approach. Be gentle. The prophet Muhammad SAW, he says, "gentleness does not enter anything except that it makes it beautiful and it is not kept out of anything except that it leaves it deficient."

So what do I do if I'm feeling helpless and I'm having all of these negative thoughts? Speak to someone.

فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِن كُنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (النحل: 43)

"So ask the people of knowledge if you do not know."

Seek counsel. Speak to someone with professional abilities. Someone with empathy and compassion. Someone that you trust. Seek that and Allah SWT will make the journey easy for you.

Make the intention. Sit in sujood and say, "Ya Rabb help me."

Cry out, pour your heart to Allah SWT. And Allah will facilitate a way. Be optimistic.

The companions said that the Prophet Muhammad SAW loved optimism. That's why the Tabieen and others said, "Hope for good and you'll find it."

What if I know someone who is experiencing those negative thoughts? What should I do? Help them. Be there for them. Take them to an expert. **Save their life.** As we mentioned earlier, saving one life is equivalent to saving all of humanity.

And having highlighted the importance of saving and preserving one life in Islam, and the value of life in Islam, it's important to consider the ayah where Allah SWT says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَن تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَن تَرَاضٍ مِّنكُمْ ۚ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا (النساء: 29)

"O you who believe, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly, but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves. Indeed Allah is ever Merciful to you."

And keeping in mind that one of the five maqasid of shariah, one of the five main goals of the Islamic law is to preserve human life, it makes sense then that the Quran defines suicide as a crime.

And although the Prophet Muhammad SAW refused to pray the janaza or funeral prayer on the individual who had killed himself, he allowed the companions to pray on the same individual.

Here we see the wisdom of the Prophet Muhammad SAW: balancing between maintaining and affirming the dignity of our Muslim brothers and sisters, while also maintaining the severity of the act of suicide.

Now, what do I do if I encounter a family that is grieving the loss of someone to suicide?

I am going to help. I am going to show empathy. I'm going to make duaa for the family. I am going to be present.

I'm going to make myself available and listen with empathy. I will shift the conversation away from the fate of the deceased, towards the healing of the family. And I will consult the experts. And connect the family with professional therapy if needed.

Also importantly, give them the space to heal. And **be kind in the words that you choose**. And how you speak about the individual who has passed on. And how you speak about the family that is coping with the situation.

Now of course it is important to remember that we have at our disposal the suicide toolkit available to us from the Stanford Muslim Mental Health Lab. May Allah bless all those who worked on it and May Allah keep us sincere. Consulting the toolkit and consulting the experts can really help us use the correct words, direct our empathy in the best of ways, and give the family the help that is needed and empower them with the tools that are required.

With that, I make the duaa that the Prophet Muhammad SAW taught us to make when we are facing difficulties and anxieties of any kind:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ القُرْآنَ رَبِيعَ قَلْبِي، وَنُورَ صَدْرِي، وَجَلَاءَ حُزْنِي، وَذَهَابَ هَمِّي

"Oh Allah, allow the Quran to be the spring of our hearts.
And the light of our chests.
And the thing that wipes away our sorrows.
And the thing that displaces our sorrows, our anxieties, and our worries."

I ask Allah SWT to grant us all His rahmah, to make us compassionate and loving to one another, to give us resilience, and to empower us with strength. I ask Allah to give us all beautiful endings. And to allow the best of our deeds to be the last of our deeds. And allow us to meet him in the best of ways.

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