

ENGLISH | VOTING IS AN OBLIGATION

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ
 سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.
 وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
 وَرَسُولُهُ.

Indeed, all praise is for Allah. We praise Him, we ask for His help, we beg for His forgiveness, and we seek
 refuge and protection with Allah from the evils of ourselves and from the evil consequences of our sins.
 Whoever Allah [SWT] guides to the straight path, no force in the universe can misguide him. And whoever
 Allah [SWT] misguides, no one can guide them to the Truth. I bear witness that there is no deity, no object
 worthy of any act of worship except Allah [SWT], the One without any partners, associates or equals. And I
 bear witness that Muhammad [SAWS] is His slave and messenger.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ ؕ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ

مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

You who believe, be mindful of God, as is His due, and make sure you devote yourselves to Him, to your dying moment. 3:102

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا
 وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ ؕ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ

اللَّهُ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴿١﴾

People, be mindful of your Lord, who created you from a single soul, and from it created its
 mate, and from the pair of them spread countless men and women far and wide; be mindful
 of God, in whose name you make requests of one another. Beware of severing the ties of
 kinship: God is always watching over you. 4:1

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٧٠﴾
يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧١﴾

Believers, be mindful of God, speak in a direct fashion and to good purpose, and He will put your deeds right for you and forgive you your sins. Whoever obeys God and His Messenger will truly achieve a great triumph. 33:70-71

1st khutba

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

Be a community that calls for what is good, urges what is right, and forbids what is wrong: those who do this are the successful ones. 3:104

As 2020 General Elections approach, this week we would like to remind all Muslims that they need to register to vote before October 19, 2020 and request their mail-in-ballots by October 27, 2020. It is best, of course to do each before the deadline. Let's reflect and see why voting is an obligation for us in this challenging times. Muslim scholars categorized obligations in 2 broad categories: Fard-ayn (individual obligation) and Fard-kifayah (societal obligation). Fard-ayn includes prayers, zakat, fasting, hajj, earning from lawful sources and consuming lawful and clean things, upright character generally to Allah, family and the community. These individual obligations are mandatory on all Muslims who meet the criteria of moral responsibility and are *mukallaf* (morally responsible as a result of intellectual and physical maturity).

Fard-kifaya (societal obligation) includes working to first eradicate the harms in a society and then establish good broadly. Scholars captured the essence of the above verse in the legal maxim *dar' al-mafasid wa jalb al-masalih*. They took pains to order the process of societal obligation as *dar' al-mafasid (removal of harms)* and then *jalb al-masalih (accrual of benefits)* because good cannot accrue until harms are removed that prevent the emergence and sound establishment of good. And benefits cannot be realized and sustained unless the harms that prevent their emergence are removed and a vigilance is established to continuously guard against the establishment of those harms.

Good cannot accrue until harms are removed that prevent the emergence of good. Benefits cannot be realized and sustained until primary harms are eradicated.

Muslim organizations that work to empower the American Muslim community toward this seminal responsibility of *amr bil-ma'ruf and nahi-an al-munkar* - to implement our societal obligations - continually call for American Muslim voter participation as a crucial act in a full framework of fulfilling our societal obligations - our fard-kifaya. The full framework is the commitment to work in every sphere of societal engagement including change through *political participation and engagement*.

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ اَنْ صَدُّوْكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ اَنْ تَعْتَدُوْا وَتَعَاوَنُوْا عَلٰى الْاِثْمِ وَالنَّقْوٰى
وَالْعَدْوٰى اِنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢﴾

Do not let your hatred for the people who barred you from the Sacred Mosque induce you to break the law: help one another to do what is right and good; do not help one another towards sin and hostility. Be mindful of God, for His punishment is severe. Qur'an 5:2

Ibn Taymiyyah mentions that this verse is the basis of politics. How do we help each other towards **birr**--which denotes all notions of good (fighting income inequality, fighting environmental degradation, fighting political corruption, embracing peoples of all backgrounds)--and taqwa--reverence? The Qur'an doesn't specify in detail – however, our creativity, our intelligence CAN and SHOULD be unleashed in working to figure that out, to organize ourselves, to advocate, to amplify our voices. One of the many means by which other communities are able to achieve their ends--and therefore American Muslims can learn from those experiences--is by engagement in the political process. And the most basic engagement in the political process that only takes little time once every years is VOTING. But to vote, you have to be registered. If you are registered to vote, please vote. If you remain unregistered, I encourage you to register to vote before our state deadline on **October 19, 2020** so that you can vote in the general election on **Tuesday November 3, 2020**. **And of course in these pandemic times, those who are registered should request vote-by-mail ballots before October 27, 2020 and return their voted ballots by November 3, 2020.**

Every year is a historic opportunity for Muslims to come and vote in record numbers and vote in officials who will support the rights of immigrants, the working class, and stand up in the climate of bigotry. Especially in this year's local elections, how your tax dollars are used, how your schools are funded, how your police treats you is at stake.

May Allah guide us to take our societal obligation - our fard-kifaya - in the most serious manner and give this community the tawfiq to make a difference in the direction of our country.

2nd khutba

Here are possible objections some might have to voting and our answer:

1. Objection: My vote does not matter | Answer: remember Bernie Sanders win in 2016 Michigan primary where the Muslim and Arab vote carried him across the finish line.
2. Objection: The current politicians are corrupt | Answer: Work to promote other candidates who are aligned with our values.
3. Objection: What if I vote for a person who becomes bad? | Answer: Change the person in the next elections.
4. Objection: The system is rigged and broken between the 2 parties | Answer: Work to educate and change through campaign finance reform, and other well established paths to political change
5. Objection: Voting denies Allah's sovereignty | Answer: This is willful ignorance as working within the society to change it is Fard-kifaya and voting by no means denies Allah's ultimate power and will but uses our common knowledge of society to take the legal and common sense means of change available to us. So don't be fooled by such a silly argument.

Again, if you remain unregistered, I encourage you to register to vote before our state deadline on **October 19, 2020** so that you can vote the Pennsylvania primary election on **Tuesday November 3, 2020**. Remember, you can send your ballot in the mail. Deadline to request your mail-in-ballot is **October 27, 2020** and your ballot should reach the county election office on **November 3, 2020**.

Reminder of Shaikh Taha Jabir Al-Alwani's fatwa (he passed away March 4 2016, May God be pleased with him)

"...it is incumbent upon Muslims to actively participate for the following reasons: 1) In order to protect our rights as American citizens, we must be involved in politics. 2) Our involvement can facilitate our support of our fellow Muslims around the world. 3) Our interaction with non-Muslims and our involvement will help to spread Islam's message. 4) It helps to convey the universality of Islam... Our participation is an obligation in Islam, and not merely "a right" that we can choose to forfeit at will. It affords us the opportunity to protect our human rights, guarantee the fulfillment of our needs, and work for the improvement of living conditions for Muslims and non-Muslims in America and abroad... Whatever helps us to achieve these noble goals becomes Islamically obligatory. This includes: ... Supporting (both politically and financially) those non-Muslim candidates whose beliefs and values are most compatible with ours as Muslims, and who most address and support our issues and causes... Registering to vote and then voting. Although separate acts, they are both an essential part of the electoral process. Our participation in that process is mandatory."

End of khutba

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴾

God commands justice, doing good, and generosity towards relatives and He forbids what is shameful, blameworthy, and oppressive. He teaches you, so that you may take heed. 16:90