FRIDAY SERMON

HADHRAT MUHYI-UD-DIN AL-KHALIFATULLAH

MUNIR AHMAD AZIM

01 March 2019
23 Jamadi'ul Aakhir 1440 AH

After greeting all his disciples (and all Muslims) worldwide with the greeting of peace Hadhrat Khalifatullah (atba) read the Tashahhud, Ta'uz, Surah Al Fatiha, and then he delivered his sermon on:

THE DANGERS OF SOCIAL NETWORKS/ MEDIA

Who does not know Facebook, Youtube, WhatsApp, Messenger, WeChat, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, etc. ? They are described as social networks that connect people around the world. Today, these networks have more than 2 billion users worldwide and thousands connect each week. And the most used of these networks is Facebook.

In Mauritius and around the world as a whole, Facebook has been growing in popularity. Everyone goes on it, even 10-year-olds. It includes all social classes: movie stars, artists, politicians, social workers, students, men, and housewives, etc.

While this network has some advantages, such as finding work and finding long-lost family members or friends, there are many dangers, especially for us Muslims.

Facebook is a social network, but by doing a thorough analysis, we see that it's actually an antisocial network. Users are often permanently connected to it at home or in the office. Some young people, addicted to Facebook, evolve almost in

a virtual world, disconnected from reality. Many people prefer to eat in front of the computer (or Laptop/ Tablet/ Smartphone etc.), chat with virtual friends or play games on Facebook. They no longer see the importance of spending time eating with family, among others.

According to Wahshi ibn Harb's report, some of the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) said: *"O Allah's Apostle! We eat but we are not satisfied."* He said: *"Perhaps you eat separately."* They replied: *"Yes."* He said: *"If you gather together at your food and mention Allah's name, you will be blessed in it."* (Reported by Abu Dawud).

Eating together strengthens family ties, encourages dialogue, and certainly brings more blessings. Islam is a religion that is against individualism, it encourages sociability and wants all believers to live as a family.

Facebook also brings a lot of narcissism. Research by psychologists and linguists has shown that the personal pronouns used on Facebook's walls are impressive: 'me', 'I', 'myself', compared to collective words like: 'we', 'community', 'humanity'. The users become very self-centred and they take pleasure in putting themselves forward and giving importance to themselves. They carefully create their virtual image in order to beautify their profile on the network. There is a general decline in the concept of belonging to the community and the group. The examples of increasing individualism are certainly numerous. They often boast of (most of the time, it being make-belief) having made trips abroad, of having gone to social gatherings, sports or cultural activities in vogue. They publish "super" photos, often distorted (morphed), to say *"I am even more beautiful from this angle"*. They tend to value themselves, as if to say *"look at me"*.

Now the definition of life for these people boils down to Facebook, Instagram etc. They waste valuable time scrolling the indefinite pages of their friends, family relationships and even strangers! They comment, post photos and videos of their personal activities as if their lives are for the public eye and not private! Facebook, and other virtual platforms have become like a drug for people. They cannot do without it anymore. Instead of talking face-to-face and living a healthy life, without photo filters and Photoshop morphing, they engage in activities that are reprehensible in Islam.

It is really unfortunate to see that many Muslim women have also fallen prey to it. They publish photos or videos where they are dressed in their finest adornment for parties, weddings and even on the occasion of the Eid and some wearing their *Hijab* and while others not. They define their *Hijab* as a toy, a casual unimportant thing! Allah, in His infinite wisdom, has ordered women not to voluntarily expose themselves to strangers and to show their beauty only to their *Mahrams*.

Examples abound in the Quran and Sunnah, like verse 34 of Sura 33 (Al-Ahzab):

"Stay in your homes; and do not flaunt yourselves in the manner of women before Islam (Jaahiliyah)."

Now, it is our Muslim women who are behaving worse than in the days of *Jaahiliyah* (era of ignorance before the advent of Islam). In the past, there were no social networks! Today, the whole world knows what our Muslim women do, as well as all Muslim brothers!

So how can some Muslims put themselves forward, daring to appeal to the public who can easily access these images? They do not realize that the world of the internet - with all the details, images and videos of their lives - and even smartphones are tools that can be easily hacked. They are not protected. And this applies to all users of social networks.

Islam advocates its followers to stay within the limits of decency, and to apply the divine commandments so that we are protected from the pangs of Satan. These are fundamental aspects of Islam and it is unfortunate that they are thus trivialized.

Today everyone says he does not have enough time. But do we know how to use our time? Facebook addicts do not see the time spent playing virtual and other games. They have become cyber-dependent, and like drugs, they cannot live without them anymore. As any addiction is dangerous, cases of suicides have been recorded among the big Facebook users. As soon as they connect, it is difficult for them to get off the hook. They become more and more curious, wanting to look for personal data about others' private lives and other things that does not concern them.

On the authority of Abu Hurairah (ra) who said: *"The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "Part of the perfection of a person's Islam is his leaving that which is of no concern to him"* (Reported by Tirmidhi).

In addition, gossip, false news emerge and it borders on selfishness and even voyeurism. All of this goes against what Islam teaches us. In doing so, we neglect things much more important, even essential, such as *Salat* at the prescribed time or the reading and study of the Holy Quran.

And now, because much of the world has become addicted to Facebook, that it was necessary to advocate a day without Facebook - Yesterday Thursday, 28 February 2019 was the international day without Facebook! But in reality we must live our lives fully, as it should, disconnected from virtual things and stay within the limit of the permissible. I'm not telling you that social networks are completely bad. Far from it, it can be very beneficial, but you need to know how and when to use them. Today with globalization, we Muslims have very useful tools through the internet and sophisticated gadgets of the modern era. We have the opportunity to use these tools to spread Islam, to teach the world the language of truth, the language of spirituality, and to enrich our knowledge, both spiritual and secular.

So let's use them only to please Allah, and to build and consolidate our *Iman* (faith), not to please our ego and for ostentation. Let's us not waste our precious time on useless things. Let's not look for information that will not benefit us in this world and beyond. Let us use this time to come closer to our Creator and to do things that will please Him. Society needs us at all levels to help those in distress, the poor, the orphans. Parents should encourage their children to serve the community during the weekend or school holidays and to play sports instead of wasting their time and energy unnecessarily on social networks.

May Allah help our young and old to realize the dangers they face in using social media. *Ameen.*

Allah will certainly help us, but we must make the necessary efforts to abandon such practices which are useless and harmful to our *Iman* and to do everything to establish ourselves in the fruitful practices, which will help us in our goal of spreading the divine message in all the nooks and crannies of the world. We have the tools. Let's learn how to use them. If you doubt that you will not be able to

use them without slipping away (from your main goal of spreading the word of Allah), then it is best to stay away from all this, and use your communication skills to do *Dawa / Tabligh*. Go to people, invite them to Allah, to His Faith (Islam). The contact with people is much better than the virtual contact.

May Allah help you all understand this sermon. If you were a fan/ addict of social networks, keep a minimum of time on it. Do not waste your precious time in the virtual world. Live the true life that Allah has granted you, and make Allah pleased by staying away from the forbidden. *Insha-Allah, Ameen.*