



SCOPE HIV MESSAGES OF HOPE LESSON SERIES

A Sermon Guide for Muslim Leaders

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SERMON 1 – TESTING TOGETHER AS A FAMILY IS GOOD FOR A HEALTHY FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

Opening Remarks

I commence by greeting you with the greetings of peace, “**Assalamu Alaykum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh!**

Firstly, I praise Almighty Allah, Lord of the universe. Secondly, I beseech Almighty Allah to send down His mercy, blessings and pure salutations upon the last Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), his household, and his noble companions. May His mercy and blessings be showed upon all of you present here, *Amin!*

Today in our discussion, we will talk about the issue of **testing together as a Family**. We will explain how it is important for us as Muslim households to go for HIV testing together, and how that will act as an important factor in strengthening love and affection between ourselves.

Why is it so important for a Muslim household to test together?

As believers, we are commanded to do things together. Many of our religious acts are done in congregation to instill in us the spirit of togetherness when doing things. We have been taught that Allah’s help, protection and blessings are always with those who are together. Our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is reported to have said: “**Allah’s hand is with those who are together...**” (Reported by Tirmidhi).

Therefore, based on this teaching, we are encouraged to go for HIV testing together as a family to ensure that each member in our family is protected, for whatever calamity befalls one member in the family, is as if it has befallen all of them.

Advantages of testing together.

Testing together as a Muslim household has many benefits in our family life and our religious life are concerned. Some of the main benefits are;

- Testing together shows that the members in a Muslim family are sincere in their relationship and that there are no deceptive or hypocritical attitudes among them. In that way, love and affection among them is strengthened and consolidated. Our prophet (pbuh) was reported to have said: “**He who is not trustworthy has no faith, and he who does not keep his covenant has no religion...**” (Reported by Ahmad). He also said: “**And he who cheats us, is none of us.**” (Reported by Muslim).
- It shows that the members wish good for each other, which is one of the signs of being a true Muslim believer. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: “**None of you become a true believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself.**” (Reported by Bukhari and Muslim).
- It shows the correctness of one’s belief, for a Muslim believes that Almighty Allah knows all that which is done secretly and that which is done openly. Qur’an 2:284 says: “**To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Whether you show what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allah will bring you to account for it...**” (Qur’an 2:284).

Conclusion

Therefore, it is incumbent upon us as Muslim families to go for HIV testing together if we rightly wish to be true Muslims who follow the pure and beautiful teachings of Allah and His Prophet (pbuh). And in that way, we will definitely attain the love and blessings of Almighty Allah in this world and the next life.

Wassalam Alaykum Warahmatullah, Wabarakatuh!

SERMON 2 – CHILDREN GET HIV TOO, LET US PROTECT THEM BY GETTING THEM TESTED FOR HIV

Introduction

I greet you with the greeting of peace **“Assalamu Alaykumu Warahmatullah Wabaraktuh!”**

I begin by praising Almighty Allah, The Beneficent, and The Merciful. Secondly, I ask Allah to shower His mercy and blessings upon our beloved Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), his family members and his companions.

Today, the topic of our preaching— specifically addressed to the fathers and the Muslim boys -is **“Children get HIV too.”** We will try our best to explain how it is important for us to assist them and those we take care of to get tested for HIV.

Our prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said: **“He is not one of us who shows no mercy to younger ones....”** (Reported by Tirmidhi). In this prophetic saying, we learn that showing mercy towards the young ones is one way of being a true Muslim. And that assisting them to get tested for HIV to help them know their health status is one of the clear signs of showing mercy towards them, and wishing good for them.

As Muslims, we are taught in the Qur’an as well as the sayings of our prophet (pbuh), that the worldly life is full of tests and trials, which do not exclude any of us despite our age, gender, color, tribe etc. This teaches us that it is normal for a child to get HIV. Almighty Allah says: **“And we test you with good and evil as trial; and to Us you will be returned.”** (Qur’an 21:35).

Message to the Muslim Fathers

You are responsible for the protection of your family:

Muslim fathers should know that the duty of protecting their families is upon their shoulders, and that they will be questioned regarding it on the day of resurrection. Allah says in Qur’an 66:6: **“Oh! You who believe! Protect yourselves and your families...”**

The prophet (pbuh) also said: “Certainly, Allah will question everyone who is responsible about his charge.” (Reported by Tirmidhi).

Muslim Fathers should encourage their children to go for HIV testing:

Muslim fathers have the duty of advising and encouraging their children to go for HIV testing on their shoulders. They should emulate the noble example of Luqman (r.a) whose story is mentioned in the Qur’an when he advised his son saying:

“Oh, my son, observe the prayer, advocate righteousness, forbid evil and be patient over what has befallen you. These are of the most honorable traits.” (Qur’an 31:17).

Therefore, Muslim fathers should *encourage and convince their children about the importance of knowing the status of their health with tender and love*. They should instill in them the confidence that being HIV positive is neither bad luck nor a curse from Allah. Let them teach their children that those who persevere during the time of hardships while taking ARVs and adhering to the instructions given by the medical experts, are the true Muslim believers.

Muslim Fathers should be among those who command good and forbid evil:

The Holy Qur'an has taught us that successful Muslims are those who call toward good by commanding others to do righteousness and forbid evil. Says Almighty Allah: **"And let there be among you a community calling to virtue, and advocating righteousness, and deterring from evil. These are the successful."** Qur'an 3:104.

Message to the Muslim Boys

Muslim Boys should know that they have a role to play in this matter. Islam has taught that each of us is a guardian/responsible and will be answerable for their responsibility. **"All of you are responsible,"** said the prophet Muhammad (pbuh), as reported by Bukhari and Muslim.

Therefore, as Muslim boys, take part in advising and encouraging the young ones about the importance of HIV testing. Sufficing enough as an example is the story of the people (the boys) of the cave regarding whom the Qur'an relates;

"When the youth took shelter in the cave, they said:" Our Lord, give us mercy from yourself, and bless our affair with guidance." (Qur'an 18:10).

Conclusion

Muslim fathers and Muslim boys, let us jointly spread the message of hope to the young ones. Tell your friends that testing for HIV and knowing your status is just cool, showing that you are wise. Let us be in the forefront by going for the testing so that we act as a good example, and in that way, we will be a source of hope for them. Convince them that they can still live happily with HIV AIDS.

Wassalam Alaykum Warahmatullah Wabarakatuh!

Sermon 3 – Starting treatment when you have tested positive for HIV

Opening Remarks

I start by praising Allah the Almighty and the Creator of the heavens and earth. May His purest salutations and His choicest blessings descend upon the last Messenger Muhammad, his household and his noble companions, *Amin*.

Brothers and Sisters in Islam, ***Assalamu Alaykum Warahmatullah Wabarakatuh!***

Today insha-Allah (i.e., *with the will of Allah*), we are going to encourage each other about the importance of starting treatment as soon as we have tested HIV positive.

The Qur'an and Sunnah (sayings of our prophet (pbuh) teach us that life is a precious gift given by Allah the Merciful, and that He will question us on the day of resurrection on how we cared for it.

You must remember that we as Muslims do not view illness as bad luck or a curse from Allah, as others wrongly claim. Rather we view illness as a test from Allah, with which He tests whomsoever He wishes (out of His wisdom), regardless of whether we perceive it or not. As for those who patiently accept the decree of Allah, a great reward awaits them in the hereafter. But for those who lose hope and turn to deny Allah due to what has befallen them, they are the losers in this world and the next life.

Says Allah The Most High: **“And we test you with good and evil as trial; and to Us you will be returned.”** (Qur'an 21:35).

Message to the religious leaders (play an example)

As Shaykhs and Ulama (Muslim scholars and leaders), we need to be in the forefront of going for testing and start the treatment immediately if we find ourselves HIV positive. It is not enough for us to suffice lecturing our people, rather, our words should be by action.

Allah says in Qur'an 2:44: **“How can you tell people to do what is right and forget to do it yourselves?”**

He also says in another verse: **“You have an excellent example in the Messenger of Allah; for anyone who seeks Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah frequently.”**

How important is it for a Muslim who has tested Positive to take ARVs?

The Qur'an has taught us that Allah The Most High will only help those who help themselves. Therefore, a true Muslim should not act carelessly and expect Allah to help or protect him. In Qur'an 13:11, Allah Almighty clearly states: **“Surely Allah does not change what is in a people until they change what is in themselves.”**

Hence it is very important for a Muslim who has tested positive to start treatment because;

- 1) It is a commandment given by our beloved prophet (pbuh), that one should take treatment whenever he/she falls ill. He said: *“Yes servants of Allah, make use of medical treatment, for Allah has not made a disease without appointing a remedy for it, except for one disease; viz, old age.”* (Reported by Abu Daud).

- 2) Allah has prohibited Muslims from throwing themselves into ruin. He says in Qur'an 2:195, "**And do not throw (yourselves) with your (own) hands into destruction. And do good....**" Hence not taking the treatment when one has tested positive is as literally as throwing oneself into ruin, which is one of the major sins in our religion.
- 3) Islam teaches us not to kill ourselves, for life is a precious gift given to us by Allah through His infinite mercy. Therefore, neglecting the treatment is like killing oneself and being careless of Allah's gift. Says Allah The Most High says, "...**And do not kill yourselves.**" (Qur'an 4:29).
- 4) It is important to take treatment because, just as Allah has given us the gift of life, He will also ask us how we care for it. Our prophet (pbuh) said: "**Man' feet will not move on the day of resurrection before he is asked about his life, how he consumed it...**" (Reported by Tirmidhi).

In conclusion

My dear Muslim brothers and sisters! We, therefore, learn from these points that being negligent in taking treatment – for one who has tested HIV positive – is one way of putting oneself into destruction and ruin. It is one way of being careless about the precious gift of life. It is also a sign of not caring for others connected to you. All these are qualities of an ignorant and foolish Muslim who is neither adherent to the teachings of his/her religion, nor serious enough for his/her own well-being and prosperity. To such people, Allah Almighty warn them by saying: "**And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses His limits – He will put him into the Fire to abide eternally, and he will have a humiliating punishment.**" (Qur'an 4:13).

May Allah bless you and look after you all.

Wassalamu Alaykum Warahmatullah Wabarakatuh!

Sermon 4 – Adherence to taking ARVs when we have tested HIV positive

Opening Remarks

Let me begin by greeting you with the greetings of peace, “**Assalamu Alaykum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh!**

All praises are due to Almighty Allah, Lord of the entire creation. Secondly, I ask Allah to send down His mercy, blessings and pure salutations upon the last Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), his household, and his noble companions. May His mercy and blessings also be shown upon you present here, *Amin!*

Dear brothers and sisters in faith! Today, we will encourage each other on why it is important (in fact incumbent) – for a Muslim living with HIV – to adhere to the treatment- ARVs. As much as taking the ARVs is important, much more important than that, is for a Muslim to carry on taking the ARVs with total adherence.

A Muslim living with HIV should understand and know that by adhering to ARVs, not only does he/she protect himself/herself and attain good health, but rather those he/she loves are also protected from contracting the virus. Hence the Muslim’s adherence to the ARVs is one way of reducing the risk of HIV transmission, and this attitude conforms to the teaching of the Holy Qur’an “**commanding good and forbidding evil.**” (Qur’an 3:104).

A Muslim should always do as commanded.

In our religion, we know that almost every act of worship has its prescribed order and procedure of performing it, and without adhering to that order, such an action is not accepted in the sight of Allah. For instance, if wudhu (*ablution, i.e., the washing of one’s limbs before performing prayers*), has a specific procedure of doing it, without which it is regarded as invalid. Likewise, the order of Salaah (*the five daily prayers*), by performing them without following its prescribed procedure, timings, etc., is deemed null and void. And many others, to cite a few.

All this teaches a Muslim that he/she should always do his actions according to their prescribed order, whether it be worship or worldly actions, or otherwise one will not attain the intended and anticipated purpose thereof.

Therefore a Muslim living with HIV AIDS;

- Should take the ARVs according to the prescription given to him/her and continue doing so even if he/she feels healthy. The prophet (pbuh) said: “**Allah loves that whenever any of you does something, he should excel it.**” (Reported by Abu Ya`la).
- Should know that being constant in doing things is one of the most encouraging traits in the Islamic faith. Our beloved Messenger (pbuh) said: “**And the most beloved deed to Allah is the most regular and constant, even though it were little,**” as reported by Bukhari. Therefore, a Muslim should adhere to ARVs to be active in religion.

- Should know that being a healthy and energetic Muslim is vital in the prosperity of your religion, and for that to be achieved, it demands that a Muslim living with HIV should adhere to the ARVs. And by doing the opposite, one will be a weak and sickly Muslim who will be a burden on both himself/herself and the Muslim society. Our beloved Messenger (pbuh) said: **“A strong believer is better and is more lovable to Allah than a weak believer..”** (Reported by Ibn Majah).

Finally, let me conclude by asking Almighty Allah that He makes this message positively affect our hearts and minds. May Allah make us understand that our religion of Islam is not confined in worship only. Rather, it has to do with one’s day-to-day life, and that one cannot reach the next life unless he/she successfully passes through this worldly life. So take your ARVs and be steadfast and adherent to them for your life.

I close with the greeting of peace, ***Wassalam Alaykum Warahmatullah Wabarakatuh!***

Sermon 5 – Continue treatment even after you've been prayed for

Opening Remarks

I commence by greeting you with the greetings of peace, **“Assalamu Alaykum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh!**

I firstly praise Almighty Allah, Lord of the universe. Secondly, I beseech Almighty Allah to send down His mercy, blessings and pure salutations upon the last Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and his household, and his noble companions. May His mercy and blessings also be showed upon all of you present here, *Amin!*

My dear brothers and Sisters in Islam, today I will address you on “continuing taking treatment” even after one of you has been prayed for.”

In Islam, we learn that there is no conflict or contradiction whatsoever between belief in God's powers, worship and using medical treatments for one to have good health. In Islam, no belief prohibits one from taking medications, and in fact, one is not obliged to refrain from taking medicines for him to be a true believer.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: **“And do not make (your oath by) Allah an excuse against being righteous and fearing Allah and making peace among people. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.”** (Qur'an 2:224).

ARVs are Good for a Muslim.

ARVs are good because by it's means (and with the will of Allah), immunity is restored and revived in your body, thereby helping you be a healthy and active Muslim, able to worship Allah and fulfill your religious obligations efficiently. We should remember that our religion needs healthy and active Muslims for it to prosper.

Therefore no one should deceive you by saying that prayer alone is enough for your well-being, or that taking medicine is a sign of weak faith. That is incorrect and is against the pure Islamic teachings. It is such a misconception that draws back the prosperity of our religion.

Allah The Most High says in Qur'an: **“Insights have come to you from your Lord. Whoever sees, it is to the benefit of his soul, and whoever remains blind, it is to its detriment. I am not a guardian over you”** (Qur'an 6:104).

ARVs are a protection for your Muslim family

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Islam! Allah has commanded us to protect ourselves as well as our families and those we take care of. Hence neglecting this commandment is being a disobedient Muslim. When you adhere to taking ARVs as advised to you by the medical experts, and you remain steadfast on it, you will protect both yourself and your family as well, and that is a sign of being an obedient Muslim, who will earn the pleasure of Allah in this world and the world to come.

Allah says: **“O you who believe! Protect yourselves and your families....”** (Qur’an 66:6). He also says: **“... And do not kill yourselves, for Allah is Merciful towards you”** (Qur’an 4:29).

A message to the Muslim fathers and Husbands

Dear Muslim fathers and Husbands! Remember that your families need you to live long with them. They need your protection, support, love and care. Therefore, be a responsible Muslim father and husband, always caring for yourself. Do not be negligent in taking your ARVs even if you feel healthy. Know that a weak, sick father/husband can never provide for his family, and will always be a burden on them. Almighty Allah reminds you of your role and position in the family as He says in the Holy Qur’an: **“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women...”** (Qur’an 4:34).

In another verse, He says: **“And spend in the course of Allah and do not throw yourselves with your own hand into ruin, and be charitable. Allah loves the charitable.”** (Qur’an 2:195).

Conclusion:

In conclusion, I urge all Muslim brothers and sisters who have tested positive to be steadfast in taking the ARVs. And in case you experience any side effects, go to the hospital immediately and see your doctor. That is being a true believing and successful Muslim.

Wassalam Alaykum Warahmatullah Wabarakatuh!