

# Human Rights Elements in the Farewell Sermon

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## **Abstract:**

The research explores the topic of human rights by analyzing Prophet Muhammad's sermon on the Day of Arafah during his final and only pilgrimage, known as the Farewell Sermon. Advanced countries like Britain, France, and America have claimed to be the first to address and implement human rights in their respective countries. Therefore, the study aims to identify and analyze the elements of this sermon to extract provisions for individual and collective human rights, as this topic was prominent in the sermon. focuses on whether the religions and states before Islam declared the issue of human rights or whether Islam was the first to call for it. The study used the analytical deductive method to extract the components of human rights from the Prophet's sermon, among other things. The study concluded that the Farewell Sermon is the first international document declared by the Prophet 1400 years ago, indicating that Islam preceded all other religions and states that claim to be the first to declare a system of human rights.

**Keywords:** Farewell Sermon, human rights, international document.

## **I. INTRODUCTION:**

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, and peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, the Seal of the Prophets, and upon his family, companions, and those who follow them until the Day of Judgment. The call to implement human rights has become a global call that has been echoed by the people of the earth for many centuries, especially due to the sufferings faced by the Western countries. These sufferings include oppression, persecution, violation of human dignity, and the loss of rights and properties. This call has become the last resort and the only refuge for human conscience, after losing many ethical and religious values in their lives.

The state that upholds these rights and provides services, programs, and slogans for them is considered among the advanced civilized countries that are characterized by justice, fairness, appreciation, and respect for human beings. Therefore, nations have competed in claiming the honor of this call for themselves.

Indeed, Britain issued the Declaration of Rights in 1689, which included the requirement for Parliament to approve freedom of speech and the prohibition of taxation without legal authority. This document was a significant step towards recognizing and protecting human rights [1].

Indeed, France claimed to be the first nation to declare human rights in the French Constitution in 1791. The principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity were summarized in this constitution. This declaration played a significant role in the development of human rights principles and influenced subsequent declarations and charters worldwide.

"Then the Americans came and claimed that they were ahead of others, as they declared three rights (life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness) in the Declaration of Independence in 1776 [2].

Finally, the United Nations directed these documents by issuing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948 [3]. It boasted and proudly proclaimed itself as the world leader and the savior of humanity from the evils of injustice and tyranny?!

However, contemporary reality reveals a different truth. These countries are the first to violate human rights and crush human conscience and existence in the world. Therefore, the historical and practical reality testifies to the

truth that Islam, with its tolerance and teachings, was the first to call for respect for human beings and recognize their rights. Its true message, brought by Muhammad (peace be upon him), is manifested in liberating humanity from the worship of creatures to the worship of the Creator, after experiencing the horrors of injustice and persecution by kings, princes, authorities, and powers. The world lived in deep darkness in all its political, economic, social, and religious aspects before the advent of the Muhammadan mission in the 6th century AD.

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) affirmed these rights in his final sermon to the Islamic nation during the Farewell Pilgrimage, in the presence of a gathering of more than 100,000 people. This sermon can be considered as the first international document in safeguarding human rights, contrary to the claims of Western leaders.

## **II. PREVIOUS STUDIES:**

Scholars of Hadith have studied the topic of the Farewell Sermon and its meanings according to the methodologies of Hadith. As for the objective study of the content and themes of the sermon, several sources can be found on the internet, including an article titled "Human Rights in the Farewell Sermon." These sources can be utilized to understand the concepts and values addressed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this sermon and their application to human rights [4].

## **III. THE SERMON OF THE PROPHET:**

Oh People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether, after this year I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore, listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and

TAKE THESE WORDS TO THOSE WHO COULD NOT BE PRESENT HERE TODAY.

O People, just as you regard this month, this day as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Harm no one so that no one may harm you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that He will indeed reckon your deeds.

Allah has forbidden you to take usury (Interest); therefore, all Interest obligations shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer inequality. Allah has judged that there shall be no interest and that all the interest due to Abbas ibn Abd'al Mutallib shall henceforth be waived.

Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regards to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission.

Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.

O people listen to me in earnest, worship Allah, perform your five daily prayers (Salah), fast during the month of Ramadan, and give of your wealth the poor due (Zakat). Perform Hajj (pilgrimage) if you can afford to.

All mankind is from Adam, and an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also, a white has no superiority over black nor does a black have any superiority over a white, except by piety and good action.

Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves.

Remember, one day you will appear before Allah and answer for your deeds. So beware, do not sway from the path of righteousness, after I am gone.

O People, no prophet or messenger will come after me, and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore,

O People, and understand the words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Quran and my example (the Sunnah) and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. be my witness,

O Allah (the One God), that I have conveyed my message to your people."

#### IV. THE ELEMENTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE FAREWELL SERMON INCLUDE



**Figure 1: Human Rights in Sermon**

The farewell sermon included many aspects of human rights within the framework of Islam, on an individual, familial, societal, and national level, see Figure 1. It can be summarized as follows:

##### **4.1- The first international document of human rights.**

The Prophet (peace be upon him) performed his final pilgrimage in the tenth year of the Hijra, and he had not performed Hajj before that. He announced the pilgrimage to the people, and a large gathering of believers from all parts of the Arabian Peninsula joined him to witness this monumental event and the great international gathering. They received instructions and commands from the supreme leader of the Islamic state [5]. Historians and biographers estimate that the number of pilgrims at that time was around one hundred thousand or more.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) addressed the pilgrims using a general form, saying, "O people," and he repeated it several times. He did not address them as believers or monotheists, in order to make it a global announcement until the Day of Judgment. Thus, all Western claims of being the first to declare human rights are invalidated.

##### **4.2- Declaration of the right to individual ownership.**

Allah Almighty has honored humanity in general, and He declared this in His book in the verse (And indeed We have honoured the Children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with At-Ta'iyibat (lawful good things), and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preference.) [6], granting them the most important right they possess, which is the right to life. This right entails preserving oneself from any unjust aggression or oppression. Whoever violates this right is considered to have violated the rights of all humans. Allah affirmed this in the most beautiful manner, stating (Because of that, we decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land it is as if he had slain mankind entirely) [7].

The Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasized this right to individual ownership from two perspectives:

- 1- The ownership and independence of one's own self.
- 2- The ownership of wealth and the right to dispose of it.

He greatly emphasized this in his sermon and made the sanctity of violating these two rights equal to the sanctity of the Day of Arafah, the sacred land, and the sacred month. In the beginning of his blessed sermon, he said, "Verily, your blood, your property, and your honor are sacred to you until you meet your Lord, like the sanctity of this day of yours, in this month of yours." In a hadith narrated by Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him), it is mentioned, "Like the sanctity of this day of yours, in this month of yours, in this land of yours." [8].

At the end of the sermon, he warned against the crime of anger and unjust aggression against people's rights without justification. He said, "It is not permissible for a person to take anything from his brother except what he has given willingly." This global declaration and clear statement from the Prophet (peace be upon him) was not temporary! It stirred the emotions of the audience and fulfilled the desires and needs of the people! It was not just false propaganda slogans displayed in front of the world! Far be it from him (peace be upon him) to commit such an act. Rather, this declaration was a real and permanent truth that will remain in effect until the Day of Judgment. This is the interpretation of his statement (peace be upon him), "until you meet your Lord."

One of the rulings he established regarding individual ownership in the sermon was the return of trust to its owners, and it is not permissible to dispose of it except with the permission of its owner. He said, "Whoever has a trust, let him fulfill it to the one who entrusted him with it." He strongly emphasized the issue of usury, which destroys the financial rights of individuals, spreads tyranny and dominance of the wealthy over the weak and the poor, thus destabilizing society and tilting the balance in favor of falsehood over truth. He said, "Every form of usury is forbidden, and Allah has declared that there is no usury..." [9].

#### **4.3- Women's Rights.**

Women are not commodities. Women are not objects of pleasure. Women are not servants. Women are not symbols of shame and disgrace. All these equations represent the status of women in the early ignorant times among the Arabs and other religions in the dark world, as well as their status today in materialistic Western countries [10], and some deviant Arab countries. Women have not found their status, honor, self-respect, and the protection of their dignity except in the Islamic religion, which honored them and declared their rights in its constitution:

Women are the teachers, educators, and schools that shape generations and mold men. Women are the equal halves of men in thought, intellect, and counsel. Women are the mothers, the nurturing and compassionate beings that Allah has made as a means to enter paradise. Women are Allah's blessing to men, the beauties of the world, and the essence of the heart. Women are the wives, the homes, the stability, the mercy, and the psychological security. They are the honor, dignity, and pride if they are righteous and pure [11].

Thus, the status of women in Islam is manifested, and they ascend to the highest levels of dignity and honor. The Prophet, peace be upon him, emphasized this right in a noble principle and a comprehensive statement by saying, "Treat women kindly, for they are your partners and have nothing for themselves." [12].

#### **4.4-Rights of the Spouses.**

Regarding the rights of spouses in non-Islamic religions, there may be variations and a lack of emphasis on these rights. However, Islam has established strong foundations and steadfast principles for this relationship and provided clear guidance in cases of discord between spouses [13]. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of loyalty and faithfulness from the wife to her husband in matters of love and commitment. This includes refraining from engaging in immoral acts and prohibited relationships such as adultery and other suspicious relationships that can undermine the family bond and destroy the love and unity between the spouses. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also provided guidance on how to address a wife's disobedience and rebellion. He stated that if a wife persists in her disobedience, the husband is permitted to abstain from sexual relations and lightly strike her. However, if she ceases her disobedience, she is entitled to her provision and clothing in a good manner (As to those women on whose part you see ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next), refuse to share their beds, (and last) beat them (lightly, if it is useful), but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance). Surely, Allah is Ever Most High, Most Great) [14].

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also clarified the rights of the wife upon her husband, which include protecting her, treating her kindly and recognizing her vulnerability and dependence on him. He advised treating women kindly, as they are helpers and do not possess anything for themselves. The husband has taken them as a trust from Allah and made their private parts lawful through the word of Allah. Therefore, people should be mindful of their responsibilities towards their spouses [15].

#### **4.5-Rights of Brotherhood.**

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) established the bond of brotherhood among Muslims as a foundation and principle for building human societies [16]. One of the first actions he took after migrating to Medina was to establish brotherhood between the Muhajireen (migrants) and the Ansar (helpers). He was able to make the creation of brotherhood the secret to the success and unity of the Muslim community, and the spiritual and faith-based criterion for the relationship between Muslims. The Quran also affirms this. Allah says (the believers are nothing else than brothers (in Islamic religion) [17].

The Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasized this bond in his sermon, stating, "O people, listen to my words and understand. You must know that every Muslim is a brother to another Muslim, and Muslims are brothers..."

The concept of brotherhood in Islam goes beyond being an emotional and spiritual connection between Muslims. The best manifestation of brotherhood is establishing social solidarity among individuals through financial support, assistance, advice, and more.

By promoting this concept, Islam ensures that the Muslim community functions like a united family and a single body. If one part of the body suffers, the rest of the body responds with vigilance and care.

These are some of the meanings of brotherhood in Islam. However, it is important to reflect on whether we find these principles or parts of them in Arab countries or not.

#### **4.6-Right to Free Thought and Reasoning.**

Islam grants humans the freedom to think and reason, while also providing guidelines through Sharia law [18]. In his sermon, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) mentioned various practices from the time of ignorance that stifled intellect and hindered the mind from its fundamental purpose of seeking knowledge and guidance. These practices included following Satan in worshiping other than Allah, manipulating the laws and regulations of Allah, and taking ancestors as a source of worship, thought, and behavior. The Prophet guided us on how to regulate our thinking in worship, stating, "I have left among you that which, if you hold fast to it, you will never go astray, a clear command: the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet."

#### **4.7-Right of the Ruler and Authority.**

The Prophet (peace be upon him) called for the obligation of obeying the ruler, regardless of their social or racial status, as long as they rule according to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet. He said, "O people,

listen and obey, even if an Abyssinian slave is appointed as your leader, as long as he establishes the Book of Allah among you [19].

#### **4.8-Rights of Servants and Slaves.**

These rights include providing them with food and clothing, treating them equally in terms of treatment and provision. This represents the pinnacle of justice and mercy between the master and the wealthy and the poor. It reflects the justice of Islam in curbing injustice and granting freedom to slaves. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The best among you are the best to their servants. Feed them from what you eat and clothe them from what you wear. If they do something wrong that you dislike, forgive them. Sell the slaves of Allah and do not punish them." [20].

### **V. CONCLUSION:**

These are the main findings of the research, in the following aspects:

- 1- The farewell sermon is the first international constitution for human rights.
- 2- The sermon included provisions that are essential for individuals, society, and the state.
- 3- The sermon revealed some rights that have not yet been recognized by Western constitutions, such as the rights of orphans and the rights of brotherhood in religion.
- 4- Human rights in Islam surpass all fake situational rights.

### **VI. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The study recommends the study of the recent Farewell Sermon, its translation, and teaching it in Islamic and non-Islamic universities worldwide, so that learners and scholars can recognize the priority of the Islamic religion in this subject, and even establish this great principle.

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