

March 6, 2009

Khutbah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Title: [The Most Important Awakening](#)

DVD title: Awaken Before You are Awakened from the Grave
The Beginning of Awakening: Repentance in the Arms of Mercy

Opening Du'ās. Allah Swt reveals to us in the Holy Qur'an a number of verses on the topic of our *khutbah* today.

Surely Allah takes hold of the heavens and the earth so they do not cease to spin in their orbits. And if they should cease, aside from him, no one can hold them. Surely He is clement, ever-forgiving. (35:41)

And also,

And if Allah were to take the people to task for whatever they had earned, He would not leave a single living creature on the face of the earth. But He will relieve them for an appointed time, and when their time comes, they will surely know that Allah is the seer of His worshipers. (35:45)

And again in Suratu-l-Hijr,

And we did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them other than by the Truth. And surely the hour is coming, so

forgive with a gracious forgiving. (15:85)

Perhaps you see a pattern in these ‘*āyāt*. Here’s a hint (first reads ‘*āyat* in Arabic):

**Save the one who repents and believes, and performs righteous deeds.
For such, Allah will change their evils deeds to good. And Allah is ever
forgiving and singularly compassionate. (25:70)**

My dear brothers and sisters, everything in this creation has a beginning .Our beginning is really the beginning of our awakening, and the realization that within ourselves, everything is not well. Everything is not balanced, not harmonious. When we begin to realize that, this is the awakening to the reality of our life. It can come early to our life or quite late in our life. Worse than that, we can think it came to us early in life and it hasn’t yet come to us. There might be several beginnings after periods of ups and downs, illness and wellness, stagnation, change, denials, affirmations of Allah. Many of us have had this experience.

In the early years, I used to travel to India a lot. When I came home I thought, “Ah, here’s the chance for a new beginning. I can start all over again.” Each beginning holds the highest potential. This is a great mercy from Allah. Our life is a very short journey. It is only one aspect of creation. Its length is not of our concern, for Allah has determined it according to His knowledge, according to the will of Allah (Swt), making it adequate for each soul to establish whatever it is they need, to be a witness for themselves on the Day of Judgment. If it’s one day long; that is adequate for some souls. If it is a hundred years long that is the time allotted for us, or anything in between, that is a sufficient time. [It is] thirty years for some, sixty years for others, seventy-five, eighty, a hundred, or a hundred

and twenty for others.

A further mercy to humankind is every new beginning nullifies what preceded it, whether it's *nifāq* (hypocrisy) or *kufr* (covering the truth) or whatever. Each new beginning nullifies whatever came before, whether some form of sin, or the failure to make the best use of our time and resources. Thank God nobody here has that problem. The Prophet Mohammed (sal) said, as reported by Muslim:

Islam destroys what was before it, and repentance destroys what was before it

There is a condition. Each new beginning has to have some repentance in it; some form of consciousness. What greater generosity and magnanimity and beneficence can come from Allah Swt than when Allah, Who after mentioning the potential of eternal misery, humiliation and punishment for those who commit the gravest sins, says what I recited to you from Qur'an: **“Save the one who repents and believes and performs righteous deeds. For such, Allah will change their evil deeds to good. And Allah is ever forgiving and singularly compassionate.”** What greater message can there be but that?

We have to realize and know that however long or short our lifespan might be, its quality, by the grace of Allah, is determined from that point where one asserts their human faculties of thought, reason, compassion, and actions and awakens to the purpose of our creation and undertakes to fulfill our own responsibilities on each and obedience to Allah. The length of this period of time is again determined by Allah in adequate measure, according to Allah's knowledge of every soul, Allah's presence in our presence, Allah's gift of our *taqdīr*. From this beginning, true life emerges, a life of a much higher quality,

a life that only the believer can achieve. Allah Swt says in Qur'an:

Is one who was dead, and We gave him life, and made for him light by which to walk among people like one who is in darkness out of which he cannot emerge? In this way the conduct of those who cover up the truth is made to seem good to them. (6:122)

The initial awakening in which we choose Islam, submission, surrender, the safety and security, the awareness of that Divine presence in our life over other ways, over our own thoughts, our own means, this initial awakening is very significant. You can think a lot, practice a lot of things. You can have said a lot of things to yourself. Someone said to me parenthetically recently, "I wasn't feeling well, and I was praying to Allah." I said, "You should do your prayers and you should make your *du'ā*." "Well, I was praying in my own way." I said, "In your own way? Who are you, Allah? The way Allah provided for you is not sufficient? You have already perfected that way and that way didn't work? You stood correctly, you bend correctly? When you were ill, you sat in a chair correctly? You did your *wudu* correctly? You did all the things Allah asked you to do that you *know* about, but you want to do it in your own way? Your ego is driving you, not your need for prayer."

I remember a member of my own family said to me many years ago, "You have your way of meditation, and I have mine. I just sit by the seaside and I meditate." I said, "That's fine. *Alhamdulillah*. But you do that because you don't know any other way? Or because you refuse to take a way that has been proven for 3,000 years? But you, in your 45 years of life, have determined that this is the best way in your humility?" I said to the person I

talked to the other day, “I don’t doubt your sincerity, but I do doubt your humility.” Do you think that arrogance plus the sincerity will bring you the result you want? Or maybe you should just do it in the way you have been guided to do it, which is hard enough. Is it for us to make it easier for ourselves, or for us to do and find ease in what Allah Swt has given us? That initial awakening then can come. I should tell you that this person was not 20, 30, or 40. I’ll leave it at that.

To move from unawareness to awareness, from invention to comprehension, from denial to acceptance, from doubt to belief, from *shirk* to *tawhid*. This is a great challenge. But for the Muslim, the believer—I don’t care what other label you put on that person: the Jewish believer, the Christian believer, the Buddhist believer, the Hindu believer, or just the believer—there’s also an awakening, one that leads us from our wrong actions, our wrong thoughts. “Wrong” means those that destroy us, that distract us, that turn us away from the truth, from what is good, those that turn us away from being compassionate and kind and merciful beings, loving and just beings. Every day, who are distracted by those turns in the road, especially if you have your cell phone in your hand and you are driving. We keep adding distractions to ourselves.

This awakening that leads us from wrong actions to better actions, to neglect from responsibility, from self-satisfaction to higher aspirations; from selfishness to servicefulness often comes gradually, and sometimes it comes without ease. It comes with an uneasy feeling, a discomfort in the soul, because there is a recognition of, “I’m not where I thought I was.” The soul is saying, “I’m not comfortable now. You have now awakened me.” The *ruh* is awakening. The *nafs* is not comfortable, because now the light of the *ruh* is shining on the *nafs*. “I’m not comfortable with this!” Of course there is

Allah and Mohammed (sal), and then there is our idol that we have placed above them. Our idol doesn't complain. But that Divine presence of Allah Swt, of Prophet Mohammed (sal), they complain to us from within our own soul. I don't mean to anthropomorphize Allah but you know what I mean, metaphorically.

The soul becomes discomfited with it looks at the *nafs*. Then the *nafs* becomes very uncomfortable when the soul's light shines upon it. This uneasiness develops into an apprehension and finally into an awareness that, "*Walahi*, I have lived this life for [so many years], and I am not prepared for the grave. I am not ready. I can't say that I've fulfilled what I should fulfill spiritually in this life." Facing this undeniable truth, the '*abd*' realizes that no excuse will suffice on the Yawmi Qiyama. Through neglect and worldly distractions, and intellectual jujitsu we convince ourselves that maybe that is no Yawmi Qiyama. Maybe there's no awareness in the grave, and maybe there's no *barzakh*. Maybe or maybe not. "I'm going to go spend the rest of my life in Las Vegas, or if I can't afford that, then Atlantic City. Because, I've been gambling my whole life, I might as well gamble some more." Through this neglect and distraction, through this arrogance and "I'm going to do this my own way," we have placed our soul in danger.

Then, part of that awakening is something we don't like so much. At the beginning, we have fear. We are frightened by the thought that, if any of this is true, then all of it is true. If any of this is true, that means not only are there rewards for the pious and repentant, but also pain and suffering for those who are not. Since we only want the part about Jannah, and not the part about Jahannam, we want to reject the whole thing. Yet, everything in the physical life shows us, not metaphorically but actually, what makes pain and what makes happiness. It's not like this is a hidden secret. It also shows us we are not

in control of everything in this life. “We are on a beautiful beach, living the life. We pulled our money out of the stock market before it fell. Everything is fine; we are living higher on the hog because now we are richer than 99.5% of the people in the world. Before we were only richer than 75.2%, but everybody else left their money in. Now I can live in Dubai (paradise). We are living in paradise and everything is fine.”

Everything in the world is just... fine. Then we awaken.

We can awaken the day before we die, although there are *hadith* on this subject that tell us if you repent on your deathbed it's not the best thing to do. But Allah moves us, and with the special mercy reserved for those who have earned the acceptance of Allah in the greater life to come, He forgives us and we have awakened. We begin that journey. Remember everything from before that moment is removed, so it's not like you have to start all over again. You repent for all the prayers you haven't done. Yes, you are supposed to make up all those prayers you haven't done over your life. You are supposed to add one or two every day. You can do that to show your intention. But Allah has forgiven you because you repented of that. All those Asr prayers you didn't do. Thirty years times 365, now we are at 9,000 some prayers. If we did one a day it would be another 30 years. I'm not going to live another 30 years, so I'd better do 2 a day. Maybe I won't live 15 years. Maybe I should do 3 a day. But then there are the times we did them backwards, when we made up Maghrib after we did Isha. And there's nothing in our bank account, we never did the *tahajjud* prayer, or the *nafle*. Maybe I better to six extra prayers a day. That's another 15 minutes a day... you do the math. But Allah has forgiven them. Still, we have to make our effort. It's not about making prayers. It's about waking up. It's about not trying to negotiate the system.

We know that in this present state, we question, “With all this mercy, will You accept the changes in us, Allah?” Those diseases of the heart, so carefully concealed from our brothers, our sisters, our community members, our children and families, even from our own selves will be uncovered on that day, unless they are cured. Again, I remind you: you don’t have to start all over. You just have to make that repentance. That means, get yourself right. Measure it out. Get yourself harmonious and balance, so the system is not hitting a glitch when it hits you. You are moving along in the system, and all of a sudden, “Oh! There’s Abdur Rashid. Splat!” Glitch in the system. Instead, “Oh, there’s Abdur Rashid. What’s he standing in the middle of the road for? Oh, he got out of the way just in time and jumped on the back end of the train.”

A wise person, a prudent person, an intelligent person, a servant of Allah will really hasten to grasp the rope, to hold onto the rope, will rush to grab that opportunity in our remaining days, hours, and minutes. We will realize that Allah granted to us probably an extension without us asking, out of His mercy. Allah knew our *qadr*, and knows if given just one more opportunity, we will repent and turn back, and we will take that opportunity. When the time has expired, there will be no respite or chance for an amendment to our lives. Allah says in the Qur’an:

Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive with remembrance of Allah and what has been revealed of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the scripture before, and then a long period passed over them, and their hearts hardened. And many of them are transgressors. (57:16)

This ‘*āyat* seems to address not just the Muslims of the past but also Muslims of today. We might be surprised at the statement of the Sahabi Ibn Massood, when he said, “*There was from the time of our accepting Islam until Allah admonished us in this ayat only four years.*” Such was the concern of Allah for the Muslim community that He wanted even the pious Sahabi to have this opportunity to move against deviation, forgetfulness, and neglect. *Asalāmu aleikum.*

SECOND KHUTBA Three days from now on the 12th of Rabi-al-Awwal is the Mawlid of Prophet Mohammed. We will celebrate it over this weekend with *dhikr*, *insh’allah*, and some discussion. We will focus part of that discussion on Suratu-n-Nasr. Most people believe this was the last revelation to Prophet Mohammed (sal). This will focus our understanding about Prophet Mohammed. Think, see, look, study it yourself and see what you think about it. We will talk about the history of that revelation and what it means for us today, *insh’allah*. We will spend some time trying to understand why the teaching of Prophet Mohammed (sal) is something unique. It could be said that all the religions are the same. It’s all the Ahl al Kitab, and it doesn’t matter whether you come at it this way or that way. That’s true. Gillette used to have a single blade razor; then a double blade razor. Then they made the Mach 3. Now they have the moveable head zappetty bat razor. It does make a difference. They are not all the same. There is progress. If you understand Islam, you understand the progress of Islam. You understand this very, very important thing about the awakening. Awaken before you are awakened from the grave by Allah is my interpretation of it. *Insh’allah.* Du’ās.

