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Khutbah



Title: [Why Extremism Comes About](#)

DVD title: Seize the Moment and Avoid Extremism  
Balance seeking Dunya and the Akhirat

Opening du'ās. My dear brothers and sisters, in the Holy Qur'an Allah (swt) has revealed:

**And when you have completed the prescribed rituals (the pilgrimage), then remember Allah as you remember your forefathers, but with a stronger remembrance. And from the people there are those who say to their Lord, "Give us our portion in this world," and they shall have no share in the final world. (2:200)**

Allah also says in Surah al-A'raf:

**Say, "On the Day of Judgment they (the lawful things in life) shall be solely for those who sincerely believed during the worldly life." In this way We explain the signs to people who have knowledge. (7:32)**

My dear brothers and sisters, friends, I take advantage of my brother being here today. We were having a conversation, and he sent me some information that got me thinking about something. I wanted to talk about what's called seizing the moment, and how to know what to do to seize the moment. There are many promises human beings make to other human beings. The promise we have to be assured of is the promise Allah (swt) has made to us. There is seizing the moment, patience, and impatience. There are many attributes of understanding what this means. What are the final guarantees? What are the actual guarantees we have from Allah (swt)?

We know we have one guarantee: the sun comes up in the morning, and the moon comes up following its course. We see things that seem to be guarantees, like life continues on this planet. We understand that there are many guarantees we want to make to each other. We want to guarantee our love, our ardor; we want to guarantee our support. We want to guarantee that we will share the bounties that we have. But at the end of the day, the only guarantees come from Allah (swt). How do we make ourselves available to those? We see people flocking to pursue and enjoy the entertainment and bounties of this world, and at the same time ignoring what is eternal and everlasting. I'd like to talk about seizing the moment in the sense of opportunity; seizing the moment while we can avoid what invariably happens when we do not seize the moment, and we have to do things at the last moment.

We become extremists at the last moment. Extremism is the result of not seizing the opportune moment at the right time. You might think it is the opposite. You might think that extremists just seize the opportunistic moment to cause difficulty. Or one forces oneself to do things at the last minute, or what they think is the last moment when it is almost too late, and people become extreme—like the last moment on our deathbeds, the last moment when we see that all the opportunities are fleeing from us. Then we become extreme. Bad decisions are made. In the political sphere, it's also obvious. We see what's happening in Libya today: a despotic ruler who happens to call himself a Muslim has done nothing for his people for 40 years. You see it in other parts of the Middle East. Then at the last moment some extreme measures are given: 37 billion dollars are distributed to the people in Saudi, or something like that, at the last moment. Holding on to what?

If in their hearts, they were true Muslims, they would be giving and giving to their people every minute they could. Taking the bounties Allah had given them, whether under the

ground or above the ground, and shared it with their own people. Some did, to some degree. Some didn't, to any degree. This is an example of extreme reaction. So what is happening? Muslims are killing Muslims. People are killing their own people. How do we seize the moment to avoid that extreme moment when we have nowhere else to turn? We do it by seizing the moment and opportunities that come in the right way. How do we know not only to avoid the extreme, but also to avoid being disbalanced, to avoid being disharmonious in our understanding of our relationship to this world and to life, and to our relationship to the Akhirat/Hereafter? This imbalance that comes from not seizing the moment is obviously prevalent in the world we live in today, especially among Muslims, I'm afraid. Muslims should be more knowledgeable, more aware than anyone else, since we have the guidance of Allah (swt) and the example of the Prophet Muhammed (sal).

What we see all over the world, and in this country also now, are extreme reactions to things. People seize the moment of extremism to use for their own political or greedy ends—the financial markets, the drilling in the Gulf again (guess by who), the corporations. I'm not here to make political statements, but we see this tendency in human beings to move to the extreme when they are able to do that. Some of it is with a lot of hope, and some of it is with a lot of greed; some with anger and political or social opportunism; and a lot of it is draped in religion. Allah (swt) and His Prophet (sal) did not leave us to just our own thoughts and desires on this matter. Indeed, the Shar'īah covers this in detail in matters such as marriage, divorce, community life, food, relationships to nature; the etiquette of even when we look at the Sunnah, the etiquette of even the most delicate of activities. It leaves us to wonder or find how the Shar'īah and Sunnah tells us or legislates about matters of seizing the moment.

Why is there so much confusion today regarding a balanced approach to Islam, considering how to till the ground to plant the seeds in the worldly life for the Hereafter? It seems with Muslims we witness one of two extremes. There is the person who pursues

this worldly life and ends up not concerned at all with the Hereafter, and becomes totally secularized. In the secularization, one goes on to some very strange kinds of opportunistic endeavors in the name of religion, totally abandoning religion, killing one another, oppressing women, not providing for education */tarbiyya*. There is no *taslim* and no *ta'lim*. We can see throughout the Muslim world how it has been ruled for hundreds of years, and now we see what is happening to some of those despotic leaders. Why?

Young people, and not just for social and economic reasons, have been exposed to things and they are feeling the desire for freedom, the desire to speak out, the desire for their ideas to be heard. These are young, pious people. They are not secularized young people. You saw in Tahrir Square how they prayed, by the hundreds of thousands, and then they are protesting. They are not anti-religion. They are not anti-Muslim. They have not been secularized because of the despotic rulers they had. Quite the contrary, they have belief and they have faith. They are seeing a parallel between the freedoms that are presented in democratic ideas, and the freedoms presented in the Qur'an. I have spoken to some of them. We see them on Facebook, and Khaled is writing about it. This is very hopeful.

The other extreme [is found in those] who pursue the *Akhirat*, and think there is nothing else to do but to die and prepare to die, and there is nothing to be done in this world. Those who don't see that Allah swt has provided for us beauty, capacity, nature, education, science, technology; and that it is there for us to use, *subhāna-Llāh*, in praise of Allah (swt), and to assist others, by whatever name they call themselves and whatever religion they follow. They see this world as useless, instead of as the tool for uplifting the heart and the spirit in order to come closer to understanding that wherever you look, there is Allah. Think about it. We are not on a straight line; we are on a circle. We are all facing the center and the center is Allah. As you move along the dots on that circle, you are always facing Allah. **“Wheresoever you turn, there is the countenance of Allah.”** We are living on this globe. We live in a universe that has a curvature to it. The

horizon is always moving with us. We live in a circle; a circle of humanity, a circle of seasons, a circle of life and death, and everywhere there is Allah.

We heard today in the Qur'an how Allah (swt) has created beautiful things, and we are to enjoy those beautiful things. The ones who pursue just the *akhirat* and leaves the *dunya* are far outnumbered by the former ones, the ones who strive in *dunya* and for some reason don't consider the Hereafter. But as Muslims, we should be in the center. We are the people of the *ummah ta'wasita*. As people who prefer the world of Islam through *tariqah*, the *halaka*, the circle of believers, then we should remember very deeply in our hearts that those who strive in *dunya* for the sake of Allah have their place in the *akhirat*. Not those who abandon their responsibilities and duties in *dunya*, not those who don't support the good works, not those who don't support those who are in need. If it was true, why would there be *zakat*? Why would *sadaqa* be important? *Zakat* would not be a pillar of Islam. In other words, we seek harmony.

*It was reported that a man came to Abul Hazim, an early Islamic scholar, and said, "I feel something that makes me sad. That is, that I love the dunya so much." Abul Hazim said, "Don't grieve over loving the dunya, because that's natural. What you should be aware of is that its love does not cause us to attain what Allah (swt) has prohibited us from, and not to hold back anything of it that is loved by Allah. If we do that, our love toward dunya will not harm us."*

*It was reported by Abul Nuuh Ayn, "Hence we must take from the dunya what does not corrupt us in striving for the akhirat. If we work for the akhirat in a manner that does not disturb our day to day responsibility in life, and does not disturb our harmony, then we do not become one of those people who does not observe a balanced attitude toward the here and the Hereafter, because such a person is a loser, in both this world and in the Hereafter."*

How do you gain the benefit of the *dunya* and the *akhirat*? The balanced way would give us the rewards of both. If we strive only for *dunya*, we will have nothing in the *akhirat*. Concerning this, Allah (swt) says what I reported to you: **“But of mankind there are some who say, “O Lord, give us Your bounties in this world.” And for such, there will be no portion in the Hereafter.”** Allah (swt) also reminds us, **“But seek the wealth Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion of the lawful enjoyment of this world, and do good, as Allah (swt) has been good to you. And seek not mischief in the land. Truly, Allah likes not the mischievous.”** (28:77)

On both sides, as we see in the world today, there is extremism. Either we are indulging too much in this world and forgetting the *akhirat* – which is of course the most frequent case for all of us – or we are only being concerned with the *akhirat* and forgetting the *dunya*. The latter is the fanatical concern of the extremists in this world who cause all the misery breaking the laws and guidelines of Islam, like what happened last week in Pakistan with the law that was passed, and what happened today in Baghdad, and with what’s happening in Libya today. People forget. May Allah punish them, really, with the realization of what they have done. The only way to correct it is to repent to Allah (swt) and stand in this world before the court of justice that Allah has created.

We have to seize the opportunity of the Hereafter while we are in this world. The Prophet (sal) said, **“Seize the opportunity of five before the five stop you: Your youth, before your old age; your health before terminal illness; your wealth before your poverty; your leisure, before being preoccupied; your life before death.”** On the authority of Abu Hurayra, the Prophet (sal) said also, **“Lose no time to do good deeds before you are caught up by one of the seven calamities. Then by way of warning, he recounted them: starvation due to poverty, which may impair your vision; prosperity and wealth, which may mislead you; an ailment, which may be damaging to your health; old age, which may harm your senses; sudden death or the appearance of the**

***abdul dajjal (the anti Christ). All of these bad events may be awaited on the Day of Resurrection, and this Day is indeed very hard and bitter.”***

The Prophet (sal) is constantly teaching us to utilize the bounties and beauties of this world, the resources and gifts of Allah (swt); to cultivate our life in this world; to cultivate the means and tools, and our abilities in order to capitalize on the opportunities that come to us for our benefit here and in the Hereafter. Whether it is our work, our day to day life, our family life, or our relationship with the community, this is true. This is the way. From this we learn that we should be grateful to Allah (swt) for His Bounties, and recognize the importance of every moment and every minute, the importance of time/*zaman*, the importance of good health, the importance of a good life, the importance of good friendships, the importance of a good relationship with Allah, the importance of the good practices that we do.

In the mind of a true Muslim, time becomes a vehicle, a means in a journey that transports us from here to the *akhirat* by seizing every moment, not just in the extreme. Life consists of a time that we live in this world, a time that we act as an ‘*abd*, a worshiper, a servant. In that time, we have to be strong and steadfast in our *dīn*. Allah swt says in Qur’an, **“By the declining day, truly mankind is in a state of loss except those who believe and do good works, and exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to patience.”** Anything other than that is a waste of time. Everyone we talk to, everyone we meet including our children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, everyone we meet gives us an opportunity to do that, to do good work, to exhort one another to the truth, and to patience and perseverance. Think about the derivatives of that. There is little left out. There is a formula.

Ibn Abbas (ra) reported that the Prophet (sal) said, ***“There are two blessings that many people lose because they are not aware of their importance. Their health and free time for doing good.”*** Not free time for just messing around, not for just indulging ourselves,

but for doing good. You can do good at a lunch. You can do good on the way to a movie and back. You can do good if you are with good people—not just nice people, but people of good. You may have success when you surround yourself with the right people, because your success and my success depend on the receptivity of one to each other. You must ask yourself about this. We have directed our lives here, specifically, to take our free time, our day to day time, I hope, for doing some good.

[Do make your free time a time] to feel guilty, “It’s Friday, I’m going to go into town and get a coffee at Starbucks. Stop off at Sam’s Club. Walk into Walmart and look at all the aliens who have landed. Then I’m going to have a Thai dinner. Oooh, I feel guilty.” Don’t feel guilty. Do some good while you are there. Do you ever go to a restaurant with me? Have you heard the way I speak with the wait staff? Do good. Spread blessings. Don’t use it as an excuse to eat too much, however. You have to ask yourself.

You take what is *sunnah* and you choose it to be *fard*. When you make *sunnah* into *fard*, you are doing *nafl*. If you do your *nafl* all the time, because you choose to do it and you do it all the time, then your *nafl* becomes *fard*. That’s our obligation. Our *nafl* should be, take our free time and do good with it. The statement of Prophet Muhammed illustrates that most people are ungrateful for the bounties of Allah. Most people underestimate their importance, and they undervalue what they possess. This life which we have brings us from birth to death to the *akhirat* is a test and opportunity. If I say to the kids, what did you learn today? That’s a test, a quiz. “Write down what you learned in math.” Life is full of trials and tribulations. What are we learning from them? Why should we expect it to be anything else?

Even the most beautiful things in nature have to stand out in the heat and cold. I’m very worried about this dove in Washington. Every spring, this dove and her husband come and build a nest on our porch. This year she found the flower pot and built her nest there. The nest is just a bunch of twigs. It’s not really a nice nest like you see a wren’s nest.

You feel you could sleep in that nest yourself if you were small enough—nice and warm and soft. This one is just a bunch of twigs. I worry the eggs will fall down underneath it. It is not built for comfort, but for facility. Do you know how long that crazy bird sits there? Months! They are building the nest now, and she will still be sitting on it in June. We won't be able to go out on the porch, near the flower pot, etc. She's sitting there month after month, and her husband comes along and brings a twig. He sits on the nest while she goes and gets something to eat. She goes over to McDonald's and picks up some things that have fallen on the ground. She comes back and he proudly stands up and says, okay, you get to sit on it now. She gets to sit on it for an hour; he goes for 23 hours.

I worry about things like that! Even the most beautiful things have to bear the heat and cold. We look at the animals and see the cow and donkey in the summer time with flies on them. We realize what it is like when just one fly comes near our nose, or one mosquito. Allah puts every living thing to tests and trials. For the cow and horse it is flies; for us, it's people and relationships, getting it wrong more than right, basically. They are innocent creatures. We are not innocent creatures. Why [should] we expect saintliness from one another and ourselves, when this is the means to avoid real pain and suffering in this life, which is a message from Allah. The means of life are to refine ourselves. We need to be tolerant and beneficent of one another, like Allah (swt) is tolerant and beneficent and forgiving of us. Allah (swt) knows these messages have come out of my mouth for years upon years, and still my ears don't hear them. Shall I expect yours to hear them?

Why do we have expectations of this world to be Paradise? Should we have expectations of this life to be hell? No. The time is a test. Seizing the moment at the right moment for the right reasons will get us through this test. It is just like a good professor or teacher testing us to show what we learned, not to trip us up but to tell us what to pay more attention to. That's what a good teacher does. Allah (swt) is saying, "Here is the measurement." No one can measure our state better than ourselves. Others may remind

us and point out things; but we cannot live without measuring our own understanding. Allah says that He will walk in our feet and work through our hands when we pay attention and remember Allah (swt). What is remembering Allah (swt)? It is not remembering some god on a throne. Remembering Allah is seizing the moment for compassion, seizing this moment for mercy, seizing this moment for patience and tolerance and forgiveness, seizing this moment for repenting and asking for forgiveness, seizing this moment to be silent or to speak.

I guarantee you (at least it is my understanding) that Allah doesn't just reside in the hearts of pure people, just like Allah (swt) doesn't demand to live only in a five-star deluxe hotel, although some *shaykhs* do. Allah is also with the destitute, those who are in pain, those who are impoverished. We know that because of our prophets. Sidna Isa's wife – I consider Mary Magdalene his wife given the culture and the times – was saved from an illicit life by the teachings of Allah (swt). It's very important to understand the culture and the times. We have responsibilities in relationships. Those responsibilities have to be fulfilled as best as we can. Allah (swt) resides in the hearts of the ugly and the beautiful, the perfectly built and the disabled, the overweight and the too thin. Thank Allah for the happy and the sad, the black and white, those who are sick and those who are well, the male and the female, the young and the old. The Prophet (sal) is constantly teaching us to utilize the bounties and resources of this world, to turn to Allah. There is no where Allah (swt) is not, and there is no one to whom Allah does not respond.

**“He has created death and life that He may try those among you who are best in conduct. He is mighty, forgiving.”** From this *‘āyat* we see that Allah (swt) demands from us the best work, not the most work; the best attention; not the most attention; the best efforts. He examines us to differentiate between those who are striving and righteous, and those who are not; and to help to correct the wrong actions, *maruf* and *munkar*. We see the life of this world is full of trials, but in the *akhirat* there is no more examination. You matriculate with whatever degree you have. It would be really good to

graduate from this world summa cum laude—very good, or at least magna cum laude, or at least cum laude. After we finish all our examinations and graduate, there is more for us to do. The reward is just a step for future effort. Allah tells us, **“Each will receive their recompense for eternity.”** So let us not waste time. **“On that day, some faces shall turn bright, and some shall turn dark. Then as to those whose faces turn dark, did you disbelieve after your belief? So taste therefore the chastisement before you disbelieve.”**

Prophet Mohammed, related by Ibn Umar, said, *“When the people of Paradise have entered Paradise, and the people of the fire have entered the fire, death will be brought and will be placed between the fire and Paradise. Then they will be slaughtered, and a call will be made: ‘O people of Paradise! No more death. O people of fire! No more death.’ The people of Paradise will have happiness added to their previous happiness; the people of the fire will have sorrow added to their previous sorrow.”* I’ll discuss that more if you like on Saturday night, because you will ask me about that, I know. Nobody likes the idea of eternal fire. *Asalaamu aleikum.*