

April 1, 2011

Khutbah



Title: [Come to Know One Another](#)

DVD title: Finding the Qualities Within, There is No Barrier Between  
Strive to Communicate with Allah and with One Another

Opening duas. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

**O people, surely We have created you man and woman, and made you into tribes so that you might come to know one another. Truly, the most honorable among you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most conscious of Allah, warding off evil from within and without. Allah is Knowing and Aware.**

And also He revealed:

**Your Lord says, "Call upon Me and I will answer you, but those who are too proud to worship Me will certainly end up in Jahannam disgraced."**

Brothers and sisters, friends, we live in a time when maybe people are trying to come to know one another in a good way. We see a wave of change in certain parts of the world. And we see that in certain parts of the world, there is good conduct in that change. We also see the resistance to that change is an example of bad conduct, to say the least. We are told in Qur'an that Allah is aware of all this and knows this. We see also, for example in Egypt where the people are going through the first stages of their revolution

or change, they were praying to Allah in the streets, hundreds of thousands. There was brotherhood and sisterhood among the Christians and the Muslims at that time.

On one hand, you see that. On the other hand, you see what is happening in Libya and Yemen. The irony in all this is the very basic lesson of the tribes that Allah is speaking about here: you see the tribal problems He is trying to correct. Sometimes it's hard to believe there are any noble thoughts in this world, because it is hard to see good conduct. I tend to think that deep in our hearts and souls, we believe that if we pray to Allah, Allah hears our prayers. I believe that it is incumbent upon us to pray strongly and sincerely that the nations, tribes, and diverse groups of people in Bahrain, Yemen, Jordan, Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco come together and come to know each other in a noble way, and that they do that through good conduct.

It doesn't escape our shores either. In our own political sphere we are still seeing it. Sometimes we see people in this country acting like they have a tribal mentality. We may call them parties, but they act with a tribal mentality, and we see this split in differentiation. These two *'āyāt* in the Qur'an offer a clear and open invitation to communicate with Allah in the way we can communicate with one another, and to communicate with one another in the way we communicate with Allah (swt). He says that if we are faithful, we don't have to worry about things, because He looks after us and our interests. Yes, I said "He." But you know I don't mean "He." You know I mean in our hearts and souls if we find the compassion and mercy and tolerance, patience, understanding and love, then there is no border and no barrier between us. We stop looking at each other as tribes or individuals who look and sound and act differently.

There are certain legitimate questions that are raised from an Islamic point of view from some of these countries, but they are not questions that should be dealt with through violence. Indeed, questions have been dealt with through violence in the history of Islam and they have never been resolved in that way. They need to be resolved from a values point of view, from a practice point of view, from a point of view of piety, not of differences. In Qur'an, Allah tells us that all we have to do is ask of Him and He responds to us. Of course, some people are deluded in their thoughts and looking for excuses. They think, "If it doesn't happen right away, then how can you believe?" Because He said, "If you believe in Me, I will answer your prayer."

Why do we have trouble believing that Allah (swt) looks after us and our interests and our needs, and all we have to do is ask? We don't have a problem with it if we understand that the tuning of those qualities is in our hands. It is not just asking, "O Allah help me with Your healing, Your mercy, Your compassion, Your love, Your patience, Your understanding." We have to tune ourselves to that. It doesn't take many seconds or profound problems to evoke from us a disharmony. I just had one on the way down, which I noted, *alhamdulillah*. Why do we involve ourselves so much in our own interests, our own needs, more reactive to what is happening next and what is coming than what is passed. I know we all think there have been many things we asked for and they weren't instantaneously fulfilled; or fulfilled in the way we wanted them fulfilled, so that feeds our doubt: "I'm not sure Allah is listening." Maybe we were watching HBO instead of Kickboss on tv; we were tuned to a different channel.

We aren't intended to put our discerning mind in that way when we read the Qur'an. We are not supposed to say, "This is the way it is," and when it doesn't happen, say nothing, and don't ask any questions. We have honest questions, about this and other things; and

we can say to a certain degree that our spiritual station/*maqam* is determined by the kind of questions we ask, and how we seek those answers, and how we understand how Allah (swt) is responsive to us. Some people think, “I prayed and it didn’t happen; therefore, I must be far away from Allah (swt). He didn’t hear my prayer. If I were closer and had a microphone; maybe if I could whisper in His ear...” Thank God, we are not the type of people who believe that Allah has ears, not like our ears anyway.

It’s true that we have to go through a lot to understand and accept a different paradigm. We have to understand what it means when we say, “He understands or hears,” or when He says, “Call on Me and I will respond to you.” “Ask of Me and I will grant your wish.” We have to pursue understanding; herein lies a part of the answer to the question. When things don’t seem to happen according to what we think should happen; when we think we have done things correctly and Allah doesn’t seem to answer us, there is something wrong with our understanding. There is something wrong with our hearing. There is something wrong with the way we ask.

I don’t think it’s just a simplistic and typical religious answer to say that, because I think it is manifest in our lives every day. We think we see something, but it is not what we saw. The classic example I have given for 35 years is the mother seeing the father throw the child across the room to the couch, and gets angry, not realizing they are playing. We hear things and misinterpret them. I understand that certain schools of archaic, revivalistic thought (whose name I won’t mention) probably think that Allah (swt) gets His ears cleaned out on a regular basis by a very large Q-tip. Just like they think His thobe is a certain length and He sits on a throne. Perhaps, they think He needs Lasik surgery because He has cataracts and isn’t seeing certain things. We don’t believe that.

We know that blessings come to us in a disguised fashion. We know there is confusion at times in our lives. But we also should know by this time in our journey that everything is a doorway to knowledge, and knowledge is not always pleasant to have or is easily digested. If we know that, then when there is difficulty or tension inside of ourselves or between our self and another traveler, a brother or sister, husband or wife, child or friend, we are calm in that. We seek calmness in that. We know there is a message for us in that—and not necessarily what we are upset about. It may just be the fact that we are upset and we are not seeing or hearing, or we haven't been seen or heard.

Yes, life can be frustrating, because we are emotional human beings. We are asking for knowledge of something in one way, and we are not sure exactly how it arrives. But if we have an open heart and an open mind, that knowledge has tremendous power. Not only does it give us information or make us wise so that we can make good choices, but it is also healing physically, mentally, and emotionally. When we embark on a mission—it could be our work, a global mission, our relationship with another human being, the mission of understanding Islam—things happen that allow and permit us to see who it is that is on that mission, who I am, and not only that, what the value of it is.

A person with a lot of confidence can take a new job. They find out there is a lot they don't know about that job. They are told, "We are going to hire you because you seem to be the right person for us." And you know that you don't know. You are humbled by the fact of that. A person has the desire for good things, and they find out there is a price to pay for what they think is beautiful or attractive or pleasurable or uplifting, or fun. There is a price for those things. You have to pay to get into Disneyworld to have fun. There is a price for tasty food that might not be good for you. If you eat enough tasty food, there is a price to pay for the new size of pants you might have to buy. I'm very happy they have

elastic ones. If you are rich and have all the money in the world, relatively, and you can buy anything and everything you want, there is a price you pay for it. Everyone can see that you can buy anything you want. Every once in a while, a burglar might come who is envious and jealous of you, and head for your diamonds, your Maserati, your garbage where he can find your bank account number. There was a time when ‘spam’ was something you ate. Now it eats you.

When Allah (swt) says, “**Call Me and I will answer your call,**” it is a very intimate and personal message directed right at you and I in the moment: the moment we remember it, the moment we read it. It is not just a perfunctory statement. It is a statement that is full of love and compassion and mercy, tolerance, patience and understanding, and...and... 99 ands. It is the way I tried to explain the other day in Charlottesville, the way the lover and the beloved communicate with one another, calling on one another. He sends you the secret password. Someone hacked into my credit card again, and I had to change it again. I was online this morning almost an hour and a half with the “Just Answer” guy trying to get rid of my Chrome error. We all need assistance.

We need other people. Tribes can also be interpreted to mean different databases, different knowledge bases. “**I wanted you to come to know one another,**” in that true sense. I wanted your knowledge and that knowledge to come together, until we have mutual benefit with one another, and have peace with one another. It means to be compatible, also. It also means to have mutual benefit. So, we need to change our password to the one that accesses ‘Allah browser.’ In that is a personal message. When you use that word, you will fall back on that word. If you hit reply on that word, Allah will reply to you, and you will reply to Allah (swt). Sometimes we forget the word, and the word is the word of the moment. It is a very, very safe, almost spam and hacking

proof password. It doesn't have to be 16 characters with three numbers and an asterisk. In one moment it will be *eshq*. In the next moment, it will be *wadud*. In the next moment, it will be *sabr*. In the next moment, it will be whatever it is. It is like you are constantly changing your password according to the need. I think I've beaten this metaphor to death.

There is something else in this message of encouragement; no matter what you may have difficulties and trials and tribulations about, "*Ma'alesh*. Don't worry!" You begin in a very simple way, and you leave in a simple way. We can enter this world in a simple way from an incredibly complex process over 9 months. It comes out in a very refined being, but it has no knowledge yet—just cellular knowledge. We should try to remember our simple origins and beginnings in Allah, and then everything will be all right. But how do we remember that? Every station, every level we have attained in life, whether academically, or through our work, or through our efforts, or contacts, or our spiritual practices, our *ijāzah*, it's all been from the Mercy of Allah.

It's all designed for our eventual freedom. That means unrestricted existence, where we soar beyond the limits of our physical being, even if we die while we are still alive (die before you die). If we develop humility and gratitude, then the fears we have will turn into awe. And the passions we feel will turn into *eshq*. And the anger we feel will turn into repentance and forgiveness. When we don't forgive, or repent and we don't love, and we don't allow those transitions to take place, Allah (swt) way of telling us is: look at yourself. We have to ask ourselves, just like we would ask someone else who came to us for help, a series of questions. What's your role in all of this? We have to ask ourselves, "Why am I holding onto this? Why am I not forgiving that person or this circumstance? Why am I not being compassionate in the moment, or trusting, or

relaxing? Why am I worrying all the time?” What’s the message? What is the latest gift Allah (swt) gave us? Bitter? Sweet? Bitter-sweet? I’m constantly giving to myself. What kind of a gift am I giving to myself? Every day is a birthday. Why am I making myself sick over myself or my situation? What has opened up in me now to allow me to see myself? Maybe it’s some new commitment, new trust, new position, new capacity. Maybe it’s just, “I’ve taken the time to realize how far on this journey I’ve come.”

The opportunity is here with us. We shouldn’t hide from it or run away from it. We have been raised among the ranks of those who stand with Allah (swt). Who have been raised among the ranks of the Prophet Mohammed (sal) and the Prophet Isa (as) and Sidna Musa (as) and all the prophets. We have been raised and invited into the homes of the *awliyā* of Allah and the *shuyukh*. Sometimes we are in a big crowd, and we are not even sure someone is up there speaking in front of the crowd. You can be at the end of the mall at a big rally for something, but as far as you know, it could be an animal from the zoo up there, because you can’t see anything. But you get closer and closer, and you can see there really is someone there, who was hidden from your sight before. You had to work your way up to the front of the crowd.

Allah says in a *hadith quds*, “**I was a hidden treasure, longing to be known** (—longing to be found, longing to be heard, longing to be loved, longing for the compassion to be reflected back to Me).” It seems to me that Allah (swt) assumes the role of the lover and the seeker, and initiates us into this love and trust as a believer. Everything is there for us, and everything is there for Him. Another thing implied in that *hadith* is that the relationship of love between Allah and His creation, and human beings, and you and me, is natural. It is Real. But the initiative has to come from the beloved in the disguise of the lover. What I mean by that is we may be the beloved and the lover of another human

being, but we are the beloved of Allah. Our love for Allah is because Allah first loved us and created us.

If we are happy; that's wonderful. If we are unhappy, it means there is something wrong inside of us, not outside of us. It's not right to bury things inside of ourselves. At the same time, it is not right to just wear all your problems on your sleeve. We have to engage in a dialogue between ourselves and those Qualities of Allah. The first relationship we have to have in any problem is to engage with Allah. If a situation demands your patience, first engage with the one who is the Patient, as-Sabur. If the situation demands that you are compassionate, first engage with ar-Rahman. It's just in a second. Engage means draw upon, dial into, bring it up on your inner browser, however you want to look at it; then create a subfile called "This situation, that situation."

It is also the guidance of the Prophet Mohammed (sal). We were told to follow the Prophet, and if we really loved Allah, then Allah will love us. We are advised to do good deeds, because Allah loves those who do good deeds. We are advised to be steadfast, because Allah (swt) loves those who are firm and steadfast. We are told to be loving, because Allah loves those who love. He assists those who are patient. **"Innallaha ma'a sāberīn. Innallaha yuhibbus sāberīn."** He assists those who are loving. We are told to be just for the same reasons, and to purify ourselves because He loves those who are pure, and to be patient, etc. These are all invitations, guidelines, means, challenges. There is a different kind of a challenge to live your life without that kind of guidance. There is no guidance if there is no need to be guided. Why should we be patient if there is nothing to be patient over, if we don't value patience or compassion or mercy.

Allah (swt) responds to us and answers us by giving us the opportunity to be exactly as we wish we could be, except we never think we are not that way until circumstances point it out. You think you are a compassionate human being, until someone points out that you are not being compassionate. You may not even think you are a compassionate human being. We all think we are fine, intelligent, powerful, and making the right decisions, until something comes along in our face and tells us that is not the way it is. If you tell a little child, “Go lift the tree up,” they will try to lift the tree, until the tree tells them they cannot lift it.

When the circumstances come, and we are not the way we wish we could or would be, it’s because we haven’t allowed ourselves to see ourselves clearly, as I spoke about last night. We have been hiding inside of ourselves, writing a different story. If we can just let things come to pass, they will come and they will pass, *alhamdulillah*. Everything will be all right. What we consider trials and hardships and tests are those things, until we are past them, and then they were just experiences, memories. When we pass them, they are gone just like final exams at school. There is worry, worry worry until the exam; then the exam is gone, and it is past. Of course, there is always more to say on this subject.

The way into this realization of becoming more and more aware of this opportunity Allah has given us, aware of our true involvement in our own state and our own life, is if we take the time that begins with a greeting to one another; and if we remember each other in our prayers before we go to bed (if we pray); if we make *du’ā* throughout the day when we see a need/ someone’s need / our own need, we supplicate; if we increase our *iman*/faith in that way; if we show our gratitude, then and only then, I think, do we really understand what we are truly asking for and how it is truly being given to us. The

bond of love, the bond of trust, the bond of faith between people who believe—Muslims, brothers and sisters in *tariqah*, believers (all believers)—has to come from the heart. Perhaps, we ask something at the beginning out of selfishness or fear, but if somewhere along the line we can remember and trust Allah, not only will we hear His response, but we will see it in our own lives, and we will find success and contentment.

It is a continuous effort. There are things that have to be done regularly, like brushing your teeth, combing your hair, getting a haircut, clipping your nails, eating food, drinking water. Don't you see? That's how we survive, by doing certain things continuously, repeatedly. Set your alarm. Is this a daily alarm, or a one-time event? Brushing your teeth, is it a daily alarm? Eating, is it a daily alarm? Why did Allah (swt) create? For the purpose of remembering who we really are. Five prayers a day, Ramadan, the *eids*, certain acts, *wazifas*, guidance that comes on a regular basis, and principles that we encounter every day—it's totally consistent. Of course, you are free not to do it. Your teeth will fall out, and your nails will grow to be that long, which will make certain things difficult to do. You are free not to get a haircut. We are free to eat all we want, assuming we have the money to do that; or not to eat at all. But the balance, harmony, and regularity is the same thing as asking those questions, getting the answers, and putting yourself in a place where you can actually see and hear the response.

Success and contentment perhaps are within our grasp. We need to be able to pray to Allah Who hears us, and be able to ask for a special favor and help so that not only can we come to know one another, but we can be sure of the Divine Presence, *inshā'a-Llāh*. *Asalaamu aleikum. DUAS*.

SECOND KHUTBAH: Duas. O Allah, so many people are suffering in this world. They have courage and they have fear. Many who are fighting for their freedom don't know what freedom is, because they have never experienced it. There are those who are wounded in battle, and find themselves pitted against others who are (nominally as they may be) Muslim, and this is against Your will. Peace-making is much better we know than war and fighting. Allah, there are also many people who are the victims of others through no fault of their own. They are starving in camps and victims of the earth quakes and tsunamis. We ask You, Allah, to be merciful to all of them and to all of us. Let the words and the sincerity of our pleas reach You, Allah (swt), so that no one has to discover or uncover such tragedy in their lives. *Amin.* Duas.