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Khutbah



Title: Life as A System of Activities for Good in This World and the Next

DVD title: The Continuity of the Good Life: Here to the Hereafter
Introduction to the Month of Rajab

Opening duas. *Asalaamu aleikum.* Allah (swt) reveals in the Holy Qur'an:

To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth and He forgives whom He wishes and He punishes whom He wishes. And Allah is All Forgiving and Singularly Compassionate. (48:14)

Say, truly my worship and my sacrifice, my living and my dying, are for Allah Lord of all the worlds, in Whose Divinity none has a share. This I am commanded, and I am the first among you who surrender to Him. (6:162-3)

Allah (swt) has made obvious to us that as one deepens and pursues their life as a true Muslim and as a Sufi, especially through the *tariqah* and in the ways we have been discussing the last two nights, that our life as guided by the Qur'an and Sunnah of Prophet Mohammed (sal) is designed by Allah (swt) to be lived as a system of activities that has their goal in the world and in the next world, the *akhirah*. He encourages us to sustain us, and promote balance and peace and harmony in both these worlds. It's our duty and our responsibility to strive for harmony with one another, with nature, and with all people. It's the purpose in our life and in our community of people and believers to fulfill this admonition.

Allah says: **“Had I wanted to, I would have made you one community. But I made you different that you may come to love and respect, justice and caring for one**

another.” It shouldn't take our whole lifetime to come to this conclusion. Some people pass out of this world without concluding there is anything other than this world. They are good people, no question. Like my brother-in-law who passed last night. You remember Harold; we will keep him in our prayers today. He was not a believer in anything, but he was a good man. For those of us who have struggled over many, many years, we should at least be grateful that Allah (swt) has given us some sense of remembrance, of reminders in our life for the seeking of harmony and balance. As we progress in our study and meditation, we realize how everything testifies to something that exists from beyond and returns to the beyond. It's almost inescapable for one who really cares to look at it and see it, instead of deny it.

In addition, Allah (swt) is so merciful that for those who don't have that blessing to see the continuity of here and the Hereafter, you can make their life pleasurable and fulfilling for them in this world. Moreover, for the realization to happen, we have to recognize our *fitra* and the essential and basic freedom that has been given to us by Allah that is sometimes a very heavy weight on us, because we don't know how to use it correctly. We imprison ourselves and others around us with that same freedom that has been given to us. Allah has given us will and choices, and we have often burned ourselves with our own will and our own choices because they become misdirected and misguide. The ability to act, to change, to influence ourselves, as well as to influence others in a good way in society has been given to us by Allah through our self/*nafs*, which we have also used and misused at times, rightly and wrongly in our lives.

We find ourselves having to wait long periods of time, or we find ourselves becoming lazy. Sloth and torpor enter into our lives, accompanied by habitual patterns and negative attitudes, which we and other human beings can have, and we lose our way. But patience is wonderful. If to patience we add our *iman* and our sincerity, that patience causes us to act in a way that is right and good, what is changing for ourselves. That patience influences others for the good, which is the cornerstone of Islamic teaching: *maruf* and

munkar. Allah (swt) affirmed to us in Sura al Baqarah: “**Allah does not lay upon you a burden (meaning a responsibility) on anyone that he or she cannot bear.**” That may be very doubtful to us at certain times in our lives; but on the other hand, those moments tend to pass. We find that yes, we could bear this problem, this disease, this challenge, or this test. Often, we feel that things are too heavy for us, and we resort to other aspects that Allah has given us: our emotions, passions, fears, attitudes to other things of this world or the world itself. But slowly (and sometimes not too slowly), as we practice and take a moment to be reflective, not just fulfilling our desires or avoiding big questions, we find our attention can clarify the intentions of Islam in our life. We don’t exist for ourselves only. We do have responsibilities to fulfill towards others and toward creation itself. We have to strive to understand what it means and how one accomplishes the rights Allah has given us, and to recognize the rights in *dunya*.

The first is accomplished as we learn the way to refine and develop our potential of our self. That is to say physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually we open our hearts, minds, bodies and souls to the Divine Presence, intending with clarity and inviting Allah (swt) to manifest His right to influence us and guide us in harmonious ways to that state of harmony and balance/*mizan*. Allah says: “**O you who believe! If you help Allah, He will assist you and set your feet firm.**” It is equally important and necessary to stimulate and sustain a very high degree of social consciousness, of social responsibility; because social responsibility is the foundation on the pillar of Islam, and the pillar of life. We cannot just live for ourselves and enjoy ourselves in this world. Even if we did, the things we use for our enjoyment were produced and created by someone else. The venue in which we are living is protected by someone else. The principles by which we guide our outer life were probably articulated by someone else, or many others.

Whatever we expect of one another or ourselves, whatever rights we claim, whatever demands we make for our own well being , must be less than our respect and activities with regard to others. Our responsibility (our ability to respond to our self) and our

obligations to ourselves have to be balanced with some obligations toward other human beings. For society is not defined or delineated by race or nationality or gender or even faith. We can only encourage and inspire others to understand and embrace the principles of the way of life that we embrace ourselves, if we are respectful of who others are, of what they believe, and even what they don't believe, as long as it is not based on bigotry, destruction or oppression of others. Then we can make some contribution to their well-being, their harmony, and their life. We are not responsible for it, but we can be responders to it.

Allah (swt) didn't create us either to be monks or just *da'ees* as a profession. He gave us direction and inclinations and intelligence to encourage ourselves to develop a point of view in life that is good and constructive—perhaps better than what others have, or what we entered into this world knowing. [He gave us] a means of developing our own character, which includes a state of mind that looks towards and contemplates our responsibilities and duties to each other, and for ourselves, and monitors our own actions and our own choices. The Prophet (sal) said, “***Actions rest on intentions.***” If we examine how our minds operate, we can see that the intention is the means through which the mind creates balance between the inherent nature and our actions. If our intentions are true, and we strive to be balanced in our duties toward Allah (swt), His creatures and His creation, our duties toward our emerging self, our duties toward society, we will find ourselves more and more aware of the subtleties and the intricacies of our own interests, capabilities, and the needs of the greater society.

This is a very fulfilling state to be in. Indeed, it is a *maqamat*, a station that one can achieve. When there is balance and awareness and constant intention, then we are doing the righteous work. The righteous work is to be good, to be right, to be proper. It also means something else: to be useful, to be serviceful in work that fosters peace, reconciliation, improvement in the human condition. This is what we will find ourselves involved in. So, how we choose our work, the context, the subjects, the venues are

important. When we speak about the works as a job, or as relationships, the character and characteristics of a Muslim must come through, in the sense of a peace maker. It's the attitude of a Muslim.

We have two separate roots that describe peace, as you know. *Salama*, as in *muslim* or *islam*; and *salaha*, reconciliation and peace-making. These are two aspects of our own character, our own personality. They have to be characteristics of our society. If we don't have that, we have selfishness. Selfishness might have its own rewards, but those rewards are in *dunya*; they are not in the *akhirat*. Selfishness rewards are in the '*alam al khalq*, the world of creation. The injunction for good comes from the '*alam al-amr*, the world of command. One implies the character of the individual; the other is a force for restoration of goodness in society. These are very important concepts to understand.

When we differentiation between the culture of Islam and the local culture of Muslims, we can see that the overriding attitude and point of view of the Sufis is a manifestation of a different process. The Prophet (sal) said, "**Respect the ways of Allah and be affectionate to the family of Allah.**" Who is the family of Allah? The people who believe in Allah. We see there is a kind of dyad, a parallel between the duties to oneself and the duties to others. The challenge is that we must withstand the cultural conditioning, as well as the forces of personal *nafs*, keeping in the forefront of one's heart and mind whether in one's family, work, or society that dual obligation; otherwise, we are selfish. There are many selfish people who are good people, but they are only living half a life. They are only benefitting from half the reality, half the truth.

To be mindful is *khair*, to be good; not *shahr*/evil. This is good and evil as a real Muslim sees it. It bears a lot of deep contemplation. To be good in every aspect and situation in life, you have to make this distinction in your personal and your intimate life, in our intellectual pursuits and emotional states, and in our social responsibility. It is the basis of what is good and evil. What is allowable and not allowable, what is *halal* and what is

haram finds its root in this sense of one's place and one's responsibility. The foundation in food for what is *halal* may be outlined in the way you sacrifice an animal. The idea being it is respectful for the animal, and the food is good and pure for human consumption, but the world changes. If the animal is fed poisons, you may sacrifice it in the right way, but it may not be good for you. So we have to understand the full context of it, not just the way it is sacrificed, but what its intention is for that sacrifice. The intention is that it is healthful. So we may have to make adjustments.

The enjoinder, **“You are the best of people, evolving from mankind, enjoining what is good and right and forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah”** is a changing dynamic. It is not something that is etched in stone, so to speak. What is *khair*, excellent and admirable, and best in blessing for the general welfare of people covers all the aspects of life: charitable, beneficial, making right choices, free to choose. The distinction in personal life, in community life is goodness. **“Believe and work righteously,”** Allah (swt) says. This is all contained in the concept of *khair*. It means simply to keep the truth in mind in all our activities, in our life and work with others in the community, and even with all the creatures of this world.

The virtues of goodness, kindness, love, purity, affection and truth, respect and patience and forgiveness are not extra social or only personal attributes to develop for our own selfishness. These are qualities to raise our character and are necessary. At the root of our character lies the potential for a created being that can have the *hayatul tayibah*. This is an example of the depth and breadth of the Qur'an I hope, *inshā'a-llāh*, which helps us to live in peace and strive in harmony with all living beings. We have to remember to say, as Allah (swt) tells us in the Qur'an: **“My prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death, are all for Allah, the Lord of all the worlds and the Lord of all existence.”**
Asalaamu aleikum.

SECOND KHUTBAH. O Allah, we ask You for Your healing for those among us who are ill and who have some disease. Create harmony and *mizan*/balance in their bodies. For all of us who are in need of Your *Shifat* in some way or another, we ask You for that blessing. We ask you Allah for Your Blessings on all those who are dying by the hands of other Muslims, *astaghfiru-Llāh*, and people who are dying by the hands of other human beings, whose boot of oppression is over their head. We ask You, Allah, to bring down those who whisper lies into the ears of others, and who speak ill of You and have no trust in You. So many people in the world are suffering today Allah (swt). Help us to increase our role in bringing some relief and harmony in their lives. *Amin.*

I want to mention to you that of course you know, but I don't know how much it has sunk into your minds, that this is the month of Rajab. We are over a week into it, and there are many things that can be done, because there are many benefits that come from the month of Rajab. The reverence and sanctity of this month is very deep, and it is linked to the month of Sha'ban of course, and to Ramadan. It is said that whosoever observes even one day of fasting during the month of Rajab gets Allah's pleasure. Asking forgiveness and turning repentant to Allah as much as you can during this month is a mercy, like drops of mercy from the heavens like a gentle rain in the month of Rajab. It is known as *asab*, pouring out, where the full love and kindness of Allah comes to us during the month of Rajab, especially for those of us who are praying for something very specific, who are in need or who are ill. This is a time to ask very deeply from Allah's mercy.

(Dua.)

(The Shaykh reads from a writing on Rajab):

Recite: 'Astaghfirullahad'ee Laa Ilaaha Ilaa Huwa Wah'dahoo La Shareeka Lahoo Wa Atoobu Ilayh (I ask forgiveness of Allah, who is "There is no God save He, and no other; has no partner"; and I turn repentant to Him)' at least 100 times (400 times will accrue more rewards), and recites "Laa Ilaaha Illallaah" 1000 times, during the month of Rajab, and gives alms in the name of Allah at the completion.

Recite Surah Al-Ikhlās at least 100 times (1000 or 10000 times will accrue more rewards) in the month of Rajab.

Rajab is the beginning of the spiritual season of these three holy months. I suggest you go back and listen to our talks from last year, before we enter into Sha'ban and Ramadan. We give our praises to Allah and thank Allah for giving us yet another opportunity to cleanse ourselves of our sins and our oversights. The Holy Prophet (sal) said:

Rajab is a great month of Allah, unmatched by any other month in the respect and significance accorded to it. War with the infidels during this month is prohibited. Verily, Rajab is Allah's month, Shaban is my month, and Ramadan is the month of my ummah. Whoever fasts a day in the month of Rajab will be granted the reward of ridwan and an angel in heaven. The wrath of Allah shall be withdrawn and the door of hell will be closed.

(Continues reading):

Fasting is one of the most recommended acts during this season, and it becomes wajib during the month of Ramadan, but it is highly recommended during the month of Rajab and Shaban, as we see from that hadith. Hazrat Salman Farsi narrated in the final message, the Messenger of Allah said, there is a day in the month of Rajab in which a person fasts and does the night vigil. On that night he will receive rewards like a person who fasts for a hundred years, and night vigils for a hundred years. This night is the night and the day of the 27th of Rajab. This is a day in which Hazrat Muhammed (sal) was appointed a messenger of Allah. So on the 27th of Rajab it is a good day if you can fast, the night before and the day.

Hadrat Salmaan narrates that the Beloved of Allah, Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) said "O Salmaan, there is no Mumin (True Believer) and Muminah (Truly Believing Female) who performs 30 Raka'ah in the month of Rajab and in each Raka'ah recites Surah Al-Faatihah once, Surah Al-Ikhlaas 3 times, and Surah Al-

Kafiroon 3 times that Allah does forgive them their sins and bestows rewards upon them as upon a person who has fasted a whole month. He becomes among those who will be steadfast in their Salaat in the year which is to come. For him the deeds of the day are equal to that of the martyr. He will be raised with the Martyrs of the Holy Battle of Badr. For him is written for the fast of each day, one year's worship. His station is raised 1000 times higher.

If he fasts the entire month of Rajab and he performs this (Above) Salaat, Allah will give him salvation from the Hell Fire, make Waajib for him, His Paradise and bestow His Nearness upon him. Hadrat Jibreel informed me "O Muhammad this is the sign between you and the Mushrikeen (Polytheists) and the Munaafiqeen (Hypocrites) because the Munafiq does not perform this Salaat."

Hadrat Salmaan says, I beseeched "O Rasoolallah tell me when and how shall I perform this Salaat (Prayer)" He said "O Salmaan, perform 10 Raka'ah on the first of it (month of Rajab) and in each Raka'ah recite Surah Al-Faatihah once, Surah Al-Ikhlaas thrice and Surah Al-Kafiroon thrice and after you do your Salaam (at the end of the Salaat) raise your hands and say: "There is no God but Allah, The One Who has no partners. To Him belong all His kingdom and all the praise, Who created life and death and Who is Alive without Death. From His hands (only) good is done and Who has Power over everything. Dearest Allah, no one can stop what You bestow and no one can give what You prevent. There is no one who can profit us except You the August among all." Then spread your hands over your face.

In the middle of the month perform 10 Raka'ah and in each Raka'ah recite Surah Al-Faatihah once, Surah Al-Ikhlaas thrice, and Surah Al-Kafiroon thrice and after you do your salaam (at the end of the Salaat) raise your hands towards the heavens and say:

"There is no God but Allah, the One who has no partners. To Him belong all His Kingdom and all the praise. Who created life and death and Who is Alive without Death. From His Hands (only) good is done and Who has Power over everything. The only God, Unique, Who has no needs. He has no wife and no children." Then spread your hands over your face.

You perform this Salaat at the end of the month, 10 Raka'ah. In every Raka'ah recite Surah Al-Faatihah once, Surah Al-Ikhlaas thrice and Surah Al-Kafiroon thrice. After you do your salaam, raise your hand towards the heaven and say: "There is no God but Allah, The One Who has no partners. To Him belong all His Kingdom and all the praise. Who created life and death and Who is Alive without Death. From His Hands (only) good is done and Who has Power over everything. And the blessing of Allah be upon the Master Muhammad and upon his pure progeny and there is no power greater than that of Allah Who is the Greatest in Might".

Then ask for your needs (to be fulfilled). Your Supplication will be accepted and Allah will create 70 trenches between you and the Hell fire, the distance between each trench will be like it is between Heaven and Earth and written for you will be freedom from Fire of Hell, and from crossing the Bridge of Siraat." When the Beloved of Allah, Hadrat Muhammad had finished, I fell down in prostration, weeping out of gratitude towards Allah for the abundance of the rewards.

There is a beautiful *hadith* on this subject. I will make it available to you. We are still in the first part of the month, up until two days from now, so make your ten *rak'as*, and then again in the middle of the month, and at the end. Make your prayer to Allah (swt) and recite these *du'ās*, *inshā'a-llāh*.