

July 8, 2011

Khutbah



Title: [Following the Tract of Allah \(swt\)](#)

DVD title: Follow the Tract of Allah:
The Presence of the Attributes, particularly Rahmat

Opening duas. *Bismi-Llāhi-r-Rahmāni-r-Rahīm.* Allah (swt) reveals to us in the Holy Qur'an:

And those who persevere in seeking the face of their Lord and establish their salah and spend out of what we have provided, secretly and openly, and who have overcome evil with good, it is these who will have the final abode, Gardens of Eden which they enter along with the righteous ones among their parents and their mates and their children. The angels enter unto them from every gate saying, "Peace be upon you because you have persevered. Ah! Passing sweet will be the final abode." And those who break the covenant of Allah after it had been established and severed that which Allah has ordered to be joined and spread corruption on the earth, for them is the curse and theirs is an evil abode. Allah enlarges a provision for whom He chooses or strains it for whom He chooses. And they rejoice in the life of this world but the life of this world in comparison to the final life is but a brief comfort. And those who cover up the Truth say, "If only some sign were sent down upon him from his Lord." Surely, Allah sends astray whom He chooses and He guides to Himself all who turn repentant toward Him. Those who believe and whose hearts are made tranquil by the remembrance of Allah, surely, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find their rest. Those who believe and act righteously, supreme joy is for them and bliss is their journey's end.

So now you know the context, if you did not know it before, of what we recite quite often. Also Allah (swt) says:

Good and evil deeds are not equal. Repel evil with what is better and you will see that the one with whom you had enmity will become, as it were, your dearest friend.

So one is a general statement about the blessing, and one is a very specific example of how one can act in order to win the *na'ima*, the *fadl* of Allah (swt) in terms of life here and in the Hereafter. So I could have read more, maybe I should read more from the second *'āyat*:

But none are granted this save those who are steadfastly patient, and none are granted this save the possessor of good fortune. “This” meaning hearts that the hearts are made tranquil.

So my dear brothers and sisters, the point is made very clearly in Qur'an, again and again, that the bond between Allah (swt) and His creation and human kind, is one of love and one of obedience and submission and surrender. Allah gives us our existence and just our existence alone, we have to understand, is our first *bai'at*. We give *bai'at* to the Prophet Mohammed (sal) through the hands of our *shuyukh*, and this is the second *bai'at*. The highest form of devotion is founded on love and that love, of course, has to be for Allah (swt), as we have described it so many times. Allah in this context becomes the Beloved of the seeker. The love of the seeker seeks in all love in all relationships. Truly, in all love and all relationships, we seek beauty, we seek majesty, we seek justice, we seek kindness, we seek friendship, we seek forgiveness, we seek patience, we seek perseverance. Isn't this true? Isn't this what we seek?

So when we say that the highest form of devotion is founded on the Love for Allah, we love patience in those circumstances. We love all those *Sifats/Attributes* of Allah, don't we? So don't every confuse that. To be the Beloved of the seeker, the love the seeker seeks in all relationships are the things that we love every day – beauty and tolerance and love and patience. There are men who take images as substitutes for Allah (swt), and love them as they should love Allah. I was having a conversation today with two of our staff members and we were talking about the Hare Khrishnas in West Virginia and in Pittsburgh. I was saying that they did beautiful books about Bakhti Vedante Swami. I saw him just before he died in Rishikesh. He was a very good and nice man in many ways. He was an exemplary Yogi, Vishnava. But, it was an infatuation and love for this idol, Khrisna – that is what it looked like and that is what it sounded like. It was all the love for Khrisna and it was wonderful, but it stops short. Yet at the same time, it would be wonderful if people were told that this was just a quality of God. But they were not saying that.

So Allah (swt) says that we should love Allah, but with the faithful the love of Allah is the strongest. How do I love Allah more than I love my children? I don't, in that sense. I love Allah because of the beauty of my children. I love Allah because my children show justice or forgiveness, or they show patience. When they are not patient, then we ask, "Where is Allah in that? Allah is not present in that." I say that to my children – and I mean to all of our children. I love my brothers and sisters for the same reason. You see the new baby girl, and we love her immediately. What do we love about her? The beauty, the newness, her freshness, the new life, all of this we love. This is loving Allah more than we love any thing.

Allah says, **"If you love Allah, follow me. Allah will love you and forgive yours sins. Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."** (3:31) How do you follow Allah? You follow the tract. You follow Allah. You follow the '*āyāt*/signs. You go from beauty to beauty, from beauty to patience, from patience to tolerance, from tolerance to forgiveness, from

forgiveness to justice, from justice to mercy back to patience, from patience to beauty, from beauty to majesty, from majesty to..... you are just tracking, all the time. You say, “Where are you right now?” and you say, “I am on the road to majesty. Why don’t you join me?” “What do mean by that?” “Look at the mountain. Look at the mountain.” That is what we loved in the great saints that we have met in our lives. It is not that they are always talking about God. It is that anything they are talking about is God. Know what I am saying? It is very serious, very important that we understand this very basic, very important message: that if you love Allah (swt) and you say, “Love Allah, follow me.” It means you follow the tract of Allah (swt). What does that mean? When you see beauty, you are on the tract of Allah (swt).

My Shaykh was such a loving person, such a compassionate person, sweet person, you know? You [know you] are on the tract of Allah (swt), because you drown in that sweetness. I remember when the children would come for Halloween, do you remember children? I would make sure he had candy to give to the children. He would go, “Hohoho. What is this?” There were certain costumes he didn’t particularly like, one that looked like a skeleton. He didn’t like that too much. He was as sweet as the sweet. Do you remember, the older children? *Alhamdulillah-Llāh*. That tract is the sweetness of Allah (swt). So when we say that Allah will forgive your sins and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful, it is not, “Oh he was a good boy. I am going to forgive your sins.” No. It is in that company there is no sin in that company. Everything is wiped clean. Yes? You go outside; you work hard; you perspire; you take a shower; everything is wiped clean. You get out of the shower and get dressed, and somebody says, “Would you mind going outside and put the shovel away.” Immediately you get dirty again. That is the way of life.

But if you say “I am doing this as *ibāda*, as worship, as service,” you don’t get dirty, even from the dirt. That is why there are very specific things that are said to be *narjis*. They are very specific things. Everything else is pure from Allah (swt)—even the things that

are *narjis*, depending on what state they are in. We won't get into that today because it is not a subject we are talking about today. But this is the promise of Allah (swt) in Surah al-Baqara and Surah al-Imran. When we find love and we know that we are finding the love that is Allah (swt), then surely Allah will give us protection and forgive us over and over again. Forgive us. What does it mean to forgive us? It means giving more to us. Over and over again, repeatedly in Qur'an there is an emphasis that a belief in Allah (swt) must necessarily result in the love of Allah (swt). **“O you who believe, should any of you desert this faith, Allah will raise up a people loved by Him and loving Him.”** There will always be those who love Allah (swt). Again it says, **“...will be raised up from among you such people.”**

So again, in Qur'an points out that the love of Allah (swt) is expressed through His creatures, the love of unique creatures, special creatures to whom Allah (swt) has brought a special message, collectively and individually. Because each of us goes through life with many different experiences or even the same experiences, but we respond differently to those experiences. That is an individual message that comes to us. **“He who desires the love of Allah has necessarily to learn to love His creatures.”** Yes, even the ticks and the spiders. That is hard. I don't know about the ticks. It does not say “certain creatures” or “only the ones you like” or “only the ones who tell you what you want to hear” but the ones that remind you of Allah. “Ya Allah (scratching himself as if from an insect bite)!” We don't say, “Ya Shaytan.”

I never understood as a kid when the Christians used to say, “Don't take the name of the Lord in vain.” We used to say, “Jesus Christ!” And Billy used to hit me on the head with a book every time I used to say that. If I said, “Jesus,” He would hit. I would say, “What's wrong with [saying] that? That is the guy you believe in. Why can't I say that?” “You are using his name in vain.” There is nothing vain about this. Then he would hit me on the head. I should write him and ask him why he did that.

Again and again, the Qur'an points out that this love is expressed through the love of His creatures. Allah says, **“Who for the love of Allah disperses his wealth and though longing for it themselves bestows their food on the poor and the orphans and the captive and says, ‘We feed you for the sake of Allah. We seek neither recompense nor thanks.’”** To whom? To the poor, the orphans and the captives—the captive! That is hardly what we would see among the Taliban, al-Qaeda, or the Hizbul Tahrīr people. The truth of it has been very well expressed in Qur'an and also in the traditions of Nebi Muhammed (sal). You know what he said. He said:

On the Day of Judgment, Allah will address that particular individual (meaning us) and say, “O son of Adam, I was sick and you did not attend Me.” The individual will reply, “How is that possible? You are, after all, the Supreme Lord of all the worlds. How could you fall sick?” Allah will say, “Do you not remember that so and so among my servants was ill and lying near you, and you did not turn towards him in sympathy? If you had but gone near, you would have found Me by his side.” In a like manner, Allah (swt) addressed another individual, “O son of Adam. I asked you for a piece of bread but you would not give it to Me.” The individual would exclaim, “How is that possible, O Allah? You do not eat bread.” Allah will reply, “Do you not remember a certain time that a certain one of My servants in a moment of need had asked you for bread, and did you not refuse to give it to him? Had you not refused, you would have found Me by his side.”

So Allah (swt) is everywhere, as I have been saying and saying and saying. You move within the company of Allah; you move in the current of Allah; you move in the awareness of Allah. Drifting along in *ghunūgi*, you are in the company of Allah, moving from compassion to mercy, mercy to tolerance, from tolerance to patience, from patience to perseverance, from perseverance to love, around and around again. That *hadith* is not about illness; it is not about bread. It is about understanding how we should treat one

another. It is about how we should be when we see the needs of one another. How can we find Allah (swt): we find Allah (swt) accompanying those in need. Are we not needy? Are not all of us in need? The very same consideration is implicit in all the forms of devotion, all the actions suggested by Qur'an. It's implicit in the emphasis that is laid on certain qualities and virtues that we have to develop. It's implicit in the distinction that is made between what is lawful and what is unlawful, who is loyal and what type of person is disloyal, who is trustworthy and who is not.

So great is the stress laid on the presence in human beings of the quality of *rahmat* (compassion and mercy) – indeed, on no other Attribute of Allah is stress laid as much – that it appears 300 times in the Qur'an. How many times does the Prophet's name appear in the Qur'an? Four times. Compassion and mercy: if we include other attributes that are similar, such as providence, forgiveness, benevolence, protection and forbearance, it's almost uncountable. You just have to leave out the conjunctions and articles. Wherever we look, the basis of worship according to Al Qur'an rests on the idea that the aim of human life, whether we are children or adults, elderly or young, healthy or ill, is to reflect in one's own thought and activity these Ninety-Nine Attributes of Allah, which are really thousands of attributes.

If we have our own selfishness as our goal, not only will that mean we will not come near to Allah (swt), because Allah is calling us through those things and circumstances around us, and asking of us through the need of those who have need, it means we will not be able to serve anyone in the way of Allah. Worse than that, we will probably be following only our desires and become lost in our own self-centeredness. We will become lost in our weaknesses and in our inability to articulate what is true and good and right, especially to those who need to hear it, and those nearest and dearest to us.

The Qur'an regards the emergence of human beings to be the line where the animal nature ceases, and the higher life begins to disclose itself *if you so choose*. The quality

which distinguishes us from animals gives us a scale and station in life that is really tremendous. Humanity is nothing but the reflection of Allah's (swt) Divine Qualities and Attributes. Perfection is to be reached by expressing in one's life more and more those Divine Qualities and Attributes. Selfishness, arrogance, ego, being overcome by desires, lack of self-control, lack of respect for our parents, lack of parents respect for their children, lack of friendship, lack of respect for relatives—these are the greatest barriers to our own happiness. They are not just barriers that create poor communication. Sometimes there is no communication.

I remember even in my own family, and I'm sure many of you will attest to the same fact, when my sister was having some difficulties, who did she turn to? Our mother, because the mother is the best friend of the child. Well, we like to think the father is too, but the truth is, the roles are different. What would be the fear of communication? There should be no fear, only open-heartedness and love. Sometimes parents pick on the children a little, "Do this, don't do that. Put your things away. Unplug that. Plug that in. This and that." The child may think, "I'm afraid if I say anything, I'll be told don't do this and don't do that." Don't be afraid of that. I remember after my mother passed, I would sometimes think, "I'm going to call my mother. Oh. She's not there anymore." And I thought of all the things I could have said or should have said, but I didn't say to her. Some of you knew my mother. She would sit in the back of the room there and hear me talk and shake her head. I won't say what she was mouthing! Sort of, "I know you. You are not pulling the wool over my eyes!" Most of you knew my mother, *alhamdulillah*.

"The mother, the mother, the mother," [it is stated in the *hadith*]. It is not just because she carries you in her belly. We have to take some credit for that, too. It is because the mother is always going to be the manifestation of compassion and understanding. So children, always talk to your mother. And your children and my children must talk to their fathers! This is very, very serious and very, very important. We laugh about it, but it's a very important subject. Understand that Allah (swt) is calling to us. We have to

understand also as adults that we should not mix up things. When a person is wanting compassion, we should be giving compassion. When they need silence from us, we should be giving them silence. When they need love from us, we should be giving them love. That applies to the aunties and the uncles also.

That's why tradition and cultural values are very, very important. If you stick with traditional and cultural values, you are very, very blessed. Some of us were born, raised in America, and those cultural values weren't very clear for some people. If you were born in Indonesia, Iran, or India or these other places in the world, or if we come from a traditional family... and I happen to come from a family where *adab* was very, very important, even though they were Americans. My grandmother came from the old country. There were certain things you always did with the grandmother. My grandmother protected me like I was threatened. If anything was off, my grandmother would protect me.

We have to understand that the Qur'an tells us all about this. It's all about the *Sifat* of Allah, and that Allah is calling us through circumstances and things in the world around us. When we are young, we think we have the answers for everything. When you get older, it's a real scramble to live your life and get the answers. We assume we understand, and that we have the tools to deal with any situation. The truth is we don't, especially when we are young. Then when we are older, maybe we don't have the newer tools. We should always stay open, and understand that maybe there is another way of looking at things. We might be looking at things from one point of view, but we should be looking from the point of view of compassion. If we see something ugly, we should look from the point of view of beauty. If we are upset about and turned off by something that seems to be not good, we should be looking at justice. And that's what we need our elders for.

So, my dear brothers and sisters, when the Qur'an refers to any special qualities in human beings, it always sets them in relationship to the Attributes of Allah (swt), so much so that when it refers to the qualities of humanity, it calls them the “**very breath of Allah.**” Our humanity is the breath of Allah, the breath that shaped us, in which Allah breathed our spirit into us, as He breathed the spirit of Sidna Isa into the womb of Maryam (ra), as He breathed the spirit into Hawa and Adam (as). Whenever the Qur'an attempts to raise in our minds the concept of Divine Mercy and Compassion, it does so with the purpose of stimulating within us the very same qualities, the qualities that gave us hearing, seeing, and concern. The same purpose is underlying in repeated references to other attributes. So frequently does it emphasize that there is no limit to Divine Forgiveness, no limit to compassion, no limit to love.

It suggests to us that we as human beings should also develop those same qualities in our lives, unrestricted, and as a reflection of Allah (swt): patience, tolerance, understanding, kindness, gentility, compassion. Wherever you don't see them, there lies in wait the Shaytan. But the Shaytan cannot live in the light of those qualities, so keep those qualities near to you. Keep all those attributes near to you, and you don't have to worry about the Shaytan. *Aūdhu billahi minash-shaytan ar-rajīm.* And what then is the solution? *Bismi-Llāhi-r-Rahmāni-r-Rahīm.* That's what we say. *Bismi-Llāhi-r-Rahmāni-r-Rahīm* is the neutralizer, a formula. *Inshā'a-Llāh. Asalamau aleykum.*

O Allah, there are those among us who are ill and who have been given the challenge of well being. There are those who in the past week have passed since our last *khutbah*, and come near to You. O Allah, there are those waiting to be born, and in this week, we have had the birth of a new child into this community. We are thankful Allah (swt) for all the blessings. We are thankful for the challenges as a means of remembering You. We ask You for Your Shifat for those who are struggling with illness, to make them whole and well again, and make their bodies pure. We ask You for Your Protection in the coming week, and the blessings for healing and health for all of us, *inshā'a-Llāh. Amin.*

SECOND KHUTBAH: In this time between the two *khutbahs* in *jumah* is a time when you sit down and ask Allah for what you need and what you want. The reason why it is brief is because as you are listening to the *khutbah*, you should come to the conclusion of what you want. You condense it into one *niyyat*, one sentence, and you say it in that moment/*waqt*. You seize the *waqt*, because Allah is listening for that. How is Allah listening, after all the things I tell you about Allah? Listening...everything has ears, just like everything praises Allah (swt). So your needs will be met, *inshā'a-Llāh*.