



Equality and Equity are Divinely Willed

(This khutbah was given by telephone from the Shaykh's house as he was recuperating from surgery.)

I'm sorry I am not physically there with you, but I am here. I want to thank all those of you who have been calling me and who come to visit me. I enjoy it very much, and thank you so much for your *du'ā*, and keep up the *du'ā*, *inshā'a-Llāh*.

In Surah al-Baqarah, there are two important *'āyāt* for today.

And among the people there are those who take objects of worship as rivals to Allah, loving them as Allah should be loved. Those who securely believe are stronger in their love for Allah. They who are intent on obscuring the truth will only see suffering [and will come to know all is] in the power of Allah, and Allah is severe in His punishment.
(2:165)

First of all, when thinking about these *āyāt*, you have to remember, exactly at that moment, we are talking about Allah is those attributes. When we say, **“those who take objects of worship as rivals to Allah,”** it means anything that does not remind you of Allah. Can you imagine that? I hope we can, because we do it all the time. If we take the leadership from Allah's attributes we know that in any moment, there is compassion and mercy, love, tolerance, patience, and justice. There are so many opportunities in the world we live in to speak kindly, and to be of the middle path; to enjoin others to do good, and not to do evil; to repent of ourselves, and

repent to Allah Swt. Obscuring the truth means you are the weaker person; you are the person who isn't doing that.

I had surgery. If I don't thank Allah, and remember Allah, and ask Allah, meaning if I don't make my promises, and [ask for His] support and don't seek His guidance (I'm using the term "His guidance," but I'm saying a moment of repentance for being lazy, and not doing what I should have done earlier, or asking Allah for His support in this transition time and in recovery), if I don't do that, then I am not loving Allah as Allah should be loved. I'm not remembering Allah. A person who you love wants you to remember them. **"Those who securely believe are stronger in their love for Allah, and they who are intent on obscuring it could only see the suffering they will."** What is the suffering? What comes when you don't have that knowledge? What happens when you don't have that attitude? The other *'āyat* for today is:

The sacred month for the sacred month, and the retribution for the violation of sanctity. Whosoever commits aggression against you commits aggression against him. Safeguard yourselves for those who love Allah safeguard themselves for his sake. (2:194)

One way of looking at this is there are not only sacred times and sacred months, and retribution for when we violate the sanctity. But retribution in this sense means that the people who commit aggression against us are people who are not as tolerant as, or as patient as, or who have a limited view of us. Hopefully, that's true. Or their aggression is unwarranted, because in the world of Allah Swt, that is the world of forgiveness, the world of Islam. You have to keep yourself safe to those things. Also, in Surah Fussilat, Allah says: **"Good and evil deeds are not equal. Repel evil with what is better, and you will see the one you have enmity with will become as your dearest friend."** It means we have to continue to love people,

and even though we have anxiety and fear, we have to love them. Even though we understand this enmity between us, we have to make it up with love.

One of the chiefs of the Qureysh came to see Hazrat Umar (ra) and some freed slaves were waiting in the courtyard. You remember that slaves were freed for many reasons. One of the reasons was if a slave was a concubine or married by a Muslim, the child became a Muslim. Since in Islam, you cannot manumit just the person, you have to manumit the whole family, once one was freed, the whole family was freed. Would that would have been understood 1200 years later in the United States. Umar (ra) called those people first, and the Qureysh chiefs had to wait outside.

Abu Sufyan, who you know was not the sweetest fellow in the world and who was the enemy of the Prophet (sal), and whose wife Hind tried to poison the Prophet (sal), took this very badly, as he was wont to do. He said to his companions, "This is a strange turn of the wheel. Slaves are collected and called to the court why we wait outside!" One of those with him said, "To speak to the truth, we have no right to complain against Umar. Rather, we should complain against ourselves, for Islam called us all with one voice. Those of us who came only when their own ill luck drove them to it (referring in a very direct way to Abu Sufyan and himself) deserve to come last."

They were only driven to Islam when the Prophet took Mecca.

It was also reported that the son of Ibn Abbas beat a man without just cause. It was reported to Umar (sal), and he (the son) was flogged in the presence of Ibn Abbas, who dared not protest. And we know the story of Umar's cloak. Once he was delivering an address in the mosque, and a man stood up and

questioned him about the cloak he was wearing. The man said he was small, but still could not make a cloak or shirt from a piece of cloth that was the same share each person had received in Medina. You should know that when there was booty from battles, it was from the rulers, not the people. It was distributed equally from the lowest soldiers to the generals. No one was allowed to take the land or property of any innocent people, only of those who were from the court they were fighting. How was it that Umar had a cloak made, then? He must have had two pieces. Umar asked his son, who was there, to answer the question. He said that since none of them could make a cloak from one piece of cloth, he had given his piece to his father.

This was the quality, the standard held by Umar (ra), that everything should be distributed in equal portions. Although he gave priority to those who embraced Islam, he had a very close relationship with others. People were enjoined to Islam. When Islam took over an area, country, or nation, no one was forced by the sword to become a Muslim. They were forced to be ruled by Islamic law, but no one was forced to become a Muslim. He even gave stipends to his slaves. During his reign, a plague swept across that part of the Middle East and killed almost 20,000 soldiers. Umar paid a visit to Shams, and a few miles away from the town he gave his horse to a servant and rode in on his servant's camel. When he reached the town, people asked where Umar was, and the servant pointed to the man riding the camel. People were amazed, and could hardly believe their eyes. But they saw by his conduct that Islam did not make any distinction between the slave and the master.

It's not just about money, and issues, and circumstances in life. But also in human relationships it is possible to find balance and harmony. We don't all have the same talents and knowledge. People don't have the same opportunities, especially in the society we live in. We delude ourselves to think that we are better than anyone else

in the world, or we have a higher standard of birth, or whatever. Our life standard is lower than other countries. Our educational standard is lower than other countries. We have more malnutrition than other countries. Statistics tell the truth, even though the politicians of today don't. They think if you tell a lie enough times, people will believe it, and it will become the truth.

We are not better than other people. What makes an American better is they live by real democratic standards, not because they have the name Americans or because they live on this soil. The soil is only made sacred by the sanctity of a person's faith and belief and trust in the process. People forget that we no longer have habeas corpus. We no longer have privacy. We no longer have so many of the guarantees of the Bill of Rights, because of the Patriot Act. The name itself gives it away. Are you patriot if you follow it? Are you a patriot if you take away the rights of people? We all knew once that act was fully established, it would be very hard, if not impossible, to backtrack it. Then people think we are living in a democracy, but we are not. What makes us free is living the principles.

It is the same thing: what makes us a Muslim is living the principles. The effort to create equal opportunity allows a lot to happen. The pursuit of equal opportunity and equity is a foundation of Islam, as we saw in the stories of Umar and the Prophet (sal). It allows for many things. It allows for a society to be more balanced, and for personal creativity to come forward. We realize people are not necessarily equal in all things, but they should have equal opportunity. When we listen to these stories, it shows a lot of importance to the concept of equality, but also a practical philosophy and policy. It shows how Islam has tried to build on a concrete foundation of common parentage of all human beings, Hazrat Adam (as). It means all human beings, including their slaves, are brothers under Allah. If we keep looking back at something, we can find its foundation and judge how strong it is. He repented the

moment he realized what he had done. He and Hawa stopped what they were doing. They repented to Allah. They were cast down, but they were protected.

The issue of masters and slaves has a lot of negativity, obviously, and rightfully so, especially in our country, and all through Africa, and today in the Middle East and Asia. If you go back to the point where all humanity derived from one single egg and one single sperm, and all are equal for the vast majority at birth, then we have to question social customs. We have to bridge the gap between a social construct that exists between slaves and masters. We have to listen to the language that's used, and see how people manipulate others with their language. The fact that everyone is created equal, you have to bridge that with beliefs. In the case of Pakistan recently where a young girls was shot, there was so much reaction worldwide, even in Pakistan. A hundred thousand dollars reward has been offered for any information that leads to the person who shot her.

Understand, there are passions here. Many of them are by assumption, where you take principle of one thing, and you ascribe it to something else. For example, the principle of slander results in lashes. So they said that slander leads to drinking, because people got intoxicated. When a person was caught drinking alcohol, even though originally alcoholic beverages were allowed, and it was drunkenness that was not allowed, Umar said it had to stop. They had no punishment for it. So by kiat they said a person would receive lashes, because they would lose control of their tongue. They would say mean things to other people. But of course there are many anomalies, and extremes.

So many things that are simple have been made so complex in the Muslim world today because people, through their culture, want to punish more than they want to change. It tells us about the inequity and inequality that is part of the human

tradition. I don't believe we could have seen this happen under the Prophet Mohammed (sal). From the history we know, from the kind of punishments he was forced to dole out, almost all of them were against his will. Rightfully so, people cry out in public against this girl being shot. But the administration in this country refuses to put pressure on our "allies and friends" to change their behavior, not the Saudis or the Syrians. We understand the difference between these countries, and that they are the hotbeds of the Middle East. But there are things that need to be done. Too many things are being gotten away with in the name of Islam. We supposedly don't intervene in the sovereign rights of other nations, but of course we know that is not true. We do all the time. There needs to be some understanding about this. How can we expect great changes to come about when people are taking such baby steps, and allowing such inequity to take place?

The answer is, of course we can't. Change doesn't come rapidly even when they are supported. On the other hand, look at how rapidly change came about under the Prophet Mohammed (sal). Well, the exceptions prove the rule. It took the Prophet (sal), the Sahabah, the *taba'in*, the *taba-taba'in* and the great *awliya-Llāh* to effect such changes over a short period of time. Otherwise, it takes enormous periods of time. As we know, at almost 1433 years out from that time. Even if there were only 200 crazy Muslims running around in the world, or 2,000, not 2 billion, think of the havoc they could raise. You would think they would have evolved some kind of real justice under the name of justice, real compassion under the name compassion, real truth under the name of truth. But the opposite is true: power corrupts, chauvinism, cultural prejudice and greed affects human beings' lives. But we can't give up, because the paradigm may shift.

Equality is still something to be reached for, grasped for, and held on to; otherwise, what do we have? We have a commitment to speak out against wrong actions and

Muslims against injustice, and strive to bring fairness and justice and truth back to Islam, just as we have a duty to speak out in our country to revive democracy and the rights of individuals. Every one of us! There is voting in two weeks. Every one of us should remember what has to be said. Would you rather change progress, or would you rather keep the progress going? That's the question you have to ask people who aren't sure how they are going to vote. Do you really think we need change, or do we need to continue to make progress? The other side in this political battle doesn't give any ways to make change, they just say, "We're going to do it. Trust me." Trust them? Why should we? Why should we trust anyone? Why should we trust the government at all? You have to keep their feet to the fire, that's what the founders of this nation said; otherwise, we will only see more injustice and hypocrisy. It took a long time in certain ways for civil rights to be approached, let alone legislated, and not fully implemented yet.

Some say the civil rights of Muslims today are being attacked. I saw on tv how close we are to having implants on their children for safety, that will let the GPS satellites in space know exactly where you are at any given moment. But that's not all they do. They also know exactly what we are doing. They can measure our blood rate, and know exactly what room we are in, in the house. They can even see into those rooms with the military satellite. Can you imagine that there are people who are choosing this?! We have rights we are entitled to, and we are entitled to criticize. That is in our constitution of the United States, and the Declaration of Independence. It is also in the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet (sal).

We cannot allow ourselves to sit with inequality and injustice. An individual's personality, role, and capacity are very important. And not just their role and capacity, but how we express ourselves as a person. People criticized Joe Biden because he was smiling too much [during the national pre-election debates]. They

said that on a scale of 1-15, he should have been more of an 8 instead of an 11. So he shouldn't be himself? Are we that stupid? If he makes his opponent, who is a young, upstart idiot who lies just to get elected look stupid, good for him. Joe Biden was challenged by his opponent with this remark, "Some things that come out of the Vice Presidents mouth embarrass himself." Joe said, "Yes, but I always mean what I say." That's how the Prophet (sal) was. [It is important to uphold] the idea to abolish preferential treatment, what Umar did, and to reaffirm the rights of every citizen; to have equal treatment and equal rights, the birthright of an individual; to demand equality towards others. They may not be able to have it, or execute the equality equally. But if you work for a company and you can't measure up for the job because you don't have the intelligence or the skills, then you won't have that equal job. That job will go to someone else. We accept that in the world we live in today, but what about the 47% who want everything for free, or the 30% who don't care? That's ridiculous.

On the other hand, there are those who have the intellect and the skills, but have never been given the opportunity. If you don't have the intelligence for something, you have to look at education and see how people are being educated. When we look at our educational system, what do we see? Would you like to have the most prestigious, lowest paid job in the world? I do. I am a teacher. It's the greatest job in the world with the lowest wage. We carry on that tradition here. If there were some way to rectify the inequity, we should. In other words, the goal of equality has to be there, and the opportunity has to be there. The means has to be there. Whatever we have, we have to excel at it. We have to make this community and our educational standards better.

We have to help our children in college, and give them work to do, and excite them about the work that we are doing. "Say, I want to travel the world. I can work at my

own Legacy International and do that!" There's nothing wrong with that. We are not the kind of parents who say to their children, "Oh, go do what you want to do. Do anything that is interesting to you." Make what we do interesting. I think the biggest mistake I ever made was I didn't send everyone of you on a mission for Legacy. All of children would be thrilled to work with us, had I sent the children at 13, 14 years old to see these programs. Then we wouldn't be facing the fact that we only have an older population today. I made a mistake; I'm sorry. Forgive me. It was a big mistake. Had we sent you to a village, you would see, hear, taste, and smell what we do in this world. You would be proud of it. In fact, equal opportunity is very important, but the basic equality in Islam is that we come into existence from one seed. It is the same seed that gave birth to all humanity, by whatever name we call ourselves, whatever name we worship; therefore, Muslims should stand up for equality and equity everywhere.

Hazrat Umar refused to pray in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. I understand; the Christians think he conquered Jerusalem. The Persians think he conquered Persia. That's not what happened. Yes, there were wars and they won the wars, but no one was forced to Islam. The Zoroastrians were on the cusp of becoming monotheists. The Jews had become monotheists three thousand years before, the Christians, 600 years earlier. You see how the cultures worked against that. Now you see how the *mullahs* are, raising themselves to be called Imam, making the implication that they are like the Mahdi. The Divine Will of Allah is about equality.

When the Persians give their own people equality, then they can speak about Islam clearly. When the Saudis give their people equality, then they can speak about Islam. When we give our people equality, we can speak about democracy. It is a fact that equality and equity are Divinely willed by Allah. There are a lot of other aspects of

equality that we desire, like dignity, honor and humility. But I've talked for a long time. *Asalaamu aleykum.*