

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

[Beatitudes of Tasawwuf:](#)

Manifest with Sincere Motivation and Intention

Allah Swt has given us very good guidance which we should remember frequently, and which should be part of our thinking. He says:

O you who have arrived at secure belief. Do not invalidate your charity by reminders of it, or by hurting the feelings of the poor like the one who spends his wealth, to be seen by the people. And believe in Allah and the final Day. His likeness is the likeness of a smooth stone upon which is dust, and it is hit by the heavy downpour that leaves it hard and bare. Such people gain nothing from what they earn through acts of charity. And Allah does not guide those who cover up the truth. (2:264)

Also Allah says in Surah al Fussilat, ayat 60:

Say to them, I am a man like you, to whom it has been revealed that your God is one God. So take a straight course to Him, and seek His forgiveness. And woe to those who associate others with Him, those who do not pay the *zakat*, and who cover up the truth about the Final World.

Surely, for those who believe and do good deeds, for them there is unending reward.

I should begin with an announcement: that is, summer has arrived. You may remember a few days ago it was 42 degrees at night; we have now had a 50 degree swing, and the poor people in Texas have had over a hundred homes destroyed by

tornadoes that have nothing to do with global climate change. It's time for renewal, a time for new life, a time for reaffirming of life. It behooves you to walk around and make *du'ā* and remember how much sincerity is needed to maintain. I'll get to that. Whatever we do, we have to pray. We have to act with utmost sincerity. We know that this *ikhlas* is so important to us. It's a motivator. It's a factor that prompts people to do their work in a better way, and to strive hard, and to bear the trials and tribulations of day to day life. The motivations that induce us to sacrifice or to give of our wealth and our property, and sometimes even our lives are many and varied.

One [motivating factor] manifests in people's involvement in their work and their service. Another motivating factor may very well be hidden, and usually is hidden deeply in the recesses of the heart, cannot easily be seen from the outside. Many times each of us performs an act, and we are not aware of from where that act originates. We are very much influenced at times by those acts, and the secrets of those acts. The acceptance or non-acceptance of those acts can easily often see where the motivation of the other individual is. Not only are we watched always by Allah, that is to say also that the universe responds to our thoughts and actions, but we are always watched continually by those around us.

Some of that watching is culturally based; and assumptions come along with it. Some of it is just watched with a sense of human capability, and compassion, concern, and love. People watch how we work and speak, how we act and serve, take and receive. If we are involved in very positive goals, and if we act with utmost sincerity, and if we are involved in the service of Allah Swt in such a way that we don't have greed for more wealth, or desire for acceptance, recognition, pride, and self importance, and if we don't do things out of pride, self-aggrandizement, and hypocrisy, then we are truly of those who are on the right path. In that list, there is guidance for life. You could call it the "Beatitudes of Tasawwuf."

Of course, there are inclinations in all of us, in our hearts that may not be the most charitable, the most generous, motivated by the deepest awareness or consciousness. Certainly any act that is performed for a purpose other than praising or recognizing the presence of Allah falls into that category. In the Qur'an, we have the examples I recited today, as well as examples like, **"We are feeding for the sake of Allah. We do not expect from you any compensation or thanks."** These are attitudes of sincerity and honesty that we have to pray are developed within us and our children, and manifest in our community. They are released from the very core of our hearts, where they were placed in pre-eternity by Allah Swt. If I were to ask you right now, what are those qualities? The question you should ask yourself is, "Do I remember what was said just 45 seconds ago, or one minute ago?" If you can't, then you have to question yourself.

As we were speaking previously, all of this goodness is in the depths of our hearts. We are not starting from a place of sin or badness. We are starting from a place of goodness, *fitrah*, and love to correct the inclinations of the heart and keep it away from superficial desires. The Prophet Mohammed (sal) said, ***"Acts depend on intentions. If anyone migrates with the intention of gaining the world or to marry a certain woman, then his migration will be counted for the purpose for which he has left his house."*** Think about what you do, where you go, what you say, what the purpose is.

The distance between Medina and Mecca is traversed by thousands and thousands of travelers for many different purposes. But for the purpose of attaining the highest level of *dīn*, and for keeping oneself alert, the thing that distinguishes a *muhajir* from the common traveler, though the physical acts may be exactly the same, is the intention by which the action takes place. The people who left Mecca to

go to Medina to save their religion from danger and to form a new government in a new place are these types of individuals. Another person who travelled for another purpose with no connection to the *hijra* certainly does not fit the same profile. And everyday we are making such journeys. Even physical journeys from our home to our work, from our work to where we take our food, from the place of food to the masjid, for our prayer and back again, the intentions that we carry for our journey is, for the most part, the most important things. Even if you are coming, like some of you are coming to our home today, as others have been coming all week. The intention is what is clear and what makes it *ibada*. It is what makes your *sadaqa* accepted, and our love and appreciation meaningful to you.

The people who left Mecca are still alive today in your hearts. How these journeys can be told is what our intentions are through our attitudes and through our actions and through the way we speak, the way we work with one another, the way we live together in the community. It is the correctness of that intention and the sincerity of that intention that elevates each person's worldly action into *ibada*. But if there is a perversion or another agenda in the intention, if there is another desire in the heart, if our movement from place to place is only for comfort, money or status or what we perceive worldly necessity, then we should take pause and ask ourselves what we are moving for, where we are coming from and where we are headed, because each point draws a line and the line goes in a direction.

What happens is that we degrade ourselves with the highest intentions, and the degradation of others follows. Regardless of the prayers we offer, our purpose is at least, if not degraded, at least tainted. Over the centuries there are many examples of people who build palaces and *masjids*, institutions and gardens, and the most wonderful and beautiful edifices, externally; and they mean nothing. Unless they were built with the right intention, they lose their meaning. They become places of

defecation, even. If you go to Dehli, Kirgystand, Egypt or other places, and you see the ruins, you also see what people are using those ruins for. Those ruins were once the most beautiful edifices built with the highest intentions, destroyed. [They were not destroyed] just for stupid, ignorant, pseudo-religious purposes, but just by humanity that has lost its way and purpose. Sometimes it is done intentionally, even in Mecca. Sometimes it is done just out of ignorance. And sometimes it is just another point in a line that becomes another purpose, and another purpose, and another purpose, until we see that culture is lost, and language is lost, and intentions are lost, and friendships are lost—lost.

In our efforts and labor and constructions, if they are to benefit humanity, even in the building of our homes, not just to welcome people there, but with the intention that they will give shelter, that they will be places of worship and service, then we will reap the benefits. Some of us see that some of us could have been and should have been more green, more conscious, more prescient about the world that we are living in. But as long as you see it, at least you can attempt to change.

Today, I saw a great thing on a site that came through an advertisement, which are things I don't usually click on. I clicked on this advertisement because it was how to not pay the power company money for power. There was this beautiful machine there and I thought, "Well, that is interesting. We ought to really look into that." I went onto this site, and the site was a Patriot site about what is happening to the country, and that was a link to an anti-Semitic site, which was a link to an anti-Islamic site, which was a well-produced site, with mind charts, mind-mapping. It was brilliantly produced with the proper Tennessee or Kentucky accents about patriots. I had to turn it off before I got to the machine. I googled the machine and it took me right back to the site.

This is how something, a good intention, can be turned into the worst of things. It is not important, on one level, that we will reap the benefits and receive the *thawab* from Allah (swt), but the rewards will come to us in the good things, in the goodness that come from our work, our lives and our homes and our voice speaking properly. The Messenger, Mohammed of Allah (swt) said that, ***“Anyone who, without subjecting another person to cruelty or aggression, builds a magnificent building or plants saplings without indulging in cruelty or rancor, will get full reward in the time that Allah’s creatures are benefited by those things.”*** I know that Safiyya wants me to read that again. I know that Neelam wants me to read that again. I know that Basheera wants me to read that again. I know that Mitra wants me to read that again. I know that you all want me to read that again, because of what is happening on the property today. ***“Anyone who, without subjecting another person to cruelty or aggression, builds a magnificent building or plants saplings without indulging in cruelty or rancor will be getting reward for the fullness of the time in which Allah’s creatures are benefited by these things.”***

You feel a little better? But we still have responsibility. How are we going to plant the saplings following this harvesting that is going on? Shall we not call it harvesting, but taint it with the word destruction? *Alhamdulillah*, this is a great *hadith*. It is not surprising that we should speak as we do in this community among ourselves and among our brothers and sisters about the future, about the sustainability of our Islam, about the sustainability and the rights of the actions of the *ummah*, at the same time speaking about the sustainability of our land and of our community. It is very important that we think and we speak and we act and plan for generations. But to plan for generations, you need generations. By the grace and blessing of Allah (swt), we are able to do that mentally and outwardly. I hope we are able conceptualize such things more.

In another *hadith*, the Prophet (sal) said, ***“If a Muslim lays a garden or does farming, and if an animal or man eats something grown by him, then he will gain virtue in its place.”*** Mustafa should hear this. Sahar should hear this. All of you who work in the garden should hear it—how much good you have gotten, how much *thawab* you have gotten, you children, for all the time you have spent in that garden. Today a young lady came out for an interview, or to interview us. I was standing in the garden to talk to her. She was told about Legacy, and the community, and me, and about who we are. She was a student of Abdun Nasr’s and enjoyed his class. I said to her, “You know, the garden is a metaphor for life. You never know what the weather will be; it’s ever-changing. You don’t know if you are going to have floods or drought. You don’t know what blight will hit or insects will come. You don’t know what pests, two-legged or four-legged, will come.

The garden is not something you plant and walk away from. It’s a daily commitment and adjustment. If it rains too much, you have to adjust. If there is drought, you have to adjust. If there is a blight, you have to adjust. You can’t wait the whole season; otherwise, you could lose your whole crop. Changing circumstances, aging, medical issues, volunteers, a sense of continuity; not just cooking and eating what comes out of the garden, not just picking and cooking and eating what comes out of the garden, not just planting; also weeding, also encouraging, also supporting.... like life.

Alhamdulillah. It’s not so surprising that we should care for our property and our land, and that we should grow the foods we grow, and give it to those we give it to, serve those that we serve, or even make it come around again and again and again in an organic way. Nor is it strange that we should re-contemplate our original intentions, our original practices, even our original dietary needs, of course with the adjustments that medicine and aging require of us, not just taste. ***“Whatever you***

feed your father is a charity from you. And whatever you feed your child is a means of reward for you. And whatever you feed your servants is also a charity from you,” the Prophet (sal) said, *alhamdulillah*.

These are all the great guidelines for living our daily lives with the utmost sincerity. The fact is, as long as people remain obedient to Allah, as long as our intentions are pure and sincere, as long therefore as our acts, movements, and attitudes reflect those intentions in our sleep as well as in our waking, and as long as all of these are considered for the pleasure and praises of Allah Swt, *fī sabīli-Llāh*, it will be earth-changing, community-changing or sustaining. It will be society-changing that forces our society’s needs to be fulfilled in ways that are ethical and moral.

Once, during the early days of Islam when the followers were in dire poverty, a battle was to be fought. Some people came to Rasūlu-Llāh (sal) to join his forces, and offered themselves to be sacrificed to the cause of Allah. But Allah’s Messenger didn’t allow them to take part in the *jihad* because of their incapacities. They returned with very heavy, sorrowful hearts. They were deeply grieved for not being allowed to participate in that battle. Then this *‘āyat* was revealed: **“About those who came to you to be provided with mounts, it is acceptable that you said, ‘I can find no mounts for you,’ causing them to turn back, their eyes streaming with tears of grief that they had no resources wherewith to provide their expenses.”** But firm faith and strong faith is never lost and never wasted. The firm faith and desire of those people who were so strong and who volunteered was never lost, because the Prophet (sal) appreciated their faith. He said to the soldiers who were going with him in the battle, **“There are some people who we have left behind in Medina, and wherever place or valley we may camp, they will be with us. For them, their intention is sufficient.”**

We shouldn't look for the reason not to fight, not to volunteer, not to plant, not to weed, not to sacrifice, not to give. We should make and create all the opportunities for that to happen privately, publically; but we should also understand there are some who can't. We should not put ourselves forward as one who can't; they didn't. We should put ourselves forward always as someone who can do something, and leave it for the judgment of Allah Swt, or the people in need, to care for us, as the Prophet (sal) cared for them. That's a trust. If you see someone is weighted under the weight, then find a way to relieve the weight.

I don't know how many of you get Aramco magazine. There was an article a couple of months ago about the lapis industry in Afghanistan. To get to where those mines are, there are no trains or buses. You go by car, and then you go by mule, and then you go by foot. There was a very small man, with a 250 pound piece of lapis on his back, carrying it down the mountain, and then a mile to carry it to a village. **Alam nashra laka sadrak...!** The guy's poor; it's the only way he can make a living. So he has to bear that weight. I don't know. He could have been a barber. Do you know, really?

Even those whose intentions are sincere, but are not capable for whatever reason, and cannot participate in what is necessary for the good of the whole community in one way, they are participating in other ways, and they do share the reward. But we have to make sure we do participate. It's so important that we look at every day of our lives, especially those of us who are blessed to live in this kind of environment, who work in so many different areas we work in, we have to see the benefit. We are receptive of the charity of Allah. We have a responsibility for the education of our children. We really need to put it into the perspective it needs to be put into here in the United States, in rural as well as urban America, at the time of history we are in. It is so fraught with doubts, questions, corruption, and ethical and moral questions.

And what we know and what we have access to is so important in the society at large. Do we appreciate it?

Only when we live by those intentions and that sincerity do we give of ourselves, that we will really be able to communicate and translate it to others. That young girl came; the gardens spoke for themselves. Our work was described; it spoke for itself. The parallels between where she has been working at Camp Kumbayah, where I happen to have a pastor's meeting once a month. I know the pastor there, a wonderful guy, who wants me to give a retreat on "inner and outer" there this summer some time. She said, "The parallels are so compatible." Only when we can live by those intentions can we communicate them to others, and we don't have to communicate them by word. Dr. Kaufman, aka Abdur Nasr, will tell you that you have to let the work speak for itself in the world we live in today. Dr. Parrish said the same thing to me a week ago: our Fellows are a testimony to Legacy's work. "You don't have to tell hardly anything. My students," he said, "grasp it. That's why they did such a wonderful job for you."

Our hearts, if they are filled with sincerity, are like this land in the spring. They are like the land that lies dormant. All of a sudden, the flowers start to come up and it's fertile, but a heart without sincerity is barren. It's like a desert of rock. We know deserts have blossoms too. We also have a bit of anxiety that we should always have: what's the weather going to be like? Who's going to be able to come? How much will we be able to harvest? Will we be able to dry the tomatoes? Will the blight come? This is the way we define *taqwa* – that kind of respectful anxiety, the consciousness that makes us understand. No matter how much work you do in the garden or at Legacy, you just can't control it all. You have to be able to respond.

We can only respond in the best way we can, and pray to Allah Swt to give us an understanding, to be grateful for whatever happens, and for what we do have. The frost will come. We've even been known to have snow in May, here, at times. Before those flowers bloom and the fruit trees blossom, we don't want the frost to come. The fruit will be lost. We have to understand: we can only do so much, that there are greater forces, and Allah is the greatest of those forces. I saw a documentary the other day. In the translation, they translated "Allahu Akbar" as "God is the greatest." I wanted to jump through the screen and say, "How could you be a Muslim, and do a documentary like this, and translate that wrong?" It gives the wrong impression, but that's the world we live in.

Sincerity with gratitude and faith, submission and trust are wonderful recipes for happiness and fulfillment. *Inshā'a-Llāh*, each of us will be able to grasp more and more of the meaning of that every day in our lives, minute by minute, hour by hour, until it is the way we think. We are all still on that *sayr-i-Llah*, journey toward Allah. *Asalaamu aleikum*.