



**Eid ul Fitr**  
**8 August 2013—1 Shawwal 1434**  
**“REMEMBER ME AND I WILL REMEMBER YOU”**  
**The Duties of the Believer**

**Allahu Akbar kabira. Wa al hamdu lillahi kathira.**  
**Wa subhana llahi bukratan wa asila.**

Allah is Supremely Great, immensely so! And praise be to Allah, abundantly!  
And Glory be to Allah, both early and late.

Asalaam Aleikum wa Rahmatullah-e wa Barakatuh.

**To Allah belongs the unseen, the secrets of the heavens and of the earth. And to Him goes back every affair for decision. And worship Him, and put thy trust in Him, and thy Lord is not unmindful of aught that you do.**

**And know that all mankind were once but a single community, and only later did they begin to hold divergent views. Had it not been for a decree that had already gone forth by thy Sustainer, all their differences would indeed have been settled from the outset.**  
(10:19)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See also 2:253 and note 245 Muhammad Asad Qur'an and Surah 2 note 197-198 and 2:213

I wish you Eid Mubarak with gratitude and hope—gratitude for the opportunity to experience Ramadan again with family and sincere seekers of Truth; and hope, *inshā'a-Llāh* for another opportunity, another year to improve and refine my/our appreciation for this path and this community. We had such a wonderful retreat with diverse individuals who all unite in the search for truth, and who attended carefully to the *durūs*, which gave me hope and encouragement to seek better and better ways to understand and share the wonders of Tasawwuf, *iman*, meditation and what we call applied Sufism. It gave me hope for the future—not an easy thing to have in the world we live in today.

Indeed, this month is a great gift and blessing of Allah *Subhanallah wa ta'ala*. Another year in our lives has passed in worship, striving, in service, and in submission to His Will. Whether or not we were, or are, cognizant of the Divine Presence in each moment, we are none the less alive and working, and breathing by Divine Mercy. And lest we forget, Rasūlu-Llāh (sal) was sent to us as 'a Mercy' from Allah Swt. This is a year that engaged our hearts, and our minds, our emotions, and our love; a year with losses of dear ones, whose memory and imprint on our lives and our community will never, ever be forgotten; a year with new additions to our circle of family and friends; a year of transitions and a year of challenges. I pray Allah Swt gives us the strength and the wisdom and the humility to benefit from all of His Blessings.

Of course we feel reluctance at seeing the month pass, because we have had the opportunity to fast, to retreat into the inner recesses of our hearts, minds, and bodies, and been blessed to have glimpses of the dimensions of life and its challenges, our abilities and our disabilities, and to reaffirm our commitment to Allah Swt and to ourselves. We have established some new spiritual patterns, and we know that they can dilute and dwindle with time, unless we redouble our efforts to sustain them. Now, the temptation of daily life's demands, and the possibility of subordinating our experiences and our spiritually-oriented schedule to other influences begin to raise its not-so-beautiful face. During the month of Ramadan, Allah Swt has kept the doors of Hell closed, and the angels have been among us.

Now, it is up to us to keep lock and key on those doors, and to remain in contact with the angels of His Mercy.

Indeed, there were days for some, even in the month of Ramadan with all the assistance of the Almighty, when Shaytan tried to pry open the doors and awaken the memories of the previous months. We cannot take this lightly. I do not take it lightly; and I embrace, as I hope you do, too, the opportunity and challenge not only to remember but to repent and to change. We must resist with all our hearts and souls the tendencies to undermine our gains, even if we do not recognize those gains, and even if we doubt that gains have been made. We must affirm and renew our reliance on Allah *Subhanallah wa ta'ala* throughout our days and nights. Let us approach the future and each other with a renewed, or new, sense of respect and forgiveness, kindness in words, and positivity, and love. The opportunity to forgive and to be kind is a form of refinement and purification/*at-tazkiya* of inner as well as outer peace-making, and creates even physical health.

Believe me and the *shuyukh* that *dhikr* / remembrance is truly a great, if not the greatest remedy for all our ills. Science proves the value of recitation and meditation (as if science needed to), and science came after (not before) such practices were established.

Periodically over the years, I tell the derivation of this day, the Eid, and its meaning. Bear with me as I do it once again for the young who have not heard it, or guests, or even ourselves who may have forgotten. The inner meaning should reflect our personal goal and hope. It is said that this celebration of breaking fast came to be called Eid because Allah restores joy and happiness (*yu-id-u*) to His servants on this day. It is very important for us to realize that the Arabic nouns *id* and *awaid*, as well as the verbs *ya'udu*, *adu* and *udu*, are all derived from the same root, which means "to return, to do something again, go to the place of returning (home); to bring back, to relinquish, to restore." Certainly, the returning of Ramadan, year after year, to our homes and to our hearts, and our relinquishing of our former lifestyle, habits, desires, and actions in order to return to our homes in our hearts and souls, to

restore our selves bears ample witness to the real meaning and the inner meaning of this word Eid.

There are other explanations in history, and among the scholars and believers, of the derivation of why this day came to be called Eid. One is that it brings the benefits (*awa'id*), and the favors and advantages that come from our investments in time and effort during this month. Such blessings come from Allah *Subhanallah wa ta'ala*. Some say that one has returned (*adu*) from obeying Allah directly to obeying the Messenger (*ta-at ar-Rasul*), from the *fard* practices to the *sunna*, from the fast of Ramadan to the fast of the first six days of Shawwal. The *ummah* is simply told:

***Return (udu) to your homes knowing that you have repented and Allah has forgiven you. (Prophet)***

Whatever the interpretation, the experience of the sincere individual is clear and, indeed, becomes clearer each year, if we understand as we spoke during the whole of the retreat on *ta'wil*. We have to experience the inner meaning of these days. We should, over the years, resist entropy. We should see more and more people making *itikaf*, and striving for *ta'wil* of Qur'an, so when this day arrives we can truly know that we have repented, that we have turned back toward the source of all life and meaning, and that our repentance has been accepted, feeling relief and energy to begin anew.

There is and should be cause for celebration and gift-giving, not out of cultural tradition but in remembrance of the gifts of the Almighty that have flowed to us during this past month, and as a reminder in our hearts of the love and the interdependency we have for and with one another. The gifts that are here and now, the gifts that we will open and benefit from as the days go by, the gifts that we will come to realize a long time from now, and the gifts that awaits us in the *akhirat* are the real gifts of the Eid.

On this day, Allah created the Garden of Paradise, and on the day of breaking the fast (*Yawm al Fitr*) hH planted the tree of bliss (*Tuba*) with its roots in Paradise, its leaves extended downwards to the earth. Some say that one of its branches will enter the mansion of each inhabitant of the Garden of Paradise, bearing flowers and ripe fruit of every imaginable kind on the Day of *Eid ul Fitr*. He chose Jibreel (as) as the conveyor of inspiration (*wahy*) on [that day]; and the sorcerers (*sahara*) found forgiveness on the day of *Eid ul Fitr*.

The Holy Prophet (*salla-Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) said:

***When the Yawm al Fitr comes around, and the people emerge from their homes to pray in the open space near the burial ground, Allah Subhanallah wa ta'ala will take notice of them, and He will say, "My servants, for My sake you have kept the fast, and for My sake you have performed the prayers. Now take your leave, knowing that you have been granted forgiveness!"***

Anas ibn Malik (*radiy Allahu anhu*) said the Prophet (*salla-Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) said,

**On the night of breaking the fast, Allah will grant the recompense due to anyone who has kept the fast throughout the month of Ramadan, and He will grant that recompense in full measure. Then in the early morning of the day of breaking the fast, Allah Subhanallah wa ta'ala will give His angels their instructions. In obedience to His command, they will promptly fly down to the earth, where they will position themselves at the street corners and the crossroads, proclaiming in a voice that is audible to all created beings, apart from the jinn and humankind, "O community of Mohammed come forth into the presence of your Lord, Who accepts the smallest offering, bestows the greatest abundance, and forgives the most terrible sin!"**

They surely were at the crossroads today where we met. *Inshā'a-Llāh*, we received their blessings.

**Then, once the believers have emerged and presented themselves at their place of prayer (*musalla*), performed their prayers, and offered their supplications, the Lord will make sure that they are left with no need that He has not satisfied, no request that He has not answered, and no sin that He has not forgiven. They will then return to their homes, knowing that they have been granted forgiveness.**

And the good tidings are:

*Then He will say, "O My human servants, put your request to Me now, for this I swear by My Might and My Majesty you will not ask Me this day, in this gathering of yours, for anything connected with your life hereafter without My granting to you, nor for anything connected with your life in this lower world without My attending to your need. By My Might and My Majesty, I will surely condone the false steps you make, as long as you are consciously alert in the effort to avoid incurring My displeasure. By My Might and My Majesty, I will not put you to shame, nor will I expose you to disgrace amongst those who are faithfully committed to observing the states (*hudud*). Now you may depart knowing that you have been forgiven. You have won My approval and I am well pleased with you. The angels will be very happy, and they welcome the good news of all that Allah Subhanallah wa ta'ala will bestow upon this Community, when its members break the fast they have kept through the month of Ramadan."*

**No soul knows what joy is reserved for them in return for their works (fasting)." (Q 32:17)**

**Eat and drink with healthy relish for what you did before in the days that have gone by. (Q 69:24)**

So, my dear friends, take a moment express your sincerest and most heart-felt gratitude to Allah, and ask Allah for what your needs are. Make *muhatabah* for the errors and seek the *wasila* of the Prophet and *shuyukh* for what follows – in silence. Value the silence. And when we depart from this gathering to meet and speak, remember the value of words. Decide now who you will strive to be and how you will strive to act when you exit this masjid today.

**SILENCE AND ALOUD...THE WAY OF LIFE OF THE SEEKER.**

Ramadan has ended and today is the Eid. This year I am grateful to be here again and I want to speak about the inner and outer faces of Ramadan, of life, of community, of love and respect, gratitude, and of conscious living.

The retreat we just finished was designed to stimulate a new relationship with the Qur'an, and with understanding the inner aspect of our being that seeks an unfolding experience. Implied in that is also the approach to life of knowing when to be silent and when to speak. Part of each day of Ramadan, a great part, is silent. The inner challenge of the fasting, the watching of the tongue at its inclination to give form to thoughts, the silencing of inappropriate thoughts and hence words, the retreat inward to a place of silent meditation and reflection on the self and on life – all lead to deeper and more profound, penetrating *dhikr* / remembrance. After many hours or days in seclusion, perhaps in *itikāf*, one begins to realize the limitation of words and the excessive chatter of the mind. Since most cannot take such time it is also can be an aggregate experience from the fasting, beginning with the *niyyah* and affirming the fast.

The tongue is a very precious and sensitive organ of outer perception. It can bring us and others joy through words of love and compassion, assistance and insight. It can taste the sweetness of Allah's provisions or bitterness, too. The tongue is used to proclaim the Shahadah and for reciting the *adhan* and the Qur'an. During this past

month I am sure that most if not all of us can relate to the proper and improper use of our tongue both in speech, and perhaps in eating. We did hear some beautiful recitation of the Qur'an before breaking the fast and at *taraweeh*, but today I want to draw your attention back to the retreat, to the inner *ta'wil* of the Qur'an, and to the *muraqabah*, which both uses breath and tongue to focus us on the inner dimensions of life.

Why today? Why at the Eid ul Fitr *khutbah*? Because now we must remember, remember about our outer health, and the power of our words, and perforce our preceding thoughts. And we must remember Allah's message in a way that transforms us. Since the key message of Ramadan is remembering, I want to dwell on this for a few minutes.

*Dhikr* / remembering is of two main types: aloud , which is called *dhikr lisani* (with the tongue), *jahli* or *jahri*; and silent, or *dhikr qalbi* or *dhikr khafi*. The tongue is used to proclaim the Shahadah and used to recite the *adhan* and to affirm *ba'iat*. ***When a man came to Rasūlu-Llāh sal) and said, "O Rasūlu-Llāh, the laws and conditions of Islam have become too many for me. Tell me something that I can always keep," Rasūlu-Llāh said, "Keep your tongue always moist with dhikru-Llāh."*** But as one of the commentators, Mullah Ali Qari (ra) said: *"It is not possible to keep up the dhikr of the tongue all the time as it is not permitted in certain circumstances. This is only possible with the dhikr of the heart."*

The Khwajagan Masters explain that doing *dhikr* of the *qalb* and without raising one's voice is better than loud *dhikr*, since Allah (swt) stated, **"And do bring your Lord to remembrance in your very soul, with humility and in reverence, without loudness in words, in the mornings and evening, and be not of those who are unheedful."** 7:205 They also mentioned that to follow the direct command that Allah Almighty has made upon the *mu'min*, to make abundant *dhikr*, is only possible with the *dhikr* of the *qalb*. Sayyida Aisha (ra) said, ***"Rasūlu-Llāh always used to be in remembrance of Allah Almighty. When he slept his heart was in permanent dhikru-Llāh. And he [sal] said, "O Aisha, my eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep."***

The Khwajagan Masters emphasize that the abode of Allah Almighty is in the heart. ***“In man there is a lump of flesh, it is kept wholesome the whole body remains in health conditions and if it is corrupted the whole body is corrupted, mark it is the heart.”*** The seeker is made aware by his master. The two most harmful enemies on the spiritual path are the ego and *dunya*, the latter being the major impediment. *Dhikr* is a shield to provide protection against the ego and attractions of *dunya*. But also Qusharyi stated, *“The dhikr of the heart is the sayf (sword) for the believers.”* The masters cure the illnesses in people through this sword of *dhikr* by changing the focus to something else. Whenever they are asked for advice, they mention the importance of remembering Allah in abundance. This is the blessing of *dhikr*, that is most effective method used through which the hearts of many people are transformed. When the heart is being utilized for the purpose it was created for, a tremendous amount of energy and power is created, not only spiritually, but also physically. This is why each limb of the body has a connection with the heart. When the heart is strong, it channels this energy to the rest of the body.

***Rasūlu-Llāh (sal) said, “When you pass by the gardens of Paradise, take benefit from them.” The Sahabah asked, “What are the gardens of Paradise?” He replied, “The circles of dhikr. There are roaming angels of Allah, who go about looking for the circles of dhikr, and when they find them, they surround them closely.”***

*Alhamduli-Llāh*, such circles of *dhikr* were held by our predecessors following *isha*. When they gathered, they would do *dhikr* and *muraqabah* and would continue until *tahajjud*. The collective power of the *dhikr* and the *muraqabah* in the community brought health to those who did it. *A man once asked, “Why do pious people have such nūr on their face, such beauty in their speech and characteristics, and such an aura?” He was told, “It is simple: they sit in His presence and His company. He adorns them with His lights and His blessings. Why should they not reflect that on their bodies and in their being? This is a sign that they are hadir (present).”*

My dears, the whole of Ramadan is about presence, about remembrance, about being in the world and not of the world. The *awliya-Llāh* are the healthiest, and even in illness their spiritual health is great. Last night I showed the tape we made at the *mawlid* of Rasūlu-Llāh (sal) in Istanbul, with Shaykh Osman Sirajjudin an Naqshband. He was at that time about 98 years of age. He lived to be, *alhamdulillah*, 105 or 107. That is something we discussed late one night at the Community Center during Ramadan after *tarawīh*. The elders of this community who have always done their practices with sincerity and diligence (and some of the younger ones, too, I might say) have survived many illnesses and obstacles.

*There was a story that when Khwaja Hafiz Muhammad Ali (ra) reached his nineties, he was very feeble and was approaching death. The doctor who came to check him said "When I checked his pulse, his pulse indicated he had passed, but I could still hear him making the dhikr. Everything else indicated he had passed."*

**Rasūlu-Llāh said "The likeness of the one who remembers his Lord, and the one who does not remember Him is like that of a living to a deceased person."**

We do not want our spiritual heart to be dead; we want to be Khdir. So the role of the *murshid* is to guide the hearts of people away from the desires of the ego and connect them to the spiritual path by prescribing practices and giving guidance.

*Khwaja al Khaliq Ghujdawani (ra) was studying in the presence of Shaykh Sadruddin (ra) when he read, "Call unto your Sustainer humbly, and in the secrecy of your hearts. Verily, He loves not those who transgress the bounds of what is right." (7:55), and it prompted him to ask, "Master, what is the reality of this verse? How should this dhikr khafī be performed? In loud dhikr you have to use your tongue, so everyone will hear you and see you. In the silent dhikr of the heart, Shaytan might listen to you and hear you, as Rasūlu-Llāh has mentioned: "Satan moves freely in the veins and arteries of the Sons of Adam." Shaykh Sadruddin (ra) replied, "My son, this is a hidden, heavenly*

*knowledge. I wish that Allah (sal) puts you in touch with one of His friends and he will teach you the reality of secret dhikr."*

*So Khwaja Abd al Khaliq (ra) waited for the friend of Allah, and one day he met Sayyidina Khidr (ra), who taught him the principle called wuquf-i-adadi (awareness of number). Sayyidina Khidr (ra) then ordered him to submerge himself under water, and begin to make dhikr in his heart, saying in his heart "lā ilāha illa-Llāh Muhammadan Rasūlu-Llāh." And it was there he learned dhikr khafī.*

*Dhikr khafī is precious as the remembrance of Allah Swt remains hidden and no one is aware of it. In a hadith qudsi, Allah differentiates. He says: "I am to My servant as he expects of Me. I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in his heart, I remember him to Myself; and if he remembers Me in an assembly, I mention him in an assembly better than his." While the reward for loud dhikr in a gathering is Allah Almighty remembers that person in the gathering of angels, the honor Allah Swt gives to a person who remembers Him through the heart is different, as He remembers that person, when no one else is; hence, the honor of dhikr khafī is such that the person is blessed with the unimaginable joy of Allah Swt remembering him alone, individually, not in a group.*

As we go forward in remembrance from Ramadan within, we must also remember our duties to ourselves and others without. We must pause and reconnect with wuqufi qalbi with just the one name: Allah. **Rasūlu-Llāh said "The last day will not come until, 'Allah' is no longer said upon the earth."** We are told that dhikr of Allah can prevent destruction as long as one of the master is present and gives permission of the dhikr of the *ism e dhat*, 'Allah.' How that is done I will leave for another *dars*. My point in this Eid *dars* is to begin the new cycle of time of tasting the fruits of Ramadan with both the tongue of the senses and the tongue of sensitivity, with the food of the Eid and the inner nutrient of dhikr. To be aware of the heart is truly at the heart of Sufism, at the core of Islam. Hazrat Bahā'uddīn Naqshband (ra) recommended that the following *du'ā* be read so that the heart can attain contentment:

***Alahi anta maqsoodi wa rida'ka matlubi atayni muhabbatak wa ma'rifatak.***

***O Allah, You are my purpose and Your pleasure is my goal. Grant me Your Love and Your understanding.***

Ramadan comes every year, the moon cycles our lives and through our lives; it reflects the light of the sun for the seeker. We must return again and again to that which liberties our souls and fills our hearts. This is the beginning of remembrance in the heart, and it is necessary to persist and sustain our efforts until consciousness in the heart rises. This *du'ā* helps us to focus when the heart needs to be reminded to remember Allah Swt. And when the heart is active, it does not need a reminder, just as the lover never needs a reminder of the Beloved. The seeker who is blessed with the genuine remembrance can then practice *khafi dhikr* in any situation: walking, working, sitting, even while sleeping. It is to be done in the subtle centers in a subtle manner in the heart with each breath. ***It is reported that Rasūlu-Llāh (sal) said, "The dhikr not heard by the recording angels equals seventy times the ones they hear."***

Now we leave Ramadan. What we should have begun to accomplish in this month and what we sorely fell short to accomplish, I am sure we are well aware of. We need to perfect ourselves in the way of our *shuyukh*.

*In his youth, the venerable Kwaja Baqi Billah mentioned to his master, "I have the desire to meet the Qutb of the time." His master gave him permission to go (ziyarat), instructing him to travel to Srinagar in Kashmir. Upon arrival, Khwaja Baqi Billah was surprised that the person whom his master had named as the Qutb was a sitar maker. As Khwaja Baqi Billah watched the Qutb pulling the strings, he realized that the job required a lot of precision. In his mind, he pondered, "If he must pay so much attention to his job, where does he get the time to remember Allah Almighty?" When the Qutb had finished his job, Khwaja Baqi Billah greeted him in a beautiful manner with immense respect, and said,*

*“When my master sent me to you, he said, ‘Allah Almighty has given you such high maqam (rank), that not for one breath are you heedless.’ O Shaykh, I am foolish and blind, please explain to me how you made dhikr and kept your inner state alive whilst you were doing this work. This work is such that it requires such high degrees of concentration, that you cannot be negligent, even for one moment.” The Qutb explained, “This is our way. We have to be busy in something, but our heart must be busy with Him. This work requires physical focus, but my heart never moves away from Allah, not even for a split second.” The Qutb taught Khwaja Baqi Billah (ra) the concept of dhikr khafī, which was to make the heart stop on Allah Almighty, so that each breath is taken in awareness.*

Let us determine now what our minutes, our hours, our days, our weeks, our months, and our year will be filled with. Let us leave this holy month with a resolution and self-confidence and commitment to *mizan* (balance), to struggle with our *nafs*, to overcome the hostility between our outer and our inner selves, and between each other, between ourselves and Shaytan, to find the right way, and to hear the guidance from our Guides and from our Lord. We have been given clear guidelines which, if not followed, we will find that the standards of goodness and justice, mercy and compassion cannot be maintained. If we do not maintain them, we will become prey to the many forces and desires which will destroy our mission and our sense of being, and our role in life.

This year, I add to this plea and admonition that we all learn how to extend our reliance on Allah Swt. Certainly, over the past year, I have also encouraged all of us, including myself, to clarify our commitment to this *tariqa*, our *suluk*, our *tarbiya* and this *ummah* / community. You must realize that today you have tools and, *inshā’a-Llāh*, discipline and experience that you have not had before. You have struggled another year, and you have been victorious to arrive here today. But victory can be short-lived, as the Holy Prophet (sal) found at Uhad. Unless one consolidates their intention, their forces, their efforts, and their unshakable commitment to Allah, to Truth, it all could be lost. All this must be contemplated throughout the day, and

especially before the evening prayer, for that is the time when the old day is put to rest and the new day arrives, just as the new month arrived today.

In light of this, recently in our Maghrib sittings I have asked you to observe some moments of silence (*lahdahatu samt*) and account for yourselves (*muhabsabatu an nafs*), and to reflect on the truth of how you thought, intended, acted, and responded on that day. We must seek out the guidance and develop the trust that will make one's dream come true. Allah Swt said in Holy Qur'an:

**But to those who receive guidance, He increases the light of guidance for them and bestows on them their goodness and piety (taqwa). (Q47:17)**

What is this light of guidance and the qualities of that guidance? Certainly, it is guidance that leads us in the right direction, that makes clear not only the way, but also the manner and the mode of traveling, which of course depends on our conduct and our offering *hadya* (*good behavior*) and *hadiya* (*righteous leadership*) toward Allah. That conduct is not limited to Ramadan, nor is the Eid limited to today. Indeed, every day we obey Allah and are forgiven is an Eid day. So, it is imperative for each person of good intelligence and sympathy to look not on the external aspects of life to measure their successes, happiness, or spiritual progress; but rather, [to look] on the inner qualities, to shed the light of knowledge and insight Allah requires of us, and be receptive to the means and the form of that light. Sometimes it comes from a fire, and sometimes from a flashlight. In truth, we must expect both the heat and the coolness of the light. Guidance is always the same. At times, it is easy to accept; and at others it is almost too hot to handle. But it is guidance when it is coming from the source of knowledge, when it is coming in love, and with honor.

We know it is the Eid when we see the faces and the manner of the people who come to the *masajid* for the prayer. On your faces is the light and the new knowledge gained from Ramadan. Even your dress on the days of Eid will be more carefully chosen. We can tell who has spent the month in real seeking and

receptivity, because they will be happy and filled with gratitude, while those who have focused only on themselves and their problems and desires will seem depressed and distant. It is as it will be on the Day of Awakening (*Yawmi Qiyama*). Those who associate others with Allah *Subhanallah wa ta'ala* will stumble and be dragged along. It is the correctness of one's intention and sincerity that lifts one's action in *dunya* from mere action to prayer.

**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.** (Ahmed Hadith)

The Prophet (sal) also stated:

**If you spend even a little to seek the pleasure of Allah, you are rewarded so much so, that even putting a morsel of food in the mouth of (another), is a virtuous act.**

In fact, the truth is, as long as people remain obedient to Allah, and as long as their intentions are sincere, all their movements, be it their sleep or their waking, are considered to be for the pleasure of Allah *Subhanallah wa ta'ala*. The heart, empty of sincerity, compassion, forgiveness, and love is like arid land, infertile and hostile. Lying in wait for the right conditions are thousands of seeds waiting for the right condition (environment) to flower and make the desert bloom. It is time (long past time), that the ills of our *ummah*, our community, and our society be addressed honestly, with that sincerity which will create a beautiful meadow out of desert. There is too much *fitna* among the community of Muslims today – dare we call some of them Muslims. It is a travesty to even utter their name with the name Islam. We need to turn our attention toward our roles in this society and the time frame we are living in. We must cherish every day of our lives. We have to construct our day-to-day lives so that we contribute to the well-being of others and the success of the work of our community, our *tariqa* and of our greater *Ummah*.

All that we do and all that we learn has its place in that intention. That intention is the duty and the responsibility of each and every member of this *tariqa*, and of the *Ummah* of the Prophet (*salla-Allahu alaihi wa sallam*). I cannot stress to all of you enough the seriousness and the integrity of such a commitment, and such an attitude. Just as you have mortgage payments or car payments as obligations, just as you have obligations to your employer, or your business, or your parents, or your own physical well-being, you have agreed, given your word, made a bond, and affirmed a principle. It must be more serious to you than a paycheck, or a title, or a payment to the bank. It must at least equal your duty to your parents.

***Any group of people who come together to remember Allah, they will be encircled by angels, mercy will overwhelm them, peace and tranquility will descend upon them, and Allah will remember them to those who are near to Him. (The Holy Prophet salla-Allahu alaihi wa sallam)***

The Prophet (*salla-Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) said:

***Anyone who has obtained learning through which Allah's pleasure can be obtained, with no purpose other than to achieve success in the world, on the Day of Resurrection will be unable to smell the fragrance of Paradise. (Abu Daud)***

***Do not attain learning in order to express pride before the ulema, nor learn to quarrel with foolish people, nor from it try to overwhelm meetings, for he who does so, his destination is fire. (Ibn Maja)***

At the same time, know that there is no reason why a student or seeker must necessarily face difficulties and trials and terribly difficult times. I know that it is hard to believe. It is only the result of the diseases that are generated by the lack of sincerity, or the weight of doubt, or the stubbornness of ego, and torpor and laziness

that causes such things. When they grow, they destroy faith, trust, and patience. Even a few can cause openings in the barrier between faith and trust, where our lower nature can enter and become ensconced. While we must put forth our best efforts and pray for their good results, we must also at the same time be patient, with faith and submission replacing expectation and disappointment that we carry around with us.

**Man is made of haste. I shall show you My signs, but ask Me not to hasten. (21:37)**

What is needed in today's world is what we must also cultivate, and indeed, demand of ourselves first in this community. It is a world fraught with self-interest instead of cooperation and concern, of manipulation and control instead of service and trust, of competition and ego instead of cooperation and humility, of fear of loss and resentment, instead of gratitude and shared happiness. We must find solidarity, and create cooperation by supporting one another, covering the faults of one another, standing by one another in what is good and right and needed for success, growth, and sustainability.

If we, as sincere Muslims, look at the world around us, we would not hesitate to choose to get involved in the need for such unity, lending our voices, our hands, our wealth, and our prayers to that end. But it is very distressing to see that the environment (the world) that we live in is one of less than fully sincere, committed individuals, and we must not let that disease enter our community and our personal lives. Each of the adults have had to fight these tendencies in themselves, and each has won and lost some of those battles. Allahu Akbar, our children have a head start in life; yet, I see that they, too, are infected to some slight degree with some of the same tendencies. They could go either way in terms of succumbing to the social values of this world, if we are not constantly vigilant, or [they could] be examples and leaders in virtue and values for a new generation of true believers in Allah's message, people of open mind and open heart, pragmatic and willing to speak with all people, people of love for all people of diverse religion, race, and nationality. We must change ourselves inwardly through sincere effort and the unyielding honor of

our word; and outwardly in our affect, behavior, actions, and communication style, and above all, in our ultimate Trust in Allah.

Indeed, we are swimming against the current at this time. Yet, the Prophet (*sallaallahu alaihi wa sallam*), who predicted that there would be deterioration in the religion, established that there would be a time when people would stand up and correct the misconceptions in the minds of others, who would teach others the real message, and warn against those who would contravene the essence of Shar'iah—not just laws and rules and warnings only, but truly, the well-trodden path of love and concern; moreover, the brilliant light and direction of *tariqa*. Walk the well-trodden path, follow the guidance of the open heart and love of a true guide, and be aware of the time and the place. Allah says in al-Imran:

**Adhere to the true Religion of Allah and do not disunite. Recall the endowment of Allah upon you, that you were enemies and Allah mended your hearts together. (3:103)**

Let none of the enmity exist here, and always accept the mending and uniting. It is my sincere hope and prayer that we are a community of those who not only seek knowledge and strive to understand the reality of the Message of the Prophet (*salla-Allahu alaihi wa sallam*), and the unity that is possible between Muslims, and [between] our brothers and sisters of faith in the spirit and the truth that is truly Islam (submission), but that we [also] love everyone and open our hearts to all living things. And [then] we might find among ourselves those whom the Prophet called *ghuraba* (the strangers). They are those who correct what others have distorted among the teachings, the people who will bring about the unity among the Muslims and all Allah's people. *Inshā'a-Llāh*, in this very room there are such people.

**And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah stretches out for you. And be not divided among yourselves, and remember with gratitude God's favor on you, for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love so that by His Grace, ye became brethren. And ye were on the brink of the pit of fire, and He saved**

**you from it. Thus doth God make His signs clear to you, that you may be guided.**

**Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong. They are the ones who attain felicity.**

I might add, in a *ta'wil* of *that* 'āyat, you must understand, He could have said: "Invite all to Islam." But He said, "Invite all to what is good."

**Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves, and fall into disputations amongst themselves after receiving clear signs. For them is a dreadful penalty. (103-105)**

When we understand what is *islam / taslim*, when we understand that we invite people to safety and security and love and peace and submission, then we can open our hearts to everyone. Let this be an end today of any division and disputation among ourselves, insecurity and lack of respect. Please, I beg of you to be patient and forgiving; speak kindly and sincerely; respect the opinion and the point of view of each other, and be open to change. The signs are clear. Let us remember who we are at the core of our being as civil, humane, human beings; and hope that that defines the core of being, not just Muslims, but Sufis. Make it a living reality. We are the designers and implementers of the future. As such, we must also be sustainers of the community, the trustees and the guardians of the Amanat, and the message of the Prophet (*salla-Allahu alaihi wa sallam*). We must commit ourselves to being compassionate, merciful, and forgiving. In society, we must play the role of the peacemakers, and cultivate a true love for all, especially for the disenfranchised, and the less fortunate, and the minorities. Tolerance and the service must be our *raison d'être*. If nothing else, this community is our school, our opportunity, our graduate work in perfecting our roles, our purpose, creating our places, our missions, and for fulfilling our duties and our every responsibility.

Ask yourself, please, in the quiet honesty of your inner hearts, with the still and quiet voice of your hearts: “How can I question what is true, just, good, and right?” Look at the purity that is among us in our children. Look at our influence on that purity when we speak harshly, or out of anger or ego, when we act out of coarse habits and fear, when we maintain the affect of our doubts, or do not seek answers to basic questions, or when we are afraid to create the right boundaries and guidelines in the name of liberality or freedom. You know, I am a very pragmatic person, and liberality is a very big term for me.

Look at the influence on the children among us for the good, their kindness, trust, and anxiousness for more knowledge, their love beyond the boundaries of their families. They are not just our children, or the children of our brothers and sisters. They are a walking opportunity for all of us to change, to affirm our best qualities, to build a new future for ourselves. Each one is a mirror for each other. Look at our community, and see where it began, what it has gone through, and where it is now.

Ask yourselves and one another, “Is this a village, really, a perfect village yet?” Moreover, have we renewed the most important social and spiritual entity, the extended family? Or is this a housing development of superficially united, sincere, but not yet integrated nuclear families? Do we act fully as aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers, sisters, parents, and friends to one another? Have we opened the door of your hearts, let alone the door of your homes? Do you see and feel the benefit and the importance of creating a culture, not for the sake of creating culture, but for the sake of creating a basis for the future, our future, and our children’s future, and *inshā’a-llāh*, our children’s children’s future? Do we agree on what is a mutual goal, behaviors that support that, discipline that empowers it that truly enables insight and growth? Do we awaken anxious each day to meet the challenges of creating a new beginning for ourselves, building a better world, of sustaining our knowledge and increasing it, extending our friendships and family ties?

We have heard and seen from just a few days ago, how specially we are viewed by people who came here on retreat—some for the first time, some year after year. Our hospitality, our education, our cooperative spirit have been noted. But more than

that, I believe what also has been noted is the spiritual sincerity of the people here. People who have chosen to come here for *itikāf*, to make the *tarawīh* here. Now my dears, you and I know that entropy sets in; and we have to reaffirm again and again our inner path until *maqam* upon *maqam*, there is no falling back. You have all accomplished a great deal, but yet it is clear there is more to accomplish. This must be a vibrant and living community of seekers for our mission to be accomplished year after year. What is that mission? It is the mission of Legacy in the world, the mission of our school, and the mission of our inner life's attraction to Allah Swt. It's our mission to carry on the teachings of our Five Orders, and of being sincere, humane, civil, kind, loving human beings.

So let us continue visit one another, study together once again on Sundays, *inshā'a-Llāh*, and in *halaqa*, and show our solidarity with one another, especially those among you who you have little contact with each other throughout the year. We must establish and re-establish our family ties, because this is a family. We must be on our very best behavior, and be very generous and kind. And we have to know when to seek forgiveness. The Holy Prophet (sal) said:

***The community is a mercy, and loneliness is punishment. Whoever dies while being away from the community, he dies in a state of ignorance. Be with the community as the wolf eats sheep.***

And,

***The similitude of the believers in their kindness, love, and affection, in their mercifulness, and in their sympathy and compassion towards one another is like a body: when one organ ails, the whole body is drafted to take care of the problem.***

**Verily, God changes not what a people have until they change it for themselves. (Q13:12)**

**Man is made of haste. I shall show you My signs, but ask Me not to hasten. (21:37)**

What is needed in today's world is that we have the responsibility to cultivate in our self and in our communities, to demand of ourselves first in this community. We live in a world fraught with self-interest instead of cooperation and concern, of manipulation and control instead of service and trust, of competition and ego instead of cooperation and humility, of fear of loss and resentment instead of gratitude and shared happiness. That's why I say we have to find solidarity.

**Adhere to the true Religion of Allah and do not disunite. Recall the endowment of Allah upon you, that you were enemies and Allah mended your hearts together. (3:10)**

Hear that as people of *tariqah*. What is the true religion of Allah? What is the true Deen of Allah? It is that of kindness, of love, of compassion, of surrender, and submission, of safety and security. Call it what you will. Whichever prophet called it by whatever name he called it. Call it what you will.

So my dears, remember that the Holy Prophet (sal) said,

**The community is a mercy, and loneliness is punishment.**

We must pray for one another as I pray for you and ask you to pray for me. I pray that all people have the peace and love that they deserve, that their hearts be filled with the light of Allah *Subhanallah wa ta'ala*, that the name "Muslim" doesn't make fear and terror in the hearts of people. Those people who call themselves that, but seem to be exactly the opposite, have not just hijacked the religion, but created a new one with the name Islam on it.

I pray for all who have left us before Ramadan this year and are in Paradise; and for all those who are coming towards Islam and our *tariqah*, that they might find the peace and the opportunities they yearn for. So, instead of missing our friend, Ramadan, this year let us build a permanent residence for this dear friend, this dear elder member of our family, a residence that resides permanently in our hearts.

**Verily, God changes not what a people have until they change it for themselves. (Q13:12)**

May Allah bless you and keep you, and fill you with the choicest blessings of this Ramadan. *Asalaamu alaykum*

***Second Khutbah***

For those of you who made *itikaf*, I pray that Allah accepted your special efforts. For those of you who fasted the month of Ramadan without any problems and with ease, I pray that Allah gives you some strain next year, so it means more to you. For those of you who suffered some small suffering and difficulties in Ramadan, or even large ones, it is a blessing of God to make you conscious and awaken you, for you were asleep and you did not know it. For those of you who, for health reasons, were unable to fast, I pray that our fast was heard by Allah, and that He accepted our prayers for you, and that your health becomes well that you may fast once again. I pray that the blessings of Eid accrue to everyone in this community and to our work. I pray that all of our brothers and sisters receive the blessing of Allah, and that we come to better understandings among ourselves in the spirit of our *tariqa*, our community, and our capacities.

For those who are not Muslims in knowledge, but are Muslims in practice, I pray that they become truly Muslims in their relationship with Allah (swt). May Allah bless all our brothers and sisters in this world with peace and happiness. I pray for our government, and for the leader of this government. May he find peace in his heart, and health in his mind, and that he be strong through the tribulations. And may Allah and he have clear and direct communication. May we all pray for the goodness of this country. I pray for our brothers and sisters who are victims of the bad policies of this country and other nations, and other people of those nations who would oppress them. I pray for our friends and brothers and sisters throughout the world, in Egypt, and Libya, and Tunisia, and Syria, places in China, and all the places in Africa, and Indonesia, and where we have friends, and brothers and sisters, young friends who came and spent parts of their years with us.

I pray that we come to an understanding of the unity of humanity, and especially we understand that even a change of leadership in Iran does not guarantee that there is kindness or reform. These people need to reform and free the people in Iran from

the bondage they have been under since 1979. The only resource that is worth conspiring over, fighting over, or worrying over is the resource of our love for one another, our love for Allah (swt). I pray that all the weapons of destruction, all the chemical and biological weapons, minefields, weaponry that can be directed from one person toward another be abolished and made not to work, and completely fail, and that the only weapon we can use is the weapon of love to awaken the hearts of others. I ask you to join me in the *du'ā*. I pray that all those who do wrong actions in the name of Islam become awakened to their error and ask forgiveness of Allah, and let no one, leaders or followers, use Islam or Tasawwuf for the wrong things. Let's make Fatihah for all of this, and wrap it up in the one Fatihah we believe in so deeply, that tells us the Names of Allah; ar-Rahman, and ar-Rahim. That's the secret within Islam.

My dear friends, brothers and sisters, children, family, lovers of God, I wish you Eid Mubarak!