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Khutbah

Title: [Real Brother / Sisterhood in Islam](#)

DVD title: Islam: A Brotherhood and Sisterhood among Believers
A Relationship of Mutual Love and Respect based in the Median Ideal

Opening du'ās. Allah Swt has provided for us clear guidance in the Qur'an in His '*āyat*,

Surely the believers are brothers, so make reconciliation between your brothers. And be conscious of Allah and ward off evil from within and without, so that you may have mercy. (49:10)

It's interesting to realize that the '*āyat* that follows this is a deeper understanding of what it means by brotherhood, that they are believers.

O you who believe! Let not one folk ridicule another folk. Perhaps they may be better than them. Nor let women ridicule other women. Perhaps they may be better than them. Do not insult one another, nor call each other by offensive nicknames. (49:11)

[This is] not only the guidance of brotherhood and sisterhood, but of the attitude. This applies to brothers and sisters, not just to brothers. So my dear brothers and sisters, we can try to understand that the believers in their love and mutual kindness toward one another are like one body. Allah Swt tells us that when one part of the body is sick, the whole body is sick. When one part complains, the whole body responds to it, as we can tell with some of the people in our

community today who are ill with fever or influenza or pollen-enza. There is a certain level of affection, love, and compassion to keep in touch with in the form of a relationship among believers of not only the *ummah* of the Prophet (sal), but among believers of the *ummah* of Hazrat Adam (as).

The friendship and relationship is not just between young and old, middle age to middle age, rich and poor. It has given us the ability to survive and gather together in groups of people who would not normally find each other attractive, but who under Islam find each other very beautiful. We have to extend that to understand Islam in its greatest sense: a brotherhood and sisterhood among people who are believers and who are good people. As we look out at the world today, we see people who say they believe—among the Muslims and non-Muslims, especially among the *Ahl al Kitab*—but they have tremendous prejudices, biases, and bigotries toward one another. This is certainly not Islamic. It is not Christian. It is not ethical and not proper. As we all know, there is a lot of work to be done.

The teaching of Islam supports the concept of spreading love in society. The Prophet (sal) said, ***“None of you truly believe until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.”*** The believers may live in a society, in themselves free from selfishness and expectation, where they can help each other face the problems of life, like the Prophet (sal) had hoped for Medina. Allah Swt said to the Prophet (sal), ***“Allah will help His servant as long as His servant helps his brother.”*** This relationship among believers is a relationship of mutual love and respect. When there isn’t, there is not an understanding of brotherhood. There is not an understanding of piety, or of the *dīn*. Prophet Mohammed (sal) said, ***“It is evil for a man to humiliate his Muslim brother.”***

A relationship between a Muslim and his brother can be broken by this kind of behavior. He went on to say that this kind of distance from one another should not last for more than three days. It's not lawful for a Muslim to forsake his brother for beyond three days. Just think if we really abided by that, in our community. How much better would it be? How much more understanding and tolerance would there be? If we said to each other, "I haven't called so and so in 3 days. I haven't seen so and so in 3 days." It readjusts all your relationships, your time frame, and your interests. It readjusts the topics of your thoughts. It affects your conversation. It affects what your children see. It's very comprehensive, just that little statement about three days.

The foundations of love are supported by giving and assisting, giving not just charitable gifts but love, affection, care, concern, and attention. The Prophet (sal) said, "***Give gifts to one another and love one another.***" The people who have means give in service to society, and fill in gaps that can occur in the infrastructure of that society as a result of unequal distribution of wealth and the greed of certain people and institutions, which we are experiencing today in our society. Supporting the needy with wealth is one thing. But in Islam the poor don't resent the rich, and the rich don't resent the poor. In fact, they pray for each other's increase in wealth. The rich person prays for the poor so they can pay *zakat* and help others. The poor prays for the rich to maintain their wealth for the sake of being able to be assisted.

Ibn Malik narrated that of the Ansar living in Medina, one had a large number of date palms. The most beloved of his property to him were some gardens which stood opposite the mosque of the Prophet (sal). The Prophet (sal) used to enter it and drink water there.

The verse “**None of you shall attain righteousness unless you spend of that which you love**”(3:92) comes from that.

The owner of the gardens got up and said, “O [Messenger of] Allah! The most beloved of my property to me is these gardens, so I give them as a charitable gift in Allah’s cause. I hope to receive good out of it, and to have it restored to me by Allah. So dispose of it in the way Allah orders you to.” The Prophet (sal) replied, “This is a fruitful property. I have heard what you said and I think that you should distribute it among your relatives.” “I shall do so, O Messenger of Allah!” was the reply. And he divided the property among his relatives and his cousins.

The people of the *Sahabah* who were wealthy realized that they had responsibility for the wealth they had acquired. When they found a need the state was unable to fulfill for others, they would sacrifice their wealth in order to fulfill it. The meaning behind this distribution of wealth to relatives is that you spread that duty among the relatives. [One should] not just give it to the Prophet (sal) and say, you take care of it. The responsibility is ours. This is real brotherhood and sisterhood. It’s an historical fact that Uthman (ra) gave a huge caravan of camels bearing wheat, oil, and raisins to the poor Muslims as *sadaqa* when an economic crisis hit Medina during the *khalifat* of Abu Bakr (ra). Merchants had offered him five times its original price for profit, but Hazrat Uthman (ra) said, “Who offered it to you when no one came to you before us? We are the merchants of Medina. God has given me ten times its worth.” And he shared it among the poor Muslims.

There are many stories in the biographies of the Muslims who are pious. Of course we

have worries and concerns and tremendous needs. Each one of us has needs for ourselves and our families. The generosity that comes through brotherhood and sisterhood comes from Allah Swt. When we look at the community in which we live, we have to understand even more. We have to understand that there is no class among believers. We can start with the Muslims, but understand there is no class distinction among those who believe in Allah Swt, who live with brotherhood and sisterhood, and who serve one another. Muslim society didn't witness any conflict between classes and doesn't recognize the superiority of one class over another.

That Median ideal should come true in the world today, not just among Muslims, where there is no differentiation between color, race, national origin, culture, or language. But the world is ruled by tyrants, bigots, and power-hungry people who leave almost an indelible mark on society. You have to live (as we try to live) with equality. The example that is given is of the teeth in a comb. They are all equal. But if you had four teeth that stuck out [above the others], you'd scratch your head badly. If the Islamic society had been destined to continue its civilizing process in the world, it would have been wonderful. From the Sufic perspective, we see it as a civilizing movement to lead humanity today, *insh'allah*. The advantage of Islam in building a strong society based on mutual love and respect, brotherhood and sisterhood is a possibility, especially among those of *tariqah*. Yet we see in the world that people somehow think they can build relationships based on power and hatred and conflict and destruction.

Remember, **“The believers are none else than brothers. Therefore, make peace between your brethren, and observe your duty to Allah, and haply you may obtain mercy.”** (49:10) This is where it begins, with the revelation of Allah Swt to the Prophet Muhammad (sal). Islam made it a duty for brothers to establish close relationships. These words come through the Prophet (sal) from Allah Swt. The system of brotherhood

and friendship was introduced, and the specific bond of brotherhood resulted in special rights and duties to individuals. The Prophet (sal) established bonds of brotherhood among Muslims in Mecca before the *hijra* on the basis of allegiance to truth and mutual support and brotherhood: between Hamza and Zaid ibn Harat, and Abu Bakr (ra) and Uman (ra) and Uthman (ra), and on and on and on. These agreements and pledges of brotherhood [were] established by actions. The Messenger (sal) established a bond of brotherhood between all these people and it later became articulated in guidelines.

It is said that the Prophet established brotherhood among the *muhajarūn*, and took Ali as his own brother. There is no doubt that the in Medina, because of the general brotherhood of Islam (and kinship), since they were in the same place, they did not have to establish something new. This understanding of brotherhood came, just like we have an understanding of it here. People are in need; they rise up. People are sick, people include them in meals. Someone needs help in their home, they are there. Some special problem arises, there is someone to speak to. This is the way it is in true brotherhood. This is the truth of Islam. We have to come to it from our heart. It is the basis of community. Every time we extend ourselves, it is one small taste of what happened in Medina.

Every time we give hospitality here, we give it with so much love. And we are noted for that. People recognize it, because we are the followers of Mohammed (sal). We don't like to believe that religion has anything to do with it, unfortunately, in our enlightened states, but we are followers of Allah Swt and Rasulallah (sal). How do we show it? It starts to come out naturally. We know we don't have to flail the Qur'an in our hands and beat people over the head with it to prove anything. You just try to live a good life and be kind to people. You come to it from your heart. You come to it in your heart from Tasawwuf, and from your history and background, from the love you receive maybe from

your parents, or from your brothers and sisters here.

The love in Allah grows in our hearts when we love one another. For that love, I'm sure Allah swt will reward us all, or reward you at least. The generosity of the Ansar was so great that they suggested to the Prophet (sal) that they divide their palm trees between themselves and the *mujaharūn*. The palm trees were a source of income for them. The Prophet (sal) asked them to keep the palm tree plantations for themselves, but to share the dates. We don't know whether it was defined by a specific system. It seems the Prophet (sal) didn't want the *mujaharūn* necessarily to work in agriculture because they weren't familiar with it, or he needed them for something else. The *Ansar* offered all their extra money to the Prophet (sal). They said, "If you want, take our homes." He thanked them and had houses built on land where the *Ansars* had offered, and on land that was not owned by anyone. This generous treatment they gave moved the *muhajarūn*, and they spoke openly about the generosity of the Ansar.

It was narrated that they said, "O Messenger of Allah! We have never come to a people like the Ansar. They are the best people we have ever seen when it comes to giving support. If they have much, they are best in sacrificing it. They have given us everything we need, allowing us to share in their happiness to such an extent we are afraid they will take all this reward from Allah." The Messenger (sal) said, "No, as long as you commend them and pray for them, that won't happen."

Don't we see how that grows naturally, here in our own mini-Medina? But do we recognize it? Are we saying the things the *Ansar* said? Is there a subject more important to a believer than the love of Allah Swt and the brotherhood/sisterhood of the community? If the light stays on, just one little candle here and there, *insh'allah* one can find their way. If there is one spark left in a fire, you can bring it back and cook a meal,

warm the house, warm the hands, dry the wet clothing, give safety and security to a traveler. We all have challenges these days: economic, social, personal, health. The solution lies right in this brotherhood and sisterhood, and not just among the “Muslims” but among the believers.

I was recently asked by an old friend, Swami Omkarnanda, to write on brotherhood. Look at that. He called me after all these years to write on peace and brotherhood in Islam for our brochure that is coming out on our 25th anniversary. This is love and brotherhood between two people: he’s from India, I’m from the US. We knew each other when I was a yogi and he was just a *Brahmachari* doing *puja* three times a day. We traveled in India together. He met Hazrat on the first day with me. What more testimony to that brotherhood? He is totally immersed in his work in San Leandro and India, building orphanages and schools and feeding the poor in India, teaching people in California. The brotherhood remains. He’s a Hindu; I’m a Muslim. There is no mention of that.

There are people in our country today coming back from war. They have seen things they never saw in our country, even if they came from a poor part of our country. Such destruction, pain, and suffering and poverty created by the war. Are they coming back with a sense of humanity, of care and concern for others, or full of hatred, bias, and bigotry? Whose responsibility is it? They are just someone’s children. They expected to maybe stay in their home towns in West Virginia, Tennessee or New York, or wherever. Many are not from a higher economic standard, and some are extremely well educated West Point graduates. They are just someone’s kids who by circumstance, or belief, or political understanding, or sense of duty, or just no job found themselves at war. What are they coming back to? A society that says, “We’re not worried. They will transition okay, because we are a society of loving brothers and sisters and caring human beings across cultural, racial, religious, and economic barriers. And they (the soldiers) learned

how important it was to help humanity.”

How many of us live in that delusion, thinking that’s what they learned? But it could be. When people came back to Medina, it was mostly integrated and cooperative. The teachings of Nebi Mohammed (sal) were supported and enforced. That’s why we have to here, even in our tiny little society here, maintain certain values and attitudes no matter what, so that our children are reinforced here with those attitudes, *insh’allah*. Let’s reflect on that brotherhood and sisterhood and use it in a good way, and try to be present with one another, *insh’allah*. Du’ās.

SECOND KHUTBAH. Closing du’ās.