

August 7, 2009

Khutbah

Title: [Health and Balance: Physical and Spiritual](#)

DVD title: Mīzān: With Balance and Harmony in the Spiritual Being, Physical Health Follows

Du'ās. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah Swt reveals to us:

Surely, We sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and we sent down with them a Book and a balance, so that the people might uphold justice. And We sent down iron in which there is a great might and many uses for the people, and so that Allah might know who defends Him and His messengers though He be unseen. Truly, Allah is strong and mighty. (57:25)

And also, in relation to this 'āyat of *mīzān*, Allah Swt says,

And thus We made you a community of the center, that you might testify against the people, and that the Messenger might testify against you. And We did not make a change in the direction in which you face, except to know who followed the Messenger and who turned away from his guidance. It was a difficult test except for those who Allah has guided. And Allah will not permit that your faith be in vain. Truly Allah is Gentle, and the Bestower of Mercy to the people. (2:143)

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This image of Allah Swt and the Messengers is very important for us today because we live at a time of ignorance and arrogance and extremes. One could say, wheresoever you look, there is the countenance of arrogance and extremes blocking the Countenance of Allah. We don't see in the world around us that people have respect, but the opposite. They think they are creating everything anew; or that they, themselves, are the solutions or solvers of problems, even if they think that at all. Mostly people act like sheep, being moved here and there at the whims of people who want power, and who have greed and lack of concern for the human well-being. When one turns on the news, whether this morning or last night, or I assure you, tonight or tomorrow morning, we will become very distressed over the arrogance we see, the ignorance and hostility we see. How human beings can feel among all this that we have any right to reach across the world and influence the governments of political ideology of other people is astounding—or how to be an example of governance is humiliating. People of other cultures and ideologies have a sense of what is right and wrong, not having any understanding necessarily of our culture and the way we approach human beings.

The subject today is the subject of harmony and *mīzān*. The implication is to enjoin or inspire us to think about equality, equity, and balance. *Ta'ādul* means equal. It comes from the same word as *'adl*, which also means something equal, or bound in part. We live in a world that is not balanced and not equal, where there is a tremendous amount of inequity. The concepts of equality and equity more than most distinguishes human beings from one another, the capabilities of one human being from another, the qualities of one human being from another—not just consciousness, but how people are balanced and equal. The potential of certain human beings to distinguish themselves from other living things and from other human beings is often based on harmony and balance: *mīzān*.

The concept of equality and balance is the criteria or standard of excellence at which we can hope to operate, the standard which represents the house of nobility of humankind. As Allah Swt has revealed to us in Qur'an, in every facet and aspect of our human existence, being equal or living in equity, balance, and harmony is considered a sign of excellence of virtue. When things are equal or near equal, we can achieve that balance. Whether it is equity in terms of material things or in legal terminology, or in moral and ethical values or in justice, it is very important that equality and equity imply a balance as we have heard in Qur'an. Especially, as we are now past the middle of Shab'ān, which we need to spend some time tonight thinking about, and as we approach the significance of Ramadān, I enjoin all of you to review your papers. Don't wait. Don't just fast. Prepare yourself. We have an opportunity to reflect.

When we look at the physical human nature and our physical bodies, we see the health of the human body lies in the balance of its constitution with its nature. This is what will enable us to fast or not fast in the month of Ramadan. Our constitution means also our temperament. Our physical makeup is balanced with the world outside of us, and the nature outside of us, and how we exist and co-exist in our environment. Is it a co-existence that will be healthful and balanced? Any disturbance of our balance between our temperament and our constitution, against the backdrop of the physical world, speaks of many difficulties, dis-ease—a lack of ease, a lack of harmony, a lack of balance, a lack of equity, a lack of physical, moral, ethical balance and justice.

It's no wonder that today we still haven't found the cures for many diseases we could have. There is no wonder that we rely on strictly the most gross materialistic means for healing instead of the more subtle ones. It is no wonder that we see the fear of global plagues in front of us, because we are not, around the world, people who are seeking

balance and harmony, thereby infusing everything we do—our principles, our systems, our research, our development—with this concept. When we look at ethics or spirituality, the same principle of *ta'ādul* is operating. Instead of physical health, we are talking about spiritual health.

The state of imbalance is called spiritual bankruptcy, not just material bankruptcy as we see in the world today; or spiritual corruption, not just the kind of corruption we see prevalent in our society and other societies. And also in the sense that impure things corrupt the body: impure food, lack of standards in providing foodstuffs for people. If you leave things out in an environment that is not best for it; like leaving butter or milk out in the heat of the day, it will go bad. If we put ourselves in the wrong environment, we go bad. We get diseased and corrupted. It comes from a lack of understanding and values, lack of equity and ethical balance, a lack of moral balance. The arrogance that rises up in the human being is like the corruption of food. The bacteria come, and then affect the whole environment, the whole body.

The environment of power [is seen] in the world around us today [and] in our country. [Where] enormous power causes corruption at the highest levels, we find there are shadow governments being revealed, and overt crusades that are being waged again. Remember the news revealed last week just in our own country: the crusade one company of mercenaries is waging of Iraq against Muslims. The concept is always there is an enemy that has to be taken care of or killed. Behind that is a desire to keep a mentality of corruption and disruption, of inequity and imbalance, of greed and power, and of course to couch it in the mantle of “religion.” Aside from that, we get an attitude of moral superiority that comes along with it. There may be cultural and religious aspects to this, but different cultures look at balance in different ways. If some of the imbalances are not

caught in time, it's very hard to rectify those imbalances. Just like a disease that is not dealt with in time becomes a deeply organic problem: acute becomes chronic, and chronic becomes organic. Superficial problems become diseases, and these lead to some kind of spiritual, moral, and ethical decay and demise.

The essential basis of human beings is not the physical body, not the tissues or the flesh, but the spiritual, moral, and ethical excellence and perfection that made us able to master the physical world. But without its correlative—balance in the physical world—it won't last. Jalaludin Rumi described the state in these words: *“Humanity is not flesh and bones and skin. It is nothing but the pleasure of the Almighty Allah.”* That is why those who do not value their own excellence; those who are not humbled by their own humanity. and those who do not see the tremendous responsibility they have by that potential, those who are not in awe of the power that Allah Swt has assigned to them, those who do not see their own ability and see that they must take the higher road ethically, and not be revengeful and cause disruption all over the world; those who do not see the relevancy of their own health and well-being, or the health and well-being of others in this battle (I wish it was a dialogue) going on in this country today over health care; those who don't see the importance of balance, lose the essence that Mevlana refers to in these words: *“These you are looking at are the reverse of humanity, for they are not human. They only have the cover of humans.”*

It's embarrassing when you watch the news. It's embarrassing when you meet these people to hear what they have to say. If they are sincere, that's very frightening. If they are not sincere, that's very disturbing. They speak as if they are sincere, but their intention is to disrupt. If we go around the world and force our way into making inequities, then who are we? We are not human beings. We are animals under the guise

of human beings. How many people walk around with the external cover of humanity or of religion, and have the physical body and all the verbiage, but they, themselves, are not really humans? What people are doing around the world, in Iran and Iraq, Afghanistan and Darfur, China and the United States is not human or humane behavior. They do not understand the real spiritual realm, or the purpose of life: to be balanced.

It is not to gain territory, hegemony, and power; and make what appears to be security while relieving people of their rights and forcing upon them narrow ideologies, relieving them of their wealth and forcing poverty on them, relieving them of their health. Though it can be said the health of the spirit is the balance, or the *ta'ādul* of the soul and its ethics, the soul and its inner practices, only the person who combines the spiritual, the mental, and the physical in a way that maintains balance – which is a constant, continuing process, just as all life is a dynamic and continuing process – can be called a perfect being. Not even that—just a real human being.

It is this perfection or realism that was given to us by Allah Swt through all the prophets and the messengers. Just as doctors look at the health of the physical body (or should), so too Allah Swt sends His Messengers to look at the health of our spiritual bodies and our spiritual beings (which will long outlast our physical bodies), and to bring us to the spiritual medicines that cure us of the spiritual ills. Indeed, this is the overlap into the cultural realms too, which is distinguished by cultural ways of looking at things. But if you are anxious to take your vitamins every day, or get your acupuncture treatments every day, if you are anxious to watch your diet and watch what you are exposed to in the physical environment because you are so concerned about your physical body, what about the spiritual remedy? What about the spiritual doctor? What about the checkup that should come every day? The soul needs a checkup every day.

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People get up every morning and some take their pulse. Some take their blood sugar. Some people take other measurements of their health and well-being. We have tools to measure our spiritual being. We can't just forget about that; and not sit in meditation, not do the prayer, not do the recitations, not pray for people who are ill, not repent of Allah, and not ask Allah to forgive others, not forgive others yourself. You can't do that. It makes you ill. If you don't believe it makes you ill, have the courage to look at your own attitudes. Have the courage to look at your own souls, to listen to your own words—all of us. How do you know you are ill? You have a fever; a cough, a little cold. Your stomach doesn't feel right. You have a headache. You can't breathe too well, a little allergy, a pain here or there, or even a disease. It is something that has to be repaired, and you know it. Are you diagnosing your spiritual state? Are you trying to find harmony and balance in your spiritual life? Or are you so obsessed with the physical, or the material, in the sense that people are so obsessed with power in the physical world that they pay no attention to anything else. Or they are so obsessed with their physical state and physical body that they pay no attention to their soul.

Look at ourselves. Stand in the mirror. Is this who you want to be? Is this what you want to look like? Is this what you feel is consistent with your image of yourself and your potential? In the physical world, we do it every day. Some people don't stand in front of the mirror for precisely that reason. You have to stand in front of the mirror of spirituality and balance, and Qur'an, and the presence of the *shuyukh*, the *shaykh*, and the brothers and sisters. How do you do that? You can hide out in your home. Or you can invite someone in for dinner, breakfast or lunch, and sit, meditate, talk, or listen to a discourse, or just have good conversation about what is necessary in your life, in the community. And your soul will be mirrored. Or you can invite someone over and just

complain about your knee, your arm, your weight, your breathing, your allergy, your sensitivity, or your food or whatever. Or just have a social time.

We can't assume that our way of looking at everything is right. It's all too easy for someone else to say, "You're thinking this, and you're saying this." But we don't point the finger at ourselves: that stupid thing we used to be told as children. If you point your finger at someone, remember you have three fingers pointing back at you. But it's smart. The teaching the *ambiyā* brought, the teaching of the *shuyukh* can be balanced in each one of our lives. No one in this world can look at their way as being only right.

We are not made exactly the same way. Allah Swt tells us in Qur'an, that if He had wanted to make us one community, He would have made it that way. But He decided not to do that so we could come to know one another, and respect one another, and honor one another—and forgive one another, be tolerant of one another, and support one another.

The main message of the Messenger, the main objective of all the prophets, especially of Mohammed (sal), was to create a state of moral and ethical and physical equilibrium, balance/*mīzān*. If you have that, what do you have in a nation? You have a nation of the center, the *ummata wasita*/the middle nation, where people of balance, of systems, of values, education and health can be adjusted, re-directed, looked at, and evaluated against what? Against values so there can be a balance between the ethical and moral aspects, and the physical aspects of life, between the spiritual and the material. There is no one way. Changes take place.

Sometimes one has to do things to the extreme at times. There are times when one has to back off from the extremes and find a balance. Now is the time to do that: there is no question about that. We are left without any doubts, if one cares to look, if you care to be

brave enough to look at your own state, at your own physical state. How do you balance your mental, physical, emotional, and physical states? A Messenger is sent with the Torah, with the Injīl, with the Psalms, with the Qur'an. The Divine Message has established a basis of spiritual and physical balance. Not just for individuals, but for all people and all nations. The message of Islam is a universal message, not just by the fact that there are Muslims everywhere. Rather, there are Muslims everywhere because there is a universal message. In fact, it is the balance that is the sign of a healthy nature. When we find that balance, just like the signs of a healthy person, we can tell. You can eat anything. You can sleep anywhere. You can bend down and pick up something. You can walk among many people and speak many languages, literally or figuratively.

When we look at the nations today, and our nation, we see that there is not a healthy balance. There are a lot of unhealthy people: obese people, starving people, healthy people, sick people, killing people. Within the nations there are disagreements. Disagreements are all right, but not the kind we are having today. If you turn on the news, you hear people in their ignorance, people who are over 65 on Medicare saying they want an end to government health care. You want to hit them in the head. What kind of silliness is that? [It is] sheep being led to slaughter by the insurance companies and corporations, and the politicians. There will never be peace without understanding, without balance. The view is so narrow, so selfish, so immature, but it is the reality. We see there is not a proper balance in mental and social health, let alone physical health in this world. We see that the relationships between countries are disrupted when their populations are kept in ignorance, and there is no economy that supports true global understanding and cooperation.

People who follow the Prophet (sal) are the people of the middle nation/*ummata wasit*. It

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is a nation raised on the principle of harmony and balance, and therefore there are exceptions that are assigned to the people of the middle way. Where are these people of the middle way? We have to be there. I'm glad to see that there are movements against war, and against more nuclear proliferation, and toward nuclear disarmament. I'm glad to see that there are concerns for the health of nations. But when it comes down to effective methodologies, it takes people of spirit, people of humility, people who have *taqwa* to carry it through. Where is the mentality of understanding, of negotiation and mediation? Where is the mentality of compromise and cooperation, of respect?

Allah says, **“Thus We have made a community (an ummah) justly balanced.”** (2:143)

Well, it is unbalanced right now, and not just the *ummah* of Islam. We have to be especially attendant to that, but it is all the people. **“Of those We created are people who direct each other with the truth and with justice.”** (7:181) Let's find them.

Became we can assume that the people who guide others to truth and justice must know what the truth is. You might find truth and justice there, if you are looking for it. There is no more truth in the way a Muslim acts in the world today than there is truth in the fact that the Jews consider themselves the only chosen people. That's not right. It's picking and choosing about what you are choosing.

I remember going to a Bat Mitzvah that Rabbi Jack Moline was giving in Washington, a memorial service for my nephew. The Bat Mitzvah girl raised the question of sacrifice. Why are the Jews not making sacrifices? We make a sacrifice at Ramadan on the Eid, the *qurban*. Why is there no more *qurban* in Judaism? Jack went into a very, very good explanation about Jews choosing things—that religion is dynamic, times change and therefore choices change. Some things are abrogated after time. Well, maybe the chosen people ought to be abrogated after time, also. Maybe we are all chosen people. It seems

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to me in a globalized world that everyone ought to be able to live in relative peace and understanding among each other. Why is it okay to stop sacrificing, but not okay to give up the idea that “this is my land, and I get to kick you off, and kill you to get you off!” It’s not fair. It’s not reasonable, and it’s not right. By extension, what are the reasons we wage war?

It is not because the Qur’an says “you are the best of people” that we are the best of people, either. It means I created you to be the best of people but you are not going to be the best of people unless you act in a way that makes you the best. If you want to be the chosen people, you have to ask yourself: why have we been chosen? What are the values, the ethics, and the morality of the chosen people? If we don’t live it, we are not chosen. We have to understand that we have to draw the curtain over ourselves, examine ourselves, and find our own balance/*mīzān*.

The Prophet (sal) said, “***The very object of the religion of Islam is to wish well to all people.***” Wherever Muslims are not wishing well to other Muslims (like in Iran and other places), or not wishing well to non-Muslims, they have lost the object of the religion. It means in every possibility, we should be the benefactors. We should be the example, and the beneficent people, because we have this teaching. You can talk about what is wrong very easily, what you would prefer. “I wish you did this or that. I wish you said this or that. I wish you would remember this and that.” We all do this. But we don’t look to ourselves. If there is a duty for a nation, there is duty for a community. If there is duty for a community, there is duty for people. If there is duty for people, there is duty for me as an individual. Whether we are looking at health or environmental issues, or ecological balance, or understanding in education, rights and justice, rule of law and civil liberties—all need to be balanced. Some people understand that.

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We got an inquiry for our work just two days ago saying there are these young people in the Middle East who are so wealthy, they cannot transition into normal society. They are so wealthy and pampered, they have no sense of other people's cultures and values. They have no sense of the world. "Would you help us? Would you join us in training them for the future?" A very famous group of people called us to do this. It's very important work. The next day, we got another call, about a similar values and training program. Some people are realizing in the Muslim world, that there needs to be people who can make transitions. And who are they calling? *Alhamdulillah*, they are calling us, because we have proven that people can live in harmony together, they can work in harmony together. They can have differences; they can have their culture. They can have religious differences, but they share common values. People are recognizing it and calling upon us.

We have to call upon Allah Swt. What does it mean they are calling upon us, when you and I don't do a health evaluation of our soul every day, but we do a health evaluation of our body every five minutes? What does that mean? What does it mean when we let food rot in our gardens, when we don't participate in that chain of events that takes place just 200 feet from here? What does that mean? *Bismillah. Asalaamu aleikum.*

SECOND KHUTBAH Duas.