

August 14, 2009

Khutbah

Title: [The Bond between Allah and His Creation](#)

DVD title: The Bond of Love of Allah Swt and His Creation

Opening prayers

My dear brothers and sisters, today I want to speak a little about the bond between Allah (Swt) and His creation, which is the bond of love. Allah (Swt) in Holy Qur'an says:

**Is one who knows what is set down to you from your Lord is the Truth like the one who is spiritually blind? Truly, only the people of understanding will remember. And those who fulfill the covenant with Allah do not break the vow, and those who join that which Allah has ordered to be joined and fear their Lord, and are afraid of the evil of their account, and those who persevere in seeking the face of their Lord, and establish their salat, and spend out of that which We have provided secretly and openly, and who overcome evil with good, it is these who will have the Final Abode. (13:19-22)**

And again, Allah (Swt) says in Qur'an:

**Good and evil deeds are not equal. Repel evil with that which is better. You will see the one whom you had enmity will become as it were your dearest friend.**

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There are many, many references in Qur'an, such as the ones that I have read, that always raise the question of what the purpose of human life is, especially at a time when human life seems to be very expendable and easily taken by other human beings. How human beings could have existed for so many millenniums through so many events and learned so very little of the sanctity of human life, [other than to] define the sanctity of human life by a person's nationality or by their race or by their religion is very hard to grasp. So Allah Swt tells us that the good deed and the evil deed are not alike, and He wants us to repel the evil deed for the good deed as I quoted to you.

As you know, this is a favorite *'āyah* that we use in *khutbah*, and many people use. It is important because today we are speaking about, in the world that we live in today, the enmity between Muslims and non-Muslims, between Muslims and Muslims, between the fearful aged people and the young people, and between the government and the citizenry. There is a lot of enmity in the world we live in today. Time and again, Qur'an has tried to make clear that the bond that exists between Allah (Swt) and His Creation and humankind is the bond of love and affection and care and concern, and that is what it should be. The highest form of devotion is, as we know, is love—to love God, to love His prophets, to love His representatives, to love one another for the sake of Allah, for the sake of Truth, for the sake of peace, for the sake of compassion, for the sake of mercy.

We, who are Muslims, should at least understand that we are not loving one another for the sake of some being sitting someplace else. We should love one another for the sake of these attributes, these qualities that are, supposedly, deeply imbedded in us; therefore, the highest form of love in our loving of Allah Swt should be put in the context of every moment of our life, and every issue of our life. It becomes as if the Beloved of the seeker

in Qur'an should be everyone and everything in His Creation.

In Sūratu-l-Baqarah, Allah Swt says:

**There are those men who take images and substitutes for Allah and love them with the love that they should truly be showing for Allah. But in the faithful, the love of Allah is the strongest. (2:165)**

It does not mean that you do not love the creation of Allah Swt. It means that you understand that what is created that people love as if they are idols, is Allah and is the Creation of Allah, so you love the Creator of it. Allah (Swt) says in Sūratu-l-Imrān:

**Say, “If you love Allah, then follow me and Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. Allah is Ever Forgiving and Singularly Compassionate.” (3:31)**

There are so many things that people love as substitutes for Allah Swt. It would take many *khutbah* just to list them. But we can start with things that are the most familiar in our own life. Over and over and over repeatedly in Qur'an, Allah (Swt) tells us that the emphasis is belief in Allah Swt and love for Allah (Swt). **“O you who believe, should any of you desert his faith, Allah will then rise up a people loved by Him and loving Him.”** That is the criteria, clearly said—clearly said. How many times is that quoted from Suratu-l-Hūd. Allah Swt says, you know, in Qur'an: **“And if you turn away, still I conveyed what I sent to you with succession. And give it to a people other than you. You cannot harm Him. Surely He is the guardian over all things.” (11:57)** It is clear what the requirement is. This is the criteria.

Allah (Swt) has given us the capability to feel and the capability to express human love in many ways. We can practice from time to time that which was put into our breast, into us from the breast of our mother after birth, as mother's milk. Allah Swt puts these characteristics into us and we need them as we need the milk of the mother, to survive. We walk through this world, and wherever you go in this world, you go to the deepest jungle, the biggest city, you see people who care for each other, walking hand in hand—literally, friends walking hand in hand. It is the nature of human being. Again, Qur'an points out that the love of Allah Swt is expressed through the love of His creatures. **“He who desires to love Allah has necessarily to learn to love His creatures.”** He tells us:

**Who, for the love of Allah, disburses his wealth and who, longing for it themselves, bestows their food on the poor and the orphans and the captive and says: ‘We feed you for the sake of Allah. We seek from you neither recompense nor thanks.’ These are the people who are the most beloved by Allah.”**

It is so clear, so clear. The truth has been expressed so impressively clear in Qur'an and so many times in Hadith of Prophet Mohammed (sal). The consideration is implicit in all the acts of devotion and actions suggested by Qur'an and Hadith. It is implicit also on the emphasis of very, very specific qualities and virtues that we have to develop. It is implicit in the distinction that is made between what is lawful and what is not lawful. So incredibly powerful is this message, so important is the stress that is laid on the presence in human beings of the quality of *rahmat*/mercy (or any other quality) that the reference to *rahmat* (for example) is made over 300 times in Qur'an. If we include other attributes in one form or another that are similar, such as providence and forgiveness, benevolence and justice, truth and peace, love and forbearance and patience, how many times would it

appear in Qur'an? In almost every *'āyah*.

Wherever we look, the basis of worship, the basis for success as a human being in our life, the basis for peace, the basis for happiness, according to Qur'an and according to Hadith rests on the idea, on the truth, on the reality that the aim of human life (whether we are children, whether we are adults, whether we are young or old) is to reflect in one's own thoughts and to reflect in one's own activities, those attributes, those qualities of the al-Asmā' al-Husna.

If we have our own selfishness as our goal, we will never be able to do that. Not only will that mean that we will not become nearer to Allah Swt (as people want to say metamorphically), or not become more aware of that Divine Presence (as I would rather say it), nor that we will ever be able to understand Allah Swt and understand what is expected of us as human beings, but it means that we will not be able to serve anyone properly. We will not even be able to receive service from anyone properly. Perhaps worse than anything is that we will be only following our own desires and we become lost in our own self-centeredness and our own egos to such an extent that we care very little for His creation or His creatures, and care very little to assist and serve in any other way. You see this among people of religion: who only care for the Hereafter, who only care for the reward that will come after life, without living a life that will give you that reward. Whether they are evangelical Christians or orthodox extreme mentality of Muslims, pick any religion, it does not matter. People are totally misguided. And we know what Allah Swt says of people who are misguided: they cannot be guided.

So the Holy Qur'an regards the emergence of the human being like a line. It is like drawing a line in the sand of creation, a line where the animal nature ceases and the

higher life begins to disclose itself as within our own heart. There is a transition from the animal to the potential of the human being, and from the potential of the human being, to become a humane, tolerant, caring human being. We all have to struggle with the animal nature, the *nafs ammāra*. Even, indeed, as you become more aware and more sensitive to the Divine Presence, sometimes you have to struggle even more with it because you pick up, if you will, on others, on what is happening around you. It is just like you have a microscope that sees viruses, or you have a telescope that sees events far into space, or you have hearing aid that allows you to hear, or a device that allows you to hear what others cannot hear. So you have to deal with those things, because if you hear something that others don't hear, it causes an emotional response in you. People will see the emotional response and people will say, "Where did that come from?" "Why are you reacting? Why are you getting so upset?" But you are seeing, or sensing it.

There are many forces in the world that are trying to keep everybody at the same low level, just go to any political meeting now, any town meeting. Knowledge is very fascist. Nobody wants anyone to have any knowledge. They only want them to be angry. The quality that distinguishes us as human being, distinguishes us from animals, gives us a station, and gives us a scale of life that is great is our humanity, our humaneness. When we see human beings not with humane-ness, that may be an oxymoron. When we look around today and see man's inhumanity to man or woman's inhumanity to woman, then we can understand how far human beings can fall. Humanity is designed to be nothing but a reflection of the Divine Qualities of Allah (Swt) and the Prophet Mohammed (sal).

Allah (Swt) did not have to design human beings to show us animal behavior. So perfection, if there is such a thing, is to express in one's life more and more Divine Qualities. Selfishness, arrogance, ego, possessiveness, acquisitiveness, anger, rage,

disassociation of human beings from their families, as we see today, overcome with desire, lack of control, lack of respect for the parents and the elderly, lack of respect for people different from us, lack of respect for our friends and relatives and the people we work for or work with, these are barriers to our happiness. These are not Divine Qualities.

They are created through the deepest unhappiness, the worst *fitna* that can possibly be imagined. People do not trust others. We do not trust others. In fact, what we do is we affirm the “other” existence instead of embracing the other. We affirm the difference. That is why in Qur’an when it refers to any special qualities in human being, it always sets them in relationship to the Attributes of Allah (Swt). So much so this is done, when it refers to qualities of humanity and mankind, it applies the phrase, “the very breath of Allah.” That is why we are the breath of Allah. Our humanity is the breath of Allah. Our humanity is the breath that shaped us, the breath that Allah breathed into our spirit, giving us hearing and sight, and giving us concern. Wherever the Qur’an tries to raise before our minds a concept of Divine Mercy, a Divine Compassion, it does so with the purpose of stimulating within us those very same qualities to come forward in us.

The same purpose is underlined with repeated references to other attributes. Very frequently does it emphasize that there is no limit to the Divine Forgiveness, for example. Read the Qur’an just to see about forgiveness. Think: how many times in Qur’an or Hadith do you hear about forgiveness? It suggests that we as human beings should develop the same qualities as unrestricted in our lives as it is unrestricted in the reality that is Allah (Swt). This does not seem to be the predominant message that is given by the *ulema*, the *imams*, or the Muslim community, necessarily. There is a lot about hell, a lot about punishment. Yet they are missing the message of Qur’an by using the other

message of the Qur'an: this is the last message that should be given. Give all the good message and tell all the ways to be a good Muslim, a believer, a human being, a humane being, a kind being, a selfless being, a person who cares about the orphans and the sick and the needy, etc. Give that message first, then say, "And if you are not, here is what you can look forward to."

So far has Islam been perverted, and Christianity and Judaism before it, you see from these *'āyāt* that I read at the beginning, as far as the laws of society are concerned, Qur'an does not call upon us to love our enemies as they are enemies. We know that it is very hard to love the person who is actively our enemy, but the Qur'an says that it is good for us and proper for us to forgive even our enemy. Because when one learns to forgive one's enemy, then the mind empties itself of the hate and the ill will and it becomes purified. The purified mind, through forgiveness, becomes part of *tazkiya*, a form of refinement, purification, then even enemies become as if they are bosom brothers.

In Qur'an, we are not asked to do anything unreasonable, anything unreal; but rather to take the steps that seem unreasonable and unreal and make them reasonable and real. It is very hard to find that anywhere else. It says in Qur'an:

**Moreover good and evil are not to be treated alike. Turn away evil by what is better and lo, he between you and yourself who was an enemy shall be as a warm friend or brother. But none will attain this except one who is steadfast and patient and none will attain this except the most highly favored degree.**  
(41:34-35)

So whether we talk about the people we live with or work with, or historically about

groups of individuals, or people that we know about in the world today who are struggling with one another: Muslims and Christians, Jews and Palestinians and Israelis, the South Africans, the whites, the blacks, the Tibetans and the Chinese. It does not matter. It is very important that we believe from our Islamic point of view that forgiveness brings mercy, and that mercy and forgiveness create a humane sense of brotherhood and sisterhood.

We have a responsibility to act in that way: being merciful and enjoining what is good and forbidding what is wrong. It does not necessarily protect us physically. We know that many good people perish, but it does protect our soul. To be merciful and to enjoin what is good and to forbid what is wrong is not just a good idea. It is an enjoinder, an injunction. When we do that and we do it seriously, without concern for our national identity or our race or our linguistic identification, our religion, our piece of land or our power or the political implications of it, when we do it with sincerity and seriously from whatever situation we find ourselves, [we do so] because Allah Swt gives us these different situations and challenges us. “Here is a situation. Can you be forgiving? Can you be patient? Can you understand? Can you give up your prejudice? Can you not feel that you have been taken advantage of? Can you be understanding? Can you serve in the name of Allah? Can you overcome mistrust?” These are all tests.

They certainly make us clear what our capabilities are. If we are open and we are receptive to the guidance and the teachings of Qur’an and Hadith, and if our guides and teachers in this world and in the spiritual realm are really dear to us and loved by us, then we can say, “Yes I can.” Everything, whether it is in the phenomenal world or the physical world or the inner life or the outer life, each one of us is vested with a very special quality, natural quality, peculiar to us. Each one of us is, in that strange way,

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strange, peculiar, unique. We have a nature. The nature of fire is to burn. The nature of water is to produce coolness. So is the case of each human action. Each action has its uniqueness. It is what in Qur'an Allah Swt calls recompense, justice. **“Deem they whose earnings are only evil, we will deal with them who work righteously so that their life and death shall be alike.”** (45:21)

So it is clear that when the religion invites one to do good, and when the parents invite their children to do good, and when the teachers invite the students to do well, and when the Prophet (sal) invites us to do good (whether you are Shi'a or Sunni), and when our *shuyukh* invite us to do good, whether it is inviting a whole nation or a group of individuals or inviting ourselves to abstain from what is harmful and destructive, that invitation is an invitation to happiness and to peace.

**“He who does right, it is for himself. And he who does evil, it is for himself. Your Lord will not deal unfairly with His servants.”** And in a well-known tradition, the Prophet Mohammed (sal) he said, *“Allah said, ‘O my servants! If all those who are born or who will be born, and if all human beings and all Jinns should be as good as the most righteous among you, their behavior will not add a wit to My sovereignty over the whole world. O My people! In a like manner, if all those who have gone before and all those who have come after, and all the human beings and all of the Jinns should turn, O people, remember that it is your own deeds over which, for your sake, I exercise control that I return to you. So whoever gets a pleasing requittal for his actions, let him offer thanks to Allah. And whoever receives an unpleasant requittal for his actions, let him blame himself and no one else.’”*

This is the power of the choice. So we should come to know that the root of this is love.

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The root of this is to be receptive and to be accepting and to be challenged and when we find ourselves in conflict or we see conflict around us, as we see around the world today, whether we see it between children and their parents or their teachers, or between the ill-informed and the informed as we are seeing every day in the country today, we have to understand that if we struggle with these issues and we grow out of ignorance to knowledge, that is the potential of the human being. We have the faith of the potential of the human being to grow out of ignorance into knowledge. Sometimes it is very, very difficult to figure out how that is going to happen.

When help people to open their ears and listen, we should feel confidence that something good in every human being will start to respond to what is true and what is good. The leaders of our country and other countries should be enjoined to choose good over evil. They should be told and reminded the teachings of their religion, their *dīn*. They should be challenged on the basis of the values of the ethics and the morality of what they are doing—not the expediency and the politics or the power that come from it.

*Alhamdulillah*. If we have to struggle to remember that message, every one of us, then perhaps we will find a better way to live our life and to bring meaning to our life.

Closing prayers.