



EID AL-FITR KHUTBAH 1 SHAWWAL 1430 \* \* \* \* 20 September 2009

## RE-NEWING OURSELF AND OUR COMMUNITY How to Live for Tomorrow Fully Today

*Allahu Akbar kabira. Wa 'l hamdu li'llahi kathira. Wa subhana 'lahi bukratan wa asila. Asalaam Aleikum wa Rahmatullah-e wa Barakatuh.*

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

**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.**

In Suratu Yunus, Allah says:

*Wa maa kaana-n-naasu illaa ummatañw-wa ahidatañ fa-khtalafuu wa lawlaa kalimatuñ sabaqat mir-rabbika laqudiya baynahum feemaa feehi yakhtalifuun*

**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

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From the depths of my heart, I wish you Eid Mubārak. We have come to the end of the month of Ramadān and arrived at the Eid al-Fitr. The Eid is a great gift and blessing of Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta'ālā*). Another year in our lives has passed in worship, striving in service; a year of gains and (for some) losses; a year of challenges that some of us never expected nor even felt we could meet. In the end, we have discovered again, that there is only one answer to every question, one state of heart and mind that will meet these challenges and enable us to grow and progress in life. That answer is to be found in our Faith/Iman and our Submission/Islam and in the reality of the Divine Presence through our Path.

Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta'ālā*) is Present. Allah's Mercy and Compassion, His Forgiveness and Guidance is present in each and every moment, yet we are responsible to develop our insight/*basīra*, our consciousness to be able to see and hear and understand that Presence.

We feel a sense of separation from this Friend who has been with us, because we have had the opportunity to fast, to retreat, to change our focus, our schedule our perspective and direct our attention inwardly more to our hearts, our spiritual intellect and even in a different way toward our bodies. In so doing we have 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 (*Subhānahu wa ta'ālā*) and to ourselves. As in each year, we are concerned about how we can hold fast to the Rope of Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta'ālā*) during the next year; how we can maintain the commitments of this past month, our schedule of sitting, our study of Qur'an, our awareness of our 'tongues' our 'minds'.

During the month of Ramadān, Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta'ālā*) has kept the doors of Hell closed, and the angels have been among us. Now, as I mention every year, 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 Ramadān with all the assistance of the Almighty, when Shaitan tried to pry open the doors and awaken the memories of the previous months. We must be serious about what has transpired this past month and this past year and what role our Shaitan has played in it. We all realize what it takes to resist falling back to old ways of thinking, our postmodern models of self centeredness, our habits, which are excuses for creating and recreating patterns of negativity, or fear or doubt or self-deprecation. There have been many gains and much progress made this year.

If you could really see how even your resistances and your fears were not strong enough to stop your progress, you would not doubt that there was progress. Today and everyday our primary responsibility is to affirm and renew our reliance on Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta'ālā*).

We fast for the sake of Allah; we praise Allah and we rely on Allah, because we are the servants of Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta'ālā*). Especially with this post modern conditioning that deceives us to believe we are the ultimate creators of our own Destiny, instead of having the possibility of being the masters of our Destiny, we forget. Yes, we forget; and the whole purpose of Ramadān is to remember Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta'ālā*), to see our position as abdAllah.!

As you remember some say that this celebration today is called Eid because Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta'ālā*) restores joy and happiness (*yu'idu: 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'. Ramadān returns to us, year after year, to our homes and to our hearts. When we relinquish our former lifestyle, habits, desires and actions in order to be present to greet Ramadān in our homes, in our hearts and souls; present in sincerity/*ikhlas* in order to restore our selves, we can realize the real meaning of Ramadān.

Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta'ālā*) created the Garden of Paradise on the day of breaking the fast (*Yawm al-Fitr*). He 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 al-Fitr*. He chose Gabriel (*'alayhi-s-salām*) as the conveyor of inspiration/*wahy* on (that day) and the sorcerers (*sahara*) found forgiveness on the day of *Eid al-Fitr*.

The Holy Prophet (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi 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 (*Subhānahu wa ta'ālā*) 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 (*radiya-LLāhu ‘anhu*) said the Prophet (*salla-LLāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said,

***On the night of breaking the fast, Allah (Subhānahu wa ta’ālā) will grant the recompense due to anyone who has kept the fast throughout the month of Ramadān, and He will grant that recompense in full measure. Then in the early morning of the day of breaking the fast, Allah (Subhānahu wa ta’ālā) 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!”***

Again this year, *al’hamdullah*, they were at the crossroads today where we met. *Inshā’a-LLāh*, we all were able to receive their blessings.

*Fa-laa ta’lamu nafsum-maa ukhfiya lahum miñ qurrati a’yuniñ jazaaa’am bimaa kaanuu ya’maluun.*

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

*Kuluu wa-shrabuu hanee’am bimaa aslaftum fi-l-’ayyaami-l-khaaliya.*

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

*Bismillaahi-r-Rahmaani-r-Raheem Allahumma inna nasalaka mujibati rahmatika Wa’aza’ima magfiratika, wa salamata min kulli Itmin, wal-ganimata min kulli birrin, wal-fawza bil-jannati min-an-nar.*

**Oh Allah, we ask You for words which will make certain Your Mercy, actions which will make certain Your Forgiveness, freedom from every offence, a**

**supply of every virtue, entering Jannah and safety from the Nār.**

Brothers and Sisters: I stand here before you on this Eid al-Fitr with firm faith and knowledge that this month past has brought us many challenges and opportunities, and with firm faith and intention that each of you find it in your will and *himmat* to bring the light, the *bāraka*, the knowledge that you have gained into the coming months and years.

I stand here firm in my knowledge and experience that it is only with the companionship of good people, in the *madad* of the *shuyukh* and of our Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) and through specific practices and endeavors can we truly and honestly experience the Divine Presence, Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta’ālā*), as our True Companion on this life’s journey and [can we] achieve the levels of progress that we say we seek. Only with sincere effort and profound obedience, trust and love can we free ourselves from the shackles of fear, doubt, unwise attachment and affirm our unique and specially designed place in this ‘life’ and in the Hereafter.

Moreover, I hope that today we can affirm our practical, applied role and responsibility for what we encounter in life and where we have been placed in this world. One would have to be deaf, dumb and blind not to realize that we live at a time when renewal—personal and collective, spiritual and social—is an absolute necessity. The degrees of corruption, or prejudice, bigotry, oppression and greed are enormous. We are exiting the month of renewal, the month of reflection, the month wherein we deepen our faith, we refine our knowledge, we rekindle our hope, and we build our strength. This is a great and celebratory time. It is a time of urgency and humbling experiences; it is a time of testing.

It is my hope that you and I have had our fast accepted by Allah (swt), that we have felt some transformation and exhibited sufficient gratitude and humility. As people of Islam, we are to be not only Muslim but strive to be Mu’min. For those of Tariqah, we must refine our inner being, develop the subtle organs of perception, and strive to experience that Divine Presence and serve that Divine Presence (Allah (swt)) as our primary effort, goal and accomplishment in life. *Inshā’a-Llāh*

Truly Islam and Tasawwuf are a Global Reality of Hope for a world in dire need. The awareness of the company of great minds and open and awakened hearts is profound. I am here to ask you to reach out to others of like minds and hearts, and build a brother-sisterhood based on sincere efforts to build a bridge of understanding between people, to

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build a bridge within yourself between the inner and outer (the ‘*ālam al-amr* and the ‘*ālam al-khalq*), to establish in this world dignity and sense of purpose and mutual respect, but not to settle for less than the highest standards and deepest sincerity from your fellow Muslims.

Let this Eid be a call to action for a safe, secure, sane, respectful, pious, tolerant and peaceful world. All around us, if we look we can see opportunity for positive change, for creative problem solving, for critical decisions and advancement of the human purpose, the Divine Will, the spiritual goals...but we have to look and listen and act. We have come to understand that if we “have eyes that see and ears that hear,” then our life is not about creating a *masjid* or a school or earning money or getting power; rather, it is about creating practical movements, applying the most refined spiritual science and human capabilities that will place the touch of the Sufi, the eye of the Sufi, the hand of the Sufi, and foremost, the heart of the Sufi upon the needs of future generations—movements that will address the challenges of the world in which we live and that will create a legacy that we will be humbled to leave.

The month of Ramadān, and not the Eid al-Fitr, is a true invitation to revitalize and renew our brotherhood and sisterhood by applying our knowledge and our experience, our *iman* and our love, to making this world a better place. It is an invitation to intensify our commitment to inner refinement. The wisdom and the capacities represented here and at other gatherings today must be focused and utilized for all people around the world. Muslims who are truly on the path of Tasawwuf have been given the *idhn* (Divine Permission) and the *irāda* (freedom of choice) to address the pressing needs of these times. Allah (swt) continues to provide humbling responsibilities that govern our lives. Though our methods may be different, these differences that Allah (swt) has created are proof of His Plan of Diversity in Unity.

My dear brothers and sisters, we must strive to answer the call of these unusual times and to be *ibn ul waqt* (sons of our time). We must seize this moment and respond with full cooperation, for as we remember how to work together in the *dunya* (manifest world) as we worked as one before our physical existence in the *ghaib* (unseen world), the living reality of the *Asmā’ al-Husna* (The Ninety-Nine Names of Allah) will reemerge from behind the veil to address the needs of humanity in the *dhāahir* (manifest) and in the *bātin* (hidden).

### **Standing at the Crossroads**

When we look at the state of humankind and the world today, we see all kinds of critical breakdowns and breeches in mental and emotional stability; we see disconnects between values and/or ethics and actions; we see injustice wrapped in the cloak of law and promiscuity wrapped in the cloak of love. We see the deterioration of responsibility, compassion, patience, and tolerance, and so much more. Most importantly, we see a lack of humility, an absence of sincerity, and a lack of *taqwa* (reverence for Allah (swt)) that precludes relationship with the Divine Presence.

As it says in Qur'an:

*Dhahara-l-fasaadu fi-l-barri wa-l-bahri bima kasabat aydee-n-naasi  
liyudheeqahum ba<sup>c</sup>da-lladhee <sup>c</sup>amiluu la<sup>c</sup>allahum yarji<sup>c</sup>uun.*

**Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of the evil wrought by the hands of people, so that He may make them taste some of what they have done, [and] so they may turn back. (30:41)**

When we search for the cause of all of this degradation of the environment and of society's values, we need look no farther than ourselves. All the issues we are faced with today—poverty, food security, war, genocide, depletion of natural resources—occur because of both internal and external imbalance and disharmony. Until we correct these inner elements as individuals, any efforts we make to address the external issues can only represent a surface correction at best, and at worst are thus fated to give rise to even more problems.

But the solution also lies in the problem. Not only has Allah (swt) made us responsible and placed us in creation at the crossroads of the *bātin* and the *dhāhir*, He has also placed us at the crossroads of traditional family values and modern individualism; the crossroads of theory and practice; at the crossroads of human responsibility for Allah (swt)'s creation and greed.

As Muslims, and particularly as aspirants to Sufism, we are part of a global religion that can take advantage of both our place in time in creation and modern trends toward globalization in order to present to the world community the clear and effective global perspective that has always characterized Islam: the expression of a comprehensive, compassionate, totally integrated system that we identify with also as Tasawwuf.

Tasawwuf is, by its essential nature and essence, reflective of time, place and circumstance. Its moderate and holistic view of humanity promotes inclusion over separation. Tasawwuf accepts the responsibility bestowed upon us by Allah (swt): the *amanah* (free will). It affirms the dynamic presence of the Divine. Moreover, Tasawwuf is the effective and affective mode of fulfilling the intention and purpose of the Prophet (sal), who said:

*Innamaa bu<sup>c</sup>ith-tu li-utammim makaarimu-l-akhlaaq.*

**I was not sent except to complete the best of manners.**

This process of fulfilling both the inner and outer, calls to embody this system of *adab* (manners), [which] is the core of Islam for the living human being; this is the process of refinement and renewal.

### **A Time of Opportunity**

While we live at a time of both great heartache and suffering in many places around the world, as well as heightened awareness of this suffering through global media, we also live at a time ripe with great opportunities: opportunities to combat extremism, opportunities to end poverty, opportunities to create food security, and opportunities to address inequities, bias, and prejudice. Tools to educate the masses of humanity to their common values and common purpose have had no greater availability in history; and the unique status as Muslims and people of *Tariqa* obligates us to use these tools to bring a long history of wisdom, science, and spiritual renewal to the world. *Al-hamdul-Lllah*, this is an exceptional time of *tajdīd* (renewal) that is spiritual as well as social.

**It is precisely because Tasawwuf** is experiential and reflective of the ephemeral moment, yet firmly rooted in the Shariah and the Sunna, it is precisely because Tasawwuf requires us to develop the personal reflective nature of the sincere as a striving human being that Tasawwuf preserves the traditions and the essential foundations of Islam while utilizing them in ever new and relevant ways. Tasawwuf is dynamic and organic and develops access to the *fayyād* (direct energy) from the Divine Presence. As it says in the Qur'an:

*Huwa ma<sup>c</sup>akum ayna maa kuñtum.*

**"He (Allah) is with you wherever you are." (57:4)**

The application of this message is founded in the Universal Values (indicated by the *Asmā' al-Husna*) that are eternally relevant to the realities of all times. I call this principle Applied Sufism: Classical Teachings for the Contemporary Seeker. When applied, the *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah (swt)), *suhbat* (teaching lecture), *muraqabah* (meditation), *munasabah* (cordiality), *khidmah* (service), and *tarbiya* (elevation) of the Sufi enables one to fully develop “the eyes that see and the ears that hear” and the heart that beats in cadence with the beauty, light, compassion, and love that *IS* Allah (swt).

Sufism is a bulwark against losing the essence of our *dīn*. It encompasses the essential modernity of Islam, and its deep roots remain firmly in the core principles and practices of Islam. As aspirants to the Sufi path, we affirm and work for justice, peace, tolerance, equality, and trust in Allah (swt). We try to address the ills of this world with the skills of the mystic and the devoted servant, drawing energy and guidance from Allah (swt), while inwardly maintaining peace and harmony with that Divine Presence (Allah swt) and His Prophet Muhammad (sal). Yes, my dear brothers and sisters, given our world, we have many, many opportunities to seize the moments in which we live. Though our ways may seem strange to others, we must remember what the Prophet (sal) said:

***“Indeed Islam began as something strange. And it will return as something strange the way it began. So give glad tidings to the strangers.” He was asked, “Who are the strangers, O Allah’s Apostle?” He answered, “Those who are righteous when the people have become corrupt.”*** (Reported by Ahmad/Sahih)

### **Paradigm Shift**

When will a person who works for good in this world no longer be the exception? As more individuals realize that they stand at the nexus between knowledge based in wisdom and insight and the achievement of responsible, constructive, inclusive, and positive well-being for all, the universal values and intentions of al-Qur’an and the Sīrah of Nebi Muhammed (sal) that they have internalized will continue to further shift the paradigm. The resulting phenomena that emerge will manifest a comprehensively positive period for humanity—for this world and for future generations—in turn, preparing the way for a time of total transformation.

Total transformation in this sense is possible because of the inter-connected nature of the system in which we live. Everything we perceive and all that is beyond our perception is part of an integrative, dynamic and responsive system, a system of repeating patterns and signs, reflected over and over again in the *‘ālam al-khalq*, the world of creation. The

*Rabbi ul-Ālamīn*, the universes that Allah (swt) is, consist of the dimensions of atoms, chromosomes, genes, cells, organs, as well as the totality of our bodies, our social structures—including cultures, races, communities, villages, and nations that comprise our world. All are reflections of the same pattern. In this endlessly integrated system, all things in this world—from the subatomic levels to the farthest universes—reflect the same universal Reality. Separation exists only in our minds. We are all Children of Hazrat Adam (as), and all creation is the living intention of the One/Ahad...Allah (swt).

As those who deeply recognize this greater context, those who aspire to and study Sufism in today's societies, we are obligated to encourage a renewal of both spiritually grounded intellectual pursuits and technological achievements, as well as to exemplify and pursue refined inner moral and ethical principles based on a personal relationship with Divine Presence. We must develop comprehensive, realistic educational models that require individuals to study both the classical texts and hermeneutical approaches to modern religious beliefs. These approaches must take into consideration time, place and circumstances, and they must address the needs of today's communities using critical thinking, critical inquiry, and sound judgment that is based in a sound epistemology.

This Retreat has come at the right time, in the right place, and has brought together the right people in order to address the right issues, both inner and outer. *Inshā'a-llāh*, many thousands of Muslims and non-Muslims will view this on the Internet. It is not a reality that a message of hope and progress, of mutual and joint effort and addressing global realities and inner dimensions can reach thousands of people instantaneously. What we speak about here today you should continue to address among your friends, family, colleagues over the next few months and beyond. This convergence must not stop here, but rather it must begin here; we must use the technology of the day to remain in contact; we must call on the skills of our brethren to address critical issues that face humanity, both within and without. We must continue to build Teams of Excellence to reflect the capacity of Islam and Sufism to address the challenges of today, and we must personally pursue as well as encourage and support in our fellows the sincere inner journey toward self-renewal.

### **A Time for Renewal (*Tajdīd*)**

This subject of *tajdīd* (renewal) is a very important one for the times in which we live. Renewal is constant, even eternal, on every level of creation; from individual cell growth to new generations of life, but renewal also applies to ideas and commitment to values. The Mujāddid (revitalizer of the Faith) is thought to always come at a time when the

Muslim community departs from the True Path as defined by al-Qur'an and the as-Sunnah. The task of the Mujāddid is to return the Muslims to their basic sources and to cleanse Islam from impure elements, creating an atmosphere in which Islam will flourish, more or less, in its original pure form.

In each epoch this has meant something different. Today, the world is much smaller than it once was. The message moves very quickly on the Internet. But what one views and listens to on the Internet is still a matter of choice. The issues and choices have not changed, despite their increased availability. The implication is that *tajdīd* is ongoing, constant, and continuous. The need for Muslims to explain Islam, to make Islam applicable to constantly changing circumstances and situations is continuous throughout time. And this must be done without violating Islam's essential principles. In this sense, there is the possibility, or indeed likelihood if not necessity, of the existence of a Mujāddid within each of us in terms of yearning for a return to our *fiṭrah* (true eternal belief).

*Tajdīd* does not mean going back to the beginning and trying to create a society that is a replica of the time of Medina in the time of Nebi Mohammed (sal). It means instead to renew in our time and circumstances the applicability of the principles of Islam and belief in faith and submission, trust and kindness, inclusivity and mutual respect, love and justice, personal responsibility, community responsibility and global responsibility as exemplified by the Medinah example and Sīrah of Rasūlallah (sal). And gradually the perspective unveiled by these principles will help us to understand the Ummah (Muslim community) to comprise the entire interconnected globe. Although the contemporary resurgence of Islam is most often inspired by the bright examples of its formative past, we must accept that we will never return to that time; and we must, with maturity, begin to bring that ideal to the present with a pragmatism born of the living light of the Prophet (sal).

*Tajdīd* is like a perennial plant. When the new season comes and the time is right, it emerges from the ground again. We must embrace and grow in this season of renewal; we must build a modernity that reflects the essence of and the historical and spiritual origins of Islam and Tasawwuf without losing them. The difference between contemporary renewal and what has happened in the past is that, in our time, *tajdīd* is occurring in the context of rapid globalization and instantaneous communication. The Internet revolution has taken place; mass communications have broken down boundaries; and social media are indeed becoming spiritual media. These communication

technologies have made all the people in the world a potentially global Ummah. Our knowledge of the essential principles of Islam as eternal means that we, as Muslims, must not only grasp this ongoing transformation, but we must embrace it and utilize it for the common good, a common good for all people across the world.

Remember that the message of Islam through al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah is a universal message, and *tajdid* is an inextricably universal principle; so the event of, the growth of, and our use of a global system of communication is entirely and even uniquely appropriate. The crossroads of the natural imminence of renewal and the technological facility that we have today creates an unprecedented potential. This is more than a Renaissance; it is more than the enlightenment in Spain from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E. or in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in the rest of Europe, when the seekers of Truth were involved in science and ethics, aesthetics and rationality. We are living in a time when we must not only allow people to grow, but we must support them in their growth; we must give them the means to become educated; we must give them access to technology; and we must trust that they will in turn, by Allah (swt), address global problems from the spiritual perspective of Islam and Tasawwuf as the fruit of our efforts.

### **Personal Renewal**

Although this talk has focused on the macro level, our commitment to *tajdid* is also reflected in and is a question of personal renewal on a micro level. Each one of us is primarily obligated to renew our Islam, our Tasawwuf, daily. This is the essence of the *salah* (Islamic prayer) and of the *dhikr*. Maintaining this relationship with Allah (swt) by applying the principles of Islam and Tasawwuf to our daily lives—our decisions and our choices on an individual basis—comprises the pursuit of transformation that simultaneously contribute to the macro level. Indeed, it drives and fuels it. This requires a personal commitment to deepening one's understanding of Islam—an educated, spiritually alive, and traditionally loyal attitude toward Islam. On a personal level, *tajdid* means reforming our thoughts and enlightening ourselves; remaining firmly on the *siratal mustaqim* (the straight path); learning how to seek and how to obtain higher, purer levels of *muraqabah* and *tafakkur* (inner contemplation) without ceasing. As Allah (swt) says in al-Qur'an:

*Qul innamaa a'idhukum biwaahidatin añ taquumuu li-Llaahi mathnaa wa furaadaa thumma tatafakkaruu.*

**Say, I advise you about one [matter]. Wake up for the sake of Allah, in pairs**

**or alone, and reflect.” (34:46)**

Through *tafakkur*, one’s relation to life and relationships in life are facilitated so that we become capable of clearly seeing ourselves, and we become able to fulfill our destinies: the service of our fellows for the sake of Allah (swt). Real renewal comes from upholding refined language and refined values that are handed down to us century by century, from the Prophet (sal) who said: **“Good manners (*husn al-adab*) are a part of faith.”** And he also said: **“My Lord corrected me (*addabani*) and gave me excellent correction.”** Self-renewal takes place not in the outer realm only, but begins in the inner realm where the spirit is revived and revived. Then it manifests in the physical world, insofar as it engages in and uses modern scientific discoveries, technology, concepts of psychology, or whatever, to increase our knowledge of the universe. We have to constantly hold up our hearts and minds to *muhasabah* (self-accounting) to sustain the interface with both the inner and outer.

**The Meeting of Outer and Inner**

Let me end by saying that as we move forward, what we need is a renewed understanding of *tajdīd* as a movement toward awakening, toward enlightenment—a movement toward building a dialogue between ourselves and everyone else in the world, between ourselves and nature, between ourselves and the unknown. I don’t know any group, other than certain groups of aspirants to Sufism, that either have that training, that ability, or that inclination to that depth of understanding necessary to make change *fī sabīli-Llāh*

The life of those aspiring to the Sufi path today has to include a response to and an interest in the solutions to problems affecting all human beings that ultimately become rooted in action. As Muslims actually attain and live this understanding of renewal, they will throw off the chains of merely ritualistic behavior and attachments, and they will learn the efficacy of Islam from their own personal experience, both from their inner growth and by witnessing the changes in the Ummah for which all Muslims long, and these changes will have been built on the foundation of the ethical and moral principles of al-Qur’an and al-Sunnah, eternally resolute.

As we learn to see and hear, we are repeatedly made aware that we are a part of a greater integrative and eternal system, a reflection of the very same Truth, the very same Love and Compassion that is infused throughout the worlds, and in the *fitrah* (human nature) of

all humanity. We are not only the inheritors but also the progenitors of the Message of the essential goodness and truth and eternal peace that is Islam. Today, we must renew our commitment to fulfill our duty to Allah (swt) by further refining our own selves, as well as our interactions with the community.

I am humbled and grateful to stand here and share these thoughts with such a noble group of believers. May Allah (swt) forgive my errors and omissions. I plead for your *du'ā*.

**Closing Du'ā**

*Wa Llaahu lahu-l-h.aqqi wa huwa yahdii-s-sabiil.*

*H.asbunaa-Llaahu wah.dahu wa nicma-l-wakiil.*

*Wa s.alli calaa sayyidinaa Muh.ammadin wa aaalihi wa s.ah.bihi ajmaciin  
wa-l-h.amdu li-Llaahi rabbi-l-aalamiin.*

**Truth belongs to Allah; it is He who shows the way.  
Allah, alone, suffices us, and what a fine guardian is He!  
Blessings upon our Master Muhammad  
and his family and Companions altogether  
and praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.**