

November 6, 2009

Khutbah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Title: The Necessity to Counteract the False

DVD title: Counteract the False by Enjoining and Doing Good Deeds

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah says:

And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them as a game. Had We wished for diversion, We could have found it in Our Presence if We were to do so. Know that We hurl the truth against the falseness and it breaks the head of the lie, and behold, it vanishes. And woe to you for what you utter about Allah. And all that is in the heavens and the earth is His, and all who are in His Presence are not too proud to worship Him, nor do they tire of doing so. (21:16-19)

Then Allah goes on to reveal:

They glorify Him night and day, and they do not slacken. Nor do they, who live on earth, take gods from the earth who raise the dead. If there were other gods than Allah, those two Romes would have both been ruined. Glorified is Allah, Lord of the Seat of the Absolute Authority above all description. He cannot be questioned about what He does, but they will be questioned. (21:20-23)

This is from Sūratu-l-Ambiyā as you may know, and *alhamdulillah-Llāh* there are a lot of lessons in this, *inshā'a-Llāh*, for us. In these famous 'āyāts from Qur'an, Allah (swt) is attempting to tell humanity, us, that life is something to be taken very seriously and cherished. Life is taken seriously best only when we can distinguish between what is true and what is false. There are some people who feel

it is an entitlement that comes along with being a Muslim; that they can tell what is true and what is false. That's like me telling you a spaceship is going to land on the front lawn tomorrow. Allah tells us that the truth will always overcome what is false. Not only is the false overcome, but the false will perish. Where? When it is cracked in the head with the truth.

We live in a time, obviously when we are talking not about little truths but about big truths. We are living in a time where people wear the garb, take the name of Islam, and do big lies in its name. Certainly, it is true with other religions, but we don't have the time to bemoan what's happening in every religion or path, other than to generalize that the truth should stand out from what is false. We pray to Allah that the truth of human trust and human kindness that Allah has planted in the hearts and souls of the vast majority of people (and in each one of us), indeed will counteract the falsity that people are spreading all around us causing misery. How sad it is to see every day, virtually every minute, while we have been sitting here, yet another rampage has happened in Orlando, Florida.

But it's hopeful that each one of us will counteract the falseness that people are spreading around us. It is sad, very sad, how easy it is to reduce human beings to the most base animal nature. One would think, after the millenniums of human existence, that just because we are bipeds, we would stop crawling around the earth like we are animals on all fours, attacking everything that comes into our path. Indeed, animals don't do that. They only attack when they want to eat or are being threatened. When we read the articles or see the news of the terrible things that happen around us, when we hear what is said by one faith community about another faith community (specifically these days, Muslims), we see how people speak about other human beings in such horrible ways, wishing them the worst things and perpetrating upon them the worst things.

We can try and explain it all psychologically. [We may] say that man yesterday, the psychiatrist, was deranged. Obviously, he was deranged, only deranged people do things like that (referencing the killings at Fort Hood, Texas). I don't think any of us need a degree in psychiatry (and certainly his degree didn't do him much good) to be able to say that. It doesn't suffice to explain anything just to say that people are polarized over issues or are fearful. Of course, people are fearful. When people speak about Islam, they speak about a religion that is about having people's hand chopped off or are killed at will. Not enough voices stand up and say that Islam forbids this kind of thing, this kind of activity. But even if it was said, it wouldn't necessarily be listened to. When people who are Muslim are called Satanic, and when people want to put together legislation to ban the religion in the United States, or speak about Muslims in the worst, disgusting, pejorative terms, we recoil at that. We should equally recoil that when Muslims speak in pejorative terms about other people, whether they are speaking about their religion, their race, or their political ideology.

It becomes one of those strange situations of who is the biggest barbarian. It seems that real barbarians are the most educated ones. Isn't that strange? The ones who are empowered to help others, to lead their country, or to guide their countrymen. Sometimes the real barbarians don't commit acts such as I have been describing. Sometimes they are the ones who speculate on a moment to moment basis in the financial market, and give themselves hundreds of millions of dollars of bonuses, not caring a whit about anyone else; about the people who are out of work or the real security of the country we live in. They are also barbarians. If you watch in the breaking news, between the murders and mayhem, you even find people who criticize each other who used to work in that industry.

You may remember the story. The elephant has a reputation of being a peaceful animal, but a rogue elephant is known all over the world. The rogue elephant can

be Goldman Sachs or [the doctor who killed the people in Texas]. The problem is, when things get too big, like a rogue elephant, it has no natural enemies. They live a long time, and very few people can defeat them, not even the President of the United States, not even the people who are supposed to be served. This rogue elephant roams around, secure even around its natural enemies. Then, of course, there are the other kinds of enemies who want to shoot them for their ivory. They are rogues in another way. But in the natural world, they have no natural enemies. A human being by itself cannot take on an elephant. Nobody says, "There's the rogue elephant. I'm personally going to go wrestle it to the ground." It takes a gun or bullet to bring down the rogue elephant, like the police woman who brought down the rogue doctor.

It is power that is extended. It's not human power. It's a human's power to use extended power. That takes us to a whole other realm of linkages. But you see all kinds of ways of extending power to the laws of the land, to the misuse of the laws of the land. Pick a land. It doesn't have to be the U.S. Through innuendo, through information, through the dissemination of truths and lies softened, it is not so easy to discern which is the truth and which is the lie. So jingoism comes in: whoever says truth first, gets the truth. Whoever points the finger and says, "That's a lie," says it loudly enough and has a tea party over it, it becomes the lie. It used to be a tea party was where civil people sat around at 3 or 4 in the afternoon and had high tea. Now even that has been corrupted to mean political resistance against... what? Logic, reason, care, and concern?

We see that human beings have a way of extending their powers to the detriment of other human beings, not even caring that it's to the detriment to themselves or of people like them. The insanity has spread so much that it's fearful. Every once in a while we look around and say, "Is this the norm? How can people be so stupid?" I was on tech support a lot this week. I'm talking to this woman in

Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I said, “Are you originally from Cedar Rapids?” She said, “No, I’m from a small town, Davidville.” Or something like that: population two minus two. We got into a little political discussion while we were waiting for a download, which is about the amount of time you can get into a discussion these days. I said something like you live in one of the red states. She said, “I may live here, but not me!” Ah, a friend! She said, “You have to remember, we gave Obama Iowa.” I said, “Yes, I do, but look at the map today. It’s all red.” I said, “Why is that? Are people so stupid they don’t give time for change to take place?” I gave the talk I gave the other night: how long does it take to recover from a major operation. She said, “I don’t know. (She was very articulate). It’s a good point.” “They won’t even give the man a little over a year?” “I’m willing to give the man 2 – 4 years. I know how bad it is. I just got this job, finally.” People are so stupid. Are we? So fearful and so stupid?

How dare a person who has been given the opportunity to be a physician and to heal people, people with mental illness, not be able to see their own symptomology? At some point, he had to see it. How dare he put us all in jeopardy, not just the people he killed, but the rest of us who carry the same identification as a Muslim. How dare he? We can do those “how dare you” to the bankers, the insurance companies, the health industry, and to war-mongering pervious administrations. People sit passively instead of taking an active part in politics. How dare “we” not participate? Allah tells us that ultimately it’s the good deed. Ultimately, it’s the good work, good actions.

One Islamic scholar said that the act of doing good deeds is a keystone to the structure of life. A good deed points to actions that have to be the result of knowledge, knowledge that is becoming ripe in the form of wisdom. In truth, good deeds, good works, are the key for human beings to find inner and outer contentment and peace, and to help bring peace and contentment among other

human beings. Do these people really think they go to their graves with anything other than their deeds? Whether it's visible or hidden, spiritual or secular, personal or a social collective reality, physical or mental, good actions make improvement in society. That's just the truth. Isn't that intelligent, Shaykh? One person at a time. One group at a time. One cat at a time.

A good deed, my dear brothers and sisters is the act that really lets one taste *fallah*/ success. These acts are sufficient in themselves to lift the actor to a very high degree of awareness and advancement, one that is encoded. We know what a bad deed does; it lands you somewhere like this military doctor—a fool, deranged individual. Good deeds are engraved on our souls. The benefits of those who are recipients of good deeds are obvious. The benefit to the givers of good deeds are maybe a little less obvious. Can you imagine? Maybe somewhere along the way, this deranged military doctor, so-called Muslim, helped some people who came from Iraq and Afghanistan. Maybe he did, before he snapped. Can you imagine how confused those people are right now? Maybe he helped them with their post traumatic stress disorder. Maybe he gave them some decent advice, or gave a prescription that helped. How confused they are right now. How can a hand that does good go bad? We know about one hand extended in peace and the other one slaps. This is why the Native Americans always extended two hands, to show the hands were empty.

Why were we created to act in the way of Allah, and to remember Allah in everything, and to serve Allah's creatures and creation? Because that is the *fitrah*. That is the nature of humanness. The Qur'an refers to this nature of human beings in Sūratu-l-Tīn (The Fig): **“Indeed, We have created man in the best of molds.”** (95:4) This mold and that mold, and the one in Orlando and over there, and that leader over there, and that one of that color in that religion, of that size and shape, is moldy! It is moldy, and not turning into good cheese, not turning into

penicillin—corrupt. How does that happen? There is mold on the vegetables, because people don't eat the Brussels sprouts. They rot in the walk out. Moldy.

He says, **“I have only created men and jinn that they may serve Me through My worship.”** (51:56) Even in the most literal sense, worship doesn't mean killing anybody! Worship doesn't mean harming anybody. Worship doesn't mean imprisoning anybody. Worship doesn't mean beating anybody. Worship doesn't mean whipping anybody. Worship doesn't mean cutting the hands off of people. Worship doesn't mean any of that. Worship means you put your head on the ground and lift your head up, in the most literal sense. If you are a Catholic, it means on your knees, saying Hail Marys. If you are Jewish, you say Shema Israel. If you are Hindu you say many things: *Om namo bhagavate Vasudevaya. Aham bramasmī*. If you are Buddhist you say: *tat twam asi*. I don't know what a Mormon would say. But it never means to harm anybody. Worship never means to harm anybody. You may have to protect your home from somebody breaking into it. You may have to stand up for your rights to worship, but it is only in defense, and never in offense. And never with the intent to harm. Moldy!

Of course we know Allah never means just to worship through ritual. The next level up, as we spoke last night, is the *adab* of ritual. You worship through good deeds, by serving: *ibāda 'abd*. In that sense, *ibāda* means obedience. It also means kindness, and awareness of Allah/*ihsan*. *Ibāda* is upon which everything depends in our whole social system and our own personal well being in that sense of service. If we would treat our actions as if they were worship, and our communications as if we were speaking holy words, and special words of Allah. It is not saying, “*Allahu Akbar*” [followed by] bang, bang, bang, as if [those words] somehow justify everything.

If people understood what this [worship] really means, then we would have success and contentment and fulfillment in our life, if we had humility and fear of Allah, and fear of doing anything that was not filled with good intention. We are human beings, part of a collective. We have our individual ideas and desires, and our individual intentions, of course we do. But we are part of a collective purpose and intention, a collective reason for the creation of this universe. As a result of our good actions and good deeds, that's the way we can become harmonized, balanced, in line with wisdom. We can be an efficient creation.

Allah says: **“Whoever does right from among men and women, and he is a believer, We will surely cause him to live a good life and will surely give them reward in proportion to the best of what they do.”** (16:97)

Then what? He says: **“And when you recite Qur'an, seek refuge in Allah from the cursed Shaytan. Truly, he has no authority over those who believe and who place their trust in their Lord. He only has authority over those who take him as their protector, and those who set up partners to worship alongside Allah.”** (16:98-100)

So that man runs in there and says, *“Allahu Akbar,”* and his partner is Shaytan. That's who his partner is. That's that partner of the Khomeinis and Ahmadinejads. That's the partner of all these people who dare to use this name, Allah. It just goes to show you that education degrees, post-graduate degrees, don't mean anything, at the end of the day. It's what your intention is to do with them. What is your intention, and how are you going to get that support? Either you will create a robot, or a being of character. So Allah (swt) didn't create robots. He created us for a specific purpose, and a special organic system of wisdom and discipline, understanding and personal choices that run throughout His Creation. It is the Will of Allah behind that system of creation in a very

unique and marvelous way. Whatever happens in this world should be and can be and could be in line with some overall plan, and not against that plan.

This Whisperer comes in. This constant conflict and struggle we find in every corner of the universe doesn't mean there is no order in the universe. It doesn't mean there is no discipline in the universe. It doesn't mean there is no purpose or any hope. *Alhamdulillah*, at least at this moment, we are not living in the midst of anarchy. It's not that anarchy cannot exist. In fact, it is because of constant conflicts we are reminded, until we know and understand that it is not about conflicts in this world. It is about conflicts within our own self that have to be solved, the *jihad al-akbar*. We have to be reminded of the Presence of Allah and of our inability to do anything without His Will, without His Name, if we are sane, sincere individuals.

We can be philosophical and say that when something degenerates, it's the beginning of a revival of something new, and there is a new opportunity in all this, in the system. It's because of the constant changing from the old views to the new states that the universe remains alive, fresh, and new; and yes, that's true. It's good to find boundaries and push them - for the good. It's good to find our talents and abilities and use them - for the good. You see the young people who come here for over 30 years, and we try to guide them for the good. Many of them, most of them, I'm sure, that we know about, do good work. We have things to be proud of and to be happy about. I'm sure we could have done it better, and sure we can do it better. And sure there are other ways to look at things that might open up new ways. Let's open our hearts, and embrace those ways and find guidance, and work together for doing that goodness, and find new challenges, so people can find better about themselves and become stronger in their beliefs for doing good.

When we think, I'm making no change, that change is impossible – and I must say, that thought has crossed my mind in the last 24 hours; when we think we are not growing, and not making enough effort – I have to admit, that thought has crossed my mind in the last 24 hours; and we want to give up – I have to admit, that thought has crossed my mind in the last 24 hours; and when we think we are making no change, because our effort isn't right – I have to admit, that thought has crossed my mind in the last 24 hours; we have to remind ourselves that the Qur'an constantly says that human progress is based on good works, on good actions. The whole universe is moving through some kind of Divine Plan in a particular direction that we might understand if we increase our good works, if we dive into the world of *muraqabah* and meditation, if we understand the relationship between the inner and the outer, because we understand that every good work is a like a point on a map that tells you where you are going.

There's no happiness without good works. There is no completion without good works. There is no happiness in sitting and doing what you know over and over and over and over and over again. There is no happiness in thinking that you, yourself, can change the world through anything but good work. There is only misery for yourself and, obviously, for others. There is no happiness in doing what you know only, with no contact with other human beings. There is no way to build strength in your character without good works. There is no strength in your character without good works. There is no strength in your knowledge without good works. If we isolate ourselves from the rest of humanity, and we think we have all the answers, and we do not put them to the test in conversations and in acts of good works, we are not only fools, we are worse than that. We are followers of the Whisperer.

Then you build this psychological prison and you keep the rest of the world out, and if anyone tries to tell you differently, you know what happens. If you have

real faith in Allah, real trust in Islam, real faith in the *dīn*, real faith in good works, real *ihsan* in what is beautiful, then you get out and work for humanity. You work for the community. You work for your family, for the security of your own soul in that order. You encourage others to do the same. There is no happiness without those good works, and no success without the sacrifice. There is no success without difficulty or without effort. So let's attune ourselves to the rhythm of good things, the rhythm of that Divine Presence. And whenever you hear the Whisperer, tell him to shut up. Just shut up! If you see something that needs to be done that's good, do it. Take the initiative. I say this to the children: learn how to take initiative to do good things as children, because no one will teach you easily when you are an adult.

It may mean you walk in and see the clothes all over the floor of your room – thank God that doesn't happen in our house! -- And you take the initiative. What will happen? Immediately, Mommy or Daddy will walk in the room and say, "Oohhh! *Alhamdulillah*! How is that possible? Diyaa cleaned up her room! Sabreen cleaned up her room!" Good deeds. Take initiative. If you see someone who doesn't have a hat on and it's cold, give them a hat. You see someone without a scarf around their neck, and they were sick the day before, give them your scarf. If it's raining, get an umbrella. Take initiative. It's not about deciding what you are going to watch on television. That's not initiative. Take the plate off the table; put it in the sink; run water on it! Tomorrow you might take a sponge and wipe it. Mommy and Daddy will not say, "Let me clean it, you don't know how to clean it." That would be backwards.

Why we know this is because some of us didn't take initiative, and we had to learn it the hard way. So I say to the children: take initiative to do good works. "But I don't like it!" Well, you will like the response you get: "Oh, look at that! You cleaned up after yourself. Here, have a cookie." You may think, "I was going to

have that cookie anyway. I was going to take it without anybody looking.” A cookie given with appreciation is a lot different than the one you take on your own. The thanks that come after, “Did you clean up your room, FINALLY?” “Yes.” “Thank you!” Is a lot different than, “Oh, thank you for cleaning up your room!” Right?

This is how a human being of potentially good character becomes one of really great character and goodness, and they can’t do anything bad, unless unfortunately some mental derangement comes. Thank Allah that does not happen often. But when it happens, it happens big time! Time is like a food for action. Where does it go? Time disappears. It turns into something else. If you take the nails and hammers and wood, and the time, you can build a house. Someone lives in that house. It may be called Habitat for Humanity. It’s a great name. (I was with them last week. I suggested to them an interfaith build.) It is said that Allah loves those who are patient and who do good works in His Name. So let’s try to get some good perspective on all this, *inshā’a-Llāh. Asalaamu aleikum.*

Duas. SECOND KHUTBAH. Duas.