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Khutbah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Title: Glorifying Allah

DVD title: The State of Muraqabah:  
Being Aware of the Divine Presence with Overwhelming Glorification

Opening du'ās. *Asalām aleikum*. In Qur'an, Allah says:

**You know that Allah knows what is within yourselves. So beware and know that Allah is forever forgiving and forbearing. (2:235)**

Also in Suratu-l-Baqarah, He says:

**And fight in the way of Allah. And know that Allah is hearing and knowing.**

[We have] this understanding and belief that Allah (swt), this Divine Presence, is involved in our life not as a distant God, sitting on high, as we have said so many times, but that there is a perception and a discernment in Allah. There is a *basīra* that comes from Allah to human beings and there is Allah's sight. There is discernment, evaluation and seeing clearly of our actions; and from that comes a weighing of activities, which in a sense, one can look at as being a way of filtering and discerning levels of commitment and sincerity in people. In Suratu-t-Tahrim Allah gives us guidance. What do you do to achieve goodness in the sight of Allah? Not just to fear that Allah is watching and is going to come down on your head if you do something bad, but rather how do you raise yourself up in your own sight? Allah says:

**O you faithful believers!** (because who else is going to want to, right? An unfaithful believer, a faithful unbeliever?) **Turn to Allah in sincere repentance/tawbah. It may be that your Lord will cover up your faults and bring you into the garden beneath which gardens flow. Upon that day, Allah shall not abase the Prophet and those who faithfully believe in him. The light shall run before them and on their right hands they shall say, ‘O our Lord, perfect our light for us and forgive us. Truly, You have the power over all things.’ (66:8)**

This is to understand that by certain actions, Allah (swt) covers the faults of others. Today I would like to impress upon us the importance of achieving that state and that place of grace, if you will, the importance of achieving that *maqam*, that place of *muraqabah*. We know that *muraqabah*, at the root of it, Allah is watching over us. We are very familiar with the statements such as “**Allah knows what is in your mind, so fear Him,**” and the previous quote I just read, and “**Allah is the watcher over all things**” and “**He is with you wherever you are.**” There are many similar verses throughout the Qur’an.

We know, as we have been studying a lot over the last five or six months, of the depth of what is revealed in the Hadith Jibreel. When asked about *ihsan*, goodness and excellency, the Prophet replied, “*Ihsan is to worship Allah as though you see Him, but since we do not see Him, we should know that He is present at all times.*” Without quoting that *hadith* over the past six months, I have been talking about that *hadith*. In its essence, this *hadith* is about *muraqabah*. In its essence, *muraqabah* is a very interesting word and concept, because it implies many things. It implies not just meditation, as we use as a catch all word for meditation, but implies a seeker has to endure many things. Like a servant endures many requests from the master.

The knowledge and the conviction is developed in the heart of a true believer of a seeker (as referred to in the ‘*āyāt* I have quoted), [which] requires a kind of perseverance and endurance. Also implied in it is a certainty that Allah (swt) is present, watching over us, as we have been speaking most recently, internally, part of us. When I say ‘part of us,’ I don’t mean that Allah is contained within us. Allah Himself says, “**You will find Me in the heart of the believer.**” That means that on the level of the physical body and the level of the most sublime, spiritual level, beyond the physical level, we are in that Divine Presence. To be aware of that is the process that comes through *muraqabah*.

So a goal, and perhaps *the* goal, of a true seeker is reduced to having this knowledge and having a level of certainty at all times that you are in the Divine Presence. Being in that Divine Presence, He will see through our eyes, and work through our hands and walk with our feet. How you measure that is by your own knowledge of your own perceptions, and by your faith in your own perceptions. If you not only have the knowledge that Allah (swt) is watching over you, as the Watcher over you, you also have the certainty that Allah is watching over you internally, keeping things in balance, keeping you alive, keeping each one of us focused.

Who is directing our *niyyat*/intention? Why is our intention a spiritual intention, not just a material intention? The fruit of the knowledge of the slave/*abd* is that Allah is watching, or overseeing, or hearing, or witnessing. Just like, if you are standing next to me and I am having a conversation with someone, you are present. You are watching and you are hearing me, and, probably in your mind, you are evaluating what I am saying, especially if I am talking about you. You are observing my actions, my attitude, my deeds. You are hearing about my perceptions, through my own words, and from this, there comes fruit.

Junayd said, *“The one firm in muraqabah fears the waste of even a moment for other than his Lord.”* And Dhul Nun, (ra) the great Egyptian mystic said, *“The sign of muraqabah is to favor what Allah (swt) sent down of the revelation, to glorify what Allah (swt) has glorified, to dislike what Allah (swt) has disliked.”* And Ibrahim al-Khawwas said, *“Muraqabah is the sincerity of both the internal and the external to Allah (swt).”*

So the implication here is that internally Allah is also present. By internally, do we mean secretly? Yes, in the form of what we understand of *sirr*. Physically, internally? Well, Allah (swt) says, **“You will find Me in the heart of the believer.”** The heart is described in other places as being a piece of flesh within the body, but internally there is something else that happens. It is the dialogue that goes on between our self and Allah. But the dialogue between our self and Allah goes on physically. There is a dialogue that we imply goes on between the One Who keeps us alive, Who keeps the *rūh* in our body and in our organs (the heart), even. There is a dialogue going on between our heart and Allah (swt), between the systems of our body and Allah (swt).

If you put a plug in the wall here and the electricity is going to flow and the light is going to come on, you can say, metaphorically, that there is a dialogue between the means and the light. There is a flow. In the same way, we are plugged in, in a sense, to Allah (swt) and there is a dialogue going on, and Allah (swt) is present in our lives. So the heart, in that sense, then, speaks to Allah (swt) by going ba-boom, ba-boom, ba-boom, ba-boom. Then Allah goes, “*La swish illaha illeh la swish,*” or puts things in our minds. Behind all of that, behind all of our thoughts and our words is that ba-boom, ba-boom, ba-boom [of the heartbeat]. In the case of some people here the heart [makes an irregular beat], so then you take Cactus Grande flora.

(The Shaykh has audience make the different sounds to demonstrate the heart (ta-dum, ta-dum) and the blood running through the veins (shwish, shwish, and while these sounds are going on, the Shaykh continues:) and then there are words going on, “Yo, Man! It is a beautiful day out there. Hey, Hameed. What is going on?” (Shaykh tells everyone to stop the sounds) So you have the beat of the heart, and you have the valves, and all of that is allowing us to say, “Hey, what’s going on?” or tell a joke, or whatever. So Allah keeps telling us, “Keep your mind focused on Me. Keep your attention on your heart.” Remember your heart. Pay attention to your heart, and then go deeper into the heart. There are so many dialogues going on.

You have rhythm going on, and you have the valves, the mechanical part and you have the blood flowing. All these dialogues are just going on in your heart. We could also go, hrrr, and make the stomach sounds. Within those dialogues, other things are going on. The cells are communicating with each other. There are the T cells. There cells that are dying and cells that are being born. While we are alive, life and death are happening inside of us. There are things being sloughed off. If you were to sweep up this room and check the DNA of everything in this room, of all the people who have sat here: Woa! Crowds of people here. Hm.hm. We found some Minnesotan DNA, and we have some partLebanese DNA, and some Arab DNA, and some Iranian DNA in here.

Allah is present in all. The impulse of Allah’s will is present, so that one becomes alive and one becomes transformed, and this part of myself is uplifted. It is just like some cells become a liver or a heart or a kidney, or skin or a brain. There is all this internal communication going on. This is a form of *muraqabah*, if you pay attention to it. Things are going on unheard by our ears. We would go crazy if we could hear all the things that go on inside of us. Allah made us in such a way that we have this R65 insulation. We would go crazy if we went out all day hearing

our heart beat. Somebody came up to me the other day and said, “I have ringing in my ears.” I have ringing in my ears. The problem is that I wish it was playing an interesting song.

You would go crazy if you could hear what was going on in your body! So Allah makes this whole thing up and thinks, “Now how am I going to keep them from going crazy?” But sometimes we have to hear it so we amplify it through a stethoscope where we have to see what is going so we have a sonogram or we want to see deeply so we have a pet scan or an MRI or whatever. Then we can see the actual communications taking place; you can see the neurons firing in the brain, or you can see the muscles contracting, and [you can] measure the electrical impulses. All these communications are going on. All of this is Allah speaking to us through us. This is *muraqabah*.

Externally, of course, our job is to take this whole being of all of these systems and processes and focus it on something. Hopefully what we focus it on is a reflection of our Creator, in our work (like we work all over the world), in our service to one another, in our community, in our love of one another. This is Islam in its essence. As we refine our external communication through our consciousness, through our *irāda*/will, we also realize that there are certain things that are involuntary. Just like our body has involuntary systems, there are things that a refined heart does involuntarily. It loves automatically. It is compassionate automatically. Just like Oscar Hammerstein said, “You have to be taught to hate.” Love comes naturally.

In prayer, we have things that are voluntary and we have things that are preferred, and then there are things that are required of us. There are things that go on inside of our bodies that are basically involuntary, but some things are affected by our *niyyat* because there is a bridge between the two. If our *niyyat* is good, and we

choose to eat well, to act well, to have a good attitude towards things and not be obsessive/compulsive towards things, that helps our physical body. If our *niyyat* is to be serviceful, Allah (swt) put us in the category of those who are in resonance with service and love. Externally, what we choose to say and how we choose to say it, who we choose to say it to, how we speak to each other, our friends, how we speak to our mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers, what we choose to say, what we choose to hear, how we choose to respond, these are all voluntary potential within us to uplift our soul and to be in that Divine Presence.

It has been said that the best that man can cling to on this road to Allah is *muhasabah*, the reckoning with one self, asking our self, measuring our self. If we have *muraqabah* and we have governing our conduct with knowledge, then we are going to be of those who are witnessing, seeing, *mushahadah*. The people of knowledge all agree that having *muraqabah* for Allah in one's hidden thoughts, and in one's most hidden thoughts (*khafī* and *akfah*) is a means to manifest it in our deeds and in our external behavior. That is to say that in our most hidden place, our *niyyat* is our goodness. When our observing of Allah is so deep inside of us, it affects our external actions automatically. For it is said: “*Whoever has muraqabah in secret and internally, Allah will preserve him in his actions and in his behavior both internally and externally.*” One of the finest definitions, perhaps, of *muraqabah* is this one:

*Muraqabah of Allah is being on the way to Him at all times with an overwhelming glorification, inciting nearness, and urging joy.*

*Muraqabah* is being on the way to Him that is awareness of that Divine Presence at all times with overwhelming glorification—“*inciting nearness and urging joy.*” This overwhelming glorification is to have the heart filled with that sense of glorification, praise. These beautiful flower arrangements that Rabi’a made for

my birthday are sitting in our home now. They are beautiful and just fill the room up [with their beauty]. This state makes the *abd* less concerned with glorifying themselves or glorifying another human being, attributing to another human being these Divine Qualities (other than Allah) and [therefore able to] say, “What I am seeing that is good is Allah.”

So a servant/*abd* should always have this state, especially when in remembrance. To begin with, Allah provides us with a kind of *uns/intimacy* of love. If these are not associated with glorifying Allah, then they take us out of our limits of our service to Allah. When they are glorifying Allah, we are sitting making *dhikr* and praising Allah. We are looking at His Creation and we are thinking about ourselves, how we are internally and externally in that rhythm, aware. If we don't associate with looking at glorifying Allah, then we cease being humble, and we cease being attentive, and we cease being inclusive, and we cease being grateful.

That love begins in childhood. We raise our children and we say, “I love you.” They reply (in a quick way), “I love you.” Later on they say, “I love you” (with more feeling). They are running out the door, “Love you, dear.” “Love you too, Mom.” “Love you too, Dad.” Later on we get into the habit of saying, “Love you.” “Love you, too.” “I love you.” “I love you, too.” It is no doubt that it is love, but it is not hooked onto anything very strongly until the child realizes how important that love is. That love is what sustained them, served them, uplifted them. That is the love that is coming from them that encourages the parent to do even more and give even more.

If you come to our home, you will hear grandma or Mitra saying, “*Qurbanishoma aziza.*” You are talking about sacrificing, “I have sacrificed myself for you.” You don't just say, “I love you.” It is more than that. It expresses a real feeling, a truth. A parent sacrifices for their child. “I am your sacrifice. I am your *qurban.*”

We greet our children and we say, “How was school today?” “Okay. Fine.” “What did you do?” “Well, you know....” Then one day it dawns on you that this is not just to make conversation, but to realize that we are inexorably linked in each other’s lives. What this means is that it is another way of expressing love. It is a way of glorifying that love. You don’t want to separate yourself from that. So when you say, “I love you.” “I love you, too... bye.” It loses its meaning. This glorification of this love is glorifying of whom? Of Allah. Allah is al-Wadud. You are saying, look at the story of Sidna Ibrahim, the story we just went over in the ‘Eid. It is not just a story of sacrifice. It is a story of sacrifice with love. Who would make that sacrifice? It wouldn’t be a sacrifice if it was not made with love. It would just be killing someone.

This glorification of Allah (swt) means you keep walking. We say, idiomatically, walking towards Allah, constantly walking towards Allah. It means watching your steps, moving always step by step towards that glorification, towards that Divine Presence. Of course, Allah is present everywhere, but you direct your steps not in distraction, but in attraction. Keeping Allah present in your heart is keeping love in your heart. If you love your children, if you love your parents, if you love your brothers and sisters, if you loved your beloved, realize you are keeping Allah (swt) in your heart. Then glorifying Allah, being overwhelmed with that glorification is to be concerned, not just with yourself, but with others and other things around us.

I said to someone on the phone, “We had a great gathering for the ‘Eid.” [And they responded,] “*Subhāna-Llāh.*” You can say, “Oh you just say it as a statement.” But if you really mean it, it is a glorification of Allah. That feeling of closeness makes us glorify Allah in a way that makes us to pay attention to that Presence in everything. So when you are just praising and there is no attention to Allah, then you can become distracted. So you see, all of this that I have said

today, all that I have quoted from Qur'an is to encourage us to be conscious and to have joy and happiness in our relationships, to mind those relationships with a joy and happiness that are in them.

Many of us who are not children run out of the door and say, "Bye...love you too." Or "See you later." You may. You won't feel me later, understand me later, love me later, but you may see me later. It is to take that moment, and to sincerely feel that there is a meaningfulness in that relationship. I guess that the main point in all of this is when you sit and make *muraqabah*, when you are walk in a state of attentiveness, when you make *muhasabah* and you look at yourself and evaluate yourself, when you allow yourself to witness what is before you, not only is this meditation, but it is glorification. And you feel a happiness and a contentment with that, that cannot be felt anyway else.

So we understand that *muraqabah* is not just a technique. It is not just grabbing the child when it comes to the door and saying, "*Aziz anqurbani*" kissing and hugging that child. Would you call that a technique? Or is it love. If you do it with love, it is not a technique. "Oh, the kids are coming home soon. I will use the *qurbani* technique. What will I get from that?" If we do it with our heart and our soul and our children return it to us, it will be from generation to generation to generation passed on. Generation to generation to generation. It is not just the hugging and kissing that is passed on. It is not just the words that are passed on. It is the sincerity that is passed on, and Allah is present where those glorify Him. **"Remember Me and I will remember you."** That is what Allah says. And [when you have] the feeling of security and safety that comes along with that, then you are a Muslim. That is *taslim*. The feeling of love that comes along with that is the greatest protection and the greatest love that there can be.

*Inshā'a-llāh*, we remember this. I am quoting you in Farsi, but I do not mean to denigrate English either. You can say, "How are you, my darling." "How are you my dear? My sweetheart. My love." You should hear how Grandma speaks. Even if you don't understand Farsi, you can hear her. We don't get up in the morning and say, "Oh, Samah. I am sacrificing myself for you." "Oh Sabreen! My dearest, my darling, I love you. I am your sacrifice." That is why you hear me say, "sweetheart" and "honey" a lot, because the heart should be sweet. Say these words. Say them. They will have an effect, either today or tomorrow. Win over the hearts of someone with good words. Remind them of your love by good words. Sometimes people say, "Hello, sweetheart. How are you?" "Don't sweetheart me!" "What do you want? Are you feeling guilty about something?" Everybody has this desire to be a psychiatrist. Doesn't matter. Doesn't matter. Those words will stick to your fingers like honey. How many of you if you have honey on the spoon lick it off the spoon or run and wash the spoon. The honey is in your words. All of this is *muraqabah*, semantically in Arabic and actually in your heart. *Asalām Aleikum*.