

December 18, 2009

Khutbah



Title: [A New Year: The First of Muharram](#)

DVD title: The First of Muharram
A New Year: Are We Prepared for what is Coming?

(Du'ās.) Allah (swt) Most High said in the Holy Qur'an:

Blessed is he whose hand is the Sovereignty, and He has Power over all things, Who has created death and life in order to test from which of you is best in your actions, and He is Mighty and Ever-Forgiving. Who has created the seven heavens in harmony, one above the other. You cannot see any fault in any creation of the Universally Merciful. Look again, do you see any fault? (67:1-3)

Allah says also to us in the Qur'an:

Whoever desires the harvest of the final world will increase his harvest. Whoever desire the harvest of this world we give him something from it, but he has no share in the final world. (42:20)

My dear brothers and sisters, the *Ummah* of Islam in the world we live in today has many things we don't seem to have in common. There are many disagreements among the people. There are many misunderstandings among the people of the *ummah*. There are arguments and death and destruction among the people of the *ummah*. One thing that at least most Muslims today agree with is that today is the first day of Muharram. So happy new year! Some may question

the dates, but at least the moon was sighted, and most people feel today is the first of Muharram in the year 1431. *Alhamduli-Llāh*

So we bid farewell to another year, and welcome in another year. Similarly the days pass again, as they have passed in the past. The haste and speed of life continues. The question is has it dawned on you, my dear brothers and sisters, to say, “Where is this haste and speed of life leading me? What will there be after this last round, at the end of the road?”? We sit at the end of a road. What should I gather from this life? What should I make of this life that we reside in. What should I gain from this life, which we live and which we reside in, and which we work hard at and strive in?

Sometimes we slave in this life. Some people were actually slaves in their lives through their whole life. This country was built on slave labor. Slaves lived during the Jahiliya and the post-Jahiliya period. Bilal (ra) was a slave. Sometimes we just work. Sometimes we slave. Sometimes we toil just to seek our livelihood, just to put food on the table, just to find enough provisions for a day, or a meal, or to carry water from a stream or a distant well. Sometimes we spend our days in recreation and play, holidays. Isn't it interesting that holiday also spells “holi day.” Should a holiday be a holy day? Some people spend their lives in pleasure. All are the Blessings of Allah (swt). All are the Will of Allah (swt).

Have you ever said to yourself on any day, “Did anything happen to me today that does not appear in the Qur'an? Did anything happen to me that wasn't described or discussed somewhere in the Qur'an, or in the Hadith of Prophet Mohammed (sal), or in the words of the great Sahaba? Allah says: **“Blessed is he in whose hands is the dominion, sovereignty. He has power over all things. He has created death and life that He may try which of you is best in your acts.”**

(67:1-2) In your works, in your deeds. That is day after day. It is not supposed to dawn on children when they are five years old; maybe when they are 11 or 14, it starts to dawn on you. By the time you are in your 20's it should be eminently clear that this life goes rapidly and it has to be filled with something. Distractions are merely distractions. Did not Allah (swt) say, as I quoted to you: **“To any who desires the harvest of the Akhirat (the Hereafter), We give increase in what they harvest in this world. Any who desires the harvest of this world, We grant some of it to him, but he has no share in the Hereafter.”**

Today is a new year, the first of Muharram. It has been 1431 years since the message began to become revealed and still people don't get it. So at least today we should pray that we all awaken to some degree from our stupor. I should say slumber, but mostly it's a stupor. “What did you do last night?” “I don't know. I was out with the boys. I got so smashed I can't remember.” A drunk, an intoxicated person cannot remember what they did the night before. We may remember; but we don't remember the purpose of it. What are we intoxicated with? The truth is this life is very little other than a place of preparing for the Hereafter. That preparation can be wonderful. Hours and hours of cooking. Order the food, cut the food, chop the food, cook the food. And in half an hour, gone!

Life is like that. You prepare, and it is eaten up very quickly. It's like a burp. But the joy of cooking it, the joy of preparing it, the happiness at providing it, the sitting at the table while someone eats it, you forget it took only a half hour to eat it. Grandma stands up and cooks and cooks. She made delicious dolme for me yesterday. She rolled the leaves and cut the pepper and all that. “Grandma, I ate your dolme yesterday.” “Nurshijan!” She's so happy I ate it. How many seconds does it take to eat a cabbage dolme? How many minutes to make each one? Life is just like that, consumed. But the joy is in making it, knowing it will be enjoyed by someone else.

Allah gives us all these provisions. Yes, we are preparing for the Hereafter, but it doesn't mean we can't enjoy the preparation. It doesn't mean we don't enjoy teaching the children art, like Iman does, or teaching the children in school like the teachers here do, or keeping the community running like Jehan does, or watching your children grow like the parents do, or preparing something for our international work, or even the joy of helping someone who gets sick, get better. These are all provisions for the Hereafter. It doesn't matter how much time it takes to eat the meal, because the joy of preparing it far outweighs it. What we do in life is not to be some sour, dour thing. "Oh, from the moment we are born we are walking toward the grave, so let's act like we are already in the grave!" "It's the first of Muharram and you are all going to go to Hell or to Paradise!"

No, enjoy life, but know it is all preparation. There is nothing other than preparing for that. This is nothing other than a corridor, passageway to the Hereafter. I don't know about you. I've been in subways in Paris, Moscow and in Washington where there are beautiful pictures people drew on the walls to make them look nicer. The passageway can be decorated also. In Islamic architecture, passageways are very important. They have an understanding of that. This life is nothing other than a place of activity and work for the next step. It is just like today is a preparation for tomorrow. Just like if we put in a request for a grant today, the reward comes tomorrow if it's judged to be good. There is a panel of judges who decide: "I like what that group is going to do. We'll give them the grant." What we did today is rewarded tomorrow.

We are all working for rewards tomorrow. We try to raise our children properly, so that tomorrow we see they are safe and secure, not just intelligent and independent. [We want to see that they are] humble and good people, that they care about others, that their *adab* is good, and they love to serve and cook

something, that they are creative, and do something good for someone—shovel a walkway or fix something. The reward comes tomorrow.

This life is a place of aspiring, longing and promising, and witnessing what Allah swt has promised to us, if you take the time to read the text, if you take the time to understand the life of the Prophet (sal) and the *ambiyā* and the *awliyā*. All of us can be called harvesters. All of us who seek the harvest of this life also seek the harvest in the Hereafter. Our provision in this life is guaranteed to us and it is plentiful. Allah (swt) is the One Who has guaranteed it to us. Look at the plenty that has been granted to us. **“Allah is gracious to his servants. He provides for whom He wills. He is Strong and Mighty.”** (42:19) Allah is kind to people, and each of them has a share in this life. No one will obtain more than what has been decreed for them, and there remains for them or all of us something in the Hereafter that is good, pure, and true, for whoever really desires it, and for whoever does good deeds in this life.

The rich person and the poor person have a harvest in this life. Each one has their share. But in the Hereafter, it is not the same. In the Hereafter, those who have done good deeds—it doesn't matter whether they were rich or poor—come forward in the company of those who have sound hearts. On that day, Allah (swt) says: **“When money and children will benefit no one, except however comes to Allah with a sound heart. Righteous believers will rejoice in the Hereafter after the hardships and struggles in this life.”** (26:88-91) The struggle of this life is not just to put food on the table or be successful materially, but [it refers to] those who struggle with their *nafs*, and their passions and desires against Shaytan, in order for there not to be disobedience to Allah in committing wrong actions, or by consuming distractions, or in the consuming of people's wealth in vain that Allah has provided.

On the other hand, there are many people who become very, very weary, seeking pleasures and comfort, and leave the *Dīn* of Allah. You can see them finding their prayers difficult, looking for excuses not to pray, finding it difficult to make the *wudu*, finding it difficult to give their charity, finding it difficult to say a good word, finding it difficult to read Qur'an, finding it exhausting. Many wear out their bodies in order to obtain the benefits of this life. Their health suffers, and they are heedless at the least, if not arrogantly rejecting of the Hereafter. Let's hear what the Qur'an has to say about these people, and about those who are blessed in the Garden. After that, then again ask yourself: Are these people equal to those people? Is the one who seeks the harvest of this life equal to the one who only seeks the harvest of the Hereafter? Allah says, after mentioning a group of prophets and righteous people and their offspring who followed them in excellence, said:

But after them followed a posterity who missed prayers and followed their lusts. Soon then will they face destruction; except those who repent and believe and work righteousness, for these will enter the Garden and will not be wronged in the least. Gardens of Eternity, those which Allah Most Gracious has promised to His Servants in the unseen, for His Promise must come to pass. They will not hear any vain discourse but only greetings of peace. They will have therein their sustenance morning and evening. Such is the Garden We give as an inheritance to those of Our Servants who guard against wrong actions or evil. (19:59-63)

This is the price of Paradise if you seek the Hereafter, if you follow the Prophet Mohammed (sal). Allah gives Paradise to those who have *taqwa*. As long as you are able to perform good actions, then do them, before you are unable to do them. Seize the opportunity of this life before the life ends. When this term is reached,

Allah (swt) tells us, “**Not an hour can they cause to delay it, not an hour can they advance in its anticipation.**” (10:49)

So, Happy New Year. Another year has passed, come and gone. Because we live in the United States of America, because some of us come from one culture or another culture, some of us have two or three new years. We get to reflect on this a lot. A year has passed, another has come. We have to ask ourselves, what have I prepared for tomorrow? What did I do yesterday? Am I prepared to receive with humility the gratitude that will come to me, because I helped someone get better with my Homeopathy? Am I prepared for the gratitude that will come to me when someone says, “Oh, I liked your discourse last night?” Am I prepared for the gratitude that comes to me when my mother says to me, “Oh, my gosh! You cleaned your room and I didn’t even ask” or “Thank you Mommy, thank you Daddy, for the sled!” or “Thank you for the recommendation for college” or for the gratitude that will come to me because I said a kind word or did a good act? Are we even prepared for that?

Am I prepared for what is coming? Ya Allah. We should have *taqwa* in the time we spend in our actions. And we should have *khawf* for the day when we will be brought back to Allah, “**and every soul shall be paid what it earned, and none shall be dealt with unjustly.**” (3:161) So take a lesson from what is happening on the earth today. Today in the news I saw an amazing thing: I saw a volcano 4,000 feet under the ocean. You saw the fire, and immediately it goes to puuff! Amazing. Then there are the man-made earthquakes from the bombs being dropped in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Who is prepared? These are all reminders, awakeners to the believer to prepare themselves for the earthquakes and the volcanoes and the tsunamis, the God-made ones and the man-made ones, so when the heart jumps it is like a .9 on the Richter scale.

[These are reminders of the] day when the earthquake will last for hours, not minutes, and the earth is pounded to powder, when the earth is shaken to the utmost convulsions, and when the great events occur, when you will see the earth bringing many low and exalting many, and when ever nursing mother shall abandon her suckling baby. These earthquakes you see today are nothing less than the awakening for the heedless, the sinners, the arrogant, the disobedient to return and repent to Allah. What does it take to repent to Allah? *Astaghfiru-Llāh*. Just to remember to repent. Like to remember to say, “Good morning,” “Thank you.” “Goodbye.” “ I’ll miss you.” What does it take to remember to say good morning to your parents or goodbye to your teacher, or to say thank you very much, which we teach the children.

I walked out the door this morning, and one of my daughters yelled after me, “Thank you very much for the breakfast.” It lifted my heart. If it uplifts my heart when my daughter thanks me for breakfast, then what do our thank-yous to Allah mean? Thank you Allah for the provision on the table. Thank you for this life. Thank you for the work we do, for the community, for the friendships, love, and responsibility. This is not crazy religion. This is just human, common sense. It’s all proven in each one of us. Your friend comes to you and says, “Thank you very much for the card you sent me on my birthday.” You can be 12 or 8 years old, and you feel good about it. Why? Because it’s right to feel good about that. In the act of goodness, the reward immediately comes. Just some small little thing. “I was at the store. I heard you mention you like gouda cheese. I thought I’d pick up a little gouda cheese for you.” Now it’s not just cheese; it’s a gift of love. What about Allah? That’s even better than gouda. It’s much gouda.

In this month of Muharram we are told that a caller to Allah was to flee from his *dawa*. [He was] a brother of Mohammed (sal), and both of them were on the same path, and they called to the same thing. Indeed, this brother is Sidna Musa (as). A prophet is not sent except that an oppressor is placed in order to oppose that prophet. There is no prophet without an opposer. A leader of *dawa* doesn't carry his conviction except that there is a tyrant prepared to fight that person. And the *dawa* in this case is just to live the truth, not to beat someone over the head with the Qur'an. "Here, I have a gift for you. Whack! Let me beat this Qur'an into your head." No, no, no. This book is very heavy, but it's light enough that you carry it in your breath and your heart. If you know it, it's lighter than any thought in your mind. The right word on your tongue at the right moment—that's the whole weight of the Qur'an. .

You will not find in the *sunnah* of Allah any change, and if Allah did not defend some people from others, the earth would be corrupted totally—not just as corrupted as it is today, which is almost totally. It is in this month that Sidna Musa (as) was expelled from Egypt, from the evil Pharaoh. It was in this month that the Prophet Mohammed (sal) was expelled from Mecca by the Qureysh. As Allah (swt) says in Sūratu-l-Furqān: **"Thus We have made for every prophet an enemy from amongst the sinners, but enough is thy Lord to guide and help."** (25:31) And Sidna Musa (as) with the Bani Israel, clashed with the sea. When did the sea open up? Just as it was about to go over their heads. Not like you see in the pictures, where he stands on the bank and the sea is parted and they will walk into the open sea. That's not what happened.

With faith/*iman* they walked into the sea, and as it goes over their heads to drown them, the sea parts. This is not just a miracle; it's an act of *iman*. It's an act of *islam*/submission. The army is behind them, and the death from the sea is in front of them. Musa calls to Allah; and Allah is not far away. He says, **"When My**

Servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close. I respond to the prayer of every caller when he calls Me.” (2:186) The Bani Israel said, “O Musa! Their army will catch us!” Musa (as) smiled, as Mohammed (sal) smiled in the cave. He said, “La. It’s not going to happen. My Lord is with me, and soon He will guide me and He will guide you.” “Where will he guide you? Pharaoh is behind you and the sea is in front of you!” This problem had no solution to it. From the limited perspective of a person, there was no escape.

Musa said, “**My Lord is with me, and He will soon guide me.**” At that point the command came, “**Don’t delay! Strike the sea with your staff.**” And in the name of Allah, he struck the sea, and a path emerged, and Musa and the children of Israel walked through. (reference 26:62-66) And the tyrant came to test them one last time but you know what happened. Tyrants meet destruction. Either their hearts curse them when they are walking on the earth, or the earth swallows them when they die; or Allah inflicts upon them some affliction and prepares them for the Jahannam. Pharaoh arrived with his army, and Allah said to the sea, “Come together,” and it did. And this was the end of that Pharaoh.

When he realized the realities, Pharaoh said, “**I believe there is no God except him who the Children of Israel believe in, and I am one of those who submit!**” But it was too late. Allah said: “**Now, but a little while before in rebellion you did much mischief and violence.**” (10: 90-91) At that moment, Allah was saying, after you have done so many horrible things and crimes, and you claimed to be the lord yourself, now you seek forgiveness? The answer is no, and Musa was saved. This messenger shared with his brother the same joy and success in victory he shared with his colleagues on the journey of *dawa*, the propagation of the message of Allah to all the world.

On this beautiful day, the day of Ashura, Allah saves His believing and righteous slave and the believers who were with him. He saved them from the plans of the Pharaoh. The day of Ashura remains a day in which we are reminded of the destruction of the most dangerous of tyrants of Allah, of this earth. It remains a day when we are reminded of the victory of Allah and His Kindness and Support for His believing souls. This is not a Shi'a thing or a Sunni thing. This is a teaching of Islam. It is a teaching of the al-Sunnah al-Jamat.

The Prophet (sal) found the children of Israel in Medina, fasting on the day of Ashura. He asked, "What is this day?" They said, "It is the day that Allah saved Musa (as)." He said, "We are closer to Musa than you are! Because Musa is our brother, our beloved, and we carry the way of Musa, not you." And he fasted that day.

It is recorded in Sahih Muslim that the Prophet (sal) said, ***"I hope from Allah that this day will be an expiation from the sins of the past year."*** So it's from the Sunnah to fast the day before or the day after the 9th or 10th, or the 10th and 11th of this month. As the Prophet (sal) said, ***"It is for me to fast the 9th and the 10th, so may Allah swt be pleased with Musa, his dawa, his way, his humility, his sacrifice."*** May Allah (swt) be pleased with the Prophet (sal) for his humility and his courage, and his sacrifice, for the sake of his *ummah*. May Allah (swt) be pleased with whoever follows his way, and sacrifices for the sake of his convictions, and is humble for the sake of his dawa, and takes part in spreading that message, the true message that everything in this life is for something that comes after this life.

Everything you do today is going to have an effect on tomorrow. Every good word you say today will have an effect on you immediately or the next day. And every evil you do, or bad deed, or every forgetful thing you forgot and didn't

allow yourself to remember or change, will have an ill effect on you. That's the way the system operates. All the good in this world will add to the Hereafter, and all the wrong will accrue also. So every day, children, adults, everything you say and do has a value to it. On a scale of one to ten, where are you?

Don't tell me that bringing joy to someone else's heart doesn't bring joy to your heart. "Today, I'm going to make apple pie. We'll have hot apple pie tonight when the snow comes." You enjoy making it, and you sit down and feed it to your mother, brother, your children. And you are happy about it. You enjoyed making it, feeding it, and the response that came from it. All of that is going to give you an apple orchard in Paradise. It will be just one tree. You look at it and say, "I want golden delicious apples today," and pfeww! There will be golden delicious apples on that tree. There will be a fire for you, and a pot to boil the apples in, and angels to roll out the dough. Now I'm hungry for apple pie. Maybe my daughters will make me some blueberry muffins.

I ask Allah to gather us with Prophet Mohammed (sal) and Sidna Ibrahim (as), and Sidna Musa (as), and Sidna Isa (as), with the good people, the pure people, the righteous people, the people who lived for and died for Allah, the pure ones and innocent ones and good ones, the collateral damage who died for Allah (swt), the pious ones and the true ones, and to be in the company of the great people and good people and noble people, the cooks of Paradise. That's why we bless the hands that cook the meal, filled it with light. [Let us be] in the company of the pious people like my mother in law, and the good people. And put us on the Seat of Truth next to Rabbi-l-Ālamīn, the Lord of the Worlds, *inshā'a-llāh*. Happy New Year. (Duas).

SECOND KHUTBAH: Duas.

