

May 14, 2010

Khutbah



Title: [Arrogance: A Means to Humility](#)

DVD title: Humility and Modesty: The Models of the Prophet and Sahabah
Guide our Conduct away from Society and Towards Allah

Opening duas. *Asalām aleikum*. Allah (swt) in Qur'an uses '*tadara*' and '*khashu*' both in a sense of humility in the Qur'an, a number of times. For example, in Suratu-l-An'am, He says:

We have sent [messengers] to nations before you and gripped them with misfortune and hardships so that they might humble (*tadarru*) themselves.
(6:42)

In Suratu-l-'Araf, Allah says:

Call upon your Lord humbly (*tadarru*) and secretly. Truly, He does not love the transgressors. (7:55)

Again in Suratu-l-Mu'minūn:

Successful are the believers – those who are humble (*khāshia*) in their salah – and those who shun idle talk – and those who pay their zakah – and those who guard their private parts – (23:1-6)

Then, it tells us later on in Suratu-l-Hadid:

All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. His is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He

gives life and He causes death – and He has power over all things. He is the First and He is the Last and the Manifest and the Concealed, and He knows all things. It is He who created the heavens and the earth in six stages, [and] then assumed the Seat of Absolute Authority. He knows all that enters [into] the earth and all that emerges from her and whatever comes down from the heavens or rises up to them. And He is with you wherever you are, and Allah is Seer of all that you do. He is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, and all things shall be returned to Him. He makes the night to merge into the day and the day to merge into the night, and He is the Knower of all that is in the hearts. (57:1-6)

This subject of humility is a very critical subject, an extremely critical subject. Allah is telling us to be humble in many ways. He says, is it not time for the hearts that sincerely believe to yield to the Messenger of Allah and to the message that He has sent down?

The implications are that humility is something that has to be worked on, that one has to yield to the belief, and one has to surrender. The best way to do that is to surrender to Allah and to just do it. I know that it sounds very simplistic, to just do it—to stop resisting, to stop arguing, to do what the heart in itself knows is right. He also says the faithful servants of the Beneficent are those who walk among the earth modestly, who when foolish ones address them, they answer ‘peace.’

Again, there is this concept of humility, this concept of resisting resistance. There is a long ‘*āyāt* in Qur’an (48:29) that says that Muhammed (sal) is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are hard against those disbelievers, and merciful among themselves. This ‘*āyāt* is addressed to the Prophet Muhammed (sal).

O Muhammed, see them bowing and falling prostrate in worship, seeking bounty from Allah and His acceptance. The mark of them is on their

foreheads from traces of prostrations. Such is their likeness in Torah and the likeness in the Gospel that rises like firmaments upon its stalk, delighting those who sow it, that he may enrage the disbelievers with the sight of them. Allah has promised unto them a belief and do good work and forgiveness and an immense reward. (48:29)

One of the realities of life that we have to try and grasp and understand, one of the capabilities that we have that Allah (swt) has given us, has implanted within us is the capability to be humble and modest, but a lot in society works against that. Much of our society today, especially in the Western world, in the material world, in the world of television and movies and advertising, goes totally against this idea of humility and modesty—along with that, kindness, patience and tolerance. *Tadarra*/humility is the opposite of arrogance. It is the opposite of pride. Yet at the same time, a person who may not be arrogant and who may not be prideful, may also not have humility. Wish I wouldn't have to say that and that it were not true. A person can have low self-esteem, not care about themselves, and therefore do things that are not good.

In the news today, there was a horrible thing. A young girl, 18 years old, goes to Mexico and she is murdered. Allah hu. Parents didn't know; she was living a double life. She was a star soccer player. She took care of animals. She believed in environmental things. She was loved by everybody. Secretly, she was working in a club at night. I don't have to describe what kind. Then she disappears and they find her and two men's bodies in Mexico. They found out about it on Facebook!

People have no self-esteem. They put everything out there. A twitter: "I took my dog out for a run. He smells horrible. Please someone come and wash my dog." Another twitter, "My dog is full of fleas. Now my house is full of fleas. Help!" I guess that is what you can write in 45 characters. We have to allow the realization of one's place in this universe, one's place in the face of consummate compassion, consummate mercy,

consummate love, consummate tolerance; not consummate greed, not consummate sexuality, not consummate stupidity. Would you want an end to compassion if you were in misery? No. “I’m sorry. I would help you, but I have run out of compassion.” “I’m sorry but my allotment of compassion is up.” Would you want someone to come up to you when you needed patience and say, “Listen. Normally I would say...oh, but I can’t. I don’t have the word anymore. It is not in my vocabulary stock anymore.” The word would be ‘patience.’ Do you want there to be an end to people who love you or who you love? Of course not.

Seeing that we are humbled by these things, we should guide our conduct towards those attributes, toward compassion and love and tolerance and mercy, and toward people who are similar to us in those ways. It is not cool to have a jerk for a friend. It is not cool to hang out with people who are immoral and unethical. It is not cool to hang around people who take drugs, smoke weed or whatever. That is not cool. I am addressing this to the adults. These things are not cool.

It is said that one who has to cross the threshold through the doorway to become a real human being has to be like a mat thrown on the pavement for people to worship on. That is how we have to be, so one can sincerely confess that everyone seems to be much better than myself, not from the point of view of having low self-esteem, but from the position of putting yourself in a place of saying, “I am a servant. Everyone is the wheat and I am the chaff.” Then the inhabitants of Paradise will kiss that one on the head when they arrive. It is a narration attributed to the Prophet Muhammed (sal), he said: ***“Whoever is humble, Allah exalts him; and whoever is haughty, Allah humiliates him.”***

If humiliation comes to you, the first thing you should say, other than, “Why me?” is “Where is my arrogance?” If you don’t find it, do as Imam al-Ghazāli (ra) said: This is because sometime in the future I will be arrogant. This humiliation has come to me so as to avoid my being arrogant in yet a worse way. If you cannot find how you were arrogant

up until the moment, then you have to say, “It is because Allah is saving me from an arrogance far greater, where I will be in a situation where I will have no one to help me.” ...or no support or no forgiveness, or whatever. So come to it with gratitude. Then we get a clear understanding of what humility is. But our greatness is somehow adversely proportionate to behaving as though we were great and important. Just as one’s humility is adversely proportionate to behaving as if you were humble.

I think it is divided in many ways. Seeing oneself as having no virtues or treating others with respect or seeing oneself as the worst of all humanity is one aspect of humility. Some people can pull that off. It is a way of practicing humility. But another way is being aware of oneself: to be aware of one’s nature, one’s *nafs ammāra*, one’s temptations; to be aware of one’s faults, to be aware of one’s weaknesses but to be aware in a way that makes you strive to change them; to be aware of them so that you seek assistance; to be aware of them in such a way that you don’t let them take over you. It doesn’t always have to be seen by other people, either.

Humility and modesty have to be felt by your own self. Sometimes one can see what you are struggling with and sometimes people can’t see it. No one can see the effort you are making, however—very rarely. Maybe your parents can, or your husband or your wife, or your brothers or your sisters, or your fellow members in *tariqah*. Maybe you can see someone else’s struggle, but most of the time, people cannot see. If you are striving very hard in your life not to be arrogant, striving very hard to be tolerant, to develop good virtuous behavior and others don’t see it, well, that gives you extra impetus so that you (or your ego) don’t become arrogant. It gives you extra impetus to become even more humble. You don’t become angry and frustrated that your efforts aren’t being appreciated, that no one is seeing them, but you are being alert to the *nafs ammāra*, striving to suppress it, which is enough of a task for any one human being.

Whatever the definition of humility may be, and we have seen a number of them in the quotations of Qur'an that I gave as examples, every definition only expresses one side and one dimension of humility. The last of the *nafs*, the last of the ego relates to those people who really, really, really, really are sincere. Not because they have necessarily overcome every aspect of their *nafs ammāra*, but their sincerity is counted by Allah (swt). Not because they are perfectly humble, perfectly resistant to their *nafs*. Not because they no longer have to struggle, but because the intention is there, and the sincerity is there. Such an individual (hopefully, to some degree, we are all such individuals) never gives up, never gives up thinking that there is more to do, and less arrogance to have; there is more confidence to have in Allah (swt), more gratitude to have for my family, for my life, for my work, for my sacrifices, for the gifts that are given to me, and less belief that we ourselves are in total control of our lives.

In other words, those who are consciously engaged in the remembrance of Allah (swt), those who are consciously engaged in being compassionated, tolerant and peaceful—not just people who are constantly engaged in saying, “Allah” “Allah” “Allah,” walking around with their beads—but those who are consciously aware of Allah are those who are consciously aware of their responsibility to themselves and to the other human beings and to this planet. You cannot separate those.

Those who strive to be consciously aware of Allah in the sense of *dhikru-Llāh*, all those who in their prayers don't forget others in need, they don't forget to do their service, they think behind the immediate self, behind their immediate families or tribes and nations, those people will naturally become more humble. They will immediately see the rise and the fall of their *nafs ammāra*. They will see what is needed. They are not walking around with their computers in front of their faces. We all suffer from some portion of this disease. You have spent the last five or ten years of your life getting your e-mail from your computer. You are going on a trip. You go get an I-phone or a Blackberry and install your e-mail. Within two weeks, you are addicted to tracking your e-mail,

every two minutes. That is how close we are to addiction. That is how close we are to being drunks, drug addicts. Really! There are exceptions. But I would rather not count myself among the exceptions. It is too dangerous.

A companion of the Khalifa Umar (ra) saw him carry a pitcher of water on his shoulder and he said, “Ya, Umar, what are you doing, O Khalifa of the Messenger of Allah (swt).” Umar (ra) said, “Some envoys have come from other countries and I felt some arrogance in my own heart, so I wanted to suppress it. I felt better than the ones who came out of the country to visit us, so I decided to carry water to them.” He used to carry bags of flour on his back. Once he accused himself while giving a khutbah. He kept silent when people questioned or criticized his actions.

It is very important when we are put in positions like this one—or any responsibility or duty as a brother, a sister or a friend, an auntie, an uncle, a father, a mother—to see our self, because we don’t see our self clearly all the time. Unfortunately, we cannot have the hope and the expectation that others will see us as we are seeing ourselves. They will see our arrogance or our extreme goodness. They won’t see us in just the normal way of things, usually. They will remember us as we were. As I used to say, many years ago, “You can change in six months, but it will take six years for people to accept your change.” And probably the ones closest to you will take the longest to accept it.

Abu Hurayra, (ra) carried wood while he was deputy governor of Medina.

While he was the chief judge of Medina, Zayd ibn-Thabit kissed Ibn ‘Abbas’s hand; and Ibn ‘Abbas, known as the interpreter and scholar of Qu’ran, helped Zayd to get on his horse.

Hassan (ra), the grandson of the Prophet Muhammed (sal), sat with some children who were eating bread crumbs, and he ate the bread crumbs with them.

Once, Abul Dharr (ra) offended Bilal. In order to obtain his forgiveness, he put his head on the ground and he said, "If the blessed feet of Bilal do not tread on this simple head, my head will never rise from the ground."

These people were not just people who were humble. Their humility comes from seeing themselves. They recognized in themselves a problem and they tried to correct it right away, from self reflection. No one forced them to be humble. No one said, "Put your head to the ground so that I can step on your head." No one said, "Pick up bread crumb and eat it, Hasan." No one said, "Carry the flour," "Carry the wood." These are examples of humility among the leaders of Islam, but they were people, just like you and me. No one is exempt from humility, because no one is exempt from arrogance. No one is exempt from forgiveness, because no one is exempt from wrong action and repentance and sin. We have to hold to what Allah (swt) says about His Forgiveness and Humility toward us, and not depend on other human beings who don't have the same *basīra*/sight. Remember that the blessing of Allah, the spiritual energy, the *fayd*, is what carries us through these difficult times in ourselves.

Allah (swt) and His Messenger emphasize humility so much that one can have no doubt of the value of humility, no doubt that sincerity and humility go together, no doubt that modesty and humility go together. We read it in the Qur'an over and over again. It can also be heard in the *hadith* of Rasulallah (sal) when Rasulallah (sal) said, "***Allah has told me that you must be humble. No one must boast to another. Shall I inform you of the one hellfire will not touch? Hellfire will not touch one who is near to Allah, who is amicable with people, mild and easy to get along with. Allah (swt) exalts one who is humble. That one sees themselves as small when he is truly great in the eyes of the people.***" Another Hadith says, "***O Allah! Make me see myself as small.***" He wasn't talking about height.

My brothers and sisters, the real glory, exaltation, and humility lies not in our own sight but in the sight of others; but from our sight we become humble. It begins with how we see our self. “If I am humble, Allah will notice me. If I am humble, people will like me,” is not the right approach. We have to truly rid ourselves of the dependency on others and keep our dependency on Allah. The only way to do that is to go back and remember Allah swt in all things. GO back and remember what I have said about *dhikru-Llāh* over these years. Go back and remember; and see the majesty in this creation on this beautiful spring day, in all that we have been given, and in how much power we have, and in how much power, guess what, we really don’t have. We have to see how we put ourselves in submission, and we must be careful.

Submission to strangers? Strange things can happen. Submission to Allah? Nothing bad will happen. If someone asks you, “Come on, let’s go down to Mexico! I’ll drive.” Now, you are in total submission to the stranger. You say, “Would Allah have me go in a car with a stranger to Mexico?” How long would it take you to answer that question? Absolutely not! Would the Prophet (sal) say, “Go on a camel trip with a stranger all by yourself, unprotected, and you are a female, 18 years old?” No, absolutely not. Would your mother say yes? Would your father say yes? No. Submission to Allah is clear. The answer is clear. How long did it take to get those answers? A half a second?

What will people think of me if I put this on my Facebook? What will people think of me if I twitter this? Why am I twittering this private information? Why am I putting a picture of myself up? Why do I say I drink, I smoke, I do this and that? If you ask yourself the question, you won’t put it up. It’s there forever. Even when you die, it’s still up. Facebook won’t take it down unless you get a special order. It won’t be taken down; it will become a memorial of you. Anybody can see a history of your life. Oh, Hameed Gifford, he did this! Sabreen Rash did this! You may now be 60 years old, but it has been up since you were 14. There is no end to it. Interestingly, it is analogous to what

happens when you die. Your whole record is in front of you. It is read out to you, then Allah judges you. With Facebook, you can get judged in the world as a practice for getting judged in the Hereafter. Isn't that nice? You can experience people saying, "Whew! I don't want to hire that person. Now I know what that person is like." If I were an employer in a big company hiring people today, the first thing I would do is look at the Facebook. I would know a lot about their personality and how they will interface. We do it.

Do you get it? In a very strange way, you get the practice of being judged in the Hereafter by being judged in this world. Then what happens? "I said one little thing on my Facebook page, and this happened! Arrghh!" No humility, no modesty. The Prophet Muhammed (sal) was a very humble person. If he saw children on the road, he would greet them and stop and play with them. If someone took his hand and wanted to lead him somewhere, he would take their hand and walk next to them, being led. He didn't object to it. He helped his wives with their housework. When people were working, he liked to work next to them. He mended his own shoes and sewed his own clothing. He milked the sheep and fed the animals. He sat at the table with the servants. He welcomed the poor people warmly to his home and presence. He looked after widows and orphans, ugly people and beautiful people. He visited those who were ill, and followed funeral processions of those who passed. He answered the call of the slaves of the community. This was the type of person he was, and that's the type of person we should all be.

Sometimes it's not easy. He had his moments in his life, his difficulties, and he overcame them. All this was because he was aware of something. What? He was aware that Allah (swt) is present: present in your compassion, present in your wealth and in your poverty; present in love and at times when you want to hate; present when people reject one another, and when people accept and forgive one another. He is present in

repentance and in sin. You cannot do these things from saying, “I was harmed! I was insulted! I was humiliated! This was done to me; that was done to me.” You have to get behind that and see how Allah (swt) wants us to be. Muhammed (sal) was aware of the Divine Presence. You can’t do things consistently if you just want praise. You can’t do things consistently if you just want to avoid things that are difficult. There has to be a transformation in the heart and soul of the individual who has lived this way, and that is the journey of life.

You don’t come to the end of your life, without at least striving hard to overcome these resentments, striving hard to be humble, to be modest, protecting yourself. Being kind to everyone doesn’t mean being kind to everyone. It sometimes means walking away from someone, avoiding someone, avoiding situations. “Oh, they will think ill of me if I don’t get into that car. They are good customers at the dance club. What could happen? I’ve known these people two weeks!” You have your best friend, or brother or sister think ill of you, but you don’t want strangers to think ill of you. You are a good Muslim girl, and you are in a situation. Perhaps someone tells you to go help that man over there. “I don’t want them to think we are weird, because I shouldn’t be with that man alone. So I’m going to go do that.” No you don’t do that. You say, “I’m very sorry, get a man to do that.” Because that’s how it all starts. You have to protect yourself and be kind to others, but within certain parameters.

You have to come to the end of your life striving to do good things. Allah (swt) knows that’s what you are striving to do, *alhamdulillah*. That’s where the transformation comes. There is more to say on this subject, but I won’t say it. *Asalaamu aleikum*.

Duas. SECOND KHUTBAH Duas.