

October 22, 2010

Khutbah



Title: [The Power of Words and the Necessity to Speak Out for Good](#)

DVD title: Have Good Thoughts and Speak Good Words  
A Universal Spiritual Message for Today

Opening du'ās.

In the opening prayers you will note that it is said, “*those who attain to faith,*” not those who have not attained to faith. This is a message for those who have *iman*, who have already attained to faith. So, don’t worry so much about those who do not attain to faith yet. They have the way of faith ahead of them. But those who attain to faith and who do not operate by their faith, those are the ones who are enjoined to do this. If you haven’t meditated on that before, you should. Allah says in the Holy Qur’an:

**Whoever it is that wants power and glory should know that all might and power belong to Allah. Good words rise up to Him and He raises virtuous actions to Himself. But whoever plots evil deeds, terrible punishment awaits, and the plotting of such people come to nothing. (35:10)**

We live in exactly this kind of time, when people who desire so much power and so much capability of raw power, they forget that the power belongs to Allah. I speak on this today, because we have nominally an example of that before us next Tuesday on election day in this country. We must as spiritual beings take our civic responsibility very seriously, especially as Muslims. Allah says, “**Unto those people** (the people who desire raw power) **evil will come.**” The problem is, of course, it will also come to those who are innocent, as a result of giving the power to the wrong people. “**For them will be a**

**terrible doom, and the plotting of such people will come to naught,”** Allah says in Qur’an. Unfortunately, we find that others will also suffer under these circumstances.

We live in a time when almost all the resources of humankind are being used in inappropriate ways, if not for wrong. Whatever is being used for the right is only enough to maintain, it seems.

If we can use the political term ‘spin,’ a perspective that is put on things so that people will believe everything is all right, then we would say that the ‘spin’ is very effective these days. People are saying, “Look at us! We are the righteous people. We are the patriotic, freedom-loving people. And those people who don’t agree with us are evil.” [This is done] not even by implication, but by direct words. For the children, I think you need to understand that these are very, very different times. Things are much worse today than they were 15 or 20 years ago, and unfortunately, you must know this. If you don’t, you won’t know how to respond appropriately to it. Whenever we hear this affirmation or statement of ‘other,’ we should always be fearful and see that there is a problem. Whenever we hear people saying, “the others, them, those people,” we know there is a problem.

Historically, this has been shown to be true. It is the way power and hate-mongers try to hold onto their power and use their hate. Allah alone knows why such evil can come into the hearts of such people. But, they do try to rule the world. Now we see the world is being ruled by evil and darkness, and those who would speak out are called the evildoers. We see the same thing happening in this country, and growing. The world is being ruled by raw power, lies and hate. Those who try to create a balance of power even in a political sense are called often traitors and worse, disbelievers. What can we do? We can pray to Allah (swt). Allah is the Changer of Hearts, and we ask Allah to change the hearts of people and make things right. If we want them to use logic and reason, we can implore them to do that. But we can doubt in today’s world that is going to happen.

The message of Suratu-l-Fatir is a simple message, but the message is deeply complex. Allah is telling us without any doubt that we are living in difficult times. Now, how can Allah be telling us that when this *surah* is from 1431 years ago? You have two answers to that. Either, it's always difficult times, so it's a pretty safe thing to say. It's like saying, "There's weather today." Or, you can say that the message is appropriate for today, and it is coming to us today. I think both are correct.

We have to realize something very important; that history is now, in the present. We are making history. It is not in the past; it is alive. The great leaders of the past, no matter who they were—Prophet Muhammed (sal), Prophet Isa (as), Mahatma Gandhi, or leaders like Desmond Tutu or Martin Luther King—these people are still alive. They are alive in their Truth. Their message is alive. The Truth is always alive and never dead. When we talk about righteousness and goodness, well-being and health, that message is eternal. The Qur'an is revealed by Allah (swt) as a living message. We say that with a great deal of love, respect and gratitude. So the message about power is as much for today as it was for 1431 years ago. There is no question about that.

Last night and in recent days, we have been speaking about humility and some levels of consciousness. When we allow ourselves to be conscious and make effort to practice what has been provided for us, we begin to see what is really going on. Somehow, in that seeing, there is both a blessing and unfortunately a challenge. When we see the patriotic or religious spin, when we allow ourselves to be immune to that spin and really see what is going on, it bothers our conscience very deeply. The question comes to us, "What can I do about it?" There are many great teachers who have come to encourage us or inspire us, whose words remain with us, in both secular and religious teachings. But almost every one of them, no matter when they came in the history of humanity, warned us about being silent. They warned us not to stand so far from the fray that we don't engage with our capabilities.

‘Engaging’ may mean many things: ‘engaging’ next week means voting. Engaging between now and next week may mean speaking to your neighbors, making sure other people vote. Engaging may mean writing an editorial or column or calling people on the phone. That can be engaging. It doesn’t mean necessarily walking out on the street with placard signs. We cannot allow the government to rule over people that is not a government that represents the people. We cannot allow governance to be diluted to such a degree that it becomes a tool of corporate mentality. It is just like we cannot give religion over to extremists and radicals, whether you are Christian, Jewish, Muslim or whatever. It cannot be permitted. The way we don’t permit it is by being active and engaging, to whatever degree we can engage.

We can think we are reading the Qur’an and the Torah and the Injīl and understanding it; but we are not understanding it, unless we are taking an active role in society also. We can’t take a proper active role in society unless we advocate freedom and peace. That’s what I’ll speak about on Sunday. We have to understand and accept that the truth stands out from the untruth. Therefore, if you don’t know what the truth is, how is it going to stand out, unless it is uttered and proven, unless it is lived? We have to try to live it. Part of living the truth is also learning how to ask for forgiveness and repenting.

So what is the truth? It is known in the consciousness of people, in the conscience of most people; yet people have been ‘dumbed down.’ Good words are not just words that sound patriotic or religious. People have to understand that actions follow those words. What is acceptable in Iraq, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, the United States, Russia, or Saudi Arabia has to be acceptable globally, otherwise it is unacceptable. It is very hard to understand that this is the message of the Qur’an at this time. It is not just an Islamic message; it is a message of truth.

When we are at peace, we can think on a very high level. We can think about personal perfecting and all these wonderful things, but [what about] when we are in deep trouble like we are now, where the enemy is all around us, when we are talking about people spying on one another or people desecrating sacred places, or women being beaten at gas stations—just read the reports coming out daily from CAIR. Seeing what is happening on campuses, the blatant racism and homophobia and Islamophobia—*aūdhu billahe minash-shaytan-ir-rajīm*—we have to realize these are not bright times.

We have to ask, “Where am I living? How far have we strayed from the founding principles of this country? How far have we strayed from the principles of Qur’an? How far have we strayed from the essential principles of the people of the Book?” People – my family – came to this country for freedom and liberty and for things that were meaningful to them. They were able to make a life here that allowed me to stand here and speak. But where is the freedom, if we are going to sacrifice the basis of that freedom? Where is the hope for anyone else? Where is the hope for the future of people here in this country? And why are Christians, Jews, and Muslims not together on this in a loud voice? Everyone is used to saying, “Why don’t the Muslims speak up?” The Muslims have been speaking up about the atrocities and radicalization. They don’t cover it in the news, so people don’t think they are. But we also have to ask, where is everyone else speaking up about what is going on in this country?

It has gone beyond the simplicity of saying, “Why don’t the Muslims speak up about 9/11?” They spoke up ON 9/11 when Muslims were killed too. Now we have to say, “Where are the Christians, the Jews, the Mormons, the Hindus, the Buddhists in this country? Why aren’t they speaking up about what is going on in this country?” We have to turn it back on everyone, and ask the same question. Politicization of religion has taken place, and it is usurped by those politics. It becomes only a leveraging tool, a weapon, against the Haqq/Truth. It is the greatest weapon against the truth, because everyone accepts religion on some level. If religion says this or that, it must be right! Of course

there is no such thing as “religion saying,” but people proclaim a religious basis for what they say. So excuse the linguistic twist there.

It’s the same excuse that the crazy people who flew the planes into the twin towers used to excuse themselves: religion, religion. What is the Qur’an telling us? It is a simple message. You would think anyone in the world would accept it. Good words and good actions are a means for having universal peace and understanding. It’s very hard to have good words if you are unhappy. It’s very hard to have good words and good actions if you are spending every minute of the day trying to survive. It’s very hard to have good words if you are told the enemy is all around you, and you don’t know how to identify them. It’s good to have good thoughts and words, but it’s hard to have good intentions if we don’t feel the security and safety and see the causal relationship between poverty and food insecurity and global health issues, just like we don’t see the relationship between our own personal health and our own personal attitude.

It makes no sense not to respond when we have the ability to respond to circumstances around us, except in some unconscious, immediate, uncontrollable emotional, intellectually anesthetized reaction to things that are happening right in front of our faces. We don’t see a lot of constructive action, but we see reaction and blame placed everywhere. Blame is a very expensive commodity. It costs a lot to put those ads on television. Lies have become very, very costly, and not in the negative sense. People pay a lot to lie and to blame. They have imbued lies and blame with a high level of monetary value; and of course it is placed everywhere, anywhere it can be placed.

I don’t think if I were a rabbi or a Hindu priest or a Buddhist monk or a Christian pastor that I would be saying anything differently. The truth stands out from the untruth. Allah (swt) gives us guidance to have good thoughts and good intentions, to try to support the health and well-being of everyone, not to affirm illness. The good words and good thoughts are sent from Allah: meaning they exist inherently as realities within our

potential, within our being. Good words come from good intentions. Misery, sorrow, unhappiness, difficulties, don't really attack the lower self. They do not really often affect the most simple people, because the simple people are so busy surviving they don't have any time for bad thoughts, as strange as that may sound; hence, we speak of the people who are *faqir*, the *darvish*.

What I hope to be speaking about on Sunday is the search for happiness. The search for happiness is the search for truth. We don't find our children in misery and sorrow, grief-stricken, complaining about the torment of day-to-day life. My children have never come home complaining about the torments of day-to-day life. They may complain and resist something that you ask them to do – I won't mention what it is. It could be eating broccoli, or cleaning up your room – but not my children! They tell you they are not hungry, and you say, "It doesn't matter. You still have to eat." But as soon as they see ice cream, the hunger returns! Why? Life should be sweet. In fact, we make that assumption. When someone is married or born, the Persian's make sweet rice to celebrate that sweetness. Sweet is good, we think. The dentist says something else.

Children tend not to bear grudges for more than a minute or two, then they are happily playing again. But look at what is happening in the public school systems. Society has forced everyone to grow up very fast, and because they have access to large groups of followers through the Internet, look at the number of suicides and terrible things that are happening among our youths—bullying, hate crimes among the youths. I do worry; I worry about our children. I worry that they will catch the adult disease of worrying and complaining, and not seeing enough happiness. I worry they are not hearing enough good words, so I have to speak some good words now.

A Sufi needs to be strong and educated, positive and insightful, to value health and prosperity as a means as a tool for helping others. We have to go toward prosperity and happiness with an open hand and an open mind, and not complaining. We have to

remember as adults to stop complaining. Stop connecting the dots between this circumstance and that circumstance, vis a vis negativity. All of us; I don't exclude myself. Yes, there are people who will cut off your hand if you stick it out too far, or your head. But those are people who live on lack of health. There are those who would like us to stay disoriented and unbalanced.

Here we are in this world with our conscience and consciousness and our natural inclination to do good, and it is being thwarted. We live in a world where religion is politicized, and Americans are the only righteous people in the world. Now, if you are following the news, we will go through Americans with a nit comb to see who has the fleas in their hair. We are going to "cleanse" America from its negativity. Those people can "easily be identified" (according to some people) by their appearance. Not only does it mean someone is looking at you in that way, it means also "give me the chance, and I'll comb you right out!" We already know one cannot be called an American just because they are a citizen. Forget that! We will amend the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment, the first amendment, the 17<sup>th</sup> amendment, to make sure what it says. We are not sure that freedom of religion really means there should be no state religion.

Then we have to look at the past. The prophetic tradition of the Prophet Mohammed (sal) tells us very clearly there is in the human being a special organ that has the capacity to fight off disease, to cure and heal mental and physical diseases and to stimulate our immune system. That special organ has been placed there by Allah, and it will heal us and ward off disease if at all possible. It will fight off the attacks of grief, misery, sorrow, fear, complaining, doubt, inequity and injustice. If that organ is healthy, the whole body will be healthy. If that organ is diseased, the whole body is diseased. That organ is the heart, *qalb*.

The illnesses of the heart have certain symptoms. Maybe they are the illnesses of our society, too: ignorance, doubt, lack of security, lack of certainty about oneself, weakness

of character, lack of identity, disturbed mind, lack of direction, lack of clarity, excuse-making, victimization, and blaming. We need a 10M Homeopathic dose of *qalb*. These are illnesses of the heart; *similia similibus curenter*, like cures like. These are the illnesses told to us by our *shuyukh*. Our society has a heart disease, and I'm afraid that just a little angioplasty is not enough. I think we have to have heart transplants, or something else that is much more effective. But where do we get that healthy heart? The heart condition comes about because of these irregularities.

Allah asks in Suratu Rahman, who will deny? Deny what? The blessings and benefits, the truth that Allah (swt) has revealed to us, the wonders of this universe, the peace that is in store for us. Who will deny? Each time that question is asked in Suratu Rahman, it means something different. When the heart is in such an upset state, the words are not good enough. The accusations, the blame, the anger are there; but when the heart is in such a negative state, everything is a culprit. Everything is a threat. Everything is confusing. Everything victimizes us. We don't know what to think, to eat, to drink, what supplements to take. We don't know which ones not to take, or who to believe. And our hearts become weaker and weaker, and we become more and more insecure.

Those who say we should have less government, act for more control and power. Those who say they benefit for everyone, try to take the benefits away from everyone. Those who wave the flag of democracy have sold the nation to foreign interests. Those who complain about the price and taxes of things, are the same who exploit the resources for their own benefit, and make each one of us pay. Those who say we are to be the compassionate leaders of the world ("compassionate conservatism") are the same ones who create terror in the heart of people.

We have to refine the *dīn* of Islam. We have to find a way to be positive at a time when it is materially, ethically, and morally very difficult. We have to affirm the truth. Young people here in our community and young people from all over the world, we have to

encourage them to be strong, to recognize what is true and good, and send them out when they are young and strong—not just out into the world, but out the door of the house-- with a sense of truth and goodness in their hearts. We should plead with Allah. O Allah! Take control out of the hands of evildoers and put it in the hands of the good people; and do not promote prejudice and bias among ourselves, or permit ourselves to have prejudice and bias toward any one religious community. We have to remember what the *dīn* teaches us. Those people who call themselves Christians, Muslims, Jews, or whatever, especially in this country, we have to see who are misusing the truth, and who are fostering lies, and who are speaking the truth in order to foster understanding.

Allah (swt) says, in the Qur'an, **“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and excellent counsel. Argue with them in the best way. Surely your Lord knows best who has strayed from His way, and who is rightly guided.”** These are the instructions from Allah. Allah says in Qur'an, **“Do they not see they are being tested every year, once or twice? Still they do not turn in repentance and do not think.”** These tests will come to us, and we have to respond appropriately to them. We have to remember that the Prophet (sal) said that good deeds wipe out the wrong deeds, so let's perform good deeds. It doesn't mean to be passive, it means go out and vote. That's a very simple level. Do what's right. Contact those people who still have power and ask them to do as much good as they can do. Allah says in Qur'an, **“Unless the Lord guides me, I shall surely be of those who go astray.”** So we should let Allah (swt) guide us, our hearts and our minds and encourage good and positive actions. *Asalaamu aleikum*. Duas.

SECOND KHUTBAH.