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Khutbah

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Title: [Delay and Avoiding](#).

DVD title: The Tendency to Put Things Off:
Delaying and Avoiding Seeking Allah's Nearness

Opening du'ās.

In the Qur'an, Allah (swt) reminds us:

When my worshipers ask you about Me, so know that I am near. I answer the call of the caller when he calls Me, so let them respond to Me and believe in Me so that they might be rightly guided. (2:186)

And in Suratu-l-A'raf:

Then do they feel secure from the designs of Allah? None believe themselves secure from the designs of Allah save the people who are lost. (7:99)

Today, I want to speak about the tendency we have to put things off. There are two groups of people who delay things. The first group delays in covering itself, or involving themselves in obedience to Allah; and the second group delays in seeking the real truth of Allah/al-Haqq. Both of these are delaying. All delay and putting things off is due to lack of real or deep desire for what is true, and when we settle for what is less than true, and therefore less than real. If one desires the truth, al-Haqq/Allah, then the Truth desires that individual. Allah desires that person. The Prophet Muhammed (sal) said,

“The one who loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him.”

In another Hadith Qudsi, a very important *hadith* we know very well:

If My servant approaches Me within a hand's width, I will approach him an arm's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I will come to him running.

He also said: ***"I am the companion of the one who calls to Me. No matter where he asks for Me, he will find Me.***

If we are listening, we know that the thing that links these three quotations together are our actions, our movements, and our intentions. It is not getting a hook in our mouths and being reeled in, like a fish. It is our intention, our action, our desire. Sometimes, as we know, it is something we don't feel. But how many of us realize how we are suppressing that feeling? How we let the things of this world, and our fears, our preferences, our desires, our selfishness, suppress the natural urge for knowledge, nearness and awareness of Allah (swt). The revelation of course is not only due to the grace and magnificence of Allah. The Gift of Allah coming toward us is the gift that is immeasurable, but in a strange way, it can be deflected.

These quotations are an indication of the necessity of our action and our intention not to delay. If we spend our lives (as many of us do) seeking out a life that really doesn't exist, that really doesn't have every single quality in it that we want, the consequence is we remain dissatisfied because we don't have something, instead being of satisfied with everything that we do have. When I say it doesn't exist, I mean it is a life that doesn't exist beyond some small measure of time. In the process of that, we abandon what does exist, subsist and sustain, and then we are really ignorant people. We are not approaching Allah, not even a hand's width. Then we are under the control of our *nafs ammāra*.

If you know what you have in your hand is gold, why would you abandon it for just a stone? If you think what is in your hand is a worthless stone, but someone tells you it is

worth more, people will throw the gold away and take two hands worth of what is worthless, instead of one hand worth of what is valuable. How do we know what is valuable? We can't know until somehow we learn about it and experience it. If we don't know the value of the nearness of Allah (swt), how can you accept that Allah is as near to you as your jugular vein? How can you accept that Allah comes running toward you? How do you accept that Allah will reach toward you an arm's length, if you reach out just a hand's width? How can you accept that He comes to you according to your sincerity? How do you accept that Allah (swt) comes to you quickly? You can't know that if you don't accept the truth of it, or accept that it is real.

Allah (swt) is nearer to us than our *nafs*; but the *nafs* becomes more real to us than the Real. The quality of the seeker, of the murīd/a, of the sincere human being, who is delaying in their search for the truth, who deflects their knowledge, who avoids the reality, is just like a lazy person who every day says in pure, really good Arabic, “*Mañana*” –until tomorrow comes. Tomorrow is the end of their life. “***Allah desires His servant more than His servant desires Him.***” Ghaus Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani (ra) said in an invocation,

The Real told me: I am an excellent invoker, and the invoked is an excellent man. If man knew his dwelling with Me, he would say with each breath, “To whom does this kingdom belong today?”

What stops us from arriving at Allah, if it is not anything but our own delay? We think we have time. We think we control time. We think that we can make time. I believe we can make time, under the right circumstances, but every one of us would delay many of those actions. Of course, none of us control time. It ticks by. We think we have enough time to do everything that we want to do. But we don't, necessarily. There are those who delay by clothing themselves in religious activity. There are those who delay by attending many spiritual events. There are those who delay by being *bāraka* collectors. They make no real effort to purify themselves. It's like ‘contact Sufism,’ or ‘contact

spirituality.’ “If I’m in contact with it, a little of it will rub off on me.” It seems to them to be in conformity with their destiny. It seems to them to be pious, sincere. I don’t doubt there is piety in it; there is. I don’t doubt there is sincerity in it; there is. But it is a replacement. There is not a complete commitment. It is only in conformity and the desires of the *nafs*. It’s a deal that is being made with the *nafs ammāra*. It’s a negotiation with the soul, the self. “I’ll do this much, but I don’t go beyond that.” So the *nafs ammāra* allows that. It’s like making a deal with Shaytan.

This quotation from Suratu-l-Baqarah is very important. **“When My worshipers ask you about Me, so know that I am near. I answer the call of the caller when he calls Me.”**

If we read it very carefully, and make *tafsir* in it, it reveals the position Allah has placed Himself and us in—a position of immediate response. How near is your jugular vein? Pretty close. It tells us we might have a destiny; but in Islam, that destiny is also somewhat controlled by our decisions. It tells us by our asking, praying, supplication to Allah, we can realize our nearness to Allah (swt). In that sense, you might say, we are coming nearer to Allah. Especially, we find that the more we supplicate and pray, the more our life becomes obedient, the less we delay. If a person really has and embraces and appreciates the values of Islam, if a person really values the character of a person with *adab*, then there will be no delay, because there is joy in service.

There is joy coming in prayer, and joy in being prepared. In fact, you find among the most pious people and especially among our brothers and sisters in this journey of Tasawwuf, that *du’ā* is very important and very sincere. It makes life easier. One turns to that Divine Presence in the moment. When something happens, when there is some need, you make *du’ā*. Someone comes to me and says, “Shaykh, I am having this problem,” I say, “I will give you a *du’ā* for it.” You make it. It brings you closer to Allah (swt) Who of course is as near to you as your jugular vein. This ‘*āyat* from Qur’an is justification for all the *du’ā*. If you see the opportunity to better yourself in life, of course the tendency is to rush toward that opportunity. Ah, a new job! I can get an extra \$30,000!

I heard a story today: a person I know went and got a job at a major company. They asked him what he wanted to earn as a starting salary (he hadn't worked for a while). He said, "\$40,000." The person came back and said, "We're going to give you \$80,000." Oh, I'm going to get \$80,000! But the person didn't get the job, because he didn't quite tell the truth about something on his application, and he lost it all. It's very interesting how we perceive ourselves, and how we rush toward some opportunity, not being prepared. In our community, there are many opportunities to better our lives in the future, even in the material sense.

People are running to Egypt and Morocco, Oman and Kuwait; driving to North Carolina; driving up to Washington. There are so many things we are doing, rushing for many things for our material well-being. Do we remember that it is Allah Who is providing everything, and Allah is the Proof of it all? We act and want to acquire things. Do we exert ourselves toward Allah as fast as we do in seeking this temporary material gain? Do we listen to the Qur'an for the same amount of time we listen to the radio? Do we make *du'ā* as long as we make a phone call? Do we have a conversation with an *'arif* as long as we have a conversation with an idiot? Do we put the same energy and effort in? Of course, we do not, but we should.

I don't think our rushing hither and thither is much good, unless it has a purpose with a good intention behind it. The truth is we had better find some balance inside and outside of ourselves. One of my previous teachers said, "If you read one hour, pray two hours, then meditate four hours." For someone like me who like to read a lot at the time, that was a really intense command. I was certainly reading more than one hour in the day. How does that formula work when we sit and work 16 hours a day?

In seeking what is real, seeking the truth, the truth is that we don't exert ourselves enough. In a sense, we can say that we are being disobedient. We can say that we don't

await the Divine object of our desire as if we are secure. We think we are secure, but we are surrounded by all the material issues. We don't feel as secure in Allah's plan as we should. When you say, "fear Allah" to the average person, they don't know what you mean. When you tell a believer to fear Allah, they say, Allah is al-Ghafur, the Forgiver. He takes care of every need. "Fear Allah" to a Sufi, means be more pious. My dear brothers and sisters, it may be very healthy for us to have some pity on ourselves. It may also be healthy to chastise ourselves at times.

The person who has false hopes is like the donkey upon which someone puts a camel load, and his back is broken. It's not that he is not a beast of burden, or that he can't carry a heavy load, it's just that the wrong load is put on the wrong animal. We should know what is breaking our spiritual back. We shouldn't be content with separation, distance or delay from Allah because of our lack of focus. We shouldn't delay. We shouldn't accept separation, blindness or deafness if we know they can be cured. We should not stop with other than that Divine Presence being in our mind and heart. We should take advantage of the fact that we are hardwired for those qualities and attributes of Allah (swt). Take advantage of the fact that in a moment, compassion lies in our heart—forgiveness, mercy, love, tolerance, patience, and understanding, a sense of beauty, a sense of majesty, acceptance, transformation, beauty, creativity. We are hardwired for this.

Then what happens? We must put blocks before them, veils that have to be lifted; otherwise, so many circumstances during every day will evoke from us these Divine Qualities. If they evoke from us, then how distant can Allah (swt) be? So let's not abandon the truth for our *nafs*. Let's not abandon ourselves even for the blink of an eye. *Asalaamu aleikum. Du'ās.*

SECOND KHUTBAH O Allah, we are grateful for Your Blessings on our sister Sahar, and we as You for a complete and full healing for her. We are grateful for her strength, and the strength of her will and her character that comes from your blessings, and for her

family, and for the support of the community. We ask You, Allah, as you have proven again, over and over to us, for Your Divine Love, and the love You have sent to us, and in the strength we have seen in Iman, and in Fareeda, and in others in our community, and in Musa, and all those who have faced great challenges in health. We ask You to keep us blessed by Your Presence in them and Your Shifat. O Allah, for those poor suffering souls in this world, we ask You to lift off the suffering from their chests, and give them strength. For those who are hungry, help us to feed them. For those who have no shelter, show us the way to give them access to the shelter they need. O Allah, as winter comes upon us, let's remember those who are cold and in need. We ask You, Allah (swt), to give us health, well -being and depthless piety, so that we might be true servants of Yours. *Amin.*