

December 3, 2010

Khutbah



Title: [Mercy and Compassion in the Way of Allah](#)

Dvd Title: The Mutual Foundation for Peace and for Fighting in the Way of Allah:  
Compassion and Mercy and Forgiveness

Opening *duas*. Allah (swt) says in Qur'an:

**Surely Allah has brought from the believers their souls and their wealth in exchange for the Jannah, the Garden. They fight in the way of Allah, and they kill and they are killed. It is a promise binding to him in the Torah, in the Injil, and in the Qur'an. Who fulfills the covenant better than Allah? Rejoice then in the bargain you have made, for that is the supreme attainment. (9:111)**

Allah also reveals in Sura al-Furqān:

**And the worshipers of the Universally Merciful are they who walk modestly upon this earth, and if the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace." (25:63)**

Here, you have two contrasting things: people who fight in the way of Allah, and people who walk gently upon the earth and say "peace" to people who address them. How does this make sense? Well, it doesn't. Goodbye! Yes, it makes sense. (A little levity never hurts.) There is sense in this because the foundation of both of these states is if you fight in the way of Allah, you have to do it mercifully, with compassion and minimally. Even if an ignorant person addresses you, you must address them with mercy and compassion by saying "peace" to them. Needless to say, if you are fighting in the way of Allah, you

are only fighting to the point of achieving peace. My dear brothers and sisters, I should have read the rest of that, which goes:

**Triumphant are the repentant, the worshipers, the praisers, those who wander, seeking truth, those who bow down, those who prostrate, those who order the good and forbid the evil, and preserve the limits set by Allah and give good news to the believers. It is not for the Prophet and those who believe to ask forgiveness for those who set up partners with Allah, even if they should be their kin, after it has become clear to them that they are companions of the fire. (9:112-113)**

This is good guidance from the Qur'an that wherever we look in the Qur'an and Hadith, over and over again we are told, guided, and shown how there is to be a balance between what our choices are and what the potential is in the human being to do good, or to do wrong. What is the criteria that really makes a human being a compassionate and a really loving, successful, feeling and kind being? We all struggle with that every day, either because we don't see; we don't hear clearly, or we have our own ideas and desires. Nonetheless, our journey, whether easy or difficult, quick or slow, is one toward awakening, toward healing, toward confronting what is real, toward overcoming certain human tendencies, to avoid pain, to avoid upset and anger, and to overcome them with mercy and compassion.

It's hard to believe, sometimes, that it is mercy and compassion that overcome illness and pain and doubts. Yet, the seed that is planted in us to help us overcome our trials and tribulations, our upsets and angers, our pains, our confusions, our ego, our greed, our judgmentalness is called *rahmat*/compassion. It is compassion in the sense of Divine Compassion, which arises when us whenever the doorway is open. Whenever the doorway of our self-ness, our selfishness, our fears, our doubts is left open, then we at the

core of our being is affected. We are seeing the pain, suffering, needs of our own self, instead of the suffering, needs and losses of other creatures—our friends, our families, and then even our own self in another way.

I've given this example before many times. If you walk outside and see that Jezbah has a thorn in his paw, all of you would run to him to take the thorn out of his paw. What arises in our heart is compassion. We are hard wired for compassion; and first cousin to compassion, if not the brother or sister to it, is forgiveness. If we see one of the children get knocked over by one of the other children running around, not paying attention, immediately we have compassion for the one who got knocked over. We turn to the other one and say, "You be careful when you are running." They get this fearful look on their faces, and we say, "That's okay. It's just an accident, but you must be careful." There is forgiveness in the compassion. Those are examples you can remember.

When you feel bad for someone who is going through some confusions or difficulty, from your heart you talk to them. You say, "Don't worry. Believe in Allah. Ma'alesh, Allahu akbar, God is greater than whatever this is. You have to realize that however great the problem is, Allah is greater than that. And you need to forgive yourself before you can be forgiven." This aspect is the mercy of Allah (swt) within us. There is mercy in us to be merciful toward our own self – not to minimize something, necessarily – but to be merciful to our self. The ability to forgive ourselves is related to the ability to forgive others. We make some mistake, perhaps. We are not very forgiving of the other person, because we are not very forgiving of ourselves.

Along with compassion is this good friend, brother, cousin—forgiveness. When you feel someone is going through something, you have to remember this. This is made clear to us when Allah says, "**My mercy precedes My wrath.**" Indeed, we find in human beings that our anger precedes our mercy, our forgiveness, and our repentance. Someone does

something to us, and we get angry. Then we see they are upset, and we feel compassion; and we forgive. It's all backwards. When something happens, Allah (swt) first forgives, unconditionally, then decides whether any punishment is needed. It's a hard thing for most of us to understand. Some actions, however, do have reactions, even if there is no malevolence, no revenge, no lack of forgiveness.

A believer, one who guards the heart, always acts with mercy and compassion. It is the heart that embraces and encompasses the presence of Allah (swt), not the mind. Compassion has no agenda. We are not compassionate to someone so we will be appreciated by them. We may manipulate someone with our words or attitudes, but it is not real compassion. We are not merciful so that they will thank us. We don't trust because we will benefit from it. It's for its own sake. When it's for its own sake, we feel clear and fulfilled, humble and repentant, understanding and even pious. Piety not just in a religious sense, but piety in truly the spiritual sense, humbling sense. It is not for form, but for the dynamic of what piety brings to it. It brings submission, trust, patience, and beauty.

We can stand bent over with our heads down, humbly, and realize the state we are in, or we can ask Allah for His Mercy and Compassion. And the response is, "I've already forgiven you. You need to forgive yourself. You need to open the doorway to understanding. I am always with you. I am as near to you as your jugular vein." In that sense, Allah (swt) makes it clear how powerful the heart is. He says that you find Him in the heart of the believer. Also there is the analogy of "I am as near to you as the blood that flows through these arteries."

He says, "**My heaven and my earth cannot embrace Me, but the heart of My believing servant embraces Me.**" In a *hadith*, the Prophet (sal) said, "***The heart of a believer is held between two fingers of the Merciful. He turns it about as He wills.***" We

know about hearts that turn—turn on, turn off, turn this way and that way, turn upside down. Mevlana said in a poem:

*The overwhelming light from the fingers of the Divine light is safe from dimming or eclipse. The Divine dispenses that light upon the self, and the blessed hold out their robes to receive that light. Whoever is favored by that is one who has turned his face from all but Allah.*

If we would strive to be on this path, to be of those who seek happiness and contentment, who would like to fulfill some real purpose in life, and would like to understand that all that is within us is under the control of Allah; if we would like to know what Allah (swt) has designed us for, specifically, realizing that all this is within the hands of the Prophet (sal); we would like to have some *du'ā*, some means, some supplication that would remind us that this *jihad*, this struggle on the path of seeking knowledge, would make us into really spiritual travelers, forgivers and people who are forgiven—forgivers of our own past mistakes, and forgiven by those we think we have trespassed upon.

We don't want to add an ounce or atom to our own past mistakes. We want to just end them. So there has to be forgiveness, giving up the idea that "I'm going to punish someone for something wrong they have done to me," or "I'm going to be punished by someone for some wrong they think I did." It's all in the hands of Allah. That means, first there is Allah's forgiveness, which is part of the *rahmat*. Then there is Allah's patience. Then, behind all this is the love of Allah (swt). And then, and then, and then... maybe some punishment. You have a long way to go. But we punish ourselves; we harm ourselves. We have to make a choice.

Those who really believe are pious. Those who walk on the straight path, even if you stumble over a stone on the path, those are the good people. Those who forgive others,

they have the qualities of a good person. Those who make a choice to turn toward the *siratal mustaqim*, instead of toward their fears, worries, or desires, these are the good people. There is a saying, “Those who do a wrongdoing and are punished for it in this world, Allah’s justice is such that punishment for such a devotee is not repeated in the Hereafter.” Double jeopardy. When one in this world commits a wrong-doing that is covered by Allah, Allah does not re-judge something that has been covered up and forgiven by Him in this world. When a punishment is given in this world, it will not be carried over to the next. If something is covered by Allah, by His Mercy and Sirr, that won’t be uncovered, either. What a level of forgiveness and compassion that is.

That’s how we should be—just to remember those two things. Just to remember, not how much you’ve gotten away with, but how merciful Allah is. To say, “My elbow has been saved many times by Allah.” I’ve been spared many times by Allah. That doesn’t mean Allah is going to spare me again and again and again. But at least I have the knowledge that the Compassionate and Merciful Lord, the Creator of all things is not going to say, “Now, I got you!” That’s what Shaytan says.

Forgiveness is forgiveness, finished/*khalas*. That should be encouraging to us. If Allah acts in this way, why should we act any differently? If we cover the faults of something, their error, their mistakes, their misunderstandings, why would we later seek to punish them? If Allah covers their mistakes, why would we seek retribution, if Allah has already forgiven them? If Allah punishes them, why would we seek to add to the punishment? Allah’s punishment is Rahmat; it cleans the slate. What is ours? It is debilitating, for the punished and the one who does the punishing.

This is compassion. It is not just being nice to someone or taking the thorn out of the paw of the cat. It is much more than that. It is an absolute compassion, and absolute forgiveness—nothing left over, no remnant. Imam al Ghazāli defines a person who is

humble as “*one who intentionally gives up something he or she deserves.*” Think about that—not even “thinks they deserve,” but “deserves.” A sign of humility is you accept true words, no matter who has spoken them. If there is someone here (or wherever you are) that you don’t respect, and they speak the truth to you, you accept the truth they spoke. You may find some fault in them; you may question their motive; but the truth is the truth. Just think how silly it would be if a person you really despise, who was a nasty person, points to the sun and says, “That’s the sun,” and you say, “Can’t be, because I don’t like you.” “That’s the moon over there.” “Oh, I can’t believe a word you say.”

Another aspect of humility, that comes when you are compassionate and forgiving, is that you don’t admire yourself for any action you, yourself, perform. Believe it or not, sometimes we admire ourselves for doing things like that. The servants of the All Merciful are those who walk this earth with modesty. It’s also to stand humbly before that truth, guarding the truth, striving to fulfill the truth. Believers, in their hearts, are people who guard the truth, striving to fulfill it in a very calm way. They do not aggressively guard it, unless that truth is attacked. We can only act in *that* way defensively. If we zealously guard the truth with humility, trust, example, and strength that lie in the heart of the human being, then at the right moment, we bring out what is necessary. But it is only to that amount that is necessary, lest you become proud of how much truth you have, how much force you can gather.

We know what a person is called who just displays power over human beings for no reason: a bully. If a person approaches another person and beats them up for no reason, that’s a bully. A person who restrains until he or she is forced to act, being compassionate, merciful, patient, loving, kind and humble is a believer. The one who knows when to give compassion at the right time for the right reason is not only a compassionate human being, that person is a great human being. Zealotry has no place in Islam. Shaytan was zealous. He refused to bow. He said with zealotry, he would not

because he would only bow to Allah. On one level, that makes sense. On another level, he is disobeying Allah. Under the guise of being a zealous believer, he expressed the first resistance to the Haqq, the Truth. He doesn't bow down. Why? Because bowing down in the case of this moment in the history of Islam means what? Bowing down to Allah. He said, "I won't bow down to anything but Allah." But, in fact, first of all, Allah is everything. Secondly, Allah is the Creator of what He is asking him to bow down to. Thirdly, bowing down to anything Allah has created is bowing down to Allah. You see the hypocrisy in it; therefore, there can be no mercy or compassion for that.

Even today we see people doing wrong actions in the name of Allah, in the name of God or truth. People who berate believers, who berate Muslims, Christians, Jews, doesn't matter, those in their misplaced zeal in the name of God have no humility and no respect. Yesterday I was K-Roger's. You know that store? I was standing in the international aisle. This woman came up to me and thinks she's being clever. I have a box of matzos in my cart. She says to me, "Excuse me. Are you Jewish?" I said "Well, I was." She said, "Oh! Wonderful!" She didn't say, what are you now? She said, "I just want to show you my pin." It had an American and an Israeli flag on it. "I love Israel!" I said, "All of Israel?" "Oh, I love Israel." I said, "You know, in Israel, there are some bad people." "I, uh, well," she said. I said, "I don't think you want to hear what I have to say to you." "Oh, no, I want to hear it!" "No, you don't want to hear what I have to say." "No, no, tell me." "What I have to say to you is that Israel is a country of state-sponsored terrorism. And then there are people who call themselves Hamas, also, who terrorize Israelis. Israelis don't allow the Palestinians even to pick herbs that they use for their breakfast. How would you like it if someone didn't let you pick an herb in your own garden?" She's looking at me. I said, "I told you, you didn't want to hear it." She said, "But Israel is the hope." "What is it the hope for?" "Hope for the Lord!" I said, "Lady, I got news for you. I knew Ezra Weitzman. I knew a lot of the leaders in Israel, and I know many Palestinians. The hope may lie in the Lord, but it isn't one lord lording over

other lords, or lording over anybody's land. It lies in the Truth." "Oh, thank you very much." "No, thank you. I thought you would feel very angry with me for what I'm telling you, but you didn't." She said, "I thought you were Jewish." I said, "You probably saw the matzos in my cart." I was trying to be compassionate, not clever. And humble.

Allah said, **"Is it not the time that the hearts of those who have faith should be humbled in the remembrance of Allah and truth which He sent down?"** Why? Because means being courteous. Our false self, the ego, is made strong by being arrogant, resistant, and distorted. The heart instinctively wants to have *adab*. The ego is driven by imposing the heart. The heart and the ego in their struggle find that the ego tries to take on the identity and name of the heart, just like people say "Allahu Akbar" when they commit a crime. Allahu Akbar! And they cut off someone's head. There is no Allah in there, no *akbar*, and no *hu* in it either. All there is is crime. There is no compassion, no mercy, no forgiveness, no tolerance, no patience, no understanding, no kingliness, no beauty, no greatness, no power, etc.—just ego.

Those who have *adab* are referred to in the Qur'an as "those who have kept the bonds of Allah." *Adab* is for the spiritual seeker to live and walk within the boundaries of compassion and of mercy, leading the way, while circumstances come about to challenge it as they always do. First, be compassionate. Then if you have to be otherwise, and another response is evoked, it has to come under the mantle of compassion. That's the message for today. *Asalaamu aleikum. Du'ās.*

SECOND KHUTBAH. O Allah, there are those among us who will be traveling, and who are traveling. We ask you for their safe journey and health along the way. May they carry the light of your love and mercy, the light of this community and of the *tariqah* with them. Give them strong wills, character, patience, love, compassion, and

understanding, and let their words be light unto nations and people. For those who are ill, we ask You for healing. For those who have passed this week, we ask for mercy on their souls. *Du'ās.*