

اسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

THE BOOK
OF
'AMAL

Eight Discourses
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Text of Qur'an: taken from
the Algerian State Edition of Imam Warsh.

English meanings: from the Emirates-approved text
of the Hajjis Abdalhaqq and Aisha Bewley.

DISCOURSE I

OCTOBER 27TH 2007

I want to introduce the subject of Mu‘amala. Mu‘amala is defined by the Rasul, sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam: “Ad-Deen al-Mu‘amala.” The Deen is Mu‘amala, the Deen is Behaviour. ‘Behaviour’ is not the best word, but it will do for the moment.

If the Deen is nothing but correct manners and correct behaviour, it is therefore the responsibility of every Muslim to know what that is and what is expected of him. For the Sufi it is more important because Imam al-Ghazali has warned in his ‘Ihya al-‘Ulum ad-Deen and other places that ‘Ilm al-Mu‘amala has to precede ‘Ilm al-Mukashafa. In other words, the knowledges of behaviour have to precede the knowledge

of the veiled matters, of the hidden things, of the Anwar – the lights, and the illuminations that come from Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala. But prior to that is that you have the correct behaviour.

It would not be correct to negate Imam al-Ghazali, who is our great teacher, but without denying what he said, I would actually say that the opposite is true: 'Ilm al-Mukashafa precedes 'Ilm al-Mu'amala. Remembering that we have said that Mu'amala is the Deen itself, we therefore have to say what Mu'amala is. We are going to find the Qur'anic explanation of the source of Mu'amala in the Qur'an and we shall find it in Surat al-Baqara (2:144):

قَدْ بَرَى نَفْسِي وَجْهَكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُؤَلِّيَنَّكَ
 قِبْلَةً تَرْضِيهَا قَوْلٍ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا
 كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الْأَذِينَ أَوتُوا
 الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
 وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

We have seen you looking up into heaven,
 turning this way and that,
 so We will turn you towards a direction
 which will please you.

Turn your face, therefore, towards the Masjid al-Haram.

Wherever you all are, turn your faces towards it.

Those given the Book know it is the truth from their Lord.

Allah is not unaware of what they do.

Here we have the manifestation, the unveiling of Mu'amala, and it is Allah's bounty on the Muslims.

قَدْ بَرَى نَفْسِي وَجْهَكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُؤَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا

We have seen you looking up into heaven,
turning this way and that,
so We will turn you towards a direction
which will please you.

Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, is giving an order, giving us the Qibla, the direction in which the Muslims will worship. He says, "You have been looking for something and I am going to give it to you." This is the 'Amal of Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, on the Muslims. Remember that this is a Revealed Book, this is a Revelation that has come from Jibril and into the heart of Rasul, sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam, and is then open to the people by the permission of Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala. Remember that the Adab of Allah and everything in Qur'an flows to the Rasul, and from the Rasul to the people. "So We will turn you towards a direction which will please you." You could say this is to the Rasul, but it is also to all the Muslim people because Allah then says:

قَوْلٍ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا
كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ

Turn your face, therefore, towards the Masjid al-Haram.
Wherever you all are, turn your faces towards it.

This is really the moment of the foundation of Islam. The granting of the Qibla happens while there is still the final putting-in-place of the Hajj. This is the initiatory creation of the new religion, and it is an act of Adab of Allah to his Messenger and to His people. Allah does not say, "I will turn you to a direction that is pleasing to Me." He says, "I will turn you to a direction which is pleasing to you." This is Adab. This is the Adab of Allah on His Messenger and on His people.

He then says, "Turn your face, therefore, towards the Masjid al-Haram." At that point He creates a new Deen with this act of courtesy. And He says, "Wherever you all are, turn your faces towards it." Now look at the next passage:

وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ

Those given the Book know
it is the truth from their Lord.

The Adab of the Muslims encompasses the situation of the people who have been given the Book. In other words, when this happens, everything they stood on is finished. But because they have been given the Book, they know it is the truth. At that moment, the old dispensation is finished, which is also why ANY talk of discourse or connection with, or collaboration with the jews and the christians is out of the question. They are finished! They are sacked from the practice of worship because they know from their Books

that the Qibla is the foundation of the Deen – because they had another Qibla. They had one, and now it is over and finished, and now there is this new one, and this is for the people who love Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, and who follow the Rasul, sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam. Surat an-Nisa (4:59):

أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ

Obey Allah and obey the Messenger.

This is the command of Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala. The final passage is:

وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾

Allah is not unaware of what they do.

So Allah is not unaware of what they, the jews and the christians, do. The one who dispenses correct behaviour knows whether it is received well or whether it is not received well. If he is dispensing it then he has knowledge – the one of manners, of courtesy, is a man of knowledge. So if it is received, he knows if it is received, and if it is rejected, he knows if it is rejected. Sometimes hypocrites do it in a very special way. Cunning and diabolical people do it in a very clever way. But the one who has 'Amal, who has correct behaviour, he knows, because 'Amal itself is knowledge, it is Hikma.

We go back to what I said earlier: Ad-Deen al-Mu'amala. That is the foundation of the Deen. The indication of the Qibla is the beginning of the Deen, and facing the correct

Qibla is a Divine Illumination. By being given the Qibla of the Masjid al-Haram you have been given the point of reference. It is perfect manners, and it comes from Allah to Rasul, to the Muslim people.

The truth is that all real good manners come from the one of knowledge, and are dispensed to the ones either of ignorance or of innocence. It is the treating of these people in that way that has in it wisdom.

We said at the beginning of this that while Imam al-Ghazali's statement is that 'Ilm al-Mu'amala precedes 'Ilm al-Mukashafa, I say that the opposite is true, while not denying the principle upon which he says that. I give you an example: I was with my Shaykh, Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib, rahimahullah, in the little room at the top of his tower in his Zawiya, and there was a very poor man from the desert who had some need to go to Marrakesh, which is on the other side of Morocco from Meknes, and with him were one or two of the Shaykh's Fuqara from Meknes. The Shaykh said, "You must go to Marrakesh," but then he saw that the man had no money, nothing. So he turned to one of his Fuqara and said, "Give him the money for his fare to Marrakesh," and the Faqir said, "Bismillah," and took out his purse and gave the money to the man. The poor man was overwhelmed and crying and he took the money and fell on his knees and started to kiss the man's knee and his foot, and the Faqir exclaimed, "No, no! Stop, stop!" Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib became very angry and said, "Leave him be! Let him do it!" The Faqir was taken aback because he had done this good action, but here he was, being rebuked! The man again kissed his foot and said,

“Thank you, thank you!” and then left. Then Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib turned on this poor fellow who had handed over the fare and said, “How dare you do that! You must not take away from him the right to cover his shame about his poverty.” This made me see that the REAL Adab was not the giving of the money. The real Adab was knowing how to behave when you gave the money.

Also, the Rasul has said that the Sadaqa that is seen is less than the Sadaqa that is not seen, because then the Adab is strictly between Allah and the one who receives it. We are also told that if you have not thanked the giver, then you have not thanked Allah. Thus, I am saying that the whole matter of Adab is something that can only come by the one who is spiritually illuminated.

The first principle of all Adab is that you set the people who are lower than you above you, and you set the people who are higher than you, either below you or equal to you. That is why the ethos of politics is a matter of shaytan because there they do not recognise the person, they recognise the position. This is the opposite of behaviour, even when they appear to be correct. If you want a proof of this, look at any news-reel of a politician, and you will see him shaking hands one way, and his eyes going to where the next person is going to be that he is going to receive a greeting from – whereas the one of Adab would look at the person he is greeting because it is the man giving to you from himself.

So Adab is something which is unmasked in very small things, otherwise it never appears in the big things. The mark of the modern rich Muslims is that they treat their

servants and the people below them abominably. Nowhere do you see people more badly treated than in Arabia and the Emirates – they treat people like dogs. But then that means that they are the dogs. This matter then of Adab is actually the end of all concepts of equality. Equality is a lie. It is a lie among the people who preach it, and it is a lie among the people who pretend to carry it out. People are not the same. People are not equal. Some are better than others – and I am not talking about their wealth but about their being. And some are less than others. The man of Allah is perpetually aware that things are not what they seem, so that one man may come to him and he may treat him with great Adab and courtesy because he sees he is a man of Allah, he sees that Allah loves this man, while another man he will treat with disdain. There are all different balances of this.

When Moulay al-'Arabi ad-Darqawi was sitting in his Zawiyah in Fes with his Fuqara, a very rich Fasi merchant came in. He said to the Fuqara, "Get up and greet your master!" Why? Because this man fed them, and it was only fitting that they should greet him. Not because he was rich but because he fed the Fuqara. One of the great Sufis of Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib, rahimahullah, Hajj Jilali, rahimahullah, he loved the Shaykh, and he said, "I want to go with you everywhere to be with you," and he said, "No. I will not allow you into my company unless you feed twenty-five people every day on your farm." Hajj Jilali said, "Bismillah." And every day he fed twenty-five people on his farm and he went everywhere with his Shaykh and he is buried next to him. This is Adab, and this Adab took him to the Next World.