



Inculcating Taqwā In Our Lives
by Marc Manley

إن الحمد لله نحمده ونستعينه و نستغفروه و فيه نتوكل، و نعوذ به من شرور أنفسنا و سيئات أعمالنا،
فمن يهده الله فلا مضل له، و من يضله فلا هادي له،
و نشهد أن لا إله إلا الله، وحده لا شريك له، رب الأرباب و مسبب الأسباب، فاطر السموات
السبع، خالق كل شيء،
و نشهد أن محمدا، النبي الأمي، عبده و رسوله، ختم الأنبياء و أشرف المرسلين، صلى الله
عليه و على آله و أزواجه و أصحابه و أنصاره و ذرياته و سلم. إن الله و ملائكته يصلون على
النبي، يا أيها الذين ءامنوا صلوا عليه و سلموا تسليما، و بعد

Verily all praise belongs to God - thus we praise Him, seek His aid, repent our sins to Him and in Him do we place our trust. We seek protection in Him from the evil whisperings of our own souls as well as from blameworthy actions and deeds.

For the one God has chosen to guide, there is no misguider for him. And as for one whom God has misguided, there is no guidance. And we bear testimony that there is no god but God, Allah, One is He, with no partner, Lord of lords, Causer of all causes, the Fashioner of the Seven Heavens, Creator of all that is. We also bear witness that Muhammad, the Unlettered Prophet, is His slave and messenger, Seal of the Prophets and most noble of the Messengers. May God send peace and blessings upon him, his family, his wives, his companions, his helpers, and his progeny. Surely God and His Angels send blessings upon the Prophet therefore O' you who believe!, send prayers and blessings upon him abundantly.

Dear respected brothers and sisters in Islam, I greet you today with the تحية الجنة as-Salaamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakaatuhu.

First Khutbah – Main Points

- Responsibility
 - o Attached to every sane human being is the charge of responsibility.
 - o Allah is well acquainted with our thoughts and our actions – this should serve as a guide and a warning for us to help sculpt our thoughts and actions.

إن ربهم بهم يومئذ لخبير

“Surely, on that day, their Lord shall be well-acquainted with them.” [Q: 100:11]

- Spiritual Training
 - o Spiritual maturity requires spiritual training
 - We must build and develop our religious and more importantly, spiritual reflexes such that we can make better use of the intellect [‘aql].
 - The first step in any situation can often be the most critical – this is similar to boxing or fencing: the first step/move is crucial to the outcome and success.
 - The intuition must be allowed to come into play – once the reflexes are trained then they can work in tandem with the mind [‘aql].
 - Reflexes are often used in self-defense. From here, the idea of self-defense, is where we will look at and examine taqwā.

- The History & Meaning of Taqwā
 - o The word taqwā was not unknown in pre-Islamic times [i.e., the Jāhiliyyah]. At-Tabrīzī, in his commentary, *al-Hamāsah*, gives us a very concise definition of taqwā as it was known to the Arabs:
 - الإِتْقَاءُ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَكَ وَ بَيْنَ مَا تَخَافُهُ حَاجِزًا يَحْفَظُكَ
 - “Taqwā is the idea that you [A] place something [C] between yourself and that which you fear could destroy you [B].”
 - Taqwā, in a sense, is a type of self-defense or self-preservation system or technique to ward off destruction by placing something between yourself and that impending doom. We will see shortly how this ties into the Qur’ān’s definition and the Sunnah’s definition of taqwā.
 - o A quick look at taqwā in Jāhiliyyah poetry:
 - In the *Mu’allaqah*, Zuhayr states boldly:
 - وَقَالَ سَأَقْضِي حَاجَتِي ثُمَّ أَتَّقِي * عَدُوِي بِأَلْفٍ مِنْ وَرَائِي مُلْجَمٍ

- Zuhayr says to himself, *“I will satisfy my vengeance [on my brother’s killer by taking his life!], then I will defend myself from their reprisal with a thousand horses, all bridled in support of my cause!”*
- This demonstrates the use of taqwā as a means of self-defense/preservation, from a physical foe. You have to love the Jāhiliy spirit!
- For a more philosophical take on how taqwā was used, we can look to ‘Amr bin al-Ahtam’s account:
- كل كريم يتقي الذم بالقري
- *“Every noble man guards himself against blame by showing hospitality”*
- Here, “blame” is a non-physical threat [the idea of being stingy or unable to provide and be magnanimous was of great importance to the Arabs at this time – it is how they demonstrated their power].
- What taqwā demonstrates here is the need to be observant: to recognize an imminent danger and take actions to ward off that danger by placing something between one’s self and that destruction. What about danger that is not so tangible? In modern times, especially those of us who have “kept the wolf away from the door”, we think we are in no danger at all and are free to live “good lives” – that we can self-suffice what is good/bad without the need for a higher authority [Allah/Sunnah]. In the second khutbah, we shall examine the Qur’an’s take on this as well as examples from the Sunnah.

May Allah forgive us our sins and guide us to the Straight Path. For Allah is The Forgiver, The Loving...

الحمد لله, و الصلوات و السلام رسول الله و بعد

Second Khutbah – Main Points

- Allah states in the Suwrah al-Baqarah regarding taqwā:

و اتقوا يوما لا تجزي نفس عن نفس شيئا و لا يقبل منها شفاعة و لا يوذ منها عدل و لا هم ينصرون

“Defend yourself against a day that will come where no soul shall be of assistance to another whatsoever – nor shall it put forth an intercessor in its place – no compensation will be taken from it – nor shall there be anyone to come to its aid.” [Q: 2:47]

- Allah also states in Suwrah al-Baqarah:

و إن كنتم في ريب مما نزلنا على عبدنا فاتوا بسورة من مثله و ادعوا شهدائكم من دون الله إن كنتم صادقين – فإن لم تفعلوا و لن تفعلوا فاتقوا النار التي وقودها الناس و الحجارة, أعدت للكافرين

“And if you still harbor doubts as to what we revealed to our slave then simply produce a single suwrah of its ilk, calling upon whatever witnesses you may have other than Allah, if you are true to your word! But if you are unable, and you most assuredly are unable!, then protect yourself from a blazing fire, whose fuel is men and stones, lying prepared for the ingrates!” [Q: 2:22]

- This is a clear articulation by Allah on the definition of taqwā:
 - o Allah is giving us the chance to come clean and put our affairs in order before it is too late.
 - o In other words, taqwā is a preemptive technique for staving off Divine Chastisement and Punishment.
 - o The techniques of Zuhayr and all his horses will do us no good in the grave if we have not put something substantial between ourselves and the Reckoning of Allah.

- Inculcating Taqwā & Its Understanding

- o Like a wild animal, we must become aware! Take stock of our environment and what situations we put ourselves in.
- o A short hadīth from the Prophet [s] will demonstrate for us, with perhaps even a bit of humor, another aspect of taqwā:
- o عن عبد الرحمن بن علي, يعني ابن شيبان عن أبيه, قال, قال رسول الله, صلى الله عليه و سلم:

من بات على ظهر بيت ليس له حجار فقد برئت منه الذمة

- On the authority of Abdur Rahmān, also known as Ibn Shaybān, stating that his father said that the Messenger of Allah said: *“Whoever spends the night on the roof of a house that has no stone balustrade, then by all means, Allah’s responsibility towards him has been absolved!”*
 - In other words, do not act recklessly as a fool and still expect Allah to pull you out! This is what is meant but having awareness and responsibility and a spiritual maturity.
 - It is here that we see the importance of following a mature outlook that the Qur’ān, the Sunnah, and the Muslim intellectual tradition attempts to inculcate within us: take responsibility for your actions while you can. You must use your brain and yet, not rely solely upon it as the only source of validation.
- Primary Means of Attaining Taqwā
- A few examples:
 - Related to us from Imam Mālik’s Muwatta’: Mālik heard the Messenger of Allah [s] state: *“I was sent for the perfection of character.”*
 - عن مالك, أنه قد بلغه: أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم, بعثت لأتمم حسن الأخلاق
 - Mālik relates to us on the authority of Safwān Bin Sulaym that he heard the Messenger of Allah [s] say: *“I and the one who guarantees the orphan, whether for himself or someone else, will be like these two in the Paradise, when he has attained taqwā.”*
 - عن صفوان بن سليم, أنه بلغه أن النبي, صلى الله عليه و سلم, قال: أنا و كافل اليتيم, له أو لغيره, في الجنة كهاتين, إذا اتقى و أشار بإصبعيه الوسطى التي تلي الإبهام
 - This is a beautiful example of three major points coming together that God willing, we can memorize and put in our hearts:
 1. The Prophet [s] is stating that whoever commits this action will be like the middle finger and the index finger. Who would not desire this?!
 2. Social responsibility! Taking responsibility for the orphan, even if you are not his primary ward, shows a consciousness and awareness that Allah is always watching. It is also a beautiful act of generosity that will help encourage us to other acts of kindness as well as the societal responsibility we have!
 3. This act of generosity, this “good deed” is the self-defense/preservation act that will be a barrier between us and Allah on the Day of Judgment.

A closing du’ah, one which we should say every day, from one of the Companions of the Prophet [s], Mālik, where he stated:

اللهم اجعلني من أئمة المتقين

“O’ Allah, make me from amongst the people of Taqwā!”

“Allahumma, ij’alniy min u’immatil mu’taqiyn!”