

The Concept of *Taqwa*: Righteousness II

"Certainly we have repeated in the Quraan that they may remember" 17:21

"See how we repeat the messages that they may understand" 6:65

The Creator in His wisdom and judgement and in His knowledge of the nature of man decided that His messages to mankind should be repeated and presented in different ways in order to establish a foothold in the human mind. I believe that our teachers, parents, speakers, whosoever has a responsibility for shaping human character must bear this approach in mind.

According to the Quraan, there are two kinds of people in this world.

One are those whom it describes as people of understanding and others who just follow their instincts:

"They are but as cattle, they are further away from the right path" 25:44

The first category lives on an intellectual plane. These are people who think about what exists and surrounds them and conclude that surely this cannot be meaningless and without purpose.

"They reflect on the Creations of the heavens and the earth and say our Sustainer you have not created all this in vain. All praise is for you. Save us from the punishment of the fire" 3:191

They also reflect upon themselves as the Quraan says

"Do not they reflect upon themselves" 30:8

The second category live on an animal plane and are described this:

They believe that life is nothing but living and dying; it has no purpose and so should be made the most of.

"They say there is nothing but our life of the world. We die and we live, nothing destroys us but time"

45:24

The Quraanic comment on their thinking is

"They have no knowledge, they are only guessing"

45:24

The Creator responds to the wish of the first category of people and sends them the Guidance. They are required to understand and assimilate this guidance and set themselves up as living models. This is so as God does not wish to forsake anyone. These living models are to help those who are not

intellectually endowed to grasp the significance of life and right living. Perhaps they would understand better if they could see a working model.

Taqwa is not a mode of dress; it is not a certain appearance. These have their significance and utility when part of a total personality. Without this central core it is just a wrapping with no certainty of the real contents. It is a programme of self-awareness and self-direction, which faces a challenge at every moment of existence. Thoughts come all the time, desires surface at any time. One has to stop and examine every idea, every incentive and subject it to the Quraan - the criterion for deciding if it is acceptable or not. The pursuit of *Taqwa* does not stop at any point in time. There is no stage of development where one can relax. It does not mean that one has to be tense. Once the mind is set on this mode it does this work faster than any computer. It is automatic and relaxing because it is a security against going wrong.

A basic requirement of this course of actions is to have a thorough knowledge of the Quraan, which is our criterion between deciding right and wrong. This knowledge does not come by just listening to sermons or attending lectures. These do have their usefulness but are not a replacement for individual commitment.

The Quraan is not just for reading, it is for reflection, understanding and practice. It is not something that any other person can do for one. Others can help and guide but the main job has to be done by ones' own self. It is an individual responsibility.

As was submitted last Friday, it is a many splendoured concept. There are no limits to its width or height and there are no limits to human achievement. The Quraan says

"He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the earth and all that is from Himself. Surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect" 45:13

So let us not be complacent, let us not be timid, let us be ambitious and pursue the path of *Taqwa* i.e. remembering God with a view to protect ourselves from wrong and harm. Surely you will thus become beacons for your fellow being.

Istiqamat: Holding Allah's religion firmly

"*Istiqamat*" in Arabic means: standing firm. Holding Allah's religion firmly in worship and persistently abiding by His commandments are the characteristics of the believers.

Allah Almighty says:

"Verily those who say: Our lord is Allah and then they stand firm, on them the angles will descend saying: Fear not, nor grieve! But receive the glad tidings of paradise which you have been promised!" 41:30

Truthfulness is the door to receive blessings and upright behaviour in one's affairs brings the required firmness in religion. Allah says: *"And if they had believed in Allah and went on the right way, we would surely have bestowed on them rain, water in abundance."* 72:16

The Prophetic tradition points out that steadfastness in obeying Allah all the time until death is the only way to have firmness in religion. Therefore, one should not become among those who worship Allah in some season/time of the year and turn away from their Lord at other times.

Another danger is to ruin good deeds by pride or by despair. Allah Almighty says:

"Do not become like a woman who undoes the thread which she has spun, after it has become strong" (16:92)

Being human, one may fall sometimes into sin but one should stop as soon as he realizes it and follow it up with good deeds as:

"The good deeds remove the evil deeds. That is a reminder, an advice, to those who accept advice, are mindful of it". (11:114)

The believer needs to review his faith frequently. Even a minor sin or mistake should trouble him deeply as this is the sign of faith. However, hypocrites commit major sins without it touching their conscience as their faith is either weak or dead.

Let us explore how to keep holding the faith firmly intact. There are a number of suggestions which can be of help such as:

Firstly: Pondering upon the meanings of the Quran and its comprehension.

Allah Almighty says:

"And we send down from the Quran, which is a healing and a mercy for the believers." 17:82

The recitation of the Quran with understanding of its meanings rekindles faith and strengthens it, just as a Hadith is regarded as a means to repolish the rusted heart.

Secondly: trying to feel an awareness of the might and majesty of Allah – by learning His names and attributes, pondering their meanings and invoking them.

"There are beautiful names for Allah, therefore call upon Him with them."

For example in a time of distress, one may repeat:

"O ever living! O ever sustainer! I seek your help with your mercy." 7:180

Thirdly: Seeking Islamic knowledge, which leads one to have the consciousness of Allah, as we find in the Quran:

"It is only those who have knowledge among His servants who fear Allah." 35:28

Fourthly: Dhikr of Allah – The remembrance of Allah in beginning any work, particularly when one awakes or goes to bed etc.

Fifthly: Doing righteous and charitable deeds. For example once the Prophet (pbuh) asked his companions:

Who among you got up for fasting this morning? Abu Bakr AsSiddique said I did. The Prophet (pbuh) further inquired: who among you has attended a funeral? Abu Bakr AsSiddique said I have. The Prophet (pbuh) again asked: Who among you has fed a needy person today? Again Abu Bakr replied in affirmative. The

Prophet (pbuh) added: who among you has visited a sick person today? Abu Bakr said I have. Thereupon the messenger of Allah (pbuh), said: No man does all of that does all that but he will enter Paradise. Muslim

Sixthly: Remembering death and frequently visiting the graveyard for this purpose. The noble Prophet (pbuh) said:

Remember often the destroyer of pleasure, meaning death.

Seventhly: thinking of insignificance of this world until the heart is detached from it. Allah says:

"The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception-a deceiving thing." 3:185

The messenger of Allah (SAWS) said: *'Beware of sins that are seen as insignificant, for they will keep accumulating until they destroy a man.'* Many people are too easy going in matters which they think trivial or insignificant, but in fact destroy the basis of faith. For example, looking at *haram*; forbidden things will eventually lead to major sins.

Finally, *Du'a* – supplicating is one of the most efficient means which a believer must employ frequently as the Prophet (SAWS) said:

'Faith wears out in the heart of any one of you. Just as clothes wear out, so ask Allah to renew faith in your hearts.

He, (SAWS) also said:

'Every deed starts with energy and strength. Then this strength and energy is followed by slackening, so whoever slackens in voluntary deeds, as opposed to fard, obligatory deeds, will be fine, however, whoever slackens in fard deeds will be doomed.' Ahmad

May Allah make us *Mustaqim*, straight forward, upright and consistent on Islam.

A letter from Makkah

The following letter was sent from Malcolm to his assistants, new Muslim Mosque, press and his wife, during the conclusion of his pilgrimage to Makkah. The content is reproduced from The Autobiography of Malcolm X as told to Alex Haley.

Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and the overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as practiced by people of all colors and races here in this Ancient Holy Land, the home of Abraham, Muhammad and all other prophets of the Holy Scriptures. For the past week, I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people of all colors.

I have been blessed to visit the Holy City of Makkah. I have made my seven circuits around the Ka'ba, led by a young Mutawaf named Muhammad. I drank water from the well of Zam Zam. I ran seven times back and forth between the hills of Al-Safa and Al-Marwah. I have prayed in the ancient city of Mina, and I have prayed on Mt. Arafat.

There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue eyed blonds to black skin Africans. But we were all participating in the same rituals, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had lead me to believe never could exist between the white and non-white.

America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have considered 'white' -- but the 'white' attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color.

You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to re-arrange much of my thought patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me.

Despite my firm convictions, I have always been a man who tries to face facts, and to accept the reality of life as new experiences and new knowledge unfolds it. I have always kept an open mind, which is necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth.

During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept in the same bed, (or on the same rug) -- while praying to the same God -- with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the same words and in the actions and in the deeds of the 'white' Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan and Ghana.

We were truly all the same (brothers) -- because their belief in one God had removed the 'white' from their minds, the 'white' from their behavior, and the 'white' from their attitude.

I could see from this, that perhaps if white Americans could accept the Oneness of God, then perhaps, too, they could accept in reality the Oneness of Man -- and cease to measure, and hinder, and harm others in terms of their differences in color.

With racism plaguing America like an incurable cancer, the so-called 'Christian' white American heart should be more receptive to a proven solution to such a destructive problem. Perhaps it could be in time to save America from imminent disaster -- the same destruction brought upon Germany by racism that eventually destroyed the Germans themselves.

Each hour here in the Holy Land enables me to have greater spiritual insights into what is happening in

America between black and white. The American Negro never can be blamed for his racial animosities -- he is only reacting to four hundred years of conscious racism of the American whites. But as racism leads America up the suicide path, I do believe, from the experience that I have had with them, that the whites of the younger generation, in the colleges and universities, will see the handwriting on the wall and many of them will turn to the spiritual path of truth -- the only way left to America to ward off the disaster that racism inevitably must lead to...

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all the Worlds.

Sincerely,

El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcom X)

Marriage Bureau is held on Mondays and Wednesdays between 2pm - 4pm
Family Support Clinic held Tuesdays
From 2pm - 4pm

Contact:

0121 446 4157 / 07870 450 347

Patrons: Dr. Mohammed Naseem
Haji Mohammed Sarwar

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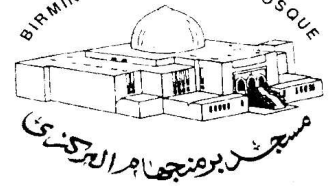
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PRAYER TIMETABLE

INDEED PRAYERS ARE ENJOINED ON BELIEVERS AT A STATED TIME (Al-Quran 4:103)

June 2003 Rabi-al-Thani 1424 AH

June		Rabi-al Thani	Fajr		Sun	Zawal	Dhuhr	Asr		Sun	Maghrib	Isha	
Date	Day	Date	Start	Jamaat	rise		start	Start	Jamaat	set	Adhaan	Start	Jamaat
1	Sun	1	3.03	4.15	4.46	1.05	1.10	6.40	7.30	9.25	9.28	10.43	11.00
2	Mon	2	3.00	" "	4.45	1.06	1.11	6.41	" "	9.26	9.29	10.43	" "
3	Tue	3	2.58	" "	4.45	" "	" "	6.41	" "	9.27	9.30	10.43	" "
4	Wed	4	2.54	" "	4.44	" "	" "	6.42	" "	9.28	9.31	10.43	" "
5	Thr	5	2.53	" "	4.43	" "	" "	6.43	" "	9.29	9.32	10.44	" "
6	Fri	6	2.53	" "	4.43	" "	" "	6.43	" "	9.30	9.33	10.44	" "
7	Sat	7	2.52	" "	4.42	" "	" "	6.44	" "	9.31	9.34	10.44	" "
8	Sun	8	2.52	" "	4.42	1.07	1.12	6.44	" "	9.32	9.35	10.44	" "
9	Mon	9	2.51	" "	4.41	" "	" "	6.45	" "	9.33	9.36	10.45	" "
10	Tue	10	2.51	" "	4.41	" "	" "	6.45	" "	9.33	9.36	10.45	" "
11	Wed	11	2.50	" "	4.40	" "	" "	6.46	" "	9.34	9.37	10.45	" "
12	Thr	12	2.50	" "	4.40	" "	" "	6.46	" "	9.35	9.38	10.45	" "
13	Fri	13	2.50	" "	4.40	1.08	1.13	6.47	" "	9.36	9.39	10.46	" "
14	Sat	14	2.50	" "	4.40	" "	" "	6.47	" "	9.36	9.39	10.46	" "
15	Sun	15	2.49	" "	4.39	" "	" "	6.48	" "	9.37	9.40	10.47	" "
16	Mon	16	2.49	" "	4.39	" "	" "	6.48	" "	9.37	9.40	10.47	" "
17	Tue	17	2.49	" "	4.39	1.09	1.14	6.48	" "	9.38	9.41	10.48	" "
18	Wed	18	2.49	" "	4.39	" "	" "	6.49	" "	9.38	9.41	10.48	" "
19	Thr	19	2.49	" "	4.39	" "	" "	6.49	" "	9.39	9.42	10.49	" "
20	Fri	20	2.50	" "	4.40	" "	" "	6.49	" "	9.39	9.42	10.49	" "
21	Sat	21	2.50	" "	4.40	" "	" "	6.49	" "	9.39	9.42	10.49	" "
22	Sun	22	2.50	" "	4.40	1.10	1.15	6.50	" "	9.39	9.42	10.49	" "
23	Mon	23	2.50	" "	4.40	" "	" "	6.50	" "	9.39	9.42	10.49	" "
24	Tue	24	2.51	" "	4.41	" "	" "	6.50	" "	9.39	9.42	10.49	" "
25	Wed	25	2.51	" "	4.41	" "	" "	6.50	" "	9.39	9.42	10.49	" "
26	Thr	26	2.51	" "	4.41	" "	" "	6.50	" "	9.39	9.42	10.49	" "
27	Fri	27	2.52	" "	4.42	1.11	1.16	6.50	" "	9.39	9.42	10.49	" "
28	Sat	28	2.52	" "	4.42	" "	" "	6.50	" "	9.39	9.42	10.49	" "
29	Sun	29	2.53	" "	4.43	" "	" "	6.50	" "	9.39	9.42	10.49	" "
30	Mon	30	2.54	" "	4.44	" "	" "	6.50	" "	9.39	9.42	10.49	" "

Dhuhr Congregation at 1.45pm

Jumu'ah Congregation at 1.30pm

(Urdu speech starts at 12.45pm English speech starts at 1.00pm)