LECTURE # 2

TOPIC: Taqwa

(Fear of Allah): The Key to Learning

Definition of Taqwa

The Messenger of Allah, (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: Taqwa is here," and he pointed to his chest.

Allah says,

\[
\text{يَا بَنِي اَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اَنْقُوِّوا اَللهَ وَأَمَنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ ْوَيَتَّخِذُواْ}
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\[
\text{كَلِبَاءَ وَمَصْرَعَ يَهُودَ وَأَلْلَهَ عَفُوٌّ رَحِيمٌ}
\]

“O Believers! Fear ye God, (Have Taqwa) and believe in His Messenger; He will give you two portions from His Mercy and will place in you light, which you will walk with and He will forgive you.” (57:28)

Allah, the Almighty also says:

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\text{يَا بَنِي اَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اَنْقُوِّوا اَللهَ وَأَمَنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ ْوَيَتَّخِذُواْ}
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\text{كَلِبَاءَ وَمَصْرَعَ يَهُودَ وَأَلْلَهَ عَفُوٌّ رَحِيمٌ}
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“O Believers! If you will be fearing God He will decree a decision for you and acquit you of your sins and forgive you” (8:29)

Al-Haafidh Ibn Katheer (d.777H) said: “Ibn Abbaad, as-Suddee, ‘Ikrimah, ad-Dahhaak, Qataadah and Muqaatil Ibn Mayan all said about “Furqaan” that it means: a way out (from difficulty). Mujaahid added: “A way out (from difficulty) both in this world and in the Hereafter”. In a narration from Ibn ‘Abbas he said it means: salvation; and in another narration from him: being helped.

Muhammad bin Ishaaq said that it means: a criterion to judge between truth and falsehood. This explanation from Ibn Ishaaq is the most general of what has already preceded and it is a necessary consequence of it. Since whoever has Taqwa of
Allah by obeying His commands and abandoning what he has prohibited, will be given the ability to recognize truth from falsehood.

**Concept of Taqwa (Piety)**

Taqwa means: to cleanse or purify the heart and the soul. Some Aayaat in Sort ush-Shams in which Allah says proves this fact:

و الشمس وضحها . والقمر اذا تلها . والليل اذا يغشها . والمسماء وما بناها . والار رض وما سوها . ونفس وما سوها . فالهمها فجورها وتقوها . قد افحل من زكها . وقد خاب من د سها .

(سورة الشمس آيت 1 تا 10)

"By the sun and its rising sunshine, and by the moon when it comes after the sun, and by the day when it brightens, it, and by the night when it enshrouds it, and by the heaven and as He made it, and by the earth and as he extended (outspread) it, and by the soul and as He shaped it, then He inspired it understanding of licentiousness and warding off! Verily prospered he who purified it, and failed he who threw it into dust

[91:1-10]

Among the missions of the Prophet (صلي الله عليه وسلم) Allah sent him with the command to purify the souls of the Muslims in particular, and of mankind in general. Allah (T) says:

هو الذي بعث في الامين رسولا منهم يتلوا عليهم آياته ويز كيم ويعلمهم الكتاب والحكمة .

(سورة الجمعة آيت 2)

"It is he who raised up from among the illiterate a Messenger from among them, recites to them His verses and Book and the Wisdom and before that they had been lying in manifest forgetfulness.” (62-2)

In this ayah the word Hikmah is often translated as wisdom. Imam Shafi’, one of the greatest scholars of Islam, said that when Allah mentions Hikmah in the Qur’an it refers to the Sunnah of the Prophet (صلي الله عليه وسلم) In addition to this ayah, we see that the Prophet (صلي الله عليه وسلم) was sent with three tasks:

1) To teach the Qur’an.
2) To teach the Sunnah.
3) To show the means of purifying the soul.

This purification is obtained by doing the proper acts of ‘ibaadah and by avoiding sins and disobedience.

**Conditions for Attaining Taqwa**

How does a person know that his acts of ‘ibaadah are helping him to achieve Taqwa? To develop Taqwa, one must fulfill the following conditions:-
1) Ikhlaas, sincere intention that the act is performed purely for the pleasure of Allah, out of love for Him, while hoping for His reward and mercy, as well as fearing His anger and punishment if He is disobeyed.

2) To do the deed in accordance with the authentic Sunnah. To have the necessary knowledge of the i'baadah, that is being performed. To know how the Prophet performed the action and proper times for the performance of that action.

Concerning Ikhlaas, it must be present both before and after performing the deed, with no riyaa or sum'ah (doing things to be seen or heard by people). For instance, after doing a good deed, someone tells others, "Look at all the good I have been doing ", or "I'm such a marvelous person because I do such and such".

This formula, if used to achieve Taqwa, is scientific, in that if you follow it, while fulfilling all of its conditions and their rights, you will achieve Taqwa Insha’a Allah.

**Significance of Taqwa (Piety) in the Qur'an**

When we look at the various practices and teachings of Islam with regards to acts of worship, we find most of them, if not all, guiding people towards this state of Taqwa. For example, with regards to fasting,

قال الله سبحانه وتعالي:

Allah is saying, "O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was for those before you in order that you may be of those who have Taqwa."

This concept of Taqwa, wherein one seeks to protect oneself from the wrath of Allah by doing the things, which are pleasing to Him, one can only do so if one is conscious of Allah. This is why the term Taqwa is also expressed in English as God-consciousness. And when we look with regards to salah, we find Allah saying, "Establish the prayer for my remembrance."

So salah, and virtually all aspects of i'baadah, serve to keep us in a state of consciousness of Allah in that when a person is conscious of Him, aware that He is watching, then that person would not seek to do the things which would not be pleasing to Allah. It is when we forget Allah that Satan finds the opening, he is able to approach us, suggest evil and we fall into evil.

A Muslim surrenders before Almighty Allah and does what he is ordered to do and refrains from what he is told to keep away from. Taqwa, the fear of Almighty Allah, is the only force that can restrain man from evil and wickedness. It is this fear of Almighty God that keeps the heart of a believer awake and enables him to distinguish right from wrong.

Besides, Taqwa is the only virtue that brings honor to a believer, man or woman, in the Islamic society. The Holy Qur'an says:

يا ايها الناس ان خلقتم من ذكر ونثي وجعلتم شعوبا وقبا هل لتعا رفوا ان اكر مكم عند الله اتقكم (سورة الحجرات آية 13)
“O mankind, We have created you of a male and a female and appointed your castes and tribes that you may recognize one another.
Verily he has greater respect with God who is possessed of greater courtesy” (49-13)

Justice and Taqwa are two principles that emerge as necessary corollaries from the doctrines of Oneness of Allah, which according to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah, is the basic article of faith, whereas the discipline and the dos and the don'ts of the canon law are merely its outward expression, or means to the attainment of divinely ordained ends of man in its collective as well as individual existence.

In Islam, being just is considered to be a necessary condition or being pious and God-fearing, the basic characteristics of a Muslim.

The Holy Qur'an says:

(سورة المائدة آيت 8)

“Do justice _ that is nearer to piety, and fear you God. Allah is well aware of what you do.”

The Holy Qur'an aims to create an ideal society based on Taqwa for the good of the entire humanity.
Allah says:

(سورة آل عمران آيت 110)

"You are the best community created for the good of mankind." (3:110)

The fear of Almighty Allah, the root of all wisdom, find expression in the individual's awareness of the impact that his actions or failure to act will at the various stages or levels of his social connections and relationship have on others. It is admitted that the primary concern of Islam is to develop the personality of the individual as a God fearing man, and equip him with the talent to live in peace with himself and peace with others.

In Surah Al Imran, Taqwa is bracketed with steadfastness and patience, and in Surah Baqarah with making peace among mankind. Even in conducting wars, when mere values are generally overlooked, Muslims have to abide by the dictates of Taqwa. This condition of heart transforms both the thinking and the action of man. The Holy Qur'an repeatedly asks us to observe Taqwa, to abide by the decisions of the Prophet, to act up to the injunctions of the Shariah, and to refrain from prohibited acts, and to attain glory.