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## **BLESSINGS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (TAQWA)**

**By Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmad**

*Oh Mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you, and Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things [49:13]*

Stars beautify the heavens whereas the obedient beautify the earth. The only purpose of life is the obedience to Allah ﷻ and the purpose of living is the remembrance of Allah ﷻ.

### **The Most Honorable**

Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran:

*Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you, and Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things [49:13]*

The emphasis here is neither on color nor race, and neither is it on being an Arab versus being a non-Arab. In fact, the nearest to Allah ﷻ are the most righteous.

### **Signs of Being Near to Allah ﷻ**

Nearness to Allah ﷻ is directly proportionate to a person's level of righteousness (*taqwa*), and thus *taqwa* becomes a clear indicator in judging the closeness of beings to Allah ﷻ. This is why the Holy Quran states:

*No men can be its (the Blessed Ka'bah) guardians except the righteous [8:34]*

### **Neither Grief Nor Fear**

*Verily on the Friends of Allah ﷻ there is no fear nor shall they grieve [10:62]*

*Khauf* refers to fear from an outside source whereas *huzn* is fear from within, and Allah ﷻ says that His Friends the *Auliyaa Allah ﷻ* are protected from both of these kinds through His Mercy. This special status is only reserved for these honored people, whom Allah ﷻ defines as:

*Those who believe and guard against evil [10:63]*

Allah ﷻ further specifies the rewards of His *Auliyaa*:

*For them are glad tidings in the life of the present and the Hereafter [10:64]*

Allah ﷻ honors His decisions and promises. Hence, people should practice *taqwa* in order that they enter into such an honored category of people such as the *Auliyaa*.

### **Different Degrees**

There are different stages of *wilayah* [Friendship of Allah ﷻ], the first of which is shared by all who testify to the Testament of Faith (*kalimah*) and are Muslims. This is the first and simplest stage, where the lowest definition of *wilayah* is widely spread among all Muslims, since no one is actually an enemy of Allah ﷻ.

### ***Wilayat-e-'Aammah* and *Wilayat-e-Khasah***

This first stage, which is accessible to all Muslims who recite the *kalimah* is called *Wilayat-e-'Aammah*, the lowest stage without which Allah ﷻ does not even accept deeds. The next and special stage of *wilayah* is *Wilayat-e-Khasah* that is only accessible to people who attain *taqwa*.

*Surely Allah does accept of those who are righteous.* [5:67]

### **Decorated with *Taqwa***

Just as a vendor painstakingly arranges his food stall by placing the best fruits and nuts at the top, Allah ﷻ has adorned His Holy Book with references to *taqwa* after every three to four verses. Such references shine throughout the Holy Quran like dancing stars, even as the command to acquire *taqwa* may occur three or more times in one verse alone. For Allah ﷻ to issue a command even once is no small matter, and so the numerous times that this command occurs should serve as an important message indicating its importance.

*Oh Mankind! Fear your Guardian Lord!* [4:1]

This verse is structured in a command form, exhorting all those addressed to acquire *taqwa* and fear their Creator.

*Oh Mankind! Fear your Guardian Lord Who created you from a single person created of like nature his mate and from them twain scattered countless men and women: fear Allah through Whom you demand your mutual rights and revere the wombs that bore you, for Allah ever watches over you [4:1]*

This verse serves as another beautiful illustration wherein *taqwa* is mentioned at the beginning and at the end of the verse. Yet another verse with this command is:

*O you who believe! Fear Allah and let every soul look to what it has sent forth for the morrow [59:18]*

#### **No Limit to *Taqwa***

The *shariah* has prescribed limits for everything except *taqwa*. Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran:

*So fear Allah as much as you can [64:16]*

*O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared [3:102]*

Indeed, *taqwa* has a special station with Allah ﷻ to have been given such importance and the honor of being the one thing without limitation.

#### **Benefits of *Taqwa***

*Taqwa* is a tremendous blessing that itself provides a doorway to other blessings. It provides means for forgiveness from sin and gives the believer extraordinary insight. Allah ﷻ states in the Holy Quran:

*If anyone fears Allah He will remove his ills and enlarge his reward [65:5]*

Elsewhere in the Holy Quran Allah ﷻ says:

*O you who believe! If you fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion [8:29]*

Here, Allah ﷻ says that He will bestow the insight of Furqan upon the righteous, such insight and brilliance that leaves no doubt of the difference between truth and falsehood. One no longer needs to debate the *taqwa* behind an action or wander in doubt because everything becomes clear.

#### **Sustenance of the Flesh**

Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran that He would shower blessings from above and below if only the people accept faith and acquire *taqwa*.

*If the people of the towns had but believed and feared Allah, We would indeed have opened to them blessings from heaven and earth [7:96]*

Elsewhere, Allah ﷻ says:

*If only they had stood fast by the Law and all the revelation sent to them, they would have enjoyed happiness from every side [5:66]*

Man is composed of two things, flesh and the soul (*ruh*). Whatever is from the earth receives sustenance from the

same, which in this case means that the body receives its nourishment from the earth, because this is what it was created from. For example, bread is made from wheat that grows out of the ground and water springs forth from the oceans and mountains. Similarly, the clothes that man uses to cover his body are made from cotton that also grows out of the ground. Hence, since Allah ﷻ created the body from the earth, so did He assign all its sustenance to come from the same.

#### **Sustenance of the *Ruh***

The origin of the *ruh* is ‘*Aalam-e-Amr*’. Consequently the *ruh* derives its sustenance from the countless blessings and mercy that continuously flow from Allah’s ﷻ Throne.

*They ask you concerning the Ruh. Say it comes by command of my Creator [17:85]*

While the body derives all its needs from the earth from which it was made, the *ruh* in turn derives its nourishment from the heavens from where it was created. Allah ﷻ says that He will give both the *ruh* and the body its due sustenance from where He designed it.

*Taqwa* is such a blessing that it opens not only the doors of sustenance, but all blessings, and Allah ﷻ will always provide amply if people are grateful. However, ingratitude

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<sup>1</sup> The heavenly part of Allah’s ﷻ creation that is created spontaneously and immediately by the Divine Command *Be, and it is*, including but not limited to the Throne and the Angels. This is in contrast to ‘*Aalam-e-Khalq*’, the worldly creation that was created gradually over a period of time.

and rebellion will only result in this abundance being withdrawn to the point that Allah ﷻ may even stop their flow.

*If you are grateful, I will add more favors unto you, but if you are thankless, truly My punishment is dire! [14:7]*

In the Holy Quran, Allah ﷻ cites the example of a nation thriving in abundance and blessing, that was consequently in no grief or fear from anyone. Their pride in their abundance eventually translated into ingratitude and rebellion to Allah ﷻ, and hence, Allah ﷻ withdrew all His blessings from them so that they were left in dire poverty and hunger.

*A city enjoying security and quiet, abundantly supplied with sustenance from every place; yet was it ungrateful for the favors of Allah, so Allah made it taste of hunger and terror, (closing on it) like a garment because of the evil which its people wrought [16:112]*

If man is ungrateful, Allah ﷻ will cease showering His blessings, and instead of having plenty, man will be reduced to having naught. On the other hand, if man is grateful and righteous, then Allah ﷻ will open the gates of His mercy, and blessings will rain down heavier than ever before, such that sustenance comes from places and by means that man could not possibly have imagined.

*For those who fear Allah He prepares a way out [65:2]*

Hadrat Thanvi (May the mercy of Allah be upon him) wrote a fascinating story regarding the blessings of Allah ﷻ. A young man said to his brothers that he would readily forsake his share of the inheritance to them if he could solely be left with the responsibility of caring for his parents. The brothers readily agreed to this and this young man served and tended to his parents very devoutly until the day they passed away.

One night, he saw a dream in which a voice told him that he would find one hundred dinars under a particular stone because of his service to his parents. He asked if the money would have Allah's ﷻ blessings, but the voice said no, and so he declined to accept. The next morning, he told his wife about his dream, and she advised him to check for the money even if he was not going to take it. However he refused, since he was firmly against the idea.

The next night, he heard a voice in his dream telling him of ten dinars under a particular stone that he still had the chance to take as a reward for his service to his parents. Again, he asked the same question, and declined after receiving the same reply.

The third night, the voice said that there was one dinar under the stone and this was his final chance to take it. The young man again asked if the dinar would have Allah's ﷻ blessing, and this time the voice said yes. Hence, the next morning he eagerly took the dinar from under the stone. Walking home, he decided to buy something in the market for his wife to cook, and thus brought a fish home with him. As his wife was cleaning the fish, she found a precious jewel inside that they were able to sell and live comfortably

for the rest of their life. Such are the blessings of Allah ﷻ, that He grants sustenance through avenues that people cannot possibly conceive.

### **Sustenance of the *People of Allah***

The *People of Allah* ﷻ find sustenance from the same source as prophets, and receive lovingly from Allah ﷻ, just as a devoted father cares for his child. Allah ﷻ opens His vast treasures for them and the Holy Quran says:

*He prepares a way out and provides for him from sources he could never imagine [65: 2-3]*

### **Definition of Sustenance**

The closest translation for the Arabic word *rizq* is sustenance and means. Collectively, this includes the livelihood and honor of the whole family, food and earning, and the tranquility that accompanies a satisfied life.

It is unfortunate that this is exactly the kind of fruitful life people struggle for all their lives but somehow feel that it is always beyond their grasp. Working more than one job also does not seem to solve their problems and this is because Allah ﷻ withdraws His blessings because of something that is gravely wrong or missing from daily life.

### **The Paradigm Reversed**

People today pursue careers in engineering and medicine because they feel that they cannot possibly sustain themselves if they pursue a lifetime of pleasing Allah ﷻ as a scholar (*'aalim*) or someone who has memorized the Holy Quran (*hafiz*). This is an unfortunate delusion because one

cannot possibly find even one example where a true practicing *'aalim* or *hafiz* ever died from hunger or poverty.

Sustenance comes from Allah ﷻ who will never fail those who serve and obey Him. So this way of thinking is ridiculous and a delusion from Shaitan. It is frequently the other way around, where one often hears of others who have completed high degrees, but have ended their lives in dire poverty and hunger.

#### **Hadrat Imam Abu Yusuf**

Imam Abu Yusuf (May the mercy of Allah be upon him) lost his father as a young child and so his mother sent him to the local launderer to be an apprentice so he could learn the trade and begin earning. On his way, the young Abu Yusuf encountered Imam Abu Hanifa (May the mercy of Allah be upon him) and began sitting in his company.

Abu Yusuf subsequently became Hadrat Imam Abu Hanifa's student and told him about his mother's concerns. Imam Abu Hanifa advised him to console his mother by telling her that he had high hopes of a great career from what he was learning instead of being apprenticed to a launderer. The mother was not satisfied by this, and came to Imam Abu Hanifa to complain, saying that she had not sent her son to seek knowledge but to learn a trade so that the family could generate some immediate revenue.

Imam Abu Hanifa tried to reassure the mother and said, "You will see that your son will prosper and eat sweet dishes and delicacies meant only for rulers." The mother finally acquiesced and left her son in Imam Abu Hanifa's tutelage.

This son would later become an exemplary student and scholar of the Islamic world.

Later in his lifetime, Imam Abu Yusuf served as Chief Justice and the Caliph Harun Rashid (May the mercy of Allah be upon him) would sit in his company. Once the caliph said to Imam Abu Yusuf, “Hadrat, I have had a dish prepared for you and would like it brought to you everyday.” Hadrat Imam Abu Yusuf liked the sweet dish very much and asked what it was. Harun Rashid replied, “This dish is so special that it is prepared for me only seldom but from now on, it will be prepared for you daily because of your exemplary status in knowledge.” Imam Abu Yusuf was grateful but again asked what it was, and the king replied, “This is a sweet dish made from pistachios.” Hadrat Imam Yusuf was at once reminded of the words his great teacher Imam Abu Hanifa had spoken to his mother that her son would be dining on dishes reserved for rulers, for in those times pistachios were considered a rich delicacy.

#### **Hadrat Salim**

Hadrat Salim (May the mercy of Allah be upon him) had originally been sold as a slave for three hundred dirhams, but afterwards, his pursuit of religious learning reached such an honored status that the king of the time used to come to his door seeking advice. It also happened once that the king was even refused an audience with Hadrat Salim and had to return empty handed, because Hadrat Salim had been so preoccupied with his religious duties.

Hadrat Salim had once been a slave sold for merely three hundred dirhams, but his intense desire for knowledge and a connection with Allah u increased his worth a hundred fold.

*Unknown we remained until we were sold,  
Your buying made us priceless.*

### **The Responsibility of Sustenance**

Allah ﷻ delivers sustenance to all humankind from His vast treasures, but showers it especially on the righteous. Allah ﷻ takes responsibility for sustaining all of creation in the Holy Quran, but yet man is the only creature that hoards, as if this will somehow subside or be insufficient.

*And there is not a thing but its (sources and) treasures are with Us ... We only send down thereof in due and ascertainable measures [15:21]*

*There is no moving creature on earth but its sustenance depends on Allah [11:6]*

*It is Allah who feeds (both) them and you [29:60]*

Someone once came to Hadrat Bayazid Bustami (May the mercy of Allah be upon him) seeking advice because he was very troubled. He said that he had a large family and was struggling to make ends meet. Hadrat Bayazid replied, “I want you to return home and evict all the people whose sustenance you are responsible for providing and only let those stay whose sustenance is the responsibility of Allah ﷻ.”

### **Family Planning**

In the 1800s, a man named Malthus urged the importance of population control, claiming that the earth's resources would become insufficient to sustain mankind if population growth was not curbed. This concept was revisited in the 1960s when governments urged family planning so that there would be enough for the 1970s generation to live comfortably.

The 1970s came and passed and so did the 1980s with populations living in the same condition as before if not better. Decade after decade, governments issued these warnings that people would be reduced to cannibalism by the 1990s if population growth was not curbed with efficient family planning. However, even the 1990s came and passed with people living and eating even better.

The simple and beautiful truth is that people in the 1990s were being sustained even better than their counterparts in the 1960s because Allah ﷻ was increasing means and sustenance as the world population increased. This was and is in conjunction with Allah's ﷻ promise that sustenance is His responsibility.

When Hadrat Adam ؑ was the only human being on earth, Allah ﷻ just sent down sustenance for one, and subsequently allowed for more as the world's population increased. Furthermore, the earth did not produce nearly as much as it does today in modern times when Hadrat Ibrahim ؑ was alive, because Allah ﷻ made the earth produce only what was necessary at that time for what the population numbered then.

### **Doors of *Taqwa* and Sustenance**

The provision of sustenance is Allah's ﷻ responsibility. This by no means implies that man should not work or make effort to support himself, but rather than he should keep focused on that fact that Allah ﷻ is the Source of all. Difficulties and financial strains arise only when people neglect to focus on Allah ﷻ as the primary source of sustenance and thus resort to illegal means of acquiring income. On the other hand, the righteous never have the opportunity to complain because Allah ﷻ opens the vast treasures of His ﷻ sustenance for them.

### ***Taqwa* in All Phases of Life**

*Taqwa* benefits man in all circumstances and in all phases of existence – in the temporal world; the grave; *barzakh* (the intermediary world), and the Hereafter. Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran:

*Said Moses to his people, "Pray for help from Allah and (wait) in patience and constancy...and the end is (best) for the righteous [7:128]*

The Holy Quran stresses *taqwa* and further guarantees success in this world and the Hereafter because of *taqwa*.

### ***Taqwa* and the Bridge of *Sirat***

Family, relatives, friends and all except the righteous will become bitter enemies on the Day of Judgment. *Taqwa* will prove useful even after death, and everyone will have to cross the Bridge of *Sirat*.

*Not one of you but (the righteous) will pass over it [19:71]*

Allah ﷻ says that all will cross, in order to separate righteousness from evil.

*This is by your Lord, a Decree that must be accomplished*  
[19:71]

Only the righteous will be able to cross and thus be saved, whereas the evil and rebellious shall fall into Hellfire.

*But We shall save those who guarded against evil* [19:72]

Having successfully crossed the Bridge, the righteous shall be escorted to the gardens of Paradise awaiting them.

*Those who feared their Creator will be led to Paradise in crowds* [39:73]

### **Inhabitants of Paradise**

Angels will welcome the righteous into Paradise at every gate, praising their patience and wishing them peace.

*Angels shall enter unto them from every gate* [13:23]

Allah ﷻ says that the righteous shall inherit Paradise, and at one place in the Holy Quran, an entire *ruku'* is dedicated to the good tidings of Paradise.

*Such is the Garden that We give to those who guard against evil* [19:63]

All that is in Paradise is for the righteous, and the Holy Quran is filled with the beauty that lies within.

*Verily for the righteous will be a fulfillment of desires; Gardens enclosed and grapevines; companions of equal age; and a cup full to the brim. No vanity shall they hear therein, nor untruth. Recompense from your Lord, a gift, sufficient.*

[78:31-36]

Four streams shall flow through the Paradise of the righteous for their drink and pleasure.

*A parable of the garden which the righteous are promised; in it are rivers of water incorruptible; rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine, a joy to those who drink; and rivers of honey pure and clear [47:15]*

Success and honor in both the temporal world and the Hereafter is based on *taqwa*. Hence, people should abandon all their worthless pursuits in this life and put all their efforts into practicing *taqwa*.

### **Hadrat Yusuf ؑ**

Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran that *Surah Yusuf* is one that carries important and essential lessons for mankind.

*We relate unto you the most beautiful of stories [12:3]*

Herein is the story of two fellowships – that of Hadrat Yusuf ؑ and that of his brothers. Indeed, Hadrat Yusuf ؑ was only one man, but sometimes even one man can outweigh a company of many men because of his strength

and fortitude as proved to be the case here. Hadrat Ibrahim ؑ was only one man, but the Holy Quran says:

*Ibrahim was indeed a nation* [16:120]

Allah ﷻ tested Hadrat Yusuf's e brothers who resolved to kill their brother as a possible solution to their problem and consoled themselves by saying that they would repent later.

*Slay Yusuf or cast him out to some (unknown) land* [12:9]

Hence, the brothers committed a grave sin through which Hadrat Yusuf ؑ was tested severely, but he emerged successful through Allah's ﷻ grace and mercy.

*But she in whose house he was, sought to seduce him from his (true) self* [12:23]

Allah ﷻ further tested him through a woman's charms, but Hadrat Yusuf ؑ also proved successful in this and the master was compelled to proclaim Hadrat Yusuf's ؑ sincerity.

*Yusuf! O man of truth!* [12:46]

The events that follow show that Hadrat Yusuf ؑ was not only freed from jail but also promoted to the post of Finance Minister over all of Egypt. By the wisdom Allah ﷻ had bestowed upon him, he successfully steered Egypt

through the years of abundance and then the years of famine, as had been foreshadowed in the king's dream.

The events that follow this are even more fascinating in the contrast that they present. The famine had been very severe on Hadrat Yusuf's ﷺ family, and so his brothers came to barter most of the family's belongings for food. The money and other belongings that they brought were by no means enough to buy all the food that they wanted, and knowing this, they requested Hadrat Yusuf ﷺ to be charitable in their time of need.

Both the brothers and Hadrat Yusuf ﷺ were sons of the same prophet, but the brothers had failed Allah's ﷻ tests whereas Hadrat Yusuf ﷺ had passed the tests. Now, Hadrat Yusuf ﷺ was seated on a pedestal whilst his brothers were at his feet on the ground.

Presenting themselves in this fashion, the brothers put their case of suffering and their request for charity to Hadrat Yusuf ﷺ. The Holy Quran records their conversation for posterity:

*O exalted one!* [12:78]

*Distress has seized us and our family. We have brought but scanty capital, so pay us full measure and treat it as charity to us; Allah rewards the charitable* [12:88]

Upon hearing that their situation had become so dire, Hadrat Yusuf ﷺ asked:

*Know you how you dealt with Yusuf?* [12:89]

*Are you indeed Yusuf?* [12:90]

Taken aback, the brothers asked if he was really the brother they had tried to kill. Hadrat Yusuf ﷺ revealed himself to them and also emphasized his relationship to his brother Binyamin.

*I am Yusuf and this is my brother* [12:90]

Hadrat Yusuf ﷺ said that Allah ﷻ rewards the patient and righteous. Allah ﷻ guarantees that the sacrifices and deeds of the righteous are never in vain.

*Never will Allah suffer the reward to be lost of those who do right and are patient* [12:90]

#### ***Taqwa* and Nearness to Allah ﷻ**

The previous scholars and venerable sages (*mashaikh*) understood the importance of inculcating *taqwa* into their lives and endured tremendous hardship and sacrifice to do so and were thus successful.

Today the Muslims have forgotten this important lesson and hence, are in a state of dishonor and disgrace. Hadrat Qasim Nanotvi, Hadrat Rashid Ahmed Gangohi, Hadrat Shaykh ul-Hind (May the mercy of Allah be upon them) and countless *mashaikh* of the past embodied *taqwa* and left magnificent examples that shine throughout time for the whole world. Yet, they studied from the same texts that students study from today, but the students of today are certainly not the caliber of the likes of Hadrat Nanotvi.

The elders of the past were able to partake of the mercy of Allah ﷻ by deciphering the jewels and pearls of *taqwa*

from within the holy texts, something which people have unfortunately forgotten today.

Such great personalities would not even fill their stomachs with lawful earnings but yet, their progeny is satisfied from filling its belly with the unlawful. The progeny of great people who would not sleep but worship all night is satisfied with sleeping soundly all night in warm beds. It is indeed unfortunate that Muslims have forgotten so much. All the more reason to reflect and practice now before it is too late.

#### **Knowledge is a Thing Most Delicate**

Indeed, knowledge is a blessing to be treated delicately and with respect. None is to be pitied more than one who has acquired the knowledge and speech of an *'aalim* but his heart remains hard and ignorant.

Hadrat Luqman عليه السلام said that he had lifted the heaviest weights but found nothing to be heavier than knowledge. He also said that he had partaken of the sweetest dishes but found nothing as sweet as the remembrance of Allah ﷻ. Today, most Muslims wear some of the softest and richest clothing and eat the most exotic dishes and so, their hearts remain harder than stone.

#### **The Heart: a Place of Filth?**

RasulAllah ﷺ said that the heart is the seat of *taqwa*. Today, the heart of the common Muslim is filled with filthy desires that always put the nafs above Allah's ﷻ wishes; The heart has truly become a wicked and filthy place. Purification of

such a heart requires a sincere will and struggle to change the heart to the obedience and remembrance of Allah ﷻ.

*What are these images to which you are so devoted?* [21:52]

Angels of mercy do not enter a house in which there are pictures. Today Muslims have pictures and idols of lust and greed littering their hearts, so how can the Mercy of Allah ﷻ be expected to descend onto such a filthy place that is already filled with others?

Struggle and perseverance against the nafs is required to rectify such hearts and only then will *taqwa* take root therein. Muslims must sincerely practice what the Holy Quran says and hold themselves accountable before they are held accountable. Putting the Holy Quran into action in our daily lives is the only way to inculcate *taqwa*, and others will only listen when the speaker himself is a living and breathing example of what he is preaching.

*I advise myself first and then you* [Hadith]

If words fail to impact one's own ears, how can they be expected to impact others? It should be that we listen to our own advice to others and reflect on the same. Along those same lines, we should ponder upon and implement what we read in the texts.

#### **Hadrat Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri**

A group of Hindus once accepted Islam at the hand of Hadrat Anwar Shah Kashmiri (May the mercy of Allah be upon him) and so someone asked them why they had done

so. Pointing to their benefactor, Hadrat Kashmiri, they said that Hadrat's face could not be that of a liar.

These were the great personalities from Islam's past, whose faces would glow with *taqwa* and shimmer from their acts of worship. Alas where are such people today?

### **Definition of *Taqwa***

Hadrat Umar ibn Khattab رضي الله عنه once asked Hadrat Ibn Ka'ab رضي الله عنه the definition of *taqwa*. In reply Hadrat Ibn Ka'ab رضي الله عنه asked, "Have you ever had to traverse a thorny path?" Hadrat Umar رضي الله عنه replied in the affirmative and Hadrat Ka'ab رضي الله عنه continued, "How do you do so?"

Hadrat Umar رضي الله عنه said that he would carefully walk through after first having collected all loose and flowing clothing in his hands so nothing gets caught in the thorns hence injuring him. Hadrat Ka'ab رضي الله عنه said, "This is the definition of *taqwa*, to protect oneself from sin through life's dangerous journey so that one can successfully complete the journey unscathed by sin."

*And your garments keep free from stain [74:4]*

*Taqwa* is the best protector and life companion, for it shall always guard against sin and evil.

*But the raiment of taqwa is best [7:26]*

*Take a provision with you for the journey, but the best provision is taqwa [2:197]*

Being the ultimate guide to married life, *Surah* al-Nisa is decorated with references to *taqwa* every third to fourth

verse, because the nurturing of *taqwa* is the key ingredient to the success of any marriage. Allah ﷻ warns us in the Holy Quran:

*And fear Allah and know that you are to meet Him [2:223]*

Hadrat Maulana Hafiz Ghulam Habib (May the mercy of Allah be upon him) used to define *taqwa* as the shunning of everything and anything that causes a deficiency in one's relationship with Allah ﷻ.

*Taqwa* is not merely a word or something associated with just a single act, but needs to be implemented from head to toe and throughout a person's life.

Whatever the human definition, Allah ﷻ provides a clear explanation of *taqwa* in the Holy Quran. Let Muslims turn to the Holy Quran for its divine guidance and explanation.

*It is not taqwa that you turn your faces toward East or West, but it is taqwa to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book and the Messengers, to spend of your substance out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts you have made; to be firm and patient, in pain and adversity. Those are the truthful and those are the righteous [2:177]*

Those who practice the divine words above are truly worthy of being called the truthful and the righteous.

*Those are the truthful [2:177]*

*Those are the righteous [2:177]*

May Allah ﷻ give us all the ability to adhere to the Holy Quran and inculcate *taqwa* within ourselves. Ameen.

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