



Providence and Reliance in Islam: An Exposition
by Marc Manley

إن الحمد لله ، الذي أنزل رسوله محمد الذي استنقذنا به من عبادة الأوثان
والأصنام. الله ربنا الذي خلق السماوات والأرض في ستة أيام ثم استوى على
العرش يدبر الأمر.
فمن يهده الله فلا مضل له، و من يضلله فلا هادي له، و أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله،
وحده لا شريك له، و أشهد أن محمدا، النبي الأمي، عبده و رسوله، ختم الأنبياء
و أشرف المرسلين، صلوات الله و سلامه و تحياته و بركاته 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 Allah [God in the Arabic language], Who sent His Messenger, Muhammad, by which he salvaged us from the misguided worship of idols. God is our Lord, He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and established the Throne and order.

For the one God has chosen to guide, there is no mis-guider 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. 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's prayers, His peace, His greetings, and blessings be 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 greeting of Paradise, "as-Salaamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakaatuhu".

First Khutbah – Main Points

يا قوم ادخلوا الأرض المقدسة التي كتب الله لكم ولا ترتدوا على
أدباركم فتنقلبوا خسرين

قالوا يا موسى إن فيها قوما جابرين وإنا لن ندخلها حتى يخرجوا
منها فإن يخرجوا منها فإنا داخلون

قال رجلان من الذين يخافون أنعم الله عليهما ادخلوا عليهم الباب فإذا
دخلتموه فإنكم غالبون – وعلى الله فتوكلوا إن كنتم مومنين

Opening recitation from s. Ma'idah:

"[Moses] said: 'O' my people! Enter the Holy City which God has ordained for you and do not turn your back on your tracks. If you do you will be made the losers'.

[His people] said: 'O' Moses! But there are powerful people in that city and we will never go in until they leave. If they leave then we will certainly go in'.

Two men amongst them who feared God said: 'Enter upon them by way of the gate. If you do so you will be victorious'. And upon God you should rely if you are believers." [Q: 5: 21-23]

What does it mean to rely upon God? Is *tawakkul* an individual endeavor or can it also have communal aspects as well?

When God commanded Moses to go to the Holy Land, He knew He was placing a **heavy burden** on Moses. Likewise, Moses' people reacted with **trepidation** because of the charge set before them. Moses reminded them that **despite the obstacle before** them, it was "what God had written for them".

To turn from that would be in loss: **فتنقلبوا خاسرين**.

It was **the courage of two men** from amongst them, **not Prophets**, but men, who encouraged them to drive on and do what was required of them. This illustrates the nuanced meaning of "God-fearing". We can take from it the meaning of humility, responsibility, and acting with the objective of pleasing God. This very dynamic passage ends with: **"upon God you should rely if you are believers!"**.

We should expect our task to be made difficult and challenge us. Even the Prophet [s] was challenged:

أم حسبتم أن تدخلوا الجنة ولما يأتكم مثل الذين خلوا من قبلكم –
مستهم البأساء الضراء و زلزلوا حتى يقول الرسول والذين ءامنوا
معه متى نصر الله – ألا إن نصر الله قريب

“Did you think you would waltz into the Garden while the state of those who passed away before you had not come on you yet? They were afflicted with poverty and distress to such an extent that they were shaken [their faith], and the Prophet, as well as those who professed faith with him, cried out: ‘When will the help of God come?’ Surely the help of Allah is close at hand.” [Q: 2: 214]

Belief and trust in God go hand in hand. They require **moral courage** tempered with **intellectual restraint** and know-how. I say all this to point us and lead us to **examining our own context** here and now by looking at the Qur’an in both a new and fresh light while rooted in the **muslahah** of the *Sunnah*. Like Moses’ people, **we stand outside the city/society**; Islam stands outside of the society – will we go in or stay outside? Can **we** afford to stay outside? If **we** go in, how shall **we** enter?

The Prophet Muhammad’s [s] life and characteristics continually provide numerous gems of wisdom to benefit from. **Overshadowed** by an approach to the *Sunnah* which focuses on the **minutia** of implementation, such as use of the *miswak* and putting the shoes on, our approach to the *Sunnah*/the Prophet himself, has blinded of us looking at the **Big Picture of his Message**. We should constantly ask ourselves, what was his message? **What was his goal** and therefore, **what is our goal**? Can we let labels do all of our talking for us or **can we make space and room for all of us to participate and come together, as a community, to reply upon God**? Where will we find our two men who will remind us of our duty and obligation?

Second Khutbah - Main Points

. He was aware of their shortcomings because he was one of them and witnessed their ignorant ways. He allowed them to enter into Islam so that it may be that cure for their hearts:

فبما رحمة من الله لنت لهم – ولو كنت فظا غليظ القلب لانفضوا من حولك – فاعف عنهم واستغفر لهم وشاورهم في الأمر – فإذا عزممت فتوكل على الله إن الله يحب المتوكلين

“It was a mercy from God that you are gentle with them [the Prophet’s companions]. If you had been rough with them or had a hard heart they would have scattered from your midst. Therefore pardon them and ask for forgiveness for them and share in the decision making process. And when you have made up your mind, put your trust in God for God loves those who rely upon Him.” [Q: 3:159]

There is so much to take from here. For the sake of time, I will only list a few items:

- The Prophet [s] had a divinely-inspired personality which engendered in him a sense of gentleness and humility.
- Many of us **mistake being hard, rough, or tough for being pious**. Piety is not the same as taking the most difficult path to accomplishing a task.
- **If the Prophet [s] had been harsh** he would have had no cooperation from them and **could not have completed his mission**.
- The **decision making process can be a shared one**, *but* when the conclusion is made, we should **put our trust in that process** and not back-bite one another or promote sedition/*fitnah* amongst our ranks and respect the authorities in our communities.
- Trust in God is not a simple-Simon individualism where we just do what ever we want. It is a process in which we must come together and negotiate our differences in a way that is pleasing to God first and foremost and secondarily, protects the dignity of Muslims. Closing Du’ah:

اللهم لك الحمد أنت نور السماوات والأرض ولك الحمد أنت قيام
السماوات والأرض ومن فيهن أنت الحق وقولك الحق ووعدك الحق
ولقائك حق والجنة حق والنار حق والساعة حق اللهم لك أسلمنا وبك
آمنا و عليك توكلنا وإليك أنبنا وبك خاصمنا وإليك حاكمنا فاغفر لنا
ما قدمنا وأخرنا وأسررنا وأعلننا أنت إلهنا لا إله إلا أنت

Amin.