



Getting What God Wants Us To Get From Islam: Creating Safe Spaces
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.

First Khutbah - Main Points

What do we want from Islam? We seldom ask this question. **What does Allah want us to get from Islam?** And in the negotiation of these two questions, **how do we go about making this a reality?**

Piety, to a large extent, **has been replaced by such plastic words as “tradition”**. This word has garnered so much attention in recent years that Muslims are beginning to identify themselves as “traditional Muslims”. But my question is: **what is “traditional Islam”?** Often what is deemed to be traditional is expressed in **modes of dress, pious affectation, perhaps even cuisine**. Allah has a different definition of piety:

ليس البر أن تولوا وجوهكم قبل المشرق والمغرب
ولكن البر من ءامن بالله واليوم الآخر والملائكة والكتاب
والنبيين...

“Piety is not the turning of your face to the East or the West. No, piety is the one who is secure in his belief of God and the Last Day, the Angles, the Book and the Prophets...”

[Q: 2:177]

الذين ءامنوا ولم يلبسوا إيمانهم بظلم اولئك لهم الأمن وهم
مهتدون

“Those who profess faith and do not wear their faith on their sleeve, security is their reward. They are the rightly guided.”

[Q: 6:82]

The downside to all of this is that we often create psychological spaces where people do not feel safe to grow as Muslims. This **plays on people’s religious sensibilities** and in fact, when they do not stand up to this comparison, they may be **afflicted with doubt and uncertainty**.

Muslims more than ever need spaces where they can feel safe. **This is one of the root meanings of *imān*: to be secure [from a-ma-na]**.

فبما رحمة من الله لنت لهم – ولو كنت فظا غليظ القلب لانفضوا من
حولك – فاعف عنهم واستغفر لهم وشاورهم في الأمر

“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.” [Q: 3:159]

Even the Prophet [s] was commanded by God to be kind and gentle with his Companions [r]. He knew and they knew that his understanding of the religion was infallible; beyond reproach. Yet, Allah, in all of His Wisdom, set up a “space” where the Prophet was instructed to make his Companions feel safe and have room to grow.

Second Khutbah – Main Points

Spiritual Training

Some athletes train their **whole lives** for **8 seconds of performance**.

Do we come even close to this kind of dedication towards our own Islam, our salvation when we stand before Allah?

فأما من أوتى كتابه بيمينه فسوف يحاسب حسابا يسيرا و ينقلب إلى
أهله مسرورا
وأما من أوتى كتابه وراء ظهره فسوف يدعو ثورا ويصلى سعيرا
إنه كان في أهله مسرورا إنه ظن أن لن يحور بلى إن ربه كان به
بصيرا

“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.” [Q: 84:7-15]

Like these athletes, **if we want to get solid results out of our Islam, then we have to train for it and manage it.**

Reading Qu’ran

Studying the life of the Prophet

Studying ourselves, our cultures, and our contexts

For those who want to have a competitive spirit, we have to look to what the Qu’ran says and what the Companions [r] of the Prophet [s] said about this:

إن الأبرار لفي نعيم على الأرائك ينظرون تعرف في وجوههم نظرة
النعيم يسقون من رحيق مختوم ختامه مسك وفي ذلك فالتنافس
المتنافسون

“The pious ones are felicitous, on couches gazing in wonder. You will recognize in their faces the brilliance of joy. They will drink from the Sealed Wine of Jennah, sealed with musk. So let those who aspirations aspire to that!” [Q: 83:22-26]

أمرنا رسول الله يوماً أن نتصدق, فوافق ذلك ما لا عندي, فقلت: اليوم
أسبق أبا بكر إن سبقته يوماً, فجئت بنصف مالي, فقال رسول الله: ما
أبقيت لأهلك؟ فقلت: مثله. قال: وأتى أبو بكر بكل ما عنده, فقال له
رسول الله: ما أبقيت لأهلك؟ قال: أبقيت لهم الله ورسوله. قلت: لا
أسابقك إلى شيء أبداً

‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab relates a hadith to us: “The Prophet [s] commanded us to give some charity one day so I took sufficient wealth with me from my property to offer for this charity and said: ‘Today I shall outdo Abu Bakr if I am ever to outdo him. So I came with half of my property and the Messenger of Allah said: ‘what have you left your family with?’ I replied, ‘with an equal amount [half]’. Then Abu Bakr came and the Prophet said to him, ‘what have you left your family with?’, to which Abu Bakr replied, ‘I have left them Allah and His Messenger’. I [‘Umar] said, ‘I will never succeed you in anything!’” [Sunnan Abu Dawud, Book of Zakāh, #1678, pg. 176, Dar al-Ma’rifah.]

اللهم اجعلني من أئمة المتقين

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

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