

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ



Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3:102

O You Who Believe!

- Fear Allah as He should be feared.
- And die not except in a state of Islam.

Commentary

Allamah Taba Tabai (AR)

The verse talks of *at-taqwa* as it rightfully should be done, that is, a piety that is not tainted by the least wrong. Such piety is the pure servitude which is never marred by an iota of obliviousness or heedlessness; it is obedience without disobedience, gratitude without ingratitude, remembrance without forgetfulness; it is the true Islam, that is, the highest grade of Islam. Accordingly, the words, *and do not die unless you are Muslims*, would mean: Continue on this condition of ideal *at-taqwa* until you die.

This verse gives a different ideal than the words: *Therefore fear Allah as much as you can* (64:16). This command enjoins man not to leave fear of Allah in anything as much as he can. But ability differs from man to man according to people's strength, understanding and will. There is no doubt that the ideal piety is not within easy reach of a majority of men. There are, in this spiritual journey, many stations, locations and danger points which cannot be spotted except by those who know. Also there are many delicate points and subtle differences which cannot be recognized except by those who have been purified. There is many a stage of piety which a common man would say, was beyond human ability; he really believes it to be far above the human strength – while the truly pious people have long past that stage and are now progressing towards even more difficult goad, through much more harder terrains.

The two verses (*fear Allah with the fear which is due to Him; fear Allah as much as you can*) then give the following connotation: All people are called and invited to the ideal piety; then they are told to proceed to that goal as much as they can, everyone according to his own ability and strength. In this way, all will come on the path of piety; but they will be in different stages and various stations according to their own understanding and ambition, coupled with the Divine help and support, that is, bestowed on deserving servants. (This is what one understands after pondering on the two verses.)

It is clear from the above explanation that the two verses are neither different from each other in meaning nor identical; rather, the first verse (*fear Allah with the fear which is due to Him*) points to the ultimate goal, while the second (*fear Allah as much as you can*) shows the way.

Abu Basir says - I asked Abu Abdillah (AS) about the words of Allah, *fear Allah with the fear which is due to Him*, and he said:

He should be obeyed, and not disobeyed; remembered and not forgotten; and thanked, and not shown ingratitude.
(Ma'anil-akhbar; at-Tafsir, al-Ayyashi)

Al-Khatib narrates from Anas that he said - The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

No servant fears Allah with the fear which is due to Him until he knows that what has befallen him could not miss him, and what has missed him could not reach him.
(ibid)

Ibn Shahrashub quotes from at-Tafsir of Waki that Abd Khayr said - I asked Ali ibn Abi Talib (AS) about the words of Allah: *O you who believe! fear Allah with the fear which is due to Him*, and he said:

By Allah, no one acted upon it except the House of the Messenger of Allah; we remembered Him, so we do not forget him; and we thanked Him, we are never ungrateful to Him; and we obeyed Him, so we never disobeyed Him.

When this verse was revealed, the Companions said - We are unable to do it.

Then Allah revealed, *Therefore fear Allah as much as you can*.

Waki said: *that is, as much as you are able to do*.
(al-Burhan fi tafsiril-Qur'an], al-Bahrani)

Mir Ahmed Ali (AR) and Aqa Mahdi Puya (AR)

Ittaqullah means to safeguard oneself with awareness of the boundaries (physical, moral and spiritual laws) laid down by Allah so as to keep clear of sins and transgressions. There is no room for "fear" in Islam. Please refer to the commentary of Fatihah: 1 to 4; Baqarah: 2; Ali Imran 31. Taqwa means piety or to ward off evil and take refuge with Allah, not out of fear, but because of the awareness and insight of the consequences if one breaks or tampers with the laws made and enforced by Allah for the benefit and welfare of mankind.

Haqqa tuqatihi means it is the duty of the creature to be aware of the creator's will and command. It is His prerogative that His creatures should, willingly or unwillingly, obey Him and carry out His commands.

Wa antum muslimun means full of faith, perfect in conduct, and strict in the observance of the law, which is possible when one surrenders and submits oneself unconditionally to Allah.

Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars

1. Every day we must promote to a higher stage.

"O' you who have Faith! be in awe of Allah as it is due to Him...."

2. Mere belief is not enough, but to remain faithful is the condition. Beginning is not so important while the ending is more important.

"... and do not die unless you are Muslims."

3. Islam not only teaches us how to live, but also teaches us how to die.

4. Piety is the only key to the goodness of destiny.

Any perfection such as Faith, knowledge and piety has stages. There are elementary stages and the stages higher than that up to the absolute perfection. For instance, we recite the Qur'an where it says: *"O' Lord! Increase me my knowledge!"* Or in Makarim-ul-Akhlaq, the Supplication, we, asking the Lord, recite: *"O' Lord! Expand my Faith to a perfect faith."* And, in the above mentioned verse we recite: *"... be in awe of Allah as it is due to Him..."*

Imam Sadiq (AS) in this regard, says:

The due piety is in the fact that Allah be obeyed and not to be disobeyed; to be remembered and not to be forgotten, and to be thanked with no ingratitude.

This shows that there are some stages and steps in piety.