

Fear in the Muslim Tradition

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Introduction

In a way, Islam serves as an antidote to fear. The foundational beliefs and teachings of the Muslim tradition, especially as communicated through the Quran and the biography of the Prophet Muhammad, give the believer a panoramic perspective of worldly suffering.¹ This perspective is rooted in the fundamental insecurities of a believer's existence, and propels him to place complete faith in Allah. In a number of Quranic verses, the injunction is clear: nothing of this world - no individual, group or calamity - should serve as a cause of fear for a Muslim.² A true believer's fear should stem from two ultimate realities: the Almighty Creator and the Day of Judgment. It is thus the responsibility of the believer to cultivate the proper type of fear, and in doing so, work to rid himself of the improper types.³

Despite Quranic injunctions that Muslims must overcome their worldly fears in order to truly manifest their belief in Allah, the Quran acknowledges that individuals, and the community or *ummah* as a whole, will experience challenges that can lead to despair.

¹ The Quran and the example of the Prophet Muhammad through his teachings and practices, known as the *Sunnah*, serve as the two primary sources of guidance for Muslims. All other Islamic hermeneutical works, including *fiqh* or *shari'a* stem from these two sources. This paper will primarily focus on the Quran and the Sunnah. A chapter of the Quran is known as a *Surah*.

² This sentiment is expressed in Surah 3, Verse 175 in the Quran which states, "It is but Satan who instills [into you] fear of his allies: so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are [truly] believers!" For this and all other translated Quranic verses, I will be using "The Message of the Quran" translated and with commentary by Muhammad Asad, published by The Book Foundation in 2003.

³ Interview with Professor Ovamir Anjum by author. Professor Anjum is the Imam Khattab Chair of Islamic Studies at the Department of Philosophy, University of Toledo. The interview took place on Feb. 11, 2010.

Managing fear, therefore, is often addressed in Quranic discourse. The Quran chronicles instances in history when prophets and their followers suffered from despair and anxiety, including stories of Prophet Moses and Pharaoh and the struggles of the early Muslim community in Mecca and Medina.

This paper seeks to explore the role of fear in the Muslim tradition. I will first explore the varied references to fear in the Quran and traditional Islamic scholarship. Next, I will focus on the life of the Prophet Muhammad and the experiences of the early Muslim community in regards to moments of fear that they experienced and their response. The example of the Prophet is imperative for the scope of this paper, as he embodies the ultimate role model for all Muslims. The goal of this paper is to shed light on religious or historical sources which Muslims have turned to in order to understand how to manage fear—on both a communal and individual level—through faith.

The Quran and Traditional Islamic Scholarship

The Quran uses a number of Arabic words to express fear, although the precise definition of each differs based on context. The general term *khawf* is used in *Surah* (Chapter) 3, Verse 175, "So fear them not, and fear Me alone, if you are believers." Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, a Sufi and prominent Sunni jurist, wrote an entire chapter on "The Station of al-Khawf" in his work on spirituality, *Madarij us Salikeen*. In the chapter, he cites *khawf* as a

spiritual station for Sufis.⁴ Ibn Qayyim includes a *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad, in which Ayesha, the wife of the Prophet states:⁵

"O Messenger of Allah, is the verse 'And those who dispense their charity while their hearts fear that to their Lord they must return' [23:60] referring to someone who commits fornication, drinks alcohol and steals and still fear Allah? The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "No, Oh daughter of as-Siddiq, but it refers to one who fasts, perform prayer and gives charity, and fears that it may not be accepted from him." (Tirmithi) Al-Hasan, commenting on this, said, "By Allah, they (the Companions) obeyed Him and strove hard in it, yet they feared it might be rejected. A believer combines righteousness with fear in his heart, while a hypocrite combines evil with impunity."⁶

This hadith underscores the importance of cultivating fear for a believer, as fear positions him to remain steadfast on the path of righteousness.

Ibn Qayyim then addresses the nuances in the different types of fear. The general term *khawf* is used for the fear of an ordinary believer who, when faced with a trial, takes flight or is motivated by his survival instinct. This is the lowest degree of fear that is required by faith. The word *rahbah* is similar to *khawf* and describes the urge to run away from danger as a result of fear—in most cases, of death.⁷ The words *khashyah*, *wajal*, and *haybah* are also translated as

⁴ *Madarij us Salikeen*, which is translated as the Ranks of the Divine Seekers, is an eminent work on Muslim spirituality by Ibn Qayyim, who was born in the year 1292 and died in 1350 CE. Ibn Qayyim, who was born near the city of Damascus, in Syria, was a student and close companion of the great 13th Century Hanbali reformer Ibn Taymiyya.

⁵ A *hadith* is a tradition based on reports of the sayings, actions and tacit approvals of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, known as the Sahaba. A hadith also includes a chain of transmission.

⁶ This hadith was referenced in *Madarij us Salikeen*, translated from the Arabic by Ovamir Anjum. It was obtained from this website: <http://www.islaam.com/Article.aspx?id=664>.

⁷ Overcoming the fear of death, which is a human beings ultimate fear, is a primary responsibility for a Muslim, and is mentioned in many works by Islamic scholars of spirituality. For Muslims, death is not the end, but a transitional phase that will bring one closer to meeting with the Creator. Once a Muslim overcomes the fear of death, other

fear. *Khashyah*, which is more specific than *khawf*, is associated with those who have an innate awareness of Allah, and as a result, are in a state of tranquility when faced with adversity. This is more akin to a state of awe and is expressed in Surah 35:28: “and (as) there are in men, and in crawling beasts, and in cattle, too, many hues? Of all His servants, only such as are endowed with [innate] knowledge stand [truly] in awe of Allah.” Another word in Arabic that is from the same root as *khashyah*, is *khushoo*. Muslims are urged to specifically develop *khushoo*, or submission, in their prayers as expressed in Surah 23, Verse 1-2: “Truly, to a happy state shall attain the believers, those who humble themselves in their prayer.” This humility and submission during prayer is a result of a believer’s awe and fear of Allah and the knowledge that He is omniscient.

Ibn Qayyim describes *wajal* as the trembling of the heart upon the cognition or remembrance of someone whose power or punishment one fears.⁸ Finally, *haybah* is the fear associated with the virtuousness and glorification that comes as a result of the fear of displeasing Allah. According to a number of Muslim scholars, it is the highest stage of fear towards which the believer and community must strive.⁹ Another word for this is *taqwa*, translated as Allah-consciousness or piety. Developing *taqwa* helps a Muslim pursue righteousness and keeps him from the acts that are forbidden.

fears become small. In Surah 4, Verse 84, the Quran exclaims: “Fight thou, then, in God’s cause –since thou art but responsible for thine own self – and inspire the believers to overcome all fear of death.”

⁸ *Madarij us Salikeen*

⁹ It is important to mention that while many examples relating the role of fear might reflect an individual response or reaction, religiously speaking, the moral imperatives for individual believers in Islam are also those for the community at large.

Khawf is complemented with the Arabic term *raja'*, which means hope. A sound believer must be able to balance both hope and fear, and ensure that neither are too extreme. Fear that results in despair is impermissible, as is hope that results in a sense of security—if one feels secure, or fearless, where is the need for belief in a Higher Power and Sustainer? Ibn Qayyim asserts that fear is but a means towards an end—that end being receiving Allah's ultimate pleasure in the hereafter. It is said of the people of Paradise that "no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve."¹⁰ In another beautiful Quranic verse, Muslims are told that "among His wonders is this: He displays before you the lightning, giving rise to [both] fear and hope, and sends down water from the skies, giving life thereby to the earth after it had been lifeless: in this, behold, there are messages indeed for people who use their reason!"¹¹ This call to reason is an important command. Muslims should not let their fears overcome them to a point where their reason is impaired.

In another Surah, the Quran "urges the believers to fulfill their spiritual and social responsibilities, and ends with a reminder of man's utter dependence on Allah."¹² A verse in this Surah is especially relevant to the context surrounding the contemporary fears and challenges of the global Muslim community. It was revealed at a time when the Prophet and his companions were facing persecution and hostility from their neighbors in Medina. It states: "O you who have attained to faith! If you ever abandon your faith, Allah will in time bring forth [in your stead] people whom He loves and who love Him - humble towards the believers, proud

¹⁰ *The Message of the Quran*, Surah 2, Verse 274

¹¹ *The Message of the Quran*, Surah 30, Verse 24.

¹² *The Message of the Quran*, Surah Maa'idah explanation

towards all who deny the truth: [people] who strive hard in Allah's cause, and do not fear to be censured by anyone who might censure them.”¹³ Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi, a major 20th century Islamist thinker in the Indian subcontinent, writes about this verse in his exegesis of the Quran:

That is, they will fearlessly follow the Way of Allah and act upon His commandments, and declare to be right what is right, and wrong what is wrong, according to it, and will not mind in the least the opposition, the censure, the criticism, the objections, the derision and ridicules of their opponents. They will boldly follow the Way of Islam which they sincerely believe to be right, even if the popular opinion is against Islam and they are exposed to the ridicule, derision and taunts of the world.¹⁴

Ultimately, this verse affirms that the believers will surely be persecuted or rebuked in this world because of their religion. It urges Muslims to not be intimidated by those who seek to defame Islam, and instead stand proudly by their faith.

The Life of the Prophet Muhammad

The *Seerah*, or life of the Prophet Muhammad, is an important source of guidance for Muslims. Muslims look towards his physical and spiritual journey as a model for how they should conduct themselves in this world. In recent years, a number of English-language biographies have been written about the Prophet by contemporary Muslims (and non-Muslims) who try to relay the relevance of his message to modern sensibilities.¹⁵ The Prophet embodied

¹³ *The Message of the Quran*, Surah 5, Verse 54.

¹⁴ Mawdudi's exegesis is entitled *Tafhim al-Quran*, which means "The Meaning of the Quran." I was able to access the English translation on this website: <http://www.english tafsir.com/Quran/5/index.html>. The footnote for this particular statement is 88.

¹⁵ These biographies include *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* by Martin Lings, *In the Footsteps of the Prophet* by Tariq Ramadan, *Memories of Muhammad* by Omid Safi, *Muhammad: A Prophet for Our Time* by

the “living Quran,” and the ideals that the believers aspire towards are in his manner, speech, looks and behavior, based on the context of his own life and those who surrounded him. It is especially in the moments of adversity—both in the Prophet’s personal life and in the history of the first Muslims, that we can find appropriate responses to managing fear.

It is difficult to imagine a day in the life of the Prophet when he must not have felt even a minimal amount of fear. From his early childhood, which was for the most part spent as an orphan, to his last days of fulfilling his mission, the Prophet faced innumerable challenges: the death of close friends and family, betrayal, persecution, and war. Furthermore, he not only served as a prophet, but also head of state, military commander, diplomat, businessman, legislator, and family man.

One of the most fearful moments of the Prophet’s life is when he received his first revelation from the Angel Gibrail in the cave of Hira near Mecca, where he would seclude himself for days in worship and reflection. His wife Ayesha narrates in a hadith:

Then Allah's Apostle returned with the Inspiration and with his heart beating severely. Then he went to Khadija bint Khuwailid and said, "Cover me! Cover me!" They covered him till his fear was over and after that he told her everything that had happened and said, "I fear that something may happen to me." Khadija replied, "Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your Kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones."¹⁶

Karen Armstrong, and *And Muhammad is His Messenger* by Annemarie Schimmel. I will primarily be using Ramadan’s biography.

¹⁶ *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 1, Hadith 3. English translation available from: <http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/crcc/engagement/resources/texts/muslim/hadith/bukhari/001.sbt.html>.

Khadija bint Khuwailid was the Prophet's first wife. Her immediate support and faith in him from the start of the revelation was a tremendous source of comfort, as was the support of the initial converts to Islam. This hadith is remarkable in that it not only signifies the love and trust between the Prophet and his wife, Khadija, it also humanizes the Prophet for ordinary believers. Here was a simple, illiterate merchant in Mecca, who was being told that he was the Messenger of Allah! The enormity of this life-altering moment cannot be overlooked. With such an onerous and unexpected task ahead of him, the Prophet no doubt felt an abundance of emotions in addition to fear, including immense psychological strain. This hadith reveals a significant lesson for Muslims: domestic and community solidarity in moments of fear. Even the Prophet of Allah had to turn to his closest family and friends during this time period for comfort.

As the Prophet received more revelations and broadened his base of support in Mecca, the heads of the various clans became increasingly threatened by his message, observing that it challenged the very economic, political and religious fabric of society. These individuals included heads of the tribe of Quraysh, who at the time, practiced polytheism. By calling on the people of Mecca to worship one God and get rid of their idols, the Prophet was undoubtedly challenging their basic belief systems. As a result, the Muslims were persecuted, leading the Prophet to make a critical decision. He told a group of nearly one hundred Muslims to migrate to the land of Abyssinia, which is in modern-day Ethiopia. The Prophet instructed them to "find there a king under whose command nobody suffers injustice...[and] remain there until Allah

delivered you from what you suffer at present.”¹⁷ The king of Abyssinia was named Negus, and he was a practicing Christian who was known for his tolerance and just nature. The Prophet believed that the Muslims would be welcome in his land.

The Meccans tried to sabotage their departure by sending emissaries to Abyssinia to persuade the king to expel his Muslim subjects. The king refused to heed their concerns unless he heard from the Muslims themselves about the tenets of their faith and the message of their Prophet. Although he was impressed by the call to oppose injustice and reject idol worship, the emissaries sought to create a divide by highlighting the Muslim understanding of Jesus as a mere mortal, which undoubtedly stood in stark contrast to the understandings of the Christian king. The king demanded to know more about Jesus in Islam, and “the Muslims were aware of the dangers this encounter involved: an explanation of the differences between the two religions might lead Negus to send them back.”¹⁸ Nonetheless, they remained true to the teachings of the faith in their response. This impressed Negus, who sent the emissaries back and welcomed the Muslims to his land.

This narrative reveals an important lesson for contemporary Muslims, particularly those living in Western societies. Muslims should not only look towards other Muslims in moments of fear or adversity—it is imperative to cultivate alliances with and seek solidarity with diverse faith groups. The Prophet recognized that although Negus was a Christian, he was a man of principle and justice, and *that* was the basis for his trust in him. Furthermore, this incident

¹⁷ Tariq Ramadan, *In the Footsteps of the Prophet: Lessons from the Life of Muhammad* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 59.

¹⁸ Ramadan 61

speaks to the Quranic verse mentioned earlier in Surah Maa'idah. In spite of facing the threat of being expelled from Abyssinia, members of the early community did not compromise their religious principles for the sake of appeasing Negus. It is in their truthful representation of their faith tradition that they were ultimately saved.

Meanwhile, in Mecca, the situation for the remaining Muslims and the Prophet was deteriorating. Although some of the Muslims were protected by their tribal or clan affiliations, this protection was challenged when the Meccans began an economic boycott of the Muslim community. In addition, the Prophet personally suffered a loss with the death of his wife Khadija and his guardian and uncle, Abu Talib. Seeking to find a tribe that would offer the Muslims protection, he went to the town of Taif. There, he was met with a cold reception and asked how Allah would allow His Messenger to beg for their support. As he left, the population of the tribe ridiculed him and the children threw stones at him, causing him to bleed. In a moment of utter despair, he sought refuge in an orchard, and turned towards his Creator:

O God, to You alone I complain of my weakness, the meagerness of my resources and my insignificance before men. O Most Merciful of the Merciful, You are the Lord of the weak and You are my Lord. Into whose hands do You entrust me? To some remote stranger who will ill-treat me? Or to an enemy to whom You have granted authority over my affairs? I harbor no fear as long as You are not angry with me. Yet Your gracious support would open a broader way and a wider horizon for me! I seek refuge in the light of Your face, by which all darkness is illuminated and the things of this world and the next are set aright, so that I do not incur Your anger and am not touched by Your wrath. Nevertheless, it is Your prerogative to admonish as long as You are not satisfied. There is no power strength but in You.¹⁹

¹⁹ Ramadan 69

This prayer expresses the Prophet's fears about fulfilling his mission on this earth, which was undeniably becoming more challenging with each passing day. According to Tariq Ramadan, a Swiss Islamic scholar and academic, the prayer "tells of humanity's helplessness and of the Messenger's extraordinary spiritual strength. Seemingly lonely and without support, he knew that he was not alone."²⁰

Eventually it became clear that the Muslims needed to leave Mecca and migrate to Medina. The Prophet and one of his closest companions, Abu Bakr, were two of the last people to leave. The clan chiefs in Mecca had decided to execute the Prophet. In order to trick the executioners, the Prophet decided that his nephew would take his place in his bed the night of the departure. The planning of the *hijra* or migration had been in effect for nearly two years. One might ask why the Prophet of Allah would need to plan or strategize. It was ultimately this strategic organization that enabled the Muslim community to safely relocate to Medina. As Ramadan states:

Only after making intelligent and thorough use of his human powers had he trusted himself to the divine will, thereby clarifying for us the meaning of reliance on God: responsibly exercising all the qualities (intellectual, spiritual, psychological, sentimental, etc.) each one of us has been granted and humbly remembering that beyond what is human possible, God alone makes things happen. Indeed, this teaching is the exact opposite of the temptation of fatalism: God will act only after humans have, at their own level, sought out and exhausted all the potentialities of action. That is the profound meaning of this Quranic verse: "Verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves."²¹

²⁰ Ramadan 69

²¹ Ramadan 81

Before the departure, the Prophet made sure to repay all of his debts in Mecca, even to his enemies. Even in the midst of a trial, he fulfilled his social obligations. Abu Bakr and the Prophet strategized an escape plan where they hid in a cave near Mecca and gathered intelligence about their pursuers' whereabouts through Abu Bakr's family. At one point, a group of Meccan men arrived in front of the cave, preparing to enter. Abu Bakr became alarmed that they would be seen, but the Prophet reassured him, saying: "Have no fear, for God is with us," and added, "What do you think of two [people] whose third is God?"²² Miraculously, a spider had woven a web that covered the entrance, and a dove had nested there. To the blood-thirsty Meccans, it appeared that no one could possibly be hiding inside the cave. The incident at the cave was another fateful moment for the Prophet; in spite of his carefully executed strategy, he was still in danger of being discovered. At that moment, "trust in God, of which the Prophet reminded Abu Bakr...took on its full meaning and strength."²³

Once in Medina, the challenges for the Muslim community did not come to a halt. The Meccans and the Muslims went to battle a number of times, the first of which, the Battle of Badr, the Muslims enjoyed a resounding victory despite having significantly fewer soldiers. In the Battle of the Trench the Muslim army, led by the Prophet, strategized once more. They dug a moat wide and deep enough around the city of Medina to prevent the Meccans from entering. Such resourcefulness in military strategy is "revealing of the manner in which the Prophet taught his Companions both deep faith and the exploitation of intellectual creativity in all circumstances....the genius of peoples, the wisdom of nations, and healthy human creativity

²² Ramadan 82

²³ Ramadan 82

were integrated into their mode of thinking, without hesitation or timidity.”²⁴ Nonetheless, as the battle ensued, the Quran describes the fear that gripped the Muslims. In Surah Ahzab, the Quran declares, “[Remember what you felt] when they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when [your] eyes became dim and [your] hearts came up to [your] throats, and [when] most conflicting thoughts about God passed through your minds: [for] there and then were the believers tried, and shaken with a shock severe.” Again, the juxtaposition of strategy in addition to maintaining faith and fearing none but Allah is depicted in this situation.

The use of rationality and strategy was not restricted to the battle; in these adverse circumstances, even legal thought was developed as it related to practice, accounting for fearful or adverse circumstances. For example, although normally it is recommended that Muslims pray together, during times of fear, especially in battle, the Quran states:

Thus, when thou art among the believers and about to lead them in prayer, let [only] part of them stand up with thee, retaining their arms. Then, after they have finished their prayer, let them provide you cover while another group, who have not yet prayed, shall come forward and pray with thee, being fully prepared against danger and retaining their arms: (for) those who are bent on denying the truth would love to see you oblivious of your arms and your equipment, so that they might fall upon you in a surprise attack. But it shall not be wrong for you to lay down your arms [while you pray] if you are troubled by rain or if you are ill; but [always] be fully prepared against danger.²⁵

This prayer is called *Salat ul Khawf*, or the Prayer of Fear. It is permissible when in fear of human beings, but also “when one is gripped with the fear of hurt from some beast like a lion

²⁴ Ramadan 138

²⁵ *The Message of the Quran*, Surah 4, Verse 102

or python and there is very little time left to make the prayer.”²⁶ It is important to note that flexibility is allowed with regard to religious practice. Thus, the response to fear need not only happen within a spiritual or political realm, but also in the legal realm.²⁷

After the three main battles against the Meccans, the Prophet decided that it was time to make a peaceful pilgrimage to Mecca with some of his followers. The *Hajj*, or pilgrimage, is a religious requirement for every Muslim. As the sanctuary within Mecca was considered off-limits for warfare, and the Meccans, by custom, were expected to be welcoming of all those who wished to enter, the Prophet hoped that he and his followers would be allowed in. Nonetheless, the Meccans resisted the entry, and the two opposing parties meet on the plain of Hdaybiyyah, nearly ten miles outside of Mecca, to negotiate a settlement. At first, it appears to the Muslims that the Prophet made a number of compromises in the treaty, including an agreement that the Muslims would not make the pilgrimage that year but the year after. His followers become incensed, stating that the treaty only was of benefit to the Meccans and had humiliated the Muslims. Yet, the patience and foresight of the Prophet is evident, as this treaty proved to be a watershed moment for his community.²⁸ The Prophet was able to make a number of compromises to maintain peace in the region, based on his “deep spirituality, strict rational coherence, extraordinary intelligence, and strategic genius.”²⁹ By agreeing not to make

²⁶ Mufti Shafi Usmani, *Maariful Quran*, Volume 2, Page 561

²⁷ In Islamic thought, this legal realm is primarily in the area of *fiqh*, which is defined as Islamic jurisprudence, based on the Holy Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. It is related to Islamic law (*sharia*). Many of the rulings cover religious practice, such as prayer, fasting, performing the hajj, etc.

²⁸ Although this paper will not go into detail about the implications of the Treaty of Hdaybiyyah, it is described in detail in the chapter “A Dream, Peace” in Ramadan’s biography of the Prophet.

²⁹ Ramadan 157

the pilgrimage that year, the Prophet understood the vulnerability the Meccans felt, especially after the Battle of the Trench, and he knew they wanted to protect their prestige. The Quran affirmed his decision, and a revelation was sent down:

Indeed, God has shown the truth in His Apostle's true vision: most certainly shall you enter the Inviolable House of Worship, if God so wills, in full security, with your heads shaved or your hair cut short, without any fear: for He has [always] known that which you yourselves could not know. And He has ordained [for you], besides this, a victory soon to come."³⁰

Ultimately, the Muslims peacefully took over Mecca—the same city that had, only a few years ago, driven them out. That moment alone, is not considered the prime victory. The Treaty of Hdaybiyyah, which set the stage for long-term peace between the Muslims and the Meccans, is considered a victory in Muslim history. This incident, which has strong political and diplomatic relevance today, displays that “listening, the ability to shift one’s point of view, sensitivity to the other’s dignity, and foresight” are critical to inculcate in any response to adverse situations.³¹ One must continuously be able to balance short-term advantages, for longer-term security.

The ability to cultivate patience during times of adversity is also addressed in another Prophetic hadith. This hadith could be seen as an example of how the Prophet urged his followers to *not* manage fear. In this hadith:

The Prophet passed by a woman who was weeping beside a grave. He told her to fear Allah and be patient. She said to him, "Go away, for you have not been afflicted with a calamity like mine." And she did not recognize him. Then she was informed that he was the Prophet. So she went to the house of the Prophet and

³⁰ *The Message of the Quran*, Surah 48, Verse 27

³¹ Ramadan 159

there she did not find any guard. Then she said to him, "I did not recognize you." He said, "Verily, the patience is at the first stroke of a calamity."³²

This hadith urges Muslims to not only always fear Allah, but also remain patient in the face of calamity.

Conclusion

A number of important conclusions can be drawn from the Quran and the life of the Prophet Muhammad as it relates to coping with fear. Fear, in many ways, enables religion to remain relevant. It is in moments of adversity that believers are able to find inspiration. Fear cannot be separated from its emotional, spiritual, physical, and political ancillaries. In some cases it impinges upon physical well being, in others, it must be developed for spiritual purification, and in others, it factors into communal survival within a hostile climate.

A strong theme throughout the Quranic verses and the example of the Prophet has been the importance of placing ones fear only in Allah. As it applies to worldly fears, Muslims are urged to use their rational capacity, such as strategy, innovation, and creativity to deal with their fears. Whether this means building alliances, making compromises, or creating new traditions, the Prophet and the history of the early Muslim community sets an example for a number of models for contemporary Muslims.

As this paper was meant to be an introduction to the scriptural and historical sources that Muslims can turn to in order to manage fear, a number of questions pertaining to the role of fear for the contemporary Muslim inevitably arises. Going forward, we must ask ourselves:

³² *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 2, Book 23, Hadith 372

What induces fear for the contemporary Muslim? How has the community dealt with these fears thus far? What are the situations today that call for alliances? How are Muslims making compromises that could be deemed beneficial and what compromises impinge upon our religious principles? In addressing these questions, this paper hopes to relay Quranic discourse and lessons from the Prophet Muhammad's life to serve as a foundation for the discussion.