

MODULE 1

Class Title: Finding Courage

Aim of the lesson: To learn how to deal with fear- both internal and external.

Category: Personal Development

Lesson Format: Power point presentation with discussion.

Greeting to students) *AssalamalaikumwaRahmatullahiwaBarakatuh*

(*Taooz*) *Aodhubillahi min AsShaytanirRajeem*

(*Tasmiyah*) *BismillahirRahmanirRaheem*

(*Du'a*) *Rabbishrahlisadriwayassirliamriwahluluqdatummillisaniyafqahuqawli*(Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Slide 1:

In previous classes, we have discussed the qualities that we, as *khalifas*{vicegerents} of Allah (swt), should possess. So, today we are going to talk about another very important quality that any *khalifa* of Allah (swt) should have, we are going to see if we have that quality in ourselves, and we will discuss how we can develop that quality if we don't already have it. We'll discuss the situations in which we need that quality and how we can handle such situations.

Slide 2:

The quality that we are going to talk about is: courage.

Slides 3 and 4:

Courage is a special kind of knowledge. The knowledge of how to fear what ought to be feared and how not to fear what ought not to be feared. That's the definition of courage. So, basically, courage is effective handling of fear. Fear is something that we all feel, and we fear a number of things.

Slide 5:

I will only talk about three common fears today

Slide 6:

The first one is 'creepy, crawly fear'. I'm sure many people here are afraid of lizards, right?

Slide 7:

Have you all heard the poem about Little Miss Muffet? Can anybody recite it for me?

Student: Little Miss Muffet,
Sat on a tuffet,
Eating her curds and whey;
Along came a spider,
Who sat down beside her,
And frightened Miss Muffet away.

Teacher: You know, I learnt this poem when I was in kindergarten and I still remember it, even though I'm not good at remembering things!

Slides 8 and 9:

If you look at the books that have this poem and notice the pictures that go with it, you'll see spiders of all sizes and kinds. Look at the size of the spider in this picture. Just look at the size of the girl and the size of the spider. Anybody would be scared of such a huge spider.

The point I'm trying to make is that, through these poems, we have been programmed to be scared of spiders. From a very young age we learn this poem and we learn that when the spider comes, the girl runs away. Every time people see a spider, they scream and run away.

Slide 10:

Now let's look at some facts. What is the maximum size of an actual spider and how deadly is it? If you search the internet you will find that the tarantula is one of the biggest spiders that Allah (swt) has created and is around 12 inches, but the spider you just saw in the picture is definitely more than 12 inches. There are also many myths regarding the tarantula. It is supposed to be extremely deadly and some people are scared of even looking at it, as if they'll die by just looking at it. The reality is that the tarantula eats mice and worms and even if it does bite a human, one will feel irritation on their skin for a long time but that's about it. However, if it feels threatened, it throws its hair on the attacker. Its hair is coated with a chemical which can cause breathing problems that might result in suffocation, if it enters our body through the nose.

Slide 11:

We must realize that this is not the spider found in our homes and schools. This is something which is found only in forests. The size of a house spider is, at maximum, 3 inches and they are perfectly harmless. So you see, our fear of spiders is quite baseless.

Slide 12:

Now, let's talk about cockroaches! I'm sure you don't even want to look at the pictures here. I'm sure many of you are also afraid of cockroaches, right? But we all need to realize that these are fears that don't have any basis. Do you think a *khalifa* of Allah (swt) should be scared of cockroaches?

Slide 13:

Lizards; another species that we are scared of. Yes, they are disgusting to look at but they are harmless.

Slide 14:

The reason why we are talking about these things is that, sometimes, the fear of these small things interferes in our daily lives. For example, you may not want to go to the bathroom if there's a cockroach in there; if this happens to you then you must realize that you are not being fair to yourself and you are underselling your dignity. You must realize that you are a *khalifa* of Allah (swt) on this earth; these small fears don't make your personality a wholesome personality. You have developed a fear of something which isn't worth being fearful of. If this is the attitude we have towards small creatures, then what will we do if we have to face bigger problems in life or if we ever have to go for *jihad*. These are just small fears and we shouldn't let them interfere with our lives; that's not a very healthy approach.

So how should we handle our fear?

Slides 15 and 16:

Allah (swt) says in the Quran that:

“It is but Satan who instils [into you] fear of his allies: so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are [truly] believers!” (Surah Ale-Imram 3: verse 175)

So fear is something that comes from shaytan.

Allah (swt) also says:

“And if an evil suggestion comes to you from Satan, then seek refuge in Allah. Indeed, He is Hearing and Knowing.” (surah Al-Araf 7: verse 200)

Therefore when you feel afraid just remember Allah (swt) and ask for His protection.

And the second thing to do is to remind yourself that you are a *khalifa* of Allah (swt) and you are the best of His creations, so you can't be scared of such small things and you can't let them interfere with your life.

Slide 17:

Now, let's talk about an example from the *Qur'an*. *Alhamdulillah*, none of the Prophets were scared of such things. But there was one Prophet who had to deal with a certain creepy crawly creature.

Musa (as) was once challenged by the Pharaoh to compete against a group of magicians, because everyone thought that Musa (as) was a magician and not a prophet of Allah (swt).

Slide 18:

The magicians said, "O Musa will you throw down first or shall we?"

Musa (as) replied that they could throw down first. Suddenly it appeared to Musa (as) as if their cords and staffs were moving about as if by magic.

The *Qur'an* tells us that, "Musa (as) conceived fear within himself." (Surah Ta-Ha 20: Verses 65-67)

So the magicians threw down their ropes and staffs which started moving about just like snakes, creating fear in Musa (as). So, fear is something that anyone can feel. Allah (swt) had given a miracle to Musa (as): every time he threw down his staff it would turn into a huge serpent. So Musa (as) threw down his staff which changed in to a serpent and started eating the illusionary snakes of the magicians.

Slide 19:

When the magicians saw the serpent of Musa (as) swallowing their illusions, they knew that it was not magic. They understood that this was a real miracle because they were experts in their fields.

The *Qur'an* tells us, "So the magicians humbled themselves by prostrating and said, 'we believe in the *Rabb* of Haroon and Musa.'" (Surah Ta-Ha 20: Verse 70)

During that time, the Pharaoh used to claim that he was the real *Rabb* {Allah-Sustainer}, *naoodhoobillah*. Everyone believed him and prostrated before him, but when this incident happened all the magicians went into *sajdah* {prostration} immediately, knowing Musa's (as) God to be the real *Rabb*. The Pharaoh could not take this and decided that he would kill all those who disobeyed him.

Slide 20:

To this the magicians replied, "We can never prefer you over the miracle we have witnessed and Him Who has created us, therefore do whatever you will, you can only punish us in this worldly life. As for us, we have believed in our *Rabb* so that He may

forgive our sins and the magic you have forced us to practice. Better is the ever-lasting reward of Allah.”

Slide 21:

This was the level of awareness of the magicians; as soon as they saw Musa’s (as) miracle, they realized that there has to be one true Allah (swt) behind all of it and their fear of Allah (swt) overcame everything, even the Pharaoh. They told him he could only harm them in this world. Thus they discovered courage, in the true sense and realized that Allah (swt) is the one who should be feared at all times.

Slide 22:

The second type of fear that we will talk about today is ‘the fear of failure’. Have you heard the story of the tortoise and the hare?

Slide 23:

(Note to teacher: click on power point icon on the lower right hand corner of slide to run another slide show)

Once upon a time there was a hare who, boasting how he could run faster than anyone else, was forever teasing the tortoise for its slowness.

Then one day, the irate tortoise answered back: “Who do you think you are? There’s no denying you’re swift, but even you can be beaten!”

The hare squealed with laughter, “Beaten in a race? By whom? Not you, surely! I bet there’s nobody in the world that can win against me, I’m so speedy. Now, why don’t you try?”

Annoyed by such bragging, the tortoise accepted the challenge. A course was planned, and the next day at dawn they stood at the starting line. When the signal was given, the hare sped off and was soon way ahead of the tortoise. Halfway through the course, the hare decided that, since the tortoise was far behind, he could take a nap; he fell fast asleep and was soon snoring happily. The sun started to sink, below the horizon, and the tortoise, who had been plodding towards the winning post since morning, passed by the hare, who was still fast asleep. The tortoise eventually reached the finish line, and the hare was still asleep. Eventually the hare woke up to find that he had slept through the race, and had thus lost to the much slower tortoise.

Is the moral of the story that ‘slow and steady wins the race’? This is the story we have all grown up with and traditionally this is where it ends, but I will continue the story for you. You see the hare was very disappointed with what had happened.

He did some soul-searching and thought to himself, “Why did I lose? What went wrong? How come the tortoise beat me?”

So he challenged the tortoise again and the tortoise agreed. This time the hare didn't sleep because he had experienced failure once and he knew why he had failed so this time he did not repeat the same mistake and naturally he won. So what is the moral of the story now?

Student: You should concentrate on what you are doing

Student: We should not be scared of trying again.

Alhamdulillah, and most importantly fast and consistent will always beat slow and steady. If you are fast and you are consistent and you do your best then you will beat the rest.

Again the story doesn't end here. The tortoise had already been working hard and not being lazy. So he spent some time thinking about how to beat the rabbit and came up with an idea. He challenged the hare to another race, but with a difference course; the rabbit agreed. Now the tortoise knew that there was a stream on that course and the finish line was on the other side of the stream. When the rabbit reached the stream he was stuck as he couldn't swim while the tortoise easily swam across and won.

The story still hasn't ended.

The rabbit thought about it and he decided they could do better if they made a team so the turtle agreed. The rabbit carried the turtle with him until they reached the stream and when they reached the stream the turtle carried the rabbit. And this time they reached the finish line much faster.

So you see, neither the tortoise nor the hare gave up. They always learnt something from their failures. The hare decided to work harder and put in more effort after his failure and the tortoise changed his strategy.

This story teaches us many things. Never give up when faced with failure. Fast and consistent will always beat slow and steady. Work to your competencies. Identify your own strengths and work with them. Compete against the situation, not with the rival; look at the problem in such a way that you can come up with better solutions and work as a team.

Slide 24:

So, courage doesn't always roar, sometimes it's the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, "I will try again tomorrow."

Slide 25:

Let's discuss another example from the *Qur'an*. We just talked about the Pharaoh and

what kind of a tyrant he was; he was a very tough opponent and Musa (as) was given the tough task to preach to him.

Slide 26:

Allah (swt) had asked Prophet Musa (as) to, “Go to Pharaoh for he has indeed transgressed all bounds.”(Surah Ta-Ha 20: Verse 24)

Slide 27:

Prophet Musa (as) dealt with this difficult situation by praying to Allah (swt) and asking for His help.

He said, “O my *Rabb*, open my heart, ease my task, remove the impediment from my speech so that people may understand what I say and grant me a minister from my family, Haroon my brother. Grant me strength through him and let him share my task so that we may glorify you frequently and may mention you often. For You are the One Who has always been watching over us.

Allah (swt) responded, “Your request is granted O Musa.”(Surah Ta-Ha 20: Verses 25-36)

Slide 28:

Alright, so what did Prophet Musa (as) do when he was given a difficult task? Firstly he did *du'a* {invocation to Allah (swt)}. Then he asked for a helper, his own brother and made sure to constantly remember Allah (swt). The acknowledgement that Allah (swt) is the only Protector and is more powerful than the Pharaoh gave him the courage to face the tyrant.

Slide 29:

The last fear we will be discussing is the “fear of not being accepted.”

Slide 30:

In this picture there is a pit filled with spikes and there are boys inside the pit who are asking the boy outside to join them. Do you know what spikes are? They are things that can hurt you; that is what peer pressure does to us. Whether a trend is good or bad, we just want everyone to join us. And if we aren't in the “in” crowd, we fear that we will be left out. In this situation, we need to find courage.

Slide 31:

So, we must understand that courage is not the absence of fear, rather the judgment that something is more important than fear. Let's find out what we should do in such situations.

Do you all know what icebergs are? How much of an iceberg can you see?

Student: Only the top.

Teacher: Right. Only ten percent of any iceberg is visible; the remaining ninety percent is below sea level. This phenomenon can be seen in humans as well. Our knowledge, skills and physical appearance are some things that are visible to everyone but our attitude, our values, standards and judgments are inside us. These are things that you don't see from outside. These values, motives and beliefs influence our behaviors.

Slide 32:

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So if we work on our values, standards, beliefs and motives, we will develop fear of Allah (swt) and realize that everything else is secondary. The fear of Allah (swt) helps us to overcome every other fear.

Slide 33:

Let's discuss another example from the *Qur'an*. A group of Muslim boys were forced by their society to give up their religion and to give up worshipping Allah (swt); they are called the *Ashab-e-Kahf* {People of the cave}.

Slide 34:

Allah (swt) says in the Quran, "Now we tell you the real story. They were young men who believed in their *Rabb*. On them we had bestowed guidance. We put courage in their hearts when they stood up and declared, our *Rabb* is the *Rabb* of the heavens and earth. We shall never call upon any deity except Him for if we do we shall be saying something improper."(Surah Al-Kahf 18: Verses 13-14)

Allah (swt) had given them courage, because the whole society was against them but they knew that they were on the right path so they remained steadfast.

"These people of ours have taken for worship other gods besides Him. If they are right why do they not bring forth any convincing proof of their divinity? Who is more wicked than one who invents lie about Allah"(Surah Al-Kahf 18: Verse 15)

Then these boys ran off and hid themselves in a cave.

Slide 35:

“Then in their mutual consultation they said, now that we have withdrawn from them and denounced those deities whom they worshipped besides Allah, let us take us refuge in some cave. Our *Rabb* will extend to us His Mercy and facilitate us in disposing of our affairs.’ (Surah Al-Kahf 18: Verse 16)

They prayed to Allah (swt). They didn’t want to give up their faith, so they made *du’a*.

Slide 36:

“When those young men took refuge in the cave they said, ‘our *Rabb* have mercy on us from Yourself and guide us out of our ordeal.”(Surah Al-Kahf 18: Verse 10)

These young men realized that the fear of Allah (swt) is more important than the fear of anything else and that’s why they went and hid in the cave and Allah (swt) protected them from everything. He put them to sleep for a very long time and when they woke up, good times had come and the king of that time was more tolerant towards Christianity (Christianity was the right religion at that time).

Slide 37:

Now let’s conclude today’s class.

For the creepy crawl fear:the first thing to do is to say *ta’ooz and make du’a*. Remember that you are the *khalifa*of Allah (swt). It doesn’t suit us to be scared of such things. So next time you see a lizard, don’t scream and run away, just remind yourselves what you learnt today.

For the fear of failure: don’t give up. Ask for help and work as a team. Work as if no prayer will help and pray as if no work will help.

For the fear of not being accepted: Realize that it is better to let go of some things. Follow the example of the *Ashab-e-Kahf*who realized that it was not worthwhile living with people who don’t believe in Allah (swt). So they left their homes to live in a cave. It’s always better to let go of something that isn’t adding value to your life, and fear of Allah (swt) can overcome all other fears. Thus, strengthen your faith.

Greeting to students) *AssalamalaikumwaRahmatullahiwaBarakatuh*
(*Taooz*) *Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanirRajeem*
(*Tasmiyah*) *BismillahirRahmanirRaheem*
(*Du’a*) *Rabbishrahlisadriwayassirliamriwahluluqdatummillisaniyafqahuqawli*(Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)