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Hold Fast the Reins and Be Guided: Embodied Expressions of Taqwā in Prophetic Hadith and Orations of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib

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Abstract

This essay examines the interplay of form and content in early Islamic expressions of *taqwā* (translated variously as piety, or fear or consciousness of God), with a primary focus on prophetic hadith and the orations of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. Through this analysis, two major observations can be made. First, expressions of *taqwā* in these sources are indelibly corporeal, articulated through forms of bodily intimacy, whether between rider and mount, or as the cure for bodily sickness. Second, attention to both form and content and their interstices elucidates a picture of *taqwā* that expands our notion of embodiment to encompass the realm of the internal. *Taqwā* involves techniques of the limbs, tongue, eyes, and ears as well as techniques of the heart. To demonstrate this, I explore both the ways that believers are enjoined to seek *taqwā* as well as how *taqwā* is articulated as enacting transformations in/on those believers.

Keywords

taqwā – form and content – hadith literature – oration – embodiment – internal and external – orality – techniques of the body – intimacy

In recent years, several studies have tackled the interplay of form and content in classical Arabic literary production, interrogating literary sources together with the reception of those sources within the tradition. Lara Harb notably analyzes the works of ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 471 AH/1078 AD) to complicate understandings of the relative importance of form (*lafẓ*) and content (*maʿnā*) in medieval criteria of poetic eloquence.[1] Her work builds on prior scholarship on al-Jurjānī that similarly suggests form and content cannot be so easily parsed with both contributing to the science of eloquence (*ʿilm al-balāghah*).[2] Tahera Qutbuddin in her monumental 2019 work expands understandings of the role of oration in the classical Arabic literary canon, and the specific ways form was used to communicate in a primarily oral milieu.[3] These works recenter the varied ways form and content come to matter in a classical Arabic context, offering the modern scholar of classical Arabic literature tools and frameworks of analysis indigenous to the tradition itself.

The aim of the present study is to examine early Islamic articulations of *taqwā* (translated variously as piety, or fear or consciousness of God) appearing in prophetic hadith and the orations of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), fourth Sunni caliph and first Shiʿa Imam, by focusing on the interplay of form and content in these works. Discussions of *taqwā* immediately before and during the first Hijri century are widespread, spanning pre-Islamic poetry, the Qur'an, prophetic hadith, early Islamic poetry and oration, prophetic biography, and Umayyad prose.[4] Indeed, a concept similar to *taqwā* may have been

1 Lara Harb, "Form, Content, and the Inimitability of the Qur'ān in ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's Works" *Middle Eastern Literatures* 18, no. 3 (2015): 301–321. Following Harb, I use a simple distinction here between form (*lafẓ*) and content (*maʿnā*) though these are approximate translations of the Arabic terms.

2 Margaret Larkin, *The Theology of Meaning: ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's Theory of Discourse* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1995); Kamal Abu Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī's Theory of Poetic Imagery* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1979). Scholarship on the distinction between form and content in early Arabic literary production and literary criticism beyond al-Jurjānī includes Wolfhart Heinrichs, "Arabic Poetics, Classical," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Roland Greene et al., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012): 62–65; and Djamel Eddine Kouloughli, "A Propos de *Lafẓ* and *Maʿnā*," *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, no. 25 (1983): 43–63.

3 Tahera Qutbuddin, *Arabic Oration: Art and Function* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

4 See, for example, the *Ḥamāsah* and *Muʿallaqāt* for instances of *taqwā* in pre-Islamic poetry. Abū Tammām, *Dīwān al-ḥamāsah* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 2008), 182; al-Tabrīzī, *Sharḥ al-muʿallaqāt al-ʿashir* (Dār al-Salām, 2019), 132, 161, 208, 251. The prophetic biography (*sīrah*) of Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833) provides examples of early Islamic poetic usages of *taqwā* and in orations of Muhammad. ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah al-nabawiyyah* (Cairo: al-Hayʾah al-ʿĀmmah l-Quṣūr al-Thaqafah, 2012), vol. 1, 294, vol. 2, 157–158, vol. 4, 211. See the epistles (*rasāʾil*) of ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib (d. 132/750) for examples of *taqwā* in Umayyad prose.

present in the Abrahamic traditions of the Late Antique milieu into which Islam emerged in the 7th century AD, that together with *taqwā's* pre-Islamic poetic linguistic inheritance coalesced into the Islamic concept that permeates these early sources.[5] It is impossible to offer a comprehensive analysis of all occurrences of *taqwā* in the first Hijri century. For this reason, I focus on two overlapping genres that are particularly illustrative in elucidating the dynamic between form and content: oration and prophetic hadith.[6] Specifically, I examine expressions of *taqwā* appearing in three of the most prominent canonical Sunni hadith collections (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Sunan al-Tirmidhī*) and one later, popular collection of hadith focusing on ethical topics (*Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn*).[7] I further examine the orations of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib appearing in the *Nahj al-balāghah*.[8] In doing so, I aim to the understandings of *taqwā* that emerge, their conceptual frameworks, and rhetorical tools.

Iḥsān ʿAbbās, ed., *ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn Yaḥyā al-Kātib wa-mā tabbaqā min rasā'ilih wa-rasā'il Sālim Abī al-ʿAlā'* (Amman: Dār al-Shurūq li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 1988), 197–201, 218, 276–278, 299–300.

5 See my forthcoming dissertation, titled "Textual Traces of Tradition: *Taqwā* in the Early Islamic Moment and its Reimagination in Contemporary Egyptian Preaching." See also Adam Becker, "Martyrdom, Religious Difference, and 'Fear' as a Cateogry of Piety in the Sasanian Empire: The Case of the *Martyrdom of Gregort* and the *Martyrdom of Yazdpaneh*," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2, no. 2 (2009): 300–336.

6 I maintain these as two separate genres purely as a heuristic. In fact, orations appear as prophetic hadith, and hadith appear in collections of orations. For example, the Prophet Muhammad's farewell pilgrimage appears both in collections of hadith and as an oration in, for example, the *Sīrah* of Ibn Hishām. Compare al-Nawawī, 56 and Ibn Hishām, 252.

7 Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Damascus and Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2002); Muslim ibn Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1994); Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Maʿārif, 1996); al-Nawawī, *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn* (Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 2004). While *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, and *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* were compiled in the 9th century AD, *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn* was compiled in the 13th. The decision to consult three canonical Sunni hadith collections and one shorter, more popular (and later) collection reflects my desire to cast a wide net when considering expressions of *taqwā* in prophetic hadith while also consulting a collection specifically oriented towards ethical concepts like *taqwā*. Indeed, all the hadith appearing in *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn* are well documented in one of the canonical Sunni collections. *Taqwā* is of course not limited to these sources. For example it appears frequently in the popular collection of ethical hadith *Kitāb al-shihāb*. Tahera Qutbuddin, *Light in the Heavens: Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 32, 44, 88, 108, 122, 130, 148.

8 Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāghah*, ed. Qays Bahjat al-ʿAṭṭār (Mu'assasat al-Rāfid li-l-Maṭbuʿāt, 2010). The *Nahj al-Balāghah* was compiled in the 11th century AD. The decision to focus on the orations of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, the son-in-law and cousin of the Prophet Muhammad, fourth Sunni caliph and first Shiʿa Imam, reflects his universally recognized status as a master of oratorical eloquence.

In examining *taqwā* in the early Islamic sources with an eye to rhetorical form, the following question may be posed: How was the concept of *taqwā* communicated to the early Muslim community? One answer can be found in the analyses of *taqwā* in the Qurʾan done by Izutsu, Ohlander and others.[9] *Taqwā*, according to Izutsu, is to "place between yourself … and something you are afraid of … something which might protect you by preventing it from reaching you."[10] We learn from this work that *taqwā* derives from the *iftaʿala* (VIII) form of the root *w-q-y*, and linguistically signifies caution, fear and preservation. The verb form "to have *taqwā*" (*ittaqā*) can be transitive or intransitive, meaning to be wary, on guard, or to protect oneself against something. Medieval lexicographers acknowledged both this sense of *taqwā* as well as its application to a religious context, including guarding oneself from sin, and preserving oneself from punishment through righteous conduct.[11] According to this body of work, *taqwā* in the Qurʾan most often refers to an ethical value demanding certain religious and moral actions, subsumed under the notion of pious obedience to God.

While this body of literature is illuminating and important in understanding both the linguistic roots of *taqwā* and their transformation into a core Islamic ethical concept, they answer more the question of what *taqwā is*, and less the question of *how* it was expressed and communicated in the earliest period of Islam. By turning the focus to the interface of rhetorical form and content, including the documented actions and behaviors of the Prophet Muhammad (*sunnah fiʿliyyah*) in the case of prophetic hadith, we come much closer to answering the question of how *taqwā* was expressed.[12] I argue in this paper that first and foremost, *taqwā* in the prophetic hadith and orations of ʿAlī cannot be unmoored from the corporeal. Attunement to rhetorical form, including the classical tools of metaphor and extended metaphor (*istiʿārah* and *tamthīl*), paronomasia (*jināṣ*), rhyming prose (*sajʿ*), and parallelism (*izdiwāj*),

9 See, for example, Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Koran: Semantics of the Koranic Weltanschauung* (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964); Erik Ohlander, "Fear of God (Taqwā) in the Qurʾān: Some Notes on Semantic Shift and Thematic Context" *Journal of Semitic Studies* L/1 (2005): 137–152; and Fazlur Rahman, "Some Key Ethical Concepts of the Qurʾān" *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 11, no. 2 (1983): 170–185.

10 Izutsu, 235.

11 See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1930), s.v. "W-Q-Y."

12 Prophetic hadith (*sunnah*) can be divided into three parts: prophetic utterances (*sunnah qawliyyah*), prophetic actions (*sunnah fiʿliyyah*) and tacit approval of others' words and deeds (*sunnah taqrīriyyah*). See Hakīm al-Nīsābūrī, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh, *Kitāb al-madkhal ila maʿrifat kitāb al-iklīl* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2003).

illuminates the bodily ways in which *taqwā* was described and communicated to the early Muslim community and documented for future generations.[13] In this way, we observe an intimacy between believer and *taqwā*: it is the cure for a bodily sickness and the reins of a mount, leading the believer down the right literal and metaphorical path.

Secondly, attention to the interplay of form and content in expressions of *taqwā* in prophetic hadith and ʿAlī's orations complicates categorizations of embodiment as exclusively that which is external and visible.[14] Across prophetic hadith and orations of ʿAlī, seeking *taqwā* is both internal and external. Importantly, however, even when it concerns an internal state it unambiguously involves the body, often in the form of the heart. If we open embodiment to include both internal and external corporeality the very need to categorize it as one or the other falls apart.[15] Seeking *taqwā* is an embodied process involving techniques of the heart, limbs, tongue, eyes, ears and more.[16]

13 None of the classical Arabic tools of rhetoric map neatly onto English terms though for most Arabic terms there are sufficiently adequate approximations in English. It is these approximations that I use in this paper.

14 In his 1935 work that has been widely taken up in the social sciences and humanities, Marcel Mauss famously defines techniques of the body as "the ways in which from society to society men know how to use their bodies." Mauss's writing focuses on external ways of using the body. The concept of "techniques of the body" has been taken up in the anthropology of Islam and in Islamic Studies, but typically with respect to *external* techniques of the body. In this article I explore sources in which *internal* techniques of the body are equally as prominent. See Marcel Mauss, "Techniques of the Body" *Economy and Society* 2, no. 1 (2005); Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); and Shahzad Bashir, *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), among others.

15 Recent work has called into question the self-evidence of the body. Yet, this work often focuses on disrupting the realm of the corporeal. For example, Zachary Wright argues for an understanding of embodiment that transcends the physical body. Similarly, Steven van Wolputte points to trends in the anthropology of the body that focus on fragmented or hybrid bodies. It is precisely in *not* moving away from the corporeal that the expressions *taqwā* I examine here lend insight into a more capacious understanding of the body and corporeality. Zachary Wright, *Living Knowledge in West African Islam: The Sufi Community of Ibrāhīm Niasse* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015); Steven Van Wolputte, "Hang on to Your Self: Of Bodies, Embodiment, and Selves." *The Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 251–269.

16 Importantly, I am not suggesting that the distinction between internal and external does not obtain in early Islamic sources. To the contrary, as early as the Umayyad period there was debate internal to the tradition about internal versus external expressions of faith. My focus is instead on how *taqwā* was expressed and communicated with an explicit focus on the interplay of form and content in a selection of early sources, demonstrating a sense of embodiment that incorporates the heart as much as it incorporates the tongue,

In what follows, I begin by asking how believers were instructed in these sources to seek *taqwā*, suggesting that through attention to the formal features deployed to communicate the sense and meaning of *taqwā*, including the actions of the Prophet Muhammad, we can observe the ways in which bodily hierarchies express a complex dynamic between the internally and externally corporeal. I then turn to descriptions of *taqwā* as agentive, transforming the believer. Through this analysis journey imagery in particular emerges as articulating a relationship between rider, mount and reins that communicates a give and take between the individual efforts of the believer and the transformations those efforts enable. Finally, I turn to instances of *taqwā* that at first blush seem to complicate and push back against the prior understandings, namely when believers are commanded to have *taqwā* of an object other than God (e.g., hellfire, the world, oppression). Yet even in these alternate uses of the concept there are nonetheless striking continuities in both communicative strategies (e.g., rhetorical form), and the ways of seeking *taqwā*.

Seeking *Taqwā* and the Internal/External

A major theme appearing in prophetic hadith and the orations of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib is expressions of what it takes to attain *taqwā*. This theme is particularly notable when considered alongside expressions of *taqwā* that occur in other genres of the same milieu, including pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry, prophetic biography, and the epistles of ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib. Across these latter genres, *taqwā* appears alternatively in a material sense (e.g., protection from a physical threat), an abstract moral sense (e.g., protection from slander), and increasingly after the advent of Islam an explicitly religious sense (e.g., *taqwā* of God).[17] Yet, across these sources the meaning of *taqwā* itself is rarely

eyes, and ears. See Khalid Blankinship, "The Early Creed," in *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 33–54.

17 For example, in the *muʿallaqah* of pre-Islamic poet Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā (d. 609 AD), *taqwā* appears in both a physical, material sense, and in an abstract moral sense. First in a material sense: وَقال سأَقضِي حاجَتِي ثُمَّ أَتَّقِي عَدُوّي بِأَلفٍ من وَرَائِي مُلْجَم [And he said I will fulfull my task then I will have *taqwā* [*attaqī*] of my enemies by a thousand bridled behind me]. That is, the poet voice will protect himself from his enemies through a thousand strong army mounted upon houses behind him. Then, in an abstract moral sense: وَمَن يَجْعَلِ المَعرُفَ من دُونِ عِرْضِهِ يَفِرْهُ وَمَن لا يَتَّقِ الشَّتْمَ يُشْتَمِ [He who is beneficent but without

made the object of explicit discussion. When we consider the more than 250 occurrences of *taqwā* and its derivatives that permeate the Qurʾan, descriptions of the attributes and actions required to seek *taqwā* do appear, but they appear relatively infrequently compared to the plentiful invocations of *taqwā* without descriptions of what its attainment entails.[18]

Articulations of the means of seeking *taqwā* in prophetic hadith and ʿAlīʾs orations stand out for two reasons. First, they demonstrate an interplay between the internal and external that affirms *taqwā* as an internal state but one that cannot be disentangled from external action. Second, and perhaps most importantly for the purposes of this article, this interplay between the internal and external can be seen most readily through analysis of rhetorical form in both genres and in the prophetic actions and behaviors that appear in prophetic hadith, revealing a bodily hierarchy in the acquisition of *taqwā* that expresses a balance of interior and exterior aspects of the body.

Two particularly telling hadith demonstrate on the one hand the corporeal characteristics of rhetorical form and prophetic action in expressions of *taqwā*, and on the other how this corporeality contributes to a bodily hierarchy of seeking. In the first, appearing in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn*, the Prophet Muhammad invokes *taqwā* as he articulates what comprises right relationships among Muslims.

his honor flees it, and he who does not have *taqwā* (*yattaqi*) of cursing will be cursed]. Contrast this with a line of poetry of Companion Kaʿb ibn Mālik (50/670) on the Battle of the Trench demonstrating a religious sense of *taqwā*: تِلْكُمْ مَعَ التَّقْوَى تَكُونُ لِبَاسَنَا … يَوْمَ الْهِيَاجِ وَكُلّ سَاعَةِ مَصْدَقِ [That, along with piety, shall be our clothing, on the day of turmoil and at every courageous hour]. The meaning of *taqwā* is presupposed in each of these disparate examples. By contrast, what it takes to attain *taqwā* is not elaborated on. *Rijāl al-muʿallaqāt al-ʿashr wa-akhbār*, ed. Muṣtafā Ghalāyīnī (Beirut: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Ahlīyah, 1912), 174; Ibn Hishām, vol. 3, 274. Translations are primarily my own and when they are not, I note this accordingly.

18 Compare, for example, Q al-Baqarah 2:183 elaborating the connection between fasting and the attainment of *taqwā* with the common command to have *taqwā* without further elaboration (e.g., Q al-Baqarah 2:278, Q Āl ʿImrān 3:15, Q al-Ḥijr 15:69, Q al-Shuʿarāʾ 26:108, and many other verses).

وعن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لا تحاسدوا ولا تناجشوا ولا تباغضوا ولا تدابروا ولا يبع بعضكم على بيع بعض وكونوا عباد الله إخوانًا . المسلم أخو المسلم لا يظلمه ولا يحقره ولا يخذله . كل المسلم على المسلم حرام دمه وماله وعرضه التقوى ههنا ويشير إلى صدره ثلاث مرات بحسب امرئ من الشر أن يحقر أخاه المسلم

Reported by Abū Hurayrah, may God be pleased with him, who said: "The messenger of God, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: Do not be jealous, do not quarrel, do not hate one another, do not turn away from each other, do not sell what belongs to another, but be, O servants of God, brothers. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim; he must not betray him, lie to him, or abandon him. The wealth, belongings, and blood of one Muslim are unlawful to another Muslim. *Taqwā* is here, and he pointed three times to his chest. It is enough for a man to commit evil by despising his Muslim brother."[19]

This hadith discusses right conduct between Muslims in quite a bit of practical detail. In addition to general prohibitions against betrayal and dishonesty, it includes specific guidance for interpersonal transactions. The climax of the hadith is the Prophet Muhammad saying "*Taqwā* is here" (*al-taqwā hahuna*), pointing three times to his chest. Reading the hadith based solely on the Prophet's utterances (*sunnah qawliyyah*) would suggest that *taqwā* can be found in the practical transactions between Muslims: in not stealing, betraying, and respecting one another and their possessions.[20] Yet, the inclusion of prophetic action offers another, embodied layer of meaning. Namely, that *taqwā* is *here*, internal, in one's heart. This dual interpretation of the locus of *taqwā* is illustrative of the complex dynamic between the internal and external involved in expressions of the concept in the early Islamic period. Rhetorically, the use of rhyming prose (*sajʿ*) contributes to the hadith's climax. Immediately before the *taqwā* statement, the Prophet articulates a series of three commands ending

19 Al-Nawawī, 235; Muslim, 2564a. When citing prophetic hadith, I use the standard numbering system for hadith.

20 By extension, from this hadith we might also understand that *taqwā* is found in not quarreling, hating, or repudiating, a list that already complicates an internal/external divide. For, while quarreling and repudiating may be seen externally through the tongue (a bodily characteristic I analyze later), hating cannot so readily be "seen."

with (*-uhu*), a crescendo that culminates in the corporeal non-utterance that *taqwā* is "here" as the Prophet physically points to his chest.

Noteworthy in this hadith and frequently across the two genres I analyze in this paper, the object of *taqwā* is implied. *Taqwā* can take a direct object and often does, with the object ranging from non-religious material protections, to abstract moral ones, to religious ones such as God or hellfire. However, in many of its appearances in prophetic hadith and ʿAlī's orations, the fact that *taqwā* refers to *taqwā* of God is implied. Invocations of *taqwā* with an implied object (God) similarly permeate the Qurʾan. The structure "… if they have *taqwā* and believe" (Q al-Māʾida 5:93) where having *taqwā* (*ittaqū*) is set alongside other religious values such as believing (*āmanū*) or doing good deeds (*ʿamilū al-ṣāliḥāt*) commonly appears in the Qurʾan. In these and other instances, *taqwā* as signifying *taqwā* of God is apparent from the verse's context.

Not only do prophetic hadith set up a complex internal/external dynamic vis-à-vis *taqwā*, but they suggest a bodily hierarchy that serves to communicate this dynamic to believers. In a hadith appearing in *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* and *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn*, the Prophet Muhammad uses extended metaphor to communicate this bodily hierarchy.

وعن أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال إذا أصبح ابن آدم فإن الأعضاء كلها تكفر اللسان تقول اتقِ الله فينا فإنما نحن بك فإن استقمت استقمنا وإن اعوججت اعوججنا

Reported by Abu Saʿīd al-Khudrī, may God be pleased with him, that the Prophet, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "When the son of Adam wakes up in the morning, all the limbs humble themselves before the tongue, saying: Have *taqwā* of God for us, as we are with you. If you are straight, we are straight. If you are crooked, we are crooked."[21]

Extended metaphor (*tamthīl*) and metonymy (*majāz mursal*) describe a tongue being implored by deferential limbs to have *taqwā* of God. Here again, the force of *taqwā* as being entangled with external action is clear. The tongue plays a powerful role as a metonym for the mouth engaging in speech acts, with upright speech often cited as a locus of *taqwā*, echoing Q al-Aḥzāb 33:70–71. The limbs in turn are a metonym for various actions the body can take in the world. It is by looking at the force of rhetorical form in this hadith that a

21 Al-Nawawī, 1521.

bodily hierarchy of *taqwā* emerges. The stakes of the tongue vis-à-vis *taqwā* are high. Right, and presumably wrong, use of the tongue impacts other parts of the body concerned with other types of bodily practice. That is, constraining the tongue will constrain the body, both external manifestations of *taqwā*. The idea that the very cultivation of *taqwā* which is "here" in the heart depends on external action appears in another hadith, which reports that no one will attain *taqwā* until he abandons what is not objectionable, in being on guard of what is objectionable.[22] Together, these hadith demonstrate how attention to rhetorical form and prophetic action points to the corporeal as a guide to the place of *taqwā* in the heart and how that state is inextricable from the external actions that lead to its acquisition, with a focus on avoiding unlawful actions.

Like in prophetic hadith, attention to rhetorical form in the orations of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib elucidates the interplay between the internal and external in seeking *taqwā*. Unlike in prophetic hadith, however, rich imagery permeates ʿAlī's orations, elucidating and further specifying expressions of how believers must seek *taqwā*. In their persistent invocation of the heart alongside other, external bodily manifestations, ʿAlī's orations demand a reconsideration of the concept of embodiment. Typically understood to relate to outward, visible techniques of the body, in ʿAlī's orations we are challenged to integrate inner, invisible bodily forms of seeking.[23] For example, using imagery and parallelism (*izdiwāj*) Oration 82 juxtaposes and expresses the importance of both internal and external corporeality in seeking *taqwā*.[24] "Have *taqwā* of God, the one with a core whose heart is filled with contemplation and puts fear on his body."[25] In this oration, both the heart and the body describe corporeal forms of seeking *taqwā*; yet, only the latter is embodied in the sense of an outward, visible

22 Al-Tirmidhī, 2451. لا يبلغ العبد أن يكون من المتقين حتى يدع مالا بأس به حذرا لما به بأس.

23 When I refer to inner bodily forms of seeking I am not pointing to the mind in a mind-body duality. Indeed, in the work of Mauss, cited earlier, and later Bourdieu, the introduction of the concept of *habitus* aims to collapse the mind-body distinction. In his analysis of embodiment in the field of anthropology, Csordas emphasizes the need to consider both perception and practice "grounded in the body." Yet, none of these addresses the possibility of a technique of the heart, corporeal, yet outwardly invisible. In examining expressions of *taqwā* we are presented with a different playing field entirely, that of the body in both its internal and external forms. Mauss, 73; Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Thomas Csordas, "Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology" *Ethos* 18, no. 1 (1990): 5–47.

24 In referencing specific orations, I use both oration and page numbers in the ʿAṭṭār edition in the absence of a standard numbering across editions.

25 Al-Raḍī, 141. فاتقوا الله تقية ذي لب شغل التفكر قلبه وأنصب الخوف بدنه

manifestation. If we allow the oration to expand the scope of embodiment as not exclusively external and visible, we are faced with the sense that the body, in both its internal and its external forms, contributes to understanding the process of seeking *taqwā*. Notably, this command to have *taqwā* is the fourth such command in the oration, becoming an almost formulaic refrain. This echoes the formulaic appearance of "have *taqwā* of God" (*ittaqū āllāh*) in the Qur'an, not appearing in the early Meccan suras but becoming a common refrain in the middle and late Meccan and Medinan suras.[26] Further, together with the alternate phrasing "I counsel you to have *taqwā*" (*ūṣīkum bi-l-taqwā*), the command to have *taqwā* permeates ʿAlī's orations and appears in at least one version of the Prophet Muhammad's first Friday sermon.[27] The frequency of the command to have *taqwā* across sources points to its formulatic usage and importance in communicating with the early Muslim community.

The importance of both internal and external aspects of the body in seeking *taqwā* is echoed and refined in Oration 193 when ʿAlī is asked to describe those with *taqwā*. ʿAlī's first response is to instruct the inquirer, Hammām, to have *taqwā* and do good deeds (*ittaqi āllāha wa-aḥsin*). Hammām subsequently pushes ʿAlī to expound on the concept. He obliges. What follows is an elaborate oration rich with imagery describing an expansive set of practices embodied both internally and externally, by one who has *taqwā*.

Those with *taqwā* are the virtuous ones.	فالمتقون فيها هم أهل الفضائل
Their utterances are correct, their attire simple, and their gait humble.	منطقهم الصواب وملبسهم الاقتصاد ومشيهم التواضع
They lower their gaze away from that which God forbids, and their ears attend to knowledge from which they might benefit. They experience calm in times of trial as they do in times of comfort	غضوا أبصارهم عمّا حرّم الله عليهم ووقفوا أسماعهم على العلم النافع لهم نزلت أنفسهم في البلاء كالذي نزلت في الرخاء

26 See, for example, Q al-Shuʿarā' where "have *taqwā* and obey me" (*ittaqū āllāha wa-aṭīʿūn*) appears eight times, or the three appearances of the command to have *taqwā* (*ittaqū āllāh*) in Q al-Ḥashr.

27 This phrasing appears in Ṭabarī's depiction of Muhammad's first Friday sermon alongside the phrasing "I counsel you to *taqwā* of God" (*ūṣīkum bi-taqwā āllāh*) as noted by Tahera Qutbuddin. Qutbuddin, *Arabic Oration*, 286. It does not occur in the version of Muhammad's first Friday sermon appearing in Ibn Hishām's prophetic biography.

تراه قريباً أمله قليلة زلله خاشعاً قلبه
قانعة نفسه منزوراً أكله سهلاً أمره حريزاً
دينه ميتة شهوته مكظوما غيظه

You will see his wishes soon—his slips are few, his heart is humbled, his soul is content, his food is simple, his manner is easy, his religion is protected, his lusts are dead, and his anger is controlled.[28]

Oration 193 is a striking example of how seeking *taqwā* is communicated as embodied both internally and externally. The oration includes expressions of the external practices of those with *taqwā*, including upright speech, humility in movements and turning physically away from what is unlawful. The sense that one's gait is an external technique of the body is disrupted with an internal framing: in this case the gait is a humble one, demonstrating an admixture of internal and external. The physical attire of those with *taqwā* is also mentioned, resonating with the poetry of Companion Kaʿb ibn Mālik appearing in Ibn Hishām's prophetic biography that describes *taqwā* as clothing, and with another of ʿAlī's orations where jihad is articulated as the clothing of *taqwā*.[29] This oration is a particularly sensorial description of the means of seeking *taqwā*. The senses of sight and sound are invoked repeatedly throughout the sermon as pivotal characteristics of those with *taqwā*. Further examples in the oration invoke the idea of bodily emaciation, indexing the minimal earthly needs of those with *taqwā*, with one particularly striking example expressing that "fear has emaciated them like arrow shafts."[30] Each of these examples contributes to an understanding of seeking *taqwā* as present on the bodies of believers, but not exclusively their external bodily characteristics. Throughout the oration, the heart and the soul appear as bodily features that mark an internal form of embodiment. Those with *taqwā* are described by ʿAlī as having hearts that are humbled (*khāshiʿan*) and sorrowful (*maḥzūnah*) and souls that are at ease (*qāniʿah*).

Through extended metaphor, parallelism and rhymed prose, the rhetorical force of Oration 193 demonstrates how *taqwā* was expressed as a complex dynamic of internally and externally embodied seeking. *Taqwā* is in the heart; yet it is also manifest in attunement to and participation in certain sounds (e.g., Qur'an recitation), sights (e.g., averting their gaze from the unlawful)

28 al-Raḍī, 406.

29 al-Raḍī, 84, Ibn Hishām, vol. 3, 274.

30 قد براهم الخوف بري القداح Translation by Tahera Qutbuddin, "Piety and Virtue in Early Islam: Two Sermons by Imam Ali" in *Self-Transcendence and Virtue: Perspectives from Philosophy, Psychology, and Theology*, ed. Jennifer Frey and Candace Vogler (New York: Routledge, 2018): 125–153.

and actions (e.g., wearing simple garments). This capacious, embodied understanding of the forms of seeking *taqwā* as expressed in prophetic hadith and orations of ʿAlī crystalize through analysis of rhetorical form and prophetic actions alongside content. Taking such an approach similarly enables understandings of the transformative capacities of *taqwā*, to which I now turn.

The Transformative Power of Taqwā

Articulations of the ways in which *taqwā* transforms believers are another major theme in prophetic hadith and the orations of ʿAlī. Like expressions of seeking *taqwā*, expressions of being transformed *by taqwā* demonstrate an embodied interplay between the external and internal. What is most striking about these articulations is the repeated use of journey imagery as a communicative strategy. Journey imagery has a long history in classical Arabic literature. Indeed, one of the three main thematic components of the traditional pre-Islamic poetic ode is the poet's intense journey through the desert mounted on a camel or horse, encountering wild animals along the way.[31] In classical Arabic orations, as documented by Qutbuddin, nomadic, journey, and camel imagery served as common metaphors to communicate eschatological visions of the hereafter, particularly in orations of pious counsel.[32] While journey imagery in prophetic hadith has not previously been studied, its presence is unsurprising in the context of the broader pre-Islamic into early Islamic milieu. In the prophetic hadith and orations of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib that I examine here, the language and metaphors of journeying serve to articulate a relationship between the believer and *taqwā*, including what is in the believer's control (the rider) and when and how they relinquish control to *taqwā* (alternatively the reins or the mount). Through images of bodily and human/non-human intimacies, we are presented with a picture of shared agency that resists the simple notion that the human is in full control of their actions and fate.

The relationship between *taqwā* and journeying, and specifically as provision for a journey, is often associated with one of the most well-known Qur'anic verses on *taqwā*, namely Q al-Baqarah 2:197, "the best of provisions is *taqwā*" (*khayr al-zād al-taqwa*). The broader verse situates *taqwā* as the best of

31 See, for example, Robert Irwin, ed., *Night and Horses and the Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature* (New York: Overlook Press, 1999); Michael Sells, *Desert Tracings: Six Classic Arabian Odes* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1989); Suzanne Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak: Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

32 Qutbuddin, *Arabic Oration*, 116–117, 237.

provisions in the context of a journey, specifically the Hajj journey. Believers are instructed to bring provisions but are reminded that the best of provisions is *taqwā*. The concept of *taqwā* as the best provision for a journey is echoed in a hadith appearing in *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* and *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn*, where *taqwā* as provision is reiterated.

وعن أنس رضي الله عنه قال جاء رجل إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال يا رسول الله إني أريدُ سفراً فزودني فقال زودك الله التقوى قال زدني فقال وغفر ذنبك قال زدني قال ويسر لك الخير حيثما كنت

Reported by Anas, may God be pleased with him, who said: "A man came to the Prophet, may God's blessings and peace be upon him, and said: Messenger of God, I intend to go on a journey, please provide for me. He said: May God grant you the provision of *taqwā*. He said: Please provide for me. He said: May He forgive your sins. The man said: Please provide for me. He said: May he make it easy for you to do good wherever you are."[33]

Opening a series of questions and answers, an inquirer asks the Prophet Muhammad to provide supplies for a journey, and Muhammad responds that the provision he supplicates God to provide is *taqwā*. The response is notable for several reasons. First, it forcefully plays with the linguistic roots of *taqwā*, namely as a protection (*wiqāyah*). The inquirer may have expected a physical, material protection as the appropriate provision for his journey. Muhammad's reply both acknowledges the need for protection and shifts the inquirer's focus away from the material (e.g., a sword), and toward divine protection. Second, the response points to the transformative power of *taqwā*, that is, *taqwā* as agent. The Prophet asks that God grant the traveler *taqwā*, implying that doing so will lead to the provision and protection the traveler needs on the journey. What is involved in such a provision is not explicitly communicated. Rhetorically, the repeated questioning of the traveler, and the Prophet's repeated responses in the form of an oath points to a commitment to non-material provisions: *taqwā*, forgiveness of sins, doing good. While through resonance with the Qur'an this hadith sets up *taqwā* and journeying in close relation, the precise nature of this relationship is most clearly expressed in 'Alī's orations.

In the orations of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, *taqwā* is expressed as a powerful agent in a believer's life that depends on the actions of the believer but not exclusively so.

33 Al-Nawawī, 217.

We see *taqwā* likened alternatively to trained horses and the reins of a mount, and the believer likened to the rider. Each of the orations is forceful rhetorically, particularly in the deployment of vivid, metaphorical imagery. Echoing the interplay of the external and internal in embodied articulations of seeking *taqwā*, here too it is through bodily imagery of a rider physically upon their mount that this early Islamic expression of *taqwā* crystallizes. Oration 16 opens with a powerful claim. *Taqwā* can prevent believers from the abyss of doubts. To explore this claim, *taqwā* is then expressed in an extended metaphor that in employing a parallel structure contrasts unruly horses (transgressions) with trained horses (*taqwā*).

من صرّحت له العبر عما بين يديه من المثلات حجزه التقوى عن تقحّم الشبهات	To whomever history's lessons of exemplary punishments have been declared, *taqwā* prevents him from the abyss of doubts.
...	...
ألا وإنّ الخطايا خيل شمس حمل عليها أَهلها وخلعت لجمها فتقحّمت بهم في النار ألا وإنّ التقوى مطايا ذلل حمل عليها أهلها وأعْطوا أزمّتها فأوردتهم الجنّة	Know that transgressions are unruly horses whose riders have been placed upon them with the bridle removed, guiding them to hellfire. And *taqwā* is trained horses whose riders have been placed upon them with the reins, guiding them to paradise.[34]

In the opening lines, we again see traces of the linguistic meaning of *taqwā* as a protection. Pointing to *taqwā* as protection from doubts echoes a prophetic hadith in which the Prophet instructs believers to "have *taqwā* of doubts" (*ittaqū al-shubuhāt*).[35] While the connection between *taqwā* and doubts is left unexplored in the oration, the hadith contextualizes the idea of doubts as that which is between what is lawful and what is unlawful. It goes on to liken those who indulge in such doubts to a shepherd who allows his sheep to graze dangerously close to someone else's pasture. In both the hadith and the oration, it is only *taqwā* as a protection that prevents the believer from entering such an unadvisable situation.

34 al-Raḍī, 68.

35 Al-Tirmidhī, 1205. الحلال بيّن والحرام بيّن وبينهما مشبّهات لا يعلمها كثير من الناس فمن اتّقى المشبّهات استبرأ لدينه وعرضه ومن وقع في الشبهات كراعٍ يرعى حول الحمى يوشك أن يواقعه

After setting up the importance and protective power of *taqwā*, the oration introduces a vivid, corporeal articulation of *taqwā* using an extended metaphor of a journeying rider. In contrast to transgressions that are unruly horses, *taqwā* is trained horses. This comparison is echoed elsewhere in ʿAlī's orations where *taqwā* is described as interrupting the "venom of transgressions" (*ḥumat al-khaṭāyā*).[36] It is worth pausing to note the locus of agency in this description of *taqwā* as trained horses. The believer is placed upon the horse and given the reins, but the horse (*taqwā*) is responsible for leading the believer to paradise. That is, the rider is neither passive nor in complete control; the believer must do the embodied work of holding onto the reins, knowing how to use the reins in the correct way. Yet once they do, it is *taqwā* that guides them beyond what the individual on their own could possibly accomplish. For this extended metaphor to be effective, it presumes the intelligibility to the audience of what it means to use the reins of a mount, and to know the embodied feeling of being subsequently led. *Taqwā* is expressed here through a form of human/non-human intimacy. The image that these lines conjure is one of close physical proximity between human and non-human animal bodies, one that involves a dependency that can seem counterintuitive to a modern reader. This point is essential to understanding how *taqwā* was expressed as transformative. *Taqwā* is both within and outside the individual believer's control, and it is through attention not just to the content of these lines but to their rhetorical force that the weight of this point is communicated.

While across occurrences of *taqwā* in ʿAlī's orations the believer is consistently likened to the rider, *taqwā* is alternatively expressed as the mount as above, or as the reins, as I explore below. Describing *taqwā* as the reins of the mount communicates a somewhat different image of the ways that *taqwā* transforms. In two orations in particular (Oration 190 and 195), believers are instructed to hold fast to the reins of their mount, the reins likened to *taqwā*. Doing so leads to a series of positive impacts on the believer's life. Yet here, the rhetorical focus is the believer's physical grasping of the reins.

36 Al-Raḍī, 294.

أوصيكم عباد الله بتقوى الله فإنّها الزمام والقوام

فتمسّكوا بوثائقها واعتصموا بحقائقها تؤل بكم إلى أكنان الدعة وأوطان السّعة ومعاقل الحرز ومنازل العزّ في يوم تشخص فيه الابصار

I counsel you, servants of God, to *taqwā* of God, for it is the reins and sustenance.
Hold fast to what binds it, adhere to its truths. It will draw you to shelters of equanimity, abodes of ease, places of comfort, fortifications of refuge, and dwellings of honor on that day when eyes will be opened.[37]

Oration 195 mobilizes nomadic journey imagery and a Qur'anic verse that together enumerate the benefits of *taqwā*. In the metaphoric image, *taqwā* is likened to the reins that allow one to guide their mount. The believer must do the holding; doing so results in ease, comfort, and honor on the Day of Judgement. Among *taqwā's* transformations is an invocation of Q Ibrāhīm 14:42, the day when eyes will be opened.[38] Centering the bodily action of holding onto the reins also appears in Khutba 190, where believers are instructed to "hold fast to *taqwā* of God."[39] Here, believers are explicitly instructed to hold onto *taqwā*, with the image of the reins implied through the subsequent description of *taqwā* as involving a rope (*ḥabl*) with a secure knot. In this sense, *ḥabl* might even be directly translated as reins, rendering the image explicit. Resonating with Oration 195, Oration 190 further describes *taqwā* as a well-fortified stronghold. In their focus on the believer grasping the reins, these two orations emphasize the role of the believer in cultivating *taqwā*; yet still here the believer must simultaneously relinquish some control to *taqwā*, guiding them beyond their own capacities.

Orations 16, 190, and 195 all depict bodily understandings of *taqwā* that center intimacy between a rider and their mount to communicate the ways in which *taqwā* acts on the believer. Such expressions rely on audience familiarity with the intimacies between rider, reins, and mount to communicate the oration's message about *taqwā*. While in Oration 16 the focus is on the mount that is guiding the believer to paradise, in Orations 190 and 195 the focus is on grasping the reins (*taqwā*), for it is in doing so that the believer achieves *taqwā*'s benefits. While embodied journey imagery often expresses the

37 al-Raḍī, 414.

38 ولا تحسبنّ اللّه غافلًا عمّا يعمل الظالمون إنّما يؤخّرهم ليوم تشخص فيه الأبصار Q14:42

39 فاعتصموا بتقوى الله فإن لها حبلا وثيقا عروته ومعقلا منيعا ذروته وبادروا الموت في غمراته. Al-Raḍī, 375.

intimate relationship between the believer and *taqwā* in ʿAlī's orations, other metaphors also appear. For example, in Oration 198, *taqwā* is described as "a remedy for the disease of your hearts, sight for the blindness of your minds, a cure for the sickness of your bodies."[40] Mirroring the relationship between believer and the reins/mount, here also *taqwā* acts on the believer through intimate proximity: through curing internal and external bodily disease and bringing sight to cognitive blindness.

Across the prophetic hadith and orations I have examined thus far, expressions of *taqwā* point to the coalescence of a shared understanding of the concept in a nascent Islamic context. We might then ask, is this always the case? That is, are there expressions in these sources that complicate an understanding of *taqwā* as demanding internally and externally embodied forms of seeking and that through action comes to transform the believer? It is to this question that I now turn.

Taqwā's Others

In prophetic hadith and orations of ʿAlī, *taqwā* is communicated as a religious concept that carries a direct object: God. As mentioned above, however, the commandment to have *taqwā* may or may not explicitly mention God. That is, the phrase "have *taqwā* of God" (*ittaqū āllāh*) appears as regularly as the phrase "have *taqwā*" (*ittaqū*), but in both cases the object of God and the religious context is presupposed. Across these occurrences of *taqwā* themes of seeking and being transformed by *taqwā* emerge, themes that when approached with the lens of rhetorical form and in attention to prophetic action illuminate an understanding of embodiment not limited by the external/visible. Internal and external embodiment is articulated through vivid journey imagery depicting close intimacies between believer and their mount. While this understanding of *taqwā* permeates prophetic hadith and the orations of ʿAlī, a not insignificant minority of occurrences of *taqwā* in these sources make mention of a different, other-than-God object while maintaining a religious sense. Here, I explore those instances of *taqwā* that diverge from the norm. In doing so, I identify continuities with and divergences from the analytical trends identified above, contributing to a more complete answer to my primary question: how was *taqwā* communicated in prophetic hadith and orations of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib?

40 Al-Raḍī, 417. فإنّ تقوى الله دواء داء قلوبكم وبصر عمى أفئدتكم وشفاء مرض أجسادكم

Across early Islamic sources, the standalone word *taqwā* and references to those with *taqwā* (*al-muttaqūn*) exclusively and consistently refer to a religious concept directly or indirectly referencing God. This is important to keep in mind as I explore instances that differ from the norm. That is, while at times *taqwā* takes an unexpected object, it is only in verb form (e.g., "have *taqwā*"). To emphasize this point, the standalone word *taqwā* (and "those with *taqwā*" or *al-muttaqūn/īn*) refers to a positive quality that Muslims are commanded to cultivate and, as described above, can have transformative effects on believers.

While most occurrences of the command to have *taqwā* (*ittaqū*) appearing in prophetic hadith and ʿAlī's orations take God as object (sometimes implicitly), occasionally they take a different, often eschatological, object. In prophetic hadith, the command to have *taqwā* takes a variety of objects, including oppression (*al-ẓulm*), avarice (*al-shuḥḥ*), hellfire (*al-nār*), the world (*al-dunyā*), women (*al-nisā'*), and doubtful acts (*al-shubuhāt*). Some of these also appear in ʿAlī's orations (women, hellfire) as do innovation (*bidʿah*), and "the allures of comfort" (*sakarāt al-niʿmah*). These other-than-God objects resonate with certain Medinan verses of the Qur'an where the command to have *taqwā* occasionally take objects like hellfire and the day of judgement (*yawm*). In an unusual non-religious example from the period, a verse from the poetry of Umayyad poet ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa (d. 93/712) refers to having *taqwā* of enemies, "Did you not have *taqwā* of the enemies during the moonlit night?"[41] Across these examples, *taqwā* takes a wide variety of objects, demonstrating a flexibility in the concept even while affirming its primary religious sense.

Analyzing these less common occurences of *taqwā* is important in assessing the extent to which expressions of *taqwā* in these sources point to a shared semantic landscape. Does taking God as object here and hellfire as object there point to semantic unity or to disparate understandings of the concept? Are techniques of the heart, limbs and tongue involved in having *taqwā* of the world? I suggest that occurrences of *taqwā* taking objects like hellfire, oppression, and the world demonstrate striking similarities with the occurrences I analyzed above. This buttresses the notion of expressions of *taqwā* in prophet hadith and ʿAlī's orations as a coalescence more than a disprateness. That is, we might think of expressions of *taqwā* as carrying a certain degree of flexibility, but within a particular semantic range that emphasizes similarity more than difference. On the one hand, there are divergences. For example, the linguistic meaning of *taqwā* as a protection is emphasized more when the direct object is *not* God than when the direct object *is* God. On the other hand, there are clear

41 ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa, *Dīwān* (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, n.d.), 64–67. فَلَمّا أَجَزنا ساحَةَ الحَيِّ قُلنَ لي
أَلَم نَتَّقِ الأَعداءَ وَاللَيلُ مُقمِرُ

continuities and resonances between forms of seeking *taqwā* when the object of *taqwā* is God and when it is something else. For example, even when it takes a more eschatological object, seeking *taqwā* still involves protecting against the unlawful and engaging in upright speech.

In a hadith from *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* that also appears in *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn*, the Prophet Muhammad commands believers to "Have *taqwā* of injustice" (*ittaqū al-ẓulm*) and to "have *taqwā* of avarice" (*ittaqū al-shuḥḥ*). The hadith goes on to say that without this protection those who came before treated the unlawful as lawful.[42] Another, common direct object is "hellfire" (*nār*) as in the following example appearing in *Ṣāḥīḥ Bukhārī*:

قال الأعمش حدّثني عمرو عن خيثمة عن عديّ بن حاتم قال قال النبيّ صلى الله عليه وسلم اتّقوا النار ثمّ أعرض وأشاح ثمّ قال اتّقوا النار ثمّ أعرض وأشاح ثلاثا حتّى ظننّا أنّه ينظر إليها ثمّ قال اتّقوا النار ولو بشقّ تمرة فمن لم يجد فبكلمة طيّبة

Al-ʿAmash said that ʿAmr told him on the report of Khaythamah, reported by ʿAdī ibn Ḥātim who said that the Prophet, peace and God's blessings upon him, said, "Have *taqwā* of hellfire." Then he turned away and averted his eyes. Then he said "Have *taqwā* of hellfire." Then he turned away and averted his eyes until we thought he was looking at it. Then he said "Have *taqwā* of hellfire even if with half of a date. He who does not find it, a good word."[43]

Here the sense of *taqwā* as protection is clear. Believers are instructed to protect themselves against hellfire through the cultivation of *taqwā*. The direct object of *taqwā* (*al-nār*) raises the question of whether there are multiple, mutually unintelligible (or at least distinct) meanings of *taqwā*. The end of the hadith in particular indicates that this is not the case. The instruction to have *taqwā* of hellfire is expanded with an articulation of the means of seeking it: giving charity, and if charity if not possible, engaging in upright speech. Despite the term's occurrence in a distinct context, that is, as a protection from hellfire, the means of seeking it are similar, pointing to conceptual continuity with those examples already analyzed. Notably, the Prophet's actions add rhetorical force

42 Al-Nawawī, 203. اتقوا الظلم فإن الظلم ظلمات يوم القيامة واتقوا الشح فإن الشح أهلك من كان قبلكم حملهم على أن سفكوا دماءهم واستحلوا محارمهم

43 Al-Bukhārī, 6540.

to the command to have charity and upright speech. Narrators record that it seemed almost as if the Prophet was *looking at hellfire* as he turned his head to the side three times. Facing precisely that from which believers need protection the Prophet concisely and clearly articulated what is needed to put such a protection in place.

Continuities in forms of seeking *taqwā* when the direct object is other-than-God also appear in ʿAlī's orations. In Oration 119, for example, the command to have *taqwā* of hellfire (*al-nār*) is followed by the explanation that indeed, having upright speech (*al-lisān al-ṣāliḥ*) is better than having money but abstaining from praising God.

واتقوا نارا حرها شديد وقعرها بعيد وحليتها حديد وشرابها صديد ألا وإن اللسان الصالح يجعله الله للمرء في الناس خير له من المال يورثه من لا يحمده

Have *taqwā* of hellfire whose heat is intense, its bottom far, its ornament iron, and its drink pus. Indeed, God giving an upright tongue to one among the people is better for him than one who inherits wealth but does not praise Him.[44]

Here again, the tongue serves as a metaphor for speech, an embodied form of communicating *taqwā* to believers. Notably, it follows vivid descriptions of hellfire that employ rhymed prose (*sajʿ*) to communicate the intensity of what *taqwā* is protecting from. In this sense, even when the command to have *taqwā* takes an object other than God, the word carries a family resemblance with its more positively religious sense, a sense that is clear through attention to rhetorical form and bodily invocations that appear across both, pointing to shared forms of seeking *taqwā*. While when *taqwā* takes God as an explicit or implicit direct object, its sense as a protection is minimized, here such a sense is unambiguous. It is precisely in engaging in correct forms of seeking that one can be protected from hellfire. In this sense, while the object may be something worldly (e.g., women, the world), or otherworldly (e.g., hellfire), in constantly centering the internal and external techniques of the body required to achieve it, *taqwā* here cannot be disentangled from the divine-oriented understanding most common across prophetic hadith and ʿAlī's orations.

44 Al-Raḍī, 234.

Conclusion

Exploring the interplay of form and content in prophetic hadith and the orations of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib leads to an understanding of *taqwā* as expressed in terms of both internal and external forms of embodiment. Cultivating *taqwā* in the heart involves engaging in the correct techniques of the body in the world, including avoiding what is unlawful or doubtful, and engaging in upright speech, practices that carry their own bodily hierarchy. Further, through vivid metaphorical imagery linking rider, reins, and mount, the transformative power of *taqwā* to guide the believer to paradise is communicated. In this intimate space between believer and *taqwā*, we see that *taqwā* is the reins of the mount, the cure for internal and external sickness and a protection against the venom of transgressions. Even when *taqwā* is not of God, but of hellfire, or oppression, it is nonetheless communicated using powerful embodied language and rhetorical form, communicating forms of seeking continuous with divine-oriented invocations.

On the one hand, prophetic hadith and ʿAlī's orations are but two places where *taqwā* appears in the leadup to and in the first Hijri century. In an effort to comprehensively understand what *taqwā* is at the advent of Islam, we would necessarily need to cast a wider net that also looks at its occurrences in pre-Islamic poetry, the Qur'an, early Islamic poetry, prophetic biography, and Umayyad prose. On the other hand, focusing on the genres of prophetic hadith and oration opens up rich understandings of how *taqwā* was communicated to believers in a primarily oral milieu. During a period of rapid shifts in fundamental values and life orientations, prophetic hadith and ʿAlī's orations do not simply provide a glimpse into early Islamic ethical orientations. More importantly, they act as a rhetorically forceful communicative locus, pointing us to the metaphors, actions, and imagery used to express and persuade in this critical historical moment. In doing so, they push us to take a more expansive view of embodiment that incorporates techniques of the heart together with those of the tongue, ears, limbs, and eyes.