

TAQWA

(PIETY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS)

Definition:

Taqwa is an Arabic word that embodies several meanings. Some of these meanings include The following:

1. Fear of Allah's punishment if we disobey His orders as well as fear of displeasing Him if we do wrong.
2. Sincerity and devotion in worshipping Allah and following His orders because of our realization how much we depend upon Him.
3. Our love of Him and our desire to please Him
4. Watching our behavior because Allah is watching what we do and His angels are recording all that we say and do.

FEAR OF ALLAH'S PUNISHMENT

Those who believe understand that Allah can inflict His punishment at any time if they disobey His orders and transgress their bounds. They always think of their accountability, a Day that is surely coming and a Day when they must answer for all their bad deeds. It is this concept, that we are accountable to Allah and must explain all our deeds that shapes our behavior. We avoid sin, not following our lusts and desires. We sacrifice and are patient striving to do good, all because one day our deeds will be scrutinized and we will have to answer for every detail small or big. The Qur'an explains,

﴿ وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَإِنْ كَانَ

مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا وَكَفَى بِنَا حَاسِبِينَ ﴿ [الأنبياء: ٤٧]

"We shall set up scales of justice for the Day of Judgment, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least. And if there be (no more than) the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it (to account): and enough are We to take account" (Al-Anbia'a 21: 47)

The wicked will be in a state of terror because they rejected belief and did not prepare for their accountability. They will now see their Book of Deeds spread open, bearing witness over their bad deeds.

﴿وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يَوَيْلَتَنَا مَا لِهَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا وَلَا يَظِلُّمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا﴾ [الكهف: ٤٩]

"And the Book (of Deeds) will be placed (before you); and thou will see the sinful in great terror because of what is (recorded) therein; they will say, "Ah! woe to us! what a Book is this! it leaves out nothing small or great, but takes account thereof!" they will find all that they did, placed before them: and not one will thy Lord treat with injustice" (Al-Kahf 18 : 49)

Alternately, those who understood their duty and believed in Allah submitting to Him will have nothing to fear on the Day of Judgment.

﴿يَعْبَادِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ﴾ [الزخرف: ٦٨]

"My devotees! no fear shall be on you that Day, nor shall ye grieve," (Az-Zukhruf 43 : 68)

﴿الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ﴾ [الزخرف: ٦٩]

"(Being) those who have believed in Our Signs and bowed (their wills to Ours) in Islam" (Az-Zukhruf 43 : 69)

﴿ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ أَنْتُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ تُخْبَرُونَ﴾ [الزخرف: ٧٠]

"Enter you the Garden, you and your wives, in (beauty and) rejoicing" (Az-Zukhruf 43 : 70)

Mankind has been forewarned repeatedly about their eventual accountability. They were told that nothing on that Day will be able to help them except their good deeds and sincere devotion to Allah and Taqwa. Our children and our money will not help us on the Day of Judgment.

﴿وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَعَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ﴾ [البقرة: ٤٨]

"Then guard yourselves against a day when one soul shall not avail another nor shall intercession be accepted for her, nor shall compensation be taken from her, nor shall anyone be helped (from outside)" (Al-Baqara 2 : 48)

This verse is very strong on those who deny their accountability for it cuts off any hope they may have for help or intercession. It states clearly that:

1. No soul will be able to help another soul.
2. No intercession will be accepted for the sinners.
3. They cannot ransom themselves by offering money.
4. There is no help from anyone against Allah's justice.
5. The implication is that our best chance to avoid this dreadful outcome is to do good in this life, to obey Allah and serve Him well avoiding what is sinful and wrong.

Some may think that their parents, children, or families may be able to help them and intercede on their behalf. After all, in this life children, money and power help; however, the Qur'an explains that during our accountability, we should not count on any of these material things to be of any help to us. Each person stands on his merit alone.

﴿يَتَأْتِيَ النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ وَأَخْشَوْا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي وَالِدٌ عَنْ وَلَدِهِ وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ هُوَ جَارٍ عَنْ وَالِدِهِ شَيْئًا إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُم بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ﴾ [لقمان: ٣٣]

"O mankind! do your duty to your Lord, and fear (the coming of) a Day when no father can avail aught for his son, nor a son avail aught for his father. Verily, the promise of Allah is true: let not

then this present life deceive you, nor let the Chief Deceiver deceive you about Allah" (Luqman 31 : 33)

A wise person understands that his accountability is surely coming, therefore, he sets his priorities correctly and he prepares for this Day of Reckoning. He watches his behavior, hastens in all good deeds, avoids what is wrong and sinful and lives his life with sincere devotion to Allah. He has done his job and his heart is content and he is hopeful of Allah's mercy and reward.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾ [الحشر: ١٨]

"O ye who believe! Fear Allah, and let every soul look to what (provision) he has sent forth for the morrow. Yea, fear Allah: for Allah is well-acquainted with (all) that ye do" (Al-Hashr 59 : 18)

﴿وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ﴾ [الحشر: ١٩]

"And be you not like those who forgot Allah, and He made them forget their own souls! Such are the rebellious transgressors!" (Al-Hashr 59 : 19)

SINCERITY, DEVOTION AND OBEDIENCE

The second meaning of Taqwa implies devotion to Allah and obeying His orders living our life as He has ordered us to do. Allah explained to us in the Qur'an and in the Sunnah of His Prophet (PBUH) His straight way and made His guidelines clear. It is our duty then to follow the Way of Allah and to follow the example of His Prophet (PBUH).

The Qur'an explains this straight way of Allah and contrasts it with other ways. The Way of Allah is straight leading us to success and Allah's pleasure. Other ways are those of the Satans, and they will cause us to deviate becoming misguided and lose Allah's guidance.

﴿وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ
ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصْنُكُمْ بِحَبْلِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾ [الأنعام: ١٥٣]

"Verily, this is My Way leading straight: follow it; follow not (other) paths: they will scatter you about from His (great) Path; thus does He command you, that ye may be righteous" (Al-Ana'm 6 : 153)

The Qur'an contrasts two groups of people, one group live their life conscious of Allah obeying His orders and seeking His pleasure, their foundation is solid and strong, able to withstand tests and trials. The other group disobey Allah and heeds no warning. They follow their own desires and their foundation of belief is weak and shaky crumbling away.

﴿أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ تَقْوَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ
عَلَىٰ شَفَا جُرُفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾
[التوبة: ١٠٩]

"Which then is best? He that lays his foundation on piety to Allah and His Good Pleasure? Or he that lays his foundation on an undermined sand cliff ready to crumble to pieces? And it does crumble to pieces with him, into the fire of Hell. And Allah guides not people that do wrong" (At-Tawba 9 : 109)

BE AWARE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

We can easily forget our priorities and become distracted from our goal of serving Allah with devotion in our busy life. There are certain ideas that may help us in this regard:

1. To follow a bad deed with a good deed.
2. To improve our character and behavior.
3. To remember Allah at all times.

These three useful hints are a summary of the advice the Prophet (PBUH) gave. Abi Dhurr Al-Ghafari (May Allah be pleased with him) related that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said,

“Fear Allah and be conscious of Him at all times; and follow a bad deed with a good deed, you will cancel the bad deed; and treat others with a good and noble character and righteous behavior.”

Narrated by Termedhi & Abou Dawood

- Learning and understanding our religion, Islam

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) explained that proper knowledge and understanding of religion makes us better human beings.

Abi Horaira (May Allah be pleased with him) said the Prophet (PBUH) was asked, “*Who is the most noble and honorable among mankind?*” He said, “*The most noble is the most pious and righteous.*” When asked about the most noble among the Arabs in character, he said, “*The best among you in **Jahleeyya** (state of ignorance before Islam) are those who are best among you in Islam when they learn and understand their religion.*”

Narrated by Bokhari

- Not being dazzled by outside appearances or glitter

Many things in life may give us immediate pleasure and self-gratification; however, they are not necessarily good things, and indeed, some may even be bad traits and evil deeds. We should learn to resist our natural instincts and value sacrifice and patience over immediate satisfaction of our vain desires. This requires resolve and strong faith in Allah.

﴿ قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ الْخَبِيثِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَتَأُولَى

الْأَلْبَبِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلَحُونَ ﴾ [المائدة: ١٠٠]

"Say: Not equal are things that are bad and things that are good, even though the abundance of the bad may dazzle thee; so fear Allah, O ye that understand; that (so) ye may prosper"

(A-Maeda 5 : 100)

- Obeying the orders of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The Prophet explained Allah's message and showed us how to apply it to our lives. He was an example to follow in his noble character and

behavior; therefore, obeying His orders and following his example will enable us to live our lives as sincere Muslims devoted to Allah. The Qur'an states,

﴿وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ
الْعِقَابِ﴾ [الحشر: ٧]

"So take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you. And fear Allah; for Allah is strict in Punishment" (Al-Hashr 59 : 7)

The Prophet calls on us to live our life as righteous Muslims aware of our responsibility and accountability to Allah; therefore, his orders renew our life and give it meaning and purpose.

﴿يَتَأْتِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ﴾ [الأنفال: ٢٤]

"O you who believe! give your response to Allah and His Messenger, when He calls you to that which will give you life; and know that Allah comes in between a man and his heart, and that it is He to Whom ye shall (all) be gathered" (Al-Anfal 8 : 24)

- To seek help in patience and Taqwa :

We are going to face many tests and trials in our lives. What will give us strength and resolve is patience, Taqwa, and knowing that our effort is recorded and we will be fully rewarded by Allah.

﴿يَتَأْتِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾
[آل عمران: ٢٠٠]

"O ye who believe! persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allah; that ye may prosper" (Al-Imran 3 : 200)

- To stay in the company of other Muslims and cooperate with them

As human beings, the company we keep influences us. If we associate

with good decent people, they affect our behavior in a positive way and remind us of our duty towards Allah. On the contrary, if we are close to those whose only goal is to enjoy the good things in life and completely disregard their accountability to Allah, we will surely drift with them and become as misguided as they are.

Abi Saed Al-Khudri (May Allah be pleased with him) related that the Prophet (PBUH) said,

“Do not become a friend except to a believer, and do not let anyone eat your food except someone who fears Allah.”

Narrated by Abou Dawood, Termedhi and Hakim

As we discussed previously in the section on Islam, there are certain guidelines that characterize the relationship between Muslims to each other. The following saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) sheds light on and focuses on several important aspects of this close tie between the Muslims.

Abi Horaira (May Allah be pleased with him) related that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said,

“Do not envy each other; do not buy or compete when your brother is buying; and be O servants of Allah as brothers to each other. A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim; He does not wrong him nor does he leave him without helping him, and he does not put him down. Taqwa is here (pointing to his chest three times). A Muslim incurs on himself much evil when he puts down and ridicules his Muslim brother. Everything that belongs to a Muslim is sacred and must be respected by other Muslims, his life, his money and his wife.”

Narrated by Muslim

In this Hadith, we learn:

1. To respect the life, property and family of each Muslim.
2. We should not put down or ridicule another Muslim.
3. We should not cheat or wrong other Muslims.
4. We should not hold any dislike or hatred towards other Muslims.
5. We should not turn our backs or separate ourselves from other Muslims.
6. We should not envy other Muslims for what Allah has provided for them, but be happy for them.

Muslims should pull their resources and effort working together to do something positive to improve the life of all who live in their community and country. They should stand for morality and fight immorality and corruption. The goal is to make the community a better place, safe and free filled with opportunities.

﴿وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ﴾ [المائدة: ٢]

"Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancour: fear Allah: for Allah is strict in punishment" (Al-Maeda 5 : 2)

LOVING GOD AND PLEASING HIM

Our best example of a human being who understood how much we owe to Allah, and how we should appreciate His blessings and show our gratitude to Him, is Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Aesha (May Allah be pleased with her) related that the Prophet of Allah (PBUH) would stand up in prayer at night until his feet were quite swollen. She asked him, "O Messenger of Allah, why do you do that, seeing that Allah has already forgiven your sins whatever you have done before and whatever you may do in the future?" His reply was,

"Should I not then be a grateful servant of Allah?"

Narrated by Bokhari

The Qur'an encourages the believers to fear Allah working to gain His pleasure and striving in His cause; to do this is to obtain the means to success.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ ۚ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ [المائدة: ٣٥]

"O ye who believe! do your duty to Allah, seek the means of approach unto Him, and strive with might and main in His cause: that ye may prosper" (Al-Maeda 5 : 35)

WATCHING OUR BEHAVIOR

Allah's angels duly record everything that we say or do. We cannot hide anything since Allah and His angels are close to us and watch our behavior at all times:

﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ ۖ وَحَنُوقُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبَلٍ
الْوَرِيدِ﴾ [ق: ١٦]

"It was We Who created man, and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him: for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein" (Qa F 50 : 16)

﴿إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ﴾ [ق: ١٧]

"Behold, two (guardian angels) appointed to learn (his doings) learn (and note them), one sitting on the right and one on the left" (Qa F 50 : 17)

﴿مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ﴾ [ق: ١٨]

"Not a word does he utter but there is a sentinel by him, ready (to note it)" (Qa F 50 : 18).

We cannot hide anything from Allah for He knows all that we do, even our secret consultations and what we harbor and conceal in our hearts. It is this knowledge that should serve as a deterrent from wrongdoing, but many people ignore that Allah knows what they are doing or forget this fact. The Qur'an reminds us of Allah's all encompassing knowledge.

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا آدْنَى مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرُ إِلَّا هُوَ
مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾

[المجادلة: ٧]

"See thou not that Allah does know (all) that is in the heavens and on earth? There is not a secret consultation between three, but He makes the fourth among them, nor between five but He makes the sixth, nor between fewer nor more, but He is in their midst, wheresoever they be: in the end will He tell them the truth of their conduct, on the Day of Judgment. For Allah has full knowledge of all things" (Al-Mujadalah 58 : 7)

On the Day of Judgment, our Book of Deeds will be brought forth and spread open; it will bear witness for us or against us.

﴿وَكُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَبْعَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ ۖ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنشُورًا﴾ [الإسراء: ١٣]

"Every man's fate We have fastened on his own neck: on the Day of Judgment We shall bring out for him a scroll, which he will see spread open" (Al-Isra'a 17 : 13)

﴿أَفْرَأَى كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا﴾ [الإسراء: ١٤]

(It will be said to him:) *"Read thine (own) record; sufficient is thy soul this day to make out an account against thee"*

(Al-Isra'a 17 : 14)

OBEDIENCE

We have previously illustrated the importance of obeying the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) for he delivered Allah's message, explained it and applied it in his life; therefore, following the example of the Messenger (PBUH) in his behavior and character will surely allow us to evolve and improve as sincere righteous servants of Allah. The Prophet (PBUH) had an exalted standard of character and his actions and words were guided by Allah. He was the human application of what Allah wishes His servants to be and he represented the best possible human behavior and the noblest of character.

That was the reason that his companions loved him so much and

emulated his character and behavior. They described to us all his sayings and actions so that we may learn and evolve as human beings.

Anas Bin Malik (May Allah be pleased with him) related that three men came to the Prophet's (PBUH) house and asked his wives about the manner of his worship. When they were informed, they felt that perhaps he did not do too much because Allah had already forgiven his sins, but they were mere mortals and felt they had to do more. One of the men said, *"I will pray all night and never sleep."* Another person said, *"I will fast every day, and will never break my fast."* The third person said, *"I will remain a bachelor and will never marry."* The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) came and said,

"Are you the people who said so and so. By Allah! Amongst you I fear Allah the most, and I am the most pious amongst you, but I stand in prayer at night part of the night and I sleep the other part; I fast and I break my fast (Meaning I do not fast every day); and I marry women. Whoever does not want to follow my way, he does not belong to me."

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim

We learn from this Hadith:

1. Islam calls for moderation in our life. We should avoid all extremes because they are not natural. No one can fast every day of his life and no one can stand in prayer all night every night. These acts are against human nature and should be discouraged.
2. Taqwa is to do what is right in moderation and not to neglect some duties at the expense of other duties. If we pray all night, we are tired the next day and cannot do our work properly. If we fast every day, we will become weak and sick needing medical help and someone to look after us.
3. We should follow the good example of God's righteous servants up to a limit. People are different, and what works for them may not be exactly right for us.
4. It is not how much prayer or fasting that we offer to Allah that is beneficial, but it is offering these rituals in moderation and with sincerity and devotion with the purpose of pleasing Allah. At the same time, being careful to do our work to the best of our ability and helping those who need our help in order to set the best possible example for our family and children.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE WITH TAQWA

The Qur'an outlines the characteristics of those who have Taqwa (piety and righteousness) as possessing the following attributes:

1. They believe in Allah and in being accountable to Him.
2. They believe in the Qur'an, the divine message given to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and follow its guidance and principles.
3. They believe in Allah's messengers and follow their example.
4. They establish regular prayers.
5. They give regular charity.
6. They fulfill their promises and covenants.
7. They are patient and persevere in adversity.
8. They control their anger.
9. They pardon the mistakes of others.
10. They realize their own mistakes and turn to God seeking His forgiveness for their sins and shortcomings.

These characteristics were compiled from the following Qur'anic verses:

﴿ ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴾ [البقرة: ٢]

"This is the book; in it is guidance, sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah;" (Al-Baqara 2 : 2)

﴿ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴾ [البقرة: ٣]

"Who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them;" (Al-Baqara 2 : 3)

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴾ [البقرة: ٤]

"And who believe in the Revelation sent to thee, and sent before thy time, and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter"

(Al-Baqara 2 : 4)

﴿ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴾ [البقرة: ٥]

"They are on (true guidance), from their Lord, and it is these who will prosper" (Al-Baqara 2 : 5)

Another verse from the same chapter is:

﴿لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ أَنْ تُولُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَءَاتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَآثَانَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّابِقِينَ فِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ﴾ [البقرة: ١٧٧]

"It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practise regular charity, to fulfil the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing"

(Al-Baqara 2 : 177)

The third verse is in Chapter 3 of the Qur'an:

﴿وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٣٣]

"Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a Garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth, prepared for the righteous" (Al-Imran 3 : 133)

﴿الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَبِيرِ وَالْغَيْظِ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٣٤]

"Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity;

who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men; for Allah loves those who do good" (Al-Imran 3 : 134)

﴿وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٣٥]

"And those who, having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own souls, earnestly bring Allah to mind, and ask for forgiveness for their sins; and who can forgive sins except Allah? And are never obstinate in persisting knowingly in (the wrong) they have done"

(Al-Imran 3 : 135)

﴿وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٣٥]

"Are never obstinate in persisting knowingly in (the wrong) they have done" (Al-Imran 3:135).

﴿أُولَٰئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَنَبْعٌ آٰجِرٌ أَلْعَمَلِينَ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٣٦]

"For such the reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens with rivers flowing underneath; an eternal dwelling: how excellent a recompense for those who work (and strive)!" (Al-Imran 3: 136)

REWARDS OF TAQWA

Allah loves those who have Taqwa:

The Qur'an stresses that Allah loves those who have Taqwa (righteous and pious).

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ﴾ [التوبة: ٤]

"Allah loves the righteous" (At-Tawba 9 : 4)

Sa'd bin Abi Waqas (May Allah be pleased with him) related that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said,

"Allah loves His servant who is righteous, and who uses his wealth and gives in charity secretly."

Narrated by Muslim

The Qur'an also praises the virtue of Taqwa as a characteristic of those who are most honored in the sight of God.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ﴾ [الحجرات: ١٣]

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full Knowledge and is well-acquainted (with all things)" (Al-Hujerat 49 : 13)

The righteous are given good news in their life and in the Hereafter for they have nothing to fear or to be sad:

Those who obeyed Allah and lived their life exhibiting Taqwa are close to Allah and His friends. He promised them His protection and Grace.

﴿أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾ [يونس: ٦٢]

"Behold! verily on the friends of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve;" (Yunus 10 : 62)

﴿الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ﴾ [يونس: ٦٣]

"Those who believe and (constantly) guard against evil"

(Yunus 10 : 63)

﴿لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ﴾ [يونس: ٦٤]

"For them are Glad Tidings, in the life of the Present and in the

Hereafter: no change can there be in the Words of Allah. This is indeed the supreme Felicity" (Yunus 10 : 64)

They will enter paradise and dwell therein forever:

Those who feared their Lord will enter Paradise, a just reward for their devotion and sacrifice.

﴿لَكِنِ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ هُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نُزُلًا مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِلْأَبْرَارِ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٩٨]

"On the other hand, for those who fear their Lord, are Gardens, with rivers flowing beneath; therein are they to dwell (for ever), a gift from the Presence of Allah, and that which is in the Presence of Allah is the best (bliss) for the righteous"

(Al-Imran 3 : 198)

If we fear Allah and guard against evil, we will be able to see our way clearly and our minor sins will be forgiven.

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ﴾ [الأنفال: ٢٩]

"O you who believe! if ye fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion (to judge between right and wrong), remove from you (all) evil (that may afflict) you, and forgive you: for Allah is the Lord of grace unbounded" (Al-Anfal 8 : 29)

Increase our guidance:

As we turn to Allah and seek His guidance, He promised to guide us to His way and increase our belief.

﴿وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَءَاتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ﴾ [محمد: ١٧]

"But to those who receive guidance, He increases the (light of) Guidance, and bestows on them their Piety and Restraint (from evil)" (Muhammad 47 : 17)

BENEFITS OF TAQWA

1. Forgiveness of sin.
2. Gaining paradise.
3. Gaining the pleasure of Allah & His Grace.
4. Becoming guided by Allah.
5. Obeying Allah & His messenger.
6. Watching our behavior.
7. Being conscious of and prepared for our accountability.
8. Is a sign of faith in Allah.
9. Is a sign that we appreciate Allah's blessing and are grateful to Him.