

**In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.**

# **Taqwah: A Quranic Term**

**By Qazi Fazlullah**

The word Taqwa is actually derived from "Waqa", which means to guard and protect. It is also derived from "Ittaqa", which is also used in the meaning and form of, "Fear of Allah (SWT)". Its derivatives are mostly used in the Holy Quran and Ahadith of Rasoolullah (SAS).

In many verses this commandment of Allah (SWT) is followed by death or events of the day of Resurrection, as in Surah Aal-i-Imran, Allah (SWT) said, "O the believers! Fear Allah as He should be feared and die not except in a state of Islam.(Verse 102).

Or in Surah Hajj Allah (SWT) has said: "O mankind! Fear Your Lord, the earthquake of the hour is a terrible thing" (Verse 1).

In Surah Al Hashar Allah (SWT) Says: "O the believers! Fear Allah (SWT), and let every person look to what he has sent forth for tomorrow, and Fear Allah. Verily Allah is all aware of what you do." (Verse No. 18.).

In certain other places Allah (SWT) has mentioned the attributes of Taqwah and the qualities of Muttaqeen, the people who fear Allah. In Surah AI-Baqarah it is said "Muttaqeen are those who believe in hidden or unseen things, establish their Salat and spend (in the cause of Allah from what we have bestowed on them. Those who

believe in what has been revealed to you O Prophet (SAS), and that which was revealed before you, and they firmly believe in the day of resurrection". (Verses 3, 4).

In Surah Mominoon (Verses 1-9) the qualities of these people (Muttaqeen) are mentioned with the title of Mominoon which is synonymous with Muttaqeen.

"Successful indeed are the believers, those who offer their Salat with profound devotion utmost solemnity and submissiveness, and those who turn away from Al-laghw (Dirty false, wrong, evil vain talks and deeds) and those who pay Zakat and those who guard their chastity except from their wives and from those whom their right hand possess; and for that they are free from blame. But whoever seeks beyond that then those are transgressors; those who are faithfully true to their Amanat (Duties and Trusts) and to their Covenants and those who strictly guard their prayers".

In Surah Al-Furqan Allah (SWT) has bestowed on them the honorable title of Ibad-ur-Rahman (The slaves and true servants of Allah (SWT)). In this Surah (Verses # 63-68) Allah (SWT) says:

"The slaves of the most Beneficent are those who walk on the earth in humility and when the ignorant try to pick on them they excuse themselves with gentle and kind words and those who spend the nights before their Lord prostrate and standing and

those who say our Lord! Avert from us the torment of Hell. Verily the torment of Hell is a great loss; indeed it is an evil abode and an evil place of dwelling.; and those when they spend are neither unduly extravagant nor unduly niggardly but keep a balance; and those who do not invoke any other god (besides Allah (SWT)) and those who do not kill a person whom Allah (SWT) Has forbidden to kill except for just cause and those who do not commit fornication or adultery; and whoever commits this crime shall receive the punishment".

In Verses # 72-74 of the same Surah Allah (SWT) says:

"And those who do not witness falsehood (in silence) and if they happen to pass by where there is some evil play or evil talk they pass by it with dignity and non-indulgence and those when they are reminded of Ayat (Verses, signs, proofs, evidences, arguments) of their Lord do not act as if they are deaf and blind and those who say: Our Lord bestow upon us from our wives and offspring's in the form of comfort to our eyes (pleasure, satisfaction, harmony and peace of mind) and make us the leaders of Muttaqeen".

There are other Ayat and Ahadith, which mention the ingredients of Taqwah, Iman and Islam in general. The Holy Prophet (SAS) said that Taqwah is to avoid a thing, which weaves in your heart. It means to avoid something about which you are not sure whether it is allowed or not. In various Ahadith it is mentioned that fear Allah

(SWT) not only openly but in secret as well.

The Holy Prophet (SAS) also said that the beginning and end of wisdom (Intellect, knowledge) is fear of Allah (SWT). He also said that Taqwah is the fountainhead of all good deeds.

A person who fears Allah (SWT) never transgresses the boundaries laid down by Allah (SWT), nor does he harm any of his creations without just cause.

Taqwah gives an inner mechanism which prompts us to do good deeds, refrain from bad ones and provides us peace and serenity within our souls. A Sahabi once asked Rasoolullah (SAS) as to how I will recognize and feel my Iman? He replied that when your good deeds make you happy and your bad ones make you unhappy then you are a Momin. This indeed is a sure test of one's Iman.

The taste of Iman is based on three things as narrated by Imam Bukhari in the following Hadith:

"When one is content with the fact that Allah is his Lord, Muhammad (SAS) is his prophet, and Islam is his Deen, then he has tasted Iman ".

The scholars of Quran and Sunnah have summarized Taqwah according to a new

approach consisting of taste and practices. Sheikh Jeelani said that Taqwah is a practice whereby a religious prudent person practicing it does not feel shy about it.

Hazrat Uthman (RAA) said that those who fear Allah (SWT) have five qualities:

1. They do not associate with people except with those with whom they can maintain terms on a religious basis.
2. They restraint their private parts and tongues.
3. When they make any large worldly gain, which is temporal, they consider it a curse and when they gain even a little piety they consider it precious.
4. They do not eat to their full even out of what is permitted for fear that something forbidden might be mixed with it.
5. They consider all others pious and pardoned and consider themselves as sinners.

A great Mufassir (Interpreter) of Holy Quran Qazi Baidzawi has said that Taqwah has the following three kinds of grades or categories:

1. Taqwah of commoners and that is to shun Shirk (Polytheism i.e. making associates with Allah (SWT)).
2. Taqwah of Khawas (Special people) is to avoid all forbidden things.

3. Taqwah of Akhsas-ul Khawas (extra special people) is not only to avoid things that are ambiguous or doubtful but also those things that are Mubah (Things about which Islamic Law is silent about their permissibility or prohibition).

In short Taqwah is a term that cannot be adequately described by any other word. This word (Taqwah) is a very comprehensive and multidimensional term of the Holy Quran as it covers every aspect of our life. Some scholars have said that Taqwah means to avoid every forbidden thing and to obey/commit everything enjoined. They said that it is different from Khauf (fear). Taqwah is a combination of faith, character, actions, which has a profound effect on the lifestyles, social, economic and political activities and conduct and objectives of individuals as well as nations.

### **Objectives, results, gains, and effects of Taqwah:**

Allah (SWT) says in surah Al-Ahzab (Ayat #70,71): "O the believers adopt Taqwah, and speak "Qauli Sadeed"(To the point, straight forward true talk and in accordance with the circumstances and tile environment). If you do so then Allah will correct your actions (guiding you in the right direction) and will forgive your sins, and one who obeys the commandments of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAS) has achieved great achievements (he has indeed achieved great success)".

These Ayat explain that adopting Taqwah will bring you righteousness in your deeds; forgiveness of your sins, and that obeying the commandments of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAS) will bring you success not only in this world but also in the hereafter.

In Surah Alanfal (Ayat #29) Allah (SWT) says: "O you who believe if you obey and fear Allah (SWT) then He will grant you a criterion and will clean you of your sins and forgive you. And indeed Allah is the Lord of boundless bounty".

This Ayat gives us another concept of Taqwah, which is as follows: It gives you a criterion i.e. an inner mechanism in your nature through which you will easily distinguish right from wrong. It also means that it will make you a criterion for others, as you will be known as a symbol of righteousness. Allah (SWT) has defined "Sirat-e-Mustaqeem" in Surah Fatiha by the words "The path of those upon whom you bestowed your favors".

According to Surah Nisa (Ayat # 69) "These people consists of Prophets, the truthful people, those martyred in the path of Allah (SWT), and the pious people".

This level of piety could be achieved only by following the dictates of Shariah.

Rasoolullah (SAS) said: "One could not be a perfect Momin until his wishes and his ego become subservient to my Deen ". In other words to become a perfect Momin one needs to follow the dictates of Shariah in all walks of life.

The word Furqan that is also the title of a Surah (#25) means distinguishing features, which mark the identity of an individual. A Momin is identified by his practices. He will be a well-wisher of the entire creation of Allah (SWT). He will be eager for the guidance of the entire humanity. He will be of a clean character. He will always lower his gaze in front of Non-Mahrams, and he will use his tongue very cautiously. His aspirations will not be for mundane matters and worldly gains but for the Hereafter. He will constantly endeavor to ensure that his hands and his tongue do not cause harm to any other human being. He will remove any harmful thing from the road so as not to cause harm to passersby. He will provide succor to the weak and infirm, sympathize in their sorrows and tribulations.

Human beings possess a natural instinct of self-preservation. A person may be a cruel transgressor to others but he will not like the same for himself nor he will tolerate it. Due to this instinct mankind has survived and the world has not been destroyed. This is the secret of the existence of the world and this is the spirit and soul of this universal system, the moment this instinct disappears the big crunch or the total destruction of the world would will occur and that is meant by the

following Hadith of Rasoolullah (SAS): "Qayamat will not come but upon wicked people". And Qayamat will not occur as long as the name of Allah (SWT) is pronounced in this world.

The Muslims will go with this distinction and criterion, and any of the people who will follow and accept the way they practice will be successful in the Hereafter.

We, the Muslims living in non-Muslim societies should be a role model for others to emulate. We must show the people that we are neither traitors, hypocrites, or cheaters, but we are honest, sincere, loyal, law abiding citizens of the country we live in as this is what has been ordained by Rasoolullah (SAS) in the following Hadith: " The Muslims should be committed and bound by the conditions they accepted", And Allah (SWT) says in Surah Maida (Ayat #1) "O the believers fulfill your obligations (contracts, conditions etc)".

**May Allah (SWT) guide us and all of humanity to the Straight Path. Ameen**