

In the name of Allah the Most Merciful, the Especially Merciful.

Taqwa - What is it?

The word “taqwa” is mentioned many times in the Quran (251 times). It is not a word that can be easily described in one word.

- Protecting oneself from the anger of Allah by obedience to His commands and avoiding the haram and not indulging in things that Allah forbids or frowns upon or are questionable in their nature.
- An awareness of Allah at ALL times through our actions and senses and thoughts
- The shunning of everything and anything that causes a deficiency in one’s relationship with Allah.

Why do we care?

Taqwa is the medium through which we gain Allah’s mercy, victory and provisions in this life and the hereafter. It is the medium by which to protect ourselves from sin through life’s dangerous journey so that we can successfully complete the journey unscathed by sin. It is the most honored thing in Allah’s eyes.

49:13 - the most honorable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has Taqwa.

An example of taqwá - If one is walking through a forest where there are many thorns, one walks carefully so as not to get pricked or get one's clothes torn.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “**The most common thing which leads people to Paradise is taqwa of Allah and good conduct**, and the most common thing which leads people to the Hell Fire is the mouth and the private parts.”
[Tirmidhi]

Having taqwá allows a person to be constantly aware of both Allah's all-encompassing knowledge and attributes and a reminder of their relationship and responsibility to Allah as His creation and servant. **Ultimately, we are Allah’s creation and His servant and our purpose in life is to serve our Master and be as obedient to Him as possible so as to get His rewards!**

REMEMBER: There is NO distinction between Muslims except for their level of taqwa. In other religions a man of scripture (the priest, the budha, the brahmins as opposed to the untouchables) is different from the ordinary layman. NOT in Islam! In Islam, the ordinary “layman” can have more taqwa than an imam and Allah may grant him more in this life and in the hereafter than someone who claims to have Islam in them.

In Islam there is only one Shariah and one scale for righteousness for all believers. That scale is the level of taqwa one has achieved through one’s actions, thoughts and desires.

There is no compulsion in religion but one's desire for Allah's mercy and forgiveness should be the compulsion to want to better one's religion.

We are all in it together. The rich and the poor, the educated and the un-educated, the leader and the follower, the writer and the reader, the preacher and the listener, the ruler and the ruled, the old and the young, the man and the woman, all must develop taqwa. **We should always remember that the most honored person, in the sight of Allah, is the believer with the most taqwa.**

We must all try to have and increase our levels of taqwa.

For women, it's even more important to build our taqwa because we are the driving force in building and preserving our families. WE are responsible for our children, our husbands and are caretakers for our relationships and interactions with our relatives and friends. IF we don't have the taqwa that will guide us to do/say and be the right thing, then how can our community grow to have taqwa as well?

Understanding and Knowledge are Key Factors to Attaining Taqwa

We MUST have a true and vital understanding of what it is to have taqwa to attain it.

A true muttaqoon is a person who strives to possess a solid understanding and knowledge of the rulings of Allah (swt) through the Qur'an and Sunnah. **Without proper knowledge of the Islamic rulings, a person would not know what is asked of him/her.** Therefore, it is a must to understand Islam properly as well as to have the proper intention of pleasing Allah (swt) in carrying out these actions.

Unfortunately, this is the very concept which the Muslims have left behind, as a result of faulty education. The disbelievers in the distant past, as well as in present times, have understood the importance of taqwa and the Islamic creed, and how it could jeopardize their interests. They realized **how taqwa and the Islamic creed ('aqeedah) were the roots of power to the Muslims.** Thus they began to warp and dilute it by adding Greek, Persian and Hindu ideas and philosophies to it. **Eventually, the Muslims began to incorporate the false ideas of the body and soul, and their interrelationship, into the original, pristine Islamic concept of taqwa.**

Muslims started portraying a person possessing taqwa as a soft-spoken, elevated, calm, pious, spiritual person, adorned with a certain type of holy attire. A picture of a person who over emphasizes prayer, fasting, and things such as donating to the masjid, while living a secluded and isolated life would be the one with taqwa, even though the same person could be dealing with usury, lying or selling alcohol. They began manufacturing their own version of taqwa and fed this false sentiment to the Ummah.

We must learn what it is meant to have taqwa to truly attain it.

2:121 - Those to whom We have sent the Book study it as it should be studied: They are the ones that believe therein:

2:157 - They are those on whom (Descend) blessings from Allah, and Mercy, and they are the ones that receive guidance.

There are several degrees of taqwa:

- Levels of Belief: That the slave should protect himself from kufr (covering over the truth), and that is the station of Islam;
- Levels of Actions: That he should protect himself from acts of disobedience and forbidden things, and it is the station of turning or repentance (tawbah);
- Levels of Doubts: That he should protect himself from doubtful matters, and that is the station of caution or carefulness (wara');
- Levels of Excesses: That he should protect himself from even those things that are permitted, and that is the station of doing without (zuhd); (ie maqrooh or excess can lead to haram)
- Levels of Ihsan: That he should protect himself from the presence of other than Allah in his heart, and it is the presence of witnessing (mushahadah).

The path to Taqwa – What are some things we can do to increase our levels of taqwa?

- **Belief** in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, all of Allah's scriptures, all the Prophets; belief in the unseen; Belief in the Quran and it's words
- **Following the right guidance** and the path of the Muttaqem (47:17, 39:28, 6:153)
- Spend in ease and in adversity from that which Allah has given you in charity to kinsfolk, orphans, the needy and the traveler and to those who ask;
- Be consistent in giving **charity**
- Frees slaves for the love of Allah
- Pays the **zakat**
- Spend your substance in the cause of Allah, **and follow not up your gifts with reminders of your generosity or with injury;**
- **Kind words and the covering of faults** are better than charity followed by injury.
- Observes **proper worship of Allah** with devoutness and concentration
- Observes the daily prayers on a regular basis; **steadfast in prayer** and in jamaat
- **Keeping one's promises** and fulfilling them in halal ways
- Being **patient** when afflicted with disease, pain, misfortune and stress; seek (Allah's) help with patient **perseverance and prayer**; Say "To Allah We belong, and to Him is our return"
- **Viewing with one another for Allah's forgiveness and for paradise; SHOW Allah you want His blessings!**
- **Ward off evil** - in action, thought and desires
- When an evil thought comes to them from Shaitan, they **remember Allah** and push those thoughts away
- When shaitan approaches, be VERY mindful and take care and caution (7:201)
- **Control your anger**; Divert energy to good things
- Be **kind and forgiving** to mankind; **Be a source of peace and comfort** to people (3:133-135)
- Pure, true and sincere **Tauba**

- Enjoin and **even demand right conduct** from yourselves as well as others
- **Eat of the lawful and good stuff**; forbidden is dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that on which any other name other than Allah was invoked upon
- **BE GRATEFUL; BE GRATEFUL; BE GRATEFUL!**
- **Fasting**; Self restraint; **Control of the nafs**; Preserve your nafs from disintegration and decay (91:8)
- **Prepare a Will** and set aside bequests to parents and next of kin
- **Don't waste your property** on excessive vain needs;
- Don't use your property for bribery or make gains over other's property unlawfully
- Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; Those who believed and those who suffered exile and fought (and strove and struggled) in the path of Allah;
- **Jihad with ones religion**
- Perform the **Hajj** and or the **Umrah**
- Supplicate to Allah OFTEN and also listen to His commands
- **Take Allah as our Protector and Guardian** against everything in life and for the hereafter (2:21, 47:17, 39:28, 6:153, 39:24, 44:56, 52:18, 52:27, 2:201, 3:16, 40:45, 76:11, 59:9, 64:16, 3:28, 8:25, 2:48, 2:123, 2:281, 2:24, 3:131, 66:6)
- **Prevent yourself from willfully continuing a wrong**
- Stand **in awe of Allah even in privacy** (21:48-49)
- **Fear the Day of Judgement**
- Reflect on one's actions at night and ask for guidance against imperfections (51:15-19)
- Always be in a pure state (**a state of wudu and cleanliness**) (16:31-32)
- **Fear Allah**

Avoiding the haram and doubtful things

- Avoidance of the unknown or the doubtful; One should be wary of how one tries to reach Allah. **Questionable things can lead to further harm** so avoid them!
- The true believer should abandon what is or appears to be harmless out of fear of falling into that which is truly harmful. (Tirmidhi)
- **Avoidance of the haram**
- **Avoid following the evil one**; the shaitan
- Breaking Allah's covenant after it has been declared
- Not obeying what Allah has ordered
- **Doing mischief on earth**
- Don't be the first to reject faith
- **Don't sell your faith for any price**
- **Don't cover truth with falsehood when you know it to be false**
- Don't become an enemy of Allah or his angels and messengers; to Jibreel or to Mikhail (aws)
- **Avoid Magic** at all costs
- **Avoid Riba** at all costs
- **Avoid Backbiting** at all costs

- Don't bring or cause discord between a husband and wife (or anyone for that matter); **Avoid any form of adultery and shameful acts**
- **Intoxicants** and **gambling** are great sins
- Do not marry unbelieving women (idolaters), until they believe
- Don't use Allah's (name) as an excuse in making oaths against doing good, or acting rightly, or making peace between people; **Allah will not call you to account for thoughtlessness in your oaths, but for the intention in your hearts**
- **Don't be self-righteous** for ONLY Allah can say who is pious and who is not.
- **Don't transgress your limits**; Stay within the bounds of the Divine Limits described in Quran and Sunnah.
- **Don't reject faith or the message when it comes to you**

What are some things that can help to awaken your senses to achieving more and more taqwa?

- Fear of **punishment** in the next life;
- Fear of punishment in this life;
- Hope of worldly **reward**;
- Hope of the reward of the next world;
- Fear of the **reckoning**;
- **Shyness** and **bashfulness** before the gaze of Allah, and this is the station of fearful watchfulness (muraqabah);
- Showing **gratitude** for His blessings by obeying Him;
- **Knowledge**, because of His words, "They only fear Allah, of His slaves, the ones who have knowledge";
- Exalting and **honouring His majesty**, and it is the station of awe; Constant **Dhikr**
- **Sincerity in love of Allah**

Finally

From what Allah (swt) has outlined for us in the Quran and Rasul (saws)' Sunnah, we can see that a person who possesses taqwa is not one who lives an isolated life, only praying, fasting and maintaining good character alone. Instead, the muttaqoon are those who fear Allah (swt) and look to what Allah (swt) has ordained in carrying out his actions to avoid His (swt) displeasure and anger. These people are involved with the Ummah, active in his/her life, concerned with the affairs of the Muslims, while at the same time praying, fasting, spending in Allah's cause, having good morals and are forgiving. All these descriptions can be attributed to a person who has taqwa.

WE CAN ALL ATTAIN TAQWA and we should race with each other to achieve more and more of it. Don't delusion yourself into thinking that you can not achieve the highest levels of taqwa. YOU CAN.

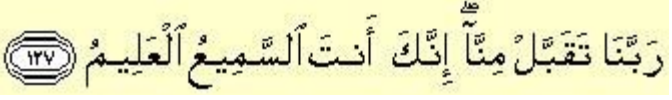
The life of this world is very alluring to the disbeliever and even to the believer. But the believer knows that this world is fleeting and the ultimate goal is to reach Allah for it is Allah who graces us with His mercy and love and rewards us for our every little effort. WE are told over and over that when we call upon our Lord, He listens to our prayers.

The month of Ramadan is fast approaching us. Let us use this time to practice good behaviour so that we can excel during the best days of the year.


002.112 -Whoever submits His whole self to Allah and is a doer of good, - He will get his reward with his Lord; on such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

Duas to remember

2:127 - And remember Abraham and Isma'il raised the foundations of the House (With this prayer): "Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us: For Thou art the All-Hearing, the All-knowing."

	Rabbana taqabbal minna innaka antas-sameu'l a'leem
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2:201 - Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and defend us from the torment of the Fire!


Rabbana atina fidduniya hasanatan wa fil akhirati hasanatan wa qina a'za-bannar

2:255 – Ayatul Qursi

Allah is He besides Whom there is no god, the Everliving, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases, His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا
 خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
 وَهُوَ يَحْفَظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٢٥٥﴾

2:286 - On no soul doth Allah Place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns. (Pray:) "Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; our Lord! Lay not on us a burden Like that which Thou didst lay on those before us; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Blot out our sins, and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. Thou art our Protector; Help us against those who stand against faith."

رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا
 طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

Rabbana wala tahmil a'laena isran kama hamaltahu A'lallazeena min qablina. Rabbana wala tuhammilna mala twaqata lana bihi Wa'afu a'nna Wagfir-lana War hamnaa Anta maulana fanswurna a'lal qaumil kafireen

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References - What to do:

Sura Baqara, v2-5: This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah; Who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them; And who believe in the Revelation sent to thee, and sent before thy time, and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter. They are on (true) guidance, from their Lord, and it is these who will prosper.

3:133-135 - And **vie one with another for forgiveness from your Lord**, and for a paradise as wide as are the heavens and the earth prepared for those who ward off (evil); those who spend (of that which Allah has given them) in ease and in adversity, those who control their wrath and are forgiving toward mankind; Allah loves the good; and those who, when they do an evil thing or wrong themselves, remember Allah and implore forgiveness for their sins - who forgives sins save Allah only? And will not knowingly repeat (the wrong) they did."

2:177 - It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East and the West; but righteous is he who believes in Allah and the last Day and the angels and the Scriptures and the Prophets; and gives his wealth for the love of Him, to kinsfolk and to the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observes proper worship and pays the poor-due. And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the God-fearing.

3:176 - the chosen of Allah is he who fulfils his pledge and wards off (evil); for lo! Allah loves those who ward off (evil)."

20:14 - so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance

2:41 - And be steadfast in prayer; practise regular charity; and bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship).

2:238 - Guard strictly your (habit of) prayers, especially the Middle Prayer; and stand before Allah in a devout (frame of mind).

2: 261, 262 - **The parable of those who spend their substance in the way of Allah is that of a grain of corn: it groweth seven ears, and each ear Hath a hundred grains.** Allah giveth manifold increase to whom He pleaseth: And Allah careth for all and He knoweth all things. Those who spend their substance in the cause of Allah, and follow not up their gifts with reminders of their generosity or with injury,-for them their reward is with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

2.245 - **Who is he that will loan to Allah a beautiful loan, which Allah will double unto his credit and multiply many times?** It is Allah that giveth (you) Want or plenty, and to Him shall be your return.

2:263 - Kind words and the covering of faults are better than charity followed by injury.

Allah is free of all wants, and He is Most-Forbearing.

2:44 - Do ye enjoin right conduct on the people, and forget (To practice it) yourselves, and yet ye study the Scripture? Will ye not understand?

2:45-46 - seek (Allah's) help with patient perseverance and prayer: bear in mind the certainty that they are to meet their Lord, and that they are to return to Him.

2:153, 155 - O ye who believe! seek help with patient perseverance and prayer; for Allah is with those who patiently persevere. Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere,

2:62 - Those who believe (in the Qur'an), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians,- any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord

2:110 - And whatever good ye send forth for your souls before you, ye shall find it with Allah: for Allah sees Well all that ye do.

2:136 - make no difference between one and another of them (the prophets throughout the generations like Ibrahim, Ismail, Isaac, Yaquub, Musa, Isa pbut)

2:168 - O ye people! Eat of what is on earth, Lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of the evil one,

2:172 - and **be grateful to Allah**

2: 183 - Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint,-

2:180 - It is prescribed, when death approaches any of you, if he leave any goods that he make a bequest to parents and next of kin, according to reasonable usage; this is due from the Allah-fearing.

2:188 - And do not eat up your property among yourselves for vanities, nor use it as bait for the judges, with intent that ye may eat up wrongfully and knowingly a little of (other) people's property.

2:190 - **Fight in the cause of Allah** those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors

2:195 - And **spend of your substance in the cause of Allah**, and make not your own hands contribute to (your) destruction;

2:196 -And complete the Hajj or 'umra in the service of Allah.

65:5 - And whoever fears Allah, and keeps his duty to Him, He will forgive his sins from him and will enlarge his reward."

7:201 - Verily those who are fearful of Allah (have taqwa) are the people who, when an evil thought comes to them from Shaitan, they remember Allah and indeed they then see aright."

2.218 - Those who believed and those who suffered exile and fought (and strove and struggled) in the path of Allah,- they have the hope of the Mercy of Allah: And Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

2:212 - **The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection;** for Allah bestows His abundance without measure on whom He will.

2.186 - When My servants ask thee concerning Me, **I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me:** Let them also, with a will, Listen to My call, and believe in Me: That they may walk in the right way.

2:256 – (There is) no compulsion in religion

2:6 - As to those who reject Faith, it is the same to them whether thou warn them or do not warn them; they will not believe.

References - What not to do:

2:27 - Those who break Allah's Covenant after it is ratified, and who sunder what Allah Has ordered to be joined, and do mischief on earth: These cause loss (only) to themselves.

2:41 - 42 - be not the first to reject Faith therein, nor sell My Signs for a small price; and fear Me, and Me alone. And cover not Truth with falsehood, nor conceal the Truth when ye know (what it is).

2:098 - Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and messengers, to Gabriel and Michael,- Lo! Allah is an enemy to those who reject Faith.

2:102 - the blasphemers Were, not Solomon, but the evil ones, teaching men Magic,.. the means to sow discord between man and wife,... the buyers of (magic) would have no share in the happiness of the Hereafter

2:156 - "To Allah We belong, and to Him is our return":-

2:173 - forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that on which any other name hath been invoked besides that of Allah

2:219 - In them (intoxicants and gambling) is great sin, and some profit, for men; but the sin is greater than the profit."

2:221 -Do not marry unbelieving women (idolaters), until they believe

2:224, 225 -And make not Allah's (name) an excuse in your oaths against doing good, or acting rightly, or making peace between persons; for Allah is One Who heareth and knoweth all things. Allah will not call you to account for thoughtlessness in your oaths, but for the intention in your hearts; and He is Oft-forgiving, Most Forbearing.

53:32 - Hold not yourself purified. He knows best who has taqwa." [Al-Najm, 53:32].

2: 6-9 - talk of the disbelievers or those who say they believe but really don't

Warnings and Tests:

2:7, 9 - Allah hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a veil; great is the penalty they (incur). Of the people there are some who say: "We believe in Allah and the Last Day;" but they do not (really) believe. Fain would they deceive Allah and those who believe, but they only deceive themselves, and realise (it) not!

2:74 - Thenceforth were your hearts hardened: They became like a rock and even worse in hardness. For among rocks there are some from which rivers gush forth; others there are which when split asunder send forth water; and others which sink for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unmindful of what ye do.

2:85 - After this it is ye, the same people, who slay among yourselves, and banish a party of you from their homes; assist (Their enemies) against them, in guilt and rancour; and if they come to you as captives, ye ransom them, though it was not lawful for you to banish them. Then is it only a part of the Book that ye believe in, and do ye reject the rest? but what is the reward for those among you who behave like this but disgrace in this life?-

and on the Day of Judgment they shall be consigned to the most grievous penalty. For Allah is not unmindful of what ye do.

2:204 - And among men is he whose speech about the life of this world causes you to wonder, and he calls on Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the most violent of adversaries.

2:143 - Thus, have We made of you an Ummat justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves; and We appointed the Qibla to which thou wast used, only to test those who followed the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels (From the Faith). Indeed it was (A change) momentous, except to those guided by Allah. And never would Allah Make your faith of no effect. For Allah is to all people Most surely full of kindness, Most Merciful.