

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate

Chapter 3: AL IMRAN (The Family of Imran 76)

﴿بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ وَاتَّقَىٰ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ﴾

“Nay, whoever fulfills his commitment and fears Allah - then indeed, Allah loves those who fear Him.” (3:76)

The word /taqwa/ is derived from the root /w-q-y/ which means protecting, preserving, guarding and being cautious. In Islamic terminology it refers to protecting one’s self from the harms of disbelief, sin, and anything that is displeasing to Allah. It indicates a high degree of God consciousness, and sensitivity in obeying His commands and refraining from His prohibitions. The tem /taqwa/ is usually translated as piety or righteousness. Some render it into English as the fear of God, but this meaning only comprises an aspect of /taqwa/, and does not capture its complete meaning. Quran points out this fundamental aspect of preserving and guarding when it decrees: “*But the clothing of righteousness - that is best.*” (7:26)

For a believer who stays clear from ascribing any partners to Allah, this precious virtue starts with carefully observing the mandatory acts of worship, and strictly refraining from the grave sins. In the next level of /taqwa/, the God-conscious believer refrains from all that is doubtful. This level is described in an authentic tradition as follows: “/Halal/ (the permissible) is clear and /haram/ (impermissible) is clear. Between them lays some doubtful things that many people do not know whether it is permissible or not. Whoever leaves out the doubtful in order to protect his religion and honor, then he is safe. Whoever indulges in such doubtful actions it is likely that he will fall into /haram/. This is similar to a person who grazes his animals near the royal pasture; it is likely that he will graze in the royal pasture. Behold! Every king has a royal pasture, and the royal pasture of Allah is those things which have been made impermissible.” In the final stages of /taqwa/, the pious (or /muttaqi/) leaves out even certain permissible things for the fear that he may fall into a mistake. This level of consciousness is sometimes also termed as /warah/. Finally, the virtue of /ihсан/ is seen by certain scholars as the ultimate level of /taqwa/ where the righteous always acts as if he sees God, or at least as being watched by God.

It should be pointed out that every age and every era has its own peculiar conditions. Thus a believer living in such adverse conditions that he can only observe the initial conditions of /taqwa/ may be seen as truly righteous for his time, and under his conditions. According to Badiuzzaman and Hodjaefendi, however, a believer should always pursue the utmost level of righteousness and piety throughout his life. Read: “*O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should be feared, and do not die except as Muslims [in submission to Him].*” (3:102)

In the first chapter after the Opening (al-Fatihah), Quran immediately draws attention to this essential quality and decrees: “*This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah*” (2:1). Only the pious can truly benefit from the light, healing and the guidance of Quran. Quran does not open the gates of its treasures to those who are disrespectful to the Divine commands and prohibitions. The piety is a gate to and a foundation for benefitting

from Quran. In return, the blessings that the pious receives from Quran will increase his /taqwa/ leading him into a virtuous cycle.

The piety is among the most valuable virtues as we have seen in the verse 3:76 above: “*Allah loves the God-conscious.*” Moreover, the pious enjoys the company of Allah. Read: “*And fear Allah, and know that Allah is with those who fear Him.*” (2:194) In yet another verse Quran says: “*O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.*” (49:13)

Quran uses /taqwa/ in distinct forms and in different contexts for more than 250 times, as yet another indication of its value. Here in the verse 3:76, /taqwa/ is coupled with another significant virtue; namely, fulfilling promises and keeping commitments. The full concept of /taqwa/ will reveal when one studies all these aspects instructed by Quran. It is the lifeblood of the spiritual well-being of the individual, as well as the welfare of the society.

Hodjaefendi extends the definition of /taqwa/ substantially to include the observance of universal laws governing the nature. After all, such laws are also set by the power of Allah Almighty, and they obey His will. Therefore such laws, too, should be observed and respected as a part of God-consciousness. The penalty of violating the laws of Quran is mostly left to the hereafter; whereas violating the laws of nature is usually settle in this world.

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May Allah write our names among the God-conscious, bless us with His love and company; and favor us with certainty of faith and sincerity of worship. May peace and blessings of Allah be upon His messenger, his pure family and companions, and his noble brothers in the office of messengership.