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Taqwa: The Essence of Piety and the Key to Eternal Success

Taqwa, often described as God-consciousness, lies at the heart of Islamic teachings. It is a quality that inspires believers to maintain constant awareness of Allah's presence, guiding their thoughts, actions, and decisions in ways that align with His commands and avoid His displeasure. Taqwa, which Allah mentions repeatedly in the Qur'an, is the ultimate virtue, fostering spiritual growth, protecting against sin, and unlocking countless blessings.

Through verses of the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions, taqwa emerges not just as an abstract concept but a practical guide to righteousness. Additionally, examples from the lives of the Tabi'een (the generation following the Sahaba) offer insight into how this virtue was lived and embodied.

The Foundations of Taqwa

Linguistically, taqwa comes from the Arabic root word *waqaa*, meaning to shield or protect. Spiritually, it signifies guarding oneself against Allah's displeasure by observing His commands and avoiding sin. Taqwa envelops every aspect of life, encouraging believers to be just, humble, and conscious of their actions in their relationships with both Allah and His creation. As Allah states in the Qur'an: *"Indeed, Allah loves the righteous"* [Surah At-Tawbah: 4].

This verse reminds believers that taqwa is not merely desirable; it is a trait that earns

divine love, a treasure no material wealth can match.

Further emphasizing its importance, Allah declares: *"And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is taqwa"* [Surah Al-Baqarah: 197].

Here, taqwa is described as a spiritual sustenance essential for life's journey, preparing the believer for the Hereafter and ensuring success in this world and beyond.

The Emphasis of Taqwa in the Sunnah

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) frequently emphasized taqwa, describing it as the foundation of good character and the key to success. He said: *"Taqwa (consciousness of Allah) and good character are what lead most people to Paradise"* (Hasan - reported by At-Tirmidhi).

This statement underlines the practical impact of taqwa—it is not confined to rituals but extends to every aspect of a believer's behaviour and relationships.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also gave insight into Allah's love for those who possess taqwa, saying: *"Indeed, Allah loves the servant who is pious, self-sufficient, and inconspicuous"* (Reported by Muslim).

This hadith highlights the sincerity required in practicing taqwa, where actions are driven by a desire to please Allah rather than seeking recognition or praise.

Additionally, he advised believers: *"Fear Allah wherever you are, follow a bad*

deed with a good one to erase it, and treat people with good character" (Reported by At-Tirmidhi).

This timeless advice encapsulates how taqwa motivates individuals to strive for self-improvement, seek forgiveness, and uphold kindness.

Taqwa Exemplified in the Lives of the Tabi'een- Umar ibn Abdul Aziz (may Allah have mercy on him): The Pious Leader

Often referred to as the "Fifth Rightly Guided Caliph," Umar ibn Abdul Aziz displayed extraordinary taqwa in his governance. He rejected the luxuries of leadership and lived modestly, ensuring fairness and justice for all under his rule. One famous account tells of his refusal to use the state's oil for a lamp when conducting personal matters, instead using his own oil out of fear of misusing public resources. His strict adherence to taqwa earned him immense respect and Allah's favour.

He once gave a moving sermon about the fleeting nature of the world, urging people to prioritize taqwa and live in a way that reflects accountability to Allah.

Sa'id ibn Al-Musayyib (may Allah have mercy on him): Unwavering Integrity

Sa'id exemplified taqwa through his steadfastness and sincerity. When offered wealth by a ruler in exchange for political allegiance, Sa'id rejected the offer, declaring that his loyalty was to Allah alone. This act of defiance demonstrated his refusal to compromise his principles, reflecting his deep commitment to taqwa.

The Fruits of Taqwa

The Qur'an describes taqwa as a source of innumerable blessings, encouraging believers to strive for this virtue:

Guidance:

"This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of

Allah" [Surah Al-Baqarah: 2].

Taqwa illuminates the path of righteousness, enabling believers to make decisions that align with Allah's guidance.

Provision and Relief:

"And whoever fears Allah—He will make for him a way out and will provide for him from where he does not expect" [Surah At-Talaq: 2-3].

Taqwa acts as a shield against hardship, ensuring relief and sustenance.

Forgiveness:

"Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and rivers" [Surah Al-Qamar: 54]. Taqwa earns forgiveness, divine blessings, and eternal peace.

Ease in Affairs:

"And whoever fears Allah—He will make his matter easy for him" [Surah At-Talaq: 4]. Taqwa simplifies life's complexities by bringing tranquillity to the heart.

The Call to Embody Taqwa

Taqwa is the foundation of a meaningful relationship with Allah. It is both a shield against misguidance and a compass pointing toward eternal success. Allah calls upon believers:

"O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims" [Surah Aal Imran: 102].

This powerful verse serves as a reminder to continuously strive for taqwa, enriching every aspect of life with its transformative essence.

Taqwa is not a distant ideal but a practical virtue that can be nurtured through regular effort and acts of worship.

May Allah grant us taqwa in our hearts, guiding us to embody this virtue in both our intentions and actions.