

**What Is Taqwa and What Is It Not?**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 ﴿... إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىكُمْ...﴾  
 سورة الحجرات ، ١٣

عن زيد بن أرقم رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ:  
 «... اللهم آت نفسي تقواها أنت خيرٌ من زكاها أنت وليها  
 ومولاها...»  
 مسلم، الذكر، ٧٣

**Dear Brothers and Sisters!**

The sole Owner of the worlds, Allah (swt), has honoured us with faith and made the Noble Qur'an a guide for us. One of the most frequently used concepts in the Qur'an is taqwa. Taqwa is a fundamental measure that regulates a believer's relationship with Allah (swt), with other people and with the world around them. Allah (swt) states, **"Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous (the most mindful of Him)."**<sup>1</sup> Thus, He informs us that superiority lies not in lineage or status, but in taqwa.

**Dear Brothers and Sisters!**

In its general meaning, taqwa is to live with a deep sense of respect and responsibility toward Allah (swt). It is the sincere effort to fulfill His commands and to avoid His prohibitions. Taqwa begins in the heart, settles in one's intention and is reflected in one's actions. Performing prayer properly, earning one's livelihood through lawful means, guarding the tongue from lies and the heart from hatred, these are signs of taqwa. A believer who possesses taqwa knows that even when alone, he or she is in the presence of Allah and shows the same sensitivity in private as in public. While acts of worship are the foundation of taqwa and its outward expression in life, taqwa is the essence of worship and the measure by which Allah (swt) evaluates deeds and intentions. In the Qur'an, Allah (swt) states: **"It is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah, but your taqwa."**<sup>2</sup>

**Dear Jama'ah!**

We must also clearly understand what taqwa is not. Taqwa is not merely outward appearance, clothing or words. Formalism and superficial religiosity are not taqwa. In the Qur'an, it is stated: **"O children of Adam, We have bestowed upon you clothing to cover your nakedness and as adornment. But the garment of taqwa—that is the best."**<sup>3</sup>

A person whose heart is harsh, whose character is weak and who is hurtful toward others cannot attain the measure of taqwa, no matter how religious they may appear. Taqwa is never about judging others or seeing oneself as superior to them. Arrogance and hypocrisy are serious diseases that destroy the spirit of taqwa. Moreover, completely withdrawing from worldly life is not taqwa. Islam does not teach abandoning the world, rather, it teaches earning the Hereafter while living in this world. Working, producing and striving for lawful sustenance are not contrary to taqwa. Taqwa means living within halal boundaries without falling into what is forbidden or into injustice. It is not escaping responsibility, but fulfilling it with justice and good character. In today's language, taqwa can rightly be described as a deep sense of moral and spiritual responsibility.

**Dear Brothers and Sisters!**

Taqwa is sincerity and devotion. It is living not for one's ego or for others, but for the pleasure of Allah. Taqwa means striving in every area of life to be a servant with whom Allah is pleased. If we say with our tongues, "We fear Allah," yet do not shape our lives according to His commands, this is hypocrisy.

One day,

Umar ibn al-Khattab (r.a.) asked Ubayy ibn Ka'b (r.a.) what taqwa is. Ubayy (r.a.) asked him,

"Have you ever walked on a thorny path?"

Umar (r.a.) replied, "Yes, I have."

Ubayy then asked, "What did you do?"

Umar (r.a.) answered, "I gathered up my clothes and exerted all my effort to protect myself from the thorns."

Upon this, Ubayy (r.a.) said, "That is taqwa."

**Dear Brothers and Sisters!**

In summary, taqwa is to carefully avoid any action that would displease Allah and to show true sensitivity toward His commands. Let us conclude our khutba with the following dua of our beloved Prophet (saw):

*"O Allah, grant my soul its taqwa and purify it. You are the best One to purify it. You are its Protector and Master."*<sup>4</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:13

<sup>2</sup> Surah Al-Hajj, 22:37

<sup>3</sup> Surah Al-A'raf, 7:26

<sup>4</sup> Muslim, Zikir, 73