

When you have a chance to do something good do it, and do not delay, for you may not have a second chance

BS Foad, MD 2018

Allah's mercy has no bounds. He makes available to us many good opportunities, but it is up to us to take action and seize the moment and do something good. Those who have sound strong faith realize their accountability, do not hesitate but hasten in all good deeds:

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقَلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ
أُولَٰئِكَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَابِقُونَ

“And those who approach everything they do, and their hearts tremble because they realize that they will be brought back to their Lord. They are the ones who hasten in all good deeds, and are foremost in them”

Al-Mumenoun (The Believers) 23:

In contrast, those who lack faith or their faith is not based on clear conviction let these opportunities pass them by, and do nothing or give all kinds of excuses. They are the losers because they missed on a good deed that may not present itself again.

At the end what is important, and what will weigh heavily in our account is what we did in our lives: Did we serve as good examples to others and had a positive effect on our families and friends? Or did we just waist our time in vain useless pursuits? Time is a valuable commodity, and the day that passes without doing something useful and good is a day wasted. The Qur'an explains that what counts is our deeds, good or bad, and our faith in God and sound heart:

فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

“Therefore, whoever is looking to his meeting with his Lord let him do good righteous deeds, and worship none but his Lord”

Al-Kahf (The Cave) 18: 110

And

وَأَن لَّيْسَ لِلإِنسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ
وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَىٰ
ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ الْجَزَاءَ الْأَوْفَىٰ

“That man can have nothing but what he strives for. That he will see the fruit of his striving. Then he will be rewarded with a complete reward

An-Najm (The Star) 53: 39-41

So what are the good righteous deeds that enable us to get close to Allah and to gain his pleasure, and make us successful and allows us to enter paradise?

1-Rituals of worship, like prayer, charity, fasting and pilgrimage are certainly crucial. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) told us that nothing brings us closer to Allah and more beloved to Him than fulfilling what He made obligatory on us, then offering optional service. When we continue to do that we get closer to Allah and we gain his love

2-Taking care of our parents, and our families, and treating them with kindness and love is essential. We are responsible for their welfare and we are accountable to Allah regarding them.

3-Treating our neighbors well is part of faith, whether they live close to our home, or are our neighbors at work, or our friends in our community.

4-Caring at work, and doing our work to the best of our ability is certainly part of faith. The Qur’an states:

وَقُلِ اعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَسَتُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

“And say: “Work righteousness, for soon will Allah, and His messenger and the believers witness your work”

At-Tawba (Repentance) 9: 105

5-Having a heart that does not hold a grudge or ill-feelings towards others, and does not have a sense of hatred, envy or suspicion is important for our deeds to be accepted. A heart that is kind, caring, loving, full of compassion and mercy and that overlooks and forgives the mistakes of others:

وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا ۗ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“Let them overlook and forgive, do you not wish that Allah may forgive you, for Allah is often-forgiving most-merciful”

An-Nur (The Light) 24: 22

Only such a heart will be accepted by Allah:

وَلَا تُخْزِنِي يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُونَ

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ
إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

“Let be not in shame and humiliation on the day when thy will be resurrected. The Day when neither sons nor money will help, except the person who comes to Allah with a sound heart”

Ash-Shura’a (The Poets) 26: 87-89

So who is the person who qualifies, and possesses such characteristics?

The Qur’an refers to such persons as Al-Muttaqoun (The Righteous). Then the Qur’an describes these righteous people in great detail, so we may learn from their behavior and character. In Surat Al-Baqara ten characteristics of the righteous are described:

5 characteristics of faith and 5 characteristics of behavior:

- 1- Belief in Allah and the Last Day, and in God’s angels, books and Messengers.
- 2-Also giving in charity, establishing regular prayers, fulfilling our promises, and patiently persevering during difficult times and being honest and truthful

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ
وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي
الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ
الْبَأْسِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ

“Righteousness is not to face towards East or West, but righteousness is to believe in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels, and the Book, and the messengers, and to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and give Zakat, to fulfill the contracts which you have made, and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the righteous”

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 177

Taqwa is understanding that we are accountable to Allah, therefore we watch our behavior:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

“O you who believe fear Allah, and let every soul look at what it has sent forward, and fear Allah for Allah is well aware of all that you do”

Al-Hashr (The Gathering) 59: 18

Other characteristics of righteousness are mentioned in Surat Al-Imran, namely spending in charity, restraining anger, forgiving other people, and not persisting in wrong-doing, rather correcting their mistake and seeking God's forgiveness:

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاطِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ
وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ اللَّهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ
يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

“Those who spend whether in prosperity or in adversity; who restrain anger; and pardon others, for Allah loves those who do good. And those who, having done indecent act or wronged their own souls remember Allah and ask for forgiveness for their sins, and who can forgive sins except Allah? And are never obstinate in persisting knowingly in the wrong they have done”

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 134 & 135

Taqwa is controlling our desires and doing what is right

قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ الْخَبِيثِ ۚ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

“Not equal are things that are bad and things that are good, even though the abundance of the bad may dazzle you; so be conscious of Allah o people of understanding that you may prosper”

Al-Ma'ida (The Table) 5: 100

Taqwa is proper faith and obedience to Allah and His messenger

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

“So take what the messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you; and be conscious of Allah, for Allah is severe in punishment”

Al-Hashr (The Gathering) 59: 7

Taqwa is resolving differences and improving the relationship between people

“The believers are but a single brotherhood, therefore reconcile the differences between your contending brothers, and be mindful of Allah that you may receive His mercy”

Al-Hujerat (The Apartments) 49:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

Therefore, Taqwa is doing what is right and helping those who need our help. Taqwa is noble character and being humble, and seeking God's pleasure. Taqwa also means acknowledging God's blessings and feeling the desire to thank God for his favors, by sharing His blessings with others and reaching out and helping them

Taqwa is closely related to fairness and justice. The Qur'an states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَا نَ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ۗ اْعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

“O you who believe stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealings, and let not the hatred of others towards you make you swerve from justice. Be just, that is closer to piety, and be conscious of Allah, for Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do”

Al-Ma'ida (The Table) 5: 8

Taqwa is also closely related to truthfulness and honesty. The Qur'an orders Muslims to be truthful and be conscious of Allah:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

“O you who believe be conscious of Allah, and be with those who are truthful”

At-Tawba (Repentance) 9: 119

Taqwa means that we watch our behavior because we know that Allah is watching us, and that whatever we say or do is duly recorded, and will weigh in our account on the Day of Judgment. The Qur'an states:

مَا يَنْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

“Not a word that he utters but there is a vigilant guardian”

Q'af 50: 18

And

وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنْشُورًا

اِقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا

“On the Day of Judgment We shall bring out for him a scroll, which he will see spread open. It will be said to him: ‘Read your own record, sufficient is your soul this day to make out an account against you”

Al-Isra'a (Night Journey) 17: 13 & 14

There are great rewards for Taqwa

1-Allah loves those who are righteous

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ وَاتَّقَىٰ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

“Those that fulfill their pledges and act righteously, indeed Allah loves the righteous”

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 76

2-Their sins are forgiven and they are rewarded according to the best of their deeds

لِيُكَفِّرَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“So that Allah will remit from them the worst in their deeds, and give them their reward according to the best of what they have done”

Az-Zumar (The Groups) 39: 35

3-They will enter paradise

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ

ادْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ آمِنِينَ

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غَلٍّ إِخْوَانًا عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ

لَا يَمَسُّهُمْ فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَمَا هُمْ مِنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِينَ

“The righteous will be amid gardens and springs. Their greeting will be: ‘Enter here in peace and security. And We shall remove from their hearts any lurking sense of injury. They will be brothers facing each other on raised couches. There no sense of fatigue shall touch them, nor shall they be asked to leave”

Al-Hijr (Rocky tract) 15: 45-48

4-Allah will shower them with his mercy and guide them

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَآمِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“O you who believe be conscious and mindful of Allah, and believe in his messenger, and He will bestow on you a double portion of His mercy, and He will provide for you a light by which you shall walk straight, and He will forgive you, for Allah is often-forgiving, most merciful”

Al-Hadeed (The Iron) 57: 28

5-Allah will deliver those who are righteous of difficulty, provide for them and make their affairs easy, and increase their reward

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا
وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

2

“Those who are conscious of Allah, He ever prepares a way out, and He provides for them from sources they never expect”

At-Talaq (Divorce) 65: 2 & 3

And

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا

“And for those who are mindful of Allah, He will make things easy for them”

At-Talaq (Divorce) 65: 4

And

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَكْفِرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهُ أَجْرًا

“If any one fears Allah, He will remove his evil deeds, and will enlarge his reward”

At-Talaq (Divorce) 65: 5

6-The righteous will have nothing to fear on the Day of Judgment

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ
لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ

“Indeed the friends of Allah will have no fear, nor shall they grieve. Those who believe and are conscious of Allah and guard against evil. For them are glad tidings in the life of the present and in the Hereafter”

Yunus (Jonah) 10: 62-64

7-The righteous is honored in the sight of Allah

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاكُمْ ۗ

“Indeed the most honored amongst you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous amongst you”

Al-Hujerat (The Apartments) 49: 13

When you have a chance to do something good do it, and do not delay for you may not have a second chance BS Foad, MD 2018

(1)Allah provide opportunities for us to do something good, but it is up to us to seize that opportunity and help others:

“And those who approach everything that they do, and their hearts tremble because they realize that they will be brought back to their Lord. They are the ones who hasten in all good deeds, and are foremost in them” Al-Mumenoun (The Believers) 23: 60 & 61. In contrast, those who lack faith do nothing or give excuses. **What counts in our accountability is what we did in our life:** Did we serve as good examples to our family and friends and do righteous deeds, or did we waste our time in vain useless pursuits? “Therefore, whoever is looking to his meeting with his Lord let him do good righteous deeds, and worship none but his Lord” Al-Kahf (The Cave) 18: 110; “That man can have nothing but what he strives for. That he will see the fruit of his striving. Then he will be rewarded with a complete reward” An-Najm (The Star) 53: 39-41

(2)What are the good righteous deeds that enable us to get close to Allah and gain his pleasure, make us successful and allow us to enter paradise? 1- Rituals of worship: like prayer, charity, fasting & hajj. **2-**

Taking care of our parents & families, and treating them with kindness and love. **3-Treating our neighbors well,** whether they live close to us or are our neighbors at work, or friends in our community **4-Doing our work to the best of our ability:** “Say: ‘work righteousness, for soon Allah, and his messenger and the believers witness your work” At-Tawba (Repentance) 9: 105 **5-Having a heart that does not hold a grudge or ill-feelings towards others, nor hatred, envy or suspicion,** otherwise our deeds may not be accepted: “Let them overlook and forgive, do you not wish that Allah may forgive you? For Allah is often-forgiving, most-merciful” An-Nur (The Light) 24: 22; “Let me be not humiliated on the Day when neither money or sons will help, except for the person who comes to Allah with a sound heart” Ash-Shura’a (The Poets) 26: 87-89

(3)So who is the person who qualifies? The Qur’an refers to such a persons as Al-Muttaqoun (The Righteous/ pious) 10 characteristics are described in the Qur’an: **Belief in Allah, and the Last Day; belief in Allah’s angels, books and messengers; giving in charity; establishing regular prayers; fulfilling our promises;**

patiently persevering during difficult times; and being truthful (Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 177. Taqwa (Righteousness) also implies **understanding our accountability:** “O you who believe fear Allah, and let every soul look at what it has sent forward, and fear Allah for Allah is well-aware of all that you do” Al-Hashr (The Gathering) 59: 18. **Restraining our anger and forgiving the mistakes of others:** “Those who spend, whether in prosperity or in adversity; who restrain anger; and pardon others, for Allah loves those who do good” Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 134; **correcting our mistakes and not persisting in wrong-doing:** “And those who having done indecent act or wronged their own souls remember Allah and ask for forgiveness for their sins, and who can forgive sins except Allah? And are never obstinate in persisting knowingly in the wrong they have done” Al-Imran 3: 135. **Obeying Allah & his messenger:** “So take what the messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you, and be conscious of Allah, for Allah is severe in punishment” Al-Hashr (The Gathering) 59: 7; **Resolving differences and improving relationship:** “The believers are a single brotherhood, therefore reconcile the differences between your two contending brothers, and be mindful of Allah that you may receive his mercy” Al-Hujerat (The Apartments) 49: 10. **Taqwa means that we watch our behavior because we know Allah is watching us, and whatever we say or do is duly recorded:** “Not a word that he utters but there is a vigilant guardian” Q’af 50: 18, and: “On the Day of Judgment We shall bring out for him a scroll, which he see spread open. It will be said to him: “Read your own record, sufficient is your soul this day to make an account against you” Al-Isra’a (Night Journey) 17: 13 & 14; **Taqwa is closely related to fairness and justice:** “O you who believe stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealings, and let not the hatred of others towards you make you swerve from justice. Be just, that is closer to piety, and be conscious of Allah, for Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do” Al-Ma’ida (The Table) 5: 8; **Taqwa is closely related to truthfulness and honesty:** “O you who believe be conscious of Allah, and be with those who are truthful” At-Tawba (Repentance) 9: 119

