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The Conceptual Framework of Taqwā: A Comparative Exegetical Study of Classical and Contemporary Approaches with Reference to the 30th Juz of the Qur'an

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Abstract

*Taqwā is a fundamental ethical and spiritual concept in the Qur'an that shapes moral consciousness and human behavior. Although many studies have addressed the theological dimension of Taqwā, the conceptual framework is still far from adequately researched, especially in terms of comparative analysis between classical and modern exegesis with a focus on the 30th Juz (Juz 'Ammā). The current study fills that **gap** by closely examining selected āyāt of the 30th Juz and how interpretations of Taqwā as a concept have changed across different scholarly traditions. The research is **qualitative**, thematic, and comparative, analyzing āyāt within the context of classical tafsir works by Al-Tabari, Al-Qurtubi, and Ibn Kathir, as well as modern exegeses such as Bayan al-Qur'an, Ma'arifur Qur'an, and Tafsir-ul-Qur'an. The **results** show that classical mufasssirin relate Taqwā to fear-based obedience (wīqayah) and accountability in the Hereafter, while modern mufasssirs interpret it as reference to social responsibility and practical ethical engagement. Drawing on these perspectives, this study proposes an integrated conceptual framework of Taqwā that combines spiritual piety with modern social harmony.*

Keywords: Taqwā; Juz 'Ammā; Comparative Exegetical Study; Classical Tafsir; Contemporary Tafsir.

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Introduction

Taqwā is understood as piety, God-consciousness, awareness of moral obligations, and fear of Allah, and is a crucial aspect of Islamic thought and belief. It steers our species toward ethical behaviour, spiritual discipline, and social accountability. The Qur'anic understanding of Taqwā works as an internal sense of ethical direction, while also directing one externally towards moral conduct. It develops the qualities of a fine human character, sharpens the consciousness that Allah is ever-watching us, and provides much-needed guidance and support to act according to divine order in life, leading to moral responsibility and self-restraint, and to justice by being answerable for every action. Traditional Islamic scholarship always explored Taqwā through a spiritual and moral lens which highlights the fear of Allah, self-purification, obedience, refinement of character, and preparation for the afterlife.

The concept of Taqwā has been studied from Qur'ānic, ethical, psychological, educational, and organizational perspectives. Harison Mohd. Sidek, Sulaian Ismail and Noor Saazai Mat in "Taqwā dalam al-Qurān: dengan spesifik pada Sūrah al-Baqarah" have tabulated the characteristics of Taqwā with respect to the Qur'ān's sequential emphasis, which could serve as a skeletal reference for believers. They offer Taqwā as a mystical and ethical system that strengthens individual belief, develops virtue, and promotes justice for the poor [1]. In another study, Harison Mohd. Sidek investigates the characteristics of Taqwā in Sūrat Al 'Imrān by using purposive sampling to choose thirty-eight āyāt from Surah Āl 'Imrān that fundamentally denote Taqwā, especially towards the fundamentals pertaining to the principle of al-amr bi al-ma'rūf – enjoining what is good [2].

Suhaimi Mhd Sarif in his study "How the Role of Taqwā in Effective Capacity Building and Competitive Advantage?" terms Taqwā a principle of commitment encompassing obedience to Allah, mu'aṣṣāt (abstinence from evil-doing), and the enhancement of qualities such as integrity, patience, loyalty, and righteousness [3]. Wildan Bin Yahya & Munawar Rahmat wrote "Characteristics of the Muttaqīn in The Qur'an and His Relevance to Islamic Education". The article employs a thematic digital Qur'an methodology that examines related āyāt to explain the message of Taqwā in an educational and religious context [4]. Nafidul Ihsan is the researcher of the āyāt that contain Taqwā from Sūrat al-Baqarah and analyses them using an established Qur'anic exegesis with clearance from a Qur'an interpretation expert [5].

According to Ivan Fahmi Fadillah, Taqwā, as a fundamental concept in Islamic teaching, still requires further analysis of the Qur'an. To overcome this problem, Fadillah uses a qualitative method to analyze Qur'anic texts, focusing

on āyāt that contain the word Taqwā or its derivatives. This research further prepares selected interpretations of the idea with classical and modern Qur'anic analysis to project an extensive perception [6]. Standardized Taqwā scale for Muslims: A Qur'anic Perspective towards Scientific measurements of Taqwā by Fauzia Nazam, Akbar Husain and Mubashir Gull. Their study primarily focuses on three domains – faith in God, love for God, and fear of God – but may also address the lack of effectiveness observed in previous studies that did not properly assess this construct [7].

An Inquiry into the Linguistic and Thematic (Re-)Conceptualizations of Taqwā in the Qur'an alongside an examination regarding its standard, traditional understanding as "fear of God" Eric S. Ohlander. He examines how Taqwā gains in meaning, both semantically and socially, as the Qur'ān progresses. According to Ohlander, Taqwā is not pure emotional fear; rather, it entails a wider spiritual awareness, moral consciousness and devotion to Allah. His conclusion reveals that Taqwā, within the early Meccan surahs, merely encapsulates fear, reverence for Allah's Sovereign authority, and individual responsibilities, whereas in the later Madinan chapters it evolves into a broader ethical and spiritual concept that portrays social justice, moral virtue, and righteous conduct [8]. In a similar vein, Kubat Ahmad explores the ethical worth of Qur'ānic Taqwā and its local, global and universal impact. His research emphasizes Taqwā as a concept for individual ethics – moral behavior, social responsibility and self-development – and his claims for activist practice of Taqwā are that it improves personal conduct, perfects social ethics, and promotes an overall Islamic ethical system [9].

These studies illustrate a strong sense of academic curiosity about Taqwā (piety) in the Qur'an. For example, in the past, empirical studies have theorized Taqwā in relation to a few sūrahs, such as Sūrat al-Baqarah and Sūrat Āl 'Imrān, as well as in educational, ethical, organizational, psychological, and linguistic perspectives. Such studies have added important aspects of the nature, roles and practical concerns of Taqwā. Yet, previous works remained fragmented, and no focused comprehensive study of Taqwā in the 30th Juz of the Qur'ān has been undertaken from a comparative lens encompassing premodern and postmodern tafsīr traditions. Furthermore, no prior research has systematically aggregated classical and contemporary exegetical insights to formulate a composite multidimensional conceptualisation of Taqwā. This research aims to address this problem by investigating the concept of Taqwā in the 30th Juz, which will serve as a foundation for an integrated framework drawn from classical & contemporary exegesis.

Research Objectives and Research Questions

This research aims to develop a conceptual framework for Taqwā in relation to the 30th Juz of the Qur'an through a comparative study of classical and contemporary tafsīr traditions. More specifically, this study aims:

1. To identify and thematically analyse Taqwā-related concepts in selected āyāt from the 30th Juz of the Qur'an.
2. To conduct a comparative analysis of the classical and contemporary mufasssīrūn regarding their interpretations of Taqwā.
3. To combine existing classical and modern interpretations into a unified multidimensional conceptual framework of Taqwā.

According to these objectives, research questions are as follows:

- 1) What are the expressions and conceptualization of Taqwā found in the selected āyāt of the 30th Juz of the Qur'an?
- 2) What are the main similarities and differences between classical and contemporary mufasssīrūn on Taqwā interpretations?
- 3) How can classical and modern views be integrated into a multidimensional conceptual basis of Taqwā?

This study provides a focused examination of Taqwā in the 30th Juz, an area that has received less attention and contributes to Qur'anic and tafsīr studies. Theoretically, it constructs a multidimensional lens that combines classical and contemporary exegetical perspectives across spiritual, psychological, ethical, and social dimensions. Thus, this study expands on the previous scholarship by framing Taqwā not merely as personal piety or fear of Allah, but as an integrative Qur'anic principle for conceiving moral development, character building, social responsibility, and contemporary Islamic thought.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on a thematic and comparative exegetical framework. It perceives Taqwā not only as divine fear or piety, but also as a multifaceted Qur'ān that mirrors and guides moral presence, spiritual awareness, ethical commitment, personal transformation, and social action.

The thematic analysis is applied to find the meanings of Taqwā in the selected āyāt of the 30th Juz. This comparative exegetical approach is then used to highlight how these meanings play out in the interpretations of classical and contemporary mufasssīrūn. Classical tafsīr generally focuses on fear of Allah, obedience, avoidance of sin and accountability in the Hereafter. Contemporary

tafsīr has taken these meanings further toward moral reformation, education, leadership, social responsibility, and a practical Muslim life.

Method

This research is a qualitative, analytical, thematic and comparative exegesis of the concept of Taqwā in Juz' 30 of the Qur'an. Since the study is based on textual interpretation rather than numerical measurement, it is a qualitative study. It is analytical in the sense that it delves into the meanings, contexts and implications of selected Qur'anic āyāt; it is thematic because it arranges the selected āyāt according to different themes related to Taqwā. It is comparative, as it investigates classical and modern tafsīr traditions to identify similarities, differences, and interpretive developments.

The main data of this study consist of selected Qur'anic āyāt from the 30th Juz and their interpretations in several selected classical and contemporary tafsīr works. In addition to the primary data, secondary data consists of relevant books, journal articles and prior studies on Taqwā, Qur'ān ethical teaching, thematic tafsīr and comparative exegesis.

Selection of Qur'anic Āyāt

The Qur'anic āyāt were selected from the 30th Juz using a purposive method with regard to the two types. The first selection was made from the āyāt that explicitly mention the word Taqwā or its derivatives. Secondly, verses that use a term other than Taqwā due to the implicit meaning, although they are synonymous with it or stem from conceptual similarities thereof, were also incorporated.

Selected Tafsirs

The study will be conducted using the following three classical tafsīrs:

1. *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān* by Imām Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH / 923 CE)
2. *Al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Imām Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 AH / 1273 CE)
3. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* by Imād al-Dīn Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'il ibn 'Umar Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH / 1373 CE)

As well as the following three modern tafsīrs:

1. *Al-Bayān al-Qur'ān* by Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī (d. 1362 AH / 1943 CE)
2. *Ma'ārif al-Qur'ān* by Mufti Muḥammad Shafī' (d. 1396 AH / 1976 CE)
3. *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid Abū'l A'lā Mawdūdī (d. 1399 AH / 1979 CE)

Justification of Tafsīr Selection

These six works were selected therefore because of their already established standing in the Islamic exegetical tradition. Of the classical tafsīrs, al-Ṭabarī's *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān* is universally regarded as the original all-inclusive tafsīr; al-Qurṭubī's *Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān* is characterised by its jurisprudential, rules-driven focus and verse-by-verse point order which renders it uniquely applicable for comparative legal studies; Ibn Kathīr's *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm* ranks with the most well-known and widely read of the classical corpus representing an impact spectrum association arrangement representative of his interpretive horizon view across wide adoption in relevance among Muslim populations. Test case for the study In this section, we outline a comparative corpus of commentary working in modernists, classical thinkers and contemporary South Asian voices with which to test how well Relational Knowledge helps facilitate across discourse gleaned from what is often understood as conflicting kinds of work regarding 'i'jāz al-Qur'ān. The three (non-exhaustive) modern tafsīrs are each by one of the three most recognised scholars from the Indian subcontinent and consist arguably some of the most read and referenced modern works about Qur'an writ large extending comparisons involving acknowledged contemporary authorities on Islamic scholarship throughout South Asia.

Data Collection and Analysis

To collect data, Taqwā-related āyāt in the 30th Juz were identified, and their interpretations from the selected tafsīr works were compiled. Every chosen āyah was analyzed: its wording, its immediate context in the Qur'ān, and its exegetical commentary. Thematic analysis was then performed on relevant verses, as presented in both classical and contemporary tafsīrs.

Followed the thematic analysis to code the meanings as major conceptual themes of Taqwā. Spiritual themes, consciousness, fear of Allah, accountability, purification of the soul, moral control/self-restraint, and obedience to the Creator are among the most prevalent, together with righteousness and good actions, sincerity/good intention to do more good deeds, and social responsibility. Following the preliminary identification of themes, overlapping concepts were collated to form more abstract conceptual dimensions of Taqwā.

A comparative analysis of classical and contemporary interpretations was then performed. The research contrasts the classical mufasssīrūn's meanings of Taqwā (fear of Allah) in terms of obedience, avoidance, and reckoning on the Day of Judgment with contemporary mufasssīrūn's extension of these meanings

to include straightening character, becoming guides to leaders, social responsibility, and practical Muslim life. This comparison highlights both aspects of the continuity and development in a hermeneutical understanding of Taqwā.

Finally, an integrated, multidimensional conceptual framework of Taqwā was developed by synthesizing these findings. The synthesis was derived from patterns found within both the Qur'anic āyāt and the chosen tafsīr texts. The framework has four interrelated dimensions: spiritual-cognitive, psychological, ethical-behavioral, and social-ideological. The study thus reveals the role of Taqwa as not only a concept for individual salvation but also a comprehensive Qur'anic basis for worship, ethical conduct and social responsibility.

Result and Discussion

1. Āyats on Taqwā in the 30th Juz' of the Qur'an

The āyāt of the Qur'an in the 30th Juz' that explicitly or implicitly reflect the concept of piety are classified into two categories:

a. Āyāt in which the term taqwā is explicitly mentioned : Surah Al-Naba (78):31-36; Surah Al-Shams (91): 7-8; Surah al- Layl (92):5-7, 17-21; Surah al-Alaq (96):9-12

b. Āyāt in which synonymous expressions of taqwā are used:

- خوف (Khawf) : Surah Al-naziat (79):40-41
- خشية (Khashyah) Surah Al-naziat (79):15-26,45-46; Surah Abasa (80):5-10; Surah al-Ala (87): 9-10; Surah al- baiyyinah (98):7-8
- تزكية (Tazkiyyah): Surah Al-naziat (79):15-26; Surah Abasa (80):5-10; Surah al-Ala (87): 14-15; Surah Al-Shams (91): 9-10
- إخلاص (Ikhlas): Surah al- baiyyinah (98): 5

2. Themes and contexts of āyāts on Taqwā in the 30th Juz' of the Qur'an

There are numerous āyāts related to Taqwā in the Qur'an, each carrying profound and multi-layered themes and contexts. However, this research found the following themes and contexts of āyats on Taqwā in the 30th Juz of the Quran:

2.1 Thematic grouping of the āyāts

2.1.1. Taqwā (تقوى) - Consciousness of Allah & Moral Restraint

Taqwā is both internal awareness and external discipline—avoiding desires and acting righteously. These āyāt directly mention taqwā or describe its practical expression are:

Al-Shams (91), 7-8 : فَالْمَهْمَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

Al-Layl (92), 5-7 : وَاتَّقَى

Al-'Alaq (96), 12 : أَوْ أَمَرَ بِالتَّقْوَى

Taqwā in action (fear + self-restraint)

Al-Nāzi'āt (79), 40-41 : خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ

Al-Layl (92), 17-21 : الْأَنْفَى ... يَتَزَكَّى

2.1.2. Tazkiyah (تزكية) - Purification of the Soul

Tazkiyah involves purification from sins, growth through worship, charity, and remembrance. These āyats emphasize spiritual purification and growth:

Al-Shams (91), 9-10 : قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

Al-A'lā (87), 14-15 : قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى

Al-Layl (92), 18 : يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى

'Abasa (80), 3,7 : (implicit in context of تَزَكَّى)

2.1.3. Khashyah (خشية) - Deep Reverential Fear of Allah

Khashyah is actually القلب- centered (heart-based), linked with knowledge and humility and a driving force for guidance. Āyāts highlighting خوف/خشية (a higher level of fear rooted in knowledge):

Al-Nāzi'āt (79), 26 : لِمَنْ يَخْشَى

Al-Nāzi'āt (79), 45 : مَنْ يَخْشَاهَا

'Abasa (80), 9 : وَهُوَ يَخْشَى

Al-A'lā (87), 10 : مَنْ يَخْشَى

Al-Bayyinah (98), 8 : لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ

2.1.4. Īmān & ‘Amal Ṣāliḥ (Faith and Righteous Deeds)

True faith is not abstract—it requires: sincerity (إخلاص), worship (عبادة), social responsibility (zakāh). These āyāt connect belief with action:

Al-Bayyinah (98), 7–8 : آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

Al-Bayyinah (98), 5 : يُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ

2.1.5. Moral Choice & Human Responsibility

Humans are morally aware, free to choose, accountable for choices. These āyāt emphasize الإنسان's ethical test:

Al-Shams (91), 7–8 : dual nature: تفوى vs فجور

Al-Layl (92), 5–10 (context) : two paths (giving vs withholding)

Al-‘Alaq (96), 9–12 : opposing righteousness

2.1.6. Prophetic Reminder & Da‘wah Approach

Da‘wah should focus on receptive hearts and be rooted in wisdom and prioritization. Guidance methodology and دعوت principles:

Al-A‘lā (87), 9–10 : فَذَكِّرْ

‘Abasa (80), 5–10 : priority of sincere seekers

Al-Nāzi‘āt (79), 17–19 : da‘wah to Fir‘awn

2.1.7. Ākhirah (Hereafter) & Reward

The Qur’ān consistently links in selected āyats between النجاح & taqwā (success) and self-control & Jannah. Āyats describing final outcomes:

Al-Naba (78), 31–36 : reward for muttaqīn

Al-Nāzi‘āt (79), 40–41 : Jannah as outcome

Al-Bayyinah (98), 7–8 : eternal success

2.1.8. Exemplary Historical Warning (Story of Mūsā & Fir‘awn)

Āyats of Al-Nāzi‘āt (79), 15–26 indicated theme insight, رفض الحق leads to destruction, arrogance (طغيان) opposes taqwā, history serves as moral lesson.

The selected āyāt collectively construct a Qur’ānic ethical model where inner consciousness (taqwā) produces spiritual purification (tazkiyah), which manifests through God-conscious fear (khashyah) and righteous conduct, ultimately leading to eschatological success (falāḥ).

The table below described the thematic grouping (āyah → theme → Qur’ānic keywords) of āyats:

Table 1: Thematic Table of Selected Āyāt

Theme	Sūrah & Āyah	Key Arabic Keywords
Reward of Taqwā (Ākhirah)	Al-Naba (78):31-36	الْمُتَّقِينَ، مَفَازًا، حَذَائِقَ، جَزَاءَ
Moral Duality (Taqwā vs Fujūr)	Al-Shams (91):7-8	فُجُورَهَا، تَقْوَاهَا
Tazkiyah (Purification of Soul)	Al-Shams (91):9-10	زَكَاةَها، دَسَّاءَها، أَفْلَحَ
Practical Taqwā	Al-Layl (92):5-7	أَعْطَى، اتَّقَى، الْحُسْنَى
Highest Level of Taqwā	Al-Layl (92):17-21	الْأَتَقَى، يَتَزَكَّى، وَجْهَ رَبِّهِ
Enjoining Taqwā vs Opposition	Al-'Alaq (96):9-12	يَنْهَى، صَلَّى، الْهُدَى، التَّقْوَى
Self-Control & Fear of Allah	Al-Nāzi'āt (79):40-41	خَافَ، نَبَى التُّفْسَنَ، الْجَنَّةَ
Historical Lesson (Mūsā-Fir'awn)	Al-Nāzi'āt (79):15-26	طَعَى، تَزَكَّى، تَخَشَّى، نَكَالَ
Khashyah & Ākhirah Awareness	Al-Nāzi'āt (79):45-46	مُنْذِرَ، يَخْشَاهَا، عَشِيَّةَ
Priority in Da'wah	'Abasa (80):5-10	اسْتَعْفَى، تَصَدَّى، يَخْشَى، تَلَّى
Reminder & Receptivity	Al-A'lā (87):9-10	ذَكَرَى، يَذْكُرُ، يَخْشَى
Tazkiyah & Worship	Al-A'lā (87):14-15	تَزَكَّى، ذَكَرَ، صَلَّى
Sincere Worship (Ikhlās)	Al-Bayyinah (98):5	مُخْلِصِينَ، حُنَفَاءَ، الصَّلَاةَ، الزَّكَاةَ
Faith & Righteous Deeds	Al-Bayyinah (98):7-8	أَمَنُوا، عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ، خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ
Khashyah as معيار (Criterion)	Al-Bayyinah (98):8	خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ

2.2 Qualities of the Muttaqī

2.2.1. Inner God-Consciousness (Taqwā Awareness)

The Muttaqī possesses deep internal awareness of Allah and moral responsibility. Recognizes the dual nature of the soul taqwā vs fujūr (Q. 91: 7-8), chooses righteousness over corruption, lives with constant awareness of accountability. So the Muttaqī is internally guided by moral consciousness, not external pressure.

2.2.2. Self-Purification (Tazkiyah of the Soul)

The Muttaqī actively purifies the self through discipline and worship. Purifies the soul (zakkāhā) success guaranteed (Q. 91:9-10), engages in continuous self-improvement, gives charity and seeks spiritual growth (Q. 92:17-21).

2.2.3. Moral Discipline & Self-Control

A key quality is resisting desires and controlling the self, restrains the nafs from desire (Q. 79:40-41), avoids arrogance and rebellion -Fir'awn example shows opposite- (Q. 79:15-26), chooses long-term accountability over short-term pleasure.

2.2.4. Prioritizing Truth & Humility

The Muttaqī is humble and attentive to sincere guidance, gives attention to sincere seekers of truth (Q. 80:5-10), does not ignore the humble or needy, responds positively to reminders (dhikr).

2.2.5. Faith-Based Action (Īmān + ‘Amal Ṣāliḥ)

True piety is expressed through action, belief combined with righteous deeds (Q. 98:7-8), establishes prayer and gives zakāh (Q. 98:5), and acts with sincerity (ikhhlās).

2.2.6. Khashyah (Reverential Fear of Allah)

The Muttaqī has deep, conscious fear rooted in knowledge, fears standing before Allah (Q. 89:40-41), responds to reminders with humility (Q. 98:9-10), and avoids sin out of awareness of divine presence.

2.2.7. Consistency in Worship & Remembrance

Regular worship defines the Muttaqī's lifestyle, they establishes ṣalāh (Q. 98:5; 87:14-15), engages in dhikr (remembrance of Allah) and maintains spiritual discipline consistently.

2.2.8. Social Responsibility & Ethical Priority

The Muttaqī is socially responsible and just in priorities, they does not ignore sincere seekers (Q. 80:5-10), gives charity and purifies wealth (Q. 92:17-21), and chooses moral responsibility over arrogance.

2.2.9. Ultimate Success (Falāḥ) as Outcome

All qualities lead to final success e.g. paradise for the Muttaqīn (Q. 78:31-36), eternal reward and divine pleasure (Q. 98:8), protection from loss and corruption (Q. 91:9-10).

The Muttaqī in the selected Qur'ānic āyāt is characterized by inner God-consciousness, self-purification, moral discipline, humility, sincere worship, social responsibility, and reverential fear of Allah, culminating in ultimate success in the Hereafter. The table below describe a summery of charactarestics of Muttaqi at a glance:

Table 2: *Quality of Muttaqī in the 30th part of the Qur'an*

Quality of Muttaqī	Sūrah & Āyah	Explanation (Keywords/Meaning)
God-conscious awareness (Taqwā)	Al-Shams (91:7-8)	Awareness of dual moral capacity: تَقْوَى / فُجُور
Self-purification (Tazkiyah)	Al-Shams (91:9-10), Al-A'lā (87:14-15)	Purifying the soul leads to success (falāḥ)
Moral discipline & self-restraint	Al-Nāzi'āt (79:40-41)	Restraining desires (نَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَى)
Humility & receptivity	'Abasa (80:5-10), Al-A'lā (87:9-10)	Respect for sincere seekers; responsiveness to guidance
Faith + righteous action	Al-Bayyinah (98:5, 7-8)	Prayer, zakāh, and sincere belief with deeds
Reverential fear (Khashyah)	Al-Nāzi'āt (79:26, 45), Al-Bayyinah (98:8)	Fear of standing before Allah
Social responsibility	Al-Layl (92:17-21), 'Abasa (80:5-10)	Charity, sincerity, and ethical engagement
Resistance to arrogance	Al-Nāzi'āt (79:15-26)	Rejecting Fir'awn-like tyranny and pride
Ultimate success (Falāḥ)	Al-Naba (78:31-36), Al-Bayyinah (98:8)	Eternal reward, gardens, divine pleasure

2.3 Negative Behaviours Opposed to Taqwā in the 30th Part

In the 30 part the Qur'ān does not only describe taqwā and the muttaqī, but also clearly outlines the negative behaviours that contradict taqwā—i.e., what Allah calls people to avoid in order to develop his consciousness. Below is a thematic extraction of those negative traits strictly based on your verses:

2.3.1. Arrogance and Self-Sufficiency (Istighnā' / اسْتِغْنَى)

A major barrier to taqwā is feeling independent of divine guidance and rejecting guidance due to arrogance prevents purification and taqwā. Allah says: “As for the one who considers himself self-sufficient...” (Q. 80:5-7)

2.3.2. Neglecting the Truth-Seeker / Spiritual Blindness

Disregarding humble seekers reflects spiritual insensitivity and lack of taqwā. Ignoring sincere seekers of guidance is condemned. Turning away from the one who comes “striving and fearing” (Q. 80:8-10)

2.3.3. Rebellion and Transgression (Ṭuḡhyān)

The Qur'ān presents Fir'awn as the extreme example of anti-taqwā behaviour: “Indeed, he transgressed (ṭaghā)” (Q. 79:17) and “Then he denied and disobeyed” (Q. 79:21).

2.3.4. Denial of Truth (Takdhīb)

Denial of truth leads to moral collapse and loss of taqwā. Fir‘awn who “denied the greatest sign” (Q. 79:21–22)

2.3.5. Following Desires (Hawā) Instead of Divine Guidance

Allowing desires to control behaviour is a direct violation of taqwā. Taqwā requires self-restraint; its opposite is desire-following. Allah says: “Whoever feared standing before his Lord and restrained the soul from desire...” (Q. 79:40–41)

2.3.6. Pride in Wealth and Social Status

Social arrogance blocks humility, a core condition of taqwā. Self-importance due to wealth or position leads to moral blindness. Allah says, “As for the one who is self-sufficient...” (Q. 80:5)

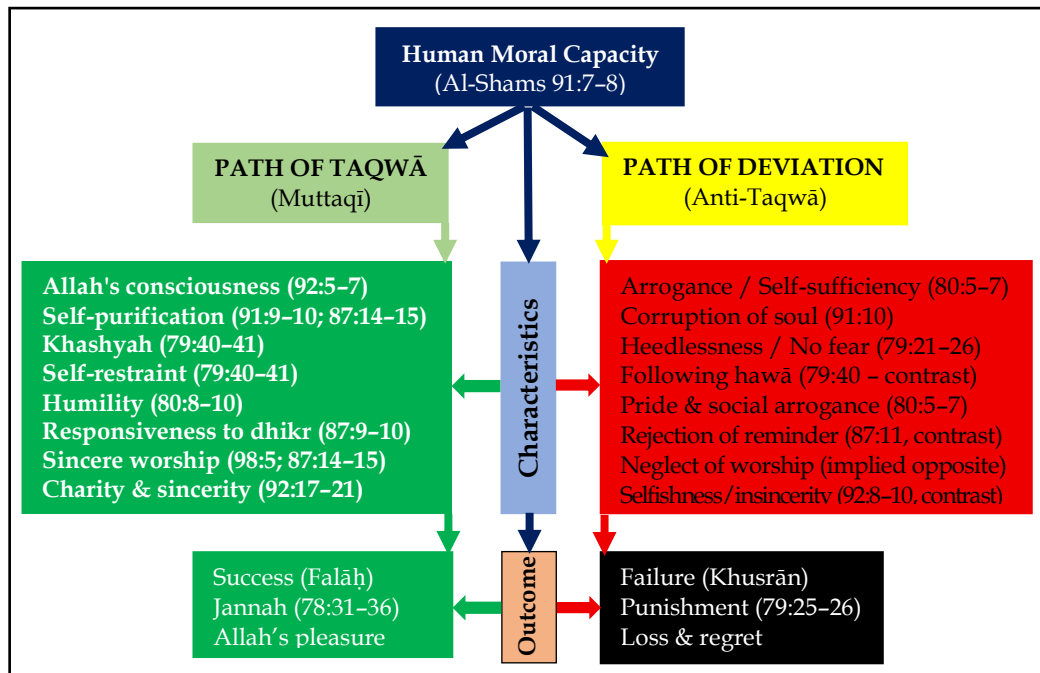
2.3.7. Failure to Purify the Soul (Anti-Tazkiyah Behaviour)

Opposite of purification is corruption and neglect of self-reform allowing the soul to decay through sin is rejection of taqwā. As describe Qur’an, “He has failed who corrupts it” (Q. 91:10). The selected āyāt identify several negative behaviours that directly oppose taqwā: arrogance, self-sufficiency, rejection of truth, following desires, social pride, neglect of purification, denial of accountability, and indifference toward divine reminders. Collectively, these traits represent a moral and spiritual condition that prevents the development of taqwā and leads to failure (khusrān) in both worldly and eternal dimensions.

2.4 Comparative Framework: Taqwā vs Anti-Taqwā Model

A comparative conceptual diagram integrating both positive (Muttaqī) and negative (anti-taqwā) traits derived from 30th part of the Qur'an as follows:

Figure 1: Comparative Framework: Taqwā vs Anti-Taqwā Model



The comparative framework illustrates the Qur'ānic dual-path model of human morality, wherein individuals are endowed with the capacity for both taqwā and fujūr. The path of taqwā, characterized by God-consciousness, self-purification, humility, and disciplined conduct, leads to ultimate success (*falāh*) and eternal reward. In contrast, the path of deviation—marked by arrogance, moral corruption, heedlessness, and indulgence in desires—results in spiritual failure and divine punishment. This binary structure reinforces the Qur'ānic emphasis on conscious ethical choice and accountability.

3. Interpretation of Taqwā by Classical and Modern Mufasssir

3.1 Definition of Taqwā

To understand the profound nature of Taqwā, it is essential to explore both its linguistic roots and its interpretations by classical and modern mufasssirun. The term Taqwā (تقوى) is etymologically derived from the Arabic root *waqa* (وقى), which linguistically signifies protection, safeguarding, or shielding oneself from harm [10].

Among classical mufasssir Al-Tabari defines Taqwā primarily through the lens of active compliance as a strong shield for oneself against Allah's punishment and wrath, established through worship and obedience to Him. He emphasizes that Taqwā is not merely a verbal claim. For Al-Tabari, if an

individual claims to fear Allah yet neglects mandatory duties (*Fara'id*) or indulges in prohibitions, they do not qualify as a Muttaqi. He views Taqwā as a proactive protective mechanism [11].

Al-Qurtubi elevates Taqwā to a state of spiritual consciousness as the creation of a permanent internal space between oneself and Allah's displeasure, keeping the heart away from sinful acts. He explains that a Muttaqi abandons sin not merely out of fear of Hellfire, but out of profound respect for Allah's majesty and honor. He characterizes Taqwā as the 'Jami' al-Khayrat' (the collection of all goodness) [12].

Ibn Kathir portrays Taqwā through the lens of spiritual vigilance as following Allah's commands through the light of the Qur'an and Sunnah, while avoiding His wrath. Referencing the famous dialogue involving the companion Ubayy ibn Ka'b (RA), Ibn Kathir likens the world to a "thorny path." Taqwā is the caution one exercises tucking in one's clothes and walking carefully to avoid being snagged. In essence, Taqwā is safeguarding one's faith from worldly trials [13].

On the other hand, among modern mufassir Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi has defined Taqwā as a firm 'Malakah' (ingrained quality) or permanent strength of the soul (*Nafs*), through which the power to abstain from sins is acquired [14]. Explaining the true essence of Taqwā, he states: "Taqwā is to safeguard oneself from every sin out of the fear of Allah Almighty's displeasure" [15].

Mufti Muhammad Shafi has provided several definitions of Taqwā. The famous one is, "Taqwā is to abstain from every sin and act of disobedience out of the fear of Allah Almighty's displeasure" [16]. He compared Taqwā to a special state of caution of the heart, saying: "Taqwā is that vigilant and living state of the heart, under the influence of which a person contemplates before performing any action whether it is contrary to the command of Allah Almighty" [17]. To explain the scope of Taqwā, he provided another profound definition: "Taqwā is the name of the collective effort of performing every act commanded by Allah (Wajibāt) and abandoning every act forbidden by Him (Muharramāt)" [18].

Maulana Abul A'la Maududi moved beyond conventional definitions and defined Taqwā as a revolutionary moral consciousness. In his view, Taqwā is not merely a spiritual term; it is a living moral force: "Taqwā is that consciousness through which a sense of responsibility, a perception of duty, and the ability to distinguish between vice and virtue are awakened within a person" [19]. He defined Taqwā by comparing it to an internal 'brake' or control within a person: "Taqwā is a character strength that restrains a person from the

desire for disobedience and keeps them steadfast on the path of obedience to Allah" [20]. Within a political and ideological context, he provided a profound definition: "Taqwā is the name of acknowledging Allah's sovereignty in every facet of life and confining oneself within the legal boundaries (Hudud) prescribed by Him [21].

According to the above statement classical and modern mufasssirs agree that taqwā integrates obedience, inner consciousness, moral vigilance, and self-restraint, forming an ethical system that safeguards faith, disciplines the soul, and guides aspects of life.

3.2 Characteristics of Taqwā

Taqwā is not merely an abstract spiritual concept; rather, it manifests itself through a set of visible, practical, and morally transformative characteristics in a person's life. Below is a detailed analysis of the characteristics of Taqwā as understood by both classical and modern mufasssirun.

According to classical Qur'ānic exegetes such as Imam al-Ṭabari, Imam al-Qurṭubī, and Imam Ibn Kathir, taqwā is not merely an abstract or theoretical concept; rather, it is a comprehensive moral and spiritual condition that manifests through a range of interrelated characteristics in a believer's life. At its foundation lies firm faith in the unseen (īmān bil-ghayb), which, as al-Ṭabari explains, constitutes the first defining trait of the muttaqī [22], while al-Qurṭubī regards it as the basis of spiritual purification (tazkiyah) [23], and Ibn Kathir views it as the initial stage of true recognition (ma'rifah) of Allah [24]. This inner faith naturally produces a deep awareness of accountability in the Hereafter, where, according to al-Ṭabari, constant remembrance of the return to Allah safeguards a person from moral deviation, al-Qurṭubī interprets it as khashyatullāh (reverent fear), and Ibn Kathir identifies it as the central motivational force behind taqwā.

Building upon this inner consciousness, taqwā further requires rigorous self-discipline, particularly in restraining the النفس (ego and desires). Al-Ṭabari describes taqwā as controlling the النفس from sinful inclinations [25], al-Qurṭubī elevates this struggle to the level of jihād al-akbar (the greater jihad) [26] and Ibn Kathir likens it to a moral restraint that protects a person from destructive desires and leads toward salvation [27]. This discipline is closely tied to a heightened sensitivity even toward minor sins; al-Ṭabari emphasizes that a true muttaqī considers the greatness of Allah rather than the triviality of the sin, al-Qurṭubī warns that small sins accumulate like stones forming a mountain, and

Ibn Kathir regards such sensitivity as essential to preserving the spiritual life of the heart.

In addition to internal discipline, the mufasssirūn stress ethical vigilance and precaution in daily life. Avoidance of doubtful matters (*shubuhāt*) is a hallmark of *taqwā*, as al-Ṭabari explains that a *muttaqī* avoids anything that may lead to the unlawful [28] al-Qurṭubi frames it as a protective boundary safeguarding one from falling into prohibition [29] and Ibn Kathir categorizes it under *waraʿ* (scrupulous piety) [30].

Moreover, sincerity and moral integrity are central to *taqwā*, particularly in maintaining consistency between one's public and private life. Al-Ṭabari underscores that a true *muttaqī* remains equally conscious of Allah in solitude and in public [31], al-Qurṭubi considers this the ultimate test of *ikhhlās* (sincerity) [32] and Ibn Kathir defines it as *murāqabah*, a constant awareness that one is under divine observation [33]. This sincerity naturally translates into consistent obedience and worship, where al-Ṭabari stresses the importance of fulfilling obligatory acts without negligence, al-Qurṭubi interprets it as a balance between justice (*ʿadl*) and truthfulness (*ṣidq*), and Ibn Kathir insists that all acts of worship must strictly conform to Prophetic guidance. Such obedience reaches its highest expression in unconditional submission to divine commands; al-Ṭabari characterizes this as the attitude of "we hear and we obey," al-Qurṭubi argues that such submission elevates a believer to the rank of the *muttaqī*, and Ibn Kathir emphasizes immediate compliance without calculating worldly benefit or loss.

Finally, *taqwā* is reflected in social behavior and interpersonal ethics, particularly through humility and forgiveness. Al-Ṭabari portrays the *muttaqī* as free from arrogance, al-Qurṭubi highlights gentleness and the avoidance of personal revenge, and Ibn Kathir, drawing on Qur'ānic teachings, identifies controlling anger and forgiving others as essential social manifestations of *taqwā*. In sum, the classical mufasssirūn present *taqwā* as a holistic and integrated framework that combines faith, inner discipline, ethical caution, sincerity, obedience, and refined social conduct, thereby shaping both the internal state and external behavior of a believer in a coherent and transformative manner.

According to modern Qur'ānic exegetes such as Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi, Mufti Muhammad Shafi, and Abul A'la Maududi, *taqwā* is understood not only as a spiritual state but as a dynamic force that transforms the inner self, ethical behavior, and socio-ideological engagement of a المؤمن. In the thought of Thanvi, *taqwā* is primarily an internalized spiritual quality *malakah* that develops through deep psychological purification, whereby a believer acquires

an inherent aversion to sin. This refined inner state produces such sensitivity that one avoids not only the unlawful but even permissible matters that distract from the remembrance of Allah. Central to this transformation is *ikhhlās* (sincerity), which ensures complete consistency between one's private and public life, ultimately creating a tranquil النفس in which desires are subdued and all actions conform to the Sunnah. Such moral and spiritual refinement elevates the believer to the مقام of wilāyah (friendship with Allah) [34].

In contrast, Mufti Muhammad Shafi presents taqwā through a more practical and socially grounded framework, defining it as constant murāqabah—a continuous awareness of Allah in every aspect of life. This awareness manifests in extreme caution in obeying divine commands, metaphorically resembling a person carefully navigating a thorny path to avoid harm. For him, the hallmark of taqwā is not confined to personal piety but extends to social responsibility, particularly in the fulfillment of ḥuqūq al-ʿibād (rights of others). A true muttaqī, therefore, is one whose conduct ensures the safety of others from his tongue and hands, whose financial dealings are transparent, and whose character is free from moral vices such as backbiting, lying, and slander. In this sense, taqwā shapes an الفرد into a socially responsible and ethically upright member of society [35].

Meanwhile, Abul Aʿlā Maududi conceptualizes taqwā as a powerful moral and ideological force rooted in a profound sense of accountability before Allah and unwavering submission to His sovereignty. According to him, taqwā equips a believer with furqān—the discernment to distinguish truth from falsehood—enabling navigation through the complexities of modern life. Unlike a purely inward spirituality, Maududi emphasizes the active and transformative dimension of taqwā, whereby the muttaqī is driven not only to personal righteousness but also to establish justice and divine guidance within society and governance. This consciousness instills courage and steadfastness, allowing a believer to resist material temptations and societal pressures while standing firm against injustice [36].

Thus, in the modern exegetical perspective, taqwā emerges as a holistic construct that integrates inner purification, ethical discipline, and proactive engagement in establishing moral order in both individual and collective spheres.

3.3 Importance and signification of Taqwā

According to classical Qur'ānic exegetes such as Imam al-Ṭabari, Imam al-Qurṭubī, and Imam Ibn Kathir, the importance and significance of taqwā form a unified and foundational principle that governs the entire spiritual, ethical, and existential framework of Islam. They collectively present taqwā as the essential basis for divine guidance, moral integrity, and ultimate success in both this world and the Hereafter. In the thought of al-Ṭabari, taqwā is the primary ground of guidance and a form of inner consciousness that acts as a moral sentinel within الإنسان, preparing the heart to receive the light of the Qur'an. He portrays it as a spiritual receptivity, without which revelation cannot truly benefit a person, and as a protective shield wiqāyah that safeguards the believer from divine punishment. This consciousness transforms taqwā into a practical covenant that regulates all aspects of life, ensuring obedience to Allah and elevating a person to the مقام of wilāyah (divine friendship) [37].

Expanding this perspective, al-Qurṭubī interprets taqwā as the ultimate provision of the soul and a comprehensive moral force that sustains both individual and societal well-being. He emphasizes that while material resources nourish the temporary body, taqwā nourishes the eternal soul, functioning as a spiritual brake that restrains الإنسان from falling into sin and moral chaos. This inner restraint generates murāqabah (self-accountability), which, in turn, establishes social harmony and justice even in the absence of external enforcement. At the personal level, taqwā brings sakīnah (tranquility) and purifies the heart from arrogance and فساد, enabling the believer to attain higher spiritual states such as iḥsān [38]. Thus, in al-Qurṭubī's view, taqwā is both the foundation of inner peace and the cornerstone of a self-regulating, ethically sound society.

Meanwhile, Ibn Kathir presents taqwā as the ultimate criterion of human dignity and the decisive factor in the acceptance of deeds. Drawing upon Qur'ānic teachings, he asserts that all worldly measures of superiority – such as lineage, wealth, and status – are rendered meaningless before Allah, with taqwā alone determining true honor. He further describes it as furqān, a divine light and insight that enables the believer to distinguish truth from falsehood, particularly in times of confusion and trial. This illumination grants moral clarity and wisdom, guiding the believer through life's complexities while placing them under Allah's special guardianship [39]. Moreover, Ibn Kathir emphasizes that no act of worship is accepted without taqwā, likening deeds devoid of it to lifeless forms incapable of attaining divine acceptance.

In sum, the classical mufasssirrūn present taqwā as a holistic and indispensable reality: it is the condition for receiving divine guidance, the معيار for human honor, the shield against punishment, the source of inner tranquility and social order, and the ultimate guarantee for the acceptance of deeds. Through this comprehensive lens, taqwā emerges as the central force that shapes the believer's inner consciousness, outward conduct, and final destiny.

According to modern Qur'ānic exegetes such as Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi, Mufti Muhammad Shafi, and Abul A'la Maududi, the importance and significance of taqwā can be understood as a unified, comprehensive force that operates at spiritual, ethical, social, and ideological levels. They collectively present taqwā as the essential روح (spirit) of religion and the foundational معيار (criterion) for both individual salvation and collective reform. In the spiritual dimension, Thanvi emphasizes that taqwā is the inner life-force that gives meaning and acceptance to all acts of worship, transforming ritual into living devotion and enabling proximity to Allah (*qurb-e-ilāhī*) and the state of *iḥsān*. It purifies the heart from diseases such as pride, envy, and hypocrisy, liberates the soul from the domination of the النفس, and grants inner tranquility (*sakīnah*) and the sweetness of faith. Without taqwā, knowledge becomes a source of arrogance rather than guidance, whereas with it, knowledge is elevated into wisdom and true spiritual awareness [40].

From a practical and socio-ethical perspective, Mufti Muhammad Shafi highlights taqwā as the ultimate standard of human dignity and the moral compass that governs all aspects of life, especially social dealings (*mu'āmalāt*). It ensures justice, honesty, and the protection of ḥuqūq al-'ibād, making a believer trustworthy even in the absence of external authority. Taqwā also functions as a divine "light" (*nūr*) and a source of حلول (solutions), guiding individuals through moral complexities and promising relief (*makhraj*) and sustenance in times of difficulty [41]. In this sense, it is the backbone of a just and harmonious society, preventing corruption, exploitation, and moral decay.

At the ideological and systemic level, Maududi interprets taqwā as a revolutionary moral force and the prerequisite for establishing a just civilization. It instills a deep sense of accountability to Allah, producing individuals who act responsibly not out of fear of worldly punishment but from internal conviction. Taqwā equips believers with *furqān* (discernment), enabling them to distinguish truth from falsehood in the complexities of modern life, and empowers them to resist oppression, materialism, and injustice with unwavering moral courage. It transforms individuals into active agents of change who strive to establish justice and divine guidance in society, pensuring

that authority and power are treated as trusts (*amānah*) rather than tools of domination [42].

In sum, modern mufassirūn present taqwā as a holistic and transformative paradigm that unites inner purification, ethical discipline, social justice, and ideological commitment. It is simultaneously the means of attaining closeness to Allah, the guarantor of moral integrity in human interactions, and the driving force behind the establishment of a just and righteous social order.

3.4 Stages of Taqwā

The concept of taqwā occupies a central position in Islamic spirituality, representing a dynamic journey of moral and spiritual refinement rather than a fixed state. Classical exegetes have systematically articulated its stages to illustrate the gradual elevation of a believer's faith and practice. Their analyses reveal that taqwā develops through progressive levels of acceptance, discipline, and spiritual excellence, ultimately leading to nearness to Allah.

According to Imam al-Ṭabari taqwā has three stages [43]:

1. *Al-Talaqqī wa al-ʿAmal* (Acceptance and Practice) : Accepting Allah's commands wholeheartedly and implementing them in life.
2. *Al-Thabāt ʿala al-Taṣdīq* (Steadfastness in Faith): Remaining firm upon imān without deviation or innovation.
3. *Al-Iḥsān wa al-Taḳarrub* (Spiritual Excellence and Nearness): Attaining closeness to Allah through nawāfil and worship with deep consciousness (iḥsān).

According to Imam al-Qurṭubī also taqwā has three stages [44]:

- 1) *Al-Taqwā ʿan al-Kufr* (Protection from Disbelief): Establishing pure tawḥīd; foundational level of salvation.
- 2) *Al-Taqwā ʿan al-Maʿāṣī* (Protection from Sin): Avoiding major and minor sins; practical (ʿamalī) taqwā.
- 3) *Al-Taqwā ʿAmmā siwā Allāh* (Detachment from All Besides Allah): Complete spiritual focus on Allah; highest level of purity.

Imam Ibn Kathir divided stages of taqwā according to Muttaqī [45]:

- [1] *Ẓālim li-Nafsihī* (One Who Wrongs Himself) : Believer with weak taqwā; commits sins but repents.
- [2] *Muqtaṣid* (The Moderate) : Fulfills obligations and avoids prohibitions; standard level of muttaqī.
- [3] *Sābiq bi al-Khayrāt* (Foremost in Good Deeds): Excels in worship; avoids even doubtful/permissible distractions; highest perfection of taqwā.

The stages of taqwā demonstrate that spiritual growth in Islam is a continuous process of purification and elevation. They collectively emphasize

that the highest attainment of taqwā lies in complete sincerity, moral vigilance, and unwavering devotion to Allah.

According to the modern mufassir Taqwā is not a static ritual but a dynamic spiritual journey that evolves as a believer grows in faith and consciousness. The progressive nature of Taqwā can be categorized into various developmental stages, where each level represents a higher degree of spiritual depth, legal adherence, and ideological commitment.

According to Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi the stages of taqwā are [46]:

1. *Taqwā al-‘Ām* (General Piety): Protection from disbelief and major sins; foundation of Islamic identity.
2. *Taqwā al-Khāṣ* (Special Piety) : Avoidance of minor sins and doubtful matters; focus on inner purification (*tazkiyah al-bāṭin*).
3. *Taqwā Khāṣ al-Khāṣ* (Elite Piety): Avoiding even permissible distractions; complete absorption in Allah and attainment of iḥsān.

Stages of taqwā according to Mufti Muhammad Shafi are [47]:

- Protection from Disbelief (*Tawḥīd* Foundation) : Establishing firm belief as the base of taqwā.
- Protection from Disobedience (*Muraqabah* Stage): Careful adherence to commands and avoidance of sins with constant self-awareness.
- Protection from Superfluous Matters (Highest Practical Taqwā): Avoiding even permissible excesses; taqwā becomes a natural instinct guiding all actions, especially in *ḥuqūq al-‘ibād*.

Abul A'la Maududi describe the stages as follows [48]:

- Awakening of Consciousness (*Shu‘ūr*): Development of accountability before Allah.
- Moral Integrity in Daily Life: Taqwā governs personal, social, and economic behavior.
- Systemic and Ideological Commitment (*Iqāmat al-Dīn*): Striving to establish divine guidance in society; transition from personal piety to active reform.

When comparing these three perspectives, it becomes evident that while their te outward caution in *الشريعة (al-Shari'ah)*, and Maududi's peak level focuses on the external systemic reform of society. However, all three scholars agree that Taqwā is a journey of increasing يقين (*Yaqin* or certainty). For Thanvi, it is certainty of love; for Shafi, it is certainty of law; and for Maududi, it is certainty of responsibility. This comparative analysis suggests that a complete *Muttaqi* is one who combines all these dimensions possessing a heart free from غفلة, a life free from فضول, and a character committed to إقامة الدين. This synthesis

provides a holistic framework for understanding how Taqwā functions as a comprehensive tool for both individual and civilizational development.

Table 3. *Similarities and Differences in the Interpretation of Taqwā*

Aspect	Classical Mufasssīrūn	Modern Mufasssīrūn	Similarities	Key Differences
Definition of Taqwā	Shield against Allah's punishment through obedience Spiritual consciousness & reverent fear Caution while walking on a "thorny path" (Ibn Kathīr)	Ingrained quality (<i>malakah</i>) of the soul Constant <i>murāqabah</i> (heart's awareness) Revolutionary moral consciousness & internal "brake"	Taqwā is protection from sin and divine displeasure through awareness and self-restraint.	Classical: More legal-theological and protective emphasis. Modern: More psychological, habitual, and ideological emphasis.
Core Nature	Proactive protective mechanism <i>Jāmi' al-Khayrāt</i> (collection of all goodness) Spiritual vigilance	Permanent strength of the <i>nafs</i> Living state of the heart Moral & ideological force	Both view Taqwā as an active force that protects and guides a person.	Classical: Emphasis on protection & obedience. Modern: Emphasis on inner transformation and societal impact.
Characteristics	<i>Īmān bil-ghayb</i> Self-discipline & control over <i>nafs</i> Avoidance of <i>shubuhāt</i> (<i>wara'</i>) Sincerity (<i>ikhlas</i>) & consistency Humility & forgiveness	Inner purification & <i>tazkiyah</i> Sensitivity to even permissible distractions <i>Murāqabah</i> in daily life Social responsibility (<i>huqūq al-'ibād</i>)	Both stress self-discipline, sincerity, avoidance of sin, and ethical conduct.	Classical: Focus on legal boundaries and individual piety. Modern: Stronger focus on psychological depth and social ethics.
Stages of Taqwā	al-Ṭabarī: Acceptance, Steadfastness, <i>Ihsān</i> al-Qurṭubī: From Kufr, Sins, Detachment from all besides Allah Ibn Kathīr: <i>Zālim li-Nafsihi</i> , <i>Muqtaṣid</i> , <i>Sābiq bi al-Khayrāt</i>	Thānawī: <i>Ām</i> , <i>Khāṣ</i> , <i>Khāṣ al-Khāṣ</i> Muftī Shafī': Tawḥīd, <i>Murāqabah</i> , Highest practical level Mawdūdī: Consciousness, Moral integrity, Systemic reform (<i>Iqāmat al-Dīn</i>)	Both present Taqwā as progressive stages from basic to highest level.	Classical: More focused on personal spiritual ascent. Modern: Includes societal and ideological dimensions at the highest stage.
Importance & Significance	Foundation of	Spirit of religion &	Both consider Taqwā essential for	Classical: More

	divine guidance Criterion of human honor (<i>furqān</i>) Shield against punishment Condition for acceptance of deeds Source of inner tranquility	inner life-force Moral compass for all aspects of life Source of <i>sakīnah</i> and wisdom Means of establishing justice in society	guidance, honor, and success in this world and the Hereafter.	emphasis on individual salvation and acceptance of deeds. Modern: Stronger emphasis on social justice and civilizational reform.
Social Dimension	Humility, controlling anger, forgiveness Creates social harmony through inner restraint	Protection of others' rights (<i>ḥuqūq al-'ibād</i>) Transparent dealings Active role in establishing justice and resisting oppression (especially <i>Mawdūdī</i>)	Both acknowledge that true Taqwā reflects in good social behavior.	Classical: Mostly interpersonal ethics. Modern: Extends to socio-political and ideological reform.
Overall Approach	Theological, legal, and spiritual emphasis. Focus on protection, obedience, and personal piety.	Psychological, practical, and ideological emphasis. Focus on inner transformation and societal application.	Both present Taqwā as a holistic concept involving faith, discipline, and righteous conduct.	Classical: More traditional and text-based. Modern: More contextual, psychological, and reform-oriented.

4. The Integrated Conceptual Framework of Taqwā

4.1 Definition and Characteristics of Taqwā

Taqwā, linguistically derived from the Arabic root *waqa*, signifies protection, safeguarding, or preserving oneself from harm. In a broader spiritual and ethical sense, it represents a state of heightened awareness and conscious mindfulness of one's responsibilities before Allah. It is not merely avoidance of sin; rather, it encompasses an integrated system of ethical vigilance, spiritual mindfulness, and practical obedience that guides a believer in every aspect of life.

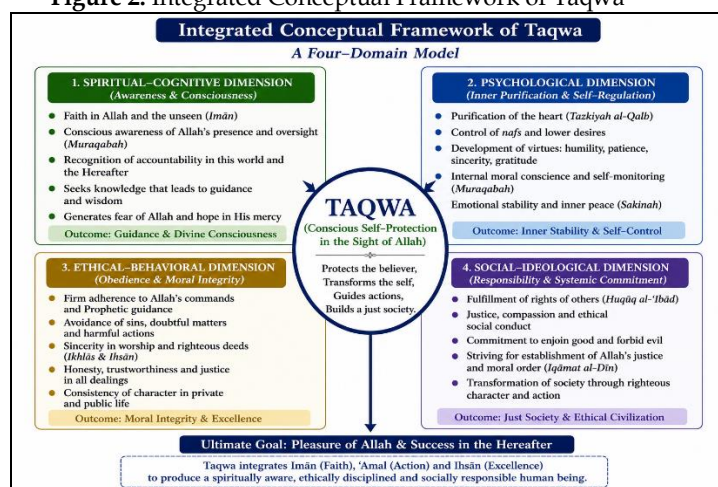
Integrating classical and modern perspectives, taqwā can be conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct comprising four interrelated domains. First, the spiritual-cognitive dimension involves faith in the unseen, awareness of divine accountability, and the continuous remembrance of Allah.

Second, the psychological dimension emphasizes self-regulation, purification of the heart, and the development of an internal moral conscience that restrains base desires. Third, the ethical-behavioral dimension manifests in consistent obedience, avoidance of sin and doubtful matters, sincerity in worship, and integrity in both private and public life. Fourth, the social-ideological dimension reflects taqwā in interpersonal conduct, justice, and active commitment to establishing moral values within society.

Thus, taqwā functions simultaneously as a protective mechanism, a transformative process, and a guiding framework. It protects the believer from moral and spiritual harm, transforms the inner self into a state of purity and consciousness, and guides outward actions toward justice and righteousness. Ultimately, taqwā represents the harmonization of faith (īmān), action ('amal), and excellence (iḥsān), producing a الإنسان who is spiritually aware, ethically disciplined, and socially responsible, thereby fulfilling the holistic vision of Islam in both individual and collective life.

The figure below shown the integrated model of Taqwā including its characteristics:

Figure 2: Integrated Conceptual Framework of Taqwā



4.2 Stages of Taqwā

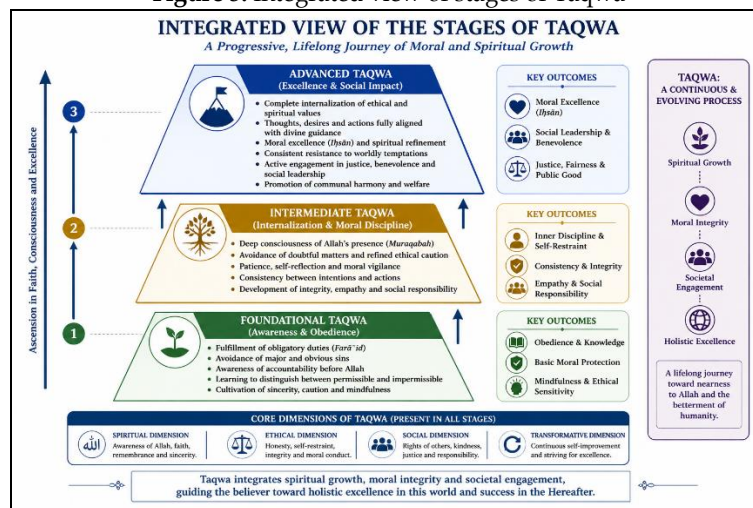
Taqwā is not a static trait but a progressive, lifelong journey of moral and spiritual growth. At the initial stage, the believer focuses on fulfilling obligatory duties and avoiding obvious sins. This foundational level establishes awareness, obedience, and the groundwork for ethical sensitivity. The individual learns to discern between permissible and impermissible acts and begins cultivating habits of sincerity, caution, and mindfulness.

In the intermediate stage, the believer develops deeper consciousness of divine presence, exercising restraint in doubtful matters and refining internal moral discipline. Patience, self-reflection, and moral vigilance become central, guiding decision-making and fostering consistency between intentions and actions. The individual begins to internalize ethical principles, demonstrating integrity, empathy, and social responsibility in interactions.

At the advanced stage, Taqwā is fully internalized, with thoughts, desires, and actions entirely aligned with ethical and spiritual ideals. The believer achieves moral excellence, spiritual refinement, and social conscientiousness, consistently resisting worldly temptations and striving for justice, fairness, and benevolence. Engagement in social welfare, ethical leadership, and promotion of communal harmony becomes a natural extension of personal piety.

Across all stages, Taqwā is dynamic and evolving, encompassing spiritual growth, moral integrity, and societal engagement. It guides the believer toward a state of holistic excellence in which personal development, ethical conduct, and social responsibility are seamlessly integrated. This lifelong process reflects the transformative power of Taqwā as both an individual and collective guiding principle. The figure below presenting the integrated view of stages of Taqwā:

Figure 3: Integrated view of stages of Taqwā



Conclusion

This study explores the conceptual framework of Taqwā in the 30th Juz of the Qur'an through a comparative analysis of classical and modern tafsir. It demonstrates that Taqwā is a comprehensive concept encompassing God-consciousness, moral discipline, and social responsibility. While classical exegetes such as Imam Ibn Kathir, Imam al-Qurṭubi, and Imam al-Ṭabari emphasize obedience, avoidance of sin, and accountability before Allah, modern scholars expand its scope to include ethical application and social engagement in contemporary contexts. Addressing a notable research gap, this study focuses specifically on the 30th Juz and integrates both classical and modern perspectives through a qualitative, thematic, and comparative methodology. The findings reveal that Taqwā is both spiritually rooted and socially transformative, functioning as a bridge between inner consciousness and outward conduct. By synthesizing these perspectives, the study proposes an integrated framework of Taqwā that remains relevant across time. It highlights Taqwā's enduring role in fostering ethical behavior, personal development, social harmony, and spiritual growth, while also providing a foundation for future research on Qur'anic concepts using similar approaches. Future research may apply this four-dimensional Taqwā framework to other Qur'anic sections, empirically examine its impact on Muslim ethics and society, and compare it with analogous concepts in other traditions.

Author Contributions

Md. Ruhul Amin: Conceptualization, Methodology, Review, editing & Supervision, Developing. **Aklima Akter Akhi:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, analysing and Writing.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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