

# Self-Control– A Perspective from the Quran

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## Abstract

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A model is suggested for self-control using the hyperbolic delay discounting work of George Ainslie. Examples from the Holy Quran are presented for ideal self-control conditions based on the above model. The Quran promotes self-control over willpower. However, the Quran suggests that temptation may be defeated through methods guided by the Quran.

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**Keywords:** Quran, Self-control, willpower, Hyperbolic delay Discounting, Temptation

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## Introduction

Self-control, or as commonly used in Islamic Literature, the biggest Jihad (الجهاد الاكبر)<sup>1</sup> is the clash with the soul (نفس). It is the conflict between temptations and doing what is right. It is the ability to control emotions, impulses, cravings, or negative behaviors to achieve what is good and beneficial.

The Quran teaches that a soul is inspired to be able to acquire both righteousness (تقوى) and wickedness (فجور).<sup>2</sup> The Quran then says “whoever purifies his soul has succeeded”,<sup>3</sup> and “whoever instills it with corruption has failed.”<sup>4</sup> Purification of the soul (تزكية) in the Quran is to cleanse the soul from bad and associate it with qualities ascribed to the straight path (صراط المستقيم)<sup>5</sup>, that is righteous qualities described in the Quran. The Quran recognizes that even well-intended souls may slip in life. In the most encouraging and positive tone, the Quran invites every guilty soul to try to climb back up and purify their souls.<sup>6</sup> By seeking the acceptance of repentance from Allah, one may cleanse the soul from the damaging effects of sin.<sup>7</sup> The Quran seems to suggest that seeking the acceptance of repentance from Allah for committed sins is only a partial solution to purification.<sup>7-8</sup> One still needs to associate the soul with righteous qualities. More successful souls to the right path belong to those who avoid committing wrong and instead, continue climbing higher toward the straight path.

Self-control is a tool that helps mankind not to sin voluntarily and gives him the drive to do good. The objective of this paper is to outline the understanding of self-control and then examine the teachings of the Quran and see how these teachings affect success in achieving self-control. A model representation of self-control is developed starting with the hyperbolic delay discounting work of Ainslie. Next, guidelines from the Quran for each segment of this model are reviewed and discussed.

## Self-Control

Self-control and its subcategory, willpower, have been the subject of extensive research and publications.<sup>9-10</sup> Self-control, or self-regulatory process as it is sometimes called in the literature, provides fewer desires that conflict with one’s longstanding goals. A person experiences fewer temptations and fewer and less pronounced cognitive conflicts.<sup>11-12</sup> Willpower is the internal “brute-force” approach to a self-regulation problem<sup>10</sup>, namely resisting temptation at the moment. We will use the work of George Ainslie in willpower to model the concept of self-control. Ainslie’s work is chosen, as it is a well-reviewed research work<sup>9</sup> and provides a visually clear system representation of willpower, which can easily be extended to the discussion of self-control and variables of interest in this work. Once this model approach is established, the teaching of the Holy Quran will be discussed based on this proposed model.

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In the early 1980s, psychiatrist George Ainslie discovered that many people would prefer smaller, sooner (SS) rewards immediately rather than larger, later (LL) rewards in 6 months. But they would *not* prefer the same (SS) in 3 months rather than the same (LL) in 9 months. The two scenarios are identical, just shifted by 3 months, and yet the same people behave differently depending on when the scenario would be presented (Figure 1).<sup>13</sup> This observation has been shown to exist in nonhumans and children as well and suggests that it is an inborn psychological tendency.<sup>9</sup> Experiments across species have found that similar tendencies may occur not only over months but over as little as tens of milliseconds delay as well.<sup>9</sup>

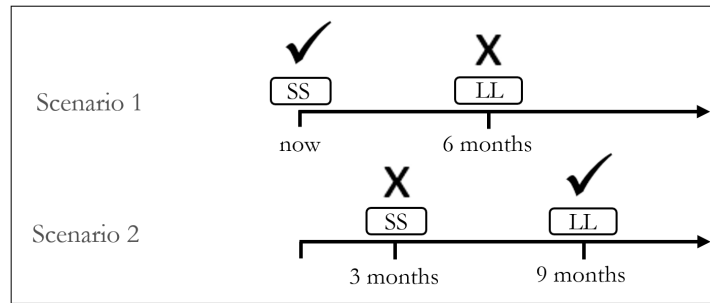


Figure 1 – Change in preference from SS to LL with a time delay.

Humans (and nonhumans) tend to show a hyperbolic discount curve.<sup>9,13-14</sup> A hyperbolic discount curve has a higher discount rate in the near future and a lower discount rate in the distant future. The original response to Scenario 1 implies people would prefer the fast smaller reward (i.e., they would have a high discount rate), but the response to Scenario 2 implies they would prefer the delayed reward (i.e., they would have a low discount rate).

The hyperbolic discount curve is defined as Equation 1,<sup>13</sup> where  $\tau$  is the relative time from now (delay), and  $k$  is the impatience (impulse, appetite, arousal, temptation, craving) factor:

$$\text{discount fraction } S(k, \tau) = 1/1+k\tau \quad (1)$$

Figure 2 shows a typical hyperbolic discount curve. The higher discount rate in the near future and the lower discount rate in the more distant future are also illustrated.

The delayed value of a reward can then be calculated by multiplying the discount fraction with the reward value (Equation 2). Reward value is a subjective value one may assign to SS and LL. For example, in Figure 3 a value of 10 is assigned to the reward. Finally, the delay axis in Figure 2 is flipped to the other side to get the value versus the “delay until reward” time plot (Figure 3-a). The figure shows that if this reward is offered to a person immediately, he will value it at 10. However, if the same reward is offered to him to receive at a time in the future (offered at a negative time in the figure), then he will perceive the value of the reward to be lower. Note that the value line will shift upward if the value of impatience ( $k$ ) decreases (Figure 3. b).

$$\text{Value (reward, } \tau, k) = \text{reward} \times S(\tau, k) \quad (2)$$

The Hyperbolic delay discount plot for SS and LL can be created by adding the value curves for both SS and LL in one graph (Figure 4-a). In this figure, just for demonstration, the value of LL is assumed to be ten and the value of SS is assumed to be five. The preference of a person will switch from LL, which represents a good and logical choice or (تقوى), to SS, which represents a bad and illogical choice or (فجور), if the two value curves

intersect. Once the intersection occurs, the preference for SS will become higher for any reward times shorter than the point of intersection. However, for any time to the left of the point of intersection, the value of LL is still higher, and it remains the favorite choice.

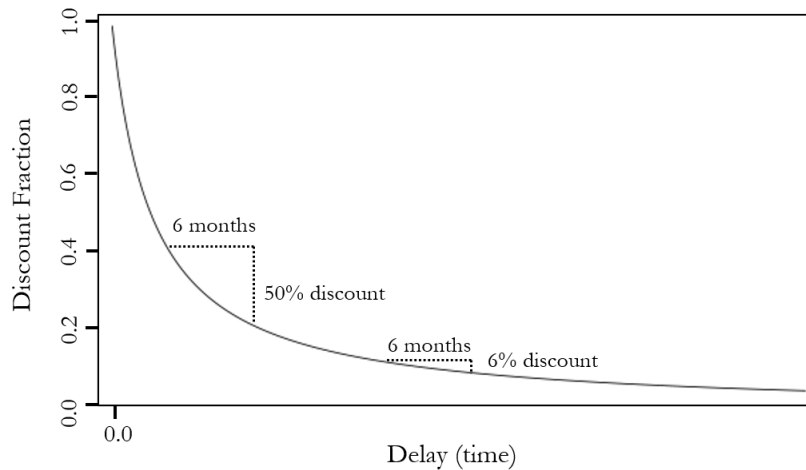


Figure 2 - A typical hyperbolic discount curve. It shows a higher discount rate in the near future and a lower discount rate in the more distant future.

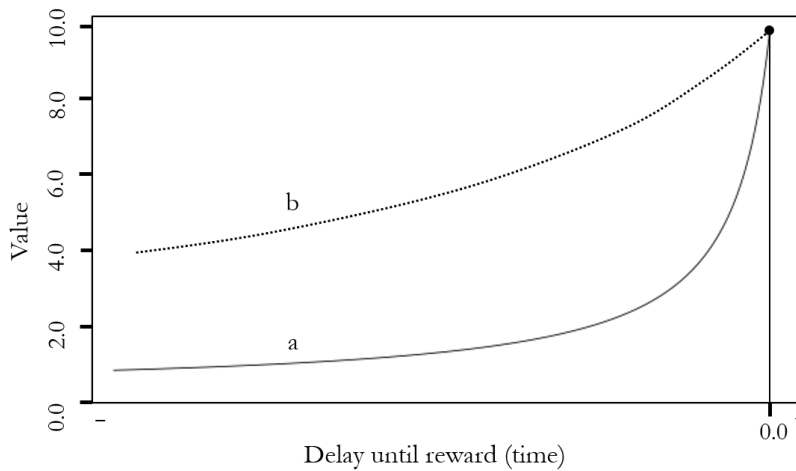


Figure 3 - The value of a reward is calculated by multiplying the discount fraction with the reward value. The delay axis is flipped to the other side to get the value versus the “delay until reward” time plot. (a) is a plot with a high  $k$  value, and (b) is the same curve plotted with a lower  $k$  value.

Figure 4 is a model representation of self-control. Four variables dictate if a person will prefer the good, or the bad in any situation: (1) the value of good, (2) the value of bad, (3) the value of  $k$ , and (4) time. Certainly, for most moral topics, this model is primarily qualitative, or at best a semi-quantitative model. Except in rare cases, it is difficult to assign an accurate value to a moral act and a value to its counterpart, an immoral act. Or it is difficult to qualitatively assign the time between LL and SS. And certainly, it is difficult to quantify a value for  $k$  in most cases. However, this model can be a powerful qualitative model to gauge self-control.

One may avert preference for bad behavior by avoiding the intersection between the reward curve for a bad with the reward curve for a good. This may be done by reducing the value of  $k$ , which is a temptation (وسوسة).

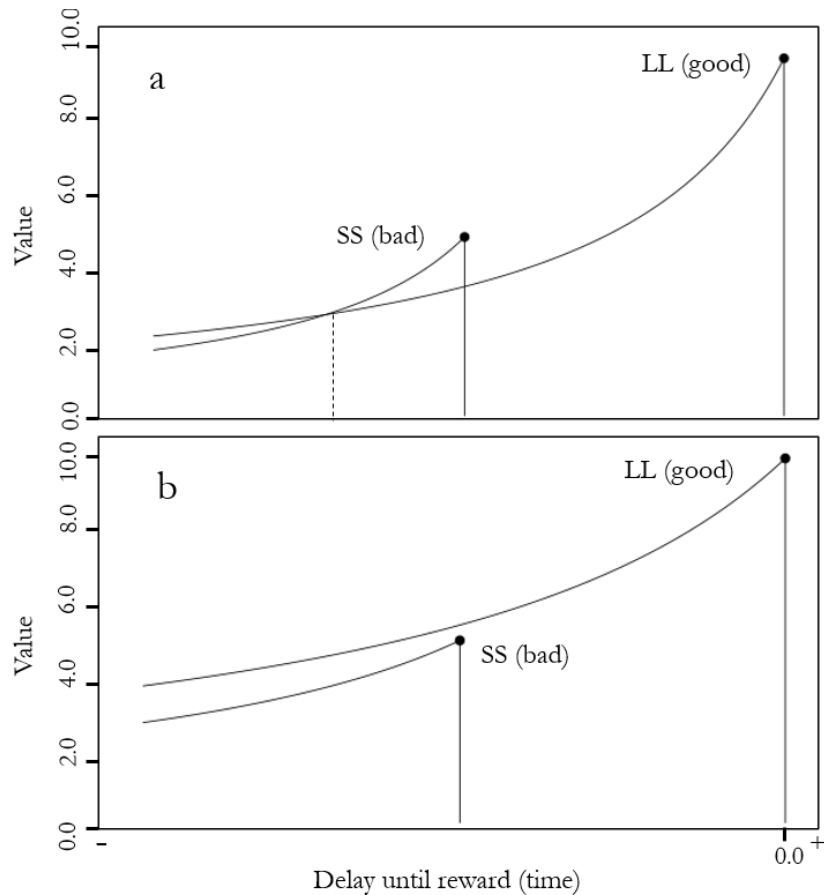


Figure 4 - A model representation for self-control. Hyperbolic delay discount reward curves for both SS and LL are included in the same reward value plot. The intersection of the two curves is the point where the value of SS goes over LL and consequently, preference for SS takes over. (a) An example with an intersection of the two curves at the dotted line. (b) The  $k$  value was reduced in (a) to eliminate any intersection formation.

Temptation, impulse, impatience, appetite, arousal, or craving may be used interchangeably in the present discussion. One such example is shown in Figure 4-b, where the value of  $k$  was reduced to avoid an intersection between the two curves. The concept of self-control suggests that a person should avoid developing temptations to begin with.<sup>10</sup> A person who has never smoked cigarettes does not develop much craving for a cigarette if offered. That is self-control. Willpower is for a smoker (or a former smoker) to control his craving for smoking under similar conditions. In either case, if successfully implemented, the outcome is that the reward curve for smoking never crosses the reward curve for the non-smoking curve and neither person will accept the offered cigarette.

Besides  $k$ , to avert the intersection of the two curves one may increase the value of the LL reward or reduce the value of the SS reward to avoid the two curves crossing. For example, an exhausted student may be tempted to skip an exam if the exam constitutes a very small portion of the overall class grade (small LL). However, the same exhausted student (same  $k$  level) will not skip the exam if the same exam constitutes a substantial portion of the overall grade for the class (LL is large).

In case the intersection between the two curves cannot be avoided, one can still delay the time to the left of the intersection to increase the desire to do good over bad. For example, a hungry person may tend to immediately

take a donut from the counter instead of waiting for dinner in 30 minutes. However, if he decides to wait 15 minutes and then eat the donut, the delay time may be sufficient to alter his decision.<sup>9</sup>

### The Quran and Self-control

The Quran was revealed to mankind to teach him that the value of تقوى, which encompasses all good (LL), is priceless,<sup>15</sup> and the value of فجور, which encompasses all bad (SS) is vain or insignificant.<sup>16</sup> Like many Quranic concepts, تقوى and فجور form two spectrums. Spectrum of righteousness and spectrum of wickedness, respectively. In-depth understanding of the purpose of life and moral principles in the Quran may be sufficient to create a prominent level of تقوى and a solid self-control, as the perceived value of any LL will become high, and the perceived value of any SS will be minimal. The Quran says, “And the worldly life is not but amusement and diversion; but the home of the hereafter is best for those who see the presence of Allah, so will you not reason?”<sup>17</sup> The Quran teaches that doing good is not only for the hereafter but this life as well, “Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer, we will surely cause him to live a quality life.”<sup>18</sup> In-depth understanding comes from reflecting on the words of the Quran and the life of messengers of Allah. But true insight (بصيرة) transpires only through practice after knowledge. The Quran states that every human will frequently be put into trials in life with hardship and abundance to help him develop insight into the truth. “And we test them with good and bad that perhaps they would return to him.”<sup>19</sup> In summary, the teaching of the Quran, if correctly understood, provides high LL value and low SS value for any action in life.

A decision, either for an honorable award (LL) or a false one (SS), is normally formed by an aggregate of sub-rewards. For example, a decision for honesty (LL) may be an aggregate of, (i) respect for the parties involved (LL<sub>1</sub>), (ii) fear of repercussions (LL<sub>2</sub>), (iii) being a moral person (LL<sub>3</sub>), (iv) being watched (LL<sub>4</sub>), and perhaps many other factors. So,  $LL = LL_1 + LL_2 + LL_3 + LL_4 + \dots + LL_n$ . The value of LL may be high enough to prevent any intersection between the LL reward and SS reward curves in Figure 4. However, if some sub-rewards get eliminated, then the overall size of LL may not prevent an intersection, resulting in favoring dishonesty.

One solution the Quran offers is to stay away from the boundaries of sub-rewards. The Quran says, “O Adam, you and your wife reside in Paradise and eat from wherever you will, but do not approach this tree, otherwise you both will be of the unjust and wrong-doers.”<sup>20</sup> In other verses the Quran says, “And do not approach the property of an orphan, except in the way that is best,”<sup>21</sup> or “do not approach الفحشاء (egregious sins, adultery, etc.)”<sup>22</sup> The tree in the above verse is the symbol of wrongdoing and its low-hanging fruits are sub-rewards that can easily be threatened and lost. The Quran tells mankind to stay clear of committing small sins, as these small sins may activate the conditions for committing larger sins by altering the overall sizes of involved LL and SS values.

The Quran gives a clear description of what may happen if a person does not stay clear of the boundaries of the sub-rewards (small sins). The Quran calls it following the footsteps of Satan or the step-by-step policy of Satan. The Quran says, “O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”<sup>23</sup> It then says, “He only orders you to do السوء (sin) and الفحشاء (a great sin) and to say about Allah what you do not know.”<sup>24</sup> These verses suggest once the sub-rewards are encroached and lost, mankind will sin. Loss of sub-rewards will cause the reduction of the overall size of LL rewards, which can cause preference for committing الفحشاء or great sins. Great sins by themselves are sub-rewards for the highest sin, which is to alter the words of Allah and misguide mankind.

Knowledge without regular reminders can be forgotten and may cause unintentional elimination of sub-rewards. Hence another solution the Quran offers is to stay attentive, “And remember your Lord within your soul, with humility and fear, and without speaking loudly in the mornings and at nights and be not of the inattentive (غَافِلُونَ).”<sup>25</sup> Or, “O you who believe, let not your properties or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whosoever does that, then they are the losers.”<sup>26</sup> Attentiveness requires

commitment for continuing education through self-learning and associating with individuals who have similar commitments to be attentive of the straight path.

A sin reduces the size of LL, and at the same time may increase the size of the corresponding SS. As an example, a violation of honesty will reduce the overall size of the LL reward for honesty. At the same time, the lost portion of LL can create a false sense of reward for dishonesty and cause an increase in the overall size of SS reward for dishonesty. This process makes dishonesty easier, as the ratio of LL to SS has changed in favor of SS. Studies show that those who engaged in having sexual relations with someone other than their spouse in the first relationship were three times more likely to engage in the same act in their next relationship compared to those who did not engage in such violation in the first relationship.<sup>27</sup> Other research examples show about 90% of problem gamblers relapse.<sup>28</sup> Recidivism rate of theft is over 70%.<sup>29</sup>

The k factor (impatience, impulse, appetite, arousal, temptation, craving) arises from perceived pleasures of life. Just thinking about them is pleasurable and develops desire. A cigarette smoker can feel pleasure just thinking about smoking and may be tempted to light one. Only 3-5% of self-quitters of cigarettes achieve prolonged abstinence for 6-12 months after a given quit attempt.<sup>30</sup> Temptation is a powerful factor in increasing the desire to do bad over good (Figure 4). The Quran tells man that temptation (وسوسة) is from evil.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, the Quran states that inspiration (الهام) is from Allah.<sup>32</sup> Inspiration is also a powerful factor in increasing the desire to do good over bad. A benefactor thinking about some help he gave to a noble cause can create a sense of pleasure and encourage him to help again.

Research during the past decade indicates that the best way to reach one's goals of doing what is right is not to fight temptations but to avoid them before they arrive.<sup>33</sup> Research further suggests that fighting temptation is fragile, the mind eventually gets exhausted and caves in at some point.<sup>33</sup> The best self-regulators engage in willpower remarkably seldom and may not possess strong willpower.<sup>33</sup> The Quran acknowledges that temptations should be avoided before they arrive. It says, "And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, hearing, sight, and the heart will be questioned."<sup>34</sup> Temptation, or inspiration does not enter the mind without context, that is, space must be prepared. The Quran advises avoiding situations or activities that may create temptations. The Quran discourages having sinful thoughts or dreams. A perceived sense of pleasure from an immoral fantasy will weaken the protective armor of the soul by increasing the temptation factor (k). The Quran then encourages mankind to use the same blessed capabilities of listening, viewing, and thought to prepare space for receiving inspiration, "And it is he who created for you, hearing, sight, and hearts. Little do you give thanks."<sup>35</sup>

The last chapter of the Quran is dedicated to warning mankind about Temptation. "Say, I seek refuge in the guider (رب) of mankind. The possessor (ملك) of mankind. The God (الله) of mankind. From the sneaking evil of temptation. Who puts temptation into the heart of man. From among the unseen and the man."<sup>36</sup> These verses express three sources that cultivate temptation.<sup>37</sup> The first source is wrong education. Transfer of information in life if not correctly monitored can plant precursors for temptation. What a person reads, watches, or associates with passion, can reframe his state of mind and provide perceived false pleasures. The Quran tells mankind to seek refuge in the guidance of Allah, which is the lifestyle taught in the Quran. The second source is evil powers. Powers that can shape the social, cultural, economic, and educational fabric of societies and become the supplier of misinformation, are the precursors for temptations. The Quran instructs creating environments possessed by the standards prescribed in the Quran. The third source of temptation is the soul itself. A soul is inspired to be able to acquire both good and bad. Even in the most ideal living environment, a soul can acquire bad if it desires. The Quran counsels mankind to seek the domain of spirituality (تقوى) that is healthy for the human soul. Seeking فجور will encourage temptations. An effective self-controller makes plans that structure his social and private life to avoid temptation from arising. He recruits proactive strategies to achieve his goals, occurring before a temptation is encountered.<sup>38</sup> For example, people with high self-control

conscientiousness have better romantic relationships, in part, because they avoid situations and actions that can lead to infidelity.<sup>39</sup> It is worth noting that seeking refuge prescribed by the Quran is not a request for action alone, but also an invite to accept help from God Almighty. Allah says in the Quran, “I grant the supplication of the supplicant when he truly calls upon me.”<sup>40-41</sup>

An effective self-controller is protected by the armor of high LL and low SS and is less likely to succumb to an unexpected temptation. The Quran says, “And if a temptation from Satan comes to you, then seek refuge in Allah. Indeed, He is Hearing and Knowing.”<sup>42</sup> Seeking refuge to Allah from temptations requires knowledge. Without an in-depth knowledge of the straight path, temptation may remain hidden and undetected.<sup>37</sup> The Quran then says “Indeed, those who have *تقوى* when an impulse touches them from Satan, they remember [Him] and at once they have insight.”<sup>43</sup> The Quran explains that the knowledge needed to both identify and defend off unexpected temptation is *تقوى*. The state of *تقوى* is a state of readiness with the knowledge of the straight path, and the determination to implement it. The Quran in the story of the prophet Yusuf says, “And she, in whose house he was, sought to seduce him. She closed the doors and said, come, you. He said, [I seek] the refuge of Allah. Indeed, he is my guide, who has made good my residence. Indeed, wrongdoers will not succeed. And she certainly determined [to seduce] him, and he would have inclined to her had he not seen the proof of his Lord.”<sup>44</sup> The story of Yusuf is a clear example that the knowledge of God can immediately overtake any suggested SS reward. Remembering Allah immediately resets high LL and curtails any potential temptation. Ainslie in his work argues that willpower should be recognized as either or both of two distinct functions, which can be called resolve and suppression.<sup>9</sup> In the present discussion suppression may be interpreted as the immediate remembrance of Allah and his boundaries, as in the story of prophet Yusuf. Resolve is the ongoing valuation of LL reward offered by obeying the Almighty Allah, versus succumbing to the vain SS reward offered by temptation.

Ainslie’s research on the importance of the time factor for choosing LL over SS assumes constant  $k$ . Dr. Ainslie has shown that even if impatience remains the same when the rewards get delayed, preference for LL may overtake SS due to the inborn psychological hyperbolic delay discounting tendencies. However, in the present discussion, there is no need to limit the discussion to constant  $k$ . A delay in reward may in fact cause the  $k$  factor to become smaller. For example, the craving to buy a piece of chocolate may lessen once a person has passed the chocolate store and the visual support of the craving has disappeared. In any case, both delays in SS reward, or reducing the reward time distance between SS and LL can help LL overtake SS by reducing the tendencies for the two curves to overlap (Figure 4). The message the Quran repeatedly conveys to man is to avoid doing wrong and that the promised reward of Allah is near, not only in the hereafter but in this world as well.<sup>41, 45</sup> The Quran says, “And do not spread corruption in the land after it has been set in order and call upon Him in fear and hope. Indeed, the mercy of God is close to the doers of good.”<sup>45</sup> The message is clear, the Quran discourages accepting SS awards, which can delay committing wrong for SS reward, and conveys the fact that LL rewards are very near.

## Conclusion

The schematic representation of self-control depicted in Figure 4 is helpful to see the grand picture of steps needed for successful self-control. LL reward must be maximized, SS reward must be minimized, temptation factor  $k$  must be made as small as possible, SS reward must be delayed, and the delay time between LL reward and SS reward must be reduced (Figure 5). Under such desirable conditions SS reward curve will not intercept the LL reward curve.

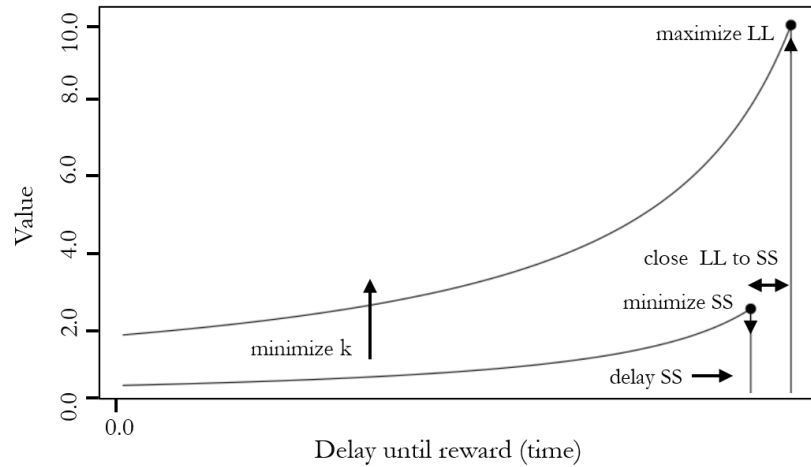


Figure 5 – A schematic representation of successful self-control. Arrows show the preferred trends for more successful self-control.

The teaching of the Quran accounts for the desirable conditions in Figure 5. Examples were presented for each area outlined in Figure 5. Readers are encouraged to review more examples from the Quran. The Quran highly promotes self-control over willpower. But it does suggest preparedness with تقوى as a prerequisite for successful willpower in fighting off temptations. A soul who inquires an elevated level of تقوى will have a high LL value and can curtail k value as a secondary effect to defend off wickedness. It has a strong drive to pursue righteousness as well.



## References

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عَلِيُّ بْنُ إِبرَاهِيمَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنِ النَّوْفَلِيِّ عَنِ السَّكُونِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ص بَعَثَ بِسَرِيَّةٍ فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِقَوْمٍ قَضَوْا  
الْجِهَادَ الْأَصْغَرَ وَبَقِيَ الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ فَبَلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ص وَمَا الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ قَالَ جِهَادُ النَّفْسِ.
- 2- Holy Quran 91:8 - And inspired it its wickedness and its righteousness.  
فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا
- 3- Holy Quran 91:9 - He has succeeded who purifies it.  
قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا
- 4- Holy Quran 91:10 - And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].  
وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا
- 5- Allamah Tabatabaei, Al-Mizan, Vol. 9 P 377, 1393 Lunar.
- 6- Holy Quran 39:53 - Say, O my worshipers who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is he who is the forgiving, the merciful.  
قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.
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- 14- George Ainslie, “Picoeconomics in Neural and Evolutionary Contexts,” *Social Neuroscience and Public Health*, pp 3-18, January 2013.

- 15- Holy Quran 49:13 - 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.  
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ
- 16- Holy Quran 3:185 - Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your [full] compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So, he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has attained [his desire]. And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion.  
كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّوْنَ أَجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَنْ زُحْزِحَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ
- 17- Holy Quran 6:32 - وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ وَلَدَارُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ
- 18- Holy Quran 16:97 - مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ
- 19- Holy Quran 21:35 - كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ
- 20- Holy Quran 2:35 - وَفَلْتَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ
- 21- Holy Quran 17:34 - وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا
- 22- Holy Quran 6:151 - إِفْلَاقٍ سَنَحْنُ نَزْرُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ وَلَا قُلُ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِمَّنْ تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ
- 23- Holy Quran 2:168 - يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوبَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ
- 24- Holy Quran 2:169 - إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ
- 25- Holy Quran 7:205 - وَادْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرَّعًا وَخَيْفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْغَافِلِينَ
- 26- Holy Quran 63:9 - يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنِ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ
- 27- Kayla Knopp, Shelby Scott, Lane Ritchie, Galena K. Rhoades, Howard J. Markman, Scott M. Stanley, “Once a Cheater, Always a Cheater? Serial Infidelity Across Subsequent Relationships”, *Sexual Behavior* 46(3), pp 2301-2311 (2017) DOI:[10.1007/s10508-017-1018-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-017-1018-1).
- 28- Your Gambling Relapse Prevention Plan Begins in Understanding Risk, Cambridge Behavioral health, <https://kindbridge.com/gambling/your-gambling-relapse-prevention-plan-begins-in-understanding>
- 29- Recidivism, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recidivism>.
- 30- John R Hughes, Josue Keely, Shelly Naud, “Shape of the relapse curve and long-term abstinence among untreated smokers”, *Addiction* 2004 Jan;99(1):29-38. doi: 10.1111/j.1360-0443.2004.00540.x.

- 31- Holy Quran 20:120 - Then Satan tempted him; he said, "O Adam, shall I direct you to the tree of eternity and possession that will not deteriorate?"  
فَوَسْوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ يَا آدَمُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى شَجَرَةِ الْخُلْدِ وَمُلْكٍ لَّا يَبْئَلُ
- 32- Holy Quran 47:5 - He [Allah] will inspire them and amend their condition.  
سَيَهْدِيهِمْ وَيُصْلِحُ بَالَهُمْ
- 33- Michael Inzlicht, and Malte Frieze, "Willpower is Overrated," Behavioral and Brain Sciences, Vol. 44, 2021, e42, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X20000795>.
- 34- Holy Quran 17:36 -  
وَلَا تُقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا
- 35- Holy Quran 23:78-  
وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ
- 36- Holy Quran 114:1-6 -  
قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ. مَلِكِ النَّاسِ. لَهِ النَّاسِ. مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ. الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ. مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ
- 37- Muhammad Ali Ansari, Bayan 2, Interpretation of Quran Surah An-Nas
- 38- Hennecke, M., Czikmantor, T., & Brandstätter, V, "Doing despite disliking: Self-regulatory strategies in everyday aversive activities," European Journal of Personality, 33(1), 104–128 (2019).
- 39- Hill, P. L., Nickel, L. B., & Roberts, B. W., "Are you in a healthy relationship? Linking conscientiousness to health via implementing and immunizing behaviors," Journal of Personality, 82(6), 485–492 (2014.)
- 40- Holy Quran 2:186-And when My worshipers ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me - indeed I am near. I grant the supplication of the supplicant when he truly calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided.  
وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أَجِيبْ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ
- 41- Mehrdad Yasrebi and Asad Azemi, "Grant of a Supplication in the Quran - A Systems Thinking Perspective" Islam Today Journal, Vol. 20231, No. 1.
- 42- Holy Quran 7:200 -  
وَإِنَّمَا يَنزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نِزْجٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ
- 43- Holy Quran 7:201-  
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ
- 44- Holy Quran 12:23-24 -  
وَرَأَوْنَاهُ أَلْفِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَن نَّفْسِهِ وَغَلَّقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْت لَكَ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ. وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنَّ رَأَى بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرَفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَاءَ إِنَّهُ مِن عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ.
- 45- Holy Quran 7:56 -  
وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ حَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ