

# Dhu al Hijjah 12, 1439 H - Fear and Hope

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All praise is due to Allah, we praise him, and we ask him for guidance and forgiveness. And we seek protection in Allah from the malice of our own souls, and the evil of our actions. Whom Allah guides, no one can lead him astray, and whom He makes astray, no one can lead him back to the right path. I bear witness that there is no other deity but Allah, by himself, no associate to him, and I bear witness that Muhammad is his slave and Messenger.

"O you who believed! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except as Muslims." [Quran 3:102]

"O you who believed! Fear Allah, and (always) say a word directed to the truth. [71] "That He may make your conduct whole and sound, and forgive you your sins: he that obeys Allah and His Messenger, has then attained the highest Achievement." [Quran 33:70 71]

فإن أصدق الحديث كتاب الله وخير الهدى هدى محمد (ﷺ) وشر الأمور محدثاتها وكل محدثة بدعة وكل

بدعة ضلالة وكل ضلالة في النار

Dear brothers and sisters, one of the most beautiful things about the concept of worship in Islam is to worship Allah (ﷻ) out of love for Him but with a

healthy balance of fear and hope. In today's Khutbah, let us try to understand what these two terms "fear" and "hope" mean when used in respect to our relationship with Allah (سبحانه و تعالیٰ). What is the best approach one should take with respect to fear of Allah and hope in Allah? How to balance fear with hope? Allah (سبحانه و تعالیٰ) says in Surat Al-A'raf:

وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا ۚ إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

"And invoke Him in fear and aspiration. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good." *Quran (7:56)*

In this ayah, the two states of fear and hope are joined together in order that the Muslim is both fearful and hopeful of Allah. And while describing the believers, Allah (سبحانه و تعالیٰ) says in Surat al-Isra':

وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ ۚ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْدُورًا ﴿٥٧﴾

"And they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever feared." *Quran (17:57)*

Referring to the believers who get up from their beds late in the night to perform their *Tahajjud* prayers, the verse 16 of Surat as-Sajda says,

تَتَجَافَىٰ جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

“They arise from [their] beds; they supplicate their Lord in fear and aspiration, and from what We have provided them, they spend.” *Quran (32:16)*

The Muslim person leads his life between fear and hope. Whoever recognizes the generosity and bounties of Allah hopes for Him and whoever fears His punishment, fears Him. In the Hadith;

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ "لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الْمُؤْمِنُ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْعُقُوبَةِ مَا طَمَعَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ أَحَدٌ وَلَوْ يَعْلَمُ الْكَافِرُ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ مَا قَنَطَ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ أَحَدٌ" رواه مسلم

The prophet (ﷺ) said: “If the believer knew what is with Allah of punishment, none would hope for Paradise, and if the disbeliever knew what is with Allah of mercy, none would despair of (attaining) Paradise.”

This Hadith proves that a believer should have equal amounts of fear and hope; more fear of Allah’s wrath during times of good health, and extra hope in His mercy during illness and before death.

فَعَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ : أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - دَخَلَ عَلَى شَابٍ وَهُوَ فِي الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ : "كَيْفَ تَجِدُكَ" . قَالَ : أَرْجُو اللَّهَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَأَخَافُ ذُنُوبِي . فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - : "لَا يَجْتَمِعَانِ فِي قَلْبِ عَبْدٍ فِي مِثْلِ هَذَا الْمَوْطِنِ إِلَّا أَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ مَا يَرْجُو وَآمَنَهُ مِمَّا يَخَافُ" حديث حسن

It was narrated from Anas that the Prophet (ﷺ) entered upon a young man who was dying and said: “How do you feel?” He said: “I have hope in Allah, O

Messenger of Allah, but I fear my sins.” The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“These two things (hope and fear) do not coexist in the heart of a person in a situation like this, but Allah will give him that which he hopes for and keep him safe from that which he fears.”

Therefore whenever we do a good action, we should hope that it has been accepted by Allah, but at the same time we should also have fear that maybe it isn't enough or that the good deed has not been worthy of acceptance.

Likewise when we sin, we should have hope that Allah will accept our repentance and forgive us, but we should also fear that we may be accountable for it. This balance should be reflected in our relationship with Allah (سبحانه و تعالیٰ).

There are three degrees of fear. The first degree is weakest degree. It has no real effect either in the inward or in the outward. This fear might as well not exist because it is of no benefit or use. The second degree is strong fear which wakes up the person from his heedlessness and carries him to become obedient and upright. It drives him from his neglectfulness and makes him go on the straight path. The third degree of fear is the severe overpowering fear that reaches to such a degree that the slave loses hope in Allah. This is not

permissible. It is not permissible to allow fear to reach such a degree. Allah (

سبحانه  
وتعالى) says in Surat az-Zumar,

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ

جَمِيعًا ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥٣﴾

“Say, O My servants 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." *Quran (39:53)*

It is commonly known that the best of affairs is the middle of them. The best form of fear is not the weak form which has no effect in one’s inwardness or one’s outward behavior, nor is it the one which is so strong that it makes one lose hope of Allah’s mercy, but it is the fear that transforms one’s life and makes one take up right action and give up wrong action.

Just as fear has three degrees, hope also has three degrees. The first degree is the hope for the mercy of Allah along with right actions and obedience. This is the praiseworthy type of hope. The second degree of hope is the hope which accompanies wrong actions and disobedience. This is the blameworthy type of hope. The third degree of hope is very strong which reaches to a

degree of considering oneself safe. This is absolutely wrong. Allah (سبحانه و تعالی) says in Surat al-A'raf,

أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ ۗ فَلَا يُأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

“Then did they feel secure from the plan of Allah? But no one feels secure from the plan of Allah except the losing people.” *Quran (7:99)*

Dear brothers and sisters, fear of Allah makes us think twice before we commit a sin. It is the quality of mindfulness and awareness of Allah that resides inside the heart of a believer. Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) pointed to his chest three times and he said:

"التَّقْوَى هَاهُنَا" رواه مسلم

“Godfearing piety is here.”

Indeed, the description of punishment in the Hereafter found in the Quran and Sunnah should increase our resolve to be righteous. Fear of Allah is the source of all knowledge as it motivates us to seek the truth and act in accordance with it. Allah said in Surat Fatir:

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

“Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge.

Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Forgiving.” *Quran (35:28)*

Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (RAA) would say during his sermons:

حَيْرُ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَى وَرَأْسُ الْحِكْمَةِ مَخَافَةُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

“The best provision is mindfulness of Allah, and the foundation of wisdom is the fear of Allah the Exalted.”

However, we need to balance our fear of Allah with our hope in His reward and His Paradise. Allah <sup>(سبحانه و تعالاه)</sup> said in Surat Al-Ankabut:

وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَارْجُوا الْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ

مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

And to Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu'ayb, and he said, "O my people, worship Allah and expect the Last Day and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption." *Quran (29:35)*

Hope in Allah motivates us to perform good deeds and to abandon our base materialistic desires for the sake of righteousness. The description of Paradise in the Quran and Sunnah should increase our resolve to perform good deeds to be rewarded in the Hereafter. In fact, it is a major sin to despair of the mercy of Allah. Allah <sup>(سبحانه و تعالاه)</sup> says in Surat Al Hijr:

وَمَنْ يَفْقَطْ مِنْ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّهِ إِلَّا الضَّالُّونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

“And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord except for those astray?” *Quran*

(15:56)

Dear brothers and sisters, it is thus clear how imbalances in any of the three qualities of worship: Love, fear, and hope can lead to major deviation and drifting from the True Guidance. And this will be explained in the second Khutbah.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

Ask Allah <sup>سبحانه</sup> (وتعالى) for forgiveness. Truly, He is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ، وَلَا عُذْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ، وَنَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَلِيُّ الصَّالِحِينَ، وَنَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا وَنَبِيَّنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ إِمَامُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ، وَأَفْضَلُ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ أَجْمَعِينَ، صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ وَسَلَامُهُ عَلَيْهِ، وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَالتَّابِعِينَ لَهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ،

Dear brothers and sisters, amongst the worshipers of Allah <sup>سبحانه</sup> (وتعالى), there are three groups who show imbalances in the three qualities of worship. The first group are those who worship Allah with hope only. The people of this group believe that sins do not affect faith i.e. no matter what sins a person commits, his *iman* (faith) is complete and perfect. They worship Allah only with hope

because they believe that if one believed and testified to Islam, they would enter paradise regardless of their actions.

Unfortunately, we find a similar attitude amongst many Muslims today. When they are advised to turn to Allah and abandon sinful actions, they just point to their hearts and say, "Allah knows what is in my heart", or "Allah forgives", or something else like that.

The second group includes those who worship Allah in fear only. They believe that anyone who commits major sins is a disbeliever and would therefore dwell in Hellfire forever. This of course is gross extremism and straying from the correct path.

We should never say of anyone that he or she is a 'lost cause' or 'doomed'. However, we fear for those who commit major sins because they have been threatened with punishment in the Qur'an and the Hadith. However it is up to Allah whether He chooses to punish them or whether He will forgive them.

The last group that shows imbalances in the three qualities of Allah's worship includes those who worship Allah in love only. Those are the heretics who reduce the religion to just 'love' and so all their talk and their mystical practices are centered on developing more 'love'.

Therefore, we should have a healthy balance of love, fear, and hope in our worship of Allah. The idea of balance in worship is expressed eloquently in *Ibn Al-Qayyim's* symbol of the bird on its journey to Allah. *Ibn Al-Qayyim* said:

الْقَلْبُ فِي سَيْرِهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الطَّائِرِ .. فَالْمَحَبَّةُ رَأْسُهُ .. وَالْخَوْفُ وَالرَّجَاءُ جَنَاحَاهُ .. فَمَتَى سَلِمَ  
الرَّأْسُ وَالْجَنَاحَانِ .. فَالطَّائِرُ جَيِّدُ الطَّيْرَانِ .. وَمَتَى قُطِعَ الرَّأْسُ مَاتَ الطَّائِرُ .. وَمَتَى فُتِدَ الْجَنَاحَانِ فَهُوَ عُرْضَةٌ  
لِكُلِّ صَائِدٍ وَكَاسِرٍ.

“The heart on its journey towards Allah the Exalted is like that of a bird. Love is its head, and fear and hope are its two wings. When the head is healthy, then the two wings will fly well. When the head is cut off, the bird will die. When either of two wings is damaged, the bird becomes vulnerable to every hunter and predator.”

Let us remember that our hearts are just like a bird on a journey to Allah in the Hereafter. Our love of Allah is the basis of our worship, and our fear and hope are like two wings that push us along the straight path toward our final destination.

I ask Allah (سبحانه و تعالٰى) to make us among the people of praiseworthy fear of Him and praiseworthy hope of Him.

هَذَا وَصَلُّوا وَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى مَنْ أَمَرَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالسَّلَامِ عَلَيْهِ، فَقَالَ عَزَّ مِنْ قَائِلٍ: (إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ  
عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا) اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى عَبْدِكَ وَنَبِيِّكَ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ عَلَى اله,  
وَصَحْبِهِ، وَالتَّابِعِينَ لَهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ .. اللَّهُمَّ أَعِزَّ الْإِسْلَامَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ .. اللَّهُمَّ أَصْلِحْ لَنَا دِينَنَا الَّذِي هُوَ  
عِصْمَةُ أَمْرِنَا .. وَأَصْلِحْ لَنَا دُنْيَانَا الَّتِي فِيهَا مَعَاشُنَا .. وَأَصْلِحْ لَنَا آخِرَتَنَا الَّتِي إِلَيْهَا مَعَادُنَا .. وَاجْعَلِ الْحَيَاةَ زِيَادَةً  
لَنَا فِي كُلِّ خَيْرٍ .. وَالْمَوْتَ رَاحَةً لَنَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَرٍّ .. سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ .. وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ  
\* وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ