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The Fear of Allah ﷻ **By Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmad (db)**

Two Wings of a Bird

Allah ﷻ is Most Merciful and Forgiving, and He is glad whenever one of His servants repents sincerely so that He can wash away his sins. Keeping Allah's ﷻ Mercy foremost in mind helps man to be hopeful, and this in turn increases the desire to act righteously. However, what is equally important to keep within context is fear. Hope and fear are like the wings of a bird, and a believer has to keep them balanced.

The Messenger ﷺ of Allah brought not only good tidings, but also stories and events to instill fear, for faith lies between hope and fear. A person must be hopeful when he reflects on the Mercy of Allah ﷻ, and likewise be fearful of Allah's ﷻ Wrath when he reflects on his own sins. Man is living in rebellion to the wishes of Allah ﷻ and should mend his ways as soon as possible.

Advice of the Elders

The *mashaikh* (spiritual masters and teachers) have written as to the time when a believer should be overcome by each of these conditions of fear and hope. They have written that a person should be fearful in his youth, because this is the time of adolescence and the most vulnerable time to fall into wrong. Thus a person should fear Allah ﷻ so to be saved from sin.

On the contrary, a person should turn hopeful of Allah's ﷻ Mercy and Forgiveness when elderly because death is looming near. The person should turn to repentance and hence be desirous of Allah's ﷻ forgiveness.

A person should be fearful of Allah ﷻ in times of happiness and celebration. The *shariah* (Islamic Sacred Law) has set boundaries for us and there is sometimes danger of stepping outside these bounds when one is in too much of a celebratory mood. Emotions can run high, and unknowingly we might act against the *shariah*. Likewise a person should be hopeful of Allah's ﷻ Mercy whenever sad or dejected. This is so he does not lose hope, which is in itself a sin. A believer should always stay within these two states of fear and hope.

Counter productivity

Fear prevents a person from sin, and today hearts are rusting because of the intensity of sins that we have committed. This is not to say that people are not doing good deeds, because they are. However, good deeds and sins are taking place side by side, which is counterproductive. A good deed is offering prayer in the masjid. However, when walking

home our eyes are wandering and looking at forbidden things, and therefore we waste the good effects that being in the *masjid* had on our hearts.

Likewise, reading the Holy Quran is a good deed but then we also lie throughout the day. Many women pray *Tahajjud* (the night vigil) but also go out in public with their heads uncovered. Why are people engaged in both good and bad at the same time? This is because we don't fear Allah ﷻ as we should.

People will only refrain from committing all wrong when they *understand* the greatness and glory of Allah ﷻ. Such people do exist in this world, and they know that if they commit any wrong, they will have to stand and answer very shortly. Hadrat Ibn Qayyim ؒ writes, "Do not ponder on whether the sin is big or small. Rather reflect upon the greatness of Whom you are disobeying."

It is very ironic that parents become prepared to beat and even throw their child out of the house if the child does not obey after repeated requests. Allah ﷻ is so Merciful and so Gracious that He has not once threatened to expel us from His fold despite our repeated and stubborn disobedience. Allah ﷻ can also most certainly tell us to leave Him and search for another provider and sustainer. However, Allah ﷻ is Merciful and Forgiving and therefore keeps giving us chances to reform.

Degrees of Fear

The *ulama* (scholars) fear Allah ﷻ because they *comprehend* the greatness of Allah ﷻ. They remain overcome with fear, and desire only to be admitted among those who have the good fortune of having been accepted by Allah ﷻ. These people pray everyday to be put on the Straight Path, the Path of those whom Allah ﷻ has favored. Who are these people whom Allah ﷻ has favored? The Holy Quran tells us that they are the Prophets, the Truthful, the *Shuhudah* (Witnesses), and the Righteous.

Fear of Allah ﷻ is the key that stops people from committing sin and every other disapproved action. The fear of the common people is very different from the fear of the *ulama*. The common people fear Allah ﷻ because they will be punished if they commit sin, just like a child obeys when he fears that he will be beaten.

A wife's fear is different altogether, because she does not fear a beating. However, what she fears is that the husband will no longer regard her with the same love that he used to. Both the child and the wife fear the man, but there is vast difference in their respective degrees of fear. The fear of the common population is comparable to that of the child, while the fear of the scholars and the learned is comparable to the fear of the wife. They remain in fear of provoking Allah's ﷻ dislike and distemper by which He may stop regarding them with the same level of love as before.

Fear of Allah ﷻ is a blessing from the many blessings of Allah ﷻ and we should request it from Allah ﷻ and crave it. We ask other things from Allah ﷻ, and we should also ask to be made fearful of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ calls this fear a blessing because it prevents people from sin.

A condemned prisoner does not sit in his cell planning more crime. Crime no longer matters to him since he knows that he is about to die; this causes his heart to be heavy. Likewise, a believer has the Day of Judgment and the Fires of Hell constantly before him and this keeps him from committing sin and therefore protects him.

A Practical Lesson

A young man came to a *shaykh* and said, “I am a young man with strong desires. I cannot help looking at people when I am in the bazaar. What do I do?” The *shaykh* handed him a cup of milk that was full to the brim, and told him to deliver it to an address that would take the young man directly through the bazaar. He then instructed the young man that the milk should not spill, and the man said that it would not. The *shaykh* then summoned one of his students and told him to accompany the man through the bazaar to the destination, and to severely beat him if any milk were to spill.

This man successfully took the milk to the destination and returned to give the good news to the *shaykh*. The *shaykh* asked, “Tell me, how many sights and faces did you see in the bazaar?” The man replied incredulously, “Hadrat, I didn’t even realize what was going on around me. I was only fearful of the beating and disgrace that I would have to endure in public if a drop of milk were to spill.” The *shaykh* smiled and said, “It is the same with a believer. The believer fears that Allah ﷻ may disgrace him in front of the entire creation on the Day of Judgment if his faith were to spill over from his heart.” Such people save themselves from sin because they constantly remain focused on the Day of Judgment.

Huzn is a word that refers to grief that dwells within, and *Khauf* is fear from an outer source. A person eats less, or stops eating altogether if he has *huzn* in his heart. Preoccupied people rarely feel like eating; food is no longer appealing if a husband or a young child dies. A person who has lost a loved one loses all desire to eat. Just as such a person burdened with *huzn* loses appetite, a person with fear of Allah ﷻ in his heart loses all interest in committing sin. Such a person does not even think of sin.

Hadrat Qasim Nanotvi ﷺ said when laying the foundation for Darul Uloom Deoband, “Today such a person will lay the foundation of this Darul Uloom who has not even *thought* of a major sin, let alone commit one.”

There was a small and elderly person called Munne Shah, who made his living as a gardener. He would arrange an annual dinner for the staff of the Darul Uloom from his monthly savings over the span of a year. The staff would eagerly await his annual gatherings because they would feel a marked improvement in their *salat* for forty days after the gathering. There is certainly a marked distinction between us today and these magnificent people.

Our *mashaikh* have written that advice or guidance cannot affect someone devoid of the fear of Allah ﷻ. Advice washes off such a person, and nothing affects him because his heart refuses to accept.

Chilling Words

A man came to Hadrat Hasan Basri ؓ and said, “Hadrat, I do not know what is the matter with us. It seems that our hearts are asleep.” Hadrat Hasan Basri ؓ asked what was the matter. The man replied, “Our hearts are not affected when you recite the Holy Quran and Hadith to us.” Hadrat Hasan Basri ؓ said to him, “If reading of the Holy Quran and Hadith do not affect your hearts, do not say that your hearts are asleep. Instead say that your hearts are dead. Even a sleeping person awakes when shaken awake. If someone sleeping does not awaken when shaken, he is not asleep but dead.” When advice and guidance do not affect the heart, it is an indication that the heart has died.

Hadrat Ali ؓ said that whoever wants Paradise should persevere against lust, and whoever wants to be saved from Hell should persevere against sin. A believer has two kinds of fears. One such fear is that he might be robbed of the wealth of faith at the time of death. There are so many examples of people who have Muslim names but their names are erased from the list of believer’s at the time of their death. It is written in Hadith that *Shaytan* (devil) comes to the dying at the time of their death in the guise of dead relatives: a father, mother, or uncle. He says to the dying person, “Listen, I am your father (or such other relative); I have seen the next stages. There is no God, so what have you been doing all your life but wasting time?” This way *Shaytan* tries to take people away from Islam and towards *kufir*. *Shaytan* plays on the emotions of the dying and deludes them so the particular person trusts who he thinks is a relative and hence dies as an unbeliever.

Moreover, those who have lived their entire lives according to the Holy Quran and sunnah are protected against this delusion of *Shaytan*. At the time of their death, the Angel of Death chases *Shaytan* from them and tells them to recite the *Kalimah* (Testament of Faith) because the time of death is near. He thus takes their life.

Heroic Examples of our Elders

Hadrat Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal ؓ was a rock of faith and courage. He endured so much hardship and sacrificed so much for Islam that it is said that an elephant could not have taken the burdens. At the time of his death all his students were gathered around his bedside and reciting the *Kalimah* to prompt their mentor to recite it as well. However, Hadrat Ahmed bin Hanbal ؓ would only recite “*La*” at certain intervals. The students were all surprised and when their teacher seemed to recover a little they asked him what was happening. Hadrat Ahmed bin Hanbal ؓ said, “*Shaytan* was in front of me saying, ‘Ahmed bin Hanbal, you have escaped with your faith intact,’ and I was saying, ‘*La*, I am not safe from you until my life passes from this world.’”

Imam Muhammad ؓ was a renowned student of Imam Abu Hanifa ؓ. He writes that no creature in this world is ever safe from *Shaytan*. No one knows what may happen until death. *Shaytan* is someone who pursued and tested even the Prophets, and hence cannot be taken lightly. He attacks continuously and relentlessly, but Allah ﷻ protects His chosen and beloved. The Messenger ﷺ of Allah said that there is a *Shaytan* with everyone, and the *Sahabah* (Companions) asked, “Even with you O Prophet (ﷺ)?” The Messenger ﷺ of Allah replied, “Yes, even with me, but my *Shaytan* has become Muslim.”

Shaytan is with us everyday and working very hard to lead us astray. He makes special and intense effort at the time of death. Man is most vulnerable at this time because his life is slowly ebbing away. Hence this time of humility is an ideal and opportune time for *Shaytan* to launch an offensive. *Shaytan* comes and puts doubts in our hearts just when the breath is getting caught in the chest. Hadith provides many examples of pious people who have been very close to Paradise but were thrown in Hell because *Shaytan* was successful in putting doubt in their minds. Thus the believers try to do good deeds and stay afraid of losing their faith at the time of death.

Such people become careless and risk losing their faith because they never placed any real value on their faith to begin with. We need to regard our faith with the value and respect that it deserves. Our *mashaikh* have written that three kinds of people met with bad ends: an innovator, someone who disrespects and mocks the *Auliya*, and a person who knowingly and fearlessly commits sins.

People would constantly be wary of someone in their midst who were to have a dagger hidden in his sleeve, because an attack could be imminent. The *nafs* (lower self) and *Shaytan* are exactly this hidden dagger which can strike at any moment and so we need to stay wary all the time.

This fear of Allah ﷻ was visible in the lives of all our great elders. Hadrat Hasan Basri ؓ was a great *shaykh* and scholar. However, he would sit with such respect and fear that it would seem that he was a prisoner of war. When walking he would resemble someone who has just come from the graveyard having buried his father. When talking it would seem to be the talk of a man condemned to death.

There were during his time many other *dars* (religious discourses) going on in Basra. However, when Hadrat Ali ؓ visited Basra, he had all *dars* discontinued and led Hadrat Hasan Basri ؓ to the pulpit to be the only *dars* giver. What is this except the unquestionable stamp of approval by Hadrat Ali ؓ? Such a person as Hadrat Hasan Basri ؓ would cry so much that the collected water from his tears would flow upon hitting the ground. These kinds of people understood the greatness of Allah ﷻ.

Fear of Allah ﷻ in the Righteous Predecessors

A person from Bani Israel worshipped for five hundred years, but Allah ﷻ voided all of it in one moment of anger because He does not need anything. Hence these people do good deeds but remain scared of Allah's ﷻ self sufficiency at the same time, meaning that He can void anything at anytime simply because He has no particular *need* for our worship. They worship but at the same time realize that their worship is not worthy of Allah's ﷻ greatness: it is only His Mercy if He accepts it or not but our worship in itself is not worthy of His Greatness. Hadrat Abu Hanifa ؓ performed Hajj after forty years of worshipping and obeying Allah ﷻ, and prayed thus: "Ya Allah ﷻ, we have not worshipped You as You deserve to be worshipped, and we have not comprehended Your Greatness the way we should have."

Hadrat Umar ؓ was a courageous Companion about whom The Messenger ﷺ of Allah said, "If there was to be another prophet after me, it would be Umar." The Messenger ﷺ of

Allah also said regarding Hadrat Umar ؓ that his good deeds were comparable to the stars. It is further written in Hadith regarding this great Companion that Shaytan used to leave the path on which Hadrat Umar ؓ walked. Such an honorable and esteemed person used to cry so much in fear of Allah ﷻ that his face was marked by the trails of tears just as a stream's path is carved on a mountainside. These people feared Allah ﷻ because they *knew* Allah ﷻ.

Hadrat Rabia Basri ؓ would cry when reflecting upon Allah's ﷻ favors and greatness. Once she started crying loudly when someone brought her cooked meat for dinner. The person was surprised and asked what the matter was. Hadrat Rabia Basri ؓ replied, "This animal is lucky that it was slaughtered before it was cooked. Man does not realize that if he indulges in sin he will be cooked *alive* on the Fire. So I was thinking that this animal is better than me." This was the degree of fear in their hearts: they used to remember Hell even whilst eating cooked meat. They were ever lost in thoughts of Hell and punishments; hence they did not even imagine sin.

Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ is that fortunate Companion whom Allah ﷻ chose to be the first among the adult males to accept Islam. He was the Prophet's ﷺ companion not only in the Cave of Thaur but also in the Tomb in the Prophet's Mosque. When the sun rises, the first rays fall on the tallest structure: when the sun of Prophethood rose, its rays fell on the person who was the foremost in character after the Messenger ﷺ of Allah.

Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ had received the glad tidings of Paradise from the Prophet ﷺ himself, and Allah ﷻ would send *salam* (greetings) to him through Hadrat Jibril ؑ. Such an honored Companion would sit in solitude and cry, "I wish my mother had never borne me....I wish I were a bird....I wish I were the hair on a believer's body....I wish I were a blade of grass that would be cut down by the hoof of an ox."

Someone asked Hadrat Talha ؓ his wish. Hadrat Talha ؓ answered, "I have only one wish, that I had never been born." These people were so scared of standing in front of Allah ﷻ and having to render an account because they *knew* Allah ﷻ and His greatness.

Someone asked a similar question to Hadrat Uthman ؓ, who answered, "I have only one wish, that Allah ﷻ not raise me in front of Him on the Day of Judgment." Hadrat Ibn Masood ؓ said something similar to such a question: "I wish I were dust and so I would not have to stand in front of Allah ﷻ on the Day of Judgment." Hadrat Ibn Masood ؓ passed away during Hadrat Uthman's ؓ *Khilafah*, and Hadrat Uthman ؓ paid a visit before he passed on. He greeted Hadrat Ibn Masood ؓ and asked, "What do you hope for?" Hadrat ibn Masood ؓ replied, "I am hopeful of Allah's ﷻ Mercy." Hadrat Uthman ؓ asked again, "What do you fear?" and Hadrat Ibn Masood ؓ replied, "I fear for my sins."

Hadrat Uthman ؓ then asked, "Can I arrange a stipend for your daughters?" Hadrat Ibn Masood ؓ shook his head, "No, Allah ﷻ is Master. They recite Surah Waqia everyday, and the Messenger ﷺ of Allah said that He will protect the reciter of Surah Waqia from starvation and poverty." Such was the strength of faith of these people that they would remain steadfast on whatever the Messenger ﷺ of Allah said, and were fearful despite this. Why? Because Allah ﷻ has the right to do anything He wants: He can throw a person into Hell despite a number of good deeds.

The Master of the Universe

If I were to bring new furniture into my house, does anyone have the right to tell me whether I should arrange it in the living room or the dining room? I am the master of my house and so no one can tell me what to do in my own house. This is exactly the reason why Allah ﷻ may keep some of us in this world longer than others. He can grant some more wealth than others: He is Master of all creation.

If I were to burn this new furniture just because I didn't like it, no one has the right to question my actions because it is *my* furniture. Likewise, no one has the right to question Allah ﷻ if He decides to take a healthy young man in the prime of his life. He is Creator of all and He has the right to use his creation as he wishes. The Holy Quran says that the fuel of the Fire will be men and stones. This does not necessarily mean that men from *this* current creation of Allah ﷻ will have to go to Hell, for if Allah ﷻ wishes to save these men He can always create more to put in Hell. It is up to Him because He can do as He wishes with His creation and no one has the right to question Him.

It is written in Hadith that the Messenger ﷺ of Allah led the funeral prayer of a very little infant. Afterwards he supplicated to Allah ﷻ, "O Allah ﷻ, please safeguard this child from the punishment of the grave and the Day of Judgment." Someone said to him incredulously, "This is a little baby." The Messenger ﷺ of Allah said, "Yes, but after all, Allah ﷻ is Master and can do as He pleases."

Along the same lines, a woman said referring to a young child, "This child is a bird among the birds of Paradise." The Messenger ﷺ of Allah was angry and said, "How can you say that? I swear that I am a Prophet of Allah ﷻ but even I do not know what will happen with me."

We have been told such things so that we do not become over confident and too reliant on the mercy of Allah ﷻ. We must strive to do good deeds until we die because no one knows the time or condition of death. Nobody is safe until death, and this is why a believer remains fearful of a death deprived of faith. He keeps begging forgiveness because he cannot predict Allah's ﷻ temperament at any give point in time and space.

The Wrath of Allah ﷻ

Allah ﷻ becomes very angry whenever someone regards a sin as minute. There was a man named Damut ؑ among the Bani Israel. Once he was walking outside his town when he came upon a small inlet that was surrounded by barren trees and there was hardly any vegetation. He began thinking that it would be very pretty if there were waterfalls and fruit trees to beautify the scenery.

Allah ﷻ sent *ilham* (inspiration) upon him saying, "Damut, have you left my servitude and become my advisor that you point out blemishes in My Creation?" Hadrat Damut ؑ became terrified, and at that point decided that he would punish himself by not eating until he received *ilham* from Allah ﷻ granting him forgiveness.

A few days passed in this state, and Hadrat Damut ؑ had not eaten. There was a function at someone's house and so he brought food for Hadrat Damut ؑ. Hadrat Damut ؑ refused to eat despite much insistence. After much persuasion as to why, he finally told the

townspeople the reason why he was not eating. Hearing this one of them said, “This is not such a serious matter. Please eat and we will bear amongst ourselves whatever punishment Allah ﷻ may send.”

At once Allah ﷻ inspired Hadrat Damut ؓ with the following; “My beloved, leave this town now, for I want to crush these people within the earth.” How can anyone claim to be a servant of Allah ﷻ and then dare to say that he can withstand Allah’s ﷻ punishment? The Holy Quran says that Allah’s ﷻ punishment is indeed terrible.

The Messenger ﷺ of Allah would be grieved whenever the Holy Quran talked about the result of previous nations that disobeyed. He used to worry constantly about his own nation. The *Sahabah* noticed some white hairs in his beard and commented, “Your hair have become white O Messenger ﷺ of Allah.” The Messenger ﷺ of Allah replied, “Surah Hud has made me old.” Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran that there is only destruction for the people of Thamud. The Prophet ﷺ would become frightened and worried about his nation because of such verses. Hence the believer remains in constant fear of destruction being written for him.

The common people remain scared because of their sins, whereas the pious and those close to Allah ﷻ are scared because of their *good* deeds, always begging forgiveness because they are not worthy of being presented to Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says that He has created life and death so that He may test who does good deeds. We have been told to do good deeds, but our prayers are hurried because we are thinking about work, our study of the Holy Quran and Hadith is short and infrequent because we get “tired” and have so much else to do. Yes we are fulfilling the command of doing good deeds, but what value do these kinds of deeds have when presented in front of the Master of all creation?

More Examples of Fear

Hadrat Abu Darda ؓ used to say with absolute certainty that whoever does not fear that he might lose his faith upon death has guaranteed that he will die without it. Once Hadrat Abu Sufyan ؓ was crying and replied to someone’s question that he was crying because of the Day of Judgment. The other person asked him, “Because of your sins?” Hadrat Abu Sufyan scanned the ground, picked up a grain of sand in his hand, and said, “My sins aren’t even the size of this grain. I am scared of being robbed of my faith at the time of death.”

Another fear is the fear of hypocrisy. Hadrat Hanzalah ؓ ran out into the street shouting, “Hanzalah has become a hypocrite.” Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ asked him what was the matter and so Hadrat Hanzalah ؓ told him that his spiritual condition always deteriorated whenever he was deprived of the company of the Messenger ﷺ of Allah and hence he must be a hypocrite because of these two conditions. Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ said that he used to experience the same and so both took the matter to the Prophet ﷺ.

The Messenger ﷺ of Allah smiled and said to Hadrat Hanzalah ؓ that if what they felt when in his company lasted all the time, then the angels would start descending and shaking hands with them. The optimum enthusiasm felt while in the company of one’s *shaykh* fades when deprived of that company.

Signs of a Hypocrite

Every believer should have this fear of hypocrisy. The Messenger ﷺ of Allah explained that there are four signs of a hypocrite. The first sign is that he lies whenever he speaks. The Messenger ﷺ of Allah said that a believer can be many things but he cannot be a liar. We have to evaluate ourselves, and if we lie then this is an indication of hypocrisy. Not many of our days pass without untruths. *Shaytan* has deluded us very cleverly by making us invent clever bypasses for lies such as “minor deception” or “white lies.”

The second indication is that he misappropriates whatever he has been given as a trust. The third is that he resorts to insult and ridicule whenever he argues and is angry. Resorting to insults and bad language when angry is the sign of a hypocrite. The fourth sign is that he always breaks whatever promises he makes. A person is a hypocrite if any one of these signs is present in him.

The *Sahabah* thus used to be terrified of any indication of hypocrisy. The Messenger ﷺ of Allah had told Hadrat Abu Hudhaifa ؓ the names of all the hypocrites among the Muslims, and had sworn him to secrecy. Hadrat Umar ؓ summoned Hadrat Hudhaifa ؓ during the period of his *Khilafah* and said to him, “I know that the Messenger ﷺ of Allah told you the names of all the hypocrites, and I also know that he swore you to secrecy in the matter. I therefore will not ask you those names but just tell me whether or not Umar’s name is among them.” This was the extent of their fear and they were never relaxed in their worship. They used to pray Fajr with the ablution of the previous day’s Isha, having spent their whole night in worship; then would raise their hands in repentance as if they had committed a grave sin during the night.

At times people cry, but at the same time will not abstain from the sin that they are crying over. This is hypocritical weeping and worth understanding. Crying for repentance in *dua* (supplication) but unwillingness to abandon the sin is hypocrisy also. A man was eating and crying at the same time. Another man asked why he was crying and so the man pointed to a dog sitting in the corner and said, “I am crying because that dog is hungry.” The other man said, “Then why don’t you give him some of this food?” This man replied, “No, it is barely enough for me so I am eating it. However, I am crying because this dog is hungry.”

The Holy Quran says that the brothers of Hadrat Yusuf ؑ came to their father after Isha prayer in tears, supposedly crying over the loss of Hadrat Yusuf ؑ. These were tears of hypocrisy. *Shaytan* encourages us to weep more because he knows that we are not ready to give up the sin. What use is this weeping and begging for forgiveness when we are unwilling to abandon the sin for which we are supposedly repenting? Tears only become valuable when the person abandons the particular sins.

The Messenger ﷺ of Allah would become disoriented and worried at the time of dark clouds and storm, and would wander to and from the house and the masjid. The *Sahabah* would ask on this occasion, “Why do you seem so worried?” The Messenger ﷺ of Allah would answer, “Previous nations were punished with exactly the same conditions. They thought that these were just clouds but fire and stones descended upon them.”

A scholar was delivering a lesson on Hadith and started trembling in the middle. His students were surprised and asked, “Hadrat, why are you trembling while teaching us Hadith?” Their *shaykh* answered, “Didn’t you see? A cloud came over me and I got scared lest Allah ﷻ shower stones upon me.” This was the condition of such people.

Educating Wisely

Blessed and fortunate are those children who have the Holy Quran preserved in their hearts, and blessed are those parents who have given their children over for such study. These children will become light and a means of salvation for those parents. However, if parents do not discharge their responsibilities and teach the Holy Quran and Hadith to their children, those very children will become enemies on the Day of Judgment and testify against their parents.

On the Day of Judgment these children will say, “O Allah ﷻ, our parents told us to become doctors and engineers, and we showed them. However, they never let us come toward religion. What were we to do? We were merely following their example and obeying. Today give them double the punishment you are giving us and destroy them.”

This is by no means to say that we are not to educate ourselves in secular education. However, we are to have our priorities straight and secure the relationship of our hearts with Allah ﷻ; then by all means do as we please. By all means, set up factories and businesses, but as a *believer* and a person with *faith*. We need to strengthen our foundations and that is why we must put our children on a firm footing very early so that they become strong and rightly guided Muslims. We do not understand the priceless value of *deen* (religion).

It is our responsibility to teach our children correctly. Allah ﷻ will ask us concerning each and every child whether we taught him/her *deen*. Insha’Allah Allah ﷻ will reward us and these children will become a way for us out of punishment and disgrace.

Parents will be given crowns of light on the Day of Judgment because of these children who have become successful in *deen*. Hence this is a golden opportunity for someone who has fear of Allah ﷻ in his heart. There is no better way to guarantee eternal reward than to leave behind children who one has put on a firm foundation of *deen*. Insha’Allah Allah ﷻ will grant us Paradise because of these children.

The Fear of Other Creation

The Messenger ﷺ of Allah heard noises and humming emanating from the Throne of Allah ﷻ when he became near to it during the *Miraj* (Ascension). He questioned Hadrat Jibril ﷺ, “What are these noises coming from inside the Throne?” Hadrat Jibril ﷺ said, “Beloved of Allah ﷻ, the Throne is trembling in sheer fear of Allah ﷻ.”

It is written in Hadith that the Messenger ﷺ of Allah then saw angels who were prostrating, and they were so big that the distance between their shoulders spanned many miles. The weight of their prostration was also causing these noises from the Throne. Hadrat Jibril ﷺ said, “Allah ﷻ has created these angels in prostration and they will remain this way until the Day of Judgment. They are worshipping and praising Allah ﷻ, and at the same time trembling in fear of Him.”

Everything except man and jinn knows and understands Allah's ﷻ greatness, and this is why everything except man and jinn truly understands the meaning of fearing Allah ﷻ. This is why they do not disobey, and are obediently doing whatever it is that Allah ﷻ created them for. Many angels have been created in the standing position of *salat* (prayer), and will remain thus until the Day of Judgment. Many other angels have been created in the position of prostration and will remain this way until the Day of Judgment.

Likewise, mountains and trees have been created in the same standing position. The Holy Quran says that when thunder approaches, it does so praising Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran that everything praises Allah ﷻ but we cannot understand their praise. When the wind rustles through the trees and shakes the leaves, this rustling is the *tasbeeh* (litany) of the leaves that we cannot understand. When the wind howls through narrow passages and caves, this is the *tasbeeh* of the wind that we cannot understand.

Trees are alive and constantly in worship of Allah ﷻ. This is why Hadith tells us that a man should not dare to relieve himself under a tree, because when its shadow lengthens and shortens, it is standing and bowing in front of Allah ﷻ. It is very sad that animals and inanimate objects as we know them understand and fear Allah ﷻ more than we do.

Every aspect of creation is engaged in a specific worship act of Allah ﷻ. Trees are standing in *salat*: rocks are sitting in *salat*: insects have been created to be in prostration. Man is very fortunate that he has been given the opportunity to discharge all these acts of worship in one act: *salat*. Allah ﷻ has honored us so highly by making us His *Khalifah* and we still cannot discharge this responsibility. We are not regular in our *salat*.

The Fear of an Animal

A Companion came to the Messenger ﷺ of Allah and said that he had a camel that he used for work and took care of very well. However, at the end of the day after being fed, the camel would make horrible noises and thus disturb his master when the latter was sleeping. The Messenger ﷺ of Allah had the camel summoned in order to hear its side of the story. The camel entered most humbly and sat down in front of the Prophet ﷺ, who summarized his master's complaint and asked for an explanation.

The camel affirmed that his master cared for it very well. However, he said that his master took food after Maghrib and then would rest on the bed, thinking that he would rest a while. However, he would fall into a deep sleep while the camel would be awake in the stable nearby. The camel said that it would get late and he would fear that his master would miss his Isha *salat*, and that is why he would make noise to try and wake him up.

Animals understand and fear Allah ﷻ; angels understand and fear Allah ﷻ; the *Sahabah* understood and feared Allah ﷻ. Man is supposed to rise higher than animals and angels, so *why* are we so ignorant and arrogant when it comes to Allah ﷻ? We should beg Allah ﷻ to instill true fear in our hearts for Him and allow us to die with the *Kalimah* on our lips.