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Words^{on} Love Fear and Hope

By Sheikh
Mohammed Ibn Ibrahim El-Hamd



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Words on love

All praise be to Allah and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah.

Love is the cornerstone of worship. Worship is based on three pillars: love, fear and hope. Here below is a short word on this great pillar— i.e. love.

1. Definition of love [mahabbah]

Ibn al-Qayim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “Love knows no boundaries. Boundaries are nothing but to prevent love from existing. Love is only manifested through love. People are only to mention its causes, factors, signs, evidence, benefits and rulings. Therefore, their logic about love is based on these six pillars where everyone differs in expressing his concept according to his/her perception, position, conditions and fluency”¹.

There are many definitions of love as follows²:

- 1- Heart inclination in [loving Allah].
- 2- Preferring the beloved [Allah] over all other things.
- 3- Consistency with the beloved in his presence and absence.
- 4- The heart’s obedience to the commands of the beloved [Allah].

1 See Madarig As-Salikeen (311/).

2 See Madarig As-Salikeen (318-13/).

- 5- Magnifying little sins and belittling abundant good deeds.
- 6- Freeing the heart from loving anything except that of Allah.
- 7- Your inclination and love for a thing, then preferring Allah over your soul and property. Then, making your inward and outward deeds the same and finally realize your short comings towards Him.
- 8- Enslaving oneself to Allah alone and freeing oneself from any other thing.
- 9- Engaging in seeking His pleasure through your heart and continuous remembrance of Him by the tongue.
- 10-Continuous occupation with Him and doing everything for His sake.

Categories of love

- 1- **Love of worship:** it means humiliating oneself and glorifying Allah. It is represented in feeling His majesty in one's heart, complying with His commands and refraining from His prohibitions. This kind of love is the basic for faith [Iman] and monotheism [tawheed]. It implies numerous virtues. Whoever dedicates this kind of love to Allah is considered the true believer. Whoever dedicates it to otherwise, he will associate others with Allah the Almighty [Shirk]. This is like the disbelievers who love their deities and other things such as trees, stones, humans or kings like the way they love Allah. This kind of love is the basic and root of polytheism.
- 2- Loving Allah the Almighty: this implies love of what Allah loves of places, times, people, deeds, sayings and the like.

3- **Natural love:** this kind of love falls into the following:

- **Mercy:** like the parent's love for his children and being merciful to the patients and weak.
- **Respect and veneration:** it includes a child-parent love, student-teacher love and the like.
- **Human needs:** this includes man's love for food, drink, marriage, garments, friends and the like.

This represents the permissible forms of love, if these forms were to help in loving and obeying Allah, it will be categorized among good acts of obedience; otherwise, it will be considered among prohibitions. If it neither helps in obeying nor disobeying Allah, it will remain from among permissible things.

2. Virtues of loving Allah:

Loving Allah is the noblest and greatest deed which has uncountable virtues some of which are as follows:

- 1- It is the root and essence of Tawheed: Sheikh Abd al-Rahman ibn Sa'di (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Loving Allah alone is the root and essence of Tawheed. It is the principal for knowing Allah's Lordship and our servitude to Him; yet it is the pure worship. Tawheed is perfected only through our love for our Lord which much takes precedence over loving anything else and overwhelms it. Thus, loving Allah will be the source of every other love, happiness and success in life"³.
- 2- The need for loving Allah is greater than that of food, drink and marriage: Sheikh al-Islam ibn Taymiya (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "There is love in the hearts of humans for

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Al-Qawl As-Sadeed P. 110.

their Lord, the One they dedicate their worship to. This love is the essence of their hearts and nourishment of their souls. This is likewise their love for food, spouses; thus their life will be meaningful and consistent. Humans' need for their Lord is greater than their need for food. This is because if food is missed, the body will be weak, but losing the Lord, souls will be spoiled"⁴.

Ibn al-Qayim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Loving Allah is the life of hearts and nourishment of souls without which a heart will not feel happiness, blessings, success or life. If the heart misses the feeling of loving Allah, it will hurt more than losing one's eyesight, hearing, smelling, or ability to speak?! If one's heart is void of loving His Creator, Lord and the Truth it will be greatly dangerous than losing one's soul"⁵.

- 3- Loving Allah is a consolation at times of misfortunes. Ibn al-Qayim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "The one who truly loves Allah, His Lord, finds in His love what soothes his pains unlike others who do not have this in their hearts. This makes him as if he was gifted abnormal nature. An afflicted person in this case is strengthened through his love for his Lord and finds pleasure in all trials that His beloved Lord afflict him with. This is unlike material love which is tended to one's desires and whims. This is proved through one's sense and passion. Allah knows best."⁶
- 4- Loving Allah greatly helps a person to abandon sins: ibn al-Qayim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "loving Allah is one of the great means that help a person refraining from committing sins and disobeying Allah's commands. This is

4 Jani al-Rasa'il by Ibn Taymya: 2230/.

5 Al-Jawab al-Kafi: Pages 541542-.

6 Madarig al-Salikeen 338/.

because a person submits himself to the one he loves. The more the power of love increases in one's heart, the more he obeys his beloved [Allah]. Indeed, sins and disobedience spring from weak love. There is a difference between the one who abandons disobeying Allah out of fearing His server punishment and wrath and the one who refrains from sins out of loving His Lord and Master." He continued: "A sincere lover of Allah has something that monitors his heart, love and all senses. Observing this monitor is the sign of true love. Here, it is worthy to mention that this pure love of Allah must be associated with glorifying and exalting Him and thus it instills *haya'* [modesty] and obedience in one's heart; otherwise, love will be only manifested in pleasure, remembering and longing. Consequently, a person may find love for Allah in his heart, yet it cannot prevent him from disobeying Him. Therefore, loving Allah must be associated with glorifying and exalting Him which is a great favor that Allah bestows upon whom He wishes."⁷

- 5- Loving Allah prevents doubts: ibn al-Qayim said: "There is a great contradiction between love and doubts, just the same as between remembering Allah [dhikr] and negligence. A person who loves Allah is determined and firm in His belief. Doubts are the characteristics of those who are negligent and far from the path of Allah."⁸
- 6- Loving Allah brings the utmost happiness and blessings. A Muslim's vacant heart can never be warm except through loving Allah and getting closer to Him the Almighty. Nothing of this world's pleasures can replace the sweetness one finds in his heart due to loving Allah Most High. Ibn al-Qayim said: "Loving Allah is incomparable. Nothing in this world is dearer

7 Tareek al-Hijratien pages 449450-.

8 Madarig As-Salikeen 338/.

to hearts than loving their Lord, Creator, Supporter, Disposer of their affairs, Sustainers, Giver and Taker of their lives. Loving Allah is the pleasure of souls, nourishment of hearts, light of minds, comfort of the eyes and source of inner peace. Sound hearts, good souls and pure minds find no pleasure in anything other than their love to their Lord and their longing to meet Him. The sweetness one finds in his heart tops any other sweetness; the blessing one gets from loving Allah is the most perfect one; and the pleasure he feels is the greatest of all.” Ibn al-Qayim continued: “All these matters are determined by the degree of love [strong or weak] and according to realizing the beauty of the beloved [Allah] and relation with Him. The more the love, realization and closeness to Allah are great, the more sweetness is strong. A person who knows best about Allah, His Names and Attributes loves and gets closer to Him; he finds extreme sweetness in his heart. Once the heart tastes this sweetness of love, it will never feel comfort in anything else. The more one loves Allah, the more he submits himself to Him in humiliation and worship and frees himself from slavery to anything other than Him.”⁹

3. Characteristics of those whom Allah loves

Allah Almighty loves His servants and they do too. Allah Almighty says: ‘Allâh will bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him’ [Al-Ma’ida: 54].

From among the characteristics of those whom Allah loves are the following:

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Ighathat al-Lahffan p.567

- 1- *At-Tawabun* (The Repentants who constantly repent to Allah).
- 2- *Al-Mutatahirun* (Those who always purify themselves).
- 3- *Al-Muttaqun* (The pious).
- 4- *Al-Muhsinun* (Those who give).
- 5- *As-Sabirun* (the Patients).
- 6- *Al-Mutawkilun* (Those who put their trust in Allah).
- 7- *Al-Muqsitun* (Those who are just in their dealings).
- 8- Those who fight in the cause Allah like one unit.
- 9- Those who are humble to the believers.
- 10- Stern to the disbelievers.
- 11- *Al-Mujahidoon* (Those who fight in the cause of Allah).
- 12- Those who do not fear the blame of blamers.
- 13- Those who observe voluntarily prayer to get near to Allah.

4. Means that bring Allah's love

- 1- Profound reading of the Qur'an, understanding its meanings and injunctions.
- 2- Observing voluntary prayers to get closer to Allah.
- 3- Remembering Allah constantly [*dhikr*] by tongue, heart, deeds and in all cases and conditions.
- 4- Preferring the love of Allah over any other love.

- 5- Understanding Allah's Names and Attributes.
- 6- Pondering over His benevolence, visible and invisible blessings.
- 7- The heart's surrender in humiliation before Allah.
- 8- Seclusion [*khulwa*] at the last third of night to supplicate Allah, reciting His words [Qur'an], standing in submission before Him while holding fast to the good manners of worship and finally seeking Allah's forgiveness [*Istighfar*].
- 9- Accompanying righteous sincere people to benefit from their righteousness, knowing that a still tongue keeps a wise head.
- 10- Forsaking all kinds of sins that may separate the heart from loving Allah the Almighty. ¹⁰

O Allah! I ask You for Your love and the love of those who love You, and for the love of every action which will bring me closer to Your love. And peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, His family and Companions.

10 See Madarig al-Salikeen 319-18/.

Words on fearing Allah [*al-Khawf*]¹¹

All praise be to Allah and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah.

Fearing Allah is from among the loftiest ranks of worship and the most beneficial of all. It is obligatory for everyone to fear Allah.

Allah Almighty says in the Qur'an:

“So fear them not, but fear Me, if you are (true) believers” [Al-Imran: 175].

“But for him who [the true believer of Islâmic Monotheism] fears the standing before his Lord, there will be two Gardens (i.e. in Paradise) [Al-Rahman: 46].

1. Definition of Khawf:

- 1- Expecting Allah's punishment in every breath.
- 2- The strong belief in destiny.
- 3- The heart's determination to avoid Allah's wrath upon feeling it.
- 4- It is a distress that befalls oneself when expecting the occurrence of something bad.

2. Quotes on fearing Allah

Abu Hafs 'Umar ibn Maslama al-Haddad al-Nisaburi said: “Fearing Allah is a light in one's heart through which he/she can distinguish

11 See the detailed hadith on fearing Allah in *Madarig As-Salikeen* 1513-507/ and the comment on the book of *Tawheed*, the chapter titled: «It is only Shaitân (Satan) that suggests to you the fear of his Auliya» [supporters and friends].

between good and bad. When we fear anyone we run away from him; unlike Allah the Almighty to Whom we flee. Therefore, the one who truly fears his Lord, flee to Him”.

- Abu Solaiman said: “A heart that loses the fear of Allah will end up as a loser”.
- Ibrahim ibn Sufyan said: “when the fear of Allah is instilled in the hearts, it burns the spots of lusts and leads the believer to refrain from worldly pleasures.”
- Dhu An-Nun said: “The believers are on the straight path as long as they fear Allah; otherwise, they will go astray.”

3. Praiseworthy fear

The sincere praiseworthy kind of fear is that which prevents the believer from approaching what Allah prohibited. If a believer blindly exaggerates his fear, he will end up in losing hope in Allah’s mercy.

Abu ‘Uthman al-Hiri said: “Sincere fear is to refrain from committing sins in one’s outward and inward actions.”

Sheikh al-Islam, ibn Taymiya said: “praiseworthy fear is that which prevents a believer from approaching what Allah prohibited”.

4. Obligatory and recommended fear

Obligatory fear is that which exhorts the believer to observe the obligations and refrain from prohibitions.

Recommended fear is that which exhorts the believer to observe recommended acts and refrain from what is detested.

Combining between fear, hope and love

A believer must combine between these three pillars in his relation with

his Lord due to the following reasons:

- Worshipping Allah through fearing Him only results in losing hope in Allah's mercy, thinking ill of Him and finally disbelief.
- Worshipping Allah through "hope" [al.*Raja*] only results in arrogance and false hopes while leaving good deeds which in turn expels a believer from the religion.
- Worshipping Allah through love [*mahabbah*] only is the methodology of extremist Sufis who say: we worship Allah but we neither fear His Hellfire nor aspiring for His Paradise; but just out of loving Him. This method is a corrupted one and results in evil consequences including feeling secure against Allah's plan which results in immorality and thus expulsion from the religion.

The predecessors (may Allah have mercy on them) had a famous quote in this regard which reads: "Whoever worships Allah through love only is considered an immoral person; whoever worships Him through fear only is a Kharijite; whoever worships Him through hope only is a Murji'; and whoever worships His through fear, love and hope is monotheistic believer".

Ibn al-Qayim said: "On his way to Allah, a [believer's] heart is likened to a bird: love is its head, fear and hope are its wings. Hence, when the head and wings are sound, the bird will perfectly fly; if the head is cut, the bird will die and when it loses the wings, it will be inevitably objected to hunting".

5. Which one does take precedence over the other: fear or hope?

Ibn al-Qayim said: “The predecessors recommended strengthening one’s fear from Allah in this world and the other way round in the Hereafter. This is the methodology of Abu Solaiman and others. He (Abu Solaiman) said: fear should take precedence over hope in a believer’s heart; otherwise, it will be corrupted. Other predecessors said: the perfect method is to maintain moderation in combining between hope and fear and topping them with love. Love is the ship, hope is the guide, fear is the driver and Allah guides us through His grace and generosity”.

Categories of Fear:

- 1- Secret fear (it should be entertained for Allah alone): it is an act of worship through which a servant worships Allah and draws himself closer to Him. This fear exhorts a person to refrain from disobeying his Lord, fearing His wrath that He afflicts upon the sinners by His will.

This category of fear must be entertained to Allah alone since it has a lofty status among the acts of worship, it is one of the greatest jobs of the believer’s hearts and it is one of the pillars of worship. Whoever fears Allah in this way is considered a sincere believer.

On the contrary, a person who fears others than Allah commits a major sin of Shirk [associating partners with Allah]. This is the act of the polytheists [mushrikeen] who attribute power to their deities and threaten the friends of Allah [Awliya] by this false belief.

Allah mentioned in the Qur’an that the people of His Prophet Hud

threatened him by their false deities. They said to their Prophet: “All that we say is that some of our gods (false deities) have seized you with evil (madness)” [Hud: 54].

The same applies to those who worship the dead and seek their intercession in times of distress.

- 2- Fearing Allah’s wrath: Allah promised to afflict His wrath upon the sinners. This is the highest category of fear.
- 3- Prohibited fear: This kind of fear is represented in abandoning one’s obligations such as Jihad [fighting in the cause of Allah], joining what is good and forbidding evil without having an excuse except fearing people. Likewise the case with those who run from joining the armies in war out of fearing meeting the enemies. This is a prohibited kind of fear; yet it does not reach the state of Shirk.
- 4- Human innate fear: It is a natural praised kind of fear such as fearing wild animals, enemies, destruction, drowning and the like. Allah mentioned this kind of fear in the Qur’anic verses which talk about Prophet Musa (peace be upon him). Allah Almighty says: “So he [Musa] escaped from there, looking about in a state of fear” [Al-Qassas: 21]. Allah also says: “So Mûsa (Moses) conceived a fear in himself” (Taha: 67).

This category of fear also includes the fear that precedes meeting the enemy or giving a speech which is regarded as natural innate feeling and it is praised when exhorting a person to prepare himself; otherwise it will be dispraised if it leads to retreatment.

- 5- False fear: this category of fear has no reasons or very weak

ones. That's why it is a dispraised kind of fear that leads a person to cowardness. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) sought refuge in Allah from cowardness since it is from among bad manners. Therefore, sound faith [Iman] and complete trust in Allah are the greatest factors that push this kind fear away and fill the believer's heart with courage. The more one's faith increases, the more false fear runs away from his heart and the vice versa.

Therefore, the fears of the believers who possess strong steadfast faith turn into safety and tranquility due to their sound faith and absolute trust in Allah. Allah says: "Those (i.e. believers) unto whom the people (hypocrites) said, "Verily, the people (pagans) have gathered against you (a great army), therefore, fear them." But it (only) increased them in Faith, and they said: "Allâh (Alone) is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs (for us). So they returned with Grace and Bounty from Allâh. No harm touched them; and they followed the good Pleasure of Allâh. And Allâh is the Owner of Great Bounty" [Al-Imran: 173-174].

All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, peace be upon His Messengers and peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad.

Words on hope (*al-Raja'*)

All praise be to Allah and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger. Hope or *Raja'* is one of the pillars of worship which is based on love, fear and hope. It is one of the greatest acts of the heart which is mentioned abundantly in the texts of the Shari'ah [Qur'an and Sunnah] and its doers are praised.

1. Evidence from the Qur'an

Allah Almighty says:

“Those whom they call upon [like 'Iesa (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary), 'Uzair (Ezra), angel, etc.] desire (for themselves) means of access to their Lord (Allâh), as to which of them should be the nearest and they ['Iesa (Jesus), 'Uzair (Ezra), angels, etc.] hope for His Mercy and fear His Torment” [Al-Isra': 57].

Desiring the means to get near to Allah is attained through worshipping and loving Him. Therefore, Allah mentioned the three pillars of faith: love, fear and hope.

He Almighty says: “Whoever hopes for the Meeting with Allah, then Allâh's Term is surely coming” [Al-'Inkabut: 5].

“...all these hope for Allâh's Mercy. And Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful” [Al-Baqara: 218].

2. Evidence from Sunnah

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “None of you should dies until he thinks well of his Lord” [Muslim].

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said in the Quddsi hadith: “Allah Exalted be He says: “I am to My servant as he thinks of Me, so, let him think of Me in the way he wishes”.

3. Quotes on al-Raja’:

- 1- It is said that al-Raja’ directs and paves the way for the hearts towards Allah and the Hereafter.
- 2- It is the glad tidings of the grace of Allah, Exalted be He, and seeking His Generosity.
- 3- It is certainty of the existence of One Lord.
- 4- It is the aspiration to get Allah’s mercy that encompasses everything.

4. Combining between fear, hope and love:

Ibn al-Qayim said: “On his way to Allah, a [believer’s] heart is likened to a bird: love is its head, fear and hope are its wings. Hence, when the head and wings are sound, the bird will perfectly fly; if the head is cut, the bird will die and when it loses the wings, it will be inevitably objected to hunting”.

5. Kinds of Raja’:

There are three kinds of Raja’; two of which are praiseworthy while the third is repugnant.

The first two praiseworthy kinds of Raja’ are represented in the following examples:

- A person obeyed Allah and followed His light; therefore, he hopes in attaining the reward from his Lord.
- A person committed sins and then repented; therefore, he hopes to attain Allah’s forgiveness, bounties, patience and generosity.

- As for the repugnant kind of Raja', it is represented in the behavior of a person who exceeds the limits in committing sins while hoping to attain Allah's mercy without repentance. This act is called arrogance or deception [*Ghurur*] and false wishes.

6. Distinction between Raja' and Tamanni [wishing]:

The distinction between the two is that *Tamanni* is associated with laziness and a person does not take matters seriously or does efforts; while Raja' is associated with exerting efforts and putting trust in Allah. The first is likened to a person wishes to have a land to cultivate and reap its fruits, and the second is likened to a person who ploughs his land, sew the seeds and waits its fruits.

Question:

Which one is perfect: the hope of a righteous person who seeks reward from his Lord or the hope of a wrong doer who seeks his Lord's forgiveness?

Answer:

This is a controversial matter. A group of people preferred the hope of the righteous person who strongly seeks Allah's reward; and others preferred the hope of the wrong doer who seeks his Lord's forgiveness because it springs from the feeling of being guilty and humiliating himself to his Lord.

7. Raja' must be accompanied by action

Scholars unanimously agreed that Raja' must be accompanied by

action. This is because refraining from repentance and continuing committing sins calming to hope in Allah's mercy has nothing to do with Raja'. Rather, it is ignorance, immaturity and deception. This is because Allah's mercy is ever near to the righteous and not to the excessive wrongdoers, stubborn and those who are persistent in committing sins.

Ibn al-Qayim (may Allah have mercy on him) said concerning the excessive wrongdoers who depend on Allah's mercy: "Such kind of people completely depends on the texts that present Allah's mercy. When pointing fingers of blame to them due to their excessive sins, they list all what they know about Allah's comprehensive mercy and forgiveness. There are strange and unfamiliar stories about such kind of people"¹². Then, he [ibn al-Qayim] gave numerous examples to such kind of people.

8. The criterion for thinking wel of Allah [Husn az-Zan]:

Ibn al-Qayim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Thinking well of Allah or Raja' manifests itself in believing in the means of salvations granted by Allah and not otherwise. Meaning, if a person excessively commits sins depending on Allah's forgiveness, mercy which precedes His wrath, it must be said that Allah is above all of this thinking. Allah is Ever-Wise in His decree. Allah is the Ever-Wise; He is above His creation and the Ever- Avenger who sends His wrath upon those who deserve it. Therefore, if thinking well of Allah is attributed to His Names and Attributes, thus righteous and immoral; believer and disbeliever, His Wali [friend of Allah] and enemies will be alike in the sight of Allah. Therefore, a tyrant immoral person will never attain Allah's mercy and forgiveness while Allah Has decreed torture for Him and engulfed him

12 Al-Jawab al-Kafi by ibn al-Qayim pages 6768-.

with His wrath. Such a person who committed sins, exceeded the limits of Allah and violated His prohibitions deserves nothing except Allah's wrath. On the contrary, thinking well of Allah benefits a person who sincerely repents and determine not to return to sins and to spend the rest of his life in goodness, obedience and righteousness. Then, such a repentant hopes to attain mercy through thinking well of Him. This is typically what Husn Az-Zan means, while the first case is known as deception. Allah is the Best Supporter"¹³.

9. Virtues of Raja':

After presenting the quotes and criteria of Raja', here is a glimpse on its virtues. Raja' has many fruitful virtues if it is correctly entertained. Such virtues include the following:

- 1- Manifesting humiliation and need to one's Lord through seeking refuge in His bounties and generosity that a person can never live without it.
- 2- Allah Almighty loves His servants to have Raja' in Him and ask Him to bestow His bounties upon them because He is the Sovereign [Al-Mali], the Truth [Al-Haqq] and the Most-Generous.
- 3- Refraining from Allah's wrath, this is because the one who does not ask Allah, Allah sends His wrath upon Him.
- 4- Raja' paves the way for the person towards seeking the pleasure of His Lord. It urges the person to pursue his life. Raja' is the power that pushes a person to lead a happy life. This is because none can live with fear, but loving Allah moves the person towards good.

13 Al-Jawab al-Kafi pages 7677-.

- 5- Raja' increases Allah's love in one's heart. The more a person hopes in Allah in answering his wishes and then they come true, Allah's love increases in one's heart as a means of gratitude.
- 6- It increases one's gratitude and thanking.
- 7- It increases a person's knowledge of Allah, His Names, its meanings and invoking Him through them.
- 8- Love and hope are inseparable.
- 9- Hope and fear are integrated.
- 10-When a servant's wishes are answered by his Lord, it brings happiness to one's life.
- 11- Raja' allows a servant's heart to continuously remember Allah, His Names, Attributes and enjoying its blessings.

Oh Allah! We ask You to grant us Your love, fear and hope, and peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad.

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