

Fear of God

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I was visiting a friend. We were deep in conversation in his drawing room when his ten year old son, Hussain, walked in. After formal greetings and introductions my friend told me that Hussain was memorising the Qur'an. He asked his son to recite a few verses for me. Hussain, there and then, recited a passage that he had memorised that day. Certainly his recitation was correct and his voice was sweet. However, my attention centred on the words of the repetitive verse of the passage he was reciting. The verse was, *Fattaqullah wa atioon*, So fear Allah and obey me. (Surah 26:108,110,126 ff)

After the recitation, Hussain left us engaged in discussion on the subject of fearing God, and we talked about it for quite a long time. Not only the Qur'an but also the *Torah*, *Zabur*, *Injil* and other books of the Prophets teach that we should fear God and obey his commandments. Job, known in Islam as *Ayub*, said, "The fear of the Lord - that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding" (Job 28:28). David, known also as *Daud*, said, "The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever" (Psalm 19:9). On the same subject Solomon, known also as *Sulaiman*, said, "He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain

of life, turning a man from the snares of death" (Proverb 14:26-27).

To encourage his followers, Jesus said, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. . . . Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you in hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him" (Luke 12:4-5).

Do these passages refer to physical fear that we should literally tremble and shiver in God's presence? No, certainly not. To honour God, to trust him and to abhor wickedness amounts to the fear of the Lord. The Bible in many passages, commands us to obey God and fear him because he alone is holy (Revelation 15:4). He is the Almighty and the only Creator (Deuteronomy 10:17). He is the master and ruler of the Day of Judgement, when, though he is kind and forgiving, he will fulfil both his kindness and his justice in judging all people. Thus, as people of God we should 'purify ourselves from everything that contaminates our body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God' (2 Corinthians 7:1).

The fear of the Lord has several results. We avoid evil (Proverb 16:6). He delights in us and extends his mercy (Psalm 147:11; Luke 1:50).

Like the Old Testament, which includes the *Torah* and Psalms, the New Testament, which contains the Gospel of Jesus, has many passages on this subject. If you would like a copy in the English language, please write to the

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