



216867 - Fearing Allah is one of the most important religious obligations

the question

Is fearing Allah obligatory? How can we respond to those who say such things as: "The true meaning of prayer has nothing to do with its quantity, the way in which the movements are done, the number of rak`ahs or the number of times we visit mosques, churches or synagogues; rather it has to do with the divine Essence in its expansion and encompassing, and when the heart and soul open up to unity with all that exists, touching the light of Allah and feeling the joy of meeting Him. The aim of prayer is not to provide an opportunity or a limited timescale for an individual to express what he needs from Allah and what we want to attain with greed covered by many layers of self-serving hypocrisy. Rather we pray to set ourselves free and leave behind – even for a few moments – the load and burden of our selfish desires, delusions and fears that lurk beneath. There is no benefit in prayers that people make a habit and routine that they repeat devoid of any soul in order to avoid the punishment of hell or to attain eternal paradise, for the absence of soul is hell itself. Is it not the souls that are burned in hell? It (prayer) is a journey like an inward mi`raj (ascent to heaven) that is renewed with every breath we take, and a mirror that helps us to see ourselves in this universe clearly, and brings us close to the centre of existence where there is calm, stability and reassurance that is unmatched. So let us pray, not only on Sunday, and not five times a day or fifty times a day; let us pray with every breath we take and pray out of love, not fear, for how different the God of love is from the idols of fear"?

Summary of answer

Fearing Allah is obligatory; in fact it is one of the most important of religious duties, and the one who does not fear Allah is not a believer.

According to Ahl as-Sunnah, the worship that is prescribed includes love and veneration of Allah. Love generates hope and veneration generates fear.

The only reason why Allah created creation and sent messengers to them is so that people would worship Him, obey Him, fear Him and His punishment, seek His pleasure, ask for His paradise, and



seek His mercy, pardon and forgiveness. Were it not for that, people would have nothing to deter them from committing evil deeds, and they would have no fear of Allah that would prevent them from committing immoral actions, and no faith to instruct them to do what is right.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Is fearing Allah obligatory?

Fearing Allah is obligatory; in fact it is one of the most important of religious duties, and the one who does not fear Allah is not a believer.

Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

- {That was only the Shayt@ân, who tries to instil [in you] fear of his followers. Do not fear them, but fear Me, if you are [truly] believers} [Al `Imran 3:175]
- {Do you fear them? But Allah has more right that you should fear Him, if you are [truly] believers} [At-Tawbah 9:13]
- {For him who fears standing before his Lord there will be two gardens } [Ar-Rahman 55:46]
- {Indeed, those who fear their Lord unseen will have forgiveness and great reward} [Al-Mulk 67:12]
- {Verily, they used to hasten to do good deeds, and they used to call on Us in hope and fear, and they were always humble before Us} [Al-Anbiya' 21:90].

How is fear of Allah connected to love of Him and hope for



His mercy?

According to Ahl as-Sunnah, the worship that is prescribed includes love and veneration of Allah. Love generates hope and veneration generates fear.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Fear is one of the three pillars of iman (faith) and ihsan, on the basis of which the righteous will vary in their ranks as they journey towards Allah. Those three pillars are: fear, hope and love.

The absence of faith due to the absence of fear is like the absence of a thing when the conditions for it are not met, and the absence of fear when there is an absence of faith is like the absence of the effect due to the absence of the cause.

Thus fear is strongly connected to faith and is one of its inevitable outcomes, so it cannot be separated from it.

Allah, may He be Glorified, praised the closest of His slaves to Him by describing them as having fear of Him. Hence he said of His Prophets, after praising and commending them:

{Verily, they used to hasten to do good deeds, and they used to call on Us in hope and fear, and they were always humble before Us} [Al-Anbiya' 21:90].

End quote from *Tariq al-Hijratayn*, p. 282.

The pillars of worship: love, fear and hope

What the questioner quoted in his question are the words of one who does not give true recognition to Allah and does not fear standing before his Lord, and he does not differentiate between the religion of the monotheists and the religion of the polytheists and heretics; rather he has confused himself and can no longer see the difference, so the followers of all religions have become all the same to him, if they follow the religion that he calls them to!



So the one who prays – any prayer, in any manner, whether it is the prayer of the Muslims or the prayer of the idolaters – in order to be liberated from the shackles of slavery, and he does not seek paradise thereby or fear hell thereby, and he has no other aim beyond that, whether in this world or the hereafter, is the true worshipper according to this liar, as he thinks that he is the only one who knows the importance of prayer and what prayer really is.

However, it is well established in Islam, as is known to anyone with the slightest knowledge of Allah's religion, that what this liar is saying is nothing but opposition Allah and His Messenger, and a rejection of the message that the Messengers brought and the Books that Allah sent down.

The only reason why Allah created creation and sent messengers to them is so that people would worship Him, obey Him, fear Him and His punishment, seek His pleasure, ask for His paradise, and seek His mercy, pardon and forgiveness. Were it not for that, people would have nothing to deter them from committing evil deeds, and they would have no fear of Allah that would prevent them from committing immoral actions, and no faith to instruct them to do what is right. Were it not for that, there would be no point in there being paradise and hell, and there would be no purpose in resurrecting people or in their standing before the Lord of the Worlds, and that would not have become one of the pillars of faith and one of the fundamentals of religion.

Thus in reality, this brief refutation is sufficient, and there is no need to examine in detail every word this liar said, which reflects a lack of respect for the rituals prescribed by Allah and does not recognize the limits that He has set, and it indicates that this person does not give true recognition to Allah.

The prayer of the Muslims – and in fact all their acts of worship and religious practices that they devote to the Lord of the Worlds – is based on love, fear and hope, and by virtue of these three elements both the upper and lower realms will be maintained in good order, and one will attain happiness in this world and the hereafter. Each of these three elements is connected to the others.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The three elements – love, fear and hope – are what motivate a person to make good use of his



time in doing that which is more appropriate and more beneficial for the doer. They form the basis of conduct and of the journey towards Allah, and Allah, may He be Glorified, mentions the three together in the verse:

{Those upon whom they call themselves seek nearness to their Lord, [competing to see] which of them will be nearest. They hope for His mercy and fear His punishment, for verily the punishment of your Lord is something to be dreaded} [Al-Isra' 17:57].

These three elements form the foundation of true servitude to Allah, and all deeds are based on them.

End quote from *Madarij as-Salikin*, 3/128.

Ultimately, this liar who fabricates lies against Allah will end up becoming a heretic; he will refuse to comply with the commands and prohibitions of Allah, he will be deceived and will rely on wishful thinking, or he will go down the path of the misguided who believe in pantheism.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The verse of supplication – {Call upon your Lord with humility and in private, for indeed Allah does not love those who overstep the limits} [al-A`raf 7:55] – mentions humility, which means humbling oneself and expressing one's utter need of Allah, and this is the essence of remembering Allah (dhikr) and calling upon Him (du`a')...

Remembering Allah and fearing Him are mentioned together because the one who remembers Allah needs to feel fear of Him. For remembering Allah will lead to love of Him, and that love will be the consequence of that remembrance, so the one who remembers Allah a great deal will inevitably love Him.

But if love of Allah is not connected to fear of Him, it will not benefit the individual; rather it will harm him, because it will lead to feeling content and apathetic, and it may lead some ignorant, deceived people to decide that they do not need to do any religious duties, and they will say that the point of worship is that it develops heart-based worship, which makes the heart turn to Allah



and love Him, after which putting effort into the means that helped one attain that status becomes pointless!

A man told me that he objected to some of those people who were in seclusion for worship and did not attend Jumu`ah because of that, and their shaykh said to him: Didn't the jurists say that if someone fears for his wealth, Jumu`ah is waived in his case?

The man said: Yes indeed.

The shaykh said: The heart of the murid (devotee) is more precious than ten dirhams – or whatever he said – and if he goes out he will lose his (the purity of) heart, so maintaining the well-being of his heart is a valid excuse for waiving Jumu`ah in his case.

The man said to him: This is misguidance; rather what you must do is go out and attend Jumu`ah in compliance with the command of Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted.

So think about this grievous misguidance and how it led to shedding Islam altogether, for anyone who follows this logic will shed Islam altogether as a snake sheds its skin, thinking that he is one of the elite of the elite!

The reason for that is that fear of Allah was not connected to love of Him and the divine will. Hence one of the early generations (the salaf) said: Whoever worships Allah on the basis of love only is a heretic; whoever worships Him on the basis of fear only is a Kharijite; and the one who worships Him on the basis of hope only is a Murji'ite. But whoever worships Him on the basis of love, fear and hope is a true believer.

The point is that separating love of Allah and remembrance of Him from fear will lead to this kind of confusion. But once love is connected to fear, then a person will return to the right path, like one who is afraid and has a whip with which he strikes his mount so that it will not stray from the path. Hope is like the one who sings to the mount in order to urge it to move, and love is like leading the mount by the reins; if there is no whip or stick with which to bring the mount back to the right path, it will stray from the path, wander away from it and become lost.



Thus nothing can protect a person from transgressing the limits that Allah has set and what He has prohibited, and nothing can help him to reach Allah like fear of His punishment, hope for His mercy, and love for Him. If the heart is devoid of these three, then it will become so corrupt that there will be no hope of rectification, and if one of these three is weak, his faith will be weak commensurate with that.

End quote from *Majmu` al-Fatawa*, 15/199-21.

For more information, please see the answers to these questions: [220547](#), [87534](#), [307430](#), [104769](#) and [147639](#).

And Allah knows best.