

The concept of fear and its synonyms in the Holy Qur'an: an analytical and explanatory study

Hosein Hashemnezhad, Dr.*Zahra Rezazade Asgari*, Dr. Akbar. Jedi,
Abdulameer Abdulhadi Mohsen

Associate Professor University of Tehran, Faculty of Islamic Studies and Thought

hashemnezhad48@ut.ac.ir

Faculty Member, Faculty of Islamic Thought and Knowledge, University of Tehran

Zasgari@ut.ac.ir

Asst. Prof. Faculty Member, Faculty of Islamic Thought and Islamic Studies, University of Tehran

akbarijedi@ut.ac.ir

Asst. Lect. PhD Student, Faculty of Islamic Thought and Islamic Studies, University of Tehran

abdulameer.abdul@ut.ac.ir

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The main purpose of this research is to examine the concept of "fear" from a thematic perspective within the Holy Qur'an so as to help define its linguistic and religious aspects and determine how it appears and where it occurs. Additionally, the purpose of this research will be to provide an overview of its positive spiritual and educational influences upon the individual and society.

Fear is presented as an integral part of the Qur'anic model of belief and individual growth. Fear has been described by the Qur'an in several ways (fear of God; fear of His punishments; fear in man due to his own nature; fear caused by trials and dangers). Praiseworthy fear causes people to be obedient and to avoid sin while blameworthy fear can cause people to become despondent or prevent them from accepting the truth.

The results illustrate the extent to which fear can have important effects on both the religious education of individuals as well as the spiritual lives of individuals, particularly the development of piety (Taqwa) and the growth of self-regulation and personal responsibility through self-control and by developing a balanced believer.

Keywords: Fear , holy qur'an , piety (taqwa) , qur'anic education , spiritual effects , educational development

Introduction

The Quran provides the foundational basis for Islam's views regarding humanity, life and existence. Because they have such a strong impact on behavior and development of faith based and moral identity, the Quran dedicates a significant amount of space to defining the

mental states that occur among humans. Fear is particularly significant, due to its natural occurrence in human beings. It functions primarily to protect and preserve an individual, but it can refine and govern behavior if it is established on the belief in Allah (SWT) and a sense of His observation and justice.

The Quran is concerned with fear in many different ways. It connects fear with all the prophets and messengers, both believers and disbelievers, as well as to life on earth and to what happens after death. All these different terms for fear that appear in the Quran reflect the detail and the rich vocabulary of the Quran. Furthermore, the Quran does not limit itself to one term of fear; the Quran uses closely related terms of fear including *khashyah* (reverent fear), *rahbab* (dread) *wajal* (trepidation), and *faza'* (fright). Therefore, it is a necessity to analyze the terminology for fear and other related concepts in the Qur'an in order to understand their lexical and terminological aspects, as well as to clarify the semantic differences between those similar terms that are so closely associated with each other; and, furthermore, to identify the pedagogic and belief-based purposes that are being expressed through the use of language in the Qur'anic discourse regarding the subject of fear.

The importance of these subject stems from how it explores a Qur'anic idea which is directly connected to the building of a person's personality as well as the development of behavior. This paper will also help to identify one of the aspects of the Qur'an's semantic inimitability through examining the use of the words for "fear" and their near-synonyms.

The necessity for this to be a study of an analytical/explanatory nature caused it to have to be divided into two primary sections; with each section having two sub-sections as shown below:

Section One: An Analytical and Explanatory Study of the Concept of Fear and Its Near Synonyms in the Qur'an.

- Subsection One: The Concept of Fear: Its Linguistic and Terminological Meanings and Qur'anic Usage
- Subsection Two: The Near-Synonyms of Fear in the Qur'an and the Semantic Distinctions among Them

Section Two: The Thematic Dimensions of Fear in the Qur'an and Its Pedagogical Implications.

- Subsection One: The Contexts and Manifestations of Fear in the Qur'an

- Subsection Two: The Spiritual and Pedagogical Effects of Fear on Individual and Societal Development

Conclusion

References

Section One

The Concept of Fear and Its Near-Synonyms in the Qur'an: An Analytical and Explanatory Study

In Islam, the concept of "fear" is viewed as an inner act of worship. The Islamic view of "fear," therefore, does not simply imply feelings of terror but implies actions taken due to fear, such as refraining from committing sins and performing obedient acts based on the knowledge of Allah (God) and understanding of his greatness. Types of fears include praiseworthy fear. This type of fear of God provides the motivation for obeying him and for avoiding sinful behavior. This fear is considered to be among the greatest religious obligations. In addition, blameworthy fear exists when a person fears a creation of God in something over which he has no control, or when fear causes a person to abandon a religious duty or to do what is forbidden.

Subsection One: The Concept of Fear: Its Linguistic and Terminological Meanings and Qur'anic Usage

Fear is an essential emotional response for humans. As such it has been present as part of the human experience from the very beginning of humanity. In addition to extensive study in linguistics, psychology and Islam, fear has received great focus by Quranic studies due to the significance of fear on both the human's social interaction with other humans, as well as the individual's spiritual connection with Allah. Accordingly, fear is referenced in numerous Qur'anic passages and conveyed through a range of meanings that reveal its psychological, pedagogical, and faith-related dimensions.

First: The Lexical Meaning of Fear

Lexically, *khawf* (fear) denotes terror, fright, and the anticipation of something undesirable. Ibn Fāris states: “The letters *khā’*, *wāw*, and *fā’* constitute a single root denoting terror and fright.”¹ Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī defines it as “the anticipation of something undesirable on the basis of an indication that is either presumed or known.”² Ibn Manẓūr explains that *khawf* means fright and is the opposite of security. The verb is conjugated as *khāfa*–*yakhāfu*, while its verbal nouns include *khawfan*, *khīfatan*, and *makhāfatan*³.

These definitions indicate that fear is a psychological state arising from the anticipation of harm or an undesirable event, whether certain or merely possible. It therefore stands in contrast to a state of security and tranquility.

Second: The Terminological Meaning of Fear

Al-Ghazālī defines fear as “the pain and burning of the heart caused by the anticipation of something undesirable in the future.”⁴ Fear is thus an affective state associated with an individual’s awareness of potential dangers or punishments. Scholars regard fear as an innate characteristic of the human psyche, as it prompts individuals to exercise caution and take appropriate measures to protect themselves from harm.

In psychology, fear is regarded as a natural emotional response to an actual or anticipated threat. It is accompanied by a range of physiological and psychological changes, such as an increased heart rate, muscular tension, and the urge to flee or defend oneself.⁵ Fear may exceed its normal limits and develop into pathological fear when it is excessive or lacks any genuine basis⁶.

Third: Fear in the Qur’an

Fear in the Qur’an does not constitute a single, uniform category. It includes praiseworthy fear, such as fear and reverence of God Almighty; natural and instinctive fear, for which an individual is not blameworthy; and blameworthy fear when it results in the neglect of a religious duty, objection to the commands of God Almighty, or placing fear of created beings above fear of the Creator. Scholars of Qur’anic polysemy (*al-wujūh wa al-naẓā’ir*) have observed that the term *khawf* is employed in the Qur’an in several senses, including fear in its literal sense, knowledge, conjecture, warfare, killing, diminution, and fear of punishment⁷. This semantic diversity attests to the richness and precision of Qur’anic usage in employing words in accordance with their varying contexts.

The Qur’an also portrays the psychological and physical manifestations of fear with remarkable precision, referring to inner agitation, darting eye movements, flight, vigilant anticipation, and other states accompanying this emotion. The Qur’an has shown how early it was to demonstrate the Quran’s knowledge of mental and emotional conditions through its depiction of them in accordance with what is now known by psychologists.

Based on this, one possible definition of fear according to the Quran is an emotional and psychological state that occurs in response to perceived danger or the possibility of undesirable events occurring. One type of fear is the kind that brings someone closer to Allah and results in compliance with Allah’s will. Another type of fear is natural fears related to dangerous aspects of the world. Fear is used by the Quran as an educational/faith-based tool to shape human behavior and direct individuals towards right and just actions.

¹ Mu’jam Maqāyīs al-Lughah, Vol. 2, p. 23.

² Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur’ān, p. 166.

³ Lisān al-‘Arab, Vol. 9, p. 99.

⁴ Ihya’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn, p. 246.

⁵ Dhakhīrat Ta’rīfāt A’lām ‘Ulūm al-Nafs, Vol. 1.

⁶ Al-Mushkilāt al-Nafsiyyah ‘inda al-Aṭfāl, p. 147.

⁷ Nuzhat al-A’yūn al-Nawāẓir fī ‘Ilm al-Wujūh wa al-Naẓā’ir, pp. 280–286.

Section Two: "Synonyms of Fear in the Holy Qur'an and the Semantic Distinctions among Them"

The Qur'an's use of vocabulary related to fear represents an important element of the rich field of semantic meanings present throughout the Qur'anic message. The use of the Qur'anic term for fear, *khawf* (fear), does not stand by itself in the Qur'an but is used with a variety of other terms which are semantically related, such as *khashyah* (reverential fear), *wajal* (trepidation), *rahhah* (dread), *faza'* (fright), *hala'* (panic), and *ishfāq* (apprehension). While all these terms are part of the same semantic field, they have distinct connotations, and therefore can be considered as non-synonyms. Each has unique contextual and situational occurrences that distinguish it from the others.

First: "The Semantic Distinction between *Khawf*" (Fear) and *Khashyah* (Reverential Fear)

Khashyah is also one of the terms that are most closely associated with *khawf*. Scholars, however, have identified subtle distinctions between the two. A number of linguists and Qur'anic exegetes maintain that *khashyah* represents a higher and more intense degree of fear than *khawf* and is associated with the greatness and majesty of that which is feared. By contrast, *khawf* is associated with the weakness of the person experiencing fear and the anticipation of something undesirable⁸. Consequently, a person may fear something weak or insignificant if they believe that it could cause harm, whereas *khashyah* arises only in relation to something of great significance and stature⁹.

This distinction is illustrated in the words of God Almighty: "And those who join what Allah has

commanded to be joined, and fear their Lord, and dread the dire reckoning" (Qur'an 13:21). Here, the Qur'an differentiates between *khashyah*, which is directed toward God Almighty, and *khawf*, which is associated with the severity of the Reckoning. God Almighty also states: "Likewise: human beings, animals, and livestock are of various colors. From among His worshipers, the learned fear Allah. Allah is Almighty, Oft-Forgiving." (Qur'an 35:28). The verse thus specifically associates people of knowledge with *khashyah* because their knowledge of God Almighty and His greatness is more complete than that of others¹⁰.

Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī defines *khashyah* as "fear infused with reverence and rooted in knowledge of that which is feared." Accordingly, *khashyah* is regarded as the fruit of knowledge and understanding¹¹. Some scholars, including Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, define *khashyah* as "fear in a context of hope"; that is, fear accompanied by hope and the aspiration for the mercy of God Almighty¹².

Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī likewise distinguished between the two in terms of their psychological effects. He regarded *khawf* as a state of movement and agitation that impels a person to flee, whereas *khashyah* is a state of inner constriction and stillness arising from the recognition of the greatness of that which is feared and from knowledge of it¹³. Thus, *khashyah* emerges as a more specific and elevated form of *khawf*, as it combines fear with knowledge and reverence.

Second: "The Semantic Distinction between *Khawf*" (Fear) and *Wajal* (Trepidation)

In addition to fear of the heart, *Wajal* includes the feelings of agitation and anxiety of the heart.

⁸ See Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn Fāris ibn Zakariyyā, Mu'jam Maqāyīs al-Lughah, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl), s.v. "kh-sh-y," Vol. 2, p. 185.

⁹ Faḍl ʿAbbās and Sanāʾ Faḍl ʿAbbās, I'jāz al-Qur'ān al-Karīm (edition and publisher not stated), p. 173.

¹⁰ Al-Rāzī, Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, Vol. 23, p. 106.

¹¹ Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān, s.v. "kh-sh-y."

¹² Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, Tafsīr al-Manār, Vol. 2, p. 257.

¹³ Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, Al-Furūq fī al-Lughah, p. 236.

The term "wajal" comes from the Quran. God Almighty states: "Believers are those whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned, and when His revelations are recited to them, they strengthen them in faith, and upon their Lord, they rely" (Qur'an 8:2).

Scholars explain that wajal refers to the heart's agitation and lack of tranquility when contemplating the greatness of God Almighty or fearing that one has fallen short in fulfilling one's duties toward Him. One of the clearest illustrations of this meaning appears in the Prophet's explanation of the verse: "And those who give what they give, while their hearts tremble, knowing that to their Lord they will return" (Qur'an 23:60). When asked about this verse, the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: "No; rather, it refers to a man who fasts, gives charity, and prays while fearing that his deeds may not be accepted from him."¹⁴

Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī maintains that khawf is the opposite of tranquility, whereas wajal refers to the anxiety and inner agitation that affect the heart. Accordingly, one says in Arabic, *anā min hādihā ʿalā wajal* ("I am apprehensive about this"), while the expression *ʿalā khawf* is not used in the same construction¹⁵. Other scholars have described wajal as intense fear, the perception of a hidden danger, or the trembling and breaking of the heart when one whose authority and punishment are feared is mentioned¹⁶.

Accordingly, wajal is more specific than khawf, as it denotes the inner effect of fear upon the heart, whereas khawf remains broader and more inclusive.

Third: The Semantic Distinction between Khawf (Fear) and Rahbah (Dread)

Rahbah is a form of fear infused with reverence, humility, and submission. It is therefore frequently employed in contexts of worship and supplication to God Almighty. God, Glorified be

He, states: "So We answered him, and We gave him John, and We cured his wife for him. They used to vie in righteous deeds. And they used to call on Us, in hope and awe. And they were humble before Us." (Qur'an 21:90).

Rahbah is not merely fear of punishment; rather, it is a form of fear that impels the individual experiencing it to humble themselves and submit before the one who is feared. It is therefore more closely associated with worship and reverent humility. The Qur'an generally employs rahbah in the context of the relationship between the servant and the Lord, indicating that it is more specific than fear in its general sense¹⁷.

Fourth: The Semantic Distinction between Khawf (Fear) and Fazaʿ (Fright)

Fazaʿ denotes sudden terror arising from an emergency or an unforeseen event. Accordingly, the Qur'an associates it with momentous circumstances and the events of the Day of Resurrection. God Almighty states: "The Supreme Horror will not worry them, and the angels will receive them: "The Supreme Horror will not worry them, and the angels will receive them: "This is your day, which you were promised" (Qur'an 21:103).

Fazaʿ is distinguished from khawf by its more pronounced element of suddenness. It is an immediate response to an overwhelming event or unforeseen danger, whereas khawf may arise from anticipating future adversity or perceiving potential harm.

Fifth: The Semantic Distinction between Khawf (Fear) and Halaʿ (Panic)

Halaʿ is regarded as one of the most intense forms of fear because it combines extreme distress with an inability to remain patient. God Almighty states: "The human being was created anxious, touched by adversity, he is fretful,

¹⁴ Al-Tirmidhī, Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Hadith No. 3225.

¹⁵ Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *Al-Furūq fī al-Lughah*, p. 238.

¹⁶ Fāḍil al-Sāmarrāʾī, *Lamasāt Bayāniyyah*, p. 88.

¹⁷ See Al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*, Vol. 1, p. 243.

touched by good, he is ungenerous" (Qur'an 70:19–21).

Linguists have defined *hala'* as extreme distress, impatience, and agitation when adversity strikes, to the extent that the individual experiencing it loses psychological equilibrium and becomes unable to cope with hardship¹⁸. Qutb considers "*hala'*" to be a psychologic condition of reduced certainty and loss of hope. The person experiencing *Hala'* views suffering as perpetual and inevitable; therefore, she/he will experience extreme anguish or intense fright that are unrelenting due to their absolute nature¹⁹.

As a result of these two factors, an individual will perceive their afflictions to be lasting and impossible to escape; therefore, they are subject to extreme despair and a tremendous amount of anxiety

Sixth: "The Distinction between Khawf" (Fear) and Ishfaq (Apprehension)

Ishfaq is a type of fear that includes compassion, love and an anxiety to be harmed. Therefore, it represents softness in one's heart combined with fear of being hurt. Allah says: "They will say: 'We were concerned about our family before (Qur'an 52:26).

Ishfaq is not limited to merely fear; rather, it also encompasses concern and compassion for those whose well-being is at stake. It is therefore semantically more specific than fear in general terms

In conclusion, there are differences among the Qur'anic words for "fear". Each represents a different level or form of emotional response to fear. *Khashyah* is fear rooted in knowledge and respect for God; *wajal* means an agitated and unsettled condition of one's heart; *rahbab* refers to being fearful and submitting (to God); *faza'* is sudden fright; *Hala'* is extreme fear and extreme anxiety as well as losing control of one's temper; *Isfaq* is fear that includes mercy and concern. This semantic diversity demonstrates the richness of Qur'anic language and the precision with

which its terms are selected to suit different contexts.

Section Two

The Thematic Dimensions of Fear in the Qur'an and Its Educational Implications

Fear as understood by the Quran is a belief system and an active behavior which creates one's character and provides for a social structure. As long as fear of Allah exists in the believer's heart, it will illuminate his way and provide light for him so that he can be safe from evil. The devil (Satan) will leave him alone, and he will experience all those things which will cause him to have peace and contentment in this life, and success in the hereafter. Therefore, we will look at the different aspects of fear by examining its two major categories. We will examine the areas and forms where fear manifests itself, and then how fear has an impact on the individual spiritually and educationally.

First Subsection: The Domains and Manifestations of Fear in the Qur'an

The Qur'anic references are representative of various forms and domains of fear that vary based on the subject of the fear and the motivating factor behind it. These domains and manifestations of fear can be grouped together in three major categories based on the thematic uses of fear in the Qur'an

First: Praiseworthy Devotional Fear ("Fear of Standing before God the Divine Threat of Punishment and the Unseen")

Fear of Allah is a fundamental station of faith that has been mentioned frequently throughout the Quran to be an attribute of true believing people. It is referred to by the Quran as one of the most important attributes for the purification of the soul, guidance to correct behavior, and motivation to act with righteousness.

In the Islamic conception, praiseworthy fear is not the kind that engenders despair or loss of hope in God's mercy. Rather, it motivates

¹⁸ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, s.v. "*hala'*."

¹⁹ Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qurʾān*, Vol. 6, p. 3699.

righteous action, cultivates consciousness of divine watchfulness, and deters individuals from disobedience, while sustaining hope in His mercy and forgiveness²⁰.

This constitutes the religiously prescribed form of fear for which God Almighty commends those who possess it. It is rooted in the majesty of divine lordship and the grandeur of divinity, whereby the servant fears standing before the Lord and the consequences of personal shortcomings. Its manifestations include the following:

Reverential Fear of the Most Merciful in the Unseen: This entails maintaining consciousness of God's watchfulness both in private and in public, especially when no one but God can see the individual. God Almighty states: "Who inwardly feared the Compassionate, and came with a repentant heart" (Qur'an 50:33).

Fear of Standing before God and of His Threat of Punishment: This denotes the heart's trepidation at the awe-inspiring scene of the Day of Resurrection and at the fulfillment of God's threat of punishment against the disobedient. God Almighty states: "And We will settle you in the land after them. This is for whoever fears My Majesty and fears My warnings" (Qur'an 14:14).

Fear of the Horrors and Punishment of the Day of Resurrection: This is reflected in the Qur'anic description of the righteous: "We dread from our Lord a frowning, grim Day" (Qur'an 76:10).

In his exegesis of the Qur'anic injunction to fear God as He ought to be feared, al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr states: "The servant worships Him as though he sees Him, knowing that even though he does not see Him, He sees him."²¹

The command to fear God Almighty occurs in numerous Qur'anic passages, including the following: "That is only Satan sowing fear in his allies; so do not fear them, but fear Me, if you are

believers" (Qur'an 3:175); "O Children of Israel! Remember My favors which I bestowed upon you, and fulfill your pledge to Me, and I will fulfill My pledge to you, and revere Me" (Qur'an 2:40); and "We have revealed the Torah, containing guidance and light. The submissive prophets ruled the Jews according to it, so did the rabbis and the scholars, as they were required to protect Allah's Book, and were witnesses to it. So do not fear people, but fear Me. And do not sell My revelations for a cheap price. Those who do not rule according to what Allah revealed are the unbelievers" (Qur'an 5:44). These verses demonstrate that fear of God is an essential requirement of sincere faith and that the believer gives precedence to reverential fear of God over every other form of fear.

The Qur'an also commends those who reverentially fear their Lord in the unseen. God Almighty states: "As for those who fear their Lord unseen—for them is forgiveness and a great reward" (Qur'an 67:12). Exegetes have explained that this refers to those who fear God Almighty in private and in public and remain conscious of His watchfulness, even though they have neither seen His punishment nor witnessed the horrors of the Hereafter. This awareness impels them to obey God and refrain from sin, thereby attaining forgiveness and a great reward²².

The Qur'an further indicates that fear of God Almighty characterized the people of Paradise during their earthly lives. God Almighty states: "They will say, 'Before this, we were fearful for our families. But Allah has blessed us, and He spared us the suffering of the Fiery Wind'" (Qur'an 52:26–27). Here, *ishfāq* denotes fear accompanied by caution and consciousness of divine watchfulness. The faith they had in Jesus helped them be delivered from God's wrath (punishment) and to receive God's favor or pleasure²³.

²⁰ Ibn Qudāmah, *Mukhtaṣar Minhāj al-Qāṣidīn*, pp. 303–304.

²¹ See Ibn Kathīr, *Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, Vol. 8, p. 439.

²² Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, Vol. 23, p. 126; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, Vol. 7, p. 435.

²³ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, Vol. 7, p. 435.

One of the most evident demonstrations of fear rooted in belief is seen with GOD's declaration in Qur'an 23:57 when HE states "those who have a reverent attitude toward their Lord" and then continues to describe them in Qur'an 23:60 as "and those who donate freely while their hearts shudder at the thought of returning to their lord. These verses demonstrate that believers do not merely perform righteous deeds; rather, they remain fearful that their deeds may not be accepted and apprehensive about falling short in their duties toward God Almighty. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) explained that the latter verse refers to those who strive diligently in worship and obedience yet fear that their deeds may not be accepted; it does not refer to those who commit sins and acts of disobedience²⁴.

In the Qur'an, fear is also associated with the prospect of standing before God Almighty on the Day of Resurrection. God Almighty states: "But as for him who feared the Standing of his Lord, and restrained the self from desires. Then Paradise is the shelter" (Qur'an 79:40–41). Consciousness of standing before God Almighty for judgment impels the servant to struggle against the lower self and restrain it from base desires and acts of disobedience, thereby fostering greater adherence to God's commands and prohibitions. The Qur'an therefore presents this fear as a means of attaining Paradise²⁵.

Second: Fear of Created Beings and Disbelievers (Blameworthy Fear and the Prohibition against It)

Conversely, God—Glorified and Exalted be He—forbids Muslims from fearing anyone other than Him and makes clear that such fear diminishes faith. Reverential fear must be reserved exclusively for the One who possesses all power and might, in whose hand lie all lifespans and provisions, and to whom belong absolute dominion and majesty. God Almighty states: "Will you not fight a people who violated

their oaths, and intended to expel the Messenger, and initiated hostilities against you? Do you fear them? It is Allah you should fear—if you are believers" (Qur'an 9:13).

God Almighty declared that the disbelievers had lost hope of overcoming the believers' religion, stating: "Prohibited for you are carrion, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and animals over which any name other than Allah's was pronounced; also the flesh of strangled animals, or killed violently, or killed by a fall, or gored to death, or mangled by wild animals—unless you purify—and animals sacrificed on altars, and the practice of drawing lots. For it is immoral. This day, those who disbelieve have despaired of your religion, so do not fear them, but fear Me. This day, I have perfected your religion for you, and have completed My favor upon you, and have approved for you as a religion, Submission. But whoever is compelled by hunger, with no intent of wrongdoing, then surely Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" (Qur'an 5:3). What reason, then, remains for fear? Accordingly, no believer has any justification for outwardly expressing agreement with the disbelievers or seeking protection through them, as Ḥaṭīb ibn Abī Balta'ah (may God be pleased with him) did when he corresponded with them to safeguard his relatives. God had increased the believers after they had been few, granted them honor after humiliation, and restored through them the guiding light of the divine law. Moreover, God Almighty prohibited fear of the disbelievers in several verses, including: "That is only Satan sowing fear in his allies; so do not fear them, but fear Me, if you are believers" (Qur'an 3:175).

[Documentation and Exegesis]: Imām Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī states in *Jāmi' al-Bayān*: "Will you not fight, O believers, those polytheists who broke the covenant between you and them, aided your enemies against you, expelled the Messenger, and were the first to initiate hostilities against you? Do you fear for your lives because of them and

²⁴ Al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, Hadith no. 3225.

²⁵ Al-'Izz ibn 'Abd al-Salām, *Shajarat al-Ma'ārif*, p. 69.

consequently refrain from fighting them out of concern for your own safety? God has a greater claim upon your fear; you should fear His punishment for abandoning the struggle against them and beware of His wrath, rather than fear these polytheists, who possess no power to harm or benefit you except by God's permission."²⁶

Third: "Fear Arising from Psychological Warfare and the Enemies Alarmist Rumors"

Psychological warfare represents an advanced technique of intimidation used by unbelievers to weaken the resolve of believers. The West's projection of its authority through the entire Muslim World; and display of military capability to intimidate Muslim societies; represent an example of this type of psychological warfare. Because of such pressures within the Muslim community some members have either stopped speaking out publicly regarding Islamic Legal Rulings; or changed them to agree with unbelievers based on their own fears and panic for fear they will be rejected by the Western academic/intellectual community. The psychological effects of these images (for example, a large naval vessel crossing an ocean or a fighter jet soaring in the sky) combined with reports that "a great power is watching you" and counting your each breath demonstrate how the psychological warfare waged by one superpower against Muslims affects their will to resist. The above examples illustrate how the mass media can be used for psychological purposes as part of a broader military strategy.

Psychological warfare is often conducted through rumors, which have been used as weapons of psychological warfare by many nations for both wartime and peacetime purposes. Intellectual and psychological confusion provides an entry point for changing attitudes, manipulating minds, and ultimately exerting control through ideological distortion and brainwashing.

[Documentation and Source]: Psychological warfare is defined as "the planned use, by a state or group of states, in wartime or peacetime, of communication measures intended to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of hostile, neutral, or friendly foreign groups in a manner conducive to achieving the policies and objectives of the state or states employing such measures."²⁷

Second Subsection: The Faith-Related and Educational Effects of Fear in Shaping the Individual and Society

Fear of God Almighty manifests itself at two complementary levels: the individual level, as reflected in personal conduct and worship, and the level of the Muslim community and society, as reflected in their cohesion and strength.

First: Educational and Faith-Related Effects at the Individual Level

The effects of fear on the moral refinement of the individual believer's conduct are manifested through a range of action-oriented motivations and devotional acts that draw one closer to God:

1. Commitment to Acts of Obedience and Devotion and the Cultivation of the Disposition of Taqwā (God-Consciousness):

One consequence of fearing God Almighty is the Muslim's commitment to fulfilling obligatory duties and seeking nearness to Him through supererogatory acts of worship, thereby attaining closeness to God and His love. The essence of taqwā is defined as "fully safeguarding oneself from whatever may cause harm on the Day of Resurrection by fulfilling what has been

²⁶ See al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 11, p. 89 (adapted).

²⁷ See Aḥmad Nawfal, *Al-Ḥarb al-Nafsiyyah*, Book One (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Furqān, 1st ed., 1405 AH/1985 CE), p. 42.

commanded and avoiding prohibited and doubtful matters.”²⁸

This requires that one not be found by God where He has forbidden one to be, nor be absent from where He has commanded one to be. Taqwā is a noble garment, and only those possessed of genuine faith attain the honor of being adorned with it. “Taqwā cannot be separated from Muslim conduct, for it is an ingrained disposition from which such conduct emanates.”²⁹

The following sublime ḥadīth qudsī (divine saying) states: “Whoever displays enmity toward a devoted servant of Mine, I declare war against him. My servant draws near to Me with nothing more beloved to Me than that which I have made obligatory upon him...”³⁰

Taqwā yields profound benefits in shaping the individual. Based on evidence from the Noble Qur’an, these benefits may be summarized as follows:

1. Attaining the Love of God Almighty: “Except for those among the idolaters with whom you had made a treaty, and have violated none of its terms, nor aided anyone against you. So fulfill your treaty with them to the end of its term. Allah loves the righteous” (Qur’an 9:4).
2. Divine Accompaniment and Support: “Allah is with those who are righteous and those who are virtuous” (Qur’an 16:128).
3. An Exalted Rank on the Day of Resurrection: “Beautified is the life of this world for those who disbelieve, and they ridicule those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection. Allah provides to whom He wills without measure” (Qur’an 2:212).
4. Entering Paradise and Abiding Therein Eternally: “And race towards forgiveness from your Lord,

and a Garden as wide as the heavens and the earth: prepared for the cautious” (Qur’an 3:133).

5. The Acceptance of One’s Deeds by God: “And relate to them the true story of Adam’s two sons: when they offered an offering, and it was accepted from one of them, but it was not accepted from the other. He Said, “I will kill you.” He Said, “Allah accepts only from the righteous” (Qur’an 5:27).
6. Receiving Guidance and Benefiting from the Qur’an: “This is the Book in which there is no doubt, guidance for the righteous” (Qur’an 2:2).
7. Protection and Safeguarding from Satan: “Those who are righteous: when an impulse from Satan strikes them, they remind themselves, and immediately see clearly” (Qur’an 7:201).
8. Facilitation of Affairs and Relief from Distress: “Once they have reached their term, either retain them nicely or separate from them nicely. And call to witness two just people from among you. And give upright testimony for Allah. By this is exhorted whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day. And whoever reverences Allah: He will make a way out for him.” (Qur’an 65:2).
9. Forgiveness of Sins and the Enhancement of Reward: “That is the command of Allah, which He has revealed to you. Whoever is mindful of Allah: He will remit his sins, and will amplify his reward” (Qur’an 65:5).

Among the additional benefits of taqwā identified by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah are God’s protection of those who possess it and His not leaving them dependent on anyone besides Him. This is supported by the following verse: “If goodness befalls you, it upsets them; but if something bad befalls you, they rejoice in it. But if you are patient and maintain righteousness, their schemes will

²⁸ ee Nāṣir ibn Sulaymān al-‘Umar, *Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt: Dirāsah Taḥlīliyyah wa Mawḍū‘iyyah* (Riyadh: Dār al-Waṭan, 2nd ed., 1414 AH), p. 226.

²⁹ See Muḥammad Shams al-Dīn, *Bayna al-Jāhiliyyah wa al-Islām* (Lebanon: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1st ed., 1975), p. 175.

³⁰ Recorded by Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Riqāq*, Chapter on Humility, Vol. 4, Hadith no. 6502, Part 7, p. 243.

not harm you in the least. Allah comprehends what they do" (Qur'an 3:120)³¹.

2. The Night Vigil Prayer and Intimate Communion with God in the Depths of the Night:

The servant experiences a happiness and delight beyond compare while communing intimately with God Almighty in the darkness of the night, when people are asleep, motivated by fear of God's punishment and hope for His mercy. God Almighty states: "Their sides shun their beds, as they pray to their Lord, out of reverence and hope; and from Our provisions to them, they give" (Qur'an 32:16). The night is a time of stillness and tranquility, which foster concentration and spiritual clarity. It is a state of seclusion with God that brings intimacy and psychological comfort, causing one to forget bodily weariness and the fatigue of prolonged standing.

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī—may God have mercy upon him—said: "I have found no act of worship more demanding than prayer in the depths of the night." He was asked why people performing the Night Prayer looked so happy. He said that is because they secluded themselves from all else with Allah, the Most Merciful, and thus he clothed them with his Light."³²

3. Sincerity in Deeds; Awareness of Allah's watching over him (Murāqabah); Openness to Reminding:

The fear of God causes the believer to commit acts with sincerity towards God alone and to avoid asking for compensation or recognition for his actions from created beings; "We are feeding you just for Allaah's sake." We desire from you neither compensation nor gratitude. We dread from our Lord a frowning, grim Day." (Qur'an 76:9–10). It also instills continual remembrance

and vigilant self-examination of one's deeds, as God Almighty states: "He who fears will take notice" (Qur'an 87:10). Furthermore, it renders the believer receptive to admonition conveyed through revelation: "We are fully aware of what they say, and you are not a dictator over them. So remind with the Quran whoever fears My warning" (Qur'an 50:45).

The Noble Qur'an associates fear with hope in numerous passages. God Almighty states: "Those they call upon are themselves seeking means to their Lord, vying to be nearer, hoping for His mercy, and fearing His punishment. Your Lord's punishment is to be avoided" (Qur'an 17:57). This indicates that the Qur'anic approach is founded on a balance between fear and hope, with neither permitted to outweigh the other. The believer fears God's punishment while simultaneously hoping for His mercy and forgiveness, thereby maintaining a balanced course in the spiritual journey toward God³³.

Scholars have observed that praiseworthy fear is moderate fear that gives rise to caution, taqwā, spiritual striving against the self, and self-examination. Excessive fear that leads to despair and despondency, by contrast, is blameworthy, while the absence or weakness of fear results in heedlessness and greater audacity in committing sin. In addition to this, researchers have identified that fear is a key motivation for education which influences the development of the individual and leads to improved behavior, through encouraging compliance with Allah's commandments and discouraging those things which are prohibited by Him³⁴.

Fear in the Quran is not simply a natural emotional response; fear is a form of worship within one's self and a high level of faith. It connects individuals to their Lord, renders them

³¹ See Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr, *Badā'i' al-Fawā'id* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, no edition specified), Vol. 2, p. 239 (adapted).

³² See Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī, Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān, *Mukhtaṣar Minhāj al-Qāṣidīn*, p. 67.

³³ See Aḥmad 'Abduh 'Awaḍ, *Al-Taqwā: Dirāsah Tafsiriyyah Lughawiyyah Iḥṣā'iyyah* (Tanta: Dār al-Ṣaḥābah lil-Turāth, 1st ed., 1410 AH/1990 CE), p. 16.

³⁴ See al-Qāsimī, *Maw'izat al-Mu'minīn*, pp. 290–291; Ibn Qudāmah, *Mukhtaṣar Minhāj al-Qāṣidīn*, pp. 303–304.

more vigilant in monitoring their own conduct, strengthens their commitment to obedience, and distances them from sin, thereby enabling them to attain security and salvation in this world and the Hereafter.

Second: Educational and Social Effects at the Societal Level

The effects of fear are not confined to the individual; rather, they contribute to building a strong, courageous, and cohesive society:

1. Cultivating Courage and Fearlessness in the Face of Reproach (Developing a Valiant Character):

The doctrine of divine decree and predestination serves to prevent individuals from acquiring the blameworthy trait of cowardice. It teaches that no human being can avert what God has decreed; therefore, one should be courageous and valiant. In this way, members of society are raised to devote themselves to obedience to God, paying no heed to the attempts of the enemies of truth and the party of Satan to disparage religious people and portray their virtues as faults and their merits as shortcomings, out of envy, hatred, and hostility toward truth and its adherents³⁵.

God Almighty has made it clear that all affairs, whether good or evil, rest in His hand alone. He states: "If Allah touches you with harm, none can remove it except He. And if He intends good for you, none can hold back His grace. He makes it fall on whomever He wills of His servants. He is the Forgiving, the Merciful" (Qur'an 10:107). If God wills to grant a person victory, no one can overcome them; and if He wills to forsake them, no one can grant them victory: "If Allah supports you, there is none who can defeat you. But if He fails you, who is there to help you after Him? So in Allah, let the believers put their trust" (Qur'an 3:160). It is well established that love of worldly life, attachment to it, and fear for one's life or livelihood lead to weakness and the erosion of

character (wahn). The Prophet ﷺ defined wahn as "love of worldly life and hatred of death."³⁶

2. Fortifying Society against Psychological Defeat and Rumors:

Psychological warfare seeks to deprive citizens and combatants of their most valuable asset—their "will to fight." It targets their intellect, thought processes, hearts, and emotions in order to destroy their morale and lead them toward defeat. When the fear of God becomes firmly rooted in society, however, it is transformed into a source of resilience and preparedness, in accordance with God Almighty's command: "And prepare against them whatever forces you can muster, and all the cavalry you can mobilize, to terrify thereby Allah's enemies and your enemies, and others besides them whom you do not know, but Allah knows them. Whatever you spend in Allah's way will be repaid to you in full, and you will not be wronged" (Qur'an 8:60). Thus, the psychological deterrence of adversaries may be achieved through preparedness without actual combat.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) demonstrated mastery of this psychological strategy, having been granted victory through the fear cast into his enemies from a distance of one month's journey. Following the Battle of Uhud, when the Muslims were surrounded on the mountain, the Prophet recognized the significance of the psychological dimension and refused to allow military defeat to be compounded by psychological defeat. He therefore instructed the Muslims to respond to Abū Sufyān with an answer imbued with a firm conviction of spiritual ascendancy: "God is our Protector, whereas you have no protector; our fallen are in Paradise, whereas yours are in Hell." In this manner, society maintains its cohesion in the face of alarmist rumors, while the instruments

³⁵ See: Maḥmūd 'Aktam, Fikr Munīr, prepared and edited by Muḥammad Adīb Yāsirjī, *Fuṣṣilat for Studies, Translation, and Publishing*, n.ed., n.d., p. 448 (adapted).

³⁶ Narrated by Abū Dāwūd, Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath, Sunan Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Malāḥim*, "Bāb fī Tadā'ī al-Umam 'alā al-Islām," Hadith no. 4297, Vol. 4, p. 111. The hadith is classified as ḥasan.

of ideological distortion and brainwashing are neutralized³⁷.

3. Attaining Empowerment, Victory, and Succession to Authority:

According to the Qur'anic sunan (divinely established patterns), collective victory and empowerment on earth are linked to fear of God alone. God grants triumph to those who possess taqwā and fear standing before Him. God Almighty states: "Two men whom Allah had blessed among those who feared, said, "Go at them through the gate. And when you have entered it, you will be victorious. And put your trust in Allah, if you are believers" (Qur'an 5:23). God's promise of succession to authority is likewise conditional upon fear of Him: "And We will settle you in the land after them. This is for whoever fears My Majesty and fears My warnings" (Qur'an 14:14). Reverential fear of God is also a means of attaining collective guidance and the completion of divine favor: "And wherever you come from, turn your face towards the Sacred Sanctuary. And wherever you may be, turn your faces towards it. So that people may have no argument against you—except those who do wrong among them. So do not fear them, but fear Me, so that I may complete My favor upon you, so that you may be guided" (Qur'an 2:150).

It may be concluded from the foregoing discussion that the thematic dimensions of fear in the Qur'an delineate an integrated educational trajectory. This trajectory begins with the purification of the self and the exclusive direction of reverential fear toward God Almighty, proceeds through resistance to external psychological pressures and the enemies' alarmist rumors, and culminates in the formation of a courageous and valiant individual and a strong, cohesive society granted succession to authority on earth³⁸. Fear of God thus constitutes freedom from the fear of created beings, security from the

terrors of the Day of Resurrection, and the foundation of every form of elevation in this world and the Hereafter.

Conclusion

All praise is due to God, Lord of all worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon our master Muḥammad and his chosen family and Companions. To proceed:

This study examined fear in the Noble Qur'an through a thematic approach by systematically surveying the relevant Qur'anic verses, analyzing their linguistic and thematic meanings, and elucidating the various types of fear and their faith-related and educational effects on the lives of individuals and society. The results show that fear is an important belief in education and faith that contributes to the growth of humanity as outlined in the Quran. Fear has two roles - it keeps people away from sin; it encourages people to be obedient. One of the high levels of spirit that can help purify oneself and refine behavior.

The study has shown that in addition to its role in the emotional experience of believers, the Noble Qur'an views fear as an educational tool for encouraging worship (servitude) to God and for developing a sense of the divine's watchful eye over the individual, accountability for his actions and taqwā. The four types of fear found in the Quran are; fearing Allah (God), fearing his wrath for sinning against him, having a fear of failing to carry out your obligations to Allah, and having an intrinsic fear that is felt throughout all aspects of life. Additionally, the Quran teaches us how we can control our feelings of fear and channel them into what they were intended for.

The study found that laudable fear is the type of fear that causes obedience and prevents people from sinning. On the contrary, reprehensible fear is that fear which separates people from the truth, creates a sense of desperation and dejection in them; or makes people submit to those who are

³⁷ See Aḥmad 'Umar Hāshim, *Al-Da'wah al-Islāmiyyah: Manhajuhā wa Ma'ālimuhā* (Cairo: Maktabat Gharīb, no edition specified), p. 148 (adapted).

³⁸ See Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Ḥasanī al-Nadwī, *Rijāl al-Fikr wa al-Da'wah fī al-Islām*, 6th ed., 1403 AH/1983 CE, p. 60.

not God. It was also determined that fear has an important relationship with many of the principal Islamic virtues such as taqwā, hope, tawakkul (the reliance upon God) and patience, thus verifying the interdependent aspect of faith development within the Qur'anic method.

Fear in the Noble Qur'an is a method for developing individual piety as well as social justice. It is the purpose of instilling in individuals a sense of accountability for their actions based on the teaching of the Qur'an. This will help guide individuals toward fulfilling their duty.

Findings

"The study yielded several findings the most significant of which are as follows":

1. Fear is an important Qur'anic theme expressed through various linguistic forms throughout the Qur'an indicating it's role as a core part of the Qur'an's message to help form and educate people on their religious beliefs.
2. In the Noble Qur'an, the term khawf (fear) and its derivatives can be interpreted for a variety of meanings such as fear of Allah, fear of divine punishment, fear which comes from nature, and fear of calamity or danger.
3. In the Holy Quran, there are two types of fear: Praiseworthy fear that induces submission and righteousness; Blameworthy fear that is a cause of timidity, loss of hope, and doubt.
4. One of the greatest levels in Islam is the station of fear for Allah. And it is one of the chief factors leading to soundness of heart and rightfulness of behavior.
5. Fear is linked very strongly to taqwā (God-consciousness) in that fear represents a major motivation for believers to adhere to God's will and avoid disobedience of His commandments.
6. The two are also both intertwined within the Quranic approach as together they create the balance or harmony of faith.
7. Fear of God is an important factor in reducing deviance from morality and behavior and also

preventing or curbing the spread of crime and corruption in society.

8. Fear of God (or fear of punishment) plays a major role in teaching children to be responsible for their actions and to monitor themselves as they grow older.
10. Fear based on faith for Muslims gives them strength and endurance when faced with problems or challenges, as their only source of fear is Allah (God).
11. The Noble Quran also uses various ways to inspire a positive type of fear; this includes depicting scenes of the Day of Judgment, portraying the punishment that awaits those who do not follow the way of God, as well as providing an account of the history of past nations.
12. Fear is also important for the purpose of providing both psychological and social security when regulated by the principles of Islamic law.

This builds a cohesive community with values and morals based on Qur'anic education that has a fear of God Almighty.

13. Recommendations

"In light of the study's findings the researcher recommends the following":

1. More emphasis is needed on the study of education and psychology as they are defined within the Noble Quran, with respect to modern day society.
2. The faith based schooling that has been established by an equal amount of fear and hope needs to have greater involvement in school curriculum's and religious outreach programs.
3. Educational institutions need to support a variety of ways for the younger generation to develop their self-monitoring with the use of the Quran.
4. The behaviors and social implications of the fear of Allah (SWT) should be emphasized in all forms of religious and media communication.
5. Specialized studies of the qur'an should be performed in order to compare and contrast the

- concept of fear with other stations of faith such as love, tawakkul (reliance on god) and hope.
6. Qur'anic guidelines relating to fear can also provide a framework for addressing current psychological and behavioral problems.
 7. Students should be encouraged by researchers to explore thematic values related to education found in the holy qur'an and their role in the development of human character.

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