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See also: ACQUISITION; ALMSGIVING; ARTERIES AND VEINS; ASTRAY; BELIEF; BELIEVERS; BOUNDARIES OF ALLAH; DISBELIEVERS; FEAR; FIRʿAWN; GENEROSITY; HIDING KNOWLEDGE; HOPE; HYPOCRISY AND HYPOCRITES; JĀHLIYYA; KNOWLEDGE; POSSESSIONS AND PROPERTY; RIGHTS; SPENDING; SQUANDERING WEALTH; TRIALS AND STRIFE; WEALTH AND PROSPERITY; ZAKĀT.

AWE OF ALLAH

KHASHYAT ALLĀH

“Fear (*khawf*) mixed with magnification (*taʿzīm*)” is how al-Rāghib al-Aṣḥānī (d. ca.502/1108), the author of the celebrated *Mufradāt al-fāz al-Qurʾān*, defines *khashya*. “It generally arises,” he continues, “from knowledge of the one for whom one has *khashya*; this is why scholars (*al-ʿulamāʾ*) are especially identified with it in His saying: ‘of His servants, surely [those who] are endowed with knowledge have awe of Allah...’ (Q 35:28)” (*Mufradāt*, sub *kh-sh-y*).

Khashya, translated here as “awe”, is the infinitive noun from the root *kh-sh-y* and appears eight times in the Qurʾān (Q 2:74; 4:77 twice; 17:31, 100; 21:28; 23:57; 59:21); the verbal form (*khashīya*) of this root appears forty times. The root carries several meanings, including awe, fear, dread, dislike, hope, and knowledge (Farāhīdī; Ibn Fāris; Fayrūzābādī; Zabīdī; Ibn Manzūr).

Some linguists consider it synonymous with fear (*khawf*) (Farāhīdī; Azharī, *Tahdhīb*), while others hold that *khawf* and *khashya* are distinct from each other as well as from other words—such as *wajal* and *rahba*—used to denote fear. Al-Fayrūzābādī (729-817/1329-1415), for instance, says: “*khashya* (awe), *khawf* (fear), *wajal* (wariness), and *rahba* (dread) are close to each other in meaning, but are not synonyms... *Khashya* is more specific than *khawf*, for *khashya* is [the characteristic of] scholars who have knowledge of Allah Most High. It is fear (*khawf*) associated and linked with gnosis (*maʿrifā*). (...) *Khawf* is movement [of the heart], *khashya* is cessation of movement: it is stillness [of the heart]” (*Baṣāʾir* 2:545-46). Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī (d. 395/1005) likewise distinguishes *khashya* from *khawf*: the latter, he says, relates to what one dislikes (*makrūh*), whereas *khashya* is related to the one who sends the dislikeable and not to the thing disliked (al-ʿAskarī, *al-Furūq*, p. 241). Al-Rāzī (543-606/1148-1209) provides an extensive differentiation between *khawf* and *khashya* in his commentary on Q 50:33, *the one who stood in awe of the Most Merciful*:

According to linguists, awe (*khashya*) and fear (*khawf*) are synonymous, but there is difference between them: awe is due to the augustness (*ʿazama*) of the one for whom one has awe. This is because the combination of the letters *kh-sh-y*, in their various sequences, inherently carries the meaning of reverential awe (*hayba*). [For instance,] *shaykh* (which has the same root letters, but in a different sequence) is used for someone

who is a lord or a person of advanced age, both of whom are imposing (*mahibān*). Fear (*khawf*), on the other hand, is due to the weakness of one who is frightened, because the combination of the letters *kh-w-f*, in their various sequences, inherently point to weakness. (...) Allah Most High has used the word *khashya* in many places [in the Qurʾān] referring to fear (*khawf*), due to the augustness of the one for whom one has awe (*khashya*) [—examples include Q 35:28 and 59:21]. (...) The outcome of this discussion is that if you reflect on the usage of *khashya*, you will find that it is used for fear due [specifically] to the augustness of the object of one's awe; and when you examine the usage of [the word] *khawf*, you will find that its usage is for fear due to the weakness of the one who is afraid. This is the most common usage, although at times it may be used otherwise.

sub Q 50:33

While al-Zarkashī (745-794/ca.1344-1392) maintains that there is no linguistic difference between *khashya* and *khawf*, he nevertheless asserts that there is no doubt that the former is “higher” (*aʿlā*) and “more intense” (*ashadd*) than the latter. When used to describe vegetation, for instance, the former denotes a desiccated shrub (*shajara khashiyya*), whereas the latter used to describe a she-camel (*nāqa khawfāʾ*) denotes a creature that is parched but that has not yet died of thirst. This more intensive sense explains why the word *khashya* is specifically used for Allah, al-Zarkashī continues, as in Q 13:21: *and they stand in awe of their Sustainer (wa yakhshawna Rabbahum) and fear the most severe reckoning (Burhān, Type 46: Alfāz yuzamm bihā al-tarāduf, 4:78).*

From the Divine command to Mūsā, upon him peace (*q.v.*), to go to Firʿawn (*q.v.*) and Say: “*Are you desirous of attaining purity? Then I shall guide you toward your Sustainer, so that you may have awe [of Him]*” (Q 79:18-19), Ibn ʿAṭiyya (d. 546/ca.1151) extrapolates the necessary conditions for awe: knowledge comes after Divine guidance (*q.v.*), and awe comes after knowledge; and of His servants, only those endowed with knowledge have awe of Allah (*Muḥarrar*). Al-Rāzī further comments: “The verse demonstrates that gnosis (*maʿrifā*) of Allah takes preference over [mere] obedience to Him, because Allah mentions guidance and makes awe (*khashya*) contingent upon it—other examples being Q 16:2 and 20:14. The verse also demonstrates that awe cannot be achieved without knowledge, as in His saying, ‘of His servants, surely [those who] are endowed with knowledge have awe of Allah’ (Q 35:28), those being the learned. The verse indicates that awe (*khashya*) is the root of all good deeds

(*al-khashya milāk al-khayrāt*). For whoever stands in awe of Allah will do only good; and whoever has lost it, such a person will have the audacity to commit any evil” (*Tafsīr*). Al-Zamakhsharī (467-538/ca.1074-1143) echoes al-Rāzī in his commentary on the verse, as he calls awe of Allah “the determinant” (*milāk al-amr*): “whoever has it, within him is all virtue; whoever does not have it has the audacity to commit any evil” (*Kashshāf*).

The Qurʾān uses the verbal form *kh-sh-y* for fear rather than awe, as in Q 18:80: *And we feared (fa-khashinā) that he would bring grief upon them by his wickedness and disbelief*. Al-Azharī (d. 370/980), citing al-Farrāʾ, explains this usage as meaning “we knew” and therefore metonymically referring to the fear such knowledge yields. In accounting for the seemingly variant usage of the word, he also states that al-Zajjāj held this to be a statement of al-Khiḍr (*q.v.*) rather than of Allah, and that the subject of the verb may in fact be Allah, in which case the “fear” would be in the sense of “dislike” (*karāha*) (*Tahdhīb*).

The Qurʾān uses the word *khashya* with reference to: (i) awe of Allah, and (ii) awe or fear of other than Allah (*khashya mā siwā Allāh*). The former occurs in thirty-one verses: five times as the construct “awe of Allah” (*khashyat Allāh*) (Q 2:74; 4:77; 24:52; 35:28; 59:21); twice as “awe of the Most Merciful” (*khashyat al-Raḥmān*) (Q 36:11; 50:33); seven times with *Rabb* (with different possessive suffixes: *Rabbahum, Rabbihim, Rabbahu*) (Q 13:21; 21:49; 23:57; 35:18; 39:23; 67:12; 98:8) (see BEAUTIFUL NAMES OF ALLAH); twice as an exception (i.e., referring to *those who have awe of none but Allah*; Q 9:18; 33:39); in twelve verses in verbal form with or without a suffix (Q 2:150; 4:9; 5:3, 44; 9:13; 20:3, 44; 33:37; 79:19, 26; 80:9; 87:10); and once as infinitive noun with a pronoun (Q 21:28). The latter occurs in nine verses (Q 3:173; 4:25; 5:52; 9:13, 24; 17:31; 18:80; 20:77, 94) (for these, see FEAR). According to al-Zamakhsharī, correct faith requires that one have *khashya* of none but Allah (as in Q 33:39; *Kashshāf, sub Q 9:13*). Believers (*q.v.*) are specifically enjoined (Q 5:3) to have no fear or awe of any disbeliever but only of Allah, because in doing so they recognize that He alone is the source of all benefit and harm (*cf. Rāghib, Tafsīr* and Ibn ʿAṭiyya, *sub Q 5:3*).

Awe of Allah (*Khashyat Allāh*)

“Awe of Allah” is variously explained by exegetes as: “to abstain from sins and the unlawful and to have fear of the painful reckoning” (Samarqandī, *sub Q 13:21*); “the bridle that holds back a believer from running into the valley of passions, a rein which pulls him and keeps him steadfast on *taqwā* (God-wariness)”