

Fear and hope — the two wings

The Qur'an almost never names one without the other. Hope on its own becomes presumption; fear on its own becomes despair — and both are named in the Book as the errors of other people.



Call on Him with both

وَأَدْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا

“And call upon Him in fear and in hope.” Not alternating moods — the instruction is for the same supplication.

Qur'an 7:56

Who gets out of bed

تَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا

“Their sides part from their beds; they call upon their Lord in fear and hope.” The night prayer, described by its two motives.

Qur'an 32:16

Tell them both things

نَبِّئْ عِبَادِيَ أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

“Inform My servants that it is I who am the Forgiving, the Merciful.” The sentence does not stop there.

Qur'an 15:49

And the other half

وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْأَلِيمُ

“And that My punishment is the painful punishment.” The next verse. Quoting either one alone is quoting half a sentence.

Qur'an 15:50

What the prophets did

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا

“They used to hasten to good deeds and call upon Us in hope and fear.” Said of Zakariyya and his household.

Qur'an 21:90

Neither one is safe

فَلَوْ يَعْلَمُ الْكَافِرُ بِكُلِّ الَّذِي عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ لَمْ يَأْسَ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ، وَلَوْ يَعْلَمُ الْمُؤْمِنُ بِكُلِّ الَّذِي عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ لَمْ يَأْمَنْ مِنَ النَّارِ

From the hadith of the hundred mercies — neither party would be as it is, if it knew what the other half of the picture holds.

Sahih al-Bukhari 6469

Despair is named a sin

وَلَا تَيْئِسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يَئِيسُ مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

Ya'qub to his sons: “Do not despair of relief from Allah. None despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”

Qur'an 12:87

And so is feeling safe

فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

“None feels secure from the plan of Allah except the losing people.” Both errors, condemned in the same language.

Qur'an 7:99

At the end, both at once

لَا يَجْتَمِعَانِ فِي قَلْبٍ عَبْدٍ فِي مِثْلِ هَذَا الْمَوْطِنِ إِلَّا أَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ مَا يَرْجُو وَأَمَنَهُ مِمَّا يَخَافُ

A dying young man said: “I hope in Allah, and I fear my sins.” He ﷺ said these two never gather in a heart at such a moment without both being answered.

Sunan at-Tirmidhi 983 • hasan; at-Tirmidhi: gharib