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Fear of God means being accountable

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Fear of God essentially means to be aware of the reality that one day we will have to account for our every thought, word and deed before of God. Once a person is convinced that he indeed has to account for all he does in this world; all his actions will be influenced by this truth.

This is what is meant by fear of God. The Quran reaffirms: "On that Day people will come forward in separate groups to be shown their deeds: whoever has done the smallest particle of good will see it; while whoever has done the smallest particle of evil will see it" (99: 6-8).

This concept is illustrated by a small story. Once a taxi driver pulled into a no-parking zone and stopped his taxi to chat with a friend on the sidewalk.

He is later confronted by a traffic policeman who books him for parking in a no-parking zone. The taxi-driver kept denying the charge. The policeman responded by saying nothing, and took him to the nearby police station.

Here, the traffic inspector, at the switch of a button, replays the recording of one of the many surveillance video cameras deployed by the traffic police in New Delhi to monitor traffic violations.

Now the taxi driver saw his every action replayed on the screen in front of him. He is left speechless. Under compulsion, he now has to acknowledge the truth that he had denied.

This is what is going to take place on a far larger and universal scale in the Hereafter. Man must know every moment that he is under the surveillance of God Almighty.

In this life God records our every action and the intentions behind them. We can either mend our ways now or face the punishment on the Day of Judgment.

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