

52) Kinds Of Fear

The scholars of ethics have classified “fear” into different categories as follows:

1– Fear of something that is certain to happen that it has been predestined by God; in traditions, it is called “fate” or “destiny” like dying, becoming orphan, or remaining a widow. Imam Ali (AS) has been reported as saying to an old man, who was present in the Siffeen Battle,: “You do not go up a mountain or go down a valley unless it is decreed by God.”^{[1](#)}

Victory or defeat, honor and disgrace, health and disease are decreed by God. Therefore, the fear of them is useless. Such fear is balanced by religion and reason.

2– Fear of something which is likely to happen, that it may or may not happen like the fear of a possible loss by the enemy, the fear of not having money, the fear of poverty, or the fear of future; like the first one, this kind of fear is also balanced by religion and reason.

3– Fear of something which is at one’s own hand like the fear of divorce, the fear of certain diseases, or entanglements; this kind of fear is undue, for it is in man’s own hand. Hence, one should be careful about what he does instead of having fear.

4– Fear of something which is natural like the fear from a dead person, the fear of darkness when one is alone, or the fear of the Jinn; this fear arises from cowardice and feeble-mindedness. This kind of fear is blamed. Man should overcome this fear.

5– Fear of God’s punishment because of sins, crimes and evil deeds; this kind of fear is not only unblameable, but it is praiseworthy. There are many verses and traditions about this kind of fear. Hence, man should do his best to attain such a station of fear. In a supplication, we read: “O Allah! From You and by You, I beseech for setting my need, and to confer upon me with the grace of making me cast my sight down (against what is unlawful for me to look at) and making me act chastely and making me stop committing any deed that you have deemed unlawful, so that nothing shall be more preferred in my sight than the obedience to You and the fear of You, and doing all that which You love, and avoiding all that which You have detested and warned against.”^{[2](#)}

If one has such a fear, he will be grateful to God and will live a happy life. It is this kind of hope that, in the words of Ameerul Mo'minin, the master of the monotheists Imam Ali (AS), is "safety". It is the garment of devotees, the feature of the pious, the habit of the fortunate ones, as means of faith, attainment of security, imprisonment of the self against sins and a deterrent of the self from disobediences." [3](#)

This is the same fear that, in the words of Imam Ali (AS), is the ultimate goal of the acknowledgement of God and knowledge. [4](#)

[1.](#) Ibid., vol. 2, p. 434.

[2.](#) Supplication of Ramadhan.

[3.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam.

[4.](#) Ibid.

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