

The Quranic Principle of Personal Accountability: "If You Do Good, You Do Good for Yourself; and If You Do Evil, It Is for Yourself" (Quran 17:7)

Introduction

The Quranic verse, "إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا" — translated as **"If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if you do evil, it is for yourselves"** (Quran 17:7) encapsulates a fundamental principle of individual accountability and the direct relationship between human actions and their consequences. This verse, and others similar to it in the Holy Quran, underscores that the ultimate impact of one's deeds, whether righteous or harmful, returns to the doer themselves.

Core Meaning of the Verse

At its heart, the phrase signifies that all human actions carry inherent consequences for the individual's soul and well-being.

Good Deeds (Ihsan)

When a person performs good deeds, they are in effect benefiting their own self. These actions contribute to their spiritual growth, inner peace, and a favorable outcome in this world and the Hereafter.

In Islamic teachings, "Good Deeds" (often referred to as Ihsan or Hasana) embody actions that are pleasing to Allah and carry profound spiritual and worldly benefits for the doer. The concept extends beyond mere physical acts to include the purity of intention and the recognition of divine authority.

Meaning of Good Deeds (Ihsan)

The term Ihsan (doing good) fundamentally means performing an act due to its inherent goodness, free from ulterior or false intentions. A "good deed" is defined as:

- **An Action Pleasing to Allah:** It is an action fit to receive honor from God and capable of elevating good words to Allah, ultimately leading to His reward.
- **Love and Recognition of the Ahl al-Bayt:** According to a tradition from Al-Sadiq, a good deed is the love and recognition of the rights of the People of the Household. From another perspective,

Ayat al-Mawadda (Quran 42:23)

This verse is central to the topic, as it presents love for the Prophet's family not as a mere recommendation, but as the **only reward he sought for his mission**.

قل لا أسألكم عليه أجرا إلا المودة في القربى

"Say, 'I do not ask you for any reward for it except love of [my] relatives.'" (Quran 42:23)

The verse commands the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) to declare that he seeks no material or worldly compensation for conveying the divine message. The sole "reward" he asks of the Muslim community is their **love (mawadda)** for his **near kin (al-qurbā)**.

وقد روي في خبر آخر أن الصادق عليه السلام سئل عن معنى (حي على خير العمل) فقال: خير العمل الولاية. وفي خبر آخر خير العمل بر فاطمة وولدها عليهم السلام (١). باب تفسير الهدى والضلالة والتوفيق والخذلان من الله تعالى

It has been narrated in another tradition that Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) was asked about the meaning of 'hasten to the best of deeds;' Hence he replied: **"The best of the deeds is the Guardianship [al-wilayah]."** In another tradition **the best of deeds is said to be kindness towards Fatimah and her children (peace be upon them)**.

— Al-Tawhid by Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali al-Saduq, Book 2, Chapter 34, Hadith #2

- علي بن إبراهيم عن محمد بن عيسى عن يونس عن أيوب بن الحر عن أبي بصير عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) في قول الله عز وجل ومن يؤت الحكمة فقد أوتي خيرا كثيرا فقال طاعة الله ومعرفة الامام.

Ali ibn Ibrahim has narrated from Muhammad ibn 'Isa from Yunus from Ayyub al-Hurr from abu Basir from Imam abu 'Abdallah (peace be upon him) who has said the following about the words of Allah **'Whoever is given wisdom he has received a great deal of goodness'** (Quran 2:269) **"It means obedience to Allah and knowing who one's Imam is."**

— Al-Kafi (Vol. 1) by Shaykh Muhammad b. Yaqub al-Kulayni, Book 4, Chapter 7, Hadith #11

- علي بن محمد وغيره عن سهل بن زياد عن يعقوب بن يزيد عن زياد القندي عن عمار الاسدي عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) في قول الله عز وجل إليه يصعد الكلم الطيب

والعمل الصالح يرفعه ولايتنا أهل البيت وأهوى بيده إلى صدره فمن لم يتولنا لم يرفع الله له عملا.

Ali ibn Muhammad and others have narrated from sahl ibn Ziyad from ya'qub ibn Yazid from Ziyad al-Qandi from 'Ammar al-'Asadi from abu 'Abdallah (peace be upon him) about the words of Allah, the Most Majestic, the Most gracious. ". . **Good words (worship) will be presented before Him and He will accept good deeds. . .**" (Quran 35:10) The Imam (peace be upon him) said, **"It is our Wilaya Leadership and Guardianship with Divine Authority. He made a gesture with his hands to his own chest saying Allah will not raise the deeds of those who would not acknowledge our Wilaya."**

— Al-Kafi (Vol. 1) by Shaykh Muhammad b. Yaqub al-Kulayni, Book 4, Chapter 108, Hadith #82

الإمام الحسن (عليه السلام) - في جواب رجل قال له: إني من شيعتكم -: يا عبد الله ، إن كنت لنا في أوامرنا وزواجنا مطيعا فقد صدقت ، وإن كنت بخلاف ذلك فلا تزد في ذنوبك بدعواك مرتبة شريفة لست من أهلها ، لا تقل: أنا من شيعتكم ، ولكن قل: أنا من مواليكم ومحبيكم ومعادي أعدائكم، وأنت في خير وإلى خير

Imam al-Hasan (peace be upon him) said in answer to a man who said to him, 'Verily I am one of your Shi'ah', **'O 'Aabdallah, if you are truly obedient to us in our commands and prohibitions, then you are telling the truth. But if not, then do not add to your sins by falsely claiming such a dignified position that you are not worthy of. Do not say, 'I am one of your Shi'ah', but say rather, 'I am one of your adherents and one of your lovers and an enemy to your enemies.' You are [doing] good and aiming towards good.'**

— Tanbih al-Khawatir, v. 2, p. 106

"Hasana" refers to the knowledge of Walayat (the guardianship of the Ahlul Bait) and the love of the Ahlul Bait, signifying that a good deed requires both spiritual recognition and physical action.

- **Actions of the Heart and Body:** "Good-doing" or "righteousness" encompasses both actions originating from the heart, such as true belief and pure intention, and actions of the body, such as the worship of Allah and spending in His way.
- **Link with Good Words:** Good deeds are closely tied to good words, which include the declaration of faith

وبهذا الإسناد قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: الإيمان إقرار باللسان، ومعرفة بالقلب، وعمل بالأركان.

God's Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, "**Faith consists of verbal expression, whole-hearted acceptance and acting accordingly.**"

— Uyun akhbar al-Riḍa (Vol. 2) by Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali al-Saduq, Book 1, Chapter 1, Hadith #17

Good deeds imply the belief in the truth of this statement and the conviction that it is from Allah.

Purity of Intention (Qurbah): The best in good deeds does not refer to quantity but to the correctness and purity of intentions, stemming from an overwhelming respect for Allah and a true intention of seeking nearness to Him (qurbah). If the intention is not pure and for the sake of Allah, the deed may not be considered righteous.

Comprehensive Scope: Good deeds are not limited to grand actions; every small deed, when done with piety, is significant and can be accepted by Allah. They are actions performed in obedience to God's command and out of love for Him.

Examples of Good Deeds

Various examples of good deeds, include:

- Walking with a believing brother to fulfill his need.
- Feeding others and greeting those known and unknown with peace.
- Performing Salat (prayer) in its stipulated hour.
- Showing goodness towards one's parents.
- Engaging in Jihad in the way of Allah.
- Making a brother in faith happy, paying someone's debts, relieving someone from distress, and feeding an indigent person.
- Reconciling between people, lightening the burden of debt for the insolvent, caring for an orphan, stopping someone from bothering a believer.
- Reciting the Quran, thanking Allah for His bounties, consoling a sick person, and escorting a funeral procession.
- Being truthful, remaining honest, performing prayers, fasting, giving Zakat and Khums, and participating in Jihad.

Benefits of Good Deeds

Performing good deeds yields numerous benefits, both in this worldly life and in the Hereafter:

1. Spiritual and Hereafter Rewards:

- **Forgiveness and Proximity to Allah:** Good deeds have the power to erase past sins and bring individuals closer to Allah. They can counteract evil deeds and serve as a reminder for those who remember Allah.
- **Attainment of Paradise:** Good deeds are essential for seeking the pleasure of Allah, attaining paradise, and safeguarding oneself from the torment of hell-fire.
- **Divine Reward and Multiplication:** Allah rewards good deeds, multiplying them seven hundred-fold for each good deed for a Momin servant, or more, or less, as He pleases. According to the Holy Quran, any good deed has a tenfold reward. Those who do good deeds in the world will receive rewards for them, and these rewards will be gathered for them in the Hereafter.
- **Witnesses on Judgment Day:** Good deeds and good words will serve as witnesses on Judgment Day, with angels, the earth, days, nights, and months testifying for the believer.
- **Foundation for a Good Life:** Performing righteous deeds is the foundation of a good life. The Quran states that those who do righteous deeds, whether male or female, will be granted a new life and a good life, and will be rewarded according to the best of their actions. Allah says: "**Surely (as for) those who believe and do good, We do not waste the reward of him who does a good work**" (Quran 18:30).
- **Prepared Path:** A righteous deed paves the way for its doer, similar to how a person sends a servant ahead to prepare everything.
- **Divine Mercy and Wisdom:** Whoever does good deeds without dissimulation will be showered with the rain of mercy, and their tongue will utter words of wisdom.
- **Preservation and Lasting Benefit:**

ما تقدم من خير يبق لك ذخره و ما تؤخره يكن لغيرك خيره

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said: **Whatsoever you send in advance shall be reserved for you, and whatsoever you postpone, its benefit would be only for the others (and its responsibility is your burden)**

— 1. Nahjul Balaghah. Sharh Nahjul Balaghah, vol 18, page 41. Girar Al-Hikam, page 104.

وعن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: إن عمل المؤمن يذهب فيمهد له في الجنة كما يرسل الرجل بغياله فيفرش له، ثم تلا:

It has been reported that Abu 'Abd Allah (peace be upon him) said: **The deed of a believer goes forth and makes preparations for him in Paradise just like a man who sends ahead his servant to furnish and spread out things for him.** Then he (peace be upon him) recited Allah's saying, "**And whoever does good, they prepare (good) for their own souls.** [Quran 30:44]"

2. Worldly Benefits:

- **Joy and Happiness:** Good behavior and deeds are said to bring joy and happiness.
- **Societal Prosperity:** Good behavior is considered half of the religion of Islam and is believed to make cities populous and increase the age of citizens.
- **Immediate Personal Benefit:**

أهل المعروف إلى اصطناعه أحوج من أهل الحاجة إليه، لأن لهم أجرهم وفخره وذكره، فما اصطنع الرجل من معروف فإنما يبدأ فيه بنفسه. (احقاق الحق ج12 ص437)

Imam Mohammad Taqi (peace be upon him): **The people of good deeds are needier towards practicing them than those who have the need of them. Because they (good doers) have the reward, pride and memories of those deeds for themselves and to their credit. So the man who performs a good deed first of all it's, benefit reaches his own self**

— Ehqaq ul-Haqq Vol. 12, P 437

- **The quickest reward:**

أسرع الخير ثوابا البر.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **The fastest good to be rewarded is righteousness. (by Allah (swt) in the Hereafter)**

— Man La Yahduruh al-Faqih (Vol. 4) by Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali al-Saduq, Book 1, Chapter 175, Hadith #5803

رسول الله (صلي الله عليه وآله): إن أسرع الخير ثوابا البر، وإن أسرع الشر عقابا البغي

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **'The good deed to be rewarded the fastest is righteousness, and the evil deed to be punished the fastest is aggression.'**

— al-Khisal, p. 100, no. 81

(عن أبي عبيدة الحذاء اقل: سمعت أبا جعفر محمد بن عيل الباقر عليه السلام) يقول: : اقل رسول هلا (صل هلا عليه وآله) إن أسرع الخير ثواب البر وإن أسرع الشر عقاب البغي، وكفى ابلمرء عيبا ان يبصر من الناس ما يعمى عنه من نفسه، وان يعير الناس بما ال يستطيع تركه، وان يؤذي جليسه بما ال يعنيه

From Abu Ubaida Al-Hadha who said: I heard Abu Jafar Muhammad bin Ali Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) saying: **The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said: The fastest good deed to be rewarded is righteousness, and the fastest evil to be punished is transgression. It is enough of a fault for a person to see in others what he is blind to in himself, to shame people for what he cannot abandon himself, and to harm his companion with what does not concern him.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 15, Section 2, Chapter 36, Hadith 20548

Importance of Correctness and Intention

It is crucial to perform good deeds in the correct manner, as doing them incorrectly can render them unacceptable. This involves:

- **Purity of Action:** To purify your deeds means to perform them in the best way possible, avoiding any corrupting influences. For example, performing Rukoo and Sujood in prayer optimally, avoiding anything that may corrupt a fast, and refraining from forbidden actions during Hajj.
- **Concealment:** The correct approach to performing good deeds is to conceal them rather than boasting or showing them off.
- **Expectation from Allah Alone:** The doer of good deeds should expect their reward from Allah, not from people.

Ultimately, good deeds are an essential component of prayer and are closely linked with faith. Faith is seen as an internal matter reflected in one's actions, serving as the foundation for good deeds, making them truly valuable and worthy.

Evil Deeds (Isaa'ah)

Conversely, when a person commits evil or wrongdoing, they are ultimately harming their own self. These actions lead to spiritual detriment, internal turmoil, and adverse consequences in their life and in the afterlife.

In Islamic teachings, committing evil deeds or wrongdoing (referred to as Isaa'ah, sin, injustice, haram act, or transgression) carries severe and multifaceted consequences for the perpetrator, affecting both their worldly life and their ultimate fate in the Hereafter. These consequences stem from a fundamental principle: a person's actions have direct repercussions that ultimately return to the doer.

The Nature of Evil Deeds (Isaa'ah)

An "evil deed" or "wrongdoing" in Islamic theology encompasses a wide range of actions and beliefs.

- **Denial of the Imam:** According to one perspective, an "evil deed" specifically refers to the denial of the Imam appointed by Allah. Rejecting this rightful guardian is considered a grave sin leading to punishment on the Day of Judgment.
- **Hatred Towards Ahl al-Bayt:** Earning evil is equated with hatred towards the People of the Household (Ahl al-Bayt) and derogation of their rights, leading one to be surrounded by hatred and sins.
- **Specific Transgressions:** This includes actions such as wildly extravagant and self-indulgent spending, deceit, promiscuity, gambling, drinking alcohol, drug abuse, and other deeds condemned in the Quran and sayings of God, Imams, and prophets.
- **Against One's Own Soul:** When someone commits a sin, they are committing it against their own soul, and the responsibility lies solely with them, not with anyone they might blame.
- **Injustice:** Committing injustice against oneself or others is a significant category of wrongdoing.

Consequences in the Hereafter

The ultimate and most severe consequences of evil deeds manifest in the Hereafter.

Direct Recompense and Accountability:

- Whoever does evil will be required to answer for it and will be recompensed with a similar evil deed.
- Every soul will be confronted with all the evil it has done, and will long for a mighty space between itself and that evil. The deeds will appear in repulsive and loathsome forms, inseparable from the individual, as man's deeds are almost a part of his existence.
- A person will be informed of what they have sent forth and what they have put off, being held accountable for their deeds.

Severe Punishment and Humiliation:

- Wrongdoers will face severe punishment and debasement, enduring a painful chastisement.
- Those who earn evil deeds will be fearful of what they have earned, and it will surely befall them.
- Perpetrators will face punishment and humiliation, with a portion of punishment like the portion of their sin, abiding eternally in the Fire.
- Those who commit major sins will face Allah's condemnation and a terrible end, being thrown upon their faces into the Fire.
- Transgression ultimately leads its perpetrators to the Fire.

Loss of Divine Support and Aid:

- Whoever does evil will not find a guardian or helper besides Allah.
- Perpetrators will have no friends to support them, and their burden will not be lightened by any means.
- They shall not be helped when punishment comes.

Nullification and Forfeiture of Good Works:

- Disbelieving in Allah's signs, slaying prophets unjustly, and slaying those enjoining justice leads to works becoming null in this world and the Hereafter.
- Some sins can cause the forfeiture of some good deeds that were previously accumulated.

Increased Burdens and Double Punishment:

- Wrongdoers will bear their own burdens entirely on the Day of Resurrection and also the burdens of those whom they led astray without knowledge. This applies to those who cause corruption and spread evil, as they are responsible for their own sins and the sins of those who follow their example.
- Some sins cause double punishment, as stated in the Quran for certain transgressions.

Then [if you had], We would have made you taste double [punishment in] life and double [after] death. Then you would not find for yourself against Us a helper. (Quran 17:75)

O wives of the Prophet, whoever of you should commit a clear immorality - for her the punishment would be doubled two-fold, and ever is that, for Allah, easy. (Quran 33:30).

Regret and Eternal Abode:

- Wrongdoing ultimately results in regret.
- Their deeds are considered their bad assets and will determine a miserable everlasting life in the next world.

Consequences in This World

Evil deeds also bring about significant negative consequences in the present life.

Return of Evil to the Doer's Soul:

- **"If you do evil, it is for yourselves."** This means the harm and negative impact of wrongdoing ultimately recoil upon the perpetrator.

- Doing evil to others is akin to asking Allah to inflict the same evil upon oneself, as it shows pleasure with the action.

Divine Retribution and Afflictions:

- Allah states that corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea because of what people have earned, causing them to taste part of the consequences of their actions.
- Committing an injustice can lead to being seized for it regarding oneself, one's wealth, or one's children. Allah will turn the injustice against the perpetrator and make His help available to the one wronged.
- Committing an oppressive act can result in Allah afflicting the oppressor, their children, or their progeny with the same oppression.
- Whoever commits an evil deed will receive its retribution in this world itself.

Societal Corruption and Public Exposure:

- Individuals who cause corruption and spread ugly deeds, setting up dens of evil and corrupting society, are responsible for their own sinful deeds and the sins of those who follow their example.
- If someone performs evil deeds in secret, Allah will manifest them after some time, making them known to others.
- Committing unpleasant deeds condemned by Islamic teachings means one cannot escape their consequences, which will ultimately harm them in their life.

Impact on Sustenance and Life Quality:

- Committing sins can lead to persecution by ruling authorities, illness, stopped sustenance, and severe agonies of death.
- Turning away from Allah's remembrance results in a straitened life.
- Sin has severe consequences and leads to quicker remorse.

Spiritual Detachment and Blocked Growth:

- Committing a haram act distances one from nearness to Allah and blocks the process of spiritual growth and sublimity.

Accountability for Inaction:

- Not opposing evil and wrongdoers can lead to being held accountable for inaction, as blame is against those who oppress men and revolt unjustly.

Mitigation and Divine Forbearance

Despite the severe consequences, Islamic teachings also provide avenues for mitigation and emphasize Allah's forbearance.

Good Deeds Erasing Evil Deeds:

- Good deeds have the power to erase evil deeds. Allah expiates evil deeds with every good deed, **"surely the good deeds erase the evil deeds."** (Quran 11:114) serving as a reminder for the mindful.
- It is taught that whenever someone does an evil deed, they should follow it up with a good deed to quickly delete the evil deed, as a good deed can repel the onslaught of an evil one.
- Some good actions can even change evil deeds into good ones through repentance, belief, and performing good deeds. **"Except for those who repent, believe and do righteous work. For them Allah will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful."** (Quran 25:70).

Repentance and Forgiveness:

- Repentance (Tawbah) and submission to Allah can expiate sins. Allah forgives faults altogether for those who have acted extravagantly against their own souls and do not despair of His mercy.

Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful." (Quran 39:53)

And return [in repentance] to your Lord and submit to Him before the punishment comes upon you; then you will not be helped. (Quran 39:54)

Allah's Respite:

- Allah is forbearing and gives people respite until a fixed term. If He were to punish people for their wrongdoing immediately, He would not leave a single creature on Earth. He is not oblivious to wrongdoings but gives wrongdoers respite until a destined day.

Intention vs. Action:

- If a person intends to do an evil deed, it is not immediately recorded in their scrolls until they actually perform it. The Angel "Raqeeb" waits for a period (five or seven hours) before recording the deed, in case the person repents.

Distinction between "Return of Evil" and "Punishment for Evil":

- The return of an evil in kind (retaliation) is considered evil. However, the punishment for an evil act, when administered fairly and justly, is not considered evil. The ethical response to a bad deed is not to retaliate with bad, but to repel it with something better, as instructed by the Quran.

The Role of Repentance (Tawbah)

Repentance is a fundamental and vital concept in Islam, signifying a sincere turning away from sin and towards Allah. It is a crucial means to purify the soul and avoid the dire consequences of evil deeds.

Definition and Importance:

- **Turning to Allah:** Repentance involves seeking forgiveness from Allah for past mistakes or wrongdoings. It is a sincere turning away from sin and towards Allah and entails removing all pollutions of infelicity and disobedience, including polytheism and evil deeds.
- **Means of Deliverance:** Allah has opened the door of repentance to His people, inviting them to purify their souls and save themselves from the consequences of their sins.

الإمام علي (عليه السلام): التوبة تطهر القلوب وتغسل الذنوب

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said, '**Repentance purifies the hearts and washes away the sins.**'

— Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 1355

It is a means of "deliverance" from plunging deeper into sin and starting a "new, honest life."

- **Spiritual Growth:** Repentance is an important aspect of spiritual growth, leading to true faith and enjoying the bounties of obedience and proximity to Allah.

Conditions for Acceptance:

For repentance to be accepted, it must be genuine and accompanied by certain actions:

- **Awareness and Remorse:** A person must first realize, and be sure of, its evil, which then produces regret and remorse.
- **Change of Direction:** This remorse should lead the individual to change his direction to do some good deeds, opposite to that evil one.
- **Formalities:** Repentance entails expressing regret, asking for forgiveness, acquiring habit of doing good deeds, discarding evil deeds.

- **Ignorance and Promptness:** Repentance is particularly accepted for those who do evil "**The repentance accepted by Allah is only for those who do wrong in ignorance [or carelessness] and then repent soon after.**" (Quran 4:17).
- **Belief and Righteous Deeds:** It is most effective when combined with belief and righteous deeds.

Timing of Repentance:

- **Promptness is Key:**

عن عبد الصمد بن بشير، عن أبي عبد هلالا (عليه السالم) اقل: العبد المؤمن إذا أذنب ذنبا أجله هلالا سبع ساعات، إفن استغفر. هلالا لم يكتب عليه شيء، وإن مضت الساعات ولم يستغفر كتب عليه سيئة

From Abdul Samad ibn Bashir, from Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) who said: **When a believing servant commits a sin, Allah gives him respite for seven hours. If he seeks Allah's forgiveness, nothing is recorded against him. But if the hours pass and he does not seek forgiveness, a bad deed is recorded against him.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 1, Chapter 85, Hadith 20995

- **Unaccepted at Death:** Repentance is not accepted "**But repentance is not [accepted] of those who [continue to] do evil deeds up until, when death comes to one of them, he says, "Indeed, I have repented now," or of those who die while they are disbelievers. For them We have prepared a painful punishment.**" (Quran 4:18).

و سئل الصادق عليه السلام: عن قول الله عز و جل «و ليس التوبة للذين يعملون السيئات حتى إذا حضر أحدهم الموت قال إني تبت الآن»

قال «ذاك إذا عاين أمر الآخرة

Imam Jafar ibn Muhammad Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) was asked about the words of Allah (swt), the Mighty and Glorious: **But repentance is not [accepted] of those who [continue to] do evil deeds up until, when death comes to one of them, he says, 'Indeed, I repent now'**. (Surah An Nisa Quran 4:18).

Imam (peace be upon him) said: **That is when they witness the realities of the Hereafter.**

— Man La Yahduruh al-Faqih (Vol. 1) by Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali al-Saduq, Book 1, Chapter 24, Hadith #352

- **Lifelong Vigilance:** Individuals are encouraged to reckon their deeds daily and seek forgiveness, with an emphasis on vigilance, especially as one ages.

Allah's Mercy and Forgiveness:

- **Open Door of Mercy:** "Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful." (Quran 39:53).
- **Acceptance and Pardon:** "And it is He who accepts repentance from his servants and pardons misdeeds, and He knows what you do." (Quran 42:25). He promises to be Forgiving and Merciful to those who repent.
- **Guidance:** The one who repents and turns to good deeds is guided and receives Allah's mercy and forgiveness.

But indeed, I am the Perpetual Forgiver of whoever repents and believes and does righteousness and then continues in guidance. (Quran 20:82)

عن أبي جعفر (عليه السلام) في قوله تعالى: وإني لغفار لمن اتب وآمن وعمل صالحا ثم اهتدى اقل: أأل ترى كيف اشترط، ولم تنفعه التوبة والإيمان والعمل الصالح، حتى اهتدى؟! وهلا، لو جهد أن يعمل ما قبل منه. حتى يهتدي، اقل: قلت: إلى من جعلني هلا فذاك؟ اقل: إلينا

From Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) regarding the Almighty's words: "**And indeed, I am the Perpetual Forgiver of whoever repents and believes and does righteousness and then continues in guidance** (Quran 20:82)." **He said: Do you not see how He set conditions, and repentance, faith, and righteous deeds did not benefit him until he was guided?! By Allah, if he strived to do good deeds, it would not be accepted from him until he is guided. I said: To whom, may Allah make me your ransom? He said: To us.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 1, Section 2, Chapter 29, Hadith 315

Transformative Power of Repentance:

- **Erasure of Sins:** Good deeds performed after evil deeds can wash away its effects from his heart and soul. Obedience to Allah and repentance can expiate the evil deeds of this world and the hereafter. Good deeds erase evil deeds.
- **Replacement of Evil with Good:** "Except for those who repent, believe and do righteous work. For them Allah will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful." (Quran 25:70). This is a manifestation of Allah's mercy and forgiveness.

- **Concealment of Deeds:** When a person truly and sincerely repents, God will conceal that evil deed from them in this world and the Hereafter. This concealment is achieved by causing the angelic scribes to forget the deed, commanding the servant's body to hide it, and even commanding the piece of land where the act was committed to hide the evil deed. Repentance itself acts to effectively conceal an evil deed.

عن معاوية بن وهب اقل: سمعت أبا عبدهللا (عليه السالم) يقول: اذا اتب العبد توبة نصوحا أحبه هللا فستر عليه في الدنيا، والآخرة، قلت: وكيف يستر عليه؟ اقل: ينسي ملكيه ما كتب عليه من الذنوب، ويويح إلى جوارحه أكتمي عليه ذنوبه ويويح إلى بقاع الرض أكتمي ما كان يعمل عليك من الذنوب فيلقى هللا حين يلقاه وليس شيء يشهد عليه بشيء من الذنوب

From Muawiya bin Wahb who said: I heard Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) saying: **When a servant repents with sincere repentance, Allah loves him and conceals his sins in this world and the hereafter.** I asked: How does He conceal it for him? He said: **He makes the two angels forget what they recorded of his sins, and reveals to his limbs to conceal his sins, and reveals to the places on earth to conceal the sins that were committed on them. Thus he meets Allah when nothing bears witness against him regarding any sin.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 1, Chapter 86, Hadith 21009

Elaboration from Quranic Verses

This principle is reiterated across various chapters of the Quran, emphasizing personal responsibility:

Surah Al-Jathiya (Quran 45:15)

"Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against the self. Then to your Lord you will be returned."

This verse directly links the action to the soul and highlights the ultimate return to Allah for reckoning.

Interpretation and Meaning:

This verse conveys several crucial aspects regarding actions, the soul, and accountability to Allah:

1. **Individual Responsibility for Deeds:** The core message is that all deeds, whether good or evil, have direct consequences for the person who performs them. Whoever does a good deed, he will gain the benefits thereof and whoever commits evil acts, he will reap the evil consequences thereof. This principle underscores individual accountability, meaning a person's actions have consequences that affect their own soul. The Quran reiterates this concept in various ways, such as:
 - **"And whoever gives thanks, he gives thanks for [the good of] himself. And whoever is unthankful, then indeed, Allah is Self-Sufficient and Praiseworthy."** (Quran 31:12)
 - **"So whosoever accepts the guidance, it is only for himself and whosoever goes astray, he goes astray merely for his loss."** (Quran 39:41)
 - **"And he who purifies himself, then he purifies solely for his own benefit. And to Allah is the Return [of all]."** (Quran 35:18)
 - **"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity. It will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil] it has earned."** (Quran 2:286)
 - **"Every soul, for what it has earned, will be retained."** (Quran 74:38)

These expressions emphasize that the rewards and evil consequences are solely the individual's share. Good deeds enable a person to tread the path of perfection and soar toward God, while sins lead to depravity, Divine Wrath, deprivation from His Mercy, and ending up with everlasting damnation.

2. **Impact on the Soul:** The phrase "it is for his own soul" (or "for himself") and "it is against himself" highlights the internal and spiritual impact of actions. Good deeds uplift and purify the soul, bringing it closer to God, while evil deeds burden, contaminate, and corrupt the soul. The effects of actions are not external to the individual but fundamentally shape their inner state. The call of prophets and the revelation of divine books, including all Divinely appointed obligations, serve the purpose of guiding humanity towards actions that benefit their souls and deterring them from deeds that harm them. This demonstrates that all divine guidance is a great service rendered to mankind, not to Allah, who is Self-Sufficient, nor to His Messengers, whose reward is with Him.
3. **Free Will and Divine Justice:** The concept of individual accountability is deeply rooted in the principle of free will.

محمد بن أبي عبد الله وغيره عن سهل بن زياد عن أحمد بن محمد بن أبي نصر قال قلت لأبي الحسن الرضا (عليه السلام) إن بعض أصحابنا يقول بالجبر وبعضهم يقول بالاستطاعة قال فقال لي اكتب بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم قال علي بن الحسين قال الله عز

وجل يا ابن آدم بمشيئتي كنت أنت الذي تشاء وبقوتي أديت إلي فرائضي وبنعمتي قويت على معصيتي جعلتك سميعا بصيرا ما أصابك من حسنة فمن الله وما أصابك من سيئة فمن نفسك وذلك أني أولى بحسناتك منك وأنت أولى بسيئاتك مني وذلك أني لا أسأل عما أفعل وهم يسألون قد نظمت لك كل شيء تريد

Muhammad ibn abu 'Abd Allah and others have narrated from Sahl ibn Ziyad from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn abu Nasr who said the following: "Once I asked abu al-Hassan al-Rida (peace be upon him), 'Certain persons of our people believe in compulsion and others believe in people's capabilities. The Imam said, **'Write down, "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, (Imam) Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him), has said that Allah, the Most Majestic has said, 'O son of Adam, through My will it is you who wish. With My power you fulfill your obligations to Me. With My bounties you become strong to sin. I made you to hear and see. Whatever good you receive is from Allah. Whatever evil befalls you is from your own soul. It is because I have more credit in your good deeds than you do and you are more responsible for your bad deeds than I am. It is because I am not questioned about what I do and they are the ones who are questioned about their deeds. I have organized for you all things that you want.'**"

— Al-Kafi (Vol. 1) by Shaykh Muhammad b. Yaquub al-Kulayni, Book 3, Chapter 30, Hadith #12

الإمام الصادق (عليه السلام): من زعم أن الله ٥ يجبر عباده على المعاصي أو يكلفهم ما لا يطيقون فلا تأكلوا ذبيحته، ولا تقبلوا شهادته، ولا تصلوا وراءه، ولا تعطوه من الزكاة شيئا

Imam Jaffar al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said, **'He who claims that Allah coerces His servants to disobey Him or burdens them with that which they cannot endure [i.e. acts of obedience], you must not eat from an animal that he has slaughtered, nor should you believe his testimony, nor pray behind him, nor give him any part of your alms.'**

Bihar al-Anwar, v.5, p. 11, no. 17

عن ابراهيم بن أبي محمود، عن الرضا (عليه السلام) - في حديث - اقل: حدثني أبي موسى بن جعفر (عليه السلام)، عن أبيه جعفر ابن محمد بن عيل (عليه السلام)، انه اقل - في حديث - من زعم ان هلاا يجبر العباد على المعاصي، او يكلفهم ما ال .يطيقون فال أكلوا ذبيحته، وال تقبلوا شهادته، والتصلوا وراءه، وال تطعوه من الزكاة شيئا

From Ibrahim bin Abi Mahmoud, from Al-Ridha (peace be upon him) - in a hadith - he said: My father Musa bin Jafar (peace be upon him) narrated to me, from his father Jafar ibn Muhammad ibn Ali (peace be upon him), that he

said - in a hadith: **Whoever claims that Allah compels His servants to commit sins, or burdens them with what they cannot bear, then do not eat from their slaughtered animals, do not accept their testimony, do not pray behind them, and do not give them anything from zakat.**
Permissibility Of Slaughtered Animals By Different Groups Of Muslim...

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 24, Section 1, Chapter 28, Hadith 30021

عن أبيه، عن الصادق (عليه السلام) اقل: من زعم أن هللا - في حديث - (عن إبراهيم بن أبي محمود، عن الرضا) عليه السلام. يجبر عباده على المعاصي أو يكلفهم ما لا يطيقون قال تعطوه من الزكاة شيئاً

From Ibrahim ibn Abi Mahmud, from Al-Ridha (peace be upon him) - in a hadith - from his father, from Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) who said:
Whoever claims that Allah compels His servants to commit sins or burdens them with what they cannot bear, do not give them anything from zakat.

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 9, Section 6, Chapter 7, Hadith 11899

This clarifies that individuals have the choice to perform good or evil, making them fully responsible for their deeds. Divine retribution and reward are just and correspond to these freely chosen actions.

4. **Return to Allah (Accountability in the Hereafter):** The concluding phrase, **"Then to your Lord you will be returned,"** signifies the ultimate accountability on the Day of Judgment. This return is not merely a physical journey but a spiritual reckoning where every soul will stand before Allah to account for all its actions. This is further supported by other verses:
 - **"Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against the self. Then to your Lord you will be returned."** (Quran 45:15, referencing the concept of return)
 - **"Whoever has done an atom's weight of good, will see it and whoever has done an atom's weight of evil, will also see it."** (Quran 99:7-8)
 - **"The Day every soul will find what it has done of good present [before it] and what it has done of evil, it will wish that between itself and that [evil] was a great distance. And Allah warns you of Himself, and Allah is Kind to [His] servants."** (Quran 3:30)

Allah, who knows what is seen and unseen, will inform individuals of what they have been doing, ensuring complete justice.

Surah Fussilat (41:46)

"Whosoever does righteous good deeds, it is for his own self; and whosoever does evil, it is against his own self. And your Lord is not at all unjust to (His) slaves"

This affirms that Allah is just and does not wrong His servants, implying that consequences are a direct result of their choices.

Individual Accountability for Actions:

The first part of the verse, **"Whosoever does righteous good deeds, it is for his own self; and whosoever does evil, it is against his own self. And your Lord is not at all unjust to (His) slaves"** clearly establishes the principle of personal responsibility.

- **Direct Consequences:** It means that the favorable and unfavorable consequences of a person's conduct directly impact that individual. Good actions benefit one's own soul, leading to Divine Favors. Conversely, evil deeds harm the person who commits them, leading to evil consequences. The torments for disbelievers, for instance, are a direct result of their vicious deeds.
- **No Transfer of Burden:** A person cannot transfer the spiritual consequence or the burden of their deeds to someone else. The Quran consistently emphasizes this, stating that **"every soul shall be fully paid what it has earned"** (Quran 3:25) and **"no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another."**
- **Examples from the Quran:** This concept is reinforced by other verses, such as:
 - **"Every soul, for what it has earned, will be retained."** (Quran 74:38)
 - **"And whoso doth good an atom's weight will see it, and whoso doth ill an atom's weight will see it."** (Quran 99:7-8)
 - **"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity. It will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil] it has earned."** (Quran 2:286)
- **Free Will:** The implication of personal accountability is also tied to the concept of free will.

التوحيد عن الإمام الباقر والإمام الصادق(ع): إن الله عز وجل أرحم بخلقه من أن يجبر خلقه على الذنوب ثم يعذبهم عليها، والله عز من أن يريد أمرا فلا يكون . قال: فسئلا: هل بين الجبر والقدر منزلة ثالثة؟ قال: نعم، أوسع مما بين السماء والأرض

Imam Mohammad Baqir (peace be upon him) said, **'Allah, the Exalted, is too merciful to coerce His servants to sin and then punish them for it. He is**

also too mighty to want something and it not be accomplished.’ Then they were asked whether there is a stance between free will and predestination, to which they replied, ‘Yes, [a stance] wider than the space between the earth and the sky.’

— al-Tawhid, p. 360, no. 3

بحار الأنوار عن المفضل عن الإمام الصادق (عليه السلام): لا جبر ولا تفويض، ولكن أمر بين أمرين . قال: قلت: ما أمر بين أمرين ؟ قال: مثل ذلك مثل رجل رأيته على معصية فنهيته فلم ينته، فتركته ففعل تلك المعصية، فليس حيث لم يقبل منك فتركته كنت أنت الذي أمرته بالمعصية

Imam Jaffar al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said, according to what Mufadhal b. ‘Umar narrated on his authority, ‘There is neither predestination nor free will, but a stance in between them.’ [Mufadhal] asked, ‘What is the stance in between?’ He replied, **‘It is like when you observe a man in sin and you advise him against it but he does not desist from it, so you leave him to his sin. Leaving him to sin after he has rejected your advice does not mean that you commanded him to sin.’**

— Bihar al-Anwar, v. 5, p. 17, no. 27

This confirms that individuals have the choice to act, making them responsible for their choices.

Divine Justice:

The latter part of the verse, **"And your Lord is not at all unjust to (His) slaves"** affirms Allah's absolute justice. This phrase has profound implications:

- **Absolute Equity:** It means that Allah is absolutely just, does not wrong anyone, not even **"an atom's weight"** (Quran 4:40), and will not increase punishment unwarrantedly. Divine justice means giving a justified right to somebody without any discrimination.
- **Rejection of Compulsion (Jabr):** This verse, along with the teachings of the Imams (peace be upon them), refutes the idea of fatalism or compulsion.

الإمام الرضا (عليه السلام): قال الله ّ تعالى: يا بن آدم، بمشييتي كنت أنت الذي تشاء، وبنعمتي أديت إلي فرائضي، وبقدرتي قويت على معصيتي، خلقتك سميعاً بصيراً، أنا أولى بحسناتك منك، وأنت أولى بسيئاتك مني

Imam Ali Ar-Ridha' (peace be upon him) said, **‘Allah, most High, said, ‘O son of Adam! By My will you attained free will, and with the help of My favor, you perform your obligations towards Me, and with My power you feel empowered to disobey Me. I created you with sight and hearing, so I**

deserve more credit for your good deeds than you, while you are to blame for your own misdeeds.'

— Bihar al-Anwar, v. 5, p. 4, no. 3

This emphasizes that God's justice prevents Him from forcing individuals into actions for which they are then punished.

- **Basis of Accountability:** Divine justice ensures that individuals are held accountable for their actions only if they have been informed and guided accordingly. The Quran states, "**We do not punish [any community] until We have sent [it] an apostle**" (Quran 17:15), highlighting that punishment follows fair warning and guidance.
- **Perfection of Allah's Attributes:** Allah's justice implies that He is free from any shortcomings, deficiencies, ignorance, or carnal desires that could lead to oppression. His actions are based on absolute wisdom and justice because He is Eternal, Self-Sufficient, and All-Knowing. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) stated that

الإمام علي (عليه السلام) - لما سئل عن العدل :- العدل إلا تتهمه

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) when asked about faith in Allah's divine justice, replied, '**[Faith in] divine justice is that you do not accuse Him of anything.**'

— Nahjul Balaghah, Saying 470

- **Purpose of Judgment Day:** The concept of divine justice is presented as the main reason for the occurrence of Judgment Day, where every soul will be fully paid what it has earned, and no one will be dealt with unjustly.

Implications on Divine Justice and Individual Accountability:

Surah Fussilat Quran 41:46 powerfully intertwines divine justice with individual accountability.

1. **Fairness of Recompense:** The verse guarantees that the consequences (rewards for good, punishment for evil) are perfectly just because they are directly proportional to the actions performed by the individual. Allah, being perfectly just, will not wrong anyone by attributing actions they didn't do or by punishing them beyond their desert.
2. **Motivation for Righteousness:** Knowing that good deeds are for one's own benefit and evil deeds are against one's own self serves as a powerful motivator for righteous conduct and a deterrent from evil. This personal

impact is coupled with the certainty that Allah, in His perfect justice, will ensure that every individual receives what is due to them.

3. **Refutation of Blame-Shifting:** Since Allah is not unjust to His servants, individuals cannot blame Allah for their evil deeds or for the consequences they face. Their suffering is a direct result of their own choices and actions, aligning with the principle that **"Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]."** (Quran 30:41)
4. **Foundation of Ethical Conduct:** The verse lays a strong foundation for an ethical life based on conscious choice and responsibility, assuring believers that their efforts will be justly rewarded and their transgressions justly accounted for by a God who is utterly free from injustice.

Surah Al-Baqarah (Quran 2:286)

The verse states: **"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity. It will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil] it has earned. "Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred. Our Lord, and lay not upon us a burden like that which You laid upon those before us. Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no ability to bear. And pardon us; and forgive us; and have mercy upon us. You are our protector, so give us victory over the disbelieving people."**

This verse can be broadly divided into two main parts: the declaration of Allah's justice and the subsequent supplication of the believers, led by the Prophet, seeking divine mercy and assistance.

Allah's Leniency and Capacity:

The initial statement, **"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity. It will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil] it has earned"** (Quran 2:286) establishes a core tenet of divine justice: Allah never burdens a soul beyond its endurance. This means that every individual is held accountable only for what they are capable of doing or refraining from, and the consequences of their actions—good or evil—are entirely their own.

- **Individual Accountability:** This principle is further elaborated in other verses, such as **"And for all there are degrees [of reward and punishment] for what they have done, and [it is] so that He may fully compensate them for their deeds, and they will not be wronged."** (Quran 46:19) and **"And**

every soul will be fully rewarded for what it did. And He knows full what they do" (Quran 39:70).

- **Divine Justice and Compassion:** The statement "**Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity.**" signifies Allah's perfect justice, ensuring that no one is wronged or held responsible for deeds in which they had no role. It further clarifies that "**Allah does not Encumber a soul except what it has Given it**" (Quran 65:7), and "**Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity.**" (Quran 2:286) This emphasizes that Allah's commands and prohibitions are always within human capability, aligning with His immense mercy.

This emphasizes that an individual's earnings (good or bad) are solely for or against them.

The Believers' Supplications and Divine Responses:

The latter part of the verse comprises a profound prayer by the believers, echoing the supplications of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny), for which Allah granted immense graces to his community. During his ascension (Mi'raj), the Prophet recited the concluding verses of Surah Al-Baqarah, and Allah responded to each plea:

وقال النبي صلى الله عليه وآله: «وضع عن أمتي تسعة أشياء السهو و الخطأ و النسيان و ما أكرهوا عليه و ما لا يعلمون و ما لا يطيقون و الطيرة و الحسد و التفكير في الوسوسة في الخلق ما لم ينطق الإنسان بشفة

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **Nine things have been lifted from my community: mistakes, errors, forgetfulness, what they are compelled to do, what they do not know, what they cannot endure, superstitions, envy (if not acted upon), and thoughts of doubt in creation as long as a person does not express them verbally.**

— Man La Yahduruh al-Faqih (Vol. 1) by Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali al-Saduq, Book 1, Chapter 15, Hadith #132

عن عبد هلال بن محمد الجعفي، عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام اقل: سمعته يقول: كان رسول هلالا (صل هلالا عليه، وآله) والاستغفار لكم حصنين حصينين من العذاب، فمضى أكبر الحصنين وبقي الاستغفار أفكثروا منه فإنه ممحاة للذنوب (اقل هلالا عز وجل:) وما كان هلالا ليعذبهم وأنت فيهم وما كان هلالا معذبهم وهم يستغفرون

From Abdullah bin Muhammad Al-Jufi, from Abu Jafar (peace be upon him) who said: I heard him saying: **The Messenger of Allah (peace be**

upon him and his family) and seeking forgiveness were two strong fortresses protecting from punishment. The greater of the two fortresses has passed away, and seeking forgiveness remains, so increase in it for it erases sins. Allah the Mighty and Majestic said: **[But Allah would not punish them while you are among them, and Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness]** [Quran 8:33]

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 1, Chapter 85, Hadith 21002

وعن الحلبي، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام)، اقل: اقل رسول هلا (صل هلا عليه وآله): وضع عن امتي الخطأ، والنسيان، وما استكروها عليه

From Al-Halabi, from Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him), who said: **The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said: Lifted from my nation are error, forgetfulness, and what they are compelled to do.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 23, Section 7, Chapter 16, Hadith 29468 Allah

عن عمرو بن مروان، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) اقل: اقل رسول هلا (صل هلا عليه وآله): رفع عن امتي أربع خصال خطأها ونسيانها وما أكرهوا عليه وما لم يطيقوا، وذلك قول هلا عز وجل: (ربنا ال تؤاخذنا إن نسينا أو أخطأنا ربنا وال تحمل). (علينا إصرا كما حملته عل الذين من قبلنا ربنا وال تحملنا ما ال طاقة لنا به) (وقوله: إال من أكره وقلبه مطمئن اباليما

From Amr bin Marwan, from Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) who said: **The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said: Four traits have been lifted from my nation: their mistakes, their forgetfulness, what they are forced to do, and what they cannot bear. And this is in the words of Allah Mighty and Majestic: "Our Lord, do not hold us accountable if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord, do not place upon us a burden like that which You placed on those before us. Our Lord, do not burden us with what we cannot bear" [Quran 2:286] and His words: "except one who is forced while his heart is content with faith" [Quran 16:106].**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 15, Section 2, Chapter 56, Hadith 20770

حدثني أبي عن سعد بن عبد الله عن الحسن بن علي بن عبد الله بن المغيرة عن العباس بن عامر قال قال علي بن أبي حمزة عن أبي الحسن (ع) قال لا تجفوه يأتيه الموسر في كل أربعة أشهر و المعسر لا يكلف الله نفسا إلا وسعها قال العباس لا أدري قال هذا لعلي أو لأبي ناب

My father narrated to me from Sa'd ibn 'Abdillah, from Hasan ibn Ali ibn 'Abdillah ibn Mughirah, from 'Abbas ibn 'Amir, from Ali ibn Abi Hamzah, who said: Abul Hasan (Imam Kazim (peace be upon him)) said: **Do not be negligent toward him (Husain (peace be upon him)). Those who are wealthy should go to him once every four months and as for the insolvents, "Allah does not impose on any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability"** (Quran 2:286). 'Abbas (ibn 'Amir) added: I do not remember if the Imam (peace be upon him) said this statement to Ali (ibn Abi Hamzah) or to Abi Nab.

— Kamil al-Ziyarat by Shaykh Jafar b. Muhammad al-Qummi, Book 2, Chapter 98, Hadith #7

عن محمد بن سنان، عن أبي الحسن (عليه السلام) في قول هلال عز وجل: (والذين إذا أنفقوا لم يسرفوا ولم يقتروا وكان بين ذلك قواماً) اقل: القوام هو المعروف عمل الموسع قدره وعمل المقتر قدره عمل قدر عياله ومؤنته التي هي صالح له ولهم، ال. يكلف هلال نفساً إل ما آتاه

From Muhammad ibn Sinan, from Abu al-Hasan (peace be upon him) regarding the saying of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic: **"And those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just balance between those extremes"** [Quran, 25:67]. He said: **The just balance (qawam) is what is proper according to the capacity of one who has abundance and according to the capacity of one who has little, in accordance with the needs of his dependents and his expenses which are proper for him and for them. Allah does not burden a soul beyond what He has given it.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 21, Section 7, Chapter 27, Hadith 27860

عن جميل بن دراج، عن بكير، عن أبي عبد هلال عليه السلام أو عن أبي جعفر (عليه السلام) - في حديث - إن هلال عز وجل اقل آدم (عليه السلام): جعلت لك أن من عمل من ذريتك سيئة ثم استغفر غفرت له، اقل: أي رب زدني، اقل: جعلت لهم التوبة. أو بسطت لهم التوبة حتى تبلغ النفس هذه، اقل: أي رب حسبني

From Jameel bin Darraj, from Bukayr, from Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) or from Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) - in a hadith - Allah the Mighty and Majestic said to Adam (peace be upon him): **I have granted for you that whoever from your offspring commits a sin then seeks forgiveness, I will forgive them. He said: O Lord, grant me more. He said: I have granted them repentance or I have extended repentance for them until the soul reaches here. He said: O Lord, this is sufficient for me.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 1, Chapter 93, Hadith 21055

عن أبي بصير اقل: قلت البي عبدهللا (عليه السالم:) اي أيها الذين آمنوا توبوا إلى هللا توبة نصوحا (اقل: هو الذنب الذى ال يعود فيه أبدا، قلت: وأينا لم يعد؟ فقال: اي اب محمد ان هللا يحب من عباده المفتن التواب

From Abu Basir who said: I asked Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) about **"O you who believe! Turn to Allah in sincere repentance"** [Quran 66:8]. He said: **It is the sin that one never returns to again.** I said: And who among us has not returned? He said: **O Abu Muhammad, indeed Allah loves from His servants the one who is tested and repents.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 1, Chapter 86, Hadith 21011

عن ابن أبي عمير، عن بعض أصحابنا رفعه اقل: ان هللا اعطى التائبين ثالث خصال لو أعطى خصلة منها جميع اهل السماوات والارض لنجوا بها: قوله عز وجل: (ان هللا يحب التوابين ويحب المتطهرين) فمن احبه هللا لم يعذبه وقوله: (افغفر للذين اتبوا واتبعوا سبيلك وقهم عذاب الجحيم) وذكر الآلايت وقوله: (إل من اتب وآمن وعمل عمال صالحا أفولئك بيدل هللا سيئاتهم حسنات) الآلية

From Ibn Abi Umayr, from some of our companions who raised it saying: Allah gave the repentant three qualities that if one of these qualities was given to all the inhabitants of the heavens and earth, they would be saved by it: His saying: **"Indeed Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean"** [Quran 2:222], **so whoever Allah loves He will not punish, and His saying: "So forgive those who have repented and followed Your path and protect them from the punishment of the Hellfire"** [Quran 40:7], and he mentioned the verses, and His saying: **"Except those who repent, believe and do righteous work. For them Allah will replace their evil deeds with good deeds"** [Quran 25:70].

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 1, Chapter 86, Hadith 21013

وعن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: إن المسلم إذا جاءه أخوه المسلم فقام معه في حاجته، كان كالمجاهد في سبيل الله

It has been reported that Abu 'Abd Allah (peace be upon him) said: **A believer who rises to assist another believer when he comes to him for help is like one who strives in the way of Allah.**

— Kitab al-Mumin by Husayn b. Said al-Ahwazi, Book 1, Chapter 5, Hadith #38

أنصر أخاك ظالماً أو مظلوماً؛ إن يك ظالماً فاردده عن ظلمه؛ وإن يك مظلوماً فأنصره

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **Assist your brother (in faith), being him an oppressor or oppressed; if the former, keep him away from oppression and if the latter, lend him a hand**

— Nahj Al-Fasahah

رسول الله ﷺ (صلي الله عليه وآله) : يجير على امتي أدناهم

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: '**It is up to my community to protect those who are under them** [i.e. non-Muslims living in Muslim lands].'

— Kanz al-'Ummal, no. 10932

Broader Context and Implications:

Surah Al-Baqarah Quran 2:286 thus provides a comprehensive framework for understanding individual responsibility within a divinely merciful and just system. It emphasizes that:

- **Free Will and Accountability:** Humans are given free will and are held accountable for their deeds, with consequences directly attributed to their actions. Each soul gets the benefit of its good deeds and bears the consequence of its bad deeds.
- **Divine Mercy and Leniency:** Allah's justice is always coupled with mercy. The supplications in this verse, and their acceptance, highlight the special favor granted to the community of Prophet Muhammad, lifting many burdens that afflicted earlier nations.
- **Trust in Allah:** Believers are encouraged to put their trust in Allah's justice and mercy, even when facing difficulties. This is further supported by verse Quran 2:284, which states, "**To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Whether you show what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allah will bring you to account for it. Then He will forgive whom He wills and punish whom He wills, and Allah is over all things competent.**" (Quran 2:284)
- **Reward and Punishment in the Hereafter:** The ultimate reckoning and full recompense for deeds occur on the Day of Judgment, where "**And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be treated unjustly.**" (Quran 2:281).

Surah Az-Zalzalah (Quran 99:7-8)

"So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it."

This illustrates the meticulous accounting for even the smallest of deeds.

Surah Az-Zalzalah (Chapter 99) is a powerful and concise chapter of the Quran, comprising eight verses. Its name, "The Earthquake," refers to the cataclysmic events that will precede the Day of Judgment.

Context of the Day of Judgment (Verses 1-6):

1. **The Great Quaking (99:1-3): "When the Earth shall quake with a mighty quaking, And the Earth shall cast forth her burdens, And man shall say (distressed): What has befallen her?"**

This describes an unprecedented, global earthquake, distinct from any ordinary local tremor. The earth will cast out its 'burdens' (athqal), which commentators suggest could refer to human beings emerging from their graves, the minerals and treasures hidden within, or enormous boulders and lava. The most commonly accepted interpretation includes humans being expelled from their graves, akin to Surah Inshiqaq. **"And has cast out that within it and relinquished [it]"** (Quran 84:4). Observing this colossal event, all humanity, believers and disbelievers alike, will be utterly astonished and question what is happening to the Earth.

2. **The Earth as a Witness (Quran 99:4-5): "On That Day, she will recount (all) her news: For that your Lord will have given her inspiration."**

A unique aspect of this Surah is the Earth's role as a direct witness. On the Day of Judgment, the Earth itself will speak and bear witness, recounting all the events and deeds that occurred upon its surface, as commanded and inspired by Allah.

3. **Gathering for Reckoning (Quran 99:6): "On That Day, people shall come forth in groups to be shown their deeds."**

After these cosmic upheavals, humanity will emerge from their graves and be gathered in various groups, perhaps based on locality or the nature of their deeds. The purpose of this gathering is for them to be shown, and to witness, their own actions from their worldly life.

Meaning of Verses Quran 99:7-8: Meticulous Accounting and Consequences:

The climax and central message of the Surah are encapsulated in its final two verses:

- **"So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it."** (Quran 99:7)

- **"And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall behold it."** (Quran 99:8)

These verses provide a profound warning and deterrence, making it unequivocally clear that every single action, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant—even an atom's weight (or a mote's weightparticle)—will be recorded, accounted for, and presented to the doer.

This implies:

- **Comprehensive Accountability:** No deed, whether good or evil, will be overlooked. The concept of atom's weight emphasizes the meticulous and precise nature of divine accounting. As mentioned in Surah Luqman "[And Luqman said], **"O my son, indeed if wrong should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or [anywhere] in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Indeed, Allah is Subtle and Acquainted."** (Quran 31:16), if a deed is even as small as the weight of a mustard seed, Allah will bring it to light, regardless of its secrecy.
- **Direct Confrontation with Deeds:** Individuals will see their deeds. This implies that actions, and other spiritual entities, will be personified and appear in a manifest form on the Day of Judgment. People will find themselves directly confronted with everything they did in this world, unable to escape or deny the consequences. As the Quran states elsewhere, "On the Day when every soul will find itself confronted with all that it has done of good and all that it has done of evil..."
- **Personal Responsibility:** These verses underscore the principle of personal responsibility. Each individual's actions are inextricably linked to them and will accompany them throughout their life, ultimately leading to their reckoning. The notion that his good (deeds) and his evil (deeds) would be with him wherever he may be signifies this intrinsic connection. **"And [for] every person We have imposed his fate upon his neck, and We will produce for him on the Day of Resurrection a record which he will encounter spread open."** (Quran 17:13)

Divine Justice and the Nature of Deeds:

Surah Az-Zalzalah (Quran 99:7-8) reinforces the fundamental principle of Divine Justice (Adl), asserting that Allah is All-Just and will repay every soul according to its deeds without any oppression.

- **Weighing of Deeds:** Other Quranic verses corroborate this concept, highlighting the weighing of deeds on the Day of Judgment. Those whose scales are heavy with good deeds will achieve bliss, while those whose scales are light will face perdition. **"And the weighing [of deeds] that Day will be**

the truth. So those whose scales are heavy - it is they who will be the successful. And those whose scales are light - they are the ones who will lose themselves for what injustice they were doing toward Our verses."

(Quran 7:8-9) **"Then as for one whose scales are heavy [with good deeds], He will be in a pleasant life. But as for one whose scales are light, His refuge will be an abyss."** (Quran 101:6-8). The weight of deeds determines one's destiny.

- **Good Deeds Erasing Evil Deeds:** While strict accountability is emphasized, divine mercy is also present. The Quran states that **"surely the good deeds erase the evil deeds"** (Quran 11:114). This means that righteous actions have the power to mitigate or even nullify the impact of wrongdoings for the mindful.
- **Allah's Power to Change Deeds:** Furthermore, Allah possesses the power to change evil deeds into good ones for those who truly repent and believe. **"Except for those who repent, believe and do righteous work. For them Allah will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful."** (Quran 25:70). This is described as a specific mercy for the repentant sinners among the Shi'ah. According to one narration,

قال: أخبرني أبو غالب أحمد بن محمد الزراري رحمه الله قال: أخبرني عمي أبو الحسن علي بن سليمان بن الجهم قال: حدثنا أبو عبد الله محمد بن خالد الطيالسي قال: حدثنا العلاء بن رزين، عن محمد بن مسلم الثقفي قال: سألت أبا جعفر محمد بن علي عليهما السلام عن قول الله عز وجل: " فأولئك يبدل الله سيئاتهم حسنات وكان الله غفورا رحيمًا "؟ فقال عليه السلام: يؤتي بالمؤمن المذنب يوم القيامة حتى يقام بموقف الحساب، فيكون الله تعالى هو الذي يتولى حسابه، لا يطلع على حسابه أحدًا من الناس، فيعرفه ذنوبه حتى إذا أقر بسيئاته قال الله عز وجل للكتابة: بدلوها حسنات، وأظهروها للناس، فيقول الناس حينئذ: أما كان لهذا العبد سيئة واحدة؟! ثم يأمر الله [عز وجل] به إلى الجنة، فهذا تأويل الآية، وهي في المذنبين من شيعتنا خاصة.

He said: Abu Ghalib Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Zurari, may Allah bless him with mercy, reported to me from my Uncle Abul Hasan Ali ibn Sulaiman ibn al-Jahm, who reported from Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Tayyalisi, who reported from al-Ala' ibn Razin, from Muhammad ibn Muslim al-Thaqafi, who said: I asked Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali, peace be upon him, about the verse (in Quran): **'Those Allah will change their evil deeds into good deeds. Allah is ever all-Forgiving, Merciful.'** (Quran 25:70) He said: **"A believer who will be a sinner will be brought on the Day of Reckoning, and made to stand for accounting. And Allah (Himself) will be in charge of his reckoning, and no other men will know about his reckoning. Then Allah will show him his sins, till when he will confirm his evil deeds, then Allah will command the recorders: 'Change them into good deeds, and display them to the people.' Then the people will ask: 'Did this slave not have even single lapse?' Then Allah will order him to Paradise. This is the true**

meaning of the verse, and it is especially for the sinners among our Shi'ahs."

— Al-Amali by Shaykh Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Mufid, Book 35, Chapter 8, Hadith #8

- **Continuous Recording and Presentation:** Human deeds are continuously recorded,

رسول الله ﷺ (صلي الله عليه وآله): إن المؤمن إذا خرج من قبره صور له عمله في صورة حسنة ، فيقول له: ما أنت فوالله ﷻ إني لأراك امرأ الصديق ؟ ! فيقول له: أنا عملك ، فيكون له [نورا أو قائدا] إلى الجنة . وإن الكافر إذا خرج من قبره صور له عمله في صورة سيئة ، وبشارة سيئة فيقول: من أنت فوالله ﷻ إني لأراك امرأ السوء ؟ ! فيقول: أنا عملك ، فينطلق به حتى يدخل النار

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **'Verily when the believer will come out of his grave, his deeds will come to him personified in a good form, and he will address it asking 'Who are you, for by Allah I see you to be a veracious man indeed!' to which it will reply, 'I am your [good] deed', and it will be a source of light for him and lead him into Paradise. And verily when the disbeliever comes out of his grave, his deeds will come to him personified in an ugly form with an ugly countenance, to which he will ask, 'Who are you for verily I see you to be an ugly man indeed!' and it will reply, 'I am your [evil] deeds', and it will rush off with him to plunge into the Fire.'**

— Kanz al-'Ummal, no. 38963

و روي: «أن أعمال العباد تعرض على رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله و على الأئمة عليهم السلام كل يوم أبرارها و فجارها فاحذروا و ذلك قول الله عز و جل «﴿ و قل ﴿اعملوا فسيرى الله عملكم و رسوله و المؤمنون ﴿﴾

It is reported: **The deeds of the servants are presented to the Messenger of Allah (sw) and to the Imams (peace be upon him) every day, both the good and the evil ones.**

So beware! This is the meaning of Allah's (swt) statement: 'And say: Work; so Allah (swt) will see your deeds, and [so will] His Messenger and the believers' (Surah At-Tawbah Quran 9:105)

— Man La Yahduruh al-Faqih (Vol. 1) by Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali al-Saduq, Book 1, Chapter 28, Hadith #583

عن أبي بصير، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) اقل: تعرض العمال على رسول الله صلياً هلالاً صلحاً هلالاً عليه وآله أعمال العباد كل صباح. أبرارها وفجارها، افحذروها، وهو قول هلالاً عز وجل: (وقل اعملوا فسيرى هلالاً عملكم ورسوله) وسكت

From Abu Basir, from Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) who said: **The actions of the servants are presented to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) every morning, both their righteous and sinful deeds, so be cautious of them. And it is the saying of Allah the Mighty and Majestic: "And say, 'Work, for Allah will see your deeds, and [so will] His Messenger'" [Quran 9:105] And he remained silent.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 1, Chapter 101, Hadith 21102

سألت موسى بن جعفر، (عليه السلام) عن الملكين هل يعلمان ابلذنب إذا أراد العبد أن يفعل، أو الحسنه؟ فقال (عليه السلام): ريح الكنيف والطيب سواء؟! قلت: ال، اقل: إن العبد إذا هم ابلحسنه خرج نفسه طيب الريح، فقال صاحب اليمين لصاحب الشمال: قم فإنه قد هم ابلحسنه، فإذا فعلها كان لسانه قلمه وريقه، مداده أفثبتها له، وإذا هم ابلسيئة خرج نفسه منتن الريح، فيقول صاحب الشمال لصاحب اليمين: قف، فإنه قد هم ابلسيئة. فإذا هو فعلها كان لسانه قلمه وريقه مداده أفثبتها عليه

I asked Musa ibn Ja'far (peace be upon him) about the two angels - do they know about the sin when the servant intends to commit it, or about the good deed? He (peace be upon him) replied: **"Is the smell of filth the same as fragrance?!"** I said: "No." He said: **"When the servant intends to do a good deed, his breath comes out with a pleasant smell, so the angel on the right says to the angel on the left: 'Stand up, for he has intended to do a good deed.' When he does it, his tongue becomes the pen and his saliva becomes the ink, and it is recorded for him. And when he intends to do a bad deed, his breath comes out with a foul smell, so the angel on the left says to the angel on the right: 'Wait, for he has intended to do a bad deed.' When he does it, his tongue becomes the pen and his saliva becomes the ink, and it is recorded against him."**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 1, Section 2, Chapter 7, Hadith 120

Additionally, the deeds of the servants, both good and evil, are presented daily to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) and the Imams (peace be upon him), affirming Allah's statement: **"Work; so Allah (swt) will see your deeds, and [so will] His Messenger and the believers"** (Quran 9:105).

Surah Al-Muddaththir (Quran 74:38)

" Every soul, for what it has earned, will be retained."

This emphasizes that one's soul is bound by its actions, illustrating the inescapable nature of personal accountability.

Surah Al-Muddaththir (Chapter 74) is a significant chapter of the Quran that addresses fundamental aspects of faith, warning, and accountability. While it begins with a divine command to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) to rise and warn, it swiftly transitions to describe the Day of Judgment, the fate of disbelievers, and the universal principle of personal responsibility for one's actions.

Explanation of Surah Al-Muddaththir (Quran 74:38):

The verse Quran 74:38 states: **"Every soul, for what it has earned, will be retained."**

This verse delivers a profound message about individual accountability in the Hereafter. It signifies that on the Day of Judgment, every human being will be held responsible and answerable for all the deeds—both good and evil—that they have committed in their worldly life. The term "held in pledge" (or "rahinah") implies that each soul is captive or bound by its actions, meaning its ultimate fate is determined by what it has acquired or earned. Just as a collateral is held against a debt, a soul is "pledged" by its deeds, and its liberation or condemnation depends on the nature of those deeds.

This emphasizes that individuals are entirely responsible for their own actions. No one can bear the burden of another's deeds, nor can anyone escape the consequences of their own choices. The Quranic verses underscore the importance of personal accountability and responsibility, highlighting that individuals will be judged based on their own actions and efforts. These verses serve as a reminder to individuals to take responsibility for their actions and to strive for righteousness, as they will be accountable for their deeds in the hereafter. Accountability on the Day of Judgment is individual; no one can carry the burden of another's sins.

The Exception: "Except companions of the right hand" (Quran 74:39):

Immediately following this universal declaration of accountability, the Quran presents an exception in verse 74:39:

"Except the people of the right hand"

This exception refers to a specific group of individuals who, by Allah's mercy, may not be held in the same strict pledge as others. A clear interpretation within the Shia context regarding the identity of these companions of the right hand.

According to narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt:

عن محمد بن أبي عمير، اقل: قلت لأبي الحسن موسى (عليه السلام) أخبرني عن تختم أمير المؤمنين (عليه السلام) بيمينه ألي شئ كان؟ فقال: إنما كان يتختم بيمينه لأنه إمام أصحاب اليمين بعد رسول رسول هلالا (صل هلالا عليه وآله)، وقد مدح هلالا أصحاب اليمين وذم أصحاب الشمال، وقد كان هلالا (صل هلالا عليه وآله) يتختم بيمينه وهو عالمة لشيعة يعرفون به وبالجملة على أوقات الصلاة. وإيتاء الزكاة ومواساة الإخوان والمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر

From Muhammad bin Abi Umayr who said: I asked Abu Al-Hassan Musa (peace be upon him) to tell me why Amir Al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) wore his ring on his right hand? He said: **He wore it on his right because he is the leader of the people of the right after the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family). Allah has praised the people of the right and condemned the people of the left. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) used to wear his ring on his right hand and it is a sign for our followers by which they are known, along with maintaining prayer times, giving zakat, helping brothers, commanding good and forbidding evil.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 5, Section 1, Chapter 49, Hadith 5981

الإمام الباقر (عليه السلام): سئلت أم سلمة زوج النبي (صلي الله عليه وآله) عن علي بن أبي طالب (عليه السلام)، فقالت: سمعت رسول الله (صلي الله عليه وآله) يقول: إن عليا وشيعته هم الفائزون

Imam Mohammad al-Baqir (peace be upon him) said, **'Umm Salama, the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), was once asked about [the status of] Ali b. Abi Talib (peace be upon him), to which she replied, 'I have heard the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) say, 'Verily Ali and his Shi'ah are the victorious ones.'**

— Al-Irshad: 1/41.

This interpretation highlights the special status and potential intercession that may be granted to the sincere followers (Shias) of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) and the People of the Household. This exception, however, does not negate the principle of striving for good deeds and avoiding evil. Rather, it signifies a form of divine mercy and a special relationship that these individuals have due to their adherence to the Wilayah (guardianship) of the Ahl al-Bayt.

The Connection to Deeds and Soul's Liberation:

The concept of the soul being "pledged" by its deeds is further elaborated by Imam Abu Abdullah (Imam al-Sadiq):

عن أحمد بن محمد بن خالد رفعه اقل: اقل أبو عبدهللا (عليه السالم): اقصر نفسك عما يضرها من قبل أن تفارقك، واسع في فكاكها كما تسعى في طلب معيشتك، إفن نفسك رهينة بعملك

From Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid who raised it to Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) who said: **Restrain your soul from what harms it before it departs from you, and strive for its liberation just as you strive for your livelihood, for indeed your soul is held in pledge by your deeds.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 15, Section 2, Chapter 39, Hadith 20560

This powerful statement directly links the individual's efforts in this life to the state of their soul in the Hereafter. It encourages proactive self-control, avoiding harmful actions, and diligently working towards the spiritual liberation of the soul, much like one strives for their worldly sustenance. The implication is that the soul's freedom from the "pledge" depends on the quality of its actions while alive.

Role of Intercession and its Limits:

The emphasis on personal accountability is further clarified by understanding the role of intercession (shafa'ah). While the companions of the right hand may benefit from intercession, it is not a blanket exemption from responsibility. The Quran also states:

"So the intercession of intercessors will not benefit them." (Quran 74:48)

This refers specifically to those who commit Kufr (disbelief) and Nasibis (those hostile to the Ahl al-Bayt), for whom "There will be no intercession."

Intercession (shafa'ah) is only possible by Allah's explicit permission. Moreover, On the Day when a soul will not possess for another soul [power to do] a thing; and the command that Day is [entirely] with Allah. Even intercession (Shifa'ah) will only occur with Allah's permission, both for the intercessor and for the one interceded for. This reinforces that while intercession exists as a mercy, it operates strictly under divine will and does not undermine the fundamental principle that each individual is ultimately accountable for their deeds before Allah.

Surah Al-Isra (Quran 17:15)

"No bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another."

This principle confirms that each person is responsible for their own actions and will be judged based on them.

أنزلوا الناس منازلهم من الخير والشر

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **Assign people their due status (value) of good and evil**

— Nahj Al-Fasahah

الإمام علي (عليه السلام): إنه ليس شيء بشر من الشر إلا عقابه ، وليس شيء بخير من الخير إلا ثوابه

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said, '**There is nothing worse than an evil deed except for its own punishment, and there is nothing better than a good deed except for its own reward.**'

— Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon 114

ولا يكونن المحسن والمسيى عندك بمنزلة سواء، فإن في ذلك تزهيذا لأهل الإحسان في الإحسان، وتدريباً لأهل الإساءة على الإساءة (نهج البلاغة لصبحي الصالح، الكتاب 53، ص 430)

Imam Ali (peace be upon him): **Absolutely must never the good doer & the evil doer be equal in your eyes, since, this thing becomes the reason of the inclination of those performing good deeds in their performance of good deeds & the encouragement & incentive of the evil doer upon doing bad deeds**

— Nahjul Balagha Le Sabeeh Al Saleh Qisar ul-Hikam, chapter 35, P 430

Meaning of Surah Al-Isra Quran 17:15:

The verse states:

"Whoever is guided is only guided for [the benefit of] his soul. And whoever errs only errs against it. And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another. And never would We punish until We sent a messenger." (Quran 17:15)

This verse outlines several critical aspects of a person's relationship with their deeds and their ultimate destiny:

1. **Personal Benefit of Guidance and Harm of Error:** Whoever chooses the path of guidance does so for their own benefit, and whoever deviates and goes astray does so to their own detriment. This emphasizes that religious choices and actions have direct consequences for the individual, highlighting personal agency and the immediate impact of one's deeds on one's own soul.
2. **No Transference of Responsibility:** A central tenet expressed is that **"no bearer will bear the burden of another."** This unequivocally establishes the principle of individual accountability, meaning each person is solely responsible for their actions and cannot shift the blame or burden of their sins onto others. The Quran further elaborates on this in related verses, stating: **"Say, "Is it other than Allah I should desire as a lord while He is the Lord**

of all things? And every soul earns not [blame] except against itself, and no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your return, and He will inform you concerning that over which you used to differ." (Quran 6:164). This principle ensures that individuals are accountable for what they strive for and earn, not for the evil deeds committed by others in which they did not participate.

3. **Divine Justice Requires Prior Warning:** The verse concludes by stating: "**And never would We punish until We sent a messenger.**" This signifies Allah's perfect justice, ensuring that no community or individual is held accountable or punished without first having received clear guidance and warning through a divine messenger (Rasool). This highlights that divine retribution is not arbitrary but is preceded by the establishment of clear evidence and communication of divine commands and prohibitions.

Elaboration on Individual Responsibility:

The principle of "**no bearer will bear the burden of another**" is foundational in the Quranic understanding of justice. It means that on the Day of Judgment, each individual's scroll of deeds will reflect only what they themselves have done.

الإمام الباقر (عليه السلام) - في قوله تعالى: «وكل إنسان ألزمناه طائره في عنقه» - يقول: خيره وشره معه حيث كان، لا يستطيع فراقه حتى يعطى كتابه يوم القيامة بما عمل

Imam Mohammad al-Baqir (peace be upon him), with regards to Allah's verse "**We have attached every person's omen to his neck**", said, '**The good and the evil he has done is with him wherever he is, and he cannot separate them until he is given his book about his deeds on the Day of Resurrection.**'

— Tafsir al-Qummi, v. 2, p. 17

Children Are Not Held Responsible for Their Parents' Disbelief

الإمام الباقر (عليه السلام) - في قوله تعالى: «إلا المستضعفين...» - هو الذي لا يستطيع الكفر فيكفر ولا يهتدي سبيل الإيمان فيؤمن، و الصبيان، ومن كان من الرجال والنساء على مثل عقول الصبيان مرفوع عنهم القلم

Imam Mohammad al-Baqir (peace be upon him), **with regards to the Quranic verse: "Except the ones who are deemed weak..."**[Quran 4:98], said, '**This refers to one who is not capable of disbelieving that he may be considered a disbeliever, though neither has he been guided the path of faith that he may have faith. [It also refers to] children, and those people from among men and women who have intellects of children and who are therefore not accountable for their deeds.**'

— Ma'ani al-Akhbar, p. 201, no. 4

The Descendants of al-Husayn's Killers and the Justice of al-Qa'im

عن عبد السالم بن صالح الهروي اقل: قلت البي الحسن عيل بن موسى الرضا عليه السالم: اي ابن رسول هلا ما تقول في حديث روي عن الصادق عليه السالم (اقل إذا خرج القائم قتل ذراري قتلة الحسين) عليه السالم (بفعال آبنها؟ فقال) عليه السالم: هو كذلك، فقلت: قول هلا عز وجل) وال تزر وازرة وزر أخرى (ما معناه؟ اقل: صدق هلا في جميع أقواله، ولكن ذراري قتلة الحسين) عليه السالم (يرضون بفعال آبنهم ويفتخرون بها، ومن رضى شيئاً كان كمن أته، ولو أن رجال قتل ابلمشرق فرضي بقتله رجل ابلمغرب لكان الراضي عند هلا عز وجل شريك القاتل، وإنما يقتلهم القائم) عليه السالم (إذا خرج، لرضاهم بفعل آبنهم).

From Abdul Salam ibn Salih al-Harawi who said: I said to Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (peace be upon him): O son of the Messenger of Allah, what do you say about a hadith narrated from Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) that when the Qa'im rises, he will kill the descendants of those who killed Husayn (peace be upon him) for the actions of their fathers? He (peace be upon him) said: That is correct. So I said: What about Allah's saying "**No bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another**" (Quran 6:164), what does it mean? He said: **Allah is truthful in all His sayings, but the descendants of those who killed Husayn (peace be upon him) are pleased with their fathers' actions and take pride in them. Whoever is pleased with something is like one who committed it. If a man is killed in the east and another man in the west is pleased with his killing, the one who is pleased would be considered a partner in the killing by Allah. The Qa'im (peace be upon him) will only kill them when he rises because of their pleasure with their fathers' actions.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 2, Chapter 5, Hadith 21180

This profound explanation clarifies that the responsibility for the descendants' fate is not merely for the actions of their forefathers, but rather for their own pleasure and satisfaction with those past injustices. By being pleased with the wrongdoing, they become active participants and "associates of the killer" in the eyes of Allah, thereby incurring their own burden. This interpretation perfectly reconciles the apparent contradiction, reaffirming that ultimate accountability is always personal, even when it pertains to historical injustices.

Surah An-Nisa (Quran 4:79)

"Whatever befalls you from a good, so it is from Allah, and whatever befalls you from an evil, so it is from yourselves."

This verse indicates that all good things come from Allah's blessings, while misfortunes or evils are a result of one's own actions, choices, or errors. It is not that Allah wills evil for individuals, but rather that human free will and actions lead to such consequences. The attribution of good and evil to the "self" or "soul" depends on

belief and disbelief, which are within man's power and emanate from his will and choice.

The Ultimate Message of Surah An-Nisa Quran 4:79:

The verse states:

"Whatever of good befalls you, it is from Allah, and whatever of ill befalls you, it is from yourself; and We have sent you as a Messenger unto mankind; and Allah is sufficient (peace be upon him) a witness (thereof)." (Quran 4:79)

The ultimate message of this verse is that all good acts originate from Allah, while all evil deeds stem from one's own self. This principle emphasizes personal responsibility for actions and acknowledges Allah's guiding role in human behavior.

Origin of Good and Evil:

Good from Allah:

From a divine theological perspective, everything is created by Allah, and **"Allah is the Creator of every thing."** (Quran 39:62). Allah has created everything good and beautiful, as the Quran states: **"Who made good everything that He has created."** (Quran 32:7). Thus, whatever good a person experiences, whether it is a virtue, a blessing, or a positive outcome, ultimately emanates from Allah. Allah is **"foremost in bestowing good deeds."**

Evil from the Self:

Conversely, **"whatever befalls you from an evil, so it is from yourselves."** This means that defects, faults, misfortunes, or evil actions are a direct result of human choices and deeds. Humans are foremost in committing sins.

كل بني آدم خطاء، وخير الخطائين التوابين

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **All sons of Adam are wrong doers, and the best among them are the penitent**

— Nahj Al-Fasahah

فمن زعم أنه مجبر على المعاصي فقد أحال بذنبه على الله وقد ظلمه في عقوبته. (تحف العقول ص461)

Imam Ali-un-Naqi (peace be upon him): **The one who thinks he is obliged to commit sin has attributed the responsibility of his sin towards Allah and has accused Him of cruelty and excess upon His servants**

— Tuhaf al-Uqul P 482

- Just as parts of the Earth are dark because they face away from the sun, darkness or evil in human experience is due to the self, not Allah.
- Allah creates grapes, but humans process them into alcoholic beverages, which cause accidents and illnesses.
- Allah gives power, but some use it to oppress the impoverished.
- Allah bestows the mind, but some use it with ill intentions for mischievous and devious purposes.

Therefore, while Allah is the ultimate source of all creation and goodness, humans are the direct agents responsible for their evil deeds.

Human Free Will and Allah's Will:

The verse strongly affirms human free will and accountability. The existence of commands for virtue and prohibitions against vice, as well as verses speaking of blame for evil-doers and praise for good-doers, all serve as proof of human free will. If actions were entirely predestined, such commands, blame, and praise would be meaningless or oppressive. Similarly, the concepts of questioning, judgment, rewards, and punishments on the Day of Judgment confirm that individuals are responsible for their own choices and actions.

The relationship between human free will and Allah's will through an explanation of the verse "**wa ma tasha'una illa an yasha'Allah**" (**You will not will anything except by the will of God**). Misinterpretations suggest this implies humans have no will, leading to belief in predestination. However, according to the Ahlul Bayt, the correct interpretation is that the free will bestowed upon humans originates from Allah's will, and its exercise is by Allah's permission. This means Allah, through His own will, granted humans free will; it does not mean He directly wills every specific action a human undertakes.

Repentance and Ill-Nature

رسول الله ﷺ (صلي الله عليه وآله): لكل ذنب توبة إلا سوء الخلق، فإن صاحبه كلما خرج من ذنب دخل في ذنب

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **'The repentance of every sin is acceptable, except for ill-nature, for indeed the ill-natured person is such that every time he manages to get out of one sin, he plunges into another.'**

— Bihar al-Anwar, v. 77, p. 48, no. 3

أبي رحمه الله، قال: حدثنا علي بن إبراهيم، عن محمد بن عيسى، عن يونس بن عبد الرحمن، عن حفص بن قرط، عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم: من زعم أن الله تبارك وتعالى يأمر بالسوء والفحشاء فقد كذب على الله، و من زعم أن الخير والشر بغير مشية الله فقد أخرج الله من سلطانه، ومن زعم أن المعاصي بغير قوة الله فقد كذب على

الله، ومن كذب على الله أدخله الله النار. يعني بالخير والشر: الصحة والمرض، وذلك قوله عز وجل: (ونبلوكم بالشر والخير فتنة)

My father (RA) said: `Ali ibn Ibrahim said, on the authority of Yunus ibn `Abd al-Rahman, on the authority of Hafs ibn Qurt that Abu `Abd Allah al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said: **The Messenger of Allah (SA) said: Whoever claims that Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, commands immorality and indecency has attributed a lie to Allah. And whoever claims that good and evil take place without the will of Allah, has removed Allah from His Rule. Whoever claims that sins can take place without the power of Allah, has attributed a lie to Allah. And whoever attributes lie to Allah, Allah will cast him into Hell. The meaning of good and evil is health and illness, referring to his saying, the Majestic and Glorious**

— Al-Tawhid by Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali al-Saduq, Book 2, Chapter 59, Hadith #2

This Hadith unequivocally rejects the notion that Allah commands evil, while also affirming His ultimate sovereignty.

Reconciliation with Apparent Contradictions (Surah An-Nisa 4:78 vs. 4:79):

The contradiction between Surah An-Nisa Quran 4:78 and Quran 4:79. Verse 78 notes that when good befalls people, they say "**this is from Allah**," but when evil befalls them, they say "**this is from you (O Prophet)**." It then concludes, "Say: '**All is from Allah**.'" This might seem to contradict verse 79, which states that good is from Allah and evil is from oneself.

The explanation clarifies that verse 78 describes the attitude of people who attribute good to Allah but blame others for misfortunes. However, the command "Say: 'All is from Allah'" in verse 78 refers to Allah's ultimate sovereignty and providence over all occurrences, encompassing His creation of all things and His allowing events to transpire. Verse 79, on the other hand, specifies the source of good and evil deeds in relation to human choice and accountability. Good deeds are ultimately from Allah because He creates the potential for good and guides towards it, while evil deeds are from humans because they choose to misuse their free will and the capacities granted to them by Allah.

Thus, there is no true contradiction. All events ultimately fall under Allah's comprehensive will and knowledge, but the moral responsibility for choosing good or evil within that framework rests squarely on the individual.

Imam Al-Ridha' (peace be upon him) provided profound interpretations of Quranic verses, particularly concerning human responsibility, good and evil deeds, and the boundless scope of divine forgiveness and repentance. His explanations shed light on the meaning of Surah Al-Isra 17:7 and related concepts.

Imam Al-Ridha's Interpretation of Surah Al-Isra 17:7:

قال: وقال الرضا (عليه السلام) في قول الله عزوجل: (إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ - 5 (4) فلها) (3) رب يغفر لها

He said: Al-Rida (peace be upon him) said, regarding the saying of Allah, "**If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if you do evil, [you do it against] yourself.**" (Quran 17:7) **[There is a] Lord that could forgive it.**

— Al-Amali by Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali al-Saduq, Book 1, Chapter 17, Hadith #5

According to Imam Al-Ridha' (peace be upon him), the meaning of this verse, particularly the part about committing evil, is that "**if you do evil, there is a Lord who can forgive you.**" This interpretation emphasizes that even when an individual commits evil, the door of divine mercy and forgiveness remains open through Allah's magnanimity. It underscores the hope for redemption despite one's transgressions.

Responsibility for Evil Acts:

Imam Al-Ridha' (peace be upon him) offered a comprehensive perspective on the responsibility for evil acts, presenting three possibilities and clarifying the correct understanding:

1. **Allah is responsible for evil acts:** This possibility is rejected, as it would imply that Allah punishes His servant for something He Himself is responsible for, which is unjust.
2. **Both Allah and the human being are equally responsible:** This is also deemed unjust, as a stronger partner (Allah) should not punish a weaker partner (human being) in a shared responsibility scenario.
3. **Evil acts are solely the result of human action:** This is the correct understanding. The human being alone is responsible for their evil deeds. In this context, if Allah chooses to punish, it is due to the human's fault. However, if Allah chooses to forgive, it is entirely due to His magnanimity and generosity. This highlights Allah's absolute justice combined with His infinite mercy.

The Importance of Repentance and Forgiveness:

Imam Al-Ridha' (peace be upon him) strongly emphasized the significance of repentance (tawbah) in Islam:

- **Greater Sin in Abandoning Repentance:**

رسول الله ﷺ (صلي الله عليه وآله): لا كبير مع الاستغفار ، ولا صغير مع الإصرار

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: '**No petty sin remains when persisted upon, and no grave sin remains when repented for**' [i.e. the petty sin can be cancelled with persistence and furtherance in it, hence becoming a grave sin, and the grave sin can be annulled with repentance]

— Bihar al-Anwar, v. 73, p. 355, no. 62

رسول الله ﷺ (صلي الله عليه وآله) - وقد سئل عن التوبة النصوح: هو الندم على الذنب حين يفرط منك، فتستغفر الله ٥ بندا متك عند الحافر، ثم لا تعود إليه أبدا

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: '**Sincere repentance is remorse for the sin as soon as it slips out from you; then you ask Allah for forgiveness, then you never return to it.**'

— Kanz al-Ummal, no. 10302

عن كميل بن زياد أنه اقل المير المؤمنين (عليه السلام): العبد يصيب الذنب فيستغفر: هللا فقال: اي ابن زايد التوبة، قلت ليس؟ اقل: ال، قلت: كيف؟ اقل: ان العبد إذا أصاب ذنبا اقل: استغفر هللا ابلتحريك، قلت: وما التحريك؟ اقل: الشفتان، واللسان يريد ان يتبع ذلك ابلحقيقة، قلت: وما الحقيقة؟ اقل: تصديق القلب واضمار أن ال يعود إلى الذنب الذي استغفر منه قلت: اذا فعلت ذلك أفان من المستغفرين؟ اقل: ال النك لم تبلغ إلى الصل بعد، قلت: أفصل الاستغفار ما هو؟ اقل: الرجوع إلى التوبة عن الذنب الذي استغفرت منه وهي أول درجة العابدين وترك الذنب والاستغفار اسم واقع لستة معان، ثم ذكر الحديث نحوه

From Kumayl ibn Ziyad who said to Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him):
When a servant commits a sin and seeks Allah's forgiveness... He said: **O Ibn Ziyad, that's repentance.** I said: Is it not? He said: No. I said: How so? He said: **When a servant commits a sin and says "Astaghfirullah" with movement.** I said: What is movement? He said: **The lips and tongue, intending to follow it with truth.** I said: What is truth? He said: **Confirmation of the heart and concealing the intention to never return to the sin from which he sought forgiveness.** I said: If I do that, am I among those who seek forgiveness? He said: **No, because you have not yet reached the foundation.** I said: What is the foundation of seeking forgiveness? He said: **Returning to repentance from the sin you sought forgiveness for, and this is the first level of worshippers. Abandoning sin and seeking forgiveness comprises six meanings** - then he mentioned the hadith similarly. Obligation Of Sincere Repentance And Its Conditions

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 1, Chapter 87, Hadith 21029

This highlights the critical importance of actively seeking forgiveness and making amends for one's mistakes, indicating that the refusal to repent is a graver spiritual error than the initial sin itself, provided there is a struggle against the sin and subsequent repentance.

- **Conditions for Forgiveness:** While Allah's forgiveness is vast, Imam Al-Ridha' (peace be upon him) also specified conditions under which certain evil deeds of "good-doers" might not be forgiven. These include associating another with Allah (shirk), hurting a friend of Imam Al-Ridha' (peace be upon him), or harboring ill-will towards them, unless the person desists from such behavior. This illustrates that certain actions, especially those related to divine unity and loyalty to the Ahl al-Bayt, carry profound weight in the context of forgiveness.
- **Gracious Forgiveness:** When interpreting the Quranic verse "...**So overlook (any human faults) with gracious forgiveness,**" Imam Al-Ridha' (peace be upon him) explained that

قال وقال الرضا (عليه السلام) في قول الله عزوجل: (فاصفح الصفح الجميل) (5)، - 6 -
(6) قال: العفو من غير عتاب.

And al-Rida (peace be upon him) said, regarding the saying of Allah, "**So, overlook with gracious forgiveness**" (Quran 15:85). He said: **Forgiveness without reproach.**

— Al-Amali by Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali al-Saduq, Book 1, Chapter 17, Hadith #6

Forgiving without any reproach is the meaning of gracious forgiveness. This implies a complete and unconditional pardon, free from any blame or reminder of the past offense.

- **Hidden vs. Open Evil Deeds:**

الإمام الرضا (عليه السلام): المذيع بالسيئة مخذول، والمستتر بالسيئة مغفور له

Imam Ali Ar-Ridha' (peace be upon him) said, '**The one who commits an evil deed openly is disgraced [by Allah], and the one who hides his evil deed [feeling ashamed of it] is forgiven by Allah.**'

— Bihar al-Anwar, v. 73, p. 356, no. 67

This emphasizes the moral distinction between publicly flaunting sin and privately regretting it, suggesting that the latter disposition is more conducive to divine mercy.

قال: وقال الرضا (عليه السلام) في قول الله عزوجل: (إن أحسنتم أحسنتم لانفسكم وإن أسأتم (4) فلها) (3) رب يغفر لها

He said: Al-Rida (peace be upon him) said, regarding the saying of Allah, **"If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if you do evil, [you do it against] yourself."** (Quran 17:7) **[There is a] Lord that could forgive it.**

— Al-Amali by Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali al-Saduq, Book 1, Chapter 17, Hadith #5

Imam Al-Ridha's interpretation of Surah Al-Isra Quran 17:7, coupled with his broader teachings, portrays a divinely just system where humans are responsible for their choices, yet Allah's mercy and the path of repentance offer profound hope for forgiveness and spiritual redemption.

Manifestation of Deeds

The consequences of actions are not always confined to the inner self but can also manifest outwardly.

إني ال تعشي مع أبي عبد هلا (عليه السالم) إذ تال هذه آآية: بل الإنسان عدل نفسه بصيرة ولو ألقى معاذيره ثم اقل: ما يصنع الإنسان أن يتقرب إلى هلا عز وجل بخالف ما يعلم هلا؟! إن رسول هلا) صل هلا عليه وآله (كان يقول: من أسر .سريرة رداه هلا رداها، إن خيرا فخير، وإن شرا فشر

I was having dinner with Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) when he recited this verse: **Nay, man will be evidence against himself, even though he were to put forth his excuses** [Quran, 75:14-15]. Then he said: **What good would it do for a person to try to get closer to Allah the Mighty and Sublime by doing contrary to what Allah knows?! Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) used to say: Whoever conceals something in secret, Allah will clothe him with it openly - if good then good, and if evil then evil.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 1, Section 2, Chapter 11, Hadith 142

This emphasizes that one's inner intentions and hidden deeds can ultimately become apparent in their life and character.

In Islam, a fundamental principle emphasizes that a person's inner intentions and hidden deeds will inevitably become apparent, outwardly manifesting in various forms. This principle is rooted in the omniscient knowledge of Allah, who is aware of all secrets and intentions, whether they are concealed or revealed.

Allah's Omniscience and the Revelation of Secrets:

Allah knows everything about the secrets and intentions of people, including what they keep hidden in their hearts and what they reveal publicly. The Quran states that Allah is all-knowing and aware of what is in one's heart, whether it is hidden or manifest. This means that individuals cannot hide from Allah's knowledge, and their true intentions and actions are known only to Him, the ultimate judge of deeds. As such, manifesting or hiding one's intentions and actions has no bearing on Allah's knowledge and power to take account of them. Allah will call individuals to account according to their intentions and actions, whether they are manifested or hidden.

The Principle: Inner Intentions and Hidden Deeds Becoming Apparent:

The Islamic teachings highlight that the true nature of a person, born from their intentions and secret actions, will eventually be unveiled. This is powerfully conveyed in the narration from the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.w.):

أن رسول هلالا (صل هلالا عليه وآله وسلم) كان يقول: من أسر سريرة رداه هلالا- في حديث- (عن أبي عبد هلالا) عليه السالم. رداها، إن خيرا فخيرا، وإن شرا فشر

From Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him), in a hadith, that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) used to say: **Whoever conceals a secret intention, Allah will clothe him with its garment; if good then good, and if evil then evil.** Shaykh Hurr Amili This includes both intention and action, and there are many similar hadiths.

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 1, Section 2, Chapter 7, Hadith 118

This narration, along with others, illustrates a profound spiritual reality:

- **The Garment Metaphor:** The "garment" signifies that a person's inner self—their beliefs, intentions, and hidden deeds—will become their outward appearance, reputation, or the consequences they face in this life and the Hereafter. If the inner self is pure and good, the "garment" will be beautiful and lead to positive manifestations. Conversely, if the inner self is corrupt and evil, the "garment" will be ugly, bringing forth negative outcomes. As stated by God's Prophet (s.a.w.w.), if one hides their inner self, God will make their inner self appear as a garment on them; if their inner self is good, the garment will look nice, but if their inner self is evil, the garment will look bad.
- **Divine Manifestation:** It means that Allah will ultimately reveal the true essence of an individual's hidden conduct. This revelation can occur in the form of one's reputation among people, the correction or corruption of one's public affairs, or the direct consequences experienced in life.

وقال (عليه السلام): ما أضمر أحد شيئا إلا ظهر في فلتات لسانه و صفحات وجهه

Amir al-muminin, peace be upon him, said: **Whenever a person conceals a thing in his heart it manifests itself through unintentional words from his tongue and (in) the expressions of his face.**

— Nahj al-Balagha by al-Sharif al-Radi, Book 3, Chapter 26, Hadith #29

الإمام علي (عليه السلام): يستدل على عقل كل امرئ بما يجري على لسانه

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said: **'The intellect of every man can be determined by the words that flow on his tongue.'**

— Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 10957

Consequences of Concealing Good and Evil Deeds:

The principle applies to both righteous and evil hidden actions:

- **For Concealed Good Deeds:**

أعظم العبادة أجرا أخفاها.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **The greatest of worship in reward is the most hidden.**

— Bihar al-Anwaar by Allamah Majlisi, Volume 67, Page 251

رسول الله ﷺ (صلي الله عليه وآله): السر أفضل من العلانية ، والعلانية لمن أراد الاقتداء

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **'Performing actions in secret is better than performing them publicly, except for the one who wishes to set an example.'**

— Kanz al-Ummal, no. 5273

لا تتصدق على اعين الناس ليزكوك، فانك ان فعلت ذلك فقد استوفيت اجرک، ولكن اذا اعطيت بيمينک فلا تطلع عليها شمالک، فان الذي تتصدق له سرا يجزيک علانية على رؤوس الأشهاد، فى اليوم الذى لا يضرک ان لا يطلع الناس على صدقتک. (تحف العقول ص305)

Imam Jaffar Sadiq (peace be upon him): **Do not give away alms when the people are witnessing and watching so that they may consider you a pious one so if you did that you have received your reward.**

But if you gave it away (in a manner) that your left hand does not become aware of it when you give it by your right hand. So then the one (Allah) for whom you have given it away secretly, will give you it's reward and remuneration in the presence of witnesses and evidences on the day when not being aware of the people about your almsgiving will not harm you. (Resurrection day)

— Tuhaf al-Uqul. P 305

- If a servant of Allah does a good deed secretly, Allah will soon uncover for them good rewards.
- Even if a person conceals a good deed, Allah will eventually reveal the good for them. Their good deeds will be exposed and recognized, and Allah will make them apparent to others so that they may admire what lies hidden for them in the Hereafter.

وبهذا الإسناد قال: قال علي بن أبي طالب عليها السلام: من كنوز البر إخفاء العمل، والصبر على الرزايا وكتمان المصائب.

Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) said, **"Hiding one's good deeds, perseverance in the face of hardships and not disclosing one's calamities are all parts of the treasure of goodness."**

— Uyun akhbar al-Riḍa (Vol. 2) by Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali al-Saduq, Book 1, Chapter 1, Hadith #105

Imam as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) stated:

- علي بن إبراهيم عن صالح بن السندي عن جعفر بن بشير عن علي بن أبي حمزة عن أبي بصير قال قال أبو عبد الله (عليه السلام) ما من عبد يسر خيرا إلا لم تذهب الأيام حتى يظهر الله له خيرا وما من عبد يسر شرا إلا لم تذهب الأيام حتى يظهر الله له شرا.

Ali ibn Ibrahim has narrated from Salih ibn Sindy from Ja'far ibn Bashir from Ali ibn abu Hamza from abu Basir who has said the following: "Abu 'Abd Allah (peace be upon him) said, **'Whenever a servant (of Allah) does a good deed secretly, not very long thereafter Allah uncovers for him good rewards. Whenever a servant (of Allah) does an evil deed secretly, very shortly thereafter Allah uncovers for him an evil return and misfortune.'**"

— Al-Kafi (Vol. 2) by Shaykh Muhammad b. Yaqub al-Kulayni, Book 1, Chapter 116, Hadith #12

الإمام الصادق (عليه السلام): من عمل حسنة سرا كتبت له سرا، فإذا أقر بها محيت وكتبت جهرا، فإذا أقر بها ثانيا محيت وكتبت رياء

Imam Jaffar al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said, '**The deed of one who performs it in secret is recorded down as a secret action. If he admits to having performed it [when asked], the previous record is erased and it is recorded instead as a public action. If he subsequently avers it himself, however, the previous record is erased and it is recorded instead as showing off.**'

— 'Uddat al-Da'ai, p. 221

- **For Concealed Evil Deeds:**

أقل أبو عبد هللا (عليه السلام): ما من عبد يسر خيرا إلّا لم تذهب الأليم حتى يظهر هللا له خيرا، وما من عبد يسر شرا إلّا لم تذهب الأليم حتى يظهر هللا له شرا

Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) said: **There is no servant who conceals a good deed except that the days will not pass until Allah reveals good for him, and there is no servant who conceals an evil deed except that the days will not pass until Allah reveals evil for him.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 1, Section 2, Chapter 7, Hadith 119

- If a servant of Allah does an evil deed secretly, very shortly thereafter Allah uncovers for them an evil return and misfortune.
- If a person conceals an evil deed, Allah will also eventually reveal it. Their evil deeds will be manifested after some time, making them known to others, leading to an ill reputation.
- Concealing evil deeds and showing off good deeds out of greed for worldly gain is condemned, as it will lead to Allah's punishment, regret, and remorse.

The Crucial Role of Intention (Niyyah):

Central to this principle is the profound importance of intention. The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.w.) taught that deeds are tied to intentions, and every person gets what they intend. The intention behind an action is crucial in determining its value and outcome; it is the motivation behind people's actions and the basis for their rewards or punishments. If the intention is not pure and sincere, the deed becomes null and void, regardless of its apparent goodness. Allah rewards more for good intentions than for mere good practice.

Manifestation in the Hereafter:

This principle extends to the Day of Judgment, where all hidden thoughts and deeds will become open and manifest. The inner and outer state of a person will become the same, fully apparent. The good or evil deeds themselves will transform into their own pleasant or unpleasant recompense, which, though hidden in this life, will be clearly revealed on the Day of Resurrection. The Quran emphasizes that Allah will call individuals to account for what is in their minds, whether they manifest it or hide it, encompassing beliefs, faculties, and intentions.

A Quranic Framework for Ethical Living

In essence, the verse and its supporting Quranic verses establish a comprehensive framework for ethical living, stressing personal accountability, the direct impact of actions on one's soul, the role of free will, and the ultimate return to Allah for justice and reckoning, while also acknowledging His boundless mercy.

The ethical framework established by Quranic verses is fundamentally rooted in the Oneness of Allah and human nature, with monotheism serving as a core principle. This comprehensive framework guides individuals towards a moral life, emphasizing virtues and providing practical rules for salvation. The Quran, often described as a book of moral ethics, lays out basic Islamic beliefs including theology, Resurrection, and Prophethood, alongside various ethical commands aimed at purifying the soul and acquiring good morality.

The key principles within this framework, emphasizing personal accountability, free will, divine justice, reckoning, and boundless mercy, are as follows:

Personal Accountability (Individual Responsibility)

The Quran unequivocally stresses that every individual is solely responsible for their actions and intentions. This principle is foundational to Islamic ethics, highlighting that no one can bear the burden of another's guilt.

- **Individual Deeds and Consequences:** "If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if you do evil, it is for yourselves." Furthermore, the Quran states that "**No bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another**" (Quran 6:164) and "**that man shall have nothing but what he strives for.**" (Quran 53:39) This means that an individual's actions directly impact their own fate, and "**whatever misfortune happens to an individual is due to the things their hands have wrought.**" (Quran 42:30)
- **Self-Awareness and Inescapable Responsibility:** Humans are inherently aware of their own actions and intentions, making excuses futile. The Quran

states, "**Nay, man is evidence against himself, though he puts forth his excuses**" (Quran 75:14-15)

- **Comprehensive Accountability:** Accountability extends beyond outward actions to include intentions and all sensory perceptions. "**And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned.**"
- **Intentions and Actions**

النبي (صل هلا عليه وآله وسلم) أنه اقل: الأعمال ابلنيات.

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said: **Deeds are judged by intentions.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 1, Section 2, Chapter 5, Hadith 88

الاعمال بالنية

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **Actions depend on (are rewarded according to) intentions**

— Nahj Al-Fasahah

نية المؤمن أبلغ من عمله

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **A believer's intention is more significant than his deeds**

— Nahj Al-Fasahah

أبي جعفر (عليه السالم): إن هلا تعالى اقل الدم (عليه السالم): اي آدم، جعلت لك أن من هم من ذريتك بسيئة لم تكتب. عليه، إفن عملها كتبت عليه سيئة، ومن هم منهم بحسنة إفن لم يعملها كتبت له حسنة، وإن هو عملها كتبت له عشا

From Abi Ja'far (peace be upon him): Allah Almighty said to Adam (peace be upon him): O Adam, I have decreed for you that whoever among your offspring intends an evil deed, it will not be recorded against them, but if they do it, one evil deed will be recorded. And whoever intends a good deed but does not do it, one good deed will be recorded, and if they do it, ten good deeds will be recorded.

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 1, Section 2, Chapter 6, Hadith 100

اقل أبو عبد هلا (عليه السالم): إنما خلد أهل النار في النار، الن نياتهم كانت في الدنيا، أن لو خلدوا فيها أن يعصوا هلا أبدا وإنما خلد أهل الجنة في الجنة ألن نياتهم كانت في

الدنيا أن لو بقوا فيها أن يطيعوا هللا أبدا، فبالنيتات خلد هؤلاء وهؤلاء، ثم تال. قوله تعالى: قل كل يعمل عمل شاكلته اقل: عمل نيته

Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) said: **The people of Hell were made eternal in Hell because their intentions in this world were such that if they were to live forever in it, they would disobey Allah forever. And the people of Paradise were made eternal in Paradise because their intentions in this world were such that if they were to remain in it, they would obey Allah forever. So by their intentions these and those were made eternal.** Then he recited the words of the Almighty: "**Say, each works (acts) according to his disposition**" [Quran, 17:84]. [This means] he said: **According to his intention.**

— Wasa'il al-Shia Vol. 1, Section 2, Chapter 6, Hadith 96

- **Divine Limits on Burden:** Allah does not burden a soul beyond its capacity or what He has given it, affirming a just and merciful standard of responsibility: "**Allah does not impose a duty on any soul beyond its ability.**" (Quran 2:286)

Human Free Will

The Quran affirms human free will, emphasizing the individual's power to make choices that shape their moral character and spiritual well-being. This concept is essential to the Quran's moral teachings and rejects strict determinism.

- **Power of Choice:** The Quran's emphasis on human morality "highlights the importance of individual responsibility and choice." Humans have "the power to make decisions that will impact their spiritual well-being," underscoring "the concept of free will, which is essential to the Quran's moral teachings."
- **Rejection of Compulsion and Determinism:** Humans are created as free beings with a fixed responsibility and mission, and are not under compulsion before God. They are given the freedom to choose their actions, and Quranic verses reject determinism and absolute authorization, instead emphasizing the idea that humans have the ability to make choices but are ultimately dependent on Allah's will.
- **Innate Moral Compass:** Human nature is endowed with the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong. The Holy Quran states: "**And a soul and Him who perfected it, and inspired it (with conscience of) what is wrong for it and (what is) right for it. He is indeed successful who causes it to grow. And he is indeed a failure who stunteth it.**" (Holy Quran 91: 7-10). This highlights an inherent moral compass that humans are free to cultivate or stunt.

- **Divine Change Linked to Human Initiative:** Allah's intervention is often contingent on human effort: "**Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves.**" (Quran 13:11)

Divine Justice (Adl)

Justice is a cornerstone of Islamic ethics, ensuring that all individuals are treated equitably and that Allah's judgment is perfectly fair. The Quran commands believers to uphold justice in all aspects of life.

- **Allah's Infallible Justice:** "**Our Lord is not unjust to His servants.**" (Quran 41:46). Allah will judge each person according to their own actions, and that each person will be responsible for what they have earned, and He will not wrong anyone. "**And Allah created the heavens and earth in truth and so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.**" (Quran 45:22)
- **Command to Establish Justice:** A key expectation from God is to establish and act with justice. Believers are enjoined to be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for God, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives.

إعدلوا بين أولادكم كما تحبون أن يعدلوا بينكم

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **Observe justice among your children just as you would like that they render justice among you**

— 1. Bihar al-Anwar, volume 23, Makarim AlAkhlaq, page 220

عدل ساعة خير من عبادة سنة

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: **One hour of justice is better than one year of worship**

— 1. Nahjul Fasahah, page 490

The Quran states, "**Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.**" (Quran 16:90)

- **Meaning of Justice:** Imam Ali (PBUH) elaborated on this principle, stating, Justice is to place everything in its rightful place.

الإمام علي (عليه السلام) - لما سئل عن أفضلية العدل أو الجود - العدل يضع الأمور مواضعها، والجود يخرجها من جهتها، والعدل سائس عام، والجود عارض خاص، فالعدل أشرفهما وأفضلهما

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was once asked which was better, justice or generosity, to which he replied, '**Justice puts things in their rightful place, whereas generosity takes them away from their course. Justice is a general predominant state, whereas generosity is a transient characteristic. Justice is therefore the nobler and better of the two.**'

— Nahjul Balaghah, Saying 437

الإمام علي (عليه السلام): العدل نظام الإمرة

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said, '**Justice is the regulatory system of authority.**'

— Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 774

الإمام علي (عليه السلام): العدل قوام الرعية وجمال الولاية

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said, '**Justice is the support of the masses and the beauty [adorning] the governors.**'

— Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 1954

الإمام علي (عليه السلام): العدل أساس به قوام العالم

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said, '**Justice is the base that supports the whole world.**'

— Matalib al-Sa'ul, p. 61

This underscores the societal obligation to create environments where all individuals, regardless of their circumstances, are provided equal opportunities and resources.

- **Fair Recompense:** In divine judgment, every soul shall be recompensed for whatever it has earned without any injustice.
- **Justice in Governance and Law:** Islamic law is based on Justice, and good governance requires leaders to be fair, responsible, and accountable

Reckoning and the Day of Judgment

The concept of reckoning on the Day of Judgment is a fundamental Islamic belief, serving as the ultimate manifestation of divine justice and personal accountability.

- **Universal Accountability:** On the Day of Judgment, every individual will be accountable for their deeds, and their book of deeds will be revealed to them. They will be reminded of every action, big or small, and will be held responsible for their choices and decisions.
- **Comprehensive Review of Deeds:** Every act of hearing, seeing, or feeling in the heart will be enquired into on the Day of Reckoning. Individuals will be held accountable for their actions in this life, and will be rewarded or punished accordingly in the next life.
- **Divine Knowledge and Swiftmess:** Individuals will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the seen, who will inform them of what they were doing. Allah is also described as "quick in reckoning, signifying the certainty and thoroughness of the final accounting.
- **Principle of Requit:** Every soul will be requited for what it earned, and that every individual will be recompensed for all that they did.

Boundless Mercy and Forgiveness

While emphasizing strict accountability and justice, the Quran equally highlights Allah's boundless mercy and forgiveness, providing hope and encouragement for individuals to strive for righteousness and seek divine clemency.

- **Emphasis on Mercy and Forgiveness:** The Quran emphasizes Allah's mercy and forgiveness, and encourages individuals to seek pardon and protection from Allah.
- **Love and Grace as Ethical Foundations:** Islamic ethics are based on love and grace, reflecting the benevolent attributes of the Divine and inviting believers to embody these qualities in their interactions.
- **Consideration for Human Capacity:** The principle that "**Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity. It will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil] it has earned**" (Quran 2:286) implicitly demonstrates Allah's mercy by setting duties within human capability, ensuring that expectations are just and attainable.

Conclusion

These principles collectively form a comprehensive ethical framework in Islam, guiding human conduct in both individual and societal spheres, fostering a deep sense of responsibility, and promoting justice, moral integrity, and spiritual development in anticipation of ultimate divine reckoning and mercy.

The Quranic verse "إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا" — **"If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if you do evil, it is for yourselves"** (Quran 17:7) — thus serves as a foundational statement of individual accountability, the direct impact of actions on one's own soul, the role of free will, and the ultimate return to Allah for justice and reckoning, while also acknowledging His boundless mercy and forgiveness. It encapsulates the essence of the Quranic ethical framework, urging every individual to reflect on their actions and take responsibility for their choices, as they will ultimately be held accountable for their deeds before Allah.

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