

# A sense of accountability

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**One of the important teachings of Islam** is the concept of accountability. In the chapter entitled Al-Isra' (The Night Journey) of the Quran, this concept is gone into in detail: "Give full measure, when you measure, and weigh with accurate scales. That is fair, and better in the end. Do not follow what you do not know; for the ear and the eye and the heart shall all be called to account" (17:35-36).

Everything we say is inevitably based on information that we gather from outside. Basically, there are three sources: what we hear, what we see, and what we think. But in each case there is the possibility of misunderstanding or miscalculation, so we have to be very careful to be precise in all of our utterances.

The expressions in the above verse concerning weights and measures are used symbolically. Here, measuring or weighing means intellectual measuring or intellec-

tual weighing. We should be very accurate when we speak about anyone or about any issue.

Right thinking and precise speaking are moral requirements: neglect of these matters can have very serious consequences. Since everything is known to God Almighty, everyone will be punished or rewarded according to how he speaks and behaves.

This being so, every man or woman must of necessity be very serious. In the firm belief that one day he will be presented before the all-knowing God, everyone must conduct himself with a deep sense of responsibility. Living in fear of punishment is not a negative feeling. It is a completely positive feeling. It turns you into a responsible person; it inculcates the spirit of self-discipline. It makes you an honest person, building into your personality a welcome predictability. And it saves you from all kinds of deviation.

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