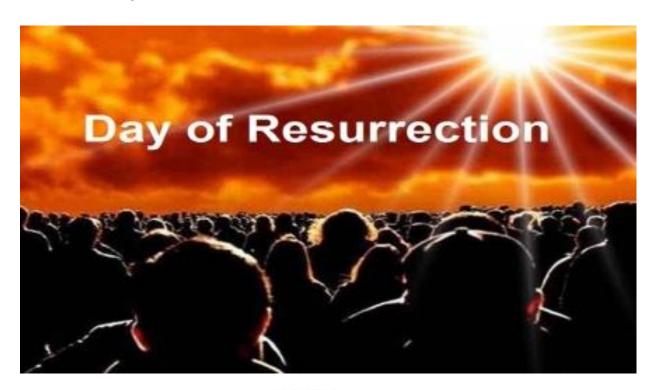
Day of Resurrection: The Scales are Placed & Deeds are Weighed Imam Ibn Uthaymeen





The Scales are Placed & Deeds are Weighed

In one of the verses that proves the scales will be setup on the Day of Resurrection, Allah says:

And those whose scales are heavy (with good deeds), it is they who will be successful. [Sūrah al-Muminūn, 23:102]

The verse contains a conditional clause; the condition is "those whose scales are heavy", and if that condition is met, the consequence is "it is they who will be successful." By "scales are heavy", what is meant is that one's good deeds outweigh his bad. "Successful" here describes an individual who achieves what he hopes for and is saved from what he fears. So he is given safety from what he hates and rewarded with what he loves. Allah also says:

But those whose scales are light, it is they who have lost their souls. In Hell they will abide forever. [Sūrah al-Muminūn, 23:103]

Those who do not believe in Allah will "have lost their souls." They will lose themselves, their families, and the possessions they hold dear:

Say: Indeed, the losers are the ones who will lose themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection. Unquestionably, that is the clear loss.[Sūrah al-Zumar, 39:15]

But as for a believer in Allah whose behavior was righteous, he will have succeeded, gaining his soul, his family, and his possessions, having benefited from all of them. People who do not believe in Allah (or disbelieve in Allah's "oneness") will lose themselves because they will have not benefited from their very existence in life. In fact such people, despite what they presumably achieve in life, actually achieve no true benefit and gain only harm (in the hereafter). In a sense, they even lose their wealth in life as they gain no real benefit from it. Even when they may share it with others among creation, such charity does not benefit the givers. Allah (علاء) says:

And nothing prevents their spending from being accepted from them except that they disbelieved in Allah and in his messenger.[Sūrah al-Tawbah, 9:54]

They also lose their families because their families will either be in the fire with them, or if their families are in Paradise, such disbelievers will still have lost them because they themselves will be in the fire. Any individual who dies while disbelieving in Allah will never again enjoy the company of his family. Such enjoyment will be locked out from a disbeliever as soon as he is locked in his coffin, and each one will imagine no one else is receiving a harsher punishment than he.

As for "whose scales are light", this means his bad deeds will outweigh his good or he will have no good deeds whatsoever. This is the meaning if we accept the position that disbelievers will have their deeds weighed which seems apparent from the verse in Sūrah al-Muminūn, 23:103 and others like it. And this position is one of the two held by religious scholars. The other opinion, that disbelievers will not have their deeds weighed, is the second position and it is based on the verses:

Say: Shall we inform you of the greatest losers as to (their) deeds? Those whose effort is lost in the worldly life while they thought they were doing good work. Those are the ones who disbelieve in the verses of their Lord and in (their) meeting him. So their deeds have become worthless, and we will not assign to them on the Day of Resurrection any weight. [Sūrah al-Kahf, 18:103-105]

As for the two positions, whether disbelievers will have their deeds weighed or not, Allah knows best which is correct.

The Arabic word for scales used in some verses, (هَوَازِيْن mawāzīn), has been reported in other texts in both the singular and plural forms. As for the plural form, Allah (عداعت) says:

And we place the scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so no soul will be treated unjustly in any way. [Sūrah al-Anbiyā, 21:47]

And:

خَسِرُوا الَّذِينَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَوَازِينُهُ خَفَّتْ وَمَنْ الْمُفْلِحُونَ هُمُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَوَازِينُهُ ثَقُلَتْ فَمَن ۚ الْحَقُّ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَالْوَزْنُ يَظْلِمُونَ بآيَاتِنَا كَانُوا بِمَا أَنفُسَهُم

And the weighing (of deeds) that day will be true. So those whose scales are heavy, it is they who will be successful. And those whose scales are light, they will lose themselves for what injustice they were doing toward our verses. [Sūrah al-'Arāf, 7:8-9]

As for the singular form, the prophet (صلَّى الله عليه وسلَّم) said:

There are two statements beloved to the Most Merciful, light on the tongue but heavy on the scale: "Glorified is Allah and all thanks are for him," and "Glorified is Allah the greatest." [59]

In this ḥadīth, the prophet (صلَّى الله عليه وسلَّم) mentioned the singular form, (ميْزَان mīzān), "scale." So how do we understand the Quran verses which mention "scales" and this ḥadīth which mentions "scale?"

Perhaps it is mentioned in the plural form only as a way of speaking about what is weighed – deeds – which is plural. Then it is mentioned in the hadīth in singular form because the scale is actually one. It could also be because perhaps there is one scale for each nation or even that the prophet meant "heavy in weight" when he said, "heavy on the scale."

However, what is apparent—and Allah knows best—is that the scale is actually one but is mentioned in plural form with regards to what is weighed (i.e., deeds). This linguistic usage can also be seen in the verse:

So those whose scales are heavy...[Sūrah al-A'rāf, 7:8]

In this verse, it is not actually the scales that are heavy, rather it is a form of Arabic speech in which one word (e.g. scales) is used to mean another word relating to the former (e.g. deeds).

There is a related issue but one into which people have not delved: Will there be a single scale setup for all nations, all mankind, or will there be one for each nation (e.g., one for Muhammad's nation, one for Jesus' nation, one for Moses', etc.)? This question may be relevant because some texts indicate the rewards for deeds vary for different nations. [61]

These texts, taken at face value, are apparent in that the scale will be real and tangible as this is exactly how the word "scale" is commonly understood. This is because the principle of understanding religious texts reported in the Quran or Sunnah is that they are to be understood upon the commonly known, real and actual meanings of their words unless there is clear evidence that they should be understood differently (i.e. metaphorically). The commonly understood meaning to all Muslim teachers, writers, and lecturers ever since the Quran was revealed up until today is that the scale is real. However, some misguided sects have differed in understanding. For example, those who incorrectly believe any texts can be figurative, having metaphorical meanings instead of what the words actually mean, they claim that there will not be a real scale setup on the Day of Resurrection. They insist that there is really no

need for an actual scale to weigh actions because Allah already knows the deeds of his servants and their worth. Instead, they claim that "scale" is allegorical and it really means Allah's "fairness" or "justice."

No doubt, the claim of such people is incorrect because it contradicts the outward, apparent meaning of the word and the consensus of all the righteous predecessors who understood the word to mean what the word actually means – scale. If we say the meaning is figurative and it really means fairness or justice, then there is little meaning in the several texts which mention "scale," they would simply say "justice" (as other texts do) because the characteristics of fairness and justice are closer to and speak more directly to people's souls than the word "scale" anyway. For this reason, Allah says:

Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct. [Sūrah al-Naḥl, 16:90]

The correct understanding is to take the word "scale" on its intended, actual meaning. We say that the correct understanding is the same one revealed – scale. The "Ḥadīth of the Card" (to be mentioned soon) also proves that it is a real, actual scale with weighing pans. This ḥadīth mentions that scrolls of bad deeds placed in one pan will be lighter than a single card placed in the other pan which will be heavier. So it is clear, what is correct is what was revealed – the scale is real.

The actions of the servants will then be weighed. And with that, there are two points of discussion.

The first point is this: How will deeds be weighed when it is known that a deed is simply a description or action of the one who performed it, and a deed has no physical form? The answer is that Allah (عن والعرب) will make these deeds into actual, physical forms. This should not be unbelievably strange when considering the capability of Allah (عز وجل). As an analogy, death will be made into the form of a ram on the Day of Judgment and it will be slaughtered between Paradise and Hell [63] while death now is simply a concept and not a physical form. And to clarify a side-note, the Angel of Death is not the one slaughtered here; it is actually death that Allah (تعالى) will make into a physical form everyone will witness and see. Similarly, Allah (عز وجل) will turn deeds into actual forms that will be actually weighed with this actual scale.

The second point: Deeds will actually be weighed, both good and bad. This is the apparent understanding as Allah (ఆగ్రామం) says in the Quran:

يَرَهُ شَرَّا ذَرَّةٍ مِثْقَالَ يَعْمَلْ وَمَن يَرَهُ خَيْرًا ذَرَّةٍ مِثْقَالَ يَعْمَلْ فَمَن أَعْمَالَهُمْ لِيُرُواْ أَشْتَاتًا النَّاسُ يَصْدُرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ That day, people will depart, separated (into categories) to be shown their deeds. So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it. [Sūrah al-Zalzalah, 99:6-8] So it is clear that deeds will really be weighed whether they are good or bad. Also, as has previously been mentioned, the prophet (صَلَى اللهُ عليه وسلَم) said, "There are two statements beloved to the Most Merciful, light on the tongue but heavy on the scale..." This ḥadīth is also clear, even explicit, in that actions will actually be given form and weight and then weighed, and there are several other texts that prove this.

However, there are other reliable texts that indicate that it may not be the actual deeds weighed but rather the records of deeds. An example of this type is the "Ḥadīth of the Card" in which the prophet (صلَّى الله عليه وسلَّم) said:

كُلُّ سِجِلاً وَتِسْعِينَ تِسْعَةً عَلَيْهِ فَيَنْشُرُ الْقِيَامَةِ يَوْمَ الْخَلائِق رُءُوس عَلَى يأُمَّتِ مِنْ رَجُلاً سَيُخَلِّصُ اللَّهَ إِنَّ » فَيَقُولُ ، رَبِّ يَا لا : فَيَقُولُ ؟ الْحَافِظُونَ كَتَبَتِي أَظَلَمَكَ ؟ شَيْئًا هَذَا مِنْ أَتَنْكِرُ : يَقُولُ ثُمَّ الْبَصَر مَدِّ مِثْلُ سِجِلِّ بطَاقَةٌ فَتَحْرُجُ ، الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ ظُلُمَ لا فَإِنَّهُ حَسَنَةً عِنْدَنَا لَكَ إِنَّ بَلَى : فَيَقُولُ ، رَبِّ يَا لا : فَيَقُولُ ؟ عُذْرٌ أَفَلَكَ مِطَاقَةٌ فَتَحْرُجُ ، الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ ظُلُمَ لا إِنَّكَ احْضُرْ : يَقُولُ فَ ، وَرَسُولُهُ عَبْدُهُ مُحَمَّدًا أَنَّ وَأَشْهَدُ اللَّهُ إِلاَّ إِلَهَ لا أَنْ أَشْهَدُ فِيهَا هَذِهِ مَا رَبِّ يَا : فَيَقُولُ ، وَزْنَكَ احْضُرْ : يَقُولُ فَ ، وَرَسُولُهُ عَبْدُهُ مُحَمَّدًا أَنَّ وَأَشْهَدُ اللَّهُ إِلاَّ إِلَهَ لا أَنْ أَشْهَدُ فِيهَا فَطَاشَتْ كُمَّةٍ فِي وَالْبِطَاقَةُ كَفَّةٍ فِي السِّجِلاَّتُ فَتُوضَعُ : قَالَ ، تُظْلَمُ لا إِنَّكَ : فَقَالَ ؟ السِّجِلاَّتِ هَذِهِ مَعَ الْبطَاقَةُ وَثَقُلَتْ السِّجِلاَّتُ هَا اللَّهُ اللهُ السْمِ مَعَ يَثْقُلُ لا وَالْ للْوَالْلِهُ الْوَا الْبِطَاقَةُ وَثَقُلُتُ السِّجِلاَّتُ السِّجِلاَّتُ السِّجِلاَتُ السِّجِلاَتُ السِّجِلاَّتُ السِّجِلاَتُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ الْلَاهُ الْمُؤَلِّ لا وَاللَّهُ اللَّهُ الْفَالُ الْمُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ الْمُ اللَّهُ الْمَ الْمُؤَلِّ اللَّهُ الْمَالَقَةُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ الْهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ الْمَالُولُ الْمُلْكُولُولُ اللَّهُ الْمَالِقَةُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ الْمُؤَالُ الْمَالِقَةُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكُولُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ الْقُولُ اللللَّهُ اللَّهُ ال

Allah will single out a man from my nation at the head of all the creations on the Day of Resurrection. Ninetynine scrolls (of bad deeds) will be spread out before him, each as far as the eye can see. He will be asked, "Do you deny doing any of this? Did my recording, guardian angels wrong you in any way?" The man will answer, "No, my Lord." He will be asked, "Do you have any excuse?" to which he will again reply, "No, my Lord." It will then be said, "Rather you certainly do have a good deed with us and there will be no injustice on you today." A card will then be brought out, written on it: "I testify there is nothing deserving of worship but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is his servant and messenger." The man will be told, "Present yourself for your weighing." He will ask, "My Lord, what is this card compared to all these scrolls (of bad deeds)?" He (Allah) will tell him, "You will certainly not be wronged." So the scrolls will be placed in one pan (of the scale) and the card in the other, and the scrolls will be lighter and the card heavier as nothing is heavier than the name of Allah.

[Recorded by al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, and Aḥmad. al-Albānī said it is authentic in his "Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī" (no.2127)]

From this hadīth, it is apparent that it is the written records of deeds weighed instead of the deeds themselves.

There are other texts that indicate what is weighed is the person who does the deeds. For example, Allah says:

Those are the ones who disbelieve in the verses of their Lord and in (their) meeting with him, so their deeds have become worthless. And we will not assign to them on the Day of Resurrection any weight.[Sūrah al-Kahf, 18:105]

But it has been said that the meaning of "weight" in the verse could mean "significance" or "importance" instead of weight. Another indication that it may be the person himself that is weighed is the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (ملك عبضر said:

A huge, fat man will be brought on the Day of Resurrection and he will not weigh in the sight of Allah even as much as a gnat's wing [Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim]

الله عضر The understanding that it is the person who will be weighed is also indicated by the ḥadīth of lbn Mas'ūd (الما يضر a morf honarb kāwis a kaerb ot gniyrt ecno saw eh nehw(عنه ree. He used to have thin legs and the wind blew and

The prophet (صلَّى الله عليه وسلَّم)then said:

I swear by the one in who hand is my soul (Allah), they (his legs) are both heavier in the scale than Mt. Uḥud. [Recorded by Aḥmad (1/421) and al-Albānī classed its chain of narrators as ḥasan in "Sharḥ al-A'qīdah al-Taḥāwiyyah.]

So to conclude, we have texts indicating three things that will be weighed in the scale: the deeds, the records of deeds, and the person who performed the deeds.

Some scholars said the way to understand these together is simply that some people will have their deeds weighed, some will have their records of deeds weighed, and others will be weighed themselves. Other scholars said that when texts mention deeds being weighed, what is really meant is the records of deeds, and as for a person being weighed, this is specific to certain individuals.

Other scholars have combined these texts with the understanding that in reality only the records of deeds are weighed, but they will be heavy or light based on the merit and greatness of the deeds written in them. So in essence, it is as if the deeds are weighed. But after reflecting on the texts relevant to this issue, we find most of them indicate that it is the deeds that are weighed. Yet some people will be exclusively chosen to have their records of deeds weighed or even the individual himself. As far as the ḥadīth of Ibn Mas'ūd or the "Ḥadīth of the Card," it could be that these are specific situations for which Allah chooses whomever he wants from his servants.

So the scales are placed, people's deeds are weighed, then the books of deeds are distributed.

Footnotes:

[59] Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. The transliteration of these two statements:

SubhānAllahi al-'Azīm SubhānAllahi wa bihamdihi

Glorified is Allah the greatest Glorified is Allah and all thanks are for him

Another ḥadīth which mentions "scale" in the singular form and indicates the greatness of this scale is classified as authentic by al-Albānī in "Silsilah al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah" (no. 941). In it, the prophet (صَلَى الله عليه وسلّم) said:

يَزِنَ لِمَنْ رَبّ يَا : المَلائِكَةُ فَتَقُوْلُ لَوَسَعَتْ وَالأَرْضَ السَّمَوَاتِ فِيْهِ وَزِنَ فَلَوْ القِيَامَةِ يَوْمَ نُالمِيْزَا يُوْضَعُ » وَيُوْضَعُ . دَتِكَعِبَا حَقَّ عَبَدْنَاكَ سُبْحَانَكَمَا : المَلائِكَةُ فَتَقُوْلُ . خَلْقِي مِنْ شِئْتُ لِمَنْ : تَعَالَى اللهُ فَيَقُوْلُ ؟ هَذَا : فَيَقُوْلُ المَلائِكَةُ فَتَقُوْلُ المُوْسَى حَدِّ مِثْلَ الصِّرَاطُ : فَيَقُوْلُوْنَ . خَلْقِيْ مِنْ شِئْتُ مَنْ : فَيَقُوْلُ ؟ هَذَا عَلَى تَجِيْزُ مَنْ : المَلائِكَةُ فَتَقُوْلُ المُوْسَى حَدِّ مِثْلَ الصِّرَاطُ » فَيَقُوْلُونَ . خَلْقِيْ مِنْ شِئْتُ مَنْ : فَيَقُوْلُ ؟ هَذَا عَلَى تَجِيْزُ مَنْ : المَلائِكَةُ فَتَقُوْلُ المُوْسَى حَدِّ مِثْلَ الصِّرَاطُ

The scale will be set up on the Day of Resurrection, and if the heavens and the earth were to be weighed in it, it would be sufficient to hold them. The angels will ask, "Oh Lord, who is this for?" Allah will reply, "For whomsoever I want among my creations." The angels will then say, "Glory to you, we have not worshipped

you as you rightfully deserve to be worshipped." And the bridge will be placed (over Hell) and it will be like the edge of a razor. The angels will ask Allah, "Who will be saved from this?" to which Allah will again reply, "Whomsoever I want among my creations." They will say, "Glory to you, we have not worshipped you as you rightfully deserve to be worshipped."

[61] One example of such texts is the ḥadīth recorded by al-Bukhārī in which the prophet (صلَّى الله عليه وسلّم)said comparing Muslims to Jews and Christians:

عَلَى النَّهَارِ نِصْفِ إِلَى غُدْوَةَ مِنْ لِي يَعْمَلُ مَنْ: فَقَالَ أُجَرَاءَ اسْتَأْجَرَ رَجُكِ كَمَثَكِ الْكِتَابَيْنِ أَهْلِ وَمَثَكُ مَثَلُكُمْ » فَعَمِلَتْ ؟ قِيرَاطٍ عَلَى الْعَصْرِ صَلاةٍ إِلَى النَّهَارِ نِصْفِ مِنْ لِي يَعْمَلُ مَنْ: قَالَ ثُمَّ ، الْيَهُودُ فَعَمِلَتْ ؟ قِيرَاطٍ فَعَصِلَتْ ، هُمْ فَأَنْتُمْ ؟ قِيرَاطَيْنِ عَلَى الشَّمْسُ تَغِيبَ أَنْ إِلَى الْعَصْرِ مِنْ لِي يَعْمَلُ مَنْ: قَالَ ثُمَّ ، النَّصَارَى فَغَضِبَتْ ، هُمْ فَأَنْتُمْ ؟ قِيرَاطَيْنِ عَلَى الشَّمْسُ تَغِيبَ أَنْ إِلَى الْعَصْرِ مِنْ لِي يَعْمَلُ مَنْ : قَالَ ثُمَّ ، النَّصَارَى الْيَهُودُ : قَالَ ؟ عَطَاءً وَأَقَلَّ عَمَلاً أَكْثَرَ لَنَا مَا : فَقَالُوا وَالنَّصَارَى الْيَهُودُ : قَالَ ؟ عَطَاءً وَأَقَلَّ عَمَلاً أَكْثَرَ لَنَا مَا : فَقَالُوا وَالنَّصَارَى الْيَهُودُ اللَّهُ فَذَلِكَ » لَذَ قَالُوا وَالنَّصَارَى فَضَلِي فَذَلِكَ

Your example compared to those of the two former scriptures can be likened to a man who hires a number of laborers. He asks, "Who will work for me from morning until midday for a certain sum?" The Jews are the ones to work at this time. Then he asks, "Who will work from midday to the late afternoon for the same sum?" The Christians are the ones to work at this time. Then he asks, "Who will work from the late afternoon until sunset for double that sum?" You (Muslims) are these people. This angers the Jews and Christians who ask, "Why did we have to work more only to receive less?" He answers, "Have you been cheated of any of your rights?" They answer, "No." He then says, "This is my favor that I give to whom I please."

Death will be brought in the form of a black and white ram and a caller will call out, "Oh people of Paradise!" and they will stretch their necks and look. They will be asked, "Do you know what this is?" to which they will answer, "Yes, that is death," and each of them will be able to see it. Then it will be called out, "Oh people of Hell!" They will also stretch out their necks and look. They will be asked, "Do you know what this is?" and they too will say, "Yes, it is death," and each of them will see it. It will then be slaughtered. Then it will be said, "Oh people of Paradise, eternity and no death. Oh people of Hell, eternity and no death."

Then the prophet (صلَّى الله عليه وسلَّم) recited:

And warn them of the Day of Regret, when the matter will be concluded. And yet they are in heedlessness.

He then said, "And these people are headless, people of this life," and finished the verse: يُؤْمِنُونَ لَا وَهُمْ

And they do not believe. [Sūrah Maryam, 19:39]

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