

Are we accountable for our inner thoughts?

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## Are we accountable for our inner thoughts?

The Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta'

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

**Question:** Will a person be called to account for their inner thoughts?

**Answer:** Allaah is Gracious and Merciful to His Servants. He, out of His Mercy, does not impose upon them what they cannot bear. No one will be called to account for their inner thoughts, based on the Hadeeth authentically reported on the authority of Aboo Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **Allaah has forgiven my Ummah (nation based on one creed) whatever thoughts that occur to their minds, as long as they do not put them into action or utter them.**<sup>1</sup> In his book "Al-Musnad", Imaam Ahmad said: `Affan told us that `Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Ibraaheem told him that Al-`Ala' ibn `Abdul-Rahmaan told him on the authority of his father that Aboo Hurayrah said: "When it was revealed to the Messenger of Allaah (peace be upon him) the Ayah (Qur'aanic verse) saying: [To Allaah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth, and whether you disclose what is in your own selves or conceal it, Allaah will call you to account for it. Then He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills. And Allaah is Able to do all things]<sup>2</sup>, the Sahaabah (Companions of the Prophet) felt it hard. They came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace be upon him), kneeled in front of him and said: "O Messenger of Allaah! We were assigned deeds that we can perform, such as Salaah (Prayer), Sawm (Fasting), Jihaad (striving in the Cause of Allaah) and Sadaqah (voluntary charity). But we cannot bear this Ayah that was revealed to you." The Messenger of Allaah (peace be upon him) said: 'Do you want to say as the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) said before you, 'We hear and disobey?' You should rather say, 'We hear and we obey; (we seek) Your forgiveness, our Lord! and unto You is the return.'<sup>3</sup> When people acknowledged it and humbly recited it, Allaah (Glorified and Exalted be He) revealed directly after it: [The Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allaah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. (They say), "We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers" - and they say, "We hear, and we obey. (We seek) Your Forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the return (of all)."]<sup>4</sup> When they did, Allaah (Blessed and Exalted be He)

<sup>1</sup> Saheeh al-Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim

<sup>2</sup> Soorah al-Baqarah [2:284]

<sup>3</sup> Saheeh Muslim & others

<sup>4</sup> Soorah al-Baqarah [2:285]

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abrogated it and revealed instead: [Allaah burdens not a person beyond his scope. He gets reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned. "Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error.]"<sup>5</sup>

May Allaah grant us success. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions.

Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta'

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<sup>5</sup> Soorah al-Baqarah [2:286]