



**Spiritual Quest**

A Biannual Journal of  
Ethics and Spirituality

Vol. 8 | No. 2 | Summer & Autumn 2018

## The Effect of Intention on the Ethical Value of Actions from the Viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an\*

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### Abstract

The virtue and vice of the active agent (*husn wa qubh fa'ili*) is one of the most important foundational premises of ethical values in Islamic ethics from the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an. This premise, which is also called 'intention' (*niyyat*), has such a penetrating effect on the actions of the active agent that it has sometimes been termed the identity and principle of actions. This article discusses the effect of intention on ethical values from the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an by organizing the verses of the Holy Qur'an into two groups. The first group of verses explains the effect of intention on the action, whilst the second group indicates the effects of intention on the consequences of actions. In this way it can be established that one of the most important premises in ethical values is the intention of the action.

### Keywords

virtue of the active agent; intention; ethical values; effect of intention on action; effect of intention on the consequences of action

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## **Introduction**

Beliefs, values and ideals are the most important cultural elements of a society which establish the framework and lifestyle of that society. More so, those values which are responsible for the establishment of ideals and lifestyle are themselves based upon foundations which are discussed in the philosophy of ethics. The quiddity or whatness of ethical values, their originating elements and their criteria are some of these foundational discussions.

Amongst these, the origination elements of ethical values have always held a special importance. Through the ages it has been a main discussion amongst ethical philosophers with many differing opinions and viewpoints being proposed. Social acceptance, personal or collective benefit, social conventions and the intention of performing one's responsibility are just some of the opinions that have been proposed.

This article intends to introduce intention one of the most important elements in providing value to ethical behaviours and that the actions of an ethical value are dependent on it from the viewpoint of the Holy *Qur'an*.

## **History of the discourse**

Even though in Islamic sources, the effect of intention on action has also been a focal discussion, no independent and structured research which looks at all the dimensions of this matter has been done. Only a few Qur'anic commentators, in a very sporadic way, while discussing the commentary of certain verses, have explored the effect of intention on the value of action or its results. For example, Ayatollah Jawadi Amuli in two of his works, *Tasnim* (Jawadi Amuli 1389 SH: vol. 22, pp. 299-300) and *The Stages of Ethics in the Holy Qur'an* (Ibid. 1378 SH: p. 245) and Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi in his books *Akhlaq dar Qur'an*, *Falsafeh-ye*

*Akhlaq* and *Makatib-e Akhlaqi* have made valuable remarks in this regard. Some articles have also been written on this topic, for example, *Naqsh Niyyat dar Arzish Akhlaqi* (The Impact of Intention on Ethical Values) (Misbah Yazdi 1391 SH) and *Naqsh Niyyat dar Arzish Fi'l Akhlaqi* (The Impact of Intention on the Value of Ethical Actions) (Misbah Yazdi 1391 SH) can be mentioned. However, none of these works discuss the current topic from a Qur'anic angle and viewpoint.

### **Necessity and importance of the topic**

Undertaking this research was necessary for the following reasons: (1) this topic in and of itself is worthy of being researched, as it plays a fundamental role in establishing many norms and lifestyles and identifying referents of ethical actions; (2) as one of the key distinguishing factors between the Islamic ethical school of thought and the majority – rather all other ethical schools of thought – is the acceptance of the impact of intention on the ethical value of actions. In addition to this is the unsatisfactory nature of previous research in addressing this topic from the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an, and the newfound significance that it has been given in important discussions such as philosophy of ethics only adds to this necessity.

### **Key words and concepts**

#### **Value (*arzish*)**

The lexical meaning of 'value' has been identified as 'price', 'fee', 'worthiness', 'merit' and 'validity' (Mu'in 1371 SH: vol. 1, p. 199). It can also be used in a number of different contexts, e.g. economic value, artistic value, epistemological value, logical value, social value, historical value, political value, lawful value,

value of rights and ethical value (Misbah 1388 SH: p. 51). That which has been discussed in this article is ethical values.

According to some, this term cannot be thoroughly defined because of its self-evident nature, or because there is no conceptual equivalent for it; all that can be done is to uncover the instances of its application so that in this way it becomes possible to a degree to acquire its criteria and basis (Mu'allimi 1384 SH: p. 21). However, other scholars believe that the meaning of value is synonymous with that of ideality (Misbah 1377 SH: p. 45).

### **Ethics (*akhlaq*)**

The word *akhlaq* is the plural of the word *khulq* which means 'character' or 'disposition' (Jawhari 1407 AH: vol. 4, p. 1471; Ibn Faris 1404 AH: vol. 2, p. 214). Sometimes this term has been lexically defined to mean a characteristic or dispositional trait that has penetrated the soul and is the source of the performance of an action without hesitation or indecision (Misbah 1377 SH: p. 9). However, in its technical meaning, it has three uses: (1) the internal attributes of a person (irrespective of being virtues or vices) which are discussed in the science of ethics; (2) only concerned with those virtuous attributes and ignores the vices, hence this meaning is more particular than the first and (3) human behaviours and actions that be labelled good or bad (Misbah 1377 SH: pp. 9-10). The research of this article is based upon the third technical meaning.

### **Ethical values**

Many different definitions have been given by ethical philosophers for ethical values; however, explaining, discussing and critiquing these definitions requires a separate study. So, it will suffice to mention the meaning which is intended in this

article. An 'ethical value' is that ideal nature of a chosen action in its impact towards allowing a person to achieve true felicity, which from the viewpoint of the *Holy Qur'an* is to gain proximity to Allah. Therefore, this article aims to prove that the role of these ethical values is that actions should be performed with a pure and Allah-seeking intention. However, common human intentions, such as friendliness or rightfulness, even though they can be counted as being ethical values, are deprived of having Qur'anic value which houses true felicity.

### **Intention (*niyyat*)**

The word *niyyat* is formed from the letters *nun*, *waw* and *ya* and possesses a number of meanings such as 'transferring or moving from one place to another', 'a plant seed', 'that which occurs in the heart of good or evil', and 'the side or area which is given attention to' (Farahidi 1410 AH: vol. 8, p. 393; Ibn Faris 1404: vol. 4, p. 366). It has also been said to mean 'the final decision of the heart' (Fayyumi 1405 AH: p. 632). Others have defined 'intention' in accordance with its common usage which is 'the resolution of the heart upon a task or tasks' (Fayyumi 1405 AH: p. 632), while the majority of Arabic lexicons have made reference to it being 'the direction which is intended in any task' (Fayyumi 1405 AH: p. 632; Ibn Manzur 1414AH: vol. 15, p. 347; Ibn Faris 1404 AH: vol. 5, p. 366; Jawhari, 1407 AH, vol. 6, p. 2515).

In its technical meaning, 'intention' is sometimes used to mean the attention of the soul to a particular task or its objective. In this meaning, intention is focused on the primary goal which is intended to be achieved by the performance of the task at hand. This meaning is known in philosophy as the 'final cause' (Misbah Yazdi 1366 SH: vol. 2, p. 20) and in psychology as 'purpose' or *qasd* (Reber 1390 SH: p. 459).

At times it is also considered to be one of the factors in the

establishment of behaviour, i.e. motivation (Khuda Panahi 1379 SH: pp. 10-11).

What is meant by ‘intention’ in this article is the philosophical meaning, as it is this meaning which has been focused on in Islamic philosophy of ethics. Therefore, intention is attention towards the aim and objective which initiated the action for its accomplishment and is termed the motivation for the performance of the action. So when discussing intention, the action, its purpose and the type of relationship between them needs to be considered.

### **Action (*amal*)**

The literal meaning of ‘action’ is ‘work’ and ‘service’ (Ibn Manzur 1414 AH: vol. 11, p. 475). At times, it is considered to be an activity that is performed with a purpose by an existent which possesses sense. From this, it can be established that work (*amal*) is more particular than mere action (*fi'l*), as action can at times be attributed to non-sensible and inanimate objects and at other times to sensible existents that perform it without any purpose (Raghib Isfahani 1412 AH: p. 587).

The meaning of ‘action’ in this article is those human actions performed with awareness and purpose.

### **Research methodology**

The research methodology applied in this article is that of a subject-wise exegesis which greatly resembles the reference-based and inductive-qualitative methods, i.e. instead of dependence on data analysis, explication of the contents of specific verses of the *Holy Qur'an* was performed.

In this article, firstly all verses which implicitly or explicitly

indicate the effect of intention on the ethical value of actions were collected and then grouped according to their indications. Then it was shown how the verses clarify and ultimately prove the hypothesis.

### **The uses of the term ‘intention’ in the Holy Qur’an**

The term ‘intention’ in the form of *niyyat* does not appear in the Holy Qur’an; however by paying close attention to the verses, phrases and words can be found that contain or explain this concept.

These words and phrases can be divided into four categories:

1. A variety of terms that have been used to indicate a worthy action performed with the aim of gaining the pleasure of and proximity to Allah. Some of the terms that have been used in this regard are: ‘for Allah’s sake’ (*lillah*, 2:196); ‘for the sake of Allah’ (*li-wajh Allah*, 76:9); ‘in Allah’s way’ (*fi sabil Allah*, 2:154); ‘follow [the course of] Allah’s pleasure’ (*ittaba’a ridwan Allah*, 3:162); ‘[a means of] attaining nearness to Allah’ (*qurubatin ‘ind Allah*, 9:99); and ‘dedicate their religion [exclusively] to Allah’ (*wa akhlasu dinahum lillah*, 4:146).

The minimum that can be understood from these verses is that they refer to something done with a godly motivation.

Reference can be made to the following verses and books in order to gain a better understanding of the matter:

- ‘For Allah’s sake’ – Tabarsi (1372 SH: vol. 2, p. 518);
- ‘Dedicate their religion [exclusively] to Allah’ – Abu al-Futuh Razi (1408 AH: vol. 6, p. 162);
- ‘Those who seek Allah’s pleasure’ (*yuriduna wajh Allah*, 30:38) – Tabarsi (1372 SH: vol. 8, p. 479); Amuli (1413 AH: vol. 2, p. 512);
- ‘Follow [the course of] Allah’s pleasure’ – Tusi (n.d.: vol. 3, p. 475);

- ‘Submits his will to Allah’ (*aslama wajh lillah*, 2:112) – Tusi (n.d.: vol. 1, p. 412); Baydawi (1418 AH: vol. 1, p. 101);
- ‘They are sincere to Allah’ (*nasahu lillah*, 9:91) – Tusi (n.d.: vol. 5, p. 279); Alusi (1415 AH: vol. 5, p. 345);
- ‘Migrating towards Allah’ (*yuhajiru fi sabil Allah*, 4:100) – Nishaburi (1416 AH: vol. 2, p. 482); Sur Abadi (1380 SH: vol.1, p. 465);
- ‘For the sake of their Lord’s pleasure’ (*ibtigha’a wajh Allah*, 13:22) – Tusi (n.d.: vol. 2, p. 354); Abu al-Futuh Razi (n.d.: vol. 4, p. 82);
- ‘For the sake of Allah’ – Tabarsi (n.d.: vol. 10, p. 617);
- ‘Seeking the pleasure of Allah’ – Fakhar al-Razi (1420 AH: vol. 11, p. 218); Tabataba’i (1417 AH: vol. 2, p. 391);
- ‘In Allah’s way’ – Abu al-Futuh Razi (n.d., vol. 4, p. 49); Makarem Shirazi (1374 SH: vol. 2, p. 18);
- ‘[A means of] attaining nearness to Allah’ – Samarqandi (n.d.: vol. 2, p. 83); Alusi (n.d.: vol. 6, p. 7);
- ‘Founds his building on godwariness’ (*assasa bunyanahu ‘ala taqwa*, 9:109) – Abu Hayyan (1420 AH: vol. 5, p. 505); Kazimi (1365 SH: vol. 2, p. 118);
- ‘Turned my face toward Him’ (*wajjahtu wajhi*, 6:79) - Nishapuri (n.d.: vol. 1, p. 376); Andalusi (1422 AH: vol. 2, p. 391);
- ‘Dedicate yourself to Him’ (*tabattal ilayh*, 73:8) – Qummi (1367 SH: vol. 2, p. 392);
- ‘Whoever desires the Hereafter’ (*man arada al-akhirah*, 17:19) – Amin Isfahani (1361 SH: vol, 2, p. 170); Kashani (1336 SH: vol. 5, p. 265).

2. Terms and phrases that are used to describe hypocritical actions. The *Holy Qur’an* emphasizes the lack of ethical value of these actions because of their accompaniment with polytheistic



intentions. For example the phrases ‘to be seen by people’ (2:264; 4:38; 8:47) and ‘showing off to people’ (4:142; 108:6).

These verses, which contain the concept of intention, indicate that self-conceited actions are void of any ethical value because of the lack of a godly purpose. ‘Some among you desire this world, and some among you desire the Hereafter’ (*Qur’an* 3:152; see Sur Abadi: vol. 1, p. 348).

3. Terms and phrases which indicate that the final verdict of certain actions are based upon what the *Qur’an* 4:33 (in Surat al-Nisa’) and 5:89 (in Surat al-Ma’idah) calls ‘*aqd al-ayman*’ (‘compact’ or ‘pledge’) or what *Qur’an* 2:225 calls *kasb al-qulub* (‘incurrence of the hearts’). These two phrases, which allude to the concept of intention, emphasize the relationship between actions containing ethical value with the actions of the heart (Faydh Kashani 1418 AH: vol. 1, p. 107).

### **The influence of intention on ethical values**

Verses which explain the influence of intention on the ethical value of actions can be divided into two general groups: (a) verses which describe the relationship between intention and action, and (b) verses which explain the relationship between intention and the result of an action.

### **Verses which explain the influence of intention on action**

Verses that pertain to the impact of intention on the desirability of an action, even though the contexts may vary, also indicate the impact of intention on the worthiness of an action. A few examples of this type of verse are provided.

### a) Intention is the substance of an action

In one verse, human action is based upon what the *Holy Qur'an* terms *shakilah*, which means that an action is in conformity with it and arises from it. Allah says, ‘Say, “Everyone acts according to his *shakilah*. Your Lord knows best who is better guided with regard to the way” (17:84).<sup>1</sup>

The word *moshakilah* comes from the root word *shakala*, which means to possess the same form and image or in other words to have the same shape, and is derived from the literal meaning of *shakala* meaning ‘to bind or to tie up an animal’. Others believe that it is derived from the root word *shikl* which means ‘to have affinity and familiarity between two companions’; so, just as affinity and familiarity bring two sides together, disposition and character form the basis of a human. Hence, *shakilah* refers to those dispositions and characteristics that structure and form a human being and push him towards performing good and virtuous deeds (Raghib Isfahani 1412 AH: p. 462).

This word has also been said to mean ‘area’, ‘path’ (Azhari 1421 AH: vol. 1, p. 15), ‘school of thought’ (*madhhab*), ‘purpose’ (Ibn Manzur 1414 AH: vol. 11, p. 357), ‘direction’ and ‘creature’. Firuz Abadi considered it to also have the meaning of ‘intention’ (Firoz Abadi n.d.: vol. 3, p. 401). From amongst the meanings mentioned above, only two conform to the verse in question: ‘disposition and character traits’, and ‘intention and purpose’.

In addition to the lexicographers, exegetes also attempted to define and explain this term. Alusi quoting Farra’, Zajjaj and Zamakhshari states that *shakilah* means ‘school of thought’ and ‘doctrine’ (Alusi 1415 AH: vol. 8, p. 143). He adds that Mujahid and Ibn ‘Abbas believed it to mean ‘disposition’. Fakhr Razi has a

١. ﴿قُلْ كُلٌّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَىٰ شَاكِلَتِهِ فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَىٰ سَبِيلًا﴾

similar opinion to the one stated above in that *shakilah* refers to individual acts in accordance with their essence and substance.

After explaining the lexical meanings of this term, ‘Allahmah Tabataba’i writes, ‘In any case, the blessed verse concludes that the action of a human being is the result of his *shakilah*, i.e. actions are done in accordance and in conformity to it. Hence, this *shakilah* is like a spirit which flows through the framework of action. It has also been proven via experimentation and science that a special relationship exists between behavioural traits and actions. Therefore, it is because of this difference in the *shakilah* and behavioural traits that the actions of a brave person differ from those of a cowardly one (Tabataba’i 1417 AH: vol. 13, pp. 189-190). It seems that he has defined *shakilah* as ‘behavioural states and characteristics’, just as Mulla Sadra has done (Mulla Sadra 1360 AH: p. 260). It can be said that these traits and characteristics shape the intention of a person or make it easier for an intention to be actualized in order for the actions of that person to be formed around it. So, whether we take *shakilah* to mean ‘intention’ or ‘disposition’, it indicates to the impact of intention on the value of actions; as the context of the remainder of the verse, ‘Your Lord knows best who is better guided with regard to the way’ (17:84),<sup>1</sup> points to the evaluation of an action.

It is possible to say that if *shakilah* is taken to mean ‘disposition’, then this verse in fact negates the impact of intention on action, as it views the source of action to be behavioural traits. However, by paying closer attention to the preceding explanation and the confirmations that are found in the traditions, it can be concluded that there is no inconsistency between dispositions being the source of actions and the verses’ indication of the impact of intention on action.

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١. ﴿فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ وَأَهْدَىٰ سَبِيلًا﴾

By elaborating on this point that *shakilah* is defined as that thing which shapes the intention of an individual, the attribution of it to intention is in the manner of attributing the cause to the caused. Therefore, in any case intention plays a role in the formation of action and because the verse is at the level of evaluation of action, it indicates the impact of intention on the value of action.

The attribution of *shakilah* to intention can also be concluded from the traditions and they can therefore be seen as verifying this understanding. Imam Sadiq (a) is reported to have said, 'Intention is better than action; rather it is the action!' Then the Imam recited the verse, 'Say, "Everyone acts according to his *shakilah*, which is their intention"' (Kulayni 1365 SH: vol. 2, p. 16).

In his book *Mira'at 'Uqul*, 'Allamah Majlisi proposes the same view:

From the point of view that intention proceeds from the *shakilah*, and that the *shakilah* is that element which shapes the intention, in the traditions it has been explained to mean intention. So when the Imam has said, 'Say, "Everyone acts according to his *shakilah*, which is their intention"' it is as if the Imam is elaborating on the word *shakilah*, which is usually said to mean a state or doctrine, to mean intention. In this way the Imam is informing us that intention proceeds from the states and doctrines of a person. In addition, this meaning of intention has also been mentioned by lexicographers. Firoz Abadi mentions that *shakilah* means 'shape', 'an area', 'intention' and 'doctrine' (Majlisi 1404 AH: vol. 7, p. 85).

Other verses also exist which place intention as the foundation and 'soul' of an action, such as:

There is no blame on the weak, nor on the sick, nor on those who do not find anything to spend, so

long as they are sincere to Allah and His Apostle. There is no [cause for] blaming the virtuous, and Allah is all-forgiving, all-merciful. Nor [is there any blame] on those to whom, when they came to you to provide them with a mount [for war], you said, 'I do not find any mount for you,' and they turned back, their eyes flowing with tears, grieved because they did not find any means to spend (9:91-92).<sup>1</sup>

The negating of blame and guilt within the verses at times only indicates to there being no sin and the permissibility of the action. At other times, in addition to what was mentioned before, it signifies the compulsory nature of the action. Furthermore, it may at times also signify the permissibility of that action and the gaining of a reward for that action which was not performed. In the above verse, the third meaning, i.e. reward for an action not performed, is intended; because if it merely meant to negate blame and sin, then this would be apparent from the first part of the verse. The conjunction of the proceeding groups to the first one shows that this matter is greater than just a mere negation of sin. In reality, the verse divides those who were unable to participate in war into two groups: a group who are unable to fight, whom Allah excuses and accepts their reasons from; a second group who in addition to having their reasons accepted also benefit from the rewards of Allah. That is why the first verse ends with, 'Allah is all-forgiving, all-merciful,' for if the meaning of the verse were to only excuse them for their inability, it would have been more appropriate for this part of the verse to come after the second part.

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١. ﴿لَيْسَ عَلَى الضَّعْفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ \* وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا اتَّوَكَّلْتُمْ لِيَتَحْمِلَهُمْ قُلْتُمْ لَا أَجِدُ مَا أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ تَوَلَّوْا وَأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا يَجِدُوا مَا يُنْفِقُونَ﴾

A confirmation of this conclusion can be seen in a prophetic tradition which says that these verses were revealed in respect to those individuals who wanted to join the Holy Prophet for the Battle of Tabuk, however, they did not possess the means and ability to do so. In this tradition the Holy Prophet is reported to have said, ‘You have left behind in Medina men who neither traversed any road, nor gave any wealth, nor stepped into any valley, but yet they are your partners in this endeavour.’ The companions then asked, ‘How can that be so, O Messenger of Allah, when they are in Medina?’ The Holy Prophet answered, ‘Their reasons [for not being able to join] are sufficient for them’ (Suyuti 1404 AH: vol. 3, p. 267).

Now it can be asked, is simply crying and feeling dejected from not being able to join the military expedition a cause for the acquisition of the reward for the action and to have the station of participation? Or is it that these two behaviours are signs for something else which is not at the level of action, but rather the soul and spirit of it?

The circumstances and context of these verses confirm that intention has a fundamental part to play with respect to the worthiness of these two actions. That is why at the end of the first verse, Allah says, ‘So long as they are sincere to Allah and His Apostle. There is no [cause for] blaming the virtuous,’ to show that simply not being able to partake in the expedition is not sufficient, but that sincerity towards Allah is essential, as the term *lillah* (to Allah) signifies that the performance of the action must be done purely for the sake of Allah. The use of the word ‘virtuous’ (*muhsinin*) also indicates the impact of intention, as the negation of blame and guilt is based upon the person being from among who possess virtue, because the attribution of the agent signifies the righteousness of the agent, and as a result the influence of the intention of his actions.

In the second verse, the reasons behind the worthiness of the

tears and sorrow to not having the means to go and fight is mentioned and is clear that if they did not have the intention or fervour to take part in the battle, not having the means would not have caused them to become sorrowful and dejected. Therefore, it can be said that a sincere and godly intention is the source of value for ethical actions and is the spirit and soul of action.

### b) The futile nature of hypocritical and self-conceited actions

The position of the impact of intention on a negative ethical value is the same as on a positive ethical value. A verse which alludes to this matter is, ‘O you who have faith! Do not render your charities void by reproaches and affronts, like those who spend their wealth to be seen by people and have no faith in Allah and the Last Day. Their parable is that of a rock covered with soil: a downpour strikes it, leaving it bare. They have no power over any of what they have earned, and Allah does not guide the faithless lot’ (2:264).<sup>1</sup>

The verse compares that action which is rendered void because of the effects of reproach and affronts to one which is performed hypocritically and without a godly intention. What is meant by action being rendered void is not its erasure on the Day of Judgment. Rather, according to the clear meaning of the verses ‘and whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it’<sup>2</sup> (99:8) and ‘They will find present whatever they had done’ (18:49), hypocritical and self-conceited actions will remain and be seen on

١. ﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَمْطُلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ  
الْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ لَا  
يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴾

٢. ﴿ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ﴾

the Day of Judgment.

So what may be meant by this verse is that the objective and goal that was sought by the agent in performing that specific action will not come to fruition. In other words, this action in the court of Allah will not be accepted from the person.

The verse says that self-conceited, hypocritical actions and those non-hypocritical ones that were accompanied by reproach and affronts are in this way the same, as they both do not possess a godly intention. In contrast, an action which is accompanied by a godly intention is classified as being worthy and valuable because of that intention; therefore, that which makes action valuable and worthy is its intention.

The end of the verse confirms this explanation, as the phrase, ‘They have no power over anything of what they have earned,’ signifies the nullification of the desired result of the hypocritical action and hence the worthlessness of it. In addition, the simile which appears in the verse also elaborately shows the reason for the worthlessness and non-materialization of the desired result, i.e. the baselessness of the action, which is its being void of a godly intention.

### **c) The equal nature of an action and being pleased with it**

Among the verses that signify the impact of intention on the value of action are those which generalize the attribution of action to the individual as a result of his pleasure from it, for example, ‘But they impugned him and hamstrung her. So their Lord took them unawares by night because of their sin, and levelled it’ (91:14).<sup>1</sup>

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١. ﴿فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوْهَا فَذَمَّوْهَا عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذَنْبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا﴾



The context of the verse revolves around the incident of the killing of the she-camel of Prophet Salih. The word *aqar* has the literal meaning of 'slaughtering of a camel' (Raghib Isfahani 1412 AH: p. 577), which could only have been performed by a handful of people i.e. those who surrounded and were in the presence of the she-camel. According to traditions and historical reports, only one person from that tribe was responsible for this crime (Sharif Razi 1412 AH: vol. 1, p. 181; Nu'mani 1422 AH: p. 35). So why then does Allah in the *Holy Qur'an* attribute this action to the entire tribe of Thamud, mention the slaughter in a plural form in 11:65 and 26:157 and speak about a punishment that would affect the entire tribe?

In order to answer this question, it must be mentioned that if Allah decided to only punish his servants based upon the actions and deeds that they themselves did, then it would have been necessary for the entire tribe of Thamud to take part in the action; however, it is very unlikely that this action was performed by all of them. Therefore, that which is possible to have existed within all of them was their pleasure in and approval of this crime (Sharif Razi 1406 AH: p. 107).

In the traditions, this point has been emphasized: 'O people! Indeed people are united via their pleasure and displeasure. For the killer of the she-camel of Salih was only one man, but Allah expanded the punishment to include the entire tribe, as they were all pleased with the action' (Sharif Razi 1406 AH: p. 107).

By carefully reviewing the previous discussion, it becomes clear that the verse attributes the action of one person to others and that they were also punished for it. If the negative value of action were only related to the action without taking into consideration its intention and pleasure in it, then neither would the attribution of it to others be correct nor would their punishment just, as the action was not performed by them.

### d) Intention, the secret behind an action's value and perpetuity

Another group of verses which show the impact of intention on action are those verses which mention the effect of intention on the eternalness of actions. For example: 'And do not invoke another god besides Allah; there is no god except Him. Everything is to perish except His Face (*wajh*). All judgement belongs to Him, and to Him you will be brought back' (28:88).<sup>1</sup>

In order to prove the import of this verse on intention with respect to the value of action, it is necessary to understanding the meaning of the term *wajh* in the verse. Some of the meanings that have been mentioned for this term in the lexicons are 'face', 'the beginning of a thing' (Raghib Isfahani 1412 AH: p. 855), 'facing or being opposite to something' (Farahidi 1410 AH: vol. 4, p. 66; Ibn Faris 1404 AH: vol. 6, p. 88), 'the noblest or the primary form of anything' (Raghib Isfahani 1412 AH: p. 855), 'essence' (Raghib Isfahani 1412 AH: p. 855; Ibn Faris 1404 AH: vol. 6, p. 88; Sayyid Murtaza 1325 SH: vol. 3, p. 47), 'direction', 'way', 'position', 'leader' (Raghib Isfahani 1412 AH: p. 855; Ibn Faris 1404 AH: vol. 6, p. 88; Sayyid Murtaza 1325 SH: vol. 3, p. 47), 'purpose' (Raghib Isfahani 1412 AH: p. 855-6; Ibn Faris 1404 AH: vol. 6, p. 88; Sayyid Murtaza 1325 SH: vol. 3, p. 47), 'the place or position one is focused on to achieve' (Ibn Manzur 1414 AH: vol. 13, p. 556) and that '*wajh Allah*' is the place or direction that Allah has commanded one towards (Turayhi 1375 SH: vol. 6, p. 366).

Fakhr Razi, by referencing Arab poets, claims that *wajh* means purpose and intention. He says:

What is meant by *wajh* is purpose and intention. As the poet has recited, 'I ask forgiveness from Allah from those sins which I am unable to count and

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١. ﴿لَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ﴾

towards the Lord of the Worlds do I turn my intention (*wajh*) and action.’ Similar to this is what Allah says in the Holy Qur’an, ‘Indeed I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth, as a Hanif, and I am not one of the polytheists’ (6:79).<sup>1</sup> (Fakhr Razi 1420 AH: vol. 4, p. 21).

It seems to mean ‘a part of thing that faces or becomes connected with something else’ (Tabataba’i 1417 AH: vol. 7, p. 101). Other meanings are either a practical application or referent of this meaning or can be sourced from it. A broader and deeper explanation of this point is related to the study of *fiqh al-lughah* and will not be discussed further in this article. However, even if this meaning is not accepted, the most appropriate meaning for this verse among those which were mentioned above is that of ‘essence’ or ‘intention’.

However, by analysing the verse closer, it can be seen that ‘essence’ is not an appropriate meaning for the word *wajh*. For if the essence of Allah were intended, it would have been more appropriate to have said that ‘everything is to perish except Allah.’ So the use of the word *wajh* instead of Allah indicates that ‘essence’ was not intended. Therefore, by taking into consideration the above discussions, the term could either mean ‘direction’ and ‘way by which a connection can be made with Allah’, or ‘a godly intention’.

If we take it to mean ‘the direction or way that enables a person to face Allah’, and by taking into consideration that He is not a physical being, it can be concluded that what is meant is the existence of an action that will create a true connection with Allah. This cannot be anything other than a godly intention or an action that is accompanied with one.

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١. ﴿إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ﴾

So, as intention is the only thing which essentially attaches to Allah and every action that is attached must be supplemented with this type of intention in order for it to be righteous, it can be said that the primary factor is intention.

The above conclusion is not in contradiction with the meanings of 'religion of Allah', or the 'Infallible Imams' which appear in the traditions in explaining *wajh Allah*, as these seem to be mentioned as referents. Meaning that the religion of Allah, the divine law and the Infallible Imams are also linked to Allah and are ways and means to achieve proximity to Allah, or that people gain proximity via these two factors. In other words, because the Infallible Imams are intimate with Allah, a person can, via them, turn their attention to Allah. This very meaning has been alluded to in *Ziyarat al-Jami'ah al-Kabirah* when it is recited, 'Whoever intends Allah turns toward you' (Saduq n.d.: vol. 2, p. 276). Therefore, *wajh* means that thing which a person by means of it turns his attention to Allah and, without any comparison, has the position of the face of Allah.

Based on the preceding discussion, the intended meaning of the verse is that everything will perish or is perishable, except that which is performed with a godly and righteous intention. Now, it could be asked that on what basis are the actions contained within the meaning of the word 'everything' in the verse? In order to answer this question, two proofs can be given. Firstly, the generality and inclusiveness of the word 'everything' and secondly, the context present at the beginning of the verse. The beginning of the verse talks about sincere worship, which is an action done solely for Allah. The following verses like 'everything will perish except the face of Allah' are intended to explain and expound on the beginning of the verse. In this way the phrase 'everything will perish' contains actions as well.

With this explanation and by taking into consideration the

context, the meaning of the verse reads: ‘Do not bring other than Allah in your worship, because there is no Lord except Him and every action that is performed with a unrighteous and ungodly intention is of no value and will be destroyed,’ or ‘Anything, action or otherwise, is perishable and only that which is performed with a righteous and godly intention is valuable and will remain.’

### **The impact of intention on the results of action**

From amongst the groups of verses which signify the impact of intention on the value of action are those verses which indicate the effect of intention on the result of an action. As mentioned previously, the value of an action means the actualizing of the goal upon the action, i.e. that goal which the agent at the time of the action wanted to achieve by the performance of the said action.

In reality, this group of verses intends to explain the ethical value of actions based upon the actualization of the action’s goal. In this regard, what follows is an analysis of a few of the verses from this group.

#### **a) The acceptance of action is dependent on its intention**

One of the outcomes that the *Holy Qur’an* indirectly references for a righteous agent is the acceptance of his deeds and actions. The content of this matter can be attained from the story of Habil and Qabil and the reasons behind the acceptance and rejection of their sacrifices. The *Holy Qur’an* explains that the reason Habil’s sacrifice was accepted and Qabil’s was rejected was because the agent of one of the two actions was from amongst the Godway:

Relate to them truly the account of Adam’s two sons. When the two of them offered an offering, it

was accepted from one of them and not accepted from the other. [One of them] said, ‘Surely I will kill you.’ [The other one] said, ‘Allah accepts only from the Godwary’ (5:27).<sup>1</sup>

In this verse, Allah narrates that two of the children of Prophet Adam gave a sacrifice; however, it was only accepted from one of them even though the action they performed was the same and has been attributed to both of them. That which differentiated their sacrifices in the eyes of Allah was the presence or absence of piety and godwariness. This is the criteria for the acceptance of deeds and actions.

Also in Surah al-Hajj, when narrating this event, piety and godwariness are counted as the primary factor in the acceptance of the sacrifice. ‘It is not their flesh or blood that reaches Allah; rather, it is your piety that reaches Him’ (22:37).<sup>2</sup>

Within the framework of the Holy Qur’an, piety is enacted when a person heeds Allah and is focused on Allah in the performing of or abstaining from an action. A pious individual is always self-conscious and careful to perform actions with the intention of gaining proximity to Allah, and it is because of this that no defects can be found in his actions. For this explanation, it should have become clear that a godly intention is concealed within the concept of piety and that the condition for an action being worthy based on piety in reality means that it is conditional upon intention.

### **b) Reward is related to sincere intention**

Another verse that focuses on the relationship between the intention

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١. ﴿وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ ابْنَيْ آدَمَ بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقُبِّلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا وَلَمْ يُتَقَبَّلْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ قَالَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ﴾

٢. ﴿لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهُ لُحُومَهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤها وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَى مِنْكُمْ﴾

of the righteous agent and the outcome of action is 2:262. According to this verse, the reward for giving charity is conditional on two important elements: (1) the action should be in the way of Allah, and (2) it must not be accompanied by reproach and affronts.

Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah and then do not follow up what they have spent with reproaches and affronts shall have their reward near their Lord, and they will have no fear, nor will they grieve. (2:262)<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the discussion that was previously mentioned regarding the signification of the condition ‘in the way of Allah’ on intention, by comparing this verse with the verse, ‘O you who have faith! Do not render your charities void by reproaches and affronts, like those who spend their wealth to be seen by people’ (2:264),<sup>2</sup> which explains the opposite stance, i.e. the rejection of action and by noting that reproach and affront appear in both verses, it can be concluded that ‘in the way of Allah’ is the complete opposite of ‘to be seen by people’, so a self-conceited and hypocritical intention identifies with the unrighteousness of the agent, just as someone proceeding in the way of Allah identifies with the righteousness of it.

The *Holy Qur’an* cements this understanding when it contrasts the concept of ‘in the way of fake gods,’ (4:76) with that of ‘in the way of Allah’. Even though the concept of intention cannot directly be understood from this verse, the necessity of performing actions in the way of Allah is that it must be accompanied with a godly and

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١. ﴿الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَّبَعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَذَىٰ لَّهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾

٢. ﴿لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَىٰ كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ﴾

righteous intention. It can therefore be said that this verse in a way emphasizes the effect of the righteous and virtuous agent on the outcome and result of actions and deeds.

### c) The position of intention in acquiring the goodness of this world and the hereafter

The following two verses imply a worthy outcome for some ethical actions, outcomes that are achieved because of a pure and sincere intention:

Give the relative his due, and the needy and the traveller [as well]. That is better for those who seek Allah's pleasure, and it is they who are the felicitous. What you give in usury in order that it may increase people's wealth does not increase with Allah. But what you pay as zakat seeking Allah's pleasure – it is they who will be given a manifold increase (30:38-39).<sup>1</sup>

The word *iradah* comes from the root *rawd* which means wanting something accompanied by effort. In its literal sense, it is a faculty that is a combination of want, need and desire. In other words, *iradah* is a term that is used to indicate the pulling or pushing of the soul towards or away from something that is either beneficial or unbeneficial to do (Raghib Isfahani 1412 AH: p. 371). Similar phrases such as 'desiring His face'<sup>2</sup> (6:52; 18:28) also appear in other verses.

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١. ﴿فَأَتَتْ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ \* وَمَا آتَيْتُم مِّن رَّبًّا لَّيْبُوا فِي أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا يَرْبُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَتَيْتُم مِّن زَكَاةٍ تُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضْعِفُونَ﴾

٢. ﴿يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ﴾



These verses, which have the same meaning as those verses which contain the phrase ‘seeking the pleasure of their Lord,’ show that these individuals perform these types of action in seeking the essence of Allah (Raghib Isfahani 1414 AH: p. 856) and are always near to that which brings them closer to Him (Sayyid Murtaza 1325 SH: vol. 3, p. 50). An explanation on the relationship between the ‘face of Allah’ and intention was given previously.

Therefore the signification of these verses on the impact of intention on the outcomes of actions should be clear. The first verse places the seeking of Allah’s face as a condition for the goodness and righteousness of the fulfilment of the rights of the relatives, needy and travellers. It has also been introduced as the element which will enable one to achieve felicity, and points to the fact that such an intention changes the essence of an action into goodness. Hence, the goodness of an action is the outcome of a godly and righteous intention.

The second verse underlines this point that the paying of zakat (Islamic tax) with the intention of seeking Allah’s pleasure will result in an increase in the rewards and wealth of that individual. It must be noted that the increase of wealth will occur in this world (see Tusi n.d.: vol. 8, p. 255; Fayd Kashani 1415 AH: vol. 4, p. 134). So, the influence of a righteous agent on the outcomes of actions in this world and the hereafter can be extracted from this verse.

#### **d) The impact of intention in reaching an esteemed position**

Another set of verses which elaborates on the effect of intention on the outcomes of actions is comprised of those verses which speak about migration in the way of Allah. Allah says in the Holy Qur’an:

Those who migrate in the way of Allah and then are slain, or die, Allah will surely provide them with a good provision. Allah is indeed the best of

providers. He will admit them into an abode they are pleased with. Indeed Allah is all-knowing, all-forgiving (22:58-59).<sup>1</sup>

According to this verse, the attaining of a good provision and entrance into the domain of Allah's pleasure are the reward for those who migrated in the way of Allah. This shows that the prominent factor and element which made this action worthy in the eyes of Allah was their godly and righteous intention, not that the action was performed to gain worldly desires such as wealth and status.

From the promise of Allah to reward those who are slain or die after the migration, it can be concluded that no reward exists for the one who makes the journey without a godly and righteous intention and who ends up dying or being killed. This shows that the primary factor and element in this regard is the existence of the righteous agent and godly intention (Tabataba'i 1417 AH: vol. 14, p. 399).

Another example is the following verse:

Whoever migrates in the way of Allah will find many havens and plenitude in the earth. And whoever leaves his home migrating toward Allah and His Apostle, and is then overtaken by death, his reward shall certainly fall on Allah, and Allah is all-forgiving, all-merciful. (4:100)<sup>2</sup>

In the above verse, a relationship between the righteous agent and the outcome of the action is established. Migration, struggle and

١. ﴿وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ قُتِلُوا أَوْ مَاتُوا لَيُرْزُقْنَهُمُ اللَّهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ﴾  
لَيَدْخُلْنَهُمْ مُدْخَلًا يَرْضُونَهُ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ

٢. ﴿وَمَنْ يَهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَاعِمًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا﴾

detachment of the heart from its longings is sometimes performed in order to achieve things such as wealth, status and other worldly objectives. This type of action will not earn the reward of Allah.

That which gives value and worth to the migration and will the means by which the reward of Allah is earned is the criteria of in the way of Allah or towards Allah; just as this verse assures to a great reward waiting for them.

Similar to this verse is the following one from Surah al-Nahl:

Those who migrate for the sake of Allah after they have been wronged, We will surely settle them in a good place in the world, and the reward of the Hereafter is surely greater, had they known (16:41).<sup>1</sup>

In this verse, instead of the phrases ‘in the way of Allah’ or ‘towards Allah’, the term *fi Allah* (for the sake of Allah) is used. A migration that is done for the sake of Allah is one that is undertaken purely to earn the pleasure of Allah. For example, phrases such as, ‘travelling for the sake of learning knowledge’ or ‘going out for the sake of earning livelihood’ mean that a person is travelling or going out solely for the purpose of achieving the stated objective and nothing else (Tabataba’i 1417 AH: vol. 12, p. 254). Therefore, the existence of this phrase in the above verse signifies the effect and impact of intention on the outcomes of actions.

### e) The effect of intention in attaining the afterlife

When the life of man comes to an end and he leaves this worldly abode and enters a different one, his book of deeds closes; many traditions clearly stipulate this point. For example, it is reported

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١. ﴿وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا لَنَنبُوْتَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَلَا نَجْزِي الْآخِرَةَ أَكْبَرَ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

that the Holy Prophet said, ‘When a child of Adam (human being) dies, his actions will terminate’ (Muslim n.d.: vol. 5, p. 73).

The *Holy Qur’an* points to this fact in a slightly different way where Allah says, ‘But their faith was of no benefit to them when they sighted Our punishment – Allah’s precedent, which has passed among His servants, and it is thence that the faithless will be losers (40:85).’<sup>1</sup> Ma’mun asked Imam Rida why Firawn’s confession to monotheism and belief in Allah at the last moment of his life not accepted. In reply, Imam Rida made reference to the above verse and said that at the time of death and vision of punishment, a person’s book of deeds is closed and no action will be of benefit to him (Bahrani 1416 AH: vol. 4, p. 772).

Therefore, according to the verses and the traditions, with the death of a person, no action or deed will be accepted from him. However, there are some exceptions to the rule that can also be found in the *Holy Qur’an* and traditions. One of those instances is where a person gives his life in order to purchase proximity with Allah: ‘Indeed Allah has bought from the faithful their souls and their possessions for paradise’ (9:111).<sup>2</sup> At this instant, no matter how apparent the death of a person may be, in return he attains a life which is far more worthier and valuable. In addition, Allah says. ‘Do not call those who were slain in Allah’s way “dead”. No, they are living, but you are not aware’ (2:154).<sup>3</sup> In that life, which exists within the bounds of Allah’s infinite mercy, man will benefit from the special provisions of their Lord. ‘Do not suppose those who were slain in the way of Allah to be dead; no, they are living and provided for near their Lord’ (3:169).<sup>4</sup>

١. ﴿فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنْفَعُهُمْ إِيمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا سَبَّتَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ قَدْ خَلَّتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾

٢. ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ﴾

٣. ﴿وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ﴾

٤. ﴿وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ﴾

It is clear that that which gives value and worth to this struggle and enables a person to attain such a lofty abode is not merely the physical confrontation with the unbelievers, for if a righteous intention for this action did not exist and struggle were not done in order to earn the pleasure of Allah, it would definitely not have such an esteemed outcome. It would rather be like a 'killed donkey' – a donkey that was killed while being present on the battlefield within the ranks of the Holy Prophet, but did not earn a position amongst the ranks of the martyrs and did not attain the lofty rewards promised to them (Naraqı n.d.: vol. 3, p. 89). That which gives value and worth to struggle and sacrifice and elevates a person to, according to some traditions, the highest of stations is fighting and struggling with a godly intention and in the way of Allah. It is reported from the Holy Prophet, 'Above every goodness there is a better one, until a person is killed in the way of Allah, for when he is killed in the way of Allah, there is nothing better or higher than it' (Sha'iri n.d.: p. 83).

## Conclusion

From the Islamic viewpoint, those actions and deeds which possess ethical value are those which are performed with a righteous and godly intention and for the earning the pleasure of Allah. The phrases that indicate the influence of intention in the verses of the *Holy Qur'an* vary; sometimes they indicate the direct effect of intention, while at others they signify its effect on the outcomes and results of actions. It can be concluded from these verses that intention is the essence and soul of the action and it is because of this that an intention which is not godly in nature has no value or worth in the divine court of Allah. Similarly, intention has such a deep relationship with the action, that even if a person just intends to do it or is pleased with the performance of it, according to the Holy Qur'an, he will be placed amongst the ranks

of the agents of that action. The eternalness and continuity of the value of an action in the Hereafter is also related to intention. In addition, the acceptance of an action and the earning of divine rewards from Allah in this world and in the Hereafter are also guaranteed by means of having a godly intention for that deed or action. Therefore, from the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an, the most fundamental factor and element in the ethical value of an action is the effect of the intention on its performance.

## References

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