

# Avoid double measurement

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

The chapter of the Quran entitled Al-Mutaffifin (Those who give short measure) deals with hypocritical behaviour. The Quran calls it “double measurement”.

“Woe to those who give short measure, who demand of other people full measure for themselves, but when they give by measurement or weight to others, they give them less. Do such people not realise that they will be raised up, on a fateful day. The day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the Universe?” (83:1-6).

“Double measurement” means giving less to others and taking more from them. It applies not only to giving short measure or short weight in commercial terms, but also to all other social activities. Not only does it vitiate commercial dealings, but it also undermines social and moral relationships. All things considered, it is a reprehensible practice and those who stoop to it are evil in character.

The next verses of this chapter make it clear that what is being condemned is the spirit of injustice, which is, giving too little and asking too much. This appears in commercial dealings, where a man exacts a higher standard in his own favour than he is willing to concede to others. In domestic or social matters, an individual or group may ask for honour, or respect, or services, which for their part he or they are not willing to give in similar circumstances.

It is worse than one-sided selfishness: for it is double injustice. But its worst manifestation is in religion or spiritual life: how can a man have the effrontery to ask for mercy or love from God when he grudges giving either to his fellow men? There is a golden rule which should be borne in mind: “Do as you would be done by.”