

## 51. None of Us Will Enter Jannah Only Due to Our Deeds

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...Al-Imaam al-Bukhaaree collected a hadeeth in his Saheeh from Aboo Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) who narrated that the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, “No individual among you will attain salvation only because of his deeds.” The Companions asked, “Messenger of Allaah, not even you?” He replied, “Not even me, unless Allaah encompasses me with His mercy. Strive to do all that is correct and strive to come as close as possible to what is best. Progress along a portion of your course in the early part of the day, a portion in the latter part of the day, and a portion at the end of the night. You must follow a course of moderation. You must follow a course of moderation. When you do that, you will succeed in reaching your destination.”<sup>1</sup>

Another narration of the hadeeth has the wording, “This religion is one of ease. If anyone tries to contend with the religion, it will overcome him. Therefore, strive to do all that is correct, strive to come as close as possible to what is best, and receive glad tidings. You will be aided in consistently progressing along your course when you make some of the time you spend travelling in the early part of the day, some in the latter part of the day, and some at the end of the night.”<sup>2</sup>

Al-Bukhaaree also collected a hadeeth from ‘Aa’ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) who narrated that the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, “Strive to do all that is correct, and strive to come as close as possible to what is best. Realize that none of you will be admitted to Jannah only because of his deeds, and the most beloved of deeds to Allaah are those performed consistently even if they may seem little.”<sup>3</sup>

This hadeeth presents an important foundational principle: no matter what level of goodness and completion a person’s deeds reach, that alone will not make him entitled to being admitted to Jannah, or saved from the hellfire. Rather, those outcomes depend solely on Allaah’s forgiveness and mercy.

In the aforementioned hadeeth, the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, “None of you will be admitted to Jannah only because of his deeds.” However, Allaah (the Almighty and Most Majestic), said,

﴿ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

“**You may now enter Jannah as a result of the deeds you had performed.**”<sup>4</sup> The way these two texts are understood together is that being admitted to Jannah comes about by Allaah’s mercy while people’s ranks in Jannah will be in accordance with their deeds: the better and more a person’s deeds are, the higher his rank in Jannah would be. In addition, it must be borne in mind that although deeds are a cause for being admitted to Jannah, their performance comes about by Allaah’s mercy as well. Therefore, we can understand that both admittance to Jannah and performance of deeds come about by the grace and mercy that Allaah grants to His servants who have eemaan. This is why those admitted to Jannah will say when they enter it, “All praise is due to Allaah who guided us to do what led to this reward. We ourselves could not have attained guidance had

<sup>1</sup> Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (6463).

<sup>2</sup> Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (39).

<sup>3</sup> Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (6464), Saheeh Muslim (2818).

<sup>4</sup> Soorah an-Nahl (16):32.



Allaah not guided us to His path and kept us steadfast upon it.”<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, due to them acknowledging that Allaah blessed them with admittance to Jannah as well as the guidance that led them to it, and due to them praising Allaah for that all, they will be told, “This is Jannah which has been granted to you as a result of the deeds you had performed.”<sup>6</sup> Here, the deeds were ascribed to the people themselves, and they were also rewarded for performing them.

Servants of Allaah, another detail worth mentioning is that by Allaah’s favour and kindness, rewards for righteous deeds are multiplied. For one righteous deed, He grants a reward for ten like it and He even multiplies it to seven hundred fold or more. Allaah’s servants will always have shortcomings and remain in need of their Lord’s pardon and forgiveness. There is no person who does not have sins which he needs Allaah to forgive him for so as to be admitted to Jannah, which is the abode that Allaah calls His servants to. He said,

﴿وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُوا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ﴾

“Allaah calls to Jannah and forgiveness by His permission.”<sup>7</sup>

Servants of Allaah, based on the preceding, an individual who has eemaan must not ever think that the deeds he performs are something remarkable, and he must not place his dependence upon them no matter how good or many they might be. The individual must not become complacent and think that his acts of worship and obedience to Allaah are all accepted, since none has knowledge about that besides Allaah, the Almighty and Most Majestic. The individual must remain focused on nothing besides Allaah’s favours and blessings to him. It was this frame of mind which led the Companions (may Allaah be pleased with all of them) to not see themselves as individuals of virtue, even though they did have unparalleled virtues and were foremost in performing righteous deeds. What they always kept in mind was that their Lord blessed them to perform righteous deeds and guided them to prepare the provisions that draw them nearer to Him. As a result, they would ascribe all favours and blessings to Him. Moreover, they combined diligence in performing deeds along with fear of them not being accepted by Allaah. ‘Aa’ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) had once asked, “Messenger of Allaah, there is an aayah that says,

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَى رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ﴾

“Those who do what they do while their hearts remain fearful of being punished when they return to their Lord.”<sup>8</sup> Messenger of Allaah, does that refer to those who rob people, commit adultery, and consume intoxicants; and that is what makes them remain fearful of Allaah?” The Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) replied, “Daughter of Aboo Bakr, daughter of as-Siddeeq, it does not refer to them. Rather, it refers to people who pray, fast, and give in charity, yet they remain fearful that Allaah, the Almighty and Most Majestic, [would not accept that from them].” This was collected by Ahmad.<sup>9</sup> From this hadeeth, we can understand that we are encouraged to perform righteous deeds without delay, continue performing them, and remain fearful of Allaah throughout that all. The Companions were the most righteous and obedient of Allaah’s servants, yet their hearts remained filled with apprehension about their deeds not being accepted. A narration mentions that a man once came to ‘Abdullaah ibn Mas‘ood (may Allaah be pleased with him) and said, “It would not please me to merely be among the people of the right. Rather, it would please me to be among those nearest to Allaah.” ‘Abdullaah replied by saying about himself, “However, there is a man right here who would be pleased to pass away and not be resurrected.”

<sup>5</sup> Soorah al-A‘raaf (7):43.

<sup>6</sup> Soorah al-A‘raaf (7):43.

<sup>7</sup> Soorah al-Baqarah (2):221.

<sup>8</sup> Soorah al-Mu‘minooneen (23):60.

<sup>9</sup> Musnad al-Imaam Ahmad (25705), Jaami‘ at-Tirmitheeh (3175). Graded saheeh by al-Albaanee.



Servants of Allaah, a person who has genuine eemaan is to expend his efforts to perform righteous deeds and acts of obedience to Allaah. Along with that, he must not become conceited or think he is doing anyone a favour by the deeds he performs. He must recognize that Allaah, the Most Exalted, is the One who blessed him, guided him, and removed impediments and obstacles. His overall state should reflect a sentiment along the lines of “if it were not for Allaah, we would not have guidance, give charity, or perform prayer.”<sup>10</sup>

An individual must strive to perform every prescribed righteous deed he can, and he must not think little of any righteous deed. It could very well be that a seemingly small deed performed with sincerity to Allaah is what enables an individual to attain Allaah’s forgiveness and be admitted to Jannah.

Abou Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) narrated that Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, “As a man was once walking along a path, he was overcome by intense thirst. He eventually found a well, descended into it, and drank. When he emerged, he found a dog panting and licking the ground out of thirst. The man said to himself, ‘This dog is experiencing the same thirst which I experienced.’ As a result, he went into the well again, filled his shoe with water, and carried it with his mouth all the way until he emerged from the well and then gave the dog to drink. Due to that, Allaah rewarded him by forgiving his sins.” The Companions asked, “Messenger of Allaah, even animals are a source of reward?” He replied, “Every living creature is a source of reward.” This was collected by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim.<sup>11</sup> Another narration of this hadeeth collected by al-Bukhaaree mentions that Allaah rewarded him, forgave him, and admitted him to Jannah.<sup>12</sup> Thus, that man was forgiven by Allaah as a reward for his deed, and it led to him being admitted to Jannah.

Any person of eemaan who seeks salvation from the hellfire and admittance to Jannah must do so by pursuing the means to attaining Allaah’s mercy, pardon, forgiveness, pleasure, and love.

Among the deeds which Allaah loves are those performed consistently, even if relatively small. The Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) forbade the Companions from forsaking deeds they performed. He told ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas, “Do not be like such-and-such person. He used to pray at night but he later forsook praying at night.”<sup>13</sup>

Also among the deeds which Allaah loves are those performed with moderation and ease, not difficulty or overdoing things. Our Lord said,

﴿يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ﴾

“Allaah wants to grant you ease, and He does not want to put you through difficulty.”<sup>14</sup> In addition, the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) reprimanded those who resolved to remain celibate, pray for the entire night, fast every day, and read the entire Qur’aan every night. When three individuals desired to adopt a course for themselves which opposed his guidance, he directed them back to the path of moderation by saying, “However, I fast and break my fast, I pray at night and sleep as well, and I marry women. Thus, if someone is averse to my Sunnah, he is not from me.”<sup>15</sup> This is the meaning of the statement in the hadeeth mentioned earlier [at the beginning of the sermon], “Strive to do all that is correct and strive to come as close as possible to what is best.” This essentially entails following a course of moderation in worship, without any negligence or excessiveness. The statement “strive to come as close as possible to what is best” implies that you must not be excessive in acts of worship and, thus, exhaust yourselves. That excessiveness will lead you to become fatigued and to eventually neglect the deeds you had

<sup>10</sup> Alluding to poetry which was said by the Companions. See Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (2837), Saheeh Muslim (1802).

<sup>11</sup> Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (2363), Saheeh Muslim (2244).

<sup>12</sup> See Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (173).

<sup>13</sup> Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (1152), Saheeh Muslim (1159).

<sup>14</sup> Soorah al-Baqarah (2):185.

<sup>15</sup> Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (5063), Saheeh Muslim (1401).



been performing.

Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allaah have mercy upon him) commented that something which we should recognize is that we do not please Allaah or attain His love merely by punishing ourselves and doing difficult things. Many of the ignorant think that, in all cases, the more difficult a deed the more virtuous it must be. This is not so. Rather, reward is in proportion to how beneficial the deed is, and how obedient a person is to Allaah and His Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection). The more beneficial a person's deed, and the more obedient he is, the more virtuous that is. The rank of deeds is not merely by quantity. Rather, their rank is in accordance to what is in a person's heart when he performs them.<sup>16</sup>

In the hadeeth mentioned earlier [at the outset of this sermon], there was the statement of the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection), "receive glad tidings." This means that if you have striven to do what is correct, striven to come as close as possible to what is best, and followed a moderate course in worship, then you are entitled to glad tidings of immense goodness and reward. The "glad tidings" were mentioned here in a general way, and this encompasses every form of goodness, virtue, and reward in this world and the hereafter.

Servants of Allaah, we must also realize that virtues are not attained just by a multitude of physical actions. Rather, they are attained when our actions are performed sincerely for Allaah and in accordance with the Sunnah. It was not merely by a plethora of fasting or prayers that the Companions (may Allaah be pleased with all of them) outdid those who came after them. What distinguished the Companions was the purity of their hearts, their fulfilment of the rights of our Ummah, the sincerity of their intentions, the strength of their attachment to the hereafter, and shifting their primary focus away from this world. By accepting Allaah's Messenger, accompanying him, and struggling in Allaah's path alongside him, they attained eemaan and certainty which no one else shares with them.

Dear Muslims, the most virtuous of people are those who traverse the path tread by the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) and tread by his most eminent Companions, in terms of being moderate in acts of worship while also remaining diligent concerning matters pertaining to the heart. The journey to the hereafter is one that the heart traverses, not only the limbs. The hadeeth mentioned [at the beginning of the sermon] stated that the times of proceeding to Allaah are the end of the night, the early part of the day, and the latter part of the day. The Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, "You will be aided in consistently progressing along your course when you make some of the time you spend travelling in the early part of the day, some in the latter part of the day, and some at the end of the night." These were also mentioned by Allaah, the Almighty and Most Majestic, in His statement,

﴿وَأَذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَاسْجُدْ لَهُ، وَسَبِّحْهُ لَيْلًا طَوِيلًا﴾

**"You must mention the name of your Lord during the early and latter parts of each day, as well as during some of the night. Furthermore, throughout all circumstances, you must prostrate to Him in prayer and glorify Him for a long while during the night."**<sup>17</sup>

In the first two times – the earlier and latter parts of the day – we find an obligatory action and a supererogatory one. The obligatory comprises the Fajr and 'Asr prayers, and when a person is diligent in establishing them, he would be admitted to Jannah. The supererogatory is thikr (mentioning Allaah using the prescribed words) during the time after Fajr until sunrise, and in the time after 'Asr until sunset.

In the third time – the end of the night – there is the act of seeking Allaah's forgiveness. He said,

﴿وَيَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِذُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُكْفِرِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾﴾

**"And at the end of the night they seek forgiveness."**<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Majmoo' al-Fataawaa (25/281).

<sup>17</sup> Soorah al-Insaaan (76):25-26.

<sup>18</sup> Soorah ath-Thaariyaat (51):18.



My dear brothers, when the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, “None of you will be admitted to Jannah only because of his deeds,” he was not saying that deeds have no purpose, or that we should forsake acts of worship. On the contrary, his statement implied that deeds are absolutely necessary and they have a major purpose. Performing righteous deeds is an indicator of the presence of Allaah’s mercy by which a person would be admitted to Jannah. The meaning of the statement is: You must continue performing deeds and striving to do so correctly – by complying with the Sunnah and remaining sincere to Allaah – in order for those deeds to be accepted and for Allaah to then grant you His mercy.

So long as we are alive, deeds are required of us at all times. The more a person obeys Allaah, the greater that person’s goodness, completion, and rank with Allaah would be. However, along with that all, one must never be complacent and think that his deeds are what will admit him to Jannah. The foregoing hadeeth implies that a cause may not necessarily bring about the desired effect. For instance, if rain falls on some seeds, that does not necessarily yield plants. Air and soil are required, and impediments must be removed. For the desired result, prerequisites must be fulfilled and obstacles must be removed. Furthermore, all of that occurs by Allaah’s decree.

Similar applies to the hereafter. It is not only a person’s deeds that enable him to attain happiness, since deeds are only a cause. Along with deeds, the person still requires Allaah’s mercy and favour to be admitted to Jannah. No matter how great a person’s deeds, they – on their own – cannot grant a person salvation from the hellfire or admit him to Jannah.

Additionally, there was repetition in the part of the hadeeth that says, “You must follow a course of moderation. You must follow a course of moderation. When you do that, you will succeed in reaching your destination.” This implies that one must be consistent in performing righteous deeds. Overexerting oneself on the journey can lead to fatigue and stagnation, while remaining moderate is most conducive to proceeding forward consistently.

I say this much and I implore Allaah, the Most Majestic, to forgive me, you, and all Muslims for every sin and misdeed. Thus, ask His forgiveness and repent to Him. My Lord is certainly the Most Forgiving, the Bestower of mercy.



...My dear brothers who have eemaan, the final destination of the path we are to traverse is our Lord. When a person does not know the path to his Lord, that person will go astray. The path to Allaah is traversing the straight course that He prescribed: the course with which He sent His Messenger, sent down in His Scripture, and instructed all people to traverse.

Reaching Allaah by that path takes two forms: one in this world and one in the hereafter. Reaching Allaah in this world means our hearts attaining sound knowledge about Him. When our hearts know Allaah, they will love Him, find solace with Him, find Him near to them, and find Him responsive to their supplications. Reaching Allaah in the hereafter means being admitted to Jannah which is the abode in which Allaah blesses His obedient servants with His favour, in accordance to the levels of their obedience.

As Allaah’s servants proceed along their course to Him, they must be wary of letting any of their deeds go to waste and, thus, not yield the benefit anticipated from them. Allaah, the Most Exalted, said,

﴿ وَقَدِمْنَا إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنَّ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَاءً مَّنثُورًا ﴾

“We will come to the deeds performed by certain people then make them like scattered particles of dust floating in the air, not availing them in the least.”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Soorah al-Furqaan (25):23.



Allaah's servants must also be wary of underrating the gravity of sins and, thus, ruining themselves. Allaah, the Most Exalted, said,

﴿وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ﴾

“You think it is something minor, but it is very grave with Allaah.”<sup>20</sup>

Even worse is when a person finds sins appealing. Allaah, the Most Exalted, instructed His Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection),

﴿قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعِيَّهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا﴾

“Say: Shall We inform you about those who will suffer the greatest loss in terms of their deeds? They are the ones whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good from the actions they performed.”<sup>21</sup>

Not only that, an individual may have performed righteous deeds but also wronged others without restoring their rights to them. At the time of accountability, they may end up taking all of his righteous deeds. If that is insufficient, their sins will end up being cast upon him, and he will then be cast into the hellfire.

Another important detail about proceeding to Allaah is that actions are given consideration based on the way they conclude. Therefore, all people of eemaan should beseech Allaah to grant them a good ending, seek refuge with Him from a miserable one, and implore Him to keep them steadfast upon His religion until they leave this world. Allaah, the Most Exalted, said,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

“People of eemaan, observe taqwa of Allaah as He rightfully deserves, and ensure that you do not die except submitting to Allaah in Islaam.”<sup>22</sup> Ibn Katheer (may Allaah have mercy upon him) explained that this means you must remain steadfast in adhering to Islaam while you are in safety and good health, so that you would also pass away adhering to it; and a person will be resurrected according to what he died adhering to. We seek refuge with Allaah from anything besides [His religion of Islaam].<sup>23</sup>

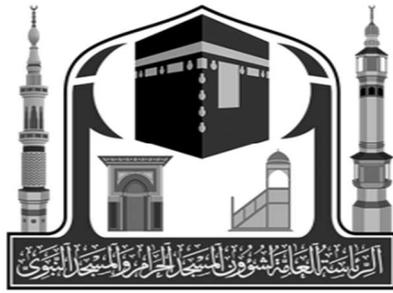
Dear Muslims, it is absolutely necessary for us to prepare for what lies ahead of us, bear in mind how much of our lives have passed, and take account of ourselves from this very moment lest death arrive unexpectedly. Al-Fudayl ibn ‘Iyaad asked a man, “What age have you reached?” He replied, “Sixty years.” Al-Fudayl told him, “That means you have been proceeding to your Lord for the past sixty years and you may reach Him soon.” The man said, “Aboo ‘Alee, we all belong to Allaah alone and we will all return to Him alone.” Al-Fudayl asked, “Do you know what you just said?” The man replied, “I said: we all belong to Allaah alone and we will all return to Him alone.” Al-Fudayl asked, “Do you know what that means?” The man replied, “Aboo ‘Alee, explain its meaning to me.” Al-Fudayl said, “You are saying about yourself, ‘I belong to Allaah as a worshipping servant and I will eventually return to Allaah.’ If an individual knows he is to be a worshipping servant of Allaah and that he will eventually return to Allaah, that individual must realize that he will be brought before Allaah. If he knows that he will be brought before Allaah, he must realize that he will be questioned. If he knows that he will be questioned, he needs to prepare proper answers.” The man then asked, “How is that done?” Al-Fudayl replied, “By something simple.” The man asked, “What is it?” Al-Fudayl replied, “If you do what is right in what remains, you will be forgiven for what passed and what remains; but if you do wrong in what remains, you will be taken to account for what passed and what remains.”

<sup>20</sup> Soorah an-Noor (24):15.

<sup>21</sup> Soorah al-Kahf (18):103-104.

<sup>22</sup> Soorah Aali ‘Imraan (3):102.

<sup>23</sup> Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-‘Atheem (2/87).



Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy upon him) commented that genuinely preparing to meet Allaah is the key to all righteous deeds and to all the legs of one's journey to Allaah including alertness, penitence, repentance, love, hope, fear, reliance, submission, and all other actions of the heart and limbs.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Tareeq al-Hijratayn (1/381).