



Hadith

THE TESTIMONY THAT MUHAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM) IS GOD'S MESSENGER

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:



All my community shall be admitted into Heaven except those who refuse.



People asked: 'Messenger of God, who will refuse?'



He said: Whoever obeys me enters Heaven and whoever disobeys me refuses.⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7280.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Say: 'If you love God, follow me; God will love you and forgive you your sins. God is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'.﴾ (3: 31)
- ﴿He who seeks a religion other than Islam [i.e. self-surrender to God], it will not be accepted from him, and in the life to come he will be among the lost.﴾ (3: 85)
- ﴿If you obey him, you shall be rightly guided. The Messenger is not bound to do more than clearly deliver his message.﴾ (24: 54)
- ﴿So let those who would go against His bidding beware, lest some affliction or painful suffering befall them.﴾ (24: 63)
- ﴿Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you, abstain from it. Remain God-fearing; for God is severe in retribution.﴾ (59: 7)

The Narrator

Abu Hurayrah 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Şakhr al-Dawsī embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He was the Prophet's companion who narrated the largest number of his hadiths, because he committed himself to remain close to the Prophet. He was keen to learn the Prophet's hadiths and he remained for a long time in Madinah. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) explains in this hadith that all people of his community will be admitted into Heaven except those who refuse. He further explains that only those who disobey him and do what is contrary to his Sunnah refuse to enter Heaven.



Message and Meaning

1

The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that all his community will go to Heaven except those who refuse. What is meant here by the word 'community' includes everyone, human and jinn, who received his message. This applies to all those who have heard of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his message and received God's revelation and religion. They are all included in the community to which he has been sent.

2

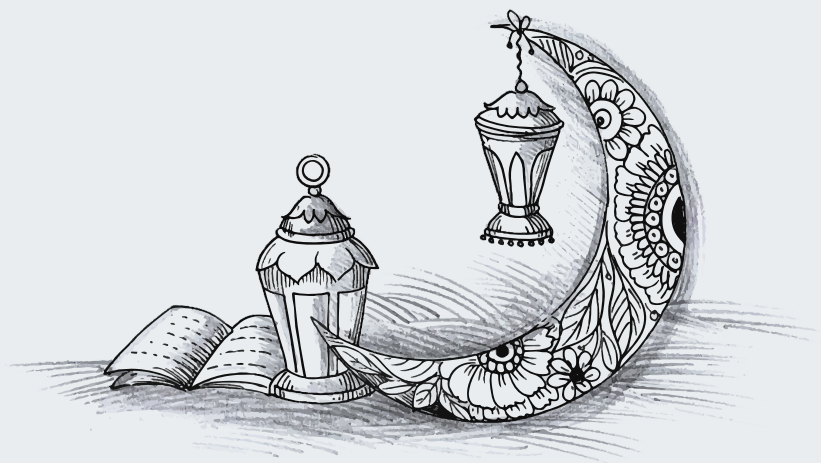
When the Prophet (peace be upon him) said this, his companions were amazed. They wondered how anyone could refuse to go to Heaven which promises luxuries and comforts the like of which no eye has seen, no ear has heard of and no mind has ever imagined. Their rhetorical question expressed amazement.

3

The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained the meaning of his statement. He said that whoever followed him, doing whatever he commanded and refrained from whatever he prohibited would earn entry into Heaven. By contrast, whoever disobeyed him, acted contrary to what he ordered, refused his Sunnah and urged others to discard it, condemned himself, through his own deeds and beliefs, to be barred from entry into Heaven.

The one who is described as refusing to enter Heaven may be an unbeliever who rejects Islam totally. Such a person will never be admitted into Heaven as God says: 'He who seeks a religion other than Islam [i.e. self-surrender to God], it will not be accepted from him, and in the life to come he will be among the lost'. (3: 85) 'For those who deny Our revelations and scorn them the gates of Heaven shall not be opened; nor shall they enter paradise any more than a thick, twisted rope can pass through a needle's eye. Thus do We reward the evil-doers'. (7: 40)

Alternatively, such a person may be a Muslim, but he is one who pursues the satisfaction of his desires through unlawful ways and neglects what God has ordered. Such people follow the ways of transgressors, or they invent a way of life which God does not approve of. They do not remain in Hell forever, because a Muslim is not permanently condemned to Hell. Yet they do not go to Heaven with the goodly people who are the first to enter it. They first have to suffer punishment, or at least a rebuke.



Implementation



Abu Hurayrah narrated a greater number of hadiths than any other companion of the Prophet, because he dedicated himself to learning from the Prophet. He used to stay in the mosque at night, with the Suffah people,⁽¹⁾ eating with them, so that nothing would distract him from remaining close to the Prophet all the time. This speaks much of his determination and tireless effort. Whoever wants to excel in Islamic learning or attain excellence in any discipline or profession should emulate Abu Hurayrah in his dedication to his purpose.



The hadith starts with a statement of general meaning that requires explanation. The Prophet purposely did this so that people would pay attention to what comes next and learn it fully. His companions immediately put their questions forward, requesting explanation. Teachers, educators and advocates of Islam should always use methods that alert people to pay full attention and help them to retain what they learn.



Entry into Heaven is a great prize, and it requires what is easy and feasible, namely, following the Prophet's teachings and obeying his orders. Whoever neglects such a great prize ends up an utter loser through his own doing.



This is indeed a very clear and easy way which involves no hardship. It simply means obeying God through commitment to obey His Messenger. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd said: 'We follow and do not initiate. We emulate and do not deviate. We shall never go wrong as long as we follow the way marked for us'.⁽²⁾



It is a well-known maxim, passed across many generations that 'Unless you follow Muhammad, you are unwise. For what is there in this world if you are destined to die?' Essentially, then, since this is a temporary life, its luxuries are trivial. It, therefore, behoves you to make determined efforts to gain the prize in the next life.

1 The Suffah people were individuals who accepted Islam and left their tribes to join the Prophet in Madinah. They were homeless and poor. The Prophet dedicated an area behind the mosque where they were housed, and this area came to be known as al-Suffah. They did some odd jobs and were looked after by the Prophet. They were part of the Muslim community. – Editor's note.

2 Ibn al-Qayyim, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'in 'an Rabb al-'Ālamīn*, Vol. 4, p. 115.

