

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

1

Whoever advocates right guidance earns the same reward as the reward of those who follow him, without diminishing their reward in any way.

2

and whoever advocates error earns the same burden as the burdens of those who follow him, without diminishing their burdens in any way.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿On the Day of Resurrection, they shall bear the full weight of their burdens, as well as some of the burdens of those ignorant ones whom they have led astray. Evil is the burden they shall bear.﴾ (16: 25)

﴿The unbelievers say to those who believe: 'Follow our way and we shall indeed take your sins upon ourselves'. But never will they take upon themselves any of their sins. Liars indeed they are. (12) Yet most certainly will they bear their own burdens, and other burdens besides their own; and most certainly will they be called to account on the Day of Resurrection for all their false assertions.﴾ (29: 12-13)

﴿Who speaks better than he who calls people to God, does what is right, and says, 'I am one of those who have surrendered themselves to God?'﴾ (41: 33)

The Narrator

Abu Salamah 'Ubaydullāh, or 'Abdullāh, ibn Miḥṣan al-Khaṭmī belonged to the Anṣār. However, scholars have different views on whether he was a companion of the Prophet or not. Ibn Ḥibbān said that he was. Ibn al-Sakan said that it is reported that he was a companion of the Prophet, while Ibn 'Abd al-Barr said that most scholars confirm that he was.

Summary

Those who advocate Islam, inviting people to believe in God, earn the greatest reward. They have the reward of their deeds in full, and they also earn a similar reward to that given to everyone who follows them. The people who advocate error are the most wretched because they have to carry their own burdens and a burden similar to that of everyone who follows their example.

1 Related by Muslim, 2674



Message and Meaning

1

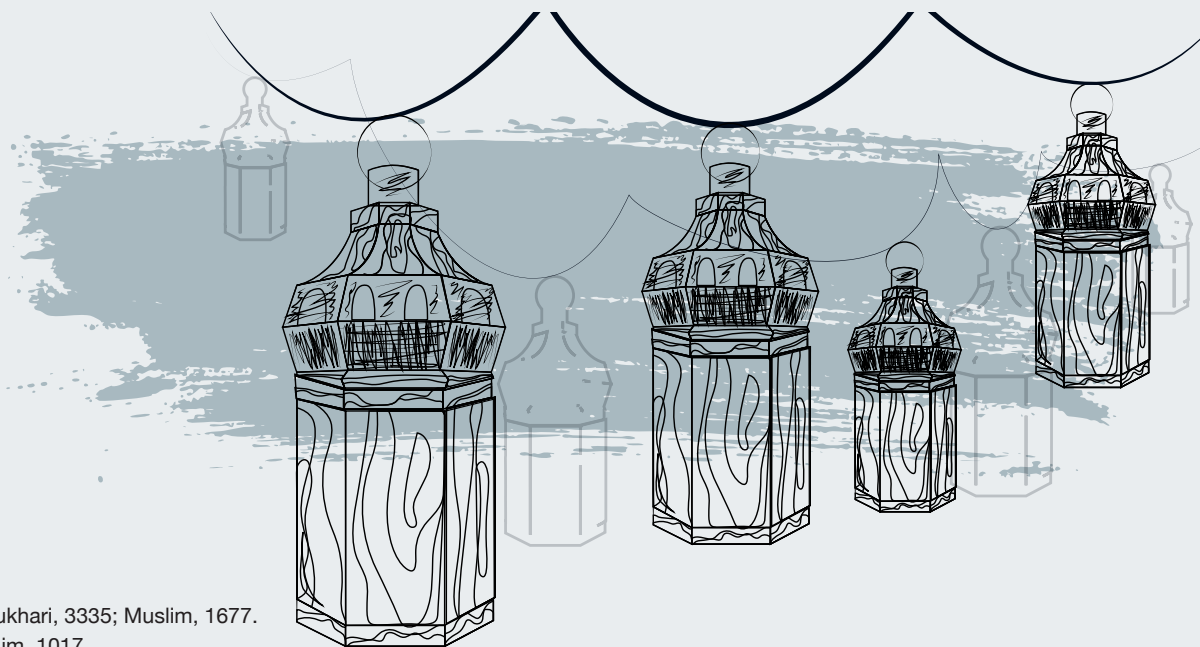
The Prophet (peace be upon him) stresses the importance of advocating the faith, calling on people to believe in God, explaining the rules of the divine faith. He tells us of the great reward such advocacy earns. Whoever advocates any aspect of goodness, even a minor one, earns the same reward as everyone who follows his example, adopting that aspect of goodness, without diminishing their reward in any way.

Such advocacy is not limited to verbal explanation; it may be in a practical form. When a Muslim performs some recommended sunnah, and others emulate his practice, he earns the reward of his own action in addition to a reward similar to that of anyone who follows his example.

2

The Prophet also warns against leading people astray. Whoever advocates disbelief or encourages a deviant or sinful practice, by word or deed, incurs the burden of his own error in addition to the burden of everyone who follows his error. Everyone who follows his example will continue to bear the burden of his own error. God says: 'On the Day of Resurrection they shall bear the full weight of their burdens, as well as some of the burdens of those ignorant ones whom they have led astray. Evil is the burden they shall bear'. (16: 25) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whenever someone is wrongfully killed, the first son of Adam bears a share of this sinful action for being the first who started murder'.⁽¹⁾

The message of this hadith is confirmed by another hadith which quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him): 'Whoever starts a good practice in Islam shall earn its reward and a reward similar to that of whoever follows his example, without diminishing their reward in anyway. And whoever starts a bad practice in Islam shall bear its burden and a burden similar to that of whoever follows his example, without diminishing their burdens in any way'.⁽²⁾



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3335; Muslim, 1677.

2 Related by Muslim, 1017.

Implementation



Whoever wants to increase his credit of good deeds should call on people to believe in God. This will bring that person a reward similar to the reward God will grant to those who heed his call and follow him.



Advocates of Islam are people who earn the reward of continuous acts of charity which do not cease at their death. They continue to earn them more reward. Everyone should try to have continuous good deeds and ensure their bad deeds are ended.



Try to revive some of the recommended practices, i.e., sunnah, which have been neglected by large numbers of Muslims. Reviving such a sunnah earns God's pleasure, the Prophet's love, and a reward similar to that of those who practise it.



Disseminating Islamic knowledge is one of the most important ways of Islamic advocacy. It is through such dissemination that people learn the rules of their faith, fulfil their duties and refrain from what is forbidden.



Beware of continuous wrong deeds. Many are those whose bad deeds continue to be recorded by the angels after their deaths. These are the ones who advocate error, sinful deeds and even disbelief, and are followed by others.



Happy is the one who is a leader in goodness, and wretched indeed is the one who leads others to Hell. The latter belongs to the ones whom God describes as 'leaders who call others to the Fire'. (28: 41)



