

ANTICIPATION OF REWARD

Allah has bestowed on this nation with many great favours and magnificent gifts. He has blessed it with the greatest of blessings.

Abdullah ibn Umar رضي الله عنه narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Your similitude and the similitude of the two peoples of the Book is like that of a man who hired workers, and said, ‘Who will work for me from the morning till midday and will have one scale of wages?’ So the Jews did the work. Then he said, ‘Who will work for me from the midday till *salatul* Asr and will have one scale of wages?’ So the Nazarenes i.e. the Christians, did the work. Then he said, ‘Who will work for me from *salatul* Asr till the Sun sets and will have two scales of wages?’ So they are you. So the Jews and the Nazarenes were angry, and said, ‘How come we did more work, but were less in wages?’ He said, ‘Have I wronged you in any of your rights?’ They said, ‘No’. He said, ‘So, that is my virtue, I give to whom I will.’¹

One of the favours that Allah has given us is that great reward can be achieved by correcting the intentions and by anticipating the reward with Allah in all actions, big and small, whether in the matters of *deen* or in the livelihood affairs.

One should remember some points related to the virtue of *ih-tisaab* i.e. anticipating the reward of the good actions with Allah. Because of remembering the reward, souls will correct their direction, their intention will be renewed and the believers will rejoice in the virtue from Allah:

“Say: ‘With the virtue from Allah and with His mercy, let them rejoice’.” (10:58)

The first thing which needs to be mentioned with regards to anticipating the reward from good work is continuing truthfulness with Allah, Most High, who knows the betrayal of the eye and what the breasts conceal (40:19). That is because Allah is Good and only accepts that which is good. And He is the Most Sufficient and is not in need of any partners; so whoever does an action in which he associates another with Allah, Allah will not accept his action or his anticipation of the reward. The Muslim shouldn't despair of the Mercy of his Lord, nor should he surrender to the whispers of the *Shaytaan* (Satan) saying that his intention isn't pure, but he should promise himself to renew his intention every so often. One should reflect on Allah's saying, translated to mean:

“And they give food, for the love of Him (or in spite of their love for it), to the poor, the orphan and the captive. (Saying): ‘We feed you seeking Allah's Countenance only. We wish for no reward, or thanks from you’.” (76:8-9)

Mujaahid and Saeed ibn Jubair said:

“By Allah, they didn't say those words with their tongues, but Allah knew what is in their hearts, so He praised them for it, so that others would do the same.”

¹ Hadith: Narrated by Al-Bukhari

The Prophet ﷺ used to remind his companions ﷺ about anticipating the reward in actions with different levels. So he ﷺ reminds them about anticipating the reward of losing a loved one:

Abu Hurairah ﷺ narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said to a group of women:

“If anyone of you loses three of her children, and she anticipates the reward, then she will enter Al-Jannah.” So one woman said, “What about two? O Messenger of Allah!” He said, “Even two.”²

In the *hadith* of Mu’ath ibn Jabal ﷺ that the Prophet ﷺ said:

“By He whom my soul is in His Hand, the miscarried child will pull his mother by his umbilical cord to al-Jannah (paradise), if she anticipates it [the reward of losing a child].”³

On the authority of Abu Hurairah ﷺ who said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“Allah said: “Whoever I take away his two loved objects (his eyes), and he is patient and anticipating, I have pleasure in giving him no less than al-Jannah”.”⁴

To know the status of a chosen one from this life, whether a child or a brother, consider this *hadith*: On the authority of Abu Hurairah ﷺ the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“Allah the exalted says: “There is no reward for My believing slave if I take the life of his close one from this life, then he anticipates the reward, except Al-Jannah”.”⁵

Abdullah ibn Umar ﷺ said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“There isn’t a better rewarded dose with Allah than a dose of anger that someone swallows wanting the reward of Allah.”⁶

Ihtisaab in times of crisis is the path of the believer. What Allah gives as a replacement is much better than that which is lost.. Umm Salamah ﷺ narrated that her husband Abu Salamah ﷺ narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“If one of you is afflicted by an affliction then let him say ‘We are to Allah, and to Him we shall return. O Allah! I anticipate the reward of my affliction so reward me for it, and replace me with better than it’.” She said, “So when Abu Salamah died, Allah replaced me with someone better than him (i.e. the Prophet ﷺ became her husband).”⁷

The Prophet ﷺ didn’t only remind his companions about anticipating the reward only for afflictions or loss of loved ones, but he also reminded them to anticipate the reward in their daily transactions and worship. Uthman ibn Affan ﷺ said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say:

“Whoever builds a masjid for Allah (anticipating the reward from Allah), Allah will build a house for him in Al-Jannah.”⁸

² Hadith: Narrated by Imam Muslim.

³ Hadith: Narrated by Imam ibn Majah

⁴ Hadith: Narrated by Imam al-Tirmidhi

⁵ Hadith: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari

⁶ Hadith: Narrated by Imam Ibn Majah

⁷ Hadith narrated by Imams Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Abu Dawood and al-Nasaee

⁸ Hadith: Narrated by Imam Muslim

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“The fasting of the Day of Arafah (9th of Dhul Hijjah) I anticipate from Allah that He will atone the (bad deeds of the) previous year and the year to come. The fast of Ashura’ (10th of Muharram) I anticipate on Allah that He will atone the (bad deeds of the) previous year.”⁹

He ﷺ said, “Whoever follows a burial of a Muslim, out of Iman and expecting reward from Allah, and is with the funeral when it is prayed upon and until it is buried, then he will return with two scales of reward. Each scale is like that of the Mountain of Uhud. Whoever prays on him, and returns before he is buried, he will return with one scale of reward.”¹⁰

On the authority of Abu Hurairah ﷺ the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Whoever anticipates the reward of keeping a horse for the sake of Allah, and out of believing in Allah’s promise, then the horse’s feeding, watering, his urine and droppings will all be in his scale of good deeds on the Day of Judgement.”¹¹

Similarly, as *ih-tisaab* is in the difficult matters, it is also in easy matters. Abu Masood al-Ansāri ﷺ narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said,:

“If the Muslim spends money on his family – whilst anticipating its reward – then it will be for him a charity.”¹²

Sa’ad ibn Abi Waqqas ﷺ narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said:

“You will not spend any money in which you seek the reward of Allah, save that you will be rewarded for, even that which you place in your wife’s mouth.”¹³

Um Salamah ﷺ, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ said: I heard from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

“Who ever spends on two daughters or two sisters or two female relatives expecting Allah’s reward, until Allah gives them from His bounty, then they will be a curtain for him from the Fire.”¹⁴

Glory be to Allah! The obligatory expenditure that one must spend, with *ih-tisaab* will be charity and reward with Allah.

He who reflects upon the life of the Companions will see their keenness to practice these meanings, and their anticipation of reward in their actions, during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ.

This is Abu Dhar ﷺ asking the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from where can he give charity, and he has no money? The Prophet ﷺ answered, “Is it not from charity: *At-Takbeer* (to say ‘Allahu Akbar’), Al-Hamdu Lillah, Subhaana Allah. You seek forgiveness of Allah. You enjoin good and forbid evil. You remove the thorn, bone and stone from the path

⁹ Hadith: Narrated by Imam Muslim

¹⁰ Hadith: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhaari

¹¹ Hadith: Narrated by Imam Muslim

¹² Hadith: Narrated by Imams al-Bukhaari and Muslim

¹³ Hadith: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhaari

¹⁴ Hadith. weak (*daeef*) *hadith* narrated by Imams Ahmad and al-Tabaraani

of the Muslims. You guide the blind. You show someone seeking his need where it is - if you know. You help the weak with your muscles. All these are charity from you to yourself. And to have intercourse with your wife, there is reward.”

Abu Dhar said, “How will I be rewarded for my own desire?”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Imagine – out of the intercourse – you were blessed with a child. Then he grew and you were excited to see him to his full, then he died. Would you not anticipate the reward?”

He said, “Yes!”¹⁵

Also, this is Ubay ibn Ka’ab ؓ, who is informed about a man of the *Ansaar*¹⁶ whose house is on the outskirts of Madinah, but he never missed a prayer with the Messenger of Allah. Ubay said: We were concerned for him. So I said to him, “Why don’t you buy a donkey which will carry you, to protect you from the desert and the many dangerous creatures on the ground.” He said, “I don’t wish for my house to be next to the house of Muhammad (i.e. near the Masjid).” So he was taken to the Prophet ﷺ who questioned him, and the man answered similarly to what he had answered Ubay, but he mentioned that he wishes to get the reward for his walking. So the Prophet ﷺ said to him, “You shall have that which you wish.”¹⁷

Anas ibn Malik ؓ said: I was sitting in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ in his house when a man asked him, “When is the Hour, O Messenger of Allah?”

He ﷺ said, “It will occur, but what have you prepared for it?”

He said, “By Allah, I haven’t prepared for it a lot of action, but I love Allah and His messenger.”

He ﷺ said, “You are with whom you have loved, and you shall that which you anticipate its reward.”¹⁸

And the concern of the Companions and their followers on this matter extends after the passing away of the Prophet ﷺ. We can observe the best of this Ummah after its Prophet: Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq ؓ. When he sent the army of Yazeed ibn Abi Sufyan to Ash-Shaam¹⁹, so he accompanied him walking. Yazeed was the commander of the army, so he said to Abu Bakr: “Either you ride or I come down (off my ride).

Abu Bakr said, “You are not to come down, and I am not riding. I am anticipating these steps in the Path of Allah.” Then he gave him some advice.²⁰

Saeed ibn Al-Musayib said: When death approached one of the *Ansaar*, he said, “I will inform you of a hadith, I am informing you because I expect the good reward from doing so. I heard the Messenger of Allah saying, ‘If one of you performs wudu well, then leaves for the Prayer (i.e. in the masjid), he will not lift his right foot without getting one good deed from Allah. And he will not place his left foot without Allah removing one bad deed from his account’.”²¹

¹⁵ Hadith: Narrated by Imam al-Nasaee

¹⁶ Arabic word describing the People of Al-Madinah, who gave support to the Prophet ﷺ.

¹⁷ *Sahih*: Narrated by Muslim

¹⁸ *Sahih*: Narrated by Ibn Hibban and Ahmad

¹⁹ Ash-Shaam is an Arabian district which nowadays covers Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. At the time of the Prophet ﷺ, it was occupied by the Romans

²⁰ Hadith: Narrated by Imam Malik

²¹ *Sahih*: Narrated by Abu Dawood

Mu'ath ibn Jabal ؓ, when questioned about how he reads the Qur'an, said, "I sleep the beginning of the night. I, then, get up with having attained my sleep, so I read what Allah has written that I read. And I anticipate the reward of my sleep as I anticipate the reward of my *qiyaam*²²." ²³

When Wakee' ibn Al-Jarraah narrated the hadith in which the Messenger said, "Every one of you shall be spoken to by Allah on the Day of Judgement. There shall be no interpreters..."

When he completed narrating the hadith, he said, "Whoever is from the people of Khurasān²⁴, then let him anticipate revealing this hadith in Khurasān."

At-Tirmidhi said, "Because the Jahmiyya²⁵ reject this."

"And he who is pious and righteous will be far removed from it (Hell): He who spends his wealth for increase in self-purification. And has in his mind no favour from anyone for which a reward is expected in return. Except only the desire to the Countenance of his Lord, the Most High. And He surely will be pleased." ²⁶

²² Literally means standing, but Islamically means standing up for Night Prayer

²³ *Sahih*: Narrated by Al-Bukhari

²⁴ A Province that was part of the Persian empire, located in north eastern modern day Iran

²⁵ Jahmiya are a sect which has certain innovations in their belief

²⁶ Holy Quran: Chapter of the Night