

Hadith #1 of the Forty An-Nawawi

عَنْ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَبِي حَفْصٍ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ
قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ
بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى، فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ
وَرَسُولِهِ فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ، وَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ لِدُنْيَا يُصِيبُهَا
أَوْ امْرَأَةٍ يَنْكِحُهَا فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ .

Omar (may Allah be pleased with him), reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: Actions are based on intentions, and everyone will be rewarded according to their intention. Whoever's migration was to Allah and His Messenger, then their migration is to Allah and His Messenger, but whoever's migration was for some parts of worldly life that they wished to acquire, or for a woman to marry, then their migration was for whatever they migrated for.

The significance of the Hadith

This Hadeeth has a great place within Islam. For righteous actions have two conditions: sincerity, and following the

sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ). This Hadeeth speaks about the first condition of sincerity.

The scholars have indicated the importance of this Hadith. Ash-Shafi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: This Hadeeth is a third of knowledge, and it is related to seventy chapters of jurisprudence. Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him), said: The fundamentals of Islam revolve around three Hadith: This Hadith of Omar, the Hadith of Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) which states: **Whoever introduces something into our religion which is not a part of it, then it is rejected**, and the Hadeeth of An-Numan (may Allah be pleased with him), which states: **The lawful is clear, and the unlawful is clear**.

Explanation of the Hadeeth

Actions are based on intentions, which means that the intention is the condition for actions to be counted. In other words, if there is no intention, then the action is not counted. The intention is not spoken out loud. The intention is the will and intent of the heart.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: **Everyone will have what they have intended**. Some may falsely be lead to be believe that there is repetition. In this regard, we must always

remember that the Prophet (ﷺ) was given the comprehensive speech. That is, his (ﷺ) words speak volumes. So we need to understand the distinct meanings of the first two phrases of this Hadith. The first phrase, as mentioned previously, indicates that only the actions that have intentions are regarded. The second phrase: **Everyone will be rewarded according to their intention**, indicates that the intention is the basis for either a reward or punishment. Whatever is for Allah the Exalted and in accordance to the Sunnah, then the person will earn a reward, and whatever is for other than Allah the Exalted, then the person will be punished.

The Prophet (ﷺ) then said: **Whoever's migration was to Allah and His Messenger, then their migration is to Allah and His Messenger, but whoever's migration was for some parts of worldly life that they wished to acquire, or for a woman to marry, then their migration was for whatever they migrated for.**

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: **Whoever's migration was to Allah and His Messenger, then their migration is to Allah and His Messenger.** The Prophet repeated **migration is to Allah and His Messenger** to honor it and highlight its importance.

The Prophet (ﷺ) informed us that the recompense for migration differs based on the intentions and goals of the migration. Whoever migrates out of love for Allah and His Messenger such as migrating to learn Islamic knowledge or to practice the religion freely then such a person has truly migrated to Allah and His Messenger,

On the other hand, whoever migrates seek some worldly gain or to marry a woman, then their migration is for whatever they migrated to. Neither of these cases are migrants for the sake of Allah.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: ***Their migration was for whatever they migrated for*** and did not repeat the specific aim of the migration as a means of showing its insignificance and lack of importance. While they may attain the worldly matter that they sought, they will not earn reward for their migration.

Key Lessons from this Hadith

This hadeeth has many lessons and we will just consider a few of them.

- Intentions are conditions for the correctness of actions. Intentions are what distinguish between

ordinary actions and acts of worship. Intentions are distinguish between voluntary and obligatory acts of worship. Additionally, intentions are the basis for distinguishing between different types of obligatory worship. For example, although Dhuhr and Asr are both 4 rakat, it is the intention that distinguishes between them.

- If one does not intend something for the sake of Allah, then they are not rewarded for it even if it is the same outwardly action. For example, a person may perform intermittent fasting from Fajr and Maghreb only intending a physical benefit such as losing weight. Although technically he fasted the same period of time as prescribed for a voluntary fasting, he would not be rewarded for it because he did not intend to fast for the sake of Allah.
- Whoever intends something and takes concrete steps but is not able to do the action due to factors outside their control, then they will still be rewarded for the intention. For example, if someone intended to perform Umrah and took concrete steps such as saving money, buying a ticket and making a reservation but in the end was prevented from going due to a factor outside his control such as a debilitating illness then he will be still rewarded for the intention.

- Based on intentions, ordinary actions can become acts of worship. For example, all humans need to eat, drink and sleep simply to survive. However, if someone has the intention of eating in order to make his body stronger for worship then his eating in itself becomes an act of worship. The same can be said for other ordinary aspects of life such as working and earning a living. If one intends to seek Allah's pleasure, then these ordinary actions become actions of worship that one is rewarded for.

Putting this Hadith into Action

We need to put this Hadith into action. Let us consider some practical steps in this regard.

1. Monitor and safeguard our intentions
 - a. One needs to monitor what drives them to do actions. Is it so that people can say how kind they are? Or how generous they are? Or thoughtful and caring they are? If that is the case, certainly people will praise them and but they will not earn a reward for their actions.
 - b. Sometimes people advertise their actions without even realizing it. For example, a person may announce that they can't eat on a particular

day because they are fasting. Or they may go out of their way to broadcast an act of kindness that they did in response to seeing a needy person.

- c. We should be cautious were possible to hide our actions like the pious predecessors who would hide that they were fasting from their own family and friends. When leaving the house they would give the meal to a poor person along the way. Their family thought that they had breakfast. When they went to the market, their friends there assumed that they already ate at home.

2. We should make a habit of transforming the customary acts into acts of worships

- a. For example, when eating and sleeping intend that the primary driver is to get stronger for worship.
- b. For example, when earning money – intend to support family and help poor people etc..

So let us strive to put this hadith into action.