

Answer to Question

## Will the Kaffir (disbeliever) be Rewarded for the Good Deeds he has Done Before Becoming a Muslim?

To Ustadhi Kamsokole

(Translated)

### Question:

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah wa Barakatahu, Our Sheikh, may Allah have mercy on you, I have a question:

We know that when a Kafir (disbeliever) converts to Islam, all his sins are erased, so what about the good he did while being Kafir? Through explaining the story of the Messenger, on the authority of Hakim bin Hizam, he said: O Messenger of Allah, "Before embracing Islam I used to do good deeds like giving in charity, slave-manumitting, and the keeping of good relations with kith and kin. Shall I be rewarded for those deeds?" The Prophet (saw) said: «أَسْلَمْتُ عَلَى مَا سَلَفَ مِنْ خَيْرٍ» "You became Muslim with all those good deeds (Without losing their reward)." What is the understanding of this, may Allah reward you with goodness?

### Answer:

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah wa Barakatahu,

You are asking about the noble hadith that was narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in their Sahihs and others on the authority of Hakim bin Hizam, may Allah be pleased with him, who said: I said: "Before embracing Islam I used to do good deeds like giving in charity, slave-manumitting, and the keeping of good relations with kith and kin. Shall I be rewarded for those deeds?". The Prophet (saw) said: «أَسْلَمْتُ عَلَى مَا سَلَفَ مِنْ خَيْرٍ» "You became Muslim with all those good deeds (Without losing their reward)."

And the question that you asked and what is understood from your words, but you did not declare it, is: Are the good deeds that a person did while he was a disbeliever rewarded for them if he reverted to Islam and perfected his Islam and died upon Islam? And the answer to that:

**First:** There has been a difference of opinion among the scholars on this issue, and I will quote to you some of what al-Nawawi mentioned in his commentary on Sahih Muslim when explaining this hadith, for he, may Allah have mercy on him, excelled in presenting the issue:

[....As for his saying (saw), "You became Muslim with all those good deeds (Without losing their reward)". There was difference of opinion:

1- Imam Abu Abd Allah Al-Mazari, may Allah have mercy on him, said that his outward appearance is contrary to what is required by the fundamentals, because the Kaffir's approach is not accepted, so he will not be rewarded for his obedience. And it is right for him to be obedient and not close like his counterpart in faith. He is obedient in it insofar as it is in agreement with the command, and obedience to us is in agreement with the command. But he won't be close, because one of the conditions of the one who approaches is that he knows the one who he's approaching and while looking, he did not acquire knowledge of Allah Almighty. After that, if this is established, it is known that the hadith is interpreted, and it may have several aspects. One of them is that it means that you have acquired a beautiful character, and you are benefiting from that character in Islam and this habit will be a preparation for you and an aid to do good. And the second means that you have gained a beautiful praise by that, so it remains for you in Islam. And the third is that it is not far-fetched to increase his good deeds that he does in Islam and to increase his reward for the beautiful deeds that he has done. And they said about the Kafir (unbeliever), if he does good, it will be lightened for him because of it, so it is not far off that this will increase his reward. These are the last words of Al-Mazari, may Allah have mercy on him.

2- Judge Ayadh, may Allah have mercy on him, said, and it was said that it means by the blessing of what preceded you of good, Allah Almighty guided you to Islam, and that whoever appears to be good in his first matter is evidence of his happiness in the end and a good outcome. This is what the judge said.

3- Ibn Battal and other investigators said that the hadith is as it shows, and that if the Kafir (unbeliever) converts to Islam and dies upon Islam, he will be rewarded for what he did in the state of disbelief. And they quoted as evidence the hadith of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him, who said that the Messenger of Allah (saw), said: **إِذَا أَسْلَمَ الْكَافِرُ فَخَسِنَ إِسْلَامُهُ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ كُلَّ حَسَنَةٍ زَلَفَهَا وَكَانَ عَمَلُهُ بَعْدَ الْحَسَنَةِ بِعِشْرِ أَمْثَالِهَا إِلَى سَبْعِمَائَةِ ضَعْفٍ وَالسَّيِّئَةُ يَمْتَلِئُهَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَجَوَّزَ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى** “If the Kafir (unbeliever) converts to Islam and becomes a good Muslim, Allah Almighty writes for him every good deed that he has done and erases from him every bad deed that he had committed, and his deed after the good is ten times as much, up to seven hundred times, and a bad deed is like it, except if Allah, Glory be to Him, transcends it” mentioned by Al-Daraqutni in Ghareeb Hadith Malik. Ibn Battal, may Allah Almighty have mercy on him, said after mentioning the hadith, And Allah Almighty grants His servants what He wills, and no one can object to it. He said, and it is like what he (saw) said to Hakim bin Hizam, may Allah be pleased with him: I embraced Islam for the good that I did in advance, and Allah knows best...] End of the transmission from the explanation of Al-Nawawi on Muslim.

**Secondly:** As for the hadith that Ibn Battal used as evidence, there is more to it than what is in Sahih al-Bukhari, which is: (41- Malik said: Zaid bin Aslam told me that Abu Saeed Al-Khudri told him that he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say: **إِذَا أَسْلَمَ الْعَدُوُّ فَخَسِنَ إِسْلَامُهُ يُعْفَرُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ كُلَّ سَيِّئَةٍ كَانَ زَلَفَهَا وَكَانَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ الْقِصَاصُ الْحَسَنَةُ بِعِشْرِ أَمْثَالِهَا إِلَى سَبْعِمَائَةِ ضَعْفٍ وَالسَّيِّئَةُ يَمْتَلِئُهَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَجَوَّزَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا** “If a person embraces Islam sincerely, then Allah shall forgive all his past sins, and after that starts the settlement of accounts, the reward of his good deeds will be ten times to seven hundred times for each good deed and one evil deed will be recorded as it is unless Allah forgives it.”

And in Umdat Al-Qari, an explanation of Sahih Al-Bukhari: (Statement of the hadith's ruling: Al-Bukhari mentioned it in mu'allaq, and he did not connect it anywhere in the book, and Bukhari did not realize the time of Malik, so it would be a ta'liq, but it is in a definitive wording, so it is authentic and there is no defamation in it. Ibn Hazm said: It is false because it is interrupted, and not as he said, because it is connected from other correct directions. And not every disconnected object is criticized, for this, although it is called interrupted according to the convention, but it is under the rule of continuity in being correct, Abu Dharr al-Harawi has transmitted it in some copies... Likewise, Al-Nasa'i transmitted it on the authority of Ahmad bin Al-Mu'alla bin Yazid, on the authority of Safwan bin Saleh, on the authority of Al-Walid bin Muslim, on the authority of Malik bin Zaid bin Aslam. It was narrated by Sufyan bin Uyaynah on the authority of Zayd bin Aslam on the authority of Ata', and Malik preserved the connection in it and he mastered the hadeeth of the people of Madinah than others. Al-Bazzar mentioned that Malik singled out his connection, and Ibn Battal said: The hadith of Abi Saeed, part of which was omitted by al-Bukhari, and it is a well-known hadith from Malik's narration in other than its place, and its text is: (If the Kafir converts to Islam and becomes a good Muslim, Allah writes for him every good deed that he committed, and erases from him every deed that he committed.) And he mentioned the rest of it with its meaning...).

**Third:** As you can see, the addition in the above hadith is not found in the hadith of Bukhari and contradicts definitive texts that linked reward for good deeds, linked it to faith in many verses, including:

**﴿وَأَمَّا مَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُ جَزَاءُ الْحُسْنَى وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا﴾** “As for those who believe and do good, they will have the finest reward, and we will assign them easy commands.” [Al-Kahf 18:88]

**﴿وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَيُلْكُمُ ثَوَابُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِمَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَلَا يُلْفَاهَا إِلَّا الصَّابِرُونَ﴾** “But those gifted with knowledge said, “Shame on you! Allah's reward is far better for those who believe and do good. But none will attain this except the steadfast.” [Al-Qasas 28:80]

**“Give good news ‘O Prophet’ to those who believe and do good that they will have Gardens under which rivers flow.” [Al-Baqara 2:25]**

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ “And those who believe and do good will be the residents of Paradise. They will be there forever.” [Al-Baqara 2:82]

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ﴾ “Indeed, those who believe, do good, establish prayer, and pay alms-tax will receive their reward from their Lord, and there will be no fear for them, nor will they grieve.” [Al-Baqara 2:277]

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُوْفَىٰهُمْ أَجُورُهُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ “And as for those who believe and do good, they will be rewarded in full. And Allah does not like the wrongdoers.” [Aali-Imran 3:57]

**It is clear from these verses that the rewards for good deeds come after faith and not before it.**

**Fourth:** Based on that, I prefer to return this addition (Allah wrote for him every good deed that he missed). The hadith of Al-Bukhari mentioned above is relied upon this (Malik said Zaid bin Aslam told me that Abu Saeed Al-Khudri told him that he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say «إِذَا أَسْلَمَ الْعَبْدُ فَحَسْنُ إِسْلَامِهِ يُكَفِّرُ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُلَّ سَيِّئَةٍ كَانَ زَلْفَهَا وَكَانَ يَعْدُ ذَلِكَ الْقِصَاصَ الْحَسَنَةَ بِعِشْرِ أَمْثَالِهَا إِلَى سَبْعِمَائَةِ ضَعْفٍ ...» «If a person embraces Islam sincerely, then Allah shall forgive all his past sins, and after that starts the settlement of accounts, the reward of his good deeds will be ten times to seven hundred times for each good deed and one evil deed will be recorded as it is unless Allah forgives it.”

That is, the issue being discussed is that he was not blamed for sins before his conversion to Islam, and in other words, that is, the application of the hadith of the Messenger (saw): «إِنَّ إِلَّا إِسْلَامٌ يُبْلِغُ مَا كَانَ قَبْلَهُ» “Islam erases what was before it.” Narrated by Ahmad and Al-Tabarani on the authority of Amr bin Al-Aas. And it agrees with the above hadith of Al-Bukhari: “If a person becomes a Muslim, then his Islam becomes good, Allah expiates from him every evil he committed.” This meaning, i.e. expiation for his bad deeds during the Jahiliyyah after his conversion to Islam, has been mentioned in evidence that specializes in more than three cases where he is held accountable for them after his conversion to Islam. We have clarified this in the book (*Institutions of State in the Khilafah* 123-127) in the section of contracts and transactions... that three cases are excluded from the noble hadith:

1. If the case that was agreed upon and its implementation ended with a continuous impact that contradicts Islam.
  2. If the case is related to someone who harmed Islam and Muslims.
  3. If the case relates to usurped money existing in the hands of its usurper.

As for moving cases that have a continuous effect contrary to Islam, the Messenger (saw), stopped the remaining usury on people after they became in the Islamic state and assigned their capital for them. That is, after the abode of Islam, what remained of their usury has become abolished, that is, it was not taken. Likewise, those who were married to more than four according to the laws of the Jahiliyyah, after the state of Islam were obligated to keep four only. Al-Tirmidhi brought out from the path of Abdullah bin Omar that Ghaylan bin Salama Al-Thaqafi embraced Islam and he had ten women in the pre-Islamic era, and they all became Muslim with him. «فَأَمِرْهُ النَّبِيُّ أَنْ يَتَحَبَّرْ أَرْبَعًا مِنْهُنَّ» So, the Prophet (saw) commanded him to, "**Choose four of them.**" Accordingly, contracts that have a continuous effect contrary to Islam, this effect is removed when the Khilafah (Caliphate) is established, and its removal is obligatory, for example, if a Muslim woman was married to a Christian before Islam, then after the Khilafah, this contract will be annulled according to the provisions of the Shariah.

- As for mobilizing the issues related to those who harmed Islam and Muslims because the Messenger (saw) when he conquered Mecca, shed the blood of a few people who were harming Islam and Muslims during the Jahiliyyah. Their blood was shed even if they clung to the curtains

of the Kaaba, knowing that the Messenger of Allah (saw), said: «إِنَّ الْإِسْلَامَ يَجْبُ مَا كَانَ قَبْلَهُ» “Do you not know, that Islam demolishes what preceded it”. [Narrated by Ahmad and al-Tabarani on the authority of Amr ibn al-Aas]. That is, whoever harms Islam and Muslims is excluded from this hadith. And since the Messenger (saw) later forgave some of them, like his forgiveness (saw) on Ikrimah bin Abi Jahl; therefore, it is permissible for the Khalifah to mobilize the issue against these people or to forgive them. This applies to those who used to torture Muslims for speaking the truth or slander Islam, because the hadith «إِنَّ الْإِسْلَامَ يَجْبُ مَا كَانَ قَبْلَهُ» “Islam demolishes what preceded it” is not applicable to them. Rather, they are exempted from this, and the case is moved against them or they are pardoned according to what the Khalifah deems appropriate.

- As for moving existing cases of usurpation in the hands of the usurper, when Muslim narrated it on the authority of Wael bin Hajar, he said: **«كُنْتُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ فَاتَّاهُ رَجُلٌ يَخْتَصِمُنِي فِي أَرْضٍ فَقَالَ أَحَدُهُمَا إِنَّ هَذَا انتزَى عَلَى أَرْضِي يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَهُوَ امْرُؤُ الْقَيْسِ بْنُ عَابِسٍ الْكِنْدِيِّ وَخَصْمُهُ رَبِيعَةُ بْنُ عَبْدَانَ قَالَ: لَيْسَ لِي بَيْتَهُ، قَالَ إِذْنْ يَدْهَبُ بِهَا، قَالَ: لَيْسَ لَكَ إِلَّا ذَاكَ، قَالَ: فَلَمَّا قَامَ لِيَحْلَفَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ مَنْ افْتَطَعَ أَرْضًا ظَالِمًا لَقِيَ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِ غَضْبٌ» I was with the Messenger of Allah (saw) that two men came there disputing over a piece of land. One of them said: Messenger of Allah, this man appropriated my land without justification in the days of ignorance. The (claimant) was Imru'l-Qais b. 'Abis al-Kindi and his opponent was Rabi'a b. 'Iban He (the Holy Prophet) said (to the claimant): Have you evidence (to substantiate your claim)? He replied: I have no evidence. Upon this he (the Messenger of Allah) remarked: Then his (that is of the defendant) is the oath. He (the claimant) said: In this case he (the defendant) would appropriate this (the property). He (the Holy Prophet) said: There is than no other way left for you but this. He (the narrator) said: When he (the defendant) stood up to take oath, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: He who appropriated the land wrongfully would meet Allah in a state that He would be angry with him. He seized my land, conquered it, and took it by force. The Messenger (saw) accepted the man's claim against the one who usurped his land, knowing that it was in the Jahillyya (pre-Islamic) era. Accordingly, whoever expropriates land, usurps livestock, or money owned by individuals, or extorts money from public property or state property by force, the case is accepted.**

**Fourth:** In conclusion, if a person becomes a Muslim and becomes a good Muslim, then his bad deeds before Islam are forgiven, except in the three cases mentioned, as we have explained.

This is what I think in this matter, and Allah is All-Knowing and Most Wise.

Your brother,

**Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah**

30 Dhul Hijjah 1444 AH

Corresponding to 18/07/2023 CE

**The link to the answer from the Ameer's Facebook page:**

<https://www.facebook.com/HT.AtaabuAlrashtah/posts/834241274929910>