

In The Name of Allah, The Most Merciful, The Bestower of Mercy.

One of the pious predecessors said:

Indeed a servant commits a sin due to which he enters Jannah, and he performs a good deed due to which he enters the Fire". It was said: "How?" He said, "He commits the sin and does not cease thinking about it, fearing (the evil consequences), very unhappy about it, apprehensive, weeps due to it, regretful, feeling ashamed in the presence of his Lord, The Exalted, his head lowered (in submission and humility) in the presence of (his Lord) and sorrowful. Then, this sin becomes a cause of his happiness and success (i.e. due to repentance), and until it becomes more beneficial for him than performing numerous acts of obedience due to the (good) things that results from it that leads to happiness and success; and until the sin (i.e. due to regret and repentance that takes place thereafter) becomes a cause for his entry into Jannah; or he performs a good deed and does not cease to regard it as a favour to his Lord, becomes proud due to it, (afflicted with) self-regard and self-amazement due to it, presumptuous, and saying, "I did such and such", so this leads him to self-amazement, pride, boasting and presumptuousness which becomes a cause of his destruction.

When a person hears this, he is amazed by it, for indeed it is sin that enters a person into the fire and good deeds enter a person into Jannah, so how can a sin be the cause of entry into Jannah and how can a good deed be the cause of entry into the fire?! So, he clarified it. A servant of (Allāh) sins due to being overcome by shaytan, but then he hastens towards his Lord (in repentance), for he knows that he has a Lord who forgives and accepts repentance, thus, he does not stop weeping and turning to Allah, increases in the performance of good deeds which he hopes will be a cause of wiping away his sin and this becomes a reason for his entry into paradise. On the other hand, a good deed may lead a person to the fire – not due to the good deed itself – due to the [behaviour] of the person after the performance of that good deed, such as being self-amazed and regarding that deed as a favour to his Lord.

Allah said:

يَمُنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا تَمُنُوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَمَكُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَيْكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

They regard as favour upon you [O Muhammad] that they have embraced Islam. Say: "Count not your Islam as a favour upon me. Nay, but Allah has conferred a favour upon you, that He has guided you to the Faith, if you indeed are true. [Al-Hujurat. 17]

Allah said:

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا

And had it not been for the Grace of Allah and His Mercy on you, not one of you would ever have been pure from sins]. [Al-Nur. 21]

Therefore, neither think that you have done a favour nor be afflicted with self-regard- neither become self-amazed nor presumptuous. This behaviour is from that which will nullify deeds, such as self-amazement, presumptuousness and show off. This behaviour might occur after the performance of a good deed, for example, it may be an act of obedience which Allah has enabled you to perform or an matter related to knowledge bestowed on you, or memorisation, so the person becomes presumptuous, shows off and becomes self-amazed, which becomes a cause of entry into the fire – and Allah's Refuge is sought.

There is a beneficial reminder in this matter and that is when a person commits a sin, he should hasten towards repentance, turn to Allah in repentance- with complete submission, obedience and humility, and he should know that he has a Lord Who forgives. He should be eager to meet Allah on the Day of Judgement without the burden of his sins. If he is favoured with (the ability to perform) an act of obedience or favoured with some knowledge, he should acknowledge Allah's Favour as well as acknowledge that he has great shortcomings, because when a person is attentive to these things, it will repel self-amazement. If a blessing is bestowed on a person, firstly he should know that it is from Allah; then he busies himself with gratitude to Allah, and then knows that he has many shortcomings, because this will repel self-amazement from him.

An Excerpt from Sharh Al-Waabilus Sayyib. Lesson 1. By Shaikh Abdur Razzaaq Al-Badr (may Allāh preserve him) <https://al-badr.net/sub/371>. Slightly paraphrased

