210371 - Will the one who does not pray, but affirms the pillars of faith, go to Hell?

the question

I have a question about the hadith which says: “No one will enter Hell in whose heart is an atom’s worth of faith.” We know that there are many people who believe in the six pillars of faith, in the existence of Allah and in the hereafter, but they do not pray. The status of the prayer is well known in Islam, as it is the criterion that distinguishes between faith and disbelief. Can we say that these people will not enter Hell because they are believers, even if they do not pray?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The Muslim scholars are unanimously agreed that faith consists of both words and deeds, and that faith is not valid unless both factors are present. Faith is words on the lips, belief in the heart and actions with the physical faculties; it increases with acts of obedience and worship, and it decreases with acts of disobedience and sin.

See the answers to questions no. 59911, 119068 and 131415

Secondly:

It was narrated that ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ood said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “No one will enter Hell in whose heart is an atom’s worth of faith.”

Narrated by Imam Ahmad (3947), and by at-Tirmidhi (1991) who classed it as saheeh. It was also classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh at-Tirmidhi.

What is meant is that he will not enter it as the disbelievers will, so he will not abide forever in Hell, even if he enters it because of his disobedience and sins.

Please see the answer to question no. 170526.

In the hadith of intercession that was narrated by Muslim (193) it says: “it will be said to me: ‘O Muhammad, raise your head. Speak, you will be heard; ask, it will be given to you; intercede and your intercession will be accepted.’ I will say: ‘O Lord, my ummah, my ummah.’ It will be said to me: ‘Go, and whoever has in his heart faith the weight of a grain of mustard-seed, bring him out therefrom.’ So I will go and do that, then I will come back to my Lord and I will praise Him with those words of praise, then I will fall down prostrating to Him, and it will be said to me: ‘O Muhammad, raise your head. Speak, you will be heard; ask, it will be given to you; intercede and your intercession will be accepted.’ I will say: ‘O Lord, my ummah, my ummah.’ It will be said to me: ‘Go, and whoever has in his heart faith that is smaller, smaller, smaller than a grain of mustard-seed, bring him out of the Fire.’ And I will go and do that.”

The point is that Allah, may He be exalted, will bestow His grace upon the sinners among those who affirm His Oneness, so He will bring out of Hell everyone who had an atom’s worth of faith in his heart, then He will admit them to Paradise by His mercy. So no one will abide forever in Hell and be deprived of Paradise except the pure disbeliever in whose heart there is not even an atom’s worth of faith or even less than that.

Al-Bukhaari (4203) and Muslim (111) narrated that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “No one will enter Paradise except a believer.”

Thirdly:

In the answer to question no. 83165 we stated that if a person does not pray at all, then his good deeds are rendered invalid.

As it is proven in the Islamic texts that no one will enter Paradise except a believer, and that faith consists of both words and deeds, and is not valid except with both, and that if a person does not

pray at all then his good deeds are rendered invalid, then from all of the above we may conclude that if a person does not pray at all, then he does not have sound faith that would protect him from entering Hell, according to what it says in the hadith mentioned.

At-Tabaraani narrated in al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer (8941) with a saheeh isnaad from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: "Whoever does not pray has no religion."

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

If a rational person has the slightest speck of faith in his heart, it is not possible for him to persist in not praying when he knows how important the prayer is and that it was enjoined from the highest place that any human ever reached. How can he bear witness that there is no god but Allah and yet persist in not praying? A testimony such as this obliges him to worship Allah by means of the greatest act of worship. It is essential to confirm words with actions, so it is not possible for a person to claim something that he does not do; rather in that case he is a liar in our view. How come we describe him as a disbeliever on the basis of the texts which describe him as such, even though he says Laa ilaaha ill-Allah (there is no god but Allah), but we do not describe him as a disbeliever for not praying, even though the texts clearly state that he is a disbeliever? This is nothing but a contradiction.

According to the hadith of Mu'aadh, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "There is no one who testifies that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, sincerely from the heart, but Allah will protect him from Hell" (agreed upon). According to the hadith of 'Itbaan ibn Maalik, he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Verily Allah has forbidden to the Fire anyone who says Laa ilaaha ill-Allah, seeking thereby the Countenance of Allah" (agreed upon).

So uttering the Shahaadatayn (twin declaration of faith) is dependent upon sincerity of intention and sincerity in the heart, which would prevent a person from failing to pray. That is because there is no one who is sincere in saying that but his sincerity would inevitably motivate him to do the prayer. The prayer is the foundation of Islam and is the connection between the slave and his Lord.

If he is sincere in seeking the Countenance of Allah, then he will inevitably do that which will help him to attain that, and he will avoid that which would prevent him reaching that goal.

By the same token, if a person bears witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, sincerely from the heart, that sincerity will inevitably motivate him to perform the prayer sincerely for the sake of Allah, may He be exalted, and thus following the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), because that is one of the requirements of that sincere testimony.

End quote from ash-Sharh al-Mumti‘ (2/31-36)

Shaykh Ibn Jibreen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked:

What is the response of the scholars who regarded one who does not pray out of carelessness as a disbeliever to the hadith of intercession and the hadith of the one who has a slip of paper [on which the Shahaadatayn are written, and it will outweigh his bad deeds in the Balance on the Day of Resurrection], and the idea that anyone who has an atom’s worth of faith in his heart will be brought out of Hell?

He replied:

It is well-known from the hadiths of intercession that there will be no intercession except for those who affirmed the Oneness of Allah (Tawheed), the people of Laa ilaaha ill-Allah, and that they will be known by the mark of prostration, for Allah will forbid the Fire to consume the mark of prostration on the son of Adam. This indicates that they pray, and it indicates that those who do not pray will not be recognised, so they will not benefit from intercession.

The same applies to the hadith of the slip of paper: it is well-known that this slip of paper on which are written the Shahaadatayn, will belong to a believer who was sincere and certain in his faith, and this sincerity will undoubtedly motivate him to act accordingly. So this applies to the people of Laa ilaaha ill-Allah, who act upon their faith, and part of acting upon it is performing the prayer.

End quote from Sharh Akhsar al-Mukhtasaraat (64/39)

Over and above all that, we know for certain that some people among this ummah, among those who affirm the Oneness of Allah, and even among those who pray, will enter Hell because of sins that they commit, then the Most Merciful of those who show mercy will bestow His grace upon them and will bring them out of Hell, and will admit them to Paradise. Hence the angels will recognise them in Hell, after they have been burnt in it due to their lengthy stay, and they have been thoroughly burned – the angels will recognise them by the marks of prostration, for the Fire will consume everything of the son of Adam except the marks of prostration.

So how about the one who did not pray at all, regardless of whether he was a disbeliever or not, when it is known that prayer is the greatest foundation of Islam and the greatest means by which a person may draw closer to his Lord, after the twin declaration of faith, and it is known that not praying is the gravest of sins, more serious than any sin that any of the sinners among those who affirm the Oneness of Allah can commit!

And Allah knows best.