142662 - The Condition for a House in Paradise: Praying Sunnahs Daily or Just Once?

the question

With regard to the hadith, “Whoever offers twelve rak`ahs in the day, a palace will be built for him in Paradise,” does it mean that for the one who does that consistently a palace will be built for him in Paradise, or that he will have a palace in Paradise for every day he offers those prayers [meaning multiple palaces]?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

This significant hadith which speaks of the virtues of offering regular supererogatory prayers was narrated in two versions.

The apparent meaning of one of them is that for whoever offers the twelve rak`ahs of the regular Sunnah prayers – even for just one day of his life – a house will be built for him in paradise, and that the one who does that consistently for many days will have as many houses in Paradise as the numbers of days on which he offered those prayers. This is indicated by the following version of the hadith:

It was narrated that Umm Habibah, the wife of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: “Whoever prays twelve rak’ahs in a day and night, a house will be built for him in Paradise because of them.” Narrated by Muslim, 728.

Based on the apparent meaning of this version, this is what may be understood from the words of `A’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her): Whoever prays twelve rak`ahs at the beginning of the day, a house will be built for him in Paradise. Narrated by Ibn Abi Shaybah in *Al-Musannaf*, 2/109.

This also appears to be the meaning of the words of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), who said:

There is no Muslim who prays twelve rak`ahs of voluntary prayer in a day but a house will be built for him in Paradise.

It was narrated by Ahmad. The commentators said in the *Mu'sasat ar-Risalah* edition (16/283): This is a sound (hasan) isnad. It was also narrated in a mawquf report with a weak isnad.

It also appears to be the meaning of the chapter heading under which Imam at-Tirmidhi (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated this hadith in his *Jami`* (1/537):

Chapter: what was narrated regarding the reward for one who prays twelve rak`ahs of Sunnah prayer in a day and night,. End quote.

Ibn Hibban included it in a chapter in his Sahih (6/204) entitled:

Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, will build a house in Paradise for the one who prays twelve rak`ahs in a day and night other than the obligatory prayers. End quote.

All of these reports speak in general terms (twelve rak`ahs in a day and night), which indicates that offering these regular (Sunnah) prayers for one day only is sufficient for a house to be built in Paradise.

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

Is the one who does these prayers all in one day the one for whom a house will be built in Paradise, or if he does that for three days, will three houses be built for him, or what?

He (may Allah have mercy on him) replied:

Whoever prays twelve rak`ahs in a day and night, Allah will build a house for him in Paradise as a reward for all twelve rak`ahs, and if he continues to do that, another house will be built for him in Paradise for each day.(*Fatawa Nur `ala ad-Darb*, tape no. 249).

He (may Allah have mercy on him) also said:

The apparent meaning of the hadith suggests that it is not stipulated that one must consistently pray these rak`ahs every day, and that if a person offers those prayers for one day, Allah will build him a house in paradise.(*Sharh Muslim*, tape no. 4, side B).

Regarding the apparent meaning of the second version, it indicates that it is stipulated that one must consistently pray these twelve rak`ahs of regular [Sunnah] prayers every day in order to attain the reward of one house being built in Paradise. This version of the hadith is as follows:

It was narrated that Umm Habibah, the wife of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say:

“There is no Muslim slave who prays twelve rak`ahs to Allah each day, voluntarily, apart from the obligatory prayers, but Allah will build for him a house in Paradise – or a house will be built for him in Paradise.”

Narrated by Muslim, 728. The relevant part of this quotation is the Prophet’s words “each day.”

Even clearer than that is the hadith of `A’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), according to which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah) said:

“Whoever persists in praying twelve rak`ahs of Sunnah prayer, Allah will build for him a house in paradise.”

Narrated by at-Tirmidhi (no. 414). He said: It is a ghareeb hadith with this isnad. The scholars had some reservations about Mughirah ibn Ziyad with regard to his memory. Al-Albani classed the hadith as authentic (sahih) in *Sahih at-Tirmidhi*.

This is the view adopted by Ibn Abi Shaybah in *Al-Musannaf* (2/108), where he included this hadith in a chapter entitled:

Regarding the reward of one who persists in offering twelve rak`ahs of voluntary prayer. End quote.

And an-Nasa'i included it in *As-Sunan al-Kubra* (1/458) under the chapter heading:

Chapter on the reward of one who consistently prays twelve rak`ahs [of voluntary prayer] every day and night – and he quoted different versions of the narrators concerning that. End quote.

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) favoured the second view, when he said:

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) stated that the one who consistently prays twelve rak`ahs of voluntary prayer every day and night, a house will be built for him in Paradise in return for that.(*Fatawa ash-Shaykh Ibn Baz*, 11/380).

Perhaps this view is the most likely to be correct. In other words, this promise is only for the one who persists in that, in order to take into consideration the stipulation that is mentioned in some sound narrations. That is because the report which speaks in general terms should be understood in the light of the reports in which the wording is more specific. Adding a stipulation in this case is acceptable, and there is no reason to ignore it.

And Allah knows best.