77225 - The hadeeth “Every merchant will enter Hell except those who are pious.”

the question

Is this hadeeth saheeh: “Every merchant will enter Hell except those who are pious”?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

We could not find this hadeeth in this wording in any of the books of Sunnah, but there are similar reports in the saheeh Sunnah, including the following:

It was narrated from Rifaa’ah ibn Raafi’ (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The merchants will be raised on the Day of Resurrection as evildoers, apart from those who fear Allaah and are honest.”

Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (1210), al-Daarimi (2/247), Ibn Maajah (2146) and Ibn Hibbaan (11/276).

Al-Tirmidhi said: It is hasan saheeh. Al-Haakim said: Its isnaad is saheeh, and al-Dhahabi agreed with him.

It was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in al-Silsilah al-Saheehah (994).

Al-Mubaarakfoori said in Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi (4/336):

“apart from those who fear Allaah” by not committing any major or minor sin, such as deceiving and cheating, i.e., they treat the people well in their business dealings or they obey and worship Allaah. “And are honest” means they are truthful in their oaths and in everything they say.

Al-Qaadi said: Because it was the habit of merchants to be deceitful in their dealings and ruthless in selling their products in whatever ways they could, such as swearing false oaths and the like,

they were judged to be evildoers, but an exception is made for those of them who avoid haraam practices, are honest in their oaths and truthful in their speech.

This was also the view of commentators, who interpreted evildoing (fujoor) as referring to idle talk and false oaths, as it says in al-Marqaah. End quote.

There is also an indication in the saheeh Sunnah of the reason why merchants were described as evildoers, which is because of their wrong deeds such as false oaths and broken promises.

It was narrated from ‘Abd al-Rahmaan ibn Shibl (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

“Merchants are the evildoers.” It was said: O Messenger of Allaah, has Allaah not permitted buying and selling? He said: “Yes, but they speak and tell lies, and they swear oaths and sin (as a result).”

Narrated by Ahmad (3/428); al-Haakim (2/8) – he said its isnaad is saheeh; it was classed as saheeh by the commentators on al-Musnad and by al-Albaani in al-Silsilah al-Saheehah (366).

But trade is one of the best ways of earning a living for those who are honest and sincere, for the honest, trustworthy merchant will have a great reward.

It was narrated from Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

“The honest, trustworthy merchant will be with the Prophets, siddeeqs and martyrs.”

Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (1209) who said: This is a hasan hadeeth but we know it only through this isnaad. Ibn Taymiyah said its isnaad is jayyid, as noted in al-Mustadrak ‘ala Majmoo’ al-Fataawa (1/163).

Abu Haamid al-Ghazaali (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in Ihya’ ‘Uloom al-Deen (2/79):

These reports may be reconciled in several ways. We say:

We do not say that trade is better in all cases, rather trade may be used to seek sufficient provision or more than what is sufficient.

If it is used to seek more than what is sufficient and to increase and accumulate wealth that is not spent on good works and charity, then it is blameworthy, because it is focusing on love of this world which is the root of all evil. If the person also mistreats others and deceives them, then it is wrongdoing and evil.

But if it is used to seek sufficient provision for oneself and one’s children, then engaging in trade as a means of keeping oneself from asking others for help is better. End quote.

See also question no. 21575.