

# HADITH

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**Subject:** The Word

**Level :** Intermediate

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ "إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مِنْ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ لَا يُلْقِي لَهَا بَالًا، يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ بِهَا دَرَجَاتٍ، وَإِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مِنْ سَخَطِ اللَّهِ لَا يُلْقِي لَهَا بَالًا يَهْوِي بِهَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ". ((مُتَّفَقٌ عَلَيْهِ))

On the authority Abu Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet ﷺ; said, "A slave (of Allah) may utter a word which pleases Allah without giving it much importance, and because of that Allah will raise him to degrees (of reward): a slave (of Allah) may utter a word (carelessly) which displeases Allah without paying paying attention to it and because of that he will be thrown into the Hell-Fire." [agreed upon].

## The Narrator:

Abu Hurairah's name is Abdul Rahman ibn Sakhr Al-Dawsi from the tribe of Daws. He came from Yemen to Medina in the 7th year AH to embrace Islam. He was known as Abu Hurairah because he used to carry a kitten in his sleeve. He narrated the most hadiths from the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and he was known of his sharp memory. He said about himself: "I divide the night into three parts: a third in which I sleep, a third in which I pray, and a third in which I recall the hadiths of the Messenger ﷺ." Abu Hurairah would pray for a third of the night, his wife for another third, and his daughter for another third. Abu Hurairah passed away in the year 59 AH at the age of 78, may Allah be pleased with him.

## Vocabulary

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • كَلِمَةٌ : word               | • دَرَجَاتٍ : levels - degrees |
| • رِضْوَانٍ : pleasure          | • سَخَطٍ : discontent - anger  |
| • بَالًا : attention            | • يَهْوِي : to fall            |
| • يَرْفَعُ : to raise - lift up | • جَهَنَّمَ : Hell Fire        |

### The Explanation:

The tongue is a great blessing from Allah upon mankind. Every word a person utters is accounted for, as Allah says,

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ [ق:18]

"Not a word does he utter but there is a vigilant observer" (50:18).

A word can be a means of guiding a person or a path to much good for many people. Conversely, a word can lead to a person's misguidance and many evils.

In this hadith, the Prophet ﷺ explains the impact and consequences of a word. A good word, which is pleasing to Allah, can elevate the speaker's ranks in paradise and earn him rewards. A bad word, which is displeasing to Allah, can be the cause of the speaker's entry into Hellfire.

The phrase "does not pay attention to it" means that the speaker does not consider the word to be of great significance; he says it without realizing that it has a tremendous importance in the sight of Allah, to the extent that it could admit him to the Paradise or Hell.

Words are powerful: with a word, a person can enter Islam, and with a word, he can leave it. A word can support someone, or it can let them down. A word can save a life, or it can take a life. Marriage and the building of a family are initiated with words, and divorce and the destruction of a family are initiated with words.

### Guarding the Tongue

Guarding the tongue can admit its owner to paradise, and failing to guard it can admit him to hell, as is evident from this hadith and others that will be mentioned. Therefore, a Muslim must guard his tongue, weigh his words, and judge them before speaking. This requires knowledge and understanding, which we will clarify in the following lines.

**Firstly**, Allah commands Muslims in the Quran to speak kindly to people, Allah says::

وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

"And speak to people good [words]" (2:83).

He also said,

وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا [البقرة: 83]

Allah also says: "And tell My servants to say that which is best" (17:53). The Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak a good word or remain silent" (Bukhari)

**Secondly**, Allah praises His righteous slaves and describes them as those who avoid idle talk; they neither engage in it nor sit with those who do. Allah says, "And those who turn away from ill speech" (Quran, 23:3). Ill speech refers to words that have no benefit or goodness. They turn away from it out of a desire to distance themselves from it, to elevate their souls, and to maintain their dignity. When they pass by ill speech, they pass by with dignity. If they avoid idle talk, then avoiding the forbidden is even more necessary and appropriate. If a servant controls his tongue and restrains it except for good, he will have mastery over his affairs.

**Thirdly**, Allah emphasizes accountability for every word, as mentioned in the verse: "Not a word does he utter but there is a vigilant observer" (50:18). This highlights that even seemingly insignificant words are recorded and scrutinized.

`Uqbah ibn `Amir (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "I asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, what is salvation?' He said, 'Restrain your tongue, let your house be sufficient for you, and weep over your sin.'" (Tirmidhi).

### The levels of Guarding the Tongue

There are four levels for guarding one's tongue and all Muslims must strive to go to the highest level.

- First Level: The Muslim guards his tongue from words that cause definite and pure harm. such as lying, mocking, etc.
- Second Level: The Muslim guards his tongue from words whose harm outweighs their benefit, or that lead to greater evil.
- Third Level: The Muslim guards his tongue from words that have neither benefit nor harm, such as idle talk, because its waste of time.
- Fourth Level: The Muslim guards his tongue and only speaks words that are beneficial, good, and serve a purpose, Such as dhikr, advice, etc.

### **To guard the tongue effectively, a Muslim must:**

- **Develop Awareness:** Constantly remember that every word is recorded and will be accounted for. This awareness acts as a deterrent against careless speech.
- **Seek Knowledge:** Learn about the types of speech that are pleasing to Allah and those that are not. This includes understanding backbiting, slander, lying, and other harmful types of speech.
- **Practice Restraint:** Exercise self-control and think before speaking. If there is doubt about the permissibility of a word or phrase, it is better to remain silent. Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (May Allah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet ﷺ said, "When the son of Adam gets up in the morning, all the limbs humble themselves before the tongue and say: 'Fear Allah for our sake because we are with you: (i.e., we will be rewarded or punished as a result of what you do) if you are straight, we will be straight; and if you are crooked, we will become crooked.'" [At-Tirmidhi].
- **Reflect on Consequences:** Consider the potential impact of words on oneself and others. Words can build or destroy relationships, uplift or harm individuals, and bring about positive or negative outcomes.

By applying these principles, a Muslim can strive to ensure that his speech is a source of benefit and not harm, bringing him closer to Allah and protecting him from His displeasure.

### **Words of Wisdom:**

- Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) used to place a pebble in his mouth to prevent himself from speaking, and he would point to his tongue and say: "This is what has brought me to peril.")
- Ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "Nothing deserves a long imprisonment more than the tongue."
- Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "No one truly fears Allah as He should be feared until he restrains his tongue."
- Amr ibn al-As (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "Speech is like medicine; a small amount of it is beneficial, but too much of it is deadly."

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Encouragement to seek accuracy in speech.
- Highlighting the great reward for good words and the severe punishment for bad words.
- A wise person is one who is cautious with their words so as not to harm anyone.
- A person should use the gift of speech in ways that please Allah.