

Acts of Worship

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In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

May Allah increase His mercy upon Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

The fact of being pious or having a lot of knowledge

does not guarantee eternal joy before Allah.

We seek refuge in Allah against trials

like having a tragic end and changing our faith.

Know that it is confirmed that Barsisa,¹ Balaam²

and Iblis (Satan) will burn in hell,

even though they were among the best

of their generations in knowledge and worship.

This is the reason why the scholar Cheikh wrote

these poems that strengthen acts of worship.

Barsisa Abidu was put to the divine test for fornication,

and he killed a woman for that reason.

It is before Satan that he bowed down,

the worshipper and the worshipped are both in the land of fire (in hell).

Iblis (Satan) behaved with arrogance before our Creator

¹ *Barsisa* or *Barṣ ȳ ā* was a saint whose three brothers requested to look after a sick woman. At the devil's (Satan) suggestion, *Barṣ ȳ ā* seduced the woman. When he found out she had conceived, *Barṣ ȳ ā* killed her and buried her body to hide the evidence of his crime. The devil, however, revealed the murder to the woman's brothers. *Barṣ ȳ ā*, panicked and succumbs again to the devil, renouncing God in exchange for security, only to be mocked by Satan as taught in the Quran (59:16): "(...) I am free from you. I fear Allah, the Lord of the Worlds."

² The main story of *Balaam* or *Bal'am* took place during the journey of the Israelites in the plains of Moab, East of Jourdain, at the end of the 40 years of wandering, shortly before Moses's passing and the crossing of the Jourdain. Balaam was also a scholar close to God that Satan seduced and deceived.

instead of obeying him for His power and His oneness.

Iblis has rejected Adam (in front of Allah)

instead of approaching him with respect and humility.

Anyone who is unaware of Allah will go to hell,

except if their repentance is accepted.

Was it not Balaam who had chosen wealth

and tried to humiliate the prophet Moses who was a worshipper of Allah?

What we know is that his soul came out of his ribs quickly (when he was dying),

like when a bird flies to safety!

His tongue came out (of his mouth),

like a dog that is about to bark.

Let Muslims not change their faith,

if they don't want to end up like Balaam the Day of Resurrection.

Cain (Qābīl) who had killed his younger sibling Abel (Hābīl)

is also counted among the doomed.³

Whoever kills a coreligionist

will go with Cain to hell.

Abil Hasani who refused to lend (his objects)

is also counted among the doomed.

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Anyone who refuses to lend their objects

will be in the company of Abil Hasani the Day of Resurrection.

³ *Qābil* and *Hābil* are considered by Muslims to be the two first sons of *Adam* and *Hawwa'* (Eve).

Whoever does not have an unbelieving heart will receive eternal happiness.

Whoever lends [his objects] is promised eternal happiness.

Let the men and children follow the straight path.

Having a good mother will not prevent anyone from burning in hell.

Canaan (Kan ʿān), Noah's son, and his mother,

are also counted among the doomed.⁴

It is not because the Prophet Noah is promised eternal happiness

that Canaan and his mother are not promised to burn in hell!

A mother should not believe that having a pious child

will prevent her from entering hell.

It is not because the muezzin Bilal⁵ is in the land of eternal bliss

that Ummayah⁶ is not in hell.

Even though Allah promised the saint (Abraham) eternal happiness,

that has not prevented his father Āzar⁷ from going to hell.

Let the slave not believe that having a pious

Fula (as master) will prevent him from going to hell.

It is not because the best creature (Muhammad) is in the land of eternal happiness

that Walid ibn al-Mughira⁸ is not sent to hell.

⁴ This story is often recounted as the *Curse of Sham*, which is also used by some to support racists theories against Black people, the supposed descendants of Canaan.

⁵ *Bilal* or *Bilal ibn Rabāḥ* was a Black man and one of the most faithful companions of Prophet Muhammad. He is considered the first muezzin chosen by the Prophet.

⁶ *Umayyah ibn Khalaf* was an Arab from Mecca, a leading member of the *Quraysh* group and the clan chief of *Bani Jumah* who were polytheists and at war with Muslims. He was *Bilal's* master. Afterwards, *Bilal* was emancipated by *Abū Bakr* who is one of the first companions of Prophet Muhammad.

⁷ *Āzar* is regarded in the Quran as the father of Abraham (*Ibrāhīm*) and who worshipped idols and refused to follow his son's teachings.

⁸ *Walid ibn al-Mughira* or *Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughbira al-Makbuzūmi* was the *Banū Makbuzūm* clan chief of the *Quraysh*. He was a polytheist, but his children converted to Islam and fought for Prophet Muhammad.

Let no man believe that having a pious wife

will prevent him from going to hell.

It is not because Assia⁹ is in the land of eternal happiness

that Pharaoh will not burn in hell.

Let the youth not believe that consulting

marabouts (religious leaders) will provide eternal happiness.

Seeing the Prophet in person, without being a practicing Muslim,

will not prevent you from burning in hell.

Let no slave owner believe that

owning a practicing [religious] slave will prevent him from going to hell.

The pious and generous Queen¹⁰ is promised eternal happiness.

Power and wealth did not prevent her from accomplishing her duties.

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She ruled fully over one thousand righteous people.

All this did not prevent her from accomplishing her acts of worship.

Buildings in gold were built

as residence for Bilqīs.

Beautiful creatures will have no excuse on the Day of Judgment,

if their beauty prevented them from accomplishing acts of worship.

Beautiful and committed creatures are in the land of eternal happiness,

because their beauty did not prevent them from accomplishing acts of worship.

⁹ *Assia*, *Asiya* or *Asya* was the Pharaoh's wife who adopted Moses (*Mūsā*). A descendant of the children of Israel, she was a sincere believer who worshipped God secretly, according to the Islamic tradition.

¹⁰ The author refers here to the *Queen of Sheba* (*Bilqīs*).

When beauty was shared,

Prophet Joseph received half of the shares.

Anyone who receives half of all humanity's share

cannot be counted among those wronged.

Leaders will have no excuse on the Day of Judgment,

if their power prevented them from accomplishing acts of worship.

Committed leaders are in the land of eternal happiness,

because their power did not prevent them from accomplishing their duties.

Jinns and people,

they led them all, including all the creatures that live and move.

Men will have no excuse on the Day of Judgment,

if their material success prevented them from accomplishing acts of worship.

The man from Babylon¹¹ is seated in the land of eternal happiness.

His material success did not prevent him from accomplishing acts of worship.

Dhū al-Qarnayn's enclosure was filled with gold,

covering its area would take a day's walk.

His cows, his horses and his sheep

are covered in gold like in a wedding ceremony.

The sick will have no excuse on the Day of Judgment

by saying their illness prevented them from accomplishing acts of worship.

Prophet Job is in the land of eternal happiness,

because his illness [physical] did not prevent him from accomplishing acts of worship.

¹¹ Here the author refers to *Zul Qarnayn* or *Dhū al-Qarnayn* (*The Bi-bornea*) mentioned in the Quran 18:83-101. Some classical commentaries of the Quran equate him with *Alexander the Great* and to other mythical figures. He died in June 323 BCE in Babylon.

He was ill and his whole body was infested with worms.

But this did not prevent him from accomplishing acts of worship.

Salman The Persian¹² is seated in the land of eternal happiness.

Hardship in his life did not prevent him from accomplishing acts of worship.

His farms, his wives, his assets,

and all that he possessed did not make him stray (from the straight path)

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Here, the Creator has informed believers

that He rewards good deeds before the time of death.

The blind will have no excuse on the Day of Judgment,

if blindness had prevented them from accomplishing acts of worship.

'Abdullah son of Ummu¹³ is in the land of eternal happiness,

for blindness did not prevent him from accomplishing acts of worship.

He tied a rope (connecting his house) to the mosque.

He who is guided by an attached rope cannot deviate.

Those who experience hardship will have no excuse on the Day of Judgment,

if their hardship prevented them from accomplishing acts of worship.

Salman was king in Persia,

after a distant exile with periods of great hardships

The fearful will have no excuse on the Day of Judgment,

if their fear prevented them from accomplishing acts of worship.

¹² *Salman al-Farsi* or *Salman the Persian* was a companion of Prophet Muhammad. He is considered the first Persian who converted to Islam.

¹³ ' *Abdullah ibn Umm-Maktūm* was a companion of Prophet Muhammad. In some traditions, his name is also spelled as ' *Amr ibn Umm-Maktūm*. The first verses of ' *Abasa* (80th chapter of the Quran) relate to a story he was involved in.

Jesus is in the land of eternal happiness,

because persecution did not prevent him from accomplishing acts of worship.

Three hundred people were in Madina.¹⁴

It was because of their sincerity they resided there.¹⁵

The illness and the hunger they endured,

all this did not prevent them from accomplishing acts of worship!

No one will tell Allah on the Day of Judgment

that this or that excuse prevented them from accomplishing acts of worship,

except the thousand men who stood for the holy war [with the Prophet],

though all this did not prevent them from accomplishing acts of worship.

'Abdullah has composed these verses

to advise the Muslims and not to frighten them.

Let Muslims take these verses seriously.

If they find any mistake, I ask for their forgiveness.

Allah, forgive me and forgive my parents, our spiritual leaders, all Muslims, and all the believers, men and women, those who are dead and those who are alive up to the last person born in Islam. May Allah bless Prophet Muhammad and peace be upon him. This poem is written by Umar. The owner's name is Umar son of Alfaa Muhammad Saalih.

¹⁴ *Madina* or *Medina* formerly called *Yathrib*, is a city in Saudi Arabia. It is where Prophet Muhammad and his companions sought refuge in the early days of Islam.

¹⁵ Here the author refers to the first Muslims who relocated to Madina, leaving their wealth in Mecca, to demonstrate the sincerity of their faith.