

Thinking Good About Allaah

Imaam Nawawee & Imaam al-Manaawee

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

None of you should die Except while he is having good thoughts about Allaah

Jaabir (رضي الله عنه) said: Three days before he died, I heard the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) say

لَا يَمُوتَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَّا وَهُوَ يُحْسِنُ الظَّنَّ بِاللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

None of you should die except while he is having good thoughts about Allaah (عزَّ وجلَّ)¹

The following is from al-Nawawee's explanation of Saheeh Muslim:

Regarding the statement of the prophet '**None of you should die except while he is having good thoughts about Allaah**', scholars have said that this is a warning against losing hope and despairing (of Allaah's mercy) and an encouragement to have hope especially at the time of death.

Allaah (سبحانه وتعالى) also said in a hadeeth ["**I am as my servant thinks of Me.**"] and (considering both hadeeths) scholars explain that having good thoughts about Allaah means that an individual should expect Allaah to have mercy on him and pardon him.

Some scholars have also said that during times of wellbeing and health, an individual should have both hope and fear in Allaah and these two feelings should be equally balanced. Others say that one's fear should be more, but when the signs of death approach, a person's hope in Allaah's mercy should become stronger. This is because the very purpose of having fear of Allaah is to prevent oneself from committing sins and ugly deeds and to increase in obedience and good deeds. And those things are most often not possible during that situation (i.e., during the last moments of one's death).

Instead, in that situation, assuming good thoughts about Allaah is preferable which would cause one to have feelings of destitution and submission and to feel oneself in total need of Allaah (تعالى).

The hadeeth mentioned by Imaam Muslim right after this one also supports this understanding:

يُبْعَثُ كُلُّ عَبْدٍ عَلَى مَا مَاتَ عَلَيْهِ

Every servant will be resurrected according to what he died upon.²

¹ Collected by Muslim.

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Scholars explain that it means each individual will be resurrected in the same state in which he died. The next hadeeth (in Imaam Muslim's authentic collection) also supports this:

إِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ عَذَابًا أَصَابَ الْعَذَابُ مَنْ كَانَ فِيهِمْ ثُمَّ بُعِثُوا عَلَىٰ أَعْمَالِهِمْ

When Allaah intends to punish an entire group of people, the punishment afflicts them all, but then each is resurrected according to (his individual) deeds.³

And the hadeeth:

إِنَّمَا يُبْعَثُ النَّاسُ عَلَىٰ نِيَّاتِهِمْ

People will only be resurrected upon their (individual) intentions.⁴

The following explanation is from al-Manaawee's, Fayd al-Qadeer:

His (صلى الله عليه وسلم) statement '**None of you should die except while he is having good thoughts about Allaah**' means: Let none of you die under any circumstance except while in the state of thinking good about Allaah (تعالى) in that He will be merciful with you and pardon you. This is because when a person's time of passing arrives and his journey comes to an end, his fear (of Allaah) has no real purpose (to prevent him from bad deeds during life). It would perhaps lead him to despair and to a feeling of restriction of (Allaah's) mercy and bounties.

Whoever at that time, even if his heart were laden with major sins, begins expecting the best (of his Lord) and increases in hope, he has then perfected his provisions for his arrival to his Lord...

al-Tibee said:

The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) instructs one to ensure he does not die in any state other than expecting and assuming good about Allaah. And this does not mean one can change destiny or fate. Rather, what is intended is that an individual is commanded to have good thoughts (about Allaah) so that when death overcomes him, he is in such a state.

[Source: Excerpted from the article "Thinking Good About Allaah" – With Explanations by: Ibn Hajar al-Asqalaanee, al-Nawawee, & al-Manaawee – authentic-translations.com]

² Collected by Muslim.

³ Collected by Muslim.

⁴ Collected by Ibn Maajah and al-Albaanee says it is authentic in Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah (no. 3407).