52887 - How will the sinful Muslim take his book of deeds on the Day of Resurrection?

the question

When the books of deeds fly (to people’s hands on the Day of Resurrection), will the one who takes it in his right hand never enter Hell at all? And will the one who takes it in his left hand never enter Paradise at all? How will the people of Paradise who will be punished first in Hell take their books?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The Quran and Sunnah indicate that the people will take their books, which contain the record of their deeds, on the Day of Resurrection. Some will take their books in their right hands and some will take their books in their left hands from behind their backs.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Then as for him who will be given his Record in his right hand will say: ‘Here! read my Record!

20. ‘Surely, I did believe that I shall meet my Account!’

21. So he shall be in a life, well-pleasing.

22. In a lofty Paradise,

23. The fruits in bunches whereof will be low and near at hand.

24. Eat and drink at ease for that which you have sent on before you in days past!

25. But as for him who will be given his Record in his left hand, will say: ‘I wish that I had not been

given my Record!

‘And that I had never known how my Account is!

27. ‘Would that it had been my end (death)!

28. ‘My wealth has not availed me;

29. ‘My power (and arguments to defend myself) have gone from me!’

30. (It will be said): ‘Seize him and fetter him;

31. Then throw him in the blazing Fire.

32. ‘Then fasten him with a chain whereof the length is seventy cubits!’

33. Verily, he used not to believe in Allah, the Most Great” [Al-Haaqqah 69:19-33]

“Then as for him who will be given his Record in his right hand,

8. He surely, will receive an easy reckoning,

9. And will return to his family in joy!

10. But whosoever is given his Record behind his back,

11. He will invoke (for his) destruction,

12. And he shall enter a blazing Fire, and made to taste its burning.

13. Verily, he was among his people in joy!

14. Verily, he thought that he would never come back (to Us)!” [Al-Inshiqaaq 84:7-14]

These verses indicate that the believer who is destined for Paradise will take his book in his right hand, and that the kaafir who is doomed to Hell will take his book in his left hand, from behind his back.

The evidence that those who take their books in their left hands are the kaafirs is the verses in which Allah says:

“Verily, he used not to believe in Allah, the Most Great” [Al-Haaqqah 69:33]

“Verily, he thought that he would never come back (to Us)!” [Al-Inshiqaaq 84:14]

i.e., he thought that he would never return to Allah.

This is also indicated by the verse in which Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“But those who disbelieved in Our Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.), they are those on the Left Hand (the dwellers of Hell)” [Al-Balad 90:19]

Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his Tafseer (20/65): i.e., those who will take their books in their left hands. End quote.

This is a clear statement that taking the book in the left hand is something that is limited to the kuffaar.

Undoubtedly the obedient believer who will be saved from punishment, will take his book in his right hand. This is indicated by the context of the verses. The simple reckoning will be merely showing his deeds without discussing them. If a person’s deeds are discussed he will be punished or doomed to Hell, as is narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Narrated by al-Bukhari, 2172; Muslim, 2876.

This is also indicated by the report narrated by al-Bukhari (2441), Muslim (2768) and Ibn Maajah (183) from Safwaan ibn Muhriz al-Maazini who said: Whilst I was walking with Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), holding his hand, a man came up to him and said: “What did you hear the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say about al-najwa (the secret conversation that Allah will have with His slaves on the Day of Resurrection)?” He said: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: ‘Allah will draw the believer close to Him and He will screen him, then He will say: “Do you admit such and such a sin?

Do you admit such and such a sin?" And he will say: "Yes, O Lord." Then when he has admitted his sins, and thinks that he is doomed, (Allah) will say: "I concealed them for you in the world, and I forgive you for them today." Then he will be given the book of his good deeds [Ibn Maajah adds: In his right hand]. As for the kaafirs and the hypocrites, they will be called before all people. Those are the ones who told lies about Allah.'"

As for the sinners among those who believed in Tawheed, who will enter Hell and then be brought forth from it, there is a difference of scholarly opinion concerning them. Some scholars say that they will take their books in their right hands and some say that they will take their books in their left hands.

Al-Safaareeni (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The kaafir will be given his book in his left hand from behind his back, and the sinful believer will be given his book in his left hand from in front of him, and the obedient believer will be given his book in his right hand from in front of him. Al-Maawirdi was certain that what is well known is that the (Muslim) evildoer who dies without having repented from his evildoing will take his book in his right hand, then he narrated an opinion which suggests that we should not discuss this matter and said: No one says that he will take it in his left hand.

Yoosuf ibn 'Umar narrated that the Maalikis differed concerning sinners among those who believe in Tawheed. It was said that they will take their books in their right hands, and it was said that they will take them in their left hands.

With regard to the view that they will take their books in their right hands, it was said that they will take them before they enter the Fire, and that will be a sign that they will not abide therein forever. And it was said that they will take them after they are brought out of the Fire. And Allah knows best."(Lawaami' al-Anwaar al-Bahiyyah, 2/183)

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: With regard to a believer who sins, will he take his book in his right hand or in his left hand? He replied: He will take it in his right hand."(Al-As'ilah al-Mulhaqah bi Sharh al-Safaareeniyyah, p. 500).

It seems – and Allah knows best – that no one will take his book in his left hand except the kaafir, as is apparent from the verses quoted above.

What the Muslim should do is to strive hard to do acts of obedience and worship, and to do good deeds, so that he will be among those who are given their books in their right hands. May Allah make us among them.

And Allah knows best.