

## How Can an Accepted Deed Transform Us into a Better Version of Ourselves?

### What Is an Accepted Deed, and How Can We Ensure Our Deeds Are Accepted?

Deep within every human being lies the desire for becoming and being perfect. This desire to go beyond our current state drives us to seek a way to develop our hidden talents. But how can we begin this winding journey toward perfection and reach our destination? The answer can be summed up in one word: deeds!

A deed is not simply a series of moves and activities; it is the driving force that directs us toward progress and development. Without action, our inner potentials remain dormant and our goals remain unattainable. But how do our deeds, whether conscious or unconscious, shape the fabric of our being? This is where the concept of accepted deed becomes important.

Imagine an artist delicately drawing a brush across a canvas and creating pristine patterns, or an athlete who strives for top physical condition by enduring intense training sessions. Each of these actions not only leads to the creation of a work of art or the winning of a medal, but also transforms the artist and athlete, making them more mature, more experienced, and closer to the ideal version of themselves. But does every action lead to this positive transformation? Does every action lead us toward perfection, and is every action an accepted deed?

The reality is that we face many crossroads in our lives. On one side, there are deeds that lead us astray, waste our energy, and distance us from our main purpose. On the other hand, there are deeds that light the way like a lamp, double our energy,

and lead us to the peaks of success; in other words, some actions are accepted and others are rejected!

In this lesson, we will take a closer look at the concept of deed and examine how we can distinguish an accepted deed from an unaccepted deed. Our purpose is to provide a framework for a deeper understanding of the concept of deed and its role in individual, social, and spiritual life. This framework will help us to choose the right deeds, pave the way for growth and prosperity, and become the best version of ourselves.

### **Deed Explored: Defining Its Concept, Types, Signs, and Effects**

To understand the types of deeds, we must first arrive at a comprehensive definition of what a deed is. What is a deed? Is it merely a set of outward rituals, or does it encompass a concept beyond that? What is the difference between a deed and a simple, aimless move? What is meant by an accepted deed and a rejected deed? By what signs can we distinguish an accepted deed from a rejected deed?

### **The Concept and Whatness of a Deed**

Broadly speaking, a deed can be defined as any deliberate and purposeful action, behavior, or effort that is carried out with a specific intention and to achieve a specific purpose, but this definition only deals with the appearance of the matter. A deed is a concept that goes beyond a physical or mental action. a deed is the force that helps a person on the path to becoming and achieving perfection; more precisely, a deed is that which leads to becoming, growth, and perfection.

A deed is the source of human power and spiritual asset. God has assigned a set of duties and responsibilities for the human being, and their fulfillment will lead the individual to human perfection and prepare them for life in Heaven. To achieve any goal, effort and practice are essential. For example, in learning to cook, it is not enough to simply know the recipe. Rather, a set of behaviors, rules, and regulations must be learned and applied to become a skilled cook. In other words, a deed is a set of actions, rules, and dos and don'ts that lead us to our goals and enable us to acquire desired titles such as an engineer, a doctor, a scholar, an athlete, and an artist.

A deed is a means of becoming similar to divine names. Through a deed, a person succeeds in receiving the name. For example, to attain the name *Halim* (forbearing), one must practice patience and tolerance and be patient when offended by others. To receive each of the divine names, one must practice to acquire that specific name until the desired similarity is created. This view emphasizes the role of the human in the manifestation of divine attributes.

### **Types of Deeds: How Do Deeds Guide Us Toward Perfection?**

Our deeds can be examined from various perspectives, but our main goal in this lesson is to examine the criteria for the acceptance of deeds and to distinguish between an accepted deed and an unaccepted one. According to this perspective, deeds are divided into two categories: deeds that are accepted by God and lead humans toward growth and perfection, and deeds that are rejected and ineffective and have no impact on human spiritual growth.

An accepted deed is one that penetrates deep into the essence of a person and adds to their spiritual assets. Doing an accepted deed brings inner peace and happiness and puts a person on the path of spiritual growth and elevation. This type of deed brings a person closer to divine attributes and prepares them for the hereafter.

In other words, an accepted deed leads to the growth and strengthening of the spiritual dimension of human existence and creates the necessary ability for life in the *Barzakh* and a healthy birth into the hereafter.

In contrast, a rejected deed is an action that does not add anything to a person's essence and spiritual assets. These assets include spiritual strength, joy, peace, enlightenment, and patience; in fact, a rejected deed distances a person from the main purpose of their creation, which is to manifest divine attributes.

The important point about a rejected deed is that it is performed, but the desired result is not achieved; for example, prayer should be a deterrent from evil and sins [1], but if a person commits undesirable deeds despite praying, their prayer is rejected. This is because it has produced the opposite result and distanced them from human perfection. Imam Sadiq (Peace be upon him) says in this regard: "Whoever wants to see whether his prayer has been accepted by God or not, he should see whether this prayer has prevented him from evil and wrongdoings or not. His prayer is accepted to the extent that it has prevented him" [2].

## **Signs of an Accepted Deed: How to Recognize an Effective Deed?**

Do you know how we can distinguish and accepted and effective deed from rejected and ineffective one? Every deed has its own signs and consequences and recognizing them is helpful in making the right choices.

A correct understanding of the concept of deed and the distinction between an accepted deed and an unaccepted one helps us to regulate our deeds in such a way that they lead us to manifest divine names and attributes. The purpose of every deed should be to become and attain perfection. Only those deeds which are accepted and embraced by the soul are accepted by God. By focusing on this purpose and striving to do deeds that lead us toward it, we can experience a happier, more peaceful, more meaningful, and more fulfilling life. Below, we will look at some of the signs and consequences of an accepted deed and an unaccepted one.

### **Signs and Effects of an Accepted Deed**

- It increases human happiness and inner peace.
- It keeps human away from undesirable traits such as jealousy, arrogance, and resentment.
- It brings about transformation within a person and guides them toward growth and perfection.
- In addition to knowledge, it also produces wealth and spiritual asset.
- It is done with sincerity and solely for the pleasure of God.

- It makes a person more like God every day, making them manifest divine names in themselves.
- It creates insight in a person, allowing them to easily distinguish true growth from superficial or illusory growth.
- It is accompanied by respect for the rights of others and avoidance of any injustice and oppression.
- It makes a person stronger in the face the problems and hardships of life.

### **Signs and Effects of a Rejected Deed**

- It has no effect on improving one's character and behavior.
- It prevents personal growth and progress.
- It leads to malice, hatred, and jealousy.
- It is performed with ignorance and doubt.
- It leads to a disregard for the body's rights and cruelty to its limbs.

### **Criteria for an Accepted Deed: How to Do a Decent and Effective Deed?**

The acceptance of a deed is a real and tangible matter, not a notional or merely mental one! That is, a deed that is accepted must have an impact and quality that create a real and tangible effect on the individual. At every stage when we want to reach perfection and take steps on the path of growth and acquisition of divine names, our deeds must be accepted. The degree of acceptance of a deed depends

not only on its performance, but also on the quality and extent of its impact; that is, simply performing a deed is not enough, but the deed must be acceptable enough to create the necessary impact, ability, and capability in the individual.

The most important aspect in performing a deed is its quality; that is, the deed done must have the necessary competence and credibility to be accepted. Just as a cook's food is not approved if it's of poor quality or burnt, human deeds must be performed with pure intentions and meet the quality standards set by God to have a meaningful impact on the soul and be accepted.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his family) states three important conditions for the acceptance of a deed: "There are three things that if a person does not have, his deed will not be fruitful: piety that prevents him from disobeying God, morality that allows him to tolerate people, and patience and forbearance with which he can reject the ignorance of the ignorant" [3]. These conditions show that merely doing a good deed is not enough, but in order to be effective and accepted, the deed must be of quality and done with divine intention. This shows that a correct understanding of the quality and effectiveness of the deed is the main key to success on the path of spiritual growth and the attainment of divine perfections.

### **Obstacles to the Acceptance of Deeds: What Factors Hinder Human Growth and Perfection?**

In order for our deeds to be effective on the path to growth and perfection, we must be aware of and avoid the obstacles that prevent their acceptance. These obstacles, like obstacles to vitamin absorption in the body, prevent the positive

effects of a deed from affecting the soul and psyche. Below, we will mention some of the most important of these obstacles.

### **-Ignorance and Doubt**

As long as a person is in doubt, his deeds are of no use because only deeds that are based on certainty and belief in the heart will be effective. With doubt and denial, no deed is beneficial and cannot bring about a change in a person [4]. In other words, a deed must be accompanied by certainty and knowledge so that it penetrates the heart and existence of a person and becomes one with them; otherwise, it will be separated from them with the slightest pressure. This pressure and change are different for different people and can be caused by things such as a delicious meal, a foreign trip, the use of the Internet, etc.

### **-Lack of Sincerity**

A deed is not accepted unless it is pure and has no purpose other than the pleasure of God [5]. Hypocritical deeds not only have no effect on human perfection, but also incur God's wrath.

### **-Malice, Jealousy, and Enmity**

Imam Sadiq (Peace be upon him) said: "God does not accept any deed from a believer who has bad intentions toward his fellow believer" [6]. This narration shows that our relationship with others has a direct impact on the acceptance of our deeds. A heart filled with jealousy and hatred cannot be a place for the manifestation of divine light and the attainment of perfections. The sanctity of a believer is higher than the Kaaba, and we must be extremely careful in our behaviors with others, especially family members. Striving to earn *halal* (lawful,

permissible) sustenance and seeking knowledge should not be an excuse for neglecting family duties and disrespecting others.

### **-Neglecting the Rights of the Body:**

The human body is a divine trust and one must care for it properly. Without respecting the rights of the body, even *halal* sustenance becomes *haram* (unlawful) and renders the action ineffective. *Haram* livelihood does not always result from acts such as stealing, underselling, or overselling; rather, when we are extravagant and put pressure on our eyes and bodies to earn money, we are also in a way acquiring *haram* sustenance; therefore, we must avoid oppression of the body's organs and pay attention to our physical needs; of course, this rule does not include exceptional cases such as *jihad* (striving in the way of God) and defending the homeland.

Other obstacles, such as lack of gratitude, lack of knowledge, and seeing a deed as great, can also be considered obstacles to the acceptance of the deed. By avoiding these obstacles and striving to gain God's approval, we can do our deeds in a way that is accepted to God and leads us to perfection and likeness to divine names.

In this lesson, we examined the concept of deed and introduced two types of deeds, an accepted deed and an unaccepted one, and pointed out some of their signs and effects. There are many other aspects about these two types of actions, paying attention to which helps us make a considered choice at critical moments and choose the best deed.

What is your understanding of these two types of deeds? Do you know which of the things you do in your daily life is accepted and which are unaccepted? We would be happy to hear your views on this matter.

## References

1. "Indeed, prayer restrains from indecency and wrongdoing." (Quran, 29:45)
2. Imam al-Sadiq (Peace be upon him): "Whoever wishes to know if his prayer has been accepted should see whether it has restrained him from indecency and wrongdoing? To the extent that it has, it has been accepted." (Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 82, p. 198)
3. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his family): "Three qualities, if absent in a person, make all deeds void: piety that restrains from sin, good character to deal with people, and patience to endure the ignorant." (*Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 116)
4. Imam al-Baqir (Peace be upon him): "No deed benefits alongside doubt and denial." (*Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 400)
5. Imam Ali (Peace be upon him): "Only the deeds done with sincerity are accepted from you." (*Ghurar al-Hikam*, vol. 1, p. 265)
6. Imam al-Sadiq (Peace be upon him): "God does not accept any act from a believer while he harbors ill intentions toward his fellow believer." (*Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 361)