115342 - Du’aa’ asking to attain the attributes of the Prophets

the question

What is the ruling on du’aa’ asking to attain the attributes of the Prophets, such as saying ‘O Allaah, grant me the patience of Ayyoob and the wisdom of Yoosuf’ and so on?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Asking Allaah to grant the attributes of the Prophets may be divided into two categories:

1.

Du’aa’ asking for the miracles or virtues for which Allaah singled them out, such as asking one's Lord to give one the sovereignty of Sulaymaan, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “He said: ‘My Lord! Forgive me, and bestow upon me a kingdom such as shall not belong to any other after me. Verily, You are the Bestower’” [Saad 38:35]; or asking Allaah for a miracle that can only be given to a Prophet, such as the miracle of ‘Eesa (peace be upon him) who was born without a father, or asking Allaah for the status of al-waseelah in Paradise, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him) said: “Then ask Allaah to grant me al-waseelah, for it is a station in Paradise which only one of the slaves of Allaah will attain, and I hope that I will be the one” (narrated by Muslim, no. 384).”

The ruling on this type of du’aa’ is that it is forbidden and is not allowed, because it is obviously overstepping the mark, because in it a person is asking for that which it is not permissible to him to ask for.

It was narrated that ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Mughaffal (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Messenger of Allaah (blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him) say: “There will be among this ummah people who overstep the mark in purification and supplication.”

Narrated by Abu Dawood (96) and classed as saheeh by Ibn Hajar in al-Talkhees (1/144) and by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Overstepping the mark in supplication means asking for something that the Lord will not do, such as asking Him for the status of the Prophets when he is not one of them, or asking for forgiveness for the mushrikeen and so on, or asking for that which involves disobedience to Allaah, such as asking for help in committing disbelief, evildoing and sin. End quote.

Majmoo' al-Fataawa, 1/130

See also the answer to question number 41017.

2.

Asking Allaah to help one acquire the attitude of the Prophets, and to follow their guidance and their example, to adhere to their way and attain their honourable characteristics, such as patience, wisdom, compassion and other things which are required of people in the first place.

We do not think that there is anything wrong with this supplication, although it is better for the Muslim to follow the high example of the Prophets and Messengers in their worship, attitude, piety and devotion to Allaah. The Qur'aan is full of encouragement to follow in their footsteps in all matters, to take them as an example, to seek to acquire their characteristics and to imitate their actions. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"They are those whom Allaah had guided. So follow their guidance"

[al-An'aam 6:90]

"Therefore be patient (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) as did the Messengers of strong will"

[al-Ahqaaf 46:35].

If a person calls upon his Lord as he has been commanded and is required to do, and asks Allaah to give him what He gave the Prophets of good attitudes, deeds and words, and to help him as He helped them to be patient in obeying Him or refraining from sin, to be wise in calling, to be kind to people, to be steadfast and to have peace of mind, if he asks for all of that, he will be rewarded in sha Allaah for his supplication, and there is the hope that Allaah will grant him his request.

But we have some reservations about asking to be like them, such as asking for the patience of Yoosuf, or the understanding and wisdom of Sulaymaan… We are afraid that this request may come under the heading of overstepping the mark in supplication, especially if he starts to ask for the best quality by which each of the Prophets was distinct from the others, such as the understanding of Sulaymaan, the patience of Ayyoob and the weeping of Dawood, and he begins to ask for them all in his du'aa', because combining the different virtues by which each Prophet was distinguished, and for which Allaah praised them, in one ordinary person is not possible.

What we advise is to adhere to the supplications which are narrated and proven from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him), or narrated from his noble Companions, or known from the imams and scholars. Otherwise, then he may pray for himself for what he wants in this world and in the Hereafter, whilst striving to observe proper etiquette in supplication and seeking out the times when a response is most likely.

As for the made up supplications which people circulate in text messages and the like, how often people hasten to spread them, then it becomes apparent that they contain inappropriate material such as overstepping the mark in supplication or going against the Sunnah and proper etiquette.

And Allaah knows best.