145514 - Commentary on the hadith, “Whoever would like his rizq (provision) to be abundant and his lifespan to be extended, let him uphold his ties of kinship”

the question

Could you explain to me this hadith: it was narrated from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever would like his rizq (provision) to be abundant and his lifespan to be extended, let him uphold his ties of kinship”? What is meant by “and his lifespan to be extended”?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Al-Bukhari (2067) and Muslim (2557) narrated that Anas ibn Maalik (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: “Whoever would like his rizq (provision) to be abundant and his lifespan to be extended, let him uphold his ties of kinship.”

Abundance in provision means that it is increased, caused to grow and expand, and made blessed; it refers to it being increased in a real sense.

The explanations given by the scholars for the phrase “*yunsa’ lahu fi atharihi* [translated above as: and his lifespan to be extended]” differed.

It was said that it means an increase in his physical strength.

And it was said that it refers to blessing in his lifespan, being enabled to do acts of worship and obedience, being enabled to use his time in ways that will benefit him in the hereafter and ensuring that his time is not wasted in anything other than that.

And it was said that what is meant is that he will be well remembered after he dies.

And it was said that it means that his lifespan is written and connected to a condition such as a stipulation that if he uphold his ties of kinship, then his life will be [increased by] such and such, otherwise it will only be as originally decreed, so the addition to his lifespan will be an addition in a real sense.

See: *Sharh an-Nawawi 'ala Muslim* (16/114); *Fath al-Bari* (4/302).

This last view is the one that is most likely to be correct. So what the hadith means is: whoever would like his provision to be made abundant, so that it will increase and be blessed for him, or would like his lifespan to be extended, let him uphold his ties of kinship.

Thus upholding ties of kinship is a prescribed means of increasing and expanding provision and of increasing and extending one's lifespan. Were it not for that, this would not be his provision and this would not be his lifespan – by the decree and wisdom of Allah, may He be exalted.

Shaykh al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *Sahih al-Adab al-Mufrad* (1/24):

The hadith is to understood according to its apparent meaning, which is that Allah, in His wisdom, has caused upholding of ties of kinship to be a prescribed means of extending one's lifespan. The same applies to having a good attitude and being good to one's neighbours, as is mentioned in some sahih hadiths. This does not contradict what is well-known in Islamic teachings, that lifespans are already decided, because that is correct when looking at when lifespans end. This is exactly like the issue of whether a person is blessed (destined for Paradise) or doomed (destined for Hell). Whether a person is blessed or doomed is already decided with regard to individuals. However, it is well established in Islamic teachings that being blessed or doomed is connected to causes that lead to these two ends, as is mentioned in the religious texts.

That is similar to the case of faith (iman), which may increase and decrease. It increases when one does acts of worship and obedience and it decreases when one commits sins, yet that does not contradict what is written in al-Lawh al-Mahfuz. By analogy, lifespans may increase and decrease,

depending on the measures that an individual takes. This also does not contradict what is written in al-Lawh al-Mahfuz. End quote.

At-Tahawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It may be that when Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, wanted to create a particular soul, He decreed that if it upheld ties of kinship, its lifespan would be such and such [longer] and if it did not uphold ties of kinship, it would be of a shorter duration. Similarly, if that person offered supplication, certain things would be warded off from him, and if he did not offer supplication, certain things would befall him; if he did certain deeds, he would be deprived of certain things, and if he did not do those deeds, he would be granted certain things. All of that could be written in the pages of decrees to which nothing can be added and nothing can be taken away."(*Bayan Mushkil al-Athar* 7/202).

Al-Halimi (may Allah have mercy on him) said regarding the meaning of the hadith: in some cases, Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, decrees that if a person upholds his ties of kinship, he will live for a certain number of years, and if he severs those ties, he will live for fewer years than that. In this way we may understand the idea of something being added to his lifespan."(*Shu'ab al-Iman* 6/219).

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

A person's lifespan is two lifespans, one that is not connected to anything, which is known only to Allah, and one that is subject to conditions. This explains the meaning of the Prophet's words "Whoever would like his rizq (provision) to be abundant and his lifespan to be extended, let him uphold his ties of kinship." Allah instructed the angel to write down the lifespan for him, and said: If he uphold his ties of kinship, I will increase it by such and such. The angel does not know whether it will be increased or not, but Allah knows how things will turn out, then when his ordained time of death comes, it will not be brought forward or put back."(*Majmu' al-Fatawa* 8/517).

Shaykh Salih al-Fawzan (may Allah preserve him) said:

What this means is that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has promised the one who upholdd his ties of kinship that He will reward him by extending his lifespan and making his provision abundant, as a reward for his doing good.

There is no contradiction between this hadith and the hadith which says that the lifespan and provision of every person is already decreed when he is in his mother’s womb, because there are causes that Allah has ordained to extend one’s lifespan and causes for obtaining provision. This hadith indicates that being kind and upholding ties of kinship are a cause of lifespans being extended and provision being increased. It is Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, Who decrees things and ordains causes. There are things that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has ordained and connected to causes and means. If these means are taken, fulfilling all the necessary conditions and avoiding impediments, then the expected results will materialise by His will and decree, and as a reward from Allah, may He be glorified and exalted."(*Al-Muntaqa min Fatawa al-Fawzan* 98/1).

Shaykh Ibn Jibrin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

That is because Allah will reward a person with a reward that matches his deed. So whoever upholds his ties of kinship, Allah will increase his lifespan and provision in a real sense. And the opposite of that is that whoever severs ties of kinship, Allah will cut short his lifespan and provision."(*Fatawa ash-Shaykh Ibn Jibrin* 54/13).