1815 - Why will the people who ask others for Ruqyah be of a lesser status?

the question

We want to understand the hadeeth of Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them both) in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) says of the seventy thousand who will enter Paradise without being called to account that they “do not ask for ruqyah (seek healing through spiritual means e.g. by recitation of Qur’aan etc.)…” (Reported by al-Bukhaari, no. 6472 and 6541; Muslim, no. 220). Does this hadeeth include all kinds of treatment? If this is not the case, what is the difference between (medical) treatment and ruqyah, because both of them may effect a cure? How are we to understand the Prophet’s command to ‘Aa’ishah and others to seek healing from al-‘ayn (the evil eye) through ruqyah? If we know that a person has been afflicted by the evil eye, should we tell him to seek healing through ruqyah or should we tell him to bear it with patience and hope for reward from Allaah?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The phrase in the hadeeth about the seventy thousand who will enter Paradise without being called to account, that they “do not ask for ruqyah” means that they do not seek it from others. But the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded us and taught us to seek treatment, as he said: “Allaah has not created any disease without also creating the cure; some know it and some do not.”

(Reported by al-Bukhaari, no. 5678).

Ruqyah and seeking medical treatment differ in two ways:

The first difference is that a person will feel a greater attachment to the one who does ruqyah than to the one who offers medical treatment, because if Allaah decrees that he should be healed

through ruqyah, the bond between the person who did the ruqyah and the person who was sick is a spiritual bond, as the cure did not come about through physical means. The fact that it is a spiritual bond may be a source of fitnah (temptation or trial), as he may say, “he is one of the awliya’ (close friends) of Allaah” and so on, which may lead him to shirk (associating partners with Allaah). Hence it was followed by the words “… and who put their trust in their Lord.”

The second difference is that a sick person may ask for ruqyah from someone who is not qualified to do it, because the latter is not using something tangible that can be identified. So the person who has been asked to do ruqyah may do it, and the sick person may be healed coincidentally, not as a result of the ruqyah which was not done according to sharee’ah, but at the same time as the ruqyah is done, so people may suffer fitnah because of this, and think that this is a person whose du’aa’s are answered and whose ruqyah is blessed, when this is not the case.

For this reason the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, “… those who do not ask for ruqyah..” and did not say “those who do not seek treatment. Seeking treatment is essential, but it is better not to seek ruqyah. However, if a person comes forward and recites something over you and you do not stop him, this does not mean that you are not counted among the people mentioned in the hadeeth, because you did not ask for ruqyah. By the same token, if you do ruqyah for your brother, you are doing him a favour, and this does not rule you out from being one of the seventy thousand. Thus we say that the extra phrase reported in Saheeh Muslim, “… and they did not do ruqyah…” is a dubious addition that is not saheeh. The correct wording is only “Those who did not ask for ruqyah.”

With regard to seeking ruqyah from a scholar, if he is known as such then you can ask him for ruqyah, because if he treats a person with ruqyah, they will benefit from it, by the grace of Allaah, as is the case with doctors who treat people.

With regard to the question of whether we should treat the person who is afflicted by the evil eye with ruqyah or tell him to bear it with patience, the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught us the way to seek healing from the evil eye, when he told the one who had put the evil eye on one of his companions to do ghusl and wudoo’, then to take some of the water and

pour it over the one who was afflicted until he recovered.