496175 - Supplication For Deceased Child in Funeral Prayer

the question

What is the reason for mentioning specifically that the deceased is a child when calling people to attend the funeral prayer (prayer for the dead) when the word “the dead (*al-amwat*)” includes children? Is it prescribed to stand by the grave and pray that the deceased be made steadfast after burying child?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I.

The practice is to mention specifically that the deceased is a child when giving the call to the funeral prayer. What appears to be the case is that that is done so that the worshippers will offer the specific supplication for children. This is what was mentioned by some of the jurists, and some of the supplications that are in circulation are mentioned in reports, but there are some reservations about those reports. However, the jurists regard it as recommended to offer a specific supplication for a child that differs from the supplication for an adult, which asks for forgiveness for the deceased, because there is no sin in the case of a minor.

An example of that is what al-Bukhari narrated in a mu`allaq report about reciting al-Fatihah in the funeral prayer.

Al-Hasan said: Al-Fatihah is to be recited for a deceased child, and one should say: “Allahumm aj`alhu lana faratan wa salafan wa ajran (O Allah, make him a precursor and forerunner for us, and a source of reward).”

Ibn Hajar narrated it with a complete isnad in *Taghliq at-Ta`liq* (2.424); and al-Albani classed it as

good (hasan) in *Ahkam al-Jana'iz*, p. 161.

See also: *Fat-h al-Bari* by Ibn Hajar, 3/203.

Ibn Qudamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: If the deceased is a child, then instead of praying for forgiveness for him, one should say: "*Allahumm aj`alhu faratan li walidayhi wa dhukhran wa salafan wa ajran. Allahumma thaqqil bihi mawazinahuma wa a`zim bihi ujurahuma. Allahum aj`alhu fi kafalati Ibrahima wa alhiqhu bi salihi salaf il-mu'minin, wa ajirhu bi rahmatika min `adhab al-jahim, wa abdilhu daran khayran min darihi wa ahlan khayran min ahlihi* (O Allah, make him a precursor for his parents, and a future treasure, a forerunner and a cause of reward. O Allah, make him weigh heavily in their scales (of good deeds) and magnify their reward. O Allah, place him in the care of Ibrahim and make him join the righteous believers who have passed on, protect him by Your mercy from the torment of Hell, give him a home better than his home, and a family better than his family) … and so on.

Whatever supplication you offer of those that we have mentioned or similar words, it will be good enough, and there is no specific supplication that is to be offered.

End quote from *Al-Mughni*, 3/416.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: Is there any supplication narrated in the Sunnah to be recited for a dead child in the funeral prayer?

He replied: There is no such supplication narrated soundly from the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), but there are some hadiths, concerning the soundness of which there are some reservations, which say that in the case of a deceased child who had not reached the age of puberty, supplication should be offered for his parents. And some of the jurists mentioned an appropriate supplication, as they said: "*Allahumm aj`alhu faratan li walidayhi wa dhukhran wa shafi`an mujaban. Allahumma thaqqil bihi mawazinahuma wa a`zim bihi ujurahuma, wa alhiqhu bi salihi salaf il-mu'minin waj`alhu fi kafalati Ibrahim, wa qihi bi rahmatika `adhab al-jahim* (O Allah, make him a precursor for his parents and a future treasure, and an answered intercessor. O Allah, make him weigh heavily in their scales (of good) and magnify their reward, and make him join the

righteous of the believers who have passed on, and place him in the care of Ibrahim, and protect him by Your mercy from the torment of Hell).”

End quote from *Liqa’ al-Bab al-Maftuh*, 35/10).

II.

As for praying that the child be made steadfast, we have not come across any clear words to that effect.

But the scholars differed as to whether children are questioned in the grave, and there are two views. The view on praying for the child to be made steadfast is based on the view as to whether the child is questioned in the grave.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Are children questioned in the grave?

The scholars differed regarding that, and there are two views, both of which were narrated from the companions of Ahmad.

The evidence given by those who say that they are questioned is the fact that it is prescribed to offer the funeral prayer for them and offer supplication for them and ask Allah to protect them from the torment and trial of the grave, as Malik narrated in his *Muwatta’* from Abu Hurayrah that he offered the funeral prayer for a boy, and he was heard to say in his supplication: O Allah, protect him from the torment of the grave.

They also quoted as evidence the report narrated by `Ali ibn Ma`bad from `A’ishah, that the funeral of a small boy passed by her and she wept. It was said to her: Why are you weeping, O Mother of the Believers? She said: I wept for this small boy out of compassion towards him, because of the pressing of the grave.

They also quoted as evidence the report narrated by Hannad ibn as-Sari: Abu Mu`awiyah told us, from Yahya ibn Sa`id, from Sa`id ibn al-Musayyab, from Abu Hurayrah, who said: If he offered the

funeral prayer for a newborn who had never committed any sin, he would say: O Allah, protect him from the torment of the grave.

The scholars said: Allah, may He be Glorified, gives them reason so that they understand where they are, and they are inspired to answer the questions that are put to them.

They said: That is indicated by many hadiths in which it says that they are to be tested in the hereafter. Al-Ash`ari narrated that from the scholars of hadith. So if they are to be tested in the hereafter, there is nothing to rule out the possibility of their being tested in the grave.

Others said that the questioning is only for one who can understand the concept of the Messenger and the One Who sent him. So he will be asked whether he believed in the Messenger and obeyed him or not. And it will be said to him: What did you use to say about this man who was sent among you? As for the child who has no discernment at all, how can it be said to him: What did you use to say about this man who was sent among you? If he is given the power of reasoning, he cannot be asked about something he never learned about and never came to know, so there is no point in this questioning.

Regarding the hadith of Abu Hurayrah, what is meant by the torment of the grave cannot mean punishment for the child for not obeying or for committing sin at all, for Allah does not punish anyone for a sin that he did not commit; rather the torment of the grave may refer to the pain that the deceased feels because of others, even though it is not a punishment for something that he did. An example of that is the Prophet’s words “The deceased is tormented by the weeping of his family for him,” meaning that he is pained by that and feels upset because of it; it does not mean that he is punished for the sins of the living, for {no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another} [al-An`am 6:164].

This is also similar to the Prophet’s words, “Travel is a piece of torment.” The word torment is more general in meaning than the word punishment, and undoubtedly in the grave there are pains, distress and regrets that may have an impact on the child and cause him pain. Therefore, it is prescribed for those who offer the funeral prayer for him to ask Allah, may He be Exalted, to

protect him from this torment. And Allah knows best.

End quote from *Kitab ar-Ruh*, 1/265.

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

As for the trial in the grave, it is the testing and questioning of the deceased, when the two angels ask him: What did you use to say about this man, Muhammad, who was sent among you? And Allah will make steadfast those who believe, with the word that stands firm, so the believer will say: Allah is my Lord, Islam is my religion and Muhammad is my Prophet. And he will say: He is Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, who came to us with clear proofs and guidance, so we believed in him and followed him. And they (the two angels) will rebuke him severely, and this is the last trial that the believer will undergo.

There are mass-transmitted hadiths from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) about this trial, such as those narrated by al-Bara' ibn `Azib, Anas ibn Malik, Abu Hurayrah and others (may Allah be pleased with them).

This applies to all those who are accountable, except the prophets, concerning whom there is a difference of scholarly opinion.

Similarly, there was a difference of opinion about those who are not accountable, such as children and the insane.

It was said that they will not be tested, because the test is only for those who are accountable. This is the view of al-Qadi and Ibn `Aqil. According to this view, they are not to be prompted [with the answers to the angels' questions] after death.

And it was said that they should be prompted, because they are also tested. This is the view of Abu Hakim and of Abul-Hasan ibn `Abdus, who narrated it from his companions, and it is in harmony with the view of those who say that they will be made accountable on the Day of Resurrection, as is the view of most of the scholars and of Ahl as-Sunnah, both the scholars of hadith and of kalam (Islamic philosophy). This is what Abul-Hasan al-Ash`ari (may Allah be pleased

with him) narrated from Ahl us-Sunnah and he favoured this view, and it is also what is implied by the texts that are attributed to Imam Ahmad.

End quote from *Majmu` al-Fatawa*, 4/257.

In *Al-Ikhtiyarat al-Fiqhiyyah* by Shaykh al-Islam, compiled by Abul-Hasan al-Ba`li (89), it says:

The one who is not accountable will be tested and questioned. This is one of two views in the madhhab of Ahmad. End quote.

Shaykh Ibn Baz favoured the second view, when he (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The apparent meaning of the hadiths indicates that those who are accountable will be questioned. As for the child, he will be let off. And the apparent meaning of the hadiths indicates that the deceased who is accountable will be asked about his Lord, his religion and his Prophet. As for the child, I do not know of anything to indicate that he will be questioned, because children, according to the consensus of Ahl as-Sunnah, are among the people of paradise; the children of the Muslims [who die in childhood] will be among the people of paradise.

End quote from *Fatawa Nur `ala ad-Darb* by Ibn Baz, 13/475.

What appears to be the case is that the issue of praying for deceased children to be made steadfast is flexible. So whoever prays for the child to be made steadfast, there is nothing wrong with that, and there is no clear evidence to indicate that it is not allowed. Rather it is in harmony with what Shaykh al-Islam narrated from most of the scholars. However, the issue of the horrors of the grave is very distressing, and if we assume that the child is not to be questioned like adults, the horrors and conditions of the grave are something terrifying, and we ask Allah to comfort us when we are alone and make us steadfast when we are questioned.

And Allah knows best.