## 6496 - Will Children Enter Paradise?

**the question**

Will ALL children that died before the age of account go to Jannah OR will only the children of the Muslim parents?

**Summary of answer**

There is no dispute among the scholars that Muslim children will enter Jannah.
Scholars differed concerning the fate of the children of the non-Muslims that they will be; 1- In Jannah. 2- With their parents in Hell. 3- The servants of the people of Paradise. 4- Tested in the Hereafter, and whoever obeys Allah will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys Him will enter Hell.

**Detailed answer**

Praise be to Allah.

We may divide this issue, in sha Allah, into two parts:

- Firstly: the fate of the children of the Muslims.
- Secondly: the fate of the children of the non-Muslims.

### The fate of the children of the Muslims

Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“With regard to the children of the believers, there is no dispute among the scholars. Al-Qadi Abu Ya`la ibn Al-Farra` Al-Hanbali narrated that Imam Ahmad said: there is no dispute concerning the fact that they will be among the people of Paradise. This is what is well known among people (i.e., the majority of scholars) and this is what we are definitely sure about, in sha Allah.” (End quote

from Tafsir Al-Quran Al-`Adhim, 3/33).

Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “Who has any doubts that the children of the Muslims will be in Paradise?!”

He also said: “There is no difference among them on this matter.” (End quote from Hashiyat Ibn Al-Qayyim `ala Sunan Abu Dawud, 7/83)

Imam An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “The reliable Muslim scholars agreed that any Muslim child who dies will be among the people of Paradise, because he was not responsible (i.e., had not yet reached the age of account).” (End quote from Sharh Muslim, 16/207).

Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “The view that they will be in Paradise is the view of the majority. And he said: some scholars denounced any dispute concerning them.” (End quote from At-Tadhkirah, 2/328)

## The fate of the children of the non-Muslims

The scholars differed concerning this matter, and there are several views:

- That they will be in Paradise. Some of them said that they will be in Al-A`raf [a place between Paradise and Hell]. And the reason why it was said that they will be in Paradise is because this is the ultimate destiny of the people of Al-A`raf. This is the view of the majority of scholars, as reported from them by Ibn `Abd Al-Barr in At-Tamhid (18/96).

They quote the following to support their view:

1. The Hadith of Samurah (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saw the children of the Muslims and the children of the Polytheists with Ibrahim (peace be upon him). (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 6640)

1. Hasna` bint Mu`awiyyah from Bani Suraym said: “My paternal uncle told me: I said, O Messenger of Allah, who will be in Paradise? He said: "Prophets will be in Paradise, martyrs

will be in Paradise, infants will be in Paradise and baby girls who were buried alive will be in Paradise." (Narrated by Imam Ahmad, 5/409; classed as inauthentic by Al-Albani in Da`if Al-Jami`, 5997)

- That they will be with their parents in Hell. Al-Qadi Abu Ya`la (may Allah have mercy on him) attributed this view to Ahmad! But Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) pointed out that this was a grave error. (Hashiyat Ibn Al-Qayyim `ala Sunan Abu Dawud, 7/87)

They quote the following to support their view:

1. Salamah ibn Qays Al-Ashja`i (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "My brother and I came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said that our mother had died during the Jahiliyyah, and that she had honoured her guests and upheld the ties of kinship, but that she had buried alive a sister of ours during the Jahiliyyah who had not reached the age of puberty. He said: the one who was buried and the one who buried her are in Hell, unless Islam reached the one who buried the child alive and she became Muslim.

The Hadith was classed as sound by Ibn Kathir in At-Tafsir (3/33), and before him by Ibn `Abd Al-Barr in At-Tamhid (18/120)

1. There are other Hadiths, but they are inauthentic.

- Not giving any opinion on this matter. This is the view of Hammad ibn Zayd, Hammad ibn Salamah, Ibn Al-Mubarak and Is-haq ibn Rahawayh.

They quote the following to support their view:

1. According to Ibn `Abbas  (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was asked about the children of the Polytheists, and he said, "Allah knows best what they would have done." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 1383 and Muslim, 2660)
2. There is a similar Hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah. (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 1384 and Muslim, 2659)

- Some scholars say that the children of the Polytheists will be the servants of the people of Paradise.

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “There is no basis for this view.” (End quote from Majmu` Al-Fatawa, 4/279)

I say: ”Concerning this, there was a Hadith narrated by At-Tabarani and Al-Bazzar, but it was classed as inauthentic by the Imams – including Al-Hafidh ibn Hajar in Al-Fat-h (3/246)”

- That they will be tested in the Hereafter, and whoever obeys Allah will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys Him will enter Hell. This is the view of the majority of Ahl As-Sunnah wal Jama`ah, as transmitted by Abul Hasan Al-Ash`ari, and it is the opinion of Al-Bayhaqi and many other researchers. It is also the opinion favoured by Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah. He said that this is what is implied by the texts of Imam Ahmad, and is the view regarded as most correct by Al-Hafidh Ibn Kathir. He said: this view reconciles all the reports, and all the Hadiths quoted above support one another. (End quote from At-Tafsir, 3/31)

They quote the following to support their view:

1. Anas said: the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Four (kinds of people) will be brought forth on the Day of Resurrection: the infant, the insane, the one who died during the Fatrah (the period between two prophets) and the very old man. All of them will speak in their own defence, then the Lord, may He be blessed and exalted, will say to a neck of Hell, `Come forth!` and He will say to them, `I used to send Messengers to My slaves from amongst themselves. Now I am the Messenger of Myself to you. Enter this (i.e., the Fire).` Those who are decreed to be among the doomed will say, `O Lord, how could we enter it when we are trying to escape it?` And those who are decreed to be among the blessed will rush to enter it. And Allah will say: `You would have been more disobedient towards My Messengers.` So those will enter Paradise and those will enter Hell.” (Narrated by Abu Ya`la, 4224) There are corroborating reports which were mentioned by Ibn Kathir in At-Tafsir (3/29-31)

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

“This is the most reasonable of the opinions, which reconciles all the reports and brings all the Hadiths into harmony. On this basis, some of them will be in Paradise, as in the Hadith of Samurah, and some of them will be in Hell, as in the Hadith of `A’ishah. The reply of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) indicates this, as he said: “Allah knows best what they would have done, because He created them.” It is known that Allah does not punish anyone on the basis of what He knows, unless what He knows actually comes to pass.

The phrase “Allah knows best what they would have done” indicates that Allah knows what they would have done if they had lived. The ones who obey Him at the time of the test are the ones who would have obeyed Him if they had lived in this world, and those ones who disobey Him at that time are the ones who would have disobeyed Him if they had lived in this world. This indicates that He knows about what does not happen and how it would have been if it had happened. And Allah knows best. (End quote from Hashiyat Ibn Al-Qayyim `ala Sunan Abu Dawud, 7/87)

The Hadiths quoted above stating that they will either be in Paradise or in Hell do not contradict what we believe is more likely to be correct. Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said: the Hadiths about them being tested are more specific. Whoever Allah knows will obey Him, He puts his soul in Al-Barzakh with Ibrahim and the children of the Muslims who died in a state of Fitrah, and whoever He knows will not obey Him Him, his case rests with Allah, and on the Day of Resurrection he will be in Hell, as is indicated in the Hadiths about the test and as reported by Al-Ash`ari from the scholars of Sunnah. (End quote from At-Tafsir, 3/33)

The phrase “Allah knows best what they would have done” does not mean that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was not giving an opinion.

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

“The evidence used by this group needs further examination. The answer of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) does not mean that he did not want to give an opinion; rather, he was attributing the knowledge of what they would have done if they had lived to Allah. This was

the answer to the question of how they could be with their fathers when they had no deeds in their records – which is part of the Hadith. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) attributed the knowledge of what they would have done to Allah; he did not say, Allah knows best where they will be. This evidence does not support the opinion of this group."

For more details, please see the following answers: 21434, 185515, 177657, and 3277.

And Allah knows best.