110461 - Feeding birds in the graveyard as an act of charity on behalf of the dead

the question

After my father died, I used to visit the graves, and I noticed some people feeding the birds on behalf of their deceased loved ones on Fridays. Is this correct and will the reward reach the dead?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

If a Muslim wants to benefit any of his deceased relatives, he may give charity on their behalf, intending that the reward of the charity should reach them.

The evidence for that is what was narrated from `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), that a man said to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): O Messenger of Allah, my mother died suddenly and did not leave a will. I think that if she had been able to speak, she would have given charity. Will she have any reward if I give charity on her behalf? He said: "Yes." Narrated by al-Bukhari, 1388; Muslim, 1004.

It is well known that feeding birds and animals comes under the heading of charity for which reward will be written down for the Muslim, as Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "There is no Muslim who plants something or cultivates something, and birds, humans or animals eat from it, but it will be charity for him." Narrated by al-Bukhari, 2320; Muslim, 1553.

But it is better, preferable and will bring a greater reward and benefit to give charity to the poor and needy Muslims who can be found everywhere in the world today; as for the birds and animals, they will find their provision which Allah makes available to them.

With regard to their singling out Friday for visiting the graves, we have previously pointed out that this is an innovation (bid`ah), in the answer to question no. 12322. Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about the ruling on singling out Friday for visiting the graves.

He (may Allah have mercy on him) replied:

There is no basis for that. What is prescribed is to visit graves at any time of night or day that is easy for the visitor. As for singling out a particular day or night, that is an innovation for which there is no basis, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever introduces into this matter of ours anything that is not part of it, it will be rejected.” Agreed upon. And because he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever does an action that is not part of this matter of ours, it will be rejected. “ Narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih* from `A’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her).

End quote from *Majmu` Fatawa Ibn Baz*, 13/336.

It should be noted that benefiting the deceased is not limited to feeding the birds or giving money in charity. There are other things that also benefit the deceased, the best and most beneficial of which is offering supplication for him.

See also the answer to question no. 763.

And Allah knows best.