22355 - If boys reach the first row before older people, they are more entitled to it

the question

Some children come early on Fridays, then people who are older than them come and make them get up, then they sit in their places. They quote as evidence in support of this the hadeeth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): “Let there be behind me those among you who are wise and mature.” Is this permissible?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

This is the view of some scholars, who say that it is better for young boys to form rows behind the men. But this opinion is subject to dispute. The more correct view is that if they get there first, it is not permissible to make them sit further back. If they reach the first or second row first, those who come after them should not make them sit further back, because they got there first and that gives them the right over those who did not get there first. So it is not permissible to make them sit further back, because of the general meaning of the ahaadeeth concerning this matter, and because making them sit further back would put them off coming to the prayer and from competing in that – and this is not appropriate.

But if a group of people arrive together, because they are traveling together or for some other reason, then the men should form the first rows, the boys behind them, and the women – if there are women present – should form rows behind them. This is when a group is all together. But for older people who come later to make the youngsters move and then take their places is not permissible, as we have mentioned.

With regard to the hadeeth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): “Let there be behind me those among you who are wise and mature” – this is meant to encourage people

who are wise and mature to hasten to the prayer and to be in the forefront of the people. It does not mean that those who arrived before them should be made to move for them, because that goes against the shar'i evidence that we have mentioned.