36830 - Ruling on those who drowned in the Egyptian ferry, and offering the funeral prayer for them

the question

In the last few days the Egyptian ferry sank and the number of those who drowned in this accident is nearly one thousand. Are they considered to be martyrs? How can we offer the funeral prayer for those of them who have not been found?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Undoubtedly all things are in the hand of Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted, and He controls them as He wills. We may note the following about this incident:

Firstly:

Allaah may choose from among His believing slaves some types of people, individually or in groups, and send calamity upon them so that the calamity may raise them in status and expiate their sins. So calamities are a means of expiating sins and raising one in status. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “There is nothing that befalls a believer, not even a thorn that pricks him, but Allaah will record one good deed for him thereby or erase one bad deed.” Narrated by Muslim (2572).

Secondly:

What is prescribed for a Muslim if calamity befalls him is to be patient, and to say that which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) enjoined upon us. It was narrated that Umm Salamah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: I heard the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say: “There is no Muslim who is stricken with a calamity and says what Allaah has enjoined – ‘Verily to Allaah we belong and unto Him is our return. O Allaah, reward

me for my affliction and compensate me with something better' – but Allaah will compensate him with something better." Narrated by Muslim (918).

Thirdly:

Whoever dies by drowning is a martyr (shaheed) and will have the reward of the martyrs with Allaah, may He be exalted. It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The martyrs are five: the one who dies of the plague, the one who dies of a stomach disease, the one who drowns, the one who is killed by a falling wall and the martyr (who dies) for the sake of Allaah." Narrated by al-Bukhaari (2829) and Muslim (1914). According to a version narrated by Muslim (1915): "the one who drowns is a martyr."

Ibn al-Teen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: All of these deaths involve hardship and Allaah has shown favour to the ummah of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) by making them a means of erasing their sins and increasing their reward, and causing them to attain the status of the martyrs.

Fath al-Baari (8/438). See also the answer to question no. 22140.

Fourthly:

Whomever Allaah has saved from this accident and brought forth safely, let him praise Allaah for that, and do good for the rest of his life, for death will certainly come to man, but Allaah delayed it and saved him. If He had willed, it could have turned out otherwise.

Fifthly:

If a person is brought out dead, then he must be washed and shrouded, and the funeral prayer offered for him. With regard to the one who cannot be found, the funeral prayer must be offered for them in absentia, because offering the funeral prayer is a communal obligation (fard kafaayah) which must be fulfilled. So the people should form rows and the imam should go forward and lead the prayer for him as if the bier were in front of them.

It says in al-Mawsoo’ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah:

If the drowned person can be found, then he should be washed and shrouded and the funeral prayer offered for him as with any other deceased person, but if he cannot be found, then the funeral prayer should be offered for him in absentia, according to the Shaafa’is and Hanbalis. End quote.

Al-Bukhaari (1318) and Muslim (951) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) announced the death of the Negus to his companions on the day he died, and he led them out to the prayer-place, then he went forward and they formed rows behind him, and he said takbeer four times.

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: This is evidence for al-Shaafa’i and those who agreed with him with regard to offering the funeral prayer in absentia. End quote.

We have discussed the issue of offering the funeral prayer in absentia in the answer to question no. (35853).

We ask Allaah to accept them as martyrs and to grant their families patience and consolation.

And Allaah knows best.