71400 - Isnaad of the hadeeth about the Angel of Death asking the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) for permission to take his soul

the question

How sound is this hadeeth? “The angel Jibreel entered upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said: ‘The Angel of Death is at the door, and he is asking permission to enter upon you. He has never asked permission from anyone before you.’ He said, ‘Let him in, O Jibreel.’ The Angel of Death entered and said: ‘Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allaah. Allaah has sent me to give you the choice between staying in this world and meeting Allaah.’ The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘Rather the Higher Companion, rather the Higher Companion.’ So the Angel of Death stood at the head of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) as he will stand at the head of each of us, and said: ‘O good soul, the soul of Muhammad ibn ‘Abd-Allaah, come out to the good pleasure of Allaah and a Lord Who is pleased and is not angry.’”.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

There are many ahaadeeth about the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Many such reports have been narrated, but the saheeh ones are mixed with the false ones, and many people are careless about quoting reports which have no basis or which have been narrated via unsound isnaads. The one who is seeking sound reports on this subject should refer to the saheeh ahaadeeth, which are sufficient and in which he will information about the incidents surrounding the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and in which there are important lessons to be learned.

Al-Haafiz Ibn Katheer (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Bidaayah wa’l-Nihaayah (5/256):

Al-Waaqidi and others narrated many reports concerning the death (of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)) in which there are many strange things. We have refrained from mentioning many of them because of their weak isnaads and dubious content, especially those narrated by many storytellers, later writers and others. Many of them are undoubtedly fabricated. In the saheeh and hasan ahaadeeth which are narrated in the well known books there is sufficient information and we have no need of lies and reports whose isnaads are unknown. And Allaah knows best. End quote.

After researching the reports about the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), we could not find the hadeeth mentioned by the questioner in this version, but there are ahaadeeth about the Angel of Death asking the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) for permission, in wording similar to that mentioned by the questioner. But these are weak (da'eef) ahaadeeth which the scholars judged to be false and fabricated. For example:

There is a hadeeth narrated by 'Ali ibn al-Husayn from his father, telling a long story in which the Angel of Death asks for permission to enter upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and speaks with him.

This story was narrated by al-Tabaraani in al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer (3/129) and in Kitaab al-Du'aa' (1/367).

Al-Haythami said in Majma' al-Zawaa'id (9/35): Its isnaad includes 'Abd-Allaah ibn Maymoon al-Qaddaah, whose reports are worthless.

He was also judged as such by al-Haafiz al-'Iraaqi in Takhreej al-Ihya' (4/560); al-Haafiz ibn Hajar in Ajwabah Ba'd Talaameedhatihi (1/87) and Ibn Katheer in al-Bidaayah wa'l-Nihaayah (5/290). Al-Albaani said in al-Silsilah al-Da'eefah (5384): it is mawdoo' (fabricated).

There is another hadeeth which was narrated by Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him), in which it mentions the Angel of death seeking permission to enter upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) during his final illness. This was narrated by al-Tabaraani in al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer (12/141).

Al-Haythami said in Majma’ al_Zawaa’id (9/36): its isnaad includes al-Mukhtaar ibn Naafi’, who is da’eef (weak).

Al-‘Iraaqi said in Takhreej al-Ihya’ (4/560): It isnaad includes al-Mukhtaari ibn Naafi’, whose hadeeth is rejected.

With regard to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) being given the choice between death and staying in this world, and his saying, “Rather the Higher Companion,” this is proven in al-Saheehayn in the hadeeth of ‘Aa’ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her), which is quoted in the answer to question no. 45841, q.v.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked about the story of the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): it is mentioned in some books of history that the Angel of Death came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in the form of a Bedouin and asked for permission to enter upon him. How true is this?

He (may Allaah have mercy on him) replied:

This is not correct. The Angel of Death did not come to him or ask permission to enter upon him, rather the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) delivered a speech at the end of his life in which he said: “Allaah has given a slave the choice between immortality in this world for as long as Allaah wills, or meeting his Lord, and he has chosen to meet his Lord.” This is what he said at the end of his life. Abu Bakr wept, and the people were surprised that Abu Bakr wept at these words. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was the one who was given the choice, and Abu Bakr knew the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) better than any of the people. This is what has been narrated. As for the idea that the Angel of Death came to him and asked him for permission, this is not correct. End quote from Liqa’ al-Baab il-Maftooh (2/340)

Anyone who wants to read more saheeh ahaadeeth about the story of the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) may refer to the book al-Bidaayah wa’l-Nihaayah by Ibn Katheer (5/248), the chapter of the last days and death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of

Allaah be upon him); and Saheeh al-Seerah al-Nabawiyyah by Ibraheem al-'Ali, chapter 6: The illness and death of the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

And Allaah knows best.