

112131 - The hadith about the blind man and his seeking for his need to be met by virtue of the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)

the question

There is a hadith which says that a blind man came to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah, pray to Allah to give me sight. He said: "Go and do wudoo', then pray two rak'ahs, then say: 'O Allah, I ask of You and I turn to you by virtue of our Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), the Prophet of mercy. O Muhammad, I have turned by virtue of you to my Lord so that He might fulfil my need.'" How sound is this hadith, and what does it mean?

Detailed answer

The scholars differed concerning the soundness of this hadith. Some of them said that it is da'eef and others said that it is hasan, but it is to be interpreted in a manner other than what may first come to the reader's mind. The meaning of this hadith is that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) instructed this blind man to do wudoo' and pray two rak'ahs so that he would be sincere in seeking the intercession of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) for him, and so that his wudoo' and prayer would be indicative of his desire to draw closer to Allah by virtue of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and to turn to Allah (to meet his need), may He be glorified and exalted, by virtue of him. Hence if his intention was sincere and sound, and his resolve was strong, then the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would intercede for him with Allah, may He be glorified and exalted; in other words, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would offer supplication for him, because du'aa' (supplication) is a kind of intercession. This is proven in the saheeh hadith in which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "There is no Muslim man who dies, and forty men who do not associate anything with Allah offer the funeral prayer for him but Allah will accept their intercession for him."

So what this hadith means is that this blind man asked the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to pray to Allah for him, because this du'aa' would be a kind of intercession. But now, after the death of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), such a thing is not possible; it is not possible for the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to pray for anyone after his death. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "When a person dies, all his good deeds come to an end except three: ongoing charity (sadaqah jaariyah), beneficial knowledge or a righteous son who will pray for him." Du'aa' (supplication) is undoubtedly one of the deeds that come to an end when a person dies. Indeed, du'aa' is an act of worship, as Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And your Lord said: "Invoke Me, (i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islamic Monotheism)) (and ask Me for anything) I will respond to your (invocation)." [Ghaafir 40:60].

Hence at times of hardship and need, the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them) did not resort to asking the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to pray to Allah for them; rather, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab said, when there was a drought and no rain fell: O Allah, we used to seek to have our needs met by You, by virtue of our Prophet, and You would grant us rain; now we seek to to have our needs met by You, by virtue of the paternal uncle of our Prophet, so grant us rain. And they were granted rain. And he asked al-'Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him) to call upon Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, to grant them rain; he did so and they were granted rain. This indicates that it is not possible to ask the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), after his death, to pray for anyone, as that is not possible because his deeds came to an end with his death. Because it is not possible for anyone to ask the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to pray for him after the death of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), it is more apt to say that it is not possible for anyone to call upon the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) himself to ask him to meet his needs. This comes under the heading of major shirk which Allah does not forgive, and He has forbidden Paradise to anyone who does such a thing. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And invoke not besides Allah, any that will neither profit you, nor hurt you, but if (in case) you did so, you shall certainly be one of the Zalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers)” [Yoonus 10:106]

“So invoke not with Allah another ilah (god) lest you be among those who receive punishment” [ash-Shu‘ara’ 26:213]

“And whoever invokes (or worships), besides Allah, any other ilah (god), of whom he has no proof, then his reckoning is only with his Lord. Surely! Al-Kafiroon (the disbelievers in Allah and in the Oneness of Allah, polytheists, pagans, idolaters, etc.) will not be successful” [al-Mu‘minoan 23:117]

“Surely, they have disbelieved who say: "Allah is the Messiah (Iesa (Jesus)), son of Maryam (Mary)." But the Messiah (Iesa (Jesus)) said: "O Children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord." Verily, whosoever sets up partners in worship with Allah, then Allah has forbidden Paradise for him, and the Fire will be his abode. And for the Zalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers) there are no helpers” [al-Maa’idah 5:72].

The point is that whoever calls upon the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) after his death, or anyone else among the dead, asking him to ward off harm or bring some benefit is a mushrik in the sense of major shirk (associating someone else with Allah) that puts one beyond the pale of Islam; he must repent to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and direct his du‘aa’ only to the Most High, the Almighty, Who responds to the distressed one, when he calls Him, and Who removes the evil. (cf. an-Naml 27:62).

I am astounded by people who go to the grave of so and so and call upon him to relieve their distress and bring them good things, when they know that when this man was alive he could not do that, so how can he do it after his death, and after he has become a corpse and maybe even dust, having being consumed by the earth. They go and call upon him and they fail to call upon Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, Who is the only One who wards

off harm and brings benefits and good, even though Allah, may He be exalted, has commanded them and urged them to do that, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And your Lord said: “Invoke Me, (i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islamic Monotheism)) (and ask Me for anything) I will respond to your (invocation).” [Ghaafir 40:60]

“And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor). So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright” [al-Baqarah 2:186].

And Allah, may He be exalted, says, denouncing those who call upon anyone other than Him (interpretation of the meaning):

“Is not He (better than your gods) Who responds to the distressed one, when he calls Him, and Who removes the evil, and makes you inheritors of the earth, generations after generations. Is there any ilah (god) with Allah?” [an-Naml 27:62].

I ask Allah, may He be exalted, to guide us all to His straight path.”(Majmoo’ Fatawa wa Rasdaa’il ash-Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen, 2/274)

The hadith does not indicate that it is permissible to seek to have one’s needs met by virtue of the status of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), as some people suggest; rather the hadith indicates that this man sought to have his needs met by virtue of the supplication of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) when he said: “O Allah, I ask of You and I turn to you by virtue of our Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him),” that is, by virtue of the supplication of our Prophet Muhammad, and when he said “O Muhammad, I have turned by virtue of you to my Lord”, i.e., by virtue of your supplication.

This is indicated by the following:

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this man came to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and asked him to offer supplication for him; if what he wanted was to have his need met by virtue of the status of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), he would have stayed at home and said: O Allah, I ask to have my need met and I ask of You by virtue of the status of Muhammad.

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Among the supplication that the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) taught him was to say: “O Allah, accept his intercession for me and accept my intercession for him,” i.e., accept the intercession of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) for me, and intercession is a kind of supplication. Thus it implies that the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) offered supplication for him.

The words “And accept my intercession for him” mean: accept my supplication asking You to accept his supplication.

Al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Kitab at-Tawassul (73, 74):

One of the things that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) taught the blind man was: to say “and accept my intercession for him” i.e., accept my supplication asking You to accept his (the Prophet’s) intercession, i.e., his supplication to restore my sight. Nothing other than this can be understood from this sentence.

Hence you see those who ignore this part of the hadith ignoring it and not paying any attention to it whatsoever, because it would pull the rug out from under their feet and destroy all their arguments. If they hear it, you will see them looking at you like one who is in extreme distress. That is because the intercession of the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) for the blind man is something understandable, but as for the intercession of the blind man for the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), how can that be? They have no answer for that at all. Another thing which highlights their feeling that this sentence invalidates their misinterpretations is that you

never see one of them using it and saying in his supplication: O Allah, accept the intercession of Your Prophet for me and accept my intercession for him.

End quote.

For a detailed discussion on this hadith, please see at-Tawassul, p. 68-92

And Allah knows best.