

Do the Deceased Benefit from Those Who are Alive?

هل ينتفع الميت بعمل غيره من الأحياء؟

{English- إنجليزي}

2010 - 1431

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This research is the summary of a series of lectures delivered at the Imam University/Faculty of Shari'ah. They deal with important issues and aspects of Aqeedah

Imam at-Tahawi, may Allah have mercy on him, said in his great book: '*Aqeedah at-Tahawiyah*': **The deceased would benefit from the Du'aa of the deceased and from their Sadaqah.** Is this statement correct? We will clarify this as we progress in this research.

First Issue: Does the reward of deeds (in general, regardless of their type) reach the dead person or not?

Ahlu Sunnah wal-Jama'ah did not disagree with one another in this issue; rather those who disagreed with this are the people of Bid'ah (innovation).

Sheik Islam b. Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, clarified this saying:

'The scholars of Islam are agreed that the deceased would benefit from the Du'aa which is made for him, and the deeds which are done on his behalf. This is known from the *Deen* by necessity...and the proof of this is in the Qur'an, Sunnah and Ijmaa (consensus of the scholars)...whoever differs regarding this is from the people of Bid'ah...'

Proofs from the Qur'an:

1. The Angels supplicate for the believers that Allah forgive them and save them from the Hell-Fire. Allah says concerning this:

"Those angels who bear the Throne of Allah and those around it glorify the praises of their Rubb, and believe in Him, and ask forgiveness for those who believe in the Oneness of Allah saying: 'Our *Rubb!* You comprehend all things in mercy and knowledge, so forgive those who repent and follow Your way, and save them from the torment of the blazing Fire."

(Surah Ghafir 7)

2. The Messengers sought forgiveness for the believers. Allah says:

'Seek forgiveness for your sin, and seek forgiveness for the believers (male and female).

(Surah Ghafir 7)

Proofs from the Sunnah:

1. Muslims perform Jinaazah (funeral) prayer for the deceased and supplicate Allah for him in it.

2. A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said that a man approached the Prophet (may Allah exalt his mention) and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, my mother passed away, and she left no Wa'siyah (bequeathment)...and were she to do so, I think she would have given something out in Sadaqah (charity). Would she receive a reward if I give Sadaqah out on her behalf? He said: 'Yes.'(authentic)

3. The Prophet (may Allah exalt his mention) said: 'He who dies, while not completing the fast, his guardian would fast on his behalf.'

Proofs of the People of *Bid'ah* & the refutation of these proofs:

The people of Bid'ah -as we have stated above- say that the dead person would not benefit from any deed...they use as proof:

Allah says: 'And man can have nothing but what he does (good or bad).'

(Surah an-Najm #39).

Refutation:

First of all we say that this opinion is not correct. It is rejected by the Qur'an, Sunnah and Ijmaa (consensus of the scholars). Ahlus-Sunnah answered this proof in a number of ways, some of these 'answers' are considered weak, while others are strong:

1. They said that the 'man' referred to in the ayat was a Kaafir (unbeliever) or it referred to the living...therefore it would not involve the Muslim or the deceased. In any case this is a weak answer.

2. The strongest answer to this proof is the answer of Sheik Islam b. Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him. He said:

'The Qur'an has not negated the fact that the person would benefit from the deeds of others, rather it only negated the fact that the person would own these deeds (i.e. that these deeds would belong to him exclusively), and there is a difference between these two issues. ...'

Second Issue: Now that we have affirmed that the deceased would benefit from the deeds of the living...would the deceased benefit from every deed or from some of them?

This Khilaaf (difference) is present amongst Ahlus-Sunnah.

Important Note: Although Ahlus-Sunnah differed amongst themselves in this issue, none of them stated that the other (i.e. who held a different opinion) was not part of Ahlus-Sunnah due to this difference. A Muslim should not 'jump the gun' and throw around titles such as: 'Mubtadi' and 'Faasiq'.

Important note: Keep in mind that we are not talking about the case in which it is compulsory upon the person to fast, and he dies while not being able to complete the fast or prayer; rather, we are talking about the case where a person gives the reward of his deed to the deceased.

What the Scholars agreed upon and differed over:

The scholars agreed that it is lawful to give the reward of acts of worship such as Sadaqah (Zakat and other like acts of worship which deal with money) or acts of worship which combine money and physical actions to the deceased. However, they differed concerning pure acts of worship (such as Salah, and recitation of Qur'an).

The most correct opinion: Sheik Islam b. Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, said: 'The authentic proofs point out that one should fast on behalf of the deceased if he vowed to fast, and the Prophet, may Allah exalt his mention equated it with paying off the debt. As for the Hajj it is lawful to give its reward to the deceased and there is only an odd difference of opinion in this case.'