
Ruling on the deceased children of the Mushriks

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: A questioner from Riyadh asks: What is the ruling on a child who, being born to two disbelieving parents, dies before reaching the age of Taklif (meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for actions)? Is the child a Muslim in the Sight of Allaah, knowing that the Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)¹ said: **Every child is born on Fitrah (divinely bestowed natural disposition of Islaam)?²**

If the child is a Muslim, should the Muslims wash the dead body and perform the Funeral Prayer over the child? Please enlighten us. May Allaah reward you.

Shaykh Bin Baaz (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ)³: If a child of two disbelieving parents dies before reaching the age of Taklif, they fall under the same the rulings applied to them in the worldly life, and consequently, the corpse is not washed. Moreover, they are neither entitled to a Funeral Prayer nor to be buried in the Muslims' graveyards. Yet, in the Hereafter, the judgment concerning them rests with Allaah (سُبْحَانَهُ)⁴. It was authentically reported that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), when asked about the children of the Mushriks (those who associate others with Allaah in His Divinity or worship), said: **Allaah knows what sort of deeds they would have done.⁵** Some religious scholars viewed that the Knowledge of Allaah (سُبْحَانَهُ) about them is manifested on the Day of Resurrection, and that they will be tested in the way of Ahl-ul-Fatrah (people having no access to Divine Messages). Thus, if they obediently submit to what they are asked, they will enter Paradise; but if they disobey, they will enter the Fire. Hadeeths from the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) about testing Ahl-ul-Fatrah on the Day of Resurrection were proven authentic. This also applies to those who receive the same religious ruling, such as the children of the disbelievers.

¹ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him

² Saheeh al-Bukhaaree, Saheeh Muslim, Sunan at-Tirmidhee, Sunan Aboo Daawood, Musnad Ahmad and Al-Muwatta Maalik

³ (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him

⁴ (سُبْحَانَهُ) (Subhanahu) Exalted be He

⁵ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree, Saheeh Muslim, Sunan an-Nasaa'ee, Sunan Aboo Daawood, Musnad Ahmad

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Allaah (عزوجل) says: **[And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning).]**⁶ This is the most correct opinion regarding Ahl-ul-Fatrah and those like them to whom Da`wah (calling to Islaam) has not reached in an uncorrupted manner. This opinion was also maintained by the Shaykh of Islaam Ibn Taymeeyah, his student Ibn al-Qayyim, and a group of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) and the Khalaf (the succeeding generations), may Allaah be merciful with them all. Scholar Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمته الله) extensively elaborated on the religious ruling regarding the children of the disbelievers and Ahl-ul-Fatrah at the close of his book, Tareeq-ul-Hijratayn [The Path of the Two Hijrahs], under the title, Tabaqat al-Mukallafeen [Levels of the Mukallafs].

⁶ سورة الإسراء – Soorah al-Israa [17:15]