
Taking children to the mosque

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(Al-Hudaa wan-Noor, 668.)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

Questioner: O Shaykh of ours, if you would ... sometimes, maybe a small [child] who has not reached an age where he can differentiate [between right and wrong], asks to go to the mosque to pray, what is the ruling? Does the father allow him since he has not reached the age where he can yet differentiate? [Does] he allow him to pray, to go to the mosque with him?

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ)¹: I thought you were going to ask [whether] it's allowed for the father to take him without him having asked.

Questioner: No, in my opinion he doesn't take him with him since he hasn't turned seven yet ...

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): I thought you were saying: is it allowed for the father to take his son to the mosque without the son having asked to go. What do you think, is it allowed or not?

Questioner: In order to pray or just to go to the mosque?

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): [Choose] whichever one you like.

Questioner: ... if it's to pray ... something else ...

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): Isn't him going to the mosque to pray more fitting than anything else?

Questioner: [If he's] less than seven ...

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): This is what we're discussing.

Questioner: Yes.

¹ (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him

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Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَجَمَهُ اللهُ): You know, O Ustaadh, that the early Salaf, at the head of whom was our Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)², used to allow their children to enter his mosque (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

And you'll remember the story which one of the Companions narrated, [in which he stated] that one day he was praying 'Asr behind the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), and the Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) prolonged the prostration during some of it, prolonging it to an extent which was not customary, so this Companion raises his head to make sure his Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is okay, he feared that he may have passed away—when to his surprise he sees a strange sight, he sees him in prostration, and al-Hasan and al-Hussain ... so the Companion feels at ease [that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is okay] and falls back into prostration.

After he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) gave salaam to end the prayer, they said to him, 'O Messenger of Allaah! You prostrated in the prayer and prolonged it ...' so he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, '**My son was riding on my back and I did not want to disturb him ...**' this boy went to the mosque for the prayer, he was, as you said, not at an age where he was able to differentiate—reminding those who pray, whether men or women, not to bring their children with them to the mosque, was not part of his (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) guidance.

In fact, he used to endorse them doing that in opposition to the well-known hadeeth whose chain of narration is not authentic, 'Keep your infants, your insane, your evil ones and your buying and selling away from your mosques ...', even though the last part of the hadeeth is authentic, proven to be so by other authentic hadeeths, as is not hidden from you, in'sha'allaaah.

The point being, he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) never used to prevent them [from bringing their children to the mosque], in fact, he used to endorse it, in fact, he had a ruling specific to it: [where] he took into consideration the feelings of the mothers who used to pray behind him in Salaah, and whose children were crying, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) [even] while he was calling upon his Lord, would take note of the fact that there was a woman praying who had her child with her, and so, '**I stand in prayer, then I hear a child crying, so I make my prayer brief because I do not want to cause hardship for his mother.**'

Thus, he would shorten the lengthy recitation, which was a habit of his (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), in order to free up a mother for her child. He (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) could have done the same as many of the ignorant Imaams do and have said, 'Why do you bring your children to the mosque, disturbing us?' and so on—he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) did nothing of the sort.

So based upon this, it's more fitting that a child, if he were raised with an Islaamic upbringing, and then longs to go to the mosque, even if it were [just] to play, even if it were

² (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him

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[just] to play, if he asks to go with his father to the mosque then the father should fulfil his request, since it will get him used to going to the best of all places, [the place] about which the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was asked [the following question]: ‘What is the best of all places and the worst?’ and so he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) answered, **‘The best of all places are the mosques, and the worst are the markets.’**

So if a child was raised like that, and then wants to go to the mosque instead of the streets or alleys, then this is a blessing and very pleasing news.

So the father, in fact, the mother, should take advantage of this phenomenon and facilitate the way for him to go to the mosque. Thereafter if he, and there is no doubt that this will happen, does something while playing or having fun which is not becoming in the mosque—and what play do you want which is greater than the Chief of Mankind (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) being taken as something to [climb and] ride on [as al-Hasan and al-Hussain did]—and even then he didn’t rebuke him, in fact he carried out a ruling specific to it [i.e., he prolonged the prostration], just like he had there [in that other instance I mentioned, when he shortened the prayer upon hearing a child cry, out of concern for the mother].

If this were done today there would be shouting from all corners of the mosques, ‘You made the prayer too long for us, O Shaykh ... the boy, why did you bring the boy [to the mosque]?’

They don’t know the guidance of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), they don’t know his kindness and compassion for his Ummah, and Allaah spoke the truth when He said, **[‘... for the believers [he is] full of pity, kind, and merciful.’]**³

³ سورة التوبة – Soorah at-Tawbah [9:128]