
Giving the adhaan in the ear of a newborn child

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Questioner: Our Shaykh, the question is: is the hadeeth about giving the adhaan in the ear of a newborn child established? I heard that it's da'eef, should we act on it?

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ)¹: No.

Questioner: What do you advise us to do?

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ): My advice: [and] this is a clarification for the people, I used to hold that the adhaan in the ear of a newborn child was legislated, aware of the fact that the hadeeth which states that it is a Sunnah to do so in the ear of a newborn child was reported in Sunan at-Tirmidhee with a weak chain of narration, but I follow the path of strengthening weak hadeeths with supporting narrations.

I had found a supporting narration for this hadeeth in Ibn al-Qayyim's book well-known as, 'Tuhfatul-Mawdood bi-Ahkaam al-Mawlood,' where he had ascribed this supporting narration to al-Baihaqi's Shu'ab al-Eemaan, and even though he had stated that its chain of narration was weak, I regarded this statement of his to mean that the chain of narration was not severely weak [but just weak]. Based upon that, I considered it to be a supporting narration for the hadeeth of at-Tirmidhee which is from the narrations of Aboo Raafi'.

In those days Shu'ab al-Eemaan was not available, not in manuscript form or as a printed book, [and] as many of you know despite my presence in the Dhaahiriyyah Library which has thousands of hadeeth manuscripts, this book, Shu'ab al-Eemaan of al-Haafidh al-Baihaqee, was not present in it, in fact it was not present in most of the world's libraries.

Nowadays it has been published and added to the Islaamic libraries, it is an extremely valuable book which has many hadeeths which are not found in the six books [of hadeeth] or, in fact, others too. From these hadeeths is the one which I had relied upon Ibn al-Qayyim about, in terms of it being a supporting narration for Aboo Raafi's hadeeth in Sunan at-Tirmidhee.

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

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[When I read it] all of a sudden [I found that] Imaam al-Baihaqee reported this [supporting] hadeeth in his book Shu'ab with a chain of narration which had two narrators accused of being liars—so at that point it became clear to me that Ibn al-Qayyim (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ), was lax/lenient when he stated that the hadeeth's chain of narration was only weak—what is correct is that it is very weak.

In this situation it is not allowed for someone who works in the science of hadeeth to take something which is very weak as a supporting narration for something which is not very weak.

At that point I had no choice but to retract the declaration that the hadeeth of Aboo Raafi' found in Sunan at-Tirmidhee was strengthened by the hadeeth in Shu'ab al-Eemaan, due to it being severely weak, so [the end result is that] Aboo Raafi's hadeeth stayed weak.

And I, according to what Allaah has guided me towards in terms of the impermissibility of acting on a weak hadeeth, went back to the stance that: so long as the chain of narration of Aboo Raafi's hadeeth is weak and its supporting narration is even weaker than it, then [the end result is that] the weak hadeeth stays weak as it is, and I retracted my previous stance of the adhaan in the ear of a newborn child being a Sunnah or something legislated.

This is the answer to the question.²

² Al-Hudaa wan-Noor, 562.