

128686 - Whoever Sets a Bad Precedent Will Bear the Burden of Sin of Those Who Do it Until the Day of Resurrection

the question

If a person dies, and leaves behind bad deeds and bad things, will these bad things accumulate? Meaning if there was a father who set a bad example for his children, and his children grow up following in their father's footsteps, will this father bear the burden of his children's sins?

Detailed answer

If a person dies having done actions that were contrary to Islam, and others such as children, friends, neighbours and so on followed his example, then he bears the burden (of sin) of what he did and the burden of those who did the same, following his example, without that detracting from their burden of sin in the slightest. Muslim (1017) narrated that Jareer ibn 'Abd-Allah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever sets a good precedent in Islam will have the reward for that and the reward of those who do it after him, without that detracting from their reward in the slightest. And whoever sets a bad precedent in Islam will bear the burden of sin for that, and the burden of those who do it after him, without that detracting from their burden in the slightest."

Ibn 'Allaan said:

"Whoever sets a bad precedent in Islam" means sin, even if it is small, if he does it and his example is followed, or if he promotes it or helps others to commit it. "Will bear the burden of sin for that", means, for having done it. "And the burden of those who do it after him, without that detracting from their burden in the slightest." End quote.

Daleel al-Faaliheen, 2/136

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen said:

This is a warning against setting a bad precedent, and shows us that whoever sets a bad precedent will bear the burden of sin for that and the burden of those who do it, until the Day of Resurrection, even if it was on a small scale at first, then it became more widespread; he will bear the burden of its spreading. For example, if one person granted a concession to one other person with regard to something permissible that became a clear means leading to something impermissible or close to it, if that became widespread because of the fatwa given to people, then the burden will be upon him as will the burden of those who did it until the Day of Resurrection. End quote.

Sharh Riyaadh al-Saaliheen, p. 199

It was narrated that Ibn Mas'ood (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "No soul is killed unlawfully, but there is a share of the sin on the first son of Adam, because he was the first one to set the precedent of killing."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (3336) and Muslim (1677).

Al-Nawawi said:

This hadeeth represents one of the basic principles of Islam, which is that anyone who introduces any kind of evil will bear the burden of sin of everyone who follows his example in doing that until the Day of Resurrection. End quote.

So the father who gives his children a bad upbringing and is a bad example for them, and they follow him in his deviant conduct, will bear the burden of his children's sin, because he was the cause of their deviating; the children will also bear the burden of their own actions in full and nothing will be detracted from it.

What this father should have done was to give his children a good upbringing and fulfil the responsibility that Allah placed upon his shoulders in the best manner.

The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock. ... A man is the shepherd of his household

and is responsible for his flock.”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (7138) and Muslim (1829)

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said:

The man is the shepherd of the members of his household, his wife, his son, his daughter, his sister, his paternal aunt and his maternal aunt. He is the shepherd of members of his household and he is responsible for his flock; he must take the best possible care of them because he is responsible for them. End quote.

Sharh Riyadh al-Saaliheen, p. 337

And Allah knows best.