31200 - What is al-waneesah

the question

What is al-waneesah? What is the ruling on it and what is the reward for it?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

When we were asked about al-waneesah we were told that it means staying overnight at the grave on the first night after the burial, to give comfort to the deceased, as they claim. This is a kind of reprehensible innovation (bid’ah) which has no basis in the actions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or of his companions. If it were something good they would have done it before us. Because no such thing has been narrated to us from them, even though so many people died during their lifetime, it may be understood that there is nothing good in this practice.

The basic principle concerning acts of worship is to follow only that which is narrated in the Qur’aan and Sunnah, and not to introduce new and innovated forms of worship. Allaah can only be worshipped in the manner that He has prescribed in His Book or on the lips of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

There is no reward for doing acts of bid’ah, rather they will be rejected and thrown back at the one who does them, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever innovates something in this matter of ours [Islam] that is not part of it, will have it rejected.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 2697; Muslim, 1718).

It is also misguidance, as he said: “The worst of matters are those which are newly-innovated. Every innovation is a going astray.” Narrated by Muslim, 867. Al-Nasaa’i (1578) added: “And every going astray will be in the Fire.”

There is the fear that fitnah (trials, afflictions) will befall the person who practices this innovation, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And let those who oppose the Messenger’s (Muhammad’s) commandment (i.e. his Sunnah legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statements) (among the sects) beware, lest some Fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant) should befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them”

[al-Noor 24:63]

Ibn Katheer (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in his commentary: “Let those who go against the command of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), which is his way, his path, his Sunnah and his sharee’ah, beware, Words and deeds will be weighed against his words and deeds; whatever is in accordance with them will be accepted, and whatever goes against them will be rejected and thrown back at the one who says or does them, no matter who he is, as it was proven in al-Saheehayn and elsewhere that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘Whoever does an action that is not part of this matter of ours [Islam] will have it rejected.’ And let the one who goes against the sharee’ah of the Messenger whether inwardly or outwardly beware ‘lest some Fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, etc) should befall them’ i.e., lest their hearts be afflicted with kufr, hypocrisy or bid’ah, ‘or a painful torment be inflicted on them’ i.e., in this world by means of killing, a hadd punishment, imprisonment and the like.”

The deceased does not need any of the living to comfort him, because he is preoccupied with his own reckoning and being rewarded or punished for his deeds, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) explained in the lengthy hadeeth of al-Baraa’ ibn ‘Aazib:

“When the believing slave is about to depart this world and enter the Hereafter, there come down to him from heaven angels with white faces like the sun, and they sit around him as far as the eye can see. They bring with them shrouds from Paradise and perfumes from Paradise. Then the Angel of Death comes and sits by his head, and he says, ‘O good soul, come forth to forgiveness from

Allaah and His pleasure.’ Then it comes out easily like a drop of water from the mouth of a waterskin. When he seizes it, they do not leave it in his hand for an instant before they take it and put it in that shroud with that perfume, and there comes from it a fragrance like the finest musk on the face of the earth. Then they ascend and they do not pass by any group of angels but they say, ‘Who is this good soul?’ and they say, ‘It is So and so the son of So and so, calling him by the best names by which he was known in this world, until they reach the lowest heaven. They ask for it to be opened to them and it is opened, and (the soul) is welcomed and accompanied to the next heaven by those who are closest to Allaah, until they reach the seventh heaven. Then Allaah says: ‘Record the book of My slave in ‘Illiyoon in the seventh heaven, and return him to the earth, for from it I created them, to it I will return them and from it I will bring them forth once again.’ So his soul is returned to his body and there come to him two angels who make him sit up and they say to him, ‘Who is your Lord?’ He says, ‘Allaah.’ They say, ‘What is your religion?’ He says, ‘My religion is Islam.’ They say, ‘Who is this man who was sent among you?’ He says, ‘He is the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).’ They say, ‘What did you do?’ He says, ‘I read the Book of Allaah and I believed in it.’ Then a voice calls out from heaven, ‘My slave has spoken the truth, so prepare for him a bed from Paradise and clothe him from Paradise, and open for him a gate to Paradise.’ Then there comes to him some of its fragrance, and his grave is made wide, as far as he can see. Then there comes to him a man with a handsome face and handsome clothes, and a good fragrance, who says, ‘Receive the glad tidings that will bring you joy this day.’ He says, ‘Who are you? Your face is a face which brings glad tidings.’ He says, ‘I am your righteous deeds.’ He says, ‘O Lord, hasten the Hour so that I may return to my family and my wealth.’”

And he said:

“But when the disbelieving slave is about to depart this world and enter the Hereafter, there come down to him from heaven angels with black faces, bringing sackcloth, and they sit around him as far as the eye can see. Then the Angel of Death comes and sits by his head, and he says, ‘O evil soul, come forth to the wrath of Allaah and His anger.’ Then his soul disperses inside his body, then comes out cutting the veins and nerves, like a skewer passing through wet wool. When he

seizes it, they do not leave it in his hand for an instant before they take it and put it in that sackcloth, and there comes from it a stench like the foulest stench of a dead body on the face of the earth. Then they ascend and they do not pass by any group of angels but they say, ‘Who is this evil soul?’ and they say, ‘It is So and so the son of So and so, calling him by the worst names by which he was known in this world, until they reach the lowest heaven. They ask for it to be opened to them and it is not opened.” Then the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) recited (interpretation of the meaning):

“for them the gates of heaven will not be opened, and they will not enter Paradise until the camel goes through the eye of the needle”

[al-A’raaf 7:40]

He said: “Then Allaah says, ‘Record the book of My slave in Sijjeen in the lowest earth, and return him to the earth, for from it I created them, to it I will return them and from it I will bring them forth once again.’ So his soul is cast down.” Then the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) recited the verse (interpretation of the meaning):

“and whoever assigns partners to Allaah, it is as if he had fallen from the sky, and the birds had snatched him, or the wind had thrown him to a far off place”

[al-Hajj 22:31]

He said: “Then his soul is returned to his body, and there come to him two angels who make him sit up and they say to him, ‘Who is your Lord?’ He says, ‘Oh, oh, I don’t know.’ They say, ‘What is your religion?’ He says, ‘Oh, oh, I don’t know.’ Then a voice calls out from heaven, ‘Prepare for him a bed from Hell and clothe him from Hell, and open for him a gate to Hell.’ Then there comes to him some of its heat and hot winds, and his grave is constricted and compresses him until his ribs interlock. Then there comes to him a man with an ugly face and ugly clothes, and a foul stench, who says, ‘Receive the bad news, this is the day that you were promised.’ He says, ‘Who are you? Your face is a face which forebodes evil.’ He says, ‘I am your evil deeds.’ He says, ‘O Lord, do not let the Hour come.’”

Narrated by Ahmad, 18557; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami', no. 1676

And Allaah knows best.