

Should A Child Repeat Salah When He Reaches The Age Of Puberty (Being Baligh)?

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(Dawateislami)

Question

What do the scholars of Islam say regarding the following matter: After offering the Fard (Obligatory) Salah in congregation, a child reached puberty within that same time. Does he have to repeat the Salah or not? Please explain.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

The Salah offered by a non-Baligh (prepubescent) child before reaching the age of puberty (being Baligh) is considered Nafl even if it is prayed with the intention of Fard. This is because the Fard and Wajib acts are only binding upon legally responsible individuals, whereas the one who has not reached the age of puberty is not subject to the laws of Shari'ah. Therefore, the Salah which was already offered is Nafl. If he reached puberty within the time and there was enough time for him to proclaim the Takbeer-e-Tahrimah (opening Takbeer), the Salah of that time will become Fard upon him. If he did not offer it again within that time, it is Fard for him to make it up, and if he delayed it without a valid reason, then he will also make repentance (Taubah). This is the answer to the above question.

In relation to this, there is a very beautiful story which can be found in the life of Imam Muhammad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ. When he was fourteen years old, he presented himself before Imam Abu Hanifah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ and asked: if a non-Baligh (prepubescent) boy prayed the Isha Salah and then fell asleep, and in that very night, before the dawning of Fajr time, he reached the age of puberty (i.e. he became Baligh), will he have to repeat the Salah or not? Imam Abu Hanifah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ replied: He will repeat it. At that very moment, Imam Muhammad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ stood up and immediately offered his Salah (even at such a young age, he was habitual in offering Salah, and he was so concerned about Salah that upon reaching the age of puberty, he did not wish for even one Salah to be missed. After enquiring about the ruling, he immediately offered the Fard Salah so that he can save himself from sin). From the aforementioned incident, it can be observed that how in the previous eras, children were raised with Islamic values. Alas, the Muslim parents of today are becoming heedless of their children's Islamic upbringing, due to which, our upcoming generations are unaware of the fundamentals of the religion. The lesson to be learnt from the abovementioned story is that children should be taught the basics of the religion and should be in a habit of performing Salah etc. from a young age so that when they reach the age of puberty (being Baligh), and Salah and fasting etc. become Fard upon them, they can fulfil their responsibilities according to the correct method, in accordance with the appropriate Islamic rulings, and so that they are not sinful for leaving their Fard and Wajib duties.

Warning: Although Salah is not Fard upon a non-Baligh (prepubescent child), the parents should still put them in a habit of performing it by teaching them the method of Salah and encouraging them to perform Salah when they reach an age of discernment. When they reach the age of seven, they should definitely be taught the method of Wudu and Salah, and they should be taught to maintain it. Then, when the child reaches the age of ten, the parents should instruct them to perform Salah with even more emphasis, using appropriate discipline if required.

وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَرَسُوْلُهُ اَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّمَ

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