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# JOURNEY TO ETERNITY

-Death / the Grave / the Last Day and the Afterlife-

Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ

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## FOREWORD

Endless praise and thanks be to our Lord who created us, His humble servants, out of nothing and as human beings, the most honourable among His creation, and who granted us guidance through the Books and the Prophets and Messengers He has sent.

Endless salutations and of peace and blessings be upon the pride of creation, the master of the Prophets, the mercy to all the worlds, our greatest guide in this world, Muhammad, and upon his noble family and distinguished companions.

Human beings, by virtue of their creation, are forever disposed to truth and goodness. For this reason, they are unwilling to accept something without questioning it and are constantly curious in pursuit of the truth. The mysterious things they do not or cannot know agitate their spirit and grieve them.

The greatest concern occupying human beings throughout history has been the mystery surrounding death and the afterlife.

Indeed, human beings, whatever their way of life, share a common dilemma in the unescapable reality of death. The certainty that all the paths of life have an eventual disappearance on the horizon of death causes the human being deep anguish. The reality of death, which looms over everyone, is without exception the most difficult thing to befall every living creature in this world. For this reason, knowing the nature of death and what awaits beyond it, is one of the most beneficial and liberating of things.

Life is a gift too great to be confined to the lifespan between the cradle and the grave. Unravelling the tangle of death and what is beyond it, cannot be achieved with the limited capacity of human reason alone, and necessitates overthrowing the obsession of the lower animal self and lend-



ing an ear to the voice of the divinely revealed Qur'an. Perfect realisation of this is possible only through adorning oneself with love of the divine and inhaling the spiritual breezes of the Prophets and the friends of God that are their true inheritors.

Attempts have been made in every era by those deprived of the guidance of revelation, through their various falsehoods, to silence, suppress or imprison to the subconscious, the questions relating to death and beyond. These questions if not solved are akin to a poisonous serpent in the mind unsettling the human being at every stir.

Undoubtedly, this is when the lower self and its desire tries to cover up and avoid the spiritual weight of those truths, which it does not want to face up to. But no truth can be avoided by evasion or wilful ignorance.

Neither limited human knowledge blurred with ignorance nor philosophies ridden with baseless ideas can possibly acquaint the human being with the truth of death and beyond. The darkness of death cannot be illuminated with such 'short range' lighting.

Attempting to wander in the valley of death and the Next Life with faulty knowledge and the selfish concerns of a fallible mind lacking any divinely revealed knowledge utterly jeopardises the eternal life. Human knowledge and logic concerning the eternal journey that is deprived of a grounding in divine knowledge, constitutes useless capital doomed to melt and fade into the shadow of the coffin and the darkness of the grave.

Whoever is indifferent to divine and prophetic commandments has only deceived themselves and become distracted by empty consolations in order to fill the void in their soul. Such people cannot escape being caught unprepared for death, taken unawares by the angel of death and encountering what lies ahead in the eternal abode, despite all their unwillingness and denial. A life of forgetfulness spent without any concern for the Next World is a delusion no different to perceiving the daytime in complete oblivion of night.

Imam Rabbani says:

“Death is not a calamity. The real calamity is ignorance of what will come to pass after death.”

As stated in a Qur'anic verse:

“Say: ‘Are they the same - those who know and those who do not know?’” (Az-Zumar, 39:9)

The one who knows possesses a concern for the Next Life.

The one who knows, obeys the commandments of Allah Almighty.

The one who knows, spends the night in worship, again out of such a concern, prostrating and standing before His Lord.

The one who knows, holds fast to worship and obedience, hoping for the mercy of his Lord.

The one who knows, acts with sound judgement and takes lessons and warnings from their Lord’s account of the Next World.

The only beacon of truth illuminating our path in the journey to death and beyond is a contemplation and consciousness that is grounded in the Majestic Qur’an. Given that there is no event greater than death, the full gravity and profundity of the descriptions about it need to be comprehended. And so, the Qur’an makes mention of the Next World, as was the case, unanimously, in all previous divine revelations, as the “tremendous news”<sup>1</sup> (*Naba al-’Adhim*) and has been explained with various proofs – intellectual, emotional and moral.

Those who incline to the call of the Qur’an, perceiving its awesome account of the Next Life are freed from the deception of this world and its traps. Waking up from the slumber of heedlessness and illusions, they endeavour to strive for the Next World as their final abode.

This is precisely the purpose of the creation of mankind and the blessings of this worldly life. In other words, Allah Almighty wants the best for His slaves - to lead lives rich with the spiritual blessings and the tranquillity of the Qur’anic and prophetic truth and to obtain endless eternal happiness.

Let us not forget that life is a limited blessing granted to us only once, in order for us to use it for earning the great success of never ending bliss in the Next World. Our worldly trial is a one-off with no chance to go back

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1. See (78:2).



and live it again. If we fail an exam, we can go back and resit it. If again we cannot pass, we can repeat it another time. The test of our life however, is not like that. We live and die just once in the world. In this respect, using the blessing of life in constant consideration of death and the Next Life is a must for every person who is wise.

How beautifully Mawlana Jalaladin Rumi puts it when he says:

“Whoever deems this world the planting field of the Day of Reckoning, sows much here and reaps much there.”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) states:

“There is no life except the life of the Next World.” (Bukhari, Jihad 33, Salat 48, Riqaq 1)

In today’s capitalist, materialist and liberal society, we are constantly being called to engage in meaningless worldly pursuits and no mention is made of anything beyond this world. With the relentless bombardment from our television screens and on the internet, human beings today are more than ever before being distracted from the reality of the Next World and are more and more enslaved by their worldly passions, as was the case during the time of ignorance (the time just before the coming of Islam) and are therefore limited to material realm devoid of any higher spiritual experience or purpose.

From the Islamic perspective every age in which the Next World is forgotten can be deemed an age of ignorance. Throughout history this remains the case and loser examination of the societies of ignorance to which previous Prophets and Messengers were sent reveals more or less all of them were in denial of the Next Life, and so the age of ignorance eradicated by the arrival Islam was also no exception. What the polytheists or idol worshipers of Mecca found particularly hard to digest was the news that they would be raised back to life after death and that they would be held to account for what they did in this world.

Today’s society of ignorance, too – having completely rejected the Next Life – dwells in the swamps of wrongdoing, perpetrating all manner of wrong actions without batting an eyelid. People mock the idea of a divine rendezvous with their creator where there will be a reckoning for

their actions. As the human being moves away from traditional, divinely revealed truth in the name of reason and material science, they forget their humanity in the process.

There are countless people today sliding into atheism, being taken by false philosophies, and as a result viewing belief in Allah as a weakness. When belief in the Next Life loses its conviction in the heart then inclination to falsehood increases, and hearts that are not busy with truth are busy with falsehood, there's no other option. We must, therefore, frequently review our position and seriously evaluate the extent to which our hearts are certain about the Next Life and urgently try to rectify any shortcomings.

Praise be to Allah that we are Muslim. We affirm the essentials of belief with our hearts and declare them on our tongues. However, when we are tested with worldly gain, how much do we prefer the Next World? Are our hearts sufficiently protected against the virus of secularisation, which has become an epidemic in our day? How much are we able to put the true life that is the life of the Next World at the centre of our minds? In other words, to what extent do our everyday actions reflect our belief in the Next World?

It is clear that in this time of turmoil, as we get closer to the end of time, we need more than ever to remember the divine and prophetic traditions related to death, the grave, the Last Day and the Next Life, and to reflect upon the true life of the Next World. Keeping our belief in the Next Life fresh in our hearts is our strongest protection against succumbing to this fleeting world and thus losing our eternal bliss.

Let us not forget that a life not illuminated with contemplation of death is no different from a dark night of tribulation. The sun of eternal happiness rises on those who lead their lives in the light of the divine commandments and who know how to travel to the Next Life with a clear conscience. As for those who remain heedless of Allah, neither does this world they leave behind weep for them, nor the Next Life await them with a smile.

Indeed, the skies above our heads are the very same skies that poured suffering and scourge on those earlier peoples who disbelieved throughout human history. The sun above us is the same sun which once illuminated the pavilions and palaces of many a tyrant such as the Pharaoh, Haman, Qarun and Nimrod, and which then rose above their ruins.

And so, there can be no greater delusion and ruin than to squander our endless life after death with fleeting animal passions and earthly concerns. One who enslaves his heart to the world, to which Allah Almighty does not ascribe even the worth of a gnat's wing, and who thus forgets the ultimate reality, is not esteemed in His sight either. Those taken captive by this world today and who have forgotten Allah, will be among those who will be forgotten on the last day.

So, let us never forget that we have come to this world to earn our place in the Next World.

Esteemed readers,

A difficult journey awaits us. Our last breath, the grave, the Resurrection, the Day of Reckoning, the Balance, the Judgement and the bridge of *Sirat*...

Countless warnings and words of counsel confirm these truths in the Qur'an and the prophetic traditions. It is with the intention of enabling these important truths to become duly imprinted in our hearts and minds that we present this humble work to our readers.

I would like to thank Dr. Murat Kaya, Ibrahim Hakkı Uzun and Mehmet Akif Günay for their valuable contribution and I ask my Lord that their efforts be accepted for them as a perpetual charity.

May our Lord count us all among His righteous servants who are able to solve in their inner worlds, with the light of revelation, the mysteries of death and the life after it and who endeavour to lead lives of righteousness to beautify their death and transform their Next Life into an eternal bliss.

May Allah Almighty protect our hearts from the illusion of dwelling in this world as though we were permanent residents.

May He not deprive our hearts of the deep wisdom and insight that we will one day become the very piece of land on which we tread today.

*Amin.*

Osman Nuri Topbaş  
Üsküdar  
2017



## CHAPTER 1

# *Journey to Eternity*

*Death is an inevitable reality for every mortal soul. Let us not forget that there is in the world neither a place in which to hide from death, nor the possibility of return from the grave, nor a shelter in which to take refuge from the ferocity of the Last Day.*

*Happy, therefore, are those who leave a good name in this world and die in order to reach their eternal home.*





## JOURNEY TO ETERNITY

It is a divinely-prescribed law for all living beings that all those who are born, live only as long as their appointed time (ajal) and inescapably die when their appointed time arrives. No living being can escape this. Life continues to flow in a stream of fleetingness.

Indeed, this truth is expressed in a Qur'anic verse in the following way:

“Everyone on it will pass away; but the Face of your Lord will remain, Master of Majesty and Generosity.” (Ar-Rahman, 55:26-27)

This world has been created as a divine testing arena. There are myriad wisdoms in every event and many lessons to be taken from both blessings and tribulations. The mission of this world will finish with the death of the last human being to live in it. After that it will be destroyed. The Next World, a completely new order and manner of living will begin with the Final Hour, in line with the divine decree.

This universe is a manifestation of divine power and wisdom and carries infinite wisdoms and lessons which have been prepared to invest the human being with a consciousness of slavehood. That is to say, the human being has been sent to the world in order to learn how to be a slave of his Lord and to affirm his faithfulness to Allah Almighty.

The human being's existence on earth cannot possibly be some kind of coincidence or purposeless adventure. In order for them to be able to acquire this consciousness and cognisance, they have been given reason and have been sent Prophets to guide them to the path of uprightness and Messengers who were given divinely revealed books. All things, from the minutest particle to the heavenly bodies, from the macrocosm to the microcosm have been created with a certain wisdom and meaning not without purpose.



It is declared in following Qur'anic verses:

“We did not create them except with truth but most of the do not know it.” (Ad-Dukhan, 44:38)

“Does man reckon he will be left to go on unchecked?” (Al-Qiyama, 75:36)

“Did you suppose that We created you for amusement and that you would not return to Us?” (Al-Muminun, 23:115)

### **Every Soul is bound to Taste Death**

Our Lord, who declares, “I only created Jinn and men to worship Me.” (Adh-Dhariyat, 51:56), demands worship and servitude from us. As a result of this, He wills for us to undergo various stages on the path of spiritual advancement and acquire experiential knowledge to come to know our Lord directly with our hearts.

What a pitiful delusion, therefore, is our conducting ourselves in this realm, like heedless wanderers not knowing their purpose and responsibility in this fleeting world and oblivious to the fact that they will die at an appointed time. Freeing ourselves of such a delusion is only possible through considering each one of our numbered breaths in this life as steps on the journey to eternity.

The event of death that will surely come upon every living traveller is a mystery that all possessors of understanding are forced to solve. Indeed, Allah Almighty declares in a verse in the chapter entitled ‘The Prophets (Al-Anbiya, 21:35)

“Every self will taste of death. We test you with both good and evil as a trail. And you will be returned to Us.”

In the second verse of the chapter, ‘The Kingdom’ He declares:

“He who created death and life to test which of you is best in action. He is the Almighty, the Ever-Forgiving.” (Al-Mulk, 67:2).

Let us not forget that there is in the world is not a place in which to hide from death and that there will be no return from the grave nor will

there be any shelter in which to take refuge from the ferocity of the Last Day. The Qur'an calls out to those who seek an escape from the reality of death:

“Say: ‘Death, from which you are fleeing, will certainly catch up with you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible and He will inform you about what you did.’” (Al-Jumu’a, 62:8)

“Wherever you are, death will catch up with you, even if you are in impregnable fortresses.” (An-Nisa, 4:78)

Since there is no escaping death, what needs to be done is to try to beautify it.

How, then, is death to be beautified? For whom is death the rejoicing of a return home after separation and a reunion with their beloved?

Just as a sound means, or a sound path is necessary for a sound result, a worldly life adorned with belief and right action and is required for a happy life in the abode to come. A death opening onto eternal bliss is a reward only for a life led under the guidance of the light of belief and the Qur'an.

So, a Muslim must never forget his religion in any phase life and try hard to spend his twenty-four hours just as the Master of the Prophets, Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) did. They thus need to weigh up their own state earnestly and frequently.

As ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) has said:

“Call yourselves to account before you are called to account, and prepare yourselves for the Day of Judgement: the Day you shall be brought before Allah. Truly, the account in the Next Life of the one who calls himself to account in this life will be easier.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 25/2459)

For instance, a Muslim should weigh up their entire day each night and should ask themselves:

✓ How did I open my book of life this morning? Did I give thanks to my Lord who bestowed upon me a new day?

✓ Was I able to hasten to meet Him at the hour of early dawn to which He invites me to forgiveness? How much was I able to benefit from

the overflowing of divine mercy and forgiveness at that time? Or did I waste away those special opportunities with sleep?

✓ Did I carry with me the light of this blessed time to the rest of my day? How much of my day passed in remembrance of Allah? To what extent did I experience the closeness of Allah in my remembrance of Him?

✓ Did I contemplate death, the destroyer of pleasures?

✓ How much did I shed myself of life's superfluous concerns and turn to my Lord? How much depth of contemplation did the inscriptions of divine power and majesty bring about in my heart?

✓ How many times did I respond to the divine call from the minaret and to offer my prayer in congregation? Did I observe my prayers in a fitting manner earning divine approval, in humble submission, in harmony of heart and body?

✓ Was I careful that my earnings, what I ate, drank and wore today were lawful and not doubtful or forbidden? Did a sense of avoidance of what is forbidden accompany me in all of my actions and conduct?

✓ Did I take care in regard to observing the rights of others? Am I able to say, "I did not violate the rights of others, I did not hurt anyone"?

✓ Was I able to look at all creation with the Creator's mercy, compassion and love?

✓ Did I observe the rights of the creature at my doorstep? Did I have mercy on creation, knowing that a person who starved a cat will be punished and one who gave water to a thirsty dog will be forgiven?

✓ Did I inquire after my mother, father and relatives? If they have passed away, did I read the Qur'an for their souls?

✓ Was I able to behold my family wholeheartedly, with the awareness of it being one of the gardens of the Garden and protect my loved ones from the adverse effects of the outside world – of fashion, advertising, television and the internet? In this respect, to what extent was I able to translate into action, the divine injunction, "You who believe! Safeguard yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and Stones," (At-Tahrim, 66:6)

✓ Did I see my husband off to work in the morning lovingly, with a smile and ask Allah that he bring home lawful sustenance? Did I greet him again with a smile and tender words on his return, help him unwind and strive to be a family from which all others take example?

✓ How tender and compassionate was I towards my wife and my children? How much effort did I exert for their moral and spiritual wellbeing, knowing that the greatest legacy I can leave behind for them is useful knowledge that leads to the Garden?

✓ What did I teach my children, whom Allah has entrusted to me, in the manner of decency and righteousness? Did I try to awaken in them a love of Allah and His Messenger and all the Divinely-sent Prophets and friends of Allah?

✓ What did I do today, to inculcate an Islamic character in my children, who will be my representatives tomorrow?

✓ Which seeds of virtue did I sow in the hearts of my offspring that they be a source of pride and happiness for me on the Day of Reckoning?

✓ Did I instil in them a consciousness of Islamic belief, practise and all that is sacred, being a trust? Did I remind them of their ancestors who bequeathed this beautiful nation to us, the honourable martyrs who gladly sacrificed their lives in the way of Allah and of their unswerving belief and devotion? Did I help them see that the Qur'an is Allah's greatest blessing and the Call to Prayer echoing in our skies is our greatest honour and dignity?

✓ I spend years of labour, time and expense for the worldly education of my children; what did I do towards their training for the eternal abode? Did I think it enough for their eternal future to send them to the mosque for a month or two in the summer holidays?

✓ Did I approach those in need of guidance today with softness of speech, an admirable manner and a heart exuding mercy? Did I enjoy the good and try to prevent evil and ask Allah for their guidance? Did I set an example of what it means to be a good Muslim through my character and conduct?





✓ While generations are being lost today like logs swept away by floods, what precautions did I take for the protection of your family, first and foremost, followed by all those for whom I bear responsibility, against the corruption and evil of our day?

✓ Did I take a child or young person along with me to the mosque? Did I try to gather together a few young people to give to them materially and spiritually and attract them to Islam? What did I gift a person I love for the sake of Allah?

✓ With whom and to what extent did I share the bounties that Allah has bestowed upon me? Did I spend some part of my wealth in the way of Allah?

✓ Did I experience the spiritual satisfaction of contributing to the happiness of another believer?

✓ Did I show compassion to an orphan? Did I visit the sick? Did I attend a funeral procession today?<sup>2</sup>

✓ Did I attend to my neighbour's needs and those in my surrounds? Did a poor neighbour who went to bed hungry cause grief to my heart?

✓ Did I share what I have with Syrian refugees taking refuge in my country? Did I work towards being one of the helpers for those emigrants?

✓ Was I troubled by the plight of the World Muslim community? Did I feel a pain in my heart because of the suffering of the oppressed?

✓ Did I work towards the feeding of the hungry, the healing of the sick and helping relieve the burden of a person in debt? Did I ask Allah to this end with my heart, tongue and most importantly, with my actions?

✓ Did I greet everyone I encountered today, whether you knew them or not? Did I show people a smiling face?

✓ Did I respond with goodness to a person who treated me harshly and harmed me? Was I able to forgive them?

✓ Did I win any friends? How many friendships did I renew?

✓ Did I try to keep company with a righteous friend of Allah? Did I befriend a righteous and faithful person who would always speak the truth, even if it went against to my interests and ego? Was I concerned for the protection of my heart because of the company of wrongdoers and transgressors?

✓ Did I remove something harmful from the road?

✓ Did I perform any service or activity that increased me in knowledge or wisdom?

✓ Did I receive from any religious gatherings, spiritual remedies for my heart and spirit that will increase me in exuberance?

✓ How many pages of the Qur'an, the greatest miracle to continue until the Last Day, did I read? Did I reflect upon the messages in it and act accordingly? Was I among those who taught the Qur'an and who hastened to its service, in order to take my place among the best of people?

✓ Did I have the willpower to resist bad habits that are tempting me and trying find their way into my life?

✓ Was I able to protect my tongue against idle and empty speech, lies and gossip, slander and quarrelling and against injuring the heart of another?

✓ How did I close my book of life today? What was written on today's pages of deeds? Will I be able to account for today's page on the Day of Reckoning?

✓ In short, did it at all cross my mind that I am forever putting my life on record, that every state and deed is being recorded with divine cameras? Did I examine my last twenty-four hours and call myself to account?

Those believers motivated by such self-interrogation understand death to be a means of reunion with the Beloved, rather than something to be feared. In this way, death, which is a passage between the two worlds, begins to take on a beautiful form.

This goes to show that the sole means of being freed of the cold chills of death is to deepen in contemplation of the expression, "Die before you die," and to strive to lead a righteous life.



## Death's Mirror

The death that every living being will one day certainly face is like a personal Doomsday unique to the individual. Just as there will be no fear and no sorrow on the Day of Resurrection for those who believed in Allah and who spent their lives doing good actions in service and obedience to their Lord, the same will be true for their moment of death. In this respect, death will manifest itself in accordance with the spiritual degree of the person.

How aptly Mawlana Jalaladin Rumi (may Allah have mercy on him) expresses this truth:

“Son, everyone’s death has the same hue they have. To the enemy of Allah, who does not deem it reunion with Him, a formidable enemy and to the friend of Allah, a friend.

O soul that flees from death! It is not death you fear, but your own bad actions and forgetfulness.

For what you find in death’s mirror is not the image of death, but your own ugly face. Your spirit is like the tree and death the leaf. Each leaf grows forth from the tree...”

“The Last Day is a terrible day of slaughter for piebald cattle. That day is an hour of destruction for cattle and a festival for the true believers.”

Just as the believers rejoice on the Eid al-Adhar (the celebration of the sacrifice) and animals are put to the slaughter, the state of human beings on the Last Day will resemble one of these two states, in accordance with their choices and lives in this world. They will either be of those who rejoice, or those who merit punishment.

Because of this truth, if a person leads their life enslaved to their lower self, believing only in this world and the pursuit of its pleasures, then their grave will be in the form of a dark dungeon ridden with dread and nightmares. The horror of death will cause them unimaginable suffering.

But when a slave transcends their lower appetites and worldly desires and advances in the direction of higher qualities hidden in their spirit, death is viewed as an inevitable condition of reunion with their All-Great

and All-Transcending Lord. Thus, death, a cause of cold chills for most, becomes transformed into the reunion with the 'Exalted Friend'.

Mawlana Jalaladin Rumi (may Allah have mercy on him) viewed the night of his own death as his *shab-i'arus* (wedding night), or being freed from a worldly separation to attain ultimate reunion with the Beloved, has said:

"On the day of my death, when they carry my coffin, do not think that I have any worldly concerns. Do not suppose that I am pained at leaving this world. Do not weep for me, say not, "Alas, alas!" Were I to fall into Satan's snare while alive, that would indeed be alas!

When they commit me to the earth, say not, "Farewell, farewell!" Know well that this time will be for me not separation, but reunion.

The grave is a veil drawn over the bliss of the Garden. You have seen the setting of my sun, have you not? Behold, too, the rising! Can setting impair the sun and the moon?

This state seems to you like a setting, while it is in fact a rising, a return to life!

Can a seed that falls into the earth ever be called dead?

Know well that death is the pain of the spirit's birth into another realm. In name, it is death in this fleeting realm, but in reality it is called 'birth' into the eternal abode.

And is it not Allah who takes life? Then know that death is for His special servants as sweet as sugar. For death, even if fire, is a rose garden and the water of life for a friend of Allah."

Thus, death is not annihilation, it is birth into eternal life. Just as coming to this world is birth for a baby, the spirit's leaving the body and going to the intermediate realm is also a birth into another realm – the Next World.

## Dying as Muslims

The Qur'an offers many warnings concerning our actions and behaviour, in order to avoid a pitiful end. One of these and perhaps the most important, is this:



“O you who believe! Have taqwa (fearful awareness of Allah) with the taqwa due to Him and do not die except as Muslims.” (Al ‘Imran, 3:102)

We were brought into existence out of nothing, without paying a price. We were honoured with being human beings among all creation and being Muslims among mankind. The Almighty has equipped us with special qualities that allow us to attain experiential knowledge and love of Him. He created us as *ahsani taqwim*, or in the finest form. He has favoured us through the Books and Prophets that He has sent. Through the book of the universe – the witness to His existence, to His unity and infinite majesty and power – He has presented to us the manifestations of the divine mysteries and wisdom. These are bounties and favours for which we are incapable of showing enough gratitude.

Similarly, Allah Almighty prepared for us an endless bliss – the Garden. The Garden, however, comes at a price and is not cheap. We may have come to this world without paying a price but there is a price we have to pay for getting out of it successfully. No one has a guarantee that they will die as a Muslim.

Allah the Almighty, declares in a Qur’anic verse:

“Do people imagine that they will be left to say, ‘We believe,’ and will not be tested?” (Al-‘Ankabut, 29:2)

That is why we experience trials throughout our lives. So that we can surrender our lives to their true owner in a way that is acceptable to Him, without compromising our belief, no matter what.

By means of the command, “and do not die except as Muslims,” He declares, so to speak, “Do not, whatever you do, die without being a Muslim!” He indicates that this is the biggest danger facing a slave in this world. Allah the Almighty reveals that the last breath is an absolute finality and that a last breath taken without belief is an eternal calamity impossible to rectify.

Again, the Qur’an presents the example of heroes from among the believers like the Pharaoh’s sorcerers and the Companions of the Trench, who sacrificed their lives, possessions and all that they had in order to protect their belief. In contrast, it illustrates the fateful end of such unfortunate

souls as Bal'am bin Ba'ura' and Qarun, who lead righteous lives only to go astray towards the end of their lives.

Thus, concerning oneself with the preservation of one's own belief at the last breath is both a requirement and the sign of a true believer. For nobody – with the exception of the Prophets and those that the Prophets confirmed – has any guarantee of salvation on the Day of Judgement. As a matter of fact, even those companions who were promised the Garden during their lives feared not being able to maintain their state and lived in a constant struggle to preserve and increase their belief up until death.

The following incident is a powerful case in point:

Two people once offered greetings of peace to the Prophet's companion Salman al-Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him).

They then asked him, "Are you a companion of the Messenger of Allah?" to which he replied, "I do not know." The men wondered if they had the wrong person.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) had said of him, "Salman is of us, of the noble household."<sup>3</sup> In spite of such unmistakeable favour and despite all his merits, this esteemed companion never saw his efforts as adequate. With a heart trembling and oscillating between hope and fear, he completed his words in the following way:

"Indeed, I have seen the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and have been present in his assembly. But a true companion of the Messenger of Allah is one who can enter the Garden with him." (Haythami, VIII, 40-41; Dhahabi, Sira, I, 549)

Such is the sensitivity of the companions who are the model generation for the whole Muslim community.

Therefore, we should never forget that we are treading on slippery ground until our last breath. Just as someone who is forced to cross a mine-field has to pay attention with every step, the believer must take great care throughout their life journey to avoid the actions and conduct that Allah has prohibited.

3. Hakim, III, 691/6541; Haythami, VI, 130; Ibn Hisham, III, 241; Ibn Sa'd, IV, 83.



Again, our Lord shows us the truest way, in order that we remain on the straight path and not fall into error:

“You who believe! If you help Allah, He will help you and plant your feet firm.” (Muhammad, 47:7)

Thus, we cannot relegate Islam to the background at any stage of our lives. We should never forget our Lord in our homes, our workplaces, on the street, in public, or at school and must obey His commands whatever the circumstances. Our greatest objective in life is to lead such a life as to allow us to completely surrender ourselves as Muslims.

To this end, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said:

“Whoever wishes to be delivered from the Fire and enter the Garden should die with belief in Allah and the Last Day...” (Muslim, Imara, 46; Nasa’i, Bay’at, 25; Ibn Majahh, Fitān, 9)

The crux of the matter is to live this fleeting life in line with the divine and prophetic truth.

### Universal Concern

The Qur’anic chapter An-Naba’ opens with these verses:

“About what are they asking each other? About the momentous news: the thing about which they differ.” The News (An-Naba, 78:1-3)

It informs us of the disagreement of the unbelievers about the Last Day, the accounts concerning the Next Life and the existence of the Garden and the Fire. They are occupied with the questions: “what if the Garden and the Fire exist, what will happen to us in the Next World” This is the “momentous news” mentioned.

The age of ignorance, as is the case in today’s secular order, was a worldly life without any concern for the Next Life and without a consciousness of any ultimate accountability or reckoning. They did not have the slightest concern that they would one day be held to account for the persecution and injustice they perpetrated. This smoothed the ground for oppression and exploitation of the weak and for a brutality that exceeded

even that of wild beasts. This is why the twisted order of the polytheists was shaken and their spirits dejected upon the Qur'an's news of the Next Life.

The polytheists then came to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) telling him that they would accept his Prophethood and follow him in return for his abandoning the message of an after-life and leaving alone their idols.

Those today who are disturbed by news of the afterlife, who do not remember death or worship their Lord and who pursue a life without any idea of ultimate accountability, remind us of the same attitude of the age of ignorance.

When a mosque is constructed in more affluent districts, for instance, property prices in these areas drop because the funeral prayers offered there remind those who lead a life of luxury of death. It is also interesting that when the Qur'anic verse, "Every self will taste death," was hung at the entrance of the Zincirlikuyu Cemetery in Istanbul, many people complained that this message depressed them and they demanded its removal.

This illustrates the universal apprehension and dread that people, whether believers or not, have concerning life after death. Believers and unbelievers are troubled about death, the end of the world and the eternal life, only with a difference in focus.

The latter are concerned that the accounts of a Next Life are true: What if death is not eternal annihilation? What if there really will be a great Reckoning? This is a spiritual crisis that arises from an innate predisposition to the truth deeply embedded in every human being from the echoes of prior contract of their spirit.

In contrast, the concern of the believer is centred on the question of what their state in the afterlife will be and will their service be acceptable to their Lord.

The heart of the believer:

✓ Is filled with the fear of whether they will be able to surrender themselves as true believers.

✓ Questions of whether or not they have attained a level of servanthood enabling them to be welcomed by the Angel of Death with a smile.





✓ Worries about answering the questions of the interrogating angels in the grave successfully.

✓ Worries whether their grave will be one of the meadows of the Garden or a pit of fire.

✓ Worries what their state will be when the Supreme Court is established, when their belief and actions are weighed on the scales, when their book of deeds, which contain all their actions great and small – is brought before them and when the final verdict on them is given.

Again, the believer thinks to himself:

In which hand will I receive the book of my deeds? Will it be from the front or from behind my back? What am I going to find in my Record, in which is kept the account of every moment of my life?

Indeed, I must take myself to account in this world, before I am taken to account in the next, but will my account here correspond with the one there?

Allah Almighty cautions us in this matter as follows:

“Whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it. Whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it.” (Al-Zilzal, 99:7-8)

A Bedouin who heard these Qur’anic verses from the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) asked in great astonishment:

“O Messenger of Allah, an atom’s weight?”

When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied in the affirmative, the Bedouin’s face changed immediately.

“What of my faults!” he began to lament, repeating these words over and over again. He then repeated the Qur’anic verses he had heard and then left.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Belief has entered this man’s heart.” (Suyuti, al-Durr al-Manthur, VIII, 595)

Thus, contemplating the Day of Reckoning on which those shortcomings deemed trivial or unimportant in the world will be accounted for, and leading one's life with such a concern, is the mark of true belief.

In this respect, a concern for the extent to which one's deeds will weigh as good or evil on that sensitive scale is a preoccupation of a believing heart.

In another Qur'anic verse, Allah Almighty declares:

“Then you will be asked that Day about the pleasures you enjoyed.”  
(At-Takathur, 102:8)

When this verse was revealed, a companion who had no worldly possessions stood up and asked:

“Do I possess anything about which I will be questioned, O Messenger of Allah?”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“The shade of a tree, the two sandals on your feet and the cold water you drink.” (See Suyuti, VIII, 619)

Thus, even a person who thought that he possessed no pleasures for which he would be questioned on the Day of Judgement, is regarded as accountable for these comforts he has been given.

We should bear in mind that the minimum amount of Zakat (obligatory charity) is clearly defined as one fortieth. We fulfil our duty that we are accountable for by payment of this amount. But Allah Almighty will not call people to account on the Day of Judgement just in regards to their wealth and possessions, but for all the imaginable blessings He has conferred upon them, such as their talents, abilities, health strength and free time and the minimum amount of these bounties is not clearly established.

Moreover, in accordance with the Qur'anic verse, “If you tried to number Allah's blessings, you could never count them. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (An-Nahl, 16:18). Who knows just how many blessings we have been favoured with – whether we are aware of them or not? Just as we

are incapable of determining the exact amount of these favours, we are also incapable of fulfilling our debt of gratitude for them, no matter what we do.

Because the Prophet's companions vividly felt the great weight of this responsibility, they gave their entire lives in service to Allah and His Messenger with an ever-increasing fervour and enthusiasm. They mobilised all the resources at their disposal and went all the way to China, Samarkand and to central Africa to convey the message of Islam ensuring they never grew weary or negligent.

Allah Almighty, declares in a Qur'anic verse:

"We will question those to whom the Messengers were sent, and We will question the Messengers." (Al-Araf, 7:6).

Even the Prophets and Messengers who were protected from any wrong action and guaranteed the Garden and led lives of self-sacrificing service, question whether or not they had duly fulfilled their mission of communicating the message.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) endured all kinds of oppression and hardship in way of Allah attempting to call people to the truth. He had stones thrown at him and was subjected to relentless physical and verbal abuse but no matter the difficulty and risk, he did not refrain for a second from fulfilling his sacred mission of transmitting the message and demonstrated his tireless effort in this regard. Allah Almighty addressed him with the words:

"Perhaps you will destroy yourself with grief because they will not become believers." (Ash-Shu'ara', 26:3).

During his farewell address, he (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) asked his companions numbering more than one hundred thousand, three times:

"O People, you will be asked about me, what will you say? Have I conveyed the message?" to which his companions responded, "You have, O Messenger of Allah!"

He then said three times, “Be my witness O Lord, that I have conveyed your message to the people!”<sup>4</sup>

The Messenger’s great sense of responsibility constitutes very important guidance for his community.

Because of these truths, every believer should carry in the depths of his spirit a concern for the Last Day, strengthening their steadfastness and keeping the fire of belief burning brightly. With a heart illuminated through contemplation of death, they should strive to lead a vigilant life of servanthood.

Allah the Almighty reveals to us, in the person of His Messenger, the importance of constant remembrance of the Last Day and the Next Life and thus keeping ourselves in check:

“Has news of the Overwhelmer reached you?” (Al-Ghashiyya, 88:1)

That account has indeed come to us. But Allah Almighty, in a sense, offers warning to us:

“How is it that you can be so comfortable as though this news has never come to you?

How can you get caught up in the pursuit of vain ambition?

How can you waste away your life, your most precious capital?”

The verse below draws our attention to the form, on the Day of Rising, which the faces of those who spend their lives in distraction in this world and idle pursuit will take:

“Some faces on that Day will be downcast.” (Al-Ghashiyya, 88:2)

In contrast, the countenance of those righteous believers who are not deceived by this fleeting world and who go through life earning the rewards of the life to come are depicted as follows:

“Some faces on that Day will be radiant.” (Al-Ghashiyya, 88:8)

How then, in what state will we be on that Day?

4. See Muslim, Hajj, 147; Abu Dawud, Manasik, 56; Ibn Majah, Manasik, 76, 84; Ahmad, V, 30; Ibn Hisham, IV, 275-276; Hamidullah, al-Wasaik, p. 360.



We pay attention to our clothes and appearance in this world. What about our appearance and our faces in the Next World? What form will they take? Should we not be paying attention and showing more care to this?

What will our faces be like on that Day? A face that is covered in dust and dirt, dripping with blood and sweat, wretched, ugly and downcast? Or one that is beaming, radiant, shining with the mark of prostration – pure and glowing?

Allah draws attention to the fact that one's character and inner condition in this world will be manifested on their face in the Next World:

“That Day some faces will be dust-covered, overcast with gloom. Those are the dissolute disbelievers.” (‘Abasa, 80:38-42).

What will our bodies be like on that Day? Will they be wretched bodies with limbs testifying against us, resurrected with the ugly marks of the bad things we did in the world, openly or in secret, overwhelmed by the burden of our own injustice? Or beautiful, pure, perfected bodies glowing in the parts that we used to wash for daily prayers, with our limbs fragrant and shining with the marks of our righteous deeds?

Let us not forget that what will determine our complexion and form in the Next Life is the spiritual state of our heart in this world. Hearts that are tarnished by the dark stain of wrong actions in this world will, in the world to come, cause the body to be resurrected in a repulsive state. Hearts that are purified in this world, however, and adorned with right actions, will – by the grace of Allah – be the means for being raised up blissful with a beautiful, radiant and smiling face.

Only those who are friends with Allah in the world are those who will be safe from fear and sorrow and who will have an easy passage across to the Next World. As is declared triumphantly in a Qur’anic verse:

“Yes, the friends of Allah will feel no fear and will know no sorrow.” (Yunus, 10:62)

And so, the sole purpose of life for the people of knowledge is to increase in friendship with their Lord and Master, Allah. May Allah Almighty enable us all to lead a life in accordance with His good pleasure

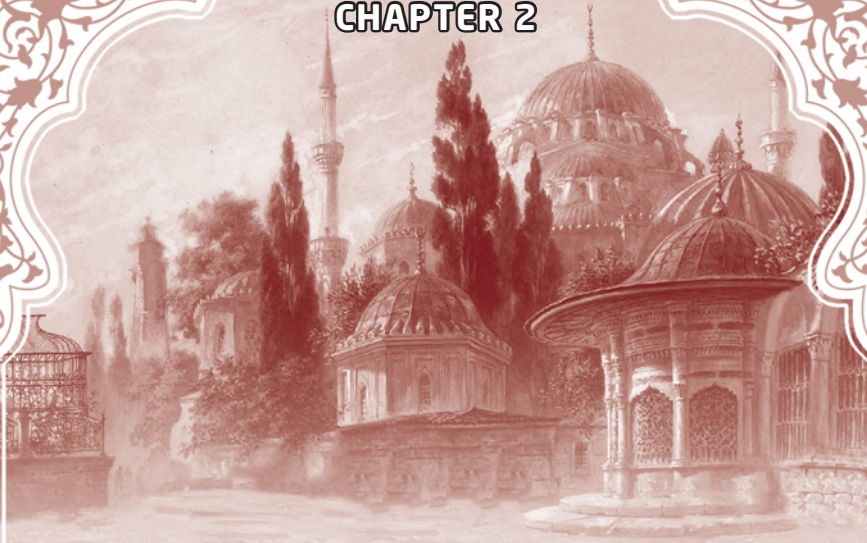
and approval and to stand before Him with a sound and flawless heart. May He protect us from the trials of the grave and make our graves meadows of the Garden. May He include us among those friends who will have no fear and sorrow and who will be safe on the Day of Resurrection. May He make us neighbours of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in the highest levels of the Garden *Amin*.







## CHAPTER 2



# *Belief in the Afterlife*

*People in the modern world spend a great deal of energy and money on research into ways of living longer. In the Next World, however, no one will be concerned with this and the only worry for people there will be the extent to which they turned their worldly life, which is as short as the time it takes for night to fall when compared with the afterlife, into a means of gaining eternal bliss.*



## BELIEF IN THE AFTERLIFE

One of the fundamental tenets of Islamic belief is belief in the Next Life and it is mentioned alongside belief in Allah in many verses of the Qur'an, indicating its importance.

Some of these Qur'anic verses are the following:

"...All who believe in Allah and the Last Day and act rightly, will have their reward with their Lord. They will feel no fear and will know no sorrow." (Al-Baqara, 2:62)

"If you have a dispute about something, refer it back to Allah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the last day. That is the best thing to do and gives the best result." (An-Nisa, 4:59)

"You will not find people who believe in the Allah and the Last Day having love for anyone who deposes Allah and His Messenger, though they be their fathers, their sons, their brothers or their clan" (Al-Mujadila, 58:22)

Again, in praise of the believers, Allah, glory be to Him, declares:

"Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day." (At-Tawba, 9:44)

It is not possible to come to terms with the enormous reality of death and the afterlife with mere reason and intellect alone. Human beings are greatly in need of the guidance of divine revelation. And Allah the Almighty has not left His servants without help and guidance in this matter. Throughout the Qur'an there is a frequently reoccurring theme mentioning the situation of people after death, occasionally with explicit proofs and sometimes through examples, awakening the hearts to this great matter of the Next World which we will all enter after death.

Indeed, this is the wisdom behind the revelation of Qur'anic verses of this kind characterising the early years of the Messenger's mission which



stressed the essentials of belief in Allah and all the various elements of the unseen world which is veiled from our eyes. This is also the wisdom behind the repeated mention of these matters again after the Hijra (emigration) to Madinah, in revelations containing legal rulings concerning both worship and worldly matters. One of the most striking causes of corruption characterising the age of ignorance is a denial of the afterlife.

Denial of the existence of an afterlife is illogical and unreasonable. Just consider:

In a play, for instance, the curtain never drops after the first act, without a final moment of closure being reached. What would the audience think in such a case with their thoughts stirred and suspense built up, intent on learning the final outcome of the play and the motivation of the playwright? Even a child would not consider it appropriate to finish a play in this way. Why then would Allah, who created everything with a purpose and who possesses full knowledge of all things, end this grand narrative of the universe in a manner that is illogical even to a child?<sup>5</sup>

In other words, reason also necessitates that human beings, who claim at every opportunity that they live in a world of causes, believe in a Next Life in which they will see the effects of these causes.

It is declared in a Qur’anic verse:

“Those who are disbelievers say, ‘The hour will never come.’ Say: ‘Yes, by my Lord, it certainly will come!’ He is the Knower of the Unseen, Whom not even the weight of a single particle eludes, either in the heavens or in the earth; nor is there anything smaller or larger than that which is not in a Clear Book.” (Saba’, 34:3).

“Allah, there is no god but Him. He will gather you to the Day of Rising about which there is no doubt. And whose speech could be truer than Allah’s?” (An-Nisa’, 4:87)

“He asks: ‘so when is the Day of Rising?’

But when the eyesight is dazzled, and the moon is eclipsed, and the sun and moon are fused together, on that Day man will say, ‘Where can

I run?’ No indeed! There will be no safe place. That Day the only resting place will be your Lord. That Day man will be told what he did and failed to do.” (Al-Qiyama75:6-13)

“Say: ‘Allah gives you life, then causes you to die, and then will gather you together on the Day of Rising about which there is no doubt. But most people do not know it.

The kingdom of the heavens and earth belongs to Allah, and on the Day that the Hour arrives, that Day the liars will be lost.” (Al-Jathiiyya, 45:26-27)

“Say: ‘It would not matter if you were rock or iron or indeed any created thing that you think is harder still!’ They will say, ‘Who will bring us back again?’ Say: ‘He who brought you into being in the first place.’ They will shake their heads at you and ask, ‘When will it happen?’ Say: ‘It may well be that it is very near.’” (Al-Isra’, 17:50-51).

So, this world is like a large room with two doors, one at each end and has seen countless people pass through one door and out the other since the time of Prophet Adam (peace be upon him). So where are they now? Or where will we be after a certain time? Does anybody know? This is the unknown. But one thing is for certain: death will surely come to both the oppressors and the oppressed, to the devout and to the neglectful and everybody will wait for the resurrection that is the beginning phase of the eternal life.

If we think about it, the soil on which we tread is filled with the dust of the billions of people who have lived on earth. Like billions of overlapping shadows. Tomorrow, we too will be buried in that same soil, along with our deeds and will fade away into this dark shadow and an everlasting journey will begin. Since there is no escaping it, we should stop for a moment and think.

## **This World and the Next World**

What does it matter if one’s life is long or short in this fleeting realm? For when compared with the everlasting life, this perishing world is no different to the foam of soap. No matter how long a person lives in this world,



it is but a short period of time when compared to the immense reality of the Next World.

As is indicated in verses of the Qur'an: "He will say: 'How many years did you tarry on earth?' They will say, 'We tarried for a day or part of a day. Ask those who are able to count!' He will say, 'You only tarried there for a little while if you did but know!'" (Al-Muminun, 23:112-114)

In another Qur'anic verse, Allah Almighty declares:

"On the Day they see it, it will be as if they had only lingered for the evening or the morning of a single day." (An-Nazi'at, 79:46)

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) offers the following similitude to illustrate the nature of this world compared to the next:

"By Allah, the significance of this world in comparison to the Next Life is similar to one of you dipping their finger into the ocean and then seeing the amount of water that remains on it." (Muslim, Janna, 55)

The Turkish Sufi poet Yunus Emre succinctly expresses just what a short stay our presence is in this realm is:

"From the womb to the bazaar we came;

To buy a shroud and return to the grave."

In another poem he says:

"Like a passing breeze,

my life has gone by.

To me it seems

but the blink of an eye."

Our entire endeavour, then, should be to adorn this short life with service to God with worship and reverence.



By the same token, the days of this fleeting worldly life are nonetheless precious. For the Next Life is the place of receiving returns while this world is the place of investing.



It is narrated that Prophet Ilyas (upon him be peace) shuddered in horror when he saw the Angel of Death. Wondering the reason for this, the Archangel asked:

“O Prophet of Allah, is it death you fear?”

Prophet Ilyas replied:

“No, it is not that I fear death, but that I should take leave of the life of this world.” He then continued, saying:

“For I strived in this worldly life to serve my Lord, to enjoin the good and prevent evil, I spent my time in worship and performing deeds of righteousness and tried to live with good morals and character. This gave me peace and filled my heart with joy. I fear that I will no longer be able to experience such happiness and that I will be held captive in the grave until the Resurrection.



Amir ibn ‘Abd al-Qays (may Allah be pleased with him), from the generation of the Successors (Tabi’in), began to weep at the approach of his death.

When asked why he was weeping, he replied:

“I do not weep for fear of death, nor out of worldly ambition, but because I will be no longer be able to observe the fast on hot days and wake up for worship in the middle of the night.” (Dhahabi, Sira, IV, 19)



In relation to an everlasting bliss in the Next Life being earned in this world, Imam Junayd al-Baghdadi says:

“A day in this world is better than a thousand years in the next because profit and loss are in this world, while in the Next World we can no longer do anything to attain salvation.”

Consider this: If Allah gave us a lifetime of a thousand years, say for instance if we were born in the year 1000 and died in 2000, all the while living in abundance and prosperity, we would now still be dead. No matter how long we may live, a passing worldly life is still passing. So therefore,





how reasonable can it possibly be to prefer a single passing moment to all eternity?

Since those who prefer this world to the next cannot fathom the great many appetising varieties of food that indeed exist, it is no different to the comprehension of a child who imagines the onion in their hand to be the most delicious thing there is to eat. Choosing this passing world over the eternal is to share the lack of insight and perception of a hapless bird which flies into a little cage when it could be soaring through the endless skies.

A wise man once said:

“Were the world made of gold but fleeting and the Next Life made of mud but eternal, the wise person would prefer the eternal mud to the fleeting gold. What then, must one do if the situation were reversed and this fleeting world was made of mud and the next eternal life made of pure gold?”<sup>6</sup>

Surely, a sound mind would exchange the small, simple and temporary interests for great benefits, the fruits of which will last forever. For this reason, the mission of every person of sound mind should be to avoid falling prey to the illusion of this fleeting world and to strive to earn their eternal happiness in the next abode.

The truly intelligent are described in a prophetic narration as follows:

“The wise person is the one who subjugates the lower self, calling it to account and working for what is after death. And fool is one who pursues their vain desires and merely hopes in Allah (on the Day of Judgement).” (Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 25/2459)

How sound of mind a person is should be measured in this light. So, one who sacrifices the fleeting to earn the eternal is deemed wise and sane. While the heedless person who forgets the Next Life and is deluded by this world, cannot be considered wise or even completely sane. In the words of Umar Ibn al Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) “truly ignorant and foolish is one who sells their eternal life for this life.” Allah does not value

6. Abu al-Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ajiba, *al-Bahr al-Madid fi Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Majid*, Cairo 1419, II, 112.

a person who loses themselves in this world, which does not even hold the worth of a gnat's wing in His eyes, and forgets the afterlife.

It is for this reason that Luqman Hakim once advised:

“Sacrifice this world for the Next World that you may gain both. Do not sacrifice the Next World in exchange for this world and then lose both.”

For unrefined, raw souls, the world is a mirage that appears a false oasis. It is like a toffee apple that children love to eat: even though it is a spectacle of colour on the outside, it is sour and rotten within.

It is declared in a Qur'anic verse:

“Know that the life of this world is merely a game and a diversion and ostentation and a cause of boasting among yourselves and trying to outdo one another in wealth and children: like the plant-growth after rain which delights the cultivators, but then it withers and you see it turning yellow, and it then becomes broken stubble. In the Next World there is terrible punishment but also forgiveness from Allah and His good pleasure. The life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion.” (Al-Hadid, 57:20)

“Allah expands the provision of anyone He wills and restricts it. They rejoice in the life of this world. Yet the life of this world compared to the Next World, is only fleeting enjoyment.” (Ar-Ra'd, 13:26)

“The life of this world is nothing but a game and diversion. The abode of the Next World – that is truly life if only they knew.” (Al-'Ankabut, 29:64)

“The life of this world is nothing but a game and a diversion. The Next World is better for those who have taqwa (fearful awareness of Allah). So will you not use your intellect? (Al-An'am, 6:32)

“..Those who prefer the life of this world to the Next World, and bar access to the way of Allah, wanting to make it crooked; they are greatly misguided.” (Ibrahim, 14:3)

“Those are the people who trade the Next World for this world. The punishment will not be lightened for them. They will not be helped.” (Al-Baqara, 2:86)



“Say, ‘The enjoyment of this world is very brief. The Next World is better for those who have taqwa (fearful awareness of Allah). You will not be wronged by so much as the smallest speck.’” (An-Nisa, 4:77)

“As for any of you who desires this fleeting existence, We hasten in it whatever We will to whoever We want. Then We will consign him to Hell where he will roast, reviled and driven out.

But as for him who desires the Next World, and strives for it with the striving it deserves, being a believer, the striving of such people will be greatly acknowledged.” (Al-Isra, 17:18-19)

“My people! The life of this world is only fleeting enjoyment. It is the Next World which is the abode of permanence.” (Ghafir, 40:39)

This same truth issues forth in the words of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace):

“O Allah, the real life is the life of the Next World.” (Bukhari, Jihad 33, Salat 48)

The following incident narrated by ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be pleased with him) offers us great guidance also:

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was sleeping on a straw mat and when he woke with the pattern of the mat imprinted on him. We said:

“O Messenger of Allah, allow us to prepare a bed for you!”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“What do I have to do with this world? I am not in the world except as a rider seeking shade under a tree, then after resting for a break before setting off again on his journey.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 44/2377)

Again, ‘Umar Ibn al Khattab (may Allah be well pleased with him) once came to the house of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). He cast his eye around the room. Every corner of it was empty. There was, however, a mat made of date palm leaves. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was lying on it and it had left an imprint on his blessed face. In another corner was a single



measure of barley flour. Beside it was hanging an old water skin. This was all. This was all the worldly possessions that the Messenger of Allah, the pride of humanity possessed at a time when the entire Arabian Peninsula recognised and yielded to his authority.

‘Umar sighed heavily upon observing such a scene. His eyes filled with tears and he began to weep. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“What is it that makes you weep, O ‘Umar?”

‘Umar said: “Why should I not weep, O Messenger of Allah! When Caesar and Khosrau wallow in worldly luxury and you are the Messenger of Allah and you live like this!”

Putting ‘Umar’s heart at ease, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“Do not cry, O ‘Umar! Would you not prefer that this world be theirs and the Next World be for us?”<sup>7</sup>

Allah the Almighty and All-Wise warns the believers against looking in envy at the worldly wealth, prosperity and power of the unbelievers:

“Were it not that mankind might all become one community, we would have given those who reject the All-Merciful silver roofs to their houses and silver stairways to ascend and silver doors to their houses and silver couches on which to recline, and gold ornaments. All that is merely the trappings of the life of this world. But the Next Life with your Lord is for those who have taqwa (fearful awareness of Allah) (Az-Zukhruf, 43:33-35)

“Do not be deceived by the fact that those of are disbelievers move freely about on the earth. A brief enjoyment; then their shelter will be Hell. What an evil resting-place!” (Al ‘Imran, 3:196-197)

Mawlana Jalaladin Rumi’s depiction is most fitting:

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7. See Ahmad, II, 298; Tabarani, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, ed. Hamdi ‘Abd al-Majid al-Salafi, Beirut: Dar ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, 1984–94, X:162.

“One who seeks this fleeting world has sought an impossible, evil thing. While one who seeks the Next World has sought the good, the beautiful, the right and true.”

A person once approached Sufyan Ath-Thawri seeking his advice. Sufyan Ath-Thawri advised him with the following words:

“Work for this world in proportion to the time you will spend in it and work for the Next World in proportion to the time you will spend in it.”  
(Abu Nu’aym, Hilya, VII, 56)

So, we should frequently ask ourselves how much importance we give to this worldly life and how much importance we give to the life of the Next World, which is everlasting.

People in the modern world spend a great deal of energy and money researching ways of living longer and on medicines and cosmetics to this end. In the Next Life, however, no one will be concerned with whether lived a long or short life. The biggest concern for people there will be the extent to which they used their worldly life, which is as short a time as nightfall or mid-morning when compared to the afterlife, for the sake of their eternal life.

But sometimes even if people are aware of these truths, they cannot avoid following the desires of their lower self and falling prey to heedlessness. It is stated in the Qur’an:

“Yet still you prefer the life of this world when the Next World is better and longer lasting.” (Al-A’la, 87:16-17).

Human beings therefore prefer the world, which does not even amount to a single drop when compared to the ocean of the Next World.

I would like to present here a personal anecdote that has been a great source of reflection:

One day, as I was about to leave the house for the Morning Prayer, I heard the wailing shrieks of two cats outside. I went out to the garden to see what was happening. I saw two cats standing, facing each other, growling like little tigers ready for attack and exchanging stares without flinching. Their fur was standing on end, ready to tear the other to shreds at the slightest stir.

Just as I was wondering what could have led to this vicious confrontation, I saw a mouse between them – a little dead mouse. It turns out the cats were fighting over it and so the dead body of a little mouse was the motivation behind the harm they intended for one another, at the expense of personal injury.

This seemingly straightforward scene was in fact a great lesson. It demonstrated the negative consequences of the failure to remain indifferent to a bit of tempting food. In a sense, it represented those in pursuit of the world preferring loss and ruin in the Next Life for the sake of fulfilling their selfish appetites. It illustrated how fleeting desires and temptations, as well as positions of importance and leadership onto which many a heedless soul clings so tightly to, are in fact little different to this dead mouse that the cats were fighting over and in no way worth squandering our eternal lives for.

The following incident is a clear example of just how grievous an end awaits those who do not content themselves with the lawful bounties which earn divine approval, and who fall prey to desires:

During the Miraj (ascent through the heavens), the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) accompanied by the Archangel Gabriel (upon him be peace) saw a people eating raw putrid meat and leaving the good meat and the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) asked the Archangel who these people were and he replied:

“These are the men from your community who would leave their wives at home to be with those women who were forbidden to them and the women who would leave their husbands to be with those men forbidden to them.” (Haythami, I, 67, 68)

Likewise, disregarding the afterlife, the Reckoning and the punishment, and to immerse oneself in earthly pleasures without consideration for the lawful and unlawful, is a delusion which condemns the slave to dreadful destitution, shame and misery.

Consequently, one cannot understand a person who toils solely for the transient world despite professing belief in the Next Life that is the eternal realm. There can be no foolishness more obvious than reckless consump-

tion of this fleeting worldly life, as though it will never end and failing to invest any of it for the eternal life to come.

For this world is not a site of play and amusement, but the only place where capital for the Next Life can be amassed. As affirmed in a Qur'anic verse:

“Seek the abode of the Next World with what Allah has given you, without forgetting your portion of this world. And do good as Allah has been good to you. And do not seek to cause corruption in the earth. Allah does not love the corrupters.” (Al-Qasas, 28:77)

With this divine injunction, attention is drawn to the fact that attainment of happiness in the Next Life is contingent not upon renunciation of the world, but on using what has been given from worldly means in a way in which Allah approves and thus turning them into otherworldly capital.

Junayd al-Baghdadi, one of the friends of Allah (may Allah be pleased with him) once encountered a man selling ice. Upon hearing the seller calling out, “Help a man whose capital is melting,” he was shaken, then fainted and fell down.

For as sublimely indicated in the Qur'anic chapter Al-'Asr (The Late Afternoon), the human being is a traveller to eternity whose capital is wasting away day by day. If they fail to turn their worldly capital, through their belief and right actions, into capital for the Next Life, their worldly efforts will become portions that devils share with them. The outcome is great disappointment and a painful punishment.

As 'Uthman (may Allah be well pleased with him) says:

“Assuredly this world is perishing, and the Next World is abiding. Let not the fleeting tempt or distract you from that which is eternal. Prefer the abiding to that which is ephemeral. For this world is finite and the return is to Allah. Fear Allah.” (Ibn Abi al-Dunya, al-Mawsu'a, I, 77)

## Provisions for the Next World

We are all travellers who are journeying towards divine judgement at every moment. But no journey can be embarked upon without due preparation and provisions.



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once asked Abu Dharr (may Allah be well pleased with him):

“If you wish to set off on a journey, do you not make the necessary preparations?”

Abu Dharr responded:

“Yes, O Messenger of Allah.”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) continued:

“How, then, will the journey to the Day of Reckoning be? Shall I tell you what will avail you most on that Day?”

Abu Dharr (may Allah be well pleased with him) replied with great enthusiasm:

“Yes, O Messenger of Allah! May my father and mother be your ransom!”

The Prophet then said:

“The Day of Rising is a day of great heat. Fast now that you may be relieved from the heat of that Day.

Offer two units of prayer in the darkness of night, in order to lessen the darkness and loneliness in the grave.

Perform the Hajj (pilgrimage) in preparation for the overwhelming events of the Last Day, and spend in charity.

Either speak the truth or remain silent.” (Ibn Abi al-Dunya, *Kitab al-Tahajjud*; Ghazali, *Ihya*, I, 354)

Allah, glory be to Him, declares in a Qur’anic verse:

“You who believe! have taqwa (fearful awareness) of Allah and let each self look to what it has sent forward for Tomorrow. Have taqwa of Allah. Allah is aware of what you do.” (Al-Hashr, 59:18)

Allah Almighty refers to the Next Life as “tomorrow” in this verse. Our Lord, who is above and beyond time and space, refers to the time until the Last Day and the Next Life – which to the unbelievers seems as though



it will never come and to the heedless a long way off – as short as the time until tomorrow.

And just how relative a concept is time; Allah indicates in the Qur'anic verse:

“A day with your Lord is equivalent to a thousand years in the way you count.” (Al-Hajj, 22:47)

Therefore, in order to be able to reap the fruits of bliss in the eternal life, which we are as close to as ‘tomorrow’, we must hasten to good actions without delay and sow the seeds of goodness in the field of this world today. We should use our time so wisely that even if it were to be said that we will die tomorrow, we would not feel the need to make any changes to our life schedule.

How wise are the following words of Sa'di Shirazi:

*“Procure your own provisions for the Next Life during this life, for your friends will neglect you when dead, for their own selfish ends.*

*Gold and affluence give while you have them in hand; for after you die, they're not yours to command. If you wish affliction in the Next Life not to find, never let the afflicted escape from your mind. You should scatter your treasure in bounty today; for tomorrow, the key will have passed from your sway. In almsgiving, bear off your stores during life, for no sympathy comes from a son and a wife.*

*Prosperity's ball, from the world he will bear, who carries away to the future a share.*

*In compassion, excepting my own nail's, alack! Not a soul in this world thinks of scratching my back.*

*On the palm of your hand, all your wealth do not set! Lest, tomorrow, you gnaw at the hand of Regret.”*

Allah Almighty makes known to us our most precious provisions in the journey to eternity:

“Whatever good you do, Allah knows it. Take a provision; but the best provision is taqwa (fearful awareness) of Allah. So have taqwa of Me people of intelligence!” (Al-Baqara, 2:197)

Allah Almighty wants to be a Friend to His servants. The ways of attaining such friendship are described in the Divine injunctions.

Friendship springs from sharing a common purpose. Being a friend to Allah requires loving those who He loves and turning away from all those who He does not love. Righteousness is the best provision for the next world. It is to take on the praiseworthy and noble characteristics that are pleasing to Allah and taking pains to avoid those characteristics that are disliked by Him. Necessary for the attainment of such friendship is a sound heart adorned with pure goodness and righteousness.

Mawlana Jalaladin Rumi says of such friendship in his famous work the *Mathnawi*:

*“To arrive empty-handed at the door of friends is like going to the mill without wheat.*

*At the Gathering, Allah will say to the people,*

*‘Where is your gift for the Day of Resurrection?’*

*Have you come to Us without provision, alone, in the same manner as We created you? And what have you brought as an offering—a gift for the Day you rise from the dead? Or had you no hope of return? Did the promise of meeting Me seem to you vain?’*

*O you who have been created in the perfect pattern of creation! How do you step foot in the Court of that Friend with such empty hands whilst you disbelieve not in that Day? Abandon sleep and food a while in this fleeting realm and bring a gift for your meeting with Him.”*

The most excellent gift to be taken to Allah the Mighty and Majestic is an enlightened, purified heart in which His attributes of beauty are reflected.

## **Benefits of Belief in the Next World**

A believer who knows the transitory nature of the world and the Next World’s being eternal does not allow his/her heart to be taken by this world. They do not lose sight of all passing blessings each being a test and use all them in accordance with Divine approval and good pleasure. In

other words, a concern for one's Next Life and preparation for death serve to keep the slave steadfast and on the straight path.

It is self-evident that a believer who says, "Truly we fear from our Lord a glowering, calamitous Day." (Al-Insan, 76:10), will steer clear of sin and wrongdoing and strive to do good.

Only one who is oblivious leads their life without any concern for the Next Life and in accordance with their whims and desires. They are dominated by their animal appetite and are not aware of it. They consider their misery bliss with no idea about the many stages awaiting them in the grave and the Next Life, they waste their lives in a state of futile distraction.

Yet no fact will disappear by mere ignorance of it. Indeed, we have surely never heard of anyone escaping death. The fear of death has never availed anyone at the time of death.

The reality of death and the Next Life will one day most certainly catch up with those who are covering it over. The laughter of the heedless today will turn into great disappointment and bitter regret tomorrow.

Belief in the Next Life reminds every discerning person that their connection with the world will one day be severed, that they will be left to face whatever good or evil they have done and that they will see the consequences without exception. In other words, contemplation of death and the Next Life leads to heightened God-consciousness and prevents one from allowing their heart to be caught up in the world, allowing a person to regulate their actions and behaviour and avoid wrongdoing that they will later regret.

Thinking about death in times of prosperity and affluence protects the Muslim from the trials of wealth. Contemplating death in want and poverty is a means to attaining contentment of heart.

Death is the greatest test and most fearsome calamity for the human being. But what is much worse than death is to live oblivious of death and the afterlife and to waste one's life without performing deeds in search of forgiveness and reward from Allah that will be given after death. What befits a sound-minded Muslim is to prepare for death before it strikes and



for this preparation the most important thing is to purge their lower self from evil characteristics and connections to this material world.

An impure heart that is not disciplined with the Quran and Sunna will never accept the reality of death. Just as Isma'il Haqqi Bursawi (may Allah have mercy on him) says of the lower egocentric self:

“How can the lower self be a Muslim when it is the mother of unbelief. Even Satan became an unbeliever because of his lower self.”<sup>8</sup>

In other words, so long as a person fails to restrain the temptations and desires of their lower animal self and not loosen its hold on them, they will not be able to sufficiently contemplate death and the beyond it. With the animal-self overcoming spirituality, it can even lead to a person dying without belief – may Allah protect us from that.

In order to be secure against this great danger it is imperative that the lower self be purified and disciplined, and that the spirit be strengthened with acts of worship and frequent remembrance and invocation of Allah.

Shaykh Sa'di (may Allah have mercy on him) points to the importance of disciplining the soul before death:

“To the dust you will return, where you came from; Be humble, resembling the dust, then, oh, brother!”



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says:

“Let he who believes in Allah and the Last Day not harm his neighbour. Let he who believes in Allah and the Last Day honour his guest. Let he who believes in Allah and the Last Day speak well or keep silent.”  
(Bukhari, Nikah 80, Adab 31, 85, Riqaq 23; Muslim, Iman 74, 75)

A believer who wholeheartedly pays heed to this prophetic wisdom realises their dealings with the people forever with mercy, courtesy, respect and with due regard for the rights of others.

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8. *Çıktım Erik Dalına*, Istanbul 2012, p. 60.

Likewise, belief in the Next Life strengthens a person's sense of responsibility. It inspires the effort to be able to meticulously fulfil one's duty and responsibility. A person who is aware that Allah sees them always and that everything they do is being recorded and that they will be called to account in the Next Life regarding their worldly life, acquires the sensitivity of avoiding wrongdoing even in places where they are not seen by others. On the contrary, in awareness of the fact that deeds of righteousness undertaken away from the gaze of mortals, in secret and private, are more befitting a sense of 'sincerity', they deem such times and places special opportunities for the attainment of divine approval. As such, they become virtuous individuals in whose every state, public and private, others trust.

On the other hand, the Next Life is a realm which is necessarily existent in terms of both oppressors and the oppressed, the disbelieving criminals as well as the righteous. This is because there can be nothing more natural than the rewarding of good and the punishing of evil. Had there not been prisons even in this fleeting world where the evil people are punished, life would be unbearable.

Just this wisdom alone necessitates belief in the Next World.

Is it not the human being who is angered even by a mosquito that bites them and wants to kill it, while on the other hand they deem themselves indebted to a person who offers them a single cup of coffee. Consequently, it would be absurd to suppose that the evil and good issuing from a person throughout their life will remain without consequence.

If there was no reward and punishment, the divine program placing all creation at humanity's disposal would have remained meaningless, and the creation of humanity futile. This would have, in turn, contradicted the divine names Al-'Adl (The All-Just) and Al-Hakīm (The All-Wise). Just as Allah is exalted above having any deficiencies, He does not wrong His servants and is absolutely exalted above any meaningless action which has no wisdom. Allah Almighty declares: "We did not create the heaven and earth and everything between with to no purpose. That is the opinion of those who disbelieve. Woe to those who disbelieve because of the Fire. Would We make those who believe and do right actions the same as those who cause corruption on the earth? Would we make those who are godfearing the same as the dissolute?" (Sad, 38:27-28)

“Or do those who perpetrate evil deeds suppose that We will make them like those who believe and do right actions, so that their lives and deaths will be the same? How bad their judgement is! Allah created the heavens and earth with truth so that every self might be repaid for what it earned and they will not be wronged.” (Al-Jathiyah, 45:21-22)

That is to say, by virtue of His divine justice, Allah will punish the wrongdoers in the Next Life and He will reward those who do good. In the words of the Qur'an:

“Whoever does an atoms weight of good will see it. Whoever does an atoms weight of evil will see it.” (Az-Zilzal, 99:7-8)

It is stated in the Qur'anic chapter Luqman:

“My son, even if something weighs as little as a mustard-seed and is inside a rock, or anything in the heavens or earth, Allah will bring it out. Allah is All-Pervading, All-Aware.” (Luqman, 31:16)

Moreover, those who have no belief in the Next World, will surely become the most harmful people in this world, since they will worship their personal gain and self-interest. In the eyes of such people, religious sentiments, moral and spiritual responsibilities, love of people and Umma (the world community of Muslims), respect for the common good and society's interests are laughable matters. The only accomplishment for them is dishonesty and deceit.

In one Qur'anic verse, the disposition and character of those who do not believe in the Next Life is exemplified:

“You who believe! do not nullify your sadaqa (charity) by demands for gratitude or insulting words, like him who spends his wealth, showing off to people and not believing in Allah and the Last Day.” (Al-Baqara, 2:264)

Therefore, undermining the idea of religion and the Next Life is an extremely dangerous undertaking that drags societies to ruin. Recent and distant history is full of such examples.

While believers who believe in the Next Life and regulate their lives accordingly worry about their departure from this world with their belief intact, they do not have a fear of death per se. The aim of attaining the approval and good pleasure of Allah and reaching eternal bliss leads to the

endeavour to live a full life. It also gives one the ability to patiently endure the suffering of worldly life. Enjoying worldly pleasures cannot satisfy the human spirit. The spirit's repose is to be found in the spiritual tastes with which belief invests the human being.

In fact, death and the life of the Next World is mentioned in many verses with the word, *liqāa* (*liqāa l-lah, liqāi l-ākhirati*), denoting 'meeting; uniting with one's beloved.' As declared in another verse from the Qur'an:

"As for those who look forward to meeting Allah, Allah's appointed time is certainly coming. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing." (Al-Ankabut, 29:5)

In other words, while death is a painful separation filled with longing for those who are left behind, it is for believing hearts a means for the spirit's breaking out of the cage of the body, its passage from mortality to eternity and reunion after separation.

Moreover, no real achievement can be spoken of in this life without the endeavour to return to Allah, to whom we belong, honourably and with a clear conscience.

The Qur'an says of those who deny the afterlife:

"Who could do greater wrong than those who invent lies against Allah? Such people will be arrayed before their Lord and the witnesses will say, 'Those are the ones who lied against their Lord.' Yes indeed! Allah's curse is on the wrongdoers, those who bar access to the way of Allah desiring to make it crooked and reject the Next World." (Hud, 11:18-19)

"Those who deny the meeting with Allah have lost, so that, when the Last Hour comes upon them suddenly, they will say, 'Alas for how we neglected it!' They will bear their burdens on their backs. How evil is what they bear!" Livestock (Al-An'am, 6:31)

### **How does Allah invite His slaves to His Presence?**

Allah, glorified be He, invites His servants to the Abode of Peace (*Dar al-Salam*), or to the Garden. Of course, every invitation has its conditions and every blessing has a price. The Garden can be entered only with a pure,



refined, unstained and clean heart. This purity of heart is the visa, so to speak, of entry into the Garden.

Abu al-Hasan says:

“Allah Almighty brought you into the world in a pure state; so, do not go to Him with impurity.”<sup>9</sup>

When a human being is born, they smell beautiful despite coming from a murky origin and they generate a feeling of great happiness and tranquillity in the heart. This stems from their innocence and purity. Allah wants for us, too, to remain in the immaculate state in which we were sent to this world, to lead an upright life and to return to Him with an unblemished Record. For the Garden cannot be entered with the heaviness of sin and wrongdoing. Wrong actions are stains that blacken the heart. An increase in these stains causes the eye of the heart to become blind and then a person no longer feels anything when committing wrong actions.

‘Umar ibn ‘Abdulaziz (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“The forbidden acts are a burning fire. Only those whose hearts are dead reach toward them. Had the hearts of those reaching out to them been alive, they would surely have felt the pain of that fire.”

That is to say, hearts that have become hardened with wrong actions, have as a result experienced a spiritual death becoming blind to the light of truth. As declared in a Qur’anic verse:

“It is not the eyes that are blind but the hearts in the breasts that are blind.” (Al-Hajj, 22:46)

“Those who are blind in this world will be blind in the Next World and even further off the Path.” (Al-Isra’, 17:72)

“But if anyone turns away from My reminder, his life will be a dark and narrow one and on the Day of Rising We will gather him blind.’ He will say, ‘My Lord, why have you gathered me blind when before

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9. Kharraqani, Nur al-’Ulum, 258.

I was able to see?’ He will say, ‘Just as Our Signs came to you and you forgot them, in the same way you too are forgotten today.’ (Ta Ha, 20:124-125-126)

And so, the blindness in this world towards the matter of the revelation of Qur’an will turn into an eternal blindness in the Next Life.

Those whose hearts are blinded by the darkness of wrong actions cannot find the path of the Garden to which Allah Almighty invites humanity. In this respect, it is imperative that we take a pure, sound heart with us to His presence.



## CHAPTER 3



# *Death*

*The moment a human being is clothed in the bodily garb and enters the world, they start travelling towards death.*

*Were all fleeting bounties to be gathered in a single person and were they to become as wealthy as Prophet Sulayman (peace be upon him) and were they to be as beautiful as Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) and live a thousand years in bliss and splendour, what good would it do them! Is not their destination, at the end of all this, underground, where they will be buried – a narrow pit of this dark world?*



# DEATH

## Contemplation of Death

When the human being reflects deeply with the eye of their heart on the traces of Divine power displayed in their own selves and in the universe, they are obliged to think about what their worldly lives are for and how they are best spent. In the rapidly alternating days and nights, the weeks, months, seasons and years, the new that becomes old and the spectacular palaces turn into ruins. The faces in the mirror that change over time and greying of our hair should all serve as sufficient reminders for us as to where we are headed. For this reason, it is death that most merits our contemplation.

Because all of us, without exception, will one day be forced to yield to the Divine injunction, “Every self will taste death...” (Al-Anbiya, 21:35) and pass through death’s passage.

Death, the most absolute truth we know about our future, is in a sense like a single night between the day of the world and the next day of the next world. So, the world is a fleeting day and death is a temporary night and the next life the morning awakening onto the eternal reality.



The following sermon by Quss ibn Sa’ida, delivered at the Great Fair of ‘Uqaz in Mecca in the pre-Islamic era of Jahiliyya, is a stern warning and poignant mirror of belief in Divine Oneness and Unity:

“O People!

Come, pay heed and take lesson!



One who lives, dies. One who dies is lost forever. What will be, will be. Rain falls forth, grass grows, children are born and take the place of their mothers and fathers. Then they all go to ruin. All these events continue without cessation, one following the other.

Now heed my words! There are signs in the skies and lessons in the earth.

The earth a bed spread out, the sky a lofty canopy. The stars move, the seas abide. Those who come to the world do not remain. Those who die do not return. Do they remain there because they are satisfied, or are they detained or asleep?

O People!

Beware of heedlessness! Everything is passing. Only Allah is everlasting. He is One and has no partner or rival. He alone deserves to be worshipped. He begets not, nor is He begotten.

There are many instances for us to take heed in those that went before.

O tribe of Iyad! Where are your fathers and forefathers? What about 'Ad and Thamud who built lofty palaces and dwellings of stone? What of the Pharaoh and Nimrod, who in their vainglory proclaimed to their people, 'I am your Supreme Lord!'

This place crushed them in its mill, turning them into dust. Even their bones rotted away. Their dwellings were destroyed and deserted. Dogs now occupy their habitations. Do not become heedless like them! Do not follow in their footsteps! Everything is transient. Only Allah is eternal.

Once you enter the river of death, you cannot come out of it. All people, young and old, are dying. Surely I too will go where they have gone.”  
(Bayhaqi, *Kitab al-Zuhd*, II, 264; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, II, 234-241; Haythami, IX, 418)



In fact, in presenting as an example the falling asleep of bodies wearied from the various occupations of the day, Allah reminds His servants each and every day of death's reality. As mentioned in a Qur'anic verse:

“It is He who takes you back to Himself at night, while knowing the things you perpetrate by day, and then wakes you up again, so that a speci-





fied term may be fulfilled. Then you will be returned to Him. Then you will be informed about what you did.” (Al-An’am, 6:60)

When addressing the tribe of Quraysh in the early days of his public proclamation of the message of Islam, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) alluded to this truth in the following words:

“...You will die just as you fall asleep and will be raised to life just as you wake from sleep. You will certainly be raised from your graves and be brought to account before Allah for all of your actions. You will be rewarded for all the good that you did and punished with a terrible punishment for your evil. Both the Garden and the Fire are eternal.” (See Baladhuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, I, 118; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, II, 61; Halabi, *Insan al-Uyun*, I, 459)

Therefore, we should not live this fleeting life saying, like the unbelievers, “What is there but our life in this world? We die and we live and we will not be raised up again!” (Al-Muminun, 23:37), enslaved to our lower desires and oblivious of the next life.

In accordance with the truth, “He who created death and life to test which of you is best in action. He is the Almighty, the Ever-Forgiving.” (Al-Mulk, 67:2), we should live in the way Allah wants of us, in line with the Qur’anic and Prophetic guidance.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) commanded Tariq ibn ‘Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him):

“Tariq! Prepare for death before it seizes you!”<sup>10</sup> We too must take on this counsel.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) encouraged his community on numerous occasions to engage in the contemplation of death – the undeniable, inevitable reality facing all human beings:

“Remember death and the rotting of the body and the bones after death. Whoever seeks the next life will abandon the adornments of this worldly life.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 24/2458)



10. Hakim, Mustadrak, IV, 347/7868.



The companions (may Allah be pleased with them) who were raised directly under the prophetic instruction and teaching, attained such heightened spiritual sensitivity with regards to remembrance of death that everything they saw reminded them of the grave, the Day of Judgement, the Reckoning and of punishment in the next world to come.

One of the great figures of the generation of the Successors (*al-Tabi'in*), Abu Wa'il, (may Allah be pleased with him), relates:

“Once we set out with ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be well pleased with him). Al-Rabi’ ibn Khaytham (Allah have mercy on him) was with us. We passed by the workshop of a blacksmith when Abdullah ibn Mas’ud stopped to watch the iron in the fire. Al-Rabi’ looked at the fire also and almost passed out. Then ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud left. We reached a baker’s oven. When Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be well pleased with him) saw the fire blazing in the furnace, he recited these Qur’anic verses:

‘When it sees them coming from a long way off, they will hear it seething and rasping. When they are flung into a narrow place in it, shackled together in chains, they cry out there for destruction!’” (Al-Furqan, 25:12-13).

Upon this, al-Rabi’, (may Allah have mercy on him) fainted. We carried him to his home and ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be pleased with him) waited by his side until after noon, but al-Rabi’ did not regain consciousness. He waited until the evening when al-Rabi’ finally came round.” (Abu ‘Ubayd, *Fada'il Qur'an*, p. 23)



The scholar ‘Abduhamid Kishk (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“When one of the companions entered their home, his wives would ask him the following two questions (not about what happened at the market):

1. How many verses of the Qur’an were revealed today?
2. How many Traditions of Allah’s Messenger have you committed to memory?

When he was to leave his house, his wife would say:





‘Fear Allah. Do not earn a livelihood through unlawful means, for we can patiently endure hunger in this world, but we will not be able to endure the punishment of the Fire in the next world.’” (‘Abd al-Hamid Kishk, *Fi Riḥab al-Tafsir*, I, 26)



In contrast to modern humanity’s desire to live longer and more comfortably, the greatest desire of the generation of the companions of the Messenger of Allah was to make a good transition to the next life with a sound heart and clear conscience.

One day, ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be well pleased with him) said addressing his friends from the Successors:

“You fast, offer prayer and strive in doing deeds of righteousness more than the companions of Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). But they were better than you.”

When they asked how this could be, he replied:

“They had less desire for the world and greater longing for the next life than you.” (Hakim, *Mustadrak*, 4/135)



Muhammad ibn Ka’b al-Qurazi (may Allah have mercy on him) relates:

“I once encountered ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdulaziz in Medina. He was at the time a handsome youth who lived in affluence. I later called on him when he had become a Caliph. After seeking permission to enter I was most surprised at seeing him and stood in astonishment looking at his face. He asked me why I looked at him in this way.

“O Commander of the Faithful,” I said, your complexion is pale, your body worn and your hair grey and wispy. I could not hide my astonishment upon seeing you so altered.”

‘Umar ibn ‘Abdulaziz (may Allah be pleased with him) said in response:

“O Muhammad, who knows what your astonishment would be upon seeing me three days after my being placed in the grave? You would never recognised me and would be even more astonished.

Never mind all this and repeat to me the prophetic narration reported by Ibn ‘Abbas from Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) (Hakim, IV, 300/7706)



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said in one tradition:

“Remember often the destroyer of pleasures.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 4)

One who can engage in constant contemplation of death and who is aware of their being a traveller to the next life, is not fooled by fleeting pleasures and by the playthings of this worldly guesthouse and does not waste their time with them.

When children play on the beach, they build sandcastles, occupy themselves with them for a while, and when they are bored after hours of amusement, they tear them down in a single stroke. Or a wave comes and swallows the castle whole.

Death is like this. Human beings, who make plans and projections for their future and attempt to realise these, suffer sorrow when they remember death. Right in the middle of putting these into action, death destroys everything in a single moment. All that work and toil crumbles, like those sandcastles.

That being the case, what a profound heedlessness it is to give into worldly dreams and aspirations and to live covering up the reality of death!

On the authority of Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (may Allah be well pleased with him) the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once drew a square and then drew a line in the middle of it which extended beyond it. He drew some small lines within the square up to this middle line. He then asked his companions:

“Do you know what this means?”

They replied as they always did:



“Allah and His Messenger know best.”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) went on to provide the following explanation:

“This is man and this is the end of his lifespan which encircles him – or by which he is encircled – and this which goes beyond it is his hope and ambition and these small lines are things he faces through life. If this one misses him, that one gets him. If one misses him, another one strikes him.”  
(Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, III, 18)



What a petty delusion it is that while death is an inevitable reality, people squander their lives in this world on futile pursuits and preoccupations, as though they will be here forever.

Sufyan al-Thawri (may Allah be pleased with him) points to this universal human oblivion in the following words:

“Were a crier to call out to a crowd gathered: ‘Let all those who can say they will live to nightfall, stand!’ not a single person would be able to stand. All the more surprising is that despite this reality, were he to cry out to the people, ‘Let whosoever has prepared for death stand!’ not a single person would be able to rise from their place still.”



It is stated in a prophetic tradition:

“What an evil slave is the one who fancies himself and becomes vain forgetting the All-Great, the Most High.

What an evil slave is the one who violates the rights of others and tyrannises, forgetting the Compeller, the Most High.

What an evil slave is the one who is heedless and diverted, forgetting about the grave and the trials.

What an evil slave is the one who is extravagant and exceeds the bounds, forgetting his beginnings or his end.” (Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Qiyama, 17)

Attainment of the greatest knowledge for human beings begins with solving the mysteries of death and birth into the eternal world. Who can



be more unfortunate than the person whose consciousness and perception cannot penetrate the worldly limits of the cemetery wall?

Our ancestors built their cemeteries within their cities and in front of mosques so that they would constantly reflect upon mortality and lead their worldly lives in accordance with the reality of the next the life. Passers-by to see their own future and reform their own selves, feeling the transience of this current worldly life and never forgetting the looming afterlife. Far from displaying such heedlessness, they would turn their worldly bounties into a means for happiness in the eternal life. They would not be deceived by their youth, their strength and wellbeing and suppose themselves permanent residents of the world, and would thus turn away from futile and useless things. They would make every effort to procure their indispensable capital for the eternal abode, as soon as they possibly could.

### **A Solitary Journey of No Return**

Death, the unavoidable passage from the world of shadows to the real world, is the most difficult journey that a person will undertake on their own. It is declared in a Qur'anic verse:

“You have come to Us all alone just as We created you at first, leaving behind you everything We bestowed on you.” (Al-An'am, 6:94)

Neither children, nor their wealth or possessions will accompany them on this journey. Their sole companion will be the belief in their heart and the deeds of righteousness and good works they send ahead to the Next Life.

A man of wisdom once advised a heedless person in pursuit of the world with the following words:

“O heedless one deceived by the world and proud of their fleeting fortune!

Trust not the palaces and solid dwellings you build! Do not forget that your place under the earth awaits you. Your lofty, spacious and stately mansions will remain here while you lie all alone and helpless in your place in the earth. Therein you will enter with only your deeds and the account of what you have earned.”

Wealth and possessions that cannot be turned into capital for happiness in the Next Life will be a great source of regret for a person, as indicated by another person of wisdom:

“When a slave dies, they face two trials concerning their possessions, the likes of which they have never seen before:

First is the seizure of all their possessions, and secondly, their being called to account for all of them in spite of them being taken away.”

What a quandary it is for a person to be called to account for wealth that does not avail them. As clearly described in a Prophetic narration, the only thing that will accompany a person in the grave is their deeds. If these are deeds are good, they will be a friend in the grave. They will convey glad tidings, expand and illuminate their grave and protect their owner from trial, fear and torment. If, however, these are evil deeds, they will fill their owner with dread and fear and be a cause for darkness and constriction in the grave.<sup>11</sup>

Hasan al-Basri (may Allah be pleased with him) poignantly expresses this truth:

“Do not be deceived by the multitudes of people you see around you for you will die alone, be brought back to life alone and be called to account alone.”<sup>12</sup>

‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan (may Allah be well pleased with him) also warns of heedlessness in this regard:

“Children of Adam! Know that the angel of death has been following you since the day you first came to this world and jumps over you to seize another. And so, it will continue as long as you remain in the world. But the day will come that he will jump over others so as to take your life and this may happen when you least expect it. So be prepared for death and try not to be caught unawares, for he does not forget you.

Children of Adam! Know that if you remain heedless of your own soul and do not prepare, no one else will prepare for you. You will assuredly

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11. See ‘Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, III, 581-582.

12. Bursawi, *Ruh al-Bayan* [Takaathur, 3].

appear before Allah, so make the necessary preparations yourself and do not leave the task to another.” (‘Ali al-Muttaqi, 42790)

### **You will die as you have lived and will be resurrected as you have died**

Life is like the drops that fill a glass. One’s last breath, or their death, is like the last drop poured into the glass which causes the water to overflow. The clarity of the water depends on the clarity of the drops. It is essential that these droplets are not contaminated with the impurity of wrongdoing in order for a person to appear before Allah in complete purity.

The greatest sign of our spiritual state at our last breath is how we use our breath in the here and now. So, it is essential that each and every breath we take is preparation for the last breath, that we bid fair farewell to this fleeting abode. For, it has been stated:

“A person dies as they have lived and will be resurrected as they have died.” (Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadr Sharh al-Jami’ al-Saghir*, V, 663)

That is to say, the spiritual quality of all the breaths we take in all our acts of worship, daily dealings and behaviour, constitute a kind of indicator of our last breath, like a kind of worldly indication of our state in the Next World.

The following incident aptly illustrates this point:

Bahlul Dana, who lived during Abbasid rule, would look at the shaky wall of a desolated building and delve into contemplation of his end. Again, one day, as he looked on with worry, the wall suddenly collapsed. His face assumed an expression of joy. When those around him could not understand this change in emotion enquired, he said, “Do you not see, the wall collapsed in the direction to which it was tilted?”

When they asked what was so surprising about this, he offered the following wise words:

“Given that everything in the world is destined to collapse toward the side to which it is inclined, I am inclined towards Allah, so when I die, I



will reach Him. O people, let us increase our bowing down and prostration that we do not collapse in other directions.”



‘Ubaydullah Ahrar relates:

“A righteous man saw Baha’ al-Din Naqshband (may Allah have mercy upon him) in his dream after his death and asked him:

‘What should we do for our eternal deliverance?’ Baha’ al-Din Naqshband replied:

‘Preoccupy yourself with whatever one needs to be preoccupied with at the last breath.’ In other words, just as we are required to think only about Allah Almighty at death, then we should be conscious in this same way throughout our lives.<sup>13</sup>

Whatever hearts are mostly engaged with during one’s life, this is what they become busy with at death. In other words, a person dies as they have lived. There are countless examples of this.

For instance, famous hadith narrator ‘Abdulaziz ibn Abi Rawwad relates a remarkable event to which he was witness:

“I was on my way to the Prophet’s Mosque in Madina when a woman approached in haste and said:

‘If you wish to earn rewards come help! There is a gravely ill young man who is on his death bed. Urge him to recite the Shahada (declaration of faith).’

I rushed to his side but however much I tried to prompt the man to say *Lā ilāha illāllāh*, it was in vain, for the man just would not say it. At one point, he opened his eyes and said:

‘You keep telling me to recite these words, but it has been some time now that I have turned away from this Profession and from the religion of Islam. And now I just cannot say it.’ He died shortly afterwards.

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13. *Rashahat*, p. 130.



When I later enquired about him, I learned that he was an alcoholic. I remembered the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) saying, ‘One who is addicted to wine is like a worshipper of idols.’<sup>14</sup>

So, a dark life cannot have a luminous end.



Ar-Rabi’ ibn Khaytham (may Allah have mercy on him) relates in an anecdote:

“I was once present by the side of a man in the throes of death. As I prompted him to say, ‘There is no god but Allah (*Lā ilāha illāllah*)’, he seemed not to hear me, instead continuing to calculate something with his fingers, as though he were counting money.” (In other words, he breathed his last breath upon the state in which he lived).”

Where and in which state, then, do we wish to meet death? In what circumstances will our certain meeting with the Angel of Death take place? This is precisely the concern that a believer’s heart should perpetually have. For, there is also the possibility of facing death while worshipping in the mosque, when striving to earn a lawful livelihood, when in the company of the righteous, when lending an ear or offering solace to the lonely or it could take place when one is spending one’s earnings in the way of Allah for His servants. Or, on the contrary – Allah forbid – one can also die in unseemly circumstances: when breaking the heart of another; standing on the side of falsehood instead of in defence of the truth; in a moment of anger; in pursuit of base pleasures; in the presence of Allah’s enemies or wrongdoers; while witnessing evil; or while engrossed in the unlawful.



In the same way, the human being will surely be resurrected in the state in which he dies. ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr (may Allah be well pleased with him) once asked:

“Messenger of Allah, tell me about jihad and fighting.”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied:



“Abdullah ibn Amr, if you fight sincerely and with patience, seeking your reward only from Allah, Allah will resurrect you as one who is patient and sincere, seeking your reward only from Him; but, if you fight for show, in vanity and boasting, Allah will resurrect you as a self-conceited person who fights for show off and boast.

O’ Abdullah ibn Amr, in whatever state you fight or are killed, Allah will resurrect you in that same state.” (Abu Dawud, Jihad, 24/2519; Hakim, II, 95/2437)

Other prophetic traditions on the subject are as follows:

“Every person will be raised (in the same very state) in which they die.” (Muslim, Janna, 83)

### For Soundness of Belief at the Last Breath

When the human being receives a worldly diploma, that diploma remains valid throughout their life. But this is not the case with the spiritual life. There is no such guarantee there. On the contrary, there is always the danger of losing one’s spiritual state or belief at any moment. Indeed, the Qur’an relates the stories of those, like Bal’am bin Ba’ura’ and Qarun, who went astray in the last stages of their lives.

Qarun was once a righteous slave of Allah, among the best commentators of the Torah. He was later tested by Allah almighty with wealth. Driven to self-conceit due to his riches and material strength, he took a stance against Prophet Musa (peace be upon him). This pride and conceit led to his own ruin.<sup>15</sup>

Also having lived during the time of Prophet Musa, Bal’am bin Ba’ura’,<sup>16</sup> too, fell prey to his vain desires and thus ruined his Next Life.

15. See (28:76-82).

16. **"Relate to them the story of the man to whom We sent Our signs, but he passed them by: so Satan followed him up, and he went astray"** (Al-A'raf, 7: 175)

The exegetes of the Qur'an interpreted that the man whose name was not mentioned in this verse was Bal'am bin Baura from the peoples of Moses (pbuh). Bal'am who once had been among the believers of Moses converted to disbelief in pursuit of simple worldly benefits.

“Recite to them the tale of him whom We gave Our Signs, but who then cast them to one side and shaytan caught up with him. He was one of those lured into error.” (Al-Araf, 7:175)

Qur’anic exegetes have indicated that the person mentioned in this verse is indeed Bal’am bin Ba’ura’. While having believed in Prophet Musa initially, he went astray in exchange for petty worldly interests.

Only the Prophets and those that the Prophets themselves have explicitly confirmed have any guarantee when it comes to departing from this world with sound belief in their hearts.

For this reason, the heart of a believer:

✓ Needs to constantly oscillate between the two realities of hope and fear throughout their entire life, in a perpetual state of vigilance.

✓ Needs to strive to understand the wisdom behind the Qur’anic verse: “And (continue to) worship your Lord until what is certain (death) comes to you.”

✓ Must spend in the effort of translating the Qur’an and the prophetic way into action at every breath, reciting repeatedly and wholeheartedly the supplication of Prophet Yusuf: “My Lord ... Take me to back to You as a Muslim at my death and join me to the people who are righteous.” (Yusuf, 12:101)

✓ It should not be forgotten that the most important diploma to be earned in this world of trial is the testimony of belief at one’s last breath.

The following example vividly illustrates the importance of spiritual vigilance until this appointed time:

Friend of Allah, Sufyan Ath-Thawri, was bent double in humility at a very young age. To those who enquired about the reason, he used to say:

“I had a teacher from whom I received instruction. During his death, he could not recite the declaration of Belief despite my frequent prompting for him to do so. Seeing him in such a state caused me to become thus.”



The last breath is the most critical and difficult moment in one's life. All a person's worldly thoughts, dreams and plans are upset and upturned at this moment and they are in a state of utter confusion and disarray. It is declared in a Qur'anic verse:

"The throes of death come revealing the truth. That is what you were trying to evade!" (Qaf, 50:19)

'Aisha (may Allah be well pleased with her) relates:

"(Nearing the time of his death,) There was a vessel or a container containing some water in front of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and he put his hands in the water and wipe his face with them, saying, 'There is no god but Allah. Death has its agonies.'" (Bukhari, Riqaq 42, Maghazi 83)

It is therefore imperative that one prepare for this most difficult moment, so that they can affirm the words of the shahadah (declaration of belief) at the last breath. For it is no easy thing for a person in whose heart belief has not taken root, who has not led a life in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunna, whose tongue has not become accustomed to remembrance of Allah, to utter the Declaration of Faith at that gruelling moment.



'Umar (may Allah be well pleased with him) once saw Talha in a state of sorrow. When he asked him why he was in such a state, Talha (may Allah be well pleased with him) said:

"The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once said:

'I know a word the invocation of which at the time of death will assuredly be a light for the dying person's book of deeds and with it their body and spirit will attain Divine approval, mercy and repose at the moment of their death.' The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) passed away before I was able to ask him what this word was. This is what grieves me."

Upon this, 'Umar (may Allah be well pleased with him) said:



“I know that word. It is the statement, ‘There is no god but Allah’ (*Lā ilāha illāllah*), which the Messenger of Allah wished that his uncle, Abu Talib had said. If the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) had known of a word better than this, he would certainly have desired for him to have uttered that instead.” (Ibn Majah, Adab, 54. See also Ahmad, I, 6)

For the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“He whose last words are: ‘*Lā ilāha illāllah*’ (There is no god but Allah) will enter The Garden.”<sup>17</sup>

According to the scholars, that which is implied in this saying means the statement, “*Lā ilāha illāllah*”, and its inseparable addition, “*Muḥammadun rasūlullah*.” Both, ‘there is no god but Allah’ and ‘Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,’ need to be recited together. Some narrations mention only the statement, “*Lā ilāha illāllah*”, while both statements are implied. This is because, legally speaking, the words “*Lā ilāha illāllah*” have been taken to signify both clauses of the Declaration.<sup>18</sup>

The Declaration of Faith become imprinted on the heart of a person as a consequence of a life lead in agreement with it. If the slave is neglectful, deficient or completely indifferent towards the Divine commands and prohibitions, a great chasm is created between them and this sublime Declaration of Faith. This chasm only deepens and continues to do so as long as they fail to turn away from their heedlessness back to Allah asking for his forgiveness. In the end, its only remaining connection with the slave becomes an empty assertion that goes nothing beyond mere vocal expression and utterance and this amounts to absolute ruin.

Allah Almighty declares:

“Do people imagine that they will be left to say, ‘We believe,’ and will not be tested? We tested those before them so that Allah would know the truthful and the liars.” (Al-Ankabut, 29:2-3)



17. Abu Dawud, Jana'iz, 15-16/3116; Ahmad, V, 247; Hakim, I, 503, cf. Bukhari, Jana'iz, 1.

18. al-'Azim Abadi, *Awn al-Ma'bud*, Beirut 1415, VIII, 267-268.

When Wahb ibn Munabbih (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked:

“Is not the invoking of, *“Lā ilāha illāllah”* (There is no god but Allah), the key to the Garden?” he replied:

“Indeed, but certainly every key has its teeth. If you bring a key that has teeth, the door shall open for you; otherwise, it will not.” (Bukhari, Jana’iz, 1)

Likewise, Imam Zuhri, the great scholar from the generation of the Successors (may Allah be pleased with him) was once asked concerning the Prophetic narration, “Whoever says *‘Lā ilāha illāllah’* will enter the Garden.” He replied:

“This was only in the early days of Islam, before the revelation of the Divine commands and prohibitions.” (Tirmidhi, Iman, 17/2638)

That is to say, with the completion of the Deen (way of life), fulfilling all the rules, commandments and injunctions of the Qur’an and the Sunna became mandatory. In this respect, it is essential, for our eternal happiness in the Next World that every moment of our worldly lives be in line with the profession of belief.

Negligence and deeds of wrongdoing more often than not become obstacles to professing one’s belief at the last breath. One of the stories related in relation to this is the following:

A man who used to strive to weigh with a true, accurate balance was in his death throes. When he was prompted to say, *Lā ilāha illāllah*, he managed to say it with great difficulty:

“Pray that Allah make it easy for me to recite the Profession of Faith. The tongue of the scales is weighing down on my own tongue and preventing me from professing my belief. For I never used to wipe the small amount of dust remaining on the scales and would never clean the dust and dirt that accumulated on them due to the wind.”<sup>19</sup>



Muhammad Ma’sum al-Faruqi says:

19. İmâm Şârânî, *Ölüm Kiyâmet Âhiret*, Bedir Yayınları, p. 48.



“The fear of the last breath is a blessing by which all Friends of Allah have been affected.”

A believer who carries this feeling in their heart leads his worldly life with meticulous caution, as though they were walking through a minefield. They yield wholeheartedly to the silent counsel of the graveyards, that their last stop in this world be a garden of the Garden. They come to the realisation that preparation for death is not so much preparing the grave for themselves, but preparing themselves for the grave.



It is recorded that Ahmad Harb had an elderly Zoroastrian neighbour; whose name was Bahram. Ahmad Harb once invited his neighbour to accept Islam, upon which the elderly Bahram replied:

“Let me put to you three questions. If you can answer all of these, I will accept Islam.”

Ahmad agreed, so Bahram asked:

“Why did Allah create human beings? Having created them and providing their sustenance, why does He cause them to die? And having caused them to die, why does He raise them up again?”

Ahmad replied:

“He created them to serve Him, realising His existence and Oneness and coming to perceive the manifestations of His power and majesty.

He provided them so they might know Him to be the All-Providing and All-Merciful.

He causes them to die that they might know His All-Overwhelming power.

He raises them back to life again to make them know Him as the All-Permanent, absolutely All-Powerful One Who has full knowledge of and power over all things.”

After a moment of reflection upon hearing this response, Bahram professed his belief. But Ahmad Harb fainted. When he regained consciousness, they asked him why he fainted, to which he replied:



“The very moment [when Bahram recited the Declaration of Faith], a voice from within called out to me saying: ‘Bahram was a Zoroastrian for seventy years and now he has believed. You, however, have spent seventy years in belief; do you know what will befall you at your last breath?’”<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, we must ensure that every breath we take will render the last moment of our worldly life a propitious one. In addition, we must not rely upon our good deeds and steadfastness, instead seeking refuge in Divine mercy and forgiveness for the sake of our eternal salvation.

As is stated in a prophetic narration:

“Verily, a person performs the deeds of the people of the Garden for a long time. Then his deeds are transformed into the deeds of the people of the Fire and, truly, a person performs deeds like the people of the Fire for a long time, and then his deeds are transformed into the deeds of the people of the Garden.” (Muslim, Qadar, 11)



‘Uthman (may Allah be well pleased with him) said:

The true believer possesses six different kinds of fear:

1. Fear of losing their belief;
2. Fear of the Recording Angels having written something that will be the cause of their disgrace on the Day of Reckoning;
3. The fear that the accursed Satan will bring their deeds to naught;
4. The fear that the Angel of Death will come to them at a time of heedlessness and catch them unawares;
5. The fear of being caught up in distractions such as family and children that might divert them from remembrance of Allah and the mentioning of His Names; and
6. The fear of being tempted by this world and remaining heedless of the Next World.

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20. *Tazkirat al-Awliya*, p. 97.



Thus, by teaching us the following supplication, our Lord reveals the way in which we need to turn to Him:

‘Our Lord, do not make our hearts swerve aside after You have guided us. And give us mercy directly from You. You are the Ever-Giving’ (Al ‘Imran, 3:8)



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would frequently recite the following supplication:

*Ya muqallib al-qulub, thabbit qalbi ‘ala dinik.*

“O Overturner of Hearts! Make my heart firm upon Your Religion.”

Moreover, when Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be well pleased with him) once asked him:

“O Messenger of Allah, we believe in you and what you have come with, but is it that you fear for our belief?” The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied:

“Yes. Indeed, hearts are between the two Fingers of the All-Merciful; He changes them as He wills.” (Tirmidhi, Qadar, 7/2140)



Another point is that the believer must always think the best of their Lord. On this, Jabir ibn Abdullah (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates:

“I heard the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) saying three days before his death:

‘None of you should die except with a good opinion of Allah, the Exalted and Glorious.’” (Muslim, Janna, 82; Abu Dawud, Jana’iz, 12-13/3113)

As stated in a Sacred Tradition (*hadith Qudsi*),

“I am in My slaves opinion of Me. I am with him wherever he is and whenever he makes mention of Me.” (Bukhari, Tawhid, 15, 35; Muslim, Tawba, 1.)





Thinking well of Allah is to attract His compassion and kindness, never to despair of His infinite mercy, hoping for His forgiveness, and having unwavering confidence and belief in the attainment of such happiness.

But for this to happen, a person needs to possess pure belief and right action. The joining together of belief and good deeds in so many verses of the Qur'an points to their mutual interdependence.

And so, a person who hopes for good and mercy from Allah and who strives to fulfil all their obligations, will find Allah just as they have thought of Him. One who expects otherwise, will find Him to be otherwise.

Let us conclude this discussion with the earnest entreaty of Abu Bakr (may Allah be well pleased with him):

“O Allah, make the best part of my life its end, the best part of my deeds their results and the best of my days the day in which I am reunited with You!”<sup>21</sup>

*Amin.*

### **In the company of the dying**

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has instructed his community to speak of good things when in the company of the ill or dying:

“When you visit one who is sick or dying, say good things, for the angels say ‘*Amin*’ to whatever you say.” (Muslim, *Jana'iz*, 6; Abu Dawud, *Jana'iz*, 15)

“When one of you visits the sick, offer them words of reassurance and hope regarding their life. Indeed, these will not repel anything that is preordained for them, but will offer comfort to their soul.” (Tirmidhi, *Tibb*, 35/2087; Ibn Majah, *Jana'iz*, 1/1438)

Similarly, prompting a dying person to say, ‘*Lā ilāha illāllāh*’ is a religious obligation. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said:

21. al-Suyuti, *Tarikh al-Khulafa'*, p.103.

“Urge those of you who are dying to say, ‘*Lā ilāha illāllah*.’” (Muslim, Jana’iz, 1, 2; Abu Dawud, Jana’iz, 15-16/3117)

Great care, kindness and tenderness, however, is required when undertaking this task. It is not right to force the sick person to recite the Profession of Faith, or to be overly insistent. Disturbing or harassing the sick at such a difficult time can cause them to die – Allah forbid – without professing their belief, or to act in a manner contrary to Islamic faith.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, if a believer has not uttered any worldly words after having uttered the Declaration of Faith, their last words are considered as being the profession of faith, no matter the length of their illness or death throes. It is thus hoped that they will become those to whom the Messenger of Allah has given glad tidings in the Prophetic narration, “He whose last words are, ‘*Lā ilāha illāllah*’ (There is no god but Allah) will enter the Garden.”<sup>23</sup> There is therefore no need to repeatedly prompt individuals in such cases.

Furthermore, reciting the Qur’an, especially the Qur’anic chapter Ya-Sin in the company of the dying in a pleasant, soothing voice, is something that has also been encouraged.

## The Moment of Death

Death will greet each person in a way that is consistent with their life. For some, the morning bliss of a day of festivity and for others, a torturous journey.

Indeed, the angels will seize the souls of righteous believers at the moment of death, slowly and pleasantly, without causing any trouble: “... and those who draw out gently...” (An-Nazi’at, 79:2)

22. “If a person in the throes of death is one who has spent their life with belief and who has not shown any indication of unbelief only to display unexpected signs of unbelief at the last moment, this is deemed insanity and they cannot be deprived of the treatment that is due to other believers.” (Necip Fâzıl Kısakürek, *İman ve İslâm Atlası*, Büyük Doğu Yayınları, İstanbul, 2017, p. 330.)

23. Abu Dawud, Jana’iz, 15-16/3116; Ahmad, V, 247; Hakim, I, 503, cf. Bukhari, Jana’iz, 1.

“Those the angels take in a virtuous state. They say, ‘Peace be upon you! Enter the Garden for what you did, (An-Nahl, 16:32) this is how they will offer glad tidings to them.

The veil will be lifted from one’s eyes, the angels will become visible and happy news will be given to them. This reality is described in a Qur’anic verse as follows:

“The angels descend on those who say, ‘Our Lord is Allah,’ and then go straight: ‘Do not fear and do not grieve but rejoice in the Garden you have been promised. We are your protectors in the life of this world and the Next World. You will have there everything you demand. Hospitality from One who is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Fussilat, 41:30-32)

Similarly, it is revealed that one who has spent their life in worship and dutiful obedience to Allah, whose heart has found contentment with remembrance of Allah, will be addressed first at the moment of death, then at the place of the Supreme Gathering, followed by their entry to the Garden, with the following words:

“O self at rest and at peace, return to your Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing! Enter among My slaves! Enter My Garden.” (Al-Fajr, 89:27-30)

A closer look at the words in the verse reveals that the servant’s being pleased with their Lord is mentioned first. That is to say, in order to obtain their visa for the Garden, the slave must always be pleased with the will of their Lord and must continue their servitude with patience and thanks, that their Lord, too, may be well pleased with them.



The moment of death for hearts darkened with ignorance that have been deprived of the light of belief will be an utter tragedy. The angels seize their souls violently,<sup>24</sup> and they will die an agonising death, caught between the scolding and striking of the angels.

Allah Almighty describes this horrendous scene as follows:

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24. See (79:1).

“If you could see when the angels take back those who disbelieved at their death, beating their faces and their backs: ‘Taste the punishment of the Burning!’” (Al-Anfal, 8:50)

“As for those the angels take in death while they were wronging themselves, they will offer their submission: ‘We did not do any evil.’ Oh yes you did! Allah knows what you were doing. ‘Enter the gates of Hell, remaining in it timelessly, for ever. How evil is the abode of the arrogant!’” (Al-Anfal, 16:28-29)

“But how when the angels take them in death, beating their faces and their backs?” (Muhammad, 47:27)

The following depiction in a Prophetic narration of the way in which the soul of a transgressor will be taken from their body offers a terrifying warning:

“The soul is taken from the body like a pronged skewer is ripped out through a wet piece of wool.” (Hakim, Mustadrak, I, 93-95/107, cf. Ahmad, IV, 287, 295; Haythami, III, 50-51)

Again, Allah addresses the polytheists in the following Qur’anic verses:

“No indeed! When it reaches the gullet and he hears the words, ‘Who can heal him now?’ and he knows it is indeed the final parting, and one leg is entwined with the other: that Day he will be driven to your Lord. He neither affirmed that truth nor did he pray, but rather denied the truth and turned away and then went off to his family swaggering.” (Al-Qiyama, 75:26-33)

The state, at the moment of death, of those with a frightful end is described in the Qur’anic chapter al-Waqi’a:

“Why then when death reaches his throat and you are at that moment looking on – and We are nearer him than you but you cannot see - why then, if you are not subject to Our command, do you not send it back if you are telling the truth.” (Al-Waqi’a, 56:83-87)

All humanity shall inevitably surrender to the Divine will at the moment of death. Even those tyrants and self-conceited people who oppose the Divine commandments in stubborn defiance, will not be able to object in any way. With the countless veils before their awareness and



perception lifted, the human being will only at that moment be able to fully see, in complete awe, that it is to Allah we and the universe belongs. Alas, to no avail!

The verses which follow, read:

“But the truth is that if he is one of Those Brought Near, there is solace and sweetness and a Garden of Delight. And if he is one of the Companions of the Right, ‘Peace be upon you!’ from the Companions of the Right. And if he is one of the misguided deniers, there is hospitality of scalding water and roasting in the Blazing Fire. This is indeed the truth of Certainty. So glorify the Name of your Lord, the Magnificent.” (Al-Waqi’a, 56:88-96)

On one occasion, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“Allah loves to meet anyone who loves to meet Him. Allah is averse to meeting anyone who is averse to meeting Him.”

‘Aisha (may Allah be well pleased with her) or another one of his wives said:

“O Messenger of Allah, “We dislike death.”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“This is not what is meant, for when the believer is given the good news at the moment of death of the mercy of Allah and His good pleasure and His eternal grace and kindness, there remains nothing more agreeable to him than attaining these things. He wants to meet Allah and so Allah wants to meet him.

When the unbeliever is given the news of the punishment of Allah and His wrath, there remains nothing more disagreeable to him than these things. He is averse to meeting Allah and so Allah is averse to meeting him.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 41; Muslim, Dhikr, 14)



Again, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:



“Prophet Dawud (upon him be peace) was a very devout man and attached great importance to protecting the honour and reputation of his family. When he went out of his home, he locked the door, so that nobody could enter his house until he returned. One day he went out and returned, only to find a man standing in the middle of the house, so he asked him:

‘Who are you?’

The man replied, ‘I am the one who fears no king, nor am I hindered by any veil.’

Prophet Dawud (peace be upon him) then said:

“Then, you could be none other than the Angel of Death, so welcome with Allah’s Command.’

His soul was seized shortly after...” (Ahmad, II, 419)

The late Necip Fazıl (may Allah have mercy on him) puts it beautifully:

At that moment veils are lifted and veils descend,

Welcoming the Angel of Death, the true attainment.

There is a saying about the one who laughs last. The real meaning of this is that there can be no better smile than the smile on the face of the person for whom all the veils are lifted at their last breath and who is shown their destined place. The best happiest smile of the slave in this world is at that moment. May Allah grant us such happiness.



The famous Umayyad caliph Sulayman ‘Abd al-Malik (may Allah have mercy on him) once asked the gnostic Abu Hazim:

“What will the return to Allah be like?” Abu Hazim replied:

“The return of an obedient slave is like the return home to his family after separation from them, who eagerly await his return. As for the transgressor, it will be like the return of a slave who ran away from his master.”

## Regret

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once said by way of warning to his community:

“There is no one who dies who does not feel regret.” His Companions asked:

“What shall they regret, O Messenger of Allah?” The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“A good-doer will regret that they did not do more and a wrongdoer will regret that they did not give up evil and reform their ways.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 59, 59/2403)

Allah Almighty cautions us as follows:

“You who believe! do not let your wealth or children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. Whoever does that is lost. Give from what We have provided for you before death comes to one of you and he says, ‘My Lord, if only you would give me a little more time so that I can give sadaqa (charity) and be one of the righteous!’ Allah will not give anyone more time, once their time has come. Allah is aware of what you do.” (Al-Munafiqun, 63:9-10-11)

“He will say, ‘Oh! If only I had prepared in advance for this life of mine!’” (Al-Fajr, 89:24)

A person of means, therefore, should send in advance to the Next Life the Divinely-bestowed provision that they received while they still have the chance, preparing for the difficult and gruelling Day of Reckoning. It should not be forgotten that when we all pass on to the eternal world in the future, neither will the wealthy have any means at their disposal to give away, nor will any possibility remain of turning fleeting bounties into capital for eternal happiness.



‘Ali, (may Allah be well pleased with him) said:

“This world is retreating and the next is approaching. Both have sons of their own. Be among the sons of the Next Life and not among the sons of this world.



Today there is a chance to act and without reckoning. While tomorrow there will be only reckoning and no chance to act.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 4)

Just as a student leaving an exam room cannot return to the exam, respond to examination questions and in this way increase their mark – even if they remember the answers that escaped their mind during the exam – remembering that, after death the answers to the questions in the trial of life will not avail a person in the least; far from it, they will be more a cause of regret.



The wise words of Abu Dharr (may Allah be well pleased with him) powerfully encapsulate the importance of preparing for Next World, so as then not to say, “If only...”

“There are three partners in one’s wealth. The first is you, the owner. The second is Divine destiny, which does not consult you as to whether it will bring destruction or death. The third is its heir, waiting for you to put your head down (in the grave), and take away your wealth upon your death, while you are left to account for it. Do whatever you can to ensure that you do not become the most helpless of these three partners.

Allah, gloried and exalted be He, says: ‘You will never be able to attain godliness and virtue until you spend of what you love (in Allah’s cause, or to provide sustenance for the needy)...’<sup>25</sup> This camel is the most prized of my possessions, so I am sending it ahead of myself.” (Abu Nu’aym, Hilya, I, 163)



The following practice of the gnostic Ar-Rabi’ ibn Khaytham is should be noted in the matter of preparation for death and beyond:

Ar-Rabi’ ibn Khaytham once dug a grave for himself in his garden. When he felt that his heart becoming hardened, he would lie down in it and remain there for some time. He would contemplate his inevitable departure from the world. Reflecting upon the need he will have in the grave for repentance and charity, he would think about the reckoning in





the Next Life and engage in deep self-criticism. He would then recite the following verses from the Qur'an:

"When death comes to one of them, he says, 'My Lord, send me back again so that I may act rightly regarding the things I failed to do!' No indeed! They are merely words that he utters. Before them there is an inter-space until the Day they are raised up." (Al-Muminun, 23:99-100)

When Ar-Rabi' got out of the grave, he would say to himself:

"O Rabi'! Look, today you have been sent back. But there will come a time when your request will not be fulfilled and when you will not be sent back. So, take utmost precaution and increase your efforts of righteousness, your struggle in the way of Allah and your preparations for the Next Life."



Imam Ghazali's (may Allah have mercy on him) words of caution are also piercing:

"O youth, suppose you die today. How you will be grieved for all your moments of heedlessness, exclaiming, 'If only!' But Alas! (There is no chance of return!)"

"Every believer should remind themselves after observing the Morning Prayer:

My capital is my life. When my life comes to an end, my capital is all that I spent that I no longer have any chance of acquiring. Today is a new day. Allah the Exalted has favoured me by granting me respite. (Turning over a new leaf for me in the book of life.) Had he seized my soul, I would surely have wished to be sent to the world, even if for one day, to perform many deeds of righteousness.

Now suppose you have died and have been given permission to return to the world for one day. So, keep away from evil today, whatever you do! Waste not even a single moment today. For every breath is a priceless blessing."



For this reason, hastening to do good for the Next Life should be everyone's priority. This is why we must not be deceived by the world's



temporary pleasures. We must not forget that all the worldly bounties we imagine that we own are in actual fact no different to a treasure found in a dream. In the words of Mawlana Jalal al-Rumi, we must strive to “return to the true owner everything that needs to be returned before death takes back what was given.”

Allah Almighty cautions us against heedlessness in this regard:

“You who believe! Give away some of what We have provided for you before a Day arrives on which there is no trading, no close friendship and no intercession. It is the unbelievers who are the wrong doers.” (Al-Baqara, 2:254)

Let us thus, in line with the maxim, “Die before you die,” abandon today, with our own free will, those baseless passions and worldly desires which we will be forced to abandon at death. Let us reform ourselves with repentance before death strikes, so that the last breath will not be a mirror of disappointment in which we behold our lives in regret.

It will not be possible for us to do anything for our Next Life, once the span of our lives comes to an end and any remorse for our worldly lives will be utterly useless. Time is the greatest favour that Allah bestows upon His servant. Time cannot be turned back, accumulated, lent or borrowed. In fact, Allah swears by time in the Qur’anic chapter ‘al-’Asr,’ warning that those who do not believe and do not perform good deeds of and therefore fail to call to the truth and patience are in a state of total loss.

Consequently, today is the day for preparation for a reckoning that will enable us to attain forgiveness and acceptance on the Day of Gathering. The time to act is now! For this reason, it has been said, “Those who defer to tomorrow have been ruined!” For nobody has any guarantee that they will make it to tomorrow.

We should hasten, therefore, to do great works and make the following counsel of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) our life’s motto:

“O People! Repent to Allah before you die. Hasten to do good deeds before you become preoccupied with other troubles and hardships. Uphold the rights of your Lord by remembering Him a great deal and by giving a

great deal of charity, openly and secretly, that you be granted provision and Divine support, and your condition be reformed.” (Ibn Majah, Iqama, 78)

### **The Soul's Journey**

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, has related certain scenes from the realm of the grave, the Last Day and the Next World, that we stop and reflect and prepare for the last breath and beyond.

On the authority of Abu Hurayra (may Allah be well pleased with him) the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once said:

“When the soul of a believer leaves their body, it is received by two angels who raise it to the heavens. He then mentioned the sweetness of its fragrance emitted from the believer’s soul. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) further said that the inhabitants of the heavens say:

‘Here comes a pleasant, right acting soul from the earth. May the blessings of Allah be upon the body in which it resides.’

And then it is carried by the angels to its Lord, the Exalted and Glorious. He says:

“Take it to its destined end the grave that is a garden from among the gardens of the Garden.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) then made mention of the foul smell of the soul of the unbeliever as it leaves the body and of its being cursed.

“The inhabitants of the heavens say, ‘Here comes an impure soul from earth’ and it will be said: ‘Take it to its destined end, a pit from among the pits of Hell.’

Abu Hurayra then reported that The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) placed the thin cloth which was with him upon his nose while making mention (of the foul smell) of the soul of an unbeliever. (Muslim, Janna, 75)



## The Body's Journey

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“When a body is laid out and the men carry it on their shoulders, if it was a righteous person, it says, ‘Take me forward,’ (to the promised reward in return for my righteous deeds).

If it was not righteous, it says, ‘Alas, where are you taking me?’

All things except human beings hear its voice. Were human beings to hear it, they would faint.” (Bukhari, Jana’iz, 50, 90, 91)



Bara’ (may Allah be well pleased with him) describes the state of The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) at a funeral:

“We were with the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) at a funeral, and he sat at the edge of the grave weeping, until the earth became wet with his tears. Then he said:

‘O my brothers, prepare yourselves for an important place such as this.’” (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 19)



## CHAPTER 4



### *Life of the Grave*

*Though it may seem like a silent mound of earth from the outside, the grave, in which every human being will enter, is like a cross-section of the Place of the Supreme Gathering. The first station of those in the Next World, the grave will take shape according to how we observed the divine commands and prohibitions in this world. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:*

*“The grave is either a garden from among the gardens of the Garden, or a pit from among the pits of Hell.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 26)*



## THE INTERMEDIATE REALM AND THE NEXT WORLD <sup>26</sup>

Having departed from this world with death, we will then pass on to the life of the grave, in other words, to the temporary station that is the intermediate realm. After this, the last phase of the Next World, will begin.

The intermediate realm is temporary, just like life on earth. But the next phase that follows it however, is a life where both bliss and punishment are never ending.

The most important point concerning the intermediate realm and the Next Life is this: Life in both these realms is very different, in many ways, from life in this world. Time and space will be very different in these two realms.

For instance, we refer to time in this world in accordance with the rising and setting of the sun. We calculate days in reference to hours and months in reference to the days and the years in reference to months. All these will become meaningless when we enter the grave. The measurement of time there will be particular to the intermediate realm.

The same is true for the eternal realm. In fact, as it is endless, measurements, scales, time and space in that life will be completely different from those in this world. In trying to understand the information provided in the Qur'an and prophetic narrations concerning the life of the Next World, let us not make the mistake of assessing these in accordance with the standards and measures of this world.

Human beings have discovered that even in this life, the concepts of space and time are applicable only on Earth. It is known that time slows down in space and there is the expansion of space-time. Scientists have shown that if a twin was sent to the gravitational field of a large planet and remained there for 10 earth years, they would have aged less than their twin sibling. NASA astronaut Scott Kelly undertook a yearlong mission aboard the International Space Station in 2015. He returned 5 cm taller and one 100th of a second younger than his twin brother.

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26. [Ebubekir Sifil's comments on the section concerning the Life of the Grave and the Next Life in our book.]

This information can help us understand why it is not right to try to understand the eternal life of the Next World on the basis of worldly dimensions. Inevitably, our mind can only attempt to understand what we do not know by comparing it to what we do know. When someone describes someone we do not know, they do so by likening them to other acquaintances that we have in common, saying things like, "They are as tall as So-and-so, their face or eyes looks like the face or eyes of So-and-So..."

How, then, can we describe an entity that we have never known? Were someone to say to us, "I just saw someone who is neither male nor female with no gender." What would we understand from this? We would not understand much, because we have never seen a person who does not have a gender. Having said that, we are firmly convinced of the existence of such creatures as angels, because the Qur'an and in the Prophetic narration inform us of these. But angels are genderless and in many other ways way beyond anything we have any reference of.

In the same way, we do not know what the spirit is, what its nature and characteristics are. But we firmly believe in its existence. In revealing to us in the 85th verse of the Qur'anic chapter Al-Isra', "of knowledge, you have been granted only a little," Allah, glorified and exalted be He, declares that there are many things that we cannot comprehend or explain.

This goes to show that belief is one thing, while perception is another. We believe in many things, the existence of which the Qur'an and the prophetic narrations inform us of, even if we cannot fully comprehend them. This is one meaning of belief in the Unseen.

Matters such as questioning in the grave, the grave's expansion and wideness for the believers and its contraction and narrowness for the unbelievers, need to be evaluated within this context.

In much the same way, the endlessness of the life in Garden in the Next World, with the absence of such things as old age, illness, suffering in any way at all, as well as the continual renewal of the bodies of those condemned to the Fire, without their being permitted to burn to ashes, need to be considered in the same light. While inexplicable from the perspective of worldly dimensions and measurements, all these are very real and true.





## LIFE OF THE GRAVE

The intermediate realm refers to the life of the grave that begins with a person's death and which will continue until the resurrection. This truth is expressed in the Qur'an as follows:

“When death comes to one of them, he says, ‘My Lord send me back again so that perhaps I may act rightly regarding the things I failed to do! No indeed they are merely words he utters. Before them there is an inter-space until the Day they are raised up.’” (Al-Muminun, 23:99-100)

However long human beings live in this world, they will, when they reach the last of their numbered breaths, assuredly be a traveller to this intermediate realm. The only worldly thing they will be able to take with them on this journey will be a few metres of burial shroud.

Hence, the shroud, which is the last garment of this fleeting life, will one day most certainly enwrap all people, as will death, setting its seal on all transient transactions, pleasures, attractions and beguiling glitters. As a result, the body of the human being will return to the earth out of which it was created.

The body is a covering for the spirit. On the Day of Resurrection on which all people will be raised back life, this spirit will be clothed with a new body. The nature of this body will manifest itself according to the spiritual level obtained while in the world.

Mawlana Jalaladin Rumi (may Allah have mercy on him) illustrates this truth in a vivid manner:

“Reduce the sweets and delicacies with which you feed your body. For one who nourishes the body excessively falls prey to its desires and faces eventual disgrace and ruin.”



“Give the soul spiritual sustenance. Let there be mature thought, subtle understanding, and spiritual sustenance, so that the soul goes to its destination safe and sound.”

Just as the signs indicating whether one’s eternal life will be bliss or tribulation begin to show at the last breath, the life of the grave, which is first of the stops along the journey to the final eternal abode, constitutes the second most important stage in this journey.

Hani’, the freed slave of ‘Uthman (may Allah be well pleased with both of them) reported:

When ‘Uthman (may Allah be well pleased with him) stood by a grave, he would weep until his beard was wet. He was once asked:

“You remember the Garden and the Fire but you do not weep, yet you weep because of this?”

‘Uthman (may Allah be well pleased with him) replied:

“I have heard the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) say:

“Surely, the grave is the first stage of the stages of the Next World, so if one is saved from troubles in it, whatever follows will be easier than it. But if one is not saved from it, then whatever follows will be harder and more severe.” And the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: “I have not seen any sight more terrifying or gruelling than it.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 5/2308; Ahmad, I, 63-64)

The deceased person in the grave is, in a sense, like a person drowning in the sea and frantically calling out for help. They await prayer from their parents, siblings, their loved ones and friends. If indeed they do receive prayer, this is more precious and pleasing to them than all the world and its contents.

Thus, when a believer goes to the cemetery, they should first offer greetings to the people of the grave, offer prayers of forgiveness for them, recite as much Qur’an as they like and reflect upon the fact that they will one day be exactly like them. The great Sufi Hatim al-Asam says:



“One who visits a graveyard without offering prayers for the deceased and without contemplating their own end has betrayed both their own self and those buried there.”<sup>27</sup>

Muslim scholar Sufyan ibn ‘Uyayna (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“The need that the dead have for prayer is greater than that of the living for food and drink.”<sup>28</sup>

Allah Almighty rewards the people of the grave abundantly as a result of the prayers of those in the world. The best gift that the living can send to the dead is to pray for their forgiveness and to give alms and charity on their behalf.

According to the belief of the Ahl al-Sunna (people of the prophet example), the deceased possess consciousness and can hear and feel. They benefit from and are pleased with good works and are tormented and grieved by acts of vice and wickedness. In other words, a person dies with their body, not their soul.

Sent as a mercy to all the worlds, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says in one prophetic narration:

“My life is a great good for you: you bring up new matters and new matters are clarified up for you. My death is a great good for you also; your actions will be presented to me and if I see good, I shall praise Allah, and if I see evil I shall ask His forgiveness for you.” (Haythami, IX, 24)

Similarly, the Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) calls out to us in the Farewell Sermon:

“So, make not my face overcast by sinning.”<sup>29</sup>

In other words, as members of his community, our every deed is presented to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). All our greetings of peace and salutations are conveyed to him.<sup>30</sup>

27. *Ihya*, IV, 868.

28. al-Suyuti, *Sharh al-Sudur*, Lebanon 1417, p. 297.

29. See Haythami, III, 271; Muhammad Hamidullah, *al-Wasa’iq*, p. 367.

30. See Abu Dawud, Manasik, 96.

In another Prophetic narration, it is stated that our deeds are also presented to believing family members and loved ones who have passed away:

“Your actions are presented to your close relatives and kinsfolk from among the deceased. If your actions are good, they are pleased by them, but if they are other than that, they ask Allah saying, ‘Our Lord, do not cause them to die until You guide them like You have guided us.’” (Ahmad, III, 164; Tabarani, *Kabir*, IV, 129/3887)

As we have seen, the grave is the first point of great deprivation and suffering for those who wasted their lives in pursuit of base pleasures. In contrast, it is the first stage of eternal bliss for those who spend their lives engaged in the spiritual struggle prescribed in the Qur’an and the prophetic practice.

A funeral procession once passed before the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Indicating the deceased, he asked, “Relieved or relieving?”

The people asked, “O the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) what is relieved and relieving?”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied:

“A believer is relieved of the toils of this world and its harm and goes to the mercy of Allah, while the people, lands, trees and animals are relieved of the evil person.” (Bukhari, *Riqaq*, 42)

### Interrogation in the Grave

Every human being subjected to trial in this world will assuredly be questioned in the grave, after their numbered breaths have transpired. Even those people who were not placed in a grave, who drowned or who perished in the wilderness, will ultimately reach the intermediate realm and face interrogation.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said:

“When the believer is made to sit up in their grave, the angels will come to them and they will testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. This is the state indicated in Allah’s words, “Allah makes those who believe firm with the Firm Word in this life and the Next World. But Allah misguides the wrongdoers. Allah does whatever He wills.” (Ibrahim14:27) (Bukhari, Jana’iz 87, Tafsir 14/2)

‘Uthman (may Allah be well pleased with him) narrated that whenever the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) buried the dead, he used to stand by their grave and say:

“Seek forgiveness for your brother and his Allah for his deliverance, for he is now being questioned (by the interrogating angels).” (Abu Dawud, Jana’iz, 69)

The human being suffers great distress and anxiety in matters that are unknown to them. One such matter which grieves them is undoubtedly the life of the grave. This is because human beings are unaware of what happens underneath the ground. However, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has given us detailed information concerning the grave, which he says is either a garden from among the gardens of the Garden, or a pit from among the pits of Hell.<sup>31</sup>

To this end, Asma bint Abi Bakr (may Allah be well pleased with her) said:

“The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once began delivering a sermon and described the trials that face a person in the grave. When he described the state of the grave in such detail, the Muslims began crying out aloud.” (Bukhari, Jana’iz, 87)

The following prophetic statements are among the traditions in which the Messenger speaks of the grave:

It is related from Anas (may Allah be well pleased with him) said that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“When a slave is placed in his grave and his companions depart from him and he hears the sound of their footsteps, two angels come to him and

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31. Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 26/2460.

make him sit up and say to him, ‘What do you say about this man, Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)?’

As for the believer, he says: ‘I bear witness that he is Allah’s slave and His Messenger.’

It will be said to him, ‘Look at your place in the Fire. Allah has replaced it for you with a place in the Garden.’ Then he will see both places.

An unbeliever or hypocrite will say, ‘I do not know. I used to say what everyone else said.’

He will be told, ‘You neither understood nor followed the guidance of those who had understanding.’

Then he will be struck between the ears with an iron hammer and will cry out with a cry which is heard by everything near him except human beings and jinn.” (Bukhari, Jana’iz, 68, 87; Muslim, Janna, 70; Abu Dawud, Jana’iz, 78/3231; Nasa’i, Jana’iz, 110; Tirmidhi, Jana’iz, 70/1071)

In another narration, these angels are described as having eyes which are jet-black and sky-blue, and as having the names Munkar and Nakir.



Yet another prophetic narration describes the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings, as having said:

“The deceased person is placed in the grave. The righteous person is made to sit up in their grave with no fear or distress.

Then it is said to him, ‘What religion did you follow?’

He says, ‘Islam.’

It is said to him, ‘Who is this man?’

He says, ‘Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) He brought us clear signs from Allah and we believed in him.’

It is said to him, ‘Have you seen Allah?’

He says, ‘No one is able to see Allah (in the world).’



Then a window looking onto the Fire is opened for him, and he sees its flames, some of them engulfing others.

Then it is said to him, 'Look at what Allah has saved you from.'

Then a window looking onto the Garden is opened to him, and he looks at its beauty and what is contained in it. It is said to him, 'This is your place.' And then it is said to him, 'You had certainty of faith and you died upon this state of sound belief, so by Allah's permission, in that state you will be resurrected.'<sup>32</sup>

As for the evil person, he is made to sit up in his grave in fear and horror and it is said to him, 'What religion did you follow?'

He says, 'I do not know.'

It is said to him, 'Who is this man?'

He says, 'I used to say what everyone else said.'

Then a window to the Garden is opened to him, and he looks at its beauty and what is contained in it. It is said to him, 'Look at what Allah has taken away from you.'

Then a window to the Fire is opened for him, and he sees its flames, some of them engulfing others. Then it is said to him, 'This is your place. You lived in doubt; in this state you died and in this state you will be resurrected, by God's leave.' (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 32. See also, Bukhari, Jana'iz, 68, 87; Muslim, Janna, 70)



Another Prophetic narration reveals that the deceased person will be shown his destined place morning and evening – a garden of the Garden, if they are among the people of the Garden and a pit of fire if they are one of the people of the Fire – and that they will be told:

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32. Although the believer will be questioned in the grave and shown their final place, as indicated in the prophetic Tradition, it is after the Final Hour when they will be called to account for their actions. Every person will then receive the recompense for every atom's weight of good and evil. In fact, a Qur'anic verse reveals that even Prophets, who have been guaranteed entry into the Garden, will be questioned. See (7:6).



“This is your place until Allah raises you up on the Day of Rising.” (Bukhari, Jana’iz 90)

“...shown their station morning and evening, either in the Fire or in the Garden ... until they are resurrected to it.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 42)

Again, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) informs us that people will be tested in the grave concerning their belief and that they will be asked certain questions:

“It was revealed to me that you will be tested in the graves with a trial like – or nearly like – that of the False Messiah (Ad-Dajjal) ...” (Bukhari, Wudu’, 37)

As such, The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) draws attention to the severity and intensity of the questioning in the grave.



Wathilah ibn al-Asqa’ (may Allah be well pleased with him) narrates:

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) led us in prayer for the funeral of a Muslim and I heard him supplicate to Allah saying:

“O Allah, so and so, son of so and so, is under Your protection, so guard him from the trial in the grave and the punishment of the Fire. You are true in Your promise and are worthy of praise.

O Allah, forgive him and have mercy on him. You are the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Merciful...” (Abu Dawud, Jana’iz, 56; Ibn Majah, Jana’iz, 23)



A person’s attaining Divine mercy is a great felicity. One of Ma’ruf al-Karkhi’s friends asked him:

“Ma’ruf, what has caused you to perform this much worship?” Ma’ruf was silent. His friend continued:

“Is it the thought of death?”

Ma’ruf al-Karkhi replied:





“No! What is death anyhow?”

“The thought of the grave, perhaps?”

“No,” he again replied. “For what is the grave!”

The friend again continued:

“Fear of the Fire, perhaps, or the hope for the Garden?”

To this, Ma'ruf offered the following magnificent response:

“What of all these things! All these things of which you speak are in the hands of One of such Glory and Grandeur that when you love Him, He will make you forget all these. When you become acquainted with Him, He will protect you from all these things.”<sup>33</sup>

### **Punishment in the Grave**

One of the matters concerning the Unseen which cannot be perceived directly with our senses and intellect, but which is confirmed through Divine Revelation, is punishment in the grave. Punishment in the grave is the torment that a person who does not obey the commandments of Allah will endure after death until the Resurrection. This punishment is referred to in some prophetic narrations as the trial of the grave.

According to a report by Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas (may Allah be well pleased with him) the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) used to seek refuge in Allah reciting the following supplication:

“O Allah, I seek refuge with You from cowardice and I seek refuge with You from miserliness. I seek refuge with You from reverting to the basest stage of life. I seek refuge with you from the trial of this world. I seek refuge with you from the trial of the grave.” (Bukhari, Jihad 25, Da'awat, 37, 41, 44)

Allah Almighty declares in the Qur'an concerning punishment in the grave:

“... If you could see the wrongdoers in the throes of death when the angels are stretching out their hands, saying, ‘Disgorge you own selves!

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33. Babanzâde Ahmed Na'im, *İslâm Ahlâkının Esasları*, İstanbul: 1963, p. 66.



Today you will be repaid with the punishment of humiliation for saying something other than the truth about Allah, and being arrogant about His Signs.” (Al-Ana’m, 6:93)

“And those who do wrong will have a punishment besides that but most of them do not know it.” (At-Tur, 52:47)

“Some of the desert Arabs around are hypocrites and some of the people of Madina are obdurate in their hypocrisy. You do not know them but We know them. We will punish them twice over and they will be returned to a terrible punishment.” (At-Tawba, 9:101)

According to Ahl-Sunna scholars, the Qur’anic verse which mentions Pharaoh and his clan being exposed to the Fire morning and evening, and their being subjected to severe punishment when the Last Hour comes,<sup>34</sup> as well as the verse which speaks of Prophet Nuh’s people being made to enter a punishing Fire after they were drowned in the Flood,<sup>35</sup> are Qur’anic indications of the torment in the grave.

Prophetic narrations also indicate that such forbidden acts as backbiting and gossip,<sup>36</sup> wailing in mourning,<sup>37</sup> dying with debt,<sup>38</sup> lying, fornication and adultery, consuming usury and drinking alcohol<sup>39</sup> are causes for punishment in the grave.

‘A’isha (may Allah be well pleased with her) relates:

“I never saw the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) offer a prayer without seeking refuge in Allah from the punishment of the grave.” (Bukhari, Jana’iz, 87)

The companions Abu Juhayfa, Bara’ ibn ‘Azib and Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (may Allah be well pleased with all of them) reported:

“The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) went out after the sun had set and heard a noise.

34. See (40:46).

35. See (71:25).

36. See Musnad, I, 225; Bukhari, Jana’iz, 88.

37. See Bukhari, Jana’iz, 33; Muslim, Jana’iz, 16-28.

38. See Ibn Majah, Sadaqat, 12.

39. Bukhari, Jana’iz 92, Tabir 48.

He said, ‘Jews being punished in their graves.’” (Bukhari, Jana’iz, 88; Muslim, Janna, 69)

The following question can come to mind here: We do not see any traces of punishment visible on any deceased person in their grave. For instance, how are they made to sit up in their grave, how are they questioned and how are some deceased persons punished with an iron hammer?

This can be said in response:

This is by no means impossible as there is something similar in this world. A sleeping person experiences pleasure or pain based on what they see in their dream, but nobody else senses a thing. A person who is awake is in the same way animated or saddened by a word they have heard or by a passing thought they have had, but the person right next to them might not be able to discern it.<sup>40</sup>



Zayd ibn Thabit (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates:

“The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was going with us to the dwellings of the Banu an-Najjar. He was riding a pony, which became frightened and nervous, and he nearly fell off. He found four, five, or six graves there and asked, ‘Which of you knows about those lying in these graves?’

Someone said, ‘I do.’ The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) asked, ‘In what state did they die?’ The man replied, ‘They died as idol-worshippers.’

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, ‘These people are being put through an ordeal in their graves. Would it not stop you burying your dead in the ground, I would have certainly entreated Allah for you to hear it also.’

Then turning his face towards us, he said, ‘Seek refuge in Allah from the punishment of Hell.’

40. See at-Tibi, al-Kashif ‘an Haqa’iq as-Sunan, Makka al-Mukarrama, 1417, II, 590.



They replied, 'We seek refuge in Allah from the punishment of Hell.'

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, 'Seek refuge in Allah from the punishment in the grave.'

They said, 'We seek refuge in Allah from the punishment in the grave.'

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, 'Seek refuge in Allah from trials both the visible and invisible.'

They said, 'We seek refuge in Allah from trials both the visible and invisible.'

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, 'Seek refuge in Allah from the trial of the Dajjal, the (false) Messiah.'

They said, 'We seek refuge in Allah from the trial of the Dajjal.'" (Muslim, Janna, 67)



Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates:

"The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) passed by two graves and said, 'These two are being punished for a matter they deemed minor. One of them did not guard himself from urine and the other used to spread malicious stories and gossip.'

Then he called for a fresh leafless branch of a palm tree, split it into two, and inserted one half into each grave, saying, and 'I hope that this will lighten their punishment for as long as these remain fresh.'" (Bukhari, Adab 49, Wudu' 55-56, Jana'iz 82)<sup>41</sup>

As stated by the companion Abu al-Darda' (may Allah be well pleased with him):

"O grave! How silent are you on the outside, while filled with horrors on the inside!"



Jabir ibn Abdullah (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates:

41. Also see Muslim, Tahara, 111; Abu Dawud, Tahara, 11; Tirmidhi, Tahara, 53; Nasa'i, Tahara, 26; Jana'iz, 116; Ibn Majah, Tahara, 26.



“When Sa’d ibn Mu’adh (may Allah be well pleased with him) passed away, we went with the Messenger of Allah to attend his funereal. After the Messenger of Allah led the funeral prayer, Sa’d was placed in his grave and the grave was levelled over. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) then glorified Allah repeatedly and we did the same. He then exalted Allah and so did we.

He was asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah, what made you glorify and then exalt Allah?’

‘The grave became constricted and tightened on this righteous servant, until Allah Almighty made it spacious for him.’” (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, III, 360, 377)

Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates:

“The day Sa’d ibn Mu’adh (may Allah be well pleased with him) was buried, the Messenger of Allah, (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) stood by his grave and said, ‘Were anyone to have been saved from trial and questioning in the grave, Sa’d ibn Mu’adh would have been saved from it. But the grave closed in on him too, until Allah, glorified and exalted be He, expanded it for him.’” (Tabarani, al-Mu’jam al-Kabir, X, 334; Haythami, III, 46)



## Protection Against the Punishment of the Grave

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) used to say in his supplications:

*Allahumma inni a’udhu bika min ‘adhabi jahannam, wa min ‘adhabi-l qabr, wa min fitnati-l mahya wa-l mamat, wa min sharri fitnati-l masihi-d dajjal*

“O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the punishment of Hell, and from the punishment of the grave, and from the trials of life and death, and from the evil of the trial of the Dajjal.”<sup>42</sup> In asking Allah for protection in this

42. Bukhari, Jana’iz, 88; Muslim, Masajid, 128-134.



way, he prescribed his community also to seek refuge in Allah in respect to these four matters.

This is because in the grave, people will only find with them what they have done in this world. While vice and wickedness will be a cause for great abasement, deeds of righteousness will be a faithful friend and protector for their owner.

In this vein, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) states:

“When a person enters their grave, their good deeds will surround them. When they are approached from the direction where their prayers are positioned, the prayer will declare, ‘No entrance from my side!’ When they are approached from the direction of the person’s fasting, the fasting will declare, ‘No entrance from my side!’ They will be commanded to rise. The person then sits up. If the deceased is a transgressor or an unbeliever, they will be approached and there will be nothing standing between them and the approach of the angel.” (Ahmad, VI, 352. cf. Haythami, III, 51-52)

“When a deceased person is placed in their grave, an angel will approach. When the angel approaches from the direction of the head, the Qur’an that the person had recited will say, ‘There is no entrance through me.’ When they are approached from the hands, all their acts of charity will say, ‘There is no entrance through me.’ Then they will be approached from the feet, where all the footsteps they took to the mosque will say, ‘There is no entrance through me.’ And patience is another great shield. The angel then says, ‘Had I found an opening, I would have approached them.’” (Haythami, III, 52)

Along similar lines, it is stated that those who frequently recite the Qur’anic chapter al-Mulk will be protected against punishment in the grave, as the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) referred to it as, ‘*al-mani’ah*’ (that which protects), indicating that it protects a person against punishment and torment in the grave.<sup>43</sup>

Jabir (may Allah be well pleased with him) related:

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would not sleep until he recited *alif lam mim tanzīlu* (the Qur'anic chapter al-Sajdah) and *tabāraka alladhī biyadihi l-mul'ku* (the Qur'anic chapter al-Mulk).” (Tirmidhi, Fada'il Qur'an [Virtues of the Qur'an], 9/2892)

Tawus ibn Kaysan (may Allah have mercy on him) from the generation of the Successors (*al-Tabi'in*), said:

“These two Qur'anic chapters are seventy times more meritorious than each of the other chapters of the Qur'an.” (Tirmidhi, Fada'il Qur'an [Virtues of the Qur'an], 9/2892)

In addition, it has also been reported that frequently reciting the Qur'anic chapter al-Ikhlās will also deliver a person from torment in the grave.<sup>44</sup>

### Blessings of the Grave

Righteous believers who lead their worldly lives in accordance with the divine commands and prohibitions and who in this way turn it into a means of eternal happiness, will be favoured with blessings in the grave that Allah will bestow upon them as He wills.

As 'Ata al-Khorasani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Allah bestows His mercy most upon His slave at the time when they have been placed in the grave and their loved ones have left them.” (Qurtubi, Tadhkira, p. 345)

The following bounties can be listed among those with which a believer will be favoured in the grave:

The believer's grave is expanded, filled with bounties and is rendered a garden from among the gardens of the Garden. A believer is shown their place in the Garden. Prophets and martyrs begin immediately being honoured with the bounties of the Garden.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has informed us that the Prophets and Messengers are alive in their graves

44. İmâm Şârânî, *Ölüm Kiyâmet Âhiret*, Bedir Yayınları, p. 102, 130.



and that they offer prayers there.<sup>45</sup> He affirms that during the Night Journey (*Isra'*) and the Ascension (*Mi'raj*), he saw the Prophets Musa, Isa and Ibrahim, upon them all be peace, offering prayer and that when the time for prayer came, he led all the Prophets and Messengers in congregational prayer. (See Muslim, Iman, 278)

It is stated in a prophetic narration:

“The Prophets are alive, and they offer prayer in their graves.” (Haythami, VIII, 211)

“I happened to pass by Musa on the occasion of the Night journey near the red mound (and found him) offering his prayer in his grave.” (Muslim, Fada'il, 164)

There are other believers that are also honoured in such a way. Despite the fact that a deceased person no longer has any responsibilities or obligations, the prayer offered by the Prophets and some righteous servants is a prayer stemming from a love of worship and is offered in great spiritual absorption and exuberance.

Again, as indicated in various Traditions, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) saw some Prophets recite the ritual invocation of God during the Pilgrimage and circle the ancient house of the Ka'ba.<sup>46</sup>



It ought to be said here that the true nature of the life of the grave can only be fully perceived at the level of certainty that arises from direct experience. Descriptions in the Qur'an and the Sunna inform human beings in accordance with a worldly human conception. Understanding its essential reality, however, is beyond human perception. The duty of the believer in any case is to be busy preparing for the grave, rather than trying to fully comprehend what, in essence, it really is. To a companion who asked, “When will be the Last Hour?” The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) simply responded with the question:

45. See Muslim, Iman, 278. cf. Abu Nu'aym, Hilya, II, 319; Ibn al-Jawzi, Sifat al-Safwa, III, 263.

46. Bukhari, Libas, 68; Muslim, Iman, 268; Ahmad, I, 232; Hakim, II, 638/4123.





“What have you prepared for it?”<sup>47</sup>

In precisely the same way, the duty of the believer is not to get caught up in aspects of these matters in ways that they are not responsible for, but to engage instead in preparations for such a life which directly concerns them.

Just as human beings transitioned through different realms, each with their own conditions, before coming to the world, at their death they will be born once again into a realm with its own life conditions once again. The life of the Next World will most probably be very different to the life of the grave. Or our Lord will give us different faculties, or capacities of feeling and perception in every realm through which we pass (that are particular and in accordance to each realm).

In summary, it can be said that in such matters that transcend the bounds of human knowledge and intelligence, we have to say:

*La ya'lamu'l ghayba illallah*: “None knows the Unseen except Allah,” and *Allahu a'lamu bi al-sawab*: “(Surely) Allah knows best.” Deferring the last word to the endlessness of silence seems indeed to be the best path.

### **Those Whose Bodies Remain Unspoiled in the Grave**

Allah created humankind from the earth<sup>48</sup> and nurtures them with sustenance from the earth throughout their lives. When they die, they will again return to the earth:

Allah, glory unto Him, declares:

“From it (the earth) We created you, and to it We will return you, and from it We will bring you forth a second time.” (Ta Ha, 20:55)

This demonstrates that the human body is by nature doomed to mortality. As physical constitution is earth matter, bodies will transform into earth matter once again in the grave; that is, they will return to their essence and source.

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47. See Muslim, Birr, 163.

48. “Among His Signs in this, that He created you from dust...” (30:20).



However, Allah Almighty will preserve the bodies of some of His servants in the intermediate realm of the grave as an exceptional favour bestowed upon them. The Prophets are first and foremost in this regard.

Indeed, as narrated by Aws ibn Aws (may Allah be well pleased with him) the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“The most excellent of your days is Friday. Therefore, invoke peace and blessings upon me abundantly on that day, for your invocations are presented to me.”

The companions then asked: “Messenger of Allah, how will our invocations be presented to you once your body has turned to dust?”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) then described Allah’s special favour upon his Prophets and Messengers in the following words:

“Allah, glorified and exalted be He, has prohibited the earth from consuming the bodies of the Prophets.” (Abu Dawud, Salat, 201/1047, Witr 26; See Nasa’i, Jumu’ah, 5)

In another narration, he says:

“Your invocations are presented to me even after my demise, for Allah has forbidden the earth to consume the bodies of the Prophets. The Prophets of Allah are alive and receives provision.” (Ibn Majah, Jana’iz, 65)

There are also anecdotal reports concerning the preservation of the bodies of the Prophets. In our recent history for instance, during the construction of the Dicle Dam, which provides irrigation to a large section of the Diyarbakir Plain, the graves of the Prophets al-Yasa’a (Isaiah) and his paternal cousin Dhu’l-Kifl (upon them both be peace) were transferred, to prevent them from being submerged in water. During the transfer, the graves of these two Prophets, reportedly 3,200 years old, were disinterred and transported to new graves on a nearby hill. Those who carried out the transfer report that the bodies of both Prophets were as though they were sleeping.<sup>49</sup>



Another group of people whose bodies will not be consumed by the earth are those who were killed in the way of Allah. As a matter of fact, even today there are cases of bodies of the deceased in various places that remain unspoiled in their graves.

It is stated in the Qur'an:

“Do not suppose that those killed in the Way of Allah are dead. No indeed! They are alive and well provided for in the very presence of their Lord, delighting in the favour Allah has bestowed on them, rejoicing over those they left behind who have not yet joined them, feeling no fear and knowing no sorrow...” (Al ‘Imran, 3:169-170)



The life of the Prophets is without a doubt far superior to that of the martyrs.

Apart from the Prophets and the martyrs, the bodies of the righteous, whose hearts are full of the love of Allah and His Messenger, who avoided the unlawful and doubtful throughout their lives and who exhibited elevated servitude to Allah in piety and God-consciousness, are also perfectly preserved in the earth. This has been proven time and time again through written accounts and eyewitness reports. A few examples from the Age of Happiness are as follows:

When the wall of ‘Aisha’s chamber collapsed during the time of al-Walid ibn ‘Abdalmalik, they began rebuilding it and a foot appeared. They were alarmed, thinking it to be the blessed foot of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). No one could be found who knew anything about it until ‘Urwa ibn Zubayr (may Allah have mercy on him) said to them, “No, by Allah, it is not the foot of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). It is the foot of ‘Umar.” (Bukhari, Jana’iz, 96)



Jabir ibn Abdullah (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates:

“When the Battle of Uhud approached, my father called me during the night and said, ‘I think that I will be among the first of the companions of the Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to be killed. I’m



not leaving behind me anyone dearer to me than you, except for the soul of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). I have debts, so repay them and always treat your sisters well.’

In the morning, my father was the first to be killed and was buried with someone else in a grave. I was not comfortable leaving him in the same grave as another, so I disinterred him six months later. And he was just as he had been on the day that I had buried him, except for a small place on his ear. I buried him in a grave on his own.” (Bukhari, Jana’iz, 78)

Such is the extraordinary state of the righteous Muslims.



Another example from our recent history of the bodies of such righteous servants of Allah is that of an esteemed Muadhin (caller to prayer) from Adana in Turkey, who also had memorised the entire Qur’an. The saint Mahmud Sami Ramazanoğlu (may Allah purify his secret) was one of those who personally recounted the story of the disinterment of precisely such a person who had memorised the entire Qur’an and passed away in Adana. Thirty years after his death, a road was being built which cut through his burial site, obliging his grave to be dug up and relocated. Sheikh Mahmud Sami witnessed firsthand that the body was perfectly preserved and amazingly, even his burial shroud was in perfect condition.

This event is also an indication of the fact that those who memorise the Qur’an (*huffaz*) who are dedicated to leading their lives in accordance with it will receive many Divine gifts and favours in this world and in the Next World.

### After Death

As stated in a Qur’anic verse, the believers are brothers and sisters to one another.<sup>50</sup> One of the crucial responsibilities that this fellowship imposes on the believers is to fulfil their final duty and pay their last respects to their fellow believers. Allah Almighty created the human being upon the perfect pattern of creation (*ahsani taqwim*) and made them the



most honourable of all creatures. They are thus to carry out the burial of their fellow believers in the best possible way, washing and shrouding them with compassion, in a manner that befits human honour and dignity.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) specifies the rights that Muslims have over one another in a prophetic narration:

“The rights a Muslim has over another Muslim are five: returning the greetings of peace, visiting the sick, joining funeral processions (attending the funeral prayer and burial), accepting invitations and blessing those who sneeze, (saying, *yarhamuk Allah*, may Allah have mercy on you).” (Bukhari, Jana’iz, 2; Muslim, Salam, 4)

“Six are the rights of a Muslim over another Muslim. When you meet him, offer him greetings (As-Salamu Alaykum); when he invites you to a feast accept it; when he seeks your council offer it to him, and when he sneezes and says: ‘All praise is due to Allah,’ you say *yar hamuk Allah* (may Allah have mercy on you); when he falls ill visit him; and when he dies, follow his bier (his funeral procession).” (Muslim, Salam, 5)

## 1. Preparations for Burial, Enshrouding and Attending the Funeral Procession<sup>51</sup>

Offering the funeral prayer for the deceased and burying them is an obligation on the community, or *fard kifaya*,<sup>52</sup> while other acts have been classified recommended (*sunna*) and commendable (*mustahab*)<sup>53</sup>. If these duties are neglected, the whole community as a whole is held accountable for not having met this obligation.

51. Preparations for burial (*tajhiz*): These are the general preparations that need to be made for the burial of the deceased.

Enshrouding (*takfin*): The washing and shrouding of the body of the deceased.

Accompanying the funeral procession (*tashyi*): Accompanying the deceased from their placement on a bier, to the offering of their funeral prayer, until the place of burial.

52. Collective duty (*fard kifaya*): the fulfilment by a sufficient number of individuals excuses other individuals from fulfilling it.

53. Commendable (*mustahab*): Those acts that are recommended and rewardable but are not binding or compulsory. The practice of such actions is rewarded, but their omission is not punishable.



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was always meticulous when it came to burial preparations, demanding that those who were charged with such duties wash and enshroud the deceased in the best possible way. Regarding the importance of this duty, he said:

“Whoever washes a deceased person and conceals their knowledge of its condition is forgiven forty times. Whoever enshrouds a deceased person is clothed with the silk garments of the Garden. Whoever digs for them a grave and buries them is granted a reward equal to that of providing a needy person with a dwelling until the Last Day.” (Hakim, I, 506/1307)

One of the things that one should pay attention to during their enshrouding is to show due respect to the deceased person and to avoid those actions that would have made them uncomfortable while alive. For instance, the deceased person should not be washed in very hot or very cold water, but water that is lukewarm.

Furthermore, burial preparations and enshrouding should be undertaken with extravagance or excess.

Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah (may Allah be well pleased with him) reports:

“One day the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in the course of his sermon made mention of a person among his companions who had died and had been wrapped in a shroud not long enough to cover his whole body and then buried during the night. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) then forbade burial at the night, except in cases of dire necessity, so that the funeral prayer could be offered (over the deceased). He then said:

‘When one of you shrouds his brother, he should shroud him well.’ (Muslim, Jana’iz 49; Abu Dawud, Jana’iz, 29-30/3148; Nasa’i, Jana’iz 37)

Again, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said:

“Wear white, for indeed it is purer and cleaner, and shroud your dead in it.” (Tirmidhi, Adab, 46/2810)

Moreover, the Messenger of Allah advised the matter of burying the dead without delay:

“Carry the funeral bier quickly. If the deceased was righteous, it is good you are advancing him to. If they were other than that, then it is an evil you are casting off from your necks.” (Bukhari, Jana’iz, 51; Muslim, Jana’iz, 50, 51)

Despite the Messenger’s injunction in this regard, bodies of the deceased are still kept waiting in some places, for other people to be able to attend the funeral prayer. However, what matters most is that the deceased is not kept waiting, under any circumstances, and that they are buried as soon as possible. For as has already been stated, the funeral prayer is a collective duty. The congregation that is present should offer the funeral prayer and those who are unable to make the prayer can offer it again, should they wish to do so, upon their arrival.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, it is also possible for those who are unable to come, to offer the funeral prayer from the place where they are located.

However, if there is a necessity to keep the body of the deceased waiting, for an autopsy for instance, then it can be held in a morgue. Placing a body in a morgue when there is no such necessity, however, is considered to be a cause of suffering for the deceased.



Placing a head stone or marker for graves is permissible. Al-Muttalib ibn Abi Wada’a relates:

“When Uthman ibn Maz’un died, he was brought out on his bier and buried. (‘Uthman was the first of the Emigrants to die.) The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) instructed a man to bring him a rock to mark ‘Uthman’s grave, but the man was unable to carry it. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) got up himself, went over to it and rolled up his sleeves.”

The narrator said that al-Muttalib remarked:

54. Offering the funeral prayer twice is considered reproachful according to the Hanafi and Maliki schools. According to the Shafi’i and Hanbali schools, however, it is permissible for those who cannot make it to the funeral prayer to offer the prayer separately afterwards, even if after the burial; this is even recommended according to the Shafi’is.



“I can still see the whiteness of the forearms of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) when he rolled up his sleeves.

He then carried it and placed it at the head of Uthman’s grave, saying:

‘I am marking my brother’s grave with it, and I shall bury beside him those of my family who die.’” (Abu Dawud, *Jana’iz*, 57-59/3206. See, Ibn Majah, *Jana’iz*, 42)



On the way to Hdaybiya for the minor pilgrimage (*‘Umra*), the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) stopped at Abwa, to visit the grave of his mother.

He said, “Verily Allah permitted Muhammad to visit his mother’s grave.”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) came there, tidied up the grave and wept by its side, moving others around him to tears also. He was asked about it and he replied:

“I remembered my mother’s affection and compassion for me and this is what caused me to weep.” (Ibn Sa’d, I, 116-117. Also see, Muslim, *Jana’iz*, 105-108)



Preparing the grave properly is a requirement of Islam and an expression of doing whatever one does in the best possible way.

When the grave of his son Ibrahim was being levelled over, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) noticed something like a stone in one corner and began to level it and stroke it with his hand. As he did so, he said, “When any one of you undertakes a task, let them do it properly, for this console the afflicted soul.” (Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 141-142)

According to another narration, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was standing on the edge of the grave of his son, and he noticed a crack in the grave. He then handed over a clump of soil to the gravedigger and said:





“This will not harm nor profit the deceased, but this pleases (literally, ‘cools’) the eye of the living.” (Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 142, 143; *Baladhurl*, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, I, 451)

There is no harm in sprinkling water on the soil of the grave to allow consolidation. When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) buried Ibrahim, he said:

“Is there anyone who can bring a water skin?”

A man from the Ansar (helpers) immediately brought a water skin.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said to him:

“Sprinkle it over the grave of Ibrahim.” (Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 141)

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) ordered a stone to be placed at the head of Ibrahim’s grave<sup>55</sup> and Ibrahim was the first to have water sprinkled over his grave.<sup>56</sup>



Planting trees and other greenery in suitable areas around the grave has also been favourably looked upon. As indicated in one Prophetic narration, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) informed his companions when passing by two graves that their occupants were being punished. He then asked for a branch of a fresh date palm, split it into two, and planted them on each grave and said:

“It is hoped that their punishment be lightened so long as these remain fresh.” (Muslim, *Tahara*, 111)<sup>57</sup>

Qur’anic commentator, narrator of prophetic traditions and jurist Imam al-Qurtubi says the following in his explication of this Prophetic narration:

55. Ibn Sa’d, *Tabaqat*, I, 144; *Baladhurl*, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, I, 451.

56. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Isti’ab*, I, 59; Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-ghaba*, I, 51; Qastalani, *al-Mawahib al-Ladunniya*, I, 259.

57. For the full text of the Prophetic Tradition, see p. 131.



“The expression, ‘so long as these remain fresh’, indicates that these branches engage in remembrance and invocation of Allah for as long as they do not dry up. The scholars have said:

‘The deceased benefits from the planting of trees on graves and the recitation of the Qur’an. If even planting a single tree lightens the punishment of those in the grave, then imagine the benefit of a believer’s recitation of the Qur’an. The reward of that which is presented to the deceased is given to those who recite it also.” (Qurtubi, X, 267)



Standing or sitting on graves is disliked (*makruh*). The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says in this regard:

“It is better that one of you should sit on live coals which would burn his clothing and come in contact with his skin than that he should sit on a grave.” (Muslim, Jana’iz, 96; Abu Dawud, Jana’iz, 77; Nasa’i, Jana’iz, 105)

Again, Jabir (may Allah be well pleased with him) reports that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) forbade that graves be plastered, or be used as sitting places (for the people), or that buildings be built on top of them.<sup>58</sup>

In addition, while there has been disagreement on the matter of the *talqin*, or the prompting of the deceased in the grave, which prepares them for questioning by the interrogating angels, there have been those who have espoused the view that such a practice is agreeable. Indeed, the Prophetic narration, “Recite the Qur’anic chapter Ya-Sin over your deceased,”<sup>59</sup> has been understood as recommendation to recite this Qur’anic chapter frequently both before death and after death.

## 2. Paying their Debts

A Muslim is one who leads their life in the consciousness of forever being under divine surveillance and who fears being in debt when appearing before Allah Almighty.

58. See Muslim, Jana’iz 94; Abu Dawud, Jana’iz 76; Tirmidhi, Jana’iz 58.

59. Abu Dawud, Jana’iz 19-20; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad V, 26, 27; Ibn Hibban, Sahih, V, 3.

If a person has died without paying their debts, the relatives must first try to pay all his debts before executing his will and distributing his property among his heirs. For it is stated in a prophetic narration that even martyrs cannot enter the Garden as long as their debts remain unpaid.<sup>60</sup>

Likewise, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says in another tradition:

“The soul of the believer is attached to his debt until it is repaid.” (Tirmidhi, Jana’iz, 74. See Ibn Majah, Sadaqa, 12)

So, such people are in a sense captive, and cannot attain their esteemed rank. Moreover, judgement cannot be made as to whether they will attain salvation or damnation. For this reason, their anxious wait continues.



It is related from Abu Hurayra (may Allah be well pleased with him) that when a dead man with debts was brought to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) he used to ask, ‘Has he left anything with which to pay his debts?’

If he was told that he had left enough to pay his debts, he would offer the funeral prayer over him. Otherwise he would say to the Muslims,<sup>61</sup> ‘Offer the pray for your companion.’

When Allah granted him victories,<sup>62</sup> he said, “I have more right to be the guardian of the believers than themselves. Recite (the Qur’anic verse) if you wish, The Prophet is closer to the Believers than their own selves...”<sup>63</sup>

“I have more right to be the protector of the believers than themselves. If any believer dies leaving a debt, I will pay it. If anyone leaves property, it goes to his heirs.”<sup>64</sup> (Bukhari, Tafsir 33/1, Kafala 5, Fara’id 4, 15, 25; Muslim, Fara’id, 14)



60. See Muslim, Imara, 119, 120; Nasa’i, Buyu’, 98; Ahmad, V, 289.

61. Tirmidhi, Jana’iz, 69/1069; Nasa’i, Jana’iz, 67.

62. Bukhari, Nafaqat, 15; Muslim, Fara’id, 14.

63. (33:6)

64. As a result, a debtor who cannot leave sufficient possessions and property with which to pay off their debts despite wanting to do so, has their debt paid from the state treasury.



Sa'd ibn Atwal (may Allah be well pleased with him) narrates that his brother died, leaving behind three hundred dirhams (silver coins) as well as dependents: "I wanted to spend (his money) on his dependents, but the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, 'Your brother is being detained due to his debt, so pay it off for him.'

Sa'd said, "Messenger of Allah, I have paid it off apart from two dinars (gold coins), which a woman is laying claim too without proof."

He said, "Give them to her for she is telling the truth." (Ibn Majah, Sadaqat, 20)



Similarly, in another prophetic narration, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) warns the believers about being in debt at the Reckoning:

"Whoever has done an injustice to a fellow believer in respect to their honour or anything else should seek to be absolved by them before the day when there will be neither dinar nor dirham. If he has deeds of righteousness, they will be taken from him to counterbalance the injustice he did, and if he does not have any good actions, some of the bad actions of his friend will be taken and he will be made to shoulder them." (Bukhari, Mazalim 10, Riqaq 48)

### 3. Fulfilling their Will

Following the enshrouding, preparations for burial and the repayment of debts, the last will and testament of the deceased is executed with one third of the remaining property and possessions, while the remainder is divided among the heirs.

Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas (may Allah be well pleased with him) one of the ten companions who were promised the Garden, narrates:

"The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) used to visit me in the year of the Farewell Pilgrimage on account of a serious illness I had. I said, 'This illness has affected me and I have property



but no heirs except a daughter. Shall I give two-thirds of my property away as charity?’

He said, ‘No.’

I said, ‘A half?’

He said, ‘No.’

I said, ‘A third?’

He said, ‘A third, but a third is a lot. It is better to leave your heirs wealthy than to leave them poor, begging from other people. There is nothing you spend, desiring by it the good pleasure and approval of Allah, but that you will be rewarded, even for a morsel that you put in your wife’s mouth.’

I said, ‘Messenger of Allah, will I be left behind after my friends depart?’ (Am I going to die here?)

He said, ‘You will not be left behind, for any virtuous actions you do will raise you in degree and elevation. And then you might be left behind so that some people will benefit from you and others harmed by you. O Allah, let my companions complete their Emigration and do not let them turn back on their heels.’

But poor Sa’d ibn Khawla had the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) grieve over his death in Makka.” (Bukhari, Jana’iz 36, Wasaya 2, Nafaqat 1, Marda 16, Da’awat 43, Fara’id 6; Muslim, Wasiyya, 5)

#### 4. Supplication and Seeking Forgiveness

The first form of supplication offered for a deceased Muslim is performing their funeral prayer. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) offers the glad tidings that, “If any Muslim dies and forty men who do not associate any partners with Allah stand over him and offer prayer for him Allah will accept them as intercessors for him.” (Muslim, Jana’iz, 59)

The number forty mentioned here has been used to indicate a crowd of people. For while the number one hundred is used in another Prophetic

narration for this group,<sup>65</sup> yet another Tradition deems a congregation of three rows sufficient to this end.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, Malik ibn Hubayra (may Allah be well pleased with him) who relates the last Tradition, once considered those who attended the funeral of a fellow Muslim to be a few and divided them into three rows in accordance with this tradition.



Furthermore, being able to receive the good opinion of the Muslims is a great privilege for the deceased person. Anas (may Allah be well pleased with him) narrates:

“A funeral procession passed by the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and some of his companions, were praising the dead man. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, ‘It has become certain.’

Then another passed, and they were speaking ill of the dead man. He said, ‘It has become certain.’

‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be well pleased with him) asked, ‘What has become certain, O Messenger of Allah?’

He said, ‘You praised this one, and so the Garden has become certain for him and you spoke evil of this one, so the Fire has become certain for him. You (believers) are the witnesses of Allah on the earth.’” (Bukhari, Jana’iz, 86; Muslim, Jana’iz, 60)



Attending the funeral prayer of a fellow believer and accompanying their bier until their place of burial earns great rewards for the believer.

The Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said:

“Anyone who follows the funeral procession of a Muslim motivated by their belief and in expectation of the reward and accompanies it until the prayer has been offered and the completion of the burial, comes back

65. See Muslim, Jana’iz, 58.

66. See Abu Dawud, Jana’iz, 39/3166; Tirmidhi, Jana’iz, 40.



with the reward of two qirats.<sup>67</sup> Each qirat is the size of Mount Uhud. And whoever prays over him and leaves before he is buried, comes back with one qirat.” (Bukhari, Iman, 35)



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says, “When you pray over the dead, make sincere supplication for them,”<sup>68</sup> he offers the most excellent example in this regard to his community. A few examples of such supplications that he offered at funerals are the following:

Abu ‘Abdurahman ‘Awf ibn Malik (may Allah be well pleased with him) narrates:

“The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) offered the funeral prayer for a deceased person. I heard him say in his prayer and I remembered his words:

‘O Allah, forgive him, have mercy upon him, protect him from torment and punishment and forgive him his sins. Receive him with honour and make his grave spacious.

Wash him with water, snow and ice and purify him of sins as white garments are cleansed of impurity.

Admit him to the Garden and protect him from the torment of the grave and the torment of the Fire.” (Muslim, Jana’iz, 85)



Abu Hurayra, (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) as saying during the funeral prayer:

“O Allah, forgive our living and our deceased, our present and our absent, our young and our old, our male and our female.”

67. *Qirat*: A unit used to weigh precious metals and stones. One qirat equals 2 decigrams, one-sixteenth of the silver dirham.

68. Abu Dawud, Jana’iz, 54-56/3199.



O Allah, to whomever of us You bestow life, grant them life as a believer, and whomever of us You take in death, take them in death as a follower of Islam.

O Allah, do not withhold from us the reward (of being present at this funeral) and do not lead us astray Next World.” (Tirmidhi, Jana’iz, 38)

“O Allah, You are his Lord. You created him, and you guided him to Islam. You have seized his soul, and You know best his hidden and manifest aspect. We have come to Your presence as intercessors, so forgive him.” (Abu Dawud, Jana’iz, 56)



Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates:

“The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) entered a grave during the night, so a torch was lit for him. He took the deceased from the direction of the *qibla*, and he said, ‘May Allah have mercy upon you. You were often invoking Allah by reciting the Qur’an.’ And he repeated the phrase, ‘*Allahu Akbar*’ four times.” (Tirmidhi, Jana’iz, 62/1057)



Allah Almighty also makes known to us the prayers of the believers for those who came before them:

“... Our Lord! Forgive us, and our brothers who preceded us into the Faith and do not put any rancour in our hearts towards those who believe. Our Lord, You are All-Gentle, Most Merciful.” (Al-Hashr, 59:10)

One of the most important things that those who have passed away expect from those they leave behind are prayers for their forgiveness. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has advised that when a deceased person is buried, and forgiveness is asked for them that they pass the questioning in the grave with ease.<sup>69</sup>

Similarly, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) used to frequently visit the graves of his companions who lay in





the Baqi' cemetery as well as those martyred at Uhud. 'A'isha reports that whenever it was her turn for the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to spend the night with her, he would go out towards the end of the night to Baqi' cemetery, greet those buried there and supplicate to Allah for them.<sup>70</sup>

On one occasion, the Archangel Gabriel came to him and said, "Your Lord has commanded you to go to the inhabitants of Baqi' and beg pardon for them." The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) went immediately to the graveyard. (Muslim, Jana'iz, 103)



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has also stated:

"When a person dies, their deeds come to an end, save three: continuous charity, knowledge by which the people benefit, or a righteous child, who prays for them." (Muslim, Wasiyya, 14)

He states in another Tradition:

"A slave will be raised in status in the Garden and will say, 'Where did this come from?'

And it will be said, 'From your righteous child's praying for forgiveness for you.'" (Ibn Majah, Adab, 1; Ahmad, II, 509)

In the world, children are in need of their parents as they grow, but parents are in need of their children in the latter part of their lives. After their death, parents are again in need of the prayers of their children, for their children to be a never-ending charity for them.

As indicated in the Prophetic saying, righteous children become an ongoing charity and a means of mercy for their deceased parents and predecessors. In contrast, however, children whose religious and moral training and education have been neglected become – God forbid – an ongoing misdeed for their parents. Such parents remain unvisited and alone in their graves, though they are in much need.

70. See Muslim, Jana'iz, 102.



So, in order not to be downcast on that day, we must pay attention to the direction that our own lives take in the here and now, as well as being closely concerned with the spiritual upbringing of our children, who are each a Divine trust, from their early ages.

The most compassionate parents are those who raise their children in line with the Qur'an and the Prophetic example and thus prepare them for the true future that is the Next World. The most precious legacy that a parent can leave for their child is noble character.

The compassion to be shown to children and young people doesn't mean simply to feed them, dress them in fine clothes, amuse and entertain their desires and their bodily comfort, as though life were comprised merely of this world. Far from it, true mercy and compassion is to nourish their spirits and trigger their wisdom. Consequently, it is to inculcate in them those spiritual values that will save their eternal future from being a time of torment, and render it instead an infinite season of bliss, before it is too late.

In this respect, when compassionate parents who believe in Allah and the Last Day are faced with the choice between the worldly and eternal happiness of their children, they spurn the world without hesitation, and choose the Next World. They do not make the foolish mistake of forsaking the ocean in pursuit of a drop.

They cannot get caught up in their child's nourishment in the world at the expense of their Next World, or seek a promising worldly future over and above their eternal happiness.

In the present day, great importance is given to the worldly education of children in order that they have a bright future, with more than enough time, money and labour being spent to this end. Regrettably, however, the religious and moral training that will contribute to their eternal happiness is not given anywhere near as much priority. In addition to worldly diplomas, attention is not paid to the diplomas that will be awarded in the Next World. Sending children to a mosque for a short period over the summer holidays is deemed sufficient. Yet, seeing the religious education and training in such simplistic terms is a bitter indication of the weakness of our faith.

In that case, parents need to stop and think:

✓ In whose hands is the future of their children? Is the true future in this world or in the Next World?

✓ Do we aspire for our children to reach an esteemed rank in the Next World, the eternal abode, as much as we desire that they receive a good education and get somewhere in this fleeting worldly realm?

✓ Are our children being raised as truly our children? Which circles are shaping their personality and character? Which ideals, goals and individuals have they set their hearts on? Are our children using television, the internet, computers and their mobile phones, or are these devices using them?

✓ Do our efforts at beautifying their outer appearance, or the efforts and sacrifices we make towards enabling their inner worlds to blossom in the climate of the Qur'an and Sunna, take precedence?

Yet, the actual aspect of the slave esteemed before Allah Almighty is revealed in a Qur'anic verse as follows:

"...The noblest among you in Allah's sight is the one with the most taqwa" (Al-Hujarat, 49:13)

As stated in a prophetic narration:

"Verily Allah does not look to your bodies nor to your faces, but He looks to your hearts." (Muslim, Birr, 33)

So, that which is to benefit us and our children on our journey to eternity is neither physical strength nor outer beauty, but belief, Taqwa and right actions.

In short, so as not to remain desolate and all alone in the grave, and to be able to receive our children's supplication and prayers for forgiveness, we ought to strive while we still have the chance to raise them with the spirituality of the Qur'an. We must be closely concerned with the upbringing of our children and we must infuse the love of Allah and the Messenger, as well as the culture of the Qur'an and the Sunna, into their pristine hearts. Given that success breeds success, we should encourage our children with



gifts and positive reinforcement for their spiritual growth and development.

Imam Malik (may Allah have mercy on him) explains that each time he memorised a saying of the Prophet, his father would give him a present and that he came to such a point that even if his father did not offer him a gift, he got a taste for memorising the hadith and did so nonetheless.

Let us not forget that we will reap just what we sow in the hearts of our children. In other words, we can only expect from them what we give them to begin with.

## 5. Charity and Spending in the Way of Allah

That which is most beneficial to the deceased after supplication and praying for their forgiveness is giving in charity and speeding in the way of Allah on their behalf.

Abdurahman ibn Abi 'Amra relates that his mother had wanted to free a slave, but she delayed this until morning and died before reaching morning. Abdurahman asked al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, "Will it help her if I free a slave for her?"

Al-Qasim replied, "Sa'd ibn 'Ubada said to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) 'My mother died. Will it help her if I set a slave free for her?' The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said 'Yes.'" (Muwatta', Itq, 13; See, Bukhari, Wasaya, 15)

Abu Bakr's son 'Abdurahman died suddenly in his sleep and 'A'isha, the wife of the Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) set free many slaves for him. (Muwatta', Itq, 14)

All these prophetic narrations indicate that deceased believers benefit from the prayers, almsgiving and charity of their fellow believers and loved ones and love the living to undertake such good works.



“A man came to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and said, ‘Messenger of Allah, my mother has died and fasts of one month are due from her. Should I complete them on her behalf?’

Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, ‘If debt was due from her, would you not pay it?’

The man said, ‘Yes.’

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, ‘The debt owed to Allah deserves payment more than any other.’  
(Muslim, Siyam, 155)

It is essential that the elderly and the incurably ill pay the *fidya*, or expiatory payment in their health for missed obligatory fasting days, or that they state in their will that their heirs pay the *fidya*. The existence of such a will, and in the event that one third of the deceased’s estate is sufficient, such expiatory payment by the heirs is a religious obligation. If there is no will or if a third of the deceased’s estate is not sufficient for the execution of the will, it is recommended that the heirs pay this amount by way of charity.

## 6. Reciting the Qur’an

Reciting the Qur’an and conferring its reward upon deceased persons is also included in the category of good works undertaken on their behalf.

For the dead to benefit from the Divine mercy to ensue from recitation of the Qur’an, reading the Qur’anic chapter entitled Ya-Sin is well known and broadly practiced. As stated in a prophetic narration:

“...Ya-Sin is the heart of the Qur’an. So, whoever recites it purely for the sake of Allah and seeking the abode of the Next World, then he will be forgiven. Recite it upon your deceased.” (Ahmad, Musnad, V, 26)

Similarly, the Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has stated:

“When one of you dies do not tarry, but make haste to take them to their grave and let one of you read at their head the Opening chapter al-



Fatiha, and at their feet the end of the Qur'anic chapter al-Baqara." (Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, XII, 340; Haythami, Majma' al-Zawa'id, III, 44; Daylami, Musnad, I, 284)



Al-'Ala' ibn al-Lajlaj relates that his father, the companion al-Lajlaj, said to his children before he died:

"When you bury me, say, *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى سُنَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ*: '*Bismillah wa 'ala sun-nati rasul Allah.*' (In the name of Allah and in conformity with the practice of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Then level the earth over me and recite at my head the beginning of Surah al-Baqara and its end, for I have seen that Ibn 'Umar approved of such a practice." (Bayhaqi, Kitab al-Sunan al-Kubra , VI, 56)

Again, al-'Ala' ibn al-Lajlaj's son Abdurahman relates:

"My father said to me: 'O my son, when I die, then dig my grave in the form of a *lahd* (a type of grave that has a niche cut into the side in which to place the deceased). When you place me in the *lahd*, recite, *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى مِلَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ*: '*Bismillah wa 'ala millati rasul Allah.*' (In the name of Allah and upon the religion of the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings). Then slowly cast the earth upon my grave and then recite at my head side the beginning and end of Surah al Baqara. For verily I heard the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) saying so." (Haythami, III, 44)



When the Companion 'Amr ibn al-'As (may Allah be well pleased with him) was on his deathbed, he said to those around him:

"When you bury me, fill my grave well with earth, then stand around it for the time within which a camel is slaughtered and its meat is distributed so that in your company I may adapt to my new life and ascertain what answers I can give to the Messengers (the interrogating angels) of my Lord." (Muslim, Iman, 192)

Citing this narration in his collection, Imam Nawawi includes the following words of Imam Shafi'i (may Allah have mercy on him):



“It is commendable (*mustahab*) to recite verses and chapters from the Qur’an at the graveside. Reciting the entire Qur’an, however, is even better.”<sup>71</sup>

As mentioned in a Prophetic narration, when Sa’d ibn Mu’adh (may Allah be well pleased with him) died, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) offered his funeral prayer, and after placing him in the grave and levelling over it, he remained by the grave along with his companions for a long time and recited the *takbir*.<sup>72</sup>

One of the great scholars of Hadith of the generation of the Successors, Imam al-Sha’bi, (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“When one of their loved ones passed away, the Helpers would visit their grave frequently and recite the Qur’an at the graveside.”<sup>73</sup>

Again, Imam al-Sha’bi (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“The Helpers would recite the Qur’anic chapter al-Baqara beside the deceased.” (Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, II, 445/10848)

Tabi’in scholar Jabir ibn Zayd would recite the Qur’anic chapter ar-Ra’d beside the deceased. (Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, II, 445/10852)



As can be gleaned from all these narrations, visiting graves, greeting those buried there, offering supplication and prayers for their forgiveness, performing good works in their name and reciting the Qur’an are all a means of mercy both for the living and the dead.

The sayings and practices of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and his companions about visiting graveyards clearly demonstrates to us just how we too are to conduct ourselves in such circumstances, without going to extremes.

71. Nawawi, *Riyad al-Salihin*, Beirut, n.d., p. 293.

72. For the full text of the Tradition, see p. 132.

73. Bakr al-Khallal, *al-Qira’a ‘ind al-Qubur*, Beirut 1424, p. 89, no. 7.



## 7. Offering Condolences

Offering condolences to those who have lost a loved one or who are suffering in any way, or in other words, to console and encourage them to endure patiently, is a very high social virtue.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says:

“There is no believer who consoles another believer who is stricken with a calamity, but Allah will clothe them with garments of honour on the Day of Resurrection.” (Ibn Majah, Jana’iz, 56)

The human being has been created with an innate weakness and helplessness and is in need of support and consolation in the face of hardship and misfortune. Therefore, such matters as attending a funeral procession and offering condolences are each a religious and a human duty. Neglecting these is a cause for great liability and shortcoming.

Moreover, let us not forget that the short visit and small consolation that we begrudge our fellow believer today, we may ourselves be in need of tomorrow. For this reason, if we want to find somebody to turn to when we ourselves are in need, we should strive to share the pain of our fellow believers and to offer them whatever support we can. True religious companionship requires that one is as willing to share in their fellow believer’s grief and sorrow as they are in their joy.

## Mistakes made Concerning the Deceased

The last of the duties of the believers towards each other in this life is to attend the funeral procession of their fellow believer, offer the funeral prayer and to be at their graveside during the burial. Just as this is their final duty towards the deceased, it is also an expression of recognition for the family and loved ones they leave behind.

What befits a Muslim is to be by the side of their fellow believers during their times of difficulty and sorrow, just as much as during their happy times. The funeral is the most painful of these moments of hardship. During funeral processions, hearts become softened in a climate of deep contemplation, pain of separation and sorrow. Those who are able to





take lesson from their deceased brothers and sisters find the opportunity to examine their own selves in way of leading the remainder of their lives in much more conscious observance of the divine commands and prohibitions.

Nevertheless, there are certain practices in our day that stand in stark contrast to this otherworldly dimension of the funeral and which do not conform to the Islamic narration. The foremost of these innovations and errors, which stem from either ignorance, heedlessness or the influence of false beliefs or ideologies, can be enumerated as follows:

- Sending wreaths to funerals.
- Placing the body of the deceased on a catafalque and observing a minute's silence before it.
- Taking the deceased's body to places where they worked during their lifetime and making speeches beside it.
- Providing musical accompaniments to funeral processions.
- Keeping the body in a morgue or cold storage when there is no need to do so, because in Islam, it is essential not to keep the body of the deceased waiting and to bury it as soon as possible.

There are many prophetic injunctions in this regard. For instance, when Talha ibn al-Bara' fell ill and the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) came to inquire about his health, after he left, he said to those who were present, "I see that Talha's death is imminent. So, inform me (about his death) and make haste (with his funeral), for it is not proper that the dead body of a Muslim should remain with his family" (Abu Dawud, Jana'iz, 34)

Likewise, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once said to 'Ali (may Allah be well pleased with him) "do not delay three things: Prayer when its time; a funeral when the body of the deceased is ready; and the marriage of an unmarried woman when a suitable match is found." (Tirmidhi, Salat, 13/171)

- It is also wrong to wash the body of the deceased with water that is too cold or hot. The compassion and sensitivity shown to the living must



also be shown to the dead, and they should be washed with lukewarm water.

Umm Qays bint Mihsan (may Allah be well pleased with her) narrates:

“My son died, and I was heavily grieved. I said to the person who was washing him, ‘Do not wash my son with cold water, you will kill him.’

‘Ukasha ibn Mihsan (may Allah be well pleased with him) went to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and told him what I had said, and he smiled and then said, ‘Is this what she says? May Allah give her long life?’”

The narrator of the Narration then said, “And we do not know of any woman who lived as long as she lived.” (Nasa’i, Jana’iz, 29)

- Burying the body in a place other than the place in which the person died is another one of the common mistakes made in our day. The body can only be buried elsewhere if there is no Muslim cemetery in the place where the person died. This is an important consideration, for just as one is careful to be in the company of the righteous during one’s life, care must be taken to ensure that deceased believers are buried among the righteous.

- It is not right for women to join the men for the funeral prayer and to go to the grave if there is no such necessity.

While the funeral prayer and accompanying the deceased until the burial is commended as meritorious for men, it has not been viewed as favourable for women, being classified in legal terms as, *makruh tanzihan*.<sup>74</sup> This is because women, who innately have a stronger sense of compassion and mercy, are more likely to display unbefitting behaviour in such painful and distressing circumstances.

One of the female Companions Umm ‘Atiyya (may Allah be well pleased with her) relates:

“We were forbidden to join funeral processions, but it was not made absolutely forbidden on us.” (Bukhari, Jana’iz 29, I’tisam 27; Muslim, Jana’iz, 34-35)

74. *Makruh*: acts which, while they are not considered categorically forbidden, are permissible only in extenuating circumstances, and must normally be refrained from. *Makruh tanzihan* are reprehensible acts that are nearer to permissible (*halal*).

It is discouraged (*makruh*) for women to form rows for the funeral prayer. Their joining the congregational prayer has been made contingent upon certain conditions. Avoiding male-female contact and interaction, in particular, is the most important condition. In fact, to this end the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said about one of the doors Prophet's Mosque:

"Let's make this door for only women." The male companions did not use this door again. (Abu Dawud, Salat, 53/571)

In the Two Noble Sanctuaries of Makka and Madina – Masjid al-Haram and Masjid al-Nabawi, however, pilgrims who come there purely for the purpose of worship and seeking the great blessing and benefit of worshiping in these sacred spaces, can offer all prayers, including funeral prayers, in congregation. But they must always comply with the conditions of not adorning themselves, not wearing perfume, avoiding male-female contact, and not giving rise to any indiscretion.

- It is also not right to wail after the dead.

As reported by Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be well pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) passed by a woman who was weeping excessively at a grave and said, "Fear Allah and show fortitude."

She said, not recognising him, "Leave me alone. You have not been struck by the affliction I have!"

She was later told that it was the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). As soon as she heard this, she rushed to the house of the Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and, finding no one guarding the door, she said, "Messenger of Allah, I did not recognise you."

He said [most compassionately], "True patience is that which is shown at the first blow." (Bukhari, Jana'iz, 32)

Similarly, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says:

"A funeral procession should not be followed by a loud voice or fire." (Muwatta', Jana'iz, 13; Abu Dawud, Jana'iz, 46/3171)



- Taking grief to extremes and mourning for weeks and months and losing interest in life, does not befit a Muslim.
- It is not right to speak ill of the dead, show disloyalty to them or to forget them.
- Praying towards the grave or building mosques on graves is also wrong.
- It is not appropriate to make elaborate graves and write expressions of excessive praise on gravestones. Such practices contravene Islamic character and the proper courtesy of slavehood. No matter how virtuous the deceased person is, making categorical statements, as though guaranteeing their place in the Garden, should be avoided. The following incident illustrates this point vividly:

Known for his righteousness and asceticism, ‘Uthman ibn Maz’un (may Allah be well pleased with him) died in the house of the Ansar who had given him lodging after his emigration. Umm al-’Ala’, a woman of the Ansar and the lady of the house, said:

“The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) came to us and I said (addressing the deceased), ‘O Abu As-Sa’ib, I bear witness that Allah, glory be to Him, has honoured you.’

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, ‘How do you know that Allah has honoured him?’

She replied, ‘By Allah, I do not know, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah!’

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, ‘As for ‘Uthman, the Certain (i.e. death) has come to him, and I hope for him what is best. By Allah, even though I am the Messenger of Allah, I do not know what He will do with me.’

Umm al-’Ala said, ‘By Allah, I will never again vouch for anyone after him (only hoping for good from my Lord).’” (Bukhari, Tabir, 27)

- Having the Qur’an recited for a sum of money during the burial, or afterwards, or to hold mawlid ceremonies for the deceased on certain days and on anniversaries after their death, again in return for payment, and

giving feasts, have all been considered *bid'a*, or innovations. It is hoped that the recitation of the Qur'an on the occasion of one's death will be meritorious both for the reciter as well as for the deceased. However, arranging for this in return for payment, or for those reading the Qur'an not for the sake of Allah, but for the money, will lose of all the merit and reward.

- Falling out with one's family and relatives because of inheritance disputes and personal greed and ambition is also unacceptable. The believers should divide up inheritance in the manner decreed by Allah and should not give rise to anything that will weaken or jeopardise the bonds of kinship.

Unfortunately, in our day, as people have grown distant from Islam, anger and resentment among relatives has become commonplace.

However, severe Divine sanctions have been prescribed for those who do not comply with these injunctions. While many issues are explained in the Qur'an more generally, the division of inheritance is clearly elucidated in detail and in the plainest terms.<sup>75</sup> It is declared:

"These are Allah's limits. As for those who obey Allah and His Messenger, we will admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, for ever. That is the Great Victory. As for him who disobeys Allah and His Messenger and oversteps His limits, We will admit him into a Fire, to remain in it timelessly, for ever. He will have a humiliating punishment." (An-Nisa, 4:13-14)

- There is no basis or indication in the Qur'an or in the prophetic narration concerning the arrangement of mawlid or Qur'anic recitation ceremonies for the deceased, on certain nights, such as the seventh, fortieth or fifty-second days after their death.

Seeking forgiveness for a deceased believer and giving charity and reciting the Qur'an in their name is something that needs to be done all the time. Restricting this to set days leads to the deceased being remembered less on other days. From another standpoint, those who do not have knowledge will suppose that such events are part of Islamic belief and practice.

75. See 4:11-12.

### Mistakes Made when Visiting Graves and Tombs

- Tying pieces of cloth on trees surrounding graves or tombs, sticking stones, throwing money, sprinkling salt, sacrificing animals in their gardens or at their entrances, burning candles, or asking from the deceased are all wrongs when it comes to visiting graves and tombs.

- Tying votive pieces of cloth at graves is a Shamanic practice. According to Shamanic belief, every mountain, every spring, lake and river, large tree and rock has a spirit cohabitant. These spirits demand sacrifices from people and punish those who do not offer such sacrifices. But these spirits are not difficult to please, being appeased with a rag, a knot of horsehair, or even a stone cast as an offering.

Tying pieces of cloth to graves and the superstitious throwing of certain objects stem from such falsehoods. Unfortunately, traces of such erroneous rituals can still be observed among ignorant people.

Failing to show the necessary sensitivity in the avoidance of such superstitions will subject the slave to great agony and torment in the Next World, for the doctrine of divine oneness and unity has no toleration whatsoever for even the slightest partnership.

The following incident transmitted by Salman al-Farsi suffices to reveal the seriousness of this matter:

“One of two men who once travelled together was granted entry into the Garden because of a fly, while the other entered Hellfire because of it. Their journey led them to a people who used to worship idols. The idol worshipers compelled every passer-by to make an offering to their gods.

When the two men arrived, the idol worshippers said to them, ‘You must make an offering to our gods!’ One of the men replied, ‘I have nothing to offer!’

They said, ‘You can sacrifice anything. Even a fly will do!’ The man consented. So, he caught a fly and sacrificed it before their gods and thus became one of the people of the Fire.

When the idol worshipers demanded the same thing from his companion, he replied, ‘I will not make an offering to anyone except Allah

Almighty.’ The idol worshippers killed him and so when he died, he entered the Garden.” (Abu Nu’aym, Hilya, I, 203)

- Lighting candles at graves is a holdover custom from fire worshippers;
- Circumambulating the graves of the righteous, as one would the Ka’ba;
- Drawing pictures of things on the doors of tombs that one seeks to have in the life of the world, such as houses, cars, or children;
- Throwing soil or coins, or sticking paper money at tombs; and
- Kissing tombs, touching them, bowing when entering them and entertaining the belief that any of their problems will be solved or wishes granted in these ways, are all objectionable acts with respect to Islamic belief.



It should not be forgotten that human beings are by nature helpless and weak. Everyone and everything is in need of Allah. If the person whose grave is visited is thought to be a righteous Muslim and a friend of Allah, there is no harm in entreating Allah Almighty for their sake. That is to say, one’s prayer can be directed to Allah by using that righteous figure as a means but on no account must anything be sought directly from the deceased themselves.

Whenever there was drought during his Caliphate, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab would take the Messenger’s uncle al-’Abbas ibn ‘Abdulmutalib with him for the rain prayer. He would entreat Allah saying:

“O Allah, we seek intercession with You by Your Messenger and we ask You for rain. We seek intercession with You by the uncle of Your Messenger, so give us rain!” And they were thus given rain. (Bukhari, Istisqa’, 3)

It is only Allah who hears and answers our prayers and responds to the call of every supplicant. Given that Allah is the true owner of all things, there is no harm in using those things He loves when calling on Him as a means for His acceptance of prayer.



However, asking righteous individuals, when visiting their graves or in their absence, for healing, or for the fulfilment of a certain need, and in so doing, asking from them directly is – God forbid – an extremely misguided practice which can pave the way to shirk (the association of partners with Allah).

Even if certain interpretations can be made concerning practices such as these, such acts that are potentially injurious to the pure doctrine of divine oneness and unity, must be avoided. Expressions that give the impression that something other than Allah can remove difficulty and dispose of the world's affairs must never be used.

Warning with wisdom those who conduct themselves in such a way, is a duty of every believer. But those who go to the other extreme as to regard visiting the graves automatically as associating partners with Allah, are also to be warned and corrected with courtesy.

Islam, as in all other matters, takes the middle way in regard to the grave visits. The words and actions of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and his Companions, are the finest example of how best to act in this matter, without going to extremes. For the Companions surely knew better than us what associating partners with Allah, and what Divine Unity consisted of.

This incident constitutes a significant response for those who go as far as to deem all grave visits, polytheism:

Umayyad caliph Marwan ibn al-Hakam once passed by the blessed grave of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and saw a man with his cheek against the grave.

He said, "What do you think you are doing?"

When the man turned his head, Marwan realised that it was Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (may Allah be well pleased with him).

The Companion of the Prophet replied, "Yes, I know very well what I am doing. I came here for the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) not for a stone. I heard the Messenger of Allah say, 'Have no worry for the Religion when those who are qualified are in charge



of it; however, you have cause to weep when it is under the charge of the unqualified.” (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, V, 422; Hakim, IV, 560/8571; Haythami, V, 245)

Accordingly, it is unreasonable to regard the practice of intercession during grave visits that complies with Islamic belief, as the association of partners with Allah. What constitutes association of partners with Allah is to view the deceased as being able to either benefit or harm a person. For this reason, the person seeking *tawassul*, or intercession, must be well aware that the object of *tawassul* can be a means to the attraction of good or the aversion of evil, only with the permission of Allah.

Thus, close attention must be paid to Islamic principles when visiting graves or tombs. Care must be taken to ensure that one's actions do not lead to the mistakes that are injurious to the fundamental principles of Islamic belief. The believers need to articulate the true Islamic understanding and approach in every matter to their families and to those around them and strive to lead lives that are true to the prophetic practice.





## CHAPTER 5



# *The Resurrection*

*If there is an earthquake, or if a bomb explodes, people refer to it as an Armageddon. The true Armageddon, however, during which the stars will fall, the firmaments will be rolled up like scrolls and the mountains violently shaken, will be a destruction that is beyond human comprehension. This is the Day in which children will turn grey, pregnant women will miscarry their unborn children, eyes will gaze in horror, and people will be as if they have lost their senses. Those blessed slaves who will receive protection and be secure from fear and sorrow even on that terrifying and harrowing Day, Allah heralds as follows:*

*“Yes, the friends of Allah will feel no fear and know no sorrow.” (Yunus, 10:62-63)*



## THE RESURRECTION

Allah Almighty, who has destined everything He has created with mortality, has appointed the Final Hour for the world, just as He has appointed a time of death for mankind also. Similarly, just as He has rendered unknown this appointed hour of death for every human being, knowledge of the Hour and absolute knowledge of the Unseen, also resides only with Him. As is declared in a Qur'anic verse:

“They will ask you about the Hour: when is it due? Say: ‘Knowledge of it rests with Allah alone. He alone will reveal it at its proper time. It hangs heavy in the heavens and the earth. It will not come upon you except suddenly.’ They will ask you as if you have full knowledge of it. Say: ‘Knowledge of it rests with Allah alone. But most people do not know that.’” (Al-A'raf, 7:187)

“People will ask you about the Last Hour. Say: ‘Only Allah has knowledge of it. What will make you understand? It may well be that the Last Hour is very near.’” (Al-Ahzab, 33:63)

“Blessed be Him to whom belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and everything in between them. The knowledge of the Hour is with Him. You will be returned to Him.” (Az-Zukhruf, 43:85)

### SIGNS OF THE LAST DAY

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would respond to questions concerning when the Last Day would come to pass with the answer, “The one questioned knows no more than the questioner.” Nonetheless, he has informed his Community concerning the signs of the Hour, that they may take heed and lead their lives accordingly.

It is declared in a Qur'anic verse:



“What are they awaiting but of the Hour to come upon them suddenly? Its Signs have already come. What good will their Reminder be to them when it does arrive?” (Muhammad, 47:18)

Some of its signs are physical, like the emergence of the Dajjal and the sun's rising in the west, while others are spiritual signs like the weakening of belief and righteousness.

Some scholars have divided the signs of the Last Day into three:

1. Those that have already come and passed. These are called “distant signs” or “minor signs.” The sending of the final Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to humanity, the battles of Jamal and Siffin, the Umayyad rise to power are included in this category.

2. Some have appeared but have not yet passed and are progressively continuing towards culmination. These are called “middle signs.”

3. “New signs” or “major signs”, immediately after which the world will come to an end. These will occur one after the other like scattered prayer beads.

Here, we will consider the minor and middle signs in one section and the major signs in another:

### ***a) Minor and Middle Signs***

There are many signs that indicate the coming of the Last Hour well before it comes. These signs offer a constant reminder to the believers and enable them to prepare for the Next World. Some of these are as follows:

### **The Arrival of the Final Messenger**

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) is the final link in the chain of Prophet hood. He is the final Prophet and he has been sent uniquely to all of humanity from the beginning of his Prophethood until the Final Hour and no Prophet will come after him. Accordingly, his coming to the world is therefore a precursor of the Last Day, as it signals the last phase of mankind.

Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah (may Allah be well pleased with him) reports:

“When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) delivered a sermon, his eyes became red, his voice rose, and his fervour intensified such that he was like a military commander warning against the enemy and saying, ‘The enemy has planned a morning assault on you and an evening assault on you also.’ He would join his forefinger and middle finger and say, ‘The Last Hour and I have been sent as close to one another in time as these two.’” (Muslim, Jumu’ah, 43. Also see, Ibn Maja, introduction, 7)

### Increased Ignorance in Religious Sciences

It is stated in a prophetic narration:

“Study the Qur’an and teach it to the people. Learn the knowledge related to inheritance and teach it to the people. The Last Day is near when two people will dispute regarding rulings on inheritance and will find no one of knowledge to decide between them.” (Haythami, IV, 223)

Learning the religious sciences and living in accordance with them is incumbent upon every Muslim. The failure of Muslims to be sufficiently engaged with the religious sciences due to the weakening of their religious commitment and to therefore be unable to sincerely practice their religion is also one of the signs of the Last Day.

It is stated in another narration:

“Islam will wear away as embroidery on a garment wears away, until no one will know what fasting, prayer, pilgrimage rites and charity are. The Book of Allah will be taken away in one night, and not even a single verse of it will remain on earth. And there will be some people left, old men and old women, who will say:

‘We saw our fathers saying the words, *La ilaha illallah*, so we say them too.’”<sup>76</sup>

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76. As a matter of fact, a similar state of affairs has been witnessed for years on end in Central Asia, which remained under the yoke of Communism, and especially in China and Russia.



When Hudhayfa (may Allah be well pleased with him) narrated this Narration, Sila ibn Zufar (may Allah be well pleased with him) who was next to him, said, ‘What good will saying *La ilaha illallah* do them, when they do not know what fasting, prayer, pilgrimage rites and charity are?’

Hudhayfa (may Allah be well pleased with him) did not respond. Sila ibn Zufar, repeated his question three times and Hudhayfa turned away from him each time.

When Sila repeated his question one more time, Hudhayfa said, ‘O Sila, it will save them from the Fire,’ repeating his words thrice.” (Ibn Maja, Fitan, 26)

Similarly, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has stated:

“Among the signs of the Hour are the disappearance of knowledge, the establishment of ignorance, the drinking of wine and the prevalence of fornication.” (Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 21)

Prevalent ignorance in the religious sciences can be seen clearly in the present day. In the same way, the prevalence of alcohol consumption and fornication is a bitter truth that is widely-accepted. In our day, the situation of those who regard as ‘backwardness’ the treatment of fornication as a crime, who know no bounds in the gratification of their bodily desires, and who openly “fornicate like donkeys”,<sup>77</sup> is no different to that of those unfortunate souls upon whom the Hour will come.

The transgressions mentioned here are especially mentioned because they demonstrate the collapse of the essentials of religion known as *zarurat al-diniyya* upon which this world and the Next World are established and through these principles they are protected. The disappearance of knowledge results in corruption of the Religion, alcohol gives rise to the loss of one’s senses, fornication leads to the degeneration of future generations, and the increase of turmoil and tribulation causes harm to come to life and property. However, the most important duty of Muslims is to protect these five things. The deterioration of these five important essentials, also called *zarurat al-khamsa*, is the greatest precursor of the world’s destruc-



tion. For it is a Divine promise that mankind will not be left to their own devices, until the end of time.<sup>78</sup> Given that no Prophet will come after the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) it is certain that those who forsake these trusts will face ruin and destruction.

### **The Increase of Sedition and Murder**

Sedition in the Muslim lands began during the caliphate of ‘Umar (may Allah be well pleased with him). The manifestations of these, however, have been different in every period. In other words, all these tribulations do not have to take place at the same time. They will be realised at different times and in different forms until the Last Day.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace said) once said:

“There will come a time in which there will be many reciters of the Qur’an and few people of understanding (*fuqaha*); knowledge will be taken away and there will be a lot of *harj*.”

He was asked, “Messenger of Allah, what is *harj*?”

He said, “Killing among you. There will then come a time when the Qur’an is read by people but it will not go beyond their throats (that is, it will not penetrate their hearts and be put into practice).

Then after that will come a time when the disbelieving hypocrite, will dispute with the Muslim, using the same arguments as him.” (Hakim, Mustadrak, IV, 504/8412. cf., Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 24)

Indeed, the notable increase in our day of modernist and historicist theologians – so-called scholars – who interpret the Qur’an and Sunna with their inadequate understanding and make an attempt at religious reform, of excommunicators (*takfiris*) who fight Muslims supposedly in the name of Islam and of ignorant Sufis who again damage the straight path of the religion, confirm these prophetic statements.

78. See, 75:36.



The warning of Allah's Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace said) to Abdullah ibn 'Umar (may Allah be well pleased with him) on the matter is an important point of reference for all of us:

"Ibn 'Umar, hold fast to your religion. For it is your flesh and blood. Be mindful of who you take it from. Take it (the religious sciences) from the steadfast scholars and do not take it from those who have deviated."<sup>79</sup>



It thus becomes clear that at the time just before the Last Day, life and existence on earth will be a torment for people. Human life will become so cheap that the killer will not know why he killed and the slain why they were slain. Even those who have nothing to do with religion and religious sentiment will dread being in the world and will seek death.

Turning to goodness in such a climate and undertaking deeds of righteousness is a tremendous thing. For this reason, times of ease and peace should be appreciated before the advent of this difficult period and time of turmoil and such opportunities turned into capital for eternal happiness.

Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace said) provides the following warning:

"Hasten to perform good deeds before the emergence of turmoil which overtakes like black night. A man will be a believer in the morning and an unbeliever by the evening, or he will be a believer in the evening and an unbeliever by the morning; he will sell his religion for worldly gain." (Muslim, Iman, 186)<sup>80</sup>

"...Those who hold fast to their religion at such a time are like those holding burning coals in their hand." (Ahmad, II, 390)<sup>81</sup>

At such times, the weak believers will disregard the Qur'an and the Sunna and act according to their own limited comprehension and understanding and will keep their worldly interests at the fore even when interpreting Qur'anic verses and prophetic narrations.

79. al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *al-Kifaya fi 'ilm al-riwaya*, Medina: al-Maktaba al-'Ilmiyya, p.121.

80. Also see Tirmidhi, Fitan 30, Zuhd 3; Ibn Maja, Iqama, 78; Ahmad, II, 303, 372, 523.

81. See also Muslim, Iman, 186; Tirmidhi, Fitan, 30/2196.



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says:

“The righteous will disappear one by one until only the dregs remain, like the dregs of barley or dates, and Allah will pay no regard to them.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 9)<sup>82</sup>

### **Authority Given to the Unqualified**

Abu Hurayra (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates:

When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was once in an assembly talking with the people, a Bedouin came and asked, ‘When is the Last Hour?’

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) continued talking without interruption, upon which some people said that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) had heard what the man said and disliked it. Others said that he had simply had not heard it.

When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) finished what he was saying,

he said, ‘Where is the person who asked about the Last Hour?’

The Bedouin said, ‘Here I am, Messenger of Allah.’

Allah’s Messenger said, ‘When trustworthiness has been lost, then expect the Last Hour.’

The Bedouin asked, ‘How will it be lost?’

The Messenger replied, ‘When authority lies with other than those who should rightfully have it, then expect the Hour.’ (Bukhari, ‘Ilm 2, Riqaq 35)<sup>83</sup>

The consignment of authority to those who are not qualified for it implies the disregard of knowledge, experience and merit, and assigning those who are unqualified to positions of authority. Because such unquali-

82. See also Darimi, Riqaq, 11.

83. See also Ahmad, II, 361.



fied people fail to properly fulfil their duties, constantly pursue their own interests and perpetrate many injustices so, the general order of things is adversely affected.

### **The Quick Passage of Time**

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace said) said:

“The Hour shall not be established until time is contracted, such that a year is like a month, a month is like a week, a week is like a day, a day is like an hour, and an hour will be like a burning flame.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 24/2332)

Towards the end of time, wealth will become abundant and because people will be devoting their time to it and to vain amusement, or because they will experience deep anxiety due to increased turmoil, they will not know how time passes and be unable to benefit from it. It has also been suggested that this prophetic narration indicates that lifespans will shorten, and that time will become unproductive.

The Hadith scholar al-Khattabi states that the contraction of time will occur during the time of the prophesised Imam Mahdi (may Allah be pleased with him) or after the return of Prophet Isa (upon him be peace). The famous scholar ‘Ali al-Qari, however, has said that this will happen during the time of both, because the contraction of time will occur when the Dajjal appears.

### **Abundance of Worldly Wealth**

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said:

“Rejoice, and hope for what will gladden you. By Allah, it is not poverty that I fear for you, but I fear that this world will be spread out in front of you as it was spread out in front of those before you, and then you will vie for it as they vied for it and it will destroy you as it destroyed them.”

“After me, I fear for you the beauty and attraction of this world which will be opened up to you.” (Bukhari, Zakat 47, Jihad 37; Muslim, Zakat, 121-123)<sup>84</sup>

“The world is sweet and green. Surely, Allah will grant you worldly rule in order to see how you will act and what you do. So, beware of this world and beware of women.” (Muslim, Dhikr, 99)

Wealth will increase to such a point towards the end of time that it will satisfy even the greedy. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace said) has stated:

“There will be a caliph in the last period of my Community who will freely give handfuls of wealth to the people without feeling the need to count it.” (Muslim, Fitan, 68, 69)<sup>85</sup>

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has informed us that all this will indeed take place. Perhaps these events may intensify over time, but these can certainly be encountered in our day also.

### Exclusive Greeting

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“Just before the Hour there will be exclusive greetings (people will greet only those they know, or restrict their greeting to only certain people upon entering a gathering) and trade will be widespread, such that a woman will help her husband in his business. Severing of family ties, false testimony, concealment of truthful testimony, and the emergence of the pen (i.e. widespread literacy, whereby people will be literate in worldly sciences and illiterate in the religious sciences).” (Ahmad, I, 407, 419; Hakim, IV, 110/7043)

“One of the signs of the Hour is that a person will not greet anyone except those they know.” (Ahmad, I, 405. cf. ‘Abd al-Razzaq, Musannaf, III, 154)

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84. See also Nasa'i, Zakat, 81; Ibn Maja, Fitan, 18.

85. See also Ahmad, III, 317.



## Other Signs of the Hour Foretold by the Messenger of Allah

“The Final Hour will not come until two large armies fight one another in which many will be killed while they call to the same thing; until the lying Dajjals appear, about thirty of them, all of whom claim to be the Messenger of Allah; until knowledge is taken away, earthquakes are frequent, time passes quickly...until your wealth increases to the point of overflowing until the owner of wealth is anxious about who will accept his Zakat, and when he does offer it to someone, that person will say, ‘I have no need of it’...” (Bukhari, Fitan, 25)

The inability to find any person in need Zakat was experienced during the caliphate of Umar Ibn Abdulaziz, and will again be witnessed in the future. Even today, in some places, it is not easy to find someone who is entitled to Zakat in the true sense, because of an increase in wealth and affluence. But one point warrants particular attention; it is a great oversight to merely look around oneself, in one’s own circles, due to an insensitivity towards the needy, and suppose that there are no people left who are in need. It is imperative that the believers, who can be considered prosperous with regards to their religion, should seek the needy and fulfil their obligation of the establishment of a collected Zakat in the best possible way.



Again, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace said) has said:

“By the One in whose Hand is my soul! The Hour will not be established until you fight your imams (*a’imma*), and you strike each other with your swords, and your world will be inherited by the evilest among you.” (Tirmidhi, Fitan, 9/2170)

“The Last Hour would not come before the Euphrates discloses a mountain of gold, for which people will fight. Ninety-nine out of each one hundred will die but every man amongst them will say that perhaps he would be the one who would be saved (and thus possess this gold).” (Bukhari, Fitan, 24; Muslim, Fitan, 29)<sup>86</sup>

“The Euphrates is about to disclose a treasure of gold. Whoever is present then should not take any of it.” (Bukhari, Fitan, 24; Muslim, Fitan, 29-32)<sup>87</sup>

It is reported that the Euphrates will dry up and a mountain of gold or a large gold mine will emerge. The term ‘mountain’ here may well have been used to describe the magnitude of the treasure that will come to light. It may also signify its taking place at a time very close to the Last Day or be a figurative expression.

In another prophetic narration relating events before the end of time, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace said) said, “The earth will throw up long pieces of its liver like columns of gold and silver.”<sup>88</sup> At such a time, people will fight each other for the world and ninety-nine out of a hundred, according to one narration nine in ten, will die doing so.



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace said) states:

“Among the signs of the Hour are that... there are many women and few men so that one man has to look after fifty women.” (Bukhari, ‘Ilm, 21)

The expression used in the Narration is not meant to be an exact number and just means many. It is understood that near the end of time one man will have to protect and care for many women and Allah knows best.

In addition, as sedition will increase as the Last Day approaches, killing and war will also increase, and the male population will decrease as a result.



In the prophetic narration famously known as Hadith Jibril, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace said) is asked about the signs of the Hour, upon which he responds:

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87. See also Abu Dawud, Malahim, 13; Tirmidhi, Sifat al-Janna, 26.

88. Muslim, Zakat. 62.



“That the slave girl will give birth to her mistress and master that you will find barefooted, destitute goat herders vying with one another in the construction of magnificent buildings.” (Muslim, Iman, 1, 5)<sup>89</sup>

The slave girl giving birth to her mistress and master can be understood in the following way:

1. Mothers will give birth to rebellious children who will treat them like slaves and take advantage of their parents.
2. Slaves will increase. The child born of a slave will assume its father's position and be the master over him.
3. The sale of slave mothers (*ummahat al-awlad*, or slave women bearing their master's child), who unknowingly end up in the hands of their own children. In other words, this is the level of depravity that people will reach.

As for the, “barefooted, destitute goat herder vying with one another in the construction of magnificent buildings,” this signifies the rise of material prosperity and spread of comfort and extravagance, whereby even those who were once poor will acquire a great amount of wealth such that they will compete with one another in the construction of lofty buildings.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace said) has said:

“The Final Hour will not come until...people compete in the construction of tall buildings...” (Bukhari, Fitan, 25).

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace said) specifically mentions fornication and the increase of tall buildings among the signs of the Last Day. Even a cursory look at the world around us today reveals the increase of immorality and tall buildings.

Fornication and immorality are detrimental to the peace and spirituality of societies. High-rise buildings resemble the grave stones of the soulless cities that debilitate spirituality.

89. Also see Bukhari, Iman, 37; Tirmidhi, Iman, 4; Abu Dawud, Sunna, 16; Nasa'i, Mawaqit, 6; Ibn Maja, introduction, 9.



## There Will Come a Time When...

By informing his Community of some of the trials and upheavals that will take place at the approach of the Last Day, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace said) demands that they remain on guard and careful in this regard. Some of these prophetic narrations are the following:

“There will come a time when there will be no one left who does not consume *riba* (usury) and whoever does not consume it directly, some of its dust<sup>90</sup> will reach them nonetheless.” (Abu Dawud, Buyu’, 3/3331)<sup>91</sup>

“A time will come when a person will not care from what source they get their livelihood nor whether it is lawful or unlawful.” (Bukhari, Buyu’, 7, 23)

“The time will come when the liar is believed and the truthful is rejected, the deceitful is trusted and the trustworthy is considered treacherous. A person will give testimony when they are not asked for it and will make vows and not fulfil them.

The luckiest of people in their worldly affairs will be the least in terms of faith, they will not believe Allah and his Messenger, worst of the worst.” (Tabarani, al-Mu’jam al-Kabir, XXIII, 314; Haythami, VII, 283)

“There will come a time when the people will refrain from enjoining what is good and trying to prevent what is evil.” (Haythami, Majma’ al-Zawa’id, 280)



Thawban (may Allah be well pleased with him) narrates:

“The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace said) said, ‘The time is near when nations will summon one another to attack you as diners invite others to a meal.

Someone asked, ‘Will it be because of our small numbers on that day?’

90. The wording in one narration recorded by Abu Dawud is, “...its vapour will reach them”.

91. Also see Nasa’i, Buyu’, 2/4452; Ibn Maja, Tijara, 58; Ahmad, IV, 494; Bayhaqi, Sunan, IV, 275.



He replied, 'No, rather you will be many on that day, but you will be like the scum and dirt carried by flood waters. Allah will remove your fear from the hearts of your enemies and fill your hearts with wahn.'

Someone asked, "Messenger of Allah, what is *wahn*?"

He said, 'love of this world and a dislike of death.'" (Abu Dawud, Malahim, 5/4297; Ahmad, V, 278)

As can be understood from this prophetic narration, that the enemies of Islam will invite each other to collaborate to break up the Muslims, to divide them and eventually to destroy them. And they will do this with the ease of one who invites others to their table for a meal. That is to say, just as it is easy for them to dine at their own table, the unbelievers will call for an alliance against Islam, take the lives of Muslims, invade their lands and plunder their wealth and resources with the same ease and leisure.

The emboldening of the unbelievers will be due to small numbers of Muslims, but rather their weakness in respect to belief and God-Consciousness, and their excessive attachment to the world. This is due to the fact that a person who fears death and who is attached to the world cannot make sacrifices, cannot endure difficulties. Naturally such people give up the struggle that must be fought with their wealth and their selves. It is from the love of this world that the Muslims lose the awe-inspiring dignity that causes fear in the hearts of their enemies. As a result, the enemies of Islam will have no qualms about causing harm to Muslims and their lands.

'Abdullah ibn Umar (may Allah be well pleased with him) said:

"The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace said) turned to us and said, 'O Muhajirun, there are five things with which you will be tested, and I seek refuge with Allah lest you live to see them:

Immorality never appears among a people to such an extent that they commit it openly, but that plagues and diseases that were never known to their predecessors will spread among them;

They do not cheat in weights and measures, but that they will be stricken with famine, severe calamity and the oppression of their rulers;

They do not withhold Zakat, but that rain will be withheld from the sky, and were it not for the animals, no rain would fall on them;

They do not break their covenant with Allah and His Messenger, but that Allah will enable their enemies to overpower them and take some of what is in their hands;

Unless their leaders rule according to the Book of Allah and seek all good from that which Allah has revealed (not just what suits them), Allah will cause them to fight one another.” (Ibn Maja, Fitan, 22; Hakim, IV, 583/8623; Bayhaqi, Shu’ab al-Iman, III, 197)



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) also said:

“A nation who makes a woman their ruler will never have success.” (Bukhari, Maghazi, 82)

“When your leaders are the best of you, the richest are the most generous among you, and your affairs are consulted among you, then the surface of the earth is better for you than beneath it.

And when your leaders are the worst of you, the richest are the stingiest among you, and your affairs are referred to your women, then beneath of the earth is better for you than above it.” (Tirmidhi, Fitan, 78/2266)

This is because in such a society there is no longer the possibility of establishing the injunctions of the religion.



‘Ali (may Allah be well pleased with him) explains:

“The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

‘When my Community does fifteen things, tribulation will befall it.’

Someone asked, ‘What are they, O Messenger of Allah?’

He said,

1-When war spoils are distributed without regard for the poor and needy;



- 2-when a trust is usurped and becomes a means of making a profit;
- 3-when paying the prescribed the Zakat becomes a burden and is viewed as a loss;
- 4-when a man obeys his wife and disobeys his mother;
- 5-when a man is kind to his friend whilst shunning his father;
- 6-when voices are raised in the mosques;
- 7-when the leader of the people is the worst of them [as is the case in many parts of the world in today];
- 8-when people treat a man with respect because they fear some evil he may do;
- 9-when intoxicants are drunk freely;
- 10-when silk is worn by men;
- 11-when female singers and musical instruments become popular.
- 12-and when the later generations of my Community curse the earlier ones [like some ignorant people of our day who bear resentment against their ancestors and against bygone Muslim scholars].

When this occurs, let them expect a red wind (seizing the souls of the believers), or the earth to swallow them, or for them to be transformed into animals.”<sup>92</sup>

“...and the signs follow in succession like the pearls of a necklace whose string is cut and so they fall in succession.”<sup>93</sup>

No one knows the Unseen except Allah. These are the signs that will appear, probably as a result of the increase of vice and wickedness towards the end of time.



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has stated:

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92. See Tirmidhi, Fitan, 38/2210.

93. Tirmidhi, Fitan, 38/2211.



“The Mahdi will be from my family, of the descendants of Fatima.”  
(Abu Dawud, Mahdi, 1/4284; Ibn Maja, Fitan, 34)

“The Mahdi will be of my stock. He will have a broad forehead and a prominent nose. He will fill the earth with equity and justice as it was filled with oppression and tyranny, and he will rule for seven years.” (Abu Dawud, Mahdi, 1/4286)<sup>94</sup>

All of the things reported in these Narrations, or similar cases, have already transpired. But because the time of the Hour cannot be known for certain, it is also possible that more intense occurrences of these signs will take place in the course of time. For this reason, as believers, it is essential that we are always wary and vigilant and that we prepare ourselves for the Next World.

### ***b) Major Signs***

One day, some of the Companions were discussing a subject among themselves. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) asked what they were discussing. They said, “We are discussing the Last Hour.”

Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “The Last Hour will not come until ten signs appear: the smoke (*dukhan*); the Dajjal; the beast of the earth (*dabbat al-ard*); the rising of the sun from the west; the descent of Isa the son of Maryam (upon him be peace); the Gog and Magog; and landslides in three places, one in the east, one in the west and one in Arabia at the end of which fire would burn forth from Yemen, and would drive people to the place of their Assembly.” (Muslim, Fitan, 39-40; Abu Dawud, Malahim, 11; Ibn Maja, Fitan, 28)

Muslim scholars have taken these events as the major signs of the Last Day. While this prophetic narration makes mention of these ten major signs of the world’s end, there are also various narrations that deal specifically with each of these signs separately.

Knowledge related to the Resurrection falls under the category of ‘the Unseen’. Knowledge about the Unseen can only be learned as much as is

94. Also see M. Yaşar Kandemir, *Şifâ-i Şerîf Şerhi*, II, 159.



revealed to us by Allah Himself, through His Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). The subject of the Unseen is touched upon in sixty places in the Qur'an, in accordance with its importance. These verses state that only Allah knows the Unseen. There is only one exception. This is indicated again in the Qur'an as follows:

“He is the Knower of the Unseen, and does not diverge His Unseen to anyone – except a Messenger with whom He is well pleased, and then He posts sentinels before him and behind him.” The Jinn (Al-Jinn, 72:26-27)

As can be clearly seen, information concerning the Last Day, the Next World, the Garden and Hellfire, among other things, was revealed by Allah to His Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and he reported to us what he saw fit. Without a doubt, what Allah's Messenger has informed his community is that which Allah willed to be known. Through Allah's help, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) also came to know the truths that transcend the limits of human perception and which can only be grasped with the light of Prophet hood. However, the Messenger has not conveyed to his community this knowledge which has been reported to him exclusively, except for the truths that he was charged with communicating. As he states in a prophetic narration:

“Indeed, I see what you do not see, and I hear what you do not hear. The heavens creak, and it is their right to creak. For there is no space the width of four fingers but has an angel, placing its forehead in it, prostrating to Allah. By Allah, if you knew what I know, you would laugh little and weep much, and you would never taste the pleasures of your women in your beds, and you would go out in the streets, beseeching Allah...” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 9/2312; Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 19)

It ought to be stated at this point that the fact that knowledge concerning such matters as death, the grave, resurrection, and the Next World has been veiled from mankind is a mercy to protect the general order of things from being upset and disturbed. Had such knowledge transcending human perception been given, we would not be able to endure it and it could cause insanity. However, the Divine and Prophetic knowledge about death and the next world that is given to human beings is not for the purpose of disturbing the order of things, but instead to put life into order and context.

In spite of this, mankind, in their wrongdoing and ignorance, are often curious about those things the knowledge of which will harm them, rather than pursuing those truths in which they are in need. However, it is a Divine blessing and mercy not to know certain things.

For instance, had a person learned that they would die a year later, they would become mentally imbalanced, they would lose their zest for life and would as good as die a thousand deaths instead of a single one. Whereas a human being who lives unaware that they will die in three days' time, is more peaceful and happy.

The formidable journey awaiting the human being, which encompasses death, the grave, resurrection, reckoning and the bridge of Sirat, and the unknowable nature of their end is a great cause of anxiety and trepidation. Were a person to remain in a constant state of contemplation of this with all their conscience, they would not be able to eat or drink and would not be able to continue their normal existence.

Only as an overflowing favour and mercy from Allah that we have our lives and worldly existence, with certain realities veiled from us. This goes to show that a certain degree of forgetfulness is a necessary blessing for the regulation of human life. What is wrong is for this forgetfulness to exceed the bounds. In other words, to lead a whole life unaware of the reality of death, indifferent to reckoning after death, unconcerned with the notion of reward and punishment, or leading a life without any consideration of the Next World. The consequence of this is eternal loss.

This is why the religion of Islam constantly teaches and enjoins fear and hope. That is, realising our slavehood by establishing a spiritual balance between fear of Divine wrath, and hope in His mercy.

### 1. The Smoke (*Dukhan*)

One of the ten major signs of the Last Day is *dukhan* (smoke). There is also a chapter in the Qur'an of this name. There has been debate as to whether the smoke mentioned by the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) as one of the signs of the Final Hour is the same smoke referred to in this Qur'anic chapter. Allah Almighty declares in herein:



“So be on the watch for a day when heaven brings forth a distinctive smoke, which enshrouds mankind. ‘This is a painful punishment! Our Lord, remove the punishment from us. We are really believers.’ How can they expect a Reminder when a clear Messenger has already come to them?” (Ad-Dukhan, 44:10-13)

There are two differing views concerning this verse:

The first view:

According to ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be well pleased with him) and the majority of scholars, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) asked Allah to punish the Meccan idol-worshippers with famine when he saw them increase their persecution against the Muslims, and Allah accepted his prayer. Thus, the people of Mecca were subjected to a severe famine. So severe was the drought that the Meccans were forced to eat carrion and dry bones, and they saw what they thought to be smoke covering the sky. They came to the Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) asking him to pray to Allah on their behalf and end the drought, and promised that they would believe if it indeed came to an end.

But with the alleviation of the drought after the Messenger’s prayer, the idolaters reverted to their former insults and persecution of the Muslims. According to ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud, the smoke mentioned in the Qur’anic chapter al-Dukhan signifies the foggy vision of the Meccan polytheists, which was caused by hunger.

Ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates:

“The Quraysh were slow to accept Islam and the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) invoked Allah against them. They thus suffered a drought during which some of them died and they were forced to eat carrion and bones. Abu Sufyan came to him and said, ‘O Muhammad, you came to enjoin that ties of kinship be maintained and now your people are dying. So, make supplication to Allah.’



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) or Ibn Mas'ud recited the Qur'anic verse, 'So be on the watch for a day when heaven brings forth a distinctive smoke'<sup>95</sup>

The Quraysh subsequently reverted to their unbelief, and that brought about the words of Allah Almighty, 'On the day we launch the Great Assault' (44:16) referring to the Battle of Badr.

Mansur, one of the transmitters, adds the following:

"The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) made supplication and they received rain which continued for seven days and nights. The people then complained about there being too much rain and he said, 'O Allah, around us and not on us,' and the clouds streamed away from over his head, and the people in the surrounding areas had rain."<sup>96</sup>

It should be noted here that the Prophet Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) who was sent as a mercy to all the worlds, made such a supplication against the Meccan polytheists not just because of their persecution, but because of their denial of Islam and their rebellion against Allah. And, indeed, he made supplication for the end of their suffering with the hope of their being honoured with belief. That is to say, his sole concern was their ultimate salvation.

The second view:

According to Companions like 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas and 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (may Allah be well pleased with them both) this smoke is a smoke which will envelop the world before the Final Hour. Some Qur'anic commentators like Ibn Kathir have also adopted this view.

Accordingly, when the Last Day approaches, a smoke will descend upon the earth from the skies, engulfing the whole world and continuing for forty days. The earth will overheat. The believers will feel a slight effect of this smoke, in the form of a flu-like illness, while the unbelievers and hypocrites will be violently shaken by it, becoming like drunken people.<sup>97</sup>

95. (44:10)

96. Bukhari, *Istisqa'*, 13; Tafsir, 30,44/2. cf. Muslim, *Munafiqin*, 39,40; Ahmad,I, 431,441.

97. See Metin Yurdagür, "Duhân", *Diyanet İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, IX, 547.

## 2. The Dajjal

There is no information in the Qur'an about the Dajjal, the word itself carries the meaning of a liar, a deceiver, a person who confounds good and evil. We learn from prophetic narrations that the liar and imposter Dajjal will appear before the end of time, and with certain Divinely-bestowed abilities and extraordinary talents, will mislead people.

Al-Nawwas ibn Sam'an (may Allah be well pleased with him) narrates:

"The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) mentioned the Dajjal at length one morning and then lowered his voice and then raised it again until we thought that he might be in a cluster of date-palms nearby. When we went to him in the evening, he noticed our concern and asked, 'What is wrong with you?'

We said, 'O Messenger of Allah, in the morning you mentioned the Dajjal and then lowered your voice and then raised it again so that we thought he must be in a cluster of date-palms nearby.'

He said, 'It is something other than the Dajjal that I fear most for you. If he were to appear while I was still among you, I would overcome him with arguments on your behalf. If he appears when I am not among you, then each man must have his own arguments. And Allah will preserve every believer after me. He is young, with curly hair and eyes protruding, resembling 'Abduluzza ibn Qatan. Anyone of you who sees him, should recite the first verses of Surah al-Kahf. He will appear from a place that is between Syria and Iraq and will cause devastation right and left. O slaves of Allah! Hold fast!'

We asked, 'O Messenger of Allah! How long will he remain on earth?'

He said, 'Forty days. One day like a year, one day like a month, one day like a week, and the remainder of his days are like your days.'

We said, 'O Messenger of Allah, in the day which is like a year, will it be sufficient for us to observe the prayers of a single day in it?'

He said, 'No. You will have to estimate it accordingly.'

We said, 'O Messenger of Allah, how fast does he travel about the earth?'

He said, 'Like a rain storm propelled by the wind. He will come to a people and summon them to believe in him and they will believe in him and respond to him. He will command the Heavens to bring forth rain, and it will rain, and he will command the earth to bring forth growth, and it will have growth. Their herds will return to them with their coats the longest, their udders the fullest and their stomachs the fattest.

Then he will come to a people and summon them and they will deny him and reject his claims. Then he will turn away from them and they will be struck by drought and lose everything they have.

Then he will come upon some ruins, saying to them, 'Bring forth your treasures!' And their treasures will follow him like drone bees.

Then he will call a man in the full bloom of youth and he will strike him with a sword, cutting him in half. Then he will summon him, and he will come forward with his face beaming.

While he is doing such things, Allah Almighty will send the Prophet Isa Ibn Maryam (Isa son of Mary, upon him be peace).

He will descend at the white minaret, to the east of Damascus, wearing two dyed garments, with his hands on the wings of two angels. When he lowers his head, beads of sweat will fall and when he raises it, drops like pearls will come down. His breath does not reach any unbeliever but he dies, and his breath will reach as far as his sight.

He will pursue the Dajjal until he seizes him at the gate of Ludd (near Jerusalem) where he will kill him. Then Isa (peace be upon him) will come to some people whom Allah has protected from the Dajjal, and he will stroke their faces, telling them of the end to the trials of Dajjal, and inform them of their degrees in the Garden..." (Muslim, Fitan, 110)<sup>98</sup>



The trial of the Dajjal is undoubtedly the greatest trial that mankind will witness on earth. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

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98. Also see Tirmidhi, Fitan, 59; Ibn Maja, Fitan, 33.



“There is no trial from Adam’s creation until the establishment of the Hour that is greater than that of the Dajjal.” (Muslim, Fitan, 126)<sup>99</sup>

It is for this reason that all Prophets and Messengers informed their communities of this trial and warned them thereof.<sup>100</sup> The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) also sought refuge in Allah from the trial of the Dajjal and enjoined us to do the same.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) stated that “about thirty Dajjals” would appear from his community who would each claim that they are a Messenger of Allah.<sup>101</sup> Indeed, throughout history, many such imposters and liars have appeared, and Allah destroyed all of them. The great Dajjal will surely face the same end and will be shamed and disgraced.



Rib’i ibn Hirash relates:

‘Uqba ibn ‘Amr said to Hudhayfa, “Will you not relate to me what you heard from the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)?” He said, “I heard him say, ‘The Dajjal will emerge accompanied by water and fire. What appears as water will in fact be fire that burns, and what appears as fire will in fact be cold water. Anyone among you who meets him, should plunge into what appears to them as fire, for it will in fact be sweet, cold water.’” (Bukhari, Anbiya 50, Fitan 26; Muslim, Fitan, 105, 108)

According to a Narration recorded in Muslim, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“I know what the Dajjal will have with him. He will have two flowing rivers, one that appears to the eye to be clear water and one that appears to the eye to be flaming fire. If anyone sees that, let him go to the river which he thinks is fire and close his eyes, then lower his head and drink from it, for it is cool water.”

99. See also Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, IV, 19-21.

100. Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 3; Ibn Maja, Fitan, 33.

101. Bukhari, Fitan, 25; Muslim, Fitan, 84.



In other narrations, it is stated that the Dajjal will have with him a garden and fire and that his fire would be a garden and his garden would be fire. (See Muslim, Fitan, 109)

Allah, who transformed Nimrod's fire into a water for Prophet Ibrahim (upon him be peace) will turn the so-called fire of Ad-Dajjal into sweet, cold water for those believers who are not deceived by the Dajjal. His fire will not harm the believers in any way.

The Dajjal will be sent as a big trial for the people, so that those who truly believe be distinguished from those who do not. The believers should refute the Dajjal and should not be afraid of that which he presents as fire. For this is not fire but mercy. It is not Hell, but the Garden.<sup>102</sup>



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“There will be no land which would not be covered by the Dajjal with the exception of Mecca and Medina, and there would no paths out of the paths leading to them which would not be guarded by angels arranged in rows. Then he will appear in a barren place and Medina will be shaken with its people three times, and every unbeliever or hypocrite will come out of it.” (Muslim, Fitan, 123)<sup>103</sup>

This Narration clearly states that the Dajjal will travel to all areas of human settlement on earth with the exception of Mecca and Medina, and that all people will therefore be subjected to a severe trial through him. Allah will protect from the Dajjal the two sacred precincts of *Makka al-Mukarrama* and *Madina al-Munawwara*, and those sincere Muslims who refuse to abandon them.



102. It should be pointed out here that just as Doomsday is a tremendous event for the whole world, it is only natural that the signs of the Last Day have their extraordinary aspects too. Consequently, it should not be surprising that certain events that are beyond comprehension and imagination today will come to pass as the end of the world approaches. Indeed, it is evident that those things that could not even be predicted forty or fifty years ago are possible today with the rapid progress in science and technology. The predictions related in the Qur'an and the Prophet ic Traditions will also most certainly come to pass when the time comes, for nothing is difficult for Allah Almighty.

103. See also Bukhari, Fada'il al-Madina 9, 26, 27, Tawhid, 31; Ibn Maja, Fitan, 33.



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) stated:

“Race to do good works against seven. Are you waiting but for overwhelming poverty, or distracting richness, or debilitating illness, or babbling senility, or sudden death, or the Dajjal, so that hidden evil is what is awaited, or the Hour? The Hour is more calamitous and bitter.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 3/2306)



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said:

“The Dajjal will emerge and a man from among the believers will go towards him. He will be met by armed men, who are the bodyguards and supporters of the Dajjal.

They will say to him, ‘Where are you going?’

He will say, ‘I am going to this one who has appeared.’

They will say to him, ‘Don’t you believe in our lord?’

He will say, ‘There is nothing hidden about our Lord (that we abandon belief in Him for belief in another).’

They will say, ‘Kill him.’

Some from among them will say, ‘Didn’t your lord forbid you to kill anyone without his consent?’ So they will take him to the Dajjal and when the believer sees him, he will say, ‘O people, this is the Dajjal, the false Messiah of whom the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) spoke.’

The Dajjal will order that he be made to lie spread-eagled on the ground.

The Dajjal will say, ‘Take him and strike him on the head,’ and the believer will be beaten severely on his stomach and back.

Then he the Dajjal will say, ‘Do you not believe in me?’



The believer will say, 'You are the false Messiah.'<sup>104</sup>

"Then it will be ordered that he be sawn in half. The Dajjal will walk between the two halves and say to him, 'Get up,' and he will stand up straight.

Then the Dajjal will say to him, 'Do you believe in me?'

He will say, 'It has only made me more certain about you.' The believer will then say, 'O People, he will not be able to do this to anyone after me.'

Then the Dajjal will take hold of him to slaughter him, but the area between his neck and collar bone will be turned into copper and he will not be able to harm him. Then he will take hold of his hands and feet and throw him and the people will think that he threw him into Hell, but he will be thrown into the Garden."

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) concludes his words as follows:

"This believer will be the greatest of martyrs before the Lord of the Worlds." (Muslim, Fitan, 113)<sup>105</sup>

Some have suggested that this believer who is well acquainted with the nature of the Dajjal and his tricks and intrigues is al-Khidr (the famous saint who is widely believed to have been granted an extraordinarily long lifespan of many thousands of years, upon him be peace).

104. Just as Prophet Isa is called the Messiah (*Masih*), the Dajjal is also referred to with the same term (*Masih al-Dajjal*) - the (false) messiah. *Masih* is a derivative of the word *mash*, which means, to wipe or pass one's hand over something. The Dajjal's being known by this name is because of goodness being taken or wiped away from him, and because of his left eye being 'wiped' such that it is as if it had never existed. One side of his face is completely flat and because of this he is blind in one eye. (Refer to Bukhari, Ta'bir 11, 33.) It has also been suggested that the Dajjal has been given this title because he will 'wipe the earth' or travel widely.

Isa being called the *masih* is by virtue of his passing his blessed hand over the ill and healing them, by Allah's permission. It is significant that Allah destroys one messiah with another. The Qur'anic verse, "Rather We hurl the truth against falsehood and it cuts right through it and it vanishes away! Woe without end to you for what you portray!" The Prophets (Al-Anbiya, 21:18) illustrates the end of evildoers in general, including the Dajjal.

105. See also Bukhari, Fitan 27.



This devoted believer's challenging the Dajjal in the presence of his armed men and saying, "There is nothing hidden about our Lord," is an expression of the believers' knowing their Lord according to His Names and Attributes and not entertaining even the slightest doubt about His existence, unity, power and His absolute perfection and freedom from all defects.

This situation reveals the importance of experiential knowledge of Allah for the human heart in the face of trials and spiritual dangers. The example of this staunch believer before the Dajjal also clearly demonstrates how important and instrumental knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunna is for a believer when it comes to the trials and signs of the end of time.

This prophetic narration indicates that the trial of the Dajjal will come to an end not long after he appears. Consequently, the duty of the believers to be tested with this trial is to hold on even tighter to their belief, to never become complacent, and to take an unyielding stand against the Dajjal, without any fear.

### Characteristics of the Dajjal

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

"There is no Prophet who has been sent but that he warned his people about the one-eyed liar. Your Lord is not one-eyed.

Written between his eyes is the word *kafir* (unbeliever)." (Bukhari, Fitan 26, Tawhid 17; Muslim, Fitan 101, 102)<sup>106</sup>

"...his eye is like a protruding grape." (Bukhari, Fitan 26, Tawhid 17; Muslim, Iman, 274)<sup>107</sup>

As has been reported in similar narrations that some of the Dajjal's characteristics can be summarised as follows:

106. Also refer to Abu Dawud, Malahim 14, Sunna 25-26; Tirmidhi, Fitan 56, 62; Ibn Maja, Fitan, 33.

107. Also see Tirmidhi, Fitan, 60.



✓ Both eyes of the Dajjal will have defects. His right eye will be blind and look like a protruding grape, while his left eye will be 'wiped' (i.e. will not function properly).

The creation of the Dajjal with characteristics that can be easily seen, recognised and remembered by the believers is a special favour of Allah Almighty. But only those sincere believers with unshakeable belief will be able to duly realise the potential of this Divine favour when faced with this formidable trial.

✓ Written between his eyes will be the Arabic letters ka-fa-ra (denoting unbeliever). Every believer will be able to read it, whether or not they are versed in Arabic. Those deprived of Divine mercy, however, will not be able to decipher this writing, even if they have a command of the Arabic language.

✓ The Garden and Fire that the Dajjal will have with him are the seeming the Garden and hellfire that he will present as reward and punishment to those he puts to trial. But that supposed garden is in reality a fire. In other words, anyone who enters the place the Dajjal presents as the Garden finds themselves in a garden outwardly, but in reality has entered Hell. Anyone thrown into the fire of the Dajjal because they opposed him would in reality have entered into the Garden.

✓ The Dajjal's hair is curly and he is young in age.

✓ He is of large build and short stature.<sup>108</sup>

✓ The Dajjal will emerge from a land in the east, probably from Khorasan or Isfahan, or from a place between Syria and Iraq.<sup>109</sup>

✓ As Allah Almighty will protect the cities of Mecca and Medina with angels, the Dajjal will not be able to enter these sacred precincts.

✓ Like the thirty-odd imposters to appear before him, the Dajjal will at first say that he is a Messenger of Allah<sup>110</sup> and subsequently claim to be Allah.

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108. See Bukhari, Fitan, 26; Abu Dawud, Malahim, 14.

109. See Muslim, Fitan, 110.

110. See Bukhari, Fitan, 25; Muslim, Fitan, 84.



✓ Since the Dajjal will be a severe test for those living at the time of his emergence, great powers will be given to him, such as commanding the sky to rain, afflicting people with drought and bringing forth the earth's treasures. These extraordinary powers given to the Dajjal will pose a great danger those who possess weak faith.

✓ Because the Dajjal will be of Jewish descent,<sup>111</sup> the Jews will offer him the greatest following and support.

✓ The Dajjal will cut a person in half with a saw and then revive him and in spite of this, this believer will exclaim to the Dajjal himself that he is a liar and imposter, after which the Dajjal will no longer be able to kill anyone.

✓ Prophet Isa the son of Maryam (upon him be peace) will kill the Dajjal and put an end to this great trial.

### For Protection Against the Dajjal

Seeking refuge in Allah from the trial of the Dajjal is an important injunction from the Messenger to his Community. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said:

“When one of you utters the *tashahhud* he must seek refuge in Allah from four (trials) and should thus say:

*Allahumma inni a'udhu bika min 'adhabi jahannam, wa min 'adhabil-qabr, wa min fitnatil-mahya wal-mamat, wa min sharri fitnatil-masihid-dajjal*

‘O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the punishment of the Fire and from the punishment of the grave and from the trials of life and death and from the evil of the trial of the false Messiah (*Masih al-Dajjal*).” (Muslim, Masajid, 128)



Moreover, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has also said:

“Whoever learns by heart the first ten verses of the Qur’anic chapter al-Kahf will be protected from the Dajjal.” (Muslim, Musafirin, 257; Abu Dawud, Malahim, 14)

It is also recorded in the sources that it is advisable to read the last ten verses of the same chapter. The first ten verses of this Qur’anic chapter refer to knowledge of the divine essence and attributes and mention Allah’s protection of the people of the Cave from the evil of the tyrant Daqyanus. It is presumably because of this association that those who see the Dajjal have been advised to recite these particular verses.<sup>112</sup>



The Prophet’s stating in one narration, “It is something other than the Dajjal that I fear most for you...”<sup>113</sup> essentially indicates that the Dajjal will not pose a great risk for those with firm faith.

As a result, protection from the trial of the Dajjal is contingent upon righteousness, raising sincere scholars who put their knowledge into practice in accordance with the Qur’an and the prophetic example. Only these such people will take a stance against the lying Dajjal – with Divine grace and favour – will not be defeated and will eventually be worthy of entry into the Garden.

Undoubtedly, the most reliable measure of recognising the Dajjal is the Qur’an and the Sunna. Those people who present themselves with a religious claim must be measured against these two criteria.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) saying, “...If he appears when I am not among you, then each man must have his own arguments...”<sup>114</sup> demonstrates that every Muslim needs to learn their religion properly. If Muslims learns Islam, then neither the great Dajjal nor the imposters to come before him will be able to deceive him.

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112. See Yaşar Kandemir, İsmail Lütfi Çakan, Raşit Küçük, *Riyâzü’s-Sâlihîn Tercüme ve Şerhi*, İstanbul: Kampanya Kitapları, 1434/2013, VII, 536-578.

113. For the full text of the Tradition, see pp. 211-213.

114. For the full text of the Tradition, see pp. 211-213.



### 3. The Beast of the Earth (*Dabbat al-Ard*)

The word *dabba* denotes creatures who are in need of food and drink. *Dabbat al-ard* signifies a beast that emerges from the earth. The Qur'an makes mention of this very beast that is one of the major signs of the Last Day, in the following words:

“When the Word is justly carried out against them, We will produce a Beast from the earth which will speak to them. Truly mankind had no certainty about Our Signs.” (An-Naml, 27:82)



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) stated in another Narration:

“When three things appear, belief will not benefit the person who has not previously believed or who has derived no good from his belief:<sup>115</sup> the rising of the sun in its place of setting, the Dajjal and the beast of the earth.” (Muslim, Iman, 249; Ahmad, II, 445)

“A beast will emerge from the earth. With it shall be the seal of Sulayman (upon him be peace) and the staff of Musa (upon him be peace). It will brighten the believer's face with the staff, and brand the unbeliever's nose with the seal, such that when the people gather to eat, one man will call out to another, saying, ‘O believer,’ or ‘O unbeliever’ (i.e. both the believer and the unbeliever will be distinguishable from their faces).” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 27/3187; Ibn Maja, Fitan, 31)

“The first sign (of the signs of the emergence of the Dajjal) will be the rising of the sun from its place of setting and the appearance of the beast to the people in the forenoon. Whichever of these comes before the other, the other is close at hand.” (Muslim, Fitan, 118; Abu Dawud, Malahim, 12)



*Dabbat al-ard* is a creature that will emerge from the earth. But the exact nature of this creature has not been given. It is indicated, however, that he will warn the people with a clear speech. There are also reports which state that he will emerge at a time when enjoining the good and for-



bidding evil is abandoned and that he will declare all religions other than Islam to be false.

Moreover, this event clearly shows to those who do not believe that Allah Almighty will raise the dead back to life.

The beast will notify the unbelievers of the approach of the Last Hour. By enabling this creature to speak, Allah, glorified and exalted is He, will inflict disgrace on the unbelievers. For they are those unfortunate souls who have turned away from the most exalted speech – that is, the Qur'an – with which the Prophet Muhammad, the most honourable of mankind and speaking the most eloquent language, was sent. Allah Almighty will convey to them the truth through the language of a different creature, in a manner that they will understand. The belief of the deniers after this, however, will be too late to do them any good.

#### **4. The Sun's Rising from the West**

The sun's rising from the west is one of the major signs of the Last Day. Since the creation of the universe, heavenly bodies have been pursuing their course through space according to a very delicate and precise balance.

Allah, glory unto Him, declares:

“The sun and the moon both run with precision.” (Ar-Rahman, 55:5)

Indeed, the sun and the moon are two delicate systems in the heavens as manifestations of Divine power and majesty. All human beings regulate their time in accordance with these two systems. It is such a delicate system of reckoning time that it does not stall for a second and there is not the slightest alteration.

However, even a machine made with the most advanced technology of our time eventually wears, malfunctions and ultimately becomes unusable after a certain period of time. What a magnificent manifestation of Divine majesty is it that the sun and moon follow their course from the moment of their creation without the minutest deviation!

What is more, this delicate balance is not particular to the sun and moon. Allah Almighty asks in a Qur'anic verse:



“He Who created the seven heavens in layers. You will not any flaw in the creation of the All-Merciful?”

Look again – do you see any gaps? Then look again and again. Your eyesight will return to you dazzled and exhausted!” (Al-Mulk, 67:3-4)

When Allah, the Creator and Owner of the universe, wills to end the worldly life of humanity, He will destroy this delicate balance that He Himself created, again by executing His Will. The sun will then rise from the west and those who witness it will know without a doubt that the world is at its end. But because the door of repentance would have been closed for good, this realisation will not be of any use to them. It will be too late and the opportunity wasted.



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) states in one Narration:

“The Hour will not come until the sun rises from the west. When it rises and the people see it, they will all believe. But that will be the time, “On the day that one of your Lords Signs does come, no faith which a self professes will be any use for it.” Livestock (Al-An’am, 6:158).” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 40; Ahmad, II, 369)<sup>116</sup>

“Whoever seeks repentance before the rising of the sun from the west, Allah turns to him with Mercy.” (Muslim, Dhikr, 43)

“Allah, the All-Exalted and All-Glorious, extends His Hand during the night so that the people may repent for the wrongdoing committed from dawn till dusk, and He extends His Hand during the day so that the people may repent for the wrongdoing committed from dusk to dawn. (This will continue – He would accept repentance – until) the sun rises in the west (before the Day of Resurrection).” (Muslim, Tawba, 31)

So, everything depends on its being done at the right time. Given that the world will surely come to an end and all people will surely account for their actions on the Day of Reckoning, then what we need to do is obvious: turn away from all wrongdoing and sincerely repent to Allah while we still

have the chance, to hold fast to belief, and to fortify our belief with deeds of righteousness and good works.

## 5. The Descent of Prophet Isa

Isa, otherwise known as Isa (upon him be peace) was sent as a Prophet to the Tribe of Israel. As one of the examples of Divine power, he came to the world without a father and was given many miracles. The Children of Israel first accused him of lying. They then wanted to crucify him, but Allah saved him and raised him to His Presence.

Allah Almighty declares in the Qur'an as follows:

“...and their saying, ‘We killed the Messiah, ‘Isa son of Maryam, Messenger of Allah.’ You did not kill him and they did not crucify him but it was made to seem so to them, those who argue about him are in doubt about it. They have no real knowledge of it just conjecture. But they certainly did not kill him. Allah raised him up to Himself. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise.” (An-Nisa, 4:157-158)

“When Allah said, ‘Isa, I will take you back and raise you up to Me and purify you of those who disbelieve. And I will place the people who follow you above those who disbelieve until the Day of Rising.” (Al ‘Imran, 3:55)

On the basis of this verse, Muslim scholars have concurred that Prophet Isa Ibn Maryam was raised to the heavens. But they have disagreed as to whether this ascension was only with the spirit, or with the spirit and the body.

There are verses in the Qur'an which indicate that he will return to the world before the end of time. In addition to the above-mentioned, the verses below declare:

“There is not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him before he dies; and on the Day of Rising he will be a witness against them.” (An-Nisa, 4:159)

“He is the Sign of the Hour have no doubt about it. But follow me. This is the straight path.” (Az-Zukhruf, 43:61)



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) stated in a Prophetic narration:

“By the One in whose hand is my soul, the time is near when the son of Mary will descend among you as a just ruler. He will break the cross, kill the pig,<sup>117</sup> and abolish the jizya-tax (i.e. only Islam will remain as a religion). Wealth will become so abundant that there will be no takers for it.” (Bukhari, Buyu’ 102, Mazalim 31, Anbiya 49; Muslim, Iman 242, 243, 247, Hajj 216, Fitān 34, 39, 110)<sup>118</sup>

“A group from among my Community will not cease fighting for the truth and will prevail until the Day of Resurrection. Isa Ibn Maryam (peace be upon him) would then descend and their commander of the believers will say, ‘Come and lead us in prayer.’

But he will say, ‘No, some among you are leaders over others as an honour from Allah to this community.’” (Muslim, Iman, 247)



There are many other prophetic narrations concerning the descent of Prophet Isa to earth and his restoration and practice of Islamic law.<sup>119</sup>

There is no contradiction between Isa’s return to earth and our master Muhammad the Messenger of Allah (upon him be peace and blessings) being the last Prophet to be sent to humanity. This is because Isa (upon him be peace) will descend upon earth not as a Prophet sent to communicate new divine injunctions, but as a “just Muslim ruler” living and practicing

117. Prophet Isa, upon him be peace, will forbid the consumption of pig meat so vehemently that he will order that pigs be destroyed in order to demonstrate its importance and to emphasise the prohibition of their consumption. Also implied in this command is a rebuke of those Christians who sanction eating the meat of swine and consume it with great avidity while they claim to follow the way of Jesus. Also implied in Prophet Isa’s command is an abolition of Christianity, by removing the symbols that its adherents have presented as indispensable.

118. Also see Abu Dawud, Malahim 12, 14 (4324); Tirmidhi, Fitān 21, 54, 59, 62.

119. Muhammad Anwar Shah al-Kashmiri (1875-1933) compiled 101 of these narrations, seventy-five of which go back to the Prophet (known as *marfu’* Traditions) in his work entitled, *al-Tasrih bima Tawatara fi Nuzul al-Masih* (Aleppo: Maktabat al-Matbu’at al-Islamiya, (1385/1965).





ing the religion with of the the final Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

## 6. Gog and Magog

Perhaps the greatest trial after the Dajjal is the trial of Gog and Magog (Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj). The tribes of Gog and Magog are mentioned in two places in the Qur'an:

The first is the complaint to Dhu'l-Qarnayn concerning Gog and Magog's causing corruption in the land and Dhu'l-Qarnayn's constructing a huge wall in front of them as an impenetrable barrier blocking them in with blocks of iron to prevent them from escaping.<sup>120</sup>

The second are the following verses which describe the collapse of this barrier and Gog and Magog's invasion of the civilised world:

"When Yajuj and Majuj are let loose and rush down from every slope, and the True Promise is very close, the eyes of those who disbelieved will be transfixed: 'Alas for us! We were unmindful of this! No, rather we were certainly wrongdoers.'" (Al-Anbiya, 21:96-97)

These two tribes will spread across the earth and cause unrest for some time.



As related by the Prophet's wife Zaynab bint Jahsh (may Allah be well pleased with her) that she once entered upon the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and found him saying, 'There is no god but Allah! Woe to the Arabs for an evil that is drawing near! Today, an opening like this has been made in the barrier of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj,' and he formed a circle joining his thumb and forefinger.

Zaynab asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, will we be destroyed even when the righteous are among us?'

He said, 'Yes, if wickedness prevails.'" (Bukhari, Fitan 4, 28; Muslim, Fitan, 1)<sup>121</sup>

120. Refer to (18:94-98).

121. See also Bukhari, Anbiya 7, Manaqib 25; Abu Dawud, Fitan, 1; Tirmidhi, Fitan, 23; Ibn



Commentaries of this Narration mention that the destruction that will take place with the prevalence of evil and wrongdoing are not specific to the time of Gog and Magog, but constitute a general rule, and therefore apply to any time in which wickedness and immorality prevails.



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said:

“(After Isa, kills the Dajjal,) Allah will reveal to him these words: ‘I have brought forth from amongst My slaves such people against whom none has the power to fight; take these people safely to Tur (for protection).’

And then Allah will send Gog and Magog and they will swarm down from every slope. The first of them would pass the Lake of Tiberias and drink out of it until they leave it completely dry. Those who come after them will pass by that river and say, ‘There was once water here.’

Our master Isa (peace be upon him) and his companions will then be besieged there and the head of a single ox will be dearer to them than one hundred dinars is for one of you today. The Prophet of Allah, Isa and his companions will turn to Allah for help in earnest supplication and then Allah will respond by sending worms (that will attack their necks), and they will all perish in one go, in the morning.

Allah’s noble Messenger Isa son of Maryam (upon him be peace) and his companions will then come down to the earth and they will not find a single hand span of space which is not filled with their putrefaction and stench. They will then again supplicate to Allah, who will send birds like the necks of Bactrian camels which will carry them (i.e. their carcasses) and throw them wherever Allah wills.

Then Allah will send rain which no house of clay or camel hair will be able to keep out and it will wash the earth until it is like a mirror.

Then the earth will be commanded to bring forth its fruit and restore its blessing. On that day, a group of people will eat from a single pomegranate and shelter beneath its skin. Milk will be so blessed that a camel’s milk

will be sufficient for a crowd of people, a cow's milk will be sufficient for a tribe of people, and a sheep's milk will be sufficient for a whole family.<sup>122</sup>

At that time, Allah will send a pleasant wind which will envelop them beneath their armpits and will take the soul of every believer and every Muslim. Only the most wicked of people will remain and they will fornicate like donkeys and upon them the Hour will come." (Muslim, Fitan, 110)<sup>123</sup>

### **Landslides:**

#### **7. In the East**

#### **8. In the West; and,**

#### **9. In the Arabian Peninsula**

In the Narrations whereby he states that the Last Hour will not come until ten major signs appear,<sup>124</sup> the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) mentions landslides taking place in the east, the west and in the Arabian Peninsula as three of these signs.

Just as there are a number of minor signs that emerge before the major ones, as their precursors and indicators, so too of course, have there been many landslides to date. However, it is stated that the landslides of which the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) spoke of are much greater and much more terrifying than these.

### **10. A Fire from Yemen or the Hijaz**

At the approach of the Hour, a great fire will emerge either from Yemen, or from the Hijaz, which will burn so bright it will illuminate distances far and wide.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

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122. That Allah will destroy these unassailable barbarians at a single stroke by inflicting worms upon them, and His then reviving the earth and making it more conducive to human existence, is undoubtedly yet another mark of the infinite Power and Majesty of the Lord of the Worlds.

123. See also Tirmidhi, Fitan, 59; Ibn Maja, Fitan, 33.

124. For the full text of the Tradition, see p. 206.



“The Hour will not come until a fire emerges from the land of the Hijaz which will illuminate the necks of the camels in Busra [in Syria].” (Bukhari, Fitan, 24; Muslim, Fitan, 42)

Again, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) stated:

“A fire will emerge before the Last Day from the sea of Hadhramawt or from Hadhramawt, and it will gather the people.”

(Those present) said, “What do you instruct us to do, O Messenger of Allah?”

He said, “I advise you to go to Damascus (to Syria).” (Tirmidhi, Fitan, 42)

A great fire to emerge in the Hijaz region will be visible from Syria. This is another one of the major signs of the Last Day.

## THE RESURRECTION

When the minor and major signs of the Last Day appear and the divinely-appointed time for the destruction of this fleeting world comes to pass, that great divine promise will be realised in an instant.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has stated in a prophetic narration:

“...The Final Hour will come while two men are spreading out a garment between them and they will not finish their transaction or fold the garment up.

The Final Hour will come while a man is carrying the milk of his milk-camel but will not be able to taste it.

The Final Hour will come while someone is mending his water basin and will not be able to water from it.

The Final Hour will come when someone is raising his food to his mouth but will not be able to taste it.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 40; Ahmad, II, 369. See Muslim, Fitan 140, Iman 248)

## The Blowing of the Trumpet (*Sur*)

The Resurrection will begin with the blowing of the *Sur*, or the Trumpet. The Trumpet is a kind of horn which will signal the total destruction of the world. It will be blown by the archangel Israfil (upon him be peace) to ensure that all the dead are gathered in the Place of Supreme Gathering after the final destruction.

The Trumpet, the exact nature of which remains unknown, is mentioned in a prophetic narration as follows:

“The Trumpet (*Sur*) which will be blown (is in the form of a ram’s horn).” (Abu Dawud, Sunna, 24)

The Qur’an states that the Trumpet will be sounded twice. The first will be accompanied by the final destruction of this worldly realm as we know it, and with the second will come the raising up of the dead from the graves.

Some Qur’anic verses state in relation to the events that will unfold in the universe as a result of the Trumpet’s second blowing:

“So the Trumpet will be blown with a single blast, and the earth and mountains are lifted and crushed with a single blow. On that Day, the Occurrence will occur and Heaven will be split apart, for that Day it will be frail.” (Al-Haqqa, 69:13-16)

“On the Day the earth and mountains shake and the mountains become like shifting dunes.” (Al-Muzzammil, 73:14)

“When the stars are extinguished, when heaven is split open, when the mountains are pulverised, when the Messengers’ time is appointed.” (Al-Mursalat, 77:8-11)

“On the day the earth is changed to other than the earth and the heavens likewise, and they parade before Allah, the One, the All-Conquering.” (Ibrahim, 14:48)

“That Day We will fold up heaven like folding up the pages of a book. As We originated the first creation so We will regenerate it. It is a promise binding on Us. That is what We will do.” (Al-Anbiya, 21:104)



“They will ask you about the mountains. Say: ‘My Lord will scatter them as dust. He will leave them as a barren, level plain on which you will see no dip or gradient.’ (Ta Ha, 20:105-107)



As for the state of human beings at both soundings of the Trumpet, the Qur’an states:

“The Trumpet will be blown and those in the earth will all lose consciousness, except those Allah wills. Then it will be blown a second time and at once they will be standing upright, looking on!” (Az-Zumar, 39:68)

“On that Day the first blast shudders, and the second blast follows it, hearts that Day will be pounding and eyes cast down.” (An-Nazi’at, 79:6-9)

The day the Trumpet will be blown will undoubtedly be the most terrifying day of worldly life, such that on that day little children will grow old out of dread and fear. Allah declares:

“How will you safeguard yourselves, if you disbelieve, against a Day which will turn children grey, by which heaven will be split apart? His promise will be fulfilled.” (Al-Muzammil, 73:17-18)

There are also those who will not be afraid on this Day of great horror, and who will be secure against sadness and sorrow because they are under the protection of Allah. As declared in another Qur’anic verse:

“On the Day the Trumpet is blown and everyone on earth is terrified – except those Allah wills, everyone will come to Him abject.” (An-Naml, 27:87)





## CHAPTER 6



### *The Next World*

*The unbelievers, the wrongdoers and the unmindful and heedless forever imagine, a world that is without reckoning, responsibility and without an afterlife. When they are faced with the horrendous scenes of the Final Hour, they will be willing to ransom themselves with everything they possess in this world many times over, in view of escaping the torment of that awesome Day. But alas, the chance would have been missed and the opportunity long lost.*





## THE NEXT WORLD

### 1. Revival After Death (*Ba'ath*)

The revival of all the dead on the day of Resurrection will occur with archangel Israfil's second blowing of the Trumpet. With this second sounding, all creatures will be restored to life. This is referred to as *ba'thu ba'dal mawt* or revival after death.

Abu Hurayra (may Allah be well pleased with him) once asked the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) about the time between the two blowings of the Trumpet, to which Allah's Messenger replied that there would be an interval of forty.

When Abu Hurayra was asked whether this expression meant forty years, forty months or forty days, he insistently responded to each saying, "I cannot say anything." Then continuing to transmit the words of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) he related:

"Then Allah will cause water to pour forth from the sky and they (the people) will sprout like vegetables. The only thing in a human being which will not decay will be one bone (the tailbone), referred to as *'ajb al-dhanab*,<sup>125</sup> from which the whole (bodily) frame would be reconstituted on the Day of Resurrection." (Bukhari, Tafsir, 39/3; Muslim, Fitan, 141; Muwatta', Jana'iz, 48; Abu Dawud, Sunna, 24; Nasa'i, Jana'iz, 117)

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125. According to authentic reports, the earth will consume the entire body of the human being, but the *'ajb al-dhanab*, or coccyx, which the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and blessings, describes as resembling a mustard seed (Ahmad, III, 28) and which is considered to be the seed of the human body, will not decay. The human being will be brought back from the *'ajb al-dhanab* and restored to life. (See Muslim, Fitan, 141-143)

In some reports, the interval between the two soundings of the Trumpet is mentioned as being forty years<sup>126</sup> and this has been the generally accepted view.<sup>127</sup>

According to the Hadith scholar and grammarian al-Farra':

"Human beings and all creation will die with the first blowing of the Trumpet. There are forty years between this and the second. At this point, Allah will send rain. For forty days, the rain will be of the consistency of male seminal fluid. Human beings will be cast forth in their graves like are cast forth in their mother's womb. This is what is expressed in the following Qur'anic verse:

"It is He who sends out the winds, bringing advance news of His mercy, so that when they have lifted up the heavy clouds, We dispatch them to a dead land and send down water to it, by means of which We bring forth all kinds of fruit. In the same way We bring forth the dead, so that hopefully you will pay heed." (Al-A'raf, 7:57)

That is to say, "We bring forth the dead from their graves like We bring forth plants from the earth."<sup>128</sup>



In the Qur'an, Allah Almighty addresses those who have doubt as to how the revival after death will take place:

"Mankind! If you are in any doubt about the Rising, know that We created you from dust, then from a drop of sperm then from a clot of blood

126. Ibn Manda, Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ishaq ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Yahya al-'Abdi (d. 395/1005), al-Iman (I-II). Edited by 'Ali Ibn Muhammad Nasir al-Faqihi, Beirut: *Muassasat al-Risala*, 1406, II, 794; Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, I, 541.

127. al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad (d. 505/1111), *al-Durra al-fakhira fi kashf 'ulum al-akhira* (In *Majmu'at rasail al-Imam al-Ghazali*), Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1409, p. 118; Baghawi, VII, 132; Qurtubi, Tadhkira, I, 287; Suyuti, *al-Budur al-safirah* p. 86-88; Bebek, "Sur", TDV Encyclopedia of Islam, XXXVII, 534.

128. al-Farra', I, 382. Tabari refers to the same report without its chain of transmission. His account mentions this rain being called *ma'u hayawan*. (Tabari, XII, 493-494) cf. Ibn Abi Hatim, VIII, 2784; Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, I, 541; Abu Hayyan, V, 79.

An authentic report reveals that Allah Almighty will send down rain from the sky and that through it, the dead will be restored to life in the same way that plants and vegetation grow by means of it.

then from a lump of flesh, formed yet unformed, so We may make things clear to you. We make whatever We will stay in the womb until a specified time and then We bring you out as children so that you might reach full maturity. Some of you die and some of you revert to the lowest form of life so that, after having knowledge, they then know nothing at all. And you see the earth dead and barren; then when We send down water onto it quivers and swells and sprouts with luxuriant plants of every kind. That is because Allah is the Real and gives life to the dead and has power over all things and the Hour is coming without any doubt and Allah will raise up those in the graves.” (Al-Hajj, 22:5-7)



The reality of resurrection that Allah Almighty announces is also expressed in the following conversation which took place between the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and Abu Razin (may Allah be well pleased with him):

Abu Razin al-Uqaili (may Allah be well pleased with him) narrates:

“I once asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah, how will Allah bring the dead back to life? What is the sign of this in His creation?’

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, ‘O Abu Razin, do you not pass through the valley of your people and see it arid and barren, and then pass through it and see it stirred to life and green)?’

I said, ‘Yes.’

He said, ‘This is how Allah will bring the dead back to life.’” (Ahmed, IV, 11)



The great confoundment and remorse that the deniers of the Resurrection will face when they are revived and restored to life is described in the verses of the Qur’an as follows:

“There will be but one Great Blast and then their eyes will open. They will say, ‘Alas for us! This is the Day of Reckoning!’ This is the Day of Decision you used to deny.” (As-Saffat, 37:19-21)



“They will emerge from their graves with downcast eyes, like swarming locusts, necks outstretched, eyes transfixed, rushing headlong to the Summoner. The unbelievers will say, ‘This is a pitiless day!’” (Al-Qamar, 54:7-8)

This is because they belied the life of the Next World, supposing their lives to be comprised solely of their worldly experience. This truth is expressed in the Qur’an as follows:

“They say, ‘There is nothing but our existence is this world. We die and we live and nothing destroys us except time.’ They have no knowledge of that. They are only conjecturing. When Our Clear Signs are recited to them their only argument is to say, ‘Bring us our fathers if you are telling the truth.’ Say: ‘Allah gives you life, then causes you to die, and then will gather you together for the Day of Rising about which there is no doubt. But most people do not know it.’” (Al-Jathiyya, 45:24-26)

In his denial of the resurrection, one of Islam’s stubborn enemies Ubayy ibn Khalaf once picked up a piece of decayed bone from the ground, crumbling it in his hands, and said deridingly to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace):

“Do you believe that Allah will revive these decayed bones?”

The Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said to him in response:

“Yes. Allah will revive you and will admit you into the Fire.” (Qurtubi, al-Jami’, XV, 58; Wahidi, p. 379)

The following verses from the Qur’an were subsequently revealed:

“Does not man see that We created him from a drop yet there he is, an open antagonist! He makes likenesses of Us and forgets his own creation, saying, ‘Who will give life to bones when they are decayed?’ Say ‘He who made them in the first place will bring them back to life. He has total knowledge of each created thing.’” (Ya Sin, 36:77-79)



At the beginning of the Qur'anic chapter Al-Qiyama (The Rising), Allah describes the ease with which He will restore human beings to life after death:

“Does man imagine We will not reassemble his bones? On the contrary! We are well able to reshape his fingers.”<sup>129</sup> (Al-Qiyama, 75:3-4)



Allah declares in the Qur'anic chapter Luqman:

“Your creating and rising is only like that of a single self. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.” (Luqman, 31:28)

The first creation undoubtedly constitutes evidence of the second creation. This is because creating something from nothing is more difficult than destroying an already existing thing and then restoring it to life afterwards. Accepting the more difficult thing of the first creation while asserting the impossibility of the easier second one is not at all a wise. Moreover, there can never be any question of any weariness for Allah, the Possessor of infinite Knowledge and Power, at the first creation when it is He Who brought into being countless creatures in the first instance, each a wonder of creation.

Indeed, Allah asks His slaves:

“Were We exhausted by the first creation? Yet they are dubious about the new creation” (Qaf, 50:15)




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129. The modern branch of knowledge referred to as dactyloscopy involves the analysis of fingerprints for the purpose of identification. This science has demonstrated the immutability of the fingerprint and that the lines forming the design of the fingerprint are never repeated in another fingerprint.

This is why fingerprint impressions provide the most reliable form of identification in law enforcement. While this discovery was made only at the end of the 19th century, the Qur'an miraculously drew attention to this aspect of the human fingerprint 14 centuries prior. This is one of countless examples of the Qur'an's being forever ahead of its time, and the positive sciences following suit by expounding and confirming it.



Humanity's being raised from their graves is depicted in the Qur'an in the following words:

"The Trumpet will be blown and at once they will be sliding from their graves towards their Lord. They will say, 'Alas for us! Who has raised us from our resting-place? This is what the All-Merciful promised us. The Messengers were telling the truth.'" (Ya Sin, 36:51-52)<sup>130</sup>

"Does he not know that when the graves are emptied out, and the heart's contents are brought into the open, that Day their Lord will certainly be aware of them." (Al-'Adiyat, 100:9-11)



The ferocity and horror of that Day is expressed in the Qur'an as follows:

"Then when the Trumpet is blown, that Day there will be no family ties between them; they will not be able to question one another." (Al-Muminun, 23:101)

"When the Deafening Blast comes, the Day a man will flee from his brother and his mother and his father and his wife and his children: on that Day every man among them will have concerns enough of his own." (Abasa, 80:33-37)

The Prophet's wife 'A'isha, may Allah be well pleased with her, narrates:

"The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said,

'You will be gathered barefoot, naked and uncircumcised.'

I asked (in astonishment), 'Messenger of Allah, will men and women be looking at one another?'

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130. The views of Qur'anic exegetes on the subject are as follows:

- a. Death here is likened to sleep, as there is inactivity in both. The horrors of that Day will confound people's minds and they may well suppose themselves to be sleeping.
- b. The place of sleep can also be implied here.
- c. When the wicked come to comprehend their state after their life in the grave and the horror of the punishment of the Fire, they will suppose the grave, in comparison, to be a place of sleep and thus utter these words. (See Alusi, *Ruh al-Ma'ani*, XII, 31)



He answered, "The business will be too severe for them to be concerned by that." (Bukhari, Riqaq, 45; Muslim, Janna, 56)

As indicated in another Prophetic narration, the first person to be clothed on the Day of Rising will be Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him).<sup>131</sup> Then Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) will be clothed in his garment. He (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) will stand to the right of the Supreme Throne, a place only he will (be permitted to) occupy. By virtue of his exalted rank and immense worth, he will be the envy of those who came before and after him.



Allah Almighty will gather the dispersed and decayed parts of the body, restore to them their souls, and bring forth the dead from their graves. A life without end will thus begin for human beings who are brought back to life.

The first person to be restored to life and raised up from the grave on the Day of Rising will be our master the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).<sup>132</sup>

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once entered the mosque with Abu Bakr on one side and 'Umar on the other (may Allah be pleased with both of them). He was holding their hands, and he said, "This is how we will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement." (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 16/3669)

## **Examples of the Resurrection in the Qur'an**

Although there has been debate as to whether the resurrection will be a corporeal or spiritual in nature, there are many verses in the Qur'an which indicate that it will be material. Allah will raise up every human being with their physical body and restore their soul.

In order for hearts to attain contentment concerning the reality of the resurrection after death and concerning the ease with which Allah will

131. See Bukhari, Anbiya, 8.

132. See Darimi, Muqaddima, 8. Also, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 1/3616.



bring it about, Allah displays instances of His reviving the dead in this world and mentions their examples in the Qur'an as follows:

***a) The Revival of Birds Cut into Pieces:***

It is declared in a Qur'anic verse:

“When Ibrahim said, ‘My Lord, show me how You bring the dead to life.’ He asked, ‘Do you not then believe?’ He replied, ‘Indeed I do! But so that my heart may be at peace.’ He said, ‘Take four birds and train them to yourself. Then put a part of them on each mountain and call to them; they will come rushing to you. Know that Allah is Almighty, All-Wise.’”  
(Al-Baqara, 2:260)

According to narration, Allah ordered Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) to cut four birds into pieces, to scatter the parts, and then to place each piece on a separate hill, reserving the heads.

Prophet Ibrahim (upon him be peace) is said to have caught a peacock, rooster, raven and an eagle. He cut them up into four pieces, mixed all the pieces, and then placed a portion on various hills. He then called the birds in the name of Allah and the birds immediately sprang to life. Each piece joined with the others from the same body, attaching to the correct head to form the original whole.<sup>133</sup>

It has also been suggested that Prophet Ibrahim's placing the bird pieces on different hills indicates that there was a large crowd gathered around him. In other words, the implication is that he may have been commanded to scatter the birds in a high place so that they could easily be seen by the people. Accordingly, Ibrahim (upon him be peace) was given a miracle from Allah Almighty to prove to those who denied the revival after death.



Prophet Ibrahim is one of the greatest Prophets. As a result, it is unthinkable that he entertained even the slightest doubt about God's raising the dead back to life.





Surely, Allah Almighty also knew that Ibrahim (upon him be peace) was one of the people of belief. However, in order for all others to know what was implied in Ibrahim's words, "My Lord, show me how You will restore life to the dead," Allah asked him, "Why? Do you not believe?" As indicated in the Qur'anic verse, Prophet Ibrahim then goes on to state that he made such a request from Allah Almighty so that his heart could be at peace by witnessing the truth directly and for his belief to reach complete certainty by beholding this manifestation of Divine majesty. For there is no doubt that when people see something with their own eyes, their belief is strengthened to the point of becoming unshakeable.

On the other hand, it has also been suggested that Prophet Ibrahim's making such a request was aimed at his heart's attaining complete conviction, since he was blessed to be the 'intimate friend of Allah'.

Moreover, the Qur'anic verse reveals the truth that no matter what spiritual station a person reaches, there is still progress that can be made in the way of spiritual perfection

Even Ibrahim (upon him be peace) who is one of the five great Prophets (*ulul-'azm*), or 'those endowed with a great mission', who carries the rank of intimate friend of God, and who the Qur'an indicates was the recipient of many Divine favours, even he prayed to Allah to increase his certainty and asked help from Him in this regard.



### ***b) The Revival of those Struck by Lightning***

It is stated in the Qur'an:

"And when you said, 'Musa, we will not believe in you until we see Allah with our own eyes.' So the thunder-bolt struck you dead while you were looking. Then We brought you back to life after your death, so that perhaps you would show thanks." (Al-Baqara, 2:55-56)

As can be understood from these verses, some from amongst the people of Prophet Musa (upon him be peace) said that they would not believe unless they saw Allah, after which Allah struck them with a thunderbolt.



Then Allah revived those who were killed when the thunderbolt seized them, and they thus came to directly perceive the might of Allah.

This incident in the Qur'an shows those who deny the resurrection after death that this is not at all difficult for Allah. God's granting Isa (upon him be peace) the ability to bring the dead back to life, and the raising up of the People of the Cave after three hundred or so years asleep, also serves to show those who deny the resurrection in the Next World, the infinite power of Allah.

### *c) The Revival of those who remained dead for a Hundred Years*

One of the matters to which the Meccan polytheists objected most to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was the resurrection of the dead. While accepting this did not suit their egos on the one hand, they also had difficulty understanding how bodies that had disintegrated and become dust would be raised up back to life. Allah Almighty revealed to His Messenger many Qur'anic verses that would dispel these doubts of the polytheists, describing the reality of revival after death with many clear metaphors. One of these is the incident which took place in the time of the Prophet 'Uzayr, (peace be upon him) whereby a man who remained dead for a hundred years was brought back to life. It is stated in a verse:

“Or the one who had passed by a town which had fallen into ruin. He asked, ‘How can Allah restore this to life when it has died? Allah caused him to die a hundred years then brought him back to life. Then He asked, ‘How long have you been here?’ He replied, ‘I have been a day or part of a day.’ He said, ‘Not so! You have been here for a hundred years. Look at your food and drink – it has gone bad – and look at your donkey so We could make you a Sign for all mankind. Look at the bones – how We raise them up and clothe them in flesh.’ When it had become clear to him, he said, ‘Now I know that Allah has power over all things.’” (Al-Baqara, 2:259)

This individual, which in some Qur'anic commentaries is mentioned to be the Prophet 'Uzayr, (peace be upon him) passed by a town the inhabitants of which had died away and had fallen into complete ruin. He then asked himself how Allah would restore life to this desolate town and then fell asleep there.

Allah made him remain dead for a hundred years, after which He then raised him back to life. After the man was revived, he assumed that he had been asleep for a short time, because his food had not yet spoiled. But when he looked at his donkey, he realised that it had died long ago, with only its disintegrating bones remaining. Allah restored life to the donkey before the man's very eyes and he witnessed firsthand how Allah will resurrect the dead.

### **Hawd (*The Pond*)**

There are accounts that human beings who will be raised from their graves thirsty, rushing in a state of frenzy to the *hawd* at the Place of the Supreme Gathering in order to quench their thirst. But there will also be those people who will not be able to reach it.

One Prophetic narration indicates that those who reject the bounty of Islam in this world and take the path of falsehood will be forbidden from drinking from the Sacred Pond:

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once came to a graveyard and said, "Peace be upon you, the abode of the believing people! If God so wills, we will one day join you [thus greeting the dwellers of the grave, after which he said:] "I long to see my brothers."

His Companions asked in astonishment, "Are we not we your brothers, O Messenger of Allah?"

He said, "You are my Companions. My brothers are those who have not yet come to the world."

Thereupon his Companions said, "O Messenger of Allah, how will you recognise those members of your Community who have not yet come?"

He said, "Suppose a man had a horse with a white spot on its forehead and with white feet. Now tell me, would he not recognise his own horse among a herd of black horses?"

They said, "Certainly, O Messenger of Allah!"

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, "they will come with faces, hands and feet luminous owing to the



ritual ablution (*wudu*) and I will arrive at the Hawd before them so as to offer its water to them.

Take heed! Some people will be driven away from my Hawd (drinking place) as the stray camel is driven away from the caravan. I will call out to them, "Come, come!"

Then it will be said to me, "These people changed themselves after you and abandoned your Sunna."<sup>134</sup>

And I would say, "Be off, be off!" (Muslim, Tahara 39, Fada'il 26)<sup>135</sup>

Only those who are able to draw near to the Hawd will be able to drink from it. Those who will be barred from drinking from it are those people who will not be able to cross the Bridge (established over Hellfire).



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) describes the Hawd in one narration as follows:

"My Hawd extends over the distance of a month's walking. Its water is whiter than milk and its scent more fragrant than musk. Its cups are like the stars of the sky. Whoever drinks from it will never feel thirst again." (Bukhari, Riqaq, 53; Muslim, Fada'il, 27)

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134. These people are described as those people who reverted to unbelief after having pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Indeed, it is stated in another Prophet ic Tradition: "...and it will be said (to me), 'They constantly turned on their heels after you left them.'" (Muslim, Janna, 58) There are also differing views concerning the people who will not be able to reach the Pond of the Prophet. They are enumerated as follows:

- Hypocrites and apostates.
- Those who lived in the time of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and reverted back to unbelief after his demise.
- Those who have committed major sins.
- The adherents of deviant sects and those who invent innovations against the religion. (al-Suyuti, *al-Dibaj 'ala Sahih Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj*, Dar Ibn 'Affan, 1416, II, 34)
- Those who rebel. That is to say, those who turn away not from Islam, but from the Straight Path of Islam and who abandon deeds of righteousness for acts of wickedness. (Nawawi, *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, XV, 64)

135. See also Nasa'i, Tahara, 110/150; Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 36; Muwatta', Tahara, 28; Ahmad, II, 300, 408.



Consequently, those who will not be permitted to drink from the Hawd will suffer thirst for all eternity.

According to narration, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) will be the first to reach the Hawd and will prepare to offer its water to his community.<sup>136</sup> The first people to arrive at the Hawd will be the poor from among the Emigrants who made the journey from Mecca to Medina.

Similarly, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“Indeed, there is a Pond (*hawd*) for every Prophet and they will compete to see which of them has the most people arriving at it. I hope that mine will be the one with the most people reaching it.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 14/2443)

We, too, must exert great effort to adhere to the practice of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) that his hopes not be unfulfilled. We should also strive to encourage those around us to lead their lives in this way, starting from those who are closest to us.

## **The Raising of the Dead and the Supreme Gathering on Judgment Day**

Allah Almighty will gather together all the creatures that He will raise to life after death at the plain where the Judgement and Balance of absolute justice will be established. Indeed, this reality is expressed in the verses of the Qur'an as follows:

“Our Lord, do not make our hearts swerve aside after You have guided us. And give us mercy from You. You are the Ever-Giving. Our Lord, You are the Gatherer of Mankind to a Day of which there is no doubt. Allah will not break His promise.” The Family of Imran (Al ‘Imran, 3:9) See also (18:99).

“On the Day the Trumpet is blown - and We gather the evildoers sightless.” (Ta Ha, 20:102)

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136. Muslim, Fada'il, 25-45; Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 15/2444; Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 36; Ahmad, V, 275; Haythami, X, 360-367.



“By your Lord, We will collect them and the shaytans together. Then We will assemble them around Hell on their knees.” Mary (Maryam, 19:68)

“That Day people will emerge segregated to see the results of their actions.” (Az-Zilzal, 99:6)



In one Prophetic narration, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) describes the Place of Supreme Gathering on Judgement Day:

“People will be gathered on the Day of Rising on reddish-white land like a loaf of fine bread.”

One of the Narration’s transmitters makes the following commentary:

“There will be no landmarks for anyone on it.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 44)

Indeed, the Qur’an reveals that when the Trumpet is blown, the mountains will be blasted into scattered dust, the earth will be left as a desolate wasteland, and no hills or ruggedness will remain on it.<sup>137</sup>



People will come there in different conditions, in accordance with their spiritual state in this world. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said in this regard:

“You shall be gathered walking, riding, and dragged upon your faces.”<sup>138</sup>

Those who will be dragged on their faces to the Place of the Supreme Gathering are those heedless people who are far from the guidance with which Islam has come.

As is indicated in verses of the Qur’an:

“Whoever Allah guides is truly guided. But as for those He leads astray, you will not find any protectors for them apart from Him. We will gather them on the Day of Rising, flat on their faces, blind, dumb and deaf.

137. See (20:105-107).

138. Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 3/2424 cf. Muslim, Janna, 57.



Their shelter will be Hell. Whenever the Blaze dies down, We will increase it for them.” (Al-Isra’, 17:97)

Those who are herded into Hell, such people are in the worst position. They are the most misguided from the way.” (Al-Furqan, 25:34)

Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates:

“A man once said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, how will an unbeliever be raised to life on his face on the Day of Gathering?’

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) answered, ‘Is not the One who made him walk on two legs in this world able to make him walk on his face on the Day of Rising?’

Qatada, who relates the Narration, then said, ‘Yes, by the power of our Lord!’” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 45; Muslim, Munafiqin, 54)



One of the incidents to take place at the Place Gathering is the sun’s being brought near. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said in this regard:

“On the Day of Resurrection, the sun will draw so close to the people that there would be left only a distance of one mile.<sup>139</sup> The people will be submerged in perspiration according to their deeds: some up to their ankles, some up to their knees, some up to their waist and some will be bridled with it.” (Muslim, Janna, 62; Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 2/2421)

“The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: “A Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the Worlds?”<sup>140</sup> and said, “Each of them will stand in his sweat up to the middle of his ears.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 47; Muslim, Janna, 60)

It is useful to note at this point that the intermediate realm of the grave and the realm that follows it after the Rising out of the grave, each have their own unique conditions and features as distinct from the condi-

139. Sulaym ibn ‘Amir, one of the narrators of the Tradition, said: “By Allah, I do not know whether he meant by ‘mile’ the mile that refers to distance on earth or the instrument used for applying kohl to the eye.”

140. (83:6)



tions of life in this world. As a case in point, were the sun brought closer to the earth in this world, all things would burn to ashes. Similarly, if all parts of the world were to be submerged under water due to a great flood, all human beings would perish. However, as such events will transpire in the Next World according to everyone's individual circumstance, a wrongdoer will feel great torment with the drawing near of the sun, but they will not die. For there, there is no death.

In the same way, when the people at the Gathering will sweat from the heat of the sun, they will each be submerged in their own sweat, which will in no way harm or affect those who stand near to them. This is reminiscent of the fact that everyone will be led in their own light on the Day of Judgement.

In fact, it is stated in the Qur'an:

"On the Day you see the men and women of the believers, with the light streaming out in front of them, and to the right: 'Good news for you today of Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, for ever. That is the Great victory.' That Day the men and women of the hypocrites will say to those who believe, 'Wait for us so that we can borrow some of your light.' They will be told, 'Go back and look for light!' And a wall will be erected between them with a gate in it, on the inside of which there will be no mercy but before whose exterior lies the punishment." (Al-Hadid, 57:12-13)

On that fearsome Day, every person's light will suffice only themselves and not be of any benefit to others. This situation is one of the unique aspects of the Day of Resurrection.

The similitude in this world is as follows:

A Muslim walk in the light of their belief. The unbeliever beside them remains in the darkness of their unbelief and cannot benefit from the light of Muslim. Like so, a blind person walks beside a person who has the ability to see and remains blind.

Imam al-Sha'rani said in relation to the overwhelming amounts of sweat that will flow from human beings on the Day of Gathering:



“It is a certainty that the people who will sweat on that Day are those who did not sweat in the world by performing righteous deeds such as striving in the path of Allah, undertaking pilgrimage, fasting, praying, seeing to the affairs of the Muslims and building water wells. For this reason, they will be submerged in their own perspiration on the Plain of Supreme Gathering. They will sweat due to the shame, fear and anxiety they will feel while waiting in the Place of Supreme Gathering.” (Imam Şârânî, *Ölüm Kiyâmet Âhiret*, p.159)

In summary, there are such terrifying fears pertaining to the Day of Gathering and such things will be experienced that it will even cause people who have been promised the Garden while in their graves to forget this Divine favour and mercy.<sup>141</sup> We seek refuge in Allah Almighty from all these fears.

### **The Intercession of Allah’s Messenger**

Abu Hurayra (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates:

“We accompanied the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) as he responded to an invitation. Some meat was presented to him, as he liked it. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) ate a piece of it and said:

‘I will be the master of all the people on the Day of Rising. Do you know why? Allah will gather the first and the last on the same plain such that an announcer will be able to have his voice heard by all and an observer will be able to see all of them at once. The sun will draw very near to the people. They will suffer such distress and trouble that it will become unbearable (another narration mentions this period of waiting as being seventy years).<sup>142</sup>

Then some people will say: “Do you not see what a state you are in and what has befallen you? Why do you not look for someone to intercede with your Lord on your behalf?”

141. See Ibn al-Jawzi, *Bustan al-Wa’izin wa Riyad al-Sami’in*, Beirut 1419, p. 36.

142. Ishaq ibn Rahuya, *Musnad*, I, 84/10; Bayhaqi, *al-Ba’th wa al-Nushur*, I, 336/609.



Some people will say to the others, "Go to your father, Adam (peace be upon him)."

So they will go to Adam and say to him, "O Adam! You are the father of mankind. Allah created you with His Hand and breathed into you out of His Spirit and He ordered the angels to prostrate before you. And He made you dwell in the Garden. Will you not intercede with your Lord on our behalf? Do you not see what we are suffering and what has befallen us?"

Adam will say, "My Lord today is angry as He has never been before, nor will He ever be again. He forbade me the tree, but I disobeyed. O my soul! My soul! My soul! Go to someone else. Go to Nuh."

So they will go to Nuh (peace be upon him) and say, "O Nuh! You are the first of the Messengers to be sent to the people of the earth and Allah called you "a thankful slave."<sup>143</sup> Do you not see what we are suffering and what has befallen us? Will you not intercede with your Lord on our behalf?"

He will say, "My Lord today is angry as He has never been before, nor will He ever be again. I was granted the right to make one absolutely accepted supplication and I made it against my nation. O my soul! My soul! My soul! Go to someone else. Go to Ibrahim."

They will go to Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and say to him, "O Ibrahim, you are the Prophet of Allah and His intimate friend (*khalil*) among the people of the earth. Will you not intercede with your Lord on our behalf? Do you not see what we are suffering and what has befallen us?"

He will say to them, "My Lord today is angry as He has never been before, nor will He ever be again. I once uttered three ambiguous words. O my soul! My soul! My soul! Go to someone else. Go to Musa."

The people will then go to Musa (peace be upon him) and say to him, "O Musa! You are Allah's Messenger and Allah gave you superiority above the others with His Message and He spoke to you directly. Will you not intercede with your Lord on our behalf? Do you not see what we are suffering and what has befallen us?"

Musa will say, “My Lord today is angry as He has never been before, nor will He ever be again. I killed a person I had not been commanded to kill. O my soul! My soul! My soul! Go to someone else. Go to ‘Isa (Jesus).”

So they will go to ‘Isa (peace be upon him) and say, “O ‘Isa! You are Allah’s Messenger and His Word which He conveyed to Maryam and a spirit from Him and you spoke to the people while you were in the cradle. Will you not intercede with your Lord on our behalf? Do you not see what we are suffering and what has befallen us?”

Isa will say, “My Lord today is angry as He has never been before, nor will He ever be again.” Prophet Isa will not make mention of any wrongdoing, but will say, “I myself am more in need of intercession. Go to someone else. Go to Muhammad.”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) relates the continuation of this incident in another narration which states:

“They will come to me and say, ‘O Muhammad! You are the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets and Allah has forgiven you your past and future sins.<sup>144</sup> Will you not intercede with your Lord on our behalf? Do you not see what we are suffering and what has befallen us?’

144. There is reference here to the expression contained in the second verse of the Qur’anic chapter al-Fath (The Victory): “That Allah may forgive you (O Messenger) your sins of the past and those to follow...” This expression is one that is used for the purpose of emphasis. That is to say, by means of this statement, Allah Almighty draws attention to the innocence of His Messenger, upon him be peace and blessings, and his being protected against committing sin.

The use of the term “sin” here has been elucidated as follows:

- Implied by ‘sin’ is the Messenger’s preference for the less correct, as opposed to the better or best course, when exercising juristic interpretation (*ijtihad*). Reference to such a preference as ‘sin’ while it is normally not sinful, is by virtue of the Messenger’s elevated standing and station. For it has been said that, “The good deeds of the pious (*abrar*) are considered as the bad deeds of those who are brought near (*muqarrabin*).” In other words, certain acts that are considered good and acceptable for the God-revering and virtuous may be regarded as shortcomings by individuals who are more advanced in nearness to Allah. This is because their level of closeness to Allah necessitates a much higher degree of virtue.
- Minor sins, or lapses, are suggested. Lapses are involuntary errors. Whether inadvertently or on purpose, they are permissible concerning the Prophets and these lapses protect them from self-conceit. Moreover, the notion that the Prophets too, by



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) added, “They will come to me and I will prostrate before my Lord under the Throne (in which state he will remain for one week).”<sup>145</sup>

Then, He will bestow upon me knowledge of such praises and glorifications to Him as He has never bestowed upon anybody else before me. (After an extended time reciting such praise and glorification), it will be said, ‘O Muhammad! Raise your head. Intercede and your intercession shall be accepted. Ask and your request shall be granted.’

So I shall raise my head and say, ‘My community, O my Lord! My community, O my Lord! My community, O my Lord!’

It will be said, ‘O Muhammad! Let those of your community who are not subject to reckoning enter through gate of the Garden furthest to the right. They will share the other gates with others.’”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) then added, “By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, the distance between the two gateposts of all the gates of the Garden is like the distance between Mecca and Hajar, or that between Makkah and Busra (in Syria).”<sup>146</sup>

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virtue of their being human, can fall into error, prevents their respective communities from over-glorification and from ascribing Lordship to them.

- This statement is aimed at encouraging the Muslim community to seek forgiveness.
- The circumstances of the verse’s revelation expressly reveal that what is meant by the sins forgiven here are those mistakes that the Muslims made in the preceding nineteen years, during the struggles, efforts and military campaigns under the leadership of Allah’s Messenger, undertaken in spreading Islam. No one knows exactly what these are. Human comprehension is at a loss as to identifying a failing among these sincere endeavours. However, there were such shortcomings in these endeavours in the eyes of Allah, because of them the Muslims were not granted (an immediate) victory against the polytheists.

Therefore, what is meant in this Divine ordinance is the following:

“Had you continued your endeavours and striving in the way of Allah with these mistakes, it would have taken you much longer to overcome the Meccan polytheists. But by forgiving you all your faults and errors and removing them through our grace, We opened to you this door to triumph at Hudaibiya. Else you could not have achieved this victory with your own efforts.”

145. See Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, I, 4; Ibn Hibban, Sahih, XIV, 394; Haythami, X, 374.

146. See Bukhari, Anbiya 3, 9, Tafsir, 17:5; Muslim, Iman 327, 328; Tirmidhi, Qiyama 10.



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said in another narration:

“...I will ask the permission of my Lord and it will be granted to me. I will then stand before Him and praise Him with praises which I am not able to do now, but at that time only Allah will inspire me to do.

I will then fall before Him in prostration and it will be said to me, ‘O Muhammad! Raise your head and speak and it shall be listened to. Ask and your request shall be fulfilled. Intercede and it shall be accepted.’

I will say, ‘My Lord, my people, my people!’

It will be said, ‘Go, and bring forth from it the Fire whoever has in their heart belief equal to the weight of a grain of wheat or a barley seed.’

I will go and do so.

Then I will return to my Lord and offer those praises (taught to me by Allah) ...”

After the second entreaty of The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) he will be told, “Go and take out from it the Fire whoever who has in their heart belief equal to the weight of a mustard seed.” His third appeal would engender the response, “Go, and bring out of the Fire whoever has in their heart belief that is smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than that, and then even smaller than that.” (See Muslim, Iman, 326, 322)

As can clearly be seen in these narrations, human beings are going to seek to escape the severity and torment of the Day of Reckoning. However, they will watch in horror as all their chances for deliverance are slip away one by one. When at last their hopes begin to completely fade, they will realise the only person who will have any say on that fearsome Day will be the final Messenger, Allah’s Beloved (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and they will appeal to him. The Prophet of Mercy will then intercede on their behalf and deliver them from these horrors.



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) will also have a special intercession reserved for his community. The

“praiseworthy station” (*maqām al-maḥmūd*) that Allah mentions in the Qur’anic verse,” (Isra, 17:79) is the authority to intercede with Allah.

Concerning this, he says:

“My intercession will be for those of my people who have committed major wrong actions.” (Abu Dawud, Sunna, 20-21/4739; Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 11/2435-6; Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 37; Ahmad, III, 213)

The Messenger’s stating in this narration that his intercession will be on account of the major wrong actions of his followers, does not mean that his intercession is particular to them. Those who commit certain major wrong actions will of course be most in need of intercession. But there are many kinds of intercession. For this reason, whoever Allah wills will have a share in this intercession commensurate with their particular state and situation.

Nevertheless, this narration should not make us neglect our duties of slavehood. For an act that we see as small and insignificant or think “will be forgiven anyway” can be a great act of wrongdoing in the eyes of Allah. Another narration states that a woman was condemned to punishment for starving a cat to death.<sup>147</sup>

As declared in a Qur’anic verse:

“You were bandying it about on your tongues, your mouths uttering something about which you had no knowledge. You considered it to be a trivial matter, but in Allah’s sight, it is immense.” (An-Nur, 24:15)



As stated in the Prophetic narration above, this station is reserved solely for the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). At such a time, Allah’s Messenger will hold the “standard of praise” (*liwa’ al-hamd*), under which all the Prophets, including Prophet Adam (upon him be peace) will be gathered.<sup>148</sup>

147. See Bukhari, Anbiya, 54.

148. See Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 1/3615, Tafsir, 18; Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 37; Ahmad, I, 281, 295, III, 2, 144.

It ought to be stated here that the fact that the Prophets, to whom the people will appeal for intercession and who will not see themselves as worthy of offering intercession due to their individual lapses, is both a demonstration of their elevated nobility and humility, as it is an indication of the degrees of intercession – the greatest authority of which lies with the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Subsequently, the other Prophets will be granted permission to intercede with Allah.

Indicated in another narration is that Allah granted him three prayers that would be accepted and then said: “..I said, O Allah! Forgive my people, forgive my people! And I have deferred the third for the Day on which the entire creation will turn to me, even Ibrahim (upon him peace).” (Muslim, Musafirin, 273)



Despite all these truths, there are still some people who claim that no one can intercede except Allah, thus refusing to accept the Prophetic narrations concerning intercession. However, there are many Qur’anic verses which explicitly state that those to whom the All-Merciful gives permission can intercede with Him on the Day of Reckoning. The following verses are clear cases in point:

“Allah, There is no god but Him, the Living, the Self-sustaining. He is not subject to drowsiness or sleep. Everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. Who can intercede except by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them but they cannot grasp any of His knowledge save what He wills. His Footstool encompasses the heavens and the earth and their preservation does not tire Him. He is the Most High, the Magnificent.” (Al-Baqara, 2:255)

“You Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself firmly on the Throne. He directs the whole affair. No one can intercede except with His permission. That is Allah your Lord, so worship Him. Will you not pay heed?” Jonah (Yunus, 10:3)

“They have no right of intercession. None do but those who have a contract with the All-Merciful.” (Maryam, 19:87)



“”Intercession with Him will be of no benefit, except from someone who has His permission. So that when the terror has left their hearts then will they say, ‘what did your Lord say? ‘they will say, ‘The truth. He is the All-High, The Great.” (Saba, 34:23)

These verses are unmistakeable examples of the truth of intercession, being only by Allah’s permission.

### **The Descent of Allah Almighty**

Following the descent to earth of the angels of the heavens, Allah glory be to Him, will also descend. All people and angels will then be aligned row upon row.

As is mentioned in verses of the Qur’an:

“What are they waiting for but Allah to come to them in the shadows of the clouds, together with the angels, in which case the matter will have been settled? All matters return to Allah. (Al-Baqara, 2:210)<sup>149</sup>

“And the Earth will shine with the pure light of its Lord: the book will be put in place; the Prophets and the witnesses will be brought; it will be decided between them with the truth; and they will not be wronged.” (Az-Zumar, 39:69)

A scene from that difficult and terrifying Day of Reckoning is presented to us in another Qur’anic verse as follows:

“No indeed! When the earth is crushed and ground to dust and your Lord arrives with the angels rank upon rank.” (Al-Fajr, 89:21-22)

One Prophetic narration reveals that when Allah Almighty makes Himself manifest on the Day of Rising, people will faint, unable to withstand His power and awesome majesty, and that the Messenger of Allah

149. The expression in the verse, “that Allah comes to them,” indicates that Allah Almighty will manifest Himself at the Place of Supreme Gathering in a manner that is to us unknown and that He will thus begin to call His slaves to account for whatever they have done in the world. Some Qur’anic exegetes have understood this statement to mean, “The coming of Allah’s command and severe punishment”.



(may Allah bless him and grant him peace) will be the first to regain consciousness.<sup>150</sup>

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be well pleased with him) reports:

“I saw The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) on the mimbar and he was saying that Allah the exalted, will fold up the heavens and the earth on the Day of Judgement, take them in His hands and say:

‘I am Allah. I am the Lord. Where are the kings of the world? Where are the haughty? Where are the proud (today)?’

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) closed his fingers to form a fist, then opened them. I saw the mimbar shaking from underneath because of something trembling there. And I said to myself, ‘It will not fall with the Messenger of Allah standing on it.’” (See Muslim, Qiyama, 23-26)

That the people will be arrayed before their Lord on that Day is mentioned in the Qur’an in the following verse:

“They will be paraded before your Lord in ranks: ‘You have come to Us just as We created you at first. Yes indeed, even though you claimed that We would not fix a time with you!’” (Al-Kahf, 18:48)

In this verse, Allah also presents the great heedlessness that His slaves show in this world concerning their returning to and meeting with Him. But because everything in this world will have come to an end, regret and lamentation will be to no avail.

### **Those Who Will Enter The Garden without Questioning**

In one narration, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) states that some people will enter the Garden without experiencing the difficulties of questioning:

150. See Bukhari, Khusumat, 1.



“My Lord promised me that seventy thousand of my Community shall be admitted into the Garden without a reckoning against them, nor any punishment. With every thousand to enter there are seventy thousand and three measures from the measures<sup>151</sup> of my Lord.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 12/2437; Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 34; Ahmad, V, 250)

In another Narration, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) describes the meritorious nature of guarding the borders of one's nation and the reward that those who die doing so will receive in the Next World:

“Keeping guard for a day and a night is better than fasting for a whole month and standing in prayer every night. If such a person dies (while, performing this duty), their reward will continue and they will go on perpetually receiving their reward and will be delivered from the torment of the grave.” (Muslim, Imara, 163)<sup>152</sup>

The foremost precondition of martyrdom, before Allah, is sincerity. Martyrdom is a ticket for direct entry into the Garden if it is without ulterior motive, that is, if it is realised purely for the sake of Allah Almighty. Thus, only those who strive in the name of a lofty goal, by way of exalting the religion of Allah, protecting the lands where His religion can be practised, and guarding one's nation and sacred sites, can be considered martyrs. Otherwise, the fact that those who die while acting for fame or fortune, or hollow heroism will not be considered martyrs is expressly stated in a Prophetic narration.<sup>153</sup>

That is to say, the martyrs who will enter the Garden exempted from reckoning are those who were not looking for anyone, but were sincerely seeking a reward from their Lord.



Again, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has stated:

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- 151. This expression appears to have been used rhetorically, by way of exaggeration for emphasis.
  - 152. Also refer to Tirmidhi, Fada'il al-Jihad, 2; Nasa'i, Jihad, 39; Ibn Maja, Jihad, 7.
  - 153. See Muslim, Imara, 152. For the complete text of the Prophetic Tradition, see, p. 366-368.



“When the slaves stand for the Reckoning, a group of people will come with their swords on their backs and with blood dripping from their wounds and they will assemble at the gate of the Garden.

It will be asked, ‘Who are they?’

It will be said, ‘They are the martyrs. They were alive, receiving sustenance from their Lord.’

Then a caller will cry out, ‘Let those whose reward is with Allah rise and enter the Garden!’

The caller will cry out a second time, ‘Let those whose reward is with Allah rise and enter the Garden!’

The people will ask, ‘Who are those whose reward is with Allah?’

‘Those who forgive the people,’ will be the response.

Then the caller will cry out a third time, saying, ‘Let those whose reward is with Allah rise and enter the Garden!’

Then, this many thousand people will rise and be admitted into the Garden without reckoning.” (Tabarani, Mu’jam al-Awsat, II, 285; Haythami, X, 411)

Indeed, Allah, glory be to Him, declares in relation to such people:

“The repayment of a bad action is one equal to it. But if someone pardons and puts things right, his reward is with Allah. Certainly He does not love wrongdoers.” Counsel (Ash-Shura, 42:40)



Similarly, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said:

“All the communities were shown to me. I saw one Prophet pass by with a community, one Prophet pass by with a group, one Prophet pass by with ten people, one Prophet pass by with five people, and another Prophet pass by all alone. Then I looked and there was an enormous crowd.

I asked, ‘Jibril (Gabriel), is this my community?’

He answered, ‘No, but look at the horizon.’

I looked and there was a large group of people gathered together.



He said, ‘This is your community. Seventy thousand of them will enter the Garden without any reckoning or punishment.’

I asked, ‘Why?’

He said, ‘They did not have themselves cauterised, nor did they use incantations,<sup>154</sup> nor seek omens, but, they put their trust in their Lord.’”

‘Ukkasha ibn Mihsan stood up and said, ‘ask Allah to make me one of them.’

He said, ‘O Allah, make him one of them!’

Then another man stood up and said, “Please ask Allah to make me one of them.”

Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Ukkasha has beaten you to it.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 50; Muslim, Iman, 367-374)

Another narration also mentions those who do not practice or resort to sorcery and black magic.<sup>155</sup>



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) refers to the other believers who will enter the Garden without reckoning in the following words:

154. ‘*Ruqya*’, translated here as incantations, or asking Allah to heal the sick by means of certain Qur’anic verses and prophetic statements, is religiously permissible. There are prophetic traditions which indicate that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, also performed *ruqya*. The censure of those who use it for healing in this narration pertains to the act of seeking healing and cure not from the Creator, but from something that is created, thus acting against the principle of complete reliance in Allah. This is akin to a person’s deeming their healing to be not from Allah but from a doctor or from medication. A believer undertakes treatment for a particular illness by means of the Divinely-bestowed ways and means. However, on no account do they ascribe healing or cure to mortals. They see their healing to be solely from Allah. Indeed, Prophet Ibrahim, upon him be peace, as cited in a Qur’anic verse as having said: “And when I am ill, it is He who heals me.” (Ash-Shu’ara’, 26:80)

That is to say, even if a believer avails themselves of causes, they must wholeheartedly believe that healing is absolutely from Allah, glorified and exalted be He. They must trust only Him, be resigned to their fate, and must have patience for the misfortunes that befall them.

155. See Muslim, Iman, 374.



“On the Day of Judgment, the people will be gathered on a vast plane, such that the voice of an announcer can reach all of them and all of them are visible.

On that Day, a crier will call out three times saying, ‘Today, everyone will know those people of great distinction!’

Then, a voice will cry out, Who forsake their beds to call on their Lord in fear and hope, and spend from that which We have provided for them?<sup>156</sup>

Those who are not distracted from trade or commerce from the remembrance of Allah and establishing the Prayer and paying Zakat?’<sup>157</sup>

The crier will call out once again, ‘Today, everyone will know those people of great distinction!’

Then, it will be said, ‘Where are those who most praised their Lord?’”  
(Hakim, Mustadrak, II, 433/3508; Bayhaqi, Shu’ab, IV, 539)



On the basis of the Qur’anic verses and Prophetic narrations cited above, those people who will be admitted into the Garden without questioning can be enumerated as follows:

- ✓ Those with perfect reliance on Allah;
- ✓ Those who do not believe in omens and superstition;
- ✓ Those who do not practice or resort to sorcery and black magic;
- ✓ Those who do not cauterise;
- ✓ Martyrs;
- ✓ Those who forgive others;
- ✓ Those who stand in prayer during the night;
- ✓ Those who spend in Allah’s way; and
- ✓ The believers who constantly remember and praise Allah, and whose reward is, as a result, with their Lord.

156. Refer to Qur’an, (32:16).

157. See, Qur’an (24:41).



## Those Who Will Enter Hellfire without Questioning

In addition to those who will enter the Garden without being called to account, as a manifestation of divine forgiveness and mercy, there will also be those people who will be thrown into the Fire directly, without any reckoning.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has stated in a Prophetic narration:

“On the Day of Judgement, fire will emerge from the Fire of Hell. It will have two eyes which can see, two ears which can hear, and a tongue which can speak.

It will say, ‘I have been given charge over three (types of people):

Every obstinate oppressor; all those who adopt a deity other than Allah, and image makers<sup>158</sup> (who draw and sculpt).” (Tirmidhi, Jahannam, 1/2574; Ahmad, II, 336; Ibn Abi Shayba, Musannaf, VII, 51/34141)

After uttering these words, the fire in the shape of a neck emerging from Hellfire will pick them up from among their ranks like a bird pecking at sesame seeds from the ground and then cast them into the Fire. (Ibn al-Mubarak, al-Zuhd, II, 101)



On that terrifying Day of Reckoning, as stated in a Qur’anic verse, the call, “Keep yourselves apart today, you evil doers! (Ya Sin, 36:59)” will be

158. Muslim jurists and exegetes have ruled that it is permissible in Islam to depict such inanimate objects as landscapes and nature. For there are many prophetic traditions in which the Messenger of Allah has forbidden producing images of living things. This is due to the fact that the excessive devotion to images and sculptures has eventually led human beings to idolatry.

The images that are prohibited here are the handmade sculptures or embossed depictions of living beings, for this suggests comparison with the divine act of creation. Photographs, however, are a representation of already existing figures. Therefore, their use in daily life is not be viewed as objectionable.

Likewise, it is forbidden to wear or to hang such illustrated fabrics on the wall. The Hanafi school has not regarded it reproachful (*makruh*) these printed images on cushions or on floor coverings. The point of sensitivity here is whether or not the images are revered. This is why images hung on the wall, placed in high places or sculpted depictions are unanimously classified reproachful.

heard. The ‘criminals’ implied here are the proud and arrogant, those who disbelieve in Allah, the hypocrites and the polytheists. These four groups of people will be those will never come out of the Fire.

Hasan al-Basri (may Allah have mercy on him) has said:

“On the Day of Resurrection, they (the believers and unbelievers) will surely be separated, even if they are together in the world. The believers will be *‘a’la ‘illiyyin* (uppermost heights), while the unbelievers will be at *asfal safilin* (the lowermost depths). One will experience the degree ultimate union while the other will be condemned to the pit of separation. Those experiencing union will be seated upon the throne of love, while those suffering separation will be upon a seat of affliction and difficulty. For the former is manifold reward, while for the latter is all manner of torment. One community has attained prosperity and happiness and is enveloped in bounty and blessing, while the other burns in the fire of separation.” (*Ruh al-Bayan*, v. 15, p. 35)



## The Spreading Open of the Record of Deeds

On the Day of Reckoning, the Record of whatever human beings did in the world, both good and evil, will be spread open and everyone will see their deeds clearly.

As declared in a Qur’anic verse:

“On the Day We summon every people with their records, those who are given their Book in their right hand will read their Book and will not be wronged by the smallest speck.” (Al-Isra’, 17:71)

“You will see every nation on its knees, every nation summoned to its Book: ‘Today you will be repaid for what you did.’ (Al-Jathiyah, 45:28)

“Read your Book! Today your own self is reckoner enough against you!” (Al-Isra’, 17:14)



Only Allah knows the true nature of the books, the records of deeds. That which has been revealed to us is that this is a book in which a person's every action is recorded, without the omission of even the slightest deed. This truth is revealed in a Qur'anic verse as follows:

“The Book will be set in place and you will see the evil doers fearful of what is in it. They will say, ‘Alas for us! What is this Book which does not pass over any action, small or great, without recording it? They will find there everything they did and your Lord will not wrong anyone at all.’” (Al-Kahf, 18:49)<sup>159</sup>

As can be seen in this verse, people are troubled not because they have been wronged in any way, but on account of even the sins they deemed small being recorded.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) who was most closely acquainted with this reality, warns his community in the person of his wife ‘A’isha (may Allah be well pleased with her):

“O ‘A’isha, beware of evil deeds that are regarded as insignificant, for they have a pursuer from Allah (an angel who is charged with watching over and recording them).” (Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 29; Darimi, Riqaq, 17; Ahmad, VI, 70, 151)

Another Prophetic narration states:

“Beware of those wrong actions that are regarded as insignificant, for they will accumulate until they destroy a person.”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) offers the following likeness in regard to minor sins:

“A group of people stopped to camp in the wilderness and they wanted to prepare some food, so one person went and brought a twig, another person brought a twig, until they gathered a huge pile and lit a fire, in which they cooked whatever they were then to eat.”<sup>160</sup>

159. There are several accounts in the Qur'anic verses concerning an incident that is to take place on the Day of Resurrection. These mention various aspects and diverse manifestations of the incident at differing times. These differences must therefore not be regarded as contradictions.

160. See Ahmad, I, 402-403; V, 331.



In other words, the sins that are trivialised and committed without any care or regard can in time accumulate and turn into major sins. What a slave needs to do, therefore, is to thoroughly avoid committing all forms of wrong, whether great or small. They must look not at the magnitude of the sin, but at the magnitude of who it is committed against. If they cannot succeed in doing this and thus succumb to sin, whatever its nature, they should immediately turn to Allah Almighty and wholeheartedly seek His forgiveness and pardon, shedding tears of remorse that wash their hearts.



Those who will receive their Record of deeds in their right hand will attain eternal happiness and immeasurable joy. Those who are given their Record in their left hand or from behind their back, however, will feel to their core the anguish of being faced with eternal loss and ruin. Verses from the Qur'an describe their state as follows:

“As for him who is given his book in his right hand, he will say, ‘here come and read my Book! I counted on meeting my Reckoning.’ He will have a very pleasant life in an elevated Garden, its ripe fruit hanging close to hand, ‘Eat and drink with relish for what you did in days gone by!’ But as for him who is given his Book in his left hand, he will say, ‘If only I had not been given my Book and had not known about my Reckoning!’” (Al-Haqqā, 69:19-26)

“As for him who is given his Book in his right hand, he will be given an easy Reckoning and return to his family joyfully. But as for him who is given his Book behind his back, he will cry out for destruction but will be roasted in a Searing Blaze. He used to be joyful with his family. He thought that he would never return.” (Al-Inshiqāq, 84:7-14)

And so, those who are deceived in this fleeting world by the beguilement of Satan and their lower desires to suppose wretchedness bliss, and who are thus lost in the heedlessness of base pleasures, will only know fear and endless sorrow in the Next World.

In contrast, those believers who strive in this world to lead a life of righteousness and display a degree of slavehood, will attain true happiness, bliss and tranquillity in the Next World that is the true abode.



There will be times when a person will think of nobody but themselves in the terrifying tumult of the Day of Resurrection.

The Prophet's wife 'Aisha (may Allah be well pleased with her) narrates:

"I once thought of Hellfire and wept.

(Upon seeing me in such a state,) the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) asked, 'What is the matter, O 'Aisha? What is it that makes you weep?'

I replied, 'I thought of Hellfire and wept. Will you remember your family on the Day of Resurrection?'

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, 'There are three places where no one will think of anyone else:

At the Balance until one knows whether their scales of good deeds are light or heavy;

At the examination of the Book of one's life until one says, "Here! Come and read my Book!"<sup>161</sup> When they know whether their book will be placed in their right or left hand, or behind their back;

And the Bridge when it is placed across Hellfire. On both sides of the Bridge pronged flesh hooks, placed under Divine command will be hung and will seize those about whom they are commanded to, throwing them into the Fire. (And so,) a person will not think of anyone else until they know whether or not they have escaped.'" (Hakim, IV, 622/8722, cf. Ahmad, VI, 101, 110)

## **The Reckoning**

### ***The Reckoning of Animals***

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) indicates that even animals will be held to account on the Day of Judgment:

“The rights of all creatures will be redressed on the Day of Resurrection until justice is restored, even between the hornless sheep and the horned sheep.” (Muslim, Birr, 60; Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 2/2420)

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was once sitting when two sheep locked horns next to him, until one of them defeated and subdued the other.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) smiled and someone asked him, “Why are you smiling, O Messenger of Allah?”

He replied, “Because of this scene. By the One in whose hand is my soul, it will settle its score with the other on the Day of Resurrection.” (Ahmad, V, 172)

These words of the Messenger are both a sign that this incident will transpire in the outward, literal sense, as well as constituting an admonition because the fact that the right of no creature, animals included, will be left uncompensated requires us to contemplate and reflect upon just how a serious a reckoning lies ahead for us.

This being the case, we should take lesson from this news and exert ourselves to the utmost to ensure that we do not violate the rights of, or wrong any creature in any way. In addition, taking into consideration the mercy of the Creator towards His creation, we must approach all creatures with a deep compassion, mercy and love.

We should not forget that all creation was brought into existence for the service of and as a lesson for the human being, hence they are entrusted to us. For this reason, treating them with compassion and protecting their rights is a debt of conscience for every human being. Violating the rights of animals is a heavy liability that will confront a person on the Day of Judgement.

‘Aisha (may Allah be well pleased with her) once mounted an unruly camel and she began to make it go back and forth, behaving severely with it so as it calms down.

Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “You should show kindness, for kindness is not to be



found in anything but that it adds to its beauty and it is not withdrawn from anything but it makes it defective.” (Muslim, Birr, 78, 79)



The Ottomans exhibited numerous examples in the matter of compassion for all creatures and observance of their rights.

For instance, they prohibited by law the overburdening of animals. Some local law enforcement agencies were even tasked with pursuing those who violated this law, letting the animal rest and requiring the owner to carry the same burden in punishment.

The series of imperial decrees issued by Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent (may Allah have mercy on him) in 1520 to 1566 concerning the animals used to carry loads during the construction of the Suleymaniye Mosque Complex, is a mark of this sensitivity. As per these decrees, the rest and grazing periods of the horses, donkeys and mules employed on the worksite were observed, and meticulous care was taken to ensure that the rights of no creature were violated. This caution of the Sultan in relation to human and animal rights in the construction of this monumental place of worship is perhaps one of the foremost wisdoms behind the mosque’s spiritual blessings.

Again, Sultan Suleyman once sought a legal pronouncement, in verse, from Shaykh al-Islam Ebus-suud (d. 1574) concerning the killing of the ants causing damage to the pear trees in the imperial garden:

*If the ant eats away the tree,  
Is there any harm in destroying it?*

At the request of the Sultan, the jurist replied to the Sultan in like manner:

*When tomorrow the Divine Court you reach,  
From Suleyman will the ant redress seek.*



Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be well pleased with him) says in relation to the Qur’anic verse, “And when the wild beasts are gathered together,” (81:5):



“Everything will be gathered together on the Day of Gathering even the flies.”<sup>162</sup>

After all creatures are gathered on the Plain of the Supreme Gathering, the Reckoning will be established. The accounts between animals will be settled before those between human beings. All animals will then become dust.

It is declared in a Qur’anic verse:

“There is no creature crawling on the earth or flying creature, flying on its wings, who are not communities like yourselves – We have not omitted anything from the book – then they will be gathered to their Lord.” (Al-An’am, 6:38)

Abu Hurayra (may Allah be well pleased with him) says in relation to this Qur’anic verse:

“On the Day of Judgement, all creatures will be gathered in one place – animals, insects, birds, everything... Divine justice will be realised completely, so much so that even the hornless sheep will settle its account with the horned sheep. Then Allah will command the animals, ‘Become dust!’ Then the unbeliever (witnessing this) will say (in the terror of being called to account), ‘Oh! If only I were dust!’<sup>163</sup> (Hakim, Mustadrak, II, 345/3231. cf. Hakim, IV, 619/8716)

Undoubtedly, this state shows the point to which regret, shame and fear will be experienced on that Day.



### ***The Reckoning of Human Beings***

The most frightening moment for the human being at the Supreme Gathering is the time that they will be called to account. For it is then that they will be asked concerning everything they did in this trial arena of the fleeting world, and it is then that the direction of their eternal life will be

162. Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, (81:5).

163. See Qur’an, (78:40).



determined. It is for this reason that their perturbation, anxiety and distress will reach its highest point.

A man once came to ‘Ali (may Allah be well pleased with him) and asked, “How will all the people be questioned at the same time when they are gathered for reckoning?”

‘Ali (may Allah be well pleased with him) pithily replied, “Just as Allah, glorified be He, provides them all with sustenance at the same time, He will call them to account on the Day of Judgement in exactly the same way.”<sup>164</sup>



There are Prophetic narrations which indicate that collective accounts will be settled before individual accounts. In other words, at the Place of Supreme Gathering, a caller will cry out to the people saying, “Those who have committed such-and-such sin, rise!” The perpetrators of this sin will then rise and will be humiliated before all those present at the Supreme Gathering.

Famous ascetic and judge from the generation of the *Tabi’un* (the successors of the Prophet’s Companions) Abu Hazim al-A’raj would on this account engage in constant self-criticism, addressing his own soul in the following words:

“O Abu Hazim! On the Day of Judgement, it will be said, ‘O those who have committed such-and-such sin!’ And you will stand up with all those who committed that same sin. Then another sin will be called, and you will stand up once again. It seems, O A’raj that you wish to stand again and again with every group of sinners!” (Abu Nu’aym, *Hilya*, III, 230; Imam al-Sha’rani, *Ölüm Kıyâmet Âhiret*, p. 152-153)

Once all collective accounts are settled, human beings will then be called to account one by one.



Ibn Abi Mulayka (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates:

Whenever ‘Aisha, the wife of the Prophet, heard something and did not understand it, she would ask again until she had grasped it.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Whoever is taken to account on the Day of Reckoning will have been put to torment.”

‘Aisha (may Allah be well pleased with her) said, “Has Allah, glory be to Him, not said, ‘Then he who is given his Book in his right hand (who receives his Book in his right hand)’?”<sup>165</sup>

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said in response, “That is but the *presentment* (*‘ard*) (of one’s deeds and not the actual reckoning). But whoever has their account thoroughly examined in Reckoning will be ruined.” (Bukhari, ‘Ilm 36, Riqaq 49; Muslim, Janna, 79, 80; Abu Dawud, Jana’iz, 1/3093)

Implied in the word *‘ard* mentioned in the Narration is the presentation of people’s deeds to the Balance for weighing, or to the doers of the deeds themselves. That the reckoning on this day of presentment will be very easy for the righteous people referred to as the ‘people of the Right’ (*Ahl al-Yamin*), is described in the Qur’an.<sup>166</sup> On the Day they are called to account, the people of the Right will be given the glad tidings of forgiveness. When their deeds are presented to them, along with their shortcomings, they will also behold the great bounties they will attain. As a result, they will not experience much difficulty during the reckoning.

As for those who will not receive the glad tidings of forgiveness, their reckoning will be severe. When they discover during their questioning that many of the deeds they thought to be meritorious will not be accepted, their dispute in this regard will lead them to punishment. Else, even if eventually coming to a conclusion, this dispute will be a torment in and of itself.<sup>167</sup>



165. (84:7:8)

166. Refer to Qur’an, (56:27-40, 90-91); (74:39-40).

167. Ahmed Naïm Efendi, *Tecrid-i Sarîh Tercemesi*, I, 100-101.



There is many a deed that, whether undertaken with unlawful earnings for instance, or tarnished with such corrupt qualities as hypocrisy, will not be acceptable before Allah. For this reason, for those who seek to attain the reward for these actions, these actions will instead give rise to great loss and regret in the Next World.

Allah Almighty declares in the Qur'an:

“Labouring, toiling, endlessly, roasting in a red-hot Fire.” (Al-Ghashiyya, 88:3-4)

“Say, ‘Shall I inform you of the greatest losers in their actions? People whose efforts in the life of this world are misguided while they suppose that they are doing good” (Al-Kahf, 18:103-104)

On account of this, a person's giving their own name to the mosque, Qur'an school, or other charitable foundation that they build, for example, for the purpose of keeping their name alive, has not been looked favourably upon, as it paves the way for feelings of showing off and a desire for fame. In the words of Allah's Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) showing off is tantamount to minor *shirk*, or associating partners with Allah.<sup>168</sup> The creed of divine unity, however, has no toleration whatsoever for any partnership. That being said, there is no harm in a building or institution bearing a benefactor's name after their death, with the intention of their being remembered in people's prayers, as there is no longer any opportunity for self-display or vainglory.

### ***Sound Witnesses***

When the slave is brought to questioning in the Next World, there will also be witnesses with them. This is because unbelievers and transgressors will continue their denial and objections in the divine presence as they had done in the world. Allah, glory be to Him, will then seal their mouths and command their other limbs to speak.

Qur'anic verses declare:



“On the Day when their tongues, hands and their feet testify against them about what they were doing.” (An-Nur, 24:24)

“Today Day We will seal up their mouths and their hands will speak to us, and their feet bear witness to what they have earned.” (Yasin, 36:65)

“When they reach it, their hearing, sight and skin will testify against them concerning what they did. They will ask their skins: ‘Why did you testify against us?’ and they will reply, ‘Allah gave us speech as He has given speech to everything. He created you in the first place and you will be returned to Him.’” (Fussilat, 41:20-21)



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says in this regard:

“...And Allah will say (to His slave on the Day of Judgement), ‘Did you not think that you would be meeting Us?’

...And the slave will say, ‘O, my Lord, I believed in You and in Your Books and in Your Messengers and I prayed and fasted and gave charity,’ and he will speak in good terms like this as he will be able to do.

And Allah will say, ‘Very well then, We will bring forth our witnesses against you.’

And the slave would think to himself who it was who would bear witness against him and then his mouth will be sealed, and it will be commanded to his thighs, to his flesh and to his bones to speak.

And his thighs, flesh and bones will bear witness to his deeds and it will be done so that he will be left with no excuse. This person is a hypocrite who has incurred the anger of Allah.” (Muslim, Zuhd,16)

It is stated in another narration:

“The slave will say, ‘My Lord, have you not guaranteed me protection against injustice?’

Allah will say, ‘Yes.’

Then the slave will say, ‘I do not deem valid any witness against me but my own self.’



And Allah will say, ‘Sufficient as a single witness for you on this Day is your own self against you, and as multiple witnesses, the two Noble Scribes (*Kirāmun Kātibūn*) who had been appointed to record your deeds.’

Then a seal will be set upon his mouth and it will be said to his hands and feet to speak and they will speak of his deeds.

Then the mouth will be left free to talk and the man will say, ‘Off with you! Woe to you! It was for you that I struggled.’” (Muslim, Zuhd, 17)



Allah reveals in a Qur’anic verse that the earth will bear witness in addition to a person’s own bodily limbs and organs:

“On that Day it will impart all its news because your Lord has inspired it.” (Az-Zilzal, 99:4-5)

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once recited these verses and then asked his Companions, “Do you know what its news is?”

They said, “Allah and His Messenger know best.”

He said, “Indeed its news is that it will testify against every slave, male and female, it will say that they did such and such, on such and such a day.” He said, “With this it shall be commanded.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyama 7/2429; Tafsir 99/3353; Ahmad, II, 374; Hakim, II, 281/3012)

Similarly, it is stated in another Prophetic narration:

“Beware of the earth, for it is your mother; it is the place in which you dwell and the place to which you will ultimately return. It will reveal all deeds, good and evil, that are committed on it.” (Haythami, I, 241)

On that Day, human beings will exclaim in bewilderment and complete horror, “What is the matter with the earth! How is it able to recount all this!”



On that Day, there will also be witnesses from among humanity and the angels, but the greatest of all witnesses is certainly Allah Almighty to whom not a single matter escapes.



It is declared in a Qur'anic verse:

“Every self will be paid in full for what it has done, and He knows what they do.” (Az-Zumar, 39:70)

If one can perceive this truth in its full meaning, and if a person can give up all kinds of harmful things and vice with sincerity and a due sense of shame and awe of Him, they will have no need for any witnesses except Allah, the All-Compassionate to His slaves.

As He declares in the Qur'an:

“He is with you wherever you are - Allah sees what you do.” (Al-Hadid, 57:4)

“We created man and We know what his own self whispers to him. We are nearer to him than his jugular vein.” (Qaf, 50:16)

“know that Allah intervenes between a man and his own heart, and that you will be gathered to Him.” (Al-Anfal, 8:24)

“If My slaves ask about Me, I am near. I answer the call of the caller when he calls on Me. They should therefore respond to Me and believe in Me so that hopefully they will be rightly guided.” (Al-Baqara, 2:186)

That is to say, Allah, who is beyond all time and space, is with His slaves at every moment, aware of our every state and witness to our every action. Consequently, as believers, we need to be in the constant awareness of this reality and rigorously avoid any state or manner that is unbecoming to the proper courtesy of the enlightened slave who knows that His Master sees him.



On that great Day of Reckoning, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) will also be brought forward as a witness to his community. The Qur'an states:

“How will it be when We bring a witness from every nation and bring you as a witness against them?” (An-Nisa, 4:41)

While even in this world it is very embarrassing to be called to account before friends for a crime, one ought to consider what the state of a person



called to account in the presence of the Prophets and other witnesses will be on that Day. This is because the wrong actions that they committed in secret in this world will be divulged in the presence of many witnesses.

Owing to this, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) who was sent as a mercy for all the worlds and who is filled with compassion for his community, calls out to us in his Farewell Sermon as follows:

“...I will precede you to the *hawd* and I will take pride in you your numbers before the other communities. Do not make my face overcast (cause me to be ashamed by committing sin)...”<sup>169</sup>

Allah the exalted declares in a Qur’anic verse:

“On that day those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger will wish that they were one with the level earth. They will not be able to hide a single circumstance from Allah.” (An-Nisa, 4:42)

And so, leading a life oblivious to Allah and His Messenger will lead a person to a devastating disgrace and an overwhelming calamity on that Day as to make them wish the ground would open up and swallow them whole.

### *Severity of the Reckoning*

The unbelievers, the evildoers and the heedless forever imagine in their fleeting lives a world that is without reckoning, responsibility and without an afterlife. When faced with the horrendous scenes of the Day of Resurrection, they will be willing to ransom themselves from the torment and punishment of that awesome Day, by everything they own and many times over for that matter. But alas, the chance would have been missed and the opportunity long lost. This scene is depicted in the Qur’an in the following way:

“Even though they can see each other. An evil doer will wish he can ransom himself from the punishment of that Day, by means of his sons,

or his wife or brother or his family who sheltered him or everyone on the earth, if that only meant that he could save himself.” (Al-Ma’arij, 70:11-14)

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: in relation to the severity of the Divine Reckoning:

“The unbeliever will be brought on the Day and Rising and it will be said to him, ‘If you were to have enough gold to fill the earth, would you ransom yourself with it?’<sup>170</sup>

They will say, ‘Yes.’

They will be told, ‘You were asked for what is easier than that (not to associate anything with Allah, yet you refused).’” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 49; Muslim, Munafiqin, 52-53)

Another narration states that this question will be directed at “the person who has the least punishment in the Fire on the Day of Rising”.<sup>171</sup>



‘Adi ibn Hatim (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Protect yourselves from the Fire.”

Then he turned and averted his face and then said, “Protect yourselves from the Fire.”

Then he turned and averted his face a third time until we thought that he was looking at it and then he said, “Protect yourselves from the Fire, even if only with half a date, or, if he cannot manage even that, then with a good word.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 49)

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) states in a similar Prophetic narration:

“... [There is none of you but that] he will stand before Allah and there will be no veil, nor any interpreter to interpret for him, between him and Allah and He will say to him, ‘Did I not give you wealth?’

He will say, ‘Yes.’

170. See, Qur’an (Maidah, 5:36); (10:54); (13:18); and (39:47).

171. See Bukhari, Riqaq, 51; Muslim, Munafiqin, 51.



Then Allah will say, ‘Did I not send a Messenger to you?’

And he will say, ‘Yes.’

Then he will look to his right and see nothing but the Fire and then to his left and see nothing but the Fire.

Each of you should protect himself from the Fire, even if only with half a date, or, if he cannot manage even that, then with a good word.” (Bukhari, Zakat, 9)

According to Islam, wealth and dominion belong to Allah. He demands from those slaves who are legally considered wealthy and thus subject to give the Prescribed Alms (the *zakah*) of one-fortieth of their wealth (over and above their basic needs). It is religiously binding upon every believer to determine this amount and donate it accordingly.

In addition, our Lord wants his slaves to give in charity and spend in His way. It is declared in a Qur’anic verse:

“You will never attain true goodness until you give of what you love. Whatever you give away, Allah knows it.” (Al ‘Imran, 3:92)

This demonstrates that spending in His cause is one of the means bringing a person close to Allah.

The “half a date” mentioned is for a person who has nothing else to give. If a person with greater financial means distributes dates and supposes this to have relieved themselves of liability, they would have been greatly mistaken. Such an expression demonstrates that spending for the sake of Allah and in His way assumes a crucial role in protecting a person from the Fire and illustrates that it is an essential duty upon all people. Even if a person with nothing else than a single date is commanded to give away half of it, the sacrifice that those in possession of much greater material means can be better comprehended.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once said to one of the poorer Companions, Abu Dharr (may Allah be well pleased with him) “Abu Dharr, when you prepare broth, add water to it and share that with your neighbour.” (Muslim, Birr, 142)

When one of the Qur'anic verses commanding spending in Allah's way was revealed, even the poor Companions took to the mountains to chop wood, bringing it back to sell at market and give away their earnings in the way of Allah.

Allah Almighty presents the following as a measure in this regard:

“Those who give in time of both ease and hardship, those who control their rage and pardon other people - Allah loves the good-doers.” (Al 'Imran, 3:134)

“They ask you about alcoholic drinks and gambling. Say, ‘There is great wrong in both of them and also certain benefits for mankind. But the wrong in them is greater than the benefit.’ They ask you what they should give away. Say, ‘Whatever is surplus to your needs.’ In this way Allah makes the Signs clear to you, so that hopefully you will reflect.” (Al-Baqara, 2:219)



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says in regard to the severity of the questioning on the Day of Judgement:

“The children of Adam will be brought on the Day of Judgement as if they are a goat's kid, to be made to stand before Allah, the Most High.

Allah will say to them, ‘I gave to you life, health, bodily faculties and organs, I granted you (children, slaves, wealth and status), and I bestowed innumerable favours upon you such as sending down my Books and Messengers. So, what did you do?’

The slave will say, ‘I collected it, increased it, and left it as more than what it was. So, send me back <sup>172</sup> and I will give it all to You.’

Then Allah will say to them, ‘Show me what you have prepared.’

Once again, the slave will say, ‘I collected it, increased it, and left it as more than what it was. So, send me back and I shall give it all to You.’

And when he fails to present any good deeds he will be led to the Fire.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 6/2427. cf. Muslim, Zuhd, 16)



172. See Qur'an, (32:12); (6:27-28); (7:53); (23:99, 103-111); (26:94-102); (35:36-37); (39:55-59); (40:10-12); and (42:44-45).



Allah Almighty presents the desperate situation in which the heedless people will find themselves in:

“They will shout out in it, ‘Our Lord! Take us out! We will act rightly, differently from the way we used to act!’ Did We not let you live long enough for anyone who was going to pay heed to pay heed? And did not a warner come to you? Taste it then! There is no helper for the wrong doers.” (Fatir, 35:37)

This is a verse which warrants serious contemplation. Although this fleeting worldly life is very brief in comparison with the Next World, it is more than enough time for a person who seeks to reflect and take lesson. In other words, we have all been given ample time to think and reflect in this world and a Messenger warning us concerning punishment in the Next World has also been sent. There are countless works surviving to our day that expounding on that Messenger and Book with which have been sent. In this way, no excuses remain.

That being the case, let us not delay in abandoning all wrong actions and performing good deeds while we still can. Let us call ourselves to account frequently and earnestly, that the account we will be called to give on that Day be easy for us.

### *A Mercy for the Believers*

One of the Divine attributes is *Sattar Al-'Uyub*, or the Veiler of Faults. As a manifestation of this attribute, Allah Almighty will question some of His erring believing slaves in private, so as not to divulge their faults publicly.

Safwan Ibn Muhriz Al-Mazini (may Allah be well pleased with him) narrates:

“While I was walking with Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be well pleased with him) holding his hand, a man came up and said, ‘What have you heard from the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) about an-najwa<sup>173</sup>?’

173. Najwa denotes intimate conversation. Implied here is the private manner in which Allah Almighty will call his believing slaves to account, without the knowledge of others.



Ibn 'Umar replied, 'I heard the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) say:

"Allah will bring the believer near and place His veil upon him and shield him (questioning him such that no other can see).

He will then ask, 'Do you acknowledge such-and-such a wrong action? Do you acknowledge such-and-such a wrong action?'

The slave will reply (in contrition), 'Yes, O Lord,' until he confesses to all his wrong actions and thinks to himself that he is destroyed.

Allah will say, 'I concealed them for you in the world and I will forgive you for them today.' Then he will be given the Book of his right actions.

In the case of the unbelievers and hypocrites, witnesses will say (exposing their sins publicly), 'These are the people who lied against their Lord! The curse of Allah is upon the wrongdoers!'<sup>174</sup> (Bukhari, Mazalim 2, Tafsir 11/4; Ahmad, II, 74)



A slave's being alone with their Lord during the questioning is a special favour. This is why the friends of Allah have held a rather different view of the reckoning. The famous Sufi Abu Yazid al-Bistami (may Allah have mercy on him) is known to have once said:

"The people fear the account, while I want for Allah Almighty to call me to account."

When asked why, he replied magnificently, "It may be that Allah will address me (during questioning), saying, 'My slave!' And I will reply, 'Here I am, my Lord (*Labbayk*)!' His saying, 'My slave,' is dearer to me than the world and everything in it. Then he can do with me as He pleases!"<sup>175</sup>

### ***What will be Asked?***

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) states that the first question to be asked on the Day of Reckoning concerning worship will be about the Prescribed Prayer in particular:

174. (11:8)

175. Ibn al-Mulakkin, *Tabakat al-awliya'*, Cairo 1415, pp. 399-400; Ibn Hani', *Hada'iq*, p. 320.



“The first thing for which a person will be brought to account on the Day of Judgement will be their Prayer. If it is sound then they will have succeeded, and will have attained salvation, but if it is not then they will have lost and failed.

If something is deficient in their obligatory prayers, Allah, the Most High, will say:

‘Look and see whether My slave has any supererogatory prayers.’ These will make up for what is deficient in their obligatory prayers.

Then all of their deeds will be dealt with in like manner.” (Tirmidhi, Salat, 188/413; Nasa’i, Salat, 9/462)



Among the rights of other human beings, the first to be reckoned on the Day of Judgement will be that of blood that is unjustly shed. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says:

“The first of what will be decided between people will be bloodshed.” (Bukhari, Diyat, 1; Muslim, Qasama, 28)

The fact that wrongdoing related to bloodshed will be the first to be judged clearly demonstrates the extent to which the unjust killing and harming of a person incurs Divine anger.

It is an enormous wrong to kill a person because of a worldly matter. It is a much greater sin to intentionally kill a person who one knows to be a Muslim. Allah exalted is He, reveals the tremendous punishment of such a person in the Qur’an as follows:

“As for anyone who kills a believer deliberately, his repayment is Hell, remaining in it timelessly for ever. Allah is angry with him and has cursed him, and has prepared for him a terrible punishment.” (An-Nisa, 4:93)



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) mentions the other matters which he will be questioned about on the Day of Judgement:

“Indeed, the first favour about which the slave will be questioned on the Day of Judgment is that it will be said to him, ‘Did We not grant your body health, and give you of cool water to drink?’” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 102/3358)

“The feet of the children of Adam will not move on the Day of Judgment until they have been questioned about five things:

About their life and how they led it;

Their knowledge and what they did with it (how they acted upon it);

Their wealth and how they earned it;

And what they spent their wealth on;

And their body their youth and where they used it.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 1/2417)<sup>176</sup>



We live in a time referred to as the ‘information age’ where we can access information faster and in more diverse forms than ever before. So much so that ignorance is far from being an excuse. A Muslim who wants to learn about their religion has many avenues through which they can read, research and ask about it. We should not forget that we will one day be questioned about how much gratitude we have for this great blessing, the kind of information we fill our minds with, and the things we preoccupy our hearts with. We must never forget that the foremost and most important learning is to be able to learn our religion correctly and apply it to our lives.

We see many young university graduates who are educated and cultured in a worldly sense but sadly, they are not at all acquainted with the knowledge of the Qur’an and Sunna. They suppose the education they have received to be the most important and useful knowledge. However, knowledge which take someone to Allah, and which does not carry them to comprehension of His power and majesty, may provide a person with status and rank in this world, but it cannot save them from being subjected to eternal loss and ruin.

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176. Also refer to, Darimi, *Muqadimma*, 45/543-545; Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf*, VII, 125/34694; Bayhaqi, *Shu’ab*, III, 278/1648.



The highest knowledge is to be acquainted with Allah Almighty and to be a good slave of Him. We should constantly call ourselves to account and look closely and critically at the extent to which knowledge of the Qur'an and the Prophetic Practice has become established in our lives. For it is this for that we have been created and for which we will be held to account on the Day of Judgement.



Allah the exalted declares in a Qur'anic verse:

"Then, on the Day of Resurrection, you will be disputing before your Lord." (Zumar, 39:31)

When this verse was revealed, the Prophet's Companion Zubayr (may Allah be well pleased with him) asked:

"O Messenger of Allah, will we repeat our disputes after engaging in dispute in the world?"

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied:

"Yes (until every right holder is given their due)."

Zubayr (may Allah be well pleased with him) then said:

"Indeed, this is a very serious matter." (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 39/3236)

For on that Day, there will be no right for which the aggrieved person does not take reprisal.



The Prophet's Companions showed great diligence not to do anything they would not be able to answer for on the Day of Reckoning and would caution those who showed heedlessness and negligence in this regard.

Abu Hurayra (may Allah be well pleased with him) once encountered a man carrying some milk for sale. Seeing him mix the milk with water, he urged him to act not with the fleeting worldly life in mind, but the eternal life of the Next World, saying:



“What will you have to say when you are asked on the Day of Judgment to extract the water from the milk?” (Bayhaqi, Shu’ab, VII, 231/4927)



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was once riding on his camel behind his Companions. Mu’adh ibn Jabal (may Allah be well pleased with him) sought his permission to approach. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) allowed him to do so. When Mu’adh drew near, they began riding side by side.

Mu’adh (may Allah be well pleased with him) asked:

“My soul be your ransom, O the Messenger of Allah! May Allah take our Trust (our souls) before He takes yours! Were you to depart this world before us, which acts of worship should we observe after you?”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was silent. Mu’adh then asked, “Shall we strive in Allah’s way?”

The Messenger replied, “Striving in Allah’s way is praiseworthy, but there is something that is better for the people.”

(Mu’adh asked,) “Is this fasting or paying the Prescribed Alms (*zakāh*)?”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) answered, “Fasting and paying the Prescribed Alms is also praiseworthy.”

Mu’adh (may Allah be well pleased with him) thus enumerated all the means of goodness for human beings and the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) responded each time saying:

“There is something that is better for the people.”

Mu’adh (may Allah be well pleased with him) asked, “May my mother and father be your ransom, O Messenger of Allah! What is it that is better for the people?”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) pointed to his mouth and said, “Speaking well or remaining silent.”

Mu’adh (may Allah be well pleased with him) asked, “O Messenger of Allah, will we be called to account for what we say?”



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) gently tapped Mu'adh's knee and said:

“May Allah grant you goodness, O Mu'adh! Will the people be dragged in the Fire on their faces for anything other than the harvests of their tongues! Let whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day speak well or keep silent. For you will prosper through speaking a good word and attain repose by avoiding an evil word.” (Hakim, IV, 319/7774)

This goes to show that on the Day of Resurrection, all the words that come out of our mouths will be asked about. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) makes mention of certain exceptions in this regard:

“The speech of the children of Adam is against them not in their favour, except for enjoining good, or forbidding evil, or invocation and remembrance of Allah.” (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 63/2412)



Alongside idle speech and harmful words, there will also be the account for words that should have been spoken but were not.

Abu Hurayra (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates:

“We used to hear (the following spoken amongst the Companions):

On the Day of Judgement, a person with whom a man was not well acquainted will come and seize him by the collar.

The man will say in astonishment, ‘What do you want from me? I do not even know who you are.’

The assailant will say, ‘In the world, you found me engaged in vice and wrongdoing, yet you did not warn or prevent me from evil,’ and will demand his rights.” (al-Mundhiri, *al-Tarhib wa'l-Tarhib*, III, 164/3506; Sulaymān al-Rūdānī, *Jam' al-Fawa'id*, V, 384)

For that reason, we must not forget that there will be many people we neglected in the world while we had the chance of conveying the message of Islam to them, who may very well seize us by the collar on the Day of Judgement and say:



“You became acquainted with Islam as a result of the sincere efforts of those who came before you. You knew what Islam was and what belief was. Why did you keep it from me? Why did you deny me my chance of deliverance from the Fire?”

Abu ‘Ali ad-Daqqaq (may Allah have mercy on him) suggests that failing to convey the truth in the face of wrong and injustice is a mark of weakness of faith. He says:

“Whoever refrains from speaking the truth is a mute devil.” (Qushayri, *Risala*, I, 245; al-Nawawi, *al-Azkar*, p. 335/1030)

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said:

“Whoever among you sees an evil, let them change it with their hand. If they cannot, then let them change it with their tongue. If they cannot, then in their heart – and this is the weakest of faith.” (Muslim, Iman, 78)

For this reason, one should forever keep in mind that they will held to account on a Day when nothing in the name of good or evil will be overlooked, not even an atom’s weight.

### ***Lightening the Reckoning***

Deliverance from the terrifying reckoning of the Day of Judgement necessitates, in particular, making up in this world for wrongs they have committed against others. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said in one narration:

“Whoever has wronged their fellow believer in respect to their honour or anything else should ask for their pardon before their death, as in the Next World there will be neither dinar nor dirham.

They should secure pardon in this life before some of their good deeds are taken and paid to their fellow believer. If they have done no good deeds, some of the bad deeds of their fellow believer are taken to be burdened upon them in the Next World.” (Bukhari, *Mazalim*. 10, *Riqaq* 48)

It is stated in another narration:



“O people, whoever has violated the rights of another human being, let them hasten to secure pardon (in this world) and not be troubled by (the possibility of) worldly disgrace. Know well that worldly disgrace is much lighter than ignominy in the Next World.” (Tabarani, al-Kabir, XVIII, 280; Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil, II, 319; Haythami, IX, 26)

Again, by way of demonstrating the essentiality of expiation in this world for making easier the reckoning in the Next World, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) made the following supplication: “May Allah have mercy upon a slave who has wronged his brother in respect to his honour or his wealth, then he comes to him to seek his pardon before his right is taken, when he will have no dinar nor dirham...” (Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 2/2419)



It should not be forgotten that the rights of the slaves (*haqq al-'ibad*) are very important and are deferred to the reckoning in the Next World – provided they are not redressed in this world. As stated in a Prophetic narration, reaching the Day of Judgement with such liability and burden reduces a person to a position of ‘bankruptcy’.

Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once asked his companions:

“Do you know who the bankrupt person is?”

They replied, saying, “The bankrupt amongst us is one who has neither dirham with him nor wealth.”

Allah’s Messenger said:

“The bankrupt of my community is the person who will come on the Day of Judgment with prayers, fasting and charity but they will find themselves bankrupt on that day as they would have exhausted their virtues since they hurled abuse at others, brought calumny against others and unlawfully consumed the wealth of others and shed the blood of others and beat others.

So, their virtues will be credited to the account of those who suffered at their hand. And if their good deeds fall short of clearing the account, then the sins of those they have wronged will be entered in this slave’s





account and they will be thrown in into the Fire.” (Muslim, Birr, 59; Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 2/2418; Ahmad, II, 303, 324, 372)

That is the real bankruptcy. The slave – may Allah protect us from that – becomes bound for the Fire when they were in fact journeying to the Garden.

Sufyan al-Thawri (may Allah have mercy on him) once said:

“It is easier for you to meet Allah with seventy sins which are between you and Him [i.e. where you have violated His command] than meeting him with one sin between you and another person [i.e. where you have violated the rights of another human being].”

The famous Scholar al-Qurtubi says concerning these words:

“These words are true, for Allah is Self-Sufficient and Generous, while the children of Adam are poor and in need. On the Day of Judgement, human beings will be in need of even a single act of goodness, that weighs heavily on the scales and that their good deeds outweigh their evil ones.” (Qutubi, Tadhkira, p.726)



Muhammad ibn Jahsh (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates:

We were sitting with the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) when he raised his head toward the sky, and put his palm on his forehead.

Then he said, ‘Glory be to Allah! What a stern warning has been revealed!’

We fell silent in fear.

The following day I asked him, ‘O Messenger of Allah, what is this stern warning that has been revealed?’

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

‘By the One in whose hand is my soul, if a man were to be killed in the cause of Allah then brought back to life, then killed again, but he owed a



debt, he would not enter the Garden until his debt was paid.” (Nasa’i, Buyu, 98/4681)

Another Prophetic narration states:

“All the sins of a martyr are forgiven except debt.” (Muslim, Imara, 119)

If this is the situation of martyrs – who will hold the highest position in the Next World after the Prophets – when it comes to the rights of others, then we ought to think about what the state of other people will be.



One of the greatest rights of human beings are the rights of parents, which cannot be recompensed with any form of goodness. In Islam, kindness to parents follows obedience to Allah and His Messenger in importance. Allah Almighty declares in a Qur’anic verse:

“Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you should show kindness to your parents. Whether one or both of them reach old age with you, do not to say, ‘Ugh!’ to them out of irritation and do not be harsh with them but speak with them with gentleness and generosity.” (Al Isra’, 17:23)

This is because our parents are the means for our coming into this world and are a great gift. Allah, glory be to Him, has made His approval and good pleasure contingent upon the good pleasure and approval of one’s parents. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) emphasises this truth as follows:

“The good pleasure of Allah lies in the good pleasure of one’s parents, and the anger of Allah lies in the anger of one’s parents.” (Tirmidhi, Birr, 3/1899)

Thus, the rights that our parents have over us are too numerous to be counted. Could it at all be possible to repay them when they have given everything in way of protecting us from life’s trials and storms? The following similitude is offered in a prophetic narration:

“No child can do enough for their father, unless they found him in slavery and purchased him to set him free.” (Muslim, Itq, 25; Abu Dawud, Adab, 119-120; Tirmidhi, Birr, 8/1906)



Allah commands kindness in one's treatment of parents and fulfilling their legitimate wishes, even if they are non-Muslims. However, those matters that are considered disobedience to Allah are of course excluded,<sup>177</sup> as there can be no obedience to creation that is disobedience to the creator.

Notwithstanding the importance of the rights of parents, if parents neglect the spiritual nurture of their children, or if they bring them up in a way that is displeasing to Allah, thus causing them to become wrongdoers, their children will have a case against them on the Day of Reckoning. They will claim that their parents did not teach them to distinguish truth from falsehood, set a good example for them, or properly fulfil their duties as parents. It is then that parents will seek a place of escape from their own children.

### **The Balance (*Mizan*)**

*Mizan* is the name given to the Balance through which the records of people's deeds, good and evil, will be laid open and measured. On the Day of Reckoning, balances are set up, the exact nature of which is known only to Allah, and the actions of everyone will dealt out and weighed, without any person being wronged in the least.

Indeed, this truth is expressed in a Qur'anic verse thus:

"We will set up the Just Balance on the Day of Rising and no self will be wronged in any way. Even if it be no more than the weight of a mustard-seed, We will produce it. We are sufficient as a Reckoner." (Al-Anbiya, 21:47)

Allah, glory be to Him, declares that those whose scales of good deeds are heavy will be the prosperous, while those whose scales of evil deeds are heavy will be those who will face abiding punishment:

"The Weighing that Day will be the truth. As for those whose scales are heavy, they are the successful. As for those whose scales are light, they are the ones who have lost their own selves because they wrongfully rejected Our Signs." (Al-A'raf, 7:8-9)

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177. See, Qur'an (31:15).



These verses describe the situation of the righteous believers and those who denied Allah's revelations. Even if the latter did perform some acts of goodness in this world, this will avail them not on that Day because of their denial. For it is unshakable belief that invests one's actions with value in the eyes of Allah.

The state of the sinning Muslims who are caught between these two groups is illustrated in a Qur'anic verse as follows:

"But others have acknowledged their wrong actions and mixed a right action with another that is wrong. It may well be that Allah will turn towards them. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (At-Tawba, 9:102)

When Allah Almighty wills to punish those who do not concede their sins, or whose repentance is not accepted, He excludes them from His mercy. As a consequence, their scales are light on the Day of Reckoning because they have no acceptable good deeds, and they will be cast into the Fire.

Concerning the weighing of deeds on that Day, Allah, glory be to Him, declares:

"As for him whose balance is heavy, he will have a most pleasant life. But as for him whose balance is light, his motherland land is Hawiya. And what will convey to you what that is? A raging Fire!" (Al-Qari'a, 101:8-11)



Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be well pleased with him) narrates:

"I asked the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to intercede for me on the Day of Judgement.

He said, 'I am the one to do so.'

I said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Then where shall I seek you?'

He said, 'Seek me for the first time on the Bridge (*Sirat*).'

I said, '(What) if I cannot find you upon the Bridge?'

He said, 'Then seek me at the Balance (*Mizan*).'

I said, 'And if I cannot find you at the Balance?'

He said, ‘Then seek me at the Sacred Basin (*Hawd*), for indeed I will not be anywhere except at these three places.’” (Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 9/2433; Ahmad, III, 178)

This demonstrates that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) will intercede with Allah on behalf of his community at the Bridge, the Balance, and will offer them the water of the Sacred Pond.

As was discussed in the section on the intercession, the intercession is true and will take place by the leave and power of Allah Almighty. For it is to Allah that the whole authority to intercede exclusively belongs. He will grant permission to intercede to whomsoever He wills. He will not allow the Messenger to intercede for some of his slaves, or He will allow him intercession after a certain time. In other words, the intercession should not be misconstrued, and it should not be forgotten that everything is entirely at Allah’s disposal and authority.



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) describes a scene from the Balance:

“Allah will single out a person from my community before all of creation on the Day of Judgement. Ninety-nine scrolls will be laid out before them, each scroll as far as the eye can see.

Then He will say, ‘Do you deny any of this? Have those who recorded this wronged you?’

The person will say, ‘No, O Lord!’

Allah will say, ‘Do you have any excuse?’

The person will say, ‘No, O Lord!’

So Allah will say, ‘Indeed, you have good deeds with Us, and you will not be wronged this Day.’

Then a card will be brought out on which is written, *Ash-hadu an lā ilāha illāllah wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullah* (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah).



Allah will say, ‘Behold how your deeds are weighed.’

The person will say, ‘O Lord! What good is this card next to these scrolls?’

Allah will say, ‘You shall not be wronged.’

The scrolls will be put on one side (of the scale), and the card on the other side: the scrolls will be light, and the card will be heavy. For nothing is heavier than the Name of Allah.” (Tirmidhi, Iman, 17/2639; Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 35; Ahmad, II, 213; Hakim, I, 46/9)

This narration demonstrates how precious true faith in Allah is. It also reveals the importance of the declaration of faith that is uttered at the moment of death. Allah has thus commanded the believers as follows:

“You who believe! Have taqwa of Allah with a taqwa due to Him and do not die except as Muslims.” (Al ‘Imran, 3:102)



Similarly, another matter that will be the cause for a person’s happiness at the Balance is noble character, which denotes the reflection of a true and perfect belief upon all one’s states and actions.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says:

“Nothing will weigh heavier on the scales on Day of Resurrection than good character.” (Ahmad, VI, 442, 451; Ibn Hibban, Sahih, II, 230)<sup>178</sup>

### ***The Intercession of the Believers, One’s Actions and the Qur’an***

Alongside the Great Intercession of the Messenger (*al-Shafa’a al-Uzma*), the believers will also be able to intercede with Allah on each other’s behalf. Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once said:

“Through the intercession of one person from my Community, more than Banu Tamim will be admitted into the Garden.”

They asked, “O Messenger of Allah! Someone other than you?”

Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Yes, other than me.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 12/2438; Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 37; Darimi, Riqaq, 86; Ahmad, III, 469)



Similarly, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has also said:

“On the Day of Resurrection, the companions of the Garden will be aligned in ranks and a person from among the companions of the Fire will approach and say:

‘O so and so! Do you not remember the day when you asked for water and I gave you water to drink?’ So, they will intercede for the person.

And another person will come and say, ‘Do you not remember the day when I gave you water with which to purify yourself?’ and they will intercede for this person.

Yet another person will say, ‘Do you not remember the day when you sent me to do such and such for you, and I went and did it for you?’ And he will intercede for him.” (Ibn Maja, Adab, 8)

The message we need to take from this Prophetic narration is the importance of serving Allah’s slaves, without discrimination. This is how valuable a capital for the Next World it is to receive the prayers of the believers.



Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has informed us that the Qur’an, too, will intercede on that Day:

“Recite the Qur’an, for on the Day of Resurrection it will come as an intercessor for those who recite It.” (Muslim, Musafirin, 252)

Again, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says:



“Indeed, there is a chapter in the Qur’an of thirty verses, which interceded for a man until he was forgiven. It is (the Qur’anic chapter which reads,) “*tabārah alladhī biyadihi l-mulk*”. (Tirmidhi, Fada’il Qur’an, 9/2891)

The Qur’an is a miraculous book which enables one to live a life of happiness and bliss in this world and in the Next World. Leading a life in line with the teachings and injunctions of the Qur’an is the essential duty of every believer. Otherwise, while we are hoping to attain the Great Intercession of Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and the noble testimony of the Qur’an, we may – God forbid – fatally find them as claimants against us. That the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) will bring forth a complaint against those who lead their lives in opposition to the Qur’an is expressed in a Qur’anic verse as follows:

“Then the Messenger says, ‘My Lord, my people treat this Qur’an as something to be ignored.’” (Al-Furqan, 25:30)

According to narration, the Qur’an itself will assume a visible form and voice the following complaint:

“Whoever learns the Qur’an but does not concern themselves and engage with it, the Qur’an will take hold of them and say:

‘O Lord! This slave held me captive, abandoned me and kept away from me. They did not act on my message and teachings. Judge between me and them.’”<sup>179</sup>

In other words, so as to avoid being the subject of such complaint in the Next World, we must frequently read the Qur’an, in close observance of the rules of its proper pronunciation and articulation, become acquainted with its deeper meanings and strive to apply these in our lives with utmost sincerity.

It is an immeasurable honour for the believers to be the direct addressees of the Qur’an, which is a miracle that will continue until the Day of Judgement. Giving heartfelt heed to this Divine Letter is a prescription of felicity for all of us. We must also know, however, that it is not sufficient to merely say that we love the Qur’an. If we do indeed love the Qur’an, how



much are we acquainted with it? To what extent is its morality reflected upon us? Are we able to adhere to its laws and principles? Do we send our children to special Qur'an courses to instil in them the culture and morality of the Qur'an?

We should frequently ask ourselves these very questions and try our utmost to remedy our deficiencies in this regard before it is too late.

In short, we must never forget that the Qur'an will be either an intercessor or a complainant against us on the Day of Reckoning.

### **The Bridge (*Sirat*)**

*Sirat* is the name of the Bridge established over the fire of Hell on the Day of Judgement. All people will necessarily cross this bridge. This passage will be realised in accordance with the degree of one's belief in this world and the quality of their actions. For this reason, the Bridge will become so thin under the feet of some people that those crossing it will see it to be – as in the famous saying – thinner than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword. Under the feet of some people, however, it will widen, allowing them comfortable passage to The Garden where they will find the bounties that Allah Almighty has prepared for them.<sup>180</sup>

In contrast, the companions of the Fire will slip while trying to cross the Bridge and tumble down into the Blaze.

On the authority of Abu Hurayra (may Allah be well pleased with him) some people said:

“Messenger of Allah, will we see our Lord on the Day of Rising?”

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) responded to this question with a question:

“Do you have any doubt about seeing the moon on a night when it is full and there are no clouds obscuring it?”

The companions said, “No, Messenger of Allah.”

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180. See Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab*, I, 565/361.



He said, "Do you have any doubt about seeing the sun when there are no clouds obscuring it?"

They said, "No, Messenger of Allah."

He said, "That is how you will see Him on the Day of Rising. Allah will gather all the people together and will say, 'Let whoever used to worship something pursue it.'

Those who worshipped the sun will pursue it, those who worshipped the moon will pursue it, and those who worshipped idols will follow them. This community will be left, together with its hypocrites.

Then Allah will come to them in other than the form which they recognise and say, 'I am your Lord.'

They will say, 'We seek refuge in Allah from you. This is where we will stay until our Lord comes to us. When our Lord comes to us, we will recognise Him.'

Then Allah will come to them again in the form which they recognise and say, 'I am your Lord.'

They will say, 'You are our Lord,' and they will follow Him.<sup>181</sup>

A bridge will then be set up over Hellfire. I will be the first to cross it. The supplication of the Messengers on that day will be, 'O Allah, preserve us! Preserve us!'

The Bridge has hooks like the thorns of the prickly-plant. Have you seen the thorns of the prickly-plant?"

They said, "Yes, indeed, Messenger of Allah."

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) continued:

"They are like the thorns of the prickly-plant except that only Allah knows how big they are. They will hook onto people according to their actions. Some of them will be destroyed by their actions and some will be lacerated and then saved..." (Bukhari, Riqaq, 52)

181. According to the commentary of Qadi 'Iyad, they will follow Allah's command, or the angels He has appointed to this end.

The Bridge is the only point of passage for all human beings. Consequently everyone, believing or not, will reach it. However, as stated in a Qur'anic verse, the saintly slaves of Allah will have no fear on that Day,<sup>182</sup> and will cross it safely. Sinning slaves, however, will endure difficulty in accordance with their evil deeds.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once said in the company of his wife Hafsa, may Allah be well pleased with her:

“God willing, the people who swore allegiance under the tree (*ashab al-shajara*) will never enter the Fire.”

Hafsa asked, “Allah says, ‘Not one of you but will pass over it (the Fire).’<sup>183</sup> (How will this be?)”

Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) then said, “Allah, the Exalted, has said, reciting the subsequent verse, “We will rescue those who are godfearing and We will leave the wrongdoers in it on their knees.” (Maryam, 19:72) (Muslim, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 163)

Thus, for the companions of the Garden, ‘coming to’ the Fire implies passing over the Fire when crossing the Bridge of *Sirat*, and not falling into it.



On the same token, the companions of the Garden will cross the Bridge with a speed that is determined by their deeds. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said:

“The people will pass over the Fire, and then traverse it based on their deeds. The first of them like a flash of lightning, then like the wind, then like a fleeing horse, then like a rider fleeing on a mount, then like a man fleeing, then like a person walking.” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 19/3159)

However long a person remains on the Bridge is the extent to which they will be subjected to the heat, smoke, stench and frightful scenes of Hellfire. Worse than that, they will experience constant dread in the fear

182. See Qur'an, (10:62-64).

183. (19:71)



of falling into the blazing flame at any moment. This is why the faster a person crosses it, the more secure they will be from torment.

Once again, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has said:

“...and the first of you will cross with the swiftness of lightning... Then like the wind, then like a bird, and the next with the speed of a running man, according to (the nature and quality of) their deeds. And your Messenger will be standing at the foot of the Bridge saying, ‘O Lord, preserve them! Preserve them! (*Rabbi Sallim, Sallim*)’

This will continue until people’s deeds become too few to allow them passage, that some people come who will be able only to crawl. On both sides of the Bridge pronged flesh hooks will be hung and will seize those about whom they receive command. Some people will be lacerated and escape (wounded) and others will be thrown into the Fire.” (Muslim, Iman, 329)

Every sin committed in this world, therefore, actually translates as a hook on the side of this Bridge. For that matter, The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) cites trustworthiness and the ties of kinship, saying that these would be dispatched to stand on the right and left of the Bridge, and would struggle against those who did not observe them in the world.<sup>184</sup> The specific mention of these two elements in this narration serves to illustrate their great importance and the great neglect shown in these matters.

At the Bridge, the believers, like Allah’s Messenger, will have the same entreaty on their lips. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says:

“The distinguishing phrase of the believers upon the Bridge will be, ‘O lord, preserve us, preserve us.’” (Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 9/2432)

Allah’s Messenger will stand at the foot of the Bridge for the purpose of intercession. He has stated in another Prophetic narration:

“...Then the Bridge will be established over the Fire and permission for intercession will be granted...” (Muslim, Iman, 302)

### *The Wait*

The believers who escape the pronged hooks of the Bridge will confront one another for some of the smaller injustices they perpetrated against one another in the world. These, however, there are those believers whose righteous deeds will not be wasted upon the carrying out of *qisas*, or retaliation, and who will not be excluded from the Garden.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) describes this event in the following narration:

“After the believers are saved from the Fire, they will be stopped at (another) bridge<sup>185</sup> between the Garden and the Fire where they will exact retaliation against one another in response to the injustices which arose between them in this world. After they are purified and purged, they will be granted permission to enter the Garden. By the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, each one of them will recognise their dwelling in the Garden better than they recognise their dwelling in this world.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 48)

The prophetic narration below points to this wait:

“I stood at the gate of the Garden and most of those who entered it were poor while the wealthy were held back for reckoning, but the people of the Fire had been commanded to enter the Fire. I stood at the gate of the Fire and saw that most of those who entered it were women.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 51; Muslim, Zuhd, 93)



The Day of Resurrection is extremely difficult and very long. But Allah Almighty will make the day easier for his righteous slaves and free them of all trouble and concern.

Indeed, the Companions of Allah's Messenger once expressed their wonderment and concern at this Day being described as a day measuring fifty thousand years.

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185. It appears that this bridge is the end of the Bridge (of *Sirat*) which leads to The Garden. It might also be a different bridge altogether. Or this group of believers will stand beside something resembling a great archway.



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) responded saying:

“By the One in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad that Day is made easy for the believer so that it will be easier for them than a single obligatory prayer which they observe in the world.” (Ahmad, III, 75; Bayhaqi, Shu’ab al-Iman, I, 556/355; Haythami, X, 337)

### **Those without Fear or Grief**

In the violent turmoil of that Day, friend will forget friend, a person will flee from their brother, from their mother and father, from their spouse and from their children, and children will turn grey-headed. There are some people on that Day, however, who will be favoured with Divine gifts in an atmosphere of complete peace and safety. For them will be no fear and they will fear no sorrow.

Allah, glory unto Him, declares:

“Not so! All who submit themselves completely to Allah and are good-doers will find their reward with their Lord. They will feel no fear and know no sorrow.” (Al-Baqara, 2:112)

“Yes, the friends of Allah will fear no fear and know no sorrow; those who believe and are godfearing.” Jonah (Yunus, 10:62-63)

“The angels descend on those who say, ‘Our Lord is Allah,’ and then go straight; ‘Do not fear and do not grieve but rejoice in the Garden you have been promised.’” (Fussilat, 41:30)



The slaves who are mentioned in other Qur’anic verses, whose reward is with their Lord and whom fear and grief will not reach are the following:

✓ Those who follow the guidance from Allah, who keep away from disobedience to Him whenever Messengers come to them, and who thus mend their ways. [See (Baqara, 2:38); (7:35); and (72:13)]

✓ Those who truly believe in Allah, the Last Day and the other essentials of belief, who reform their state and do good, righteous deeds, estab-

lish the Prayer and pay the Zakat. [See (Baqara, 2:62, 277); (5:69); (6:48); (20:112); and (24:55)]

✓ Those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah and then do not taunt or put the receiver under any obligation. [See (Baqara, 2:262)]

✓ Those who spend their wealth night and day, secretly and in public. [See (Baqara, 2:274)]

✓ Those killed in Allah's way. [See (Al 'Imran, 3:169-170)]

✓ Those of whom the unbelievers swore that Allah would never favour them with mercy, and thus despised and scorned, but who in reality are the righteous believers who are favoured with His favour and mercy. [See (7:49)]

It is the unchanging nature of the unbelievers to denigrate and look down on the believers. They suppose that whoever believes in Allah will never attain peace and comfort, and that they will forever be humiliated and disgraced. But they are not aware that what gives a person true value is the belief in their heart. When the believers are ultimately favoured with Allah's mercy and enter the Garden, the unbelievers will be reminded of these misguided notions they held. They will be shown how the seemingly weak believers will be eternally secure from fear and grief, and how they will remain in a never-ending state of loss and ignominy. So, to the believers will belong the final happy end and the supreme triumph.

✓ Those who fulfil their duty as heirs to the Divine Book and who compete with one another in doing good deeds. [See (35:32, 34)]

✓ Those who keep from disobedience to Allah in righteousness and reverence for Him. [See (Zumar, 39:61)]

✓ Those who have believed in Allah's signs and Revelations and who have, in complete submission, achieved a level of slavehood with which Allah is well pleased. [See (43:68-69)]



As is reported in Prophetic narrations, on the Day when the sun will be made to approach and when those who have been long in arduous, fear-



ful wait will be submerged in their own sweat, there will be some slaves who will receive bounty and blessing in the shade of the Supreme Throne.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) describes these special slaves as follows:

“There are seven whom Allah will shade with His shade on the Day when there is no shade but His:

- A just leader;
- A youth who has been raised in the worship of Allah;
- A man whose heart is attached to the mosque;
- Two people who love each other solely for the sake of Allah, meeting for this reason and parting for this reason;
- A man who refuses the advances of a noble and beautiful woman, saying, ‘I fear Allah’;
- A person who gives charity and conceals it such that their left hand does not know what their right hand gives;
- And a person who remembers Allah in seclusion as their eyes overflow with tears.” (Bukhari, Adhan 36, Zakat 16, Riqaaq 24, Hudud 19; Muslim, Zakat, 91)



Again, another group of those happy people who will be delivered of the tribulations of the Day of Judgement and who will feel no fear or sorrow will be comprised of those believers who love one another for the sake of Allah and nothing else.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says:

“Allah will say on the Day of Resurrection:

‘Where are those who love one another for the sake of My Majesty? This Day I shall shelter and protect them in My shade when there is no shade but Mine.’ (Muslim, Birr, 37)

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:





“There are people from among the slaves of Allah who are neither Prophets nor martyrs, but the Prophets and martyrs will envy them on the Day of Resurrection on account of their rank before Allah, the Most High.”

They asked, “Would you tell us who they are, O Messenger of Allah?”

He said, “They are those people who love one another for the sake of Allah, without having any ties of kinship or financial transactions between them. By Allah, their faces will be radiant, and they will be (sitting on pulpits of light. They will have no fear on the Day when the people will have fear, and they will not grieve when the people will grieve.”

He then recited the following Qur’anic verse: “Behold! Verily for the friends of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve.” (Abu Dawud, Ijara, 76/3527; Hakim, IV, 188/7318)

The following incident described by the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) beautifully illustrates the value of loving a fellow believer for the sake of Allah:

“A man once set off to visit his brother in another town and Allah assigned an angel to wait upon his path.

When the man drew near, the angel asked, ‘Where are you headed?’

The man said, ‘I have a brother in this town. I am on my way to visit him.’

The angel asked, ‘Are you to receive something in return for a favour you did him?’

The man replied, ‘No. I merely love him for the sake of Allah and this is why I wish to visit him.’

The angel then said in response, ‘I am a Messenger to you from Allah (sent to inform you) that Allah loves you as you love him.’” (Muslim, Birr, 38; Ahmad, II, 292).



In another narration, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says of person who lends money to a person who is in need and who makes easy its repayment:



“He who grants respite to a person who is in difficulty, or who alleviates their debt, Allah will shade him in His shade.” (Muslim, Zuhd, 74)

“Whoever grants respite to a person in debt or waives repayment, Allah will shade him under His Supreme Throne on the Day of Judgement, a Day in which there is no shade except His shade.” (Tirmidhi, Buyu’, 67/1306; Ibn Maja, Sadaqat, 14)



Allah Almighty created human intellect to comprehend different truths through concrete examples, presenting this transient realm as an exhibition of warning and lessons. He has promised the Garden to those who lead their lives in accordance with the divine injunctions, while promising the Fire to those who persistently disbelieve in His Religion and reject His Book.

Before all else, it needs to be said that it is not possible for us to comprehend with our limited worldly understanding, in the true and complete sense, the Garden or Fire that is depicted for us in the Qur’an and Prophetic narrations. For the finite cannot fathom the infinite. Moreover, that which is revealed concerning the Next World and what will take place there are those divine and Prophetic truths that are presented according to our level of understanding, that we not neglect necessary preparations for that eternal world.

In way of displaying His infinite knowledge and power, Allah has created many different realms, each with their own distinct characteristics, and has made the human being a traveller through these realms.

The human body, for example, was once in the earth as an element of nature. Then it passed to the vegetation springing forth from the earth, and from there to certain creatures. Until eventually, it was transferred to its father’s loins through the food that he consumed, and from there it settled in its mother’s womb.

The human being acquired a very different life in the mother’s womb. There, it lived in a water sac beneath seven veils of darkness, nourished with the blood of its mother. After a certain time, it was forced to abandon its existing life and opened its eyes to a very different realm. Of course,



there were very different conditions in this new life. It was no longer possible to live in water without breathing, or to be nourished with blood. The human being was now maintaining its existence with the oxygen it received and the food it ate.

Mawlana Jalaladin Rumi powerfully illustrates this truth in the following words:

*What if someone said to an embryo in the mother's womb,  
"Outside of your world of black nothing is a miraculously ordered universe; a vast, plentiful earth  
covered with tasty food; mountains, oceans and plains, fragrant orchards and fields full of crops;  
a luminous sky beyond your reach, with a sun, moonbeams, and uncountable stars;  
and there are winds from south, north and west,  
and gardens replete with sweet flowers like a banquet at a wedding feast.  
The wonders of this world are beyond description.  
What are you doing living in a dark prison, Drinking blood through that narrow tube?"*

*But the womb-world is all an embryo knows and it would not be particularly impressed by such amazing tales, saying dismissively:*

*"You're crazy. That is all a deluded fantasy."*

This is the condition of the majority of people in the world. They deny the words of the friends of Allah, and the news they bring from the spiritual realm. These saintly slaves of Allah say to them:

"This world is very dark – like a very narrow well. Beyond this world, however, lies a delightful world free of odour and colour." But their words fall on deaf ears.

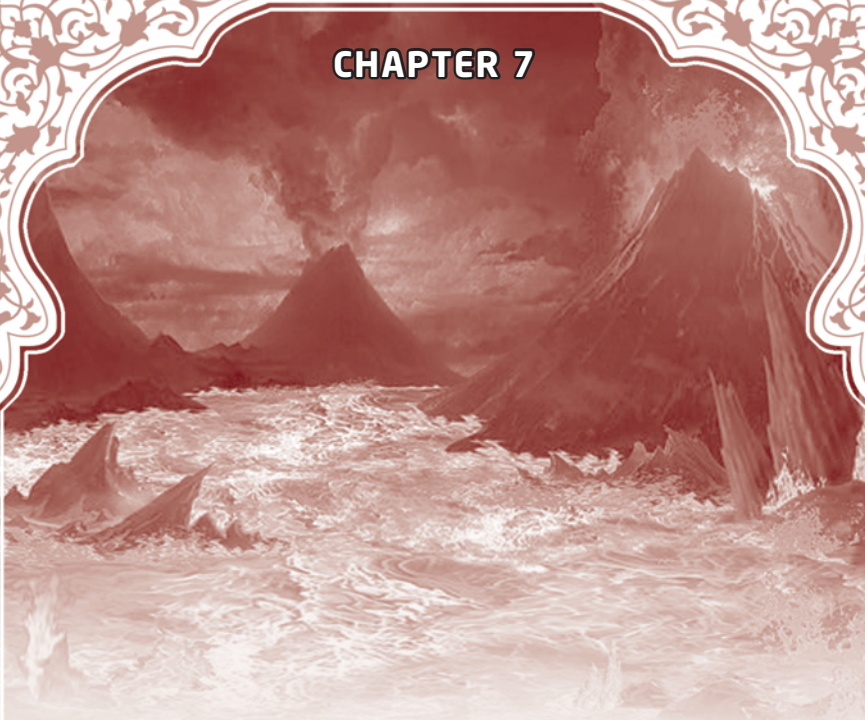
Just like this, after a person dies, they will go to yet another realm. The conditions of that realm will be utterly different to those in our present life.

Indeed, as has been revealed, life there will be eternal beauty and blessing beyond imagination. On the same token, the torment that the wrongdoers will face there is beyond the severity and horror of anything that has been seen in this world. In other words, both pain and joy cannot be compared to anything in this world. For there, time, space, dimension and distance will be utterly different. For this reason, a person can only comprehend the bits of knowledge to the extent that are disclosed in the Qur'an and prophetic narrations and by means of comparison with worldly impressions.

Thus, through His Prophets and Messengers, Allah Almighty has revealed the qualities of the eternal life and the preparations that need to be made for it, explicitly communicating to them the abodes of reward and punishment. He has declared that He will favour with endless blessings those who use their reason and accept divine truths and guidance, while subjecting the rebellious to a painful punishment. All of these truths will be realised exactly as they have been conveyed, as nothing is difficult for Allah.



## CHAPTER 7



# *Hellfire*

*It is clear that a dark worldly night spent deprived of divine love and spiritual pleasures will not bring a bright death.*

*Let us not forget that the temporal rosi-  
ness of the worldly life is filled with the pal-  
lor of a fateful end, and its heedless laughter  
filled with the crackling of the Fire.*



## HELLFIRE

Both the Garden, the abode of eternal happiness and Hellfire, where those who rebel against Allah will face a painful punishment, have been created and exist at this very moment. Once the world has come to an end, Hellfire will be brought forth from its current place to the Place of Supreme Gathering. Those unfortunate souls who flee the sun of guidance for the darkness of unbelief will be punished with it.

It is declared in a Qur'anic verse:

“And that Day Hell is produced, that Day man will remember, but how will the remembrance help him?” (Al-Fajr, 89:23-24)

In way of reminding the people of this reality, and drawing attention to its magnitude and horror, Allah's Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says:

“Hell would be brought forward on that Day with seventy thousand bridles, and seventy thousand angels dragging each bridle.” (Muslim, Janna, 29)<sup>186</sup>



After the sinners have suffered their due punishment in the Fire, they will be taken out. However, when the unbelievers enter Hellfire, their punishment will be enduring and without reprieve.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says in this regard:

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186. See also Tirmidhi, Jahannam, 1/2573.





“The people of the Garden will enter the Garden and the people of the Fire will enter the Fire and then an announcer will stand between them and call out:

‘People of the Fire! No death! People of the Garden, no death! Eternity!’” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 50)

### **The Horror of Hellfire**

Abu Hurayra (may Allah be well pleased with him) relates the following Narration concerning the ferocity, magnitude and depth of the Fire:

“We were in the company of The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) when we heard a terrible sound. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) asked:

‘Do you know what that sound was?’

We said, ‘Allah and His Messenger know best.’

Thereupon he said, ‘That is a stone which was cast into the Fire seventy years ago. It has been falling down ever since and has only just reached the bottom (which is the sound that you have just heard).’ (Muslim, Janna, 31; Ahmad, II, 371)

Allah allowed the companions in the Messenger’s presence to hear a sound that is normally inaudible to human beings, as an extraordinary event, and in order to provide warning.

Let us stress again at this point that our conception of distance is in worldly terms. The notion of time and space as concerns the Next World, however, is unique unto itself. The possibilities and conditions of both worlds are very different. Human beings will pass through to an utterly different realm with their death. For this reason, in considering the information at our disposal regarding the intermediate realm and the Next World, we should not lose sight of the different conditions inherent to these realms and refrain from evaluating them according to the conditions we are acquainted with in this world.





Allah Almighty declares in a Qur'anic verse:

“On the Day He says to Hell, ‘Are you full?’ It will ask, ‘Are there any more to come?’” (Qaf, 50:30)

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says in relation to the event mentioned in this verse:

“...As the wrongdoers are thrown into the Fire, it will continue to say, ‘Is there any more,’ until Allah, glory be to Him, will place His foot there<sup>187</sup> and it will pull together and contract and it will say, ‘Enough, enough, by Your Glory and Benevolence.’”

And there will be excess space in the Garden until Allah creates new beings and make them inhabit that space in the Garden.” (Muslim, Janna, 38)

Mention in the narration of Allah creating slaves who He will favour with His grace, and with whom He will fill the empty spaces in the Garden, and contracting and thus destroying the voids of Hellfire, is demonstration of His not wronging any of His slaves,<sup>188</sup> as well as being an expression of His mercy exceeding His wrath.



Similarly, The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once said, addressing his Companions:

“Your fire is a seventieth of the Fire of Hell.” He thus drew their attention to the overwhelming fierceness of Hellfire.

The Companions responded saying, “Messenger of Allah, (had the fire of Hell been like our fire) that would assuredly have sufficed!”

Allah’s Messenger said, in order to aid understanding of the matter:

“Sixty-nine parts were added to them (all the world’s fires put together), each of them being equivalent in heat to them.” (Bukhari, Bad’u al-Khalq, 10; Muslim, Janna, 30)

Imam Qurtubi offers this commentary:

187. Such figurative statements are aimed at aiding the comprehension of transcendent truths. Else, Allah Almighty is absolutely exalted above likeness to created beings.

188. See Muslim, Janna, 35-39.



“If all the fires burned by the children of Adam were gathered, they could not amount to as much as one of the seventy parts of Hellfire. In other words, if all the earth’s firewood and flammable materials were collected and burned, one-seventieth of Hellfire would be more violent even than this. (Qurtubi, *Tadhkira*, p. 861)



The following Prophetic narration illustrates the ferocity of Hellfire’s blaze:

“The Fire complained to its Lord saying, ‘O Lord, part of me consumes another part.’

So, Allah allowed it two breaths, one in the winter and the other in the summer. The breath in the summer is at the time when you feel the severest heat and the breath in the winter is at the time when you feel the severest cold.” (Bukhari, *Bad’u al-Khalq*, 10)

Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be well pleased with him) says the following about the severest winter cold, referred to as *zamharir*:

“The companions of the Fire will ask to be delivered from the excruciating heat of the Blaze. An icy cold wind will be blown upon them, which will cause their bones to snap and break, after which they will beg to return to the heat.”<sup>189</sup>

Under earthly conditions, fire completely consumes anything it burns. In the Next World, however, because death itself will be killed and everything will be invested with eternal existence, the unbelievers will not die, and their punishment will be enduring. As reported in Prophetic narrations, their bodies will be created in much larger and sturdier forms so that they will feel the full severity of the punishment.

Allah, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate, warns His slaves repeatedly in the Qur’an against this tremendous torment.

We must never forget that the news of the Next World reported to us in the Qur’an and the prophetic narrations are by no means mythical or imaginary, but are truths that, precisely like death, human beings will cer-

tainly face. Thus, what is required is a serious attempt to acquaint ourselves with this knowledge, to act accordingly, and to prepare for the eternal life in the best possible way, while we still have the chance.



The foolish mindset of unbelief, which fails to grasp the seriousness of the Divine and Prophetic news concerning the Fire and tries to gauge them with earthly concepts and its own limited understanding, is portrayed in the following incident:

A Narration that Ibn Jarir relates on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be well pleased with him) states:

“When the Qur’anic verse, ‘Over it (the Fire) there are nineteen (keepers),’ (74:30) was revealed, Abu Jahl (the inveterate enemy of Allah and His Messenger) said to a party of the Quraysh:

“May your mothers mourn your deaths!”

(Indicating the Messenger of Allah, he then said,) “Ibn Abi Kabshah tells you that the keepers of the Fire are nineteen. While you are large in number. Will ten of you fail to overpower one of the keepers of this Fire?”

Allah then inspired to His Messenger to go to Abu Jahl and say to him, ‘Woe to you! And then (again) woe! Again, woe to you! And then (again) woe!’” (al-Suyuti, *Lubab al-Nuqul*, II, 189)

The following Qur’anic verses address Abu Jahl specifically and, in his person, the unmindful and heedless who are overcome by the confusion of pride and unbelief:

“It is coming closer to you and closer. Then closer to you and closer still.” (Al-Qiyama, 75:34-35)

## The Torment of Hellfire

The punishment that those who have been condemned to the punishment of the Fire will not all be equal. Their forms of torment by which they will be punished will vary in accordance with their own state. Some of these are mentioned in the Qur’an in the following verses:



“As for those who reject Our Signs, We will roast them in a Fire. Every time their skins are burned off, We will replace them with new skins so that they can taste the punishment. Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.” (An-Nisa, 4:56)

“They will have Hell, as a resting-place and covering layers on top of them. That is how We repay the wrongdoers.” (Al-A'raf, 7:41)

“They will have awnings of Fire above them and awnings of Fire below them. By that Allah strikes fear into His slaves: ‘So have taqwa, My slaves, of Me!’” (Az-Zumar, 39:16)<sup>190</sup>

“They will say on the Day their faces are rolled over in the Fire, “If only we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger!” (Al-Ahzab, 33:66)

What horrifying scenes are these! When one side of the face and then another is presented to the hottest part of the fire, and at the same time that this fierce blaze reaches every point of the body and face! The unbelievers, weary and in utter remorse, conceding their sins and begging, and in a tone of despair showering curses upon those who dragged them to such a fateful end.



Again, Allah Almighty describes the punishment in the Next World in relevant Qur'anic verses:

“Here are two rival groups who disputed with each other concerning their Lord. Those who disbelieve will have garments of Fire cut out for them, and boiling water poured over their heads, which will melt the contents of their bellies as well as their skin, and they will be beaten with cudgels made of iron. Every time they want to come out of it, because of their suffering, they will be driven back into it: ‘Taste the punishment of the Burning!’” (Al-Hajj, 22:19-22)<sup>191</sup>

Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be well pleased with him) reports that when the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) overheard a person reciting the verses, “With Us there are shakles and a Blazing Fire

190. Cf. (29:55).

191. Cf. (32:20); (Maidah, 5:37).



and a Fire and a food that chokes and a painful punishment” (73:12-13), he fainted. (Bayhaqi, *Shu’ab*, I, 522/917; ‘Ali al-Muttaqi, VII, 206/18644)

In one Narration, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says in relation to the punishment of the Fire:

“The fire of Hell will begin to burn those within it, consuming their bodies until it reaches their hearts. Then the bodies of the companions of the Fire will be created anew, and the fire will again begin to burn them until it reaches their hearts. This torment will be abiding and is the state that Allah describes in the verses of the Qur’an,<sup>192</sup> ‘It is the Fire of Allah (*hutama*), kindled brightly, which shall rise up to the hearts’.<sup>193</sup>



The food that the unbelievers and wrongdoers will consume in the Fire is the tree of *Zaqqum*. According to the Qur’an, it is a tree growing in the heart of the fire of Hell, its buds resembling the heads of satans, which is the food for the people of Hellfire. When it is consumed it will not provide sustenance, instead boiling in the bellies of the companions of the Fire like molten brass and boiling water.

After being made to eat it, they will be given a drink mixed with boiling hot water, drinking it like a camel raging with thirst. As they drink it, however, their thirst will only increase. They will then be dragged back into the blazing flame and boiling water will be poured over their heads as punishment.<sup>194</sup>

Another form of torturous food for the companions of the Fire is described in the Qur’an in the following words:

“Some faces that Day will be downcast, labouring, toiling endlessly, roasting in a red-hot Fire, drinking from a boiling spring. They have no food but a bitter thorny bush which neither nourishes nor satisfies.” (Al-Ghashiyya, 88:2-7)

192. (104:6-7)

193. Ibn al-Mubarak, *Kitab al-Zuhd wa’l Raqa’iq*, II, 87; Ibn Abi al-Dunya, *Sifat al-Nar*, p. 94/139; Ibn Kathir, *al-Nihaya*, II, 147.

194. See (37:62-68); (44:43-48); and (56:52-55).



It can be understood from these verses that hunger is a separate form of punishment in the Next World.



Jabir ibn Abdullah (may Allah be well pleased with him) reports that a person came from Jayshan, a town in Yemen, and he asked Allah's Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) about a drink which was consumed in their land, prepared from grain, and was called *mizr*.

Allah's Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) asked whether it was intoxicating.

When the man replied that it was, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

"Every drink which intoxicates is forbidden. Assuredly Allah, glory be to Him, has promised to serve those who consumed intoxicants, *tinat al-khabal*."

Those present asked, "Allah's Messenger, what is *tinat al-khabal*?"

He said, "It is the sweat of those who dwell in Hell or the matter that seeps from their wounds." (Muslim, Ashriba, 72; Abu Dawud, Ashriba, 5)<sup>195</sup>

Similarly, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says:

"The proud will be gathered on the Day of Rising like tiny specks in the form of human beings. Abasement will envelop them on every side. They will be driven to a dungeon in Hellfire called *Bulas*. The fiercest of fires will engulf them and they will be made to drink the pus of the people of the Fire, the foul fluid that their skins excrete." (Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 47/2492; Ahmad, II, 179; Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 557)



Abdurahman ibn Yazid narrates:

“I used to embark on military campaigns with Ata’ al- Khurasani, may Allah have mercy on him, staying in the same camp. Each night, he would call out to us from inside his tent saying:

‘O ‘Abdurahman, O Hisham ibn al-Ghaz, O So-and-so... Get up, make the ablution and observe the prayer! For it is easier to fast during the day and stand for prayer during the night than it is to drink putrid liquid and don garments of iron in the Fire! Make haste, make haste! Save yourselves, save yourselves!’ Then he would continue his prayer.” (See Bayhaqi, Shu’ab, IV, 528, V, 417; Abu Nu’aym, Hilya, V, 193; Ahmad, Zuhd, p. 309)



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) informs us that the body and limbs of those who deny Allah will be expanded in the Fire, according to the level of their unbelief:

“The molar or canine tooth of an unbeliever will be as (the size of) Mount Uhud and the thickness of their skin a three night’s journey.” (Muslim, Janna, 44)

“The distance between the two shoulders of the unbeliever in the Fire will be that of a three-day journey for a swift rider.” (Muslim, Janna, 45)

“The seat of the unbeliever in the Fire will be like the distance between Mecca and Medina.”<sup>196</sup>

There is no doubt that this enlargement of the unbeliever’s bodies is for the Fire to become completely filled and that they may taste the punishment.

If we consider that it is Allah Almighty Who created both the ant as well as the elephant, if He had so willed, He could have created the ant in the size of the elephant or shrink the elephant to the size of the ant. Likewise, it is He Who created both the whale and the anchovy. Nothing is difficult for Him.

Naturally, it is within the absolute Power of Allah to create human beings that are greater in size and distances that are longer. In other words, these kinds of narrations are not rhetorical, but are an expression of real-

196. Tirmidhi, Jahannam, 3/2578.



ity. We have to accept the information that comes to us through authentic chains of transmission. As has already been indicated, we must not try to understand the Next World by means of earthly conditions and must never overlook the fact that the Next World is an altogether different realm.



The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has stated in the following narrations:

“There will be some to whose ankles the fire of Hell will reach, some to whose knees, some to whose waist the fire will reach, and some to whose collar-bone the fire of Hell will reach.” (Muslim, Janna, 32, 33)

“The person with the least punishment the Fire on the Day of Rising will be a person under the arch of whose feet will be two embers on account of which his brains will boil just like the copper pot or narrow copper vessel boils.”<sup>197</sup> “...and they will think that they had not seen anyone in a more grievous torment than them, while they would be in the least torment.” (Muslim, Iman, 364)



The most grievous torment for the people of the Fire will be debarment from vision of Allah and from being favoured with the treasures His mercy.

As is declared in a Qur’anic verse:

“No indeed! Rather that Day they will be veiled from the light of their Lord.” (Al-Mutaffifin, 83:15)

Those condemned to the Fire will not be able to draw the mercy Allah. Abu ‘Imran al-Jawni says:

“If Allah, the exalted, directs His gaze at a person, He surely has mercy on them. Had He cast his gaze at the companions of the Fire, He would surely have had mercy on them. However, He has decreed that He will not turn (in mercy) to them.” (Abu Nu’aym, *Hilya*, II, 314)





The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) informs us of the state of some of the sinners facing punishment in the Fire:

“On the night in which I was taken on the Night Journey (*Isra*’), I encountered people whose stomachs were like houses, in which there were snakes that could be seen from outside their stomachs.

I asked, ‘Who are these people, O Jibril?’

He said, ‘They are the people who consumed usury.’” (Ibn Maja, Tijara, 58)

Again, Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) states:

“On the night of the Ascension (*Mi’raj*) I came across people who had nails of copper with which they were scratching their faces and their chests.

I asked, ‘Who are these people, O Jibril?’

He said, ‘They are those who were given to backbiting and who impugned people’s honour.’” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 35/4878; Ahmad, III, 224)



Those who indulge in sins which exclude a slave from Allah’s mercy and which incur His wrath should immediately turn to Him in repentance, with tears of remorse. They should never despair of His mercy and sincerely entreat His forgiveness. For He Himself declares:

“Say: “My Slaves, you who have transgressed against yourselves, do not despair of the Mercy of Allah. Truly Allah forgives all wrong actions. He is the Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Az-Zumar, 39:53)

After the Prescribed Prayer offered immediately before a funeral prayer at the mosque, the Caller to Prayer usually recites this verse, with hands raised in supplication. Indeed, there can be no despairing of Allah’s mercy, for He forgives all sins. But, with one condition, the mention of which comes in the verse immediately after:

“Turn in repentance to Lord and submit to Him before the punishment comes upon you, for then you can not be helped.” (Az-Zumar, 39:54)

In other words, we need to turn to Allah in penitence and without delay, so that death does not seize us when we are lost in sin.



Allah Almighty demands heartfelt repentance from His slaves that is a repentance that is reforming. What befalls the slave is to repent in remorse, despising their sin and resolving never to commit it again, and then turning to Allah constantly for the acceptance of their repentance. Allah will accept the repentance of His slave if He so wills. For, like the acceptance of supplication and worship, the pardon of sins is also contingent Upon His will.

On the same token, a person must guard themselves against falling into sin with the misguided thought that they will “be forgiven anyway”. But this is Satan’s trickery and deception, and many people fall prey to it.

To warn His slaves against being led into this trap of torment, Allah declares:

“Mankind! Allah’s promise is true. Do not let the life of this world delude you and do not let the Deluder delude you about Allah.” (Fatir, 35:5)

“Mankind! Have taqwa of your Lord and fear a day when no father will be able to atone for his son, or son for his father, in any way. Allah’s promise is true, so do not let the life of this world delude you and do not let the Deluder delude you concerning Allah.” (Luqman, 31:33)

So, it should never be forgotten that just as Allah’s mercy is Infinite, His punishment and condemnation is also most severe. For He is the All-Overwhelming (*Al-Qahhar*) as He is the All-Merciful (*Ar-Rahman*).

As is described in a Qur’anic verse, Allah is:

“The Forgiver of wrong action, the Acceptor of repentance, the Severe in retribution, the Possessor of abundance. There is no god but Him. He is the final destination.” (Ghafir, 40:3)

Hence, it is essential to strive to live a life of slavehood in righteousness and God-consciousness by remembering that His Overwhelming Power (*Qahr*), just like His Subtlety and Grace (*Lutf*), and His Majesty (*Jalal*), just like His Beauty (*Jamal*), can become manifest at any moment.

As indicated in many verses of the Qur’an,<sup>198</sup> only the unbelievers ever despair of Allah’s mercy. As expressed by Farid al-Din ‘Attar, may Allah

have mercy on him, in his *Pendname*, “Those who lead their lives without fearing Allah’s punishment are not believers, but outright unbelievers.”

## The Desire to be Destroyed

The unbelievers tasting the painful punishment in the Fire will want to die and be destroyed there. But this will not be possible. They will suffer an agonising torment that will neither kill them, nor allow them to live. How can they escape when they cannot die! How can they live when their torment will not abate!

Qur’anic verses declare:

“But the most miserable will shun it, those who will roast in the Greatest Fire and then neither die nor live in it.” (Al-A’la, 87:11-13)<sup>199</sup>

“The evildoers will remain timelessly, for ever, in the Punishment of Hell. It will not be eased for them. They will be crushed there by despair. We have not wronged them; it was they who were wrongdoers. The y will call out, ‘Malik, (the angel in charge of Hell) let your Lord put an end to us!’ He will say, ‘You will stay the way you are.’” (Az-Zukhruf, 43:74-77)<sup>200</sup>

The scene these cries for help portray is one of souls extremely overwhelmed by punishment and bodies wearied and spent because of the indescribable pain that they endure at every moment. The response to their pleas demonstrates that they are not valued in the least, but far from it, are held in contempt.



Depictions of punishment in the Qur’an are more elaborate than depictions of blessing and bounty. A more detailed explanation of these scenes is due to its impact on feeling thus allowing it to be more alarming and therefore cautionary for the carnal soul.<sup>201</sup>

199. See also (20:74).

200. See also (35:36).

201. Sayyid Qutb, *Mashahid al-Qiyama fi al-Qur’an*, p. 65.



Indeed, when the Prophet's companion Shaddad ibn Aws (may Allah be well pleased with him) went to bed, he would constantly toss and turn and could not fall asleep. Until he would eventually say:

“O Allah, (fear of) the Fire will allow me no rest!” Then he would stand to offer prayer until morning. (Abu Nu'aym, *Hilya*, I, 264)

### **The Doors to Hell: open and hidden sins**

Allah has created everything in opposites, all continuing in their own path: belief/disbelief, truth/ falsehood, good/bad, beautiful/ugly and halal/ haram (permissible/impermissible).

Human beings have been given free will to choose. They can choose either belief or disbelief, to be a right acting person or a wrong acting person, just or unjust, merciful or merciless, generous or miserly. Everyone chooses their own path which leads them either to the eternal bliss of the Garden or to the eternal torment Fire.

This world is a transitory place in which Allah the Almighty gives sustenance to all creatures without discrimination, believer or disbeliever, obedient or disobedient, they all receive this divine favour of sustenance and they live together seemingly equal but in the next world they will be separated from each other in a crystal clear way. The disbelievers and oppressors will no longer be with the believers. In the following verse Allah states how this separation will take place in the hereafter where all human beings are gathered on the plain of Mahshar (gathering place).

“Keep yourselves apart today, you evildoers!” (Yasin, 36:59). After this the believers will be taken to the Garden and those who committed all kinds of wrong actions will be dragged to into Hell.

In His book, Allah the exalted narrates the following conversation between the people of the Garden and the people of the Fire who were veiled by their lower desires and appetites from obeying the commands of their Lord who created them:

“In Gardens they will ask the evildoers:

‘What caused you to enter Saqar’ (Hell Fire)?” They will say,

‘We were not among those who did Salat (prayer) and we did not feed the poor. We plunged with those who plunged and denied the day of judgement until the certain (death) came to us’

The intercession of the intercessors will not help them.” (Al-Muddaththir, 74:41-48)



Omar Ibn Abdulaziz (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “make your preparations for the Next World according to the place you want to have there.”

There are only two paths, one leading to the Garden and the other leading to the Fire, by their actions in this world, people prepare themselves for one of these destinations. If we want to reach Allah, we should spent our lives yearning to reach Allah. If we want to see the Beauty of Allah in the hereafter, we should strive very hard to deserve this and rush to good actions that are required by Allah the Almighty. That is because our actions and spiritual states will determine our destination in the hereafter.

The following verse states that human beings prepare their own ends with their own hands, either good or bad:

“.....Allah did not wrong them; rather it was themselves they were wronging...” (Al’ Imran, 3:117)

Therefore, the torture of the Hellfire is not the result of any kind of injustice but only a punishment due to the stubbornness of deliberately ignoring divine warnings.

When we experience a calamity such as an earthquake or a flood, we feel fear. We also fear many things in everyday life, many businessmen fear bankruptcy or loss of material wealth. These are all acceptable fears since we are all human. However, the real fear we should feel is towards those things that distance us from Allah the exalted and those forbidden acts which poison our spiritual life.

Yahya Ibn Muadh (may Allah be pleased with him) states: “it is surprising that one holds back from spoiled food for the fear of disease but he does not hold back from a wrong action for the fear of the Fire.”



Hence we should fear wrong actions:

We should fear our wrong words:

We should fear being deprived of mercy and love.

We should fear our lack of Husnul Khuluq (good character).

We should fear failing to show a smiling face of Islam to others.

We should fear the terrible consequences of our wrong actions and negligence in the next world that is waiting for us after death. We should fear committing any kind of wrong actions in order to become among those happy believers praised by Allah as “those who are safe from fear and anxiety.”

Allah the Almighty says in the Generous Qur’an:

“...Allah does not love any persistently ungrateful wrongdoer.” (Al-Baqara, 2:276)

As a result, wrong actions make man destined for hellfire. Hence the need to leave all kinds of wrong doing both the hidden kind and the apparent. Allah, in the following verse forbids both kinds of sins:

“Abandon wrong action, outward and inward. Those who commit wrong action will be repaid for what they perpetrated” (Al-An’am, 6:120)

External wronging like drinking, gambling, fornication, theft and injustice, are easy to see but there are also internal sins like jealousy, hatred and ostentation which poison the heart. These internal sins cannot be seen, so therefore people tend to fall into them unknowingly. In addition, people rarely seem to understand the gravity of these inward sicknesses and therefore are not actively engaged in finding solutions to give up them. Cleaning the heart from such spiritual sicknesses like pride, miserliness and jealousy is as important as refraining from outwardly apparent sinful acts. We should refrain from the inwardly hidden faults and know that the sinful actions of the limbs are the result of these internal faults and impurities.

A famous Sufi from the Nakshi Silsilah (chain of teaching), Shaykh Abul Hasan Haraqani, (may Allah have mercy upon him) states:

“Just as praying and fasting is obligatory for the believer, so too is the removal of conceit, jealousy and greed from the heart.”<sup>202</sup>

“If a flame from the oven happens to catch on to your clothes you immediately try to put it out. So how can you allow such evil traits as conceit, envy and ostentation to remain in your heart, when they are like a Fire that will burn your religion?!”<sup>203</sup>



Those who desire the pleasure of Allah the Almighty should refrain from deadly internal sins:

### • **Conceit, pride:**

Conceit and pride are both related to self-love and considering yourself better than others and looking down upon others. Both conceit and pride are evil characteristics that bring nothing but misery and suffering in this world and next. Whoever looks down upon a fellow Muslim will suffer terribly in the Next World. The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has warned:

“It is enough evil for a Muslim to look down upon his brother.” (Muslim, Birr, 32)

The Qur’an also contains severe warning about conceit and pride being two big obstacles to reaching the Garden:

“That abode of the akhira (hereafter) – we grant it to those who do not seek to exalt themselves in the earth or to cause corruption in it. The successful outcome is for those who have taqwa (fearful awareness of God).” (Al-Qassas, 28:83)



The Prophet Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) also stated on this subject as follows:

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202. Attar, Tazkira, s. 629.

203. Harakani, Nuru'l-Ulum, s. 239.

“Anyone with half a mustard seed of Kibr (pride) in his heart will not go to the Garden and anyone with half a mustard seed of Iman (belief) will not enter the Fire.” (Muslim, Iman, 148-149)

For eternal bliss, belief is the greatest gift and pride is the greatest calamity that poisons the heart and leads a person to hell. Hearing these words of the Prophet, one companion asked:

“O Messenger of Allah! A man likes to have fine clothing and footwear. Is this included in Kibr?” He responded,

“No, Allah is Beautiful and loves Beauty, Kibr is Batrul Haq (denouncing the truth) and abasing people” (Muslim, Iman, 147; Tirmidhi, Birr, 61)

In another hadith the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) stated that the hard-hearted people who walk with pride and contempt will go to hell:

“The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever lets his garment drag along the ground out of pride, Allah will not look at him on the Day of Resurrection.” (Muslim, Libas, 42)

### • Envy (Hasad):

Envy can cause disbelief because it causes the individual to feel that Allah has not been fair and objective in how He has distributed His blessings among His creatures. The sign of envy is when a person wants the removal of a blessing from the one he envies and when he sees that the blessing is taken away he becomes happy.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) warned us against envy or Hasad in the following hadith:

“Beware of Hasad, for truly it devours good deeds the way Fire destroys dry wood. (Abu Dawud, Adab, 44/4903)

“Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Do not hate one another and do not envy one another and do not desert each other and O slaves of Allah! Be brothers.” (Bukhari, Adab, 57)



### • Anger:

Anger is an emotion that can destroy a person's spiritual balance, it shows man's weakness and incompetence. Anger disables the power of reason, since when anger comes, reason leaves. Most violent crimes are stem from anger. Anger has written a history of human disasters.

Anger is the best assistant of Satan, making his job easier. When a person gets angry, the Devil plays with them like a child playing with a ball. Hence the wise person is the one who can control himself at the time of anger, since anger is the biggest enemy of reason. When anger comes, the eyes are blind to the truth and when the anger leaves the face is left red in shame.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) emphasizing the difficulty of controlling anger said:

The strong man is not one who is good at wrestling, but the strong man is one who controls himself in a fit of anger. (Bukhari, 76)

Abu Darda said to the Prophet:

"Advise me something that will take me to the Garden!" The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said,

"Do not become angry and furious." (Bukhari, Adab, 76; Tirmidhi, Birr, 73)

Having said that not all anger is bad, if our anger is egoistic and Satan-ic it is bad, if we get angry for the sake of Allah it becomes a virtue. Getting angry for the sake of Allah is as important as controlling one's wrath in order to attain the pleasure of Allah.

### • Hypocrisy:

It is considered as being twofaced, showing off one behaviour and deceitfully hiding another. It is one of the worst characteristics that destroys the rewards of a believer's actions. Islam never allows its believers to act hypocritically and behave insincerely. Therefore Allah the almighty states in the His mighty book:



“They were only ordered to worship Allah, making their deen (religion) sincerely His and to establish Salat (prayer) and pay Zakat (obligatory annual charity) that is the correct deen.” (Al-Bayyina, 98:5)

Another verse of the Qur’an informs us that the good deeds done for the sake of showing off to others is nothing their complete destruction:

“You who have iman (belief)! Do not nullify your sadaqa (charity) by demands of gratitude or insulting words, like him who spends his wealth, showing off to people and not having iman in Allah and the Last Day. His likeness is that of a smooth rock coated with soil, which, when heavy rain falls on it, is left stripped bare. They have no power over anything they have earned. Allah does not guide kafir (unbelieving) people.” (Al-Baqara, 2: 264)

We should not forget that Iman or belief in the oneness of Allah means that a person can never attribute any partners alongside Allah Almighty. This fact is stated by the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in the following hadith on Shirk (worshipping something other than Allah):

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

“The thing that I fear most for you is minor shirk.” They said:

“O Messenger of Allah, what is minor shirk?” He said:

“Showing off, for Allah will say on the Day when people are recompensed for their actions: ‘Go to those for whom you were showing off with your deeds in the world and see what reward you find with them.’” (Ahmad, V, 428, 429)



This hadith shows that hypocrisy can even take someone to Shirk or associating partners with Allah almighty, hence it is extremely serious for the next life in the hereafter. The following hadiths (saying of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) clearly indicated to us the terrible end of those who committed this crime, losing all their sincerity when he told the following news:



“The first person to be judged on the Day of Judgement will be a man who died a martyr. He will be brought forth and informed of this blessing his Lord gave him and he will know it. Then his Lord will say to him, ‘What did you do to bring this about?’ And the man will reply, ‘I fought for Your sake until I was martyred.’ Thereupon Allah will say, ‘You lie. Rather you fought so that people might say you were brave and they did indeed say it.’ Then He will command that the man be dragged on his face and cast into the Fire. Then another will come who studied knowledge and taught and recited the Qur’an. He will be brought forth and informed of this blessing his Lord gave him and he will know it. Then his Lord will ask him, ‘What did you do?’ and he will say, ‘I studied and taught knowledge and recited the Qur’an for Your sake,’ So Allah will say, ‘You lie. Rather you studied so that people might say you were a great scholar and reciter and they did indeed say it.’ Then He will command that the man be dragged on his face and cast into the Fire. We seek protection with Allah from that. Then another will come whom Allah made rich and to whom Allah gave all sorts of wealth. He will be brought forth and informed of this blessing his Lord gave him and he will know it. Then his Lord will ask him, ‘What did you do with it?’ and he will reply, ‘I spent my wealth in every single way that you love wealth to be spent.’ So Allah will say, ‘You lie. Rather you did what you did so that people might say that you were a generous man and they did indeed say it.’ Then He will command that the man be dragged on his face and cast into the Fire.” (Muslim, Imara, 152)

### • Miserliness:

It is to spend from what Allah has given you only for yourself, forgetting the rights of others, this is a vice the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) warned us against in the following hadith:

“Two traits are not combined in a believer: Miserliness and bad manners!” (Tirmidhi, Birr, 41/1962)

“Beware of oppression, for oppression will turn into excessive darkness on the Day of Resurrection and beware of niggardliness, for niggardliness destroyed your predecessors.” Related by Muslim.



Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Beware of injustice, for oppression will be darkness on the Day of Resurrection; and beware of stinginess because it doomed those who were before you. It incited them to shed blood and treat the unlawful as lawful.” (Muslim, Birr, 56)

“The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Every day two angels come down from Heaven and one of them says,

‘O Allah! Compensate every person who spends in Your Cause,’ and the other angel says,

‘O Allah! Destroy every miser.” (Bukhari, Zakat, 27)

Allah glory be to Him, informs us of the terrible fate of stingy and miserly people who selfishly collected wealth and did not spend it for the sake of Allah:

“Woe to every fault finding backbiter who has amassed wealth and hoarded it! He thinks his wealth will make him live for ever. No indeed! He will be flung into the Shatterer. And what will convey to you what the Shatterer is? It is the kindled Fire of Allah reaching right into the heart. (Al-Humaza, 104, 2-7)

Stingy people place their trust in their wealth and not in Allah. They think that their wealth will make them eternal. A friend of Allah explained the vanity of this assumption in the following words:

“Do not ask eternity from the world, how it can give you something of which it does not possess.”

Those who spend their fleeting days to amass wealth blindly will only get a handful of dust in their hands when they are lowered into the grave. The wealth of the world will stay in this world but man will be held accountable for his wealth.



The real success is to make hearts an ocean of mercy through generous, self-sacrificing actions, converting our worldly favours given for a short time into never-ending rewards in the Garden. Therefore, the best wealth is the one we send ahead for ourselves and find in the next world.



Similarly, the best life is the one which was spent in the path of Allah's contentment.

Asad Arbili states in this matter: "When tenants move from one house to another they take all their belongings and leave nothing behind of what they love. This being the case, how strange it is then that when they enter the house of their grave, where they are in need of everything, they are not able to take even a part of their treasured belongings. (why do they not send some of their worldly wealth to the next life by giving charity when they are alive) (Maktubat, s. 16, no: 5)

### • **Wastefulness:**

Wastefulness is the attempt to suppress feelings of inferiority and to present oneself to others through wealth by way of buying repute and esteem. It signifies overstepping the bounds in every respect and transgressing the Divinely-established limits.

It is declared in a Qur'anic verse:

"...and do not be profligate. He does not love the profligate." (Al-An'am 6:141)

Allah, glorified and exalted be He, declares, "Squanderers are ever brothers of Satans and Satan was ungrateful to his Lord." (Al-Isra, 17:27)

Wasting the wealth means to spend it in places where Allah the Almighty does not like. Allah gave us material wealth so we can meet our needs, live honourably, without opening our hands to others. Those who waste it away in needless places will one day be dependent on others even for their basic needs. Hence we should spend it wisely and also strive to make it a sustenance in the hereafter by giving charity. One has to start giving charity first to relatives, then to others beginning from those who are. This kind of spending is Halal (allowed) but spending it in places where Allah the Almighty has forbidden is Haram (forbidden).

The following Qur'anic verse describes the best criteria of spending:

"Those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor mean, but take a stance between the two." (Al-Furkan, 25:67)



Hence both extravagancy and miserliness are vices that can lead the person astray.

### • **Spying on others:**

It is to be offensively curious and inquisitive especially about other people's faults, it originates from one's baseless suspicions and negative thinking. One of Allah's names is As-Sattar al-Uyub (the concealer of faults) and therefore He is angered with those who uncover the faults of other people, especially those sins which are not harmful and related to public good. Allah the most high says in the Qur'an:

"Allah does not like evil words being voiced out loud, except in the case of someone who has been wronged. Allah is all Hearing, all Knowing."  
(An-Nisa, 4:148)

When the hidden sins and ugliness are spied on and revealed to others it causes them being spread like a contagious disease, hence those who reveal them knowingly or unknowingly advertise these sins. Their spread through advertising is worse than their being committed, since only a few people are affected when they are initially committed but when they are advertised, countless people are negatively influenced. A believer can repair the damage of committing the sin but once it spreads and goes public, no one can eradicate the negative effect it causes. This presents a threat to the public sense of morality.

About this, the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: "If you search for the faults of people, you will corrupt them, or nearly corrupt them."

In another Hadith the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) warns us from trying to listen and eavesdrop on people in order to learn their secrets:

"and if somebody listens to the talk of some people who do not want him to listen to or if they run away from him, then molten lead will be poured into his ears on the Day of Resurrection;" (Bukhari, Tabir, 45)

### • Lying:

It is one of the most severe wrong actions that drags man to the Fire, especially when the rights of Muslims trampled on by lies. The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“He who appropriates the right of a Muslim by making a false oath, Allah will make Hell-Fire necessary for him and will declare The Garden forbidden for him. A person said to him: Messenger of Allah, even if it is something insignificant? To which he (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied: Yes even if it is a twig of the arak tree. (Muslim, Iman, 218; Muwwatta, Akdiya, 11)

“The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in another hadith said:

“Truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to The Garden. And a man keeps on telling the truth until he becomes a truthful person. Telling lies leads to al-Fujur (wickedness) and al-Fujur leads to the Fire and a man may keep on telling lies till he is written before Allah, as a liar.” (Bukhari, Adab, 69)

It is clear that lying is a calamity committed by the tongue and the tongue is the spokesman of the heart. Those who can control their tongues and keep away from lying will protect themselves from a painful punishment.

A believer should not forget that whatever he or she says, will be recorded immediately and stay far from telling a lies. Allah the Almighty-tates in the holy Qur'an:

“He does not utter a single word, without a watcher by him, pen in hand!” (Qāf, 50:18)



The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) also warned us against lying and its harsh consequences in the next world:

“The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Whoever claims to have seen a dream which he did not see, will be ordered to



make a knot between two barley grains which he will not be able to do;...”  
(Bukhari, Tabir, 45)

### • Backbiting:

Backbiting is to speak against a Muslim brother or sister in their absence in a manner which he or she would not like if they heard it. Allah the Almighty values man's honour so much that if someone harms it by revealing his mistakes in his absence, He announces in His holy Book that such an act is a grave wrong. This shows the degree of mercy Allah has for sinners, by protecting their honour.

There is another reason why backbiting is forbidden that is because backbiting harms the peace of society and damages the bond of brotherhood and sisterhood between Muslims. It destroys the solidarity of the Muslims and plants seeds of hatred in the hearts, therefore it is considered one of the major wrong actions in Islam. However, people often tend to justify it by saying that they are only telling the truth not a lie. This is ignorance about backbiting since as described in the hadith of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) it is telling the actual mistakes of a believer in his absence regardless of whether it is true or not, otherwise saying a mistake which is not true is slander. Hence justifying this can only be a false justification which simply increases the weight of wrong on the backbiter and shows their level of ignorance and or heedlessness.

The Prophet one day asked his companions, do you know what backbiting is? They said: Allah and His Messenger know best. Thereupon he (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: Backbiting is talking about your brother in a manner which he does not like. It was said to him: What is your opinion about this if I actually find that fault present in my brother which I made a mention of? He said: If that fault is actually found in him as you mentioned, you have still backbitten him, and if it is not in him then it is a slander. (Muslim, Birr, 70; Abu Dawud, Adab, 40/4874)



The following verse of the Holy Qur'an is an enough warning from committing this grave mistake:



“...and do not spy and do not backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat his brother’s dead flesh? No, you would hate it. And have Taqwa (fearful awareness) of Allah, Allah is Ever-Returning, Most Merciful.” (Al-Hujurat, 49:12)

Backbiting is described in the verse as eating the dead flesh of your brother, this shows very clearly the gravity and importance of avoiding it. The flesh of a man is already forbidden even when he is alive, so how can anyone eat a rotten piece of flesh that belongs to a human being willingly? This shows the amount of a person’s moral and spiritual deterioration.

Backbiting burdens the backbiter with shame and the rights of other believers on his shoulders.

The backbiter must go and apologize to the person he spoke badly of and ask for his forgiveness. He should also tell the person what he said: ‘I said so and so about you and there was so and so with me when I said it.’ If his backbiting has already caused a damage in society, he should also ask forgiveness from Allah very often and give charity to seek forgiveness. The backbiter should turn to Allah and ask Him to forgive him with regretful heart.

Backbiting shows the triumph of the ego over one’s soul, it is the manifestation of spiritual sickness in the heart, a spiritual disease that threatens destruction in this life and the next.

Although the Islamic perspective against backbiting is clear, it is very unfortunately people often become immune to it and listen to the backbiting as if they are listening to soothing music, making it a continuous habit. May Allah the Almighty make us aware of this grave matter and make us successful in keeping away from it. May Allah help us in refraining from all open and hidden wrong actions and mistakes.

### **Those who are saved from the Hellfire**

Those who believe in the creed of Islam are saved from eternal punishment of the hell Fire. However, there are some from the believers who Allah will punish because of their major sins. Those believers are saved from it by divine forgiveness, or intercession of other believers or after

their punishment has finished. The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) informs us of this process in the following hadith:

“By One in whose hand is my life, there will be none among you more eager to claim a right than the believers on the Day of Resurrection for brethren in the Fire who would say:

“O our Lord, they were fasting along with us, and praying and performing pilgrimage. It will be said to them: Take out those whom you recognise. Then their people will be forbidden to the Fire and they will take out a large number of people who had been overtaken by the Fire up to the middle of the shank or up to the knees. They will then say: O our Lord not one of those about whom Thou didst give us command over remains in it. He will then say: Go back and bring out those in whose hearts you find good of the weight of a dinar then they will take out a large number of people. Then they would say: O our Lord! We have not left anyone about whom You commanded us. He will then say: Go back and bring out those in whose hearts you find as much as half a dinar of good.

Then they will take out a large number of people, and would say: O our Lord! Not one of those about whom You commanded us we have left in it. Then He will say: Go back and in whose heart you find good to the weight of a particle bring him out. They would bring out a large number of people and will then say: O our Lord, now we have not left anyone in it (Hell) having any good in him. Abu Sa’id Khudri said: If you don’t testify me in this hadith, then recite if you like:” Surely Allah wrongs not the weight of an atom and if it is a good deed. He multiplies it and gives from Himself a great reward” (al-Qur’an, iv. 40).

Then Allah, Exalted and Great, will say: The angels have interceded, the Messengers have interceded and the believers have interceded and no one remains (to grant pardon) but the Most Merciful of the merciful. He will then take a handful from the Fire and bring out from it people who never did any good and who had been turned into charcoal and will cast them into a river called the river of life, on the outskirts of the Garden. They will come out as a seed comes cut from the silt carried by a flood. You see it near the stone or near the tree. That which is exposed to the sun is yellowish or greenish and which is under the shade is white. They said: Messenger of Allah! It seems as if you had been tending a flock in the

jungle. He (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: They will come forth like pearls with seals on their necks. The inhabitants of the Garden will recognise them and say: ‘Those who have been set free by the Compassionate One. Who has admitted them into the Garden without any good deed that they did or any good that they sent in advance’, then He will say: ‘Enter the Garden; whatever you see in it is yours. They will say:

“O Lord, You have placed a favour upon us that You have not granted upon anyone else in the world”. He will say:

“There is with Me a favour for you better than this.” They will say:

“O our Lord! Which thing is better than this?” He will say:

“It is My pleasure. I will never be angry with you after this”. (Muslim, Iman, 302)



The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) informs about the last man who will emerge out of Hell to go to the Garden:

“...when Allah has finished the judgments among His slaves and decides to take out of the Fire whoever He wishes to take out from among those who used to testify that none had the right to be worshipped but Allah. We will order the angels to take them out and the angels will know them by the mark of the traces of prostration on their foreheads for Allah banned the Fire to consume the traces of prostration on the body of any of the children of Adam (peace be upon him). So they will take them out and by then they will have become burnt like coal and then Ma’ul Hayat (water of life) will be poured on them and they will spring out like a seed springs out on the bank of a rainwater stream and there will remain one man who will be facing the Fire and will say, ‘O Lord! Its vapour has poisoned and smoked me and its flame has burnt me; please turn my face away from the Fire.’

He will keep on invoking Allah till Allah says, ‘Perhaps, if I will give you what you want, you will ask for another thing?’ The man will say, ‘No, by Your Power, I will not ask you for anything else.’ Then Allah will turn his face away from the Fire. The man will say after that, ‘O Lord, bring me near the gates of The Garden.’ Allah will say to him, ‘Didn’t you promise



not to ask for anything else? Woe to you, O son of Adam! How treacherous you are!’

The man will keep on invoking Allah until Allah says, ‘But if I give you that, you may ask me for something else.’ The man will say, ‘No, by Your Power. I will not ask for anything else.’ He will promise not to ask for anything else after that. So Allah will bring him near to the gates of the Garden and when he sees what is in it, he will remain silent as long as Allah wills and then he will say, ‘O Lord! Let me enter the Garden.’ Allah will say, ‘Didn’t you promise that you would not ask Me for anything other than that? Woe to you, O son of Adam! How treacherous you are!’ On that, the man will say, ‘O Lord! Do not make me the most wretched of Your creation,’ and will keep on invoking Allah until Allah smiles and when Allah smiles because of him, then He will allow him to enter the Garden and when he will enter the Garden, he will be addressed, ‘Wish from so-and-so.’ He will wish till all his wishes will be fulfilled, then Allah will say, all this (i.e. what you have wished for) and as much again are for you.’ “ Abu Hurayra added: That man will be the last of the people of the Garden to enter it. (Bukhari, Rikak, 52)

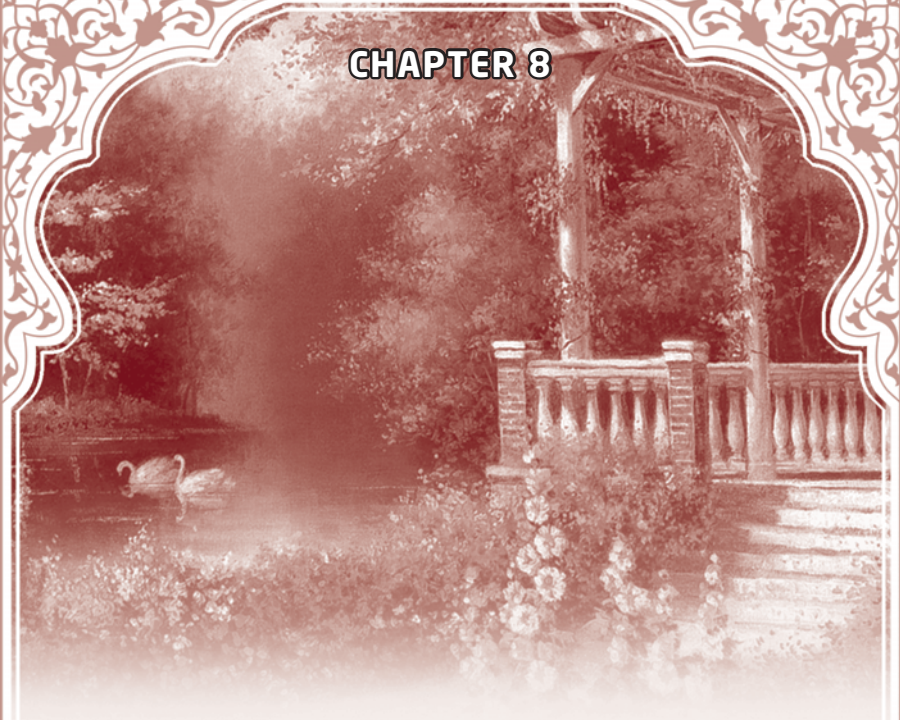


In another narration the Muslims who are destined to hell will suffer an amount time in Hell and after some time will die so as to not suffer too much. After that they will be totally burnt into charcoal, after they stay in the Hell as long as Allah wills, then they will leave the Fire due to intercession. Then they will be thrown into the rivers of the Garden until they are given a new life and body.<sup>204</sup>





## CHAPTER 8



# *The Garden*

Allah the Almighty states in the Qur'an:  
"Allah has bought from the believers their  
selves and their wealth in return for the Gar-  
den." (At-Tawba, 9:111)

Hadrat Ali (may Allah ennoble his face)  
said: "Nothing is enough reward for your life  
and wealth except the Garden. Therefore, sell  
you lives and wealth only in return for the  
Garden."



## THE GARDEN

The Garden had been created as the everlasting abode of reward and mercy as a pure gift from Allah the almighty and is in existence right now.<sup>205</sup> This world is a test for us and after living a life in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunna (the Prophetic example) establishing our life on Taqwa (fearful awareness of Allah), we have been promised the reward of the Garden, which has a beauty far beyond our imagination and perception.

The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) informs us that death will be killed and those who enter both The Garden and hell will stay there forever in the following authentic narration.

“Death will be brought on the Day of Resurrection in the form of a white ram. Abu Kuraib narrated this addition: Then it would be made to stand between the Garden and Hell. So far as the rest of the hadith is concerned there is perfect agreement between the two narrators that it will be said to the inhabitants of the Garden:

“Do you recognise this?”

They will raise up their necks and look towards it and say: “

Yes, ‘ it is death.”

Then it will be said to the inhabitants of the Fire...

“Do you recognise this? And they will raise up their necks and look and say:

Yes, it is death. Then the command will be given for slaughtering it and then it will be said:

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205. Bukhari, Bed'ü'l-Khalq, 8.



“O inhabitants of the Garden, there is an everlasting life for you and no death and to the people in the Fire, it will be said:

“O inhabitants of the Hellfire, there is an everlasting life for you and no death. Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) then recited this verse pointing with his hand to this material world:” Warn them, this Day of dismay and when their affairs will be decided and they will be unmindful and they believe not” (xix. 39). (Muslim, Jannah, 40)



The people of the Garden will be overjoyed when they hear that there is an everlasting life for them as the people of hell be utterly devastated to hear that:

“... If it were not that Allah had decreed the inhabitants of the Garden would remain, then they would die of joy and if it were not that Allah had decreed that the inhabitants of the Fire would remain, then they would die of grief.” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 19/3156)

This attitude of these two groups are understandable since the first group are so happy that they will enjoy the beauty of The Garden forever, whereas the second group will have no hope of saving themselves from their terrible state. If they had a little bit of hope their grief would be slightly relieved.



The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Do good deeds properly, sincerely and moderately and have good news because one’s good deeds will not make him enter the Garden.” They asked, “Even you, O Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)?” He said, “Even me, unless Allah covers me in His Mercy.” (Bukhari, Rikak, 18; Muslim, Munafikun, 71-72)<sup>206</sup>

This hadith shows that we should do all kinds of good deeds to try to earn the pleasure of Allah, however we should not depend on them as if they are a ticket to the Garden, we should only take refuge in Mercy of Allah, this is the necessary courtesy of the slave in his relationship with





his Lord. Another point is that people of the Garden will all have different ranks in it according to the strength of the certainty and the sincerity of their good actions.



Those who arrogantly followed the vain desires of their lower selves and wasted away their lives in disobedience as well as all kinds of evil activities, will be in a devastating predicament in the hereafter when they are called to the scales for the weighing of their deeds. However, those who feared Allah's punishment in this life, spending their lives in obedience, following the straight path of Islam will be saved from all kinds of fears and calamities and will obtain eternal bliss. The Holy Qur'an states:

"But as for him who feared the station of his Lord and forbade the lower self its appetites, the Garden will be his refuge." (An-Nazi'at, 79: 40)

"For those who fear the station of their Lord there are two Gardens." (Ar-Rahman, 55: 46)

"They will say, 'Beforehand we used to live in fear among our families. But Allah was gracious to us and safeguarded us from the punishment of the searing wind. Beforehand we certainly used to call on Him because He is the All-Good, the Most Merciful'" (At-Tur, 52:26-28)

As stated in the Qur'an, Allah will give the people of the Garden such a vast reward that they will no longer feel any boredom or tiredness:

"They will say: 'Praise be to Allah, who has removed all sadness from us. Truly our Lord is Ever-Forgiving, Ever-Thankful: He who has lodged us, out of His favour, in the Abode of Permanence where no weariness or fatigue affects us.'" (Fatir, 35:34-35)

The Garden will be the final destination for those believers who hoped for divine contentment and feared the divine anger, those who were very careful not to hurt others and those who trusted in Allah almighty.

"There will enter the Garden people whose hearts are like the hearts of birds (in terms of their reliance on Allah) (Muslim, Jannah, 27)



## The vastness and beauty of the the Garden

Allah the Almighty in the Holy Qur'an describes the vastness of the Garden in the following way:

“Race each other to forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the people who have taqwa (fearful awareness of God).” (Al’Imran, 3:133)<sup>207</sup>

The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in one of his sayings explained the levels of the Garden in the following way:

““In the Garden, there are a hundred levels, between every two levels is a hundred years.” (Tirmidhi, Jannah, 4/2529)

It is related from the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) that he said: “Indeed the people of the higher levels, will be seen by those who are beneath them like the stars which appear far away in the sky. And indeed Abu Bakr and ‘Umar are among them and they have done well.” (Tirmidhi, Menakib, 14/3658; Ibn Majah, Mukaddima, 11; Ahmad, III, 26, 98)<sup>208</sup>

The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) also said, “The people of the Garden will look at the dwellers of the lofty mansions (i.e. a superior place in the Garden) in the same one looks at a brilliant star far away in the East or in the West on the horizon; all that is because of their superiority over one another.” On that the people said, “O Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)! Are these lofty mansions for the Prophets which nobody else can reach? The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied,” No! “By Allah in whose Hands is my life, these are for the men who believed in Allah and the Messengers.” (Bukhari, Bedul-Khalq 8, Rikak 51; Muslim, Jannah, 11)



The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) described the beauty of one of the Gardens of the Garden in the following hadith:

207. Krş. al-Hadid, 21.

208. Krş. Bukhari, Rikak, 51; Muslim, Jannah, 10.

The companions asked the Prophet: ‘The Garden, what is it made of?’ The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“Bricks of silver and bricks of gold. Its mortar is musk of a strong fragrance and its pebbles are pearls and rubies and its earth is saffron. Whoever enters it shall live and shall not suffer and shall feel joy and shall not die, nor shall their clothes wear out, nor shall their youth come to an end.”<sup>209</sup>

“Indeed, in the Garden, there are two gardens, their vessels and all that are in them are made of silver, and there are two gardens, their vessels and all that are in them are made of gold...”<sup>210</sup>

### **The rewards that will be given to the believers in the Garden**

Allah the Almighty describes the beauty of the Garden in the following verse:

“Give good news to those who have iman (belief) and do right actions that they will have Gardens with rivers flowing under them. When they are given fruit there as provision, they will say, ‘This is what we were given before.’ But they were only given a simulation of it. They will have spouses of perfect purity and will remain there timelessly, for ever.” (Al-Baqara, 2:25)

“Those who have taqwa (fearful awareness of God) will be amid Gardens and Springs: ‘Enter them in peace, in complete security!’ We will strip away any rancour in their hearts – brothers, resting on couches face-to-face. They will not be affected by any tiredness there and they will never be made to leave.” (Al-Hijr, 15:45-48)

“They will have Gardens of Eden with rivers flowing under them. They will be adorned in them with bracelets made of gold and wear green garments made of the finest silk and rich brocade, reclining there on couches under canopies. What an excellent reward! What a wonderful repose!” (Al-Kahf, 18:31)



209. Bukhari, Rikak 51, Bed’ü’l-Halk 8, Tefsir 56/1; Müslim, Jannah, 6-8; Tirmidhi, Jannah, 1/2524.

210. Tirmidhi, Jannah, 2/2528.



When the Muslims enter the Garden, they will forget all their fear and anxiety, they will never again any of these negative emotions. Furthermore, Allah gives them rewards and gifts far beyond their imagination. The following verse describes this as follows:

“My slaves, you will feel no fear today; you will know no sorrow:as for those who had iman (belief) in Our Signs and became Muslims: ‘Enter the Garden, you and your wives, delighting in your joy.’ Platters and cups of gold will be passed around among them and they will have there all that their hearts desire and their eyes find delight in. You will remain in it timelessly, for ever. That is the Garden you will inherit for what you did. There will be many fruits in it for you to eat.” (Az-Zukhruf, 43:68-73)

“So Allah has safeguarded them from evil on that Day and has made them meet with radiance and pure joy and will reward them for their steadfastness with a Garden and with silk. Reclining on couches, they will experience there neither burning sun nor bitter cold. Its shading branches will droop down over them, its ripe fruit hanging ready to be plucked. Vassals of silver and goblets of pure crystal will be passed round among them, crystalline silver – they have measure them very exactly. They will be given there a cup to drink mixed with the warmth of ginger. In it there is a flowing spring called Salsabil. Ageless youths will circulate among them, serving them. Seeing them, you would think them scattered pearls. Seeing them, you see delight and a great kingdom. They will wear green garments of silk and rich brocade. They will be adorned with silver bracelets. And their Lord will give them a pure draft to drink.” Man (Al-Insan, 76:11-21)



“Indeed in the Garden there are chambers whose outside can be seen from their inside, and whose inside can be seen from their outside.” A Bedouin stood up and said: “Who are they for O Prophet of Allah?” he (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: “For those who speak well, feed others, fast regularly and perform Salat (the prayer) for Allah during the night while the people sleep” (Tirmidhi, Jannah 3/2527, Birr 53/1984)

The bounties of the Gardens of the Garden will never give any kind of hardship, as narrated in the following hadith:



“I heard the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) saying that the inhabitants of the Garden will eat and drink but will neither spit, nor pass water or excrement, nor suffer catarrh.”<sup>211</sup>

The companions asked in surprise:

Then, what will happen with the food? Thereupon he said: They will belch and sweat and their sweat will be that of musk and they will glorify and praise Allah as easily as you breathe. (Muslim, Jannah, 18)<sup>212</sup>



The people of the Garden will enjoy the blessings of the Garden forever, without any difficulty and suffering. They will have bright eyes full of pleasure, their bodies without hair, they will be very beautiful and handsome. Their age will be 30 or 33 no older.<sup>213</sup>

In the Garden there will be no tiredness, no dirt, and no bodily fluids from the ears or nose which are normally considered unpleasant. No one will have any evil characteristics as we see in this world. There will be no useless idol talk and no words of evil. Everyone will love each other like brothers and sisters and always want to see each other.

“Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“The first group of people who will enter the Garden, will be glittering like the full moon and those who will follow them, will glitter like the most brilliant star in the sky. They will not urinate or defecate or spit, or have any nasal secretions. Their combs will be of gold and their sweat will smell like musk. The aloAs-wood will be used in their centres. Their wives will be houris. All of them will look alike and will resemble their father Adam (in stature), sixty cubits tall” (Bukhari, Anbiya 1, Badul-Khalq 8; Muslim, Jannah, 14-19)<sup>214</sup>

The hadith mentions that the people of the Garden will resemble Prophet Adam (peace be upon him). People have been decreasing in stat-

211. al-Baqara, 25; al’Imran, 15; an-Nisa, 57.

212. Bukhari, Badul-Khalq 8, Anbiya 1.

213. Tirmidhi, Jannah, 12/2545.

214. Tirmidhi, Qiyama 60, Jannah 5; Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 39.

ure ever since Adam. But in the Garden all of them will look alike and will resemble their father Adam in stature, “sixty cubits tall.”<sup>215</sup>



The food and drink given to the people of the Garden is not to relieve their hunger or cure them from any disease, just as the musk incense given is not to mask any foul odours but they are all purely for their enjoyment. Allah the Almighty states:

“You will not go hungry in it or suffer any nakedness. You will not go thirsty in it or burn from the sun.” (Taha, 20:118-119)<sup>216</sup>

The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“He who will get in the Garden bliss that he will neither become destitute, nor will his clothes wear out, nor his youth decline.” (Muslim, Jannah, 22)

There will be an announcer who will make this announcement:

“Verily there is in store for you health and that you should never fall ill and that you live and do not ever die. And that you will remain young and never grow old. And that you will always live in affluent circumstances and never become destitute, as in the words of Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, “It will be proclaimed to them: ‘this is your Garden you have inherited because of what you did.’” (Al-Araf, 7:43)” (Muslim, Jannah, 22)<sup>217</sup>

## The rivers of the Garden

Allah the Almighty says in the holy Qur’an :

“An image of the Garden which is promised to those who have taqwa (fearful awareness of Allah): in it there are rivers of water which will never spoil and rivers of milk whose taste will never change and rivers of wine, delightful to all who drink it, and rivers of honey of undiluted purity; in it they will have fruit of every kind and forgiveness from their Lord. Is that

215. Bukhari, Anbiya 1, Isti’zan 1; Muslim, Jannah, 28.

216. Qurtubi, Tadhkira, s. 984.

217. Tirmidhi, Tafsirul Qur’an, 41.



like those who will be in the Fire timelessly, for ever, with boiling water to drink which lacerates their bolwes?” (Muhammad, 47:15)

The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) explained the nature of the rivers in the Garden in the following hadith:

“Indeed in the Garden there is a sea of water and a sea of honey and a sea of milk and a sea of wine, then the rivers shall split off afterwards.” (Tirmidhi, Jannah, 27/2571)

The wine of the Garden does not resemble to the wine of this world. Allah the exalted describes it in His precise Book:

“A cup from a flowing spring passing round among them, as white as driven snow, delicious to those who drink, which has no headache in it and does not leave them stupefied. There will be dark-eyed maidens with them, with eyes reserved for them alone, just like closely guarded pearls.” (As-Saffat, 37:45-49)



One day the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was asked:

“What is Al-Kawthar?”

He said: “It is a river that Allah has given me” - in the Garden- ‘whiter than milk and sweeter than honey. In it are birds whose necks are like the necks of camels.”

Hadrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “Indeed this is plump and luxurious then.”

So the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Those who consume it are more plumb than it.” (Tirmidhi, Jannah, 10/2542)

## Beauty beyond imagination

The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) describes the unimaginable beauty of the Garden in the following way:



“...and a place equal to an arrow bow of anyone of you, or a place equal to a foot in the Garden is better than the whole world and whatever is in it and if one of the women of the Garden looked at the earth, she would fill the whole space between the earth and heaven with light and would fill whatever is in between them with perfume and the veil of her face is better than the whole world and whatever is in it.” (Bukhari, Rikak, 51)

““If as little as what can be placed on a fingernail of what is in the Garden were to become apparent, it would have beautified all the far corners of the heavens and the earth. And if a man among the people of the Garden were to appear and his bracelets were to become apparent, it would have blotted out the light of the sun, as the sun blots out the light of the stars.” (Tirmidhi, Jannah, 7/2538)



One day a man asked the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) the following questions:

Do the people of the Garden sleep?

The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) answered: sleep is the sister of the death and the people of the Garden do not die. (Bayhaki, Shuayb, VI, 409/4416; Haythami, X, 415)

In worldly life people get older and so does their skin. When they look in the mirror they realize that their faces are getting older, however in The Garden this will be opposite, i.e. every day they will have a more beautiful face.

“In the Garden there is a street to which they will come every Friday. The north wind will blow and will scatter fragrance on their faces and on their clothes and will add to their beauty and loveliness, and then they will go back to their families having an added beauty and loveliness and their families will say to them: By Allah, you have been increased in beauty and loveliness after leaving us and they will say: By Allah, you have also increased in beauty and loveliness after us.” (Muslim, Jannah, 13)





The Muslims in The Garden will be like kings ruling over their kingdoms. Allah the Almighty will give each of them a kingdom incomparably larger and richer than any king in this world.<sup>218</sup> this good news is given to us in the following verse of the Qur'an :

“Seeing them, you see delight and a great kingdom!” (Al-Insan, 76:20)

If this is the reward for the lowliest person in The Garden, imagine how much Allah grants to those who have higher degrees in The Garden. As mentioned in the following hadith, the people of the Garden will be in many different degrees of reward according to their obedience in this world.

“The Garden has one-hundred grades which Allah has reserved for the Mujahidin who fight in His Cause and the distance between each of two grades is like the distance between the Heaven and the Earth. So, when you ask Allah (for something), ask for Al-firdaus which is the best and highest part of The Garden.” (Bukhari, Jihad 4, Tawhid 22)<sup>219</sup>



These are the rewards that the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) informed us about but they are not limited. Allah the Almighty has more rewards in the Garden that we do not know of as narrated in the following hadith:

“Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said,

“Allah said, “I have prepared for My righteous slaves things which have never been seen by the eye or heard by the ear and have never occurred to the heart of a man.” If you wish, you can recite this verse from the Qur'an:-  
-”No self knows the delight that is hidden away for it in recompense for what it used to do.” (As-Sajdah, 32:17)” (Bukhari, Badul-khalq, 8)

Similarly, Sahl Ibn Sa'd As-Sa'idi reported:

218. Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 32/3198; Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 4; Kurtubi, Tezkire, s. 1022.

219. Nasa'i, jihad, 18; Ahmad, II, 335, 339.



One day, I was in the company of Allah's Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and he gave a description of The Garden and then Allah's Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) concluded with these words: There will be bounties which the eye has not seen and the ear has not heard and no human heart has ever perceived. He then recited this verse: "Their side eschew their beds as they call on their Lord in fear and ardent hope. No self knows the delight that is hidden away for it in recompense for what it used to do." (As-Sajdah, 32:16-17)" (Muslim, Jannah, 2-5)

### **The Crown of the bounties of The Garden: Allah's pleasure**

Those who used their counted breaths in the path of Allah will attain divine pleasure and Allah the Almighty will have special gifts for them in accordance with divine Power in the The Garden. The crown of all these gifts is the pleasure of Allah with his slave as mentioned in the following verse:

"Say: Shall I tell you what is better than these? For those who guard (against evil) are gardens with their Lord, beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and pure mates and Allah's pleasure; and Allah sees the servants." (Al'Imran, 3:15)<sup>220</sup>

The people of wisdom say when Jannah (the Garden) is mentioned in the Qur'an it refers to a physical garden but when *ridwan* is mentioned it refers to a spiritual garden, which is the highest degree of the Gardens of paradise. In the first level of the Garden man becomes pleased with Allah but in the second level, Allah becomes pleased with man. This is mentioned at the end of the chapter of 'the Dawn' (Al-Fajr, 89:31) "Return to your Lord, well-pleasing and well-pleased."<sup>221</sup>

In another verse, Allah the Almighty states the rewards in the Garden:

"Allah has promised to the men and women of the believers Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, for ever, and

220. al-Maida, 119.

221. Razi, Mafatihul Ghayb, [Al 'Imran, 15].



fine dwellings in the Gardens of Eden. And Allah's good pleasure is even greater. That is the great victory." (At-Tawba, 72:9)

The pleasure of Allah is better than all the rewards and gifts of Gardens of the Garden. Since He is the source of all good and happiness and all kinds of honour. If someone has sincerity in his worship and obedience to Allah aiming for the pleasure of Allah, that is the highest of all gifts and happiness.



The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) reports the following conversation that will happen in the Garden:

Allah the Almighty will say in the Garden:

"O, Dwellers of the Garden! and they will say in response:

"At your service and pleasure, our Lord, the good is in Your Hand." He will say:

"Are you well pleased now?" They will say:

"Why should we not be pleased, O Lord, when You have given us that which You have not given to any of Your creatures?" He will, however, say:

"Shall I not give you even more excellent than that?" And they will say:

"O Lord, what thing could be more excellent than this?" And He will say:

"I shall cause My pleasure to alight upon you and I shall never be afterwards angry with you." (Bukhari, Rikāk 51, Tawhid 38; Muslim, Jannah 9)<sup>222</sup>

This hadith proves that Allah the Almighty loves his servants and He is full of mercy for them and He wants His servants to live in The Garden forever with full contentment and satisfaction. He even does not want us to continue to worry about the question; "are we making our Lord happy or are we causing the anger of Allah with our behaviour?" therefore He is asking whether are we pleased in the Garden and after that He is crowning

222. Tirmidhi, Jannah, 18.



this happiness with the everlasting pleasure of Allah, saying He will never get angry with us again.

What a great happiness for us that we will be honoured with the praise and gifts of Allah who is the creator and owner of the universe.

### **Ru'yatullah: The Eid of witnessing the Divine Beauty**

For those who reach the pleasure of Allah, the highest reward will be the vision of Allah almighty. This is explained in the following verse:

“Faces that Day will be radiant, gazing at their Lord.” (Al-Qiyama, 75:22-23) this is the highest reward and there is nothing over this in the Garden. Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) explains this in the following hadith:

“When those deserving of the Garden will enter, the Blessed and the Exalted will ask: ‘do you wish Me to give you anything more? They will say: haven’t you not brightened our faces? Haven’t you not made us enter the Garden and saved us from the Fire? He (the narrator) said: He will lift the veil and of things given to them nothing will be dearer to them than the sight of their Lord, the Mighty and Glorious.” (Muslim, Iman, 297; Tirmidhi, Tafsirul-Qur’an, 11)



Divine favour is so intense that servants want it all the time. Abu-Yazid al-Bistami (may Allah have mercy on him) explains this state in the following words:

“Allah the Almighty has some special servants in the Garden that if they are deprived of seeing their Lord they supplicate to Allah for that as the people of Hell supplicate Him to get free from the Hell Fire.”<sup>223</sup>

Ismail Hakki of Bursa says:

There are three kinds of Eids: the first one is after the month of Ramadan and at the completion of the Hajj and Sacrifice, these are gifts for the struggles of Muslims in this world. The second Eid is when we die with

a strong faith, this is much bigger and lastly and the greatest Eid is to see Allah the Almighty in the Garden” (224)



In order to celebrate the last kind of Eid which is the highest and most perfect of all, i.e. to see Allah, a Muslim should practise Islam according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, lead a life filled with Taqwa (fearful awareness of Allah), divine love and yearning.

### **Doors opened to the Garden: fulfilling the commandments relating to our external and internal dimensions**

Our duty in this life is to prepare for the next world and not to get deceived by the glamour that this passing life has to offer. To achieve this, we should increase our sacrifices in the way of Allah. These endeavours which will attract Allah's satisfaction with us are like a visa to the Garden.

Man has a double nature that is his bodily nature and his spiritual nature. Therefore the orders of Allah relate to both of them, the ones for our material being are the external ones and those relating to our soul are internal ones. These two are completing each other, without applying one of them the other becomes invalid.

Among the primary external obligations of Islam are, fasting, paying charity, making the pilgrimage to Mecca and all other deeds like striving in the path of Allah will take us to the Garden, however they have to be done following some internal spiritual conditions.

### **External Obligations**

The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) informed in his sayings about the external deeds that will take us to the Garden.

Rabi'a Ibn Kab said:

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224. Bursevi, Ruhu'l-Beyan, c. 2, sf. 200.



“I was with Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) one night and I brought him water and what he required. He said to me: Ask anything you like. I said: I ask for your company in the Garden. He (the Holy Prophet) said: Or anything else besides it. I said: That is all. He said: Then help me to achieve this for you by devoting yourself often to prostration.” (Muslim, Salat, 226)

Another beloved companion of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) Thawban (may Allah be pleased with him) asked him about the deeds that will take a Muslim to the Garden. He asked these questions insistently three times. The following hadith explains the dialogue between him and the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace):

Thawban, the beloved companion of Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), asked him to tell about an act for which, if he does it, Allah will admit him to the Garden. He gave no reply. He again asked and Allah’s Messenger gave no reply. He asked him for the third time, and Allah’s Messenger said:

“Make frequent prostrations before Allah, for you will not make one prostration without it raising you a degree because of it and removing a sin from you, because of it.” (Muslim, Salat, 225)<sup>225</sup>

Prostrations in the above hadith means praying Salat, so those who want to enter the Garden and become a neighbour of Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) should often pray Salat and increase the level of their closeness to Allah by making as many prostrations as possible. The Prophet has the highest place in the Garden in comparison with other Prophets, hence in order to be closer to him one needs to resemble him in his states, his actions, his contemplation and reflection, and his awe in the prayer.



Prayer is the central pillar of the religion and it is the ascension of the believer to God, hence it is one of the best means of reaching the Garden

as the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said in the following:

“The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Allah will prepare for him who goes to the mosque every morning and in the afternoon (to pray in congregation) an honourable place in the Garden with good hospitality for every morning and afternoon he went.” (Bukhari, Adhan, 37; Muslim, Masajid, 285)

“A house will be built in the Garden, for anyone who prays in a day and a night twelve rak’ahs; and he added: I have never abandoned (observing them) since I heard it from the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Some of the other narrators said the same words: I have never abandoned (observing them) since I heard (from so and so).” (Muslim, Musafirin, 103)<sup>226</sup>

“The first thing that he spoke about was that he said: ‘O you people! Spread the Salam (greeting invoking peace), feed others and perform Salat while the people are sleeping; you will enter the Garden with (the greeting of) Salam.’” (Tirmidhi, Kiyamah, 42)<sup>227</sup>

Once the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was asked about the acts that will take a believer to The Garden and he answered:

“You should worship Allah and do not ascribe any partners to Him, offer prayer perfectly, pay the Zakat (obligatory charity) and keep good relations with your relatives.” (Bukhari, Zakat1, Adab 10; Muslim, Iman, 12, 14)<sup>228</sup>



Alongside establishing prayer there are also other traditions that advise other kinds of good acts as a means to enter the Garden. In one of the hadiths Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“The performance of Umra (the lesser pilgrimage) is an expiation for the wrong deeds committed (between it and the previous one). And the

226. Abu Dawud, Tatawwu, 1; Tirmidhi, Salat, 189; Nasa’i, Kiyamu’l-Layl, 66, 67.

227. Ibn Majah, Ikama 174, Et’Ime 1.

228. Nasa’i, Salat, 10.



reward of an accepted Hajj (the greater pilgrimage) is nothing other than the Garden.” (Bukhari, Umrah, 1; Muslim, Hajj, 437)

In another hadith the best means of reaching the Garden is described as learning useful knowledge. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“Whoever takes a path upon which he seeks knowledge, Allah makes the way to the Garden easy for him. And indeed the angels lower their wings in approval of the one seeking knowledge. Indeed, forgiveness is sought for the knowledgeable one by whomever is in the heavens and whomever is in the earth, even the fish in the water. And the superiority of the scholar over the worshiper is like the superiority of the moon over the rest of the celestial bodies. Indeed, the scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets and the Prophets do not leave behind them a single Dinar or Dirham (gold or silver coin). The only legacy of the scholars is knowledge, so whoever takes it, has indeed taken the most able share.” (Abu Dawud, Ilm, 1; Tirmidhi, Ilm, 19)



The following hadith also describes some other acts that take the believer to the Garden:

“Who amongst you is fasting today?” Abu Bakr said:

“I am.” He said: “Who amongst you followed a funeral procession today?” Abu Bakr said:

“I did.” He (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) again said:

“Who amongst you served food to the needy?” Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“I did.” He said:

“Who amongst you has today visited the sick?” Abu Bakr said:

“I did.” Thereupon Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“Anyone in whom (these good deeds) are combined will certainly enter the Garden.” (Muslim, Fedailu’s-Sahaba, 12)





Another important means of gaining entrance into the Garden is to fight in the path of Allah against those who want to harm the believers and Islam. Allah said in the Majestic Qur'an:

“Allah has bought from the believers their selves and their wealth in return for the Garden. They fight in the Way of Allah and they kill and are killed. It is a promise binding on Him in the Torah, the Ingil and the Qur'an and who is truer to his contract than Allah? Rejoice then in the bargain you have made. That is the great victory.” (At-Tawba, 9:111)

According to narrations in the books Qur'anic commentary this verse was revealed on the occasion of the pledge of Aqaba, where the Muslims of Madinah who invited the Prophet to their homeland made a strong pledge in renewal of their commitment to the Prophet. Abdullah b. Rawaha said:

“O Messenger of Allah, you can lay down any condition for Allah and for yourself.”

The Prophet said:

My condition in the name of my Lord is that you will worship Him alone and will not associate any partner with Him.

My condition for myself is that you will protect me as you protect your own lives and possessions.

The believers from Madinah asked:

If we fulfil these conditions what is our reward:

The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: “The Garden!” having heard this answer they became very happy and said:

What a profitable business this is, we will never break this contract or allow others to break it. (Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, II, 406)

Abdullah Ibn Rawaha (may Allah be pleased with him) later in the battle of Muthah fulfilled his pledge, giving his life in the path of Allah and donating his wealth to the welfare of the Muslims. He went to the battle knowing very clearly that he will not return and will be martyred in the battle.



Similarly, all the other companions were loyal to this pledge, making dawah (invitation) in the path of Allah, and giving their lives if necessary for the spreading of Islam. So their spiritual business thrived with all their sacrifices.



We should remind the reader that all good actions like fasting, prayer, pilgrimage to Mecca, spreading Islam will be a means to the Garden if one fulfils other rules at the same time. If one does not fulfil these obligations and only does a few other acts which are described as a means to the Garden, it may not be enough and end up being little more than false hope, deceiving himself or herself.

### **Internal obligations of Islam**

Islam has external obligations that one can observe in the external behaviour but also it has internal obligations like good manners, sincerity, mercy, generosity, justice, humility, chastity, patience, and many more. These are not seen on the outside as they make up the internal characteristics of the believer.

To clarify further, someone can fulfil their prayers externally fulfilling all the movements of the prayer like standing, bowing and prostration but these are not enough without respect and awe of God in the heart while praying. One can see the movements but cannot see the awareness in the heart. One can give charity to the poor, this is an external act that everyone can see but we need to have the right state of compassion and gratitude in the heart towards the recipient that he has accepted our charity rather than feeling that we have honoured him with something. We should not hurt the feelings of the poor when we help them by shaming their poverty. All these obligations are examples of duties which relate to our internal world. A believer reach perfection only by following the commandments both the internal and external that is following the letter of the law without losing the meaning of it.

The Noble Qur'an states the purpose of life as "لِيُعْبُدُونِي: so as my servants worship me."<sup>229</sup> The commentators of the Qur'an explained this verse as; "لِيَعْرِفُونِي: so as they get to know me." Knowledge of Allah means recognizing Him in the heart and this only happens when the heart is opened. The heart only opens to divine illuminations when the slave fulfils the form as well as the spirit of the commandments, the outer and inner principles of them properly.

Imam Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) states in one of his letters to his disciples:

"When we follow the letter of the commandments externally, we should then purify our inner world so as to push heedlessness from it. That is because when our inner world is not cleansed, we cannot really fulfil the external commandments. Interestingly giving importance to one's internal world necessitates adherence to the external laws and those who ignore the external while trying to cleanse the internal fall into disbelief, and whatever they achieved in their internal world is nothing but self-deception. These extraordinary states of the internal world are all satanic, since this person sacrificed the external acts of worship on the excuse of fulfilling their spirit. The best criterion of internal development is our fulfilling the shariah in our external behaviour. This is *istiqamah* (uprightness) in the Sufi path"<sup>230</sup>

Many Muslims only follow the formal outward actions without seeking their deeper meanings. Some others do not obey the commandments but claim that their hearts are clean. They restrict worship and slavehood to God to internal good morals and character but such attitudes will never make for perfect slavehood to Allah.

In order to reach to the reality of slavehood a Muslim must join both the outward actions and the realisation of the inward meanings, fulfilling all the commandments with his form and spirit. Some of the internal obligations that a Muslim must follow are:

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229. Az-Dhariyat, 56.

230. Imam-I Rabbani, Mektubat, III, 87-88, no: 87.



### • High moral qualities:

The most important of external commandments is to attain high moral qualities. The clearest indicator of one's faith and worship is his morality, his perfection in high moral qualities. Emphasizing the importance of this the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) states in one of his hadiths:

"Nothing is heavier on the believer's scale on the Day of Judgment than good character. For indeed Allah, Most High, is angered by the shameless obscene person." (Tirmidhi, Birr, 62/2002)

Allah the almighty has shown us the best example of high moral qualities in the person of His Prophet Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). He was sent as the best example (uswatul-hasana) until the judgement day. He is the matchless example to all humanity. The following verse of the Mighty Qur'an confirms this reality:

"Indeed you are truly vast in character." (Qalam, 68:4)

The Prophet himself (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) also stated this in the following hadith:

"I have only been sent to perfect good moral character." (Muwwatta', Husnu'l-khuluq, 8)

We should strive to take the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) as our example and always judge our morality against his to correct our faults.

In order to become close to the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) who is our guide to the truth in the world and intercessor in the afterlife, we should increase our love for him and in order to increase our love for him we should sacrifice for him and obey his advice.

Shaykh Hasan al-Basri (may Allah be pleased with him) said in this matter:

"O Muslims! Do not misunderstand the saying of the Prophet "a person will be with the one he loves." If you do not do virtuous acts when you can afford to like the good people do, then you cannot be like them. Even the Jews and Christians claim to love their Prophets but they are not with

them when it comes to their moral qualities, actions and way of life.” (Ihya, c. II, s. 402)

In order to see our resemblance to the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) we should judge our deeds with the deeds of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), what is the level of our obedience, sacrifice in the Prophets way. All these show our level of love for Allah the Almighty since those who love Allah, follow the Prophet as stated in the Qur’an. “Say: If you love Allah, then follow me and Allah will love you and forgive you your wrong actions, and Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most-Merciful” (Al’Imran, 3:31)

Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said,

“All my followers will enter the Garden except those who refuse.”

They said, “O Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)! Who will refuse?”

He said, “Whoever follows my Sunnah will enter the Garden and whoever refuses my Sunnah me is the one who refuses to enter it.” (Bukhari, I’tisam, 2)

### • Good manners and feeling ashamed in Allah’s presence

Allah is watching over us continuously so one should be ashamed of Allah while committing a wrong deed. Those who feel Allah’s presence will have spiritual courtesy (adab) all the time, some scholars even defined the whole religion as the following of good manners.

When we read the verses of the Mighty Qur’an with the eyes of wisdom and reason we see that many of its verses teach us good manners (adab) and feeling ashamed of Allah (haya) while doing something bad. The stories of the Prophets all preach us how to attain good manners and haya, reaching the perfect moral character and refraining from the evil acts by fearing Allah. Mawlana Jalaladdin Rumi (may Allah have mercy on him) emphasises the significance of haya in the following verses:



Whoever did not take his share of bashfulness from Allah, is not a human being. Since the only difference between man and animals is the emotions of bashfulness and shyness.

When we are in the presence of a king we cannot behave as we do with others. We try our best in order to show our respect and behave according to the royal etiquette. Perfect Muslims feel the divine presence all the time and they are therefore extremely careful in fulfilling the good manners in the divine presence, hence this shyness in the presence of Allah is reflected in their daily lives. They experience the meaning of following verse:

“...He is with you wherever you are - Allah sees what you do...” (Al-Hadid, 57:4)

Abdullah bin Mas’ud narrated that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

“Have Haya for Allah as is His due.” We said:

“O Prophet of Allah! We have Haya, and all praise is due to Allah.” He said:

“Not that, but having Haya for Allah which He is due is to protect the head and what it contains and to protect the insides and what they include and to remember death and the trial and whoever intends the Hereafter, he leaves the adornments of the world. So whoever does that, then he has indeed fulfilled Haya meaning the Haya which Allah is due.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 24/2458)

### • **Purging the nafs from its evil characteristics (Tazkiya):**

Allah the Almighty states in the Noble Qur’an:

“Allah showed great kindness to the believers when he sent to them a Messenger from among themselves to recite His Signs to them and purify them and teach them the book and the wisdom, even though before that they were clearly misguided.” (Al ‘Imran, 3:164)

Tazkiyah is to purify our inner world from all kinds of negative feelings especially from disbelief, hypocrisy and committing shirk in the minor

form. Because the biggest commandments of all is to believe in Allah's existence, in his oneness and not to associate any partners with Him.

"The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

"He who dies without associating anything with Allah will enter the Garden. He who dies associating something with Allah will enter the Fire. (Muslim, Iman, 151)

Mankind first cleanse themselves from disbelief, hypocrisy and associating partners with Allah so as to open their hearts to divine realities. This is similar to first cleaning the wound before applying the medicine over it. The following principle of Majallah (a book of Islamic law written for Ottoman courts) states: "Def'-i mefasid, celb-i menafiden evladır."

That is preventing evil has priority over bringing goodness." Therefore the declaration of faith starts with "there is no god" first cleaning the heart from false deities, hence cleaning the heart from spiritual dirt then placing the truth "except ALLAH" in the purified space of the heart forever.

Tadhkiyah is to clean the inner world from all kinds of evil and then filling it with belief, wisdom, knowledge, good feelings and other characteristics like fear of Allah. It is done in the Sufi path so as to break the authority that the desires of the lower self and the ego have over our soul so the luminous spiritual reality of the soul becomes the authority. This is only possible by very wise training of his/her will by austerities measures striving in the path of Allah. Struggling to oppose the selfish desires in Sufism is to limit its authority, forcing it to do good acts and sacrifices in the path of ALLAH even it does not like it.

It is impossible to control the ego in the absolute sense and as a matter of fact it is not necessary as long as its desires are within the boundaries of the divinely revealed shariah. The important thing is to train it in a way that it respects the divine limits set down by Allah the All-Merciful.

Purification is to get rid of worldly greed which is the mother of all wrongs. Only by purification one can attain salvation as stated in the following verse of the Qur'an:

“...and the self and what proportioned it and inspired it with depravity or taqwa (fearful awareness of Allah), he who purifies it has succeeded, he who covers it up has failed.” (As-Shams, 91:7-10)

### • Sincerity:

Sincerity means aiming only for the pleasure of Allah, when we do any act without mixing it with a worldly and selfish interest. It is the main reason for the acceptance of the good deeds.

Sincerity is like the soul for the body, if it is absent it is a dead body, a lifeless form, actions done without it only brings tiredness without any fruit. Therefore, the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: “Truly actions are by intentions.” (Bukhari, Iman, 41)

Hence we have to eradicate all kind wrong intentions from our hearts, Allah the Majestic says in the holy Qur’an:

“We have sent down the Book to you with truth. So worship Allah, making your deen sincerely His” (Az-Zumar, 39:2)

“Say, “I am commanded to worship Allah, making my deen sincerely His.” (Az-Zumar, 39:11)

The following hadith explains the significance of sincerity very clearly:

“Human beings are all dead except the scholars, the scholars are all asleep except those who put their knowledge into practise and those who practise their knowledge feel proud of themselves are deceived by their devotion except those whom Allah gave sincerity. Even those slaves of Allah with sincerity are not exempted from the dangers.” (Bayhaki , Shuayb, IX, 181)

### • Contemplation:

Contemplation of the reality is another important means to carry man into the peaks of spirituality when it is done in complete silence. Contemplation according to Qur’an is a key to a strong faith. The more one contemplates the more one attains divine love, in this way their share



in the hereafter will increase. Allah invites His slaves to contemplation in many verses of the Qur'an:

“In the creation of the heavens and earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are Signs for people with intelligence.” (Al ‘Imran, 3:190)

“Those who remember Allah standing, sitting and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: our Lord, You have not created this for nothing. Glory be to You! So safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire.” (Al ‘Imran, 3:191)

“Have they not looked at the camel - how it was created? and at the sky - how it is raised up? and at the mountains - how they were embedded? - and at the earth - how it was smoothed out?” (Al-Ghashiyah, 88:17-20)

The Majestic Qur'an from its beginning to its end continuously invites man to contemplate and reflect over the causes of creation, the extraordinary order of the universe and the miraculous nature of the Qur'an's speech. In many place it asks people: “why don't you think, why do not you contemplate, why do not you take lessons.” In order to fully appreciate our human dignity and lead the life of good Muslim, to attain spiritual depth and aliveness one needs to contemplate as described by the Holy Qur'an.

### • Humility

Humility is to feel one's own nothingness and powerlessness against the power and grandeur of God, recognizing our own limitations. Allah Glory be to Him, promised eternal bliss to those who do not behave arrogantly, those who do not create mischief on the earth and who fear and love God at the same time. The Holy Qur'an states: “The Abode of the next world – we grant it to those who do not seek exalt themselves in the earth or cause corruption in it. The successful outcome is for those who have taqwa (fearful awareness of Allah).” (Al-Qasas, 28:83) those who are deprived of the gift of humility and developed the characteristic of arrogance will eventually end up making their egos their gods.

The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) mentions the characteristics of the humble people in the following hadith:

“Shall I not inform you about the inhabitants of The Garden? They said: do so, of course. Thereupon Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: every humble person who is considered to be humble if he were to adjure in the name of Allah, He would fulfil it. He then said: May I not inform you about the denizens of the Hell-Fire? They said: Yes. And he said: every haughty, fat and proud (person).” (Bukhari, Ayman 9, Tafsir 68/1, Adab 61; Muslim, Jannah, 47)

### • Trustworthiness and truthfulness:

A Muslim should always disseminate peace and tranquillity to his surroundings. So he has to be a person from whose hands and tongue people should be safe and sound. Cheating deception and fraud cannot be in the dictionary of a good Muslim at any time.

Abu Musa (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

“—Some people asked Allah’s Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace),

“Whose Islam is the best? i.e. (Who is the best Muslim)?” He replied,

“One who avoids harming the Muslims with his tongue and hands. (Bukhari, Iman 4, 5, Rikāk 26; Muslim, Iman, 64, 65)

In another hadith the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) states:

“Truthfulness leads to righteousness and righteousness leads to the Garden and a man keeps on telling the truth until he becomes a truthful person. Falsehood leads to Fujur (wickedness) and Fujur leads to the Fire, and a man may keep on telling lies until he is written before Allah, as a liar.” (Bukhari, Adab, 69; Muslim, Birr, 103-105)

### • Patience:

Patience is to keep one’s balance against the changing conditions of life, to endure the difficulties of life, to keep one’s moderation and calm against the calamities without compromising in belief and practise.

Patience is a central part of Islamic morality, it is the key to salvation and happiness, thus it is considered half of the Iman (belief/trust). The first condition of praiseworthy patience is to show it at the first instance of the calamity, if it is shown after a long time it has no real value.<sup>231</sup>

Although patience is bitter in the beginning it will turn out very sweet in the end. Those who can bear patiently against calamities will attain the pleasure of Allah and will attain the Garden which is the place of eternal bliss. Allah the Mighty and Majestic commands us to be patient in the following verses:

“You who have iman (belief), be patient; be supreme in patience; be firm on the battlefield; and have taqwa of Allah; so that hopefully you will be successful.” (Al ‘Imran, 3:200)

“The patient will be paid their wages in full without any reckoning.” (Az-Zumar, 39: 10)



The following hadith is teaching us a good lesson in attaining the Garden through patience:

Ata Ibn Abi Rabah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates, one day Ibn Abbas said to me,

“Shall I show you a woman of the people of the Garden?” I said, “Yes.” He said,

“This black lady came to the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and said, ‘I get attacks of epilepsy and my body becomes uncovered; please invoke Allah for me.’ The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said (to her),

‘If you wish, be patient and you will have the Garden; and if you wish, I will invoke Allah to cure you.’ She said,

‘I will remain patient,’ and added, ‘but I become uncovered, so please invoke Allah for me that I may not become uncovered.’

‘So he invoked Allah for her.’” (Bukhari, Marda, 6; Muslim, Birr, 54)

This is the reward of showing patience for the sake of Allah.

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231. Bukhari, Cenaiz, 32.







## CHAPTER 9

# *Warnings to the passengers of Eternity*

*Leading a life of heedlessness, amounts to spending all the time in childish games, following one's animal desire at the period of youth, being heedless during adulthood and feeling bitter regret in old age.*



## WARNINGS TO THE PASSENGERS OF ETERNITY

The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: The archangel came to me and said:

“O Muhammad, live as long as you want, eventually you will die, love as much as you want you will leave the things you love, do deeds as much as you want, you will be rewarded according to the quality of your deeds. A believer is honoured through his night prayer and expecting honour from his Lord not from people, showing no need to them.” (Hakim, IV, 360-361/7921)



“Seize the opportunity of five things before you lose them,  
Know the value of youth before old age,  
Health before disease,  
Wealth before poverty,  
Free times before being busy,  
Life before death” (Bukhari, Rikāk, 3; Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 25)



“Whoever makes the nest life his goal, Allah makes his heart rich and organizes his affairs and the world comes to him whether he wants to or not. And whoever makes the world his goal, Allah puts his poverty right before his eyes and disorganizes his affairs and the world does not come to him, except what has been decreed for him.” (Tirmidhi, Sifatu'l-Qiyamah, 30)





“The son of Adam claims: My wealth, my wealth! And he (the Prophet) said: O son of Adam, is there anything as you own except that which you consumed, which you utilised, or which you wore and then it was worn out or you gave as charity and sent it forward?” (Muslim, Zuhd, 3-4; Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 34)



““If the son of Adam were given a valley full of gold, he want to have another one; and if he were given the second one, he would love to have a third, for nothing fills the belly of the son of Adam except dust.” (Bukhari, Rikāk, 10)



““A man came to the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, teach me but make it concise.’ He said: ‘When you stand to pray, pray like a man bidding farewell. Do not say anything for which you will have to apologize. And give up hope for what other people have.’” (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 15)



Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said,

“On the Day of Judgement, the dweller of Jahannam (hellFire) who had lived the most luxurious life in this world will be brought and he will be put in Jahannam for a second and taken out. He will then be asked:

“O son of Adam, did you ever experience any good? Did you ever experience any comfort?’ He will say:

“No, I swear by Allah, my Lord.” Then, that dweller of Jannah (the Garden) who lived the most difficult life in this world will be brought out and he will put in Jannah for a second and taken out. He will be asked,

“O son of Adam, did you ever experience any difficulty? Did you ever experience any hardship?’ He will say:

“No, I swear by Allah, my Lord. I never experienced any hardship and I never experienced any difficulty.” (Muslim, Munafikin, 55)





Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

“I heard the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) saying, ‘There are two eyes that shall not be touched by the Fire: An eye that wept from the fear of Allah and an eye that spent the night standing on guard in the cause of Allah.’ (Tirmidhi, Fadailu'l-Jihad, 12/1639)



“I am your predecessor before you, and I am a witness on you and your promised place to meet me will be the Hawd (The Basin which the believers will drink from on the day of judgement) and I am looking at it from this place of mine. I am not afraid that you will worship others besides Allah, but I am afraid that worldly life will tempt you and cause you to compete with each other for it.” (Bukhari, Magazi, 17; Muslim, Fadail, 31)



“Be sure that I will go to the Garden before you and will wait for you. Be careful that in the hereafter our meeting point will be the pool of Kawthar. Those who want to meet me should keep their hands and tongue from sin.” (Bukhari, Salat, 80; Ibn Sa’d, II, 227)



Hadrat Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“This world is like a market for Muslims, their capital is their days and nights, their good deeds are like their commodities, (after their business in this market) their profit will be the Garden and their loss will be the Fire.”



Hadrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“What is the worldly life in comparison to the Next Life, it is like the jumping of a rabbit only once (such a short time).”



“Limit your worldly desires if you would like to lead a life of freedom. Also limit your sins to minimum so as death becomes easier for you.



Hadrat Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) states:

There are four things that are outwardly virtuous and inwardly obligatory for all.

1. Befriending the good people is virtuous and following their morality is obligatory.

2. Reading the Qur'an is a virtuous act but applying it in our life is obligatory.

3. Visiting the graves is a good action but getting prepared for the grave is obligatory.

4. Visiting the sick is a virtue but taking lessons from it is obligatory.



“The biggest loser is the one who prepared nothing for his afterlife even though he had a long life.



“Worldly desires are darkness in the heart whereas the thought of the hereafter brings light to the heart.”



The wisest man is the one who interrogates his own self, rules his life in the best way, doing good deeds for his after life and attracting divine light in order to enlighten his grave.”



Hadrat Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) states:

“There is no better reward for your life than the Garden, so do not exchange your life for anything except the Garden!”



“The value of man lies in the quality of his desires and plans.”



“In order to reach the fullness of (worldly) satisfaction, one has to die as a Muslim.”

“Every breath is like a step towards death.”



“If one plants thorns he cannot harvest roses.”



Hadrat Ali used to visit graves and once he was asked:

“O Ali why are you visiting the graves so much, you made graves your neighbour.

He answered: “I found them as good neighbours! Because they never do any harm and furthermore they remind of the death!”



Muadh Ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) gave the following advice to his son:

“O my Son! When you pray, consider it as your last prayer! Do not hope to catch the next prayer!”

“O my Son! A believer should die between two good things. Since a believer when he has done a good act he has to have the intention of doing the next good act. He should not mix any bad act between the two.”



Abu Darda (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“If there were not these three things, I would not like to live in this world.

1. To put my forehead on the ground and prostrate to my Creator.
2. To fast in the hottest days of the year and to be patient with thirst.
3. To befriend with those who pick up the best of words, the people of wisdom.



Imam Shafi (may Allah be pleased with him) asks: “Is it wise to build a house for a short rest when the caravan travels?”



“Worldly people make the healthy Muslims spiritually sick.”



“Those who want to merge the love of the world and Allah in the same heart is are liars.”



Hazret-i Mevlana g buyurur:

“Ey hakikat yolcusu! O gun gelip çatmadan, kıyamet kopmadan hakikat padiShahı (olan Rabbin) ile dostluk kur da, o felaket gununde senin elinden tutsun. Zira o gun, O’nun izni olmadan senin elinden tutacak kimse yoktur. O gun insan; kardeShinden, anasından, babasından, ehlin-den ve oğullarından kaçacaktır. O halde Hak ile dostluğu iyi anla ve bil ki dostluk, son nefes(te iman selametini)in tohumudur.”



“The worldly life is like a dream, to be rich in the world is to find treasure in the dream. Worldly wealth is inherited from generation to generation (hence the first owner cannot take it to the Hereafter).

“When the angel of death takes the soul of a heedless man of wealth, this poor man understands that he did not really own anything and suffered for nothing and becomes very remorseful for his false idea of the world. But this is all vain, since everything was over.”



“Those who love the world are like those who hunt the shadow. How can a shadow be one’s possession? A stupid hunter once thought the shadow of a bird was a real bird and tried to catch it. Even the bird on the branch of the tree laughed at him.”



“Worshipping and supplicating to God means being with him, for such people both death and life are pleasant!”



People asked Shaykh Sadi: (may Allah have mercy on him)

Can you tell us who is fortunate and who is unfortunate? He answered:

The fortunate person is the one who spends as much as needed, the unfortunate person is the one who amasses his wealth without spending and leaves it behind after his death.”



“Wise people take their wealth to the next world with them by giving charity in the path of Allah, only miserly people leave everything behind.”



Abu Hazim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “Leave everything that makes death undesirable for you! After that it does not matter whenever you die.”



Once Ibrahim Ibn Adham (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked:

Why our supplications are not answered? He answered:

Due to the following things:

- ✓ You claim to know God but do not follow His commandments
- ✓ You claim to know Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) but do not follow his Sunnah.
- ✓ You read the holy Qur'an but do not practise it.
- ✓ You eat from the bounty of Allah but do not give thanks in return.
- ✓ You know about the Garden but do not know how to ask for it.
- ✓ You believe in the Fire, but do not protect yourselves from it.
- ✓ You say that there is death but do not prepare for it.



✓ You place your dead people into the graves with your own hands but do not take lessons from them.

With all these bad things how do you expect your prayers to be accepted?”



Abu Hatim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: if you postpone four things you may enter the Garden:

- ✓ Postpone sleep to the grave
- ✓ Seeking comfort to after passing the Bridge of Sirat
- ✓ Postpone praising yourself to the Scales
- ✓ Postpone satisfying the desires of your self to the the Garden



## THE LAST WORD

Allah the Almighty determined for humanity five stages of existence. The first is the world of souls, the second is the mother's wombs, the third is the worldly life, the fourth is our life in the grave and the last stage is our eternal life that will continue either in the Garden or the Fire.

The third stage, the worldly life is in order to test man how he will behave. If he behaves as required he will enter the Garden, if not he will be punished in the Fire. The following verse informs us about the nature of this life:

“He who created death and life to test which of you is best in action. He is the Almighty, the Ever-Forgiving.” (Al-Mulk, 67:2)

“Every self will taste death. We test you with both good and evil as trial. And you will be returned to Us” (Al-Anbiya, 21:35)

It is sad to see that even though we know this fleeting world takes away our youth, depletes our energy and we know that we will only stay in this world a few days, nevertheless we deceive ourselves by forgetting death. Every day we see people dying and being buried, yet still we do not take a lesson from this and think our death is a long way off. This life is only given for a short period and it is possible to lose it any time but we think we have this life forever.

A believer who knows that death is inevitable, he/she will not be deceived by the glamour of this life, as a traveller trying to reach his final destination he knows that the world is only a like a guest house, to stop over for a short rest. One does not plan to live in this guest house due to its decoration and beauty, rather he hurries to his final destination after preparation in the guest house for his long journey. Only insane people are deceived by the beauty of the furniture in the guesthouse and wish to linger



there, forgetting their real destination. And one day he is thrown out of the guesthouse because his time is over and others will take his place.

Even if a person possesses all the beauties of the world and lives for a thousand years, what good is there, since he will go to a dark pit in the ground. It is interesting that man always seeks to lengthen his life in this world, doing everything in his capacity just to stay few more days in the world. However, no one will be feeling remorse because he did not stay few more years on earth, the remorse will be because they did not do enough good deeds during their limited time on earth. It is not the length of the life one spends but the quality of it and the amount of good deeds done in it, not the quantity but the quality.

Even though the grave looks like a pile of earth, quite silent from outside, as a matter of fact there is a minor part of the day of judgement in it. As informed by the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) it will be either one of the Gardens of the Garden or a pit of hell, depending on the person's righteousness, whether he followed the commandments of Allah or not. (Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 26)

As stated earlier this world is a unique chance for us to do good deeds to try to get to the Garden in the next. Therefore, we cannot limit this life to the cradle and the grave, since its effects are resonate far beyond both of them.

Death is the most real and most inevitable matter that will descend upon every single person on earth. The weak shoulders of words cannot carry the weight of death, deaths come silently without warning and they sometimes give us loud and clear messages better than many eloquent speakers. Death with its silent language opens our eyes to the realities of hereafter and many wisdoms if we have eyes to see and ears to hear.



Death is not only for old people as most of us think. Every new-born is also a candidate for death. Death catches up with human beings at any age, therefore when we go to the graveyard we see many children and young people who died at a very early age.





Therefore postponing religious obligations to old age, especially after retirement is not a clever thing to do at all and it is a cause of eternal loss. When the Last Day comes there will be no tomorrow, it is a difficult day and we do not know when it will come. Its date is kept hidden in order to inspire us to prepare for it as though it is very soon.

Therefore Islam considers frequent remembrance death in preparation for the hereafter as the characteristics of wise and intelligent people. The following hadith expresses this fact as follows:

A companion asked Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) "Which believer is wisest?" He said: "The one who remembers death the most and is best in preparing for it. Those are the wisest." (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 31)

Hence it is the affair of the wise Muslims that death brings them the good news of eternal bliss. This is because when they were in the world they always planted the seeds of gratitude, patience and worship and now after death they are picking up the fruits of happiness and eternal bliss. These wise Muslims did not waste their worldly life and continuously planted the seeds of goodness as described in the following hadith: "the real life is the life of hereafter." (Bukhari, Jihad 33, Salat 48, Rikak 1)

We should never forget that we came to this life to be tested and in order to prepare ourselves for the next world. In order to achieve this, we should often contemplate "where all this creation is heading? From one door a new-born comes into the world and from another door dead people go out, there is a continuous flow full of lessons for us to take. Why did we come to this world? In whose dominion are we living? What will our final destiny be? Are we ready for the final reckoning in the hereafter? What have we prepared for the next life since we have been here in this world?

Allah the Almighty always invites us to this kind of contemplation. The last tenth of the Noble Qur'an in particular speaks about the Next World, what will be the end of this world, our destiny, the divine reckoning, and people's end being either pleasurable or utter destruction. All this news should give us extra and to bring our hearts to life with Taqwa (fearful awareness of Allah), deepening awareness of Allah and the Last Day.



Now let us make a short test in order to better understand our level of slavehood to God:

- ✓ Does this life style take us to the Garden?
- ✓ Will our deeds make us happy in when they are weighed in the scales on the Day of Reckoning?
- ✓ Will our sacrifices in the Path of Allah help us pass the Bridge easily?
- ✓ When Allah the Almighty asks us whether we invited people to Islam with good moral behaviour or did we do anything to cause people to be misguided from Islam?

When such questions are asked, will we be able to say with confidence:

“Yes O my Lord I did my best to invite them to Islam...”

May Allah the Almighty enable us to use our lives in a way to make Him content with us, may He enable us to lead a life in the light of holy Qur'an, May Allah enable us to reach him and benefit from His forgiveness, May Allah enable us to be honoured with the vision of His face in the highest level of the Garden.

Amin!..

How blessed are those who can return to their Lord before death comes, how lucky are those good slaves of Allah who are always remembered for their good lives after their passing to the next world.



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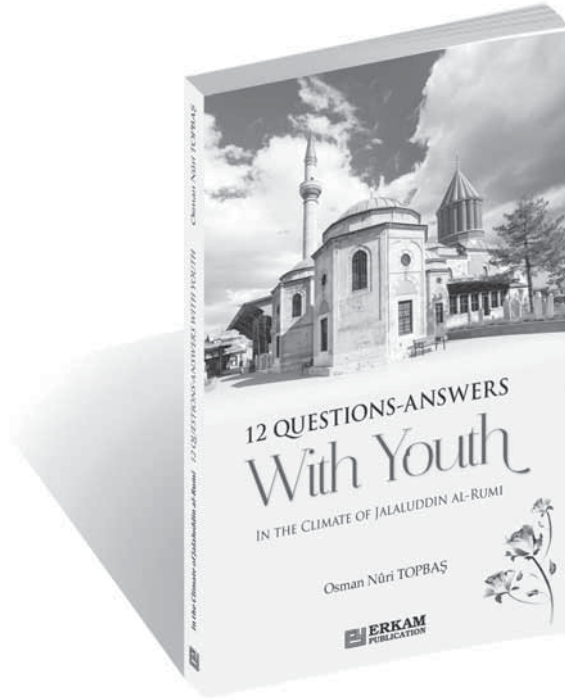
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# 12 QUESTIONS-ANSWERS WITH YOUTH



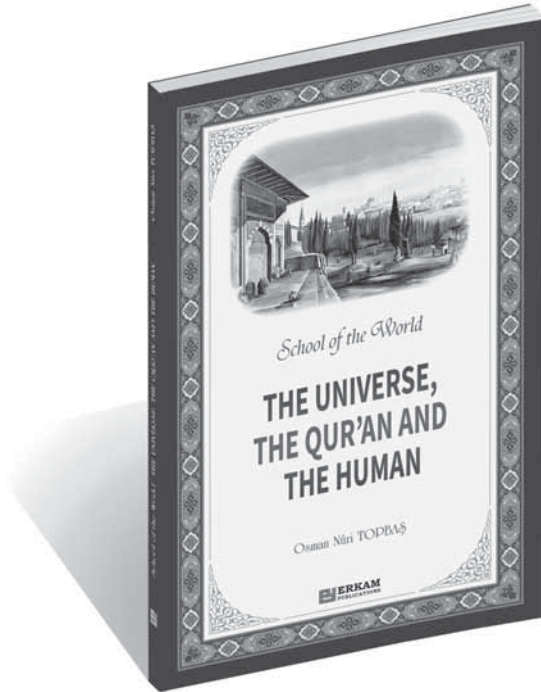
Mawlana Jalaluddin al-Rumi says:

“The cloth of wisdom lost by the heart can be found next to the people of heart.”

“Even if you are a hard stone, or become a marble, you will turn into a pearl when you reach to a man of heart.”

“The words of the saints resemble a river that is lucid, pure and full of an elixir. While there is still an opportunity, drink from it heartily so that spiritual flowers and roses will blossom in your soul.”

# The Universe, the Qur'an and the Human



In this book entitled “THE UNIVERSE, THE QUR’AN AND THE HUMAN” the writer Sheikh Osman Nuri Topbaş explain us that:

The Qur’an, the Word of Allah expressed in letters is the guidance in both this world and the Hereafter.

The Universe is another book of Allah where His Glory and Power is manifested, the Boo of the universe.

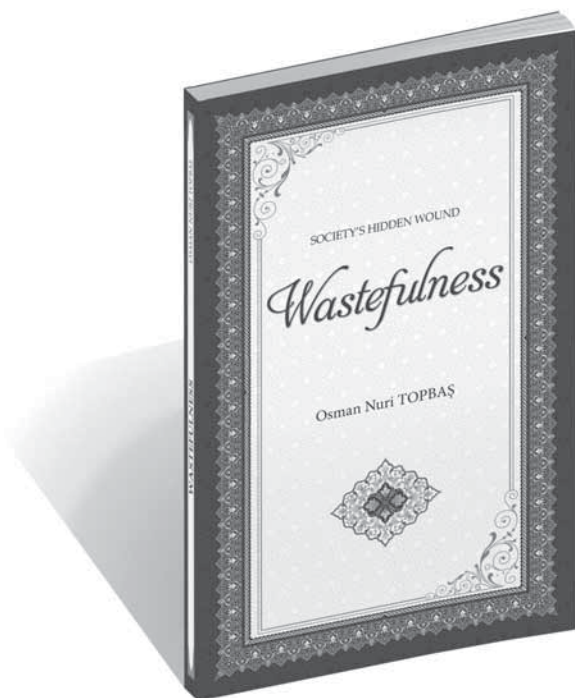
The human is the essence, index and secret of these books.

The real education means to be able to read these wonderful books, to apprehend and digest them and to live in accordance with the contents of them in the Scholl of the Universe.

The reach this real education Sheikh Osman Nuri Topbaş provide in this book the features that will be the key for our contemplation.

# Society's Hidden Wound

# Wastefulness



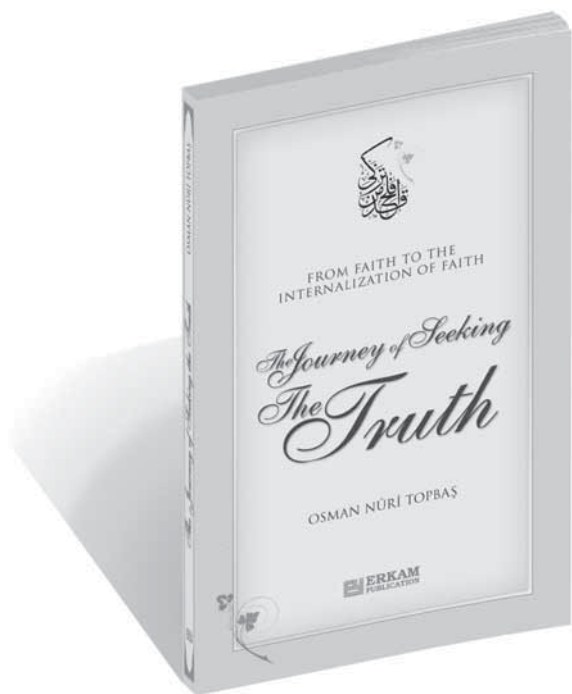
Throughout their lives, the friends of Allah have endeavored to get rid of their ego, to reach nothingness, and they have said,

“If even one single iota of selfishness remains in a person, he cannot be a friend of Allah.”

This is because in order to find the path to the throne of Allah’s grace, first one needs to remove the curtain of selfishness. This is because the wise hearts have said, “If you remove yourself out of the way, only the One who created you remains.”



# The Journey Of Seeking The Truth



Allah's friends have been striving throughout their lives to get rid of their ego to reach nothingness. They even ruled: "A human being can not be a friend of Allah as long as he alone subsists an iota of selfishness".

In fact the way to reach the throne of Allah's grace needs first of all to remove the curtain of selfishness.

This book written by our respected master Osman Nuri Topbaş explain the way to reach the throne of Allah's grace and describe step by step the way to achieve the Seeking of the Truth.

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