

Death...

crossing the Bridge to the Hereafter



الموت... العبور إلى الآخرة

Zeinab Hassan Ashry

IPC

لجنة التعريف بالإسلام
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Death

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to the Hereafter**

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IPC Islam Presentation Committee

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About the Author

The author of this book, Zeinab Hassan Ashry, is a computer engineer, who spent 12 years in Islamic studies in Dar Al-Qura'n in Kuwait. She is a well-known figure in the field of da'wah (preaching Islam) in Kuwait for English speaking ladies, Muslims and non-Muslims; she spent decades of her life in this field. She has been dedicating most of her time for spreading awareness about Islam. She teaches courses, gives lectures, writes books, articles, and is actively involved in Dawah activities among non-Muslims in Kuwait.

The author provides for the readers authentic Islamic information based on the Noble Quran, sound traditions of Prophet Mohammad (pbuh), authentic Islamic books and references as well as the opinions of great respected Muslim scholars

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Chapter (1)

The wisdom of life and Death

مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى

سورة طه "55"

Thereof (the earth) We created you, and into it We shall return you, and from it We shall bring you forth once again.

Taha 20 - 55

Creation of Mankind

God created the first man, our father Adam (pbuh), by His hands and honored him with many blessings: He raised him above the angels, taught him the names and nature of all things, and gave him high spiritual faculties. When God commanded the angels to prostrate to Adam (pbuh), they all obeyed, except Satan, who disobeyed God and refused to prostrate to Adam. Satan was originally of Jinn,¹ but was in the company of the angels in the heavens at that time.

Satan's arrogance led him to envy Adam for his high spiritual qualities and put himself above Adam just because he was created out of fire and Adam was created out of clay. He was also jealous of Adam because he was raised to such a high rank, so Satan rebelled against God and insisted on disobeying Him, and moreover did not turn to Him for forgiveness. Due to all of this, Satan was expelled out from the Garden.

To this day, Satan is still insisting on his disobedience. It is reported in some traditions that Prophet Moses (pbuh) once said to Satan:

'Do you want me to intercede for you and ask God to forgive you?' He said, 'You may do so if you want.' Then Moses asked God to forgive Satan. God said to Moses, 'First, tell him to

prostrate before Adam's grave.' Moses was very happy to give this good news to the Satan. However, Satan got very angry and said arrogantly, 'I did not prostrate to him while he was alive. Do you want me to prostrate to him when he is dead in his grave?'

Moreover, Satan not only insisted on his disobedience, he asked God to give him a respite till the Day of Resurrection in order to be able to seduce Adam and all his children so that they would be expelled from the Garden like him. He swore that he would spare no effort to assault mankind from all sides, taking advantage of every weak point in them, to drive them far from the straight path.

The Qur'an tells us that God warned Adam and Eve against Satan, and placed them in the Garden of Happiness where all of their needs were amply provided for: food and clothing drink and shelter, but it was Allah's Plan to give them a limited faculty of choice. All that they were forbidden to do was to approach a specific tree:

Then We said: O Adam! This (Satan) is an enemy unto you and unto your wife, so let him not drive you both out of the Garden so that you are landed in

¹ - Jinn are given faculty of choice similar to mankind.

misery. There you will not go hungry nor go naked. Nor to suffer from thirst nor from the sun's heat.

(Surat Ta-Ha, Chapter 20, Verses 117:119)

Adam and Eve were created by Allah, as all human beings, with a pure innocent nature, both in material as well as spiritual matters. At that time they knew no evil. After they were placed in the Garden, they had their first experience with evil. Satan misled them. He promised them Eternity and the Ever-Lasting kingdom if they ate from that forbidden tree, and he swore to them by God that he was telling the truth. They believed him because they could not imagine that some one could swear by God falsely. Thus, they both succumbed to Satan's false suggestions, and they both ate from the tree. Unlike the Bible, the Qur'an does not blame Eve for seducing Adam to eat from the tree. Rather, it emphasizes that they both disobeyed God and ate from the tree.

Eating from the tree tore off the garment that covered their nakedness and ugliness and they had to use the leaves of the Garden to cover their shame. They realized that they disobeyed Allah:

But Satan whispered evil to him, 'O Adam! shall I lead you to the Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that

never decays?' As a result, they both ate of the tree and so their nakedness appeared to them; they began to sew together for their covering leaves from the Garden; thus did Adam disobey His Lord and allow himself to be seduced.

(Surat Ta-Ha, Chapter 20, Verses 120:121)

Adam and Eve had been given the will to choose, and they chose wrong, and were about to be lost when Allah's Grace came to their aid. They turned to Allah in repentance,

"O our Lord we have wronged ourselves; and if You forgive us not and show no mercy to us we will be verily among the losers."

Their repentance was accepted, and Allah forgave them their sin and chose them for His Mercy. In Surat Ta-Ha, Chapter (20), Verses 122 it says,

"But his Lord chose him; and relented toward him; and gave him guidance."

No Original Sin

As we can see from the previous verses, the sin of Adam and Eve was forgiven before they were sent down to earth. The children of Adam are born innocent and sin-free, just as their

parents were created. Sins are not transferred from parents to children. Every human being is responsible only for his own deeds and will not inherit any of the sins of his parents. That is, children are not responsible for the sins and mistakes of their parents. The sin of Adam and Eve is already forgiven by God and there is no need for anybody to sacrifice himself to save Mankind from their sins.

God's Covenant from Mankind

The Qur'an and Sunnah inform us that the existence of all mankind goes back to the time of Adam. Each human being, born or unborn, has had a separate form of spiritual existence from the time of Adam. Verse 11 in Surat Al-A'raf, Chapter (7) addresses this issue stating that all mankind were created and fashioned by God since the time of Adam,

“Verily it is We who created you and gave you shape; then We bade the angels prostrate before Adam.”

The Qur'an and traditions of Prophet Mohammad report that after the creation of Adam (pbuh), Allah (swt) brought forth from his back, and the backs of his children, the seeds of their descendants. Al-Tirmidhi reported that Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) said:

When Allah created Adam, He touched his back, and there fell from his back every soul that He would create from his offspring till the Day of Resurrection and He created between the two eyes of every person a gleam of light. Then He presented them to Adam who said: ‘My Lord who are they?’ Allah said: ‘They are your offspring.....’

Moreover, a covenant was taken from all of the souls of Adam's offspring to testify that Allah alone is their Lord, Creator, and Sustainer and to acknowledge their obligations toward Him. Allah took this covenant from them lest they should say on the Day of Judgment that they were unaware of their obligations toward their Lord:

When Your Lord drew forth from the children of Adam from their backs their descendants and made them testify concerning themselves (saying), ‘Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?’ They said: ‘Yes! we do testify!’ (This) lest you should say on the Day of Judgment: ‘of this we were never mindful.’

Or lest you should say, ‘Our fathers before us may have taken false gods but we are (their) descendants

after them: will You then destroy us because of the misdeeds of men who followed falsehood?

(Surat Al-A'raf, Chapter 7, verses 172: 173)

Thus every human being is personally responsible for his own conduct. Therefore, there is no excuse for anyone to say either that he was unaware of the existence of God or that he should not be punished for rejecting faith because he was following the footsteps of his forefathers who followed falsehood.

Human beings have been given certain powers and faculties by Allah, whose possession is enough to make them able to fulfill the covenant Allah took from them, distinguish between good and evil, and be aware of the dangers that might lead them to break their covenant and corrupt their life. That is why every human being, by his nature, when it is pure and uncorrupted, recognizes the existence of God and turns to Him for help, especially at the time of hardships.

That explains why all mankind from different backgrounds and cultures throughout history have tended to worship something. Those whose nature was kept pure and uncorrupted, fulfilled their covenant with God, accepted God's guidance, and worshipped Him alone. And those, whose nature was impure and

corrupted, due to their wrongdoings, broke their covenant with God, rejected God's guidance, and worshipped something else beside God. And they shall face the consequences of their wrongdoings.

Man's Life on Earth (الدُّنْيَا)

After Allah sent Adam, Eve, and Satan all together down to Earth, with enmity one to another, Allah promised Adam, Eve, and their progeny after them that they would surely receive guidance from Him; whosoever follows God's guidance will not go astray nor fall into misery. And whosoever turns away from God's guidance he will verily lead a life of distress. And as he was blinded by this life and could not see the signs of God, he shall be raised up blind on the Day of Resurrection:

He said: 'Get down both of you all together from it (the Garden) with enmity one to another. It is sure that there will come to you guidance from Me; whosoever follows My guidance will not go astray nor fall into misery. 'But whosoever turns away from My Message verily for him is a life in distress and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection.'
(Surat Ta-Ha, Chapter 20, Verses 123:124)

The story of the creation of Adam (pbuh), and the refusal of Satan to prostrate before him is mentioned in many places in the Qur'an in order to warn Mankind against the enmity of Satan, and the bad consequences of following him and rejecting God's guidance.

As we can see in the above verse, Allah ordained mankind to live and die on earth, generation after generation, and they shall be tested by both good and evil to see which of them is best in conduct. Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an ,

“It is He Who created life and death to test which of you is best in conduct.”
(Surat Al-Mulk, Chapter 67, Verses 23)

Life on earth is the most important phase in our existence. We shall be put into trials, and according to the deeds we earned, our eternal fate will be determined.

Our life in this world (الدُّنْيَا) begins when God commands the angel to blow the soul into the human fetus in his mother's womb and write down four things: his means of livelihood, his life span, his actions, and whether he will be happy or unhappy. Every human being shall stay in this world for an appointed time. Death ends up man's life in this world. At the end of his appointed term, man's soul will be separated from his body and be taken back

to God not one hour earlier or later than his appointed time. In the Qur'an it says,

“And when their term comes, they shall not be put one hour earlier or later.”
Surat Al-Araf (7) - Verse (34)

Events of the Hereafter

- [1] *Death* is our first step toward the Next-world.
- [2] *The Grave* and the life of the souls in *Al-Barzakh*.
- [3] **First Blow the Trumpet**
The universe will collapse. All living beings will die, even angels and the carriers of the throne. Then a special kind of rain is sent down to earth from which the bodies will be raised back to life in their graves.
- [4] **The Second Blow in the Trumpet**
A violent earth quake causes the graves to split and people come out of them rushing and terrified as if they are drunk. Every one shall be given his record of deeds either by left, right hand, or from behind his back.
- [5] **The Gathering Day**
People will be gathered for judgment and grouped according to their deeds.

[6] The Reckoning Day

Records of deeds will be brought. The Scale will measure the good and bad deeds in the weight of an atom. The fate of every person will be determined according to the result of the scale.

[7] Crossing the Bridge (الصراط) over the Hell Fire.

The wrong doers will fall down in the Fire. God will save the believers and supply them with a light and make them cross the bridge fast according to their good deeds.

[8] Intercession

Prophets, angels, and the righteous will be allowed to intercessed for the sinners. God, out of His Mercy, will accept the intercession for whom, He wants. Accordingly, many people will not enter the Fire and many of them will be brought out from the Fire.

[9] Eternal life either in the Hell Fire or Paradise.

Chapter (2)

Death The Harshest fact of Life

“And the agony of death comes with the truth; that is what you used to flee from!”
Surat Qaaf (50:19)

What is Death?

Death is the complete separation of the soul from the body. Allah (swt) takes the soul back to a spiritual world in which it is more conscious of the realities of things. The soul does not die. Death is simply the end of our life in this world, but not the end of our existence. It is the bridge we all have to cross to the Next World, Hereafter.

Death is similar to Sleep

Death is some how similar to sleep. The Prophet (pbuh) was asked,

“Do people of Paradise sleep?” He said, “No, sleep is the twin brother of death; and there is no death in Paradise.”

In other traditions he (pbuh) called sleep the minor death. The Qur’an says in Surat Al-Zumar (39), Verse 42:

“It is Allah who overtakes the souls at the time of their death and that (soul) that does not die in its sleep. He keeps the soul which He ordained death on it. And sends the rest till an appointed term. Indeed, here in are signs for those who take thought.”

The verse states that both in sleep and at death the soul is released from the bondage of the body

and is taken to Allah. In sleep, some kind of connection or relationship between the soul and the body is maintained. That is why the body is kept alive so that the soul can return back to it when the person wakes up. During sleep, the person may have visions or truthful dreams which are spiritual gifts from Allah. In these visions the dreamer may see things as they actually happen, backwards or forwards in time, or see spiritual truths otherwise imperceptible to him. In death, there is no connection left between the soul and its body. As a result of this, the body shows no sign of life and deteriorates, and the soul can no longer return to the body.

The Time of Death is (غيب) Unseen to Us

Our life span is predetermined and we will all return to Allah at the appointed time. In fact, our trip back begins the first day we are born. It is out of the mercy of Allah that he does not reveal to us the time and place of our death. In the Qur’an it says,

“No soul knows what she is going to earn tomorrow. No soul knows in which place she shall die.”

Surat Luqman, Chapter 31, Verses 34

Why don’t we know what the future will bring? For one thing, revealing the time or place of death would indeed be terrifying to

people. It would surely disturb their life. The lives of those whose term was near would be paralyzed. Another reason that God may not reveal a person's time of death is that those whose term was far away would try to enjoy as much as they could of the pleasures of this life before their death. They would not mind committing sins and delaying repentance till near the end of their term. This attitude would provoke mischief and corruption on earth.

Death, the Harshest Fact in Life

Death is the most terrible event in every living beings life. It is the most painful experience we will go through. It separates lovers, and does not respond to our cries, and pleas. Although it is not easy to accept death, one may find solace in the fact that all living being shall die.

Death is beyond Man's Control

Mankind has no power or control over death. When man is stricken with death, he can do nothing to prevent, resist, or postpone it. The Qur'an says,

"Wherever you are death will reach you even if you seek protection in shielded high towers." Surat Al-Nisaa', Chapter 4, Verses 78

This is an indication that high technology, and

modern medicine, are of no benefits to man in regard to death. All people are helpless when facing death: the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak, the young and the old. Nobody has the power to intercede on behalf of the dying person to stop death or help prevent or delay it. In this regard, Allah (swt) says, in Surat Al-Ahzab Chapter 33, Verses 16:

"Say: 'You cannot escape from death or killing.'"

It is reported that once Prophet Dawood (pbuh) saw a strange person in his house. He asked, "Who are you?" The man said: "I am the one who fears not kings, accepts not beriberi, and the gates of palaces could not be closed before him." Prophet Dawood (pbuh) said, "You must be the angel of death."

Death is always waiting for us. We have been continually moving forward to it since we were born. Every day that passes brings us closer to it. There is no way for us to escape from it. Allah (swt) says,

"Say: The Death from which you flee will truly face (overtake) you: then will you be sent back to the Knower of the Seen and the Unseen: and He will tell you (the truth of) the things that you did!"

Surat Al-Jumua', Chapter (62), Verse(8)

When people flee away from something, they usually leave it behind them. This is true for everything except for death. No matter where we run away from it, we will find it in front of us, facing us, someday.

Death is Ordained on every living being not only on mankind

Death is not only ordained on mankind but also on every living being. We know for sure that every being that had a beginning must also have an end; this is the law of nature. The soul will not perish but the attributes of life will be taken out of it; and its existence in this life on earth has to come to an end

“Every soul shall taste death. And on the Day of Resurrection you will be paid in full for what you have earned. And he who will be displaced from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will be indeed the truly successful. And verily the life of this world is nothing but goods of deception”

(Surat Al-Imran, Chapter (3) - Verse 180).

This verse is a solace and consolation to all living beings. It informs us that all the living creatures of God shall die including Mankind, Jinn, and all angels including angel Gabriel and the Carriers of the Throne of God, and even the

angel of death himself (it is reported that it will take him forty years to take his soul out).

Death is our inevitable end as it says in Qur'an , in Surat Al-Waqia'h, Chapter 56, Verses 60)

“It is We who decreed death on all of you. And no one can overpower Us (by changing our plans or prevent us).”

It should always be clear in our minds that we are returning to Allah, the Eternal, the Everlasting. Our existence on Earth is temporary; sooner or later we shall depart. All people shall die: believers and unbelievers, rich and poor, the good and wicked, the noble and the low, the powerful and the weak, the righteous and the wicked. Allah (swt) addressed His Prophet (pbuh) in Surat Al-Zumar, Chapter 39, Verses 30), saying:

“Verily you shall die and verily they shall die. In the end will you (all), on the Day of Judgment settle your disputes in the presence of your Lord.”

We all shall die and return back to the dust of the Earth from which they were first created. As Allah says in the Qur'an , in Surat Ta-Ha, Chapter 20, Verses 55:

“From the Earth We created you. And into it We shall return you. And from it We shall bring you back to life once again.”

Allah alone is the Eternal

Allah’s existence is eternal; it is not preceded with nullity (nothingness) and is not subjected to extinction. Allah alone has the attribute of Perfect Eternal life. He will never die; His life has no beginning and no end. Nothing shall remain alive but Allah, The Living, The Eternal, The First and The Last. In Surat Ar-Rahman, Chapter 55, Verses 26-27, it says,

«All that on Earth shall perish. But the Face of your Lord shall remain forever.»

And in Surat Al-Qasas, Chapter 28, Verse 88, it says,

«Everything shall perish except His own face.»

Face or *Wajh* in Arabic signifies the whole being; so the verses mean everything shall perish except God Himself.

Allah alone Controls Life and Death

In the hands of Allah alone lies the power to

give life; and He alone is able to take this life back to Him. The Life Giver (Al-Muhyee المحيي), Death Causer (Al-Mumeet المميت) are of the perfect names of Allah.

“Allah alone gives life and causes death and He is all Seeing, well aware of your deeds.” Surat Al-Imran, Chapter 3, Verses 156

Although man can make somebody lose his life, he is totally unable to take the soul of the dying person back to him. The Qur’an reports that when the king was arguing with Prophet Abraham, peace be upon him, in regard to the existence of God, he said, “It is my Lord alone who can give life and cause death.” The king said: “I too can give life and cause death.” To show his power he commanded two people to be brought and he killed one of them and kept the other alive. Certainly that was a misleading argument because he neither gave the living person his life nor took the soul of the killed person out of his body; he only kept one of them alive and caused the other to lose his life.

The Wisdom of death

Life and death are part of the general laws controlling the universe. The objective behind the life and death is to test man’s

conduct in this world. The Qur'an , Surat Al-Mulk, Chapter 67, Verse 2, says,

“It is He Who created life and death to test which of you is best in conduct.”

Although death is very painful, there is a great wisdom behind it. Imagine a death-free world; the earth would be overcrowded with people. Its resources would not be sufficient for them, so huge a number of earth's population would be elderly and not physically fit to take care of themselves. It is Allah's wisdom to ordain death on us and make our existence on earth pass from generation to generation so that life would be possible for us. In many situations, death is a mercy from God; it is the ending of the suffering for many people.

Is Euthanasia² (Mercy Killing) permissible in Islam?

Allah (swt) is the Creator of life and death. As He (swt) provided us with the gift of life at the time He wanted, He alone has the right to take this life back to Him at the time He wants according to His Perfect Wisdom and Knowledge. Man has no right to interfere with Allah's will and end his life or the life of others.

2 - To end the life of a terminally ill person to bring his/her suffering to an end

In Islam, life is a precious trust from Allah. Man should handle Allah's trust with honesty and pay great respect to the sacredness of life. That is why euthanasia is disapproved of in Islam. One moment of life is invaluable. No one can prejudge the value of the last days or hours of the life of the dying person. No one is capable of deciding when a person should die. We should not underestimate the value of the last moments of life. In spite of the suffering, that might be unbearable, there is still room for an inner strength to fight for life within every human being.

The list of good deeds one may do at that time is endless. One may convey special messages or useful advice to his beloved ones, give a charity to the needy, make peace and reconciliation between family members and friends that would leave a good, long lasting effect after his death; or utter a few words because of which he would be saved in the Next World. He may say the Shahadah³ that will save him from the Hell Fire; or one may praise God with easy to say words as Prophet (pbuh) said:

“Two words easy to say yet they are too heavy on the scale: “Glory be to Allah and all praises; Glory be to Allah the Greatest.” سبحان الله و بحمده ، سبحان الله (العظيم).

3- To testify that there is no god but Allah and Mohammad is His Messenger.

It is our duty to be helpful and supportive for the dying person as much as we can. We should provide all possible means of comfort to ease the process of dying. Thanks to God, modern medicine provides effective therapy to combat any degree of discomfort or pain.

The Dying Process (Al-Ih-Tidar احتضار)

What is the definite sign of Death?

At death the soul will be separated out of the body gradually until it reaches the throat. It is understood from verses of the Qur'an and traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) that once the soul reaches the throat, then death is inevitable. What the dying person is going through at this time is Unseen غيب to us. This stage is called in Arabic «Al-Ih-Tidar احتضار» which is derived from the verb حضر which means 'to arrive'. It is given this name because the angel of death and his helpers arrive at this time to take the soul out of the body back to Allah (swt).

At the stage of Al-Ih-Tidar احتضار the soul is departing this world and crossing the bridge to the next world, the world of the unseen, and the body no longer has the capacity for life.

The Challenge

Once the dying person reaches this stage, no one can interfere in order to return the soul back to the body at all. Allah challenges mankind to prevent or stop death at this stage:

When the soul reaches the throat and you are watching him closely. And We are nearer still at all times, but you do not perceive it. If you are truthful in your claims (denying resurrection and judgment after death). Call the soul to return back to his body. Surat Al-Waqea'h, Chapter(56), Verses 83:87,

In another place in the Qur'an it says:

“Nay! when the soul reaches the throat; and it is asked: “Who may help?” But he was sure that it was the departing time; and one leg cramped over the other. At that time, the return is to your Lord.” Surat Al-Qiamah, Chapter (75), Verses 26:30

However, it is worth mentioning here that this stage is different from what is described as **Near-Death Syndrome**. People who experience near-death syndrome are definitely alive and have not reached the stage of Al-Ih-Tidar احتضار. They are going through some sort of spiritual experience similar to having dreams and visions in sleep. The dying person at this

time may see and hear things which we do not see and hear. He is no longer belonging to the life of this world.

Angels of Death

Allah (swt) charged the Angel of Death, I'zrael⁴, with the task of taking the souls back to Him. However, the Angel of Death has helpers of other angels, angels of mercy, to take out the souls of believers, and angels of anger to take out the souls of unbelievers. In the Qur'an it says:

- **“Say: the angel of death, who is in charge of you, shall take your souls back to God.”** Surat Al-Sajdah (32-11)
- **“When death strikes one of you at his appointed time, our messengers (angels) will take his soul back to us, and they do no mistake.”**

Surat Al-Ana'am (6-61)

Agonies of Death

The pains of death are felt throughout the body, inside and out. The body's organs die gradually one after the other, suffering pains after pains. Allah (swt) says in Surat Qaaf (50:19),

4- This name is reported in the scriptures of the people of the book; it has not neither been reported in any traditions nor in Qura'n.

“And the agony of death comes with the truth; that is what you used to flee from!”

The sight of a dying person in his deathbed, suffering the agonies of death, while people around him unable to offer any kind of help to ease his suffering, is the most frightening thing. Once the Prophet (pbuh) was asked what about death he said:

“The least pain of death is like prickly thorns inside a piece of raw wool, could the thorns be taken out of the wool without bringing some of the wool with it.”

Every one feels the agony of death including the prophets of God. Al-Bukhari narrated that the Prophet wife, A'isha, may Allah be pleased with her said:

“When the Prophet was on his deathbed, he was holding a pot full of water, from time to time he would wet his fingers and wipe his face, saying, <There is no god but Allah; truly death has its own agony.>”

It is reported in another tradition that when the Prophet (pbuh) was overwhelmed by the pains of death, he used to wipe the sweat off his face saying:

“All Glory be to Allah, سبحان الله, verily death has its agony.»

Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) used also to supplicate:

“Oh Allah! Make the agony death easy for me (give me power to stand it).”

The Wish to Return:

At the time of death, everybody will feel sorry and regret his wrong doings. Everyone will wish he could postpone death, and wish he could have a respite. The Qur'an says in Surat Al-Munafiqoon (63:10),

“When death comes to one of them he will say: ‘Oh my Lord if you give me a respite, I will verily believe and be among the righteous.”

In addition, Allah (swt) says in Surat Al-Mo'menoon (99:100),

“Until when death comes to one of them, he says, ‘My Lord! Send me back, in order that I might work righteousness in that which I have left behind!’ Nay it is only a word he says. And behind them a barrier until the day when they will be raised.”

This verse makes it quite clear that there is no returning to this world after death, nor is there any reprieve, Allah (swt) says in Surat Al-Munafiqoon (63:11),

“Allah does not reprieve any soul when its term has come.”

Even the righteous at the time of death would wish they had done more good deeds. It is reported that one of the companions said at his death:

I wish it were more; I wish it were full; I wish it were new.’ His family asked the Prophet (pbuh): ‘What did that indicate? He (pbuh) said: ‘He used to walk to the Mosque for prayer. And when he was shown the reward of his food steps he wished if he walked more than that and said: ‘I wish if it were more.’ Once a needy asked him for food. He had only one loaf of bread. He gave him half the loaf and kept the other half for himself. And when he was shown the reward of that he wished if he gave him the full loaf and said: ‘I wish if it were full.’ Once a poor asked him for some clothes. He had only two shirts, one old and one new; he gave him the old one. And when he was shown the reward of the that he wished if he gave him the new shirt and said: ‘I wish if it were new.’

The Gaze Follows the Soul

When the soul is taken out of the body, the dying person opens his eyes and gazes to see his soul departing his body as mentioned in the *Hadeeth*.

The Prophet said: “Don’t you see the eyes open and gazing (at death). They said: ‘Yes prophet’, he said: “This is when he is gazing at his soul coming out of his body.”

This is the most difficult moment of death; the dying person feels sorry for himself; sad for what he is leaving behind; and fearful of what is coming next. It is recommended at this moment to close the eyes of the dying person at that time, to reduce his sorrow and suffering.

Death is the worst thing for the believer

For a believer death is the worst thing he has to go through. Whatever comes next is easier for him. However, pains of death compensate whatever is left over of the sins and misdeeds done in his life-time so that the believer will leave this world purified from all his sins; if no sins are left pains of death will raise believer’s rank in Paradise.

It is reported that when the Prophet (pbuh) was suffering the pains of the death, his daughter

Fatimah (raa) was panicking, he said soothing her: **“No more suffering for your father after that.”**

For the unbeliever, death is the just the beginning, and what comes next is harder for him.

People differ at death According to their deeds in this life

The Qur’an informs us that people are treated differently at death according to their previous deeds. Generally, dying people are divided into three classes:

- 1) **The nearest to Allah, the most righteous**
المقربون
- 2) **Companions of the Right Hand** اصحاب اليمين
- 3) **The Deniers of the truth and wrongdoers**
اصحاب الشمال

Allah (swt) describes these types in the Qur’an in Surat Al-Waqah 56 - 88:95,

“Thus then if he is of those Nearest to Allah. (There is for him) Rest and Satisfaction and a Garden of Delights.

And if he is of the Companions of the Right Hand (For him is the salutation) “Peace be unto You” from the Companions of the Right Hand.

And if he is of those who treat (truth) as Falsehood; those who go wrong; the hospitable gift for him is boiling Water, and burning in Hell-Fire. “

Now let us take a closer look at what kind of people may be placed in each category and what they may expect to face at the time of death.

1) The Nearest to God, the most righteous

The nearest to God are people who accepted the truth and devoted their whole life for it. They stuck to Allah’s way in all aspects of their life. They are the innocent sinless people who committed no sins, but made only minor mistakes which Allah forgave them for. The angels will salute them at death with *Rauh* and *Raihan*. *Rauh* is rest and peace and *Raihan* is a sweet-smelling plant. It is used here as an indication of Satisfaction and Delight. The angels will give them the good news of the Highest Rank in the Garden of Delight near their Lord. They will surely enjoy a life of delight and bliss after death.

2) Companions of the Right Hand

The companions of the Right Hand are people who believed in the truth and followed it. But they mixed good deeds with some ill deeds. But their good deeds exceeded their ill deeds, however, they committed none of the major sins that might corrupt one’s good deeds. The angels will salute them with “Peace, Peace!” and give

them the good news of entering the Garden and being in the company of the Companions of the Right Hand, like them.

Here we learn that the nearest to God and the Companions of the Right Hand are both in Paradise; only the former have a higher Rank than the latter.

3) The Deniers of the truth and wrongdoers

They are those who recognized the truth but instead of following it, they treated it as falsehood after the clear proofs had come to them. Then they insisted on disbelief and continued in falsehood till they faced death. Such people will be harshly treated by the angels of death. In their final abode after death their salutation would be a drink of boiling water and their resting place is the Hell-Fire. Allah (swt) says in Surat Al-Ana’am (6-93):

And if you see the wrong doers suffering the agonies of death and the angels stretching forth their hands (saying): ‘Bring your souls out, today you shall taste the disgracing doom because of the falsehood you used to say against Allah, and you were too arrogant to regard His signs.

Moreover, Allah (swt) made it clear in Surat Al-Imran (3-91), nothing could save those people from Allah’s punishment:

“Lo, those who died disbelief (rejecting faith), the whole earth full of gold would not be accepted from such a one if it were to be offered as a ransom (to free himself of the Doom). Theirs is a painful Doom, and they will have no helpers.”

The Sunnah describes in more detail how people are treated at the time of their death. Here are some examples:

1. Al-Bukhari narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

‘Whosoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves meeting with him and whosoever dislikes to meet Allah, Allah dislikes meeting with him’. Then his wife A’isha, may Allah be pleased with her, said: ‘O Prophet we all dislike death’. He said: ‘It is not like this, but it is that when the time of the death of a believer approaches, he receives the good news of Allah’s pleasure with him and His blessings upon him, and so at that time nothing is dearer to him than what is in front of him. He therefore loves the meeting with Allah, and Allah (too) loves the meeting with him. But when the time of the death of a disbeliever approaches, he receives the evil

news of Allah’s Torment and His Requital, whereupon nothing is more hateful to him than what is before him. Therefore, he hates the meeting with Allah, and Allah too, hates the meeting with him.’

In other words, at death, the believer is rejoicing at the glad tiding of entering Paradise, therefore he loves to meet Allah and is looking forward for what is coming next. On the other hand, the unbeliever will suffer tremendous grief and sadness for the evil news of Allah’s displeasure with him. He becomes aware that his loss can not be compensated; therefore, he hates what is coming next for he knows it is worse for him.

- 2- An-Nasa’i reported that Prophet (pbuh) said:

When the believer dies, the angels of mercy will come to him with a piece of white silk saying : ‘come out pleased and pleased with to rest and peace from Allah and a Lord is not angry; then it will come out easily smelling like the best fragrance of musk. And they will give him one to the other; and they take him to heaven. When

they reach a gate of the heaven it will be said: 'What a nice smell is coming from earth till they reach the place of the souls of believers. They will be happy with him as a mother is happy with the return of her absentee child. They will gather and ask him questions. Some of them will say let him rest first. They will ask him: 'How is so and so?' He replies: 'He died; did not he come to you?' Woe to him he must have been taken to the souls of the wicked.

.. And when the unbeliever dies the angels of anger will come to him with a piece of raw wool saying: 'Come out, displeased and displeased with to Allah's Torment, then it will come out having an offensive smell as stink as a decaying corpse. Then they will take him to the place of the souls of unbelievers in the underworld where they are punished for their sins; and there it will be said: 'How stinky this soul is.'

3- At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah narrated that Abu Hurayrah said that Prophet (pbuh) said:

The angels are present with one who

dies, and if a man is good, they say, 'Come out, good soul which was in the good body; come out praiseworthy and be happy with rest and provision and a Lord Who is not angry.' That continues to be said to it till it comes out. It is then taken up to Heaven and the door is opened for it. The angels are asked who this is and replied that he is so and so, whereupon these words are spoken: 'Welcome, good soul, which was in the good body; enter praiseworthy and be happy with rest and provision and a Lord Who is not angry.' That continues to be said to it till it comes to the Heaven where Allah is.

But if it is a bad man, what is said is, 'Come out, wicked soul, which was in the wicked body; come out blameworthy and be grieved by a boiling liquid, one dark and intensely cold, and other kinds of its type.' That continues to be said to it till it comes out. It is then taken up to Heaven and the door is asked to be opened for it. The question will be asked who this is and the reply given that it is so and so, whereupon these words are spoken: 'There is no welcome for the

wicked soul which was in the wicked body; go back blameworthy, for the gates of Heaven will not be opened for you.' It will then be sent away from Heaven and come to the grave.

Life in Al-Barzakh (البرزخ)

The souls, after separating from their bodies, will be taken to the world of Al-Barzakh (البرزخ), where they shall stay awaiting the Day of Resurrection. Al-Barzakh (البرزخ) in Arabic means a Separator or a Barrier; it is a temporary world that separates between this world and the Hereafter, the eternal world. Life in Al-Barzakh is a transitory stage, an introduction for the Hereafter. The souls of good people are in happiness and joy rejoicing at the good news of entering Paradise; they keep praying: «O God! Bring the Hour near» for they know what comes next is much better for them. The souls of wicked people are punished for their misconduct; they keep praying that the Hour will never come for they know what comes next is much harder for them. On the Day of Resurrection souls will be commanded to return back to their bodies and people will be raised back to life for judgment.

Our knowledge about Soul is very Little

The soul is one of Allah's creatures. Although it has a beginning similar to all Allah's creatures,

but it is eternal, it has no end. That is, after separation from the body it does not die. The precise nature of the soul is beyond man's comprehension. In Surat Al-Isra', 17, Verse (85), it says,

“They ask you about the soul (spirit) say: the soul is of my Lord's decree; and of knowledge, you have been given only a little.”

The verse states clearly that Allah alone, the Creator, knows the reality of the soul. The soul belongs to a non-physical world and it is beyond man's physical and mental abilities to recognize the nature of the souls. It is better for us not to waste our time searching about the nature of the souls or trying to connect with them.

Our knowledge in regard to the nature of the world of the souls is almost nothing. We can only observe the effects of the soul upon the body but cannot understand its reality, exactly as we feel the effect of electricity when it passes through the lamp wire; we see the light, feel the heat, but we can not see the electricity itself. But when the lamp is turned off, the electricity is cut off and no light and no heat are sensed.

Although the soul is non-physical and invisible to man, nobody can deny the presence of our souls. The soul does not only give us life that

makes us able to breath, eat, drink, move, and sense but also it controls the moral, mental, and emotional part of man's nature. The soul gives man his self-identity, conscience, and the faculties that distinguish him from animals such as the ability of understanding, thinking, reasoning, taking decisions, exercising self-control, talking, expressing one's self, and experiencing different feelings and emotions. When the soul is separated from the body, at death time, the body loses its power and faculties, and all signs of life disappear.

It is reported in many traditions that the soul is a non-physical being that can talk, move, have a smell, experience pain, suffering, sorrow, happiness and other feelings and emotions similar to physical beings. However, the capabilities and the feelings of the soul are much more intense than that of physical beings because the soul after death becomes free from the limitation of the physical body.

Soul does not Transmigrate nor Re-incarnate

I would like to remark here that the soul stays in the world of Al-Barzakh until it is returned back to its body when the Hour is established. Accordingly, the soul after death does not transmigrate to bodies of other creatures, nor re-incarnate in other beings.

Can we Communicate with Souls after Death?

Al-Barzakh, where souls stay, is an unseen world (غيب) to us. We know nothing about it but only that which is revealed in Qur'an and Sunnah. Accordingly, human beings have no access to souls and no means of communicating with them or bringing them forth from Al-Barzakh into our world.

Souls are also unable to offer human beings in the life of this world any kind of help or harm at all. Accordingly, the claims of some people that they are able to prepare souls, talk to them, and seek their advice are not acceptable in Islam. It could be some sort of superstition, or maybe some form of the disapproved co-operation or relationships between mankind and jinn.

Be Prepared for Death

True believers must be fully prepared for death, and think of himself as a traveler in this world who very soon shall depart to his final destination.

Do not be deceived by the pleasures of this world. Let your main objective in this life be cultivating as many good deeds as you can for the Hereafter. Let nothing distract you from your main objective. Ibn 'Umar narrated that

the Prophet (pbuh) said:

“You should remember the reality that brings an end to all worldly joys and pleasures, namely, death.”

Make full use of your youth, health, wealth, and your whole life to please Allah. Al-Tirmidhi narrated that:

Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said to a man in the course of an exhortation, “Take advantage of five things before other five befall you: your youth before you advance in age, your health before your illness, your riches before your poverty, your spare time before you get too busy with life, and your life before your death.”

The Warner

Allah (swt) rebukes those who spend their life in wrong doings without taking advantage of the respite given to them before their death saying,

“Did not We grant you a long life, enough for him who wishes to take admonition? And a Warner had come to you”

Surat Fater, Chapter (35), Verse 73

The verse draws man’s attention to contemplate the events of life around him and learn lessons

from them; maybe he could be able to recognize the truths impeded in them.

The verse is an awakening call to every human being. Did not Allah let you live long enough to mature and understand the realities of life? Did not Allah give you full chance to consider and contemplate His signs and miracles around you? Did not Allah send you reminders one after the other and a warning after a warning? Yet you people are heedless and do not consider.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Allah will accept no excuses of any person whose death is delayed till he is sixty years of age (for he has been given enough chance).”

Alqurtubi⁵ reported that,

“So long as the sun is rising and setting, the angel of death calls every day: ‘O people of forty be ready; O people of fifty the time of the harvest has come; O people of sixty death is very near; watch for the inevitable end; you have been given full chance; no excuses are left for you; and you shall get no helpers.’”

The warners of Allah are so many: His messenger, His Book (the Qur’an), death of

⁵- In his book «At-Tadhkira Fe Ahwal Al-Akharah». He is a great Moslem scholar who lived in Qurtuba in Spain.

others around you, advancing in age, lose of power and strength as we age, sickness, and calamities and the like. Your first warner is your first gray hair. Alqurtubi⁶ reported that,

“When the angel of death came to take the soul of one of the Prophets of Allah he said: ‘Your coming terrifies people; do not you have a warning before hand so that people will be aware and ready for you?’ He said: ‘Yes, of course I do have warnings, did not you notice your first gray hair?’”

So we can see that while gray hair is a warning that death is near, it is also a light for those who did well in Islam; those who spent their life obeying Allah.

Alqurtubi also reported that a woman, who was known for her beauty and was living a life of fun, was once combing her hair and she noticed two gray hairs. Thereupon, she got very alarmed and said: “O my God! The truth has come. The falsehood has gone. This gray hair is a messenger from my God that I shall soon meet Him.” After that her life style changed completely and she was always seen fasting and praying.

6 - In his book «At-Tadhkira Fe Ahwal Al-Akharah».

Be always Mindful of Death

Allah and His Messenger (pbuh) encourage us to be mindful of death and ready for it with good deeds before it is too late. This is regarded as a sign of goodness. One should pray to Allah not to let him die except as a Muslim. Surat Yousef, in the Qur’an mentions the supplication of Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him,

“توفني مسلماً و ألحقني بالصالحين”

“(O Allah!) let me die not save as a Muslim”

The Prophet (pbuh) said: “When Allah intends good for a servant of His, He uses him for good.” They asked: “How does Allah use him?” The Prophet (pbuh) replied: “He enables him to do good deeds and makes it easy for him before his death and then causes him to die while he is in that state of goodness.”⁷

Striving for good deeds prior to death is an indication of a good end. The Prophet (pbuh) used to pray:

كان رسول الله صلي الله عليه و سلم يدعو : «اللهم اجعل خيرا أيامي يوم أن ألقاك و خيرا عمري وأخيره خيرا أعمالى خواتيمها»

7 - Narrated by Imam Ahmad and others

“O Allah! Let the best of my days be the day when I shall meet you, O Allah! Make my deeds be sealed with the best of them. O Allah! Let the end of my life be the best of it.”

Ibn ‘Umar narrated that once a man from among the Al-Ansar got up and said:

O Prophet of Allah, who is the wisest and the most prudent among people? He replied: It is he who is most aware of death and prepares himself for it. He is the wisest of people and will have honor in this world and a generous reward in the Hereafter.

Ibn Mas‘ud narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) commented on verse 6:125 of the Qur’an :

The hearts of those whom Allah wills to guide, He opens to Islam saying ‘When the light (of truth) enters the heart it expands and opens up’. The Companions asked, ‘Is there any sign of this?’ He replied: ‘Being ever mindful of the Hereafter, and remaining at guard in this life of delusion, and preparing oneself for death before it comes.’

Sudden Death

Sudden death is the most hateful thing to Muslims and is regarded as a grievous misfortune because it denies the person the last chance to reform himself and makeup for missed opportunities.

The Prophet (pbuh) was quoted saying: “Being caught unawares by a sudden death is a grievous misfortune.”⁸

No One Should Wish for Death

Death is the greatest calamity for a believer; it is the cessation of his good deeds. That is why it is disliked to wish for one’s death, or pray to Allah for it, due to any hardship or a distressful situation such as an illness or calamity.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Let no one among you wish for death due to any hardship that befell him. But if one has no other choice, but to do so, he should say: “O Allah! Grant me life as long as life is good for me, and cause me to die when death is better for me.”⁹

On the contrary, one should pray for Allah to give him long life and enable him to strive for good deeds till the last moment in his life.

⁸ . Narrated by Abu Daw‘ud

⁹ . Narrated by all the six narrators of Hadeeth , (agreed upon)

The Prophet (pbuh) once went to visit his uncle, Al-'Abbas and he found him wishing for death. Thereupon the Prophet said, "O Abbas! O Uncle of Allah's Messenger! Do not wish for death. If you do good and live long, your good deeds will multiply. Then that is better for you. If you are not good and your death is delayed, you may seek Allah's forgiveness. That is better for you. So do not wish for death." ¹⁰

It is permissible, however, to wish for death only when one's faith is at risk. For instance, the Prophet (pbuh) used to supplicate :

O Allah! I ask You for the means to do good, to avoid evil, and to love the poor, and I beseech You to forgive me and have mercy on me. When You subject my people to a trial, cause me to die without being affected by it. O Allah! I ask Your love, the love of those who love You, and the love of all such actions that bring one closer to Your Love. ¹¹

10 - Narrated by Ahmad and Al-Hakim, who says it is sound according to Muslim's conditions.

11- Narrated by Tirmidhi who said it is a good and sound tradition

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, used to pray,

"O Allah! I have grown old, I have become weak, and my flock has spread far and wide. Therefore, O Allah, take me to You before I fall short of doing my duties or transgress my limits." ¹²

12 - Narrated by Imam Malik

Chapter (3)

What should be Done to the dying person?

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمْ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُصْرُطُونَ⁶¹
ثُمَّ رُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمْ الْحَقَّ ۚ لَا لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَهُوَ أَسْرَعُ الْحَاسِبِينَ⁶²

“ .. when death approaches one of you, Our Messengers (angels) take his soul, and they never fail in their duty. (6- 61)

Then they are returned unto Allah, their True Master, surely His is the Judgment * And He is the swiftest in taking account. (6-62)

What Should be Done When Someone Dies

As everyone knows, death is an inevitable event in the life of this world, and the Qur'an and Sunnah tell Muslims how it should be dealt with.

The following pages describe 11 steps that should be taken - from the dying person's deathbed to his burial.

1) Prompting the dying person to say the Shahada

For those who are attending a dying person, the first step should be to prompt him to say the testimony of Tawheed (monotheism): “**La ilaha illa-Allah - There is no god but Allah**” (This is known as Talqeen of Shahada). One must ensure that the Shahadah is the last words of the dying person in order to remind him of the Oneness of Allah, and make sure that he is meeting with Allah in the state of Tawheed.

- **Imam Muslim and others have narrated in a Hadeeth that the Prophet (pbuh) said: “Prompt your dying people to say, ‘La ilaha illa-Allah’, (there is no god but Allah).”**
- **Imam Abu Daw'ud and others narrated**

that the Prophet (pbuh) said: “He whose last words are: ‘La ilaha illa-Allah’ (there is no god but Allah) shall enter Paradise.”

Some scholars see that the dying person should be prompted to say the two testimonies of Islam: “There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is Messenger of Allah.”

Even if the dying person is mentally impaired, he should be prompted to say the Shahada for he may be able to say it in his heart. Shahadah should be so clear that the dying person might be able to hear it and repeat it. However, one should avoid putting much pressure on the dying person lest he should become annoyed and utter something improper.

If the dying person is not a Muslim, it is much recommended to prompt him to say the Shahadah so that he might be saved at the last moment in this life; this is what Prophet (pbuh) did with his uncle Abu Talib.

Satan Attends Death

It is reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

“Satan will come to one of you at his death time and say: ‘If you wish to attain salvation die as a Jew or a Christian. “

This is the last chance for Satan to seduce man. He comes to the dying person and reminds him of his money, wealth, children, other things that were dear to him in his life in order to distract him from saying the Shahadah. That is why some people, when prompted to say the Shahadah, can not respond and say other words that they were most busy with in their life, such as phrases of songs, words used in business, or talk about nonsense.

(2) Laying the dying person on his right side facing Qibla

The dying person should be laid on his right side and face is turned toward the Qiblah as recommended by the Prophet (pbuh).

- **It is also reported that when the Prophet (pbuh) knew that Al-Bara Ibn Ma’rur, made a will that his face would be turned toward the Qiblah at the time of his death, he said: ‘Truly, He has been guided to the فطرة, (the right and natural thing)’ and prayed for him.**
- **Imam Ahmad reported that Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet, peace be upon him, at the time of her death laid herself on her right side, turned her face toward the Qiblah, and placed her right hand under her head.**

If this position is not possible the dying person should be laid flat on his back with his feet toward the Qiblah, and his face raised a little, facing it.

(3) Reciting Surat Ya-Seen¹³

Many scholars recommend reading Qur'an particularly Surat Ya-Seen to the dying person hoping it will help him affirm his beliefs in the resurrection and the last day, and give him hope of attaining Allah's blessing and forgiveness. So it is hoped that he will meet with Allah with firm faith.

Ahmad, Abu Daw'ud, Nasa'i, Al-Hakim, and Ibn Hibban reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Surat Ya-Seen is the heart of the Qur'an. Whoever recites it seeking the pleasure of Allah and the Hereafter will receive Allah's forgiveness. So recite it to your dead."

Although some scholars regard this tradition as weak, others consider it sound enough to be accepted.

Ahmad and Ibn Hibban reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Ya-Seen would not be recited to any dying person but Allah would ease his suffering."

The following verses of Surat Ya-Seen are indeed a glad tidings to every one who dies as a believer because it mentions the story of a righteous man who heard and obeyed the call of the Allah's messengers. He invited his people to believe in Allah's messengers but they refused and killed him. After his death, he rejoiced at the good news of entering Paradise and wished that his people could know about this so that they would believe in Allah as he did.

Then there came running from the farthest part of the City a man saying 'O my people! obey the messengers. Obey those who ask no reward of you and who have themselves received Guidance. And why do I not worship Him who has created me? And unto Him you shall all be brought back. Shall I take other gods besides Him? If the Most Gracious wishes me any harm, their intercession will avail me nothing, nor can they save me'. I would indeed, if I were to do so, be in manifest Error. I have believed in the Lord of you all so listen then to me! It was said (to him): 'Enter the Garden.' He said 'Ah me! would that my People know ! That my Lord has granted me Forgiveness and has enrolled me among the honored!'

Surat Ya-Seen (36), verses (20:27)

(4) The dying person is not legally Capable

At the time of death the dying person is not legally capable. His actions are no longer valid because the person at this situation does not belong to this world; he is crossing to Next world. Qur'an and Hadeeth stressed that faith and repentance at this critical time are not accepted because they are not based on free choice as it is explained by the Surat An-Nesaa' (4), verse (18):

"Forgiveness is not for those who do ill deeds until when death faces one of them he says, 'Now I have repented indeed'..."

The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Allah accepts the repentance of His slave as long as the soul has not reached the throat."

That is why Islam prompts people to hasten in good deeds and not to postpone repentance because death could strike us at any time and nothing would help then.

Also the deeds and sayings of a dying person related to the affairs of the life of this world such as making a will, giving a charity, selling and buying, or divorcing one's wife are no longer legally valid. He is no longer responsible for any of them.

(5) Closing the eyes of the Deceased at death time

As explained before the gaze of the dying person follows the soul when it departs from the body. It is recommended to close his eyes at that time, in order not to aggravate his sorrow for himself at this difficult moment of death when he would be sure that his life in this world has come to its end.

Muslim narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) went to visit Abu Salmah when he was dying. When he noticed his eyes were wide open and blank with the stare of death, he, peace be upon him, closed his eyes and said: "Verily, when a soul is seized, the eyesight follows it."

(6) Invoking Allah upon Witnessing Death

Those who attend the dying person should avoid talking in nonsense matters. They should pray sincerely for Allah's forgiveness and mercy for him at this critical time. It is reported that the angels, who attend death say "Amen¹⁴" for whatever is said at that time. This is an indication that the supplications at this time are guaranteed to be accepted by Allah.

14 -They ask Allah to accept their prayer.

- Muslim narrated by Umm Salamah that when her husband Abu Salamah died, some of the people of his family wept and wailed. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: 'Do not supplicate for yourselves anything but good, for angels say "Amen" to what you say'. He then said: 'O Allah, forgive Abu Salamah, raise his degree among those who are rightly guided, grant him a successor in his descendants who remain. Forgive us and him, O Lord of the Universe, and make his grave spacious, and grant him light in it.'
- Imam Ahmad and Muslim reported from Umm Salmah that she said: "I heard the Prophet (pbuh) saying: "If a servant of Allah is afflicted with a calamity and says: 'Verily we belong to Allah and truly to Him we shall return. O Allah! Protect me in this calamity that has befallen me and replace it with something better', Allah will accept his prayer, grant him reward for his affliction, and replace it with something better."

It is recommended to remind the dying person of his best deeds and characteristics, and that Allah will accept him among His favored servants, so that the dying person meets with

Allah while he is hopeful of His mercy and forgiveness. One of the good signs for the dying person is to have good thoughts about Allah and hope for His mercy and forgiveness.

Al-Bukhari narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Let no one of you die but while he is thinking good about Allah."

Even those who wronged themselves should be given hope in Allah's forgiveness. Al-Hajjaj¹⁵ in his deathbed said: "O! Allah! Forgive me for they claim that you will not do so." 'Umar Ibn Abdel Aziz¹⁶ said: "I envied Al Hajjaj for nothing but those words at his death."

(7) Covering the Deceased

The body of the deceased should be covered;

Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated that A'isha said: "When the Messenger of Allah died, he was covered with a piece of cloth that had some designs on it"

The reason for this is to show respect to the

¹⁵ - Al Hajjaj was a tyrant ruler of Iraq at the time of the Al-Amawiah Caliphate; he imprisoned, persecuted, and killed many Moslems unjustly.

¹⁶ - A just Amawy Caliph; he was so God fearing that he was regarded as the fifth Caliph of the guided Caliphate. At his Caliphate no poor people were found eligible for to take Zakat (the obligatory charity).

deceased dignity, and also to safeguard the body against the curiosity of those looking for defects, imperfections, or changes in the body.

Kissing the Deceased

Kissing a dead person is permissible. The Prophet (pbuh) kissed 'Uthman Ibn Maz'un after his death. When the Prophet died, Abu Bakr leaned over him and kissed him between his eyes saying: "O my Prophet! O my best friend! "

(8) Burying the Deceased without Delay

As soon as death is confirmed the body should be prepared for burial without delay. It is the duty of the guardian of the deceased to arrange for his burial as soon as possible after death is confirmed because the body might deteriorate in case of delay. The deceased should be washed and enshrouded, then, the funeral prayer should be held for him before his burial.

Abu Daw'ud narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "I see that Talhah is on the verge of death. Inform me about him (when he passes away) and make immediate preparations for his burial, for a Muslim's remains should not be left long with his family after his death."

However, if there is strong reason¹⁷ the burial may be delayed if no physical deterioration in the body is feared.

Transferring the Deceased

It is not recommended to transfer the body to be buried in another country. It is recommended to bury him in the country where he died for it is more convenient and more secure against deterioration of the physical remains. It is reported that whosoever is buried in a foreign land will be given a distance in Paradise equal to that of the distance between his place of birth and his burial place.

When Abd-ur Rahman Ibn Abu Bakr died in Abyssinia, his body was carried to Makkah where he was buried. When 'Aishah visited his grave she said: 'By Allah! Had I been there when you died, I would not have allowed you to be buried anywhere except at the place where you had died.'

However, some scholars say it is permissible to transfer the body from one place to another in case there is a valid reason. The deceased may be transferred only to the sacred cities of Mecca, Madinah, or Al-Quds.

17 - Such as a legal reason as in case of investigating a crime.

(9) Washing the Deceased

The body should be washed with soap and water three times at least if possible. If soap is not available, then washing with ordinary water will suffice.

Washing the deceased is similar to the ordinary Islamic wash (Gusil).

1. The washer should begin by lightly pressing the stomach of the deceased so as to push out, if possible, any remnants from it.
2. Clean and wash the private parts using a wash cloth because touching the private parts of the dead is forbidden.
 1. Perform complete Wudu' (ablution).
 1. Wash the head thoroughly making sure water reaches the roots of the hair.
 1. Wash the right side of the entire body then left side making sure that water reaches every part of the body.

Remarks:

- Washing might be repeated several times but it is not recommended to be more than seven times. **According to an authentic tradition that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "Wash the**

dead body an odd number of times, that is, three, five, or seven, or more if you feel it is necessary." Ibn Abd al-Barr commented, "I know about no one who recommended more than seven washes." Also Ahmad disliked to exceed beyond seven times.

- Water used for washing may be perfumed.
- After having washed the body, it should be dried and perfumed.
- Tayamum is performed in case where there is a lack of water or if washing is impossible, such as when the body is decomposed, or if nobody is available to perform the washing (when a man dies with a accompany of foreign women or a woman dies with a accompany of foreign men).
- The washer must be a God-fearing and trustworthy person who will not broadcast what he or she might see except what is good.
- The martyrs who were killed in a battle field should neither be washed, nor enshrouded, nor should funeral prayer be offered for them. **Imam Ahmad reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said, "Do not wash those who die as martyrs, for their every wound or drop of blood**

will exude a fragrance like musk on the Day of Judgment."

- Martyrs who were injured in the battle field and died later should be washed and enshrouded as well as those who are regarded as martyrs such as those who died in an accident, while defending their family, or in an epidemic... etc.

(10) Shrouding the Deceased

The deceased should be enshrouded so that all his body is covered from head to feet. It is recommended to enshroud him in a white shroud and in an odd number of sheets. It is not recommended to enshroud him in expensive material. Ibn Majah reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "Trustworthy persons should wash your dead."

The only exception is the Martyr who died on the battlefield who should be buried in the clothes he wore when he died, even if they are bloodstained. Additional shrouds may be used if his clothes are not enough to cover all of his body.

(11) Offering Funeral Prayer

The funeral prayer for a deceased is a collective obligation (Fard Kifayah) on Muslims; some Muslims must offer it otherwise all Muslims would be sinners. This prayer is some sort of

intercession to the deceased at this critical time for him. It is the last regards of Muslims for him. The Prophet (pbuh) himself used to offer prayers for all Muslims except for those who were in debt, but he used to let Muslims offer it for them instead of him.

Both Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated that Abu Hurairah reported that when the Prophet (pbuh) was informed of the death of a person, he used to ask: 'Does he owe anything to anyone?' If the answer was in the affirmative, he would then ask: 'Has he (the deceased) left anything to settle his debt?' If he had left something to settle his debt, he would offer the funeral prayer for him. Otherwise, he would say to the Muslims: 'Offer a (funeral) prayer for your brother.'"

Supplication for the deceased is a basic element of the funeral prayer. Any supplication, even a brief one, may be used for this purpose. However, it is recommended to use one of the authentic supplications said by Prophet (pbuh).

No Funeral Prayer for Martyrs

As was pointed earlier, funeral prayers should not be offered for the martyrs who were killed in a battlefield. That was the practice at the

time of the Prophet and the practice of his companions after him. The martyrs of the battle of Uhud were buried while they were still bleeding. He neither washed them nor offered a funeral prayer for them.

Al-Bukhari has narrated from Jabir that the Prophet, peace be upon him, ordered that the martyrs of the battle of Uhud be buried while they were still bleeding. He neither washed them nor offered a funeral prayer for them.

Ahmad, Ahu Daw 'ud and Tirmidhi reported that Anas said: "The martyrs of Uhud were not washed. They were buried with their wounds unwashed, and no funeral prayer was offered for them."

The reason of this is that since the funeral prayer is a kind of intercession for the deceased, the martyr does not need it for he is honored by many merits. At death he is forgiven and shown his place in Paradise. Moreover, the funeral prayer is offered for a dead person, whereas a martyr is not dead but alive as Allah (swt) says in Surat Al-Imran, Chapter (3), Verse (169):

"Do not regard those who were killed for the cause of Allah as dead for indeed they are alive in the presence of their Lord."

However, funeral prayer should be offered for martyrs who were injured in the battle field and died later as well as those who are regarded as martyrs.

Remarks

Refer to appendix A and B for how to offer Funeral Prayer and the supplications.

Could Funeral Prayer be offered in the Graveyard?

The majority of scholars disapprove of offering funeral prayers in a graveyard for fear of glorifying graves. They rely on the tradition that:

The Prophet (pbuh) said: "The entire earth is made a place of prayer for me except the graveyard and bathroom."

However, others see that there is no harm in offering funeral prayer in a graveyard because there are reports that the Prophet (pbuh) himself offered funeral prayers for some deceased after their burial in the graveyard of Madinah. They see what is forbidden is to offer regular prayers in the graveyard not funeral prayer for is quite distinct from regular prayers.

Funeral Prayer for an Absentee

It is permissible to offer a funeral prayer for a person who died in another place whether this

place is near or far. This is called “prayer for an absentee.” It is agreed upon that the Prophet (pbuh) informed people about the death of Negus on the same day he died, and then took them out to offer funeral prayer for him.

The funeral prayer may also be offered up to one month after the burial according to some scholars.

Al-Bukhari narrated by Abu Huraira that a black man or a black woman used to sweep the mosque and he or she died. The Prophet asked about her (or him). He was told that she (or he) had died. He said, ‘Why did you not inform me? Show me his grave (or her grave).’ So he went to her (his) grave and offered her (his) funeral prayer.”

Women are Permitted to Offer Funeral Prayers

Women, like men, may offer funeral prayer, singly or in a congregation. ‘Aishah, mother of the believers, ordered the body of Sa’d Ibn Abi Waqqas to be brought to her so that she could offer a funeral prayer over him.

Reward for Offering Funeral Prayer

Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said: “Whoever

follows a funeral procession and offers the prayer for the deceased will get one kerat of reward. And whoever follows it and remains with it until the body is buried will get two kerats of reward; the least of which is equal in weight to ‘Mount Uhud’, or he said ‘one of them is like Uhud.’

Persons for Whom Funeral Prayer is to be Offered

There is a consensus among the jurists that funeral prayer is offered for all Muslims, men and women, the righteous and the wicked, young and old so long as they died on Islam.

Ibn Hazm said: “Funeral prayer should be offered for all Muslims, whether good or bad, including those sentenced to death and those who die fighting. The Imam, or any one other than him, may lead the funeral prayers.”

The reports about the Prophet, peace be upon him, not praying for embezzlers and those guilty of suicide may be explained perhaps by considering such refusal to be a form of reprimand to these people. This is similar to his refusal to pray for those who died in debt, though he asked other Muslims to offer the funeral prayer for them.

The majority of Muslim scholars are of the opinion that a funeral prayer may be offered for all Muslims including those sentenced to death under Islamic law, or stoned to death, or those who committed suicide, or some similarly sinful act.

Abu Ghalib reported: "I asked Abu Amamah Al-Bahili: 'What if a man is known to drink liquor. Should a funeral prayer be offered for him? ' He said: 'Yes, for he might [at least] once in his life, while lying down for rest, have said: "There is no deity but Allah," and he might have been forgiven by Allah' ."

In a authentic *Hadeeth* Al-Hassan is reported to have said: "Funeral prayer may be offered for all those who declare 'There is no deity but Allah. ' It will be offered for all Muslims; for it is an act of intercession on behalf of the deceased."

Should Funeral Prayer be offered for an aborted baby?

Funeral Prayer may be offered for an aborted baby out of sympathy for his parents.

The Prophet (pbuh) said: "A funeral prayer should be offered for an aborted

baby, seeking for his parents the mercy and forgiveness of Allah."

However, this is based on two conditions:

- 1) how far along the pregnancy is,
 - 2) and the detection of signs of life in it.
1. If pregnancy is less than four months old then the miscarried baby is not regarded as a human being yet. It may not be washed, nor a funeral prayer be offered for it. It should be wrapped in a piece of cloth and buried.
 2. On the other hand, if pregnancy is four months old or older, and the existence of life is established in the miscarried baby (by breathing, crying, sneezing, or moving, ... etc.) then if it dies it should be washed and a funeral prayer offered for it.

(12) The Funeral Procession must Proceed at a fast Pace.

It is recommended to be quick in carrying out the funeral and burial.

The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Walk briskly while carrying a coffin, for if the deceased is righteous, you would be taking him to something better, and if he is an evil person, then you will be getting him off your necks."

One should pay respect when a funeral procession passes.

Al-Bukhari narrated that once a funeral procession passed by the Prophet (pbuh) and he stood up. When he was told that it was of a Jew, he said: "Is it not a human soul?"

The funeral procession speaks for itself in a voice that is not heard by all creatures of Allah except mankind nor jinn.

Al-Bukhari narrated that the Prophet said, "When a funeral is ready and the men carry the deceased on their necks (shoulders), if he was pious then it will say, 'Present me quickly', and if he was not pious, then it will say, 'Woe to it, where are they taking it?' And its voice is heard by everything except Mankind and if any human heard it he would fall unconscious."

Good believers are Allah's witnesses on earth.

Al-Bukhari narrated by Anas Ibn Malik that a funeral procession passed and the people praised the deceased. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "It has been affirmed to him." Then another funeral procession passed and the people spoke badly of the deceased.

The Prophet said, "It has been affirmed to him". 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab asked: "O Allah's Messenger, what has been affirmed?" He (pbuh) replied, "You praised this, so Paradise has been affirmed to him; and you spoke badly of this, so Hell has been affirmed to him. You people are Allah's witnesses on earth."

Can Women Accompany Funeral procession?

There are two different opinions regarding this point:

1) First Opinion

The Hanafi, Shafi'i and Hanbali schools disapprove the participation of women in funeral processions. Their point of view is based on the opinions of Ibn Mas'ud, Ibn 'Umar, Abu Amamah, 'Aishah, Masruq, Al-Hassan, An-Nakh'i, Awza'i, and Ishaq. They refer to the traditions which directly forbid women from participating in funeral processions. As example, Ibn Majah and Al-Hakim reported that :

Muhammad Ibn Al-Hanafiyyah reported that 'Ali said: "The Prophet, peace be upon him, went out and saw a group of women sitting outside. When he asked them why they were sitting there, they told him that they were waiting for the

funeral procession. He asked them: 'Are you going to wash the body?' They said: 'No.' The Prophet, peace be upon him, asked them: 'Are you going to carry the coffin?' They said: 'No.' He asked them: 'Will you place the body in the grave?' They said: 'No.' At this he said to them: 'Then go back to your homes with your sins and without gaining any reward.'

But scholars regard this tradition as weak and question the reliability of one of its narrators (Dinar Ibn 'Umar). Abu Hatim says he is not well known; Azdi describes him as *Matruk* (or his Hadeeth is discarded); and Al-Khalili in labeled him as "a liar." Other traditions which support this view have also some kind of weakness.

2) Second Opinion

Other scholars understood from these traditions that women are discouraged from accompany funeral procession but not strictly forbidden. Imams: Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, and Ibn Majah reported that:

Umm 'Atiyah (raa) reported, "We were forbidden to accompany funeral processions, but this prohibition was not mandatory for us."

According to Imam Malik, it is not disliked for an old woman to attend a funeral. In his

opinion, a young woman afflicted by the death of a dear one may also accompany a funeral procession without any disapproval, provided she is well covered and her presence does not cause any temptation.

Also Ibn Hazm see that that it is permissible for women to accompany funeral processions. He saw that the argument put forth by the majority of scholars is not sound. He said: "We do not disapprove of women attending a funeral procession, nor do we prevent them from doing so. Among the traditions reported on this subject there is no authentic *Hadeeth*." He referred to the following tradition:

***Hadeeth* narrated by Shu'bah on the authority of Waki', from Hisham Ibn 'Urwah, from Wahab Ibn Kaysan, from Muhammad Ibn 'Amr Ibn 'Ata who reported it from Abu Hurairah that once when the Prophet, peace be upon him, attended a funeral, 'Umar saw a woman there and yelled at her. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "Leave her, O 'Umar! Verily her eyes shed tears, the soul feels the pangs, and the promised hour is near."** (The chain of authorities of this *Hadeeth* is sound)

To further support his argument, he referred to

the above tradition reported by Umm 'Atiyah, and a sound tradition reported from Ibn 'Abbas that he did not regard it as a disliked act.

Remark

Considering the opinion that women cannot participate in funeral procession, women at their homes still can do a lot of things for the diseased; they can attend the diseased at death time, care for him, participate in preparing him for burial, washing, enshrouding (if the diseased is a female or a her husband), supplicating for him, and finally they can offer funeral prayer to farewell the disease.

Discouraged actions in a funeral procession

While accompanying a funeral procession, one should respect the dignity of the diseased and avoid to:

- shout, or raise one's voice.
- carry torches of fire in a funeral procession.
- sit down before those carrying the coffin put it down.
- remain seated when a funeral procession passes by.
- do any action that shows disrespect to the disease and his family such as eating, drinking, talking, or smiling and laughing.

(13) Burying the Deceased

The deceased should be buried in a grave covered with the sand of the earth (not in a coffin) and his face should be directed toward the Qiblah.

Burial could be anytime, Day/Night

The majority of scholars are of the opinion that it is permissible to offer a funeral prayer for the deceased and bury him anytime during the day or night. At-Tirmidhi said: "Most scholars consider the burial of the dead at night permissible, provided the rights of the deceased are not neglected.

At-Tirmidhi narrated that the Prophet, peace be upon him, buried at night a man, who used to remember Allah aloud during the night. Ibn ' Abbas reported: "The Prophet, peace be upon him, went into a grave one night and was given a lamp. Then he lifted the body from the side toward the Qiblah, saying: "May Allah be merciful to you. You used to cry a lot and often recited the Qur'an." After this the Prophet, peace be upon him, said four takbirs."

(Saheeh Hadeeth according to At-Tirmidhi)

Also it is narrated that 'Ali buried Fatimah at night. Abu Bakr, 'Uthman, 'Aishah, and Ibn

Mas'ud were buried during the night as well, may Allah be pleased with all of them.

However, if it is feared that any of his rights of the deceased might be neglected then night time burial is disliked.

Ibn Majah narrated that Jabir (raa) reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "Do not bury your dead during the night unless you are compelled to do so."

Imam Muslim narrated that of the companions of the the Prophet, peace be upon him, died and was shrouded in a short shroud, not enough to cover all of his body, and was buried during the night. When the Prophet, peace be upon him, knew about this he delivered a sermon expressing his disapproval of burying someone at night unless there is a compelling necessity.

Death, a Form of Rest

Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim reported from Abu Qatadah that once, when the Prophet passed by a funeral, he said: "He is now in peace secure from others and others are in peace and secure from him." The people asked: "O Allah's Messenger! Who is in peace and from whom are others in peace?" He said: "A believing servant (of Allah) is relieved from afflictions

of this world upon his death, while upon the death of a wicked person, other people, land, trees, and animals are rid of his evil."

Praying for the Deceased after the Burial

People should stay a little after burial to pray for forgiveness of the deceased, acceptance of his good deeds by Allah, to show mercy to him, and to support him at this critical time when he is being questioned in his grave about his god, prophet, and religion.

- **It is recommended to prompt the deceased the answer of the questions of the two angels. One should say three times: "O! so and so, say: there is no god but Allah; Allah is my Lord; Mohammad is my messenger; Islam is my religion."**
- **Abu Daw'ud and al-Hakim reported, a Hadeeth considered as an authentic tradition, that 'Uthman (raa) narrated that, "After burial, the Prophet, peace be upon him, would stand by the grave of the deceased and say: "Seek forgiveness for your brother and pray for his acceptance, because he is now being questioned about it."**

It is also reported that, "After the deceased was buried 'Ali (raa) used to pray: 'O Allah!

This is Your servant, who is now a guest of Yours, and You are the best host. Forgive him, and expand the entrance into heaven for him." Refer to appendix B for special supplications for the deceased.

Reciting Qura'n and Surat Ya-Seen

It is also recommended to recite Surat Ya-Seen at the grave and ask Allah to protect him against the punishment of the grave, widen his grave, enlighten it, and make it a garden of the Paradise.

Al-Baihaqi narrated that Ibn 'Umar (raa) used to recommend to recite the first and the last few verses of Surah Al-Baqarah at the grave after the burial was over.

(14) Respect the Deceased Dignity

The deceased honor, dignity, sacredness should be respected after his death as they were respected in his lifetime. We should always pray for forgiveness for the deceased and speak only of his good deeds.

Abu Dawuod and At-Tirmadhi reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Recall the good deeds of the dead and refrain from speaking about their ill deeds."

Nothing of his misdeeds should be mentioned unless it is for reasons approved in Islamic laws.

Imam Ahmad and An-Nasa'i reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Do not speak ill of the dead for they have faced the consequences of what they have earned." In another tradition, A'isha narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Do not speak ill of our dead then you hurt our living."

(15) Settling the Debt of the Deceased

The debt of the deceased, if any, should be settled as soon as possible after death is confirmed before dividing the estate.

For Imam Ahmad and Tirmidhi narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "A believer's soul remains in suspense until all his debts are paid off."

As was pointed out before, the Prophet (pbuh) did not offer funeral prayers for those who had died in debt and left nothing behind to settle the debt.

Both Imam Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated that Abu Hurairah reported that when the Prophet (pbuh) was informed of the death of a person, he used to ask: "Does he owe anything to anyone? If

the answer was in the affirmative, he would then ask: 'Has he (the deceased) left anything to settle his debt?' If he had left something to settle his debt, he would offer the funeral prayer for him. Otherwise, he would say to the Muslims: 'Offer a (funeral) prayer for your brother'"

The Prophet (pbuh) used to pay the debt for those who left behind no wealth to settle their debt.

Al-Bukhari narrated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "I am nearer to the believers than their own selves. So if someone dies leaving behind a debt, but no wealth to settle it, we shall pay his debt, and if someone dies and leaves some estate behind him, it is for his heirs (to pay his debt)."

This issue is dependent upon the intention of the debtor. If a person takes debt with the sincere intention of paying it back, but for some reason beyond his control, he was not able to pay it back, Allah will forgive him and settle his debt. Also the person who dies in debt with sufficient means to pay it and was willing to do so, but his heirs do not pay it, then, forgiveness is hoped for him.

But he who takes people's money with the intention of not paying it back, will be punished by Allah.

Al-Bukhari narrated by Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "If anyone takes other people's money with the intention to repay it and then he or she should die without settling the debt, Allah will pay the debt on his behalf. And if anyone takes money or property (of others) with the intention of destroying it, Allah will destroy him."

According to strong traditions, the soul is prevented from entering Paradise until its debts are fully paid off and settled.

16) Weeping over the Deceased is Permissible

It is no sin to weep silently over the deceased without uttering anything improper. Weeping is a mercy from Allah that brings relief to the afflicted person. However, crying loudly and wailing are forbidden. It is reported in authentic traditions that:

- **The Prophet (pbuh) wept on the death of his son, Ibrahim, and said: "The eyes shed tears and the heart feels pain, but we utter only what pleases our Lord. O Ibrahim! We are aggrieved at your demise."**

- The Prophet (pbuh) said: “Allah does not punish a person for shedding tears or feeling pain in one’s heart. But He does punish, though he may show mercy, because of what he utters with this,” and then he pointed to his tongue.
- He also wept when his grand daughter, Umaymah, daughter of Zainab, died. At this Sa’ad ibn ‘Ubadah said, “O Messenger of Allah! Are you weeping? Did you not forbid Zainab from weeping?” The Prophet (pbuh) replied: “This (weeping) is the mercy that Allah has placed in the hearts of His servants. And surely Allah bestows mercy upon those who are merciful among His servants.”

Wailing over the diseased is Forbidden

Crying aloud and wailing over the deceased was prohibited by the Prophet as well as other wrong practices of the pre-Islamic days of Ignorance, such as shaving the head, tearing one’s clothes, and dusting oneself with sand.

- Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated that Umm ‘Atiyyah reports: “The Messenger of Allah made us (women) pledge that we will not wail over (the dead)”

- The Prophet (pbuh) said, “The deceased is tortured in his grave for the wailing done over him.”

This tradition does not mean that the dead are actually punished because of the wailing over them because the Qur’an states clearly that nobody is responsible for the misdeeds of others. The Qur’an says: “**No sinful soul carries the sins of other soul.**” The torture of the deceased is the feeling of pain and displeasure of his family if they wail over him for he hears their wailing and their deeds are shown to him.

Mourning is only for three Days except for the Husband

It is not permissible for a woman to mourn for the deceased more than three days except if the deceased is her husband, in which case she should mourn for four months and ten days. In mourning she should not wear makeup, perfume, adornment, jewelery, or bright clothes.etc.

It is reported that the prophet’s wife, Um Habiba, on the third day after learning about the death of her father Abu Sufyan, asked for some kind of a yellow perfume and scented her cheeks and forearms saying, “No doubt, I

would not have been in need of this, had I not heard the Prophet saying: 'It is not legal for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day to mourn for more than three days for any dead person except her husband, for whom she should mourn for four months and ten days.' "

17) Preparing Food for the Bereaved Family

The Prophet, peace be upon him, encouraged Muslims to be supportive and compassionate to the bereaved family during this difficult time. He recommended for Muslims to prepare food for the relatives of the deceased and urge them to eat, as the first step to ease their pains and help them cope with their grief and loss.

A sound tradition narrated by Abu Daw'ud, Ibn Majah and Tirmidhi that Abdullah ibn Ja'far reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said:

"Prepare some food for the family of Ja'far, for what has befallen them is keeping them preoccupied."

Imam Ash-Shafi'i said: "It is recommended that the relatives of the deceased prepare enough food to feed all the deceased's family for one day and night, for it is the Sunnah of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and a practice of good people."

This is prophetic recommendation is against the present day custom that the deceased's family should prepare food for the people coming to pay their condolences, for it over burdens them, and increases their grief unnecessarily. Some scholars consider this to be absolutely forbidden. Other scholars are on the opinion that it is permissible, however, if there is a real need for it, for example, preparing food for people who come from far places to attend the funeral.

18) Offering Condolences

Offering condolences to the family of the deceased is very desirable for it is a way of sharing their grief with them.

Ibn Majah and Al-Baihaqi reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Every believer who consoles his brother in distress will be dressed by Allah in an apparel of honor on the Day of Resurrection."

Offering condolences is only for three days after death, either before, or after the burial. Condolences may be offered at a later time if one was not present at the time of death.

Sitting for Condolences

The practice of the Prophet (pbuh), his companions, and the righteous after them is to

offer condolences to the family of the deceased then leave without gathering or sitting with the family.

In some Islamic countries people gather together in groups to offer condolences. Islam disapproves of these gatherings, even if nothing forbidden is practiced in them. For such a gathering is a burden on the family of the deceased; it increases their sorrow and grief, and prevents them from carrying on their usual tasks and needs.

However, some scholars see that there is no sin in gathering so long as it is outside mosques, condolences last for only three days, and nothing wrong is practiced there.

Words of Condolences

Condolences may be offered in any words so long as they help ease the pain, decrease the distress, encourage patience, and bring solace to the bereaved. It is preferable, however, to use the wordings reported in the Prophet (pbuh) traditions. As for the response to condolences, the receiver should respond, “*Amin*” and “May Allah reward you.”

Examples

1- Al- Bukhari narrated that Usamah Ibn Zaid reported, “A daughter of the

Prophet, peace be upon him, sent him a message to come to her house, because a son of hers had died. In response, he sent her a message with his regards saying:

‘Verily, to Allah belongs what He has taken, and to Him belongs what He has given. For everything He has set a term. So be patient and be content’.”

Imam An-Nawawi commented about this tradition: “This is a very comprehensive Hadeeth. It includes a number of basic principles of Islam. It encourages one to be patient in the face of catastrophe and hard times. The meaning of ‘what Allah has taken’ is that everything belongs to Allah. Therefore what he takes also belongs to Him and not to others. He takes what He owns. Whatever we have is on trust. Thus, we should be patient and content with whatever befalls us.”

2- Ash-Shafi’i has reported the following in his Musnad from Ja’far Ibn Muhammad, who reported from his father and from his grandfather, both of whom said: “When the Prophet, peace be upon him, died and condolences were offered, they heard someone saying.

‘In Allah is the best consolation against every catastrophe, a substitute for every

loss, and a replacement for anything that is missed. Trust Allah, seek His aid, and be hopeful of His mercy. The one really afflicted is the one who is deprived of the reward for his misfortune." The chain of narrators of this tradition is weak.

Remarks

Muslim scholars say that:

a- If a Muslim offers condolences to another Muslim he should say:

"May Allah increase your reward, give you the best consolation, and forgive your deceased beloved."

b- If one gives condolences to a Muslim for a disbelieving relative, one should say:

"May Allah increase your reward, and grant you the best of consolation."

c- If one gives condolences to a disbeliever for a Muslim relative, one should say:

"May Allah give you the best of condolences and grant forgiveness to your deceased beloved."

d- If both the deceased and the one to whom condolences are given are disbelievers, then one should say: **"May Allah grant you a substitute."**

Helping Bereaved Family Cope with Death

Muslims are encouraged not only to offer condolences to the family of the diseased and his beloved ones during the mourning period but also to be supportive, helpful, and attentive to their needs until they recover of their grief. The loving support of relatives and friends of the bereaved family and their positive actions would certainly help them find ways to cope with their loss.

Life in this World is just a Test

Re-affirm to them that life is transit joy; it is temporary; it is very little comparing to the eternal life in the Hereafter. It is just a test and we are here to be tried with both the good and evil. Hardships and ease are a trial for you to test your faith.

Death is Inevitable

It is a great consolation to their souls to remind them that death is the inevitable end of every human being; there is no one who shall be saved; no one has the power to escape from

it; even the prophets, the closest to God, were not spared of death; the holy Qur'an says: **"All that on Earth shall perish. But the Face of your Lord shall remain forever."** The only option for man is to submit to God and accept His decree. No one has the power to prevent death; when one is stricken with death, he is totally helpless; he can do nothing but to surrender. Consider that there are multitudes of millions of people died before, and millions die today and millions will die in the future.

Death is not the End of our Existence

They should be reminded that death is only the departure of the soul of the person from the life of this world; it is not the end of the person's existence; although death is a very painful emotional experience; however it may be filled with hope and mercy. There is an eternal life is to come, and we pray for God's mercy to be with the diseased, in hopes that he may find peace and happiness in the life to come; perhaps he is experiencing a joyful life which is much better for him than the life of this world. After all, the diseased returned to be in the presence of Allah, His Lord, the all Compassionate, Who is more Merciful to him than his dearest ones in his previous life. And whatever is with Allah (swt) is better and everlasting.

Thank Allah for the Calamite was not Bigger

They should be reassured that he is not alone in his catastrophe. There are many people who share with him the same experience of loss, suffering and pain. They should thank Allah that the calamite was not bigger than that. For example, if one lost a child, he should remember that there are people who lost two, three, or even more of their children. And some people lost all their family members at one time.

We Belong to Allah and unto Him we are Returning

The best soothing words on calamities are the verses from 155 to 157 in Surat Al-Baqara (2) :

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ
وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالْثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ (١٥٥) الَّذِينَ إِذَا
أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ (١٥٦)
أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ
(١٥٧) البقرة

"And surely We shall try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives and crops; but give glad tidings to the steadfast, Who say, when a misfortune strikes them: Verily! we belong to Allah and Verily! unto Him we are returning. Such are they on whom are blessings from their Lord, and mercy. Such are the rightly guided.

The Muslim must be aware that misfortunes and calamities are part of our life; they are an essential element for our spiritual growth.

The above verses describe the attitudes of strong believers when they face various kinds of difficulties in this life and give them glad tidings. When a misfortune strikes them they face it with patience and steadfastness saying: **“Verily! We belong to Allah and Verily! unto Him we are returning”** Because of their strong faith, patience, and clear vision, they are promised countless blessings from their Lord, mercy, and guidance both in this life and the next life to come. Commenting on these verses of the Qur’an, Ibn Abbas (raa) said: “Allah, the Almighty and the Exalted, informs us that when a believer is patient and resigned after a misfortune visits him and invokes Allah, Allah will grant him three (good) merits: blessings, mercy, and guidance to the right path.”

The Best Cure

Reciting the phrase, **“Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji’un - Verily! We belong to Allah and Verily! unto Him we are returning”** sincerely from the heart, and believing in every word in it, will bring instant cure of grief, sadness, sorrow, difficulties, and distress which the believers may experience when they encounter the loss of the beloved ones, calamities, misfortunes, or any other kind of hardships in this life.

– The first statement: **“Verily! We belong to Allah”**

indicates our acceptance of Allah as our Lord, Master, and Owner.

– The second statement: **“Verily! unto Him we are returning”** indicates our belief in the last day, resurrection, reckoning, punishment, and reward after death.

– The prophet (pbuh) encouraged Muslims to invoke Allah (swt) in these words and ask Him (swt) to replace them with something better. The bereaved family should be encouraged to follow this Sunnah of the prophet (pbuh). They should be reassured that repeating the phrase, **“Verily! We belong to Allah and Verily! unto Him we are returning”** sincerely from the heart, believing in every word of it, will help them overcome their grief and sadness.

- Imam Ahmad and Muslim reported from Umm Salamah that she said: “I heard the Prophet, peace be upon him, saying: “If a servant of Allah is afflicted with a misfortune and says: Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji’un, Allahumma ajirni fi musibati wa akhlif li khairan minha ‘Verily we belong to Allah and truly to Him shall we return. O Allah! Reward me in this calamity that has befallen me and replace it with something better for me; but Allah will accept his prayer, grant him reward for his affliction, and replace it with something better.”

She added: "When Abu Salamah (her husband) died, I invoked Allah in the words taught to me by the Prophet, peace be upon him, and Allah did grant me someone better than he, i.e., (He gave me) the Messenger of Allah (as a husband)."

- Al-Tirmidhi reported a sound Hadeeth that bu Musa al-Ash'ari that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "When a child of a servant of Allah passes away, Allah says to the angels: 'Did you take the soul of My servant's child?' They say: 'Yes.' He, the Almighty, says: 'Did you take away the apple of my servant's eye?' They say: 'Yes.' He, the Almighty says: 'What did My servant say at this?' They say: 'He praised You and said: "Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'a un (Verily we belong to Allah and to Him shall we return)."' At this Allah says: ' Build for My servant a mansion in Paradise and call it the House of Praise (bayt al-hamd)'." Tirmidhi says this is a sound hadith.

- Imam Al-Bukhari has reported from Abu Hurairah that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "Allah, the Exalted and Glorious says: 'I have no better reward than Paradise for a believing servant of

Mine who is patient and resigned when I take away one of his beloved, one among those he most cherishes in the world."

Hope for Great Rewards from Allah

It is understood of the previous discussion that Allah (swt) will surely grant blessings, mercy, and guidance to those who face the calamity with patience and submission saying: "**Verily! We belong to Allah and Verily! unto Him we are returning.**"

Furthermore, the tradition narrated by Umm Salamah reassures that these blessings include replacing the bereaved person with something better for him in the life of this world. Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (raa) said, "Whenever I am hit with a calamity I thank God for five things:

- 1) It was not in my faith (my religion);
- 2) I will be rewarded for it;
- 3) It was not worse than this;
- 4) Allah (swt) will surely follow it up with something better for me as He (swt) promised;
- 5) Allah (swt) will raise my rank in the paradise because of it.

This positive attitude of Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (raa) proved to be very successful in overcoming any calamity; he focuses on the good things, not

the bad ones; his first response to the calamity is to look for the good things and thank Allah for them. The first thing he says is praising Allah (wt), saying: “Al-Hamdu Lillah”, the glorious Qur’an confirms the same meaning; it says about the slander against the mother of the faithful Aisha (raa), the chaste and pure, **“Do not regard it as an evil for it was indeed good for you”** (Al-Noor 24-11),

This positive attitude empowers us to face the calamity courageously. This balanced approach pacifies the person so that he can see things clearly; and can recognize the wisdom behind the calamity and be able to turn it into an enriching and meaningful experience.

On the other hand, adapting a negative attitude will impair person’s way of thinking. He becomes so absorbed in his problems; he cannot see clearly; everything seems to his eyes black, miserable, negative, and hopeless. It will make him totally unable to cope with the hardship.

Resort to Prayers and Patience

They should be advised to resort to prayers for prayers incite patience in face of calamities. Prayer brings spiritual and mental serenity that help to cope with grief. The Qur’an says: “O you who believe! Seek help in patience and prayer. Lo! Allah is with the patient. Al-Baqara (2- 153).

Prayer is a reminder of God’s endless power,

infinite mercy and forgiveness. Sincere prayer leads to spiritual growth, protects our soul and minds, and thus empowers the person to think good and act good.

Regular prayers are a barrier to mental strains, despair, depression, anxiety, and particularly to all the negative emotions experienced by people during the time of distress.

Face the Calamity with More Patience

One has to qualify himself to be patient and able to deal with the bad situations he will face in this life; and should learn how to cope with them, and not to waste his life in grief and sorrow. Every bad experience is actually an opportunity for gaining more understanding of life if one exercises patience. Imam Muslim narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

“Wondrous are the believer’s affairs. For him there is good in all his affairs, and this is so only for the believer. When something pleasing happens to him, he is grateful (thanks Allah), and that is good for him; and when something displeasing happens to him, he is patient, and that is good for him”

Accept your Qadr

One of the pillars of our faith is to accept our Qadr, whether good or bad. Everything in this life is predetermined according to God’s perfect Knowledge and Wisdom. We should remember

that whatever happened is a Qadar. There is no way to change it or prevent or avoid it. Everything Allah decrees for us, good or evil, is for our benefit. But rewards are only granted for those who are patient with the Decree of Allah. Panic, complaining, and impatience cannot prevent Allah's Decree; they only deprive us of the reward of Allah.

Grief is normal when one has lost a loved one, and it is natural to feel sad and cry. If one is overwhelmed with sadness, bitterness, or anger, he is permitted to cry but should avoid any actions or sayings that may destroy his faith, for example, he must not blame or accuse Allah for his misfortunes of life, or express his dissatisfaction toward Allah as the unbelievers do in these situations. Rather, one should humbly remember Allah and His mercy, and pray for the deceased. When the Prophet Muhammad's own son died, he said: "The eyes shed tears and the heart is grieved, but we will not say anything except which pleases our Lord."

One should strive to be patient, and remember that Allah is the One who gives life and takes it away, at the time He (swt) appointed. It is not for us to question His actions.

The Prophet (pbuh) said to Ibn Abbass (raa) : "If you ask, ask God, if you seek help, seek the help of God, Know that if the nation were to gather together to benefit you with something, it would benefit you only with something that God

had already prescribed for you. And that if they gather together to harm you with anything, they would only harm you with something God had already prescribed for you. The pins have been lift, and the pages have dried (nothing can be altered - no more writing).

Whatever occurred to you could not have missed you and what missed you could never have reached you. We must be assured that Allah (swt) wants only good for us. The misfortunes of life are not meant to torture us, but to help us understand realities of this world, develop Taqwa, improve ourselves, and be prepared for the meeting with Allah, our Creator.

Back to Ordinary Routines

Encourage them to go back to their ordinary routines and usual daily activities; it will certainly help them recover faster. Convince them that getting back to normal life doesn't mean they forgot the dead person and let him down; and how long it takes until they recover isn't a measure of how much they loved the dead person.

Keep in Touch

Keeping in touch with them and offering your help even small things like preparing a meal, taking a child to school, helping in shopping, or car maintenance, will make a big difference to them and help ease their pains.

Watch for Warning Signs

Be watchful of signs of problems; people sometimes deal with their sorrow by engaging in self-destructive activities to escape from the reality of their loss. Satan whispers to them to isolate themselves so they gradually sink in despair, guilt, or helplessness which may develop into deep depression.

If their faith is not strong or they are not practicing Muslims they may neglect their religious obligations, or escape from the hardship by indulgence in drinking or using drugs, which increases their suffering and makes matters more complicated for them. Should any problem arise, you must promptly take actions before the situation gets complicated.

Take helpful measures to bring them back to faith because loss of faith is the worst loss, the real loss. Help them to improve their faith and turn to Allah (swt) seeking His forgiveness, guidance, and support. For many people death of a dear one was a turning point in their life; it improved their faith and brought them closer to Allah (swt).

Chapter (4)

The Deeds that Benefit the dead

The Deeds that Benefit the Dead

Although the deeds of the dead person cease, he/she still benefits from all of the good deeds which he/she might have done or have been a cause of them in the life of this world. He also benefits from the good deeds that others do on his behalf. It is reported that the angels bring the rewards of these good deeds in silver and golden plates as gifts for the deceased who would be very happy for receiving them.

i) Righteous deeds which he had been a cause for

The dead person will be continually rewarded for all the good deeds that he might have caused during his life. This includes the prayers of his righteous children, as well as all of the things that he has done which may have been useful to other people. The following three traditions mention some of these deeds:

[1] Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "When a person dies, all his good deeds cease except for three: a running charity, useful knowledge, and a righteous child who prays for him."

[1] Muslim and others narrated that Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "The righteous works that

continue to benefit a believer after his death include the knowledge that he taught and spread among others, a righteous child whom he leaves behind, or a copy of the Qur'an that he left behind to his inheritors, or a Mosque that he builds, or a rest house that he builds for the wayfarers, or a canal of water that he digs for the benefit of others, or a charity that he gives out of his property during his life while he is sound of health. He will continue to receive reward for all these even after his death."

[1] Jarir ibn Abdallah reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Whoever introduces a good practice in Islam will get its reward and the rewards for all those who follow these practices after him, without any loss to their reward. And whoever introduces a bad practice in Islam will acquire its sin and the sins of all those who practice it, without any decrease in their sins."

ii) Righteous deeds which others do in behalf of the deceased

Here are some of the righteous deeds that are performed by others and are of benefit to the deceased:

1) Supplication for the Deceased

Supplications for the deceased and asking Allah's forgiveness and mercy for him are among the most beneficial deeds to the deceased, especially when the supplicant is sincere and humble in his supplication. *(Refer to appendix B for some supplications)*

2) Giving Charity

Muslim scholars agree that the rewards of all types of charities given in the behalf of the deceased reach him.

- A man Asked the Prophet (pbuh) : "My father died and left wealth but made no will. Would he be rewarded if we gave charity on his behalf?" He said: 'Yes.'"
- Ahmad and others reported that when the mother of Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah died, he asked the Messenger of Allah: "My mother has died; should I give charity on her behalf?" He (pbuh) said: 'Yes.' The man asked: 'What is the best charity?' He (pbuh) said: 'Offering people a drink of water.'" The narrator of the tradition said: "This is the drinking place of the family of Sa'd in Madinah."

3) Fasting

One may fast in behalf of the deceased either for the day he/she missed or as an extra fast for him/her.

Al-Bukhari and Muslim reported that Ibn 'Abbas said a man asked the Prophet (pbuh): "My mother has died without making up for a missed month of fasting. Can I fast on her behalf?" The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Would you pay her debt if she owed someone?" The man said: "Yes." The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Allah is more deserving of receiving payment for what is due to Him."

A man asked the Prophet (pbuh) how to help his parents after their death. The Prophet (pbuh) advised him to offer prayer for them when he prays for himself and to fast for them when he fasts for himself.

4) Performing the Pilgrimage (Hajj)

One may perform Hajj or Umrah for the sake of the deceased.

Al-Bukhari narrated that a woman came to the Prophet (pbuh) and said: "My mother had vowed to perform pilgrimage, but she died before she could fulfill her vow. Should

I perform it on her behalf?" The Prophet (pbuh) said: 'Yes. Perform Hajj on her behalf. Would you not pay the debt of your mother if she had owed someone? Fulfill it. Allah is more deserving of receiving payment for what is due to Him.'"

5) Recitation of the Qur'an

Because it was not reported in any tradition that the Prophet (pbuh) recited the Qur'an for the dead or recommended it, the scholars of Islam have two opinions regarding whether the recitation of the Qur'an benefits the deceased or not.

i) Some of them strictly forbid it; Imam An-Nawawi said, "The most well-known position of the Shafi'i school is that this does not benefit the deceased."

ii) On the other hand, many others approve it because generally it is a good deed that maybe done on behalf of the dead. Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal put a general rule that the deceased will receive the reward for every good deed done on his behalf. He said: "This is proved by textual evidence found on this subject."

Al-Qurtubi in his book Al-Tazkirah explained that in many authentic traditions, the Prophet (pbuh) told that charity includes all helpful

actions, praises and glorification of Allah (swt), good supportive words, supplications, seeking forgiveness, and prayers. He (pbuh) stressed that every one of these acts is a charity. According to this broad meaning of charity, the recitation of the holy Qur'an is also a charity because words of the Qur'an are nothing but supplications, seeking forgiveness, or praises and glorification of Allah (swt).

According to many authentic traditions, the Prophet (pbuh) recommended offering charity for the dead. Charity here should be understood in its broad meaning which certainly includes recitation of the Qur'an.

As we see many scholars see that recitation of the Qur'an benefits the deceased similar to supplications, prayers, and all other good deeds. However, they put the following conditions for it:

1- The recitor should ask Allah to grant the reward of his recitation to the deceased, for example, he should pray: "O Allah! Grant the reward of what I recited to so-and-so."

2- He should be sincere in granting the reward of his recitation for the deceased; in other words he is not doing it because he is shy of the deceased family, or likes to please them.

3- He must not be paid for it. The Prophet

(pbuh) warned not to make the Qur'an a means of living nor a source of wealth.

4- He must avoid any Bid'a (innovative) practices like reading in group at specific times or at the grave, or reading specific parts or Surahs of the Qur'an.

6) Prayer (salah)

Like fasting and Hajj, one may also offer prayers on the behalf of the deceased. This is based on a tradition reported by Ad-Darqutni, that

a man asked: "O Allah's Messenger! I had parents whom I served while they lived. How can I be good to them after their death?" The Prophet (pbuh): "Verily, among the good deeds that you can do after their death is to offer prayer for them when you pray for yourself and to fast for them when you fast for yourself."

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal put a general rule that the deceased will receive the reward for every good deed done on his behalf. He said: "This is proved by textual evidence found on this subject."

However, there are some opinions that do not allow offering Salah (prayer) on behalf of the dead based on the following :

1- Unlike Hajj and fasting, offering Salah for the dead was not reported in any traditions.

2- Salah (prayer) is a special physical act of worship on every individual at specific times; once its time passed it cannot be performed. It cannot be done by an individual on behalf of other individuals.

What is Best for the Deceased?

Ibn al-Qayyim said that the "best present for the deceased is an act that is most beneficial to people." Thus giving a charity is better than fasting on behalf of the deceased. And the best of the charities is that which fulfills people's needs and its benefits are continuous.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "The best charity is to give people a drink of water." This applies to a place where water is scarce. Otherwise, giving someone a drink of water from a river or a canal would not be better than feeding the hungry who is in need for food.

Appendix A

The Funeral Prayer

The funeral prayer is a special prayer with neither bowing nor prostration. It is performed while one is standing. One has to say Takbir (Allahu Akbar - Allah is the Greater) four times in this prayer: the first one to commence the prayer, the second after reciting Al-Fatihah, the third after saluting the Prophet (pbuh); and the fourth after supplicating for the deceased. This is based on the tradition narrated by both Imams, Al-Bukhari and Muslim, on the authority of Jabir that Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him, offered funeral prayers for Najashi (Negus) and said four takbirs, meaning that he said "Allahu akbar" four times loudly. Below is a summary of this prayer:

Fold your right hand over your left hand;

1. Make sure that you meet all the requirements for a formal prayer (salah): Purification and Wudu' (Ablution).
2. Stand up facing Qiblah with the intention of offering the funeral prayer for the deceased.
3. Fold your right hand over your left hand;

4. Raise your both hands with Takbirat Al-Ihram (first opening takbirah) saying Allahu Akbar loudly.
5. Recite Al-Fatihah silently.
6. After finishing Al-Fatihah say Allahu Akbar loudly.
7. Offer salutations to the Prophet (pbuh) and end by saying Allahu Akbar loudly.
8. Now supplicate for the deceased, and end by saying Allahu Akbar loudly. It is recommended to use one of the supplications reported from the Prophet (pbuh).
9. Make a general supplication for yourself and all Muslims. It is recommended to say: 'O Allah! Grant us good in this life and good in the life to come, and save us from the torment of Hell Fire.' "O Allah! Do not deprive us of reward for (supplicating for) him/her, nor put us to trial after him (or her)." You may also supplicate for the deceased.
10. End the prayer with Salam salutations (one to the right and one to the left side) similar to those said at the end of any formal prayer. However, some scholars require only one salutation to the right to end the prayer.

Failure to meet the above requirements of the Funeral Prayer will invalidate the prayer.

Appendix B

Supplications for the Deceased

As supplication for the deceased is a basic element of the funeral prayer, any supplication, even a brief one, may be used for this purpose. However, it is recommended to use one of the supplications reported from the Prophet, peace be upon him. One must be sincere when praying for the deceased.

قال رسول الله ﷺ: "إِذَا دَعَيْتُمْ لِلْمَيِّتِ فَاخْلُصُوا فِي الدُّعَاءِ"

Abu Dawud and others narrated that Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) said, "When you offer a funeral prayer for a deceased person, pray with sincerity for him."

Here are some authentic supplications:

(1)

قال رسول الله ﷺ: "اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبُّهَا، وَأَنْتَ خَلَقْتَهَا، وَأَنْتَ رَزَقْتَهَا، وَأَنْتَ هَدَيْتَهَا لِلْإِسْلَامِ، وَأَنْتَ قَبَضْتَ رُوحَهَا، وَأَنْتَ أَعْلَمُ بِسِرِّهَا وَعَلَانِيَتِهَا، جِئْنَا نَشْفَعُ فَاغْفِرْ لَهَا ذَنْبَهَا"

«Allahumma anta Rubbuha wa anta khalaqtaha wa anta razaqtaha wa anta hadaytaha lil Islam wa anta qabadd-ta roha-ha wa anta a'lamo

bisirriha wa 'alaniyatiha. Ji'na nashfao' faghfir laha zanbaha»

Abu Hurairah said that Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) once prayed in one of the funeral prayers for the soul of the deceased: "Oh Allah ! You are her Sustainer, You are her Creator, You provided her with sustenance, guided her to Islam, caused her to die, and You best know her secret and public life. We plead to You on her behalf to forgive her sins."

(2)

قال رسول الله ﷺ: "اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّ فُلَانًا ابْنَ فُلَانٍ فِي ذِمَّتِكَ، وَحِبِّ جِوَارِكَ، فَقِهِ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْقَبْرِ وَعَذَابِ النَّارِ، وَأَنْتَ أَهْلُ الْوَفَاءِ وَالْحَقِّ، اللَّهُمَّ فَاغْفِرْ لَهُ وَارْحَمْهُ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ" (رواه أحمد وأبو داود)

"Allahumma inna fulanon ibnu fulan, fi dhimmatika wa habli jiwarka, fa-qihe min fitnatel qabri wa adhabin nar wa anta ahlol wafa' wal haq, allahumma faghfir lahu warrahmhu fa-innaka antal Ghafurur Raheem."

Ahmad and Abu Daw'ud reported that Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) once prayed in one of the funeral prayers : 'O Allah! So-and-so, son of so-and-so, is under Your protection and mercy, so protect him from the trial of the grave and the torture of Hell Fire. You are the

guardian of the truthful and the faithful. O Allah! Forgive him and show mercy to him, You are the Most Merciful, Most Forgiving.”

(3)

قال رسول الله ﷺ: “اللهم اغفر له، وارحمه، واعف عنه، وعافه، وَاكْرَمْ نُزْلَهُ، وَوَسِّعْ مُدْخَلَهُ، وَاغْسِلْهُ بِمَاءٍ وَثَلْجٍ وَبَرْدٍ، وَنَقِّهِ مِنَ خَطَايَاهُ كَمَا يُنْقَى الثَّوْبُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ، وَابْدِلْهُ دَارًا خَيْرًا مِنْ دَارِهِ وَأَهْلًا خَيْرًا مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَزَوْجًا خَيْرًا مِنْ زَوْجِهِ وَقِهِ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْقَبْرِ وَعَذَابِ النَّارِ”

(رواه مسلم والنسائي)

“Allahumma-ghfir lahu war-rhamhu wa’fu anhu wa a’fihi wa akrim nuzulahu wa wassi’ mudkhalahu waghsilhu bi-ma’-in wa thalj-in wa baradin wa naqqihi minal khataya kama yunaqa ath-thaubw ol-Abiado minad danas wa abdilhu daran khairan min darihi wa ahlan khairan min ahlihi wa zaujan khairan min zaujihi wa qih fitnatal qabr wa adhaban nar.”

Muslim narrated that Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) once prayed in one of the funeral prayers: “O Allah! Forgive him, have mercy on him, pardon him, heal him, be generous to him, cause his entrance to be wide and comfortable, wash him with the most pure and clean water, ice and snow, and purify him from sins as a white garment is washed clean of dirt. Give him in exchange a home better

than his home (on earth) and a family better than his family, and a spouse better than his spouse, and protect him from the trial of the grave and the torture of Hell Fire.”

(4)

قال رسول الله ﷺ: “اللهم اغفر لحينا وميتنا، وشاهدنا وغائبنا، وصغيرنا وكبيرنا، وذكرنا وأنثانا. اللهم من أحييته منا فأحيه على الإسلام. اللهم من توفيتنا منا فتوفه على الإيمان” (رواه أحمد والترمذي) وزاد أبو داود “اللهم لا تحرمنا أجره ولا تفتنا بعده”

“Allahummaghfir lihayyina wa mayyitina wa shahidina wa ghaibina wa saghirina wa kabirina wa dhakarina wa unthana. Allahumma man ahyatahu minna fa-ahyih ‘alal Islam wa man tawaffaitahu minna fatawaffahu ‘alal iman. Allahumma la tahrinna ajrahu wa la tuftinna ba’dahu.”

Ahmad and others reported that Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) once prayed: “O Allah! Forgive our living and our dead, our young and our old, our males and our females, those of us who are present, and those who are absent. O Allah! Whomsoever among us You keep to live, make him to live in Islam, and whomsoever You cause to die, let him die in faith. O Allah! Do not deprive us of our reward for (supplicating for) him, and cause us not to go astray after him.”

(5) If the deceased is a child, then it is desirable to pray:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "اللهم اجعله لنا سلفاً وفرطاً وذخراً"

Allahumma-j'alhu lana salafan wa dhukhran.

Bukhari and others narrated that Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) once prayed: "O Allah! Make him our forerunner and make him (a means of) reward for us and a treasure."

Imam An-Nawawi said: "If the deceased is a child, a boy or a girl, one should say what is reported in the supplication (4) :

"O Allah! Forgive our living, our dead..."

and add the following:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "اللهم اجعله فرطاً لأبويه، وسلفاً وذخراً وعظة واعتباراً وشفيعاً وثقل به موازينهما وأفرغ الصبر علي قلوبهما، ولا تفتنهما بعده، ولا تحرمهما أجره"

Allahumma-j>alhu faratan li-abwaih wa salafan wa dhukhran wa izatan wa i>tibaran wa shafi>an wa thaqqil bihi mawazinahuma wa afrlghas sabra <ala qulubihima wa la taftinhuma ba>dahu wa la taharim-huma ajrah.»

"Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) once prayed: "O Allah, make him (or her) for his parents a forerunner, a treasure and an admonition, an honor, an intercessor, and cause him (or her) to make their scales of good deeds heavier (on the Day of Judgment). O Allah! Grant them patience, and O Allah! Do not put them to trial after him (or her) nor deprive them of his (or her) reward."

(6)

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "اللهم باعد بينه وبين خطايا ما باعدت بين المشرق والمغرب، اللهم اغسله من خطايا بالماء والثلج والبرد، اللهم نقه من خطايا كما ينقى الثوب الأبيض من الدنس"

"Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) say in funeral prayer: "Oh Allah , keep him farther away from his misdeeds as the distance between the east and the west. Oh Allah , wash him with the most clean water, ice and snow, and purify him from sins as a white garment is washed clean of dirt."

(7)

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "اللهم ثبته عند السؤال، ووسع له في قبره ونور له فيه، واجعله له روضة من رياض الجنة، اللهم تجاوز عن سيئاته وكثر من حسناته وتقبله في الصالحين"

Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) said in some supplication: «Oh Allah! support him when he is questioned, widen up his grave, enlighten his grave, and make his grave a garden of the Paradise. Oh Allah! cover up his ill deeds, multiply his good deeds, and join him with the righteous.”

(8)

“اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِفُلَانٍ وَارْفَعْ دَرَجَتَهُ فِي الْمَهْدِيِّينَ وَاخْلُفْهُ فِي عَقْبِهِ فِي الْغَابِرِينَ وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلَهُ يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَأَفْسَحْ لَهُ فِي قَبْرِهِ وَنَوِّرْ لَهُ فِيهِ”

“O Allah, forgive (name of the dead person). Make him among the guided ones, raise his status and be his deputy among the grieving. O Lord of the two worlds, forgive us and him and make his grave wide and full of light”.

Prophet Mohammad (SAW.) recited this dua after the death of Abu Salama (R.A.) after closing his eyes. In place of فُلَانُ state the dead person's name. (Muslim)

When recited for another Muslim then in place of فُلَانُ.

Test Your Knowledge

- Q1. What is the purpose of our existence in this world ?
- Q2. Allah (swt) says : ”Every soul shall taste of death then unto Us you shall be returned”. Death is the most horrible event in our life, we all face it helpless and powerless. What is death ? Is death decreed only upon mankind ?
- Q3. Could death be the end of our life ? and why ?
- Q4. What is the definite sign of death? When a person reaches this stage , will his deeds be valid ?
- Q5. Can we know what the dying person is going through ?
- Q6. Explain how people differ at death time according to their deeds.
- Q7. What should we do for the dying person ?
- Q8. What should we do right after a person has died ?
- Q9. Who takes away the souls of believers and the souls of disbelieves?
- Q10. What does happen to the souls of believers and disbelieves right after death ?
- Q11. Is what is called “*Merciful Death*”¹⁸ permissible in Islam?
- Q12. What is Al-Barzakh (البرزخ)?
- Q13. Can man acquire any knowledge in regard to the reality of the Soul?

18 . To end the life of a dying person to end his/her suffering

- Q14. Does the Soul die?
- Q15. Are human beings able to contact the souls or bring them forth into this world ?
- Q16. How can a true believer be prepared for Death?
- Q17. Is it permissible for the believer to wish for Death?
- Q18. Mention five things that should be done for the dying person.
- Q19. Why should we prompt the dying person to say the Shahada ? Should we pressure on him in order to ensure that he uttered the Shahada before dying?
- Q20. Assume that the dying person is unconscious, or mentally impaired, or unable to repeat what we say, should he be prompted to say the Shahada ?
- Q21. What Surah should be recited at death time? and why?
- Q22. Are the deeds and actions of the dying person valid and why?
- Q23. Why should we close the eyes of the deceased at death time ?
- Q24. Why should we invoke Allah upon Witnessing death? What should we say?
- Q25. Why should the deceased be covered?
- Q26. Is it permissible to kiss the deceased?
- Q27. Is it permissible to delay the burial of the deceased and transfer the body to another place?
- Q28. How the deceased should be washed?
- Q29. Under what circumstances can we perform Tayamum instead of washing?
- Q30. Should martyrs be washed and enshrouded?
- Q31. How should the deceased be enshrouded?
- Q32. Describe the funeral prayer.
- Q33. Should we offer funeral prayer for martyrs?
- Q34. Could Funeral Prayer be offered in the Graveyard?
- Q35. Is it permissible to offer a Funeral Prayer for an Absentee?
- Q36. Are women permitted to offer funeral prayer?
- Q37. Should Funeral Prayer be offered for an aborted baby ?
- Q38. Are women permitted to follow the funeral procession?
- Q39. What should be done just after burying the deceased ?
- Q40. Are we permitted to mention the ill deeds of the deceased ?
- Q41. Somebody who was in debt died. What is the first thing that should be done after his death? and why?
- Q42. How long should we mourn for the deceased ?
- Q43. Is weeping over the deceased permissible?
- Q44. Is crying loudly and wailing over the deceased permissible ?
- Q45. For how long should condolence be offered to the family of the deceased ?
- Q46. Mention some of the good deeds that benefit the dead.

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Respected Dear Readers

Please pray for forgiveness and mercy of Allah, Subhanahu Wata'la, for the author, her parents, her family, all Muslims, particularly the misfortunate and the less privileged around the world.

I constantly pray to Allah, Subhanahu Wata'la, to bring Muslims from darkness to light, to cover our faults and mistakes in this life, and forgive us for them in the Next life, to seal our work with the best good deeds, and let the best of our days be the day when we shall meet with Him, and make the best part of our lives the end of it.

I also pray to Allah, Subhanahu Wata'la, from all my heart to accept this work and make it sincerely for His sake.

“Say : Truly, my prayers, my services of sacrifice, my life, and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. There is no partners with him. This am I commanded, and I am the first of Moslems (of those who submit to His will)” (Quran 6- 162, 163)

And let the last of our prayers be All praises are due to Allah the Lord of all the worlds»

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