

WEEKLY BOOKLET: 340



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THE TASTE OF DEATH

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موت كا ذائقه

Mout Ka Zai`qa

The Taste of Death

This booklet was originally written in Urdu by the Ameer of Ahl al-Sunnah, Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas Attar Qadiri.

Dawat-e-Islami's Translation Department has translated it into English. If you find any mistake in translation or composition, please inform the Translation Department on the following postal or email address with the intention of earning reward.

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The Taste of Death

An English translation of *Mout ka Zā'iqā*



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أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ ط

أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ط بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ط

Dua for reading a book

Recite the following dua before you read a religious book or Islamic lesson. You will remember whatever you study -
:رَقِيَّةُ اللَّهِ

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ عَلَيْنَا حِكْمَتَكَ وَانْشُرْ
عَلَيْنَا رَحْمَتَكَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

O Allah! Open the door of knowledge and wisdom for us, and have mercy on us! O the One Who is the Most Honourable and Glorious!¹

Note:

Recite ṣalāt upon the Prophet once before and after the dua.

¹ Al-Mustaṭraf, vol. 1, p. 40

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The Taste of Death¹

The prayer of Attar's successor

O Lord of the Prophet! Whoever reads or listens to the page booklet *The Taste of Death*, make their matters of the grave and Hereafter easy for them! Forgive them and their parents without accountability!

أَمِيرُنْ بِجَاهِ خَاتِمِ النَّبِيِّينَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

The excellences of reciting ṣalāt upon the Prophet

The final Prophet of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ declared, “Recite ṣalāt upon me in abundance, as your recital of ṣalāt upon me is indeed forgiveness for your sins.”²

صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ

¹ Various audio lectures of the founder of Dawat-e-Islami, Mawlana Ilyas Attar al-Qadiri, have been converted into written form by the Islamic Research Centre's “Attar's Speeches” wing. From amongst said speeches, the Weekly Booklet Department hereby presents one entitled *The Taste of Death*, which took place on 15th Sha'ban 1426 AH, with supplementary editing and additions.

² Al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr, p. 87, hadith 1406

The Taste of Death

Dear Islamic brothers! Whoever experienced life will also taste death, whoever walked upon this Earth will leave, and whoever beheld the attractions of this world shall also see the curtains close on their life one day.

It was said regarding it:

الْمَوْتُ بَابٌ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ دَاخِلُهَا، الْمَوْتُ قَدْرٌ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ شَارِبُهَا

Death is a door through which all souls will pass; death is a beverage all souls will drink.

This is indeed the case. Everyone shall taste death and pass away, just as the Quran declares:

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ

*Every soul will taste death.*¹

It is stated in *Tafsīr Şirāṭ al-Jinān*:

This verse highlights how Allah has decreed death for every living thing, and none can escape it. Death entails the separation of the soul from the body. This takes place with intense pain; a pain greater than all a person experiences in the world.²

¹ Al-Quran, part 4, Āl 'Imrān, verse 185; translation from Kanz al-'Irfān

² Tafsīr Şirāṭ al-Jinān, Āl 'Imrān, under verse 185, vol. 2, p. 122

Dear Islamic brothers! Let us take heed from some stories relating to death and its severities.

The Banī Isrā'īl challenged Prophet 'Īsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام by saying, “Bring Sām b. Nūḥ to life for us.”

Prophet 'Īsā replied, “Take me to his grave.”

Upon arriving, he made dua to Allah, and Sām b. Nūḥ returned to life. When the latter exited his grave, his hair were seen to be white. Prophet 'Īsā asked, “You did not have this old age in your time?”

He replied, “O Rūḥullah! When you called me, I thought perhaps the Day of Judgement had begun. Out of fear, my hair turned white.” Prophet 'Īsā then asked him about death, to which he replied, “I still taste the bitterness of death, although I passed away more than four thousand years ago.”¹

From this, we learn Allah granted Prophet 'Īsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام the miracle of resurrecting the dead. We also learn the terrors of the Day of Judgement are so severe; Sām bin Nūḥ's hair became white just from fear of the **possibility** it had arrived.

We also learn that death bears such bitterness that despite 4000 years after Sām b. Nūḥ's passing, he could still feel its effects.

¹ Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī, part 03, Āl 'Imrān, under verse 49, part 4, vol. 2, p. 1128, summarized

The heat of death even after one's demise

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once stated:

A group from the Banī Isrā'īl passed by a graveyard. After discussion they agreed, “Let us offer two units of salah and make dua to Allah, so He may resurrect one of the dead for us, who shall then tell us of what death is like.”

They did so. In the midst of their dua, a person emerged from his grave with marks of prostration apparent on his forehead. “What do you want with me?”, he asked. “It has been a hundred years since I died, and I still feel the heat of death. Make dua for Allah to return me to my previous state.”¹

Dear Islamic brothers! The heat of death stayed with this person for a century. In normal circumstances, if something harms us, its effects disappear after some time. Yet, the effects of death last hundreds of years. Common sense then dictates for us to always remember and prepare for it whilst we have the chance.

We hear of people passing away every single day but cannot draw admonition from this. We learn no lessons when we visit the graveyard, when the whole goal of this is to take heed in the first place. A hadith mentions, “I forbade you from visiting

¹ Al-Zuhd li Imām Aḥmad, p. 44, hadith 88, summarized

graves, but visit them now, for they draw attention away from the world and remind one of the Hereafter.”¹

When we go to the graveyard, we do not cry out of fear of Allah, whereas our beloved Prophet ﷺ once sat by a grave and cried to the extent his blessed tears wet the earth beneath him.

Soil became wet with blessed tears

The Companion Barā' b. 'Āzib رضي الله عنه explains:

We accompanied the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at a funeral. He sat at the edge of the grave and cried until the earth became wet with his tears. “O brothers!”, he said, “Prepare for the likes of this.”²

When the beards of the pious became wet with tears

When visiting graveyards, stories of the Companions عليهم الرضوان and pious elders رحمة الله عليهم being overwhelmed by the fear of Allah and shedding tears can also be found.

When the third Caliph of Islam, 'Uthmān b. 'Affān رضي الله عنه, would stop at a grave, he would cry until his beard became wet. It was asked, “You do not cry when mentioning Heaven or Hell, so why do you cry when it comes to the grave?”

¹ Sunan Ibn Mājah, vol. 2, p. 252, hadith 1571

² Ibid, vol. 4, p. 466, hadith 4195

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He replied:

Be certain the Messenger of Allah ﷺ declared, “The grave is the first of the Hereafter’s stages. Whoever is successful in this has the upcoming stages rendered easy for him. Whoever falls short in this shall find the other stages even more severe.”

He also announced, “I have not seen anything more terrifying than the grave.”¹

Imāmah would become wet with tears

The scholar Yazīd al-Raqāshī رحمه الله عليه would approach the graves and say:

O you who find solace in your actions in the stomach of the earth! If only I could know at which of your actions you have rejoiced and which of your brothers you have admired!

He would then cry until his ‘imāmah became wet with tears. Whenever he simply saw a grave, he began crying aloud, emitting a sound similar to the bellowing of a bull.²

Spending the entire night at a graveyard

‘Īsā b. ‘Umar رحمه الله عليه relates:

¹ Sunan Tirmidhī, vol. 4, p.138, hadith 2315

² Iḥyā’ al-‘Ulūm, vol. 5, p. 238

‘Amr b. ‘Utbah رحمته الله عليه would ride his horse to the graveyard at night and exclaim, “O people of the graves! The book of deeds has closed, and actions have risen.” He would then lean forward and cry intensely until returning to join the fajr salah congregation.¹

Our distressful state

Dear Islamic brothers! Observe how much our pious elders would cry out of fear of Allah upon visiting the graveyard. Our state is such that we accompany funerals to the graveyard whilst laughing and come back without taking the slightest heed.

There was a time when Muslims would cover their faces when accompanying a funeral, crying whilst remembering their own deaths. They would contemplate how they too shall be carried on the shoulders of others to the grave, just as they were doing to somebody then. Their grief was such, that if anyone wished to express condolences, they would not know who the inheritors of the deceased were. Everybody would be in a state of intense sadness.

The Proof of Islam Imam Muḥammad al-Ghazālī رحمته الله عليه states:

There was once a time in which everyone accompanying a funeral would cover their faces and cry. If somebody

¹ Hilyat al-Awliyā’, vol. 4, p.173, number 5159

wanted to offer condolences, he would be unable to ascertain whom he should offer them to.¹

People do cry at funerals nowadays, but not everyone. Only a select few can be seen doing this and even then, fewer cry out of fear of Allah or whilst remembering their own death. They mostly cry out of worry or love for the deceased.

The grave – a delicate affair

The grave is a matter of profound sensitivity. If we truly contemplated over it, our heedlessness would come to an immediate end. The problem is, we do not think about it at all.

Imagine you were held at gunpoint, taken to a pit, and told by the capturer, “For a while, if you let yourself be buried alive inside this pit just like a dead person is, I will not shoot you.” In this situation, perhaps the shock of potentially being buried may impact you heavier than a bullet. You will worry for what will happen to you in this dark, lonely, and small space.

The actual grave is a severer matter than this. Before reaching there, the deceased sees those who are washing and shrouding them. They also feel being carried on the shoulders of others to the graveyard. They hear the people saying, “Hold from here”, as their body is lowered into a grave. Despite seeing, hearing, and experiencing all of this, they will be unable to speak.

¹ Kimiyā Sa‘ādat, vol. 1, p. 397

Finally, they are placed in the grave. Slabs are affixed above them against the grave walls. When the final one is set in place, the grave becomes pitch dark for the deceased. Whatever slight ray of light there is will disappear when people begin casting soil into the grave.

“Put some here!”, some people shout. “There’s a gap here, make sure to fill it”, others say. In this way, the grave is filled to the surface. Everyone then makes dua and return to their homes.

The deceased sees, hears, and feels all of this. To the extent, when people leave them in solitude in the dark grave and leave, they hear the sounds of their footsteps.

A hadith explains, “The deceased hears the sounds made by the shoes of those who buried him.”¹

The angels Munkar and Nakir enter their grave, and questioning begins. The deceased is rewarded or punished according to their good and bad deeds. For example, if the deceased was embroiled in robbery, alcoholism, or fornication, and died without repenting, two snakes are sent into his grave, which eat away at his flesh - **مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ**.

Two snakes will bite at the flesh

As narrated by Masrūq **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ**, “Whoever died whilst

¹ Al-Zuhd li Ibn al-Mubārak, p. 41, hadith 163, summarized

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involved in theft, drinking alcohol, or fornication; two snakes are appointed to eat away at his flesh.”¹

Similarly, if the deceased was dishonest or fraudulent, fire will be kindled in their grave.

When a shawl became fire

The Companion Abū Rāfi‘ رضي الله عنه narrates:

One day, as the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم passed by Al-Baqī‘, he said, “أف، أف، أف.” It was only myself with him at this time.

I humbly asked, “O Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم ! What has happened?”

He responded, “That was the grave of so-and-so. I sent him as a collector ‘of zakāt’ to so-and-so tribe; he stole a cloak, and now, he is clothed with something similar made of fire.”²

Those caught up in theft, alcohol, and fornication should think deeply. If they die without repenting and enter the grave whilst Allah and His Messenger صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم are displeased with them, then not one, but two serpents will eat away at their flesh therein. The very friends who took money from them to buy

¹ Mawsū‘ah li lbn Abī al-Dunyā, vol. 5, p. 476, hadith 257, summarized

² Sunan Nasā‘ī, p. 150, hadith 859, summarized

alcohol will bury them and return home without a care.

Likewise, those involved in treachery, lying, and fraud should reflect. If they too leave this world without repenting and flames are ignited in their graves, what will become of them?

Safety lies in immediate repentance. By Allah, the punishment of the grave will otherwise be unbearable. It may be that Satan beguiles you with hopes of a long life and tries to make you avoid repenting now. Even if you live a long life, how long will it be? Maybe 60 or 70 years at the most, as people generally live that long. Yet, death and the grave are realities nobody can escape.

There is no guarantee of living at all, as even one-day old babies pass away. Even if you are in great physical shape and know how to protect yourself, nothing can protect you when the Angel of Death **عليه السلام** comes to seize your soul. Your good health and strength will not stop this.

Allah forbid! If an earthquake strikes now, hundreds of thousands of people may die. Every day, flooding, earthquakes, and other natural disasters are occurring, in which neither a person's health nor youth can save them. Death will come to each and every person, no matter what.

We do not consider our impending death

Sadly, death is something we turn a blind eye to. We listen to speeches regarding it purely because everyone else is. What we hear goes in one ear and out the other.

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The final Prophet ﷺ stated, “If animals knew what you know about death, you would not be able to eat a well-fed animal.”¹

This means animals would become emaciated and thin from fearing death, yet humankind roams fearlessly, eats excessively, and sins recklessly whilst laughing.

The Companion ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbās رضى الله عنهما explained, “Whoever laughs whilst sinning will enter Hell crying.”²

We just read a hadith describing the state of animals if they knew what we do about death. Here is a story which teaches us yet another moving lesson about this.

A camel who would not eat

Prophet ‘Īsā عليه السلام once passed by a herd of camels and found one in particular playing around more than the others. It playfully rammed its head into the bodies of others, bit them, and jumped around. He went close to this camel and said in its ear, إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ - “You will die.” He said this and proceeded onwards.

Thoughts of death overcame the camel to the extent it stopped playing entirely. It even stopped eating and began losing weight.

Some time later, when Prophet ‘Īsā passed by again, he saw the

¹ Shu‘ab al-Īmān, vol. 7, p.353, hadith 10557

² Mukāshafat al-Qulūb, p.275

camel standing aside from the others. It was gaunt and extremely thin. He asked the camel herder regarding it, and he replied, "I only know this much; an individual said something in its ear which made it stop eating. It now keeps away from the other camels and stands there."¹

Dear Islamic brothers! A camel, which is just an animal, was simply told it was going to die. Despite not having to experience the throes of death, the grave, or the punishment of Hellfire, it fell into a state of immense worry and lost all feelings of happiness. Some animals will be sent to Hell however, but not to be punished. They will instead administer punishment to those in Hell and not feel any pain therein.²

This is the state of an animal when hearing about death. On the other hand, we have the state of mankind and Muslims, who despite knowing death is a reality, remain completely negligent of preparing for it. They turn away from the fact they will be lowered into a grave one day and recompensed for their good and bad deeds.

Even if we sometimes remember death in heart moving, sunnah-inspired gatherings, the thought soon subsides. Some people lower their heads, listen intently to the speech, and lament upon their sins. However, only a short while after the

¹ Nuzhat al-Majālis, vol. 1, p. 85

² Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, part 30, Al-Naba', under verse 11, vol. 40, p. 27, summarized

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completion of the speech, they slip back into the routine of excessive joking and laughing with their friends.

Such people do not even offer fajr salah the following day. Even if they do, they go on to miss zuhr. Sadly, if they manage to offer all the salah of that day, they do not arise for fajr the following day. In this way, they fall back into the same pattern of negligence.

All graves are not the same within

Dear Islamic brothers! When we go to the graveyard, all graves seem the same outwardly, appearing as mounds of soil. Yet, internally they are not alike. Some graves are gardens whilst others are pits of fire. In some, their residents are enjoying the bounties of Allah, and in others, their denizens are being afflicted with punishment.

Muḥammad b. Sammāk رحمته اللّٰه عليه once remarked upon seeing the graveyard, “O people! Do not be deluded by the silence of these graves. Their residents are not the same. Some are in great pain and others are in bliss.”¹

Every intelligent person should think about the grave deeply. Sufyān al-Thawrī رحمته اللّٰه عليه states:

Whoever remembers the grave often will find it to be the likeness of a garden of Paradise. Whoever becomes

¹ Ahwāl al-Qubūr, p.226, Summarized

heedless regarding it will find it to be a pit of Hell.¹

What will become of us? We do not even like hearing about death. You will meet many people who do not attend sunnah-inspiring gatherings because they feel Dawat-e-Islami mentioning death repeatedly “ruins their mood”.

Such people are requested to consider how our pious elders would also remind people of death in their speeches.

O slaves of Allah! Remember death!

The fourth Caliph of Islam, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه, stated in one of his sermons:

O slaves of Allah! Remember death and prepare for it, as avoiding it is impossible. It will seize you if you try to stand in its way. It will catch you if you try to run. Death has been tied to your foreheads, so seek a means of avoiding its punishment. Prepare for death, as the grave awaits and calls you hastily. Always remember that the grave is either a garden or a pit of Hellfire.²

If out of fear of death, we begin offering our salah on time and abstain from sin, we shall find ourselves at ease in our graves. If we become heedless of death and lead a life of sin, there will be

¹ Iḥyā' al-‘Ulūm, vol. 5, p. 238

² Al-Mustaṭraf, vol. 1, p. 107, summarized

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nothing except terror for us in the grave.

Life after death is more powerful than the life before it. One's faculties of hearing and seeing are magnified. If we laid in an open grave and tried to look out, we will not see what is happening above ground. After death, even after the grave has been closed, the deceased is able to see who is coming and going above ground and hears their voices. It is for this reason we greet the deceased with salam upon entering the graveyard, saying:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ الْقُبُورِ، يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ، أَنْتُمْ سَلَفُنَا وَنَحْنُ بِالْآخِرِ

Peace be upon you, O grave dwellers! May Allah grant you and us forgiveness. You are our forerunners, and we are to follow.

Salam is offered to one who hears and replies, as Mufti Aḥmad Yār Khan Naʿīmī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ explains:

It is sunnah to give salam first when entering the graveyard and say:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَإِنَّا إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ لَلْآحِقُونَ

After this, the reward of good actions should be conveyed to the deceased. This highlights that the deceased see and recognise those outside and hear their speech. Otherwise, greeting them with salam would not be permissible, as it is not permitted to give salam to those who cannot hear or reply. Consider the person

sleeping and the one offering salah; we cannot greet them with salam.¹

This evidences how the deceased hear and reply to our salam.²

Remember! Not only Muslims, but even the disbelievers see and hear after death. Furthermore, our pious elders hear and see from further afar in their graves in comparison to the average deceased believer. For example, if we call out to the Crown of the Saints, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī رحمه الله عليه, he will hear our voices by the permission of Allah, as he is the leader of the saints.

Reflect on how telecommunications have advanced to the extent we can speak to our friends on the other side of the world, and they can hear us, even though there are no wires etc. running between us. If this is the power of a technological connection, what will be the power of a spiritual connection!

After death, the hearing and sight of every person is magnified. The deceased sees those coming to his grave and hears their voices.

If we are neither punished in the grave, nor do serpents and scorpions enter, and we are only entombed in it, then how will we endure the dark grave for thousands of years until the Day of Judgement? Neither will we be able to go to a friend of ours, nor will we be able to call someone to us. If someone does come,

¹ Mir’āt al-Manājil, vol. 2, p. 524

² Shu‘ab al-Īmān, vol. 7, p. 17, hadith 9296, summarized

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he will recite Sūrat al-Fātiḥah, look at the graves here and there, and then leave, whilst we look at him with regretful glances.

Suppose we were imprisoned in a mansion and were given all forms of necessities and luxuries. Lights, fans, an air-conditioned room, soft cushions, food, and drink were all at our disposal. Let us say we had this, but we were entirely alone and were forbidden from having anyone visit us. If this was the case, we would only be able to spend a few days there at most. In fact, some of us would be unable to spend a single day alone.

If we are not prepared to stay alone in such a luxurious mansion for one day, how will we remain alone for hundreds of years in the grave! Today, entrapped in this colourful world, we have forgotten our graves, whereas it is mentioned that the grave calls out five times, daily:

O man! You walk upon my back whereas your end is in my belly. O man! You laugh on my back; very soon you shall be buried within me and cry. O man! You devour the unlawful upon me, and soon, worms will devour you inside my stomach. O man! You rejoice on my back. Soon, you will grieve when I envelop you.¹

By Allah! There is great admonition in this. If only we could learn a life-changing lesson from this before an announcement is made of our passing, brothers are called to wash us, we are

¹ Tanbih al-Ghāfilīn, p. 23, summarized

wrapped in a funeral shroud, and we are lowered into our graves. Remember death and repent for your sins before all this comes to pass.

How to remember death

Dear Islamic brothers! Some methods of remembering death are mentioned here. Read them intently. These will help one remember death and prepare for it.

1. Participation in funerals.
2. Making a habit of visiting the graveyard.
3. Listening to speeches about death.
4. Reading stories relating to death.
5. Traveling in Dawat-e-Islami's Madani qafilahs, which contain speeches and lessons regarding death. In this way, one will recall death and avoid sin.

A hadith explains, **كُنْفَىٰ بِأَلْمُوتِ وَإِعْطَا** – “Death is sufficient advice.”¹ Make intention to travel for at least three days in a Madani qafilah every month.

One must also make a mindset of offering each salah on time. Make sincere intention that after today, you will not miss a

¹ Shu'ab al-Īmān, vol. 7, p. 353, hadith 10556

The Taste of Death

single salah or fast of Ramadan, and you will not watch films or listen to music.

Intend to obey your parents and avoid annoying them. Also, aim not to tell tales, backbite, accuse others, or disrespect Muslims. Conceal their shortcomings. Resolve to participate in Dawat-e-Islami's weekly sunnah-inspiring gatherings every week.

May Allah grant us ability to perform many good deeds, avoid sin, and prepare for the Hereafter before we die.

اٰمِيْنُ بِجَاہِ خَاتِمِ النَّبِيِّنَّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ

WEEKLY BOOKLET STUDY

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ Every week, the founder of Dawat-e-Islami, Shaykh al-Tareeqah Ameer Ahl al-Sunnah, Founder of Dawat-e-Islami Hazrat Allamah Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas Attar Qadiri Razavi بِرَحْمَتِهِمُ الْعَالِيَةِ, and his successor Al-Haaj Abu Usaid Obaid Raza Madani مَد ظَلَهُ الْعَالِي, encourage the reading of a booklet. مَا سَاءَ لِلّٰهِ! Millions of Islamic brothers and sisters participate in this blessed activity by reading or listening to this booklet, benefiting from the prayers of Ameer Ahl al-Sunnah and his successor. This booklet is available for free download in audio format on the Dawat-e-Islami website,

www.Dawateislami.net, and through the **Read and listen Islamic book application**. With the intention for reward, read it yourself, and distribute it for the Esal-e-Sawab of your deceased ones.

(Department of Weekly Booklet Study)



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