

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Matter of the Graves is Not Simple

وَعَلَى إِلِكِ وَأَصْحِيكَ يَا حَبِيبَ اللَّهِ
وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ

وَعَلَى إِلِكِ وَأَصْحِيكَ يَا نُورَ اللَّهِ
وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ

تَوَيْتُ سُنَّتَ الْإِعْتِكَافِ

Translation: I have made the intention of Sunnah I'tikaf.

The Virtue of Sending Salat Upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ

The Noble Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ أَنْجَاكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا وَمَوَاطِنِهَا أَكْثَرُكُمْ عَلَيَّ صَلَاةً فِي دَارِ الدُّنْيَا

Meaning: "O people! Indeed, the one who will be saved the fastest from the terrors and stages of the Day of Judgment will be the one among you who sent the most Salat (Durud Sharif) upon me in the world."¹

صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ

Speech Intentions

The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: أَفْضَلُ الْعَمَلِ النَّبِيَّةُ الصَّادِقَةُ – "The best of

¹ Firdaws al-Akhbar, vol. 2, p. 471, Hadith 8210

deeds is a sincere intention.”¹

Dear Islamic brothers! Make it a habit to form good intentions before every action, as good intentions can lead one to Paradise. Before listening to the speech, we can make the following good intentions:

- I will listen to the entire speech to gain knowledge.
- I will sit respectfully.
- I will avoid being lazy.
- I will listen with the intention of self-improvement.
- I will try to convey what I learn, to others.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

O devotees of the Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ! Today is the 15th night of Shaban al-Muazzam, that is, Shab-e-Baraat, a night full of blessings, greatness, and goodness. A night filled with blessings, A night of greatness, A night full of goodness.

On this night, supplications are accepted, sustenance is distributed, and the provision for the entire year is decreed.

It is stated in the blessed Hadith: “When the middle night of Shaban arrives, then stand in worship during that night and fast during its day. Indeed, when the sun sets on that night, Allah Almighty, in a manner befitting His Majesty, manifests His special mercy upon the sky of the world and proclaims: ‘Is there anyone seeking forgiveness from Me so that I may forgive him?’ ‘Is there anyone seeking sustenance, so I may grant him sustenance?’ ‘Is there anyone afflicted, so I may grant him relief?’ This announcement continues until the break of dawn.”²

¹ Al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaghīr: hadith 1284

² Ibn Maja, p. 225, Hadith 1388

The Night of Freedom from Hell

May Allah Almighty grant us the ability to value this blessed night. According to the blessed Hadith, on this night, as many sinners are freed from Hell as the number of hairs on the goats of the tribe of Banu Kalb.¹ Banu Kalb was an Arab tribe. The books say they owned an enormous number of goats.²

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ! How many hairs are on a goat's body? Who can count them? It becomes clear that on this night, thousands, millions, rather billions of people are forgiven. However, ten unfortunate individuals are not forgiven even on this night:

1. The one addicted to alcohol,
2. the one disobedient to his parents,
3. the one addicted to fornication,
4. the one who severs family ties,
5. the one who makes pictures or images,
6. the tale-bearer,³
7. the soothsayer or fortune-teller,
8. the one who practices magic,
9. the one who wears his lower garment below the ankles out of pride,
10. and the one who harbours hatred and enmity against a Muslim without a Shar'i reason, also remains deprived of forgiveness on this night.⁴

May Allah Almighty, for the sake of this blessed and sacred night, grant all of us the gift of forgiveness, the ability to repent sincerely, the dislike for sins, the

¹ Shu'ab Al-Iman, vol. 3, p. 384, Hadith 3837

² Mirqat al-Mafatih, vol. 3, p. 339, under Hadith 1299

³ Faza'il-e-Awqat, p. 33, Hadith 36

⁴ Aaqa Ka Mahina, p. 11

abundance of good deeds, and may Allah Almighty and His Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ be pleased with us on this night.

اٰمِيْنُ بِجَاہِ خَاتِمِ النَّبِيِّنَّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

صَلُّوْا عَلٰى الْحَبِيْبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ

The Man with the Iron Face

Dear Islamic brothers! Come, let us listen to an admonitory incident and learn from it.

Sayyiduna Marthad bin Hawshab رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ narrates: "I once visited Sayyiduna Yusuf bin 'Amr رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ. Beside him sat a strange man whose face was partially made of iron. That man began to relate his story: 'In my youth, a plague spread throughout our area; (people were dying rapidly). I thought to myself, I should work as a gravedigger. So, I began digging graves.

One evening, between Maghrib and 'Isha, I had just finished preparing a grave and was sitting nearby. Soon, a funeral arrived; we buried the deceased, covered him with soil, and everyone returned home. I remained there alone. Suddenly, two large white birds, each the size of a camel, descended near the newly-dug grave. One stood at the head side, the other at the foot. They began digging into the grave until one of them went down inside. I watched in astonishment as the bird inside struck the deceased with a powerful slap and said, "Are you the same person who used to wear shining clothes and drag them arrogantly when visiting your in-laws?" The dead man screamed, "Ah! I cannot bear this!" The bird struck him again with such force that the oil and fluids of the body burst out and flowed within the grave. Then the corpse was restored to its original form, and the bird said again: "Are you not the one who used to wear glittering garments and walk arrogantly towards your in-laws?" Saying this, it struck him yet again, three times in total. At that moment, one of the birds looked towards me and said to the other: "May Allah disgrace him! Look at this man sitting here!"

Then it gave me one slap, so fierce that I remained unconscious the entire

night. When I regained consciousness in the morning, there were no birds, and the grave appeared completely normal, just like any other. The condition of my face that you now see, this iron-covered portion, is the lasting effect of that bird's slap."¹

Beware of Arrogance!

Dear Islamic brothers! Reflect for a moment, what a severe punishment that was! One single slap so powerful that the body melted and began to flow away, then it was restored to its first state and struck again. Remember! The punishment of the grave is actual. May Allah Almighty protect us all from the torment of the grave. Let us think about ourselves, God forbid! If such punishment were inflicted upon us, could we endure it? Never! How painful and terrifying that would be. And who was this punishment for? It was for the arrogant one.

May Allah Almighty protect us from this evil. Arrogance is a very severe sin; it is haram² and leads a person towards Hell. Some people have the habit of visiting their in-laws: They show off extravagantly, display unnecessary pride and attitude, complain about food or drink, and demand special arrangements for themselves. This is not good behaviour, and if such conduct comes from arrogance, then the door to sin may also open.

Therefore, whether it is the in-laws' home or one's own home, the shop or the office, the street, the neighbourhood, or the marketplace, wherever we are, we must stay far away from arrogance and adopt humility alone. Through humility, Allah Almighty grants honour and elevation. It is mentioned in the blessed Hadith: "Whoever humbles himself for the sake of Allah Almighty, Allah Almighty will elevate him in rank."³

On the contrary, on the Day of Judgment, Allah Almighty will disgrace and humiliate those who were arrogant. It is stated in the Hadith: "On the Day of Judgment, those who were arrogant will be resurrected in the form of tiny ants

¹ Musu'ah Ibn abi dunya, vol. 6, pp. 75-79, Number 98

² Fatawa Ridawiyah, vol. 23, p. 614

³ Muslim, p. 1002, Hadith 2588

in human shapes. Humiliation will surround them from all sides. They will be driven towards a prison in Hell called Bulas, where a mighty fire will engulf them. They will be made to drink Teenat-ul-Khabal طِينَةُ الْخَبَالِ, the pus of the inhabitants of Hell.”¹

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

One Must Face the Consequences of One’s Deeds

Dear Islamic brothers! We have come into this world, and now we must die, descend into the grave, and face the consequences of our deeds. No matter how much we try, no matter how many ways we attempt to escape, we cannot free ourselves from the results of our actions; we will surely face what we have done.

Allah Almighty says in the Holy Quran:

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِيْنَةٌ ﴿٣٨﴾

Every soul is a pledge for what it earned²

It becomes clear that every person is bound by their actions. Whoever has come into this world will surely enter the grave and bear the fruit of his deeds.

The Coffin Caught Fire

It is said that once there was a king. When his final time approached, he called his sons and made a strange will. He said, “When I die, have an iron coffin made, place my body inside it, and then put that coffin into an iron chest. Do not bury it in the ground; instead, hang it in a room from the ceiling so that I may be safe from the punishment of the grave.” (He intended that if he did not descend into the grave, he would not face its narrowness and terror, nor endure torment therein). The sons carried out the will. When the king died, they had an iron coffin made, placed the king's body inside it, then put the

¹ Tirmidhi, p. 590, Hadith 2492

² Al-Quran, Al-Muddathir, verse 38; translation from Kanz al-‘Irfān

coffin into a large iron chest. Then the chest was suspended in the room by chains or the like, and the room was sealed.

When night came, strange noises began to come from the room. The sons ran there, opened the door, and saw that the chest was shaking. They lowered it, opened it, and were shocked. Inside the chest was the coffin, and sitting upon the king's face was a terrifying snake, biting him repeatedly. (Apparently, it was a matter of great surprise. there was no opening or hole in the chest; how the snake entered was beyond imagination...!! Anyway!) The sons removed the snake and killed it, closed the chest again, and hung it back as before. That night passed. The next night, the same noises were heard again. The sons hurried to the room, opened it, and saw the chest shaking once more. When they opened it this time, they saw an even bigger snake sitting upon the king's chest. Amazed and horrified, they again took the snake out and killed it, then hung the chest again.

Well, the night had to pass, and pass it did; the next night, noises were heard again. The sons opened the room and lowered the chest. Upon opening it, they were so terrified that they lost their senses. The chest was perfectly sealed from the outside, yet inside the coffin, a fierce fire was blazing! Seeing this dreadful scene, they understood that there is no escape from the punishment of the grave. So, they removed the body from the chest and buried their father properly in the grave.¹

What Is Barzakh?

The king whose incident we just heard was deceived. He thought that if he did not enter the grave, he could avoid the punishment for his sins. But this is not so, Barzakh is the state from death until the Day of Resurrection.

Allah Almighty says in the Holy Quran:

وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

¹ Silwat al-'Arifin, vol. 2, p. 231

Meaning, whoever in this world commits sins, turns away from the remembrance of Allah Almighty, from the noble Quran and blessed Sunnah, from good deeds, and from Salah and fasting, for him will be a constricted and painful life within the grave.

The Terrifying Snakes with Seven Heads

Sayyiduna Abu Hurairah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrated: "One day, the Greatest and Final Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ recited this verse:

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا

And whosoever turned away from My remembrance, then indeed there is a deprived life for him,¹

Then the Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, 'Do you know what is meant by a deprived life?' The noble Companions رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ humbly replied, اللهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ, 'Allah and His Beloved Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ know best.' He صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, 'It refers to the punishment of the grave that will be given to a non-believer. By the One in Whose control is my life! Ninety-nine Taneen will be set upon the disbeliever in the grave. Do you know what a Taneen is? These will be 99 snakes. Each Taneen is a snake with seven heads! These ninety-nine snakes will keep biting him continuously until the Day of Resurrection.'²

الله أكبر! Dear Islamic brothers! Reflect for a moment on how terrifying that scene will be! A terrifying seven-headed serpent, and not just one or two but a whole ninety-nine serpents! Allah! Allah! What a horrifying sight this is. May Allah Almighty have mercy upon us and protect us from the horrors of the grave. Truly, the matter of the grave is not easy.

The Grave Is the First Stage

It is reported that the grave calls out seven times every day and announces: "O

¹ Al-Quran, Taha, verse 124; translation from Kanz al-'Irfān

² Ahwal al-Qubur, p. 95

weak human! Before you reach me, have mercy upon yourself during this worldly life! Indeed, when you come to me, if you are obedient to your Lord, I will have mercy upon you, and you will find comfort within me. But if you did not show mercy to yourself, then I too will not show mercy to you.

O weak human! I am the home of worms and insects, and along with that, a place of long-lasting humiliation. I am the home of loneliness and isolation, and along with that, of hardship and severity. I am the home of thirst, and along with that, of dreadful darkness. I am the home of constriction, and along with that, of terrifying scorpions. O son of Adam! Beware! Do not let the life of this world deceive you. Surely, you must come to me! I am the first stage among the stages of the Hereafter. If you are saved from me, then you will be saved from every terrifying stage thereafter. O son of Adam! I am a place of wrath; I have no pity on a young person's youth, on a child's childhood, or on an elder's old age. Indeed, I show no mercy to the one who did not have mercy upon himself.”¹

The Anonymous Adviser

Sayyiduna Salmah Basri رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ narrated: Once, a man was passing by and saw a grave that had been built with great beauty and decoration. He admired its design (the beautiful tiles fitted above, etc.) and stood there gazing at it in amazement.

That night, when he slept, he saw a person in his dream who recited the following Arabic verses as a form of advice:

وَالْجِسْمُ فِيهِ قَدْ حَوَاةَ الْبَيْلَى

أَعْجَبَكَ الْقَبْرُ حُسْنُ الْبِنَاءِ

يُنَبِّئُكَ عَنْ ذَلِكَ ذَهَابَ الْجَلَى

فَأَسْأَلِ الْأَمْوَاتِ عَنْ حَالِهِمْ

Explanation: “You were amazed by the beauty and structure of the grave, while afflictions and calamities surround the body inside. Ask the dead about their condition, they will tell you where all their honour and glory have gone.”²

¹ Bustan-al-Wa'zin, p. 154

² Musu'ah ibn abi dunya, vol. 6, p. 120, number

Allah! Allah! Dear Islamic brothers! This is indeed the reality, no matter how beautifully a grave is built from the outside, the actual condition inside can only be known by the one who lies within it.

The Matter of the Grave Is Not Easy

Dear Islamic brothers! We have surely seen people die before our very eyes, but remember! Dying is not easy. We may have shrouded a deceased person with our own hands; it is easy to shroud a corpse, but wearing the shroud is not easy. We may have lifted a bier on our shoulders, but lying upon it and being carried by four shoulders is not easy. We may have lowered many into their graves; remember! It's easy to lower someone into the grave, but descending into the grave ourselves will not be easy.

The matter is truly severe and complicated! Just imagine, as if a thorny branch were pulled from a heap of cotton in one sudden motion, that is how the soul will be torn from the body. Every part of our body will ache and suffer. And what kind of pain will it be? More painful than being struck by a thousand swords! And in that state of anguish, no one will come to help us. Our parents, our children, our brothers and sisters, our dear relatives. Those who once cared for us will all stand by helplessly. No one will be able to assist us; they will only look on. We will not even be able to express our pain.

Alas! There will be crying and wailing all around us, yet we will not be able to speak to anyone. Our wealth, our riches, our bank balance, our cars, our houses, our bungalows, our power, our position, our degrees, everything will be left behind. Even the clothes we wear will be removed. A plain shroud will be placed upon us. Those who once cherished us, who have borne our burdens, will carry us on their shoulders, lay us in a narrow, dark grave, and, with their own hands, will then pour mounds of soil upon us and walk away. We will still hear their footsteps, but we will not be able to call out to them. Ah! Such pain, that no pain like it was ever experienced before! Such loneliness, that no loneliness like it was ever faced before! Such horror, that no horror like it was ever seen before! And it will not end there! While these calamities still shake us, we are still settling into this new home, still unaccustomed to its solitude, still reeling from the agony of the soul's departure. Suddenly, the walls of the grave will tremble, and two angels will enter, tearing through the grave's sides.

They will question us in stern voices. Ah! If we fail to answer correctly, if we do not succeed in the examination of the grave, the fire of Hell will be kindled within it, and torment will be inflicted! What will become of us then? Where will we go? Whom will we call for help?

The Horrifying Scenes of the Grave's Punishments

Dear Islamic brothers! The affair of the grave is complicated. Fortunate is the one who remains at peace in his grave, but the one who is seized there is truly ruined. Let us listen to some narrations describing the intense punishments of sinners in the realm of Barzakh, so that we may take heed.

Depiction of the Punishments for Sins

The fourth Caliph of the Muslims Sayyiduna 'Ali al-Murtaza رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, narrated: One day, after leading the Fajr Salah, the Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ turned towards us and said: "Last night, two angels came to me and took me towards the sky of the world. I saw an angel holding a large stone in his hand, and before him was a man. The angel was striking his skull with a stone, causing the brain to spill out to one side and the stone to tumble to the other. I asked, 'Who is this?' The angels said, 'Please move ahead!' Then I saw another angel ahead, an angel who was tearing at the man lying before him, rending his jaw—sometimes on the right, sometimes on the left—with an iron rod, right up to the ear. I asked, 'Who is this?' They said, 'Please move ahead!'

As I moved forward, I saw a river of blood, boiling like a cauldron. Naked people were inside it, and angels stood on its banks holding lumps of clay. Whenever anyone peered out of the canal, they would strike him with a clod of earth, sending him tumbling back into the water until he landed at the bottom. I asked, 'Who are these?' They said, 'Please move ahead!' I then saw a house whose lower part was narrower than its upper part. Inside were naked people, and beneath them a blazing fire. The stench was unbearable. I held my nose and asked, 'Who are these?' They said, 'Please move ahead!' Next, I saw a black hill on which some mad men stood. Fire was being blown into their rears, coming out of their mouths, nostrils, eyes, and ears. I asked, 'Who are they?' The angels replied, 'Please move ahead!' Then I saw an underground prison

filled with fire, guarded by an angel. Whenever someone tried to escape, the angel pursued and threw him back into it.”

The Holy Prophet ﷺ was then informed of the reality of all these terrifying scenes: The first man whose head was crushed with a stone, so that his brain was flung to one side and the stone to the other, was the one who did not offer the Isha Salah, and performed the other prayers after their appointed times. He will be struck in this manner until he is thrown into Hell. The second man, whose cheeks were torn with iron rods, was among those who spread mischief among Muslims and indulged in tale-bearing. His punishment will continue until he is cast into Hell. The third man, into whose mouth stones were thrown, was a usurer (one who dealt in interest). His torment will persist until he is placed in Hell. The fourth scene, where naked people were burning, these were fornicators, and the foul stench was that of their private parts. They, too, will remain in this punishment until they are thrown into Hell. And (in the fifth scene) the mad people you saw were those who committed and caused others to commit filthy acts like the people of Loot; they too will remain afflicted by this torment until they are cast into Hell, and (in the sixth place) that underground prison filled with fire was Hell.¹

Painful Punishments

Sayyiduna Abu Sa’id Khudri رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrated: The Beloved Prophet ﷺ said: “I passed by a table spread (dastarkhwan) upon which roasted meat was placed, but there was no one. Then, in front of it, I saw another table spread upon which decayed and foul-smelling meat lay, and many people were eating from it. I asked, ‘O Jibreel, who are these people?’ He said, ‘These are those from your Ummah who abandoned the lawful and turned towards the unlawful.’ Then I moved on and saw people whose stomachs were enormous like cottages. Whenever one of them tried to stand up, he fell flat on his face and cried, ‘O my Lord! Do not establish the Day of Judgment!’ I asked, ‘Who are they?’ Jibreel عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام replied, ‘They are the usurers (those who consume interest).’ Then I saw people whose lips were like camels’ lips. Their mouths were being forced open, and burning embers were fed into them. I asked,

¹ Tarikh Dimashq, vol.19, p. 451

‘Who are these?’ He said, ‘They are those who used to consume the wealth of orphans unlawfully.’ Then I saw women hanging by their breasts. I asked, ‘Who are they?’ He said, ‘They are the women who committed adultery.’ Then I saw people whose flesh was being sliced from their sides and forced into their mouths, while it was said to them, “Eat as you used to eat the flesh of your brother!” I asked, ‘Who are they?’ He said, ‘They are those who committed backbiting and found faults in others.’”¹

Punishment for Seeing and Hearing the Unlawful

Sayyiduna Abū Umamah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrated: One morning after the Fajr Salah, the Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: “I saw a dream, and indeed it was true, so understand it well! Someone came to me, took my hand, and led me to a vast mountain. He said, ‘Climb it.’ So, I climbed it with him. We moved forward and saw men and women whose cheeks were torn apart. I asked, ‘Who are these?’ He said, ‘They are those who spoke what they themselves did not act upon.’ Then we saw men and women with nails driven into their eyes and ears. I asked, ‘Who are they?’ He said, ‘These are the people whose eyes looked at what they should not have looked at, and whose ears listened to what they should not have listened to.’ Then we came across women who were hanging upside down by their ankles, and snakes were biting their breasts. I asked, ‘Who are these?’ He said, ‘These are the women who did not feed their children milk.’ We moved further and saw men and women hanging upside down, licking boiling water. I asked, ‘Who are these?’ He said, ‘These are the ones who used to break their fasts before time.’ Then we saw men and women who were extremely ugly, wearing filthy clothes and emitting a terrible stench. I asked, ‘Who are they?’ He said, ‘These are the men and women who committed adultery.’ Then we passed by bloated, foul-smelling corpses. I asked, ‘Who are they?’ He said, ‘These are the dead disbelievers.’”²

الله أكبر! Dear Islamic brothers! Reflect deeply upon these narrations! What terrifying scenes they describe! Some have their heads crushed with stones, some have their jaws torn with iron rods, some people are being dunked into

¹ Dala'il al-Nubuwwah, vol. 2, pp. 390-393

² Mu'jam Kabir, vol. 4, p. 285, Hadith 7563

streams of boiling water like a pot, some have fire blown into their bodies, some are fed rotten, foul-smelling meat, some are forced to eat burning embers, some are made to eat the flesh cut from their own sides! Are these the kinds of torments we can endure...!! Ah! Who has the courage! Who possesses the strength for this! Yet, alas! We still do not reform; we still do not fear. When it comes to sin and disobedience, when it comes to luxury and frivolous activities, we're ready right now, but when it comes to repentance, we delay! Alas! If only we were granted the fear of Allah Almighty, if only we were granted concern for our graves and the Hereafter.

The Grave, A Garden of Paradise or a Pit of Hell

Sayyiduna Abū Sa'īd Khudri رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrated: The Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: "Remember often the destroyer of pleasures, death, for the grave calls out every day, saying: 'I am the home of estrangement. I am the home of loneliness. I am the home of dust. I am the home of worms and insects.' When a believer is buried in the grave, the grave says to him: 'Welcome! Of those who walked upon my back, you were the most beloved to me. Now that you have come to me, see how well I treat you!' Then the grave expands for him as far as the eye can see, and a door to Paradise is opened for him. But when a sinner or disbeliever is buried, the grave says: 'You are not welcome! Of those who walked upon my back, you were the most detested. Now that you have come to me, see how I treat you!' Then the grave tightens upon him until his ribs interlock. Allah Almighty appoints seventy thousand dragons (i.e., large snakes) upon him; if even one of them were to hiss upon the earth, nothing would ever grow again. Those serpents will continue biting him until the Day of Resurrection." The narrator says: The Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ further said: **إِنَّمَا الْقَبْرُ رَوْضَةٌ مِّنْ رِّيَاضِ الْجَنَّةِ أَوْ حُفْرَةٌ مِّنْ حُفْرِ النَّارِ** "Indeed, the grave is either a garden from the gardens of Paradise, or a pit from the pits of Hell."¹

The Punishment for Sinning in Secret

Sayyiduna Abdullah bin Zayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrated: "I once passed by a graveyard

¹ Tirmidhi, p. 584, Hadith 2460

on the early nights of the month and saw a man coming out of a grave, dragging a chain. Another person held the chain and pulled him back into the grave. Then I saw him beating that corpse, and the corpse was saying: 'Did I not pray? Did I not perform ghusl after impurity? Did I not fast?' The punisher replied: 'Yes! Why not? (You really used to do that.), but when you were alone, you used to commit sins and did not fear Allah Almighty.'¹

Sayyiduna Ibrahim Taimi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ narrated another similar incident: "I would often visit the graveyard to remember death. One night I was in the cemetery when sleep overcame me and I fell asleep, so in my dream I saw an open grave and heard a speaker saying: 'Take this chain, insert it into his mouth, and pull it out from his private part!' The deceased cried, 'O my Lord! Did I not recite the Quran? Did I not perform Hajj of Your Sacred House?' He continued listing his good deeds one after the other then I heard someone say this: 'You did it before people. When you were alone, you rebelled against Me and did not fear Me.'²

الله أكبر! O devotees of the Holy Prophet! Just imagine, who can bear such terrifying punishments? Indeed, none of us can have the courage to do it! Yet, sadly, we still do not fear; we remain heedless and lazy. We may avoid sins in front of people out of shame, but when alone, the market of sin burns bright

الْأَكْمَانُ وَالْحَفِيفُ!

A sin is, after all, a sin

Dear Islamic brothers! A sin, whether done secretly or openly, remains a sin. And Allah Almighty severely shows His wrath upon those who disobey Him. Reflect! The people mentioned earlier appeared pious outwardly but secretly committed sins, whereas we commit sins openly without any shame. What will become of us?

Ah! Just think about it! If we continue sinning like this and one day descend into the grave and we were afflicted with punishment, what will we do then? If snakes and scorpions tear through our shroud and seize our bodies, where

¹ Al-Zawajir, vol. 1, p. 30

² Al-Zawajir, vol. 1, p. 30

will we go? If the grave's walls press against us until our ribs break and interlock, how painful will that be? We cannot even bear the strike of a stone, so what will become of those fragile bones? If the angels begin striking us with hammers?

Companion of the Merciful Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Sayyiduna Abdullah ibn 'Abbas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا said:

“O sinner! Why are you not afraid of the evil consequences of sin? Although living in the pursuit of sin is a greater sin than committing sin. Feeling no shame before the angels on your right and left, and remaining persistent in sin without repentance is an even greater sin that is, remaining in sin without repenting is an even greater sin. Rejoicing after committing a sin and laughing about it is an even greater sin, although for you do not know how Allah Almighty will deal with you! Feeling sorrow over being unable to sin is an even greater sin. And when the curtain of a door moves because of the strong wind, you become afraid, yet you do not fear the Gaze of Allah Almighty that is constantly upon you. This, act, is an even greater sin.”¹

Today Is the Time to Act

Dear Islamic brothers! We are still alive; we still have time. We can repent today and have our past sins forgiven. We can perform good deeds to illuminate our graves. But once the beads of life's rosary scatter, once the soul departs the body, nothing will remain except regret. It is said that a deceased person was seen in a dream, and he said:

مَا عِنْدَكُمْ أَكْثَرُ مِنَ الْعُقَلَّةِ وَمَا عِنْدَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنَ الْحَسْرَةِ

“You, the living, are drowned in heedlessness, and we, who are buried, are drowned in regret.”²

Man Has Two Homes

O devotees of the Holy Prophet! Before the time of regret and shame comes

¹ Al-Zawajir, vol. 1, p. 26

² Ahwal al-Qubur, p. 68

upon us, we must begin preparing for our graves and the Hereafter. Sayyiduna Abdullah bin Iyaz رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said: “Man has two homes: (1) One above the ground, and (2) The other beneath the ground.

Man spends all his effort adorning the home above, making arrangements for comfort and protection from heat and cold, but in doing so, he ruins the home below. Then, when the one destined to come (i.e. Death) arrives, he is asked: ‘Tell me, how long will you stay in this house which you have decorated so beautifully? He replies: ‘I do not know.’ Then he is asked: ‘And in the house which you have messed up, i.e. the grave, how long will you stay there?’ He replies: ‘That is my true home.’ Then it is said to him: ‘You admit this, yet did nothing to prepare for it, do you consider yourself wise?’¹

Dear Islamic brothers! This is the reality. We do not know how long we will live in this world. Soon, very soon, we will be lowered into the dark grave, where we will remain until the Day of Judgment. The sage is he who prepares for his grave while in this world. And the unfortunate one is he who stays lost in worldly pleasures; soon, he will face severe hardship.

Deeds That Illuminate the Grave

Dear Islamic brothers! We need to perform deeds that illuminate the grave and avoid those that cause punishment in the grave. To illuminate the grave, the foremost thing is correct belief (aqeedah), belief about Allah Almighty, His Prophets, about Companions, Ahl-e-Bayt, and Saints must be sound and in accordance with the Quran and Sunnah. Alongside this, we must continue doing righteous deeds. Be punctual in offering the five daily Salah with congregation in the Masjid. Fulfil all obligations and duties (faraiz and wajibat). Give Zakah if it is due. Observe fasts. Treat others with kindness. Recite the Holy Quran in abundance. Send plentiful Salat and Salam (Durood Shareef) upon the Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Engage frequently in the remembrance of Allah (Dhikrullah). And stay firm in all other good deeds, رِيشَاءِ اللهِ, a means of salvation from the torment of the grave will be secured.

¹ Ahwal al-Qubur, p. 244

Charity Illuminates the Grave

Dear Islamic brothers! Giving charity in the path of Allah Almighty is also a good deed that turns the darkness of the grave into light and its terror into peace and comfort.

The Beloved Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ الصَّدَقَةَ لَتُطْفِئُ عَلَى أَهْلِهَا حَرَّ الْقُبُورِ

“Indeed, charity cools down the heat of the grave for the one who gives it.”

وَأَنَّمَا يَسْتِظِلُّ الْمُؤْمِنُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ ظِلِّ صَدَقَتِهِ

“And surely, on the Day of Judgment, the believer will be shaded beneath the shadow of his charity.”¹

Therefore, we should make it a habit to give charity regularly. The virtues of charity are many and immense: Charity closes seventy doors of evil. The giver of charity will be shaded under its shadow on the Day of Judgment. Charity protects from the heat of the grave. Charity wipes away sins just as water extinguishes fire. Charity wards off calamities and afflictions. Charity increases one’s lifespan. Charity saves from an evil death and a bad ending. Charity extinguishes the wrath of Allah Almighty. Charity brings expansion in sustenance and abundance in wealth. Charity removes poverty and destitution.² In short, charity opens the doors of countless blessings and closes the doors of many evils. Hence, we must give abundant charity and donations to prepare for the brightness of our graves and the success of our Hereafter.

Encouragement to Give Donations

Dear Islamic brothers! **اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ**! Dawat-e-Islami is a global religious movement of devotees of the Holy Prophet, spreading the call to righteousness worldwide.

¹ Shu’ab al-Iman, vol. 3, p. 212, Hadith 3347

² Sadqay Ka in’am, pp. 17-19 selected

By the grace of Allah Almighty, Dawat-e-Islami is serving Islam through over 80 departments. It has built thousands of Masajid and hundreds of Faizan-e-Madinah (Islamic centres). To teach the Holy Quran to boys and girls separately, there are approximately 12,699 Madrasah-tul-Madinah established worldwide, where around 373,729 students are being taught Hifz and Nazirah (memorization and recitation) of the holy Qur'an free of cost. (Note: This report includes short-time Madrasah-tul-Madinah for boys and girls.)

To promote Islamic knowledge, Jamia-tul-Madinah has established separate campuses for boys and girls. Currently, there are around 1,500 Jamiat-ul-Madinah, where approximately 124,000 students are studying Dars-e-Nizami (Islamic scholar courses) free of charge. Till now, about 31,211 students have completed their Aalim and Aalima courses. For issuing religious guidance, there are 17 Dar-ul-Ifta Ahl-e-Sunnat across Pakistan, where Muftiyan-e-Kiram provide fatwas and religious rulings to the Ummah. On average, around 170,000 questions are answered annually through various means, in person, by phone, WhatsApp, email, etc.

Dawat-e-Islami's Translation Department transcends linguistic barriers by rendering Islamic literature into 40+ global languages. With over 7,000 works translated to date, this department has successfully completed the Kanz-ul-Irfan Quranic translation in English, Sindhi, Pashto, and Roman Urdu, with a further 23 languages currently in progress.

At Al-Madinah Al-'Ilmiyyah (Islamic Research Centre), 932 Islamic books on various topics have been published to date, and this effort continues. Madani Channel, **الحمد لله!**, broadcasts in three languages: Urdu, English, and Bangla. Short clips are dubbed into other local languages for different countries. For children's Islamic education, the Kids Madani Channel is also running successfully.

You too should! Participate in this great work of serving the religion of Allah Almighty! Give your donations and contributions to Dawat-e-Islami. Your donations can be spent on any legitimate, religious, reformative, welfare, spiritual, and virtuous cause.

Allah Almighty says in the Holy Quran:

وَمَا تَكُمُ إِلَّا تَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاثُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ط

What is the matter with you that you do not spend in the way of Allah even though the inheritance of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah?¹

Under this verse, it is stated in the Tafsir al-Sirat al-Jinan: “Why do you not spend in the way of Allah Almighty when He is the Owner of the heavens and the earth? He is Everlasting, while you will perish, and your wealth will remain His property. If you do not spend it in His path, you won't receive any reward. It is better for you to spend your wealth in the way of Allah Almighty so that you may receive a reward for it.”²

صَلُّوْا عَلٰی الْحَبِيْبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلٰی مُحَمَّدٍ

¹ Al-Quran, Al-Hadīd, verse 10; translation from Kanz al-ʿIrfān

² Tafseer Sirat al-Jinan, part 27, Al-Hadīd, under verse 10, vol. 9, p. 721