Life in al-Barzakh
from Death until Resurrection

2nd Edition

Muhammad Mustafā al-Jibāly

Al-Kitaab & as-Sunnah Publishing
The Inevitable Journey – Book 4

حياة البرزخ

Life in *al-Barzakh*

from Death until Resurrection
(The nonbelievers continue in their wrongdoing and lying) until, when death comes upon one of them, he says, “My Lord, send me back. Perhaps I may do good in that which I have left behind.” No! It is but a word that he speaks, and behind them is a barmakh until the Day when they will be resurrected.

\{Al-Mu’minūn 23:99-100\}
الرحلة المحتملة - الكتاب الرابع
THE INEVITABLE JOURNEY - BOOK 4

حياة البرزخ
LIFE IN AL-BARZAKH
FROM DEATH UNTIL RESURRECTION

Second Edition

مُعْمِّر بن مُصطفى علی الیبایی
MUHAMMAD MUSTAFÄ AL-JIBÄLY

انتشارات الكتاب والسنة
AL-KITAAB & AŚ-SUNNAH PUBLISHING
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**Prelude**

Opening Sermon

إِنَّ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، الْحَمْدُ وَالْبُكْرَةُ وَالْعُمَرَةُ، وَتَنْعِذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَرْرِ أَنفُسِيَّا، وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِيَّا. مَنْ يُهدِيَهُ اللَّهُ فَلاَ مُضْلِلٌ مَّلِيْمُ، وَمَنْ يُضْلِلُ اللَّهُ فَإِلَّا هَادِئٌ عَلَيْهِ.

Al-ḥamdu lillāh. Indeed, all praise is due to Allāh. We praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allāh from our souls’ evil and our wrong doings. He whom Allāh guides, no one can misguide; and he whom He misguides, no one can guide.

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ، وَحَدَّهُ إِلاَّ شَرَيكُ لَهُ. وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ مُحَمَّدَ عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

I bear witness that there is no (true) god except Allāh — alone without a partner, and I bear witness that Muḥammad (ﷺ) is His ‘abd (servant) and messenger.

ۚبِأُيُوبِكَ الْذِّينَ آمَنُوا آمَناً، آمَنَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَحْقَاقَهُ، وَلاَ تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّآ وَأَنْتُمُ مُسْلِمُونَۚ» آل عمران ۱۰۲

«O you who believe! Revere Allāh the right reverence, and do not die except as Muslims.»

ۖبِأُيُوبِكَ الْذِّينَ آمَنُوا رَبِّكَ الْذِّي خَلَقْكُم مِّنْ نَفْسٍ وَحِيدَةٍ، وَخَلَقْ مِنْهَا زَوْجَتَهَا، وَبُثَّ مِنْهَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَرِبَّاتٌ. وَآمَنُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الْذِّي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَبِيبًاۚ» النساء ۱

«O people! Revere your Lord who has created you from a single soul, created from it its mate, and dispersed from both of them many men and women.

1 ventus * Al ’Imrān 3:102.
Revere Allāh through whom you demand things from one another, and (cherish the ties of) the wombs. Indeed, Allāh is ever-Watchful over you.» 1

«O you who believe! Revere Allāh and say fair words. He will then rectify your deeds and forgive your sins. He who obeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly achieved a great victory.» 2 3

Indeed, the best speech is Allāh’s (ﷻ) Book and the best guidance is Muhammad’s (ﷺ) guidance. The worst affairs (of religion) are those innovated (by people), for every such innovation is an act of misguidance leading to the Fire. 4

Our Mission: Purification and Cultivation

Correct Islāmic beliefs and actions must derive from Allāh’s Book and His Messenger’s (ﷺ) Sunnah, and should be guided by the knowledge

1 An-Nisā’ 4:1.
2 Al-Ahzāb 33:70-71.
3 The above paragraphs, including the Qur’ānic portions, are known as “Khutbat ul-Hājah (the Sermon of Need)”. The Prophet (ﷺ) often started his speeches with this sermon, as was recorded by Muslim (868), Abū Dāwūd, and others, from Ibn Mas‘ūd, Ibn ‘Abbās, and other companions (ﷺ).
4 The Prophet (ﷺ) also said this paragraph when starting a speech, as was recorded by Muslim (867), an-Nasā‘ī, and others, from Jābir Bin ‘Abdillāh (ﷺ).
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and understanding of the *sahābah (أخبار)*. This is the clear path of guidance that Allah (الله) has drawn for people, and that leads to their immediate and ultimate success and happiness.

Sadly, most Muslims have departed, to varying degrees, from this magnificent path. Thus, any serious work for reviving Islām among the Muslims must involve two fundamental components:

1. **Purification**: the process of clearing this path from obstacles and obscurities, and guiding people to it.

2. **Cultivation**: the steady and relentless process of teaching people how to live upon this path and abide by its dictates.

These two components were central to the Prophet’s (صلى الله عليه وسلم) mission, as Allah (الله) indicates:

> «It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His *āyāt*, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and Wisdom — although they were previously in clear deviation.»

From this, we realize the urgency of providing the English-speaking public with responsible writings that refine the understanding of Islām and present it in a pure and simple form that incorporates two aspects:

1. Purified Islāmic teachings
2. Practical guidelines for implementing them.

Indeed, this is the mission that we adopt, and this book is a humble step in that direction.

---

1 *Al-Jumu’ah* 62:2.
Purification

Purification (or *tasfiyah*) is required in regard to our sources of Islamic knowledge, our beliefs, and our practices.

A. PURIFYING OUR SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

Narrations that are falsely attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ) or his companions (ﷺ) may not be used as sources of knowledge or bases for action. In fact, these narrations are among the main causes of deviation from true Islam. Therefore, purifying our knowledge from the weak and fabricated narrations is an essential task that must be fully incorporated into our learning and teaching efforts. Praising those who strive in purifying the Islamic knowledge, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

"يَحْمِلُ هَذَا الْعَلَّمُ مِنْ كُلْ خَلْقٍ عُدُولَهُ، يَنْفُونَ عَنْهُ
	تَحْرِيفَ الْغَالِينَ، وَأَنْتَحَالَ الْمُبْطَلِينَ، وَتَأْوِيلَ الجَاهِلِينَ."

"This knowledge will be carried by the trustworthy individuals from every generation — they will expel from it alterations of the extremists, falsehoods of the liars, and misinterpretations of the ignorant." ¹

B. PURIFYING OUR BELIEFS

The belief of many Muslims has been tainted with misconceptions arising from philosophical arguments and un-Islamic notions. Therefore, the necessary purification process demands purifying our faith so that it is based only on authentic texts from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and clean from any form of *shirk* (joining partners with Allah). Such was the belief of the *sahābah* that Allah (ﷻ) praised, saying:

¹ Recorded by al-Bayhaqi, Ibn 'Adiyy, and others from Abū Hurayrah, Ibn Mas'ūd, and other companions (ﷺ). It is verified to be *hasan* by al-Albānī (*Mishkāt al-Maşābih* no. 239).
So if they believe as you (O Prophet’s companions) believe, they are indeed truly guided.» 1

C. PURIFYING OUR ACTIONS

Many Muslims mix their religious practices and acts of worship with innovations (bid’ahs) that are not authorized by Allāh (ﷻ) or His Messenger (ﷺ). Therefore, a great effort is needed to purify the Muslims’ acts of worship so as to conform with authentic texts from the Qur’ān and Sunnah, comply with the understanding and practice of the saḥābah, and reject bid’ahs. This is the only acceptable path of guidance, as Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«Whoever opposes the Messenger — after guidance has become clear to him — and follows other than the path of the believers 2, We will give him what (consequence) he chose and admit him into hell — the most awful destination!» 3

Cultivation

Cultivation (or tarbiyah) is to establish our beliefs and actions upon the purified knowledge. Cultivation goes hand-in-hand with purification.

A. BECOMING TRUE FOLLOWERS OF THE SALAF

The above discussion about purifying our beliefs and actions must extend into cultivating ourselves and our communities upon the

1 Al-Baqarah 2:137.
2 The description “believers” here applies primarily to the saḥābah (ﷺ).
3 An-Nisā’ 4:115.
purified teachings, striving to be true followers of our great salaf, the sahābah (ﷺ). Praising both the sahābah and their true followers, Allāh (ﷺ) says:

«The first to embrace Islām among the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār, and also those who follow them in the best way, Allāh is pleased with them and they with Him. He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, and in which they will abide eternally. This is the supreme success.»

The sahābah were the righteous people whom Allāh (ﷺ) chose to accompany His Prophet (ﷺ). So they left the false religion of their forefathers, associated closely with the Prophet (ﷺ), learnt directly from him, established with him the first and best Islamic community, and transmitted his teachings, accurately and completely, to other people.

When the Muslims make the sahābah their true role models, they would become inclined toward seeking the truth objectively, and free from stubborn and narrow-minded adherence to mathhabs (sects) and prejudiced loyalty to parties.

B. INVITING TO THE PURE RELIGION

A vital part of the cultivation process is to invite all people, Muslims and non-Muslims, to the pure and unadulterated Religion. This should be done by presenting good examples, adorning ourselves with good manners, and employing beneficial, effective, and kind approaches worthy of the message that we carry. Allāh (ﷺ) says:

\[\text{At-Tawbah 9:100.}\]
Let there arise from you (Muslims) a nation that invites to good, enjoins right, and forbids wrong, for those are the successful.»

Helping with this is an obligation upon every Muslim, according to his/her best ability, as Allāh (ﷻ) commands:

«Help one another in righteousness and piety; and do not help one another in sinning and transgression.»

This is the only way to attain Allāh’s acceptance and achieve happiness and success. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«By time, a human being is surely in loss, except for those who believe, do righteous deeds, mutually enjoin the truth, and mutually enjoin perseverance.»

And this is the way to establish among the believers a true and honest compassion that emanates from a strong unifying cause. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

1 Al 'Imrān 3:104.
2 Al-Mā'idah 5:2.
3 Al-'Aṣr 103:1-3.
And hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves.

C. PRESENTING THE ISLĀMIC SOLUTION

Inviting to the Truth includes providing realistic Islāmic solutions to contemporary problems. There is no doubt that Allāh’s guidance is the only comprehensive way for resolving people’s problems at the individual and communal levels. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

And hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allāh, and be not divided among yourselves.

Arbitrate among them according to what Allāh has revealed, and do not follow their errant views.

Indeed, we seek Allāh’s guidance and help, and we implore Him (ﷻ) to enable us to purify and cultivate ourselves and our communities in the way that is most pleasing to Him — āmīn.

1 Al ‘Imrān 3:103.
2 Al-Mā‘ādah 5:49.
**The Inevitable Journey**

Our soul inevitably passes through a route that starts with birth, passes through death, and ends with Resurrection in the next life. This route revolves around death, and is strongly marked with events that precede and succeed it. These events include sickness, pre-death and post-death situations, the intermediate life in the grave (al-Barzakh), and lapses of time we spend sleeping that count as “minor death”. These, and related issues of the soul, are the subjects that we discuss in “The Inevitable Journey” over a sequence of titles as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sickness, Regulations &amp; Exhortations</td>
<td>المرض: أحكام وعظات</td>
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<td>Inheritance, Regulations &amp; Exhortations</td>
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</table>

We base our discussions on authentic texts from the Qur’an and Sunnah, guided in their explanation by the understanding of the eminent ‘ulama’ of Islām. We strive to eliminate elements of superstition and falsehood that have crept into these parts of human life by way of tradition and ignorance.

Each book in this series is intended as a complete handbook and reference in its subject matter. The material is often supplemented with
charts and diagrams for easy reference, discussion, and study.

This Book

SUBJECT MATTER

Death is the ultimate reality that no human being can escape. It forces us to realize the worthlessness of this worldly life and the necessity of preparing for the eternal abode in the next one. It eliminates any hope for permanent prosperity in this life, thus subduing people and challenging all of their false claims and deviant beliefs.

With death, people are transferred to an intermediate stage of living totally different from the life in this world. Once there, they have no way of returning to this life.

The purpose of this book is to discuss details of this intermediate life, al-barzakh. The discussions are based on authentic texts from Allâh’s (ﷻ) Book and His Messenger’s (ﷺ) Sunnah, avoiding unfounded presumptions and speculations that people import from various cultures and philosophies.

Through our in-depth discussions of the incidents of al-barzakh, we hope that we provide a sound and vivid understanding of this inevitable stage of life. Consequently, this should help a Muslim prepare himself for al-barzakh and what lies beyond it in the hereafter.

We attempted to present the material in a structured and organized manner, often in tabulated format, to make it possible to use this book as a classroom or study-circle reference.

THIS EDITION

The first edition of this book was limited to translating and organizing selected chapters and sections from specific books dealing with the study of al-barzakh. Furthermore, we included in the first edition the Arabic texts only for the Qur’anic citations.

In this new edition, we have rewritten the whole book, adding extensive texts and numerous important notions. We based our discussions on a large number of references, as can be seen from the list of references at the end of the book. With this detailed study, we
were able to reach a better understanding of al-barzakh, often clarifying serious misconceptions, such as the meaning of sijjin and 'illiyyūn, and the location of the souls in al-barzakh.

In this edition, we have also included the Arabic text for all hadīths, and have provided most of the Arabic vowel signs (tashkīl).

Furthermore, in our hadīth references, we now provide the hadīth reference numbers for al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrations (according to 'Abd ul-Bāqī’s standards). As for other narrations, we provide the locations where they are verified to be authentic (usually from al-Albānī’s (ṣ) books).

An Important Note Concerning Ghayb

Many situations and concepts discussed in this series (The Inevitable Journey) relate to ghayb. In dealing with such issues, we should apply the following important rules:

a. Matters of ghayb that are mentioned in the Qur’ān and Sunnah should be fully accepted and adopted.

b. The texts concerning ghayb have real meanings that are within human reason — otherwise, Allāh would not have mentioned them to us. For example, the texts about Jannah describe trees, fruits, rivers, jewelry, clothing, and other things with which we are familiar. This helps in providing a general idea of what to expect in Jannah, although we know that there is no comparison between the everlasting splendor of Jannah and this life’s temporal glitter.

c. Unless there is authentic evidence to the contrary, ghayb issues should be understood and interpreted verbatim, in accordance with the apparent meaning of the texts.

d. Our reasoning is based on our experience in the physical world where we live. Since ghayb relates to a totally different world that is not governed by our physical laws, we should not attempt to subject ghayb issues to such laws.
May Allāh, the Almighty, guide the Muslims in all of their affairs to His Book and His Messenger’s (ﷺ) Sunnah; He is All-Hearing and All-Knowing.

Acknowledgement

All praise and thanks are due to our Lord (لَهُ الْحَمْدُ) who facilitated the completion of this work. May He reward all the Muslims who helped and supported this effort in various ways. In particular, may Allāh (لَهُ الْحَمْدُ) reward my shaykh and teacher, Muḥammad Nāṣir ud-Dīn al-Albānī, whose works have benefited us in ways beyond description, my daughters who proofread the manuscript and provided valuable suggestions, and my son ‘Abd ur-Rahmān who typed a portion of the Arabic text.

We ask Allāh (لَهُ الْحَمْدُ) to make this humble effort helpful and profitable to the Muslims, forgive our shortcomings, purify our work from hypocrisy and conceit, and accept it from us.

Our Lord, forgive me, my parents, and all of the believers, and bestow Your peace and praise upon our Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ).
CHAPTER 1
THE APPROACH OF DEATH

People’s Attitude Toward Death

Most people hate death and try to keep it away from their thoughts, because it is the terminator of their worldly pleasures and delights, and of the ties and attachments they cherish in this life. Indeed, death is a gruesome barrier that every human must cross along his way to the hereafter.

The natural dislike of death, however, should never undermine our strong hope of entering paradise, where we would enjoy eternal happiness and unlimited delights, and, most importantly, where we would meet our Lord (ﷻ).

Expecting Good from Allāh

When a person is at the verge of death, he should turn submissively to his Lord, seeking His forgiveness and hoping for His mercy and generosity. Jabir (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«لا يَمْوتُنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَّآَّ وَهُوَ يُحْسِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْطَّنْفَ،ْ فَإِنَّ فُوْمَاً قَدْ أَرَدَاهُمْ سَوَءُ ظَنُّهُمْ بِاللَّهِ ﷺ، فَأَصْبَحُوا مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ.»

«Let no one among you die except while expects good from Allāh. Indeed, there are people whose expectation of evil from Allāh has brought them to ruin and made them among the losers.» ¹

Commenting on this hadīth, an-Nawawī (ﷺ) said:

¹ Recorded by Muslim (2877), Abū Dāwūd, and others.
“A person’s expecting good from Allāh (الله) means: hoping that Allāh will show him mercy and forgiveness. When the person is healthy, he should hold (in his heart) both fear and hope, giving more weight to fear. When death approaches him, hope should prevail, mostly or entirely. This is because fear leads to avoiding sins and increasing in good deeds, and these actions become mostly impossible at that moment. On the other hand, holding hope in Allāh is recommended then because it reflects reliance on Him and submission to Him.” ¹

When a dying person’s hope for Allāh’s (الله) rewards and forgiveness is sincere and well-founded, Allāh rewards this by fulfilling his expectation. Abū Hurayrah and Anas (أنس) reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«يقول اللد: “أنا عند صنًّا عبدي بي، وأنا معه إذا ذكرني”»

“Allāh says, “I am at my servant’s hope in Me, and am with him whenever he extolls or calls Me.”” ²

A RIGHTOUS BELIEVER LONGS TO MEET ALLĀH

When the reality of death comes to a true believer, he welcomes it and earnestly longs to meet his Lord (الله) in Jannah, realizing that this meeting would signify the greatest of goodness and bounties. In return for this longing, Allāh (الله) also longs to meet His beloved servant. ‘Ā’ishah (أئش) reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«مَنْ آَحَبَ لِقَاءِ اللدِّ أَحَبَّ اللدَّ لِقَاءَه، وَمَنْ كَرَهَ لِقَاءِ اللدِّ كَرَهَ اللدَّ لِقَاءَه»

“Whoever loves meeting Allāh, Allāh loves meeting him. And whoever hates meeting Allāh, Allāh hates meeting him.” ³

¹ Al-Minhāj 17:206.
² Recorded by al-Bukhārī (7405, 7505), Muslim (2675), and others.
³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (6507-6508), Muslim (2683-2686), and others.
When she heard this from the Prophet (ﷺ), 'A'ishah ( המס) exclaimed, “O Prophet of Allāh, do you mean hating death? We all hate death!” The Prophet (ﷺ) responded:

"لَئِنَّ كَذَّبَ الَّذِي كَذَّبَتْ النَّاسُ إِذَا حَضَرَتْ الْمَوْتُ، بَلْ رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَرَضْوَانُهُ وَكَرَامَتِهِ، قَلِيسَ شَيْءٌ أَحْبَبَ إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا أَمَامَهُ. فَأَحْبَبْ لَقَاءَ اللَّهِ، وَأُحْبَبَ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ، وَإِنَّ الْكَافِرِ إِذَا حُصِرَ بَشَرَ بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ وَسَخَطِهِ وَعَظْوَتِهِ، قَلِيسَ شَيْءٌ أَكْرَرَ إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا أَمَامَهُ. فَكَرَّ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ، وَكَرَّ اللهُ لِقَاءَهُ." 

“This is not what it means! When death comes to a believer, he is given the tidings of receiving mercy, acceptance, and merit from Allāh. Nothing is then dearer to him than what lies ahead of him; so he loves meeting Allāh, and Allāh loves meeting him. But when death comes to a nonbeliever, he is given the tidings of Allāh’s anger, torture and punishment. Nothing is then more hateful to him than what lies ahead of him; so he hates meeting Allāh, and Allāh hates meeting him.” ¹

Similarly, Shurayh Bin Hānî ( م) was puzzled when he heard the above hadith from Abū Hurayrah ( م), so he went to ‘A’ishah ( המס) and said, “O Mother of the Believers, Abū Hurayrah relates a hadith from Allāh’s Messenger ( ﷺ) that, if true, means that we are all lost!” She said, “A loser is only he who has been declared so by Allāh’s Messenger ( ﷺ). What is he relating?” Shurayh related to her the hadith, adding, “And none among us but hates death.” She explained:

"فَقَدْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ، وَلَسْنَا بِالَّذِي تُزَهَّبُ إِلَيْهِ، وَلَكِنَّ إِذَا شَخَصَ الْبَصَرُ، وَخَضَرَ الصَّدْرُ، وَآفَضَسَ الْجَلَدُ، وَتَشَنَّجَتِ الأَصَابِعُ، فَعَنَّى ذَلِكَ، مِنْ أَحْبَبِ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ، أَحْبَبُ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ، وَمِنْ كَرَّ لِقَاءَهُ، كَرَّ اللهُ لِقَاءَهُ.”

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (6507) and Muslim (2684).
“Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) did say this, but did not mean what you think. Rather, when the gaze becomes fixed, and the chest rattles (as the soul departs), and the skin tightens, and the fingers tremble — at that point, whoever loves meeting Allāh, Allāh loves meeting him; and whoever hates meeting Allāh, Allāh hates meeting him.”  

Abū Hurayrah (4&) also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إنَّ المُؤمِن يَنْزَلُ يَدَمَتْ وَيَعَابِينَ ما يَعَابِينَ. فَوَرَّدَ لَهُ خَرَجَتْ تَقْسِيْمَهُ، وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ لِقَاءَهُ. فَإِنَّمَا كَانَ عَدَاً للَّهِ يَنْزَلُ يَدَمَتْ وَيَعَابِينَ ما يَعَابِينَ. فَإِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ أنْ يَخْرُجْ رُوحُهُ أَبْداً، وَاللَّهُ يُعْفِضُ لِقَاءَهُ.»

«Indeed, when death descends upon a believer, and he witnesses things (implying his forthcoming rewards), he wishes that his soul would depart (quickly), and Allāh loves to meet him.

And when death descends upon an enemy of Allāh, and he witnesses things (implying his imminent punishment), he wishes that his soul would never depart, and Allāh hates to meet him.»  

Furthermore, as soon as a righteous believer enters his grave, he is given a preview of the great pleasures that await him. This makes him realize how worthless the worldly life is, so he entertains no wish to return to it.

**A NONBELIEVER WISHES TO RETURN TO THE WORLDLY LIFE**

We saw above that, contrary to a believer, a nonbeliever hates to meet his Lord (ﷻ) who is extremely angry with him; and his Lord equally hates to meet him. Death brings to him unpleasant tidings of the great punishment that awaits him. It terminates his worldly pleasures,

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1 Recorded by Muslim (2685).
2 Recorded by al-Bazzār; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (ṣaḥīḥah no. 2628).
offering him only the Fire as a substitute, and allowing him no chance
to do any good that could possibly save him from the punishment.
Allāh (سُلَم) says:

Ô طَبْنَتَا، إِذَا ذَهَبُواٰ، فَلَا فَوْقُ. وَأَخْذُوا مِن مَكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ وَقَالُواٰ:
"عَبْدُمُ اللَّهِ، "أَنْتُمْ لَا تُكْرِهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَشَاءُواٰ مِن مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِهِ مِن قَبلٍ، وَيُقْفُونَ بَيْنَ الْمَغْتَبِ مِن مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ، وَحِيلٌ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ مَا يُشْتَهِيٰونَ، كَمَا فَعَلَ بِأَشْيَاهِهِمْ مِن قَبْلَ، إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا فِي شَكّ مُرِيبٍ 54-51 سَأَ."

«If you could but see when they (the nonbelievers) will be terrified (at death and in the hereafter), with nowhere to escape, and they will be seized (by angels and by their own deeds) from a place so close to them. They will then say, “We do now believe in it (Islām)” But how could they reach (for faith) from so far away — seeing that they had previously disbelieved in it, and they used to cast doubts from so far (from truth)? And a barrier will be set between them and anything they ever desired, as will be done to such of their kind as lived before them. Indeed, they all lived in doubt and suspicion.»

As soon as a nonbeliever enters his grave, he realizes his bad performance in the worldly life, and is given a preview of the severe punishment that awaits him. Seeing his predicament, he wishes to be given a second chance to correct his deeds. Allāh (سُلَم) says:

حتَّى إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدُهُمْ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ: "رَبِّ أَرْجَعُونَ، َلَعَلَّي أُعْمَلٌ صَلِّي عَلَيْهِمَّ ٌ فِي مَآءٍ تَرْكُتُ؛" كَلَاٰ، إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَأَلَّهَا، وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرَزَعٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ لَا يُبَيِّنُونَ ﴿99-100﴾

\[\text{\textsuperscript{1} Saba' 34:54.}\]
«(The nonbelievers continue in their wrongdoing and lying) until, when death comes to one of them, he says, “My Lord, send me back. Perhaps I may do good in that which I left behind.” No! It is but a (false) word that he speaks, and behind them (i.e., the dead) is a barrier until the Day when they will be resurrected.» ¹

**Sinners Wish to Return to the Worldly Life**

The above āyāt (23:99-100) do not only apply to nonbelievers, but also to sinful believers who committed many atrocities and freely transgressed Allāh’s limits. At the time of death, they see what punishment awaits them in the grave and in the hereafter, so they too wish to return to the worldly life to correct their shortcomings.

This understanding was expressed by many ‘ulama of tafsīr, such as Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurtubī, and as-Sa’ādi (†5) who said:

“Any excessive wrongdoers regrets his actions at the time of death, because he sees his future abode and realizes the ugliness of his deeds. He requests to return to the worldly life, not to enjoy its pleasures and reap its desires, but only to do good and mend his evil.” ²

Allāh (ﷻ) addresses the believers by saying:

«And (O believers,) spend (in Allāh’s way) from what We have provided you before death comes to one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give

¹ Al-Mu’minūn 23:99-100.
charity and be among the righteous.” But never will Allāh delay a soul when its time has come. And Allāh is Well-Aware of what you do.” ¹

Commenting on these āyāt, Ibn Kathīr (_initialized) said:

“Every wrongdoer regrets his actions at death and requests at least a little extension in his term (of life), so as to find an excuse (for his actions) or correct what he missed (of them).” ²

A fine example of a sinful believer who dreads the meeting with Allāh (Initialized) is cited in the next chapter (p. 35), about the man who instructed his children to cremate him.

Matters Relating to the Arrival of Death

Satan’s Plotting Continues until Death

Satan attends all of our affairs, relentlessly striving to divert us from doing good and push us toward evil. The moment of death is his final chance to lure us, hoping to make us end our life in sinning and disobedience. Jābir Bin ‘Abdillāh (Initialized) reported that the Prophet (Initialized) said:

<Indeed, Satan attends you in all of your affairs, including your eating.> ³

Satan only stops his enticing and plotting against us after we die. Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (Initialized) reported that the Prophet (Initialized) said:

¹ Al-Munāfiqūn 63:10-11.
² Tafsīr ul-Qur‘ān il-‘Azīm 63:10.
³ Recorded by Muslim (2033).
Indeed, Satan said (to Allâh), “By Your dignity, my Lord, I will continue to lure Your servants as long as their souls are in their bodies.” And the Lord (ﷻ) replied, “By My dignity and glory, I will continue to forgive them as long as they seek My forgiveness.”

Therefore, the Prophet (ﷺ) taught us an important supplication to protect against Satan’s attacks at the time of death. Abû al-Yusr Ka‘b Bin ‘Amr (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say the following du‘â:

“Allâhumma innî a‘îthu bika minal-hadmi wal-ghamm, wa-‘îthu bika minat-taraddî, wa-‘îthu bika minal-gharaqi wal-‘araqi wal-haram, wa-‘îthu bika an yatakhbâbataniy-ash-shaytân ‘indal-mawt, wa-‘îthu bika an amûta fi sabîlika mudbirâ, wa-‘îthu bika an amûta ladîghâ — O Allâh, I seek Your protection against dying under a collapsing building and against distress; I seek Your protection against falling from a high place; I seek Your protection against drowning or burning or old age; I seek Your protection against Satan’s confounding touch at the time of death; I seek Your protection against dying while running away from...”

1 Recorded by al-Hâkim, al-Bayhaqi (in al-Asma‘), and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albâni (as-Sahihah no. 104 and Hidâyat ur-Ruwâh no. 2283).
fighting for Your cause; and I seek Your protection against dying from a snake bite.» ¹

**ALLAH HESITATES TO TAKE A BELIEVER’S SOUL**

Allah (ﷻ) loves a believer according to his righteousness. When Allah loves a person, He supports him and protects him from harm. Allah would even have protected him from death — had He (ﷻ) not decreed that all humans must die. Even the believers have to experience death in order to reach the hereafter’s eternal bliss. Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) reported that Allah (ﷻ) said:

> إن الله تعالى قال: “من عادى لي وليا، فقد أذنته بالحرب، وما تقرب
> إلى عبدٍ بسيئٍ أحب إليّ مما أفضحت عليه، ولا يزال عبدٍ بسيئٍ ينفرج
> إلى بالتوافل حتى أحبه، فإذا أحببته، كنت سمعه الذي يسمع به، وبصره
> الذي يبصر به، ويدله التي يبطش بها، ورجله التي يمشي بها، ولن
> سأأتي لأعطيته، ولن أستعاذني لأعيدته، وما تردَّدت عن شيء أن
> فأعطيه تردُّدي عن نفس الوُمَت، يكره المُوت وأنا أكره مسأليته.”

> Whoever harms one of my close friends, I declare war against him. And My servant cannot draw closer to Me with anything dearer to Me than the religious duties I have mandated upon him.

My ‘abd continues to draw closer to Me (beyond the obligations) with voluntary acts until I love him. When I love him, I become his ears with which he hears, his eyes with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. Would he then ask me for anything, I will surely grant it to him; and would he seek refuge in Me, I will surely shelter him.

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā’ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Hidāyat ur-Ruwāh no. 2407 and Sahīḥ Abī Dāwūd nos. 1388-1389).
I do not hesitate in anything I do as I hesitate in taking the life of my believing servant: he hates death and I hate to hurt him.> \(^1\)

It should be noted that Allāh’s “hesitation” in this hadīth is not like people’s hesitation that results from uncertainty regarding an action’s outcome — exalted be Allāh (ﷻ) above this. Rather, His hesitation simply means that He (ﷻ) decrees the coexistence of two things when one of them may appear to affect the other negatively. In this case, He (ﷻ) decreed that He will protect His righteous servants and, at the same time, He decreed that they must tolerate death. \(^2\)

**Agonies of Death**

Death arrives with pains and agonies that every human must taste. These agonies put the dying person in a numb state that resembles intoxication. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

\[
(۰۲۰۱۹)
\]

«The intoxication of death arrives, bringing with it (for the human being) the truth, (and he is told) “This is what you were trying to evade.”» \(^3\)

‘Ā’ishah (ﷻ) reported that she attended her father Abū Bakr (ﷺ) when he was dying. He fainted, and she recited a line of poetry about the arrival of a time of sorrow, and meaning:

“He who keeps control of his tears
Will surely pour them out one day.”

Abū Bakr regained his consciousness, and heard these words, so He exhorted her to recite, instead of this, the above āyah (54:19). \(^4\)

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1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (6502), al-Bayhaqī, and others.
2 For more detail, see Ibn Taymiyyah’s ( SAFE) discussion of this as cited by al-Albānī in as-Saḥīḥah 4:191-193.
3 Qāf 54:19.
4 Recorded by Ibn Ḥibbān. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (at-Ta’līqāt ul-Hisān
Even the prophets (ﷺ) tasted the pangs of death. ‘A’ishah (cff) said:

"ما رأيت أحدا أشدًا عليه الوجع من رسول الله "

"I never saw anyone suffering more pain (at the time of death) than Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ)." ¹

‘A’ishah (cff) also reported that during the Prophet’s terminal illness, a can of water was placed near him. He would dip his hand into the water, wipe his face with it, and say:

"لا إله إلا الله. إن للعوت سكرات.

«There is no (true) god except Allāh. Indeed, (the pain of) death causes (what resembles) intoxication.»

After repeating this a number of times, he stretched out his hand and said:

«اللهُمَّ أُغْفِر لِي وآرْحَمْي، وَأَلْحَقْيِ بالرَّفِيقِ الأَعْلَى.

«O Allāh! Forgive me, have mercy on me, and join me with the highest company.»

The Prophet (ﷺ) then passed away, and his hand fell limp. ²

Afflictions and hardships befalling the prophets (ﷺ) and other righteous believers in this life increase their rewards, expiate their sins, and elevate their rank in Jannah. The agonies of death are no exception to this important rule.

Contrary to a wrongdoer, a righteous believer’s agonies end by his death. Anas reported that shortly before the Prophet (ﷺ) passed away, his daughter Fātimah (cff) visited him and found him undergoing periods of unconsciousness. She said, “Oh, how great is my father’s suffering!” He said:

«ليست على أبيك كرب بعد اليوم.»

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari (5646) and Muslim (2570).
² Recorded by al-Bukhari (4449, 6510), at-Tirmithi, and others.
Chapter 1

Your father will have no suffering after today. 1

This is not specific to the Prophet (ﷺ). We will see in forthcoming chapters that a righteous believer finds happiness and forgets all pain shortly after death.

Abū Qatādah ( равно) reported that a funeral once passed before the Prophet (ﷺ), so he commented, "He (the deceased) has either rested, or others have rested from him." The Prophet (ﷺ) was asked what he meant by this, and he responded:

"The believer rests from the hardships and harm of the worldly life and is transferred to Allah’s mercy. As for an evil person, other people, land, trees, and animals rest from him." 2

And yet, the taste of death sometimes takes a long time to recede. Jābir (𤀹) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"You may freely relate things from the Children of Israel, because amazing events occurred to them."

Then he (ﷺ) related:

"A messenger of mine told me that a caravan of those Israelites returned to them. They said: "You are surely people who have a warning."

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (4462), Ibn Mājah, and others.

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (6512-6513) and Muslim (950).
The Approach of Death

"A few (righteous) men from the Children of Israel once passed by one of their graveyards and said to each other, "Let us pray two rak'at and then beg Allāh (سُعْرِب) to raise for us a man from among the dead so that we can ask him about death." They prayed and supplicated. After a little while, a brown-skinned man, with the trace of sujūd between his eyes, raised his head from his grave and said, "O people, what do you want from me? You have done something grave to me." They replied, "We begged Allāh to bring out to us a man from those in the graves so as to tell us about the taste of death." He said, "I died one hundred years ago, and the taste (or heat) of death did not subside from me until just now. But now, you requested Allāh (to raise me from death) after the taste has just subsided. So supplicate to Allāh for me that He restores me as I was (without having to taste death again). They supplicated, and Allāh restored him (to death)." ¹

The Final Stance Is What Counts

APPARENT ACTIONS DO NOT ALWAYS REFLECT THE TRUTH

During this life, people fluctuate between belief and disbelief. Those

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad (in az-Zuhd), Ibn Abī Shaybah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (ṣa-Șahīḥah no. 2926).
who, with Allāh’s facilitation and help, establish in their heart a strong belief, they will remain firm on this belief until their soul departs from their body. But as for those who live in doubt, or who fake belief with their tongue and apparent actions while their heart belies this, their true belief will be exposed at death.

Sahl Bin Sa’d as-Sā’idī (RH) reported that during one of the Muslims’ battles, a particular member of the Muslim army fought so well that some of the sahābah said to the Prophet (ﷺ), “None of us has fared as well as did so-and-so today!” But they were shocked to hear the Prophet (ﷺ) say, «Indeed, he is one of the people of the Fire.» Some of the sahābah thought, “Who among us can then go to Jannah if this man went to the Fire?” In the subsequent fighting, one of them fought closely by his side and saw him become wounded and then kill himself with his own sword (because he was not patient enough to tolerate the pain). The sahābī went back to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told him what he saw. The amazed and relieved the other sahābah, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Indeed, for a long time, a man would do deeds of the people of Jannah — as it appears to people — but he is (ultimately) from the people of the Fire. And indeed, for a long time, a man would do deeds of the people of the Fire — as it appears to people — but he is (ultimately) from the people of Jannah. Indeed, deeds are only by their conclusion.» ¹

This hadīth indicates that a person may appear to people to be good and righteous while he lacks the true belief needed to save him from hell. In this case, the man committed suicide, which is a major sin reflecting mistrust in Allāh.

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2898, 4203, 4207, 6493, 6607), Muslim (112), and others.
On the other hand, a person may live sinfully most of his life, but his heart may house the belief and repentance needed to save him. An example of this will be cited later (p. 45) about the man who murdered one hundred people.

The final abode of both types of individuals may be revealed at the conclusion of their life.

**A Believer's Conclusive Declaration of Faith**

One should never wait for the pangs of death before declaring a pure belief in Allāh (ﷻ). Rather, this belief must be nurtured prior to that, and while one is sound of intellect. This would guarantee entering Jannah in the hereafter. 'Uthmān (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«من مات وهو يعلم أنه لا إله إلا الله دخل الجنة»

«Anyone who dies knowing that, “Lā ilāha illa-llāh” will enter Jannah.»

Abū Ṭharr, Jābir Bin ‘Abdillāh, and other companions (ﷺ), reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«من مات لا يشرك بالله شيئا دخل الجنة»

«Anyone who dies joining none with Allāh will enter Jannah.»

This belief in Allāh must be based on firm conviction and certitude. Mu‘āth Bin Jabal (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«ما من نفس تموت وهي تشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأتي رسل الله بمعين موقن، إلا غفر الله لها.»

«No soul dies while testifying that there is no (true)

1 Recorded by Muslim (26) and Ahmad.

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1237-1238, 2388, 3222, 5827, 6268, 6443-6444, 7487), Muslim (32, 92-94), and others.
Chapter 1  16  Life in al-Barzakh

god except Allah and that I am Allah’s Messenger, with that issuing from a believing heart, but that Allah will forgive it.>  

Allah (ﷻ) blesses some individuals with saying the shahadah at the time of death. This would be an endorsement of their true belief, and presents glad tidings of their future abode in Jannah. Mu‘āth (ﷺ) also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«من كان آخر كلاميه لا إله إلا الله دخل الجنة.»

«He whose last words are “La ilāha illa-llāh” will enter Jannah.»  

Even sinful believers who may be punished in hell for their sins will eventually enter Jannah by virtue of this great declaration. Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«من كان آخر كلاميه لا إله إلا الله عند الموت دخل الجنة»

«يوماً من الدُّهر، وإن أصابه قبَّل ذلِك ما أصابه.»

«Anyone whose conclusive words at the time of death are, “La ilāha illa-llāh,” will enter Jannah one day, regardless of what happens to him prior to that.»  

Jābir (ﷺ) reported that after the passing away of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), Umar (ﷺ) observed signs of sadness on Ṭālḥah Bin Ubayd Illāh ⁴. He asked him, “What is wrong, O Abū Muḥammad? You appear disheveled and worried since the passing of Allah’s

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1 Recorded by Ibn Mājah, Ahmad, and others. Verified to be hasan by al-Albānī (Ahkām ul-Janā‘iz 48).
2 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, al-Hākim, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Hidāyat ur-Ruwāh no. 1564 and Ahkām ul-Janā‘iz 48).
3 Recorded by Ibn Hibbān. Verified to be hasan by al-Albānī (at-Ta‘līqat ul-Hisan no. 2993 and Irwā‘ul-Ghalil no. 687).
4 One of the ten saḥābah who were given tidings of Jannah. He fought most of the battles with the Prophet (ﷺ). He was assassinated in 36 H at the age of 62.
Life in *al-Barzakh* 17  The Approach of Death

Messenger (**ﷺ**). Is it because of the appointment of your cousin (Abū Bakr), as *khalifah*?” He replied, “No, may Allāh forbid!” He praised Abū Bakr (**ﷺ** and then explained, “It is just that I heard from Allāh’s Messenger (**ﷺ**) a *hadith* (that I did not understand), and nothing but hesitation prevented me from asking him (for clarification) — until he passed away!” Then he related that he heard the Prophet (**ﷺ**) say:

أَنْفُسَ اللهُ عَنْهُ كَرِيبَتَهُ، وَوَجَّهَتْ رُوحُهُ لَهَا رَوْحاً حِينَ تَخْرُجُ مِنْ جَسَدهُ، وَكَانَتْ لَهُ نُورًا فِي صُحِيفِهِ يُوْمَ الْقِيَامِةِ َ

Indeed, I know a statement that no person says at the time of his death but that his complexion shines by it, Allāh removes his distress, it provides his soul with security as it departs from his body, and it will be a light in his record on the Day of Resurrection.

‘Umar (**ﷺ**) said, “I know what this statement is.” Ṭalḥah exclaimed, “Exalted be Allāh! What is it?” ‘Umar replied, “Do you know a statement greater than that with which he (**ﷺ**) prompted his uncle at his death, "لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا-اللَّهُٓ؟"” Ṭalḥah said, “You spoke the truth. By Allāh, this is it!”

A NONBELIEVER’S DECLARATION OF FAITH

If a person rejects the belief in Allāh throughout his life, but declares it upon feeling the pangs of death, such a declaration will not avail him. Ibn ‘Umar (**ﷺ**) reported that the Prophet (**ﷺ**) said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَقْبِلُ نُوْبَةَ العَبْدِ مَا لَمْ يَغْضَرْ َ

Indeed, Allāh continues to accept a person’s repentance as long as he has not reached the

gurgling stage (when his soul is leaving his body).» 1

Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«But repentance is not (accepted) of those who continue to do evil deeds up until, when death comes to one of them, he says, “Indeed, I have repented now,” nor of those who die as disbelievers.» 2

When Pharaoh was drowning, he declared belief in Allāh, but this was rejected from him, as Allāh (管网) says:

«(Pharaoh persisted in his tyranny and disbelief) until, when drowning overtook him, he said, “I believe that there is no (true) god except that in whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of the Muslims.” (Allāh said,) “Now — while you continued to disobey (Me) before this, and were of the corrupters?”» 3

Ibn ‘Abbās ( ☽ ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Ibn ‘Abbās ( ☽ ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

Recorded by at-Tirmithī, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Hidaway ur-Ruwāh no. 2282 and Sahīh ul-Jamī’ no. 1903).

2 An-Nisā’ 4:18.

3 Yūnus 10:90-91.
Jibrīl said to me, “O Muhammad, would you have seen me as I took black dirt from the sea and stuffed it into Pharaoh’s mouth, fearing that the mercy (of Allāh) might reach him.”

This hadīth indicates that Allāh’s (艉) great mercy may reach even those who are thought to be completely doomed. It further indicates that, in the case of Pharaoh, this did not happen because he declared the faith too late. Obviously, Jibrīl’s blocking of his mouth was by Allāh’s permission and command to eliminate any hope of forgiveness for that great enemy of Allāh.

Taking a Lesson from Death

Graveness of the Grave

From the above, we conclude that we should view death as a great lesson that urges us to take heed and reminds us of the major events that await us beyond it.

Death is the first step into the path of the hereafter, and the grave is the first stop along that path. Hānī, ‘Uthmān Bin ‘Affān’s (ﷺ) servant, said that whenever ‘Uthmān stood over a grave, he would cry until his tears wet his beard. He was told, “You do not weep (as much) when you remember paradise and hell, but you weep when you see a grave!” In response, he reported that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say:

\[\text{إنَّ الْقُبْرَ أَوَّلُ مَنْازِلِ الْآخِرَةَ} \\
\\text{وَإِنْ نَجَّاَ مَيْتًا فَمَا بَعْدُهُ أَيْسَرُ مَيْتًا} \\
\\text{وَإِنَّ لَمْ يَنْجُ مَيْتًا فَمَا بَعْدُهُ أَسْتَرُ مَيْتًا} \]

Indeed, the grave is the first of the hereafter’s dwellings. If a person passes through it safely, what follows will be easier; and if he does not pass through it safely, what follows will be more horrible. And I have never seen a dreadful sight but that the

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1 Recorded by Ahmad and at-Tirmithī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Sahih ul-Jāmi’ no. 5206 and as-Sāḥīfah no. 2015).
grave is even more dreadful. ¹

Al-Bara' Bin 'Āzib reported that once the Prophet (ﷺ), passing by a group of people gathered around something, asked, «علماً أجنعب هاتفٌ؟»
«Over what are these people gathered?» He was told, “It is a grave they are digging.” So he rushed ahead of his companions until he reached the grave. He knelt down and wept, his tears falling to the ground, then turned to his companions and said:

«أيُّ إخوائِي، لِمِثلِ هَذَا الْيَوْمِ فَأَعْدِواً.»
«O my brothers, for a day such as this, then, prepare yourselves.» ²

'$Abdullāh Bin Mas'ūd (rad.) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«استَخْفِيوا مِنِ اللَّهِ حَقَّ الْحَيَاةِ، مِنْ أَسْتَخْفِيَ مِنِ اللَّهِ حَقَّ الْحَيَاةِ، فَلَيُحْفَظُ الْرَّأْسُ وَمَا وَعَى، وَلَيُحْفَظُ الْبَطْنُ وَمَا حَوْى، وَلَيُذْكَرَ الْمَوْتُ وَالْبَلَاءِ. وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الأَخْرَى تَرْكَ زَيْنَةَ الدُّنْيَا. فَمَنْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ، فَقَدْ أَسْتَخْفَى مِنِ اللَّهِ حَقَّ الْحَيَاةِ.»

«You should maintain the right shyness before Allah. He who holds the right shyness before Allah would preserve his head and its faculties (from disobedience), would preserve his abdomen and what it holds (from greed, unlawful earnings, etc.), and would remember death and decadence. And he who seeks (success in) the hereafter should drop (indulgence in) the worldly adornments. Whoever does this would have maintained the right shyness before Allah.» ³

¹ Recorded by at-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be hasan by al-Albānī (Sahih ur-Targhib wa-Tarhib no. 3550 and Hidayat ur-Ruwāh no. 128).
² Recorded by Ibn Mājah, Ahmad, and others. Verified to be hasan by al-Albānī (as-Saḥīḥah no. 1751).
³ Recorded by at-Tirmidhī, al-Hākim, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī.
This means that remembering death and preparing for it are among the qualities required from a believer to exhibit proper manners before Allāh (ﷻ).

**PREPARING FOR DEATH**

Therefore, we should remember death frequently and prepare for it diligently. The exposé in this book should be a great help in this, exhorting us to move forth in preparing for that decisive and unavoidable event and what lies beyond it.

A careful preparation and planning for death reflects wisdom and prudence. Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

`أَفْضَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَخْسَسُوهُمْ خَلِفًا، وَأَكْسَسُوهُمْ أَكْرُهُمْ ذِكْرًا لِلْمَوْتِ وَأَشْدَدُهُمْ أَسْتِبَعَادًا لِلَّهِ. أَوْلَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْأَكْيَاسُ، ذَهَبُوا بِشَفَرِ الدُّنْيَا وَكَرَامَةِ الأَخِرَةِ.`

The best among the believers are those with best manners. And the most prudent among them are those who remember death most often and prepare for it the hardest. Indeed, those are the prudent ones: they attain honor in this life and excellence in the hereafter.¹

This preparation should not be left off until it is too late. Ibn ‘Abbās (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

`اغْتَنِمْ خَمسًا قَبْلَ خَمسٍ: شَباَبُكَ قَبْلُ هَرْمِكَ، وَصَحِيحُكَ قَبْلَ سَقِيمَكَ، وَغَنَّاكَ قَبْلُ فَرْكِكَ، وَفَرْغَاكَ قَبْلُ شَغْلِكَ، وَحِيَاتُكَ قَبْلُ مُرْتَبِكَ.`

Make use of five things before they are overtaken by five other things: Your youth before reaching old-age, your health before becoming sick, your wealth before becoming poor, your free time before

¹ Recorded by at-Tabarānī, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (ṣaḥīḥah no. 1384).
becoming busy, and your life before your death.> ¹

Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أفضل الصدقة أن تتصدّق وأنت صحيح شحيح. تخصى الفقر وتأمل الغني. ولا تمهل حتى إذا بلغت الحلق فلتُت. “إِنْفَلانَ كَذَا وَإِنْفَلانَ كَذَا”. أَلا وَقِدْ كَانَ إِنْفَلانَ كَذَا»

(The best type of charity is that which you give when you are healthy and short of funds, fearing poverty and hoping for wealth. Do not postpone it until your soul reaches your throat and you say, “Give so much to so-and-so, and so much to so-and-so. Indeed, by then, so-and-so may have already received so much (from the inheritance).») ²

We should not belittle any good deed that may be of help to us in the life to come. Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) once, passing by a recently covered grave, said:

«رَكِعَتَنَّ خَفْيَتَانَ مِمَّا تَحْزَرُونَ وَتَنَفُّلونَ بِزِيدَهُمَا»

هَذَا فِي عَمْلِهِ أَحْبَبْ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ تَبْيِينِ دُنْيَاكُمْ.

(To this (dead person), adding to his deeds only two light voluntary rak‘āt that you may belittle, is more beloved to him than all of what is in your worldly life.) ³

¹ Recorded by al-Ḥākim, Ibn Abid-Dunyā, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Iqtida’ ul-Ilm-il-Amal no. 170).
² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.
³ Recorded by Abū Nu‘aym, at-Ṭabarānī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (as-Saḥīḥah no. 1388).
CHAPTER 2
BELIEF IN AL-BARZAKH

Defining al-Barzakh

In Arabic, “Barzakh” means barrier. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«He (Allāh) released the two great bodies of (fresh and salty) water, so as to meet. Yet, between them is a barzakh (barrier) that they may not transgress. »

And He (ﷻ) says:

«He it is who has released the two great bodies of water, one sweet and thirst-quenching and the other salty and bitter; and yet, He placed between them a barzakh (barrier) and inhibiting partition.»

“Barzakh” also refers to the barrier that separates the worldly life from the eternal life starting on Judgment Day. Al-barzakh, therefore, extends from death until Resurrection. It is an intermediate stage of living totally different from the life of this world, and different from the life of the hereafter as well. Once a person has entered al-barzakh, he has no way of returning to this life. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

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1 Lisān-ul-'Arab by Ibn ul-Manzūr.
3 Al-Furqān 25:53.
«Until, when death comes upon one of them (those who join partners with Allâh), he says, “My Lord, send me back. Perhaps I may do good in that which I have left behind!” No! It is but a word that he speaks, and behind them is a barzakh until the Day when they will be resurrected.»

Since, after death, a dead person’s body is usually laid in his grave, al-barzakh overlaps with the abode in the grave. Therefore, we will interchangeably use terms such as, “punishment during al-barzakh” and “punishment in the grave”.

**Texts Mentioning al-Barzakh**

There are texts in both the Qur’an and the Sunnah making clear or implicit reference to the life in al-barzakh.

**Qur’anic Texts**

As for the Qur’an, Allâh (ﷻ) says:

> وَمَنْ حَوَلَّكُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مُنَفِّفُونَ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ مُرَّدُوا عَلَى الْنَّفَاقِ لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ تَحْنِينَ تَعْلِمُهُمْ سَتَعْدَبُهُمْ مُرَّتَيْنِ لَمْ يَرَدْنَ إِلَى عَذَابِ عَظِيمٍ \(\text{Quran 23:99-100}\)

«There are hypocrites from among the Bedouins who dwell around you, and (also) from the people of al-Madinah. They have become audacious in their..."
hypocrisy. You (O Muḥammad) do not (always) know them, but We know them. We will punish them twice, then they will be delivered to a great punishment (in the hereafter).»

In regard to “punishing them twice” in this āyah, Ibn Kathīr (‡) reported that Qatādah, al-Ḥasan al- Баṣrī, and others (‡) said:

“Punishment in this life, and punishment in the grave.”

And Allāh (‡) says:

«(The worst torment surrounded Pharaoh’s people:) the Fire. They are exposed to it morning and evening; and, on the Day when the Hour will be established, (a command will be issued) “Admit Pharaoh’s people into the most severe torment.”»

Commenting on this āyah, Ibn Kathīr (‡) said:

“After drowning in the sea, they were transferred to the Fire. Indeed, their souls are presented to the Fire in the morning and evening, until the Last Hour arrives. On the Day of Resurrection both their souls and bodies come together in the Fire.”

And Allāh (‡) says:

| 1 At-Tawbah 9:101. |
| 3 Ghâfir 40:46. |
| 4 Tafsîr ul-Qur’ān il-‘Azîm 40:46. |
«And indeed, there is for the wrongdoers a punishment before that (of the hereafter), but most of them do not know this.» ¹

In regard to the “first punishment” in this āyah, at-Ṭabarî (ァ) reported from Qatadah (ァ) that Ibn ‘Abbās (ァ) said, “Punishment in the grave.” ²

And Allāh (ゥ) says:

«He was told, “Enter Jannah.” He said, “I wish my people could know of how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honored.”» ³

These āyāt refer to a righteous man who was killed by his people because he called them to Allāh. As soon as he died, he (i.e., his soul) is told to enter Jannah. He immediately expressed a wish that his people (who had not yet died) would know of his great reward, because he still hoped for them to be guided. Therefore, his soul’s admission to Jannah must have been in al-barzakh and before Resurrection.

TEXTS FROM THE SUNNAH

There are numerous texts in the Sunnah that mention various aspects of the life in al-barzakh. We will discuss many of them in the forthcoming chapters.

In the next section, however, we present a number of hadīths in which the Prophet ( صلى الله عليه وسلم ) taught his Ummah to seek Allāh’s protection from the punishment of the grave.

¹ At-Tür 52:47.
² Tafsīr at-Ṭabarî 52:47.
³ Yā Sin 36:26-27.
Seeking Allāh’s Protection from the Torment of the Grave

The Prophet (ﷺ) often sought Allāh’s protection from the grave’s trial and torment, and he taught his companions to do the same.

Seeking Protection in the Morning and Evening

Ibn Mas’ūd (ﷺ) reported that the following was part of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) morning and evening extollments:

«رب أعود بك من عذاب في النار و عذاب في القبر.»

*Rabbi a’ūthu bika min ‘athābin fin-nārī wa-‘athābin fil-qabr — My Lord, I seek Your protection from the punishment in the Fire, and from the punishment in the grave.*\(^1\)

Abū Bakrah reported that the following was part of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) morning and evening extollments:

«اللهُمَّ إِنِّي أُعْثُو بِكَ مِنَ الْكَفْرِ وَالْفَقْرِ،»

Allāhumma innī a’ūthu bika min-al-kufri wal-faqr,

Allāhumma innī a’ūthu bika min ʼathāb il-qabr —

O Allāh, I seek Your protection from disbelief (or ingratitude) and poverty, and I seek Your protection from the torment of the grave.*\(^2\)

Seeking Protection during the Prayer

Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) instructed his companions to say during tashahhud:

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1 Recorded by Muslim (2723), Abū Dāwūd, and others.
2 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā‘ī, and others. Verified to be *hasan* by al-Albānī (al-Adab ul-Mufrad no. 701).
O Allah, I seek Your protection from the torment of hell, from the torment of the grave, from the trial of life and death, and from the evil of the trial of al-Masîh ud-Dajjâl. 2

Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to teach his companions the above supplication as he would teach them a sūrah from the Qur‘ān. 3

Sa’d Bin Abî Waqqâṣ (رضي الله عنه) reported that, at the end of the prayers, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to seek Allâh’s (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) protection with the following supplication:

Allâhumma innî a‘ûthu bika min al-jubn, wa-a‘ûthu bika min-al-bukhl, wa-a‘ûthu bika an uradda ilâ arthal-il-‘umur, wa-a‘ûthu bika min fitnat-id-dunyâ, wa-a‘ûthu bika min ‘athâb-il-qabr —

O Allâh, I seek Your protection from cowardice; and I seek Your protection from miserliness; and I seek Your protection from reaching the worst of (old) age; and I seek Your protection from the trial of the

1 Al-Masîh ud-Dajjâl (or, simply, ad-Dajjâl): the Lying Messiah. This is the greatest imposter who will claim divinity near the Last Hour.
2 Recorded by al-Bukhârî (1377), Muslim (588), and others.
3 Recorded by Muslim (590).
worldly life; and I seek Your protection from the punishment of the grave.» ¹

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to say the following supplication during his prayer:

اللهم إني أعود بك من عذاب القبر، وأعود بك من فتنة المسيح الدجال، وأعود بك من فتنة المحيّا والممات. اللهم إني أعود بك من المأئوم والمغرم.

«O Allah, I seek Your protection from the torment of the grave; and I seek Your protection from the trial of al-Masih ud-Dajjal; and I seek Your protection from the trial of life and death. O Allah, I seek Your protection against sinning and indebtedness.» ²

SEEKING PROTECTION AT THE REMEMBRANCE OF DEATH

Al-Bara’ Bin ‘Ázib (رضي الله عنه) reported that he accompanied the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) to a funeral for a man from the Ansār. They reached the location of the grave before it was dug. The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) sat down facing the Qiblah, and his companions sat around him quietly, as if afraid to disturb birds perching on their heads. He held in his hand a stick with which he moved the earth. He looked toward the sky, then toward the earth, raising and lowering his eyes three times. Then he urged them, «Seek refuge with Allāh from the punishment of the grave.» After repeating this three times, he said three times:

اللهم إني أعود بك من عذاب القبر.

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2822, 6365, 6370, 6374, 6390), an-Nasā‘i, and others.
² Recorded by al-Bukhārī (832, 6368, 6375-6377), Muslim (589), and others.
Chapter 2

30 Life in al-Barzakh

<Allahumma inni a'uthu bika min athab-il-qabr — O Allah, I seek Your protection from the punishment of the grave.> ¹

Anas (r) reported that the Prophet (saw) once entered a date garden owned by some of Bani an-Najjar (a tribe from the Ansār). There were a few graves in the garden, and the Prophet (saw) heard ² from their direction a sound that alarmed him, so he asked, «‘Who are buried in these graves?» He was told, “They are some people who died during Jāhiliyyah.” So he (saw) said:

«Tādhūdaw bāllāh mīn ‘udāb al-qabr, wīn fīṣqat al-dajal.»

<Seek Allah’s protection from the punishment of the grave, and from the trial of ad-Dajjāl.> ³

SEEKING PROTECTION FOR THE DEAD

‘Awf Bin Mālik (r) reported that among what the Prophet (saw) once said during a janāzah prayer was the following supplication:

«Al-lāhūm-aghfir lahu war-hamhu wa-āfīhi wa-fu ‘anh, wa-akrim nuzulahu wa-wassi mudkhalah,

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ahmad, and others, and verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ahkām ul-Jāna’iz pp. 198-202 and Sahih ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib no. 3558). This is also partially recorded by al-Bukhairī (1369, 4699) and Muslim (2871).

² We will see other examples of the Prophet (saw) hearing, as a special merit and miracle, the screaming of those who are punished in their graves.

³ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and Ahmad. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Sahih ul-Jāmi’ no. 1930, Sahih ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib no. 3555, and as-Sahihah no. 1444, 3954).
waghsilhu bil-mā'i wath-thalji wal-barad, wa-naqqihi min khaṭāyāhu kamā yunaqq-ath-thawb-ul-abyaḍu min-addanas. Wa-abdilhu dāran khayran min dārih, wa-ahlan khayran min ahlīh, wa-zawjan khayran min zawjih. Wa-adkhilh-ul-jannata, wa-a’ithhu min ‘athāb-il-qabri wa-min ‘athāb-in-nār —

O Allāh, forgive him and show him mercy; give him well-being and pardon him; honor his abode (in the grave), and make his entry (into the grave) spacious; wash him with water and ice and hail; cleanse him from his sins as a white garment would be cleansed from dirt; substitute for him his house with a better house, his family with a better family, and his spouse with a better spouse; admit him into Jannah, and shelter him from the punishment of the grave and the punishment of the Fire.

‘Awf remarked, “On hearing this, I wished I was that dead person!”

Wāthilah Bin al-Asqa‘ reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) once prayed janāzah over a Muslim, and he heard him say:

Allāhumma inna fulān-abna fulānin fi thimmatika wa-ḥabli jiwārik, faqihi fitnat-al-qabri wa-‘athāb-an-nār, wa-anta ahl-ul-wafā’i wal-ḥaq, faghfaru ‘llahu wa-‘rāhim. Ğālimi ulla wa-khiṣma. ‘La ilāhi ilā Anta ‘llahu malkullahu dhōriyyahu. Verily so-and-so, son of so-and-so, is in Your custody, holding to the rope of Your mercy. Shelter him from the trial of the grave and the punishment of the Fire. You are the One worthy of fulfilling the promises and establishing the truth, so
forgive him and show him have mercy, for You are the All-forgiving, the All-Merciful.> ¹

SEEKING PROTECTION IN VARIOUS SITUATIONS

Anas Bin Mālik (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say the following supplication:

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اللهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعْوَذُكَ مِنَ الْعُجْرَةِ وَالْكُسَالِ، وَالْجُبَّانِ وَالْهَرِّمِ وَالْبَخَلِ، وَأَعْوَذُكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقُبُورِ، وَمَنْ فَتْنَةِ الْدُّжَالَةِ، وَمَنْ فَتْنَةِ الْمَحِيَّةِ وَالْمَصَّاتِ.
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<Alldhumma innī aʿūthu bīka min al-ajzi wal-kasal, wa-jubni wal-harami wal-bukhl, wa-aʿūthu bīka min athāb-il-qabr, wa-min fitnat-id-dajjal, wa-min fitnat-il-mahyā wal-mamāt —
O Allah, I seek Your protection from helplessness and laziness, and from cowardice and old age and miserliness; and I seek Your protection from the punishment of the grave, from the fitnah of ad-Dajjal, and from the trials of life and death.> ²
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`Aʾīshah (ʾ) narrated that a Jewish woman came to her door begging for food and saying, “Feed me; may Allah protect you from the fitnah of ad-Dajjal and the fitnah and punishment of the grave.” `Aʾīshah (ʾ) mentioned this to the Prophet (ﷺ), upon which he stood up, raised his hands and extended his arms, and said:

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اللهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعْوَذُكَ مِنْ فَتْنَةِ الْدُّجَالِ، وَأَعْوَذُكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقُبُورِ.
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 Allaḥumma innī aʿūthu bīka min fitnat-id-dajjal, wa-aʿūthu bīka min athāb-il-qabr — O Allah, I seek Your protection from the fitnah of ad-Dajjal, and from the punishment of the grave.> ³
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¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Akhām ʿl-Janāʾīz p. 158).
² Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2823, 4707, 6367, 6371), Muslim (2706), and others.
³ Recorded by Aḥmad, and verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib
'A‘ishah (رضي الله عنها) also reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to say the following supplication:

وَلَّهَمَّ اِنَّكَ أَعُوَّدُ بِكَ مِنَ الْكَسْلِ وَالْقَفْرِ،ِ
وَمِنْ فَتَنَّةِ الْقُبْرِ وَعَذَابِ الْقَفْرِ،ِ
وَمِنْ فَتَنَّةِ الْثَّأرِ وَعَذَابِ الْثَّأرِ،ِ
وَمِنْ شَرِّ
فَتَنَّةِ الْغَيْبِِ وَأَعُوَّدُ بِكَ مِنَ فَتَنَّةِ الْغَيْبِِ
وَأَعُوَّدُ بِكَ مِنْ فَتَنَّةِ الدَّجَالِ
وَقَلْبٍ مُّلِيَّٰٰٰ مِّنْ الخَطَايَا،ِ
كَمَا نَقَّيْتَ الْتَّوْبَ الأَبْيَضِ مِّنَ الدَّنَسٍِ
وَبَايِعُ بِنَبِيّٖ وَبِيَّنَ خَطَايَايِ،ِ
كَمَا بَايِعْتَ بِنِنَالْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِِ

<Allahumma inni a’uthu bika min-al-kasali wal-haram, wa-ma’thami wal-maghram, wa-min fitnat-il-qabri wa-‘athab-il-qabr, wa-min sharri fitnat-il-ghina; wa-a’uthu bika min fitnat-il-faqr; wa-a’uthu bika min fitnat-il-masih-id-dajjal. Allahumma-aghsil ‘anini khatayya bima-ith-thalji wal-barad, wa-naqqi qalbi minal-khataya kama naqqayt-ath-thawb-al-abyada min-ad-danas, wa-ba’id bayni wa-bayna khatayya kama baadta bayn-al-mashriqi wal-maghrib—
O Allah, I seek Your protection from laziness and old age, from sinning and indebtedness, from the trial and punishment of the grave, from the trial and punishment of the Fire, from the evil of the trial of wealth, from the trial of poverty, and from the trial of al-Masih ud-Dajjal. O Allah, wash my sins from me with the water of ice and hail, purify my heart from sins like You purify a white garment from dirt, and separate between me and my sins as You have separated between the east and the west.> ¹

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhari (6368, 6375, 6377) and Muslim (589).
Umm Ḥabībah (¶) reported that she once said, “O Allāh, let me (always) enjoy the company of my husband: Allāh’s Messenger, my father: Abū Sufyān, and my brother: Mu‘āwiyah.” On hearing this from her, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«لقد سألت الله لِأجَال مَضْرَبِيَّةٍ، وأيام مَعْدودة، وأُرُزاق مُفسومَة. لن يعجل الله شيئَا قبل حلبه، أو يوخر شيئا عن حلبه. وله كنت سألت الله أن يعافيتك من عذاب في النار أو عذاب في القبر. كان خيرا وأفضل.»

“You are requesting from Allāh things that involve fixed terms, counted days, and ordained sustenance. Allāh will not expedite anything before its time, nor delay a thing beyond its time. Had you, instead, asked Allāh to protect you from the punishment of the Fire and the punishment of the grave, this would have been better and more beneficial.»

Al-Barzakh for People Who Do Not Die a Normal Death

The discussions of al-barzakh that we present in the coming chapters mostly pertain to people who die a normal death and are buried normally. This may bring a doubt to some people regarding those who die an abnormal death and are not buried normally, such as those burnt by fire, killed and eaten by wild beasts, or drowned and eaten by fish.

Our response to this is that regardless of the mode of death or burial of a person, Allāh (ﷻ) is capable of bringing together the particles of the body so as to meet the punishment or reward that he deserves. Furthermore, al-barzakh events are subject to laws totally different from those of our physical world.

A man from the earlier nations once had this kind of doubt. He thought that he could evade Allāh’s (ﷻ) punishment by having his corpse cremated and its particles scattered in the wind. Allāh, however, disproved his doubt immediately after his death.

1 Recorded by Muslim (2663) and Ahmād.
Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī, Abū Hurayrah, Ḥuthayfah, and other companions (tfe) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

كَانَ مَيْمُونًٰ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ رَجُلٌ نِّيَبَاشَ رَأْسَهُ اللَّهُ مَّالَأَ وَلَدَأً، فَأَمَرَّ فَعَلَّهُ مَعْلُومًا خَيْرًا قَطًٰ، إِلَّا السُّحِيَّةَ. فَلَمَّا أَحْتَضَرَّ وَأَيْسَ مِنَ الْحَيَاةِ قَالَ لِبَنِيِّهِ: "أَيُّ بَنِيٍّ، أُيُّ بَنِيٍّ، أَيُّ بَنِيٍّ، أُيُّ بَنِيٍّ، لَكُمْ؟" فَأَلَّا: فَهُمُّ أَبُو نَفْحَةٍ مُطْعِمٌٓ؟" فَأَلَّا: "نَعْمَ."

There was among the people who preceded you a man who was a grave thief, and Allāh granted him wealth and offspring. He wronged himself immensely and never did good deeds, except for his belief in Allāh. When death came to him and he lost hope of life, he asked his children, “O my children, what kind of father was I to you?” They replied, “The best of fathers.” He said, “Therefore, you will either fulfill what I command you now, or I will give my inheritance to other than you. Will you obey me?” They said, “Yes.”

قَالَ: "فَأَئِنَّى لِمْ أَذَخْرُ عَنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرًا، فَأَنْظُرُوا إِذَا أتَى فَأُجِمَعْنَا لِي حَطَبًا كَثِيرًا، وَأُوقِدْنَا فِيهَا نَارًا فَحِرْقَوْنَا. حَتَّى إِذَا أُكْلِفْتُ النَّارُ لَحِمَيٍّ وَخَلَصُتْ إِلَى عَزْمِي فَأَمَاتُتِنَا فَكَتَبْنَا فَخَمَا، فَحُرْقَوْنَا ثُمَّ أُطْهِرْنَا بِالمُهْرَاسِ، ثُمَّ أَنْظُرْنَا يُومًا عَاصِفًا، فَأَذْرُوْنَا فِي الْرِّيحٍ، نَصَفِي فِي الْبَرَّ وَنَصَفِي فِي الْبَحْرِ، لَعْلَمَ أَصِلَ اللَّهُ فَوَلِللهِ لَيْنَ قَدْرَ اللَّهِ عَلَى لَيْبَدْتَنِي عَذَابًا لا يُعْدِبْنِي أَحَدًا مِنَِّ الْغَالِبِينَ." فَأَخْذَ مَوَاثِيقَهُمْ عَلَى ذِلِكَ.
So he instructed them, “Indeed, I did not store any good deeds with Allah. So when I die, gather a large amount of firewood, make a fire with it, and burn me. After the fire eats up my flesh and reaches my bones, turning them into coal, take me, and grind me in a mortar. Wait for a stormy day, and throw me (i.e., my remains) into the wind, half in the land, and the other half in the sea. Perhaps (by doing this), I will be lost to Allah, for, by Allah, if Allah gets hold of me, He will surely punish me to such a degree that He would not punish any other person.” And He took their pledge that they will do this to him.

When he died, his children did as he had instructed. So Allah commanded the earth, “Give back what you took,” and He commanded the sea, “Give back what you took.” They both gathered what they had (of the man’s particles), and there he was: a man standing in Allah’s fist. Allah asked him, “O son of Adam, what made you do what you did?” He replied, “Nothing made me do it except fear from You, and You know better.” So Allah forgave him because of this, though he never did any good, except for his belief in Allah.  

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1 This is combined from narrations recorded by al-Bukhārī (3452, 3479, 3481, 6480-6481, 7506), Muslim (2756), and others (see as-Saḥīḥah no. 3048).
Al-Ālîbānî (⌵) cited a long discussion of this ḥadîth by Ibn ‘Abd il-Barr (⫁), and then concluded:

“In summary, the digger was a believer who acknowledged Allâh’s oneness. He commanded his children to burn him either because he was ignorant of Allâh’s ability to bring him back together — which I find unlikely — or because his extreme fear of Allâh’s punishment overshadowed his rationality. The latter view was reported by al-Ḥâfîẓ from Ibn ul-Mulaqqin, and I find it most likely, based on the various narrations of this story, and Allâh (ﷻ) knows best. Whichever is the case, it is clear that the man’s action did not contradicted tawhîd so as to move him from ʿimān to kufr, because Allâh would not have then forgiven him. This clearly indicates that not everyone who commits an act of disbelief becomes a disbeliever.”

**Importance of Belief in al-Barzakh**

The life in *al-barzakh* is well documented in Islâm, and is founded upon strong proofs from the Qur’ān and Sunnah. Therefore, it is an important and vital part of a Muslim’s creed. It makes him aware of situations that he will surely face immediately after death, and this should lead him to fear Allâh’s punishment and seek His rewards.

Despite the strong proofs for *al-barzakh*, there are deviant Muslim sects who deny it, giving more value to their corrupt understanding than crystal-clear texts from the Qur’ān and Sunnah.

A man told Anas Bin Mālik (⫁) that there are people who deny the punishment of the grave. Anas replied, “Do not sit with them.”

*Imâm* Ahmad (⫁), said, “No one denies the punishment of the grave except a misguided person who also misguides others.”

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2. Recorded by al-Bayhaqi in 'Athâb ul-Qabr (no. 258).
Imām al-Juwaynī (ﷺ) said:

"Many of the affairs of the hereafter are based on (authentic) reports. Among that is the grave’s torment and the interrogation by Munkar and Nakîr. The position of the people of truth is to affirm this, because it is acceptable to the intellect, and Allāh is capable of giving life to the dead and having the two angels ask him about his Lord and Messenger. Everything acceptable to the intellect and confirmed by (authentic) reports must be adopted. There are numerous narrations that the Prophet (ﷺ) sought Allāh’s protection from the grave’s punishment. This (knowledge) continued to be widely spread among the righteous salaf prior to the emergence of the people of bid’ahs and desires." ¹

Imām al-Albānī (ﷺ) said:

"The belief in the grave’s torment must be adopted because it is established through authentic ḥadīths.

The claim that these ḥadīths are merely ʾāḥād (singular) narrations has no value, because — as we have demonstrated elsewhere ² — items of faith may be based on authentic ʾāḥād narrations.

Furthermore, the ḥadīths regarding the grave’s torment are mutawātir (numerous), leaving no room for doubting this belief through claiming that they are ʾāḥād narrations.

On top of this, the Qurʾān attests to this belief (as in Ghāfir 40:45-46).” ³

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¹ Al-Irshād p. 375.
² See, for example, al-Hadīthu Ħuǧjatun bi-Nafṣīh fil-Aqāʾiḍi wal-Ahkām (Hadith provides a Stand-alone Evidence for Beliefs and Regulations), Muhammad Nāṣir ud-Dīn al-Albānī, Maktabat ul-Maʿārif, Riyadh, 1424 (2005).
³ Rephrased from as-Sāhiḥah 1:295-297.
CHAPTER 3
THE MOMENT OF DEATH

Introduction

In this chapter, we present incidents that occur from the time a person is at the verge of death, until his soul starts its trip to heaven.

THE SOUL EXITS UNWILLINGLY

The soul becomes so attached to the body it inhabits in this life that it hates to part with it at the time death. This is manifested by the hardship that people face then. Abū Hurayrah (ص) reported that the Prophet (ص) said:

"Allāh says to the human soul, "Depart (from the body, at death)." It replies, "I will not depart except reluctantly." He says, "Depart, then, even if you are reluctant."" ¹

THE SOUL EXITS VIA THE THROAT

At death, the soul exits from a person’s body through his throat. Allāh (ص) says:

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (in al-Adab-ul-Mufrad), al-Bazzār, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (as-Sahihah no. 2013).
«No! When it (the soul) has reached the collar bone (of a dying person), and it is said (by his family), “Is there any reciter (to save him from death)?” And he is certain that this is the time for departure; and a leg is joined with another leg (i.e., hardship surround him): toward your Lord, on that day, is the drive.» ¹

Commenting on this āyah, as-Sā‘dī (السدي) said:

“The hardships gather and tangle (around the dying person). The situation becomes difficult and the anxiety heavy, and it is decreed for the soul to exit from the body that it came to know and inhabit. The soul is then driven toward Allāh (الله), so He would make it confess what it did and would judge it according to its deeds. This reproach should turn the heart toward what saves it, and away from what causes it destruction.” ²

And Allāh (الله) says:

«Why, when it (the soul) has reached the throat (of a dying person), and you are at that time (helplessly) looking on, and We (i.e., Our angels) are nearer to him than you, although you do not see (them): why, then, if (you think) you are not bound (by Our decree), would you not bring it back (to the body) if you should be truthful?» ³

¹ Al-Qiyāmah 75:26-30.
² Taysir al-Karīm-ir-Rahmān 75:29.
ALLĀH TAKES THE SOULS

When a human being completes his term in this world, Allāh (ﷻ) takes away his soul, which results in his death. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«Allāh takes the souls at the time of their (owners’) death, and (He also takes) those that (their owners) have not died yet — during their sleep. Then He keeps those for which He has decreed death and releases the others for a specified term. Indeed, in this are signs for those who reflect.» ¹

Allāh (ﷻ) also says:

«It is He who takes you (i.e., your souls) by night and knows what you do by day. Then He raises you in it (i.e., each day) until a specified term is fulfilled. Then to Him will be your return, and He will inform you about what you used to do.» ²

THE ANGEL OF DEATH

Allāh (ﷻ) does not take our souls directly with His hand. Rather, He appointed the Angel of Death to do this. He (ﷻ) says:

¹ Az-Zumar 39:42.
² Al-An‘ām 6:60.
Chapter 3

Life in *al-Barzakh*

«Say (O Muhammad), “The Angel of Death who has been entrusted with you will take you (i.e., your soul). Then to your Lord you will be returned.”» ¹

When the Angel of Death comes to a dying person, that person can see and hear him, while other people around him cannot.

In ancient times, the Angel of Death sometimes came to humans in the form of a man, and it was not always possible to immediately know his identity. This happened to Mūsā (安宁): when the angel came to take away his soul, Mūsā did not recognize him at first. Abū Hurayrah (安宁) reported that the Prophet (安宁) said:

"Indeed, the Angel of Death used to come to (some) people in a visible way. So, he came to Mūsā and said to him, “Come to your Lord.” On hearing this, Mūsā punched him and knocked out his eye.

The angel went back to Allāh and said, “My Lord, You sent me to a servant of Yours who does..."

¹ *As-Sajdah* 32:11.
not wish to die. Indeed, he has knocked out my eye. If he did not have a noble position with You, I would have dealt with him harshly.” So Allāh restored his eye and said, “Go back to my servant and ask him if he wishes to live longer. If he does, then tell him to put his hand on a bull’s hide. For every hair that his hand covers, he will live one year.”

When the angel told Mūsā this, Mūsā said (to Allāh), “What after that long life, my Lord?” Allāh replied, “Death will follow.” Mūsā said, “Then, let it be now. And, my Lord, let me die a stone’s throw away from the Holy Land (Jerusalem).” So with one sniff, the Angel of Death took Mūsā’s soul.

After this incident, the Angel of Death always came to people invisibly (i.e., only seen and distinguished by the dying person).

The Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) then added:

«وَلَوْ أُتِيْ أَنْتِ عَنْدَهَا لَأَرْسَلْكُمْ قَبْرًا إِلَى جَانِبِ الْطَّرِيقِ تَحْتَ الكَشِبِ الْأَخْمَرِ»

“If I was near that place, I would have shown you his grave by the road at the foot of the red mountain.”

Despite being a prophet, Mūsā did not recognize the angel when he came to him in human form. This is similar to the situation when angels visited Ibrāhīm (ASA) in human form and he did not recognize them, so he went and prepared food for them. Similarly, our Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) did not immediately recognize Jibrīl (ASA) when he came to him in the form of a man and asked him about ĩmān, Islām, and other things.

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1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1339, 3407), Muslim (2372), Aḥmād, and others (see as-Sāhīḥah no. 3279).
3 This was recorded by al-Bukhārī (50, 4777), Muslim (9, 10), and others from Abū Hurayrah, and other companions (ﷺ).
In Mūsā’s case, a stranger appeared in his house and told him to be ready to die. Mūsā (ﷺ) naturally thought that this was an evil person invading his privacy and trying to harm him, so he rightfully punched him in the eye. Later on, however, Mūsā discovered the angel’s identity, and understood the choice he brought, so he chose an immediate meeting with his Lord over an extended life in this temporal world.¹

We do not know whether a different “angel of death” is appointed for every person, or whether only one “Angel of Death” takes all souls. The latter opinion is more apparent from the above and subsequent hadiths. Since this is an issue of ghayb, we may not ask, “How could one angel simultaneously take the lives of numerous individuals spread all over the world?” As we explained in the preface of this book, issues of ghayb may not be subjected to our reasoning that is shaped by the physical laws of this world. Yet, in answer to this question, we may propose, for example, that, Allāh (ﷻ) is capable of creating a being who can take souls in this “multi-tasking” manner, and who can simultaneously interact with numerous people who are far apart from each other.

The Assistants of the Angel of Death

There are other angels who accompany the Angel of Death (ﷺ) when he takes a person’s soul. Allāh (ﷻ) says about them:

(بِيَتِيَ إِذَا جَاءَ أُحَدّكُمُ الْمَوْتُ نَفَقْتُكُمُ الْمَوْتِ وَنَزَّلَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلاَ يَغْرَطُونَ ۚ) الآية ۶۱

«When death comes to one of you, Our messengers (the angels) take his soul, and they never neglect their duty.»²

We will soon see that these angels take the soul from the Angel of Death as soon as he finishes extracting it from the body. They wrap it in shrouds and carry it up to heaven.

¹ For additional details on this, the reader is referred to al-Albānī’s excellent discussion in as-Sahīhah 7:826-835.
There are many *hadiths* about the Angel of Death and his assistants. For example, Ḥuṭḥayfah, Abū Hurayrah, and Abū Masʿūd (ṣ) reported that the Prophet (ṣ) said:

> The angels took the soul of a man from those who preceded you. They asked him, “Have you done any good deeds?” He replied, “No, except that I used to lend money to people. I was easy in demanding repayment from the wealthy, and I pardoned the poor, hoping that Allāh (ﷻ) would pardon me.” Allāh then said, “I have more right to pardon than you.” And He commanded the angels, “Pardon my servant.”

The assistants of the Angel of Death are two types: angels of mercy who handle a believer’s soul, and angels of punishment who handle a wrongdoer’s soul. We will present in this chapter several texts mentioning both types of angels. As an example, Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (ṣ) reported that the Prophet (ṣ) said:

> Among the people who preceded you, there was a man who killed ninety-nine persons. Then he wanted to repent, so he asked for the most learned person

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1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2077-2078, 2391, 3451, 3480), Muslim (1560-1562), and others.
on earth, and was directed to a monk. He went to him and told him that he had killed ninety-nine persons, and asked if he may repent. The monk said, “No!” So, the man killed him, making this his hundredth murder.

Still wishing to repent, the man again asked for the most learned person on earth. He was directed to a ‘alim (learned man). He went to him, told him that he had killed one hundred persons, and asked if he may repent. The ‘alim answered, “Certainly! Who can prevent you from repenting? Go to such-and-such town, and you will find people who worship Allāh; so worship Allāh with them, and do not return to your land because it is an evil land.”

Thus he embarked on his trip (toward the good town), but death came upon him near the middle of
the way, so he pointed his chest (toward his destination) and died. The angels of mercy and the angels of punishment disputed over him. The angels of mercy said, “He came repenting, his heart turning to Allah.” And the angels of punishment said, “But indeed, he never did a good deed.”

Allah then sent an angel in the form of a man (to mediate among them), and they asked him to resolve their dispute. He said, “Measure the distance between the two lands, and attribute him to the land nearer to him.” They did this and found him only one span nearer to the good town that he had targeted. So the angels of mercy took his soul.> ¹

**DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A BELIEVER’S AND A NONBELIEVER’S DEATH**

We will see in this chapter that a believer’s soul is handled very differently from a nonbeliever’s at death. ‘Abdullāh Bin Mas’ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

> لقنا موتاكم: “لا إله إلا الله، فإنه نفس المؤمن تنخرج رشحاً، ونفس الكافر تنخرج من شذقيه كما تنجرت نفس الحمار.”

>Prompt your dying ones to say “La ilaha illa-llāh.” Indeed, the departure of a believer’s soul is (as easy) as sweating (because of this statement), whereas a nonbeliever’s soul departs from the side of his mouth (with difficulty and noise) like a donkey’s soul.> ²

**THE EYESIGHT FOLLOWS THE SOUL**

When the soul departs from a person’s body, his gaze remains fixed in the direction where it departed.

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¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (3470), Muslim (2766), and others.
² Recorded by at-Tirmithī and at-Tabarānī (in al-Kabīr). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (as-Saḥīḥah no. 2151).
Umm Salamah reported that the Prophet visited Abū Salamah after his gaze became fixed (because of death). The Prophet closed Abū Salamah’s eyes and said:

«إن الروح إذا قبض تبعه البصر.»

<When the soul is taken, the eyesight follows it.>

On hearing this, some of Abū Salamah’s relatives started weeping. So the Messenger said:

«لا تدعوا على أنفسكم إلا أحسن، فإن الملائكة يؤمنون على ما تقولون.»

<Do not make except good supplications, because the angels say “āmin” to what you say.>

And he added:

«الله أغفر لأبي سلمة، وأرفع درجته في المهديين، وأخلقه في عقبه في الغابرين، وأغفر لنا وله يا رب العالمين، وأفصح له في قبره، وتوز له فيه.»

<Allāhum-aghfir lahu, warfa’ darajatahū fil-mahdiyyin, wa-khlu夫hu fi ‘aqibih fil-ghābirin, wa-ghfīr lanā wa-lahā yā rabb-al-‘ālāmin, wafṣāh lahu fi qabrīh, wa-nawwir lahu fīh—
O Allāh! Forgive him (Abū Salamah) and elevate his position among the guided ones; raise good successors for him from among his offspring; forgive us and him, O Lord of the worlds; and expand his grave and illuminate it for him.> ¹

Regarding the same incident, Abū Hurayrah reported that the Prophet said:

«ألم تروا الإنسان إذا مات سُمّع بصرةً؟ فذلِك حين يبخُب بصر نفسه.»

1 Recorded by Muslim (920), Ahmad, al-Bayhaqi, and others.
The Moment of Death

"Don't you see that when a person dies his gaze becomes fixed? This happens because his eyesight follows his (departing) soul." 1

SINFUL BELIEVERS

The texts that we present in this and the next few chapters contrast between two extreme pictures: a believer and a nonbeliever.

With the approach of death, a believer is pleased because the material barrier of this world is about to dissolve, and he is, therefore, about to meet his Lord. His soul departs with ease, emitting beautiful odors that delight the angels.

On the other hand, a wrongdoer is terrified to realize that his worldly pleasures are over and his great punishment is eminent. His soul is extracted from his body by force, emitting the most loathsome odors.

We will see from our study of these contrasting cases that a "believer" means a righteous believer whose good deeds outweigh his sins, whereas a "nonbeliever" means a nonbeliever or a hypocrite who obstinately rejected the truth.

As for the believers whose sins cause them to deserve punishment before entering Jannah, they may be punished in their grave, and possibly after Resurrection as well. Their punishment in the grave is not fully detailed in the Sunnah, but some of its forms have been described by the Prophet (ﷺ). This is covered in Chapter 9 titled, "The Sinful in al-Barzakh".

Death of the Believer

A BELIEVER DIES WHILE PRAISING ALLĀH

When a true believer is afflicted with a hardship, he submits to Allāh (ﷻ) and praises Him, knowing that this affliction is a trial from Allāh that contains in its folds multiple rewards.

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1 Recorded by Muslim (921).
Chapter 3 50  Life in al-Barzakh

Death is no exception. When a true believer feels its pangs, he praises Allāh (ﷻ) for it. Ibn ‘Abbās (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ الْمُؤَمِّنِينَ يُبْخَثُونَ نَفْسَهُمْ مِنَ الْجِنَّاتِ وَهُوَ يُبْخَثُ للهِ اللَّهُ﴾

<Indeed, a believer praises Allāh as his soul departs from between his two sides (i.e., from his body).> ¹

Similarly, Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

قَالَ اللَّهُ : "إِنَّ عِبَادِي الْمُؤَمِّنِينَ عِنْدَيْ بَعْلِيَةً كُلُّ خَيْرٍ:

يَحْمِدُنِي وَأَنْعَرْ نَفْسَهُ مِنَ الْجِنَّاتِ".

<Allāh (ﷻ) says, “Indeed, my believing servant has an excellent status with Me: He praises Me even while I pull his soul from his body.”> ²

GLAD TIDINGS BROUGHT BY THE ANGELS OF MERCY

Together with the Angel of Death, the assistant angels of mercy come to a believer at the time of death in a reassuring manner. They kindly handle his soul and tell him of his great rewards in Jannah. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«أَنَّ الْذِّينَ قَالُوا: "رَبِّنَا أَلَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ أَنْ تَنْصَرِنَا عَلَى الْحَيَّةِ الْأُخْرَىٰ" ﴿١٠٠﴾

لَا تَحْزَنُوا، وَلَا تَخَرَّبُوا، وَأَنْبِئُوا بِالْبُشْرَىٰ الْمُثْقَالَةَ ﴿١٠١﴾

كُلُّمَا نَحْنُ أَوَّلًا كُلُّمُ فِي الْحَيَّةِ الْأُخْرَىٰ وَفِي الْحَيَاةِ الْأُولَىٰ» ﴿١٠٢﴾

"Indeed, those who say, “Our Lord is Allāh Alone,” and stand firm (in obedience), the angels descend upon them (at the time of death) saying, “Do not fear or grieve. We bring you glad tidings of Jannah

¹ Recorded by Ahmad, an-Nasa`i, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (as-Sahihah no. 1632 and Sahih ul-Jami’ no. 1931).
² Recorded by Ahmad and al-Bazzār. Verified to be hasan by al-Albānī (as-Sahihah no. 1632).
that you have been promised. We are your allies in
the worldly life and in the hereafter." ¹

Commenting on these āyāt, Ibn Kathīr (٢) said:

"The angels descend upon them at the time of death
telling them not to fear what is ahead of them in the
hereafter, nor grieve over what they left behind of
children, family, wealth, or debts, because We (i.e.,
Allāh) will take care of that ...

The angels also tell them, 'We were your allies in
the first life, guiding and helping and protecting you,
with Allāh’s permission. We will also be with you in
the last life, giving you company in the solitude of your
graves, when the Horn is blown, etc ...’" ²

AL-BARĀ’ S REPORT

Al-Barā’ Bin ‘Āzib (٤) reported that the Prophet ( صلى الله عليه وسلم ) said:

«إنَّ الْعَبْدَ الْمُؤْمِنَ إِذَا كَانَ فِي أَنْقِطَاعٍ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَإِقْبَالٍ عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَائِكَةٌ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ، بِيضُ الْوُجُوهُ، كَانَ وَجُوهُهُمْ السَّمَّاءُ، مَعْهُمْ كَفَنٌ مِنْ أَكْفَانِ الْجَهَنَّةِ وَخَنْوَتِ مِنْ حَنْوَتِ الْجَهَنَّةِ، حَتَّى يُنَبِّئُوهُ مَنْ لَهُ مِنَ الْبَصَرِ.

<Indeed, when a believer is at the point of departure
from the worldly life, and is about to enter the next
life, angels descend from the heaven, their faces
white as the sun. They carry with them a shroud
from the fabric of Jannah, and embalmment from
the fragrance of Jannah. They sit away from him at
the limit of his eyesight.>

ثُمَّ يَجِبُ مَلِكُ الْمَوْتِ، حَتَّى يَجِبِسُ عِنْدَ رَأْسِهِ فَيَقُولُ، "أَيْتُهَا»

¹ Fussilat 41:30-31.
The Angel of Death then arrives, sits by his (the believer's) head, and says, “O good and peaceful soul, depart to Allah's forgiveness and acceptance.” On hearing this, the soul leaves the body (as easily) as water drops from the spout of a waterskin, and he (the Angel of Death) takes it.

When his soul leaves his body, all angels between heaven and earth, and all angels in heaven, pronounce salāh upon him. All gates of heaven open for him, the guardians of every gate imploring Allah that his soul ascends in their direction.

When the Angel of Death takes the soul, they (the other angels) do not leave it in his hand for as little as the blinking of an eye. They take it and place it in its shroud, and put the embalmment on it; and from it issues the best scent of musk that ever existed on earth. To this apply Allah's (ﷻ) words:

1 This means that they ask that he be forgiven.
«Our messengers (the angels) take his soul, and they never neglect their duty.» ¹ ²

**Abū Hurayrah’s Report**

Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> إنَّ الْمُوْمِينَ يُنْزِلُ به الْمَوْتُ وَيَعَابِينَ ما يَعَابٍ، فَؤُودُهُ لَوْ خَرَجَتْ نَفْسُهُ، وَاللَّهُ يُحْبِبُ لِقَاءِهِ. فَإِذَا فُصِّلَ أَنْثَى مِلَاكَةَ الرَّحْمَةِ بِحَرِيرَةِ نَبِيِّاءٍ، فَيَقُولُونَ (فَيَقُولُ) : "اِخْرَجُوا أَيْتَاهَا النَّفْسُ الطُّيْبَةُ كَانَتْ فِي الْجَسَّدِ الطَّيِّبِ، أَخْرَجُوهَا حَمِيدَةً، وَأُنْشِرْيَ بَرْوُحُ وَرَبَّعَانِ، وَوَرَبُّ غَيْرِ غَضِبَانِ، فَلا يُزَالُ يُقَالُ لَهَا ذِلِّكَ هَٰئِلَ حَتَّى تَخْرِجَ كَأَظِفَّ رَيْحَ الْمَسْكِ. حَتَّى إِنَّهُ لَيْنَاوِلْهُ بِغَضِبَهُ بُعْضِهِمْ بُعْضاً، فَيَشْمُونَهُ.»

- Indeed, when death descends upon a believer, and he witnesses things (implying his forthcoming rewards), he wishes that his soul would depart (quickly), and Allāh loves to meet him. When he (i.e., his soul) is being taken, the angels of mercy come to him with a piece of white silk (a shroud), and (the Angel of Death) says, “Depart, O good soul that inhabited a good body; depart gracefully, and receive glad tidings of happiness, sweet aromas, and a Lord who is not displeased (with you).” This continues to be said to it until it leaves the body, issuing the most beautiful scent of musk. The angels even pass it to each other, each one smelling it.» ³

¹ Al-Anām 6:61.
² See p. 30 for references.
³ This is combined from several authentic narrations by Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ):
   b. Recorded by an-Nāṣā’ī, Ibn Ḥibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ ṭul-Targhīb waṭ-Targhīb no. 3559 and as-Sahihah no. 1309).
Death of the Nonbeliever

Tidings Brought by the Angels of Punishment

Together with the Angel of Death, the assistant angels of punishment come to a nonbeliever at the time of death in a cruel and terrifying manner. They tear out his soul and beat him severely. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

٣٠٩٠ وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذَا نَفَقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَلَمْ لَيظَنُّوا أَنَّ الْجَهَنَّمَةَ يَضُرَّبُونَ وَجُوُهُمُّ وَأَدْبَرُوهُمْ وَذُوْفُوهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحَمَ ۚ ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَمَتْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بَاطِلُ الْعِبَادَ. (الأنفال ٥٠-٥١)

"If you could but see when the angels take the souls of the nonbelievers, while striking their faces and backs, and (saying), “Taste the punishment of the blazing Fire. This is for what (evil) your hands have put forth, and because Allāh is never unjust to His servants.”" ¹

And Allāh (ﷻ) says:

۲٧١ فَكِيفُ إِذَا نَفَقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَلَمْ لَيظَنُّوا أَنَّ الْجَهَنَّمَةَ يَضُرَّبُونَ وَجُوُهُمُّ وَأَدْبَرُوهُمْ وَذُوْفُوهُمْ؟ (م٢٧)

"Then how will it be when the angels will take their souls at death, beating their faces and backs?" ²

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¹ Al-Anfāl 8:50-51.
² Muhammad 46:27.

c. Recorded by at-Tirmīzī and Ibn Hībān. Verified to be hasan by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib wa-Tarhib no. 3560 and Ḥidāyat ur-Ruwāḥ no. 126).
d. Recorded by al-Bazzār. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (ṣaḥīḥah no. 2628).
e. Recorded by at-Ṭabarānī, Ibn Hībān, and al-Ḥākim. Verified to be hasan by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib wa-Tarhib no. 3561).
f. Recorded by Muslim (2872).
At death, the angels do not bring the nonbelievers any glad tidings. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

(يَوْمًاٰ يُؤْتُونَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ نَبَايِنَاءٍ يُؤْتُونَ الْمُجَرَّمِينَ
وَيَفْقُرُونَ: ”حِجَّرًا مُّخْجُورًا.”) القرآن ٢٤٧

«The day they see the angels (at death), there will be no glad tidings then for the wrongdoers, and they (the angels) will say, "(Glad tidings are for you) absolutely prohibited."»

Commenting on this āyah, Ibn Kathīr (ﷺ) said:

“The day when the nonbelievers see the angels will not be a good day for them. Rather, when they see them, they will receive alarming tidings from them. This happens at the time of death when the angels give them tidings of the Fire and of the Almighty’s displeasure ...

Both at death and on Resurrection Day, the angels appear to the believers and the nonbelievers. They give the believers glad tidings of Allāh’s mercy and acceptance, whereas they give the nonbelievers tidings of failure and misfortune. Therefore, the wrongdoers will receive no glad tidings on those two days.”

These angels give the nonbelievers tidings of the punishment that awaits them because of their arrogant rejection of the truth. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

وَلَوْ نُرِى إِذٌ الْظَّلَمُونَ فِي عُمَّرَةٍ مِّنَ الْمَوْتِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةَ بَاسِطِيًا أَيْدِيَهُمْ:
”أَخْرِجُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَلِيِّمَ وَتَغْرَبُوا عَذَابَ الْهَيْوَنِ يَمْكُونُ نَكَبَّلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ
اللَّهُ غَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَكَنَّا نَسْتَكْبِرُونَ.”) الأَنْعَام ٩٣

«If you could but see when the wrong-doers are in the agonies of death, and the angels stretching out

1 Al-Furqan 25:22.
2 Tafṣīr Ul-Qur'ān il-ʿAzīm 25:22.
their hands (for punishment, and saying), "Deliver your souls! This day you will be recompensed with the torment of degradation because of what falsehood you used to utter against Allāh, and that you used to contemptuously reject His signs." ¹

The angels also rebuke the nonbelievers for joining partners with Allāh. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«Who could be more unjust than those who fabricate lies against Allāh or deny His signs? Those will receive (in this life) their portion of (Allāh’s) decree — until Our messengers (i.e., angels) come to take their lives and ask them, “Where, now, are those whom you used to invoke instead of Allāh?” They will reply, “They have forsaken us!” Thus do they bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers.» ²

And Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«Indeed, for those whom the angels take their lives while wrongdoing themselves, and who are asked (by

¹ Al-An’ām 6:93.
² Al-A’raf 7:37.
the angels), “In what condition were you?” And they say, “(We did wrong because) we were oppressed in the land.” And they (the angels) say, “Was not Allâh’s land spacious enough for you to emigrate therein?” For those, their abode is hell — and evil it is as a destination.» 1

And Allâh (€ۖ) says:

«Indeed, (there are) those whom the angels take their lives while wronging themselves. They then offer submission, (saying,) “We did not do any wrong.” But, yes! Indeed, Allâh is Knowing of what you used to do.» 2

**AL-BARÂ’S REPORT**

In continuation of al-Barâ’ Bin ‘Azib’s (€ۖ) earlier hadîth, the Prophet (€ۖ) said:

»وَإِنَّ الرَّئِيسَ الْكَافِرِ، إِذَا كَانَ فِي أَنْقَطَاعٍ مِّنَ الدُّنْيَا وَإِفَاءَ عَلَىَّ الأَخِرَةِ، نُرِئُهُ إِلَيْهِ مِنَ السُّمَاءِ مَلَائِكَةٌ غَلَاطُ سُيُوُّدُ الْبَصَرِ، مَعَهُمُ السُّوَّاحُ مِّنَ النَّارِ، قَيِّمُهُمُ مُّنَّةٌ مِّنْ دُمَّ الْبَصَرِ.«

<And indeed when a nonbeliever is at the point of departure from the worldly life, and is about to enter the hereafter, strong hulking angels with dark faces descend to him from the heavens. They bring with them tough fabrics from the Fire. They sit away from him at the limit of his eyesight.>

1 *An-Nisa* 4:97.
The Angel of Death (833) arrives, sits by his head, and says, “O malicious soul, depart to the wrath and anger of Allah.” On hearing this, it becomes terrified, and clings to the body, but he extracts it (by force), like a skewer is pulled from wet wool, causing the veins and nerves to burst, and he (the Angel of Death) takes it.

Every angel between the heavens and the earth, and every angel in the heavens, curses him. The gates of the heavens are shut, and the guardians of every gate implore Allah that this soul does not ascend in their direction.

When he (the Angel of Death) takes the soul, they (the other angels) do not leave it in his hand for as little as the blinking of an eye. They put it in that tough fabric, and from it emanates the most repugnant odor of a decaying cadaver that ever existed on earth. \(^1\)

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\(^1\) See p. 30 for references.
Life in al-Barzakh

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The Moment of Death

ABū HURAYRĀH’S REPORT

In continuation of Abū Hurayrah’s (ﷺ) earlier combined narration, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا كَانَ عَذَّابُ اللَّهِ لَهُ (كَافِرًا - رَجُلٌ السُّوءِ) نُزِّلَ لَهُ الْمَوْتُ وَعَثَّى مَآ وَعَزٌّ، فَإِذَا لَمْ يُحِبْ أَنْ يَخْرُجْ رُوحُهُ أَبْيَدًا، وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ لِقَاءَهُ. فَتَأْتُوهُ مَلائِكَتَهُ مَعْذَابًا بِمَسْحٍ. فَيَقُولُونَ (فَيَقُولُ): “أُخْرِجِي أَيْتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْخَبيثَةُ، كَانَتْ فِي الْجَسَدِ الْخَبيثِ، أُخْرِجِي دُمَيْمَةً، إِلَى عَطْسَ اللَّهِ، وَأَنْشِرِي بِحَمْيَمٍ وَغُشَّائَقٍ، وَأَخَرُّ مِنْ شَكْلِهِ أَزُوَّاجٍ.” فَلا يَزَالُ يَقُولُ لَهَا ذَلِكَ حَتَّى نَخْرُجَ كَأَنْتَنَّ رِيحٌ جَيْفَةٍ.»

«And when death descends upon an enemy of Allāh (a nonbeliever, an evil man), and he witnesses things (implying his imminent punishment), he wishes that his soul would never depart, and Allāh hates to meet him. The angels of punishment come to him with coarse fabric (a shroud), and (the Angel of Death) says, “Depart, O malicious soul that inhabited a malicious body; depart disgracefully to Allāh’s wrath; and receive evil tidings of boiling fluids and dirty wound discharges (to drink), and other types of suffering of similar nature — all paired together.” This continues to be said until it departs, smelling like the worst of decayed corpses.» \(^1\)

Summary

The Angel of Death and his assistant angels appear before the dying person, ready to take his soul.

\(^1\) See p. 53 for references.
Chapter 3  
Life in *al-Barzakh*

**DURING THE PANGS OF DEATH**

The dying person tries to hold back his soul before he finally submits to his inevitable fate. Reluctantly, the soul exits via his throat. As it leaves his body, his gaze becomes fixed in the direction of its departure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affairs Relating to the Dying Person</th>
<th>A Believer</th>
<th>A Nonbeliever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His feeling about meeting Allah:</td>
<td>He loves it and longs for it.</td>
<td>He hates and fears it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah's view about him:</td>
<td>Allah loves to meet him.</td>
<td>Allah hates to meet him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What he says as his soul exits:</td>
<td>He praises Allah.</td>
<td>He requests to return to life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manner of his soul's departure:</td>
<td>It exits as effortlessly as sweating, or as water flowing from a waterskin's spout.</td>
<td>It becomes terrified and clings to the body, but then exits noisily from the side of his mouth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MISSION OF THE ANGEL OF DEATH**

The Angel of Death sits by the head of the dying person and conducts his job of extracting the soul. He commands it to exit from the body and gives it tidings of its imminent abode — repeating this until it exits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action of the Angel of Death</th>
<th>For a Believer</th>
<th>For a Nonbeliever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He command the soul:</td>
<td>&quot;Depart, O good and peaceful soul that inhabited a good body.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Depart, O malicious soul that inhabited a malicious body.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Moment of Death

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action of the Angel of Death</th>
<th>For a Believer</th>
<th>For a Nonbeliever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tidings he gives to the soul:</td>
<td>&quot;Depart to Allāh's forgiveness and pleasure; depart in a praiseworthy state; receive glad tidings of happiness, sweet fragrances, and a Lord who is not displeased with you.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Depart to Allāh's wrath and anger; depart in a condemned state; and receive evil tidings of boiling fluids, dirty wound discharges, and other types of suffering.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How he handles the soul:</td>
<td>He takes it gently.</td>
<td>He extracts it by force, causing the veins and nerves to burst.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE ASSISTANT ANGELS**

The assistant angels arrive shortly before the Angel of Death. They sit at the limit of the dying person’s eyesight, awaiting the Angel of Death. As soon as the Angel of Death extracts the soul from the body, they snatch it from his hand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistant Angels</th>
<th>For a Believer</th>
<th>For a Nonbeliever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>They are angels of mercy.</td>
<td>They are angels of punishment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance:</td>
<td>Their faces are white and bright like the sun.</td>
<td>They are strong, hulking, and of dark faces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What they carry:</td>
<td>White silk and embalmment from Jannah.</td>
<td>Coarse fabrics from the Fire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidings they bring:</td>
<td>Glad tidings: “Exit to Allāh's granted happiness.”</td>
<td>Alarming tidings: “Exit to Allāh’s wrath.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action upon receiving the soul:</td>
<td>They apply to it the shroud and embalmment from Jannah.</td>
<td>They beat his face and back and wrap the soul in the fabric from the Fire.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3

AFTER THE SOUL’S DEPARTURE

As the soul leaves the body, it emits odors that people in this life cannot smell. The angels, however, smell them, and are either pleased or repulsed by them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action or Event</th>
<th>A Believer</th>
<th>A Nonbeliever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smell emanating from the departing soul:</td>
<td>The best scent of musk that ever existed on earth.</td>
<td>The most repugnant odor of a decaying cadaver that ever existed on earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position of the assistant angels.</td>
<td>They pass the soul among them to smell it.</td>
<td>They are repulsed by its filth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action of the angels in the heavens and on earth:</td>
<td>They supplicate for him.</td>
<td>They curse him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The gates to the heavens:</td>
<td>They open for him.</td>
<td>They remain firmly shut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The angels guarding the heavens’ gates:</td>
<td>They plead Allāh to send the soul in their direction.</td>
<td>They plead Allāh to avert the soul from them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4

THE SOUL’S TRIP TO HEAVEN

Introduction

OVERVIEW OF THE TRIP

After a person dies, people around him start the burial procedure. For a Muslim, this normally includes washing and shrouding the body, praying the janazah prayer over it, carrying it to the graveyard, and, finally, laying it down in its grave and packing soil over it.

While this bodily procedure is conducted on earth, angels take the dead person’s soul on a most amazing trip to heaven.

As for a believer, his soul reaches the uppermost heaven. It enters Jannah and meets the souls of other believers in whose company it would spend its time during the barzakh period.

A nonbeliever’s soul, on the other hand, only reaches the gate of the first heaven, but is not allowed to enter it. Rather, it is cast down from heaven until it reaches the seventh earth, which is a tight abyss in the depth of earth where the nonbelievers’ souls are imprisoned. The soul meets other nonbelievers’ souls in whose company it would spend its time during the barzakh period.

In both cases, the soul is then returned to the dead person’s body right at the conclusion of the burial. This sets the stage for the final trial that every dead person faces immediately after his burial.

GRIP OF THE GRAVE

After burial, and before the trial starts, every dead person suffers a strong feeling of tightness: the grip of the grave.

It is as though the earth welcomes back its children with a painful hug. Salmān (的各项) reported that the Prophet (各项) said:

"ثَمَّ سَحَرْنَا يَا أَرْضًا، فَأَنْتَ هَا بِكُمْ بَرَاءً."
<Rub (your forehead) against the earth (during sujūd), because it is kind (like a mother) to you.> ¹

This earth’s hug is brief for a believer, but (as we will see in the next chapter) extends indefinitely for a nonbeliever.

‘Ā’ishah, Ibn ‘Umar, and Ibn ‘Abbās (r) reported that the Prophet (ṣ) said:

«إِنَّ الْقُبْرَةَ ضَغْطَةً لَّوْ نَجَا أَحَدٌ مِنْهَا لَنْيِجَا سَعَدُ

«وَنَفَقُضَ ضَمْعَةً، ثُمَّ رُوِّجَى عَنْهَا.»

«Indeed, the grave has a grip (on people). If anyone was to escape from it, it would be Sa’d Bin Mu‘āth; yet, he was squeezed once and then released.» ³

Anas and Abū Ayyūb (r) reported that, during a child’s funeral, the Prophet (ṣ) said:

«لَوْ أَفْلَتْ أَحَدُ مِنْ ضَمْعَةِ الْقُبْرَةِ، لَأَفْلَتْ هَذَا الصَّبِيِّ.»

«If anyone were to escape the grave’s hug, it would be this child.» ⁴

Are the prophets (ṣ) and other highly righteous individuals spared from the grip of the grave? We do not know because we have no authentic texts in this regard.

¹ Recorded by Abū ash-Shaykh and at-Ṭabarānī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ  Ḥaḏiḥī no. 2998 and aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah no. 1792).
² Sa’d (r) was the chief of al-Aws tribe of al-Anṣār. He was instrumental in convincing his people to embrace ʿIṣlām and support the Prophet (ṣ). He died immediately after the Battle of al-Khandaq (the Trench).
³ Recorded by at-Ṭabarānī, ʿAlī and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah no. 1695 and Ṣaḥīḥ al-Ḥaḏīḥī no. 5306).
⁴ Recorded by at-Ṭabarānī, Abū Yaʿlā, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah no. 2164 and Ṣaḥīḥ al-Ḥaḏīḥī no. 5307).
We will see in this and subsequent chapters that, during the barzakh period, the soul can be in different places almost simultaneously: in the grave; in Jannah (for believers) or in the depth of earth (for nonbelievers); enjoying other delights (for believers) or suffering various forms of punishment (for nonbelievers and sinners).

By the standards of our physical world, it is incomprehensible that the soul could be simultaneously doing various things in different places. Life in al-barzakh, however, does not follow the physical laws of our world.

Furthermore, the joining of the soul with the body in al-barzakh is dissimilar to their joining in our world. In this world, their joining means life, and their separation means death. This does not apply to al-barzakh where, whether the soul and body are joined or not, the person is considered dead in our world’s sense, and alive in the barzakh sense — though his body may be completely decomposed.

Trip of the Believer’s Soul

After departing from the body, a believer’s soul is taken up on a trip to the seventh heaven. In the seventh heaven, the soul is admitted into ‘illiyün (in Jannah) where it meets the souls of other dead believers who welcome it and ask it many questions. The soul is then presented before Allâh (الله) who gives the command for it to join the other souls in ‘illiyün. The soul is then sent back to the grave, and it enters the body for the final trial before it returns to ‘illiyün.

Literally, ‘illiyün is a place of loftiness and distinction. In the texts of the Qur’ân and Sunnah, it is the place in Jannah where the believers’ souls are gathered during the barzakh period. Ibn Kathîr (ابن كثير) said:

“Ibn ‘Abbâs said, ‘‘illiyün means Jannah.’ … It appears that the word ‘illiyün derives from ‘ulûwû (highness). And the higher a place is (in heaven), the greater and more spacious that it is …’”

1 Tafsîr ul-Qurân il-‘Atrzym 83:18.
In continuation of al-Bara‘ Bin ‘Azb’s (ﷺ) earlier hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

فَيَصَدَّعُونَ بِهَا فَلاً يَمُرُّونَ عَلَى مَلَةٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ إِلاَّ قَالُوا: "مَا هَذَا الرُّوحُ الطَّيبُ؟" فَيَقُولُونَ: "فَلَانُ أبَنُ فَلَانِ،" بَأَخَسَنُ أَسْمَائِهِ التَّيِّ كَأَنَّهَا يُسْمَوْنَهُ بِهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا، حَتَّى يَنْتَهُوا بِهَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا، فَيُسْتَفْتَحُونَ لِلْهَ، فَيُفْتَحُ لَهُمْ.

(The angels ascend with it (the believer’s soul). As they pass by gatherings of angels, they ask them, “Who is this good soul?” They reply, “He is so-and-so, son of so-and-so,” using the best names with which he had been addressed in the first life. When they reach the lowest heaven, they request admission, and the gates open for them.)

فَيَشَيعُهُ مِنْ كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ مُقَرِّبُوهُ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الَّتِي تَلَيْهَا، حَتَّى يَنْتَهَى بِهِ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ السَّابِعَةِ، فَيَقُولُ أَلَلٌ ﷺ: "أَكْتَبْهُ كَتَابٌ عَبْدِي فِي عَلِيْيَنِ، (وَمَا أَدْرِكَ مَا عَلِيْيَنُ يُصَبِّرُونَ) يُشَهِّدُهُ المُقَرِّبُونَ ﷺ" الْمَطْفَفِينَ ١٩-٢١.

(The most elite (angels) from each heaven escort him to the next one, until he reaches the seventh heaven. Allâh (ﷺ) then says, “Write My servant’s record (that he will be) in ‘illiyyûn’

«And what will make you know what ‘illiyyûn is? (It is recorded in) an inscribed register, witnessed by those (angels) nearest (to Allâh).»”) ¹

¹ Al-Mutaaffifin 83:19-21.
Thus, his record is inscribed (that he will be) in 'illiyyūn, and the angels are told, “Take him back to earth, because I promised them (i.e., humans):” «From it We created them, into it We return them, and from it We raise them a second time.»¹

«He is then returned to earth, and his soul is restored into his body; and indeed, he then hears the thumping of his companions’ shoes as they walk away from him (i.e., from his grave).»²

Abū Hurayrah’s Report

In continuation of Abū Hurayrah’s (ﷺ) earlier combined narration, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«When a believer’s soul departs (from his body), the angels receive it and ascend with it. At the (first) heaven’s gate, they request admission. The dwellers of (that) heaven ask them, “Who is this good soul

1 Taḥa 20:55.
2 See p. 30 for references.
coming from earth?” They (the angels with him) reply, “(It is) so-and-so.” (The gatekeepers) say, “Welcome, good soul that inhabited a good body; may Allāh’s blessings be upon you and upon the body that you had inhabited. Enter gracefully, and receive glad tidings of happiness, sweet fragrances, and a Lord who is not angry (at you).” (As they continue their ascent,) this greeting is repeated at the (gate of) each heaven — until they finally reach the (seventh) heaven above which is Allāh.

They then take him (i.e., his soul) to the souls of the believers (in Jannah). They (the other souls) are happier to meet him than are those to whom a beloved one returns after a long absence. They ask him about their acquaintances on earth, saying, “What happened to so-and-so?” They (some of the souls) interrupt, “Leave him until he rests, because he was just in the grief of the world.” If he (after a short rest) responds, “I left so-and-so (alive) on earth,” they (the other souls) are elated. But if he says, “So-and-so had died; did he not come to you?” They respond (disappointedly), “No, he was not brought to us.” And they (the angels) then say, “He was taken to his mother: the abyss (of Fire).”
He (i.e., his soul) is then taken before his Lord, Who says, “Take him to complete his appointed time (before Resurrection).” Thus, his soul is sent down from heaven until it enters the grave.  

**ABŪ AYYŪB’S REPORT**

Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī (🕌) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> إذا قبضت نفس العبّد تلقىها أهل الرحمة من عبّاد الله كما يلقون البنّير في الدنيا، فيقبلون عليه ليسالوا، فيقبلون بغضهم ليغضب: "أنظروا أخاك حتى يستريح، فإنه كان في كرْبٍ.

> When a (believing) servant’s soul is taken (at death), (the souls of) Allah’s servants who have been granted mercy receive him (in heaven) as (eagerly as) a carrier of glad tidings is received in the first life. They come to him and ask him questions. But some of them say, “Give your brother some time to rest, because he was in grief (in the first life).”

> فيمقبلون عليه، فيسألونه: "ما فعل فلان؟ ما فعلت فلانة؟ هل تزوجت؟" فإذا سألوا عن الرجل قد مات قبله، قال لهم: "إنه قد هلك.

> "فيمقبلون: "إنا الله وإننا إليه راجعون، ذهب إلى أمه الهاوية، فبشرت الأم وبشرت المريضية." فيعرض عليهم أعمالهم، فإذا رأوا حسنًا فرحوا وأستبشروا وقالوا: "هذه نعمتكم على عبدك فاتمنها.

> "وإن رأوا سوءًا قالوا: "الله راجع عبّدك.

> Then (after a little while,) they gather around him and ask him, “What did so-and-so man do? What did so-and-so woman do? Did she get married?” If

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1 See p. 53 for references.
they ask him about a man who had died before him, and he tells them, “He already died,” They say, “To Allāh we belong, and unto Him we will return (after Resurrection)! He must have gone to his mother, the (Fire) abyss. That is indeed the worst mother and the worst caretaker.”

He also tells them about the actions (of their living acquaintances). If they find them good (for an individual), they say, “(O Allāh,) this is Your favor upon Your servant, so complete it for him (until death).” And if they find them bad, they say, “O Allāh, bring Your servant back (to the right).”¹

Trip of the Nonbeliever’s Soul

After departing from the body, a nonbeliever’s soul is taken up to the heavens, but is not allowed to enter even the first heaven. It is then flung down into sījīn for a brief initiation, and then restored to the body for the trial in the grave, before it is finally taken back to sījīn.

Sījīn is a place where all nonbelievers’ souls are gathered during the barzakh period. It means: a most low and tight imprisonment.

Qatādah (&) reported that Ibn ‘Amr (†) said, “Sījīn is the lowest depth of the earth where the nonbelievers’ souls are.”²

Ibn Kathīr ($) said, “Sījīn is a tight prison under the seventh earth or, according to some, a well in hell (or inferno).”³

AL-BARĀ’S REPORT

In continuation of al-Barā’ Bin ‘Āzib’s (ﷺ) earlier hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

فَيُصَاعِدُونَ بِهَا، فَلاَ يُمَرُونَ عَلَى مَلَأٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ إِلَّا قَالَوْا: “مَا

¹ Recorded by Ibn ul-Mubārak (in az-Zuhd), aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in al-Kabīr), and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (ṣaḥīh no. 2758).
² Ahwāl ul-Qubūr p. 183.
The angels then ascend with it. As they pass by gatherings of angels, they ask them, "Who is this malicious soul?" They respond, "He is so-and-so, son of so-and-so," using the worst names with which he had been addressed in the first life. When they reach the lowest heaven, they request admission, but the gates are not opened for him:

«For them (nonbelievers), the gates of heaven will not be opened; and they will not enter Jannah until the camel goes through a needle's eye (i.e., never).»

Allâh (ابل) then says, "Write his record (that he will be) in sijjîn, in the lowest earth." And they are told, "Take him back to earth, because I promised them:

«From it We created them, into it We return them, and from it We raise them a second time.»

1 Al-A'raf 7:40.
2 Tâhâ 20:55.
Chapter 4

Life in al-Barzakh

«His soul is then cast down from the heavens without regard, and it falls into his body»
«As for the one who joins partners with Allāh, it is as if he plunges down from the skies, whereupon birds snatch him off, or the wind casts him away to a place far removed (from Allāh’s mercy).»

His soul is restored to his body so that, indeed, he hears the thumping of his companions’ shoes as they walk away from him."

ABŪ HURAYRĀH’S REPORT

In continuation of Abū Hurayrah’s earlier combined narration, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

وَإِنَّ الْكَافِرَ إِذَا خَرَجَتْ رُوحُهُ يُغَرْجُ بِهَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ، فَيُسْتَفْتَنُ لَهَا،
فَيَقُولُ أَهْلُ السَّمَاءِ: "مَا أَنْتَ هَذِهِ الرُّوحُ الحَبِيسَةُ جَاهِتُ مِنْ قَبْلَ الأرضِ. مِنْ هَذَا؟" فَيَقُولُونُ: "فَلَانَ." ﴿فِيْقَالُ: "لَا مَرْجَعَ بِالنَّفْسِ الحَبِيسَةِ، كَانَتْ بِالجَسَدِ الحَبِيسِ. إِرْجَعُ ذِمَيْتُهُ، فَإِنَّهَا لَا تُقْنَحُ لِكَ أَبْوَابِ السَّمَاءِ." ﴿وَيَقُولُ: "أَنْتَلْقَوا بِهِ إِلَى أَخْرَ الأَجْلَ. فَطَوَّرُسِلْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ، حَتَّى يَأْتِنَ بِأَرْوَاحِ الْكَافِرِ. ﴿ثُمَّ تَصِيرُ إِلَى الْقُبُورِ.»

«Indeed, when a nonbeliever’s soul exits (from his body), it is taken up to the (first) heaven, where admission is sought for it. The dwellers of (that) heaven say, “What an evil soul is coming from earth! Who is this?” They (the angel holding it) reply, “So-and-so.” It is then said, “You are unwelcome, malicious soul that inhabited a malicious body; return disgracefully, because the heavens’ gates will

1 Al-Hajj 22:31
2 See p. 30 for references.
not open for you.” And it is said (by Allāh), “Take it to complete its appointed time (before Resurrection).” Thus, it is sent down from heaven, and they take it to (show it its place with) the nonbelievers’ souls, and it then enters the grave.> ¹

**MEETING THE NONBELIEVERS’ SOULS**

The above hadīth is the only text mentioning the meeting in *al-barzakh* of the nonbelievers’ souls. Though we are not given the details of this meeting, we know that it is a hateful one — unlike that of the believers’ souls. It is a meeting in which hatred, spite, curses, and mutual blame are rampant — each soul blaming the other for its misfortune and misguidance. This would be similar to the great hatred and enmity among nonbelievers on Judgment Day. Allāh ( تعالى) says:

٦٧

«On that Day, close friends will be enemies to one another — except for the pious.» ²

And He ( تعالى) says:

٣٨-٤٨

«He (Allāh) will say (to the nonbelievers), “Join those nations who have preceded you, of jinns and humans, in the Fire.” Every time a nation enters, it

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¹ See p. 53 for references.

² Az-Zukhruf 43:67.
will curse its fellow-nation. Once they have all joined each other in it, the last of them will say about the first, "Our Lord, it is they who have misled us, so give them a double punishment in the Fire." He will reply, "For each is double, but this you do not know." And the first of them will say to the last, "See then! You have no advantage over us, so taste of the punishment for all that you earned!"» ¹

Summary

After the soul’s departure from the body at death, the assistants of the Angel of Death ascend with it to the heavens. A believer’s soul is warmly welcomed and admitted into all seven heavens. It meets the souls of other believers in Jannah and receives its Lord’s praise before returning to its body. A nonbeliever’s soul is condemned, and is not allowed to enter even the lowest heaven. After receiving its Lord’s blame, it is dropped into the bottom of earth for the unhappy meeting with the souls of other nonbelievers, and it then returns into its body.

Trip of the Soul to the Lowest Heaven

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>For a Believer</th>
<th>For a Nonbeliever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question of angels along the way to heaven and at the first heaven’s gate:</td>
<td>&quot;Who is this good soul coming from earth?&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Who is this malicious soul?&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Al-A’rāf 7:38-39.
The Soul’s Trip to Heaven

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>For a Believer</th>
<th>For a Nonbeliever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reception by the angels guarding the gate to the lowest heaven:</td>
<td>“Welcome, good soul that inhabited a good body; may Allah’s blessings be upon you and your body. Enter gracefully, and receive glad tidings of happiness, sweet fragrances, and a Lord who is pleased with you.”</td>
<td>“You are unwelcome, malicious soul that inhabited a malicious body; return in a condemned state, because the gates of the heavens will not open for you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission of the soul into the first heaven:</td>
<td>The gates open for it and it is admitted.</td>
<td>The gates are shut, and it is not admitted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Trip of a Believer’s Soul Through Heavens**

After the first heaven, the believer’s soul is taken through the heavens until it reaches the uppermost heaven.

At each heaven’s gate, the soul is welcomed the same way it was welcomed at the first heaven’s gate. Furthermore, the best angels from each heaven escort the soul to the next heaven.

**Meeting Other Souls**

In the seventh heaven, a believer’s soul meets the souls of other believers in ‘illiyūn. A nonbeliever’s soul, on the other hand, descends into sijjīn where it meets the souls of other nonbelievers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting’s Details</th>
<th>For a Believer</th>
<th>For a Nonbeliever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place of the meeting:</td>
<td>In the seventh heaven in Jannah.</td>
<td>In a deep abyss in the seventh earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of the soul’s travel:</td>
<td>Graceful arrival in the company of angels.</td>
<td>It is flung down from heaven to earth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meeting’s Details | For a Believer | For a Nonbeliever
---|---|---
Reception by other souls: | Warm welcome and pleasant chatting. | Unwelcome reception; mutual hate and distrust.
Feelings of other souls: | Concern about this soul and giving it time to rest. | No concern.
Some points of discussion: | The condition of their living acquaintances on earth. | Mutual blame and accusation.

TRIP’S CONCLUSION

The trip is concluded by a mandate from Allāh (ﷻ) indicating the soul’s place throughout the *barzakh* period either in *illiyūn* or in *sijjin*. Allāh (ﷻ) commands the angels to take the soul back to the grave for the final trial. As soon as the soul reaches the grave, the dead person is given the ability to hear the footsteps of his companions as they walk away from his grave.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>For a Believer</th>
<th>For a Nonbeliever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allāh’s mandate for the soul’s destination:</td>
<td>He will be in <em>illiyūn</em> (loftiest place) in Jannah.</td>
<td>He will be in <em>sijjin</em> (tightest imprisonment) in the depth of earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return to the body:</td>
<td>His soul is (gently) taken down to earth until it joins his body in the grave.</td>
<td>His soul is harshly flung from heaven to the depth of earth before joining the body in the grave.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5
THE FINAL TRIAL

Introduction

The soul returns to the body after the burial, just in time for the “final trial”. Two stern angels conduct the trial. They ask the dead person questions that test his level of belief and obedience to the Prophet (ﷺ). A believer provides the correct answers with firm words, whereas a nonbeliever stutters and gives wrong answers.

TIME OF THE FINAL TRIAL

The grave’s trial starts immediately after burial. ‘Uthmān (ﷺ) reported that after finishing burying a Muslim, the Prophet (ﷺ) would stand over the grave and say:

«أَسْتَغْفِرْلَنَا لِلَّهِ أَخِيَّكَ، فَأَنْتَ السَّبِيعُ لَهُ السَّبِيعَةَ، فَإِنَّهُ الْآنُ يُسَأَلُ.»

«Seek (Allāh’s) forgiveness for your brother, and then implore that he be granted firmness of words, for, indeed, he is being questioned now.»

When ‘Amr Bin al-Āṣ (ﷺ) was on his deathbed, he commanded those around him:

«إِذَا أُنْتُ مَتُّ، فَلَا تَصْحِبْي تَأْتِيَةً وَلَا نَارًا، فَإِذَا دَفْنُوْا فَشَنُوْا عَلَيْ الْنِّبَابَ سَنَّةً، فَمَّ أَيْسُمُوا حُولَ قَبْرِي قَدْرَ مَا نَحْرُ جُزُورٍ وَيُقْسِمُ لَحْمُهَا، حَتَّى أَسْتَنْسِ يُكَمُّ، وَأَنْظُرُ ماذا أُرَاجُعُ بِهِ رُسُلٌ يَمِينٌ.»

1 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and al-Ḥākim. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’ no. 945 and Hidāyat ur-Ruwāh no. 129).
"When I die, let no wailers or torches accompany my funeral. After you bury me, pour the soil completely over me, then stay around my grave for as long as it takes to slaughter a camel and distribute its meat — I will thus be comforted by your presence while I am considering how to respond to my Lord's Messengers (the two angels)."  

According to 'Amr's understanding, if his companions stayed longer around his grave supplicating for him, this could bring him more blessings that would be of vital help during his trial.

DIFFICULTY OF THE FINAL TRIAL

The grave's trial is of such a great level of difficulty that the Prophet likened it to the trial of ad-Dajjāl.

Asmā' reported that once, at the occurrence of an eclipse, the Prophet addressed his companions with a long speech in which he said:

«إنَّهُ قدْ أُوحِيَ إلَيْنَا نُفَضِّلُونَ فِي الْقُبُورِ.»

«قَرْبَانًا أَوْ مِثَالًا نُفَضِّلُونَ عَلَى الْمُسِحِّيِّ الْدَّجَالِ.»

<Indeed, it has been revealed to me that you will be tried in the grave to an extent near or similar to the trial of al-Masih ud-Dajjāl.>  

This comparison highlights the magnitude of the grave's trial because ad-Dajjāl's trial is the greatest to be ever witnessed by people. Hishām Bin 'Āmir reported that the Prophet said:

«ما بَيْنَ خَلْقَ أَدَمَ إلَى قَيَامِ السَّاعَةِ أَمَّرَ أَكْبَرَ مِنَ الْدَّجَالِ.»

1 Recorded by Muslim (121).
2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (86, 184, 922, 1053, 7287), Muslim (905), and others.
<Between the creation of Ādam and the arrival of the Last Hour, there is no matter as great as ad-Dajjāl.> 1

**Trial of the Believer**

**HE IS FIRM AND CALM**

Despite the trial's difficulty, it is easy for those who have a firm belief in Allāh and an ample record of good deeds.

‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Amr (r) reported that when the Prophet (ﷺ) once mentioned the interrogating angels of the grave, ‘Umar asked, "Are we restored to our reason today, O Messenger of Allāh?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "Yes, just like your present state." ‘Umar (r) then said, "I would then throw a stone into his (the angel’s) mouth." 2

‘Umar (r) said this with confidence because he was certain about his belief in Allāh (съ) and His Messenger (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) did not reproach ‘Umar for saying this, which constituted a tacit approval from him (ﷺ) for ‘Umar’s understanding.

‘A’ishah (r) reported that she said to the Prophet (ﷺ), “O Allāh’s Messenger, you tell us that we will be tried in our graves. What would be my position then, when I am a weak woman?” The Prophet (ﷺ) replied with the āyah:


«Allāh keeps the believers firm with firm words in the first life and in the last one.» 4, 5

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1 Recorded by Muslim (2946).
2 This is an Arabic expression meaning, “I will confound him.”
3 Recorded by Ibn Ḥībān, Ahmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Sahīh ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib no. 3553).
4 Ibrāhīm 14:27.
5 Recorded by al-Bāzār. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Sahīh ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib no. 3554).
A true believer would reveal his strong belief and firmness upon the *din* by instinctively trying to perform *salâh* in the presence of the interrogating angels. Jâbir (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> «إذا دخل الميت القبر، مِثلَت له الشمس عند غروبها، فيجلس يمسح عينيه، ويقول: دُعوتي أصلي.»

<When a dead person is entered into his grave, he is made to imagine that the sun is setting. So he sits up rubbing his eyes, and says (to the two angels), “Let me pray.”> ¹

**AL-BARĀ’ S REPORT**

In continuation of al-Barâ’ Bin ‘Azib’s (ﷺ) earlier hadîth, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:


<Two angels of severe reprimand then come to the believer and address him abruptly. They make him sit up, and ask him, “Who is you Lord?” He replies, “My Lord is Allâh.” They ask him, “What is your *din*?” He replies, “My *din* is Islâm.” They ask him,

¹ Recorded by Ibn Mâjah and Ibn Hibbân. Verified to be authentic by al-Albânî (Hidâyat ur-Ruwâh no. 134).
"Who is that man who was sent to you?" He replies, "He is Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ)." They ask him, "What did you do?" He replies, "I read Allah’s Book, believed in it, and obeyed it." They abruptly question him again, "Who is your Lord? What is your din? Who is your prophet?" He repeats, "My Lord is Allah, my din is Islam, and my Prophet is Muhammad." Regarding this, Allah (ﷻ) says:

"Allah keeps the believers firm with firm words in the first life and in the last one." ¹

And this is the last trial to which a believer is subjected. A caller from heaven announces, "My servant has spoken truthfully." ²

**ABÜ HURAYRAH’S REPORT**

In continuation of Abü Hurayrah’s (4^>^>) earlier combined narration, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"And when a dead person is buried, he would indeed hear the thumping of their shoes (i.e., of those who attended his funeral) as they walk away. Two

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1 Ibrahim 14:27.
2 See p. 30 for references.
angels with (shades of) black and blue colors come to him. One of them is called Munkar, and the other Nakîr.


"As for a (righteous) believer, his prayer and Qur'ânic recitation appear by his head; his fasting appears on his right; his giving of zakâh appears on his left; and his other righteous deeds of charity, supplication, walking to the prayer places, and rendering good and benevolence to people appear by his feet. He is then approached (by the two angels in a threatening way) from the direction of his head, but his prayer and Qur'ânic recitation say, "There is no passage from my direction." He is then approached from his right side, but his fasting says, "There is no passage from my direction." He is then approached from his left side, but his zakâh says, "There is no passage from my direction." He is then approached from the direction of his feet, but his other righteous deeds of charity, supplication, walking to the prayer places, and rendering good and benevolence to people say, "There is no passage from my direction."
<He is commanded, “Sit up.” And he sits up, having no fear or terror. He is made to envision the sun to be setting. He says (to the angels), “Let me pray.” They respond, “You surely will, but first answer our questions. Who is your lord?” He replies, “My lord is Allāh.” They ask him, “What do you say and testify in regard to that man (Muḥammad) who came to you? (or, Who is your prophet?)” He replies, as he used to say (before death), “My prophet is Muḥammad. He is Allāh’s servant and messenger. He brought us clear signs from Allāh, and we believed him. I testify that there is no (true) god but Allāh, and that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger.” They ask him, “What is your religion (or, How did you live)?” He replies, “My religion by which I lived is Islām.” They say, “We expected you to give these answers. Upon this certitude you lived, upon it you died, and upon it will you be raised when Allāh wills.” In this regard, Allāh says:>


Chapter 5 Life in al-Barzakh

"Allāh keeps the believers firm with firm words in the first life and in the last one." ¹ ²

Ā'ISHAH'S REPORT

'Ā'ishah (tabl) reported ³ that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Allāh keeps the believers firm with firm words...

As for the trial of the grave: with me will people be tried, and about me will they be questioned. As for a righteous person, he is made to sit up in his grave, feeling no fear or terror. He is asked, “How did you live?” He replies, “By Islām.” He is asked, “Who is that man who came to you?” He replies, “He is Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allāh. He brought us clear signs from Allāh, and we believed in him.” He is told, “In certitude (about Allāh) you lived, upon it

1 Ibrāhīm 14:27.
2 See p. 53 for references.
3 It should be noted that 'Ā'ishah's (tabl) following narration, together with its subsequent parts, is fully contained in Abū Hurayrah's (tabl) above narration and its subsequent parts. We also see a lot of overlap among other narrations by various companions. We cite such overlapping narrations for completeness, and to emphasize that the saḥābah (tabl) heard similar details from the Prophet (tabl) in regard to al-barzakh.
you died, and upon it you will be raised — when Allāh wills.”\(^1\)

**ASMĀ’ S REPORT**

Asmā’ (may God be pleased with her) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> “If a believer enters his grave, his good deeds surround him: prayer and fasting. The angel approaches him (threateningly) from the direction of prayer, but the prayer defends him; and from the direction of fasting, but the fasting defends him. The angel then commands him, "Sit up," and he does. He asks him, "What do you say in regard to that man?" He asks, "Who?" The angel says, "Muḥammad." He responds, "I bear witness that he is Allāh’s Messenger." The angel asks him, "How do you know, did you meet him?" He responds (affirmatively), "I bear witness that he is Allāh’s Messenger." The angel says, "Upon this you lived, upon it you died, and upon it will you be resurrected."\(^2\)

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1 See p. 32 for references.
2 See p. 78 for references.
Chapter 5

ABU SA'ID'S REPORT

Abū Sa'id al-Khudrī reported that he attended a funeral with the Prophet (SAW). During the burial, the Prophet (SAW) said:

"Ya 'aydha al-nas, inna 'inda al-'amūm tīla'īni fī thūbīrahā. Fa'adā al-insāna dhīn
fītnyuqun 'unhā 'ashābīyah. Jā'ā na'mīk fī yīdhī matrāq fa'aqūda. Qal: "Ma
nīqul fī hādhā arjūl?" Fa'ā kān mu'mīna. Qal: "Ash'ahū an la 'llah illā
al-lāhumā 'abdah wa rūsūlūh. Qīqul: 'ṣudqat'."

"O people, indeed, this nation (of dead people) is tried in its graves. When a person is buried and his companions depart from around him, an angel comes to him holding a club. He makes him sit up, and asks him, "What do you say in regard to this man (i.e., the Prophet)?" If he was a believer, he would say, "I bear witness that there is no (true) god except Allāh, and that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger." The angel would respond, "You have said the truth."

A man said, "O Allāh's Messenger, anyone who sees an angel standing over him with a club in his hand will surely be confused." The Prophet (SAW) responded by reciting the āyah:

«Bistīb Allāh 'l-dīnīn 'amīnū bi 'l-qulnh bi 'l-thābitīn fī
al-ḥiyāt al-dīnīyya wa fī al-akhīrā.» 1, 2

«Allāh makes the believers firm with firm words in the first and last lives.»

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1 14:27.
2 Recorded by Ahmad, al-Bazzār, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (as-Sahihah no. 3394).
Anas’s Report

Anas (4) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

٠ انا وهو١ في جنازة١ واللاد١ وَلَوْلَى١ عليه١ أَصْحَاب١، وَإِنَّهُ لَيَسْمَعَ ١
۲۸۸۹ نعَم١ ۱۲۸۷۱۲۸۷ ۲۸۸۹ ۱۲۸۷ ۲۸۸۹ ۲۸۸۹ ۲۸۸۹
۱۲۸۷ ۲۸۸۹ ۲۸۸۹ ۲۸۸۹
۲۸۸۹ ۲۸۸۹ ۲۸۸۹

Indeed, when a believer is placed in his grave, and his companions walk away from him, until he can hear the echo of their footsteps, two angels come to him. They make him sit up, and ask him, “What did you worship?” If Allāh had guided him (before death), he replies, “I worshiped Allāh.” Then they ask him, “What did you say about this man, Muḥammad?” He replies, “I bear witness that he is Allāh’s servant and messenger.” He is not asked about anything else beyond this.1

Trial of the Nonbeliever

Al-Barā’s Report

In continuation of al-Barā’ Bin ‘Azib’s (r) earlier hadīth, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲ ۴۰۱۲

1 This is combined from two narrations by Anas (r): the first was recorded by al-Bukhārī (1338, 1374) and Muslim (2870); the second was recorded by Abū Dāwūd and Ahmad, and was verified to be authentic by al-Ālānī (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’ no. 1930, Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib no. 3555, and as-Sahihah no. 1344).
Chapter 5 88 Life in al-Barzakh

(As for a nonbeliever,) two angels of severe reprimand come to him. They shake him, make him sit up, and ask him, “Who is your Lord?” He replies, “Ah, ah, I do not know!” They ask him, “What is your din?” He replies, “Ah, ah, I do not know!” They ask him, “Who is that man who was sent to you?” He cannot recall his name, and he is told, “(His name is) Muḥammad!” He says, “Ah, ah, I do not know. I just heard people say that.” He is then told, “You neither knew, nor did you recite (the Qurān)!" And a caller from heaven announces, “He lied.” ¹

ABŪ HURAYRĀH’S REPORT

In continuation of Abū Hurayrah’s (dı̈) earlier combined narration, the Prophet (s.a.) said:

¹ See p. 30 for references.
Indeed, when a nonbeliever (or wrongdoer, or hypocrite) is (threateningly) approached (by the two angels) from the direction of his head, there would be nothing (to defend him); when he is approached from his right side, there would be nothing (to defend him); when he is approached from his left side, there would be nothing (to defend him); and when he is approached from the direction of his feet, there would be nothing (to defend him). He is commanded, “Sit up.” And he sits up in his grave in a state of fear and terror. They ask him, “Who is your lord?” He replies, “I do not know.” They ask him, “What do you say and testify in regard to that man who came to you (or, who is your prophet)?” He says, “Which man?” And he is confused about his name, so they tell him, “Muḥammad.” He replies, “I do not know. I heard people say things; and I said the same.” They ask him, “What did you do (in life)?” He replies, “I do not know.” He is told, “You never knew (the truth)! We expected these answers from you. Upon doubts you lived, upon them you died, and upon them will you be raised when Allāh wills.”

At-Ṭabarānī (ﷺ) added in regard to this that Ḥammād Bin Salamah (ﷺ), a ṣābi who narrated this ḥadīth, said:

1 See p. 53 for references.
Chapter 5

90 Life in al-Barzakh

“This applies to one of the people of Qiblah (i.e., a Muslim) who says the Testimony of Faith without certitude in his heart. So he would hear people say something and repeat what they say.”

**‘Â‘ishah’s Report**

In continuation of ‘Â‘ishah’s (بنت) earlier hadith, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

» وَإِذَا كَانَ الْجَلَّ الْسُّوءُ أَجْلَسَ فَقُولَ فَرْعَا مَفْعُولًا فِيْقَالُ لَهُ: «“فَمَنْ كُنتُ؟” فَيُقُولُ: “سَمِعْتُ النَّاسَ يَقُولُونَ قُولًا فَقَلْتُ كَمَا قَالُوا.”

فيقال له: “هَذَا مَفْعُولٌ مِّنْهَا، عَلَى الشَّكَّ كُنتُ، وَعَلَيْهِ مِتَّ.”

» وَعَلَيْهِ يُبَعْثُ إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ.”

«As for an evil person, he is made to sit up in his grave in a state of fear and terror. He is asked, “How did you conduct your life?” He replies, “I heard people say things; so I said the same.” He is told, “In doubt (about Allah) you lived, upon it you died, and upon it will you be raised — when Allah wills.”» 1

**Asmâ’i’s Report**

In continuation of Asmâ’i’s (بنت) earlier hadith, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

» وَإِنْ كَانَ كَافِرًا (فَاجْرًا - مُتَاَفَقَا - مُرْتَابَا), جَاءّ اللَّهُ وَلَسْتُ بِيْتَهُ


1 See p. 32 for references.
"As for a nonbeliever (or wrongdoer, hypocrite, or person in doubt), the angel comes to him and finds nothing (i.e., no good deeds) to defend him. He commands him to sit up, and asks him, "What do you believe in regard to that man?" He asks, "Which man?" The angel replies, "Muḥammad," and he responds, "By Allāh I do not know. I heard people say things and I said the same." The angel tells him, "Upon this (doubt) you lived, upon it you died, and upon it will you be raised."" ¹

**ABŪ SAʿĪD'S REPORT**

In continuation of Abū Saʿīd’s (ﷺ) earlier hadīth, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"وَإِنَّ كَانَ كَافِرًا أَوْ مُنَافِقًا يُقُولُ لَهُ: "مَا تَقُولُ فِي هذَا الرُّجَال؟" فَيَقُولُ: "لَا أُدْرِي، سَمَّعْتُ النَّاسَ يُقُولُونَ شَيْئًا." فَيَقُولُ: "لَا دَرَّيْتُ وَلَا ثَلَّيْتُ وَلَا أُهْتَدَيْتُ.""

"And if he (the dead person) was a nonbeliever (or a hypocrite), he (the angel) asks him, "What do you say in regard to this man (Muḥammad)?" He replies, "I do not know. I heard people say things (and I said the same)." The angel responds, "You neither knew, nor recited (Qurʾān), nor were guided."" ²

**ANAS'S REPORT**

In continuation of Anas’s (ﷺ) earlier hadīth, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"وَإِنَّ الْكَافِرَ أوُلَيْدِنَافِقِ إِذًا وَضَعُ فِي فَتْرَةٍ، وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُ أَصْحَابَهُ،" وَإِذَا لَيْسَ مُسْتَعْنُ فَرَعُ نَعَلَهُمْ. إِذَا أَنْصَرُوَاهُم، أَتَأَهَّلُ مُلْكَانِ، قَيَّدُهُمَا،"
Indeed, when a nonbeliever (or a hypocrite) is placed in his grave, and his companions walk away from him, until he can hear the echo of their footsteps, two angels come to him. They make him sit up, and ask him scoldingly, “What did you worship?” He replies, “I do not know.” They ask him, “What did you say about this man (the Prophet)?” He replies, “I said what other people said about him.” He is told, “You never knew, nor did you recite (Qur’ān).” ¹

Summary

The final trial starts for the dead person as soon as he is laid down in his grave, and soil is packed upon him, and his friends and family, one-by-one, depart from his grave.

THE TWO ANGELS

Immediately after burial, the final trial starts. It is conducted by angels who have the following description:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number:</th>
<th>Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Names:</td>
<td>“Munkar” (the Unfamiliar) and “Nakīr” (the Rebuker)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color:</td>
<td>Shades of black and blue colors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance:</td>
<td>Stern and threatening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning manner:</td>
<td>Abrupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What they carry:</td>
<td>Iron clubs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ See p. 87, 188 for reference.
The angels act with the dead person in a way that causes the following reactions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Angels' Action</th>
<th>A Believer's Reaction</th>
<th>A Nonbeliever's Reaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They approach him threateningly.</td>
<td>His good deeds defend him.</td>
<td>There is nothing to defend him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They command him to sit up.</td>
<td>He sits up without fear or terror, and requests to pray.</td>
<td>He sits up in a state of fear and terror.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They ask him questions.</td>
<td>Allâh guides him and makes him firm in words, so as to know the answers.</td>
<td>He stutters, and is confused and misguided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They ask him in an abrupt manner.</td>
<td>This does not change his answers.</td>
<td>This adds to his confusion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The trial’s questions and answers

The dead person’s reason is restored to him in his grave. The angels pose their questions, and he answers them according to what he used to believe and act in the worldly life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>A Believer’s Answer</th>
<th>A Nonbeliever’s Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Who is your Lord? Whom did you worship?”</td>
<td>“My Lord is Allâh. I worshiped Him.”</td>
<td>“Ah, ah, I do not know!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What is your din? What did you say about Islâm? What did you do in life?”</td>
<td>“My din is Islâm. I adhered to it, and read Allâh’s Book, believed in it, and obeyed it.”</td>
<td>“Ah, ah, I do not know! I heard people say things, so I said the same.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>A Believer’s Answer</th>
<th>A Nonbeliever’s Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Who is that man who was sent to you?”</td>
<td>“I testify that there is no (true) god but Allāh, and that Muḥammad is Allāh’s servant and messenger who brought us clear signs from Allāh, and we believed him.”</td>
<td>“Ah, ah, I cannot recall his name. I do not know. I just heard people say that he is a prophet.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE TRIAL’S CONCLUSION

The result of the trial is announced by the angels and confirmed by Allāh (ﷻ):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Announcer</th>
<th>A Believer’s Result</th>
<th>A Nonbeliever’s Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The angels</td>
<td>“We expected you to say this. Upon certitude you lived, upon that you died, and upon it will you be resurrected.”</td>
<td>“We expected you to say this. You neither knew nor recited. In doubts you lived, upon them you died, and upon them will you be resurrected.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allāh</td>
<td>“My servant has spoken the truth.”</td>
<td>“He has lied.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 6
AFTER THE TRIAL

Introduction

The trial in the grave confirms what the dead person had already realized at the moment of his death — from the tidings brought by the Angels of Death and his assistants.

A believer is immediately rewarded: his grave is spread out as far as he can see, a door leading to Jannah appears in his grave, his grave is furnished with delightful things from Jannah, and his good deeds materialize next to him in the form of a pleasant looking person.

On the other hand, a nonbeliever is immediately punished: his grave tightens on him, a door leading to hell appears in his grave, his grave is furnished with fire and poisons from hell, his evil deeds materialize next to him in the form of a repulsive man, and he receives a most painful beating.

These incidents are detailed in this chapter.

The Trial’s Outcome for a Believer

AL-BARĀ’ S REPORT

In continuation of al-Barā’ Bin ‘Āzib’s (ﷺ) earlier hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

فَيَنادي مَنادٌ في السماء: “أُشْرُوْهُ من الجنة، وَأُبِسْوُهُ من الجنة، وَأَشْتَحْوا لَهُ باباً إلى الجنة.” فيَنادِي مَنادٌ في السماء، وَيَقُولُ لَهُ في قُرُورِهِ مَدِّ بصره

À caller then calls from heaven, “Provide him (i.e., the believer) with furnishings from Jannah, clothe him (with garments) from Jannah, and open for him
a door to Jannah.” Thus he receives bliss and perfume from Jannah, and his grave is spread to the limit of his eyesight.

Before him appears a man with a handsome face, nice clothing, and pleasant smell. He says to him, “I bring you glad tidings that will please you: tidings of Allah’s acceptance, and of gardens with eternal bliss. This is the day that you were promised.” He responds, “Glad tidings from Allah be to you too. Who are you? Your face is one that brings good.” He says, “I am your good deeds. By Allah, I only knew you to be quick in obeying Allah and slow in disobeying Him. May Allah reward you with the best.”

A door is opened for him to Jannah and another one to the Fire, and he is told, “This (the Fire) would have been your dwelling had you disobeyed Allah. But Allah has substituted it for you with this (Jannah).” When he sees what is awaiting him in Jannah, he says, “O my Lord, speed up the arrival of the Hour (of Resurrection), so that I may rejoin
my family and property.” He is told (by the angels), “Go to rest (i.e., sleep).”»

Abū Hurayrah’s Report

In continuation of Abū Hurayrah’s earlier combined narration, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«فيَفْرَجُ لَهُ فَرَجَةٌ (أو باب) قَبْلَ الْجَنَّةِ. فَيَنْظُرُ إِلَى زَهْرَتِهَا وَمَا فِيهَا،
فَيَقُولُ لَهُ: “هَذَا مَجِيلُكُمْ بَعْضَهَا، وَمَا أَمْرُ اللَّهِ لَكَ فِيهَا.” فَيَزِيْدُهُ غُبْطَةً
وَسُوْرَةً. ثُمَّ يَفْرَجُ لَهُ فَرَجَةٌ قَبْلَ النَّارِ. فَيَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهَا يَحْمِلُ بَعْضُهَا بَعْضًا،
فَيَقُولُ لَهُ: “أَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهَا ما وَقَآكَ اللَّهُ. هَذَا مَفْعُوْدُكَ وَمَا أَمْرُ اللَّهِ لَكَ فِيهَا,
لَوْ عَصِيْتَهُ.” فَيَزِيْدُهُ غُبْطَةً وَسُوْرَةً.»

“A door then appears from his (a believer’s) grave toward Jannah, and he views its grandeur and what (pleasures) it contains. He is told, “This will be your abode in it, and this is what Allāh has in store for you.” This adds to his joy and happiness. Another opening appears toward the Fire, and he sees its various sections crushing one another. He is told, “Look at that from which Allāh has saved you. This could have been your abode in it, and this is the punishment that Allāh prepared for you had you disobeyed Him.” This further adds to his joy and happiness.”

1 See p. 30 for references.
His grave is then expanded for him to seventy cubits by seventy, and is illuminated for him. He is told, “Go to sleep.” He says, “Let me return to my people to inform them (about my good condition).” But they tell him, “Sleep as does a newlywed person who is only to be awakened by his dearest family-member (i.e., his spouse).” Thus, (time passes) as if it is but a nap — until Allah raises him from his resting place. His body is returned (after the trial) to the previous state (of death). And his soul is placed with the other good souls — which are birds eating from the trees of Jannah.  

'A'ishah's Report

In continuation of 'A'ishah's earlier hadith, the Prophet said:

(As for a believer,) an opening appears (from his grave) toward the Fire, and he observes its various sections crushing one another. He is told, “Look at that from which Allah saved you.” Another opening appears toward Jannah, and he observes its grandeur and what (pleasures) it contains. He is told, “This will be your abode in it.”

Asma's Report

In continuation of Asma's earlier hadith, the Prophet said:

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1 See p. 53 for references.
2 See p. 32 for references.
And he (the believer) is told, "This is your place in Jannah. (As for now,) go to sleep (for being) righteous."  

**Abū Saʿīd’s Report**

In continuation of Abū Saʿīd’s (ﷺ) earlier hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"And he (the believer) is told, "This is your place in Jannah. (As for now,) go to sleep (for being) righteous.""  

**Anas’s Report**

In continuation of Anas’s (ﷺ) earlier hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"A door is then opened (for the believer) toward the Fire, and he (one of the angels) tells him, “This could have been your abode, had you disbelieved in your Lord. But because you believed, this will be your abode instead,” and a door is opened toward Jannah. He (the believer) attempt to rise toward that door, but the angel tells him, “Go to rest (i.e., sleep).” And his grave is made spacious for him."  

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1 See p. 78 for references.
2 See p. 86 for references.
He is shown a dwelling in the Fire, and is told, “This could have been your dwelling in the Fire, but Allâh protected you and bestowed mercy upon you, and He substituted it for you with a house in Jannah.” His grave is then expanded for him to seventy cubits, and is filled with greenery until Resurrection Day. He says, “Allow me to convey this good news to my family.” But he is told, “Go to rest (i.e., sleep).”  

The Trial’s Outcome for a Nonbeliever

**AL-BARÂ’ S REPORT**

In continuation of al-Barâ’ Bin ‘Azib’s (�) earlier hadîth, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«فِيّنادِي مُنادٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ: ٌەأَفْرُشُوا لَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَأَفْنِحْوا لَهُ بَابًا إِلَى النَّارِ.»

«فِيّاتِهِ مِن حَرْهَا وَسَمُوُّهَا، وَيُصَبِّقُ عَلَيْهِ قُبُرٌ حَتَّى تَحْتَلَفَ فِيهِ أَضْلاعُهُ.»

«ٌەأَلَا أَقُولُٛ لَهُمْ رِجْلَٓ قَبْحٍ أَلْوَجُهُ، قَبْحُ أَلْثَابٍ، مُّثَنِّبٌ الرَّجَحِ، فَيَقُولُ: أَبْشِرُ بَالَّذِي يُسُوَّؤُكُهُ. هَذَا يُوْمُكُ الَّذِي كَنْتَ تُوعَدُ.»

«ٌەفَيَقُولُ: وَأَنْتُ، فَبَشَّرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالشَّرٍّ مَنْ أَنْتُ، فَوُجْهُكَ الَّذِي يَحْيِي بالشَّرٍّ.»

«ٌەفَيَقُولُ: أَنَا عَمَلَى الخَيْبِ. فَوَٰلِهِمْ مَا عَلَمْتُمْ إِلَّا كَتَبْتُ بَيْطِنًا عَنْ طَائِعَةِ اللَّهِ، سُرِيعًا إِلَى مَعْصِيَّةِ اللَّهِ، فَجَزَّاَكَ اللَّهُ شَرَاءً.»

1 See p. 87, 188 for reference.
Before him appears a man with an ugly face, repulsive clothing, and foul smell; he says, “I bring you bad news that will displease you. This is the day that you were promised.” He responds, “Bad news from Allāh be to you too! Who are you? Your face is one that brings evil.” He says, “I am your malicious deeds. By Allāh, I only knew you slow in obeying Allāh and quick in disobeying Him. May Allāh repay you with the worst.”

A blind, deaf, and dumb person is appointed for him. He carries in his hand a sledgehammer that, if it hits a mountain, would turn it to dust. He hits him (with it) once; and he becomes dust. Allāh then restores him as he was, and the person hits him again; he emits a shriek that is heard by everything (on earth) except men and jinns.

A door is opened for him to the Fire; and he is given from the Fire’s furnishings. He then says, “O my Lord! Do not launch the Hour.”

Abū Hurayrah’s Report

In continuation of Abū Hurayrah’s (ﷺ) earlier combined narration, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

1 See p. 30 for references.
A door then appears from his (a nonbeliever's) grave toward Jannah, and he views its grandeur and what (pleasures) it contains. He is told, "Look at that from which Allâh deprived you. This could have been your abode in it, and this is the pleasure that Allâh prepared for you had you obeyed Him." This adds to his regret and remorse. Another opening appears toward the Fire, and he sees its various sections crushing one another. He is told, This will be your abode in it, and this is what Allâh has in store for you." This further adds to his regret and remorse.

A door is then opened from his grave to Hell, and he is hit a blow that can be heard by every creature (on earth) except human beings and jinns. He is told, "Go to sleep like a person bitten (by insects and snakes)." The earth is told, "Contract on him." And it contracts on him until his ribs break. Thus, his punishment continues therein, until Allâh raises him from that abode. This is the miserable living of which Allâh says:
And whoever turns away from remembering Me — indeed, he will have a difficult life, and on Resurrection Day We will assemble him blind."  

'A'ishah's Report

In continuation of 'A'ishah's earlier hadīth, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"فَيُفْرِجُ لَهُ فُرْجَةً إِلَى الجَهَنَّةِ، فَيُنْظِرُ إِلَى رَضُوْنَتَهَا وَمَا فِيهَا، فَيُقَالُ لَهُ: "أنْظِرِ إِلَى ما سَرَفَ اللَّهُ عَنكَ. "ثُمَّ يُفْرِجُ لَهُ فُرْجَةً قَبْلِ النَّارِ، فَيُنْظِرُ إِلَيْهَا يُحَظِّمُ بَعْضَهَا بَعْضًا، وَيُقَالُ لَهُ: "هَذَا مَفَاعِدُكَ مِنْهَا. "ثُمَّ يُبَعْدِبَ."

"(As for an evil person,) an opening appears (in his grave) toward Jannah, and he observes its grandeur and what (pleasures) it contains. He is told, "Look at that from which Allāh deprived you." Another opening appears toward the Fire, and he observes its various sections crushing one another. He is told, "This will be your abode in it." He is then tortured."  

Asmā's Report

In continuation of Asmā's earlier hadīth, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"فَيُقَالُ لَهُ: "هَذَا مَفَاعِدُكَ مِنْ النَّارِ. "وَسَلَّطَ عَلَيْهِ دَابَّةً فِي قَبْرِهِ، مَعَهَا سَوْطٌ ثَمَّرَهَا جَمَّةً، مِثْلُ غَرَبِ الْبَعْيِسِ، تَصَرِّبُهُ"  

1 Tāhā 20:124.
2 See p. 53 for references.
3 See p. 32 for references.
He is told, “This will be your place in the Fire.” And a beast is let loose on him in his grave, holding a whip as thick as a camel’s rope, with its tip made of a burning coal. The beast beats him (with the whip) as much as Allah wills. And this beast is deaf, and cannot hear him so as to show him mercy.” ¹

ABŪ SA‘ĪD’S REPORT

In continuation of Abū Sa‘īd’s (ﷺ) earlier hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«كلما يفتح له باب إلى الجنة، يقول: “هذا من أنت لك لو أمنت بربك، فأمائي إذ كفرت به فإن الله أبدلك به هذا.” ويفتح له باب إلى النار، ثم يقمعه قمعة بالمطران، يسمعها خلق الله كلهم غير التقلين.»

“A door is then opened (for the nonbeliever) toward Jannah, and he (one of the angels) tells him, “This could have been your abode, had you believed in your Lord. But because you disbelieved, Allah has substituted it for you with this,” and a door is opened toward the Fire. He (the angel) then strikes him with the club a blow that is heard by all of Allah’s creation except for the two large communities (i.e., humans and jinns).” ²

ANAS’S REPORT

In continuation of Anas’s (ﷺ) earlier hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

فَيَضْرِبُهُ بمِطْرَاقٍ مِن جُنْدَيْنِ بَيْنَ أَدْنَيْهِ، فَيُصْيِحُ صَيْحَةً، يُسْمُعُهَا مِنْ يَلِيْهِ مِنَ الْخَلْقِ غَيْرِ التَّقْلِينِ.

¹ See p. 78 for references.
² Ibrāhīm 14:27.
After the Trial

<He (the angel) then hits him (the nonbeliever) with an iron club between his ears, and he emits a shriek that is heard by all creatures around him, except the two large communities (i.e., humans and jinns).> ¹

Continual Bliss or Misery

We saw above that a believer’s happiness and a nonbeliever’s misery in al-barzakh continue until Resurrection Day. In this section, we discuss specific forms of happiness and misery that have been highlighted in the Sunnah.

Company of a Person’s Deeds in His Grave

We saw in al-Barā’ī’s earlier hadīth that a person’s deeds materialize in the form of a man who stays with him in his grave — adding to a believer’s happiness and to a nonbeliever’s misery. This meaning is emphasized in other hadīths as well.

Anas (ṣ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

‘‘يَتَبَعُّ الْمَيْتَ ثَلَاثَةٌ، فَيَرْجَعُ أَثْنَانَ وَيَبْقِى وَاحِدٌ، يَتَبَعُّهُ أَهْلُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَعَمَلُهُ، فَيَرْجَعُ أَهْلُهُ وَمَالُهُ، وَيَبْقِى عَمَلُهُ.’’

‘‘Three things follow a dead person (to the grave), and two of them return while the third remains (with him): his family, wealth, and deeds follow him, but his family and wealth return, and his deeds remain.’’²

Thus, the dead person’s family buries him and leaves, and his wealth is distributed to his inheritors. However, it is his deeds that accompany him to the grave.

Similarly, an-Nu‘mān Bin Bashīr, Abū Hurayrah, and other companions (ṣ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

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¹ See p. 87, 188 for reference.
² Recorded by al-Bukhārī (6514) and Muslim (2960).
The example of a believer and death is like a man who has three close friends. The first friend is his wealth, and it says to him, "Take from me as much as you wish (while you live)." The second is his family, and it says to him, "I am now with you, and when you die I lower you (into your grave and then leave you)." The third is his deeds, and it says to him, "I am with you now, and will leave (the world) with you." So he will say to it (after death), "Indeed, I used to consider you the least important of my three friends."  

**Darkness of the Grave**

Obviously, the space inside the grave is pitch-dark because it has no access to light. Yet, even if we extended electricity into it and lit it brightly, the dead person would still be engulfed in darkness — except for the graves of the true believers.

In Abū Hurayrah’s (ﷺ) earlier hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«ثمَّ يُفَسَّحُ لهُ فِي قَبْرِهِ سَبْعَةُ ذرَاعٍ فِي سَبْعَةٍ، وَيَنْبُوُّ لَهُ فِيهِ.»

(The believer’s grave is then expanded for him to seventy cubits by seventy, and is illuminated for him.)  

The illumination within the grave may be increased by the believers’ supplications for their deceased ones.

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1 Recorded by al-Bazzār, at-Ṭabarānī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (ṣaḥīḥ no. 2481).

2 Recorded by at-Ṭabarānī, Ibn Hibbān, and al-Ḥākim. Verified to be ḥasan by al-Albānī (ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib no. 3561).
Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that a black woman who used to clean the Prophet’s (ﷺ) Masjid died. Realizing her absence, the Prophet (ﷺ) asked about her and was told that she died. He said, “هَلَّا كَنْتِمْ أَذْنَبْتُمْ؟”<Shouldn’t you have informed me?> He was told that she died and was buried at night while he was asleep. But he insisted to be shown her grave, went and stood over it, prayed *janāzah* with his companions, and said:

«أَنَّ هَذِهِ الْفُوْرَ عَلَوْءَةً ظَلْمَةً عَلَى أُهْلِهَا،»

«وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَنْتَوْرُهَا لَهُمْ بِصِلَاتِ عَلَيْهِمْ.»

«Indeed, these graves engulf their dwellers with darkness. And indeed, Allah illuminates them (further) for them (i.e., the believers) because of my prayer for them.»

We saw earlier that among what the Prophet (ﷺ) said in his supplication for Abū Salamah when he died was:

«اللَّهُمَّ أَفْسَحْ لَهُ فِي فِيْهِ، وَنَوْرُ لَهُ فِيْهِ.»

«O Allah, expand his grave and illuminate it for him.»

**Continual Exposal to the Future Abode**

Every morning and evening of a person’s life in *al-barzakh*, he is shown his future abode — either in *Jannah* or in hell. This adds to a believer’s happiness and to a nonbeliever’s dismay.

Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ) said that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ أَحَدَ كَمْ إِذَا مَاتُ مَاتِ عَرْضَ عَلَيْهِ مَفْعَدُهُ بِالْغَدَآءِ وَالْعَشِي، إِنَّ كَانَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ فَالْجَنَّةُ، وَإِنَّ كَانَ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ فَالْنَّارُ، فَيَقُولُ»

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (458, 460, 1337), Muslim (956), and others. Some reports say that this dead person was either a man or a woman, but al-Albānī (ﷺ) demonstrated (in *Akhkām ul-Janā‘īz* 113-114) that it was a woman.

2 Recorded by Muslim (920), Ṭāhā, al-Bayhaqī, and others.
Indeed, when one of you dies, he is shown his (future) abode every morning and evening. If he is from the people of Jannah, (he is shown his abode in) Jannah; and if he is from the people of the Fire, (he is shown his abode in) the Fire. He is told, “This will be your abode when Allah raises you on the Day of Resurrection.”

This is confirmed in the Qur'an where Allah (ﷻ) says in regard to Pharaoh and his people:

«(The worst torment surrounded them:) the Fire. They are exposed to it morning and evening; and (later), on the Day when the Hour will be launched, (the command will be issued,) “Admit Pharaoh’s people into the most severe torment.”»

WRONGDOERS’ SCREAMS OF AGONY

We saw above that a nonbeliever is beaten severely and continuously in his grave, which makes him scream from the pain. The screaming of the dead has also been mentioned by the Prophet (ﷺ) in other hadiths. For example, Ibn Mas'ūd (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«(The worst torment surrounded them:) the Fire. They are exposed to it morning and evening; and (later), on the Day when the Hour will be launched, (the command will be issued,) “Admit Pharaoh’s people into the most severe torment.”»

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1379, 3240, 6515), Muslim (2866), and others.
2 Ghāfir 40:46.
3 Recorded by Abū Nu‘aym and at-Ṭabarānī in al-Kabīr; verified to be authentic by al-Albañī (Ṣaḥīh ul-Jāmi‘ no. 1965, as-Sahihah no. 1377, and Ṣaḥīh ut-Targhib wat-
Anas and Zayd Bin Thābit (ﷺ) reported that once the Prophet (ﷺ) was riding his mule through a land belonging to some of al-Anṣār when his mule became restless and was about to throw him off. He saw nearby four or five graves and asked his companions if they knew whose graves were they. A man told him that they were the graves of people who died during times of shirk (before Islām). So the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ هَذِهِ الأَمْوَةَ تُبِّقُكُمْ فِي قُبُورِهَا، فَلَوْلَا أَنْ لَا تَدَافَنُوا لَدَعَوْتُ اللَّهَ أَنْ يُسِمِّعَكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ الَّذِي أَسْمَعْيَ مِنْهُ.»

«Indeed, this community (the dead) is afflicted in the grave. Were it not that you might stop burying each other (from fear), I would have asked Allāh to make you hear the torture of the grave as I do.»

The Prophet (ﷺ) then said, «سَعُوْذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ النَّارِ.» They said, “We seek Allāh’s protection from the Fire’s torment.” He said, «سَعُوْذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ.» «سَعُوْذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ النَّارِ.» They said, “We seek Allāh’s protection from the grave’s torment.” He said, «سَعُوْذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ النَّارِ.» «سَعُوْذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ.» «سَعُوْذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ النَّارِ.» «سَعُوْذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ النَّارِ.» «سَعُوْذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ النَّارِ.» «سَعُوْذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ النَّارِ.» «سَعُوْذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ النَّارِ.» “Seek Allāh’s protection from tribulations, whether apparent or hidden.” They said, “We seek Allāh’s protection from tribulations, whether apparent or hidden.” He said, «سَعُوْذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ النَّارِ.» «سَعُوْذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ النَّارِ.» “Seek Allāh’s protection from the trial of ad-Dajjal.” They said, “We seek Allāh’s protection from the trial of ad-Dajjal.”

Commenting on this hadīth, al-Albānī (ﷺ) said:

“This hadīth carries many important points, among which are the following:

1. The Prophet (ﷺ) was able to hear things that other people could not hear. This was a special merits ...
and his special merits may only be established through authentic narrations and not through weak narrations, analogies, or whimsical reasoning.

2. The interrogation of the two angels in the grave is an established truth that must be adopted, and the hadiths in its regard are mutawātir.

3. The fitnah of ad-Dajjāl is a great one. Because of this, the Prophet (ﷺ) instructed us to seek Allāh’s protection from its evil, as in this and numerous other hadiths.

4. The (pagan) people of Jāhiliyyah who died before the advent of the Prophet (ﷺ) receive punishment for their shirk and disbelief, which means that they were not of those who did not receive the message of the prophets ... 

PATRONS OF DISBELIEF RECEIVE A GREATER PUNISHMENT

Obviously, the leaders of disbelief receive in the grave a greater and more distinct torment than other people.

We saw above that Pharaoh and his family are continuously exposed to the Fire during al-barzakh, in preparation for their most severe punishment in the hereafter.

We are told of another patron of disbelief who is severely tortured in al-barzakh. Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> رأيت جَهَنَّمَ بُخَطُّتُ بَعْضُهَا بَعْضًا، وَرَأيت عَمَّرُ بُنَ لَحِي، أبَا بَنُي كُعْبَ,
> يَجَرُ فُصُبَهُ فِي النَّارِ، وَهُوَ أَوَّلٌ مِنْ عَيْبٍ دِينَ إِسْمَاعِيلِ وَسَيْبُ السَّوَابِ.

"I saw hell (in a dream), with some parts of it attacking other parts. And I saw 'Amr Bin Luḥayy, Patriarch of the tribe of Banī Ka'b, dragging his

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1 Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah 1:295-297.
After the Trial

intestines in the Fire. He was the first to change Ismā‘īl’s religion and dedicate animals to idols.> ¹

‘Amr Bin Luḥayy was the first to introduce idol worship into Makkah, thereby changing the monotheist religion of Ismā‘īl (١) to the pagan religion of Jāhiliyyah. ² This, obviously, earned him a severe punishment in al-barzakh, as well as hell.

FIRE IN THE NONBELIEVERS’ GRAVES

In this life, a nonbeliever suffers from feelings of hatred, envy, and dissatisfaction that arise from his disbelief and bad relationship with his Lord and Creator. The effect of these feelings on the heart is similar to the burning by fire.

In the grave, as well as the hereafter, the emotional fire of this life transforms for a nonbeliever into an actual (or physical) fire that constantly agonizes him.

The Prophet (ﷺ) once made a supplication that his pagan enemies would be afflicted by both the worldly and the eternal fires. ‘Alī and Ibn Mas‘ūd (ﷺ) reported that, during the Aḥzāb Battle against the alliance of pagans, the fighting extended all afternoon until sunset, causing the Muslims to miss the ‘asr prayer. The Prophet (ﷺ) then said:

«مَالَ الْلَّهُ بِيْوَاتِهِمْ وَفِي حَمْرَةِ نَارَ آذَانَ حَسَسُونا وَسَتَعَلُونا
عَنِ الصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَى حَتَّى غَابَتِ الْمَسْأَلَةُ.»

‚May Allāh fill their houses and graves with fire, because they engaged us until the sun has set, causing us to miss the middle prayer‘> ³

THE SOULS AFTER THE TRIAL

We saw in the hadīth of Abū Hurayrah (p. 98) that after a believer’s trial, his soul is turned into a bird that dwells in Jannah and eats from

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (3520-3521, 4623-4624), Muslim (2856), and others.
³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2931, 4111, 4533, 6396), Muslim (627-628), and others.
its fruits. Similarly, Ka‘b Bin Mālik (ـ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"إن أرواح المُؤمنين في أوجاف طير حضر تعلق في شجر الجنة."

<Indeed, the (dead) believers’ souls are within green birds eating from the trees of Jannah.> ¹

In another report from Ka‘b (ـ), the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"إِنَّمَا نَسْمَحُ لِلْمُؤِمِّنِ طَيْرًا يَعْلَقُ فِي شَجَرَةِ الْجَنَّةِ."

<Indeed, a (dead) believer’s soul is a bird that eats from the trees of Jannah — until Allāh restores it into its body on the Day when He resurrects him.> ²

This, as we saw earlier, is ‘illiyūn, where all of the dead believers’ souls are gathered during the barzakh period.

As for the nonbelievers’ souls, we learned earlier that they are taken to sijjin, which is a deep and tight prison. We have no authentic text indicating the form that the souls take in sijjin — whether black birds eerie creatures, or something else. Yet, we have no doubt that it is a form fitting for their sinning and wrongdoing.

Pursuant to an earlier discussion (p. 65), it is important to note that some texts indicate that the believers’ souls turn into birds in Jannah, other texts indicate that they are sometimes attached to their bodies in the grave, and other texts that we will present in the next chapter further indicate that they are at various places in heaven.

The same is true about the nonbelievers’ souls. They are in sijjin, with their bodies in the grave, and being tortured in other places as well.

There is no contradiction between these texts, because the soul’s behavior is a matter of ghayb that cannot be subjected to reasoning

¹ Recorded by Ibn Mājah, at-Ṭabarānī (in al-Kabīr), and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (as-Sahihah no. 995 and Sahih ul-Jāmi‘ no. 1560).
² Recorded by Mālik, an-Nasa‘ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Hidayat ur-Ruwāh no. 1575 and Sahih ul-Jāmi‘ no. 2373).
Life in *al-Barzakh* deriving from our worldly experience. A good example for understanding this is dreams that we see during our sleep, where our souls seem to make trips to worlds beyond human perception.

Ibn Taymiyyah (ﷺ) said:

"The position of the salaf and imāms of the Ummah (of Muslims) is that a person after death will be either in joy or in torture, tasted by both his soul and his body. After the soul departs from the body, it continues to be in joy or in torture. Also, when it sometimes joins the body, it tastes the joy or torture together with it." \(^1\)

### Summary

**Changes in the Grave's Environment**

At the trial's conclusion, the environment in the grave is changed in a way dependant on the trial's outcome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>For a Believer</th>
<th>For a Nonbeliever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The dead person is given:</td>
<td>Furnishings and clothing from <em>Jannah.</em></td>
<td>Furnishings from hell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A door opens from his grave to:</td>
<td><em>Jannah</em>; so he enjoys some of its bliss and fragrance.</td>
<td>Hell; so he suffers some of its heat and fierce wind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of his grave:</td>
<td>It is spread to the limit of his eyesight: 70×70 cubits.</td>
<td>The earth contracts on him causing his ribs to break.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting of the grave:</td>
<td>It is illuminated for him.</td>
<td>Darkness engulfs him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The grave is filled:</td>
<td>With greenery.</td>
<td>With fire.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^1\) *Al-Fatāwī* 4:284.
Chapter 6

COMPANION IN THE GRAVE

The dead person's deeds materialize before him in the form of a person who can speak, telling him, "This is the day that you were promised."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>For a Believer</th>
<th>For a Nonbeliever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His deeds take the form of:</td>
<td>A handsome companion with nice clothing and a pleasant smell.</td>
<td>A hideous companion with ugly clothing and a foul smell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidings carried by the compan-</td>
<td>&quot;I bring you glad tidings of Allah's acceptance, and of gardens with everlasting bliss.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I bring you bad tidings.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ion:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His response to the companion:</td>
<td>&quot;Glad tidings from Allah be to you too. Who are you? Your face is one that brings goodness.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Bad tidings from Allah be to you too. Who are you? Your face is one that brings evil.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer of the companion:</td>
<td>&quot;I am your good deeds. By Allah, I only knew you quick in obeying Allah, and slow in disobeying Him. May He reward you with the best.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I am your malicious deeds. By Allah, I only knew you slow in obeying Allah and quick in disobeying Him. May He repay you with the worst.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DOORS TO PARADISE AND HELL

Two openings appear to the dead person in his grave. One opening shows blissful and splendid views of paradise. The other shows gruesome views of destruction in hell.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>For a Believer</th>
<th>For a Nonbeliever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The angels point at the</td>
<td>&quot;Allah saved you from this — It could have been your abode had you disobeyed Him.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;This will be your abode in hell.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opening to hell and tell the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dead person:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After the Trial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>For a Believer</th>
<th>For a Nonbeliever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effect of this news on him:</td>
<td>It adds to his joy and happiness.</td>
<td>It adds to his regret and sorrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The angels point at the opening to paradise and tell him:</td>
<td>“This will be your abode in paradise.”</td>
<td>“Allāh deprived you from this — It could have been your abode had you obeyed and believed in Him.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect of this news on him:</td>
<td>It adds to his joy and happiness.</td>
<td>It adds to his regret and sorrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every morning and evening, he is again shown:</td>
<td>His future abode in Jannah.</td>
<td>His future abode in hell.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A NONBELIEVER’S PUNISHMENT

A nonbeliever’s punishment in the grave starts after his trial and extends until Resurrection. It is conducted by a special “executor”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executor in the grave:</th>
<th>A merciless, blind, deaf, and dumb beast is appointed to torture him.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The executor’s tool of torture:</td>
<td>The executor has an iron hammer that can turn mountains to dust. In some cases, it is a thick whip with a tip of fire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beating method:</td>
<td>The nonbeliever is hit between his ears a mighty blow that causes him to turn into dust. He is then restored as he was, and hit again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loud shrieks:</td>
<td>With every blow, he emits loud shrieks of agony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who can hear the shrieks?</td>
<td>His shrieks are heard by all creatures, except for humans and jinns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 6

The Body in al-Barzakh

A believer’s body is restored to its previous state of death, and it is put to a restful sleep, whereas a nonbeliever’s body continues to be punished until Resurrection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>For a Believer</th>
<th>For a Nonbeliever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The dead person’s wish when he sees what awaits him:</td>
<td>“My Lord, launch the Hour so I may rejoin my family and property.”</td>
<td>“My Lord! Do not bring the Hour (of Resurrection).”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His wish to convey the good news:</td>
<td>He says, “Allow me to inform my family.”</td>
<td>There is no good news to convey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to the wish:</td>
<td>The angels tell him, “Be tranquil, go to sleep.”</td>
<td>He suffers restlessly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manner of sleep in the grave:</td>
<td>He sleeps like a newlywed who expects to be awakened by the dearest person to him.</td>
<td>He sleeps like a person bitten by insects and snakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rest of the abode in al-barzakh:</td>
<td>He sleeps, and time passes as if it is but a short nap — until Resurrection.</td>
<td>His punishment goes on until Resurrection.</td>
</tr>
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The Soul in al-Barzakh

<table>
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<th>The Soul</th>
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<th>For a Nonbeliever</th>
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<td>Its form:</td>
<td>It is turned into a green bird.</td>
<td>No information.</td>
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<td>Where it stays until Resurrection:</td>
<td>It stays in ‘illiyyūn (in Jannah).</td>
<td>It stays in sījīn (a prison in the depth of earth).</td>
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<td>What it does:</td>
<td>It enjoys the company of other believers’ souls and eats from the fruits of Jannah.</td>
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CHAPTER 7

PROPHETS & MARTYRS IN AL-BARZAKH

Introduction

A believer's status in the hereafter depends on his level of righteousness in this life. The same is true regarding the life in al-barzakh. The prophets have the highest status; they are followed by the martyrs and other highly righteous individuals.

The bodies of the prophets are preserved from decay, and they live a special type of life in which they continuously pray to their Lord (الله). The martyrs' souls are with the other believers' souls in Jannah, within green birds, but are closer to Allāh, being immediately under the Throne. These are some of the barzakh situations that we discuss in this chapter. But first, we present the long hadīth of the Prophet's (ﷺ) Night Journey because it contains incidents of direct bearing on our subsequent discussions.

The Night Journey

Isrā' means travel-by-night, and it usually refers to the miraculous journey that the Prophet (ﷺ) undertook one night from Makkah to Jerusalem, and back. Mi'rāj means ascension, and it usually refers to the Prophet's (ﷺ) journey from Jerusalem up to the seven heavens, and back — all in the same night. Our discussion in this section involves these two segments: isrā' and mi'rāj.

Mālik Bin Ṣa'ṣā'ah, Anas Bin Mālik, and other companions (ﷺ), narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) described to them his Night Journey as follows:

"بَيْنَمَا أَنَا فِي الْحَطِيمَةِ (أَوُلْحَحْرِ) مُضْطَجِعًا، إِذَا أَتَيَيْنَا جِنِرِيلَ، فَشَقَّ مَا بَيْنَ لَغَرُّ نَحْرِي إِلَى شَعْرِي، فَاسْتَخْرَجَ قَلْبِي، فَغُسْلَهُ"
While I was lying down at al-Ḥatīm (or al-Ḥijr), Jibrīl came to me, cut my body open from my throat to my lower abdomen, extracted my heart, washed it with Zamzam water, and restored it into my body. Then he brought a golden washbowl full of wisdom and īmān, emptied it into my chest, and sealed the cut.

An animal was brought to me smaller than a mule and larger than a donkey, white in color, called al-Burāq. (It travels so fast that) it places each footstep at the end of its eyesight. I was placed on it, and I rode it (with Jibrīl) until I reached Bayt-ul-Maqdis (the Holy Masjid of Jerusalem). I tied my animal to the same ring to which the prophets before me tied (their animals). I entered the masjid and found the prophets (praying), some of them standing, some bowing, and some prostrating. The call for prayer was then made, and we lined up in rows waiting for someone to lead us. Jibrīl then held my hand and led

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1 Al-Ḥijr (the Enclosure) is a small area between al-Ka'bah and a semi-circular wall on its north side. This is also called al-Ḥatīm (the Demolished Section), because it was part of al-Ka'bah but was removed from it during the Prophet's youth.
me to the front, and I led them in prayer.

فانطلق بي جبريل حتى أتى السماء الدنيا، فقال لخازنها:

إفتح. قال: "من هذا؟" قال: "جبريل." قال: "ومن معك؟" قال: "محمد." قال: "وقد أرسل إلي؟" قال:

نعم. قال: "مرحبًا به، فنغم المجي جآء. ففتح.

جبريل then ascended with me until we reached the lowermost heaven. He ordered its gatekeeper, "Open." The gatekeeper asked, "Who is it?" He replied, "Jibril." He asked, "And who accompanies you?" He replied, "Muhammad." He asked, "Has he been summoned?" He replied, "Yes." The gatekeeper then said, "He is welcome. What an excellent visit this is!" And he opened the gate.

When I entered, I saw a man sitting, with a large number of (small) people on his right and on his left. When he looked toward his right side, he smiled; and when he looked toward his left side he wept. Jibril said, "This is your forefather, Ādam, so greet him with salām." I gave him salām, and he returned my salām and said, "Welcome, righteous son and righteous prophet." And he made a bountiful good supplication for me.

قال جبريل: "وهذه الأسودة عن يمينه وشماله نسم بنيه. فأهل

اليمين منهم أهل الجنة، والأسودة النبي عن شماله فأهل النار."
<Jibrīl explained, “The persons on his right and left are the souls of his offspring. Those on his right are the people of Jannah, and those on his left are the people of the Fire.”

فَانْطَلَّ قَبْيَ جَبَرِيلٍ حَتَّى أُنْئِي السَّمَاةِ الثَّانِيَةُ. فَقَالَ لِخَازِنَهَا:

"إِفْتَحُ. " قَالَ: “مَنْ هَذَا؟” قَالَ: "جَبَرِيلُ". قَالَ: "وَمُعَكَ؟" قَالَ: "مُحِمَّدٌ". قَالَ: "وَقَدْ أُرْسِلْ إِلَيْهِ؟" قَالَ:

"نَعَمْ". قَالَ: "مُرْجَبَا بِهِ، فَنَصْرُ الْمُحِيُّ جَاءَ". فَإِفْتَحَ.

<Jibrīl then ascended with me until we reached the second heaven. He ordered its gatekeeper, “Open.” The gatekeeper asked, “Who is it?” He replied, “Jibrīl.” He asked, “And who accompanies you?” He replied, “Muhammad.” He asked, “Has he been summoned?” He replied, “Yes.” The gatekeeper then said, “He is welcome. What an excellent visit this is!” And he opened the gate.

فَلَمَا خَلَصَتْ فَإِذَا يَحْيَى وَيُسَيِّبُ ، وَهُمَا أَبْنَا الْخَالِثِ، قَالَ جَبَرِيلُ:

"هَذَا يَحْيَى وَيُسَيِّبُ فَسَلِمْ عَلَيْهِمَا." فَسَلِمْتُ، فَرَدَّا، ثُمَّ قَالَا:

"مُرْجَبَا بِاللَّهِ الْصَّالِحِ وَاللَّهِ الصَّالِحِ". وَدَعَوْا لِي بِجَبِيرِ."

When I entered, I saw Yahyā (John) and Īsā (Jesus), who are cousins. Jibrīl said, “These are Yahyā and Īsā, so give them salām.” I gave them salām. They returned my salām and said, “Welcome, righteous brother and righteous prophet.” And they made a good supplication for me.

فَانْطَلَّ قَبْيَ جَبَرِيلٍ حَتَّى أُنْئِي السَّمَاةِ الثَّانِيَةُ. فَقَالَ لِخَازِنَهَا:

"إِفْتَحُ. " قَالَ: “مَنْ هَذَا؟” قَالَ: "جَبَرِيلُ". قَالَ: "وَمُعَكَ؟" قَالَ: "مُحِمَّدٌ". قَالَ: "وَقَدْ أُرْسِلْ إِلَيْهِ؟" قَالَ:
Jibrīl then ascended with me until we reached the third heaven. He ordered its gatekeeper, “Open.” The gatekeeper asked, “Who is it?” He replied, “Jibrīl.” He asked, “And who accompanies you?” He replied, “Muḥammad.” He asked, “Has he been summoned?” He replied, “Yes.” The gatekeeper then said, “He is welcome. What an excellent visit this is!” And he opened the gate.

When I entered I saw Yūsuf (Joseph), and I found that he has been granted a great portion of beauty. Jibrīl said, “This is Yūsuf, so give him salām.” I gave him salām, and he returned my salām and said, “Welcome, righteous brother and righteous prophet.” And he made a good supplication for me.

Jibrīl then ascended with me until we reached the fourth heaven. He ordered its gatekeeper, “Open.” The gatekeeper asked, “Who is it?” He replied, “Jibrīl.” He asked, “And who accompanies you?” He replied, “Muḥammad.” He asked, “Has he been summoned?” He replied, “Yes.” The gatekeeper then said, “He is welcome. What an excellent visit this is!”
And he opened the gate.

فَلَمَّا خَلَصَتْ قَادِئًا إِذْرِيسُ، قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ: "هَذَا إِذْرِيسُ فَسَلَّمْ عَلَيْهِ." "فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ، فَرَدَّهُ، ثُمَّ قَالُ: "مُرْحَبًا بِالْأَخَ الصَّالِحِ وَالْبَيِّ الصَّالِحِ، وَدَعَا لي بِحَيْرَتِنَا.

<When I entered, I saw Idrīs. Jibrīl said, “This is Idrīs, so give him salām.” I gave him salām, and he returned my salām and said, “Welcome, righteous brother and righteous prophet.” And he made a good supplication for me.>


<Jibrīl then ascended with me until we reached the fifth heaven. He ordered its gatekeeper, “Open.” The gatekeeper asked, “Who is it?” He replied, “Jibrīl.” He asked, “And who accompanies you?” He replied, “Muḥammad.” He asked, “Has he been summoned?” He replied, “Yes.” The gatekeeper then said, “He is welcome. What an excellent visit this is!” And he opened the gate.>

فَلَمَّا خَلَصَتْ قَادِئًا هَارُونَ، قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ: "هَذَا هَارُونُ فَسَلَّمْ عَلَيْهِ." "فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ، فَرَدَّهُ، ثُمَّ قَالُ: "مُرْحَبًا بِالْأَخَ الصَّالِحِ وَالْبَيِّ الصَّالِحِ، وَدَعَا لي بِحَيْرَتِنَا.

<When I entered I saw Hārūn (Aaron). Jibrīl said, “This is Hārūn, so give him salām.” I gave him salām, and he returned my salām and said,
"Welcome, righteous brother and righteous prophet." And he made a good supplication for me.

Jibrîl then ascended with me until we reached the sixth heaven. He ordered its gatekeeper, "Open." The gatekeeper asked, "Who is it?" He replied, "Jibrîl." He asked, "And who accompanies you?" He replied, "Muhammad." He asked, "Has he been summoned?" He replied, "Yes." The gatekeeper then said, "He is welcome. What an excellent visit this is!" And he opened the gate.

When I entered I saw Musâ (Moses). Jibrîl said, "This is Musâ, so give him salâm." I gave him salâm, and he returned my salâm and said, "Welcome, righteous brother and righteous prophet." And he made a good supplication for me.

After I passed on, Musâ wept. He was asked, "What makes you weep?" He said, "I weep because this young man (i.e., Muḥammad) was sent (by Allâh) after me, and yet, more of his nation will enter..."
Jannah than my nation.”


Jibrîl then ascended with me until we reached the seventh heaven. He ordered its gatekeeper, “Open.” The gatekeeper asked, “Who is it?” He replied, “Jibrîl.” He asked, “And who accompanies you?” He replied, “Muḥammad.” He asked, “Has he been summoned?” He replied, “Yes.” The gatekeeper then said, “He is welcome. What an excellent visit this is!” And he opened the gate.

فَلَمَّا خُلِصَتْ فَذَا رَجلٌ مُسْتَثْنَى ظَهَرهُ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ. قَالَ جَبِرِيلُ: “هَذَا أبُوك إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَسَلَّمُ عَلَيْهِ.” فَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ السَّلَامَ وَقَالَ: “مَرْحَبًا بَالْأَبِي الصَّالِحِ، وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ.” وَدَعَا لِي بِحَيْرٍ.

When I entered I saw Ibrâhîm, leaning against al-Bayt ul-Ma’mûr. Jibrîl said, “This is your father Ibrâhîm, so give him salām.” I gave him salām, and he responded to my salām and said, “Welcome, righteous son and righteous prophet.” And he made a good supplication for me.

فَسَلَّمَتْ جَبِرِيلُ، فَقَالَ: “هَذَا الْبَيْتُ الْمَعْمُورُ يُصُلَّى فِيهِ كُلّ يَوْمٍ، سَبْعَتِنَّ أَلْفٍ مَلَكٍ، إِذَا خَرَجُوا لَمْ يُعْدُوا إِلَيْهِ أَخْرُجٍ مَا عَلَّمُهُمْ.”

I asked Jibrîl (about al-Bayt ul-Ma’mûr), and he replied, “This is al-Bayt ul-Ma’mûr: seventy

1 Al-Bayt ul-Ma’mûr: The Much-Frequented House of Worship in heaven.
thousand angels enter it every day to pray, and once they leave, they never enter it again.”

«تمَّ أَنتِ بِنَفْعَانِ مِنَ الْحَمْرِ وَنَفْعَانِ مِنِّ الْمُخَّطَّةِ مِنَ عَسَّالٍ، فَأُخْذَتُ اللَّبَنَ، فَقَالَ: "هَيْيَ الفَطْرَةُ الَّتِي أَنتُ عَلَيْهَا وَأَشْتَكُ.

I was then offered a flask of wine, a flask of milk, and a flask of honey, and I took the milk. Jibrîl remarked, “This (milk) indicates the fitrah (pure nature) upon which you and your followers are.”

ثمُ رُفِعتُ إلَىِ سَدِرَةِ الْمُنْتَهِيِ فَإِذَا نَبْتُهَا مِثْلُ قَلَلِ هُجَرُ، وَإِذَا وَرَتُهَا مِثْلُ آذِنِ الْفِلَْلِ، قَالَ: "هَذِهِ سَدِرَةُ الْمُنْتَهِيِ", فَلَمَّا غَشِيْبَهَا مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ مَا غَشِيْبَتْ تَغْيِبَتْ، فَغَشِيْبَهَا آبَواؤُهَا لَا أَدْرِي مَا هِي، فَهَلْ أَحَدُ مِنْ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يَغْشِبَهَا مِنْ حَسَنِهَا.

I was then shown Sidrat ul-Muntahā. And behold! Its fruits were like the jars of Hajar, and its leaves as big as elephants’ ears. Jibrîl said, “This is Sidrat ul-Muntahā.” When it was enveloped by Allâh’s commands (coming from above), it transformed and acquired hues that I did not recognize, such that no one among Allâh’s creation would be able to describe its beauty.

وَإِذَا قَبْلَهَا أَصِلُّهَا أَرْبَعَةُ أَهِنَّاءِ: نَهْرٌ بَاطِنٌ وَنَهْرٌ طَاهِرٌ، فَقَلْتُ: "مَا هَذَا يَا جَبِيلَ؟" قَالَ: "أَمَّأَ الْبَاطِنٌ فَنَهْرٌ فِي الجَبِيلِ، وَأَمَّأَ الطَّاهِرٌ فَالْفَلْسِ وَالْفَرَاتِ.

1 Sidrat ul-Muntahā: The Lotus Tree at the Farthest Limit (of Paradise), beyond which only very few are allowed to pass.
2 Hajar: A village near al-Madinah where huge clay jars used to be made (from an-Nihâyah).
Near its base there issued four rivers: two concealed ones (i.e., they ran underground) and two visible ones. I asked, "What are these rivers, O Jibrīl?" He replied, "As for the two concealed ones, they are two rivers in Jannah; and as for the two visible ones, they are (the essence of) the Nile and the Euphrates."

I was then admitted into Jannah, and I found in it domes made from (single) pearls, and its soil was pure musk.

Then I was taken (further up) until I reached a level where I could hear the (angels') pens' squeaking (writing Allāh's decrees). Allāh then revealed to me what He revealed, commanding me to pray fifty times every day and night.

On my way back, I passed by Mūsā, who asked me, "What have you been commanded?" I replied, "I have been commanded to perform fifty prayers each day." Mūsā said, "Indeed, your followers cannot accomplish fifty prayers each day. Indeed, by Allāh,
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Prophets & Martyrs

I have dealt with the people before you, and I tried my utmost with the Children of Israel. Go back to your Lord, and ask him to lighten the burden for your *Ummah*.

«فرجعت فوضع عني عشراً، فرجعت إلى مُوسى فقال مثله.
فرجعت فوضع عني عشراً، فرجعت إلى مُوسى فقال مثله.
فرجعت فوضع عني عشراً، فرجعت إلى مُوسى فقال مثله.
فرجعت فوضع عني عشراً، فرجعت إلى مُوسى فقال مثله.»

I returned (to Allāh), and He took off ten (daily prayers) for me. I returned to Mūsā, and he repeated his advice to me.

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«فلَمَّا أَرَجَّهُ بَيْنَ رَبِّي وَتَجَالَكَ وَبَيِّنَيْ مُوسى، حَتَّى قَالَ:
يا مُحَمَّدٌ، إنَّهُنَّ خَمْسُ صَلَواتٍ كُلُّ يَوْمٍ وَلَيْلَةٍ، لِكُلِّ صَلاةٍ عَشْرَةٌ.
فَذَلِكَ خَمْسُ صَلاةٍ. وَمَنْ هُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ فَلَمْ يَعْطَلْهَا كَتَبَ لَهُ خَسْتَهُ.
فَإِنَّ عَمُّلَهَا كَتَبَ لَهُ عَشْرَةٌ. وَمَنْ هُمْ بِبَيْنَيْنِ فَلَمْ يَعْطَلْهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ بُكْبُعَةً
شَيَّئًا، فَإِنَّ عَمُّلَهَا كَتَبَ بَيْنَيْنَ وَاحِدَةً."»

Thus, I kept going back and forth between my Lord and Mūsā, until Allāh finally said, “O Muhammad, there will be five prayers in every day and night. Each prayer is multiplied ten times, making them
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(again) fifty.

Whoever intends to do a good deed but does not accomplish it, it is recorded for him as one good deed. If he accomplishes it, it is recorded for him as ten (good deeds). And whoever intends to do a bad deed but does not accomplish it, it is not recorded for him (as a bad deed). And if he accomplishes it, it is recorded for him as one bad deed.”

“When I returned to Musa, he again asked, “What have you been commanded?” I replied, “I have been commanded to perform five prayers each day.” He said, “Your Ummah cannot accomplish five prayers each day. I have dealt with the people before you, and have exerted my utmost effort with the Children of Israel. Go back to your Lord, and ask him to lighten the burden for your Ummah.” I said, “I have requested so much from my Lord that I now feel shy (to ask anymore from Him). I will just accept this and submit to Him.” As I left, I heard a caller announcing, “Indeed, I have passed My command (for the prayer), and have lightened the burden for My worshipers.””

1 This is combined from narrations recorded by al-Bukhari (349, 3207, 3342, 3887), Muslim (162-165), and others.
In what follows, we present a few notes regarding this hadith that are of relevance to our present discussion:

1. The Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) met all prophets in Jerusalem before his ascent to the heavens. This could either mean that he met their souls, or that Allah (ﷻ) brought their bodies together in one place as a merit for His last Messenger (ﷺ). Obviously, both possibilities are within Allah’s capability, keeping in mind that the laws of ghayb are different from the physical laws of our world.

There is an exception to this in the case of Ḥisā, because he is not dead yet: The Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) probably met him in person (i.e., body and soul) both in Jerusalem and in the second heaven.

2. On his way to Jerusalem, the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) was shown Mūsā praying in his grave. Anas (ra) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مُرَرْتُ عَلَى مُوسَى لِبَلَّةٍ أَسْرِي يُبِي عَنْدَكَ
الْكَتِبِ الْأَحْمَرِ، وَهُوَ قَانِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي فَقْهَرِهِ»

«On the night of Isrā’, I passed by Mūsā near the red hill (at the outskirts of Jerusalem). He was standing in prayer in his grave.»

After meeting Mūsā and the other prophets (rs) in Bayt-ul-Maqdis, the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) again met Mūsā and some other prophets in the seven heavens. This shows again that al-barzakh is subject to laws different from our world, and that the souls move there in modes beyond our perception.

3. Among the souls that the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) saw next to Ḥādīd (as) in the first heaven were souls of nonbelievers. We saw earlier that the souls of dead nonbelievers are never admitted to heaven. Therefore, those in the first heaven were probably the souls of his offspring who had not yet been born into the worldly life at

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1 Recorded by Muslim (2375), an-NasaT and others.
4. The prophets (مُسَیَّرین) are loving brothers of one another, and they share their concern for spreading Allah’s message with full dedication. Thus, Musa (ع) gave the Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) precious advice regarding the amount of worship people can bear every day.

In another instance during the same night, Ibrāhīm (ع) gave the Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) important advice. ‘Abdullāh Bin Mas‘ūd and other companions (ر) reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«On the night of *isrā‘*, I met Ibrāhīm, and he told me, “O Muhammad, convey my *salām* to your people, and tell them that *Jannah* has good soil and fresh water; but it is an empty flat land that may be cultivated by saying: *Subhān-Allāh, wa-ḥamdu lillāh, wa-lā ilāha illallāh, wallāhu akbar, wa-lā ḥawla wa-lā quwata illā billāh* — Exalted is Allāh; all praise be to Allāh; there is no (true) god except Allāh; Allāh is the Greatest; there is no power or might except from Allāh.”»

5. The Prophet’s (صلى الله عليه وسلم) shyness and submission to Allāh (ع) earned him and his *Ummah* a great favor from Allāh: that our daily prayers and other good deeds are multiplied ten times.

6. The positions of the prophets (مُسَیَّرین) in the heavens could be

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1 This interpretation was proposed by al-Ḥafīz Ibn Hajar (علیه السلام) in *Fath ul-Bāri* 1:598-599.

2 Recorded by at-Tirmithi, at-Tabarānī, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Sahih ul-Jāmi‘* nos. 3460, 5152, and *as-Sahihah* no. 105).
indicative of the level of righteousness (for some of them), special merits that Allah (ﷻ) rewards during the \textit{barzakh} period (for others), or a wisdom that we cannot encompass. Ibn Ḥajar () said:

"There is a difference (among the 'ulamā') regarding that each of the (specified) prophets was in a particular heaven. Some considered this a reflection of the difference in their levels (of virtue) ... Abū Jamrah said, 'The wisdom behind Ādam’s being in the first heaven is that he was the first prophet, the first forefather, and the origin (of humanity). Īsā was in the second heaven because he was the nearest in time to Muḥammad ... And Ibrāhīm’s position means that he is at the loftiest level — only excelled by the Beloved Prophet (ﻠlander).’" \textsuperscript{1}

The Prophets in \textit{al-Barzakh}

\textbf{The Prophets Are Spared from the Grave's Trial}

The Prophets (ﷻ) are the best and most righteous of people. Allah (ﷻ) chose them to carry His messages and convey them to humanity. Their high status before Allah and with the angels makes the grave’s trial inapplicable to them — especially since the trial centers around the people’s obedience to them,  

‘Ā’ishah (née ⲥⲁⲧⲧⲓ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

\begin{align*}
\text{"A’mā fī sīnān al-qabr, fī bi nūṣṭun, wu’ūn nūṣ-‘ālwun."}\end{align*}

<As for the trial of the grave: with me will you be tried, and about me will you be questioned.> \textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Fath ul-Bārī} 7:264.  
\textsuperscript{2} Recorded by Aḥmad, and verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (\textit{Ṣahīḥ ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib} no. 3557).
Preservation of the Prophets' Bodies

The earth does not consume the bodies of the prophets. Aws Bin Aws and Abū Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī (r) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إن من أفضل أيامكم يوم الجمعة؛ فيه خِيَّامَة، وفيه صيام، وفيه النَفْحَةَ.
وفي الصَعْقَة، فأكثر من الصَلاة فيه، فإن صلاتكم معروضة عليَّ.»

<Indeed, among the best of your days is the day of Jumu’ah. On it, Ādam was created, on it he died, and on it will be the blow (of the Horn) and the concussion (causing all people to die). Therefore, say plenty of salah upon me during it, because your salah will be presented to me (after my death).>

The Prophet (ﷺ) was asked, “How can our salah be presented to you when you will have decayed?” He replied:

«إن الله حرم على الأرض أن تأكل أجساد الأنبياء.»

<Indeed, Allāh prohibited for the earth to eat from the prophets’ bodies.> ¹

The Prophets Live a Special Life and Pray in Their Graves

The Prophets live and pray in their graves. Anas Bin Mālik (r) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«الأَنْبِيَاء أَحْيَا فِي قُبُورهُمْ، يُصَلُّون.»

<The prophets (ﷺ) are alive in their graves, and they pray (therein).> ²

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā’ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Sahihu Abi Dawud no. 962 and aṣ-Ṣaḥḥah no. 1527).
² Recorded by Abū Y’alā, al-Bazzār and others; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘ no. 2790 and aṣ-Ṣaḥḥah no. 621).
We emphasize again that the “life” of the prophets described in these hadiths is different from the life of this world. It is a ghaybī form of life, pertaining to al-barzakh, that does not comply with the physical laws of this world. Al-Albānī (),$^{*}$ said:

“We should know that the life that this hadith affirms for the prophets (ﷺ) is only a barzakh form of life and is nothing like the worldly life. We must believe in it without striking analogies for it, attempting to know its reality, or likening it to the worldly life.

A believer’s position should be to believe in this hadith without supplementing it with analogies and opinions — like what is done by some of the people of bid'ah who went as far as claiming that the Prophet’s (ﷺ) life in his grave is a real (worldly) life, and that he eats, drinks, and has intercourse with his wives! Rather, it is a barzakh form of life whose reality is not known except to Allāh.”

What distinguishes the prophets’ life in al-barzakh from the life of other believers is that the latter sleep in their graves, whereas the prophets do not. The prophets (ﷺ) are granted the ability and merit of praying constantly in their graves.

**Conveying the Ṣalāḥ**

We saw in Ibn Mas'ūd’s (ﷺ) hadith above that our ṣalāḥ upon the Prophet (ﷺ) is presented to him. Some may take this as proof that the Prophet (ﷺ) can directly hear those around him and even respond to their requests.

However, it is clear from that hadith that the ṣalāḥ is somehow conveyed to the Prophet (ﷺ). In fact, it is conveyed to him by an angel whom Allāh (ﷺ) appoints for this purpose. The angel stands by the Prophet’s (ﷺ) grave and informs him, by name, of each person who says the ṣalāḥ upon him. Abū Bakr (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

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1 Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah 2:190.
Chapter 7

Life in al-Barzakh

"أَكِّرِوا الصَّلَاةَ عَلَيْيَ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ رَكَبَ بِي مَلَكَ عِندَ قَبْرِي. فَإِذَا صَلَّى عَلَيْيَ رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَمْمِي قَالَ لِي ذِلِّكِ المَلَكُ: "يَا مُحَمَّدٌ، إِنَّ فَلَانَ بْنَ فَلَانٍ صَلَّى عَلَيْكَ السَّاَعَةُ.""

"Say the salāh upon me frequently, because Allāh has appointed for me an angel who stays by my grave. Whenever one of my followers says salāh upon me, that angel says to me, “O Muhammad, so-and-so has just said salāh upon you.””

We will discuss this issue further in Chapter 10 (p. 182).

Are there angels to convey the salāh of people upon other prophets (ṣ)? We have no information in this regard. Yet, this is possible, because the Prophet (ṣ) urged us to say salāh upon them as we do upon him. Wā’il Bin Hijr and Abū Hurayrah (ṣ) reported that the Prophet (ṣ) said:

«صلوا على أَنْبِياءِ اللَّهِ وَرَسْلِهِ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بَعْثَهُمْ كَمَا بَعْثَنِي.»

"Say salāh upon Allāh’s prophets and messengers, because Allāh sent them just as He has sent me." 2

THE PROPHETS’ SOULS ARE IN HEAVEN

We saw in the earlier hadīth of the Night Journey that the Prophet (ṣ) met several other prophets (ṣ) in the heavens.

Similarly, in Samurah’s (ṣ) long hadīth that we fully cite in Chapter 9, among what the Prophet (ṣ) saw in his dream was the following:

"فَأَنْتَ مِنْهَا فِيهَا إِلَى شَجَرَةٍ عَظِيمَةٍ، لَمْ أَرْ نَسْجِرَةً فَقُطُ أعْظَمَ مِنْهَا وَلَا«

1 Recorded by ad-Daylāmī, al-Bazzār, and others. Verified to be hasan by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīh ul-Jāmi‘ no. 1207 and as-Saḥīḥah no. 1530).

2 Recorded by al-Bayhaqī and others. Verified to be hasan by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīh-ul-Jāmi‘ 3781-3782 and Faḍl-us-Ṣalāh 42, 45).
We proceeded and came upon a garden dense with plantation, abundant with all sorts of spring flowers. Within it, we reached a great tree unmatched in size and beauty by any tree I ever saw. Near its base stood a man so tall that I could hardly see his head up in the sky."

The angels later explained to the Prophet (ﷺ):

"وَأُمَّةُ الرَّجُلُ الطَّولِ الَّذِي فِي الرَّوْضَةِ، فَيَلَأُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ."

"As for the tall man that you saw in the garden, he is Ibrāhīm." 1

In Abū Umāmah’s (KEEP) long hadith that we fully cite in Chapter 9, among what the Prophet (ﷺ) saw in his dream was the following:

"ثُمَّ أُشْرِفْتُ بِي شَرَفًا أَخْرَى، فَرَفَعَتُ رَأْسِي، فَذَا أَنَا يَنْتَخِرُ سَبْعًَا تَحْتَ العَرْضِ، قُلْتُ: "مَنُ هُؤُلَاءِ؟" قَالَانِ: "ذَاكُ أُبُوُّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، وَمَوسَى، وَعِيسِى؛ وَهُمْ يَنْتَظُرُونَكَ."

"Then we looked upon a higher ridge. Raising my head, I saw three men under the Throne. I asked, “Who are those?” They (the angels) replied, “That is your forefather, Ibrāhīm, and (the other two are) Mūsā and ʿĪsā. They are waiting for you.”" 2

We note again that, since ʿĪsā (אשת) has not died yet, the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) possibly met him in this dream in person (i.e., body and soul), and did not merely meet his soul.

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1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1386, 7047), Muslim (2275), and others.
2 Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah, Ibn Hibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (as-Sahīhah no. 3951 and Sahīh ut-Targhib no. 1005).
In particular, the last words of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in this life also indicated that his soul would soon join the “highest company” in heaven. 'Ā’ishah ( Osman) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say:

«إِنَّهُ لَمْ يَقْبِضْ نَبِيٌّ فَطُوْثُ حَتَّى يُرِى مَطْعَمَهُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، ثُمَّ يُهْيَرُ.»

«Indeed, never was a prophet taken (by death) before he was shown his place in Jannah and then given the choice (between life and death).» ¹

'Ā’ishah Osman also reported that shortly before the Prophet (ﷺ) passed away, he partially lost his voice while reciting:

«مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالْقَابِلِينَ وَالْمُتَّقِينَ وَالْصَّلِّيِّينَ، وَالْمُتَّقِينَ. وَحَسْنَ أَوْلَٰدِكَ رَبِّي أَنَّكَ تَرِيَّقًا.» النَّاسَة. ٦٩

«(I choose to be) with those whom Allah has favored of the prophets, the most truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions.» ²

'Ā’ishah added, “I knew then that he had been given the choice (between life and death).” ³

'Ā’ishah ( Osman) further reported that the last thing that the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said before he passed away was:

«اللَّهُمَّ آلَفُ قَبَلَ الأَعْلَى.»

«O Allah, I choose to join the highest company (in Jannah).» ⁴

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (4435, 4437, 4463, 4586, 6348, 6509), Muslim (2444), and others.
² An-Nisa’ 4:69.
³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (4435), Muslim (2444), and others.
⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (4436-4440, 4449, 4451, 4463, 6348, 6509-6510), Muslim (2444), and others.
We saw above that during al-barzakh, the prophets’ (ﷺ) physical bodies are in their graves, praying. As for their souls, the above hadīths indicate they are usually in heaven, enjoying the angels’ company and the nearness to Allāh’s Throne.

The Martyrs in al-Barzakh

A shahīd (martyr) is a believer who dies on the battlefield for Allāh’s cause. A believer is considered shahīd if he sacrifices his life solely and sincerely for the pleasure of Allāh (ﷻ). Furthermore, this sacrifice may not be done in a chaotic or suicidal manner. Rather, it may only be done following instructions or approval from the legitimate Muslim supreme commander or his representative.

We will see below that a shahīd is highly rewarded by Allāh (ﷻ). Out of His great mercy, Allāh (ﷻ) also gives some rewards similar to a shahīd’s to other specific individuals, such as Muslims who die while defending their property or honor. The discussion in this section, however, pertains only to martyrs who die on the battlefield.

Martyrs Are Spared the Grave’s Trial

One of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) companions reported that a man asked, “O Messenger of Allāh, why is it that all of the believers are tried in their graves, except a martyr?” He (ﷺ) replied:

«كَفَى بِبَأْرَاقَةِ السَّبُوفِ عَلَى رَأسِهِ فَتَنَا.»

(The flashing of swords over his head was a sufficient trial for him. )

Martyrs Are Spared the Grave’s Punishment

Al-Miqdām Bin Ma’d Yakrib, ‘Ubdah Bin aṣ-Ṣāmiṭ, and Qays al-Juthāmī (ﷺ), all narrated that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

1 Recorded by an-Nasa’ī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Aḥkām ul-Janaiz p. 50, Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’ no. 4483, and Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib no. 1380).
A shahīd is awarded seven favors by Allāh: he is forgiven with the first gush of blood, shown his position in Jannah, protected from the torment of the grave, saved from the Great Fear (on Judgment Day), adorned with the adornments of Īmān, married to al-Ḥūr ul-Īn (fair women of Jannah), and allowed to intercede for seventy of his relatives.  

Martyrs Enter Jannah Immediately After Death

Ānas (`) reported that a woman once came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said:

"I had a dream that I was taken out of al-Madīnah and into Jannah. I heard a great noise that caused Jannah to shake. I looked around (for its cause), and saw so-and-so, and so-and-so, and so-and-so (thus naming twelve men that Allāh’s Messenger had sent out on an expedition). They were brought forth, wearing dirty clothes, and blood was pouring from their necks. They

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1 Recorded by at-Tirmithī, Ibn Majah, and Ahmad; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Akhām ul-Janā'iz p. 50).
were then submerged into al-Baydakh (the Greatness) river, and came out of it with their faces shining like a full moon. They were offered dates on a golden tray. They ate as much as they wished, and I ate with them.”

A few days later, a messenger came back from that expedition and informed the Prophet (ﷺ) that the twelve men were killed. The Prophet (ﷺ) then summoned the woman and commanded her to repeat her dream, which she did, exactly naming the twelve men that were killed. ¹

THE MARTYRS’ SOULS ENJOY A SPECIAL PLACE IN JANNAH

From death until Resurrection, the martyrs enjoy a pleasant life in Jannah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Do not think of those who are killed in Allah’s way as dead. No! They are alive, with their Lord, and are sustained (by Him). They rejoice in what Allah has granted them of His favors; and they rejoice for the sake of those who have not yet joined them, whom they left behind (not yet martyred), that on them no fear will come, nor will they grieve. They rejoice in Allah’s blessings and favors, and that Allah does not waste the rewards of the believers.» ²

¹ Recorded by Ahmad, Ibn Hibban, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīhu Mawārid iz-Za’mān no. 1513).
² Āl 'Imrān 3:169-171.
The martyrs' souls are fit into bodies of green birds that are free to travel and enjoy the bliss of Jannah without limit. Ibn 'Abbās (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

<Indeed, when your brothers were killed in the battle of Uhud, Allāh (ﷻ) cast their souls into green birds that frequent the rivers of Jannah, eat of its fruits, and rest in lamps of gold hanging in the shadow of the Throne. When they found this pleasant food, drink, and repose, they said, “Who will inform our brothers, on our behalf, that we are alive in Jannah, and that we receive sustenance—so that they do not forsake fighting in Allāh’s way or turn back during the fighting?” Allāh (ﷻ) said, “I will inform them for you,” and He revealed the (above) āyāt.> ¹

Similarly, Ibn Mas'ūd (ﷺ) reported that the sahābah asked the Prophet (ﷺ) in regard to the above āyāt (3:169), and the Prophet (ﷺ) responded:

1 Recorded by Ahmad, Abū Dawūd and others. Verified to be hasan by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi` no. 5205 and Hidayat ur-Ruwāh no. 3776).
The martyrs’ souls are within green birds that reside in lanterns hanging from the Throne. They travel in Jannah wherever they wish, and then take abode in those lanterns. Their Lord looks upon them a look (of kindness) and says, “Do you desire anything?” They answer, “What would we desire when we can travel in Jannah wherever we wish?” He asks them this question three times, and, when they see that they will not be left alone until they give an answer, they say, “O Lord, we wish that our souls be returned into our (original) bodies so as to be killed again for Your sake.” Thus, when He finds that they have no (real) desire, they are left alone.  

Anas (4&b) reported that, during the battle of Badr, a young sahābi called Harithah Bin Surāqah (&>,) was killed by a stray arrow. Harithah’s mother, ar-Rubayyī’ (‘3&>), came to the Prophet (0) and said, “O Prophet of Allah, tell me about Harithah. If he is in Jannah, I will be patient; otherwise, I will show you how hard I can weep over him.” The Prophet (0) responded:

O Umm Harithah, do not be irrational! You think it is only one garden? There are numerous gardens in Jannah; and indeed, your son has reached the
uppermost paradise." ¹

**Some Martyrs Excel Others in Status**

In Abū Umāmah’s (ﷺ) long hadith that we fully cite in Chapter 9, among what the Prophet (ﷺ) saw in his dream was the following:

« ثم أشرفت بي شرفًا، فإذا أنا بنقر ثلاثة يشربون من خمر لهم، فقلت: "من هؤلاء؟" قالا: "سُلَيْلَة جَعْفَر، وزيد بن حارثة، وعبد الله بن رواحة." »

«Then we looked upon a high ridge and saw three men drinking (nonintoxicating) wine. I asked, “Who are those?” They replied, “Those are Ja’far, Zayd Bin Ḥārithah, and ‘Abdullāh Bin Ruwāhah.”» ²

Abū Hurayrah, Ibn ‘Umar, and other companions (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

« رأيت جعفر بن أبي طالب ملكاً يطير في الجنة مع الملائكة بجانحين. »

«I saw (in a dream) Ja’far Bin Abī Ṭālib (like) an angel flying in Jannah with two wings, alongside other angels.» ³

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¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2809, 3982, 6550, 6567).
² Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah, Ibn Hibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (as-Sahihah no. 3951 and Sahīh ut-Targhib no. 1005).
³ Recorded by at-Tirmīthī, al-Ḥakim, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Sahīh ut-Jāmi’ no. 3465 and as-Sahihah no. 1226).
CHAPTER 8
CLASSIFICATION OF PEOPLE IN AL-BARZAKH

In this chapter, we discuss the condition of different individuals in al-barzakh based on their level of obedience to Allah in this life.

In the previous chapters, we discussed the condition of prophets, martyrs, righteous believers, nonbelievers, and hypocrites. In what follows, we summarize those discussions and discuss other classes that we have not previously discussed.

The Righteous Believers

They Are Spared the Grave’s Punishment

We saw in the previous chapters that the prophets, the martyrs, and other righteous believers are spared from the punishment of the grave.

We also saw that the prophets and martyrs are not tried in their graves. Most other righteous believers, however, are tried — but they pass their trial easily and gracefully.

They Enjoy a Good Life in al-Barzakh

We saw that, during the barzakh period, the righteous believers’ bodies enjoy some of Jannah’s pleasures that reach them in their grave. As for their souls, they are inside birds that dwell in Jannah. At the same time, the souls may enjoy other pleasures in heaven.

In Abü Umāmah’s (ﷺ) long hadith that we fully cite in Chapter 9, among what the Prophet (ﷺ) saw in his dream was the following:

فإذا نحن برجال أحسن شئ، ووجهها، وأحسن لهوها، وأطهبه رهجا، كان وجوههم الطرقيس، قلته: من هولاء؟ قال: هولاء...
We came upon men with the most handsome faces, the best clothing, and the most fragrant aroma — their faces resembling pages of books (in clarity and whiteness). I asked, "Who are these?" They replied, "These are the most truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous."  

In Samurah's long hadith that we also fully cite in Chapter 9, among what the Prophet (ﷺ) saw in his dream was the following:

"And as for this town, it is the Garden of 'Adn (Eden) — residence of the martyrs."

Common Believers

We will see in the next chapter that many believers are punished in the grave for their sins. Depending on the magnitude of their sins, their punishment may either extend until Resurrection, or end sometime before then.

There are other believers whose good deeds were also marred with many sins, but whose good deeds outweighed their sins. Those, as well as the sinful believers whose punishment ends before Resurrection, will

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1 Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah, Ibn Hibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (as-Sāhihah no. 3951 and Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib no. 1005).

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1386, 7047), Muslim (2275), and others.
eventually be in a pleasant situation in al-barzakh.

In Samurah’s long hadith that we fully cite in Chapter 9, among what the Prophet (ﷺ) saw in his dream was the following:

"فَأَنْهَنَا إِلَى مَدِينَةٍ مَبَنَّيَّةٍ بَيْنَ ذَهَبٍ وَلَعْبِنٍ فِي بَيْتِهَا. لَمْ أَرْ قَطُّ أَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا،
فيها شُيَهُوُرٌ وَشَيَابٌ وَنساءٌ وَصِيَّيْانُ، فَأَنْهَنَا بَابَ المَدِينَةِ، فَأَنْسَفْنَا فَلْيَجِدَ لنا، فَدَخَلْنَاهُ، فَتَلْقَانَا رَجُلْانِ شَطِرُ مِنْ خَلْقِهِمْ كَأَحْسَنِ مَا أَنْتُ رَأَيْتَ، وَشَطِرُ مِنْهُمْ كَأَحْسَنِ مَا أَنْتُ رَأَيْتَ. قَالَ لَهُمْ: "أَذَهَبُوا فَقُطِعُوا فِي ذَلِكَ الْبُحْرَ". وَذَا هُوَ نَهْرٌ مُّعْتَرَضُ يَجِيرُ كَانَ مَاْهُ مَتَحُضُّ مِنْ البَيْضَاءِ. فَذَهَبُوا فَقُطِعُوا فِيهِ،
ثمْ مَنْشَأُ إِلَيْنَا قَدْ ذَهَبَ ذَلِكَ الْبُحْرُ عَنْهُمْ فَأَصِبَّنَا فِي أَحْسَنِ صَوْرَةٍ."

"We came upon a town that was built with gold and silver bricks. I never saw a town more beautiful. Inside, there were old and young men, and women and children. We stood at the town’s gate, requested admission, and were admitted. When we entered, we were met by men with one half of their faces wonderful to behold, and the other half horrible to behold. My two companions said to them, “Go and plunge into that river.” A river was flowing across, whose water was milk-white in color. They plunged into it, and then returned to us, their ugliness completely gone, so they became most handsome."

The angels then explained to the Prophet (ﷺ):

"وَالدَّارُ الْأُوْلِيَ الَّتِي دَخَلْتُ دَارَ عَامَّةُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، مَوْلَى الْذِّينَ
كانوا شَطِرُ مِنْهُمْ حَسَنُ، وَشَطِرُ مِنْهُمْ قَبيْحُ. فَإِنَّهُمْ قُومُ خَلَطُوا
عَمَّا صَالِحًا وَأَخَرَّ سَيِّئًا، فَيَجَازُ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ.""

"As for the first town, it is the residence of the common believers. And the people who were half beautiful and half ugly are people who mix good
In Abū Umāmah’s (ﷺ) long hadith that we fully cite in Chapter 9, among what the Prophet (ﷺ) saw in his dream was the following:

"تَحَيَّنَ بِرَجَالٍ يَنامُونَ بِظَلَالِ الشَّجَرِ، قَلْتُ: "مَنْ هُؤُلَاءِ؟" قَالَ: "هُؤُلَاءِ مَوْتُى الْمُسْلِمِينَ.""

“We moved on, until we came upon men sleeping under the shade of trees. I asked, “Who are these?” They replied, “These are the dead Muslims.”” ²

The dead believers sleep under trees, indicating the blissful rest they enjoy in their graves after their suffering in the worldly life.

**Believers Who Die in Specific Conditions**

From the previous chapters, it is apparent that the best protection against punishment in the grave is: holding a true belief in Allāh and avoiding the major sins. In this section, we additionally present four specific acts or situations that result in protection from the graves’ trial and/or punishment.

**Believers Who Die While Guarding for Allāh’s Cause**

A Muslim who dies while standing guard for Allāh’s cause is spared from both the grave’s trial and punishment. Salmān (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"رِبَاطُ يَوْمٍ وَلَيْلَةٍ خَيْرٌ مِنْ صِيَامٍ شَهْرٍ وَقِيامٍ، وَإِنَّ مَاتَ جَرِيَ عَلَيْهِ عَمَلُ الَّذِي كَانَ يَعْمَلُهُ، وَأَجِيِّرَ عَلَيْهِ رَفْقَةً. وَأَنَّهُ الْفَتَنَانِ.”

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1386, 7047), Muslim (2275), and others.

2 Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah, Ibn Ḥibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (ṣaḥīḥa no. 3951 and ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib no. 1005).
<Standing guard (on the battle ground) for one day and night is better than fasting the days and praying the nights of an entire month. And if he (the guard) dies, his (good) deeds that he used to do continue to accumulate for him (until Judgment Day), he is provided with provisions (from Jannah), and he is saved from the interrogator (angels in the grave).> ¹

Fudālah Bin ‘Ubayd (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«كل ميت يحتمم على عمله، إلا الذي مات مرتبتا في سبيل الله»

فإن ينمي له عمله إلى يوم القيامة، ويأمن في عينتهم القبر.

«Every person's deeds are sealed when he dies, except for the one who dies while guarding in Allah’s way: his (good) deeds continue to be augmented for him until Resurrection Day, and he is secured from the grave's trial.» ²

BELIEVERS WHO DIE FROM AN ABDOMINAL DISEASE

An abdominal disease normally brings extreme pain. If Allah (ﷻ) afflicts a believer with this before death, he would spare him the grave's punishment. Sulaymān Bin Ṣard and Khālid Bin ‘Arfaṭah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«من قتله بطنه لم يعد في قبره»

«He who is killed by (disease in) his abdomen will not be tortured in his grave.» ³

¹ Recorded by Muslim (1913), at-Tirmithi, and others.
² Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithi, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Sahih al-Jāmī no. 4562 and Sahih ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib no. 1218).
Believers Who Regularly Recite Sūrat ul-Mulk

A Muslim who regularly recites Sūrat-ul-Mulk (67) ¹ will be protected from the grave's punishment. 'Abdullāh Bin Mas'ūd (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«سورة تبارك هي المانعة من عذاب القبر.»

<Sūratu Tabārak is the protector from the torment of the grave.> ²

Believers Who Die on Friday

A true believer who dies on Friday is protected from the grave's trial. 'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«ما من مسلم يموت يوم الجماعة، أو لييلة الجماعة إلا وقى الله فتنة القبر.»

<When a Muslim dies on the day or eve of Jumu'ah, Allāh protects him from the trial of the grave.> ³

Those Who Never Received a Message

There are people who do not follow Allāh's guidance because they were never exposed to Allāh's messages. They are commonly described as "ahl-ul-fatrah", which means: people who lived during absence (of messegers). Allāh (ﷻ), out of His great mercy and justice, would not punish "ahl-ul-fatrah" for their ignorance. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

ولا تبَرَّر وازْرَةً وَرَزَّ أُحْرَى، وَمَا كَتَبَ مُعَذَّبَينَ حَتَّى

¹ This is also called Sūratu Tabārak because it starts with the word "Tabārak".
² Recorded by al-Ḥākim, Abū ash-Shaykh, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmī' no. 3643 and al-Ṣaḥīḥah no. 1140).
³ Recorded by Ahmad, at-Tabarānī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Aḥkām ul-Janā'īz p. 50, Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmī' no. 5773, Ḥidayat ur-Ruwāḥ no. 1316, and Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib no. 3562).
Life in al-Barzakh

149 Classes of People in al-Barzakh

«No bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another, and never would We punish (a people) until We first send a messenger.»

Allāh (ﷻ) will subject such people to a trial in the next life comparable to the trials that other people face in this life. If they exhibit obedience to Him, He will then admit them to Jannah.

Anas and other companions (رضي الله عنهم) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"إني كنت أبعث إلى عبادي رسولًا من أنفسهم، واتبعوه." - Fiqh of the Prophet (ﷺ) - "Indeed, I will send to you a messenger from among yourselves, so follow him."

"أين ندخلكما ومنها نفر؟" - Fiqh of the Prophet (ﷺ) - "Where are you going, and from where are you fleeing?"

"فأدخل هؤلاء الجنة، وثغولاً النار." - Fiqh of the Prophet (ﷺ) - "Enter this from which we always used to run away!"

1 Al-Isra 17:15.
Allāh will tell them, “(If you dare to disobey Me now) you would have shown even more denial and disobedience to My messengers.” And as for those who will be destined to happiness, they will go forth and rush to enter that fire. Thus, they will enter Jannah, whereas the others will enter Hell.  

What is the situation of those people during the barzakh period? This has not been disclosed to us in authentic texts. Allāh (ﷻ) may punish them according to what He knows of their future truth, or keep them in a “dormant state” or some other condition until the time for their trial — and He (ﷻ) knows best.

Children

We saw above that among those who were never exposed to Allāh’s true messages are children who die before puberty. Those may be further divided into three classes:

1. Children from Muslim parents.
2. Children from non-Muslim parents who will pass Allāh’s trial.
3. Children from non-Muslim parents who will fail Allāh’s trial.

We discuss these three classes in the following.

1. Children from Muslim Parents

Children of Muslims who die before puberty are not punished in al-Barzakh. Rather, they enjoy a free and playful period of living that conforms with their childhood.

In Abū Umāmah’s (ﷺ) long hadith that we fully cite in the next chapter, among what the Prophet (ﷺ) saw in his dream was the following:

"فإذا نحنُ يعامرونَ وَيَأْذَنُونَ يَلْعَبُونَ بَيْنَ نَهْرِينَ"

1 Recorded by Abū Ya’lā, al-Baghawi, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (as-Sahihah nos. 1434, 2468).
We saw young boys and girls playing between two rivers. I asked, "Who are these?" They replied, "These are the believers' offspring (who die before puberty)." ¹

Thus, the Muslims' children (i.e., their souls) temporarily play in Jannah until Resurrection — at which time they will be readmitted into it permanently. Abū Hurayrah (radi) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

اَطفَالُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فِي جَبَلٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، يَكَفُّلُهُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمُ

وَسَارَهُ، حَتَّى يُدْفَعُوهُمْ إِلَى أبَاهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

The Muslims' children are upon a mountain in Jannah, under custody of Ibrāhīm and Sārah, until they return them to their parents on Resurrection Day.²

In particular, the Prophet's (ﷺ) son who died as an infant continues to nurse in Jannah. Anas reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said when his son Ibrāhīm died:

إِنْ إِبْرَاهِيمُ أَبِي، وَأَنَّهُ مَاتَ فِي النَّداْيِ، وَإِنَّ لَهُ لِلضَّرْبِينَ تَكْمِيلًا رَضَايَةً فِي الْجَنَّةِ.

Indeed, Ibrāhīm is my son; and indeed, he died while still nursing; and indeed, he has two nursing women who continue suckling him in Jannah.³

Abū Hurayrah (radi) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

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¹ Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah (no. 1986), Ibn Hibbān, al-Bayhaqī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Àlānî (ṣaḥīḥ no. 3951, ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib no. 1005, and at-Ta'liqät ul-Àisān no. 7448).

² Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Nu'aym, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Àlānî (ṣaḥīḥ no. 1467 and ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi' no. 1023).

³ Recorded by Muslim (2316), Abū Dāwūd, and others.
Their (the Muslims') young ones (who die) are the free roamers of Jannah. When one of them meets its parent, it holds on to the edge of his garment or hand like I hold on to your garment, and does not desist until Allah admits them both into Jannah.  

Ibn Kathir (ﷺ) said:

"It should be known that this difference (regarding children's destination) is specific to the pagan's children. As for the believers' children, there is no difference (among the 'ulama') that they will be in Jannah. This (consensus) was reported from Imam Ahmad by the Judge Abü Ya'la."  

What is it that gives the Muslims' children this special merit? It is possible that Allah (ﷻ), with His absolute wisdom and knowledge, designated that only children inclined toward goodness would be born to Muslim parents and die before puberty — and He (ﷻ) knows best.

2. CHILDREN WHO WILL PASS ALLAH'S TRIAL

In Samurah's (ﷺ) long hadith that we fully cite in the next chapter, among what the Prophet (ﷺ) saw in his dream was the following:

1 Recorded by Muslim and Ahmad.
2 Tafsir-ul-Qur'an-il-A'im 17:15.
<We came upon a garden dense with plantation, abundant with all sorts of spring flowers. Within it, we reached a great tree, and I have never seen a tree larger or more beautiful. Near its base, there stood a man so tall that I could hardly see his head up in the sky. Around him was the greatest number of children I ever saw.>

The angels then explained to the Prophet (ﷺ):

"وَأَمَّامَ الرَّجُلِ الطَّويلِ الَّذِي فِي الرَّوْضَةِ، قَالَتْهُ إِبْرَاهِيمٌ: وَأَمَّامَ الرِّلَدَانِ الَّذِينَ حَرَلَهُ، فَكُلُّ مُولُودٍ مَّاتٍ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ."  

"As for the tall man that you saw in the garden, he is Ibrahim (𢀔), and the children around him are all the children who die upon fitrah (before puberty)." (Here, some of the companions interjected, "O Messenger of Allah, does this include the children of pagans?" He (ﷺ) replied, «(Yes,) the children of the pagans as well!») ¹

This indicates that all children who die before puberty dwell in a temporary garden during barzakh. On Judgment Day, the Muslims' children will enter Jannah, whereas the other children will be tried to determine their final abode.

3. CHILDREN WHO WILL FAIL ALLAH'S TRIAL.

According to some 'ulamā', however, only children from non-Muslim parents who, according to Allah's knowledge, will pass Allah's trial dwell in that temporary garden during al-barzakh. Ibn Kathīr (𢀔) said:

"Whoever Allah knows that he will obey Him (during the Judgment Day's trial), he designates his soul during al-barzakh to be with Ibrahim and the Muslims'" ¹

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1386, 7047), Muslim (2275), and others.
children who died upon (pure) fitra. And whoever Allah knows that he will disobey Him, his status (during al-barzakh) will be decided by Allah, and on Resurrection Day he will be in the Fire.” ¹

Summary

The following table summarizes the status of different classes of individuals during al-barzakh. The gray boxes indicate lack of authentic information in regard to those cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individuals in al-Barzakh</th>
<th>Tried?</th>
<th>Punished?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prophets</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martyrs</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Righteous believers</td>
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<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believers who die from an abdominal disease</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believers who regularly recite Surat-ul-Mulk</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believers whose good deeds outweigh their bad ones</td>
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<td>Some of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believers with major sins</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believers who die on Friday or while guarding Muslims</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonbelievers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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<td>Muslims’ children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Muslims’ children who will pass Allah’s trial</td>
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<td>Non-Muslims’ children who will fail Allah’s trial</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ahl-ul-fatrah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Tafsir-ul-Qur’an-il-Azîm 17:15.
In this chapter, we discuss sins that lead to punishment in *al-barzakh*. Many of these sins were included in two long dreams that the Prophet (ﷺ) saw. Since the dreams of prophets are a form of revelation from Allah, they are all as truthful as having been seen during wakefulness.

**Two Important Dreams of the Prophet**

**Dream Reported by Samurah**

Samurah Bin Jundub (ﷺ) reported that one day, after the morning prayer, the Prophet (ﷺ) told his companions:

> "رأيت الليل مَرَّتَينَ أتياني فأخذني بيدي، وقال لي: "إنْطَلَقْ
> فانطلقت معهما، وأمَرَاني إِلَى أرض مُقَدَّسةً،
> <Last night I saw (in a dream) two men (or angels) come to me, hold me by both hands, and say, “Come with us.” I went with them, and they took me to a sacred land."

> "وَإِنَا أَتِيْنا عَلَى رَجُلٍ مُضْطَجِعٍ، وَإِذَا أَخْرِ قَالْتُ عَلَيْهِ بِصَحْرَةٍ، وَإِذَا
> هَوَّ بِهْوِيْ بِالصَّحْرَةِ إِلَّا رَاسِه، فِيْنُّعُ رَأسِه، فِيْنُّعُ هَذِهُ الحَجْرِ وَهَدِناً،
> فِيْنُّعُ الحَجْرِ، فِيْنُّعُ، فَلَن يَزْجَعُ إِلَيْهِ حَتَّى يَصْحَحْ رَأسُه كَمَا كَانَ."

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1 This is detailed in the Author’s book: “The Dreamer’s Handbook, Sleep Etiquettes & Dream Interpretation”.

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We came upon a man lying flat on his back (on the ground). Another man, standing over him with a boulder in his hand, would hurl the boulder upon his head, causing his head to split open. The boulder would then roll away, and the standing man would go and retrieve it. By the time he returned to him, his head would be restored as it was before, and he would hurl the boulder again at him. I said to my companions, “May Allāh be exalted! Who are these two?” They said, “Come, come!”

We proceeded until we came upon a man lying on his back. Another man, standing over him with an iron hook, would approach him from one side and rip open (with the hook) his face from the corner of the mouth to the back of the head, from the nose to the back of the head, and from the eye to the back of the head. He would then move to the other side and do what he did on the first side. As soon as he finished with that side, the first side would be restored as it was before, and he would move to it and do as he did the first time. I said, “May Allāh be exalted! Who are these two?” They
said, “Come, come!”

فَأَنْطَلَقَنا، فَأَتَيْنَا عَلَى مِثْلِ الْبَتْحُورِ فَإِذَا فِيهِ لَعْظَةُ وَأَصْوَاتُ،
فَأَطْلَعْنَا فِيهِ، فَإِذَا فِيهِ رَجُلٌ وَنَسْاءٌ عَرَأَةً، وَإِذَا هُمْ يَأْتِيهمُ لَهَبُ
مِنْ أَسْفَلِ مِنْهُمْ، فَإِذَا أَنْهَوْهُ ذَلِكَ الْلَهْبُ ضَوْضُوْاً. قَلَتْ لِهَمَا:
«ما هُوَ؟» قَالَ لَيْ: "أَنْطَلِقْ، أَنْطَلِقْ.

(3) We proceeded until we came upon a hole that resembled a baking pit, narrow at the top and wide at the bottom. Babbling and voices were issuing from it. We looked in and saw naked men and women. In the pit’s bottom was a raging fire; whenever it flared up, they screamed and rose with it until they almost overflowed from the pit. As it subsided, they returned (to the bottom). I said, “Who are these?” They said, “Come, come!”

فَأَنْطَلَقَنا، فَأَتَيْنَا عَلَى نَهْرٍ أَحْمَرُ مِثْلَ الدَّمِ، وَإِذَا فِي النَّهْرِ رَجُلٌ
يَسْبُحُ. وَإِذَا أَعْلَى شَطْ النَّهْرِ رَجُلٌ قَدْ جَمَعَ عَنْدَهُ حِجَارَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ،
وَإِذَا ذَلِكَ السَّابِحُ كُلُّمَا أَرَادَ أن يَخْرُجَ يَأْتِي ذَلِكَ الْلَهْبُ الَّذِي قَدْ جَمَعُ
عَنْدَهُ الْحِجَارَةَ، فَيَفْغَرُ لَهُ فَاهُ، فَيُقْلِمُهُ حَجَرًا، وَيَفْرُدُهُ حَيْثُ كَانَ،
فَيَنْطَلِقُ ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ إِلَيْهِ، كُلُّمَا رَجَعَ إِلَيْهِ فَغَرَّ لَهُ فَاهُ فَالْقَمَهُ حَجَرًا.
قَلَتْ لِهَمَا: "ما هُوَ؟" قَالَ لَيْ: "أَنْطَلِقْ، أَنْطَلِقْ.

(3) We proceeded until we reached a river of blood, with a man swimming in its center. On the bank of the river there was a man who had piled around him many stones. The man in the river would swim for a while, and then approach the man at the shore, trying to exit from the river. He would open his mouth, and the man at the shore would throw a stone into it, causing him to return (to the center of
the river). Every time he came back, making an effort to exit, the man at the shore would throw a rock into his mouth, forcing him to fall back. I said, “Who are these two?” They said, “Come, come!”

We proceeded until we came upon a garden dense with plantation, abundant with all sorts of spring flowers. Within it, we reached a great tree, and I never saw a tree larger or more beautiful. Near its base stood a man so tall that I could hardly see his head up in the sky. Around him was the greatest number of children I ever saw. I said, “Who is this, and who are these?” They said, “Come, come!”

We proceeded until, near the tree, we came upon a man with the most hateful appearance in any man. Before him was a fire, which he was kindling and trotting around. I said to them, “Who is this?” They said, “Come, come!”
They instructed me, “Climb the tree,” and we ascended it, until we came upon a town that was built with gold and silver bricks. I never saw a town more beautiful; and inside it were old and young men, women, and children. We requested admission at the town’s gate, and were admitted. When we entered, we were met by men with one half of their faces wonderful to behold, and the other half horrible to behold. My two companions said to them, “Go and plunge into that river.” A river was flowing across, whose water was milk-white in color. They plunged into it, and then returned to us — their ugliness completely gone, and they became most handsome.

I said to my companions, “This night, you took me to different places, and I saw many wonders. What
is all this that I saw?” They said, “We will now tell you: —>

أَمَّا الْرِّجْلُ الْأَوَّلُ الَّذِي أَتَيْتُ عَلَيْهِ يُتْلَعِّبُ رَأْسَهُ بِالْحَجْرِ، فَإِنَّهُ الْرِّجْلُ عَلَّمَهُ الْلَّهُ الْقُرْآنَ. (فَرْقَضَةً) فَنَامَ عَنْهُ بِالدَّيْلِ، وَلَمْ يَعْمَلْ بِهِ فِي النَّهْارِ، وَنَامَ عَنْ الصَّلاةِ المَكْتُوبَةِ. يُعْمَلُ بِهِ إِلَى يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

1 As for the first man whom you saw his head being smashed with a boulder: he is a man whom Allâh teaches the (knowledge of) Qur’ân, but he rejects it, abandoning it by night and not implementing it by day. He (also) sleeps through the times of the prescribed prayers. He will continue to be tortured in this way until Resurrection Day.

وَأَمَّا الْرِّجْلُ الَّذِي أَتَيْتُ عَلَيْهِ يُتْلَعِّبُ، فِي قَفَاهُ وَمِنْ ثَرَّةِ قَفَاةِ إِلَى قَفَاةٍ وَمِنْ ثَرَّةِ قَفَاةٍ إِلَى قَفَاةٍ، فَإِنَّهُ الْرِّجْلُ يَغْدُرُ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ فِي كِذِبْ بِالْكَذِبَةِ تَبْلُغُ الْآفَاقَ. فَيُصْنَعُ بِهِ إِلَى يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

2 As for the man whom you saw with his mouth, nose, and eyes being ripped open to the back of his head, he is a liar who leaves his house in the morning to spread lies which are carried from him in all directions. He will continue to be tortured in this way until Resurrection Day.

وَأَمَّا الرِّجْلُ الَّذِي أَتَيْتُ عَلَيْهِ يُتْلَعِّبُ، فِي قَفَاةٍ وَمِنْ ثَرَّةِ قَفَاةٍ إِلَى قَفَاةٍ وَمِنْ ثَرَّةِ قَفَاةٍ إِلَى قَفَاةٍ، فَإِنَّهُ الْرِّجْلُ يَغْدُرُ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ فِي كِذِبْ بِالْكَذِبَةِ تَبْلُغُ الْآفَاقَ. فَيُصْنَعُ بِهِ إِلَى يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

3 As for the naked men and women who were in the pit: they are male and female fornicators.

وَأَمَّا الرِّجْلُ الَّذِي أَتَيْتُ عَلَيْهِ يُتْلَعِّبُ، فِي قَفَاةٍ وَمِنْ ثَرَّةِ قَفَاةٍ إِلَى قَفَاةٍ وَمِنْ ثَرَّةِ قَفَاةٍ إِلَى قَفَاةٍ، فَإِنَّهُ الْرِّجْلُ يَغْدُرُ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ فِي كِذِبْ بِالْكَذِبَةِ تَبْلُغُ الْآفَاقَ. فَيُصْنَعُ بِهِ إِلَى يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

4 As for the man whom you saw swimming in the (blood) river and being fed stones, he is a person
who eats *ribā* (usury).»

«وأما الرجل الطويل الذي في الروضة، فإنه إبراهيم (ت الله)،»

«وأما الولدان الذين حوله، فكل مولود مات على العظمة.»

<5 As for the tall man that you saw in the garden, he is Ibrāhīm (ص), and the children around him are all the children who die (before puberty) upon *fitrah.*

(Here, some of the companions interjected, “O Messenger of Allāh, does this include the children of pagans?” He (ص) replied, «(Yes,) the children of the pagans as well.)»

«وأما الرجل الكريم المرأة الذي عنى الدار يخشيه ويسعى حولها. فإنه مالك خازن جهنم.»

<6 As for the man with an extremely ugly appearance who was by the fire, kindling it and running around it: he is Mālik, the Guardian of Jāhannam (hell).»

«والدار الأولى التي دخلت دار عامَة الصوميين، والقوم الذين كانوا شطر منهم حسن وشطر منهم حق، فإنهم قوم خلطوا عملا صالحا وأخرين سيئا، تجاوز الله عنهم.»

<7 As for the first town, it is the residence of the common believers. And the people who were half beautiful and half ugly are people who mix good deeds with evil deeds and Allāh forgives them.»

«وأما هذه الدار، فدار الشهداء (جنَّة عدن). وأنا جبريل، وهذا ميكانيل.»

<8 And as for this town, it is the Garden of *ʿAdn* (Eden) — residence of the *shuhada* (martyrs). And
I am Jibril, and this is Mikail.'»

Then they told me, “Look above you.” I raised my eyes and saw, far above me, a palace that resembled a white cloud. They said, “That is your residence.” I said to them, “May Allah bless you; allow me to enter my residence.” They said, “Not yet! There is a portion of your life which you have not yet completed; when you complete it, you will surely enter your residence.”» ¹

We learn from this hadith that among the major sins that lead to punishment in al-barzakh are:

- Missing the ordained prayers
- Rejecting the Qur'an and neglecting its teachings
- Committing zinā
- Dealing with ribā
- Spreading lies.

**Dream Reported by Abū Umāmah**

Abū Umāmah al-Bāhili (475) reported that, one morning, Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said to his companions:

> إِنِّي رَأِيتُ رُوْمَياَ هِيَ حَقًّا، فَأُعَفِّلُهَا. بَيِّنَّتَمَا أَنَا نَابِيًّا إِذَا أَنَايَ رَجُلًا، فَأُحْدَى بِضَبْعِي، فَأَتِيَ بِجِبَالٍ وَعَرْفًا طَوِيلًا. فَقَالُوا: أَصَعْدَةً. فَقَلَتُ: ¹

¹ This is combined from reports by al-Bukhārī (1386 & 7047), and is also recorded by Muslim (2275), and others.
I had (this night) a true dream, so listen to it. While I was sleeping, two men (angels) came to me, held me by my upper arms, and took me to a rocky and high mountain. They said, "Climb it." I said, "I cannot." They said, "We will make it easy for you." So I started climbing, and every time I raised my foot, I placed it on a step. We finally reached a level area high up in the mountain.

We moved along, until we saw smoke and heard loud howling. I asked, "What is this, and what are these cries?" They replied, "This is the howling of the people of the Fire. And this smoke comes from hell, so stay away from it."

We moved on, until we came upon men and women suspended (upside-down) from their Achilles’ tendons (on the back of the heels), their cheeks cut and bleeding. I asked, "Who are these?" They replied, "These are the ones who say that which they do not know (in another report: those who do not fulfill what they promise)."
We moved on, until we came upon men and women whose eyes and ears were burnt with a hot iron. I asked, "Who are these?" They replied, "These are the ones who claim to see that which they did not, and claim to hear that which they did not."

We moved on, until we came upon men and women suspended upside-down from their Achilles' tendons, licking a little bit of water mixed with dark and filthy clay (on the ground). I asked, "Who are these?" They replied, "These are the ones who break their fast before it is permissible."

We moved on, until we came upon women suspended upside-down from their Achilles' tendons, snakes biting at their breasts. I asked, "Who are these?" They replied, "These are the women who deny their children their milk."
We moved on, until we came upon men and women with the ugliest appearance, the ugliest clothing, and the most foul stench — their stench like that of gutters. I asked, “Who are these?” They replied, “These are the male and female fornicators.”

We moved on, until we came upon corpses most horribly swollen, with the most foul stench and the most hideous appearance. I asked, “Who are these?” They replied, “These are the pagans killed (during battles with the Muslims).”

We moved on, until we came upon men sleeping under the shade of trees. I asked, “Who are these?” They replied, “These are the dead Muslims.”

We moved on until I saw young boys and girls playing between two rivers. I asked, “Who are these?” They replied, “These are the believers’ offspring (who die before puberty).”

We moved on, until we came upon men with the
most handsome faces, the best clothing, and the most fragrant aroma — their faces resembling pages of books (in clarity and whiteness). I asked, “Who are these?” They replied, “These are the most truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous.”

<Then we looked upon a high ridge and saw three men drinking (nonintoxicating) wine. I asked, “Who are these?” They replied, “These are Ja‘far, Zayd Bin Ḥāríthah, and ‘Abdullāh Bin Ruwāḥah (the three martyred commanders in the battle of Mu‘tah).” I moved in their direction, and they (these three men) told me, “(The most supreme status) has surely been awarded to you; it has surely been awarded to you.”>

<Then we looked upon a higher ridge. Raising my head, I saw three men under the Throne. I asked, “Who are those?” They replied, “That is your forefather, Ibrāhīm, and (the other two are) Mūsā and Īsā. They are waiting for you.”> ¹

We learn from this hadith that among the major sins that lead to

¹ This is combined from narrations recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah (no. 1986), Ibn Hibbān, al-Bayhaqī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (as-Sahihah no. 3951, Sahih ut-Targhib no. 1005, and at-Ta‘līqāt ul-Ḥisān no. 7448).
punishment in *al-barzakh* are:

- Giving a false testimony
- Acting contrary to what one says
- Women refusing to breastfeed their babies
- Neglecting or violating an obligatory fast
- Committing *zinā* 
- Paganism and *shirk*.

### Miscellaneous Sins Resulting in Punishment in the Grave

**Contamination with Urine**

When a Muslim urinates, he should take extreme care to avoid contaminating his body or garments with urine. Contamination with urine is a major sin that causes punishment in the grave — though many people may underestimate it. Abū Hurayrah, Ibn ‘Abbās, and Anas (†) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«ثُمَّ أنَّى السُّجَرَانَى: فَإِنَّ غَمَّةَ (اُكَرِّحَ) عَذَابُ الْقَبْرِ مِنَ الْبُولِ.»

«Purify yourself from urine, for, indeed, most of the grave’s punishment is because of urine.»

### Wailing by the Deceased’s Family and Friends

A dead person is liable to the grave’s punishment if his people lament over him, provided that he urged them during his life to do so, or failed to teach them to avoid this sin.

When ‘Umar (†) was stabbed, his daughter Ḥafṣah (†), and Śuhayb ar-Rūmī (†), both cried in his presence, so he cautioned them while dying, reminding them that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

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1 Recorded by Ibn Mājah, Ahmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Sahih al-Jāmi‘* nos. 1202, 2102, 3971, *Irwā’ al-Ghalīt* no. 280, and *Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhīb wat-Tarhib* nos. 158-159, 161).
"Indeed, a dead person is punished in his grave because of some of his family’s wailing over him."¹

"Wailing" in this hadith refers specifically to that which reflects objection to Allah’s decree. This understanding is indicated in 'Umar’s above report, «Because of some of his family’s wailing,» and is also expressed in another report from 'Umar ( Drawable ], and from al-Mughirah Bin Shubah (Drawable], that the Prophet (Drawable] said:

«A person who is wailed over will be punished in his grave (and on Resurrection Day) because of that wailing.»²

The prohibited wailing, furthermore, often constitutes excessiveness in praising the deceased — sometimes to the extent of raising him to a level of divinity. Abū Mūsā (Drawable] reported that the Prophet (Drawable] said:

<Whenever a person dies, and one of his mourners cries out things like, “O our mountain (of generosity and protection); O our master (of support and help);” two angels are appointed to prod him, saying, “Were you truly as they say?”>³

An-Nu’mān Bin Bashīr (Drawable] reported that once ‘Abdullāh Bin Rawāhah (Drawable] fainted, and his sister 'Amrah (Drawable] (thinking him dead) started wailing and lauding him, “O my mountain (in generosity), O

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1286-1288, 1290), Muslim (927-930), and others.
² Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1291-1292), Muslim (927, 933), and others.
³ Recorded by at-Ṭirmithī. Verified to be hasan by al-Albānī ( Sahih al-Jāmi' no. 5788 and Hidāyat ur-Ruwāh no. 1687).
my such-and-such, etc.” When ‘Abdullāh regained consciousness, he
told his sister that whatever she said about him, he was asked
admonishingly (in a dream-like state), “Are you truly like that?” So
when he was later killed, she did not even cry over him. ¹

Suffering because of the family’s wailing is stronger for deceased
nonbelievers. ‘Ā‘ishah ( права) reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«إِنِّي لَا يَزِيدُ الْكَايِفَ عَنْ ذَاكَةَ بَيْنَا أَهْلِهِ عَلَيْهِ.»

«Indeed, Allah increases the punishment of a
nonbeliever because of the crying of his family
members over him.» ²

If a Muslim warned his family against wailing over him, expressing
his disapproval verbally or in his will, he would not be blameworthy
if they insist on wailing after he dies. ‘Abdullāh Bin al-Mubārak (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

“If he prevented them from doing it during his life, yet
they did it after his death, there is no sin upon him.” ³

This understanding conforms with an established rule in Islām that
a person is only responsible for his own doings and will not be
punished for someone else’s sins — unless he contributed to them.
Allāh’s (عَزَّ الْأَمَانِيَّ) says:

«وَلَا تَزَرِّعُوا وَازْرَعَهُ وَرْزُ أَخْرِيَ»

«No bearer of burdens will bear the burden of
another.» ⁴

SLANDERING AND TALEBEARING

There are individuals who like to gossip and spread rumors, conveying
information that causes hate and distrust among people. Such

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (4267-4268) and al-Bayhaqī.
² Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1288), Muslim (929), and others.
³ Umdat ul-Qārī 4:79.
⁴ Al-An‘ām 6:164.
individuals are liable to continuous punishment in the grave.

Ibn 'Abbas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) passed by two graves and said, «They are being punished, and their punishment is for (what people consider to be) no major sin.» The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) then added:

«بلى، كان أحداهما لا يستنبرون من بوله، وكان الآخر يمشي بالتعيم.»

«But indeed, they are (major sins). The first person did not cover (or purify) himself from his urine, and the other used to walk about spreading slander.»

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) then planted a fresh palm branch on each grave and said:

«لأعلم أن يخفف عنهما ما لزم (إلى أن) يُبيِّسَانَا.»

«Perhaps their punishment will be reduced (in response to my supplication) for as long as the two branches are not yet dry.»

1 Recorded by al-Bukhari (216, 1361, 1378, 6052, 6055), Muslim (292), and others. A similar incident was narrated by Jābir as recorded by Muslim (3012).

It is important to note that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) sought a temporary decrease in the punishment of those two dead individuals by virtue of his supplication, and not because the branches were green — as some people ignorantly presume. Furthermore, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) requested that the duration of the reduced punishment be until the branches dry up. Other than this specific incident, he never placed or recommended planting greenery or flowers on graves. Doing this, therefore, is a clear bidah and a serious misunderstanding of this hadith.

This hadith also highlights the seriousness of the sins committed by those two individuals, because even the Prophet’s (صلى الله عليه وسلم) supplication for them would not have a permanent effect in reducing their punishment.

**Backbiting and Insulting Others**

Individuals who have the habit of backbiting and defaming others are
punished in their graves by tearing the flesh of their own faces. Anas (ع.م.ث.) reported that the Prophet (ص.ف.ث.) said:

» لَمَّا عَرْجَ بِي رَبِّيَّ فَخَزَّبْتُ بِقَوْمِهِمْ أَعْفَافُ مِنْ نَحَاسِ. 
» يَحْيَٰسِحُونَ وَجُوهَهُمْ وَصُدْرُهُمْ. فَقُلْتُ: "مِنْ هَؤُلاءِ يَا جِبَرِيلْ؟ 
» قَالَ: هَؤُلاءُ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلوُنَّ لَحْوَ الْفَاسِ وَيَقْتَعُونَ فِي أَغْرَاضِهِمْ. "

When my Lord took me up to heaven (for mi'rāj), I passed by people who had brass nails with which they were slashing their faces and chests. I said, “Who are these, O Jibrîl?” He replied, “These are the ones who eat the flesh of people (i.e., backbite them) and assail their honor.” 1

THOSE WHO DO NOT PRACTICE WHAT THEY PREACH

Many orators speak eloquently, inviting others to virtues that they themselves neglect. Such individuals are punished in their grave by having their lips repeatedly cut with scissors of fire. Anas (ع.م.ث.) reported that the Prophet (ص.ف.ث.) said:

» رَأَيْتُ لَيْلاً أُسْرِي بِي رَجَالاً تَقُلُّونَ شِفَاهُمْ بِمَفَارِيضِ مِنْ نَارٍ. فَقُلْتُ: 
» مِنْ هَؤُلاءِ يَا جِبَرِيلْ؟ فَقَالَ: "الْحَطَّابُانِ مِنْ أَمْتِكَ، يَأْمُرُونَ الْكَافِرِ 
» بِالْبَيْرُ وَيَنُصُّونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ، وَهُمْ يَتَلُّونَ الْكِتَابَ. أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونْ؟ "

During the night what I was taken for the Night Journey, I saw men whose lips were being cut by scissors of fire. I asked, “Who are these, O Jibrîl?” He replied, “These are orators from your Ummah who command people to do good but forget themselves, even though they recite the Book (i.e., the Qur'ān). Did they not take heed (from it)?” 2

1 Recorded by Ahmad, Abû Dâwûd, and al-Bayhaqî. Verified to be authentic by al-Albânî (as-Sahîhah no. 533).
2 Recorded by Abû Ya'la, Ibn Hibbân, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-
An important question is: where did the Prophet (ﷺ) see those people who were undergoing punishment, sometimes collectively, during his Night Journey and in the two above-cited long hadiths? In answer to this, we note the following (and Allah (ﷻ) knows best):

1. Apparently, those forms of punishment were applied to the souls and not the bodies.

2. The punishment could have taken place in hell or at other locations — as Allâh (谴) decrees.

3. Some of those happenings may have been disclosed to the Prophet (ﷺ) from a distance without his actual presence at the punishment scene.

ARROGANT PEOPLE

Arrogance is a major sin that may result in ceaseless punishment in al-Barzakh. Abû Hurayrah and Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«بَيْنَمَا رَجُلٌ يَتَضَخَّمُ، يُشْمِي فِي بُرُدِّيْهِ (يَجُرُّ إِزَارَةً مِنَ الْحِيَابِ)، فَذُو أَعْجُبَتْهُ»

«نَفْسُهُ، فَحَسَّسَ الْلَّهُ بِهِ الأَرْضَ، فَهُوَ يَتَجْلِجُ فِيهَا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ».

<While a man was walking arrogantly in his expensive garments (and dragging his lower garment on the ground), feeling proud about himself, Allâh caused the earth to split and swallow him, so he is screaming within it until Resurrection Day.>¹

STEALING FROM THE WAR SPOILS

In Islâm, battle spoils should all be turned over to the battle’s commander. The commander would then divide them among the army as he sees fit. Taking any of the spoils without permission is

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhârî (3485, 5789-5790), Muslim (2088), and others.

Albânî (ә-ә-Sahihah no. 291).
considered theft, and may result in punishment in *al-barzakh*.

‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Amr (r.a.) reported that a man called Karkarah was placed in charge of the Prophet’s ( pbuh) provisions (during travel). Karkarah died, and the Prophet ( pbuh) said, “He is in the Fire.” Some people went to investigate the reason for this, and they found among his belongings a cloak that he unrightfully took (from the war spoils). ¹

Similarly, Abū Hurayrah (r.a.) reported that during the Muslims’ return after conquering Khaybar, a slave of the Prophet ( pbuh) was killed by a straying arrow, and some people said, “May he enjoy martyrdom.” The Prophet ( pbuh) responded:

«بل، والدي تَفْسَي بُنَّاهُ، إن الشَّمْلَةَ التي أصْبَاهَا بُنُومَ خَبَرٍ،
لم تَصْبِهَا المَقْتَسَمُ، لَتَشْتَعِبُ عَلَيْهِ نَارًا.»

«Rather, by Him in whose hand is my soul, the cloak that he snatch on the day of Khaybar, without including it with the war spoils to be divided (among the army), is now surely a burning fire for him.» ²

**Summary**

In the following table, we list the sins that were specified in earlier texts as causing punishment in *al-barzakh*. This list should not be considered exhaustive. Rather, there may well be many other punishable sins that we have not been informed about.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sin</th>
<th>Constant Punishment for the Sinner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disbelief</td>
<td>His head is beaten with a club, turning him to dust; he receives the heat and winds of hell; his body is swollen and has a most hideous appearance and foul smell; etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (3074).
² Recorded by al-Bukhārī (4234, 6707), Muslim (115), and others.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sin</th>
<th>Constant Punishment for the Sinner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rejecting the Qur'an</td>
<td>His head is smashed with a boulder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglecting the prayers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreading lies &amp; rumors</td>
<td>His mouth, nose, and eyes are ripped with a sharp hook, to the back of his head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committing <em>zinā</em></td>
<td>He burns, naked, in a pit of fire. He has a most hideous appearance and foul smell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating <em>ribā</em></td>
<td>He swims in a river of blood, and is fed stones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lying and neglecting to fulfill promises</td>
<td>He is hung upside down, and his cheeks are cut and bleeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving false testimony</td>
<td>His eyes and ears are branded with hot iron.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking obligatory fasts</td>
<td>He is hung upside down, and is made to lick filthy mud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A woman who refuses to breastfeed her baby</td>
<td>She is hung upside down, and snakes bite her breasts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contamination with urine</td>
<td>This is the most common reason of punishment, but it is not specified what form of punishment he receives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wailing and excessive praise by his relatives</td>
<td>This adds to his punishment, and two angels prod him, saying, “Were you like that?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backbiting, slandering</td>
<td>He tears his own face and chest with brass nails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orator not practicing what he preached</td>
<td>His lips are cut with scissors of fire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrogance</td>
<td>He is tortured in the depth of earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing war spoils</td>
<td>He is punished with fire.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 10
COMMUNICATION WITH AL-BARZAKH

Introduction

We discussed earlier that the souls of dead believers are in heaven, enjoying pleasures from Jannah. Sometimes, the souls reunite with their bodies to enjoy other pleasures, or go to other delightful locations as Allāh (ﷻ) wills for them.

The dead nonbelievers’ souls, on the other hand, are imprisoned and tortured in the seventh earth. Sometimes, they reunite with their bodies to suffer other forms of torture, or go to other unpleasant locations as Allāh (ﷻ) wills for them.

In both cases, the souls are in the world of al-barzakh, which is separate and different from ours. Their interaction with our world is subject to the following rules:

1. The souls of the dead do not hear or know what transpires in our world — except in a few limited cases.

2. The dead believers’ souls receive some information about happenings in our world from the souls of believers who recently died.

3. Allāh (ﷻ) sometimes allows the souls of the dead to hear SPECIFIC things from this world, and only for a LIMITED duration. Allāh (ﷻ) allows this as a reward for some believers, a punishment for nonbelievers, or for other reasons that He (ﷻ) sees fit.

4. The souls of the dead have no effect on what happens in our world.

In this chapter, we discuss the above points and present strong evidence from the Qur’ān and Sunnah to support them.
1. The Dead Cannot Normally Hear Us

**The Dead's Hearing Is an Important Issue of Belief**

The question of whether the dead hear what takes place in this world is an important one, because it can have serious implications.

If it can be proven that the dead do hear, and that, furthermore, they can act according to what they hear, it would then be possible to turn to them with supplications and invocations — seeking their help or fearing their wrath! Obviously, this results in a creed of *shirk* no better than that of the *Jāhilī* pagans. And yet, some deviant Muslim sects hold this belief to varying levels of deviation. Some of them believe that, after death, some “saints” become free of the material hindrance that they had in this life, so their abilities and powers become unlimited, making them ever-ready to help their true devotees!

The deads’ hearing, however, is not subject to human opinions and speculations. It is a matter of *ghayb* that is encompassed by Allāh’s knowledge, and may only be established through clear evidence from Allāh’s Book and His Messenger’s (ﷺ) Sunnah.

We will show below that the correct understanding in this regard is that, in general, the dead cannot hear what takes place in this life.

**Evidence That the Dead Cannot Hear Us**

Allāh (ﷻ) tells His Messenger that he (ﷺ) cannot force stubborn disbelievers to see the truth, just as he cannot make the dead hear. He (ﷺ) says:

> `وَمَا يَسْتَنْبَوْيَ أَنْيَآءَ وَلَا أَمَاتَ أَنْ يَسْمَعَ مِنْ يَسْتَنْبَوْيَ وَمَا أَنتَ بِمُسْمَعٍ مِنْ فِي الْجَبَّوْرِ ٢٢ فَاطِر` ⁰¹

«Not equal are the living and the dead. Indeed, Allāh causes to hear whom He wills, but you (Muhammad) cannot make those in the graves hear you.»

Similarly, Allāh (ﷻ) says:

1 *Fāṣir* 35:22.
«So, indeed (O Muḥammad), you cannot make the dead hear you, nor can you make the deaf hear the call while they turn their back on you.»

In this āyah, Allāh ( سبحانه وتعالى) compares the nonbelievers to the dead and deaf people. This obviously indicates that the dead and deaf share the characteristic of being unable to hear. Ibn Jarīr at-Tabarî ( Knowing) supported this understanding by saying:

“This is a parable meaning, ‘You cannot make those nonbelievers understand, because Allāh has sealed their hearing and has taken away their ability to understand the revealed lessons that are recited to them — just as you cannot make the dead understand by giving them hearing, because Allāh has taken away their hearing faculty.’

He ( سبحانه وتعالى) is further saying, ‘You cannot make the deaf hear after they turn their back on you, because they have been deprived of their hearing faculty. Similarly, for those whom Allāh has deprived of the ability to hear and understand the āyāt of His Book, you cannot make them hear and understand.’”

The great ṭābiʿī, Qatādah ( Knowing), said:

“Allāh gives this parable about a nonbeliever. Just as the dead cannot hear the calls (of those who are alive), the nonbelievers also cannot hear. Thus He tells that, ‘If a deaf person turns his back, and you call him, he would not hear you. Similarly, a nonbeliever would not hear, nor would he benefit from what he hears.’”

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1 An-Naml 27:80 and ar-Rūm 30:52.
2 Tafsīr at-Tabarî 27:80.
3 Recorded by at-Tabari. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (al-Āyāt ul-Bayyināt p. 40).
This was also the understanding of 'A'ishah, 'Umar, and other companions (ṣ), as we will soon show.

THE PROPHETS ONLY KNOW THAT WHICH ALLĀH INFORMS THEM

After their death, Allāh’s prophets (ṣ) live their blissful life in al-barzakh, not interacting with this world except at a limited scale that Allāh (℠) permits. Contrary to what some ignorant people think, the prophets (and other righteous people) do not keep surveillance or watch over us. They cannot even know some things that are related to their previous mission in this life.

Allāh (℠) tells us that Īsā (℠) will say on Judgment Day:

«And (O Allāh) I was a witness over them for (only) as long as I was among them. When You took me away, You (alone) were the Observer over them, and You are Witness over all things.»

Similarly, the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) would not know the situation of his followers after his death. Anas, Abū Hurayrah, and other companions (ṣ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«There will come to my Pond (on Judgment Day) people from among my followers whom I know, and they know me. But they will then be separated (i.e.,
taken away) from me. I will say, “My Lord, these are my followers; they are from me.” He will say, “Indeed, you have no knowledge of what things (in Islam) they changed after you. Indeed, they turned back upon their heels.” And I will say, “Woe, woe be to those who changed things after me.”  

2. How the Dead Learn about Us

In this section, we show that there are limited ways through which some of the dead may learn about happenings from this life.

INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE DEAD BELIEVERS’ SOULS

The dead believers can know about what happens in this life from the souls of other believers who newly died. They gather around the new souls and ask them eagerly about the situation of their acquaintances and relatives in this life.

We cite again Abū Ayyūb’s (ṣ) hadith that the Prophet (ṣ) said:

إذا قُضِّتْ نَفْسُ العُبَيدِ تَلَفَّتَ أَهْلُ الرَّحْمَةِ مِنْ عِبَادِ اللهِ كَمَا يَلُفُّونَ البَشِيرِ فِي الدُّنْيَا، فَيُقِيمُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِيَسْأَلُونَهُ، فَيُقِيلُ بَعْضُهُمْ لَبَعْضٍ: "أَنْظُرُوا أَحَاكمَ حَتَّى يَسْتَرِيحَ، فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي كَرْبٍ:"

“When a (believing) servant’s soul is taken (at death), (the souls of) Allāh’s servants who have been granted mercy receive him (in heaven) as (eagerly as) a carrier of glad tidings is received in the first life. They come to him and ask him questions. But some of them say, “Give your brother some time to rest, because he was in grief (in the first life).”

فَيَقِيمُونَ عَلَيْهِ، لِيَسْأَلُونَهُ: "مَا فَعَلَ فِلْدَانِكَ؟ مَا فَعَلَتْ فِلَانَتُكَ؟ هُلَّ

1 This is combined from narrations recorded by al-Bukhārī (6582-6586, 6593, 7050-7051), Muslim (2290, 2304), and others.
Then (after a little while,) they gather around him and ask him, “What did so-and-so man do? What did so-and-so woman do? Did she get married?” If they ask him about a man who had died before him, and he tells them, “He already died,” They say, “To Allâh we belong, and unto Him we will return (after Resurrection)! He must have gone to his mother, the (Fire) abyss. That is indeed the worst mother and the worst caretaker.”

He also tells them about the actions (of their living acquaintances). If they find them good (for an individual), they say, “(O Allâh,) this is Your favor upon Your servant, so complete it for him (until death).” And if they find them bad, they say, “O Allâh, bring Your servant back (to the right).”

Similarly, in the long hadîth by Abû Hurayrah (ﷺ) that we fully cited earlier, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

1 Recorded by Ibn ul-Mubârak (in az-Zuhd), at-Tabarâni (in al-Kabîr), and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albâni (as-Sahîhah no. 2758).
The angels then take him (i.e., the believer's soul) to the souls of the believers in Jannah. They (the believers' souls) are happier to meet him than those to whom a beloved one returns after a long absence. They ask him about their acquaintances on earth, saying, "What happened to so-and-so?" They (some of the souls) interrupt, "Leave him until he rests, because he was just in the grief of the world." If he (after a short rest) responds, "I left so-and-so (alive) on earth," They (the other souls) are elated. But if he says, "So-and-so had died; did he not come to you?" They respond (disappointedly), "No, he was not brought to us." And they (the angels) then say, "He was taken to his mother: the abyss (of Fire)."

These hadiths clearly indicate that the believers' souls did not know what was happening on earth until they were informed by the "new" soul.

INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE PROPHETS

Our salah and salam upon the Prophet (ﷺ) reach him whenever we say them, and wherever we are when we say them. Abu Hurayrah (��) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"لا تَسْتَجِنُوا قُبْرِي عِيْدًا، ولا تَجْعَلُوا بِيَوْنَكُمْ ضِيَآورًا، وَخَيْنَمَا كَنْتُمْ فَصِّلُوا عَلَيْ، فَإِنَّ صَلَايُكُمْ نَبِلُفْنِي."

"Do not turn my grave into a place of seasonal celebration and visitation, and do not turn your houses into graves (by not praying in them)."

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1 Recorded by an-Nasâ‘î, Ibn Hibbân, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albâni (Saḥîh ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib no. 3559 and as-Ṣahiḥah no. 1309).
Wherever you are, pray upon me, because your prayer will reach me.> ¹

Once al-Hasan (‡), son of al-Hasan Bin ‘Alī (‡), saw a man standing by the Prophet’s (‡) grave and saying salām to him. So al-Hasan told him that it would suffice him to say the salām upon entering the Prophet’s Masjid. He then narrated the above ḥadīth and added:

“You and those in Andalus (i.e., Spain) are equivalent (in that your salām can reach the Prophet).” ²

When we say salāh or salām upon our Prophet (‡), Allāh (‡) appoints angels to convey these supplications to him. Ibn Mas‘ūd (‡‡) reported that the Prophet (‡) said:

«إن لله ملاكك في الأرض يبلغوني عن أمتى السلام.»

<Allāh has angels that travel over the earth, delivering to me (after my death) the salām from my Ummah.> ³

This indicates that the Prophet (‡) cannot independently hear the salām of his followers. He receives it solely by means of angels who deliver it to him — regardless of whether those saying the salām are standing right next to his grave or at the farthest point of the world.

This ḥadīth conforms with the general rule that the dead cannot hear things from this world. Furthermore, if Allāh’s Messenger (‡) cannot hear what happens in this life after his death, this should apply more appropriately to those who are lesser than him in status (i.e., all other people).

Because of the Prophet’s (‡) special status with Allāh, he may learn about LIMITED things that happen in this world — in addition to

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¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ahmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ahkām ul-Janā’iz p. 280).
³ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (al-Āyāt ul-Bayyināt p. 43).
the conveyance of salām to him — through two possible ways:

a. Similar to other believers’ souls: the Prophet (ﷺ) may inquire from the souls of dead believers about what happened in this life.

b. He may be told by the angels about things that are of interest to him, just as they tell him about the salām.

These two points are not limited to our Prophet (ﷺ), but may apply to other prophets (ﷺ) as well. As we saw earlier in our discussion of the Night Journey, the prophets seemed to know some things that happened after their death. For example, Mūsā (ﷺ) knew that the followers of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) would exceed his.

3. Exceptional Cases of the Deads’ Hearing

There are exceptions to the general rule that the dead cannot hear anything from this life. An exceptional case must have a clear evidence from the Qur’ān or Sunnah. If this evidence is established, the exceptional case should then be accepted and maintained within its boundaries, and may not be generalized so as to override the general rule.

**The Ditch of Badr**

‘Umar, Abū Ṭalḥah, and other companions (ﷺ) reported that, after the Muslim’s victory in the battle of Badr, the Prophet (ﷺ) had twenty-four of the most disdainful among the dead of the Quraysh dumped into a filthy ditch, and then spent three days and nights in the neighborhood of the battleground. When the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions (ﷺ) were ready to leave, they stood at the verge of the Ditch, and the Prophet (ﷺ) called out to the dead pagans with their names and the names of their fathers, saying:

يا أبا جهل ابن هشام، ويا أمية ابن خلف، ويا عتبة ابن ربيعة، ويا شيبة ابن ربيعة، ويا وليد ابن عتبة، أيسركم أنكم أطعتم الله ورسوله؟ فإننا قد
Chapter 10

Life in al-Barzakh

«وَجَدْنا مَا وَعَدْنا رَبُّنا حَقًّا، فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُم مَا وَعَدْ كَم رَبُّكُمَا حَقًّا؟

«O Abū Jahl Bin Hishām, O Umayyah Bin Khalaf, O 'Utbah Bin Rabī'ah, O Shaybah Bin Rabī'ah, O Walīd Bin 'Utbah, don't you wish that you had obeyed Allāh and His Messenger? Indeed, we have found our Lord's promises to us true; have you found you Lord's promises true?»

Here, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) and others companions exclaimed, “O Allāh’s Messenger, how do you address them after they have been dead (and decaying) for three nights? How do you address bodies with no souls in them? How can they hear, when Allāh (صلی الله علیه وآله وسلم) says: ۸۰ «إِنَّكَ لَا تَسْمَعُ الْمَوتِيَّةَ»

«Indeed, you cannot make the dead hear you.» ۱?” The Prophet (صلی الله علیه وآله وسلم) replied:

«وَالَّذِي نَفَسَ مُحَمَّدُ بِهِ، مَا أَنْتُمْ بَأْسَمَعْ إِلَّا أَقُولُ مِنْهُمْ، إِنْ تُمْهَلُ الآنُ ۱۱۲ لَيُسْمَعُونَ مَا أَقُولُ، غَيْرَ أَنْتُمْ لَا يُسْتَطِيعُونَ أَنْ يُرَدُّوا عَلَيْ تَسْمِعًا.

«By Him in whose hand is Muhammad’s soul, you cannot hear what I am saying better than they can! Indeed, they can now hear what I say, but they cannot respond to me with anything.» ۲

Commenting on this hadith, Qatadah (قادة) said:

“Allāh (صلی الله علیه وآله وسلم) gave them life in order to hear the Prophet’s (صلی الله علیه وآله وسلم) words, as a reproach and scorn, and to make them more remorseful and regretful for what they did.” ۳

When ‘Ā‘ishah (رضی الله علیها وآله وسلم) was told about this incident, and that the Prophet (صلی الله علیه وآله وسلم) said, ۱۱۳ «إِنْتُمْ لَيُسْمَعُونَ مَا أَقُولُ. » «Indeed, they can hear what

1 An-Naml 27:80 and ar-Rām 30:52.
2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (3065, 3976), Muslim (2873-2874), Ahmad, and others (see Aḥkām al-Janā'īz pp. 167-169).
3 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (3976).
I say, she objected by that what the Prophet (ﷺ) actually meant was:

«إِنَّهُمْ الْأَخْرَى لَا يُعْلَمُونَ أَنَّمَا كَتَبْنَا أَقْوَلُ لَهُمْ لَهُمْ الْحَقُّ»

<Indeed, now they surely know that what I used to tell them is the truth.>

‘A’ishah (بية) then recited:

اِنْكَ لَا تُنَفِّذُ الْمَوْتَى وَلَا تُنَفِّذُ الْمَشْيَ الْدَّعَاةِ إِذَا وَلَوْا مُدْرَبِينَ 

«Indeed, you cannot make the dead hear you, nor can you make the deaf hear the call while they turn their backs to you.» 1, 2

We have a few important notes in regard to the above hadīth:

1. **The Sahābah’s Understanding.** It is clear from the above reports that ‘Umar, ‘A’ishah, and other companions (ﷺ) strongly held the understanding that the dead cannot hear.

2. **The Prophet’s Approval.** When ‘Umar and other companions (ﷺ) objected to the Prophet (ﷺ) that the dead cannot hear, he (ﷺ) did not reject their objection and say, “You are wrong, because the dead do hear.” Rather, he (ﷺ) tacitly approved their understanding, and explained to them that the Ditch’s situation was a special one. Al-Albānī (ṣ) said:

   “We should assume that these companions had previously gained this understanding from the Prophet (ﷺ) — otherwise, they would not have hastened to object to him. And even if we assume that they were hasty in objecting without knowledge, it would then have been the Prophet’s (ﷺ) obligation to clarify to them their misconception. However, we find absolutely no reports mentioning such a clarification …

1 An-Naml 27:80 and ar-Rūm 30:52.
2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1370-1371, 3979-3981), Muslim (932), and others.
He (ﷺ) only indicated that those specific dead people were able to hear him at that specific time. Thus it is obvious that he (ﷺ) approved the general understanding that his companions, led by ‘Umar, had in regard to this issue.”

3. A Miracle for the Prophet. The hearing of the dead pagans was out of the norm. In other words, it was a miracle for the Prophet (ﷺ). Ibn ‘Atiyyah (шение), a great ‘alim from Andalus (Spain), said:

“It appears that the incident of Badr constitutes a miracle for Muḥammad (ﷺ), whereupon Allāh (ﷻ) restored the dead’s perception to be able to hear him. Had Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) not told us of this, we would have interpreted his addressing them as a mere admonishment for the living nonbelievers, as well as a reassurance for the believers’ hearts.”

Ibn ut-Tīn (шение), a great ‘alim from North Africa, said:

“There is no conflict between Ibn ‘Umar’s hadīth (of the Ditch) and the āyah (27:80). There is no doubt that the dead cannot hear. But Allāh may enable that which does not normally hear to hear ...”

4. A Sunnah of the Previous Prophets. It is interesting to note that addressing the nonbelievers after they have been destroyed by Allāh (ﷻ) is an old practice of the prophets (несение). Allāh (ﷻ) says in regard to the disbelieving people of Šāliḥ (شاءد):

"فَأَخْدِمُواْ الْرَّجُعَةَ فَأَسْتَبْحَرُواْ فِي دَارَهُمْ جَنَّةٌ فَأُوْلَىْ عَنْهُمْ...
وَقَالَ: "يَقُولُ أَلَّا أَبُلْغُكُمْ رِسَالَةَ رَبِّي وَنَسَحْتُ لَكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ لَا..."

1 Al-Āyāt-ul-Bayyināt pp. 49-50.
3 This was reported by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī in Fath ul-Bārī 3:298.
«So the earthquake seized them, and they became in their homes (corpses) fallen prone. He (Ṣāliḥ) turned away from them, saying, “O my people, I have certainly conveyed to you the message of my Lord and advised you, but you do not like those who advise.”»

Ibn Kathîr commented on this by saying:

“This is a rebuke from Ṣāliḥ (عليه السلام) to his people after Allâh had destroyed them because of their disobeying him, rebelling against Allâh, rejecting the truth, and turning away from the guidance. Ṣāliḥ said this to them, after their destruction, rebuking and reprimanding them; and they heard him, as was reported in al-Bukhârî and Muslim (and he cited the hadîth of the Ditch).”

Similarly, Allâh (تعالى) says in regard to the disbelieving people of Shu‘ayb (عليه السلام):

«So the earthquake seized them, and they became in their homes (corpses) fallen prone. Those who denied Shu‘ayb — it was as though they had never resided there. Those who denied Shu‘ayb — it was they who were the losers. So he (Shu‘ayb) turned away from them, saying, ‘O my people, I have certainly...”

1 Al-A‘râf 7:78-79.
conveyed to you the messages of my Lord and advised you, so how can I grieve for a disbelieving people?”  

5. Exceptional Cases May Not Abrogate the General Rule. Some people use the Prophet’s (ﷺ) statement, <You cannot hear me better than they can,> as a proof that the dead always hear what happens in this life. This is a wrong understanding, because it turns the exceptional case, which was a miracle granted to the Prophet (ﷺ) in that situation, into a general case conflicting with clear Qur’anic texts.

A NEWLY BURIED PERSON HEARS HIS COMPANIONS’ FOOTSTEPS

Another exceptional case is that the dead person hears the footsteps of his companions as they leave his burial place.

In a previously cited hadith reported by Anas (RA), the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ إِذَا وَضَعَ فِي قَبْرٍ، وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُ أَصْحَابَهُ، وَإِنَّهُ لَا يُسْمَعُ قُرُّ عِنْعَالَهُمْ إِذَا آَنَصَرَفُوا.»

<Indeed, when a believer is placed in his grave, and his companions walk away from him, he can hear the echo of their footsteps.>  

Similarly, in al-Bara‘ bin ‘Azib’s long hadith that we cited earlier, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«فَإِنَّهُ يُسْمَعُ حَقْقًا عَنْ أَصْحَابِهِ إِذَا وَلَوَّا عَنْهُ مَدْبَرٍ.»

<He hears the thumping of his companions’ shoes as they walk away from his grave.>  

1 Al-A‘rāf 7:91-93.
2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1338, 1374) and Muslim (2870).
3 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ahmad, and others, and verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (ʿĀkhām ul-Jānāʾiz pp. 198-202 and Sahih ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib no. 3558).
As we said above in regard to the hadith of the Ditch, this is another exception to the general rule. It only applies to the time when the dead person is placed in his grave and the angels come to question him — and may not be generalized to other cases. Thus we reconcile between this hadith and the general meaning of the above āyah (27:80), as understood by ‘Umar, ‘A’ishah, and other companions (4k>).

4. The Dead Have No Influence in this World

The Dead Cannot Answer or Provide Help

The dead cannot help the living (or harm them). In addition to being unable to hear them, they have no power to respond to their appeals. Allāh (ز) says:

>ُلِكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلُكُ وَلَّدُنُّوْنَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مَا يَسْمَعُونَ مِنْ قَطْبِيْرِٞ إِنْ تَسْمَعُوهُمْ لَيْسَمَعَكُمُ الدَّعَاءَ كَمْ وَلَوْ سَمَعُوا مَا أَسْتَجِبَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَاسَةِ يَكُونُونَ بِشَرِّكِكُمْ ولاَ يَسْمَعُونَ مِنْهُ مِثْلُ خُبْيِرٍ ۚ فَاطِرٌ ۱۳-۱۴ـ

«Such is Allāh your lord; to Him belongs the dominion. And those whom you invoke instead of Him own not even a qīṭmūr (the thin membrane covering the date pit). If you call upon them, they do not hear your call; and were they to hear, they could not grant your requests. And on Resurrection Day, they will disown your taking them as partners. And none can inform you better than One who is well acquainted with things.» ¹

These āyāt express that those whom the nonbelievers invoke besides Allāh cannot hear or help them. Here, the “invoked ones” are not simple idols but, rather, the individuals whom the idols represent, because they (and not their idols) are the ones who will be resurrected.

so as to disown those who invoked them.  

**The Righteous Dead Cannot Communicate with This World**

The deceased righteous believers cannot communicate with this world, even to simply inform their relatives of their good status in *al-barzakh*.

In Abū Hurayrah’s (4&) long *hadith* that we cited earlier, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> «The believer is told (after the grave’s trial), “Go to sleep.” He says, “Let me return to my people to inform them (about my good condition).” But they tell him, “Sleep as does a newlywed person who is only to be awakened by his dearest family-member.”»

And in Anas’s (4&) *hadith* that we cited earlier, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

> «(After the grave’s trial), he (the believer) says, “Allow me to convey this good news to my family.” But he is told, “Go to rest (i.e., sleep).”»

This is even true about martyrs. They cannot tell their relatives and friends about their great status in *al-barzakh*. Rather, Allāh (ﷻ) promises to relate this on their behalf.

In Ibn ‘Abbās’s (8) *hadith* that we cited earlier, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

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1 See *al-Āyāt-ul-Bayyināt* pp. 43-46.
2 Recorded by at-Tirmithī and Ibn Hibbān. Verified to be *hasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib* no. 3560 and *Ḥidāyat ur-Ruwāḥ* no. 126).
When they (the martyrs) found this pleasant food, drink, and repose, they said, “Who will inform our brothers, on our behalf, that we are alive in Jannah, and that we receive sustenance — so that they do not forsake fighting in Allāh’s way or turn back during the fighting?” Allāh (ﷻ) said, “I will inform them for you.”

The Prophet Can Only Answer Our Salām

While in al-barzakh, the Prophet (ﷺ) cannot personally talk to us or do anything to influence our life — with one exception that he mentioned: when we direct salām to him, he responds with a similar supplication for us. And even then, we cannot hear his response, though we certainly hope to receive its bountiful outcome.

Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَسْلَمُ عَلَيْنِ إلَّا رَدَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْ رُوحِي، حَتَّى آرَدَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ»

<Whenever a person says salām upon me (after my death), Allāh restores my soul to me so as to respond to his salām.>

We noted again that the Prophet (ﷺ) does not hear our salām directly, but by means of an angel, as was established earlier (p. 182).

1 Recorded by Ahmad, Abū Dāwūd and others. Verified to be ḥasan by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Ṣaḥīḥ no. 5205 and Ḥidayat al-Ruwāḥ no. 3776).

2 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, al-Bayhaqī, and others. Verified to be ḥasan by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Ṣaḥīḥ no. 5679 and as-Sahīḥah no. 2266).
Chapter 10 192 Life in *al-Barzakh*

**Texts Mistakenly Used As Evidence for the Deads’ Hearing**

Some of the texts that people bring to support their view that the dead hear us have one of two main problems:

a. They are unauthentic, or

b. They are authentic but have no clear implications regarding this issue.

In what follows, we provide examples for both types.

**A. UNAUTHENTIC REPORTS**

Among the commonly cited weak narrations regarding the hearing of the dead are the following:

1. Claiming that the Prophet (ﷺ) stood by the graves of those who were martyred in Uhud and said to his companions, “I bear witness that these are alive with Allâh. So, visit them and say salâm to them. By Him in whose hand is my soul, whenever someone says salâm to them, they continue to answer him until Resurrection Day.”

2. Claiming that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Whenever a person passes by the grave of a man whom he knew in this world and says salâm to him, he (the dead) recognizes him and responds to his salâm.”

**B. MISINTERPRETED TEXTS**

The following are examples of texts that people sometimes misinterpret so as to support their wrong view that the dead always hear us.

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1 Recorded by al-Hâkim, Abû Nu‘aym, and others, from Abû Hurayrah (ﷺ). Verified to be weak by al-Albâni (*ad-Da‘ifah* no. 5221).

2 Recorded by Ibn ‘Abd il-Barr from Ibn ‘Abbâs (ﷺ), and by al-Khaṭīb, Ibn ‘Asâkir, and others, from Abû Hurayrah (ﷺ). Verified to be weak by al-Albâni (*ad-Da‘ifah* no. 4493).
Life in al-Barzakh

1. Visiting the Believers’ Graves. There are various narrations in which the Prophet (ﷺ) instructed us, when visiting the Muslims’ graveyards, to address the dead in second person (i.e., as though we are speaking directly to them). For example, ‘Ā’ishah (☑) reported that, one night, the Prophet (ﷺ) told her:

«إن جبريل آتاني فقال: إن ربك يأمرك أن تأتي أهل البقاء فتمتغضرون لهم.»

>Indeed, Jibrīl came to me and said, “Your Lord commands you to visit the (dead) people of al-Baqī’ (graveyard) and ask forgiveness for them.”

‘Ā’ishah (☑) asked, “What should I say for them, O Allah’s Messenger?” He (ﷺ) instructed:

السلام على أهل الدنيا من المؤمنين والمسلمين، وبرحم الله المُستتقفِين منا والمُستَثِخِرين، وإنما إن شاء الله بكم اللحاقون.

As-Salāmu ʿalā ahl-id-diyyāri min-al-muʾminīna wal-muslimīn, wa-yarham-Ullāh-ul-mustaqdimīna minnā wal-musta’khūrīn, wa-innā in shāa-llahu bikum lalāhiqūn — Peace be on the dwellers of these places, of believers and Muslims. May Allāh have mercy upon the earlier and later among us. We will certainly follow you when Allāh wills.»

Some people may argue that the command in this hadīth to visit the dead indicates that the dead would anticipate, welcome, and enjoy the visit just like the living people do. They also argue that since the Prophet’s (ﷺ) address to them was in the second person, they must have heard him, otherwise, his address would be futile. ²

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1 Recorded by Muslim (974), Ahmad, and others.
2 It is interesting to note that Ibn ul-Qayyim (ѽ) presented this incorrect view in ar-Rūḥ pp. 6-9. Al-Albānī (☑) refuted that (in al-Āyāt-ul-Bayyināt pp. 59-61), and indicated that what appeared in ar-Rūḥ in this regard is either falsely attributed to Ibn ul-Qayyim, or that Ibn ul-Qayyim wrote it when he was still in the early stages of his scholarly life.
This argument is not valid for the following reasons:

i. Visiting a person or a place is not necessarily for the sake of the “visited”, but may often be for the sake of the “visitor”. For instance, the Prophet (ﷺ) urged us to visit the graves because they remind us of the hereafter.  

ii. It is a common practice in the Arabic language to use the second person address for an absent individual or an inanimate object. This does not mean that such an individual or object hears the address. For instance, the Prophet (ﷺ) addressed Makkah during his Farewell Pilgrimage, expressing his love and attachment as though it was a living person in front of him.  

iii. Allāh (ﷻ) delivers our supplication for the dead, usually by means of angels. We have seen this in the case of the Prophet (ﷺ), and will see more of it (in the next chapter) in regard to other believers.

iv. Addressing the dead in the second person helps us realize the nearness of their condition (of death) to us. This constitutes an important and moving admonishment much stronger than the third person address.

2. Passing by Nonbelievers’ Graves. Sa’d Bin Abī Waqqās (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) told him:

> «حيثما مررت بقبير كافر، فبشره بالنار»
> 
> «Wherever you pass by a nonbeliever’s grave, give him the tidings of the Fire.»  

1 Recorded by Muslim (977), an-Nasa‘ī, and others from Buraydah (ﷺ).
2 This is recorded by at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasa‘ī, and others from Ibn ‘Abbās and ‘Abdullāh Bin Ḥamrā‘ (ﷺ), and verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Hidāyat ur-Ruwāh nos. 2656-2657).
3 Recorded by at-Ṭabarānī, al-Bazzār, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīh ul-Jāmi‘ no. 3165 and aṣ-Ṣaḥiḥah no. 18).
Similar to the above discussion, there is no indication that the nonbelievers would directly hear the tidings we give them. Allāh (عَزَّ وَجَلِی) may convey it to them as an additional rebuke and scorn — but we have no proof for this.

Furthermore, our statement would be of benefit in reminding us of their misery so as to avoid their way. Al-Albānī (ال Allaah) said:

“This indicates the importance of giving a nonbeliever the tidings of the Fire when passing by his grave. This should alert the believer and remind him of the great sin of that nonbeliever — a sin greater than all other sins, which is disbelieving in Allāh and joining partners with Him.” ¹

3. Sitting on a Grave or Breaking a Bone. To prove that the dead interact with happenings in our world, some people cite that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) indicated that sitting on a grave harms the dead person in the grave: ‘Amr Bin Ḥazm (ربّا) reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) saw him sitting on top of a grave, so he rebuked him, saying:

«إنَّكَ جَالِسٌ عَلَى النَّقْرِ، لَا تَذْهَبْ صاحِبُ هَذَا النَّقْرِ.»

‘Come off that grave lest you harm the person who is buried in it.’ ²

This harm, however, is not material. It is called “harm” because it shows disrespect and disregard of the dead’s sanctity.

This is similar to breaking a dead believer’s bone. ‘A’īshah (مايأ) reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«إِنَّ كَسْرَ عَظْمٍ مَّوْلَاكَ مَيْنَةٌ مِّثَلُ كَسْرِهِ حَيَاةً.»

‘Indeed, breaking a dead believer’s bones is similar (in prohibition) to breaking them when he was

¹ As-Sahihah 1:57.
² Recorded by Ahmad, Abū Nu‘aym, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (as-Sahihah no. 2960).
Commenting on this, al-Ḥāfiẓ (r) said:

"We conclude from this ḥadīth that the sanctity of a Muslim extends after his death as it was during his life." ²

Thus, we have shown that the arguments presented by some people to defend their view that the dead constantly interact with our world are all weak. The correct stance from the Qurān and Sunnah is absolutely unambiguous, and leaves no doubt as to what we said earlier:

**The Dead do not hear or interact with this world except within a very limited scope that is well documented and established in the authentic texts.**

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¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, al-Bayhaqī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ahkām ul-Janā'iz pp. 295-296).

² Al-Manāwī attributed this to *Faṭḥ ul-Bārī* (*Fayḍ ul-Qādir* no. 6232).
CHAPTER 11
DEEDS THAT CONTINUE AFTER DEATH

Normal Deeds End by Death

A PERSON'S FINAL ABODE IS THE OUTCOME OF HIS ACTIONS

This worldly life is a series of tests and trials. A person’s performance in it determines his fate in the hereafter. His actions are recorded, and are the basis for his judgment in the next life.

Allāh (ﷻ) indicates that a believer’s rewards result from his own actions:

وَتَلَكَ ٱلدِ‏‏رَّجُلَةُ ٱلَّتِي أُرِئِيْتُوهَا بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (الرَّسُولُ ُّللّٰهُ ﷺ) الرَّحْمَٰن

«This is Jannah that you have been made to inherit because of the deeds that you used to do (in the first life).» ¹

Allāh (ﷻ) also indicates that a nonbeliever’s punishment results from his own actions:

ذَلِكَ ۛبِمَا قَدَّمْتَ ۬أَيْدِيكُمْ ۛوَأَنَّ ٱللّٰهَ لَا يَزَّوَّدُ ۬بِۚ۟۝ا لِلْٰعْبَدِ (الرَّسُولُ ُّللّٰهُ ﷺ) ٱلرَّحْمَٰن

«This (punishment) is because of that which your hands put forth (in the first life). Certainly, Allāh is never unjust to His slaves.» ²

A PERSON'S ACCOUNTABLE ACTIONS END BY HIS DEATH

A person’s accountable deeds in this life end by his death. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

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¹ Az-Zukhruf 43:72.
"But repentance is not (accepted) from those who continue to do evil deeds up until, when death comes to one of them, he says, “Indeed, I have repented now,” nor from those who die as disbelievers." ¹

Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

"<Indeed, Allah continues to accept a person’s repentance as long as he (i.e., his soul) does not start gurgling (when departing from his body).>" ²

Therefore, a person should not expect that his records of good and bad deeds would change after his departure from this world.

**A Person’s Record Contains His Own Actions**

Furthermore, after a person’s death, he should not expect that other people’s deeds will affect him in the hereafter. Allah (ﷻ) says:

"<And no bearer of burdens will be made to bear another’s burden. And if a heavily laden person calls another to help him carry it, nothing of it will be carried, even if he should be a close relative.>" ³

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¹ *An-Nisa* 4:18.

² Recorded by at-Tirmīthī, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Hidayat ur-Ruwāh* no. 2282 and *Ṣaḥīh al-Ｊāmi’* no. 1903).

³ *Fāṣir* 35:18.
And Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And that a human being can have nothing (in his record) but what he earned (of good or bad).»

Commenting on this āyah, Ibn Kathir (็ด) said:

"Imām ash-Shafī‘ī concluded from this āyah that reciting Qur’ān does not benefit the dead, because it is not from their doing and earning. For this reason, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) did not recommend it to his Ummah, encourage them to do it, or guide them to it with a statement or hint. Nor was such a thing reported from any of the sahābah (ﷺ). Had this been any good, they would have preceded us in doing it. Matters of worship must be limited to the texts, and are not liable to modifications based on analogies or opinions.”

EXCEPTIONS

We established above that when a person dies, his deeds end, and he cannot benefit from other people’s deeds.

These general rules, however, have important exceptions. For example, Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Among the good deeds that continue to benefit a

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1 An-Najm 53:39.
believer after death are: knowledge that he taught and disseminated, a righteous child surviving him, a copy of the Qurʾān that he left as inheritance, a masjid that he built, a house that he built for stranded travelers, a stream that he ran (or maintained for people to drink), or a charity that he gave from his wealth during his healthy days. All of these would reach him (in rewards) after death.»

This and other hadiths that we present in this chapter indicate that some deeds benefit a person after his death. In the rest of this chapter, we discuss these deeds and explain how they conform with the general rules established above: that one’s deeds end by death, and one cannot then benefit from other people’s deeds.

**Deeds That Benefit after Death**

**Deeds with Good Traces**

From Abū Hurayrah’s above hadith, we may conclude that any good deed with beneficial “traces” will benefit a Muslim after death. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

\[ \text{وَتَكْتَبُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَثَارَتْهُمُ} \]

«We record what (deeds) they put forward, and their traces.»

Therefore, when a Muslim starts a beneficial deed during his lifetime, it will continue to benefit him and augment his record of good deeds after death, as long as it fulfills two conditions:

1. It has a renewing or self-generating benefit.

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1 Recorded by Ibn Mājah, al-Bayhaqī, and others. Verified to be ḥasan by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥḥāt ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib nos. 77, 112).
2 Ya-Sīn 36:12.
2. It benefits other Muslims.

Among the good deeds with lasting traces are: teaching people and guiding them to the truth, and raising righteous children. We will soon discuss these two important cases in two separate sections.

**Examples of Deeds with Good Traces**

In Abū Hurayrah’s above *hadīth*, the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned seven beneficial deeds whose traces benefit a person after death. We present below additional *hadīths* mentioning such deeds, and we note that they all conform with the above-established guidelines.

Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا مَاتَ الْإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ تَسَلُّطٍ أَثِيَانٍ»

«صدقة جارية، أو علم ينتفع به، أو ولد صالح يدعو له.»

“When a human being dies, all of his deeds are terminated except for three types: an ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge (of Islam), and a righteous child who supplicates for him.”

1 Recorded by Muslim (1631), Abū Dawūd, and others.

Similarly, Abū Qatādah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«خَيْرُ مَا يَلْقَلُ الْرَّجُلُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ثَلَاثَةَ: وَلَدٌ صَالِحٌ يَدْعُو لَهُ.»

«وَصَدَقَةٌ جَارِيَةٌ يَبْلُغُهَا أَجُرُّهَا. وَأَعْلَمُ يَعْمَلُ بِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ.»

“The best that a man can leave behind after his death are three things: a righteous child who supplicates for him, an ongoing charity whose rewards continue to reach him, and knowledge (he taught) that continues to be implemented after him.”

2 Recorded by Ibn Mājah, Ibn Hibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Saḥīh ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib* nos. 79, 113).
Anas (ra) reported that the Prophet (SAW) said:

"Seven things are recorded for a person while he is in his grave after his death: teaching beneficial knowledge, running a stream of water, digging a well, planting palm trees, building a masjid, leaving a copy of the Qur'an as inheritance, or leaving behind him a (righteous) child who seeks forgiveness for him after his death." ¹

Abū Umāmah (ra) reported that the Prophet (SAW) said:

"There are three types of individuals who continue to receive rewards after their death: a man who died while standing as guard for Allāh's cause; a man who taught (beneficial) knowledge, so he continues to receive rewards for it as long as it is implemented; a man who started a (running) charity, so he continues to receive rewards for it as long as it runs; and a man who left behind him a righteous child who supplicates for him." ²

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¹ Recorded by al-Bazzār and Abū Nu'aym. Verified to be hasan by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib waṭ-Tarhib no. 73).

² Recorded by Ahmad, al-Bazzār, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib waṭ-Tarhib no. 114).
The reason that a person continues to receive rewards for these deeds, even though they are done by other people, is that he had initiated them during his life or contributed to them to some degree. Since Allah (ﷻ) does not neglect even an atom’s weight of deeds, He records these contributions for a person even after his death.

Al-Ḫāfīz al-Munthirī (ﷺ) said:

"The deeds of a human being end by his death. However, since he had done things like raising (righteous) children, disseminating knowledge among those who take it from him, compiling a book that remains after him, or endowing charity — the rewards of these things continue to reach him as long as they continue to exist." ²

Abū al-Wafā' Bin 'Aqīl (ﷺ) said:

"The best explanation for this in my view is that a human being, by his efforts and good conduct, earned friends, produced children, married spouses, did good, and was kind to people. Because of this, they invoke mercy for him and do good on his behalf. All of this, then, is a result of his own doing." ³

And Rashīd Riḍā (ﷺ) said:

"Among the deeds that benefit a person, even though they are done by others, are those that count as his own because he was a cause for them, such as his children’s supplication for him, or their performing hajj, giving ṣadaqah, or fasting on his behalf. All of this has been established with authentic ḥadīths." ⁴

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2. ‘Awn ul-Ma‘būd no. 2877.
DEEDS OF LASTING REWARDS

In addition to deeds with good traces that we discussed above, there are deeds that have lasting rewards for a believer — provided that he dies while performing one of them.

We saw an example of such deeds in Abū Umāmah’s above hadīth: standing as guard for Allāh’s cause. Similarly, Salmān (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«رباط يوم وليلة خير من صيام شهر وقيامه. وإن مات جرى عليه»

عمله الذي كان يعمله، وأجري عليه رفعه، وأمن الفتن.

(Standing guard (for Allāh’s cause) for one day and night is better than fasting the days and praying the nights of an entire month. And if he (the guard) dies, his (good) deeds that he used to do continue to accumulate for him (until Judgment Day), he is provided with provisions (from Jannah), and he is saved from the interrogator (angels in the grave).»

And Fuḍlāh Bin ‘Ubayd (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«كل ميت يخمَّن على عمله، إلا الذي مات مرَّابطاً في سبيل الله.

فإنه ينتمى لله عمله إلى يوم القيامة، ويأمن فتنة القبر.»

(‘Every person’s deeds are sealed when he dies, except for the one who dies while standing guard in Allāh’s way: his (good) deeds continue to be augmented for him until Resurrection Day, and he is secured from the grave’s trial.»

Other deeds of lasting rewards are: traveling for hajj or ‘umrah, and fighting for Allāh’s cause. Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the

1 Recorded by Muslim (1913), at-Tirmīthī, and others.
2 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmīthī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’ no. 4562 and Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib wa-Tarhib no. 1218).
Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«من خرج حجاجًا فمات كتب الله له أجر السحاج إلى يوم القيامة.»

ومن خرج معتمرة فمات كتب الله له أجر المعتمرة إلى يوم القيامة.«

ومن خرج غازيا فمات كتب الله له أجر الغازي إلى يوم القيامة.»

<i>Whoever travels for hajj and dies (along the way), he will continue to receive the reward of a traveler for hajj until Resurrection Day. Whoever travels for 'umrah and dies (along the way), he will continue to receive the reward of a traveler for 'umrah until Resurrection Day. Whoever travels to fight (for Allâh’s cause) and dies (along the way), he will continue to receive the reward of a traveler for fighting until Resurrection Day.» ¹</i>

**Calling to Guidance and Teaching the Truth**

Calling to neglected sunnah, fighting an established bidâh, or teaching useful and needed Islamic knowledge are among the most important charitable deeds that a person can do during his life. They help revive Allâh’s din and enable other people to implement it correctly. There are numerous texts to support this from both the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, but we only present the following few hadîths that are more directly related to our current discussion — showing that these acts can benefit a believer, even after his death.

Abû Mas‘ûd al-Ansârî and other companions (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«من دل على خير فلهم مثل أجر فاعلِهِ.»

<i>He who direct to a righteous deed will receive a reward similar to that of those who do it.» ²</i>

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¹ Recorded by Abû Ya‘lā, aṣ-Ṭabarâni, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albâni (ṣaḥîhah no. 2553 and Sahîh ut-Targhib wat-Tarhib no. 1267).

² Recorded by Muslim (1893), Ibn Ḥibbân, and others (see ṣaḥîhah no. 1660).
Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«من دعاء إلى هدى كان له من الأجر مثل أجر من تبعه، لا ينقص ذلِك من أجرهم شيئًا; ومن دعاء إلى ضلالة كان عليه من الأجر مثل أثام من تبعه، لا ينقص ذلِك من أثامهم شيئًا.»

He who calls to guidance will receive rewards similar to the rewards of those who follow him, without any reduction of their rewards. And he who calls to misguidance will receive sins similar to the sins of those who follow him, without any reduction of their sins.¹

Jarīr Bin ‘Abdillāh (ﷺ) reported that, one day, the Prophet (ﷺ) was with his companions (ﷺ) around noon when a group of people from the tribe of Muḍār arrived from outside al-Madinah to see him. These people were barefoot, scantily clothed in worn woolen striped garments or cloaks, with swords hanging around their necks. The face of Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) changed (reflecting sadness) when he observed their extreme poverty. He went in (to his house), then came out, commanded Bilāl to call the athān, and prayed zuhr. Mounted a small minbar, he then gave a khutbah in which he praised and extolled Allāh, and then said:

«أما بعد، فإن الله أنزل في كتابه:»

<Indeed, Allāh has revealed in His Book:>

«يا أباها أنتِ الناس أنتِ ربيكمِ الذي خلقكمِ من نفس واحدة، وخلق منِها زوجها، وثبت منُهما رجلاً كثيرًا ونساءً، وأنتِ بني آدم، إن الله كان عليكم رقيبًا النساء.»

«O people! Revere your Lord who has created you from a single soul, created from it its mate, and

¹ Recorded by Muslim (2674) and others.
dispersed from both of them many men and women.

Revere Allāh through whom you demand things from one another, and (cherish the ties of) the wombs. Indeed, Allāh is ever-Watchful over you.»

«O you who believe! Revere Allāh, and let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow; and revere Allāh. Allāh is well Aware of what you do! And be not like those who forgot (disobeyed) Allāh, and He caused them to forget themselves. Those are the disobedient. Unequal are the dwellers of the Fire and the dwellers of Jannah. It is the dwellers of Jannah that will be successful.»

«Spend (in Allāh’s way) before you are prevented from spending. Let a man spend of his dinārs, dirhams, clothes, and measures of wheat, barley, or dates ... even if you can only afford half a date. Do not belittle any amount of charity.»

Observing the people’s slow response, the Prophet’s (ﷺ) face showed signs of anger. But then, one man from the Anṣār came with a parcel of silver and gold (so heavy) that he could hardly hold in his hand. He

1 An-Nisa’ 4:1.
handed it to the Prophet (ﷺ) while he was still on the minbar, and said, “O Allâh’s Messenger, take this, for Allâh’s cause.” Abû Bakr (ﷺ) then gave something, ‘Umar (ﷺ) gave something, and the rest of the Muhâjrûn and Anûsâr followed each other in giving charity. Finally, a piles of food and another pile of clothes rose before the Prophet (ﷺ), making his face light up with a reddish-golden color (from happiness), and he said:

He who initiates in Islâm a good way gets his reward for it, as well as rewards similar to those who follow him into it, without reducing any of their rewards. And he who initiates in Islâm an evil way receives his burden for it, as well as burdens similar to those who follow him into it, without reducing any of their burdens.

He (ﷺ) then recited:

«We record that which they have done, as well as their traces — and We have enumerated everything in a clear book.»

And he divided what was collected among the poor people from Muḍâr.

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1 Ḣâdîth (1017), Aḥmad, and others.

2 Recorded by Muslim (1017).
Charitable Deeds from the Deceased’s Child

A PERSON’S CHILD IS FROM HIS OWN EARNING

The earnings of a person’s offspring are like his own. 'A’ishah (عنها) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إن أطَّبَقَ مَا أَكَلَ الرَّجُلُ مِن كَسْبِهِ، وَإِنَّ وَلَدَهُ مِن كَسْبِهِ.»

<Indeed, the best that a person eats is that which he earns. And his child is from his earning.> ¹

Parents normally rear their child and train him to earn his sustenance and do righteous deeds. Therefore, the child’s future earnings are initiated by his parents, which makes them deserve a share in them.

This is especially true and important if the child’s “earnings” are righteous deeds. In the rest of this section, we present specific examples from the Sunnah in this regard.

SUPPLICATION FOR THE DECEASED PARENTS

We saw earlier that a righteous child benefits his deceased parents with his duʿā. Similarly, Abū Hurayrah (ồn) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

إِنَّ الْرَّجُلَ لَنَرْفَعُ دُرْجَتَهُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، فَيُفْقِرُ:

أَلَّا لِي هَذَا؟ فَيُفْقَالُ: "بِأَسْبَبُ الصَّرْحَاءِ وَلَدِيكَ لَكَ."

<Indeed, a person’s status will be raised in Jannah, and he will ask, “How did I earn this?” He will be told, “This is because your child sought forgiveness for you.”> ²

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā’ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Irwā’ul-Ghalīl no. 1626 and Sahīh ul-Ṣāmi’ no. 1566).
² Recorded by Ibn Mājah, Ahmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (aṣ-Sahīhah no. 1598 and Hidāyat ur-Ruwāh no. 2293).
In what follows, we discuss other deeds from a child that may benefit his deceased parents.

**Giving Charity on Behalf of a Parent**

Since a person’s child is from his own earning, a charity that the child gives on his parent’s behalf is considered as being given by the parent. ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that a man asked the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), “My mother died a sudden death, and did not have a chance to bequeath. Had she been able to do, I think that she would have given ṣadaqah. Would she or I get a reward if I give ṣadaqah on her behalf?” The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) replied, «نعم، تصدق عندها.» You, so give ṣadaqah on her behalf.» ¹

Ibn ‘Abbas (رضي الله عنه) reported that Sa’d Bin ‘Ubadah came to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and asked him, “O Allah’s Messenger, my mother passed away while I was away (on a journey). Would it be of benefit to her if I give ṣadaqah on her behalf?” The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) replied, «نعم.» Yes! So Sa’d said, “Be my witness, then, that I give my fruitful date garden as ṣadaqah on her behalf.” ²

Abū Hurayrah reported that a man asked the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), “My father has died leaving behind wealth, but he did not bequeath. Would it help him if I give ṣadaqah on his behalf?” The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) replied, «نعم.» Yes.

‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Amr Bin ‘Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that his father, ‘Amr, asked the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), “O Allah’s Messenger, my father, al-‘Āṣ Bin Wā’il as-Sahmī (who died as a pagan) bequeathed that one hundred slaves be freed on his behalf. My brother Hishām has freed fifty, and fifty are left. Should I free them on my father’s behalf?” The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) replied:

إِنَّهُ لَوْ كَانَ مَسْلِماً (أُفْرَرَ بِالْتَّوْجِيدِ) فَاعْكُبْنَاهُمْ أَوْ نُصَدَّقَنَّهُمْ
أَوْ صُمَّنَّهُمْ أَوْ حَجَّجْنَّهُمْ عَنَّهُ بَلْغَهُ (تَفْعَهُ) ذَلِكَ

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1388, 2760), Muslim (1004), and others.
2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2756, 2762, 2770), Ahmad, and others.
3 Recorded by Muslim (1630), Ahmad, and others.
Had he been a Muslim (who professes Allâh’s oneness), your freeing slaves, giving sadaqah, fasting, or performing hajj on his behalf would all have reached him (as rewards) and benefited him.  

Commenting on these hadîths, ash-Shawkânî (d5) said:

“This indicates that the rewards for a sadaqah from a child reach the parents after their death — even if they had not bequeathed it. These hadîths (appear to) restrict the general meaning of Allâh’s (ۚ) saying:

وَأَنَّ لَيْسَ لِإِلَٰهٍ إِلاًّ مَا سَعَى

«And that the human being can only receive (rewards for) what he earned.»

However, there is no indication in these hadîths that the sadaqah may reach (the deceased) from other than his own child. Since it is established that a person’s child is his own earning, there is no need to claim that there is a restriction (of the âyah by these hadîths).

As for the sadaqah from other than the child, it is apparent from general Qur’ânic texts that it does not benefit the deceased. This should then be maintained unless additional evidence can be brought to restrict it.”

**DOING OTHER CHARITABLE DEEDS ON BEHALF OF A PARENT**

We saw from ‘Amr Bin al-‘Âş’s above hadîth that other good deeds, besides charity, done on behalf of a deceased parent, may benefit that parent.

Similarly, Buraydah (ۚ) reported that a woman asked the

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1 Recorded by Ahmad, Abû Dâwûd, and al-Bayhaqî. Verified to be ḥasan by al-Albânî (Akhkâm ul-Janaîz p. 218).


Prophet (ﷺ), “O Allah’s Messenger, my mother died without performing hajj. May I perform it on her behalf?” The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, «أَمِّي مِنْ ذُمَّةَ يَتَبَصَّرُ فَأَذَاعَهَا هَلْ يَكُونُ لَهَا صُلُبَّ يَبْعِثَهَا إِلَى الْقُلُوبِ؟» «فَوَلَّى الْعَيْنَةُ.» She asked, “My mother also had (vowed) one month’s fasting that she could not fulfill. Does it help her that I fast on her behalf?” He replied, «أَمِّي مِنْ ذُمَّةَ يَتَبَصَّرُ فَأَذَاعَهَا هَلْ يَكُونُ لَهَا صُلُبَّ يَبْعِثَهَا إِلَى الْقُلُوبِ؟» «فَوَلَّى الْعَيْنَةُ.»

**Fulfilling the Deceased Parent’s Vows**

The Prophet (ﷺ) approved for a child to fulfill on behalf of his deceased parent vows that are permitted in Islam. This is clear from ‘Amr Bin al-‘As’s above hadith, as well as the following hadiths.

Ibn ‘Abbās (ﷺ) reported that a woman asked the Prophet (ﷺ) whether she may fast on behalf of her mother who made a vow to fast for one month but died before fulfilling her vow. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked her, «أَرَأَيْتَ أَنْ أَلْيَمَةَ عَكَّضَتْهَا. كَيْنَتْ نَفْسَكَةَ؟» «لَأَنْ أَلْيَمَةَ كَأَمْضَى أَمْمُكَ لَأَنْ أَلْيَمَةَ كَأَمْضَى أَمْمُكَ.»<br>

“Allah’s debt is more worthy of being fulfilled. So fulfill (the vow) for your mother.”

Ibn ‘Abbās (ﷺ) also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) gave a similar answer to a woman who asked him the same question in regard to her mother who died before fulfilling a vow to perform hajj.

Sa’d Bin Ubādah (ﷺ) reported that he asked the Prophet (ﷺ) if he may fulfill a vow on behalf of his mother who had made it but died before fulfilling it. The Prophet (ﷺ) instructed him, «أَفَضِّلْ عَنْهَا.» «فَأَفْضِلْ عَنْهَا.» «فَأَفْضِلْ عَنْهَا.» «فَأَفْضِلْ عَنْهَا.» «فَأَفْضِلْ عَنْهَا.»

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1 Recorded by Muslim (1149), Ahmad, and others.
2 It is permissible to vow to perform an act of worship, but not to disobey Allāh (ﷻ).
3 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1953), Muslim (1148), and others.
4 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1852, 6699, 7315) and others.
5 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2761, 6698, 6959), Muslim (1638), and others.
Charitable Deeds by Other than an Offspring

**A PERSON IS AWARDED ACCORDING TO HIS OWN EARNINGS**

We established earlier the important general rule that a person’s status in the hereafter is merely the result of his own deeds.

We also established that deeds done by a person offspring are considered, at least partially, as being from his earning.

We show in this section that there are also deeds done by other than the deceased person’s offspring that may benefit him and add to his record of good deeds after death.

It is important to note, however, that the following examples only restrict the above rule and do not abrogate it. In other words, a dead person cannot benefit from the deeds done by other people on his behalf EXCEPT in the limited cases that have evidence from the Sunnah.

**SUPPLICATION FOR THE DECEASED**

A Muslim’s *du‘ā' for a dead Muslim benefits both of them tremendously. When it is done correctly, truthfully, and sincerely, it reflects a high level of brotherhood and concern, and it eliminates the factor of showoff that can potentially destroy good deeds. Allāh (ﷺ) says:

> «And those who came after them (i.e., the early Muslims) say, “Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in īmān, and do not place in our hearts any hatred toward the believers. Our Lord, You are Kind and Merciful.” »

A believer attains a great amount of rewards when he supplicates

1 *Al-Hashr* 59:10.
for other believers. 'Ubadah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ أَسْتَغْفَرَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِكُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ وَمُؤْمِنَةٍ حَسَنَةً»

«Whoever seeks forgiveness for the believing men and women, Allah records for him a good deed for every believing male and female.» ¹

When a Muslim sincerely supplicates for other Muslims in their absence, Allah accepts his supplication, and He (ﷻ) accords him a favor similar to what he requested for others. Abū ad-Dardā' (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«دُعُوَةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ السَّمِيمِ لَأَخِيهِ بَيْنِ الْغَيْبِ مُسْتَجِبَةٌ. عِنْدَ رَأْسِهِ مَلِكٌ»

«مَوْكَبٌ بِهِ، كَلِمَةً دَعَاءَ لَأَخِيهِ بَيْحِرٍ، قَالَ الْمَلِكُ: "أَمِينَ وَلَا كَبْشٌ".»

«A Muslim’s supplication for his brother in his absence is accepted. An angel is appointed near his head, and every time he requests good for his brother, the angels says, “Āmīn; and the same be given to you.”» ²

Since the above two ḥadīth are general, they are applicable whether the absent Muslims are living or dead.

**JANĀZAH PRAYER**

When righteous Muslims pray janāzah for their deceased fellow-believer, sincerely begging Allah to forgive him, Allah (ﷻ) accepts their supplication and forgives him. Since those Muslims who associated with him did not find any major problem to prevent them from supplicating for him, Allah, the Most Generous, accepts their supplication and forgives many of his hidden sins that they did not know. Ā'ishah, Anas, and Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the

¹ Recorded by At-Ṭabarānī in al-Kabīr; verified to be ḥasan by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi' no. 6026).

² Recorded by Muslim (2732-2733), Ahmad, and others.
Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«ما من مسلم يصلي عليه إلا من المسلمين يباعون منه.»

«كلهم يشفعون له، إلا شفيعا فيه (الله غفر له).»

<Whenever a group of Muslims, reaching one hundred in number, pray janāzah for a deceased person, all interceding on his behalf, their intercession is granted (by Allāh), and he is forgiven.>¹

Ibn ‘Abbās ( ﷺ ) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«ما من مسلم يموت، فيقوم على جنازته أربعون رجلاً.»

«لا يشترون بالله شيئا إلا شفيعهم الله فيه.»

<Whenever a Muslim dies, and forty men pray over his janāzah, none of them joining anything with Allāh in worship, Allāh grants them intercession for him.>²

Maymūnah ( ﷺ ) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«ما من ميت يصلي عليه أمة من الناس، إلا شفعوا فيه.»

<Whenever a large group of people pray janāzah for a deceased person, they are granted intercession for him.>³

Commenting on Ibn ‘Abbās’s above hadīth, Shams ul-Ḥaqq Ābādī ( ﷺ ) said:

¹ Recorded by Muslim (947), an-Nasa‘ī, and others
² Recorded by Muslim (948), Abū Dāwūd, and others
³ Recorded by an-Nasa‘ī and Ahmad. Verified to be hasan by al- Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ ul- Jāmi‘ no. 5787 and Ahkām ul-Janaiz p. 127).
“These hadīths indicate that it is recommended to gather a large number of people for the janāzah prayer. It should be attempted to reach this number (of forty), because that could lead to success (in the forgiveness of the deceased). But this has been restricted by two conditions:

1. They should seriously intercede for him, which means that they should be sincere in supplication and in seeking forgiveness for him.

2. They should all be true Muslims, none among them joining partners with Allāh.”

SUPPLICATION OVER THE GRAVE

The Prophet (ﷺ) taught and said various supplications during the janāzah prayer and over the graves. Obviously, he did this because of their beneficial outcome for the dead. In what follows, we cite a few examples.

‘Uthmān (usaha) reported that after finishing burying a Muslim, the Prophet (ﷺ) would stand over the grave and say:

«استغفروا لأخيكم، ثم سلوا له التوبة، فإنه الآن يسأل.»

(Seek Allāh’s) forgiveness for your brother, and then implore that he be granted firmness of words. Indeed, he is being questioned now.»

‘Ā’ishah (usaha) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) often went to al-Baqi’ graveyard to supplicate for the dead, and he told her:

«إنني أمرت أن أدعو لهم.»

1 ‘Awn ul-Ma’bud no. 3168.
2 Recorded by Abū Dawūd and al-Ḥākim. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’ no. 945 and Hidayat ur-Ruwāh no. 129).
"I was instructed (by Allah) to supplicate for them." ¹

‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) would go to al-Baqi’ late at night and say:

"As-salamu ‘alaykum dāra qawmin mu’minīn, wa-innā wa’iyyākum wamā tū’adūna ghadan mu’ajjalūn, wa-innā in-shā-Allāhu bikum lāhiqūn. Allāhumm-aghfir lahūn."

Peace be on you, dwellings of believing people. Indeed, we and you and whatever you have been promised are all postponed for tomorrow (Judgment Day). And indeed, we will follow you when Allah wills. O Allah, forgive them." ²

Similarly, Buraydah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) taught his companions to say when they went to the Muslims’ graveyards:

"As-salamu ‘alaykum ahl-ad-diyar min-al-mu’mīnīn wal-muslimīn, wa-innā in-shā-Allāhu bikum lāhiqūn, antum lanā faratun wanaḥnu lakum taba’. As’al-Ullāha lanā wa-lakum-ul-‘āfiyyah — Peace be on you, dwellers of these places of believers and Muslims. Indeed, we will surely follow you when Allah wills. You have preceded us, and we will follow

¹ Recorded by Ahmad. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ahkām ul-Janā’iz p. 239).
² Recorded by Muslim (974) and others. Part of this supplication was also recorded by Muslim (249) and others from Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ).
you. I ask Allāh to grant well-being to us and you."  

**Testifying to the Deceased’s Virtues**

The praise of righteous Muslims for a deceased Muslim benefits him after his death. Conversely, their blame for him harms him.

Anas (-defense) reported that the Prophet (-defense) once passed by a funeral and heard the people praise the dead person for his virtues and good deeds. The Prophet (-defense) said, "Granted, granted, granted." Later on, the Prophet (-defense) passed by a funeral and heard the people condemn the dead person for his evil deeds. Allāh’s Prophet (-defense) said, "Granted, granted, granted." 'Umar (-defense) then asked the Prophet (-defense) what he meant by saying this in both cases. The Prophet (-defense) replied:

"من أنتستمَّ عليه خيراً وجبت له الجنة، ومن أنتستمَّ عليه شراً وجبت له النار. الملاكَة شهداء الله في السماة، وأنت شهداء الله في الأرض، أنتم شهداء الله في الأرض، أنتم شهداء الله في الأرض، إن لله ملاكَة تنطق على أنسية بني آدم بما في السمو من الخير والشر.

"Any (dead) person whom you praise will be granted Jannah. And any (dead) person whom you condemn will be granted the Fire. The angels are Allāh’s witnesses in heaven; and you (the believers) are Allāh’s witnesses on earth, you are Allāh’s witnesses on earth, you are Allāh’s witnesses on earth. Indeed, Allāh has angels who speak upon the humans’ tongues as to whatever good or evil is in a person."  

‘Umar (-defense) reported that the Prophet (-defense) said:

"أيما مسلم شهيد له أربعة تجزؤ أدخله الله الجنة."  

1 Recorded by Muslim (975) and others.
2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1367, 2642), Muslim (949), and others.
Whenever four (Muslims) testify on behalf of a (dead) Muslim, Allāh will admit him into Jannah.

The Prophet (ﷺ) was asked, “What if they were only three?” He replied, “And three.” He was asked, “What if they were only two?” He replied, “And two.”

Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

ما مَنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَبْنُ فَيَشَهِدُ لَهُ أَرِبَاعٌ مِنْ أُهُلِ أَبْنَاتِ جِيْشِهِ الأُوْلِياءِ

أنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ عَنْهُ إِلَّا خَيْرَا إِلاَّ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى وَبَارَكَ: “فَقَدْ قَبِلْتُ

بَشَهَادَتَكُمْ وَغَفَّرْتُ لَهُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ.”

Whenever a Muslim dies and four of his closest neighbors testify that they only knew good about him, Allāh (ﷺ) will then say, “I accept your testimony, and forgive that which you do not know (about him).”

It is important to note that:

a) As indicated by Ibn Hājar (ﷺ) in his commentary (in Fath ul-Bārī) on the above hadīths, the testimony concerning a deceased Muslim should be made by righteous Muslims who follow the guidance of the sahābah (ﷺ).

b) The testimony would only be useful if it is based on a witness’s true knowledge of the situation and behavior of the deceased.

**Payment of the Deceased’s Debts**

Any debt owed by a deceased Muslim must be paid off from his estate immediately after his death. If he did not leave enough money to cover
his debt, his offspring should try to cover it on his behalf. If they fail to do so, or he had no offspring, his closest relatives and other Muslims are urged to pay off his debt.

Neglecting to pay off the deceased’s debt may lead to his punishment in the grave. Conversely, paying off his debt may be a means of ending his punishment.

Sa’d Bin al-Atwal (ﷺ) reported that his brother died, leaving only three hundred dirhams that Sa’d wanted to spend on his brother’s children, but the Prophet (ﷺ) told him:

«إن أخاك معبوس بدينه، فان الله فاقض عنه.»

‘Your brother is restrained (from Jannah) by his debt. So go pay it off for him.’

Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«نفس المؤمن معلقة بدنيه حتى يقضى عنه.»

‘A believer’s soul is attached by his debt (i.e., prevented from entering Jannah) — until it is paid off for him.’

Samurah Bin Jundub (ﷺ) reported that once, after praying janāzah over a man, the Prophet (ﷺ) asked, «أهلك من آل فلان أحد؟ ¿Is anyone of the family of so-and-so (the deceased) present?» When he heard no answer, the Prophet (ﷺ) repeated his question three times, and a man from the back rows said, “Here I am,” and proceeded hurriedly toward the Prophet (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

ما منعك في المرين الأولين أن تكون أجياسني؟ أما إنني لم أنوّه باسمك إلا لغيتي. إن فلاناً مسأوري بدنيه عن الجنّة. فان شئتُم

1 Recorded by Ibn Mājah, Ahmad, and al-Bayhaqi. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Akhām ul-Janaiz p. 26).

2 Recorded by at-Tirmithi, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Hidāyat ur-Ruwāh no. 2846 and Ṣaḥīh ul-Jāmi’ no. 6779).
«What prevented you from responding to me the first two times? I only called you for a good reason. So-and-so is restrained by his debt from entering Jannah. So if you wish, ransom him; otherwise, surrender him to Allah’s punishment.»

So his family and other relatives rushed to pay off his debts.

Jabir Bin ‘Abdillah (رضي الله عنه) reported that once the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was about to pray the janāzah prayer over a man, then he paused and asked, «Perhaps your friend owed a debt?» He was told, “Yes, two dinārs.” So he stepped back and said, «You pray for your friend.» Abū Qatādah (رضي الله عنه) said, “O Allah’s Messenger, I will take care of the two dinārs.” The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) inquired, «Do you pledge them from your own wealth and clear the deceased from them?» He replied, “Yes.” So the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) prayed janāzah for him. On the following day, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) met Abū Qatādah and asked him, «What happened with the two dinārs?» Abū Qatādah replied, “O Allah’s Messenger, he died only yesterday!” On the next day, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) asked him the same question, and he replied, “I have paid them off, O Allah’s Messenger.” The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) then told him:

«أَلْيَإِنْ بَرِّدَتْ عَلَيْهِ جُلْدُهُ»

«Only now have you cooled down his skin (from punishment).»

FASTING DAYS THAT THE DECEASED VOWED

It is recommended for a deceased’s close relatives to fulfill his vows for fasting. ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

1 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā’i, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Aḥkām ul-Janaiz p. 26).
2 Recorded by Ahmad, al-Hakim, and others. Verified to be hasan by al-Albānī (Aḥkām ul-Janaiz p. 27, Ṣaḥīh ul-Jwtî no. 2753, and Irwâ’ul-Ghilîl no. 1416).
Chapter 11

Life in al-Barzakh

«\(\text{من مات وَعَلِيهِ صَبَائِمُ،} \quad \text{فَصَامَ عنْهُ وَلَيْهُ.}\)»

<Whoever dies while he has fasting to fulfill (as a vow), his next of kin should fast for him.> 1

However, this hadith does NOT support the view held by some scholars that it is also recommended to fast days of Ramadān that the deceased had missed. The correct position in this regard is expressed by Imām Aḥmad (ﷺ):

“One may not fast for a dead person except in the case of a vow.” 2

This position is confirmed by the understanding of two of the saḥābah: ‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) and Ibn ‘Abbās (ﷺ).

A ṭabī‘ī woman called ‘Amrah (ﷺ) reported that she asked ‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) whether she may fast on behalf of her deceased mother who missed some days from the month of Ramadān. ‘Ā’ishah replied:

“No! Rather, give ṣadāqah to the needy in the amount of a half ṣā‘ ³ (of grains or food) for every missed day.” 4

Sa‘īd Bin Jubayr (ﷺ) reported that Ibn ‘Abbās (ﷺ) said:

“If a man becomes sick in Ramadān and dies without fasting, food should be given on his behalf, and there is no need to make up for the fasting. But if he had made a vow (to fast), his next of kin should fast for him.” 5

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1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1952), Muslim (1147), and others.
2 Abū Dāwūd’s Masā’il, no. 96.
3 A ṣā‘ is a measure approximately equal to four scoops with an average man’s hands cupped together.
4 Recorded by at-Tahāwī and Ibn Ḥazm. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ahkām ul-Janaiz 215).
5 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Ḥazm. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (Ahkām ul-Janaiz 215).
Commenting on this, al-Albānī (Ǌ) said:

“This is the most moderate and appropriate opinion in this regard, and it conforms with all of the relevant ḥadīths, without neglecting any of them, especially the first one (last page), which the Mother of the Believers (رضي الله عنها) did not find applicable to the fasting of Ramāḍān. She was the reporter of the ḥadīth, and it is established that a narrator of a ḥadīth is more knowledgeable about the meaning of what he reports, especially when his understanding agrees with the rules and foundations of the Shari‘ah, as is the case here.”

Also commenting on ‘Ā’ishah’s (رضي الله عنها) ḥadīth, Ibn ul-Qayyim (Ǌ) said:

“One group (of scholars) generalizes this, and says that both vowed and missed obligatory fasting should be made up for the deceased. Another group rejects this and says that no fasting may be made up for the deceased. A third group is more specific in saying that only the vowed fasting, but not the obligatory fasting, should be fasted on his behalf. This is the opinion of Ibn ‘Abbās and his followers, and is the correct one.

Just as it is not possible for one to pray on behalf of another, or embrace Islām on his behalf, the same is true for fasting. If it is vowed, it becomes a committed obligation similar to a debt. Thus, its execution by the next of kin is acceptable, as in the case of the debt.

Likewise, it is not possible to perform hajj or give zakāh on behalf of the deceased unless he had an acceptable excuse in delaying them. This is similar to a next of kin feeding the needy on behalf of the deceased who broke his fast in Ramāḍān with a valid excuse. But if he neglected his obligations without a valid excuse, it would not help him that others perform his neglected

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obligations, because he was the one required to perform them as a test for him – not the next of kin. Thus, no one may repent on behalf of someone else, nor accept Islam, nor perform the prayers or other obligations that he neglected until death.”

A Wrong View Regarding Deeds Done by a Non-Offspring

Some people believe that all charitable deeds on behalf of a deceased person benefit him, whether done by his children or other people. This, however, is refuted by the above strong proofs and arguments.

Al-Albānī (ٍ) said:

“The analogy of equating between the deeds done by an offspring and a non-offspring is invalid for various reasons:

1. It conflicts with general Qur’ānic texts that make a person’s good deeds a condition for entering Jannah.

2. There is no doubt that a parent benefits himself by raising his child and nurturing him. Thus, unlike other people, he deserves a reward for this … Islam considers a child part of his parents’ earnings, but not of other people’s earnings.

3. Had this analogy been possible, it would have implied that it is recommended to dedicate rewards to the dead. In such a case, the salaf would have done this, because they surely were more concerned than us to do good.”

Ibn Taymiyyah (ٍ) said:

“When the salaf performed a voluntary deed, such as

1 Flăm ul-Muwaqqîṁ 3:554.
2 Summarized from Aḥkām ul-Jāndîz pp. 220-221.
Life in *al-Barzakh* 225  Deeds Continuing after Death

prayer, fasting, *hajj*, or reciting Qur'ān, it was not their practice to dedicate the rewards of that deed to dead Muslims. We should not abandon the way of the *salaf*, because it is more sound and complete.”  

It should be noted that an-Nawawī and Ibn Qudāmah (ائد) claimed *ijmā’* (consensus) that a dead person benefits from the good deeds, including Qur'ānic recitation, done on his behalf by other people. We have shown above that this opinion is incorrect. Furthermore, al-Albānī (ائد) indicated that it falls under two additional considerations:

1. It has been demonstrated by staunch scholars, such as Ibn Ḥāzm (in *Uṣūl ul-Aḥkām*), ash-Shawkānī (in *Irshād-ul-Fuhūl*), and ‘Abd ul-Wahhāb Khalilāf (in *Uṣūl-ul-Fiqh*), that it is not possible to justify *ijmā’* for other than the most obvious matters in Islām. *Imām* Ahmad indicated this in his famous refutation against the claimant of *ijmā’*.

2. I investigated many cases for which there are claims of *ijmā’* and found that there is an obvious difference of opinion concerning them. I even found (in some cases) that the opinion of the majority of scholars is contrary to the claimed *ijmā’*.

The danger of holding a wrong belief in regard to this issue was clarified and emphasized by al-Albānī (ائد):

“Anyone who adopts this wrong understanding would rely upon others for acquiring rewards and a high status in the hereafter … This would then relieve him from

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1 *Al-Ikhtiyārāt ul-'Ilmiyyah* p. 54 (as cited in *Aḥkām ul-Janā’īz* p. 221). Al-Albānī indicated that Ibn Taymiyyah also had an earlier opinion contradicting this one, which was advocated by his student Ibn ul-Qayyim in *ar-Rūh*. That opinion was strongly refuted by Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā in *Tafsīr ul-Manār* 8:254-270.
2 In *al-Minhāj* and *al-Mughānī* repectively.
3 *Aḥkām ul-Janā’īz* p. 219.
having to work hard because others strive on his behalf! ... The wrong view that it is permissible to perform *hajj* on behalf of others, even if there is no valid excuse preventing them from performing it themselves, causes many wealthy individuals to drop *hajj* or other obligations with the excuse that others will perform them on their behalf after their death ...”  

Deeds that Harm After Death

We saw above that good deeds initiated by the deceased before his death continue to benefit him and increase his record of good deeds. Conversely, bad deeds initiated by the deceased before death continue to harm him and increase his record of bad deeds.

Allāh (ﷻ) says in regard to those who misguide others:

«Let them on Resurrection Day bear their full burdens (of sins), as well as some of the burdens of those ignorant ones whom they misguided. Unquestionably, evil is that which they will bear.»  

In Abū Hurayrah’s (ﷺ) *ḥadīth* that we cited earlier, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«He who calls to guidance will receive rewards similar to the rewards of those who follow him, without reducing any of their rewards. And he who

1 *Ahkām ul-Janaiz* pp. 222-223.
2 *An-Nahl* 16:25.
calls to misguidance will receive sins similar to the sins of those who follow him, without reducing any of their sins.» 1

And in Jarīr Bin ‘Abdillāh’s (��) hadīth that we cited earlier, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«وَمَنْ سَبَّبَ سَبْبَةً فِي الإِسْلَامِ سَبْبَةً كَانَ عَلَيْهِ وَزْرًا وَمَثَلُ وَزْرٍ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَن يَنْقُصَ مِنْ أَوْزَارِهِمْ شَيۡءًا.»

«He who initiates in Islām a good way gets his reward for it, as well as rewards similar to those who follow him into it, without reducing any of their rewards. And he who initiates in Islām an evil way receives his burden for it, as well as burdens similar to those who follow him into it, without reducing any of their burdens.» 2

Therefore, the deceased’s record of bad deeds will continue to increase as more people accept his misguidance and follow it after his death. Just as a righteous person leaves behind him a trace of good deeds, an evil person leaves a trace of bad deeds. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَنَكُنْبَ مَا قَدَّمَوْا وَمَا أَثَّرُوا وَكُلُّ شَيۡءٍ أَخْصِيَّةً فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ» يَس ١٢

«We record that which they have done, as well as their traces — and We have enumerated everything in a clear book.» 3

From the earlier discussions in this chapter and previous ones, we can list several examples of deeds that harm a person after death:

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1 Recorded by Muslim (2674) and others.
2 Recorded by Muslim (1017), Ahmad, and others.
3 Ya-Sīn 36:12.
* Raising one’s children upon disbelief or sinning.

* Opposing charitable deeds such as building a masjid or a house for the stranded travelers.

* Spreading wrong teachings and misguidance.

* Encouraging one’s family and relatives to hold a funeral filled with wailing, bid’ahs, and other wrongs.

* Righteous people cursing or condemning him.

Summary

From the above discussion, we conclude that:

1. An important general rule in Islām is that a person’s deeds are sealed by his death. Nothing that takes place after death can affect his record.

2. An exception to the above rule is anything, good or bad, occurring after a person’s death, to which he contributed in any manner during his lifetime. Such a deed will appear in his records in proportion to his contribution to it.

The following subsections summarize the main points that were discussed in this chapter.

Deeds with Traces

There are deeds whose traces may extend after a person’s death. If the traces are good (or evil), they keep adding to a person’s record of good (or bad) deeds as long as their traces exist after him. The following list contains examples of such deeds:
Deeds with Good Traces | Deeds with Evil Traces
--- | ---
Establishing an ongoing charity | Establishing ongoing *ribā*, gamble, or other unlawful monetary transactions
Teaching beneficial knowledge | Teaching harmful knowledge
Calling to Sunnah and guidance | Calling to *biḍ'ah* and misguidance
Raising a righteous child | Raising a sinful child
Establishing a facility for worshiping and obeying Allāh | Establishing a facility for disbelief or sinning
Establishing a facility for helping the needy, widows, orphans, etc | Opposing facilities that would help the needy, widows, orphans, etc
Endowing *mushafs* and books of Sunnah and other beneficial knowledge | Endowing publications of *biḍ'ah*, sinning, and other harmful knowledge
Setting up water sources, planting fruitful trees, paving a road, and other acts that are of help to people and animals | Destroying water sources, vegetation, pathways, and other acts that are harmful to people and animals

**Deeds Done by Others for the Deceased**

The deceased’s family, relatives, friends, and acquaintances may act in a way to benefit or harm him — depending on whether he was righteous or sinful, and whether he treated them kindly or unjustly. In the following table, we list examples of both types of acts:

| Beneficial Acts | Harmful Acts |
--- | ---
Suplicating and seeking forgiveness for him | Cursing him
Praying *Janāzah* for him | Refusing to pray *Janāzah* for him
Suplicating for him over his grave | Refusing to supplicate for him
Praising his virtues | Condemning and blaming him
Fulfilling his vows | Neglecting his vows
In addition to the acts listed in the previous subsection, there are acts that would enter into a deceased Muslim’s record if done on his behalf specifically by his own offspring. If other Muslims do them, their rewards would not reach him. These acts may benefit or harm the deceased parent — depending on whether he raised his offspring righteously or sinfully. In the following table, we list examples of both types of acts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beneficial Acts</th>
<th>Harmful Acts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paying off his debts</td>
<td>Neglecting his debts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing patience at his death</td>
<td>Wailing over him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving Charity on his behalf</td>
<td>Preventing charity on his behalf, or giving away evil things, such as alcohol, cigarettes, gambling tickets, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfilling his vows for fasting and <em>hajj</em></td>
<td>Neglecting his vows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing <em>hajj</em> on his behalf (if he had a legitimate reason to miss it) and other voluntary acts of worship</td>
<td>Performing innovated (<em>bid'ah</em>) acts of worship on his behalf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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APPENDIX: ARABIC TERMINOLOGY

Introduction

TRANSLATING AND REFERENCING QUR'AN AND HADITH

The Qur'an contains Allâh's exact words that cannot be precisely translated into other languages because of possible misinterpretation and limited human understanding. Therefore, we only translate the meanings as understood by trustworthy Islâmic scholars. Our Qur'an quotes include the Arabic text, the English meaning in «boldface», and a footnote specifying the location of the âyâh(s) cited.

Similarly, our hadith quotes include the Arabic text, the English meaning in «boldface», and a footnote briefly specifying its location in Hadîth compilations and its authenticity verification. If the hadith contains a supplication or exaltation, we generally include a full transliteration of its text.

USEFUL CHARTS

We present below two important charts. The first defines the transliteration symbols that we employ in this book. The second defines terms that should be uttered at the mention of Allâh-or one of His righteous worshipers.

ARABIC TERMS

A number of Arabic terms are frequently used in Islâmic discussions, and seem to constitute a basic vocabulary that needs to be available to the readers of books on Islâm. We attempt to provide such terms, together with their definitions, in the following glossary. We follow the glossary with a list of the Arabic weekdays and the Islâmic lunar months.

Other terms pertinent to the current book are included in the “Index” section at the end of this appendix, together with a page-reference indicating where they are defined in this book.
## Glossary of Common Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Abd</td>
<td>Slave, servant, or worshiper. Pl.: 'ibād or 'abīd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adab</td>
<td>Good characters or manners; etiquettes. Pl.: Ādāb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ākhirah</td>
<td>The last (or hereafter) life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Fātihah</td>
<td>The first chapter of the Qur'ān.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Ālim</td>
<td>A scholar or learned man in Islām.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Allāmah</td>
<td>Exaggerated form of “ālim”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Āmin</td>
<td>“O Allāh, answer my supplication,” said at the end of a supplication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ansār</td>
<td>Madīnah residents who supported the Prophet (ﷺ).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Asr</td>
<td>Afternoon. It is usually applied to the third daily obligatory prayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athān</td>
<td>Call to the prayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Awrah</td>
<td>A weakness that requires protection, or body-parts that must be covered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>from others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Āyah</td>
<td>Miracle or sign. Also, the smallest subdivision of the Qur'ānic text —</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>usually one sentence in length. Pl.: āyāt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidah</td>
<td>Unacceptable innovation in any of the Islāmic teachings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da‘wah</td>
<td>Call or mission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Din</td>
<td>Religion — usually used in reference to the religion of Islām.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinār</td>
<td>An old currency that used gold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirham</td>
<td>An old currency that was made of silver or copper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du‘ā‘</td>
<td>Supplication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunyā</td>
<td>The lower (i.e., wordly) life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fajr</td>
<td>Dawn. It usually applies to the first daily obligatory prayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fard</td>
<td>Obligation. <em>Fard Kifayah</em>: A communal obligation that must be performed by at least a few Muslims. <em>Fard 'Ayn</em>: An obligation that must be performed by every Muslim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatwa</td>
<td>A religious verdict. Pl.: <em>fatāwā</em> or <em>fatawī</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiqh</td>
<td>Understanding. It is often applied to the subject of “Islamic jurisprudence” that deals with the practical regulations in Islam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitnah</td>
<td>Trial, test, temptation, or affliction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiqrah</td>
<td>The pure nature upon which Allah (ﷻ) created people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghayb</td>
<td>All knowledge that is beyond the reach of human perception.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghusl</td>
<td>A ritual bath required after intercourse, ejaculation, and after a woman becomes clean from her menses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadith</td>
<td>Reports of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) sayings, actions, and tacit approvals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hajj</td>
<td>Major pilgrimage to Makkah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halal</td>
<td>Permissible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halqah</td>
<td>A circle or ring. It normally refers to a study circle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haram</td>
<td>Prohibited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan</td>
<td>Good or acceptable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilāl</td>
<td>Crescent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hijāb</td>
<td>Cover. It usually refers to the Muslim woman’s proper clothing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hijrah</td>
<td>Migration — usually refers to the Prophet’s migration to al-Madīnah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Īd</td>
<td>Festival. Pl.: <em>a'yād</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iḥram</td>
<td>Prohibition. This is a state assumed by a pilgrim, prohibiting for him (or her) specific acts, such as hunting, perfume, marriage, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ijmā'</td>
<td>Consensus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ijtihād</td>
<td>Striving to reach a correct conclusion from the available evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imām</td>
<td>A leader (of a nation, prayer, etc.), or a distinguished Islamic scholar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>İmān</td>
<td>Faith or belief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Ishā'</td>
<td>Night. It is usually applied to the fifth daily obligatory prayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isnād</td>
<td>Chain of narrators of a hadith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jahannam</td>
<td>Hell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jāhiliyyah</td>
<td>The era of ignorance (jahl) and disbelief prior to Islam.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Janābah   | A state of “uncleanliness” arising from ejaculation or intercourse.  
Jānābah is ended with a ghust.                                                   |
<p>| Janāzah   | A funeral, or a deceased’s prepared body.                                                                                                  |
| Jannah    | The Garden (of paradise).                                                                                                                  |
| Jihād     | Striving or fighting for Allāh’s cause.                                                                                                     |
| Jinn      | A creation that Allāh (azwj) made from fire and smoke, sometimes translated as “demon”. Satan is one of the jinns.                            |
| Jumu‘ah   | Friday. It also applies to the Friday prayer.                                                                                                |
| Junub     | A person in a state of janābah.                                                                                                             |
| Kāfir     | A person who practices kufr. Pl.: kuffār.                                                                                                   |
| Khalīfah  | Successor. It commonly refers to a Muslim ruler who succeeded the Prophet (ṣallAllāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) in leading the Muslims. Pl.: khulafā’. |
| Khamr     | Alcoholic beverages.                                                                                                                        |
| Khilāfah  | Successorship. It usually refers to the period of rule of a khalfah.                                                                          |
| Kufr      | Disbelief or rejection of the faith of Islam.                                                                                                |
| Khuṭbah   | Speech or sermon.                                                                                                                           |
| Maghrib   | Sunset. It is usually applied to the fourth daily obligatory prayer.                                                                        |
| Makrūh    | An act that is disapproved in Islam.                                                                                                        |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mahram</td>
<td>A man closely related to a woman and permanently prohibited from marrying her, such as her father, son, brother, uncle, nephew, father-in-law, son-in-law, suckling son, etc. Examples of non-mahrans: first cousins, step brothers, and brothers-in-law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masjid</td>
<td>Place designated for sujud; mosque.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathhab</td>
<td>Way or approach. It usually refers to one of the four Islamic schools of fiqh: the Hanafi, Malikī, Shafi'i, and Ḥanbalī.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minbar</td>
<td>Steps mounted by an imām in a masjid for delivering a khutbah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhājir</td>
<td>A migrator — a person who undertakes hijrah. Pl.: muhājirūn or muhājirīn. It usually refers to those who migrated to Madīnah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mujāhid</td>
<td>A person who performs jihād. Pl.: mujāhidūn or mujāhidīn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munkar</td>
<td>Disapproved; rejected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musalla</td>
<td>A place designated for prayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mushrik</td>
<td>A person who practices shirk. Pl.: mushrikūn or mushrikīn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nafl</td>
<td>Extra, voluntary, or supererogatory deeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qadar</td>
<td>Allāh's decree and measure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qiblah</td>
<td>The direction of al-Ka'bah in Makkah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qiyām</td>
<td>Literally means standing. It usually refers to the night prayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qudsī</td>
<td>Holy. A qudsī hadīth is quoted by the Prophet (ﷺ) from Allāh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rak'ah</td>
<td>A full prayer unit, containing one rukā. Pl.: rakāt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribā</td>
<td>Usury or interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rukū'</td>
<td>The act of bowing in the prayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Şadaqah</td>
<td>Charity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Şaḥābah</td>
<td>The Prophet's companions; singular: şaḥābī.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Şaḥīh</td>
<td>True or authentic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaf</td>
<td>The early righteous pioneers and scholars of Islam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ṣalāḥ</td>
<td>Prayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salām</td>
<td>Peace. It also means the greeting with peace (as-salāmu 'alaykum).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanad</td>
<td>Same as isnād.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahādah</td>
<td>Testimony; it is mostly applied to the testimony of Islām: “There is no true god but Allāh, and Muḥammad is Allāh’s Messenger.” Also, it is often applied to martyrdom for Allāh’s (ﷻ) cause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahīd</td>
<td>A person martyred for Allāh’s cause. Fem.: shahīdah, Pl.: shuhada’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shām</td>
<td>The Middle-Eastern area of Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharʿ or</td>
<td>The Islāmic Law. “Sharʿī” means a legislated or permissible matter in Islām. And “ash-Sharʿī” is the Legislator: Allāh (ﷻ).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharʿah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaykh</td>
<td>An elderly man. It is commonly used as a title of respect for a man with some level of Islāmic knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shayṭān</td>
<td>Satan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirk</td>
<td>Polytheism or paganism — ascribing divinity to others besides Allāh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siwāk</td>
<td>A stick from a desert tree used for brushing the teeth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siyām</td>
<td>Fasting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sujūd</td>
<td>The act of prostration in the prayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnah</td>
<td>Way, guidance, or teachings. Most commonly, it refers to the Prophet’s (ﷺ) way and guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūrah</td>
<td>Qur’ānic chapter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tābīʿī</td>
<td>Literally, follower. It normally refers to a student of the sahābah. Pl.: tābīʿūn or tābīʿīn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tafsīr</td>
<td>Qur’ānic commentaries and interpretations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takbīr</td>
<td>Saying, “Allāhu Akbar — Allāh is the greatest.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahīl</td>
<td>Saying, “Lā ilāha illallāh — There is no (true) god except Allāh.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahmīd</td>
<td>(Also, ḥamd): saying, “Al-ḥamdu lillāh — Praise be to Allāh.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taqlîd</td>
<td>Imitation, especially without knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taqwâ</td>
<td>Fearing and revering Allah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasbîh</td>
<td>Saying, “Subhan Allah — Exalted is Allah.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tashahhud</td>
<td>Pronouncing the Shahâdah. It is mostly applied to the last part of the prayer that includes the Shahâdah and salah upon the Prophet (S).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taslim</td>
<td>Saying salâm, especially to conclude the prayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tawâf</td>
<td>Circumambulation around the Ka'bah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tawhîd</td>
<td>Belief that Allâh is the only Lord and God who deserves to be worshiped, and who possesses the excellent and perfect attributes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tayammum</td>
<td>A symbolic ablution, in the absence of water, performed by wiping clean dust over the hands (to the wrists) and face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thîkr</td>
<td>Extollment: remembering and mentioning Allâh (S). Pl.: athkâr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Ulamâ</td>
<td>Plural of “âlim”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ummah</td>
<td>Community, nation, or followers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Umrah</td>
<td>A minor form of pilgrimage to Makkah that may be performed at any time of the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wahy</td>
<td>Revelation or inspiration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wâjib</td>
<td>Obligatory or required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walî</td>
<td>Friend, helper, or guardian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witr</td>
<td>Odd number. The entire night prayer is sometimes called witr because the total number of its rak'ât is odd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wudâ'</td>
<td>Ritual ablution for the prayer, which includes washing the face and forearms, wiping over the head, and washing the feet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zakâh</td>
<td>Obligatory charity. Zakât ul-Fitr: a charity in the form of food given to the needy at the end of Ramadân.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinâ</td>
<td>Adultery or fornication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zuhr</td>
<td>Noon. It usually refers to the second daily obligatory prayer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Arabic Weekdays and Islamic Hijri Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekday</th>
<th>Arabic Name</th>
<th>اليوم</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Al-Jumu'ah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>As-Sabt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Al-Ahad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Al-Itnayn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Ath-Thulathá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Al-Arba'á</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Al-Khamis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lunar Month</th>
<th>شهر</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Muharram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Safar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rabí al-Awwal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rabí al-Ákhir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jumáda Ólá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jumáda Ákhirah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Rajab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sha'bán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ramaḍán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Shawwál</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Thul-Qa'dah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Thul-Hijjah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Transliteration

Except for proper nouns, transliterated Arabic terms are *italicized*. In general, the rules of English pronunciation are applicable. The following table includes additional symbols employed in this book to help pronounce the Arabic terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Stands for</th>
<th>English Equivalent Sounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>á, Å</td>
<td>(l) Alif</td>
<td>Mostly: Man, sad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(long vowel a)</td>
<td>At times: Father, hard, god.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Stands for</td>
<td>English Equivalent Sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ā, ā</td>
<td>(و) Wāw (long vowel u)</td>
<td>Root, soup, flute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ī, ī</td>
<td>(ي) Ya (long vowel i)</td>
<td>Seed, lean, piece, receive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ه</td>
<td>(ع) Hamzah</td>
<td>The first consonant vocal sound uttered when saying: at, it, oh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ث, ث</td>
<td>(ث) Thā</td>
<td>Three, moth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ھ, ھ</td>
<td>(ح) Ha</td>
<td>No equivalent. Produced in the lower throat, below “h”. It somewhat resembles the “h” in “ahem”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ك, خ</td>
<td>(خ) Khā</td>
<td>No equivalent. Produced in the back of the mouth and top of the throat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ث, ث</td>
<td>(ث) Thāl</td>
<td>There, mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>س, ص</td>
<td>(ص) Sād</td>
<td>A deeper “s” sound. Somewhat close to the “sc” in “muscle”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>د, ذ</td>
<td>(ذ) Dād</td>
<td>Sounds deeper than a “d”. Produced by touching the tongue to the mouth’s roof, with the sides of the tongue pressed against the top molars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ت, ت</td>
<td>(ط) Tah</td>
<td>Similar but deeper than a “t”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ز, ز</td>
<td>(ظ) Zah</td>
<td>A deeper thāl, produced by touching the backside of the tongue to the tip of the upper front teeth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>أ</td>
<td>(ع) ‘Ayn</td>
<td>Produced in the bottom of the throat, underneath “h”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>غ, غ</td>
<td>(غ) Ghayn</td>
<td>A gurgling sound produced in the back of the mouth, just above the khā. Similar to the “R” in some French accents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ق, ق</td>
<td>(ق) Qāf</td>
<td>Somewhat similar to the “c” in “coffee”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notable Utterances

Out of love, appreciation, gratitude and other noble feelings, a Muslim is urged to utter the following phrases at the mention of Allāh, His messengers, or other righteous individuals.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase &amp; Transliteration</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Mentioned with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Subḥānahā wa tāʿālā; Jalla jalālu; ʿAzza wajal</em></td>
<td>He is exalted above weakness and indignity; exalted is His glory; He is exalted and glorified.</td>
<td>Allāh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wasallam</td>
<td>May Allāh’s peace and praise be on him.</td>
<td>Muḥammad or another prophet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAlayhis-salām</td>
<td>Peace be on him, her, both of them, or all of them.</td>
<td>Remarkably righteous individuals (prophets, angels, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Alayhas-salām</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Alayhimas-salām</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Alayh as-salām</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu</td>
<td>May Allāh be pleased with him, her, both of them, or all of them.</td>
<td>Ṣahābah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raḍiyallāhu ʿanhā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raḍiyallāhu ʿanhumā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raḥimahullā</td>
<td>May Allāh have mercy on him, her, both of them, or all of them.</td>
<td>Past ‘ulamā‘ or righteous Muslims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raḥimahallā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raḥimahumallā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raḥimahumullā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<th>Translation</th>
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<tr>
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1. Ibrãhim, A Nation in One Man, 184 pp, 2003.

**Other Titles**