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## 1. Stage One of the Life Herafter: An-Naza` Al-Akheer, Drawing The Last Breath

An-Naza` al-Akheer: Drawing the Last Breath

[One hadith says,

One who leads another to a good deed will receive rewards equivalent to that of its doer.

So, earn rewards by circulating this text material, may the Almighty enable you to live a happy life and to die a happy death and thus live eternally in Paradise, Allahomma Aameen.]

Another name for "An-Naza` al-Akheer", drawing the last breath, is سكرات الموت, Death Stupors. Reference to these stupors exists in this Qur'anic verse:

"And the stupor of death will bring truth (before his eyes): "This was the thing which you were trying to escape!" (Qur'an, 50:19).

These are the moments when the dying person bids this vanishing world goodbye, casts a last look at it, mostly at his own self: Life will pass before his eyes like a flash, and he will realize how short it really was, how he wasted it, how he did not perform the purpose behind his very creation: to worship the Almighty his Lord and the Lord of all creation. How will one naturally die? The answer is in verses 88–96

of Surat al-Waqi`a (Chapter 56):

فَأَمَّا إِن كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ، فَرَوْحٌ وَرَيْحَانٌ وَجَنَّةُ نَعِيمٍ: وَأَمَّا إِن كَانَ مِنَ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ فَسَلامٌ لَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ فَسَلامٌ لَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ، فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ الْيَمِينِ، وَأَمَّا إِن كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكَذَّبِينَ الضَّالِينَ فَنُزُلٌ مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ وَتَصْلِيَةُ جَحِيمٍ: إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ، فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ الْيَمِينِ، وَأَمَّا إِن كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكَذَّبِينَ الضَّالِينَ فَنُزُلٌ مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ وَتَصْلِيَةُ جَحِيمٍ: إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ، فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ : رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ : رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

"Thus, then, if he is of those nearest to Allah, (there is) rest and satisfaction (for him) and a Garden of delights. And if he is of the companions of the right Hand, (for him there is salutation:) "Peace be unto you!" from the companions of the right Hand. And if he is one of those who treat (truth) as falsehood, who commit wrong, for him there is entertainment of boiling water and burning in Hell-Fire. Truly this is the very truth, so celebrate with praise the Name of your Lord, the Supreme" (Qur'an, 56:88-96).

See how the Almighty in these verses classifies three methods of death perhaps the first of which is particularly interesting: One who is near to his Maker will smell fragrance which will turn death into a very pleasant and pleasurable experience. Of course an opposite type of death awaits those who are not close to Him and who apparently will experience death by way of suffocation.

According to some traditions, two angels pull life out of each and every cell of the dying person's body, and it will not be fun at all. During these moments, the dying person will have a moment of contemplation on what he has just left behind: worries about the little ones, separation from wealth, estates, precious items, homes on which he spent fortunes, wealth which he amassed without making sure where it exactly came from, etc. And there will be worries about how much he fell short of carrying out with regard to his duties to others and to his Maker.

In Nahjul-Balagha, the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (۶) has summarized it thus:

يتذكر أموالاً جمعها أغمض في مطالبها وأخذها من مُصرَّحاتها ، ومشتبهاتها قد لزمته تبعات جمعها وأشرف على» . «فراقها، تبقى لمن وراءه ينعمون بها فيكون المهنأ لغيره والعبءُ على ظهره

"He shall remember wealth which he had overlooked where it had come from, accepting its sources as they were claimed to be, or as they were thought to be, the consequences of having collected it now are round his neck, haunting him, as he is about to leave it behind him for those who will now enjoy it, thus the pleasure will be for others while he bears the burden."

Verse 22 of Surat Qaf states the following:

لَقَدْ كُنتَ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ

"You were heedless of this, so We have removed your veil, and your sight is sharp (on) this Day!" (Qur'an, 50:22).

Indeed, the sight of the dying person during the stupors of death will be quite sharp: He will for the first time be able to see angels, who are created of light that can easily blind any human eye, and the jinns who are created of smokeless fire. He will be able to see and hear his family, relatives, friends and strangers who are around him at the time of death and who will soon bear his casket to the cemetery.

But he will not be able to show any reaction because he has lost control over his temporal body and his soul c

فيرى رسول الله وأهل بيته الأطهار صلوات الله عليهم وملائكة الرحمة وملائكة العذاب حاضرين عنده ليحكموا فيه وانّه يترقب ايّ حكم يحكمون به، وأي شيء سوف يوصون به ؟ ومن جهة أُخرى قد اجتمع ابليس واعوانه ليوقعوه في الشك ، وهم يحاولون جاهدين أن يسلبوا إيمانه ليخرج من الدنيا بلا إيمان. ومن جهة أُخرى يعاني من هول حضور ملك الموت ، وبأي صورة وهيئة سوف يجيئه به ، وبأي نحو سوف يقبض روحه . الى غير ذلك.. قال أمير ."المؤمنين عليه السلام: "فاجتمعت عليه سكرات الموت، فغير موصوف ما نزل به

"He will see the Messenger of Allah and his Pure Family, peace and blessings of Allah be with them all, the angels of mercy and those of torment, all present near him as he awaits their verdict and what they will decide. On the other hand, the army of Satan and his helpers (will also be present in order to prevent him by all means from saying La ilaha illa-Allah لا إله إلا الله , There is no god save Allah, which is the key to salvation), to cast doubt in his heart and try hard to rob him of his belief (iman المان) so he will come out of this life without iman. At the same time, he is overwhelmed by expecting the presence of the angel of death: In what form it will approach him and how he will take his life away, etc.

Whenever the Prophet (ص) repeated his تلقين talqeen (instruction to the dying person to make a pronouncement), the dying young man could not respond. The Prophet (ص) asked a woman who was sitting at the head of the dying young man if she was his mother, and she answered in the affirmative. He again asked her if she was angry with her young son, and she again answered in the affirmative,

adding that she had not spoken to him for the past six years. The Prophet ( $\bigcirc$ ) asked her to be pleased with her son now, so she said, "May Allah be pleased with him on account of you being pleased with him, O Messenger of Allah."

When the mother thus expressed her pleasure with her dying son, the latter was able to pronounce La ilaha illa-Allah (عن). The Prophet (عن) then asked the youth to tell him about what he saw. The youth said, "I see a very dark man, very ugly, extremely smelly, wearing very filthy outfits, emitting a stench, coming in my direction, pressing on my mouth and respiratory passages." The Prophet (عن) ordered him to say:

"O One Who accepts little (of good deeds) while forgiving a lot (of sinning), do accept what is little [of the good deeds which I have done] and forgive a lot (of my sins); surely You are the Forgiving, the most Merciful." The young man did as instructed by the Prophet ( $\bigcirc$ ), so the Prophet ( $\bigcirc$ ) asked him again about what he now saw. The dying young man said, "I now see a man with a glowing face, pleasant, smelling very nicely and wearing clean outfits coming in my direction, whereupon the dark one is going away and getting ready to depart."

The Prophet (ص) ordered the young man to repeat the statement which he had taught him then asked him once more about what he then saw. "The dark one has already gone, leaving no traces," the young man said, adding, "while the one having a glowing face remains beside me." It was at that moment that the young man passed away. This is recorded on p. 92, Vol. 1 of Mustadrak Wasa'il ash–Shi`ah. We also read on p. 380, Vol. 74 of Bihar al–Anwar that Imam Ja`far as–Sadiq (ع) has said, "One who gives an outfit to his [believing] brother, whether for the summer or for the winter, it will be incumbent upon the Almighty to outfit the first with one of the outfits of Paradise, ease the stupors of death for him and expand his resting place." The greatest Prophet (ص) has said:

"One who feeds his Muslim brother something sweet, Allah will remove from him the bitterness of death." What also helps the dying person and eases his pain is hearing the recitation of Surat Ya-Sin (Chapter 36 of the Holy Qur'an) and Surat as-Saffat (Chapter 37) as well as "du'a al-faraj" which is:

"There is no god save Allah, the Clement, the Great; there is no god save Allah, the all-Knowing,

the Great; praise to Allah, Lord of the seven heavens, Lord of the seven earths and everything in them and everything between them, and the Lord of the Great `Arsh; peace be with the Messengers, and praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds."

We read on p. 33, Vol. 97, of Bihar al–Anwar that according to Imam as–Sadiq (ع), as we are told by the mentor as–Saduq, "One who fasts the last day of the month of Rajab will be placed by Allah in security against the intense pain of the stupors of death and the horror after death as well as the torment in the grave." As quoted by al–Kaf'ami on p. 397, Vol. 2, p. 397 of his Musbah, the Prophet (عن) is quoted as having said that if one recites the following supplication ten times every day, ten thousand of his major transgressions will be forgiven by Allah Who will also save him from the stupors of death and from the constriction of the grave as well as grant him security from one hundred thousands of the horrors of the Judgment Day; He will also protect him from the evil of Satan and his hosts, will pay his debts on his behalf and remove his worries and concerns; this very precious supplication, which you should share with all the ones you love, is as follows:

أعدَدتُ لِكُلِّ هولٍ لا إله إلاّ الله ، وَلِكُلِّ هَمِّ وَغَمِّ ما شاء اللهُ ، وَلِكُلِّ نِعمَةٍ الحَمدُ للهِ ، وَلِكُلِّ رَخاءِ الشُّكرُ للهِ ، وَلِكُلِّ مَل اللهُ وَلِكُلِّ مَصيبَةٍ إنا لله وإنا اليه راجعون ، وَلِكُلِّ ضيقٍ حَسبيَ اللهُ و أُعجُوبَةٍ سُبحان اللهِ ، وَلِكُلِّ ضيقٍ حَسبيَ اللهُ و أَلِكُلِّ عَدُو اعتَصمَتُ باللهِ ، وَلِكُلِّ طاعةٍ وَمَعصبِيَةٍ لا حَولَ ولا قوهَ إلا نعم الوكيل ، وَلِكلِّ قضاءٍ وَقَدَرٍ تَوَكَّلتُ على اللهِ وَلِكُلِّ عَدُو اعتَصمَتُ باللهِ ، وَلِكُلِّ طاعةٍ وَمَعصبِيَةٍ لا حَولَ ولا قوهَ إلا العليم العظيم .

"I have prepared for every horrific thing "There is no god save Allah", for every worry and distress "The will of Allah be done", for every blessing "Praise to Allah", for every prosperity "Thanks to Allah", for every amazing thing "Blessed be Allah", for every sin "I seek forgiveness of Allah", for every transgression "We belong to Allah, and to Him shall we return", for every hardship "Allah suffices me, and how good a Helper He is!", for every decree and destiny "I have relied on Allah", for every enemy "I have sought refuge with Allah" and for every obedience and disobedience "There is neither power nor might save in Allah, the most Sublime, the most Great". Another supplication has as many as seventy merits one of which is that one who recites it will be given glad tidings at the time of his/her death; it is this:

"O You, the most Hearing of those who hear, the most Seeing of those who see, the most Wise of those who decree!" Al-Kulayni has quoted Imam as-Sadiq (¿) as saying, "Do not ever be bored with reciting Surat az-Zalzala (Chapter 99 of the Holy Qur'an), for if one recites it in the voluntary prayers, Allah will keep earthquakes away from him; he will not die because of an earthquake or be struck by lightning or any of this life's catastrophes; a glorious angel will descend upon him, sit at his head and address the angel of death thus: 'Be kind to him, for he is a servant of Allah who used to recite me quite often," as we read on p. 331, Vol. 92, of Bihar al-Anwar.

Remember that in the life hereafter, there will be personification of everything: Each and every action or intention, good or bad deed, will have a form, a shape, an entity. Every verse of the Holy Qur'an, every chapter and the Qur'an as a whole will also have forms. So will desires, wishes, hopes, aspirations, remorse, regret, prayer, fast and all other norms of adoration: All will have forms. How one will distinguish one from the other is a faculty which will be created with him as he is re-created, reformulated, re-born in a new form, for the hereafter is the true life awaiting all of us, so get ready for it; there is no escape from it.

But if you do not believe in the Hereafter, this book is not written for you, and it is a pity it fell in your hands; someone else can make better use of it. Also, some non–Muslims may feel "sorry" for what the Muslims will have to go through in the Afterlife, feeling happy with the thought placed in their heads by their clergymen that they had nothing to worry about, that nothing but many good things await them after they die. Muslims, however, think that all followers of religions, or those who do not follow any religion at all, are entitled to their own wishful thinking.

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