

3. Phase Three Of The Life Hereafter: Wahshat al-Qabr, Grave's Loneliness

Wahshat al-Qabr, Grave's Loneliness

وحشة القبر

According to the book titled *Man la Yahdhuru al-Faqih*, there are tremendous horrors in the grave; therefore, when the deceased person is taken to his burial spot, he must not be entered into it suddenly. He must be placed near the pit for a while so the dead person may get ready to enter it. Then one must bring him closer to it and wait a short while again after which the deceased person is to be placed in the grave. Al-Majlisi, the father, has explained the wisdom in these steps. He says that, true, the soul has already left the body, the "animal spirit" (*spiritus animalis* in Latin) or the moving soul; as for the "articulate soul", it is yet to sever its ties with the body:

There is fear about the grave's constriction, the questioning by Munkir and Nakeer, Ruman who tries to cause the dead to slip away into the torment, and the barzakh; so, the deceased person has a lot to worry about. Ar-Rawandi has narrated saying that Jesus Christ (ع) once addressed his mother, Maryam (Mary) (ع), after her death saying, "Speak to me, Mother! Do you wish to return to the abode of the living?" She said, "Yes, so I may perform the prayers during an extremely cold night, and so I may fast during a very hot day. O Son! This path [of the dead] is frightful, horrific." It has also been narrated that Fatima az-Zahra (peace be with her) said once to her revered husband, Commander of the Faithful Ali (ع), by way of her will:

وروي : ان فاطمة عليها السلام لما احتضرت أوصت علياً عليه السلام فقالت : «إذا أنا مت، فتقول أنت غسلي وجهي، وصل عليّ وانزلني قبوري وألحدني، وسوّ التراب عليّ، واجلس عند رأسي قبالة وجهي، فأكثر من تلاوة القرآن والدعاء فأنها ساعة يحتاج الميت فيها إلى أنس الأحياء»

"When I die, wash my body and outfit me [with the shrouds], perform prayers for me, get me inside the grave, place the grave stone, bury me in the earth, sit at my head facing me, recite the Book of Allah and recite many supplications, for it is time when the deceased person needs the company of those alive."

We are told on p. 148, Vol. 1, of Mustadrak al-Wasa'il that Ibn Tawoos, may Allah have mercy on his soul, has quoted the Prophet (ص) as saying:

« لا يأتي على الميت ساعة أشدّ من أول ليلة فارحموا موتاكم بالصدقة ، فان لم تجدوا فليصل أحدكم ركعتين يقرأ فيهما فاتحة الكتاب مرّة وآية الكرسي مرّة ، وقل هو الله احد مرّتين ، وفي الثانية فاتحة الكتاب مرّة والهاكم التكاثر عشر مرّات ويسلم ويقول : اللهم صلّ على محمّد وآل محمّد وابعث ثوابها الى قبر ذلك الميت فلان بن فلان ، فيبعث الله من ساعته الف ملك الى قبره مع كل ملك ثوب وحلة ويوسع في قبره من الضيق الى يوم ينفخ في الصور ويعطى المصلي بعدد ما طلعت عليه الشمس حسنات ويرفع له أربعون درجة »

"There is nothing harder for the deceased person than the first night in the grave; so, send mercy to your dead by offering charity on his behalf, and if one does not have charity to offer, let him perform two rek'ats (prostrations) in the first of which he should recite Surat al-Fatiha, the Verse of the Throne and twice Surat at-Tawhid (al-Ikhlās). In the second, he should recite Surat al-Fatiha followed by reciting ten times Surat at-Takathur (Chapter 102 of the Holy Qur'an). Then he should offer the tasleem [greeting the Prophet of Allah (ص)] and say, "Lord! Bless Muhammad and the Progeny of Muhammad, and send the rewards [of this prayer] to the grave of the deceased person so-and-so." Allah Almighty will then instantly send a thousand angels to the grave of that dead person. Each angel will be carrying an outfit. His grave will be widened till the trumpet is blown. The person who performs this prayer will be granted good deeds as many as the expanse of what is under the sun, and he will be raised forty stations." What also helps lessen the pain of loneliness in the grave is one during his lifelong perfecting rukoo' (bowing down) very well during the prayers. Imam al-Baqir (ع) is quoted as having said: "One who perfects his bowing down [during the performance of the daily prayers] will not feel lonely in his grave," according to p. 244, Vol. 6 of Bihar al-Anwar.

Actually, the doers of good do not have to worry about such loneliness, for angels will keep them company and they will be permitted to visit their relatives, the living or the dead, escorted by these angels, and this will be a diversion for them. Another act of munjiyat, acts that save one from penalty, is repeating a hundred times this beautiful statement: There is no god save Allah, the true and obvious King. Such act will save one from poverty in his lifetime and from loneliness in the grave in the Hereafter. He will be wealthy in this life and the gates of Paradise will be opened for him in the next.

According to p. 217, Vol. 8 of Bihar al-Anwar, one who fasts 12 days during the month of Sha`ban will be visited in his grave every day by seventy thousand angels till the trumpet is blown. Here we must point out that "every day" means days of our own counting, days of this short life, for the barzakh period precedes the Judgment Day. Starting with that Day, time will bear a different dimension. And one who goes to visit a sick person will be rewarded by Allah Who will assign an angel to visit him in his grave till

the Day of Gathering, the Assembling Day. Also, it is recorded in Rawandi's Da`awat that the Prophet (ص) has said that if one recites the following supplication three times when a deceased person is buried, the torment from the latter will be lifted till the Trumpet is blown:

(اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ أَنْ لَا تُعَذِّبَ هَذَا الْمَيِّتَ)

Lord! I plead to You through the status reserved with you for Muhammad (ص) and the Progeny of Muhammad (ص) not to torment this deceased person till the Day when the trumpet is blown."

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