

4. Stage Four of The Life Hereafter: Grave's Constriction (pressure)

Grave's Constriction (pressure)

ضغطة القبر

The constriction (pressure) in the grave is a very terrifying stage to the extent that it is not just difficult for the living to imagine, it is impossible to imagine. Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has said the following about it:

يا عباد الله ما بعد الموت لمن لا يُغفر له أشد من الموت: القبر، فاحذروا ضيقة وضنكته وظلمته وغربته، إنَّ القبر يقولُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ: أنا بيتُ الغربة! أنا بيتُ الوحشة! أنا بيتُ الدود! ، والقبرُ روضةٌ من رياض الجنة أو حفرةٌ من حفرة النار... إلى أن قالَ : وإنَّ معيشة الضنك التي حدَّر اللهُ منها عدوَّهُ (هي) عذابُ القبر ، إنَّه يُسلطُ على الكافر في قبره تسعةً وتسعين تيناً فينهشَن لحمه ويكسِرَن عظمه، يتردَدَن عليه كذلك إلى يوم يبعث : لو أن تيناً منها نفخَ في الأرض لم تُنبِت زرعاً. يا عباد الله: إنَّ أنفسكم الضعيفة وأجسادكم الرقيقة التي يكفيها اليسير تُضعفُ عن هذا.

"O servants of Allah! There is nothing harder, on those who are not forgiven, than death save the grave: So, beware of its constriction, darkness and loneliness. Each day, the grave says: 'I am the abode of loneliness! I am the abode of worms!' And the grave is either like one of the gardens of Paradise or one of the pits of Hell... Indeed, the "life of hardship" about which Allah has warned those who are hostile to Him is the torment in the grave: The unbeliever is assaulted as he is in his grave by ninety-nine dragons that tear up his flesh, crush his bones and keep visiting him thus till the Day of Resurrection. Had one of these dragons blown on earth, no vegetation would have ever grown in it. O servants of Allah! Your weak selves, tender and soft bodies which are satisfied with little, are too weak to withstand all of this." As indicated above, the sins, transgressions and wrongdoings will each take a form in the hereafter, and

the worse one is the worse its form will be. What will help during this difficult situation?

Page 327, Vol. 4 of Usul al-Kafi, tradition No. 13, says that whenever Imam as-Sadiq (ع) woke up at the end of the night, he would raise his voice so his family members could hear him saying the following:

اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى هَوْلِ الْمَطْلَعِ ، وَ وَسَّعْ عَلَيَّ ضَيْقَ الْمَضْجَعِ ، اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِي الْمَوْتِ ، وَ ارْزُقْنِي خَيْرَ مَا قَبْلَ الْمَوْتِ ، وَ ارْزُقْنِي خَيْرَ مَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ ؛ اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى سَكَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ ، اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى غَمِّ الْقَبْرِ ، اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى ضَيْقِ الْقَبْرِ ، اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى وَحْشَةِ الْقَبْرِ ، اللَّهُمَّ زَوِّجْنِي مِنَ الْحُورِ الْعِينِ

"Lord! Help me with regard to the horror of what is awaiting me [after death] and expand for me the narrowness of the grave. Lord! Grant me a blessing at the time of death, and grant me goodness before death, and grant me goodness after death. Lord! Help me during the time of the stupors of death. Lord! Help me against the agonies of the grave. Lord! Help me against the constriction of the grave. Lord! Help me against the loneliness of the grave. And Lord! Do marry me to the huris with large, lovely eyes."

Be informed, dear reader, that most torment in the grave is due to one not paying enough attention and care while using the toilet, taking lightly the sources of najasa, uncleanness, and also due to committing calumny and backbiting as well keeping a distance from his family, according to p. 222, Vol. 6 of Bihar al-Anwar.

From a narration by Sa'eed ibn Jubair, another cause is one having bad manners with his wife, speaking to her roughly rather than with kindness and consideration. Whatever the reason may be, we are assured by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (ع) that "No believer is spared the grave's constriction," according to p. 221, Vol. 6 of the same reference. On p. 221, Vol. 6 of Bihar al-Anwar and on p. 74, Vol. 2 of Safeenat al-Bihar, Imam as-Sadiq (ع) is quoted as having said: "The grave's constriction is atonement for a bliss wasted by a believer." Now let us review what helps in this terrible stage of the afterlife: Luckily, there are many acts of adoration which one can perform during his lifetime which will help him in the life to come, and the book titled Manazil al-Akhira by Abbas al-Qummi counts 15 of them. But we, in order to be brief, would like to cite the following for you:

1) Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (ع) has said,

من قرأ سورة النساء من القرآن في كل يوم جمعة أمن من ضغطة القبر

"One who recites Surat an-Nisaa (Chapter 4 of the Holy Qur'an) every Friday will have security against the grave's constriction," according to p. 330, Vol. 74 of the same reference.

2) It is recorded on p. 397, Vol. 2 of Safeenat al-Bihar that

من داوم على قراءة سورة الزخرف، آمنه الله تعالى في قبره من حشرات الأرض و الحيوانات و ضغطة القبر

"One who recites Surat an-Nisaa (Chapter of the Women [Chapter 4] of the Holy Qur'an) every Friday will be granted security in his grave from the earth's insects, animals and the grave's constriction."

3) According to the same reference and page, some traditions of the Prophet (ص) indicate that

من قرأ سورة "ن و القلم" في فريضة الصلاة أو النافلة، آمنه الله من ضغطة القبر

"If one recites Surat Noon (Chapter 68 of the Holy Qur'an which is also called Surat al-Qalam), during obligatory or optional prayers, Allah will grant him security from the grave's constriction."

4) On pp. 221 and 243, Vol. 6 of Bihar al-Anwar, we are told that Imam ar-Ridha (ع) has said:

من مات بين زوالي الخميس و الجمعة، آمنه الله من ضغطة القبر

"One who dies between the periods of zawal زوال (midday) of Thursday and Friday, he will be secured by Allah from the grave's constriction." 5) Imam ar-Ridha (ع) is also quoted as having said:

عليكم بصلاة الليل، فما من عبد مؤمن قام آخر الليل فصلى ثماني ركعات صلاة الليل، و ركعتين صلاة الشفع، و ركعة صلاة الوتر، و استغفر في قنوت الوتر سبعين مرة، الا و آمنه الله من عذاب القبر، و من عذاب النار، و طال عمره، و توسعت معيشته

"Uphold the Night Prayer; no believing servant of Allah stands at the end of the night to offer 8 rek'ats (prostrations), two Shaf` rek'ats, one Witr Rek`a, then he seeks forgiveness of Allah in the Qunoot (invocation) of the Witr seventy times except that Allah will grant him security against the torment of the grave and against the torture of the Fire, grants him a longer lifespan and expands his means of livelihood for him", as we are told on p. 397, Vol. 2 of Safeenat al-Bihar where the subject of the grave is discussed.

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