

8. Stage Eight of The Life Hereafter: Al-Hashr, The Gathering

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الحشر

It starts when one comes out of his grave, having a new form with which he is not familiar, and it is one of the three most critical times through which a human being has to go. Prophet Isa (Jesus Christ), peace be with him, refers to these three stages during which he will see nothing but peace as we read in verse 33 of Surat Maryam, a chapter in the Holy Qur'an named after his saintly mother, Maryam (Mary), where Jesus is quoted by the Almighty as saying on the very first day when he was born, a miracle which testified to his extra-ordinary birth to an extra-ordinary Lady, the Mistress of the world of her time, the following:

"So peace is upon me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I shall be raised up to life (again)!" (Qur'an, 19:33).

In Surat al-Ma`arij (Chapter 70 of the Holy Qur'an), the Almighty says the following:

فَذَرَهُمْ خُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ، يَوْمَ يُخْرَجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ سِرَاعًا كَانَهُمْ إِلَىٰ نُصَبٍ يُوفِضُونَ، خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ

"So leave them to plunge into vain talk and play until they encounter the Day they have been promised. (It is) the Day on which they will come out of their sepulchers in sudden haste as if they were rushing to a goal-post (fixed for them), their eyes lowered in dejection, ignominy covering them (all over). Such is the Day they are promised" (Qur'an, 70:42-4).

On p. 111, Vol. 7, of Bihar al-Anwar, we read the following text:

روي عن ابن مسعود أنه قال: كنت جالسا في محضر أمير المؤمنين (عليه السلام)، فقال: في القيامة خمسون موقفا، و كل موقف ألف سنة. الموقف الأول هو الخروج من القبر، يحبس الناس فيه ألف سنة حفاة عراة جياعا عطاشى، فمن خرج من جدته مؤمنا بالله و الجنة و النار و البعث و الحساب و القيامة، و مقرا بالله، و مصدقا لنبيه و ما أنزل من الله تعالى، نجا من الجوع و العطش

"In the Hereafter, there will be fifty stations: Each station lasts a thousand years. The first station is getting out of the grave. People will be confined in it for a thousand years barefoot, hungry and thirsty. Whoever comes out of his grave believing in Allah, in Paradise and Hell, in the Accounting and the Judgment, admitting Allah as the Lord, believing in His Prophet and in what Allah Almighty had revealed to him, will be saved from hunger and thirst."

The Holy Qur'an refers to these fifty thousand years in the following verse:

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ

"The angels and the spirit ascend to Him in a Day whose measure is fifty thousand years" (Qur'an, 70:4).

In Nahjul-Balagha, the Commander of the Faithful Ali (ع) says the following:

و ذلك يوم يجمع الله فيه الأولين و الآخرين لنقاش الحساب، و جزاء الأعمال، خضوعا قياما قد ألجمهم العرق، و رجفت بهم الأرض، و أحسنهم حالا من وجد لقدميه موضعا، و لنفسه متسعا

"It is the Day on which Allah gathers the early generations and the last to discuss settling accounts and to reward good deeds. People will be submissive as they stand stifled by sweat, the earth having shaken underneath their feet. The best condition among them all is one who can find a foothold and a space." Obviously, the reckoning will take place on the same earth on which humans have been living for many years, but the earth will not be the same: All mountains will be then be flattened, all water in the seas and the oceans would have been turned into fire: The oxygen will be separated from the hydrogen and set ablaze:

وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ وَإِذَا الْعُشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ

"When the mountains vanish (like a mirage); when the she-camels, ten months with young, are left untended; when the wild beasts are gathered together, and when the oceans boil over with a

swell" (Qur'an, 81:3-6).

Notice the verse saying: **"And when the wild beasts are gathered together"** which indicates that the Day of Gathering will not be confined to humans but also to animals as well:

All those who, without a justifiable cause, harmed these animals will have to account for their sins on that horrific Day, and this proves to you how Islam cares so much not only about humans but also about animals. One can write a book about "animal rights in Islam" and compare these rights with the abuse these servants of the Almighty receive at the hands of either ignorant or selfish humans, but let us not get into that now. As for the last verse, No. 6, the one referring to the oceans "boiling over with a swell", I think it is a weak translation of what should be something like this: "And when the oceans are set ablaze."

The earth will be flattened in order to make room for all billions of humans and animals and perhaps birds as well; it will be like a thin disk. Mentor al-Kulayni, as cited on p. 197, Vol. 7 of Bihar al-Anwar, quotes Imam al-Baqir (ع) as saying:

ان الله تبارك و تعالى يبعث يوم القيامة أناسا من قبورهم، غلت أيديهم و ربطت إلى أعناقهم لدرجة أنهم لا يستطيعون أن يأخذوا بأيديهم قدر أنمله، و معهم ملائكة يلومونهم بشدة و يقولون: هؤلاء منعوا الخير القليل عن الخير الكثير، و هؤلاء هم الذين منحهم الله من عطاياه، فامتنعوا عن أداء حقوق الله من أموالهم

"Allah, the most Blessed and the most Exalted One, will send on the Judgment Day people out of their graves: Their hands are tied to their necks to the extent they cannot take an iota of anything in their hands. The angels will be with them chastising them harshly and saying: "These (folks) prevented the doing of small acts of goodness while plenty was at their disposal. These are the ones whom Allah granted out of His boons, yet they did not pay what belonged to Allah from their wealth."

In the same reference and on the same page, mentor as-Saduq quotes the Messenger of Allah (ص) as saying the following in a lengthy tradition:

من وشى بين شخصين، سلط الله عليه في قبره نارا تحرقه إلى يوم القيامة، وإذا ما خرج من قبره و حفرتة، سلط الله عليه حيه سوداء تقطع لحمه إلى أن يدخل النار

"If one drives a wedge between two persons, Allah sends a fire in his grave that burns him till the Judgment Day. Once he gets out of his grave, Allah will send on him a black snake that will tear his flesh apart till he enters hell." The Prophet (ص) is also quoted in the same reference as having said:

من ملأ عينه من النظر إلى المرأة الغريبة، حشره الله يوم القيامة مسمرا بمسامير ناريه حتى يحكم الله بين الناس، فيحكم عليه أن يؤخذ الى النار

"If one fills his eyes with looking at a stranger woman, Allah will gather him on the Judgment Day nailed with nails of fire till Allah judges among the people. He will then rule to throw that man into the fire of hell." He (ص) is also quoted on the next page of the same reference as having said the following:

شارب الخمر يحشر يوم القيامة مسود الوجه، مائل العينين معتمة، معوج الفم، يسيل اللعاب منه، و قد أخرج لسانه من قفاه

"One who drinks wine will be gathered on the Judgment Day with a black face, his eyes are dark and slanted, his mouth twisted, saliva pouring down his mouth and his tongue sticking out of his back." Sheikh as-Saduq, as stated on p. 198 of the same reference cited above, has quoted Imam as-Sadiq (ع) as saying:

أنه من أزال عن مؤمن همه و غمه، أزال الله عنه هموم الآخرة و غمومها، و يخرج من قبره مفرح القلب مثله

"If one removes the worry and the agony of another believer, Allah will remove from him the worries and the agonies of the Hereafter, and he shall come out of his grave with a happy and cooled heart." Both al-Kulayni and as-Saduq, as stated in the same reference, narrate a lengthy tradition from Sadeer, the money exchanger, citing Imam as-Sadiq (ع) saying:

يحشر الله المؤمن من قبره و معه تمثال و نظير، و كلما رأى المؤمن من أهوال القيامة، قال له التمثال: لا تخف و لا تحزن فإن لك البشرى من الرحمن. و يدبم على بشارته حتى يبلغ موقف الحساب، فيحاسبه الله حسابا يسيرا و يأمر له بالجنة و التمثال أمامه. فيقول المؤمن للتمثال: رحمك الله، فقد كنت لي خلا حسنا، خرجت معي من القبر، و داومت على بشارتي بالسرور و كرامة الله تعالى إلى أن تحققت لي، فمن أنت؟ فيجيبه التمثال: أنا السرور الذي أدخلته في قلب أخيك المؤمن في الدنيا، و قد خلقتني الله لأبشرك بالسرور الدائم و الفرح المداوم

"Allah gathers a believer, once he is out of his grave, in the company of an image and a like form. Whenever the believer sees horror in the Hereafter, the image says to him, "Do not worry and do not grieve, for you have the glad tidings from the most Merciful One." He keeps telling him such glad tidings till he takes his place for the judgment. Allah will then be easy on him as He judges him. He will order him to be lodged in Paradise. The image will still be standing in front of him, so the believer will ask it, "May Allah have mercy on you! You have been a good companion to me: You came out with me from the grave and continued to give me glad tidings of happiness and honor from Allah Almighty till this became a reality for me; so, who are you?!" The image will answer him saying, "I am the pleasure which you entered into the heart of your believing brother in the temporary life, and Allah created me so I may inform you of the continuous happiness and incessant pleasure."

On p. 168, Vol. 7 and p. 380, Vol. 74 of the same reference, mentor al-Kulayni narrates saying that Imam as-Sadiq (ع) has also said:

من كسا أخاه المؤمن كسوة الشتاء أو الصيف، فقد أوجب الله على نفسه أن يكسوه ملابس الجنة و يسهل عليه مشاق الموت، و يوسع عليه قبره، و تبشره الملائكة بالبشرى حين خروجه من قبره إشارة الى هذه الآية الكريمة: "لا يَحْزَنُهُمُ الْفَزَعُ الْأَكْبَرُ وَتَتَلَقَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ هَذَا يَوْمُكُمْ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

"One who gives his believing brother an outfit for the winter or for the summer obligates Allah to clothe him from the outfits of Paradise, removes the hardships of death from him, expands his grave for him and the angels convey the glad tiding to him when he comes out of his grave as referred to in this sacred verse:

'The angels welcome them saying: This is your Day which Allah promised you!' (Qur'an, 21: 103)."

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