

Barzakh (Purgatory)

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In this text, Shaheed Dastghaib has presented arguments, verses and traditions concerning Barzakh. He briefly discussed the soul of a human, the aftermath of death, the grave and the rewards and punishments in Barzakh.

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Punishment in Barzakh for Non-Fulfillment of the Rights of Others

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

It is mentioned in the book of Misbahul Harmain that in the last days of his life, a respected personality named Shaykh Abdul Tahir Khorasani travelled to Mecca and made a vow that as long as he was alive he would remain there only and serve the holy house. During those days a person had a bag full of gems, jewels and money and he was looking for a reliable person who may hold it as a trust.

People suggested the name of Shaykh Abdul Tahir Khorasani and said that he was one of the most reliable and honest personality in Mecca. Thus he placed his trust with the Shaykh. After a period of time the Shaykh passed away. When the person who had kept his bag as trust returned, he was informed that the Shaykh was dead. When he approached the successors of the Shaykh, they expressed ignorance about the matter. That man was devastated and he was reduced to penury due to this.

However he was aware of the fact that the souls of believers arrive in Wadius Salaam and that they are free and communicate with each other. So he prayed to the Almighty Allah to enable him to see the deceased so that he can ask him about his money.

After a long time, when he did not get any reply from the valley he inquired from some scholar why it was so; that he was supplicating so much but not getting any reply from the Shaykh. They told him that it was possible that he might be in the place fixed for wrong doers. That is he might be Wadi Barhut, which is in Yemen.

Wadi Barhut is a dangerous valley having horrible wells and pits etc. It is often mentioned that extremely terrifying voices are heard in that place, in other words just as Wadius Salaam in the neighborhood of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) was a place of peace and safety for noble souls, in the same way, Wadi Barhut was a place of stay for wicked souls.¹

In any case, that person set out for Wadi Barhut and became engrossed in prayer, fasting and supplications till one day he saw Shaykh Abdul

Tahir. He asked: Are you, Abdul Tahir? Yes, replied the Shaykh. But are you not the one who served the holy shrine in Mecca? Yes, said the Shaykh. That person asked about his bag and why the Shaykh was in such a bad condition. The Shaykh said: Your trust is buried in such and such corner of the house. You did not come to collect it for such a long time, so I could not return it to you before my death. Now you may go there and direct my survivors to restore your trust.

Sin, which Makes One Eligible for Chastisement in Barzakh

But as for your question at my bad condition; you should know that it is due to three sins: One is rights of others, which are like a rock attached to the wing of a bird that does not allow it to fly away.

Such is the seriousness of this matter that even though a person might have performed the Ziyarat of Kerbala, Mashad or served at holy Kaaba, he cannot get the neighborhood of Ahle Bayt (a.s.) if he has not observed this properly. No matter where the body of that person might be buried: in Mecca. Medina or Wadius Salaam, but it would not be allowed to proceed to the high heavens if it has not fulfilled the rights of others.

The following are those three rights.

Three Rights

The first sin, about which I was reminded is that I had cut off relations from my relatives in Khorasan and gone and settled down in Mecca. It is prohibited to sever relations. You paid no attention to the community and tribe. There are so many people who do not pay for the obligatory expenses of their children and parents and they do not care even if they are involved in some difficulty. They settle down in some other town and do not pay any heed to their condition and well-being.

And the second sin was that I had given a dinar to an undeserving person. The statement of the book is as follows: Perhaps one dinar was not given to a deserving person, instead it was given to an undeserving person and it is unlawful to deprive a deserving fellow.

Insulting a Scholar and Severe Chastisement

The third sin was that a scholar of religion resided in our neighborhood, and we caused insult to him. The scholar is having a right upon us and we learn about our religion from him. The scholar is having rights upon the society.

The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) said: One who has insulted a scholar; it is as if he has insulted me. If one is not attentive and has caused insult to a scholar or had been rude to him; it is as if he has denied the rights of the scholar and he would be answerable for that.

O God, what we shall do if You were to deal with justice with us? O God, we are fearful of Your justice.

O God, deal with us with mercy and grace; we are not having the capacity to bear Your justice.

Asking the Forgiveness of Neighbors at the Time of Death

It is recommended for one who feels that his death is near, to seek the forgiveness of his neighbors, friends and companion travelers. He should not say that in this way he has done a favor. Many a times one acts against the rights of neighborhood; for example one might have spoken to a neighbor in a raised voice or caused pain to him; but now one does not remembers it.

Do not trespass on the rights of those who cultivate your company and understand the importance of travelling companion through this traditional report.

Imam Ali (a.s.) and the Jew Travel Companion

It is narrated that Imam Ali (a.s.) was returning to Kufa from a journey; when a person accompanied him on the way and during that journey the Imam (a.s.) asked him about his name, address and faith etc. He said: I am a resident of such and such locality near Kufa and I follow the Jewish religion. Amirul Momineen (a.s.) said: I also reside in Kufa and I am a Muslim. Both were traveling together.

The Jew started talking and after traveling for some time they reached a junction from where one road led to Kufa and another to the locality of that Jew. On reaching there Amirul Momineen (a.s.), instead of proceeding to Kufa continued walking with the Jew. Suddenly the Jew noticed this and asked: You are not going to Kufa? Imam Ali (a.s.) replied: Why not? The Jew said:

The road to Kufa is different; did you miss it? Why? The Imam asked, I had noticed this at that same place, but since you were my companion on a journey, I wanted to fulfill the rights of traveling companions. So I walked a few steps with you to bid farewell to you. The Jew was astounded and he asked: Is it your personal belief or your religious duty? Is this kind of fulfillment of human rights related to your religion? He replied: Yes, it is the command of my religion and school.

The Jew fell into contemplation: What religion is so concerned about human rights? The following day that Jew came to Kufa and saw in a nearby Masjid that his travel companion was surrounded by a huge crowd and every person was extending respect and honor to him. The Jew asked someone who that man was. He was told that he was the Caliph of Muslims and Amirul Momineen (a.s.).

The Jew began to think: Is this person really the leader of Muslims who was the previous day behaving with me with such humility and sincerity? All of a sudden that Jew fell at the feet of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) and embraced Islam and became one of the special Shia followers of the Imam.

Siraat Bridge and Hell

If a person does not properly fulfill the right of others and dies in this condition, he would be involved in severe chastisement on Judgment Day and on Siraat Bridge. Some points are mentioned from the introduction for explanation of about the Siraat Bridge. The literal meaning of Siraat is way and in terminology whatever has been mentioned in the holy Shariat and what the Muslims are obligated to have faith in and also that which is included in the fundamentals of religion², it is a bridge over Hell.

Siraat is a Bridge over Hell

It is narrated from the seal of the prophets that he said: When Judgment Day would be established, they would haul Hell into the field of gathering³. It would have a thousand reins and each rein would be held by a hundred thousand powerful angels. When they would be hauling it, a call would be raised from Hell, which would pull the surrounding creatures to itself.

All would be calling out: O Allah come to help us! Except for the seal of the prophets; he would be saying: O Allah, help my Ummah. Like an affectionate father, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) would be concerned about the salvation of his Ummah. Thus it is mentioned in traditional reports that when the Hell would be brought, they would make a bridge above it so that people may cross it to enter Paradise. And hell is made to appear on that day. On that day shall man be mindful, and what shall being mindful (then) avail him?

On the Siraat Bridge for Three Thousand Years

Siraat is the way to Paradise; but it is a strange way. It is narrated from the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) that the length of Siraat is equal to travel of three thousand years, in which there is an elevation of a thousand years and then a thousand years of decline and then a thousand years of travel through rocky terrain and through scorpions and wild animals. It is not an easy matter to cross the Siraat. Every person would pass over the Siraat Bridge according to his faith and the quantum of his good deeds.

Light of Belief and Deeds and the Siraat Bridge

There is no particular light on the Siraat Bridge; on the contrary there is darkness on it. Sun and moon are of no use over there. There is no light, except the effulgence of elegance of His Eminence Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.s.). On Judgment Day, the effulgence of Muhammad and Aale Muhammad (a.s.) and the effulgence of their Wilayat would be of use to man. Recitation of Quran and remembrance of the Almighty Allah, effulgence of sincerity of intention would illuminate the surroundings from all directions.⁴

Finally, how much effulgence one has obtained in this world and the illumination of a person would be to the extent an eye can see. Another light would be to a length of one Farsakh and the third would be such that he would be able to see before his feet. It is narrated that the light of someone would be so less that he would be able to illuminate only his toe and he would stumble all the time.

How to Traverse the Long Dark Path without Any Light?

The effulgence of Wudhu and Ghushl is worship. It would shine from all the physical parts of the body subject to the condition that darkness of sin should not have covered the shining effulgence. This long way is equal to travel of three thousand years. How can it be traversed without the effulgence of good deeds? As much effulgence we can take with us to the grave would be less.

Siraat Bridge is Perceptive

All the things of the Hereafter possess perception and feelings. They are completely different from the material world. So much so that even the earth is having the perception of Judgment Day. The Siraat Bridge is also having perception, feelings and understanding. One who steps on the Siraat Bridge; if he is a believer, his feet would be pure, clean and broad.

And the Siraat Bridge would be pleased with his passing over it. And if the infidel or a sinner would pass over it, the Siraat Bridge would start trembling and the Holy Quran has declared that the whole Hereafter is alive.⁵ Life has enveloped the whole of the after world. Thus the Siraat Bridge recognizes individuals.

When it notices an obedient servant passing over it, it becomes leveled and smooth for him and when it sees a disobedient man walking on it, it begins to tremble under his feet to such an extent that it becomes thinner than a strand of hair, sharper than sword and darker than night. There are many passes of Siraat, from which three are mentioned here, which are related to worship acts under discussion.

A Terrible, but True Dream

Haji Noori (r.a.) has narrated from a respected Shaykh in Mustadrakul Wasail that he said: There was a Masjid in our locality. Its caretaker was a person named Muhammad bin Abi Uzniya and that Shaykh was also among the managers, founders and teacher of that Masjid and every day he came to it on the appointed time and delivered discourses. One day they continued to wait for a long time, but that Shaykh did not arrive.

Some people were sent to look for him and seek information why he had failed to show up. They reported that the Shaykh had taken ill. All the people waiting for him in the Masjid arose and set out to visit him. When they came to his house, they found the Shaykh in bed, and he had a towel around his head and was groaning in pain; saying again and again: I got burnt! I got burnt!

When they asked what was wrong, he said: Except for the thigh, my whole body is burning from head to toe. They asked how this was so. He replied: I was asleep last night, when I dreamt that Qiyamat has been established. They have brought Hell near and a bridge was placed over it for people to cross.

I also was among those who were passing over it. In the beginning, I was all right, but as I moved forward, it was becoming difficult for me. The space below my feet was becoming narrower. I began to stumble. The way narrowed down further.

There was only fire below my steps and it was beating me like melted butter. One of my feet was collapsing. I shifted my weight on the other leg and at last regained balance. But the flames were pulling me down. I could see nothing. I was thrashing my limbs here and there, but it was of no use and no one hearkened to my entreaties. Suddenly a thought came to me that was Imam Ali (a.s.) not a helper? Thus, love for Ali (a.s.) impelled me to call out O Ali!

As soon as I uttered this statement I perceived the effulgence of Imam Ali (a.s.) at my head. When I raised my head, I saw that Imam Ali (a.s.) was standing near the Siraat Bridge and saying: Give me your hand. I stretched out my hand and when Imam Ali (a.s.) extended his hand the fire moved completely aside. His graceful hand saved me and brought me up. Then he passed his affectionate hand over my thigh; after that I awoke from that terrifying nightmare.

My whole body had burned down except that spot where Amirul Momineen (a.s.) passed his hand. The Shaykh removed the towel from his body and except for some portions of his thigh, his whole body was covered with boils. The Shaykh received treatment for three months and only then he was cured. After that whenever he was asked in a gathering and he narrated the incident, he used to get fever due to fear.

Who can Remain Steadfast on the Straight Path all the Life?

There is a traditional report in the third volume of Biharul Anwar that no one from the past and the future persons can pass over the Siraat Bridge without hardships and difficulties, except for the Seal of the Prophets and his Purified Ahle Bayt (a.s.).

His Eminence has himself said: O Ali, no one can pass over the Siraat Bridge without problems, but I, you and your descendants: they are fourteen purified lights, who can traverse the Siraat Bridge without any problem; but the remaining creatures would not pass over the Siraat Bridge without stumbling. Who is steadfast on the Straight Path all the life? Who is it that passes a whole day without any mistake? Who is it that does not deviate from the true path even for a moment?

Explanation of Thinner than a Strand of Hair and Sharper than a Sword

There are so many days, which pass in disobedience from morning to night and they do not pass in obedience of the Almighty Allah. On the contrary, all the day is spent in following the carnal desires. So much do we deviate from our destination that we do not even notice it. It is a fact that the identification of path of true religion is very intricate and it is thinner than a strand of hair and acting on religious law is more difficult than a sharp sword.

Everyone would be Caused Distress by Hell

In the end, everyone would have to pass through Hell and everyone would be distressed by it. At the time of crossing the Siraat Bridge every person would be terrified of Hell and would be surrounded by flames, burning of the heart and crying; and a flame would arise from Hell, which would surround all the people and shake up the prophets as well. We don't know what has befallen us! All would be hiding their heads between their knees ⁶All would be saying: O Allah, help us! In any case, salvation is only for those who are pious.⁷ In other words., if someone thinks that he can escape the Siraat Bridge; he should know that it is impossible, because the Siraat Bridge is path to Paradise and there is Hell below it.

Reality of the Hereafter Cannot be Imagined

The condition of the afterworld can never be imagined or understood by the people of this world. It is an impossible thing. As long as man is alive, he cannot truly understand the reality of Paradise and Hell. The commonality of words leads one to form a vague idea, but the reality is much beyond that. For example, if we say: The fire of Hell; due to use of common words, we at once form an imagination of a fire produced by coal. Or when we say: Snakes and scorpions of Hell: at once we get an imagination of

worldly snakes and scorpions, because our perception can form only this imagination.

- [1.](#) Maad, Ayatullah Dastghaib
- [2.](#) Surah Mominoon 23:74
- [3.](#) Surah Fajr 89:23
- [4.](#) Surah Hadid 57:12
- [5.](#) Surah Ankabut 29:64
- [6.](#) Surah Jathiya 45:25
- [7.](#) Surah Maryam 19:72

Hell

The Fire of Hell says Amen on the Supplication of the Believer

The worldly fire does not have any perception and feeling, but the fire of Hell possesses sight and hearing; so much so, it is narrated that when a person says: O Allah save me from Hellfire, the Hell says: Amen. One who seeks the refuge of Allah from the mischief of Hellfire, the Hell says Amen for him. In the same way is the case of Houries of Paradise; that when a believer person prays: O Allah, marry me to a Hourie of Paradise; the Hourie herself says: Amen.

The Hell says that There is Space for More

When Hellfire decries someone from a distance, it begins to agitate and becomes furious; and it calls out;[1](#) it speaks up. It is mentioned in the Holy Quran that when Hell would be asked: Are you full? It would reply: Is there more?[2](#) That is are there more sinners left? Some commentators of Quran have considered the treasure of Hell to be destiny and taken the address of Hell to be that of the angels appointed on Hell, which is against the apparent meaning of the address.

Although through the study of other verses also we can learn about the perceptive ability of Hell as was mentioned before. If an ignorant person thinks that Hellfire is only for infidels and enemies of Ahle Bayt (a.s.), and it is not going to cause harm to anyone else and the believers have nothing to do with it; on the basis of this, firstly we should know that who is it who departs from the world with faith? They do not fear that Shaitan has destroyed their faith.

If supposing they do not die with faith; do they not know that there are seven levels of Hell? This is from the confirmed facts and is the declaration of the Holy Quran.[3](#) The first level whose chastisement is the easiest. It is abode of those who have not been purified in Barzakh as well and who were postponed till Qiyamat.

Different Levels of the Chastisement of Hell

There is tradition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) that some people of my Ummah would be in fire up to the shins, some would be enveloped in fire till the thighs, some till the waist, some till the neck and some would be completely immersed in chastisement.

In the same way, it is mentioned in another tradition that the person getting the lightest punishment in Hell would be one who made to wear shoes of fire and because of its heat, his brain would be on the boil. We are much away from it. Where are the signs of faith in us? Where is our hope and fear?

Color of Hellfire

In spite of the fact that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) has been clearly promised the power of intercession,⁴ and he himself is an expression of salvation and mercy; even then what is his condition? How fearful he is of Hell? Abu Basir says: I came to Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) and said: Maula, my heart has become hard. Imam (a.s.) said: One day Jibraeel Ameen came to the Seal of the prophets. He used to be very cheerful usually. But that day he was very fearful and aggrieved. Sorrow and grief were apparent from his face.

The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) asked: Why are you so gloomy today? Jibraeel Amin said: O Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.), the blowing of Hell is concluded today. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) asked: What is the blowing of Hell. Jibraeel replied: The fire of Hell was lighted by the orders of Allah for thousand years till it became white. Then it was kept burning for another thousand years till it turned black. And now they have concluded it. I am terrified of the horror of fire.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) also started crying. An angel came down and said: The Almighty Allah has promised you that He would keep you away from every sin that makes one eligible for Hellfire.

Zaqqum Hanzal is Bitterer than Neem

The Almighty Allah has said in many places in the Holy Quran that Zaqqum which is the diet ⁵of sinners in Hell. It is a tree, whose fruit, Hanzal is bitterer than Neem. Only a particle of its bitterness is kept in this world, which has more stench than a stinking corpse. Its outward appearance is extremely horrible and terrifying.

When it passes down the throat, it begins to boil up, but it creates so much pain of hunger that even the folks of Hell begin to feed on it. What hunger it is that man becomes prepared to eat Zaqqum as well? Among the other foods of Hell is Ghislin Zari'.

Boiling, which even Melts the Flesh of the Face

It is most appropriate that I should mention the drinks of Hell; one of them being Sadeed. It is said that it is the dirt of adulterous women, which is extremely hot and boiling; and it carries a terrible stench. It is flowing like a flood.

The folks of Hell would be so thirsty that they would be compelled to quench their thirst from that liquid and then scream out: Give us water!⁶ Among the drinks of Hell is Hameem. It is so hot that when a tumbler of it would be brought forth to drink, before the contents could be taken in the mouth, the heat of this liquid would cause the flesh of the face to melt and drop.

Believers are Certain

When the infidels hear all this, they say: It is only fiction.⁷ It is like the stories of Rustom and Isfandiyar. But it is not so. The Quran is truth. The Paradise and Hell are facts.⁸ When the believers hear all this, they believe it all. When the verses of Quran are recited in their presence, there is increase in their faith.⁹ In fact the most confirmed report is that which the Almighty Allah has conveyed.

The Garment of Hell would be of Fire

*“Their shirts made of pitch and the fire covering their faces.”*¹⁰¹¹

It is mentioned in the Holy Quran in many places that the folks of Hell would be wearing garments of fire.¹² Like the inmates of prison are made to wear a special dress, the folks of Hell would also be dressed in a special dress of Hell made of fire. It is also worth knowing about the salient features of Hell and it is mentioned in the Holy Quran that an inmate of Hell would be made to wear a chain seventy yards in length. After that he would be dragged into the fire.¹³

Entreaty of Imam Ali (a.s.)

It is Ali (a.s.) who swoons during worship at midnight and entreats to the Almighty Allah to give refuge from such a chastisement and says in his whispered prayers (Munajat): O Allah, I seek Your refuge on Judgment Day. The day when children and wealth would give no one any advantage; except to those bestowed with a perfect conscience by Almighty Allah.¹⁴

Some Examples of the Chastisement of Hell

Even if a single link of the chains of Hell is brought into the world, it would reduce the whole world to ashes. Among the sections of chastisement is that the caretakers are very nasty tempered and horrible. When the inmates of Hell want to come out of the fire of Hell, they are turned back with fire only.¹⁵

It is narrated that the inmates of Hell would fall for seventy years and then thrash their limbs in order to come up. And when they would be about to reach the surface, the caretakers of Hell would hit at their heads with their maces (called Maqma plural Maqameh) and send them down again. [16](#)

Maces of Hell on Heads of the Inmates of Hell

It is a statement of the Holy Quran and not a weak report. On the contrary, it is clearly the Holy Quran. The head which did not bow down in submission to the Almighty Allah all the life and had remained disobedient, in fact it is deserving of the maces of Hell with which his head would be hit. It is mentioned in the tradition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) that Jibraeel (a.s.) informed him that if one of those maces were to be hit at the caves of this world, it would destroy seven layers of the earth.

People of Submission will not go to Hell

Rebellion people are deserving of such chastisement. Hell is the abode of rebels. Otherwise, if someone is from the folks of submission; that is he has submitted to the Almighty Allah, what concern he has with Hell? But those who are disobedient and rebellious and according to the interpretation of the Holy Quran, are 'Utul' (ignoble) or unjust. [17](#)

On Judgment Day, their bodies would become hard like their selves. The body of the folks of Hell would be hard like their hearts, because in the world, their hearts were harder than rocks. [18](#) So on Judgment Day their bodies would be like their hearts. Thus, no one should object how this weak body can be subjected to such a severe punishment.

Hard Bodies like Hearts

It is mentioned in Kifayat Muwahideen that the folks of chastisement would get seventy layers of skin and thickness of each layer would be equal to forty yards. That rebellious self, not influenced by verses of Quran in this world, would also become hard on Judgment Day.

It is mentioned in another report that the teeth of the people of Hell would become like mountains of Uhad. Such hard selves and heart would become apparent in the body, the heart which was not influenced by Quran; although even water erodes a rock and makes a hole in it. Death is mentioned, Qiyamat is mentioned, but even then the hardness of self and heart pays no heed and goes to such an extent that Imam Husain (a.s.) is compelled to say: Take this infant and give him a drink of water. But in greed of the rewards of the accursed Yazid the killers pay no heed.

In the Hereafter

In the hereafter, what one feels and thinks would be visible on the faces. That is the body will take the form of what one is internally. Thus whatever is in the hidden conscience would become

apparent.¹⁹ Hearts, which are delicate, would not be able to bear to hear that chastisement. The body would also become thin like a petal. The folks of Paradise are also like this. They also cannot hear it. Delicate neck of an infant becomes the target of a three-pronged arrow.

If Paradise and Hell are Present, Where are they?

It is asked that if Paradise and Hell are present, where are they? This question is mentioned in traditional reports as well and the Imam (a.s.) replied it saying that yes, Paradise and Hell are present even now. But to say that where Paradise is located? According to reports, it is located above the seventh heaven; and the reply of the question that where Hell is; it is said that it is below the surface of the earth.

It is mentioned in some traditional reports: By the sea of fire; that is oath is taken of a sea of fire. It is an indication that the earth throws out the fire which is there in it. There are a large number of traditions regarding the fact that Paradise and Hell are present right now; one of them being the report of Meraj.

Creation of Lady Zahra (s.a.) from the Apple of Paradise

This report must have been heard time and again that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) said: On the night of ascension (Meraj), when I entered heaven, Jibraeel brought to me an apple of Paradise and I consumed it. That matter converted to the seed, through which Fatima was conceived.

Perpetuity in Hell – Special Feature of Hell Inmates

Although I convey the good news to believers that one who takes faith, equal to even a single particle, would at last be able to come out of Hell. The gate of Hell does not bear that a person having even the least faith should be with it.

Perpetuity in Hell is only for the folks of malice: infidels and polytheists.²⁰ If a believer dies without repenting for his sins, and is not purified by Barzakh, he will remain in Hell till he is purified; but how long he would remain in Hell is a matter related to his sins, which he has taken with himself. In brief, just as he has behaved here, in the same way he would see himself there. If he has made himself a wolf, a quadruped etc, he would be same there also; if he had acted like an angel, he would be an angel there also.

As long as you don't adopt the qualities of angels, you would not be able to gain the lofty rank of the hereafter and will not be able to gain Paradise. Till you don't converse with the angels, angels will not come to meet you in hordes.²¹ The first night in the grave and after that on different times, man will be having the condition as he has molded himself.

Bashir and Mubashshir are same Nakir and Munkir

You must have heard that on the first night in the grave, two angels arrive to interrogate the dead and they are famous as Munkir and Nakeer. The root words of Nakeer and Munkir is N-K-R, which means that which causes harm and which displeases. What is the function of Nakeer and Munkir? The reply is: It is for one who died without becoming a man. But if someone became a man, there is no Munkir and Nakeer for him.

On the contrary, there is Bashir and Mubashshir; that is those who convey the good news. It is mentioned in the Dua of the month of Rajab that: O Allah, on the first night in the grave, do not make me encounter Munkir and Nakeer; on the contrary let me see Bashir and Mubashshir. Thus they are not more than two angels.

There is Bashir and Mubashshir for that believer man, who had reformed himself and for the disbeliever there is Nakeer and Munkir. It is upto you, no one else would be present there to make arrangements for you. In this background, please pay attention to some interesting lines of poetry composed by Imam Ali (a.s.):

After death one has only that which he has provided for himself here. What type of a house one has built for himself? Two hand spans in length and two spans in breadth or as far as the eye can see? If he has created wideness there is no kind of thirst for you. Wideness after the death of man in that world is dependent on the wideness of the heart.

Faces will be Raised According to Deeds

It is mentioned in Tafsir Qummi under the interpretation of the verse: ***“The day on which the trumpet shall be blown so you shall come forth in hosts.”*** [22](#)

...that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) was asked whether this verse was concerning infidels or Muslims? His Eminence replied: It is with regard to Muslims; who would enter the field of Mahshar in ten rows. Some would come in form of monkeys, some as pigs; some hanging down their heads and a group will be brought blind. Some people would be chewing their tongues and dirt would be dripping from it and some will be raised in a condition that their face would be illuminated like a full moon. They would resemble angels hovering over the crowd.

In other words, everyone would be raised according to his character and nature. If he develops angelic habits, tomorrow on Judgment Day, he would possess more elegance than the angels and if he becomes a wild beast, he develops anger and base desires in himself he would become an implication of that well known traditional report, in which it is said that people would arrive on the field of gathering in such a form that the ape and wolf would seem more beautiful than them.

And they would be so horrified of their own forms that they would wish to be cast into Hell as soon as possible so that people may not see them in that condition. Indeed, how painful it must be for them that they consider Hell a comfortable place? Yes, one who cultivates the qualities of wild animals would be like this only.

The dog bites with teeth, but a human being tears up with speech and writing and he criticizes and condemns others. He is not fearful of his words; he insults some and some he causes distress. In other words, on Judgment Day the face of every person would be like his internal being. If he is human internally, he would be there in the best form and if he is internally a beast, he would be raised in the worst form.

Chastisement of Hell is in Addition to Worldly Punishment

It is known through the study of Resurrection that the punishment of the hereafter is not like the punishment of the world. For example, they would bring someone and cast him into prison. They would pull out his nails. It is another thing. It cannot be compared to worldly punishment. We will not discuss the personification of deeds over here. In the same way is the fire, which man will raise with his tongue.²³

In other words, as much as we want, we can form an image of Hell and its chastisement, even then we would not be able to understand its reality. We should only know that it is not worldly and its condition and quality is not from the fundamentals of religion that it should be necessary to know about it and have faith in it.

Dream of a Hell Inmate

“And one of His signs is your sleeping and your seeking of His grace by night and (by) day” ²⁴

In Usul Kafi it is mentioned in interpretation of the above verse that human beings did not have dreams previously. When the Almighty Allah appointed a prophet on his nation and he preached to them about Barzakh, questioning of the grave and reward and punishment, the people did not believe him and they used to say how a dead man can be questioned. After death we would be mixed up with dust.

Thus the Almighty Allah bestowed dreams to all the people of that nation. After that they began to have a particular dream; such a different dream that they had never seen them before; and when they met each other, they used to say:

Last night I saw many things in my dream, but when I woke up, there was nothing. Another one said: I said much more than this; but when I awoke, there was nothing. At last they mentioned this to their Prophet. He said: The Almighty Allah wants that you should understand that after death also, it is possible for man to be in dream. But this body would be in dust and in a long sleep or God forbid, he

wails and asks for help.

It is mentioned in Maniul Akhbar that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) said: Before being appointed to the office of prophet hood, I was grazing the goats of my uncle; in such condition, sometimes I see that goats run about in panic without any apparent cause; I asked Jibraeel of its cause and he said: When the wail of a dead is raised in Barzakh, all can hear it except Jinns and human beings.

These goats panic, because of that sound. It is divine wisdom that God has concealed the sounds of the dead from the living, so that their comfort is not disturbed.

The Dead Request the Living

If man can hear the wails and screams of his near kindred, he cannot remain alive. It is a divine wisdom that no one should be aware of the condition of the dead. Now Allah knows what the dead entreat and request from you. Tonight, which is the Night of Power (Shabe-Qadr) they request you for supplications. Not like a request for Dua, which we make to one another. All these are only formalities; the request of a deceased for supplication is a sort of begging.

It is mentioned in traditional reports that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) wept and then said: Have mercy on the dead ones. Especially, during the month of Ramadhan and he used to say: We have the month of Ramadhan and the Night of Power; we have not realized its value. We became deprived of it.

You also come with me. But as long as we have the month of Ramadhan, you have some concern for us also. Thus they entreat in such a way that even the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) is moved. Sometimes, it is in such a way that a person sees a horrible dream and he starts crying.

However, the one who is sitting next to him cannot hear it. Or sometimes he laughs aloud with joy; in such way that if he is alive, his voice reaches to a long distance. But the one who is seated next to him cannot understand. When they go at the head side of the grave of their father, no sound is audible there, but Allah knows how that poor fellow is entreating. Or if Allah wills...

Dream: A wisdom of seeing the dreams is that man should understand life after death and he should see in dream the condition after death.

I Free the Slave Girls so that I may not go to Hell

It is mentioned that a respected lady of Medina Munawwara came behind the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) to offer prayers in the Mosque. At that moment His Eminence was reciting the above verse.

That believer lady came to the Prophet and began to weep incessantly and said: O Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.), this verse has terrified and aggrieved me. What I should do so that the doors of Hell are closed on me? He (s.a.w.s.) said: Sadaqah is a shield against the fire of Hell. O Messenger of Allah

(s.a.w.s.) I had purchased seven slave girls and I don't possess anything else (that she had bought these seven maids in exchange of her total wealth).

I emancipate each slave girl in order to close each gate of Hell. O Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) please give me assurance that the fire of Hell will not burn me.

There is Nothing, but Fear in Barzakh

It is narrated from a special companion of Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) in Man laa Yahzarahul Faqih that he said: I heard a tradition from the Imam; this tradition would continue to terrify me as long as I am alive. It has taken away my peace and comfort. I faced the most severe difficulties in the world, but it had no effect on me. The fire that is blazing in my heart is so severe that no fire affects me now. One day I was in the company of Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) and he said:

When you want to bury the dead, you must not put it in the grave suddenly. If the corpse is male, it should be put into the grave from the foot side. If the corpse is female you must place it in the grave from her side. You must raise it three times and then bring it somewhat near and put it in the grave the third time.

There is fear and terror from the grave. There is trepidation in the world of Barzakh. How much hardness our hearts have developed? The narrator says: I can continue to travel till the end of my life, but we are not affected in any way. If someone considers them as fiction, he would be an extremely hard hearted person like Hajjaj bin Yusuf.

If only I Pass Over the Siraat Bridge

When a hypocrite came to Salman (who was a foremost Muslim, when he was the governor of Madayan) and said: O Salman: What is better? Your white beard or the tail of a dog? Salman is Salman and not a child. He heard the hypocrite and replied without any emotion:

If I pass over the Siraat Bridge, my beard is better. If I fall down, the tail of a dog is better. Since the hereafter is great in his view that is why these things do not affect the soul and heart of a believer like the humming of the housefly. Because he was great and he had recognition of greatness. In his view, material life was very short.

Till you don't grow up, you will not be able to reach to the elders and supposing you manage to reach an elder, you will run away from there and will not be able to benefit from the great station. They will not be able to take advantage of understandings and perceptions. They will be unable to gain from spirituality and its way is also patience.[25](#)

Divine Fire in the Grave of Yazid

Historians of some centuries ago write that there was a ruin in their times and it was rumored that the grave of the accursed Yazid was situated there. And it is experienced that whoever passed that way and whatever need he had and if he threw a stone or a pebble there, he used to have his need fulfilled. Due to this that place became a place of dirt and refuse. During our time, that grave is also missing. When Bani Abbas came to Syria, they dug up every Umayyad grave and burnt down its corpse. In the grave of Yazid they found a natural pile of ashes equal to the size of his physical body. Authentic Ahle Sunnat historians have also mentioned this fact. Thus that grave was filled up again. It remained a latrine for many years. Today that is also not in existence.[26](#)

This same earth, which we tread; apparently it does not possess any perception and understanding, but it is internally cognizant of the believer and infidel. Have you not heard that the earth pleads to three kinds of people on three occasions? One when an innocent blood is shed; secondly when the dirt of adultery drops on it; thirdly when someone continues to sleep from dawn till sunrise and does not even get up to pray two units of prayers.[27](#)

It is mentioned in traditional reports that when the corpse of a believer is buried and people go away from there, the grave itself says: O believer servant, when you walked on me, I used to be proud of you that you worshipped the Almighty Allah upon me and pleased me. I used to say to myself, when you will come inside me, I should recompense you. This is the time of recompense.

The grave is widened as far as the eyes of the ethereal world can see. On the other hand, if there is someone who leaves the prayer, the realm of the graves says: When he walked on me, I used to plead and protest; now I have got the opportunity of recompense. On the basis of this, the grave exerts such a terrible squeeze that it is equal to the driving of a nail into the wall. It is according to the narrowness and severity of the grave and this unfortunate man is also squeezed in the grave.

- [1.](#) Surah Furqan 25:12
- [2.](#) Surah Qaf 50:30
- [3.](#) Surah Hijr 15:44
- [4.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol. 3
- [5.](#) Surah Dukhan 44:43
- [6.](#) Surah Kahf 18:29
- [7.](#) Surah Anam 6:25
- [8.](#) Surah Haqqah 69:1
- [9.](#) Surah Anfal 8:3
- [10.](#) Maad, Chapter 5
- [11.](#) Surah Ibrahim 14:50
- [12.](#) Surah Shoara 26:89
- [13.](#) Surah Hajj 22:19
- [14.](#) Surah Haqqah 69:32
- [15.](#) Surah Hajj 22:22

- [16. Surah Hajj 22:21](#)
- [17. Surah Qalam 68:13](#)
- [18. Surah Baqarah 2:74](#)
- [19. Surah Tariq 86:9](#)
- [20. Words of Dua Kumail](#)
- [21. Surah Raad 13:23](#)
- [22. Surah Naba 78:18](#)
- [23. Surah Baqarah 2:24](#)
- [24. Surah Rum 30:23](#)
- [25. Kitabul Iman, Pg. 271](#)
- [26. Surah Anam 6:45](#)
- [27. Kitabul Iman](#)

Effulgence for the Reality of the Grave

Never imagine that things lack perception. Doors and walls of the world possess perception and understanding, and they even have the power to speak. But such a thing is not present in the kings. So much so that those who are living in royal atmosphere, they should know that those who have gone into Barzakh, there they can hear tumult and noise of different things and the talks of the earth. A time will come when you will also hear the talks of the earth.

At that time when your grave will say: Go to sleep like a bridegroom, if it is a man and if it is a female she would say: Go to sleep like a bride. During those nights, most probably those of the month of Ramadhan, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) did not say for nothing: I weep for the darkness of my grave. I did not have the carpet of good deeds spread in my and neither did I send effulgence of piety for my grave...

Three Groups Harboring Many Hopes

The report, which you have heard before says that there would be three groups who would be harboring more hopes than all others. The first group is of those scholars and Zakireen, on whose advice and exhortations others acted, but they left this world without any deeds. Tomorrow, when on Judgment Day they see that other people have earned Paradise through their knowledge and exhortations and they are themselves being taken to Hell, how shameful would be the occasion at that time?

At that moment, they will desire to be put into Hell as soon as possible, so that they may not be seen.

Another group is of those wealthy people who were unable to take advantage of their own wealth and after their death their heirs spent their wealth in charitable venues. Thus the deceased bore all hardships and someone else took advantage of it. Tomorrow, on Judgment Day there will be nothing, but regret for

such a person.

The third group is of those who would be involved in chastisement due to not performing any good deeds and their servants would be earning rewards. [1](#) Other than the chastisement of Hell, this is a spiritual punishment, which is worse than Hell. All his life he continued to say: I am the master; I have wife, servants and maidservants etc. But when he will look at such a wife and servants, he would say: This is the true princess and prince and I am unfortunate and debased. [2](#)

Womb and Barzakh

Another reason of deriving a moral lesson is that when we were in the womb and at that time if we were told that there is a wide world outside it, which cannot even be compared to this narrow world and inside it different kinds of foods and drinks are available, which cannot be compared to that nourishment, which you are getting through the umbilical cord.

You should know that in the world of Barzakh, your condition is like that of the child in a womb. When a child is born and comes out into the world, he enters such a new world, which neither your eyes have seen nor your ears heard; you have not even imagined it. [3](#)

Capturing of the Soul

Capturing by pain and capturing with ease

When the Almighty Allah takes away the soul, it is captured in one of the two ways: soul of some people is taken with ease and mercy and of some is taken with anger and severity. There are different levels of both kinds of death. Some reach to the stage that Hazrat Israel and his companions are accompanied with fiery weapons to take away the soul of the infidels.

And there are different levels of taking away the soul with kindness to such an extent that angels hold bouquets of flowers of Paradise, which exude fragrance of Paradise. What a good fortune it is that the Angel of death should come in an extremely beautiful form.

The Angel of death comes for everyone that his own face is according to the beauty and elegance of his deeds and faith. As much as his beauty is, as much would be his appearance. I should go on to say that Imam Ali (a.s.) is also as such. How much beauty and grace he earned? How many lofty qualities he adopted? He became a cause of benefit to the people.

How successful and thankful he was in his life? You must not think that the interrogating angels would come to all in the same form. It is not so. They come at the head of all according to the condition of the deceased. Whether we had acted like human beings or like beasts.

They come to some people in a severe and nasty mood and their hair would be rubbing against the

ground and flames coming out of their mouths like dragons and blood overflowing from their eyes. These are our deeds, which would be personified in this way. For believers they would be Bashir and Mubashshir, who give glad tidings of Paradise.[4](#)

Question: A person who died a thousand years ago and another died today. Would the world of Barzakh be same for them? Also please explain the facsimile body.

Reply: In the world of Barzakh, the period of stay of the souls is different. But the souls would not remain suspended in Barzakh. If they went away from the world purified of sins, they would be given rewards of Paradise in Barzakh. In the other case they would be involved in chastisement of Barzakh.

If they are from Mustazafeen, that who had no ability to discern good and bad or that the proof has not been exhausted for them in the proper manner, like some people who live in infidel countries, who do not have knowledge of differences in religions and they cannot go to another country and research about true faith.

In the same way are young children and insane persons; thus there will be no questioning for them in Barzakh; neither would they get any reward nor punishment. And the judgment would be on Allah till Judgment Day so that He may decide about them as per His justice or grace. Facsimile body is a body with which the soul is joined after death. It is also a body like the worldly body.

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) that he said: If you see it in Barzakh, you will say it is that same person; that is it would exactly resemble the worldly body in form and appearance. But this being would be made of an extremely subtle matter.

Allamah Majlisi says in Biharul Anwar: In subtlety it would resemble the angels and Jinns. Also he says that in traditional reports, it is mentioned that it would be like an image in the mirror, which can only be seen, but cannot be felt.

Three Things Would be Very Useful in Barzakh

One day, when the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) was extremely elated, he said: I saw the chief of the martyrs, Hazrat Hamza and Ja'far Ibn Tayyar: a tray of grapes of Paradise was placed near them. They ate some of them and the remaining transformed into seedless dates of Paradise having no hardness, exuding fragrance of musk which was perceptible for a distance of many Farsakhs.

His Eminence said: I asked them: What you have here is better than everything? His Eminence Hamza replied: There three things here, which are extremely pleasing. 1- Dua of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.). 2- Durood on Muhammad and Aale Muhammad (a.s.) and 3- Giving water to the thirsty. It would be very useful in Barzakh. If you cool the heart (quench the thirst) of a person today, tomorrow your heart would be cooled (your thirst would be quenched) in Barzakh.

Squeeze of the Miserly Inmate of Barzakh

It is necessary to be careful of your evil deeds. There were so many occasions when we should have practiced charity, but we did not. How much fire we have sent for our grave? You must not regard others; you must pay attention to yourself. As much one had been miserly as much he has made his grave narrow. When they die, there would be no expansion and wideness; on the contrary it would be as narrow as the driving of the nail in the wall.

Porter in the world and King in the Hereafter

I just remembered an incident, which I should relate. It is narrated from elders that they saw in dream a garden of Barzakh having resplendent palaces, wide roads and lofty trees bearing different delicious fruits.

They also saw a noble personality seated at an elevated spot. At that time it was noticed that the scene was not from the material world. 'I was astounded and wondering who that noble personality was. I prayed to Allah to grant show me. Suddenly that noble man called: I was a porter in the world (which is considered the basest profession).

Flame shoots up from the Grave

Darus Salam is located in Iraq. They brought the dead body of a courtier of the Qachar king (I am not disclosing the name, lest he is insulted) from Tehran to Qom. They procured a chamber in the holy sanctuary for his burial, where he was interred. After the burial, they appointed a Qari to recite Quran on the grave. He began his recital. Suddenly he saw a flame shooting up from the grave.

The Qariran went out at once. Later it was found that the carpet in the chamber and other things placed there were scorched. All understood that this was not the apparent worldly fire; on the contrary it had emerged from the grave. The fire was so severe that it affected even outside the grave. Do you wish to sow the seeds of fire and harvest flowers? Even if thousands of bouquets are placed on your grave, but what the result of your inner filth will be?

Although you may be pleased with yourself and hope for divine mercies, you cannot feel proud of your deeds. You must always remain between hope and fear. It is possible that the Almighty Allah might be merciful on you.

Restraining Anger is like cooling the Fire

Restraining anger is like putting water on the fire of grave. We should be cautious in anger and fury. We should control ourselves and guard the peace and tranquility. If we become angry, we should at once drink some water and ignore the factors which have enraged us. If we have severed relations, we should

water our grave through a good turn to relatives. In other words, every sin would be cause for passing over the Siraat Bridge.

The path to Paradise is reconciliation and peace and the path to Hell is fury and disputation. You know well which road you should tread. Generosity and charity are paths of Paradise without any hardship.⁵ Paradise is that as much as possible, speak a good word. One should be trustworthy and conceal the defects of each other's. Opposed to it, is the path to Hell.

If you want to keep away divine fury from yourself, you should control your own anger and fury. It is narrated that a person was extremely angry. All of a sudden a voice came: The trust of that person is kept with us, whereas he had swallowed his anger for our sake. Today is the day of recompense for it.

Concealed Charity and Weeping due to Fear of Chastisement

Among the things, which cool the fire of the grave is to give Sadaqah for the sake of Allah, without making an announcement of it. One of its kinds is that if one hand gives Sadaqah, the other hand should not come to know. We must not mention it to anyone else. So much so that one should not even say it to oneself. We must not even recall it in our mind and forget it completely.

Among the things, which cool the fire of Hell, are drops of tears shed in fear of God. You should recall your sins and remember the chastisement and hardship of those sins. If you become fearful and horrified and some drops of tears come out, they would cool the fire of Hell.

Following of Selfish Desires Would Make one Fall Far Away from the Siraat Bridge

Following selfish desires is a cause of falling down from Siraat Bridge. Have you seen a person whose selfish desires are his deities?⁶ Following of selfish desires takes one to the pit of Hell.⁷ One who pursues his base desires without paying any heed to the lawful and unlawful of religion is having such end; it is as if he has chosen the fire of Hell and abandoned obedience of God and the right path.

In Surah Yasin, servitude to the Almighty Allah is called as the Straight Path. One should live like slaves and not like servants. One should not consider oneself absolutely independent. On the contrary, one should consider oneself to be absolute property of God.

The Sinner is the Real Usurper

One who bestowed the tongue has also fixed the limits of its use. Who is the true usurper? That person who talks abusive things through the tongue, which is given to us as a trust, and which is bestowed to us by the Almighty Allah. One who lies and backbites. One who makes allegations and talks without having proper knowledge? One who insults people? All these are dishonest uses of the tongue.

It is the property of your Lord and your discretion over it is limited. It is necessary that it should remain under the control of the true owner (God).

Hell for the Enemy of Ali (a.s.)

It is narrated that if all people had united on devotion to Imam Ali (a.s.), (and had died on faith in Ali), the Almighty Allah would not have created the fire of Hell. Hell is for the enemies of Ali (a.s.). Thus the followers of Imam Ali (a.s.) would die after repenting for their sins and the love of Imam Ali (a.s.) is akin to leaving this world after repentance. And if suppose even if one dies as sinner and smeared with crimes, one would be purified in Barzakh.

The Follower of Ali (a.s.) Would not Remain in Hell

Muhaqqiq Qummi says: Perpetuity in Hellfire is only for the enemies of Imam Ali (a.s.) and perhaps this tradition means that because of devotion of Ali (a.s.) no sin would compel anyone to remain in Hell forever. There will be no hardship, which can cause one to remain in Hell forever even though one might be suffering chastisement since three hundred thousand years.

Imam Ali (a.s.) is Having the Keys to Paradise and Hell

Akhtab Khwarizmi and Thalabi have mentioned that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) said: Tomorrow on Judgment Day a wide pulpit having a hundred steps would be placed for me. I will sit on the first step; Ali would be seated on the second. And two angels will be seated on the step after that.

The first angel will say: O people of the gathering; I am Rizwan, the caretaker of Paradise; that is I am the key-holder of Paradise. The Almighty Allah has ordered me that I should present the keys of Paradise to Muhammad. Then the next angel would say: I am Malik, the guardian of Hell. I have been ordered to hand over the key of Hell to Muhammad. At that time I will take up both the keys and hand them to Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) as the Almighty Allah says:

“Do cast into Hell every ungrateful, rebellious one.” (Surah Qaf 50:24)

That is O Muhammad and Ali, Do cast into Hell every ungrateful, rebellious one. [8](#)

Great Personalities Terrified of the Nakedness of Judgment Day

It is mentioned in Malimul Zulfa that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) said: On Judgment Day, women will be raised naked. When Lady Zahra (s.a.) heard this, she began to weep and wail: O woe! Jibraeel Amin came to the Prophet and said: The Almighty Allah greets Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.) and says: We stand guarantee for Zahra, that on Judgment Day, We shall adorn her in two robes of Paradise.

Mother of Amirul Momineen (a.s.), Lady Fatima bint Asad; that lady who was taken inside the Holy Kaaba to deliver her child and she remained inside it for three days. And she, who was like a mother for the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.). Even she protested to the Prophet about the exposure of Judgment Day and sought refuge from him and requested him to shroud her in his shirt at the time of her burial.

When Ummul Momineen, Lady Khadija (s.a.) was in her last moments, she sent Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.) who was seven years of age at that time to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and said: Go and tell your father that your mother requests to him to bury her in his shirt, so that on Judgment Day she is not raised unclothed. These are examples of trepidation of senior personalities from exposure of Judgment Day.

For the day about whose hardship the Almighty Allah says that it is something, which one despises and which one considers bad for himself. From this same meaning the two angels who come into the grave for infidels the first night are called as Munkir and Nakeer. Thus the Late Faiz and other respected scholars have said that the arrival of angels depends on the deeds of the dead. If the deceased was righteous, Bashir and Mubashshir will come and if not they come as Munkir and Nakeer.

That is the same angels would come for believers in a nice form and would be givers of glad tidings and for the infidels and sinners, they would come in a horrible form and warn of divine punishment. It is the same angel like in the case of His Eminence Israel, but for the righteous, he would come in a nice form and for the sinners in a terrifying form.

Dispersed Locusts

“Their eyes cast down, going forth from their graves as if they were scattered locusts.” (Surah Qamar 54:7)

Humility is a matter of conscience and it is most apparent in the physical organs and most of all in the eyes. The relationship of the eyes to heart is more than with any other organ. Joy and sorrow, shame and modesty etc. all can be read through the eyes. That is why the Almighty Allah has related humility to the eyes, although it is related to the eyes, because the effects of debasement and misfortune exude from the eyes.

That is why it is said that their eyes are humble. They will come out of the graves and disperse like locusts. Among the characteristics of the locusts is that when they fly, they do so in a haphazard way and bump into each other. They crash against buildings and other things and due to this a large number of them drop down.

The Almighty Allah compared the coming of human beings from the grave to the flying of locusts. He says: When he sees something, he does so in such a way that as if he has seen it for the first time. All the past and latter people will gather over there.[9](#)

Those Who are not Distressed

Yes, there is only one group, which is not distressed and these are those who brought faith and continue to perform good deeds and the Almighty Allah bestowed peace and confidence to them. [10](#)

And they would leave the world with the same tranquility and confidence. If someone is having a doubtful faith and lacks good deeds, you can be sure that he would be distressed in the hereafter as well. [11](#) If he dies with an uncertain faith, he would be raised distressed on Judgment Day also.

Chastisement of Qiyamat is Most Severe

“...and the hour shall be most grievous and bitter.” (Surah Qamar 54:46)

By way of emphasis, he says that Qiyamat is grievous. Anything that is sorrowful and grievous and it is not possible to flee from that, it is the superlative of the word, which is used in this verse.

That is every hardship and chastisement, which seems to be extraordinary, escape from that cannot be imagined and this can be easily witnessed in the world; Qiyamat is much more difficult if he gets involved in the chastisement of Qiyamat, he would forget the hardships of the world; like one stung by a snake does not even care of the stinging of mosquitoes.

Demanders of Rights and Qiyamat

You must have read the hardships of Qiyamat again and again in the Quran. Judgment Day is the day when every person will be raised so that all may see him. Meanwhile, a caller will call out: One who has a right on this person may come forward.

The seekers of rights will rush to him. Those about whom it would be least expected that one has not even fulfilled their rights. They will gather around. He would have insulted someone, backbite against someone, usurped someone's property, had been indebted to someone and then forgotten it.

All will besiege him asking for their rights. Now that man will have to repay all of them from his good deeds. It is mentioned in traditional reports that he would have to give in exchange of every Dirham seven hundred accepted prayers. What can be a greater hardship and difficulty?

This word is derived from the root, which means bitter and the form used here is the superlative; it denotes anything, which is displeasing whatever bitterness of it can be imagined, Qiyamat is bitterer than that. It is so bitter that even a brother will flee from his brother, the son from the parents and the husband from the wife [12](#) only due to the fear that they might demand their rights.

Testimony of the Parts of the Body

Among the stages of Qiyamat is the speaking of the organs and physical parts. The parts of the body of everyone will testify for his deeds. It is a declaration of the Holy Quran. [13](#) On the contrary, when man will object to his body parts, why you are testifying against me? The organs will reply: We have no power over ourselves. Almighty Allah bestowed the power of speech to us. [14](#)

Fire for the Sinners

“Surely the guilty are in ‘Saeer’ (error and distress).” (Surah Qamar 54:47)

The literal meaning of the criminal is sinner, but according to the context of the first verse, it denotes polytheist. That is the polytheists are deviated from the truth. That is all their deeds in the world are two faced.

They are selfish. They do not perform any positive act, which might cause progress to them. All their efforts are focused on gathering wealth, whose consequence is getting deviated from the path of God.

The word of ‘swar’ is in the meaning of obsession and it is possible that it might be deviation and obsession in the world and craze is implied by it. That is the polytheists are in deviation and insanity.

Thus it is narrated from the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) in Biharul Anwar that when the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) met an insane person, he asked about his condition. People said that he was mad. He said: He is trouble stricken. Indeed, insane is one who has preferred the world over the hereafter. [15](#)

They Lose the Path of Salvation

A meaning of deviation and obsession is that both should be related to the hereafter. On Judgment Day, polytheists will lose the way to Paradise and then will not able to find it. [16](#)

“On the day when they shall be dragged upon their faces into the fire; taste the touch of Hell.”
(Surah Qamar 54:48)

Since they had turned away from the truth in the world that is why they would be thrown into the fire tomorrow and they would be told: Taste the Saqar.

Taste the Fire of Hell

Saqar is a name of Hell. It is narrated from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) that he said: There is a field in Hell, which is known as Saqar. It is mentioned in another report that Saqar is a level in Hell. One day Saqar requested the Almighty Allah to allow it to take a breath. When it was permitted it took a breath and as a result of this it scorched all the Hell. These are not fictional things.

They shake us up from the roots. They are realities, which make us tremble. We should worry about such dangerous occasions and seek refuge for such an eventuality. Till we do not see the angels of mercy at the time of death and hear that we have been invited to Paradise, till that time¹⁷ we should not sit idle and leave the world without faith. It should not be that we die without repenting for our sins. Can anyone have certainty that his death will come in the best way?¹⁸

The Dispersed Parts of the Body Would be gathered on Judgment Day

It is a matter of great astonishment that the dispersed parts of the body would be gathered once more. When rice or wheat goes down the throat of your father it disperses. But all the particles of the physical body gather once more in the loins of your father and enter the womb of the mother through the channel of semen.

You have seen how the dispersed particles were gathered and after that also they would gather the dispersed particles. In the Holy Quran, this meaning is mentioned again and again. Say: The one who has created you the first time, will bring you back together.¹⁹

The power of creation, which gathered the dispersed particles and after being dispersed again will gather it again in such a way before your eyes, they show the scene of Qiyamat; are you still astounded? Do you say that you will be reduced to dust after death; how you will be raised up again?²⁰

Life under the Surface of Earth after Death

If you are still doubtful; look at the ground beneath your feet. How in summer there was a scene of death; plant, herbs and seeds were all dried up. But when spring arrived, a new life was added to it and the signs of life began to be showered from it. Different seeds and herbs and various fruits grew from it. This is life after death.²¹

Why People of Hell were Created in the First Place?

A question arises that when the Almighty Allah knew that the folks of Hell will never accept righteousness and faith, why He created them at all? The reply can be only that: O human being, your saying how and why is beyond your limit. Although you should have said: I don't know and I can't understand the true secret of creation and not that you should be opposed to Divine wisdom.

But I reply this objection through a simple example. No powerful and kind ruler throws open all his treasure for common people and announces to them to come and take whatever they want. Now if there are some people in his kingdom who belie him and say that he is only bluffing and there is nothing worth to be taken from there. What can the king do about such people? He is not blamable in any case.

If someone does not come to collect the goods he has caused a loss to himself²²

The Actual Aim is to Widen Mercy and Grace

O human being, the Almighty Allah had invited all for a feast. Or He knew from before that all would not come.²³ There is a saying that even if all the people in the world become disbelievers, it would cause no difference to the Almighty Allah.

There is an interesting point here. It is that if all the people do not come, except for one person, it would be sufficient for the greatness and power of the Almighty Allah. The glory of Allah lies in making the arrangement and inviting the people. People may come according to their will and wish and go back satiated.

It cannot be through use of force. The act of Satan is found in an optional matter and selfish desires also intrude. On this juncture, some are found saying. Leave all this alone; allow the world to run on its way. Don't forgo money.

Which corpse has become alive again? That is you must not leave the material and natural joys. What concern you have with hereafter and Paradise; you should remain with animals. What have you got to do with the neighborhood of Muhammad and Aale Muhammad (a.s.)? This is Shaitan and this is his voice.

All these are satanic instigations and the majority of the people listen to him. Should the merciful Lord close the doors of His grace on everyone? You cannot say this. When Allah knew that all would not come, why He created them in the first place?

These are childish statements. We cannot understand the secrets of the universe that we should be able to understand all this. What is the wisdom of the King of the Kingdom and how many exigencies are concealed in it, which He himself knows or the proximate ones of His court.

Umar Saad and Call of Shaitan

What was the issue of Umar Saad? Greed for governorship of Rayy and Satanic invitation, which said that if you go to Kerbala and fight Husain, you will be rewarded with the governorship of Rayy. No one accepted the invitation of Muhammad to Paradise and one invitation of Satan; and that also in your view he oppressed and deceived the Almighty Allah. If you eliminate Husain, you will achieve your intended aim. And if in the meantime Qiyamat comes, you will seek repentance and be forgiven.

The call of Allah and the call of the Satan are there and will continue to be there till Qiyamat. It was there from the beginning and it will remain till Qiyamat. Such calls are there for every person, every day.²⁴

Death is an Example of Divine Power

The example of this statement or a statement higher than this was issued by Imam Ali (a.s.). Exhortation is not like a corpse.²⁵ Would you like to see that power is only the property of the Almighty Allah and only see the condition of throes of death. You were a great stalwart, but in spite of all your powers you cannot even drive away a housefly.

You were speaking, but at that time even if you want to recite the Kalimah, you will not be able to. If you wish to make a bequest, you can do so with only a great effort. Whatever strength he possessed, it was not his own since day one. Man aspires to reach home safely. But he meets his death in wilderness, vehicle and on the roads.

No matter what one may intend, but practically something else happens. Who were you? You were nothing on day one. Today your misunderstanding will be clarified.

Why should you not gain lesson from this? How many vehicles are there which are dangers to their owners and cause death to them? How many buildings there are to build which a man devotes all his capacities and today his bier is coming out from the same building. Please reduce your fervor and desire for this world; on the contrary you should be in anticipation of the permanent abode. How the Almighty Allah warns you all! But this man is not prepared to gain lesson from it all.

Letter of Imam Husain (a.s.) to Bani Hashim

As if originally the world was not there only (indeed a person may live for forty or fifty years and it seems that he has just come into existence). There is no end of the Hereafter as we know all along. It was there from the beginning and it will remain thus. But it is Imam Husain (a.s.) and he is inclined to another world. At the time of entering Kerbala, he wrote a letter of such subject matter.²⁶

O Allah, by the right of Imam Husain (a.s.) grant us the enthusiasm of meeting You and bestow to us love of the hereafter. Imam Husain (a.s.) is extremely desirous of death and he wants to join his grandfather, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.), father Imam Ali (a.s.), mother Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.) and brother Imam Hasan Mujtaba (a.s.).

Prophet Yaqub (a.s.) was so eager to meet Prophet Yusuf (a.s.). Imam Husain (a.s.) was eager to meet his kindred and after that he also announced that he belonged to Kerbala.²⁷

Harkening to the Entreaty of the Mourner of Imam Husain (a.s.) in Barzakh

Barzakh is the third stage. That is from grave to Qiyamat when the soul enters the facsimile body; if man is from the righteous, the place of his arrival is in Wadius Salam in the neighborhood of Amirul

Momineen (a.s.). If he is evil, his destination is wilderness of Barhut.

If he has departed from the world purified, he would reside in comfort in Barzakh. He would be bestowed with fragrance and pleasures. And if he is smeared with sins or has usurped the rights of others, has oppressed people; he would be in a severe squeeze like a nail driven into the wall.

Is there anyone who can claim that he would certainly leave the world in a purified condition and no right of others would have been upon him? He should not have insulted anyone all his life. He should not have backbite anyone.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) says: One who is sorrowful in our calamities; after death he would feel a pleasure, which will continue till Judgment Day. That is in the world of Barzakh, he would not feel any sort of sorrow and grief.

Under the Shade of Imam Husain (a.s.) on Judgment Day

On Judgment Day, weeping on Imam Husain (a.s.) would be rewarded in a very nice way. It is also not known when Qiyamat will arrive. But we know something about it from the verses of Quran. The Almighty Allah has compared this day to the 'great fear' (Faza Akbar). Its terror will surround everyone and there will be no one who would not be distressed that day.

Regarding peace on Judgment Day, Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) has said that: One who abstains from work on Ashura Day unlike the Bani Umayyah who considered Ashura Day as blessed. If one refrains from worldly things, the Almighty Allah would fulfill his desires. One who is sorrowful on Ashura Day, in exchange of it, tomorrow on Judgment Day when there will be a scene of fear and terror for all, it would be a day of joy for him.

The next difficult stage is that of the stage of accounting. Just imagine when the Almighty Allah orders you to read your scroll of deeds.²⁸ At that time even if one had performed the least ordinary deed he would see it. If it is a good deed, he would be rewarded and if it is evil, he would be punished.²⁹ How long one tarries at the stage of accounting depends on his or her own self.

One having a long accounting would be involved in hardship, but since he is himself in punishment, he does not know what his responsibility is. Is he deserving of Paradise or Hell? Although there are some, who according to traditional reports, when creatures would be anticipating accounting, these people would be under the shade of the Arsh.

They would be mourners for Imam Husain (a.s.). They will be in the neighborhood of Imam Husain (a.s.). At the time when other people would be in punishment after the accounting, these people will be in the service of Maula and this is the true Paradise.

Blowing of the Soul after Creation

On the basis of this, the second creation is a divine command; the facsimile world and Barzakh; or the conditions of Judgment Day. Fakhruddin Razi in his Tafsir, says about 'second creation': It is the blowing of the soul into the human body after conception of fetus has taken place in the womb.

And after that the Almighty Allah created man from dust and then the seed and then clot. After that a lump of flesh was created. Then the bones were created. After that He made flesh to clothe the bones. And then when the body was complete in four months, at that time He created another thing, which was the human soul.

At that moment he says: It is appropriate that the placing of the seed till the completion of the body should be considered as the first creation and the creation of human soul should be considered as second creation, because the previous verses were about creation of the body without soul.

Chastisement on the Fornicator in Barzakh

“Whoever commits fornication with a Muslim, Jew, Christian or Magian woman, whether she is a slave or a free woman; and dies without repenting for his sin, then the Almighty Allah opens three hundred doors of punishment in his grave? From each door many snakes, scorpions and pythons emerge from the fire and burn and torment him till Judgment Day.”³⁰

Foul Odor from the Fornicator on Judgment Day

When a fornicator will rise from his grave, the stink of his body shall hurt the people. The people will know what deeds he had committed in the world, till the Almighty Allah orders him to be thrown into the fire. Know that Allah has prohibited unlawful things. He has also prescribed rules and regulations of life. No one is more modest than Allah. It is His modesty that He has prohibited fornication.³¹

I Fear for You Regarding Barzakh

Umar Ibn Yazid says, “I asked Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.), “I have heard you saying that all our Shia will enter Heaven however sinful they may be?” Imam replied, “By Allah, I had truly said, they shall all belong to Heaven.”

Then I asked, “May my life be sacrificed on you, even if their sins are great and in large number?” Imam said, “All of you (Shia) shall enter Paradise by intercession of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) or his successors on Judgment Day. But, by Allah I fear for you the Barzakh.” I asked, “What is Barzakh?” He replied, “Barzakh is the grave. Its duration commences from the time of death until Judgment Day.”³²

Tomorrow, Instead of Tears you will Weep Blood

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) called the attention of Ibn Masud and imparted some advice to him. He said in this regard. "Never imagine a sin to be trifle and small and abstain from the Greater Sins, because, on Judgment Day, when the slave beholds his sins, tears of blood and puss shall flow from his eyes. At that moment Allah shall say, "This is the day when everyone shall see his good or bad deeds, and wish there be a great distance between them and their sins."³³

It is also related from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) that he said, "Verily, a person shall be kept imprisoned in Hell for a hundred years for each of the sins (that he commits)."

They Decide about the Journey of Barzakh Before Only

Man should reach the stage where he can see himself. That is the remembrance of the Almighty Allah should be so much mingled in his existence that his entity and ego should be destroyed, and when he dies, he should have already decided the destination of Barzakh and he should reach where divine saints are located and there the companions of Imam Husain (a.s.) are located.

Martyrs of Kerbala are so pleased in the court of Imam Husain (a.s.) that when the Houries of Paradise convey to them that they are eager for them, they reply: How we can leave the court of Imam Husain (a.s.)?

Divine Gift in the Court of Imam Husain (a.s.)

There is so much joy and happiness in the presence of Imam Husain (a.s.) that one would not even think of Houries. The world of love is strange. It is that same gift and divine bestowal, which cannot come into any other heart. And not only that no eye has seen and no ear has heard; on the contrary not even any mind has imagined.

At last in the stage of remembrance of God he reaches to such a level that man even forgets his own personality. Remembrance becomes so excessive that the self cannot see itself.

An Edifying Occasion for Prophet Hizqil

It is narrated that when Tark Oola was committed by Prophet Dawood (a.s.), he was passing through the mountains and forests weeping and wailing when he reached a mountain. That mountain was having a cave in which a pious prophet named Hizqil resided. When Prophet Hizqil heard the sound of animals he understood that it was Prophet Dawood (a.s.).

[Because when he recited the Zabur, all used to weep and wail with him]. Prophet Dawood (a.s.) asked: Do you permit me to come to the mountain peak. He replied: You are a sinner Prophet Dawood (a.s.)

began to weep. Prophet Hizqil (a.s.) received divine revelation that you must not condemn Dawood on his Tark Oola and seek forgiveness from me that I have left everyone on his means even though they commit mistakes.

Thus Prophet Hizqil (a.s.) brought Prophet Dawood (a.s.) near and the latter said: Dawood (a.s.) said: You indeed intended to commit a sin. No, said Hizqil (a.s.). Dawood (a.s.) said: Indeed arrogance has appeared in you. He replied: No, it is not so. Dawood (a.s.) said: Indeed, you have remembered attachment to the world and worldly lusts. Yes, he said. Dawood (a.s.) asked: How will you cure it?

He replied: I will enter this cave and seek lesson from whatever is there inside it. Dawood (a.s.) entered the cave with him. He saw that there was an iron tablet and decayed bones were placed on it and an iron slate was kept near it. Prophet Dawood (a.s.) read it. It was mentioned therein: I, Urwah Hari bin Bashlam ruled for one thousand years, constructed a thousand cities and deflowered a thousand virgins, and in the end dust was my bed, stone became my pillow and snakes and ants my neighbors.

That is, whoever sees me would not be deceived by the world.[34](#)

The Ultimate End is Only Two Handfuls of Dust

Imagine a person who was an emperor of great pomp and pageant, was reduced to be put in a desolate cave and his mortal remains were lying on a steel sheet in dust. He had insects and vermin crawling all over his mortal remains. A believer must take lesson from this incident. If he had obeyed Satan and his baser instincts, and ran after the worldly things, how long will the party last?

A person who strives too hard for his selfish ends forgets that he has to die inevitably and all the paraphernalia that he accumulates will have to be left behind. He should pray that whatever benefits and blessings he enjoyed, his end should not be like of the mighty king, whose story is narrated here.

Our topic of discussion is reminder. One, who leaves himself uncontrolled and doesn't remember Allah, will be nowhere (like a rudderless ship). Man should strive to be like a mountain in his moral behavior. One who is vulnerable to the wave of doubts created by Satan should ensure that the glitter of the world doesn't overwhelm him. This is possible if he keeps in mind the inevitable end that every mortal being is destined to![35](#)

Visitation of the Graves is for Your Own Sake

In any case, a person should gain moral lessons and derive his own conclusions. In the holy religion of Islam, emphasis is laid on visitation to graves, especially the graves of ones parents. After all; why so much emphasis on this?

If we recite Surah Fatiha for them, the reward can reach them, but it is commanded to visit the grave of your father as it a place where your supplication will be accepted.

You will get the most benefit from it; you realize that even your father is no more and you will also pass away one day. You will join him sooner or later. Do not be deceived by the world of two days' duration and in other words you should be attentive.

Lady Zahra (s.a.) on the Graves of Uhad Martyrs

It is found in the biography of Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.) that when calamities befell her after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.), she took ill; but in spite of that on every Monday and Thursday she used to take the permission of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) and visit the graves of her uncle, His Eminence Hamza and other martyrs of Uhad.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in his last days also when he had high temperature and was unable to walk without support; even in such a position, he used to ask them to take him to the Baqi Cemetery.

- [1. Layali al-Akhbar](#)
- [2. Sarai Deegar, Pg. 113](#)
- [3. Sarai Deegar, Pg. 242](#)
- [4. Surah Muhammad 47:27](#)
- [5. Surah Dahr 76:3](#)
- [6. Surah Jathiya 45:35](#)
- [7. Surah Qariya 101:9](#)
- [8. Imamate, Pg. 68-72](#)
- [9. Haqaiq az-Quran, Pg. 59](#)
- [10. Surah Fath 48:4](#)
- [11. Surah Isra 17:72](#)
- [12. Surah Abasa 80:34](#)
- [13. Surah Nur 24:24](#)
- [14. Surah Hamim Sajdah 32:20](#)
- [15. Haqaiq az-Quran, Pg. 198](#)
- [16. Surah Hadid 57:13](#)
- [17. Surah Fajr 89:27-30](#)
- [18. Haqaiq az-Quran, Pg. 198](#)
- [19. Surah Yasin 36:79](#)
- [20. Surah Saffat 37:14](#)
- [21. Kitab Bandigi Raaz Afrinash, Vol. 1, Pg. 141](#)
- [22. Kitab Bandigi Raaz Afrinash, Vol. 1, Pg. 177](#)
- [23. Surah Dahr 76:3](#)
- [24. Kitab Bandigi Raaz Afrinash, Vol. 1, Pg. 179](#)
- [25. Nahjul Balagha](#)
- [26. Kamiluz Ziyaraat](#)
- [27. Nafasul Mahmoom, Pg. 87](#)
- [28. Surah Isra 17:14](#)
- [29. Surah Zilzal 99:7-8](#)
- [30. Gunahane Kabira, Vol. 1, Pg. 202](#)
- [31. Wasailush Shia](#)
- [32. Usul Kafi](#)

[33.](#) Biharul Anwar

[34.](#) Ainul Hayat, Pg. 172

[35.](#) Istiaaza, Pg. 84

Barzakh

Thus human life from the time of death till Judgment Day is:

“...and before them is a barrier until the day they are raised.” (Surah Mominoon 23: 100)

Man should be certain that there is no solution without death. Human death is separation between soul and body and it is complete separation of body from soul. After the separation of soul from the body, the human body will mix up in dust and become dust. After separation from the material body, this soul is joined to a subtle body, which is known as facsimile and which is not visible because of its being of extremely thin matter.

And it should be believed that after death there would be interrogation about deeds. We should keep their replies ready. Certainty of this matter is also necessary that there is reward and punishment in Barzakh as well.

That is man would be recompensed according to his character and deeds till Judgment Day would be established and he gets permanent reward or punishment. Many believers possessing inappropriate character will have their accounts completed in this world of Barzakh.

In such a way that on Judgment Day they would not have to face any difficulty. Detailed circumstances of Barzakh are mentioned in the Book of Resurrection by the same author, which might be referred to. It is necessary to have faith in these issues, and one should be so certain of these fundamentals that his heart should absolutely aware of them and at the time of interrogation, he should not be bewildered.

Also for fulfillment of every obligatory and recommended act, one should not sit idle even for a moment, because time is less and result is near.

Because the distance between man and the consequences of his deeds is nothing, except death and that also continues to warn man every moment.

Certainty on Qiyamat: that is when all the past and future people would be raised and gathered in one place. That day: when the light of the sun and moon would be no more and the day when mountains would break up and become like soft particles; when the heavens and the earth would be transformed; the day when people of a particular group would be holding the scroll of their deeds in their right hands.

Another group would be in extreme distress and grief and would be holding the scroll of their deeds in their left hands. That is the day, which the Almighty Allah has referred to as 'the great day'. In such a way that elders of faith are shocked by its remembrance and they weep and wail in its terror.

Indeed if every awakened heart reads the descriptions of that day in Quran and ponders over it, he would be deprived of his comfort and peace and would become disinterested in the world and its pleasures and seek the refuge of the Almighty Allah for that day.

It is not necessary to have information about the time of Qiyamat. In the same way, it is neither necessary to have detailed knowledge about the circumstances of that day neither is it of any use. On the contrary, it is inappropriate to ask questions about it.

It is so, because this knowledge is restricted to Almighty Allah. Although it is necessary to have knowledge and faith on some stages, which are clarified in the Holy Quran: like Balance of deeds, Siraat Bridge, Accounting of deeds, Intercession, Paradise and Hell, which would be explained in the coming pages. [1](#)

Barzakh

According to dictionary, it means a veil or an obstruction between two things and which does not allow the two of them to join. For example there are two seas: salty and sweet, but the Almighty Allah has made such a barrier between them that none of them can destroy the other. This is known as Barzakh. Although according to terminology, Barzakh is a barrier, which Allah, the Mighty and the High has placed between the world and the hereafter in such a way that both should retain their characteristics.

This world is between the worldly affairs and those of the hereafter. In Barzakh, there is no headache and toothache etc. All are restricted to this material world. However they are abstract things. But they also do not resemble the circumstances of the hereafter. That is chastisement is not absolute for the disobedient and pleasures are also not absolute for the righteous.

Imam (a.s.) was asked: What is the duration of Barzakh? He replied: From the time of death till they would be raised up from the graves. It is mentioned in the Holy Quran that:

"...and before them is a barrier until the day they are raised." (Surah Mominoon 23: 100)

Facsimile world and the facsimile body

Barzakh is also known as the 'facsimile world', because it is like this world from the aspect of form and appearance, but it is different in material and characteristics, but after a period of time, they will enter another world in such way that this world would be like the womb for them. Your body in Barzakh is also the facsimile body.

That is in form it is exactly like this body, but it is not body or matter. On the contrary, the body is subtle and thinner than air. Nothing would obstruct it. A wall cannot obstruct its view.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) says: This facsimile body seems to be the same worldly body. If you see your parents in the dream, you will see them in the same worldly body, but their material body is in the grave. This form and body is facsimile body.

The body of Barzakh possesses eyes exactly like our eyes. But those eyes do not experience any pain. They continue to see till the establishment of Judgment Day and they see perfectly.

They do not weaken like these eyes, which make them needful of glasses.

Intellectuals and scholars compare it to be an image seen in the mirror, but subject to the condition that two characteristics are found in it. One is that it stands independently, without the support of the mirror.

Secondly, it has perception and feelings as well. The facsimile body exists independently and also possesses perception. Its examples are dreams, which traverse long distances in the blink of the eye. A person reached to Holy Mecca or Mashad Muqaddas in a moment.

The foods and drinks of that world, beautiful forms and faces and pleasing songs are such that no one from this world is capable to produce them. All these are present and the souls of the facsimile body take advantage from them and gain nourishment from them;² although foods and drinks of this world and other things are subtle and they are not related to matter.

On the basis of this, as mentioned in traditional reports, it is possible that a thing would transform into different kinds according to the desire of the believer. For example a fig may turn into an apple.

It is narrated from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) that he said: I saw my uncle,

His Eminence, Hamza after martyrdom. A tray of pomegranates of Paradise was placed before him and he was eating from it. Suddenly they transformed into grapes and then the grapes turned into fresh dates. That is one thing changes into different things as it is not matter, it is subtle substance.

The literal meaning of 'Barzakh' is a veil or a barrier that stands between two things and which does not allow the two to meet. For example, that part or region of the ocean in which waves of both: sweet and salty waters bounce and yet God has provided between them an invisible barrier whereby one cannot overcome another.

“He has made the two seas to flow freely (so that) they meet together: Between them is a barrier, which they cannot pass.” (Surah Rahman 55: 19–20)

It is called Barzakh, but technically Barzakh is a realm kept by the Lord of the Universe between this world of ours and the forthcoming Hereafter in such a way that both might maintain their individual limits.

Barzakh is a state between these worldly and otherworldly affairs.

Halfway between Reward and Punishment

After entering the world of Barzakh, one does not experience physical pains like headache, toothache and such other troubles. Such suffering forms a part of the essentials of the material world. But there, in Barzakh, it is the realm of abstracts or of incorporeal beings. Of course, it can also not be called the Hereafter, which may mean that there will be only darkness for the sinners and only light for the obedient ones.

Some people asked Imam (a.s.) about the duration of Barzakh. He replied, “It is from the moment of death up to the time when all will rise from their graves regaining life.”³

The Holy Quran says:

“... and before them is a barrier until the day they are raised.” (Surah Mominoon 23:100)

Facsimile World and the Facsimile Body

Barzakh is called Facsimile World also, because it is just like this world; but is so in shape and form yet different and distinct from the viewpoint of its substance and specialty. After our death, we enter a realm, which, in comparison, is like this world vis-à-vis a mother’s womb.

Similarly, our bodies also will be facsimile bodies in Barzakh. This is to say that they will appear quite like our worldly material bodies but, factually, they will not be this body (containing skin and flesh). It will be an elegant, fine and exquisite body. It will be finer than air. There will be no barriers for it, which our bodies face in this material world. It (the Barzakh body) can see anything and everything from everywhere every time. There will be no difference for observation whether something is on this side of a wall or on the other.

Imam Ja’far (a.s.) says, “If you see that facsimile body you will say: Lo, it is the same worldly body.”⁴

For example, if you happen to see your father in your dream, you will observe him only in his worldly material body whereas his body (and matter) is in the grave and this form, which you see in the dream, is his facsimile form. The Barzakh body also has eyes, but there is no fat or liquid in them.

Those eyes do not suffer any pain till the Day of Resurrection. Those eyes can see things and can see well, but they never become weak nor do they require spectacles. Here is an example for more explanation:

Picture in the Mirror, with Two Stipulations

Scholars and experts of scholastic theology have compared the Barzakh body with what one sees in a mirror. Of course there are two differences. First, the said picture is actual (not a mere reflection) and second, it achieves senses. The facsimile body is real and it also senses and understands things.

An incomparable example is dream. Therein we travel immeasurable distances in a split second. In no time we reach Holy Mecca, Holy Mashad and all other places. We also see and hear people over there and also talk there. But all these things are not performed by physical organs.

Not only this, better, higher and finer things like various kinds of tasty food, good-looking faces and pleasing fragrance as well as melodious songs etc. are instantly available to the facsimile body, things which are unimaginable here. All these things are found in Barzakh and the souls can benefit from all these things in their facsimile bodies.

“And reckon not those who are killed in Allah’s way as dead; nay, they are alive (and) are provided sustenance from their Lord...” (Surah Aale Imran 3: 169)

All Food Articles and Fruits Combined in Only One Thing

Since the foods, drinks, fruits and all such things in Barzakh are fine and have nothing to do with matter; it is quite possible for them, as mentioned in narrations, to combine in one thing according to the desires and wish of the faithful. For example, there is date fruit, but you wish to eat (taste) an apple. The former instantly turns into the latter or in any other form of your liking. All of it depends on your wish.

It is mentioned in a report that the Holy Prophet once said, “I saw my respectable uncle Hamza after his martyrdom. A plateful of heavenly pomegranate was in front of him. He was eating from that plate. All of a sudden, I saw that the pomegranate at once changed into date fruit.” (Summary of the rest of the narration is that the Holy Prophet said, “I asked my honorable uncle what kinds of deeds are most beneficial there (in the Hereafter)?”

He replied, “Three things count here the most, Giving water to the thirsty, reciting Salawat for the Prophet and his Progeny and love for Ali Ibn Abi Talib.” In short, the things of that realm are subtle (fine) and are not made up of matter; one thing turns into another and into many other forms and shapes instantly at the will of the faithful.

The Degree of Effects

Compared with this world, one of the specialties of the realm of Barzakh is effectiveness. In the science of medicine, there is a theory, the description whereof is of no use for the common masses. So we will proceed after only hinting towards it. It is that there are two things, one that affects something and the

other that is affected. According to the aforesaid theory, the more these two things are subtle, the more profound will be the effect.

Fruits, sweets and the pleasure, which we derive in this world, are like a drop in the ocean in comparison with those in the realm of Barzakh. The tastefulness there is immeasurably more than it is here. If only a part of the face of a heavenly Hourie is unveiled, it will dazzle the eyes of the whole world. If the entire beauty of that fairy opens, it will outshine the sun. Indeed, absolute beauty is available only there.

God says:

“Surely We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them (as to) which of them is best in works.” (Surah Kahf 18:7)

Meaning: We have made whatever is in the world an adornment, but it is a beauty, which is a test or trial. The intention is to differentiate between child and a major person whereby it may be known as to who becomes mad after this toy (this material world) and who does not pay any attention to this plaything. The real pleasure lies in the real beauty and in trying to attain it.

A Man in the Grave Who Hosted Others

The power of effect is so much in the realm of Barzakh that it cannot even be imagined in this world. Sometimes we come across events, which can guide the people living in this world. One such effective event has been quoted by the late Naraqī in his book Khazain: During my youth, I was busy, along with my father and other relatives, in visiting people on the occasion of Navroz holiday.

It was Tuesday and we had gone to a friend’s house situated near a graveyard in Isfahan. We were told that he (my friend) was not present in his house. As we were somewhat tired we turned towards the graveyard with a view to take some rest and also to visit the graves of the faithful. There we sat down at a spot.

One of our companions, pointing his finger towards a nearby grave, said jokingly, “O resident of the grave! These are holidays. Will you not host us?” We heard a voice from that grave, “On next Tuesday you will be my guests here.”

All of us became spellbound and also frightened thinking that perhaps, all of us would be dead by next Tuesday. So we engaged in performing as many good deeds as possible and also began to write our wills. Then arrived the following Tuesday and yet all of us were safe and alive. We gathered at a place and after consultations decided to go to that grave and see what happens. Perhaps that voice might not have meant our death, but had some other aim behind it.

So when we approached that grave, someone from us said, “O occupier of this grave! Fulfil your promise.” Suddenly we heard a voice from that grave, “Welcome!”⁵ At once, we saw that it is a very big

green garden. Pure water streams are flowing in it. Trees therein are full of various kinds of fruits available in every season.

Colourful birds of innumerable kinds are busy singing melodious sweet songs. In the midst of that garden, there stood a spacious grand mansion, which was fully decorated. All of its windows opened towards the garden. When we entered that building we saw a very handsome man sitting there. When he saw us, he stood up in respect. Then he put before us various kinds of foods, drinks and sweets the like of which we had never seen before, nor even imagined. We fully enjoyed this feast.

More significant was his statement, “We had never seen so much tasteful things before and that our desire was never satiated even after taking it and that the more we ate the desire increased. Then many other kinds of eatables were also brought and we went on enjoying them. Thereafter when we got up, the gentleman accompanied us until we got out of that garden.”

Reward of Fair dealing and Offering Prayers in Time

Before leaving, my father asked that gentleman, “Who are you? For what did the Almighty God grant you so much honor and position that you are able to host even the whole world if you so desire? What is this place of residence?”

The gentleman replied, “I belong to your native place and was selling meat in such and such street.” People asked, “How did you get this high position and lofty rank?” He said, “It is all due to only two things. During my entire lifetime, I never gave less to buyers and I also never failed to offer prayer at the earliest hour.

If I heard the call for prayer (Adhan) while weighting meat, I used to leave my shop at once and rush to the Mosque. So the Lord of the worlds granted me this place after my death. Last week you had asked me to host you. At that time I did not have permission to accede to your wish. I have obtained it this week.”

Thereafter, one of us asked him about the duration of his age. He told the questioner, “You will live for ninety years”, and that man is still alive. Then he told me, “You will live for so many years”, according to which there are yet ten to fifteen years to go. All of us bade him goodbye. He saw us off. As we turned around we found ourselves sitting by his grave as before.”

Lasting Pleasure in the Realm of Barzakh

Another specialty of the realm of Barzakh is its eternity or everlasting nature. Here (in this material world) nothing is everlasting. Beauty fades out soon. Food remains tasty only upto the time it is in the mouth, that is, only for a few moments. Same is the case with marriage and marital joy.

These foods and fruits are also not long lasting. After sometime they rot and become useless distasteful

and foul. Nothing here is everlasting. But nothing gets deteriorated or corrupted in the realm of Barzakh, because that world (in the Hereafter) does not depend on matter. Everything is everlasting there. As a testimony to what I have mentioned here, I would like to mention a case involving the great scholar and religious jurisprudent Allamah Shaykh Mahdi Naraqhi.

By the way, let me also say that presenting some truths while narrating an event in a nice way makes it easily comprehensible. That is why actual events and true happenings are also presented during the discussion of religious beliefs and doctrines.

A Cloak Full of Rice in the Valley of Peace

Shaykh Mahmud Iraqi, at the end of his book Darus Salam, quotes the late Naraqhi (r.a.). He said, “When I was a caretaker of the Holy Najaf, there fell a severe famine. One day, I came out of my house. My children were hungry and crying for food. I went to the Valley of Peace with a view to seek the removal of our sorrow and gloom through a visit to the dead among the faithful.

There I saw that some people brought a dead body and also told me, “You may also accompany us. We have come here for making this body join with pious souls of this Holy place.”

Then they took that corpse to a wide big garden and placed it in one of the palaces situated in that garden. All means of comfort were available in those palaces. When I saw all this, I also followed them and entered that palace along with them. There I saw a young man dressed in resplendent clothes sitting on a golden throne.

When he saw me, he called me by my name and made me sit by his side very respectfully. Then he told me, “You do not recognize me. I am the same body, which has been just brought here. My name is so and so. I was a resident of such and such city.

The group, which you saw in my funeral procession, was that of the angels who brought me from my city up to this garden. This is one of the heavenly gardens.” Hearing these things my gloom disappeared and I desired to see that garden thoroughly. When I got out of that palace, I saw a number of such palaces. When I looked into them I found my parents and many other near and near ones. They made me their guest. I thoroughly enjoyed the eatables served by them.

In the midst of these comfortable and luxurious moments, I suddenly remembered my family members and imagined how hungry they were. This thought made me gloomy once again. My father asked, “What happened to you all of a sudden?” I replied, “My family members are restless due to hunger.”

My father said, “Here is a heap of rice, take it.” I took off my cloak and filled it with that heavenly rice. My father told me to take it for my family. When I lifted up the cloak, I found myself in the Valley of Peace. My cloak was, of course, full of that rice. I took it to my house. My wife asked, “From where have you brought this?” I replied, “What have you to do with it?”

Briefly speaking, we ate that rice for quite a long time, but it never depleted. At last my wife forced me to tell her the true story. Thereafter when we went to take out that rice we found nothing.”

A similar event is recorded in Darus Salam. Interested readers may refer to it.

Animals Hear the Voice of the Dead

The aim of this discussion is to throw light on the perpetuity of the other world (Barzakh), be it regarding bounties or about their tastefulness or joy. On the other hand, the calamities of that world are also very hard and everlasting. May God protect us! If a man gets entangled in torture in Barzakh and if we hear his terrible shrieks, all the terrible things of our world will appear nothing to us compared to it.

It is mentioned in Biharul Anwar, Vol. 3, that the Holy Prophet said, “I was grazing sheep before I was made His messenger by Almighty God. During those days, I used to observe (as you might have also) that goats and sheep were becoming still all of a sudden as if shocked deeply by something. You might have also observed that sometimes poultry birds like hen jump off and stop picking their food even when no danger (like animal) is seen anywhere near them.

After I started getting revelations, I asked for the reason of such unusual happenings and Jibraeel told me that in the realm of Barzakh, sinners get divine punishments. Their cries are heard by all, except men and jinns. Such voices shock animals and they stop feeding.”

Cries Raised by a Hashimi Murderer in his Dream

It is mentioned in Darus Salam of Allamah Noori that, as per a narration in the book of Sawabul Aamaal of Shaykh Sadooq (r.a.), an exceptionally handsome and good-looking youth, who was a soldier in the army of Umar bin Saad in Kerbala, was also the killer of one of the brothers of Imam Husain (a.s.).

The narrator says, “I could see that the face of that fellow had become very black after the event of Kerbala. He had also become very thin and extremely weak. I inquired about his conditions from his neighbours. They said that ever since he returned from Kerbala, every night, he shrieks and cries loudly in his dreams awaking us also. I went to him and asked about the matter.

He replied, ‘At night time the Hashimi youth who was killed by me, comes in front of me and pushes me towards fire. It makes me cry loudly and I cannot sleep.’”

Advice of a Perfumer and Demand by a Jew of His Trust

There are many events in this world to prove the existence of Barzakh. Their description will become unduly lengthy, so we suffice with only one such happening. The famous pious scholar, Syed Hashimi Bahraini (r.a.) is quoted in Darus Salam⁶ that: There was a perfumer in Najaf Ashraf who gave advice

(admonition) to people at his shop daily after mid-day prayer.

Many people used to gather in his shop. A prince from India had become a resident of Najaf Ashraf. Once he had to undertake a journey. So he went to the said perfumer and gave him, as his trust, a bag containing precious stones and pearls etc. Then he went on his journey. Upon his return, when he came to the perfumer to take back his trust, the latter denied saying: I do not know about any such trust.

The prince became very uneasy and finally went to the Holy tomb of Ali (a.s.) and said, "O Ali! I left my comfortable residence just to live near your Holy Shrine for some time. I had left my precious property as a trust with such and such perfumer in Najaf. Now he is denying of any such trust. I have no wealth except that, nor have I any proof of depositing my property with that perfumer. Now there is none, except you who can help me with justice."

During that night, he saw Ali (a.s.) in his dream saying, "Next morning, when the gate of the city opens, you go out and demand your trust from the very first person you see. He will make your trust return to you." Accordingly that man went out of the city gate and saw a weak and aged pious man carrying firewood on his shoulders. He wanted to sell it for fulfilling the needs of his family.

The Indian felt ashamed of asking anything from such a poor gentleman. So he did not say anything and returned to the Holy Shrine of Amirul Momineen (a.s.). The following night also he saw the same dream and got the same order from Ali (a.s.). The next morning also he saw the same poor old man and did not tell him anything. During the third night too, he saw Ali (a.s.) in his dream and heard the same words. The following morning, he told the wood seller his need explaining to him what had happen. After thinking for a while, the old man said, "Come to the perfumer's shop tomorrow after Zuhr prayer. I will arrange for the return of your trust."

Next day when people gathered at the perfumer's shop, the old man said to the perfumer, "Today let me share in the duty of giving advice to people." That man agreed. The pious man began his talk, "O dear listeners! I am so and so and son of so and so. I am very fearful in the matter of observing rights of others. By the grace of God, I have no greed for money at all. I am a contented man and have taken to a corner for worship.

Yet, I have come into a difficult situation. I want to make you aware of it. I advise you all also to fear God's anger and the fire of Hell. Once I had to take a loan due to urgent need. I took a loan of ten Qiran⁷ from a Jew and gave him a word that I would return it within twenty days paying him half Qiran daily. I did accordingly for five days. But thereafter I could not find that Jew.

On making inquiries, I was told that he had left for Baghdad. After a few days, I saw in my dream that it is Resurrection and I and many other people have been made to stand in a counter for giving replies in the Divine Court. By the Grace of God, I got relief soon and then, joining the successful people, went towards Paradise.

When I reached the Siraat Bridge I heard the roar of Hell. Then I saw that the creditor Jew leapt like a flame of fire from Hell, came across my path and said, “Pay me back my five Qiran and proceed further only after doing so.” I implored him humbly and earnestly saying, “I was in search of you for paying up the debt, but you could not be found.” But he said, “I will not allow you to go further unless you pay up my money.”

I said, “I have nothing here just now.” He said, “Okay then allow me just to put my finger on your body.” I agreed. When he touched my chest with his finger, it burnt my body so severely that I woke up crying loudly. I saw that my chest had a burn and it is still painful. I undertook many treatments, but to no avail.”

Then he showed his chest to the gathering at the perfumer’s shop. Seeing it, people began to weep fearing their own Hereafter. The perfumer also became very fearful of God’s anger. He took that Indian to his house, returned his trust to him and begged for his pardon.

Can Such Things be Denied Absolutely

Reason says that if we come across a thing, which is difficult to comprehend, it should not be instantly and outrightly rejected or denied. Logic says that it can be possible. For example, if an astronomer says that there are some satellites around Mars and that they too revolve around Mars just as the moon revolves round the earth.

Should this claim be rejected at once? No. It may be true. The great scientist Ibn Sina says, “If you hear news or event, you should imagine it as possible until its impossibility is not established logically.”⁸

Suppose you hear that a baby is born with two heads. As this is not logically impossible, say that it may be so.

Three Kinds of News

First: News for the inadmissibility of which there is no logical proof should not be rejected or denied.

Second: News, which has some proofs thinking over which intellect may decide that it should be accepted.

Third: If the one who brought news has, with him, some testimony from the Lord of the universe, which is called a miracle. In this case, intellect decides that it should not be rejected in comparison to the second stage it should be definitely accepted and one must remain satisfied.

There is no Logical Argument against Resurrection

Just think over it. Is there any argument of any of the kinds mentioned above to reject the news of life after death? Can anyone argue and give any logical proof to show that there cannot be any questioning

after death and that the grave cannot squeeze or there is no realm of Barzakh or the other world called Qiyamat or Resurrection or Maad?

O you owners of intelligence! Just decide whether there is any difference in the news given by an astronomer that Mars and Jupiter have four thousand stars or planets and the news given by the Prophet of God (s.a.w.s.) that there are ninety-nine pythons in the grave to punish the unbeliever of God?

Is there any difference so far as the giving of news is concerned? Perhaps somebody may say that the claim of the astronomer is based on perception or that it is after seeing. Then we will say that, doubtlessly, the messenger has also said everything after observing and feeling. During the night of Meraj (ascension), he had seen and felt all things with his physical organs.

Rather, his holy soul covers the knowledge of all worlds and realms. The sight or faculty of seeing can make a mistake, but the sight of the soul of Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) can never err. There can be a defect in the eyesight of an astrologer or an astronomer, but there is no question of any error in the feeling, observation and intelligence of the Messenger of God.

Before Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) declared his Prophethood, the people of Mecca used to call him, 'As Sadiq Al Amin' meaning: The most truthful and trustworthy person. There was not even a single person, who had ever found any untruth in what he had said or done nor had anyone found any dishonesty in his dealing, behavior or attitude towards all.

So, apart from his witness and testimony, the permanent proof of Muhammad's Messengership and the everlasting miracle, Quran also tells us about Resurrection, punishment in grave and rising bare-bodied on the Day of Judgement, is it reasonable not to believe it?

Burial of Fatima Bint Asad, Mother of Amirul Momineen (a.s.)

When Fatima Bint Asad, mother of Ali (a.s.) breathed her last, Amirul Momineen (a.s.) went weeping to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and said, "My respected mother has expired." The Holy Prophet said, "It is my mother who has expired." There was a wonderful affection in the relation between the Holy Prophet and Fatima Bint Asad.

The latter had looked after the former just like a caring and loving mother for quite a long time. At the time of her burial, the Holy Prophet took off his shirt and told people to dress the late Fatima in it. People did so.

Then first the Holy Prophet himself lay in that grave for a few moments and prayed for her forgiveness. After the grave was filled up, he stood near it and, after a while, said loudly, "Your son, your son, but not Ja'far and Aqeel." People asked about the reason of doing so.

The Holy Prophet replied, “Once I was talking about the rising of the bare-bodied dead on the Day of Resurrection. Fatima Bint Asad came to me weeping and said, ‘I wish that you might cloth me in your shirt after I die.’

She was very fearful also about the squeeze of the grave. So, before she was buried, I myself slept in her grave for some time and prayed, ‘O God! Protect her from the squeeze of the grave.’

But the reason of my uttering the words ‘Your son..’ was that, when the angels asked her about God, she replied, ‘Allah’, when they asked about the Prophet, she replied, ‘Muhammad’ but as for Imam, she could not give any reply (because this event was much prior to Ghadeer Khum when Ali (a.s.) was announced as the Chief of the believers). So I advised Fatima to say, ‘Your son (Ali) not Ja’far or Aqeel.’”

Fatima Bint Asad was much Fearful about the Events after Death

Despite the fact that Fatima bint Asad was very great pious and graceful lady, who had the honor of being the mother of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) and who had been the guest of God for three days in the House of God (Kaaba) (on the occasion of Ali’s birth) and who was the second woman to put faith in the Messengership of Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) and who was a very great and humble worshipper of only one God was so much afraid of the events to take place after her death and the Holy Prophet did to her as mentioned above. Then who and what are we in comparison?

Let us all seriously think and worry about our own future.

Well, let us go back to the main issue. The truthful announcer of everything, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) says that there will be questioning and squeeze of the grave and rising bare-bodied on the Day of Judgement.

Effectiveness of Soul in Physical Body

Though it will be the soul, which will be rewarded or punished, it is also possible that the body may also feel it. Sometimes it does so happen that, owing to the soundness of the soul, the body also does not disintegrate in the grave. It remains fresh even for a thousand years. There are many testimonies to this fact.

For instance, the body of Ibn Babawayh (r.a.), around one hundred fifty years after his death in the time of Fateh Ali Shah, was found fresh. Not only this but, more astonishingly, even his shroud was not worn out nor the color of henna on his nail faded after such a long time!

The Body of Shaykh Sadooq Found Fresh

It is written in Rauzatul Jannat that a hole had developed in the grave of Shaykh Sadooq (r.a.) due to heavy rain around the year 1238 H.E. People thought of filling it up. So they entered the tomb and found that his body was safe and sound though his physique was rather bulky.

The color of henna was also traceable on his nails. This news spread in Tehran. When Fateh Ali Shah heard it, he, along with some government officials as well as religious scholars, went to the tomb to enquire. They all saw what they had heard. The king ordered to close the hole and to rebuild the tomb over the grave with decorations.

The Fresh Body of Hurr and the Handkerchief on his Head

Similar is the event of Hurr Ibn Yazid Riyahi. Muhaddith Jazaeri has mentioned it in Anwarun Nomaniya like this: Shah Ismail Safavi went to visit Kerbala and when he came to know that some people have no good opinion about Hurr, he ordered the excavation of his grave. So when the grave was opened people saw that the martyr's body was exactly in the same condition as it was on the day of his martyrdom in Kerbala.

There had been no change at all in it. So much so that even his handkerchief also was intact on his head. Since it was historically known to all that the chief of all martyrs, Imam Husain (a.s.) himself had tied his own handkerchief on the wounded head of Hurr Shah Ismail ordered that the kerchief may be untied so that he may take it to put it in his own shroud as a good luck sign.

As soon as the kerchief was removed, people saw blood gushing out of his wound. So it was replaced immediately and the blood stopped flowing. Thus people knew that Hurr's condition was good (that God was pleased with him and had given him a good reward due to his assistance to Imam Husain (a.s.) in Kerbala). The king built a grand tomb over his grave and appointed a caretaker over it.

A Suckling Babe in the Grave of Abu Ja'far Kulaini (r.a.)

The tomb of Shaykh Kulaini (r.a.), author of Kafi, is situated near the bridge in Baghdad. A fellow from the oppressor rulers thought of destroying the Holy shrine of Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) so that people may stop visiting Kazmain. His minister was a Shia (in heart). He became restless to find out a way to stop that fellow from his evil intention was unable to say anything openly, because any doubt of his being a Shia was enough to put his life in danger.

Anyway, they proceeded to Kazmain with the aforesaid evil intention. As soon as they approached the Baghdad Bridge, the minister said, "Here is the grave of a big Shia scholar, who was one of the delegates of Imam Kazim (a.s.), and people say that his body is still fresh and that it will always remain fresh and safe.

If the king agrees this may be checked. If it is found that what people say is correct, then it would not be wise to touch the tomb of Imam Kazim (a.s.).” The ruler agreed and, as per the king’s command, the grave of Kulaini (r.a.) was opened.

They saw that his body was quite fresh and not only that; more surprising was the existence of the fresh and safe body of a little child by Kulaini’s side. It could not be known whether the child was related to Kulaini (r.a.) or not. What is worth noting is what a soul can do. If any other person also comes close to a pious soul it is also affected thereby.

No doubt the Holy Progeny of the Messenger are the fountainhead of good and so their corpses are also alive and people can see occasional miracles from their graves.

Contrary to it, if somebody is a person of Hell, the chastisement to his or her soul also affects the body. Accordingly, when Bani Abbas overpowered Bani Umayyah and destroyed them totally and even dug out their graves, it was observed that nothing, except some traces could be seen in the grave of the accursed Yazid.

Fire of Barzakh Leaps out of a Grave

Quoting narrations of some reliable and trustworthy people, the late Shaykh Mahmud Iraqi has mentioned in Darus Salam that once we went to the graveyard of Imamzada Hasan (Tehran). Sun had not yet set. One of our companions sat down on the stone of a grave. Suddenly he shouted, “Please lift me up.” When we lifted him, we saw that the stone was almost red hot.

Just think. How great is the chastisement meted out to the soul that even the gravestone becomes so hot? He says, “I recognized the owner of that grave, but I would not disclose his name so that he may not be defamed among people.”

Also it is said about another man who was buried in Qom that flames of fire leaping out of his grave had burnt down carpets over there.

Fire Hotter than the Fire of this World

Shaykh Shustari (r.a.) mentioned in his admonitions that the Lord of the worlds has said: ‘Hot fire’. Is there, then, any cold fire also? Yes. If it is possible to make comparison, the fire in our world is cold compared to the fire of Barzakh. Nature speaks of two types of fires in this world itself, which if compared can tell us which one is really hot.

Lightning is the Biggest Fire in the World

Shaykh Shustari (r.a.) says that if a comparison is made between the fire of wood and charcoal and

lightning in the sky it will be known that lightning is a thin (fine) fire, created by the bouncing and hissing of clouds. It is so hot that it burns out everything it touches and then slips away instantly. It neither returns nor stays anywhere. Nothing can cool it. If it falls on a tree, it turns it into coal at once.

If it falls on an ocean it burns it up to its bottom and fries even the fish in the bottom of the sea. Only lightning is the real fire. The embers in a hearth also is fire, but that fire can be put off by pouring a little water or some dust on it. Its heat and burning has some limitations.

Now you will have understood that the fire of Barzakh cannot be compared with the fire of this world, not even with lightning. If someone's facsimile body and soul are under torture in Barzakh, it is possible (though not always necessarily) that his or her material body may also get affected.

What is contrary to it is also observed. Pleasing and sweet fragrance spread in the absence of any scent, or flowers or burning of aloes wood from the graves of some dear servants of God have also been witnessed.

Those Who do not Experience Fear

In the news and traditions of Holy Imams, there are tidings showing that some good servants of God are protected by God from the fear and punishment in the grave during the period of Barzakh. Some of them are those to whom reminder (Talqeen) was recited. Here we mean the third Talqeen, which is recited after the burial.

Yahya Bin Abdullah says, "I heard from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that: What prevents you from reciting the words, which protects your dead from seeing Munkar and Nakeer in their graves? I asked: Master! What should we do? He said: When the dead has been buried, its legal heir should sit near the grave and taking his mouth nearer to the head of the dead, recite loudly:

O so and so son of so and so. Are you on the same covenant on which you were when you parted from us? That covenant is the testimony of the fact that there is no God but Allah, Who is only One and Who has no partner. And the testimony of the fact that undoubtedly Muhammad, may the Peace of Allah be on him and his progeny, is the slave and prophet of Allah and is the lord of all the prophets and is the last of them.

And that Ali is the chief of the believers and the leader of all the successors. And indeed whatever is brought by Muhammad is truth and the death is truth and the rising is truth and Allah would raise those who are in the graves.

Then he said: Munkar and Nakeer tell one another to return, as the proof has been taught to this dead."⁹

The first Talqeen should be recited at the last moments and the second at the time of lowering the body in the grave.

It is likely that someone may say: What can a dead person understand? But, as we have described earlier, the soul (spirit) of the dead remains near its body and hears better than we can. Some may also ask: How can an admonition (Talqeen) recited in the Arabic language be understood by a non-Arab body?

The reply is that, when one goes away from this material world of water and earth all languages are equally comprehensible for him or her. Linguistic limitations belong only to the material world.

Death at a Time of the Descent of Mercy

Another group of people who are protected from the squeeze of the grave, fear and Barzakh torture are those who die between time of Zuhr on Thursday and Friday, as these are the hours when divine mercy rains allowing such persons its full benefit. God covers them in His kindness. This is also a kind of divine kindness that God showers on His servants.

Two Green Branches and Testimony of Forty Persons

The burying of two green branches of date tree, palm or pomegranate (Jareedat) along with the dead body is one of the things about which it is promised that these things come in the way of the chastisement in grave. Of course date branches are the best and they must be green.

Another protecting thing is the testimony of fourteen or more persons about the true belief of the dead and their prayer for the forgiveness of the dead. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) is quoted in Anwarun Nomaniya that he said, "If forty persons gather near a dead person and say: O God! We know nothing, except good deeds done by this person. God responds: I have accepted your testimony and have forgiven all his sins not known to you."

Prophet Dawood did not Offer Burial Prayer for a Worshipper

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) is also reported to have said that there was a worshipper among Bani Israel about whom God revealed to Dawood (a.s.) that he (said worshipper) was a hypocrite. When he died, Dawood (a.s.) did not offer prayer on his body. Others went and forty persons prayed for the salvation of the dead, saying: O Lord! We know nothing about this man, except that he was doing good deeds and You know better.

So kindly forgive him. When that body was given a wash another group of forty persons arrived and also uttered the same words, as they did not know about the hidden matters of that deceased. Then it was asked through revelation to Dawood (a.s.), "Why did you not pray for him?"

Dawood (a.s.) replied, "O Lord! I did not pray, as You informed me that he was a hypocrite." A voice came from heaven, "Though it is true, a group of people has testified that he was a good man, so I also

confirmed it, accepted their testimony and forgave him.” It also is a very great kindness of the Almighty that He pardons His servants and does not punish them even though they were not eligible for such salvation.

Testimony of Believers by Dust of Kerbala on the Shroud of Allamah Majlisi (r.a.)

It was because of this that pious people, especially earlier religious scholars used to keep their shrouds ready beforehand and to request their friends and the faithful people to write their testimonies on it. Muhaddith Jazaeri (r.a.) writes that his teacher Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) used to request his believing friends to write their testimonies with the earth of Kerbala on his shroud and they used to comply by writing: Doubtlessly he was a faithful person, and put their seals under it.

Among all such things done for protection from the chastisement in grave effectively is to place the Holy earth of the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.) in one’s grave and also to anoint the forehead and both palms of the dead with it.

The Good Deeds which Reach the Dead after Death

Among the beneficences of good deeds, which benefit one in the grave, are the good deeds, which are being performed in this world by proxy or the reward of such good deeds, which is being given to the dead as a gift.

The foremost among them is repayment of his debts and performance of missed prayers and fasts. Similar to it is performance of Hajj, which the dead could not or did not undertake, and also to give charity in the way of God and to pray and seek pardon for the dead.

There are many narrations by Ahle Bayt on this subject. (Interested persons may refer to Wasailush Shia, Kitabut Taharat, Abwaab-e-Ehtezaar, Baab 27, and Abwaab-e-Qazaae Salaat Baab 12 wherein there are 26 traditions. They may also study Baab-e-Hajj-va-Waqf in the same book).

The summary of these narrations is that if someone performs good deeds like Prayers, Fast, Hajj and alms-giving etc for a deceased person, the Lord of the Universe makes its reward reach the dead and also grants a manifold reward to the performer of such good deeds.

Numerous Gifts as Reward of Charity on behalf of the Dead

Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) says, “It also happens that a body is under squeeze in grave and then he is given ease and comfort. Angels tell him or her that this is the result of such and such good deed sent to you by your such and such well-wisher in the world. Such rewards are very big in proportion to the good deeds performed for them.”

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) has been quoted in Wasailush Shia that Almighty God commands seventy thousand angels to proceed to the grave of that fortunate person. Every angel has, in his hand, a plate full of heavenly bounties of Paradise. They tell the dead, "Be you in peace and safety, O servant of God! O friend of God! This gift has been sent to you by such and such friend."

Then his grave lit up brightly and God the merciful grants him a thousand cities, a thousand Houries and a thousand precious robes and fulfils one thousand of his wishes.

Request of the Dead to the Living

It is mentioned in Maniul Akhbar that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said, "Go on sending gifts to your dead." The companions asked, "O Messenger of God! What can be a gift for the dead?" The Prophet said, "Supplications and alms."

Then he added, "Every Friday eve, the spirits of the dead come to the nearest sky and, standing in front of their homes, cry out weeping sorrowfully, 'O my family members! O my children! O my parents and O my near and dear ones! Be kind to us. God will be kind to you. We have to account here for what wealth and property we had in the world and by which others benefit there. Please do us some favor, be it through a dirham or bread or a cloth. God will adorn you with heavenly dress...'"

Barzakh is Veiled in this World

Some may think as to where such a vast world of Barzakh is situated? Our intellect is unable to comprehend it. We will only say that the realm of Barzakh is in a veil and hence invisible to the physical eye. There are many narrations to make us understand this matter.

For example: This world of ours, along with its vast lands and skies, if compared with the realm of Barzakh, is like a tiny spot in an endlessly big forest. So long as a man lives in this world, he is like a silk worm or like an unborn child in womb. When he dies, he becomes free. Of course, he remains in this very world and does not go away and out of it, but now he has no limitations like time and space, because these things are limited only to this material world.

The Realm of Barzakh Encircles this World

If it is said to a baby in the womb that there is a very vast world beyond your present station, which is nothing in comparison with that one, he would be unable to comprehend it. Similarly, we, who are able now to see only through the physical eyes, cannot comprehend the other world, which is hidden from our eyes.

Almighty God says in the Holy Quran:

“So no soul knows what is hidden for them of that which will refresh the eyes; a reward for what they did.” (Surah Sajdah 32:17)

That is, nobody knows what things have been provided for him or her that can cool their eyes. This is the reward of the good deeds done by them in the world. We only know that as the Trust Informer (Prophet) has informed us of it and we testify to it. The realm of Barzakh has encircled and covered our present physical and material world just as this world has covered the world in womb. No other example is more explanatory.

Souls are Friendly with One Another and Please One Another

Asbagh bin Nubatah says, “I saw my master, Amirul Momineen (a.s.) standing at the gate of Kufa looking towards the desert. It appeared that he was busy talking with someone, but there was no one. I also stood up. After a long time, I felt tired. So I sat down and got up again after a while.

But Ali (a.s.) was still busy talking. I went a step forward and asked, ‘O Amirul Momineen! Who is it you are talking to?’ He said, ‘This talk of mine was to please the spirits of the faithful.’ I asked, ‘Which faithful? No one from those who have passed away is present here.’ He said, ‘Yes, they are present here.’ I again asked, ‘Are they present here physically or in spirit?’

He replied, ‘Their spirits. Had you been able to do so, you could have seen how they gather at a place, talk mutually and please one another remembering the gifts and bounties of God.’”

The Valley of Peace is the Station of the Spirits of the Faithful

It is mentioned in other traditions that any faithful person who passes away either from the east or the west of this world finds that his spirit or soul which remains in his facsimile body has its place in the Valley of Peace in the neighborhood of Amirul Momineen (a.s.).

In other words, Najaf Ashraf is an expression of the higher world. Likewise, for unbelievers their abode is Wadi Barhut situated in Yemen in a fearful and barren land where even birds do not venture. This is a place for the appearance of mean souls.

Nearness to Amirul Momineen Ali (a.s.) Attainable through Knowledge and Virtues

Whatever you have heard about importance of nearness to Amirul Momineen (a.s.) is about spiritual neighbourhood, whatever one’s physical distance from Najaf Ashraf. In fact nearness to Ali (a.s.) is attainable through knowledge and actions. When a man commits a sin, he becomes distant from Ali (a.s.) in proportion to the seriousness of his sin.

Very nice if the soul is with Ali (a.s.) and body also gets buried near him in Najaf Ashraf. It is indeed a very big fortune. But if, God forbid, one is physically buried in Najaf Ashraf, but his soul is under torture in Wadi Barhut, it is a terribly bad luck. So all of us should try our best to make our spiritual relation with Ali (a.s.) more and more strong and close.

Doubtlessly, physical burial in Najaf Ashraf also is not without benefits and has perfect effectiveness, because being buried there, is in a way, a means to nearness to the Amirul Momineen (a.s.).

A Dead Body brought from Yemen to Najaf Ashraf

It is mentioned in Madinatul Majiz that, one day, Ali (a.s.) was sitting with his companions at the back of the gate of Jufa. Looking up, he said, "Do you also see what I am seeing?" People said, "No, O Amirul Momineen!" He said, "I can see two persons who are bringing a dead body on a camel to bury it here. It will take three more days for them to reach here." On the third day thereafter Ali (a.s.) went again with the companions to see who comes.

First people could see that a camel was coming towards them with a body on its back. A man was holding the rein of that camel. Another man was walking behind. When they came nearer, Amirul Momineen (a.s.) asked, "Whose body is it? Who are you and from where do you come?"

They replied, "We are from Yemen and this is the body of our father who had willed that his body should be carried to Iraq to be buried in Najaf Ashraf." Ali (a.s.) asked, "Did you ask him the reason for it?" They replied, "Yes, our father was saying that a man will be buried there who will be able, if he likes, to intercede for the entire gathering on the Day of Resurrection." Ali (a.s.) said, "By God. I am indeed that man."

One Who gave Shelter to Locusts Around His Tent

In connection with benefits for those who are buried near Ali's (a.s.) tomb Muhaddith Qummi (r.a.) has given a very appropriate example in Mafatihul Jinaan. There is an Arabic proverb meaning: Such and such person is superior than the one who gives shelter to locusts. The story is as follows: A man named Madlaj bin Suwaid, who belonged to the tribe of Tai was, one day, sitting in his tent. He saw that a group belonging to the Tai tribe was approaching his tent holding huge bags and many utensils. He asked their condition.

They said: Many locusts have descended around your tent. We want to catch them. Hearing this, Madlaj got up, took a spear in his hand and ascending his horse declared, "By God, I will kill anyone who even touches these locusts. These grasshoppers are my neighbors and they have come in my shelter.

How can you catch them? It will never be allowed." Then he defended his locusts till the sun rose and it became hot and the locusts flew away. Then he said, "Lo. Now the locusts have left my neighbourhood.

Now it is your look out to deal with them.”

In short, it is obvious that if someone comes in the neighbourhood of Ali (a.s.), thereby taking his shelter will surely benefit by his support.

Close Relation between the Soul and the Grave

Muhaddith Jazaeri (r.a.) mentions at the end of Anwarun Nomaniya: If you ask when souls live in facsimile bodies in the Valley of Peace, why we have been asked to visit graves (for reciting Fatiha and prayers)? And how do the souls understand that a visitor has arrived when they are not present in the graves?

The reply is that it has been narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that though the souls live in the Valley of Peace, their relations with graves remain intact and they know about the visitors and recognize them. The Holy Imam has said that souls are like sun. The sun remains in the sky, but its rays cover the whole earth.

Likewise, the souls' covering or encirclement is concerned with knowledge and comprehension.

Reflection of Sunrays in a Mirror

Just as the appearance and reflection is relatively much more at a mirror, the attention of souls and their covering is more at their graves. It is so because the soul had lived in those bodies for several years and gained much favours due to them. That is why they will focus their attention there.

This also provides an answer to the one who asks as to why we should go to the grave when the Imam is present at every place and thus, there is no difference in one place and the other. Doubtlessly, the graves of Holy Imams and religious leaders are the centers of the attention of Holy souls and the places where divine favors keep raining. Angels come and go there.

So, if anybody wants to get full benefit from those Holy personalities, he should never give up visiting the Holy shrines and must try their best to go there.

Why no Reward or Punishment is Given to this Earthly Body?

Some people raise here a weak doubt and say: The soul after one's death gets connected with a fine body called facsimile body, which is just like this earthen body, as described earlier, and also sees (tastes) reward or torture with the same facsimile body. Now here arises a question:

When man had worshipped God in this earthen body, how reward is given to the other body? Or man had committed sins in the material body, which has been disintegrated now after death, how is it that the punishment is meted out to the other body? There can be several answers to this question.

Every Soul has Two Kinds of Bodies

As Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) has written, the facsimile body is not any outward thing, which may be brought near the grave after one's death and then, for example, it may be said to it: O soul! Now live in this body.

Rather, a facsimile body is a fine body, which lives even now in this world with man's earthly body. Every soul has two bodies: A fine (subtle) body and a thick (dense) body. Man has prayed and sinned in both these bodies. This matter must be well understood. So we are giving the example of a dream.

During a dream, these two bodies get separated. What a man sees in his dream is the behavior or deed of this facsimile body, which walks, talks etc. Within twinkling of eye man reaches Kerbala, Holy Mashad, tours from east to west.

This shows that the facsimile body remains with man always. But after death, it separates from the material body. This statement of Majlisi (r.a.) is a very studied one. There also are many more testimonies.

The Soul is either Punished or Rewarded

Another answer is that after death, human soul turns into the same earthen form of body. It does not get connected with any outside body. Rather the soul takes up the form of material body. Now, you may call it a facsimile body, Barzakh body or spirit.

But, as it is fine, elemental or material eyes cannot see it. Summarily speaking, it was only the spirit, which had committed sins in the world and hence it is only the spirit that is being punished after death.

Now, it may be chastised either by getting it connected with the facsimile body or it may be getting punishment absolutely by itself, constantly. Of course, on the Day of Judgement, all will rise and gather only in this worldly and material body.

[1.](#) Qalbe Saleem, Pg. 247

[2.](#) Aale Imran 3: 179

[3.](#) Biharul Anwar

[4.](#) Biharul Anwar

[5.](#) Here it should be understood sometimes, Lord Almighty removes that veil in front of eyes which prevents us from observing the things belonging to the realm of Barzakh so that people may take lessons of admonition.

[6.](#) Vol. 1, P. 247

[7.](#) Unit of Currency

[8.](#) Tafsir Burhan

[9.](#) Wasailush Shia, Book of Cleanliness, chapter 35. There are many narrations on this matter in Wasailush Shia, Book of Purification, Chapter 13. One by Imam Baqir (a.s.) is as follows: The Imam (a.s.) says: The body is not punished, until the said branches remain green and God willing, it will not be punished even after the branches dry up.

Reward and Punishment in Barzakh

Quranic Description of Reward and Punishment in Barzakh

“The fire; they shall be brought before it (every) morning and evening and on the day when the hour shall come to pass: Make Firon’s people enter the severest chastisement.” (Surah Momin 40:46)

It means that they will be thrown in fire in the morning and in the evening and when Qiyamat will occur (it will be ordered): Inflict the severest punishment on the followers of Firon.

This is one of those verses of Quran, which testify to punishment in Barzakh. The above verse refers to those people of the Pharaoh, who drowned in the Nile. Ever since that day, they are regularly brought near fire every morning and every evening. This will continue till the Day of Judgement, where after they will be given the severest chastisement.

Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) says that there is no morning or evening in the Hereafter, and that the said punishment in morning and evening refers to the world of Barzakh.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said, “If the dead person is one of the people of Hell, his place in Hell is shown to him every morning and every evening in his grave (Barzakh period). If he or she is of the people of Paradise, he or she is shown his or her palace in Paradise and told that this will be your station in the Hereafter.”

In Comfort or in Pain so long as Days and Nights Endure

The Holy Quran says:

“So as to those who are unhappy, they shall be in the fire; for them shall be sighing and groaning in it: Abiding therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord please; surely your Lord is the mighty doer of what He intends. And as to those who are made happy, they shall be in the garden, abiding in it as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord please; a gift which shall never be cut off.” (Surah Hud 11:106–108)

The Imam (a.s.) says that this verse also refers to the realm of Barzakh and the reward and punishment mentioned in it is also the consequence in Barzakh, because there is no question of earth or sky in the Qiyamat as the Holy Quran says:

“On the day when the earth shall be changed into a different earth, and the heavens (as well), and they shall come forth before Allah, the One, the Supreme.” (Surah Ibrahim 14:48)

Habib Najjar in the Paradise of Barzakh

Allah says:

“It was said: Enter the garden. He said: O would that my people had known; of that on account of which my Lord has forgiven me and made me of the honored ones!” (Surah Yasin 36:26–27)

This holy verse refers to Habib Najjar who was Faithful despite belonging to the community of Firon. When he invited his people to put faith in God’s messengers, people threatened him (as described at length in the explanation of Surah Yasin).¹ Finally they hanged him on an impaling stake and beat him to death. After his death, when he got his reward, he said: I wish my community had known that God has pardoned me and that my Lord has placed me among the respected.

Here comes the Divine Word: “He was told: Enter Paradise.” Imam (a.s.) says: Here Paradise means the Paradise of Barzakh. In another narration, it is mentioned that it means worldly heaven, which is lower than the Paradise of the Hereafter.

In short, this verse shows that as soon as the Faithful of the people of Firon was martyred, he entered Paradise instantly. Since his community till then was in the world, he wished that they might know how many bounties the Most Merciful Lord had given to him (so that they too would have obeyed) and repented for their misdeeds and turned towards God.

Hard Life and Punishment in the Grave

The Quran says:

“And whoever turns away from My reminder, his shall be a straitened life, and We will raise him on the day of resurrection, blind.” (Surah Taha 20:124)

Most commentators are of the opinion that here ‘Straitened Life’ means chastisement in the grave. Imam Sajjad (a.s.) also is reported to have taken this meaning.

Barzakh till Everyone would be Raised from the Graves on the Day of Judgement

Again the Quran says:

“Until when death overtakes one of them, he says: Send me back, my Lord, send me back; haply I may do good in that which I have left. By no means! it is a (mere) word that he speaks; and before them is a barrier until the day they are raised.” (Surah Mominoon 23:99–100)

This verse shows that man indeed has a life after death and before the Day of Judgement. It is in between the two. It is known by the name of Barzakh.

Personality of Man Due to his Spirit or Soul

In short, thinking over this verse and many other verses, it is clearly understood that human soul is a reality, which is different from body. There surely is a connection between the spirit and the body. Soul governs the body through intention and intelligence and manages the latter's affairs. In fact, a man's personality belongs to his or her soul and not to the body, which ends with death.

(Every movement comes to end and body turns into a heap of dust). Following the disintegration of its parts, the body becomes dust. Man's reality and personality or individuality is his spirit, which survives even after man's death and lives either in permanent happiness or eternal trouble depending on his pre-death intentions and performance, having nothing to do with the condition of his or her earthly (worldly) body. This is a universal truth.

Islamic scholars have, in order to prove that soul is something different from body and that it does not vanish due to death and that the rules governing it are different, put forth many arguments and logical evidences. But, after the presentation of the Word of God and the traditions and statements of the holy Prophet and pious Imams (a.s.) there is no need of reiterating the said scholarly statements. This issue is now brighter than sun for us.

Paradise in Barzakh for the Content Soul

One of the Barzakh-related verses in the Holy Quran are the last verses of Surah Fajr:

“O soul that art at rest! Return to your Lord, well-pleased (with him), well-pleasing (Him), So enter among My servants, And enter into My garden.” (Surah Fajr: 89:27–29)

In these verses, the satisfied soul is being addressed at the moment of death: “Enter My Paradise.” It has been explained as the Paradise in Barzakh. Similarly it is said, “Join and enter the group of My servant” (meaning: Muhammad and his Progeny).

There are other verses also hinting at Paradise and Hell in Barzakh, but what we have said is enough.[2](#)

Rewards and Punishments of Barzakh as Mentioned in Reports and Traditions

Many traditions discuss reward and punishment in Barzakh. Here we suffice with a few.

In Biharul Anwar, Vol. 3 there is a quotation from the Tafsir of Ali bin Ibrahim Qummi (who has quoted Imam Ali.) according to which the Holy Prophet said, “When the offspring of Adam (man) enters the last day of this worldly life and the first one of the Hereafter, his wealth and children and his deeds appear before him.

He turns towards his wealth and says, 'By God! I had too must lust and greed for you and was also very stingy. Now, how much of portion of mine is with you?' The wealth responds, 'Take only that much, which can suffice for your shroud.' Then he looks at his children and says, 'By God. I loved you very much and was always protecting and defending you. Show me how much of my portion is now with you.' They reply, 'We only will take and bury you and that is all.'

Finally, he turns to his deeds and says, 'By God, I was very careless with regard to you and I had disliked you. Yet am I to get any share from you?' The deed says, 'Yes. I will be your companion and friend in grave and will also remain with you in the Hereafter, until both of us would be made to stand before Almighty Lord.'"

If this person was an obedient one and so a friend of God, his deed will approach him in beautiful and handsome shape adorned in the best attire full of pleasing fragrance and say, "I give you good tidings that you will get Rowh and Raihaan (heavenly bounties) and divine graces. Welcome."

He will ask, "Who are you?" He will reply, "I am your good deed. Come let us proceed to Paradise from this world." This body recognizes the one who gives a wash to it and asks him, giving him an oath, to carry it speedily to his destination.

When this body enters the grave, two angels who examine every dead, come to him in a fierce form dragging their lengthy hair on the ground and tearing the earth with their teeth. Their eyes dazzle like lightning and their voice furiously roaring. They ask the body, "Who is your Lord? Who is your Prophet? What was your religion? (Etc.)."

The body says, "My Lord is only one God, Who has no partner and my prophet is Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) and my religion is Islam." Then the angels tell him, "May God keep you steadfast on the things, which you like." The same has been hinted in the Holy Quran:

"Allah confirms those who believe with the sure word in this world's life and in the hereafter, and Allah causes the unjust to go astray, and Allah does what He pleases." (Surah Ibrahim 14:27)

Then they widen his grave as far as eyes can see and open therein a door in the direction of Paradise, telling him, "Now you sleep restfully with cool eyes just as a lucky and successful youth goes to sleep."

Similarly, God has given a hint in this verse also:

"Allah confirms those who believe with the sure word in this world's life and in the hereafter, and Allah causes the unjust to go astray, and Allah does what He pleases." (Surah Ibrahim 14:27)

Then they widen his grave as far as eyes can see and open therein a door in the direction of Paradise, telling him, "Now you sleep restfully with cool eyes just as a lucky and successful youth goes to sleep."

Similarly, God has given a hint in this verse also:

But if the body is that of an enemy of God, his bad deed approaches him in the worst kind of dress emanating foul smell and tells him, “Take tidings of getting hot Hell water as drink of entering hellfire.”

He also sees the one who washes him and tells on oath to the bearers of his body to leave him alone and not to take him to his grave. When they bury him, two examiner angels arrive. First they drag out his shroud and then ask him, “Who is your Lord? Who is your Prophet and what is your religion?” He replies, “I do not know.” The angels tell him, “May God not allow you to know and be guided.”

Then they hit him with a fire mace so harshly that it frightens everything in the world, except men and animals. Then they open up a door facing Hell in his grave telling him, “Now you may sleep in the worst condition.”

Then they squeeze his grave to such an extent that it is almost sandwiched, making his brain matter come out from his nails and flesh and God makes snakes and scorpions etc. attack him and to bite and sting painfully till the Day of Resurrection. On that Day, he will be made to rise from his grave. The torture will be so severe that he will wish Qiyamat to come soon.

Faces in Barzakh would be like People's Faces in this World

There is a narration from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in Amali of Shaykh Tusi (r.a.). At the end of it, the Imam has said, “When Almighty God recovers one's soul, He sends his soul in its worldly form and shape. There they eat and drink and when a new man (spirit of another dead) arrives to them they recognize him in his worldly face, form and shape.”

In another tradition, the Imam has said that the spirits of the faithful meet one another and talk with one another and recognize one another; so much so that if you happen to see anyone of them, you will say this is so and so.

New Arrivals Questioned About Others

In another tradition, the Imam said, “The spirits dwell in body forms in a garden in Paradise. They recognize and know one another. They ask questions and get replies from one another. When a new spirit comes to them, they say, ‘Leave it (as it is) because it is arriving towards us after being freed from a great calamity (that is death).’ Then they ask it, ‘What about so and so and such and such person?’

If he replies, ‘He was alive until I came here’, the spirits express their hope that (God willing, he will also come to them). But if the newly arrived soul says that he had already left the world they say, ‘He has fallen down.’ It means that when he has not yet come here, he surely must have gone to Hell.”

Spirits Meet their Worldly Relatives and Friends

There are some narrations in Biharul Anwar, Kafi and other books. Their gist is: The spirits living in Barzakh come to visit their near and dear ones. Some of them come daily, some once in two days, and some once in three days, some on every Friday, some once in a month and some once a year. This difference depends on their condition, places of dwelling and their freedom or captivity.

According to a narration, a faithful soul sees nothing, except the well-being and pleasing things about his or her near and dear ones. If there is anything contrary to it, that thing is not shown to him or her (soul in Barzakh). Such disturbing things are kept unknown, so that it may not become unhappy. The spirit of an unbeliever sees nothing, except bad and painful things about its near and dear ones.

The Pool of Kauthar in Barzakh

Abdullah bin Sinan is quoted in several books of traditions and narrations. He asked Imam Sadiq (a.s.) about the Pool of Kauthar (a heavenly spring). He replied, "Its length is equal to the distance between Basra and Yemen (Sana)." When he expressed his astonishment, he asked, "May I show it to you?"

I said, "Yes, my Master!" Then the Imam took him out of Medina. There he kicked the ground on one spot and said, "See!" Veils before his eyes were removed by the order of the Imam. He says, "I saw a huge spring flowing, the shores of which were not visible, except the spot on which we stood and which was like a small island.

I saw a spring at one bank of which snow white water was flowing in waves and on the other bank whiter than snow milk flowing and in between the two, flowed wine, which had fine red color that was more attractive than topaz, both in sheen and fineness. I had never before seen such a wine of the best quality flowing between pure milk and snow white water."

I said, "O Master! May I be sacrificed on you. From where does this spring flow?" The Imam replied, "As mentioned by Almighty God in the Holy Quran, there is a spring of milk, a spring of water and a spring of wine in Paradise. All these three springs come from there."

The narrator says, "I saw many trees on both the banks of this spring and a Hourie near every tree. She had such beautiful hair the like of which I had never seen before. There was a utensil in the hands of every Hourie. The said vessels were so beautiful that I had never seen such utensils in the world.

They did not belong to this material world. He hinted to a Hourie to serve water. She filled that utensil from that spring and presented it to the Imam. He drank from it. He asked her again to fill it. She complied with the command and the Imam gave that utensil to me. I drank from it and found that I had never tasted such a nice, delicious and pleasing drink ever before. It had a fragrance of musk.

I said, 'May I be sacrificed on you. Whatever I observed today is such that I had not only never seen

before but also never even imagined before, (that such things could ever be available in the world).”

The Imam said, “What you have seen is only a small specimen of the bounties provided by God Almighty for our Shia. When somebody leaves the world, his or her spirit is taken to this stream and around this garden of Paradise. He eats its fruits and drinks its wines.

Whenever our enemy dies, his soul is taken to Wadi Barhut. He remains in its torture forever. He is forced to eat ‘Zaqqum’ (a thorny cactus tree) and drink hot Hell water. So pray to God for being protected from the said Barhut valley.”

Kauthar and Hameem at the Moment of Death

Among those who were shown the Paradise of Barzakh in this world are companions of the chief of the martyrs, Imam Husain (a.s.) to whom the Holy Imam had shown their places and stations in Barzakh.

In Biharul Anwar, Vol. 3, it is mentioned that Imam Baqir (a.s.) said, “No believer leaves this world unless, at his last moments, angels make him drink Kauthar water. Likewise no unbeliever dies, until he is made to drink Hameem (Hell water).

Barhut – A Sample of Hell in Barzakh

As stated earlier, ‘Wadius Salam’ (the Valley of Peace) is the abode of the fortunate souls who gather there and Barhut, which is a barren arid desert, is the place where dirty and evil souls are put to torture. It is a specimen of Hell of Barzakh. The following tradition makes the matter clearer:

One day a man went to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) the last messenger of God, and expressing his restlessness and anxiety, said, “I have seen a very strange thing.” The Holy Prophet asked, “What is it?” He replied, “My wife became seriously ill. People told me, ‘If you bring water from a well situated in the Vale of Barhut, her illness can be cured.’ (Some skin diseases are cured by mineral waters).

So I got ready and proceeded towards that valley with a skin to fill that water and also a cup for fetching it from the said well. There I saw a very frightening forest. Despite being afraid, I gathered courage and went in search of that well (At last I found it). Suddenly I heard the clanking of a chain from above. That chain came down. I saw a man caught in that chain requesting me to give him some water as he was dying of thirst.

When I raised my head to offer him a cup of water I saw that he was fastened to that hanging chain. Whenever I tried to give him water he was dragged up to the red-hot sun. Then I tried to fill my bag with water. That man was again lowered by the dangling chain suddenly and complained bitterly about his deadly thirst. I tried to hand over the cup to him, but again he was pulled up right up to the sun. It happened for the third time too.

At last I tied my water bag and could not give any water to him. I have become terribly frightened by observing all this and have come to your honour to ascertain the reason of all this.” The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) replied, “That unfortunate man is Qabil, son of Adam (a.s.). He had killed his brother Habil.

“Then his mind facilitated to him the slaying of his brother so he slew him; then he became one of the losers.” (Surah Maidah 5:30)

He will remain in this condition of torture till the day of Judgement and will finally fall in the painful punishment of Hell.”

Reason Perceives Resurrection and Good and Evil

Among the glories and signs of intellect that the Almighty Allah has bestowed to man is that he can understand his Maad (Hereafter). In words of an elder, just suppose that even if divine revelation had not been there, human intellect would have been able to realize Maad.

There should be an aim to the life of the world in which a person should be able to reach up to his success and he can understand what is good and what is bad for him in an accurate way and he should be able to perceive what is best for him. Since evil is nothing in reality. Whatever is there is absolute good; that they may be able to recognize the good acts. They should be able to distinguish between good and bad deeds.³

Decrease or Increase of Intellectual Reason

Therefore intellectuals say that there are two sections of intellect: theoretical and practical intelligence. Theoretical perceptions are same, which are the Almighty Allah, His names, qualities of perfection, which are related to things. Theoretical intelligence is discrimination of good and evil deeds through which a person knows what is good and what is bad, so that he may perform it and what is evil, so that he may leave it.

He should be able to understand his fortune and misfortune and know the flow of his life that it is a natural issue, which the Almighty Allah has placed in the primary make up of man. Reason is given to all human beings generally. Some are given more. It increases with use. Thus, in the beginning all are given this capacity equally and if it is kept aside and not acted upon, it would go on decreasing. It is such creation that the Almighty Allah has included in the make of every human being.⁴

In order to recognize resurrection and hereafter, one should adopt the mediums of divine grace like the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and the Holy Imams (a.s.); he should also adopt practical intelligence.

What have you Prepared for Your Hereafter?

There is no house for man after his death, but that which he has prepared for himself and to what extent he has prepared the provisions. If he has based it on truth and goodness, he would be in a happy condition. One who prepares fragrance for his grave would take advantage of it himself, but if a person has sent fire to it, he would get his garments, house and food burnt.⁵

Paradise of Barzakh and Paradise of Qiyamat

Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) in commentary of Al-Kafi has mentioned a very appropriate interpretation of 'Jannataan' (two paradises). It is possible that one Paradise might be in Barzakh. When the soul of a believer is removed, he is placed in the comfort and blessings of the Paradise of Barzakh, which is a garden of different types of vast bounties. Various evidences regarding the Paradise of Barzakh are mentioned in the Holy Quran.⁶

Doubt about Barzakh

Atheists have expressed a doubt regarding the world of Barzakh, which is rarely heard today, but its origin is present from before. Regarding the interrogation of Munkir and Nakeer they say: If we place something in the mouth of the deceased and then when we reopen the grave and check, we find that thing intact. If the deceased had been interrogated, his mouth would have moved and that thing would not have remained in the mouth, whereas we see that thing remains as it is in the mouth of the deceased.

The atheists also say that we don't see any sign of the getting up of the deceased, or they say that after death, the human body gets decayed and is completely destroyed. Thus what is the meaning of the world of Barzakh till Judgment Day? It is mentioned in confirmed traditional reports that the grave of a believer is extended to seventy yards or a distance of seventy years.

There are clear verses in the Holy Quran that what should be done to rebut these doubts. Its reply is that if man is aware of the terminologies of traditions and traditional reports this matter would be solved for him.

When Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) was explaining the chastisement of the Hereafter, the narrator asked: What is the time of Barzakh? He replied: It is from death to the Judgment Day and the depth of the grave is one of the stages of the world of Barzakh and soul.

The world of Barzakh does not come to an end with the decaying of the body. The Late Allamah Majlisi used to say: There is a category of traditions, in which grave is mentioned. In those traditions, grave implies Barzakh and not the material grave. And that which is mentioned in traditional reports that the Almighty Allah expands the grave of the believer, it implies the spiritual world of Barzakh.

The darkness of grave is not material and bodily and alas if it had only been material.

Dream is a Small Example of Barzakh

In Usul Kafi it is mentioned that human beings did not have dreams since creation. When the Almighty Allah appointed a prophet on his nation and he preached to them about Barzakh, questioning of the grave and reward and punishment, the people did not believe him and they used to say how a dead man can be questioned. After death, we would be mixed up with dust. Thus the Almighty Allah bestowed dreams to all the people of that nation.

That Prophet told them that it was an example of the world of Barzakh and hereafter. It is mentioned in traditional reports that the soul of the believer remains in the neighborhood of Imam Ali (a.s.) in Wadius Salam and the soul of the disbeliever is lodged in Wadi Barhut.

Some Examples

It is mentioned in Safinatul Bihar, Vol. 2, Pg. 568, that when on the orders of Muawiyah, they were digging to make a road through Mount Uhad, a spade struck the finger of His Eminence, Hamza and it began to bleed. In the same way, Amr bin Jamuh and Abdullah Ibn Amr, both of whom were from the martyrs of Uhad and their graves lay on way of digging.

When they were taken out of the grave, both their corpses were fresh. Another grave was dug up and both were buried in the same grave. A period of forty years had passed from the time of their martyrdom till the period of Muawiyah.

In other words, the cause of belief in the world of Barzakh and reports from the death of the human soul till Judgment Day all these are divine revelation, which have reached us through the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) and Ahle Bayt (a.s.). Thus, as we mentioned before, in the same way the angels, Qiyamat, Siraat, Balance of deeds, Paradise and Hell; we have unseen belief in all these and its cause is also divine revelation.

Every sort of ignorance about reward or punishment of Barzakh can be cured. In order to remove the doubts of the deniers that how is it possible for souls to be in punishment and we should be unaware of it we can say that all these are good and bad dreams. There is noise and action in dreams, but the people around the dreamer cannot see or hear it.

Sometimes they see a deceased person in dream that he is in a good condition and in comfort. Sometimes they see that he is in bad circumstances. But all such dreams cannot be relied upon, because many dreams are result of worries and mental turmoil and some are confusing and complicated and needful of interpretation.

Some parts of true dreams are related to the condition of the deceased at that particular time. For

example, if someone sees a deceased in a comfortable position, it cannot be said that he would remain in that same condition, because it is possible that at that time he might have been receiving the rewards of his good deeds and obedience of God and the next moment he might be punished for his evil acts.

In the same way, the opposite is also possible. That is if we see a deceased in throes of death and illness, it cannot be that he would remain in that condition forever. Because it is possible that the circumstances of that time might be due to his sinfulness and later he might be rewarded for his good deeds.

“So he who has done an atom’s weight of good shall see it. And he who has done an atom’s weight of evil shall see it.” (Surah Zilzal 99:7-8)

The aim of this is that if we see a deceased in a bad condition, we should not be aggrieved; on the contrary, we should assume that he would obtain pleasure later on. We should save him from supplications, Sadaqah and good deeds on his behalf. And if we see a deceased in happy circumstances, we must not be sure that he would be as such forever and that he is not in need of the help of the living ones.

Another aim of this long discussion is that we should come to know that our condition will be revealed to others to a lesser extent; hence it would be difficult for them to know how we can be benefited; hence it would be better that as long as we are alive, we should prepare for the Hereafter in the best way and as much as possible, we should perform good deeds.

We should especially check our past deeds and make as much amends as much as is possible and through charity and good deeds, provide the provisions for the hereafter.

Death Terminates the Relationships

Another important thing, which we should know is that among the hardships of Barzakh, is to feel nostalgic for the separation of worldly things and relations. When a person is separated from someone with whom he has developed attachment, he feels aggrieved. For example if one is having a lovely wife, how terrible he would feel when he dies.

Sometimes such incidents cause people to lose their sanity. A twenty year old son of a relative of ours became ill with smallpox and was near death. When the father saw the condition of his son, he performed Wudhu’ and started to supplicate the Almighty Allah: O God, if You want to take away my son, take me away before him. Thus his supplication was accepted. He died and the son survived.

But what death is? Death means the separation of what we love. To feel aggrieved in the separation of wife, children and wealth. This is also a kind of a punishment of Barzakh, whose example is present in this world as well. In other words, man becomes addicted to opium, cigarette and newspaper.

But there would no such activities in Barzakh. That is man should break away his attachment with such things before his death, so that he should not become restless in their separation in Barzakh.

Qays bin Asim arrived in Medina with some people of his tribe, Bani Tamim to meet the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.). He met the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and requested him to dispense some advice to him. [We should know that Qays was among the senior scholars of that time and before he embraced Islam, he was considered among the intellectuals of that period.] His Eminence said:

There is downfall for every honor and after life, there is death and there is a recompense for every act. The aim of this discourse is that you should not think that you can do whatever you like. Every act will be accounted for.

Only Actions Would be Present With You in Barzakh

That which is useful for man in Barzakh is his good deed, which is near to him and which he observes. If it is an evil deed, neither his protests would be accepted nor would he gain salvation.

His Eminence, Amirul Momineen (a.s.) says: A dying person looks at his wealth and says: I bore many hardships and grief to gather you. His wealth replies: You cannot get anything more than a shroud from me. Then he turns to his children and they also reply: We shall accompany you till the grave. After that he turns to his act. He says: I am always with you.

Be Patient on the Command of Allah

“And wait patiently for the judgment of your Lord, for surely you are before Our eyes.” (Surah Tur 52:48)⁷

That is: O Prophet, be patient for the command of your Lord, indeed you are under our surveillance...”

Here judgment implies giving respite to the idolaters and the inviting them to Islam by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and also assuming patience on their harassments. He did not ask him to be patient on the harassment and tortures of the idolaters. On the contrary, He told him to be patient on the command of his Lord as the consequence of both is one and the same and also so that patience may be easy for His Eminence, because Muhammad is the perfect servant and is the true devotee.

When his Lord orders him to be patient for His judgment, because He has decided to give respite to the idolaters for the time being. He says: You also must not refrain from inviting them to Islam. You must bear hardships and discomforts; then patience would become easy for you, especially because of the words of ‘our eyes’.

In other words, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) remained in Mecca for thirteen years and bore hardships and pains for the sake of Almighty Allah, till he can take revenge from them in Badr. Because if it is decided

that the Almighty Allah should not give respite to them and the liars cause harassment to him and die, the divine call would have remained without conclusion.

On the contrary, respite has to be given for a long period of time, so that some of them might accept faith and the proof may be exhausted for those who are insistent on disbelief. Such had been divine practice with regard to all prophets; on the contrary He even gives respite to the sinners.

It is mentioned in traditional reports that when Prophet Musa (a.s.) cursed Firon, he died only after forty years. The

Almighty Allah gives respite, but there are very few who take advantage of that respite to reform themselves.[8](#)

Your Soul Asks for Nourishment in Barzakh

Come make arrangement for that real elegance, the elegance, whose origin is Aale Muhammad (a.s.). No problem if there is no Sun, Moon and earth in the hereafter; but the elegance of Muhammad should be there and one who becomes a true follower of Muhammad would have the elegance of the soul and not mere material elegance. Do not oppress yourself so much and do not become oblivious of your soul.

So many comforts and facilities are there only for the physical body; do something for your grave as well. Not the body, on the contrary your soul asks from nourishment in Barzakh; it asks for clothes. It is regretful that if your garments are of fire; if you can see how terribly the fire surrounds you; you will lose your senses. The fire engulfs you.

O Supporter of Religion, Come to Barzakh Paradise

“It was said: Enter the garden.” (Surah Yasin 36:26)

Regarding the above verse, commentators have said that just as a prophet was killed, immediately his soul was addressed: enter Paradise; the command of the mercy of God has come; enter the divine garden, however, here the implication is about the Paradise of Barzakh and not the Paradise of hereafter and Qiyamat. The Paradise of Barzakh is there from the time of the death of man to Judgment Day. That is Barzakh is there since the moment there is separation between the body and soul.[9](#) Since the time of death till Judgment Day Barzakh is such a medium, in which there are neither the filths like that of the earth nor the pleasures of Paradise; on the contrary, it is within the limits of moderation. Barzakh is present now also and it is present in the world; but in the unseen, this world is a matter and the perceptions are concealed.

Our material body cannot see it. Pay attention at this moment: air is present and the compound body is also there, but the eye cannot see it, because it is subtle. It is the defect of our and your eyes, which cannot see anything other than matter. After this body is destroyed, the body of Barzakh is capable of

seeing, because it is not material. Whatever the Almighty Allah has promised in the Holy Quran about the Paradise of Hereafter is mentioned about the Paradise of Barzakh as well.

So as soon as the soul is separated from the body, it is given glad tidings to enter Paradise. All the sins of a martyr are purified. There is no good greater than martyrdom. [10](#) Paradise of Barzakh is there for a believer from his death till Judgment Day. They eliminated the believer of Aale Yasin; martyred the supporters and helpers of the Prophet; they were told: Enter Paradise.

When they entered Paradise, they remarked: O would that my people had known; of that on account of which my Lord has forgiven me and made me of the honored ones! It is true that prophets and divine missionaries are our well-wishers and other than being concerned for our well-being, they do not have any other aim, in spite of the fact that they were tortured and killed.

Yet they did not lay curse on their enemies. On the contrary, they continued to exhort the people to the path of righteousness. If only these foolish and ignorant people had understood something from it. We had said that the Paradise of Barzakh is implied; which is there from death to Judgment Day.

If he is a believer, but has also committed sins, and he dies without repenting, according to the duration of his life, the reward and punishment is of Barzakh till his decision is over. Sometimes he is purified of his sins in this Barzakh only.

When he enters the fields of Mahshar, there is nothing to account for. Some commentators have said: In the verse of:

“It was said: Enter the garden.” (Surah Yasin 36:26)

First information is given about the killing of that believer. Then He says: They were asked to enter Paradise...Why killing is not mentioned here? It is so, because death was already mentioned before. In the same verse:

“And We did not send down upon his people after him...” (Surah Yasin 36:28)

...it is concluded from the words of ‘after him’ that it was after death.

Now it is not necessary to say that he was killed.

“Alas for the servants! There comes not to them an apostle but they mock at him. Do they not consider how many of the generations have We destroyed before them, because they do not turn to them?” (Surah Yasin 36:30-31)

Human Soul Exposes Realities in Barzakh

It is mentioned in the verse of:

“Alas for the servants...” (Surah Yasin 36:30-31)

...that human soul indeed perceives the realities in Barzakh and Qiyamat. Whatever was previously concealed from them is exposed. Those who ridicule the prophets and their followers; those make fun of the callers of creatures to the hereafter; how regretful and painful would be exposure of reality for them? In the Holy Quran, Qiyamat is mentioned as ‘the day’, ‘day of tasting’ ‘Judgment Day’ ‘day of happening’. In Qiyamat, there would be no sun like it is there in the earth. ¹¹There will be no sun and moon in the field of gathering (Mahshar).

No Light Would Shine in Barzakh, Except the Elegance of Muhammad

Thus, on the basis of this why is it called ‘the day’? That is light as opposed to the night, which is dark in the world. Its reality is hidden and its inside is concealed. Reality is not visible. Since the first day of death, there is actual dawn of reality to realize the facts.

For example, no matter how much you endeavor, you cannot gain the recognition of Amirul Momineen (a.s.), because he is concealed. In the beginning of death, when your eye of Barzakh opens up, as long as you wish you can understand the loftiness and greatness of Imam Ali (a.s.).

The powerful hand of God, bounties of Allah on the righteous people and divine punishment is for the evil persons. ¹² Thus, there is night since birth till the time death and after death there is day and exposition of reality. See what calamity has befallen those who ridiculed the holy prophets. When they saw scholars and practical doers of good, how they looked upon them with disdain and made fun of them. In what punishment are they involved today?

A Point Regarding Grave and Barzakh

Grave is the noun of place, meaning place of sleep. On Judgment Day, when the dead rise up their heads from the grave they would say: Who has made us to arise from our place of sleeping, whereas they were under punishment in Barzakh? Whoever died was in Barzakh and he was rewarded and punished till he reaches the true Paradise and Hell. Whatever sin a man commits; its repercussion catches up with him. Sometimes man is purified in this Barzakh and it is due to this that it is referred to as the place of repose.

We are asleep in this world and when we enter Barzakh, we in fact enter the state of wakefulness, because in comparison to the earth, the power of effect of Barzakh is much more. All the living beings are asleep; when they die, they will be awake. This traditional report is quoted from Amirul Momineen (a.s.) regarding those who have had true dreams of death. Many such examples are mentioned in the book of Dastanhai Shaguft. In the same way, in Darus Salam, Haji Noori has also mentioned some

evidences.

In Relation to Barzakh, Qiyamat is Waking Up from Sleep

Thus Qiyamat with relation to Barzakh is waking up from sleep. Its real effect is present in Qiyamat. Barzakh: whether its reward or punishment; both are within the limits of moderation. With relation to earth everything is wakefulness; but with relation to life after death, it is sleep. Therefore, when they will be raised from the grave, they would say: Who has awakened us?

When they notice a spark of Hell, it would seem to be a flame. On one side there would be severe angels to herd the creatures to accounting and on the other side black faces would be seen. ¹³ They will see some strange things, which were not even present in Barzakh. It would so shocking that all would be crouching. ¹⁴ All would be entreating: O Lord save me; except Prophet Muhammad, who would be saying: O Lord, help my Ummah. All would be bewildered.

Pregnant females would suffer miscarriages due to fear. The nursing ladies would become oblivious of the children they had been nursing. They would see people in a stupor, whereas they would not be intoxicated. Divine punishment is very severe indeed. ¹⁵ With regard to Qiyamat, we hear that no matter if a person is involved in the punishment of Barzakh, but what is the punishment of Barzakh?

The sting of a mosquito is nothing in comparison to the sting of a scorpion. Yes, it is the same prophetic promise, which he saw and verified as true.

A House, Which Murdered its Occupants

Agha Sibti has narrated that the Late Sayyid Ibrahim Shustari, who was a congregation leader of Ahwaz, was an extremely pious man. After marriage, he became a victim of extreme poverty and was even unable to bear the expenses of his family. At last he went to Najaf Ashraf and lodged with a student of Shustar in a Madressa.

After some months a caravan arrived from Shustar. People informed Sayyid Ibrahim that his wife and parents had also arrived in the caravan and they were extremely worried about him.

He was very much worried, because at that time he neither had the means to afford them shelter nor means to feed them. In any case, he started searching for accommodation. Someone directed him to a shopkeeper, who was having the keys to a vacant house. He said: Yes, the house is vacant; but whoever has stayed in that place was involved in misfortune and died a premature death.

The Sayyid said: What difference does it make? Even if I die, it would be better than this life of poverty. If I were to die, I would get rid of my deprivation sooner. So he took the keys and went to see the house. He found that it was extremely dirty having cobwebs in every room, which showed that no one had lived in it since years.

After cleaning up the place, the Sayyid lodged his family members in it. When they went to sleep at night, suddenly the Sayyid saw a person wearing an expensive head gear appear and mount his chest with full force, saying: Sayyid, why have you trespassed my house, I will strangle you this moment. Sayyid said: I am a Sayyid and I am a descendant of the Prophet. I have not committed any sin. The Arab said: Why have you occupied my house? The Sayyid said: I will do as you say; and I seek your permission to live here.

The Arab said: All right go down to the cellar and clean it up. And when you remove the asbestos sheet, you will notice my grave. Clean up the grave and recite the Ziyarat of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) every night [apparently he said: Ziyarat Aminullaah]. And you must recite Quran daily to such an extent. And then I will have no objection if you live in this house. The Sayyid says: I did as he had directed. Cleaned up the cellar and reached till the grave and cleaned it as well.

Every day I recited Ziyarat Aminullaah and the Holy Quran. But I was still in difficult financial position. One day I was in the holy courtyard of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) when a person asked about my well-being. About whom I later learnt that he was an influential businessman related to an acquaintance of mine.

He then paid me a sum of money according to the number of my dependents and also fixed a monthly stipend. In other words, my financial condition improved and my life became comfortable.

Like other incidents, this story also proves the endurance of the soul in Barzakh. It also shows that souls are attached to the place of their burial (their grave). The explanation of this point is that because the soul remains with the body for years and acts through it and gains recognition and performs acts of divine obedience through it.

It has served through it and bore hardships in its training and development. According to scholars the relationship of the soul to the body is like the relationship of the lover and the beloved.

When he dies, he would not completely sever relations with it and wherever the body is kept, it will keep it under surveillance. Thus if he sees that the place has become a garbage heap or a place of sin and dirt, it becomes extremely distraught.

It expresses displeasure. Indeed the hatred of souls is very effective, thus it was mentioned in this story that those who lived in such a house; according to their mistaken notion they said that the house was unlucky. But if one keeps his grave clean and performs good acts like recitation of Quran etc. he would remain happy.

Hence it was said about the Sayyid that what a nice reward he earned due to the blessings of Ziyarat and recitation of Quran. [16](#)

A Miracle of Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) Regarding Barzakh

Please pay attention to this incident. Kashful Ghumma, which is a reliable reference book of Shia it is mentioned in the chapter of miracles of the seventh Imam, Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) that a vizier of Abbaside Caliph possessed much wealth and power.

He was always busy in official affairs and was deeply devoted to the Caliph. When he died, the Caliph acknowledged his valuable services and ordered that he should be buried in the mausoleum of Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) next to the holy grave.

The caretaker of the tomb was a pious and a righteous man. He went to sleep in the chamber of the grave at night. He saw in dream that the grave of that vizier split and fire arose from it. Along with the stench of the burning of bones, smoke came out of it, till the whole mausoleum was engulfed in smoke and fire.

Imam (a.s.) was standing on one side and addressing the caretaker in a loud voice: Tell the Caliph that he has caused distress to me by burying this oppressor here.

The caretaker awoke in terror and wrote to the Caliph whatever he had witnessed. That same night the Caliph came from Baghdad to Kazmain. He got the holy mausoleum vacated and ordered the opening up of the grave and taking out of the corpse to bury it somewhere else. When the grave was dug up before the Caliph nothing, but ashes of a charred body were found.

Questions about Barzakh

A senior Sadaat scholar, who was not prepared to disclose his name, writes that when I saw my father in dream I asked him about the questions which he was posed and heard his replies, which are as follows:

The souls, which are involved in punishment in Barzakh; what kind of hardships do they suffer?

Reply: It is like you enter a mountain pass and all around there are high mountains, which you are incapable of scaling; in those circumstances, a ferocious wolf starts chasing you and there is no way to escape.

Have the charitable and good deeds that I have performed on your behalf reached you?

Reply: All of it has reached me, but I will explain to you its details through example.

When you are in crowded public hot bath, where it is difficult to breathe due to smoke and crowd, in such a situation a corner of the bath opens up and cool air reaches you; how nice would you feel? Thus same is our condition at the time you send some gifts to us.

When he saw the body his father in health and radiance and only found the lips injured and smeared

with blood, he asked the reason for it and said: If I perform a good deed, would the injuries of your lips be cured?

Reply: Its cure is only with your respected mother, because it is due to the insult I committed on her; because her name is Sakina and whenever I called her, I used to say: Sakku Khanam and she was displeased with it. If you can make amends on my behalf with her, there is hope I would be cured.

The respected narrator said: I related the whole incident to my mother. She replied: Whenever your father called me, he referred to me as Sakku Khanam in a ridiculing way. I was extremely angry at that, but I never expressed any displeasure and did not utter a single letter against him, but since at this moment he is in pain and distress, I will forgive him and pray for him with absolute sincerity.

These three questions and replies contain many subtle points to understand which is very important. I explain them to the readers in brief.

Good Traits of Character are Beautiful Forms in Barzakh

It is proved from logic and textual evidences that man is not destroyed with death. On the contrary, his soul leaves his material body and is joined to a subtle body and is accompanied with all senses that it possessed in the world: sight and hearing, joy and sorrow, which are more severe and powerful than the world, because the facsimile body is at the peak of subtlety, so the material eyes cannot see it. As if it is lesser than the material body, like the air; although that body is a compound, but since it is subtle, it cannot be seen.

From death till Judgment Day; this condition of soul is called as facsimile world and world of Barzakh. [17](#) The point to be reminded is that those who have departed from this world with fortune, in Barzakh they would witness their good traits of character and good moral acts and gain advantage from them like the unfortunate souls will be regretful and punished, because of its bad character and acts and see it in the worst and horrifying forms and wish to get away from them, but they would not be able to get away.

Thus in the words of the scholar quoted above; it is akin to being chased by a ferocious wolf to escape which is impossible. Pay attention to this holy verse:

“On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil, it shall wish that between it and that (evil) there were a long duration of time; and Allah makes you to be cautious of (retribution from) Himself; and Allah is Compassionate to the servants.” (Surah Aale Imran 3:30)

It is one of the graces of the Almighty Allah that He has warned about the pitfalls of the hereafter in this world only, so that His servants may not be involved in any hardship and difficulty. [18](#)

Dog on the Bier

The pious personality, late Dr. Ahmad Ahsan, who lived for years in Kerbala Moalla, in his last days, he was a caretaker of the Qom mausoleum. He died there and was also buried in the same place. He has narrated an incident of Kerbala, which he witnessed twenty-five years ago. One day he saw a bier being carried to the tomb of Imam Husain (a.s.) to get blessings from it.

He also started walking with the bier. Suddenly he saw a dark and horrible dog perching on the coffin. He says: I was shocked and in order to find if other people were also seeing it, I asked a person walking to my right: What type of cloth it is on the coffin.

He replied: It is a Kashmiri shawl. I asked him if he was able to see something else. I posed the same question to a person walking to my left. But he also replied in the same way. Thus I understood that except from me, no one was seeing that scene.

When they reached the courtyard of the mausoleum, I found that the dog separated from the coffin. When they brought the coffin out again after encircling the Zari, I saw that dog on the coffin once more. I accompanied the corpse to the graveyard to see what unfolds. I saw the dog with the corpse all the time. When they started to bury the corpse that dog also disappeared from my sight into the grave.

Character of Man in Barzakh

The example of this incident is given by Qadi Saeed Qummi in Arbeenat, quoting from Shaykh Bahai (a.r.). Its gist is that a scholar and pious man was the caretaker of the Isfahan cemetery. Once Shaykh Bahai came to meet him. The Shaykh said: I saw a strange spectacle that day. I saw people arriving with a corpse, which they buried at so and so spot and then they went away from there.

After some time a nice smell was perceived from there and it was not from the fragrance of this world. I looked around myself to find out its origin. Just then I saw an extremely beautiful form, which went near the grave and went out of sight. Not much time later I perceived a very severe stench, which was worse than all the stinks of the world.

When I looked around, I saw a dog ambling to that grave and as soon as he reached the grave, he disappeared. I was confused and astounded. Just then I saw a youth in an injured condition and he was returning from where he had come. I followed him and asked him to explain his condition.

He said: I was the good deed of this corpse and was appointed to be his companion; and the dog which you saw were his bad deeds. Since they were more in number, they were able to dominate me and did not allow me to remain with that deceased and they expelled me.

The Shaykh says that this incident is true, because it is our belief that in Barzakh, the deeds of man assume a form according to their being good and bad. Their personification is a confirmed fact.

Therefore, our elders have said that on Judgment Day, when the veil is moved aside and the realities are exposed,[19](#) we would see the deeds as we have performed them.

He would see it and would be so ashamed that he would wish to be sent to Hell at the earliest so that he can escape this embarrassing situation.

Another interpretation of this is mentioned in traditional reports. When we shall be raised from the graves and the reality is exposed, everyone will realize what he has said with regard to the Imam and so much will they perspire due to embarrassment that some people would be drenched in it.

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) that he said: There is no time for Zuhr, Asr, Maghrib, Isha and Fajr Prayer, in which angel does not call out: O people arise and extinguish through your prayers, the fire that you have ignited from your deeds.

The world is not worth that we should be released from slavery in the world. Apparent freedom is to end very soon. May Allah bestow true freedom; which is freedom from divine chastisement. It is possible that man may cross the Siraat Bridge easily. May the Almighty Allah be merciful on him and He allows a person to cross the Siraat Bridge like lightning. Yes: Remember me in the world and I would remember you in Siraat, Balance of deeds and in the hereafter.

Salaam (Safety) is Also a Name of God

The Almighty Allah commands His Messenger: When those who have believed in My signs visit you, you must say Salaam to them.[20](#)

Widening of Grave and Barzakh

If you wish that your grave should be expanded, you should be concerned about your believer brother. The Almighty Allah expands the grave of some people to extent that an eye can see.

But this widening is different according to different people in grave, Judgment Day and Paradise.[21](#)

We will Plead Even if We are Involved in the Darkness of Grave

If we are involved in darkness in Barzakh, we would weep and wail against it: O Lord, even though we are sinners, we are devotees of Imam Ali (a.s.). Even if we fall down in the corner of Hell, according to Imam Sajjad (a.s.), we will inform the folks of hellfire that we are followers of Imam (a.s.) and lovers of his followers. We are devoted to Imam Husain (a.s.).[22](#)

It is mentioned in traditional reports that such people will tell the angels: Convey our greetings to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and tell him about our circumstances.

The Honor of Imam Husain (a.s.) Would be Seen in Barzakh and Qiyamat

Honor belongs to the Almighty Allah and He can do whatever He wants. It is mentioned in traditional reports that Ubayy bin Kaab said: I came to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.) and saw Imam Husain (a.s.) in his lap and His Eminence was kissing him.

I said: O Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.s.), are you very much fond of Husain?

He replied: The folks of heaven love Husain more than the folks of the earth. Indeed it is so. The folks of the earth are ignorant. The greatness and honor of Husain would become clear in Barzakh and Judgment Day. Debasing is for Yazid and his followers and is a share of every infidel and apostate.²³

O man, you are not going to be annihilated. You are not like animals, grasses and plants; that your life should end with your death. Your body would be destroyed apparently, but your soul is enduring by the power of Allah. When you die, you will enter Barzakh, which lies between this world and Judgment Day and it is joined to Qiyamat.

The most important training is recognition of Islam. Man should recognize himself and come to know that he is different from other entities. He is subject to the grace and mercy of the Almighty Allah. ²⁴ Allah, the Mighty and the High is merciful to the human beings. Everything is for his sake and this is the aim of creation. In the Holy Quran, there are many explanations of this point.

What a nice poem the late Shaykh Bahai has penned in this regard:

O centre of the circle of possibility O essence of the world of being

You are the king of the essence of life

You are the sun of the expressions of the ethereal world A hundred kingdoms and seas are there for your sake You are the Yusuf of Egypt, a survivor of the well

Till he became the ruler of a vast kingdom

He became the undisputed ruler of his kingdom²⁵

Barzakh and Saiqar, Worlds of the Life

The Holy Quran considers human life to be a continuation and after death, there is Barzakh.²⁶ It is a medium to the hereafter and is placed between the world and the hereafter. When soul is released from this material world, it enters another world. It is mentioned in Surah Mulk: That (it is) God, who created the kingdom and life.²⁷ It is not necessary for us to interpret this verse (and consider the creation to be

destined and say that the Almighty Allah destined death and life).

Death is not an abstract matter. It is an existing matter. That is the perfection of soul is its salvation from the material body. That is freedom from a cage of the body. It is escape from the world of matter and difficulties of it. That is the completion of deeds and reaching upto the conclusion.[28](#)

Celebration of the Entry of Believer in Barzakh

It is found in the biographies of two great scholars that they made a pact that if either of them died first he would inform the other about his circumstances in Barzakh. Thus when one of them died, he appeared to his counterpart in dream and the living friend asked: Why did you not remember us for so long?

He replied: Here we are making a long celebrating and we were busy in it. The living friend asked: What is that celebration for. The dead friend said: Do you not know that Shaykh Ansari has passed away from the world and he has arrived here. That is we are having a celebration since forty days.

Chastisement of Barzakh According to the Sin

“So on that day neither man nor jinni shall be asked about his sin. Which then of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? The guilty shall be recognized by their marks, so they shall be seized by the forelocks and the feet. Which then of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?” (Surah Rahman 55:39–42)

This verse says that it is with contradiction of time and space that in the initial stages, no one would be questioned about his sins; like the stage of terror and fear. The stage of interrogation is only later and another reason of contradiction is that the Shia would not be asked about their sins on Judgment Day.

It is so because they have departed from the world after repenting for their sins, or they have suffered the punishment of their sins in Barzakh. Many traditional reports are recorded on this subject. It is possible that some sins might require them to wait for a thousand years in Barzakh or there might be rights of others upon them, which they had not fulfilled. Let me mention an interesting story in this connection.

Punishment for a Year in Barzakh for Non-Fulfillment of Rights of Others

The Late scholar, Haji Noori has quoted in Darus Salaam from Late Sayyid Muhammad (who was among the great scholars of Isfahan) that he said: One year after the death of his father, he saw him in dream and asked about his well-being. He said: I was in punishment till today; I have just been released from it. The son asked in astonishment: How can you become liable to punishment? He replied: I was

supposed to pay Mash–Hadi Reza Saqqa for reciting the Holy Quran eighteen times, which I forgot. I made bequest that it should be paid. I was in punishment since I died.

But yesterday Mash–Hadi Reza forgave me, so I got relief. Sayyid Muhammad saw this dream in Najaf Ashraf. So he wrote to his brothers and asked them to find out if father owed any debts, they should repay it.

They searched for Saqqa and asked him about it and he said: Yes, he owed me payment for reciting the Holy Quran eighteen times; since I was not having written proof, I did not make any demands even after he passed away for it would have not been of any use and the successors would have demanded written proof from me.

I began to think that even though the Sayyid made a mistake of not giving any document to me and did not even made a bequest about it; however for the sake of his great grandfather, I will forgive him so that he may not have to suffer divine chastisement. The sons of the late Sayyid offered to pay him for reciting the Holy Quran eighteen times, but Saqqa refused the money saying: I cannot take the money when I have condoned it.

The conclusion of this story is that delay and punishment of Barzakh is also connected to fulfillment of the rights of others; but the followers of Imam Ali (a.s.) would be clear of all sins in Barzakh.[29](#)

Punishment of Usurers in Barzakh

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) has also stated: “On the night of ascension (Meraj), I saw some people trying to stand up, but did not succeed because of their huge bellies, I asked, O Jibraeel , who are these people?”

Jibraeel replied, “They are those who have taken usury. Now they can only stand up like those who have been possessed by the Devils.”

The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) continues, “Then I saw them being herded on the path of the followers of Firon. Seeing the extreme heat of the fire, they exclaimed. O God! When will Qiyamat be?” (It is clear that the fire mentioned in the tradition is of the punishment of Barzakh).

The liar has a human form only in this world. In Barzakh, he does not retain the human form. While describing the scenes of Meraj, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) told Janabe Fatima Zahra (s.a.):

“On the night of Meraj, I saw a woman whose head resembled a pig and her body was like that of a donkey. It was due to the fact that she spread discord and told lies.”[30](#)

There are many traditions and incidents that prove that the deceased persons benefit from good deeds performed by living people on their behalf. The following is such type of incident mentioned in Darus

Salaam of the late Agha Noori (r.a.):

The most pious and good-fearing Haji Mulla Ali Tehrani narrates from his father, the late Mirza Khaleel that he said, "In a public bath of Tehran was a servant whom people called by the name of 'Paadu', and he never performed prayers or fasted. One day he went to a mason and told him that he would like a bath (hamam) be constructed for him.

The mason wanted to know the source of his finance, but he was told to take the cash and build the hamam. Thus the mason built a hamam named after Ali Talib." The late Mirza Khaleel says that when he was in Najaf Ashraf, he saw Ali Talib in his dream and that he had come to Wadius Salam. – The valley of peace (a part of Barzakh). "I was surprised and asked, "How did you reach this great position while you neither prayed nor fasted?"

The person replied, "O man! When I died, I was tied in iron collar and chains and was being dragged towards punishment when Mulla Muhammad Kermanshahi (a scholar of Tehran), May Allah bestow him a good recompense, appointed a particular person to perform Hajj in my place and made a substitute to pray and fast in my lieu.

He gave Zakat on my behalf and restored the rights of those whom I had oppressed. That is, he did not leave anything that could have been performed on my behalf and saved me from divine chastisement. May Allah give him a goodly reward."

Then I was filled with terror and woke up. I was astonished at this dream. After a few days some people came from Tehran and I asked them about Ali Talib. Whatever they told me matched perfectly with what I had seen in dream. Even the persons who were appointed substitutes were same. I was extremely surprised at this dream.

[The World of Barzakh](#)

The Shaykh relates a tradition from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) in which he says: "Indeed, between the world and the Hereafter (that is Barzakh) are one thousand valleys, among which the easiest is Death."

The statement of the dead man to Prophet Isa (a.s.) that: "I was with them, but I did not share their deeds" is worth paying attention to, because it is necessary for the believer to refrain the sinners from evil deeds. And if they do not accept his advice, he should become aloof from them. If not, his end would also be like theirs. (Shaykh Bahai has supported his arguments with Quranic verses and traditions. For more details we may refer to his book, Arbæen.)

Prophet Isa (a.s.) asked, "How was your love for the world, and to what extent were you fond of it?"

He replied, "We loved the world as much as a child loves its mother. When the love of the world used to be kind to us, we became happy; and when it turned away from us, we used to lament and become

aggrieved.” Prophet Isa (a.s.) asked, “How were you worshipping false gods?” He replied, “We used to obey the sinners.”

“Then what was your ultimate end? Up to where has your Hereafter reached?”

He replied, “We spent the night in mirth, but when morning came, we were accosted by ‘hawiyah’ (fire of Hell).

Isa (a.s.) asked, “What is Hawiyah?” “It is Sijjin (another name of hellfire).” “What is Sijjin?”

“They are twisted mountains of fire, whose flames would flare upon us till the Day of Judgment.”

“In such a condition, what did you say and what was the reply that you received?”

“We said, ‘Send us back to the world so that we can perform good deeds.’ We were told, ‘You lie.’”

Prophet Isa (a.s.) asked, “Woe be unto you! Why did not others speak to me?”

He answered, “O Spirit of Allah! Their mouths are bridled with fire and very menacing angels are punishing them. I was living with them in the world, but I was not like them. But when the chastisement descended, I was also surrounded by it. I am hanging at the side of Barzakh with a single strand of hair. I don’t know whether I would continue to hang like this or get salvation.”

Prophet Isa (a.s.) turned to his companions and said, “O devotees of Allah! To eat dry bread with salt and to sleep on a bed of hay are great deeds. The success of the world and the Hereafter also lies in this.”

The incident shows how deadly a sin, the love of the world is. In the light of this tradition it can be said that the love of the world hastens the descent of chastisement and causes everlasting destruction for a nation.

‘Maad’ begins with death and then passes through grave and then Barzakh and then Qiyamat Kubra (the great resurrection) and ends with either Paradise or Hell. It cannot be comprehended by the apparent senses and even though the occurring of the original ‘Maad’ or Resurrection is proved by logic or brain, it is impossible for one to ponder in solitude over it and to understand what will happen after death, and through which stages one will have to pass.

For understanding this, there is no way except to rely on and take help from divine revelation, because man wherever he is, his power of understanding cannot cross the limits of his world. For example, it is impossible for a baby in the womb to get the idea of the outside world and to fathom its vastness. Similarly it is also beyond his powers to understand the endlessness of space and to know about the things therein.

Likewise, the man who lives in this world like a captive of matter and nature cannot have the ability to

understand the world of angels and spirits, which is hidden from him. To reach that state will be possible only after getting freedom from this material world. In short, a man who is living in this material world can never be able to know the details of the world after death, unless he puts faith and trusts in the truths made known by the Creator of this Universe.

Characteristics of the Hereafter have Nothing to do With Intellect

So if anyone says, “It is far from my brain that such and such thing will happen after death,” then his saying so is absolutely unacceptable, because the conditions and events after death have no relation with the bodily brain.

Even if all the thinkers and philosophers join together and make collective efforts to understand the conditions beyond death (in the other world) through the materials available to them in this earthly life, they can never succeed in their maneuverings.

So if we do have any source, it is only those things and those words, which the Holy Prophet, Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.s.) and His Holy Progeny have shown to us. Hence, we also confirm them, as all of those great persons who are Infallible are those to whom God Almighty, the Lord of the Universe sends revelation.

Does a Dead Body Talk?

This discussion will prove that the doubts and distrusts expressed by some senseless people are totally baseless. For example, they say that the body of a man who has died is just like dust and stone or like dry wood and so how can it be questioned in a grave? In other words, can stones talk? If we fill up the mouth of a dead body with something and on the next day open his grave and see, we will find that nothing has gone out of that mouth.

Talking is not Limited to the Tongue

Possibilities and probabilities are essential to intellect. An intelligent man (having brain) hears a thing and if it is impossible according to intelligence, he doubts its being either true or untrue. But if the one from whom he heard that thing is an infallible person, then the former will at once say that whatever he has said is true.

But if the hearer is unwise and ignorant, he would exclaim, “What kind of talks are these, which we fail to understand!” So not to accept the words of the infallible would be based on senselessness and foolishness. Such a fellow is like a quadruped, but has two feet whose senses are limited only to eating, sleeping and intercourse with the opposite sex.

Obviously if it is told to an ox or an ass that an angel appears before our eyes at the time of death or that

there will be a questioning in our graves, they will not be able to agree, because their intelligence is limited and cannot go far from their bellies and genitals. Only a higher level of soul can accept such news and matters.

There is no scope here to deal at length and with full details. Therefore, we mention briefly what has been narrated by Ahle Bayt regarding what happens right from the first stage (death) up to the last one (Resurrection).

- [1.](#) Refer Qalbe Quran by Ayatullah Dastghaib
- [2.](#) Ayatullah Dastghaib (r.a.), the Martyr of the Niche, has explained these verses in detail, which are published in Nafse Mutmainnah
- [3.](#) Kitab Tauheed, Pg. 418
- [4.](#) Surah Rum 30:30
- [5.](#) Kitab Tauheed, Pg. 343
- [6.](#) Surah Yasin 36:26
- [7.](#) Qiyamat wa Quran, Pg. 124–131
- [8.](#) Surah Ibrahim 14:50
- [9.](#) Surah Mominoon 23: 100
- [10.](#) Safinatul Bihar, Vol. 2, Pg. 687
- [11.](#) Surah Takwir 81: 1
- [12.](#) Sixth Ziyarat of Imam Ali (a.s.).
- [13.](#) Surah Abasa 80:40
- [14.](#) Surah Jathiya 45:28
- [15.](#) Surah Hajj 22:2
- [16.](#) Dastanhai Shaguft, Pg. 300
- [17.](#) Surah Mominoon 23: 100
- [18.](#) Dastanhai Shaguft, Pg. 312
- [19.](#) Surah Qalam 68:2
- [20.](#) Surah Hashr 59:23
- [21.](#) Razgoi Quran, Pg. 96
- [22.](#) Dua Abu Hamza Thumali
- [23.](#) Kitab Wilayat, Pg. 174
- [24.](#) Surah Isra 17:70
- [25.](#) Kitab Wilayat, Pg. 202
- [26.](#) Surah Mominoon 23: 100
- [27.](#) Surah Mulk 67:2
- [28.](#) Kitab Wilayat, Pg. 214
- [29.](#) Behist Javidaan, Pg. 287
- [30.](#) Uyun Akhbar Reza

Death

Death: The First Station

Truth about Death: The dislocation or the breaking of the relationship between body and soul is called death. Several examples have been quoted to explain this connection. Some say it is like the relation between a ship and its captain wherein death snatches away the ship from the control and authority of the captain.

You say: My hand, my leg and my eye. This means 'I' (my) is something other than the said hand, leg and eye. When you say: I walked, it is true that you moved, but you walked through your legs.

This shows that 'You' are something other than the limb called leg. Likewise you say: I saw, I heard, I said. In all these three sentences the word 'I' (my) refers to a person and this person is the same as your soul, which manifests through the said scenes and which has been expressed through the above sentences.

It is the soul that sees and hears, but through the eyeballs in the eyes and the holes in the ears respectively. These eyes and ears are, of course, the means of seeing and hearing. Soul is a lamp lighted by God's Might in the dark house of body, which shows its light through eyes, ears and other organs.

What is Death?

It is like shifting of a lamp from one place to another. For instance, suppose there is a hut having many holes. If a lamp is placed in it, its light would be emitted through those holes. But as soon as that lamp is moved out of that hut, it will make the hut dark.

Similarly, so long as the lamp of soul remains in the body, it manifests its existence known through the light, which comes out from limbs like eyes and ears etc. But as soon as this lamp of soul is removed from the body, all its manifestations also cease and the body becomes dark. This is Death. This was just an explanatory example. Otherwise...

The Soul Neither Enters the Body nor Gets Out of it

It must be understood that the relation between the soul and the body is not by way of Hulool (penetrative migration). It is not like the entrance of water in a utensil or of air in vacuum. It also cannot be said that it remains out of body or it goes out of it at the time of death, because soul is essence, not matter.

There is no question of its entering or vacating. The only thing is that its relation with body is such that it remains fully attentive to the body. Death disconnects this relation.

It is also obligatory for us to believe that death occurs by the command of God. The same Power, which had established this relation in the womb, at the last moment of the worldly life, disconnects this relation between the body and soul. Only He is the bestower of life and death. The Holy Quran says:

“Allah takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that die not during their sleep; then He withholds those on whom He has passed the decree of death and sends the others back till an appointed term; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect.” (Surah Zumar 39:42)

Some common people are very angry with Israel (The angel of death). They do not even like to hear his name. They even condemn him though they know that these angels do not do anything of their own wish or authority. They have been employed by the Lord of the Universe and hence do everything by His order or command.

How the Soul is Taken

How soul is retrieved from body has been narrated in the traditions about the Meraj (ascension) of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.). In short, there is a board in front of Israel, which contains names of all the people. The name of the person whose time for death arrives is removed from that board and Israel at once takes possession of his or her soul. It is also possible that names of thousands of people may be wiped out at one moment whereupon Israel takes the souls of all of them instantly.

This is not astonishing. It is just like a gust of breeze blowing off thousands of lamps in a split second. All of it is by the power of the Almighty. Doubtlessly it is Israel, who snatches souls, but as a matter of fact, it is only God Who causes it, because it is only His command and Will.

Who causes Death? God, Israel or the Angels?

Here comes up a question: Who takes away the soul? It is God or Israel or the angels? There are three verses about this in the Holy Quran. At one place it says: God causes Death. At another place it is mentioned that: The angel of death takes away the soul. (Surah Sajdah 32: 11) [1](#). On yet another occasion it is mentioned: Angels collect the souls. (Surah Nisa 4:97).[2](#)

The fact is that all these statements are true, because the angel of death and his subordinate angels collect souls as commanded by God Almighty. Doubtlessly it is just like this: A king, through his army and its chiefs, conquers a country. It is correct to say that such and such army won such and such territory. Similarly, it is also correct to mention that such and such commander captured such and such country.

But in both the statements the fact remains that the country has been conquered by the king who owns, manages and directs the affairs of his state through officers and personnel under his command. This example also is only for making the matter understandable. Otherwise such examples cannot fully

describe and explain the power of the Almighty.

The Lord of the Universe has fixed Some Causes for Death

It is agreed that it is only God who takes away life at the time of death. But you should also remember that God has made this world a world of causes. He has created causes for death also like falling from roof, becoming ill or being murdered etc. Surely all these events become causes of death, but the same is not absolutely essential, because it can be also be seen that some people were seriously ill, but they did not die of that illness.

Of course when their lifespan comes to end even a light and ordinary thing can also become the reason of death and the Lord of the universe takes away his life. It is also seen that some people die without even the slightest illness.

Appearance of Israel according to the Deeds of the Dying Person

A matter pertaining to the angel of death is that when he comes to take the soul of any person, he assumes a face according to the deeds of the dying person.

It is mentioned in narrations that once Ibrahim (a.s.) asked the angel of death, "What shape do you assume while fetching the soul of unbeliever?" The angel replied, "You will not be able to look at that frightening shape."

The Friend of God repeated, "I intend to see it." He saw the angel in the form of a black man. His hair was standing on its end all over his body. A foul stench emanated from that frightening figure. His clothes were dark and flames and smoke leapt out from his mouth and nose. Ibrahim (a.s.) became unconscious. When he came to sense, he said, "Even if the unbeliever is not given any other punishment, seeing you in this form is torture enough for him."

On the other hand the shape in which the angel of death appears before a believer has been mentioned in a number of traditions.³

Arrival of Angels and Satans at the Time of Death

During the last moments of man's life, angles arrive and stand on his right side. Likewise the Satans (devils) also approach him and stand on the left side of the deathbed ⁴. The job of Satans is to deceive and betray, particularly at the time of death so that if that person has any faith, it could be destroyed. The scale of man's luck or misfortune is his last word and deed.

The way in which he passes his life is the same manner and the state in which he has died will be his state when he will be made to rise in Qiyamat. His wish at the time of his death will be what it was during

his life and so he will die with the same ambitions. If in your heart there was an aspiration to see the charm of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) you will be able to observe that beauty at the last moment.

But if, God forbid your wish throughout your life was only the fulfilment of desire and passion then that lust of yours will become more intense at the time of death. But the one who had perfect faith is promised by God that He will protect him and Satan will not be able to gain control over him.

“Allah confirms those who believe with the sure word in this world’s life and in the hereafter...”

(Surah Ibrahim 14:27)

When Abu Zakariya Razi was about to die, those sitting around him asked him to recite, Laa Ilaaha Illallaah (There is no God except Allah). He replied, “I will not recite it.” Then he became unconscious.

When he gained sense he said, “Just now a man had come to me who said, ‘If you wish to be lucky and fortunate then say: Isa is the son of God. I said, ‘I will not say.’ After a number of requests and denials that fellow said, ‘Okay then say: There is no God but Allah.’ Yet I said, ‘Since you are asking me to say so, I will not.’ Suddenly there appeared a weapon, which killed that fellow. Now I am conscious and am reciting the Kalimah (formula of faith).”

Then he recited the two formulae (Shahaadatain) and passed away from this world.

Verily, how Satan can subdue a man who had the belief that there is only one God at the time of his death? Of course the man who had been the follower of devil throughout his life will be a companion of devil on his deathbed also.

Comfort and Discomfort at the Time of Death

Much has been mentioned in narrations about comfort and discomfort at the time of death. In some, it (the trouble or pain) has been compared with the pain experienced when one’s skin is peeled. In some it is said that the pain of death is much less compared to the revolving of a large stony door of a castle having nails, in one’s eyes.

In yet another narration it is said that the pain of death is like that experienced when one’s body is cut into pieces by scissors or torn with a saw. So it has come to notice that some dying persons have suffered pains beyond description, which make the observers tremble.

But on the other hand, for some persons death has been as pleasing as smelling a fragrant flower.

“Those whom the angels cause to die in a good state, saying: Peace be on you: enter the garden for what you did.” (Surah Nahl 16:32)

In some traditions it is mentioned by the infallibles, that for some people, death is like taking off dirty clothes and putting on a clean dress. In some other narrations, it is compared with liberating the body

from chains and yokes, as if death is like being freed from the imprisonment of this material world.

Sometimes Discomfort at the Time of Death Redeems Sins

Discomforts or comforts at the time of death mentioned above do not represent a hard and fast rule. It is not that a righteous person never experiences death time trouble. There are many a faithful whose souls depart easily. Also there are some good and faithful people who get God's mercy whereby their sins are wiped out through the death pains and discomforts.

This is because though one is faithful, he must also leave the world in a clean state (after removal of the blemishes of sins) so that he may be clean in the Hereafter also and may eligible for divine grace right from the first stage of grave. In the case of infidels, the death time pain is the starting point of his post-mortem punishments and tortures.

“But how will it be when the angels cause them to die smiting their backs.” (Surah Muhammad 47:27)

Comfort on Deathbed, Reward of Good Deeds of the Dying

Disbeliever

It is also sometimes seen that infidels and sinners die easily. It is so because they had some good deeds in his life. His soul departs comfortably so that this account may be cleared in this world (he never believed in the post-mortem accounting). So he gets the reward here instead of the Hereafter. For example, a man spent his money for some good cause or helped a poor oppressed person.

As a reward of this good deed, he is given ease at death, so that he may get the reward of this good deed in this very world and may have no claim in the Hereafter. The same is regarding the trouble faced by a believer at death time, which makes him clean from the impurities of the sins of his lifetime.

Anyway the fact of the matter is that for an unbeliever death is the beginning of his misfortune, be it comfortable or painful. For a faithful both pain as well as ease is the start of bounties and comforts of everlasting nature. So the deathbed condition indicates no fixed rule.

Confiscating a Disbeliever's Soul Through Torture

There is a tradition in the third volume of Biharul Anwar according to which once the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) went to visit his cousin, Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.). The latter was suffering from an illness of the eyes. He was sighing and groaning due to acute pain despite the fact that he was a mountain of patience in bearing troubles. At that time the Holy Prophet gave Ali frightening news, which made the latter forget his pain. The Holy Prophet said, “O Ali!

The archangel Jibraeel has informed me that when the time of taking the soul of a disbeliever comes, some angels of torture arrive and retrieve his soul hitting him with bars and whips of fire.” Ali (a.s.) asked, “O Messenger of Allah! Does such a terrible thing happen to anyone from your Ummah also?”

The Holy Prophet said, “Yes, even in Muslims there are three groups whose souls are taken in this harsh manner: First is a tyrant ruler, secondly, who usurps the orphan’s property and third is the one who gives false testimony.”

A Student of Fuzail who died the Death of a Disbeliever

Biographers have written that when the time of death approached for his most knowledgeable and intelligent student, Fuzail and some other persons went to see him. Fuzail began to recite the Surah Yasin⁵. The unfortunate student at that time hit his teacher, Fuzail saying, “I don’t want you to recite the Surah (Quran).”

Just think over the bad luck of a man, who had learnt the Holy Quran throughout his life and who spent his lifetime in mosques, Madressa and assemblies of worships and prayers, and at his last moment he says, “I don’t want you to recite Quran before me!” The unfortunate fellow did not recite even the Shahaadatain⁶ and passed away from this world.

This made Fuzail extremely sorrowful. He took to a corner of his house and stopped going out, until he saw his unlucky student in a dream and asked him the cause of his bad behaviour on his deathbed. The late student said, “I had three evil habits due to which I left the world a disbeliever. They were: I was jealous and never liked that anyone should surpass me.”

Yes, jealousy is the bad habit, which destroys faith just as fire reduces wood to ash.

“Then evil was the end of those who did evil, because they rejected the communications of Allah and used to mock them.” (Surah Rum 30: 10)

Dying in Disbelief Due to Sinning

The second evil habit was backbiting and inciting one against another. It causes separation even between a man and wife. Therefore if someone backbites about a person before you, you should not tell the latter the former was speaking ill of him.

Rather, in order to remove dislike between the two, you may tell one that the other was praising and using good words. Remember that it is no evil to tell untruth with a view to remove ill will and mistrust between two persons, because the intention is only to improve relations between two brothers.

There is a Persian proverb: Untruth resulting in improvement of relations is better than a truth causing strife. Contrary to it, backbiting is the worst evil as besides increasing ill will and enmity between two

human beings, it deprives the backbitten one of peace and calm. Then it sows seeds of trouble and unrest, which is worse than murder.

“And kill them wherever you find them, and drive them out from whence they drove you out, and persecution is severer than slaughter, and do not fight with them at the Sacred Mosque until they fight with you in it, but if they do fight you, then slay them; such is the recompense of the unbelievers.” (Surah Baqarah 2:191)

“...and persecution is graver than slaughter; and they will not cease fighting with you until they turn you back from your religion, if they can; and whoever of you turns back from his religion, then he dies while an unbeliever- these it is whose works shall go for nothing in this world and the hereafter, and they are the inmates of the fire; therein they shall abide.” (Surah Baqarah 2:217)

The third evil, which was found in Fuzail's student, was that of alcoholism. These were the three greater sins, which cause a man faithless death even though he were a scholar and a high-class teacher.⁷

Being Pleased with Death

It is also very important to remember that one must be eager to meet the Lord. It means that a faithful servant should not dislike death and must never be afraid of it. This is not to say that one must long for death. May God protect! One must never think of suicide, because it is possible that one may, in one's lifetime repent for sins and do more good deeds.

The meaning of being pleased with death is that whenever Almighty wants to him to die he should in those circumstances, consider death a bounty, because (according to Islam) he is a loyal and an obedient one of God and he will get great reward very soon and taste the sweetness of his good deeds and if he had been a sinner, his sins would come to an end and so also his punishment would decrease.

In short, a wise man should be pleased with death at the moment of God's will, because death is the only means of scaling the peak of his good fortune, that is to get rid of the web of deceptions and conspiracies and to enter the house of eternal happiness (Paradise) and to get nearness to God Almighty and to see the Holy Prophet and His Holy Progeny (a.s.) as well as to meet the shining souls of all pious people and Holy saints. The only way to get all this is death.

Similarly one must also like and be pleased with a long life and delay in death at the will of God so that he may, to the best of his or her ability, make provisions for the journey to the Hereafter.

Love for the World – Condemned by Reason and Shariat

It is also wrong and misplaced to abhor death and to be crazy after worldly life for enjoying more and more pleasures, as is the way of many. It is against both reason and Shariat.

It is unwise because firstly, real pleasure cannot be achieved in this worldly life. There is a proverb that says: Until a mouth does not taste a hundred fists it cannot swallow a morsel. There is no pleasure in the world, which is not surrounded by hundreds of pains and troubles. If there is youth, old age and weakness is bound to follow it. If there is health, which is primarily essential for enjoying every pleasure of life, then there are a number of ailments and illnesses, which pose threats to it.

If there is wealth, which makes it possible to get comfort and ease, then it is not possible to gain it (wealth) without hard labour. Thus earning of wealth is also not without hazards. Any high position is not attained without labouring hard and facing deterrents and oppositions. Besides all this, what is most significant is that all such worldly gains and benefits, and comforts and positions etc. are bound to perish one day.

According to a meaningful Persian proverb couplet: Do not become an ardent lover of this world, because this disloyal bride has not passed even a single night with sincere love to anyone.

Love for this World is an Attribute of Infidels and a Source of Sins

Deep involvement in material world is, from viewpoint of religion condemnable, because the Holy Quran has regarded love for world an attribute of disbelievers. Almighty says:

“Surely those who do not hope in Our meeting and are pleased with this world’s life and are content with it, and those who are heedless of Our communications.” (Surah Yunus 10:7)

It means that the unbelievers are happy with their worldly life. At another place:

... are you contented with this world’s life instead of the hereafter? But the provision of this world’s life compared with the hereafter is but little. (Surah Taubah 9:38)

Which means: Have you given preference to the material worldly life over the Hereafter?

Referring to Jews, it says:

“...everyone of them loves that he should be granted a life of a thousand years, and his being granted a long life will in no way remove him further off from the chastisement, and Allah sees what they do.” (Surah Baqarah 2:96)

Meaning that every one of them likes that he should live in this world for a thousand years.

There are many verses like this in Holy Quran. Similarly there are innumerable traditions and narrations. Here we mention a famous tradition of the Holy Prophet from Usul Kafi: The root of all evil is love for this world.

Dislike for Death and Weeping Over Demise of the Beloved

Whatever we have mentioned above makes clear that if dislike for death and longing for living longer in this world is because of one's madness (excessive affection) or due to the thought that death becomes a barrier between his beloved things depriving him of worldly pleasures and luxuries, then it is unwise from the viewpoint of reason and an unpleasant attitude from religious viewpoint too.

But if one dislikes death and desires its delay thinking that, in that case (in a longer life), he will continue to make more and more provision for his post-mortem journey to the Hereafter, because death closes all possibilities to do good deeds in this world and hence he desires that death may not come very soon, then it is a very good intention.

But if the wailing, crying and lamenting over the demise of beloved persons and to become angry on such occasions and to denounce the death is due to material reasons and thoughts, then it also is wrong and undesirable. For example, to weep asking why the happiness of this worldly has been snatched from him or why he has been deprived of the comforts available from his deceased beloved relative then such wailing is also wrong and misplaced.

But if the unhappiness and sorrow and mourning is only because of the separation, like that of a co-traveller (who reaches first of all to his beloved native place) then his other companions will naturally be emotionally affected (even though the departing soul has reached his beloved place and joined his beloved ones) then also the said sorrow and unhappiness is very well, rather it is desirable that a faithful should mourn over the demise of his faithful brother especially when the departing person was helping the living one in his good deeds, which formed a kind of provision for journey to Hereafter.

Expression of Impatience is the Result of Carelessness about the Hereafter

Since most people, especially women, are more inclined towards worldly matters they become all the more restless and agitated and go to extremes in crying and complaining, thinking as if they were to live in this world forever and imagining that the one who died has been annihilated.

Had they thought correctly they would have realized that the departed person was a traveler who has reached his or her destination earlier and that he or she had to go there. Then they will not show such excessive impatience and restlessness.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) once saw a man whose son had died. He was crying and complaining too much. The Imam told him, "How is it that you are crying over this little calamity and have totally forgotten the far more hard and troublesome calamity (of the Hereafter)?"

If you yourselves would have been properly busy making provision for your travel to the other world, you

would not have ever exhibited so much impatience and dislike over the demise of your beloved son. You're not being anxious and careful about your Hereafter is a calamity, which is harder than the calamity of your son's death." [8](#)

Divine Mercies and Bounties

Similarly, the condition of a man, regarding death should be like that of the one who had been in the service of a king for a few days. In the meanwhile he gets a word from the king that you will be, at an unfixed time, be made to stand in front of the king so that you may be rewarded and honored by the king for your good service and loyalty.

Surely that man will feel happy due to these good tidings. But at the same time he will also wish that he might be called up somewhat later so that he may perform some more functions liked by the king and get more rewards.

Similarly a faithful person, though he feels happy at his death, which is the door to the place of rewards and gifts, also likes and wishes that the said hour may be delayed somewhat so that he may perform more worship and at the same time remain satisfied and happy when God decides to call him up, with the conviction that God is most merciful and kind and with the longing to meet the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and his Holy Progeny (a.s.) whom he respected and honored very much during his lifetime.

The Arrival of Ahle Bayt (a.s.) at the Moment of Death

It is mentioned in many traditions that the Holy Prophet and Ali bin Abi Talib and, according to some narrations, even the Holy five (Panjetan), and also all the fourteen Infallibles (a.s.) arrive at the head of the dying person.

One of the companions of Imam Reza (a.s.) was on deathbed. The Holy Imam went to him and stood near his head. That man had closed his eyes at his last moments. Yet he said once, "At present the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and Amirul Momineen, Siddiqa Fatima Zahra, Imam Hasan, Imam Husain and all the Holy Imams right up to Imam Kazim (a.s.) have arrived here and I am getting the honor of seeing their Holy faces," and added, "O Sir! Your honour's radiant face is also visible to me here." [9](#)

In short, it is agreed that every person sees the Ahle Bayt (a.s.) at the time of his or her death and derives happiness in proportion to his or her love and respect for them.

According to a famous tradition narrated by Harith Hamadani, Amirul Momineen (a.s.) said, "Everyone sees me on his or her death bed and will do so in future also, be he a believer or an unbeliever." [10](#)

Of course what is significantly important is that, for the faithful, the visit of Ali (a.s.) will be a bounty because the handsome face of the Imam is the sweetest pleasure for the faithful, whereas, for an unbeliever, his frowning face will be showing God's terrible anger. [11](#)

Even After Death

After the soul leaves the body it remains hovering over it. Angels take the soul of the faithful towards the sky and that of the unbeliever is dragged downwards. When the corpse is being taken to the grave, if it is that of a faithful, it cries out, "Carry me to my destination as soon as possible."

If it is a disbeliever the soul says, "Do not make haste and do not rush me so speedily to my grave." At the time of bathing body, if the body is that of a believer, an angel tells him, "Do you desire to go back to the world?" The body (of the faithful) replies, "I do not want to be entangled in difficulty and sorrow again."

The soul of the dead body remains present at the time of washing (Ghusl) and also during the funeral procession. It sees the washer as well as the carriers. It hears their talks. This is why it has been advised that people should not engage in unnecessary talk near the body and that they should be busy with reciting the Holy Quran and remembrance of God.

After the burial, as some tradition writers have said, "The soul gets reconnected with the body. It becomes gloomy observing that people have gone away leaving it alone in the grave."

The very first good news given to a faithful in grave is: The Most Merciful God has forgiven you and all those who participated in your burial. Here it may be mentioned that the faithful should take care to see that all religious rituals are performed at the time of death, washing, shrouding and burying etc.

All that is desirable (Mustahab) must be performed. The legal heir of the deceased should, after all others leave the graveyard, return to the grave and recite Talqeen sitting near the grave. This has to be the last Talqeen. According to tradition it has to be recited twice before this: First when the body breathes its last and second after placing the body in the grave.

Questioning of the Grave

Among those things in which one must have faith and which form the essentials of the Shia faith is that the deceased one will have to face questioning by Munkar and Nakeer (angels) in the grave.

It is agreed that man must believe that there will be questioning in the grave. We need not go in details like whether this material worldly body will confront the said questioning or another Misaali (similar) one or it will be this dusty grave or any another pit or whether the questions will be addressed to the soul and/or whether the material physical body will also be affected by it or not etc.

It is not obligatory for us to know all these details also because there is no source of knowing it except traditions and there is no specific description in traditions and reports. Of course, Allamah Majlisi has, in Biharul Anwar Vol. 3 and also in Haqqul Yaqeen, mentioned that reliable traditions show that this worldly body, in which the deceased had lived in the world will experience questioning in the grave and the

squeeze.

It is understood that the departed soul will be made to return to either the entire body or in some part of it (that is upto the chest or the waist as mentioned in traditions) so that the deceased may be able to understand the questions and give replies.

Questioning about Beliefs and Deeds

We should also know about the things involved in questioning in the grave. It will be about beliefs and actions or deeds. It will be asked, “Who is your God? Who is your Prophet? Which religion were you following?” These questions will be asked to everyone, the believer as well as the unbeliever.

Of course lunatics or mentally retarded persons and minor children will be exempted from it. If the dead had faith in true beliefs it will state his or her beliefs and will testify to the Oneness of the Lord of the worlds and the Messengership of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) and to the Imamate of the Holy Imams (a.s.). Otherwise the dead will remain dumb and will not be able to speak.

Frightened by the said two interrogating angels some will say, “You are my Gods.” Sometimes they will say, “People say Muhammad is the messenger of God and Quran is the Book of God.” They will not give clear and correct replies. In short, if the deceased is able to give correct replies, a gate is opened near his or her head and the grave is widened as far as one can see. Thus the door of Barzakh (which will continue till Resurrection) is the door of comfort and spaciousness:

“Then if he is one of those drawn nigh (to Allah), Then happiness and bounty and a garden of bliss. And if he is one of those on the right hand, then peace to you from those on the right hand. And if he is one of the rejecters, the erring ones, He shall have an entertainment of boiling water.”
(Surah Waqiyah 56:88–93)

Then the body will be told: Have a sweet and restful sleep. [12](#)

If the deceased is unable to give correct answers, a door of the Hell of Barzakh will be opened for him or her and a breath from the breaths of Hell will fill up his or her grave. (All these sentences have been taken from narrations. Original text has not been mentioned for the sake of brevity).

Why this Questioning?

God already knows that this person is faithful or faithless, righteous or sinful. Then what is the use of this interrogation? Questioning in the grave is, in fact, for the faithful, the beginning of the manifestation of Divine bounties. How much happy and pleased will be the faithful; when he will see the beautiful and pleasing face of the angel and smell the fragrance of the gardens of Paradise accompanying the said angels. That is why such angels are called (have been named “Mubashshir and Bashir” (announcers of good tidings).

Moreover, the said questioning will be a cause of happiness for a faithful person. You must have seen students who had carefully and painstakingly studied their lessons in the school. They feel happy at the thought of being examined or questioned so that they may be able to show their talents and merits.

Likewise a faithful servant of God also entertains a wish that he should be questioned about his Lord so that he may give satisfactory testimony to the Oneness of the only one God and the Messengership of His Beloved Messenger Muhammad (s.a.w.s.).

Unbelievers will see Divine Punishment and Beginning of their Pains

Whereas the questioning in grave will make a believer happy, as it will herald an era of eternal happiness for him, the same questioning will for the faithless turn out to be the start of misfortune and torture. The very arrival of angels will terrorize the unbelievers. It is mentioned in narrations that the frightening angels will threaten the infidels in a terribly harsh tone. Flames will be leaping out from their eyes. Their hair will be very long, dragging on the ground. These are the angels who will approach the unbeliever and this is why they are named 'Munkir and Nakeer' (the abhorring ones).

The Disbeliever will Fail to Reply all Questions

A man who had passed his entire life without any thought of God and who never cared to know his Lord Creator. It can be well imagined what he will face. He will be asked about his God. But he had worshipped (was mad after) only money and wealth. He was devoted only to name and fame. He only longed for power.

He had nothing to do with the Lord of the worlds. So he will tremble and shiver in such a way that he will not be able to reply any question. Some of such fellows will reply rightly about God, but they will fail to reply regarding the Holy Prophet. Some will be unable to reply rightly about all the true beliefs. Some who will reply rightly about beliefs will fail in the questioning about their deeds and actions.

There will be Questioning about Deeds too

It is mentioned in Biharul Anwar, Vol. 3 that a man was questioned about his beliefs in the grave. He gave correct replies. Then only one question was put to him, "Do you remember that on such day you had seen that a person was being oppressed, but you did not go to help him? You saw that his honour was being trampled upon and his wealth was being grabbed. You were in a position to help him, but you did not do so?" That fellow did not give any reply.

(Do remember that it is one of the obligatory duties of every faithful to help the oppressed). As he failed in fulfilling his responsibility in this respect, the angels told him, "A punishment of a hundred lashes has

been ordered for you.” Then they inflicted the first lash, which filled his grave with fire. Yes, this is the punishment of giving up an obligatory duty or deed.

The aim is that you should not say that all your deeds are good and that there is no risk or danger. Suppose your beliefs are true and you leave the world with the same beliefs in your heart. But then, what about your deeds? Can you say that you have committed no mistake?

The Infallible complains, “I am weeping remembering the questioning by Munkir and Nakeer in the grave.” Then who are we?

Deeds are the Companions in Grave

It is agreed that in the grave, everyone’s companions will be their deed as specifically stated in the Quran and traditions. Sadooq (a.r.) has in Khisaal, Amali and Maniul Akhbar, narrated from Qais bin Asim that once he went to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) along with a group of people from the tribe of Tameem. He submitted, “O Messenger of God! Give us some admonition by which we may benefit, because, most of the time we roam in wilderness and deserts (and have few chances of visiting your honour).”

The Holy Prophet gave them a number of admonitions. One of them is: O Qais! It is necessary for you to have a companion to be buried in the grave. That companion will be alive, whereas you will be dead. So if that companion (you will necessarily have) is a nice and kind person, he will keep you in a respectable condition. If he is a bad fellow, he will leave you there in your grave in total solitude without any help or assistance.

(Also remember that) that companion will be necessarily with you in the grand gathering (Hashr) on the Day of Judgement. You will also be asked only about him. So it is very essential for you to select a good companion. If he is a good person, he will make you happy. But if he is a corrupt fellow, he will frighten you terribly and that companion is your deeds.

Qais instantly turned this admonition into a poem of advice in Arabic language:

Select a companion from your deeds because, in the grave, the only companion of a man will be his deed.

It is essential for you to reserve a companion for life after death, for the Day when man will be called and he will attend at once the Grand Gathering.

So if you are busy in any deed then beware and never engage yourself in any deed disliked by God.

Be it before death or after death, man will have nothing with him except his deeds.

Beware! Man is only a guest among his family members in this world.

He stays with them only for a few days and then marches off.

The Lord of the World Warns

There are many Quranic verses showing that after a man dies, his companion will be his deeds, that is, the result of the deeds done by him in the world.

Here we suffice with only one verse. The Almighty God says:

“On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil, it shall wish that between it and that (evil) there were a long duration of time; and Allah makes you to be cautious of (retribution from) Himself; and Allah is Compassionate to the servants.” (Surah Aale Imran 3:30)

It is God’s Mercy that He has conveyed innumerable admonitions and warnings to mankind through His Messengers.

The Disbeliever will be Accompanied by a Fearsome Face

His honour, Qazi Saeed Qummi, in his book Arbaeen, quotes Shaykh Bahai (a.r.) thus: A friend of mine resided in the graveyard of Isfahan. He remained busy in praying near a tomb and I visit him frequently. Once I asked him, “Have you ever, during your stay in the graveyard, observed any astonishing thing?”

He said, “Yes, only the other day people brought here a body, buried it in this corner and went away. After sunset, a very foul smell spread, the like of which I had never known. Then all of a sudden, I saw a terribly horrifying form of a black dog. A foul smell was emanating from its body.

That fearsome form came near and disappeared after approaching the aforesaid new grave. After a little while, a very sweet and pleasing fragrance began to spread around the like of which also, I had never felt in my life.

In the meantime, I observed a very handsome form, which also approached the aforesaid grave and disappeared. (All these are the wonders of the world of spirits, which appear in such forms). Anyway, after a few moments, that beautiful shape (form) emerged from that grave, but in a wounded and bloodstained condition. I exclaimed, ‘My Lord! Explain to me what all this is.

Who are these two forms?’ (In my sleep) I was informed that the good-looking form was that of the good deeds performed by the dead person and the ugly form was of his evil deeds. As the bad deeds were more than the good ones, the latter (bad deeds) remained with him as his companion in the grave. Only God knows when this fellow will be cleaned of his sins! Who knows when he will have a good companion in the form of that handsome being?”

Squeeze of the Grave is a Fact

Allamah Majlisi says in Haqqul Yaqeen: Muslims have a unanimously agreed belief that the squeeze of grave and both reward and punishment therein are real facts. According to reliable traditions, the grave will press the same body, which was been buried. Of course, everybody is not necessarily squeezed in the grave.

It depends upon the deeds, that is, this punishment is inflicted only on those who have earned it by sinning. The degree of squeeze will also depend on the severity of his sins. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is reported to have said that squeeze of the grave is the expiation of the sin of wasting the bounties granted by God.

Shaykh Kulaini (r.a.) has, reliably narrated from Abu Basir that he asked Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.), "Is anybody spared the squeeze in grave?"

The Imam replied, "Seek refuge God from this matter! Very few people escape the squeeze of the grave."

When Ruqaiyyah, the stepdaughter of the Prophet expired, the Prophet stood at her grave raising his head towards the sky. Tears flowed from his eyes. Then he told the people, "I remembered the calamity this lady has just passed. It made me extremely gloomy and I prayed: O Allah! Forgive her. You are Most Merciful. Please save her from the squeeze of the grave." Then he said, "God has pardoned her."

It seldom so happens that a person is saved from the squeeze of grave. This is because the squeeze of grave is due to sins. The matter is so sensitive that even an unwise and unjust behaviour with one's own family members can cause squeeze in the grave. As a testimony to this statement and with a view to show the importance of this squeeze, we narrate below a tradition related to Saad bin Maaz Ansari.

Saad was a chief of the Ansars as well as a respected person in the eyes of the Holy Prophet and also in the opinion of all Muslims. Once he was riding to visit the Holy Prophet. The latter asked Muslims to receive him. The Holy Prophet himself had also stood to welcome him. The Holy

Prophet had once appointed Saad as arbitrator in a case concerning some Jews. When he (Saad) expired, seventy thousand angels joined his funeral procession. The Holy Prophet shouldered all the four corners of his coffin and said, "There were columns and rows of angels in the funeral of Saad. My hand was in the hand of Jibrael.

I was following him (Jibrael) wherever he moved." In short, he was such a nice gentleman that, besides all these things, the Holy Prophet lowered his body in the grave. Seeing this, the mother of the deceased cried out, "Congratulation to you, O Saad! Congratulation for gaining Paradise."

The Holy Prophet asked that lady, "How did you know that your son has reached Paradise? Right now

he is under squeeze of the grave.” The companions asked, “O Messenger of God! Is a pious man like Saad also being squeezed in the grave?” The Holy Prophet replied, “Yes.”

According to another narration, when people asked the reason for the squeeze of Saad’s grave, the Holy Prophet replied that Saad was not behaving nicely with his family members and his attitude to his wife was rather bad.

Squeeze of Grave is Possible Everywhere

The respectable scholar, Kulaini (r.a.) has narrated from Yunus that he asked Imam Reza (a.s.) in the matter of one who was hanged. (In the past people were not only being hanged but their corpses were also left hanging for days. Zaid, the martyr was kept thus hanging for three years and birds had made nests in his body). The Imam replied, “Yes. The Almighty God commands air to squeeze the body.”

Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) has been quoted in another tradition saying that the Lord of the earth and air is one. He orders air to squeeze the hanging body more forcibly than the force of a grave. The same is the case of those who drown in water.

Reasons of Squeeze of the Grave

It is known from the above that wasting (not appreciating) the bounties granted by God causes grave squeeze. Similarly not behaving nicely with family members is also a reason for such squeeze of the grave. (Details about non-appreciation of Divine graces and bad behaviour with wife can be seen in the second volume of Ayatullah Dastghaib’s Greater Sins).

Some other causes of such squeeze are: Not purifying oneself after urinating, backbiting, making false allegations etc. The soul is squeezed. It is also likely that the body is also affected.

Contrary to this, the graves of those, whose behaviour and attitude towards all is good become spacious in proportion to their nice manners. For some the width goes upto seven yards or seventy yards. For some it is upto the reach of one’s eyesight. Consequently their souls live in comfort and ease.

- [1.](#) Say: The angel of death who is given charge of you shall cause you to die, then to your Lord you shall be brought back.
- [2.](#) Surely (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls, they shall say: In what state were you? They shall say: We were weak in the earth. They shall say: Was not Allah’s earth spacious, so that you should have migrated therein? So these it is whose abode is hell, and it is an evil resort.
- [3.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol. 3, Chapter on Angel of death
- [4.](#) Ibid
- [5.](#) Holy Quran, Chapter 36
- [6.](#) Dual formulae of faith in Islam
- [7.](#) Greater sins have been discussed in detail in Ayatullah Dastghaib’s book Gunahane Kabirah
- [8.](#) Uyun Akhbar Reza, Vol.2, P.81
- [9.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol. 3

[10.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol. 3

[11.](#) Ziyarat no. 6 of Amirul Momineen

[12.](#) Usul Kafi

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