

## Concerning The Questioning In The Grave

Says the Shaykh, may the mercy of Allah be upon him: Our belief concerning the questioning in the grave is that it is true and that there is no escape from it. He who answers in the proper manner will obtain rest and perfume in his grave, and the Garden of delight in the life to come.

And he who does not answer in the proper manner, for him (there will be) the

***“feast of boiling water” (Qur'an 56:93<sup>1</sup>)***

In his grave, and the roasting in hellfire in the next world. Most of the torment of the grave takes place on account of backbiting and rudeness and making light of (the impurity of) urine.

The severest form of torment that is inflicted in the grave on the rightful believer is like the (involuntary) trepidation of the eyelid or scarification.<sup>2</sup> These torments are in expiation of sins for which his anxieties and grief and diseases and the excess of pain at the moment of death did not atone.

Verily the Messenger of Allah, on whom be His blessings and peace, shrouded Fatima bint Asad, mother of the Prince of believers ('Ali bin Abi Talib), in his own shirt after the women had finished bathing her and carried her bier on his own shoulders.<sup>3</sup>

He continued to carry the bier until it was brought to her grave. The Prophet then lay himself down in it, and rising, he took her in his arms and laid her in the grave. Thereafter he stooped over her whispering for a long time and saying to her: Thy son thy son. He then came out (of the grave) and leveled the earth over her.

Then he stooped over her grave and people heard him say: There is no deity other than Allah. O God, verily I commend her to thee. Then he returned and the believers said: O Messenger of Allah, verily we saw you doing something which you have never done before. He said: Today I have lost the grace of Abu Talib.

For, in respect of aught that she possessed Fatima used to prefer me both to herself and her children. One day I spoke to her of the Day of Resurrection, and how the people will rise naked, and she said:

Woe to my (naked) body!

And I assured her that Allah would resurrect her fully clothed. And I spoke to her of the straitness of the grave and she said: Woe to my distress!<sup>4</sup> And I assured her that Allah the Exalted would protect her from it. Wherefore did I shroud her in my own shirt and reclined in her grave, and stooped over her and instructed her regarding the matters about which she would be questioned.

She was asked about her Lord, and she said: My Lord is Allah. And she was asked about her Prophet and she replied: Muhammad. And she was asked about her Imam and *wali* (guardian), and she faltered and paused.

And I said to her: Thy son, thy son. So she said: My Imam is my son. Thereupon they (the two angels) departed from her, and said: We have no power over you. Sleep, even as a bride sleeps in her inner apartment. Then she died a second death and the verification of this is in the Book of Allah:

***“They say: Our Lord! Twice hast thou made us die, and twice hast thou made us live. Now we confess our sins. Is there any way to go out?” (Qur'an 40: 11).***<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1.</sup> N, D, and T have نزولٌ من حميم meaning "descent". But نُزُلٌ as in Qur. 56, 93 is the correct reading.

<sup>2.</sup> Refers to the practice of making slight incisions for drawing blood which are not very painful.

<sup>3.</sup> For a similar tradition in Qadi Nu'man's Da'a 'imu'l-Islam, see Fyzee, Ismaili Law of Wills, no. 29.

<sup>4.</sup> N وا ضغطاه; D وا ضعفاه.

<sup>5.</sup> The translator explains that the belief in two deaths, one in this world, and another in the grave, is well established. See also MB, S.V. موت. The questioning in the grave by the two angels Munkar and Nakir is well established in Sunnite creeds: MC, 129, art. 18 and 19; 163 –167; 195, art. 23; 268; art. 27. For the philosophical Isma'ili explanation, see FC, nos. 93,94.

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