

Post-Scriptum

Although the events after death have been described already and will prove to be an incentive towards preparing ourselves for the Hereafter, I wish to list some practices and occasions described by Revered personalities, which will help everybody in their preparations.

Only those who are aware of the reality and facts about the Hereafter, can inform us about this and these are Muhammad (S) and his progeny, who are the cause of creation of the Universe. The gist of their teachings is that if anybody has to undertake a journey, he should make preparations for it.

Therefore daily before sleeping, Imam ‘Ali (as) used to announce from the mosque, “O People, get ready and make preparations for your journey of the Hereafter. May Allah have mercy on you. The proclaimer of Death is announcing. Take heed. Be prepared. You will face numerous hazards there.” (Nahjul Balagha)

The first occasion of these is the time when one experiences the pangs of death.

“And the stupor of death will come in truth; that is what you were trying to escape” (Sura Qaf, 50: 19)

This is an extremely hard time. On one side there is the intensity of pain and illness, the tongue becomes mute and the body refuses to respond.

On the other hand, the crying and wailing relatives and the thought of being separated from them forever, the grief of the children becoming orphans, separation from one's mate and life-partner and from wealth and other worldly goods (in the collection of which one had spent his lifetime): the agony of death, combined with these hardships to be faced after death, all cause this time to be painful beyond imagination.

Shaykh Saduq has quoted Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) as saying, “If anyone wishes to make the pangs of death easy and light, he should maintain good relations with his relatives and should be kind and gentle with his parents. One who behaves thus will die easily and in his lifetime will not be troubled with paucity and will on the contrary live happily.”

The Holy Prophet (S) has recommended Sura Yasin (36) and Sura al-Saffat (37) and reading the dua "La Ilaha Illa Allah al-Haleemul Karim..." (There is no power except Allah, the Forbearing and Gracious) to the end in the Qunoot as being beneficial for the time of death. (Recommending of particular Sura and Dua for particular objectives is because of the special meanings contained in them; which if understood and taken to heart have corrective influences upon man).

Second Occasion: Adeela indal-Maut (Satanic thought in death). This is the turning away from the truth to the false and wrong at the time of death. This is because Satan approaches men at the time of their death creating and raising doubts in their minds to the extent that one's correct faith may be completely shaken.

One may even become bereft of it and he may die an infidel or faithless. Traditions advise us that as a safeguard one should be in the habit of recalling Usul al-Deen with its proof so that when he is reminded of the Usul al-Deen on his death-bed and in Talqeen, certainty of his faith would prevail and doubts would cease. Dua al-Adeela in Mafatihul Jinan is also helpful and should be read at the death-bed.

Reciting the Tasbeeh of Hazrat Fatima (as), wearing Aqiq (Carnelian) ring, reading Sura al-Mu'minun on Fridays, reading "Bismillahi La Hawla Wala Quwwata Illa Billah" after Morning and Maghrib Prayers, are all beneficial.

Third Occasion: Wahshat al-Qabr (Fear and horror of the Grave): This is more severe, and fearful than the previous occasions. When the body is brought near the grave, it should not be put into it at once.

Since this is a very fearful time, it should rather be prepared for it by breaking the journey thrice (Manzil), because the spirit still retains interest in the body. The Holy Prophet has said, "The most fearful time for the dead is their first night in the grave. Help your dead in this time of need by giving charity on their behalf and by praying for them (Salaat al-Wahshat).

In this prayer in the first rakat, one should read Ayaat al-Kursi (2:255) after Sura al-Hamd (1) and in the second Sura al-Qadr (97) ten times after Sura al-Hamd (1). Alternatively, Sura al-Tawheed twice in the first rakat and Sura al-Takathur ten times in the second rakat. (i.e. after Sura al-Hamd). Also beneficial is reading "LA Ilaha Illa Allahu Al-Malikul Haqqul Mubeen" (There is no power except Allah, the King, the Right, the Manifest) 100 times daily and reading Sura Yaseen (36) every night before sleeping.

Fourth Occasion: Constriction in the Grave: This is also a difficult time. The grave calls out everyday. "I am the rest-house of the travellers. I am a house of horror and also of Respect." For some, the grave will be a garden from amongst the gardens of Heaven and for others a pit from the pits of Hell.

Imam al-Sadiq (as) has said that nobody can escape this constriction, but there are practices which can prove helpful in this regard. e.g. 1) Imam 'Ali (as) has said that reading of Sura al-Nisa (4) every Friday will save one from constriction. 2) One who makes a habit of reading Sura al-Zukhruf (43) will remain safe from the constriction and beasts in the grave. 3) Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) has said that whoever

dies between Thursday noon and Friday noon will be spared constriction. 4) Imam al-Ridha (as) has said that the habit of night prayers keeps one safe from constrictions. 5) The Holy Prophet (S) has said that reciting Sura al-Takathur (102) before sleeping helps to ward off constrictions. 6) People buried in the sacred land of Najaf are also spared constrictions.

Fifth Occasion: The Questioning by Munkar and Nakeer: Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) has said that one who does not believe that questioning will take place in the grave is not a true faithful. These questions have been already mentioned. Reading Talqeen twice before the burial is completed is very beneficial but specially (and maybe only) if the person had these beliefs and thoughts in his lifetime.

Sixth Occasion: Barzakh. Barzakh has been discussed already. It is a time of extreme helplessness. Deeds done for the dead and the benefits arising from one's previous deeds are the only useful things at this time and most fearful day.

Seventh Occasion: Day of Judgement: It is the harshest and severest. There are fifty stations in the Day of Judgement; each more difficult than the previous one. We hope that you, dear reader, will pray for us.

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