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# The Effects of Remembering Death and the Resurrection Day

## Imam Ja'far Sadiq says about the effects of remembering Death and the Resurrection day:

- remembering of death suppresses the inordinate desires
- It uproots the very foundation of negligence and apathy.
- With the reminding of Allah's promise, it strengthens man's heart.
- It softens the hard mentality of man.
- It demolishes the banners of inordinate desires and transgression.
- It suppresses the evil of greediness and makes the world humble before one's eyes.

After that the Holy Imam says, the saying of the Holy Prophet, "A moment's reflection and pondering over is better than one year's worship" (*Biharul Anwar*, vol. VI, p. 133) means thinking over and making arrangement for one's future, that is, thinking over his being questioned and his answering, and his accountability in the court of Allah's Justice.

We read in the traditions that the most wise and thoughtful are those who keep remembering death all the time. (*Biharul Anwar*, vol. VI, p. 135)

When the Holy Prophet said that hearts also get rusted like iron, the people asked, "With what substance can it be cleansed?" The Holy Prophet replied: "By remembering death and reciting the Holy Qur'an".

Another tradition that is narrated from the Holy Prophet is this: "Remember death frequently for it has four effects.

(i) It washes off your sins.

(ii) It reduces your keen fondness for the world.

(iii) It checks your indulgence in bad practices and improper use of wealth during the period of affluency.

(iv) It makes a man content with whatever little quantity of wealth he has as during poverty his remembering of death makes him realize how he will account before Allah for the wealth he has spent and the deprivation of the people, because he sees that when he has a small quantity of wealth his accountability also would be less". (*Nahjul Fasahat*, saying, 444)

Imam Ali in connection with a tradition says, "He who remembers death frequently will remain content with whatever little quantity of wealth he has. He never craves for more and he neither becomes greedy nor miser". (*Biharul Anwar*, vol. VI)

Actually, the world deceives its own lovers. Anyone who after having the thought of death and the Resurrection Day diverts his heart to the next world, this world's hypocrisies, pomp and show do not allure him towards it.

Imam Ali says, "Anyone who remembers death frequently saves himself from the hypocrisies of the world".

In another tradition which is about the impact of remembering death, we read: "Anyone who sees death in front of him and awaits it, will never lag behind in his daily performances because he knows that the time at his disposal is short and death can overtake him any moment. He gets busy in doing the noble deeds as much as is humanly possible".

Imam Ali reminds the people of how death overtook the people of the past generations and prepares them for it and says, "Where are now the kings of Yemen and Hijaz and their offsprings? Where have the Emperors of Iran and Rome gone?

Where are the tyrants and their progenies? Where are those people who had built strong fortresses and decorated them with gold? Where are those people, whose life span was greater than that of yours and whose signs were greater than those of yours?"

Actually those mothers who are anxious for the future of their daughters, prepare their dowries, little by little, from their very childhood.

Those traders who think of their future debts and liabilities start saving something from the beginning.

Similarly those people who are concerned about death and the Resurrection day from today give up their bad deeds and start performing noble deeds so as to present them on the Resurrection day.

Some people asked Ayatullah Shirazi, who was an erudite scholar of Karbala: "If a credible man tells you

that you are going to die in a week's time what will you do in the remaining few days?"

He replied, "I will continue doing what I have been doing since my youth, because from the days of my youth whenever I intended to do a thing I thought of the explanation to give on the Resurrection day and, therefore, for me to die at any moment is no worry at all".

Such people are the dedicated followers of that exalted person, who on the 19th of Ramazanul Mubarak after receiving the fatal wound of the sword of Ibn Muljam said, "By Allah I have become triumphant".

This very exalted personage in his sermon in ***Nahjul Balaghah*** advises his son to remember death at all moments so that by the time death overtakes him, his deeds are with him intact and he may not be questioned for his indifference. (Vide, ***Peak of Eloquence***, ISP, 1984)

We read in many Qur'anic verses that when you think that you are a self-made person and you are pious and honourable before Allah, you should not be afraid of death; rather you should be desirous of it.

## **Remembering of Death in Supplications**

Remembering death and the Resurrection day is the integral part of supplications. As for example in the Supplication of Abu Hamza Thamali we read as follows:

O Lord! At the time of my dying bestow Your Mercy on my sorrow and helplessness.

O Lord! Bestow Your Mercy in the loneliness of my grave and in my fear and restlessness.

O Lord! On the Day of Judgement Bestow Your Mercy at the time of the scrutiny of my deeds when I am disgraced for failing to give explanation.

O Lord! Bestow Your Mercy at the time when my friends take my coffin to the graveyard.

## **Imam Ali's Supplication in Masjid Kufa**

O Lord! Protect me from that day and put me under Your shelter, when the tyrant will be chewing his own flesh and would be repenting and saying, 'Would that I had not followed those who misguided me to go astray and instead had adopted the path as shown by the Holy Prophet'.

O Lord! Bestow Your Mercy and protection on me on the day when the parents would not be able to help me; when the repentance of the tyrants will be of no avail; when man will run away even from his father, mother, brothers sons and friends when man will be singularly responsible for his own deeds

O Lord ! Protect me on the day when the sinners would wish that their sons, brothers, friends and the entire family might be caught instead of them, and save me from the torment of Hell.

Reciting of these supplications cures the sick and brightens the darkness of the soul. They purify the souls, broaden our mental horizon and enlighten us.

However the sinners and the transgressors are those who do not believe in the accountability and the Resurrection day or if they have belief in it they are spiritually bankrupt.

## **Why Do We not Remember Death?**

Imam Ali says, "I am concerned about two things. Your following of the inordinate desires and your long hopes, as the former will distract you from the right path and the latter will take you away from the remembrance of the Resurrection day". (***Peak of Eloquence***)

We read in another tradition. "If somebody less remembers death and the Resurrection day it is because he has long and unbridled hopes and desires".

## **Consequences of Denying the Resurrection Day**

(i) **Shirking Responsibilities:** When someone wishes to derive some benefit from a tree or a land in a deserted place, his conscience will prick him and will prevent him from doing so because he has not obtained the consent of the owner. In order to deceive his own conscience he says to himself that actually there happens to be nobody as the owner of these trees and land and on this pretext he takes advantage of the situation, or he says to himself that such and such person does not go away from the scene so that he might get an opportunity to fulfil his desire. The Holy Qur'an says:

***Yet man is skeptical of what is right before him. He asks: 'When will the Day of Resurrection be ?***  
' (Surah al-Qiyamah, 75:5)

Whenever a man wants to see the women of others, he professes that all of us are brothers and sisters to one another.

When he is frightened to face the tyrant, he takes an excuse and says, "We should observe dissimulation". When he feels diffident he says, "We should cooperate with the people". True, man has such a tendency of finding excuses and inventing pretexts that he himself becomes unaware of his faculties. We call such an attitude as shirking responsibilities".

(ii) **Lack of Faith in Allah's Might and Knowledge:** There is no practical reasoning with those who deny the belief in the Resurrection day. On the other hand they consider it impossible that the dead will come into life again. We give some examples here. The Holy Qur'an says:

***They say. 'There is nothing but our life in this world, we live and die and nothing annihilate us but time and they have no knowledge of it; they only speculate.*** (Surah Jathiya, 45:24)

***The unbelievers claim that they will not be raised again. Tell them. 'Why not? By my Lord, you will certainly be raised again, and then informed of what you had done. That is easy for Allah'.***  
(Surah Taghabun, 64:7)

***But they say: 'When we have reduced to dust, how can we be created all anew? In fact, they deny the meeting with their Lord.*** (Surah as-Sajdah, 32.10)

Similarly in many other verses of the Holy Qur'an it has been mentioned that those who do not believe in the Resurrection day, because they say as to how it could be possible that after death when they had been reduced to dust would come back to life again.

We see that the unbelievers in the Resurrection day always are sceptical about it and question as to how it can happen and how it would happen. But the Holy Qur'an answers them in unambiguous term, which we have already referred to in our discussions on Resurrection.

Now at this place we quote a tradition of the Holy Prophet who says: "Whenever you happen to witness the spring season, revive your belief in coming back to life again after death". (***The Eternal Life***, p. 45 by Martyr Murtaza Mutahhery)

The Holy Qur'an also quite often stresses that coming of the dead to life again is just like the land and the trees coming back to life again. In this context we quote the gist of two couplets of Mathnavi of Maulana Rum:

"After the autumn, the spring is the proof of the coming back to life again.

In the spring the mysteries of nature are unravelled and whatever the earth has consumed becomes evident".

The reasoning of denying the Resurrection is based on the disbelief in the Power of Allah and that is why the Holy Qur'an gives many examples of the Divine Power as for instance it says that Almighty All-Powerful Lord Who first created us would again bring back to life after we have been reduced to dust particles. It is easier to reduce something to dust than to create in the first instance.

***It is He Who first creates and then reverts it. This is easy for Him.*** (Surah ar-Rum, 30:27)

There is nothing which Allah is not able to do. Allah has Power to do all things.

Another pretext of those who do not believe in the Resurrection was the question as to when the Resurrection day will happen? In the following Qur'anic verse it is mentioned that after hearing the explanation given by the Holy Prophet the unbelievers scoffed in surprise and asked when it would happen. The Holy Qur'an says:

***Or some other created things which may seem to you most difficult to create. They will then say.***

***'Who will revert us back?' Say: 'He Who created you in the beginning'. Still they will shake their heads at you and say: 'When will it be? Say: 'In the near future'. (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:51)***

These people do not know that the exact time of the Resurrection day is known only to Allah but having no knowledge of the time of happening should not be the excuse for denying the Resurrection day.

It is like that when a man does not know the time of his death himself can he deny the fact of his dying one day? There was another excuse as they said if Allah would reproduce the dead back to life the Holy Prophet should bring their dead ancestors to life again. In this connection the Holy Qur'an says.

***And when our clear revelations are recited to them, they have no other argument but to say: 'Bring our ancestors back if you are truthful' (Surah Jathiya, 45:25)***

How strangely these people behaved and placed impossible demands and raised funny questions! However if one is not unreasonable and obstinate, his believing in the Resurrection will be based on the proof of his sleeping, waking, and the reappearing of fresh leaves from the trees, but if one is adamant the coming back of his dead father to life would not convince him still and he would say: "Bring back my forefathers to life again, bring my youth again, or would demand the demolition of the whole system of Universe but would never believe in the Resurrection day.

Is it not in the Holy Qur'an that some people came to the Holy Prophet and said, "If you wish that we should believe in you, bring down the planets on the earth, produce Allah in human shape before us, break the moon into two halves, produce a live camel out of this mountain now and at once".

But unfortunately these people are quite unaware of the fact that the work of the Prophets is to show the signs of Allah, to provide proofs of them and guide the people towards prosperity and perfection, and that this world is not a show-room or an industrial home.

Had they not said after having seen the moon split into two parts that it was all sorcery?

Did Prophet Isa who used to raise the dead back to life convince the people of Allah's Power?

Can for the sake of converting a few to belief, the entire system of nature be reversed? Does Allah possess form and shape so as to appear before such stupid fools?

We close this discussion on a Qur'anic verse. Allah in reply to those who consider the coming back of the dead to life again impossible says:

***Do they not perceive that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, has the power to create the like of them? There is no doubt that He has fixed a term for them. But the wicked disdain everything but unbelief. (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17.99)***

In short if the people need some miracles in support of bringing their belief, miracles have been

performed by the Prophets already, but if some of them will make it a precondition of the demolition of the system of the universe, the Prophets would never yield to such demands.

## **Death Is a Divine Law**

Does it mean that after death the Divine Power will cease to exist and death will prevail upon the Will of Allah? Not at all; because this dying itself is subservient to the Will of Allah. This is one of such things as have been predestined. The Holy Qur'an says.

***We have ordained death among you and We are not to be overcome.*** (Surah Waqiyah, 56:60)

The interesting thing is that in the Holy Qur'an "dying" is mentioned fourteen times with the word ***tawaffa*** which means "entrusting". That is to say after death one will not be perished but that Allah will take His thing back without increase or decrease and Who will entrust it to His appointed workers.

Is dying actually means being destroyed ultimately? No. It is because destruction does not wish to be reproduced. The Holy Qur'an says:

***Who created death and life in order to try you, which of you is best in deeds and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving.*** (Surah al-Mulk, 67:2)

From this it is proved that death is not destruction but it leads to another place where one is transferred. That is "dying" is attributed to the word ***tawaffa***. The interesting point is that similar meaning is found in the sayings of the Holy Prophet as for instance he said, "Do not consider that death will annihilate you but consider that you will be shifted from one house to another house". (***Biharul Anwar***, Chap. on Purgatory)

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