

The Grave (Qabr)

One of the fearsome stages of the Hereafter is the grave, which calls out daily: “I am the abode of loneliness, I am the house of terror, I am the home of worms.”

Terror of the Grave

It is quoted in *Man La Yahzaruhul Faqih*, that when a dead body is brought for burial, it should not be buried immediately. For there is no doubt that the terror of the grave horrifies the dead person, and he seeks refuge from Allah’s wrath. The dead body should be laid to rest for sometime far from the grave, so that it prepares itself, and gets accustomed to it. Again one should stop and then take it to the grave.

Allamah Majlisi while commenting on the above, says that even though the spirit is separated from the body, it still maintains relation with it, and remains somewhat attached to it. The darkness and loneliness, questioning by ‘*Munkir* and *Nakeer*’, squeezing in the grave (*Fishar*), and the chastisement in hell are some of the frightful stages. Hence it is necessary for every man to take lessons from a dead man’s state, and reflect upon it, because one day he himself will have to pass through these stages.

Yunus narrates that one day he asked Imam Moosa al-Kazim (a.s.) that, “Whenever I think about the door of a house, the house becomes narrow in my sight, why is it so”? Imam (a.s.) replied, “It is so because whenever you take a dead body for burial, you should lay it to rest for sometime near the grave, so that the dead person may ready itself to enter there in, and collect strength to answer the questions of ‘*Munkir*’ and *Nakeer*”.

Bara bin Azib, one of the companions (*Ashab*) of the Holy Prophet(s) says that one day I was in the presence of the Prophet, when we saw a group of people gathered. The Holy Prophet (s) asked them as to why they had gathered? They replied that they had gathered to dig a grave. As soon as the Prophet heard the name of the grave, he hurried towards it and sat on one side of the grave. I sat on the other side facing him so as to get a clear view of what he did. I saw that the Prophet (s) started weeping bitterly so much so that his face became wet, then he looked at us and said, “O my brothers! Prepare yourselves for this house.”

Shaikh Bahai says that at times he saw many kings and rulers regretting their sins and wailing over their lives while dying. The Shaikh asked one such person who was about to die as to what was the reason for such regret. The dying king replied, "What do you have to say about the person who is proceeding for a journey without having gathered any provisions for it, and devoid of a helpful companion. He is stopped on the way in a horrifying grave, to be produced later before the Almighty Ruler, without having any goodness in store."

Allamah Qutubuddin Rawandi says, that after the death of Hazrat Maryam (a.s.), her son Prophet Isa (a.s.) called her, "O mother! Please speak to me, and tell me whether you are desirous of returning back to this world." Hazrat Maryam (a.s.) answered, "Yes, I desire to return back, so that during the cold winter nights I could recite Namaz, and during the hot summer days I could fast. O my dear! Verily the way to the hereafter is very difficult."

It is narrated that when the last moments of Hazrat Fatema (a.s.) neared, She called Amirul Mo'mineen Ali (a.s.) and said, "When I die, you bathe me, shroud me, pray Namaz over my dead body, and bury me. When you do so, sit near my grave for sometime and recite the Holy Qur'an, and pray for my forgiveness. For verily after death the dead person relies totally on the prayers (dua's) and affection of the living ones."

When Hazrat Fatema binte Asad (the mother of Hazrat Ali) died, Amirul Mo'mineen (a.s.) came weeping to the Holy Prophet (s) and gave Him the news of her death. The Prophet was grieved and said, "My mother has died." History bears witness that she had brought up the Prophet affectionately like a mother. The Prophet (s) gave her his own gown for the shroud (Kafan), and Himself laid in the grave for sometime before burying her. After burying her, he stood near the grave and called out: "Your son, your son, not Aqeel, nor Ja'far."

People were surprised and asked him the reason for uttering these words. The Holy Prophet (s) replied that, "One day we were discussing about Qayamat, and I said that on that day people will be coming out of their graves in a state of nakedness. My aunt (Fatema binte Asad) started crying, so I assured her that I would give her my own gown for shroud, so she would not have to face that humiliation. She was scared of the squeeze in the grave (*Fishare Qabr*), so I lay myself in her grave so as to save her from this too.

After burying her, *Munkir* and *Nakeer* came to question her. They asked her about her Lord, she replied that Almighty Allah was her Lord. Then they asked her about Prophethood (*Nabuwwah*), she bore testimony that I was Allah's Apostle. But when they questioned her about her Imam, she was a bit confused. Hence I called out to her that "Your son, your son, not Aqeel nor Ja'far (but Ali)."

Fatema binte Asad was a distinguished lady, who had the honor of giving birth to a son like Ali (a.s.), and while staying as Allah's guest in the Ka'bah for three days. She was the second woman who accepted the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet (s), the first being Hazrat Khadija (a.s.). Despite these to

her credit, she was fearful of the hereafter and wept. And we being sinful have forgotten our end, and do not take account of our deeds, but are averse to the terror of the hereafter.

Sayyed ibne Tawoos relates from the Holy Prophet (s) that he said that the first night is the most fearful and difficult for the dead person, hence give Sadqa for his safety. If you do not have to give anything as 'Sadqa' then recite two unit (*Rak'at*) Namaz: In the first Rak'at after Surah al-Hamd recite twice Surah at-Tawheed, and in the second Rak'at after Surah al-Hamd recite ten times Surah at-Takasur. After finishing the Namaz recite the following dua:

...اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَابْعَثْ تَوَابَهَا إِلَى قَبْرِ ذَلِكَ الْمَيِّتِ

O Allah; (please) bless Muhammad and his Household and send the reward of it to the grave of the dead... so-and-so (*here take the name of the dead man*).

Allah will immediately send one thousand Angels to the grave of the dead person with attires of Paradise, and expand his grave till Qayamat. And for the one who recites this Namaz, Allah will offer him great rewards and exalt his position forty times.

The other Namaz to be recited on the first night of burial is as follows: Two Rak'at Namaz is to be recited, in the first Rak'at after Surah al-Hamd recite once Ayatal Kursi, and in the second Rak'at after Surah al-Hamd recite ten times Surah al-Qadr. After finishing Namaz say:

...اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَابْعَثْ تَوَابَهَا إِلَى قَبْرِ

O Allah; (please) bless Muhammad and his Household and send the reward of it to the grave of so-and-so (*here take the name of the deceased person*)

My teacher Allamah Mirza Husain Noori (may Allah exalt his position) quotes in his book Darus Salaam from his teacher Hajj Fath Ali Sultanabadi that he said: It was my routine that whenever I heard about the death of follower (Shi'ah) of Ahlulbait (a.s.), whether known or unknown to me, I recited (the above stated) Namaz, and this was not known to anyone else except my self. One day I met one of my friends who told me that the previous night he had seen a Shi'ah who had died some days ago in his dream. My friend asked him as to how his state was. He replied that he was in deep trouble facing the consequences of his deeds, till one so and so (he took my name) person recited Namaz for him. He said that, "May Allah bless his father, he rescued me from severe chastisement." My friend asked me regarding the Namaz and I had to tell him.

Those deeds which are beneficial for warding off fear of the Grave

One of them is performing *ruku* with entire recitation. Imam Muhammad–al–Baqir (a.s.) says, that a person reciting entire recitation of Ruku in Namaz will be saved from the fear of the grave. And one who recites –

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ

There is no god save Allah the King and the evident Right

100 times daily, will be saved from anxiety in the grave, will become prosperous, and the doors of Paradise will be opened for him. It is also related that the person who recites Surah al–Yaseen before going to bed, and the following Namaz (Namaze Laylatur Raghaib), he will be saved from the terror of the grave. The first night of the month of Rajab is known as Laylatur Raghaib.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) used to fast on the first Thursday of the month of Rajab, and between Maghrib and Isha Prayers recite twelve Rak'at Namaz (in two units) as under:

In every Rak'at after Surah al–Hamd recite three times Surah al–Qadr and twelve times Surah an–Naas. After Salaam recite seventy times:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ وَآلِهِ

O Allah: (please do) bless Muhammad, the Umami Prophet, and his Family

Then go into prostration (Sajdah) and say seventy times:

Glorified (is He), Holy (is He), the Lord of the angels and the Spirit.

سُبُّوحٌ قُدُّوسٌ رَبُّ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ

Then sit erect and say seventy times:

O my Lord: (please do) forgive (me), have mercy (upon me),

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ

and overlook (my wrongdoings) that You know.

وَتَجَاوَزُ عَمَّا تَعْلَمُ

Surely, You are the Most High, the Greatest.

إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيُّ الْأَعْظَمُ

Then again go into Sajdah and say seventy times:

Glorified (is He), Holy (is He), the Lord of the angels and the Spirit.

سُبُّوحٌ قُدُّوسٌ رَبُّ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ

It has been related that a person who fasts for twelve days in the month of Sha'ban, Allah will send seventy thousand Angels daily to his grave. And if a person visits an ailing man, Allah appoints an Angel for him who accompanies him in his grave till Qayamat.

Abu Sa'eed Khudri says, that he heard the Holy Prophet (s) telling Amirul Mo'mineen Ali (a.s.), "O Ali! Give glad tidings to your Shi'ahs that their death will be eased, and they will be saved from the terror of the grave and Qayamat."

Narrowness of and Squeeze in the Grave

This event is so horrifying, that it makes a person shiver with fright in this very world. Amirul Mo'mineen Ali (a.s.) says: "O the servants of Allah! The state in the grave of a person whose sins are not forgiven is more horrifying than death itself. Fear it's (grave's) narrowness, it's squeezing, it's imprisonment, and it's loneliness. Verily the grave calls out daily: I am the house of loneliness, of terror and worms. Grave is like a garden of Paradise for a good doer, while it is like a dungeon of hell for the evil-doer.

Allah tells His enemies that He will send ninety-nine serpents in their graves, who will tear their flesh and smash their bones, and this punishment will continue till the outbreak of Qayamat. If one of the serpents exhales toward this earth, all plants and trees will be destroyed. O servants of Allah! Your souls are tender, and your bodies delicate, you cannot confront any ordinary serpent of this world, how then will you face them." It is related that Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) used to get up daily in the middle of the night and call out in a loud voice so that everyone in the house could hear, and would say:

اللَّهُمَّ أَعْنِي عَلَى هَوْلِ الْمُطَّلَعِ

O Allah; (please) help me against the horror of the new inspection,

وَوَسِّعْ عَلَيَّ ضَيْقَ الْمَضْجَعِ

expand for me the tight sleeping-place,

وَارْزُقْنِي خَيْرَ مَا قَبْلَ الْمَوْتِ

and endue me with the pre-death goodness

وَارْزُقْنِي خَيْرَ مَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ

and the post-death goodness.

One of his (a.s.)'s supplication (du'a) is also stated:

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِي الْمَوْتِ

O Allah; (please) bless me in death.

اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى سَكَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ

O Allah; (please) help me against the agonies of death.

اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى غَمِّ الْقَبْرِ

O Allah; (please) help me against the grief of the grave.

اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى ضَيْقِ الْقَبْرِ

O Allah; (please) help me against the tension of the grave.

اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى وَحْشَةِ الْقَبْرِ

O Allah; (please) help me against the loneliness of the grave.

اللَّهُمَّ زَوِّجْنِي مِنَ الْحُورِ الْعِينِ

O Allah; (please) give me in marriage the wide-eyed women of Paradise.

Reasons for the Squeeze in the Grave

Laziness in purifying oneself after urinating, creating mischief amongst people, backbiting (ghibat), and severing relation with kith and kin are some of the reasons for this punishment.

Sa'ad bin Ma'az was one of the noble men of Ansars. He was held dear by the Holy Prophet (s) himself and his companions, to the extent that whenever he came to meet the Prophet, He used to instruct his companions to welcome him with honor. The Prophet Himself stood up to welcome him. Sa'ad was wounded in a battle fought against the Jews of Qurayza, and later succumbed to the injuries. When he died, seventy thousand Angels attended his funeral. The Holy Prophet (s) was present bare feet till the end, and gave shoulder to his bier, and said that the Angels had come to recite the funeral prayers (*Namaze Mayyit*), and Jibraeel and Mikaeel were also present alongside him. The Holy prophet loved him so much that He Himself buried him. Seeing these, the mother of Sa'ad remarked, "O my son, rejoice at the attainment of Paradise."

The holy Prophet (s) says that, if a believer (Mo'min) does not help his believer brother even after having capacity to do so, Allah will send a large serpent named Ajar in his grave, who will keep biting at his fingers." In another narration it is stated that the serpent will keep on biting his fingers even though his sin will have been forgiven.

Do people who are drowned or are hanged have to face the Squeeze in the Grave?

Shaikh Kulaini narrates from Yunus who says that once Imam Ali ar-Ridha (a.s.) was asked whether a person who is hanged also faces squeezing. (In the olden days it was a custom that when a person was hanged, his body was not brought down from the gallows, but was kept hanging there. As was in the case of Zaid bin Ali bin Husain (a.s.) – he lay in that manner for three years).

Imam Ridha (a.s.) answered, "Yes, they too shall face it, because Allah (who has power over all things) orders the wind to squeeze him as the earth does." Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says that, "Verily the Lord of the earth and the wind is One and the same, He commands the wind to squeeze the dead man, and this squeezing is more painful than the squeezing by the earth." In the same manner those who are drowned or are killed and eaten up by the beasts have to face the squeezing. Not offering thanks to Allah for His blessings and denying them, is also one of the causes of the squeeze in the grave (*Fisbare Qabr*).

Those A'mal which saves one from the Squeeze in the Grave

There are many acts (A'amal) to save one from the squeeze in the grave, but for brevity's sake, I state here only seventeen of them.

1. Amirul Mo'mineen Ali (a.s.) says that a person who recites Surah an-Nisa on every Friday will remain safe from the squeeze in the grave.
2. It is narrated that if a person recites Surah az-Zukhruf, Allah will save him from the reptiles of the earth, and the squeeze in the grave.
3. A person who recites Surah al-Qalam in Obligatory Prayers (Wajib Namaz) or Supererogatory Prayers (Nafela), will remain safe from this punishment.
4. Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says, that if a person dies between the sunset of Thursday and the sunset of Friday, Allah will exempt him from this punishment.
5. Imam Ali ar-Ridha (a.s.) says, that the Midnight Prayers (Namaze Shab) is recommended (Sunnat) for you. So if a person gets up in the last part of the night and recites Namaze Shab, Allah will save him from the squeeze in the grave and grant him immunity from the fire of hell, and will increase his age and sustenance.
6. The Holy Prophet (s) says, that if a person recites Surah at-Takasur before going to bed, Allah will grant him freedom from this punishment.
7. If a person recites this supplication (dua') ten times daily will be saved from this punishment. (The du'a has already been quoted in Chapter - I under "Those A'mal, which prove beneficial during death and eases it's tribulations").
8. A person who is buried in Najafe Ashraf. Because the earth of that place has got the specialty, that a person buried there will be saved from the punishment in the grave, and will be exempted from the questioning by Munkir and Nakeer.
9. To put Jareedatayn (two wet sticks or branches) along with the dead body in the grave. It is narrated that so long as the sticks remain wet, the dead person is saved from chastisement. It is related that once the Holy Prophet (s) was passing by a grave on which Allah's wrath was descending. He called for a leafless branch. He cut it from between, wetted it with water, and kept one on the head of the grave and the other on the feet. It is also related that to sprinkle water on the grave is also beneficial, for so long as the mud of the grave remains wet, the dead person remains safe from the punishment in the grave.
10. A person who recites ten units (Rak'at) of Namaz on the 1st of Rajab such that in every Rak'at after Surah al-Hamd recites three times Surah at-Tawheed, will be saved from the squeeze in the grave. To

recite twenty Raka'at Namaz on the night of 1st Rajab, such that in every Rak'at after Surah al-Hamd recite once Surah at-Tawheed is beneficial to save oneself from the punishment in the grave.

11. To fast for four days in the month of Rajab or twelve days in the month of Sha'ban is also beneficial.

12. To recite Surah al-Mulk on the grave is an act, which saves the dead man from the punishment in the grave. Allamah Qutubuddin Rawandi relates from Ibne Abbas, who says that once a person pitched a tent on a ground not knowing that there was a grave beneath. Thereafter he started reciting Surah al-Mulk. Suddenly he heard a voice saying that the Surah gives salvation. He related this incident to the Holy Prophet (S), who replied that, "Verily this Surah frees a person from the punishment in the grave." Shaikh Kulanini also narrates from Imam Muhammad-al-Baqir (a.s.) who said that the recitation of Surah al-Mulk saves one from the punishment in the grave.

13. It is related from the Holy Prophet (s) in "Da'waat" of Allamah Qutubuddin Rawandi that, when a person is being buried and someone recites this supplication (du'a) thrice, the corpse will remain safe from the punishment in the grave till the day of Qayamat:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ أَنْ لَا تُعَذِّبَ هَذَا الْمَيِّتَ

O Allah; I do beseech You in the name of Muhammad and his Household not to torment this dead.

14. Shaikh Toosi in his 'Misbahul Mutahajjid' relates the Holy Prophet (s) as saying that, if a person recites the following two Rak'at Namaz on Friday night, Allah will free him from the punishment in the grave, and save him from fear on the day of Qayamat. In each Rak'at after Surah al-Hamd recite fifteen times Surah az-Zilzal.

15. To recite thirty Rak'at Namaz in the middle part of the month of Rajab, such that in each Rak'at after Surah al-Hamd recite ten times Surah al-Tawheed is beneficial to ward off punishment in the grave. In the same manner to recite the above Namaz on the night of 16th and 17th Rajab and the 1st of Sha'ban is also beneficial. On the night of the 1st of Sha'ban to recite 100 Rak'at Namaz, such that in each Rak'at after Surah al-Hamd recite once Surah at Tawheed, after ending the Namaz recite fifty times Surah at-Tawheed. On the night of 24th Sha'ban recite one hundred Rak'at Namaz, such that in each Rak'at after Surah al-Hamd recite ten times Surah an-Nasr. Also to recite fifty Rak'at Namaz such that in each Rak'at after Surah al-Hamd recite fifty times Surah at-Tawheed, fifty times Surah al-Falaq, and 50 times Surah an-Naas saves one from the punishment in the grave. To recite the same Namaz on the night of Ashoora (10th of Moharram) is also beneficial.

16. To keep *Khake Shifa* (the mud of the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.) in the shroud (kafan), or to rub it on the parts of prostration (Sajdah).

17. It is narrated from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) in "*Anware No'maniyyah*" that if forty persons gather

near the body and recite:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّا لَا نَعْلَمُ مِنْهُ اِلَّا خَيْرًا، وَاَنْتَ اَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنَّا، فَاغْفِرْ لَهُ

O Allah; we do not know about him except good reputation and You know about him better than we do. So, (please) forgive him.

Allah will safeguard the dead man from the punishment in the grave.

It is related from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) that there was a virtuous man in Bani Israil, regarding whom it was revealed to Prophet Dawood (a.s.) that he was a hypocrite (riyakar). When he died, Hazrat Dawood refrained from attending his funeral but forty other people attended his funeral and said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّا لَا نَعْلَمُ مِنْهُ اِلَّا خَيْرًا، وَاَنْتَ اَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنَّا، فَاغْفِرْ لَهُ

O Allah; we do not know about him except good reputation and You know about him better than we do. So, (please) forgive him.

Then another forty came and repeated the same, for they were not aware of the hidden reality. Allah then revealed to Dawood (a.s.) and asked him as to why did he not attend his funeral? Hazrat Dawood answered, "O Lord! You said that the man was a hypocrite, and so I avoided his funeral." Allah said, "Verily it was true, but because forty persons bore witness to his goodness I forgave his sins." It is Allah's mercy and beneficence who thus forgives His servant without any trial or tribulation.

It is for this reason that the believers (*mo'meneen*) in the olden days kept their shrouds (kafan) with them, and would request other believers to write down their testimonies on it. The sights of the shroud made them remember death and increase the fear of the hereafter. We too should follow this example and request other Mu'meneen to write down their testimonies on our shrouds, and preserve it with us, so that we are always reminded of the hereafter

Questioning in the Grave by Munkir and Nakeer

One of the principal factors of Shi'ism is a belief which is obligatory (*wajib*) – that is the questioning in the grave by Munkir and Nakeer. Allamah Majlisi relates in 'Biharul Anwar' and 'Haqqul Yaqeen' that it is a proven fact from reliable traditions that the questioning and the squeezing in the grave is for the physical body, as also for the spirit. In the grave one is questioned regarding one's beliefs (Aqaid) and deeds (A'maal). The questions are put to every believer as well as a non-believer. Only infants, the mentally retarded, and the people of lesser intellect are exempted from it. The period of 'Barzakh' offers them neither reward nor retribution.

One is questioned about the Prayers (Namaz), Fasting (Siyam), the Pilgrimage (Hajj), Zakat, Khums, love of Ahlulbait (a.s.), and also about how he spent his entire life and wealth. Imam Ali Zainul Abedeen (a.s.) says that after the questioning about the beliefs of Islam, a person is questioned about how he spent his life, and also about the way he earned his wealth and spent it.

There are many whose tongues would cease to answer the questions put forth to them, and would not be able to answer, or would reply wrongly. It also happens that in reply to the question “Who is your Lord?” the person will reply to the Angels that they (i.e. the Angels) are his lord. The person who is well acquainted in his lifetime with the beliefs and principals (of Islam) will be able to answer without trouble. And if he does so, his grave will be broadened to the length his sight reaches.

The period of Barzakh passes away easily with Allah’s blessings, and the Angels proclaim to him: “Sleep thou like a newly wedded bride.” (Usoole Kafi) If the dead man is a non-believer or a hypocrite, and cannot answer the questions put forth to him, one of the doors of hell is opened in his grave, and the entire grave is filled with the raging-fire. As Allah says in the Qu’ran:

“And if he be of those who have belied, gone astray, He shall have an entertainment of a boiling water, And the boiling in the hell -fire” (Surah al-Waqe’ah: 92-94).

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) says that, “A person who denies the following, is not one of our Shi’ahs: (1) Ascension (Me’raj of the Holy Prophet), (2) Questioning in the grave, and (3) Our Intercession (Shafa’at).

It is related that two Angels having a fearful countenance enter the grave for the questioning, their voices are like thunder, and their eyes like lightening. They put forth the following questions:

- i. Who is your Lord?
- ii. Who is your Prophet?
- iii. What is your Religion?
- iv. Who is your Imam?

The dead man feels uneasy in answering these questions because of the fearful environment and needs help at that moment. It is for this reason that Talqeen is recited at the following two places so that he is reminded of his beliefs (Aqaid).

When the body is laid in the grave. It is better to place one’s right hand on the right shoulder of the dead body, and the left hand on the left shoulder, and shake slightly when the name of the dead man is recited in the Talqeen’.

When the grave is closed. It is recommended (Sunnat) that a near relative of the dead man should sit near the head of the grave after people leave, and should recite the ‘Talqeen’ in a loud voice. It is better

to place one's palms on the grave and take one's face near the grave while reciting. There is no problem if another person other than the relatives is deputed for it. It is related that when the '*Talqeen*' is recited, and the Angels (Munkir & Nakeer) hear it, Munkir tell Nakeer, "Come let us leave, for the Talqeen is a proof of his beliefs, and there remains no ground for further questioning."

Admonition

A person may ask the question as to what is the benefit of reciting the '*Talqeen*', when the spirit has already left the body. The answer to this question is that (as related in traditions), the spirit (*Rooh*) of the dead man remains present at that moment, and hears and observes more clearly than us. It also understands all languages whether Arabic, Persian, or any other because such limitations are a feature of this materialistic world.

In '*Man La Yahzaruhul Faqeeh*' it is narrated, that when Abu Zarr Ghaffari's Son Zarr died, Abu Zarr buried him. Then he sat near the head of the grave and put his hand on it and said, "Oh Zarr! May Allah bless you. Verily you were more virtuous than me, and accomplished all responsibilities due to a son. And now when you have been separated from me, I bear witness that I am pleased with you.

By Allah! I do not grieve on account of your death, and do not wish anything from anyone except Allah. If I would not fear the after effects of death, I would surely have accepted death instead of you. But I wish to remain alive for some more time so as to ask forgiveness for my sins, and prepare myself for the last journey. Surely I have performed such acts on your behalf which may be useful for you in your journey, and have not confined myself to just weeping and wailing for you, and hence this has kept me away from drooping myself in your separation.

By Allah! I do not grieve on account of your death, nor because of your separation, but I lament thinking about what might have befallen you after your death, and wonder in what state you are. I wish I knew what you said and what was said unto you. O my Lord! I excuse all my rights due upon him, and I request You to forgive all your rights due upon him, for You are more liable than me to forgive and pardon."

Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (a.s.) says, that when a believer is laid to rest in his grave, Prayers (*namaz* – which he offered) remains on his right side, *zakat* on his left side, and acts of goodness & kindness (towards others) give shelter on his head, and patience (shown at the time of distress) remains near him. When '*Munkir & Nakeer*' come to question him, patience requests Namaz, Zakat, and goodness to surround him from all sides and give him refuge, and says that whenever troubles and calamities befell this man, I was always there with him (i.e. he bore it patiently).

Allamah Majlisi in his '*Mahasin*' quotes Imam Muhammad-al-Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Ja'far- as-Sadiq (a.s.) as saying that when a believer (mo'min) dies, six faces enter his grave along with him. Out of these, one is more illuminated, chaste and more scented than others. One stands on the right side, the

second on the left, third in front, the fourth near the head, fifth near the legs, and the one more illuminated shelters on the head.

From whichever side the wrath of Allah comes, the face on that side defends the dead body. The one who is more illuminated asks these other faces: May Allah bless you all, who are you"? The one on the right side says "I am the prayers (namaz) which he recited in his life time." The one on the left side says "I am the zakat which he gave while alive" The one standing in the front says "I am his fasts." The one near the head says "I am the Hajj and Umrah which he performed in his life." While the one standing near the legs says "I am the kindness (Ehsan) which he performed with his brother believer." Then all these faces turn towards the more illuminated one and ask him as to who he is. It replies "I am the love of Ahlulbait."

Shaikh Sadooq in the chapter on the importance of fasting in the month of Sha'ban says that whoever fasts for nine days in this month, 'Munkir and Nakeer' will deal with him gently and courteously during questioning. Imam Muhammad-al-Baqir (a.s.) has narrated many benefits for a person who remains awake on the night of 23rd of the month of Ramazan and offers one hundred units (Rak'at) Namaz. One of these benefits is that Allah removes fear from his heart during the questioning by 'Munkir and Nakeer' and a light shines forth from his grave, which illuminates the whole world. The Holy Prophet (s) says, that applying dye has four benefits; one of them is that 'Munkir & Nakeer' shy away from him in the grave. As stated earlier a person who is buried in Najaf, is exempt from the questioning in the grave.

Incident 1

Allamah Majlisi quotes in his *Tohfatus Zaereen* from '*Irshadul Quloob*' and '*Farhatul Uzza*' that a virtuous man from Kufa relates that, "Once on a rainy night I was seated in the Masjid of Kufa when some people entered the Mosque from the door near the shrine of Muslim bin Aqeel carrying a bier with them. They kept the bier on a mound. One of the persons accompanying the funeral felt asleep. He dreamt that two persons came near the bier, and one said to the other "I will settle his account fast before he is taken to Najaf, because then I will not be able to go near him." The person got up from his dream and narrated it to others who understood the whole situation (that the two men were Munkir and Nakeer who had to question the dead man), and lifted the bier and proceeded towards Najaf immediately to save the dead man from chastisement and the questioning."

Allamah Behbahani says that once I saw Imam Husain (a.s.) in a dream and asked him, "O my Master! Will the one buried near your grave also be questioned"? Imam Husain (a.s.) replied, "Which one of the Angels have got the nerve to question him who is buried near my grave."

Incident 2

It is written in '*Jillul Mateen*' that Meer Mu'inuddin Ashraf who was one of the virtuous attendants of the shrine of Imam Ali ar-Ridha (a.s.) says that "Once I dreamt that I was in the shrine of Imam Ridha (a.s.)

and was coming out to perform ablution (*wuzu*). When I came near the mound of Ameer Ali Sher, I saw a group of people entering the shrine. An eminent personality was leading them, and they all carried spades in their hands.

As soon as they entered the shrine, the eminent personality pointed towards a particular grave and said, "Dig out the wretched fellow from his grave." Hearing his command they started digging the grave. I asked one of those men as to who that man was. He replied that He was the Commander of the faithful Ali (a.s.). Suddenly I saw that Imam Ali ar-Ridha (a.s.) came out of His shrine and greeted Imam Ali (a.s.). Hazrat Ali (a.s.) answered His greeting. Imam Ridha (a.s.) said,

"O my Respected Grandfather! I request you, and have faith, that you will forgive this person on my behalf who lies buried here under the shelter of my shrine." Amirul Mo'mineen (a.s.) answered, "O my dear son! Do you know that he was a mischief-creator, an adulterer, and a drunkard"? Imam (a.s.) replied, "I do know, but when his last moment neared he willed to be buried under the shelter of my shrine, so I request you to forgive him on my behalf." Hazrat Ali (a.s.) forgave him and left.

I awoke from my sleep in awe and woke up the other attendants and related to them my dream. We all went to the place, which I had seen in my dream, and found a newly constructed grave, whose mud was scattered. After inquiry we learnt that a Turkish man who had died was buried there the day before."

Haji Ali Baghdadi had the honor of meeting Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) and ask him some questions. One of the questions put forward by him was that "Is it true that a person who goes for the pilgrimage (Ziarat) to the shrine of Imam Husain (a.s.) on Friday night receives salvation"? Imam (a.s.) replied, "Yes, by Allah." Haji Ali Baghdadi says that I saw tears in the eyes of Imam (a.s.).

Then I asked him another question, "In the year 1269 A.H. when we went for the pilgrimage (Ziarat) to the shrine of Imam Ali ar-Ridha (a.s.), we met a nomadic Arab who was a native of Najaf. We invited him for a meal and asked him his views regarding the reward of the love of Imam Ridha (a.s.). He replied, "Paradise" and said, "Since the past fifteen days I have been fed from the wealth of Imam Ridha (a.s.), do 'Munkir and Nakeer' have the nerve to come near me? The food which I consumed from the table of Imam Ridha (a.s.) has turned into flesh and blood." I asked Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) whether his claim was true. Imam (a.s.) replied, "Yes it is true. Imam Ridha (a.s.) himself will come and save him from the questioning in the grave. For verily by Allah! My Grandfather is a Zamin (surely) Imam."

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