

## ARTICLE

### Remembrance of Death

*By Maulana Masud Mohammed*

*Graduate of Darul Uloom, Trinidad and Tobago*

Alhamdulillah, all praises are surely for Allah Ta'ala for His numerous gifts and favours which He continues to bestow upon us. Life is indeed a great gift from Allah Ta'ala and death also is a gift as the Prophet (S.A) himself mentioned that death is the gift of a mo'min (believer). This is why in many traditions the Prophet (S.A) advised his companions, thereby advising us also that we should constantly be remembering death, for this will prevent us from indulging in the evil lusts and temptations of this world and it would aid us in preparing for the everlasting life in the Hereafter. It was in view of this that Rasulullah (S.A) said to some people who were sitting together and laughing loudly: "In your meetings, do include talk of the shatterer of lustful pleasures". On being asked what he meant by it, Rasulullah (S.A) replied 'Death.'

My dear readers, death is a topic which many people don't like to think or speak about but in reality it will surely come to us no matter how much we try to push it out of our minds or avoid speaking about it. Allah Ta'ala Himself warns us in the Holy Quraan: "Say (unto them O Muhammad S.A.), Lo! The death from which you are running will surely meet you, and then you will be returned unto the Knower of the invisible and the visible, and He will inform you about what you used to do (and recompense you accordingly) (62:8).

The Prophet (S.A) said in a Hadith: "If the animals had as much knowledge of death as you have, you would not find a fat animal for your food". Aishah (R.A) once asked Rasulullah (S.A) "Can anyone attain to the rank of the Shuhadaa (Martyrs) without sacrificing his life for the cause of Allah Ta'ala?" Rasulullah (S.A) replied: "Yes, he who remembers death twenty times every day". Another Hadith says that he who recites the following Dua (supplication) twenty-five times everyday can attain to the rank of the Shuhadaa (Martyrs): "O Allah! Bestow on me blessings when I meet my death, and bless me in what will follow death".

Pondering about death has many spiritual benefits. A Hadith says that once a man standing in the presence of Rasulullah (S.A) said "O Rasulullah, Who is the wisest of all the believers." Rasulullah (S.A) replied, 'He who keeps death much in his remembrance and makes good preparations for it. It has been narrated in another Hadith that once Rasulullah (S.A), recited the following Ayah from the Holy Qur'aan: "And whomsoever it is Allah's will to guide, He expands his heart for Islam" (6:125). He (S.A) then said: "When the 'Noor' (light) of Islam enters his heart, it expands." Someone asked. "Is there any sign by which one might know that the Noor has entered ones heart? Rasulullah (S.A) replied, 'Yes, one develops dislike against this world and having false hopes in it, and he begins to long for the eternal (Akhirah), and starts making preparation for death before it comes" (Mishkaat).

Visiting of the graves was also encouraged by the Prophet (S.A) since it serves as a reminder for us that one day, we also will have to die and enter the grave. In a tradition, Abu Zarr (R.A) says that once Rasulullah (S.A) said to him, "Visit graves from time to time, for it serves as a reminder of the Akhirah; wash the dead for it is a cure for a person who is devoid of virtues and helps him to take heed; attend funeral prayers for it makes you feel concerned about the Akhirah, and those who have this concern remain in the shadow of Allah's mercy and seek a virtuous life". (Targheeb)

Another Hadith says: 'Mention was once made of a Sahabi in the presence of Rasulullah (S.A), and the Sahabah spoke highly of his devotions and diligence in self-mortification. Rasulullah (S.A) asked: "How often did he remember death?" The Sahabah replied that they had not heard him talking of death. Rasulullah (S.A) said: 'He cannot, then, attain to such a high spiritual rank (as you consider him to have attained)'. Baraa (R.A) narrates: Once we went out with Rasulullah to attend the funeral and burial of a person. When we reached there, Rasulullah (S.A) sat by the side of a grave and wept so profusely that the ground became wet with his tears, and then he said: "Brothers, prepare yourself for (your entry in) the grave". (Targheeb)

In another tradition, Abdullah Ibn Umar (R.A) says: "Once ten of us, including myself, visited Rasulullah (S.A), when a man from the Ansaar stood up and said, O Rasulullah! Who are the wisest and the most prudent of men?" Rasulullah (S.A) replied: "The wisest of men are those who remember death more than everybody else and he is occupied in making preparations for the Akhirah more than everybody else. It is such people, indeed, who win distinction in this world and who will be raised to positions of honour in the Akhirah". Ibn Umar (R.A) also says. 'When the day dawns, do not expect to see the evening and when it is evening, do not expect to see the morning; when you are in health, provide something for the time of illness i.e. if you perform good deeds when in health, the rewards will accrue to you even in your illness, and make provisions while you are alive to serve you at the time of death". (Mishkaat)

My dear readers, let us strive as much as possible to remember death frequently and let us pay heed to the many advices and duas (supplications) which the Prophet (S.A) and his beloved companions have taught us. May Allah Ta'ala through His Infinite Kindness and Mercy bless us with the real understanding of death and may He give us the ability to make sufficient preparations for it. Ameen