

ARTICLE

The Ordeal in the Grave

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Alhamdulillah, all praises are surely for Allah Ta'ala alone for He has certainly been very kind to us and has completed His numerous favours upon us by choosing the most perfect way of life (Islam) for us. My dear readers after facing Izraeel (the Angel of Death) and experiencing death, we will be made to enter the life of the grave which is the first stage of the everlasting life in the Hereafter and just as a person will have either a pleasant or difficult time when facing Izraeel, similarly in the grave he will either have a pleasant or difficult time when facing Munkir and Nakir (the Angels in the grave). The torments of the grave are also very severe and painful. Many traditions of the Holy Prophet (S.A) inform us about this and the other occurrences of the grave.

Aishah (R.A) says. "A Jewish lady once visited me, after I had obliged her with something, she said. 'May Allah protect you from punishment in the grave'. I asked Rasulullah (S.A) 'Is there punishment in the grave?' And he replied, 'Yes, the punishment in the grave is real'. After this, Rasulullah (S.A) used to seek Allah's protection from the punishment in the grave, at the end of every Salaat, as a lesson for his followers".

It has been reported about Uthman (R.A) that when he would stand over a grave, he would weep so bitterly that his beard would get wet with tears. Someone asked him, "You do not weep so bitterly when you remember Jannah (Paradise) and Jahannam (Hell) as you do when you are reminded of the grave." He replied: "I have heard Rasulullah (S.A) saying. "The grave is the initial stage of the Akhirah; if one escapes punishment in it, then all the following stages are much easier but if one does not escape punishment in it, then all the other stages are more severe than it", and I also heard him saying "I have never seen a sight more horrifying than that of the grave."

Bara bin Azib (R.A.) reports that the Messenger of Allah (S.A.) said, "When a servant is placed in the grave and his companions move away from him to the extent that the knocking of their shoes can be heard, two angels come to him and they make him sit up. Then they say to him, "Who is your lord?" He (the believer) will say, "My lord is Allah." The Angels then say to him, "What is your religion?" He (the believer) will say, "My religion is Islam." The Angels say, "Who is this man who has been sent to you?" He (the believer) will say, "He is the Messenger of Allah (S.A)." He will be asked, "How do you know that?" He will say, "I have read the Book of Allah and believed in it and accepted it as the truth." The Prophet (SA.) then said, "An announcer will then announce from the heavens, "My servant has spoken the truth, so make for him a bed of Jannah, clothe him with the dress of Jannah and open for him a door to Jannah." A door will then be opened and a sweet, cool breeze will blow in (from Jannah) and the grave will be widened for him as far as his eyes can reach."

The Prophet (S.A.) then said, "As for an unbeliever, his soul will be returned to his body and the Angels will visit him. He shall be made to sit up and the Angels will say, "Who is your Lord?" He will say Ah! Ah! I do not know." The angels will say, "What is your religion?" He will say Ah! Ah! I do not know." The angels will say, "Who is this man who has been sent to you?" He will say "Ah! Ah! I do not know." An announcer from the heavens will then make an announcement, "He has lied. Make for him a bed of the Hell fire, clothe him with the wearing of the Hell fire and open for him a door towards the Hell fire." The heat smoke and hot winds will blow towards him. His grave will then close in upon him until his ribs from one side penetrate into the other side. Then a blind and deaf Angel will be entrusted upon him who will

flog him with a hammer made of iron. Such a hammer that one blow of it if struck onto a mountain will turn it into dust. The unbeliever will then be struck with it, such a striking that everything between the east and west can hear it except Jinn and men. With its blow he will turn to dust and his soul will be returned to him.” (Ahmad, Abu Dawood)

Another Hadith reports Rasulullah (S.A) as saying, “In the grave, the abode into which a man will move after the Day of Resurrection is shown to him every morning and evening; if he is destined for Jannah, he is shown his abode in Jannah, to his great relief and joy, while if he is destined for Jahannam, he is shown his abode in Jahannam (and the fear of the impending doom adds to his pain and misery)”.

Abu Hurairah (R.A) says, ‘we went to a funeral in company with Rasulullah (S.A), and on reaching the graveyard, he (S.A) sat by the side of a grave and said: “Everyday the grave announces, in clear words, ‘O son of Adam, you have forgotten me. I am an abode of loneliness; I am the house of estrangement (where you will not find anyone familiar). I am the house of horrors, I am full of worms. I am extremely narrow but I am expansive for that person whom Allah Ta’ala wills me to be so’. He (S.A) then said: “The grave may either be a garden of Jannah or a pit of Jahannam”.

My dear readers, all these traditions of the Prophet (S.A) clearly indicate to us that the torments in the grave are indeed severe and real. As Muslims we must have belief in this and ask Allah Ta’ala to grant us the ability to give the correct answers to the Angels in the grave. Let us all sincerely supplicate and beg Allah, just as the Prophet (S.A) did, to protect us from the horrors and torments of the grave and from the fire of Jahannam (Hell). May Allah Ta’ala through His Infinite Mercy make our grave a garden of Jannah for us and not a pit of Jahannam. Ameen

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