

## Programme Nine; Belief in Resurrection after death.

### 9. 1. Introduction.

It is our belief as Muslims that each and every soul will taste death. The Qur'ān states:

'Every should shall taste death' (3:185)

Even the angel of death will take his own soul with the order of his Lord, and then there will be no one left alive on the face of the earth.<sup>1</sup>

It is incumbent to believe that whoever dies, does so with the reason of predestination. Allāh states:

'When their appointed time has come, then they cannot delay it an hour nor precede it an hour' (10:49).

Even if he died from a disease or another reason, he does so with an appointed time. He cannot precede it or delay it.

### 9.2. Resurrection after death.

As Muslims, we believe that Allāh Almighty has the power to revive the dead from the grave, on the Day of Judgement. This is referred to as *al-Ba'th ba'd al-Mawt*. To those who refute the possibility of this happening, the Qur'ān states:

'[The disbeliever] says: 'Who will give life to these bones when they have rotted away and have become dust?' Say (O Muhammad) 'He will give life to them Who created them in the first place! And He is the all-knower of all creations.' (36: 78-9)

Elsewhere, Allāh states:

'From [the earth] We created you, and into it We shall return you, and from it We shall bring you out once again.' (20:55).

### 9.3. What is death (*Mawt*)?

Because of the way language works we tend to associate death with nothingness. Death is the opposite of life; when we are alive, we can see, hear and feel things. Therefore we tend to think that when a person is dead, the deceased cannot do anything at all. Islam's position is different to this approach. Imam Qurtubī defines *Mawt* when he writes:

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<sup>1</sup> p. 95. *Sharh al-Risala al-Nafi'a wa al-Hujaj al-Qaat'ia*. Sheikh Muhammad Abd al-Latif Salih al-Farfur (d. 1407 A.H.). Dar al-Nu'man li al-Ulum Publications, Damascus.

'Death (*al-Mawt*) does not mean mere nothingness. Rather, it means the transferral from one state to another.'<sup>2</sup>

In other words, death only implies departure from this world. It does not mean total obliteration or non-existence after death.<sup>3</sup>

#### **9.4. Those people whose bodies will not decay in the grave.**

As for those whose bodies do not perish in their graves, they are:

1. The prophets.
2. The messengers.
3. The scholars who act upon their knowledge.
4. The martyrs.
5. The callers to the prayers.
6. The memorizers of the Qur'ān who act upon what is revealed in it.<sup>4</sup>
7. Some *Awliya*.<sup>5</sup>

#### **9.5. Our belief regarding the questioning in the grave.**

It is compulsory that we believe in the questioning in the grave after death, for Muslims and non-Muslims.

When the burial has taken place and the deceased's family leaves the graveyard, the deceased hears their footsteps as they leave. Then two angels will appear after the burial called Munkar and Nakīr. The soul will be made to return to the person and he will be brought back to life. They will ask him about his Lord, his religion and about the man who was sent amongst them (namely the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him)).

The believer will say: 'My Lord is Allāh, my Religion is Islam and our beloved, our master Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was sent amongst us and indeed I believed in him. Then it will be said to him: 'Look at your abode in paradise and now sleep peacefully pleased!' Then he will sleep in his grave until the Day of gathering and a window will be opened from paradise and he will live in happiness and delight. The space of the grave will also be extended for the believer.

As for the non-Muslim, he will be asked the same as the Muslim but he will say: 'I don't know' to every question. So he will be punished in his grave until the gathering and Allāh will send snakes and insects in his grave which will sting and bite him. Thereafter a window from the fire of hell will be opened and he will be punished like

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<sup>2</sup> p. 91. Cited in *al-Isra wa al-Miraj*, Dr. 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud. Dar al-Ma'arif, Cairo, Egypt. 9<sup>th</sup> edition, n.d. on publication.

<sup>3</sup> p 44. *Islam: The Basic Articles of Faith, according to the Beliefs of the Ahl Sunna wa al-Jama'a; A Modern English Translation of Bahar-e-Shariat*. Part One. Crescent Publishing, Rochdale, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> p. 96. *Sharh al-Risala al-Nafi'a wa al-Hujaj al-Qaat'ia*. Sheikh Muhammad Abd al-Latif Salih al-Farfur (d. 1407 A.H.). Dar al-Nu'man li al-Ulum Publications, Damascus.

<sup>5</sup> p. 378. *al-Sharh al-Qawim fi Hill Alfaz al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*. 'Abd Allāh al-Harawi. Dar al-Masami'; Beirut, Lebanon, 2004.

this until the Day of Gathering. The grave will become tight and restricted for him.<sup>6</sup> The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) himself said:

‘The graves are either gardens from the gardens of paradise or pits from the pits of hell.’<sup>7</sup>

#### 9.5.1 The people who will not be questioned in their graves.

1. The prophets.
2. The messengers.
3. The Martyrs
4. Those who are killed in oppression i.e. killed by another person without reason.
5. Those who die in a plague.
6. The truthful (Siddiq).
7. Muslim Children.
8. Those who die on a Friday or Friday night.
9. The one who recites Sūrah Mulk every night.
10. The one who recites Sūrah Ikh̄lās at the time of his final illness.

As for the questioning of non-Muslim children and whether they enter heaven or hell, the scholars have differed over this. The correct opinion is that they are in the will of Allāh SWT, and we leave their matter in His hands.<sup>8</sup>

### **9.6. Barzakh and the punishment/reward in this world.**

*Barzakh* is the name given to the period between death and the resurrection. We sometimes talk about the *Ālam Barzakh* (world of Barzakh), when referring to this period.

According to his faith and actions in the previous life, a person will either enjoy the favours of Allāh during this period or he will be punished. Imam al-Bukhārī and Muslim report from Ibn Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him) that:

‘The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) once passed by two graves and said: ‘both are being punished over trivial matters’<sup>9</sup>. As for one of them, he never took care when urinating. As for the other, he used to tell-tale.’ The Prophet then asked for a dry plant which he snapped in half. He placed them on grave and said: ‘perhaps their punishment will be lightened until the plant withers.’<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, the souls of the martyrs will reside in small birds that fly around the Throne of Allāh.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> p. 371. *al-Sharh al-Qawim fi Hill Alfaz al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*. ‘Abd Allāh al-Harawi. Dar al-Masami’; Beirut, Lebanon, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Sunan al-Tirmidhi. Chapter: the Description of Qiyama. Hadith no. 2384.

<sup>8</sup> p. 98. *Sharh al-Risala al-Nafi’a wa al-Hujaj al-Qaat’ia*. Sheikh Muhammad Abd al-Latif Salih al-Farfur (d. 1407 A.H.). Dar al-Nu’man li al-Ulum Publications, Damascus.

<sup>9</sup> In other words, people see them as trivial where in fact they are major sins.

<sup>10</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Book of Wudu, Chapter, what has been mentioned about urinating. Hadith no. 211.

<sup>11</sup> p. 378. *al-Sharh al-Qawim fi Hill Alfaz al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*. ‘Abd Allāh al-Harawi. Dar al-Masami’; Beirut, Lebanon, 2004.

In *Barzakh*, different souls are kept at different places according to their degree and status. Some souls will reside in the graves whilst others will live between the sky and earth. Other fortunate souls will reside in the gardens of paradise. The souls of the disbelievers will live in a place of punishment beneath the earth called Sijjīn.<sup>12</sup>

## 9.7. The sustained life of all Prophets in the grave.

From the Ahādīth and the subsequent opinions of the classical scholars, there is no doubt that all the prophets enjoy a sustained life after leaving this world.

Imam al-Nasā'ī narrates from Aus ibn Aus (may Allāh be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said:

'The best of your days is the day of Friday. On this day Adam was created and on this day he died...so send Salāh upon me as much as possible on this day. For verily your Salāh is presented to me.' The Companions asked, 'And how will our salutations be presented to you when you pass away?' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said, 'Verily Allāh has forbidden the earth to consume the bodies of the prophets.'<sup>13</sup>

Imam al-Qushairī adds that 'there is only purpose behind conveying Salām if the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) is alive.'<sup>14</sup>

Anas reports that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said:

'The prophets are alive, performing Salāh in their graves.'<sup>15</sup>

Imam al-Qurtubī supports the belief that prophets are alive when he writes:

'[T]he martyrs after their death are alive, are given sustenance, are happy and give glad tidings to others [as mentioned in the Qur'ān]. This [type of life] is of resemblance to people who are alive in this world. When it is established that martyrs are alive after death, then prophets are most certainly alive. And indeed it is proven conclusively that the earth does not consume the bodies of prophets, and that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) met the [previous] prophets on the Night of Isrā in Bayt al-Muqaddas and in the skies, and that he saw Mūsā (peace be upon him) performing Salah in his grave and offered his salutations to the Ummah, to mention just a few

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<sup>12</sup> p 46. *Islam: The Basic Articles of Faith, according to the Beliefs of the Ahl Sunna wa al-Jama'a; A Modern English Translation of Bahar-e-Shariat*. Part One. Crescent Publishing, Rochdale, 1998.

<sup>13</sup> Sunan al-Nasa'i. Hadith no. 1357. Book of Juma; Chapter; Sending Salah upon the Prophet Excessively.

<sup>14</sup> p. 88, *al-Isra wa al-Miraj*, Dr. 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud. (p. 87) Dar al-Ma'arif, Cairo, Egypt. 9<sup>th</sup> edition, n.d. on publication.

<sup>15</sup> p. 369. *al-Sharh al-Qawim fi Hill Alfaz al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*. 'Abd Allāh al-Harawi. Dar al-Masami'; Beirut, Lebanon, 2004. Sa'id ibn Musayyab reports that he heard the Azan and Iqama from the grave of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) during the Fitna of Yazid. He led an assault against the people of Madina which resulted in Salah being suspended from the Prophet's mosque. Sa'id took shelter there and knew of the Salah times only through the means of the Azan emitting from the Prophet's grave. (p. 32. Cited in *Tashih al-Aqa'id*. Muhammad Abd al-Hamid Budayuni. Zia al-Quran Publications, Lahore.).

sources of evidence. The 'death of prophets' is correct only in the sense they are hidden from our sights. Otherwise, they are undoubtedly alive. Rather like the angels; for indeed they are present though no one from us can see them, except those who have been privileged by Allāh from his Awliya.' <sup>16</sup>

Imam Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī writes:

'The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) is alive with body and soul. He can go wherever he wants in the spaces of the earth and the [heavenly] kingdoms. Nothing has changed from his state before death and after. All of the prophets have been granted permission to leave their graves and move around the earthly and heavenly world. The sustained life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) and indeed all of the prophets is proven definitively according to us, owing to the substantial evidence in support of this.' <sup>17</sup>

Imam Qastalānī writes:

'There is no difference between the Prophet's life and death in looking over his Umma, knowing their states, their intentions, their convictions and their inner feelings. This is all radiant to him without anything hidden.' <sup>18</sup>

Qādi Ayādh writes:

'There is no doubt that the sustained life of the prophets (peace be upon them) is proven and known. And of course, our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) is the best of all prophets.' <sup>19</sup>

In *Wafā al-Wafā*, we find that Sheikh Ibn Taymiyya agrees:

'Ibn Taymiyya mentioned in *Iqtidhā al-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm*, like it has been cited by Ibn Abd al-Hādī, that the martyrs, and in fact all believers, know and recognize the visitors and return the Salām when they come to visit and send greetings upon them. When this is the state of the [ordinary] believers, then how will it not be the case for the leader of all prophets (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him)?' <sup>20</sup>

## **9.8. Do the dead benefit from the endeavours of the living? The issue of *Isāl Sawāb*.**

According to the majority opinion of the *Ahl Sunnah*, Muslims that have passed away can benefit from the prayers and actions of the living (*Isāl Sawāb*). This is proven

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<sup>16</sup> p. 91. Cited in *al-Isra wa al-Miraj*, Dr. 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud. Dar al-Ma'arif, Cairo, Egypt. 9<sup>th</sup> edition, n.d. on publication.

<sup>17</sup> p. 28. Cited in *Tashih al-Aqa'id*. Muhammad Abd al-Hamid Budayuni. Zia al-Quran Publications, Lahore.

<sup>18</sup> p. 28. Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> p. 29. Cited in *Tashih al-Aqa'id*. Muhammad Abd al-Hamid Budayuni. Zia al-Quran Publications, Lahore.

<sup>20</sup> p. 29. Ibid.

conclusively from the Holy Qur'ān, the sayings of the Beloved Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) and the consensus of the Ummah.

In general, the receiving of reward is achieved by either of two means.

- i. The fruit of the deceased's actions in his own lifetime.
- ii. The prayer (Du'ā) of Muslims for the deceased and the asking for forgiveness (Istighfār), as well as forms of charitable donations (Sadaqa) and worship (e.g. Hajj). The people of innovation hold the view that a dead cannot benefit at all, from a Du'a or a good action.

#### 9.8.1 Proof of *Isāl Sawāb* from the Holy Qur'ān.

Allāh Almighty says in the Qur'ān;

'And those who come after them say 'Our Lord! Forgive us and our brothers who came before us into faith, and do not leave a sense of injury in our hearts against those the believers. Our Lord! You are indeed most Kind and Merciful' (59; 10).

Here, Allāh applauds those Muslims who prayed for their Muslim predecessors in the form of asking forgiveness for them. This proves that their asking forgiveness does bring the deceased benefit and reward, since if it did not, Allāh would not have commended them.

#### 9.8.2 Proof of *Isāl Sawāb* from the Sunna.

There are countless Ahādith which clearly indicate that *Isāl Sawāb* is permissible.

- The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) would pray for the deceased Muslims. Imam Muslim records the Du'ā:

اللهم اغفر له و ارحمه و عافه و اعف عنه و أكرم نزله و وسع مدخله ...

'O Allāh! Forgive him, and have mercy upon Him, and pardon him and show hospitality to him and make his grave spacious...'<sup>21</sup>

- In a Hadīth recorded by both Imam Muslim and Bukhārī and narrated by Āisha (may Allāh be pleased with her) a person came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) and said 'My mother died suddenly and did not leave a bequest and I think if she had the opportunity she would have left some donations. Will she get a reward if I donate on her behalf? The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) 'Yes'.

Nor can it be said that the principle of transmitting of reward only applies to optional (*Nafil*) acts, such as charitable donations. We learn from Prophetic sayings that compulsory worship such as Hajj and fasting can be performed on behalf of a deceased too.

- In *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, Ibn Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him) reports that a woman from Juhayna came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon

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<sup>21</sup> *Sahih Muslim*. Book of Funeral Prayers, Chapter, the Du'a for the deceased in Salah.

him) and said; 'My mother promised to perform Hajj, but did not get the chance to do so before she died. Can I perform Hajj on her behalf?'

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) replied; 'Yes, perform Hajj on her behalf. If she had an outstanding debt, would you not pay this off? Fulfill (the rights of) Allāh, for His promises are more important to fulfill.'

• As for the reward of fasting for the deceased, both Imam Bukhāri and Muslim report that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said:

'Whoever dies and has not fulfilled his (compulsory) fasts, then his representative should complete it on his behalf.'<sup>22</sup>

• In a Hadīth narrated by Jābir (may Allāh be pleased with him) he reports that he read Eid al-Adhā Prayer with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). After the Prayer a ram was bought to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) which he sacrificed. As he did so he pronounced: 'In the name of Allāh; Allāh is the greatest. O Lord! This sacrifice is from myself and from whoever has not made a sacrifice from my Ummah.'<sup>23</sup>

In another narration from Imam Muslim, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said: 'O Allāh! Please accept this from Muhammad, from the family of Muhammad and from the Ummah of Muhammad.'<sup>24</sup>

### 9.8.3 Proof of *Isāl Sawāb* from Ijmā (Consensus) and from the scholars.

The Scholars of Islam have unanimously agreed on the legitimacy of Funeral prayer (Salāh al-Janāza). In essence, this is but a supplication for the deceased. During the actual prayer, supplications are recited asking for the forgiveness of the deceased Muslim.

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal was asked about someone who performs good acts such as Salāh or Sadaqa and then dedicates some of the reward to his mother or father. He replied, 'I expect this to benefit' or he said, 'the deceased receives everything from the Sadaqa and its likes.' He also recommended to:

'Recite Ayat al-Kursī three times, Surah Ikhhlās and say *Allāhuma Inna Fadhlahu le Ahl al-Maqābir*.'<sup>25</sup>

Ibn Taymiyya said:

'The deceased benefits from the recitation of the Qur'ān, as well as from financial worship like Sadaqa and its likes.'<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Book of Fasts. Chapter, He who dies without having fulfilled his fasts. Hadith no. 1816.

<sup>23</sup> *Sunan Tirmidhi*. Book of Sacrifices. Chapter, an Aqiqa with a goat. Hadith no. 1441.

<sup>24</sup> p. 125. Cited in *Tashih al-Aqa'id*. Muhammad Abd al-Hamid Budayuni. Zia al-Quran Publications, Lahore.

<sup>25</sup> p. 37. *Islam Din al-Wastiyya wa al-I'tidal* (Glossary for National Curriculum for Religious Teaching) Endowment Department, Syria.

Allama Taftazānī summarises the debate on *Isāl Sawāb*:

‘And in Du’ā by the living for the dead and the giving of Sadaqa for them is a benefit...We have in support of our position authenticated Ahādīth regarding the prayer for the dead, especially the Salāh al-Janāza...If there had been no advantage for the dead in this prayer, there would be no point in performing it. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said: ‘No group of Muslims amounting to a hundred in number performs Salāh al-Janāza over the deceased, all of them interceding for him, without their intercession for him being welcomed.’ Sa’d ibn Ubāda reported: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! Umm Sa’d has died. What Sadaqa is best for her?’ The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) replied, ‘water’. So Sa’d dug a well and said, ‘this is for Umm Sa’d.’...The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) also said that if the learned and the learner pass by a village, Allāh will remove the torment from the cemetery of that village for forty days.’<sup>27</sup>

#### 9.8.4 Objection.

The Qur’ān states:

‘There is nothing for a man except what he strives for’ (53: 39).

This therefore suggests that when a person dies, only his own good deeds will be of benefit to him. The efforts of the living will not reach him.

#### 9.8.5 Answer.

This verse does not contradict the majority position that *Isāl Sawāb* is legitimate in Islam. The proof is in the famous saying of the Prophet:

‘When a person dies, his actions cease except for three; continuous donations (Sadaqa Jāriya), a pious son who prays for him, or knowledge by which others benefit from him’.

All of these three things will benefit him in the afterlife because *during* his life, he took the necessary steps to ensure they would. Through his *own* effort, and during his life, he spent his money on charitable donations so that it would be of worth to him after dying. During his life, he nurtured his children and taught them the importance of praying for all Muslims, including the deceased. During his lifetime, he diffused knowledge into the community so that it could benefit him after he dies. So in essence, *Isāl Sawāb* does not negate this verse, but in fact supports it. A man truly does not earn except what he strives for. In fact, just by virtue of a person becoming a part of the Muslim Ummah warrants him the right to be the recipient of the supplications and rewards of his fellow Muslim brothers.

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<sup>26</sup> p. 37. *Islam Din al-Wastīyya wa al-I’tidal* (Glossary for National Curriculum for Religious Teaching) Endowment Department, Syria.

<sup>27</sup> pp. 171-172. *Sharh al-Aqa’id al-Nasfiyya*. Allama Sa’d al-Din al-Taftazānī. Maktaba Khair Kathir, Karachi, Lahore. n.d. on publication.