

CHAPTER TWO

Section One

What the dead go through

It is man's soul that represents his real nature, which is everlasting. Upon death his state changes in two ways. Firstly, he is now deprived of his eyes, ears and tongue, his hands, his feet and all his parts, just as he is deprived of his family, children, relatives, and all the people he used to know, and his cars, his houses and properties, and all that he used to own. There is no connection to be drawn between his being taken from these things and these things being taken, separation may take place through the grasping of a man's wealth, and at others when a man seized and led away from his power and wealth: in both cases the pain is identical. The meaning of death is simply the removal of a man's property resulting upon his being moved into another world which does not correspond to this.

The unseen

The other fact upon death there stand revealed before him certain things which were never revealed to him in life, in the way that things may be revealed to a man who is awake which were hidden from him. The first thing to be revealed to him is his good and evil actions, which will benefit or harm him, and which have been written in a book folded away in his innermost heart from the glance of which he was distracted by his worldly concerns. When these concerns are cut away his actions all stand revealed before him, so that he is distressed by every sin which he has; so much so that he would be forced into the depths of Hell in order to escape from this misery. *It will be said to him, 'read your book. Today you yourself is good for your reckoning!'*¹

The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) said, 'When the dead man is laid in his grave it speaks to him, saying, "O son of Adam! What distracted you from remembering me? Did you not know that I am the house of trial, the house of darkness, the house of loneliness and the house of worms? What distracted you from me? You used to pass by me!" Now if he had worked well, then someone will reply to the grave on his behalf, saying, "Do you not see that it was his practice to enjoin good and forbid evil?" And the grave replies, "Then for him shall I turn to luxuriance, and his body shall become warmth, and his soul shall ascend up to Allah (The Exalted)".'

Yazid al-Ruqashi said, 'I have heard it said that when the deceased is set in the grave his actions assemble around him and are given to speak by Allah, so that they say, "O servant, alone in his pit! Your family and friends are now separated from you, so that today we are your sole companions".'

Assistants of good actions

Kab al-Ahbar said, 'When the righteous servant is laid in his grave he is surrounded by his righteous acts, such as his prayer, his fasting, his pilgrimage, his engagement in the Holy War, and the charity he used to distribute. Then the Angels of punishment approach him from the direction of his feet, but are told by Prayer, "Get back from him, you have no authority over him, for upon those (feet) he stood in me at length for the sake of Allah". Then they approach him from the direction of his head, but Fasting says, "You have no authority over him, for in the world's abode he thirsted at length for the sake of Allah". Next they draw near the him from the direction of his chest, but Pilgrimage and Holy War say, "Get back from him, for he exhausted himself and wearied his body when he

¹ Surah Bani-Israel; Surah No: 17. Verse 14

accomplished the Pilgrimage and the Holy War for the sake of Allah; no authority do you have over him." Then they approach him from the direction of his hands, but charity says, "Back! Retreat from my master, for how many an act of charity issued from those two hands to fall into the hand of Allah (The Exalted), while he acted only for His sake; no authority, therefore, do you have over him". Then he shall be told, "Rejoice! Good you have been in life and death!" Next, the Angels of mercy come, and spread a Heavenly cloth and resting-place out for him, and his grave is widened around him for as far as his eye can see. A candle is brought from Paradise, and from it he has light until Allah resurrects him from his grave.'

Abd Allah ibn Ubayd ibn Umayr said, 'I have heard it said that The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) once declared, "The dead man sits up and hears the footsteps of those that are present at his funeral, but none addresses him save his grave, which says, 'O son of Adam! Did you not fear me and my narrowness, and my corruption, terrors and worms? What have you prepared for me?'"²

Respected Brother/sister! This is our final resting place. What will our situation be? Will the grave be a place of bliss or a place of blaze? Do we obey the commands of Allah to be rewarded with bliss or do we miss our Salaah, don't Fast nor bother with Pilgrimage or giving Charity and backbite, thinking bad of others, jealous of someone's property or car to deserve blaze in the grave? May we begin to make effort today and change ourselves for our own sake so our final destination is a place of bliss and if that means leaving the company of a close friend then be that as the friend will not assist you in the grave, you are on your own with the Angels that question!

Poetry by Shaykh Ahmad Raza Khan

Ahle Amal Ko Unke Amal Kaam Ayege
Mera Hai Koun Tere Siwa Aah! Lai Kabar³

The people of deeds will have their deeds to assist them
Who is there for me except you, Oh! Pay a visit

The Shaykh is being humble saying that I have no deeds but depends on the Prophet to help him.

Ya Ilahi Ghore Tira Ki Jab Aye Sakht Raat
Unke Pyare Muh Ki Subh Ja Fiza Ka Saat Ho

O my Lord! When the difficult night of the darkness in the grave comes
May the morning, wonderful breeze from his loving mouth be with me

The Shaykh is meditating and supplicates to Allah that may he have the protection of the Prophet, upon him peace, in the darkness of the grave.

Have you ever been given the answers before entering the examination room? However, we have not been only given the answers but the questions too, but the questioning is at that time difficult.
The questioning is discussed in the next section, so read on!

² Ibn al-Mubarak. Ibn Abi'l Dunya.

³ Hidayak-e-Bakhshish; P37

Section Two

The Questioning Of Munkar And Nakir

The state of an un-believer

Al-Bara ibn Azib said, 'I once went forth with The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) to attend the funeral of one of the Ansars (Helpers). The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) sat down by the grave and bowed his head, saying three times, "O Allah! I seek refuge with You from the punishment of the grave." Then he said, "When the believer travels in the Afterlife, Allah dispatches unto him angels whose faces are like the sun, who bear his shrouds and his perfume with them. Then they sit down around him for as far as his eye can see, so that when his soul comes every angel who is between Paradise and earth, and every angel who exist in Paradise, prays for him. Then the gates of Paradise are opened before him, all of which would accept his soul to enter through it. When his soul has ascended it is said, 'O Allah! Your servant So-and-so!' But He says, 'Return him, and expose to him the honour which I have made ready for him, for this I promised him: *We created you from the earth, and into the same We shall bring you back...*'⁴ And he hears the footfall of their sandals as they turn and depart.

"Then it is said, 'O man! Who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is your prophet?' and he shall answer accordingly: 'My Lord is Allah, My religion is Islam, and My prophet is Muhammad (upon him peace).' Then the angels take to task him strongly in the last trial to which the dead man is submitted, but when he has uttered these words a voice calls out, saying, 'You have answered correctly!' At this, there approaches one who is beautiful in appearance, sweet-smelling and dressed in best clothes, who declares, 'Rejoice at the mercy which is come to you from your Lord, and at gardens in which there is enjoyment everlasting'. 'May Allah give you good tidings!' he replies. 'Who are you?' 'I am your righteous deeds,' he says. 'By Allah, I have known that you were quick to obey Allah and slow to disobey Him; therefore may Allah reward you well.' Then a voice calls out for furnishings from Paradise to be set out for him and for one its gates to be opened before him. And when this is done, he cries, 'O Allah! Hurry on the Hour that I may return to my kinsmen and to my property!'"

The state of an unbeliever

'And (the Prophet continued, and) said, "As for the unbeliever, when he travels into the afterlife and is cut off from this world, there descends to him Angels strong wearing garments of fire and mail-coats of tar, who weighed down him on every side until, when his soul appears, he is cursed by every angel between Paradise and earth, and every angel that exists in Paradise. The gates of Paradise are locked shut, for there is not a single one of them that would not bear his entry by it. And when his soul ascends it is cast back, as it is declared, 'O Allah! Your servant So-and-so, whom neither Paradise nor earth will accept!' And He says, 'Return him, and show him horror I have prepared for him, even as I promised: *We created you from the earth, and into the same We shall bring you back...*' And he hears the footfall of their sandals as they turn and depart.

"Then it is said, 'O man! Who is your Lord? What is your religion? And who is your prophet?' but he says, 'I know not.' 'You know not!' it is said, and he is approached by one of evil appearances, corrupt-smelling and meanly clothed, who says, 'Receive the tidings of Allah's wrath, and of a painful and abiding torment!' 'Allah gives you evil tidings!' he says, 'Who are you?' 'I am your bad deeds,' he makes reply. 'By Allah, you were quick to disobey Him and slow in giving Him you obedience; therefore may Allah reward you with ill.' 'And you,' he replies, 'may Allah reward you with ill also!' Then he is

⁴ Surah Ta-Ha; Surah No: 20. Verse: 55

seized by one who is deaf, dumb and blind, who bears a rod of iron which, were men and jinn all to combine to carry it they could not, and which would slash into dust any mountain struck with it. With it he strikes him a blow which turns him to dust, after which his soul is restored, and he strikes him another blow between the eyes which is heard by every resident upon the earth, saving only men and jinn. Then a voice calls for two slabs from Hell to be set down for him by way of furnishings, and for one of the gates of Hell to be opened before him, and this is done".⁵

Blaze or Bliss?

Abu Hurayra said, 'The Prophet, upon him peace, has said, "The believer in his grave is in a flourishing garden. For his sake his grave is widened by seventy cubits, and he shines with light until he becomes as the full moon. The unbeliever's punishment in his grave," he said. "Ninety-nine dragons are let loose against him. Do you know what a dragon is? It is formed of ninety-nine serpents each of which has seven heads, which attack and savage him, and blow into his body until the Day of Resurrection."⁶

Respected Brother/Sister! If we spend our life obeying the commands of Allah we will have a better chance of answering the question than if we do not obey Allah and his Messenger (upon him peace). How will we answer the three questions if we do not know who Allah is, by this I mean recognising Him by offering the five daily Salaah. How can we say we recognise Allah when we do not fear Him, how can we recognise what Islam is if we do not know how a Muslim should follow his religion and be a good Muslim, how can a person know the Prophet if we did not read about his life and did not know his Sunnah. Then how will we answer the questions if we practiced Islam when we got time and felt like it? We need to understand our religion as best as possible by learning the knowledge of the Deen.

Poetry by Shaykh Ahmad Raza Khan

Nakiren Karte He Tazeem Meri
Fida Hoka Ke Tujpar Ye Izzat Mili He⁷

The two angels⁸ who question in the grave give me respect
Devotion in You is why this respect to me is given

Mujrim Ko Na Sharmawo Ahbaab Kafan Dakdo
Muh Dek-Ke Kya Hoga Parde Me Bala'i He⁹

Don't put to shame the sinner friends! Cover the deceased's face
What gain is there from seeing the face, success is in the veil
The punishment in the grave is a fact, and denying this is misguidance. The next section talks about the punishment in the grave, so read on!

⁵ Hakim. Bayhaqi, Ithbat.

⁶ Al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi. Ibn Hibban

⁷ Hidayak-e-Bakhshish; p117

⁸ Munkar and Nakir

⁹ Hidayak-e-Bakhshish; p122

Section Eight

Punishment Of The Grave

Ata ibn Yasar said, 'The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) once said to Umar ibn al-Khattab when you are dead, and when your family go to measure out (shroud-cloth) three cubits by one and a span, then return to you and wash you, then shroud and perfume you, and then carry and set you in (your grave), then pour the earth over you and bury you? For when your family have departed, the two tormentors of the grave, *Munkar* and *Nakir*, shall come, whose voices are rolling thunder and whose eyes are like dazzling lightning, who trail their hair and tear the grave with their pointed tooth, terrifying and frightening you? How shall you be, O Umar?' And Umar asked, "Will I have a mind like that which I have now?" and he said, "Yes." "Then," he said, "I shall be a match for them!"¹⁰

Depending on how we spend our lives, we will act accordingly in the grave. If we followed the ways of others, watched films, soaps, listened to music, using bad language and all the other bad habits, then this is what you will have. However, if we are steadfast on our Deen we will, Allah willing, be steadfast in the grave and pass with flying colours the questioning and have bliss.

Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir said, 'I have heard it said that there shall be let loose against the unbeliever in his grave a deaf and blind beast, something like an iron hammer to provoke with something like a camel's foretooth at one end, with which he beats him until the Day of Judgement. It cannot see him, that it might set him free, neither can it hear his voice, that it might have mercy upon him.'

When we shout with pain they cannot hear us nor can they see, but they will be assigned to us until the Day of Judgment and the punishment will continue. May Allah (The Exalted) have Mercy of us, Ameen!

Ya Ilahi Le Jale Jab Dafan Karne Qabar Me
Ghouse Aazam Peshwa Awliya Ka Saat Ho

O my Lord! When they take me to bury in the grave
May the great helper, leader of saints be with me

¹⁰ Bayhaqi, itiqad