

## CHAPTER ONE

### Section One

#### An Encouragement To Remember Death

*Say you, 'the death from which you flee, is certainly going to meet you, then will you be returned to Him Who knows everything hidden and open and He will inform you as to what you had done'.<sup>1</sup>*

The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) said: 'Whosoever would detest meeting with Allah, Allah dislikes meeting with him'.<sup>2</sup>

For instance, if a close friend asked for a favour being dependant on this favour and for some reason you forgot, would you really want to meet him and tell him why the favour was not fulfilled? A person will dislike meeting Allah when His Laws have been disobeyed. We should be in such a position that we recognise our Lord and want to meet him! Let's make the effort of getting closer to Allah (The Exalted) by the means of obeying his commands and abstaining from the forbidden.

The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) said: 'Remember often the Ender of Pleasures'.<sup>3</sup>

When a person is always joking and laughing, we are headless of death, for this reason this is our state and the Shaytan wants to see this. When we want to please our friends we make a joke here and there and may even hurt someone's feeling. At this point we should think if the Angel of Death came to me would I be in this state. So remember death to ruin the pleasures!

A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Shall anyone be resurrected alongside the martyrs?' 'Yes,' he replied. 'He who recalls death twenty times in one day and night'.<sup>4</sup>

A person's status is raised that will be with the martyrs in the hereafter because of remembering death. By remembering death a person is careful, as a result remembering his state in the afterlife.

Ata al-Khurasani once said: The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) passed by a gathering from which laughter was heard. "Disturb your gathering by remembering the Spoiler of Pleasures," he said. "And what is the Spoiler of Pleasures?" they asked. "Death," he replied'.<sup>5</sup>

We sit in gatherings of friends and want to please each other. When one starts, the other is motivated to make another joke and so on. This leads to the gathering completely headless and forgetfulness of the agonies of death, what will happen in the grave and on the Day of Judgment.

The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) once went out to the mosque and noticed a group of people talking and laughing. 'Remember death!' he said. 'By Him in Whose hand lies my soul, if you knew what I know you would laugh little and cry much'.<sup>6</sup>

Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) said, 'I once came to The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) in a group of ten people. A man from the Ansar (Helpers) enquired, "Who is the most intelligent and

<sup>1</sup> Surah Al-Jumah; Surah No: 62; verse: 8

<sup>2</sup> Bukhari, Riqaq; Muslim, Dhkir.

<sup>3</sup> Tirmidhi, Qiyama; Nasa'I, Jana'iz

<sup>4</sup> Tabarani, al-Mujam al-Awsat (Suyuti, Sharh)

<sup>5</sup> Tabarani, al-Mujam al-Awsat (Haytami, Majma)

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Hanbal, Zuhd; al-Bazzar, al-Musnad (Haytami, Majma)

generous of men, O Messenger of Allah?" And he replied, "The most attentive in remembering death, and the one who is best prepared for it. Such are the intelligent ones, who have gained the honour of this world and the dignity of the next".<sup>7</sup>

Respected Brother/Sister! Let us take a moment and think how we spend our life. How many times do we remember death? Are we of those who think we are here forever let's enjoy whilst we are in our youth? Are we engaged in the worldly affairs so much that we have forgotten our final destination? Bring the change in your life today; and remember death as many times as possible to destroy the luxuries of life.

## Section Two

### The Remembrance Of The Pious

Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz used every night to gather together the doctors of the Law, and they would remind one another of death, the Judgement and the Afterlife until they broke out in tears as though at a funeral.

Abu Ash'ath said, 'We used to call on al-Hasan, and (his conversation) was nothing but Hell, the Afterlife, and the remembrance of death.'

It is unfortunate today that our gatherings are not of these, but of those which diverts our attention from death. Our gathering will consist of films and dramas things which are unrealistic which diverts our attention from Allah (The Exalted). Our faith has become so weak that we can't differentiate between a good and evil gathering. May Allah (The Exalted) make our gathering where we remember Him and His beloved Prophet (upon him peace).

Al-Rabi ibn Khuthaym dug a grave in his house, and used each day to sleep in that so that by this method he might remember death constantly. He would say 'Were the remembrance of death to leave my heart for a single hour it would become corrupted.'

Abu Sulayman al-Darani said, 'I once asked Umm Harun whether she loved death. "I do not," she replied. "Why not?" I enquired, and she said, "Were I to disobey a human being I would not wish to meet him. So how can I wish to meet Him when I have disobeyed Him?"'

Abu'l Darda' (Allah be pleased with him) said, 'When you bring to mind the dead count yourself as one of them.'

If we hold on to such saying and practices of the pious, entering the graveyards and visiting the ill, it is a way to refresh the remembrance of death in the heart until it takes possession of it and stands before one's eyes.

One day, ibn Muti looked at his house, and was delighted by its beauty. He then broke in tears, saying, 'By Allah, were it not for death I would rejoice in you, and but for the narrowness of the graves towards which we travel we would be deep in thought by this world.' Then he moaned loudly and violently.

Respected Brother/Sister! These great people were true believers, see how they feared Allah at all times; and remembered their death. What is on our minds? Money, clothing, business, work, family,

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<sup>7</sup> Tabarani, Saghir; al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi.

properties, bank balance, cars etc. yet we don't think about death! We should also try to follow their footsteps as these are the friends of Allah. If we want their shade on the Day of Judgment, let us start making the effort by remembering our Creator, Allah, The Exalted.

### Section Three

#### On Lengthy Hopes And Virtues Of Brief Hopes

The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) once said to Abd Allah ibn Umar, 'In the morning time, do not speak to yourself of the evening, and in the evening time do not speak to yourself of the morning. Take from your life something for your death and from your health something for your ill-health, for in truth, O Abd Allah! You do not know what your name shall be tomorrow.'

Umm al-Mundhir said, The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) came out before the people one evening and said, "O people! Are you not ashamed before Allah?" "How should that be, O Messenger of Allah?" they asked, and he replied, "You gather in what you shall never accomplish, and build what you shall never inhabit".<sup>8</sup>

Our position today is that we make so many plans for the future, what we going to wear, what we will drive, where will I live, I want the best wedding etc. yet we are headless of the next Salaah we have to pray. What if the Angel of Death has our name on his list and is surprised that I am waiting to take his soul yet he/she is making plans?

Al- Hasan said, The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) once asked, "Do all of you wish to enter into Paradise?" and they (his companions) said, "Yes indeed, O Messenger of Allah!" And he said, "Then cut short your hopes, bring your deaths before your eyes, and be rightly ashamed before Allah".<sup>9</sup>

If one has this thought embedded in the mind, one can be a serious person and not be running after the worldly pleasures. Unfortunately we want Paradise without effort and our spending life against the orders of Allah (The Exalted), and the Hadith of the Prophet (upon him peace), well people it doesn't work like that! We need to strive hard and please Allah (The Exalted).

#### The student and teacher

It is told Shaiq al-Balkhi once went to a teacher named Abu Hashim al-Rummani, carrying something wrapped up in the side of his garment. 'What's that you've got with you?' his teacher asked, and he replied, 'Some almonds given to me by one of my brother's; I would like you to break your fast with them.' 'O Shaiq!' he said. 'Do you tell yourself that you shall live until nightfall? May I never again speak to you!' And Shaiq said, 'And he went inside, and closed the door in my face.'

The pious would think there is no guarantee of life; death could come at any time. These were the true believers, because 'we have it all' we tend to think we are here forever! Only if, we thought like them and not run after the worldly pleasures!

#### Prepared for death

Al-Qaqa ibn Hakim said, 'For thirty years have I been preparing myself for death; were it to come to me now there would be nothing I would wish to postpone.'

<sup>8</sup> Bayhaqi, Shu'ab al-iman

<sup>9</sup> Ibn Hanbal, Musnad; Tirmidhi, Qiyama

If death came to us and we had a chance to complete a few things what would we do? Meet some friends, family, sort this and that out, or on the other hand would we be in a position to say 'take me now to meet my Lord?' Remember, the Angel of Death doesn't ask for permission to take the soul, He will take it when it's time!

Al-Thawri said, 'I once heard an old man in the mosque at Kufa saying, "I have abided in this mosque for thirty years waiting for death to descend upon me. Were it to come now I would not require anything of it, nor forbid it anything which is the property of another".'

### **Next prayer**

It is related that Maruf al-Karkhi (Allah have mercy upon him) was once beginning the Prayer. Muhammad ibn Abi Tawba said, 'He told me to step forwards, and I said, "If I lead this Prayer for you I will never lead you in one again." And Maruf said, "And you tell yourself that you shall pray again! We seek refuge with Allah from lengthy hopes, for truly they make against good works!"'

### **Reasons for lengthy hopes**

The reason for lengthy hopes is two things, the first of which is ignorance, and the second of which is love of the world.

The matter of ignorance, this consists in a man's setting his confidence in his youth, and considering that death cannot be near while he remains young. This unfortunate person fails to consider that were the old men of his land to be totaled up they would amount to no more than a tenth of the land. There are so few simply because death is more common in youth: for every old man that dies, a thousand children and young men pass away.

As for when a person who is attached in the love of the world, this makes the heart heavy which keeps away from thinking of death. When in certain circumstances the question of death and the need to prepare for it occurs to him, he postpones, and makes promises to himself, saying, 'There are yet many days before you until you grow mature; then you can repent'. And when he grows to maturity he says, 'Not until you become an old man.' But when he becomes an old man he says, 'Not until you finish building this house,' or 'establishing this business,' or 'return from this holiday,' or 'conclude the setting-up of this son, and provide for him and arrange a house for him,' or 'not until you have bought to an end this enemy who takes such pleasure in your misfortunes.' The root of all these hopes is the love of the world, and finding comfort therein, neglecting the saying of the Prophet (upon him peace) 'Love whosoever you will, for you shall surely leave him.'<sup>10</sup>

### **Treatment**

Once grasped that its cause is ignorance and the love of this world, one must cure oneself by destroying this cause. Ignorance is destroyed by clear meditation with an aware heart, and through hearing powerful wisdom issuing from hearts that are pure.

The treatment of the love of the world lies only in faith in the Last Day, and the great punishment and generous reward which shall then be assigned. The love of this world will only leave one's heart when it is only the love of something great preciousness of the next.

### **Contemplate**

We should think of the afterlife every hour and let the thoughts settle, upon how the worms will greedily eat us, and upon the way in which our bones shall rot away. We should think whether the worms are to begin with the pupil of our right eye or the left; for there is no part of the body that shall not be food for the worm. Let us think of the punishment of the grave, the questioning of

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<sup>10</sup> Tabarani, Saghir; Hakim.

*Munkar and Nakir*<sup>11</sup>, and together with the terrors of the Resurrection, and the sounding of the Horn on the Day. It is thoughts such as these which brings us back to reality and freshens our remembrance of death and helps in making preparations for it.

### **Expecting Angel of death**

There were men at a time whom death stands before their very eyes, as though it had already befallen them, so that they live in constant expectation of it. A saying related by Muadh ibn Jabal (Allah be pleased with him) when he was asked by the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) about the reality of his faith: 'Never have I taken a single step', he said, 'believing that I would follow it with another.' And it is told that al-Aswad, the Abyssinian, that when he prayed at night he used to turn to his left and his right, and that he said, when asked what he was doing, 'I am looking to see from which direction the Angel of Death shall come to me.'

### **Take advantage of five things**

Ibn Abbas said, The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) once said to a man he was warning: "Take advantage of five things before others occur: your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your leisure before your work, and your life before your death".<sup>12</sup>

Respected Brother/Sister! If we postpone things thinking I will do it later, then we may regret it. It is for instance when there is the January Sale, we don't leave it to February do we? And if we leave it late then we loose out! So why leave these five things when there is no guarantee in them?

Do not make lengthy hopes, plans etc. but contemplate on the remembrance of death. Reading the next chapter will make you realise what will happen and how headless we have been all this time of our final destination.

## **Section Four**

### **Agonies of Death**

The pain felt during the period of death, however, affects the soul directly, and overcomes every one of its parts. The dying man feels himself pulled and jerked from every artery, nerve, part and joint, from the root of every hair and the bottom layer of his skin from head to foot. So do not ask about the suffering and pain which he suffers!

For this reason it has been said that 'death is crueler than the stroke of a sword, or being carved up with saws, or cut with scissors,' since to cut the body with a sword only produces pain through its connection with the soul, and how much worse must the pain be when it interrupts directly upon the soul itself!

The man who has been stabbed cries out only because there is some remainder of strength in his heart and tongue; while the voice and screams of the dying man are cut off due to the harshness of his pain, as his suffering bears down upon him and mounts up in the heart until it reaches his every part, breaking his every strength and weakening all his limbs, leaving him with no strength left to cry for relief.

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<sup>11</sup> i.e. Angels which pose the questions in the grave.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn al-Mubarak; Hakim.

It overcomes his mind and deranges it, it strikes dumb his tongue, and it weakens his limit. He longs to be able to seek relief in groaning, screaming and calling for aid, but he cannot. Should there remain in him any strength at all, a lowering and rattling sound is audible from his throat at the time when his soul is pulled and dragged forth.

### **The body**

His colour changes, to an ashen grey, until it is as though the dust which is the root of his nature has made itself obvious. Each vein is drawn out individually as the pain spreads through his surface and his guts, until his eyes roll up to the top of their sockets, and the lips are drawn back, and his tongue contracts to its roots, and his fingertips turn a greenish-black. So do not ask concerning a body from which every artery is being pulled: were one of them alone to be pulled his agony would be intense, so how must it be when the soul itself is being pulled, and not just from one artery, but from them all?

Then, one by one, his physical body begins to die. First his feet grow cold, and then his shins and thighs, each limb suffering agony after agony, and misery after misery, until his soul reaches his throat. At this point he gazes out for the last time at the world and its people, and the gate of repentance is closed, and he is snowed under by sorrow and regret.

At this stage the face of the Angel of Death appears before him. Do not ask regarding the bitter taste of death, and its miseries as its agonies mount up! It was for this reason that the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) used to say, 'O Allah! Lessen for Muhammad (upon him peace) the agonies of death!'<sup>13</sup>

### **Bitterness of death after 50 years!**

It is related that a group of Israelites once passed by a graveyard and that one said to the others, 'What if you were to pray to Allah that He should bring before you a corpse from this graveyard so that you could put some questions to him?' So they prayed to Allah and amazed! There before them was a man with the sign of prostration between his eyes, who had appeared from one of the graves. 'O people!' he said. 'What would you have for me? Fifty years ago I tasted death, yet its bitterness is not yet stilled in my heart!'

*May Allah have mercy on our souls, Ameen!*

It is related that (the Prophet) used to say, 'O Allah! Truly You draw out the soul from the ligaments, the nasal bone and the fingertips. O Allah! Grant me Your support in death, and render it easy for me to bear.'<sup>14</sup>

### **Undemanding death**

It is related on the authority of al-Hasan that The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) once made mention of death, and its chocking and its pain, and said, 'It is equal to three hundred blows with a sword'.<sup>15</sup>

He was once asked (upon him peace) about death and its harshness, and replied, 'The easiest death resembles the branch of a thorn-tree caught in some wool. Shall the branch be extracted from the wool without some remaining with it?'<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibn Maja, Jana'iz; Tirmidhi, Jana'iz.

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Ani'l Dunya, al-Mawt.

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Ani'l Dunya, al-Mawt

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Ani'l Dunya, al-Mawt

### **Paradise or Hell?**

Zayd ibn Aslam related that his father once said, 'Whenever there remain for the believer certain degrees which he had not attained in the world through his works, death is made painful for him so that through its agonies and affliction he might attain to his degree in Paradise. Whereas, should the unbeliever have to his account some act of kindness for which he has not been rewarded, then death is made easy for him to bear until his reward becomes complete and he takes his place in Hell.'

### **Death of Prophet Ibraheem**

It is related that when Ibraheem (upon whom be peace) died, Allah (The Exalted) asked him, 'How did you find death, O My Friend?' and he replied, 'Like a skewer pushed into damp wool and then tugged'. 'Yet We made it easy for you to bear,' He said.

### **Death of Prophet Musa**

It is related of Musa (upon whom be peace) that when his soul passed away to Allah (The Exalted) his Lord asked him, 'O Musa! How did you find death?' 'I found myself', he said, 'to be like a sparrow being roasted alive, unable either to die and find rest, or to escape and fly away.' It is also related that he said, 'I found myself to be like a sheep being flay alive at the hands of a butcher'.

If this is the position of the Prophets, then what will our state be?

### **Reminder of death**

Umar (Allah be pleased with him) said, to Ka'b al-Ahbar, 'O Ka'b! Speak to us of death!' 'Certainly, O Commander of the Faithful,' he said. 'Death is as a thorny twig made to enter the stomach of a man, so that each thorn becomes attached to an artery. Then a powerful man pulls at it, and it takes what it takes and leaves what it leaves.'

### **Form of the Angel of death**

It is related of Ibraheem (upon whom be peace) the Friend of Allah that he once asked the Angel of Death, 'Are you able to show me the form you assume when taking the soul of an evildoer?' 'You could not bear it,' he replied. 'But yes, I could,' he said. 'Then turn away from me,' he commanded, and he did so. Then Ibraheem (upon whom be peace) turned around, and there before him stood a black man with hair raised, evil-smelling and clothed in black, from whose mouth and nostrils sparks and smoke were issuing forth. At this, Ibraheem (upon whom be peace) fainted, and when he regained his wits the Angel had resumed his former appearance. 'O Angel of Death!' he said. 'Were the evildoers to confront nothing but your features after his death it would quite suffice him!'

The obedient man, however, shall see him in the best and most beautiful of forms. Ikrima has related on the authority of ibn Abbas that Ibraheem (upon whom be peace) was an attentive man. He had a house in which he would make his devotions and which he would lock upon leaving. One day when he came to this house he saw that there was a man within. "Who admitted you my house?" he asked, and was told, "I was admitted to it by its Master". "But I am its master," said Ibraheem, but was told, "I was admitted to it by One Who has mastery over it more than you or I." "Then which of the Angels might you be?" he inquired. "I am the Angel of Death," came the reply. "Are you able to show me the form in which you take the soul of a believer?" "Yes," he replied. "Turn away from me." This he did, and when he turned round again, there before him stood a young man, handsome of face, perfumed, and finely-dressed. "O Angel of Death!" he told him. "Were the believer to encounter only your form upon his death it would quite suffice him!"

It is related in a Tradition that the Prophet (upon him peace) said, 'When Allah (The Exalted) is satisfied with His servant He says, "O Angel of Death! Make your way to so-and-so, and bring Me his soul so that I may grant him rest. His works I find sufficient: I tested him and found him to be as I desired." And so the Angel of Death descends in the company of five thousand angels all bearing rods of sweet basil and roots of the saffron plant, until each angel tells him different good tidings from his Lord. And then, holding their rods of basil, they form two ranks in preparation for the soul's departure. When Shaytan beholds them he sets his hand upon his head and screams aloud. "What is the matter, O our Lord?" his helpers ask. "Do you not see the honour that has been accorded this servant?" he cries. "Where were you with respect to him?" and they reply, "We used our every effort with him, but he was untouchable".<sup>17</sup>

The Prophet (upon him peace) once came in upon a young man who was dying. 'How are you?' he asked, and he replied, 'I have set my hope in Allah, and fear my sins'. And he said (upon him peace) 'Never have these two things been united in the heart of a servant in circumstances such as these without Allah granting him that for which he hopes, and delivering him from what he fears'.<sup>18</sup>

What will our situation be at our death? Will we see the good side of the Angel or the evil? This depends on our actions and deeds in this world. We should contemplate on the agonies at the time of death and pray to Allah make it easy for us all!

### Poetry by Shaykh Ahmad Raza Khan

Kaanta Mere Jigar Se Ghame Rozghar Ka  
Yu Kinch Lijiye Ke Jigar Ko Kabar Nah<sup>19</sup>

The thorn of everyday pain (anxiety) from my heart  
Grasp it in such a manner that the heart does not realise

You have read about the agonies of death. The Shaykh in this verse is remembering and supplicating to Allah to make the pain of death easy.

Mowt Kehtihe Ke Jalwa He Kareeb  
Aik Zara Sole Bilakne Wale<sup>20</sup>

Death says His<sup>21</sup> appearance is near  
Just sleep a little 'O' one who cries!

The pious remember death and always have in their minds that this is the real test. The Shaykh in this verse is looking forward in seeing the Messenger of Allah, upon him peace, as he spent his life in following the Qur'an and Sunnah. He can't wait to see him.

Ya Ilahi Bhool Jawu Naz'a Ki Takleef Ko  
Shadiye Didar Husne Mustafa Ka Saat Ho

<sup>17</sup> Ibn Abi'l Dunya, al-Mawt

<sup>18</sup> Tirmidhi, Jana'iz. Ibn Maja, Zuhd.

<sup>19</sup> Hidayak-e-Bakhshish; page 81

<sup>20</sup> Hidayak-e-Bakhshish; p102

<sup>21</sup> The Messenger of Allah, upon him peace



O my Lord! May I forget the agonies of death  
May the happiness of seeing the beauty of the chosen one be with me

In this verse the Shaykh is meditating on the agonies of death, but he wants to forget the agonies and find relief once he sees the Messenger of Allah, upon him peace.

## Section five

### On meeting the Angel of Death

Ashath ibn Aslam said, 'Ibraheem (upon whom be peace) once put certain questions to the Angel of Death (whose name is Izra'il, and who has two eyes: one in his face and the other at the back of his head). "O Angel of Death!" he said. "what do you do if there is one soul (dying) in the east and another in the west, or when a land is suffering by a plague, or when two armies fight?" "I call upon the souls," he said, "By Allah's leave, until they lie between these two fingers of mine". (And Ibraheem said,) "Then the earth is flattened out like a dish before him, from which he partakes as he wishes".' Ashath said, 'It was then that He gave him the good tidings that he was the Friend (Khalil) of Allah (The Exalted)'.

#### Fear of Hope and dying

Wahb ibn Munabbih said, 'A certain king once made a wish to ride to a place. He called for an item of clothing to wear, but it was not pleasing to him, so he demanded another until after several tries he wore one that was satisfying to him. In the same way he ordered an animal for transport to be brought, but found it not to his liking when it came, so others were brought to him until he mounted the finest one amongst them. Then the Shaytan came to him and blew into his nostrils, and puffed himself up with pride. Then he set out on his journey, never looking at anyone because of his arrogance. But then he was approached by a man of scruffy appearance, who came up to him and greeted him. When the king failed to reply he took hold of the bridle of his horse. "Release my bridle!" cried the king, "For you have committed something most awful!" "I have a request to make of you," he said. "Have patience", the king said, "Until I dismount." "No," he replied. "At this instant!" and he pulled at the reins of his horse. "Then say what it is," said the king. "It is a secret," he replied. So he leaned his head down to him, and (the stranger) told his secret to him, saying, "I am the Angel of Death!" At this, the king's complexion changed colour, and his tongue stutter, and he said, "Leave me, so that I may return to my family to bid them farwell, and wind up my affairs." "No, by Allah," he told him. "Never will you see your family and wealth again!" thereupon he took away his soul, and the king fell dead, as though he were a wooden log.

Then the Angel continued on his way. He came across a believer, whom he greeted and who greeted him in return. "I have a request which I would mention in your ear," he said. "Let me hear it," said the man. And he confided in him his secret, saying "I am the Angel of Death." "Welcome!" he said. "Welcome to the one who has long been absent from me. By Allah, there is no-one on earth whom I have wanted to meet more than you!" at this, the Angel of Death said to him, "Conclude the business for which you had set out." But he replied, "I have no business which is more important and beloved to me than meeting Allah (The Exalted)." And the Angel said, "Then choose the state in which you would prefer me to take your soul." "Are you able to do that?" he asked. "Yes," he replied, "and therefore have I been instructed." "Leave me awhile, so that I may perform the ablution and pray, and then take my soul while I am prostrating." And this he did.'

Take a few minutes to think, if we had the opportunity of doing something at the final moments, what would we do?

### **Is your name on the list?**

Ata' ibn Yasar said, 'On the middle night of Shaban<sup>22</sup> the Angel of Death receives a scroll and is told, "This year you are to take the people whose names are recorded on this scroll." A man may sow crops, marry women and raise up buildings, while his name is upon that scroll and he knows it not.'

### **Fear of death**

Al-Amash has related on the authority of Khaythama that the Angel of Death once came in upon Sulayman, the son of Dawood (upon both of whom be peace) and gazed at one of his companions at some length. When he had left again the man asked, 'Who was that?' and was told that it was the Angel of Death. And he said, 'I saw him looking at me as though he wanted me.' 'So what do you want?' asked Sulayman. 'I want you to deliver me from him by ordering the wind to carry me off to farthest part of India.' And this the wind did. Then, when the Angel of death came again, Sulayman said to him, 'I saw you looking closely at one of my companion's. 'Yes indeed,' he replied. 'I was surprised to see him, because I had been instructed to take his soul in the farthest part of India shortly afterwards; yet there he was with you, and I was astonished at this.'

Respected Brother/Sister! We do not know when the Angel of Death will come for our soul, however, let us make preparations and be prepared for that moment. Let us not be in places where we should not be, let us not be doing things which we shouldn't be, but et us be in such a situation that we welcome the Angel of Death as he takes the soul in order to meet our Lord!

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<sup>22</sup> Shaban: the eight month of the Muslim year.