

Benefits of Remembering Death

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In The Name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

Hazrat Ibne Umar (Radiyallahu ‘Anhu) says: “I was one among ten people who came into the presence of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam. One Ansari stood up and asked Nabi Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam: “Who is the most intelligent and careful person?” Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam replied: “Those people who remember death most and prepare for it most. These are people who have excelled in the nobility of this world and the honor of the hereafter.” [Reported by Ibne Abud Dunyaa and Tabraani, Jaamious Sagheer, Ibne Maajah, Targheeb]

Many Ahadeeth under different topics have been narrated from Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) regarding the remembrance of death. Some of these narrations have already been mentioned under the Hadeeth of restraining hopes. Amongst them, the commands of Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihia Wa sallam) has been mentioned in different narrations that remember the breaker of pleasures excessively, i.e., death. I am mentioning this topic separately because of the importance given to it by Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihia Wa sallam). Excessive remembrance of death is a means of:

1. Restraining hopes;
2. Preparing for death;
3. Non-attachment towards the world (which is the actual object);
4. To prevent amassing unused wealth;
5. Helps to gather a treasure for the hereafter;
6. A thing which encourages repentance from sin and
7. A prevention from oppressing others and not fulfilling their rights.

In short this deed includes within itself many benefits. For this reason it is the practice of the Masha’ikh of Sulook (the divines) to specially control their followers to meditate over death according to their appropriate conditions.

In one Hadeeth it is stated that a youngster stood up in a gathering and said: “O Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)! Who is the most intelligent amongst the Muminen (well believers)?” Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “The person who remembers death excessively and makes the best preparation before it comes.” [Iffihhaaf]

Once Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) read the Aayah (verse of Holy Quran): “Whoever Allah Ta’aala wishes to grant guidance He opens his chest for Islam (he understands Islam completely).” [Surah- An’aam : 12]

Thereafter, Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “When the Light of Islam enters a person’s bosom his bosom opens up for it.” Someone said: “O Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)! Is there any sign which indicates that Islam has entered the bosom?” Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: ‘When disinclination towards the deceptive House (the world) develops, there is an inclination towards the everlasting world (Aakhirah) and there is preparation before the coming of death.’ [Mishkaat]

Hazrat Abu Zarr (Radiyallahu Anhu) says that Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) told me: “Visit the graveyard, it will remind you of the Aakhirah. Give ghusl (bath) to the dead, it is a remedy for those bodies which are devoid of good deeds. From it a lot of advice is attained. Take part in the janaazah Salaah. It is... possible that it will create some grief and

sadness in you, for a person who is concerned with his Akhirah is under the Shadow of Allah and he searches for every good.” (Targheeb)

In one Hadeeth Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said: “Visit the sick and accompany the Janaazah for this is a reminder of the Akhirah.”

A wise person was accompanying a janaazah. En-route the people were expressing their grief and sorrow for the deceased. The wise person remarked: “It would be much more beneficial if you expressed grief and sorrow over yourselves. This person has passed away and he has saved himself from three calamities:

- 1) In future he will not have any fear of seeing the Angel of Death;
- 2) He will not experience the difficulties of death and
- 3) He has no fear of an evil end (death). Hence, you should worry since you have to pass through these three stages.”

A prominent companion of Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam Hadhrat Abu Dardaa (Radi- yallahu ‘Anhu) was accompanying a Janaazah. A wayfarer asked: ‘Whose janaazah is this?’ Hadhrat Abu Dardaa (Radiyahallahu Anhu) replied: ”This is your janaazah and if you dislike what I say then it is my janaazah.” (Meaning that this is the time to remember your death. It is unsuitable to turn one’s attention towards useless talk on this occasion).

It is the saying of Hazrat Hasan Basri (Rahmatullahi Alaihi): “It is very astonishing that those people who have been commanded to prepare for the journey (of the hereafter) and the announcement for their early departure has already been made yet they are involved in the play of this world.” It is famous about him that whenever he used to see a janaazah his condition would become such because of grief and sorrow that it seemed as if he had just returned from the burial of his mother. (Tambihul Ghaafileen]

In one Hadeeth Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said: “The deceased (punishment) In the grave are punished so severely that even the animals can hear them screaming.” In one Hadeeth Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) says. “Were it not for my apprehension that you would discard burying the dead I would have made du ‘aa to Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta’aala to enable you to hear the punishment of the grave.”

Whenever Hazrat Usman (Radiyahallahu Anhu) used to stand at the grave side he used to cry so excessively that his blessed beard would become wet with his eye drop. Someone asked: “Why do you not cry so much when mention is made of Jannah and Jahannam as you would cry when mention is made of the grave?” He replied, I heard Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) saying: “The grave is the first stage from the stages of the Akhirah, Whoever has passed it easily all the other oncoming stages will be easy for him and whoever is afflicted with punishment in it for him, the oncoming-stages will be even tougher ”

And I have also heard the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) saying. “I have not seen any scene more severe than the scene of the grave.” In another Hadeeth Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said “Every morning and evening, the deceased (dead being) is shown his abode which he will enter after the Day of Qiyamah.

May Allah direct us in the right way to earn His pleasure before our death.