

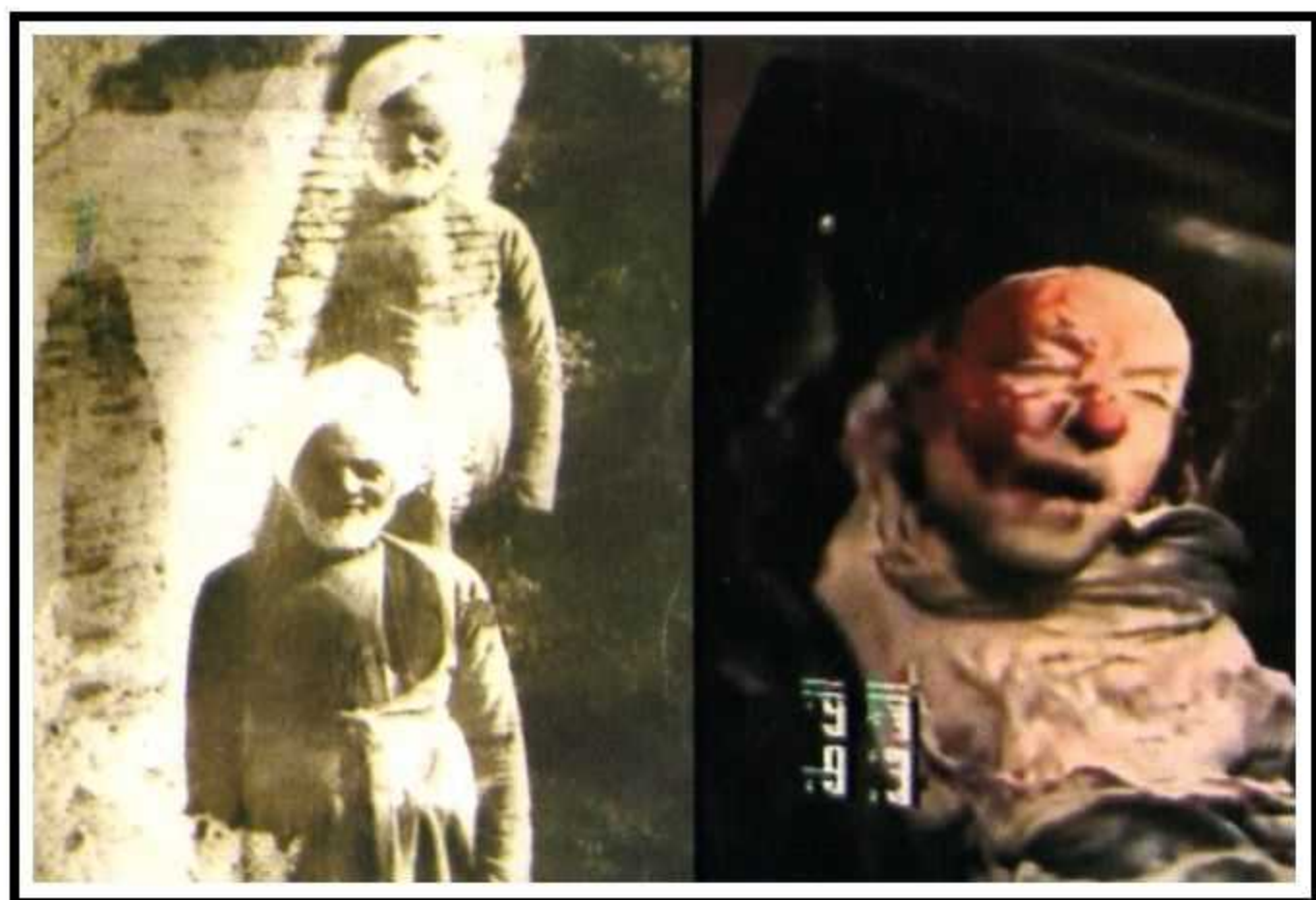
The spirit and death

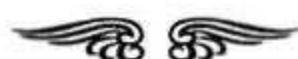
Facts and myths

Findings of the Quran, Traditions and science

Research by Dr. S. M. Hasan Rizvi

English translation by Sibte Haider





The title pictures

Left: The photograph of an Aalim e Deen. The camera shows his aura (*hamzaad*) or soul too, in the background

Right: The photograph of Hujr bin Adi a famous companion of the Apostle and Ali's Shi'ah, martyred on the orders of Mu'avyyah in 60 Hijrah. Recently the so called Salafis in Syria desecrated his shrine and took his body away to an unknown place from his grave. His face and the shroud look quite intact even after the 1400 years. What else could be the proof of veracity of Islam and Imam Ali than it?



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Prologue

To talk on the subject of the spirit and death is an utmost difficult job. But to translate such writings into English is still more difficult, specifically for a person like me.

The word rooh has been used in Quran in different meanings. But I disagree with those who claim that Quran never used it in the sense of spirit or soul. They argue that this meaning was given by the Muslim scholars in their exegeses written in the third and fourth centuries under the influence of the Western philosophy that invaded the Muslim ideology during the Abbasid era.

My argument is that exegeses were penned down by many companions of the Holy Prophet (SAVAVS) during the very first century. Details can be had from Itqaan by Allamah Sayuti. The prominent among those were:

1. Ubai bin Ka'b who completed his exegesis in 19 Hijrah during the days of Umer
2. Abdullah bin Abbas who wrote his exegesis most probably between 50 to 60 Hijrah since thereafter he went blind and died in 68 H. He obtained knowledge directly from the apostle and thereafter he remained Imam Ali's disciple.
3. The famous tabi'ee Saeed bin Jubayr who wrote his exegesis (perhaps) after the death of his teacher Ibn Abbas.
4. It is said that Abdullah bin Masood, the famous companion, also had written his exegesis.

All those treasures of knowledge and wisdom vanished by the passage of time but the exegesis of Ibn Abbas is still available with the name of Tanveer ul Miqyas. In Pakistan Qadimi Kutub Khana has reproduced it.

While interpreting the verse 23:14 *Summa ansha'naa khalq-an akhar....* Ibn e Abbas says on page 359 of Tanveer ul Miqyas that '*Ja'alnaa feeh*

Ar-Rooh means "Then WE put therein (mother's womb) the spirit/soul". There can be no other translation of the word rooh but the spirit or soul, here.

Here, one must not forget that neither Ibn Abbas saw the Abbasid era nor he was influenced by the Western philosophy. Both influenced the Muslim ideology long time after his death. As such the argument, that the rooh does not mean the spirit or soul, becomes absolutely baseless.

Well, it was my study and I passed on to you but I am not competent enough to say anything more on the topic so you carry on with Dr. Hasan's version.

As usual Dr. M. Sayedain Jaffery has helped me in improving this presentation. I am also thankful to Prof. Sayyid Alim Shah for giving me the correct names of some Western philosophers and thinkers. If some mistake persists please correct me.

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Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem

The Western thinkers' views about the spirit

- Descartes said that the spirit and the soul is one and the same thing. Animals have no soul and their acts are mechanic. Man is a combination of both the spirit and soul.
- Hegel said there is no God and no spirit. It is matter only all around.
- Democritus acknowledges the spirit but takes it as a material thing. To him it is made up of very delicate, glossy, shining and smooth substance.
- Plato was the first philosopher to declare the spirit as immortal. To him it has two aspects, an intellectual and the other non intellectual. Its real job is to sense the things, to think, and to wish. Its intellectual aspect connects it with world of symbols that is why it is immortal. After the death it goes to the world of symbols.
- Aristotle says that the spirit and body are two sides of one thing. The spirit is not the body and the body is not the spirit but they have great affiliation. The spirit, in fact, is a power found in the living body and not in the dead one.
- Barkley says that the spirit, soul, ego and wisdom are different names of one thing. The spirit is the power that thinks and ponders and desires are created by it. It senses and percepts as well.
- Hume said, "I would have known it if the spirit was something, so it is nothing".

- The modern Western thinkers have refuted Hume. They claim that although we can't feel the spirit through senses but we have the inner sense of our substratum. (Perhaps that is the spirit)
Anyhow right from Plato till 1738 all the Western thinkers confessed that the spirit is an immortal substance. But in 1739 David Hume said that it is nothing. If at all it is something, it is a bundle of acts and feelings.
- Nietzsche confessed the existence of the spirit and called it an 'absolute ego'. He also proved that it is in contact with the absolute spirit (Allah).
- Schopenhauer and Bradley wrote that the soul was the basic substance or matter of the universe, which came into being by evolution.
- W. K. Clifford declared the consciousness as soul as well as the spirit.
- The British thinker James Ward said that the soul, consciousness and feelings were the foundations of the universe.
- Hault Marven, Monteko and Harry and a group of great American thinkers, have declared the self awareness as physical reaction of the body. They also thought the spirit to be a compound machine of organs.
- The group comprising Satyana and Dreck said the universe was based on duality. It means the man is made of matter and the soul is a compound of imagination and qualities. They, matter and soul, are the essence of a man.
- The initial science took the spirit as an advanced form of life.

Muslim thinkers and the spirit:

- A group of thinkers from Ikhvan us Safaa admitted Allah as spirit of the universe.

They said the human beings have two spirits one is ordinary the other is special.

- Nizam Syar Maghzali wrote that the spirit is another form of body and is present therein like the fat in the milk. (It is also called a body belonging to the world of similitude)
- Shaikh Ishraqi wrote that man's existence is lover of manifestation meaning appearance. That is why he gets manifestation (*tajalli*) through the spirit. The spirit in the body can contact the source of light (Allah) but it cannot directly induce the manifestation in the body since the body is solid and dark. For creating a contact between a body and a spirit a medium is required, which is called animal soul (*nafs*). The soul is a hot and delicate vapor at a particular place on the heart's left side. The soul keeps running all around in the body. It is as a great lover of meeting the Absolute Light (Allah) as a moth is of a lamp. He continued that the soul (*nafs*) and mind are a unity and all their powers and talents have a mystic contact with the human spirit. He further wrote that there are three active forces in a man. First is the wisdom or the celestial spirit, which is the source to long for knowledge. Second is the animal soul that causes anger, bravery, power lust and ambitions. Third the beast soul, which is responsible for selfishness, lechery and emotion
- Mujaddad Alf Saani called the spirit a creation of the world of command but it also got the qualities of the world of creation. That is why it developed physical characteristics. In the world of command (*Alam e Amr*) everything is created at once by Allah's order while in the world of creation things take shape gradually. When the spirit

enters a human body, it causes in it emotions of excitement and revolt. Quran called it the despotic soul (*Nafs e 'Ammaarah*) and it inclines towards evil doing.

- Shah Waliullah said that the soul (*nafs*) is the medium between the animal spirit and the human spirit. After the death, the spirits of virtuous people perform different functions together with the dominion (*Malakut*). They infuse superior ideas and suggestions in peoples' minds and also advise them to be steadfast against diseases and (bad) thinking.
- Ibn Cena said that the spirit is supernatural to matter. The spirit's capabilities are divided into two parts. First the perception. It means to think and feel. Second the action. It means intention and power. The spirit has eight characteristics like hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, intuition for knowledge, perception and feeling hot and cold.

The experts of mysticism said that the whole universe is manifestation of one spirit (Allah). Every person has a separate spirit. After one's death it lives in the isthmus either with the spirits of high ups (*'Illyun*) or is imprisoned there. The torment of grave inflicts the spirit but it would be along with the body on the Dooms Day. Here the grave means isthmus. The spirits, despite being in the isthmus, have some connection with their respective bodies. After the death of a person it is impersonated in an analog body.

The spirit's reality and the traditions:

Imam Ali narrates that the Holy Prophet (SAVAVS) said that after the death of a person his spirit is connected to an analog body, which resembles the worldly physique so much that if we see it, we would recognise whose body it was.

He further said that the spirit is a creation of Allah,

which moves like air. That is why, in Arabic, both the words, spirit and air, have been derived from the word reeh (air). Then HE attributed it to Himself and said in Quran, "I breathed into him (Adam) of my spirit" (22:72).

Allah said so because He chose the Adam's spirit as HE chose Ka'bah from amongst the houses of the world or as HE chose Ibrahim as His friend from amongst the prophets. But all the spirits are the creatures and as such they are the result of an origin (*Haadis*). All are trained but they depend on Allah. Neither are they His partners nor equivalent but his creation, slaves and dependant on His training.

The spirit and Quran

Allah says, "And (O Our Apostle) they ask thee about the spirit. Say thou that the spirit is from the Command of my Lord and ye are not given (its) knowledge but a little". (17:85)

The spirit is attributed to the world of command:

The above verse tells that the spirit is a product of the world of Command and not the world of procreation. The world of Command is where everything comes into being all at once when "Be" is commanded, whereas in the world of procreation things are produced and reproduced gradually. Like spirit the angels are also a product of the world of Command.

Its interpretation:

The human body is like a factory, a multifarious mill comprising a complex of mechanical operations, each performing diverse functions. When all the parts are assembled a complex machine comes into being. Thereafter, when electricity or energy is infused into it, every silent and stagnant part starts performing functions assigned to it and the machines comes alive.

Likewise, Allah creates each and every cell and gives a size and shape to every organ of the human body in the mother's womb. Quran called this state as an image or a picture (*Tasveer*). Then HE develops a connection between these organs and

assigns some work to them. It is called creation. The well coordinated configuration of the diverse assemblage, as a whole, is given the shape befitting to body of each individual creature. In Quran this episode is termed as an exceptional article of belief 'measuring' or credo (*Taqdeer*)

Eventually, for all time HE created the spirit and enjoined it to enter the human body as an invisible energy or force which activates each organ of the body like heart, mind, liver, stomach, lung, ear, nose, eye, etc to accomplish the specific task assigned to each.

It is the Mighty Authoritative Command (*Amr*) of Allah that governs the ultimate genesis of the spirit, as enunciated in Quran. Quran says:

'His command, when intendeth HE anything, only that he sayeth unto it 'Be' then (and there) it is'. (36:82)

It means that the command (*Amr*) is Allah's intention. But Quran mentioned the creation before the advent of the command, because a physical body is first created in mother's womb followed by the command or soul (spirit). Inception of the spirit is simultaneous that fuses into the body and provides animation i. e. power to start functioning. Or it might be that a great and exalted spirit (*Malik e Akber* or *Rooh e Azam*) would have already been created at Allah's bid, as referred to in the traditions. We may call it a 'treasure' or 'store' of spirits wherefrom they move towards their respective body in the mother's womb. With the power of "charge" (spirit) ingrained in the body, vital tissues of each and every organ of body starts functioning, giving rise to evolutionary life.

As such the human beings are a consequence of the in-depth blend of the creation and the command, both. The body is a fascinating sequel of creation which progressively grows, while the spirit is the instant compliance of His command to merge with the body and manage its affairs.

Spiritualism:

Dr. Mesmayre, an Australian, introduced the concept of spiritualism in Europe in 1842. First he claimed to have possessed the powers to invoke the spirit of a dead person claiming that they could see and hear them (the spirits). Then, for those who called themselves spiritualists he established institutions to summon the spirits. They practically did so a lot many times. The author, (Dr. Rizvi) says he, himself has watched many a time, on TV channels in USA and UK, while spiritualists practiced spiritualism and confessed that the spirit was a reality. Due to such people a common man in Europe and US believes in spirit and turns deaf ear to those who thought otherwise and claimed that the spirit was a non-entity and all the fuss is about nothing.

An Urdu verse says: "In his debates a philosopher does not find Allah just as he does not find the end point of an entangled thread, while disentangling it".

Few Eastern thinkers say that what the spiritualists call the spirit is factually one's familiar self or Aura. The author (Dr. Rizvi) heard Sufi Shaheed ullah, a great Sufi master, saying that the spiritualists do invoke spirits but it is the lowest part of a spirit. Bertrand Russell, a British philosopher of international repute, also confirmed that he attended a meeting of spiritualists and found them quite scientific.

The author's experience:

In 1973 the author (Dr. Rizvi) visited a spiritualist society at Hyde Park Corner in London and met its chairman Dr. Morgan, with whom he had fixed a prior appointment, before leaving Karachi regarding invoking the spirit of his father. As soon as he entered his room Dr Morgan said, "You have come to meet your father's spirit and it is already here right before me". Then he described his features in details. He even told, and quite correctly so, about the number of his original and artificial teeth. He said the spirit seems to be of a religious

scholar as he was wearing a long cloak and a black turban. The spiritualist said that my father had told him that out of his three sons he liked the author (Dr. Rizvi) the most because he was religious minded. Dr. Morgan said that my father's spirit was enquiring about the ring presented to me by a friend of mine. My father liked that ring since its cornelian was quite big but I had abandoned it being quite heavy.

Dr. Morgan told that there was another spirit of a Christian lady doctor who was caressing me with loving eyes like a mother. I recalled her as Dr. Noons who was a nun and I was born in her hands. I was very weak since I was delivered in eighth month of pregnancy. She kept me under her care at her house for about a month in a soft padded box and treated me as her own child providing medicines etc. free of charge".

The author's father had an unique habit, that whenever the name of Imam Husain was taken before him his face became red and he would bend saying thrice 'Peace be upon him'. He always advised others to call the Imam's name with great respect. I was curious to find out what the great Imam thought about me (the author), hence I requested Dr. Morgan to ask his father about it. Dr. Morgan asked me who was Imam Husain? But immediately he got upset saying that my father's face turned red and he bowed thrice. Dr. Morgan told that my father's spirit has just advised me to call the name of Imam Husain with great respect.

When the appointment was over Dr. Morgan once again asked me as to who was Imam Husain. I told him that he was the grandson of our Apostle and was martyred at Karbala by the Umayyad. He said he believed in Muhammad's prophethood. How come, I asked? Dr. Morgan replied that, once he called the spirit of Jesus the Christ but my request was rejected and once I wanted to call Muhammad's spirit but my request was turned down the same way. He added that no spirit could

reject his call except that of a Prophet or God's friend (*Vali*). It proves that Muhammad (SAVAVS) is a true Prophet.

The concept of death

There is a basic difference between the past and present thinkers about the theory of death. The old thinkers opined that the reasons of death were extrinsic, while the modern thinkers declare the intrinsic reasons to be the cause of death. As such, however, death is the distinct characteristic of everything that is alive. It means that not necessarily does a living being (man/animal/plant) die of unfavorable circumstances but death is destined at any stage during life as prescribed by the Creator, or after attaining superannuation. That is why the death is termed as inescapable 'certainty' in Quran and that is why we calculate the average age of the human beings as well as the animals. So we must believe that every creation brings with it the certainty of death. Everyone has to die as and when laid down in his life-span.

Quran says:

'Every soul shall have a taste of death'. (3:185)
Einstein said that the whole universe was becoming colder and darker day by day (going through climatic change) but we fail to perceive because the process of metamorphosis/mutation is too slow to be felt. It takes millions of centuries for even a minutest alteration in the norm of our universe to become noticeable. Therefore, according to him the self-destructive phenomenon of the stars and planets is progressively rendering them colder and darker and hence after billions of years, our bright and warm world shall be absolutely cold and dark. May be that is the dooms day.

But the mortality of the things does not bar us from enjoying their beauty and pleasures. We find many elements very beautiful and attracting although we know they have a short life. May be

we are not captivated by the charm of a flower that remains abloom for an indefinite period. We appreciate the spring season and anxiously look forward to its arrival. The human life, likewise, is also short but we are passionately involved in it, although at times, we do become perturbed by the thought of short span of life. It means that at a time a thing can be delightful as well as painful. The lure of enjoyable future, if the span of life gets stretched, seems to be far more than the existing one.

Different views about the death:

In Buddhism it is said that the man would eventually disappear into the universe and that would be his salvation where he would go through some diverse and repeated psychological experiences under varying circumstantial conditions and stages.

Best example of such deliverance is Buddha himself, who attained salvation (nirvana) after passing through some episodes of blissful trances. He entered the first trance followed by second, third and fourth spell. Then he entered the spatial limitations followed by the space of limitless consciousness. He then entered the world where awareness is suspended. Thereafter he came back to the space of limitless consciousness and rolled in between various stages. At last, after going through the fourth trance, the pious man achieved the coveted salvation.

In Hinduism the cycle of fate repeats, like a pendulum, without completing the circle itself. Having reached the last point it returns to the starting point to endlessly repeat the cycle. This repetition is recognised by both the Eastern and the Western philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Bergson and Einstein. They all believed that the time's shape was like a circle. That is why the Eternal Wisdom has manifested itself time and again and thus the eternal sequence of this immortal circle carries on itself.

Allamah Iqbal said: "Stagnancy is something rare

in the nature while a change has constancy in the world”.

The Greeks also don't take the process of history as an evolutionary process. But, they think, it is the repetition of the events with intervals. So it is said that 'history repeats itself'. It means that repetitive feats bring about progression without letting the life to expire.

Freid proved through self analysis that the principle of return and repetition also takes the animals and vegetation back to their original condition. The principle of return has also been accepted by the modern world renowned experts like Shopenheir, Spingler and Wiseman. Nitché said, "May be we gather in future again to debate this very point of return and repetition".

Wiseman separated the living matter in his laboratory, into mortal and immortal constituents. He named the mortal part as 'soma' saying that it alone can die while the germ cell is immortal in its essence. Under favorable circumstances the germ cell acquires new entity and creates new somas.

An Urdu couplet depicts this theory in a befitting manner saying: "My harvest has been burnt but not the relish of nesting. I shall again erect the nest since I know not the disappointment". For Wiseman, it conveys that, death occurs in terms of physical existence, whereas it does not perish totally.

Freid gives this discussion the shape of a theory. He thinks the causes of death are esoteric or mystic because every form of life, aspires to go back to its original spiritual mode, in order to attain what Buddha called salvation (*nirvaan*). The life therefore, is ceaseless cycle of 'evolution' as well as 'recapitulation'.

This complex phenomenon of evolutionary repetitions is quite lucidly explained in Quran:

- "Even as HE brought ye forth (in the beginning) so unto Him shall ye also

return". (8:29)

- "Say thou (O the Apostle!): The death from which ye flee, verily it meeteth you, then ye shall be returned to the Knower of the unseen, then will HE inform ye whatever ye used to do". (62:8)
- "And indeed know ye the first growth, why then ye reflect not (the second one)". (56:12)

Therefore, as per Quran the reality of death is:

1. The return to Allah
2. To face the result of deeds (good or bad) done by us

Everything returns to its origin:

Since it is definite that everything, including man, returns to its origin (The Lord) and so it is gauged whether or not he has fulfilled the purpose of his creation i. e. total subservience to the commandants sent down by Him, wherein lay his salvation. Quran has categorically stated that:

"Then as for him whose scales are heavy (with good deeds) he shall be in a life, well pleased with. And as for him whose scales are light (with good deeds) his home shall be '*Haviah*'. What maketh thee know what '*Haviah*' is? It is a raging fire". (101:6-11)

So man's salvation is in good deeds only, which is Allah's obedience. The more good deeds he performs the nearer he becomes to Allah.

Quran says:

"Verily the pious ones shall be in orchards and rivers, in the seat of Truth, near to the Sovereign Omnipotent One". (54:54-55)

Spirits in the intermediate world:

The traditions confirm that the spirits can see, hear and comprehend. After the battle of Badr the Apostle addressed the contingents of Quraysh's chiefs and said, "You must have found it to be true what I said to you". Abu Bakr asked if they could hear. He replied they could hear far better than you.

The Apostle also lay down in the grave of Fatimah

bint Asad, her aunt and mother of Imam Ali, before she was buried therein. When she was laid to rest, he talked to her, "Two angels shall approach you from Allah for questioning. You tell them that Allah is my Lord, Muhammad is my Prophet and Ali, my son, is my Imam". Then he prayed for her and cleared the dust by striking his right hand over the left. Thereafter he said, "By Allah who possesses my life, Fatimah has heard even the sound of striking my hands". Later he added, "By Allah, Who possesses my life I did not come out of her grave until I saw two lights, one towards her head and the other by the side of her feet. He said he also saw two merciful angels". (Amaali by Shaikh Saduq p680)

The state at the time of burial:

Imam Baqir narrated that the Apostle said, "When a mu'min is laid down in the grave, six luminous faces come and stand all around his corpse. The most luminous one stands besides his head. They ask one another as to who are they. The one on the right side says I'm his prayer, the one on the left side says I am his alms and charity, the one on his front says I'm his fast, the one on his back says I'm his Hajj & Umrah, the one on near his feet says I'm his good deeds which he performed in the world and then the most luminous one says I'm the custodian (*Vilayah*) of love and reverence the dead one had towards Muhammad and his progeny". (Bihar 6:234)

The condition at the time of death:

When the angel of death comes to a man, first of all his worldly wealth is presented, personified, before him. He asks it how it can benefit him (now). The angel replies that it could buy his coffin and grave from me. The man is disappointed and turns away. Then his children are presented before him and he puts the same question to them. They say they will carry him and hand over to the grave. When again he gets disappointed, a very handsome figure holds his arm and consoles him saying:

"Don't worry as I shall help you in the grave, at the resurrection, when your deeds would be evaluated and while you cross the Bridge *Siraat*. Surprised, the man asks who the visitor is? He replies that he is not all a stranger, but I'm you own good deeds that you performed willingly or half-heartedly while you lived in the world".

The paradise and hell in the isthmus:

Imam Jafar Sadiq narrates that the Apostle was asked as to where do the spirits reside. He said that the spirits of the believers live in citadels of the Paradise (of the isthmus) and enjoy its foods, honey and nectar, meet one another and pray for an early resurrection for fulfillment of (Allah's) promises. But the spirits of Kaafooroon (non-believers) are confined to chambers (of the isthmus) filled with fire, eat hell's food, meet one another, repent for their sins and wish there was no Court of Judgment is held by Allah for fulfillment of His promises. (Usool e Kaafi 4:244)

The spirits visit their worldly homes:

Imam Jafar Sadiq narrated that the Apostle said, "Every spirit comes to see his descendants and relatives at Zuhr (mid day). When the spirit of a Mu'min observes them performing good deeds it thanks and glorifies Allah but when an infidel's spirit observes them indulged in good deeds, grief overcomes it thinking would that he also had done the same". (Usool e Kaafi 2:228)

Happiness of the dead in grave:

Imam Ali advised that you must go visit the graves because the internee lying therein will be cheerful and contended. You must sit besides your parents' graves, pray for them followed by prayers for yourselves. (Usool e Kaafi 2:228)

Profile after the death:

Imam Jafar Sadiq narrated that the Apostle said, "When Allah takes possession of a spirit HE gives it another body in which it spends the life (in isthmus) and enjoys the blessings of comfort including food, till the day of resurrection. Its physique is just like the worldly body and other

spirits recognise it easily. (Bihar 6:229)

Imam Jafar Sadiq said that after the death the recompense of six deeds left behind, keeps increasing.

1. Pious children who seek salvation for their parents
2. Recitation from the Quran left by deceased, holds reward for as long as it is recited
3. A well (or any other charitable deed) that would be for public welfare, will continue to be rewarded for as long as people are benefitted by it
4. A tree, that provides shade or fruit
5. A spring that quenches thirst and irrigates vegetation
6. Good manners/deeds that are emulated by others who follow him (Amaali p102)

The state at the time of death:

Tameem Darami, a great Sufi Master, narrated that the Apostle said, "When Allah ordains the angel of death to terminate one's life, HE says: I have tried him through periods of bliss and grief and he came up to my expectations. Now go and relieve him of the worldly trevails and bring him here along with 500 angels and with a shroud of the paradise. In their hands, they have a white handkerchief smelling musk and fragrant bouquets of sweet basil of varied colors and aromas. The angel of death sits by the head of the man while the rest stand all around him. He puts the handkerchief with musk smell beneath his chin and opens the paradise door before him. He is cheered by the new comers and the gifts of paradise just as a weeping kid is amused by toys. Sometimes houris, swaying to and fro with joy are brought before him and sometimes fruits, dresses and castles of paradise are shown to him.

On seeing all this, his spirit throbs in the body. Then the angel of death says: O the pious spirit! Let's go to the berries without thorns, clusters of bananas, the thick and vast shades with water flowing underneath. He talks to him softly as a

mother does to her child since he knows he is Allah's close friend and slave. Then the angel takes possession of the man's spirit with such an ease as a hair is pulled out of flour. All the angels greet him with salutations and give him good news of entering the paradise".

When a corpse is laid down in the grave his prayers stand by him on right and the fasts on the left. His recitation of Quran, reflection, thoughts, studies and gnosis stand by his head while his prayers in congregation stand by his feet. But his patience against hardships and adversity stands quiet in a corner. When the agony of grave emerges, his prayers and fasts address it saying by Allah! This man underwent hardships, in the world, obeying his Lord. He has just slept peacefully. The torment, then, surfaces from other side but is stopped by his recitation of Quran along with reflection, thoughts, studies and gnosis. So the distress is stopped by his virtues as it arises from all sides. The patience tells all of them, "Keep the torment away from the man or else, you ask me and I will repel it. I'll also help him, later, when his deeds are weighed and assessed".

Then two angels approach the corpse. They have bright eyes, thundering voice, pointed teeth, wide and hanging feet, fire spreading breaths. They carry a hammer, so heavy that all the men and jinns may not lift it. But the angels are quite sympathetic to a mu'min. They ask him to sit up and lower his shroud down. Then they start questioning him, as to who are your Lord, your Prophet and Imam. They endorse when he replies correctly. Then they undo the walls of his grave and it becomes very wide. When he sees upward, he finds there a door through which the lush gardens of Paradise are visible. The angels say O Allah's friend! That is your eternal abode as you obeyed your Lord.

The angels then ask him to look towards his feet and there he finds another door that opens towards

the hell. They say O Allah's friend! You got rid of the hell and he once again enjoys an everlasting pleasure.

Thereafter seventy seven gates leading to Paradise shall open up; where from cold breeze scented with aromatic fragrance would flow out. Such a pleasant state shall last till the Dooms Day.

On the other hand, when Almighty Allah sends the angel of death to a disbeliever HE says that this skeptic persistently disobeyed ME and disregarded MY countless blessings generously bestowed on him. Now he has to pay for his sins of being thankless and ungrateful.

Therefore, the angel of death comes to him in a dreadful shape, carrying in one hand, a brutal macebearer made of hellfire's iron and a burning whip of cruelty in the other. He strikes the macebearer on his face and its thorns penetrate into all of his bones, muscles and veins. When he pulls it back, other angels use the whip rendering him unconscious. While beating him up mercilessly, the angle of death pulls his spirit but stops at stomach, again pulls it but stops at knees, again pulls it and stops at heels. Meanwhile the molten copper burning with hellfire is also placed under his chin. Then he calls, "O you the cursed one! I'll take you to the hellfire and the boiling water under the shadow of dark black smoke, which is neither cold nor pleasant".

When the spirit exits from the body, the Angel says, "May Allah punish you, it was you who by being disobedient and unfaithful to Allah and thankless for his blessings, invited me hastily to present you before the wrath of Allah. You ruined yourself and me as well". The body too reciprocates the same words to the spirit. Meanwhile the Satanic hordes run towards Satan to inform him about his fellow who just entered the hell.

Earlier, when his corpse was buried, the grave becomes narrow and squeezes him so tight that his ribs are fractured and their pieces are intermingled. Snakes bite his nose and toes. The

two angels cross question him and hit him with the iron macebearer belching fire when he is unable to give satisfactory response. As he looks upwards he finds a door opening towards Paradise and the angels tell him that it would have been his eternal abode if he remained faithful to Allah and obeyed His doctrine.

Then a door, emitting blistering flames, is opened in the grave and the angels say, "O the enemy of Allah this leads to hell, your everlasting abode". Then a deaf and blind demon is assigned to him carrying an iron macebearer, so heavy that a mountain would pulverize into dust with its one hit. As the dead one is hit, his cries are heard by all living beings, except men and jinns. Eventually he is reduced to dust and then his spirit is returned to the hell. (Musnad Ahmed and Sunan Abu Daud) Bukhari and Muslim also contain Apostle's saying, "The blow of the iron macebearer and loud screams of the corpse are heard by all and sundry, except the man and the jinn.

Both can't hear this because they are being tried by their wisdom and deeds to believe in the unseen. If they happen to hear these cries they would immediately believe, but this belated confession shall neither be the belief of the faithful nor a fair expression of wisdom.

The Apostle also said, "When a dead body is carried to the graveyard it cries that it is ruined and asks where it was being taken? If anyone is able to hear such bewails, he would be knocked-out". (Bukhari) The Apostle was shown all such scenes beforehand since he was supernaturally competent to tolerate this in which he believed even before witnessing it.

He said that corpses are agonized in the graves. Had I not the fear that you would leave them unburied, I would definitely have requested my Lord to make you hear these cries as I hear. (Tirmizi) He told that he saw that a corpse's head was being crushed with a stone. Gabriel told that he studied

and understood the Quran but forgot it and kept sleeping without offering prayers.

A corpse's jaw was being torn since he was a compulsive liar. Some men and women were being burnt nude since they were adulterators. Another person was being dipped in a river and fed with stones because he was a usurer. Someone was sitting on the hellfire and a guard was inflaming the fire.

In the Paradise there was a tall old fellow who was surrounded by many children. He was Prophet Ibrahim and the children were those who died in infancy. Some people were half beautiful and half ugly. They were those who performed both the good and bad deeds. But later Allah showed mercy and they were cleared. (Bukhari and Baihqi) The Apostle saw some groups with big tummies and fire was coming out of their mouths and anuses, they were the homosexuals. There was also a canal of white milk, it was the Kausar canal. (Ibn e 'Asakar)

He said that during the ascension I saw a group with tummies big like pitchers and they fell whenever they wanted to stand. They were venal persons earning their livelihood by unlawful means. Then he saw a group having lips as those of camels and they were being fed with stones. They were those who devoured the orphans' wealth. Some people were being given to eat their own ribs. They were the backbiters and fault-finders. They all shall be continuously treated like this till the day of resurrection. (Baihqi and Dalaail un Nabuvvah) He saw some people whose tongues and lips were being cut and rejoined time and again. They were the mischievous orators (the mullas and leaders). He also saw some people in whose eyes and ears iron bars were being hammered. They were those who would watch venal things. Then he saw three persons taking pure drinks. They were Zayd bin Harisah, Jafar Tayyar and Abdullah bin Ravahah. (Sunan Ibn Khuzaymah and Sunan Ibn Habaan) Then he saw that when the angel of death

approached a person his conduct with parents came forward and snatched him away. Another person was rescued from the torment of grave by his ablution. A person's reflection made the Satans run away from him. A person's tongue was out of his mouth because of thirst; his fasts came and quenched it. Another person was being thrown out of the prophets' company. His major ritual ablution (*Ghusl e Janabat*) caught him and made him sit near him (the Apostle).

Someone was surrounded by darkness; his Hajj and Umrah got him out of it. A person was being neglected whenever he tried to talk to others. His union of kindred (*silā e rahmī*) forbade them to do so. Another person was protecting his face from blazing flames. His charity came forward to protect him. A devilish angel seized each and every part of someone's body. His preaching of religion came to his rescue and he went over to the angels of mercy. Someone's record of deeds lacked virtues but his fear of Allah neutralized it by the record of his virtuous deeds. Two children of a person who had died in infancy added weight to his righteousness. A person was on the verge of falling into hell but his dread of Allah saved him. Another person was thrown in hell but his tears salvaged him which he had shed due to the fright of Allah. Someone was scared of the razor-sharp Siraat Bridge; his pious God-fearing conjecture helped him cross it safely. Another person was walking on his knees on the Siraat Bridge but his respect for the Apostle made him stand on his feet and he crossed it. Another person saw the Paradise door closed when he reached there, but impulsive affirmation of faith by him, (*Kalima e Shahadat*) immediately opened the door for him. Some people had their tongues dropping out; they were those who used to attribute false allegations to the Muslims. (Tabarani and Navaadir ul Usul)

The state at death time and modern research:

Dr. Moodi, head of an US institution naming "Life after death" interviewed hundreds of people who

were declared dead by their physicians, but they recovered after treatment. Most of them stated that:

1. As soon as the spirit was separated from the body, their power of perception increased extraordinarily and they could feel and see things far away from them
2. After the death the spirit met their relatives and they recognised them as they had the same worldly appearances
3. When they were carried to the grave their spirits followed them at a distance of three feet
4. Everyone saw a light around him and in the grave as well
5. At the death time they found as if they were passing through a dark tunnel and suddenly they were out of their bodies
6. One person said that when people tried to resuscitate him he could clearly see and hear them. Then he saw a light and he wanted to be near to it but he was pushed back in his body.
7. Another person, bathed in blood due to accident of his vehicle, told that he saw people cutting his car to pull him out and then felt being treated by doctors. He heard them clearly and could even hear the sounds of the instruments being used. But he could not speak and had to re-enter his body with reluctance and pain.
8. Someone told that he found his thought process had changed. Distances became meaningless. He was aboard a boat like plane and flew in the space. His dead relatives joined him and his dead daughter came and sat in his lap. He heard some doctors saying that he was dead while others disagreed. And then he was forced to enter his body again.
9. Another person saw a light when he was seriously ill. He felt that he was passing

through a dark tunnel. He heard some voices and suddenly he was out of his body. His heart and mind stopped working.

The state at the time of death:

Quran says:

- 'Then why do ye not (help) when (the soul of the dying man) cometh up to the throat? And then ye (remain) gazing only (at it). And WE are nearer to him than ye, but ye see (US) not Then if he be of those drawn nigh (unto Allah), for him is rest and happiness and garden the delightful. And if he be of the people of right hand then peace be unto you from the people of right hand (for peace and happiness). But if he be of those who belied (Allah and his Apostle), has gone astray; he shall have an entertainment of a boiling water and blazing of the hell-fire. Verily it is truth in certainty'. (56:83-85 & 88-95)
- 'Those whom the angels take away in a good state, while receiving them the angels would say: Peace be on you; enter ye into the Gardens, for what ye were doing in life" (when you were alive). (16:32)
- 'Verily those who say Our Lord is Allah and persevere aright, descend upon them the angels (saying) "Fear ye not nor be grieved and receive glad tidings of the Gardens which ye were promised'. (41.33)
- "..... Sayeth he: My Lord send me back again (in the world) so that I may do (the) good, which I have left undone...". (23:99 & 100)

A tradition says:

"All the ailments are inflicted as a precursor of death. When the angel of death comes he says to the negligent: You received many messengers and informers but I'm the last messenger after whom no prophet shall come to you. Therefore accept Allah's commandments and leave the world willingly or otherwise".

The Apostle's last moments:

At the time of the Apostle's departure, Gabriel came for solicitous felicitation. He told Gabriel that he was feeling pain. Meanwhile *Izrael* - the angel of death knocked the door and sought permission to enter. Gabriel informed him that the death angel was asking his permission to enter, which he never did so before and shall never do so after this. The Apostle permitted him and asked Gabriel to stay. *Izrael* came and said: "I'm here by Allah's order to act as you desire. If I have your permission I shall take your soul to God, otherwise not". The Apostle asked whether he would be able to do so. He said yes he had been ordered so. Gabriel said Allah awaits to meet you. So the Apostle allowed the death angel to do the needful and he obeyed accordingly. (Tabarani)

Traditions about the state at death time:

Once at the time of death of an *Ansaari* the Apostle came and sat by his head side and started scratching the earth with a stick in his hand. Then he raised his head and said thrice, "Ask Allah's refuge from the agony of the grave". He further said that when a *mu'min* dies angels descend from heaven. Their faces are white and bright like the sun and they bring with them a shroud and perfume from there. They sit around him and say, "O the undefiled soul come out of your body and move towards your Lord. The soul comes out easily just like musk or a drop of water from ice. The angel of death takes him into custody while others show deference to him. They put him in the shroud brought from Paradise and spray the perfume of Paradise on him. Then he is taken to heavens and there the angels inquire as to whose auspicious spirit is that. The accompanying angels introduce him that who he was. Doors of seven heavens are opened, one by one for him. There Allah commands his deeds to be written among those of the exalted ones (*Illyyun*), and take him down to the earth again where he will first be mixed with the same dust from which he was produced and there He

will resurrect him again". The spirit is hence, put in the similitude of the worldly body of and returned to his grave.

Two angels come to him there, make him sit and then there is a question and answer session.

Q: Who is your Lord?

A: Allah

Q: What is your Faith?

A: Islam

Q. Who is your Prophet?

A: Muhammad (SAVAVS)

Q: How did you recognise him?

A: Through Quran, I believed in him and conceived the truth of his testament.

Allah is satisfied by the answers given and asks the angels to spread a carpet of Paradise for him, put him in the Paradise shroud and open the doors of Paradise to let its fragrance reach him. Immediately his grave becomes very capacious when a person with luminous face and sweet aroma emanating from him approaches and congratulates him about this day of peace bestowed on him as promised. The corpse inquires as to who he was, who seemed to be a pious one. The person replies he represented the good deeds that he performed for Allah's sake. The corpse praises him and begs for early resurrection so that he could see his family and friends". (*Noor us Sudur fi Sharh ul Qabur by Sayuti*)

But, when an unbeliever (or a cruel and sinner person) dies, black faced angels covered with black cloaks descend and sit all around him. Then comes the angel of death and says, "O, the wretched spirit! Come out of the body and move to face Allah's wrath and displeasure. The spirit tries to resist but the angel (*Izrael*) pulls it out just as an iron screw is snipped out of silk. As soon as the spirit of the sinner comes out it is wrapped in a foul smelling mantle and is then taken to heaven. At first the door of heaven remains closed as said in the Quran.

"... No opening there shall be of the gates of heaven

.....". (7:40)

Then Allah orders that his deeds be written in the book of evil-doers whose abode is in the lowest part of the earth and he be kept imprisoned there (Sijjeen).

Quran says:

"One who ascribes partners to Allah is like the one who is dropped from the sky and birds tear him apart and he is pushed into a deep ditch". (22:31)
Then his spirit is put in the similitude of the worldly body and is sent back to his grave. Two angels come to him there, make him sit and then there is a question and answer session.

Q: Who is your Lord?

A: Alas I know not

Q: What is your Deen (Faith)?

A: Alas I know not

Q: Who was the messenger sent to you?

A: Alas I know not

Then a pronouncement is made from the heaven, "My slave is an atheist, spread for him a carpet of fire, open the gate of hell so that the heat reaches him through it". His grave narrows to crush his ribs. An ugly and frightful man approaches him and says, "Welcome to this domain of torture, which was promised to you in the world". The corpse asks as to who he was. When told that he was the stockpile of bad deeds committed by him while he enjoyed the pleasures of life in the world. He cried out, O Allah! The Merciful! No resurrection for me please (so that I may not be exposed to the greater retribution).

Man's completion and success:

Imam Ali said: Had you the true concept of what would happen after the death, you would have screamed with horror and trembled with fright and would have readily obeyed Him. (Nahj ul Balaghah)

Quran says:

"Then if he be of those drawn nigh (unto Allah), (for him is) rest and happiness and a garden delightful". (56:88-89)

It proves that the successful spirits are those that

attain nearness of Allah. And the way to achieve it, is:

1. To understand Allah's Divine attributes
2. To have faith in His greatness and magnanimity
3. To obey His commandments and to fulfill his enjoiners

The more we explore the cognizance about the infinite secrets of nature scattered around in the vast universe, the more we seem to sink in the fathomless ocean of knowledge about His absolute wisdom and competence to create.

As a result of such conspicuous impressions He occupies a unique everlasting station in our psyche and conscience. As such there simmers an urge to enhance and purify the unwavering and solid faith in Him through compliance of Dos and Dons laid down by Him.

When we overcome weakness in our faith and seek his largess & magnanimity, we earn His blessings. Submission to evil vices keeps us away from Him and His bounties. The more dutiful we are to His commands, the higher we reach to His favors in our state of being dutiful.

The more affectionate we are to His creations, human or otherwise, the more deserving we become for His kindness. That is why Allamah Iqbal said: 'A mu'min's hand becomes Allah's hand'.

The more we develop in ourselves the qualities of modesty, patience and concealing secrets of others, the nearer we get to Allah. We acquire similar disposition by developing Allah's qualities in ourselves.

The Apostle also urged to develop Allah's attributes in ourselves. The more we do so the nearer we are to Him.

The Apostle said the one who feeds an orphan is near to me like my two fingers.

Same way the more we are thankful to our Lord and spend His bounties in accordance with His will, the more we earn His pleasure. And the more we follow the Apostle the more we earn the pleasure

of Allah since HE said in Quran: "Say (O Our Apostle Muhammad) If ye do love Allah then follow me, Allah will love ye" (3:31).

It means Allah ordains to follow the Apostle for attaining His nearness.

Allamah Iqbal said:

"Your ascension was that you reached the Tablet and the Pen (*Lauh o Qalam*) and my ascension is that I reached your feet".

The spirit's ascension:

The gist of the above discussion is that Allah's obedience is factually the ascension of a spirit as HE says in Quran:

"And whoever obeyeth Allah and His Apostle (Muhammad SAVAVS) is in the company of those on whom is Allah's Grace; of the Prophets, the sincere lovers of truth, the Witnesses, beholders of the Righteous and how excellent are these as companions". (4:69)

Quran's death concept is clear now:

The death means meeting Allah and to be a companion of the Prophets, the truthful (Siddiqun), the Witnesses and the Righteous ones.

There is another verse in Quran, which the death angel recites to every mu'min and his soul comes out quite easily, saying:

"(It will be said unto some) O the tranquil soul at (complete) rest! Return thou unto thy Lord well-pleased (with Him), (and) His being well-pleased with thee. Enter thou then among my devotees. Yea, enter thou in my Heaven". (89:27, 28)

It is the case of the people with tranquil souls meaning that his whole entity is fully satisfied with Allah being his Lord and with His obedience. So he obeys Him with contentment, fervor and whole heartedness. He is fully convinced that his Lord shall have mercy on him and forgive his shortcomings and flawed obedience.

Such a soul returns to its Lord quite content with the perception that his Lord is happy with him and he is happy with Him. It returns to the Lord with the same contentment with which he would

worship Him.

On reaching the Throne it prostrates and Allah directs the angels to take it to Paradise where it becomes the companion of the Truthful, the Witnesses and the Righteous ones i. e. the perfect ones.

That is the evolutionary ascension, the success for which everyone must strive. We should be dutiful and avoid all unlawful (*Haraam*) acts and should be thankful to His bounties and should love Allah's friends.

A mu'min's spirit in heavens:

The Holy Prophet (SAVAVS) said that when the spirit of a mu'min reaches near the heaven angels appreciate its fragrance! (of the good deeds of the soul). After his death it is taken to the seventh heaven where the spirits of mu'mins stay. They are pleased to see it as if some lost friend is found. They ask it about the welfare of the persons in the world. It replies that such and such person had died and asks: Did not he reach you? They reply Alas! he went to the low abode.

A mu'min's spirit at the Throne:

The Apostle said that when the angel of death takes the spirit of a mu'min to the Throne he first prostrate and then says: O Lord! he is your such and such slave. You know I have terminated his life. HE says: Ask the spirit to go in prostration and it complies. Michael, the angel, is directed to keep it with the spirits of other mu'mins and I (Allah) shall ask you about it on the day of resurrection. HE orders to reinter the body in its grave which becomes seventy yards long and seventy yards wide. Silk floor is spread therein, perfume is sprayed, his recitation of Quran enlightens it and Allah sends a light (*Noor*) which is luminous like the sun. (Kabeer by Tabarani, and Tafseer e Abd ur Rahman bin Hameed say that all its transmitters are authentic and trustworthy)

A mu'min's state at death time:

The Apostle said that no mu'min's life is terminated unless he sees pleasing things. When his spirit is

taken out it cries and requests to be presented before the Most Merciful. When the coffin is carried to the grave the spirit says why people are walking so slow. When the grave is covered the corpse sits up and looks over his place in Paradise and all other things that Allah had promised to him. Then he begs the Lord to be allowed to enter. A voice asks him to stay a while so that his sisters and brothers may also join him and advises him to sleep meanwhile. When he awakes it is the resurrection day and he sees his rewards.

Some unusual events:

Ba'ee, a narrator, says that when his brother died he sat down by his head side and recited "*Inna lillah-i va inna ilayh-i raji'un*". His brother unveiled the mantle and said "*As Salaam u Alaikum*" to him. Then he told, "I went to Allah and found Him pleased. HE was very kind to me and dressed me with seventy silken dresses. Now you should know that Ab ul Qasim (The Holy Prophet SAVAVS) was coming to offer funeral prayer for me. Please enshroud me" and then he kept quiet.

The Apostle told that one person of his Ummah shall, after his death convey his proclamations. (*Dalaail un Nabuvvah* by Baihqi claiming that the chain of all quotations of the Apostle cited by him are correct)

Supplication at death time:

Once an Ansari was in a state of death agony, the Apostle came and asked how he was. He replied that two persons had approached him, one black the other white. He asked which one was nearer to him, the Ansari said that the black one. The Apostle informed him that his virtues were in deficit while vices were in excess and prayed that the situation be reversed. Then he asked what the position was. Ansari replied that the whiteness was overcoming the blackness. (*Noor us Sudur fi Sharh ul Qabur*)

The state of death of the one who likes meeting Allah:

According to the Apostle, Allah also likes to meet

a person who likes to meet Him but does not like to meet him who does not like to do so.

Once mother Aaishah asked that we all dislike death and as such we do not like to go before Allah. The Apostle said it was not so, it simply meant that no one was happier than a mu'min to meet Him, when the angel of death approaches him and informs that HE was pleased with him and promised mercy and forgiveness for him. It means that Allah too, wants to meet him. (*Noor us Sudur fi Sharh ul Qabur by Sayuti*)

The death of an infidel:

When the death angel comes to an infidel and warns him of the tidings of Allah's displeasure, the infidel says that nothing was more unpleasant for him than to meet Him, since HE too, does not like to meet him.

A mu'min's state at death time:

The Apostle said that when Allah wants to terminate one's life HE ordains the death angel to approach him with His message of peace (*salaam*), after which the 32 mu'min's spirit comes out of its body quite easily.

When the death angel reaches a friend of Allah and conveys HIS greetings and tells him: "This world is not worth living for you so leave it. A house in the hereafter has been decorated for you, so you come along".

If that person is not a friend of Allah, the death angel says to him: "You made this world an enjoyable habitable place at the cost of your permanent abode in the hereafter". (*Noor us Sudur fi Sharh ul Qabur*)

A sinner's death:

Ibn e Abbas narrated that when Allah wants to terminate a sinner's life HE ordains the death angel first to recompense for his vices and then give him tidings of the Paradise.

The above traditions prove that one faces his death according to his deeds. The death angel behaves amicably with good doers and unfriendly with the evil doers. When he meets a virtuous person

disguised in a beautiful shape and induces in him eagerness to meet Allah by showing him blessings of the paradise and Allah's commitments. As such his spirit easily comes out of his body. On the contrary however, the death angel is very harsh with infidels and idolaters.

A spirit meets all other spirits:

Abu Nuaym narrates that when Imam Hasan felt the death pain, someone said, "Why to worry? You are moving towards your grandpa Muhammad, grandma Khadijah, mother Fatimah, uncles Hamzah and Abbas and maternal uncles Qasim, Tayyib, Tahir and Ibrahim". Having heard these words his face blushed with joy and contentment. (*Noor us Sadur fi Sharh ul Qabur by Sayuti*)

Imam Ali told that once there were two friends. When one died the other said: O Allah! my friend always intuited me for your obedience and good deeds. He would forbid me from doing evil and prayed to you for my guidance and showing me the right path. When he died his spirit joined that of his friend saying how good friends and brothers were we. (*Noor us Sadur*)

Muhammad bin Makander, a great Sufi Master, approached Jabir bin Abdullah at the time of his death and said to him, "Please convey my respectful salutations to the Holy Prophet (SAVAVS)". (Bukhari)

A mu'min observes the paradise at death time:

The Apostle said that when a spirit observes the scenes of the paradise, it craves to come out of its body to visit Allah and HE too, longs to meet him. When it reaches the heaven, other spirits come to welcome it. They ask about their relatives and friends. When they hear about someone's death they feel sorry that he did not reach them, so far. They even inquire about their pet cats.

A dead body observes the people:

Abu Saeed Khudari narrates that the Apostle said that a dead body recognises the people around it. A dying person's spirit remains in the hands of the death angel and forbids the people to cry on its death.

The death angel also accompanies the funeral procession and puts the spirit back again in the body after its burial.

After the Badr war the Apostle called the slain infidels by their names and announced that Allah has fulfilled His promise. Umar asked do they hear what you say? The Apostle replied they do so more than you but can't answer. (*Noor us Sadur*) The Apostle told that the Prophet Daud asked Allah if one gets rewarded when he accompanies a funeral procession. HE replied "He'll definitely be recompensed as angels will accompany his funeral procession and I will invoke mercy on his spirit". Ibn Abbas narrated that the Apostle said, "Enshroud your corpses well, dig deep graves for them and keep evil doers away from them". The Sahabah asked did neighborhood of a virtuous one benefits. He replied yes, just as it benefited in the world.

The Apostle said that the tenor of Munkir and Nakeer, (the two angels cross questioning the dead in his grave) will be as soft and pleasing for a mu'min's ears as it is to apply acrimony in eyes and compression of the grave will be just like softly caressing the head of a child by his mother. But for those who had suspicions about Allah, the attitude of Angels will be harsh and he will be crushed in his grave.

The way of salvation from grave torment:

The Apostle said that he, who recites *Surah Ahad* during his illness, shall be saved from the torments in his grave. His grave shall not shrink. On the Doomsday he'll cross the bridge Siraat, hand-in-hand with the angels up to the paradise gate. (*Noor us Sadur*)

The grave speaks:

Abu Saeed narrates that since the death finishes all the worldly delights, so never forget it. The grave informs you daily that leaving your habitat, you would enter it one day. It welcomes the dead saying you were a good man among those who walked over me, now experience my favors since you have

been handed over to me. Then the grave widens and a gate to paradise is opened in it. But when a cruel and evil doer is buried in it, it says you were a bad man among those who walked over me, now that you are in my bosom, just see what do I do for you. The grave shrinks and the dead body is crushed to small particles. Allah appoints seventy dragons to bite him till the Doomsday. No tree or vegetation would be left on the earth if any one of them blew a flame. The Apostle said a grave can either be a paradise or a doomed pit of hell.

Virtuous man and the grave:

If the corpse is of a virtuous man an angel asks the earth, "Will you torment him if he is virtuous who enjoined the good and forbade doing evil? The earth replies "I would become a garden for him. His body would emulate light (*Noor*) and his spirit flies to Allah".

Sufyan Sauri would say that he who remembers his grave while he was alive, it would become a paradise for him otherwise a mere pit of hell. (*Noor us Sadur*)

How to avoid hardships of death and grave:

Imam Ali narrates that the Apostle said, "He is saved from poverty and the grave torment who recites the following hundred times a day: "There is no God but Allah, the Lord, the Truth (*Haq*), the Manifest, for him all the gates of paradise are opened".

Ka'b narrates that Allah revealed to Musa, "Learn and impart knowledge since I illuminate the grave of such a person so that he may not get frightened". The Apostle said, "If someone offers two units of prayers after Maghrib and recites fifteen times Surah Zilzaal after Al-Hamd, Allah makes his death easy for him and saves him from the agony of death. He also crosses the Siraat Bridge quite easily".

Moreover if someone dies on Friday or during Ramazan, he too, shall be away from the distress and afflictions of death.

Some more strange but true events:

Ibn Najjar says in Tareekh e Baghdad that Abu Nasr, a grave digger, was a virtuous man. Once digging a grave he saw therein a young man with a beautiful dress and pleasant fragrance. He had a copy of Quran in his hands written in green words. He asked me if it was a day of resurrection. I said no and closed the grave.

Sibt e Ibn Jauzi writes that a woman died in Qaryah. Her daughter had a dream of her saying, "You people gave me a tight shroud and I feel shy (ashamed) among my companions here. I have left some Dinars at such and such place. Please buy a shroud out of it and give to such and such woman who shall join us on such and such day". Her daughter did the same and told her dream to the woman and also the day of her death. That woman was all right but died on the day as told in the dream. The shroud for her mother was buried along with the body of that woman. The same night the daughter was told in her dream that her mother had received the shroud. She thanked and also prayed for her daughter.

Ibn Abbas's death:

Saeed bin Jubayr narrates that he was present in the funeral of Ibn Abbas who died in Taaif. A sparrow flew in from the sky and entered his shroud. We searched but could not find it. We understood that it was his deeds. After the burial we heard a voice reciting the verses 89: 27-30: O (thou the righteous) soul! Rest in complete satisfaction, come back thou to thy Lord, well pleased (thyself) and well pleasing Unto Him. Enter thou then, among my devotees. Yea enter thou in My Heaven" (*Noor us Sadur*)

The dead recognises the people:

The Apostle said, "When the people visit a grave the dead therein recognises them and conveys back message of peace (*salaam*) with love. He does so even with strangers visit him. When you visit a graveyard always say: "O the Muslims and Mu'mins of graves! You went ahead and we are to

follow you. We will meet you when Allah wills so".

The recompense for visiting graves:

While returning from Uhud war the Apostle visited the grave of the martyred Mas'ab bin Umayr and declared that he stood witness to it that they were alive before Allah. Then he advised his Sahabah to keep visiting the graves, saying: By Allah, the dead reply back to those who sends peace on them". (*Noor us Sadur*)

Saeed bin Musayyub narrates that once he visited a graveyard of Madinah with Ali who proclaimed loudly:

"Peace be upon you O, the people of graves. Tell us your affairs and we will tell you ours i. e. that your wives had remarried after you, your inheritance was distributed and your orphans have been sent to orphanage. Your enemies had occupied your properties. Now it is your turn to narrate your story. A dead then spoke out, "We have been recompensed for what we did in the world and repent for what (good) we did not do. We are now prisoners of our deeds". (*Tareekh Nishapur* by Hakim & *Tareekh Dimashq* by Ibn 'Asakar)

Azaan from the Apostle's tomb:

Saeed bin Musayyab narrates, "When the Shamiites (Yazeed's army) desecrated and looted Madinah during Harrah incidence in 64 AH, no Azaan could be proclaimed and no prayers were offered for three days in the mosque of Muhammad. I was hiding alone therein. At the Zuhr time I went near the Apostle's grave and heard Azaan being proclaimed from there. Then at 'Asr I heard Azaan and Aqaamah again. I offered my prayers for three days according to the grave's Azaan". (*Akhbaar ul Madinah* by Bakr bin Muhammad)

Recitation of Quran by Imam Husain's head:

Minhal bin 'Amr narrates, "I was in *Dimashq* (Damascus) and by Allah (in Muharram 61 H) I saw Imam Husain's head being carried on a spear's head and I very clearly heard the head reciting Surah Kahf. It also said: "My martyrdom and carrying away of my head are more astonishing

than the incidence of the companions of Kahf in Quran". (*Noor us Sadur*)

The spirits' abode:

Isthmus (*Berzakh* – the intermediary world) is the place where the spirits reside. It is much larger than this world but smaller than the hereafter which has many stages according to the deeds of the people in the world.

The Apostle said that the spirits of the martyrs go to the rivers of paradise, they eat and drink, stay in the lamps beneath the Throne, they fly to wherever they like. When Allah asks them did they desire something else? They say: "Nothing but to go back to the world and get martyrdom again by fighting in Your way".

Mu'mins' spirits live in the Zazam well too:

Imam Ali narrates that the spirits of Mu'mins live in Zazam well, too. The Makkah ground is the best place while the worst is Hazar Maut Berhut (in Yemen) where infidels' spirits are gathered. The recompense is shown in the grave: The Apostle said, "Spirits get rewarded or punished as per their deeds. They are shown (in the grave) the paradise or hell twice a day and an angel tells them that either of it can be your place". (Bukhari & Muslim)

Four places for a spirit:

Ibn Qayyim says that there are four abodes for a spirit as under.

1. Mother's womb
2. The world
3. Isthmus
4. The paradise or hell, is the last place and thereafter there is no abode. It is immensely wide while Isthmus, compared with the world, is quite small just like womb of mother. As such the world of hereafter is a symbol of Allah's infinity.

The Apostle said that for a mu'min the world is as dark as his mother's womb. When he comes out of it, he cries for leaving it, but when he beholds

the brightness of the world he becomes immensely happy. Likewise at the time of his death he regrets to leave this world but when he feels the width and brightness of his grave he realizes how dark and imperfect was the world. He dislikes going back to the world just as he disliked returning to his mother's womb. (*Noor us Sadur*)

The spirits observe the world:

The Apostle said that the deeds you commit are shown to your dead relatives, friends and neighbors. They are pleased with your good deeds but pray for your soul if you had erred, beseech Allah for mercy and beg Him not to terminate their lives till You guide them well as You did with us.

The ways to provide benefaction to your dead ones:

Ibn Saeed asked the Apostle as to how to seek blessings for his deceased father. He replied there are four ways to do so.

1. Pray for him
2. Fulfill his will and abide by his directives and advice
3. Respect his relatives and 40 friends
4. Adore his name and remain in contact with his near relatives and friends

Deeds which take directly to the paradise:

Ali and Abbas narrate that the Apostle said that one who recites the verse of the chair (*Ayat ul Kursi*) after every prayer, Allah bestows him/her with:

- The grateful heart
- The deeds of the ever-truthful
- The reward like that of the Prophets
- His mercy and the death only exists in between him and the paradise. (wherein he will enter soon after he dies) (Nasaai, Ibn Haban, Darqutni, Ibn Mardvayh and Durre Mansoor)

It is quite well known that oft recitation of Surah Ahad saves the dead from the grave torment.

The best time to die:

The Apostle said that he is the blessed one who dies:

- During the month of Ramazan
- On the Friday
- In the closing hours of 9th Zilhijj
- Having given charity before death
- Uttering Kalimah Tayyibah
- Fasting for Allah's will and recompense

The bodies of Prophets and the perfect ones never decay:

Allah says in His books and commandments that people would have kept their dead ones in their homes had HE not ordained the dead bodies to decay and make room for the living ones. The Apostle told that Allah had awarded his slaves with the following three facilities from the heaven:

1. Created insects on grains otherwise the kings and the rich would have stored the crops as they did with the gold and silver
2. Removed grief from their hearts otherwise they would never have been happy
3. Ordained the dead body to decompose & disintegrate decay otherwise none would have been buried by his loved ones.

Abu Qalabah says Allah created nothing more purified than the spirit. That is why a body is fresh as long as the spirit remains therein.

The Apostle said that Allah forbade the earth to consume the dead bodies of the Prophets.

Once Amir Mu'avyyah ordered a well to be dug in the Uhud field. During the process all the dead bodies found there were fresh. Fresh blood oozed out when incidentally the digging tool hit a foot of one corpse. (Baihqi)

Proclamation of Azan without remuneration:

The Apostle said that he who proclaims Azan without any monetary gain or benefit, was like a martyr rolling in blood. His dead body would remain intact and un-dissipated by the earth.

The best state at the death time:

The Apostle called on a young Sahabi at the time

of his death and inquired how he was. He replied he hoped Allah's forgiveness but was remorseful for his misdeeds. The Apostle said that this situation at the death time means Allah would forgive him, bestow peace on him and keep any fear away from him

One must always therefore, remember the verses of Allah's mercy and magnanimity. He should ponder over his life without forgetting his unthankfulness and misdeeds. He should pray for Allah's forgiveness and should be apprehensive of His displeasure and penance if someone dies feeling pangs of conscience, Allah bestows on him His divine favor.

The successful way to face the death:

Once Ibn Umar asked the Apostle as to who was a wise mu'min. He replied, he who remembers his death more and prepares for it loaded with good deeds, makes his soul obedient to Allah and is self-reckoning. Fool is the one who follows his desires and expects recompense from Allah.

How to do away with death fear:

The fear of death can be removed if:

1. One relies on Allah's blessings, mercy and salvation
2. He keeps asking His forgiveness as well as mending himself

The Apostle said the death is a gift for a mu'min and is like a fragrant flower.

The reality of the world and thereafter:

The Apostle said that three things you believe are bad which in fact are auspicious for you:

- 1 I like poverty (*Faqr*) as a man remains humble during it and never suffers from self-conceit
- 2 I like death since it is a means to meet Allah the Sustainer
- 3 I like Illness for it is the ransom for sins

The definition of death:

The death doesn't mean end of the world but Allah has described it in simple words as 'meeting the Sustaining Master' - the Master who is also the

most Merciful.

The reality of Death:

Imam Hasan described the death as the tastiest thing.

A mu'min's death in Quran:

Quran says: (They are) those whose lives the angels take in a state of purity (from infidelity, idolatry and hypocrisy), reciting 'Peace be on you; enter ye the Garden due to (the good) which ye did in the world'. (16:32)

It means that there are the Mu'mins who are punishable yet because of tasting the pain of death they are absolved of them. Therefore every mu'min's spirit is not necessarily extracted easily.

The difficult death of infidels and very sinful persons:

But the spirit of an infidel and that of an immensely sinful person, is extracted with great pain and suffering. Traditions tell that they feel like being cut with scissors or being crushed in a mill. The angels clamp them so tightly that they cannot wriggle. Quran says: "But how (would it be) when the angels take their souls at the time of death, and smite their faces and their backs". (47: 27)

A mu'min can also get a difficult death:

Taking out an infidel's soul is his first adversity, may be therefore it is done with ease. Sometimes it is done in order to recompense him for his last good deeds. Eventually when he meets Allah, no virtue is left to his credit.

For a mu'min however, death is a blessing yet it could be difficult due to his sins previously committed and acquires forgiveness when he meets Allah.

Why is the death painful:

It is because a man prefers his worldly life over that of the hereafter though the former is a mixture of happiness and grief as an Urdu poet said: 'We see tears shedding in backdrop of a smile'. The world is ingratitude. The people whom you do favor become envious rather enemies.

Another Urdu poet said:

"After being hit by an arrow, when I looked back to the ambush I found some of my friends amongst the adversaries".

A Persian poet said:

"Don't give your heart to an unfaithful disloyal bride who would never remain confined to one person".

Unmindful of Allah's magnanimity and blessings the worldly people remain absorbed in the worldly affairs. Quran says: The infidels are pleased with the temporal life and are content with it.

Allamah Iqbal said:

"You were unwise enough to be content with a few buds in the garden otherwise there is always an answer to a shortfall".

The Apostle said that love for the world is the root cause of every vice.

We should therefore, not fall in love with the carnal affairs of the world but should take it as an unfaithful issue of no significance. It is the real delineation of it and he, who recognises it, remains quite content and saved from lust, envy, enmity, backbiting, averments and scuffles and other vices of this world.

The mystics say the world must be kept in the pocket (confined at a distance), while in the hearts there should be nothing but Allah and His friends. (Ahya ul Ulum by Ghazali)

Moreover we must always remain dedicated to Allah's will with a firm belief that HE only is our Sustainer and Master. His judiciousness is loaded with benevolence for us. We should prepare our minds and hearts to bank on Him. For example about death we must be prepared to leave the world as and when Allah wills so. It must be profitable for us since HE wants us to travel from this lowly world of trials to the exalted world of recompense. To go from this world of deceit to the world of truth heralds meeting with the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, the righteous and above all Muhammad (SAVAVS) and his progeny. If the death does not arrive, even then be pleased with

Allah since HE is giving more time to do good deeds, mending ourselves and asking for His forgiveness and embellishment of our status before Him.

Imam Ali describes the state of death:

He said, "At the time of death one remembers hoardings of his wealth about which he never thought of its being lawful or unlawful. It is painful for him to think that what he did was wrong, since the treasure-trove he piled would, after his death be distributed among others".

Quran says: "..... Now have WE removed thy veil and sharp is thy sight This Day". (50:22) The Holy Prophet (SAVAVS) said that at the time of his death, every mu'min finds luminous bodies (of Muhammad and of his progeny SAVAVS), seated towards his head. This meeting is a blessing for him but a torment for an infidel.

Once, Imam Reza visited a dying person. He told the Imam that the Apostle, Imam Ali, Lady Fatimah, Imams Hasan and Husain have also come. Your father is present along with Imam Baqir and Imam Jafar Sadiq (now your good self have come, too.) The Satan, along with his cronies, also arrives at the time of death and creates suspicion in his mind about Allah, His Apostle and the hereafter (the paradise and hell). The Satan tries his level best to take away his faith (*Imaan*) from him so that he dies as an infidel.

The Apostle told Imam Ali that the souls of the following three types of people are taken out with a fire club which the death angel brings with him.

1. The cruel rulers
2. The usurpers of orphans' wealth
3. The liars/false testifiers

Some people become infidels at the death time because of the weight of their evil deeds. Imam Jafar Sadiq advised not to allow a menstruous woman come near a dying person since angels keep away from them.

The acts making death time easy:

Imam Jafar Sadiq narrates the Apostle said that

one who wants Allah to save him from the hardships of the should:

1. Have mercy on his kn specially the parents, Such a person would never be poor as well.
2. To give clothes to mu'mins in winter who can't afford. The charity gives him the right to get relief at death time, get his grave widened and receive a gift of special heavenly dress from Allah.
3. Feed sweet dishes to Mu'mins
4. Keep fast during the last days of Rajab. The death angel visits him in an attractive shape and beautiful dress, offers him pure drink so that his soul is taken out with ease.
5. Recite seventy times the following supplication: O the Most Hearer than the hearers, the Most Seer of the seers, the only Reckoner of the reckoners and the only Rulers of all the rulers, please have mercy on me.
6. Recite Surah Zilzaal in his supererogatory prayers (Navafil). Allah saves him from earth quake, thunderbolt and other calamities. HE sends an angel at his death time and directs him to be kind, since he would recite MY verses.
7. Recite: O the Acceptor of lesser offerings and deficiencies in deeds and Forgiver of the countless sins please accept my lesser and defective deeds and forgive my countless sins. You are the Forgiver and Merciful.

The way to avoid the death agony:

One should pay no heed to Satan whatever the mischief he may try to create in one's heart. But to achieve this, one must first believe in and perceive the basic principles of Islam and then pray to Allah, "O the Most Merciful! I hand over my belief to You because of which I am firm on Your deen. You are the best to protect it, since You have ordained to protect the committed ones. Please save my undying faith in You at the time of my death".

We should recite the 'Adeelah, supplication' understanding it fully.

Imam Jafar Sadiq said that one shall be complete in his faith if he recites the following prayer. O Allah! I'm fully contended that:

- You are my Sustaining Master and Muhammad (SAVAVS) is Your last Messenger and Prophet.
- Islam is my Deen (Deen is Allah's Shari'ah while religion is invented by Mulla)
- Quran is my book
- Ka'bah is world's cynosure (*Qiblah*)
- Ali is my savior, defender and my Patron saint (*Maula*)
- Ali's twelve sons are my Imams and I concede to their Imamate
- Please bless me with their benevolence, let them be pleased with me as You are the ultimate Almighty prowess.

The one, who offers prayers regularly on time, is taught *Kalimah Shahadat* by the death angel which makes the Satan to run away.

Imam Jafar Sadiq said that if you want a good and agreeable finale to your life, then you should:

- Behold Allah as the Exalted one, don't misuse His blessings and forgiveness, do not misinterpret His limitless forbearance, don't be arrogant and disrespectful, give due regards to everyone specially those who respect and love you. Such a demeanour shall definitely be of great benefit you.
- Recite the following Quranic supplication most of the time. "Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate now after Thou hast guided us. But grant us mercy from Thine own Presence for Thou art the Granter of bounties without measure". (3:8)
- Tell beads (*Tasbeeh*) of Lady Fatimah after every prayer.
- Have a ring of red cornelian engraved thereon Muhammad Nabi Allah or Ali yun Valiullah vasi e Rasool ullah.

- Recite Surah Jum'ah and Mu'minoon on every Friday.
- Recite the following plea seven times after the Morning and evening (Fajr and Maghrib) prayers.
With the name of Allah the Most Merciful the Most Benevolent. There is no power but the Exalted, the Greatest.
- Never drink wine and avoid backbiting and jealousy. Once someone asked him about taking Nabeez (an alcoholic drink) duly allowed by the physician. He replied not even a drop of it. You will deadly repent when your soul comes to your throat. He repeated it thrice.
- Pay alms and give charity. (Manazil e Aakhirat by Abbas Qumi)

The condition in the grave:

After the death the soul stays around the body. Then a Mu'min's soul is taken upward and that of an infidel is taken downward. The mu'min says make haste to take me to my abode. The soul observes while his body is being washed. Since it is painful for the corpse, the washer should do his job very tenderly. The soul also hears what people, around him, say. After the burial the spirit is again attached to the body. It grieves the dead when people return after the burial. Qamar Jalalvi, a great Urdu poet, said:

"Having buried me all go back as if they had no acquaintance with me. What went wrong with the world in just a while?"

The first tiding given to a dead in the grave is that all those who attended his funeral are forgiven of their sins.

The first night in grave is quite grim and painful for the dead body. To help him out, charity should be given on his behalf and two units of prayers should be offered for his salvation in which Surah Ahad should be recited thrice after Al-Hamd in the first unit and Surah Takasur followed by Al-Hamd in the second unit. In response to this prayer Allah

sends one thousand angels with the dress of Paradise for the dead. His grave is widened and numberless virtues are also credited to the account of the one who offered prayers, besides uplifting his status by forty grades.

There is another way to offer this prayer i. e. to recite *Aya tul Kursi* after Al-Hamd in first unit and ten times Surah Qadr followed by Al-Hamd in the second unit.

How to avoid the fright of grave:

1. One should recite the following hundred times a day. "There is no God but Allah the Master, the Truth and the Manifest". It causes increase in provision as well
2. Visiting and serving the sick people cultivate love for Imam Ali. Abu Saeed Khudari narrated that the Apostle said to Imam Ali, "Give tidings to your friends not to worry, fear or be disappointed about fright of the grave".
3. Reciting 100 times Istaghfaar (forgiveness) daily. (Manazil e Akhirat by Abbas Qumi)

How to avoid the grave's terror:

- To avoid defiling the body and clothes with urine drops and other filth
- To avoid backbiting and unnecessary allegations
- To show mercy on wife and kids and not to be rude or insolent to anyone
- To help the poor and needy ones.
- To offer regularly the mid night prayer (Tahajjud) and therein recite Istaghfaar seventy times.
- To recite Surah Takasur before sleeping
- To keep fast for four days in Rajab and eight days in Sh'abaa.
- To recite Surahs Jum'ah and Al-Mulk and conceive their meaning
- To offer two units of prayers on every night before Jum'ah with recitation of Surah Zilzaal fifteen times after Al-Hamd. Read from Quran if it is not learnt verbatim

- To keep the dust of Imam Husain's Shrine or that of Karbala in the shroud

- Forty mu'mins should recite by his side the following. "O Allah! We know nothing about him but his goodness'. (Manazil e Akhirat by Abbas Qumi)

The night vigil on 23rd of Ramazan and offering hundred units of prayers (*navafil*) will enlighten one's grave and abate the fear of *Nakirayn*. The visit of the tomb of Imam Raza also protects from the grave torment. (Manazil e Akhirat by Abbas Qumi)

Death of the perfect ones:

Imam Ali narrates that when Lady Fatimah's illness was serious she opened her eyes and looked around. Then she said peace be on you O Gabriel and O Muhammad (SAVAVS). Then she prayed O Allah, please resurrect me with your Messenger and make the Paradise my abode near Yourself. She told that angels including Gabriel were present with her along with her father who was saying that (O Fatimah!) Come soon as your presence is desired here.

Imam Ali says then she told him that Gabriel was offering her the peace saying that she would soon meet her father in the Paradise. She returned his compliments and said that Michael had come and announces that Allah was calling her.

On hearing it Asmaa bint Umayyads brought some camphor. Lady Fatimah got up, took a bath and asked for some perfume and a dress to offer prayer. After dressing up and applying perfume she offered the prayer. Then she asked Asmaa to go out as she wanted to rest and advised her to knock after few moments and if Asma got no response, it would mean that she was dead. She asked her to inform Ali accordingly

Correct state of affairs:

Man's self-awareness or spirit wants to meet the essence of beauty. This urge takes him to Allah's affection since HE alone is the source of such high attributes.

But negligence, ignorance, greed, arrogance and above all the love for this world do not leave room for development of self-cognizance and it keeps him at distance from the pure selfless love for Allah. In this state man is allured by many (wrong) wishes and hopes. As long as a man progresses in the world he thinks he is coming closer to the reality he cherished. That is why he takes this world as a Paradise whereas it may be a hell for him. The Satan beautifies all the ugly things and makes them attractive in man's eyes in such a way that he establishes in his mind as his ultimate objectives.

Quran says:

"The Satan has made the evil look alluring in their eyes".

Man's state at death time:

At the time of death all the veils are lifted before a man, all the false gods of this world are also exposed and their ingratitude and falsehood are exposed before him. Then the self-conscientiousness of a man can identify the fire of hell in the world. During his life here, he held dear to him his wealth, gold, property, children, land, wife and other worldly possessions. Achievement of the objectives one by one was his ambition. That is why one neither values the essence of the beauty in this world nor does he feel the pain of separation from it. But when this separation finishes and the self awareness reaches the other world then it is inflicted with utmost grief, sorrow, disappointment and deprivation, since there his awareness can't be beguiled by anything. This state of great pain can be called the hell of isthmus.

On the contrary the true lover and obedient slave of Allah feels utmost happiness at the time of his death. Imam Hasan declared it the tastiest thing. The Paradise of isthmus awaits him anxiously. This state of utmost happiness is reflected through the corpse's face as well. Then he has no other wish but to meet Allah and see the essence of beauty. This pleasure is a part of a going on

evolution.

Allamah Iqbal describe this state in a Persian couplet.

"The death of a mu'min is simply migration towards the friend (Allah). One leaves the world and opts to go to the friend's street".

The Paradise and hell: Our last abodes:

The Apostle said: O Abu Zer! The world is a prison for a mu'min, the grave is a place of peace and Paradise is his eternal abode. But for an infidel the world is a paradise, the grave a place of torment and the hell is his eternal abode.

Death is a friend:

The Apostle said, "I take the death as a friend since it is a way to meet my Lord and I like illness since it is a ransom for my sins"

Why to fear the death?

The concept of death as the end of life is absolutely wrong. Death, in fact, is not the darkness of non-existence but an augury of continuance of a luminous life endowed with divine blessings and betterment.

Some people fear death due to the fear of hell. Such people should quit evil deeds, believe in Allah and ask for his forgiveness while trusting in His mercy and beneficence. Some people hate death since they wish to see their children married and play with grand children. They can however, do so even after death as the Apostle said a man's spirit observes the worldly affairs quite well. Someone may harbor unnecessary fears that after him his family would starve. Whereas it is a common observation that millions of widows and orphans are brought up without their husbands and fathers. Allah only is the Sustainer and whatever HE ordains is correct.

Some people are afraid to die because they know not how they would be treated in the hereafter. Everyone should know that the Apostle had already decreed that Allah loves His slaves seventy times more than their mothers.

Quran says:

'And that a man can have no more but what he strives for'. (53:39)

Hence, keeping high hopes and firm faith, we must strive to please Allah through our obedience to Him and doing good to others.

A divine utterance (*Hadees e Qudsi*) says, "I reciprocate as one thinks about Me". We must therefore always carry good thoughts about Him. Even if we have more sins to our credit we must believe in His unlimited mercy, forgiveness and magnanimity.

Meer Anees said:

"I'm a candidate for Your mercy duly ashamed and hiding face in my shroud. I was carried towards You since I was unable to walk due to the burden of my sins".

The Apostle's death:

On Sunday the 9th of Rabee' ul Avval 11 A. H., the Apostle felt a little better and was happy to look out from his chamber that the Sahabah Kiraam were offering morning prayer in the mosque. Afterwards when he became feeble and felt exhausted, he called her daughter Lady Fatimah. She was grief-stricken and started to cry. He asked her not to weep but recite '*Inna lillah va inna ilayh raji'un*' at the time of death since there is solace in it for the dying person. Then he drew her nearer and whispered that he was dying. She bewailed more. He again whispered that she would be the first among Ahl ul Bait to see him in the hereafter. She felt soothed and pleased. He again whispered that in the thereafter he would never be restless. He called the grief-stricken grandsons, Imam Hasan and Husain, near him kissed them and bequeathed to them the commandments of Allah's Deen and his love and awe.

Then he repeatedly said 'I am with those whom Allah has blessed'. O Allah. Allah is the Best Friend. You are my Best Friend and I'm going to my Best Friend".

He called Imam Ali and whispered for quite some

time in his ears. Then he said 'Prayer, prayer, prayer, progeny' and advised them to be mindful of the wives. Fear Allah about their rights. Then he asked for some water, put his hand in that and wiped his face, which sometimes was red and sometimes pale. He pronounced '*La ilah illa Allah*' and said, "There is some pain at the death time".

Abd ur Rahman brought a fresh dental stick (misvak), which he used. Then he raised his hands as if he was going somewhere and said thrice 'Towards the Best Friend' and he was gone. Some traditions say it was 12th of Rabi' ul Avval and some say the 28th of Safar 11 A. H. He was 63.

Mother 'Aaishah states:

She said, "As he anticipated his end the Apostle asked me to summon his friend. I called for my father (Abu Bakr) but he again asked to summon his friend. I called for Umar but again he asked for his friend. Then I called Ali and he took him under his mantle as he came and kept him hugged for quite long. (Riaz un Nazarah by Muhibb Tabari) Then he said to Ali, "Please pay my debts and return the deposits to whom they belong (I owe such and such amount to such and such Jew). You will undergo great hardships after me so you must forbear since you opted the Deen when others opted the world". (Madaarij un Nabuvvah 2:511, Tareekh Baghdadi 1:219, Rauza tul Ahbaab 5:559)

Death is just transfer of the body:

The death means nothing but transfer of the body. A man has two bodies, the physical body and its similitude called aura, which is made up of very delicate rays, looking like a light smoke. It encircles the body and is called human soul as well. The spirit has connection both with the body and its soul. It resembles the body so much that we immediately recognise as to whose aura it is. Today there are special cameras available which can snap the aura. It has different colors. If a man is ill, the aura is inflicted by that illness three day earlier. It becomes black three days before one's death.

Aura's different colors do not stand for wealth, children, status and health of a man but they denote conduct and characteristics of man. People who can see aura can judge its characteristics also. When a man dies, the spirit is disconnected with the body and it becomes motionless, but motion is regained in Isthmus world. There he also feels his good or bad condition depending upon his faith and deeds he did in the world.

Preparation for the death:

Imam Ali said, "The preparation for death means to observe "do's and don'ts" prescribed by Allah, to avoid what is tabooed and to create best characteristics within one self. If these three edicts are carried out one should not care whether death strikes him or *vice versa*"

Quran also says:

"..... Whosoever expects to meet his Lord, let him, ought to serve with righteousness and admit no one as His partner, in the worship of his Lord". (18:110)

As for as getting another body (aura) or another life in the hereafter, Quran replies it quite satisfactorily as under.

"Doth man not see that it is WE who created him from sperm? Yet behold! He (stands forth) as an open adversary and he makes comparisons for us and forgets his own (origin and) creation. He says: who can give life to (dry) bones – decomposed ones? Say: HE shall give them life Who created them for the first time since HE is well versed with every kind of creation. The same Who produced for you fire out of the green tree, when behold! Ye kindled therewith (your own fires). Is it not HE, Who created the heavens and the earth, able to create the like thereof? Yea indeed! For he is the Creator Supreme of skill and knowledge (infinite). Verily, when he intends a thing, His command is 'Be' and it is. So glory to Him in Whose hands is the dominion of all the things and to Him ye shall be all brought back". (36:77-83)

The argument of observation:

The fact is that the man does not remember that once he was nothing but a worthless drop (sperm). Allah converted him into a strong person but he, crossing his limits, stands before Allah to argue. Now he speaks against his Creator. Had he pondered a little bit, he could understand that Allah, Who created him for the first time, can also resurrect him again. Resurrection is easier than creating a thing from non-existence. To replace a body with another is not at all difficult for Allah, Who created green tree and then having dried it, made it useful for us as a fuel. Why can't Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, change a spirit's abode after a man's death? (Allamah Shabbeer A. Usmani)

The life in hereafter is but natural:

Had the man been created for extinction he would have loved it and would not have enjoyed death. But it is observed that he hates to go extinct, because he takes the death as final extinction and therefore he is afraid of it. Ever since he is fond of 'ever existing', that is why he had been fond of embalming the dead bodies in order to preserve them. Mummies of Egyptian Pyramids, philosophy of water of life (*Aab e Hayat*) and man's obsession for existence are its clear examples.

We observe that within ourselves every part has been created with certain measure. Our love to exist indicates that life is eternal. For example we have an urge for water and food, built in our in our nature, and both exist freely around us. For satisfaction of our sexual instinct we have the opposite sex available. We fall ill and there are the curative medicines. Now we must confess that if we have an urge for existence then compulsorily there must be some ways of continuance of life. Secondly, we know that we have within us a system of justice, which we call conscience. When a man does something good he feels satisfied and tranquil within himself but if some sin or vice is committed he feels repentant due to which sometimes he kills

himself or someone else. (commits suicide or reaches the hanging gibbet). It is because he thinks it is a way to get rid of the clamp of his conscience. As such a man is compelled to ask himself that when a system of justice is present within himself, then how it is that the huge universe can be devoid of it. It is because of this line of reasoning that the man confesses that there is some system of justice in the universe as well.

Quran says:

"That Allah may recompense each soul according to (as) it earned and verily Allah is swift in reckoning". (14:51)

This reckoning shall be very swift as the Apostle said that in a twinkling of eye Allah will take the accounts of all the creatures. (Majma' ul Bayan)

The system of justice:

Quran draws our attention to this system of justice, saying:

"Then guard yourself against the day when one soul shall not avail another, nor shall intercession be accepted for her, nor shall compensation be accepted for her, nor shall be anyone helped (from outside)". (2:48)

Quran further says:

"Taste ye then for ye forgot the meeting (with Allah) of this day of yours" (32:14)

The intellectual proof:

The intellectual proof of the life in the hereafter is that this worldly life becomes meaningless without the concept of life to come again. It is as meaningless as that, a child created in the mother's womb can be suffocated therein. There seems to be no sense in spending a 60-70 years of hard life in the world and despite being successful, it is terminated abruptly. If so, then what for are we going through this life? Is it only for repeatedly eating, drinking, sleeping and awakening, dressing, etc? Obviously this world becomes worthless if there is no life after this one.

Quran confirms this ideology:

"Did ye then think that WE had created you in

jest? And that ye would not be brought back to Us (for account)". 23:115)

On the contrary the worldly life becomes meaningful when we confess that it is a crop for the hereafter. Imam Ali said that this world is a place of truth for one who deals with it truthfully, a peaceful place for one who gets wisdom out of it, an abode of satisfaction for one who takes provisions for the journey (of hereafter) and a place of sermon and advice for one who reflects.

He also said that this world is like a mosque or a trading house for Allah's friends, a praying mat for angels and a receiving place for His revelation. (*Nahj ul Balaghah* p131)

It means that Allah's friends earn His love and consent in this world. The study of this world also indicates that there definitely exists a horizon of another world.

Quran says:

"And ye already know the first form of creation. Why then do ye not think (of the second life)?" (56:62)

A poet said:

"There are other worlds behind the stars as well".

Objective proof:

Against the ideology of the materialists there is another objective and cause of man's creation, which the philosophers call 'evolutionary perfection' but Quran calls it Allah's nearness or His will and worship and slavery. Quran says: "I have only created jinns and men that they may worship me". (51:56)

Quran further says:

"And to the righteous they'll be in the midst of gardens and rivers in an assembly of truth, in the presence of a Sovereign Omnipotent". (54:54. 55) If death means everything finished then how would be the purpose of perfection of a man fulfilled? It is a must therefore that journey of his life is continued so as to reap his crop, produced in this world, in the hereafter. And the objective of his creation can be achieved only by confessing the

existence of the hereafter. If not then everything is a puzzle, meaningless and absurd. Why is it so? There may no answer to it.

Arguments against the differences:

People differ on so many points and wish them to finish and the facts may be clear. That is why Quran says: "..... But Allah will judge between them, in their quarrels, on the Day of Resurrection". (2:113)

One of the purpose of the Doms Day and the life of hereafter is also to prove that the infidels were liars. Quran says: "(The infidels will be raised) In order that HE may manifest to them the truth of that wherein they differ, and that the rejecters of Truth may realise that indeed they were liars". (16:39)

Victory over death:

It is nature's law that every thing has an answer and remedy. For example we have an urge for water and food and both are present around, we have sexual instinct and there is the opposite sex, we fall ill and there are the medicines. Then what is the answer to death. The answer is neither a doctor nor a medicine. They are the answer to illness only.

The creator of death has answered it in Quran:

"..... Whosoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteously and, in the worship of his Lord, admit none as His partner". (18:110)

Reality of virtues:

In fact every act of a man is that of his self-awareness (spirit or intellect) and not that of his body. His self-awareness uses his body as a tool. That is why the Apostle said: "The acts are a result of intentions". So every act means a state of mind and every state of mind brings the self-awareness near to Allah or takes it away from Him. By being near to Allah one feels peace and contentment but being away from Him means that the spirit feels pain and sadness.

Due to sinful life hurdles come between Allah's nearness and the self-awareness so it can't ascend

towards its destination. Death's experience becomes difficult for it since death means going back to Allah whereas it has already gone far away from Him. Now the self-awareness which steps towards virtues, setting aside the vices, and as such goes through evolution. But the self-awareness which does not step towards virtues remains encircled by vices. Its efforts carry on but in the hell of isthmus. So the self-awareness may delay getting near to Allah, or the evolution, but cannot escape from it and has to undergo a lot of difficulty for this delay. A constant sinner can feel that it is becoming difficult for him, day by day, to return to a virtuous life. At last there comes an uncrossable hurdle between his self-awareness and virtue. Quran endorses it as: "... If any of you did evil in ignorance and then repented (to turn to Allah) and amended his (conduct), lo! HE is Oft-Forgiving and Most Merciful". (6:54)

Quran further says:

"And those who, having done something to be ashamed of or wronged their own souls, earnestly bring Allah to mind and ask forgiveness for their sins". (3:135)

It means that the biggest defeat of a man is that he does not resist the hurdles coming in the way of sins since he has to undergo in the hereafter, a lot of grief and pain as a ransom for his worldly sins. Such people shall start their journey of evolution in the hell of isthmus.

They feel this isthmus like a paradise in the world but the self-awareness fully faces its hell when its life is terminated being far off from Allah. When the self-awareness reaches the other world duly dipped in sins, a worst type of grief inflicts it. It is because there can be no misunderstanding at all. There is no Satan to make their deeds pleasing in their eyes and all false consolations are also gone.

Quran says:

- "..... They would see the penalty and all relations between them would be cut off".

(2:165)

- "None knows what sorts of means have been provided there to give solace (coolth to eyes)".
- "And fails he who forges a lie against Allah".

(20:61)

Such a person feels like burning in fire due to his mental torture. It is so, as every mental condition becomes an external reality in the hereafter just as external realities become mental conditions in the world.

The Apostle said that in the paradise there would be such a pleasure, deliciousness, comfort and blessings of which no ears had heard and no man had thought of.

That is why a true believer and lover of Allah is full of joy at his death time and utmost contentment and comfort reflect from his fact.

Allamah Iqbal interprets it in a Persian couplet as:

"Let me tell you a sign of a mu'min and that is that when he dies there is a smile on his face". This smile and his evolution automatically continues and this is the pleasure after which there is no desire for him. As such he enjoys the real beauty and blessings of his real beloved (Allah). Great philosophers like Barkley, Hegel, Croce, Gentile and great scientist like Edingtus confessed that there is just one thing about presence of which we are dead sure and that is the 'mental conditions'. So in the next world all other things would be worthless except our mental conditions. There, the life would reflect our mental conditions means that our self-awareness would give them an external shape. Doing so it would also utilise the things and experiences of this world. That is why the people in Paradise would say that these are the same blessings, which we enjoyed in the world, as said in Quran.

An example:

In dreams we see, feel, touch, smell, think, move and understand things while our body lies

motionless and parts are suspended. Same way, after the death, although our parts would not be with us but due to our mental conditions we would see, hear, speak, move, think feel and understand. Our mental conditions would take the shape of external existence and all the things there would be far more real and solid than the worldly things. That is why after the death every self-awareness shall have its own world built by mental conditions and would enter its Paradise or hell. It would be the same Paradise or hell, which it had prepared in the world.

Evolutionary steps:

When a man recognises Allah, it is the first step to evolution of self-awareness. Then his sense of seeking beauty is expressed in two ways.

1. By virtue of remembrance, praise, recitation and study a man ponders over Allah's attributes and the names Most Beautiful. Then he tries to act according to them and to create in him a flash of those attributes. It is called worship and is man's evolution and completion.
2. In the beginning Allah's love and gnosis is weak and obeying His enjoinders is also difficult because he has not been as much obsessed by passion for beauty as to act upon all enjoinders or in other words he is not shrouded fully by Allah's love.

It means ever since a man is not gripped fully by his objectives of life but is partly under control of other objectives and so all his acts are not in accordance with just objectives. On such occasions he takes the path of mistakes and sins.

Ghalib depicted this situation as:

"My faith attracts me but the infidelity resists. Ka'bah is before me and the Church behind". The more a man ponders over Allah's Attributes and names through remembrance, praise, recitation and study the nearer he is to the essence of beauty, love and contact with Allah followed by acting on correct objectives of life i. e. HIS obedience.

It means his self-awareness becomes powerful by getting expression for His love. Eventually His names, will, love and obedience become his ultimate objects of attention.

Now his passion for beauty is fully satisfied since His gnosis, love and obedience are accommodated in him, as the love of self-awareness for Allah increases more and more. He, then, well understands the demands of His love and goes on fulfilling it as well and his love and obedience become pure and strong.

And this is the ascension of a man's evolution. Here his self-awareness gets its wish fulfilled. It means his Creator is pleased with him. Then he says: 'Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him'. (Al-Quran)

Therefore a man's every act, life, death, worship, obedience, endeavor and love are reserved for Allah's pleasure. There the self-awareness attains itself. It is the purification, salvation and the contended soul. For such people angels recite: "O thou soul, in (complete) rest and feel satisfaction! Come back thou to your Lord, well pleased (thyself) and well pleasing Unto Him". (Quran 89:27-28) Here the self-awareness gets immense pleasure and it goes on ascending due to Allah's gnosis and love. When His love in him reaches its climax the pleasure also attains zenith.

A man then feels great attraction for his ultimate objective i. e. Allah.

There he feels that he is lost in Allah's love and HE is attracting him. Then he feels immense pleasure in fulfilling the demands of His love. And that is the soul in (complete) rest and satisfaction. Thereafter he reserves himself for His love and obedience as Quran says:

"Say! Truly my prayer, and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah the Cherisher of the worlds". (6:162)

Then he becomes Allah's figurative lieutenant since he avails His each and every bounty as per His will. It is for His will that he serves the humanity

with love. Doing so he feels a great urge within him which he can't resist.

An Urdu couplet says:

"Slowly the urge for union is driving me and slowly I become nearer to you".

Glorifying the Ahl ul Bait, Quran describes this situation as under:

"And for Allah's love they feed the indigent, the orphans and the captive (saying) we feed you for Allah's sake alone, desiring neither reward from you nor thanks". (76:8-9)

When a man loves Allah immensely, he offers extra prayers (Navafil) as well, which otherwise are not mandatory. He does so only out of his love and obedience of Allah and as such the contact with Him becomes closer.

In a divine utterance (Hadees e Qudsi) Allah says: When my slave performs extra duties in my obedience then I become his hand to work, I become his feet to walk, I become his ear to hear, I become his tongue to speak and I become his eyes to see. Mystics call this position as 'union or fusion' (Vasl). Here a man's every act becomes that of Allah. Now the more he practically cooperates with his Creator his hidden forces are exposed and his love for Allah increases. Now he feels no difficulty in overcoming his desire for sins and resistance is quite easy. He enjoys HIS obedience. And the soul also enjoys complete peace and satisfaction.

As such he attains more and more attributes of Allah and blends them within himself. He becomes His caliph and a perfect slave. The more we do so the nearer to Him we are, by completing His image that HE has made for us.

Now a man finds nothing but His hand and manifestation in this universe. Thus he finds the great reality that everything like strength, knowledge, perfection, poverty wealth peace happiness, gain and loss etc are in His hands and people are simply His tools of no significance. Having known it he rejects any other pressure or control over him. He feels free of any bondage and

considers Allah's love and obedience above all other perfections. And it is the meaning of La ilah i. e. There is no God but Allah the One. It is the man's perfection and preparation for death i. e. meeting Him. Due to Allah's love he becomes His beloved.

Allah says in Quran:

"So you remember ME and I'll remember ye". (2: 152)

Just imagine when Allah remembers a man, how much HE would love him. HE would definitely make him His beloved whose love and obedience is proven for Him. Then for such a person death means happy rendezvous with his beloved.

Ibrahim's incidence:

When the death angel came to Ibrahim and told that he came to terminate his life, he asked who had sent him. He replied that Allah had sent him. He said he was Allah's friend how come HE would do so. The death angel went back to Allah and presented Ibrahim's argument whether a friend can kill his friend. Allah directed him to ask Ibrahim that could a friend refuse to meet a friend when called. Hearing it Ibrahim immediately consented to die just as a lover goes to see his beloved. This is the demand of love.

Quran has also used the word 'liqaa' for death meaning 'meeting (the Lord)' and if love comes in between then this meeting becomes a most tasteful experience. That is why death is also called sweeter than honey due to mu'min's love.

Quran says:

"... But the believers are overflowing in their love for Allah ...". (2:165)

This type of love for Allah is the criterion of the utmost faith (Imaan). And it is the ultimate success.

A poet said:

'My message is love wherever it could be conveyed'. The practical outcome of this love is Allah's utmost obedience and love for His lovers because to love the beloveds of the beloved is a natural instinct. That is why the Apostle said: Love me and my

progeny (Ahl ul Bait) because of me. (Savaaiq ul Muharriqah).

He also said that: Allah loves those who love Husain.

In Quran also Allah enjoins to love the Apostle and his kins. It says:

“Say (O the Apostle)! I ask no reward for this (prophethood) except the love of those near of kin. And if any one earns (this) good, WE shall give him an increase of virtues in lieu thereof. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most ready to appreciate services”. (42:23)

It clearly tells that by loving Allah’s friends our sins are forgiven and also our defective virtues are accepted by Allah.

That is why Ibn Abbas said that the essence of goodness is Ahl ul Bait’s love since Quran declared it good twice in the above verse. And, in fact, this love is the root cause of all the virtues.

The Apostle said that once Allah asked Musa that what he did for Him. Musa replied he offered prayers, kept fasts and paid alms. Allah said that the prayer is meant for your nearness to ME, the fast is your shield against hell and the charity is for increment of your provision and your elevation. HE asked again: What did you do for ME? Musa was stunned and did not know what to say. Allah then asked: Did you love my friends and did you despise my foes? (Usool e Kaafi)

It means that loving His friends and vying with His foes is also one of the preferred virtues that Allah likes most.

The friends of Allah include His Prophets, Imams of Ahl ul Bait, the veracious (Siddiqoon), the martyrs, and the righteous ones. Muhammad (SAVAVS) and his progeny are over and above of all. Their love and obedience means a man’s ascension, deliverance and perfection.

Quran says:

“Say (O the Apostle!) If ye do love Allah then follow e, Allah will love ye and forgive your sins. Allah is Ever-Compassionate”. (3:31)

There can be no bigger achievement than being Allah's beloved.

The End

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- . Word to Word English Translation of Holy Quran (Under print)
- . Word to Word Urdu translation of Quran along with Tafseer-e-Ahl-al-Bayt (A.S.) (Under print)
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