



In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Journey of your Soul (DEATH)

The Soul

The soul is one the greatest puzzles for humanity. All people agree that a **'living'** person becomes **'dead'** by the departure of **'life'** or **'soul'**. The soul is the only part of ghayb that even atheists and materialists cannot deny.

In Islam, we are given a few glimpses into the knowledge of the soul. But its detailed understanding remains concealed from us. Allah (swt) says:

They ask thee concerning the Spirit (of inspiration). Say: "The Spirit (cometh) by command of my Lord: of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you (O men!)". [Al-Isra 17:85]

Death of a Muslim

Sleep is a minor death. During sleep, our souls depart from our bodies in obscure manner. The soul of every sleeping person is held by Allah (subhana wata'ala), and He then releases it when it is time to wake up. Allah (swt) says:

It is He Who doth take your souls by night and hath knowledge of all that ye have done by day. By day doth He raise you up again; that a term appointed be fulfilled; in the end unto Him will be your return then will He show you the truth of all that ye did. [Al-An'am 6:60]

It is Allah that takes the souls (of men) at death: and those that die not (He takes) during their sleep: those on whom He has passed the decree of death He keeps back (from returning to life) but the rest He sends (to their bodies) for a term appointed. Verily in this are Signs for those who reflect. [Az-Zumar 39:42]

When the time of death for a Muslim is close the Angel of Death - Azraeel alayhi salaam (Malak al-Mawt), comes down with other Angels the faces of whom shine like the sun. They come and sit next to him (at the limit of his eyesight). With them they bring silk shroud, clothes from Heaven and Heavenly perfumes for the person who is close to his death. Then arrives the Angel of Death - Azraeel alayhi salaam (Malak al-Mawt) close next to the persons head and says:

"Oh good and peaceful soul depart of that body, your lord is pleased with you".

On hearing this the soul leaves the body (as easily) as water drops flow from the spout of a water skin [Ahmad, Abu Dawud]. When the soul is taken the eye sight follows it (may be leaving the nafs behind). [Muslim, Ahmad]

When the Angel of Death takes the soul (ruh) the other angels do not leave it in his hand for as little as blinking of an eye. The Angels dress the soul in Heavenly silk clothes (shroud) and put on the perfumes and then in embalmment. The Angel then takes the soul to the sky, and the groups of Angel which they pass them (between Heaven and Earth) will know that it is a soul of a good believer, they will ask "Who is this good soul?" They (the angels holding it) reply," He is so and so, son of so and so", using the best names with which he had been addressed in the first life. They (gathering angels) will say to the soul *"Welcome holy-soul you have been obedient to Allah and Allah is pleased with you"*.

Meanwhile the Angels take the soul to the first level of the sky and knock on the door and the Angel inside ask. "Who is it?" The Angel outside reply: *"We have brought a good person's soul"*. The Angel inside, opens the door to welcome the soul. The most elite (angels) of each Heaven escort him to the next level of the sky, and there in the same manner the soul keeps traveling with the Angel until it reaches the seventh Heaven. The Angel then leave the soul on the seventh level where it goes to a place called **Il-li-yeen**.

Illiyeen (A place most high, the highest register) is the place where all good Muslim souls are gathered after death. The soul is asked questions by the souls who are already there, they ask about their families back on earth: *"How are they? What are they doing?"* Some old souls will ask about such and such a person, the new soul will say, *"Hasn't he come to you?"* The old soul replies, *"No, he must have been thrown into Hell"*.

After all the talking one of the old souls says: "Let him rest now he is very tired". Thus, his records are inscribed in Illi-yeen and the angels are told to take him back to the earth, because Allah says in Qur'an:

From the (earth) did We create you, and into it shall We return you, and from it shall We bring you out once again. [Surah Ta ha 20:55]

The soul returns to his body at the time of burial, so that he hears the thumping of his companions' shoes as they walk away from his grave. Then the Questioning starts.

At the time of burial, the soul of the dead person is going to be in Illi-yeen or in Sij-jeen. After the body has been buried, the soul returns to the body in the grave. Two Angels called **Munkar and Nakeer**, arrive at the grave and shake him and they make him sit up. They then question:

"WHO IS YOUR LORD?"

"MY LORD IS ALLAH (SUBHANA WA TA'ALA)" replies the believer.

"WHAT IS YOUR RELIGION?"

"MY RELIGION IS ISLAM" replies the believer.

Then the dead person is shown the face of the Prophet and the two Angel ask:

"WHO IS THIS MAN WHO WAS SENT AMONG YOU?" The believer will reply "THIS MAN IS THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH (SUBHANA WA TA'ALA)".

The Angel will then ask "HOW DO YOU KNOW?" "I READ THE BOOK OF ALLAH (SUBHANA WA TA'ALA) AND ACTED UPON IT".

A voice will be heard: **"This person is a true believer"**. At this point the person's grave bed will widen as far the eye can see. Light will appear in the grave and fresh air and heavenly perfume will come in the grave from a window opening into heaven. The person will be dressed in clothing from heaven and the Angel will order him to sleep. The person will rest in his grave until Yawm-ul-Qiyama (The Day of Judgment).

Then a handsome man, with clean clothes and with beautiful smells will come saying: "Be happy, this is the day Allah (subhana wa ta'ala) promised you". The dead person will ask: "Who are you?" The man will say: "I am your good deeds".

When all the questions have been asked the soul will be free to go back to Illiyeen. You must remember that every soul has contact with its body in the grave. A small example of that would

be: If a person passing by the grave says salaam, the dead person answers the salaam even if he is in Illiyeen.

The Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said that when a person's body is buried, he wakes up by rubbing his/her eyes. He/she will feel as though the sun is setting and say, "Leave me I want to read Asar Salaat". Then the questioning will start.

The grave is not a pit into which dead bodies are thrown, but it is a door to a world where people go after death (**Barzakh**). It is the stage between death and the Day of Judgement.

Death of a Non-Believer

When a non-believer is close to death, the Angel of Death - Azraeel alayhi salaam (Malak al-Mawt) and other Angel comes with darkened faces. They will have Clothes from hell and dirty smells from hell. The Angel of Death - Azraeel alayhi salaam (Malak al-Mawt) will approach the non-believer and say:

"Oh corrupt soul come out, Allah is angry with you".

On hearing this it becomes terrified and clings to the body, the soul with great difficulty leaves the body (by force) like a skewer is pulled from wet wool, causing the vein and nerves to burst. When the Angel of Death takes the soul the other angels do not leave it in his hand for as little as blinking of an eye.

Then the soul is dressed in the clothes from hell and the dirty smells of Hell will be put on him. The soul is then taken to the sky and on the way (between Heaven and Earth) the entire Angel who go past, curse it. The groups of Angel which they pass them will know that it is a soul of a unbeliever, they will ask "Who is this bad soul?" They (the angels holding it) reply, " He is so and so, son of so and so," using the worst names with which he had been addressed in the first life.

When the Angels knock on the door of the first level of the sky, they ask for permission to enter, but the gates are not open for him. The Angel inside reply, "*Throw him in **SIJJEEN** (a place most low, a place of Imprisonment)*". The soul is thrown into Sijjeen and the souls who are already there cannot talk, because they are in their own punishment. Thus, his records are inscribed in Sijjeen and the angels are told to take him back to the earth, because Allah says in Qur'an:

From the (earth) did We create you, and into it shall We return you, and from it shall We bring you out once again. [Surah Ta ha 20:55]

The soul returns to his body at the time of burial, so that he hears the thumping of his companions' shoes as they walk away from his grave. Then the Questioning starts in the same way. When the questioning is done, the soul returns to Sijjeen and it still has contact with its body. When a non-believer is buried, the same questions will be asked to the non-believer:

"WHO IS YOUR LORD?"

"I DON'T KNOW" replies the non-believer.

"WHAT IS YOUR RELIGION?"

"I DON'T KNOW" replies the non-believer.

Then the dead person is shown the face of the Prophet and the two Angels will ask:

"WHO IS THIS MAN WHO WAS SENT AMONG YOU?" "I DO NOT KNOW" replies the non-believer.

The Angel will say: "He is a liar! Put clothes of fire on Him, make Him a bed in hell and open the window of Hell for him". Then facing the non-believer, the window of hell fire opens and hot air from hell enters the grave. The grave tightens.

Blind, deaf and dumb person is appointed for him. He carries in his hand a sledgehammer that if that iron bar hit a mountain in this world, the mountain would crumble like dust. When non-believer hit by this iron bar, he would turn in to dust and then the non-believer will scream in so much pain that everything from East to West will be able to hear the screams, all except human beings and Jinns. Then Allah (swt) would restore him back (previous state).

The second punishment will be the poisonous snakes in the grave, which will not stop biting the person until the Day of Judgement. This is because he did not believe in Allah (subhana wa ta'ala).

Then an ugly looking man will come, who will smell disgusting and who will be wearing dirty clothes and say: "Be unhappy this is the day that Allah (subhana wa ta'ala) promised you. You will suffer in agony until the Day of Judgement". The person from the grave, will ask: "Who are you?" The man will reply: "I am your bad deeds".

QUESTION: People who have tragic deaths like being burn't or drowned in the sea or get eaten by an animal. Where do they go for questioning?

ANSWER: After the soul returns from Illyeen or Sijjeen, the soul enters the spine and the person is ready for questioning. The grave of a person is where the spine is, even if it is in the stomach of the whale. The soul enters the spine of the body. As there are always pieces of spine left even if it is in the ashes or in the stomach of a whale.

In the grave all the body rots away except the spine because on the Day of Judgement the bodies will be raised from it. But the prophets and the pious people, their body do not rot away like a normal person's body does.

Barzakh [Grave]

When a person dies, he goes to the world of Barzakh and stays there till Qiyamat. The period after your death until Qiyamat is known as Barzakh.

Hazrat Jabir (radhiallahu anhu) quotes Rasulallah ﷺ as saying, "When the corpse (of a Believer) is placed in the grave, he supposes that the sun is setting. When his soul is returned to it, he sits up rubbing his eyes and asks (the angels) to let him alone so that he may offer his prayers". [Ibn Majah]

It is as if he considers himself alive in the world and tells the angels to leave aside the reckoning because he had to offer his prayers before the prescribed time is over. Obviously a person who is regular in offering his prayers in this life will say so. Those who are slack in offering their prayers must take a lesson from this. Let them think what will become of them if they are put to question suddenly?

According to Hazrat Abu Hurayrah (radhiallahu anhu), Rasulallah ﷺ said "When the body (of a Muslim) is buried in the grave, there appear before him two angels, both having black faces and blue eyes. One is called Munkar and the other is called Nakir and they: Say what you have to say about this person and he will say: He is a servant of Allah and His Messenger. I bear testimony to the fact that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger and they both will say: We already knew that you would say this. Then his grave will be extended seventy arm's length square and it will be illuminated, then it will be said to him: Go to sleep but he will say: I intend to go to my family in order to inform them and they would say: Go to sleep like sleep of a newly wedded bride whom no one awakens but one who is dearest to her amongst his family members. (Thus he remains in the grave peacefully). Only Allah would

resurrect him from his resting place (on the Day of Resurrection). If he (the dead) is a hypocrite, he will reply I do not know more than what I have heard people say. The angels will say that they knew he would give such a reply. The earth will be directed to squeeze him and he is pressed so that his ribs are clasped together. Then, he remains in torment until the Day of Resurrection". [Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith no. 44]

These Ahadith tell us that the Believers will be content in the world of Barzakh. They will be full of consciousness. So they will be careful of their prayers and they will not be worried about reckoning. When they realize their good fate, they will wish to pass on the news to their family. They will be eager to face the Day of Resurrection so that they are admitted to Paradise soon. The point is when Allah is compassionate to anyone, He retains his consciousness and Allah inspires him to give the correct answers. It is stated in Qur'an:

“Allah will establish in strength those who believe, with the Word that stands firm, in this world and in the Hereafter...” [Surah Ibrahim 14:27]

Rasulullah ﷺ asked Umar (radhiallahu anhu) “O Umar what will be your condition when you are placed in the grave? The Munkar and Nakir will come to you. They will be dark skinned and their hair will be very pulling along on the floor. Their voices will be like intense thunder and eyes threatening like lightening. The teeth will be long, digging the ground before them. They will wake you up terrorizing you, the while. Hazrat Umar (radhiallahu anhu) enquired, “O Messenger of Allah sallallahu alayhi wasallam, will I be in my senses then as I am now?”

Rasulullah ﷺ confirmed to him that he would be in his senses as he was then. Hazrat Umar (radhiallahu anhu) submitted to the Prophet ﷺ “O Messenger of Allah, I will manage them”.

The possession of full consciousness will be the result of firm faith and righteousness. If deeds are not righteous, then how will one be in his senses during the reckoning?

It is worth considering that no one will live in this world forever. Life is ephemeral. The comfort of the world is not extraordinary and the afflictions tolerable. The next stage of Barzakh is going to be very long (until the Day of Resurrection). If a man has not been righteous in this world or has neglected his duties for prayer and other Articles of Faith, he will be punished at this stage. What will he do then?

We must- all of us- worry about our fate after death. Verily this world is coming to an end. Life in this world is temporary! Is it not foolish to forgo Salat (prayers) only so that we may sleep a little more? Or, to love money so much that we do not pay Zakah? And go through a severe torment in the grave (just for a little bit of sleep or money, etc.) Let us do pious deed and keep away from sinful activities so that our period in Barzakh is spent comfortably and on the Day of Resurrection too we emerge honourably.

Rabbana Aatayna Fiddoonya Hasanatawn wa fil Aakheratey Hasanatawn wa Qena Azaban Nar
(O our Lord! Bestow upon us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and protect us from the torment of the fire) Aameen.

May Allah the Almighty forgive us for our shortcomings and guide us to that which He loves and is pleased with. Whatever written of Truth and benefit is only due to Allah's Assistance and Guidance, and whatever of error is of me alone. Allah Alone Knows Best and He is the Only Source of Strength.

Source:

- The Dreamer's Hand Book (Sleep Etiquettes & Dream Interpretation in Light of the Sunnah), The Inevitable Journey – Book 5 by Muhammad Mustafa Al-Jibali (Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah).
- Hereafter (Punishment in the Grave) by Sheik Anwar Al-Awlaki
- Fisabilillah Publications
- The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an, 11th edition 1429 AH / 2008 C.E with Revised English Translation, Commentary and Index by 'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali.

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