

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Conveying the rewards of the good deeds of the living to the deceased

A translation of Sayyid Muhammad Ibn ‘Alawī Al-Māliki Al-Ḥasanī’s
Tahqīq Al-Āmāl fī mā yanfa Al-mayyit min al ‘amāl’

[Part 2]

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[Translator’s introduction]

This is the second and final part of Sayyid Muḥammad Ibn ‘Alawī Al-Māliki Al-Ḥasanī’s *Tahqīq Al-Āmāl fī mā yanfa Al-mayyit min al ‘amāl*’ [The realization of aspirations concerning that which benefits the deceased of deeds]. It covers pages 56 to 156 of the original work (distributed by *Dār Jawāmi’ al Kalam lil Tawzī wal Nashr*, Cairo, Undated). Part one has been published in the *Ipsa Journal of Islamic Studies* (Issue 9, 2010).¹

The topics covered in part include: the lawfulness of reciting the Qur’ān at the grave, the validity of the *talqīn*, the permissibility of gathering to commiserate with bereaved family members, the legality of reciting the Fātiḥah and Yā-Sīn on the souls of the deceased, the virtues of the various Qur’ānic *Suwar* that are typically read for the dying and the deceased, and issues around the need to remember death, to take illness as a warning, how to engage with one at the point of death, mourning and weeping for the deceased, hoping for death, as well as matters relating to the final *ghusl*, following the bier and burial.

¹ Read at : <http://marifah.net/articles/Isaalalthawab-sayyidMaliki.pdf>

Reciting at the grave is not a *bid'ah*²

Among the matters around which there is much discussion, debate and difference of opinion- so much so that it leads to enmity and breaking of relations- is the issue of reciting from the Qur'ān at the grave. There are some who term this as an innovation (*bid'ah*) and others who term it as forbidden (*ḥarām*).

But it is a topic that does not warrant such an odious attack and ugly rejection. Let us return to what the *A'immah* (leaders) of the *Salaf* (pious predecessors) have said regarding the issue, starting with the Imam of the *Salafiyah* in his time, Ibn Al-Qayyim.

He says: "It is mentioned that a group of the *Salaf* willed that there should be recitation of the Qur'ān while they were being buried. Abd Al-Haqq Al-Ishbīlī said: "It is narrated that Ibn 'Umar ordered that *Sūrah Baqarah* be recited at his grave.³ Imam Aḥmad used to forbid recitation at first since he had received no report in this regard but subsequently changed his position on the matter."

Al Ḥāfiẓ Jalāl Al-din Al-Suyūtī says:

"Bayhaqī in his "Shu'ub" and Ṭabarānī relate that Ibn 'Umar reported that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: "If anyone of you dies, do not detain his body but hasten him to his grave and recite by his head the opening Chapter of the Book [*Al-Fātiḥah*]" In the narration of Bayhaqī the wording is as follows: "The opening Chapter of the Book and by his feet the concluding verses (*khātimah*) of Surat Al-Baqarah at his grave"⁴ [end of quote].

I say: "The Companions have used and acted upon this *ḥadīth*. Khilāl says in the *Jāmi'*, the "Chapter on recitation at the grave":

We were informed by 'Abbās b. Muḥammad Al-Dūrī from Yahya b. Ma'īn from Mubasshir Al-Ḥalabī from Abd Al-Raḥmān b. 'Ala b. al Lajlaj from his father who said: My father said: "When I die put me in the *lahd* and say: "In the Name of Allah and upon the Sunnah of Allah's Messenger" and pour the earth over my body, and by my head recite the opening part of Sura Al-Baqarah for I heard 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar say that."

'Abbas Al-Dūrī said: I asked Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal: "Does recitation (of the Qur'ān) protect against anything? (And in another narration: "Does the recitation of the Qur'ān at the grave protect against anything?). He replied: "No." I asked Yahyā b. Mu'īn so he narrated this *ḥadīth* (of Ibn 'Umar's) to me.

Khilāl said that "Al Ḥasan b. Aḥmad Al-Warrāq informed me: "Ali b. Musa Al-Ḥaddād - who was trustworthy- narrated to us: "I was with Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Muḥammad b. Al-Qudāmāh Al-Jawharī at a funeral. When the deceased was buried a blind man sat and recited the Qur'ān at the grave. Aḥmad said to him: "Oh so and so! The recital of the Qur'ān at the grave is an innovation (*bid'ah*)." When we left the graveyard Muḥammad b. Qudāmāh said to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal : "Oh Abū 'Abdullah! What do you say regarding Mubashshir Al-Ḥalabī?" He replied: "He is trustworthy". Imam Aḥmad asked: "Have you written anything down from him?" He [Muḥammad Ibn Qudāmāh] replied: "Yes. Mubashshir informed me from 'Abd Al-Raḥmān Ibn 'Ala Ibn Lajlaj who willed that when he was buried the opening and end parts of Surah Baqarah should be recited at his head and he said: "I heard Ibn 'Umar willing that." Then Aḥmad said to him (Muḥammad Ibn Qudāmāh): "Then return and say to the man that he can recite."

Al Ḥasan Ibn Sabāḥ Al-Za'frānī said: "I asked Al-Shāfi'ī about recital of the Qur'ān at the grave and he did not object to it."

Khilāl mentioned Shu'bī as saying: "When someone passed away among the Anṣār they frequented his grave and recited the Qur'ān at the graveside." He (Shu'bī) said: "Abū Yahyā Al-Nāqīd informed me that: "I heard Al-Hasan Al-Jarawī saying: "I passed by the grave of my sister and I read (*Sūrah*) Tabārah at her side because of what is said concerning this *sūrah*." A man came to me and said: "I saw your sister in a dream. May Allah well reward Abu 'Ali because I have benefitted through what he has recited."

I was informed by Al-Ḥasan Al-Haitham who said: "I heard Abū Bakr Al-Atrush b. bint Abī Nasr Al-Tamār saying: "There was a man who used to come to the grave of his mother on Fridays and recite Surāh Yāsin. And on one his days he recited *Sūrah* Yāsin and then he said: "Oh Allah! Indeed You have promised reward for this *sūrah* so give this reward to the inhabitants of this graveyard." On the following Friday a woman came to him and said: "Are you so and so?". He replied: "Yes." She said: "A daughter of mine passed away. I saw her in a dream sitting on the edge of her grave. I asked her : "How have you come to sit here?" She replied: "So and so came to the grave of his mother and read *Sūrah* Yāsin donating its reward to all the inhabitants of the graveyard. So the soul of that reached us- or we were forgiven (along these lines)."

Nasā'ī and others narrate from the *ḥadīth* of Ma'qal b. Yasār Al-Muzinī from the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, who said: "Read Yā-Sīn by your dying/deceased." This carries the meaning of reciting to one who is dying such as in

² The following section [pp 56-68 of the text] is translated by Auwais Rafudeen

³ The reference for this report will be given later.

⁴ *Sharḥ Al-Ṣudūr* p 104. I [Sayyid Muḥammad] say: "Ḥākīm has a similar *marfū'* narration. Al-Bayyāḍī has narrated a version with the same meaning [*shāhid*] from another chain. Al-Dhahabī says in the *Talkhīs*: "It meets both their conditions but there is a difference of opinion as to whether it is *marfū'* or *mawqūf*. (Al-Mustadrak ma' al Talkhīs 1/366).

the *ḥadīth* :”Exhort your dying to recite “Lā ilāh ha illallah”⁵ And it also carries the meaning of its recitation to the deceased at the grave. And the first is more apparent⁶ for the following reasons:

- (1) It corresponds to the *ḥadīth*: “Prompt your dying to (say) “There is no god but Allah.””
- (2) There is benefit in this *sūrah* for the one close to death given what it contains of the Unity of Allah, the life to come, the glad tidings of Paradise for those who believe in Allah’s Unity, and rapture for the one who dies in this state due to His Saying: “Ah me! Would that my people knew (what I know) for that my Lord has granted me forgiveness and has enrolled me among those held in honour.” [Qur’ān 36: 26-27). The soul is rejoices in this state and loves to meet Allah, so Allah loves to meet it.⁷ This *sūrah* is the heart of the Qur’ān and has wonderful qualities when being read to those close to death. Abu Al-Faraj Ibn Al-Jawzī mentioned the following: “We were with our Shaykh Abu Al-Waqt ‘Abd Al-Awwal in his death throes. At the end of our time with him, he looked towards the heavens and laughed, saying: “Ah me! Would that my people knew (what I know) for that my Lord has granted me forgiveness and has enrolled me among those held in honour.” And then he passed away.
- (3) It is the practice and custom of the people, old and new, to recite *Yā-Sīn* to the one close to death.
- (4) Had the Companions understood from “Recite *Yā-Sīn* upon your dying” that they were to recite it at the grave, why did they then leave that? And this is a practice [reciting *Ya-Sin* at the one close to death] that was customary and well-known among them.
- (5) The benefit [of *Sūrah Yā-Sīn*] is due to listening to it. And the presence of the heart and mind [of the dying] while it is being recited in the last moments of his life is the objective. As for its recitation at the grave, there is no reward for this since reward is either through recitation or listening and this is a (good) deed which is cut off from the deceased. This is the end of the quotation from Ibn Qayyim.⁸

Al Ḥāfiẓ Abū Muḥammad Al-Ḥaqq Al-Ishbīlī expounded upon this and said: “He mentioned what has been transmitted regarding the fact that the deceased ask about the living and are aware of what they say and do. Then he says: “Abū Amr Ibn ‘Abd Al-Barr mentioned a *ḥadīth* where Ibn ‘Abbas related the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace be upon him as follows: “There is no one who passes by the grave of his believing brother whom he knows and [then] greets him, except that [the deceased] knows him and returns his greeting.”⁹ This is narrated from Abū Hurayrah in an unbroken chain who said: “And if he does not know him and greets him, the greeting is returned.”¹⁰

He said: It is narrated from a *ḥadīth* of ‘Āishah, Allah be pleased with her, who said: The Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “There is not a man who visits the grave of his brother and sits by it except that he (the deceased) is pleased with (the visitor’s) company until he rises.”¹¹ And Abū Muḥammad in this chapter uses as an argument what Abū Dāwūd has narrated in his *Sunan*, in a *ḥadīth* related by Abū Hurayrah who said: The Messenger of Allah said: “There is none that sends greetings of peace upon me except that Allah returns my soul to me until I return his greeting.”¹² He said: Sulaymān b. Nu‘aym said: “I saw the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, in a dream and said: “Oh Messenger of Allah! Are you cognizant of those that come to you (your grave) and send greetings of peace upon you?” He replied: “Yes, and I return their greetings.”

⁵ This is a *ṣahīḥ ḥadīth* narrated by Imām Muslim in the *Kitāb Al-Janā’iz*, the chapter on exhorting the deceased to recite “Lā ilāha illallāh” (3:37); Abū Dāwūd in the chapter on *talqīm* (3:190), *Ḥadīth* 3117; Tirmidhī in the Chapter “What has come down concerning exhorting the sick at the point of death and supplication for such a one (3:302; *ḥadīth* 970); Ibn Mājah in the chapter concerning the exhortation of the deceased to recite “Lā ilāha illallāh” (1: 464-465 *Ḥadīth* 1444-1446); an-Nisā’ī in the chapter on exhorting the deceased (4/5) with the wording: “Exhort your dying to recite the formula “There is no god but Allah”) and Ibn Ḥibbān in his *Ṣahīḥ* (as it is in the *Al-Iḥsān* 5:3-4; *Ḥadīth* 69992-69993).

⁶ This is impartially taken from Shaykh Ibn Al-Qayyim since he transmitted two beneficial positions from the verse, validated both of them and then inclined to the first (reading at the dying) and said this first is clearer. It is faced with the fact that the second is [also] valid and clear (namely, recital at the grave). Indeed, it is the position of Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and the majority of the scholars and it is the one the people follow in every epoch. So what are the claims of the Salafiyyah about this valid, finely researched methodology regarding his [Ibn Qayyim’s] trustworthiness, justice, fairness and ethics.

⁷ Bukhārī narrates ‘Ubādah b. Ṣāmit relating from the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, who said: “Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him. And whoever hates to meet Allah, Allah hates to meet him.” ‘Āishah or one of his other wives said: “Indeed we hate death.” He, the Salutations and Peace of Allah replied: “Not that. But when death appears to a believer he is given glad tidings of the Pleasure and Generosity of Allah.” (4/130). Muslim narrated it from ‘Āishah which has in it: “I said: O Prophet of Allah. The hatred of death. All of us hate death.” He, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, replied: “It is not like that...” *Ḥadīth* 8:65

⁸ *Al-Rūḥ* pp 155-156

⁹ Al-Ḥāfiẓ Al-Zabīdī in the *Itihāfus Sādah* says: “As to the *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Abbās which is narrated by Ibn ‘Abd Al-Barr in the *Tamhīd* with the words: “There is none...” - a similar one is narrated in the *Istidrāk* and has been rigorously authenticated by ‘Abd Al-Haqq in “*Al-Iqābah*” (Volume 10/365). There is a similar one in the *Tarīkh Al-Baghdādi* (6:137) from Abū Hurayrah with the wording: “There is no slave that passes the grave of a man that he used to know in the world, greeting him except that (the deceased) knows him and returns the greeting.”

¹⁰ It is mentioned in the *Iḥyā* on the authority of Abū Hurayrah with the wording: “When a man passes the grave of a man he knows and greets him, he (the deceased) returns the greeting and knows who it is.” And if he passes by a grave that he does not know...” In his *Sharḥ Al-Ṣudūr* Suyūṭī attributes it to Ibn Abī Dunyā and Bayhaqī classing it as *mawqūf ‘alayhi* (p. 202). Ḥāfiẓ al Zabīdī says in the *Iḥtāf*: “It is narrated by Ibn Abī Dunyā in the “Book of Graves” and Bayhaqī in the *Shu‘b* on the authority of Abū Hurayrah and it is classed as *marfū‘* (10:366).

¹¹ It is attributed by Al-Suyūṭī to Ibn Abī Dunyā in the “Book of graves” from her (*Sharḥ Al-Ṣudūr* p202). It is (also) narrated by Daylamī in the *Ma‘thūr al Firdaws* from her (4/20 Number 6055). Shaykh Ibn Taymīyyah says in his *Fatāwā* (64:331): “Ibn Al-Mubārak says: “This is established from the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, and has been rigorously authenticated by ‘Abd Al-Ḥaqq, the author of *Al-Aḥkām*.” See our book *Mafāhīm Yajibu an Tuṣahḥihuhā* (p. 240). It is narrated by Daylamī in the *Zahr Al-Firdaws* on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (4/13). In his *Al-Iḥtāf* Al-Ḥāfiẓ Zabīdī attributes a similar one to Abu Al-Shaykh (10/360).

¹² Narrated by Abū Dāwūd in his *Sunan* (2/534) *ḥadīth* 2041, “The chapter on visiting the graves.” It is also narrated by Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (2/567).

He said (Al-Ishbīlī) continued: “And he, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, used to teach them to say upon entering a graveyard: “Oh peace be upon you, the People of the Abode [*Ahl Al-diyār*]”.¹³ He (Al-Ishbīlī) said: “This points to the fact that the deceased is cognizant of the one who greets and prays for him.”

Abū Muḥammad said: “It is mentioned that Fad l b. Muwaffaq said: “I used to frequent the grave of my father. One day I saw a funeral in the graveyard and hurried to fulfill my duty [of attending the funeral] and did not go to him. That night I saw him in a dream and he said to me: “Oh my son! Why did you not come to me?” I said: “Oh my father? Do you know me when I come to you?” He replied: “By Allah my son! I continue beholding you from the time you come through the gate, until you arrive by me and sit with me and then stand up again. I continue looking at you until you walk past the arch.” Ibn Abī Dunyā said: Ibrahim b. Bashār Al-Kūfī told me this and he said: “Fad l b. Muwaffaq told me this and then narrated this story.”

It is rigorously authenticated that ‘Amr b. Dīnār said: “There is no deceased except that he knows what will happen to his family after him and that they wash and shroud him. And he beholds them.”

It is rigorously authenticated that Mujāhid said: “A man in his grave delights in the righteousness of his son after him.”

Nawawī, Allah be pleased with him, says in his *Sharḥ Al-Mahdhab*: It is recommended that a visitor recite from the Qurān what is easy and supplicates for them following that. Imām Shāfi‘ī has written this and it is agreed upon by our colleagues in the *madhhab*.” And he adds in another place: “And if completes the Qur’ān at the grave then that is the best.”¹⁴

Ibn Al-Muflih says in the *Al-Furū’*: “It is not makrūh to read the Qur’ān at the grave and in the graveyard. This is documented. This position has been chosen by Abū Bakr, the Qādi and the group (*jamā’ah*) and it is the position of the *madhhab*....” until he says: “In the Sharḥ Muslim (it says) that the ‘ulama prefer recitation of the Qur’ān at the grave due to the narration of the palm-leaf stalk. This is because if he can hope for lightening (of punishment) through its *tasbīḥ* then the recitation of the Qur’ān is even more preferred.

Section¹⁵

There is no problem in reciting [i.e. Qurān]¹⁶ at the grave. It is reported from Aḥmad that he said: “If you enter the graveyards then recite *āyah Al-kursī*¹⁷ and three times *Qul huwallāhu aḥad*¹⁸, then say: ‘O Allah its reward is for the deceased in the graveyard’”

Al-Suyūṭī¹⁹ has attributed this saying to Al-Muḥibb Al-Ṭabarī and to Al-Ghazālī in his *Ihyā*. In the *Al- Āqibah* of Abd Al-Ḥaqq, narrated from Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, it has the wording: “If you enter the graveyards then recite the opening chapter of the Book and the *Mu awwidhatayn*²⁰ and *Qul huwallāhu aḥad*, and send its reward to the deceased in the graveyard, because it will reach them”

I say: This is supported by what Al-Burhān b. Muflih has reported in his book *Al-Muflih* on the authority of Imām Aḥmad. We have quoted it in the next section amongst the legal texts on the issue, so refer to it [further on].

Al-Ḥafīz Al-Suyūṭī says in the same reference²¹: In the *Fawā'id* of Al-Zinjānī on the authority of Abū Hurayrah [it is reported] that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “Whoever enters the graveyards and recites the opening chapter of the Book and *Qul huwallāhu aḥad* and *Al-hākum Al-takāthur*²², then say: O Allah I have given its reward...” Refer to the *ḥadīth*.

In the same reference²³ regarding the virtue of *Qul huwallāhu aḥad*, Samarqandī in his version narrates from Ali that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “...and recites *Qul huwallāhu aḥad* eleven times...” Refer to the *ḥadīth*.

In his *Ithāf*²⁴ Al-Zabīdī mentions after quoting the words of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal: “Abd Al-Ḥaqq quoted it as such in the book *Al-‘Aqibah* on the authority of Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Al-Marwazī.” He also attributed it to Al-Nasā‘ī and Al-Rāfi‘ī in his *Tārīkh*, as well as Al-Samarqandī and he mentioned it as a prophetic *ḥadīth* on the authority of ‘Alī.

¹³ Narrated by Muslim on the authority of Sulaymān b. Buraydah from his father from the narration of Zuhayr in these words. It is related by Abū Bakr Ibn Abī Shaybah in these words: “Peace be upon the People of the Abode.” *Kitāb Al-Janā'iz* (The Book of Funerals), The Chapter on what is said when entering upon the grave sites and the supplication for its inhabitants.” (3/60-63). It is narrated by Bayhaqī in the *Sunan Al-Kubrā*, the Book of Funerals, the chapter on what is said when entering the graveyard. (4/132-133, ḥadīth 7211, 7212 and 7213).

¹⁴ *Al Majmū' Sharh al Mahdhab* (5/267)

¹⁵ The following section [pp68-77] of the text was translated by Sh Ebrahim Moos

¹⁶ Words between square brackets [] are from the translator.

¹⁷ [The verse of the throne, Ch. 2 V. 255]

¹⁸ [Ch. 112]

¹⁹ *Sharḥ Al-Sudūr* p.312

²⁰ [Ch. 113 and 114]

²¹ *Sharḥ Al-Sudūr* p.313

²² [Ch. 102]

²³ *Sharḥ Al-Sudūr* p.313

²⁴ *Ithāf Al-sāda Al-muttaqīn bi sharḥ ihyā 'ulūm Al-din* by Al-Zabīdī, Vol. 4 p. 220

Khallāl said: “Our *shaykh*, the reliable and trustworthy narrator Abu Al-Ḥasan b. Al-Haytham Al-Bazzār narrated to me and he said: ‘I saw Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal pray behind a blind person who recited over the graves’. It is reported from the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, that he said: “Whoever enters the graveyard and recites *Sūrah Yāsīn*²⁵, their [i.e. the deceased] punishment is lessened on that day and he [i.e. the one who recited] will receive the reward of good deeds equivalent to the amount of deceased buried there.”²⁶

And it is reported from the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, that he said: “Whoever visits the graves of his parents or one of them and recites over them *Yāsīn*, his sins will be forgiven”.²⁷ Then he said: “(Section): And any act of worship that he performs and sends its reward to the deceased Muslim, then that will benefit him with the permission of Allāh.”

As for supplications, asking for forgiveness, giving charity and the performance of other obligations, I do not know any disagreement about its permissibility, if the obligations [are of the kind that normally] accept delegation. And Allāh the most High said: “And those who come after them say: Our Lord, forgive us and our brethren that preceded us with faith”.²⁸ And He said: “And seek forgiveness for your sins, and for the believers male and female”.²⁹³⁰

When discussing difference number one hundred and seventy two, the great scholar Al-Shihāb Al-Qarāfī in summary said: “The view of Abū Ḥanīfah and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal is that the reward of the recital reaches the deceased. And when it is recited at the grave, the deceased gains the reward of that of a listener. It is suitable to say - and there is no dispute about this - that the blessings of the Qurān is [definitely] obtained [although] not its reward [indisputably]. This is similar to when the blessings would be obtained [by the deceased] when a pious man is buried close to them or they buried close to him. It is important that a person does not neglect this issue, because perhaps the truth is in fact that the reward reaches the deceased, since these are matters of the unseen. The dispute does not really involve the legal ruling, but rather its occurrence: does it happen or not? Also regarding the *tahīl* [i.e. chanting *lā ilāha illa Allāh*] that people customarily practice today, it is important that the focus should be on the bounty of Allāh as far as that is concerned. The bounty of Allāh is sought in every possible means – from Allāh comes the generosity and the goodness – this is what is suitable for the servant”.

Legal texts on the issue

Imām Shams Al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muflīḥ Al-Maqdisī stated in his book *Al-Furū* : “The recital at the grave or in the graveyard is not disliked. Abūbākr Al-Qāfī and others mentioned this and preferred this view. This is the view of the [Ḥanbalī] *madhhab*”. Then he said: “It is reported authentically that Ibn Umar requested the recital of the opening and closing verses of *Al-Baqarah*³¹ when he is buried. This is why Aḥmad retracted [his view] that it was disliked. Al-Khallāl and his companion said the *madhhab* only has one view and that is: It is not disliked.”³²

Imām Burhān Al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Abdillāh b. Muḥammad b. Muflīḥ said in his book *Al-Mubdi*: Reciting at the grave or in the graveyard is not disliked in the more authentic of the two opinions. This is the *madhhab*.

Anas reported that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “Whoever enters the graveyard and recites *Sūrah Yāsīn*, their [i.e. the deceased] punishment is lessened on that day and he [i.e. the one who recited] will receive the reward of good deeds equivalent to the amount of deceased buried there.” And it is authentically reported that Ibn Umar requested the opening and closing verses of *Al-Baqarah* be recited when he is buried. This is why Aḥmad retracted [his view] that it was disliked. Abūbākr mentioned this. Its origin is that when he [Aḥmad] passed by a blind person reciting at the grave, he prohibited him from doing that. Muḥammad b. Qudāmah Al-Jawharī then said to him: ‘What do you say about Mubashir Al-Ḥalabī?’ He replied: ‘Reliable’. Then he said: ‘Mubashir informed me on the authority of his father that the latter requested that the opening and closing verses of *Al-Baqarah* be recited at his burial’. He said [i.e. the father]: ‘I heard that Ibn Umar requested that’. Then Aḥmad said: ‘Return and tell the man that he may continue reading’. This is why Al-Khallāl and his companion said: ‘The only narration in the *madhhab* is that is not disliked, but Al-Sāmiriyy said: ‘It is recommended that the opening of *Al-Baqarah* be recited at the head-end of the grave and its closing at the foot-end.’

Imām Abu Al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Sulaymān Al-Mirdāwī said in his book *Al-Inṣāf*:

His saying ‘It is not disliked to recite at the grave according to most authentic of the two narrations’ – this is the *madhhab*. He mentioned this in *Al-Furū*’ and elsewhere. The commentator said: ‘This is the famous view of Aḥmad’.

²⁵ [Ch. 36]

²⁶ Al-Ṭabarānī narrated with a chain that contains Ayyūb b. Mudrik. Abū Ḥātim and Al-Nasāī said: He is *matrūk* [i.e. not reliable in transmission] – Abridged from *Al-Mizān* by Al-Dhahabī.

²⁷ He mentioned it in the *Iḥyā* with the wording: “Whoever visits the graves of his parents or one of them every Friday, his sins will be forgiven and he will be recorded as one who was set free”. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Al- Irāqī said: “This was narrated by Al-Ṭabarānī in his *Al-Saghūr* and *Al-Awsaṭ* from the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah as well as by Ibn Abī Al-Dunyā in the chapter of graves on the authority of Muḥammad b. Al-Nu mān ascribing it to the prophet (saw). This ḥadīth is *mu ḍal* [i.e. a narration where two narrators are omitted] and Muḥammad b. Al-Nu mān is unknown and his teacher Ibn Al- Alā Al-Bajalī is unreliable according to Al-Ṭabarānī. (Vol.4 p. 490). It has a supporting narration on the authority of Aishah from her father Abūbākr. At the end of it is: “equivalent to the amount of letters in it”. This was mentioned by Al-Ḥāfiẓ Al-Zabīdī in *Al-īthāf* (Vol. 10 p. 363)

²⁸ Ch. Al-Ḥashr V.10

²⁹ Ch. Muḥammad V.19

³⁰ *Al-Mughnī* Vol. 2 p. 425-426

³¹ [Ch. 2]

³² *Al-Furū*’ by Ibn Muflīḥ Vol.2 p. 304

Al-Khallāl and his companion said: ‘In one narration it is not disliked and this is the view that the majority follow, including Al-Qāḍī who decisively mentioned this in *Al-Wajīz* and other sources. Preference of this view is given in *Al-Furū*, *Al-Mughnī* and its commentary, and also by Ibn Tamīm, in *Al-Fā’iq* and other sources’.

The second narration states that it is disliked. Abd Al-Wahhāb, Al-Warrāq and Shaykh Taqī Al-Dīn chose this view. Shaykh Taqī Al-Dīn said: This was narrated by a group of scholars and it is the view of the majority of the predecessors. It is the view of the old scholars, among them Al-Marwazī.

I say: Many of the scholars said that Imām Aḥmad retracted this narration.[This is because] A group narrated from Imām Aḥmad that he passed by a blind person reciting at the grave and he prohibited him from doing that and he said to him: “Reciting at the grave is an innovation. Muḥammad b. Qudāmah Al-Jawharī then said to him: ‘Oh Abū ‘Abdillāh, what do you say about Mubashir Al-Ḥalabī?’ He replied: ‘Reliable’. Then he said: ‘Mubashir informed me on the authority of his father that the latter requested that the opening and closing verses of *Al-Baqarah* be recited at his burial’. He said: ‘I heard that Ibn ‘Umar requested that’. Then Aḥmad said: ‘Return and tell the man that he may continue reading’. This shows that he retracted this view.

Another view is that it is not disliked only at the time of burial. It is mentioned in *Al-Fā’iq*: “It is recommended at the time of burial. This was the chosen view of ‘Abd Al-Wahhāb and Al-Warrāq and our *shaykh*. And it is reported from him also that reciting at the grave is an innovation, since it was not what the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace be upon him, or his Companions had done.

So according to the view that says it is not disliked, then it means that it is recommended. It is mentioned in *Al-Fā’iq*: “It is recommended to recite at the grave”. This is what he finally mentioned.

Ibn Tamīm stated: “It is not disliked to recite at the grave. In fact it is recommended to do so. It is also said that it is merely permissible. It is mentioned in *Al-Ri āyah Al-Kubrā* that it is permissible to recite at the grave. He preferred this view in the *Al-Ri āyah Al-Sughrā* and the two *Hāwīs*. It is stated in *Al-Mughnī* and its commentary and the commentary of Ibn Razīn: There is no problem to recite at the grave. He left it unrestricted in *Al-Furū*”.³³

The great scholar Shaykh Maṣṣūr Al-Bahūtī said: “It is not disliked to recite at the grave or in the graveyard; instead it is recommended”.³⁴

The *Talqīn*³⁵

The *talqīn* is also of those legal issues that cause dispute, argument and rebuttal- leading to controversy and division. The root of the matter is the *marfū’ ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Umāmah, recorded by Al-Tabarī and ‘Abd Al ‘Azīz Al-Ḥanbalī in Syria, with a chain of narrators leading to Abū Umāmah who said:

“When I die, do to me as has been commanded by the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, when burring the dead. The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, commanded us, saying: “When one of your [fellow Muslims] die, level the sand on his grave and let one of you stand at the head of the grave and say:” Oh Fulān Ibn Fulānah (Oh so and so, son of fulānah[mother’s name]”- for indeed [the deceased] hears and do not respond. Then say (again):” Oh Fulān Ibn Fulānah”- for indeed he sits upright (in his grave). Then say (again): “Oh Fulān Ibn Fulānah”- for indeed he (the dead) says: “He (Allah) has guided us and may (He Allah) have mercy upon you, but you (the living) are unable to comprehend.” Then say: “Remember that with which you have departed us with in this world, the testifying that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is His slave and messenger. You are satisfied with Allah as a Lord, with Islam as a religion, Muhammad as a Prophet and the Qur’an as a guide (Imām).” (At this point the Angels) Munkar and Nakīr take the deceased by the hand and say: “Come with us and sit by he who recites the talqīn.” Then a man said:” Oh Messenger of Allah, what if his mother is not known?” [The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him] replied: “Append his lineage to his mother Hawwā and say, Oh Fulān Ibn Hawwā.”

Al-Ḥāfiẓ says in his “*Talkhīs*”: Its chain of narrators is acceptable (*ṣāliḥ*). It is strengthened by Al-Diyā in his “*Aḥkām*”. In his chain of narrators is Sa’īd Al-Azdī whose details were unknown to Abū Hātim. After scrutinizing it Al-Haythamī says: “In its chain is a group whom I do not know.” (end)³⁶

In its chain is ‘Āsim Ibn ‘Abd Allāh who is weak. Al-Al-Athram says: “I asked (Imam) Aḥmad about that which [people] do when burying the deceased, in a man standing [at the grave] and saying: “Oh Fulān Ibn Fulānah...” He (Imam Aḥmad) responded: “I have not seen anyone doing it except the people of Shām when Abū Al-Mughīrah passed away. Regarding the issue it has been narrated by Abū Bakr Ibn Abi Maryam from their *shuyūkh* that they did it. And Isma’īl Ibn ‘Iyāsh used to refer to the *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Umāmah. (end)

³³ *Al-Insāf* Vol. 2 p.557

³⁴ *Kashāf Al-Qinā* Vol. 2 p. 170

³⁵ The following section [pp 78-85 of the text] has been translated by Shaykh Dawood Terblanche.

³⁶ *Majma’ Al-Zawā’id* (3/45)

In the *Talkhīs* the *ḥadīth* of Abu Umamah finds corroboration in what has been narrated by Sa'īd Ibn Mansūr through his chain of transmission from Rāshid Ibn Sa'd, Dumrah Ibn Ḥabīb and Ḥakīm Ibn 'Umayr when they said:

“When earth is leveled on the grave of the deceased and the people are leaving, it is preferred that you say to the deceased at his grave: ‘Oh Fulān! Say that there is none worthy of worship but (save) Allah and that I testify that there is none worthy of worship save Allah (three times). (Then say to him): Oh Fulān say: My Lord is Allah, My religion is Islam, my Prophet is Muhammad, the Salutation and Peace of Allah be upon him and his family.’ Then leave”

This is narrated by Sa'īd in his *Sunan*. It is also confirmed from what has been narrated from 'Uthmān who said: “After the burial, the Prophet, the Salutations of Allah be upon him and his family, used to stand by the deceased and say: “Seek forgiveness for your brother and ask that he be strengthened for he is now being questioned.” This is narrated by Abū Dāwud³⁷ and also Ḥakīm³⁸ and rigorously authenticated by Al-Bazzār who said: “It is not been reported from the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him and his family, through this form.”

Al-Shawkāni said concerning the report of Rāshid, Dumrah and Ḥakīm: “Al-Ḥāfiẓ mentions it in the “Al-Talkhīs” and remained silent (on grading it).³⁹

I say: In his book “Al-Qawā'id” Dhufar Al-'Uthmānī speaks about Al-Hafiz Ibn Ḥajar's silence concerning additional *aḥadīth* in the “Al-Faṭḥ”. He says that Ibn Ḥajar had [already] made clear in his introduction- the *Hadī Al-Sārī*- that they were *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan* in his evaluation. Then [Al-'Uthmānī] says: “Similarly, the silence of Al-Ḥāfiẓ on a *ḥadīth* in the “Al-Talkhīs Al-Ḥabīr” is an indicator that he considers it *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan*. Perhaps Al-Shawkāni (may Allah have mercy upon him) uses the silence the silence of Al-Ḥāfiẓ in the *Talkhīs* as a proof like he does in using the silence of Ibn Ḥajar in ‘Al-Faṭḥ’. This is clearly apparent if one refers to ‘Nayl Al-Awṭār’.⁴⁰

The View of Shaykh Ibn Taimiyyah

The following is reported in *Al-Fatāwa Al-Kubrā* of Shaykh Ibn Taimiyyah:

He, the Muftī of humankind, the residue of the honorable predecessors (*salaf*), the God-fearer of Religion, the residue of the *mujtahidīn*- may Allah reward and deal excellently with him-you and may He (Allah) do good to you- was asked concerning the recitation of the *talqīn* at the grave of the deceased after his burial: Is there a sound *ḥadīth* from the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, or from his Companions regarding the issue? If there is no such report will it be permitted to recite it or not?

He answered: This *talqīn* which is mentioned has been reported from a number of the Companions. They have commanded that it should be done like Abu Umāmah Al-Bāhilī and others.

There is a *ḥadīth* narrated by the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, but it is of those which have not been adjudicated to be rigorously authenticated nor did many of the Companions engage in the practice. For this reason Imam Aḥmad and other 'Ulamā' say: “There is nothing wrong in reciting the *talqīn*. They have allowed but not enforced it. It is considered a preferred practice (*muṣtaḥab*) among a group of Shāfi'i and Ḥanbalī scholars while a group of Māliki scholars consider it disliked [*makrūh*].

[It is also inferred] from the narration in the *Sunan* where the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, stood at the grave of a man from among his Companions after he was buried and said: “Ask that he be strengthened for he is now being questioned..”⁴¹ It is recorded in the *Saḥīḥayn* that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “Instruct (*laqqinū*) your dying in *Lā ilā ha illallah*.”⁴² So the *talqīn* [instruction] for one near death is a sunnah which we are ordered to do.

It is affirmed that the deceased is being questioned and tested and that supplication (*duā'*) should be made for him and for this reason, it is said, that he benefits by the *talqīn*. The deceased listens to the call (*Al-nidā'*) because it is confirmed in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* [Al-Bukhārī] that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “Indeed he [the deceased] listens to the thumping of their shoes.”⁴³ He, the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, also said: “You (the living) are not only able to hear me better than they (the deceased) do.”⁴⁴ The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, also ordered us to greet the dead saying: “There is not a man passing by the grave of a man whom he knew in this world, greeting him, except that Allah returns [the deceased's] soul to him so that he may return the greeting.”⁴⁵ Allah knows best.

³⁷ Volume 3/215, *ḥadīth* number 3221.

³⁸ Volume 1/526

³⁹ *Nayl Al-Awṭār* by Shawkānī Volume 4/126.

⁴⁰ *Qawā'id fi 'Ulūm Al-Hadīth lil Muḥaqqiq Al-Tahanawī*, pp. 90.

⁴¹ Narrated by Ḥakīm in the *Mustadrak* who says it is rigorously authenticated- a judgment with which Al-Zahabī agrees. The book of burial (1/526) *ḥadīth* (1372). It has been previously narrated by Shawkānī who said: Al-Bazzār graded it as rigorously authenticated.

⁴² This *ḥadīth* has been extracted previously and the fact that it has been narrated by Muslim in the *Saḥīḥ* and by the authors of the *Sunan*.

⁴³ Narrated by Al-Bukhārī, “The book of burial, Chapter on the deceased hearing the treading of sandals” (2/92). It is also in the chapter concerning punishment in the grave and the Allah, the Exalted, saying: “[If you could see] how the wicked [fare] in the flood of confusion at death...” narrating from Anas, Allah be pleased with him [2:102].

⁴⁴ Narrated by Bukhārī, “The Book of Expeditions, The chapter on the killing of Abū Jahl” narrating from report of Anas b. Mālik relating from Abū Ṭalḥa 5:8-9.

⁴⁵ This *ḥadīth* has already been sourced.

He (Ibn Taymīyyah) was asked, may Allah have mercy upon him: “Is it compulsory that the *talqīn* be recited after the burial or not? Does the recitation reach the deceased?”

He (Ibn Taymīyyah) answered: “The recitation of the *talqīn* after death is not compulsory by consensus nor was it a practice known among Muslims during the life of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, and his *Khulafā*. But it is a transmission from a group of the companions like Abu Umāmah⁴⁶ and Wāthilah Ibn Al-Asqa’.

There are ‘ulamā who allow it, like Imam Aḥmad, there are others who recommend it (*mustaḥab*), like some of his followers as well as some followers of Imām Shāfi‘i, and there are other ‘ulama’ who consider it a disliked practice, believing it to be an innovation (*bid‘ah*). So there are three opinions regarding it: desirable (*istiḥbāb*), disliked (*karāhah*) and permissibility (*ibāḥah*) and this last is the more balanced view.

The *mustaḥab* act which the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, ordered and specified is the supplication for the deceased⁴⁷ ...[until he Ibn Taymīyyah] says:

The recitation [of the Qur’ān] at the time of burial has been transmitted as a whole and there is no narration for it taking place after that. And Allah knows best. [end of quote]⁴⁸

The words of Ibn Al-Qayyim⁴⁹

Shaykh Ibn Al-Qayyim says:

What people have done long before and what they still continue doing substantiates reciting the *talqīn* to the deceased. If it was not that he could hear and benefit from it, then there would be no advantage gained and it would not serve any purpose. Imam Aḥmad was asked about this and he recommended it as well as vindicating it through action.

There is a weak *ḥadīth* narrated about the *talqīn* which has been mentioned by At-Ṭabarānī his *Mu‘jam* which is the *ḥadīth* of Abū Umāmah who said: “The Messenger of Allah, the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him, said: “When one of you passes away and the others have covered him with sand, then one of you should stand at the side of the grave where his head is at and say: “Oh so and so, son of so and so [mother’s name].” The deceased will hear that but he will not answer. Then he should say the same thing a second time and the deceased will sit up straight. Then he should say that a third time and the deceased will say: “Guide and advise us, may Allah have mercy on you” but you will not hear that. He should then say: “Remember what you have left this world with: the testimony that there is none worthy of worship but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and that you are pleased with Allah as your Lord, Islam as your way of life, Muhammad as your Prophet and the Qur’ān as your Authority (Imām).” At that Munkar and Nakīr hold each other back, saying: Let us go; there is no need for us to remain here, for he has been instructed in his argument.” And Allah will accept his argument without the two of them.” A man said: O Messenger of Allah, what if his mother's name is not known?” He replied: “Then let him be ascribed to his mother Ḥawwā.”⁵⁰

Even if this *ḥadīth* is not firmly grounded, the continuous acting upon it throughout the different times and places without any rejection is sufficient for accepting the practice. Furthermore, it is not in Allah’s, Glory be to Him, habit to make a nation that has filled the east and the west of the earth, that is the most complete in terms of intellect and most vast in terms of knowledge, address someone that does not hear and understand. This practice is recommended and therefore it should not be rejected by anyone. It has been practiced as a tradition by the first era for those that follow and those who came later emulated those who were before. Hence, had it not been that the deceased being addressed can hear this would have been on the same level as addressing sand, wood, stones and someone who is not present. Even if this is regarded by someone as preferable, the scholars all unanimously agree upon its odiousness and have disapproved it.

Abu Dawūd has narrated in his *Sunan* through an unproblematic chain of transmission that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, attended a funeral of a man. When he was buried, the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “Ask for him to be made firm because he is now being questioned now.”⁵¹

The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, informed them that the deceased is being questioned at that particular time and therefore if he was being questioned then he heard the *talqīn*.

⁴⁶ He narrated a *ḥadīth* from the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, regarding the *talqīn* which has been transmitted by Ṭabarānī and which has previously been sourced.

⁴⁷ This *ḥadīth* has already been sourced.

⁴⁸ It is like this in the *Fatāwā Al-Kubrā* by Shaykh Ibn Taymīyyah Volume 24:294/296-298

⁴⁹ The following section [pp 86-92 of the text] has been translated by Shaykh Luqmaan Kagee.

⁵⁰ He says in *Al-Majma’* that Al-Ṭabarānī has narrated it in his *Al-Mu‘jam Al-Kabīr*, and in its chain of narration (*sanad*) is a group that I do not know (3/45). Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Hajar says in *Al-Talkhīs* that its chain is proper (*ṣāliḥ*), and Al-Shawkānī also makes it sound (*ḥasan*) due its having been corroborated as has been mentioned before.

[Tr: The last portion of this *ḥadīth* is based on a translation that was found at [http://forums.understanding-islam.com/showthread.php?6103-instructing-the-dead-after-buriAl-\(talqin-Al-mayyit\)](http://forums.understanding-islam.com/showthread.php?6103-instructing-the-dead-after-buriAl-(talqin-Al-mayyit)), Accessed 25 May 2011.]

⁵¹ This *ḥadīth* has already been sourced.

It is rigorously authenticated authentic from the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, that the deceased hears the sound of the people's sandals when they have turn and leave the grave.^{52 53}

Placing plants on the grave

A group of scholars say that among the things that benefit the deceased is the placing of plants on his grave, taken from the confirmed *ḥadīth* where the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, passed by two graves and said: "Indeed, both of them are being punished and they are not being punished for something that is great. One of them used to walk around slandering people and the other never used to clean himself after urinating." Then he took a moist plant, broke it in half and planted one part at the head of both of them, and then he said: "It may be that this plant will lighten the punishment for them as long it does not die." Narrated in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās.⁵⁴

It is also narrated by Muslim with a different text on the authority of Jābir, in which the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: "Oh Jābir, have you seen my position? I replied: "Yes, Oh Messenger of Allah." He said: "Go to the two trees and cut from each of them a branch and bring them to me. So I brought both branches. Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Verily I passed by two graves whose inhabitants were being punished. I ardently desired that through my intercession this punishment be lifted from them as long as the branches are fresh."⁵⁵

It is also narrated by Imām Ibn Abī Shaybah, on the authority of Sayyiduna Abū Bakrah with the words: "I was walking with the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, and he passed by two graves. He said: Verily they are being punished. Who will bring a plant to me? A man and I went to get one and we took it to him. He broke it in two from the top end and planted each part on a grave and said: "It may be that this plant will lighten the punishment as long as it is moist. They were being punished for backbiting and urine."⁵⁶

A number of *aḥādīth* have been narrated in this area by Ibn Abī Shaybah on the authority of Abū Hurayrah, Ibn 'Abbās and Ya'lā Ibn Shabābah, Allah be pleased with them..

Al-Qurtubī says in the *Al-Tadhkirah*, while commenting on the *ḥadīth* of Ibn 'Abbās narrated in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, the *ḥadīth* of Abū Bakrah narrated by Ibn Abī Shaybah and others, as well as the *ḥadīth* of Jābir narrated by Muslim in the last part of his book, says: "What is clear to me is that these are two different issues and not one issue as stated by those who have spoken about it. The context of the *ḥadīth* proves this. In the *ḥadīth* of Jābir there is an increase to the [part mentioning] the moistness of the branch, namely, the intercession of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him. The *ḥadīth* of Ibn 'Abbās indicates that the alleviation of the punishment is purely through the means of the halved palm branch, as long as it remains moist- there being no addition to this narration. . In the *ḥadīth* of Abu Bakrah, Allah be pleased with him, and Ibn 'Abbās a palm branch is mentioned that was broken in half by the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, with his blessed hands and then he planted them himself. On the other hand, the *ḥadīth* of Jābir is different to this as it does not mention the cause of their punishment.

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar says in *Fatḥ Al-Bari* commenting on the *ḥadīth* of this chapter: Regarding the lengthy *ḥadīth* of Jābir narrated by Muslim stating that he [Jābir] was the one that cut the two branches and which differs with the account given in the another narration, the difference between the two could be due to various factors.

Among these is that the latter narration takes place in Madinah while the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace and of Allah be upon him, was in a group whereas the Jābir narration takes place on a journey and the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, had to see to his need with only Jābir following him. Among other factors: in this latter narration, Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, planted the branch after breaking it in half while in the Jābir *ḥadīth* the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, ordered Jābir to cut two branches from two trees which the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, used to conceal himself in responding to his need. Then he ordered Jābir to throw down the branches to the right and left of where Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, was sitting. Jābir asked him, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, about that and he replied: "I passed by two graves whose inhabitants were being punished..."

The narration of Jābir does not mention the reason for which they were being punished, nor Prophet's, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, hope that "It may be..." Therefore, there is a clear contrast between the *ḥadīth* of Ibn 'Abbās and the *ḥadīth* of Jābir and that they were [in fact] for two different events, and [even] more than this is not farfetched. He further says: "Ibn Ḥibbān narrated in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* a *ḥadīth* on the authority of Abū Hurayrah who relates that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, passed by a grave and stopped at the side where the head is at and said: "Bring me two branches. He then placed one at the head and the other at his feet." Therefore, it is possible for this to be a third story. The *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Rāfi' supports this: "He heard something in the grave [and it contains the words]: He broke the branch

⁵² This *ḥadīth* has already been sourced

⁵³ This is how it is in the book *Al-Rūh*, by Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, p 152-159.

⁵⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim "Book on cleanliness, Chapter on the proof of the impurity of urine and the obligation of purification" 1/166.

⁵⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim "Book on *Zuhd* and *Raqa'iq*, chapter of the lengthy *ḥadīth* of Sayyiduna Jābir, may Allah be pleased with him, 8/235.

⁵⁶ *Musannaf* of Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah (Book on funerals), chapter on what enlightens the punishment of the grave, 3/55.

in two, leaving one part at the head side and the other at the feet.” In the narration of one Companion it is: “He placed one half at the head and the other half at the feet”. In the narration of two Companions he placed a branch on each grave.⁵⁷

Corroborating Comments by Scholars⁵⁸

Imām Bukhārī narrates *Muʿallaqan* (i.e. without mentioning a chain) in the *Kitāb Al-Janāʿiz* of his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from (the Sahābī) Buraydah b. Al-Muḥassab that he had stated in his will that two fresh branches be kept in his grave (after his burial).

The Ḥāfiẓ (Ibn-Hajar Al-Asqalānī) said in *Fatʿh Al-Bārī* (commenting on this):

“It is possible that Buraydah requested that the branches be placed on top of his grave, in imitation of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, placing of them on top of the two graves; and it is possible that he requested that they be placed inside the grave, due to the *barakah* (blessing) that is inherent in the date-palm tree, as stated in the Divine Statement: “Like a Pure Tree” (referring to the date palm tree).”

Then he said: “The first assumption seems more likely, and this is supported by the fact that Bukhārī mentions the *ḥadīth* of the two graves at the end of the chapter.”

He says further: “It is as if Buraydah took the *ḥadīth* to be general and did not consider it specific for those two persons.”

And he said: “The narration from Buraydah indicates the permissibility of it (i.e. placing plantation on graves). It appears from Bukhārī’s approach that he also supported that. For this is what Bukhārī said in explanation of Ibn-Umar’s comment to the person who put up a tent on the grave of ‘Abd-Al-Raḥmān Ibn Abī-Bakr: ‘Remove it O boy, for his actions will shade him’. He (Bukhārī) said: ‘The answer to this is that there is no evidence indicating that putting up a tent on a grave benefits the dead person, as opposed to placing a plant on it, for that latter is proven by the action of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, himself.’”⁵⁹

Al-Amīr Al-San’ānī said in the *‘Uddah*:

“Buraydah imitated that, and such a imitation cannot occur unless the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him – in addition to placing (the branches) with his own hands – had also ordered someone to place them, or that the lessening of the punishment was unrelated to him placing them with his own honorable hands. Al-Khafājī said in *Al-Rayḥānah*: ‘And upon this is the practice of people till today, and they even established endowments for it (i.e. for placing plants on graves).’”

Imām Al-Nawawī – may Allah have mercy on him – said in explanation of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, choosing of a fresh branch rather than a dry one:

“It is because they continue praising (Allah) as long as they are fresh, for the dry ones do not praise. And this is the opinion of most exegetes regarding the Divine statement: “*And there is nothing save that it is praising Him.*” They said, ‘It means: ‘there is nothing that is alive.’ Then they said, ‘The life of everything is according to its nature. So the life of wood is as long as it does not dry up, and the life of a stone is until it is broken.’”

Then he said:

“Then they differed whether this *tasbīh* is real or (simply by the fact) that it points towards the Creator therefore it is praising through its condition.. The accomplished scholars said they praise in reality for Allah has informed us (in the *Qur’ān*) that ‘And from the stones are those that fall down from the fear of Allah’.”

He also said:

“And if reason does not make it impossible for it (i.e. inanimate objects) to have consciousness, and *nass* has confirmed it (i.e. their consciousness), then one must accept it. And Allah knows best.”

Then he (Imām Al-Nawawī) said:

“Based on this *ḥadīth*, the *‘Ulamā* considered it recommended to recite the *Qur’ān* by the graveside, because if the lessening of punishment is hoped by the *tasbīh* of a plant, then it should be even more so through the recitation of the *Qur’ān*.”⁶⁰

Imām Ibn-Daḥīq Al-‘Īd in his *Ahkām*,⁶¹ and Imām Al-Tībī in *Shar’h Al-Mishkāt* stated similar sentiments.⁶²

Imām Al-Qurtubī said in *Al-Tadhkirah*:

⁵⁷ *Fatḥ ul-Bārī*: 1/382.

⁵⁸ [Tr] This section [pp 93-101 of the text] has been translated by Fakhruddin Owaisi

⁵⁹ Imām Al-‘Asqalānī, *Fatḥ Al-Bārī*, vol.3, pp.264-266.

⁶⁰ Imām Al-Nawawī, *Shar’h Muslim*, vol.1, p.206.

⁶¹ Imām Ibn-Daḥīq Al-‘Īd, *Ihkām Al-Ahkām*, p.63.

⁶² Imām Al-Tībī in *Shar’h Al-Mishkāt*, vol.1, p.38.

“It is learnt from this *ḥadīth* to plant trees and recite the *Qur’ān* (by the graveside). For if the punishment is lessened by the (planting of) trees then what about a believer reciting the *Qur’ān*.”

He also said: “Some of our scholars have used this *ḥadīth* of the Prophet ﷺ about the placing of a freshly broken branch (on the grave) as a proof for the (veracity) of reciting the *Qur’ān* by the grave.”⁶³

Rejected Counter-Arguments

Some have claimed that this (lessening of the punishment of graves by placing a plant on it) was unique to the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, only. Some of the proofs they cite are:

- It is not known as a practice of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs
- The narration of Buraydah is not a proof as he was alone in doing that
- That this is a matter relating to the unseen, and to put a plant on a grave must then be preceded by knowledge that there is punishment happening in the grave
- That the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, did not do it for all graves. Rather he did it once only. This proves that this was a unique case applicable to those two graves only

The answer to the first point is that according to the majority of scholars, to consider an incident as a “unique case not applicable generally” requires explicit proof. And there is no such proof here.

Imām Ibn ‘Abd Al-Barr states while commenting on Umm-Salamah’s *ḥadīth* regarding (the *hukm* of) kissing during the Fast:

“All the actions of the Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, should be emulated in all conditions unless he, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, states that it (i.e. the said action) is specific to him or the *Qur’ān* confirms that. Other than that, the least of rulings regarding emulating him, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, is that it is recommended. In fact, some People of Knowledge consider emulating him, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, in all his actions as obligatory as obeying his commandments.”

Then he said:

“And the proof that it is recommended to emulate all his actions is the statement of Almighty Allah: ‘*Indeed, you have in the Messenger or Allah, the best of Examples*’. So this commandment is understood in the most general terms unless it is qualified by irrefutable and agreed-upon evidence from the *Qur’ān*, Authentic Sunnah or Consensus. This is because Allah, the Exalted, has ordered us to emulate the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, and his actions, and it would not be acceptable for him to keep quiet about an action that is specific to him, not explaining it to his *Ummah*, knowing that they have been ordered to emulate him in everything. No sensible Muslim can assume something like that of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him.”

Answering the second argument we say:

There are many things that were not done by the *Khulafā Al-Rashidīn*, but people after them performed and accustomed themselves to it. Examples of these include performing multiple Friday congregational prayers in one town, performing the ‘*īd* prayers in the desert...etc.

The *Khulafā*’s non-practice of these things is a non-proof. For as it is unreported that they practiced these things, it is also not reported that they prohibited or considered them unique to the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him.

As for the saying of some that Buraydah is alone in narrating this: it is an erroneous claim for those narrations have been reported from other than Buraydah as well.

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Al-Suyūṭī stated:

“Ibn-‘Asākir narrated the *ḥadīth* in his *Tārīkh* from Hammād b. Salmah from Qatādah that Abū-Barzah Al-Sulamī used to report that the Messenger of Allāh, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, passed by a grave, the inhabitant of which was being punished. So he took a branch and planted it on the grave and said, ‘May it relieve him as long as it is fresh’.

Then he (Qatādah) said, ‘Abū-Barzah requested in his Will that, ‘If I die, then place two (fresh) branches in my grave’.

So this proves that Abū-Barzah also understood the act of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, as being applicable to others also, and that Buraydah was not alone in narrating that incident’.”⁶⁴

⁶³ Imām Al-Qurtubī, *Al-Tadhkirah fī umūr Al-Barzakh wa l-Ākhirah*, p.100.

⁶⁴ Imām Al-Suyūṭī, *Sharḥ Al-Sudūr*, p.135.

Gathering to commiserate with the bereaved⁶⁵

Among the most important issues causing friction and contention- and even leads to the termination of relations and verdicts of *bid'ah* and misguidance upon those who do them-is the gathering together of the deceased's family in order to receive condolences.

It has become a custom that the deceased's family sit in one row (called the "row of condolence") in order to facilitate the process instead of the sympathizer having to go from house to house searching for bereaved family members in order to console them- especially if he has missed them at the funeral prayers.

This practice has been a custom among people for a long time and had it not been for this it would have compelled mourners to walk to all members of deceased's family- to each of their houses [in order to commiserate]. Similarly, this custom compels mourners to convey their sympathies, and console with family members, and commiserate with them in their time of grief and sadness, at the first instance after their loss.

It is a secondary matter that should not produce serious conflict or contestation or lead to feuds and the termination of relations.

Its basis in Islamic law is the narration contained in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* in the section "The book on the funeral prayer"⁶⁶, the chapter being "The one who sits at the time of difficulty". In another copy of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* the chapter is entitled: "The chapter on one who sits at the masjid at the time of condolence"⁶⁷. It is a *ḥadīth* of 'Ā'ishah, Allah be pleased with her, who said: "Upon (receiving the news) of the death of Zayd b. Ḥārithah, J'afar and 'Abdallah b. Rawāḥa Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, sat down and looked sad."⁶⁸

You see that Imam Bukhārī and Imam Abū Dāwūd have clearly entitled their chapter "sitting at the time of condolence". This is why Al Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajr Al-Asqalānī says in the *Fatḥ Al-Bārī*: "Of the benefits of this *ḥadīth* is its indicating the permissibility of the condolee to sit in a calm and dignified manner."⁶⁹

Further, indeed, consoling the bereaved family is an objective of the *Sharī'ah*, and their gathering in one house is the means to fulfilling that objective. And it is a principle among the *fuqahā* that the means to an objective acquires the same legal status as the objective itself and thus the means to something that is prohibited is forbidden and the means to that which is obligatory becomes an obligation- and so forth regarding all the rulings in the *Sharī'ah*.

As to the view that such a gathering is *bid'ah* – I know of no known text or statement from the scholars supporting such an assertion. And how can such sitting be *bid'ah* when Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, sat for such a purpose?! Indeed, it does not fit the definition of *bid'ah* which, as Imām Shāṭibī says in his *Al-I'tisām*, is: "an innovated way in the religion that resembles the *Sharī'ah* and the purpose of which is to attain the objective sought by the way of the *Sharī'ah*".⁷⁰

Yes, this definition applies to something else that the 'ulamā stipulated as *bid'ah* and that is the people of the house making food and people gather there partaking of it. On the contrary, it was a *bid'ah* because the *sunnah* is that people must make food for the family of the deceased. Whosoever leaves this *sunnah* and invents another way then such a one is an innovator. Imam Nawawī, Allah have mercy upon him, has stipulated that this is a *bid'ah* that is not recommended.⁷¹ Shaykh Ibn Taymīyyah, as quoted by Shaykh 'Abd Al-Raḥmān b. Qāsim, says: "The gathering of the bereaved family members and others, with food provided by the latter, in order to recite and send the reward of the recitation to the deceased is not well known among the Salaf and a group among the 'ulamā have, without foundation, criticized this practice."⁷²

So woe to those who oppose the people in these issues, claiming to follow the way of Shaykh Ibn Taymīyyah in censure and reprimand where they stop at the words: "deceased is not well known among the Salaf and the group".

So how gentle is this sentence and how beautiful is this method in commanding good and forbidding evil. And where in this is that which we hear from those who severely denounce (such practices), who crudely disavow them through ugly words and methods that lead to severing relations with their families, refusing to participate with them at the time of their loss and sadness, claiming that these practices go against the Sunnah and show enmity and war with Allah and His Messenger, and that their presence there multiplies the people of *bid'ah* and misguidance?!

⁶⁵The following section [pp 101-126 of the text] has been translated by Auwais Rafudeen.

⁶⁶ 3:214

⁶⁷ 3:192

⁶⁸ The *ḥadīth* is also narrated by Bayhaqī in the *Sunan Kubrā*: the chapter on what is recommended in bearing the loss of the deceased with equanimity, hoping for reward through such bearing. 4/98"

⁶⁹ *Fatḥ Al-Bārī*, 3:131

⁷⁰ *Al-I'tisām*, 27

⁷¹ *Al-Adhkār*, 198

⁷² *Daḥ al ifti'āt bi jawāzil julūs lit ta'ziyah wal qirā'ah lil amwāt* by 'Allāmah Al-Faqīh Al-Shaykh Qays b. Muḥammad Āl Al-Shaykh Mubārak. It is an excellent, concise and valuable book and is the foundational one in this area. It has been published by His Excellency, 'Allāmah Al-Muwaffaq Al-Shaykh 'Isā Al-Māni', the Head of Endowments (Awqāf) in Dubai. May Allah reward him in goodness.

So just who are acting upon uncontested misguidance? And just who are acting according to uncontested objectionable practices? Is it those who gather in the house of the deceased for legally valid commiseration? Or it those who cut off family ties and accuse them of *bid'ah* and misguidance, abandoning commiserating and consoling them at the time of their loss, and losing a great reward as a result: "Then is it to be expected of you, when you are put in authority, that you will do mischief in the land and break your ties of kith and kin?" [Surah 47:22]

And, whoever sits for commiseration is not, Allah willing, prohibited from leaving the gathering due to the forbidden taking place therein as happens in some places out of ignorance and heedlessness. And there is no objection to anyone who does not sit for commiseration since it is a matter in which there is difference of opinion and which the heart of a believing Muslim must allow.

Furthermore, raising objections in matters like these is not the practice of the righteous predecessors. It is indeed an invented matter of recent times. The seeker of knowledge must root out such invented objections from society and return people to what the righteous predecessors were upon, namely, not objecting in matters where there are differences of opinion. And Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

***Al-Fātiḥah* and *Yā Sīn* for the deceased.**

It has become a custom in many Muslim lands and, especially, in the *Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn*, that people gather for the recitation of the Qur'ān and the Remembrance of Allah, Most Glorious, the Exalted, at a number of appropriate times. Such recitation and remembrance is used as a means to fulfill needs, remove distress, to correct the heart, for the forgiveness of sins, as a mercy for the deceased, a grace to the living and the realization of different aspirations. And there are many ways of achieving these aims in this sphere: through the recitation of *Al-Fātiḥah*, *Yāsīn* and *Tabāarak*, through *tahlīl*, *takbīr*, *tasbīḥ* and sending salutations upon the Exalted Beloved and the Noblest Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him.

The meaning of choice and preference

One can forgive for thinking: Why are these chapters and verses better than others? His Excellency, Imām Sayyid Muhammad Zakī Ibrāhīm throws clarity upon this issue when he says⁷³:

"Undoubtedly, all of the Qurān is the Word of Allah, the Exalted. From the perspective of its origin, its essence and its revelation according to the proper circumstances, there is no preference of one chapter or verse over the other. As for what has come down through the speech of Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, expounding the particular excellence of some of them: the meaning is not that the rest do not possess excellence; rather its meaning is that the special circumstances were created and the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace be upon him, began to expound upon the [particular] blessings and goodness of some of these chapters and verses. It follows that such special circumstances did not occur (with regard to the other chapters). For had it occurred the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, would have disclosed their merits to us. So merit is known only here and there. But we know these latter and do not know the former since their merits are a secret which cannot be encompassed except through revelation and the explanation of the Pure, Truthful one, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him.

Some of the 'ulamā have said: "The differences in excellence among the verses and chapters does not pertain to their essence but in the rewards associated with [reciting] them and benefiting through them in their particular places."

Another group says- and among them is Qurtubī, Ishāq b. Rāhawayh, Abū Bakr al Halīmī, Ibn Al-Qassār and others and others- "Differences in excellence are in the innate nature of existence so there is no problem whatsoever in one verse or chapter being superior to others for this or that reason." They say: The sense imparted by "He is the First, the Last, the Manifest, the Hidden" is not the same as the sense imparted by "and of oxen a pair" [6:144] and "and of goats a pair" [6:143]. And the meanings contained in the Verse of the Throne is not the same as that found in "May the hands of Abu Lahab perish". [111:1]. Thus, superiority for this group of scholars is from the standpoint of meaning. And the equality of all the verses is from the standpoint of source and aim.

There is no denial that some chapters and verses have special merits bringing about specific benefits and concerning which we have been informed by the greatest of the Prophets, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him. These merits with their benefits-found in special, dedicated works- do not require them to be superior to other chapters or verses. This is why the 'ulamā say on this topic: 'Merit does not require superiority.'

There are many examples in this regard and the Noble Sunnah overflow with them. Of these is what has been reported concerning the value of some verses and chapters in warding off evil, or in bringing about good, or in fulfilling debt, or in removing sadness and worry, or in providing healing in general, or in healing particular conditions such as epilepsy, heat rash, envy, evil whisperings and the devil. And of such examples are those concerning reciting over the deceased (which is our subject here) and verses which ward off poverty and neediness.

⁷³ In his book: *Al Iskāt barakāt Al-Qur'ān 'alā aḥyā wal amwāt*

And the Qur'ān- all of it- is the Word of Allah and its excellence and reward is great. And Allah is the Owner of Magnificent Excellence.

The virtues of *Sūrah Fātiḥah*

Abū Sa'īd Al- Mu'allā said: "While I was praying, the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) called me but I did not respond. I (afterwards) said: "Oh Messenger of Allah! I was praying." He replied: "Did not Allah say: "Respond to Allah and the Messenger when they call you." (Qur'ān 8: 24) Then he said: "Should I not teach you the Qur'ān's greatest surah before you leave the mosque?" Then he took my hand. Then when we intended to leave I said: "Oh Messenger of Allah! You said: "Should I not teach you the greatest *Sūrah* in the Qur'ān?" He replied: "All Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds (i.e. *Sūrah Fātiḥah*) which consists of seven verses and the Majestic Qur'ān that was given to me."⁷⁴

Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī related the following: "We were on a journey and alighted at a place. A maidservant came to us and said: "The chief of the tribe (of that vicinity) has been stung by a scorpion and our men are absent. Are there any among you who can cure through recitation (*ruqyah*)." A man (from amongst us) went with her although we were unaware whether he could do such. He performed the *ruqyah* and the chief was cured. The chief ordered that 30 sheep be given to the man and he provided us with milk. When he returned we asked him: "Do you know how to treat a person through recitation." He replied: "I did not recite anything as a *ruqyah* except the *Umm Al-Kitāb* ["Essence of the Book" i.e the *Fātiḥah*]. We said: "Do not say anything about it till we reach and ask Allah's Messenger (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him). When we entered Madinah we mentioned the incident to the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him. He replied: "How did he know that it (*Al-Fātiḥah*) was a cure? Distribute your reward and grant me a portion of it as well."⁷⁵

Abū Hurayrah, Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: 'A *ṣalāh* in which the *Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah* is not recited is one that has been aborted (he, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, repeated this thrice) and incomplete." Abu Hurayrah was told: "What if we are behind the Imam." He replied: "Recite it to yourselves for I heard Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, say: "Allah the Exalted says: "I have divided *ṣalāh* between Myself and My servant into two parts. And for My servant is what he wishes. Thus when a servant says: "All Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds" Allah, the Exalted, exclaims: "My servant has praised Me!" When he says: "The Compassionate, the Merciful" Allah, the Exalted, exclaims: "My servant has appreciated Me!" When he says: "Master of the Day of Judgment" He exclaims My servant has glorified Me!" When he says: "You alone do we worship and from You alone do we seek help" He says: "This is between Me and My servant and for My servant is what he seeks." When he says: "Guide us upon the Straight Path: the Path of those upon whom You have showered your blessings-not the path of those who have earned Your anger nor of those who go astray" "He says: This is for My servant and for My servant is what he seeks."

Sufyān said: "This was told to me by Al-'Alā b. 'Abdur Raḥmān b. Ya'qūb. I went to his house while he was sick and asked him about it."⁷⁶

Ibn 'Abbās related "And we have revealed to you seven oft-recited verses" refers to the *Umm Al-Kitāb* [*Al-Fātiḥah*]."⁷⁷

Abū Hurayrah related that Iblīs wailed when the *Al-Fātiḥah* was revealed- and that it was revealed in Madīnah.⁷⁸

Ibn 'Abbās related that Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: "Whosoever recites the Essence of the Book and 'Qul huwalāhu Aḥad" it is as if he has recited a third of the Qur'ān."⁷⁹

Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: "All Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds (i.e. *Sūrah Fātiḥah*) which consists of seven verses and the Majestic Qur'ān that was given to me."⁸⁰

Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: "By Him in whose Hand is my soul, there has not come in the *Tawrah*, or the *Injīl* (Gospels) or the *Zabūr* (Psalms) or the *Furqān* the like of such."⁸¹

'Abd Al-Mālik b. 'Umayr relates that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: "The *Fātiḥah* of the Book

⁷⁴ Narrated by Bukhārī, The Book on the Qur'ān's virtues, the chapter on the Opening to the Book (6/103) and Abū Dāwūd, The Book on Ṣalāh, Chapter on the Opening to the Book (2/21-72).

⁷⁵ Narrated by Bukhārī, The Book on the Qur'ān's virtues, the chapter on the Opening to the Book (6/103)

⁷⁶ Narrated by Muslim, the Book on Ṣalāh, the Chapter on the obligation of reciting the Fātiḥah in every cycle of prayer etc. relating from Abū Hurayrah. And also narrated by Abū Dawūd, the Book on Ṣalāh, the Chapter on the one who leaves off reciting the Fātiḥah (1/216-217), ḥadīth 821.

⁷⁷ Al Haythamī said: "Narrated by Ṭabarānī and its chain contains Abū Sa'd Al-Baqāl and he is a *mudallis* (one who relates on the authority of someone from whom he did not directly hear while concealing the identity of the person from whom he did). However, the ḥadīth of Abū Sa'īd al Ma'allā which has a similar meaning has already been quoted and that one is rigorously authenticated.

⁷⁸ Al Haythamī said: Ṭabarānī narrated it in the *Al-Awsaṭ* and it resembles *marfū'* and its chain consists of narrators who are rigorously authenticated.(6/311)

⁷⁹ Al Haythamī said: Ṭabarānī narrated it in the *Al-Awsaṭ* and in its chain is Sulaymān b. Aḥmad Al-Wāsiṭī (6/311)

⁸⁰ The source for the ḥadīth has already been given.

⁸¹ Narrated by Tirmidhī from Abū Hurayrah, Allah be pleased with him, in a lengthy narration in the "Book on the virtues of the Qur'ān, chapter on what has come down regarding the benefit of the Fātiḥah"and he says following it: "This is a ḥadīth *Ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*.And in this chapter is that which is related from Anas and that which is related from Abū Sa'īd Al-Mu'allā." [5/155-156, ḥadīth number 6870]. Regarding his saying "that which is related from Anas" it is to be found in Ibn Hibbān (refer to the *Al-Iḥsān* 2/74-75, page 771 and the *Mawārid Al-Z amān* (5/371, page 1713) and in the *Mustadarak* of Al-Ḥākim (1/560) and the latter said: "This is a *ṣaḥīḥ* ḥadīth according to Muslim's criteria but they did not extract it. Dhahabī remained silent concerning it.

Ibn 'Abbās related that while Jibrīl was sitting with the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, he heard a creaking above him so he lifted his head and said: "This is door in heaven that has opened today and that has never opened until today." There descended from it an angel and he [Jibrīl] said: "That angel that has descended to the earth has never descended until today." The angel greeted them and said: 'I give you good news of two lights given to you that have not been given to any Prophet before you: the *Fātiḥah* of the Book and the concluding verses of *Surat Al-Baqarah*. You will never recite a letter thereof except that you will be rewarded for it."⁸²

A moral

It is said in the *Bughyat Al-Mustarshidīn* by Imām 'Abd Al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad Al-Mashhūr, Allah be pleased with him:

"A man passed by a graveyard and read the *Fātiḥah*, presenting its reward to its inhabitants. Is this rewarded divided into portions for each inhabitant (to receive their share) or does each inhabitant receive its full reward?

Shaykh Ibn Ḥajar replied: "The mass of scholars pass judgment according to the second (i.e. that they each receive the full reward) because this is more in keeping with the vastness of the Almighty's mercy."

Then he said: "(The following) has been transmitted from the *fatāwā* of Al-Sayyid Al-Allāmah 'Abdullah b. Ḥusayn Bilfaqīh:

"It is preferable that anyone who wishes to recite a *Fātiḥah* upon another to say "To the soul of so and so" as is the custom. This is due to the permanent nature of the soul and the transient nature of the body and that it the soul that is experiencing the blessings or otherwise of the "barzakh" [World of Partition] since it is the basis and source [of the human being]. The secret in this is that the reality of knowledge concerning Allah and His Oneness and all hidden acts of obedience proceed from the soul. It is the soul, then, that deserves to be conferred with the fullest and most excellent reward. [summarized- *mulakhasan*]

The virtues of Sūrah Yā-Sīn

Ma'qal b. Yasār related that Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: "Al-Baqarah is the apex and summit of the Qur'ān. Eighty angels accompany each of its verses. They extract "There is no god but Allah from beneath the Throne and come with it (or, they come with Surah Baqarah). And Yā-Sīn is the heart of the Qur'ān. There is none that reads it desiring Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted and the next life except that he is forgiven. And recite it upon your deceased."⁸⁴

And he, Allah be pleased with him, relates that Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: "Recite Yā-Sīn upon your deceased."⁸⁵

He (also) related that Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: "Surah Yā-Sīn- recite it upon your deceased."⁸⁶

Anas, Allah be pleased with him, related that Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: "Everything has a heart and the heart of the Qur'ān is Yā-Sīn. And whosoever recites Yā-Sīn Allah will write for him as if he recited the Qur'ān ten times."⁸⁷

Jundub, Allah the Exalted be pleased with him, related that Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: "Whosoever recites Yā-Sīn at night seeking Allah's Face, such a one will be forgiven."⁸⁸

The virtues of Surah Mulk

⁸² Narrated by Dārimī in the "book on the virtues of the Qur'ān, the chapter on the benefit of the Opening to the Book" (2/320, p.3373)

⁸³ Narrated my Muslim, the "Book on the prayer of the traveller and its shortening, the chapter on the virtue of the *Fātiḥah* and the end of *Sūrah al Baqarah* (6/198, ḥadīth 806, the Commentary of Al-Nawawī, 6/91).

⁸⁴ Narrated by Aḥmad, ḥadīth 19789 (5/661). Al-Haythamī says in his *Majma' Al-Zawā'id* "It contains a narrator who is not named- but the rest of the narrators are rigorously authenticated." The Book on Tafsīr, *Sūrat Al-Baqarah*, 6/311)

⁸⁵ Narrated by Abū Dāwūd in the "Book on Funerals, the Chapter on recitation at the deceased." (3/489) It is also narrated by Ibn Mājah in the wording : "Recite it upon your deceased" meaning Yā-Sīn, ḥadīth 1448 (1/466)

⁸⁶ Narrated by Ḥākim in the Book on the Virtues of the Qur'ān, the chapter mentioning the virtues of different chapters and verses. And he said, after mentioning the ḥadīth: "it has been transmitted in a *mawqūf* manner by Yahyā b. Sa'īd and others from Sulaymān Al-Tīmī and his saying regarding it is that of Ibn Al-Mubārak since the addition is from an accepted authority." (53/2073) (1/753) . Ibn Ḥajar says in the *Talkhīs* : "Ibn Al-Qaṭṭān found faults with this ḥadīth because of its textual arrangement, its *mawqūf* nature and the fact that two of its narrators, Abū 'Uthmān and his father, are unknown. Abū Bakr Ibn Al-'Arabī transmitted the following statement of Daruqṭinī : "This is a ḥadīth weak in its chain, unknown as to its textual arrangement and he did not authenticate any ḥadīth in the chapter." From the *Talkhīs Al-Ḥabīr* (2/104)

⁸⁷ Narrated by Tirmidhī in the Sunan, the Book on the virtues of the Qur'ān, the chapter on what has come down regarding the benefits of Yā-Sīn (5/100-149, p6887). He said: "This is an isolated ḥadīth which we do not know except from the ḥadīth of Ḥamīd b. 'Abd Al-Raḥmān. And in the chain of the ḥadīth is Hārūn Abū Muḥammad who is an unknown Shaykh. And some of them relate it as *mawqūf* from this Ḥamīd b. 'Abd Al-Raḥmān.

⁸⁸ Narrated by Ibn Ḥibbān in the "Benefits of the Night Vigil prayer", ḥadīth 2565, through the sequence of Ibn Bulbān and it is narrated by Ibnus Sunnī from Abū Hurayrah in a *marfū'* manner: "Whosoever recites Yā-Sīn during the day and at night, seeking the Countenance of Allah, the Honoured, the Glorious, Allah forgives him." The Chapter on what is recommended to recited during the day and at night. ḥadīth, 624, 674. Al-Haythamī says in the "*Majma'ah Zawā'id*": "Narrated by Ṭabarānī in the "Al-Saghīr Al-Awsat" and its chain contains Aghlab b. Tamīm who is weak (*Majma'ah Zawā'id* 7/97). The Book on the Commentary of *Sūrah Yā-Sīn*.

Ibn ‘Abbās, Allah be pleased with both of them, said: “One of the Companions of the Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, erected a tent on a grave not knowing that it was such. And in the grave was a person who recited “Tabarakal ladhī bi yadihil Mulk [Blessed be He in Whose Hand is the Dominion] (till the end). So he came to the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, and said: Oh Allah’s Messenger! I erected a tent over a grave not knowing that it was such and in it was a man reciting Surah Tabarak Mulk till its end.” Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “ It is a protection, it is a security- securing against the punishment of the grave.”⁸⁹

‘Abdullah Ibn Masud, Allah be pleased with him, said: [The torment] comes to a man in his grave and it [first] comes to his feet. His feet say: “There is no way for you through us for he used to recite Surah Mulk. Then it comes from the direction of the chest (or he said the stomach) and it will say: “There is no way for you to come through me since he used to recite Surah Mulk. Then it will come from the direction of the head and it will say: “There is no way for you to come through me for he used to recite Surah Mulk”. It is a source of protection- protecting one from the punishment of the grave. It is also called Surah Mulk in the Tawrah. Whosoever recites it at night is given a plentiful, exceeding reward.”⁹⁰

Ibn ‘Abbas related that Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him said: “ I would love that it be in the heart of every member of my Ummah”- meaning Tabarakal ladhī bi yadihil Mulk .⁹¹

The virtue of “there is no god but Allah”

The first door for the release from suffering is “There is no god but Allah”. It is the Word of God-consciousness, as said by ‘Umar, Allah be pleased with him. It is the Word of sincerity, the witness of the Truth, the call of the Truth, security from doubt and success in this matter [of living in this world]. It is because of this Word that creation was created. As the Most Exalted says: “And We have not created Jinn and humankind except to serve and worship Me.” It is because of this Word that Messengers were sent and Books were revealed. As the Most Exalted says: And We have not sent before you Messengers except that We revealed to them that there is no god but I so worship Me.” And the Most Exalted says: He sends down His angels with inspiration of His Command, to such of His servants as He pleases, (saying):”Warn (Man) that there is no god but I: so do your duty unto Me.” And there are other such verses.

It is because of such that Ibn Uyyanah said: “Allah has not sent a blessing upon a servant greater than teaching them the knowledge of “There is no god but Allah”. And “there is no god but Allah” is for the people of *Jannah* like cold water is for the people of the world. It is because of this Word that the Abode of Reward and the Abode of Punishment have been prepared. It is because of this Word that the Prophets were commanded with *jihād*. Whoever says it-his wealth and blood are protected. Whosoever refuses to say it- his wealth and property is of no avail. It is the key to *Jannah* and the key to the Call of the Messengers. And through it Allah spoke to Musa directly.”

In the *Musnad* of Bazzār and others ‘Iyād Al-Anṣārī relates that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “ There is no god but Allah is a noble, truthful Word with Allah. It has a [high] station in the sight of Allah. It is a Word, when said truthfully, through which one will enter into *Jannah*. And whosoever says it untruthfully such a one’s blood is spared and his wealth is protected. And when He meets Allah tomorrow He will reckon with him. And it is the price of *Jannah*.”

Ḥasan said- and this has come done as *marfū’* though it is weak: “Whosoever’s last words it is will enter *Jannah*.” It is safety from the Fire, it necessitates forgiveness, it is the most beautiful of all beautiful deeds, it wipes away sins and mistakes, it revives what has been learnt of faith in the heart, it is weightier than the heavens and the earth, it tears away the veils, it is the best of what has been said by the Prophets, it is the best of deeds and the one most multiplied, it is equal to freeing one’s neck [i.e. from hell/or equal to freeing a slave], it is a protection against Satan, it is shelter against the loneliness of the grave, and it will form the distinguishing marks of the believer when they stand up from the graves.”⁹²

Abu Dharr related: “I said: “Oh Messenger of Allah! Give me advice! He replied: “If you do something wrong, follow it up with a good deed to wipe it away.” I asked” Oh Messenger of Allah! Is “There is no god but Allah among the good deeds?” He replied: “It is the most excellent of the good deeds.”⁹³

Mu‘ādh Ibn Jabal related that Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “The keys to *Jannah* is witnessing that there is no god but Allah.”⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Narrated by Tirmidhī who said it was Ḥasan *gharīb* with this chain of transmission. In the “Book on the virtues of the Qur’ān, Chapter on what has come down regarding the virtues of Sūrat Al-Mulk.” (5:164)

⁹⁰ Narrated by Ḥākim in the *Mustadarak* who rigorously authenticated it and Dhahabī agreed with him (2/498), the chapter of the commentary on Sūrah Mulk. Al-Haythamī said that Ṭabarānī narrated it who said that in its chain of transmission is ‘Āṣim b. Bahdalah who was reliable but had weaknesses. The rest of its transmitters are rigorously authenticated.

⁹¹ Al-Haythamī said : Its chain of transmission contains Ibrāhīm b. Al-Hakam b. Abān who is weak”. *Majma’ah Zawā’id*” (7:127), The Book on Commentary, Sūrat Al-Mulk.”

⁹² Look at the *Abwāb Al-Farj* by the author.

⁹³ Narrated by Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (5/169) and its chain of transmitters are reliable except for Shamar b. ‘Atīyyah. He narrated it from Abū Dharr through his teachers (*ashyākh*) but has named none of them.

⁹⁴ Narrated by Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (5/242). Also narrated by Al-Bazzār in his *Musnad* from him (Mu‘ādh) except that he narrates “key” instead of “keys”. (7/103/104 p.266). Al-Haythamī communicates it in the *Kashf Al-Astār* (1/9). After communicating this ḥadīth in the *Al-Majma’* (1/16) Al-Haythamī says: “This is narrated by Aḥmad and Al-Bazzār and it contains a separation between Shahar and Mu‘ādh. And the narrations of Isma’īl b. ‘Ayyāsh from the people of Ḥijāz are weak and this narration falls into that category.

Ma'qal b. Yasār said: "Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: "Everything has a key and the key to the heavens is "There is no god but Allah."⁹⁵

Abū Hurayrah, Allah be pleased with him related: "It was asked "Oh Allah's Messenger! Who will be the happiest person through your intercession on the Day of Judgment." Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, replied: "I thought, oh Abu Hurayrah, that none would ask me this narration before you since I have seen your desire and avidness for *ḥadīth*. The happiest person through my intercession on the Day of Judgment is the one who says "There is no god but Allah" sincerely from his heart or his self."⁹⁶

Abū Hurayrah, Allah be pleased with him, relates that Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: "A servant will never sincerely say "There is no god but Allah" except that the doors of the heavens will be open to him so that he attains to the Throne- as long as he steers away from the major sins."⁹⁷

This is a brief summary of some of virtues of Qur'ānic chapters and the blessings they contain for the living and the deceased. And we have verified by exact research- and this is the preponderant view among most of the *madhāhib* and one acted upon by the majority of Muslims in the early generations (*Salaf*) and later times (*khalaf*)- that the deceased benefits by the recitation of the Qur'ān just as he/she benefits by supplication, the seeking of forgiveness for them, charity on their behalf, hajj on their behalf and by receiving visits to their graves.

The Conclusion⁹⁸

Know that shortening (one's) hope (in this life) and frequent remembrance of death are much encouraged matters. While, lengthening (one's) hope (in this life) and forgetfulness of death, are discouraged matters, and we have been warned about them. Allah Most High states:

"O you who believed! Do not let your wealth and children distract you from the remembrance of Allah. And whosoever does that, then they are the losers * And spend from what We have provided for you before death approaches any of you and you say: 'My Lord! If you had delayed my death for a short while, I would have given charity and would have been from the pious'. However Allah will not delay (the return of) any soul when its appointed time comes. And Allah is well-aware of your actions."⁹⁹

And Allah Most High also stated:

"Has the time not come for the hearts of those who have Faith to yield to the remembrance of Allah and the truth He has sent down?! So that they are not like those were given the Book before; for whom the time seemed over long and their hearts became hard. And many of them are corrupt."¹⁰⁰

And Allah Most High also stated:

"Say: the death that you are fleeing from will certainly catch up with you. Then you shall return to the Knower of the Unseen and the Seen and He will inform you about what you did."¹⁰¹

And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"Remember frequently the destroyer of all pleasures."¹⁰²

And he, peace and salutations be upon him, was asked about intelligent people. Who they were? So he replied:

"Those who remember death most frequently, and prepare for it best; they are the most intelligent of people. They gained honor in this world and tribute in the Hereafter."¹⁰³

And he ﷺ stated:

"Be in this world as if you are a stranger or a traveler."¹⁰⁴

⁹⁵ Al-Haithamī communicates it in the *Al-Majma'*, Kitāb Al-Adhkār, [Book of Remembrance], the Chapter on what has come down concerning the phrase "There is no god but Allah" (10/82). Narrated by Ṭabarānī and its chain contains Aghlab b. Tamīm who is weak.

⁹⁶ Narrated by Bukhārī in the "Book of Knowledge", The Chapter on avidity in seeking the *ḥadīth* (1/33) and the Book of Riqāq [Refinement], the chapter on the Attributes of Heaven and Hell (7/204). Narrated by Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (2/373).

⁹⁷ Narrated by Tirmidhī in the Book of Supplications, the supplication of Umm Salamah. He said: This is a *ḥadīth Ḥasan gharīb* with this chain of transmission. (5/575, *ḥadīth* 359).

⁹⁸ This section [pp 126-138 of the text] has been translated by Shaykh Fakhruddin Owaisi

⁹⁹ *Sūrah Al-Munāfiqūn*: Verses: 9-10-11.

¹⁰⁰ *Sūrah Al-Ḥadīd*: Verse: 16.

¹⁰¹ *Sūrah Al-Jumu'ah*: Verse: 8.

¹⁰² Narrated in *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī* in the Kitāb Al-Zuhd: Bāb mā jā fi dhikr Al-mawt. *Hadīth* 3, p.378-379. And Al-Nasā'ī in his *Sunan* in Kitāb Al-Janā'iz: Bāb kathrat dhikr Al-mawt. (vol. 4, p.4). And Ibn-Mājah in his *Sunan* in Kitāb Al-Zuhd: Bāb dhikr Al-mawt wa 'l-isti'dād lahu. (vol. 2, p.1422). All from Abu-Hurayrah. Al-Tirmidhī said: "This is a *ḥadīth Ḥasan gharīb*."

¹⁰³ Narrated by Ibn-Abī'd-Dunya in *Kitab Al-Mawt* and Al-Tabarānī in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Sagīr* with a *Ḥasan* chain.

And he ﷺ also stated:

“What is with me and the world?! I am not in this world but as rider who took shade under a tree, then rode away.”¹⁰⁵

The Meaning of Remembering Death

The remembrance of death – which is of benefit to a person – is not repeating the words: “death, death”. For that is of little benefit, even if done in abundance. Rather, one must recall death with their heart, in addition to the verbal mention of it. You should recall how your condition will be during the moment of death and its pains and shocks, and when you start witnessing the affairs of the Hereafter. Some of the Pious Predecessors stated:

“Observe those actions you would like to be busy with when death approaches you, and hold on to such actions. And observe which actions you would dislike being busy with when death approaches you, and refrain from them.”

Ponder upon this advice, for it is of immense benefit for those who will practice upon it. And Allah is the Guide and the Supporter, there is no Lord but Him.

The Meaning of Disliking Death

As for disliking death, it is a natural feeling that hardly anyone can avoid. This is because death is a painful experience, and separates the person from his loved ones and what he has become accustomed to in this world.

Therefore, when the Prophet of Allah ﷺ stated:

“Whosoever looks forward to meeting Allah, Allah looks forward to meeting him. And whosoever dislikes meeting Allah, Allah dislikes meeting him.”

Sayyidah Ā'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, said:

“O Messenger of Allah! We all dislike death!”

So he ﷺ replied:

“When death approaches a believer, he is given glad tidings of Allah’s Mercy. So he looks forward to meeting Allah, and Allah looks forward to meeting him. However, when death approaches a disbeliever, he is informed of Allah’s Punishment. So he dislikes meeting Allah, and Allah dislikes meeting him.”¹⁰⁶

And he ﷺ mentioned the description of the beloved believer in the long *ḥadīth qudsī* in which Allah (SWT) states “how people come closer to Him”, till He said:

“And I do not hesitate in doing anything I have to do as I hesitate in seizing the Soul of my believing servant. He dislikes death, and I dislike displeasing him; however he must go through it.”¹⁰⁷

So notice how He described him as “*disliking death*” despite confirming the perfection of his Faith and his high status in the eyes of Allah. So this confirms what we mentioned earlier (about the naturalness of disliking death).

This is also confirmed by the story of Musa (عليه السلام), where he punched the Angel of Death when the latter came to seize his soul.¹⁰⁸

Yes, the dislike for death may be (spiritually) overwhelmed until one doesn’t feel it anymore, and that is when the lights of Gnosis and Certainty shine (upon the heart). And that is state that overcomes its people at certain times.

However, the general condition of the people of Faith is that they look forward to death as it is the means to meeting Allah, and the return to the Eternal Abode, and the departure from the *Dunya*, the abode of test and trials; but they nevertheless dislike death, due to human nature, as it is a painful experience and cuts one off from one’s beloveds. However, the stronger one’s faith, the less one dislikes death, and the more one’s natural feeling is weakened. And vice-versa. So understand, may Allah guide you.

¹⁰⁴ A *ṣaḥīḥ* *ḥadīth* narrated by Al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in the *Bāb Al-riqāq* through Ibn-‘Umar. Aḥmad added the following words to it: “*And count yourself among the dwellers of the graves.*”

¹⁰⁵ Narrated by Aḥmad in the *Musnad*, and his narrators are the narrators of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, except for Hilāl b. Hibbān, who was nevertheless considered as “*reliable*”. The *ḥadīth* was also narrated by Al-Tirmidhī, Ibn-Mājah, Al-D iyā Al-Maqdisī and Al-Ḥākim in *Al-Mustadrak*, and the latter stated: “*The ḥadīth is narrated on the condition of Al-Bukhārī*”. Al-Dhahabī confirmed this judgment of his.

¹⁰⁶ Narrated by Al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in *Kitāb Al-riqāq* (3/132), and Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in *Bāb man aḥabba liqā Allāh* and *Bāb Al-dhikr* (8/65).

¹⁰⁷ Narrated by Al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in *Kitāb Al-Riqāq* (8/131).

¹⁰⁸ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in *Kitāb bad' Al-khalq* (4/91), and Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in *Bāb Al-fadā'il* (7/100).

As for having a long life spent in the obedience of Allah, then that is certainly desirable and required, due to the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

“The best of you is the one whose lifespan was long and actions were good.”¹⁰⁹

So, the longer one’s lifespan is, in the obedience to Allah, the more ones gains from Rewards and the higher ones reaches in Ranks. As for a long life, spent in sin, it is a test and evil, wherein one’s sins are increased and one’s punishment is multiplied.

So whoever claims that he desires to live long in order to do more good deeds and worship of Allah, then he will be considered truthful in his claim only if his actions reflect that; i.e. he is seen involved in worship and good deeds and distanced from worldly affairs. However, if he is seen distracted from this by the worldly temptations, then he is a liar who is justifying his love of this world in an unjustifiable manner. For the one who wishes to remain here for something (i.e. more good deeds), then he must be seen seeking it and avoiding all distractions from it.

This is so, particularly when good deeds can only be done here in this world and nowhere else, as the hereafter is the abode of Recompense. So think ponder over that, may Allah benefit you from it, and seek assistance from Allah and persevere, and work hard and rush towards good deeds before it is too late and your death overtakes you by surprise. For you are the goalpost of tests, and from the targets of the Angel of Death.

Your capital, through which you may purchase Eternal Bliss from Allah, is nothing but your own lifespan. So beware of wasting its precious moments, nights, days, hours and breaths, in that which is of no use or benefit to you. For indeed, that will be your greatest regret after your death, once you realize the value of what you wasted.

For it has been narrated that the 24 hours of each day of one’s life are presented to the person in the hereafter in the form of boxes. So he sees the hours he spent in the devotion to Allah as boxes filled with light, and the hours he spent in sin as boxes filled with darkness, and the hours he spent in neither devotion nor sin as empty boxes. Thereby, the person will regret and wish that had he spent those hours in Worship, and the empty boxes would have been filled with light. As for the boxes filled with darkness; he would have died at their sight had it not been ordained that none can die in the Hereafter.

So the one busy with the service of Allah is a blessed person, whose blessings will only increase day by day; while the one busy with sins is a wretched person, whose wretchedness will only increase perpetually. So - may Allah have Mercy on you - choose for yourself, while you are in the world of Choice, that which will benefit and elevate you, for when you die, you will have no choice in the matter anymore.¹¹⁰

Hujjat Al-Islām Imam Abū-Ḥāmid Al-Ghazālī, may Allah be pleased with him, stated in his *Bidāyat Al-Hidāyah*:

“And know that death does not assault you at any particular time, condition or age only – and it must assault you – so being prepared for it is more important than being prepared for this life.”

And he stated in another place in the *Bidāyah*:

“And do not ever stop thinking about the proximity of your *Ajal* (final hour), the coming of death that will cut all your anticipations short and take the matter out of your hands, and the regrets that will follow a life of negligence.”

Indeed, among our pious predecessors were those if it were told to them, ‘you will die tomorrow,’ they would not find any more good deeds to do; such were they already prepared for the Hereafter with good deeds.

And one of them advised a person who sought his advice:

“Ponder what type of activity you want to be busy in when death overtakes you, and engage yourself in it from it now. Ponder as well what type of activity you do not want to be busy with when death overtakes you, and distance yourself from it now.”

There are great benefits in thinking much about one’s death and realizing its proximity, such as abstinence from the world and satisfaction with little of it, consistency in worship and good deeds, avoidance of sins and acts of disobedience, and a rush towards repentance to Allah if he has committed sins.

Likewise, the opposites of these great benefits are to be found when one neglects the thought of death and stretches his anticipation (*Amal*) of life. So it breeds an insatiable love for the World, an urge to amass its wealth, enjoyment of its temptations, being amazed by its adornments, delay of Repentance, and laziness in performing good deeds.

Our pious predecessors stated: “Whoever stretches his anticipation (of life), will spoil his deeds.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Narrated by Al-Tirmidhī in *Kitāb Al-Zuhd* (3/387), and its grading is *Ḥasan*.

¹¹⁰ Al-Ḥaddād, Ḥabīb ‘Abd-Allāh b. ‘Alawī, *Al-Nasā’ih Al-Dīniyyah*, pp.44-47.

¹¹¹ Al-Ḥaddād, Ḥabīb ‘Abd-Allāh b. ‘Alawī, *Sabīl Al-Iddikār wa ‘l-’tibār bimā yamurru bi ‘l-’Insān wa yanqadi lahu min Al-’mār*, pp.42-44.

'Alī, may Allah ennoble his Face, stated:

“What I fear for you the most is an obedience to your whims and a prolonged anticipation (of life). As for the obedience to your whims, it keeps you away from the Truth. And as for prolonged anticipation, it makes you forget the Hereafter.”

The same has been narrated from the words of the Prophet ﷺ as well.¹¹²

There is no good in any anticipation that makes one forget the Hereafter, and indeed that is a type of anticipation that the Prophet ﷺ sought refuge from saying:

“I seek refuge in You O (Allah) from every (false) anticipation that will distract me.”

And amongst his ﷺ's prayers was:

“And I seek refuge in You O (Allah) from every worldly object that prevents the good of the Hereafter, and from a life that prevents goodness after death, and from every anticipation (of time and life) that prevents a good deed.”¹¹³

For when a person's heart is overwhelmed with the anticipation of a long life in this world, he naturally gives more importance to this world and busies himself in amassing its goods, until he forgets the Hereafter and the preparation required for it- (this) until death overtakes him and he is in that condition. So he meets Allah, impoverished of good deeds. He will then cry and regret, but it will be too late. He will cry: “*How I wish I had prepared for my coming life*”, and, “*My Lord! Send me back (to the world), so that I may perhaps do good deeds, that I missed (previously).*”

Sickness is a Warner of death¹¹⁴

When man becomes sick it is necessary for him to repent, increase in seeking forgiveness and remembering Allah and to seek His (Allah's) pardon for previous mistakes and unmindfulness. Indeed man is unaware whether he will die from that sickness or whether his death is drawing closer. This will allow him to have a beautiful ending to his life, for indeed actions are judged by the manner it is concluded.

Sickness is closely associated with the Hereafter and returning to Allah (the Most High). It is a form of advice and admonition of what is important in this world and the Hereafter- especially in the establishment of the rights of creation which could be at times very difficult to accomplish.

Man in his sickness must have good thoughts of Allah, for the Prophet ﷺ said: “Let one of you not pass on except that he beautifies his thoughts of Allah”.¹¹⁵ This should occupy his heart and must take preference (over all other matters) for indeed Allah says: “I am to my worshiper what he thinks of Me and I am with him when he remembers Me.”¹¹⁶

The Prophet ﷺ visited a sick young man and said: “How do you find yourself (how are you)? The young man responded: “I desire (the pleasure of) my Creator and I fear my sins.” He Prophet ﷺ responded and said: “When a Muslim possesses these two qualities, Allah will grant him what he desires and protect him from that which he fears.”¹¹⁷

It is necessary for the sick to continuously aspire for hope especially when the signs of death appear and when he is close to his death. Let him leave this world while having good thoughts of Allah, strong hope in His generosity and the vast extent of His mercy and a love to meet Him (Allah). In a narration (it is reported): Whosoever loves (desires) to meet Allah, Allah loves (desires) to meet him, and whosoever dislikes meeting Allah, Allah dislikes to meet him.”¹¹⁸ It also appears in a narration with the following meaning: “When death approaches a Muslim, give him glad tidings of the mercy and the virtuous of Allah so that he would love to meet Allah and Allah would love to meet him. When death approaches a hypocrite, inform him of the punishment of Allah so that he can dislike meeting with Allah and Allah will then dislike meeting him.”

A pious believer is given glad tidings of the mercy of Allah- when they depart from this world their souls desire and love to meet Allah. When the Angels meet them, they (the Angels) inform them (the pious believers) of their entry into paradise and that they should not fear nor grieve. Says Allah: “The pure/ pious souls that the Angels cause to die, they (the Angels) say to them, peace upon you, enter into paradise because (of the good) you did.”¹¹⁹ Allah says: “Those who say: Allah is our Lord and

¹¹² Mentioned by Ibn-'Adī in *Al-Kāmil* in the mention of 'Alī b. Abī-'Alī Al-Lahabī as narrating it from Jābir. He stated that he was “weak and would narrate unverifiable reports.”

¹¹³ Al-'Irāqī states in his *Ithāf Al-Sādah*, vol.14, p.41: “It was narrated by Ibn Abī-Al-Dunyā in *Qasr Al-Amal* from the narration of Hawshab from the Prophet ﷺ, and there is weakness and obscurity in its Chain.”

¹¹⁴ The following section [pp 138-147 of the text] was translated by Shaykh Dawood Terblanche

¹¹⁵ Narrated by Aḥmad in his *Musnad* and Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

¹¹⁶ Narrated by Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Al-Tirmidhī, Al-Nisā'ī and Ibn Mājah from Abū Hurayrah.

¹¹⁷ Narrated by Al-Tirmidhī and Al-Mundhirī says it is (graded as) Ḥasan.

¹¹⁸ A ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth narrated by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Mentioned previously.

¹¹⁹ Surah Al-Naḥl verse 32.

is steadfast on it, the Angels will descend to them saying, fear and grief not, receive the glad tidings of paradise for which you have been promised..... A hospitable gift from the Most Forgiving and Merciful.”¹²⁰

It is necessary that the sick be clean of all filth from his body and clothes that would prevent him from prayer. He should be warned of dangers of not praying and must pray despite of his condition; sitting or lying down or by any position possible so that his actions are not in vain/lost because prayer is the pinnacle of religion. It is necessary for those who are his family and friends who are with him moments before his death to advise him (with good), and encourage and remind him (of Allah).

It should be noted that the prayer does not fall away as long as the sick is able to use his intellect and he should increase the saying: “ There is no God except Thee, glory be to Thee, I have (indeed) but transgressed myself “. He (the sick) should also increase the recitation of Sūrah Al-Ikhlās.

When the sickness becomes overwhelming and severe and signs of death are visible, it is necessary for those who are with him from family and friends when they observe signs of despondency and fear, they should remind him of his good deeds, the extent of Allah’s mercy, His forgiveness for the sinners and His pardoning of wrong. This is what the predecessors (*salaf*) advised the people to do. And perhaps the sick person will entreat similarly for those who are attending him.

What is certainly encouraged is to recite to him (the sick): “ *There is no God save Allah.*”. When he utters it, it is not necessary that he repeats it excepts when he speaks. It is also necessary to recite the blessed Sūrah Yāsīn ¹²¹for it is said that it eases the pangs of death. Death may be agonizing and painful and it may be easy and painless for some believers. It is narrated that the Angel of Death (peace upon him) said: “ I am to every believer caring /gentle and a friend.” It may also happen that at moments of death incitement (*fitnah*) may occur, and we seek protection from Allah. It is therefore necessary for those present to recite the Qur’an and speak about the aḥādīth of hope and to mention the cases of the pious people when they left the world.

“

It has also been recorded that the closest that Shaytan (May Allah curse him) comes to an individual is moments before death hoping to place him in a state of despair but Allah says : “ Indeed his (Shatyan) authority will be on those he has managed to deceive and those who ascribe partners to Him (Allah).” Allah also says: “ Allah makes firm those who believe in Him with righteous (firm) words in this world and the hereafter and leads astray those who transgress and (indeed) Allah does that which He pleases.”

The pious predecessors has recorded their fear of a bad ending and there are many stories and narrations pertaining to them on this issue- narrations which create an extensive fear. This is similar to that of the Prophet’s ﷺ saying: “I swear my Him- concerning Whom there is no god other than Him- if a man engages in deeds that will lead him to paradise and the only distance between him and it (paradise) is an arms length and the book (destiny) of Allah precedes him, and he engages in deeds of the people of fire, he will enter the fire, and if the only distance between him and it (hell) is the distance of an arms length and the book of Allah precede him and he engages in deeds of the people of paradise, surely he will enter it (paradise) Ḥādīth.

¹²²

He (The Prophet) may peace and blessings be upon him said: “ Indeed man engages in what appears to be the actions of the people of paradise but (indeed) he is of the people of the fire, and indeed man engages in what appears to be the actions of the people of the fire but indeed he is of the people of paradise.”¹²³ There are many narrations like this.

They (the pious predecessors) said: “The worst of fears is a bad ending, may Allah protect, to be neglectful of ṣalāh, the consumption of wine, disrespect of parents, that which harms the believers and also those who engage in major sin and they do not repent to Allah. What refers to this is the words of Allah: “Then evil was the end of those who did evil, they rejected the Signs of Allah and made a mockery of it. “ ¹²⁴

It is necessary for a Muslim that he hopes for the overflowing grace of Allah in that he is not deprived of the favor of Islam which was bestowed upon him without intervention and effort. He should fear the change of this greatest favor (of Islam) because of him showing little appreciation. Some of the pious predecessors believed that if anyone is deprived from Islam after being affirmed on Islam it would be deprivation. It is therefore necessary to continuously ask Allah to grant him a good ending. Iblīs, may the curse of Allah be upon him said: “My back is broken by those who ask Allah a good ending.”

Oh Allah we ask Thee through the light of Thy Face and Thy truth to grant us a good ending when we die and also for those whom we love and for the believers. Oh most Compassionate, do not deviate our heart after Thou has guided us and grant us Thy mercy for indeed Thou are the Most Giving. Oh Allah grant us true patience and let us die as believers.

The Dying person

¹²⁰ Surah Fuṣṣilat verse 30 – 32.

¹²¹ The explanation was mentioned previously.

¹²² Ṣaḥīḥ ḥādīth narrated by Al-Bukhārī from the aḥādīth on Prophets in the chapter of the creation of Adam. Narrated by Muslim in his Ṣaḥīḥ in the Book of Qadr, Chapter how Adam was created, 7:44.

¹²³ Narrated by Muslim in his Book of Al-Qadr.

¹²⁴ Surah Al-Rūm verse 10.

It is a confirmed *Sunnah* to turn the dying person on his right facing the qiblah and to close his eyes because it is narrated in a *ḥadīth*: “Indeed the eyes follows the soul.” Those present should seek forgiveness on his behalf, have mercy because the Angels say Amin for what they say. It is also permissible to cry but enduring patience is better.

Excessive mourning and crying

Excessive mourning, lamenting, outrageous behavior, throwing earth one upon the head, striking of the cheeks and chest are all strongly forbidden. There are numerous narrations that forbid (this behavior) and warns against it.

The [ruling concerning someone who has a] wish to die¹²⁵

It is disliked for someone to have a wish to die or to supplicate for it if a calamity befalls him, such as illness, poverty and other worldly difficulties. But if he fears any tribulations regarding religion, then he may wish for death. This may even be recommended since the prophet ﷺ said: “None of you should make a wish to die when a calamity befalls him, but if he really has to then let him say: O Allah let me live as long as living is better for me, but let me die if death is better for me.”¹²⁶ He also said: “None of you should make a wish to die, because he is either a doer of good and perhaps he will be increased [in goodness], or a doer of evil and he will repent”¹²⁷ i.e. return [to Allah] and ask for pardon.

Death is something that is predestined on all creation, an absolute decree that affects both the general masses and the elite. Through death Allah has made the strong and the weak equal, as well as the noble and the insignificant. Through it Allah conquers the tyrants, the emperors and the kings. Allah affords it to the pious believers as a splendid gift and a magnificent means of gaining closeness [to Him], but for the disbelievers and hypocrites it is a great affliction and misfortune.

Glory be to Him who is the One and only King and Conqueror, the only One who has eternity and is free from death and perishing. He is the first without any beginning and the last without any end. Allah the Almighty says: “All that is on earth will perish. There shall remain only the Countenance of thy Lord of Might and Glory”.¹²⁸ And Allah says: “Everything will perish save His countenance. To Him belongs the command, and unto Him you will be brought back.”¹²⁹ And Allah says: “Every soul shall have a taste of death: And only on the Day of Judgment shall you be paid your full recompense. Only he who is saved far from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have attained the object (of Life): For the life of this world is but goods and chattels of deception”.¹³⁰

Death and washing the deceased

If a Muslim has died and his death has been verified, then preparations must be made for his burial, washing, shrouding and praying over him. It is important here to follow and to take that which was narrated in the prophetic traditions. It is important that his family, relatives, neighbors, friends and the people of righteousness and piety are all notified about his death so that they can pray for him, seek Allah’s mercy on his behalf and be present for his funeral prayer.

It is recommended for anyone who has heard about the death of his Muslim brother to say after making *istirjā* [that is to say *innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji ʿun*]: “O Allah place his book of records with those who are high in rank, make him of those who had done well, take care of his family that remain behind and forgive him and us, Lord of the worlds”.

He should supplicate for him and speak well about him, because the prophet ﷺ said: “Mention the good things about the deceased and refrain from mentioning their bad deeds”.¹³¹ It is also important not to exaggerate in excessively praising him which could lead to telling lies about him.

Following the funeral procession and the burial

There is great virtue and reward attached to following the funeral procession of a Muslim, and in praying over him and being present at his burial. In an authentic *ḥadīth* the prophet ﷺ said: “The one who follows the funeral procession of a Muslim until the prayer is made over him, he shall have the reward of a *qīrāt*. If he remains behind and witnesses the burial then he shall have two *qīrāts*, and one *qīrāt* is like the mount of Uḥud”.¹³²

It is important to hasten with the deceased to his grave. The prophet ﷺ said: “If the corpse is placed [on the bier] and the men carry it, if he was righteous he says: Take me! Take me! And if he was not so righteous he will say: What a misfortune! Where are you taking me?”¹³³ And the prophet ﷺ said: “Hasten with the funeral, if he was righteous then you are taking him to a place of good, and if he was not, then it is evil that you are getting rid of”.¹³⁴

¹²⁵ The following section [pp 147-156 of the text] was translated by Shaykh Ebrahim Moos

¹²⁶ Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Nasā ʿi. (See Al-Targhīb 4/152)

¹²⁷ Bukhārī and Muslim. The wording belongs to the former (See Al-Targhīb 4/151)

¹²⁸ Ch. Al-Raḥmān V. 26-27

¹²⁹ Ch. Al-Qaṣaṣ V.88

¹³⁰ Ch. Āl- Imrān V. 185

¹³¹ Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Ḥibbān in the chapter on Funerals. Tirmidhi said that the *ḥadīth* has a solitary chain (gharīb)

¹³² Bukhārī and Muslim. (See Al-Targhīb 4/236)

¹³³ Bukhārī in the chapter on Funerals, in the section ‘The saying of the corpse: Take me!’ (2/88) and in the section ‘The words of the deceased on the bier’ (2/103) on the authority of Abū Sa ʿīd Al-Khudriyy.

¹³⁴ Bukhārī and Muslim. (See Al-Targhīb 4/242)

The deceased has a sense of knowledge as to who is washing him, shrouding him and placing him in the grave. It is reported that his soul is in the hand of an angel that stands close to him and walks with it alongside the funeral procession. The deceased hears whoever talks about him whether good or bad.

When the deceased is placed in the grave, it is recommended for the one doing so to say: “In the name of Allah and on the path of the Messenger of Allah”. It is recommended for whoever is standing close to the grave to throw three handfuls of sand and to say with the first one: “From it We created you” and with the second: “And to it We return you” and with the third: “And from it We will resurrect you another time”. The sand should be thrown over him gently, little by little. If this is complete it is recommended for those who are present to remain behind for some time, reciting Qur’ān, seeking forgiveness for the deceased and supplicating for the steadfastness of the deceased, because he will be questioned as narrated in a *ḥadīth*. The two angels Munkar and Nakīr who are the questioners of the grave will ask: “Who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is your prophet?”¹³⁵ And the one whom Allah grants steadfastness will say: “Allah is my Lord and Islam is my religion and Muhammad is my prophet”. And the one whom Allah has distanced will be in a state of confusion and uncertainty just like he used to be in his worldly life in a state of doubt, misguidance, disregarding the command of Allah and doing that which He prohibited. He will say: “Ah! Ah! I don’t know” as it was reported in the authentic traditions. At that stage the two angels will beat him, making his grave narrow, filling it with torment.

As for the firm believer, the one who was steadfast on his faith and the obedience of Allah in his worldly life, the angels will bring to him glad tidings and they will widen his grave and fill it with illumination and bliss. His good works will surround him such as his prayer, charity, fasting, recital of Qur’ān and the remembrance of Allah, and it will distance from him any fear or difficulty that he may be concerned of.

The prophet ﷺ said: “The grave can either be a garden from the gardens of paradise or an abyss from the pits of Hell”.¹³⁶ He also said: “I did not see anything except that the grave was more horrific than it”.¹³⁷

Whenever ‘Uthmān was present at a grave he would weep until his beard was soaked. Once it was said to him: “You may remember Paradise or Hell so you don’t have to weep to this extent”. He replied: “I heard the messenger of Allah say: The grave is the first stage of the Hereafter. If a person is saved in it then whatever comes afterward will be easier than it, but if he is not saved then whatever comes after it will be more severe than it”.¹³⁸

It is said that most of the torment of the grave is because of three things: backbiting, tale-bearing and negligence in the protection from urine. In a *ḥadīth* it is stated: “...generally the torment of the grave is because of urine.”¹³⁹ There is also the *ḥadīth* of the two men who the prophet ﷺ heard being tormented in their graves and he instructed that a palm leaf be placed on it and he said: “Perhaps it will lighten their punishment as long as it is green, for verily they are being punished for something major. One of them used to spread tales of people and the other one did not adequately clean him from urine”. This is a well known authentic *ḥadīth*.

The prophet ﷺ used to often seek protection from the torment of the grave and he also instructed that it be included in the supplication after the final testification (*tashahhud*) of the prayer as well as in the recommended supplications in the mornings and evenings. So the punishment and the bliss of the grave is a definite truth.

Something that benefits the deceased in his grave and protects him is the supplications made for him, forgiveness that is sought for him and charity that is given on his behalf. This is confirmed in many traditions as we have previously pointed out. It is reported that the gifts that the living afford to the deceased in the form of charity, supplications and recital of the Qur’ān – the angels come to him with those gifts on platters made of light, covered with serviettes of silk and they say to him: “This is a gift that was sent to you by such and such”, and this brings happiness and joy to him.

Oh our Lord! Accept (this effort) from us: For Thou art the All-Hearing, the All-knowing. Oh our Lord! Cause not our hearts to stray after Thou hast guided us, and bestow upon us mercy from Thy Presence. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Bestower. Our Lord! Pour out on us patience and constancy, and take our souls unto thee as Muslims.

May the salutations and peace of Allah be on our master Muhammad, his servant and messenger, the one entrusted with his revelation, and also on his purified household and rightly guided companions and all those who follow them in righteousness until the day of reckoning. And include us with them through Thy mercy, Thou are indeed the Most merciful.

¹³⁵ The details and proofs of this had already preceded

¹³⁶ Tirmidhi narrated it on the authority of Abū Sa’īd in the chapter on the description of the Hereafter. He said: This is a solitary *ḥadīth* which we do not know except from this narration (Sunan Al-Tirmidhī 4/551)

¹³⁷ Tirmidhi narrated it on the authority of ‘Uthmān b. Affān and he said: This is a sound solitary *ḥadīth*. Al-Mundhirī said: Razīn added some words according to some of the versions of Tirmidhī. Hānī said: I heard ‘Uthmān chant at a grave:

*If you are saved then you were saved from a great event
But if not, then I don’t imagine that you will ever be saved* (See Al-Targhīb 4/264)

¹³⁸ Its reference had already preceded

¹³⁹ Narrated by Al-Bazzār, Ṭabarānī in his ‘Kabīr’, Al-Ḥākim and Al-Dāraquṭnī. All of them narrated it from the narration of Abū Yaḥya Al-Qattāt from Mujāhid. Al-Dāraquṭnī said: It’s chain is okay, but there is dispute about Al-Qattāt’s reliability. (See Al-Targhīb 1/194)

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