

THE ISLAMIC WILL

(WASIYYAH)

*An Obligation Abandoned
By the Ummah*

*Malik related to me from Nafi'u from Abdullah
Ibn Umar (RA) that the Messenger of Allah,
May Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:
"It is the duty of a Muslim who has anything to
bequeath not to let two nights pass without
writing a Will about it." (Al-Muwatta of Imam
Malik; 3 7: 1.1)*

BY

Nafi'u Baba-Ahmad, mni

© Mallam Nafi'u Baba-Ahmad, mni
Rediyo Close by Rabah Road Kaduna

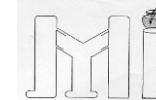
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be produced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, or served in any retrieval system of any nature without the written permission of the copyright holder and the publisher, application for which shall be made to the author.

First published, 2007

New Edition

2009
2022

Edited, Published and Printed by:



Merchant Yeoman International Limited.
Publishing Company
27 Ali Akilu Road, P.O. Box 5157,
Tel: 062 -241124, 08034503416-08022064823
Kaduna Nigeria

CONTENTS

1. Foreword
2. Publisher's Note
3. The Last Will and Testament
4. The Islamic Will (Wasiyya)
5. Important Considerations
6. Debts
7. Main Aspects of a Will
8. Introductory Part of Wasiyya
9. Death In the Presence of the Righteous
10. Conclusion
11. References
12. Last Will and Testament (II)
13. Appendix (I) The Veil of Heedlessness
14. The Actual Death
15. The Death of the Body
16. Appendix (II) The Familiar Will Come to an End

FOREWORD

Assalamu Alaikum,

All thanks and gratitude be to Allah (S.W.T) and blessings be upon the noble Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), his family and Companions.

I have perused the manuscript of this booklet written by our brother, Mallam Nafi'u Baba-Ahmad on a very important topic, '**Wasiyya**.' I recommend this booklet to all Muslims considering the issues discussed based purely on the Qur'an and the Hadith, as expounded by the early generations of scholars.

I have no doubt that this short but useful booklet will enrich the understanding of English speaking Muslims on a subject, most of which is yet to be translated from Arabic language. Finally, I pray to Allah (S.W.T) to reward him for this effort, in the hope that he will continue to work on other important publications in the future.

Bissalam,
Ja'afar Mahmud Adam
Director: Usman bin Affan Islamic Trust
Kano.

The Islamic will

The Islamic will

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

In the name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful, May Allah peace be upon the Master of the Apostles his family and companions.

There is no more dangerous situation than when a man is no longer easily accessible to his people after death except his action. I appeal to all those in positions to influence public affairs and opinion, to make a conscious effort to ensure that their will and actions are preparing to emulate what is written in this book. The word 'death' is mentioned in 162 places in the Glorious Qur'an.

The book is uplifting Muslim ummah towards understanding the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) about 'Wasiyya' an obligation abandoned by them.

It is important to re-affirm that besides the issues of the Islamic will (Wasiyya), the book touches on all other pressing areas of responsibility requiring our most urgent attention. May Allah reward him with His choicest blessings amin.

I.Y.M. Al-Mashgool Bauchi (PhD)

Rajab 27 1430 H 20th July 2009

15th February, 2008

The Islamic will

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF:

Malik related to me from Nafi'u, from Abdullah Ibn Umar (RA) that the Messenger of Allah, May Allah bless him and grant him peace; said, *"It is the duty of a Muslim who has anything to bequeath not to let two nights pass without writing a Will about it."* (Al-Muwatta, of Imam Malik; 3 7: 1.1)

THE ISLAMIC WILL (WASIYYAH) **AN OBLIGATION ABANDONED BY THE** **UMMAH**

1.0 PREAMBLE

"Every soul shall taste death" (Al-Qur'an chapter 3: 185, 21: 35 and 29:57) in this verse, Allah informs us of the inevitability of our own death and that of every single living being. Death is in fact, ironically, the only certain fact of life. Surprisingly, in spite of this, even the dominant Kufr Judeo-Christian culture which invests

The Islamic will

everything in the life of this world, with only a nodding regard for the Hereafter, is more conscious than the Muslims on the subject. Although in the Western culture, death is generally a taboo which must be avoided at all cost, yet they are always ready to deal with it in a practical way.

1.01 In Islam writing a will is a religious obligation especially if it is our wish to heed to the Qur'anic injunction: *"O you who believe! Fear Allah as He deserves to be feared and do not die except as Muslims."* (Qur'an chapter 3: 102).

The pressing need to address this obligation is even more today, as Muslims are in the process of organizing themselves and their lives to conform with the dictates of Shari'a, and since no one knows when OR where death will overtake him/her, one must thereafter hasten to write his/her will.

1.02 The will is mentioned eight (8) times in the Qur'an' one of such places is in Suratul Baqrah.

"It is prescribed for you, when death approaches any one of you, and he is leaving behind much wealth, that he makes a bequest to parents and the next of kin, according to reasonable usage. This is due from the righteous (Allah-fearing)." (Chapter 2: 180).

In this verse, writing a last will before one's death was made obligation on all Muslims. This was, of course revealed before the specific details of the system of inheritance were revealed in Suratu Nisa'i. Thus, it is clear as is the case with everything in our lives, the matter of death and dying has been covered in details by Allah and His messenger (PBUH) and the guidance of Islam is available to us to show us how to deal with every aspect of it. It is therefore absolutely vital for every Muslim, especially those who live in Kufr lands or places with preponderance of Kufr system, to know about this matter, so that we will all be able to prepare ourselves in every way, for our own approaching death.

2.01 As indicated earlier, since no one knows when or where death will come to him/her, one should endeavour to meticulously prepare for it and hasten to write his/her will.

In Al-Muwatta (37: 11) Imam Malik related from Nafi'u, from Abdullah Ibn Umar (RA), that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: *"it is the duty of a Muslim (in other translation; it is not right for a Muslim) who has anything*

The Islamic will

to bequeath, (not) to let two (2) nights pass without writing a will about it.” Related by Imam Al-Bukhari and Muslim

This hadith was also reported by Imam Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others. Commenting on the hadith, Abdullah Ibn Umar (R.A.) noted:

“Not even one night has passed me, ever since I heard this from the Prophet (PBUH) without having my will with me.”

In fact, according to the great majority of Muslim scholars, including the Hanafi, Malik, Shafi'i, Hambali, and the Zaidis, writing a will (Wasiyya) is highly recommended. It becomes obligatory if there is a danger that any dues to others or to Allah may not be fulfilled without clear instructions in a will.

2.02 In common language, '**Wasiyyah**' means 'to convey,' the root being '**Wasa**' (the conveyed) and in a legal sense, the word '**wasiyyah**' means a gift of property by its owner to another, contingent on the giver's death. (Durrul Mukhtar, Volume IV, Page 466).

2.03 Important Considerations

When a person dies, first of all, there is taken from his estate/wealth that where is necessary for shrouding and burying him. Next is the settlement of her/her debt obligations and then whatever bequests (**Wasiyyah**) he/she has made up to a third (1/3) of his estate, and then the rest is inherited in fixed share, in accordance with the stipulations of the Shari'a. Following from the above are some important considerations that one should be aware of when writing his/her will. These are:

i. One may not bequest anything to his legal heirs. As reported by Abu Dawud in the hadith related by Abu Umamah in which the Prophet (SAW) said in his farewell pilgrimage Khutbah (Sermon) that; "Allah has appointed for everyone his due right, thus no bequest may be made to an heir." Accordingly, a testamentary transfer to anyone who receives any share (large or small) is not allowed under the Shari'a. These include Qur'anic heirs (i.e. parents, husband or wife (wives), sons and daughters), because whenever a person (testator) is survived by any of these heirs, they have (i.e. each of them has) defined share in the net value of the estate. It must be noted however that this does not mean that all relatives may not be provided for, since many relatives may not be receivers or beneficiaries as a matter of right, simply because the testator (i.e. the deceased maker of the will) is survived by other relatives who are closer to him/her. In fact, it is strongly recommended that one should (some Ulama say, must) make a bequest to his/her other relatives. This position is predicated on

Suratul Baqrah (chapter, 2: 180) which though revealed before the specific stipulations in Suratu Nisa'i) provides:

"It is ordained for you, when death approaches any of you and he is leaving behind much wealth, to make bequests in favour of his parents and other relatives in accordance with what is fair. This is binding on all those who have piety." (Suratul Baqarah: 180).

2.04 Clearly, then, bequests can be made, for example, to relatives who are not entitled to a fixed share under the Shari'a, to friends, loyal servants, staff and people in need who are relatives or for public welfare, for the maintenance of mosques, orphanages, graveyards, schools, clinics, religious organizations and schemes for the poor and the needy. Such charitable contributions are well recommended and highly rewarded, through the instrumentality of WAQF, or perpetual endowment. A **waqf**, in short, is a permanent dedication by a Muslim of any moveable or immovable property for any pious religious or other charitable purpose or cause. This way a man's good deeds through its instrumentality are not limited to his/her life time, but he/she continues to receive credit or "**sawab**" after death, right up to the Day of Judgment.

2.05 In addition, the testator may wish to accommodate what is known in some schools of jurisprudence (Madhahibs) as the obligatory testamentary transfer. This involves the assignment of creation of shares in one's estate to sons and/or daughter of the testator's children who happen to die in his/her life time (i.e. grand children). These grand children can be given, according to some Madhahibs, the share their deceased parents (i.e. deceased children of the testator) would have received, had they survived the testator, provided of course that this share does not exceed the 'thuluthee' (1/3) rule.

The gist here is that without such obligatory testamentary shares, such grand children may be disqualified because the testator is survived by other children.

2.06 In all cases, such testamentary share and charitable contributions shall be reduced or even eliminated where the total value of the estate is small. This is based on the hadith of Sa'ad Ibn Waqqas (R.A) (reported by Imam Al-Bukhari, Muslim and other hadith collectors) who was advised by the Prophet (SAW) thus:

"O Sa'ad!, it would be better that you leave your inheritors (family) rich after you than leave them as a burden, begging people."

ii. The second important condition, is that the maximum one can assign in his will is one-third ($1/3^{rd}$) or 'thuluthi' of his total property, net of debts. Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas (R.A) narrated that he was with the Prophet (PBUH) during the Farewell Pilgrimage and he fell so sick that he believed that his death was imminent. The Holy Prophet (SAW) visited him and said to him:

"O Messenger of Allah, I am reduced to this state because of illness, and I have a vast amount of wealth with no inheritors except a daughter. Should I bequeath two-thirds ($2/3$) of my wealth? The Prophet (PBUH) replied "No" Sa'ad said: And I said (to the Prophet); What about half of my wealth? He (the Prophet) said: "No." Sa'ad, then asked "what about one-third ($1/3$)? The Prophet then replied: "Yes, one third is alright, and even that is too much. Indeed, O, Sa'ad! It would be better to leave your inheritors (heirs) rich after you than leave them as a burden, begging people." To this, Abdullah Ibn Abbas (R.A) said: "I wish that people would reduce their bequests from $1/3$ to $1/4$ because the Prophet (PBUH) said: "and even $1/3^{rd}$ is too much."

iii. It is prohibited to use the will to cause harm or oppression, such as depriving some of the inheritors/heirs from getting their rightful Allah-decreed

share of the inheritance estate, or favouring some of them over others. As Allah (S.W.T) decreed in Suratu Nisa'i (4:7):

"Men shall have a share in what parents and kinsfolk leave behind and women shall have a share in what parents and kinsfolk leave behind whether it be little or much, an ordained share." In the same chapter, it is clarified that the right of heirs shall come;

"After the deduction of any bequests (wasiyyah) that may have been made, or any debt (that may have been incurred), neither of which was intended to harm (the heirs)" (Nisa'i: 12)

Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (R.A) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said: *"One should neither initiate harming others, nor respond (to their action) by harming them. Whoever harms others, Allah will harm him and whoever makes it hard for others, Allah will make it hard upon him"* (Darul Qutni, authenticated by Sheikh Albani).

iv. All conditions laid down by a person making a bequest are valid, as long as they do not bring any restriction on the legatee's interest or are not against public policy. Thus, unjust bequeathals are void and rejected. A'isha (RA) reported that:

The prophet (PBUH) said: *“Anyone who involves (i.e.; initiates a new thing or bidi’ah) in this matter of ours (i.e.; Islam) that which is not of it, then it is rightly, rejected.”* Sahih Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others).

Imran Ibn Hussain (RA) narrated that:

A man freed six (6) slaves just before he died, his Bedouin (rural Arabs) heirs came to the prophet (PBUH) and complained to him about this, upon which the prophet (PBUH) said: “Did he really do this? Had we known this we would not have performed the prayer for him.” The Prophet (PBUH) then make them draw lots, freeing only 2 of them and returned the other 4 (to the heirs) as slaves,” Reported by Imam Muslim and others.

v. Some scholars have divided wasiyyah into three categories as follows:-

1. Wajib (Obligatory):

As indicated earlier, writing a will becomes obligatory if there is a risk that any dues to others or to Allah (SWT) may not be fulfilled without clear instructions in a will. Here scholars, point to situations, where a person is indebted, marriages contracted with deferred dowry or unpaid diyya. Cases involving rights due to Allah (SWT)

would include Zakkah, payment of which was due before one’s death or Kaffara (act of expiation) left unaccomplished.

2. Mustahab (Recommended, where it is not obligatory)

Here some, scholars feel if some of the obligations above do not exist, and then writing a will is not obligatory. Other scholars however feel it is still an obligation to do so. In addition, they argue, it is a reminder on the fleeting nature of the life in this world.

3. Haram (Forbidden)

This does not in fact relate to the actual act of writing a will, rather it concerns its contents. Examples include a situation where a bequest is made in favour of an heir, based on the saying of the Prophet (S.AW.): *“There is no bequest in favour of an heir.”* Other aspects that are null and void include a bequest in excess of the maximum allowable 1/3, and stipulations, in support of an act that is forbidden (bidi’ah or Haram)

vi. It has become a common practice among Muslims to introduce innovations (bidi’ah) and violations of the “Deen” especially in funeral related matters. Therefore it is imperative for a Muslim to include in his will; matters relating to his/her preparation and burial, by indicating that is should be conducted strictly in accordance with the Sunnah. This practice was followed by the Prophet’s

companions (RA). The following are a few such examples.

Amir, the son of Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas (RA) reported that his father (i.e. Sa'ad) said on his death bed; *"Dig my grave as a Lahd and lay bricks upon me, as was done to Allah's Messenger (PBUH),"* Related by Imam Muslim and others.

ii. Abu Musal Ash'ari (RA), was reported (in a hadith related by Ahmad and others, authenticated by Sheikh Albani) to have said at the time of his death:

"When you walk in my funeral, walk fast, do not follow me with incense burners, and do not erect over me anything that would separate me from the earth. And do not build a structure over my grave. And bear witness that I disown myself of anyone who mourns me by shaving the hair, beating oneself or tearing the clothes."

He was asked, "Did you hear something in this regard?" (i.e. from the Holy Prophet), he replied, yes, from Allah's Messenger (PBUH).

iii. Hudhaifah Ibn Yaman (RA) said:

"When I die, do not announce my death to anyone, because I fear that it would count as lamenting; and I heard Allah's Messenger (PBUH) prohibit lamenting."

(Reported by Tirmidhi and others and authenticated by Sheikh Albani). On all these, Imam An-Nawawi (RA) said in "Al-Adhkar" "It is highly recommended for a person to instruct his family to avoid the innovations that have become common in funerals, and to confirm his covenant with them upon it.

2.07. Non-Muslim relatives are not allowed to inherit from a Muslim under the Shari'a, based on several hadith of the Prophet (AS) to this effect, however a person may wish to assign a certain amount or property to some persons who are not heirs, such as a non-Muslim wife, parents and foster children. If a Muslim dies leaving a non-Muslim wife, she is not entitled to a fixed share, but she can benefit from a bequest in her husband's will. However, some scholars are of the view that the amount of her bequest cannot be more than the amount of the fixed share which her Muslim co-views will inherit in accordance with the Shari'a. If she is the only wife, her husband can leave her a full third of his wealth.

2.08. A murderer or an accessory in the murder of a person shall not inherit him/her at all, whether by relationship of consanguinity or affinity or by virtue of testamentary transfer.

2.09. Illegitimacy is considered a break in the line of relationship, but not a disability that disqualifies the illegitimate person from a bequest.

2.10. In the Islamic system, the treasury of an Islamic state is the heir of those who have not heirs. But even in such a situation, bequests made in favour of persons or charitable organizations, will be taken first, before payment to the Baitul-Mal (public treasury in a Muslim state).

2.11. If it turns out that a person has bequeathed more than a third (1/3) of his will, that is more than he/she is entitled to bequeath under the Shari'a then the bequest(s) are reduced proportionally so that they no longer exceed a third (1/3) of his estate; Unless all the heirs who are entitled to fixed shares in accordance with the Shari'a agree to accept lesser shares so that all the bequests, including those which exceed the third, can be distributed. **Writing the will**

2.12. A will can be oral written, but a written will is better as indicated in the hadith referred to in **2.01**

2.13. There should be two witnesses to the will. Here it is recommended to select witness who are young but have reached the age of puberty and persons who are unlikely to move far away, so that they may be around if needed, at the time of execution of the will.

2.14. Once a Muslim has reached puberty, he/she can both make a will and directly inherit under a will. Anyone entitled to inherit before reaching puberty will have his or her inheritance looked after in trust, by a close relative or

a friend until puberty or age of responsibility is attained by him/her.

2.15. A bequest in a will made during a Muslim's final illness or a gift made shortly before, and in anticipation of death, is not valid. Instead, after she/he had died, any such bequest or gift reverts back to relatives entitled to fixed share accordance with the Shari'a.

2.16. Periodic review of the will is always recommended especially since debts owed to and by the testator are normally required to be given in a separate appendix which should be meticulously updated. It is however important that each time it is reviewed, one should ensure that all Shari'a requirement, are complied with.

17.0 DEBTS

It is important to leave this world without having a debt because debts incurred in this life and left unsettled, hold back a dead person in Barzakh (intermediate station after death, before resurrection). As indicated earlier, debts constitute a first charge on the estate of a deceased person, after the settlement of burial expenses and before any bequests and he sharing of inheritance to a person's legal heirs. However, if a person dies in debt and the wealth that he/she leaves behind is not sufficient to repay the debts, then one of the kindest act of sincerity those who are still alive can do it to pay off the

deceased's debts on his/her behalf. On this issue, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

“The soul of a believer is determined by his debts and by Allah (S.W.T) in Whose Hand is my very soul, even if a man who had outstanding debts were killed in the way of Allah (S.W.T) Fisabilillah, (i.e. Jihad), then were raised from the dead to be killed again in the way of Allah (S.W.T), then were from the dead to be killed again, he still would not enter Paradise until debts are fully repaid.”

Inclusion of one's debt profile (those owed to others and those owed by the testator) saves the relatives of a person, in the event of death, of having to make inquiries (most of which can never be exhausted) about debts owed by the dead. In addition, he/she ensures that property of his inheritors (a right that crystallizes upon a person's death) is not lost through acts of avoidable omission, negligence or carelessness. This should include foreign accounts, or stocks in private companies and silent partnerships. A lot of Muslim inheritors have indeed lost and continue to lose their rightfully entitlements amounting to millions of dollars in secret coded accounts. Such funds, howsoever acquired (i.e. lawfully or otherwise) by a deceased Muslim, are lawful “halal” to the heirs and the careless deceased person will have to account to Allah not only on how he acquired and managed them, but also why he/she negligently disinherited his/her heirs of what the Shari'a has earmarked for them in his/her wealth.

MAIN ASPECTS OF A WILL

Having established that writing a will is a religious obligation, we should now examine the format of a will. Briefly, your will should contain the following aspects:-

- i. A will should address three basic issues, viz:-
 - (a) The portion of one's property or wealth (within the thuluthi 1/3 allowable limit) one wishes to bequeath to relations, friends, the needy or noble cause (s) other than one's legal heirs.
 - (b) Debt obligations or properties or receivables from other people; and
 - (c) Issues relating to one's family (i.e. advice to those of them that outlive you and one's last death rites, etc)
- ii. **A Preamble** (i.e. introductory part) in which the testator declares his/her faith (or re-affirms same) and the calls upon his/her surviving relatives and friends to fear Allah and uphold the Shari'a in all their deeds and actions.

For example:-

The exhortation of Prophets Ibrahim and Yaqub (AS) to their children: *“O my children, Allah has chosen for you this true religion, the die not except in the faith of Islam,”* (Baqarah, verse 132). And I exhort you with the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) last exhortation to his followers: *“The*

prayer..., the prayer...” Reported by Ahmad in Sahih), this was the practice of the companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). A detailed example of this exhortation will be given at the end.

iii. Select person(s) to act as the executors(s) and give clear and unambiguous instructions to the executor(s) and your heirs, as to the part of the estate that you desire to give away (to relatives, neighbours friends, charity, contributions to Islamic causes etc). However, such bequeathals are undesirable if the estate is relatively of small value and one's heirs are in actual need of it, based on the hadith of Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas (RA), mentioned earlier.

Where relevant, the executor's responsibility is:

- (i) To assemble or take stock of the property, inventory it; pay the deceased's debts, funeral expenses, Huququllah (i.e. outstanding Zakkah, Kaffarah, etc).
- (ii) Ensure that the instructions on bequest are within the maximum limit of 1/3 of the net value of the deceased's estate; and
- (iii) Ensure that the remaining property is shared according to the Shari'a, to the deceased's legal heirs without undue delay. If your estate is considerable, it is advisable to include a scholar (learned in the Shari'a), an accountant and even a lawyer, to ensure that the estate is freed from unnecessary legal and tax complications.

(iv) Make sure that person (s), you name as executors have agreed to act in such capacity.

(v) Clear identify each item for bequest and the person for whom it is intended. Also remember to draw a line through any unfilled space at the end, so that nothing else can be fraudulently added by someone later.

(vi) Your signature at the end of the will should be witnessed by at least two (2) witnesses. The witnesses do not have to read the content of your will since their duty is only to confirm your signature.

(vii) Before writing your will, prepare a draft, to help you prepare a list of everything that belongs to you. Remember than anything of your which you do not especially bequeath to a named person or organization, will either be divided amongst your surviving relatives or where applicable, to the Bait-al-mal, in case there are no relatives.

(viii) Keep your will in a safe place and make sure that your executors or some reliable persons or family members know where at least one copy can easily be accessed or located.

(ix) It should also help those who are going to conclude one's affairs after death, if you leave details of what your funeral, wishes are, where any important

documents are being kept, including its precise location.

(x) It is advisable also to keep (2) two copies with you in different places. For example: one in the office and one at home or in the computer, with a spare hardcopy.

(xi) Finally, as indicated earlier, periodic review of the will is always recommended.

It is also worth remembering that after having written a will, one is free to deal with the assets as one may wish, including selling or otherwise disposing of any property. If, however one sells a property bequeathed to a person in a will, then happens to buy another house and then dies before amending the will accordingly, some scholars are of the views that the person mentioned, in the will as being entitled to the property sold, will not receive the new house. In other words, if your will eventually contains bequeathals that are no longer possible because you no longer possess that item, it will, be time to amend your will or prepare a new one.

ADDITIONAL ADVISORY NOTES.

1. A will is important even if little or no property is available for bequest. In such a situation, one can leave instructions in the will on his/her death wishes (conduct of funeral rites etc), debt obligations

outstanding obligations owed to Allah (e.g. Kaffarah, Zakkah, etc) and other wishes regarding one's family affairs.

2. Inheritance proper (in Hausa, Rabon Gado) is an important obligation that must not be handled with sentiments or selfishness. In the first place, one cannot decide on who gets what, contrary to the specific stipulations of the Shari'a. This is a matter already decreed by Allah (SWT) and determined under the Shari'a. Thus, one cannot decrease or increase the share of an heir (e.g. a wife or one of his children), make a beneficiary therein; one not recognized by Shari'a or disinherit any qualified beneficiary. Any person that does this has transgressed the limits set by Allah (SWT) and according to the consensus of the Ulama, is a Kafir. In addition to the blunder, an Islamic judge will not hesitate to nullify and share the estate instead according to the dictates of the Shari'a. Therefore, dividing the estate of a deceased (Rabon gado) according to the Shari'a is not only an obligation which guarantees peace and harmony, but also one that should never be delayed, as is the custom in this country. Once a person is confirmed dead, then from that moment, Allah (SWT) has created rights of specific person in specific percentages in all that the person owned. Now, among those entitled, there may be people in dire need to receive their Allah-given rights, but who are invariably forced to keep quiet for fear of accusations their asking for his/her right may

evoke from others, normally very close to them (e.g. causing “fitnah, or disunity in the family, impatience etc). Doing as Allah has decreed, is the best solution and guarantee for peace which should not disunite or disintegrate family kinship (as a lot of people here believe):

“Allah knows (everything) but you do not know.”
(Baqarah, verse: 216).

Unnecessary delays could result in the death of one or some of beneficiaries, thereby further complicating matters. In such a situation, any person in a position to stand firm and ensure that the inheritance is promptly and properly shared or advise those concerned or even a superior authority, will be questioned on their negligence of duty, sentiments or even selfishness on the Day of Mutual disillusionment (Yaumul Tagabun) that is, the Day of Judgment.

AN EXAMPLE OF THE PREAMBLE/ INTRODUCTORY PART OF WASIYYA

PREAMBLE

Ash-hadu an la ilaha illallah wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluhu.

I testify that there is no true deity except Allah (S.W.T) alone without any partners, and that Muhammad (PBUH) is His obedient worshiper and Messenger.

I testify that Allah’s promise is true; the meeting with Him is true; paradise is true; the Day of judgement is coming without any doubt and that Allah (SWT) will surely resurrect those in the graves.

This is my counsel to my beloved family, relatives and friends, my Muslim brothers and sisters, and all those who remain after me:-

Strive to be true Muslims, worshipping our Creator as He alone is to be worshipped, directing your absolute fear, hope, love and submission to Him alone.

Obey Allah (S.W.T) and His Messenger (PUBH) and hold fast to his Sunnah and the guidance of the Salaf (righteous early Muslims).

Strive to spread and establish the religion of Islam and die only in the state of complete submission to Allah.

I remind you that no man or woman dies before his/her time. The exact duration of each life span is precisely determined before we born, by Allah. Death is tragic only for the one who lived his life in self deception, without submitting to Allah (S.W.T) and preparing for the final return to Him. So, do not

preoccupy yourselves with my death, but instead, make proper preparations for your own.

I exhort you with what Prophets Ibrahim and Yaqub (AS) exhorted their children:

“O my children, Allah has chosen for you this true religion, then die not except in the faith of Islam” (Baqrah, verse 132).

And I further exhort you with Holy Prophet’s (PUBH) last exhortation to his followers: *“The prayer, the prayer...”* (Imam Ahmad, Sahih).

DEATH IN THE PRESENCE OF THE RIGHTEOUS

When I approach death:-

1. I ordain that I be attended to, when dying, by Muslims of knowledge and piety, who will remind me to have good thoughts, about my Lord, to hope for His mercy and forgiveness and to utter the “Kalimatus Shahadah” from time to time.
2. I ordain the removal from my presence of all things that chase away the Angels of Mercy, such as a picture or statues of humans or animals, dogs, bells, improperly attired women, music, smoking, etc.

3. When my soul departs, I ordain that my family or those present should:

- Close my eyes;
- Make good supplication for me (without raising their voices);
- Take measures to quickly prepare me for burial; and
- Hasten to pay off my debts.

4. I ask Allah (S.W.T) to guide my family to act in a manner that will lead to my comfort, merciful treatment and my Lord’s pleasure.
5. Upon my death, I ordain that:-

- You should maintain patience, self composure and submission to Allah’s decree;

- You should not raise your voices, nor wail and lament me, or say things that are reminiscent of Jahiliyya (ignorance). This is forbidden by Allah, as it reflects lack of understanding and dissatisfaction with His will.

- You should mourn for no more than three (3) days, except for my widows who are allowed to mourn for four (4) lunar months and ten (10) days, until the “Iddah” is completed. Mourning for a widow is to feel sadness in the heart, without objecting to Allah’s decree.

6. I ordain that all my burial rites and funeral procedures be done by Muslims in complete accordance with the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet

(PBUH) absolutely; no non-Islamic services or observances shall be conducted upon my death, or on my body. I further ordain that:

- No autopsy or embalmment be done on my body;
- No unjustified reasons, should delay proceeding with my burial, such as waiting for a specific day, or the arrival of a particular person;
- My body be wrapped in plain white perfumed pieces of cloth, free of ornaments;
- I be buried where I die; my body should not be transported over any unreasonable distance from the locality of death, unless long distance transportation is required to reach the nearest Muslim cemetery.
- My funeral procession be expedited, with silence maintained.
- No voices should be raised reciting the Qur'an, the "Shahadah" or any supplication. Rather, those present should contemplate the situation and supplicate for me in their hearts.
- The funeral prayer upon me be conducted outside the graveyard.
- As far as possible, the largest number of Muslim (as Allah wills) should pray upon me.

7. I ordain that my grave be dug in accordance with the specifications of the Sunnah, and that:-

- No structure of cement, brick, clay, marble or other materials be built over my grave;
- No fence should be built around my grave;
- No writing, inscription or symbols be placed on my grave; it may only marked with a simple rock.

8. I ordain that all innovations and violations of Islam should be prevented at my funeral. Thus, no one may wear black as a sign of mourning, or perform other practices of the non-Muslims. In addition I ordain that:-

- No pictures, decorations, flowers, wreaths, flags or other symbols should be involved at any stage of the process of conducting my burial, nor be placed at the site of my grave.
- No recitation of the Qur'an (not even Suratul Fatiha or Yasin) be done over my body during the funeral procedures.
- No gatherings be arranged where condolence are offered after the 3rd day and no Qur'anic recitation meant for my benefit be made on Fridays, after seven (7) or Forty (40) days or annually.

9. I ordain that people be instructed to express their condolences in proper Islamic terms and manner. My family may not prepare food for the people who visit to comfort them, nor are they to hire or appoint men to recite the Qur'an for the occasion as Fidda'u.

I declare myself before Allah (S.W.T) the Most High, free from every action and every saying that conflicts with the Sunnah of the noble Messenger of Allah (PBUH).

Finally, I ask my relatives, friends, and all others, whether they choose to believe as I believed or not, to honour my right to these beliefs. I ask them to honour this document, and not to try to obstruct it or otherwise change it in any way. Rather, I urge them to ensure that I am buried as I have directed to be buried and let my properties be divided as I indicated they should be divided.

“Then whoever changes the bequest after hearing it, the sin shall be on those make the change. Truly, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.” (Baqarah, 181).

CONCLUSION

I wish to conclude this brief effort on Wasiyyah by drawing the attention of my brothers and sisters in Islam that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has demonstrated the best way of departing this world, which was virtually the same way he entered it, possessing nothing and owning next to nothing.

My success is not but through Allah

Wama Taufeeqi Illa Billah

Your Brother in Islam

Nafi'u Baba-Ahmad

REFERENCE

1. *"Al-Wasiyyah" by Saleh al-Atram, Darul Watan, Riyadh, 1410 A.H*
2. *"Wasiyyatush Shar'iyyah," By Nasib ar Rifa'i*
3. *"Alwasiyyatush Shar'iyyah", Darus Sahaban For Heritage" Cairo*
4. *"Hathihi Wasiyyatil Abdil Faqir" (By Adrain Al-Ar'ur, Darar Riyah, Riyadh, 1993).*
5. *"Alwasiyyatush Shar'iyyah", By Mansur Ahmad Ashmawi (An Nadwah Publishing, Makkah, 1991).*
6. *The "Last will and Testament" The Muslim Students Association of USA and Canada (1980)*
7. *"The Islamic Will" – (Hajj Abdal Haqq, Aisha Bewley and Ahmad Thomson) Dar al-Taqwa, London, 1995.*
8. *"The Islamic Will" – Muhammad Al-Jibali (Al-Qur'an Wa Sunnah Society of North America, 1995*
9. *Durr-ul Muktar, Vol. IV, page 466.*
10. *Al-Muwatta – Imam Malik*
11. *Radd-ul Muktar.*

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

1. This last will and Testament is made by me:
Name:

2. Of.....

3. I appoint as executors and trustees of my will:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.
- g.

and should one or more of them fail or be unable to act, I
appoint to fill any vacancy:

- h.
- i.
- j.

4. I appoint to be guardians of children.

5. I wish my estate to be distributed and where relevant invested in accordance with the Shari'a and after all or any funeral expenses, debts (handwritten and amended, as Allah permits, and attached), taxes and professional and testamentary expenses have been paid out of my estate by my executors, the shall hold what remains of my estate on trust to be distributed in accordance with the following provisions:

6. As regards the one quarter (1/4) of what remains of my estate (after all or any financial expenses, debts taxes and professional and testamentary expenses have been paid) which under the Shari'a of Islam I am entitled to leave to whomever I wish, I make the following specific gifts and legacies.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

In the event of the total value of the above specific gifts and legacies amounting to more than one quarter of what remains of my estate (after all or any funeral expenses have been paid), then the above specific gifts and legacies are each to be proportionally reduced by my executors in whatever manner their absolute discretion thinks fit, so that their total value then amounts to one quarter of what remains of my estate – before being distributed unless with reference to **Clause** 7 herein all my surviving relatives entitled to inherit fixed shares in accordance with the Shari'a of Islam agree to the above specific gifts and legacies being distributed as indicated above and accordingly to accept a corresponding decrease in the amount of their own respective shares in which case the above specific gifts and legacies shall be distributed as indicated above.

7. As regards the three quarters (3/4) of what remains of my estate (after all or any funeral expenses, debts, taxes and professional and testamentary expanses and with reference to **Clause** 6 herein specific gifts and legacies have been paid or distributed) which must be distributed amongst my surviving relatives in fixed shares in following specific items to go to the following relatives provided that the value of any such particular item or group of items does not amount to more than the value of the particular fixed shares to which any such item or group of items relates and to which any such relative or relatives is or are entitled, in accordance with the Shari'a of Islam:

- a.
- b.
- c.

In the event of the value of any of the above specific items amounting to more than the value of the particular fixed share or shares to which such item or group of items relates and to which any such relative or relatives is or are entitled, then my executors are instead to allocate to any such relative or relatives whatever in their absolute direction appears best represent their particular share or shares in my estate unless all my surviving relatives entitled to inherit fixed share in accordance with the Shari'a of Islam agree to any such specific items being allocated as indicated above and accordingly to accept a corresponding decrease in the amount of their own respective shares in which case the above specific items should be allocated as indicated above.

8. In the even that there being nor surviving relative or other specific recipients who would have been entitled to fixed shares from my estate if they had survived me, which means that any residue of my estate (after all any funeral expenses, debts, taxes, and professional and testamentary expenses and with reference to clause 6 herein specific gifts and legacies have been paid or distributed), then I give that residue to my mother's relations in Specifically, to those close surviving maternal relationsbut if this gift or any part of this will fails for any reason, or if any other

part of this will for any reason, then if wish the executors of my estate to hold the residue of my estate or the part affected on trust and distribute it amongst those in need amongst my community as they in their absolute discretion consider and think fit, provided always that any such distribution is in accordance with and guided by the Shari'a of Islam.

9. In the event of any children or other relatives being minors at the time of any death, I wish my executors to hold their fixed share or shares as determined by the Shari'a of Islam on trust until any such child attains the age of 18 years. My trustees shall be free to retain or sale any such fixed share as they in their absolute discretion think fit; and to invest the proceeds thereof, provided always that any such investment does not involve any form of usury and is permitted by the Shari'a of Islam, and while any such child is a minor my trustees may in their absolute discretion use all or any part of the proceeds from any such sale or of the income from any such investment for the child maintenance, education or benefit.

10. I do not want my body to be subjected to a post mortem or any of my organs to be used for transplant or medical research. I wish my body to be released for burial immediately and to be given a Muslim burial, and to have my body buried in:

11. I also wish the immediate stock taking and disposal of my total estate with dispatch.

Signed by me the above-named testator:

.....on theday of
.....200

Signed by the above named testator in our presence and
then by us in the testator's presence.

a)
NAME:.....
OF
OCCUPATION.....
SIGNATURE:..... DATE.....

b)
NAME:.....
OF
OCCUPATION:.....
SIGNATURE:..... DATE.....

APPENDIX I

(From the book- "Death Resurrection Hell" by HAROUN
YAHYA)

THE VEIL OF HEEDLESSNESS

Man is intrinsically selfish; he is extremely sensitive about
issues linked to his own interests. Ironically, he displays
indifference towards death, which ought to be a matter of

paramount concern. In the Qur'an, this state of mind
peculiar to "those who do not hold firmly to Faith" is
defined by Allah in one word: "heedlessness."

The meaning of heedlessness is a deficiency in
full comprehension of facts owing to a blurring of
awareness or even total unawareness and the resultant
failure to arrive at sound judgment and give pertinent
responses. An example of this is given in the following
verse:

*"Mankind's reckoning has drawn very close to them, yet
they heedlessly turn away."* (Suratul Anbiya'i: 1)

People feel certain that one who is afflicted by a
fatal or incurable disease will die. Yet, no less than this
patient, these people who harbour such feelings of
certainty, too will die. That this will happen some time in
the future or very soon does not change this fact. Often
heedlessness obscures this truth. For instance, it is
highly probable that someone afflicted with HIV will die in
the near future. Yet, the fact remains that it is also highly
probable if the truth be told, it is certain that a vigorous
person next to him will one day die. Maybe death will
come upon him long before it comes upon that "HIV-
stricken patient." This will most likely be at some quite
unexpected moment.

Family members grieve over patients on their
death-bed. Yet, hardly ever do they grieve over
themselves, who will definitely die one day. However,
given the certainty of the event, the response should not

vary depending on whether it occurs shortly or at some far-off time.

If, in the face of death, grief is the correct response to give, then everyone should immediately start grieving for himself or for another. Or, he should overcome his grief and strive to have a deeper understanding of death.

To this end, being acquainted with the reasons for heedlessness will be useful.

CAUSES FOR HEEDLESSNESS

* A Lack of Sagacity: The majority of the individuals making up society are not accustomed to thinking over serious issues. Making heedlessness a way of living, they do not concern themselves with death. Any mundane problems the fail to solve keep their minds, constantly occupied. Trivial issues, already, “congesting” their narrow minds, do not allow them to give serious thought to grave issues. Thus, they spend their lives drifting in the daily flow of event. Meanwhile, at the death of somebody, or when the conversation turns to the subject of death, they derive comfort from blurted phrases and simply avoid the subject. They are people with narrow minds harbouring trifling narrow thoughts.

* The Complexity and Vividness of Life: Life flows every fast and it is alluringly vivid. In the absence of exceptional mental effort, man is likely to take no notice of death, which is bound to overcome him sooner or later.

Not having faith in God, he is too distant from concepts like destiny, putting trust in God and submission to Him. From the moment he becomes conscious of material need, he strives to ensure a good living. Such a person does not even endeavour to avoid death because he is already engrossed in worldly concerns. He constantly chases after new plan, interest and objectives and, one day, unpredictably and therefore with no preparation, faces the reality of death. Then he has regrets and wants to return to life, but to no avail.

* The Deception of Population Increase: One of the reasons for heedlessness is the recurrence of births.

The population of the world keeps increasing; it never shrinks. Once dragged into the spiral of life, however, man may, because of misconceptions, believe in alluring yet utterly illusory notions like “births replace death”, thereby maintaining equilibrium of population. Such a rationale makes conditions ripe for the formation of a heedless outlook upon death. However, if from now on, no more births ever occurred around the world, we would still witness deaths one after another and, as a result, a shrinking world population. Then the horror of death would start to be felt. Man would see the disappearance of the people surrounding him one by one and would realize that the inevitable end would likewise afflict him. This is similar to what those sentenced to the death penalty feel on death row. Each day, they witness, one or two people taken out for execution. The number of

people in the cells steadily decreases. Years pass by, but still every day, those still alive go to sleep in a state of anxiety over whether the next day it would be their turn. Never do they fail to remember death, not for one second.

Ironically, the actual situation is no different from the aforementioned example. Newborns have no effect whatsoever on the ones destined to die. This is only a psychological misconception. The inhabitants of the world who live 150 years ago are not around today. The following generations did not save them from death. Likewise, 100 years from now, those currently living, with a few exceptions, will not be alive. That is because the world is not a permanent place for man.

METHODS OF SELF-DECEPTION

About from the reasons which make us disregard death and plunge into heedlessness, there are also certain defense mechanisms which are mentioned below, reduce man to the level of the ostrich which buries its head in the sand to avoid a disagreeable situation.

* Postponing thinking about death to the latter years of life: people generally take it for granted that they will live until their mid-sixties or seventies. This explains why generally young and middle-aged people employ this defence mechanism. With such calculation in mind, they postpone thinking about such 'gloomy' issues to the latter years of their lives. In their youth-or-their prime-they do

not want to 'blur' their mind with 'depressing' issues. The latter years of life are inescapably the time when one cannot get the best out of life and this period is thought by many people to be the most appropriate phase in which to think sedulously about death and become prepared for the next life. This also brings spiritual relief since it provides a sense of doing something for the Hereafter.

Nevertheless, it is evident that making such long-term and inconclusive plans makes no sense for one whose next breath is not even guaranteed. Every day he sees many people of his age or even younger ones dying. Obituaries constitute a considerable part of daily newspaper. Every hour, television channels report news of deaths. Often man witnesses the death of people surrounding him. Yet, little does he think that people around him will also witness his own death or read about it in the newspaper. On the other hand, even if he lives for a very long time, nothing will change in his life, since his mentality will remain the same. Until he is actually facing death, he just postpones thinking about death.

* Making the assumption that one will 'serve one's sentence' in hell only for a certain period: this view, which is prevalent in society, is nothing but a superstition. After all, it is not a belief having its roots in the Qur'an. In no part of the Qur'an do we find any reference to "serving one's sentence" in hell for some time and then being forgiven. Quite the contrary, in all relevant verses, there is specific mention of the separation of believer and disbelievers on the Day of Judgment. Again we know

from the Qur'an that believers will remain in paradise for all eternity, while disbelievers will be cast into hell, where they will suffer everlasting torment:

They say: "The Fire will only touch us for a number of days." Say: "Have you made a contract with Allah then Allah will not break His contract or are you rather saying about Allah what you do not know? 'No indeed! Those who accumulate bad actions and are surrounded by their mistakes are the companions of the Fire, remaining in it timelessly for ever. Whereas those who believe and do right actions, such people are the companions of the Garden, remaining in it timelessly, for ever (Surat Al-Baqara: 80-82)

Another verse stresses the same point:

"That is because they say: 'The Fire will only touch us for a number of days.' Their inventions have deluded them in their religion," (Surah Al-Imran: 24).

Hell is a place of unimaginable torment.

Consequently, even if remaining in hell only for a certain time were possible, a man of conscience would never consent to go through that suffering. Hell is the place where the attributes of Allah, Al-Jabbar (the Compeller) and Al-Qahhar (the Subdued) are manifested to the utmost degree. The torment in hell is incomparable to any pain in the world. a person who cannot endure a burn on his finger saying he can readily undergo such

torture is merely demonstrating weak-mindedness. Furthermore, a person who does not feel terrified by the Wrath of Allah fails to give Allah due esteem. Such a person, entirely deprived of faith, is a poor man who does not even deserve a mention.

* Thinking "I already deserve Paradise" there is also a group who assume themselves to be the people of Paradise. Engaging in some minor deeds they assume to be good deeds and avoiding some wicked deeds, they think they are ripe for entry into heaven. Steeped in superstition and mouthing heresies which they associate with religion, these people actually adhere to a faith completely divorced from that of Qur'an. They present themselves as true believers. However, the Qur'an classifies them among those who ascribe partners to Allah:

"Give them this parable. Once there were two men. To one of them We gave two vineyards surrounded by date-palms, with some cultivated land in between. Both gardens yielded their crops and did not suffer any loss, and We made a river flow right through the middle of them. He was a man of wealth and property and he said to his companion, while conversing with him, 'I have more wealth than you and more people under me.' He entered his garden and wronged himself by saying, 'I do not think that this will ever end. I do not think the hour of Doom will ever come. But if I should be sent back to my Lord, I will definitely get something better in return.' His companion, with whom he was conversing, said to him,

'Do you then disbelieve in Him who created you form dust, then from a drop of sperm, and then formed you as a man?' He is, however, Allah my Lord, and I will not associate anyone with my Lord. (Surat Al-Kahf: 32-38).

With the words, "But if I should be sent back to my Lord," the garden owner expresses his lack of sound faith in Allah and the Hereafter and consequently reveals that he is an idolater who harbours doubts. Meanwhile, he claims, that he is a superior believers. Moreover, he feels no doubts that Allah will reward him with Paradise. This insolent and inferior character of the idolater is very common among people.

These people, deep inside, know that they are entirely fraudulent, yet once they are questioned about it, they try to prove their innocence. They claim that observing the commandments of religions is not so important. Furthermore, they try to clear themselves, claiming that the seemingly religious people they see around them are immoral and dishonest. They try to prove that they are "good people" by stating that they do not hesitate to give money to beggars, that they have been serving honestly in public service for years and these are the things that make a sincere Muslim. They either do not know or simply pretend not to know that what makes a man Muslim is not getting along well with people, but being a servant of Allah and obeying His commandments.

In an Endeavour to base their distorted religion on some kind of rationale, they subscribe to certain fallacies. This is actually typical of their insincerity. To legitimize their own life, they seek refuge in slogans like: "The best form of worship is to work" or "what matters is sincerity of heart." In the words of the Qur'an, this is just "inventing lies against Allah," and it merits the punishment of eternal Hell. In the Qur'an, Allah describes the situation of such people as follows:

"The think they deceive Allah and those who have faith. They deceive no one but themselves, but they are not aware of it." (Surat Al-Baqara: 8).

* Double-Standard Rationales: sometimes when people think about death, they assume they will disappear for all eternity. Such a starting idea makes them develop another defence mechanism: they only give half credence to the fact that "there is an eternal life promised by Allah." Such a conclusion raises some hope in them. When they consider the responsibilities of a believer toward his Creator, they prefer to completely ignore the fact of an eternal life. They comfort themselves thinking: "After all, we shall be reduced to insignificance, decomposing completely in the soil. There is no life after death." Such an assumption, represses all fears and concerns, such as giving an account of one's deeds on the Day of Judgment or suffering in Hell fire. In both sets of circumstances, they lead their lives in heedlessness until the end of their days.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF HEEDLESSNESS

In the previous sections, as we have said, as long as one lives, death inevitably calls itself to one's attention. These reminders sometimes prove to be beneficial, prompting man to re-examine his priorities in life and to re-evaluate his outlook in general. But there are other times when the above-mentioned defence mechanisms take over, and with each passing day, the veil of heedlessness before one's eyes becomes thicker.

If disbelievers await death in a tranquil mood and have an irrational feeling of comfort, even when they are intensely aware of its approach in the latter years of their lives, it is because they are completely swathe in this veil. That is because death for them connotes restful and sound sleep, tranquility and calmness, and an eternal relief.

Contrary to what they think, however, Allah, the One who creates every being from nothing and the One who makes them die and who will give life to all creatures on Judgement Day, promises them eternal regret and grief. They will, too, witness this fact at the moment of death, a time when they assume they will go to an eternal sleep. They realize that death is not total disappearance, but the initial moment of a new world full of anguish. The terrifying appearance of the angels of death is the first sign of this great torment.

"How will it be when they angels take them in death, beating their faces and their backs?" (Surah Muhammad: 27)

At this moment, the pre-death arrogance and insolence of the disbelievers turn into terror, regret, desperation and eternal pain. In the Qur'an, this is referred to as follows:

"They say, 'When we have been absorbed into the earth, are we then to be created afresh? In fact, they deny they will ever meet their Lord. Say: 'The Angel of Death, who has been given charge of you, will carry off your souls, and then you will be sent back to your Lord.' If only you could see the evildoers hanging their heads in shame before their Lord: 'Our Lord! We have seen and we have heard, so send us back again and we will act rightly. Truly we are now firm believers.' (Suratus Sajadah: 10 – 12).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM DEATH

Death, especially at an early age, seldom comes to mind. Considering this as the end, man even escapes from the thought of it. However, just as physical avoidance provides no cure for death, neither does avoidance of thinking about it. Besides, it is impossible to ignore death. Every day, newspapers run headlines about the deaths of so many people. You frequently come across hearses or pass cemeteries. Relatives and associates die. Their funerals or visits of offer condolences inevitably bring

death to mind. As one witnesses the death of others, and especially the death of beloved ones, inevitably thinks about his own end. This thought hurts him deep inside, making him restless.

No matter how strongly the individual resists, wherever he seeks refuge or how he tries to escape, he may actually encounter his own death at any moment. He has no other choice. Ahead of him, there is no other exit. The countdown never stops, not for a moment. Wherever he returns, death meets him there. The circle encloses constantly and finally, catches up with him:

Say: 'Death, from which you are fleeing, will certainly catch up with you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible and He will inform you about what you did.' (Suratul Juma'a: 8)

That is why we need to stop deceiving ourselves or disregarding facts and strive to reach the good pleasure of Allah during this period predetermined by Him. Only Allah knows when this time will ever be.

Our Prophet Muhammad (PUBH) also said that one of the best ways to prevent one's conscience from hardening, and attain a good character is by frequently remembering death:

Abdullah Ibn Umar (RA) narrated: Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "These hearts become rusty just as iron does when water affects it." On being asked

what could clear them he replied, 'A great amount of remembrance of death and recitation of the Qur'an.' (Al-Tirmidhi, 673)

THE ACTUAL DEATH AND WHAT IS OBSERVED ABOUT DEATH

THE DEATH OF THE SOUL (THE ACTUAL DEATH)

Have you ever thought about how you will die, what death looks like and what will happen at the moment of death?

So far, nobody has appeared who dies and was raised again and who could share his actual experiences and feelings about death. This being the case, it is, technically, impossible to gather information regarding what death is like and what one feels at the moment of death.

Allah, the one Who bestows life upon man and takes it back in due course, informs us in the Qur'an about how death actually occurs. Thus, the Qur'an is the only source from which we can learn about how death really occurs and what someone who dies actually experiences and feels.

Death, as referred in the Qur'an, is quite unlike the "medical death" people observe from outside.

Primarily, certain verses acquaint us with events as seen by the dying person himself, which can never be perceived by other. This is related in the Surat al-Waqi'ah:

"Why then, when death reaches his throat and you are at that moment looking on We are nearer him than you, but you cannot see." (Suratul Waqi'ah: 83-85)

Unlike the disbelievers' death, that of the believers is blissful:

....the angels reclaim the souls of the just, saying: (to believers) "Peace be upon you! Enter the Garden as a reward for your labours." (Suratun Nahli: 32).

These verses disclose a very important and unchanging fact about death: at the moment of death, what the dying person goes through and what those nearby observe are dissimilar experiences. For instance, a person who spent his entire life as an unyielding disbeliever may be perceived to experience a "peaceful death" from outside. However, the soul, in a totally different dimension now, tastes death in a very painful way. Alternatively, the soul of a believer, despite seemingly suffering pain, leaves his body "in a virtuous state."

In brief, the "medical death of the body" and the death of the soul, which is referred to in the Qur'an, are totally different events.

Being unaware of this truth with which the Qur'an acquaints us, disbelievers, who assume death to be an eternal and peaceful sleep, also seek ways to make the moment of death painless and comfortable. The consequences of such a misconception are clearly to be seen in the examples of those who commit suicide by taking pills, inhaling natural gas or resorting to a painless form of death to escape a painful disease.

As mentioned earlier, the death "tasted" by disbelievers is a great source of torment for them, while it turns out to be bliss for believers. The Qur'an gives a detailed account of the difficulty the disbelievers undergo while their souls are taken away, because of the way angels deal with the soul of a disbeliever at the moment of death.

"How will it be when the angels take them in death, beating their faces and their backs? That is because they followed what angers Allah and hated what is pleasing to Him. So He made their actions come to nothing." (Surah Muhammad: 27-28).

In the Qur'an there is also reference to the "throes of death," which are actually the result of the angels giving the news of eternal torment at the moment of death:

...If you could only see the wrongdoers in the throes of death when the angels are stretching out their hands, saying, 'Yield up your souls. Today you will be repaid with the punishment of humiliation for saying something other than the truth about Allah, and being arrogant about His Signs.' (Suratul An'am: 93).

"If only you could see when the angels take back those who were disbelievers when they died, beating their faces and their backs: 'Taste the punishment of the Burning! That is for what you did. Allah does not wrong His slaves.' (Suratul Anfal: 50-51).

As the verses make it clear, just the death of a disbeliever is an entire period of agony in itself. While people surrounding him see a seemingly untroubled death in this bed, a great spiritual and physical torment begins for him. The angels of death take his soul, inflicting pain and humiliation on him. In the Qur'an, the angels who take the souls of disbelievers are described as:

"Those who pluck out harshly." (Suratun Nazi'at: 1).

The last phase of how the soul is taken away is explained as follows:

"No indeed! When it (the soul) reaches the gullet and hears the words, 'Who can heal him now?' he knows it is indeed the final parting". (Suratul Qiyamah: 26-28).

At this moment, the disbeliever faces the truth he denied all throughout his life, with death, he will start to suffer the consequences of his great guilt, his denial. Angles "beating their backs" and "plucking (the soul) out harshly" are only the beginning and a minor indication of the grief waiting him.

On the contrary death for the believer is the beginning of eternal happiness and bliss. Unlike that of the disbeliever who suffers bitterly, the soul of the believer is "drawn out gently" (Surat An-Nazi'at: 2) with the angles saying: "peace be upon you! Enter the Garden as a reward for your labours." (Surat an-Nahli: 32). This is similar to the state of sleep. In seep, the soul gently slips into another dimension, as the following verse indicates:

"Allah take back people's selves when their death arrives and those who have not yet died, while they are asleep. He keeps hold of those whose death has been decreed and sends the others back for a specified term..... (Surat az-Zumar: 42)

This is the ultimate truth about death. Externally people witness only the medical death: a body gradually losing its corporal functions. Those watching from the outside a person on the brink of death sees neither his face and back being beaten, nor his soul reaching the gullet. Only the soul of the person concerned experiences these felling and sees these images. However, the actual death is "tasted" in all of its aspects by the person dying in

dimension unfamiliar to those witnessing death from the outside. In other words what is experienced during the course of death is a “change in dimension.”

We can outline the facts revealed in the verse we have analyzed so far as follows: Be a believer or a disbeliever, the death of a person is neither delayed not hastened for even an hour. Wherever human beings may be, death overtakes them, if their time has come. In the process of experiencing death, they individually receive quite different treatments, although this is externally indiscernible.

THE DEATH OF THE BELIEVER

- * Being aware that death is inevitable; the believer prepares himself for death all throughout this life and ultimately passes on.

- * Angels of death greet him and give him the glad tidings of paradise.

- * Angels take the soul of a believer gently.

- * The believer feels the need to give the glad tidings to other believers in the world that God’s promise is assured and that there I neither fear nor sorrow for believers. Yet, this is not allowed.

THE DEATH OF DISBELIEVER

- * He meets the death he has always avoided all throughout his life.

- * He suffers intense fits of shaking during the course of death.

- * Angels extend their hands to him and give the tidings of the degrading punishment of the burning.

- * Angels take him in death, beating his face and back.

- * The soul is taken with a great inner pain.

- * The soul is taken as it reaches the gullet and at that moment there remains no one to heal him.

- * The soul is taken with difficulty while he is indulging in denial.

- * At the moment of death, no expression of his faith or repentance is allowed.

There are also lessons to be drawn from the “medical death” people witness from outside. The way medical death reduces the human body to insignificance makes one see certain very important facts. Therefore, the

“medical death” and the grave, awaiting each one of us, also deserve mention and contemplation.

THE DEATH OF THE BODY (AS WITNESSED FROM OUTSIDE)

At the moment of death, as the soul leaves the dimension the human being lives in, it leaves behind the lifeless body. As in the case of living beings changing their skins, it leaves behind the outer casing and proceeds towards its life.

However, the story of the “casing” which remains here in this world is important, especially for those who attach more importance to the body in this life than it actually deserves...

Have you ever thought in detail about what would befall this “casing” when one dies?

One day you will die. Maybe in a way you have never expected. While going to the grocery to buy bread, a car will hit you. Or, a fatal disease will bring your life to an end. Or, simply your heart will stop beating for no reason at all. So, you will begin tasting death. From then on, you will have no relation with your body whatsoever. That body, you assumed to be “yourself” all your life, will turn into an ordinary heap of flesh. With your death, your body will be carried by other people. There will be people around weeping and mourning. Then that body will be carried to the morgue, where it will remain for a night. The next day, the burial operation will start. The lifeless

body, now very rigid, will be washed all over with cold water. Meanwhile, the traces of death will start to appear and some parts of the body will turn purple.

Then, the body will be wrapped in a shroud and put in a wooden coffin. The hearse will be ready to take the coffin. Proceeding towards the graveyard, life will be as always on the streets. Seeing that a hearse is passing, by some people will show respect, but the majority will go on with their daily tasks. At the graveyard, the coffin will be carried by those who love you or by those who seem to love you. Most probable, there will again be people around weeping and mourning. Then, people will arrive at the inescapable destination: the grave. On the marble stone, your name will be inscribed; your corpse will be taken out of the coffin and placed in the pit. Prayers will be said for you. Finally people with shovels will start to cover your body with soil. Soil will also be thrown into the shroud. It will fill your mouth, throats, eyes, and nose. Then the soil will gradually cover your shroud. Soon, the funeral will be over and people will leave the grave. Then, the graveyard will return to its deep silence. Those attending the funeral will go on with their everyday lives and for your buried body; life will no longer be meaningful. A beautiful house, a pretty person, a breathtaking landscape will mean nothing. Your body will never meet a friend again. From then on, the only certainty for the body will be the soil and the worms, and bacteria inhabiting it.

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT YOUR BODY WILL LOOK LIKE AFTER DEATH?

With buried, your body will undergo a rapid process of decay, caused by internal and external factors.

Soon after you are placed in the grave, the bacteria and insects proliferating in the corpse due to the absence of oxygen will start to function. The gases released from these organisms will inflate the body, starting from the abdomen, altering its shape and appearance. Bloody froth will issue from the mouth and nose due to pressure of gases on the diaphragm. As corruption proceeds, body hair, nails, soles, and palms will, fall off. Accompanying this outer alternation in the body, internal organs such as lungs, heart and liver will also decay. In the meantime, the most horrible scene takes place in the abdomen, where the skin can no longer bear the pressure of gases and suddenly bursts, spreading an unendurable disgusting smell. Starting from the skull, muscles will become detached from their particular places. Skin and soft tissues will completely disintegrate. The brain will decay and start looking like clay. This process will go on until the whole body is reduced to a skeleton.

Your body, you think to be yourself, will thus disappear in a terrible and disgusting manner. While those you leave behind carry out the customary rituals, worms, insects and bacteria in the soil will eat the body away.

If you die by an accident and are not buried, then the consequences will be even more tragic. Your body will be worm-eaten, just like a piece of meat left at room

temperature for a long time. By the time the worms have eaten the last bit of flesh, your body will have become a skeleton.

This is the way, a human being's life, created in "the best of forms", comes to the most horrible end possible.

Why? It is surely by the Will of Allah that the body ceases to exist in such a drastic way. That it does so actually carries a very important inner messenger in itself. The terrible end awaiting man should make him acknowledge that he is not a body himself, but a soul "encased" within a body. In other words, man has to acknowledge that he has an existence beyond his body. Such a striking end, with its many lessons, is made ready for man so that he may understand that he is not mere "flesh and bones."

Man should look at this body to which he attaches importance, as if he would stay in this temporary world forever, and should contemplate the end of it-its death. For it will decay under the soil, become worm-eaten and finally turn into a skeleton.

APPENDIX II

(From the book- "The End of the World" – by Sheikh M. Mutawalli As-Sha'arawi)

Chapter Four The Familiar will come to End

Human beings live in this world and we become accustomed to the things we are used to seeing and living with, to the point that they become taken for granted and we do not pay any attention to them. That is what we call the immutable and unchanging aspect of the life of this world. We are used to seeing the sun rise and set every day. We are used to the alternation of night and day. We are used to the seas with their continual movement and the land with its firm, unchanging appearance. We have become used to the gift of all the constant things in existence, which is why we do not think about them. We take them for granted as if they were an inalienable right. We do not reflect on their creation or their organization, or about the Strength and Power which created them and preserves them and makes them continue to work in such a precise and fine way. Most people do not think about the unchanging gifts of existence. They take them as if they thought they were self-sustaining and gave themselves to them of their own accord.

It is truly extraordinary that people increase in knowledge as time progresses but at the same time decrease in adhering to the Way of Allah. Every day our knowledge of the laws and Signs of Allah in existence increases, and so it might be supposed that such knowledge would bring us nearer to Allah Almighty because it discloses to us some of the secrets of the power of Allah in the universe. But the increase in knowledge results in an increase in our appetites in respect of the life of this world and our attachment to it and our materialistic ideas about it. The more time

passes, the more appetite dominates the human soul. That confirms the words of the Almighty.

“No indeed! Truly man is unbridled, seeing himself as self-sufficient. Truly the return is to your Lord.” (96: 6-8).

Human oppression and tyranny raise their head whenever we think that we are self-sufficient and have no need of Allah Almighty or to worship. Science appears to achieve for us what we desire. When we want to travel we find comfortable, easy and which routes in air-conditioned aeroplanes which preclude excessive fatigue. When we want food and drink we find it prepared for us by modern means and in sterile containers, while sitting in your room you can watch the television and see anything you want any where in the world. If you become ill you can find the most modern scientific equipment which sees and analyses everything inside your body and shows us where the illness is, what it is and the method to treat it.

Modern equipment shows us X-rays of every thing in the human body. Cat scans of the brain show us any blood clots or injury that is there. Liver scans define for us where the illness is, how severe it is and how to treat it. Blood analysis has advanced to give us an exact picture of all the constituents of blood. The result of this is that people believe that it is doctor who heals. But the doctor only treats: Allah is the One who heals.

The treatment may be incorrect and become a means of hastening our end. Cure may come at the hands of a young, newly graduated, doctor after the failure of his professors who taught him to diagnose illness. That does not mean that this young doctor knows more than his teachers from whom he took his knowledge. It simply means that every healing has a time decreed by Allah Almighty. When the ordained time for healing comes, Allah reveals to the junior doctor the secret of the cure, while his professors were unable to find it because the time had not yet come. Yet people do not pay any attention to this. They rather ascribe healing to the genius of the doctor!

People rarely remember that only Divine Power is effective.

They rely more and more on human power and what it can apparently achieve. They turn to the secondary causes and forget the Causer. They esteem the blessing and forget the Giver of bless (Allah). When one of them is presented with a variety of excellent fruit, he says, "This has been produced by such-and-such a farmer." They forget the Giver and the Creator of this, who is Allah-glory be to Him and exalted is He!

Few of us, unfortunately, when we take food, begin with "In the Name of Allah, Who gives, creates and bestows." When they are full, few people say, "Praise be to Allah" to Him provided them with those blessings they have enjoyed. Man exalts his intellect and believers that

the blessings he achieves in life are the result of this intellect. He thinks he has them because he is intelligent and uses his intelligence, and prides himself on that in front of people. He believes that the blessings will continue because he has managed his life well and attended to everything. He resembles the owner of the two gardens in the Qur'an who ascribed the blessings of them to himself, and whose words to himself are reported in the Qur'an.

"He entered his garden, wronging himself, and said, 'I do not think that this will ever end. I do not think the Hour will ever come. But if I should be sent back to my Lord, I will definitely get something better in return.'" (18: 35-36).

It is as if the owner of the two gardens ascribed his blessings to himself and said that he was able to preserve them by purely human and make them endure indefinitely, and that they would never be taken away from him. How wrong he was! When we see something beautiful, we should praise its Maker, but these days we praise mankind and say, "So-and-so has returned his land into a paradise! So-and-so has done this and that! This is due to so-and-so's industry!" we do not say "by the help of Allah" or "success is from Allah." We fail to remember Allah Almighty, who is the Giver and the Withholder!

FOLLOWING THE LAW AND THE PROTECTION OF SOCIETY

We habitually rely on things which make life easier and more comfortable for us. We think that we sustain ourselves through our work independently of the power of Allah. Man believes in himself to the extent that he legislates laws for himself which are contrary to the Way of Allah. He does not stop there but goes on to describe the divinely revealed Path as being too arduous-or says that is backward or not suitable for our time. The truth is that it is the person who puts himself far from the Way of Allah who is backward.

The underlying reason for man's arrogance and reliance on his material life is that this materialism does not limit us to a particular way of behaving which restricts our appetites, whereas the Path of Way puts limits on our behaviour in life in a way which will ensure respect and honour for us, yet we pay no attention to that.

For when Allah Almighty tells me not to steal, He is not merely limiting my freedom to put my hands on other people's property; that is a narrow view. What He is in fact doing is retraining the rest of society from putting their hands on my property. So He protects me, the weak individual, from society which could easily strip me of everything.

When Allah almighty asks me not to violate someone else's honour; He does, of course, limit my freedom so that of I am attracted to a woman who is married to someone else I do not seduce her or violate her. But I should also notice that by prescribing this law Allah

Almighty has also forbidden thousands of other husbands and young men from violating my honour. This is what the Law of Allah does: it protects me and protects my property, honour and children. But my narrow view and immediate appetites make me forget what Allah is protecting me from and resent being restricted in any way. This is why however much material civilization advances human behaviour declines and deteriorates. What was unlawful becomes allowed by the custom of society, not by the laws of Allah.

But whenever man thinks that he is a self-sufficient because of his knowledge, rank, wealth, strength or anything else which Allah has given him, Allah Almighty comes and disabuses him of that idea and shows him the truth. That happens through death or the arrival of the Last Day Hour and the destruction of everything familiar to man in this world which he believes he has achieved by himself. So Allah Almighty tells him, "If you achieved it by yourself, then preserve it if you have any means of doing so."

The first truth in life is death and when faced with death everyone in this world stops powerless, humble and abased. The most famous doctors, whom others believe can preserve their health for them and prolong their lives, stand humble and powerless before death; they have no devices and can do nothing to keep it from them. The same applies to all the material blessing which man believes he can have as he likes and however he wants. They also inevitably come to an end.

At the moment of death, the human being sees clearly visible before him things which were previously hidden from him but about which Allah informed him and asked him to believe in. It is the moment when mankind is totally dumbfounded. The human being, who had believed that he was wrong, powerful and mighty, becomes humble and fearful, powerless to do anything.

When the spirit leaves the body, man leaves all he is familiar with in this world for another world in which nothing is familiar to him. Death is not the end, as many people believe, but a transition from one form of life to another, from the life of this world, which has its laws, to an interspatial life, which has other. One sees things he was not previously able (to) see. That is why Allah Almighty says:

“So We have stripped you do your covering and today our sight is sharp.” (50: 22).

The Messenger of Allah, May Allah bless him and grant him peace said in a noble hadith: *“People are asleep and when they die, they wake up.”*

How can the Messenger of Allah, May Allah blesses him and grants him peace, say, “People are asleep and when they die, they wake up”? How can the Messenger of Allah, May Allah bless him and grant him peace say, “People are asleep” when they are awake in the life in which they live, and “When they die, they wake up”? How can it be that man, who is awake and alive,

filling the earth with movement, is asleep, but then when he dies and is lying lifeless in his grave he wake up?

We reply in the life of this world people are distracted by their appetites and property and property and what they desire to achieve in. All those things distract them from the reality of the life of this world, so that they do not reflect on the Signs of Allah. Even though Allah Almighty sends them proof after proof to induce them to believe they still turn away. It is as though they were asleep to the reality of what is around them. When they die, they see everything that Allah promised them in a manifest way and with absolute clarity.

The sleeping man proceeds without guidance because his eyes are closed to the truth. When he opens his eyes, he sees and knows for certain. Then the first thing which severs man from what he is familiar with is death. When one is dying he sees that his destination is either Paradise or Hell. At the moment of death one knows for certain that he is dying because of what he sees at that time. People believe that dying is the same for everyone – a human is on the point of death and then dies. But the truth is that Allah Almighty tells us that at the moment of death, when people depart from this world they do not all depart in the same manner. The difference begins here. Read the words of the Almighty:

“That is how Allah repays the Allah-fearing, those the angels take in a virtuous state, saying, ‘Peace be upon you! Enter the Garden for what you did.’” (16-31-32)

When a virtuous believer dies he sees the angels. The unbelievers who has no faith also sees angels while he is dying-but angels of a completely different, and indeed terrifying, form, the virtuous believer sees angels of mercy who come to him bringing good news of the Garden and greeting him with peace and with their happy beautiful faces. Then the believer is happy because he is being transported to a good life which is better than the one he had in this world. His face is smiling and his features are joyful. He sees that the abode of testing has come to an end and that he is being transported to the Abode of Bliss, in which things happen directly by the power of Allah Almighty. His face is radiant. When you look at someone dying in this way, you recognize that he senses that he is moving to a better place than the place he was living and that Allah's promise to him of a good outcome has actually been realized.

The unbeliever will also see angels when he is dying. Allah Almighty describes this woeful encounter:

"If only you could see when the angels take back the unbelievers at their death, beating their faces and their back: 'Taste the punishment of the Burning! That is for what you did. Allah does not wrong His slaves.'" (8: 50-51).

Thus we see the awesome difference between the believer and the unbeliever at the moment of death. The angels say to the unbeliever: "Come, now you will see

what you used to deny in the world. You will see the punishment which awaits you. If you have any power or strength, then get yourselves out of this! Flee if you can – but you cannot. Your power in this world deluded you, so you transgressed, wronged others and disobeyed Allah. You said things about Allah which was not true. You were arrogant on the earth. Now all that you were familiar with in life in the lower world has come to an end. The deities you worshipped rather than Allah have fled and hidden themselves because they are false. Your friends who used to abet you in falsehood and disobedience to Allah have no power now to help you or even them. All those we helped you in this world without right are now unable to protect you."

Exposure to Hell-Fire

The Noble Qur'an tells us that at the moment of death the angels will beat and hurt unbelievers who denied the blessings of Allah and refused to thank Him for them. It is known that punishment can only take place when there is life; you cannot punish a dead body. In order for the body to feel the punishment, there must be life in it. That is why when the angels strike and inflict injury, it takes place at the moment of death while there is still life in the body. That is why at the moment of death you will find the faces of the unbelievers gloomy and their muscles and faces contracted: they see the evil destination which waits them.

At the moment of death, therefore, the believer and unbeliever are differentiated, which does not apply in this world. In this world an unbeliever may have rank, might, authority, and nobility which a believer may not have. But at the moment of death the separation begins. All that we were familiar with in the life of this world come to an end when the unbeliever sees the angels bringing the beginning of the punishment and they rain down blows on him. The believer sees the angels bringing him the beginning of bliss and the good news of the Garden. Indeed, there is a challenge issued by the angels to the unbeliever at the moment of death. Read the words of Allah.

"If you could only see the wrongdoers in the throes of death when the angels are stretching out their hands, 'disgorge your own selves! Today you will be repaid with the punishment of humiliation for saying other than the truth about Allah, and being arrogant about His Signs."

The angels say to every dying wrongdoer or unbelievers, "if you have power, as you used to claim in this world, then extricate yourself from this situation. Save yourself if you have power or effective authority, but you will not be able to do so. In the life of this world you claimed that you had strength and power, but now you know the truth. You know that all strength and power belongs to Allah alone and that whatever capacity, strength or authority you did have in reality belonged to Allah. You yourself possess nothing. It appeared to you that you had capability and strength and that you had power, but know you are in the

moment of truth in which there is no supposition or doubts. Now you know for certain that it was self-delusion."

After dying, then, people move to the life of the Interspaced (barzakh), which is the dimension they inhabit during the period between their death and the Resurrection. Allah Almighty has informed us a little about the laws which apply there. A human being can hear when he is dead but cannot reply. The Messenger of Allah, May Allah blesses him and grants him peace, spoke to the dead unbelievers after the Battle of Badr and called out to them, "Abu Jahl ibn Hisham! Umayya ibn Khalf! 'Utba ibn Rabi'a! Shayba ibn Rabi'a! Have you found what my Lord promised you to be true? I have found what my Lord promised me to be true." 'Umar, May Allah bless him and grant him peace, said and asked, "O Messenger of Allah! How can they hear and answer when they are corpses?" He said, "By Him who has my soul in His hand, they hear what I say to them, but they cannot reply."

Allah Almighty informs us in the Noble Qur'an about some of what will happen to the dead in their graves. He says:

"The Fire, to which, morning and night, they are exposed and, on the Day the Hour takes place: 'Admit Pharaoh's people to the harshest punishment!" (40: 46).

That means that there is more some form of life in the Interspaced between this world and the Next and that it is a type of life in which the human being is conscious and can discriminate between things. If people in the grave were still and silent and completely dead to existence, it would not be possible for the people of Pharaoh to be exposed to the Fire twice everyday. The fact that they are exposed to the Fire means that they are able to discriminate. If that were not so, they would not be able to recognize that it was a Fire and that they were going to be punished in it; and their being exposed to the Fire every day would be completely meaningless. But the truth is that they experience intense pain because they know for certain that they are heading for terrible punishment. Expectation of affliction is sometimes worse than its actual occurrence.

Time and Life in the Interspaces (Barzakh)

The words of Allah Almighty, *“The Fire, to which, morning and night, they are exposed”*, indicate that there is a sort of time in life in the Interspaces because morning and night are attributes of time. But when are Pharaoh’s people exposed to the fire morning and night? This noble ayat describes for us two states of the people of Pharaoh: being exposed to the fire and entering the Fire. Were Pharaoh’s people to the Fire in the life of this world? No, because if they had been exposed to the Fire while they were still in the life of the world, they would have prostrated to Allah Almighty and slain the false god

Pharaoh because he was leading them to Hell. This is in accordance with the words of Allah Almighty.

“He will go ahead of his people on the Day of Risings and lead them down into the Fire. What an evil watering-hole to be led to!” (11: 98).

If the people of Pharaoh had been shown the Fire in this world, they would have known that their worship of Pharaoh would lead them to the punishment and they would never have worshipped him. If we were to say that the Pharaoh’s people are shown the Fire on the Day of Risings that would be an error, for on the Day of Rising they will enter it. Allah Almighty says:

“And, on the Day the Hour takes places; ‘Admit Pharaoh’s people to the harshest punishment!’” (40: 46).

So there are three stages in the life of the human being: life in this world; between death and the Resurrection (which is the life of the Interspaced); and life after the final Hour comes. We will try to define where in these three stages Pharaoh’s people are exposed to the Fire. If it did not happen in this world and if on the Day of Rising they will enter the Fire then the exposure referred to must take place between death and the resurrection, in the life of the Interspace.

So there is life in the Interspaces and it during this interspatial life that the people of Pharaoh are exposed to the Fire. Are they exposed to the Fire while they are in

their graves or does that occur by Allah Almighty gathering them elsewhere to be exposed to the Fire? Whether that exposure takes place in their graves or by some other means, we know from the noble ayat that there is a type of life in the Interspaces in which there is consciousness and feeling. We also know that in the Interspaces or Hell, and that he will see his place in the Garden or his place in the Fire. That is confirmed by the Messenger of Allah, May Allah bless him and grant him peace, who said:

“The grave is either one of the meadows of the Garden or one of the pits of the Fire.”

That is why punishment in the grave, when a person sees his place in the Fire, is a dreadful punishment because, as we said, expectation of affliction can be worse than its occurrence. For instance, if you were to know for certain that your only son was going to die in a car accident in a year's time, would that not be a terrible torment for you throughout that year? It could be so painful that you would actually wish for the death to take place sooner so as to be spared torment. So the expectation of affliction is worse than its actual occurrence. There is another ayat about that in which Allah Almighty says:

“O you who believe! Do not make friend of people with whom Allah is angry, who have despaired of the Next World in the same way that the unbelievers have despaired of the inhabitants of the graves.” (60: 13).

Let us look at the words of Allah Almighty, *“in the same way that the unbelievers have despaired of the inhabitants of the grave.”* This means that the fact that they despair of there being any sort of consciousness in the graves is what has caused them to despair: but the fact that they despair also indicates that they know that their destination is the Fire.

There are some of the images which Allah gives us of the life of the Interspaces so that we know that it is a kind of life which has its own laws. We know that Allah Almighty has singled out the people of Pharaoh to be exposed to the Fire during their life in the Interspaces because of their arrogant tyranny and worship of Pharaoh. This is because they did not simply disobey commands but disobeyed the One who issues the commands.

It is also because Musa (AS) brought (to) the people of Pharaoh many signs to confirm that Allah alone is Divine, but they mocked him.

The unbelievers and rebels will only enter Hell at the end of the Final Reckoning on the Day of Rising, but in the grave the human being will know his fate. Either he is blessed in his grave and is in bliss because he knows what awaits him, or he is one of the people of the Fire – we seek refuge with Allah – and he is suffering terrible torment because he knows what awaits him.

But the actual entry into Garden or the Fire only takes place after the reckoning on the Day of Rising.

To summarize, the more progress man achieves in science, the more he falsely supposes that he has power, that the power comes from him, and that he is firmly established on the earth. Then death will come to awaken him from his great delusion, and he will realize that he has no intrinsic and that all that exists in this world has been produced by Allah – glory be to Allah and Exalted is He! But the moment in which he could have repented has already passed because repentance at the moment of death is a forced repentance after one sees what he sees. Once people see their fate at the moment of death, repentance does not constitute an act of faith because faith must be in something unseen. As Allah Almighty says:

“Those who believe in the Unseen and establish the prayer (2:3).”

Now what was unseen has been disclosed to him and the stage in which having faith is possible has come to an end.