

DEATH

1) Take a lesson from the deceased. Daily ponder over the following:

Just as this person has left this world, I too will be leaving soon. This world is a temporary place in which I have been sent to prepare for my everlasting life of the hereafter. I only have one life to prepare for that journey which will never terminate. How foolish if I place my full efforts and time in those things which will not accompany in my long journey to the hereafter.

I should prepare and perform righteous actions. If I do so, then at the time of death, angels whose faces are bright and shining like the sun will come to me with the shrouds and fragrances of Jannah. They will remove my soul with ease, place it in the shroud and fragrances of Jannah and take it to the heavens. I will be honoured in every sky until my name is recorded amongst the Illiyîn (special register of the souls of the pious). I will then be returned to the grave and I will be asked three questions. If I had conviction that Allâh Ta'ala was my Sustainer and Master, if I had implemented Islâm in every aspect of my life and if I followed the sunnah of Rasulullâh (salla Allahu alaihi wasallam), then I will easily answer these questions. My salâh will stand at my head-side, zakât on my right, my fasting on my left, my good deeds, abstinence from sin and kindness to people at my feet-side, all protecting me from any form of punishment in the grave. Thereafter, bedding from Jannah will be spread out, I will be clothed with clothing from Jannah, and a door of Jannah will be opened for me. The grave will be expanded as far as I am able to see. My good deeds will come to me in the form of a handsome person who will accompany me in the grave. I will meet all my family members who had passed away. I will be able to visit Jannah in the stomach of a green bird when I wish to see my abode there. I will eat, drink and go wherever I wish to go. There will be no sorrow and grief there. I will be even asked to return to this world, but I will refuse when I will experience the bounties there. On the Day of Judgement, I will be under the shade of the Divine Throne, while others will be drowning in their perspiration. I will be granted water to drink from the Pond of Kauthar due to which I will never become thirsty again and Nabî (salla Allahu alaihi wasallam) will intercede on my behalf if I followed his lifestyle. In Jannah, I will be granted such pleasures which no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard of and no heart has ever thought of. I will live there forever, young, healthy and in great comfort. I will never become ill, experience hardship or die. Day and night, I will live in enjoyment. The bricks of the houses in Jannah will be made of silver and gold, the bonding will be of pure musk, the stones will be of sapphire and pearls, and the sand will be of saffron. There will be flying conveyances in Jannah. The lowest ranking person in Jannah will have eighty thousand servants and seventy two wives. There will be rivers of honey, rivers of water, rivers of milk and rivers of wine. The beautiful wide-eyed damsels of Jannah will sing such songs the like of which was never heard before. The greatest bounty will be to see Allâh Ta'ala, which will surpass all other pleasures. May Allâh Ta'ala make us of these people!

On the other hand, if I do not prepare for my everlasting abode of the hereafter, if I follow my whims and fancies, make this world and its adornments the object of my life, do not gain the pleasure of Allâh Ta'ala and disobey Him, then at the time of death, the angel of death appears in a frightening appearance. He has twelve eyes. In his hand is a forked mace made of the fire of hell. Five hundred angels accompany him, holding huge embers of Jahannum. The deceased is struck with the mace and the fork pierces the body. The soul is extracted, with the deceased experiencing extreme pain. When he is laid in the grave, it is narrowed to such an extent that the ribs of one side pierce the ribs of the other. Black serpents appear and continue biting him from head to toe. The angels, Munkar and Nakîr, strike him so violently with a mace that the sparks of the mace spread all over the grave. The doors of Jahannum are opened and his abode is shown to him daily. On the Day of Judgement, he will be drowning in his perspiration. His book of deeds will be given in the left hand or behind his back. He will not be able to cross the Bridge into Jannah. He will fall into Jahannum, the heat of which is seventy times more intense than the heat of the fire of this world. The nourishment there is Zaqqum (a thorny plant which will get stuck in the throats), Ghassâq (a mixture of the idolater's blood, pus and sweat), Hamîm (extremely hot water which will cause the lips to contract and which will tear apart the intestines, lungs and stomach.) Burning, being crushed, being bitten by poisonous snakes and scorpions, being pierced with thorns and slashing of the skin are just some of the punishments meted out. They will live therein according to the extent of their sins. However, if they sincerely repent in this world, all their sins will be forgiven and they will become worthy of the great rewards mentioned above. May Allâh Ta'ala protect us from the punishment of the grave, horrors on the Day of Judgement and the punishment of Jahannum! Amîn

2.) One should make duâ daily for the deceased and seek forgiveness on his behalf. An easy duâ which can be recited once after every salâh or at least once daily is,

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَهُ وَارْحَمْهُ وَسَكِّنْهُ فِي جَنَّةِ الْفِرْدَوْسِ

O Allâh, forgive him, have mercy on him and grant him Jannatul-Firdaus.

Rasulullâh ﷺ said, “A dead person in the grave is like a drowning person expecting (help in the form of) duâ from his father, mother, son or friend. When the duâ reaches him, it is more beloved to him than the world and what it contains. Allâh Ta’ala converts the duâs of the people of the world (in the form of rewards) into the equivalent of mountains. The gift of the living to the dead is to seek forgiveness for them. (Shuabul Imân) Rasulullâh ﷺ also said, “Allâh Ta’ala raises the status of some of the pious in Jannah. The person will ask, “O Lord, from where (due to what act) have I been granted this?” It will be said, “By virtue of your son making duâ of forgiveness for you.” (Tabrâni) Another narration states, “On the Day of Judgement, some people will possess rewards equivalent to mountains. He will ask, “From where is this?” It will be said, “By virtue of your son seeking forgiveness for you.” (Sharhus Sudûr)

3.) One should confer to the deceased the rewards of any nafl act of worship. For example, if one performed nafl salâh, gave charity, made nafl Hajj or umrah, kept a nafl fast, then he should make the intention that the reward be transferred to the deceased.

Rasulullâh ﷺ said, “When anyone amongst you gives voluntary charity, then give on behalf of your parents. They will receive its reward without any decrease of reward for the one giving the charity.” (Tabrâni) Rasulullâh ﷺ also said, “After being dutiful (to ones parents during their lifetime), another method of being dutiful (after their demise) is, when performing salâh, to perform salâh on their behalf (by sending the rewards to them); when fasting, to fast on their behalf too; when giving charity, to give on their behalf too (i.e. to confer on them the rewards of these nafl actions).” (Ibn Abî Shaybah)

4.) Daily, some portion of the Qurân should be recited and the rewards conveyed to the deceased. By reciting Surah Iklâs thrice, the reward of reciting the whole Qurân will be granted to the reciter and the one for whom it is recited. By reciting Surâh Yâsin, the reward of reciting the Qurân ten times will be granted to both the parties. Any other recital of the Qurân should also be conveyed to the deceased.

Sha’bî (rahimahullah) narrates that it was the practise of the Ansâr that when a person passed away, they used to go to his grave and recite the Qurân for him.

5.) If possible, do such an action for the deceased by which the reward will continue endlessly (sadaqah jâriyah). An example of this is digging a well, building a masjid, madrasah, sponsoring a student of Islâmic studies, teaching the knowledge of Islâm, contributing to the distribution of reliable Islâmic books and pamphlets from which people benefit, planting of trees, etc.

Rasulullâh ﷺ said, “When a human passes away, his deeds come to an end, except from three things a.) sadaqah jâriyah b.) such knowledge from which benefit continues to be derived c.) a pious son who makes duâ for him.” (Ahmad)

6.) Pay the debts of the deceased if possible or ask the creditors to absolve the deceased. Sort out the estate as quickly as possible. Nabî ﷺ once remarked, “Jibraîl (alaihi salam) prohibited me from performing salâh on one who has debts. The debtor is held back in the grave (from the bounties of Jannah) until his debts are absolved.” (Abû Ya’lâ) Another narration states that Nabî ﷺ said, “What benefit will you derive if I perform salâh on a man whose soul is detained in his grave and cannot rise to the heavens. If some-one takes responsibility for his debts, I will stand and perform salâh over him, then my salâh will benefit him.” (Tabrâni)

7.) Males should visit the grave of the deceased if not daily, then at least once a week, preferably on a Friday.

Rasulullâh ﷺ said, “The deceased becomes attached and replies to the salâm of the one who visits his grave and sits by him, until the visitor gets up and leaves.” (Ibn Abid Dunyâ) Another narration states, “The deceased recognises those who pass by his grave whom he knew in the world and who make salaam to him. The deceased replies to his salâm.” (Ibn Abdul Barr)