

KHUTBAH ON DEATH BY IMAM THUBAYTI IN MASJID AL NABAWI MADINAH (THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE)

**[BY ONE OF THE IMAMS IN MASJID AL-NABAWI (THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE) IMAM
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All praise is due to Allaah. I testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allaah and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger s.a.w.

I enjoin you and myself to fear Allaah, for it is the provision and safety in this world and the Last Day, "the day when neither wealth nor sons will avail, except him who brings to Allaah a clean heart".

Allaah says,

"Everyone shall taste death. And only on the day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the fire and admitted to Paradise he indeed is successful .The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception (a deceiving thing)." (Aal-Imraan 3: 175)

Such is the reality of death and what comes after it. Every one of us shall taste it whether poor or rich; healthy or sick, old or young; leader or led and none of us can escape it.

Allaah says,

"Where so ever you may be, death will overtake you even if you are in a fortress built up strong and high."(An-Nisaa 4: 78).

Death, as manifested in its character and effects is one of the mysteries that dazzles human intelligence because it has to do with the soul.

Allaah says,

"And they ask you (O Muhammad) concerning the spirit. Say: 'The spirit is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord. And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little.'" (Al-Israa' 17: 85)

One of its mysteries is that you see a youth who was full of health and energy suddenly falls dead without warning; thereby making that youthfulness and energy fade away, bringing all his senses to a complete standstill. That youth might even be an erudite scholar, an eloquent author, a skilled physician or brilliant inventor but it is absolutely out of the question that this quality should prevent death from overtaking him when his time is due.

Allaah says,

"When their term is reached, neither can they delay it nor can they advance it an hour (or a moment)." (Yoonus 10: 49).

'Amr bin Abdullah used to mount the pulpit and say,

"Many a person who has seen the beginning of a day but would not see its end. And many a person who has expected morning but would not live to see it. If only you had known your appointed time and how it comes to pass, you would have detested nursing hope for worldly materials and its deception."

While man enjoys his good health, playing and merrymaking, moving about in haughtiness, commanding and forbidding, death and illness suddenly attacks him, weakens his body, makes his limbs lifeless and then closes his record.

How near is death! Every day it becomes closer to us and no sooner has the book reached its appointed time that we belong among the dead. Then it becomes clear that life is really like flowers that bloom then afterwards wither or like a lamp that illuminates then afterwards dies down.

Let those who crave for this world and its pleasures ponder over these scattered graves all over the place and realize that the way to pleasures and lustful things, though decorated with beautiful roses inevitably leads to the present condition of those buried in these graves. Happiness is for him whom a messenger of death has opened his eyes to reality before he died, and whoever does not heed to the warning of the Qur'an and death, even if mountains were to thrust one another in front of him, he would not heed.

Dear brothers! What we witness in the cemeteries is a great lesson for us. The carrier of the bier to the cemetery today is taken back there tomorrow (as a dead person) and is left there only with his deeds either good or evil.

It is also very unfortunate that in these days we see some among those who escort the deceased laughing and playing or attending the funeral for showing off. This phenomenon is due to the heedlessness that has hardened people's hearts and made them forget the Last Day and the frightening conditions of the grave. May Allaah awaken us from this heedlessness!

Brothers in faith! It is expected of him who knows that he will die, be buried, raised up on the day of Resurrection and enter Paradise or Hell to always remember death, prepare for it and reflect on it. He is in fact expected to regard himself among the dead. This is because all that is coming is near and when the angel of death comes neither your wealth nor your people can prevent him from taking your soul.

Where are those who achieved their aims and none were comparable to them in that? They collected but could not eat what they collected; they built mansions but could not live there! We on our part are still swimming in the pool of life as if we are meant to live here forever. Uways Al-Qarnee said,

"Remember death when you sleep and always think of it when you are awake."

Fellow Muslims! It is a fact that this world and its tribulations appear insignificant in the eyes of him who always remembers death, for, he has lofty aims and strong resolutions; he is far from hypocrisy and always yearns for the everlasting bliss in the eternal Paradise.

Dear Brothers! Remembering death does not in any way make one's life loathsome to him; forcing him to sit in his home and leave all means of sustenance. It is rather meant to deter him from committing sins and soften his hard heart. We remember death in order to have good preparation for it and for all that follows it by doing righteous deeds, obeying Allaah and increasing one's efforts in all acts of worship.

Abdur-Rahman ibn Mahdee said,

"If Hammad bin Salamah is told, 'You will die tomorrow.' He will not be able to increase anything in his deed, because his time is full of worship and remembrance of Allaah."

How do we prepare for death? We prepare for death by shunning all abominable things and returning trusts to their rightful owners. We prepare for death by eliminating hatred and enmity from our hearts. We prepare for death by being good to the kith and kin.

Ibn al-Mubaarak said that Saalih Al-Mariy used to say,

"If the remembrance of death leaves me for an hour my heart becomes spoilt."

It is also said that,

"Whoever frequently remembers death is honoured with three things: quick repentance, self-contentedness and energy in doing acts of worship; and whoever forgets death is punished with three things: delaying repentance, lack of contentedness and laziness in acts of worship".

When will one who always follows his lustful desires and moves wantonly in his heedlessness remember death? When will one who has no regard for Allaah's injunctions in Halaal or Haraam remember death? When will one who deserts the Qur'an, prays not Fajr in congregation, usurps people's property unlawfully, takes usury, and commits fornication, remember death? How can one whose habit is slandering others and backbiting, whose heart is full of rancour and envy remember death?

Fellow Muslims! The Prophets, whenever death came to them were given a chance of choosing between remaining on this world and moving to that noble position. It is beyond doubt that every Prophet would select the everlasting bliss. This happened to Prophet Muhammad, as narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of A'isha that she said,

"The Messenger of Allaah s.a.w. used to say while he was healthy, 'No Prophet died until he saw his place in the Paradise, he was then given the choice between that place and remaining in this world.' So when he was dying and his head was on my thigh, he fainted for a while then regained his consciousness. He stared at the ceiling, then said, 'O Allaah! I choose the Highest Companionship'." I then said, "He was not preferring us". It was then that I understood statement he used to tell us and it was true. She said, "The last word he uttered was: "Oh Allaah, I choose the Highest Companionship".

During death and its pain; in the grave and its darkness; and the Day of Resurrection and its horror people fall into two groups. A group shall remain firm; secured from fright and given glad tidings of Paradise while the other group shall suffer disgrace and ignominy. Allaah says,

"Verily, those who say, 'Our Lord is Allaah (alone) and then stood straight, on them the angel will descend (at the time of their death saying,) 'Fear not, nor grieve! But receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised'". (Fussilat 41: 30)

Angels shall descend upon the believers who are straight in their religion during death in their graves and when they are resurrected in order to assure them of security and to allay their fears of the horror of the day of judgement. The angels will be telling them,

"Do not fear about what you are going to meet and do not grieve over what you will be leaving behind of children, family and wealth".

The angels will also say,

"We have been your friends in the life of this world and (are so) in the hereafter." (Fussilat 41: 31)

i.e. we will also be your friends in the hereafter, keeping your company in your graves and when the horn is blown, we will also assure you of security on the day of resurrection.

As for the unbelievers, when death comes to them and they start suffering its agonies, they will be subjected to ignominy and disgrace.

Allaah says,

"And if you could but see when the wrong doers are in the agonies of death, while the angels are stretching forth their hands saying, "Deliver your souls! This day you shall be recompensed with the torment of degradation because of what you used to utter against Allaah other than the truth. And you used to reject His ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) with disrespect." (Al-An'aam 6: 93).

Their sorrow shall increase so much so that they will wish to go back to this world.

Allaah say,

"Until when death comes to one of them, he says, 'My Lord send me back.'" (Al-Mu'minoon 23: 99).

Qataadah said while commenting on this verse,

"By Allaah, he would not wish by this statement to go back to his family and wealth nor to collect the good things of this world and satisfy his desires. He would rather wish to go back and do acts of obedience to Allaah. May Allaah bless him who does in this life what the disbelievers would wish to do when he sees the torment of Hell!"

Fellow Muslims! How is the need of a dying Muslim to Allaah's success that his last words may be, "*Laa ilaaha illa Allaah*". Mu'aadh bin Jabal narrated that the Prophet said,

"Whoever has 'La ilaha illa Allaah' as his last words will enter Paradise."

Ibn Al-Qayyim said,

"Dictating this word to a dying man is recommended because one who is dying experiences horrors that were unknown to him before, so it is feared that forgetfulness might overtake him since Satan is close to human beings. Moreover, uttering this statement while dying has a great effect in erasing ones misdeeds because it is a testimony of a slave of Allaah who believes in it and knows its meanings; for whose lustful desires are now dead and whose soul has become weak after its might. Then that testimony becomes his last utterance, it purifies him from all his sins because he meets with his Lord with a sincere testimony..."

The righteous predecessors also recommended that a dying person be reminded of his good deeds, so that he can have positive thoughts about his Lord. Jaabir narrated: The Messenger of Allaah s.a.w. said,

"None of you should die except in the state of having positive thoughts about Allaah." (Muslim).

The Sunnah encourages talking about good deeds of a dead person and abstaining from talking about his misdeeds. Al-Bukhari reported on the authority of Aa'isha that she narrated,

'The Prophet s.a.w.. said, "Do not abuse the dead; for they have gone to meet the consequences of their deeds.'"

In Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Abul-Aswad said,

"I came to Madinah while there was an epidemic there. I sat with 'Umar ibn al-Khattab. Then a funeral procession passed by and people praised its owner. ;Umar said, "It becomes incumbent." Then another funeral procession passed by and people also praised its owner, and 'Umar said, "It's incumbent", then a third procession passed by and people spoke ill of its owner. 'Umar also commented, "It becomes incumbent." Then I said, "What is incumbent, O Leader of the Faithful?" 'Umar answered, "I said as the Prophet s.a.w said, that, "Any dead Muslim whom four persons testify in his favour, Allaah will make him enter Paradise, We said, "And three persons?". He said, "And three persons." We also said, "And two persons?". He said, "Yes, and two persons." We did not thereafter ask him of one person."

It should be added that those whose testimony is regarded are the people of virtue and truthfulness. The testimony of an enemy shall not be considered.

It is also recommendable that the person who washes the dead should conceal whatever defects he may see on him. It is also a right of a Muslim on his fellow Muslims to escort his funeral, pray on him and supplicate for him. In Saheeh al-Bukhari, Aboo Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet s.a.w said:

“Whoever attends the funeral of a Muslim faithfully and hoping for the reward of Allaah and stays with him until Salaah is done on him and he is buried, he will go back home with two qeeraats, each is as big as the size of Mount Uhud; and whoever observes Salaah on him and then goes back before he is buried will get one qeeraat.”

As regards debts, the family of the deceased should hasten to pay it because a believer's soul hangs on his debt until it is paid on his behalf. Debts of Allaah should also be promptly paid for, it is more deserving to be paid. Ibn Mas'ood said,

“A Believer has no rest until he meets Allaah.”

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