



Ahlus-Sunnah believe the souls will be returned to their bodies after their deaths and they will stand before the Lord of all creation

By Abu Khadeejah Abdul-Wāhid Alam

All Praise is due to Allāh, we praise Him, seek His aid and His Forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evils of our souls and the evils of our actions. Whomsoever Allāh guides there is none to misguide and whomsoever Allāh misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allāh, alone, without any partners and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.

Allah's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) enjoined upon us to remember death often:

أَكْثِرُوا ذِكْرَ هَازِمِ اللَّذَاتِ ، يَعْنِي الْمَوْتَ

“Frequently remember the destroyer of pleasures,” meaning death. (Ibn Mājah, 4258)

When a person forgets death, he becomes complacent and careless. He forgets his Lord, forgets to remember Him, worships Him less and less often, or stops worshipping Him altogether! He leaves off the obedience that is owed to Allah and becomes a blinded seeker of the glitter and possessions of this world, and wants to live here forever. This is from the greatest of the deceptions of Shaytān that have overcome many of the Muslims, and Allah's aid is sought.

Know for certainty, that this life will end, then there is the [grave and its trials](#), then there is the Resurrection and the standing before the Lord of all creation.

So when someone close to you dies, you must show patience, and reflect over your own remaining time in this world. Allah (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) has commanded you with patience when you are faced with a calamity or when a loved one dies:

وَلَنْبَلُونَكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ
وَالشَّمْرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِيرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

“And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth, loss of life and

crops, but give glad tidings to the patient ones (sābirīn).”

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

“Those who, when afflicted with calamity, say: ‘Truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.’”

أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

“They are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided.” (Al-Baqarah 2: 155-157)

The Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) taught the Muslim what to say to his brother who has suffered a loss:

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا أَخَذَ، وَكَهُ مَا أَعْطَى، وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى
فَلْتَصْبِرْ وَكَلْتَحْتَسِبْ

“Verily, Allah takes what is His, and to Him belongs what He gave. And everything with Allah has an appointed term, so have patience and hope for reward.” (Bukhāri and Muslim) The Salaf would console the relatives of the deceased and say:

أَعْظَمَ اللَّهُ أَجْرَكَ، وَأَحْسَنَ عَزَاءَكَ، وَغَفَرَ لِمَيِّتِكَ

“May Allah magnify your reward, make perfect your bereavement and forgive your deceased.” (An-Nawawi in Al-Adhkār)

We know our hearts ache and our eyes well up with tears but we must only say that which pleases our Lord. So, we do not strike our faces or tear our clothes or wail in grief like the people of jāhliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance) used to do.

After the life of the grave comes the resurrection (al-Ba'th), and that is the return of the souls back to their bodies. This was something that the Mushriks (polytheists) rejected in the time of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). It is something rejected also in our times by many among the unbelievers, it is denied by the atheists, and even many Muslims try and forget its reality!

Shaikh Al-Islām Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) stated: **“And we believe in the return of the souls to their bodies. And then the people will stand up straight for the Lord of all creation. They will be barefoot, naked and uncircumcised, and the Sun will drawn close to them.”**

The resurrection is something established in the Qur'an and believing in it is from the Pillars of Imān. The Qur'an gives us ample proofs that agree with the sound intellect. From those proofs:

One: The Lord who is able to begin something and create it in the first place is all the more capable of bringing it back into existence. This is both a textual proof and an intellectual proof for those who reflect.

Two: The One who is able to give life to the earth and its soil after it is dead and barren (with fruits and crops) is likewise able to give life to the bodies after their deaths.

Three: Allah is free and far from frivolity and amusement, and He is free from oppression and injustice. So there is no doubt that justice will be established between His creation, and each person will be taken to account for their deeds. And this will take place in the Hereafter and not in this world.

So the people will come out of their graves on the Day of Resurrection and Allah (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) has spoken of the rising from the graves:

وَنُفِّخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

“And when the horn is blown, whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on earth will fall dead except whomever Allah wills...” (Az-Zumar 68)

This is the blowing of the horn for death, and everyone in the heavens and earth will perish except whomever Allah wills. Some of the scholars have stated that it means, ‘except the angels and maidens of Jannah’. Then the angel will be commanded to blow the horn a second time. Then the people will stand and arise from their graves to answer to the Lord of all creation. At this blowing, the souls will fly into their bodies. Allah, the Most High, said:

ثُمَّ نُفِّخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَىٰ فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ

“Then the horn will be blown again. Then at once they will be standing, looking on.” (Az-Zumar 68)

يَوْمَ يَسْمَعُونَ الصَّيْحَةَ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُرُوجِ

“The Day they will hear the blast [of the Horn] in truth. That is the Day of Emergence [from the graves].” (Qāf: 42)

And the earth will break away from their bodies and that is something easy for Allah. So do not ever say “It can’t happen” because it will surely happen:

يَوْمَ تَشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ سِرَاعًا ذَلِكَ حَشْرٌ عَلَيْنَا يَسِيرٌ

“On the Day the earth breaks away from them, and they emerge rapidly [from their graves]. That is a gathering which is easy for Us.” (Qāf 44)

Mankind will come out of their graves and they will reach the place of assembly as if they were a host of locusts outspread. Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, stated:

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعِ إِلَىٰ شَيْءٍ نَّكُرٍ

خَشَعًا أَبْصَارُهُمْ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ كَأَنَّهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُّنتَشِرٌ

مُهْطِعِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ يَقُولُ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِيرٌ

“So leave them [O Prophet]. The Day the Caller calls to something forbidding, with their eyes humbled, they will emerge from the graves as if they were locusts spreading, racing ahead towards the Caller.

The disbelievers will say, ‘This is truly a difficult day.’”
(Al-Qamr 54: 6-8)

They will be driven along, all of them. No one is allowed to hold back, neither Muslim or unbeliever; there is no delay on this Day. Allah (the Most High) stated: **“The Day they will emerge from the graves rapidly as if they are hastening towards a raised standard.”** (Al-Ma’ārij 43) And the angels will drive them forth.

So, when Allah wants to resurrect the dead from their graves, he sends down upon them a rain from the skies that cannot be prevented by anything. No barrier can stop it; not a roof or a ceiling, not a shrine or a dome over a grave, nothing. It will penetrate the ground and enter the bodies in the graves. So those bodies will then sprout just like seeds and the people will become as they once were, alive. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, **“Between the two blowings of the horn there will be forty.”** The people said, “O Abu Hurayrah! Forty days? Forty years? Forty months?” He said: “I am not sure.” He continued, **“Then Allāh will send rain down from the sky and they will grow as shrubs grow. There is no part of a man which will not decay except the last bone at the base of the spine (coccyx) from which he will be re-created on the Day of Resurrection.”**

(Reported by Bukhāri no. 4651, Muslim no. 2955)

Allah, the Most High, stated:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ تَقُومَ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ بِأَمْرِهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ دَعْوَةً مِّنَ
الْأَرْضِ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ تَخْرُجُونَ

“And among His Signs is that the heaven and the earth stand by His Command. Then afterwards when He will call you by a single call, behold, you will come out from the earth.” (Ar-Rūm 30:25)

At-Tabari (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) mentioned in his Tafseer (26/183) that a caller will call out and say: “O gathering of bones, shredded flesh and scattered hair! Allah commands you to come together for the Judgement!” He will be brought back together just as he once was, except that he will not, at that point, have his soul.

So, the Angel Isrāfeel (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) will be commanded to blow the horn, and the souls will fly forth into their bodies. That is because the souls are gathered together in the horn, and they will fly out to their bodies. Then the people will be given life and commanded to move onwards to the place of assembly (the Mahshar). They will stand there on their feet in a tight, confined and constricted place under the intense heat of the sun. The sun will be brought close to their heads and they will be overcome by the heat and the perspiration of their bodies due to the terror and heat of that day. All of mankind will be gathered, from the first of them to the last of them.

They will sweat and they will vary in their sweating according to their deeds in this world. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **“On the Day of Resurrection, the sun will be drawn so close to the people that it will be a**

distance of only one mile. The people will be submerged in perspiration according to their deeds. Some up to their knees, some up to their waist and some will be bridled with perspiration over their mouths.” And Allah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) pointed with his hand towards his mouth. (Muslim 2864)

It will be for unbelievers and sinners a very hard day, a day of terror. That is why He (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) said:

يَقُولُ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِيرٌ

“The disbelievers will say, ‘This is truly a difficult day.’” It is a hard day for the unbelievers but **not** for the righteous, obedient worshippers, the pious believers. That day will last 50,000 years.

سَأَلَ سَائِلٌ بِعَذَابٍ وَاقِعٍ

لِلْكَافِرِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَافِعٌ

مِنَ اللَّهِ ذِي الْمَعَارِجِ

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ

فَاصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَمِيلًا

“A questioner asked concerning a torment about to befall. Upon the disbelievers, which none can avert. From Allah, the Lord of the ways of ascent. The angels and Jibra’īl ascend to Him in a Day the

measure whereof is fifty thousand years. So be patient (O Muhammad), with a good patience.” (Al-Ma’ārij: 1-5)

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: “No owner of treasure who did not pay the due Zakāh will be spared. His wealth will be heated in the Fire of Hell and made into plates and then his sides and his forehead will be burned with them until Allah pronounces judgment among His servants during that day, the extent of which be fifty thousand years. He will then see his path, leading either to Paradise or to Hell.” (Muslim 987)

However, on that day the believers will be shaded. Allāh mentions in the Qur’ān (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى):

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي ظِلَالٍ وَعُيُونٍ

“Indeed the righteous will be among shades and springs.” (Qur’ān 77: 41). So, because they will be in shades and springs, they will not experience the terror of that day. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) mentioned in the Qur’an:

لَا يَحْزَنُهُمُ الْفَزَعُ الْأَكْبَرُ وَتَتَلَقَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ هَذَا يَوْمُكُمْ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

“They will not be grieved by the great terror [of the Day of Resurrection]. And the angels will meet them and greet them saying, ‘This is your Day which you were promised.’” (21:103)

So the believer will be in ease and in a state of leisure on that day. May Allah give us shade on that Day and place us among springs. Shaykh al-Fawzān said: “This is the day of the assembly, where they will be gathered together in one plain. They will hear the caller and the sights will penetrate – they will be on a singular plain that is level and equal without any elevations or depressions.” (See *Sharhu ‘Aqeedatil-Imām Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb*, p. 75)

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْجِبَالِ فَقُلْ يَنْسِفُهَا رَبِّي نَسْفًا

“And they ask you concerning the mountains, say; ‘My Lord will blast them and scatter them as particles of dust.’” (Tāhā 20:105)

The first one to be resurrected on that Day is the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):

أَنَا سَيِّدٌ وَلَدِ آدَمَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَأَوَّلُ مَنْ يَنْشَقُّ عَنْهُ الْقَبْرُ وَأَوَّلُ شَافِعٍ
وَأَوَّلُ مُشَفَّعٍ

“I will be the master of the descendants of Adam on the Day of Resurrection, the first from whom the grave will be cleft open, the first intercessor, and the first whose intercession will be accepted.” (Muslim 2278)

The scales will be set up on that day. Ahlus-Sunnah believe in the scales (Mawāzīn) for weighing the deeds on the Day of Resurrection. Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) says:

وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“And the weighing on that day will be true [and real]. So, as for those whose scale of good deeds will be heavy, they will be the successful (and enter Paradise).”

وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَظْلِمُونَ

“And as for those whose scale will be light (due to little good deeds), they are those who had lost their souls (and will enter Hell) because they denied and rejected Our verses and signs.”

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

“And surely, We established you in the earth and appointed for you therein provisions for your life. But little is the thanks you give!” (Al-A’rāf: 8-10)

We ask Allah to grant us success to worship Him, and obey Him as He deserves – we ask Him to forgive us and show us His mercy and enter us in to the eternal Gardens of Paradise and protect us from His punishment.

And all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.