

THE JOURNEY INTO THE HEREAFTER (PART 2 OF 8): THE BELIEVER IN THE GRAVE

Rating: 4.8

Description: A description of the life in the grave between death and Judgment Day for the faithful believers.

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Published on: 11 Sep 2006

Last modified on: 25 Jun 2019

A Grave World

We will now take a brief look at the journey of the soul after death. This is truly an amazing story, all the more so because it is true and one which we all must take. The sheer depth of knowledge we have concerning this journey, its precision and detail, is a manifest sign that Muhammad was truly God's Last Messenger to humanity. The revelation he received and then communicated to us from His Lord is as unambiguous in its description of the afterlife as it is comprehensive. Our glimpse into this knowledge will begin with a brief exploration of the journey of the believing soul from the moment of death to its final resting place in Paradise.

When a believer is about to depart this world, angels with white faces come down from the heavens and say:

"O peaceful soul, come out to forgiveness from God and His pleasure." (Hakim and others)

The believer will look forward to meeting his Creator, as the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, explained:

"...when the time of the death of a believer approaches, he receives the good news of God's pleasure with him and His blessings upon him, and so at that time nothing is dearer to him than what lies ahead of him. He therefore loves meeting God, and God loves meeting him." (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

The soul peacefully passes out of the body like a drop of water which emerges from a water-skin, and the angels take hold of it:

The angels gently extract it, saying:

***"...Do not fear and do not grieve, but receive good tidings of the Paradise which you were promised. We were your allies in this worldly life and [are so] in the Hereafter, and you will have therein whatever your souls desire, and you will have therein whatever you request [or wish], as a hospitality from the Forgiving and Merciful."
(Quran 41:30-32)***

Once extracted from the body, the angels wrap the soul in a shroud smelling of musk and ascend up to the heavens. As the Gates of Heaven open for the soul, the angels greet it:

"A good soul has come from the earth, may God bless you and the body you used to dwell in."

...introducing it with the best names it was called with in this life. God commands his "book" to be recorded, and the soul is returned back to earth.

The soul then remains in a place of limbo in its grave, called the Barzakh, awaiting the Day of Judgment. Two fearsome, dread-inspiring angels called Munkar and Nakeer visit the soul to ask it about its religion, God, and prophet. The believing soul sits upright in its grave as God grants it the strength to answer the angels with full faith and certainty.^[1]

Munkar and Nakeer: "What is your religion?"

Believing soul: "Islam."

Munkar and Nakeer: "Who is your Lord?"

Believing soul: "Allah."

Munkar and Nakeer: "Who is your Prophet?" (or "What do you say about this man?")

Believing soul: "Muhammad."

Munkar and Nakeer: "How did you come to know these things?"

Believing soul: "I read the Book of Allah (i.e. the Quran) and I believed."

Then, when the soul passes the test, a voice from the heavens will call out:

"My slave has spoken the truth, supply him with furnishings from Paradise, clothe him from Paradise, and open a gate for him to Paradise."

The believer's grave is made roomy and spacious and filled with light. He is shown what would have been his abode in Hell - had he been a wicked sinner - before a portal is opened for him every morning and evening showing him his actual home in Paradise. Excited and full of joyful anticipation, the believer will keep asking: 'When will the Hour (of Resurrection) come?! When will the Hour come?!' until he is told to calm down.^[2]

Footnotes:

[1] *Musnah Ahmad*

[2] *Al-Tirmidhi*

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