

CONCERNED THE DEATH SENTENCE

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: "He who makes all his concerns into one — the concern for his Hereafter, Allah Ta'ala will grant him salvation from the worries of this world. And the one who becomes engrossed in the concerns of this world, Allah Ta'ala will not care as to which valley if the world he gets destroyed in" (Mustadrak Ibn Majah). This Hadith demands that we engage in some soul-searching. We have to check within ourselves as to which direction we have directed our concerns. Are we too preoccupied with the concerns of this world to have time to worry about the Hereafter? Has my business, my house, my car, my sports, my hobbies and my a hundred and one other things captured my concern to such an extent that I have no time to worry about MY Deen? Thus if we find that the scales are severely off-balance in favour of the worldly concerns, it is time to reverse the situation. In the light of the abovementioned Hadith, the almost total concern for the world is the reason for the help of Allah Ta'ala not descending upon us. To draw His help, we have to direct our concern towards the Hereafter.

The solution to our worldly worries is also contained in the Hadith — to shift our concern to the aspects pertaining to the Hereafter. The life of this world is extremely short. The Hereafter is eternal. Our concerns should be therefore towards securing the best for our eternal life.

When a person has been sentenced to death, he suddenly loses all taste for the pleasures of this world. If he was engrossed to a life of sin, suddenly he begins to repent and remember his Creator who had blessed him with the gift of life. He now wishes that he had spent his life in obedience to the commands of his Sustainer and Nourisher. Remorse and regret overwhelm him for his past deeds. This drastic change suddenly takes place because he has been "sentenced to death" by some mortal being like himself called the judge.

Every single person walking on this earth has been sentenced to death by the Master of all mortal judges and by the King of all kings. Even before a person is born, the time and place of his death is decreed. The death sentence from above could be carried out at any time - it could be one year from now, perhaps a month or even the next moment. It could come on any pretext: an illness, accident or murder, or even without any pretext. How often have we heard of people who "just collapsed and passed away."

But Alas how unmindful we are of this imminent death

FALLING INTO VICES

When a Muslim becomes unmindful of the certainty of death, he will easily indulge in many vices and sins. He will perhaps cheat, deceive, bribe and steal. Drugs may become his way of life. Gambling may become his pastime. Taking interest may become his business. Adultery and fornication may become his habit. Amassing the world may become his object in life. Hankering after "the next valley of gold" may become his ambition. All this could happen, and much more, simply because a Muslim has become unmindful of death.

However, if a person is forever conscious that death could come at any moment, that irrespective of age and health one could "just collapse and pass away," there will be a totally different picture. Then whenever he is tempted to sin, the voice from within will ask: "What if death comes to me while I am involved in that sin?" This is sure to restrain a person.

REMEMBERING DEATH

Hence *Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)* is reported to have said: "Remember excessively the destroyer of all passions - DEATH." Besides exhorting the Ummah to remember death EXCESSIVELY, *Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)* has declared those who do as the wisest of all people. It is reported that once *Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)* was asked as to who is the wisest of all men. He replied "The wisest of men are those who remember death more than everybody else. It is such people, indeed, who win distinction in this world and who will be raised to positions of honour in the Aakhirah" (Tabrani).

VISIT THE GRAVES

In order to keep the remembrance of death alive all the time *Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)* encouraged the Ummah to regularly visit the graves, to wash the dead and to attend the janaazah salaah. Visiting the graves is thus for the purpose of remembering one's death. However, the sad state of affairs is that when we occasionally do end up at the graveyard at the time of attending a burial,

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the opportunity to remember death is wasted in talking of worldly matters with friends. This is actually an opportunity to visualise one's own death and prepare for the day when one will be also laid in the darkness of that narrow pit.

BENEFITS AND HARMS

Abu Haamid Lafaaf has written: "The one who remembers death is blessed by Allah Ta'ala with three favours:

1. He readily turns to Allah Ta'ala in repentance
2. He is granted contentment
3. He shows greater devotion in all modes of worship.

The one who is heedless and unmindful of death is punished by Allah Ta'ala in three ways:

1. He persists in sin and hesitates to offer repentance
2. He is not contented with his income
3. He becomes sluggish in the performance of his devotions. (Fadhaai'le Sadaqaat)

Imaam Ghazali (R.A.) says: "Death is a tremendous thing to fear, but most people are heedless of it."

Many people do not even talk of death due to their absorption in worldly affairs. A few talk of death but their minds are occupied with other things and, therefore, it does them little good. It is important that, from time to time, one should concentrate upon death to the exclusion of all other things and imagine that death is staring one in the face. One should think of one's friends and relatives and recall to one's mind how they were placed on the bier, carried to the grave and buried under mounds of earth. One should imagine their faces and think of their high ambitions and the changes that dust might have wrought on their handsome faces, and how their bodies might have decayed, how their children were orphaned, their wives were widowed, how their relatives were left to weep over their loss. One should think how their fortunes were distributed and how their clothes were left behind (never to be wont by them again)! One should then say to oneself: "I shall have to suffer the same fate one of these days. How these people, who are lying in their graves, used to laugh and talk in meetings. How they indulged in lusts, but are now lying in the dust! They did not like to talk of death but have fallen prey to it. They were intoxicated by their youthful vigour, but are lying today in the graves, forsaken and uncared for. How deeply absorbed they were in the affairs of the world but now their hands and feet are scattered apart and worms are crawling on their tongues! Their bodies have become food for worms. How heartily they laughed, but now their teeth have decayed and fallen out. They made ambitious plans and arrangements for many years to come, though death loomed over their heads. Little did they know, on the last day of their life, that they were destined to spend that very night in the grave!" (Fadhaai'le Sadaqaat)

A BRIDGE

Thus it is imperative that we remember death much and prepare for it. There is no guarantee for tomorrow. By then it may be too late. If we prepare NOW, we will meet death smilingly for then it will be for us that which Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has described in the following words:

"Death is a bridge that joins the lover (the righteous believer) with the Beloved (Allah Ta'ala)."

"FROM THE GRAPEVINE"

We are often given "news" and information about people. On the basis of such "news" and information, we formulate opinions and perceptions in our minds about the people concerned. However, if the "news" is of a negative nature, it is compulsory to ignore it until it is verified and established to be true. To formulate negative opinions in our minds with regards to anybody upon hearing something which has not been verified is not permissible. In many cases these bits of information just come "from the grapevine" and have no truth in them. At times they are a mixture of half truths and distorted facts. Often it is pure misunderstanding and or misinterpretation. Nevertheless, neither must one act on these bits of information without first establishing their authenticity, nor must one harbour ill-feelings or suspicion for any person on the basis of such information.

The negative perceptions which we formulate on the basis of unverified information falls within the ambit of the words of Allah Ta'ala: "Verily some thoughts are sin" (Surah Hujuraat). Hence it is clear from this aayah that one will be questioned on the day of Qiyamah for having harboured ill-thoughts about his fellow Muslim without any basis. On the other hand if one had given the accused person the benefit of the doubt and ignored the unverified information given to one, no questions will be asked about this in the day of Qiyamah. To relate to anybody what one has merely heard but not verified is also a sin. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: "It is sufficient for a person to be guilty of lying that he relates everything he hears (without verifying the authenticity)" (Mishkaat-Pg. 280). The severity of this practice is thus clearly understood.

Therefore, without investigating the matter one should totally ignore it. Also, if the matter does not concern one, do not even bother to investigate it. Simply ignore is as if nothing was ever said to you.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

From the advices of ...



FAQIHUL UMMAH

The sterling advice of Faqihul Ummah Hazrath Mufti Mahmood Saheb (*Rahmatullahi Alaihi*) has helped thousands of people to overcome many problems and difficulties — especially in the line of *Istahun Nafs* (inner-self reformation). Hereunder is an extract from his discourses.

