

The Life of Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wa sallam in His Grave

Hayaatur-rasool sallallahu alaihi wa sallam and waseelah

THE LIFE OF RASOOLULLAH (SALLALLAHU ALAYHI WASALLAM) IN HIS GRAVE

The discussion around the concept of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) being alive in his grave also includes the equally important questions of making dua to the Messenger of Allah directly and making him a medium or intermediary in dua. This article comprises these three issues.

The question of Allah's Messenger sallallahu alaihi wa sallam being alive or dead in his qabr is, per se, not a matter that affects one's iemaan or acts of worship, nor is it a belief for which Muslims will be questioned about in the hereafter. If a Muslim goes through his entire life not knowing the status of such an issue, he would have neither lost nor gained anything. In like manner, this discussion or debate is not so serious that it should result in animosity or acrimonious exchange, and both sides should exercise caution and moderation when discussing a matter of this nature. Should we fail to do this, it is highly possible that through injudicious statements and malicious argumentation, the issue will become detrimental to our lemaan and Beliefs, whereas it was never a bone of such contention.

While we certainly believe the matter is not as serious as some make it appear, we have to acknowledge that the additional factor of supplicating to Allah's Messenger that has entered the equation has now made it important to highlight certain facts in the light of Quran and Sunnah. It is this factor that has raised an outcry from certain quarters; hence the need to touch on this subject as well.

It is our belief, based on Quran and Sunnah, that The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) is alive in his grave at this very moment. We believe he died at his appointed time, but was given a new life in the Aalam-e-Barzakh or the Transitory Abode. In fact, we believe that all Messengers of Allah are alive in their graves and they engage in acts of worship and spiritual communication with Almighty Allah.

Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) died the death of a normal human being, and the definition of death, which is expulsion of the Rooh from the physical body, did occur to the blessed body of Allah's Messenger. This is proven from the following verse of the Holy Quran: "Verily you (O Muhammad) will die and they too will die" (Quran 39:30) Here it is clearly forecast that The Messenger of Allah will pass away. Likewise, the verse where Allah Ta'ala declares: "Every soul shall taste of death" (Aala-Imraan, 185), in its generality, included the Ambiyaa as well. However, every human who dies is made alive again after being buried to face the questioning of the grave, a belief supported by numerous ahadeeth. The rooh or soul is re-introduced into the body, and it is this revived body that experiences pleasure or pain whilst in the grave, depending on the actions and deeds of the individual.

There exists authentic ahadeeth in Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood and other books describing the status of a normal human being after death. In these ahadeeth it is clearly stated that the rooh is returned to the body of kaafir to inflict punishment, and is re-introduced for further punishment after the body has turned to dust (Abu Dawood, Ahmed), that the deceased "hears the footsteps of those returning from the funeral" (Bukhari, Muslim), and he or she is made to sit up and is questioned by Munkar and Nakeer (Tirmizhi). Some ahadeeth are quite evident that the dead person answers the Angels and speaks to them, as in Bukhari and Muslim again, and that the pious souls experience and enjoy the fragrance of Jannah, and are shown their abodes in Paradise, while on the other hand these same ahadeeth make mention of the evil doer who speaks with tremor and fear to the Angels, experiences and suffers pain, and is shown his or her abode in Hell. All these incidents cannot happen to one who is lifeless and without soul.

From the hadith of Abu Dawood and Musnad-e-Ahmed we also learn that even after being reduced to dust the soul still is still brought back into the body, thus indicating that the body of the transitory world (aalam-e-barzakh) is different to that of this earthly abode.

In short it is well established that the ordinary human being is revived and given a degree of life after death through which the body of that person enjoys comfort and suffers pain, according to the deeds of the individual. And this applies even after the physical body has disintegrated.

Let's take the issue of life after death further. In Surah Baqarah, verse 154, and Surah Aala Imraan, verse 169, Almighty Allah declares that "martyrs are not dead; instead they are alive and given sustenance". A hadith of Saheeh Muslim also mentions that the Shuhadaa or martyrs are alive and fly around Jannat in the form of birds, wherever they wish. From these citations we glean that the Martyrs are alive after death. It also stands to reason that the martyrs are a select and elite fraternity and enjoy greater rewards than ordinary Muslims. For example, one hadith states that the martyr is not questioned in his grave, whilst ordinary Muslims are. This proves the even in life after death the Martyrs differ from ordinary Muslims. We have proven from the aforementioned statements that both the ordinary Muslim and the martyr enjoy life after death, but that life differs to the life in this world, and moreover, the life of the death enjoyed by the martyr is greater and of a superior quality than the life of the ordinary Muslim.

We now turn our attention to the lives of the Ambiyaa (alayhimus-salaam) after death, and in particular the life of Our Master and Nabi, Hazrat Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) after he had been entrusted to the soils of Tayba. We cite the following ahadeeth to substantiate our belief:

1) Abud-Dardaa (radhiyallahu anhu) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "Increase salutations upon me on the Day of Jum'ah because it is a day witnessed by the Angels; and undoubtedly no one shall send salutations upon me but his salutations are presented to me when he finishes."

Abud-Dardaa says: 'I asked: And after death?' The Messenger of Allah replied: 'Even after death. Verily Allah has forbidden the earth to devour the bodies of the Prophets. So the Prophet of Allah is alive; he is (even) provided sustenance.' (Narrated in Ibni Majah. The chain of transmission is sound and authentic – Mirqaat; Jaami’ul Ahadeeth).

2) Anas bin Malik (radhiyallahu anhu) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'The Ambiyaa are alive in their graves. They (even) offer salaah therein.' (Narrated by Bayhaqi and Abu’Ya’la, and its chain is authentic – Ibni Hajar)

3) Ibni Mas’ud (radhiyallahu anhu) narrates that Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'My death is good for you (because) your deeds are presented to me. So when I see good deeds I praise Allah and if I see evil I ask Allah for forgiveness on your behalf.' (Narrated by Imam Bazzar and declared saheeh by Hathami) Imam Bayhaqi, the narrator of hadith number 2 above, wrote a book titled Hayaatul-Ambiyaa fee quboorihim (The life of the Prophets in their graves) in which he narrated the above hadith among many others to substantiate this belief. Imam Bayhaqi, whose full name was Abubakr Ahmed bin Husain Khurasaani, was a renowned Scholar of Hadith in the 5th Century Hijri.

These quotations are strong and clear proof that the Messengers of Allah alaihimus salaam are alive in their grave and offer salaah therein. This is supported by the hadith of Saheeh Muslim wherein the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) says he saw Moosa and Ebrahim (alayhimus-salaam) offering salaah in their graves.

We now have three levels of life in the grave. One is that of the ordinary human being, as explained above, who is given life to be rewarded or punished. The other is the Shaheed or Martyr, who is given a more superior life in the grave than the ordinary Muslim. The third stage is that of the Ambiya and Messengers, whose quality of life in the grave is even grander and finer than the rest. It does not make sense nor is it in keeping with the teachings of Quran and Sunnah for the Ambiyaa to have a life in the grave similar to the martyrs. Rewards for Ambiyaa in the hereafter are far greater than the rest. This is further supported by the ahadeeth that mention the presentation of people’s’maal or good deeds to Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and him hearing and replying to the salaam of those visiting his grave, as well as the presentation of people’s salawaat from distant places, as quoted above. All this indicates a vibrant life of unique quality. There is a hadith, albeit it a weak transmission that states: 'He who visits me after my death is like one who visited me in my lifetime.' We quote this hadith mainly in support of above and not as independent evidence.

The view that Rasoolullah (alayhis-salaam) is alive in his grave has been propounded and expounded by the majority of Ulema in the past, such as Imam Bayhaqi, Shaikh Ibni Taymiyya, Ibnul-Qayyim Jowziya, Allama Aaloosi and this is the standard view of all Hanafi Scholars.

In short, we believe the Messenger of Allah passed away and that his rooh departed from the body. But this separation of the rooh from the body was temporarily and merely to establish a physical death for Allah’s Messenger. After being interned in his Grave, the Messenger of Allah was given a new life, which is the life of the Barzakh with much splendour and glory, unlike any other. He is currently alive. However, since this is a doctrinal matter and is not subject to scientific or logical reasoning, we cannot add anything more to what is mentioned in Quran and Sunnah.

INTERCESSION OR ASKING THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF RASOOLULLAH (SALLALLAHU ALAYHI WASALLAM)

The hadith clearly states: 'When you ask, then ask from Allah. When you seek help, seek it from Allah.' (Ahmed and Tirmizhi) Likewise, numerous verses of the Holy Quran make it clear that one is allowed to supplicate only to Almighty Allah, and not to his creation. We are commanded to ask from Him and Him alone. The verse in Surah Fatiha goes as follows: 'You alone do we worship and from You alone do we seek help' In the light of these verses, it is haraam to make dua directly to the Messenger of Allah after his demise and to seek his assistance or ask him for favours. Such dua should be directed to Allah alone, for it is only He who can fulfil requests and accept duas. When standing in front of the Blessed Grave, we will only recite salaah and salaam, and will not ask from him anything.

WASEELAH

However, it will be permissible to use the Messenger of Allah as a medium of intercession. This can be done in two ways. We can ask the Messenger of Allah to make dua for us, and we can ask our needs from Allah through his medium. This is called waseelah in Islamic terminology.

The reality of waseelah is to make dua to Allah through the medium of a good act, whether that good act belongs to a living person or to one who has expired. It is actually seeking the medium of Allah’s Mercy in making dua. One asks from Allah through the medium of another who has earned Allah’s Mercy.

PROOF FOR WASEELAH FROM THE HOLY QURAN

1) In Surah Aala-Imraan it is mentioned that when Hazrat Zakariyya (RA) saw how miraculously Hazrat Maryam (alayhis-salaam) received out-of-season fruit and the amazing way in which Allah Ta’ala granted her sustenance, he was driven to instant dua, asking Allah for a baby during his old age. The Commentators say he made this dua using Hazrat Maryam as a waseelah or medium. (Quran: 3:38)

2) In Surah Baqarah it is mentioned how the Jews used Hazrat Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), who was not yet born, as a waseelah in dua when seeking Allah’s help against their enemies. (Quran: 2:89) They would place their hands on the name 'Muhammad’ that appeared in the Taurat and made dua using the Prophet to

come as a medium. (Tafseer Roohul-Ma'ani and Durre-e-Manthoor). Since this practice was not condemned anywhere in the Quran – in fact Allah Ta'ala cited it as a favour upon the Jews – it forms part of our Shariah and may be practiced upon.

PROOF FOR WASEELAH FROM HADITH

- 1) The story of three people who were trapped in a cave is mentioned in Bukhari Shareef. Each one made dua through the medium of a good act that they had done in the past.
- 2) In a hadith narrated by Ibni Majah and declared saheeh of authentic by Abu Ishaq and other Scholars, it is stated that a blind man was ordered by Allah's Messenger to make dua asking Allah to restore his sight through the medium of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).
- 3) Tabarani narrates from Uthman bin Haneef (radhiyallahu anhu), who is the narrator of the above hadith, too, that he (Uthman) instructed a man to make dua through the medium of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), and this was after the demise of Allah's Messenger. (Tabarani in Kabeer)
- 4) During the time of Hazrat Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) there was a drought, so a man came to the grave of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Make dua for rain for your ummat, for indeed they have almost perished.' That same night the man saw a dream in which he was instructed to go to Hazrat Umar and inform him that relief from Allah was on its way. (Musannaf Ibni Abi Shaybah)
- 5) A hadith of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) states: 'You do not receive help and sustenance except through the poor and weak among you.' (Nasaa'ee)
- 6) Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) used to seek victory against his enemies through the medium of senior Muhaajir sahaaba. (Mishkatul-Maseebih)
- 7) The Sahaaba used to make dua for rain through the medium of Abbas (radhiyallahu anhu), the uncle of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

At this point some might argue that the Sahaaba used the medium of Abbas (radhiyallahu anhu) during his lifetime, so this proves that one cannot use the waseelah of the dead, only the living. The answer to this is that if one may use the waseelah of the living then to a greater extent will it be permissible to use the intercession of the dead, because the basis of waseelah is the blessing and proximity of the medium in relation to Allah. A living person is not always sure that he will maintain the same blessings and the same closeness to Allah, whereas the pious one who has passed on and gone to Allah is sure to maintain the same level of proximity to Allah and the same degree of blessing. No change is possible in a dead person, but change is possible in the living, hence it is more logical to trust the dead for realization of blessing than the living. Ibni Mas'ud used to say: 'If you intend following someone, then follow one who has passed on, because the living is not safe from corruption.' (Mishkatul-Masaabih)

Furthermore, it was the demand of respect that in the presence of a family member of Allah's Rasool, dua should be made through him, whilst at the same time the Sahaaba intended to get the dua of Hazrat Abbas (radhiyallahu anhu) himself.

- 8) Ibni Mas'ud (radhiyallahu anhu) narrates that Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'My death is good for you (because) your deeds are presented to me. So when I see good deeds I praise Allah and if I see evil I ask Allah for forgiveness on your behalf.' (Narrated by Imam Bazzar and declared saheeh by Hathami)

If The Holy Messenger of Allah makes dua for his ummat whilst in his grave, then this is a clear sign of his intercession for the ummat and that the ummat can actually ask him to make dua on their behalf.

PROOF OF WASEELAH AMONG SAHAABA AND IMAMS OF THE PAST

The following incidents have been extracted from the book of Shaikh Hasan bin Ali Saqqaf (May Allah protect him) on Waseelah:

- 1) Imam Nawawi states that our (Shaafi's) Scholars narrate from Al-Utbi, who says that one day he was sitting at the Holy Grave of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) when a Bedouin came in front of the grave and said: 'Peace be upon you O Messenger of Allah! I heard that Allah says in The Quran: 'And if they, after having wronged their souls, came to you and sought Allah's forgiveness and the Rasool (also) sought forgiveness on their behalf, then they would find Allah Most Forgiving, Most Merciful'; So I have come seeking forgiveness for my sins and seeking your intercession by Allah on the Day of Judgment.' Al-Utbi says that the Bedouin then turned and walked away. A while later I fell asleep and saw the Messenger of Allah (alayhis-salaam) in a dream; he said to me: 'O Utbi! Go after that Bedouin and give him the good news that Allah has forgiven him. (Ibni Katheer RA says this is a well known incident).
- 2) Imam Shaafi's (rahmatullahi alayhi) composed a poem in Arabic, the translation of which is: 'The Family of The Prophet is my medium (by Allah); and they are my means to reach The Prophet; I have hope that tomorrow, through them, I shall be given my Book of Deeds in my right hand. (Ibni Hajar Haitami in As-Sawaa'iq)
- 3) It is written in the books of the Hambali math-hab that Imam Ahmad (rahmatullahi alayhi), who is known as the Imam of the Ahlus-sunnah, said that it is meritorious to seek intercession through Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) at the time of a drought. (This statement can be found under the Chapter of Istisqaa in Hambali Fiqh)

Statements similar to the above, as well as poems conveying the same sentiments and meaning are reported from Allama Ibni Hajar Asqalaani, Ibni Hajar Haitami, Allama Manaawi, Ibnu Daqeeql-Eid, and others. For details see the

book Bahjatun-Naazhir by Hasan Al-Saqaaf.

SUMMARY:

From the aforementioned proofs it is clear that:

- a) The Holy Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) died a normal death, but was given a unique and outstanding life by Allah in his Blessed Resting Place. He is, therefore, alive and enjoys special Rizq and Blessings from Allah Ta'ala.
- b) It is not permissible to ask for one's needs directly from Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)
- c) However, it is perfectly lawful and permissible, and in fact mustahabb or meritorious to ask from Allah through the medium of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)
- d) It is permissible to stand in front of the Mubarak Resting Place of Our Rasool (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and ask him to seek forgiveness for one, and to intercede for one by Allah on the Day of Judgement.

And Almighty Allah knows best for His Knowledge is Absolute.

Facts mentioned in this treatise were taken from the following books:

Mirqaat, commentary on Mishkaat by Mullah Ali Al-Qaari

Hayaatul-Ambiyaa of Imam Bayhaqi

Rasaa-il of As-Saqaaf

Ahsaul-Fataawa of Hazrat Mufti Rasheed sahib RA (Pakistan)

For further reading, see the treatise of Hazrat Shaikh Zakariyya RA in Ma'arif-e-Shaikh

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