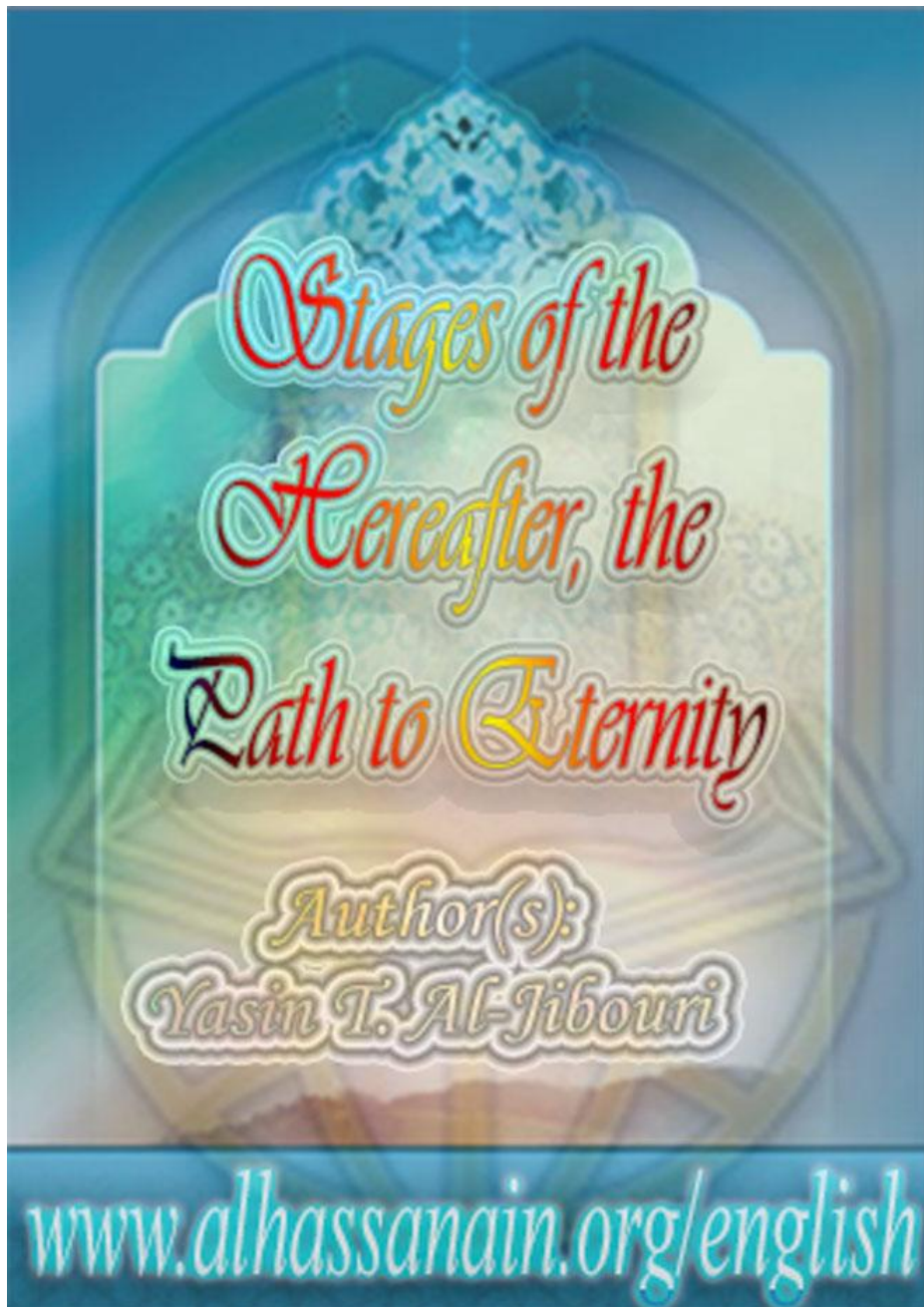


STAGES OF THE HEREAFTER, THE PATH TO ETERNITY





Stages of the Hereafter, the Path to Eternity

Author(s): Yasin T. Al-Jibouri

www.alhassanain.org/english

This text, based on the book Manazil al-Akhira by the Late Marhoom Abbas al-Qummi will take the reader step by step from the moment the soul departs from the body up to the gate of either Paradise and salvation or Hell and damnation.

Miscellaneous information:

Stages of the Hereafter, the Path to Eternity منازل الآخرة - الطريق الى
الخلود By Yasin T. al-Jibouri Based on the Book Manazil al-Akhira By
the Late Marhoom Abbas al-Qummi

Notice:

This version is published on behalf of www.alhassanain.org/english
The composing errors are not corrected.

Table of Contents

Introduction	7
1. Stage One of the Life Hereafter: An-Naza` Al-Akheer, Drawing The Last Breath	8
النزع الأخير	8
2. Phase Two of The 14 Phases Of The Life Hereafter: The Adeela at the Time of Death	14
العديله عند الموت	14
3. Phase Three Of The Life Hereafter: Wahshat al-Qabr, Grave's Loneliness.....	15
وحشة القبر	15
4. Stage Four of The Life Hereafter: Grave's Constriction (pressure) 18	
ضغطة القبر	18
5. Stage Five of The Life Hereafter: Questioning by Munkir and Nakeer	21
سؤال منكر و نكير	21
6. Stage Six of The Life Hereafter: The Barzakh.....	24
البرزخ	24
7. Stage Seven of The Life Hereafter: Qiyama, Judgment Day	29
القيامة يوم	29
8. Stage Eight of The Life Hereafter: Al-Hashr, The Gathering	33
الحشر	33
9. Stage Nine of The Life Hereafter: Al-Mizan, The Scales of Deeds..	38
الميزان	38
10. Stage Ten of The Life Hereafter: Al-Hisab, The Reckoning	41
الحساب	41
11. Stage Eleven of The Life Hereafter: Tasleem Safeet al-A`mal	44
تسليم صحيفة الأعمال	44
12. Stage Twelve of The Life Hereafter: As-Sirat al-Mustaqeem, The Straight Path	47
الصراط المستقيم	47
Conclusion	52

Introduction

In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

These twelve series of the life hereafter take you step by step from the moment the soul departs from the body up to the gate of either Paradise and salvation or Hell and damnation.

This is a subject which not many people are willing to discuss, thus avoiding it altogether instead of preparing themselves for its inevitability.

Please circulate this text to all those whom you love, perhaps when the time comes for one of them to leave this vanishing world, he/she will do so with a smile on his/her face and will be escorted to eternal bliss, Insha-Allah, by the angels of mercy instead of the denzines of hell.

You will earn your rewards for being an instrument serving to save your brother's or sister's skin from the fire of hell, may Allah Almighty spare us its torment.

1. Stage One of the Life Hereafter: An-Naza` Al-Akheer, Drawing The Last Breath

الذرع الأخر

[One hadith says,

مَن دَلَّ عَلَى خَيْرٍ فَلَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ فَاعِلِهِ

One who leads another to a good deed will receive rewards equivalent to that of its doer.

So, earn rewards by circulating this text material, may the Almighty enable you to live a happy life and to die a happy death and thus live eternally in Paradise, Allahomma Aameen.]

Another name for “An-Naza` al-Akheer”, drawing the last breath, is سكرات الموت, Death Stupors. Reference to these stupors exists in this Qur’anic verse:

وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ

“And the stupor of death will bring truth (before his eyes): “This was the thing which you were trying to escape!” (Qur’an, 50:19).

These are the moments when the dying person bids this vanishing world goodbye, casts a last look at it, mostly at his own self: Life will pass before his eyes like a flash, and he will realize how short it really was, how he wasted it, how he did not perform the purpose behind his very creation: to worship the Almighty his Lord and the Lord of all creation. How will one naturally die? The answer is in verses 88-96 of Surat al-Waqi`a (Chapter 56):

فَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ، فَرَوْحٌ وَرَيْحَانٌ وَجَنَّةُ نَعِيمٍ. وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ فَسَلَامٌ
لَكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ، وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ الضَّالِّينَ فَنُزُلٌ مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ وَتَصْلِيَةٌ جَهِيمٍ: إِنَّ
هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ، فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

“Thus, then, if he is of those nearest to Allah, (there is) rest and satisfaction (for him) and a Garden of delights. And if he is of the companions of the right Hand, (for him there is salutation:) “Peace be unto you!” from the companions of the right Hand. And if he is one of those who treat (truth) as falsehood, who commit wrong, for him there is entertainment of boiling water and burning in Hell-Fire. Truly this is the very truth, so celebrate with praise the Name of your Lord, the Supreme” (Qur’an, 56:88-96).

See how the Almighty in these verses classifies three methods of death perhaps the first of which is particularly interesting: One who is near to his Maker will smell fragrance which will turn death into a very pleasant and pleasurable experience. Of course an opposite type of death awaits those who are not close to Him and who apparently will experience death by way of suffocation.

According to some traditions, two angels pull life out of each and every cell of the dying person's body, and it will not be fun at all. During these moments, the dying person will have a moment of contemplation on what he has just left behind: worries about the little ones, separation from wealth, estates, precious items, homes on which he spent fortunes, wealth which he amassed without making sure where it exactly came from, etc. And there will be worries about how much he fell short of carrying out with regard to his duties to others and to his Maker.

In Nahjul-Balagha, the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (ع) has summarized it thus:

«يتذكر أموالاً جمعها أغمض في مطالبها وأخذها من مُصْرِحَاتِهَا ، ومشتبهاً قد لزمته تبعات جمعها وأشرف على فراقها، تبقى لمن وراءه ينعمون بما فيكون المهناً لغيره والعبء على ظهره».

"He shall remember wealth which he had overlooked where it had come from, accepting its sources as they were claimed to be, or as they were thought to be, the consequences of having collected it now are round his neck, haunting him, as he is about to leave it behind him for those who will now enjoy it, thus the pleasure will be for others while he bears the burden."

Verse 22 of Surat Qaf states the following:

لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ

"You were heedless of this, so We have removed your veil, and your sight is sharp (on) this Day!" (Qur'an, 50:22).

Indeed, the sight of the dying person during the stupors of death will be quite sharp: He will for the first time be able to see angels, who are created of light that can easily blind any human eye, and the jinns who are created of smokeless fire. He will be able to see and hear his family, relatives, friends and strangers who are around him at the time of death and who will soon bear his casket to the cemetery.

But he will not be able to show any reaction because he has lost control over his temporal body and his soul روح now takes over. On the other hand, there will be a tremendous transformation in the process of changing from one form into quite another which now enables him to see what he could never see before: According to p. 170, Vol. 6 of Bihar al-Anwar,

فيرى رسول الله وأهل بيته الأطهار صلوات الله عليهم وملائكة الرحمة وملائكة العذاب حاضرين عنده ليحكموا فيه وإنه يترقب أيّ حكم يحكمون به، وأي شيء سوف يوصون به ؟ ومن جهة أخرى قد اجتمع ابليس واعوانه ليوقعوه في الشك ، وهم يحاولون جاهدين أن يسلبوا إيمانه ليخرج من الدنيا بلا إيمان. ومن جهة أخرى يعاني من هول حضور ملك الموت ، وبأي صورة وهيئة سوف يجيئه به ، وبأي نحو سوف يقبض روحه . الى غير ذلك.. قال أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام: "فاجتمعت عليه سكرات الموت، فغير موصوف ما نزل به ."

"He will see the Messenger of Allah and his Pure Family, peace and blessings of Allah be with them all, the angels of mercy and those of torment, all present near him as he awaits their verdict and what they will decide. On the other hand, the army of Satan and his helpers (will also be present in order to prevent him by all means from saying La ilaha illa-Allah لا إله إلا الله, There is no god save Allah, which is the key to salvation), to cast doubt in his heart and try hard to rob him of his belief (iman إيمان) so he will come out of this life without iman. At the same time, he is overwhelmed by expecting the presence of the angel of death: In what form it will approach him and how he will take his life away, etc.

The Commander of the Faithful (ع) has said: "The stupors of death surround him, so no description can be made for what has afflicted him." What about the munjiyat المنجيات during this very critical and dangerous phase, the acts of adoration which one can form during his lifetime so they may help ease or even cancel his pain of death? We are told on p. 9 of Abbas al-Qummi's precious work منازل الآخرة Manazil al-Akhira, which is the main source for this text material, that it is reported that the Messenger of Allah (ص) was present during the death of a young man. The Prophet (ص) told the dying youth to testify that لا إله إلا الله La ilaha illa-Allah (There is no god save Allah), but his tongue was tied and he could not.

Whenever the Prophet (ص) repeated his تلقين talqeen (instruction to the dying person to make a pronouncement), the dying young man could not respond. The Prophet (ص) asked a woman who was sitting at the head of the dying young man if she was his mother, and she answered in the affirmative. He again asked her if she was angry with her young son, and she again answered in the affirmative, adding that she had not spoken to him for the past six years. The Prophet (ص) asked her to be pleased with her son now, so she said, "May Allah be pleased with him on account of you being pleased with him, O Messenger of Allah."

When the mother thus expressed her pleasure with her dying son, the latter was able to pronounce لا إله إلا الله La ilaha illa-Allah. The Prophet (ص) then asked the youth to tell him about what he saw. The youth said, "I see a very dark man, very ugly, extremely smelly, wearing very filthy outfits, emitting a stench, coming in my direction, pressing on my mouth and respiratory passages." The Prophet (ص) ordered him to say:

يا من يقبل اليسير ويعفو عن الكثير، إقبل مِنِّي اليسير وأعف عَنِّي الكثير، إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
الغفور الرحيم.

"O One Who accepts little (of good deeds) while forgiving a lot (of sinning), do accept what is little [of the good deeds which I have done] and forgive a lot (of my sins); surely You are the Forgiving, the most Merciful."

The young man did as instructed by the Prophet (ص), so the Prophet (ص) asked him again about what he now saw. The dying young man said, "I now see a man with a glowing face, pleasant, smelling very nicely and wearing clean outfits coming in my direction, whereupon the dark one is going away and getting ready to depart."

The Prophet (ص) ordered the young man to repeat the statement which he had taught him then asked him once more about what he then saw. "The dark one has already gone, leaving no traces," the young man said, adding, "while the one having a glowing face remains beside me." It was at that moment that the young man passed away. This is recorded on p. 92, Vol. 1 of Mustadrak Wasa'il ash-Shi`ah. We also read on p. 380, Vol. 74 of Bihar al-Anwar that Imam Ja`far as-Sadiq (ع) has said, "One who gives an outfit to his [believing] brother, whether for the summer or for the winter, it will be incumbent upon the Almighty to outfit the first with one of the outfits of Paradise, ease the stupors of death for him and expand his resting place." The greatest Prophet (ص) has said:

من أَطْعَمَ أَخاهُ حلاوةً، أزالَ اللهُ عَنْهُ مرارةَ الموتِ

"One who feeds his Muslim brother something sweet, Allah will remove from him the bitterness of death." What also helps the dying person and eases his pain is hearing the recitation of Surat Ya-Sin (Chapter 36 of the Holy Qur'an) and Surat as-Saffat (Chapter 37) as well as "du'a al-faraj" which is:

لا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ الحليم الكريم، لا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ العليم العظيم، سبحان الله رب السماوات السبع
و رب الأرضين السبع و ما فيهن و ما بينهن و رب العرش العظيم و سلام على المرسلين، و
الحمد لله رب العالمين:

"There is no god save Allah, the Clement, the Great; there is no god save Allah, the all-Knowing, the Great; praise to Allah, Lord of the seven heavens, Lord of the seven earths and everything in them and everything between them, and the Lord of the Great `Arsh; peace be with the Messengers, and praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds."

We read on p. 33, Vol. 97, of Bihar al-Anwar that according to Imam as-Sadiq (ع), as we are told by the mentor as-Saduq, "One who fasts the last day of the month of Rajab will be placed by Allah in security against the intense pain of the stupors of death and the horror after death as well as the torment in the grave." As quoted by al-Kaf'ami on p. 397, Vol. 2, p. 397 of his Musbah, the Prophet (ص) is quoted as having said that if one recites the following supplication ten times every day, ten thousand of his major transgressions will be forgiven by Allah Who will also save him from the stupors of death and from the constriction of the grave as well as grant him security from one hundred thousands of the horrors of the Judgment Day; He will also protect him from the evil of Satan and his hosts, will pay his debts on his behalf and remove his worries and concerns; this very precious supplication, which you should share with all the ones you love, is as follows:

«أَعَدَدْتُ لِكُلِّ هَوْلٍ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ، وَلِكُلِّ هَمٍّ وَعَمٍّ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ، وَلِكُلِّ نِعْمَةٍ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ،
وَلِكُلِّ رَخَاءٍ الشُّكْرُ لِلَّهِ ، وَلِكُلِّ أَعْجُوبَةٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ ، وَلِكُلِّ ذَنْبٍ أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ ، وَلِكُلِّ مُصِيبَةٍ
إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ، وَلِكُلِّ ضَيْقٍ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ وَ نِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ، وَلِكُلِّ قَضَاءٍ وَقَدَرٍ تَوَكَّلْتُ
عَلَى اللَّهِ ، وَلِكُلِّ عَدُوٍّ اعْتَصَمْتُ بِاللَّهِ ، وَلِكُلِّ طَاعَةٍ وَمَعْصِيَةٍ لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ
الْعَظِيمِ.»

"I have prepared for every horrific thing "There is no god save Allah", for every worry and distress "The will of Allah be done", for every blessing "Praise to Allah", for every prosperity "Thanks to Allah", for every amazing thing "Blessed be Allah", for every sin "I seek forgiveness of Allah", for every transgression "We belong to Allah, and to Him shall we return", for every hardship "Allah suffices me, and how good a Helper He is!", for every decree and destiny "I have relied on Allah", for every enemy "I have sought refuge with Allah" and for every obedience and disobedience "There is neither power nor might save in Allah, the most Sublime, the most Great". Another supplication has as many as seventy merits one of which is that one who recites it will be given glad tidings at the time of his/her death; it is this:

«يَا أَسْمِعِ السَّمَاعِينَ وَيَا أَبْصِرِ النَّاطِرِينَ وَيَا أَسْرِعِ الْحَاسِبِينَ وَيَا أَحْكَمْ الْحَاكِمِينَ»

"O You, the most Hearing of those who hear, the most Seeing of those who see, the most Wise of those who decree!" Al-Kulayni has quoted Imam as-Sadiq (ع) as saying, "Do not ever be bored with reciting Surat az-Zalzala (Chapter 99 of the Holy Qur'an), for if one recites it in the voluntary prayers, Allah will keep earthquakes away from him; he will not die because of an earthquake or be struck by lightning or any of this life's catastrophes; a glorious angel will descend upon him, sit at his head and address the angel of death thus: 'Be kind to him, for he is a servant of Allah who used to recite me quite often,'" as we read on p. 331, Vol. 92, of Bihar al-Anwar.

Remember that in the life hereafter, there will be personification of everything: Each and every action or intention, good or bad deed, will have a form, a shape, an entity. Every verse of the Holy Qur'an, every chapter and the Qur'an as a whole will also have forms. So will desires, wishes, hopes, aspirations, remorse, regret, prayer, fast and all other norms of adoration: All will have forms. How one will distinguish one from the other is a faculty which will be created with him as he is re-created, re-formulated, re-born in a new form, for the hereafter is the true life awaiting all of us, so get ready for it; there is no escape from it.

But if you do not believe in the Hereafter, this book is not written for you, and it is a pity it fell in your hands; someone else can make better use of it. Also, some non-Muslims may feel "sorry" for what the Muslims will have to go through in the Afterlife, feeling happy with the thought placed in their heads by their clergymen that they had nothing to worry about, that nothing but many good things await them after they die. Muslims, however, think that all followers of religions, or those who do not follow any religion at all, are entitled to their own wishful thinking.

2. Phase Two of The 14 Phases Of The Life Hereafter: The Adeela at the Time of Death

العديلة عند الموت

The “Adeela العديلة” means one turning from right to wrong as he dies due to the presence of Satan at the time of his death who will cast doubts in his heart through his evil insinuations in order to get him out of the right creed. There are many supplications to seek protection for such `adeela.

For example, the pride of all critics, may Allah have mercy on his soul, has said that if one seeks security against Satan, he must bring into his presence the proofs of conviction and the five basic principles of Islam through irrevocable evidences, with ease of conscience, then he hands them all over to Allah Almighty so He may return them to him at the time of his death. Having stated all the right doctrines, he should say the following:

«اللَّهُمَّ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ إِلَهِي قَدْ أَوْدَعْتَنِي يَقِينِي هَذَا وَثَبَاتِ دِينِي وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ مُسْتَوْدَعٍ قَدْ أَمَرْتَنَا بِحِفْظِ الْوَدَائِعِ فَرِّدْهُ عَلَيَّ وَقْتِ حَضُورِ مَوْتِي.»

"O Lord, the most Merciful of those who show mercy: I have entrusted You with this conviction of mine, with the firmness of my creed. Since You are the best of trusted ones, and You commanded us to safe keep the trusts, do return it to me at the time when I am to die." What also helps is performing the prayer rites on time; doing so helps during such a critical stage. According to one tradition, the angel of death looks at all people five times a day, that is, during the five daily prayers, so he may teach those who perform them on time the shahada and spare him the evil of the cursed Satan. It is also highly recommended to recite the following supplication/ Qur'anic verse on every Sunday during the month of Thil-Qi'da:

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ

“Our Lord!” (they say,) “do not let our hearts deviate now that You have guided us, but grant us mercy from Your Own Presence, for You are the Giver of unlimited bounties” (Qur'an, 3:8).

Other Qur'anic Chapters that have the same effect include Suras 23 and 109.

3. Phase Three Of The Life Hereafter: Wahshat al-Qabr, Grave's Loneliness

وحشة القبر

According to the book titled Man la Yahdhuru al-Faqih, there are tremendous horrors in the grave; therefore, when the deceased person is taken to his burial spot, he must not be entered into it suddenly. He must be placed near the pit for a while so the dead person may get ready to enter it. Then one must bring him closer to it and wait a short while again after which the deceased person is to be placed in the grave. Al-Majlisi, the father, has explained the wisdom in these steps. He says that, true, the soul has already left the body, the "animal spirit" (spiritus animalis in Latin) or the moving soul; as for the "articulate soul", it is yet to sever its ties with the body:

There is fear about the grave's constriction, the questioning by Munkir and Nakeer, Ruman who tries to cause the dead to slip away into the torment, and the barzakh; so, the deceased person has a lot to worry about. Ar-Rawandi has narrated saying that Jesus Christ (ع) once addressed his mother, Maryam (Mary) (ع), after her death saying, "Speak to me, Mother! Do you wish to return to the abode of the living?" She said, "Yes, so I may perform the prayers during an extremely cold night, and so I may fast during a very hot day. O Son! This path [of the dead] is frightful, horrific." It has also been narrated that Fatima az-Zahra (peace be with her) said once to her revered husband, Commander of the Faithful Ali (ع), by way of her will:

وروي : انَّ فاطمة عليها السلام لما احتضرت أوصت علياً عليه السلام فقالت : «إذا أنا مت، فتول أنت غسلني وجهي، وصلّ عليّ وانزلي قبري وألحدني ، وسوّ التراب عليّ، واجلس عند رأسي قبالة وجهي ، فأكثر من تلاوة القرآن والدعاء فأتمها ساعة يحتاج الميت فيها إلى أنس الأحياء»

"When I die, wash my body and outfit me [with the shrouds], perform prayers for me, get me inside the grave, place the grave stone, bury me in the earth, sit at my head facing me, recite the Book of Allah and recite many supplications, for it is time when the deceased person needs the company of those alive."

We are told on p. 148, Vol. 1, of Mustadrak al-Wasa'il that Ibn Tawoos, may Allah have mercy on his soul, has quoted the Prophet (ص) as saying:

«لا يأتي على الميت ساعة أشدّ من أول ليلة فارحموا موتاكم بالصدقة ، فان لم تجدوا فليصل أحدكم ركعتين يقرأ فيهما فاتحة الكتاب مرّة وآية الكرسي مرّة ، وقل هو الله احد مرتين ، وفي الثانية فاتحة الكتاب مرّة والهاكم التكاثر عشر مرّات ويسلم ويقول : اللهم صلّ

على محمد وآل محمد وابتعث ثوابها الى قبر ذلك الميت فلان بن فلان ، فيبعث الله من ساعته الف ملك الى قبره مع كل ملك ثوب وحلة ويوسع في قبره من الضيق الى يوم ينفخ في الصور ويعطى المصلي بعدد ما طلعت عليه الشمس حسنات ويرفع له أربعون درجة»

"There is nothing harder for the deceased person than the first night in the grave; so, send mercy to your dead by offering charity on his behalf, and if one does not have charity to offer, let him perform two rek'ats (prostrations) in the first of which he should recite Surat al-Fatiha, the Verse of the Throne and twice Surat at-Tawhid (al-Ikhlās). In the second, he should recite Surat al-Fatiha followed by reciting ten times Surat at-Takathur (Chapter 102 of the Holy Qur'an). Then he should offer the tasleem [greeting the Prophet of Allah (ص)] and say, "Lord! Bless Muhammad and the Progeny of Muhammad, and send the rewards [of this prayer] to the grave of the deceased person so-and-so." Allah Almighty will then instantly send a thousand angels to the grave of that dead person. Each angel will be carrying an outfit. His grave will be widened till the trumpet is blown. The person who performs this prayer will be granted good deeds as many as the expanse of what is under the sun, and he will be raised forty stations." What also helps lessen the pain of loneliness in the grave is one during his lifelong perfecting rukoo' (bowing down) very well during the prayers. Imam al-Baqir (ع) is quoted as having said: "One who perfects his bowing down [during the performance of the daily prayers] will not feel lonely in his grave," according to p. 244, Vol. 6 of Bihar al-Anwar.

Actually, the doers of good do not have to worry about such loneliness, for angels will keep them company and they will be permitted to visit their relatives, the living or the dead, escorted by these angels, and this will be a diversion for them. Another act of munjiyat, acts that save one from penalty, is repeating a hundred times this beautiful statement: There is no god save Allah, the true and obvious King. Such act will save one from poverty in his lifetime and from loneliness in the grave in the Hereafter. He will be wealthy in this life and the gates of Paradise will be opened for him in the next.

According to p. 217, Vol. 8 of Bihar al-Anwar, one who fasts 12 days during the month of Sha`ban will be visited in his grave every day by seventy thousand angels till the trumpet is blown. Here we must point out that "every day" means days of our own counting, days of this short life, for the barzakh period precedes the Judgment Day. Starting with that Day, time will bear a different dimension. And one who goes to visit a sick person will be rewarded by Allah Who will assign an angel to visit him in his grave till the Day of Gathering, the Assembling Day. Also, it is recorded in Rawandi's Da`awat that the Prophet (ص) has said that if one recites the following supplication three times when a deceased person is buried, the torment from the latter will be lifted till the Trumpet is blown:

(اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ أَنْ لَا تُعَذِّبَ هَذَا الْمَيِّتَ)

Lord! I plead to You through the status reserved with you for Muhammad (ص) and the Progeny of Muhammad (ص) not to torment this deceased person till the Day when the trumpet is blown."

4. Stage Four of The Life Hereafter: Grave's Constriction (pressure)

ضغطة القبر

The constriction (pressure) in the grave is a very terrifying stage to the extent that it is not just difficult for the living to imagine, it is impossible to imagine. Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) has said the following about it:

«يا عباد الله ما بعد الموت لمن لا يُغفر له أشدُّ من الموت: القبر، فاحذروا ضيقه وضنكه وظلمته وغرته، إنَّ القبرَ يقولُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ: أنا بيتُ العربة! أنا بيتُ الوحشة! أنا بيتُ الدود! ، وَالقَبْرُ رَوْضَةٌ مِنْ رِيَاضِ الْجَنَّةِ أَوْ حُفْرَةٌ مِنْ حُفْرِ النَّارِ... الى أن قال: وَإِنَّ مَعِيشَةَ الضَّنْكِ الَّتِي حَدَّرَ اللَّهُ مِنْهَا عَدُوَّهُ (هي) عَذَابُ الْقَبْرِ ، إِنَّهُ يُسَلِّطُ عَلَى الْكَافِرِ فِي قَبْرِهِ تِسْعَةً وَتِسْعِينَ تَنِينًا فَيَنْهَشَنَّ لَحْمَهُ وَيَكْسِرَنَّ عَظْمَهُ، يَتَرَدَّدَنَّ عَلَيْهِ كَذَلِكَ إِلَى يَوْمِ يَبْعَثُ ؛ لَوْ أَنَّ تَنِينًا مِنْهَا نَفَخَ فِي الْأَرْضِ لَمْ تُنْبِتْ زَرْعًا. يا عباد الله: إِنَّ أَنْفُسَكُمْ الضَّعِيفَةَ وَأَجْسَادَكُمْ النَّاعِمَةَ الرَّقِيقَةَ الَّتِي يَكْفِيهَا الْيَسِيرُ تَضَعُفٌ عَنْ هَذَا».

"O servants of Allah! There is nothing harder, on those who are not forgiven, than death save the grave: So, beware of its constriction, darkness and loneliness. Each day, the grave says: 'I am the abode of loneliness! I am the abode of worms!' And the grave is either like one of the gardens of Paradise or one of the pits of Hell... Indeed, the "life of hardship" about which Allah has warned those who are hostile to Him is the torment in the grave: The unbeliever is assaulted as he is in his grave by ninety-nine dragons that tear up his flesh, crush his bones and keep visiting him thus till the Day of Resurrection. Had one of these dragons blown on earth, no vegetation would have ever grown in it. O servants of Allah! Your weak selves, tender and soft bodies which are satisfied with little, are too weak to withstand all of this." As indicated above, the sins, transgressions and wrongdoings will each take a form in the hereafter, and the worse one is the worse its form will be. What will help during this difficult situation?

Page 327, Vol. 4 of Usul al-Kafi, tradition No. 13, says that whenever Imam as-Sadiq (ع) woke up at the end of the night, he would raise his voice so his family members could hear him saying the following:

«اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى هَوْلِ الْمَطْلَعِ ، وَ وَسِعَ عَلَيَّ ضَيْقُ الْمَضْجَعِ ، اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِي الْمَوْتِ ، وَ ارزُقني خير ما قبل الموت، وَ ارزُقني خير ما بعد الموت؛ اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى سَكَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ ، اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى غَمِّ الْقَبْرِ ، اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى ضَيْقِ الْقَبْرِ ، اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى وَحْشَةِ الْقَبْرِ ، اللَّهُمَّ رَوِّجْنِي مِنَ الْحُورِ الْعِينِ»

"Lord! Help me with regard to the horror of what is awaiting me [after death] and expand for me the narrowness of the grave. Lord! Grant me a blessing at the time of death, and grant me goodness before death, and grant me goodness after death. Lord! Help me during the time of the stupors of death. Lord! Help me against the agonies of the grave. Lord! Help me against the constriction of the grave. Lord! Help me against the loneliness of the grave. And Lord! Do marry me to the huris with large, lovely eyes."

Be informed, dear reader, that most torment in the grave is due to one not paying enough attention and care while using the toilet, taking lightly the sources of najasa, uncleanness, and also due to committing calumny and backbiting as well keeping a distance from his family, according to p. 222, Vol. 6 of Bihar al-Anwar.

From a narration by Sa'eed ibn Jubair, another cause is one having bad manners with his wife, speaking to her roughly rather than with kindness and consideration. Whatever the reason may be, we are assured by Imam Ja`far as-Sadiq (ع) that "No believer is spared the grave's constriction," according to p. 221, Vol. 6 of the same reference. On p. 221, Vol. 6 of Bihar al-Anwar and on p. 74, Vol. 2 of Safeenat al-Bihar, Imam as-Sadiq (ع) is quoted as having said: "The grave's constriction is atonement for a bliss wasted by a believer." Now let us review what helps in this terrible stage of the afterlife: Luckily, there are many acts of adoration which one can perform during his lifetime which will help him in the life to come, and the book titled Manazil al-Akhira by Abbas al-Qummi counts 15 of them. But we, in order to be brief, would like to cite the following for you:

1) Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (ع) has said,

من قرأ سورة النساء من القرآن في كل يوم جمعة أمن من ضغطة القبر

"One who recites Surat an-Nisaa (Chapter 4 of the Holy Qur'an) every Friday will have security against the grave's constriction," according to p. 330, Vol. 74 of the same reference.

2) It is recorded on p. 397, Vol. 2 of Safeenat al-Bihar that

من داوم على قراءة سورة الزخرف، آمنه الله تعالى في قبره من حشرات الأرض و

الحيوانات و ضغطة القبر

"One who recites Surat an-Nisaa (Chapter of the Women [Chapter 4] of the Holy Qur'an) every Friday will be granted security in his grave from the earth's insects, animals and the grave's constriction."

3) According to the same reference and page, some traditions of the Prophet (ص) indicate that

من قرأ سورة "ن و القلم" في فريضة الصلاة أو النافلة، آمنه الله من ضغطة القبر

"If one recites Surat Noon (Chapter 68 of the Holy Qur'an which is also called Surat al-Qalam), during obligatory or optional prayers, Allah will grant him security from the grave's constriction."

4) On pp. 221 and 243, Vol. 6 of Bihar al-Anwar, we are told that Imam ar-Ridha (ع) has said:

من مات بين زوالي الخميس و الجمعة، آمنه الله من ضغطة القبر

"One who dies between the periods of zawal زوال (midday) of Thursday and Friday, he will be secured by Allah from the grave's constriction." 5)

Imam ar-Ridha (ع) is also quoted as having said:

عليكم بصلاة الليل، فما من عبد مؤمن قام آخر الليل فصلى ثماني ركعات صلاة الليل،
و ركعتين صلاة الشفع، و ركعة صلاة الوتر، و استغفر في قنوت الوتر سبعين مرة، الا و آمنه
الله من عذاب القبر، و من عذاب النار، و طال عمره، و توسعت معيشته

"Uphold the Night Prayer; no believing servant of Allah stands at the end of the night to offer 8 rek'ats (prostrations), two Shaf` rek'ats, one Witr Rek`a, then he seeks forgiveness of Allah in the Qunoot (invocation) of the Witr seventy times except that Allah will grant him security against the torment of the grave and against the torture of the Fire, grants him a longer lifespan and expands his means of livelihood for him", as we are told on p. 397, Vol. 2 of Safeenat al-Bihar where the subject of the grave is discussed.

5. Stage Five of The Life Hereafter: Questioning by Munkir and Nakeer

سؤال منكر و نكير

On p. 223, Vol. 6 of Bihar al-Anwar, Imam Ja`far as-Sadiq (ع) is quoted as having said:

«ليس من شيعتنا من أنكر ثلاثة أشياء: المعراج، المساءلة في القبر، والشفاعة»

"Not among our followers (Shi'as) is one who denies three things: the ascension [to heavens], the questioning in the grave (by Munkir and Nakeer) and the intercession." In the same reference on p. 261, we are told the following:

روي أن الملكين (منكر و نكير) يأتيان في هيئة هائلة، لهما صوت كالرعد و أعين كالبرق، يسألان: من ربك؟ و من نبيك؟ و ما دينك؟ و يسألان عن وليه و امامه، و بما أن الاجابة، في تلك الحال، صعبة على الميت، و أنه لا جرم يحتاج الى مساعدة، تعين التلقين في موضعين: أحدهما حين وضعه في القبر، و يستحسن أن يؤخذ كتفه الأيمن باليد اليمنى، و كتفه الأيسر باليد اليسرى، و يحرك و يلحق في حالة الاهتزاز و الادخال في القبر، و الثاني بعد وضعه في القبر و دفنه، يستحب أن يجلس أقرب أنسبائه، و هو ولي الميت، على رأس الميت، بعد أن تركه الباكون و غادروا المكان، و يلحق الميت بصوت مرتفع، و يستحسن به أن يضع (الملقن) كفيه على القبر، و يقرب فاه من القبر، أو يفعل ذلك من ينوب عنه، فلقد ورد أن الملكين حينما يسمعان هذا التلقين، يقول منكر لنكير: دعنا نعود، فلقد لقنوه تلقين الحجة، و لا يحتاج الى سؤال، فيترك السؤل و يعودان.

It has been reported that the two angels (Munkir and Nakeer) come in a terrifying form: Their voice is like thunder and their eyes like lightning. They will ask the dead person: "Who is your God? Who is your Prophet? What is your religion?" And they will ask him about his wali and Imam. Since the answers under such conditions will be very difficult for the dead person, and he undoubtedly needs help, the talqeen becomes a must in two places: One of them when he is placed inside the grave, and it is recommended that his right shoulder be held by the mulaqqin and his left shoulder by the left hand and moved then instructed with talqeen when his body is being shaken and entered into the grave.

The other place is after the deceased person is put in the grave and buried: It is recommended that the mulaqqin, who is a close relative and a wali of the deceased person, sits at the area of the head after everyone else had left. He should raise his voice as he conducts the talqeen, and it is recommended that the mulaqqin places both his hands on the grave and brings his mouth close to the grave. Someone else who acts on behalf of the

mulaqqin may do so. It is reported that when both angels hear the talqeen, Munkir will say to Nakeer: "Let us go back, for they have taught him the talqeen of evidence, and he needs no question," whereupon they both leave.

On p. 183, Vol. 1 of Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, we are told that Imam as-Sadiq (ع) has said the following:

«إذا دخل المؤمن القبر، حضرت الصلاة الى يمينه، و الزكاة الى شماله و أشرف عليه البر و الاحسان: أما الصبر فيستقر في جانب، فاذا حضر الملكان ليسألاه، يخاطب الصبر الصلاة و الزكاة و البر (قائلاً): أعينوا صاحبكم، يعني الميت، فان عجزتم عن ذلك، فأنا مستعد لذلك»

If the believer enters the grave, prayer come at his right and zakat at his left as kindness and benevolence look on. As for perseverance, it will stand aside. When both angels (Munkir and Nakeer) come to question him, perseverance will address prayer, zakat and kindness saying, 'Help your fellow,' meaning the deceased person, 'and if you cannot, I am ready.'" Also,

في بصائر الدرجات للصفار، ص 145 - 146 الطبعة الحجرية باسناد عن زر بن جبش قال: روي في المحاسن بسند صحيح عن احدهما عليهما السلام . يعني الامام الصادق أو الامام الباقر . قال: «إذا مات العبد المؤمن دخل معه في قبره ستة صور ، فيهنّ صورة أحسنهنّ وجهاً ، وأبهاهنّ هيئة ، وأطيبهنّ ريحاً ، وأنظهنّ صورة . قال : فتقف صورة عن يمينه وأخرى عن يساره وأخرى بين يديه ، وأخرى خلفه ، وأخرى عند رجله . وتقف التي هي أحسنهنّ فوق رأسه . فإن أوتي عن يمينه منعه التي عن يمينه، ثمّ كذلك الى أن يؤتى من الجهات الست. قال : فتقول أحسنهنّ صورة : ومن أنتم جزاكم الله عني خيراً؟ فتقول التي عن يمين العبد : أنا الصلاة. وتقول التي عن يساره : أنا الزكاة. وتقول التي بين يديه : أنا الصيام. وتقول التي خلفه : أنا الحجّ والعمرة . وتقول التي عند رجله : أنا برّ من وصلت من اخوانك. ثمّ يقلن : من أنت ؟ فأنت أحسننا وجهاً وأطيبنا ريحاً ، وأبهاً هيئة . فتقول : أنا الولاية لآل محمّد صلوات الله عليهم أجمعين .»

On pp. 145-146 of the old edition of as-Saffar's Basa'ir al-Darajat, through isnad which goes back to Zurr ibn Jubaish narrating an authentic tradition in the Mahasin book from one of them, peace be with them, namely Imams as-Sadiq and al-Baqir, saying, "When a believer dies, six faces (forms or shapes, i.e. personifications) enter the grave with him, each is more beautiful, more fragrant and more clean than the rest. These faces settle in six positions: on his right side, on his left, behind him, in front of him and at his feet. The most beautiful and the most fragrant one rests at his head. If questioning or torture approaches him from all sides, it will be prevented by one of the six faces.

The most beautiful face will ask the other faces saying: 'Who are you, may Allah reward you well on my behalf?!' The face settling at the believer's right side will say, 'I am the prayers.' The face settling on the believer's left side will say, 'I am the zakat.' The face settling opposite to the believer's face will say, 'I am the fast.' The one settling behind the believer will say, 'I am the pilgrimage', while the one settling at his feet will say, 'I am kindness and benevolence towards the believing brothers.' Everyone will then ask him about himself thus: 'And who are you with your dazzling beauty and extra-ordinary fragrance?' He will say, 'I am the wilaya (mastership) of the Progeny of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be with them all).'"

6. Stage Six of The Life Hereafter: The Barzakh

البرزخ

Is the Islamic Barzakh similar to the Catholic Purgatory? Is the God of the Muslims different from that of the Catholics?! Does He tell the Christians, Jews, Hindus, or followers of any creed differently from what He tells the Muslims?!

Of course He is not; of course He does not. The Almighty is One, the truth is one, Paradise is one, Hell is one, the human family of Adam and Eve is one...

This is the true concept of Tawhid, Brothers and Sisters, so embrace your non-Muslim brother and do not hurt his feelings or slight his faith; names of creeds are only "labels", for even rocks and stones submit to the Almighty and worship Him in their own ways. Allah will judge us all, Brother, so save your own skin, do not worry about others, and let us all NOT judge each other, let us not think of ourselves as being better than others, let us not distribute Paradise and Hell, condone or condemn others as kafirs and thus play "gods". Please.

The barzakh is one of the phases or stages through which the vast majority of people will pass; only very, very few will be exempted from it, and these belong to one of two categories:

1) people with whom the Almighty is very pleased, and these go straight to Paradise, non-stop, not even a single stop on al-Sirat al-Mustaqeem that separates Paradise from Hell where many questions await those who pass over it, questions the answers for which will determine whether one should be pushed down into hell or permitted to pass to the next phase, to salvation, hopefully, to mansions, gardens and huris already prepared and are waiting for them, and

2) people with whom He is very displeased, so He does not want His angels to waste time with them; these go straight to hell from which they will never have a respite or a parole, unlike others who may eventually be released once they have ended their period of punishment, their sentence. Neither of these two groups will go through whatever goes on inside the grave, on earth, at cemeteries that are "residential complexes" for the dead: Make sure you book your place among them in a nice neighborhood, Brother, and I am dead serious, through your good deeds; otherwise, you really will be in deep trouble.

Fortunate are those who are or who will be buried in the neighborhood of the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (ع) where there is peace and quiet, hope and anticipation, feasts and celebrations, immeasurable happiness and wonderful spirituality, where the angels stay busy bringing the residents, guests of our First Imam (ع), fruits from Paradise; after all, this is the earthly Paradise, folks, for the lucky few! We plead to the Almighty to count us and your own selves among them, Allahomma Aameen.

As for other "neighborhoods," there are screams of those who are whipped in their graves with fiery rods by angry reprimanding angels,

where pleas fall on deaf ears, torment the like of which no human being has ever heard or seen. Contrariwise, nobody will be allowed to spoil the "neighborhood" where the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (ع) is resting with noise or screams, nobody.

Instead, he (ع) overwhelms them with his kindness and affection, showers them with his gifts and boons, spreads his red carpet for them and permits them to enjoy his hospitality; how great and wonderful it is to be near the resting place of the Commander of the Faithful (ع)! Congratulations, many, many congratulations for those who are and who will be enjoying such hospitality... Do not grieve if you live far away from al-Najaf al-Ashraf, Brother, if you may be buried distantly from his sacred resting place because special angels will move you from there and lodge you near the Amir (ع) if you love him so much and try your best to follow his steps. Physical distances vanish in the world of the spirit, in the hereafter, so smile and thank the Almighty for being a Shi`a of the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع)...!

The barzakh is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in places such as this:

وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

"(There) is a barrier before them till the Day they are raised up (from their graves for judgment)" (Qur'an, 23:100).

This barrier separates this short temporal life as we know it from the other everlasting one awaiting us, but it is also one of its stages or stages, a station, if you will. On p. 71, Vol. 1 of Safeenat al-Bihar we are told that Imam as-Sadiq (ع) pointed out to the barzakh once saying, "By Allah, I fear for you the barzakh." He was asked, "What is the barzakh?" He said, "It is the grave from the moment of death till the Day of Judgment."

قال الامام الصادق عليه السلام في حديث: «ولكني والله اتخوف عليكم من البرزخ. قيل

له: وما البرزخ؟ قال: القبر منذ حين موته الى يوم القيامة.

It has been cited from ar-Rawandi's book Lubb al-Lubab that those in the graves go to call upon their families, offspring and relatives and tearfully plead to them saying: "O our children!! O our families! O our relatives! Have mercy on us and bestow upon us of the good things with you and the good deeds, and do remember us, may Allah have mercy on you. We have sat in narrow prisons, bearing many worries and concerns; so, do not be too miser to pray for us and to pay alms on our behalf before your fate becomes similar to ours, perhaps Allah will have mercy on us all. Alas!

We used to be like you, enjoying blessings, but we did not spend in the way of Allah, so our wealth turned into a calamity on our heads while others benefited from it; so, listen to us and do not forget to do us a favor with a dirham or a loaf of bread or whatever you wish, for you shall join us; you

shall weep and your tears will not do you any good, just as we do although we find doing so to be futile. Work hard and seize the opportunity before it is gone and before your condition will be similar to ours."

ونقل عن لبّ الباب للقطب الراوندي قال: وفي الخبر كان الموتى يأتون فيقفون ، وينادي كل واحد منهم بصوت حزين باكياً : يا أهلاه ! يا ولده ! وياقربته ! اعطفوا علينا بشيء يرحمكم الله ، واذكرونا ولا تنسونا بالدعاء ورحموا علينا وعلى غربتنا ، فاتا قد بقينا في سجن ضيق ، وغمّ طويل وشدة ، فارحمونا ، ولا تبخلوا بالدعاء والصدقة لنا لعل الله يرحمنا قبل أن تكونوا مثلنا. فواحسرتاه قد كنّا قادرين مثل ما أنتم قادرون فيا عباد الله : اسمعوا كلامنا ولا تنسونا فانكم ستعلمون غداً فانّ الفضول التي في ايديكم كانت في أيدينا فكنا لانفق في طاعة الله ، ومنعنا عن الحقّ ، فصار وبالاً علينا ومنفعةً لغيرنا . اعطفوا علينا بدرهم أو رغيف أو بكسرة. ثم ينادون ما أسرع ما تبكون على انفسكم ولا ينفعكم كما نحن نبكي ولا ينفعنا فاجتهدوا قبل أن تكونوا مثلنا.

Is the barzakh similar to the purgatory? Catholics believe that the purgatory is a place where the souls of the dead are cleansed before receiving God's grace, and such cleansing includes atonement through pain. This seems to be close to the Islamic concept because the Almighty punishes many of His servants in the grave in order to affect justice so He may not punish them again in hell.

This does not apply to everyone, however, because some sinners are punished in this life, in the grave and in hell as well. This "purging" in which the Catholics believe may be close to the "grave's constriction" detailed above. It is also stated in some traditions that this constriction, or the torment in the grave, is one of the manifestations of the Almighty Who does not wish to torment His servants twice; so, the grave is the last stage where they have to "pay" for some of their sins.

But it is better, of course, to avoid such torment by doing simple things in this life that will spare you having to go through it, in other words, the munjiyat, acts bringing salvation, the easiest of which is recitation of supplications on a regular basis and helping others morally and financially, that is, those who deserve to be helped as explained in the Qur'an and Sunnah. The best way to offer charity, of course, is to give with the right hand what the left does not know, that is, let it be a secret you keep to yourself; do not make a show of it and thus lose its rewards. In the reference Jami` al-Akhbar, we read the following on p. 197:

ذكر صحابي عن الرسول الأعظم (ص) أنه قال: "إبعثوا بهداياكم إلى موتاكم" فسئل عن هدايا الموتى، فقال: "الصدقة و الدعاء ."

A companion of the Greatest Prophet (ص) cited the Prophet (ص) as saying, "Send your gifts to your dead." He was asked about what gifts could be sent to the dead, so he said, "Charity and supplication."

If you read the classic reference written by al-Harrani titled Thawab al-A`mal, you will see how rewards for good deeds multiply by many times, starting from the tenfold promised in the Almighty for a good deed and go up the ladder till they reach an astronomical figure of one hundred thousand times. Who will be rewarded so many times and for what? One who offers charity on behalf of both his deceased parents will receive them. If his parents still living, he will receive in the hereafter ten thousand times as much as he gives away as charity in the life of this world on their behalf.

But if you have no money to pay charity, supplications will do. A combination of both is the best, though, if you really want to shun many horrors awaiting us in the hereafter and to live a very happy and blissful life here and hereafter.

و فيه أيضا عن النبي الكرم (ص) أنه قال: إذا تصدق أحدكم لميت، فإن ملكا يحملها في طبق من نور، تمتد أشعته حتى تبلغ السماوات، فيقف على حافة القبر، و ينادي بأعلى صوته: السلام عليكم يا أهل القبور، هذه هدية أهلکم إليکم! فيتسلمها الميت، و يدخلها قبره، و يتسع بها مضجعه. ثم قال رسول الله (ص): إعلموا أنه من ترحم على ميت بصدقه، فله أجر عند الله مثل جبل أحد، و هو يوم القيامة تحت ظل عرش الله، إذ لا ظل سواه يومذاك و ينجو بالصدقه الأموات و الأحياء .

In the same reference, that is, Jami` al-Akhbar, we read the following on the same page: "The Revered Prophet (ص) has been quoted as saying, 'If one of you offers charity on behalf of a deceased person, an angel carries it on a platter of noor (celestial light) the rays of which extend and reach the heavens. He stands at the edge of the grave and calls out as loudly as he can, saying: Peace be with you, O people of the graves! This is a gift sent to you by your family! The deceased person receives it and takes it with him inside his grave: It expands his resting place..."

Then the Messenger of Allah (ص) added saying, "Be informed that when someone seeks mercy for a deceased person through offering charity on his behalf, he will get rewards as large as the Uhud Mountain, and he will be on the Judgment Day under the shade of Allah's `Arsh when, on that Day, there will be no shade other than it, and charity will be the salvation of the dead and of the living."

Here we must point out that many writers write about the thirst and hunger of the Judgment Day but do not say much about the darkness which will engulf the bad ones. There are many references to the noor, celestial light, that will shine through and for the good ones on that Day, whereas the bad ones will be terrified because they will have no noor that will enable them to see what is around them, and they will most likely suffer from the stench of the pus coming out of the bodies of many in their company whose bodies will be smitten by the angels of torture.

Contrary to their condition is enjoyed by those whom the Almighty will bless on that Day: These will have noor, shade on their heads rather than

heat and be brought drinks and fruits from Paradise as they watch others being tried, that is, court marshaled! On p. 59, Vol. 74 and on pp. 573-4 of Zad al-Ma`ad, we read the following statement by Imam as-Sadiq (ع):

قال الامام الصادق (ع) يرد الصوم و الصلاة و الصدقة و الحج و الأدمية و الخيرات على الميت في قبره، و يكتب ثواب جميع الأعمال للميت و لفاعل الخير معا

"Fast, prayers, charity, pilgrimage, supplications and good deeds reach the deceased person inside his grave, and the rewards of all deeds done on behalf of the deceased person will be recorded as they are for the doer of these deeds."

7. Stage Seven of The Life Hereafter: Qiyama, Judgment Day

القيامة يوم

Belief in the Day of Judgment is one of the basic principles of the Islamic creed and of almost all other creeds, including primitive non-divine ones. For example, if you ask an Eskimo in the North Pole what will happen when one of his folks dies, he will tell you that he will be placed in his husky dog-pulled chariot with plenty of food and clothes. The dogs will be told to pull it wherever they want, and he will be taken to a place reserved for the dead with which the huskies are familiar.

There, he will return to life and, if he is good, the Eskimo will go on, the place to which the dogs will take him will be very nice and warm: The food and clothes will keep recreating themselves indefinitely. And we know how the ancient Egyptians used to bury their dead with food, clothes and jewelry due to their belief in the hereafter. Such belief is innate, natural, instinctive, deeply ingrained in the human nature. Islam portrays the Judgment Day as follows:

القيامة من منازل الآخرة المهولة، بل هو لها أشد الأحوال و أعظمها، و فرعها أكبر فرع، و قد وصفها الله (تبارك و تعالى) في القرآن: "يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي لَا يُجَلِّيهَا لِوَفِّيَّتِهَا إِلَّا هُوَ تَقُلْتُ فِي السَّمَاءَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا تَأْتِيكُمُ إِلَّا بَعْتَةٌ يَسْأَلُونَكَ كَأَنَّكَ خَفِيٌّ عَنْهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

They ask you about the Hour (of Resurrection) when its appointed time will be. Say: "The knowledge of this is with my Lord (alone): None but He can reveal when it will occur; its burden will be weighty throughout the heavens and the earth. It will come but suddenly to you". They ask you as if you were solicitous of it; say:

"The knowledge of it is with Allah (alone), but most men do not know"

(Qur'an, 7:187).

On p. 312, Vol. 6 of Bihar al-Anwar, we read the following:

روى الراوندي عن الصادق من آل محمد (عليهم السلام) إن عيسى بن مريم (عليه السلام) سأل جبرائيل: متى تقوم القيامة؟ فارتعش جبرائيل حتى سقط على الأرض مغشيا عليه و أغمي عليه، و لما صحا، قال: يا روح الله، ليس المسؤول بأعلم من السائل عن أمر القيامة، ثم تلى الآية التي مر ذكرها

"Ar-Rawandi has quoted Imam as-Sadiq (ع) saying that Jesus son of Mary (peace be with him) asked Gabriel once: "When shall the Judgment Day be?" Gabriel shook till he fell on the ground conscious, and he lost his consciousness. When he woke up from it, he said, "O Ruhullah (Spirit of

Allah)! The asked person does not know about it more than the questioner." Then he recited the above verse.

روي أنه لما كان النبي (ص) يذكر القيامة، يتغير صوته و يشتد، و يحمر وجهه الشريف

It has been narrated that whenever the Prophet (ص) mentioned the Judgment Day, his voice would change and intensifies, and his holy face would change color. There are many munjiyat, acts of salvation, that can help during this terrifying Day about which so many Chapters and verses of the Holy Qur'an warn. Here are some of them:

1) On p. 293, Vol. 7 of Bihar al-Anwar, we read the following:

روي أنه من قرأ سورة يوسف (ع) كل يوم أو كل ليلة، يبعث يوم القيامة جميلاً كجمال

يوسف (ع)، و لا يستولي عليه فزع يوم القيامة الأكبر

"One who recites Surat Yousuf (Chapter 12 of the Holy Qur'an) every day or every night will be resurrected on the Judgment Day as beautiful as Yousuf (Joseph) (peace be with him) used to be, and he will not be overtaken by the greatest fright of the Judgment Day." On p. 295 of the same reference, Imam al-Baqir (ع) is quoted as having said:

من قرأ سورة الدخان في فرائضه و نوافله، فإن الله تعالى يبعثه مع الأمنين المطمئنين

One who recites Surat al-Dukhan (Smoke, i.e. Chapter 44 of the Holy Qur'an) in his obligatory as well as voluntary prayers will be resurrected by Allah in the company of those who will be secure and contented." And the Imam (ع) has also said the following as we read on p. 298 of the same reference:

من قرأ سورة الأحقاف كل ليلة أو كل جمعة، لا يستولي عليه الخوف في الدنيا، و يجعله

الله تعالى في أمان يوم القيامة

"Whoever recites Surat al-Ahqaf (Chapter 46 of the Holy Qur'an) every night or every Friday will not be overtaken by fear in the temporary life, and Allah Almighty will grant him security on the Judgment Day." On p. 298,

Vol. 7 of the same reference, the Imam (ع) is quoted as having said:

من قرأ سورة "و العصر" في نوافله، يبعث يوم القيامة ناصع الوجه، مشرق الحيا، قرير

العين، تبدو على شفثيه البسمة الى أن يدخل الجنة

One who recites Surat al-Asr (Chapter 103 of the Holy Qur'an) in his voluntary prayers will be resurrected on the Judgment Day with a bright face, shiny forehead, cooled eyes and a smile painted on his lips till he enters Paradise."

2) On p. 302, Vol. 7 of the same source, al-Kulayni cites Imam as-Sadiq

(ع) as having said that the Messenger of Allah (ص) has said:

من إحترم الذي بيض شعره في الإسلام، جعله الله في أمان من فزع القيامة الأكبر، و لا يخاف منه

"One who shows respect to a person who grows grey hair while being Muslim will be granted by Allah security against the greatest fright of the Judgment Day and he will not fear that Day."

3) He is also quoted, as stated in the same reference and on the same page, as having said:

من مات في طريق مكة في ذهابه إليها أو إيابه عنها، كان آمنا من فزع القيامة الأكبر، و لا يخاف منه "

One who dies on his way going to Mecca or returning from it will be secure against the greatest fright of the Judgment Day, and he will not fear that Day." And on p. 57 of the same source, as-Saduq quotes him as having said:

من مات في أحد الحرمين، أي حرم مكة و حرم المدينة، زادها الله شرفا و تعظيما، بعثه الله مع الذين لا يخافون، و هم في أمان يوم القيامة

"One who is buried in the holy precincts of Mecca the Venerable or in Medina, may the Almighty increase their honor and glory, will be secure and resurrected by Allah in the company of those who do not fear and will enjoy security on the Judgment Day."

4) On p. 303, Vol. 7 of Bihar al-Anwar, it is indicated that as-Saduq has narrated saying that the Messenger of Allah (ص) said:

من تهيأت له فاحشه أو شهوه، فتخلى عنها و تجنب التورط فيها خوفا من الله تعالى جل و علا، حرم الله عليه نار جهنم، و جعله في أمان من هول القيامة و خوفها

"If one had the opportunity to commit a sin or satisfy a lustful desire but he let it pass by and avoided being involved in it out of his fear of Allah, the most Sublime, the most Great, Allah will prevent the fire of Hell from coming near him and will grant him security against the horror of the Judgment Day and of its fright."

5) The same source cites the Prophet (ص) as having said:

من عادى نفسه و لم يعاد الناس، جعله الله في أمان من فزع يوم القيامة

"If one opposes his desires while not being hostile to people, Allah will grant him security against the greatest fear of the Judgment Day."

6) The great mentor, Sheikh Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi, as we read in Vol. 62 of the same reference, has quoted Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (ع) as having said:

من كظم غيظه و هو قادر على تنفيذه و تطبيقه، ملاً الله تعالى قلبه بالإيمان و الأمان

"If one suppresses his anger while being able to carry its dictates out and implement them, Allah will fill his heart with conviction and security."

7) Allah Almighty has said the following in the Holy Qur'an:

"Whoever does a good deed will be rewarded with better than it, and these will be secure against the fright of that Day" (Qur'an, 27:89).

A footnote on p. 117, Vol. 7 of Bihar al-Anwar cites the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع) commenting about the "good deed," the "hasana", in this verse by saying: "The doing of good in this verse is knowing about, accepting the mastership of and loving us, we Ahl al-Bayt (ع) (immediate family of the Prophet (ص))."

8) In the same reference, we are told that as-Saduq has quoted Imam as-Sadiq (ع) as saying:

من أعان أخاه المغموم الضمآن بما في وسعه، و أراحه من همه و غمه، أو أعانه في قضاء حاجته، فله من الله تعالى إثنان و سبعون رحمة، يعطيه الله في الدنيا رحمة واحدة، و بما يصلح الله أمر معاشه، و يدخر له إحدى و سبعين رحمة الباقية لأهواله و فزعه يوم القيامة

"One who helps his distressed and thirsty brother as much as he can, or if he relieves him of his worry and concern, or if he helps him take care of something, he will receive from Allah Almighty seventy-two blessings:

Allah will grant him in the life of this world one blessing whereby He repairs his livelihood while saving his remaining seventy-one blessings for the horrors and fright of the Judgment Day."

More munjiyat, acts of adoration that result in one's salvation, are stated on the pages of al-Qummi's Manazil al-Akhria to which we refer the reader.

8. Stage Eight of The Life Hereafter: Al-Hashr, The Gathering

الحشر

It starts when one comes out of his grave, having a new form with which he is not familiar, and it is one of the three most critical times through which a human being has to go. Prophet Isa (Jesus Christ), peace be with him, refers to these three stages during which he will see nothing but peace as we read in verse 33 of Surat Maryam, a chapter in the Holy Qur'an named after his saintly mother, Maryam (Mary), where Jesus is quoted by the Almighty as saying on the very first day when he was born, a miracle which testified to his extra-ordinary birth to an extra-ordinary Lady, the Mistress of the world of her time, the following:

"So peace is upon me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I shall be raised up to life (again)!" (Qur'an, 19:33).

In Surat al-Ma`arij (Chapter 70 of the Holy Qur'an), the Almighty says the following:

فَدَرَهُمْ يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ، يَوْمَ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ سِرَاعًا
كَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ نُصَبٍ يُوْفُضُونَ، خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ

"So leave them to plunge into vain talk and play until they encounter the Day they have been promised. (It is) the Day on which they will come out of their sepulchers in sudden haste as if they were rushing to a goal-post (fixed for them), their eyes lowered in dejection, ignominy covering them (all over). Such is the Day they are promised" (Qur'an, 70:42-4).

On p. 111, Vol. 7, of Bihar al-Anwar, we read the following text:

روي عن ابن مسعود أنه قال: كنت جالسا في محضر أمير المؤمنين (عليه السلام)، فقال:
في القيامة خمسون موقفا، وكل موقف ألف سنة. الموقف الأول هو الخروج من القبر، يجبس
الناس فيه ألف سنة حفاة عراة جياعا عطاشي، فمن خرج من جدته مؤمنا بالله و الجنة و
النار و البعث و الحساب و القيامة، و مقرا بالله، و مصدقا لنبيه و ما أنزل من الله تعالى،
نجا من الجوع و العطش.

"In the Hereafter, there will be fifty stations: Each station lasts a thousand years. The first station is getting out of the grave. People will be confined in it for a thousand years barefoot, hungry and thirsty. Whoever comes out of his grave believing in Allah, in Paradise and Hell, in the Accounting and the Judgment, admitting Allah as the Lord, believing in His Prophet and in what Allah Almighty had revealed to him, will be saved from hunger and thirst."

The Holy Qur'an refers to these fifty thousand years in the following verse:

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ

"The angels and the spirit ascend to Him in a Day whose measure is fifty thousand years" (Qur'an, 70:4).

In Nahjul-Balagha, the Commander of the Faithful Ali (ع) says the following:

و ذلك يوم يجمع الله فيه الأولين و الآخرين لنقاش الحساب، و جزاء الأعمال، خضوعا
قياما قد أجمعهم العرق، و رجفت بهم الأرض، و أحسنهم حالا من وجد لقدميه موضعا، و
لنفسه متسعا

"It is the Day on which Allah gathers the early generations and the last to discuss settling accounts and to reward good deeds. People will be submissive as they stand stifled by sweat, the earth having shaken underneath their feet. The best condition among them all is one who can find a foothold and a space." Obviously, the reckoning will take place on the same earth on which humans have been living for many years, but the earth will not be the same: All mountains will be then be flattened, all water in the seas and the oceans would have been turned into fire: The oxygen will be separated from the hydrogen and set ablaze:

وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ وَإِذَا الْعُشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ

"When the mountains vanish (like a mirage); when the she-camels, ten months with young, are left untended; when the wild beasts are gathered together, and when the oceans boil over with a swell" (Qur'an, 81:3-6).

Notice the verse saying: "And when the wild beasts are gathered together" which indicates that the Day of Gathering will not be confined to humans but also to animals as well:

All those who, without a justifiable cause, harmed these animals will have to account for their sins on that horrific Day, and this proves to you how Islam cares so much not only about humans but also about animals. One can write a book about "animal rights in Islam" and compare these rights with the abuse these servants of the Almighty receive at the hands of either ignorant or selfish humans, but let us not get into that now. As for the last verse, No. 6, the one referring to the oceans "boiling over with a swell", I think it is a weak translation of what should be something like this: "And when the oceans are set ablaze."

The earth will be flattened in order to make room for all billions of humans and animals and perhaps birds as well; it will be like a thin disk. Mentor al-Kulayni, as cited on p. 197, Vol. 7 of Bihar al-Anwar, quotes Imam al-Baqir (ع) as saying:

ان الله تبارك و تعالى يبعث يوم القيامة أناسا من قبورهم، غلت أيديهم و ربطت إلى
أعناقهم لدرجة أنهم لا يستطيعون أن يأخذوا بأيديهم قدر أمله، و معهم ملائكة يلومونهم
بشدة و يقولون: هؤلاء منعوا الخير القليل عن الخير الكثير، و هؤلاء هم الذين منحهم الله
من عطايه، فامتنعوا عن أداء حقوق الله من أموالهم

"Allah, the most Blessed and the most Exalted One, will send on the Judgment Day people out of their graves: Their hands are tied to their necks to the extent they cannot take an iota of anything in their hands. The angels will be with them chastising them harshly and saying: "These (folks) prevented the doing of small acts of goodness while plenty was at their disposal. These are the ones whom Allah granted out of His boons, yet they did not pay what belonged to Allah from their wealth."

In the same reference and on the same page, mentor as-Saduq quotes the Messenger of Allah (ص) as saying the following in a lengthy tradition:

من وشى بين شخصين، سلط الله عليه في قبره نارا تحرقه إلى يوم القيامة، و إذا ما خرج من قبره و حفرته، سلط الله عليه حيه سوداء تقطع لحمه إلى أن يدخل النار

"If one drives a wedge between two persons, Allah sends a fire in his grave that burns him till the Judgment Day. Once he gets out of his grave, Allah will send on him a black snake that will tear his flesh apart till he enters hell." The Prophet (ص) is also quoted in the same reference as having said:

من ملاء عينه من النظر إلى المرأة الغريبة، حشره الله يوم القيامة مسمرا بمسامير ناربه حتى يحكم الله بين الناس، فيحكم عليه أن يؤخذ إلى النار

"If one fills his eyes with looking at a stranger woman, Allah will gather him on the Judgment Day nailed with nails of fire till Allah judges among the people. He will then rule to throw that man into the fire of hell." He (ص) is also quoted on the next page of the same reference as having said the following:

شارب الخمر يحشر يوم القيامة مسود الوجه، مائل العينين معتمة، معوج الفم، يسيل اللعاب منه، و قد أخرج لسانه من قفاه

"One who drinks wine will be gathered on the Judgment Day with a black face, his eyes are dark and slanted, his mouth twisted, saliva pouring down his mouth and his tongue sticking out of his back." Sheikh as-Saduq, as stated on p. 198 of the same reference cited above, has quoted Imam as-Sadiq (ع) as saying:

أنه من أزال عن مؤمن همه و غمه، أزال الله عنه هموم الآخرة و غمومها، و يخرج من قبره مفرج القلب مثلجته

"If one removes the worry and the agony of another believer, Allah will remove from him the worries and the agonies of the Hereafter, and he shall come out of his grave with a happy and cooled heart." Both al-Kulayni and as-Saduq, as stated in the same reference, narrate a lengthy tradition from Sadeer, the money exchanger, citing Imam as-Sadiq (ع) saying:

يحشر الله المؤمن من قبره و معه تمثال و نظير، و كلما رأى المؤمن من أهوال القيامة، قال له التمثال: لا تحف و لا تحزن فإن لك البشرى من الرحمن. و يديم على بشارته حتى يبلغ موقف الحساب، فيحاسبه الله حسابا يسيرا و يأمر له بالجنة و التمثال أمامه. فيقول المؤمن للتمثال: رحمك الله، فقد كنت لي خلا حسنا، خرجت معي من القبر، و داومت على بشارتي بالسور و كرامة الله تعالى إلى أن تحققت لي، فمن أنت؟ فيجيبه التمثال: أنا السور الذي أدخلته في قلب أخيك المؤمن في الدنيا، و قد خلقتني الله لأبشرك بالسور الدائم و الفرح المداوم.

"Allah gathers a believer, once he is out of his grave, in the company of an image and a like form. Whenever the believer sees horror in the Hereafter, the image says to him, "Do not worry and do not grieve, for you have the glad tidings from the most Merciful One." He keeps telling him such glad tidings till he takes his place for the judgment. Allah will then be easy on him as He judges him. He will order him to be lodged in Paradise. The image will still be standing in front of him, so the believer will ask it, "May Allah have mercy on you! You have been a good companion to me: You came out with me from the grave and continued to give me glad tidings of happiness and honor from Allah Almighty till this became a reality for me; so, who are you?!" The image will answer him saying, "I am the pleasure which you entered into the heart of your believing brother in the temporary life, and Allah created me so I may inform you of the continuous happiness and incessant pleasure."

On p. 168, Vol. 7 and p. 380, Vol. 74 of the same reference, mentor al-Kulayni narrates saying that Imam as-Sadiq (ع) has also said:

من كسا أخاه المؤمن كسوة الشتاء أو الصيف، فقد أوجب الله على نفسه أن يكسوه ملابس الجنة و يسهل عليه مشاق الموت، و يوسع عليه قبره، و تبشره الملائكة بالبشرى حين خروجه من قبره إشارة الى هذه الآية الكريمة: "لا يَحْزُنُهُمُ الْفَرَجُ الْأَكْبَرُ وَتَتَلَقَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ: هَذَا يَوْمُكُمْ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ .

"One who gives his believing brother an outfit for the winter or for the summer obligates Allah to clothe him from the outfits of Paradise, removes the hardships of death from him, expands his grave for him and the angels convey the glad tiding to him when he comes out of his grave as referred to in this sacred verse:

'The angels welcome them saying: This is your Day which Allah promised you!' (Qur'an, 21:103)."

9. Stage Nine of The Life Hereafter: Al-Mizan, The Scales of Deeds

الميزان

It is one of the terrifying stages/stages of the hereafter; the Almighty says the following in Surat al-A`raf:

وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ، فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ، وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَظْلِمُونَ .

"And truly We shall recount their whole story with knowledge, for We were never absent (at any time or place). The balance that Day will be (absolutely) true: Those whose scales (of good deeds) will be heavy will prosper" (Qur'an, 7:8-9).

Following is Surat al-Qari`a, Chapter of the noise and clamor that announce the reckoning:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ: الْقَارِعَةُ: مَا الْقَارِعَةُ؟ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ؟ يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوثِ وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ فَأَمَّا مَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ، وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ، وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا هِيَ؟ نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. The (Day) of noise and clamor: What is the (Day) of noise and clamor? And what will explain to you what the (Day) of noise and clamor is? (It is) a Day on which men will be scattered about like moths, and the mountains will be like carded wool. It is then that one whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) heavy, he will be in a life of good pleasure and satisfaction. But if one's balance (of good deeds) will be (found) light, he will have his home in a (bottomless) pit (of hell). And what will explain to you what this (pit) is? (It is) a fiercely blazing Fire" (Qur'an, 101:1-11).

It is called so because it hammers on the hearts with fear and terror. We read the following on p. 64 of al-Qummi's book Manazil al-Akhira:

إعلم أنه ربما لا يساوي عمل لترجيح كفة الميزان في ثقله مثل الصلاة على النبي الكريم و آله البررة (صلوات الله عليهم أجمعين) و مثل الخلق الحسن

Be informed that perhaps there is nothing that tilts the scales of good deeds due to its weight like blessing the Venerable Prophet and his righteous progeny, peace and blessings of Allah be with them all, and like good manners. On p. 49, Vol. 2 of Safeenat al-Bihar, we read the following:

سأل من روى الحديث : كيف نصلي على مُجَدِّ وآله؟ فقال الصادق (عليه السلام): تقول: صلوات الله و صلوات ملائكته وانبيائه ورسله وجميع خلقه على مُجَدِّ وآل مُجَدِّ والسلام عليه وعليهم ورحمة الله وبركاته . قال الراوي : فسألت الامام: ما ثواب من صلى على النبي

هكذا؟ فقال الصادق (عليه السلام): ثوابه الخروج من معاصيه وسيئاته، اي انه يتطهر منها كمن ولد من أمه .

"The person who narrated this tradition asked Imam as-Sadiq (ع): 'How should we bless Muhammad and his progeny?' The Imam (ع) said, 'You should say: Blessings of Allah, of His angels, prophets and messengers and all creation be with Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad; greeting upon him and upon them, the mercy of Allah and His blessing.' The narrator said, 'I asked the Imam (ع): What is the reward of one who thus blesses the Prophet (ص)? The Imam (ع) said: Its reward is one coming out of his transgressions and sins, that is, he will be purged of them as though he has just been born."

On p. 443, Vol. 4 of the Tafsir book by Sheikh Abu al-Fitooah ar-Razi, we read the following text:

روى الشيخ أبو الفتوح الرازي عن رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) أنه قال: في ليلة المعراج، عندما وصلت إلى السماء، رأيت ملكاً له ألف يد، وفي كل يد ألف إصبع، كان يعد بأصابعه. فسألت جبرائيل عن اسمه ووظيفته وعمله، فقال: إنه ملك موكل على عدد قطرات المطر النازلة إلى الأرض. فسألت الملك: هل تعلم عدد قطرات المطر الساقطة على الأرض منذ أن خلق الله تعالى الأرض؟ فاجاب الملك قائلاً: يا رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم)، والذي بعثك بالحق نبياً إلى الخلائق، إني لأعلم عدد قطرات المطر النازلة من السماء إلى الأرض عامة، كما أعلم الساقطة في البحار والقفار والمعمورة والمزروعة والأرض السبخة والمقابر. قال النبي (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم): فتعجبت من ذكائه وذاكرته في الحساب. فقال الملك: يا رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم)، ولكني بما لدي من الأيدي والأصابع وما عندي من الذكرة والذكاء، فإني أعجز عن عد أمر واحد. فقلت له: وما ذاك الأمر؟ قال: إذا اجتمع عدد من أفراد أمتك في محفل وذكروا اسمك فصلوا عليك، فحينذاك أعجز عن حفظ ما لهؤلاء من الأجر والثواب إزاء صلواتهم عليك .

Sheikh Abu al-Fitooah ar-Razi has quoted the Messenger of Allah, peace and salutation of Allah be with him and his progeny, saying, "In the Ascension Night, when I reached the heavens, I saw an angel having a thousand hands. In each hand he had a thousand fingers. He was counting with his fingers. I asked Gabriel about his name, function and job. Gabriel said, 'He is an angel in charge of counting the drops of water that fall to the ground.' I asked the angel, 'Do you [really] know the number of rain drops

that fall on the earth since Allah Almighty created the earth?' The angel answered saying, 'O Messenger of Allah (peace and salutation of Allah be with him and his progeny), by the One Who sent you in truth as a Prophet to the creation, I know the number of the rain drops that fall from the sky to the earth, all of it. I also know those that fall in the seas, on the deserts, on inhabited areas, on farms, on salty land and on the grave sites.' The Prophet (peace and salutation of Allah be with him and his progeny) said, 'I was amazed at his intelligence and memory in calculation.'

The angel, therefore, said, 'O Messenger of Allah (peace and salutation of Allah be with him and his progeny), but despite all the hands, fingers, memory and intelligence, I am unable to count one thing.' I said to him, 'What is it?' He said, 'If some members of your nation gather together, mention your name and bless you, it is then that I am unable to calculate how many rewards they will receive for having blessed you.'"

Also, al-Kulayni, the mentor, articulated the following after having performed the prayers ritual in the afternoon of a Friday:

روى الشيخ الكليني ذيل صلوات عصر الجمعة: اللهم صلي على محمد وآل محمد الأوصياء المرضيين بأفضل صلواتك وبارك عليهم بأفضل بركاتك، والسلام عليه وعليهم ورحمة الله وبركاته. إنه من قرأ هذه الصلوات سبع مرات، فإن الله يرد عليه بعدد كل عبد حسنة، وعمله مقبول يوم القيامة، ويأتي يوم القيامة و بين عينيه نور .

Lord! Send Your peace upon Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad, the wasis, the pleased ones, bless them with the best of Your blessings, peace be with him and with them, the mercy of Allah and His blessings. Anyone who recites this supplication seven times will be rewarded by Allah with rewards the number of which equals that of all of His servants; his good deeds will be accepted on the Judgment Day, and he will come out on the Judgment Day with noor (celestial light) shining between his eyes."

On p. 49, Vol. 2 of Safeenat al-Bihar, we read the following text:

روي أنه من قال بعد صلاة الصبح والظهر: اللهم صلي على محمد وآله وعجل فرجهم واحشرنا معهم وارزقنا شفاعتهم، فإنه لا يموت الا و مدرك القائم من آل محمد (عليهم السلام)

"One who recites the following after the morning and afternoon prayers will not die before seeing al-Qa'im [al-Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance] from among the progeny of Muhammad, peace with them all: 'Lord! Bless Muhammad and his progeny, speed up their ease, gather us in their company and grant us their intercession.'"

10. Stage Ten of The Life Hereafter: Al-Hisab, The Reckoning

الحساب

The reckoning is one of the most terrifying of all stages of the hereafter, so much so that the hereafter is often referred to, as a whole, as "the Day of Reckoning". Numerous verses in the Holy Qur'an refer to it, emphasizing its significance and urging the faithful to prepare themselves for it with good deeds and acts of adoration, the latter cannot be accepted if the former are not. Some of the verses which refer to reckoning and to the fact that people take it lightly are these:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. اقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُونَ، مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ مُّحَدَّثٍ إِلَّا اسْتَمَعُوهُ وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ، لَاهِيَةً قُلُوبُهُمْ وَأَسْرَأُ النَّجْوَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا: هَلْ هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ؟ أَفَتَأْتُونَ السَّحَرَ وَالْأَنْثَمُ تُبْصِرُونَ؟ قَالَ رَبِّي يَعْلَمُ الْقَوْلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ، بَلْ قَالُوا أَضْغَاتٌ أَلْحَامٍ، بَلْ افْتَرَاهُ، بَلْ هُوَ شَاعِرٌ، فَلْيَأْتِنَا بِآيَةٍ كَمَا أُرْسِلَ الْأَوْلُونَ: مَا آمَنَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ مِّن قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا، أَفَهُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ؟

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Mankind's reckoning comes closer and closer: Yet they do not heed, and they turn away. (Nothing) ever comes to them of a renewed message from their Lord except that they listen to it as in jest, their hearts toying with trifles. The wrongdoers conceal their private counsels (saying), 'Is this more than a man like your own selves? Will you yield to witchcraft with your eyes open?' Say: 'My Lord knows (every) word (spoken) in the heavens and the earth: He is the One Who hears and knows (all things).' 'No,' they say, '(these are) medleys of dreams! No, he forged it! No, he is (but) a poet! Then let him bring us a Sign like the ones that were sent to (Prophets) of old!' (As for those) before them, not one of the populations which We destroyed believed: Will these believe?" (Qur'an, 21:1-6).

Another reference is this:

وَكَايِن مِّن قَرْيَةٍ عَتَتْ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهَا وَرُسُلِهِ فَحَاسَبْنَاهَا حِسَابًا شَدِيدًا وَعَدَّبْنَاهَا عَذَابًا نُكَرًا، فَذَاقَتْ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهَا وَكَانَ عَاقِبَةُ أَمْرِهَا خُسْرًا: أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَدْ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا: رَسُولًا يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ لِّيُخْرِجَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا، قَدْ أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ لَهُ رِزْقًا

How many generations that insolently opposed their Lord's command and (that) of His Prophets did We call to account, to a severe account? And We imposed on them an exemplary punishment. Then they tasted the evil result of their conduct, and the end of their conduct was perdition. Allah has prepared a severe punishment for them (in the hereafter). So fear Allah, O you men of understanding who have believed, for Allah has

indeed sent down a message for you, a Prophet who rehearses God's Signs to you, containing clear explanations, so that he may lead forth those who believe and do righteous deeds from the depths of darkness into the light. And those who believe in Allah and do righteous deeds He will admit into gardens beneath which rivers flow to dwell therein forever: Allah has indeed granted a most excellent provision for them" (Qur'an, 65:8-11).

Just as there are numerous references to reckoning in the Holy Qur'an, there are also numerous references to it in the Sunnah of the Prophet (ص): Many traditions warn the believers about its woes and perils. On p. 258, Vol. 7 of Bihar al-Anwar, we read the following:

روى الشيخ الصدوق (رحمة الله عليه) عن طريق أهل البيت (عليهم السلام) أنه قال رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم): لا تتحرك قدما عبد من عباد الله، إلا وأن يسأل عن أربعه: عن عمره فيم أفناه، و عن شبابه فيم قضاه، و عن ماله من أين وجدته، و فيم صرفه، و عن محبتنا نحن أهل البيت

Sheikh as-Saduq (may Allah have mercy on him) has narrated through the path of Ahl al-Bayt (peace with them) saying that the Messenger of Allah (peace and salutation of Allah be with him and his progeny) said:

"The feet of a servant of Allah do not move before he is asked about four things: his lifespan and how he spent it, his youth and what he did during it, his wealth and where he found it and how he spent it and about love for us, we Ahl al-Bayt (ع)."

On p. 267 of the same reference, we read the following:

روى الشيخ الطوسي (رحمة الله عليه) عن الامام الباقر (عليه السلام) أنه قال: أول ما يحاسب عنه العبد الصلاة، إن قبلت قبل ما سواها

Sheikh at-Tusi (may Allah have mercy on him) has narrated from Imam al-Baqir (peace with him) saying: "The first thing about which a servant of Allah is questioned is prayer. If it is accepted, everything else is accepted."

On p. 274 of the same reference, we read the following:

روى الشيخ الصدوق أن الدائن يأتي يوم القيامة و يشتكي، فاذا كان للمدين حسنات، تؤخذ منه للدائن، و ان لم تكن له حسنات، فتؤخذ من معاصي الدائن و تضاف الى معاصي المدين .

"Sheikh as-Saduq has narrated saying that the creditor comes on the Judgment Day and complains. If the borrower has good deeds, they (some of them if not all) will be taken away and given to the creditor. But if he has

no good deeds, some of the sins of the creditor will be taken and added to those of the borrower."

On p. 82 of *Manazil al-Akhira*, we read the following:

إعلم أن بعض المحققين قد قال: لا ينجو من مخاطر الحساب و دقائق الميزان إلا من حاسب نفسه في الدنيا و آختر شخصه بميزان الشرع الاسلامي و كذلك أعماله و أقواله و أفعاله و سيئاته و لحظاته و حركاته و سكناته، فقد قالوا: حاسبوا أنفسكم قبل أن تحاسبوا

"Be informed that some critics have said: Nobody is spared the perils of reckoning and the precisions of the scales except one who holds himself to account in the short life and tests his person according to the scales of the Islamic Shari`a, applying the same to his actions, statements, deeds, sins, looks, motion and stillness, for they have said: Hold yourselves to account before you yourselves are held to account."

11. Stage Eleven of The Life Hereafter: Tasleem Safeet al-A`mal

تسليم صحيفة الأعمال

It is another terrifying stage of the Judgment Day when the list of deeds is delivered to the one it belongs to. The Almighty has made a number of references to this book of deeds; here are some of them:

وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ،

When the scrolls are laid open" (Qur'an, 81:10)

And also these verses:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا، وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُو ثُبُورًا وَيَصْلَى سَعِيرًا

"He who is given his book in his right hand, soon his account will be taken by an easy reckoning, and he will turn to his people, rejoicing! But whoever is given His record behind his back, He will soon cry for perdition, and he will enter a blazing Fire" (Qur'an, 84:7-12).

On p. 314, Vol. 7 of Bihar al-Anwar, al-Ayyashi quotes Imam as-Sadiq

(ع) saying:

إذا قامت القيامة، تعطى لكل واحد قائمة أعماله و يقال له: اقرأ، و يذكره الله جميع أعماله بالنظر إلى تلك الصحيفة، و كذلك جميع أقواله، و خطواته و غيرها و كأنه قالها و فعلها و خطاها في الحال، فيقولون: "يا ويلتنا، ما لهذا الكتاب لا يغادر صغيرة و لا كبيرة إلا أحصاها؟"

When it is Judgment Day, everyone will be handed over his list of deeds, and it will be said to him, 'Read!' Allah will remind him of all his deeds through looking at this tablet, and the same applies to his statements, steps and everything else, as if he said, did or treaded them instantly. People will say, 'Woe unto us! Why does this book not leave out the recording of anything, be it small or big?!'" (Qur'an, 18:49).

Ibn Qawlawayh has quoted Imam as-Sadiq (ع) as saying:

من زار قبر الحسين (عليه السلام) في شهر رمضان و مات في سفر زيارته للحسين (عليه السلام)، فلا يتعرض لأمر أو حساب و يقال له: أدخل الجنة لا خوف عليك

"If one visits the gravesite of Imam al-Hussain (ع) during the month of Ramadan and dies during his trip to visit al-Hussain (ع), he will not be exposed to anything, nor will he be held to account, and it will be said to him, "Enter Paradise, you shall not fear." `Allama al-Majlisi, may Allah

have mercy on him, has quoted Imam ar-Ridha (ع) through two reliable isnads as saying:

من زارني على بعد قبري، أتيتته في مواطن ثلاثة: يوم القيامة لأنقذه من أهوالها، و عند تطاير كتب المحسنين إلى يمينهم، و صحائف المجرمين إلى شمائلهم، و على الصراط، و على الميزان

"If one comes from a distance to visit my gravesite, I shall go to him on three occasions: on the Judgment Day to save him from its woes, when the books of the doers of good are flown to their right hands, when the tablets of the criminals are flown to their left, on the Sirat [path between Paradise and Hell] and at the Mizan (scales of deeds)." In the book titled Al-Haqq al-Yaqeen الحق اليقين, it is indicated that al-Hussain ibn Sa'eed has quoted Imam as-Sadiq (ع) as having said:

إذا أراد الله أن يحاسب مؤمنا، أعطاه كتابه بيمينه، و يحاسبه فيما بينه و بينه دون أن يطلع على حسابه أحد، و يقول له: عبدي، لقد فعلت كذا و كذا، فيجيب العبد: إلهي، لقد فعلته. و يقول الله تعالى: غفرت لك و بدلته إلى حسنات. فيقول الناس: سبحان الله! إن هذا العبد لم يقترب ذنبا، و لم يرتكب قبيحا، و هذا معنى قوله تعالى: " فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا " (الإنشقاق، 7-9) . فسأل الراوي: أي أهل يقصد بهذا الأهل؟ هل يصحب المؤمن أهله الذين كانوا معه في الدنيا؟ قال الصادق (ع): إذا أراد الله بعبد سوءا حاسبه جهرا أمام الخلائق و أتم عليه حجه و أعطاه كتابه إلى شماله، كما قال الله تعالى: " وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُو ثُبُورًا وَيَصَلَّى سَعِيرًا، إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا " - يعني في الدنيا-، " إِنَّهُ ظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ يَخُورَ " يعني أنه لن يعود - و هذا يشير إلى أن أيدي الكفار و المنافقين تغل و تقيد و تسلم صحائفهم إلى شمالهم، و إلى هاتين الحالتين أشير في أدعية الوضوء عند غسل اليدين: " اللهم أعطني كتابي بيميني و خلودي في الجنة بشمالي، و حاسبني حسابا يسيرا، و لا تعطني كتابي عن شمالي و لا وراء ظهري، و لا تغل يدي إلى عنقي . "

"If Allah wants to hold a believer to account, he gives him his book [of deeds] in his right hand and judges him between Himself and the believer without anyone seeing it. He will then say to him, 'My servant! You have done this and that.' The servant will say, 'Lord, I have done it.' Allah Almighty will say, 'I have forgiven you and change it into good deeds.' People will say, 'Blessed be Allah! This servant of Allah did not commit a

sin, nor did he do anything contemptible!' This is the meaning of the verse of the Almighty:

Then whoever is given his record in his right hand, soon his account will be taken by an easy reckoning, and he will turn to his people, rejoicing!' (Qur'an, 84:7-9).

The narrator asked, 'What is meant by his people (his family)? Does the believer accompany his folks who used to be with him in this life?' Imam as-Sadiq (ع) said, 'If Allah wants something bad to afflict His servant [on account of the latter's deeds], He will try him before all creations, complete His argument against him then gives him his book in his left hand as Allah Almighty has said:

Truly he thought that he would not have to return (to Us)!' (Qur'an, 84:14).

This points towards the hands of the unbelievers and hypocrites being tied and chained and their tablets delivered on their left side. It is to both these conditions that the supplications related to ablution refer: 'Lord! Give me my book in my right hand and my eternity in Paradise on my left; do judge me easily and do not give me my book on my left or behind my back, and do not tie my hands to my neck.'

12. Stage Twelve of The Life Hereafter: As-Sirat al-Mustaqeem, The Straight Path

الصراط المستقيم

It is also one of the most terrifying stages/stages of the Hereafter if not the very most. It is described in both Holy Qur'an and authentic Sunnah in numerous verses and traditions due to its significance, so much so that the faithful are reminded of it ten times a day in their obligatory daily prayers and in all optional ones, nawafil, when they recite Surat al-Fatiha, the Opening Chapter to the Book of Allah, the Qur'an. Following is a good deal of more information about this Sirat; so, keep reading.

On pp. 103-105, Vol. 46 of Bihar al-Anwar, we read detailed descriptions of this Sirat, and additional text is indicated on pp. 69-71 of the same reference. Here is some of the text on the latter pages:

هو جسر ممدود على جهنم، لا يدخل الجنة إلا من اجتازه. و جاء في الروايات أنه أدق من الشعرة و أحد من السيف و أصلى من النار. يعبره خالص المؤمنين كالبرق الخاطف، و بعضهم يعبره بصعوبة لكنه يجتازه و ينجو بنفسه. و بعض المارة يسقطون في جهنم من بعض عقبات الصراط. و هو نموذج من صراط الدنيا المستقيم حيث الدين الحق و طريق الولاية، و متابعة أمير المؤمنين و ذريته الأئمة الطاهرين (صلوات الله عليهم أجمعين)، فمن مال عن هذا الصراط الدنيوي و عدل عنه إلى الباطل قولاً أو عملاً، فقد ارتجف من عقبة صراط الآخرة و سقط إلى الجحيم، و الصراط المستقيم الذي تجده في سورة الحمد في القرآن الكريم يشير إلى صراط الدنيا و صراط الآخرة كليهما .

"It is a bridge extended over Hell: Nobody enters Paradise without successfully passing over it. Traditions indicate that it is thinner than hair, sharper than the sword and hotter than fire. Sincere believers cross over it like lightning that snatches the eyes. Some of them pass over it with difficulty but they pass it and are thus saved, whereas others fall into Hell from one of the obstacles on this Sirat. It is a sort of this life's As-Sirat al-Mustaqeem where true faith, the path of the wilaya, is to follow in the footsteps of the Commander of the Faithful and the Purified Imams (peace of Allah be with all of them): Anyone who swerves from this worldly path and leans towards falsehood by speech or by action, the obstacle of the Hereafter's Sirat will shake under his feet, causing him to fall into hell. As-Sirat Al-Mustaqeem which you find in Surat al-Hamd in the Holy Qur'an points out to both Sirats: the one in this life and the one in the hereafter."

In his book titled Al-Haqq Al-Yaqeen, where he quotes Al-'Aqa'id by Sheikh as-Saduq, may Allah have mercy on his soul, al-Majlisi states the following:

إننا نعتقد أن كل عقبة من العقبات التي تعترض سبيل المحشر هو إسم لفريضة من الفرائض - الأوامر و النواهي - فإذا وصل الإنسان الى عقبة مسماة بإسم فريضة، و كان مقصرا في ذلك الواجب، اوقف في تلك العقبة و طلب منه تأدية حق الله تعالى بالنسبة لذلك الواجب. فإن إستطاع الخروج من تلك العقبة بالأعمال الصالحة التي قدمها، أو برحمة من الله تشملها، فقد خرج و اجتاز تلك العقبة بالذات، و مدة التوقيف في كل عقبة ألف سنة، و تتوالى العقبات، و تتواصل التوقيفات و تنهال الأسئلة و الإستنطاق عما يعود إلى مسمى إسم تلك العقبة من الواجب و الفريضة، حتى إذا أجب عن جميع ما عليه بما يجب من حسن الإجابة، إنتهى من العقبة الأخيرة إلى دار البقاء و سرح سراحا جميلا، و يحيى حياة خالدة لا موت فيها و لا بوار، و يسعد سعادة لا شقاء فيها و لا دمار، و يسكن إلى جوار رحمة ربه مع النبيين و الحجج و الصديقين و الشفعاء و الصالحين و حسن أولئك رفيقا. أما إذا استجوب في عقبة من العقبات، و طلب منه حق قصر في تأديته في الدنيا، و لم يقدم عملا صالحا يكافئ ذلك التقصير، و لا تدركه رحمة من الله تعالى لينجو من تلك العقبة، فتزل قدمه في تلك العقبة و يسقط منها إلى الهاوية و الجحيم، و نعوذ بالله من ذلك الأمر. و جميع هذه العقبات على الصراط، تسمى واحده منها الولاية، يتوقف فيها جميع الخلائق، فيسأل عن ولاية أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب و الأئمة الطاهرين من بعده، فإذا كان قد أتاها و إتبعها فقد نجا و اجتاز هذه العقبة، و إلا فقد هوى إلى الجحيم. قال تعالى: "وَقَفُّهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ مَسْئُولُونَ" (الصفات: آية 24)، و أهم العقبات هي المرصاد: "إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمُرْصَادِ" (الفجر: آية 14). يقول الله تعالى: بعزتي و جلالتي لا يفوتني ظلم ظالم. و تسمى عقبة أخرى بعقبة الرحم، و أخرى بالأمانة، و أخرى بالصلاة، و هكذا فإِنَّ لكل فريضة أو أمر من أوامر الله، أو نهي من نواهي، يقف المرء ليجيب عما هو مسؤول عنه .

"We believe that each of the obstacles along the path to the Gathering represents the name of one of the obligations, i.e. what the Almighty has commanded or prohibited. If someone reaches an obstacle bearing the name of an obligation, and if he had fallen short of performing that obligation, he will be stopped at it and will be required to pay what he owes Allah Almighty. If he can get out of that obstacle through the good deeds which he had done, or there may be mercy from Allah which will include him, he will get out and pass that particular obstacle. The time period of keeping anyone at each of these obstacles is a thousand years. The obstacles continue, following each other; questions go on and arguments are pursued about what each station represents: the obligations and the commandments. If one

answers duly, he will pass by the last station to the abode of eternity and will be released most beautifully:

He will live a perpetual life where there is neither death nor loss, and he will taste happiness where there is neither misery nor destruction. He will live beside the mercy of his Lord with the prophets, the Signs of Allah, the Truthful Ones, the ones who can intercede on behalf of others, the righteous ones whose company is truly the very best. But if he is asked at one of the obstacles and required to make up for falling short of performing it during his lifetime, if he did not offer an act of righteousness to make up for that shortcoming, and if he is not saved through mercy from Allah Almighty that rescues him from that obstacle, his feet will slip in that area and he will fall from it into the abyss and into Hell, we seek refuge with Allah against this. All these obstacles are on the Sirat. One of them is called the wilayat (mastership of or loyalty to the Imams from among the Ahl al-Bayt (ع)): All people will be stopped at it and asked about the wilayat of the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abu Talib and the Pure Imams after him (ع). If one was observing this wilayat, adhering to it, he will pass this obstacle; otherwise, he will fall into Hell. Allah Almighty has said

"But stop them, for they must be asked" (Qur'an, 37:24).

And the most important of these obstacles is the Mirsad:

"For your Lord is (as a Guardian) on a watch-tower" (Qur'an, 89:14).

Allah Almighty says: "By My Honor and Greatness (do I swear) that no oppression committed by an oppressor escapes My knowledge." Another obstacle is called the kinship obstacle. Another is called amana, trust (something entrusted for safe keep to someone), another is called salat, prayer, and so on:

لكل فريضه من الفرائض - الأوامر و النواهي - يوقف العبد عندها ليحيب عما هو

مسؤول عنه

Each obligation - what is commanded and what is prohibitive - has an obstacle at which the servant of Allah is stopped to answer about his responsibility towards it."

On p. 65, Vol. 8 of Bihar al-Anwar, we read the following:

فترى الناس على الصراط يسقطون كالفرش المبتوث، و ترى آخرين قد تعلقوا بأيديهم أو بيد واحده أو بأرجلهم و هم يمسكون خوفا من الهبوط و الملائكة حولهم واقفون يدعون و ينادون: أيها الرب الحليم، اغفر لهؤلاء و اعف عن هؤلاء بفضلك و جودك، و سلمهم ليجاوزوا الصراط و يقطعوا الصراط. فمن اجتاز الصراط برحمة الله الواسعة، قال: الحمد لله،

و بنعمة الله تتم صالحات الأعمال، و تنمو الحسنات، و أحمد الله الذي نجاني منك بفضله و منه، بعد أن كنت قد يئست، ان ربنا لأعمال العباد لغفور شكور

"So you would see people on the Sirat falling like scattered butterflies while others are holding to it with their hands or feet or even with one foot fearing they would fall down as the angels around them stand, call upon the Almighty and plead to Him saying: 'O Clement Lord! Forgive these people, overlook them through Your favor and generosity, let them safely pass on the Path and cross it.' Whoever passes the Path does so through wide mercy from Allah and says, 'Praise to Allah and through a blessing from Allah that good deeds are sealed and blessed actions grow, and I praise Allah Who saved me from you through His favor and boon after I had lost all hope; surely our Lord forgives the servants' [sinful] deeds, appreciative [of good deeds]'. "

On p. 410, Vol. 22 of the same reference, we are also told that the great sahabi Abu Tharr al-Ghifari, Allah is pleased with him, has cited the Messenger of Allah (ص) saying:

الرحم و الأمانة على طريقي الصراط، فمن وصل الرحم و أدى الأمانة، سار على الصراط،
فإن طريقي الصراط يحفظانه من السقوط و الهبوط في النار

"Kinship and trust are at both ends of the Path: Whoever maintains good relations with his kinsfolk and returns the trust safely will pass over the Path, for both ends of the Path shall protect him against falling into the Fire." In another narrative, Imam al-Baqir (ع) said:

إذا ورد قاطع الرحم و خائن الأمانة الصراط، فإن أعماله الحسنة لا تنفعه ما دامت له
هاتان الخصلتان و تسقطانه في النار

"If one who severed his ties and betrayed the trust reaches the Path, his good deeds will not avail him so long as both these characteristics were in him, and they will cause him to fall into the Fire (of hell)."

May the Almighty have mercy on us in this life and the life to come and enable us to keep our feet firm on His Straight Path and admit us into His Paradise, Allahomma Ameen.

Good deeds that make the passage on the Sirat easy:

According to p. 639 of the book الأعمال إقبال by Ibn Tawoos, one who offers 21 rek'as after the sunset prayers in the eve of the first of the month of Rajab in each rek'a of which he recites both Surat al-Hamd (Chapter 1) and Surat at-Tawhid (Chapter 112), then he recites the tasleem after each couple of prostrations will be protected by the Almighty, and his family, wealth and children will be protected, too, and he will be granted security from the torment in the grave. Moreover, he will pass over the Sirat without any questioning like lightning.

من صلّى أول ليلة من شهر رجب بعد صلاة المغرب عشرين ركعة بالحمد والتوحيد ،
ويسلم بين كل ركعتين ليحفظ في نفسه وأهله وماله وولده، وأجير من عذاب القبر، وجزاز
على الصراط كالبرق الخاطف.

On p. 136 of Thawab al-A`mal, we are told that one who fasts six days during the month of Rajab will be secure on the Day of Reckoning and will pass over the Sirat without being asked any questions.

من صام من رجب ستة أيام ... بعث من الآمنين يوم القيامة حتّى يمرّ على الصراط بغير حساب.

Ibn Tawoos also narrates that one who performs ten rek'as during the 29th eve of the month of Sha'ban, reciting in each rek'a Surat al-Hamd once and at-Takathur (Chapter 102) ten times, in addition to both Chapter 113 and Chapter 114 ten times each and Surat at-Tawhid (Chapter 112), he will be granted by the Almighty rewards of those who exert their utmost in learning the creed and in teaching it, making his scale of good deeds heavier and easing for him to pass over the Sirat like lightning.

مَنْ صلّى في الليلة التاسعة والعشرين من شعبان عشر ركعات يقرأ في كل ركعة فاتحة الكتاب مرّة وألهاكم التكاثر عشر مرّات ، والمعوذتين عشر مرّات، وقل هو الله أحد عشر مرّات، أعطاه الله تعالى ثواب المجتهدين، وثقل ميزانه، ويخفف عنه الحساب، ويمرّ على الصراط كالبرق الخاطف.

On p. 102, Vol. 34 of Bihar al-Anwar, we are told that one who performs the ziyara of Imam ar-Ridha (ع) despite his grave being so far, the Imam will visit him at three places on the Judgment Day in order to save him from their horrors, and one of these horrors is the Sirat.

من زار الامام الرضا عليه السّلام على بعد قبره الشريف، فإنّه يأتيّ عنده يوم القيامة في ثلاثة مواطن ليخلصه من أهوالها ، وإنّ أحدها عند الصراط.

What will happen after all of these stages/stages? The answer is very simple: One will be led either to eternal happiness in Paradise or to damnation in hell. And surely Allah knows best.

Conclusion

This Concludes the Phases or Stages of the Hereafter, And We Hope The Reader has benefitted from this small book, small in size but great in content.

Please pray that the Almighty enables the writer of these words to fulfill his task in serving Islam and Muslims; may you, your family, relatives and everyone who is near and dear to you be eternally blessed, Allahomma Aameen.

www.alhassanain.org/english