

Third hadith

وعن ابن مسعود رضي الله عنه قال: خَطَّ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَطًّا مُرَبَّعًا، وَخَطَّ خَطًّا فِي الْوَسْطِ خَارِجًا مِنْهُ، وَخَطَّ خُطَطًا صِغَارًا إِلَى هَذَا الَّذِي فِي الْوَسْطِ مِنْ جَانِبِهِ الَّذِي فِي الْوَسْطِ، فَقَالَ: هَذَا الْإِنْسَانُ، وَهَذَا أَجَلُهُ مُحِيطًا بِهِ أَوْ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِهِ وَهَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ خَارِجٌ أَمَلُهُ وَهَذِهِ الْخُطَطُ الصِّغَارُ الْأَعْرَاضُ، فَإِنْ أَخْطَأَ هَذَا، نَهَشَهُ هَذَا، وَإِنْ أَخْطَأَ هَذَا نَهَشَهُ هَذَا

Ibn Mas'ud reported; "The Prophet (pbuh) drew up a square and in the middle of it he drew a line, the end of which jutted out beyond the square. Further, across the middle line, he drew a number of smaller lines. Then he said; 'The figure represents man and the encircling square is the death which is encompassing him. The middle line represents his desires and the smaller lines are vicissitudes of life. If one of those misses him, another distress him, and if that one misses him, he falls victim to another.'"³⁰⁸

The analysis of the hadith

Bukhari, Tirmidhi and Ibn Mājah recorded this hadith in their hadith collections. Death encompasses human beings and there is no way to escape from it. Whenever people finish their lifespan they have leave this world for no one is spared from this reality. Life is exposed to misfortunes and if a person escapes from one, he comes across the other. People are in continuous struggle against calamities, turmoils and turbulences of this world. Indeed, all these troubles, remind human beings that they will die therefore they should prepare for the Afterlife. However, their life remains entangled in unending hopes and wishes. They never fulfil their endless desires until they are caught by death. Therefore, Believers are supposed to be prepared for death before they come to its borderline. There is no end to desires, but life is limited. Pursuing illusory wishes and desires will not change the fact of the death for it is inescapable.

Human beings have endless dreams and wishes. They are inclined to forget the reality of death. They make many projects to actualize as if they never die. However, misfortunes, calamities and the trials of life never let them to be free. The Prophet sated that 'human beings are surrounded with ninety-nine misfortunes, even they escape from all they are caught by old age.'³⁰⁹

Ali, the fourth Caliph, expressed the reality of death beautifully; 'the world walks towards its end while the Afterlife runs towards us so fast. Among people, there are seekers of this world or the otherworld. You should choose the Afterlife and not waste your life with worldly pleasures. Today, there is work but no accounting and tomorrow, there is accounting but no work.'³¹⁰

Contemporary Muslim scholar Said Nursī expressed his feelings about the temporary pleasures of this world in his way: "Alas! We have been deceived. We thought that this worldly life is constant, and thus lost it thoroughly. Indeed, this passing life is but a sleep that passed like a dream. This life, having no foundation, flies like the wind. Those who rely on

³⁰⁸ Bukhari, *Sahīh*, Riqāq, 4; Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, Qiyāma, 22.

³⁰⁹ Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, Qiyāma, 22.

³¹⁰ Bukhari, *Sahīh*, Riqāq, 5.

themselves and think they will live forever certainly will die. They race toward death, and this world, humanity's home, falls into the darkness of annihilation. Ambitions are time-bounded, but pains endure in the spirit."³¹¹

Fourth hadith

وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: بَادِرُوا بِالْأَعْمَالِ سَبْعًا، هَلْ تَنْتَظِرُونَ إِلَّا فَقْرًا مُنْسِيًّا، أَوْ غِنًى مُطْغِيًّا، أَوْ مَرَضًا مُفْسِدًا، أَوْ هَرَمًا مُفَنِّدًا، أَوْ مَوْتًا مُجْهِزًا، أَوْ الدَّجَالَ، فَشَرُّ غَائِبٍ يُنْتَظَرُ، أَوْ السَّاعَةُ وَالسَّاعَةُ أَذْهَى وَأَمْرٌ

Abū Hurayra reports that Messenger of God (pbuh) said: “Hasten to do good deeds before you are overtaken by one of the seven afflictions; ‘are you waiting for poverty which will make you unmindful of devotion, or prosperity which will make you corrupt, or a disease which will disable you, or senility which will make you mentally unstable, or sudden death which will take you all of a sudden, or antichrist (Dajjal) who is the worst expected, or the Hour; and the Hour will be most grievous and most bitter.”³¹²

The analysis of the hadith

Tirmidhi recorded this hadith and holds that it is a *ḥasan* (fine) hadith which is a category between *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) and *daʿīf* (weak). The narrators in the hadith transmission chain are not in the highest category in terms of reliability and retentive memory, but neither in the level of weak people. Therefore, it is a *ḥasan* hadith and it is permissible to act accordingly.

Human beings can be inflicted with various misfortunes and calamities. The world is a place of trial and people have to pass it before meeting with their Lord. Indeed, God declared this fact many times in the Qurʾān including;

“Do people reckon that they will be left (to themselves at ease) on their mere saying, ‘We believe’, and will not be put to a test?”³¹³

“We will certainly test you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives and fruits (earnings); but give glad tidings to the persevering and patient.”³¹⁴

“Know that your possessions and your children are but a trial and temptation, and God is He with whom there is a tremendous reward.”³¹⁵

The hadith mentioned seven elements of worldly trial and warned Believers to be careful about them. Poverty is the first one. Sometimes, people may forget their devotional duties due to extreme workload. In order to feed his family a person may work a lot and ignore his duties toward God. Poor is closer to be ungrateful to God. The Prophet seeks refuge in God

³¹¹ Said Nursī, *Words*, p. 228.

³¹² Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, Zuhd, 3.

³¹³ Qurʾān 29: 2.

³¹⁴ Qurʾān 2: 155.

³¹⁵ Qurʾān 8: 28.

against poverty in his supplications. Lack of provision and needs may bring great distress to poor and under this pressure; they may be unmindful of devotion.

The second element of test for human beings is prosperity which will make them corrupt. Spiritually weak people may be corrupted with money and wealth. They may think to live this life as they wish and waste it by seeking worldly pleasures and not avoiding the forbidden acts. With money, they will be able to fulfil the wishes of their carnal desires while neglecting the duties to God such as zakat and charity.

Third and fourth elements of the trial are related to health; a disease which will disable people, or senility which will make them mentally unstable. The diseases may be physical or mental. However, in any circumstances Believers do not complain but endure it patiently. Before losing their health, they should do their best concerning the Afterlife.

The fifth element in the hadith is sudden death which will take people all of a sudden. This part is directly related to the remembrance of death and preparation after it. People may think to postpone their repentance to old age for their sins. They may wish to start practising the religious obligations later when they get old. However, as mentioned earlier, there is no guarantee for anybody that he/she will live long. Therefore, wise person utilizes every moment of his/her life in preparation to the Afterlife. In this regard, the remembrance of death motivates people to do righteous deeds and avoid the sins.

Antichrist (Dajjal), the worst expected is the sixth trap for people on the path to God. It is very difficult to be safe against antichrist's delusion for he will do some wonders and extra ordinary things to convince people to his lordship. However, with God's mercy, Believers can pass this test too, because they are not deceived with his illusions.

The last element of test in the hadith is the Hour or end of time that will be most grievous and most bitter. The most grievous calamity is the Hour for everything will be destroyed in the universe. There are many verses in the Qur'ān that describe the events which will take place during that time. But, believers will be safe with God's mercy.

“When the sun is folded up (and darkened); And when the stars fall (losing their luster); And when the mountains are set moving; And when (highly prized) pregnant camels are left untended; And when the wild beasts (as also the domesticated ones) go forth from their places of rest (in terror of the destruction of the world, and then, following their revival, are gathered together before God, for the settlement of their accounts); And when the seas rise up boiling; And when the souls are coupled (the righteous men with pure, righteous spouses, and the evil ones with their evil spouses and with devilish companions); And when the female infant, buried alive, is questioned for what crime she was killed; And when the scrolls (of the deeds of every person) are laid open; And when the heaven is torn away (with all the truths becoming manifest); And when the Blazing Flame is kindled (to fierce heat); And when Paradise is brought near (for the God-revering, pious to enter); Every person will (then) come to know what he has prepared (for himself).”³¹⁶

³¹⁶ Qur'an 81: 1-14.

“When the heaven is cleft open; And when the stars fall in disorder and are scattered; And when the seas burst forth (spilling over their bounds to intermingle); And when the graves are overturned (and pour out their contents); Everyone will come to understand all (the good and evil) that he has forwarded (to his afterlife while in the world), and all (the good and evil) that he has left behind (undone). O human! What is it that deludes you concerning your Lord, the All-Munificent? He Who has created you, fashioned you, and proportioned you (in measures perfect for the purpose of your creation); Having constituted you in whatever form He has willed. No indeed! But (being deluded) they deny the Last Judgment (in the other world); Yet there are angel-guardians (watching) over you –Noble and honorable, recording, who know what you do.”³¹⁷

Fifth hadith

وعنه قال: قال رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَكْثَرُوا ذِكْرَ هَادِمِ اللَّذَاتِ

Abu Hurayra reports that Messenger of God (pbuh) said; “Remember more often the destroyer of pleasures (death).”³¹⁸

The analysis of the hadith

Tirmidhi recorded this hadith and holds that it is a *hasan* (fine) hadith which is a category between *sahih* (authentic) and *da'if* (weak). Nasāi and Ibn Mājah also collected the hadith in their Sunan. The Prophet advised Believers to remember death often for the evil-commanding soul (nafs) becomes saddened by such imagining and gives up its fancies, evil desires and ambitions.

Children makes homes from sand at beach and play with them for some time and then ruin them. Life in this world and death are similar to this game. Human beings make many projects and plans but death ruins their hopes and far-reached ambitions. Whole works and struggling lose their meaning by death.

One day a Companion from Ansār came to the Prophet and asked him, ‘who is best among Believers?’ The Prophet replied as ‘the one who is best in moral values’. The Companion asked again, ‘who is the most intelligent O Messenger of God?’ The Prophet said, ‘the one who remembers death often and makes preparations after it’.³¹⁹

Islam established balance between this world and the next one. People should work to earn their life and provide food to their family but they should never forget the Afterlife. The Qur’an emphasized on this point and warned people about it;

³¹⁷ Qur’an 82: 1-12.

³¹⁸ Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, Zuhd, 4; Nasāi, *Sunan*, Janāiz, 3; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, Zuhd, 31.

³¹⁹ Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, Zuhd, 31.

“But seek, by means of what God has granted you, the abode of the Hereafter (by spending in alms and other good causes), without forgetting your share (which God has appointed) in this world.”³²⁰

Each world should be taken into consideration according to their value and duration. Attention for the temporary world should be equal to its value and duration. The eternal life deserves the most part of our attentions.

Sixth hadith

وعن أبي بن كعب رضي الله عنه: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا ذَهَبَ ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ، قَامَ فَقَالَ: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ جَاءَتْ الرَّاحِفَةُ تَتَّبِعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ، جَاءَ الْمَوْتُ بِمَا فِيهِ، جَاءَ الْمَوْتُ بِمَا فِيهِ قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي أَكْثَرُ الصَّلَاةِ عَلَيْكَ، فَكَمْ أَجْعَلُ لَكَ مِنْ صَلَاتِي؟ قَالَ: مَا شِئْتَ قُلْتُ الرُّبْعَ؟ قَالَ: مَا شِئْتَ، فَإِنْ زِدْتَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكَ قُلْتُ: فَالْصَّف؟ قَالَ: مَا شِئْتَ، فَإِنْ زِدْتَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكَ قُلْتُ: فَالْتَلْتَيْنِ؟ قَالَ: مَا شِئْتَ، فَإِنْ زِدْتَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكَ قُلْتُ: أَجْعَلُ لَكَ صَلَاتِي كُلَّهَا؟ قَالَ: إِذَا تُكْفِي هَمَّكَ، وَيُغْفِرُ لَكَ ذَنْبَكَ

‘Ubayy bin Ka’b reports that when one-third of the night would pass, Messenger of God (pbuh) would get up and call out, “O people, remember God. The first blowing of the Trumpet that will shake the whole universe and thus cause all life to cease has come, followed by the second blowing that will restore life and thus mark the Resurrection Day. Death has approached with all that it comprises. Death has approached with all that it comprises.” I said; ‘O Messenger of God (pbuh), I frequently invoke God to elevate your rank. How much of my supplications should I devote to you?’ He said, “You may devote as much as you wish.” When I suggested a quarter, he said, “Do whatever you wish, but it will be better for you if you increase it.” I suggested half, and he said, “Do whatever you wish, but it will be better for you if you increase.” I suggested two-thirds, and he said, “Do whatever you wish but it will be better for you if you increase it.” I said, ‘Shall I devote all my supplications invoking God to elevate your rank?’ He said, “Then you will be freed from your worries and your sins will be forgiven.”³²¹

‘Ubayy ibn Ka’b

‘Ubayy ibn Ka’b, also known as Abu Mundhir (the father of Mundhir), was from the tribe of the Bani Khazraj in Medina. He was a companion who accepted Islam early and gave pledge of allegiance to the Prophet at Aqabah before the migration to Medina. He was one of the scribes who wrote the Qur’ān and was one of the twenty-five people who knew the Qur’ān completely by heart. His recitation was so beautiful that the Prophet encouraged his companions to learn the Qur’ān from him.

One day, the Prophet, said ‘O Ubayy ibn Ka’b! I have been commanded to show or lay open the Qur’ān to you. ‘Ubayy was unable to control his excitement, he asked, “O Messenger of God...Have I been mentioned to you by name?” the Prophet replied, “Yes, by your name and by your genealogy in the highest heavens.” He was part of the consultative group to which the caliph Abu Bakr and ‘Umar referred many problems. ‘Ubayy died in the year 649 CE during the caliphate of ‘Uthman. May God be well pleased with him.

The analysis of the hadith

This hadith is recorded by Tirmidhi in his Sunan. He holds that it is a ḥasan hadith. This hadith expresses the importance of remembrance death for Believers in the most effective

³²⁰ Qur’ān 28: 77.

³²¹ Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, Qiyāma, 23.

way. The Prophet mentioned the death of universe, which is Qiyāma (the Hour), and death of human beings together and encouraged Muslims to be ready for it. He utilized various methods of education according to the conditions, content and the addressee. Here, he started his speech with dramatic and very effective statements to bring all the attentions to his message. Once the listeners were ready, he addressed them eloquently.

Being emotionally and mentally satisfied the Companion asked about the best supplication. The answer is invoking God to elevate his rank, which is called as ‘*salawaat*’. Interestingly, whatever the Companion offered as amount of praying for the Prophet he was told to increase it if he could. This implies that, whole humanity is indebted to the Prophet and cannot pay their debt to him even if they invoke God all the time to elevate his rank. So, the Prophet did not make it obligatory upon Muslims but simply recommended it. Believers should invoke God for the Prophet as much as they can. Indeed, the Prophet did not need anyone’s prayer but these *salawaat* will increase his intercession for his followers. Therefore, the benefit of their prayers will come to the believers themselves but not for the Prophet.

The main theme in this hadith is awareness of death and preparation for it. One day the entire universe will be destroyed. Similarly, people will leave this world by their own death. Before it happens, Believers should utilize their life to achieve the Afterlife. In order to get maximum benefit from the life the remembrance of death should be alive in the minds all the time. Otherwise, human beings are inclined to forget the reality of death and waste their life obliviously.

Seventh hadith

عن بُرَيْدَةَ، رضي الله عنه، قال: قال رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: كُنْتُ نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ زِيَارَةِ الْقُبُورِ فَرُورُواهَا. وفي رواية فمن أراد أن يزور القبور فليزر فإنها تذكرنا بالآخرة

Burayda reports that Messenger of God (pbuh) said; “(In the past) I forbade you from visiting graves, but visit them now.”³²² In another narration Messenger of God (pbuh) said; “Whoever wants to visit a grave, let him do so, because it reminds us of the Hereafter.”³²³

Burayda ibn Husayb

Burayda embraced Islam when the Prophet was immigrating to Medina. In those days, the unbelievers from Makka sent search parties after the Prophet and promised a huge amount of money and bounties for who could bring him alive or dead. When the Prophet and Abū Bakr were passing through the tribe of Aslam Burayda stopped them and started to interrogate them. He was the head of his clan and had authority to investigate the strangers in his land. The eloquence and beauty in the speech of the Prophet effected Burayda deeply. Therefore, he embraced Islam along with his people and prayed all together behind the Prophet.

Burayda accompanied to the Prophet rest of the journey until Medina for he thought the unbelievers could harm him if they found him alone and unprotected. He was not content that the Prophet would enter Medina without a flag therefore he tied his turban to his lance to make it a standard. Later, he settled down in Medina and joined many battles together with the Prophet. He carried the standard of his tribe in the Muslim army at some occasions. He narrated 164 a total number of hadiths from the Prophet. He died in the year 682 of *hijrī* when he was 63 years old. May God be well pleased with him.

³²² Muslim, *Saḥīḥ*, Janāiz, 106.

³²³ Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, Janāiz, 60; Abu Dāwud, *Sunan*, Janāiz, 77.

The analysis of the hadith

Muslim recorded the first part of the hadith and considered it *sahīh* according to his hadith criteria. The second part is recorded by Tirmidhi and Abū Dāwud. This hadith is an example for abrogating one ruling that was established by Sunnah with another Sunnah. The Prophet used to prohibit Believers from visiting the cemeteries to prevent some customs that belonged to times of ignorance (jahiliyyah). Because, the Arabs used to count the number of their dead in graves and were pride of their multitudes.

They used to remember the heroism of their ancestors, weep loudly and tear their dresses by hitting their chests. Until Believers adopted Islamic values and deemed the old customs evil the Prophet prohibited them from visting the graves. However, once there was no possibility for old customs to be practiced again he encouraged Muslims to visit for it reminds the Afterlife.

Unfortunately, today's Believers are so much busy with the worldly matters that even in a cemetery they do not remember death and take themselves to accounting. Grave should be a place where Muslims cry for their sins wholeheartedly and take themselves deep accounting before it is too late. 'Uthman, the third Caliph of Islam, cried almost he would faint whenever he visited a grave. However, today it is impossible to see this type people. For this reason, vising hospitals can be more effective to remind people death and encourage them to prepare for it. People should visit hospitals and see the patients who lost their health and wail in pain.