

Eighth hadith

وعن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت: كان رسول الله، صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، كُلَّمَا كَانَ لَيْلَتَهَا مِنْ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَجْرِ اللَّيْلِ إِلَى الْبَقِيعِ، فَيَقُولُ: السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ ذَا رَقَمٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ، وَأَتَاكُمْ مَا تُوَعَّدُونَ، غَدًا مُؤَجَّلُونَ، وَإِنَّا إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ بِكُمْ لَآجِحُونَ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِأَهْلِ بَقِيعِ الْعَرَقَدِ

‘A’isha reports that whenever it was her turn to spend with Messenger of God he used to go to the Baqī’ (cemetery) at the last part of night and say, “May you be safe, O abode of the believing people. What you have been promised has come to you. You are left until tomorrow and certainly, we shall follow you if God wills. O Lord, forgive the people of the Baqī’-al-Gharqad.”³²⁴

The analysis of the hadith

The hadith is recorded by Muslim and deemed authentic according to his hadith criteria. Abu Dāwud, Nasāi and Ibn Mājah also reported it in their Sunan collections. This example shows that it is encouraged to visit the graves even at night and pray for Believers who are buried there. Greeting the dead is considered as a prayer for them. Muslims should greet the dead in graves with words of the Prophet for it is Sunnah to do that. In other versions, the Prophet greeted the dead as follows;

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ وَإِنَّا إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ بِكُمْ لَآجِحُونَ، أَسْأَلُ اللهُ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ الْعَافِيَةَ

“May you be safe, O people of the abodes of the believers and the Muslims, and if God pleases, we shall follow you, we pray to God for well-being for ourselves and for you.”³²⁵

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ الْقُبُورِ، يَغْفِرُ اللهُ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ، أَنْتُمْ سَأَلْنَا وَنَحْنُ بِالْأَثَرِ

“May you be granted safety, O people of the graves. May Allah forgive us and you. You have preceded us, and we are to follow.”³²⁶

The Prophet visited the Baqī’ around the last part of night when he stayed with A’isha. He often cried for his people and prayed God for their forgiveness. The expression ‘what you have been promised has come to you’ indicates that while alive people often hear about death and the accounting in grave, but most of them do not believe it. With death, they understand that it is real. So, Believers should accept this fact by heart and prepare themselves for it. When they die, they meet with what they are promised. For this reason, some Companions such as Sa’d ibn Rabi smelled the fragrance of Paradise when he was about to die at Uhud.

The statement ‘you are left until tomorrow’ shows that the stages after grave will be much more difficult. Because there are accounting in Judgment day, divine scale, bridge above Hell and many more. The dead come to know that the world and its pleasures are temporary but the real life starts in grave and only faith and good deeds are beneficial for them. I like to conclude this chapter with the three hadiths;

³²⁴ Muslim, *Sahīh*, Janāiz, 102; Abū Dāwud, *Sunan*, Janāiz, 79.

³²⁵ Muslim, *Sahīh*, Janāiz, 104.

³²⁶ Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, Janāiz, 59.

O people! You will be resurrected barefoot, naked, and uncircumcised. Listen to me with full attention: “The one who will The Resurrection and the Afterlife be first clothed is Abraham, upon him be peace.” Heed what I will say: “That day some from my followers will be seized on the left side and brought to me. ‘I will say: O Lord! These are my Companions.’ I will be told: ‘You do not know what disagreeable things they did after you.’ Then I will say as the righteous servant [meaning Jesus] said: ‘I was a witness over them while I continued to stay among them. When You took me You became the watcher over them. You are Witness over all things. If You punish them, they are Your slaves; if You forgive them, surely You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.’”³²⁷

Since God created them, the children of Adam have not experienced an event more terrible than death. However, death is easier than what will follow it. They will suffer such terror that sweat will cover their bodies until it becomes like a bridle around their chins, until it grows into something like a sea on which, if desired, vessels could be sailed.³²⁸

People will be resurrected in three groups: those who combined fear of God with expectation [fearing His punishment but never despairing of His mercy and forgiveness], those who [because they frequently “faltered”] will try to go to Paradise “mounted on a mule” in twos, threes, fours ... or tens. The rest will be resurrected into Fire; [since they constantly pursued sins worthy of Hellfire], if they want to sleep in the forenoon, Hell will go to sleep with them; when they reach night, Hell will reach night with them; when they reach morning, Hell will reach morning with them, and when they reach evening, Hell will reach evening with them.³²⁹

³²⁷ Bukhari, *Saḥīḥ*, Anbiyā, 48; Muslim, *Saḥīḥ*, Jannah, 56

³²⁸ Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, vol.3 154.

³²⁹ Bukhari, *Saḥīḥ*, Riqāq, 45; Muslim, *Saḥīḥ*, Jannah, 59.