

الحياة البرزخية

Al-Hayātu al-Barzakhiyyah

THE BARZAKHIAN LIFE

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Done with the help of Chat GPT

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Introduction

In the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Especially-Merciful:

Peace and blessings be upon the noblest of prophets and messengers, Abu Al-Qasim Muhammad, his pure family, and his righteous and loyal companions.

It is among our fortunate endeavors to enrich the Islamic library with valuable works that greatly benefit the Islamic nation. Thus, we emphasize the importance of the writings of His Eminence, the scholar Sheikh Ja'far Al-Subhani, whose pen flowed effortlessly, and whose thoughts were dedicated for the betterment of the nation.

The book in the hands of the honorable reader addresses a subject that, despite the numerous books written about it, has not reached the desired level of accuracy and understanding. The topic is complex and the sources are limited, yet the author's work is highly regarded here. Death and life in the intermediary realm (Barzakh) are matters that every Muslim must acquaint themselves with, as they are the ultimate destination for all human beings. Therefore, it is necessary for individuals to prepare and fortify themselves for this challenging and inevitable journey.

We beseech the Almighty to make us beneficiaries of this knowledge on the day when neither wealth nor offspring will avail, except for those who come to Allah with a sound heart. And Allah is the guide to the right path.

We ask Allah the Almighty to forgive our sins, have mercy on us, make our deaths easy and painless, not to make us suffer in our graves, to raise us with our beloved Prophet and his pure progeny, to make our faces shine during the Day of Judgement and to make us enter his Paradise, where we'll be in eternal bliss. Amen, oh Lord of the Worlds!

وَصَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الْأَطَّهَارِ

Preamble

Ibn Taymiyyah and the Impact of His Methodology on Creed and Jurisprudence

In an era where paganism and Crusader forces allied to destroy Islam and dismantle its existence within its lands, it is incumbent upon the responsible scholar in such a critical circumstance to confront these perilous situations. They should endeavor to gather and dedicate strengths, so that Muslims stand united as one front, with one hand and a fortified strength for Islam against the impending pagan invasion from the East, represented then by the fierce destructive Mongol onslaught, and the Crusader advance from the West, embodied in the vengeful Christian campaigns against the Muslim sanctities in Palestine.

In this era, we observe individuals presenting themselves as knowledgeable religious scholars well-versed in the Quran and the Sunnah. However, they introduce issues and matters that could disturb harmony, confuse minds, divide ranks, thus weakening the Islamic strength that is founded upon unity.

Can one truly describe a person of this nature as a knowledgeable scholar or an Islamic leader who revives the Sunnah and extinguishes innovation?!

The Christians had been vigilant towards the Muslims, and it was their aspiration to seize control of the Holy Jerusalem, wresting it from the Muslims' grasp under the

pretext of it being the birthplace of Christ and the Christians' holy site of worship. Therefore, they launched one raid after another, one campaign after another against the lands of the Muslims, spanning from the late 5th century (490 AH) to the middle of the 7th century. These Crusades went through eight stages, with Christians achieving victories in some and suffering defeats in others.

As a result of these major campaigns, the Muslims endured substantial losses that cannot be counted, recounted, depicted, or described adequately. While the wound was still bleeding from the West, in the year 616 AH, the Islamic lands in the East faced a treacherous and pagan-rooted campaign aimed at uprooting Islam, eradicating its foundations and branches, and annihilating its civilization and urbanity. This campaign persisted until the Abbasid Caliphate fell into the hands of those pagans in the year 656 AH, resulting in significant losses of lives and souls, nearing a million, if not more.

Destruction and war continued to prevail in the lands until the end of this century, even extending into the late 8th century. Then, another catastrophe befell the northwestern part of the Islamic lands, specifically in Al-Andalus. It involved the annihilation and extermination of Muslims, achieved through their killing or mass deportation from their homelands and territories, in vast and immense numbers.

When we look at the historical table, we see that these four centuries are considered among the worst centuries for the Islamic world, where:

- 1 - The Crusades began in the year 490 AH and continued until the year 690 AH.
- 2 - The Tatar (Mongol) invasions began in the year 616 AH and ended in the year 807 AH.
- 3 - Muslims were either killed or expelled from their lands in Spain and Andalusia from the year 609 AH to the year 898 AH.

In these tragic circumstances characterized by killing, persecution, displacement, destruction, and the associated burning of libraries and the destruction of Islamic culture, we see Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim ibn Taymiyyah raising issues in the name of

monotheism and polytheism, dividing Muslims into two groups: monotheists and polytheists.

The first group consists of those who follow his steps and ideas, and the second group consists of dissenters; they are the vast majority of Muslims.

Did he raise these divisive issues among the ranks of Muslims out of religious motives and under the pretext of defending the treasury of religion and faith? Or was there something behind the scenes, hidden motives known only to God? Or was the one posing these ideas an ignorant and foolish person, unaware of the interests of Islam and Muslims, and not knowing what would benefit or harm them in that difficult situation? In short, he neither knew the disease nor the cure.

We do not pass judgment on anything regarding it, for history is the best judge, and knowledge is with Allah, the Blessed and Exalted. However, regardless of how the mentioned person's stance is interpreted, this stance has resulted in three negative outcomes, the serious effects of which still persist to this day:

1- Undermining the status of prophets, saints, righteous individuals, martyrs, and truthful believers, and diminishing their elevated spiritual positions that Allah bestowed upon them through their struggles, sincerity, dedication to faith, and defense of religious law.

2- Exposing Islamic heritage to erasure, destruction, obliteration, and demolition to an extent where no traces of the Prophet and early Muslims remain, indicating their existence, commitment, and sacrifices. If the followers of this idea and the supporters of this approach were to succeed, Islam would transform in the eyes of future generations into a mythical image devoid of reality and foundation, existing only in books, papers, minds, and thoughts.

3- Emptying religion of its rich inner content by interpreting the Quran in its literal sense, attributing to Allah physicality, direction, location, and other attributes and states akin to created beings, including organs and body parts. This becomes evident to those who study the writings and messages of the mentioned individual.

These are the main consequences that resulted from the intellectual approach presented by Ibn Taymiyyah. However, he was unsuccessful in establishing and propagating what he intended, aimed for, and sought to spread and encourage among people. This is due to the following reasons:

Firstly: He faced the opposition of eminent scholars from various schools of thought in regions endowed with knowledge and faith, as well as love for the Prophet and his family, such as Egypt and the Levant. For this reason, his ideas remained dormant within the pages of books, awaiting a suitable environment for growth and renewal.

Secondly: He confronted the deeply-rooted affection of Muslims for Islam and the noble Muhammadan message, their inherent and sound attachment to the noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and his traces, and their centuries-old conviction in the legitimacy of honoring and venerating prophets, saints, and righteous individuals.

The circumstances were in this state, and they were not suitable for the growth and expansion of this seed until it moved to barren lands of knowledge and wisdom from the corners of Najd. The seed was watered by the hands of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab Al-Najdi (1115-1206 AH), and the seed began to grow among a people who were unlettered, unfamiliar with true knowledge. Instead, they were dominated by ignorance and pre-Islamic practices. Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab exploited this type of people to deepen, support, and spread this idea. Unfortunately, the ruler of the region, Muhammad bin Saud (the ruler of Diriyah) from the Emirates of Najd, supported his idea, and they agreed on positions and mutual support. Thus, the idea returned to the scene under the name of Wahhabism and began to grow gradually among the Bedouins of Najd and its surroundings. There were clashes and bloody wars between this faction and the Ottoman Islamic Caliphate on occasions, thanks to the Egyptian forces under the Caliphate's control at that time.

During World War I, the Islamic Caliphate collapsed and transformed into monarchies and emirates protected by British and French colonialism. The ruler of

Wahhabism, Abdul Aziz bin Saud, took control of Mecca and Medina in the year 1344 AH. This allowed them to gain control over one of the most important centers of propagation and preaching. They gained relative activity in propagating and disseminating the idea, silencing dissenting voices, and controlling opponents.

However, success was not on their side until the discovery of the largest petroleum reserves in the Eastern region (Dhahran). The ruler of Wahhabism then possessed the world's largest wealth, which he harnessed for the benefit of his tribe, spreading the idea he and his forefathers adhered to. Without these favorable circumstances, none of their accomplishments would have been recognized, and their influence would not have been heard.

History repeats itself. At a time when hostile forces like the Zionists and Crusaders launch raids after raids, targeting children and youth to distort their Islamic identity through various means, even translating the Gospel into the vernacular languages of Islamic countries, the same patterns reemerge.

In this difficult time, where the eyes of Islam shed tears of blood, we see the Wahhabis persisting in demolishing the remaining Islamic heritage. They wield their destructive tools under the guise of expanding the mosques, distributing millions of books and tapes, all dedicated to the fierce attack on Muslims at large, and specifically on the Imami Shias. They do not adopt anything from the correct and effective knowledge for the afflictions of Muslims today, except that building upon graves, kissing shrines, seeking intercession from saints, and asking for their intercession are considered acts of polytheism and innovation.

O Allah, for the sake of Muslims, when will this division, dispersion, extravagance, and waste end? Isn't it time for these ignorant ones to wake up from their negligence and strive for the unity of Muslims instead of dividing them and humiliating them, if they truly consider themselves Muslims?

By any estimation, we are facing this catastrophe that has shattered the unity of Muslims, turning them into prey for colonizers and a means of conflict, argument, dispute, and squabbling. It's the time to exert effort and dedicate cooperation for the

most important matters: preserving their independence, liberating themselves from the claws of colonizers, revitalizing their economy, and renewing their sovereignty over the world.

Here, we overlook all that we have mentioned and call upon the scholars of Wahhabism in the Hijaz and Riyadh to organize an Islamic conference attended by scholars from all Islamic denominations. This conference aims to study various issues that differentiate the Wahhabis from others, in a peaceful atmosphere governed by objectivity and scientific spirit, far from political control. This way, the truth can be distinguished from falsehood, the argument can be presented against the deniers, and perhaps in this conference, the success of Islam and Muslims, as well as the unification of their word, can be achieved. Indeed, they have the word of unity.

As the afterlife in the barzakh (intermediate state) after passing from this world is the foundation to critically assess their propaganda and beliefs, we have dedicated this research to achieving and proving it through the Quran, Sunnah, and clear reasoning, within the scope of discussions.

Chapter One: The Reality of Man, His Soul and Self

Throughout the centuries, man has continuously searched for the essence of life, its origin, and its culmination in an earnest pursuit. He seeks to uncover its landmarks, its effects, and how it unfolds among living beings. This relentless quest and profound eagerness have led to the emergence of a specialized field known as "Biology." A multitude of scientists have dedicated their lives to this endeavor, producing remarkable and well-known results.

The ultimate goal of studying the phenomenon of life is to understand the reality of man. Is he merely a physical structure composed of veins, nerves, bones, and other material components? Or is there something beyond this material appearance, another essence that constitutes the true nature of man? Does it construct his reality, and is a person truly a human being because of it?

In other words, the researcher attempts to delve into his own self and his reality. Is he an intricate mechanical existence composed of various material tools, with its components interacting with one another? Or does there lie behind this mechanical existence a sacred reality, the essence of humanity, which orchestrates what it perceives and believes itself to be?

Scientists in this field have two opinions:

The first: Humans are complex mechanical beings composed of sweat, nerves, flesh, and bones. Sensation is merely the result of interactions between these parts. There is no other existence beyond this material composition under the names of soul and spirit. According to this view, humans perish with their death, their personality ends, and there is nothing beyond the material. This theory emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries and was adopted by many researchers in the West. They denied the

existence of hidden worlds beyond the material and believed that existence is equivalent to material, and material is equivalent to existence. Thus, they constructed the materialist doctrine during those two centuries.

The second: The reality of a human, by which they are considered human, is their self and their soul. Their body is merely a tool in the hands of their soul, a device they operate in this material world. This does not mean that they consist of body and soul, but that reality transcends that. A human is their soul, and the body is a garment worn over it. As the saying goes:

"O servant of the body, how hard you strive to serve it, seeking profit in what entails loss.

Turn to the soul and complete its virtues, for you are human by the soul, not by the body."

Fortuitously, at a time when materialism was asserting itself and proclaiming that there is nothing beyond matter, scientific research proved the fallacy of this theory. Spiritualists then disseminated numerous messages and wrote extensively, encompassing their experiments and evidence in this field. In doing so, they dismantled the edifice of materialistic thinking with their scientific instruments.

Since our investigation in this chapter is based on the Book (Qur'an) and the Sunnah, we leave their evidences to the noble reader to search for them in their contexts. However, before we study the rulings of the Book and the Sunnah in this context, we present some rational proofs that resonate with the sentiments of our readers. They are clear indications that behind the physical body lies another reality called the soul. Every conscious individual is subject to it, even if they haven't read a philosophical book or knocked on the door of mental sciences. Because everything that passes through all of these matters is a matter of conscience that every person feels when they strip away preconceived notions.

The human personality expressed as "I"

Each one of us continues to attribute all of their actions to an entity expressed as "I" and says, "I did," "I ate," and "I hit." Sometimes, these actions are attributed to the connected pronouns that replace "I," and one says, "read," "wrote," "wanted," and "answered." So, the question arises about the identity of the subject to whom these actions are attributed. What is it then? Is it this physical body, or is there something else behind it? If the subject is the physical body, it wouldn't provide evidence of another essence beyond material and its effects. If the subject is something else, it establishes a subject beyond material, linked to its body and physical life.

Furthermore, we attribute our body parts to something beyond this physical body, saying, "my head," "my heart," "my stomach," and "my feet." These are major components of the physical body, "the human." Nevertheless, we attribute them to something else beyond this physical body.

At times, we go even further and attribute the entire body to something else, saying, "my physique." So, what is the common denominator in all these attributions, whether they pertain to actions, body parts, or the entire body?

Since every proposition consists of a subject and a predicate, the clarity of reason dictates that these predicates must have a subject, even if it's not visible, yet we perceive it through these predicates.

In simple terms, despite human actions emanating from various body parts – seeing with the eyes, lifting with the hand, walking with the legs, hearing with the ears – humans attribute all of them to a single source. Thus, they say, "I saw," "I walked," and "I heard," just as each body part is attributed to a source. Therefore, these predicates require a single subject of their own, so that the matter is not merely attributions without a subject. In that case, this single source is the real personality of the human, which we express through their spirit and self.

The conclusion is that the human personality resides behind their body and its outward appearance.

The Stability of Human Personality Amidst Physical Changes

Each one of us feels that they persist within the whirlwind of changes and transformations that occur to their body. Even though they go through many conditions and fundamental alterations throughout the stages of childhood, adolescence, youth, and old age, they find that one thing attributes all these qualities and states to them, remaining unchanged amidst these fluctuations. They say, "I was a child, then a youth, then a young adult, then middle-aged, then elderly." They realize that there is an enduring truth despite the alteration of all these circumstances and situations, the passage of time, and the flow of moments. Much might have changed over seventy years, but there is something constant that hasn't changed or altered. This enduring element bears those attributes and conditions. The changing is not the constant; change is a sign of the material, while constancy is a sign of transcending material judgments.

Moreover, we see that they attribute to themselves an action they performed fifty years ago, saying, "I, who wrote this line, did so when I was a child." This reflects their awareness within their consciousness that they were the one who wrote that line in the past. If there were no constant element until the time they uttered these words, the matter would be a lie and not true. This is because if a human were merely the summation of visible material parts, those parts should have disappeared, and multiple bodily identities should have emerged afterwards. So, where is the person of his youth compared to the days of his old age? His bones, veins, and nerves have transformed and changed amidst the whirlpool of alterations, and everything has decomposed, leaving behind other things—similar in form but different in essence.

The process of change within his body is continuous; cells continue to deteriorate and be replaced by new ones, yet the individual perceives himself as constant amidst the whirlwind of these transformations, as if there is a steadfast element enduring these changes over the course of seventy years. He feels in all stages of his life that he is the same person from decades ago.

Let's assume a person, whom we'll call Jane, was twenty years old and hadn't fallen under the grip of authorities until they apprehended her at the age of sixty. At that point, she stands in the court to be tried for her crime. Surprisingly, she is sentenced to death for the murders she committed, deemed just by not only the judge but also the observers in the courtroom. This is because even though her bodily cells have changed countless times over the years, everyone present, including the judge and all who hear the case, perceive her as the same culprit. This phenomenon arises from an unchanging reality within the whirlwind of changing elements, untouched by the alterations. This constancy persists throughout all the transformations.

If we consider the human being merely as a material body, her cells would have changed numerous times throughout those years. However, all the attendees, the judge, and every listener perceive her as the same criminal. This is solely due to the presence of an unchanging truth within the realm of fluctuating variables. Despite the material aspects undergoing change, the core essence remains constant, not subject to change. If change pertains to material attributes and constancy and continuity pertain to non-material attributes, we deduce that the essence of the human being is non-material and remains constant in all circumstances. This is what we refer to as the immaterial soul or self.

It's evident that this argument is different from the previous one. The basis of the first argument is the existence of the subject for all attributes. The basis of the second argument is the constancy of the subject amidst the whirlwind of transformations and changes occurring in the body.

In conclusion, Al-Razi summarized this argument in his commentary, saying: "The components of this structure are perpetually in growth and decay, increase and decrease, completion and dissolution. Undoubtedly, the individual, in terms of their true essence, remains unchanged from the beginning of their life. The enduring element is distinct from what is transient. When everyone refers to themselves with the pronoun 'I,' it must denote a distinct entity from this bodily structure."¹

¹ Mafatih al-Ghayb 4:147.

The science of human awareness of oneself alongside neglect of one's own body

You find that in certain circumstances, a person neglects everything, even their own body and its organs. However, they do not neglect themselves. This is an experimental proof that each one of us can undertake. Thus, it is valid to say that behind the human's physical body, there is another reality. For they neglect the former but do not neglect the latter. In scientific terms: the neglected, the not neglected. Here's an explanation:

Realizing this truth (neglecting everything including their body but not neglecting themselves) depends on specific conditions as follows:

1. To be in an environment where nothing occupies their thoughts and attention.
2. To imagine that they exist in that particular moment and that they previously didn't exist, which severs their connection to their past and thoughts completely.
3. To be of sound mind and clear perception at that moment.
4. Not to be ill, where the illness doesn't draw their attention.
5. To lie on their side, with space between their body parts, fingers, and toes, so they don't touch and draw their attention.
6. To be in moderate open air, neither hot nor cold, as if suspended in space, so climatic conditions or the contact point do not distract them.

In this state, where a person disconnects entirely from the external world and ignores both their internal and external body parts, they create a void from everything. In that moment, they will become aware of themselves, perceiving something beyond their body, organs, thoughts, and the surrounding environment. This is the 'human essence,' the soul or human self that cannot be explained by organs, senses, or faculties.

This realization provides clear evidence that there is a reality behind the human body and its organs, which can be neglected in certain circumstances but is never truly neglected. It demonstrates that a human is not merely their body, organs, or cells.

Al-Razi summarized this argument, saying, 'I, in a state of knowledge, am aware that "I am." I am ignorant of all my parts and limbs, except for what is unknown. What I refer to with my statement contradicts these organs and limbs.'²

Thus far, we have relied on clear evidence that anyone, regardless of their exposure to linguistic or philosophical teachings, can contemplate. This obviates the need for complex evidence posited by philosophers on the existence of the soul. Since our discourse in this research is based on the Quran and Sunnah, we study the reality and essence of humans in the light of these sources and confine ourselves to three verses in this field.

The Quran and the Reality of Human Personality

When we review the verses of the Noble Quran, we find that they indicate at times clearly and at other times indirectly that the reality of human beings and their personality is not just their physical body. We can deduce this from the verses.

The first verse is:

God, exalted be He, says: ***"Say, 'The angel of death will take you who has been entrusted with you. Then to your Lord, you will be returned.'" [32:11]***

This verse refutes the claim of the polytheists who assert that death negates personality and annuls it, and that it is contingent upon the physical body. Rather, it states that one's personality is based on something else that is neither misguided nor invalidated. Instead, it is taken by the angel of death until God resurrects it on the Day of Judgment.

² Mafatih al-Ghayb 4:149.

Here is an explanation of the doubt and its answer, within the context of the interpretation of two verses:

God, exalted be He, says:

1. ***"And they say, 'When we have become lost within the earth, are we indeed to be created anew?' Rather, they are, in [the matter of] the meeting with their Lord, disbelievers." [32:10]***
2. ***"Say, 'The angel of death will take you who has been entrusted with you. Then to your Lord, you will be returned.'" [32:11]***

These two verses indicate the "eternity of the soul" after the dissolution of the body and its disintegration. This is explained as follows:

The polytheists used to dismiss the possibility of a person's return after the disintegration of their physical body and its scattering in the earth. They thus objected to the idea of resurrection on the Day of Judgment. The Quranic response to their objection is as follows:

"They say, 'When we have become lost within the earth, are we indeed to be created anew?'" [32:10]

This means that death necessitates the destruction of the body, the separation of its parts, and its dispersal into particles of dust. So how can these scattered and lost parts be gathered, and how can a human be reconstituted anew?

The exclusion and objection in the Holy Quran are countered by these two sentences:

1. ***"Nay, but they are unbelievers in the meeting with their Lord." [32:10].***
2. ***"Say, 'The angel of death will take you.'" [32:11].***

There is no doubt that the first sentence is not an answer to their objection about the possibility of restoring the extinct parts of the body. Instead, it is a rebuke to them for

denying the meeting with God and their disbelief in it. The real answer to that is found in the second sentence, and its essence is: what goes astray from the human due to death is only the body, and this does not represent his true personality. The core of his personality remains, and what the angel of death takes and removes from the body is only the authentic aspect that constitutes his personality, which is preserved by us.

Therefore, what is lost in the earth due to death from a human - the body - is the shell, while his true essence, the human soul, which is the foundation of his personality, is not subject to annihilation or decay.

In the verse, "tawaffa" does not mean killing, but it means taking, seizing, and fulfilling, similar to His saying: ***"It is Allah who takes the souls at the time of their death" [39:42]***, and His saying: ***"And it is He who takes you in your sleep" [6:60]***, and the saying "his appointed term has come." In other words, if everything in your existence were lost through death, your objection to the possibility of restoring a human would have some merit.

As for what remains of your reality and truth, which is human nature and the soul that constitutes the body, the exclusion of this is not justified. For in that case, the restoration is an easy and possible matter, as long as what constitutes human essence remains.

The scholar, Al-Tusi, said in the interpretation of this verse:

"Indeed, the Almighty commanded His Messenger to respond to their argument based on exclusion. The reality of death is not a refutation for you, nor is it a deviation from the right path on the earth. Rather, the angel of death, who is responsible for you, takes your souls securely and completely from your bodies, meaning he separates your souls from your bodies, and your souls are your true essence. Therefore, you are preserved; nothing of you is lost on the earth. Only bodies are lost, changing from state to state, and they have been subject to change since their initial existence. Then you are preserved until you return to your Lord through resurrection, and the souls return to their bodies.

With this, their argument against denying the resurrection due to their misconception is refuted, whether it was based on exclusion or on the assertion that the dissolution of the body negates the individuality of humans, rendering them nonexistent. There is no meaning in the revival of the nonexistent. The true essence of humans is the self that is spoken of with the pronoun 'I,' and it is distinct from the body. The body is subservient to the self in its personality, and it vanishes with death but does not cease to exist. It is preserved by the power of God until He allows its return to its Lord for judgment and recompense. Thus, it will be resurrected in the form that Allah, may He be glorified, mentioned."³

The second verse is:

He, Glorified be He, said: ***"O peaceful soul, return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him]. Enter among My [righteous] servants, and enter My Paradise." [89:27-30]***

So, the verse does not address the human body and its organs as you see, but rather its reality and truth that the Wise Reminder expresses by the term "soul." It has chosen from among the many souls the tranquil soul, which resides with its Lord, content with what He is content with for it. Thus, it perceives itself as a servant that possesses neither good nor evil for itself, nor any benefit or harm.

It views the world as a metaphorical abode, and whatever it encounters therein of wealth or poverty, benefit or harm, as divine trials and tests. The continuity of blessings upon it does not lead it to tyranny, corruption, arrogance, or pride. Likewise, poverty and loss do not drive it to disbelief and abandoning gratitude.

Then, it addresses it with another address and says: "Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him]." The context of both addresses extends from the moment of death's descent to entering the eternal Paradise. Then, it addresses it with a third and fourth address, saying: "Enter among My [righteous] servants, and enter My

³ Tafsir al-Mizan, 16:252.

Paradise." These are two branches stemming from the past second address, meaning: "Return to your Lord..." and when He says: "Among My servants," it signifies her attainment of the station of servitude. In His saying: "My Paradise," it designates her abode. Adding Paradise to the pronoun of speech is a specific definition, and in His divine words, there is no addition of Paradise to His own Self except in this verse.⁴

And the addressee in these four addresses is not the cold body that has reached the state of death, like an inanimate object, nor are they the decaying bones buried in layers of earth. Instead, it is the enduring soul and spirit, unaffected.

Had the context of the address been confined to the Day of Resurrection from the moment of her revival until her establishment in Paradise, the inference might have been challenged, even though initially it seemed apparent.

The result is: Whether we say that the circumstance of the discourse is the time of death or the time of resurrection, the addressee is the same individual, not his body or his limbs. This indicates that it is his reality, and the rest is merely clothing over it.

The third verse is:

He, Glory be to Him, said: ***"So why, when the soul reaches the throat, and you at that time are looking on?" [58:83-84].***

The point of indication: The throat is a part of his body, and here there is another matter that reaches the throat at the time of death, and it is nothing but the soul that transfers from one abode to another. And if the reality of the human being were his material body, then there would be no meaning to reaching or departing.

Thus, it is known that some of what we will use as evidence in the following chapter indirectly indicates what we are currently in the process of explaining. For this reason, we will limit ourselves to the three verses for now, and we will defer the argument based on others to what will be presented to you in the next topic.

⁴ Tafsir al-Mizan 20:213; Majma' al-Bayan 5:489.

What is the reality of the human soul?

Many natural forces are known by their effects rather than their truths. We know electricity by its effects, just as atoms as well. The Knower of truths is God Almighty, and human fortune in this matter is limited to observing the effects. If this is the case with hidden forces in nature, then the soul is even more deserving of such an approach. However, many speakers and some scholars have delved into this matter without presenting a clear conclusion. The farthest they have reached is the notion that the soul is a contrary body in nature to the tangible body, a luminous, higher, light, living, and moving body that permeates and flows within the essence of the organs, like water in a rose, oil in olives, and fire in charcoal. As long as these organs are fit to accept the abundant effects from this delicate body, that delicate body remains intertwined with these organs, benefiting them with sensory perception and voluntary movement.

But if these organs deteriorate due to the dominance of dense mixtures over them, and they deviate from accepting those effects, the soul departs from the body and separates into the realm of spirits.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya said: This opinion is the correct one in this matter, and it is the only valid one. All other opinions are false. This is supported by the Book, the Sunnah, the consensus of the companions, as well as the evidence of reason and innate disposition.⁵

I say: What was said and transmitted by Ibn Qayyim is the best of what has been conveyed about them in this context. However, the reality of the soul and its status is far loftier than what is mentioned in this discourse. Comparing it to the flow of water in a rose, oil in olives, or fire in charcoal reflects the superficiality of studying metaphysical knowledge and the failure to distinguish between the levels of the soul.

For indeed, some levels of the soul can be likened to what has been mentioned. As for the highest level, which is indicated by His saying, ***"O tranquil soul, return to your Lord well-pleased and pleasing. Enter among My servants, and enter My***

⁵ Ar-Ruh, page 178.

Paradise," [89:27-30], it possesses a dignity far above being equated with mundane and delicate matters. The detailed elaboration is appropriately placed elsewhere.

Chapter Two: Continuation of Life after Transition from the World, Or the Persistence of the Soul after Death

In the previous chapter, you became acquainted with the fact that the reality of a human is their soul and self, and that the material body is nothing more than a garment upon them. The soul is the essence, and the body is its shell. We have brought the reader closer to this concept, relying on what has been mentioned in the Holy Book, while also adding what has been decreed by clear reason in this domain.

In this chapter, we focus on the eternal existence of the soul after death, and that it remains by His permission until Allah inherits the earth and all that is on it. We will limit ourselves, instead of providing intellectual evidence, to the explicit verses and texts of the Wise Reminder, so that no doubt remains for the doubter, nor any skepticism for the skeptic.

The First Verse

Allah, may He be glorified, says: ***"Allah takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die, He takes them during their sleep. Then He retains those for which He has decreed death and releases the others for a specified term. Surely, in this are signs for a people who reflect."*** [39:42]

The clarification of the evidence depends on considering two matters:

1 - The intended meaning of "souls" is the spirits associated with the bodies, not both combined. This is because what is taken at death is not the combination, but it is the spirit. The verse indicates that souls separate from bodies at death, become independent from them, and remain alongside them.

2 - The terms "takes," "retains," and "releases" indicate that there is a substance other than the material body within the human entity. These terms are related to this substance. The meaning of "takes" in the verse is only the extraction of souls and their collection. This means that Allah takes the souls to Him at the time of their death and sleep. However, those whom death has been decreed for, their souls are retained until

the Day of Resurrection and do not return to the world. And those for whom death has not been decreed, their souls are released back to the world for a specified period. What clearer indication is there than His saying that He takes the souls? Can an extinct being be taken, or does it pertain to an existing matter? And this is none other than the souls.

The Second Verse

His statement, exalted is He: ***"And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allah, 'They are dead.' Rather, they are alive, but you perceive not."*** [2:154].

The reason for the revelation of this verse is that the polytheists used to say: The companions of Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) kill themselves in battles without reason, then they die and disappear. So, Allah informed them that the matter is not as they said. Rather, they are alive in reality until the Day of Resurrection.⁶

The proper approach to interpreting this verse urges us to explain life in its true sense, that is, what the general public understands from the term "alive," especially in connection with the third verse. This verse affirms sustenance, joy, and delight for the martyrs as it will come to pass. Thus, interpreting the verse as them being alive on the Day of Resurrection is a flawed interpretation. Because being alive on that day is universal for all people and is not exclusive to the martyrs. Similarly, interpreting life in the verse as guidance and obedience, by analogy with His statement, exalted is He: ***"Is he who was lifeless, then We revived him and made for him a light by which he walks among mankind..."*** [6:122]. This passage considers misguidance as death and guidance as life, which is an invalid analogy. The presence of evidence for interpreting life as guidance and death as misguidance in the text without this verse weakens such an interpretation.

Razi's refutation of these two opinions regarding the third verse will be presented to you.

⁶ Al-Wahidi, Asbab Al-Nuzul: p. 27, Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

The meaning of the verse ***"And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allah, 'They are dead.'" [2:154]*** means, do not assume their annihilation and insignificance, for they are not dead in the sense of being futile. Rather, they are alive, but your senses do not comprehend that, and you are not aware of it.

Based on this, these two verses affirm a Barzakhian life (an intermediate state between worldly life and the Hereafter) for the martyrs, distinct from worldly and Hereafterly life. Rather, it is a life situated between the two worlds.

The Third Verse

He, glory be to Him, said:

1- "And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision." [2: 169]

2- "They rejoice in what Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty, and they receive good tidings about those [to be martyred] after them who have not yet joined them - that there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve." [2: 170]

3- "They rejoice in the favor of Allah and His bounty, and [in the fact] that Allah does not allow the reward of believers to be lost." [2: 171]

These verses are explicit, with complete clarity, regarding the continuation of souls after their separation from their bodies, and after the dissolution of their physical forms, as is evident from contemplating the following four segments:

1. "Alive with their Lord"
2. "Receiving provision"
3. "Rejoicing..."
4. "Receiving good tidings..."

The second segment points to the enjoyment of divine blessings, while the third and fourth segments indicate spiritual and meaningful blessings. The verse clearly indicates the persistence of martyrs after death until the Day of Resurrection.

This verse was revealed either about the martyrs of Badr, who were fourteen in number - eight Ansar (helpers) and six Muhajirin (emigrants) - or about the martyrs of Uhud, who were seventy in number - four Muhajirin, including Hamza bin Abdul Muttalib, Mus'ab bin Umair, Uthman bin Shammas, and Abdullah bin Jahsh, and the rest were from the Ansar. According to another view, it was revealed about both groups.

Al-Razi commented in the interpretation of this verse: "At the time, they are alive as if Allah has revived them, to deliver their reward to them." This is the opinion of most interpreters, and it indicates that those who are obedient will receive their reward while they are in their graves.

Then he pointed to the other interpretations to which we referred:

One of them: for the Asam; where life is interpreted as religious life, and that they are guided by their Lord and have light.

And the second: for some of the Mu'tazilites, that the intent of them being alive is that they will be resurrected.

Then he said: Most scholars lean towards the first opinion, then he refuted the last two opinions with reasons we mention some of:

1 - If the intent was what was said in the second and third opinions, then his statement: "But you do not perceive" wouldn't make sense; because the address is to the believers, and they knew that they would be resurrected on the Day of Judgment, and that they are guided and have light.

2 - His statement: "And they rejoice in those who have not joined them"

It is evidence of there being life in the Barzakh (intermediate state) before the Resurrection. Meaning, they rejoice in people who have not joined them while they are

in the world. So, if this is the context of rejoicing, then it is the context of life, and it is before the Resurrection.

3 - If the intent was either of these meanings, then there would be no unique merit for the martyrs in this context; as many others, not just martyrs, are guided by light from their Lord.

And Abu Muslim's response, that Allah only singled them out for mention, is weak, because their status in paradise is higher and their rank is greater, because the status of prophets and truthful ones is greater than that of martyrs, even though Allah did mention them.⁷

Two matters remain in discussion:

A - The grammatical analysis of the preposition "عند" (with) in his statement (عند ربهم), and there are several possibilities:

1 - It could be an adverbial phrase modifying the location of the pronoun in "أحياء" (alive).

2 - It could be a second predicate, with the interpretation: "They are alive with Him."

3 - It could be an adverb for the delayed verb, meaning "They will be provided."

The first possibility is more likely.

And in any interpretation, here "عند" (with) is not indicating physical proximity due to its impossibility. Allah is not in a place, nor does it mean in His knowledge and judgment, because it does not suit Him. Instead, it signifies closeness and honor, i.e., having a close and exalted status.⁸

B - The meaning of his statement: "And they rejoice." The original meaning of "استبشار" is seeking good news, but it seems that the term is detached from the meaning

⁷ Mafatih al-Ghayb 4:146.

⁸ Ruh al-Ma'ani 2:122.

of seeking news. The intended meaning is: "They are pleased and joyful." This usage follows its meaning and is connected to His statement: "Rejoicing," i.e., they are pleased and joyful for their brothers who did not join them in the path of Allah Almighty, as they will join them from behind them. They perceive the good state of their brothers who left them alive. The implication is that when they are killed in the path of Allah Almighty, they attain victory just as they achieved victory and acquire blessings, as indicated by His statement: "They have no fear, nor do they grieve."

And it is possible that the intent is: they are pleased with the arrival of their remaining brothers through martyrdom or natural death. Allah knows best.

The Fourth Verse

His saying, Glorified be He: ***"And from the farthest part of the city there came a man running. He said, 'O my people, follow the messengers. Follow those who do not ask you for any payment, and who are rightly guided. Why should I not worship Him who created me, and to whom you will be returned? Shall I take gods apart from Him? If the Most Merciful intends harm for me, their intercession will not help me at all, nor can they save me. Indeed, I would then be in plain error. I have believed in your Lord, so listen to me.' It was said, 'Enter the Garden.' He said, 'If only my people knew how my Lord has forgiven me, and placed me among the honored.' And We did not send down upon his people after him any soldiers from the heaven, nor would We have done so. It was not but one shout, and immediately they were extinguished."*** [36:20-29].

Commentators agree that these verses were revealed about the messengers of Jesus. They were revealed when they were in Antioch, inviting its people to monotheism and to forsake worshipping others besides Allah. Those who opposed them were from the categories mentioned in the Quran.

While the people and the messengers were in a debate, a man arrived from the farthest part of the city, calling them to Allah. He said to them:

"Follow, O group of disbelievers, those who do not seek any payment from you, nor do they ask for your wealth in return for the guidance they bring you. They are rightly guided on the path of truth, walking its way." Then he added, saying:

"Why should I not worship the One who created me, nurtured me, bestowed favors upon me, guided me, and to whom you will be returned when resurrected? He will recompense you for your disbelief. Are you commanding me to take gods besides Allah, even though they are incapable of benefiting me in any way or averting harm from me? Their intercession will be of no use, and they cannot save me from destruction and harm." When he skillfully dismantled the arguments of the polytheists and clarified the validity of his logic, he addressed the people or the messengers, saying, "I have believed in your Lord, so listen to me." Then, regardless of whether the address was directed at the polytheists or the messengers, the disbelievers attacked him and stoned him to death.

But Allah, Exalted is He, rewarded him by commanding him to enter Paradise, saying, "It was said, 'Enter the Garden.'" When he entered Paradise, he addressed his people, those who had killed him, saying, "If only my people knew how my Lord has forgiven me and made me among the honored."

Then, indeed, He did not delay the killers for long, nor did He send a legion from the sky to annihilate them. Instead, He destroyed them with a single cry, as He, glorified be He, says: "And We did not send down upon his people after him any soldiers from the heaven, and We were not sending down. It was not but one shout, and immediately they were extinguished."

Meaning: Their destruction, from the beginning to the end, was as simple as a single command, which was the shout. And thus they perished all together, and then they were motionless and silent.

The implication of the verse regarding the continuity of the soul, its awareness, sensation, and sending messages to those in the worldly life is very clear. The entrance into Paradise ("Enter Paradise") and the wishful longing ("I wish my people could know")

occurred before the Day of Judgment. The intended Paradise here is the interim Paradise, not the ultimate one.

Up to this point, some of the verses indicating the continuity of the souls of martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the way of Allah have been explained. There are also a group of verses indicating the survival of the souls of disbelievers after they have departed from this world. However, these are associated with various forms of punishment, while the first group is adorned with the colors of blessings. Here is the second group:

The Fifth Verse

He, the Almighty, said: ***"So Allah protected him from the evils they plotted, and the people of Pharaoh were enveloped by the worst of punishment - The Fire, they are exposed to it morning and evening. And the Day the Hour appears [it will be said], 'Cause the people of Pharaoh to enter the severest punishment.'" [40:45-46].***

And the verse is explicit that He, the Almighty, diverted the harm of the plotting from the believing person of the people of Pharaoh, so he was saved with Moses. However, the evil punishment encompassed the people of Pharaoh. As for the manner of their punishment, the verse indicates the following:

Firstly: There will be a presentation of them to the Fire and an entrance into it, and the second punishment is more severe than the first.

Secondly: The presentation to the Fire will occur before the establishment of the Hour, just as the entrance will be at its occurrence.

Thirdly: The torture will occur after death and before the establishment of the Hour, in the realm of "Barzakh," and the torture will continue at the time of the Hour, through one thing, which is the Fire of the Hereafter. However, the punishment before the establishment of the Hour involves the presentation to the Fire, and after its

establishment, the entrance into it. Consequently, those in the "Barzakh" will be tormented from a distance,⁹ and the people of the Hereafter through entering.

Fourthly: Even though the family of Pharaoh died by drowning in the sea, their death was not meant in the sense of annihilation and perishing utterly. Rather, it meant the departure of their souls from their bodies and their transition to another world situated between the two worlds. Thus, they were sentenced to a severe punishment until the Day of Resurrection, through the presentation to the Fire and entry into it after its establishment. Even if they were not resurrected, there would be no meaning in torturing inanimate entities devoid of sensation by presenting them to the Fire.

And fifthly: The identity of the family of Pharaoh is linked to their souls, not their bodies, attesting to the invalidity of their bodies and the scattering of their parts. However, after death, they are subjected to the presentation to the Fire and entry into it after the establishment of the Hour.

The Sixth Verse

"Until, when death comes to one of them, he says, "My Lord, send me back, that I may act righteously in that which I have left (behind)." But no! It is just a word that he says, and behind them is a barrier [barzakh] until the day they are resurrected." [23:99-100]

Before we mention the implication of the verse regarding the continuation of life after death, let us explain two terms from the verse:

The first term: "Al-Barzakh." It refers to the barrier between two things. Allah, glorified be He, says: ***"He released the two seas, meeting [side by side]; Between them is a barrier [barzakh] which they do not transgress." [55:20-21]***. Here, Allah's mention of His great power is made, as He created the two seas, fresh and salty, meeting each other, yet they do not mix due to the presence of a barrier between them.

⁹ The benefit of verse 25 from Surah Nuh - according to the view that it refers to the Barrier (Barzakh) - is that entry is not exclusive to the Day of Judgment. Instead, it encompasses both the intermediate realm and the Barzakh period. And perhaps there is a distinction between the two types of fire, may Allah protect us from both.

The second term: The word "behind" (وراء) which, in the verse, means "in front of". The meaning of His saying: **"And behind them..." [23:100]**, meaning in front of them and before them.

Allah says: **"...for there was a king behind them who is taking every ship by force." [18:79]**

This verse can be used as evidence from two perspectives:

1- When a sinful person is dying, they see what has been prepared for them in terms of painful punishment in the future. For this reason, they would seek from Allah's angels to send them back to the world so they can rectify what they missed and make amends. This is indicated by His saying: **"Until, when death comes to one of them, he says, 'My Lord, send me back that I might do righteousness in that which I left behind.'" [23:99-100]**

2- The statement of Allah: **"And behind them is a barrier until the Day they are resurrected" [23:100]** is a clear declaration of the existence of an intermediate life between death and resurrection. This intermediary state is called "Barzakh" because it acts as a barrier between this world and the Hereafter. It's not possible for this transitional state to be non-existent, as if the human was nonexistent between these two periods, it wouldn't be appropriate to call it a "Barzakh" between the two states. It serves as a barrier and separator between the human in this world and the human in the Hereafter.

The Seventh Verse

The Almighty said: **"And if only you could see the unjust ones in the perplexities of death as the angels stretch their hands: "Get yourselves out; today you are being repaid with the punishment of shame on account of what you used to say about Allah other than the truth, and for acting arrogantly towards His signs." [6:93]**

And arguing from the verse for the continuation of the soul after the destruction of the body can be approached from two perspectives:

A - His statement (Get yourselves out)

This is explicit in that the angels extract the soul from the body. This implies that what is left behind is the body, while the soul is taken and removed from the body.

B - Indeed, the apparent meaning of his statement: (Today you are being repaid with the punishment of shame)

It refers to the day of death and its moment. If death were a complete annihilation for humans, this statement would not hold any meaning, as after the complete and inclusive annihilation of humans, they would not be able to sense any punishment.

From this, it becomes clear that what perishes is only the body, while the soul remains, experiencing and tasting the subtle punishment and feeling it.

Al-Allama al-Tabatabai said in interpreting this verse: The speech of the Almighty is evident in that the soul is not of the same essence as the body, nor is it of the material physical aspects of existence. Instead, it has another type of existence that is joined with the body, connected to it in a way that is not material.

So, the meaning of his statement: (Get yourselves out)

It signifies severing their souls from their bodies, which is death.¹⁰

The Eighth Verse

And if you could see when the disbelievers are dying, while the angels are striking their faces and their backs and [saying], "Taste the punishment of the Burning Fire. That is for what your hands have put forth and because Allah is not ever unjust to [His] servants." [8:50-51].

This verse indicates that the disbelievers will be punished in two ways upon death:

¹⁰ Tafsir al-Mizan 7:285.

The first way is through the angels striking their faces and backs, which is also referred to in another verse where Allah says, **"So how [will it be] when the angels take them in death, striking their faces and their backs?" [47:27].**

The second way is through the punishment of the Burning Fire, as indicated by His statement, "Taste the punishment of the Burning Fire." So, the verse signifies the existence of two distinct and concomitant punishments: the first punishment is inflicted on the physical body, and the second is on the soul of the human being transitioning to the afterlife.

The Ninth Verse

He, glorified is He, said: **"Because of their sins, they were drowned, then entered the Fire. And they found not for themselves besides Allah [any] protectors." [71:25].** This verse is revealed regarding the people of Noah who were drowned due to their sins at first, then entered the Fire secondly.

And among the interpreters, there is one who interpreted the second phrase as referring to the Fire of the Hereafter, and he says: It is stated in the past tense to indicate its definite occurrence.¹¹ However, this interpretation is distant, because the apparent meaning of the verse links entry into the Fire to their drowning, not separate from it, as indicated by the presence of the conjunction "fa". Otherwise, the expression with "thumma" would have been necessary.

The Tenth Verse

His statement, glorified be He: **"They will say, 'Our Lord, You made us die twice and You gave us life twice. Now we have confessed our sins. Is there any way to get out?'" [40:11]** This verse clearly indicates that on the Day of Resurrection, man will have experienced two deaths and two lifetimes.

The first death: It is the death that transfers man from the worldly life.

The first life: It is the life after transitioning from that state.

¹¹ Majma' al-Bayan 5:364.

The second death: It occurs before the Day of Resurrection, with the blowing of the first trumpet.

The second life: It occurs at the blowing of the second trumpet.

He, glorified be He, says: ***"And the trumpet shall be blown, so all those who are in the heavens and all those who are in the earth shall swoon, except those whom Allah please; then it shall be blown again, then they shall stand up awaiting."*** [39:68]

Based on what we mentioned, both lifetimes have no connection to the worldly life. Instead, they occur after transitioning from the worldly life. One of them is in the Barzakh after the first death in the worldly life, and the other is on the Day of Resurrection after the second death with the blowing of the first trumpet.

At that point, the indication of the verse regarding the Barzakh life becomes clear.

Yes, the ones speaking did not refer to the worldly life by saying, "And You gave us life three times," even though it is a form of life that occurs after the death, which is a state of non-entry of the soul. Perhaps the reason is that the focus is on mentioning the lifetimes that serve as a cause for certainty in the Hereafter, perpetuating faith. These are the lifetimes in the Barzakh and then on the Day of Resurrection. As for the worldly life, even though it is undoubtedly a form of life, it does not, by itself, necessitate certainty in the Hereafter. They had doubts about the Hereafter while being alive in the world.¹²

Incorrect Interpretation of the Verse:

Some of the interpreters have interpreted the verse as follows:

First death: The state of the sperm before the entry of the soul.

First revival: The state of the human after the entry of the soul into it.

Second death: His death in the world.

¹² Tafsir al-Mizan 17:313.

Second revival: His revival on the Day of Resurrection for reckoning.

And then the verse is applied to His saying, Glory be to Him, ***"How can you disbelieve in Allah when you were lifeless and He brought you to life; then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you [back] to life, and then to Him you will be returned."*** [2:28]¹³

However, this is an incorrect interpretation and a faulty analogy.

As for its incorrectness, it's because the initial state of a human, that is, their state before the entry of the soul into their body, cannot be equated with death, because it's a stage that precedes life and is, in fact, non-existent.

As for it being a faulty analogy, it's because the two verses address different concepts. The wording in the second verse is "death," and it can indeed be interpreted as referring to the state of the sperm before the entry of the soul, unlike the wording in the first verse, which is "bringing to life" (إحياء), and cannot be correctly interpreted with that state that hasn't experienced "death" (إماتة) yet.

For this reason, the interpretation of the second verse is valid as follows:

"You were lifeless": The state present in the sperm before the entry of the soul.

"Then He brought you to life": By the entry of the soul into it, then transitioning from the womb to the vastness of the world.

"Then He will cause you to die": By transitioning from the world to the Hereafter.

"Then He will bring you [back] to life": On the Day of Resurrection for accountability and reward.

Since the two verses have different contexts and aims, the contexts have diverged. Thus, one hints at an intermediate life between the world and the Hereafter (the Barzakh), while the other does not. It's not obligatory to apply one context to the other after their divergence in subject and aim.

¹³ Refer to Tafsir Al-Kashaf, Volume 3, page 363, Dar Al-Ma'arif, Beirut.

These are ten complete (verses) that inherit certainty, with the continuity of life after transitioning from the world. Only the denier denies their significance, and what the verses indicate about their persistence after death is not limited to these ten verses alone. There is a group of verses suitable for inferring the intended meaning, such as: ***"Thus, we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you" [2:142]***, and His saying: ***"So how [will it be] when We bring from every nation a witness and We bring you, [O Muhammad] against these [people] as a witness?" [4:41]***¹⁴ However, we will confine ourselves to summarizing them in this context.

As for using the noble Sunnah to prove that death is not the annihilation of a person, but rather the transition from one abode to another, a portion of the narrations in the following section will suffice to illustrate the connection between the people of the world and those residing in the intermediary realm (Barzakh), where they hear their words and respond to their supplications, even though we are neither able to hear nor comprehend.

It's not surprising that there might be an echo or outcry, and we are detached from hearing and understanding. He, glorified is He, said: ***"And there is nothing but glorifies His praise, but you do not understand their glorification. He is indeed Forbearing, Forgiving" [17:44]***.

¹⁴ If we were to say that the death of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, is simply his absolute demise, then what is the meaning of him being a witness over his Ummah (community) throughout the generations?

Chapter Three: The Connection Between Worldly Life and Barzakh Life

I do not think that a knowledgeable Muslim of the Quran and Sunnah denies the Barzakh life. It is understood that after death and before resurrection, humans have an intermediate life between this world and the Hereafter. In this state, they are in a condition of comfort and enjoyment, as well as weariness and punishment.

However, worthy of study, in light of the scripture and the Sunnah, is to clarify the link between these two lives. The Barzakh inhabitants are not disconnected from what unfolds in worldly life. They can hear when they are called upon and answer when questioned, by the permission of Allah, glorified be He.

Barzakh serves as a barrier and partition, preventing the return to the worldly life. This is clearly stated in His words when a group of wrongdoers sought to return to the world to make up for their shortcomings in worship and obedience. They said, ***"My Lord, return us, that we may do righteousness in what we left behind."*** [23:99-100]. They were answered by the All-Merciful, saying, 'No!' There is no hindrance to hearing and listening, nor to questioning and answering. All of that occurs by His permission, glorified is He.

This indicates the connection between the two lives with this meaning: a collection of verses and a considerable number of narrations that we present explicitly, until doubt is removed from uncertainty.

The Noble Qur'an and the Connection Between the Two Lives

1- The Prophet Salih addresses his people after their destruction

Allah the Almighty informs in the Noble Qur'an about the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) that he called his people to worship Allah, to refrain from harming his miracle (the she-camel), and not to treat it badly. However, they harmed the she-camel and defied their Lord's command: ***Then the earthquake seized them, and they became within their homes [corpses] fallen prone. So he turned away from them and said,***

'My people, I had certainly conveyed to you the message of my Lord and advised you, but you do not like advisors.' [7:78-79].

It's clear that Allah Almighty definitively states that the earthquake destroyed the people of Salih (peace be upon him), and they became fallen in their homes. After that, Allah informs that the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) turned away from them and addressed them, saying, 'I had certainly conveyed the message of my Lord to you and advised you, but you do not like advisors.'

And this address was given by Salih to his people after their destruction and his death, with the concluding statement 'So he turned away' indicating the issuance of the address after the people's destruction.

Moreover, the explicit statement 'but you do not like advisors' indicates that their arrogance persisted even after their destruction.

2- The Prophet Shu'aib addresses his perishing people

The story of Prophet Salih is not the only story of its kind in the Noble Qur'an. Following him, Shu'aib also did the same. After his people were destroyed, he addressed them. Allah, glorified be He, says: ***Then the earthquake seized them, and they became within their homes [corpses] fallen prone. Those who denied Shu'aib—it was as though they had never resided there. Those who denied Shu'aib—it was they who were the losers. So he turned away from them and said, 'My people, I had certainly conveyed to you the messages of my Lord and advised you, so how could I grieve for a disbelieving people?' [7:91-93].***

Similarly, Shu'aib (peace be upon him) addressed his people after their destruction, so the issuance of this address was after their destruction by the earthquake.

If the connection was not possible and not established, and if the perishing were not able to hear the addresses of Salih and Shu'aib, then what would be the meaning of their addresses?

Is it valid to interpret these addresses as expressions of regret and showing sorrow?

No, this type of interpretation is against the apparent meaning and is not correct according to the principles of exegesis. Otherwise, the wrongdoers would manipulate the apparent meanings of the verses, and the Noble Qur'an would become a tool in the hands of those with ulterior motives, interpreting it according to their desires and whims.

It's worth noting that addressing the sacred souls is not an implausible concept in the realm of reason, hinting at its possibility.

3- The Prophet is commanded Communication with the Prophets

In the Noble Scripture, it is mentioned that God Almighty commands His Prophet, saying: ***"Ask those We sent before you of Our messengers; have We made besides the Most Merciful deities to be worshiped?" [43:45].***

You perceive that Allah, glorified be He, commands the noble Prophet to inquire of the prophets who were sent before him. Among the false interpretations is to attribute this to questioning the scholars of the People of the Book, based on His saying: ***"So if you are in doubt, [O Muhammad], about that which We have revealed to you, then ask those who have been reading the Scripture before you. The truth has certainly come to you from your Lord, so never be among the doubters. Nor be of those who deny the signs of Allah, [for] then you will be among the losers." [10:94-95].***

And His saying, glorified be He: ***"So ask the Children of Israel when they came to them and Pharaoh said to him, 'Indeed, I think, O Moses, that you are affected by magic.'" [17:101].***

The point of contention is: although the address in the first verse is directed to the Prophet, the intended meaning is the entire community, as indicated by His saying: "Nor be of those who doubt" and "Nor be of those who deny."

Likewise is the case with the second verse, as the address, while directed at the Prophet and His command to ask the Children of Israel about the revealed signs to Moses, is akin to saying, "Help me, neighbor," while the Prophet is greater and loftier than to be perplexed by asking the scholars of the Children of Israel about what perplexes him.

Thus, these two verses pertain to the community asking the scholars and readers of the books of the Children of Israel. This is in contrast to His saying, "Ask those We sent before you of Our messengers," which is, in fact, directed towards the Prophet.

As for the aspect of asking the prophets in the realm of monotheism, such as His saying, "Have We made besides the Most Merciful deities to be worshiped?" This has been mentioned by the interpreters, and it is reported that he, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, conversed with the preceding prophets during the Night of Ascension.

4- Sending Peace on the Prophets

Indeed, the Noble Quran sends peace upon the prophets in various places and states:

1 - Peace be upon Noah among the worlds. [37:79]

2 - Peace be upon Abraham. [37:109]

3 - Peace be upon Moses and Aaron. [37:120]

4 - Peace be upon the family of Yasin. [37:130]

5 - And peace be upon the messengers. [37:181]

Without a doubt, what is mentioned here is not superficial or hollow peace; rather, it is genuine peace and a new greeting that the Quran directs towards the prophets of God and His messengers.

And is it appropriate to extend sincere greetings to inanimate objects that neither know nor perceive or feel?! We do not have the authority to interpret Quranic concepts

stemming from the truth with a shallow interpretation by saying: All the greetings in the Quran that we recite throughout the night and at the edges of the day are not mere empty compliments, but are at the level of materialists' greetings to their companions and colleagues who have been overtaken by death.

Since materialists equate existence with matter and do not see any reality beyond it, when they offer their regards and slogans to their deceased colleagues, they justify it with superficial honor.

As for us Muslims, since existence for us is broader than material and its effects, we are not obligated to interpret the verses with a material interpretation that deviates from the framework set in the Book and the Sunnah for explaining the Wise Reminder. This guides us to interpret these salutations in a genuine manner, and it remains integral to the lives of Muslims toward them and the connection between us and them. May Allah's peace be upon all of them.

This is what revelation directs us to in the realm of the potential connection between the living and the spirits.

The Noble Sunnah and the Connection between the Two Lives

What we recited to you was a collection of radiant verses indicating the connection between the two lives, and that a portion of the prophets spoke with the inhabitants of the Barzakh.

As for the Noble Sunnah, there are abundant narratives that point to what we intend to present, of which are:

1. The Most Honored Prophet - peace be upon him and his family - speaking to the people of Qalib

The Battle of Badr concluded with a great victory for the Muslims and a humiliating defeat for the polytheists. The polytheists fled the battlefield toward Mecca, leaving behind seventy dead from their leaders and elite. The Prophet stood addressing the dead one by one, saying:

"O people of Qalib, O Atabah ibn Rabee'ah, O Shaybah ibn Rabee'ah, O Umayyah ibn Khalaf, O Abu Jahl (and he continued naming those among them from Qalib), did you find what your Lord promised you to be true? For I have found what my Lord promised me to be true."

Some of his companions asked, "O Messenger of Allah, are you addressing the dead?"

He - peace be upon him and his family - replied, He said: 'You do not hear what I say any better than they do, but they cannot answer.'"

Ibn Hisham wrote, "The Messenger of Allah - peace be upon him and his family - added after this discourse and said:

'O people of Qalib, what a wretched tribe you are to your Prophet! You denied me, and the people believed in me. You expelled me, and the people gave me refuge. You fought against me, and the people aided me.'"

Then he said, "Did you find what your Lord promised you to be true?".¹⁵

Bukhari narrated from Nafi that Ibn Umar informed him that he said: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, looked at the people of Qalib and said, "Have you found true what your Lord promised you?" Somebody said to him, "You are addressing dead people." He replied, "You do not hear better than they, but they cannot reply."

Then, it is narrated from Hisham bin Urwah from his father from Aisha who said: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, only said, "Now they know that what I used to say was true." And Allah the Almighty has said, **"You cannot make the dead hear."** [27:80]¹⁶

¹⁵ Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah 1:649; Al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah 2:179 and 180, and others.

¹⁶ Sahih Al-Bukhari: Volume 9, Book of Funerals, Chapter on What is Mentioned about the Punishment of the Grave, Page 98.

And do not forget that Lady Aisha granted the afterlife to them. This is why she said that the Prophet said, "Now they know that what I used to say was true." However, she denied that the Prophet said, "You are not more able to hear than they are, but they do not respond," without attributing it to a present speaker in the incident. Her statement was derived only from the noble verse. It is known that Ibn Umar claims to have heard from the Prophet or from someone who heard it from him. This derivation does not contradict her derivation; it only serves as evidence for herself and not for those who witnessed and testified that the Prophet spoke to them.

Moreover, there is no connection between the verse and what she claims, as will become clear to you.

And to further emphasize the authenticity of the story, we also present an authentic narration from Bukhari in the chapter of the Battle of Badr (excluding the book of funerals) and supplement it with references from other sources. What do you think about a matter that Imam Bukhari and a group of scholars have narrated? He said: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, stood by the well of Badr and addressed the polytheists who were killed and whose bodies were thrown in the well: "Indeed, you were bad neighbors to the Messenger of Allah. You drove him out of his house and expelled him. Then you gathered against him and fought him. I have found what my Lord promised me to be true." A man asked him, "O Messenger of Allah, what is your address to them?"

He, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said, "By Allah, you are not hearing better than them, and there is nothing between them and the angels taking them with maces of iron, except that I turn my face away from them."

And Hassan composed a wonderful elegiac poem about the Battle of Badr, in some of its verses, he refers to this fact, meaning the story of Al-Qalib. He says:

The Messenger of Allah called them when

We pelted them like abundant rain on Al-Qalib

Did you not find my words to be true

And the command of Allah seizes the hearts?

They did not speak, and had they spoken, they would have said,

"You spoke the truth, and you were one with accurate judgment."

Though there is no statement more explicit than what the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said in this context, where he said, "You are not hearing better than them." Is there a more explicit statement and a stronger confirmation of this fact than the Prophet', peace and blessings be upon him and his family, addressing one by one the people of Al-Qalib, calling them by their names, and speaking to them as if they were still alive?!

Therefore, it is not permissible for any believing Muslim who follows the message and the Prophet to hastily deny this accepted historical Islamic fact and rush, before investigation, to say that this matter is not true because it does not align with the limited materialistic mindset.

We have conveyed here the text of this dialogue, so that Arabic-speaking Muslims can see how the statement of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, openly declares this fact, without any statement being more explicit and indicative of this truth.

And whoever wishes to investigate the sources of this story should refer to what we have mentioned in the footnotes below.¹⁷

¹⁷ Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 5, Battle of Badr, pages 76, 77, 86, 87; Sahih Muslim, Volume 8, Book of Paradise, Chapter: The Dead are Referred to as Mu'tamad, Hadith 163; Sunan al-Nasa'i, Volume 4, Chapter: The Spirits of the Believers, pages 89-90; Musnad Imam Ahmad, Volume 2, Hadith 121; Al-Maghazi by Al-Waqidi, The Battle of Badr and others.

2. Imam Ali, peace be upon him, addresses the leaders of the treacherous

After the Battle of the Camel, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, having put aside the burdens of war, passed by Ka'b bin Sur, who was the judge of Basra. He said to those around him, "Seat Ka'b bin Sur." They seated him between two individuals holding him, as he was disabled. Then Imam Ali, peace be upon him, said to him, "O Ka'b bin Sur, indeed I have found what my Lord promised me to be true. Have you found what your Lord promised you to be true?" Then he said, "Make him lie down."

After that, he walked a little until he came across Talha bin 'Uбайд Allah, also disabled. He said, "Seat Talha." They seated him. Then Imam Ali, peace be upon him, said to him, "O Talha, indeed I have found what my Lord promised me to be true. Have you found what your Lord promised you to be true?" Then he said, "Make Talha lie down."

A man said to him, "O Amir al-Mu'minin, why do you speak to two deceased individuals who cannot hear you?" Imam Ali, peace be upon him, replied, "O man, by Allah, they have heard my words just as the people of Qalib heard the words of the Messenger of Allah."¹⁸

3. Sending peace be upon the Prophet, may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him and his family, at the conclusion of the prayer

Indeed, all Muslims around the world, despite the sectarian differences among them in the branches of religion, send blessings upon the Messenger of Allah, may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him and his family, in the prayer at its conclusion. They say:

'Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings.'

Al-Shafi'i and others have ruled the obligation of this greeting after the Tashahhud, while others have ruled its desirability. However, all are in agreement that the Prophet, may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him and his family, taught

¹⁸ Al-Jamal by Al-Mufid; Haqq al-Yaqin 2:73.

them this greeting, and that the tradition of the Prophet is established during his lifetime and after his passing.¹⁹

And now the question: If our connection and relationship with the Prophet - peace and blessings be upon him and his family - were severed due to his passing away, then what is the meaning of addressing him and sending peace upon him daily?!

4. The deceased hears the footsteps

The deceased hears the words of those who speak near their graves, not with their physical body, but with their soul that had a connection and influence on the body. This doesn't mean that the soul is inside the grave as it used to be attached to and inseparable from the body during their lifetime. Rather, the intended meaning is that the soul maintains a connection and influence on the body it has departed from. This is indicated by what Imam Al-Bukhari narrated from Anas ibn Malik, that he reported from the Messenger of Allah - peace and blessings be upon him and his family - who said: "When a servant is placed in their grave, and their companions turn away from them, even to the extent that they hear the sound of their footsteps, two angels come to them, make them sit up, and ask them: 'What did you used to say about this man, Muhammad - peace and blessings be upon him and his family?' They reply: 'I testify that he is the servant of Allah and His Messenger.' Then it is said to them: 'Look at your place in the Fire that Allah has exchanged for you with a place in Paradise.' The deceased sees both. As for the disbeliever and the hypocrite, they say: 'I don't know, I used to say what the people used to say.' They are told: 'You neither knew nor followed.' Then a blow with iron hammers is struck between their ears, and they emit a scream that everyone near him can hear except for the two groups [humans and jinns]."²⁰

The justification for using this narration is that it mentions: "He hears the sound of their footsteps." Therefore, the deceased indeed hears the sound of footsteps, and this is supported by stronger evidence.

¹⁹ Refer to the book 'Tadhkirat al-Fuqaha' 3:233, Issue 294, and the book 'Al-Khilaf' by Sheikh al-Tusi 1:47, to learn about the opinions of different schools of thought and jurists in this matter.

²⁰ Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Book 2:90, Chapter: "The deceased hears the tapping of footwear." Also, refer to the commentary on this hadith in "Fath al-Bari" by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, Vol. 3:160, and "Sharh al-Karmani" Vol. 7:117.

5. Saying of the deceased during the procession of the funeral

Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih, from Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (may God be pleased with him): The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "When the funeral is laid down and men carry it on their necks, if the deceased was righteous, she (the soul) says, 'Take me forward,' but if she was not righteous, she says, 'Woe to me! Where are they taking me?' Everything hears its voice except humans, and if humans heard it, they would faint."²¹

6. The Prophet - peace be upon him and his family - sends his greetings to the deceased

Muslim narrated from Aisha that she said: "The Messenger of Allah - peace be upon him and his family - used to, whenever it was his night in Medina, go out at the end of the night to Al-Baqi' and say: 'Peace be upon you, O home of a believing people! You have been given what you were promised. Tomorrow you will be in delay, and we, if Allah wills, shall join you. O Allah, forgive the people of Baqi' al-Gharqad.'"²²

If the deceased could not hear like inanimate objects, then sending peace upon them would be in vain. And how can the Prophet of wisdom be associated with something in vain, especially when it is known that the Prophet used to visit Al-Baqi'?

Thus, it is understood that death, in this context, refers to the cessation of blood circulation in the veins and arteries of the human body. It is the cessation of the movement, sensation, and perception of its limbs and senses. The main driver of these functions is the heart and the lungs through respiration.

As for what is related to the essence and true nature of the human being, which is the soul; the perceiving and thinking essence, it continues as an eternal knowledgeable entity.

²¹ Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Book 2:86. He narrated in "Hamal Al-Rijal al-Janazah Dun al-Nisa" (Carrying the funeral by men and not women), p. 85, and in the chapter "Saying of the Dead while on the Funeral," "Take me forward." Note the explanation of the hadith in "Fath Al-Bari," Vol. 3:144, and the explanation by Al-Kirmānī, Vol. 7:104.

²² Sahih Muslim 7:41.

7. Torture of the Deceased in the Grave

Al-Bukhari narrated from the daughter of Khalid bin Sa'id bin Al-'As that she heard the Prophet seeking refuge from the punishment of the grave.

And it is narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah used to supplicate: 'O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the punishment of the grave, from the punishment of the Fire, from the trials of life and death, and from the trial of the false messiah (Dajjal).'²³

In Sahih Muslim and other collections of hadith, it is narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Prophet said: 'When any one of you finishes the last Tashahhud (in the prayer), let him seek refuge in Allah from four: from the punishment of Hell, from the punishment of the grave, from the trials of life and death, and from the trial of the Dajjal.'

Also, in Sahih Muslim and other sources, it is narrated from Ibn Abbas that the Prophet used to teach them this supplication just as he used to teach them a Surah from the Quran: 'O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the punishment of Hell, I seek refuge in You from the punishment of the grave, I seek refuge in You from the trials of life and death, and I seek refuge in You from the trial of the Dajjal.'²⁴

Words of Ibn Abd al-Barr about the significance of visiting graves

Ibn Abd al-Barr stated, with a confirmed narration from the Prophet - peace and blessings be upon him and his family - that he said: "No Muslim passes by the grave of his brother whom he knew in the worldly life and greets him, except that Allah returns his soul to him so that he may return the greeting." This is a text affirming that he recognizes the person and responds to the greeting.

In the two authentic collections (Al-Bukhari and Muslim), from various angles, it is narrated from him - peace and blessings be upon him and his family - that he commanded regarding the martyrs of Badr who were cast into a pit. He came to stand

²³ Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Book 2:99, and see the explanation of the hadith in Fath al-Bari by Ibn Hajar, 3:188.

²⁴ Al-Ruh: Page 52. He has elaborated extensively on affirming the matter and covered its various aspects. For those seeking further expansion, they can refer back to his book.

by them, called them by their names, saying, "O so-and-so, son of so-and-so, and O so-and-so, son of so-and-so! Have you found what your Lord promised to be true? For I have found what my Lord promised me to be true." Omar then asked him: "O Messenger of Allah, are you speaking to bodies that have decayed?" He replied, "By the One who sent me with the truth, they hear my words better than you do, but they cannot reply."

It is also confirmed from him - peace and blessings be upon him and his family - that the deceased hears the sound of the footsteps of those who accompany him when they depart from him.

The Prophet - peace and blessings be upon him and his family - prescribed for his community that when they greet the inhabitants of the graves, they should greet them saying, "Peace be upon you, O abode of believing people." This is a directed speech to those who hear and comprehend, for without this, the speech would be akin to addressing something inanimate or lifeless.

The early Muslim scholars unanimously agreed upon this, and numerous reports from them have confirmed that the deceased recognizes the visits of the living and finds comfort in them.

Abu Bakr Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Ubayd ibn Abi al-Dunya mentioned in his book on graves, in the chapter regarding the recognition of the deceased through the visits of the living:

Narrated to us Muhammad ibn Awon: Narrated to us Yahya ibn Yaman, from Abdullah ibn Sim'an, from Zaid ibn Aslam, from Aisha, she said: The Messenger of Allah - peace and blessings be upon him and his family - said: "Whenever a man visits the grave of his brother and sits by it, he is comforted by his presence and the deceased returns the greeting until he stands up."

Narrated to us Muhammad ibn Qudamah al-Jawhari: Narrated to us Ma'an ibn Isa al-Qazzaz: Informed us Hisham ibn Saad: Narrated to us Zaid ibn Aslam from Abu Huraira, he said: When a man passes by the grave of his brother whom he knows, he

greet him, and the deceased responds to his greeting and recognizes him. But if he passes by the grave of someone he does not know, he still greets, and the deceased responds to his greeting. This is established through the interwoven narrations found in authentic compilations and collections of traditions.

Chapter Four: Barzakh Life in the Words of Scholars

Every scholar of Islam who delved into their knowledge and worshiped devoutly before the texts has consistently affirmed the continuation of life after transitioning from the worldly realm. We mention the following from their statements:

1. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241 AH)

He said, "There is no doubt that the one-eyed Antichrist (Dajjal) will appear. He is the greatest liar, and the punishment of the grave is true. The servant will be questioned about their religion and their Lord, and they will see their place in the Fire and the Paradise. Munkar and Nakir are true, and they are the two testers in the graves. We ask Allah, the Exalted, for steadfastness."²⁵

2. Abu Ja'far al-Tahawi (d. 321 AH)

He said, "We believe in the punishment of the grave for those who deserve it. The questioning by Munkar and Nakir in the grave regarding one's Lord, religion, and prophet is in accordance with the reports from the Messenger of Allah and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. The grave is either a garden from the gardens of Paradise or a pit from the pits of Hell."²⁶

3. Imam al-Ash'ari (260-324 AH)

He said: "We believe in the punishment of the grave, and in the Pond (of Kawthar), and that the Balance is true, and the Bridge (Siraat) is true, and resurrection after death is true. And that Allah, the Almighty and Majestic, will station His servants in a place where He will hold the believers to account."²⁷

4. Al-Baghdadi

He said: "The Jahmiyya and Dharariyya denied the questioning in the grave. Some of the Qadariyya claimed that the questioning by the two angels in the grave only

²⁵ Al-Sunnah: Page 50.

²⁶ Explanation of al-Risālah al-Tahawiyyah by Ibn Abi al-'Izz, Commentary on the Text: Page 396.

²⁷ "Al-Ibanah," The Original Source: Page 26.

occurs between the two blowings (in the trumpet) in the forms, and at that time, there will be punishment for some people in the grave.

And the Salimiyya in Basra said: 'The disbelievers will not be held accountable in the Hereafter.'

And a group called the Waziriyya claimed: 'There is neither reckoning nor balance.'

And the Karimiyya affirmed all of that, just as our companions affirmed it, except that they claimed that al-Munkar and al-Nakir are the two angels who confront every individual during their lifetime. According to this view, al-Munkar and al-Nakir are for every individual except for those whom they belong to.

And our companions said: 'They are two angels assigned to everyone, not just those who are entrusted to them.'"²⁸

5. Abu al-Yusr Muhammad al-Bazdawi (421 - 493 AH) (He belonged to the Maturidiyyah school)

He said: The questioning of Munkar and Nakir in the grave is a true matter according to "Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah" (the Sunni mainstream), and they are two angels who question those who have died after being resurrected: "Who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is your prophet?" The believer is capable of answering, while the disbeliever is unable.

There are many narrations from the Prophet - peace be upon him and his family - in this regard, indicating that the two angels come to the deceased in the grave, and Allah the Almighty revives the deceased, and they ask about what we mentioned.²⁹

6. Al-Fakhr al-Razi

He said: The statement in the verse **"And they rejoice in those who have not joined them" [3:170]** is evidence of the occurrence of a life in the Barzakh

²⁸ "Usul al-Din," Page 245.

²⁹ Usul al-Din: 165 / Issue 49.

(intermediate state) before the Resurrection. This is added to the statement of the Prophet - peace be upon him and his family - that "The grave is either a garden of the gardens of Paradise or a pit from the pits of Hellfire." The reports about the rewards and punishments of the grave are as authentic as the mutawatir (mass-transmitted) narrations. He (may peace be upon him) used to say in his final prayer: "And I seek refuge in You from the punishment of the grave" until he said: "The human being is the soul, and the experience of separation and tearing is not presented to it after death."

Then, surely, Allah the Exalted returns the soul to the body on the Day of the Great Resurrection, so that the physical states align with the spiritual states.³⁰

7. Ibn Abu al-Az Al-Dimashqi

He said, "Verily, there are three abodes: the abode of the worldly life, the abode of the intermediary realm (Barzakh), and the abode of final settlement (Qarar)."

Indeed, Allah has assigned specific regulations for each abode, and He has fashioned this human being with body and soul. He has established regulations for the worldly life that pertain to the bodies and the souls subordinate to them. He has also established regulations for the intermediary realm that pertain to the souls and the bodies subordinate to them. So, on the Day when the bodies are resurrected, and people rise from their graves, judgment, bliss, and punishment will encompass both souls and bodies altogether.

If you contemplate this meaning with true reflection, you will realize that the concept of "the grave being a garden from the gardens of Paradise or a pit from the pits of Hell" is in perfect harmony with reason. It is a truth beyond doubt. Thereby, believers are distinguished in the realm of the unseen from others.

It must be understood that the fire in the grave and the bliss are not of the same nature as the fire of this world or its pleasures. Even though Allah Almighty shields the grave with the earth and stones above and below it, to the extent that its heat surpasses the flames of the world, if the people of the world were to touch it, they would not feel it.

³⁰ Tafsir al-Kabir 4: 146 and 149.

What is even more remarkable is that two individuals could be buried side by side: one in a pit of fire and the other in a garden from the gardens of Paradise. Yet, no heat from the fire of the former would reach his companion, nor would any pleasure from the latter reach his companion. The power of Allah extends beyond that, and it is even more astonishing.³¹

Al-Razi said in the interpretation of His saying, "And they will rejoice in those who have not joined them but remain behind them" – the people who have not joined them must necessarily be in the worldly life. Thus, their rejoicing with those in the worldly life must occur before the Resurrection Day. Rejoicing must necessarily coincide with life. This indicates that they are alive before the Day of Resurrection.³²

8. Ibn Taymiyyah

He said: Authentic and widely transmitted traditions indicate the return of the soul to the body at the time of questioning, and the claim that the body can be questioned without the soul is a statement held by a group of people, rejected by the majority. Others countered them by stating that questioning is for the soul without the body. This is what Ibn Māriah and Ibn Hazm stated, both of which are incorrect. The authentic traditions refute their claims. Even if this were only about the soul, the grave would not be specifically associated with the soul.³³

9. Al-Taftāzānī

He said: Evidence for life after death is found in the verse: ***"They will be exposed to the Fire morning and evening."* [40:47]** And His statement: ***"So they were submerged in the Fire."* [71:25]** And His statement: ***"Our Lord, You caused us to die twice, and You gave us life twice."* [40:11]**

The second death is only in the grave. And His statement: ***"They will be provided for, rejoicing in what Allah has given them."* [3:169-170]**

³¹ Sharh al-Risala al-Tahawiyyah: 396-398.

³² Mafatih al-Ghayb 4:146 and 9:90.

³³ Al-Rūh: 50 expressions from Ibn Taymiyyah, referred to as the "Sheikh of Islam."

And His statement - peace be upon him and his family -: "The grave is a garden from the gardens of Paradise or a pit from the pits of Hell."

The traditions on this subject are consistently transmitted in meaning.

He also said in another place: The Muslims agree on the reality of the questioning by Munkar and Nakīr in the grave, and the punishment of the disbelievers and some of the sinners therein, attributing their difference to some of the Mu'tazilites.

Some later scholars among them said: The denial of this has been attributed falsely to Ḍirār ibn 'Amr. It is only attributed to the Mu'tazilites, and they are innocent of it due to Ḍirār's dissociation from them. A group of foolish and stubborn people followed him, opposing the truth.

We have the verses, as in His saying, exalted is He, in the story of Pharaoh's people: **"The Fire, they are exposed to it morning and evening" [40:47]**, meaning before the Day of Resurrection, and that is in the grave, supported by His saying, exalted is He: **"And [mention, O Muhammad], the Day the Hour will rise, that Day they will be divided. And those who disbelieved will be exposed to the Fire" [40:47]**.

Similarly, as in His saying, exalted is He, regarding the people of Noah: **"They were drowned, then they were made to enter a Fire" [71:25]**. The particle "fa" (ف) is for sequential explanation. As well as in His saying, exalted is He: **"Our Lord, You caused us to die twice and You gave us life twice" [40:11]**. One of the two lives is none other than in the grave, and there will only be a model of reward or punishment by consensus.

As in His saying, exalted is He: **"And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision, rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them" [3:169]**.

The widely transmitted Hadiths mean, as in His saying - peace and blessings be upon him: "The grave is either a garden from the gardens of Paradise or a pit from the pits of Hellfire." And it is narrated that he passed by two graves, and he said, "Verily,

they are being punished...".³⁴ And like the well-known Hadith about the two angels who enter the grave, accompanied by two attendants, they ask the deceased about their Lord, their religion, and their prophet, and so on from the narrations and recorded accounts in the well-known books.

It has been consistently narrated from the Prophet - peace and blessings be upon him - seeking refuge from the punishment of the grave, and this is extensively included in the established supplications.³⁵

10. Al-Sharif Al-Jurjani

He said: "The revival of the dead in their graves, Munkar and Nakir, and the torment of the grave for the disbeliever and the sinner is all true according to us. The predecessors of the Ummah agreed upon it before the appearance of differences, and the majority of the community (agreed upon it) after the appearance of differences. (And it is denied) absolutely by Dharar ibn 'Amr, Bashir al-Marisi, and most of the later Mu'tazilites. Al-Jabba'i, his son, and Al-Balkhi denied the labeling of the two angels Munkar and Nakir, and they said: The denier (Munkar) is only what comes out from the disbeliever when he stammers when asked, and the rejecter (Nakir) is the bifurcation of the two angels for him."

We have two aspects in proving what is true according to us: The first is the saying of Allah Almighty: ***"The Fire, they are exposed to it morning and evening. And on the Day when the Hour will be established (it will be said to the angels): 'Cause the people of Pharaoh to enter the severest torment.'" [40:46]***. There is a conjunction in this verse between the torment of the Day of Resurrection and the torment that is the exposure to fire in the morning and evening. So, it is known that it is different from it, and there is no doubt that it occurs before the widespread resurrection from the graves, as indicated by the clarity of the verse. What is not different from it is

³⁴ Narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari in the Book of Ablution, pages 55-56, and the Book of Funerals, page 89.

³⁵ Sharh Al-Maqasid 5:112, 114.

none other than the torment of the grave, by consensus, because the verse refers to the dead, and that is what it is.³⁶

11. Al-Alousi

He said: "The life of the martyrs is a reality with both the soul and the body, but we do not perceive it in this existence."³⁷

These are the words of the luminaries of the Sunnis. And here is the words of some of the Shia Imami scholars:

12. Sheikh Al-Mufid - may his secret be sanctified

He said in Sharh 'Aqa'id Al-Saduq: "As for the manner of the punishment of the disbeliever in his grave and the comfort of the believer in it, it has also been reported that Allah Almighty places the soul of the believer in a mold similar to his mold in the world, in a garden from His gardens, where he is comforted until the Day of Judgment. Then when the horn is blown, his body in the earth disintegrates and tears apart, then it is reconstructed and restored to him, and he is resurrected to the standing place, and he is commanded to the eternal garden, and he continues to be comforted by the preservation of Allah."

However, the body in which he is resurrected is not in the same composition as it was in the world, but it is refined, its form is improved, and it does not age with the modification of its properties, and it is not affected by any ailments in paradise, nor does it experience decline.

The disbeliever is cast into a mold, just as his likeness, in a place of punishment for retribution. He is tormented with fire until the appointed hour. Then his body, which he left behind in the grave, is reconstituted and returned to him for further torment in the

³⁶ Sharh Al-Mawaqif 8:317, and he mixed his words with the phrase of Al-Mawaqif by Al-Aij, so what he mentioned is related to the concept of content and commentator.

³⁷ Ruh al-Ma'ani 2:20.

Hereafter—a perpetual punishment. His body is also reassembled in an enduring form.³⁸

These are twelve words among the distinctive features of the Sunnis and Shias, expressing the consensus of the community on the continuation of life after transitioning from this world, or the renewal of life thereafter. Death does not mean the annihilation of the individual until the Day of Judgment. Instead, there is an intermediate phase between the two stages, with its own affairs and rulings.

This is supported by the practices and traditions followed by people since ancient times until now, such as reciting supplications for the deceased in their graves. If the deceased could not hear and benefit from these, there would be no purpose in doing so, and it would be in vain. Imam Ahmad, was asked about this, and he approved of it, using action as evidence.

Ibn al-Qayyim, a student of Ibn Taymiyyah, said after quoting what we mentioned about Imam Ahmad: 'The widespread practice of this throughout various regions and times, without opposition or denial, is sufficient evidence for its validity.'

He continued, 'If the addressee [the deceased] could not hear, this act would be like addressing dust, wood, stone, or non-existence. Although some individuals might approve of it, the scholars, in general, find it repulsive and objectionable.'

Abu Dawood narrated in his Sunan, with a moderately reliable chain, that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, attended a funeral. After the burial, he said, 'Ask your brother to be firm, as he is now being questioned.' Thus, it is known that he is questioned at that time, and if he is questioned, then he hears the recitation of supplications.³⁹

He said, "Verily, souls are divided into two categories: tormented souls and comforted souls. The tormented souls are occupied with the torment they are in, apart

³⁸ Awā'il al-Maqālāt, page 49, Tabriz; and Sharh 'Aqā'id al-Saduq, page 44, Tabriz.

³⁹ Al-Rūh, page 13, Beirut.

from interaction and meeting. As for the comforted souls, those dispatched without confinement, they interact and meet. Thus, every soul is with its companion who is based on its deeds. The soul of our Prophet is in the highest companionship. Allah the Almighty said, ***'Whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, those will be in the company of those whom Allah has blessed: the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous—and how excellent these companions are!'*** [4:60]. This companionship remains constant in the worldly life, in the realm of Barzakh, and in the realm of recompense. A person will be with those they loved in these three stages."⁴⁰

Answering a Question

There is a question here that has stirred the minds of many interpreters, and each has tackled it differently. The question is this: We witness the bodies of the deceased lifeless in their graves. So, how does what you have proposed regarding rewards and punishments, questioning and answering, remain valid?

Some have dismissed this by claiming that the intermediate life is purely material, existing as scattered particles of the physical body on Earth. Among them, Al-Razi said:

"As for us, structure is not a requirement for life, and there is no obstacle for God to restore life to each individual from those atoms and small parts without the need for composition and arrangement."⁴¹

It is notable that recognizing the intermediate life as a part of the unseen that must be believed in, even if we don't know its reality, is more important than this vague answer that only serves to emphasize worship.

However, it seems that the majority of adherents of the Sunni beliefs, relying on reports and traditions, hold that there is a body resembling a bird to which the soul is attached. They base this on what Abdul Razzaq narrated from Abdullah bin Ka'b bin Malik who said: The Messenger of Allah said, "Verily, the souls of martyrs are in the

⁴⁰ Al-Ruh, 17th Edition, Beirut.

⁴¹ Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir 4:145-146.

form of green birds, hanging on the lanterns of Paradise until Allah returns them to their bodies on the Day of Resurrection."

In some narrations: "The souls of martyrs are in the bodies of green birds hanging from the fruits or trees of Paradise."

Muslim narrated in his Sahih from Ibn Mas'ud: "The souls of martyrs are, with Allah, in the crops of green birds that roam freely in the rivers of Paradise wherever they wish and then take shelter in lanterns beneath the Throne."⁴²

It appears that these narrations are Israelite in origin, and the content of these narrations has been rejected by the narrations of the Imams of the household of the Prophet. They tackled the issue of the intermediate life in a way closer to reason by suggesting the creation of another body that resembles their worldly bodies, so that if someone were to see them, they would say, "I have seen so-and-so."

The scholar Abu Ja'far al-Tusi narrated in "Tahdhib al-Ahkam" from Ali ibn Mahzyar, from Al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, from Al-Husayn ibn Ahmad, from Yunus ibn Dhubyan who said: "I was in the presence of Abu Abdullah (Imam al-Sadiq), peace be upon him, sitting. He asked, 'What do people say about the souls of the believers?' I said, 'They say that they are in the green birds' crops in lanterns under the Throne.' Abu Abdullah said, 'Glory be to Allah! The believer is honored by Allah not to place his soul in the crop of a green bird. O Yunus, the believer, when Allah the Almighty takes his soul, He molds his soul in a form like his form in the worldly life. They eat and drink, and when the newcomers approach them, they recognize them by the same form that existed in the worldly life.'"

Ibn Abi 'Umayr narrated from Hammad, from Abu Baseer who said: "I asked Abu Abdullah (Imam al-Sadiq), peace be upon him, about the souls of the believers. He said, 'In Paradise, they are in the forms of their bodies. If you were to see them, you would say, 'This is so and so.'"⁴³

⁴² Ruh Al-Ma'ani 2:21.

⁴³ Majma' al-Bayan 1:236, Tusi's al-Kafi 3:245. Since Sheikh al-Tusi transmitted the narration from al-Kafi, we mentioned the source of the narration from it.

Chapter Five: The Residents of the Intermediary Realm

Benefit from the Deeds of the Believers

If the reality of a human is their spirit and their enduring soul, not the perishable one, and if the connection between the two abodes (the worldly abode and the intermediary realm) exists, and it is related to bodies suited for them while they are in a state between comfort and torment, then the discourse revolves around the residents in the intermediary realm benefiting from the deeds of the believers present in the worldly abode, when they supplicate for them and perform acts on their behalf, or when they don't.

Before delving into the heart of the matter, we present a statement: that faith is only beneficial to a person when righteous deeds accompany it, and faith is of no benefit if it is devoid of good deeds. This is why the Almighty often mentions righteous deeds alongside faith in many verses of the Noble Book.

The "Murjia" have erred when they claimed that abstract faith is the sole means of salvation and the key to success, placing faith first and deferring action.

The Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) have refuted this false notion, warning parents and urging them to protect their children from it: "Educate your children with good manners before the Murjia precede you in doing so."⁴⁴

Relying solely on faith without action is the deed of the foolish and the ignorant, and it neither benefits nor avails in any way.

Indeed, this false idea had another form among the Jews. They used to rely on the issue of lineage and the house of prophecy. They claimed that rewards were exclusively for them and punishment for others. They said, **"We are the children of God and His beloved," [5:18]** or they said, **"The fire will not touch us except for a few days." [3:24]**. Within the framework of this idea, they committed atrocities, shed the blood of other peoples and nations, and seized their wealth.

⁴⁴ Al-Kafi, Vol. 6:47/5.

The truth presented by the Book and the Sunnah is that salvation comes through faith coupled with righteous deeds. Procrastination in fulfilling obligations is utterly invalid. It is when a person delays what is obligatory, saying for example, "I will perform Hajj later." They keep saying this every year while delaying the obligatory duties.

This is Imam Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (peace be upon him) confirming the importance of action in his sermon, saying, "Today is the time for action without reckoning, and tomorrow is the time for reckoning without action."⁴⁵

He also says, "Today is the day of preparation while tomorrow is the day of race. The place to proceed to is Paradise while the place of doom is Hell. Is there no one to offer repentance over his faults before his death? Or is there no one to perform virtuous acts before the day of trial?"⁴⁶

This is what the Islamic nation unanimously agreed upon and what hadiths and reports converged upon.

The benefit of a person from their own work and the work of others

But through His abundant grace and generosity, God expanded the scope of human benefit from deeds. This expansion includes benefit after death, through deeds that continue to be realized after death. These deeds can be categorized into two types:

The first type: If a person engages in a direct action during their lifetime, and they pass away, yet the action continues to benefit people, like ongoing charity whose rewards they earned, or leaving behind knowledge that others benefit from, or raising a righteous child who prays for them. In these cases, the person continues to benefit from their charity and knowledge, as these deeds persist beyond their death. Unlike other temporary actions that perish with the person's demise, the bridge they built, the river they dug, the school they established, and the path they paved are all achievements from their efforts, and they continue to be beneficial.

⁴⁵ Nahjul Balagha, sermon 42.

⁴⁶ Nahjul Balagha, sermon 28.

Many narrations exist in this context. Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned some of them in the sixth matter of his book titled 'Al-Ruh'. He stated:

"Some innovators among the theologians claim that nothing reaches the deceased at all, neither supplication nor anything else. Then they said: The evidence of their benefit from what they caused in their lifetime is found in what Muslim narrated in his Sahih from the hadith of Abu Huraira that the Messenger of Allah - peace and blessings be upon him and his family - said: 'When a person dies, their deeds cease except for three: continuous charity, beneficial knowledge, or a righteous child who prays for them.' Exempting these three from the cessation of deeds indicates their connection to the person, as they are what they caused."

In Sunan Ibn Majah, in the hadith of Abu Huraira, it's narrated: The Messenger of Allah - peace and blessings be upon him and his family - said: 'For a believer, only three things continue to accrue rewards after their death: knowledge they imparted and spread, a righteous child they left behind, or a copy of the Quran they bequeathed, a mosque they built, a house they constructed for a traveler, a river they caused to flow, or a continuous charity they gave from their wealth during their health and life. All of these continue to benefit them after their death.'"

In Sahih Muslim as well, from the hadith of Jarir ibn Abdullah, he said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said, "Whoever establishes a good practice in Islam will have its reward and the reward of those who act upon it without diminishing their rewards in the least. And whoever establishes a bad practice in Islam will bear its burden and the burden of those who act upon it without diminishing their burdens in the least."

And this meaning is narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) through various authentic and reliable sources.

In the Musnad, from Hudhaifah, he said: A man asked during the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family), and people held back. Then, a man gave him, so the people gave as well. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, "Whoever establishes a good practice, then people follow it, he will have its

reward and the reward of those who follow it without diminishing their rewards in the least. And whoever establishes a bad practice, then people follow it, he will bear its burden and the burden of those who follow it without diminishing their burdens in the least."

And he indicated this by his saying (peace be upon him and his family), "No soul is wrongfully killed except that the first son of Adam bears a part of its burden; because he was the first to establish the practice of killing." So, if this is in punishment and retribution, then in favor and reward, it is more fitting and deserving.⁴⁷

This is supported by what is mentioned regarding the congregational prayer, where it is preferred by twenty-seven degrees or twenty-five degrees over praying individually.⁴⁸

So how do the worshippers benefit from each other? And the more the worshippers increase, the more their benefit increases.

The second type: If the deceased did not initiate any actions or cause any deeds, does the reward of the deeds of others reach him?

The apparent understanding from the Quran and the Sunnah is that Allah, glorified be He, due to His abundant grace and extensive generosity, conveys the reward of the deeds of others to the deceased, when someone does righteous deeds on behalf of the deceased and dedicates their reward to them. This is evidenced by a substantial number of verses, hadiths, and reports.

Presenting the Matter to the Book

The verses have declared that the believing individual benefits from the actions of others, even if they didn't exert effort in those actions. We are referring to some of these resources, by way of example but not limited to:

1. The angels seeking forgiveness for the believers, as Allah the Almighty says:

⁴⁷ "Kitab al-Ruh," Chapter Sixteen, as quoted in its entirety by Muhammad al-Faqi, a scholar of Al-Azhar, in his book "Tawassul wa al-Ziyarah," pages 226-227.

⁴⁸ Sahih Muslim, Book 2, Hadith 128, Chapter: The Virtues of Congregational Prayer.

"Those who bear the Throne and those around it exalt [Allah] with praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness for those who have believed, [saying], 'Our Lord, You have encompassed all things in mercy and knowledge, so forgive those who have repented and followed Your way and protect them from the punishment of Hellfire.'" [40:7]

Allah also says:

"The heavens almost break from above them, and the angels exalt [Allah] with praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on earth. Unquestionably, it is Allah who is the Forgiving, the Merciful." [42:5]

2. The supplication of the believers for those who have believed:

"And those who came after them say, 'Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful.'" [59:10]

The narrations indicating the benefit the deceased receives through the actions of the living

Numerous narrations indicate that the deceased can benefit from the deeds of others, either through supplication on their behalf. There is sufficient evidence for this, such as what has been consistently reported about the Noble Prophet's (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) visits to the graves of the companions at al-Baqi' al-Gharqad and his supplications for them, his visits to the martyrs of Uhud and his general supplication for them, and his repetition of such actions. Had they not benefited from his supplications, he would not have engaged in these acts. You are already familiar with the verses that indicate the deceased's benefit from the living's supplications.

The discussion primarily pertains to whether performing actions (not just supplications) on behalf of the deceased is valid. The numerous consistent narrations

affirm the validity of such actions, the conveyance of their rewards to the deceased, and the benefit that the deceased derives from them. These narrations are distributed across various authentic compilations and chains of transmission, covering different topics like fasting, pilgrimage, manumission, vows, charity, providing water, and recitation of the Quran. We will present these narrations in this sequence. However, someone delving deeper into the authentic compilations and chains of transmission might find more instances of this practice.

A) The deceased benefiting from someone else's fasting on their behalf

1. Both Bukhari and Muslim reported from Aisha: The Messenger of Allah said, "Whoever dies while having fasts to make up, his guardian should fast on his behalf."
2. Also reported by both Bukhari and Muslim from Ibn Abbas: A man came to the Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah, my mother died, and she had fasting to make up. Should I fast on her behalf?" He replied, "Yes, the debt owed to Allah is more deserving to be paid off."
3. In another narration: A woman came to the Messenger of Allah and said, "O Messenger of Allah, my mother died, and she had vowed to fast. Should I fast on her behalf?" He asked, "If your mother had a debt, would you not pay it off?" She answered, "Yes." He said, "Fulfill her vow by fasting."
4. Buraydah reported: While I was sitting with the Messenger of Allah, a woman came to him and said, "I had given a slave-girl in charity on behalf of my mother who died." The Prophet said, "You will receive your reward, and the inheritance will return to you." She then asked, "My mother had a month's fasting left. Should I fast on her behalf?" He replied, "Fast on her behalf." She asked further, "My mother never performed Hajj. Should I perform Hajj on her behalf?" He said, "Perform Hajj on her behalf."

B) The deceased benefiting from someone else's pilgrimage on their behalf

5. Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas said, "O Messenger of Allah, during her lifetime, my mother would perform Hajj from my wealth, give charity, uphold family ties, and spend from my money. Now that she has passed away, would it benefit her if I do these things on her behalf?" He replied, "Yes."⁴⁹
6. He (peace be upon him and his family) said, "If he were a Muslim, and you free a slave on his behalf or perform Hajj on his behalf, it will reach him."

The permissibility of performing Hajj on behalf of someone else has been mentioned in the fourth narration.

C) Benefiting the Deceased through the Liberation of Others on their Behalf

7. From 'Ata' ibn Rabah: A man said, "O Messenger of Allah, can I free a slave on behalf of my mother?" He said, "Yes." The man asked, "Will that benefit her?" The Prophet said, "Yes."
8. From 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi 'Umrah al-Ansari: His mother intended to free a slave but postponed it until morning, then she passed away. 'Abd al-Rahman said, "I asked al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, 'Will it benefit her if I free a slave on her behalf?' Al-Qasim replied, 'Sa'd ibn 'Ubada came to the Messenger of Allah and said, 'My mother has died. Would it benefit her if I free a slave on her behalf?' The Messenger of Allah said, 'Yes.'"

The narration in the sixth section indicates the permissibility of freeing a slave on behalf of another.

⁴⁹ These narrations (1-5) were reported by Muslim in his Sahih, Volume 3, in the chapter of fulfilling fasting on behalf of the deceased: pages 155-156.

D) Benefiting the Deceased through the Acts of Others when a Vow is Made but Not Fulfilled

9. Sa'd ibn 'Ubada came to the Messenger of Allah and said, "My mother had a vow. Should I fulfill it for her?" The Prophet replied, "Yes." He asked, "Will it benefit her?" The Prophet said, "Yes."

Muslim also narrated it with a different wording: Sa'd ibn 'Ubada asked the Messenger of Allah about a vow that his mother had but had not fulfilled before her death. The Messenger of Allah said, "Fulfill it on her behalf."

E) Benefiting the Deceased through Charitable Giving by Others on their Behalf

10. From Abu Huraira: A man said to the Prophet, "My father died leaving behind wealth and no will. Can I give charity on his behalf to atone for his deeds?" The Prophet said, "Yes."
11. Ma'adh reported: The Messenger of Allah granted me a gift. I became emotional, and he asked, "What makes you cry, O Ma'adh?" I said, "O Messenger of Allah, my mother had a portion from my father's legacy that I could give in charity on her behalf and advance for her in the Hereafter. However, she passed away without making any will." He said, "Do not let your eyes shed tears, O Ma'adh. Do you want your mother to be rewarded in her grave?" I said, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah." He said, "Then give what used to be given to her from your gift and say, 'O Allah, accept this on behalf of the mother of Ma'adh.'" Someone asked, "O Messenger of Allah, is this special to Ma'adh's mother or general for all your followers' mothers?" He replied, "It is general for all my followers' mothers."
12. Sa'd asked the Prophet - peace be upon him and his family - he said: "O Prophet of Allah, my mother has passed away, and I know that if she were alive, she would have given in charity. If I give charity on her behalf, would that benefit her?" He - peace be upon him and his family - said, "Yes." Then Sa'd asked the Prophet - peace be upon him and his family - which charity is most beneficial, O

Messenger of Allah?" He said, "Water." So, Sa'd dug a well and said, "This is for the mother of Sa'd."

The "lam" in his statement: "This is for the mother of Sa'd" is the "lam" that indicates the direction to which the charity is directed. It is not the "lam" used for the one who is being addressed or worshiped, like when we say "I have made a vow to Allah." If you wish, you can say: The "lam" in his statement "for the mother of Sa'd" is similar to the "lam" used in the Quranic verse: ***"Indeed, the charitable offerings are only for the poor..." [9:60].***

13. In Sahih Bukhari, Abdullah bin Abbas - may Allah be pleased with him - narrated:

"A man came to the Prophet and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, my mother has died, and she did not leave a will. I believe that if she had spoken, she would have given in charity. Will she receive a reward if I give charity on her behalf?' He said, 'Yes.'"

14. Also in Sahih Bukhari, Abdullah bin Abbas - may Allah be pleased with him -

narrated: "Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas' mother died while he was absent. He came to the Prophet - peace be upon him and his family - and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, my mother has died, and I was absent when she passed away. Will she receive a reward if I give charity on her behalf?' He said, 'Yes.' Sa'd said: 'I bear witness that the damaged wall of my garden is a charity on her behalf.' The "damaged wall" refers to the garden wall, and the "makhraf" is the name of that wall."

15. Abdullah bin Umar reported: Al-Aas ibn Wa'il vowed during the pre-Islamic era to

slaughter a hundred camels, Hisham ibn Al-Aas vowed to slaughter fifty-five camels. Omar asked the Prophet - peace be upon him and his family - about this, and he said: "As for your father, if he had accepted the concept of monotheism and you fast and give charity on his behalf, it would benefit him." This hadith is also narrated by Imam Ahmad.

F) And the deceased benefits from remembrance, supplication, recitation, and greetings

16. Ibn Majah narrated in his authentic compilation: The Messenger of Allah said, "Recite Surah Yasin for your deceased."
17. And from Abu Huraira: "Visit your deceased with 'La ilaha illallah' (There is no god but Allah)."
18. "No man visits the grave of his close friend, greets him, and sits beside him except that the deceased returns his greetings and finds solace in his company until he departs."
19. "No man passes by the grave of someone he knew in this world and greets him except that he recognizes him and returns the greeting."
20. "The deceased in the grave is like a drowning person calling for help, waiting for supplication from a father, mother, child, or trusted friend. When it reaches him, it becomes dearer to him than the world and all it contains. Indeed, Allah, the Almighty and Majestic, will answer the supplications of the people of the world for the people of the graves like mountains. And the living's gift to the deceased is seeking forgiveness for them and giving charity on their behalf."
21. Narrated by Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "When you pray for the deceased, make sincere supplication for him."
22. And in Sahih Muslim, from the narration of Awf bin Malik: The Messenger of Allah prayed over a funeral, and I memorized his supplication. He said, "O Allah, forgive him, have mercy on him, grant him well-being and pardon, and honor his residence and make his entrance spacious. Wash him with water, snow, and hail, and cleanse him from sins as a white robe is cleansed from dirt. Replace his home with a better one than his home, and his family with a better family. Give him entry to Paradise and protect him from the punishment of the grave and the Hellfire."

23. In the Sunan, from the narration of Wathilah bin Al-Asq'a: The Messenger of Allah prayed for a Muslim man, and I heard him say, "O Allah, so-and-so, son of so-and-so, is under Your protection and within the bonds of Your neighborliness. Protect him from the trial of the grave and its punishment. You are the fulfiller of promises and the Truthful. Forgive him and have mercy on him, for indeed, You are the Forgiving, the Merciful."

24. In the Sunan, from the narration of Uthman bin Affan: When the Prophet finished burying the deceased, he would stand by the grave and say, "Seek forgiveness for your brother and ask for his firmness, for he is now being questioned."

If one were to explore the authentic hadiths and traditions, many narrations from this category would be found. Added to this is what is reported from the noble Prophet during his visit to Baqi' al-Gharqad, his supplications for his family, and his expressing condolences. And there are other hadiths and reports related to this field. For those seeking further details, they should refer to their sources.⁵⁰

The stance of the Islamic schools of thought on this matter

And they are the imams of the three schools of thought (Hanbali, Shafi'i, and Hanafi). They issue fatwas that the deceased can benefit from the actions of the living, even if the deceased did not perform them and had no intention to do so.

These are the Hanbali jurists' view: If a person dies before performing the obligatory pilgrimage (Hajj), whether with an excuse or without, it is obligatory to spend from all of their wealth for the expenses of performing Hajj and Umrah, even if they didn't make a will.⁵¹

⁵⁰ To fully comprehend the sources of these narrations, refer to the following: Sahih Muslim, Book of Vows (Kitab al-Nadhr) 5:73-78; Kanz al-Ummal 6:598-602 / 17050-17071; Al-Ruh by Ibn al-Qayyim: pp. 118-121, and other references, "Al-Tawassul wa al-Ziyarah fi al-Shari'ah al-Islamiyyah" by Sheikh al-Faqi: p. 229, and others.

⁵¹ Al-Fiqh 'ala al-Madha'ib al-Arba'a by al-Jaziri 1:571.

This is the Hanafi jurisprudence: If the deceased did not make a will and someone among the heirs or others performs Hajj on their behalf, it is hoped that their Hajj will be accepted by God.⁵²

And this is the Shafi'i view: If a person was unable to perform Hajj during their lifetime, someone else can perform it on their behalf after their death, using funds from their estate (without being restricted by a specific bequest or lack thereof).⁵³

Ibn al-Qayyim stated: They differed in physical acts of worship such as fasting, prayer, recitation of the Quran, and remembrance. Imam Ahmad and most of the early scholars agreed on the transfer of its rewards. Some companions of Abu Hanifa also held this view. Imam Ahmad's stance is supported by a narration from Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Khahhal.

He said: It was said to Abu Abdullah (Imam Ahmad), "If a person does a good deed, like prayer or charity, can they allocate half of its reward to their deceased father or mother?" He said, "I hope so," or he said, "The deceased receives everything, whether it's charity or other good deeds." He also said, "Recite Ayat al-Kursi three times and say 'Allahu Ahad' (Surah Ikhlas) and say, 'O Allah, the merit of these deeds is for the people of the graves.'"

Ibn Abi Shaybah and al-Khallal reported through an authentic chain from al-Sha'bi that when someone among the Ansar (early Muslims of Medina) passed away, they would gather at the grave and recite the Quran.

Al-Nawawi, in his explanation of "Al-Muhadhdhab," said: It is recommended (for the visitor to the deceased) to recite what is easy from the Quran and supplicate for them afterward. Al-Shafi'i asserted this, and the companions agreed on it.

In the book of remembrances, al-Shafi'i and the companions said: It is recommended to recite some Quranic verses near the deceased. They said, "If they complete the entire Quran, it's good."

⁵² Same source 1:567.

⁵³ Same source 1:569.

Then he said, "It has been narrated from some of the followers of the Shafi'i school that its reward does not reach the deceased."

And it has been reported from groups within the Shafi'i school that they give precedence to the reward of recitation if it is not recited in the presence of the deceased, or if the intention for the reward of the recitation for them is not made, or they make the intention but do not supplicate for it.⁵⁴

While these narrations could possibly be debated concerning the authenticity of some of their chains of transmission, their overall consensus in content is widespread, and thus they cannot all be dismissed.

In addition to this, there are authentic and conclusive narrations that settle the dispute. So, when a jurist observes what the scholars of the three schools of thought have issued verdicts on, he will deduce the general principle, which is that the reward of every righteous deed performed on behalf of the deceased, whether it falls within the mentioned matters or goes beyond them, is conveyed to the deceased, as long as it is carried out on their behalf. This includes actions such as fasting, performing the pilgrimage, and other similar acts, which are provided as examples, not as an exhaustive list.

Those verses, narrations, and religious rulings are explicit in permitting the performance of actions for the deceased without their request. In other words, without them actively seeking or participating in those actions. So, if the deceased does not benefit from the actions of others, how can pilgrimage (Hajj) on their behalf be permissible or necessary? Similarly, this applies to all other matters such as seeking forgiveness, supplication, intercession, giving charity, and performing acts of worship on their behalf.

Dr. Abdul Malik Al-Saadi said: It has not been established that the Prophet - peace be upon him and his family - used to recite anything from the Quran when visiting graves, except for what is mentioned that he - peace be upon him and his family - said, "Recite Surah Yaseen over your deceased." If we consider the term "deceased"

⁵⁴ Al-Ruh by Ibn Qayyim: Pages 235-236.

according to its true meaning, which is the departure of the soul from the body, because carrying it in its literal sense implies carrying the term on its metaphorical meaning. Carrying it in its true sense is more appropriate. Despite this, there is no objection to reciting the Quran in the graveyard due to the absence of prohibition, and because the deceased can hear the recitation and find solace in it. Also, Imam Ahmad was of the view that this is permissible, as he initially prohibited a blind man from reciting by the graves but later permitted him to do so after hearing that Ibn Umar - may Allah be pleased with him - advised reciting the opening of Surah Al-Baqarah and its conclusion when buried near him, as mentioned in "Al-Mughni" by Ibn Qudamah in the matter of visiting graves.⁵⁵

As for the statement that recitation by the graves is an innovation (bid'ah), it is not in accordance with the Islamic belief. Innovation is what is not supported by specific textual evidence or does not fall under the general principles of Islam. Recitation is entirely permissible in Islam, regardless of the place and time of recitation, as long as there is no specific prohibition at a certain time, place, or situation.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Al-Mughni, 2:567.

⁵⁶ Al-Bid'ah, page 136.

Chapter Six: Concerning Raised Doubts

I have stood, thanks to the radiant noble verses, the purified prophetic tradition, and the words of the righteous scholars, affirming that death does not mean the annihilation and invalidation of a person, nor does it eradicate his truth and identity. Rather, it is a bridge that transports the individual from one realm to another, either adorned with blessings and comfort or shrouded with affliction and torment.

I have also come to realize that the connection between the two abodes is unbroken, and there is an exchange of words between them, to the extent that the denizens of the Barzakh hear the footsteps of the funeral bearers.

Furthermore, it has become clear that believers benefit from the good deeds performed by their relatives and friends.

All of this is by His grace, glorified be He, upon His servants, allowing them to benefit from the righteous supplications and virtuous deeds offered to them by their brothers after their transition from the worldly life. These deeds are dedicated to the reward of their parents, siblings, and teachers whose rights upon them have been established.

However, the attachment to desires might divert a person from embracing the truth and submitting before reality. They might present their flawed opinions against clear evidence. At times, they deny the intermediary life (Barzakh), and at other times, they reject the connection between the two realms. In some instances, they deny the benefit of the intermediaries from the deeds of their believing brethren. All of this is done through feeble arguments embellished by desires and blind conformity, lacking weight in the market of consideration and truth's abode. "Deem it better and do not inquire about the news." And to you, here are those doubts with their corresponding answers:

The First Objection

Indeed, the afterlife is a life known only to Allah. It is an independent life that we believe in, yet we do not know its nature. Between the living and the dead, there is a

barrier that prevents communication between them. Hence, communication between them is impossible, neither in essence nor in attributes. Allah, the Almighty, says: ***"And there is a barrier behind them until the Day they are resurrected."*** [23:100]⁵⁷

Response: This statement encompasses two matters that the writer has confused:

1. We do not know the reality of the afterlife.
2. The afterlife is a barrier preventing communication.

Regarding the first matter, we say: The true nature of life, whether material or pertaining to the afterlife, is an unknown realm only known to its Creator. What is accessible to us is recognizing its effects and characteristics. Just as we understand material life through its effects, as knowledge advances, humanity progresses in understanding those effects. Similarly, the afterlife is unknown in its essence, but known through its effects. The Noble Book has mentioned some of these effects, indicating that living martyrs in their afterlife are provided for, rejoice in Allah's blessings, and take delight in those who have not yet joined them. They rejoice in God's bounty and may wish for matters just as Habib the Carpenter's people recognized his destiny, as Allah says: ***"He said, 'I wish my people could know how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honored.'"*** [36:26-27]

The intermediary life (Barzakh) is not exclusive to believers; rather, there are sinful disbelievers who are encompassed by it, like the example of Pharaoh and his people. They are exposed to the Fire morning and evening. Allah, glorified be He, says: ***"And the people of Pharaoh were enveloped by the worst of punishment. The Fire, they are exposed to it morning and evening. And the Day the Hour appears [it will be said], 'Make the people of Pharaoh enter the severest punishment.'"*** [40:45-46].

This level of understanding is sufficient for us to conclude that they have sensations, perception, awareness, reasoning, and psychological manifestations of joy

⁵⁷ Al-Tawassul ila haqiqat at-Tawassul, page 267.

and pain, among other things. The issue of seeking intercession only requires that the intercessor be a living, aware, perceptive, poetic, and attentive being to the world and its affairs.

As a side note to the second matter, we say: The term "Barzakh" means a barrier, not a complete severance between the people of this world and the people of the hereafter. Those who interpret it in the latter sense are attempting to support their own viewpoint. It is a barrier that prevents people from returning to their worldly lives.

This is evidenced by the fact that Allah, glorified be He, mentioned the concept of Barzakh after discussing the wish of the sinners to return to the world. He says: ***"Until, when death comes to one of them, he says, 'My Lord, send me back that I might do righteousness in that which I left behind.' No! It is only a word he is saying."*** [23:99-100].

When He says, "No!" it rejects their wish to return, implying that their prayers will not be answered. Then, Allah reiterates this by saying: "And behind them is a barrier until the Day they are resurrected." This barrier prevents them from returning to the world until the Day of Resurrection.

Taking a predetermined stance in this matter obstructs the path to understanding the truth and hinders correct comprehension. Since the one who follows the argument that it is not permissible to seek intercession through the Prophet's supplication in Barzakh intended to support his own viewpoint, he interpreted Barzakh in the verse as a barrier to communication, not a barrier preventing the passage of the people of Barzakh to the world. It is as if he imagines an iron curtain or a massive wall between the two lives, preventing meeting and hearing. However, what he imagines lacks proof; on the contrary, the evidence is against it. You can see that Allah, glorified be He, speaks about the two seas, one sweet and palatable, and the other salty and bitter. Then He says: "Between them is a barrier which they do not transgress." This means an obstacle that prevents the two waters from mixing. He says, glorified be He: ***"He released the two seas, meeting [side by side]. Between them is a barrier [so] neither of them***

transgresses." [55:19-20] Science has not revealed the presence of a physical dam between the two seas.

The Second Objection

Indeed, Allah, may He be glorified, says: ***"And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives" [53:39].*** The verse confines the benefit to the actions for which a person has striven before their death. How then can one benefit from the deeds of others in which they did not strive?

The response to this objection comes from various perspectives. However, before providing the answer, we mention what is relevant to the reader in this context. If the apparent meaning of the verse were as the objector suggests, which is that others do not benefit from the deeds of others unless it had a direct impact on their lives, this would contradict other explicit verses and consistent narrations in this field. If that were the case, what would be the meaning of believers seeking forgiveness for their fellow believers who preceded them in faith? What would be the meaning of the angels seeking forgiveness for the people of faith and those around them? What would be the meaning of these narrations from various domains that indicate the deceased benefiting from the deeds of others?

All of this indicates that the verse has another meaning, different from what the evidence suggests. Here is a detailed explanation of the verse, considering it from various angles:

The First Angle:

The context of the surrounding verses for this verse is a context of condemnation and reproach, a context of warning and threat. Indeed, Allah, the Almighty, begins His noble speech by saying: ***"Have you seen him who turned away? And gave a little and [then] refrained? Does he have knowledge of the unseen, so he sees? Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses, and [of] Abraham, who fulfilled [his obligations] - That no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of***

another. And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives. And that his effort is going to be seen - Then he will be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense. And that to your Lord is the finality." [53:33-42]

So, you can see that the present verses, like a single intertwined chain, are formulated for the purpose of warning and threatening, especially the statement: "And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives." For this verse is situated between two explicit threatening verses, preceding it: "Never will a bearer of burdens bear the burden of another" and following it: "And that his effort is going to be seen," and then: "And that to your Lord is the finality."

All of this gives the impression that the subject matter of this verse and the preceding and following verses is punishment, not reward; wrongdoing, not goodness. The verse clearly states that every individual bears the weight of their own actions and will be punished for the evil deeds they strived for. As for the evil deeds committed by others in which the individual did not participate, they will not be held accountable for them nor punished, that every individual bears the responsibility of their own actions and will be punished for the evil deeds they strived for. As for the evil deeds committed by others in which a person did not partake, they will not be held accountable for them, nor will they be punished for them.

And as such, the 'Lam' in His saying: 'for mankind' is not for benefit, but the 'Lam' is for indicating entitlement, and this is one of its meanings,⁵⁸ like His saying: ***'Woe to those who give less' [83:1]*** and His saying: ***'For them in the world is disgrace and for them in the Hereafter is great punishment.'* [2:144]** And the saying of the Prophet - peace be upon him and his family - : 'The child belongs to the bed and the stone belongs to the adulteress.'

And as such, the theme emphasized by the verses is punishment, not reward. Therefore, the verse is diverging from the focus of the discussion, and this is evident to those who deeply contemplate.

⁵⁸ Ibn Hisham said in 'Mughni al-Labib' 1:208, 'The 'Lam' of association [preposition indicating ownership or relationship] has twenty-two meanings. One of them is entitlement, and it occurs between meaning and essence, such as: ***'For them in the world is disgrace.'* [2:114]**

The Second Angle:

Assuming that the focus of these verses is broader than just reward and punishment, and that the "I am" in the verse serves the purpose of benefit, the verse nonetheless does not negate the possibility of a person benefiting from the actions of others if the person seeking benefit strives for it, even by creating a suitable ground for self-benefit. This stands in contrast to those who lack such a foundation, readiness, capability, and suitability within themselves.

For example, a person benefits from the intercession of the Noble Prophet - peace and blessings be upon him and his family - on the Day of Judgment, as agreed upon by all Muslims, even including the Wahhabis. However, this benefit arises because the person strives for it, entering the realm of faith in Allah and His signs.

Similarly, believers seeking forgiveness for a fellow believer after their death, as well as righteous deeds for which the reward is dedicated to someone and is connected to their effort in joining the community of believers, function in the same way.

Therefore, if one is a polytheist or someone whose deeds are in vain, they cannot attain that reward or benefit from the actions of others.

Some scholars of the Sunni tradition have discerned this answer.

Abu al-Wafa ibn Aqil said: Through his efforts and good conduct, a person gains friends, begets children, marries, performs acts of kindness, and shows goodwill to others. As a result, people feel compassion for him, and dedicate acts of worship to him. This is a consequence of his striving, as the Prophet - peace and blessings be upon him and his family - said: "The best of a person's wealth is that which he earns."

The scholar al-Faqi said: This answer needs completion. By virtue of their faith and obedience to Allah and His Messenger, a believer strives for personal benefit through the deeds of fellow believers alongside their own deeds. Just as they benefit from their deeds during their lives, they also benefit from the deeds of others. Believers

mutually benefit from shared actions, such as congregational prayers. Each participant's prayer is magnified up to twenty-seven times due to their participation in the prayer. So, the deeds of others become a reason for an increase in one's reward, just as their own deeds become a cause for an increase in the reward of others.

Furthermore, the Quran does not deny the benefit of a person from the efforts of others; it only negates ownership over things unrelated to one's own efforts. There is a significant difference between these two aspects. Allah, the Exalted, has informed that one possesses only their own striving, and they can choose to dedicate it to others or keep it for themselves. He, glorified be He, did not say that benefit is attainable only through one's own efforts.⁵⁹

The Third Angle:

The verse is intended to clarify that the deeds of every individual are attributed to them alone, and it emphasizes the absence of benefit from the deeds of others. Indeed, this is evident from the fact that a person's actions are not included in the scope or meaning of the verse, nor does the verse imply denial of this.

If you wish, you can say: The verse aims to explain that every individual is responsible for their own actions. If someone does evil, no one else bears the burden for it: **"No bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another" [17:15]**. Conversely, if someone does good, they will be rewarded for it: **"Whoever acts righteously does so to his own benefit, while whoever commits evil does so to his own detriment..." [45:15]**. And **"So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it" [99:7-8]**. This is the fundamental principle in human life, both in the present and the future. No one can reject this principle and rely on others. However, this does not contradict the possibility for a person to dedicate the reward of their good deeds to others and bring happiness to others through their actions. This is beyond the scope of the verse, whether positively or negatively.

⁵⁹ Al-Tawassul wal-Ziyarah, p. 234.

This is similar to a parent telling their child: "You only benefit from your own efforts and endeavors." Indeed, the efforts of every individual are for themselves, not for others. This does not contradict the idea that the child might benefit from the actions of another if that other person offers them food, fruits, or clothes with different intentions. In such a case, the child cannot object to the parent by saying, "You said you benefit from your efforts while I benefited from the efforts of others." The parent can respond by saying: "My words refer to the same action, whether it's from you or someone else. Each person is responsible for their own actions and does not exceed that boundary. However, my statement is not addressing the scenario where someone gives you the results of their efforts out of their own goodwill."

How can we accept the claims of this Wahhabi and their likes, when both Quranic verses and Hadiths, as some of them have indicated, confirm the potential for individuals to benefit from the actions of others under specific circumstances and special conditions, even if they did not make any effort themselves?

This verse points to a lesson, which is that humans must rely on their own efforts and actions rather than their lineage or association. Otherwise, Muslims could become like the Jews who wished like fools. They relied on their connection and affiliation with the prophets, saying, ***"We are the children of God and His beloved ones" [5:18]***, or claiming, ***"The Fire will only touch us for a few days" [2:80]***.

Yes, as we mentioned, this is not an original determinant in the true happiness of a person in his worldly life and the hereafter. He cannot rely on it or take it as a foundation, even if it is a valid matter in itself. Not everything valid is suitable for a person to rely on and live by, like the intercessions of prophets and saints. It is not permissible to abandon action under the pretext that they will intercede.

The Third Objection

The Sunnah (Prophetic tradition) indicates that a person's deeds come to an end after their death except for three things. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, said:

"When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: ongoing charity, knowledge that benefits, or a righteous child who prays for him." And the deeds of others are not one of these three things, so they are not beneficial.

It should be noted:

The hadith indicates that a person's deeds come to an end with their death except for three things, but it does not indicate that they do not benefit from anything other than these three. There is a clear distinction between the cessation of deeds and the lack of benefit. The former refers to the actions a person performs during their lifetime, which necessarily come to an end with death except for those with continued existence, like the three mentioned matters. The latter, however, encompasses a broader range of actions that a person performs themselves or through others. The hadith does not negate a person benefiting from an action done by someone else and the reward being attributed to them.

In other words, the focus of the hadith is on actions where a person has a direct role or contribution, like raising a righteous child, and not on actions outside of this scope. These actions, which do not involve a person's direct involvement except through creating a conducive environment, are beyond the scope of the hadith's subject matter.

The Fourth Objection

Transfer (reward) is indeed a deserved right. It is realized in the transfer from one creature to another creature. As for the transfer from the creature to the Creator, it's a different matter; it's not valid to equate it with the transfer of slaves from one to another.

Response: This stance and this statement are an interpretation in contrast to the text. The evidence has come together that the deceased benefits from the actions of the living. Its sources are known from the book and the Sunnah. What does this inference signify?

Add to this that there is no transfer from the creature to the Creator. Rather, it is compliance with His command, glorified be He, to seek forgiveness, fast, pray, perform

pilgrimage, and make sacrifices on behalf of the believers. If we were to do that, the deceased would benefit. We perform these actions according to the Prophet's command. There is no transfer from the created to Allah.

Then consider that the reward for actions is due to His grace, not our entitlement. He, glorified be He, owes nothing to the worker. However, He, glorified be He, bestows His favor and designates a reward for the deed. He then allowed the performance of deeds with the intention of benefiting the deceased, and from His side, it will reach them. In fact, their records will be cleared. Thus, it is not valid for us to engage in argument and obstinacy in opposition to the texts, biased to a particular perspective.

The Fifth Objection

Acts of worship can be divided into two categories: one in which delegation is possible, such as charity (sadaqah) and pilgrimage (hajj), and another in which delegation is not possible, such as embracing Islam, performing prayers, reciting the Quran, and fasting. For the latter type, their rewards are specific to the doer and cannot be transferred to others.

Response: This distinction is also a matter of interpretation in contrast to the textual evidence. What is the evidence for this division? The Prophet prescribed fasting on behalf of the deceased even though fasting cannot be delegated. Allah, who promised rewards for pilgrimage, charity, and emancipation, can certainly convey the rewards of fasting, prayers, recitation, and other acts that the living can perform on behalf of the deceased.

What do you say about the statement of the Prophet, peace be upon him: "Whoever dies and has fasts outstanding, let his guardian fast for him."⁶⁰ And this is an authentic hadith.

Al-Bayhaqi also mentioned: The permissibility of making up missed fasting for the deceased has been established through narrations from Sa'id ibn Jubair, Mujahid, 'Ata',

⁶⁰ Musnad Ahmad 6:69.

'Ikrimah, and Ibn 'Abbas. In some narrations, it is mentioned: "Fast on behalf of your mother."

Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah narrated from Ibn 'Abbas: A man came to the Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah, my mother has died, and she had outstanding fasts to make up. Should I fast on her behalf?" The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, asked, "If your mother owed a debt, would you pay it off on her behalf?" The man replied, "Yes." The Prophet then said, "The debt owed to Allah is more deserving to be fulfilled."

The compilers of the authentic hadith collections, Ibn Hibban, al-Hakim in al-Mustadrak, al-Bayhaqi in "Shu'ab al-Iman," and Imam Ahmad, narrated from the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family: "Yasin is the heart of the Quran; whoever recites it seeking Allah and the Hereafter's rewards will be forgiven, and recite it near your deceased."

Al-Bayhaqi also narrated that Ibn 'Umar recommended reciting the opening and concluding sections of Surah al-Baqarah at the graveside after burial.

The Sixth Objection

The "lam" (particle) in their statement: "This is for the Prophet, or for the Imam, or for the Wali, or for the parent," is the same "lam" that exists in our statement: "I vow to Allah" or "For Allah's sake." Thus, vowing for the deceased is associating partners with Allah and worshiping them, under the pretext of sharing the actions in form.

However, the objector overlooked the difference in meaning of the "lam" in the two contexts: the "lam" in their statement, "This is for the Prophet," is the same as the "lam" in Allah's statement: ***"Charitable offerings are only for the poor and the needy..." [9:60]*** But its meaning differs from the "lam" in His statement: ***"My Lord, indeed I have pledged to You what is in my womb, consecrated [for Your service]." [3:35]*** In this case, the "lam" is emphatic, and the intended meanings are far apart. The distinction lies in giving the act the color of worship, as the person becomes the purpose and recipient, not the one to whom the act is directed.

Furthermore, we must not restrict the permissibility of dedicating rewards to only the deeds mentioned in the narrations. Instead, we generalize its permissibility to encompass all deeds by removing the specificity. Just as it is permissible to dedicate the reward of charity, pilgrimage, and freeing a slave, it is permissible to dedicate the reward of reciting the Quran to the deceased.

Especially since there are narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) permitting such actions, allowing the dedication of the reward of reciting the Quran to the deceased, affirming its arrival to them, and their benefit from it. So why disregard the view of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) and suffice with the opinion of one of the four schools of thought?

Shouldn't we refer back to the statements of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) alongside the opinions of the scholars of the four schools of thought on an equal footing?

I believe that there are dangerous motives behind this denial, namely: the assertion that the deceased do not benefit from the actions of the living serves as a pretext to deny their existence. Consequently, if the Prophets and Saints are deceased and do not benefit from what their loved ones and followers offer to them, what then is the meaning of seeking intercession, supplicating to them, and calling upon them?

A Word on Sacrifices

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, would kindly offer sacrifices on behalf of his nation, both the living and the deceased. The companions and followers also followed suit, sacrificing on behalf of their Prophet. Ibn Majah, Abd al-Razzaq, and others have reported from Aisha and Abu Huraira that when the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, intended to make a sacrifice, he would buy two large, fat, horned rams. He slaughtered one of them for Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, and the other for his nation, those who testified to the Oneness of God and His message.

Ahmad, Abu Dawood, and Al-Tirmidhi also reported that the Prophet himself performed the slaughter with his own hands and said, "O Allah, this is for me and for those from my nation who have not offered a sacrifice." This explicit act ensured the connection of reward to them and their benefit from it.

Abu Dawood narrated with his chain of transmission in the chapter on sacrifices made on behalf of the deceased, from Ali ibn Abi Talib, that he would sacrifice a ram on behalf of the Prophet and say, "He instructed me to sacrifice on his behalf, so I sacrifice on his behalf."⁶¹

The implications of this principle:

This principle entails the well-being of the actions of the Muslims; where they engage in good and righteous deeds, and perhaps dedicate the rewards of these deeds to their beloved ones and those dear to them who have passed away. This is a matter endorsed by the Quran and the Sunnah, in fact, they explicitly mentioned it.

So, what Muslims do for their deceased by dedicating the rewards of their righteous deeds to them, or what they do at the graves of prophets and saints like offering food and pouring water with the intention that its reward reaches them, is inspired by the example of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas. He asked the Prophet about the ruling on giving charity on behalf of his mother—would it benefit her? The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, "Yes." Sa'd then asked, "Which charity is best?" The Prophet replied, "Water." So, he dug a well and said, "This is for Umm Sa'd."

In this context, they are followers of Sa'd's example, not idolaters. They don't seek to worship the deceased; rather, they aim to convey the rewards to them, just as Sa'd did.

⁶¹ Sunan Abu Dawood, Vol. 2, p. 94, Hadith No. 2790, Book of Sacrifices.