

عَلَى فِرَاشِ الْمَوْتِ

أَمَّا بَعْدُ:

أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ:

إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ هُوَ الْحَقِيقَةُ الَّتِي لَا مَفَرَ مِنْهَا، وَهُوَ الْيَقِينُ الَّذِي لَا شَكَّ فِيهِ، وَهُوَ النَّهَائِيَةُ لِكُلِّ حَيٍّ، قَالَ تَعَالَى: (كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ * وَيَبْقَى وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ) [الرحمن: 26-27]، وَاللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَنَا وَيَخْتَبِرَنَا أَيُّنَا أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا، وَأَفْضَلُ طَاعَةً وَعِبَادَةً وَأَمْتِنًا لِأَمْرِهِ، وَتَمَسُّكَ بِشَرِيْعَتِهِ؛ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: (الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ) [المالك: 2].

وَقَالَ عُمَرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ: «إِذَا غَفَلَ قَلْبٌ عَنِ ذِكْرِ الْمَوْتِ سَاعَةً فَسَدَ».

وَكَانَ الْحَسَنُ الْبَصْرِيُّ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ يَقُولُ: «مَنْ لَمْ يَرُدِّعْهُ الْقُرْآنُ وَالْمَوْتُ، ثُمَّ تَنَاطَحَتِ الْجِبَالُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ، لَمْ يَرْتَدِّعْ».

وَرَوَى الْبُخَارِيُّ فِي صَحِيحِهِ مِنْ حَدِيثِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّهُ قَالَ: أَخَذَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ بِمَنْكِبِي فَقَالَ: «كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ»، وَكَانَ ابْنُ عُمَرَ يَقُولُ: «إِذَا أَمْسَيْتَ فَلَا تَنْتَظِرِ الصَّبَاحَ، وَإِذَا أَصْبَحْتَ فَلَا تَنْتَظِرِ الْمَسَاءَ، وَخُذْ مِنْ صِحِّكَ لِمَرْضِكَ، وَمِنْ حَيَاتِكَ لِمَوْتِكَ».

وَقَالَ أَحَدُ الشُّعْرَاءِ:

وَلَوْ أَنَا إِذَا مِتْنَا تُرِكْنَا لَكَانَ الْمَوْتُ رَاحَةً كُلَّ حَيٍّ

وَلَكِنَّا إِذَا مِتْنَا بَعُثْنَا وَنُسْأَلُ بَعْدَهُ عَنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

قَالَ تَعَالَى: (قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَدْعُونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ) [الجمعة: 8].

عِبَادَ اللَّهِ:

إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ قَدْ ذَاقَهُ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ وَالْعُظَمَاءُ وَالْخُلَفَاءُ وَالْأَمْرَاءُ، فَاسْتَمِعُوا إِلَيَّ مَا قَالُوهُ فِي آخِرِ لِحَظَاتِ الْحَيَاةِ، وَهُمْ يَجُودُونَ بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى فِرَاشِ الْمَوْتِ، فَيَا لَهَا مِنْ عِبْرَةٍ! وَيَا لَهَا مِنْ مَوْعِظَةٍ!، وَلَوْ بَقِيَ أَحَدٌ لَبَقِيَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ؛ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى مُخَاطِبًا نَبِيَّهُ ﷺ: (وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِبَشَرٍ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ الْخُلْدَ أَفَإِنْ مِتَّ فَهُمْ الْخَالِدُونَ * كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَنَبَلُّوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فَنُنَّا وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ) [الأنبياء: 34-35].

وَتَرَوِي لَنَا أُمُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ - عَائِشَةُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا حَالَ الرَّسُولِ ﷺ وَهُوَ عَلَى فِرَاشِ الْمَوْتِ فَتَقُولُ: «إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَانَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ رَكْوَةٌ أَوْ عَلْبَةٌ فِيهَا مَاءٌ فَجَعَلَ يُدْخِلُ يَدَهُ فِي الْمَاءِ فَيَمْسَحُ بِهَا وَجْهَهُ وَيَقُولُ: «لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِنَّ لِلْمَوْتِ سَكَرَاتٍ»، ثُمَّ نَصَبَ يَدَهُ فَجَعَلَ يَقُولُ: «فِي الرَّفِيقِ الْأَعْلَى» حَتَّى فَبِضْ وَمَالَتْ يَدَهُ» [رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ].

وَعَنْهَا أَيْضًا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ: دَخَلْتُ عَلَى أَبِي بَكْرٍ t فَقَالَ: فِي كَمْ كَفَنْتُمُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ؟ قَالَتْ: قُلْتُ: فِي ثَلَاثَةِ أَنْوَافٍ سَحُولِيَّةٍ لَيْسَ فِيهَا قَمِيصٌ وَلَا عِمَامَةٌ، وَقَالَ لَهَا: فِي أَيِّ يَوْمٍ تُوفِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ؟ قَالَتْ: يَوْمَ الْاِثْنَيْنِ، قَالَ: فَأَيُّ يَوْمٍ هَذَا؟ قَالَتْ: يَوْمَ الْاِثْنَيْنِ. قَالَ: أَرْجُو فِيمَا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ اللَّيْلِ، فَنَظَرَ إِلَى ثَوْبٍ عَلَيْهِ كَانَ يُمَرِّضُ فِيهِ، بِهِ رَدْعٌ مِنْ زَعْفَرَانٍ فَقَالَ: اغْسِلُوا ثَوْبِي هَذَا وَزِيدُوا عَلَيْهِ ثَوْبَيْنِ فَكَفَّنُونِي فِيهَا، قُلْتُ: إِنَّ هَذَا خَلْقٌ، قَالَ: إِنَّ الْحَيَّ أَحَقُّ بِالْجَدِيدِ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ؛ إِنَّمَا هُوَ لِلْمَهْلَةِ (أَيُّ: الصَّدِيدِ) [رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ].

وَيَقُولُ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا: «دَخَلْتُ عَلَى عُمَرَ t حِينَ طُعِنَ فَقُلْتُ: أَبْشِرْ بِالْجَنَّةِ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، أَسَلِمْتَ حِينَ كَفَرَ النَّاسُ، وَجَاهَدْتَ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ حِينَ خَذَلَهُ النَّاسُ، وَفَبِضَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَهُوَ عِنَّا رَاضٍ، وَلَمْ يَخْتَلِفْ فِي خِلَافَتِكَ اثْنَانِ، وَقُتِلْتَ شَهِيدًا. فَقَالَ عُمَرُ t: أَعَدَّ عَلَيَّ، فَأَعَدْتُ عَلَيْهِ، فَقَالَ: وَاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ صَفْرَاءَ وَبَيْضَاءَ لَأَفْتَدَيْتُ بِهِ مِنْ هَوْلِ الْمَطْلَعِ» [رَوَاهُ الْحَاكِمُ وَابْنُ حِبَّانَ].

وَلَمَّا حَضَرَتْ خَالِدَ بْنَ الْوَلِيدِ t الْوَفَاةَ وَهُوَ عَلَى فِرَاشِ الْمَوْتِ قَالَ هَذِهِ الْكَلِمَاتِ الْخَالِدَةَ: «لَقَدْ شَهِدْتُ مِائَةَ زَحْفٍ أَوْ نَحْوَهَا وَمَا فِي بَدَنِي مَوْضِعٌ شَبْرٍ إِلَّا وَبِهِ ضَرْبَةٌ أَوْ طَعْنَةٌ أَوْ رَمِيَةٌ، وَهَذَا أَنَا أَمُوتُ عَلَى فِرَاشِي كَمَا يَمُوتُ الْبَعِيرُ، فَلَا تَأْمَتُ أَعْيُنُ الْجُبْنَاءِ، وَمَالِي مِنْ عَمَلٍ أَرْجَى مِنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَا مُتَرَسِّسٌ بِهَا».

وَهَكَذَا تَسْتَمِرُّ الْحَيَاةُ، وَتَمْضِي رِحْلَةُ الدُّنْيَا، وَيَمُوتُ الأَبْطَالُ، وَيَفْنَى النَّاسُ كَبِيرُهُمْ وَصَغِيرُهُمْ، عَظِيمُهُمْ وَفَقِيرُهُمْ، وَمَا جَعَلَ اللهُ الخُلْدَ لِأَحَدٍ مِنَ البَشَرِ لِأَنَّ الدُّنْيَا دَارُ الامْتِحَانِ وَالِاخْتِبَارِ، وَالْآخِرَةُ دَارُ الخُلُودِ الَّذِي لَا مَوْتَ بَعْدَهُ.

أَسْأَلُ اللهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ حُسْنَ الخَاتِمَةِ، وَأَنْ نَلْقَى اللهَ وَهُوَ رَاضٍ عَنَّا، إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ العَلِيمُ، وَأَقُولُ مَا تَسْمَعُونَ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ العَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.

الخطبة الثانية

أَمَّا بَعْدُ:

فَاتَّقُوا اللهَ حَقَّ تَقْوَاهُ، وَاسْتَعِدُّوا لِيَوْمِ لِقَائِهِ، يَقُولُ اللهُ تَعَالَى: (يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مِمَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللهَ إِنَّ اللهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ) [الحشر: 18].

عِبَادَ اللهِ:

إِنَّ هَذِهِ هِيَ الْحَيَاةُ الَّتِي لَا تُسَاوِي عِنْدَ اللهِ جَنَاحَ بَعُوضَةٍ، لَوْ كَانَ فِي البَقَاءِ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ لِأَحَدٍ لَخَلَدَ اللهُ تَعَالَى أَنْبِيَاءَهُ وَأَصْفِيَاءَهُ، وَلَكِنَّهَا لَا تَسْتَحِقُّ الخُلُودَ، وَلَيْسَتْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ دَارَ كَرَامَةٍ وَسَكَنٍ.

وَالْمُؤْمِنُ لَا يَخَافُ المَوْتَ لِأَنَّهُ مُسْتَعِدٌّ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَنْزَلَ بِهِ، فَهَذَا بِلَالُ بْنُ رَبَاحٍ t وَأَرْضَاهُ، حِينَمَا أَتَاهُ المَوْتُ، قَالَتْ زَوْجَتُهُ: وَاحْزَنَاهُ، فَكَشَفَ العُطَاءَ عَنْ وَجْهِهِ وَهُوَ فِي سَكَرَاتِ المَوْتِ، وَقَالَ: «لَا تُقُولِي: وَاحْزَنَاهُ، وَقُولِي: وَأَفْرَحَاهُ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: عَدَا نَلْقَى الأَجِبَةَ.. مُحَمَّداً وَحِزْبَهُ».

وَهَذَا الصَّحَابِيُّ الجَلِيلُ مُعَاذُ بْنُ جَبَلٍ t عَلَى فِرَاشِ المَوْتِ حِينَ حَضَرَتْهُ الوَفَاةُ، وَجَاءَتْ سَاعَةُ الإِحْتِضَارِ نَادَى رَبَّهُ قَائِلاً: «يَا رَبِّ إِنِّي كُنْتُ أَخَافُكَ، وَأَنَا اليَوْمَ أَرْجُوكَ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّي مَا كُنْتُ أُحِبُّ الدُّنْيَا لِجَرِي الأَنْهَارِ، وَلَا لِغَرَسِ الأشْجَارِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِظَمِّ الهَوَاجِرِ، وَمُكَابَدَةِ السَّاعَاتِ، وَمُزَاحَمَةِ العُلَمَاءِ بِالرُّكْبِ عِنْدَ جَلْقِ العِلْمِ»؛ ثُمَّ فَاضَتْ رُوحُهُ بَعْدَ أَنْ قَالَ: لَا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ.

وَهَذَا العَالِمُ العَابِدُ الفُضِيلُ بْنُ عِيَاضٍ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى الشَّهِيرُ بِعَابِدِ الحَرَمَيْنِ، لَمَّا حَضَرَتْهُ الوَفَاةُ، غُشِيَ عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ أَفَاقَ، وَقَالَ: «وَابْعُدْ سَفَرَاهُ... وَاقْلَهُ زَادَاهُ!».

وَهَكَذَا تُطَوَّى صَفْحَةٌ مُشْرِقَةٌ مِنْ صَفَحَاتِ العُلَمَاءِ.

وَأَمَّا الخَلِيفَةُ المُعْتَصِمُ - رَحِمَهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى، فَقَدْ قَالَ عِنْدَ مَوْتِهِ: «لَوْ عَلِمْتُ أَنَّ عُمْرِي قَصِيرٌ هَكَذَا مَا فَعَلْتُ!».. كَلِمَةٌ عَظِيمَةٌ، وَرَجُلٌ مِنْ صُنَاعِ التَّارِيخِ يَمُوتُ كَمَا يَمُوتُ النَّاسُ وَيَرْحَلُ عَنِ الدُّنْيَا بِلا عَوْدَةٍ.

إِخْوَةَ الإِسْلَامِ وَالِإِيمَانِ:

لَقَدْ حَنَّنَا رَبُّنَا جَلَّ وَعَلاَ أَعْظَمَ الحَثِّ، وَدَعَانَا إِلَى اغْتِنَامِ الفُرْصِ فِي زَمَنِ المُهَلَّةِ، وَأَخْبَرَنَا أَنَّ مَنْ فَرَّطَ فِي ذَلِكَ تَمَنَّاهُ، وَقَدْ حِيلَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهُ، قَالَ تَعَالَى: (حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ المَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ * لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ) [المؤمنون: 99-100].

عِبَادَ اللهِ:

إِنَّ الحَيَاةَ فُرْصَةٌ ثَمِينَةٌ وَغَنِيمَةٌ بَارِدَةٌ لِمَنْ يَسْتَنْمِرُهَا فِي طَاعَةِ اللهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى وَالتَّقَرُّبِ إِلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ الحَيَاةَ لَا قِيمَةَ لَهَا بِلا هَدَفٍ وَلَا رِسَالَةٍ، فَإِذَا تَبَيَّنَ الإِنْسَانُ أَنَّ نِهَايَةَ حَيَاتِهِ المَوْتُ فَلْيَكُنْ لِحَيَاتِهِ قِيمَةً وَلِعَيْشِهِ أَنْثَرًا، فَمَا هُوَ الأَنْثَرُ الجَمِيلُ وَالْعَمَلُ المُبَارَكُ الَّذِي سَوْفَ تُنْفِيهِ لِلنَّاسِ يَسْتَفِيدُونَ مِنْهُ وَيَصِلُنَا ثَوَابُهُ وَأَجْرُهُ فِي حَيَاتِنَا وَبَعْدَ مَمَاتِنَا؟؛ عَنِ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ t أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللهِ r قَالَ: «إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ: إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ، أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ، أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ» [رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ].

قَالَ عُمَرُ بْنُ ذَرٍّ -رَجَمَهُ اللهُ-: كَتَبَ سَعِيدُ بْنُ جُبَيْرٍ إِلَيَّ أَبِي كِتَابًا أَوْصَاهُ بِتَقْوَى اللهِ وَقَالَ: «إِنَّ بَقَاءَ الْمُسْلِمِ كُلِّ يَوْمٍ غَنِيمَةٌ»؛
فَاغْتَنِمُوا -عِبَادَ اللهِ- أَوْقَاتَكُمْ بِالطَّاعَةِ، وَأَعْمُرُواهَا بِالذِّكْرِ وَالْعِبَادَةِ؛ فَإِنَّ الْأَوْقَاتَ خَزَائِنٌ مُسْتَوْدَعَةٌ، تَنْفَعُكُمْ يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ،
وَيَنْكَشِفُ الْغَطَاءُ، وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِفَضْلِ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَكَرَمِهِ.

وَقَفَّنَا اللهُ وَإِيَّاكُمْ لَطَاعَتِهِ، وَجَعَلَنَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ مِنَ الْفَائِزِينَ، وَأَحْسَنَ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ الْخَاتِمَةَ؛ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ.

On the Death-Bed

On the authority of Abu Hurayrah (saas), who said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: Allah (mighty and sublime be He) said: **"If My servant likes to meet Me, I like to meet him; and if he dislikes to meet Me, I dislike to meet him. Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: O Prophet of Allah, is it because of the dislike of death, for all of us dislike death? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: It is not so, but rather it is that when the believer is given news of Allah's mercy, His approval and His Paradise, he likes to meet Allah and Allah likes to meet him; but when the unbeliever is given news of Allah's punishment and His displeasure, he dislikes to meet Allah and Allah dislikes to meet him."**

I enjoin you and myself to fear Allaah, for it is the provision and safety in this world and the Last Day, **"the day when neither wealth nor sons will avail, except him who brings to Allaah a clean heart."**

Allaah says, **"Everyone shall taste death. And only on the day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the fire and admitted to Paradise he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception (a deceiving thing)."** (Aal-'Imraan 3: 175)

Such is the reality of death and what comes after it. Every one of us shall taste it whether poor or rich; healthy or sick, old or young; leader or led and none of us can escape it. Allaah says, **"Wheresoever you may be, death will overtake you even if you are in a fortress built up strong and high."** (An-Nisaa 4: 78).

No one knows when and where he or she will die. No one even knows how he will die. In this respect Allah says in the Qur'an: **"Nor does any soul know what it will earn on tomorrow: Nor does any soul know in what land it will die. Verily with God is all knowing and is acquainted (with all things)"** (31:34)

One of death's mysteries is that you see a youth who was full of health and energy suddenly falls dead without warning; thereby making that youthfulness and energy fade away, bringing all his senses to a complete standstill. That youth might even be an erudite scholar, an eloquent author, a skilled physician or brilliant inventor but it is absolutely out of the question that this quality should prevent death from overtaking him when his time is due.

Allaah says, **"When their term is reached, neither can they delay it nor can they advance it an hour (or a moment)."** (Yoonus 10: 49).

'Amr bin Abdullah used to mount the pulpit and say, "Many a person who has seen the beginning of a day but would not see its end. And many a person who has expected morning but would not live to see it. If only you had known your appointed time and how it comes to pass, you would have detested nursing hope for worldly materials and its deception."

While man enjoys his good health, playing and merrymaking, moving about in haughtiness, commanding and forbidding, death and illness suddenly attacks him, weakens his body, makes his limbs lifeless and then closes his record.

How near is death! Every day it becomes closer to us and no sooner has the book reached its appointed time that we belong among the dead. Then it becomes clear that life is really like flowers that bloom then afterwards wither or like a lamp that illuminates then afterwards dies down.

In describing the situation on the death-bed, 'Aa'ishah, may Allaah be pleased with her, said: "I have never seen anyone going through pain which is harsher than that which the Prophet sallallaahu `alaihi wa sallam suffered (during his death sickness)." (Bukhaari & Muslim)

'Abdullaah Ibn Mas'ood, may Allaah be said pleased with him, said: "I went to see the Prophet sallallaahu `alaihi wa sallam (during his death sickness) and found him suffering from intense pain, so I put my hand on him and said: 'O Messenger of Allaah! Indeed you are suffering from intense pain' he replied: **"Yes, I suffer twice as much as anyone else would."** I asked: 'Will you get double the reward?' he replied: **"Yes."** Then he said to me: **"Allaah will remove sins, just as a tree sheds its leaves, for any Muslim who is afflicted with sickness or any other tribulation."**" (Bukhaari & Muslim).

'Aa'ishah, may Allaah be pleased with her, said: "When the Prophet sallallaahu `alaihi wa sallam was on his death bed, I saw him dipping his hands into a bowl of water and wiping his face with them whilst saying: **"Oh my Lord! help me through the hardships and agonies of death."**"(Ahmad, Ibn Maajah & Tirmidhi).

Imam Shafii' (RA) on his death-bed was asked by Al Muzni "What is your condition?" Then Imam Shafii' (RA) replied, "I am journeying from this world, and departing from my brothers, drinking from the cup of death, and upon Allah, Exalted is His remembrance, arriving. And no! By Allah, I do not know if my soul is travelling towards Paradise or the Fire!"

Fellow Muslims! It is a fact that this world and its tribulations appear insignificant in the eyes of him who always remembers death, for, he has lofty aims and strong resolutions; he is far from hypocrisy and always yearns for the everlasting bliss in the eternal Paradise.

Dear Brothers, Remembering death does not in any way make one's life loathsome to him; forcing him to sit in his home and leave all means of sustenance. It is rather meant to deter him from committing sins and soften his hard heart. We remember death in order to have good preparation for it and for all that follows it by doing righteous deeds, obeying Allaah and increasing one's efforts in all acts of worship.

How do we prepare for death? We prepare for death by shunning all abominable things and returning trusts to their rightful owners. We prepare for death by eliminating hatred and enmity from our hearts. We prepare for death by being good to the kith and kin.

It is said that, *"Whoever frequently remembers death is honoured with three things: quick repentance, self-contentedness and energy in doing acts of worship; and whoever forgets death is punished with three things: delaying repentance, lack of contentedness and laziness in acts of worship."*

When will one who always follows his lustful desires and moves wantonly in his heedlessness remember death? When will one who has no regard for Allaah's injunctions in Halaal or Haraam remember death? When will one who deserts the Qur'an, prays not Fajr in congregation, usurps people's property unlawfully, takes usury, and commits fornication, remember death? How can one

whose habit is slandering others and backbiting, whose heart is full of rancour and envy remember death?

Fellow Muslims! The Prophets, whenever death came to them were given a chance of choosing between remaining on this world and moving to that noble position. It is beyond doubt that every Prophet would select the everlasting bliss. This happened to Prophet Muhammad, as narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of A'isha that she said, "**The Messenger of Allaah saws used to say while he was healthy, 'No Prophet died until he saw his place in the Paradise, he was then given the choice between that place and remaining in this world.'** So when he was dying and his head was on my thigh, he fainted for a while then regained his consciousness. He stared at the ceiling, then said, 'O Allaah! I choose the Highest Companionship.' I then said, 'He was not preferring us.' It was then that I understood statement he used to tell us and it was true. She said, 'The last word he uttered was: `Oh Allaah, I choose the Highest Companionship.`"

During death and its pain; in the grave and its darkness; and the Day of Resurrection and its horror people fall into two groups. A group shall remain firm; secured from fright and given glad tidings of Paradise while the other group shall suffer disgrace and ignominy.

So let us make use of this opportunity to draw closer to Allah (swt) through acts of devotion and worship, and by cleansing our hearts of all malice and envy, and spreading good relations between people. We ask Allah (swt) to forgive our sins and allow us to live in a state of Imaan and to die in a state of Imaan. Ameen.

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