

Discourse 26: The Angel Of Death Visits Every House Five Times A Day

عَنْ الزُّهْرِيِّ عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ : مَا مِنْ بَيْتٍ إِلَّا وَ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ يَقِفُ عَلَى بَابِهِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ خَمْسَ مَرَّاتٍ. فَإِذَا وَجَدَ الْإِنْسَانَ قَدْ نَفَدَ أَجَلَهُ، وَ انْقَطَعَ أَكْلُهُ أَلْقَى عَلَيْهِ الْمَوْتَ فَعَشِيَّتُهُ كُرْبَاتُهُ وَ غَمْرَتُهُ غَمْرَاتُهُ. فَمِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ النَّاشِرَةُ شَعْرَهَا، وَ الضَّارِبَةُ وَجْهَهَا، الصَّارِخَةُ بِوَيْلِهَا، الْبَاكِئَةُ بِشَجْوِهَا فَيَقُولُ مَلِكُ الْمَوْتِ: وَيْلَكُمْ! مِمَّ الْجَزَعُ؟

وَ فِيهِمُ الْفَزَعُ؟ وَ اللَّهُ مَا أَذْهَبَتْ لِأَحَدٍ مِنْكُمْ مَالًا، وَ لَا قَرِيْبَةً لَهُ أَجَلًا، وَ لَا أَتَيْتُهُ حَتَّى أُمِرْتُ، وَ لَا قَبَضْتُ رُوحَهُ حَتَّى اسْتَأْمَرْتُ. وَ إِنَّ لِي إِلَيْكُمْ عَوْدَةً، ثُمَّ عَوْدَةً، حَتَّى لَا أَبْقِي مِنْكُمْ أَحَدًا. ثُمَّ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: وَ الَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، لَوْ يَرُونَ مَكَانَهُ وَ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَامَهُ، لَذَهَلُوا عَنْ مِيْتَتِهِمْ، وَ بَكَوْا عَلَى نَفْسِهِمْ، حَتَّى إِذَا حُمِلَ الْمِيْتُ عَلَى نَعْشِهِ، رَفَرَفَ رُوحُهُ فَوْقَ النَّعْشِ وَ هُوَ يُنَادِي: يَا أَهْلِي وَ وُلْدِي، لَا تَلْعَبَنَّ بِكُمْ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا لَعَبْتُ بِي. جَمَعْتُهُ مِنْ حِلِّهِ وَ مِنْ غَيْرِ حِلِّهِ وَ خَلَّفْتُهُ لِغَيْرِي، وَ الْمُهَنَّا لَهُ وَ التَّبَعَاتُ عَلَيَّ، فَاحْذَرُوا مِنْ مِثْلِ مَا نُزِّلَ.

Zuhri has narrated from Anas b. Malik that he said "I heard the Messenger of Allah (S) say, 'There is not a single house which exists except that the Angel of Death visits it five times a day. If the lives of any of the people who live in the house or those who are within the house are written to come to an end, then he brings death upon that person.'

When the agonies and tribulations of death clothe the entire presence of the person; the screams of the people of the house increase; the people start to pull their hair and start to hit their head and face, and cry, it is at this time that the Angel of Death says, 'Fie be upon you! Why are you showing anger and fear?

I swear by Allah! I have not taken anyone's wealth; I have not brought the appointed time (of death) any closer and I have not come towards you without permission (from Allah). Rather, I am taking the soul by the permission of someone else (Allah). I will continue to come to this house until not a single person remains.”

At this point the Prophet (S) said, “I swear by the One who holds my life and soul in His hands, if you were to see the station where the Angel of Death is standing in the house and were to hear his words, you would surely forget the one who has passed away! Rather, you would shed tears for yourself!

As the deceased is being carried in his casket, his spirit stays above the casket, crying out, 'O' my family! O' my children! Do not let the transient world play with you as it played with me in which I collected the wealth both from the permissible and impermissible means and then left it for others behind me (to inherit). May felicity and delight be for those who have inherited that wealth, however, a responsibility remains on my shoulders. Be careful since that which has come upon me shall also come upon you.” 1 and 2

In this tradition, the advice given by the Angel of Death and the words of guidance given by the deceased to those who remain after him has been mentioned.

Truly, the most fortunate and the one with intelligence is he who constantly remembers death and if we were to keep death in mind, a majority of our troubles would be alleviated, since 99% of our grief is related to issues of the transient world.

We never show grief when we do not wake up for Salatul Lail, when we are not successful in following the laws of Allah (SwT) or when we performed sins! We never have grief over things such as this!

However, when one remembers death, he realizes that everyone's eventual outcome is the same – death – and that thing whose eventual outcome is death should have absolutely no grief attached to it!

We must study the last days of those who came before us. Sometimes when we pass by the alleys and walk through the markets, we see weak, old men and old women walking with a cane. Some are on their own walking with great difficulty; others are holding on to someone and walking around.

This will also be our eventual end! There was once a time when these people were young and full of energy, however look at them now and see how they are – see what the new day has brought them!

When I first moved to Qum, I remember seeing one of the great scholars of Yazd who had migrated here. Even in those days, he was a very well known scholar of the hawzah. Just recently, I met him

again in one of the alleyways in Qum and asked him how he was doing. His reply was amazing, “What can I do – I am neither dead and out of this world, nor am I alive and in this world. I am stuck between this world and the next. My intellectual capacity is drained and it is even difficult for me to move on my own. I am waiting for death to come and take me away!”

Of course, he was not always like this, and truthfully, this sort of an outcome is not limited to this individual! Rather death is as a beast, lying in wait at the door of every house.

There are some people who die in their old age; others leave this world in their youth, however it is through remembering death that a person can become spiritually trained. If there was no death, then it would be very difficult to live. Thus, death is actually one of the grand Divine Blessings from Allah (SwT).

In these few days that we live in the transient world, we see what kinds of tumult and clamour people raise! Imagine if a person was to live for eternity, what state this world would be in?!!

1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 74, pg. 188

2. It has been related that during the time of the Children of Israel (Bani Israaf1il), one of the Prophets passed by a graveyard. His companions said to him, “O' Prophet of Allah! We want Allah (SwT) to raise one of these dead people back to life so that we can ask him about how his life was taken and also to inform us of the questions asked by the two Angels – Nakir and Munkar.”

The Prophet of Allah rose his hands up in supplication and after his prayer, his entire body turned black (as if he had been burnt)! A person came out of the grave and in a clear and eloquent voice said, “O' people of this transient world! I died 90 years ago and still the bitterness of the experience of death has not left me!

Therefore you who are still alive, do not fall into a state of negligence and keep aware of the permissible and the impermissible; know the truth and the falsehood since at this point (when you are dead), having grief (over these things) will be of no benefit to you! Work day and night for your next life and prepare your supplies for the next life since no one will come after you to give these things to you. You should know that all of you shall taste the drink of death.”

The Prophet of Allah said to this man, “O' dead man! How were your actions while in this world?”

The man replied, “O' Messenger of Allah! I was a person of the transient world (I worshipped this world), had love for the world and was voraciously busy in amassing wealth although I also heard that in the next life that there will be such and such punishments. Satan the accursed, took me away from the right path and made the material world beautiful in my eyes.

Whatever I managed to collect, I left for those who inherited from me and thus, I came into this next world with empty hands! The wealth which I had in the world, became a source of trouble now while today, my inheritors are enjoying the wealth and do not remembering me at all. Thus since today you still have the opportunity, you should not fall into a state of negligence, ask forgiveness for your sins and remove the love of station and rank of the transient world from your hearts, since when you reach to that life (the next life), the remorse and regret will be of no value.

The Angel of Death takes the life of those people who have a love for this transient world in such a way that it feels as if all of the veins of the body become disconnected from one another and this pain is felt in all parts of the body. At this point in time, the sinner will cry out from the depths of his soul and will say:

يَا حَسْرَتِي عَلَى مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنبِ اللَّهِ

“O woe to me! for what I fell short of my duty to Allah...”[85] (Kuliyat-e-Jami al-Tamthil, pg. 222)

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