

DEATH

سکرات الموت

THE STUPOR OF DEATH

THE STUPOR OF DEATH (سکرات الموت)

Death involves a kind of stupor or intoxication which every person will face when the time of death comes.

Allaah (az) says:

وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ

{And the **stupor** of death will come in truth:

ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ

'This is what you have been avoiding!}'

(Qaaf, [050]: 019)

This stupor or intoxication is the distress and hardship of death (کرباته وغمراته).



Imaam Ar-Raaghib [r] said in his book Al-Mufradaat:

"السكر حالة تعرض بين المرء وعقله ،

"This stupor (*sukr*) is the state where a person loses his mind;

وأكثر ما تستعمل في الشراب المسكر ،

this word is used mostly in connection with intoxicant drinks.

ويطلق في الغضب والعشق والألم والنعاس

It is also used to describe such things as anger, love, pain, slumber,

والغشي الناشيء عن الألم

and the delirium caused by intense pain.

وهو المراد هنا".

This (last meaning) is what is meant by this *Aayah*."

[Fath al-Baari, 11/362.]



AS MENTIONED IN THE QUR'AAN

When the appointed time comes (إذا حان الأجل) and a person's life is drawing to a close (شارفت), Allaah sends the Messengers of Death to bring forth (لسلّ) the soul which is controlling and moving the body (الروح المدبّرة للجسد والمحركة له):

{وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ}

{He is the Irresistible [Supreme], over His slaves,

وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً

& He sends guardians [angels guarding and writing all of one's good & bad deeds] over you,

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدُكُمُ الْمَوْتُ

until when death approaches one of you,

تَوَفَّيْتَهُ رُسُلُنَا

Our messengers [angel of death and his assistants] take his soul,

وَهُمْ لَا يُفْرِطُونَ}

and they never neglect their duty.}

(Al-An'aam, [006]: 061)



We cannot see what happens to the dying person at the point of death, although we may see its effects (آثاره). Allaah [s] has told us about the state of the dying person:

{فَلَوْلَا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُقُومَ

{Then why do you not [intervene] when [the soul of a dying person] reaches the throat?

وَأَنْتُمْ حِينِيذٍ تَنْظُرُونَ

And you at the moment are looking on,

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ

but We [i.e. Our angels who take the soul] are nearer to him than you,

وَلَكِنْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ

but you see not.}

(Al-Waaqi'ah, [056]: 083-085)

What is referred to here is when the soul reaches the throat (عندما تبلغ الحلقوم) as a person is dying (في حال الاحتضار), and the people around him can see what is his suffering (إلى ما يعانيه) of the **stupor of death** (سكرات الموت), even though they cannot see the angels of the Most Merciful who are pulling out his soul (وإن كانوا لا يرون ملائكة الرحمن التي تسلي روحه).



Elsewhere, Allaah (az) says:

{كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِيَ}

{Nay, when [the soul] reaches to the collarbone [i.e. up to the throat in its exit],

وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ

And it will be said: 'Who can cure him [and save him from death]?'

وَوَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ

And he [the dying person] will conclude that it was [the time] of parting [death];

وَأَلْتَفَّتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ

And one leg will be joined with another leg [shrouded].

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ

The drive will be on that Day to your Lord [Allaah]!

(Al-Qiyaamah, [075]: 026-030)

What reaches to the collarbone (التراقي) is the soul (الروح).

والتراقي جمع ترقوة وهي العظام التي بين ثغرة النحر والعناق .



AHAADIYTH, NARRATIONS

The Messenger [p] also suffered (عانى) from this stupor (من هذه السكرات).

During his final illness there was a pot (ركوة) or jug (علبة) of water in front of him, and he kept putting his hand in it then wiping his face, and saying,

"لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ،

"There is no deity except Allaah,

إِنَّ لِلْمَوْتِ سَكَرَاتٍ".

indeed death has stupors."

[This Hadeeth is narrated by Bukhaaree from 'Aa'ishah in Kitaab ar-Riqaaq, Baab Sakaraat al-Mawt, Fath al-Baari, 11/361.]

'Aa'ishah [r] said, describing the final illness of the Messenger of Allaah [p]:

"مَا رَأَيْتُ الْوَجَعَ عَلَى أَحَدٍ أَشَدَّ

"I never saw pain more severe

مِنْهُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ".

than that of the Messenger of Allaah [p]."

[Bukhaaree, Muslim and Tirmidhi. See Jaami' al-Usool, 11/69.]



'Aa'ishah [r] visited her father Aboo Bakr [r] during his final illness, and when death was approaching, she quoted the words of the poet (فلما ثقل عليه ، تمثلت بقول الشاعر)،

"لَعْمَرُكَ مَا يُغْنِي الثَّرَاءُ عَنِ الْفَتَى،

"Certainly wealth does not help a man,

إِذَا حَشْرَجَتْ يَوْمًا وَضَاقَ بِهِ الصَّدْرُ."

when the death rattle sounds in his throat."

He uncovered his face and said, "Do not say that. Rather say:

{وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ}

{And the stupor of death will come in truth:

ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ}

"This is what you have been avoiding!"}

(Qaaf, [050]: 019)."

[Ibn Abee'd-Dunya. Ibn Katheer said in his Tafeeer (6/401),
after quoting this, this report has many Isnaads.]



Some wise people may speak of the hardship and stupor that they are suffering at the time of death. For example, when 'Amr ibn al-'Aas [r] was on his deathbed, his son said to him,

"يا أبتاه!

"O' my father!

إنك لتقول: يا ليتني ألقى رجلاً عاقلاً لبيباً عند نزول الموت

You used to say, would that I could meet a wise, intelligent man when he is dying,

حتى يصف لي ما يجد،

so that he might describe what he sees.

وأنت ذلك الرجل، فصف لي."

You are that man, so describe it to me."

He said,

"يا بني،

"O' my son,

والله كأن جنبي في تحت،

by Allaah, it is as if I am lying in a box

وكأني أتنفس من سمّ إبرة،

and breathing through the eye of a needle,

وكان غصن شوك يجذب من قدمي إلى هامتي،

and as if there is a thorny piercing branch being pulled from the bottom of my feet through to the top of my head."



ثم أنشأ يقول:

ليتني كنت قبل ما قد بدا لي ××× في تلال الجبال أرعى الوعولا.

[Tadhkirat al-Qurtubi, p. 19.]

الذي يخفف عنه سكرات (THOSE FOR WHOM THE AGONY OF DEATH IS REDUCED

(الموت

The Messenger (p) told us that the Shaheed (martyr) who falls in battle (أن الشهيد الذي يسقط في) (المعركة) will have the agony of death reduced.

Aboo Hurayrah (r) narrated that the Messenger of Allaah (p) said:

" الشَّهِيدُ لَا يَجِدُ أَلْمَ الْقَتْلِ؛

"The Shaheed does not feel the pain of death

إِلَّا كَمَا يَجِدُ أَحَدُكُمْ أَلْمَ الْقَرَصَةِ "

except as one of you feels the pain of a nip or pinch."

[This has been narrated by Tirmidhi, Nasaa'i and Ad-Daarimi. Tirmidhi said: this is a Ghareeb Hasan Hadeeth. Mishkaat al-Masaabeeh, 2/358, Hadeeth no. 3836. The editor of Al-Mishkaat said, its Isnaad is Hasan.]

The angels of death come to the believer (المؤمن) in a beautiful form (في صورة حسنة جميلة), and they come to the *Kaafir* and the hypocrite (الكافر والمنافق) in a frightening form (في صورة مخيفة).



THE PRESENCE OF THE SHAYTAAN AT THE TIME OF DEATH (حضور الشيطان عند

الموت)

When death comes, the Shaytaan is keen (حريصاً) not to let the person escape from him (حتى لا يفلت منه).

Jaabir ibn 'Abdillah [r] narrated that the Messenger of Allaah (p) said:

"إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَحْضُرُ أَحَدَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مِنْ شَأْنِهِ "

"The Shaytaan is present with anyone of you in all his affairs.

حَتَّى يَحْضُرَهُ عِنْدَ طَعَامِهِ

He is present even when he is eating,

فَإِذَا سَقَطَتْ مِنْ أَحَدِكُمُ اللَّقْمَةُ

so if any one of you drops a piece of food,

فَلْيُمِطْ مَا كَانَ بِهَا مِنْ أَدَى

let him clean off any dirt that may be on it

ثُمَّ لِيَأْكُلْهَا

and eat it,

وَلَا يَدْعُهَا لِلشَّيْطَانِ

and leave it not for the Shaytaan.

فَإِذَا فَرَغَ

When he has finished eating,

فَلْيَلْعَقْ أَصَابِعَهُ

let him lick his fingers,



فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَدْرِي فِي أَيِّ طَعَامِهِ تَكُونُ الْبَرَكَةُ " .

for he does not know in which part of the food the *Barakah* (blessing) is."

(Sahiyh Muslim, The Book of Drinks, 2033d)

Our scholars mentioned that during those critical moments (اللحظات الحرجة) (of death), the Shaytaan comes to a person in the form of his father or mother, or some other loved one who sincerely care for him, advising him and calling him to follow Judaism or Christianity or some other principles that go against Islaam. Then those for whom Allaah has decreed doom (الشقاوة) deviate (from the truth). [Tadhkirat al-Qurtubi, 33.]

This is what is meant in the Aayah:

{رَبَّنَا لَا تُرِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا

{Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate [from the truth] after You have guided us,

وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً

and grant us mercy from You.

{إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ}

Truly, You are the Bestower.}

(Aal-'Imraan, [003]: 008)

But this does not necessarily happen in every case, as Imaam Ibn Taymiyah [r] said. Some people may be tempted to follow other religions before they die, and others may not be tempted in this manner. This happened to some people. All of these are among the trials of life and death which we are commanded to seek refuge from in our prayer. [Majmoo' al-Fataawa, 4/255.]



'Abdullaah, the son of Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal [r], said:

حضرت وفاة أبي أحمد،

"I was present during the time of death of my Father Ahmed (Ibn Hanbal),

وييدي خرقه لأشد لحية،

and I had in my hand a piece of cloth with which to bind his beard.

فكان يغرق، ثم يفيق،

He was drifting in and out of consciousness,

ويقول بيده: لا بعد ، لا بعد،

and gesturing with his hand to say 'No, no.'

فعل هذا مراراً،

He did this several times,

فقلت له:

and I said to him,

"يا أبت أي شيء يبدو منك؟"

'O' my father, what was that?'

قال: "إن الشيطان قائم بجذائي عاض على أنامله،

He said, 'The Shaytaan was standing near me, biting his fingertips (i.e., trying hard)

يقول: "يا أحمد فتني"،

and saying, 'Come on, Ahmad!'

وأنا أقول: " لا بعد ، لا بعد ، حتى أموت".

and I was saying 'No, no, until I die.' [Ibid, 34.]



Imaam Al-Qurtubi [r] said:

"I heard our Shaykh, Imaam Abool-'Abbaas Ahmad ibn 'Umar al-Qurtubiy [r], saying,

حضرت أبا شيخنا أبي جعفر أحمد بن محمد القرطبي بقرطبة، وقد احتضر،

'I visited a brother of our Shaykh, Aboo Ja'far Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Qurtubi in Qurtubah (Cordova), when he was dying.

ف قيل له: " لا إله إلا الله، "

It was said to him, "Say *Laa ilaaha illAllaah*,"

فكان يقول: " لا، لا، "

and he was saying, "No, no."

فلما أفاق، ذكرنا له ذلك،

When he came to consciousness, we mentioned that to him.

فقال: " أتاني شيطانان عن يميني وعن شمالي،

He said, "Two devils came to me on my right and my left.

يقول أحدهما:

One of them was saying,

"مت يهودياً"

'Die as a Jew,

فإنه خير الأديان، "

for it is the best of religions,'

والآخر يقول:

and the other was saying:



"مت نصرانياً"

'Die as a Christian,

فإنه خير الأديان"،

for it is the best of religions,'

فكنت أقول لهما:

and I was saying to both of them,

"لا، لا..."

'No, no... "' [Opt. cit.]



Shaykh Ibn Taymiyah [r] mentioned that the Shaytaan is at his most keen to mislead (إغواء) a person at the time of death, because it is such a critical time.

In support of this view he quoted the Hadeeth which is narrated in As-Sahih:

عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدِ السَّاعِدِيِّ، قَالَ:

Sahl Ibn Sa'd As-Saa'idiyy [r] narrated:

نَظَرَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَى رَجُلٍ يُقَاتِلُ الْمُشْرِكِينَ،

The Prophet (ﷺ) looked at a man fighting against the pagans

وَكَانَ مِنْ أَعْظَمِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ غَنَاءً عَنْهُمْ

and he was one of the most competent persons fighting on behalf of the Muslims.

فَقَالَ:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

"مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يَنْظُرَ إِلَى رَجُلٍ

"Let him who wants to look at a man

مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ

from the dwellers of the (Hell) Fire,

فَلْيَنْظُرْ إِلَى هَذَا".

look at this (man)."

فَتَبِعَهُ رَجُلٌ

Another man followed him

فَلَمْ يَزَلْ عَلَى ذَلِكَ حَتَّى جُرِحَ،

and kept on following him till he (the fighter) was injured,



فَاسْتَعْجَلَ الْمَوْتَ.

and seeking to die quickly,

فَقَالَ بِدُبَابَةِ سَيْفِهِ،

he placed the blade tip of his sword

فَوَضَعَهُ بَيْنَ ثَدْيَيْهِ،

between his breasts

فَتَحَامَلَ عَلَيْهِ،

and leaned over it

حَتَّى خَرَجَ مِنْ بَيْنِ كَتِفَيْهِ.

till it passed through his shoulders (i.e., committed suicide).

فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

The Prophet (ﷺ) added,

" إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَعْمَلُ فِيَمَا يَرَى النَّاسُ عَمَلَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ،

"A person may do deeds that which seems to the people as the deeds of the people of Paradise,

وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ،

while in fact he is from the dwellers of the (Hell) Fire:

وَيَعْمَلُ فِيَمَا يَرَى النَّاسُ

And similarly a person may do deeds that seem to the people

عَمَلَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ

as the deeds of the people of the (Hell) Fire



وَهُوَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ،

while in fact, he is from the dwellers of Paradise.

وَإِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِخَوَاتِمِهَا."

Verily, the (results of) deeds done depend upon the last actions."

(Saheeh al-Bukhaari, 6493)

Imaam Ibn Taymiyyah [r] related that:

"أن الشيطان أشد ما يكون على ابن آدم

"...The Shayṭaan tries his hardest to tempt the son of Adam

حين الموت،

at the time of death,

يقول لأعوانه:

and he says to his helpers,

"دونكم هذا

'Try to catch this one,

فإنه إن فاتكم

for if he gets away you

لن تظفروا به أبداً."

will never catch him. "

[Majmuw' Al-Fatawaa of Imaam Ibn Taymiyyah]

