HEAVEN'S DOOR

Part Two of
Tazkiyat an-Nufus wa Tarbiyyatuha kama Yuqarriruhu 'Ulama as-Salaf

The Purification of the Soul

according to the earliest sources

compiled from the works of
Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya,
and Abu Hamid al-Ghazali

collected and arranged by
Ahmad Farid

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the memory of Jihad Hozayien, born on the 5th Dhu’l-Qida 1405 / 23rd July 1985 and died on the 2nd Shawwal 1423 / 6th December 2002, may Allah have mercy on him.

(Do not suppose that those killed in the Way of Allah are dead. No indeed! They are alive and well provided for in the very presence of their Lord, delighting in the favour Allah has bestowed on them, rejoicing over those they left behind who have not yet joined them, feeling no fear and knowing no sorrow, rejoicing in blessings and favour from Allah and that Allah does not let the wage of the muminun go to waste. ) (3: 169-171)
INTRODUCTION

This book comprises the second part of the English translation of Tazkiyat an-Nufus wa Tarbiyatuha kama Yuqarriruhu 'Mama as-Salaf compiled by Ahmed Farid, the first part of which has already been published under the title The Purification of the Soul. Both books are concerned with assisting the traveller in life to pass smoothly through this world and safely into the next — and should be read together.

Whereas The Purification of the Soul is concerned primarily with the science of awakening and purifying the heart — on which good inward intentions depend, Heaven's Door is concerned firstly, with outward action — which is the manifestation and outward expression of inward intention, and secondly, with the consequences of inward intention and outward action — which we meet both in this life and after we have died.

Actions are known and evaluated by the intentions behind them and intentions are dependant on knowledge. The actions of a wise man are very different to those of an ignorant fool, even if outwardly they may appear to be similar. Good actions are dependant on a clean heart, and it is only once the heart has been purified that a person can concern themselves with guiding the actions of others. If the teacher's heart is not sound, how can the teacher's actions mirror the teacher's words — and how can he or she teach others?

As we have seen in The Purification of the Soul, this soundness of the heart depends largely on being detached from the world, since desire for the world is what distracts the self and gives shaytan the opportunity to cause mischief.

Desire for this world and what it contains can possess the self and blind the heart, making this world appear to be all there is, and the next world just a dream or a fairy tale and Allah non-existent. If this is your view of existence, then you are asleep and shaytan has you where he wants.

Detachment from this world depends largely on knowledge of the next world — and on awareness that wherever you are, Allah is present. If this is your view of existence, then you are awake and shaytan has no power over you — and it is this world which seems like a dream.

Ahmad ibn Amir, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "You have four enemies:

- Shaytan : and his weapons are a full belly, and his prison is hunger.
- Desire : and its weapon is speech, and it is imprisoned by silence.
- This world : whose weapon is to meet people, and it is imprisoned by retreat.
• The self: whose weapon is sleep, and it is imprisoned by sleeplessness." ¹

It has been related by sayyedina 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, that once when he visited the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who was lying on a mat in his small room, he was moved to tears when he saw how little the Prophet possessed.

When the Prophet asked him why he was weeping, sayyedina 'Umar replied, 'O Messenger of Allah, how can I not cry? This mat has left marks on your sides and I can only see what I have seen of your stores. Caesar and Chosroes are leading their lives of plenty, while you are the Messenger of Allah, His Chosen One — and look what you have!'

'Ibn al-Khattab,' he answered, 'isn't it enough for you that for us there is the next world, and for them there is this world?' ²

When the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was dying, he was given the choice of either living longer or returning to His Lord. He chose the Highest Company. He said, "Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, said, 'If My slave longs to meet Me, I long to meet him, and if he is averse to meeting Me, I am averse to meeting him.'" ³

**Heaven's Door** is for those who are aware that time is passing, that this world is leaving them, that the next world is approaching them, and that Allah is Real. It is for those who would hate to be in the Fire and who long to be in the Garden. It is for those who find themselves knocking on heaven's door.

The Messenger of Allah, our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to say, when he rose for prayer in the middle of the night, "Oh Allah, praise belongs to You. You are the light of the heavens and the earth and praise belongs to You. You are the Sustainer of the heavens and the earth and praise belongs to You. You are the Lord of the heavens and the earth and whoever is in them. You are the Truth and Your words are true. Your promise is true, and the meeting with You is true. The Garden is true and the Fire is true and the Hour is true. Oh Allah, I submit to You and I accept You and I trust in You and I turn to You and I argue by You and I summon to You for judgement. Forgive me what I have sent before me and what I have left behind, what I have kept secret and what I have proclaimed. You are my god — there is no god but You." ⁴

Death is a doorway through which every one of us must pass. Both before and beyond this doorway there are many doorways through which we must pass if we are to find ourselves finally entering through one of the eight gates which are heaven's door.

It is related that Ibn 'Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

"The Gardens have eight gates of gold inlaid with jewels:

"Written on the first gate is La ilaha il'Allah, Muhammad arRasulu'Ilah — There is no god only Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. It is the gate of the Prophets, Messengers, Martyrs and the Generous.

"The second gate is the gate of those who prayed, who were excellent in wudu and the basic elements of the prayer.

"The third gate is that of those who gave Zakat cheerfully.

"The fourth gate is that of those who commanded good and forbade the reprehensible.

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¹ *The Basic Research* by Shaykh Ahmad ibn 'Ajiba, p.219
² *The Wives of the Prophet* by Ahmad Thomson, p. 35
³ *Al-Muwatta* Imam Malik, 16.16.51
⁴ *Al-Muwatta* Imam Malik, 15.8.34
"The fifth gate is the gate of those who rooted out their appetites and prevented passions.

"The sixth gate is the gate of those who did Hajj and 'Umra. "The seventh gate is the gate of those who fought Jihad.

"The eighth gate is the gate of those who turned their eyes from haram things and did good actions of respect to parents, relatives and others.

"There are eight Gardens:

"The first is the Abode of Majesty, and it is of white pearl.

"The second is the Abode of Peace, and it is of red ruby.

"The third is the Abode of Shelter, and it is of green chrysolite.

"The fourth is the Garden of Immortality, and it is of red and yellow coral.

"The fifth is the Garden of Bliss, and it is of white silver.

"The sixth is the Garden of Firdaus, and it is of red gold.

"The seventh is the Garden of 'Adn, and it is of white pearl.

"The eighth is the Abode of Rest, and it is of red gold, and it is the dome of the Gardens, and it is raised over the Gardens. It has two gates, and the two leaves are of gold and silver. Between each of the two leaves is what is between the heaven and earth. It is built of gold and silver bricks. Its mud is musk and its earth is amber and its straw is saffron. Its castles are of pearl and its rooms are of ruby. Its doors are of jewels, and in it are rivers. There is the River of Mercy which flows in all the Gardens, and its pebbles are pearls, with a white brighter than snow, and it is sweeter than honey. In it is the River of Kawthar (Abundance), and it is the river of our Prophet Muhammad, blessings and peace be upon him. Its trees are pearls and mombas. In it is the River of Kafur (Camphor), and the River of Tasnim (Water Coming From Above), and the river of Salsabil (Easy to Swallow), and the River of ar-Rahiq al-Maktum (Sealed Nectar). Beyond that are rivers whose number is not known."

Yahya related to me from Malik from Ibn Shihab from Humayd ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf from Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Whoever hands over two of any type of property in the way of Allah is called to the Garden, with the words, 'O slave of Allah! This is good!' Whoever is among the people of prayer is called from the Gate of Prayer. Whoever is among the people of jihad is called from the Gate of Jihad. Whoever is among the people of sadaqa is called from the Gate of Sadaqa. Whoever is among the people of fasting is called from the Gate of the Well-Watered (Bab ar-Rayyan)."

Abu Bakr as-Siddiq said, "O Messenger of Allah! Is it absolutely necessary that one be called from one of these gates? Can someone be called from all of these gates?" He replied, "Yes, and I hope you are among them." 

May you be one of those who may pass through whichever gate you choose!

Ahmad Thomson
London 1424/2003

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5 Daqa'iq al-akhbar fi Dhikri'l-Jannati wa'n-Narby Imam 'Abd ar-Rahim ibn Ahmad al-Qadi, pp. 125-6
6 Al-Muwatta' Imam Malik, 21.19.49
AUTHOR'S PREFACE

All praise is for Allah. We praise Him and seek His assistance. We ask for His forgiveness and take refuge in Him from the evil within ourselves and from the evil of our deeds. He whom Allah guided will never be diverted, and whomever He sends astray will never find his way. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, Alone — He has no partner — and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger, may Your blessings and peace be on him and on his Family and on his Companions.

One of the most important tasks for which the Prophet of this nation, Muhammad, was sent was the purification of the soul. Allah says, speaking of this mission,

( It is He who raised up among the unlettered people
  a Messenger from them, to recite His Signs to them and purify them
  and teach them the Book and the Wisdom,
  even though before that they were clearly misguided. ) (62: 2)

So whoever truly hopes for Allah and the Last Day should have a special interest in the purification of his own soul, for Allah has linked the success of His servant with the purity of his soul — after making eleven consecutive oaths. There is not to be found in the Qur'an another oath such as this. Allah says:

( By the sun and its morning brightness,
  and the moon when it follows it,
  and the day when it displays it,
  and the night when it conceals it
  and the sky and what erected it
  and the earth and what extended it,
  and the self and what proportioned it
  and inspired it with depravity or taqwa,
  he who purifies it has succeeded,
  he who covers it up has failed. ) (91: 1-10)

The word tazkia means to purify or to cleanse; the word zakat comes from the same root, since zakat purifies wealth by the recognition of Allah's right over a portion of it.

It has now become difficult for us to benefit directly from the books of raqa'iq (books on subjects which affect the emotions) written by the first generations of Muslim scholars. Most of these are large books comprising many volumes and are difficult for most Muslims to have access to; in addition to this they frequently contain weak and fabricated reports.

Thus we have set out to compile a collection of the most reliable reports, which have come to us from some of the scholars whose expertise lay in the field of da'wa: Imam Shamsudin Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, and Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali.

It is our sincere desire that this book will be a useful resource and ultimately prove to be of benefit on the Day when neither money nor children will be of benefit — for none will benefit, except for those who come with a pure heart.

All Praise is for Allah and all Power is His.
He is our Lord and to Him is the end of all journeys.
Among the muminun there are men who have been true to the contract they made with Allah. Some of them have fulfilled their pact by death and some are still waiting to do so, not having changed in any way at all. (33.23)
ONE

ENJOINING GOOD AND FORBIDDING EVIL

Enjoining good and forbidding evil, *amr bi’il-ma’ruf wa’n-nahiy an al-munkar*, is the pivot and most important principle in Islam and it is the main reason why Allah sent His Prophets and Messengers to His creatures. If this principle is not implemented and put into practice, then prophethood is ineffective, the *deen* fades away, misguidance, corruption and ignorance prevail, civilizations decline, and nations are destroyed.

Whenever this principle has been extinguished, people follow their desires and whims, ignore their Lord, and live like animals — and then you can hardly find anyone who adheres to the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil, even though the reward of putting it into practice is great in the sight of Allah.

The Obligation to Enjoin Good and Forbid Evil

Allah says:

*(Let there be a community among you who call to the good, and enjoin the right, and forbid the wrong. They are the ones who have success. ) (3: 104)*

Allah also says:

*(They are not all the same. There is a community among the People of the Book who are upright. They recite Allah’s Signs throughout the night, and they prostrate. They have iman in Allah and the Last Day, and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and compete in doing good. They are among the salihun. ) (3: 113-114)*

In the above verse, Allah does not accept their righteousness just by their believing in Allah and the Last Day, until He has added to it the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil.

In another verse, Allah says:

*(The men and women of the muminun are friends of one another. They command what is right and forbid what is wrong. ) (9: 72)*

Here Allah refers to the believers as those who enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil — therefore, anyone who forsakes this pillar is excluded from the ranks of the believers.
In another verse, Allah has cursed some of the tribe of Israel for abandoning the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil. He says:

( Those among the tribe of Israel who were kafir  
were cursed on the tongue of Dawud  
and that of 'Isa, son of Maryam.  
That is because they rebelled  
and overstepped the limits.  
They would not restrain one another  
from any of the wrong things that they did.  
How evil were the things they used to do! ) (5: 78-79)

Whereas, Allah has praised those who have implemented the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil. He says:

( You are the best nation ever to be produced before mankind.  
You enjoin the right,  
forbid the wrong  
and have iman in Allah. ) (3: 110)

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say, 'He who amongst you sees something objectionable should change it with the help of his hand; and if he does not have the strength to do it, then he should reject it with his tongue; and if he does not have the strength to do it, then he should reject it in his heart — and that is the least of faith."\(^7\)

This hadith shows that rejecting evil should be done according to your strength and ability, but should be done at least with your heart, because if your heart does not deny evil, this means that your iman is gone. Therefore you must change evil with your hand and tongue if you are able to do so, but in any event you must reject it with your heart — and this is an obligation and the least of faith — otherwise Allah's punishment will come.

Hudhaifah related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "By Him in Whose hand my soul is, you must enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, or Allah will certainly soon send punishment from Him to you. Then you will make supplication and not receive any answer."\(^8\)

An-Nu'man Ibn Bashir related that the Prophet said, "The metaphor of a person who complies with Allah's orders and prohibitions in comparison to those who violate them is like the metaphor of some people who drew lots for their seats in a boat. Some of them were given seats on the upper deck, and the others on the lower deck. When those on the lower deck needed water, they would have had to go up to fetch the water, so they said, 'Let us make a hole in our part of the ship and save those who are above us from our troubling them.' If the people on the upper deck let the others do what they suggested, all the people in the boat would be destroyed, but if they prevented them, both groups would be safe."\(^9\)

Abdullah Ibn Mas'oud related that the Prophet said, "There was never a Prophet sent before me by Allah to his nation who did not have among his people disciples and companions who followed his ways and obeyed his command. Then after them came their successors who said what they did not do, and did what they were not commanded to do. Whoever strove against them with his hand was a believer; whoever strove against them with his tongue was a believer; and whoever strove against them with his heart was a believer; and beyond that

\(^7\) Muslim, 2/22-25; At-Tirmidhi, 9/18-19; Abu Dawud, 1128; An-Nasa'i, 8/111; Ibn Majah, 4013.

\(^8\) At-Tirmidhi, 9/17; classified as hasan. Albani also classifies it as hasan.

\(^9\) Al-Bukhari, 5 / 132; At-Tirmidhi, 9/19.
there was no faith, not even as much as a mustard seed.”

Abu Bakr related that the Prophet said, "If acts of disobedience occur among any people and they do not change them even though they are able to do so, Allah will soon punish them all.”

Guidelines on Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

Knowledge

In order to enjoin good and forbid evil, you must know the principles governing them and how to distinguish between them. Actions will not be any good if they are not done with full knowledge and wisdom. `Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz said, "Whoever worships Allah without knowledge, will do more damage than what he puts right."

Mu'adh Ibn Jabal said: "Knowledge should precede action, because if action and intention are done without knowledge, then ignorance, misguidance and desires will prevail."

So if a believer knows that by forbidding a particular evil, his action will lead to a greater evil, then he should not forbid that evil in the first place; or if his action will lead to the elimination of what is of greater benefit to the Muslims, then again, he should not forbid that evil.

The Prophet did not kill Abdullah Ibn Ubai Ibn Salul, the leader of the hypocrites, and his friends, because they enjoyed significant support from among their tribes. So the Prophet avoided killing Abdullah Ibn Ubai Ibn Salul, because people might think that he was killing his companions, and also because Abdullah Ibn Ubai Ibn Salul's tribe might have risen up against the Prophet, and sought to avenge their leader's death.

Accordingly, you must consider the issues of maslaha and mafsada before embarking on enjoining good and forbidding evil.

Gentleness

You should be kind and gentle in enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. The Prophet A said, "Be gentle, for if gentleness is present in anything, it adorns it - and if it is absent from anything, it damages it." The Prophet also said, "Allah it likes gentleness in all matters and rewards it more than He rewards harshness." Jarir related, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say, "Whoever is deprived of gentleness is deprived of good."

Sufyan ath-Thawri said, "Only he who has the following qualities can enjoin good and forbid evil: he should be gentle and just and he should know the principles of enjoining good and forbidding evil."

Patience

Whoever intends to enjoin good and forbid evil must have patience in the face of adversities

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10 Muslim, 2/27.
11 Abu Dawud, 4316; Ibn Majah, 4005; Ahmed, 1/16.
12 maslaha (plural: masa‘ilah): considerations of public interest, human welfare, utility, and human good. Ash-Sha'tibi said: "What concerns the subsistence of human life, the wholeness of his way of life, and the acquiring of what man's emotional and intellectual faculties require of him in their absolute sense.” mafsada (plural: mafa'sid): Evil, namely anything which violates addaruriyat al-khamsat, the five essential values of deen, life, intellect, lineage and property; the opposite of maslaha.
13 Muslim, 16/146; Abu Dawud, 2461; Ahmed, 6/58.
14 Al-Bukhari, 12/280; Muslim, 16/146.
15 Muslim, 16/145.
and hard times. He should know, beforehand, that he will be subjected to tribulation, just as Luqman told his son:

\[
\text{(My son, establish salat,}
\]
\[
\text{and command what is right}
\]
\[
\text{and forbid what is wrong}
\]
\[
\text{and be steadfast in the face of all that happens to you.}
\]
\[
\text{That is certainly the most resolute course to follow. ) (31: 16)}
\]

Allah also ordered His Messenger to be patient:

\[
\text{(You who are enveloped in your cloak!}
\]
\[
\text{Arise and warn!}
\]
\[
\text{Magnify your Lord. Purify your clothes. Shun all filth.}
\]
\[
\text{Do not give out of a desire for gain.}
\]
\[
\text{Be steadfast for your Lord. ) (74: 1-7)}
\]

And:

\[
\text{(Be steadfast in the face of what they say}
\]
\[
\text{and cut yourself off from them -}
\]
\[
\text{but courteously. ) (73: 9)}
\]

So you must have three qualities: knowledge, gentleness and patience; knowledge before enjoining good and forbidding evil, gentleness in carrying this out, and patience after it.

**Reasons for Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil**

There are many incentives which encourage you to enjoin good and forbid evil: to receive a reward from Allah to avoid His punishment, to defend Allah's commands and His *Shari'a*, to give sincere advice to the believers and to save them from Allah's anger and punishment both in this world and in the next, to glorify Allah it by implementing His orders, by obeying Him, by thanking and praising Him and by expending your life and wealth in His way.
TWO

FIGHTING IN THE WAY OF ALLAH

The Merits of Fighting in the Way of Allah

From the Qur'an

Allah says:

( Fighting is prescribed for you even if it is hateful to you.
  It may be that you hate something
  when it is good for you
  and it may be that you love something
  when it is bad for you.
Allah knows and you do not know. ) (2: 214)

He also says:

( Go out to fight, whatever your circumstances or desires,
  and do jihad with your wealth and yourselves
  in the Way of Allah.
That is better for you if you only knew. ) (9: 41)

He says:

( Allah has bought from the muminun
  their selves and their wealth
  in return for the Garden.
They fight in the Way of Allah
  and they kill and are killed. ) (9: 112)

Allah it says:

( Those muminun who stay behind —
  other than those forced to by necessity —
are not the same as those who do jihad in the Way of Allah,
sacrificing their wealth and themselves.
Allah has given those who do jihad
  with their wealth and themselves
  a higher rank than those who stay behind.
Allah has promised the Best to both,
  but Allah has preferred those who do jihad
  over those who stay behind
  by an immense reward:
  high ranks conferred by Him
  as well as forgiveness and mercy.
Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ) (4:94-95)

From the Ahadith

Abu Hurairah related that a man came to the Messenger of Allah and said, "Tell me what
action is equal to doing *jihad.*" He replied, "I do not know of such an action." Then he added, 'Could you, as long as a Muslim fighter is on the battlefield, enter your mosque and perform prayers without stopping and fast without breaking your fast?' The man said, "Who could do that?" Abu Hurairah added, "The *mujahid* is rewarded even for the steps of his horse as it wanders about tethered on a long rope."16

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri related that a Bedouin came to the Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Who is the best of mankind?" The Prophet said, "A man who fights in the Way of Allah with his life and his property, and also a man who lives beside a mountain path among the mountain paths in order to worship his Lord and safeguard people from his evil."17

Anas Ibn Malik related that the Prophet said: "A morning's journey or an afternoon's journey in the Way of Allah is better than the whole world and what is in it."18

Salman al-Farsi related that he heard the Prophet say, "Keeping watch for a day and a night (during *jihad*) is better than fasting for a whole month and standing in prayer every night. If a person dies (while doing this), it will be as if his action continues and he will go on receiving his reward for it perpetually and he will be saved from the punishment of the grave."19

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said: "Whoever dies without having fought in the Way of Allah and without having expressed any desire for *jihad* has died the death of a hypocrite."20

Abu Hurairah related that he heard the Prophet say, "The example of a *mujahid* in the Way of Allah - and Allah knows best who really strives in His Way - is like a person who fasts and prays continuously. Allah guarantees that He will admit the *mujahid* in His Way into Paradise if he is killed, or else He will return him safely to his home with rewards and booty."21

Ibn Umar related that the Prophet said, "Whenever you enter into a loan transaction and hold on to the tails of your oxen and are content with being a farmer and give up *jihad* in the Way of Allah, then Allah will let disgrace prevail over you and He will not withdraw it until you return to your *deen.*"22

**The Merits of Martyrdom in the Way of Allah**

Anas related that the Prophet said, "Nobody who dies and finds good from Allah (in the *akhira*) wants to return to this world - even if he were to be given the whole world and what is in it - except for a martyr who, on seeing the excellence of being a martyr, wants to come back to this world and be killed again (in the Way of Allah)."23

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "By Him in Whose hand my soul is, I would like to fight *jihad* in the Way of Allah and be killed, and then fight *jihad* in the Way of Allah and be killed, and then fight *jihad* in the Way of Allah and be killed."24

'Abdullah Ibn Amr Ibn al-'As related that the Prophet said, "All the wrong actions of a *shahid* are forgiven except debt."25

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16 Al-Bukhari, 6/4; Muslim, 13/24-25.
17 Al-Bukhari, 6/6; Muslim, 13/33-34.
18 Al-Bukhari, 6/13; Muslim, 13/27.
19 Muslim, 13/61; at-Tirmidhi, 7/162; an-Nasa'i, 6/39.
20 Muslim, 13/56; Abu Dawud, 2485; an-Nasa'i, 6/8.
21 Al-Bukhari, 6/6; Muslim, 13/20; an-Nasa'i, 6/20; Imam Malik's *Al-Muwatta*, 1/443-444.
22 Abu Dawud, 3445.
23 Al-Bukhari, 6/32; Muslim, 13/24; at-Tirmidhi, 7/161.
24 Al-Bukhari, 6/16; Muslim, 13/20.
25 Muslim, 13/30.
For the wrong actions of a martyr to be forgiven, his *jihad* should be sincerely in the Way of Allah, seeking the reward of Allah.

Abu Qatadah related that the Messenger of Allah stood up among his companions and gave a talk in which he told them that *jihad* in the Way of Allah and trust in Allah are the most excellent of actions. A man stood up and said, "Messenger of Allah, do you think that if I am killed in the Way of Allah all my wrong actions will be wiped out for me?" The Messenger of Allah replied, "Yes, if you are killed in the Way of Allah and you were always steadfast and sincere and you always fought facing the enemy and never turned your back on him." Then he added, 'What did you just say?' The man asked, 'Do you think that if I am killed in the Way of Allah all my wrong actions will be wiped out for me?' The Messenger of Allah said, "Yes, if you were steadfast and sincere and always fought facing the enemy and never turned your back on him - except for debt. *Jibril* has just told me this."  

Al-Miqdam Ibn Ma'd Yakrib related that the Prophet said, "The martyr receives six good things from Allah: he is forgiven at the first shedding of his blood; he is shown his abode in Paradise; he is preserved from the punishment in the grave; he is kept safe from the Greatest Terror; he has placed on his head a crown of honour, a ruby of which is better than the world and what it contains; he is married to seventy-two wives of the maidens with large dark eyes; and he is made intercessor for seventy of his relatives."  

A man asked the Prophet "O Messenger of Allah! Why is it that all the believers are tried in their graves except the martyr?" The Prophet replied: "The head of the martyr is protected by the gleam of swords."  

**The Jihad of the Companions**

Anas related, "My uncle Anas Ibn An-Nadr missed the battle of *Badr*. He said, 'O Messenger of Allah! I missed the first battle you fought against the *kafirun* but if Allah gives me a chance to fight the *kafirun*, there is no doubt that Allah will see how (bravely) I will fight.' On the day of *Uhud* when the Muslims turned their backs and fled, he said, 'O Allah! I apologise to You for what they have done, and I denounce what these (i.e. the *kafirun*) have done.' Then he advanced and Sa'd Ibn Muadh met him. He said, 'O Sa'd Ibn Muadh! By the Lord of An-Nadr, Paradise! I can smell its scent coming out from *Uhud*.' Later on Sa'd said, 'O Messenger of Allah! I could not have done what he (Anas Ibn An-Nadr) did. We found his dead body with more than eighty sword and arrow wounds. His body was mutilated so badly that no one except his sister could recognise him, by his fingers.' Anas added, 'We used to think that the following verse was revealed concerning him and other men like him:

( **Among the muminun there are men who have been true to the contract they made with Allah. Some of them have fulfilled their pact by death and some are still waiting to do so, not having changed in any way at all.** ) (33.23)''''

Abu Hurairah, related, "The Messenger of Allah and his Companions made their way towards *Badr* and arrived there well before the *kafirun* (of Makkah). When the *kafirun* arrived there, the Messenger of Allah said, 'None of you should step forward to do anything unless I am ahead of him.' As the *kafirun* advanced, the Messenger of Allah said, 'Prepare to enter

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26 Muslim, 18/4646.  
27 At-Tirmidhi, 7/161; Ibn Majah, 2799; Imam Ahmed, 4/131.  
28 An-Nisa'i, 4/99.  
29 Al-Bukhari, 7/354-355; Muslim, 13/47-48; At-Tirmidhi, 12/80-81.
Paradise, which is as wide as the heavens and the earth.' Umair Ibn al-Humam al-Ansari said, 'Messenger of Allah, is Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth?' He A answered, 'Yes.' Umair exclaimed, 'My goodness!' The Messenger of Allah asked him, 'What made you say that?'

He replied, 'O Messenger of Allah, nothing but the desire to be one of its residents.' He said: 'You will be one of its residents.' Umair took some dates from his bag and began to eat them. Then he said, 'If I were to live until I had eaten all of these dates of mine, my life would be too long.' He threw away all the dates he had with him and fought the enemy until he was killed.  

Abu Imran said, "We set out on an expedition from Madina intending to attack Constantinople. Abd'ur-Rahman Ibn Khalid Ibn al-Walid was the leader of our army. The Romans had their backs to the walls of the city. One of our men launched an attack against the enemy. Some of the men shouted, 'Stop! Stop! There is no god but Allah. He is putting himself in danger!'  

"Abu Ayyub said, 'The following verse was revealed about us, the group of the Ansar, when Allah helped His Prophet and gave Islam the upper hand, and we thought, "Come on then! Let us stay with our property and improve it." Then Allah, the Exalted, revealed:

\[
\text{( Spend in the Way of Allah. Do not cast yourselves into destruction. ) (2: 194) }
\]

So, the meaning of casting ourselves into destruction was if we had stayed with our property and had busied ourselves with improving it and had abandoned fighting""

Abu Imran continued: "Abu Ayyub continued to strive in the Way of Allah until he (died and) was buried in Constantinople."  

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30 Muslim, 13/45-46.
31 Abu Dawud, 2506.
THREE
REMEMBERING DEATH

Praise belongs to Allah Who bows the necks of tyrants and oppressors by inflicting death on them. Their hearts repeatedly refuse to remember death, but when death comes to them they are thrown into their holes, taken from their palaces to their tombs, from light into darkness, from the pleasures of the world and the beauty of women to the pain of worms and vermin, from their enjoyment of food and drink to dirt and dust, from the love and companionship of their family to solitude and loneliness, from the comfort of their beds to the discomfort of the grave. They cannot escape from their miserable destiny — can you see a single one of them or even hear the slightest sound?

Glory be to Allah! He has power over all His creatures who shall all die — except Him. Allah humiliates evildoers and redeems righteous people through death and makes the grave a place of constriction for wrongdoers and sinners until the Day of Judgement, when they shall all meet Him and He will judge between them. He A is the Benefactor and the Avenger and all Praise is due to Him — and may His peace and blessings be on His Messenger, Muhammad It who came with clear miracles and proofs.

So is it not enough for whoever has death for a destiny, dust for a bed, worms for companions, Munkar and Nakir for visitors, the grave for a shelter, the Day of Judgement for an appointed time and either Paradise or Hell as a final dwelling place, to give much thought and consideration to all of this and prepare for it?

Constant Remembrance of Death

The heart of whoever is drowned in the pleasures of this world and its attractions is distracted from remembering death — and if someone mentions death to him, he hates it and runs away from it. As regards such people, Allah says:

( Say: 'Death from which you are fleeing will certainly catch up with you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible and He will inform you about what you did.' ) (62: 8)

In regard to remembering death, people are divided into three categories:

Firstly, there is the one who is preoccupied with worldly desires and pleasures and who does not reflect on death. If he does happen to think of it, then he only feels sorry about the life which he will have to leave behind. For such a person, remembering death veils him from Allah.

Secondly, there is the one who turns in repentance and who is mindful of death all the time. His heart experiences fear of Allah and so his turning in repentance has good results. Perhaps such a person is troubled by death out of fear that it will take him by surprise before he has repented sincerely. His dislike of death is justified, because he is one of those who wish to delay the meeting with their Lord until they are fully prepared for that meeting. In spite of this, one of the main characteristics of the person who turns in repentance is that he is always ready to meet death. If not, he would be among those who are preoccupied with the pleasures
of this world.

Thirdly, there is the one who is an ‘arif — who is in constant remembrance of Allah. He longs to meet his Lord. Such a person waits for death impatiently. He wants to be free of the life of this world and to be near his Lord.

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "Constantly remember death — which brings all pleasures to an end." 32

'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar related that the Prophet said, "Hearts grow rusty just as iron does when it is exposed to water." On being asked what keeps them clean he replied, "Much remembrance of death and recitation of the Qur’an." 33

'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar related, "I was with the Prophet t and a man of the Ansar asked him, 'Who are the most clever and generous of people?' The Prophet replied, 'The most clever and generous of people are those who constantly remember death and who are prepared for it — they earn the honour of this world and nobility in the akhira." 34

Allah it has made death one of the worst disasters. He describes it as a misfortune in the Qur’an:

( ... if you are travelling when the misfortune of death occurs, ) (5: 106)

Death is described as a misfortune because the one who dies is suddenly moved from one abode to another and from one state to another. However, worse than death itself is being negligent of it — not being constantly mindful of it and not preparing for it.

There is a consensus among the majority of our scholars that death in itself is sufficient to act as a reminder and a warning. In Mukhtasar at-Tadhkira, the author states, "You should all know that the heart is softened, Allah willing, by many things: visiting the graves, going to gatherings of knowledgeable and righteous people, listening to the stories of previous nations and learning lessons from them, and remembering death — which brings all pleasures to an end, divides families and friends and separates children from their parents.

"One of the benefits of remembering death is that it prevents you from doing wrong actions and prohibited deeds and it helps you to relinquish the pleasures of this world and to attach no importance to its disasters.

"Another example of what softens the heart is to be with people when they are dying and to witness the agony of their death and their worries and their struggle. Whoever is not moved by such a disturbing situation will not be helped by any advice."

Al-Hasan al-Basri said, "Death exposes the life of this world for what it is by leaving no moment of joy to sensible people. Whenever a servant turns to the remembrance of Allah, the life of this world and everything in it becomes insignificant in his eyes."

Ibn Muti' was looking at his house one day and was captivated by its beauty. Then he cried out and said, "By Allah! If it were not for death, I would have been happy here, and if it were not for the confinement of the grave to which we are heading, we would have been content with the life of this world."

The Misfortune of Death

Death is a misfortune — as Allah says,

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33 Transmitted by at-Tirmidhi and al-Bayhaqi in Sh'ab al-Iman.
34 Ibn Majah, 4259.
( ... if you are travelling when the misfortune of death occurs, ) (5: 106)

This misfortune in itself contains three further tribulations: the agony of death, seeing the angel or angels of death, and the fear of a bad end and the punishment of the evil-doers in the Fire of Hell.

The Agony of Death

The (prospect of the) agony of death should cause sufficient worry, trouble and concern to interrupt the pleasures of the servant and his enjoyment of them. He should reflect deeply about it and be prepared for that time — because death can take his life at any moment. Death takes away a servant's soul gradually and so each part of the body feels the agony of death — until it reaches the throat. Then the dying person is cut off from the life of this world, the gate of repentance is shut and he is overwhelmed by grief and remorse.

Mujahid interpreted the following verse:

( There is no tawba for people who persist in doing evil until death comes to them and who then say, 'Now I make tawba.' ) (4: 18)

as follows: "When the dying person sees the angels of death and is confronted with death, he repents — but that sort of repentance is no good."

Ibn 'Umar related that the Prophet said, "Allah accepts the repentance of His servant up until his death-rattle begins."35

The Death of the Prophet Muhammad

'A'isha, may Allah be pleased with her, said, "There was a leather or wooden container full of water close to the Messenger of Allah (when he was dying). He would dip his hand into the water and wipe his face with it, saying, 'None has the right to be worshipped except Allah! Death makes you so dazed.' Then he raised his hand and began repeating, 'The Highest Company,' until he expired and his hand dropped down."36

Seeing the Angel or Angels of Death

The Qur'an states that it is Allah Who is in charge of taking away life. He says:

( Allah takes back people's selves when their death arrives. ) (39: 39)

Sometimes, it states that it is the Angel of Death who takes away the soul. Allah says:

( Say: 'The Angel of Death, who has been given charge of you, will take you back then you will be sent back to your Lord.' ) (32: 11)

Sometimes, it states that it is several angels who are put in charge. Allah says:

( He is the Absolute Master over His slaves. He sends angels to watch over you. Then when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take him, and they do not fail in their task. ) (6: 62)

In reality, it is Allah Who takes the souls at the time of death.

35 At-Tirmidhi, 13/58, who classified it as hasan gharib; Ahmed, 6160; Ibn Majah, 4253; Al-Hakim, 4/257.
36 Al-Bukhari, 8/144.
Al-Kulabi said: "The Angel of Death takes away the soul and gives it to the angels of mercy if the soul is that of a believer, and to the angels of punishment if the soul is that of an unbeliever."

Imam Ahmed related on the authority of Al-Bara' Ibn Azib "We went out with the Messenger of Allah accompanying the bier of a man of the Ansar. When we reached his grave, it had not yet been dug. So the Messenger of Allah sat down and we also sat down around him as if birds were perched on our heads. He had in his hand a stick with which he was scratching the ground. Then he raised his head and said: 'Seek refuge with Allah from the punishment of the grave. He repeated this twice or thrice.'"

The version of Jabir adds here: "Just as the deceased hears the sound of their footsteps as they are leaving, he is asked: 'O so and so, who is your Lord, what is your deen, and who is your Prophet?'"

Hannad's version states: "Two angels will come to him and make him sit up and ask him, 'Who is your Lord?' He will reply, 'My Lord is Allah.' They will ask him, 'What is your deen?' He will reply, 'My deen is Islam.' They will ask him, 'What do you think about the man who was sent on a mission among you?' He will reply, 'He is the Messenger of Allah.' They will ask, 'Who made you aware of this?' He will reply, 'I read the Book of Allah and believed it and considered it true.'"

This is confirmed by the words of Allah:

(A) Allah makes those who have iman firm in the life of the dunya and the akhira. ) (14: 29)

The agreed version continues: "Then a crier will call from Heaven, 'My servant has spoken the truth, so spread a bed for him from Paradise, clothe him from Paradise, and open a door for him into Paradise.' So some of its air and perfume will come to him, and space will be made for him as far as the eye can see."

He also describes the death of the kafir and says: "His spirit will be restored to his body and two angels will come to him and make him sit up and ask him, 'Who is your Lord?' He will reply, 'Alas, alas! I do not know.' They will ask him, 'What is your deen?' He will reply, 'Alas, alas! I do not know.' They will ask, 'Who was the man who was sent on a mission among you?' He will reply, 'Alas, alas! I do not know.' Then a crier will call from Heaven, 'He has lied, so spread a bed for him from Hell, clothe him from Hell, and open a door for him into Hell.' Then some of its heat and pestilential wind will come to him, and his grave will be compressed so that his ribs are crushed together."

Jabir's version adds: "Then someone who is blind and dumb will be put in charge of him. He will have such a sledge-hammer that if a mountain were struck with it, it would become dust. He will give him a blow with it, which will be heard by everything between the east and the west, except by men and jinn, and he will become dust. Then his spirit will be restored to him."

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The Fear of a Bad End and the Punishment of the Evil-Doers in the Fire of Hell

Fear of a bad end even breaks the hearts of the righteous because it is one of the agonies of death. They fear this moment the most because they are waiting to hear whether the Angel of Death will give them the glad tidings of Paradise or the bad news of Hellfire.

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37 Abu Dawud, 3196; Al-Hakim, 1 / 37-38; Ahmed, 4 /287-288.
It is related that when he was in his death throes, Hudhaifah Ibn al-Yamani, told 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'oud, "Go and see what time it is." Ibn Mas'oud went out and came back, saying, "The sun has just risen." Hudhaifah Ibn al-Yamani replied, "I seek refuge with Allah from a morning in the Fire."

When he was in his death throes, Abu Hurairah wept and said, "I swear by Allah that I am not crying because I am leaving the life of this world, or because I am leaving you, but because I am waiting for one of two summons from my Lord — which will be either to the Garden or to the Fire."

It is related in the Sahihain, on the authority of 'Ubada Ibn as-Samit, that the Prophet said, "Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him — and whoever hates to meet Allah, Allah hates to meet him."

'A'isha, or some of the wives of the Prophet said, "But we dislike death." He replied, "It is not like that. What this means is that when the time of a believer's death approaches, he is given the good news of Allah's being pleased with him and His blessings on him, and so at this time nothing is dearer to him than what is coming to him. So he loves to meet Allah, and Allah loves to meet him. But when the time of a disbeliever's death approaches, he receives the bad news of Allah's being angry with him and His punishment, and so at that time nothing is more hateful to him than what is coming to him. So he hates to meet Allah, and Allah hates to meet him." 38

Allah says:

( The angels descend on those who say,
'Our Lord is Allah,' and then go straight:
'Do not fear and do not grieve
but rejoice in the Garden you have been promised.
We are your protectors in the life of the dunya and the akhira.
You will have there all that your selves could wish for.
You will have there everything you demand.
Hospitality from One Who is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ') (41: 29-31)

Recommendations for when You are Dying

When the time comes for you to die you should relax. Your tongue should only be repeating the shahada. You should hope for good from Allah. You should be calm and at peace with yourself, because you will see the angels of mercy who will take away your soul and give you glad tidings of Paradise. As Allah says:

( Those the angels take in a virtuous state.
They say, 'Peace be upon you!
Enter the Garden for what you did.' ) (16: 32)

As for the evil-doers and unbelievers, Allah says:

( If only you could see when the angels take back those who were kafir at their death, beating their faces and their backs:
'Taste the punishment of the Burning!
That is for what you did.
Allah does not wrong His slaves.' ) (8: 51-52)

38 Al-Bukhari, 11 / 357; Muslim, 17/9; At-Tirmidhi, 4 / 287; An-Nasa'i', 4/10.
Allah also says:

(If you could only see the wrongdoers in the throes of death when the angels are stretching out their hands, saying, Disgorge your own selves!) (6: 94)

Commentators on the Qur'an say, "Allah's words, stretching out their hands, means 'stretching out their hands to inflict punishment', because the soul of a disbeliever still permeates the body when the news of the Fire and the anger of the Lord is given. Then the angels smite the face and back of the disbeliever, saying, 'Disgorge your own self.'"

We seek refuge with Allah from His punishment and anger.

As for the believer, his or her tongue should be repeating the shahada, because the Prophet said, "Whoever says La ilaha Allah — there is no god only Allah — at the moment of death will enter the Garden."

'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab said, "Remind the dying of the words La ilaha 'illa' Allah — there is no god only Allah — because they see what you cannot see."

It is also recommended to visit righteous people when they are in the throes of death and to make du'a for them, as these may benefit them.

It is also recommended for a dying person to hope for good from Allah, because of the hadith of Jabir Ibn Abdillah who said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say, three days before his death, 'None of you should approach death without only hoping for good from Allah."

Anas said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say, 'Allah A has said, "Son of Adam, as long as you ask of Me and hope in Me I will pardon you in spite of what you have done — and I do not care. Son of Adam, even if your wrong actions were piled as high as the clouds in the sky, and then you asked My forgiveness, I would forgive you — and I do not care. Son of Adam, even if you were to approach Me with enough sins to fill the earth, and then you met Me, not associating anything with Me, then I would grant you just as much forgiveness."

39 Abu Dawud, 3100; Al-Hakim, 1/351; Ahmed, 5/233.
40 Muslim, 17/209; Abu Dawud, 2097.
41 At-Tirmidhi, 13 /59-60, who classified it as hasan gharib; Ahmed, 5 /154; Ad-Darami, 2/322.
FOUR
PUNISHMENT AND BLESSINGS IN THE GRAVE

The Salaf and the ‘ulama’ believe that after death a person is either punished or blessed in the grave. On the Day of Rising, souls are returned to their bodies and they rise from their graves to stand before their Lord to be judged. The proofs of this from the Qur’an and ahadith are numerous.

From the Qur’an

Allah says:

( ‘O self at rest and at peace,
return to your Lord,
well-pleasing and well-pleased!
Enter among My slaves! Enter My Garden.’ ) (89: 30-32)

Allah also says:

( So Allah safeguarded him from the evil things they plotted
and a most evil torment engulfed Pharaoh’s people —
the Fire, morning and night, to which they are exposed;
and on the Day the Hour takes place:
'Admit Pharaoh’s people to the harshest punishment!' ) (40: 45-46)

And again, He says:

( Leave them until they meet their Day
when they will be struck down by the Blast:
the Day their ploys will not profit them at all
and they will not be helped.
And those who do wrong will have
a punishment besides that
but most of them do not know it. ) (52: 43-45)

And He says:

(We will give them a taste of lesser punishment
before the greater punishment,
so that hopefully they will turn back. ) (41 32: 21)

Ibn Abbas referred to this verse as confirmation and proof indicating that punishment in the grave does take place.

From the Ahadith

Ibn Abbas related "Once the Prophet was passing by the graves of Madinah when he heard the cries of two people who were being punished in their graves. The Prophet t said, 'They are being punished, but they are not being punished because of a major wrong action — and yet their wrong actions are serious. One of them used not to avoid (being soiled with) urine, and the other used to go about spreading false rumours.' Then the Prophet t asked for a green
palm tree branch and split it into two and placed one piece on each grave, saying, 'May their punishment cease for as long as these pieces of branch do not dry out.'

Zaid Ibn Thabit said, "The Messenger of Allah was riding with us towards the dwellings of Banu an-Najjar when his mule shied so that he nearly fell off. He saw that there were four or five or six graves there. He said, 'Which of you knows about who is buried in these graves?' Someone said, 'I do.' So the Prophet asked, 'What state were they in when they died?' He replied, 'They died as mushrikun.' He said, 'These people are being punished in their graves. If it were not for the fact that you would stop burying your dead in graves if you could hear the torment in the graves which I can hear, then I would certainly have made you listen to it.' Then, turning his face towards us, he said, 'Seek refuge in Allah from the torment of the Fire.' We said, 'Seek refuge in Allah from the torment of the Fire.' He said, 'Seek refuge in Allah from the torment of the grave.' We said, 'Seek refuge in Allah from the torment of the grave.' He said, 'Seek refuge in Allah from turmoil, both apparent and hidden.' We said, 'Seek refuge in Allah from the trial of the Dajjal.' We said, 'Seek refuge in Allah from the trial of the Dajjal.'"

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "When you finish the last tashahhud, you should seek refuge in Allah from four things: from the punishment in the grave, from the punishment in the Fire of Hell, from the trials of life and death, and from the trial of Al-Masih Ad-Dajjal.

The Questioning in the Grave

Qatadah related from Anas that the Prophet said, "When a dead person has been laid to rest in his grave, his companions leave him — and even while he can still hear their footsteps, two angels come to him and make him sit up and ask him, 'What did you use to say about this man (Muhammad)?' The mumin replies, 'I bear witness that he is Allah's slave and His Messenger.' Then they will say to him, 'Look at the place you might have had in the Fire of Hell — Allah has given you a place in the Garden instead of it,' and he will see both places." Qatada also said, "We were told that his grave would be made spacious." Then Qatada, continued with the transmission of Anas who said, "When a munafiq or a kafir is asked, 'What did you use to say about this man (Muhammad)?' he replies, 'I do not remember — but I used to say what other people used to say.' So they will say to him, 'You did not know and you did not follow guidance.' Then he will be hit so hard with an iron hammer and he will give such a cry that everything near him will hear it, except for the jinn and people."

Al-Bara' Ibn Azib related that the Prophet said: "When a Muslim is questioned in his grave, he will testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah — and this is what is meant by the words of Allah:

(Allah makes those who have iman firm
with the Firm Word
in the life of the dunya and the akhira.)" (14: 29)

It should also be pointed out that the punishment of the grave is the punishment in the barzakh to which Allah refers in the Qur'an:

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42 Al-Bukhari, 3/242; An-Nasa'i, 4/106.
43 Muslim, 17/202; Ahmed, 3/103, 144-145.
46 Al-Bukhari, 3/231-232; Muslim, 17/204.
When death comes to one of them, he says, 'My Lord, send me back again, so that perhaps I may act rightly regarding the things I failed to do!'

No indeed! It is just words he utters.

Before them there is an interspace until the Day they are raised up. (23: 100)

Anyone who dies and deserves punishment, will receive part of it in the grave.

**The Punishment in the Grave**

Samurah Ibn Jundub said, "Whenever the Prophet finished the (dawn) prayer, he would look at us and ask, 'Who of you had a dream last night?' So if anyone had had a dream, he would describe it and the Prophet would say, 'Ma sha'Allah.' One morning, he asked whether anyone of us had had a dream and we replied that we had not. The Prophet said, 'I dreamt last night that two men came to me and held me by the hands and took me to al-Quds (Jerusalem). While we were there, I saw a person sitting down with another standing next to him with an iron hook in his hand. He was pushing it inside the mouth of the first one until it reached his jawbone and then tearing out one side of his cheek. Then while he was doing the same with the other side, the first side of his cheek would become normal again — and then he would do the same all over again. I said, 'What is this?'

'They told me to move on and so we went on until we came to a man lying flat on his back with another man standing over his head. He was holding a stone or a piece of rock and dropping it on to the head of the man lying down. When it hit him, the stone would roll away. The man would go to pick it up and before he had returned, the crushed head had become normal again — and then the man would come back and smash it again. I said, 'What is this?'

'They told me to move on and so we carried on and passed by a hole like an oven, with a narrow top and a wide bottom and a fire blazing at the bottom of it. Whenever the flames of the fire leapt up, the people in it were lifted up so high that they almost escaped out of the top, and then whenever the flames died down, the people would fall back down into it. The men and women in it were naked. I said, 'What is this?'

'They told me to move on and so we went on until we reached a river of blood in which there was a man, with another man standing on the bank. He had some stones in front of him and was watching the man standing in the river. Whenever the man in the river tried to climb out, the other would throw a stone at his mouth and make him retreat to where he had been before. As often as he tried to come out, the other would throw a stone at his mouth and make him return to where he had been before. I asked, 'What is this?'

'They told me to move on and so we did until we reached a well watered garden of green with a huge tree, at whose foot was an old man sitting with some children. There was another person near the tree with a fire in front of him which he was tending.

'The two men made me climb up the tree and told me to enter a dwelling which was better than any I had have ever seen before. Inside there were some old men and some young men, women and children.

'Then they took me out of this dwelling and made me climb further up the tree and told me to enter another dwelling which was even better and more excellent (than the first). Inside there were some old and young people.

'I said to them, 'You have kept me on the move all night — now explain everything that I
have seen to me." They replied, "Certainly."

"As for the one whose cheeks you saw being torn away, he was a liar who used to tell lies which people would believe and pass on until they spread right across the world — so he will continue to be punished like this until the Day of Rising.

"As for the one whose head you saw being crushed, he was a man whom Allah had given knowledge of the Qur'an, but he used to sleep all night and did not act on it during the day — so he will continue to be punished like this until the Day of Rising.

"As for those whom you saw in the hole, they were adulterers.

"As for those whom you saw in the river of blood, they used to deal in riba (usury).

"The old man who was sitting at the base of the tree was Ibrahim and the little children with him were the offspring of his people — and the person tending the fire was Malik, the keeper of the Fire of Hell. The first dwelling in which you entered was the dwelling of the common believers, and the second dwelling was that of the martyrs. I am jibril and this is Mikail. Now raise your head."

'I raised my head and saw what looked like a cloud above me. They said, "That is your dwelling." I said, "Then let me enter my dwelling." They replied, "You still have a life which you have not yet completed — when you have completed it then you will enter your dwelling.""  

This is an authentic sahih hadith which vividly describes some of the punishments of the grave, as the scholars have interpreted it.

**Avoiding Punishment in the Grave**

This matter has two approaches, one general and one specific.

As regards the general approach, we can avoid punishment in the grave by obeying the commands of Allah and by refraining from wrong actions. We should be pleasing to Allah in this world in order to avoid the punishment of the grave, as well as that of the next world. As we have seen in the above hadith, the Prophet described some of the (disobedient) people who are punished in the grave including liars, slanderers, hypocrites, adulterers and usurers.

As regards the specific approach, there are a number of sayings of the Prophet which indicate how we can avoid punishment in the grave:

Salman al-Farsi related that the Prophet said, "Keeping watch for a day and a night (during jihad) is better than fasting for a whole month and standing in prayer every night. If a person dies (while doing this), it will be as if his action continues and he will go on receiving his reward for it and he will be saved from the punishment of the grave."  

Fudalah Ibn Ubaid related that the Prophet said, "Everyone who dies has completed their actions, except for someone who was at the frontier (fighting in the Way of Allah) — whose actions will continue to go on increasing until the Day of Rising and who will be safe from the trials in the grave."  

Al-Miqdam Ibn Ma'd Yakrib related that the Prophet said, "The martyr receives six blessings from Allah: he is forgiven as soon as the first drop of his blood is shed; he is shown his dwelling in the Garden; he is protected from the punishment in the grave; he is kept safe from the Greatest Terror; he has placed on his head a crown of honour; a ruby of which is better

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47 Al-Bukhari, 3/251-252.
48 Muslim; 13/61; At-Tirmidhi, 7/162; An-Nasa'î, 6/39.
49 Abu Dawud, 2483; At-Tirmidhi, 7/123; Ahmed, 6/20; Al-Hakim, 2/144.
than the world and what it contains; he is married to seventy-two wives of the maidens with large dark eyes; and he is made intercessor for seventy of his relatives.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{50} At-Tirmidhi, 7/161; Ibn Majah, 2799; Ahmed, 4/131.
So far we have considered the agonies of death and the punishment in the grave for wrongdoers, but more terrifying than these are the standing before Allah on the Day of Rising, His questioning us about all the things we did in the life of this world, the setting up of the Balance — and then the Sirat, the bridge over the Fire which must be crossed in order to enter the Garden on the Day of Judgement, and which is described in the hadith as being narrower than the blade of a sword, thinner than a hair and with obstacles on it to block wrong-doers and plunge them into Jahannam (the Fire of Hell). Some will cross the Sirat into the Garden like lightning or like the wind, some with ease, some with difficulty and some with great difficulty — and some will fall down into the Fire waiting below.

These will be terrifying moments on the Day of Rising — and you must know about them and believe in them and reflect carefully and deeply about them in order to prepare yourself for them.

You must be aware of the Day when you will be resurrected from the grave, bewildered by the sound of the Trumpet being blown. Allah says:

( The Trumpet will be blown and those in the heavens and those in the earth will all lose consciousness, except those Allah wills. Then it will blown a second time and at once they will be standing upright, looking on. ) (39:65).

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet said, "Between the two blasts of the Trumpet there will be forty." People asked, "O Abu Hurairah! Forty days?" I refused to reply. They asked, "Forty years?" I still refused to reply and added, "The whole of the human body wastes away and perishes except for the coccyx — and from that bone Allah will bring the whole body back to life."^^

You must think about all the creatures — about their abasement and sorrow, waiting for Allah to judge between them. How will you be when the heavens and the earth are transformed — when the earth is darkened and people are waiting naked and barefooted, with their eyes fixedly staring in horror? That Day will be long — and so too will be the waiting and standing. Every nursing mother will forget about her baby and whoever is pregnant will miscarry and it will seem as if all mankind is drunk, but it will not be because they are drunk, but because of the severity of the dread of Allah — on the Day when the heavens are cleft asunder, and the stars are fallen and scattered, and the seas burst forth like blazing fire, and the graves are turned upside down and spill out what was in them, and the sun is overthrown, and the mountains collapse, and pregnant she-camels are neglected, and the wild animals are huddled together, and souls are reunited with their bodies, and the Fire of Hell is kindled to a fierce blaze and Paradise is brought near.

^^ Al-Bukhari, 6/338.
Names of the Day of Rising

Allah is has given many names to the Day of Rising. Each of these names emphasises a particular aspect and meaning of that Day:

The Day of Resurrection, the Hour, the Blowing of the Horn, the Earthquake, the Day of the Mighty Noise, the Calamity, the Day of the Rising of the Dead, the Day of Leaving the Grave, the Day of Gathering, the Day when Things are Made Apparent, the Day of Assembling Together, the Day of Discriminating between Good and Evil, the Day when the Sky is Split Asunder, the Day of Dispersion, the Day of the Greatest Terror, the Day of Summoning, the Event (Al-Waqi’a), the Day of Abasement and Exaltation (of the kafirun and the mum inun), the Day of Accounting, the Day of Questioning, the Day of Witnessing, the Day of Recrimination, the Day of Retribution, the Day of Reality, the Day of Complete Overshadowing, the Day of Great Lamenting, the Day of Threatening, the Day of the Deen, the Day of Repayment, the Day of Regret, the Day of Replacing One World for Another, the Day of the Meeting (with Allah), the Day that is Near, the Day of the Final Abode, the Day of Fate, the Day of Destiny, the Day of Weighing in the Balance, the Day of Sterility, the Day of Ultimate Difficulty, the Day that Everyone shall Witness, the Day of Mutual Loss, the Day when Secrets are made Known, the Day of Altering, the Overwhelming, the Day of Supplication, the Day of Intercession, the Day of Sweating, the Day of Anxiety and Agitation, and the Day of Escape.

Woe to those who are negligent and careless. Allah has sent us His Messenger and His Book, and has informed us about the names and attributes of the Day of Rising. He warns us against being negligent. He says:

(Mankind's Reckoning has drawn very close to them, yet they heedlessly turn away. No fresh reminder comes to them from their Lord without their listening to it as if it was a game. Their hearts are distracted.) (21: 1-3)

Allah also informs us that the Day of Rising is near. He says:

(The Hour has drawn near and the moon has split.) (54: 1)

And:

(They see it as something distant, but We see it very close.) (70: 6-7)

And:

(People will ask you about the Last Hour. Say: 'Only Allah has knowledge of it. What will make you understand? It may be that the Last Hour is very near.') (33: 63)

Sahl Ibn Sa’d related that the Prophet said, "On the Day of Rising people will be gathered together on earth which is reddish white — the same colour as a fresh loaf of bread. There will not be any landmarks on that earth for anyone." 52

AbuHurairah related that the Prophet said, "People will be gathered in three ways: there will be those who come full of hope and fear; there will be those who come riding two or three or ten on a camel. The rest of the people will be herded to gather next to the Fire which will be

52 Al-Bukhari, 11 / 372; Muslim, 17 / 134.
near them when they doze in the afternoon, and stay with them wherever they spend the night, and remain with them in the morning wherever they may be, and still be with them in the afternoon wherever they may be then."

Qatada reported that Anas said, "A man said, 'O Prophet of Allah! Will Allah really gather the kafirun on their faces on the Day of Rising?' He replied, 'Will the One Who made him walk on his feet in this world, not be able to make him walk on his face on the Day of Rising?'" Qatada continued: "Yes, By the power of our Lord! It says this in the Qur'an when Allah says:

(We will gather them on the Day of Rising,
flat on their faces,
blind, dumb, and deaf.
Their shelter will be Hell.
Whenever the Blaze dies down,
We will increase it for them.)" (17: 97)

What a difference between the two groups: the muminun will ride to Paradise and to the Mercy of Allah — and the kafirun will be herded to the Fire of Hell where they will receive severe punishment. Allah it says:

(On that Day We will gather those who have taqwa
to the All-Merciful with due ceremony.
But We will drive the evildoers to Hell,
like cattle to a watering hole.) (19: 86-87)

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri reported, "During the lifetime of the Prophet some people asked, 'O Messenger of Allah! Will we see our Lord on the Day of Rising?' The Prophet replied, 'Yes! Do you have any difficulty in seeing the sun at midday when it is bright and there is not a cloud in the sky?' They replied, 'No.' He asked, 'Do you have any difficulty in seeing the full moon at night when it is bright and there is not a cloud in the sky?' They replied, 'No.' The Prophet said, 'Just as you have no difficulty in seeing either of them so you will have no difficulty in seeing Allah on the Day of Rising.'

"On the Day of Rising, a caller will announce, 'Let every nation follow what they used to worship.' Then there will be none of those who used to worship anything other than Allah, like idols and other false gods, who do not fall into the Fire of Hell — until no one will remain except those who used to worship Allah, both those who were obedient and those who were disobedient, and also some of the People of the Book. Then the Jews will be summoned and it will be said to them, 'Who did you use to worship?' They will say, 'We used to worship Ezra, the son of Allah.' It will be said to them, 'You are liars, for Allah has never taken anyone as a wife or a son. What do you want now?' They will say, 'O our Lord! We are thirsty, so give us something to drink.' Then they will be dealt with and addressed like this: 'You will indeed have something to drink,' — and they will be driven towards the Fire of Hell which will appear like a mirage whose different sides are devouring each other. Then they will fall into the Fire."  

Glorified and Exalted is Allah. In the life of this world people appear the same: both the muminun and the kafirun are provided with all kinds of sustenance — but when death takes their souls, each group heads for a different life in the grave, determined by their actions in the life of this world — and when the Trumpet is blown, they will come swiftly out of their

54 Al-Bukhari, 11 / 377; Muslim, 17/ 148-149.
55 Al-Bukhari, 13 / 473; Muslim, 3 / 53-60; and Abu Dawud.
graves to their Lord. On that Day no one will be wronged in any way, nor will they be rewarded for anything other than what they used to do.

The dwellers of Paradise will be occupied with joyful things — they will be with their partners in pleasant shades, and there they will have fruits of all kinds and all they ask for. Allah it will say to them, "Salam — Peace be upon you — because of what you protected patiently!" How excellent indeed is their final abode!

As for the kafirun and the mushrikun, they will be dragged into the Fire of Hell in chains, with iron collars round their necks, and they will be scalded with boiling water. Allah will say to them, "There you will remain in disgrace — and do not speak to Me!"

On that Day everything will become clear — what was unknown will be known. Allah says:

( Would We make those who have iman and do right actions 
the same as those who cause corruption on the earth? 
Would We make those who have taqwa 
the same as the dissolute? ) (38: 27)

In another verse, Allah says:

( Anyone who does a good action 
will get something better. 
As for anyone who does a bad action, 
those who have done bad actions 
will only be repaid for what they did. ) (28: 84)

The Terrors of the Day of Rising

Allah says:

( Do not consider Allah to be unaware 
of what the wrongdoers perpetrate. 
He is merely deferring them to a Day 
on which their sight will be transfixed, 
rushing headlong — 
heads back, eyes vacant, hearts hollow. ) (14: 44-45)

Allah also says:

( On the Day the sky is like molten brass 
and the mountains like tufts of coloured wool, 
no good friend will ask about his friend 
even though they can see each other. 
An evildoer will wish he could ransom himself 
from the punishment of that Day, 
by means of his sons, 
or his wife or his brother 
or his family who sheltered him 
or everyone else on earth, 
if that only meant that he could save himself. ) (70: 8-14)

This means that there will not be anyone who can not see his father and children and relatives — but he will neither speak to them nor ask them for any help.
And in another verse, Allah says:

( ... on that Day every man among them will have concerns enough of his own. ) (80: 37)

And:

( No burden-bearer can bear another's burden.
 If someone weighed down
calls for help to bear his load,
one of it will be borne for him,
even by his next of kin. ) (35: 18)

'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar related that the Prophet said, "On the Day when all mankind will stand before the Lord of the Worlds, some of them will be drenched in their own sweat up to the middle of their ears."

Al-Miqdad Ibn Al-Aswad al-Kindi reported: "I heard the Prophet say, 'On the Day of Rising the sun will come so close to everyone that it will be as if it is only a mile away. People will be drenched in sweat depending on their actions, some up to their knees, some up to the waist and some will be wearing a bridle of sweat,'— and as he said this, the Messenger of Allah pointed with his hand towards his mouth."

The Day of Reckoning

Allah says:

( Today We seal up their mouths
and their hands speak to Us,
and their feet bear witness
to what they have earned. ) (36: 64)

And:

( On the day We crowd the enemies of Allah into the Fire
and they are driven in close-packed ranks,
when they reach it, their hearing, sight and skin
will testify against them concerning what they did.
They will ask their skins, 'Why did you testify against us?'
and they will reply, 'Allah gave us speech
as He has given speech to everything.
He created you in the first place
and you will be returned to Him.
You did not think to shield yourselves from
your hearing, sight and skin testifying against you
and you thought that Allah would never know
much of what you did.
It is that thought you had about your Lord
that has destroyed you
so now you find yourselves among the lost. ) (41: 18-22)

Anas reported: "We were in the company of the Messenger of Allah when he smiled and said, 'Do you know why I am smiling?' We said, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' So he said, 'I was thinking of the conversation which a slave will have with his Lord. He will say, "My

56 Al-Bukhari, 11/ 392; Muslim, 17/ 195.
57 Muslim, 17/196; At-Tirmidhi, 9 / 355.
Lord, have You not guaranteed me protection from injustice?" He will say, "Yes." Then the slave will say, "I will not accept any testimony against me except from myself." He will say, "The testimony against you from your self will be sufficient, together with that of the two angels who were appointed to record your actions." Then his mouth will be sealed and his hands and his feet will be asked to speak and they will speak of what he has done. Then his mouth will be allowed to speak and he will say to them, "Damn you! May the curse of Allah be on you! I was trying to keep you safe."m

'Abdullah Ibn Mas'oud reported that the Prophet said, "On the Day of Rising the feet of the son of Adam will not move until he has been questioned about five things: on how he spent his life; on what he did with his youth; on how he acquired his wealth; on how he spent it; and on how he acted on what he knew."m

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "Whoever has a claim will have their right fulfilled on the Day of Rising — even a hornless sheep who has a claim against a horned sheep.m

The Balance and the Final Reckoning Allah says:

( We will set up the Just Balance on the Day of Rising and no self will be wronged in any way.
Even if it is no more than the weight of a grain of mustard seed, We will produce it.
We are Sufficient as Reckoner. ) (21: 47)

And He also says:

( The weighing that Day will be the truth.
As for those whose scales are heavy, they are the successful.
As for those whose scales are light, they are the ones who have lost their own selves because they wrongfully rejected Our Signs. ) (7: 7-8)

There are four views as regards what is weighed in the Just Balance:

Firstly, that it is actions which are weighed: servants' actions are translated into forms and put on the Scales. Allah says:

( Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it.
Whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it. ) (99: 8-9)

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "There are two phrases which are very pleasing to the Most Merciful. They are very easy on the tongue to say — and they weigh very heavy in the Balance. They are Subhana' Allali wa biHamdihi and Subhana' Allali'l-Adheem — 'Glory be to Allah and may He be praised' and 'Glory be to Allah the Most Great'."m

Secondly, that it is the records of actions which are weighed: and this is supported by the hadith related by Amr' Ibn al-'As, in which the Prophet said, "On the Day of Rising, Allah will separate a man from his people in the presence of all His creatures and spread out ninety-nine scrolls before him, each scroll stretching as far as the eye can see, and He will say, 'Do

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m Muslim, 18 /104 -105.
n Tirmidhi, 9/253, who classified it as hasan sahih.
60 Muslim, 16 / 132; Tirmidhi, 9 / 255; Ahmed, 2/ 235.
61 Al-Bukhari, 11 / 206; Muslim, 17/19; Tirmidhi, 3534.