

RAMADAN

IMMERSION



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Waheed

Alam al-Barzakh

- Islam teaches us that another life exists alongside our current one — beyond the limitations of our physical eyes — an unseen dimension called Alam al-Barzakh.
- It is an intermediate realm between this world and the Hereafter; separated from us only by death.
- The angels are present in this realm and this is where souls reside from the moment of death until the Day of Judgment.
- Our departed loved ones are not alone, nor are they truly gone; they have simply continued their existence in the realm of Barzakh, where their story lives on.
- Upon leaving this world, their soul transitions and a new chapter begins in Hayatul Barzakh, where their journey continues.
- The souls of our departed loved one rests in honor, blessed with sustenance in the presence of Allah.
- `Allah tells us:

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

Never think of those martyred in the cause of Allah as dead. In fact, they are alive with their Lord, well provided for—rejoicing in Allah's bounties and being delighted for those yet to join them. There will be no fear for them, nor will they grieve. (3:169-170)

- Many narrations indicate the souls of believers are like birds in Jannah and are provided for by Allah until the Day of Judgment.
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

إِنَّمَا نَسَمَةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ طَائِرٌ يَغْلُقُ فِي شَجَرِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ إِلَى جَسَدِهِ يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ

"The believer's soul is a bird that eats from [the fruits of] the trees of Paradise until it will be returned to its body on the Day when he is resurrected." (Sunan Ibn Majah)

- The one who passed away is still living in another realm. The scholars teach us that the grave is their permanent home, and they arrived there before us.
- While they have already settled in the afterlife, we are still just traveling through this temporary life and will soon follow them to our final resting place.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) comforted us regarding the deceased by explaining that the soul moves to Barzakh, a different realm of existence. He mentioned that his cousin Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, who was martyred at the battle of Mu'tah and had his arms cut off, had been provided wings:

رَأَيْتُ جَعْفَرَ بْنَ أَبِي طَالِبٍ يَلْطِيرُ مَعَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ ذَا جَنَاحَيْنِ يَطِيرُ حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ

"I saw Ja'far flying in Paradise with the angels, having two wings with which he flies wherever he wishes." (Musnad Ahmad)

- The Prophet (ﷺ) testified that the martyrs are not truly dead, but alive in the presence of Allah. He constantly reminded us that our loved ones are experiencing a better existence in Barzakh; their souls are being rewarded until the Day of Judgment.
- Understanding the realm of Barzakh, believing that our loved ones are in a better place and looked after there, eases the pain of separation. For example, Asma bint Abi Bakr displayed extraordinary patience, strength, and unwavering faith after the martyrdom of her son, Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr.
 - When Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr was killed and his body was disfigured and crucified in Makkah, Abdullah ibn Umar visited Asma to offer condolences.

- He comforted her by saying: "These bodies are nothing but shells (containers), the souls have left them and are with Allah".
- She replied she was not worried about the state of his body because she knew he was with Allah, and responded: "What prevents me from being patient? Was the head of Yahya ibn Zakariya not given to a harlot of the Israelites?"
- She compared her son's fate to that of a prophet — who suffered a similar fate while standing for the truth — to put her immense grief into perspective, affirming her resignation to Allah's decree.
- The believer accepts that this world is a place of struggle, effort, and testing, rather than a place of permanent comfort, and the believer will not find ultimate respite until they enter Jannah.
 - Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said:

لا راحة للمؤمن دُونَ لِقَاءِ اللَّهِ

"There is no comfort or rest for the believer until he meets Allah." (Al-Zuhd)

Received By Angels

- When our loved ones depart this world, the angels are receiving them. They are happy to see them and vice versa.
 - Allah said:
- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا
بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

Surely those who say, "Our Lord is Allah," and then remain steadfast, the angels descend upon them, saying, "Do not fear, nor grieve. Rather, rejoice in the good news of Paradise, which you have been promised. (41:30)

- The Angel of Death, sits by their head and says to them: "O pure soul, come out to the forgiveness of Allah and His pleasure!"
- The soul flows out gently, like a drop of water from a waterskin, the angels carry it, placing it in a shroud.
- The scent emanating from the soul is a beautiful fragrant musk, more pleasant than any musk found on the face of the earth.
- The angels ascend to the heavens and pass by gatherings of angels that remark on its beautiful scent saying: What a pure spirit!

- The angels will say: "He is this person, son of this person, calling him by the best names by which he was known in the world".
- The gates of the heavens will be opened for the soul where they will meet the souls of other believers who are eager to greet them.
- Allah will say: "Write the record of My servant in the righteous register and return him to the earth, for from it I created them, to it I return them, and from it I will take them out once again".
- The soul is returned to its body in the grave where they are resting and two angels will come to sit by it for questioning. This is the first stage of the akhirah.
 - Uthman reported: The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

إِنَّ الْقَبْرَ أَوَّلُ مَنْزِلٍ مِنْ مَنَازِلِ الْآخِرَةِ فَإِنْ نَجَا مِنْهُ فَمَا بَعْدَهُ أَيْسَرُ مِنْهُ وَإِنْ لَمْ يَنْجُ مِنْهُ فَمَا بَعْدَهُ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُ مَا رَأَيْتُ مَنْظَرًا قَطُّ إِلَّا الْقَبْرُ أَفْظَعُ مِنْهُ

"Verily, the grave is the first stage of the Hereafter. If one is saved from it, whatever comes after will be easier for him. If one is not saved from it, whatever comes after will be harder for him. I have never seen anything more frightening than the grave."

(Jami` at-Tirmidhi)

- After answering the questions, a heavenly announcement will be made: "My servant has spoken the truth! Spread out carpets for him in Paradise, clothe him for Paradise, and open a gate for him to Paradise!"
- The soul will receive all the comforts and fragrances of Jannah, and their grave will be expanded as far as their eye can see.
- Released from worldly burdens, the soul now finds solace and freedom in the waiting realm of Barzakh until the Day of Judgment.
- Ibn Rajab highlights that the grave is considered a place of rest and a garden from the gardens of Paradise for the believer.
 - Abu Sa'eed narrated: The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

إِنَّمَا الْقَبْرُ رَوْضَةٌ مِنْ رِيَاضِ الْجَنَّةِ أَوْ حُفْرَةٌ مِنْ حُفَرِ النَّارِ

"The grave is but a garden from the gardens of Paradise, or a pit from the pits of the Fire." (Jami` at-Tirmidhi)

The Meeting with Other Souls

- In Barzakh, the souls of believers are awaiting the arrival of family and friends who will join them as they transition from this world.
 - Allah said:

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِّنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ ۚ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ

As for those who believe and whose descendants follow them in faith, We will elevate their descendants to their rank, never discounting anything 'of the reward' of their deeds. Every person will reap only what they sowed. (52:21)

- Ibn Taymiyyah noted that when a believer dies, their soul is welcomed by the souls of loved ones who passed away previously. These souls rejoice in the bounty, honor, and reward that Allah has prepared for them in Paradise.
- The souls in Barzakh are aware of those who will join them, and they actively look for loved ones they recognize.
 - Abu Hurairah reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) Saying:

" *الْأَرْوَاحُ جُنُودٌ مُّجَنَّدَةٌ فَمَا تَعَارَفَ مِنْهَا اتَّخَلَفَ وَمَا تَنَاقَرَ مِنْهَا اخْتَلَفَ .* "

Souls are troops collected together and those who familiarised with each other (in the heaven from where these come) would have affinity, with one another (in the world) and those amongst them who opposed each other (in the Heaven) would also be divergent (in the world). (Sahih Muslim)

- Ibn Qayyim explains that the souls are free to meet and visit each other. They will talk about what they used to do in this world and what has happened to the people of this world.
- When a new soul arrives, the souls (those who arrived earlier) will ask about the state of the world, specifically about their loved ones, current events, or people they left behind.
- The angels stop all these inquiries, saying: "Leave him/her alone, for he/she has just come out of the grief/distress of the world".

Visiting the Deceased at the Grave

- Many scholars mention that the soul of the deceased returns to the body when their grave is visited, particularly when someone offers salam (greeting).
- The Prophet (ﷺ) taught the companions to visit graveyards to remember the Hereafter and to greet the inhabitants with this du'a:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ لَاجِقُونَ، نَسْأَلُ
اللَّهَ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ الْعَافِيَةَ

*As-salāmu ‘alaykum ahlad-diyāri minal-mu’minīna wal-muslimīn, wa innā
inshā’Allāhu bikum lāḥiqūn, nas’alullāha lanā wa lakumul-‘āfiyah*

Meaning: Peace be upon you, O inhabitants of the dwellings (the graves), among the believers and Muslims. Indeed, we will, if Allah wills, be joining you. We ask Allah for well-being for us and for you.

- When the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked if the deceased could hear the living, he clarified that they possess the ability to hear, even though they cannot directly respond.
- This teaches us that our loved ones in the grave are comforted by our du'as; they hear our greetings, and respond to our salams in their graves.
 - Abdullah ibn Abbas narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

ما من أحد يمر بقبر أخيه المسلم، كان يعرفه في الدنيا، فيسلم عليه، إلا رد الله عليه
روحه، حتى يرد عليه السلام

“Whenever any of you passes by the grave of his Muslim brother whom he knew in his lifetime, and you make salam to him, Allah then returns his soul to his body so that he may reply to the salam.” (Al Akhamul Wusta)

- An example of awareness and respecting the deceased in their grave:
 - Aisha (RA) continued living in her hujra (room) where the Prophet (ﷺ) and her father, Abu Bakr (RA), were buried. She would enter this space without a hijab, saying, "They are only my husband and my father".

- After Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA) was buried beside them, she changed her habit out of modesty. She stated, "By Allah, I never entered the room except that my clothing was wrapped tightly around my body, out of shyness from Umar".
- This incident highlights the immense respect she displayed for the deceased that she observed modesty even in the presence of a non-mahram in his grave.
- It is reported that when a person visits the grave of a believer, the deceased is comforted, recognizes them and responds to their salams until they leave.
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) used to visit the graves of the martyrs of Uhud annually. He would stand at a place called Hurrat al-Waqim, greeting them while affirming they know who visits them.
 - After his passing, Umar ibn al-Khattab continued this tradition. He addressed the martyrs, saying: "I testify that you are alive" and encouraged others to send salam upon them.

Finding Comfort After Their Departure

- It is natural to grieve, but we can find comfort knowing our loved ones are now with Allah. We must keep reminding ourselves that they have settled in His care.
- After the Prophet's son Qasim passed away in infancy, he offered comfort to Khadija (RA), giving glad tidings of her child's status in the afterlife.
 - Husain bin 'Ali said:

لَمَّا تُوفِّيَ الْقَاسِمُ ابْنُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - قَالَتْ خَدِيجَةُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ دَرَّتْ لَبِيئَةُ الْقَاسِمِ فَلَوْ كَانَ اللَّهُ أَبِقَاهُ حَتَّى يَسْتَكْمِلَ رِضَاعَهُ . فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - " إِنَّ تَمَامَ رِضَاعِهِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ " . قَالَتْ لَوْ أَعْلَمُ ذَلِكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَهَوَّنَ عَلَيَّ أَمْرُهُ . فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - " إِنَّ شَيْئَ دَعَاؤِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فَأَسْمَعُكَ صَوْتَهُ " . قَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ بَلْ أَصْدَقُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولَهُ .

“When Qasim the son of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, Khadijah said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, the milk of Qasim’s mother is overflowing. Would that Allah had let him live until he had finished breastfeeding.’ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘He will complete his breastfeeding in Paradise.’ She said: ‘If I know that, O Messenger of Allah, it makes it easier for me to bear.’ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘If you wish, I will pray to Allah to let you hear his voice.’ She said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, rather I believe Allah and His Messenger.’”(Sunan Ibn Majah)

- Similarly, when the Prophet's son Ibrahim passed away, he expressed deep sorrow while remaining patient, stating that Ibrahim was with Allah and in the care of Sa'd ibn Mu'adh.
- We find comfort in the belief that our good deeds — such as charity, prayer, and Qur'anic recitation — act as gifts sent to our loved ones in their graves, providing them with joy and comfort in their resting place.
- Even though they may not have lived the most pious lives, we take comfort in the fact that they passed testifying the kalima. As believers, we can now benefit them by doing righteous acts on their behalf.
- Death should strengthen our resolve rather than weaken it. Leaving our deceased in the grave is incredibly difficult, but we must trust in the hikmah (wisdom) behind their early departure.
 - For example, following the early martyrdom at Uhud, the Muslims became more focused and determined, viewing the loss as an invitation to join their loved ones in Jannah.
- Our pain is intended to ultimately pull us closer to Allah. Therefore, we should transform our pain into a means of spiritual elevation.
 - For example, losing his mother, Amina, at the age of six was one of many trials that shaped the Prophet (ﷺ), yet it served to deepen his reliance on Allah. He teaches us that brokenness can bring one closer to Allah.
- Losing a loved one is painful, but it is considered a gift; a blessing in disguise.
 - For example, it softens the heart, making it easier for us to feel and connect with the Qur'an.

- This is why we should use our grief as a source of coming closer to Allah, as well as a means to serve and comfort others in this world.
- It is easier to navigate life's journey when we truly understand this life is just a passing. This perspective calls us to work harder on our purpose for the Hereafter.
- Those who have passed away have completed their journey and are closer to the Hereafter than we are; one day, we will surely follow them.