

If the concern of the *Kafir* person in this life is to enjoy himself, then the believer has a different concern. His concern (the believer) is to take a provision of *Iman* and good deeds for the life hereafter while being continuously aware of death, the grave, *Hisab* (reckoning) and *al-Jannah* and the Hell-fire.

No one knows when one's death will come. He also does not know how the conclusion of his life is going to be. Death could be preceded by some signs which serve as a warning such as illness, wars and others. If a person is to die as a result of sickness - especially prolonged illness- his state will change towards the end of his life. He will be disinterested in the life of the world, and it will be of no value to him. On the other hand he will be interested in the *aakhirah* and it will become very important to him. He will start preparing for death and the *aakhirah*, and in this way the appearance of the signs of death is good for him.

Death could happen suddenly while one is fit and in good health. This is what people fear most because in this case one is not prepared enough and has little provision for the *aakhirah*. This situation makes it important for a Muslim that he should be prepared for death at all times.

Forgetting about death is a cause for people to be neglectful and indulgent in the life of this world. On the other hand remembering death is a cause for turning towards the *aakhirah* and the actions which benefit one in the *aakhirah*. It is for this reason that the Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) urged Muslims to remember death. He said: "Increase in remembering the terminator of desires" i.e. death.

Part of the decree of Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) upon some people is that they die suddenly. Sudden death could be collective or on small scale (e.g. individual or family.) Collective death could happen as a result of an epidemic which kills a huge number of people in short time. This happened many times in history.

When Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) showed His bounty over human beings by the discovery of vaccinations against infectious diseases, the number of people taken by sudden death as a result of epidemics decreased. However, with the increase of storms, earthquakes, and floods in recent times - these have become the main causes for sudden death. With the discovery of modern means of transportation such as aeroplanes, ships, trains and automobiles, and with the accidents in the air, sea and land – these have also become a cause of sudden death for many people.

Sudden death on small scale happens to an individual or a family as a result of a falling wall or debris or fire or by drowning etc. Car accidents nowadays have become the biggest cause of sudden death for individuals and families. A man or a family would leave their house in their car in the morning and return to the mortuary in the evening.

Sudden death could be a punishment for the *Kafir* or an evil person. However, if a person is prepared for death by *Iman* and righteous deeds, then there is no harm upon him *insha' Allah*. Whoever is slow to do acts of obedience and quick to commit prohibitions, then sudden death is a misfortune and punishment in his case. In the *Hadith*, *Rasulullah (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam)* said: **موتُ الفجأة أخذة أسفٍ**

"Sudden death is a seizure by One who is angry" i.e. Allah when He is angry with one.

Sudden death has always been there since old time; however, it has become more widespread in recent time. In addition to accidents which cause sudden death, it is also on the increase as a result of modern diseases such heart attacks, strokes etc..

I ask Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) to grant us *husnul-khatimah* and to help us to prepare for what is awaiting us. “Our Lord! Grant us good in this life and good in the hereafter and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.”

Sudden death is part of the decree of Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*.) It is well established that *du'a* (supplication) wards off *Qadha* (decree.) Part of *du'a* of *Rasulullah* (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) was:

(اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَدْمِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ التَّرْدِي، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْغَرَقِ وَالْحَرَقِ)

“O Allah! I seek refuge with You from dying by a collapsing wall, and I seek refuge with You from dying as a result of a fall, and I seek refuge with You from dying by drowning or by fire.”

The common factor in these four types of deaths is their severity and their swiftness. We ask Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) to protect us from them.

Ibn Umar (may Allah be please with him) said: “Part of the *du'a* of *Rasulullah* (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) was his saying:

(اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ زَوَالِ نِعْمَتِكَ وَتَحَوُّلِ عَافِيَتِكَ وَفُجَاءَةِ نِقْمَتِكَ وَجَمِيعِ سَخَطِكَ)

“O Allah! I seek refuge with you from the cessation of Your blessing and from the departure of Your protection and from Your sudden punishment and from Your anger.”

Sudden death could be a form of punishment. For this it is important for one who fears misfortunes to maintain supplication with this *du'a*.

One of the useful *du'a* in protecting against sudden misfortunes in one's self and family is that reported by Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him.) He said: “I heard *Rasulullah* (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) saying:

مَنْ قَالَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ لَمْ تُصِبْهُ فُجَاءَةٌ بَلَاءٍ حَتَّى يُصْبِحَ، وَمَنْ قَالَهَا حِينَ يُصْبِحُ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ لَمْ تُصِبْهُ فُجَاءَةٌ بَلَاءٍ حَتَّى يُمَسِيَ.

“Whoever says: In the Name of Allah, Who with His Name nothing can harm in the earth or in the heavens, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing three times will not be afflicted by any calamity until the morning, and whoever recites it three times in the morning will not be overtaken by any calamity until the evening.”

Since sudden death is a seizure of One who is angry in the case of the negligent, one of the things which extinguish the anger of Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) is *sadaqah*. *Rasulullah* (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) said: “*Sadaqah* extinguishes the anger of the Lord and protects against evil death.”

Since death could come to one at any time, one should be prepared for it at all times by continuous repentance, *Istighfar* and righteous deeds and by avoiding prohibitions. One also should have one's will written.

Whoever is ready for death, he is not afraid of its sudden occurrence. Abdul Rahman ibn Mahdi said: “If it were to be said to Hammad ibn Salama that he would die tomorrow, he would not be able to increase in doing good deeds.” Adh-Dhahabi said: “His times were filled with *Ibadah* and *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah.)

Many of *as-Salaf as-Salih* (right acting predecessors) were like that.