



RECITING AZAAN AT THE GRAVESIDE

It is reported that when a person is placed in the grave and about to face the two Angels, Munkar and Nakeer, at that crucial moment Shaitaan also appears with the intention of misleading and robbing that person of great spiritual bliss. Hazrat Sufyaan Thauri (Rahmatullah Alaih) states, "When the person is being questioned, the first question being, 'Who is your Lord?' at that specific moment, the Shaitaan appears and indicating to himself, he says to the person, 'I am your Lord!'" It is for this reason that it has been recommended that one should make Dua for the deceased so that he may, through the Grace of Allah, remain steadfast when answering these crucial questions. It is reported in the Ahadith that at the time of burial, Rasoolallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) prayed for the deceased with the following words, "O Allah, protect him from the Shaitaan." [*Nawaadirul Usool*]

It is recorded in Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim that Rasoolallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "When the Mu'azzin recites the Azaan, the Shaitaan turns his back and departs as quickly as he can." In Sahih Muslim, Hazrat Jaabir (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) reports that when the Azaan is recited, the Shaitaan runs away as far as thirty miles." In some narrations it is reported that if one hears the "whispers of Shaitaan", then he should recite the Azaan, for by doing so he will eradicate the presence of the rejected one.

Hazrat Abdullah bin Jaabir (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) says, "When Saad bin Ma'az (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) was buried and the grave was made presentable, Rasoolallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) repeated at his grave "Subhaanallah" after which the Companions did the same. Rasoolallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) then repeated "Allahu Akbar" after which the Companions did the same. The Companions then asked, "O Prophet of Allah, why did you first recite the Tasbeeh and then the Takbeer?" Rasoolallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) replied, "The earth was beginning to constrain this pious person. Almighty Allah (with the Barakah of these recitals) eradicated his pain and made his grave spacious." Allama Tabibi (Rahmatullah Alaih), in his commentary of Mishkaat Shareef, states, "The meaning of this Prophetic action is that by the continuous recital of the Takbeer and Tasbeeh, Almighty Allah freed the person of the pain experienced within the grave." We see from this action of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that he recited the Takbeer (Allahu Akbar) at the grave of his beloved Companion so that he could be spared from the dangers of the grave. When we inspect the Azaan, we find these very words in it. If we therefore repeat it at the graveside, we are doing nothing but following the Prophetic action. It should also be remembered that although there are a few words added in the Azaan, it does not alter the intention that one has, which is pleading for Allah's Mercy. In the great book of Fiqh, "Hidayah" it is stated, "One should not lessen any words, for they are certainly the words narrated by the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). If on the other hand, words are added, then it is permissible, for the intention that one possesses is but to praise Almighty Allah and to make one's servitude apparent. It is therefore not forbidden to add any words to it."

Therefore, if we recite the Azaan at someone's graveside, besides saving the person from the clutches of Shaitaan, he will also be able to answer the questions put to him by Munkar and Nakeer. Let us see how he can be assisted by the mere recitation of the Azaan. We know that the three questions to be asked of him will be, "Who is your Lord?", "What is your Religion?" and "What did you used to say about this man?" When he hears the words of the Azaan, "I bear witness that there is no deity, but Allah", he will immediately realize who his Lord is! When he

hears the words, “Come to Salaah, Come to Salaah”, he will immediately realise that his religion was that religion in which Salaah was prescribed five times a day, which can only be Islam. When he hears the words “I bear witness that Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is the Messenger of Allah”, he will gain the answer to the third question!

The two great Scholars, Ibn Majah and Baihaqi, narrate the words of Hazrat Sa’eed Ibn Musayib (Radiallahu Ta’ala Anhum) in which the manner of burial is very clearly explained. This great personality said, “I was indeed once present with the great Companion, Abdullah Ibn Omar (Radiallahu Ta’ala Anh), when he placed the person inside the grave and he said, “In the Name of Allah, in the Path of Allah.” When the people began to fill the grave with sand, he pleaded, “O Allah! Protect the person from the Shaitaan and torment of the grave.” After doing so he clarified that this was the manner which he heard from the Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) himself.”” Imam Tirmidhi (Rahmatullah Alaih) narrates the words of Hazrat Omara bin Marra (Radiallahu Ta’ala Anh) who, describing the manner of the illustrious Companions stated, “It was certainly considered Mustahab (desirable) by the great Companions and those who came after them that at the time of placing the person in the grave, they used to supplicate as follows, “O Allah! Protect him from Shaitaan, the Rejected.”” Hazrat Ibn Abi Shayba (Radiallahu Ta’ala Anh), the illustrious teacher of Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim (Radiallahu Ta’ala Anhum), states, “It is considered Mustahab (desirable) that when the person is being buried, one should recite, “In the Name of Allah, in the Path of Allah, in the religion of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), O Allah! Save him from the torment of the grave, from the punishment of the Fire and from the mischief of Shaitaan, the Rejected.”” Hazrat Uthman Ghani (Radiallahu Ta’ala Anh) narrates, “When the Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) (and those around him) had completed the burial of the deceased, he would stay a while at the graveside (and addressing us) he would say, “Seek forgiveness for your brother and plead for him so that he may remain firm when questioned, and indeed he will be questioned.”” [Abu Dawud; Baihaqi; Haakim]

Let us now inspect another Prophetic action to see whether the concept of pleading for the forgiveness of the deceased holds any basis or not. Hazrat Sa’eed Ibn Mansoor (Rahmatullah Alaih) narrates the words of the great Companion, Hazrat Abdullah bin Mas’ood (Radiallahu Ta’ala Anh), who states, “When the person was buried, and the grave made presentable, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to stand for a while at the graveside and supplicate in the following manner, “O Allah! Our friend is certainly Your guest. He has turned his back to the world. O Allah! Let his tongue be true at the time of questioning and let him not be faced with those difficulties within the grave which he has no power to defend against.”” Therefore there is clear proof that it is certainly a Sunnah to stand at the graveside of a Muslim and plead for his forgiveness. [Fathul Qadeer; Bahrur Raa’iq; Fatawah Alamgiri] In other words, the act of Dua has been classified as Sunnah and we know that the Azaan is also a Dua. The great scholar of Fiqh, Mulla Ali Qaari (Rahmatullah Alaih), in his commentary of Mishkaat says, “Every Dua is the Zikr (of Almighty Allah) and every Zikr is a Dua.” To substantiate this, let us quote a Hadith wherein it is stated that once the beloved Companions were reciting the Takbeer (Allahu Akbar) extremely aloud. Fearing for their external health, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) advised them, “Have mercy upon yourselves, indeed you are not making Dua in front of One Who is deaf and blind, rather you are making Dua in front of One Who is All-Hearing and All-Knowing.” We see from this Hadith that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has clearly termed the recitation of ‘Allahu Akbar’ as a Dua, and it is this very word, which is found in the Azaan. Therefore, when the Azaan is a Dua, how can any person say that it is not

permissible to recite the Azaan at a person's graveside when it is proven through authentic sources that to recite the Dua at a Muslims grave is an act of Sunnah!

Great scholars of Islam such as Imam Shamsuddeen Al Jazari (Rahmatullah Alaih) have stated that among the ethics of Dua is that before each Dua is performed, one should perform some good deed. This is also reported in the books of Abu Dawood, Nisaa'i and Ibn Majah. Do we have to remind the Muslims of how great and beneficial the very recital of the Azaan is? When we are aware of its excellence and reward why then should it not be recited at the graveside, after which the Muslims may proceed with the Dua for the deceased? Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), explaining the times when the Dua of a person is mostly accepted, said, "There are two Duas which are not refused. One is at the moment of Azaan and the other is at the beginning of Jihad." [Abu Dawood] Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also said, "When the reciter recites the Azaan, (at that moment) the Doors of Jannat are opened and the Dua is accepted." Imagine the status of the Dua made for the deceased after the recital of the Azaan at the graveside! But there are some misled individuals whose sole aim is nothing but to rob the Muslims of this great blessing.

It has already been proven that Azaan is amongst the remembrance (Zikrullah) of Almighty Allah. We shall now state the Hadith which clearly describes how immensely beneficial the Zikr of Allah is. Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has stated, "Nothing is more supreme in saving one from the Wrath of Almighty Allah than His Zikr (remembrance)." It has also been stated that wherever the Azaan is recited, that place is safe from the Punishment of Allah for the duration of the entire day. From this injunction, we clearly see that if we recite the Azaan at a Muslim's grave we are doing nothing but ensuring that the place is free from the Wrath of Allah for the entire day. We will also be instrumental in assisting a fellow Muslim. Mulla Ali Qaari (Rahmatullah Alaih) in his commentary of Sahih Bukhari, after comprehensively describing the many benefits and advantages to be achieved by reciting the Qur'an and other Zikr of Allah at the grave of a Muslim, clarifies further by saying, "All types of Zikrullah certainly assist the deceased Muslim within the grave." Imam Badruddeen (Rahmatullah Alaih) in his commentary of Sahih Bukhari further clarifies this point. He states, "Among the considerations for the deceased person are that the Muslims should gather at his graveside, they should recite the Holy Qur'an and also busy themselves in the Zikr (remembrance) of the Almighty Allah. These actions are in fact a great gain to the deceased Muslim."

After learning about its permissibility, what is restricting us from reciting the Azaan at a fellow Muslim's graveside? May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq to make sure that the Azaan is recited after the burial of our fellow Muslims so that they can be saved from the mischief of Shaitaan and that they may find ease in answering the questions of Munkar and Nakeer, Ameen.