

Virtues of the Martyrs

Tafseer Ibn Katheer (English), 2/319-323.

Soorah Aal-'Imraan (3):169-171 Think not of those as dead who are killed in the way of Allaah. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they have provision.

They rejoice in what Allaah has bestowed upon them of His bounty and rejoice for the sake of those who have not yet joined them, but are left behind (not yet martyred) that on them no fear shall come, nor shall they grieve.

They rejoice in a grace and a bounty from Allaah, and that Allaah will not waste the reward of the believers.

Allaah states that even though the martyrs were killed in this life, their souls are alive and receiving provisions in the Dwelling of Everlasting Life. In his Saheeh, Muslim recorded that Masrooq said, "We asked 'Abdullaah about this Aayah, Think not of those as dead who are killed in the way of Allaah. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they have provision. He said, 'We asked the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) the same question and he said, Their souls are inside green birds that have lamps, which are hanging below the Throne (of Allaah), and they wander about in Paradise wherever they wish. Then they return to those lamps. Allaah looks at them and says, 'Do you wish for anything?' They say, 'What more could we wish for, while we go wherever we wish in Paradise?' Allaah asked them this question thrice, and when they realize that He will keep asking them until they give an answer, they say, 'O Lord! We wish that our souls be returned to our bodies so that we are killed in Your cause again.' Allaah knew that they did not have any other wish, so they were left." [1] There are several other similar narrations from Anas and Abu Sa'eed.

Imaam Ahmad recorded that Anas said that the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) said, No soul that has a good standing with Allaah and dies would wish to go back to the life of this world, except for the martyr. He would like to be returned to this life so that he could be martyred gain, for he tastes the honor achieved from martyrdom. Muslim collected this Hadeeth. [2]

In addition, Imaam Ahmad recorded that, Ibn 'Abbaas said that the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) said, When your brothers were killed in Uhud, Allaah placed their souls inside green birds that tend to the rivers of Paradise and eat from its fruits. They then return to golden lamps hanging in the shade of the Throne. When they tasted the delight of their food, drink and dwelling, they said, 'We wish that our brothers knew what Allaah gave us so that they will not abandon Jihaad or warfare.' Allaah said, 'I will convey the news for you.' Allaah revealed these and the following Aayat, Think not of those as dead who are killed in the way of Allaah. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they have provision. [3]

Qataadah, Ar-Rabee' and Ad-Dahhaak said that these Aayat were revealed about the martyrs of Uhud. [4]

Abu Bakr Ibn Marduyah recorded that Jaabir bin 'Abdullaah said, "The Messenger of Allaah

(sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) looked at me one day and said, 'O Jaabir! Why do I see you sad?' I said, 'O Messenger of Allaah! My father was martyred and left behind debts and children.' He said, Should I tell you that Allaah never spoke to anyone except from behind a veil? However, He spoke to your father directly. He said, 'Ask Me and I will give you.' He said, 'I ask that I am returned to life so that I am killed in Your cause again.' The Lord, Exalted He be, said, 'I have spoken the word that they shall not be returned back to it (this life).' He said, 'O Lord! Then convey the news to those I left behind.' Allaah revealed, Think not of those as dead who are killed in the way of Allaah..." [5]

Imaam Ahmad recorded that Ibn 'Abbaas said that the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) said, The martyrs convene at the shore of a river close to the door of Paradise, in a green tent, where their provisions are brought to them from Paradise day and night.

Ahmad [6] and Ibn Jareer [7] collected this Hadeeth, which has a good chain of narration. It appears that the martyrs are of different types, some of them wander in Paradise, and some remain close to this river by the door of Paradise. It is also possible that the river is where all the souls of the martyrs convene and where they are provided with their provision day and night, and Allaah knows best.

Imaam Ahmad narrated a Hadeeth that contains good news for every believer that his soul will be wandering in Paradise, as well as, eating from its fruits, enjoying its delights and happiness and tasting the honor that Allaah has prepared in it for him. This Hadeeth has a unique, authentic chain of narration that includes three of the four Imaams. Imaam Ahmad narrated this Hadeeth from Muhammad bin Idrees Ash-Shaafi'ee who narrated it from Maalik bin Anas Al-Asbuhi, from Az-Zuhri, from 'Abdur-Rahmaan bin Ka'b bin Maalik that his father said that the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) said, The soul of the believer becomes a bird that feeds on the trees of Paradise, until Allaah sends him back to his body when He resurrects him. [8]

This Hadeeth states that the souls of the believers are in the shape of a bird in Paradise. As for the souls of martyrs, they are inside green birds, like the stars to the rest of the believing souls. We ask Allaah the Most Generous that He makes us firm on the faith.

Allaah's statement, They rejoice in what Allaah has bestowed upon them indicates that the martyrs who were killed in Allaah's cause are alive with Allaah, delighted because of the bounty and happiness they are enjoying. They are also awaiting their brethren, who will die in Allaah's cause after them, for they will be meeting them soon. These martyrs do not have fear about the future or sorrow for what they left behind. We ask Allaah to grant us Paradise. The Two Saheehs record from Anas, the story of the seventy Ansaar Companions who were murdered at Bir Ma'oonah in one night. In this Hadeeth, Anas reported that the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) used to supplicate to Allaah in Qunoot in prayer against those who killed them. Anas said, "A part of the Qur'aan was revealed about them, but was later abrogated, 'Convey to our people that we met Allaah and He was pleased with us and made us pleased.'" [9]

Allaah said next, They rejoice in a grace and a bounty from Allaah, and that Allaah will not waste the reward of the believers.

Muhammad bin Ishaq commented, "They were delighted and pleased because of Allaah's promise that was fulfilled for them, and for the tremendous rewards they earned." 'Abdur-Rahmaan bin Zayd bin Aslam said, "This Aayah encompasses all the believers, martyrs and otherwise. Rarely does Allaah

mention a bounty and a reward that He granted to the Prophets, without following that with what He has granted the believers after them."

Footnotes:

[1] Muslim (3/1502)

[2] Ahmad (3/126), Muslim (1877)

[3] Ahmad (1/265)

[4] At-Tabari (7/389-390)

[5] Dala'il An-Nubuwwah by Al-Bayhaqi (3/299)

[6] Ahmad (1/266)

[7] At-Tabari (7/387)

[8] Ahmad (3/455)

[9] Fath Al-Baari (7/455), Muslim (1/468)