

Last Day 20 – Questioning in the grave

Based on the works of Shaykh Saalih al Fawzaan (حفظه الله)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

QUESTION: Is a person questioned in his grave?

ANSWER:

Islam teaches that we will be questioned in our grave and the answers that we give will be based on our actions during our lifetime.

We have mentioned in preceding *Last Day* articles the hadeeth of what happens to the person after he or she dies. That hadeeth told us that there will be angels who come to the dead person after he is laid in his grave to question him or her.

When the deceased person is placed in their grave, earth is placed on top of them. The mourners soon walk away from the grave and Muslims believe that the dead person is able to hear their footsteps. The person is then questioned by two angels called Munkar and Nakeer.

These angels sit him up and ask him three questions.

Who is your Lord? What is your religion? And who is your prophet?

If a person were a believer during their lifetime, they will be given the ability to answer these questions without any hesitation.

My Lord is Allaah. Islam is my religion and Muhammad is my prophet.

In contrast, the person who disbelieved in Islam or merely pretended to be a Muslim (i.e. was hypocritical in his claim to be a Muslim) will not be able to answer these questions and will instead say:

I do not know. I heard the people saying something so I said it (as well).

Answering these three questions is not just an issue of memorising the answers at some point before death and hoping for the best. Rather the ability to answer the questions correctly will depend entirely upon the person's beliefs actions during their lifetime. If they truly believed in Islam, they will be able to answer the questions; if not, then they will not be able.

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For this reason, Islam recommends that the Muslims stand by the grave after they have finished burying the dead Muslim and not be in a rush to leave the graveside. At that time, they should ask Allaah to make the deceased person be firm and also seek forgiveness for him/her.

This is in accordance with the practice of the Muhammad (may perfect peace and security be upon him) who, when burying the dead person, would say:

Seek forgiveness for your brother and ask for firmness for him for he is now about to be questioned.